

A photograph of a sailboat with a pink and purple sail on a body of water. The sail has the text "Day Sailer" and "19162180" on it. The boat is white and has a person on board. The background shows a line of trees with autumn foliage. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the image, containing the section header.

7 | GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

8 | GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives listed in this plan stem from the Metroparks mission statement, vision statement, and core values, and build upon the goals defined in the 2013-2017 Recreation Plan. The following factors highlighted previously in this plan contributed to formulation of the updated goals and objectives:

- **Infrastructure age and condition**—aging infrastructure has been managed on an inconsistent basis for years, requires comprehensive management plan
- **ADA compliance**—improvements needed throughout the park system, especially in parking lots, launches, and sports facilities.
- **Biodiversity areas**—large swaths of undeveloped areas in the parks are high-quality habitats for a variety of species and should be protected.
- **Regional recreation facilities**— most Metroparks are in close proximity to at least one state or county park, necessitating complementary recreation offerings.
- **Public input process**—feedback gained through a representative regional survey, three district stakeholder meetings, comments received, and a public hearing.

The following were additional major factors in determining goals and objectives, and are considered in detail in this chapter:

- **Demographic information**—an aging population with a fluctuating economic outlook requires innovative recreation approaches.
- **Regional plans**—most planning documents show a desire for environmental protection, non-motorized connections, and regional collaboration.
- **Regulatory obligations**—various regulations limit the ability of the Metroparks to develop certain areas, among other restrictions.



REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

The Huron-Clinton Metroparks serve five counties, nearly 300 municipalities, and a collective population of 4.4 million. Accurate demographic and consumer spending data is necessary to understand population trends and ongoing socioeconomic changes, which are included in the formulation of the Recreation Plan goals and objectives. The data in the following sections come from the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS), the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

Consumer Expenditures

The Bureau of Labor & Statistics (BLS) produces annual surveys of consumer spending habits for residents of various regions throughout the country. *The Consumer Expenditures Survey*¹ characterizes consumer spending habits in a variety of categories, some of which are relevant to the Metroparks.

Income Trends

In the Midwest region, consumer units² have an average income of \$66,754 before taxes, trailing the West and Northeast regions. Consumer units with reference persons³ between the ages of 45 and 54 earn the highest nationwide, an average of \$95,248 before taxes in 2015. Those with reference persons under 25 and older than 75 have similar pre-tax incomes: \$31,606 and \$36,408, respectively.

Spending Trends

According to the BLS *Consumer Expenditures 2015*⁴ report, national spending has increased across all income brackets as personal income has risen. From 2014 to 2015, the average spending per consumer unit increased by 4.6%, or \$55,978. In this time period, average pre-tax income similarly increased by 4.1%. Married consumer units with an oldest child over 18 years old participate in the most spending, averaging \$82,782 for 2015.

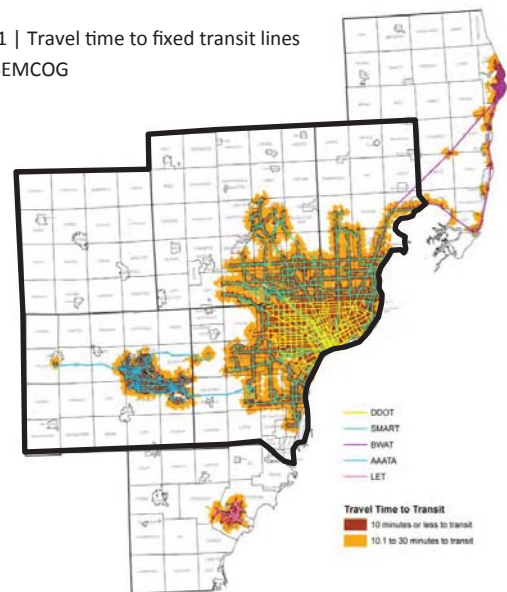
Consumer units with an oldest child aged 6-17 spend the most on the *Fees & Admissions*⁵ category, but consumer units nationwide tend to spend less than 1% of their income on this category. Income and spending on entertainment and admission fees may serve as an indicator of spending habits on park programs.

From 2014 to 2015, spending on transportation has increased, reaching an average of \$9,503. While spending on vehicle purchases increased by more than \$700 (21.1%), spending on gasoline and motor oil decreased 15.3% in this time period. These trends impact accessibility to the Metroparks through personal transportation.

