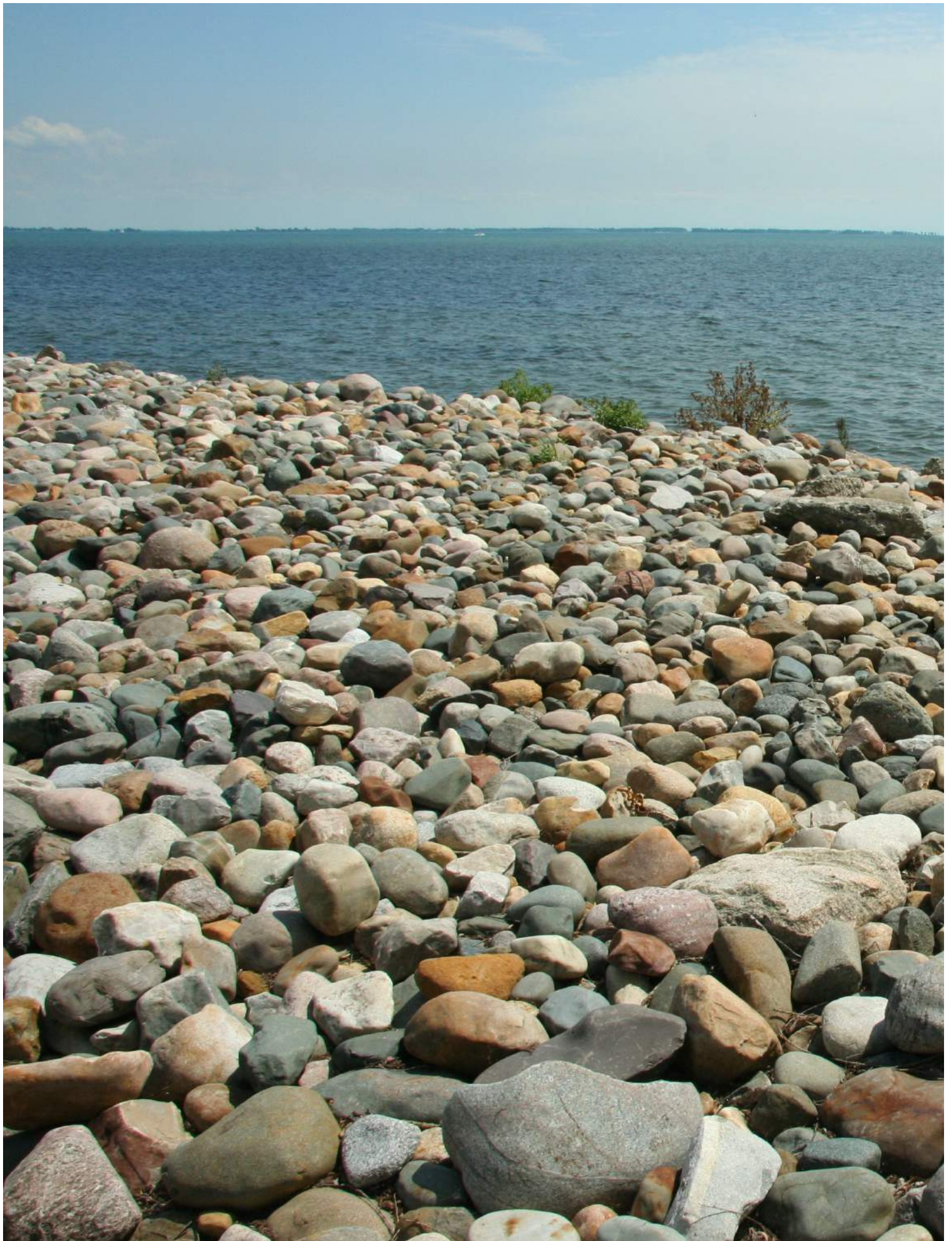




LAKE ST. CLAIR MASTER PLAN





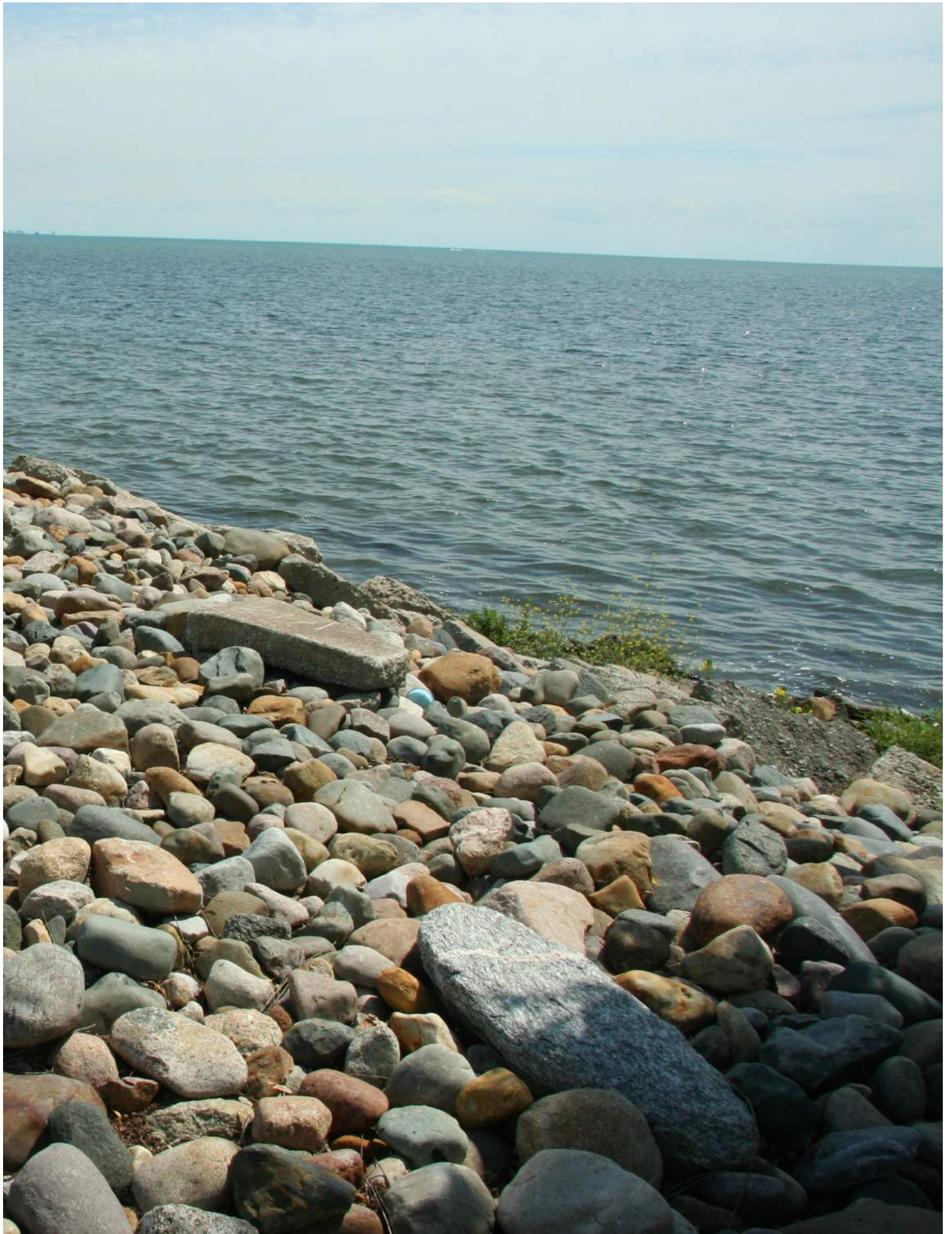
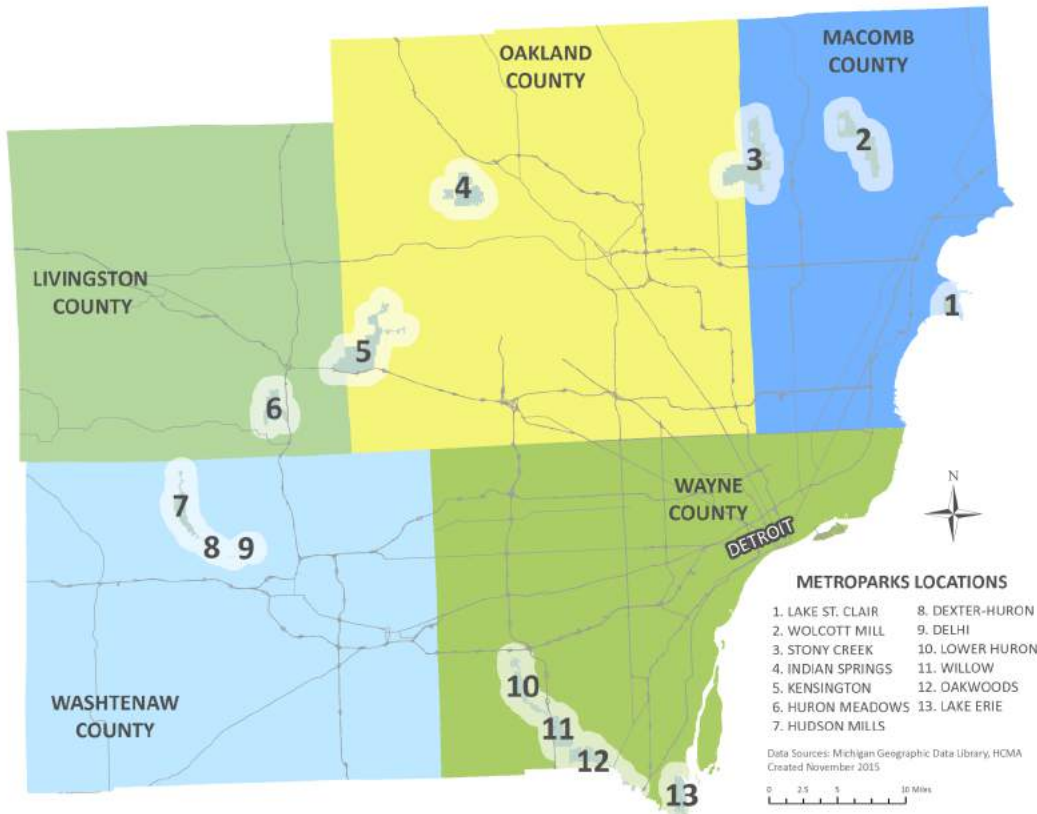


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INTRODUCTION

About the Metroparks

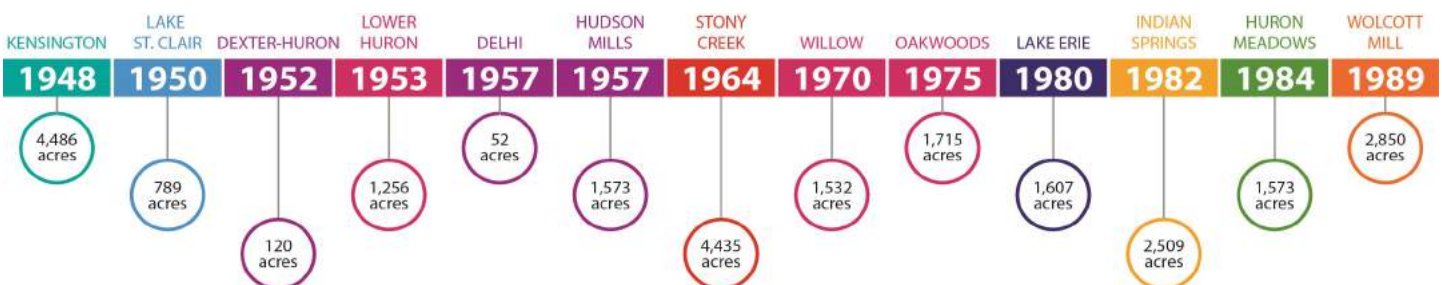


The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority was sanctioned by the Michigan State Legislature in Act No. 147 of the Public Acts of 1939. Named after the two longest rivers within its boundaries, the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority is a regional park agency consisting of 13 Metroparks encompassing approximately 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 .2141 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.

