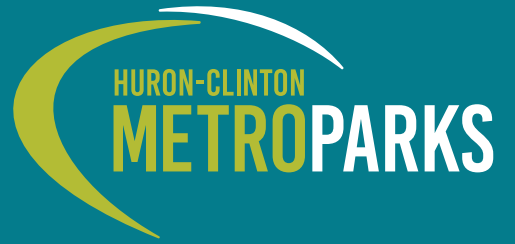


# LOWER HURON METROPARK MASTER PLAN



5 Year Update to 2016 – 2026



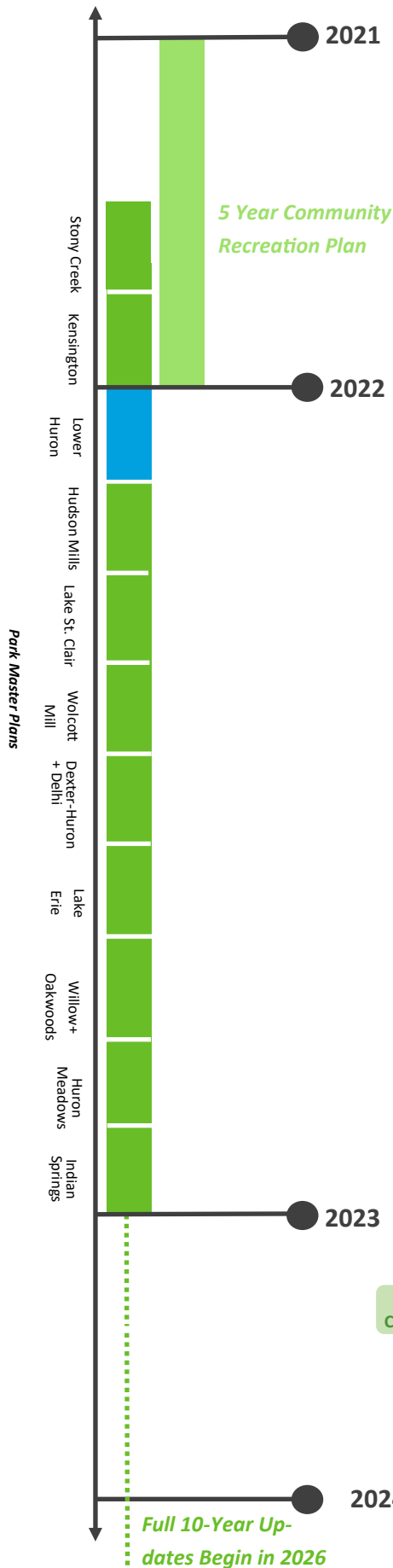
## Introduction

### Planning Process

The five-year update is an opportunity for each of the 13 Metroparks to review their master plan and make sure it is still relevant. This review includes 1) major changes to facilities, infrastructure and programming in the park; 2) updated needs and opportunities; 3) completed action items; and 4) any new actions necessary to implement the goals and policies for the park. One of the most important components is the public input collected through meetings, questionnaires, and online comments, all of which influence plan recommendations. A master plan steering committee was formed to include park employees with exceptional knowledge of Lower Huron and surrounding community who, along with the experienced Metroparks administrative department heads provided their professional opinions.

The Planning and Development Department also included updates to the demographic and spatial data to inform recommendations. Demographic data looks at the density, age, income, language, and other factors of the regional population. Spatial data, usually analyzed through Geographic Information System (GIS) 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 staff conducted 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 with this review every five years. However, they focus on park developments over ten years, and will be updated through a more comprehensive planning process at the end of the planning horizon.



The Steering Committee met on 04/31/2022

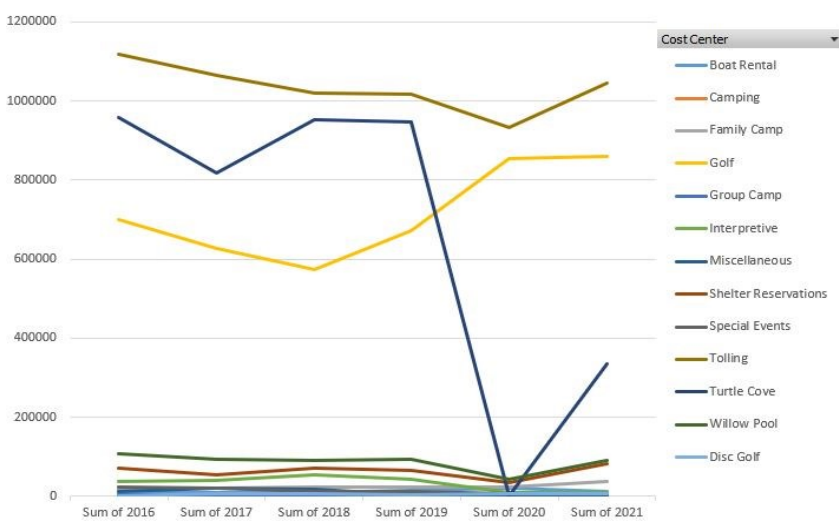
## Revenue

# Revenue Sources

### 2021 Operations Revenue

| Revenue Source       | 2021 Total*           | % of 2021 Revenue |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Turtle Cove          | 333,740.53            | 13.4%             |
| Tolling              | 1,046,057.00          | 42.1%             |
| Shelter Reservations | 82,565.76             | 3.3%              |
| Camping              | 40,432.80             | 1.6%              |
| Special Events       | 6,444.00              | 0.3%              |
| Miscellaneous        | 1,590.90              | 0.1%              |
| Golf                 | 858,660.57            | 34.5%             |
| Disc Golf            | 6,395.00              | 0.3%              |
| Interpretive         | 9,563.85              | 0.4%              |
| Willow Pool          | 89,125.41             | 3.6%              |
| Boat Rental– Washago | 10,952.58             | 0.4%              |
|                      | <b>\$2,485,528.00</b> | <b>100%</b>       |

\*2021 Operations Revenue was irregular due to the COVID pandemic.



REVENUE TRENDS 2016-2021— Lower Huron, Willow, and Oakwoods

## NEEDS

Diversify sources of revenue

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

## OPPORTUNITIES

The Metroparks 2021 General Fund revenue equaled \$59,729,968. Lower Huron's 2021 operations revenue was approximately \$2,485,528, comprising 4.2% of all Metroparks revenue.

The budgeted 2022 operations revenues for Lower Huron, Willow, and Oakwoods is \$3,083,260, while estimated 2022 operations expenses are \$6,791,291. These parks are combined in the budgeting process since they are administered together. Property tax and other revenue will subsidize 54.6% (\$3,708,031) of the three parks' operating budget.

As the chart illustrates, nearly all of Lower Huron's operations revenue comes from the Turtle Cove Family Aquatic Center and from park entrance tolling.



## Revenue

### Visitors

Lower Huron 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 Lower Huron Metropark have averaged around 300,000 since 2008. Record entries of over 400,000 were recorded in 2020. Weather often plays a role in attendance to the park; activity areas greatly affected by weather are the trails, fishing piers, Turtle Cove, and the golf course.

In 2019, the Metroparks season pass included a barcode that park staff could scan when visitors enter Hudson Mills Metropark. The barcode was added so Metroparks staff could track which ZIP codes users are coming from to create better experiences, amenities and programming within the park system. Knowing where people are coming from also assists in identifying gaps in visitor characteristics so that the Metroparks can do a better job in sharing information about areas that may be underrepresented in terms of attendance.



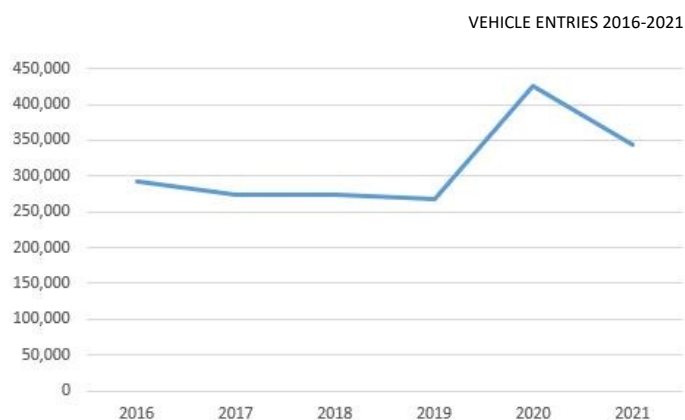
Popular Turtle Cove and Hike-Bike path

### NEEDS

Increase vehicle entry numbers

Draw visitors to the park with additional marketing and attractions

### OPPORTUNITIES



Lower Huron Metropark 30-Mile radius



# Programs & Events



Volunteer work day



Cruizin' the Park



Radio Disney D-Tour

## NEEDS

Increase revenue and visitation

Build on enthusiasm of Kensington visitors with exciting, engaging programs and events

## OPPORTUNITIES

### 2022 Integrated Marketing Plan

Educational and public programs looked much different than “average” in 2020. Staff adjusted to ever-changing situations of the pandemic to continue serving visitors on multiple platforms using virtual and hybrid programs, as well as small-group, in person, outdoor programs. These new practices will carry over into 2022 and staff will continue working collaboratively to provide exciting new experiences for the Lower Huron communities in ways that are safe and engaging.

### 2020-2022 Recreation Programming Plan

In 2022, the Metroparks amended the 2020-2022 Community Recreation Plan to include a Recreation Programming Plan.

An important element of programming is accessibility and ensuring all programs, events, and services are compliant with the American Disability Act (ADA) requirements.

To achieve this, the Metroparks has begun self-evaluation of all programming and services offered by each department. Each program was categorized into groups of similar activities (e.g. programs, events, activities) and will then be analyzed each activity in terms of vision, hearing, and mobility barriers that may exist.



# COMMUNITY INFLUENCES

## Population

The population of Lower Huron communities is growing, aging, and facing new challenges. The percentage of households without access to an automobile has stayed consistent throughout the region during 2014-2019.

The Metroparks were created during 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.

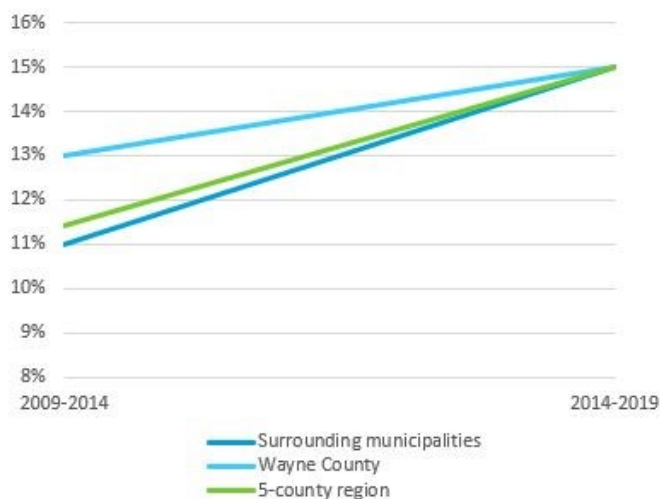
The percentage of individuals over 65 years of age is rising quickly in the region, Wayne County and communities surrounding the park. Older adults have distinct needs, often requiring accommodations for mobility and accessibility of park features such as trails and buildings. This is important to keep in mind when planning the future of a park serving an older population.

## NEEDS

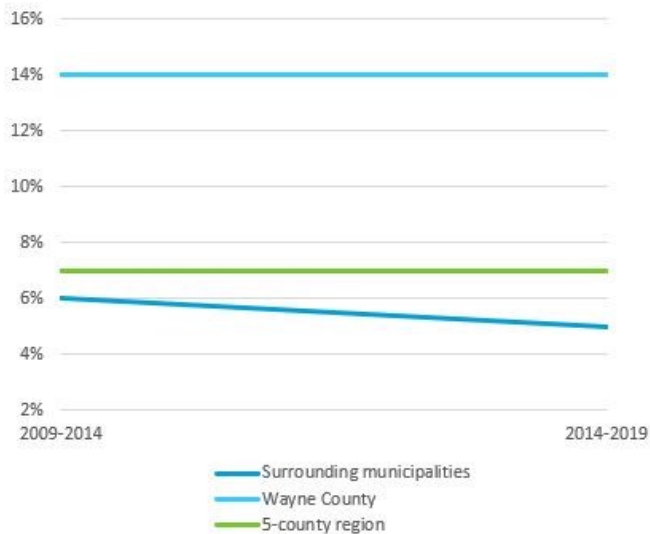
Address changing needs of new population demographics

Draw new users with an accessible, welcoming park environment

## OPPORTUNITIES



CHANGE IN PERCENT OF POPULATION OVER 65 YEARS, FROM 2009-2014 through 2014-2019 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)



CHANGE IN PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO CARS AVAILABLE, FROM 2009-2014 through 2014-2019 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)

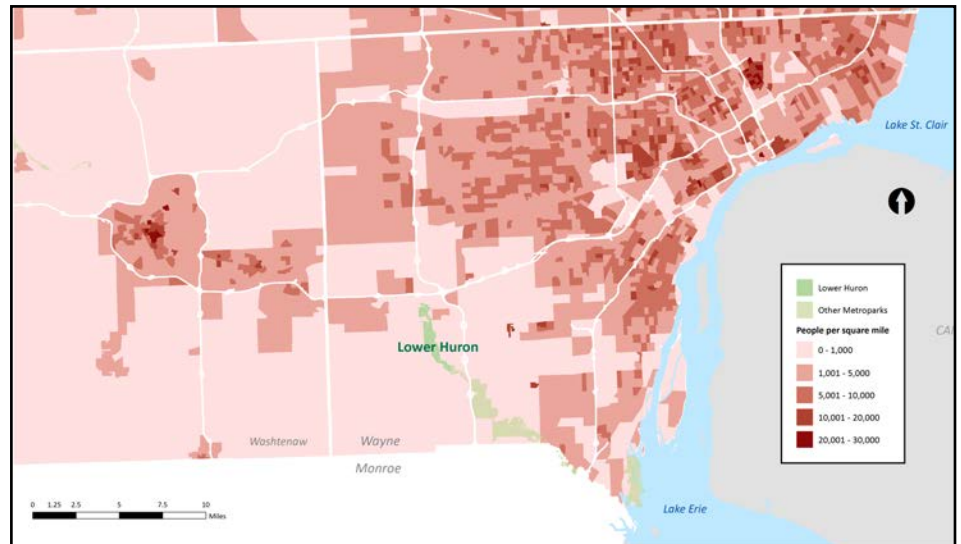


## Community Influences

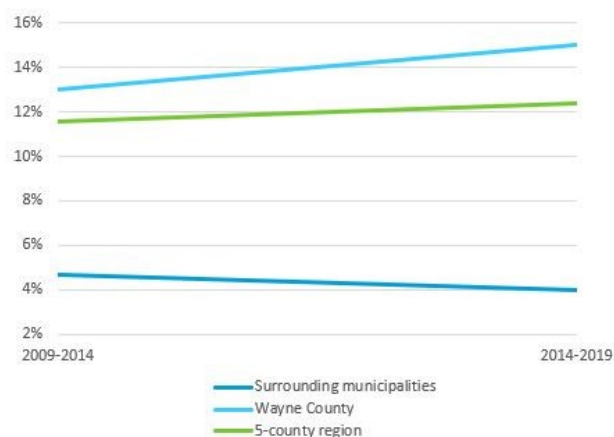
As shown below, Lower Huron is located at the southern edge of the suburban ring around Detroit, largely in the midst of rural low-density areas with less than one thousand residents per square mile. It is also connected to the string of urbanization extending to Ann Arbor. These factors create unique land use and park access challenges.

While Wayne County is falling in population density, the population in the municipalities surrounding Lower Huron has stayed remarkably constant over the past ten years. Remaining aware of development changes in the area will be important to gauge recreation needs.

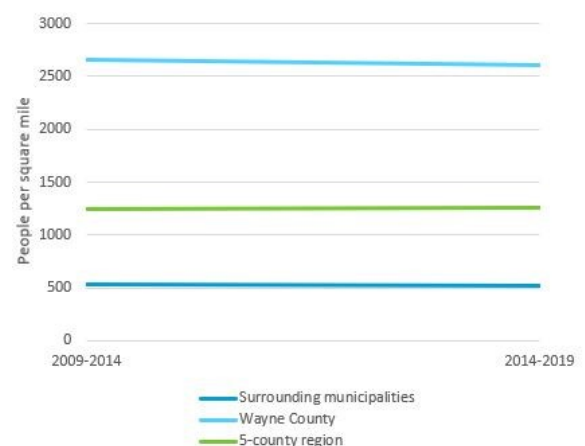
Although most households in the area still speak English as their first language, in Wayne County a growing number of households speak a language other than English at home. Because of this growing linguistic diversity, the Metroparks are working towards more universal signage design, with a focus on easily understandable symbols.



