

City of Detroit

Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan

2022-2032

Executive Summary



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for the Executive Summary

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About the Plan

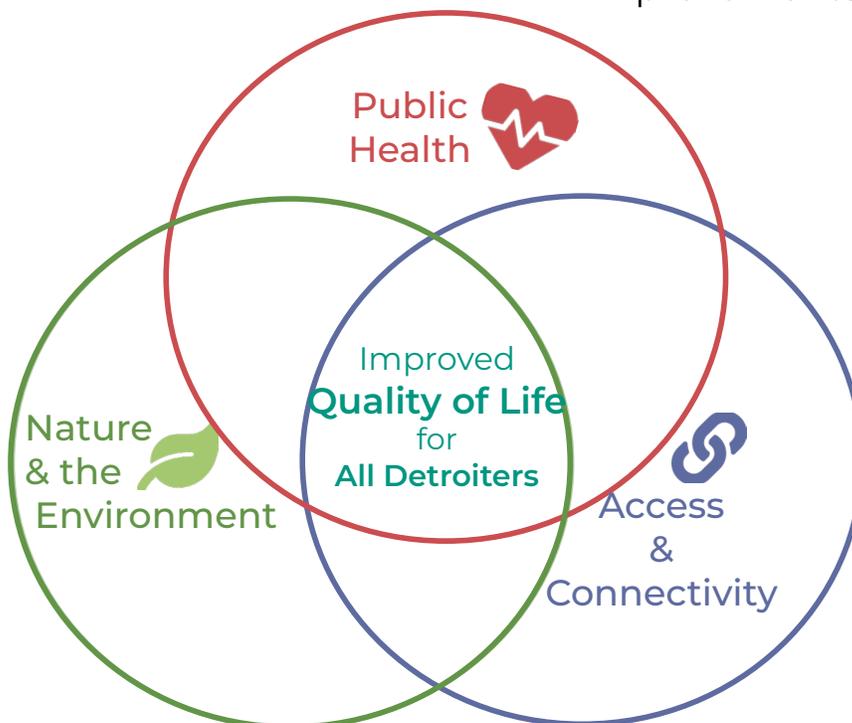
This document gives an overview of the full 2022 Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. Every 5 to 10 years the plan is updated to reflect the vision and goals for Detroit's parks and recreation system. The 2022 plan centers equity in every phase, drawing from both Detroiters' voices and data analysis.

The plan includes five chapters setting forth the Detroit Parks and Recreation Division (DPRD)'s vision, extensive community engagement and analysis process, strategies for improved service, capital needs, and targets to achieve the identified priorities in the next 10 years.

The vision is to improve the quality of life for all Detroiters through the parks, greenways, recreation centers and programs, using an equity framework.

The goals include improving public health, protecting and connecting residents to nature & the environment, and increasing access & connectivity to parks and recreation opportunities.

The strategies to improve recreational access and opportunities were developed from these goals and the priorities voiced by Detroiters. Extensive data analysis developed an equity-centered metric, which are used to determine priorities for improvements and increase access.



Community Engagement

DPRD collected feedback from Detroiters through a city-wide survey, a Community Needs Assessment survey, stakeholder and public focus groups, and public comments. We received over 4,100 comments. These responses shaped our strategies for improving the quality and accessibility of the parks and recreation system as outlined in this plan.

The Parks & Rec Strategic Plan survey received 714 responses. The PRSP survey included questions about usage, priorities, and barriers as well as providing space for thoughtful comments from some of Detroit's most avid park goers.

The Community Needs Assessment survey received 623 responses over 3 months. This survey's respondents accurately matched the demographic make up of Detroit and underscored our initial findings from the PRSP survey.

Stakeholder & Public Focus Groups provided an opportunity for community members and subject matter experts to have a hand in developing strategies to address priorities from both surveys. 562 Detroiters contributed to these discussions.

Public comments will be recorded as part of the public review process and incorporated in the final document.

What do Detroiters have to say about parks...

Detroiters commented on what they would like to see in Detroit parks & if anything keeps them from visiting.



For more, see Chapter 2 of the full plan.