Access to Parks

The *Access to Core Services*⁶ report generated by SEMCOG analyzes accessibility of core services to various segments of the population. SEMCOG highlights seven core services, which are major daily destinations for households and are important for improving resident quality of life: Jobs, Supermarkets, Health Care Facilities, Schools, Libraries, Fixed-Route Transit, and Parks.

Figure 7.1 | Travel time to fixed transit lines
Source: SEMCOG



¹Consumer Expenditures Survey, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/cex/>

² According to the BLS: "Consumer units include families, single persons living alone or sharing a household with others but who are financially independent, or two or more persons living together who share expenses." The average number of people in a consumer unit is around 2.5.

³ According to the BLS a Reference Person is: "The first member mentioned by the respondent when asked to 'Start with the name of the person or one of the persons who owns or rents the home.' It is with respect to this person that the relationship of the other consumer unit members is determined."

⁴ Consumer Expenditures - 2015, Bureau Of Labor & Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cesan.pdf>

⁵ Includes fees for participant sports; admissions to sporting events, movies, concerts, and plays; health, swimming, tennis and country club memberships; fees for other social, recreational, and fraternal organizations; recreational lessons or instruction; rental of movies, and recreation expenses on trips.

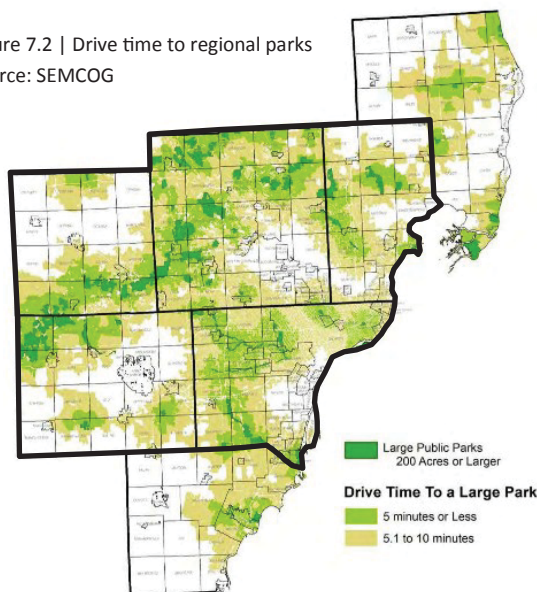
⁶ Access to Core Services in Southeast Michigan, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments. <http://semcog.org/Plans-for-the-Region/Transportation/Access>

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Currently, households within Southeast Michigan have access to five fixed-route transit systems: Ann Arbor Area Transit Authority (AAATA), Blue Water Area Transit (BWAT), Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT), Lake Erie Transit (LET), and Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART). Residents face low levels of walkability to and from bus stops, and are bound by limited travel distances based on fixed routes. Figure 7.1 on the previous page shows the travel time to these routes.

The Metroparks serve a large regional land area, and access to transportation impacts access to the parks. Figure 7.2 (below) shows the drive times from Southeast Michigan households to regional parks, defined as parks larger than 200 acres. Although 75% of households in the region are within a 10-minute drive to a large regional park, less than 15% of households are within a 30-minute transit trip to a regional park. Gaps in access to large parks by automobile may be mitigated by pedestrian access to local parks and schools.

Figure 7.2 | Drive time to regional parks
Source: SEMCOG



Focus Populations

SEMCOG outlines accessibility issues for *Transit-dependent Households*, *Households in Poverty*, and *Senior Households*. These groups have been identified as the most affected by low access to automobiles, and are more likely to use and rely on alternative forms of transportation. An understanding of how transportation options impact these populations allows the

Metroparks to better plan and organize outreach to these communities.

Overall 12.5% of households in the region are **Transit-dependent households**, which either do not have access to an automobile or have fewer cars than workers. Fixed-route transit service is more than a 10-minute walk away for 35% of these households, and more than a 30-minute walk away for 20% of these households. This reduces the ability of residents in those households to take advantage of important resources such as regional parks. Residents are faced with limited transit operating hours, long travel distances, high rates, and limited walkability to core services such as parks.

Households below the poverty threshold, defined as an annual income of less than \$20,090 for 3 people, make up 13% of all households in Southeast Michigan. The walking access to fixed-route transit for households in poverty mirrors that of transit-dependent households, and the two categories overlap.

