



STONY CREEK MASTER PLAN

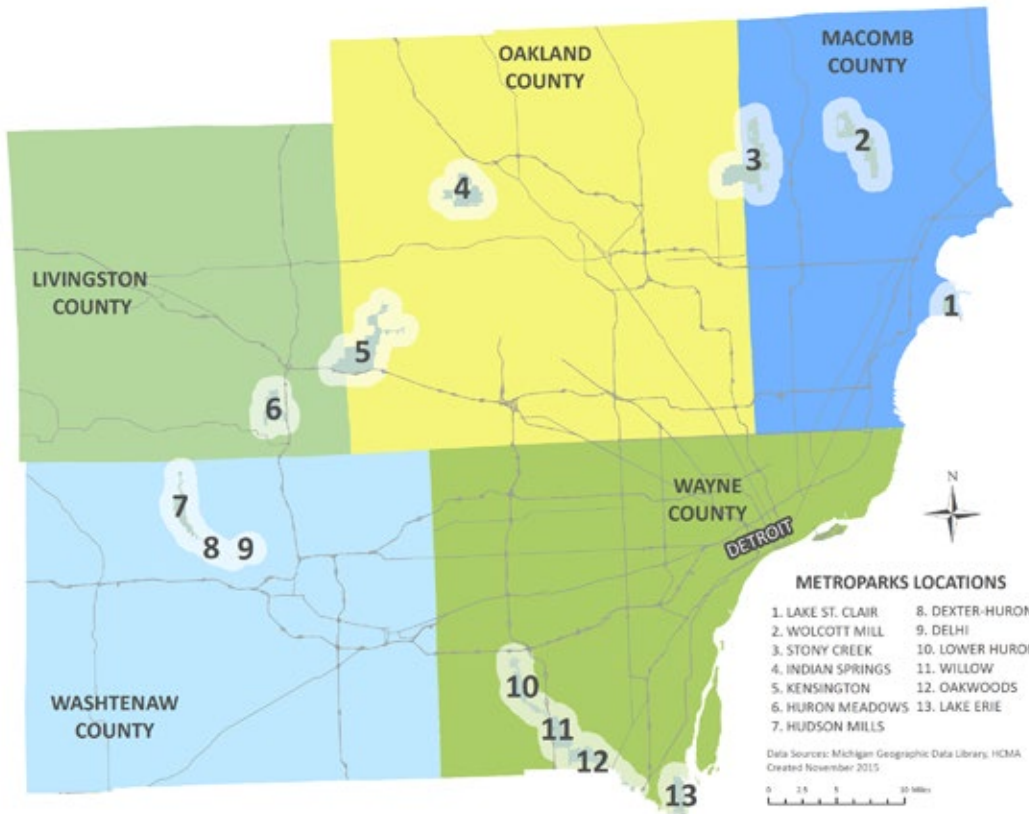


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INTRODUCTION

About the Metroparks

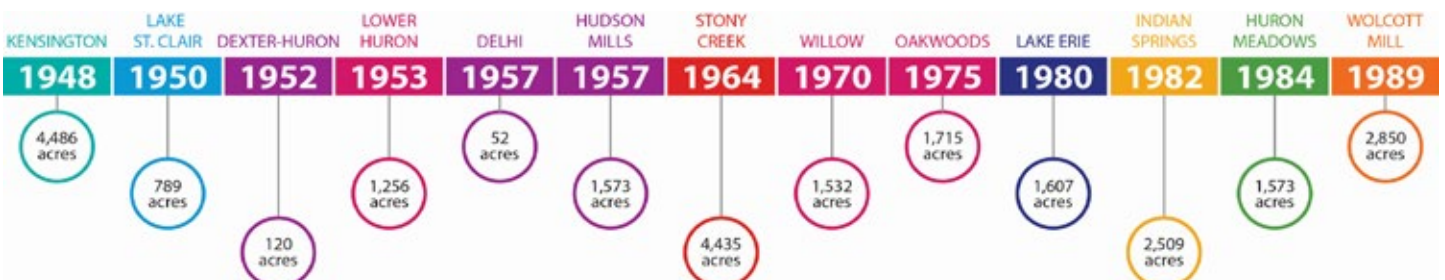


The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority was sanctioned by the Michigan State Legislature in Act No. 147 of the Public Acts of 1939. Named after the two longest rivers within its boundaries, the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority is a regional park agency consisting of 13 Metroparks encompassing approximately 25,000 acres of land within a five county area in southeast Michigan.

Much credit can be given to Henry S. Curtis and Harlow O. Whittemore for making the Metroparks a reality. The 1937 vision for a park system proposed a series of parks connected by a long parkway extending from Lake St. Clair along the Clinton and Huron rivers to Lake Erie below the mouth of the Detroit River.

Funding of the parks began in 1942 with a property tax levy, limited to one-quarter of one mill. The rate today has been adjusted to .2146 mills.

PARK DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE



Administration & Operations

Board of Commissioners

A seven-member Board of Commissioners governs the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority. The Board of Commissioners meets the second Thursday of each month, where they make policy decisions for the Authority, including approving expenditures, acquiring land, planning of new parks and facilities, approving fees and charges, awarding contracts through competitive bidding, and other matters necessary to provide regional recreation. The Board appoints staff officers for the Metroparks.

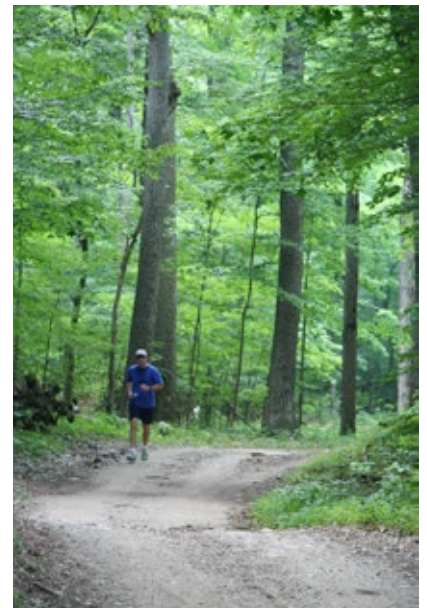
Two commissioners, appointed by the Governor of Michigan for a term of four years, serve as representatives at large. Five commissioners, one each to represent the counties of Wayne, Macomb, Oakland, Livingston and Washtenaw, are appointed for a term of six years by the board of commissioners of the above-named counties.

Director is the Chief Executive Officer of the Metroparks, provides leadership and executive oversight of all administrative and operational activities.

Administrative Departments provide administrative support to operations, and guide the organization towards its mission.

Operational Departments facilitate the day-to-day operations of the parks, making sure patrons have enjoyable and educational visits. They include Maintenance and Interpretive Services.

Metroparks Police ensure that everyone can enjoy the parks in a safe and secure environment.



Introduction

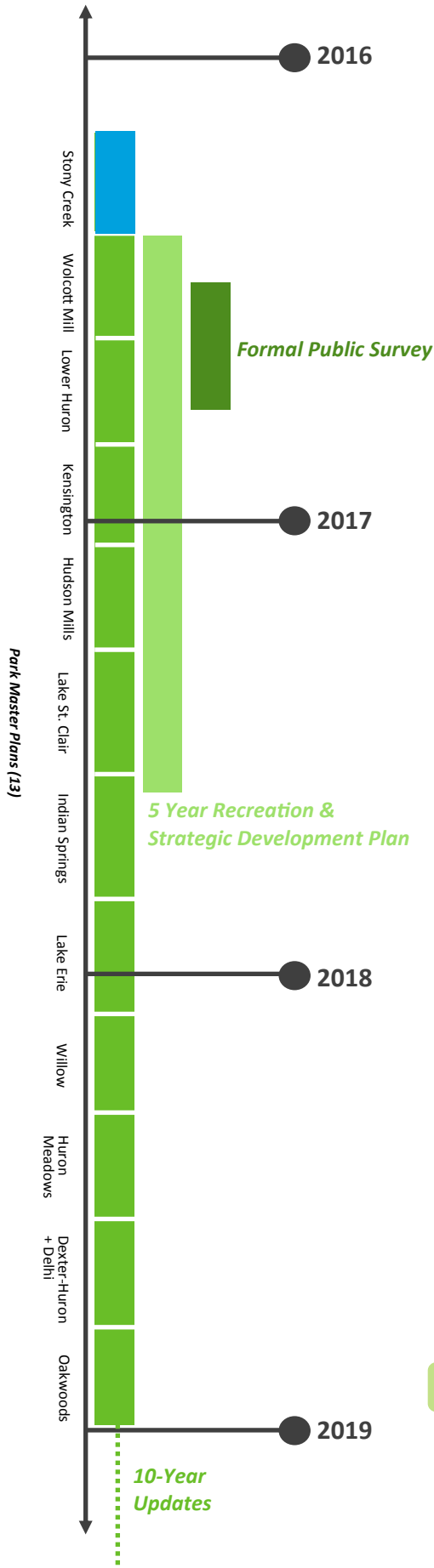
Planning Process

Several factors contribute to the recommendations that will be proposed for Stony Creek in the master plan. One of the most important is the public input collected through meetings, questionnaires, and online comments. This reveals the public's hopes and expectations for the park and significantly influences plan recommendations. A master plan steering committee was formed to include park employees with exceptional knowledge of Stony Creek and surrounding community, who along with the experienced Metroparks department heads provide their professional opinions.

The Metroparks Planning Department has scheduled an aggressive timeline for completing all 13 park master plans in three years. Each park will be given a planning window of four months, with overlap between parks. The order of the parks in the planning process was determined by staff based on current and planned park projects, planning need, geography, and park popularity.

The Planning Department collects demographic and spatial data to inform master plan recommendations. Demographic data looks at the density, age, race, income, language, and other factors of the regional population. Spatial data, usually analyzed through Geographic Information System software, looks at the physical location of the parks in relation to other recreation opportunities, transportation facilities, population centers, important natural resources, and more. Finally, the Planning Department conducts a review of park conditions to identify areas needing improvement and areas experiencing success.

The master plans are intended to be living documents, modified as needed to reflect changing conditions in the parks. However, they focus on park developments over the next ten years, and will be updated every decade through a formal planning process similar to the current one.



The Steering Committee for the Stony Creek Master Plan met on 3/8/16

STONY CREEK TODAY

Character


The following responses to our survey questions highlight the many facets of Stony Creek that form a unique experience. It is seen as a prime spot for active recreation that also includes valuable natural areas and facilitates both family fun and personal relaxation.

NEEDS


Better highlight and advertise special character of park

Build a strong identity and user base by building upon this character


OPPORTUNITIES




Additional trails like the Pines to the South would be great for kids **learning mountain biking skills**. I took my 8 yr old boy and 10 yr old girl several times last year and they enjoyed it.




I do enjoy seeing people doing the many different activities but I also like being part of the **quiet walks**..... I get to walk and ride without lots of loud noises.




I have been using the park for 40 years! It is an awesome resource, I love and appreciate it. It actually **keeps me living in the community**



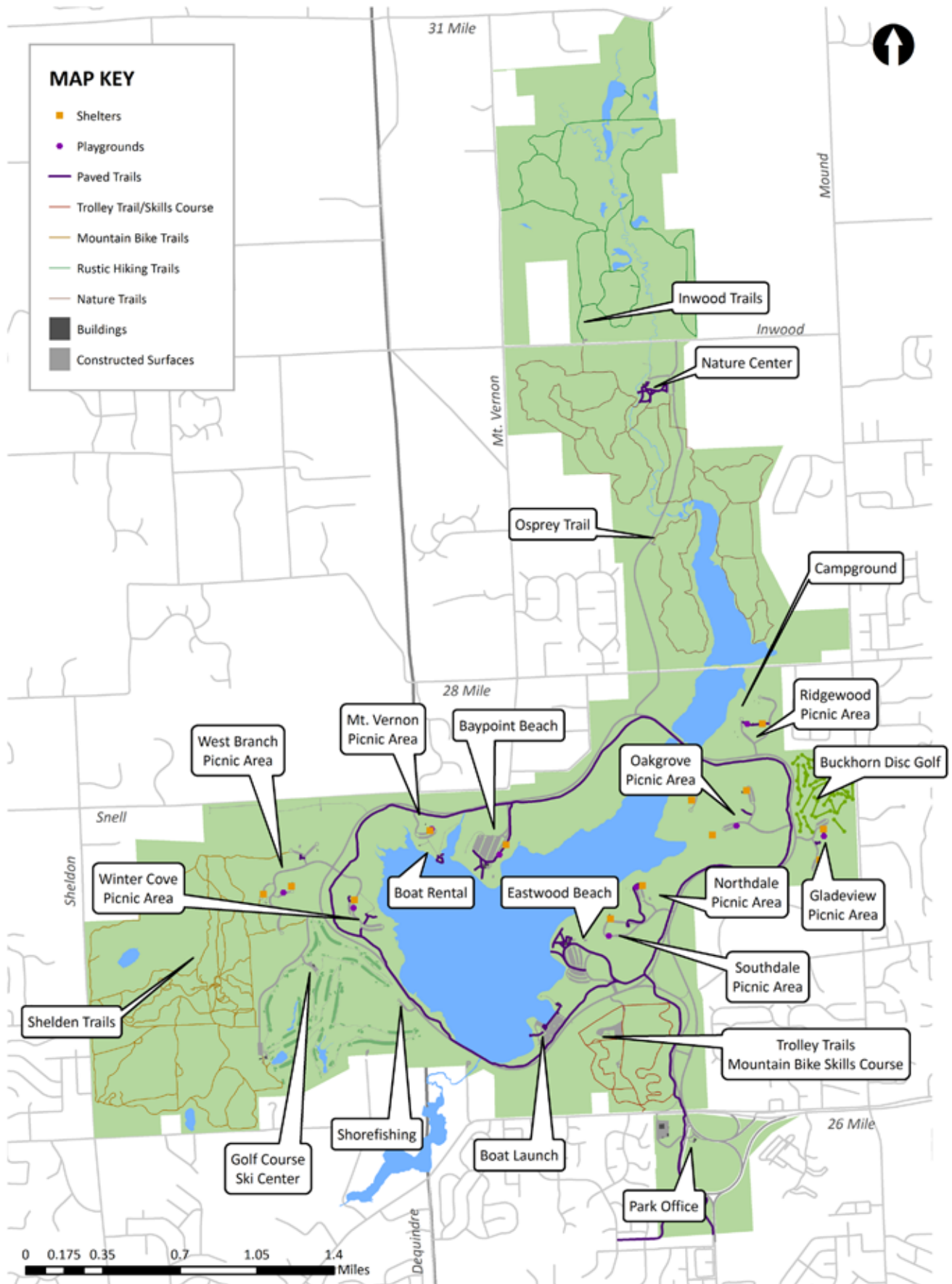
I'm going to go ahead and claim the record for having **done the most things** at SCMP: - road cycling - rowing - stand up paddling - ice skating - golf - hiking - swimming - windsurfing - kayaking - running - mountain biking - snow shoeing - xc skiing - rollerblading."