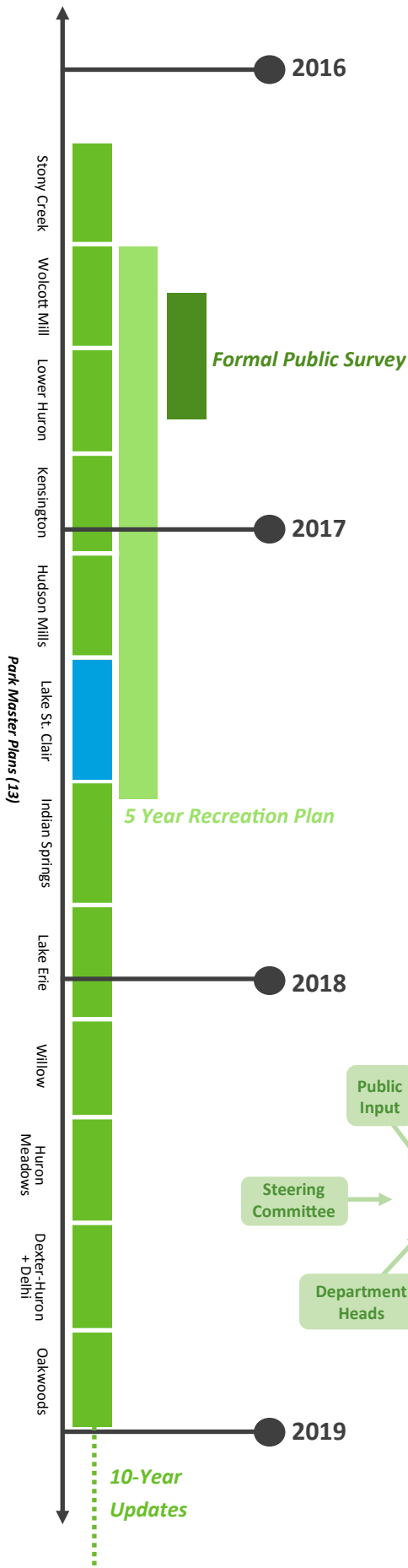
Operational Departments facilitate the day-to-day operations of the parks, making sure patrons have enjoyable and educational visits. They include Maintenance and Interpretive Services.

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



Introduction

Planning Process

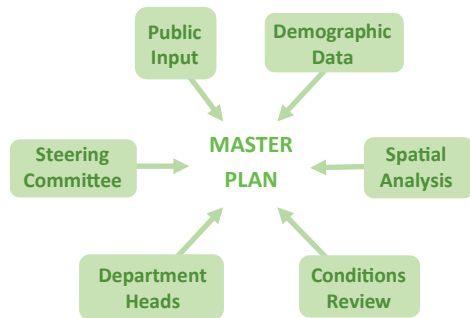


Several factors contribute to the recommendations that will be proposed for Lake St. Clair in the master plan. One of the most important is the public input collected through meetings, questionnaires, and online comments. This reveals the public's hopes and expectations for the park and significantly influences plan recommendations. A master plan steering committee was formed to include park employees with exceptional knowledge of Lake St. Clair 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 six 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 following ten years, and will be updated every decade through a formal planning process similar to the current one.



The Steering Committee for the Lake St. Clair Master Plan met on 3/9/2017



LAKE ST. CLAIR TODAY

Character



The following responses to our questionnaire highlight the many facets of Lake St. Clair that form a unique experience. Visitors appreciate the wide range of recreational activities available at the park, especially those related to the lake, wildlife, and trails. They see it as contributing to the surrounding community.

NEEDS

Continue to draw diverse range of visitors to the park

Build on park character to attract new visitors

OPPORTUNITIES

As a runner who **runs outdoors all year long** I really appreciate all the plowing and salting you guys do within the park and along freedom trail

Maintaining a place for birds to rest and feed during **migration season** is a critical role for Metroparks to play.

This park adds to the **quality of life** of this area.

I go to the park most weekends and enjoy **walking along the trails** and boardwalks.

We have enjoyed visiting the park for **47 years**, and it is one of our favorite places. We are so grateful for this wonderful place.

I mostly use the **boat launch and the walking trails**, with an occasional round of golf.



Location

Lake St. Clair Metropark is located in Macomb County, on a peninsula jutting into Lake St. Clair. All of the park is within Harrison Township. It is located just south of Selfridge Air Base and the mouth of the Clinton River. The northern portion of the park contains the Black Marsh, with flows through Black Creek into the lake.

At its northernmost extent, Lake St. Clair Metropark reaches South River Road, to the west it runs along Jefferson Avenue, its eastern boundary is the Black Creek, and to the south it extends to Lake St. Clair. The park is situated in the Clinton River East subwatershed which covers the final stretch of the Clinton River before discharging into Lake St. Clair.



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 Lake St. Clair.

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 the importance of preserving important cultural features

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

OPPORTUNITIES



Land surrounding what is now Lake St. Clair Metropark, 1929



Common Tern

Cultural History

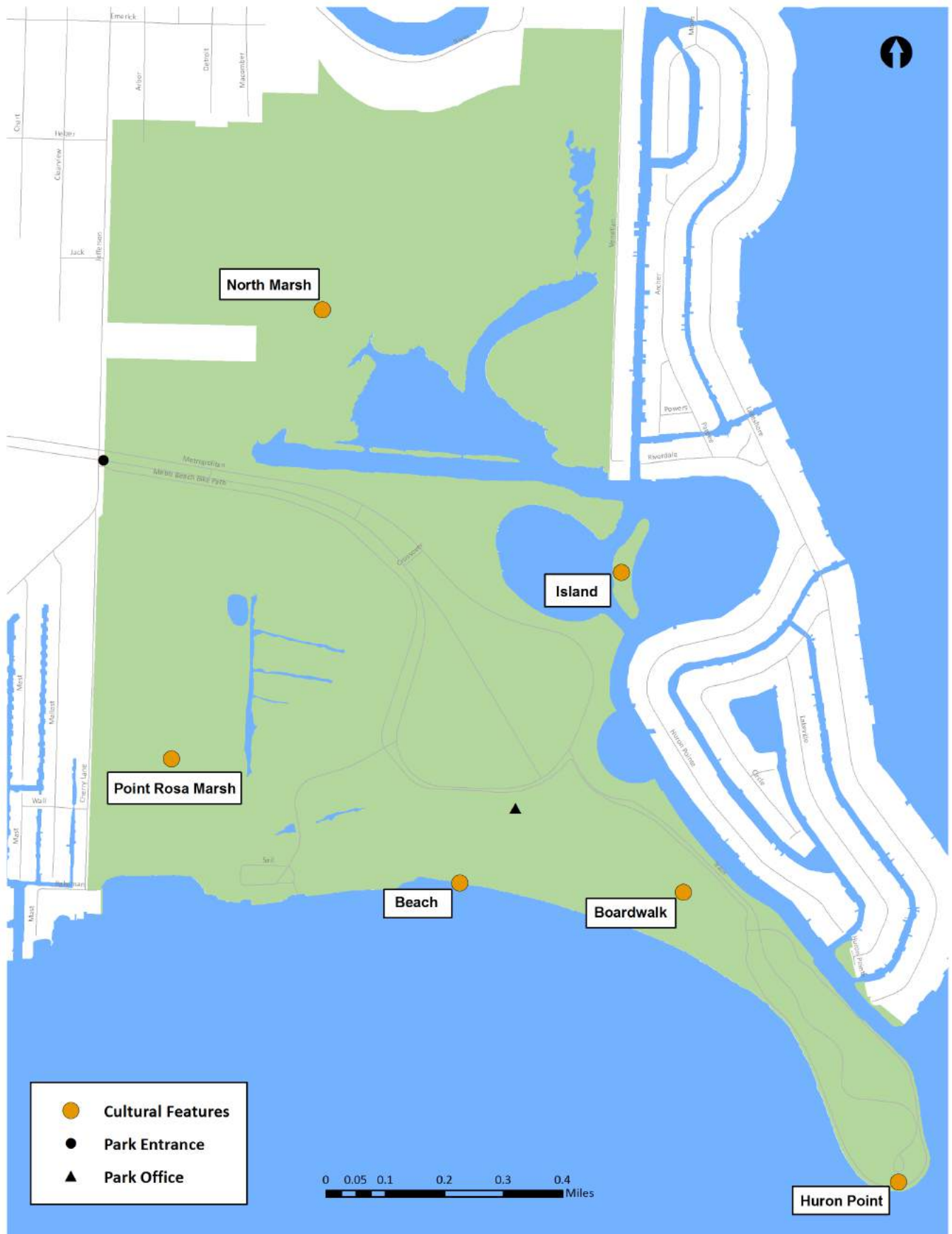
Voyageurs in the Marsh

The majority of Lake St. Clair Metropark property was a Great Lakes Coastal marsh. It was used by Native Americans and early settlers for fishing, hunting, and trapping. Because the soil was mostly wetland within the boundaries of the park, there were not permanent homesteads. The sandy ridge naturally created a beach that was an important resting place for travelers in canoes and for migrating birds. Various rare species of birds such as the now endangered Piping Plover and now threatened Common Terns nested on the point and the island.

Journals and records remain from Henry Schoolcraft and David Bates Douglas from a stop at Huron Point during their Voyageur Canoe expedition to the upper Great Lakes.