POPULATION DENSITY BY CENSUS TRACT, 2014-2019



CHANGE IN PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS SPEAKING LANGUAGE BESIDES ENGLISH AT HOME, 2009-2014 through 2014-2019  
(Source: US Census American Community Survey)



CHANGE IN AVERAGE POPULATION DENSITY, 2009-2014 through 2014-2019  
(Source: US Census American Community Survey)

## Community Influences

### NEEDS

Improve park connectivity with community

Create good working relationship with surrounding municipalities

### OPPORTUNITIES

#### Van Buren Township (updated 2022-2026

##### Parks and Recreation Master Plan)

- Provide a variety of parks and recreation experiences desired by the community
- Improve and develop greenways, connect with regional and state systems for both recreation and transportation
- Develop recreation services to support community members of all ages

#### Sumpter Township (updated Master Plan 2011-2016)

- Maintain protection of natural resources
- Woodland and Open Space ordinances, use of cluster developments
- Interest in development of greenway system

#### City of Romulus updated ( updated 2019 Master Plan)

- Connectivity and traffic flow challenges due to Detroit Metropolitan Airport
- Streetscape and non-motorized connection improvement
- Interest in acquiring public land

#### Huron Township (updated 2013)

- Metroparks as major attraction to township
- Preserve open space and farmland
- Planned denser development in the villages
- More bicycle and pedestrian connections



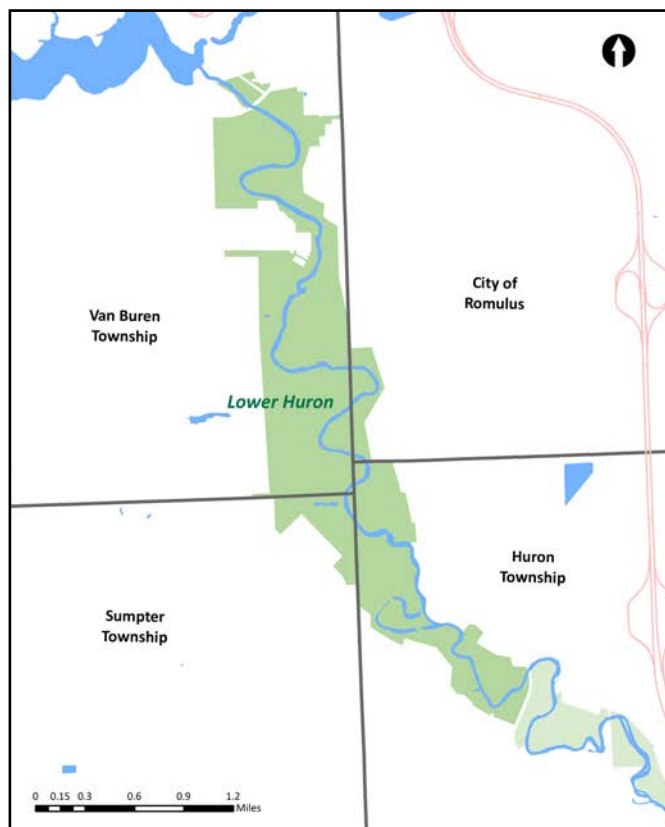
## Projects/Initiatives

### Huron River Watershed Council

- Improve climate resiliency of communities on the watershed
- Green infrastructure for local governments program
- Collaboration in stormwater management efforts
- RiverUp! program supporting placemaking in river towns
- Huron River Water Trail partner facilitation

Understanding the goals and plans of municipalities bordering and/or containing Lower Huron is essential for a collaborative, comprehensive planning process. Planning staff researched the published master plans and recreation plans of each municipality: Van Buren Township, Sumpter Township, Huron Township, and the City of Romulus. These provided a basic idea of the planned direction of each community, especially regarding land use, development, and recreation.

MUNICIPALITY MAP





## Community Influences

### Supporting Plans

#### Community Recreation Plan

The Lower Huron Master Plan is aligned with the Metroparks Community Recreation Plan 2018-2022 that creates an inventory of existing facilities and resources, identifies community and recreation and open space needs and sets a plan of action for a 5-year period. To be eligible to apply for Land and Water Conservation Fund, Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, and Waterways grants, a community must have an approved 5-Year Plan on file with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) by February 1 of the year they intend to apply.

#### Marketing Plan

Realizing the importance of marketing and communication, the Kensington Master Plan will coincide with updates to the Marketing Plan 2022 Goals and Strategies, developed annually by the Marketing and Communications Department. Both are living documents that will closely follow both present and future marketing trends and work in collaboration amongst various departments.

#### ADA Transition Plan

The Metroparks Board of Commissioners approved an updated Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan in November 2019. Moving forward, top priority projects will be added into annual capital and major maintenance improvement projects and identified in the Five-Year Community Recreation Plan and 10-year master plan (five-year amended) developments.

#### Stormwater Management Plan

The Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP), approved by the Board of Commissioners in 2019, provides a comprehensive review and analysis of the existing stormwater conveyance system for improvement and maintenance projects that prioritize reduction of impacts on water quality. It includes concepts and preliminary details for the design, construction, and operation and maintenance of the stormwater system for each Metropark (separated into individual chapters). Vetted by a committee of administrative departments and Lower Huron operations and maintenance staff, recommendations include green infrastructure development, shoreline and streambank restoration, and culvert and outfall cleanouts and replacements. Cost estimates were developed for each project, and calculation tables were included to help with budgeting (adjusting for inflation) in the future.



## Community Influences

### Relevant Planning Documents

#### Huron Charter Twp Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2019-2023

*"Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority incorporates large areas and provide recreation opportunities such as swimming, boating, hiking, hunting, camping, and golfing, which are typically beyond the ability of a local municipality to provide."*

#### Van Buren Charter Twp Master Plan, 2020

*"Provide for the protection and maintenance of the Township's environmental resources for the purpose of natural beauty, Township character, and ecological preservation."*

*"Involve stakeholders, including environmental groups from the state, Township, and adjacent communities, in environmental protection implementation working sessions, focused primarily on the Iron Belle Trail System and Belleville Lake."*

#### Sumpter Twp Master Plan, 2011-2016

*"The establishment of greenways and non-motorized pathways to connect the parks and form a continuous park system tying community facilities, schools, neighborhoods, and parks is a priority for the community. This Township-wide system should also be tied to the regional greenway system planned for the area."*

#### City of Romulus Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2021-2025

*"A paved hike-bike trail connecting the Lower Huron, Willow and Oakwoods Metroparks, a 30 mile round trip experience, connects and runs through the City of Romulus along the I-275 Expressway Metro Trail. Future plans for recreation expansion involve a tie-into these trails with local parks."*

#### Lower Huron River Watershed Management Plan, 2012

*"If current development practices are employed to accommodate the projected increase in population and associated infrastructure, then SEMCOG estimates 40% of the remaining open spaces will be developed within the watershed by 2020. Much of this projected conversion of undeveloped land will occur in the lower Huron River Watershed" p.4*

#### SEMCOG Green Infrastructure Vision for SE Michigan, 2014

*"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 Lower Huron a wider context and in many cases underscore the importance of the park's resources to citizens.

The southern portion of Wayne County contains few other large parks beyond the four Metroparks. Therefore, Lower Huron, Willow, and Oakwoods may provide a disproportionate amount of local recreation opportunities.

Lower Huron 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 Lower Huron 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. The Iron Belle Trail is a state-designated trail with both a hiking and a biking arm reaching from Belle Isle in Detroit to Ironwood at the very western edge of the Upper Peninsula. The hike-bike trail from Lake Erie to Lower Huron Metropark is part of the 791-mile bicycle route, which is 64% complete according to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. This kind of multi-jurisdictional partnership enhances the recreational resources of all participants.

# PUBLIC INPUT

## ← Outreach Process

### 2022 Community Needs and Assessment

ETC Institute administered a needs assessment survey for Huron-Clinton Metroparks (HCMA) during the Spring of 2022. The survey was administered as part of Metroparks' efforts to establish and priorities improvements to the parks system, which included 13 parks covering more than 25,000 acres in Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Livingston and Washtenaw counties. The survey and its results will guide HCMA in taking a resident-driven approach to making decisions that will enrich the future of the community and positively affect the lives of all residents in southeast Michigan.

ETC Institute mailed a survey packet to a random sample of households in Livingston County, Macomb County, Oakland County, Washtenaw County, Wayne County (outside the City of Detroit), and the City of Detroit.

| Location                              | Completed Surveys | % Precision  |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| <i>Livingston County</i>              | 479               | ±4.5%        |
| <i>Macomb County</i>                  | 511               | ±4.3%        |
| <i>Oakland County</i>                 | 583               | ±4.1%        |
| <i>Washtenaw County</i>               | 514               | ±4.3%        |
| <i>Wayne County (Outside Detroit)</i> | 407               | ±4.9%        |
| <i>City of Detroit</i>                | 405               | ±4.9%        |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>2,899</b>      | <b>±1.8%</b> |

The table above shows the number of completed surveys collected in each of the six sampling areas. The table also shows the margin of error at the 95% level of confidence for each area.

The results presented in this report have been weighted to represent each sampling area's share of the population of the Huron-Clinton Metroparks service area. The weighted results give more weight to the responses from the larger sampling areas, including Macomb County, Oakland County, Wayne County (outside Detroit), and the City of Detroit, and similarly gives less weight to the responses of the smaller sampling areas, including Livingston County and Washtenaw County

### Priorities for Parks & Recreation Facility Investments in the Huron-Clinton Metroparks Service Area

The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on Parks and Recreation investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weighs:

- the importance that households place on each facility/amenity/ activity/program
- how many households have unmet needs for the facility/amenity/activity/program

| Facility   | Priority Investment Rating (PIR) |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <i>Trails-paved, multi-use (walking, biking)</i> | 189.2                            |
| <i>Beaches</i>                                   | 174.7                            |
| <i>Natural areas</i>                             | 145.7                            |
| <i>Trails-unpaved, nature trails</i>             | 139.7                            |
| <i>Trails-unpaved, hiking</i>                    | 137.2                            |
| <i>Nature centers</i>                            | 114.2                            |
| <i>Canoe/kayak launch sites</i>                  | 110.2                            |
| <i>Outdoor swimming pools</i>                    | 107.9                            |



## Results

### Wayne County (Outside of Detroit)

The table below shows the Priority Investment Ratings (PIR) for parks and recreation facilities, based on the PIR analysis conducted using the data from Wayne County (outside of Detroit) households. The following nine facilities were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Beaches
- Picnic shelters
- Paved multi-use trails for walking and biking
- Playgrounds
- Natural areas
- Picnic tables
- Outdoor swimming pools
- Nature centers

| Facility                                  | PIR   |                                |
|---|-------|--------------------------------|
| Beaches                                   | 195.3 | High Priority<br>(PIR=100-200) |
| Picnic shelters                           | 176.4 |                                |
| Trails-paved, multi-use (walking, biking) | 165.2 |                                |
| Playgrounds                               | 150.8 |                                |
| Natural areas                             | 147.2 |                                |
| Picnic tables                             | 144.1 |                                |
| Outdoor swimming pools                    | 132.0 |                                |
| Nature centers                            | 121.8 |                                |
| Trails-unpaved, nature trails             | 107.4 |                                |
| Fishing banks or docks                    | 94.6  | Medium Priority<br>(PIR=50-99) |
| Trails-unpaved, hiking                    | 90.2  |                                |
| Splash pad (water play area)              | 85.4  |                                |
| Canoe/kayak rentals                       | 79.9  |                                |
| Waterslides                               | 77.3  |                                |
| Canoe/kayak launch sites                  | 76.3  |                                |
| Camping areas-group sites                 | 61.2  |                                |
| Trails-mountain biking                    | 52.8  |                                |
| Camping areas-primitive sites             | 49.2  | Low Priority<br>(PIR=0-49)     |
| Camping areas-RVs                         | 42.6  |                                |
| Golf driving ranges                       | 42.0  |                                |
| Golf courses                              | 36.7  |                                |
| Boat ramps                                | 36.3  |                                |
| Boat docks                                | 33.8  |                                |
| Disc golf                                 | 25.2  |                                |
| Marinas                                   | 22.6  |                                |

The table below shows the Priority Investment Ratings (PIR) for parks and recreation programs, based on the PIR analysis conducted using the data from Wayne County (outside of Detroit) households. The following 16 programs were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Concerts
- Art/photography
- Movies in the park
- Swim lessons
- Walking clubs/programs
- Water fitness programs
- Pet-friendly programs
- Environmental education programs
- Camping
- Programs for people with disabilities
- Astronomy programs
- Bird-wildlife watching programs
- Guided nature hikes
- Fishing programs
- Natural/cultural history programs
- Guided canoe/kayak tours

| Program                               | PIR   |                                |
|---------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|
| Concerts                              | 194.4 | High Priority<br>(PIR=100-200) |
| Art/photography                       | 175.1 |                                |
| Movies in the park                    | 173.9 |                                |
| Swim lessons                          | 166.8 |                                |
| Walking clubs/programs                | 164.6 |                                |
| Water fitness programs                | 162.6 |                                |
| Pet-friendly programs                 | 150.9 |                                |
| Environmental education programs      | 132.9 |                                |
| Camping                               | 129.0 |                                |
| Programs for people with disabilities | 126.7 | Medium Priority<br>(PIR=50-99) |
| Astronomy programs                    | 126.2 |                                |
| Bird/wildlife watching programs       | 125.0 |                                |
| Guided nature hikes                   | 121.7 |                                |
| Fishing programs                      | 114.2 |                                |
| Natural/cultural history programs     | 108.7 |                                |
| Guided canoe/kayak tours              | 105.5 |                                |
| Farm educational programs             | 98.0  |                                |
| Golf lessons                          | 83.6  | Low Priority<br>(PIR=0-49)     |
| Boating classes                       | 80.6  |                                |
| Guided motorized boat tours           | 70.3  |                                |
| Homeschool programs                   | 59.1  |                                |
| Running clubs/programs                | 50.0  |                                |
| Virtual programs                      | 35.3  |                                |
| Scouting                              | 31.8  |                                |
| Golf tournaments                      | 29.9  |                                |

# 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. [5-year updates are in blue text](#)

### Needs

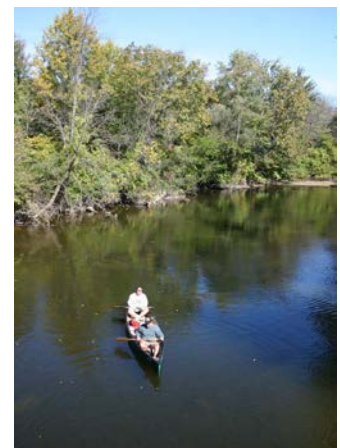
- Better highlight and advertise unique character of park
- Define and protect biodiversity features
- Address aging and overbuild infrastructure
- Work with county to address boundary [and encroachment issues](#)
- Better revenue and visitation numbers
- Improve park connectivity with community
- Incorporate a variety of user community groups into Master plan
- [Address changing needs of new population demographics](#)



### 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
- Update infrastructure to better [reflect park usage and sustainability for future use](#)
- [Take advantage of captive audiences, actively take part in programming activities and events](#)
- 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

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 five years.