Stony Creek is my **favorite local SE Mich park**. for running , mt biking, cc skiing, hiking and pond hockey.



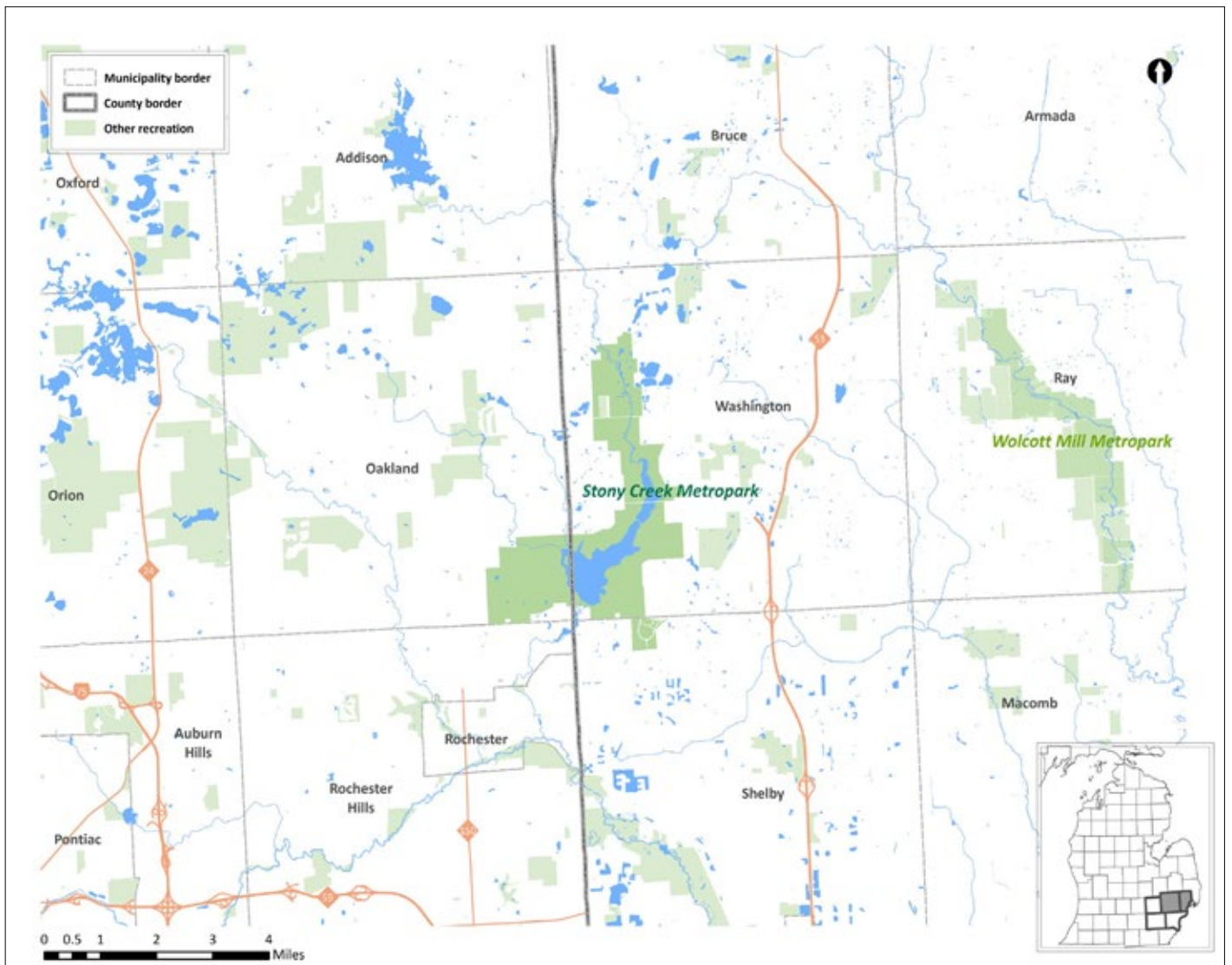
My family and I visit the park for **mountain biking and a dip in the lake**. The current trails are fun and well maintained but more trail (single track) would improve the experience.



Location

Stony Creek Metropark is located on the border of Oakland and Macomb counties in southeast Michigan. It is approximately halfway between M-59 and the Lapeer County border. Three municipalities contain portions of the park: Oakland, Washington, and Shelby Townships. The park also borders the City of Rochester Hills.

At its northernmost extent, Stony Creek reaches 31 Mile, to the east it reaches Mound Road, its western boundary is Sheldon Road, and to the south it extends between 25 and 26 Mile. The park is situated on the Stony Creek, a tributary of the Clinton River.



NEEDS

Define and protect areas with important biodiversity features

Create a resilient network of biodiverse areas in the park

OPPORTUNITIES

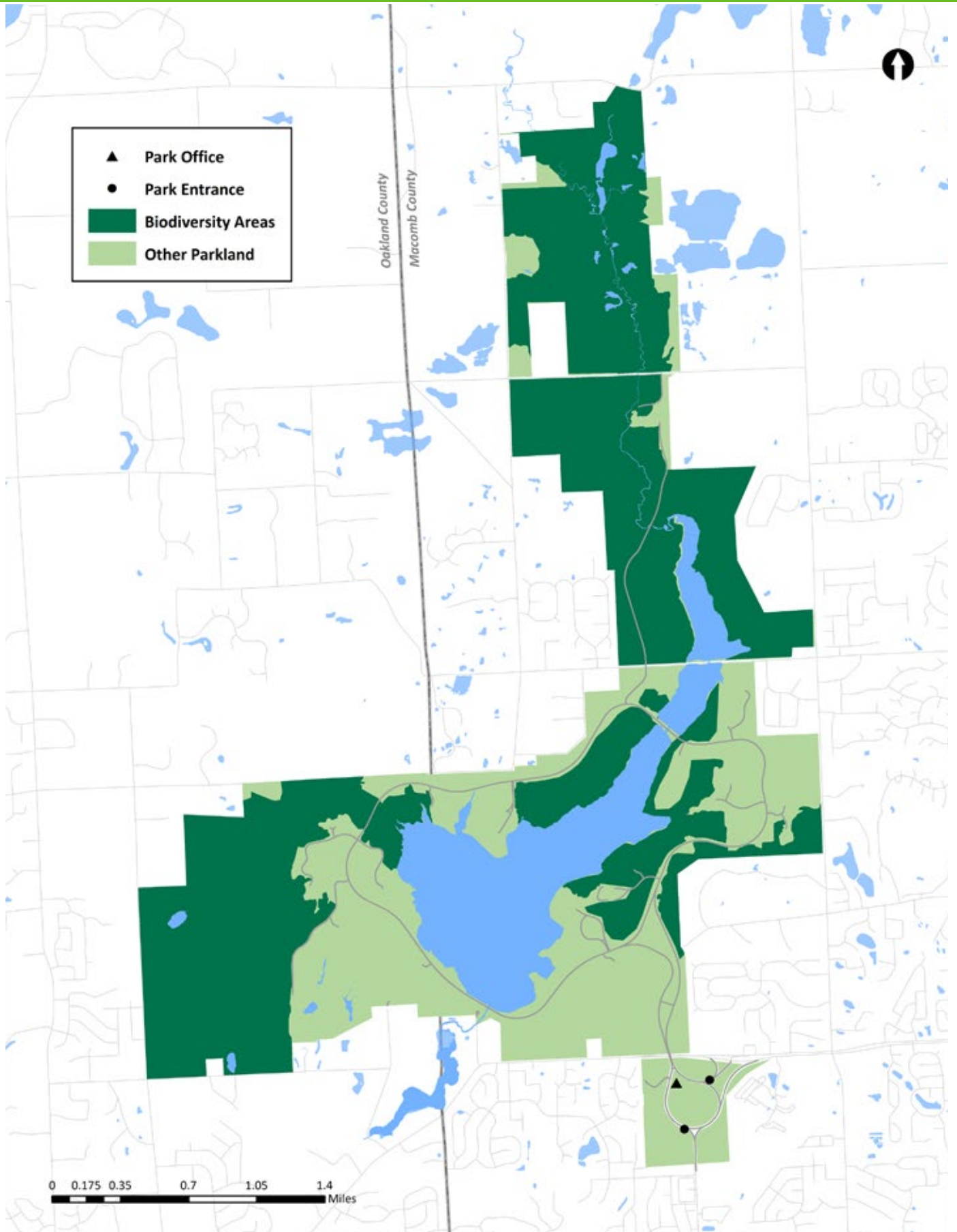
Biodiversity refers to the variety of life present in a given area, often measured by number and distribution of species. It is important to preserve because it provides humans with ecological services such as clean water and oxygen, leads to greater resistance and resilience during natural and human-caused disturbances, and reduces the risk of disease.

Biodiversity Areas

Identifying biodiversity areas can help inform the development of current and future park amenities, allowing the Metroparks to fulfill its mandate and mission statement of protecting the natural resources of the communities it serves. Development within biodiversity areas is carefully reviewed to minimize unnecessary disruption.

The following criteria for determining biodiversity areas were adapted from a matrix that the Natural Resources Department uses to determine work priorities throughout the park system. The following page shows a map of proposed biodiversity areas in Stony Creek.

Metric	What	Why	Metric	What	Why
Elemental Occurrence	the presence of a species under legal protection, or of a complete system recognized as in condition similar to pre-settlement	statutory, occurrences protected by law from intentional take	Percent Invasive Species Cover	percentage of total acreage with invasive plant coverage	areas with few invasive species require less work, have greater return on investment
FQA (Floristic Quality Assessment)	presence of plant species likely to occur in conditions similar to pre-settlement	determines the ecological value of a system based on its floral assemblage	Community Ranking	rank assigned by the state due to natural community rarity or rate of decline	assesses the vulnerability of each natural community within the state
FQI Connectivity	the presence of a quality habitat (greater than 35 FQI) within 100 feet of another	connected habitats provide diverse resources and facilitate migration, increase species fitness	Wetlands	the presence of wetlands	wetlands tend to have greatest diversity, and are also critical to promote healthy water resources
Size	acreage of the habitat in question	large habitats provide more diverse resources and facilitate migration, increase species fitness, resilience	Habitat Connectivity	the presence of a complementary habitat within 100 feet of another	connected wetlands promote genetic diversity conservation and water quality



NEEDS

Better educate about and preserve important cultural features

Draw new visitors with programming/education based on history of park

OPPORTUNITIES

Ghost Roads

The original Stony Creek Metropark was created from 124 individually-owned parcels bought in the later 1950s, and piecing them together disrupted the route of certain roads crossing the properties. Winkler Mill Road and Mt. Vernon Road ran north-south, while West Road ran east-west.

Hodges Valley Creek Farm

The current Stony Creek Nature Center stands on the site of Charles Henry Hodges Sr.'s Valley Creek Farm. His family lived in Grosse Pointe Village, but appreciated escaping from the more urbanized areas to the farm and nearby weekend home. The farm included fish-stocked ponds, an orchard and garden, horses and cattle, and crops tended by a resident farmer.

Charles Hodges Sr. died in 1937, and the family sold the building to HCMA once Detroit Edison power lines were installed. The Nature Center remained in this building until 2005, when the new Center was constructed.

Buckhorn Tavern

The Crissman family was among the first to settle in Washington Township, along Mound Rd between 28 and 29 Mile. After moving to Michigan from New Jersey in 1833, John Crissman purchased three hundred acres and used the log cabin on the property to sell everyday goods. This cabin had a pair of antlers attached to a pole outside and so became known as Buckhorn Tavern. It also provided boarding services, particularly for Native Americans traveling to Mt. Clemens to collect government payments.