Households with older adults are becoming more numerous as communities in Southeast Michigan age. Generally located in less centralized areas, this population is expected to grow 37.2% through 2040. Such an increase will generate demand for transportation and services that cater to older adults. This segment of the population faces exceptional barriers to access, with over 50% of households outside a 10-minute walk from fixed-route transit.

HCMA District Demographic Shifts¹

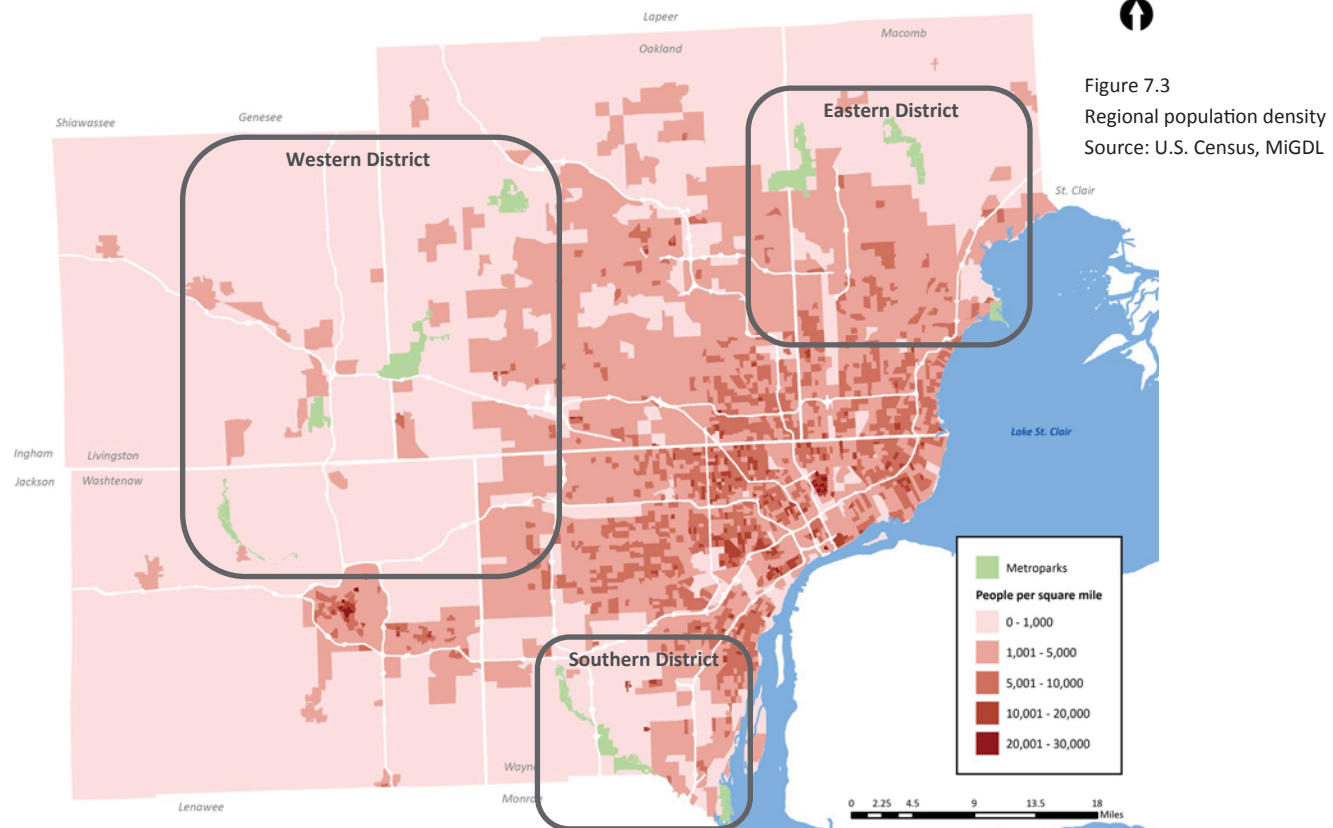
Eastern District

The HCMA Eastern District is primarily in Macomb County and contains three Metroparks: Wolcott Mill, Lake St. Clair, and Stony Creek.

Macomb County will experience a significant demographic shift through 2040: the 35-59 age group will see a 13.7% decrease, although it will remain the largest age group. The senior population (over 65 years old) will increase 90% to 228,895 residents, becoming the second-largest age group.