## Large Facilities

| Description  | Department Lead | Other Departments                 | Other Partners | Cost Estimate | Short-Term (2022-2023) | Mid-Term (2024-2025) | Long-Term (2026 +) | Status                   |
|--|-----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| New slide structure at Turtle Cove   | Engineering     | Planning, Operations              | Contractor     | \$1,605,983   | x                      |                      |                    | Budgeted                 |
| North fishing site redevelopment: improve accessibility and site amenities   | Engineering     | Planning, Operations              | Contractor     | \$297,399     |                        |                      |                    | Complete                 |
| Bemis Road Toll Booth Replacement and Paving: Toll Booth replacement on existing pedestal at Oakwoods and Lower Huron - Bemis Road entrance. | Engineering     | Planning, Operations              | Contractor     | \$30,000      | x                      |                      |                    | In Construction          |
| Backup Internet Fiber Installation: Comcast installation of underground fiber network  | Engineering     | Operations, Maintenance           | Contractor     | \$185,362     | x                      |                      |                    | In Construction          |
| Demolition of park office: new park office under construction at Willow.   | Engineering     | Planning, Operations              | Contractor     | TBD           |                        | x                    |                    | Not Started              |
| Walnut Grove Campground Improvements, Phase 2: comfort station and electrical improvements   | Engineering     | Planning, Operations, Maintenance | Contractor     | \$784,600     |                        |                      | x                  | Awaiting Grant Agreement |
| Off Leash Dog Area Development: new fenced in area for off leash dog activities.   | Engineering     | Planning, Operations, Maintenance | Contractor     | \$330,800     |                        |                      | x                  | Awaiting Grant Agreement |
| Iron Bell Trail Project : project to extend the Iron Bell trail from its current terminus to the north park entrance (Huron River Drive)     | Engineering     | Planning, Operations,             | Contractor     | \$845,016     |                        |                      | x                  | In Construction          |
| Adaptive Ballfield   | Planning        | Engineering, Operations           | RFP Consultant | TBD           |                        |                      | x                  | Planning                 |



## Infrastructure / Small Facilities

| Description   | Department Lead | Other Departments    | Other Partners | Cost Estimate | Short-Term (2022-2023) | Mid-Term (2024-2025) | Long-Term (2026+) | Status      |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Pavement projects (list developed annually, as needed)  | Engineering     | Planning, Operations | Contractor     | various       | x                      | x                    | x                 | Ongoing     |
| Accessibility improvements, including interiors and walkways - parkwide   | Engineering     | Planning, Operations | Contractor     | various       | x                      | x                    |                   | Ongoing     |
| Install above-ground fuel storage at service yard   | Engineering     | Maintenance          | Contractor     | \$170,000     |                        |                      |                   | Complete    |
| Turtle Cove Crosswalk Path: Construction of a path and crosswalk from the Foxwoods parking lot to Turtle Cove   | Engineering     | Planning, Operations | Contractor     | \$100,355     | x                      |                      |                   | In Design   |
| Accessible Path from Hawthorne Glade N Shelter to Turtle Cove: Pave 1,285' path from shelter to restrooms and Turtle Cove area per the ADA Transition Plan. | Engineering     | Planning, Operations | Contractor     | \$110,000     | x                      |                      |                   | Budgeted    |
| Accessible Path from Tulip Tree Shelter to Restrooms: Pave 330' path from shelter to restrooms per the ADA Transition Plan.                                 | Engineering     | Planning, Operations | Contractor     | \$30,000      | x                      |                      |                   | Budgeted    |
| Accessible Path: Woods Creek play area to restrooms   | Engineering     | Planning, Operations | Contractor     | TBD           |                        | x                    |                   | Not Started |
| Accessibility Improvements: Turtle Cove, connect hike and bike path   | Engineering     | Planning, Operations | Contractor     | TBD           |                        | x                    |                   | Not Started |
| Equalization of culverts: assessment, replacement, abatement.   | Engineering     | Planning, Operations | Contractor     | TBD           |                        | x                    |                   | Not Started |
| Tawata Trace underpass restoration  | Engineering     | Planning, Operations | Contractor     | TBD           |                        |                      | x                 | Not Started |
| Tulip Tree septic pump grinder  | Engineering     | Planning, Operations | Contractor     | TBD           |                        | x                    |                   | Not Started |

## Signage

| Description  | Dept. Lead | Other Depts.            | Other Partners                  | Cost Estimate | Short-Term (2022-2023) | Mid-Term (2024-2026) | Long-Term (10+ years) | Status      |
|--|------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Roadside wayfinding/directional signage updates - parkwide                               | Planning   | Maintenance, Operations |                                 | \$15,000      | x                      |                      |                       | Ongoing     |
| Trail wayfinding and interpretive signage improvements - Woods Creek, Paw Paw, Bob White | Planning   | Maintenance, Operations |                                 | \$10,000      | x                      |                      |                       | Not Started |
| Directional/ wayfinding signage to new park office at Willow                             | Planning   | Maintenance, Operations |                                 | TBD           | x                      |                      |                       | Not Started |
| Directional/wayfinding signage to serve paddlers along kayak routes                      | Planning   | Maintenance, Operations | Huron Clinton Watershed Council | TBD           |                        | x                    |                       | Not started |
| Iron Belle Trail directional/ wayfinding signage   | Planning   | Maintenance, Operations | MDNR                            | TBD           | x                      |                      |                       | Not started |
| Update wayfinding signage—Fox Woods (removal of ice skating rink icons)                  | Planning   | Maintenance, Operations |                                 | TBD           | x                      |                      |                       | Not started |

## Natural Resources

| Description  | Dept. Lead | Other Depts.                        | Other Partners | Cost Estimate | Short-Term (2022-2023) | Mid-Term (2024-2026) | Long-Term (10+ years) | Status      |
|--|------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Climate Resiliency Plan  | NR         | Planning                            |                | staff time    | x                      | x                    | x                     | Ongoing     |
| Develop NR review process in early planning stages of construction projects                                  | NR         | Planning                            |                | staff time    | x                      | x                    | x                     | Ongoing     |
| Vegetation management (annual)   | NR         | Planning, Operations                |                | \$30,000      | x                      | x                    | x                     | Ongoing     |
| Landscape tree diversity plantings (annual)  | NR         | Planning, Operations                |                | \$3,500       | x                      | x                    | x                     | Ongoing     |
| Energy conservation initiatives  | NR         | Planning, Engineering, Interpretive |                | \$9,000       | x                      |                      |                       | Ongoing     |
| Hazardous waste removal (annual)   | NR         |                                     |                | \$1,000       | x                      | x                    | x                     | Ongoing     |
| Early detection, rapid response. Invasive species surveys and control in high quality natural areas (annual) | NR         | Interpretive                        | NGOs           | \$10,000      | x                      | x                    | x                     | Ongoing     |
| Conduct prescribed fire in adapted native communities (Bobwhite wetland, Fox Woods ravine, etc.)             | NR         |                                     |                | \$15,000      | x                      | x                    | x                     | Ongoing     |
| Oak wilt monitoring and prevention (annual)  | NR         | Operations                          | MDNR           | staff time    | x                      | x                    | x                     | Ongoing     |
| Deer cull to maintain deer at roughly 15/ square mile.   | NR         | Police                              |                | staff time    | x                      | x                    | x                     | Ongoing     |
| Bioswale improvements  | NR         | Planning, Operations                |                | TBD           |                        | x                    |                       | Not Started |
| Riparian bank restoration  | NR         | Planning, Engineering, Operations   |                | TBD           |                        | x                    | x                     | Not Started |
| Reduction of mowed areas   | NR         | Planning, Operations, Maintenance   |                | TBD           | x                      |                      |                       | Not Started |



# 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   | Department Lead | Other Departments       | Other Partners   | Cost Estimate | Short-Term (2022-2023) | Mid-Term (2024-2025) | Long-Term (2026+) | Status      |
|---|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Update trail maps to show opportunities for walking/hiking/trail running        | Graphics        | Planning                |                  | staff time    | x                      |                      |                   | Ongoing     |
| Turtle Cove renovation site plan  | Planning        | Engineering, Operations |                  | staff time    |                        |                      |                   | Complete    |
| Demolition plan for park office at Lower Huron                                  | Planning        | Engineering, Operations | Consultant       |               |                        | x                    |                   | Not started |
| North fishing site improvements plan  | Planning        | Engineering, Operations |                  | staff time    |                        |                      |                   | Complete    |
| Walnut Grove campground monitoring and site improvements plan                   | Planning        | Engineering, Operations |                  | staff time    |                        |                      |                   | Complete    |
| Future plan for Par 3 Golf Course   | Planning        | Engineering, Operations |                  | staff time    |                        |                      |                   | Complete    |
| Investigate partnership with Rolling Hills waterpark for overflow days          | Planning        |                         |                  | staff time    |                        |                      |                   | ?           |
| Fisheries assessment and habitat improvement (including creel survey)           | NR              | Operations              | MDNR             | \$25,000      |                        | x                    |                   | Ongoing     |
| Herpetological distribution and abundance assessment                            | NR              | Interpretive            | Consultant       | \$9,000       |                        | x                    |                   | Ongoing     |
| Shoreline erosion survey  | NR              |                         |                  | \$10,000      |                        | x                    |                   | Ongoing     |
| Establish invasive species control tracking website                             | NR              | IT                      | MNFI, MISIN      | \$15,000      |                        | x                    |                   | Ongoing     |
| Comprehensive wildlife surveys and mapping (Birds, insects, freshwater mussels) | NR              | Interpretive            | MNFI, Consultant | \$35,000      |                        |                      |                   | Ongoing     |
| Electric Vehicle (EV) Stations  | Planning        | Engineering, Operations |                  | staff time    |                        | x                    |                   | Not Started |

## Area Plans/Studies/Initiatives

| Description  | Department Lead | Other Departments        | Other Partners | Cost Estimate | Short-Term (2022-2023) | Mid-Term (2024-2025) | Long-Term (2026+) | Status      |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Robbe Farm feasibility study   | Planning        | NR, Engineering          |                | staff time    |                        | x                    |                   | Not Started |
| Foxwoods improvements: removal of two remaining dams, existing amenities, and electrical | Engineering     | Planning, NR, Operations |                | TBD           |                        |                      | x                 | Complete    |
| Foxwoods restroom expansion  | Engineering     | Planning, Operations     |                | TBD           |                        |                      | x                 | Not Started |
| South fishing site repairs and river access improvements                                 | Engineering     | Planning                 |                | TBD           |                        |                      | x                 | Not Started |
| Accessible Baseball Field  | Engineering     | Planning, Operations     |                | TBD           |                        |                      | x                 | Not Started |
| Kayak rescue launch and access plan  | Engineering     | Planning, Operations     |                | TBD           | x                      |                      |                   | Not Started |
| Trail connection plan: French Landing Dam  | Engineering     | Planning, Operations     |                | TBD           |                        | x                    |                   | Not Started |





# LOWER HURON MASTER PLAN





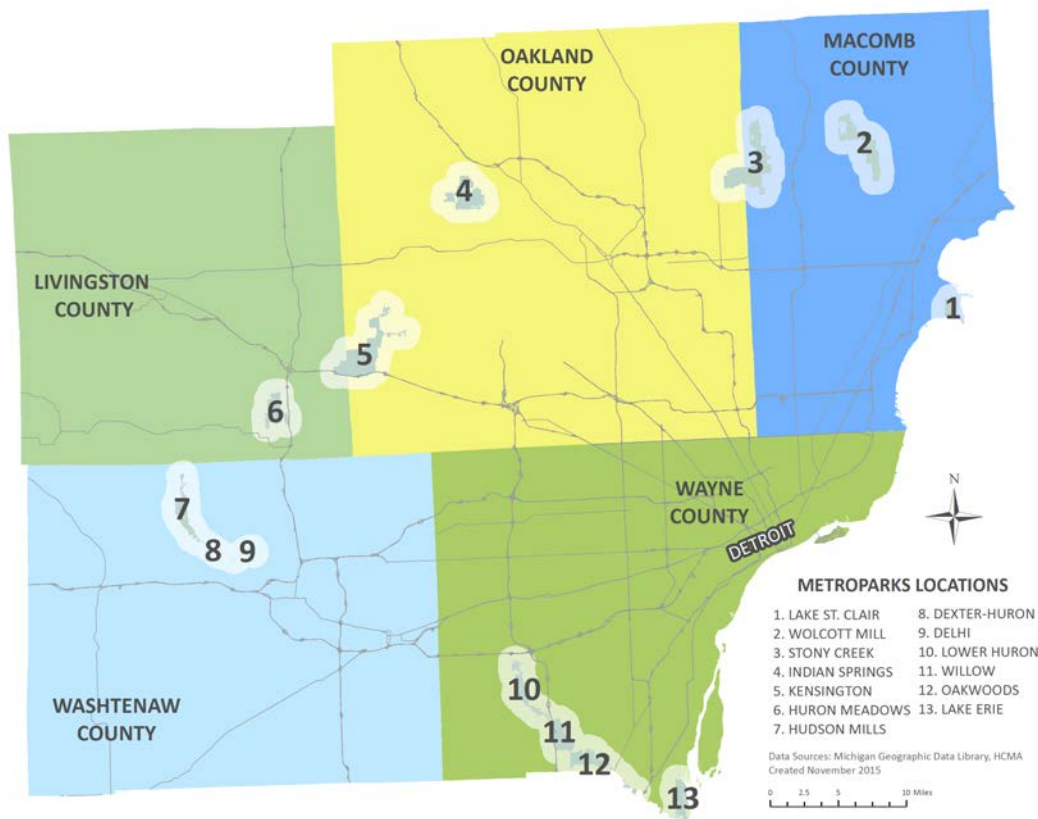
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# INTRODUCTION

## About the Metroparks

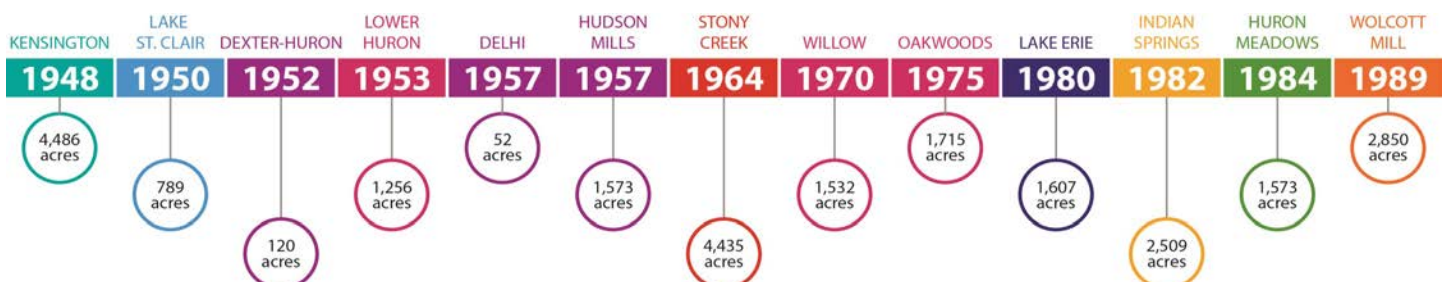


The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority was sanctioned by the Michigan State Legislature in Act No. 147 of the Public Acts of 1939. Named after the two longest rivers within its boundaries, the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority is a regional park agency consisting of 13 Metroparks encompassing approximately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

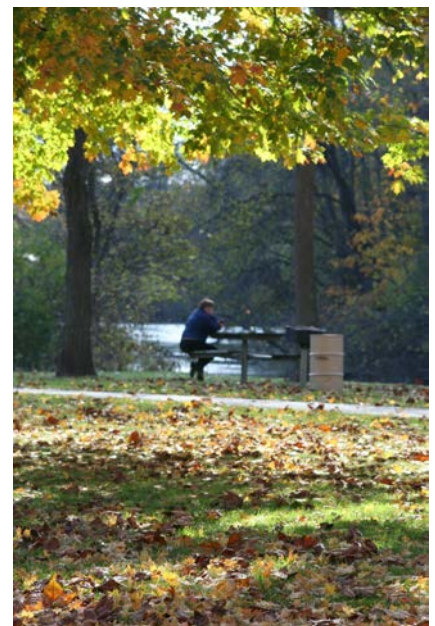
Two commissioners, appointed by the Governor of Michigan for a term of four years, serve as representatives at large. Five commissioners, one each to represent the counties of Wayne, Macomb, Oakland, Livingston and Washtenaw, are appointed for a term of six years by the board of commissioners of the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

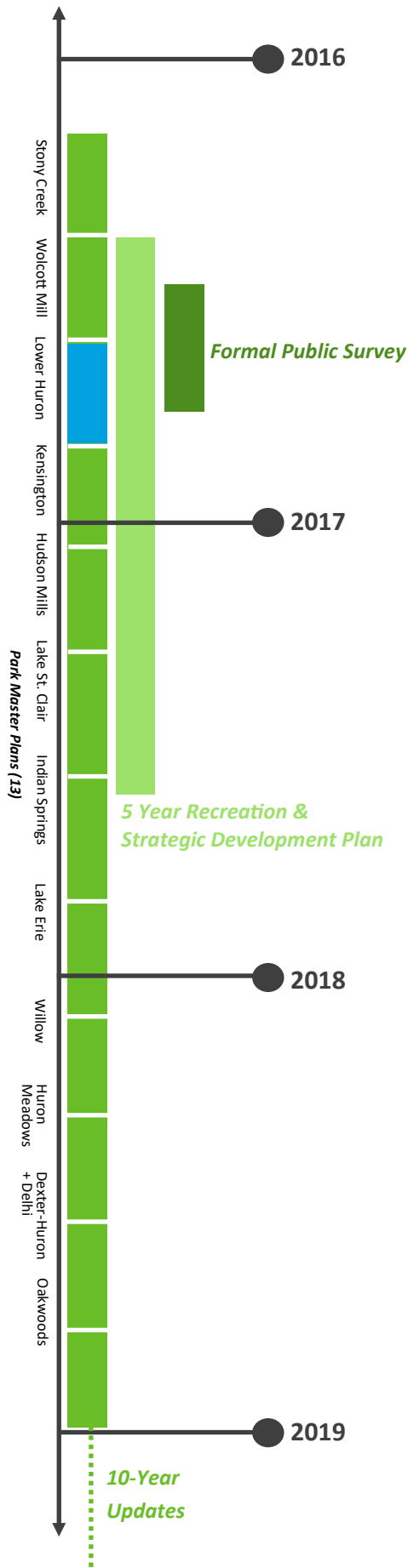
**Operational Departments** facilitate the day-to-day operations of the parks, making sure patrons have enjoyable and educational visits. They include Maintenance and Interpretive Services.