Reenactors of the Voyageur landing at Lake St. Clair Metropark



Infrastructure

In order to serve the varied needs of park visitors, Lake St. Clair 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 infrastructure necessary to maintain the activities available in Lake St. Clair includes roads, parking lots, piers, trails, pipes, utilities, picnic shelters, and much more. Since maintaining infrastructure is costly, it is important going forward to avoid overbuilding and collocate facilities to minimize paving, pipes, and other materials. Although Lake St. Clair Metropark is relatively isolated from other large recreation areas, a goal in the planning process is to ensure that the facilities and infrastructure in the park complement and do not duplicate those nearby.



NEEDS

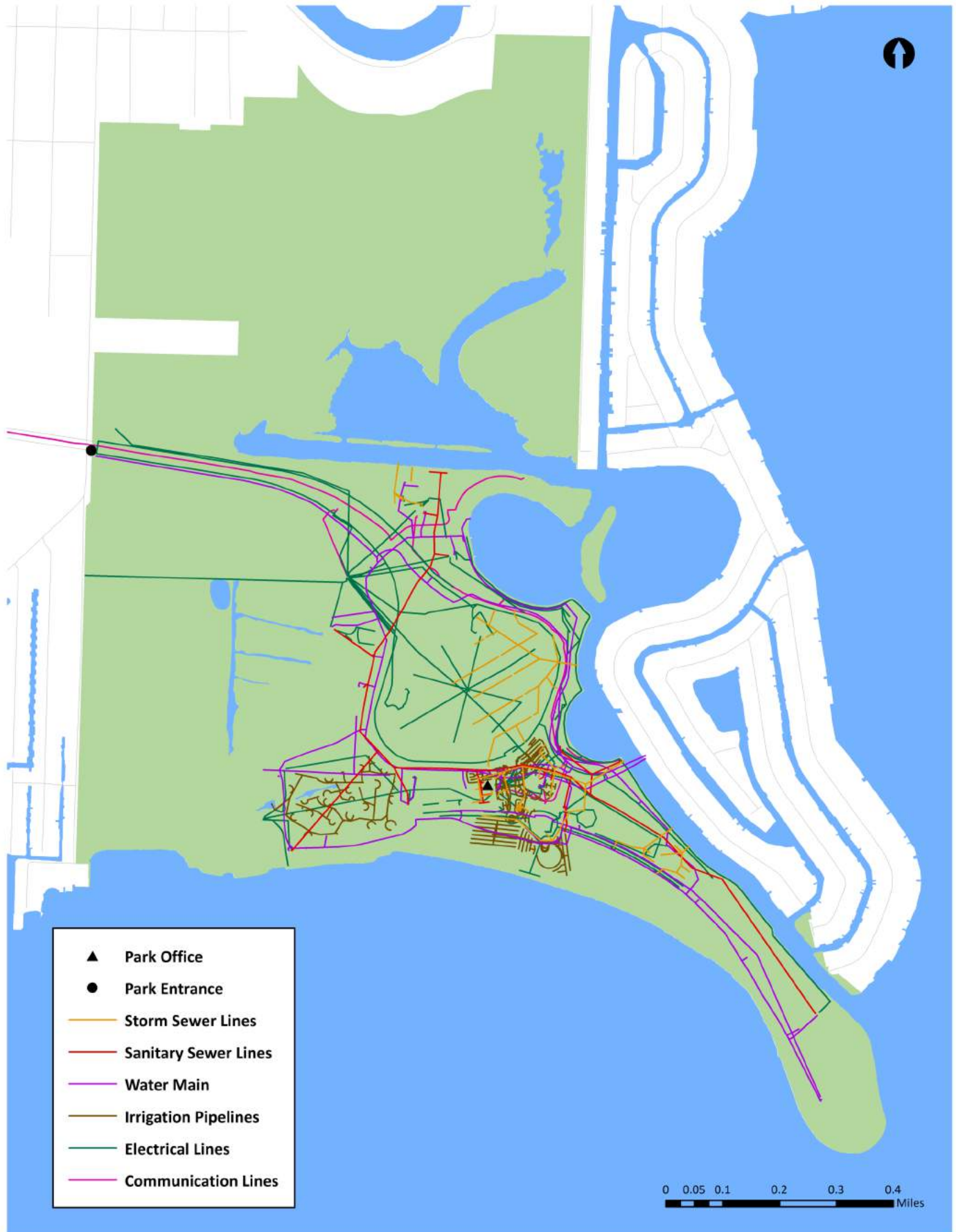
Address aging and overbuilt infrastructure

Redevelop park areas to better serve visitors and environment

OPPORTUNITIES

Lake St. Clair Infrastructure	
Public bldgs / avg age	8 / 43
Service bldgs / avg age	13 / 46
Comfort stations / avg age	6 / 35
Road miles	5.08
Parking lot acreage	36.54
Playgrounds	2
Percent of park mowed	20
Picnic shelters	12
Sand volleyball courts	10
Baseball fields	1
Fishing platforms	2
Tennis courts	4
Par-3 Golf Course	1
Ice skating rinks	2
Basketball courts	4
Public canoe/kayak launches	1







Facilities & Centers

Lake St. Clair features a number of facilities that define its character and enhance the recreational experience of visitors. 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.

Pool and Squirt Zone

Lake St. Clair Metropark offers a variety of water recreation opportunities, including a splash pad that is free and open to the public and an Olympic-size pool with a water slide and floating obstacle course.

Beach

The former namesake of this Metropark, the beach on the shores of Lake St. Clair has been drawing crowds for summer recreation and relaxation for decades. In recent years the water quality of the lake has been a concern.

Par-3 Golf Course

This course serves beginners, children, families, and experienced golfers practicing their short game. With gorgeous views of the shoreline and park amenities easily accessible, it is perfect for spending a morning outside.

Playground

The playground is an important facility for families visiting Lake St. Clair Metropark. The previous structure was dated and at the end of its useful life. Currently construction is underway to replace it with a modern play area, complete with adult fitness equipment.

Nature Center

The Nature Center includes interpretive exhibits that allow visitors to delve into the rich ecosystems of the marshes and lake. Trails extending from this building facilitate nature hikes and birdwatching.

Activity Center

The Thomas Welsh Activity Center hosts park events and is available to rent for meetings, parties, weddings, and other events. Its glass walls provide a beautiful view of the lakefront.



Lake St. Clair 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 Lake St. Clair. Relatively few of these facilities and programs are available in the five-mile radius around the park, with the exception of sports courts. This may present opportunities for Lake St. Clair to meet the recreational needs of the area in new ways moving forward.

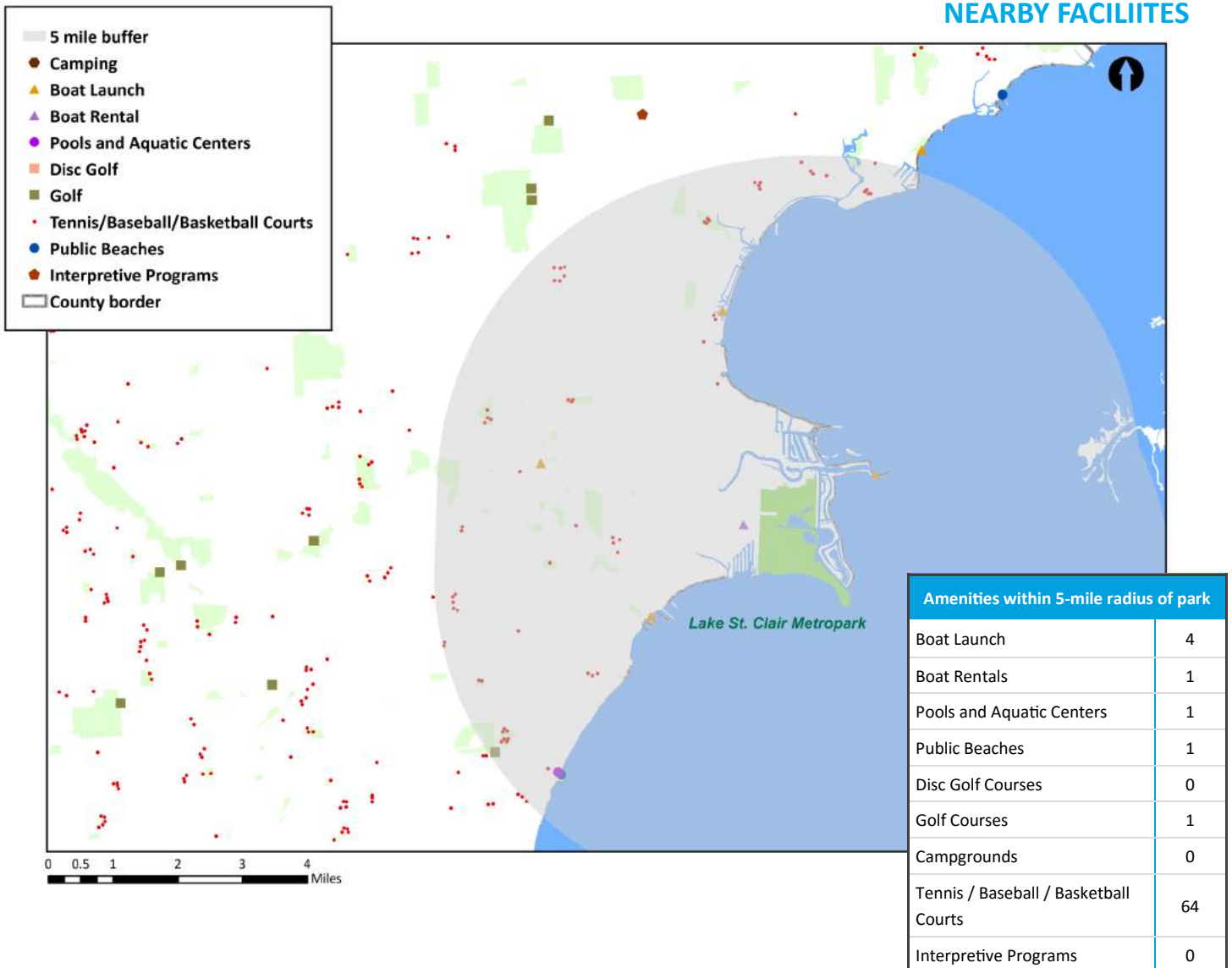
NEEDS

Identify areas of facility duplication for repurposing and consolidation

Provide unique recreational facilities to draw visitors from across the region

OPPORTUNITIES

NEARBY FACILITIES



NEEDS

Work with county and local communities to address any park boundary issues

Create good working relationship with neighbors and partner organizations

OPPORTUNITIES

Grants

Over its history Lake St. Clair 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 never be converted into a private or non-recreational use. All of Lake St. Clair is encumbered, as shown on the following page.

