



NEWS RELEASE

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Royal Oak celebrates grand opening of new playground in Mack-Rowe Park

Larger play area promotes sensory experiences, imaginative play

ROYAL OAK, MI – May 29, 2024 – Royal Oak Township and Oakland County officials unveiled a new playground at Mack-Rowe Park during a grand opening ceremony on Saturday, May 18. The new accessible play area is more than double the size of the previous space and includes numerous features designed for children ages 2-12. The Oakland County Parks Healthy Communities Park and Outdoor Recreation Investment Plan contributed \$300,000 to the project.

County and township officials highlighted the benefits of the new playground during the grand opening ceremony and how it will enhance park and recreation activities in Royal Oak Township. As children burn their energy on the climbing structures, slides and swings, their caregivers, parents and grandparents can take a moment to relax or connect with others on two bench seats or shade structures around the exterior of the play area.

Improving and expanding recreation opportunities for Oakland County residents is an ongoing priority for Oakland County Parks, Parks Director Chris Ward said.

“The lifelong memories that are made on the playground spending time with loved ones and making new friends is an opportunity every child should have during their childhood,” he said. “By partnering with local governments, Oakland County Parks is investing in local communities and introducing generations of children to the joys of outdoor play and nature exploration.”

The playground project removed outdated equipment and significantly expanded the play area from 2,450 square feet to approximately 5,250 square feet. With a nature theme, the children’s playground offers six swings, including two infant swings and one inclusive swing; four slides of varying heights; two spring riders; and three climbing structures. It also encourages creative play with two musical play elements and several activity panels that promote sensory experiences and imaginative play.

Poured-in place rubber surfacing increases accessibility for individuals of all abilities to the main playground features.

“This is a beautiful playscape and improvement to our city and to our Mack-Rowe Park,” Royal Oak Township Supervisor Donna Squalls said during the grand opening, “and we appreciate everything.”

In 2022, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners and County Executive Dave Coulter approved \$15 million for OCP from pandemic relief funds the county received as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Combined with a \$5.2 million match from the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission, this provided the parks system with substantial funds to revitalize and enhance parks located in or servicing residents of communities most impacted by the pandemic.

The goal is to improve physical and mental health outcomes, create strong social connections and address barriers to equitable access and use of quality park and recreation opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.

“Every day I come up here, I get up in the morning and do my walk and I’m just stunned at the transformation of this park,” Armond Respress, Chair of the Royal Oak Township Parks and Recreation Board, said during the grand opening ceremony.

Mack-Rowe Park is a 5-acre park owned and operated by the Charter Township of Royal Oak. Input from residents during a public planning open house last summer played a large role in development of the playground’s features.

In addition to the Mack-Rowe Park project, the Oakland County Parks Healthy Communities Park and Outdoor Recreation Investment Plan is funding improvements at Green Acres Park in Hazel Park; Lyon Oaks County Park in Lyon Township and Wixom; Red Oaks County Park – Gary McGillivray Play Garden in Madison Heights; Oak Park Woods at Shepherd Park in Oak Park; Pontiac Oaks County Park in Pontiac; Catalpa Oaks County Park in Southfield; Beech Woods Park in Southfield; and Waterford Oaks County Park in Waterford.

For more information about Oakland County Parks, visit OaklandCountyParks.com. Join the conversation on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [X](#).

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Photo cutline:

Oakland County Executive Dave Coulter, Oakland County Board of Commissioners, Oakland County Parks Commissioners and Royal Oak Township staff and trustees completed ribbon-cutting honors during the grand opening ceremony for Mack-Rowe Park on May 18. Photo courtesy of Oakland County Parks.