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



## Introduction

### Planning Process

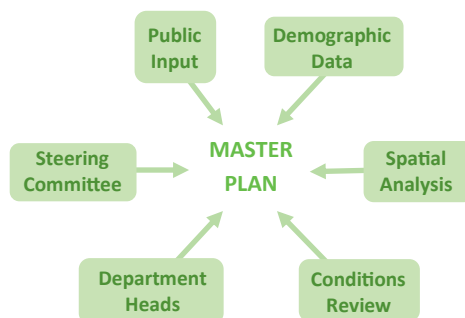


Several factors contribute to the recommendations that will be proposed for Lower Huron in the master plan. One of the most important is the public input collected through meetings, questionnaires, and online comments. This reveals the public's hopes and expectations for the park and significantly influences plan recommendations. A master plan steering committee was formed to include park employees with exceptional knowledge of Lower Huron 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, language, mobility, and other factors of the regional population. Spatial data, usually analyzed through Geographic Information Systems 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 Lower Huron Master Plan met on 6/22/16

# LOWER HURON TODAY

## Character



The following responses to our survey questions highlight the many facets of Lower Huron that form a unique experience. It is seen as a relaxing escape for viewing and strolling through nature, as well as active recreation and family activities.

## NEEDS

Better highlight and advertise special character of park

Build a strong identity and user base

## OPPORTUNITIES

The **birds I see are amazing**. The trails are awesome and should and could be promoted for trail running if they were longer. We love Lower Huron Metropark.

I love it because of the **unique trails**, and less people.

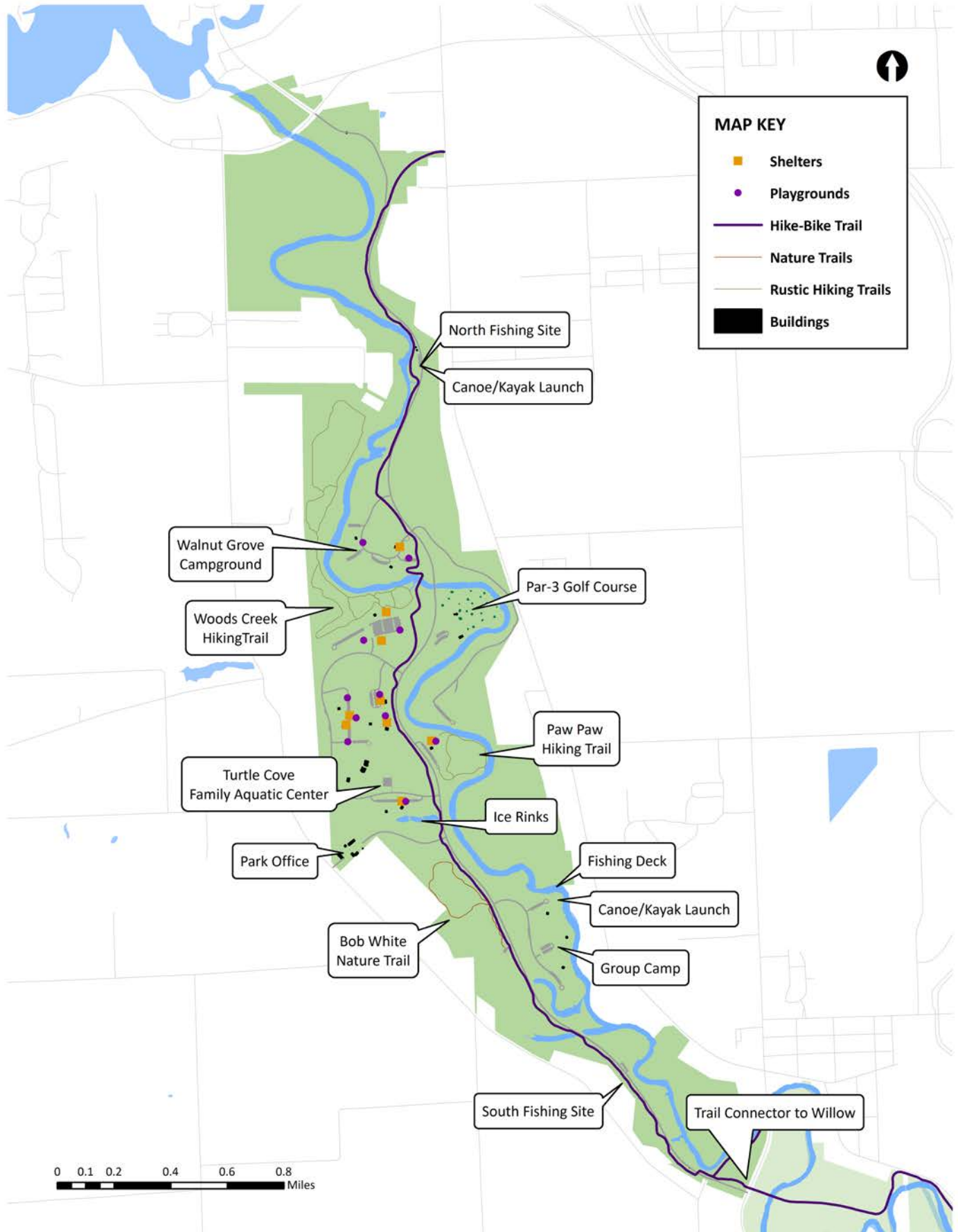
The **panorama of redbuds** along the roadway in spring was glorious! Make commitments to maintain the native areas and protect from invasive species.

I love bringing my family to your parks for **picnicking, camping, & swimming** and always feel safe every visit.

I love Lower Huron and the **connecting trail** to Willow and Oakwoods.

**Turtle Cove** is a fantastic park amenity too!

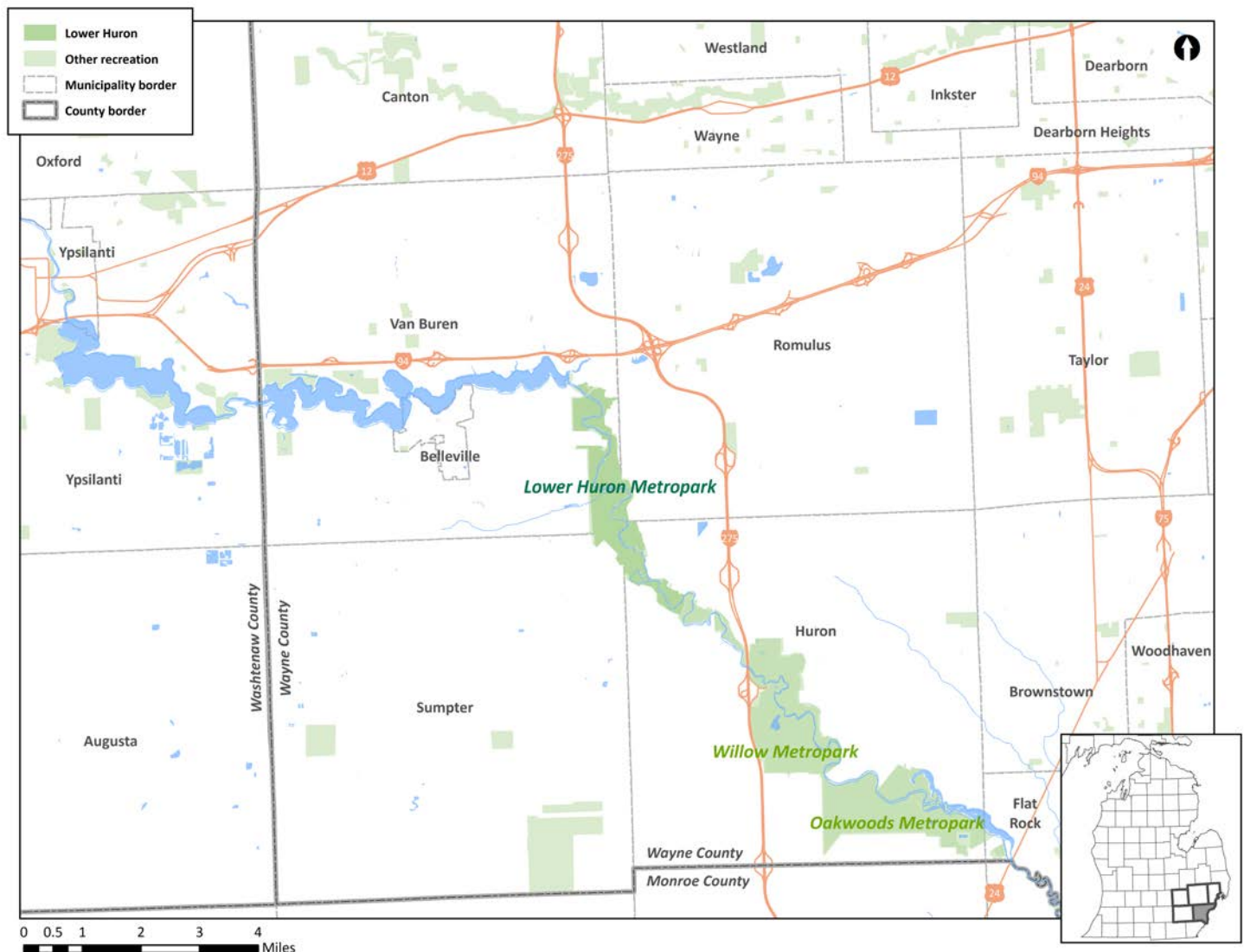




# Location

Lower Huron Metropark is located in the southwest section of Wayne County in southeast Michigan. Four municipalities include portions of Lower Huron within their borders: Van Buren Township, Sumpter Township, the City of Romulus, and Huron Township.

At its northernmost extent, Lower Huron nearly reaches I-94. Its eastern boundary is Waltz Road/Huron River Drive, to the west it reaches Haggerty Road, and to the south it extends to Savage Road. The park is situated on the Lower Huron River.



## NEEDS

Define and protect areas with important biodiversity features

Create a resilient network of biodiverse areas in the park

## OPPORTUNITIES

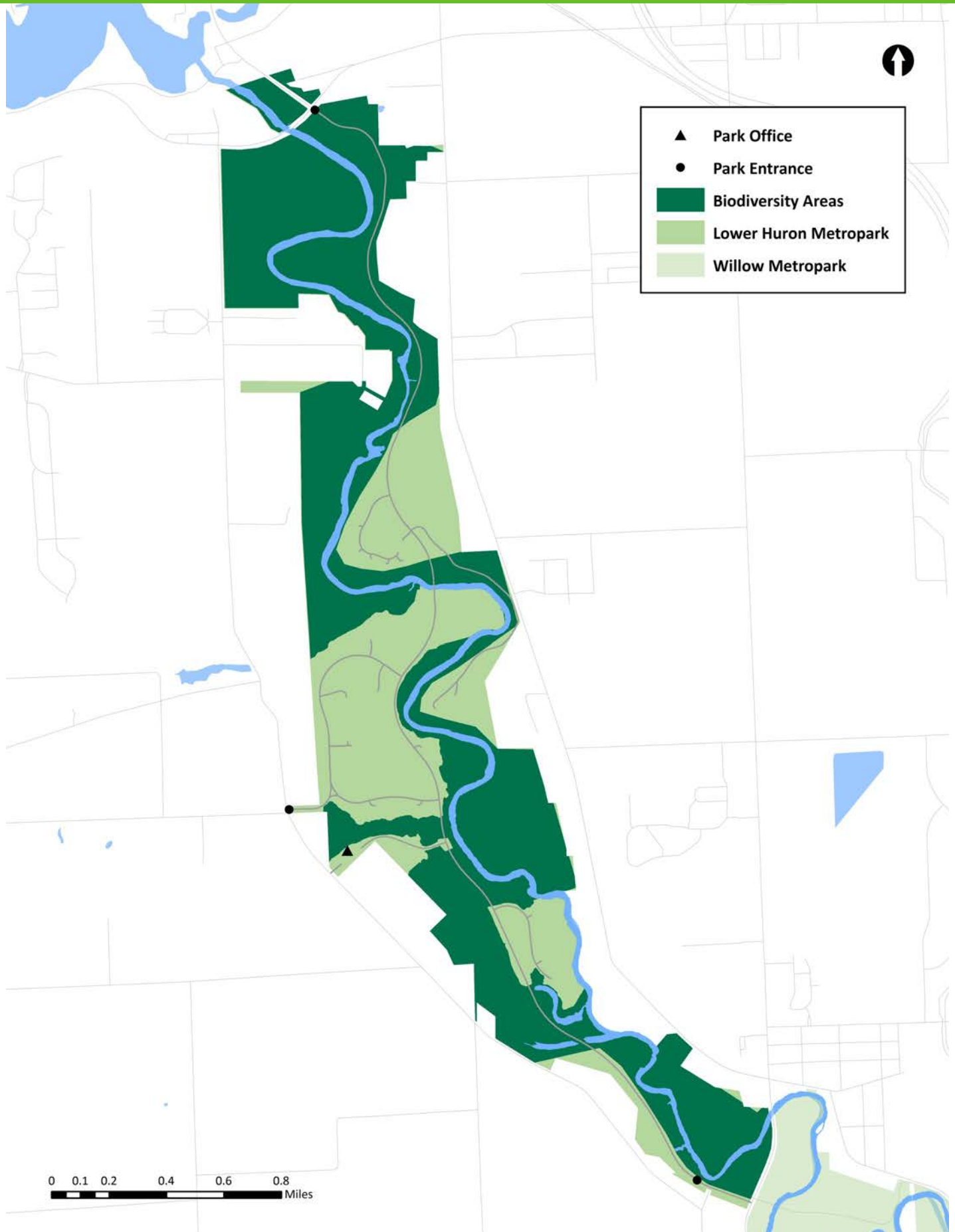
Biodiversity refers to the variety of life present in a given area, often measured by number and distribution of species. It is important to preserve because it provides humans with ecological services such as clean water and oxygen, leads to greater resistance and resilience during natural and human-caused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

| Metric                                    | What   | Why  | Metric                                | What  | Why  |
|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Elemental Occurrence</b>               | 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  | <b>Percent Invasive Species Cover</b> | percentage of total acreage with invasive plant coverage                      | areas with few invasive species require less work, have greater return on investment               |
| <b>FQA (Floristic Quality Assessment)</b> | 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                                   | <b>Community Ranking</b>              | rank assigned by the state due to natural community rarity or rate of decline | assesses the vulnerability of each natural community within the state                              |
| <b>FQI Connectivity</b>                   | 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              | <b>Wetlands</b>                       | the presence of wetlands  | wetlands tend to have greatest diversity, and are also critical to promote healthy water resources |
| <b>Size</b>                               | acreage of the habitat in question   | large habitats provide more diverse resources and facilitate migration, increase species fitness, resilience | <b>Habitat Connectivity</b>           | 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

#### Archaeological Findings

Several archaeological studies have been conducted at Lower Huron in the past decades, resulting in the discovery of artifacts from both Native American and European settlements. Sites identified include burial grounds, campsites, dwellings, kilns, commercial structures, tool manufacture areas, and farmsteads.

#### Schulz Mill and Dam

The dam is no longer standing, but the pilings can be seen within the park. The mill is still in operation just outside the park and sells feed and other grain products. Other mills that once stood on current park property but no longer exist include Johnson Mill and Otis/Stewart Mill.

#### Mt. Pleasant Village

Founded during the first half of the 1800s, the village no longer existed by the time of the Civil War. It can still be seen on historical maps, marked at the edge of current Lower Huron boundaries.

#### Robbe Farm

The Franklin L. Robbe farm consisted of a beautiful late-nineteenth century farmhouse and associated outbuildings. Robbe was involved in Van Buren Township politics in the 1880s, holding several elected positions including township supervisor. The farm and the buildings were donated to the Metroparks in the late 1960s, and the Metroparks began restoration of the property in the early 1970s.

Work stopped due to a reallocation of resources, and the farmhouse and two acres were donated to Van Buren Township after the community expressed an interest in restoring the building. Funding for the restoration was not secured and after several years of Township ownership the farmhouse and property reverted back to Metropark ownership. The Robbe farmhouse was demolished in December, 2003, but the Robbe Farm is included on the list of Michigan State Historic Sites.