John Crissman also built a house nearby, which remained until burning down around 1940.

Cultural History

Detroit United Railway

The original line, the Detroit and Lake Orion Railway, ran between these two cities starting in 1899. It became the Detroit United Railway after track extension to Flint and consolidation. The line was later extended all the way to Imlay City, but went out of business in 1934.

The railway ran on overhead electric lines, and passenger fee was 1.5 cents per mile. Farmers made use of the route to transport crops into Detroit. Today, a line of raised ground near the Boat Launch is all that remains of the railway.

William Inwood Sr's Findings

The descendants of William Inwood Sr. donated to the Metroparks a board of mounted Native American artifacts, presumably found by Mr. Inwood and his family members on his estate in the 1830s and 40s. The Inwood trails are currently located on this land.

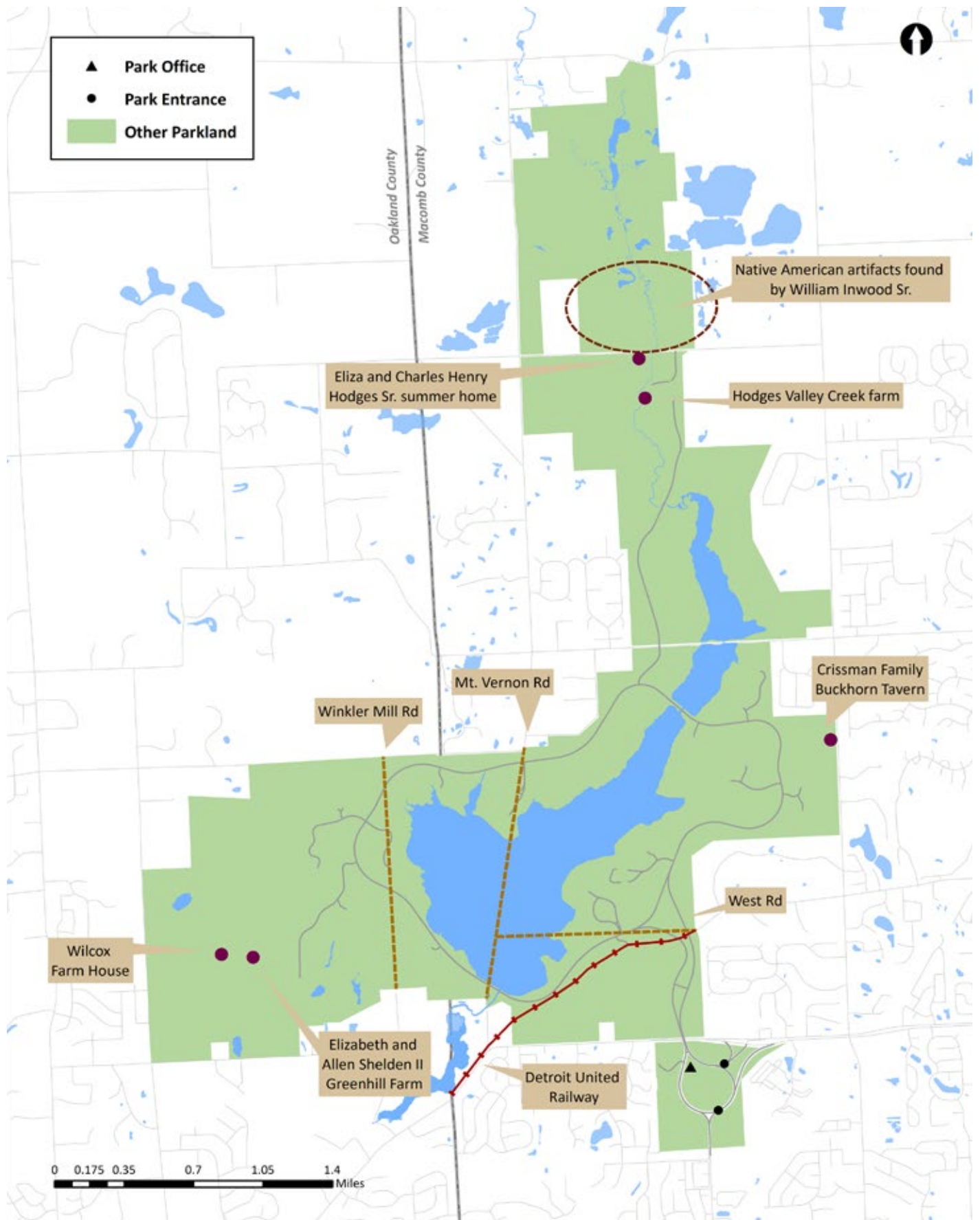
Shelden Greenhill Farm

Much of the western portion of Stony Creek was sold by Elizabeth Warren Shelden upon her death. Along with her husband Allen Shelden II she owned an autumn estate and retreat from their primary home in Indian Village and later Grosse Pointe. The property of this prominent couple included a tennis court, horse barn and dog kennels, greenhouse, pheasant pens, and a house for the farm caretakers, the Wilcox family.

Remains of the estate can still be seen today.



The steps in front of the Shelden Estate Green Hill Farm during its operation



Infrastructure

In order to serve the varied needs of park visitors, Stony Creek contains a number of buildings, surfaces, facilities, and activity areas. Many of these were constructed years or decades ago, meaning that they may need to be repaired or replaced in the near future.

The Metroparks are working to reduce overbuilding in the parks. This means ensuring that the number and extent of paved roads, parking lots, and buildings meets and does not exceed the needs of park visitors now and into the future.

Right-sizing the parks in this way leads to more natural areas protected for visitors’ enjoyment and more efficient use of maintenance funds.

An analysis of visitor use of Stony Creek facilities is necessary to determine whether the park is overbuilt.

Stony Creek features a number of trail types to accommodate various recreational activities. For more detail on trails at Stony Creek, see page 20.



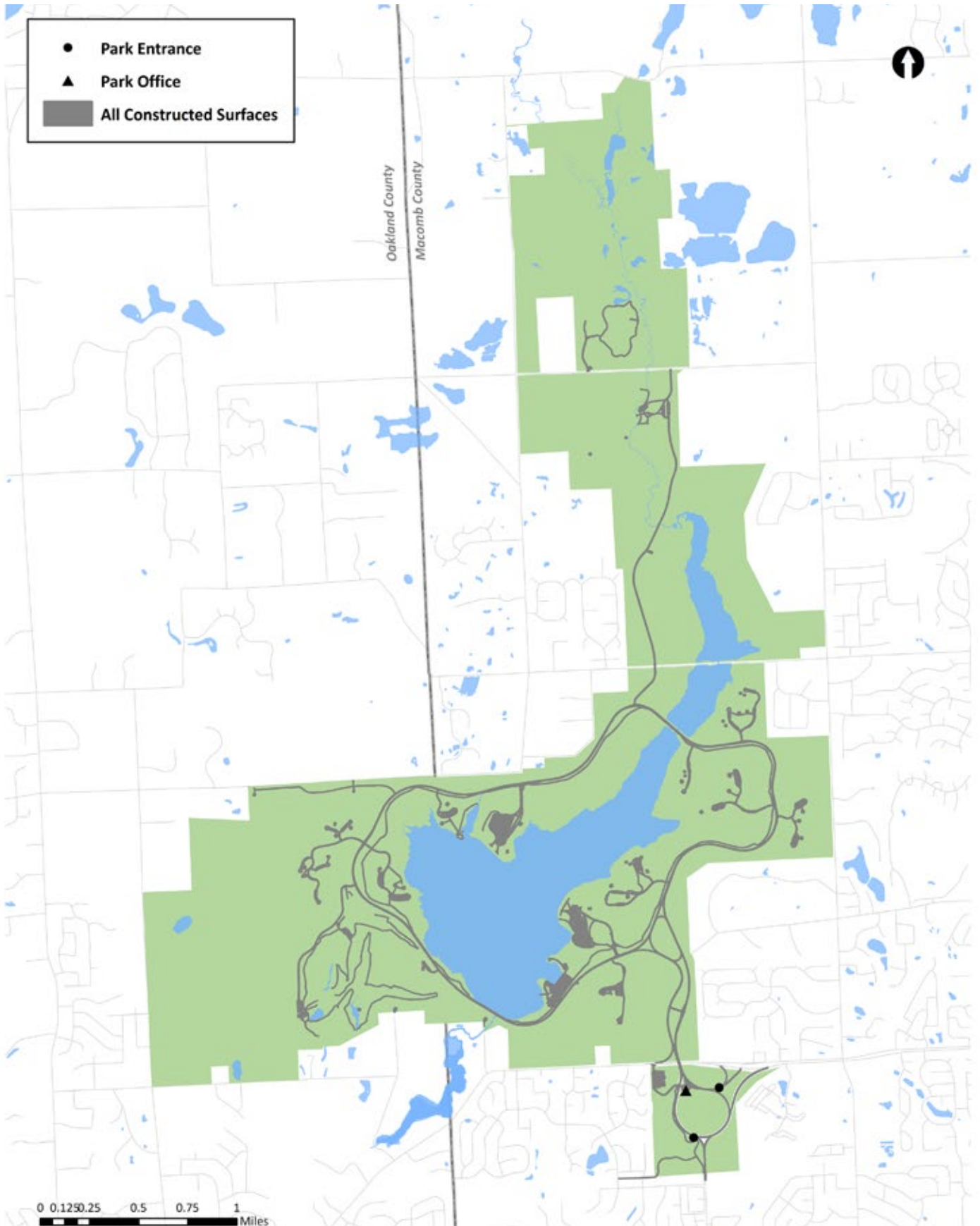
NEEDS

Address aging and overbuilt infrastructure

Redevelop park areas to better serve visitors and environment

OPPORTUNITIES

Stony Creek Infrastructure	
Buildings	21
Avg bldg age	41
Active wells over 20 yrs	27
Paths & trail miles	64.45
Road miles	14.33
Playgrounds	14
Picnic areas	10
Ice skating areas	1
Basketball courts	4
Disc golf holes	36
Boat launches	10
Boat rentals	2
Boat storage spaces	100
Bike rentals	2
Percent of park mowed	10.5
Picnic shelters	15
Sledding runs	4
Nature study acreage	599
Sand volleyball courts	2
Baseball fields	2
Fishing platforms	1
Parking lot acreage	37.52



Facilities & Centers

Stony Creek Facilities	
Banquet Tent	
Baypoint Beach	
Boat Launch & Storage	
Buckhorn Disc Golf	
Campground	
Driving Range	
Eastwood Beach	
Playground	
Water Slide	
Golf Course	
Mountain Bike Skills Course	
Nature Center	

Golf Course

Stony Creek contains a 6,928-yard, par-72 golf course with varied terrain, tree-lined fairways and abundant wildlife. Open fairways and fast greens allow both novice and experienced golfers the opportunity to challenge and improve their games

In addition to miles of trails and open spaces dedicated to informal recreation, Stony Creek features several facilities dedicated to specific recreational activities and amenities. Some of these either require an admission fee, are available for rentals, or sell concessions, supplementing park revenue. As with all park infrastructure, it is a priority to keep the facilities well-maintained and replace them when no longer functional.

Mountain Bike Skills Course

Thanks to the dedicated mountain biking community in the area, this sport is one of the most popular recreational activities at Stony Creek. The mountain bike trails and skills course are maintained in partnership with the Clinton River Area Mountain Bike Association, a chapter of the International Mountain Bicycling Association.

Eastwood Playground

Constructed only a few years ago in 2011, this playground is immensely popular and attracts huge crowds on summer days. It includes unique rope, slide, and climbing elements that keep children engaged. Overcrowding and premature wearing due to popularity are concerns. All playgrounds are regularly inspected for safety.

Nature Center

The Stony Creek Nature Center provides engaging interpretation to help visitors understand and appreciate the natural landscape of the park. The center leads tours on the 34-foot Voyageur canoe to teach visitors about the biology and history of the lake.



Stony Creek Today

The Metroparks are moving towards a more data-driven approach to developing facilities. In order to best serve the residents of southeast Michigan and use resources wisely, the Planning Department has identified the location of similar facilities and programs. The goal for future development is to avoid duplication and instead offer unique facilities that fill recreation voids in the geographic area where the park is located.