From 2014 to 2015, the annual income of households in the county increased 1% to \$68,599, which corresponds to the increase in national household income. The largest income bracket in the county is \$50,000—\$74,999, representing 19%

¹ SEMCOG 2040 Regional Forecast, <http://semcog.org/plans-for-the-region/regional-forecast>



of households. Households below the poverty line represent 12.8% of the population.

Macomb County is also changing racially. Between 2000 and 2010 the African-American population increased 5.9%, and other groups increased slightly. While the largest racial group in the county is still white, this group has decreased 7.7%.

Southern District

The HCMA Southern District includes four Metroparks, all located in Wayne County: Lower Huron, Willow, Oakwoods, and Lake Erie.

Wayne County is projected to decrease in population across most age groups through 2040. Only the senior population, (over 65 years old) will increase, as seen in other counties. Despite the senior growth, in 2040 the largest groups will be residents under 25 years of age, which will constitute 28% of the population, and residents ages 35-59, representing 32% of the population.

Just as national income has increased, so has the average income of households within Wayne County. From 2014 to 2015, the average annual income increased 1%, to \$58,406. Similar to the Eastern District, the largest income bracket is

\$50,000-\$74,999, representing 16% of households. In 2014, 25% of the population was below the poverty line.

Western District

The HCMA Western District contains six Metroparks: Indian Springs, Kensington, Huron Meadows, Hudson Mills, Dexter-Huron, and Delhi. The district is comprised of Oakland County, Livingston County, and Washtenaw County, so the data for this district is an average of the three counties.

Similar to other districts, the Western District will see a shift in demographics through 2040. While the number of residents ages 35-59 will decline, the senior population is projected to increase 173%, to 447,775. By 2040, residents under the age of 25 will make up the majority of the district's population, mostly consisting of children ages 5-7.

Among the Western District counties, households with annual incomes of \$50,000-\$74,999 make up 17% of the population, and those with incomes of \$100,000-\$149,999 constitute another 17%. Within Oakland, Livingston, and Washtenaw counties, 11% of the households are in poverty. Of the three, Washtenaw County has the highest percentage of households in poverty.

REGIONAL PLANS

The following plans were consulted to understand the challenges facing and the resources available to the region at large. With a good grasp of the intentions of other regional agencies, the Metroparks can focus on complementary goals and objectives and more efficiently serve the region's citizens.

SEMCOG	
The Economic and Demographic Outlook for Southeast Michigan through 2045	2017
Access to Core Services in Southeast Michigan	2016
Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel Plan for Southeast Michigan	2014
Green Infrastructure Vision for Southeast Michigan	2014
2040 Regional Transportation Plan for Southeast Michigan	2013
2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program	2013
The Economic and Demographic Outlook for Southeast Michigan through 2040	2012
Improving Transit in Southeast Michigan: A Framework for Action	2001

Governor	
21st Century Infrastructure Commission Report	2016
The Future of Michigan's Parks and Outdoor Recreation	2012

Watershed Councils	
Huron River Pathogen Management Plan	2011
Clinton River State II Remedial Action Plan	2011

MDOT	
2015-2019 Five-Year Transportation Program	2015
2035 State Long-Range Transportation Plan	2012

DNR	
Michigan's Iron Belle Trail Map	2015
State Trails Implementation Plan	2014
Michigan Comprehensive Trail Plan	2013
Parks and Recreation Division 2009-2019 Strategic Plan	2009

Counties	
Macomb County Blue Economy Strategic Development Plan	2012
Macomb County Parks and Recreation Master Plan	2014
Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission Master Plan	2014
Oakland County Parks Five Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan	2013
SELCRA Brighton Area Multi-Jurisdictional Parks and Recreation Master Plan	2011



FISCAL OUTLOOK

The Metroparks finance and accounting staff compiled the 2018 to 2022 projected revenue and expense assumptions for operations, maintenance, and capital improvements found below. (The definitions for these categories are found in the funding section of Chapter 4, Administrative Structure.) Anticipated revenues are based on “net” tax levy with captured taxes due to tax abatements and tax increment financing initiatives. Expenditures for personnel costs for both park operations and the administrative office reflects the HCMA Employee Association contract increases. Potential major maintenance repairs are included to keep up with an ever-increasing level of aging infrastructure. Capital improvements are projected based on staffs recommended schedule of projects. Similarly, equipment is projected based on recommended replacement cycles for major equipment.