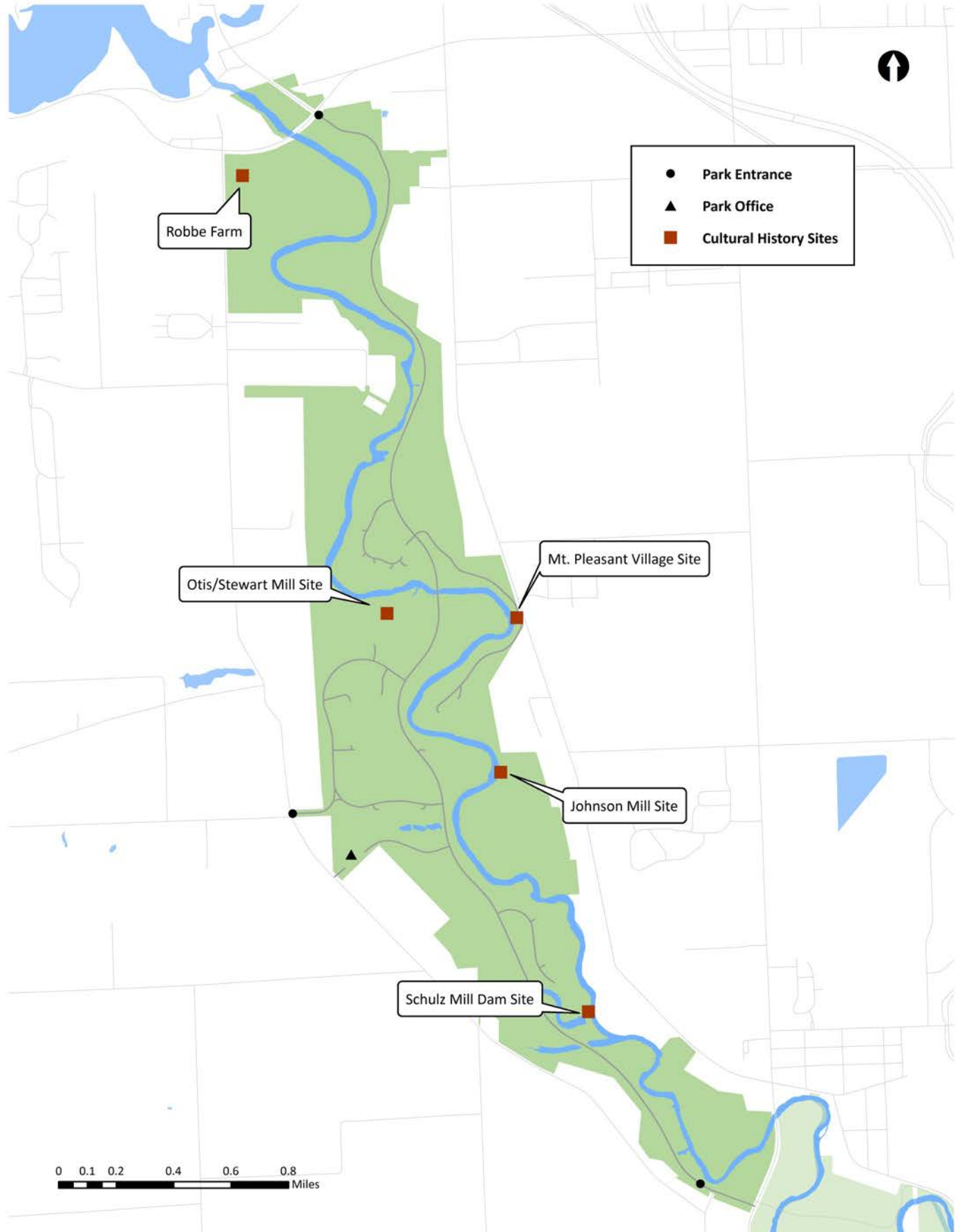
## Cultural History



Schulz Mill in 1913



Remains of Schulz Mill Dam pilings



# Infrastructure

In order to serve the varied needs of park visitors, Lower Huron 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.

Lower Huron is popular for picnicking and fishing, requiring shelters and piers to be maintained. Along with launches for paddlers on the Huron River Water Trail, a National Park Service-designated National Water Trail, these elements make up the primary recreational infrastructure of the park.

Due to their proximity, Lower Huron and the other Metroparks in Wayne County work together to provide high quality recreation to visitors. A goal in the planning process is to ensure that the facilities and infrastructure in these parks complement and do not duplicate each other.



## NEEDS

Address aging and overbuilt infrastructure

Redevelop park areas to better serve visitors and environment

## OPPORTUNITIES

| Lower Huron Infrastructure |        |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Public bldgs / avg age     | 3 / 25 |
| Service bldgs / avg age    | 3 / 20 |
| Comfort stations / avg age | 9 / 30 |
| Paths & trail miles        | 9.14   |
| Road miles                 | 8.66   |
| Playgrounds                | 7      |
| Percent of park mowed      | 22.6   |
| Rental shelters            | 9      |
| Sand volleyball courts     | 3      |
| Baseball fields            | 2      |
| Fishing platforms          | 3      |
| Parking lot acreage        | 20.09  |
| Tennis courts              | 1      |
| Ice skating areas          | 1      |
| Basketball courts          | 2      |
| Canoe/kayak launches       | 2      |







## Facilities & Centers

Lower Huron features a number of facilities that define its character and enhance the recreational experience of visitors. Some of these 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.



### Walnut Grove Campground

Lower Huron is one of two Metroparks with a public campground. Nestled within a bend of the Huron River and among the scenic Woods Creek trails, it provides easy access to picnicking and fishing.

### Ice Rinks

The Metroparks are open and provide exceptional recreation all four seasons of the year. On cold winter days, the two ice rinks host hockey matches and figure skating.

### Group Camp

On the banks of the river, the Group Camp site allows scouting troops, youth groups, and other youth organizations to enjoy a night at the park while learning about nature and rustic living.

### Turtle Cove Family Aquatic Center

One of the defining facilities of Lower Huron is the Turtle Cove Family Aquatic Center, constructed in 2007. It has become a popular destination for summer adventures in Wayne County. The center includes a lazy river, two waterslides, a zero-depth entry pool, and a play structure with a 300-gallon dumping bucket. Concessions are available at Turtle Cove.

### Par-3 Golf Course

This course has been utilized by beginner golfers and families, and includes both traditional and foot golf. It includes shorter holes than regulation golf.



## Lower Huron 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.

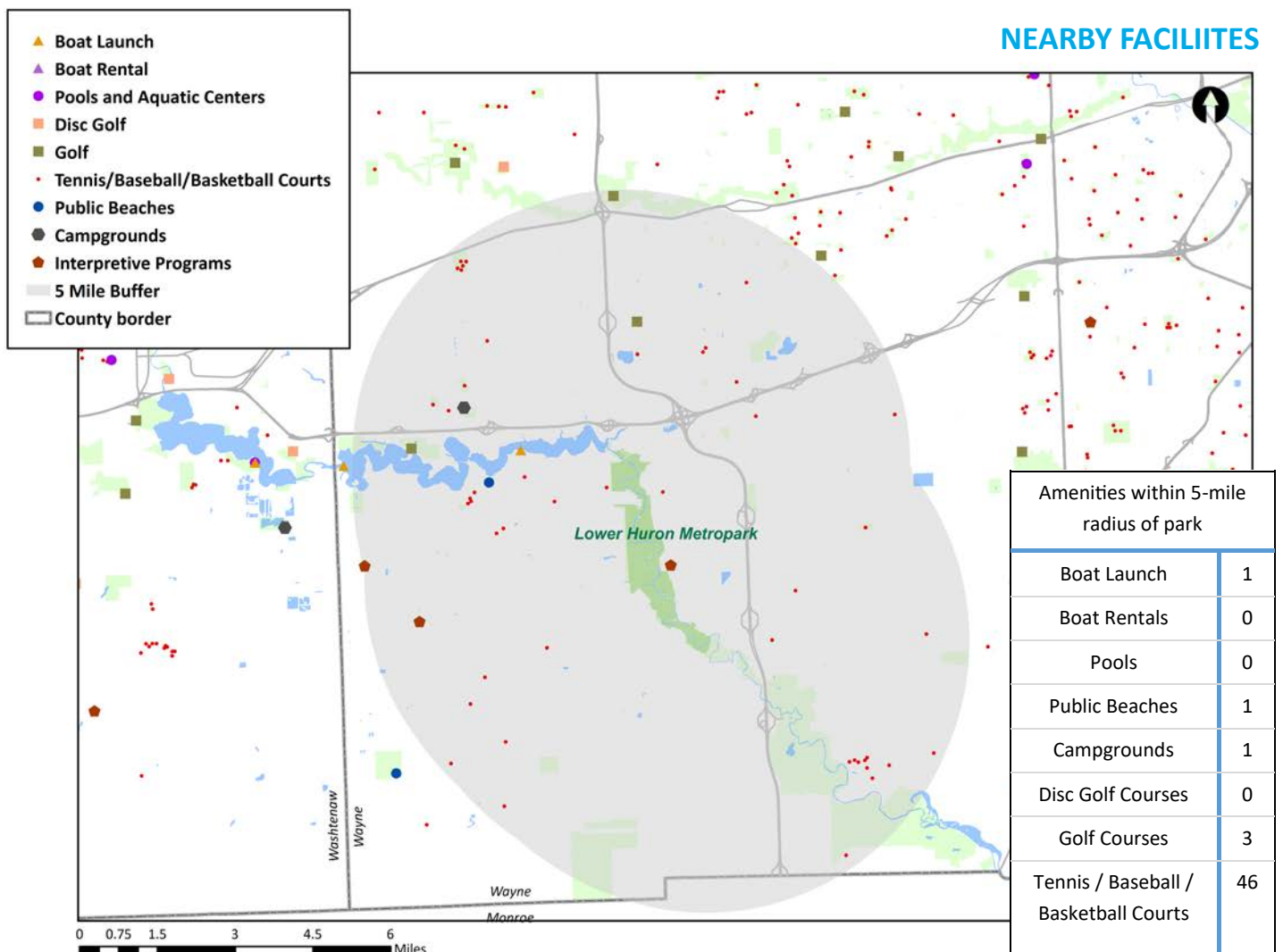
The map below shows the location of aquatic facilities, golf and disc golf, neighborhood sports facilities, and interpretive programs that compete with those offered at Lower Huron. The park is surrounded by relatively few other facilities, not including other Metroparks. Even court and field games are not well-represented except to the southeast near Willow. This may suggest that Lower Huron and the other Southern District parks play an important role in the recreation offered to residents of the area, acting as more of a local resource than other Metroparks.

### 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

### Grants

Over its history, Lower Huron 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 Lower Huron is encumbered, as shown on the following page.

The generous grants from the DNR and other sources have allowed the Metroparks to develop Lower Huron into the center of high-quality recreation that it is today.



### Encroachments

The Planning Department has worked with Lower Huron 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 Lower Huron abuts numerous residential backyards, it is important to work with neighbors to discourage informal 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.

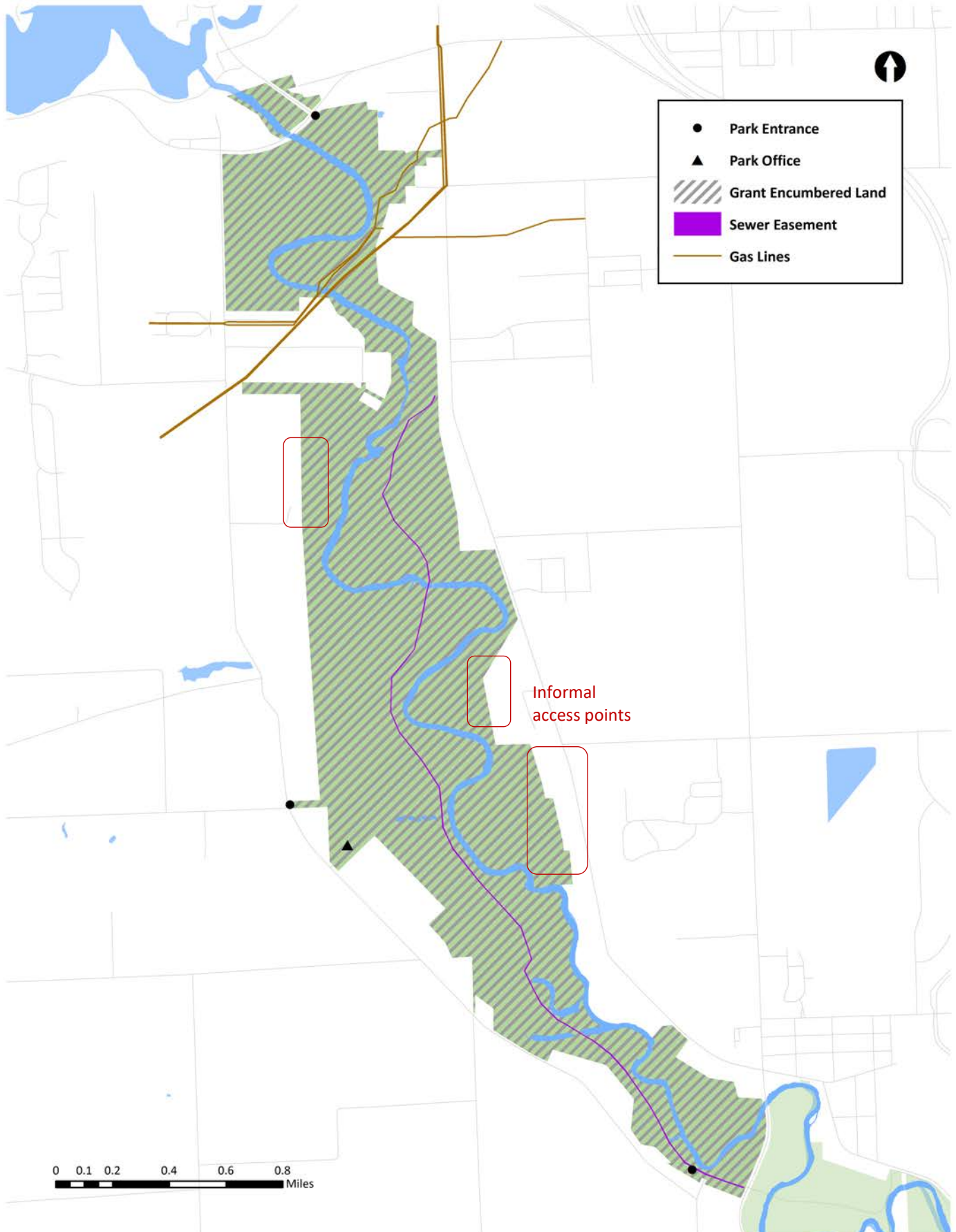
### Easements

Lower Huron contains various utility easements. These allow providers 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

Most of the property adjacent to the park is single-family residential, along with a small amount of industrial and commercial uses.









## 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 Lower Huron, 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

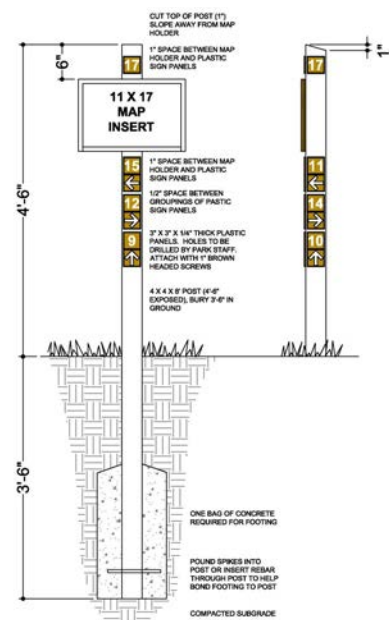
For many people, the easiest way to orient oneself in a new environment is through use of a map. For greater ease of use, all new trail wayfinding signs will include a map marked with a "you are here" symbols and the location of important park features and amenities.

