

Strategic Action Plan

Vision

Our vision inspires us; it is aspirational and declares our intent and direction and states the long-term outcome of our work.

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

Mission

Our mission is a concise explanation of what we do and who we do it for.

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

The core values are our highest priorities, deeply held beliefs and fundamental driving forces. They are the lenses through which we plan and evaluate our work as a parks and recreation agency. They are our cultural cornerstones. We will measure the outcomes of our work using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that relate directly to the Core Values. KPIs are quantifiable measurements compared to realistic and strategic targets.

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.

1. Ensure that park attendance reflects the demographic profile of the surrounding communities.
 - *KPI: Conduct surveys that identify gender, age, race, and ethnicity of park visitors and program participants and compare with U.S. Census data for the surrounding community.*
 - *KPI: Engage diverse groups of people, including those whose statistics are not captured by U.S. Census data (e.g., LGBTQ+ persons), and work with them to understand and respond to their recreational needs.*
2. Collaborate with partners to identify communities, households, and individuals with needs for equitably provided services (“priority equity communities, households, and individuals”) and ensure that OCPR-sponsored programs in these communities are properly supported and are reaching their intended audience.
 - *KPI: Track attendance at OCPR-sponsored programs within identified priority equity communities.*

3. *Invest in outreach to priority equity communities and individuals.*
 - *KPI: Track percent of budget utilized for priority equity communities, households, and individuals.*
4. *Decrease gaps in recreation access and improve parks and recreation use by priority equity communities.*
 - *KPI: Number of unique transactions and program participants from zip codes of priority equity communities.*
5. *Ensure that the staff and Parks Commission reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of Oakland County and provide a positive and welcoming work environment.*
 - *KPI: Monitor the diversity of the staff and Parks Commission as related to the diversity of Oakland County.*
 - *KPI: Track participation in trainings and workshops related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and workplace culture*

Health and Wellness

Increase access to the spaces and experiences that promote physical, mental, and social health for all.

1. *Grow and elevate awareness of programs and facilities that enhance wellness and are available for free.*
 - a. *KPI: Track participation numbers*
 - b. *KPI: Online and on-site surveys regarding use, satisfaction, and barriers.*
2. *Promote the county and regional network of trails, and track trail usage and satisfaction in our park trails*
 - a. *KPI: Miles and types of OCPR trails connected to local, county, and regional trails, non-motorized infrastructure, and transit lines.*
 - b. *KPI: Trail user counts*
 - c. *KPI: Online and on-site surveys regarding trail use, satisfaction, and barriers*
3. *Ensure ease of access into every park and between facilities within the park so people of all ages and abilities have the confidence to be active, social, and connect with their surroundings.*
 - a. *KPI: ADA compliance for access routes between entrances, parking lots, recreation facilities, and restroom facilities – 100%*
 - b. *KPI: Track number of universally accessible recreation facilities and equipment in each park.*
 - c. *KPI: Online survey regarding ease of park access and facility use and barriers*

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.

1. *Responsibly steward the natural resources within the park system.*
 - *KPI: Number of acres being restored to improve biodiversity*

- *KPI: Number of acres that are high-quality and are being managed to preserve existing resources*
- 2. *Use energy from renewable sources and implement energy efficiency practices.*
 - *KPI: Percent of energy consumed from renewable sources*
 - *KPI: Percent of energy generated on site via renewable sources*
 - *KPI: Track fleet, buildings, and equipment electrification*
 - *KPI: Track energy efficiency upgrades and projects*
- 3. *Improve water management, such as reducing irrigation, restrooms, and other uses.*
 - *KPI: Track and reduce water usage*
- 4. *Manage stormwater through design and operational practices to improve regional water quality.*
 - *KPI: Track and reduce amount of impervious surface and turf.*
 - *KPI: Track and increase green infrastructure*
 - *KPI: Monitor and improve the quality of water bodies in our parks*
- 5. *Transition purchase of commodities to sustainable products.*
 - *KPI: Track and reduce usage of cleaning products, herbicides, promotional items, single use plastics, and transition to sustainable alternatives.*
- 6. *Waste management reduce waste, divert into recycling, compost, reduce consumption*
 - *KPI: Track and reduce tonnage of waste that goes to landfill*
 - *Track recycling composition and rates*

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.

