

Executive Summary

The Oakland County Parks and Recreation (OCPR) *5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2023-2027* ("*Recreation Plan*") will guide staff and the Parks Commission over the next five years to provide high-quality recreational opportunities to the residents of Oakland County.

The *Recreation Plan* updates and replaces the *Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2018-2022*, which expires on December 31, 2022. Preparation of this plan follows the *Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans* (MDNR 4/26/2021) provided by Grants Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). Approval of this *Recreation Plan* by the MDNR qualifies Oakland County Parks and Recreation to apply for grants administered by the State of Michigan.

The planning team is grateful to the Parks Commission, OCPR staff, and our Oakland County and local community partners for your contributions into this draft *Recreation Plan*. We are looking forward to your continued engagement and to input from Oakland County residents as we prepare for the next five years of Oakland County Parks and Recreation.

The *Recreation Plan* updates OCPR's strategic plan Vision and Mission, as well as adding four Core Values that will help us build an equitable, sustainable, diverse, inclusive, and resilient future for Oakland County Parks. The opportunity is now to build this future for our organization and its parklands, and for our communities.

Vision

Everyone in Oakland County has access to a park, public space, or recreational opportunity to relax, be active, socialize and connect with nature.

Mission

We create and operate accessible, welcoming, and sustainable parks and public spaces, provide recreational and educational programs and opportunities, preserve open space, and steward the environment to help all people be healthier and build resilient, connected communities in Oakland County.

Core Values

- ❖ Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - Ground all actions and decisions in equity and justice and provide parks and recreation services that feel safe and welcoming to everyone.
- ❖ Health and Wellness - Increase access to the spaces and experiences that promote physical, mental, and social health for all.
- ❖ Environmental Sustainability and Natural Resources Stewardship - Plan, build, and operate our parks and services in a sustainable manner while collaborating with local communities. Care for the natural environment, preserve land and open space for future generations, meet current recreation needs without compromising the future and build community resilience and adaptation to climate change.
- ❖ Fiscal Responsibility and Organizational Excellence - Implement our mission with a robust, innovative, and diverse parks and recreation organization and ground our decisions in sound fiscal policy.



Recreation Plan 2023-2027 Highlights

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES PARK AND OUTDOOR RECREATION INVESTMENT PLAN: In October 2022, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners approved a proposal from the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission for \$15M in Oakland County American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to invest in park and outdoor recreational spaces in areas that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID. Identified projects include improvements to Oakland County Parks – see Catalpa Oaks, Lyon Oaks, Red Oaks, and Waterford Oaks; long-term local partnerships that enhance parks and expand the OCPR park system – see Beech Woods Park in Southfield, Hawthorne Park in Pontiac, and Shepherd Park in Oak Park; and park improvement capital grants and partnerships with local communities – see Hazel Park and Royal Oak Township.

OAKLAND COUNTY FARMER’S MARKET MODERNIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: OCPR has submitted a congressional appropriation request to fund major improvements to the market that will increase accessibility at the market for 200,000+ annual visitors, create new program space for educational activities (ours and many partners), develop a commercial kitchen for popular cooking demonstrations and possible incubator use, build accessible/family restrooms, and improve the overall site with storm water management and demonstration gardens. We will increase and promote access to healthy, nutritious food, while better supporting our 100+Michigan farmers. See Oakland County Farmer’s Market.

NATURE PRESERVES: Natural resources preservation and management has long been a priority for the Parks Commission. With the *Recreation Plan*, we will designate our most precious natural parks as Nature Preserves and develop standards and protocols for management and access. This includes the planned acquisition of the 70-acre Turtle Woods property in Troy. See Highland Oaks, Rose Oaks, Rose Oaks/Water Road, and Troy Properties.

Photos Left: Lyon Oaks (top), Independence Oaks (middle), Oakland County Farmers Market (bottom)

Recreation Plan 2023-2027 Highlights

CLUBHOUSES AND CONFERENCE CENTERS: Oakland County Parks has several buildings that are costly to maintain and have limited or no usage by the public. We will review these facilities in detail and examine alternatives to determine how to eliminate subsidy of private events and increase the public's access, use, and awareness of these assets. Assets to be reviewed include the historic Buhl Estate Conference Center at Addison Oaks; the historic Clubhouse at Glen Oaks, the Clubhouse at Lyon Oaks; Davis House, Activity Center, and Golf Clubhouse at Springfield Oaks; the Activity Center at Waterford Oaks; and the Clubhouse at White Lake Oaks.

WATERPARKS: Red Oaks and Waterford Oaks waterparks are well-loved destinations that need significant investment, or a more modest investment coupled with an adjustment in focus and operation. We will review detailed facility condition assessments for both waterparks and examine alternatives to determine how to meet public need and be fiscally sustainable. See also Red Oaks and Waterford Oaks waterparks.

WATER ACCESS: Oakland County residents love their rivers and lakes. We want to continue to improve and expand access by improving beaches, shorelines, docks, and fishing piers, as well as offering kayak and canoe rentals and programs that get people out on the water. We will also work with our local partners to identify new opportunities for kayak and canoe access. See water access at Addison Oaks, Groveland Oaks, Independence Oaks, Orion Oaks, White Lake Oaks, Beech Woods in Southfield, and Hawthorne Park in Pontiac.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: In 2022 OCPR created a Chief of Environmental Sustainability and Natural Resources position within the park system, as well as a Sustainability Committee made up of staff and Commissioners guide sustainability practices and investments within the park system. Each of the Park Action Plans has a section on sustainability, and all projects have a sustainability review before making recommendations for scopes or bidding contracts.

Photos Right: Red Oaks (top), Orion Oaks (middle), Catalpa Oaks (bottom)



Figure A: OCPR parks and projects