### NEEDS

Replace outdated, confusing, inconsistent signs

Create consistent, convenient wayfinding system to give visitors confidence

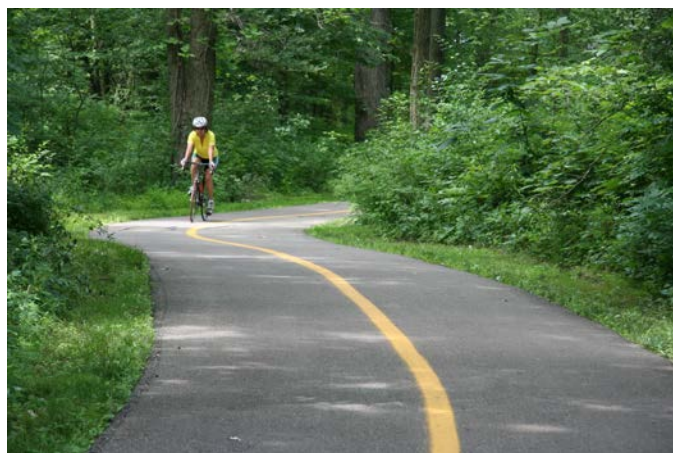
### OPPORTUNITIES

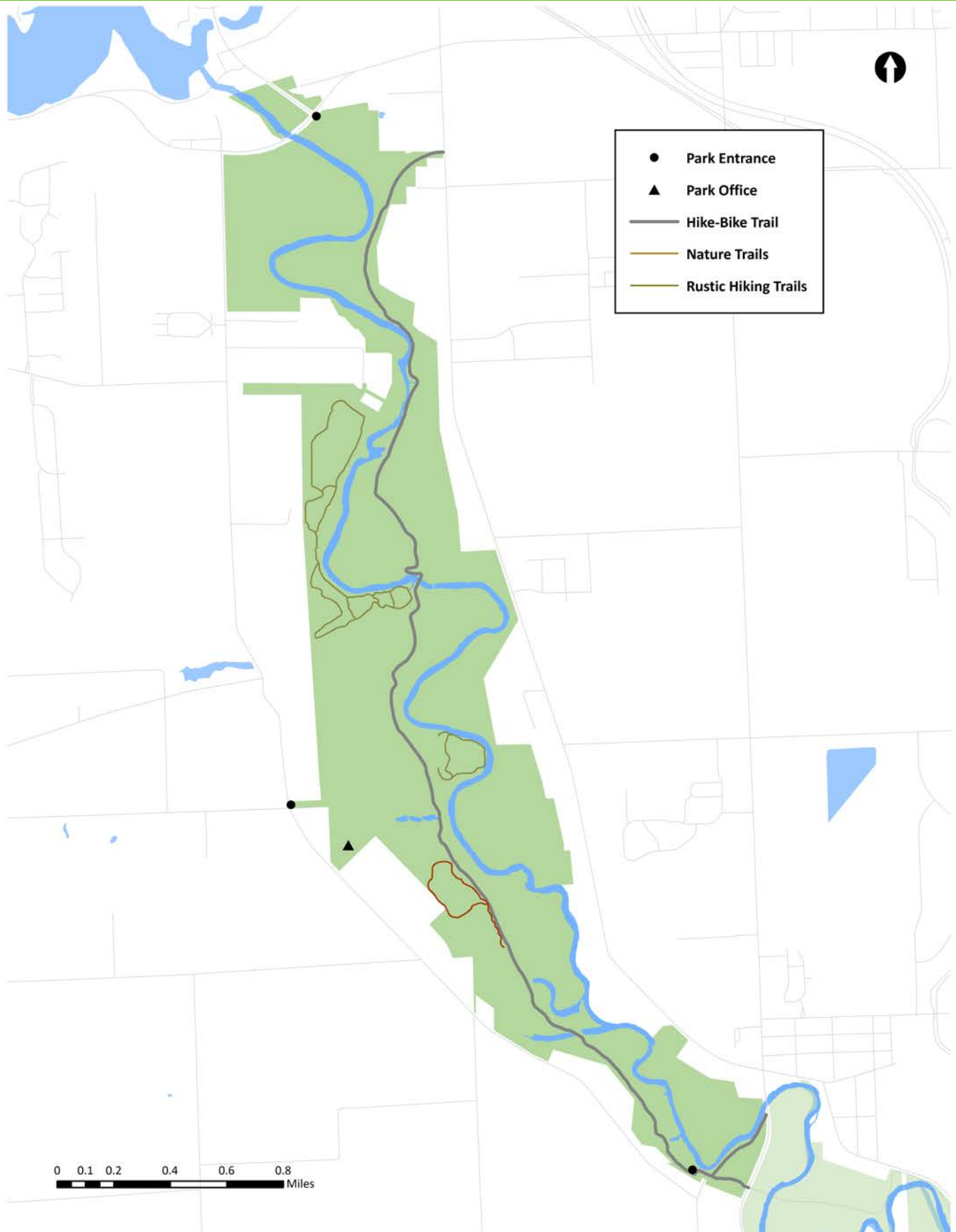


# Trails

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 trail availability 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   |
|---|---------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Shared-Use Trail (Hike-Bike Trail)</b> | 4.94          | 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.  |
| <b>Nature Trail</b>                       | 0.82          | 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. |
| <b>Rustic Hiking Trail</b>                | 3.38          | Pedestrian use only; running, jogging and pets. Snowshoes and cross-country skiing are permitted on designated trails only.   | Motorized vehicles, bikes and horses.  | Width and material vary, often dirt trails.   |
| <b>Huron River Water Trail</b>            | 6.2           | Canoeing and kayaking   | Other uses are present in river but are not considered part of water trail.  | Water   |





# 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 Lower Huron Metropark. These areas are highlighted below and shown on the map on the following page.

## NEEDS

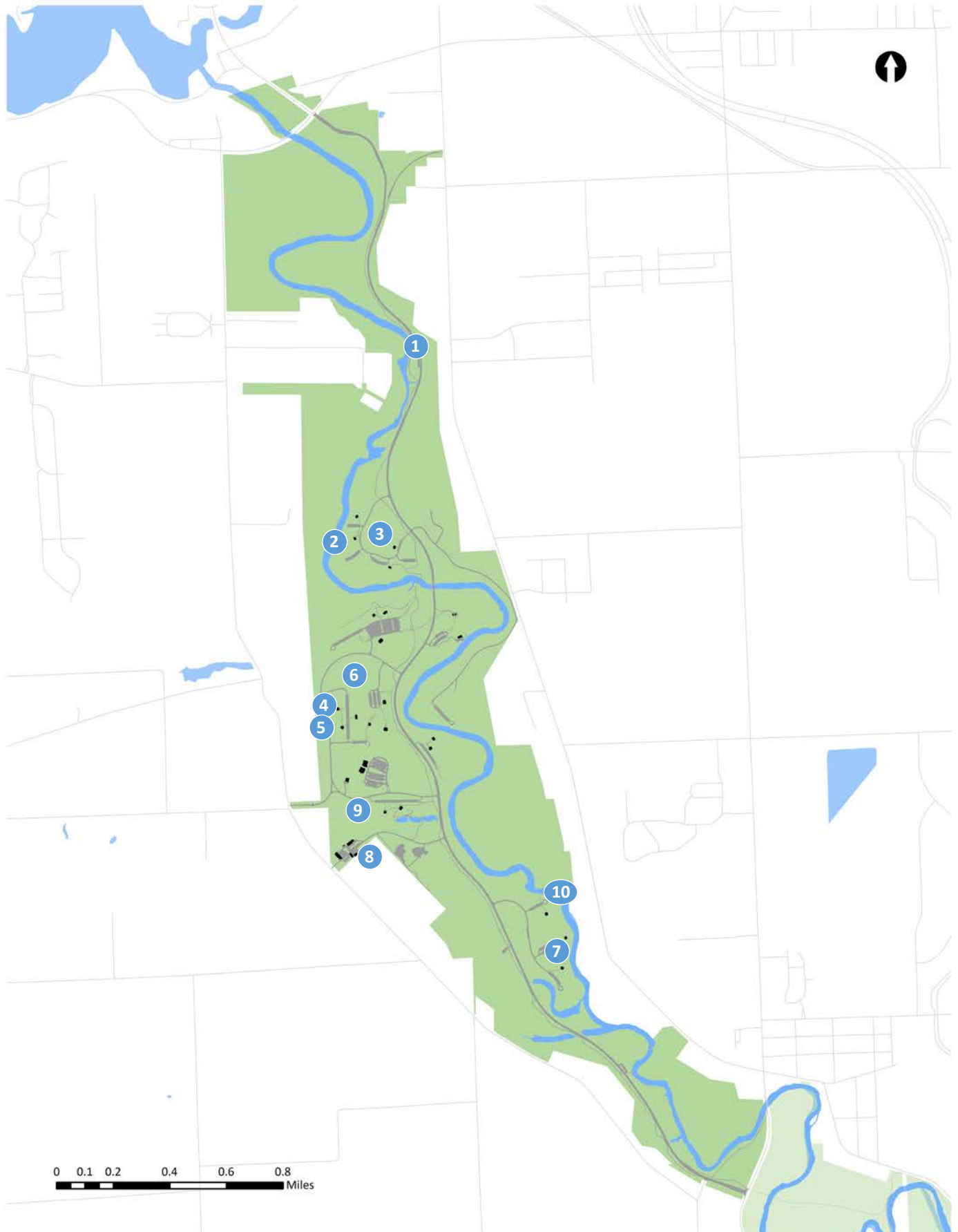
Pursue improvements to park accessibility

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

## OPPORTUNITIES

| Area                         | ID # | Description  |
|------------------------------|------|--|
| North Fishing Site           | 1    | Recommended accessible launch system, accessible routes to launch, signage at accessible parking, and accessible toilet for fishing site and launch.   |
| Walnut Grove                 | 2    | The playground is designed for accessibility but there is no access walkway to the structure.  |
| Tulip Tree                   | 3    | An accessible walk is needed between the picnic shelter and restrooms. Currently connection requires travel via car or roadways.   |
| Ellwoods East Playground     | 4    | The playground is designed for accessibility but there is no access walk to the structure .  |
| Ellwoods Restroom Building   | 5    | Accessible walks are needed to the restroom building. There are no paved walks to the building at this time.   |
| Hawthorn Glade South Shelter | 6    | An accessible walk is needed to the shelter. Recommendation is to move the shelter to a better spot that can be more easily connected with current accessible walks.   |
| Group Camp Picnic Shelter    | 7    | An accessible walk is needed to the picnic shelter. Recommendation is to move the shelter to a better spot that can be more easily connected with current accessible walks.  |
| Park Office                  | 8    | Recommended ADA assessment to ensure all features meet requirements.   |
| Fox Woods                    | 9    | An access walk to the shelter, restrooms and lower skating ponds is provided. Current entrance gates to parking lot interfere with accessible routes, do not offer consistent access walkways. The parks should consider modifying so access is provided all the time. |
| East Bend Launch             | 10   | Recommended accessible launch system, accessible routes to launch and map, and accessible water spigot.  |
| Parking lots                 | -    | Need additional striping, spaces and signage to make them compliant.   |
| Picnic shelters              | -    | ADA picnic tables and grills needed at shelters.   |





# REVENUE

## Revenue Sources



### 2015 Operations Revenue

| Revenue Source           | 2015 Total       | % of Revenue  |
|--------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Turtle Cove              | 918,560          | 58.48         |
| Tolling                  | 549,115          | 34.96         |
| Shelter Reservations     | 42,375           | 2.70          |
| Par-3/Footgolf           | 33,739           | 2.15          |
| Camping                  | 19,016           | 1.21          |
| Special events (approx.) | 6,000            | 0.38          |
| Miscellaneous (approx.)  | 2,000            | 0.13          |
|                          | <b>1,570,805</b> | <b>100.00</b> |

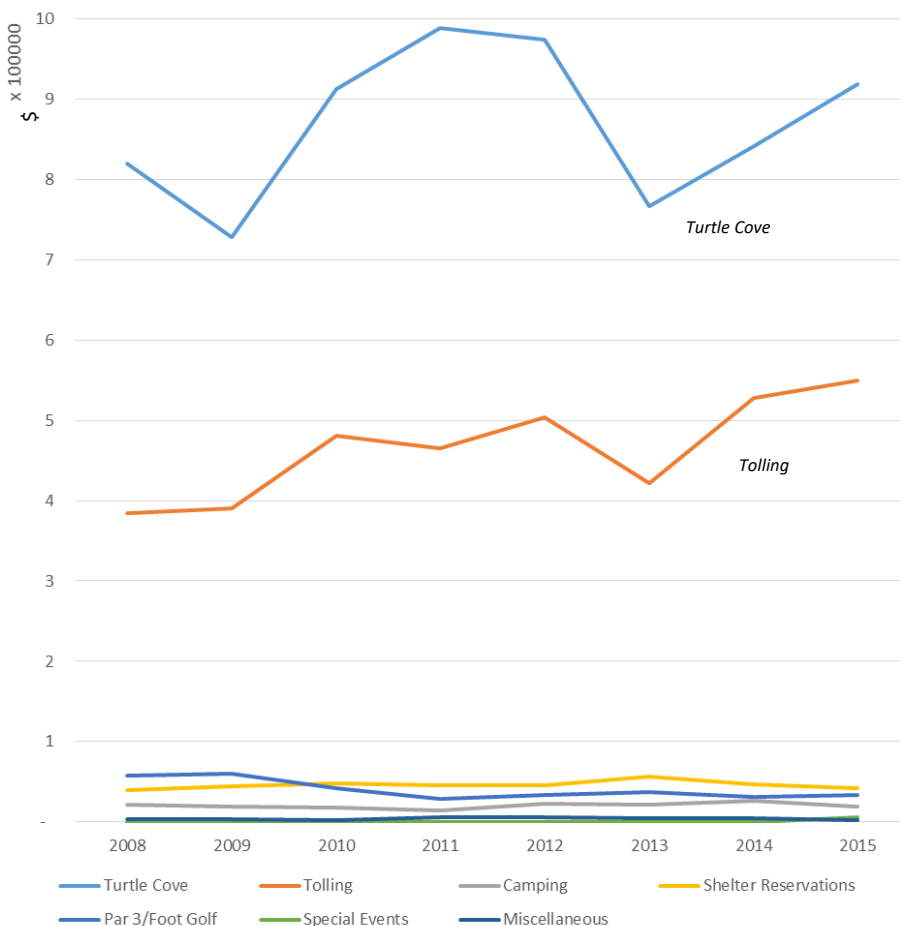
### NEEDS

Build up other sources of revenue

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

### OPPORTUNITIES

REVENUE TRENDS—2008-2015



The Metroparks 2015 General Fund revenue equaled \$48,477,108. Lower Huron's 2015 operations revenue was approximately \$1,570,805, comprising 3.2% of all Metroparks revenue.

The budgeted 2016 operations revenues for Lower Huron, Willow, and Oakwoods is \$2,884,254, while estimated 2016 operations expenses are \$6,202,473. These parks are combined in the budgeting process since they are administered together. Property tax and other revenue will subsidize 53.5% (\$3,318,219) of the three parks' operating budget.

As the chart illustrates, nearly all of Lower Huron's operations revenue comes from the Turtle Cove Family Aquatic Center and from park entrance tolling.

## Revenue

### Visitors

Lower Huron 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 Lower Huron Metropark have averaged around 300,000 since 2008. Record entries of over 400,000 were recorded in 2010. Weather often plays a role in attendance to the park; activity areas greatly affected by weather are the trails, fishing piers, Turtle Cove, and the golf course. Entries have dropped since 2010 but in the last couple years have shown signs of improvement.

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.

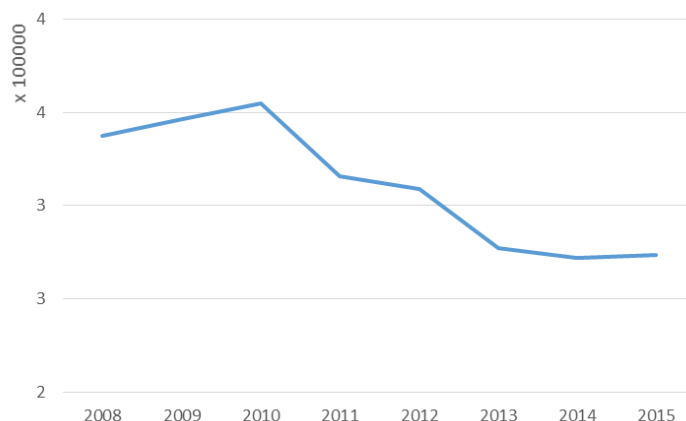
### NEEDS

Increase vehicle entry numbers

Draw visitors to the park with additional marketing and attractions

### OPPORTUNITIES

VEHICLE ENTRIES 2008-2015



Popular Turtle Cove and Hike-Bike path

Lower Huron 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



Volunteer work day



Cruizin' the Park



Radio Disney D-Tour



Lower Huron is primarily used for picnicking, family outings, and water recreation, and does not hold many programmed events throughout the year. Interpretive programs generally take place in nearby Oakwoods, where an interpretive center is located. Volunteer workdays do occur when special natural resources projects are needed, such as the boardwalk on the Woods Creek trail. Turtle Cove occasionally sees special events, and a number of external groups use park facilities to host gatherings such as 5k runs.

Due to its size and layout, nearby Willow Metropark has traditionally hosted more events. However, public input gathered for the master plan has revealed an interest in more programmed activities at Lower Huron, especially for children.



# COMMUNITY INFLUENCES

## Population

The population of the communities surrounding Lower Huron is aging rapidly and changing in mobility. The percentage of households without access to an automobile is rising throughout the region, and although the absolute numbers are still low, this trend is especially stark in the communities around Lower Huron. 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.

Although the municipalities immediately surrounding Lower Huron have a lower percentage of individuals over 65 years than the county and the region, that percentage is rising steeply. It seems possible that in the future these communities will overtake Wayne County in percentage of older adults.

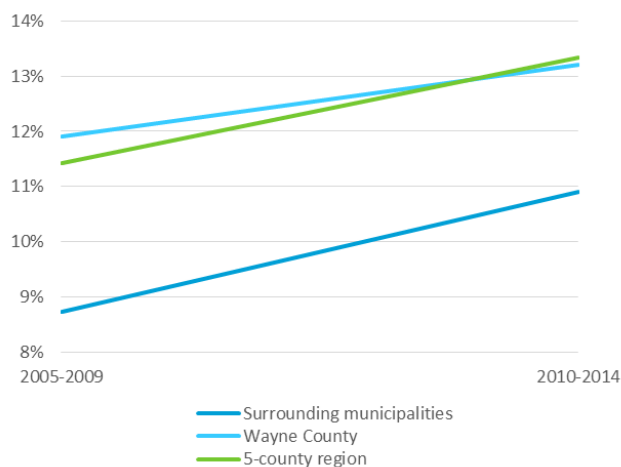
Older adults have distinct needs, often requiring accommodations for mobility and accessibility of park features such as trails and buildings. This is important to keep in mind when planning the future of a park serving an older population.

