

CITY OF FLINT 2019 PARKS PLAN



DRAFT

Flint is a city poised and ready for transformation. A city committed to reinventing itself by building upon its rich history, strong character, and enduring work ethic. A city eager to once again stand as a symbol to the nation as to what hard work, ingenuity, and commitment can achieve. Flint is a city dedicated to forging innovation and creativity into a city of new opportunity, vitality, and livability.

The last half century has been hard on Flint. A fifty percent population decrease, thousands of vacant structures, a decimated local economy, and a fragmented development pattern have left the City a bruised and battered version of its former self. But, while disconnected neighborhoods, contaminated industrial sites, and neglected facilities are now too common, the seeds for reinvention have already begun to emerge – community groups and residents eliminating blight lot by lot; churches leading community gardening initiatives; local organizations promoting change through community activities; world class cultural and education facilities

Imagine an extensive network of well-kept parks, safe and accessible to all and beautifully maintained by an alliance of City, non-profit, volunteer, and resident partners.

*Imagine the Flint River revitalized for economic growth and recreation, brimming with kayakers and canoers, and home to a vibrant “green waterfront” of parks and trails spanning the entire length of the river. - **Imagine Flint***

The City of Flint thanks our Park Adopters, neighborhood groups, non-profit organizations, and residents who have attended a park meeting and shared their stories and ideas to help craft this plan. Our planning is grounded in the vision of our community and we work to implement their goals to bring about an extensive network of parks and open space that is safe, accessible, and ecologically sound for all of our youth and residents.

Mayor Dr. Karen Weaver

City of Flint City Council: President Herbert Winfrey, Vice President Monica Galloway, Eric Mays, Maurice Davis, Santino J. Guerra, Kate Fields, Jerri Winfrey-Carter, Allan Griggs, Eva Worthing

City of Flint Department of Planning and Development Staff

DRAFT 2019 PARKS PLAN

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The Draft 2019 Parks Plan will guide development within Flint's J. Dallas Dort Memorial Park System for the next five years and was prepared by the City of Flint Planning and Zoning Division as an update of the 2013-2017 *Park and Recreation Plan*. This plan and is aligned with the 2013 *Imagine Flint* Master Plan. It will also allow for the pursuit of Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) grants in accordance with MDNR requirements as stated in the "Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans" as well as establish a basis for other funding opportunities.



Thank you for taking the time to read the draft 2019 Parks Plan! As you are reading through the plan please feel free to convey any and all input you have about the plan's content, graphics, layout, or anything you think we may have missed so that we can create the best possible plan. You will also notice as you go through the plan, boxes with questions for quotes. If you have anything to say about the topic or why Flint Parks are important to you, please let us know!

The comment survey can be accessed at
<https://goo.gl/YPBkJN>

Or you can email or call in your comments to Andy Fedewa,
afedewa@cityofflint.com | 810-766-7426 x3016

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WHY INVEST IN PARKS?

With the numerous areas of need throughout the City of Flint, the question of “why is it important to invest in parks?” is a critical one.

Flint’s J. Dallas Dort Park System was created to ensure public open space be available within walking distance to all residents of the city. We work to continue that legacy of access and equity to help stabilize and strengthen our neighborhoods.

With significant decline in population over the past few decades, the City of Flint, with over 1,800 acres of parkland, has twice as much parkland per resident as recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). Flint has incredible opportunities to redevelop its park system and harness the many benefits of parks and open spaces.

In the face of the ongoing Water Crisis Flint residents continue to demonstrate their dedication to their parks as stable neighborhood gathering space by passing the 2016 Parks Millage renewal vote with overwhelmingly 76% approval. The City is committed to using this millage to its maximum potential with the help of our partners, volunteers, and grant-makers to foster a vibrant Flint with thriving communities.

PARKS HAVE POWER!

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

A thriving park, used and enjoyed by residents, is a sign of a desirable neighborhood, attracting new residents, businesses, and investments. Research has shown that parks and open space increase the value of neighboring residential property, with growing evidence showing a similar benefit to commercial property value.

HEALTH POWER

Increased access to places for physical activity leads to a 25% increase in people exercising three or more days a week, reducing the risk of a wide range of diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. Parks and open spaces are also important areas for mental health, providing respite from the urban environment. Studies have shown that even ten minutes in an urban park or woodland area can tangibly reduce stress.

