

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Update on Waterford Oaks County Park and Wave Pool**

**OAKLAND COUNTY, MI – Dec. 9, 2024** - Waterford Oaks County Park has been one of the most popular destinations in the Oakland County Parks (OCP) system since the 1970s and the home of iconic attractions like Waterford Oaks Waterpark and The Fridge.

Unfortunately, this park, more than any other of the OCP sites, has experienced significant disinvestment and deterioration due to our inability to keep pace with major maintenance and improvement needs over the years.

Voter approval of the millage proposal this November has opened the door to make major investments that will begin a wonderful new chapter for Waterford Oaks and the many people who love to visit. In the coming months, an updated improvement plan will be developed and we will be seeking your input and ideas for the changes you'd like to see in the park.

The Waterford Oaks Wave Pool will not be opening for the 2025 season due to the steep decline in ticket sales that has occurred since the popular raft ride was removed in 2019. Average sales during the past three years are down approximately 80 percent from peak levels, while the costs associated with operating the facility have skyrocketed.

Despite record heat this past summer, the Wave Pool had the smallest number of visitors in nearly 50 years of operation, resulting in a deficit of nearly \$400,000 – which equates to a taxpayer subsidy of more than \$30 per ticket sold. The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission voted unanimously several weeks ago to pause operations after reviewing the final statistics from the 2024 season.

We know that many people love the Waterford Oaks Wave Pool and many have treasured memories from its heyday as a fully functioning waterpark with fun and exciting features. A big decision must be made in the upcoming months about the future plans for the facility and its site. Preliminary plans have been developed to consider two options: rebuilding a waterpark with modern features or renovations to operate primarily as a public pool.

We are also undertaking a thorough analysis of the current and future aquatic recreation needs of the community and may explore other options to adapt the site for non-aquatic recreation uses. The costs associated with pursuing any of these alternatives will likely exceed \$10 million. We want to be sure that whatever option is chosen meets the needs of the public and is financially sustainable to maintain and operate in the long term.

The public is invited and encouraged to share their ideas and input in this survey:

[https://bit.ly/Survey\\_WWP](https://bit.ly/Survey_WWP).

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In the meantime, Waterford Oaks County Park is still open and serving the community with exiting new events and improvements coming in 2025.

We will be hosting our first ever Fireworks and Flannels event on February 15. This FREE outdoor winter festival will begin with a Flannel Fun Run 1K/5K followed by live entertainment, an illuminated walking path, beer tent, horse-drawn wagon rides and so much more. The whole thing will wrap up with a beautiful firework finale. Members of our Planning team will be at the event to engage with visitors about the park's future.

Construction will be underway throughout the spring and summer on a new multimillion dollar universally accessible play area called "Cattail Cove," featuring new pickleball courts, an adult jungle gym and a pavilion/restroom building.

You can keep up with information regarding the development of Waterford Oaks County Park and get the latest information on programming at [OaklandCountyParks.com](https://OaklandCountyParks.com). Join the conversation on Facebook, Instagram and X.