## NEEDS

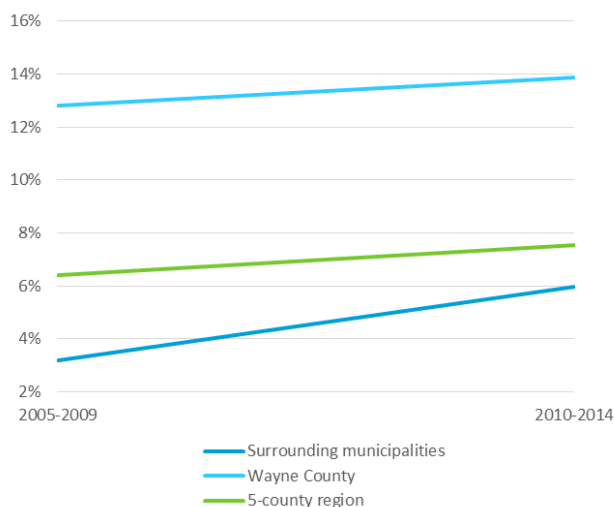
Address changing needs of new population demographics

Draw new users with an accessible, welcoming park environment

## OPPORTUNITIES



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



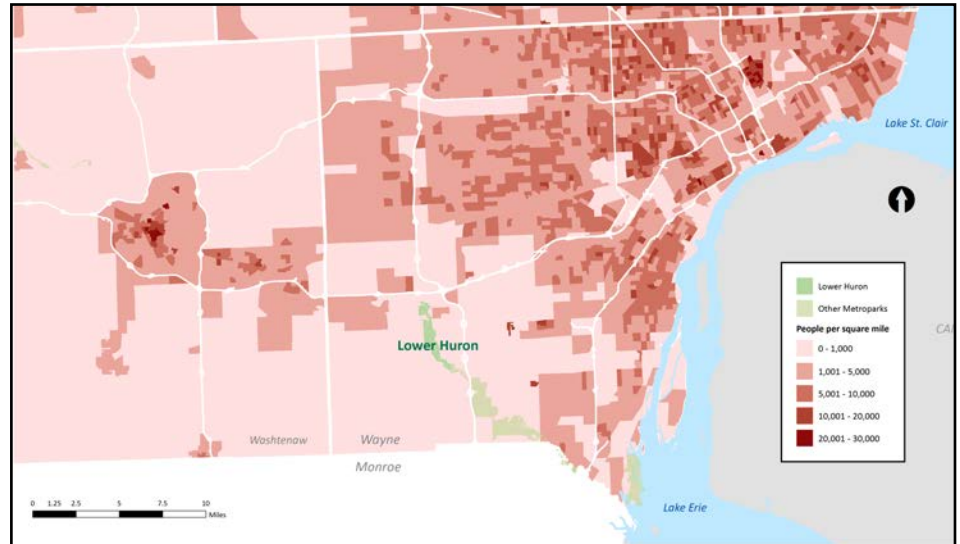
CHANGE IN PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO CARS AVAILABLE, 2005-09 through 2010-14 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)

## Community Influences

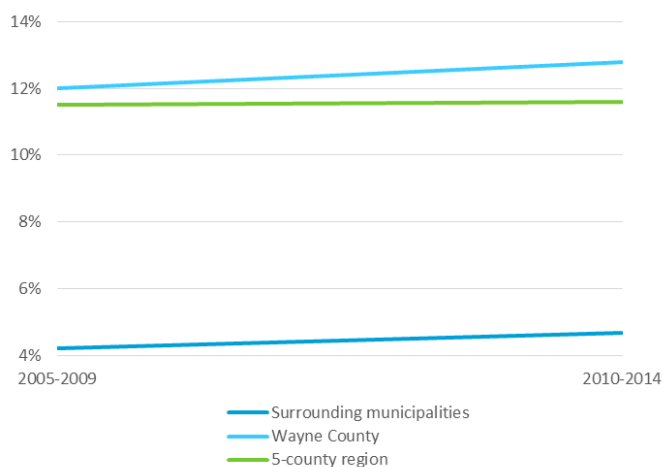
As shown below, Lower Huron is located at the southern edge of the suburban ring around Detroit, largely in the midst of rural low-density areas with less than one thousand residents per square mile. It is also connected to the string of urbanization extending to Ann Arbor. These factors create unique land use and park access challenges.

While Wayne County is falling in population density, the population in the municipalities surrounding Lower Huron has stayed remarkably constant over the past ten years. Remaining aware of development changes in the area will be important to gauge recreation needs.

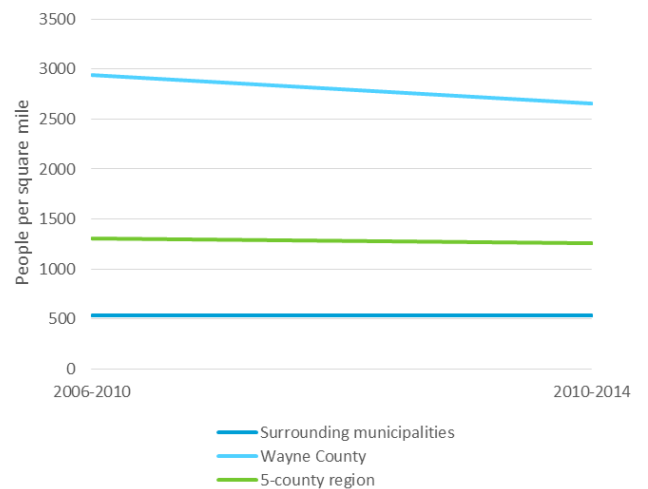
Although most households in the area still speak English as their first language, in both the surrounding communities and Wayne County a growing number of households speak a language other than English at home. Because of this growing linguistic diversity, the Metroparks are working towards more universal signage design, with a focus on easily understandable symbols.



POPULATION DENSITY BY CENSUS TRACT, 2014-2019



CHANGE IN PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS SPEAKING LANGUAGE BESIDES ENGLISH AT HOME, 2009-2014 through 2014-2019 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)



CHANGE IN AVERAGE POPULATION DENSITY, 2006-10 through 2010-14 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)

### NEEDS

Improve park connectivity with community

Create good working relationship with surrounding municipalities

### OPPORTUNITIES

#### Van Buren Township

- City of Belleville serves function of “downtown” for southern Van Buren
- Preserve open space and rural feel
- Development of greenway and trails plan

#### Sumpter Township

- Preserve open and agricultural lands
- Protection of natural resources such as Lakeplain Prairie
- Woodland and Open Space ordinances, use of cluster developments
- Interest in development of greenway system

#### City of Romulus

- Connectivity and traffic flow challenges due to Detroit Metropolitan Airport
- Streetscape and non-motorized connection improvement
- Interest in acquiring public land

#### Huron Township

- Metroparks as major attraction to township
- Preserve open space and farmland
- Planned denser development in the villages
- More bicycle and pedestrian connections

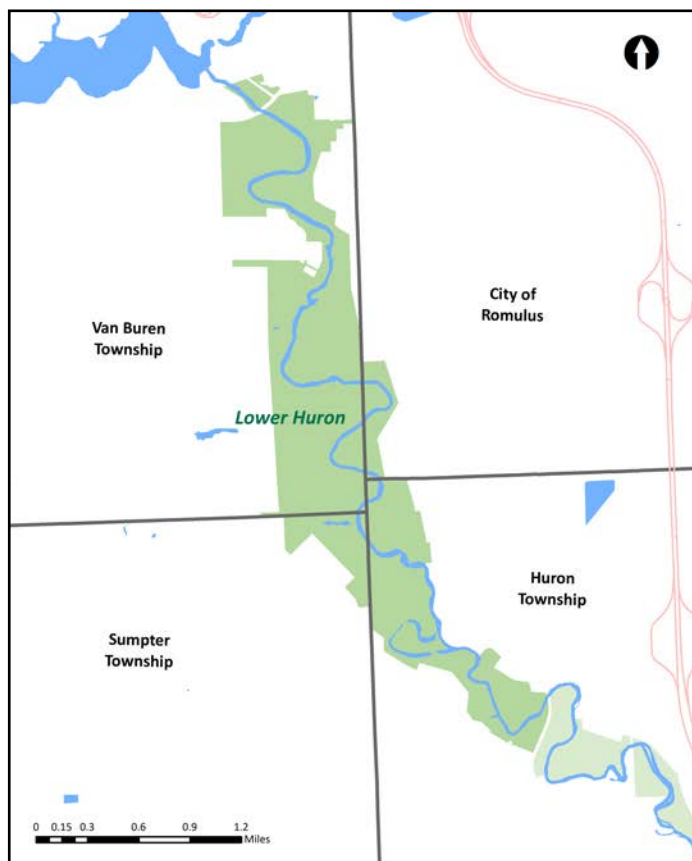
#### Huron River Watershed Council

- Improve climate resiliency of communities on the watershed
- Green infrastructure for local governments program
- Collaboration in stormwater management efforts
- RiverUp! program supporting placemaking in river towns
- Huron River Water Trail partner facilitation

## Projects/Initiatives

Understanding the goals and plans of municipalities bordering and/or containing Lower Huron is essential for a collaborative, comprehensive planning process. Planning staff researched the published master plans and recreation plans of each municipality: Van Buren Township, Sumpter Township, Huron Township, and the City of Romulus. These provided a basic idea of the planned direction of each community, especially regarding land use, development, and recreation.

MUNICIPALITY MAP



## Community Influences

### Relevant Planning Documents

#### Huron Charter Twp Master Plan, 2004

*"Huron Township is blessed with the presence of the Huron River and the Metroparks. The natural features associated with the Huron River are a critical part of the Township's ecosystem, natural heritage, and quality of life." pg. 17*

#### Sumpter Twp Master Land Use Plan, 2005

*"Woodlands, particularly along unpaved and/or narrow rural roads are an important feature because they contribute to the Township's rural character and help to convey a 'country' atmosphere." pg. 67*

#### Lower Huron River Watershed Management Plan, 2005

*"If current development practices are employed to accommodate the projected increase in population and associated infrastructure, then SEMCOG estimates 40% of the remaining open spaces will be developed within the watershed by 2020. Much of this projected conversion of undeveloped land will occur in the lower Huron River Watershed" pg. 23*

#### Van Buren Twp South Side Master Plan, 2007

*"As the South Side continues to grow and development pressures increase, a re-evaluation of land use and development planning and policies is warranted. A combination of open space preservation, zoning changes and innovative land development will likely become more important." pg. 3.7*

#### City of Romulus Master Plan, 2009

*"A multi-modal pathway has been installed along the I-275 that must be maintained in order to protect Romulus's access to the regional pathway system. In addition, there is a planned regional greenway system that should be considered in non-motorized transportation planning." pg. 4-7*

#### SEMCOG Green Infrastructure Vision for SE Michigan, 2014

*"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 Lower Huron a wider context and in many cases underscore the importance of the park's resources to citizens.

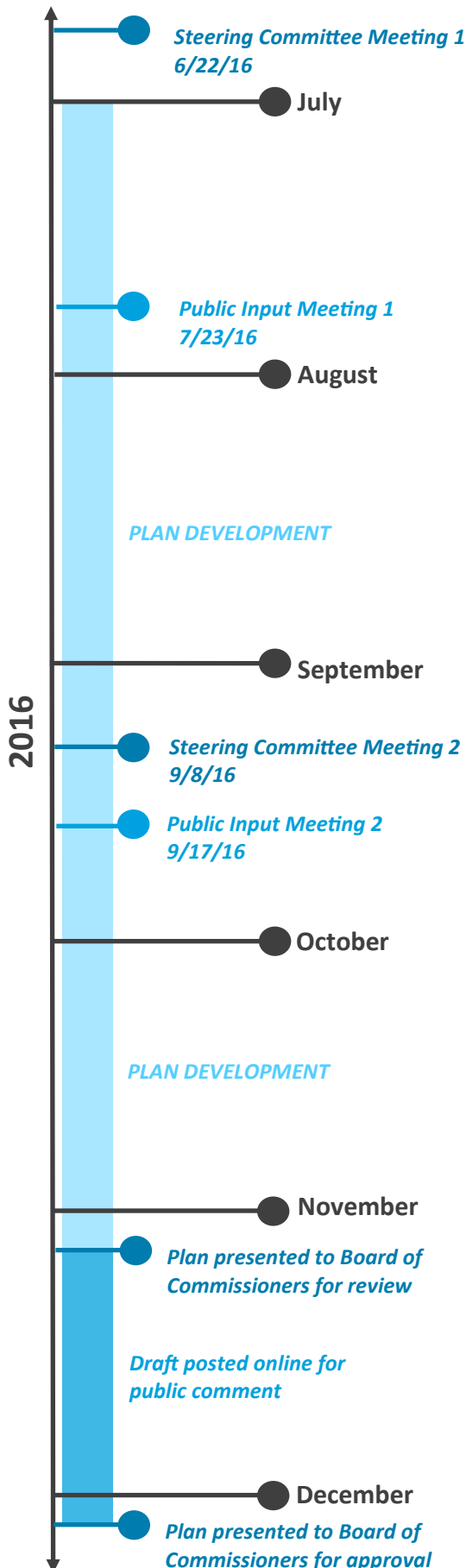
The southern portion of Wayne County contains few other large parks beyond the four Metroparks. Therefore, Lower Huron, Willow, and Oakwoods may provide a disproportionate amount of local recreation opportunities.

Lower Huron 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 Lower Huron 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. The Iron Belle Trail is a state-designated trail with both a hiking and a biking arm reaching from Belle Isle in Detroit to Ironwood at the very western edge of the Upper Peninsula. The hike-bike trail from Lake Erie to Lower Huron Metropark is part of the 791-mile bicycle route, which is 64% complete according to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. This kind of multi-jurisdictional partnership enhances the recreational resources of all participants.



# 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 both by Metroparks social media and by staff distribution of flyers to libraries and community centers in the surrounding areas.

Submitted 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 November for final public comment, which influenced the final Master Plan sent to the Board of Commissioners for approval in December.

### Public Meeting 1 - 7/23/16

- 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 - 9/17/16

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

# Results

At the first public meeting, the pom-pom activity showed that trails are a top priority for Lower Huron visitors, with Canoeing/Kayaking and Camping also being highly valued. Golf and Winter Activities came in next, then Picnicking and Turtle Cove, then Fishing, and finally Court Games.

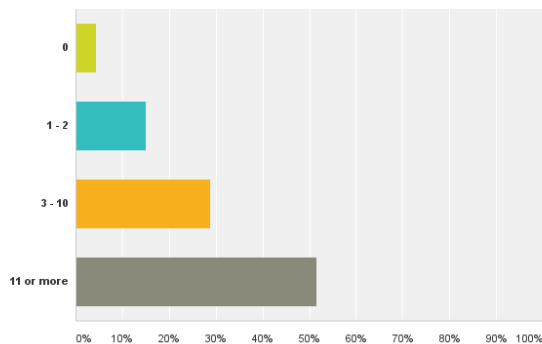
The survey responses, both written and submitted online, offered more insight into the needs of park patrons. A common theme running through the suggestions was the desire for more amenities and activities at the park. A number of respondents proposed canoe/kayak rental, more play areas and activities for children, and trail-related programming. Several comments were made about trails, including need for better maintenance, better signage, and expansion. Individuals also mentioned general park concerns about cost, access, natural resource preservation, and advertisement.

At the second public meeting, participants expressed strong support for improvements at the North Fishing Site, especially regarding kayak access. They also approved of enhancement of the campground, favored a relocation of the park office to the Haggerty Road entrance, and supported closure of the Par-3 course.

This input helped form the project list in the following section of the plan. More analysis of public feedback results can be found on the next page.

**Q3 Approximately how many times do you visit Lower HuronMetropark in a year?**

Answered: 180 Skipped: 1



**Q7 What can be done to improve your favorite area or facilities for your favorite activity?**

Answered: 71 Skipped: 110

Campsites Rental Turtle Cove Doing Love Drive  
Willow Bike Paths Water River Park  
Programs Trails Winter Lower Huron  
Golf Course Natural Cheaper Playground Price  
Kayak Launch Toddler Play Areas



**Q8 What would make your visit to Lower HuronMetropark more enjoyable overall?**

Answered: 61 Skipped: 120

Benches Price Guided Nature Enjoy Walk  
Rentals Big Access Trails Improve Park  
Playground Activities Canoe Road Fishing  
Passes Restroom Camping

## Survey Response Topics

### User Experience

- Trees and natural landscapes
- Disability/senior access
- Transportation to park
- Annual pass entrance lane
- Restroom quality/quantity
- Frequency of park patrol
- Road repair and user conflict
- Scenic overlooks

### Events/Activities

- Advertisement of activities
- Band selection
- Horse and buggy rides
- Increased activity programming
- Choice of caterer

### General

- Entrance fee
- Extend hours
- Website improvement
- Land acquisition

### Trails

- Increased trail programming
- Better trail maintenance
- Addition of walking trails
- Addition of biking trails
- Winter trail plowing
- Addition of mountain bike trails
- Improved trail signage
- Improved dog signage
- Potable water access
- Increased shade and amenities
- Improved nature trails
- Bike rental
- Segways on trails

### Golf/Sports

- Advertisement of golf course
- Addition of sports courts
- Closure of golf course
- Improved ice rink
- Disc golf course
- Rental fishing poles

### Children

- Addition of new kinds of play areas
- Increased children's activities
- More shade in play area
- Safety and security for children
- Addition of bounce house

### Camp/Picnic

- Improved campground
- East Bend as picnicking
- Reopened group camp
- Vehicle access to picnic shelters
- Barbecue pits

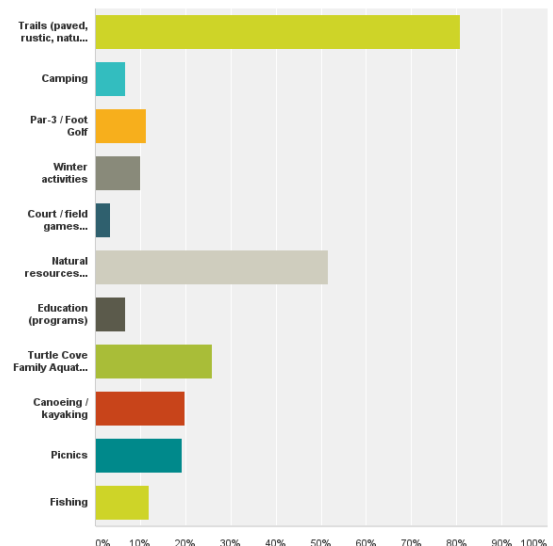
### Water

- Canoe/kayak rental
- Addition of Turtle Cove features
- Vehicle paths to launches
- Addition of kayak launches
- Improved launch signage
- Picnic tables near water
- River clean up



**Q6 What is your favorite part of the park or activity within Lower HuronMetropark?**  
Examples are given for each category.  
(Choose up to 3.)