Revenue (assumes a 2% rate of growth from 2018-2022)										
	2018	Change	2019	Change	2020	Change	2021	Change	2022	Change
Property Tax	31,172,610	102%	31,796,062	102%	32,431,983	102%	33,080,623	102%	33,742,235	102%
Operating Tolls	8,876,490	100%	8,876,490	100%	8,876,490	100%	8,876,490	100%	8,876,490	100%
Operating Golf	5,478,807	100%	5,478,807	100%	5,478,807	100%	5,478,807	100%	5,478,807	100%
Operating Aquatics	2,025,897	100%	2,025,897	100%	2,025,897	100%	2,025,897	100%	2,025,897	100%
Other	3,864,099		4,285,699		4,259,899		4,236,519		4,265,801	
Total Revenue	51,601,803		52,247,255		52,857,376		53,482,636		54,173,530	



Expenses										
	2018	Change	2019	Change	2020	Change	2021	Change	2022	Change
Admin Office	9,889,685	102%	10,219,372	102%	10,599,526	102%	10,993,697	102%	11,415,753	102%
Park Operations	24,790,184	102%	25,701,529	102%	26,499,114	103%	27,338,264	103%	28,240,764	103%
Major Maintenance	1,610,000	32%	1,122,500	70%	1,147,500	102%	1,000,000	87%	1,000,000	100%
Total Operating Expenses	70,747,964	92%	72,606,199	102%	74,902,362	103%	77,132,045	103%	79,672,956	103%
Operating Surplus	(19,146,161)		(20,358,944)		(22,044,986)		(23,649,410)		(25,499,426)	
Land Acquisition	0		0		0		0		0	
Capital Need	5,080,000		1,710,000		2,905,000		3,000,000		3,000,000	
Total Capital Improvement	5,245,000		1,710,000		2,905,000		3,000,000		3,000,000	
Capital Equipment	1,200,000		1,200,000		1,200,000		1,200,000		1,200,000	
Total Expense	52,402,780		49,814,670		52,508,248		53,993,781		55,632,192	

REGULATORY OBLIGATIONS

The constraints placed on the Metroparks by various agencies must be taken into account in the formulation of goals and objectives, to ensure safety, equality, and sound environmental stewardship in addition to engaging recreation.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The *2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design*¹ regulates any new or modified facilities in the park, including boating facilities, fishing piers, golf courses, playgrounds, pools, and sports areas. Government agencies are also required to develop a transition plan to remove barriers to access from current facilities. The Metroparks are committed to achieving compliance with ADA and will work towards the higher standard of Universal Design wherever feasible.

Compliance projects that can be addressed immediately include parking space signing and striping and small-scale paving. When a large amount of paving is necessary to make all facilities on a site accessible, it is more effective long-term to wait until redevelopment of the site is appropriate and arrange facilities in an accessible design. Since many of the Metroparks were designed and built decades ago, the current arrangement of facilities is sprawling and does not take into account varying levels of ability. Clustering new development into accessible nodes of activity will not only allow more people to enjoy the facilities, but will also decrease impervious surfaces and preserve open space.

When sites are redesigned or newly constructed, attention will be given to appropriate measurements and design criteria at recreational facilities noted in ADA 2010. In the future it may be necessary to hire a consultant to survey the accessibility of building interiors and make recommendations for improvements.

Occupational Safety and Health Act

This act provides standards for design and procedure in facilities or areas where individuals are employed.² The regulations cover exit routes, noise exposure, hazardous materials, environmental controls, fire protection, heavy machinery, and more. The Metroparks are committed to maintaining a safe and healthy workplace for all employees.

Natural Rivers District

Four of the Metroparks are subject to regulations for the Natural River-designated segment of the Huron River: Huron Meadows, Hudson Mills, Dexter-Huron, and Delhi. The Huron is the only river in Southeast Michigan with Natural River designation.

Additional requirements must be followed for development near the river in these parks, which guide the plans for each facility's future. The Michigan Natural Rivers Act,³ passed in 1994, gave power to both state and local agencies to protect rivers of uniquely pristine nature that must be protected from detrimental development. Local governments are encouraged to create zoning guidelines regarding use of the river frontage; otherwise the state zoning regulations apply. These rules usually cover allowable development types, setbacks, and dimensions within the land 50-100 feet from the river on each side.

The Metroparks are committed to working within the Natural Rivers District zoning to develop park amenities sensibly in the four parks noted above. The goal is to maintain the integrity of the river and frontage while still providing recreational resources that serve all users.