The generous grants from the DNR and other sources have allowed Lake St. Clair Metropark to develop the high-quality recreation it offers to the public today.



Encroachments

The Planning Department has worked with Lake St. Clair 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.

Since Lake St. Clair abuts several residential areas, it is important to work with neighbors to discourage illegal paths into the park and identify areas where a formal pedestrian entry point may be necessary to serve a neighborhood.

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

Lake St. Clair contains various 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.

Adjacent Property Uses

Property uses surrounding the park include residential and commercial. Much of the park is bordered by the lake or its waterways, which see frequent boat traffic from nearby neighborhoods.



Wayfinding

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 Lake St. Clair, 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

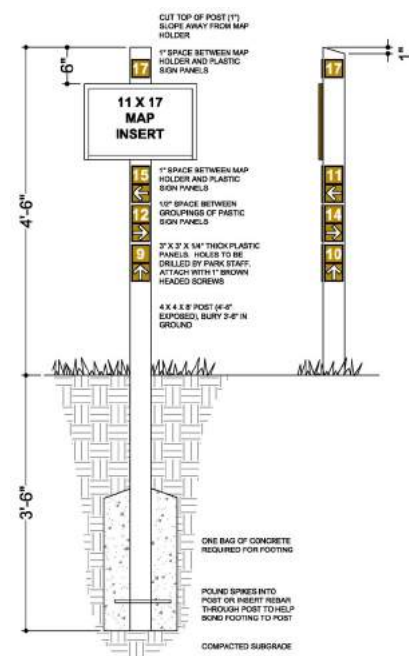
For many people, the easiest way to orient oneself in a new environment is through use of a map. For greater ease of use, all new trail wayfinding signs will include a map marked with a “you are here” symbols and the location of important park features and amenities.

NEEDS

Replace outdated, confusing, inconsistent signs

Create consistent, convenient wayfinding system to give visitors confidence

OPPORTUNITIES



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)	3.74	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	2.14	Pedestrian use only; hiking and walking. Snowshoeing is permitted on all Nature Trails except those designated for cross-country skiing. Cross-country skiing is permitted on designated 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.
Cross-Country Ski Trail	1.85	Cross-country skiing only. Many are used for other activities during the summer.	Motorized vehicles, snowshoes, hiking, bikes, horses and pets.	Snow covered.

Lake St. Clair includes a scenic shared use trail wrapping around the point, with views all the way to downtown Detroit. At the park entrance it connects to the Freedom Trail, which extends for ten miles along Metro Parkway. This also connects into the Clinton River Spillway Trail, providing an extended recreational opportunity for cyclists, runners, and walkers.



Accessibility

To remain compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Metroparks are responsible for ensuring that park space is accessible to all members of the public. In the development of this master plan, planning staff has taken an active role in locating the less accessible park amenities, so that all guest can enjoy the park. A survey of several areas has resulted in a list of accessibility issues present at Lake St. Clair Metropark. These areas are highlighted below and shown on the map on the following page.

NEEDS

Pursue improvements to park accessibility

Ensure that users of all abilities feel empowered to take full advantage of the park

OPPORTUNITIES

Area	ID #	Description
Boat Launch	1	Accessible walk needed to excursion boat pickup point. Suggest an accessible kayak launch.
Nature Center/ Nature Trails	2	Restrooms need to be updated for accessibility. One nature trail needs surface improvements.
Sand Volleyball/ Baseball field	3	Accessible walk needed to sand volleyball courts and the baseball field.
Daysail	4	Accessible parking spaces should be relocated.
Picnic Shelters	5	Creek View, Seawall, West Beach, and Boardwalk picnic shelters do not have accessible walks.
Huron Point Playground	6	Huron Point playground is not accessible.
Parking	7	Issues with ADA parking spaces at staff parking lot behind office.
Picnic Tables	Parkwide	Picnic tables need to be evaluated throughout park. No accessible grills are located in the park

By working with the ADA Checklist provided by the ADA National Network and the Institute for Human Centered Design, the Metroparks are able to prioritize accessibility improvements of park entrances, services, public restrooms, and other park amenities. The areas mentioned, in addition to others, were identified using the recommended methods for all HCMA parks.



REVENUE

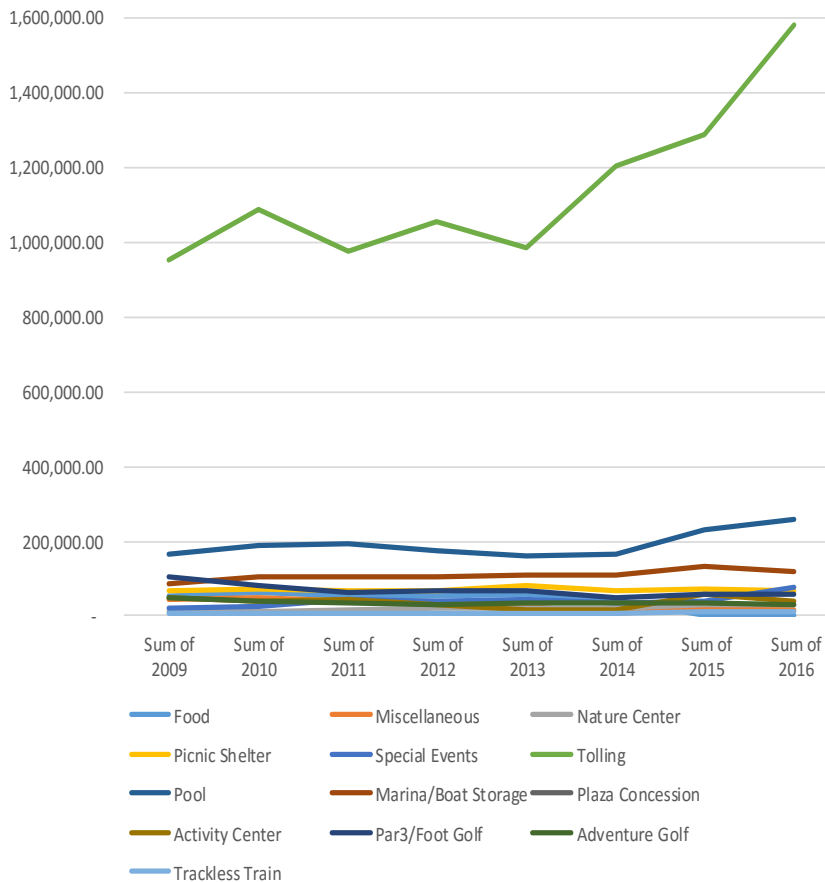
Revenue Sources

NEEDS

Diversify sources of revenue

Offer new and exciting activities/ programs to visitors to both boost tolling and gather user fees

OPPORTUNITIES



The Metroparks 2016 General Fund revenue equaled \$50,531,202. Lake St. Clair’s 2016 operations revenue was approximately \$2,293,271, comprising 4.5% of all Metroparks revenue.

Lake St. Clair’s budgeted 2017 operations revenues are \$2,468,150, while estimated 2017 operations expenses are \$4,324,484. Property tax and other revenue will subsidize 43% (\$1,856,334) of the Lake St. Clair operating budget.

As the chart illustrates, the vast majority of revenue (approximately 69%) comes from park entrance tolling.

2016 Operations Revenue

Revenue Source	2016 Total	% of Revenue	Revenue Source	2016 Total	% of Revenue
Tolling	1,581,099	68.9	Shuttle Bus	9,060	0.4
Par 3/Foot Golf	57,797	2.5	Marina/Boat Storage	119,236	5.2
Adventure Golf	29,308	1.3	Nature Center	28,612	1.2
Pool	257,469	11.2	Activity Center	41,072	1.8
Special Events	78,364	3.4	Plaza Concession	6,256	0.3
Picnic Shelter	67,080	2.9	Miscellaneous	17,918	0.8

TOTAL: 2,293,271

Revenue

Visitors

Lake St. Clair Metropark is a regional park and can draw from the approximately 3,412,193 Michigan residents 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 Lake St. Clair Metropark have hovered between 360,000 and 460,000 since 2009, fluctuating through the years but facing a slight decline overall. Weather often plays a role in attendance to the park; activity areas greatly affected by weather are the trails, beaches, marina, boat launch, nature center and golf course. This may explain the dips in attendance visible in 2011 and 2014.

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.



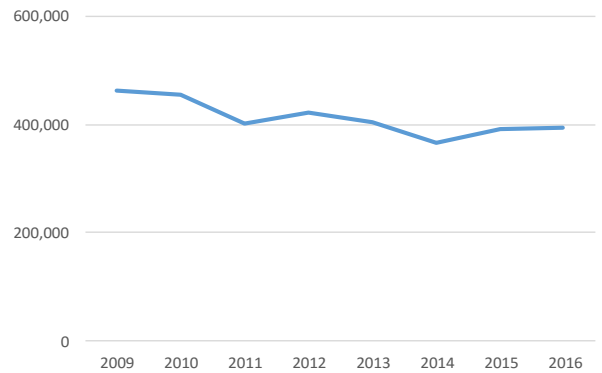
NEEDS

Target market strategy

Take advantage of proximity to urban population to grow revenue and system awareness

OPPORTUNITIES

VEHICLE ENTRIES YEAR 2009-2016



Lake St. Clair Metropark 30-Mile radius



Programs & Events



Dickens Christmas



Voyageur Canoe Program



Interpretive Hike

NEEDS

Increase revenue and visitation

Build on enthusiasm of Lake St. Clair visitors with exciting, engaging programs and events

OPPORTUNITIES

Lake St. Clair hosts dozens of events each year, organized either by park staff or outside groups. Many of these are interpretive programs for both children and adults to explore the natural and cultural assets of the park. Some promote artistic enrichment, and others encourage physical activity or advocate for a cause. The Nature Center hosts a full schedule of programs throughout the year achieved with countless hours donated by volunteers. Currently interpretive programs take place in and around the marshes and on the nature trails. A series of popular events that offer a unique experience include the free Sunday Concerts hosted at the Thomas Welsh Activity Center and the Summer Discovery Cruises.

Other Recent events include:

- Full Wolf Moon
- Family Nature Club: Winter Birds
- Owl Festival
- Evening Voyageur Canoe
- Morning in the Marsh Canoe
- Birds 'n' Brunch
- River Day: Explore the Wetland by Canoe
- River Day: Marsh Boardwalk Hike
- Family Nature Club: Seeing Snakes
- Science Olympiad: Arthropods
- Snow Painting
- Spring Break Hoots
- Earth Day Clean-up
- Migration Day– Welcome Back Birds!
- Nature Explorer's Camp

COMMUNITY INFLUENCES

Population

The population of the communities surrounding Lake St. Clair is aging rapidly and changing in mobility. The percentage of households without access to an automobile is rising in the region, Macomb County, and at a somewhat slower rate, Harrison Township. 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.