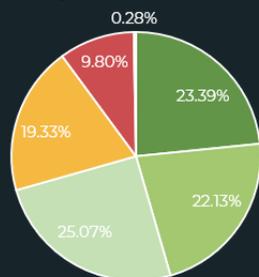
Detroit's Parks & Rec System
is a system of
Parks, Greenways, Rec
Centers, Cultural Sites, and
Programs



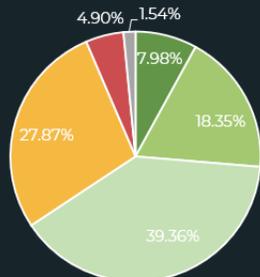
USE FREQUENCY according to the survey

- Daily
- Once a week
- Few times a month
- Rarely
- Not at all
- No response

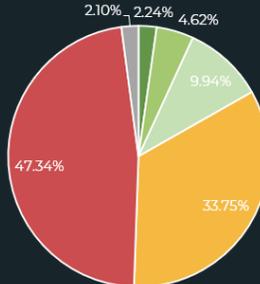
Neighborhood Parks



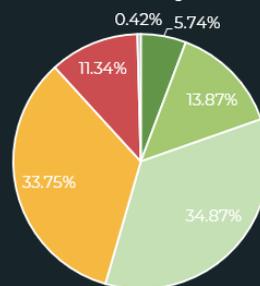
Regional Parks



Rec Centers



Greenways



What Detroiters Want from Their Parks & Rec System

Community engagement revealed Detroiters' preferred activities in parks and rec spaces, as well as what can keep them from using their public spaces. These responses helped inform a series of proposed strategies, which strive to address many of these preferences & concerns; targets for achieving these priorities are shown here marked by a target symbol. 

Parks

Preferred Activities:

-  **87%** Walk or bike
-  **80%** Relax in nature
-  **62%** Exercise
- 70% Socialize
- 51% Active recreation in nature
- 43% Play with kids
- 40% Athletics / sports
- 30% Pass-through to other places
- 21% Dog walking
- 16% Other
 - Community & cultural events
 - Appreciate nature
 - Swimming and water activities
 - Picnics
 - Educational activities
 - Use amenities (e.g. restrooms)

What keeps Detroiters from using parks:

-  **35%** Lack of info
-  **28%** Safety issues
- 25% Lack of interest
-  **11%** Lack of Transport
- 8% Personal Health
- 35% Other
 - Cleanliness & Maintenance
 - Social Discomfort
 - Location

Rec Centers

Preferred Activities:

-  **67%** Exercise
- 51% Community connection
- 45% Socialize (youth)
- 44% Art classes
- 38% Open gym time
- 38% Socialize (adults)
- 38% Adult education
- 37% Music classes
- 36.7% Resource center
- 36.6% Team athletics / sports
- 34% Youth education
- 29% Physical health services
- 25% Food and personal care distribution
- 22% Mental health services
- 11.5% Other
 -  **Swimming**
 - Activity programming
 - Group programming
 - Specific resources
 - Organized sports
 - Community meetings

What keeps Detroiters from using rec centers:

-  **49%** Lack of info
- 20% Lack of interest
- 17% Cleanliness
- 11% Safety issues
- 8% Staff friendliness
- 6.1% No transportation
- 5.9% Cost / affordability
- 3.6% Personal health
- 3.2% No childcare
- 15% Other
 - Location
 - Maintenance
 - Alternatives
 - Age & inclusivity



For more on responses, see Chapter 2, and for more on targets, see Chapter 5 of the plan.

Strategies

These 48 strategies address the needs and desires expressed by Detroiters in surveys and focus groups, guided by the knowledge of experts in accessibility, sustainability, health, beautification, and the environment, as well as DPRD staff..

Priority Levels	Cost levels
★	\$ under \$10,000
★★	\$\$ >\$10K to \$100K
★★★	\$\$\$ >\$100K to \$1M
★★★★	\$\$\$\$ >\$1M to \$10M
★★★★★	\$\$\$\$\$ >\$10M

See Chapter 3 for details on each strategy.