COMMUNITY POWER

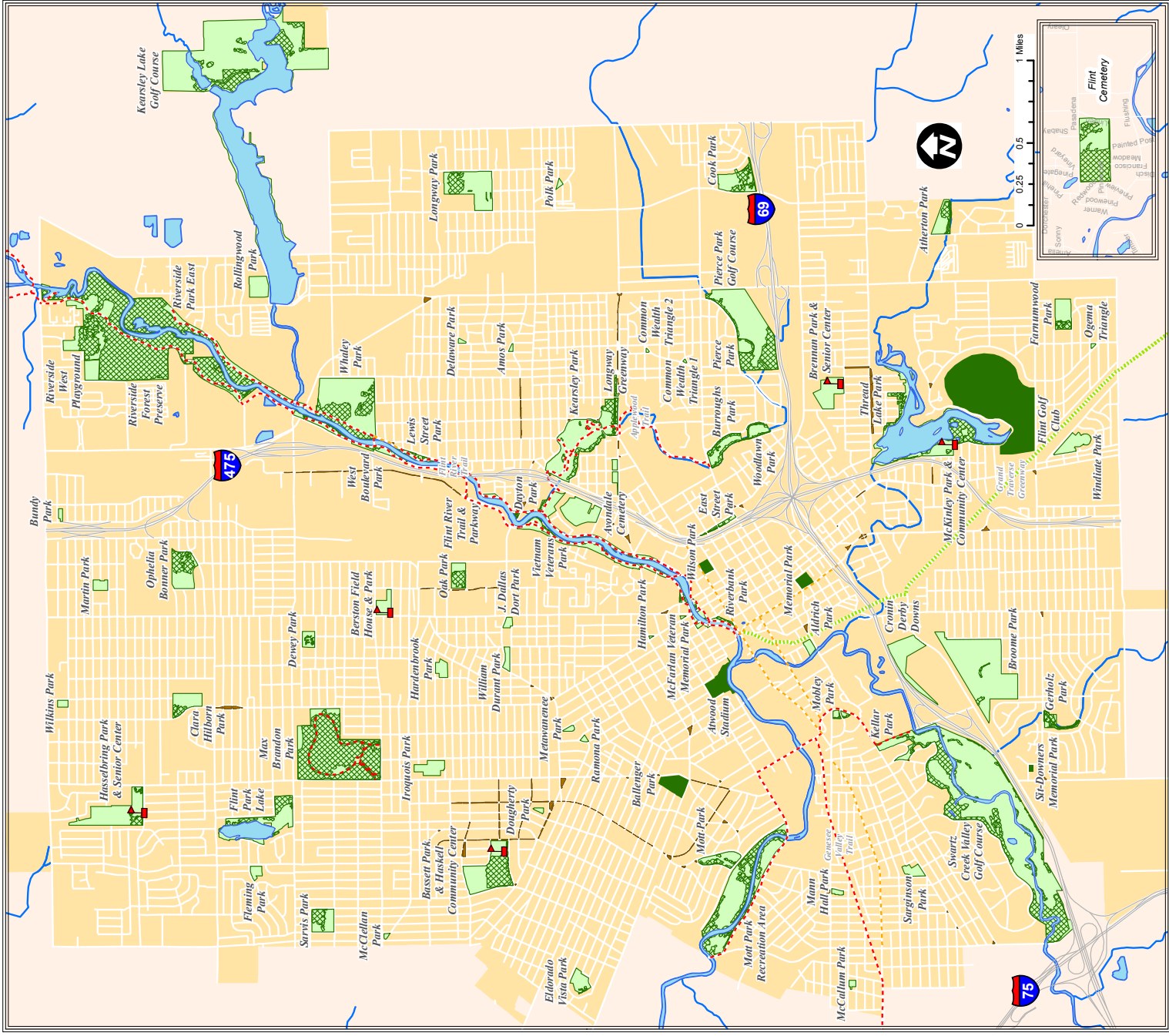
Parks strengthen *community ties* and bring *diverse populations* together. Parks and community facilities are perhaps the greatest opportunity for social interaction as prime candidates for neighborhood gatherings and events. Parks are key sources of recreational opportunity for at-risk youth and low-income families; access to public parks and recreational facilities has shown strong links to reduction in crime, especially juvenile delinquency

ENVIRONMENTAL POWER

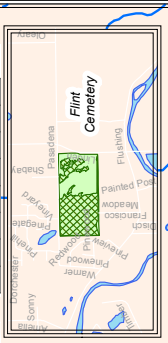
One acre of trees absorb the carbon dioxide produced by driving a car 11,000 miles. Parks (and trees) are also incredibly effective at managing stormwater, at a much lower cost than sewer systems or other physical infrastructure. Parks are important buffers against the urban heat island effect, where abundant pavement and other surfaces increase temperatures.