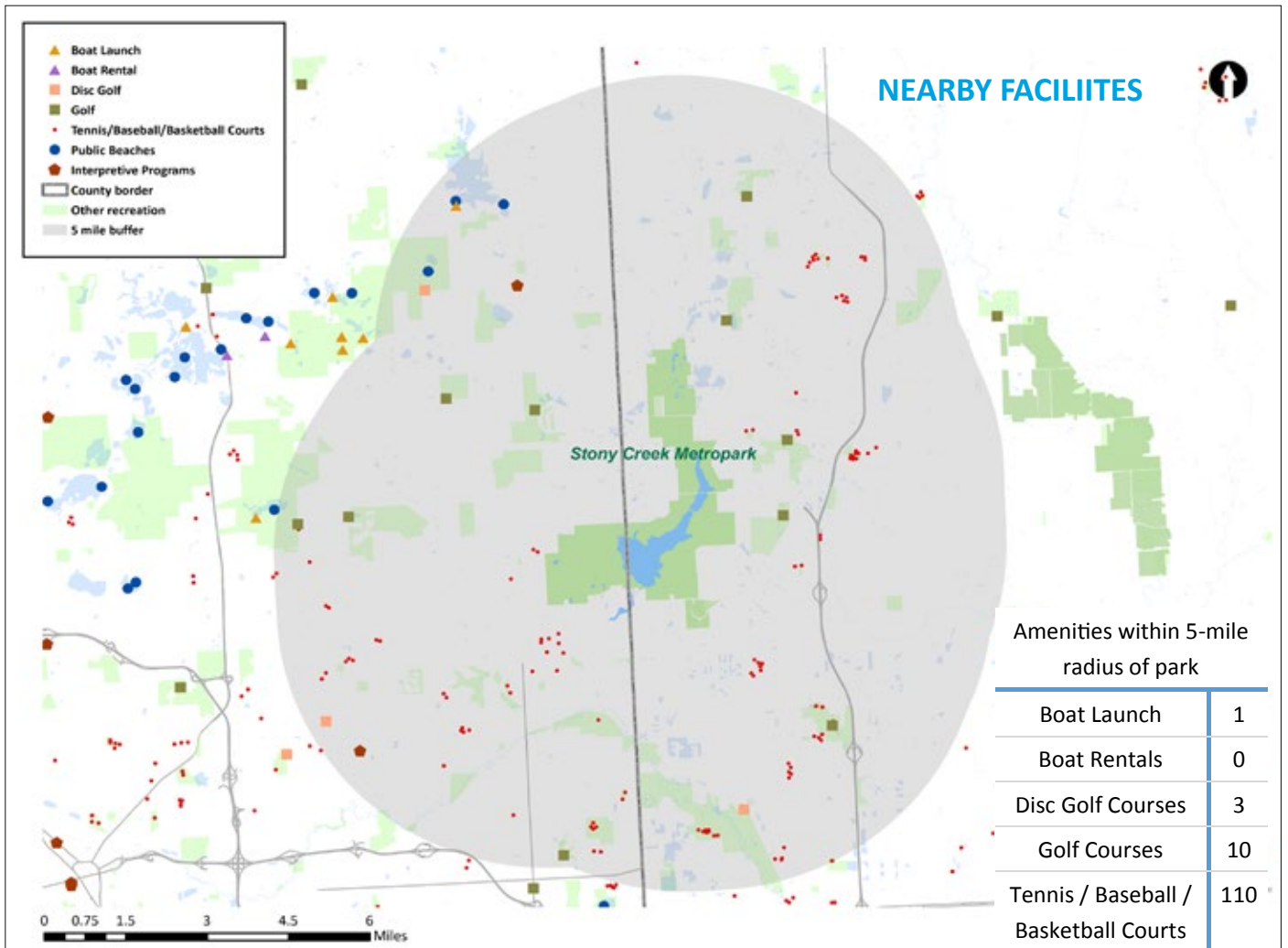
The map below shows the location of aquatic facilities, golf and disc golf, neighborhood sports facilities, and interpretive programs that compete with those offered at Stony Creek. The park is surrounded by a ring of golf courses, and slightly farther away is a scattering of public beaches and a few boat launches. Several tennis/baseball/basketball courts were also identified, mostly near the west end of Stony Creek.

NEEDS

Identify areas of facility duplication

Provide unique recreational facilities to draw visitors from across the region

OPPORTUNITIES



NEEDS

Work with county to address park boundary issues

Create good working relationship with neighbors and partner organizations

OPPORTUNITIES

Adjacent Property Uses

The land located between Mt. Vernon Rd and the Sportsman’s Club is encumbered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for public recreational use, and is partially classified by the Metroparks as a Biodiversity Area.

In other areas, a piece of private property is surrounded on three sides by Metroparks land. The Metroparks work with these property owners to resolve any conflicts that arise and maintain neighborly relations. If any of these property owners offer their land for sale in the near future, the Metroparks will have the option of filling in gaps in the park border.

Grants

Over its history Stony Creek has received several grants from the DNR for land acquisition, trail development, and more. The land specified as the project area of those grants was encumbered in perpetuity—meaning it may not ever be converted into a private or non-recreational use. Most of Stony Creek is encumbered, as shown on the following page.

A small portion in the west of the park is unencumbered due to a DNR grant conversion mitigation. The land was converted from recreational uses through the construction of a cell tower. In place of that area, a piece of land in Wolcott Mill Metropark with at least equal recreational value was encumbered. In addition, some portions of the park north of Inwood and most of the Sheldon Estate areas remain unencumbered.

The generous grants from the DNR and other sources have allowed the Metroparks to develop Stony Creek into the vibrant hub of recreation that it is today.

Contaminated Areas

The gravel pit bordering Stony Creek, north of Inwood and west of Mt. Vernon, poses a contamination risk to the park. Currently, the contaminants are being carefully monitored, and this must remain an important consideration in the future. In the future, these areas may be reclaimed and redeveloped as residential housing.

Encroachments

The Planning Department has worked with Stony Creek park staff to identify external encroachments on park boundaries. These include private development on park property, dumping waste, and breaking through fence lines. Together with a new combined map of county parcels in relation to historic HCMA-created parcels, this will help staff resolve existing property issues.

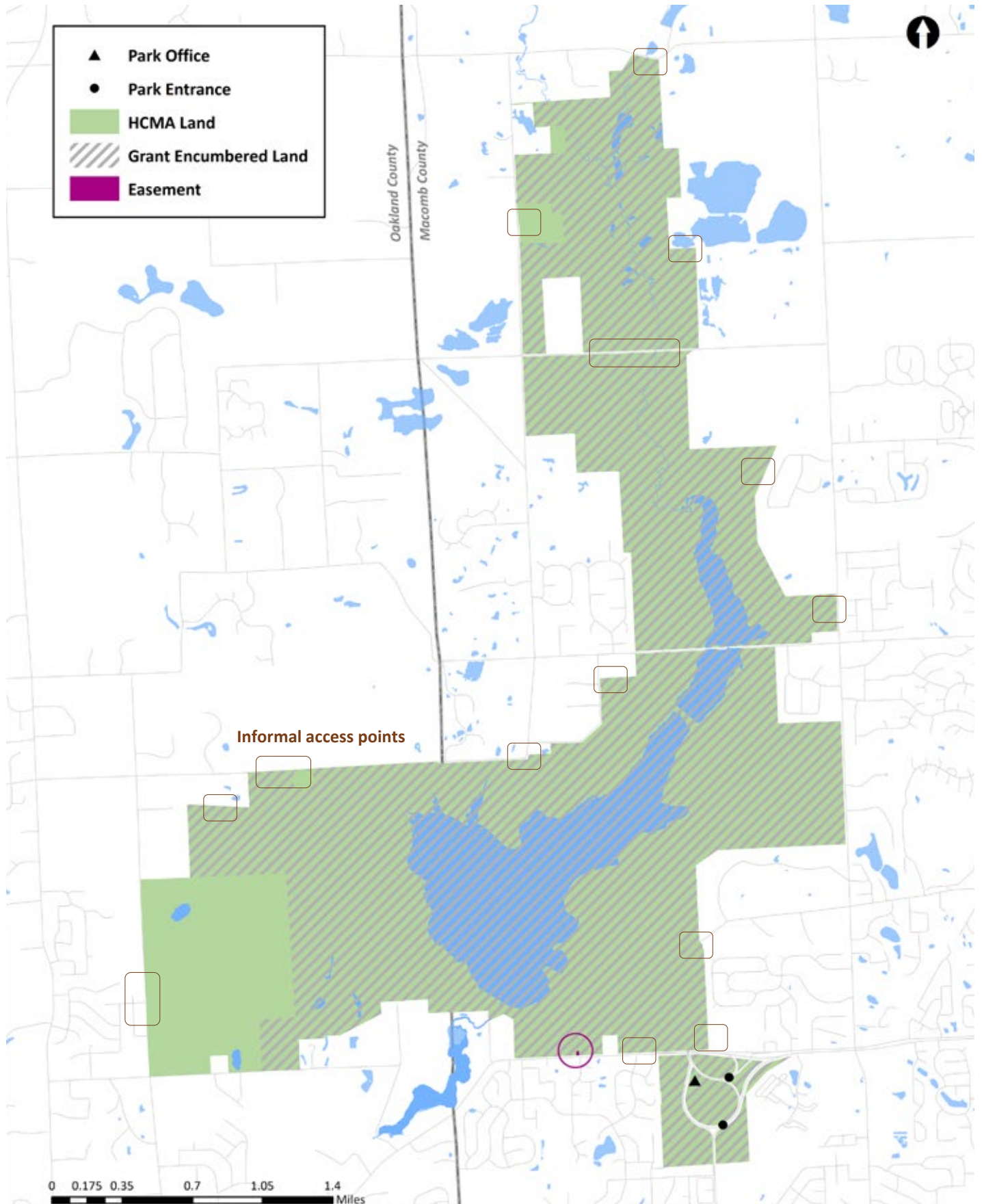
Due to the high number of residential areas directly bordering Stony Creek, the park is more susceptible to encroachments such as driveways built on parkland and numerous breaks in the fence line.

Informal Access Points

Certain spots on the park border are open to pedestrian access but not formally designated as an entrance. These must be monitored and considered in the planning process. Individuals may park on adjacent streets and enter the park on foot, affecting the tolling revenue of the park and potentially causing negative traffic impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.

Easements

Stony Creek contains several utility easements, meaning that utility providers are allowed to use certain sections of land to run power lines or other equipment, in order to provide service to the surrounding area. In the future, the Metroparks will collaborate with surrounding municipalities and agencies to link into existing utilities rather than building park-specific utilities—thus furthering the vision of a lean, efficient park system.



Vehicular Wayfinding

Standardization

Currently Metroparks include signage installed at various times with various standards and designs. This does not reinforce the parks working together as a system and can be confusing for visitors. As older signs reach the end of their lives, they will be replaced with new, standardized signs.

Simplicity

In many parks, including Stony Creek, an abundance of signage is not necessarily useful for directing visitors. Minimizing duplication of signs and expressing sign information simply will make navigation easier for users of the park.

Symbols

Symbols are useful for expressing information in a small amount of space, and also make park facilities more accessible for visitors who have trouble reading or speaking English. A standard set of symbols has been developed to be used in wayfinding signage.

Trail Wayfinding

Standardization

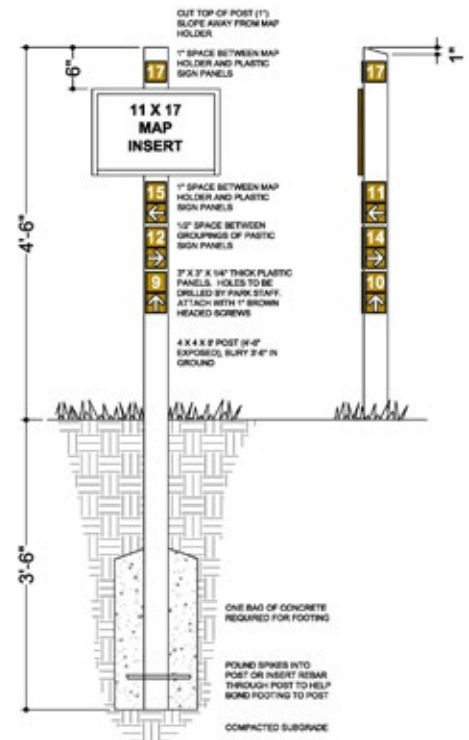
Trail types present in the Metroparks include shared use, mountain bike, ski, nature and rustic, and equestrian. Despite their different functions, these trails together create a complete recreation system, so signage will be based on a uniform template.

Flexibility

In order to serve the differing needs of users on these various trail types, the signage template will allow for removable panels and be customized to fit the needs of that user group.

Legibility

For many people, the easiest way to orient oneself in a new environment is through use of a map. For greater ease of use, all new trail wayfinding signs will include a map marked with a "you are here" symbols and the location of important park features and amenities.