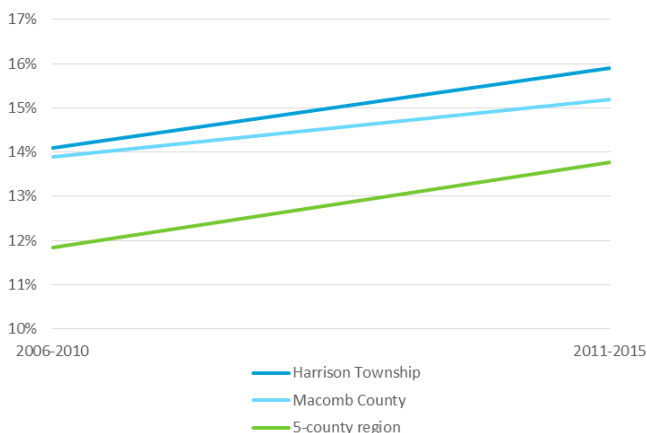
The percentage of individuals over 65 years of age is rising quickly in the region, Macomb County, and Harrison Township. The township is seeing this growth more dramatically than the county as a whole. Older adults have distinct needs, often requiring accommodations for mobility and accessibility of 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.

NEEDS

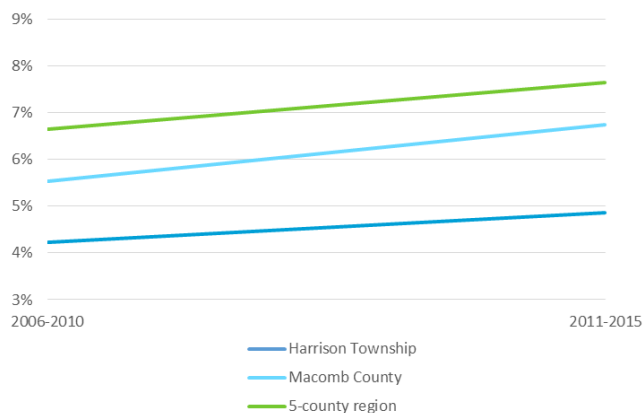
Address changing needs of new population demographics

Draw new users with a connected, accessible, welcoming and safe park environment

OPPORTUNITIES



CHANGE IN PERCENT OF POPULATION OVER 65 YEARS, FROM 2006-10 through 2011-15 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)



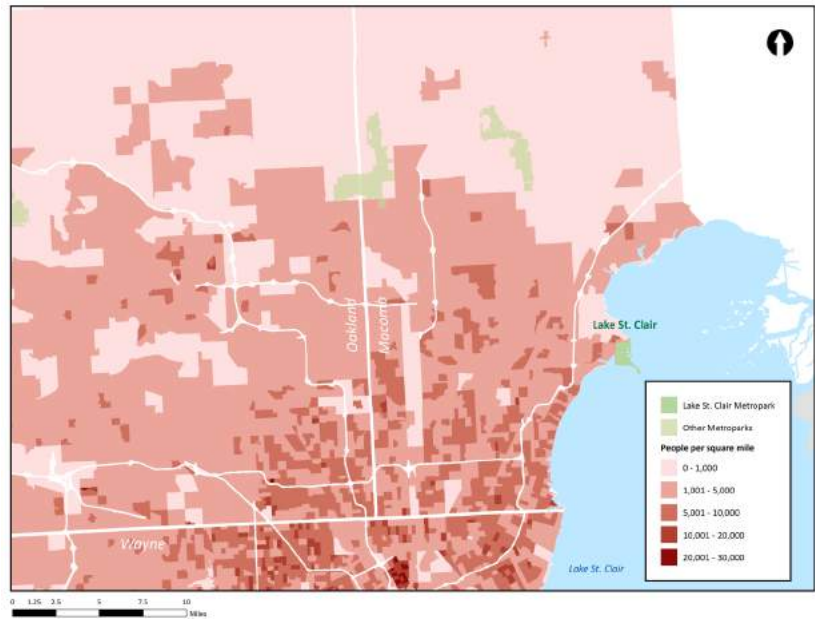
CHANGE IN PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO CARS AVAILABLE, 2006-10 through 2011-15 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)

Community Influences

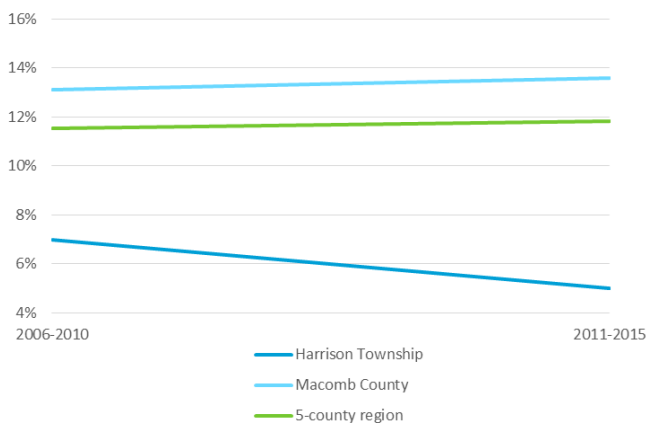
As shown below, Lake St. Clair is located in a denser area than many other Metroparks, at the end of the chain of higher population areas following I-94. The areas directly bordering the park have an average population between 1,001 and 5,000 people per square mile, and the population center of Mt. Clemens can be found just to the west. The swath of lower population density to the north of the park may be explained by the presence of Selfridge Air Base.

While on average the 5-county region is falling in population density, the population in Macomb County has risen slightly, creating increased demand for recreation in the area. The population of Harrison Township has been relatively constant from 2006-2010 to 2011-2015.

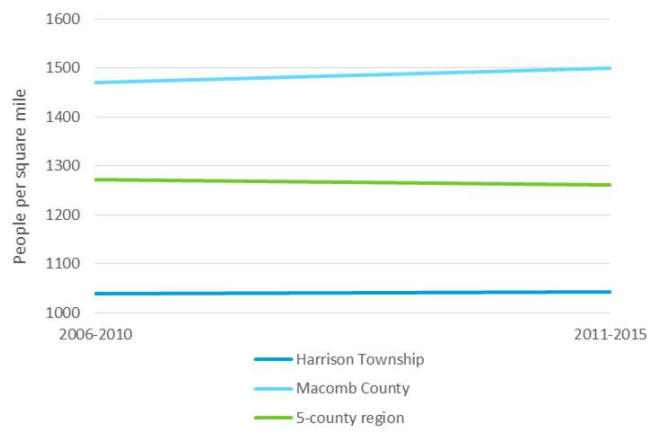
Although most households in the area still speak English as their first language, Macomb County and the region at large are seeing a slight increase in households speaking languages other than English at home. Because of this growing linguistic diversity the Metroparks are working towards more universal signage design, with a focus on easily understandable symbols. Harrison Township does not follow this trend, having decreased numbers of speakers of other languages.



POPULATION DENSITY BY CENSUS TRACT, 2010-14



CHANGE IN PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS SPEAKING LANGAGE BESIDES ENGLISH AT HOME, 2006-10 through 2011-15 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)



CHANGE IN AVERAGE POPULATION DENSITY, 2006-10 through 2011-15 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)

NEEDS

Improve connectivity within the park and with the community

Create good working relationship with surrounding municipalities

OPPORTUNITIES

Understanding the goals and plans of municipalities bordering and/or containing Lake St. Clair is essential for a collaborative, comprehensive planning process. Planning staff researched the published master plans and recreation plans of surrounding municipalities, counties, and regional agencies. These provided a basic idea of the direction planned for each, especially regarding land use, development, and recreation.

Harrison Township

- Reimagining as denser, more connected, more sustainable place to live.
- Flood risk leads to recommendations for rain gardens and pervious surfaces.
- Maximizing community access to lakefront and other recreation

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

Clinton River Watershed Council

- WaterTowns green infrastructure improvement suggestions

Projects/Initiatives



MUNICIPALITY MAP



Community Influences

Relevant Planning Documents

Macomb County Trailways Master Plan, 2004

Charter Township of Harrison Master Plan, 2010

Macomb County Blue Economy Strategic Development Plan, 2012

Macomb County Parks and Rec Master Plan, 2014

SEMCOG Green Infrastructure Vision, 2014

“HCMA is also responsible for coordinating the implementation of a regional hike-bike path through central Macomb County. The main purpose of this system is to provide a non-motorized pedestrian and bicycle path connection between existing and planned major recreation facilities in this portion of the County. It will accomplish this by developing new paths that will connect with those that currently exist in the area.” pg. 1.12

“By 1950, Macomb County had its cornerstone facility in Lake St. Clair Metropark.... As the region began to see the successes of HCMA, Macomb County positioned itself to facilitate additional investments in parks and recreation.” pg. 4

“Public accessibility to the green infrastructure network is paramount, including access to parks, trails, water, and ensuring public spaces are designed for all residents.” pg. 1

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 Lake St. Clair a wider context and in many cases underscore the importance of the park’s resources to citizens.

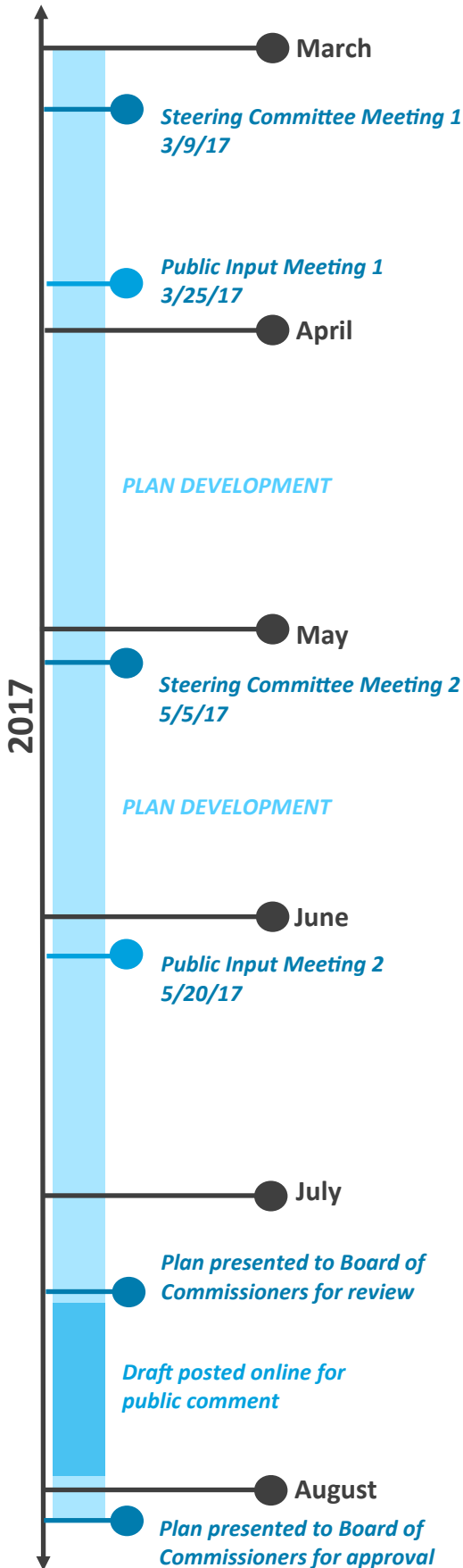
Macomb County does not have a Parks and Recreation Commission and maintains only a few county parks. Therefore, Lake St. Clair may play a larger role than other Metroparks in meeting everyday, neighborhood-level recreation needs.