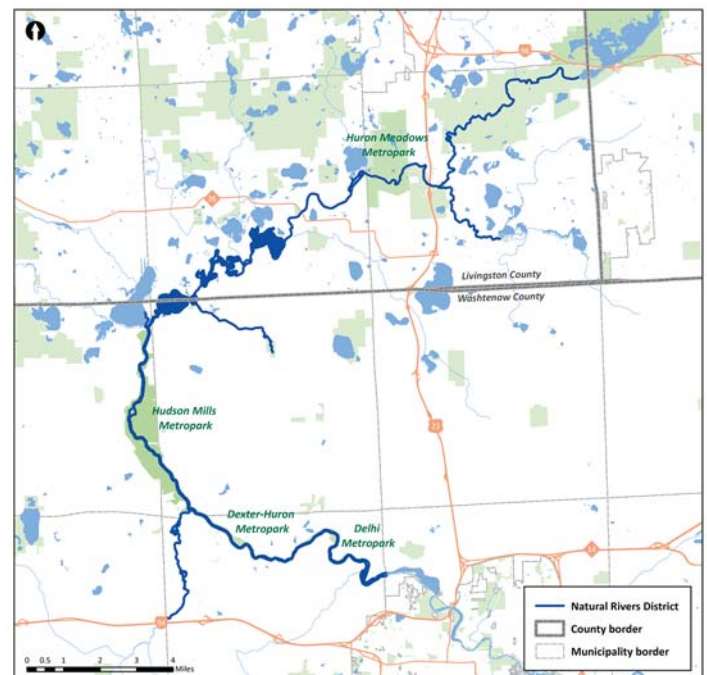


Figure 7.5 | Huron River Natural River System | Source: MDNR

¹ United States Access Board, <https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-ada-standards/ada-standards>

² United State Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Act, <https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/>

³ MDNR, Citizen Tools for Natural Rivers, http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/CitizenTools_NR_320951_7.pdf

Clean Water Act

The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA) has implemented a storm water management program to reduce the discharge of pollutants to the Waters of the State within its jurisdiction. This plan has been developed to fulfill the requirements for Part I, Section B of the State of Michigan's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit (MIS049000) for Storm Water Discharges from Separate Storm Water Drainage Systems (MS4s).¹ Although it operates under a Jurisdictional Permit, HCMA has been participating in the watershed planning process with the Stony/Paint Creek, Lower Huron, and Kent Lake Sub-watershed Groups. HCMA has property within both the Huron and Clinton River Watersheds, and a Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) has been implemented within the requested area of coverage as determined by the urbanized areas outlined in the General Permit.

The purpose of the SWMP is to develop a program to implement the six minimum measures as required by the General Permit, which include:

- Public Education Plan (PEP)
- Public Involvement and Participation Plan (PIP)
- Illicit Discharge Elimination Plan (IDEP)
- Post Construction Storm Water Management Program for New Development and Redevelopment Projects
- Construction Storm Water Runoff Control
- Pollution Prevention / Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

These six minimum measures are designed to minimize the negative impacts or reduce discharge of pollutants within the storm water conveyances of the Metroparks to the Maximum Extent Possible (MEP). The MEP requirement will be met by:

- Educating the public, HCMA employees, and vendors on potential negative impacts of storm water discharge on receiving waters.
- Training appropriate HCMA staff on the investigation of illicit connections and discharges, including those from on-site disposal systems (OSDS), with emphasis on outfall observations/screenings, safety issues, and naturally occurring phenomena.
- Implementing a system for identifying and eliminating

illicit discharges and connections to the MS4s, including outfall observations and follow-up sampling.

- Locating and accurately mapping the storm water conveyances and outfalls owned and operated by the HCMA within the requested area of coverage.
- Determining the ownership of other significant storm water conveyances in the HCMA and initiating a process to bring any "orphan" drains under proper jurisdiction.
- Working with the Drain Commissioner and County Department of Public Health in their efforts to develop and implement an OSDS inspection program.
- Coordinating HCMA IDEP efforts with other local communities and impacted County agencies.
- The identification and implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to comply with the minimum measures of Part I, including cooperation with other permittees as necessary to assure compliance.
- The identification and implementation of BMPs to comply with storm water related requirements established in a corrective action plan, to meet TMDLs as applicable.
- Demonstration of effectiveness or environmental benefit of the program.