NEEDS

Replace outdated, confusing, inconsistent signs

Create consistent, convenient wayfinding system to give visitors confidence

OPPORTUNITIES

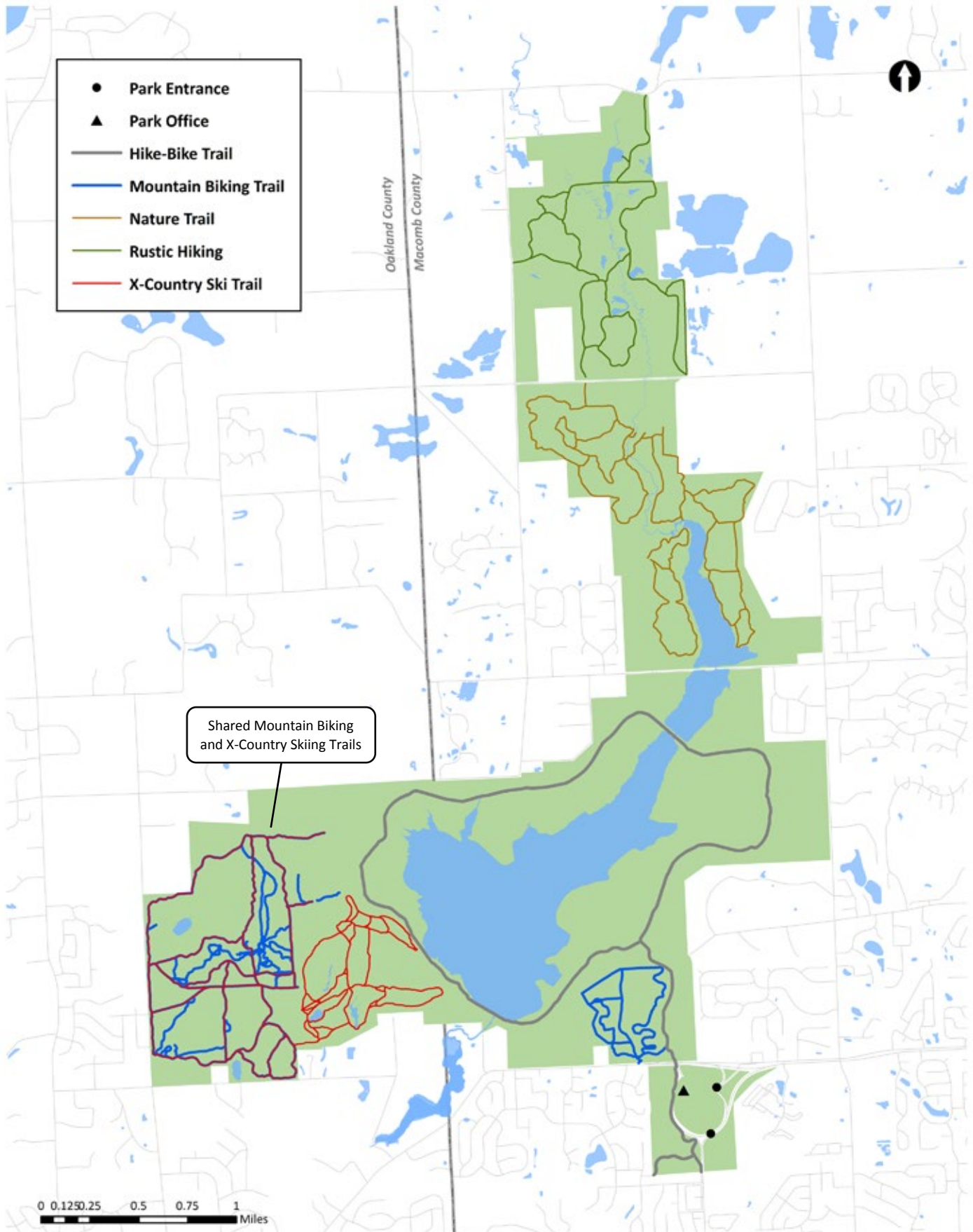


Park Trails



As part of the master planning process, staff have categorized and defined the various types of trails in the park, inventoried the miles, and specified the uses and design of each. This formal listing allows for assessment of availability of trails for various users in comparison to user group demand. It will also lead to more standardized maintenance and rule enforcement processes.

Trail Type	Miles in park	Allowed Uses	Prohibited Uses	Surface
Shared-Use Trail (Hike-Bike Trail)	7.66	Non-motorized traffic and pets.	Horses and motorized vehicles such as golf carts, scooters and hover-boards.	10' wide, typically asphalt, some small sections may be concrete or boardwalk.
Nature Trail	9.89	Pedestrian use only; hiking and walking. Snowshoeing is permitted on all Nature Trails except those designated (maps) for cross-country skiing. Cross-country skiing is permitted on designated (maps) trails only.	Motorized vehicles, running, jogging, pets, bikes and horses.	Trail surfaces vary and include asphalt, aggregate, mulch and compacted earth. Portions of these trails are accessible, but most are not ADA-compliant.
Rustic Hiking Trail	8.76	Pedestrian use only; running, jogging and pets. Snowshoes and cross-country skiing are permitted on designated (maps) trails only.	Motorized vehicles, bikes and horses.	Width and material vary, often dirt trails.
Mountain Bike Trail	16.8	Bikes, running, jogging and hiking. During the winter months, groomed trails can be used by cross-country skiers. Prohibited: Motorized vehicles, horses and snowshoes.	Motorized vehicles, horses and snowshoes.	Dirt, trail widths vary.
Cross-Country Ski Trail	14.71	Cross-country skiing only. Many are used for other activities during the summer.	Motorized vehicles, snowshoes, hiking, bikes, horses and pets.	Snow covered.



REVENUE

Revenue Sources



2015 Operations Revenue

Revenue Source	2015 Total	% of Revenue
Tolling	1,919,596	54.7%
Golf	910,491	26.0%
Boat Rental	176,089	5.0%
Rip Slide	138,993	4.0%
Picnic Shelter	76,500	2.2%
Disc Golf	59,195	1.7%
Beach	49,808	1.4%
Family Camping	32,267	0.9%
Interpretive	27,329	0.8%
Boat Storage	27,149	0.8%
Special Events	26,879	0.8%
Banquet Tent	25,300	0.7%
Parkway Maintenance	18,260	0.5%
Cross Country Ski	11,583	0.3%
Mobile Stage	8,000	0.2%
Miscellaneous	1,264	0.04%
	3,508,702	100.00%

NEEDS

Offset revenue loss from decline of golf participation

Increase revenue in upwardly trending activities such as rentals, camping, and special events.

Pursue development of desirable waterfront shelters

OPPORTUNITIES

The Metroparks 2015 General Fund revenue equaled \$48,477,108. Stony Creek's 2015 operations revenue was \$3,574,513, comprising 7.4% of all Metroparks revenue.

Stony Creek's budgeted 2016 operations revenues are \$3,949,373, while estimated 2016 operations expenses are \$4,742,942. Property tax and other revenue will subsidize 16.7% (\$793,569) of the Stony Creek operating budget.

REVENUES TRENDING UPWARD

Beach, Boat Rental, Family Camping, Rip Slide, Special Events, Tolling, overall park revenue

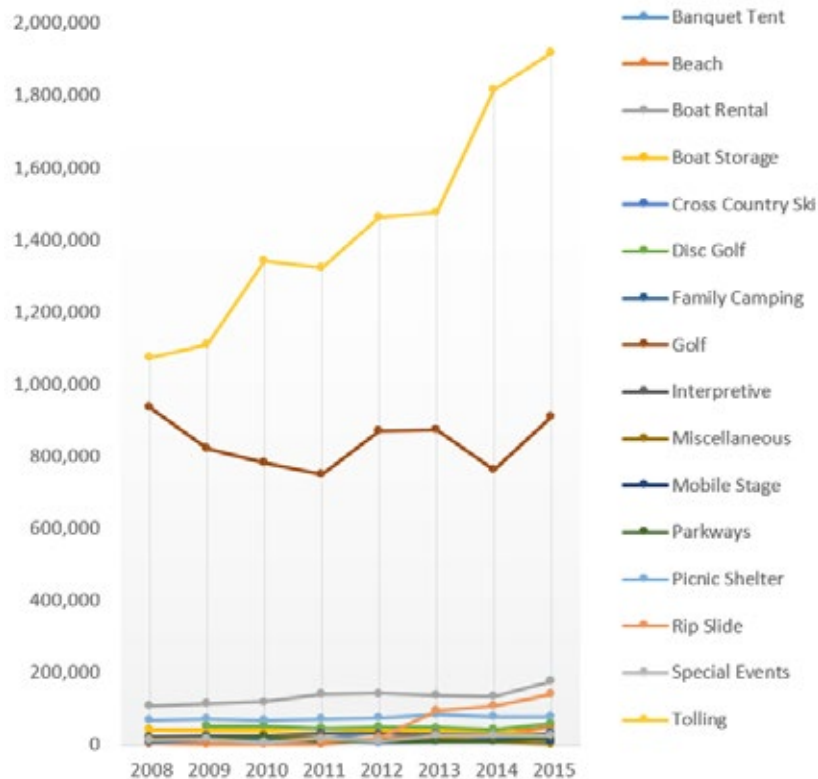
REVENUES TRENDING DOWNWARD

Boat Storage

REVENUES WITH MODERATE FLUCTUATION (perhaps weather-related)

Banquet Tent, Cross Country Skiing, Disc Golf, Golf, Interpretive Services programs, Picnic Shelter reservations

REVENUE TRENDS—2008-2015



Revenue

Visitors

Stony Creek Metropark is a regional park and can draw from the 3,484,040 people that live within a 30 mile radius (approximately a 45-minute drive) of the park. Certain events and activities may draw visitors from greater distances.

Vehicle entries to Stony Creek Metropark have averaged close to 512,000 since 2002. Record entries of 534,573 were recorded in 2002. Weather often plays a role in attendance to the park; activity areas greatly affected by weather are the trails, beaches, boat rental, disc golf course and golf course. Entries dipped below 480,000 in 2011, likely due to abnormal precipitation and average temperatures.

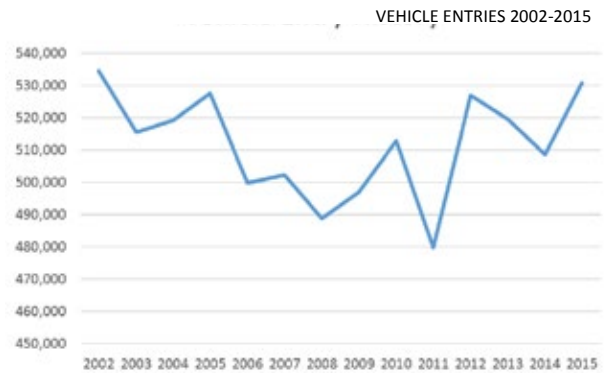
Consolidation of statistical information is needed to better assess vehicle entries, park users, event attendance, event participants and activity participation within the park. This information will help with marketing of events, activities and future analysis of the park.

NEEDS

Better data on revenue and visitation numbers

Use data to invest in activities and facilities drawing increasing number of users

OPPORTUNITIES



Popular Baypoint Beach

Stony Creek Metropark 30-Mile radius



Programs & Events



NEEDS

Increase revenue and visitation

Take advantage of captive audiences, actively take part in programming activities and events

OPPORTUNITIES



Voyageur Canoe Interpretive Services Program



Concert at Eastwood Beach



Fall for Nature Craft Show

Event Type	# of Events	Estimated Attendance
Fireworks	1	18,000
Track/Cross Country/Running	22	11,550
Camping Nights	47	6,580
Walk/Bike-a-thons	8	3,250
Concerts	4	2,650
Movie Nights	2	1,000
Other (War in the Wilderness)	1	750
Disc Golf Tournaments	3	180
Triathalons	1	150
Total	89	44,110

2015 Interpretive Services Programming

Interpretive Program Totals—628

- 264 Public Programs within the park
- 3 Public Programs out of the park
- 335 School Programs within the Park
- 26 School Programs out of the park

Interpretive Program Attendance—18,522

Nature Center Visitation (2015)—153,579

Public program topics include:

- Homeschool curriculum
- Social/leisure
- Seasonal/holiday
- Canoe trips
- Wagon rides
- Crafting
- Nature walks
- Scouting
- Science: environmental, biological, ecological

COMMUNITY INFLUENCES

Population

The population of the communities surrounding Stony Creek Metropark is growing, aging, and facing new challenges. The percentage of households without access to an automobile is rising throughout the region, although it remains relatively low in the area directly surrounding Stony Creek. The Metroparks were created at the time of the auto boom, when it was assumed that every family would have a car to take out to the countryside on the weekends. Since habits and lifestyles are changing, the Metroparks must look into innovative ways to provide access to the parks for all.

NEEDS

Address changing needs of new population demographics

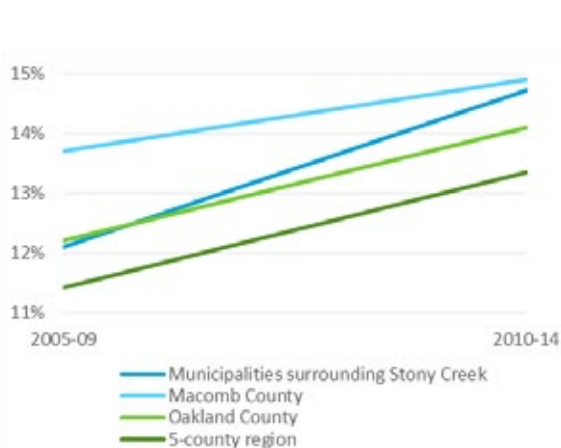
Draw new users with an accessible, welcoming park environment

OPPORTUNITIES

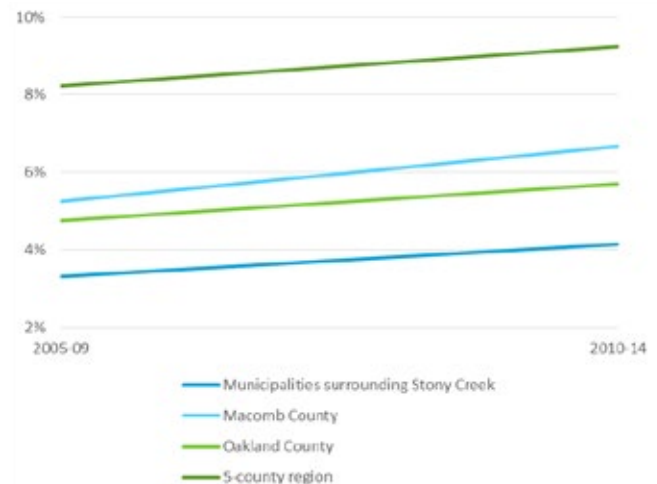
As shown in the map below, Stony Creek is situated at the very edge of the suburban ring around Detroit, transitioning into rural low-density areas with less than one thousand residents per square mile. This creates unique land use and park access challenges and opportunities.