Lake St. Clair 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. Due to this, recreation and green infrastructure plans were also considered in creating the Lake St. Clair Master Plan. Many communities are currently advancing their non-motorized 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. A general park feedback survey was posted online and advertised by Metroparks social media.

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 - 3/25/17

- 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 - 5/20/17

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

Results

A genuine appreciation for the long history and connection to the local community with this park was a common theme gathered throughout all public participation efforts. However, respondents also acknowledged a willingness to repurpose underutilized facilities and areas of the park with protection of natural resources at the forefront for any changes proposed.

Overall, the most frequent comments indicated a favorable response to both expansion of the hike-bike trail along with continued accessibility improvements and amenities to the existing nature trails. In the pom-pom investment activity, wildlife and the environment led all categories followed by the nature center and trails. The swimming pool and spray pad, fishing, picnicking, and golf/mini golf were all tied in receiving the fewest votes.

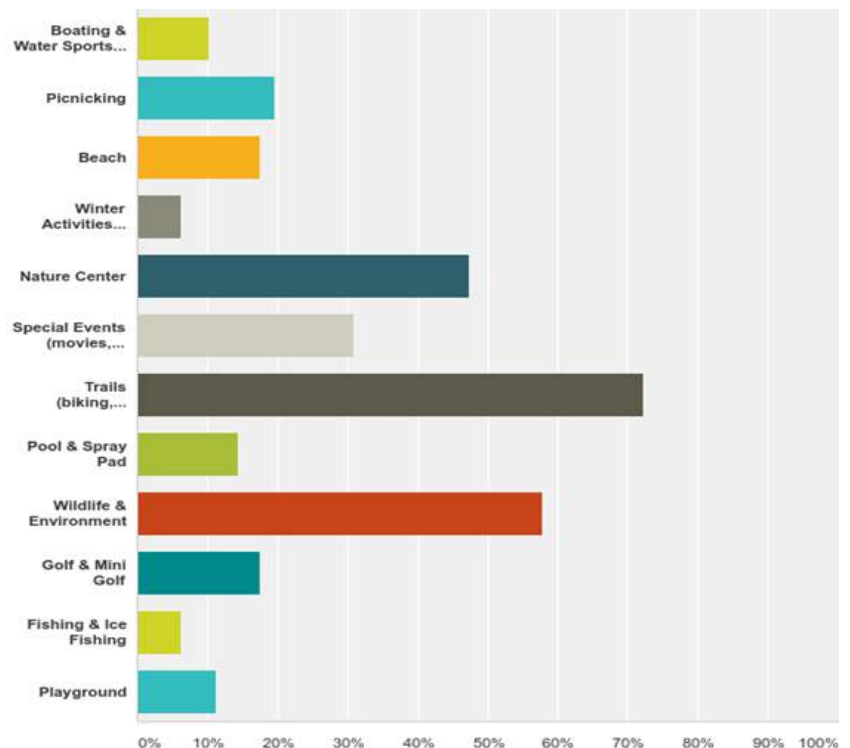
In addition, open suggestions often discussed the waterfront and boardwalk. Comments on the waterfront were related to the water quality issues causing beach closures, continued shoreline restoration improvements for shorebirds and fish habitat, along with continued management of the ongoing challenges of organic build up on the beaches. The majority of participants at both public input meetings agreed with improvements to the landmark boardwalk in need of repairs.

At the second public meeting, planning staff presented the action plan items for participant input. Participants at this meeting commented in favor of the key projects including the repurposing of the par 3 golf course and the pool/bath house improvements. Additional suggestions included a study of the park entry/fee structure and more year round activities for all ages.

Planning Department staff also spent two days performing intercept surveys in the field at the park. Park visitors were asked to participate in the questionnaire at strategic activity areas including the nature center, marina, daysail, and plaza. Respondents offered suggestions for the cleanliness of the beach and water sports launch areas, more programming and events at the marina, and better connectivity and marketing of the nature center.



Q6: What is your favorite part of the park or activity within Lake St. Clair Metropark? (Choose up to 3.)



Public Input

Questionnaire Response Topics

Trails

- Improve nature trails
- Add more boardwalk
- Add fitness trail
- Add connector to daysail area

Environment

- Protection of wildlife habitat
- Add naturalized areas
- Native restoration plantings
- Improve lake water quality
- Tree preservation
- Reduce surface parking lots
- Continue invasive species management
- Environmental regulatory compliance
- Beach cleanliness

Maintenance

- Maintain beaches and waterfront
- Repair and replace picnic tables

Programming

- Add more outside concerts
- Advertise on social media
- Support for park volunteers
- Interpretive programs targeting teenagers and young adults
- Schedule more year round events
- More programs/events for all ages
- Add more summer discovery cruises

Facilities

- Consideration for dog park
- Improve nature center
- Repair/upgrade pool
- Bathrooms closer to activity areas
- Keep shuffleboard
- Improve parking lot
- Consider skate park
- Consider disc golf course

Safety/Signage

- Improve enforcement of rules
- Promote trail etiquette
- Additional rule signs
- Overall park information

Access

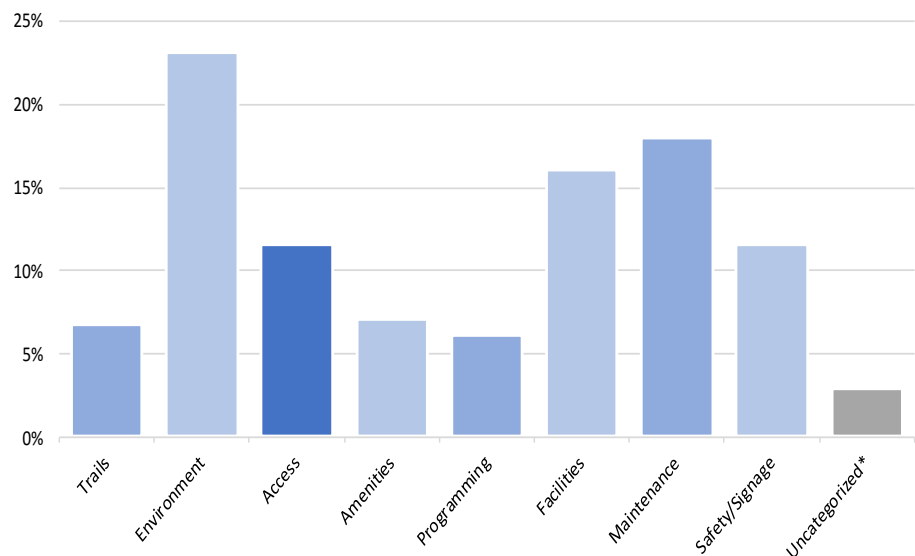
- Reduce costs
- Extend access into water
- Provide more birding areas
- Annual pass entry lane
- Extend park hours
- Public launch for paddlers
- Add bike lanes on roads
- Limit construction in summer
- Discounted park rates
- Expand transit service

Amenities

- Better concession menu
- Dog amenities
- Explore camping experience
- Water bottle filling stations
- Quality restrooms
- Add benches
- Add observation platform
- Implement trail markers
- Incentives to rent shelters
- More shade at pool
- Larger size and lights for sled hill

This chart shows the distribution of questionnaire response topics, as categorized by planning staff. Some responses fell into more than one category, so they add up to more than 100%.

*Uncategorized responses lacked specific suggestions or consisted of only positive remarks.



Planning staff received several written communications via email in response to the draft master plan document posted on the Metroparks website in late July. Support was expressed for the turtle nesting project, general habitat improvements, trail expansion, and improving the daysail area. Representatives from Selfridge Air National Guard Base also expressed concern that some of the proposed projects may attract additional avian wildlife within the 10,000-foot area surrounding the air field.

Participation



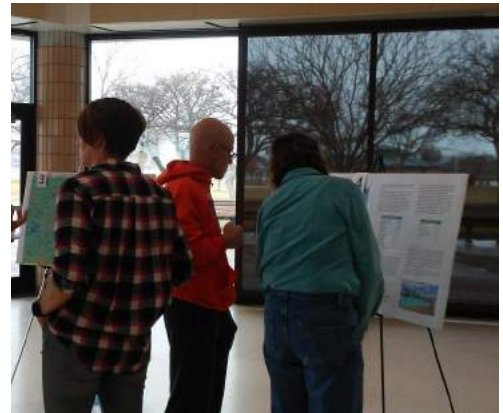
The Lake St. Clair Master Plan online and hard copy questionnaire received 478 responses and 23 individuals attended the two public meetings. As shown below, the questionnaire drew responses from twelve counties in Michigan, as well as a handful from other states and Canada.