#	Strategy	Overarching	Public Health	Nature	Connectivity	Priority Level	Cost Level	Responsible Division(s)
Stage: Immediate (1 year)								
1.1.1	Create an Events & Programs Calendar	X				★★★★	\$	Marketing
1.1.2	Create Seasonal Program Notices	X			X	★★★★	\$\$	Marketing
1.1.3	Increase Awareness through Apps	X				★★★	\$	Marketing, PSP
1.3.1	Continue Community Engagement	X				★★★	\$\$	Public Space Planning
1.3.3	Strengthen Partnerships	X	X			*	\$\$	Rec Programming
1.3.4	Foster Year-Round Park & Rec Use	X	X	X	X	*	\$\$	Rec Programming
1.1.5	Advertise Programs, Events, & Rules in Parks	X				★★	\$\$	Landscape Design, Marketing
2.2.3	Expand & Diversify Staff		X			★★	\$\$	Business Office, Rec Operations
2.3.1	Simplify the Permitting Process		X		X	★★★	\$	Rec Events
3.1.1	Increase Maintenance Capacity	X				★★★★	\$\$\$	Grounds, Park Development
3.1.2	Expand Natural Habitat Areas			X		★★	\$	Grounds, Landscape Design
3.1.4	Budget for Long-Term Park Repairs	X				★★	\$	Business Office, Park Development
3.2.1	Design with Wildlife in Mind			X		*	\$	Landscape Design, Sustainability
3.3.1	Launch Anti-Litter Campaign	X				★★★★	\$\$	PSP, Sustainability, Marketing
3.3.2	Refocus Adopt-A-Park	X				*	\$	PSP, Grounds
4.2.3	Ensure Info is Accessible		X		X	★★	\$	Marketing
4.1.3	Focus on Safety				X	★★★	\$\$\$	Business Office, Security, Blight
Stage: Short-Term (2-4 yrs)								
1.1.4	Develop Outreach Database	X				*	\$	Public Space Planning
1.2.1	Create Park Ambassadors	X		X		★★★★	\$\$\$	Business Office, Grounds
1.2.2	Develop Repair Staff Opportunities	X				★★★	\$\$	Business Office, Park Development
1.3.2	Establish Gear Libraries	X	X	X		★★	\$\$	Rec Programming

#	Strategy	Overarching	Public Health	Nature	Connectivity	Priority Level	Cost Level	Responsible Division(s)
Stage: Short-Term (2-4 yrs) contin.								
1.2.4	Extend the Season: Programs & Maintenance	X	X	X		***	\$\$\$	Grounds, Rec Operations, Facilities
2.1.1	Support Self-Directed Play		X	X		*	\$\$	Landscape Design
2.1.2	Facilitate Walking Fitness		X			**	\$\$	Landscape Design
2.1.3	Provide Flexible Amenities		X			**	\$\$\$\$	Landscape Design
2.1.4	Create Sports Hubs at Regional Parks		X			**	\$\$\$\$\$	Landscape Design, Rec Athletics
2.2.1	Adjust Rec Center Hours & Fees		X			*	\$	Rec Operations
2.3.2	Re-establish Programming in Parks		X			**	\$\$\$	Rec Programming
2.3.3	Expand Drop-in Rec Activities		X			*	\$\$	Rec Operations
3.1.3	Manage Natural Areas			X		*	\$\$\$	Grounds
3.2.2	Get Residents Out in Nature			X		**	\$\$\$	Landscape Design, Rec Programming
3.2.3	Invest in Green Climate Management			X		**	\$\$\$	Sustainability
3.3.3	Invest in Youth Stewardship			X		*	\$\$	Business Office, Grounds, Rec Programming
4.1.1	Ensure Convenient Transit Options				X	*	\$\$\$	Public Space Planning
4.2.4	Strive Beyond ADA; Universal Accessibility				X	***	\$\$\$\$	Facilities, Landscape Design
4.2.1	Create Parks Inclusive for All Ages & Abilities				X	***	\$\$\$\$	Landscape Design
4.2.2	Expand Inclusivity in Rec				X	**	\$\$\$	Rec Programming
4.3.3	Create Multi-Modal Hubs				X	*	\$\$\$	Public Space Planning
Stage: Long-Term (5-10 years)								
1.2.3	Develop Green Careers	X		X		**	\$\$	Business Office, Sustainability
2.2.2	Improve Facility Conditions & Set Standards		X			***	\$\$\$	Facilities
2.3.4	Build Consistency in Long-Term Programs		X			***	\$\$	Rec Programming
3.2.4	Expand Park Lands & 10-min Access			X		**	\$\$\$	PSP, Landscape Design
3.3.4	Get Pollution Out of Parks			X		**	\$\$\$	Sustainability, PSP
4.1.2	Work on Safe Routes to Parks with DPW		X		X	**	\$\$	Landscape Design
4.3.1	Improve Path Infrastructure & Maintenance				X	**	\$\$\$\$	Landscape Design, Grounds
4.3.2	Develop Educational Campaign for Greenways, Bike Lanes				X	**	\$\$	Public Space Planning, Marketing
4.3.4	Create a Network of Greenways				X	***	\$\$\$	PSP, Landscape Design
4.3.5	Develop Green & Blue Corridors			X	X	**	\$\$	PSP, Landscape Design