Both the region at large and the municipalities bordering Stony Creek have been aging rapidly, following a nationwide trend. The area directly surrounding the park has seen the steepest rise in percentage of older adults, and will likely soon overtake the percentage in Macomb County as a whole.

Older adults have distinct needs, often requiring accommodations for mobility and accessibility of park features such as trails and buildings. This is important to keep in mind when planning the future of a park serving an older population.



CHANGE IN PERCENT OF POPULATION OVER 65 YEARS, FROM 2005-09 through 2010-14 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)

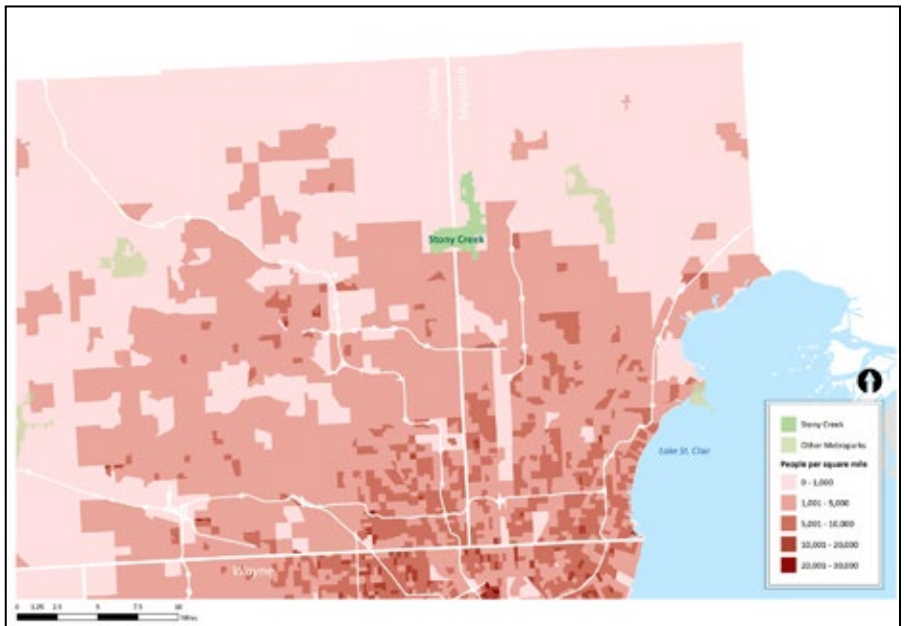


CHANGE IN PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO CARS AVAILABLE, 2005-09 through 2010-14 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)

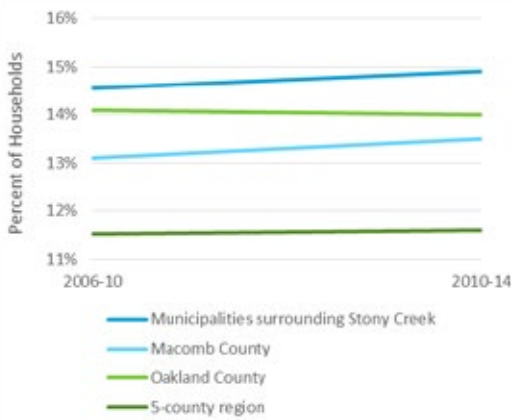
Community Influences

While on average the 5-county region is falling in population density, this is largely driven by population losses in Wayne County. Both Oakland and Macomb counties are experiencing population density increase (Maccomb starting from a much higher baseline). The four municipalities surrounding Stony Creek are growing at an even faster rate than either of the counties as a whole, likely due to their relative availability of unbuilt land.

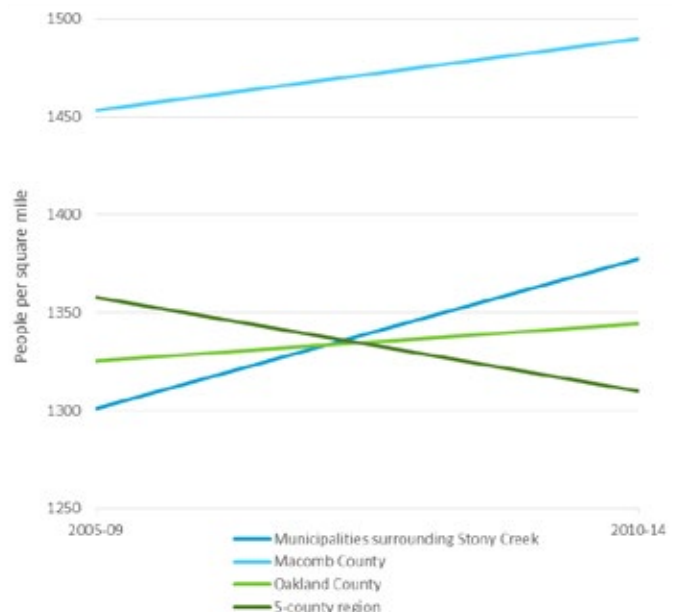
Although most households in the area still speak English as their first language, in many counties a growing number of families speak other languages at home. Maccomb County and the municipalities directly surrounding Stony Creek have seen an increase in the percentage of these households. Because of this growing linguistic diversity the Metroparks are working towards more universal signage design, with a focus on easily understandable symbols.



POPULATION DENSITY BY CENSUS TRACT, 2010-14



CHANGE IN PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS SPEAKING LANGUAGE BESIDES ENGLISH AT HOME, 2006-10 through 2010-14 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)



CHANGE IN AVERAGE POPULATION DENSITY, 2005-09 through 2010-14 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)

NEEDS

Improve park connectivity with community

Create good working relationship with surrounding municipalities

OPPORTUNITIES

Shelby Township

- Focused on 26 Mile trail connectivity
- Interest in possibility of reconfiguring park entrance
- New 5-year master plan process begun

Oakland Township

- Proposed residential development on western border of park
- Planning for bicycle connections to Stony Creek and Paint Creek Trail
- Interest in new vehicular entrance to park
- Interest in pedestrian entrances to park

Macomb County

- Enhancing role in recreation through shared services and collective efforts
- Goal is to establish dedicated parks and recreation department
- Continuing to invest in Macomb Orchard and Paint Creek trails

Washington Township

- New 5-year master plan process begun
- New residential development planned adjacent to the park
- Planning for a community center with aquatic features
- Interest in pedestrian entrances to park

Rochester Hills

- Planning new Riverbend Park with focus on accessibility and special needs
- Interest in new vehicular entrance to park
- Interest in pedestrian entrances to park
- Working on city connection with Macomb Orchard Trail

Oakland County

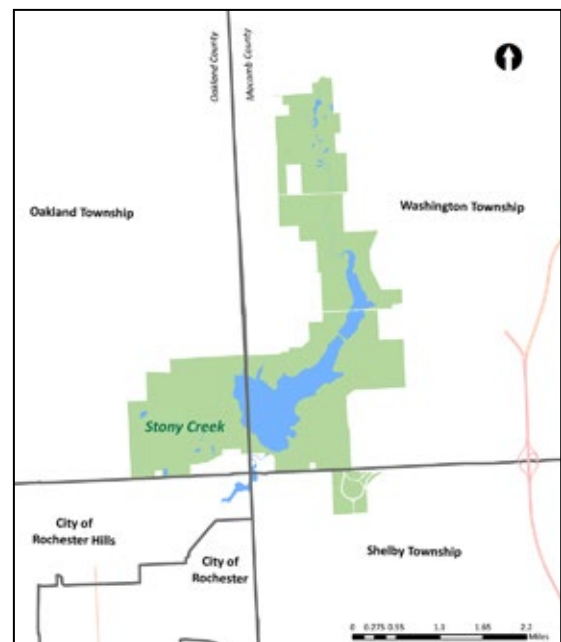
- Green Infrastructure Vision linking Stony Creek to other open space and recreation

Clinton River Watershed Council

- WaterTowns green infrastructure improvement suggestions

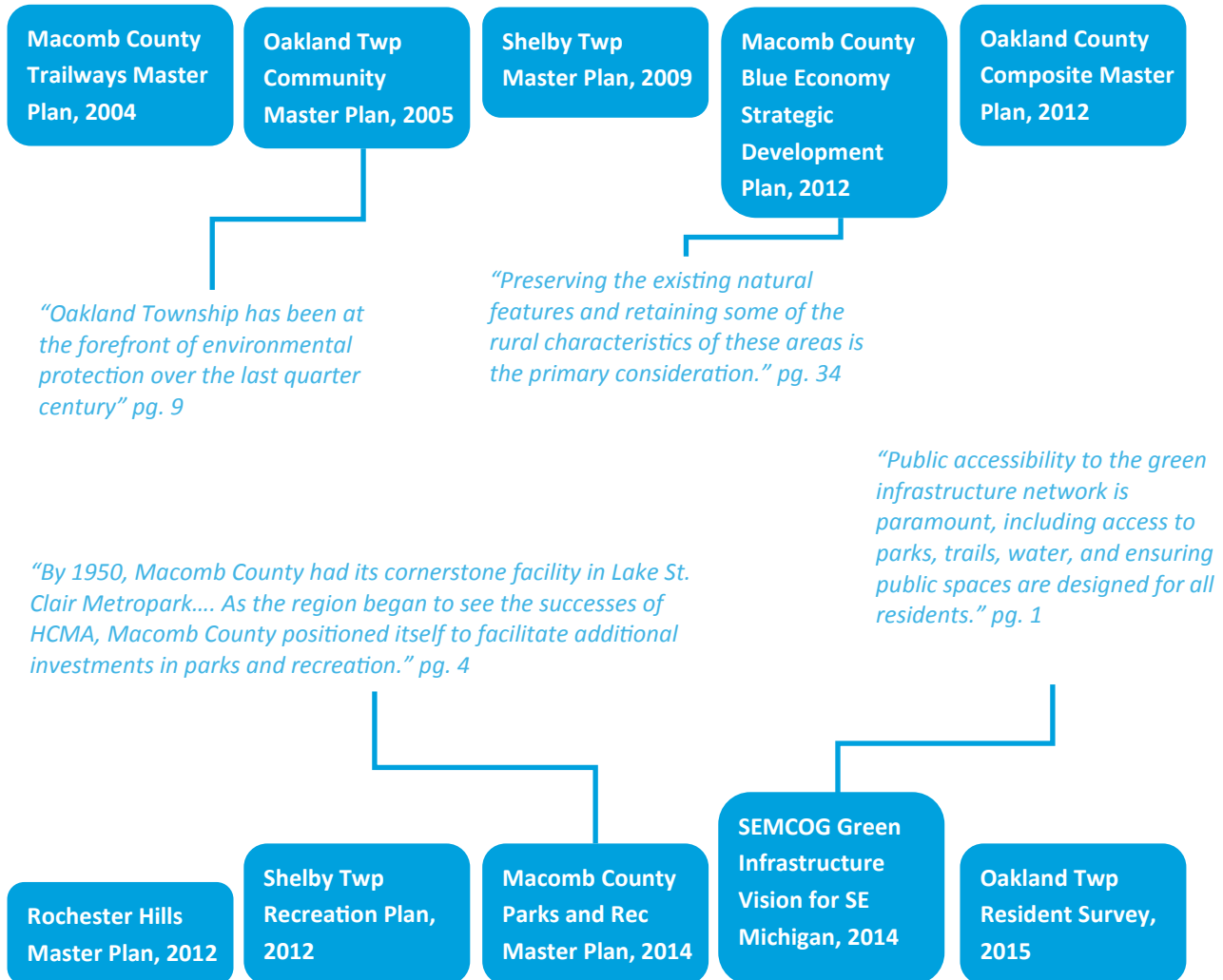
Understanding the goals and plans of municipalities bordering and/or containing Stony Creek is essential for a collaborative, comprehensive planning process. To begin, planning staff researched the published master plans and recreation plans of each municipality: Oakland Township, Washington Township, Shelby Township, and the City of Rochester Hills. These provided a basic idea of the planned direction of each community, especially regarding land use, development, and recreation. In order to gain a deeper understanding and open a dialogue, staff then met individually with planning professionals from each municipality and discussed potential developments, planned trails and park improvements, and any questions or concerns about the Metroparks planning process.

MUNIICIPALITY MAP



Community Influences

Relevant Planning Documents



Since the development and land use decisions of bordering communities and other governmental agencies directly impact the park, these neighbor master plans were reviewed and taken into account when creating this document. The opinions and ideas expressed by residents and leaders in these municipalities give Stony Creek a wider context and in many cases underscore the importance of the park's resources to citizens.