NEEDS

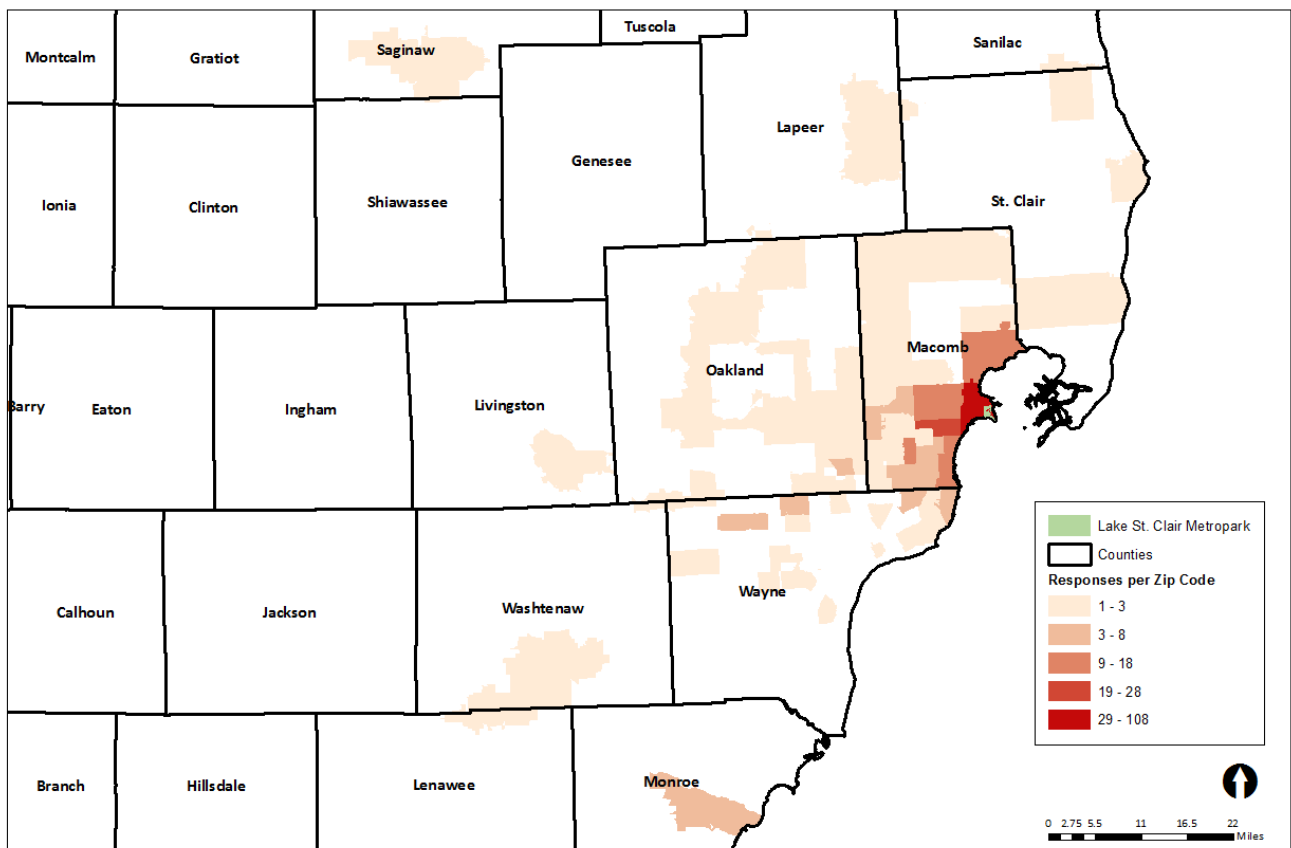
Incorporate variety of opinions and user groups into master plan

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

- Continue to draw diverse range of visitors to the park
- Define and protect areas with important biodiversity features
- Better educate the importance of preserving important cultural features
- Address aging and overbuilt infrastructure
- Identify areas of facility duplication for repurposing and consolidation
- Work with county and local communities to address any park boundary issues
- Replace outdated, confusing, inconsistent signs
- Pursue improvements to park accessibility
- Diversify sources of revenue
- Target market strategy
- Increase revenue and visitation
- Address changing needs of new population demographics
- Improve connectivity within the park and with the community
- Incorporate variety of opinions and user groups into master plan



Opportunities

- Build on park character to attract new visitors
- Create a resilient network of biodiverse areas in the park
- Draw new visitors with programming/education based on history of park
- Redevelop park areas to better serve visitors and environment
- Provide unique recreational facilities to draw visitors from across the region
- Create good working relationship with neighbors and partner organizations
- Create consistent, convenient wayfinding system to give visitors confidence
- Ensure that users of all abilities feel empowered to take full advantage of the park
- Offer new and exciting activities/programs to visitors of the park to both boost tolling and gather user fees
- Take advantage of proximity to urban population to grow revenue and system awareness
- Build on enthusiasm of Lake St. Clair visitors with exciting, engaging programs and events
- Draw new users with a connected, accessible, welcoming and safe park environment
- Create good working relationship with surrounding municipalities
- Create vibrant park through robust, transparent public outreach



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)
Complete parking lot redevelopment	Engineering	Planning, Operations, NR	Contractors	\$5,000,000	x		
Implement Park Office/Food Bar redevelopment	Engineering	Planning, Operations	Contractors	\$3,000,000		x	
Implement Nature Center renovation strategy	Engineering	Interpretive, Maintenance	Contractors	\$500,000	x		
Implement Pool/Bathhouse improvement plan	Engineering	Planning, Interpretive	Contractors	\$1,000,000		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)
Pavement projects (list developed annually, as needed)	Engineering	Planning, Operations	Contractors	various	x	x	x
Accessibility improvements, including interiors and walkways - parkwide	Engineering	Planning, Operations	Contractors	various	x	x	
Sealcoat and re-stripe parking lot - old section (prior to completion of redevelopment)	Engineering	Engineering, Operations	Contractors	\$60,000	x		
Resurface basketball court on the Point	Engineering	Operations, Maintenance	Contractors	\$12,000	x		
Develop hike-bike trail connectors from Daysail to the playground (Tot Lot) and to the Playfield area (~2,800 lf)	Engineering	Planning, Operations	Contractors	\$150,000		x	
Implement Maintenance Area redevelopment plan	Engineering	Planning, Maintenance, Operations, NR	Contractors	TBD	x		
Implement West Playfield redevelopment plan	Engineering	Planning, Operations	Contractors	\$80,000	x		
Implement Par-3 Golf Course facility strategy	Engineering	Planning, Operations, NR		TBD		x	
Implement Adventure Golf facility strategy	Engineering	Planning, Operations		TBD		x	
Install comfort station at former roller rink site	Engineering	Planning, Operations	Contractors	\$350,000		x	
Implement North Marina building replacement plan	Engineering	Planning, Operations	Contractors	TBD	x		
Boardwalk repairs (East/West)	Engineering	Operations, Maintenance	Contractors	\$430,000	x		
Rebuild Nature Trail bridges(2)	Engineering	Planning, NR	Contractors	\$160,000	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 (annual)	NR	Operations		\$30,000	x	x	x
Hazardous waste removal (annual)	NR	Operations		\$2,000	x	x	x
Early detection, rapid response. Invasive species surveys and control in high quality natural areas (annual)	NR	Interpretive	NGOs	\$12,000	x	x	x
Conduct prescribed fire in adapted native communities	NR		Contractors	\$4,000	x	x	x
Nuisance animal control	NR		NGOs	\$3,000	x	x	x
North Marsh prairie restoration	NR	Planning		\$30,000	x		
Turtle nesting habitat	NR			\$5,000	x		
Nesting platforms for marsh birds	NR		MDNR/USFWS	\$10,000	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	x		
Trail wayfinding signage and trailhead improvements— nature trails, hike-bike trail	Planning	Maintenance, Interpretive, Operations		\$5,000	x		
Interpretive signage improvements— nature trails, parking lot stormwater features, marsh	Interpretive	Planning, Operations, Maintenance		\$5,000	x		



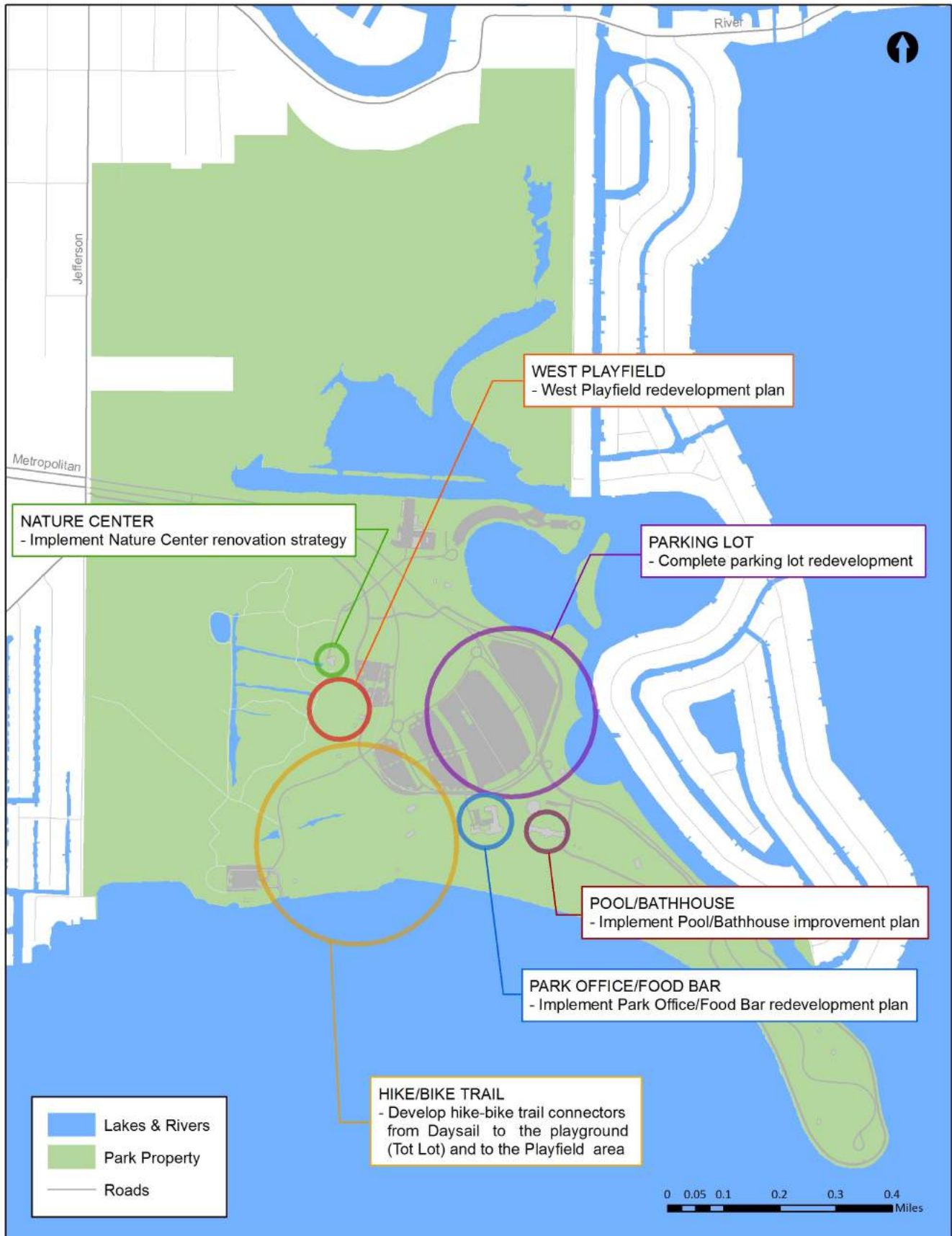
Area Plans/Studies/Initiatives

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)
Pool/Bathhouse improvement plan: replace piping/mechanical elements, renovate bathhouse, replace slides	Engineering, Planning	Operations, Maintenance		staff time	x		
Park Office/Food Bar redevelopment plan: possible relocation of one or both functions to new facilities	Planning, Engineering	Operations		staff time	x		
Adventure Golf facility strategy: determine future use of the area	Planning	Engineering, Operations		staff time	x		
Par-3 Golf Course facility strategy: determine future use of the area	Planning	Engineering, Operations		staff time	x		
Maintenance Area redevelopment plan: replace buildings, organize site, address stormwater issues	Planning, Engineering	Maintenance, NR, Operations		staff time	x		
Nature Center renovation strategy: replace exhibits, building improvements, site improvements	Interpretive	Engineering, Planning		staff time	x		
North Marina building replacement plan	Planning, Engineering	Operations	Consultant	TBD	x		