Inventory & Analysis

Current Park Amenities

DPRD evaluated every City-owned park in Detroit and recorded the location and condition of amenities such as playgrounds and outdoor fitness equipment. Additionally, important indicators of public health and environmental quality were mapped to understand how the parks and rec system can leverage its resources to address Detroiters needs.

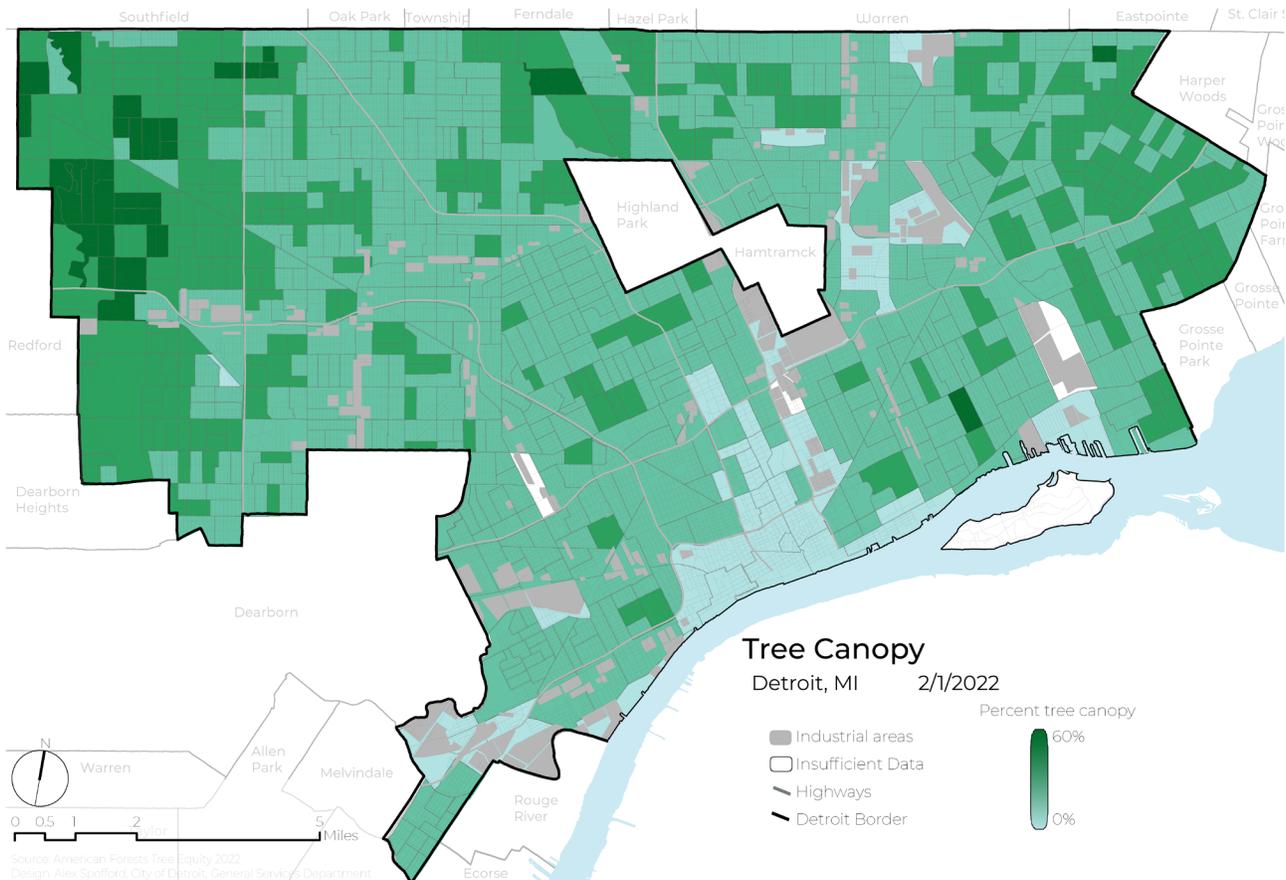
Inventory

- Tree Canopy
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure
- Outdoor Fitness
- Places to Cool Off
- Parks
- Recreation Centers
- Greenways

See Chapter 3 & 5 of the plan for maps.

Tree Canopy, Beautification, & Public Health

Below is a map showing the percent of each block group, a census geographical area, that is covered by tree canopy. Plant life filters the air of many pollutants, while capturing and sequestering carbon, and bringing vibrant colors to the city. Detroit's tree canopy is higher in areas of dark green and lower in lighter areas. Between 2010 and 2015, Detroit Water and Sewage Department (DWSD), in partnership with The Greening of Detroit, planted over 7,000 trees in the Rouge River corridor. Parks can be a great place to increase tree coverage, especially in neighborhoods with low canopy percentages. Parks & Rec strives to reach 25% coverage of tree canopy in all neighborhood parks to beautify the city and improve public health.



Measuring Access

Walksheds, Overlap, and Gaps