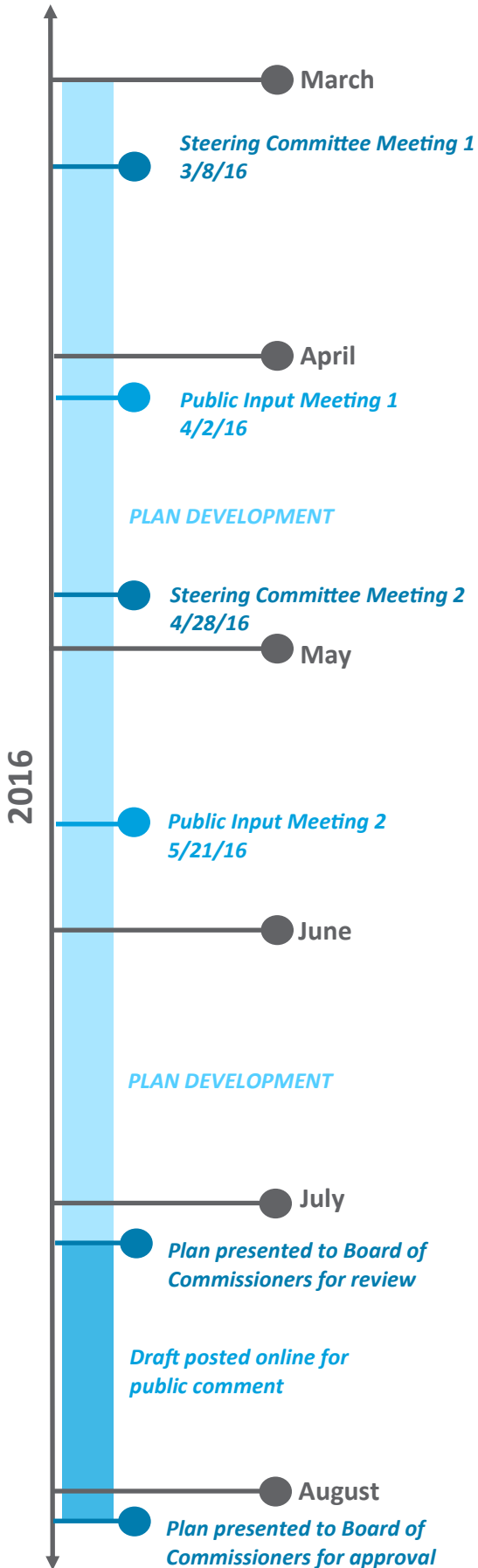
Macomb County does not have a Parks and Recreation Commission and maintains only a few county parks. Therefore, Stony Creek may play a larger role than other Metroparks in meeting everyday, neighborhood-level recreation needs.

Stony Creek is part of a broader system of recreation and green space that includes other Metroparks as well as local, county, and state parks and greenways. Therefore, recreation and green infrastructure plans were also

considered in creating the Stony Creek Master Plan. Many communities are currently advancing their nonmotorized networks, seeking grant funding to create greenways and paths, and cooperating to provide linked green and recreation spaces to their constituents.

PUBLIC INPUT

← Outreach Process



Since this park belongs to the people of southeast Michigan, the Planning Department aimed to include the public in multiple stages of the planning process.

The planning process began with a meeting of the steering committee, which identified organizations and individuals with significant investment in the park for targeted invitations to the public meeting. A strategy for soliciting general participation in the public meeting was also discussed.

The next step was a public meeting with community members to gather initial ideas about the direction of the park.

These ideas were taken into account, along with staff feedback and other data, in developing initial recommendations. These were then presented to the public at a second meeting, and feedback was collected, analyzed, and incorporated into a draft Master Plan document.

This document was posted online in July for final public comment, which influenced the final Master Plan sent to the Board of Commissioners for approval in August.



Public Meeting 1 - 4/2/16

- Explanation of and timeline for the planning process
- General park information and map
- Regional map on which participants placed stars to indicate their place of residence in relation to the park
- Exercise in which participants placed pom-poms representing resources in jars representing activities, expressing their opinion on where investments should be made
- Opportunity to fill out survey in person

Public Meeting 2 - 5/21/16

- Short presentation on survey results, community influences, and intended projects
- Opportunity for participants to write down feedback on intended projects

Results

Appreciation and concern for the trail systems in the park was clearly expressed. In the pom-pom investment activity, the Trails option captured over four full bottles of pom-poms—about equal to the combined total in all the other categories. This is partially due to the strong representation of the mountain biking community at the meeting, but also reflects the general popularity of trails for hiking, running, and strolling. Natural Resources, Lakefront Activities, Winter Activities, Playgrounds, and Camping also captured a significant number of pom-poms.

The survey responses, both written and submitted online, offered more insight into the needs of park patrons. Desire for additional mountain biking trails, especially single-track, was overwhelmingly expressed. Survey participants also had interest in more fat-tire biking paths and mountain biking trails specifically for children. In general, trail use conflict and enforcement of regulations was a major theme. Whether it involves mountain bikers and hikers, road bikers and cars, bird watchers and pet owners, or more, visitors to the park want disruptive uses minimized while recreating.

A large portion of respondents articulated the desire for greater protection of and investment in natural areas as opposed to facilities for active recreation.

Q6 What can be done to improve your favorite areas or facilities for your favorite activity?

Water Maintain and Improve Birds Continuous Loop Docks
 Not Allowed Lake Longer Ski Trails Inwood
 Trails Nature Trail Mileage Single
 Track mt Bike Mountain Bike
 Trails Think Park Skills Area MTB
 Trails Trail Markings Road Preserve Boat
 Storage Small Sailboats Wildlife Additional Designated Mountain
 Bike Boat Launch

Q7 What would make your visit to Stony Creek Metropark more enjoyable overall?

Better Trail Events Think Boat Storage Costs Pass
 Hiking Trails Fat Biking Walking MTB Trails
 Rules Road Enforcement Mountain
 Bike Trails Activities
 Park Inwood Single Track Year-round
 Natural Fees Bikers Main Entrance Stony
 Creek mt Bike Boat Launch
 Quiet Lake Beach



Survey Response Topics

Mountain Biking

- Increased, more varied, more connected mountain biking trails
- Opportunities for all ages and skill levels
- Year-round drinking water access

Trails and Use Conflict

- Greater separation of uses and more enforcement of use restrictions
- Additional dedicated infrastructure for dirt running, skate skiing, rustic trail use etc.
- Dog park or other designated off-leash areas
- Better maintenance of trails and roads

Natural Resources

- Protection of natural areas amid population growth
- Undeveloped areas and passive recreation
- More interpretation
- Invasive species management
- Recycling
- Photographer accommodations and observation areas
- Additional and better maintained picnic areas
- More camping opportunities

Access Issues

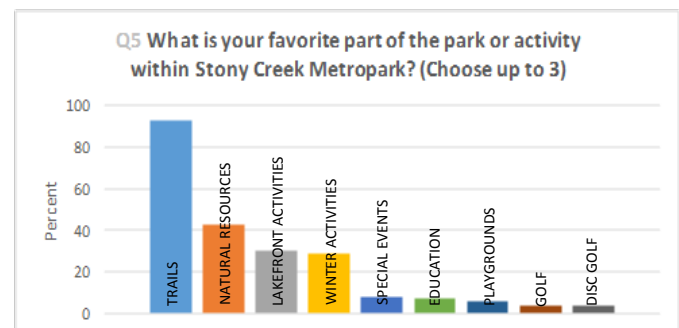
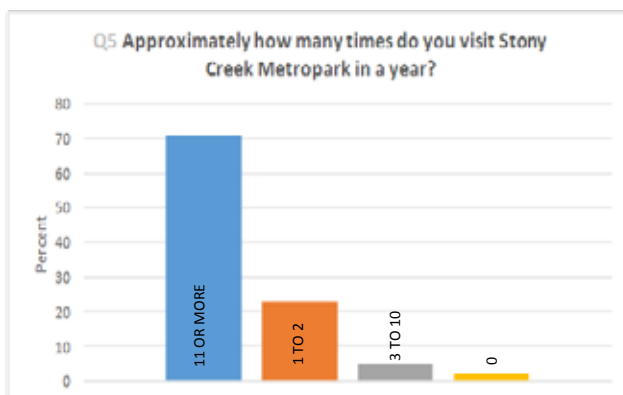
- Keep parks accessible to all income levels
- Year-round access to all park areas, more events
- More park access points and non-motorized trail connections
- Parking more strategically located near trailheads and launches
- Clearer, better-placed, more universal wayfinding signage
- Annual pass holder lane during peak hours
- Shared pass for Metroparks and DNR
- Better access for older adults and people with disabilities
- Greater diversity of food offered

Water Sports

- Low cost watercraft storage
- Additional and better-maintained launches
- Management of fish populations
- Handicap access to water
- More swimming opportunities, sandy beach

Health/Safety

- Increased enforcement of speed limits and smoking ban
- More visible security
- Seaweed removal from boating areas
- Increased maintenance and improvement of bathrooms and playgrounds



Participation

The Stony Creek Master Plan online survey received over 600 responses, and over 150 individuals attended the two public meetings. As shown in the map below, responses came in from all over the five-county Metroparks jurisdiction, from the three counties north of Stony Creek, and even occasionally from locations all over the state.

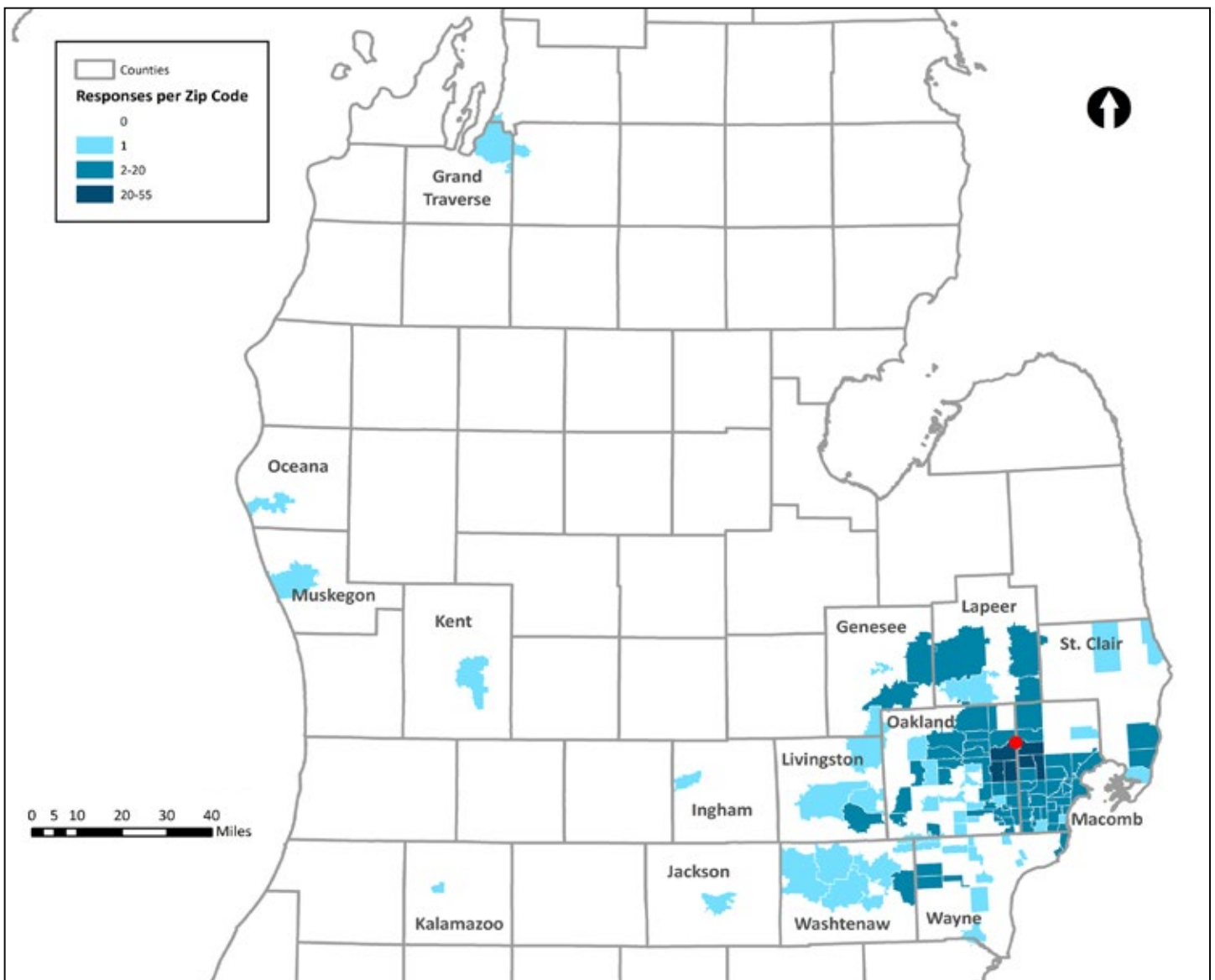
NEEDS

Incorporate variety of opinions and user groups into master plan

Create vibrant park through robust, transparent public outreach

OPPORTUNITIES

Survey Response Zip Code Map



Action Plan

Needs & Opportunities

Based on the assessment of park conditions, demographic research and spatial analysis, public input, and staff input, the needs and opportunities listed throughout this document were developed.