City of Flint J. Dallas Dort Memorial Park System



- City Owned Parks & Open Space
- Privately Owned Parks & Open Space
- Wooded Area
- Community Centers
- Pedestrian/Bike Trail
- On Street Bike Trail
- Proposed Trail
- Street Triangles & Medians
- Open Water
- City Limits
- Genesee Limits



HOW DOES FLINT COMPARE TO PARKS AND RECREATION NATIONAL AVERAGES?

The incredible decline in Flint's population over the last few decades has resulted in a large surplus of parkland and greenspace per resident. The City now has over double the national average of the amount of parkland per 1,000 residents, as reported by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). Flint also has fewer residents per park than the national average, meaning our parks are less crowded. Most glaring, however, is the amount of staff and operating expenditures per resident Flint has to manage such a large parks system. The City has less than one full-time parks staff member for not just every 10,000 residents, but **for all 97,386* residents!** Additionally, because expenditures are tied to the declining parks millage, Flint spends 21 times less than the average parks and recreation agency.

	Flint*	NRPA†
Park Land	19.3 acres per 1,000 residents	9.6 acres per 1,000 residents
Residents Per Park	1,475 residents per park	2,266 residents per park
Staff Members	0.025 staff members per 10,000 residents	7.3 staff members per 10,000 residents
Operating Expenditures	\$3.61 per resident	\$77.32 per resident
Percent Recovery of Operating Expenditures by Revenue Generation	0%	29%

* 2016 Census estimate of 97,386 residents

† Based on 2017 NRPA Field Guide <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/research-papers/agency-performance-review/>

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SUMMARY

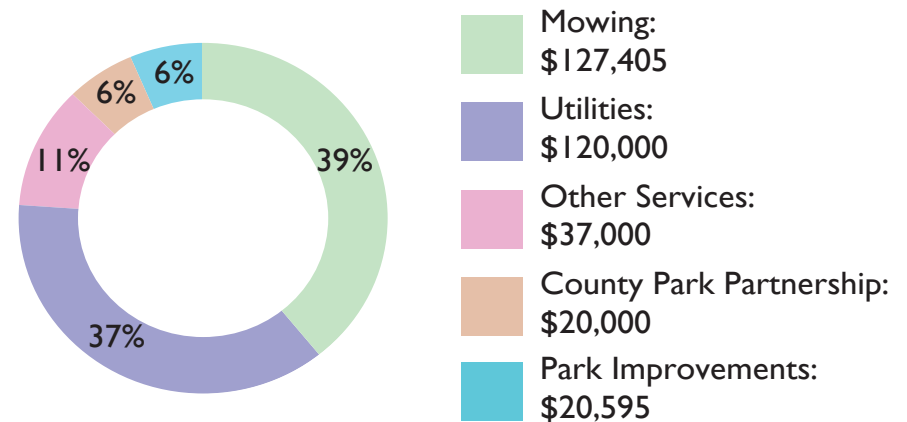
The principles, goals and proposed actions of the 2019 Parks Plan derives from and builds on the 2013 *Imagine Flint* Master Plan. All components are supported by or are an update of, the goals, objectives, and guiding principles of the “Environmental Features, Open Space, and Parks Plan” chapter of *Imagine Flint* and past parks and recreation plans.

The City of Flint is tasked with balancing the needs of a community utilizing 70 parks and recreation facilities, while drawing funding from a declining parks millage. The City places a high priority on partnerships, community-led planning, and efficiently allocating resources to provide parks, open space, and recreation infrastructure that both meets the needs of the community and is maintainable by the City and its partners.

Since the 2013-2017 *Parks and Recreation Plan* the functions of the former Parks and Recreation Department have been absorbed into the Planning and Zoning Division.