The City strives to enable all Detroiters to reach a park within a 10-minute walk. To do this, DPRD analyzed the parks system's existing walksheds: the area that can be reached by the average pedestrian in 10 minutes, or approximately 1/2 mile. The walkshed of many of Detroit's parks walksheds overlap, creating areas where residents can easily access recreational opportunities. Some residential areas are outside of all park walksheds. These areas are considered gaps in the parks and recreation system. The City aims to close these gaps through new parks and partnerships sites, with the long-term goal of park access for all Detroiters.

Good Access

areas within a 10-minute walkshed, approximately 1/2 mile, of a park.



Access

Excellent Access

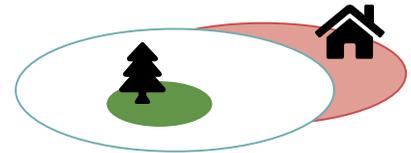
areas in the 10-minute walkshed of 2 or more parks.



Click arrows to view

No Access

areas outside of all park 10-minute walksheds.



Gap

Filling Gaps in Park Access

This plan's equity first approach ensuring access to Detroit's park system for all Detroiters, and especially those most vulnerable.

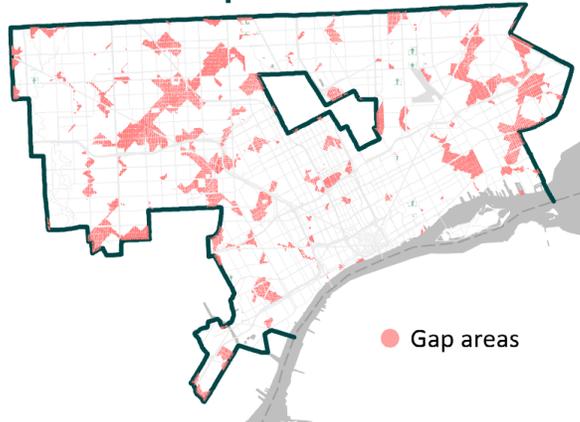
Creating new parks will expand park access to nearly every Detroit. Community engagement will be part of the process of creating all new parks.

Developing partnerships across the City, where need is greatest and new parks are not feasible, will increase access, while beautifying and strengthening Detroit's neighborhoods.