- 1. *Provide parks, programs and services that respond to community need*
 - a. *KPI: Track alignment of services with Community Needs Assessment and targeted public engagement*
- 2. *Ensure that facilities with mostly individual benefit meet cost-recovery targets.*
 - a. *KPI: Track cost-recovery for facilities with 75-100% targeted cost recovery*
- 3. *Leverage external funding sources for park and program development – i.e., grants, sponsorships, and donations*
 - a. *KPI: Track percent of external funding against annually set targets*
- 4. *Provide excellent and well-supported customer service*
 - a. *KPI: Track percent of seasonal staffing goal met annually*
 - b. *KPI: Track percent of returning seasonal staff annually*
 - c. *KPI: Track volunteer hours annually*
 - d. *KPI: Track percent of responses to customer-service inquiries within one business day*
 - e. *KPI: Track staff certifications relevant to delivery of parks and recreation services*
 - f. *KPI: Track non-compulsory training participation and sharing*

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Our strategic goals are what we want to accomplish in the next five years. They are purpose-driven, long-term, forward-focused, actionable, and measurable. They are a roadmap for the individual objectives and actions that move us forward.

Goal 1: Offer Experiences and Places that Make a Difference

Experiences in a park or participating in an activity can change the character of your day or have an impact on your lifetime. Offer a wide range of experiences and places throughout the park system and provide diverse programming.

- A. Provide opportunities to be physically active with diverse places, programs and services for all ages and abilities, for people to be active individually, in groups, or as a guided/unguided experience.
- B. Create opportunities to gather with other people in informal or organized groups in a comfortable and welcoming setting.
- C. Provide places for people to relax, recharge, and reconnect with nature and enjoy activities that lower stress levels.
- D. Provide opportunities for a learning experience to gain new skills and knowledge that people can use in their daily lives.
- E. Offer opportunities to engage with nature with programs for all ages and abilities, volunteer stewardship, and experiencing interpretive signs and installations.
- F. Provide spaces for hobbies and sports that align with our core values without duplicating local and regional opportunities.
- G. Incorporate a wide array of celebrations that reflect the diversity of the county and the local community including access to healthy food and food from other cultures.
- H. Connect with the rich and storied history of Oakland County parks beginning with Indigenous Peoples with an inclusive approach that reflects multiple perspectives and a variety of themes.
- I. Create refuges from negative experiences, which may include places to cool off during heat events, safety from weather events related to climate change, and socially distanced recreation during health crises such as the COVID pandemic.

Goal 2: Operate Clean, Safe, and Welcoming Parks

Great park experiences are only possible because of the people who provide our places, programs, and services. Implement best practices and design standards that support the operation of parks that are equitable, resilient, sustainable, and integrated into the community.

- A. Engage the park operations and program services staff in both site-specific and organization-wide planning
- B. Review all parks to identify and remove potential barriers to access and enjoyment.
- C. Review and update the Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan and provide annual progress updates to the Parks Commission.
- D. Incorporate safety into park design and park upgrades.
- E. Implement an integrated plan for waste disposal – recycling, composting, litter, trash.

- F. Provide access to drinking water – without single-use plastic bottles.
- G. Provide access to restrooms and phase out permanent use of portable toilets – open existing restrooms with flush toilets; develop standards and design for green restrooms in rural parks
- H. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from equipment and vehicles – convert to alternative, no emission versions, use no-idle technology, and install electric vehicle charging stations.
- I. Manage water usage through reduction of watering and water reclamation
- J. Select and purchase products for park operations that reduce harmful impacts to the environment, minimize necessary use of products that have harmful impacts such as road salts, coal tar sealing.

Goal 3: Sustainably Invest in Assets and Infrastructure

Invest in assets and infrastructure with regular maintenance, resolution of deferred maintenance, replacement of assets as they come to the end of their lifecycle, or new construction of new assets that create new experiences.