Needs

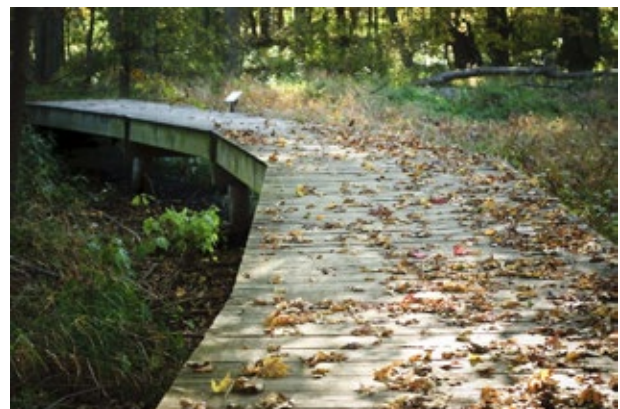
- Better highlight and advertise unique character of park
- Define and protect biodiversity features
- Address aging and overbuild infrastructure
- Work with county to address boundary issues
- Better revenue and visitation numbers
- Improve park connectivity with community
- Incorporate a variety of user community groups into Master plan



Opportunities

- Build a strong identity and user base with unique character of park
- Create resilient network of biodiverse areas in park
- Draw new visitors with programming and park history education
- Right-size park to better serve visitors and environment
- Provide unique recreational facilities to draw visitors from across the region
- Create good working relationship with neighbors, municipalities and partner organizations
- Use data to invest in activities and facilities, increasing users, and increased outreach
- Draw new users with an accessible, welcoming park

With these in mind, the following list of projects, plans, and studies was developed. Major and minor projects have been identified as priorities and assigned a timeline, and the accompanying studies have been listed. These pages should serve as a blueprint for the future of the park over the next ten years.



Large Facilities

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2017-2021)	Mid-Term (2022-2026)	Long-Term (10+ years)
Boat Launch area redevelopment	Engineering	Planning	Consultant - engineer		x		
Baypoint Beach & Boat Rental redevelopment; includes sewer line replacement (\$500,000 est.)	Engineering	Planning	Consultant - architect, engineer		x		
Eastwood Beach building/parking lot redevelopment	Engineering	Planning	Consultant - architect, engineer		x		
Golf course redevelopment	Engineering	Planning, NR	Consultant - landscape architect			x	
Park entrance & office redevelopment/relocation; includes Main Park Drive bridge deck replacement (\$200,000 est)	Engineering	Planning	Consultant - architect, engineer; Macomb County Dept. of Roads				x



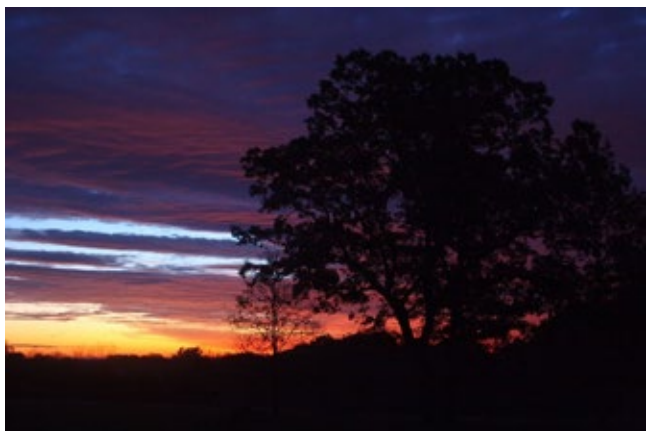
Infrastructure / Small Facilities

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2017-2021)	Mid-Term (2022-2026)	Long-Term (10+ years)
Road paving projects (list developed annually)	Engineering			various	x	x	x
Other pavement projects (list developed annually)	Engineering			various	x	x	x
Dam (2) mechanism/assembly redevelopment	Engineering		Consultant - engineer				x
Accessibility improvements, including interiors and walkways - parkwide	Engineering	Planning	Contractors	various	x	x	
Picnic shelter-comfort station co-location projects	Engineering	Planning					x
Shelden & Trolley trail systems redevelopment	Planning	Engineering, NR	CRAMBA-IMBA	TBD	x		
Buckhorn disc golf building replacement	Engineering	Planning		TBD		x	
Re-align paved trails to further separate road and recreational cyclists (multiple areas)	Engineering	Planning		TBD	x		



Natural Resources

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2017-2021)	Mid-Term (2022-2026)	Long-Term (10+ years)
Vegetation management projects (list developed annually)	NR	Operations		various	x	x	x
Aquatic vegetation management (list developed annually)	NR	Operations		various	x	x	x
Stony Creek soil erosion/ sedimentation improvements	NR	Engineering	Macomb County Dept. of Roads	\$ 15,000.00	x		
Inwood / Nature Area grasslands development	NR	Planning			x		
Sheldon Wetland Complex restoration	NR	Planning				x	
Inwood Wetland Complex restoration	NR	Planning					x
Inwood (west) mitigation wetland development	NR	Planning					x
Sheldon grassland restoration	NR	Planning			x		
Old group camp grassland restoration/development	NR	Planning				x	



Signage

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2017-2021)	Mid-Term (2022-2026)	Long-Term (10+ years)
Roadside wayfinding/directional signage updates - parkwide	Planning	Maintenance, Operations		\$ 15,000.00	x		
Trail signage updates - Inwood, Osprey, Nature, East Lake, Shelden, Trolley	Planning	Interpretive, NR	Foundation, Scouts	\$ 20,000.00	x		



Area Plans/Studies/Initiatives

After identifying the need for changes or improvements based on user feedback and staff research, in-depth evaluation and planning must be carried out to gain a detailed understanding of problems and opportunities and determine the best strategies based on existing conditions and resources. Sometimes a process to formally monitor facility usage and gauge popularity is necessary. These studies often result in a scope of work, a work plan, and in some cases a site plan that give staff a roadmap for planned changes. Recommended studies are listed below:

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2017-2021)	Mid-Term (2022-2026)	Long-Term (10+ years)
Monitor high ropes course impacts (natural resources, revenues, operations)	Planning	NR	GoApe	staff time	x	x	
Monitor demand (reservations, revenues) for campground improvements	Planning	Operations		staff time	x		
Park office vista turnoff assessment	Planning	Interpretive, Operations		staff time	x		
Shelden and Trolley trails use evaluation and plan	Planning	NR, Engineering	CRAMBA-IMBA	staff time	x		
Park office replacement/entrance reconfiguration plan	Planning	Engineering	Macomb County Dept. of Roads	staff time		x	
Golf course and starter building redevelopment plan	Planning	Engineering, NR, Golf Services	Consultant - golf course designer	TBD	x		
Baypoint Beach & Boat Rental redevelopment plan	Planning	Engineering		staff time	x		
Eastwood Beach redevelopment plan	Planning	Engineering		staff time	x		
Shelden Estate use/preservation plan	Planning	Operations		staff time	x		

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2017-2021)	Mid-Term (2022-2026)	Long-Term (10+ years)
Update trail maps to show opportunities for walking/hiking/trail running	Graphics	Planning			x		
Aquatic vegetation survey/ lake water quality surveys	NR	Operations	Consultant	\$ 6,000.00	x	x	x
Water Quality assessment - Stony Creek, West Branch Stony Creek, tributaries	NR		Consultant	\$ 5,000.00	x	x	x
Water Quality assessment/analysis— Inwood monitoring wells	NR	Engineering	Consultant	\$ 12,000.00	x		
Inwood Wetland Complex study	NR	Planning					
Fisheries assessment & habitat improvement (incl creel survey)	NR	Operations	MDNR	\$ 25,000.00	x		
Ecological systems/quality - habitat assessment & mapping - parkwide	NR	Interpretive			x		
Herpetological distribution & abundance assessment (incl Massauga)	NR	Interpretive	Consultant - herpetologist	\$ 8,000.00	x		
Vegetation surveys / mapping updates	NR	Interpretive			x		
Wildlife (Bird, Insects, etc) surveys and monitoring	NR	Interpretive	Audubon		x		





Key Projects

Boat Launch

2017-2021

Built in 1967, the boat launch is a heavily-used area of the park in need of improvements for safety, accessibility, and relevance. Patrons make use of the site not only to launch boats, but also as an access point to the hike-bike trail and a gathering place conveniently located near the park entrance. Renovations to the area hope to capitalize on these traits to create an accessible multi-use recreation hub.

Issues:

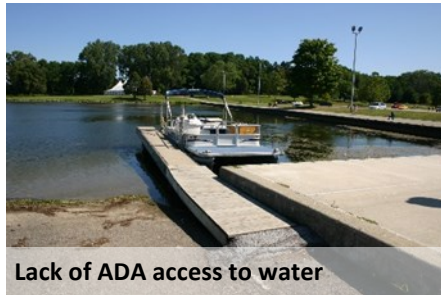
- Outdated building
- Lack of ADA access to water
- Safety concern with trail/parking lot crossing

Solutions:

- Construct new building with improved amenities
- Install accessible kayak launch
- Reconfigure parking lot and relocate trail to minimize conflict



Outdated building



Lack of ADA access to water

Eastwood Beach

2017-2021

Built in 1971, Eastwood Beach is a very popular area for active family recreation, but is in need of updates reflecting beach area use, building age, and ADA accessibility needs. The area includes a number of recreation facilities in a small space: the heavily used playground, the seasonal water slide, the beach itself, and volleyball courts. The lakeshore is also utilized for special events, such as outdoor film showings and fireworks. Configuring these activities to make the best use of available space will be important in the future, as well as ensuring that the facilities are accessible to all.

Issues:

- Outdated building
- Outdated beach configuration
- Lack of ADA accessibility

Solutions:

- Construct new building with improved amenities
- Reconfigure beach area
- Include ADA accessible pathways to facilities



Outdated building

Action Plan

Shelden + Trolley Trails

2017-2021

The Shelden trails run through the serene, historic western segment of the park and host several different user groups that sometimes conflict: mountain and fat tire bikers, hikers with and without pets, and cross country skiers. The Trolley Trails near the park entrance support these uses, offering a Skills Course with obstacles for mountain bikers and trails open to mountain and fat tire biking and hiking. All users of these trails would like to see dedicated trails expanded and protected from conflicted areas. In addition, the Shelden Trails are located in a designated biodiversity area, necessitating sensitivity when considering land use changes. The Clinton River Area Mountain Bike Association, a chapter of the International Mountain Bicycling Association (CRAMBA-IMBA) dedicates volunteer hours to maintaining these trails and will be consulted in the potential reorganization of trails open to mountain biking.

Issues:

- Desire for more single track than currently available
- Lack of connectivity between two sites
- Conflicts among user groups
- Inadequate signage

Solutions:

- Implement new trails organization including expanded single track
- Create link between the two sites
- Set aside more dedicated user trails and better educate public
- Install improved signage

Baypoint Beach & Boat Rental

2017-2021

Built in 1963 and 1970, respectively, the Baypoint Beach and Boat Rental areas have great potential due to their prime locations, but are in need of rethinking to reflect changing recreation trends and infrastructure management. Baypoint Beach has a different character from Eastwood, used more for casual leisure time and group events than family outings. As a result it is somewhat underutilized and has excess parking space. The Boat Rental, meanwhile, has been growing in popularity and is in need of more parking capacity. Going forward, reimagining Baypoint and connecting the two areas to better serve demand will be priorities.

Issues:

- Outdated buildings and restrooms
- Lack of picnicking areas
- Lack of connectivity between the two sites

Solutions:

- Construct new building with improved amenities
- Install accessible kayak launch
- Reconfigure parking lot and relocate trail to minimize conflict



Outdated building and restrooms

Action Plan

Golf Course

2022-2026

Built in the early 80s, the golf course is one of the most successful and well-loved of the Metroparks courses, but significant drainage and site design issues, along with the general decline of golf, will be challenges in the future. Michigan is overbuilt in terms of golf courses at a time when fewer and fewer new golfers are joining the sport. At the same time, the golf course provides an important source of revenue for the park, so investing strategically in infrastructure improvements will be key.

Issues:

- Outdated building and irrigation system
- Distance of starter building from main park
- Decline in golf participation

Solutions:

- Construct new building and irrigation system
- Relocate starter building
- Develop creative marketing strategies



Other Projects

• Walkway and interior accessibility improvements

Due to growing awareness that park facilities do not meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, increasing accessibility will be an ongoing focus. Buildings will be rebuilt and retrofitted to improve ease of access, and paved paths will be constructed to better connect parking with recreational activities.

• Realignment of paved trails to separate road and recreational cyclists

Use conflicts exist in the park among pedestrians, road and recreational cyclists, and drivers. At points where the hike-bike trail comes into contact with the road, separation measures will be taken. Signage and education will also be utilized to keep all patrons safe.

• Wetland and grassland restoration projects (Shelden, Inwood, former Group Camp)

Certain areas of the park have the potential to be high quality natural areas through the work of the parks Natural Resource Department. These projects will create resilient habitats to sustain the park and all its amenities into the future.

• Roadside wayfinding signage updates

Current road wayfinding can be inconsistent and confusing. A new signage strategy will focus on providing succinct information at important decision points. Symbols will also be incorporated into the design to promote universal comprehension.

• Trail signage updates

Trail signage is also confusing and worn in some spots. New trail signs will standardize wayfinding and provide more concise, engaging interpretation of the natural world.

• Annual projects: paving, vegetation management

Both natural resources and built infrastructure are regularly maintained by staff. Invasive species are consistently removed and treated, and when cracks and other wear appear on paved trails they are patched or repaved.

• Replacement of Buckhorn disc golf building

Disc golf is growing in popularity in the area, and to ensure a positive user experience the old building will be replaced with an updated structure, which may provide amenities such as snacks and disc golf items for purchase.







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