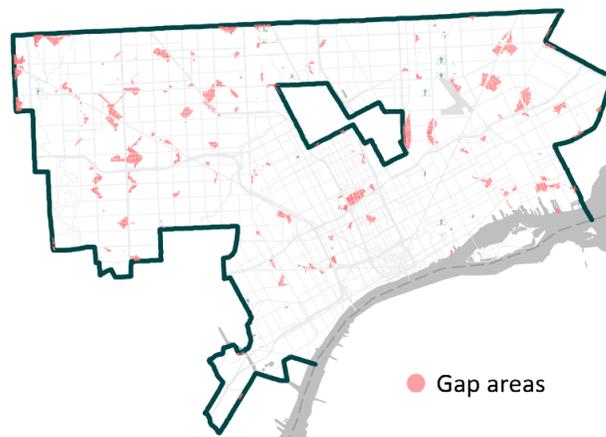
This will increase resident park access from 80% to 95% of all Detroiters. Championing the 10-minute walk benchmark for park access can put Detroit among the highest ranked park systems for access to parks for all.

All parks without improvement since the last plan are proposed to receive improvements.

Current Gaps in Park Access



Reducing the Gap with the Plan



See Ch. 5 for more information

Filling Gaps in Rec Access

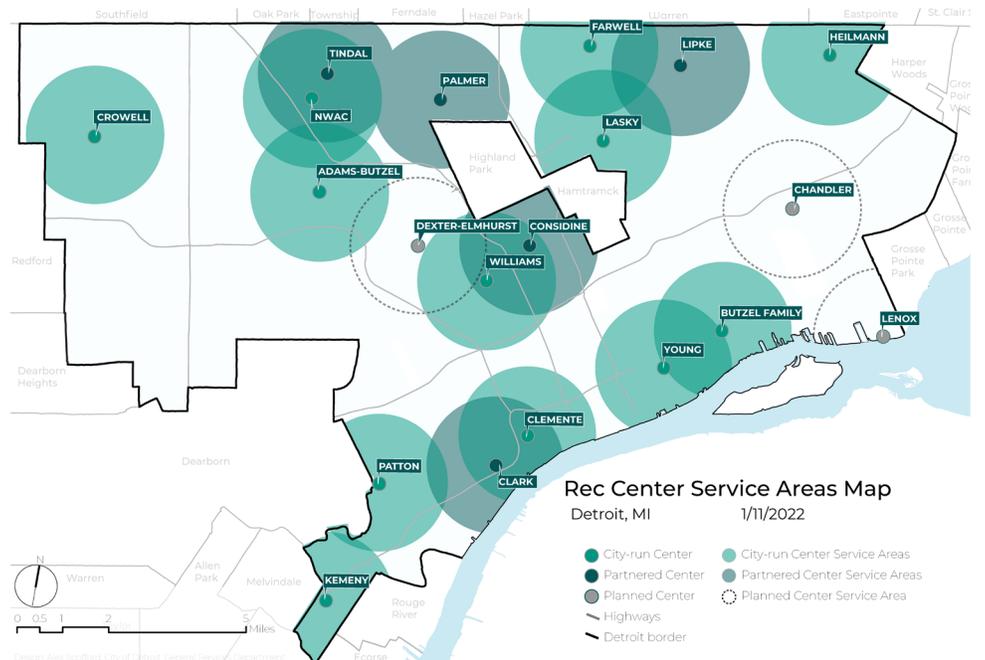
Equitable access is not just for parks, but rec centers too.

Rec centers are a critical hub of resources, fitness, education, and fun. The City currently owns 17 rec centers, 11 of which are City-run, 5 are partnered with local community organizations, and 1 is jointly operated (NWAC). DPRD strives to provide rec center access within a 20-minute bus ride to all Detroiters.

Three new centers, Chandler, Lenox, and Dexter-Elmhurst, will be opening in the near future, improving rec access from 60% to 66% of Detroiters.

Current rec centers provide even more recreational opportunity through reinvesting in structures and revamping programming.

Developing additional partnerships can provide access to Detroiters in the remaining gap areas that lack City facilities.



For more details, see Chapter 5 of the plan.