- A. Update Park Action Plans annually to identify actions to manage assets and assign actions to Capital Improvement Program, Maintenance Management Plan, Natural Resources Management, Park Operations, or Planning and Resource Development.
- B. Evaluate proposed investments into facilities and services based on fiscal sustainability, alignment with our core values, and the potential for a lasting positive impact for residents.
- C. Update building standards and processes, conduct an energy audit, and build new and update existing assets to net zero carbon emission standards and to reduce impact on the surrounding environment.
- D. Integrate alternative energy sources including identification of off-grid buildings in parks.
- E. Manage stormwater infrastructure effectively and in compliance with regulatory agencies.
- F. Implement updated waste management practices to include appropriate receptacles for landfill, recycling, and organic waste.

Goal 4: Contribute to Thriving and Resilient Communities

Work in partnership with local communities, non-profits, and regional planning agencies and be ready to help when gaps in equitable park access are identified.

- A. Convene local communities and park and recreation agencies on a regular basis to share best practices and seek mutual benefits for parks and recreation in Oakland County.
- B. Work with partners to identify priority equity communities, households, and individuals based on a data-driven understanding of the characteristics, demographic trends, access, and other needs of diverse communities and households.
- C. Design and implement a comprehensive recreation programs and outreach to communities with emphasis on creating equitable access.
- D. Identify gaps in equitable park access and assist priority equity communities, households, and individuals in accessing OCPR parks, programs, and services by increasing local trail and transit connectivity, providing transportation assistance, or offering free or discounted admission.
- E. Help communities and residents expand the use of natural landscapes to support regional biodiversity and stormwater mitigation.

- F. Communicate with the public and communities about OCPR’s environmentally sustainable practices to highlight the sustainability of OCPR park system and provide demonstration projects and examples to emulate.

Goal 5: Care for the Land and Natural Environment and Increase Green Infrastructure

Conserve land and advance green infrastructure to help mitigate the impacts of climate change and to ensure there are open spaces for future generations. Restore and manage natural communities to preserve biodiversity, protect water and air quality, support robust populations of wildlife, and connect people with high-quality experiences in nature.

- A. Implement OCPR’s Natural Resource Zones system as the basis for system-wide management decisions.
- B. Create standards to define and establish Nature Preserve designation for parkland.
- C. Engage with Indigenous Peoples to learn about traditional/cultural land use and management.
- D. Expand and manage diverse, high-quality natural communities, habitats, and wildlife corridors including creating refuges and passage for plants and animals, and support climate resilience of our communities.
- E. Manage the native tree canopy to sustain healthy forests in our parks, improve shade for wildlife and people, and support climate resilience of our communities.
- F. Protect water quality for aquatic organisms, surrounding wildlife, recreational users, and downstream communities.
- G. Establish standards and targets for land acquisition that supports preservation, restoration, and green infrastructure.

Goal 6: Engage the Entire Organization in the Aspiration of Our Vision

At the foundation of our work is a collaborative network of people who recognize that our world is changing, and we need to change with it to remain relevant and best serve our communities and residents. We are ready to take on the challenges of our vision and build a future where everyone “has access to a park or public space where they can relax, be active, socialize, and connect with nature”.

- A. Employ a workforce that reflects the diversity of Oakland County and the communities we serve.
- B. Implement hybrid work schedules where possible to enhance staff productivity and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from staff travel.
- C. Continue the effort to recruit and retain diverse seasonal staff.
- D. Update purchasing policies and evaluate all contracts through the lens of our Core Values.
- E. Update Parks Commission approval procedures to delegate lower-level funding decisions to management and to present alternatives based on our Core Values for funding decisions by the Commission.
- F. Support our commitment to equity and justice with a focused staff position and relevant training and Commission-adopted policies.
- G. Develop a portfolio of diverse funding sources and attempt to divest funds from petroleum-based and climate change advancing industries.

- H. Create one program responsible to coordinate all compliance efforts and to manage the actions of other entities (lessees, easement holders, etc.) on natural parkland.
- I. Provide training and resources to staff to implement our Core Values
- J. Update customer service portal and create method for tracking and evaluation