Area Plans/Studies/Initiatives (cont'd)

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2017-2021)	Mid-Term (2022-2026)	Long-Term (10+ years)
Redevelopment plan for North and Shore marinas: determine future use of area, address seawall	Planning, Engineering	Operations, Maintenance	Consultant	TBD		x	
Develop storage solution and annual removal strategy for lake weeds	NR	Maintenance, Engineering, Planning	Contractors	staff time	x	x	x
Sustainability initiatives	NR	Operations, Planning, Engineering		TBD	x	x	x
Establish invasive species control tracking website	NR	Web, IT	MNFI, MISIN	staff time	x		
Stormwater monitoring	NR			\$5,000	x	x	x
Herpetological surveys	NR		NGOs	\$15,000	x	x	x
European Frog Bit control research	NR		Local universities	\$20,000	x		
West Playfield redevelopment plan: ice rink lighting, compressor, comfort station, warming area	Planning	Engineering, Operations		staff time	x		
North marsh access study	Planning	NR, Engineering		staff time	x		
Water quality study	NR	Planning, Engineering		staff time	x		
Shoreline erosion study	NR	Planning, Engineering		staff time	x		
Beach and shoreline debris management strategy	Planning	NR		staff time	x		



Key Projects

Nature Center Renovation Strategy

2017-2021

The Nature Center dates back to the 1980s, and was built to provide a nature interpretive center. It has facilitated the discovery and education about nature with seasonal exhibits, waterfowl displays, a kid's corner and more. The center will undergo modernization and improvements for accessibility. Parking and connectivity to the building and trails will also be evaluated and improved.

Needs:

- Vehicular/pedestrian wayfinding
- Accessibility
- Modernization

Solutions:

- Redevelop parking and update wayfinding signage
- Update bathrooms to meet accessibility standards
- Carry out building improvements to facility and update exhibits



West Playfield Redevelopment Plan

2017-2021

The West Playfield area will be redeveloped to update the facilities that have concentrated on winter activities that include ice hockey, ice skating, and a sledding hill. The area will be evaluated as a redevelopment plan that will include improvements to the ice rink, sledding hill, restrooms, and a warming area. The hope is to refine the focus of the area and enhance the user experience.

Needs:

- Enhance user experiences
- Update accessory structures to recreational facilities

Solutions:

- Improve lighting for sledding hill
- Improve ice rinks
- Improve restroom
- Warming house for year round use



Action Plan

Complete Parking Lot Redevelopment

2017-2021

The 42 acre parking lot built in 1950 has completed the initial elements of a multi phased parking lot redevelopment project. Highlights completed involve green infrastructure and hydrologic improvements redirecting treated storm water to the coastal marshlands. Future phases will involve completion of native trees, green infrastructure, along with vehicular and pedestrian circulation improvements.

Needs:

- Improved traffic and pedestrian circulation
- Maintenance and repair
- Continued Lake St. Clair water quality protection

Solutions:

- Parking lot layout reconfiguration
- Bio-swales
- Additional parking lot tree plantings and green space



Pool/Bathhouse Improvement Plan

2017-2021

The high demand usage of the pool facilities along with antiquated equipment over time require maintenance and repairs. In addition, improvements to the pool facilities include consideration for offering exciting new features and experiences for the users. Based on the assessment of park conditions from staff and public input, the improvement plan will include replacement of piping/mechanical elements, renovation of the bathhouse, and replacement of the slides.

Needs:

- Update facilities
- Aging pool infrastructure

Solutions:

- Building improvements
- Pool improvements
- Shade structures



Action Plan

Park Office & Food Bar Redevelopment Plan

2017-2021

The Park Office and Food Bar were built in the 1950s when the park opened and is insufficient for the current needs of staff and the park users, respectively. The park office requires various updates to the facility for operations. Based on results of the public input meetings and questionnaire, revamping the food bar would be a key component in providing a more attractive and updated building and providing a better user experience. Both facilities would be considered for relocating within the park following further site evaluation involving purpose and needs.

Needs:

- Update facilities
- Commercial revenue generator

Solutions:

- Possible relocation of one or both functions to a new facility/locations



Hike-Bike Trail Connector

2022-2026

The connectivity throughout the park with accessible non motorized facilities is needed for enhancement of the user experience and a more extensive loop system. The development of a new hike-bike trail is planned for connecting the daysail area to the playground and west playfield area.

Needs:

- Connectivity through out park
- Enhance user experience
- Larger trail loop

Solutions:

- Implement a hike-bike trail (shared use path facility) for multi users and abilities
- Pathway connecting daysail area to the playground and west playfield



Other Projects

- **Nature trail bridges**

The 2.41 miles of nature trails have recently been improved with the replacement of wood chips with a gravel surface. Continuing on these improvements, a rebuild of two bridges along the nature trail will be performed to provide updated trail facilities and accessibility for trail users.

- **North marsh prairie restoration**

The continued efforts involving phragmites treatments along with future challenges of other invasive species will be needed to promote native species restoration.

- **European frog bit control research**

The Natural Resources Department's near-term project focus will be to finding a solution to the increasing European frog bit problem in the coming years. The expansion may be a possible side effect due to the phragmites control.

- **North Marina**

The North Marina will undergo modernization and improvements for accessibility. Both the building and the site will be evaluated and improved.

- **Water quality study**

Elevated Ecoli levels continue to impair water quality and negatively impact park users with beach closures. Water quality studies with partners in the community will continue when funding opportunities are available.

- **Shoreline erosion study**

Generally a reflection of natural processes, shoreline restoration involving low-impact management techniques to reduce the rate of erosion will be the focus studies in protecting the shoreline.

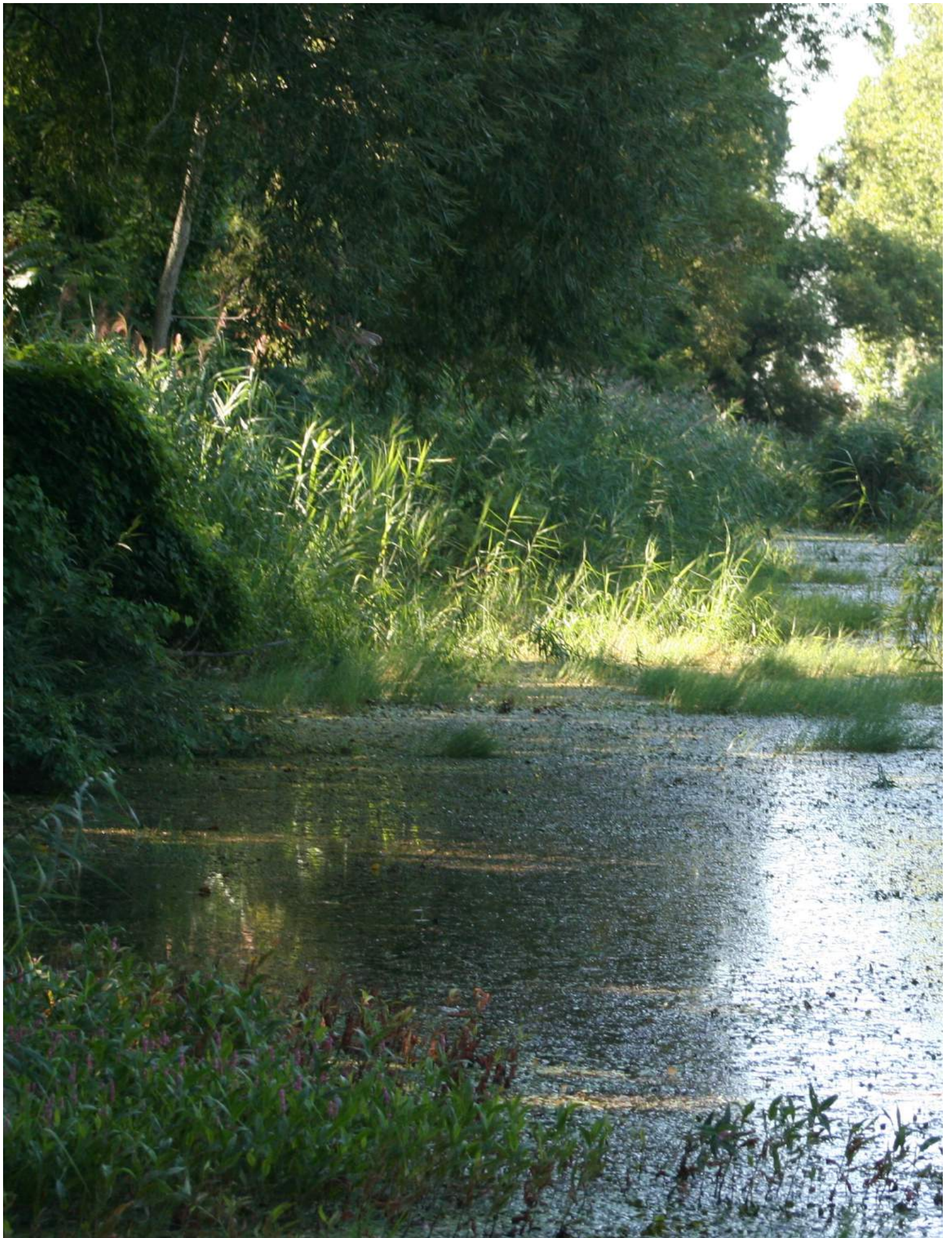
- **Vegetation management**

The park will continue to manage vegetation (both woody and non-woody) following park guidelines to assist in the maintenance or increase of native vegetation diversity while controlling invasive species. The park staff will continue to work with volunteer groups including the Lake St. Clair Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) in these efforts.

- **Beach and shoreline debris management strategy**

- **Par 3 golf course facility strategy**

- **Adventure Golf facility strategy**







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