The Metric & Maps

Understanding Detroit's Population and Park Need

After calculating the watershed for each park, DPRD analyzed 10 factors of the population, looking at demographic, environmental, and health data. Each park received a score between 1 to 5 for every factor below, where 5 represents the highest park need. These scores were then combined to create the park's overall metric. Parks with the highest metrics were prioritized for investment in the capital plan.

Click titles to view maps
See Chapter 5 for more factors & maps.

Youth

BIPOC

Mental Health

Seniors

Access

Air Quality

Heat Risk

Process of Prioritizing Investments

Step by Step Process



1. Calculate each park's metric by awarding each characteristic a score between 1 and 5, then adding them together, for a total out of 50.



2. Order parks by metric to prioritize equity of park need. Highest scores indicate the greatest need for park investment.



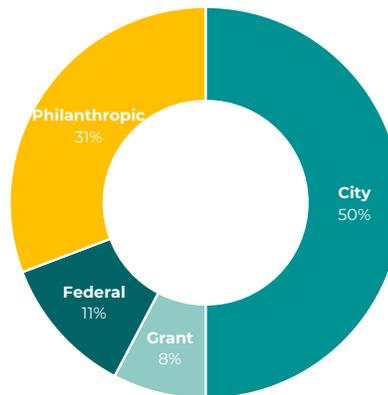
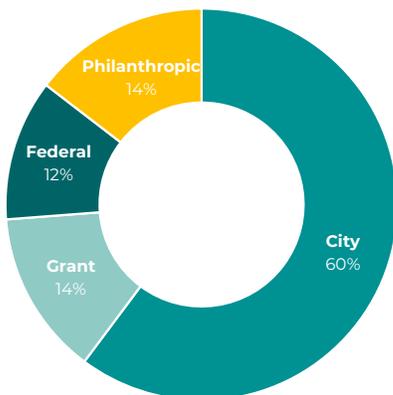
3. Consider distribution across the City, such as by district. Make adjustments to ensure spatial equity across Detroit's districts, so that all 7 districts will receive significant improvements in the initial phases.



4. Incorporate even distribution of improvement types. There are three types of investments: Minor, major, and full renovations, which are determined by current condition, identified need, and recent investments. Adjustments are made to ensure that totals are similar for each phase for consistent budgeting and fundraising targets.

Example: Stoepel No. 1 Park

Population Characteristics	Population	4
	Youth	4
	Seniors	4
	BIPOC	4
	Low-Income	3
Access	10-min Walkshed	4
Public Health	Physical Health	4
	Mental Health	4
Environmental Health	Air Quality	5
	Urban Heat Island Effects	4
Metric		20
District		1
Phase		1





Capital Improvement Plan

Walkable Parks

Walkable parks are parks that serve the neighborhood directly around them and can be in the category of mini, neighborhood, or community sized parks.

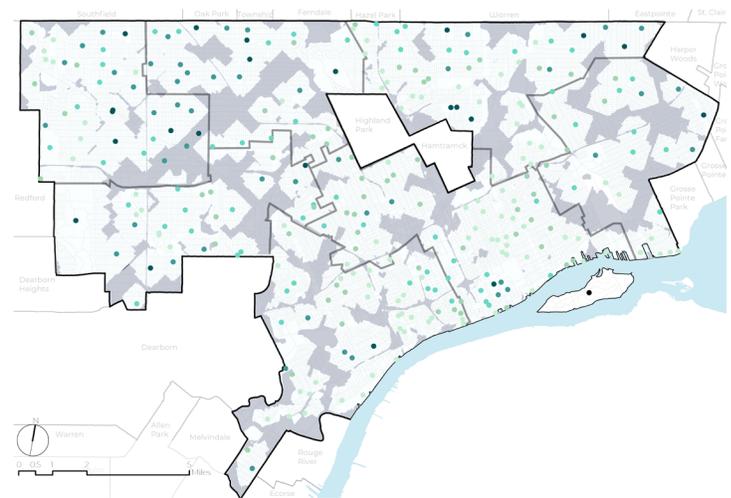
See Chapter 1: Context for more information on park types and amenities.

DPRD plans to improve over 100 parks over the course of the plan. See Chapter 6: Capital Plans for park metrics and phasing by district.