Answered: 151 Skipped: 30



## Participation

The Lower Huron Master Plan online and hard copy questionnaire received 181 responses, and a dozen individuals attended the two public meetings. As shown in the map below, responses came in primarily from the area directly surrounding Lower Huron in southwest Wayne County. Zip codes in Washtenaw and Monroe counties also yielded several responses, along with a few in Livingston, Oakland, and Macomb counties. One or two responses came from Kalamazoo County in southwest Michigan and Chippewa County in the Upper Peninsula.

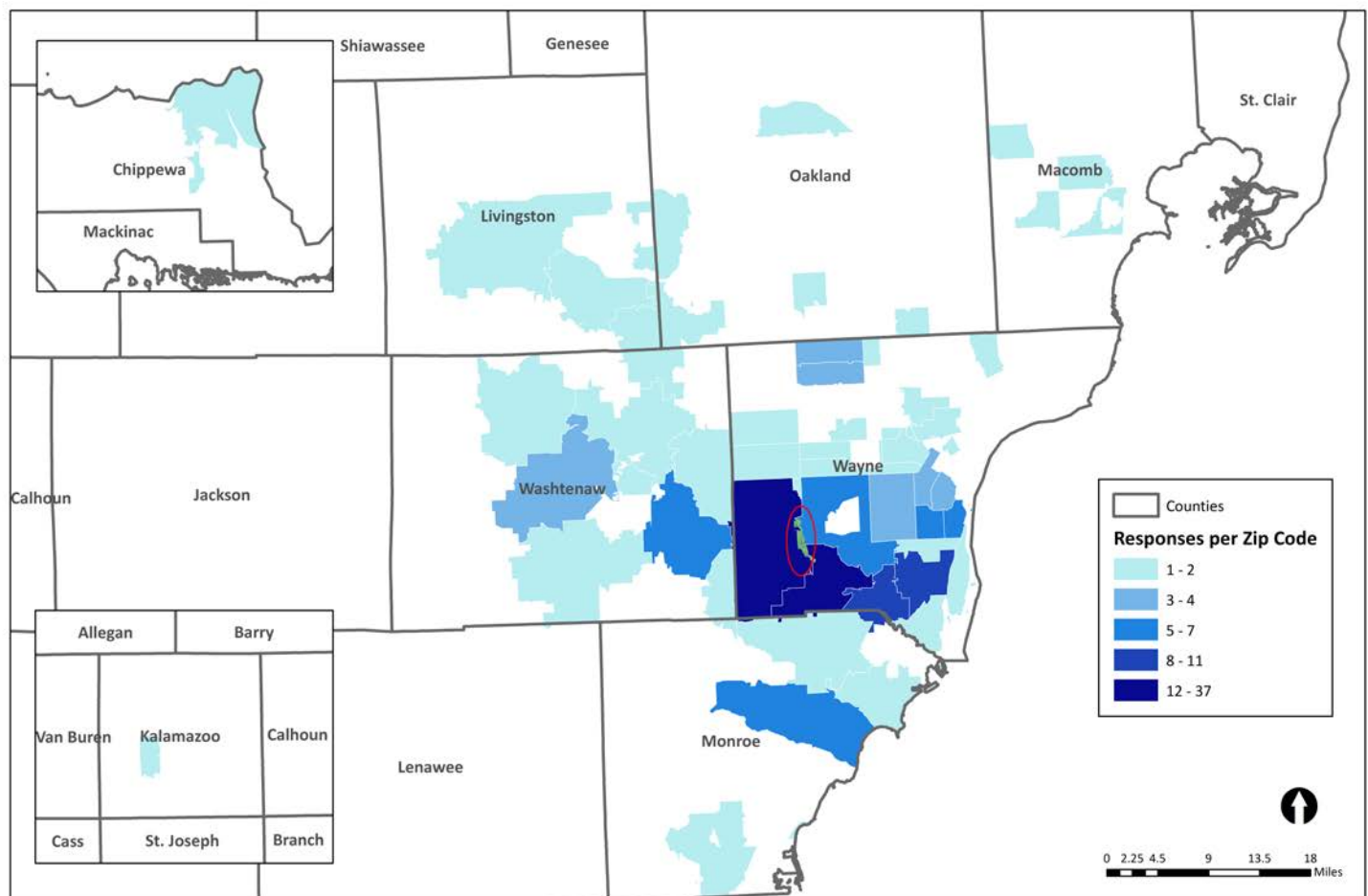
### NEEDS

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 special character of park
- Define and protect areas with important biodiversity features
- Better educate about and preserve important cultural features
- Address aging and overbuilt infrastructure
- Identify areas of facility duplication
- Work with county to address park boundary issues
- Replace outdated, confusing, inconsistent signs
- Build up other sources of revenue
- Increase vehicle entry numbers
- Increase revenue and visitation
- Address changing needs of new population demographics
- Improve park connectivity with community
- Incorporate variety of opinions and user groups into master plan



### Opportunities

- Build a strong identity and user base
- 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
- Offer new and exciting activities/programs to visitors of the park to both boost tolling and gather user fees
- Draw visitors to the park with additional marketing and attractions
- Take advantage of captive audiences, actively take part in programming activities and events
- Draw new users with an accessible, welcoming 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) |
|--|-------------|------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Turtle Cove renovations: new aquatic feature, new rental shelters, reinforced turf in overflow parking, increase food service kitchen capacity, new shade structure(s) for extended queuing line | Engineering | Planning, Operations               | Contractor     | \$1,000,000   | x                      |                      |                       |
| North fishing site improvements: increase parking capacity, replace/relocate pit toilets, improve canoe/kayak launch   | Engineering | Planning, Operations               | Contractor     | TBD           |                        | x                    |                       |
| Replace Bemis Road tollbooth   | Engineering | Planning, Operations               | Contractor     | \$120,000     | x                      |                      |                       |
| Replace and relocate Park Office   | Engineering | Planning, Operations               | Contractor     | \$2,000,000   | x                      |                      |                       |
| Walnut Grove campground improvements: provide electricity to selected camp sites, add shower facilities, enhance landscape (more trees, seed former ball fields)                                 | Engineering | Planning, Operations, Maintenance  | Contractor     | TBD           |                        | x                    |                       |
| Close Par 3 Golf Course  | Operations  | Maintenance, Planning, Engineering |                | n/a           | 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                    |                       |
| Install above-ground fuel storage at Service Yard                       | Engineering | Maintenance          | Contractor     | \$170,000     | 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 and interpretive signage improvements - Woods Creek, Paw Paw, Bob White | Planning   | Maintenance, Operations |                | \$10,000      | 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         | Planning, Operations                |                | \$30,000      | x                      | x                    | x                     |
| Landscape tree diversity plantings (annual)  | NR         | Planning, Operations                |                | \$3,500       | x                      | x                    | x                     |
| Energy conservation initiatives  | NR         | Planning, Engineering, Interpretive |                | \$9,000       | x                      |                      |                       |
| Hazardous waste removal (annual)   | NR         |                                     |                | \$1,000       | x                      | x                    | x                     |
| Early detection, rapid response. Invasive species surveys and control in high quality natural areas (annual) | NR         | Interpretive                        | NGOs           | \$10,000      | x                      | x                    | x                     |
| Conduct prescribed fire in adapted native communities (Bobwhite wetland, Fox Woods ravine, etc.)             | NR         |                                     |                | \$15,000      | x                      | x                    | x                     |
| Oak wilt monitoring and prevention (annual)  | NR         | Operations                          | MDNR           | staff time    | x                      | x                    | x                     |
| Deer cull to maintain deer at roughly 15/square mile.  | NR         | Police                              |                | staff time    | x                      | x                    | x                     |

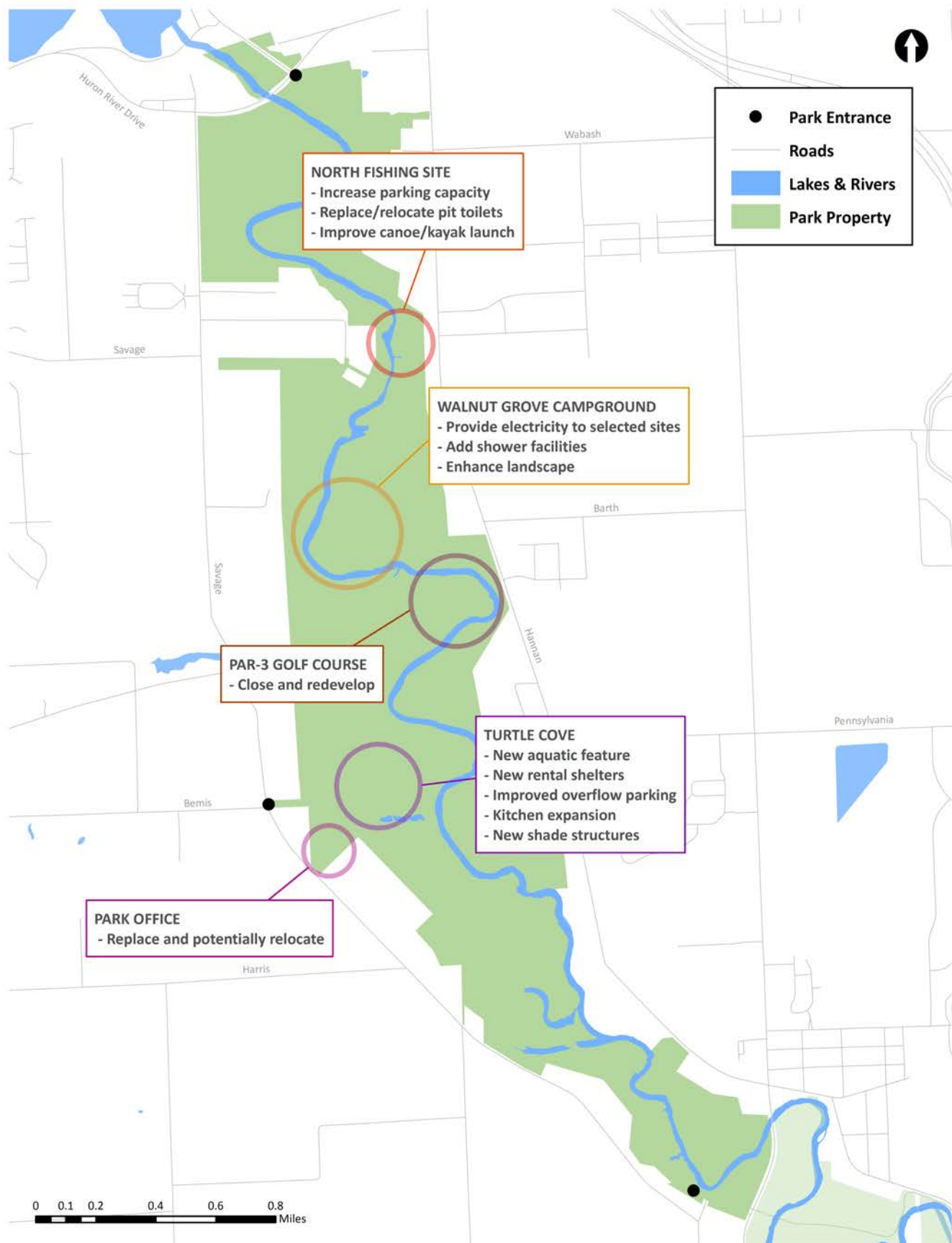




# Area Plans/Studies/Initiatives

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) |
|---|------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Update trail maps to show opportunities for walking/hiking/trail running        | Graphics   | Planning                |                  | staff time    | x                      |                      |                       |
| Turtle Cove renovation site plan  | Planning   | Engineering, Operations |                  | staff time    | x                      |                      |                       |
| Park Office redevelopment and relocation plan                                   | Planning   | Engineering, Operations | Consultant       | \$80,000      | x                      |                      |                       |
| North fishing site improvements plan  | Planning   | Engineering, Operations |                  | staff time    | x                      |                      |                       |
| Walnut Grove campground monitoring and site improvements plan                   | Planning   | Engineering, Operations |                  | staff time    | x                      |                      |                       |
| Future plan for Par 3 Golf Course   | Planning   | Engineering, Operations |                  | staff time    | x                      |                      |                       |
| Investigate partnership with Rolling Hills waterpark for overflow days          | Planning   |                         |                  | staff time    | x                      |                      |                       |
| Fisheries assessment and creel survey   | NR         |                         | MDNR             | \$25,000      | X                      |                      |                       |
| Herpetological assessment of the park   | NR         |                         |                  | \$9,000       | X                      |                      | X                     |
| Shoreline erosion survey  | NR         |                         |                  | \$10,000      | X                      |                      |                       |
| Establish invasive species control tracking website                             | NR         | IT                      | MNFI, MISIN      | \$15,000      | X                      |                      |                       |
| Comprehensive wildlife surveys and mapping (Birds, insects, freshwater mussels) | NR         | Interpretive            | MNFI, Consultant | \$35,000      | X                      |                      | X                     |



# Key Projects

## Turtle Cove

2017-2021

Built in 2007, Turtle Cove Family Aquatic Center is a popular destination for family outings in Wayne County. Since then, changes have been proposed to make the user experience more enjoyable and comfortable for all. These investments into the facility will ensure that Turtle Cove can continue providing high quality recreational experiences for years to come.

### Needs:

- More varied play experience
- Amenities on high-volume days
- More picnicking opportunities

### Solutions:

- Add new water element to the facility
- Expand kitchen and add shade structures
- Add picnic shelters nearby



## North Fishing Site

2022-2026

Dating to the 1950s and with a dock built in 2001, the North Fishing Site draws many anglers, paddlers, and other nature lovers due to its beautiful and convenient location near the north park entrance. This popularity means that the facility needs upgrading to accommodate larger volumes and more intensive recreational use.

### Needs:

- More user amenities
- Improved paddling facilities and access to the river

### Solutions:

- Expand parking area
- Add restrooms
- Enhance canoe/kayak launch



## Action Plan

### Park Office

2017-2021

Built in 1958, this park office has seen decades of park operations at Lower Huron, and staff are in need of a more modern facility to keep the park running smoothly. Since the office serves a fundamental role in providing information and assistance to visitors to Lower Huron, Willow, and Oakwoods, the new building will likely be constructed in a more prominent and accessible location.

#### Needs:

- Structural improvements
- More central location

#### Solution:

- Build new park office in new location



### Walnut Grove Campground

2022-2026

Built in 2012 at the Tulip Tree picnic area, this is one of only two public campgrounds in both Wayne County and the Metroparks system. After several seasons of families and individuals taking advantage of this site for outdoor adventure, a few amenities have been identified as important to drawing campers in the future.

#### Needs:

- Improved campsite amenities
- Improved aesthetics

#### Solutions:

- Addition of showers
- Addition of electricity to select sites
- New landscaping features





## Action Plan

### Par-3 Golf Course

2017-2021

Opened in 1961, the Par-3 golf course allows players to take on shorter holes and has often been used by beginners and younger golfers. It has consistently generated more expenses than revenue, however, and upcoming infrastructure costs make it no longer financially viable. The course will be closed and a site plan will be created to repurpose the land for other recreational activity.

#### Needs:

- Less maintenance-intensive land use
- No further investment in course

#### Solutions:

- Close golf course
- Create site plan for alternate recreational use



Infrastructure improvement cost

## 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. Structures will be built and retrofitted to improve ease of access, and paved paths will be constructed to better connect parking with recreational activities.

- **Above-ground fuel storage**

All parks are transitioning to above-ground fuel tanks, which are less costly and easier to install, maintain, and monitor.

- **Wayfinding/interpretive signage**

Current wayfinding can be inconsistent and confusing. New signs will provide succinct information at important decision points and provide more concise, engaging interpretation of the natural world. Symbols will also be incorporated into the design to promote universal comprehension.

- **Update of trail maps**

Current maps do not accurately reflect trail availability within the park. Trails will be properly classified and mapped in conjunction with the signage updates.

- **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.



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