¹ US EPA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater-discharges-municipal-sources>

Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake Candidate

Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) listed the eastern massasauga rattlesnake (EMR) as Federally Threatened under the Endangered Species Act on Sept. 29, 2016.¹ EMR populations have substantially decreased due to many issues including habitat loss and fragmentation, human persecution, and disease. EMR are known to occur at four Metroparks (Stony Creek, Kensington, Indian Springs and Hudson Mills), and have been the focus of past research and study at all of these locations.

HCMA has obtained protection for management activities that may cause incidental harm to individual snakes or their habitat by signing the Certificate of Inclusion to the MDNR's CCAA. The purpose of the CCAA is to conserve and enhance habitat that will maintain viable EMR populations, while reducing uncertainty that landowners face in managing lands with federally listed species.

Management activities covered by the CCAA include: wetland protection, cultivation, mowing and hydro-axing, chemical controls, trail/pathway management, prescribed burns, forest management including brush removal and invasive species control, and water level manipulations. Previous habitat management has led to the persistence of EMR populations on HCMA property. The CCAA does not require significant changes to current management activities.

To be considered for the CCAA the Natural Resources Department submitted a draft EMR Implementation Plan (EMRIP) to the MDNR. This plan highlights which areas are considered Managed Lands and Unmanaged Lands.

Unmanaged Land

These are lands that are enrolled in the CCAA but are not considered important to the long-term sustainability of EMR and may be incompatible with EMR management, such as campgrounds or golf courses. Managers do not need to implement conservation strategies on these lands and may actively discourage massasauga use. Landowners are still covered for incidental take. HCMA has identified roughly 21,000 acres of Unmanaged Land throughout the park system.

Managed Land

This land is considered most important to the long-term sustainability of EMR and has been identified as holding EMR. HCMA has identified 3,554 acres of Managed Lands in the four parks known to have EMR populations.



¹ US Fish & Wildlife Service Endangered Species, <https://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/reptiles/eama/eama-fct-sht.html>

8 | GOALS & OBJECTIVES

After considering all of the factors presented in the previous pages, HCMA staff developed the following five goals and corresponding objectives. The goals are meant to be broad, comprehensive categories that each encompass aspects of the vision to which the Metroparks aspire. The objectives are intended to describe a path forward for meeting the goals, moving into greater specificity. Finally, in the next chapter, these objectives will be broken down into actionable tasks with timelines and cost estimates.



1 INNOVATION

Modernize the Metroparks and develop new revenue streams.

- 1.1 Use new technology to increase connectivity and efficient communication throughout the system.
- 1.2 Construct and repurpose buildings to provide administrative and operations staff with workspaces that maximize employee productivity and wellness.
- 1.3 Redevelop targeted areas with innovative takes on current recreation trends to attract and retain a strong user base.



2 MAINTENANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE

Repair, maintain, and improve core park infrastructure.

- 2.1** Adopt a comprehensive and preventative approach to infrastructure management, maintaining an accurate inventory and investing in updates.
- 2.2** Continue to present visitors with a clean, functional, and pleasant park experience with excellent maintenance standards.
- 2.3** Plan for transition to ADA accessibility in all park system facilities, with an eye towards universal design.



3 EDUCATION & AWARENESS

Develop and enhance programming, communication, and outreach efforts.

- 3.1** Enhance visitors' understanding of and appreciation for Metroparks natural features and cultural history through updated interpretive exhibits, programs, and signage.
- 3.2** Ensure ease of navigation and safety through clear, simple, and strategically placed wayfinding signage.
- 3.3** Develop new visitor feedback opportunities to foster a greater sense of accountability in staff and ownership in the public.



4 STEWARDSHIP

Protect and restore natural biodiversity while balancing resource management with recreational activities.

- 4.1 Maintain clean, fresh water resources that facilitate both extraordinary recreation and healthy ecosystems.
- 4.2 Develop natural areas in the Metroparks to be exemplary metropolitan habitats for a wide range of flora and fauna.
- 4.3 Use early detection and rapid response to prevent disease and invasive species from damaging natural areas in the parks.



5 SUSTAINABILITY

Prioritize employee development, environmental health improvements, and financial stability.

- 5.1 Increase focus on environmental sustainability throughout the Metroparks system, especially by expanding recycling opportunities and reducing waste.
- 5.2 Invest in the valuable human resources of the park system through staff education and enrichment.
- 5.3 Implement a diverse funding strategy to ensure financial resilience into the future.