Destination Parks

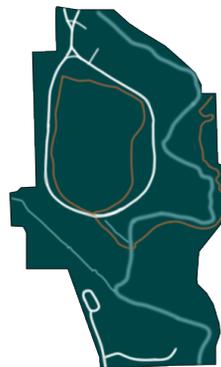
Regional and riverfront parks, have their own capital plans due to their large size, heavier use, and greater scope of their capital needs. Given the continuous need, the plan calls for significant capital investments across multiple phases of the plan. DPRD will work with park groups and the community to create master plans for each of the regional and riverfront parks to plan and advocate for their long term needs.

Find Your Park!



See Ch. 6 of the plan to find your park's metric and improvement phase.

Example:



Eliza Howell Park
District: 1
Size: 251 acres
Metric: 28
Phases: 2, 6, 10

See Ch. 6 of the plan for all destination parks.

Greenways, Marinas, Golf Courses, & Cemeteries

Parks & Rec strives to improve connections through greenways

to parks and other key destinations for all Detroiters, whether they are walking, rolling, or riding. Detroiters get around town in a multitude of ways. Those without access to a personal vehicle, including youth, elderly, and the disabled, make up approximately 25% of residents. Along the way of improving access, DPRD can also improve recreational opportunities for all Detroiters. For more information, see the Chapter 6 of the plan.



Dennis Archer Greenway

Marinas provide access to the waterfront and water recreation.

Every Detroiters should be able to enjoy the beauty of the waterfront and the chance to swim, boat, fish, and play in the water. Detroit's marinas need critical investments to enable them to be self sustaining and partner operated, they they can provide residents with boating opportunities. For more information, view Chapter 6 of the plan.



Erma Henderson Marina

Public Golf Courses & Cemeteries are an integral part of the parks system

providing opportunities for peaceful time outdoors as well as health and environmental benefits. These facilities need investment to bring up to a state of good repair and enable self sustaining partnerships. For more information, see Chapter 6 of the plan.



Rackham Golf Course

It's not just parks and rec centers, it's a system that brings enjoyment and wellbeing in a multitude of ways.

Targets for the Next 10 Years

Setting Targets and Measuring Success

DPRD created targets to guide progress over the next 10 years and beyond, to evaluate success toward goals. These targets are measurable indicators of Detroiters served and amenities implemented, which were developed through resident engagement, expert input, data analysis and mapping. Achieving these targets can lead to a more equitable and accessible parks and recreation system. Find more information about our targets in Chapter 4 of the plan.

Public Health	Pool & Swim	Increase youth swim enrollment by 5% every year.
	Resiliency at Rec Centers	Critical needs programs in at least 1 center per district.
	Rec for All Ages & Abilities	Increased senior and special needs programming in every rec center.
	Outdoor Fitness	Fitness pads & walking loops at parks over 10 acres.
	Maximize Programming	80% utilization of rec centers & maximum sustainable utilization of sports hubs.
	CAPRA Accreditation	Achieve CAPRA certification.

Nature & Environment	Nature Pockets	Nature pockets in parks over 10 acres and nature programs in all regional parks.
	Natural Habitat	Expand natural habitat areas to 1,500 acres.
	GSI Interventions	Green Stormwater Infrastructure for all newly-built or renovated park & rec spaces.
	Maintenance Investment	Maintenance investments raised to national per capita standards.
	Tree Canopy	Expansion of tree canopy to 25% in parks over 1 acre.

Access & Connectivity	Multimodal Hubs	Establish multimodal hubs at all regional parks and rec centers.
	Rec Center Access	All Detroiters within a 20-minute bus ride of a rec center.
	Park Access	All Detroiters within a 10-minute walk of a park.
	Universal Playgrounds	One or more universally accessible playground per district.
	Translated Materials	Multilingual materials in parks with significant non-english speaking communities.
	Community Engagement	750 Detroiters at community engagement events per phase.
	Reach Every Detroit	15% or fewer residents facing informational barriers to parks and rec system use.
	Self-Sustaining Partnerships	Ensure at least 60% of partnerships for recreational sites are self-sustaining.