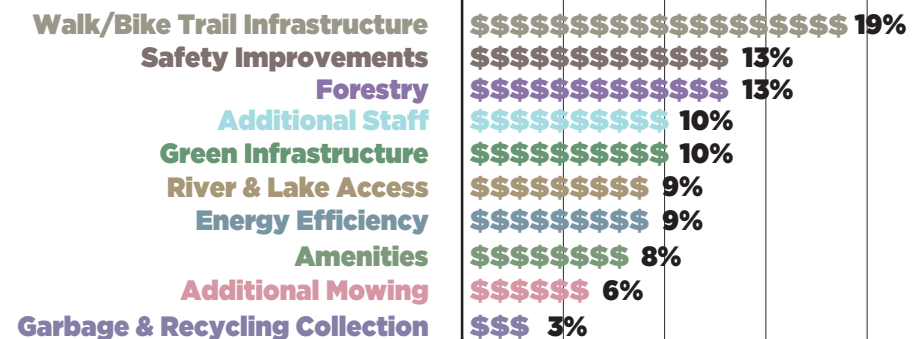
The number of full-time equivalent employees has dropped from 75 in 2007 to just 1/4 of a full-time equivalent employee in 2018. Likewise, the parks millage, which is the only dedicated source of funding for parks administration, operations, and maintenance, has been in steady decline since first being approved in 1996. In 2016, actual millage revenue stood at just \$311,597, decreasing \$468,617 (or 60%) over the previous eight years. Together, these limitations have curtailed the bandwidth of the City to carry out parks operations.

PARKS MILLAGE SPENDING: 2016



Currently, 76% of millage funds goes to paying for mowing services and utilities. Our community workshops have demonstrated how residents want to spend our remaining funds while also expressing a strong consideration for green infrastructure and energy efficiency projects to decrease the amount spent on mowing and utilities, eventually freeing up more funds for other projects.

“DOLLAR EXERCISE” RESULTS FROM PLANNING WORKSHOPS



The City of Flint will provide equitable park planning and project-based improvements to further implement the goals and objectives of the Imagine Flint Master Plan based on the following guiding principles:

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF

IMAGINE FLINT MASTER PLAN

Social Equity & Sustainability

Reshaping the Economy

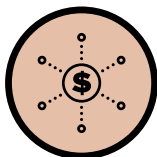
Quality of Life

Adapting to Change

Youth

Civic Life

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Strategic Investment:

Provide equitable and efficient use of limited resources through data-driven, strategic investment to our most vulnerable populations while exploring all opportunities for investment throughout the park system



Equity and Access:

Prioritize geographic and demographic equity and provide residents with free, barrier-free access to safe and attractive parks and natural areas throughout the city



Safety and Security:

Provide safety and security to increase park use, promote partnerships and volunteerism, and foster a sense of community



Environmental Sustainability:

Implement natural landscaping and green infrastructure in our parks to improve environmental quality, foster neighborhood stewardship, and to limit the City's carbon footprint



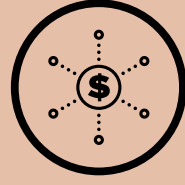
Flint River System Revitalization:

Use placemaking and natural landscaping to transform the river, creeks, lakes, and riverfronts into clean and appealing recreation and entertainment destinations

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Community Input Meeting at Woodside Church, 2015

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: STRATEGIC INVESTMENT



STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

Provide equitable and efficient use of limited resources through data-driven, strategic investment to our most vulnerable populations, while exploring all opportunities for investment throughout the park system

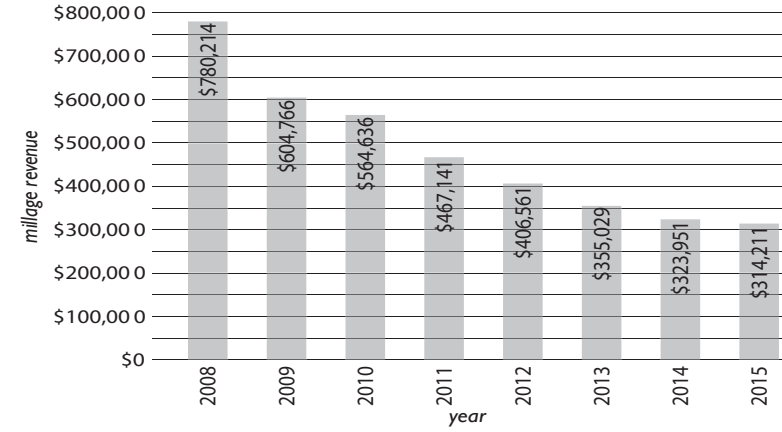
Through data-driven, strategic investment we provide a more equitable and efficient use of our very limited resources. The *Imagine Flint* Master Plan calls for prioritizing investment due to decreasing funding and the high cost of capital improvements. Considering our most vulnerable areas for investment does not mean ignoring or abandoning other areas, it simply looks to efficiently use and leverage when possible, limited resources.

When groups and residents come to the City with ideas or special opportunities to improve their neighborhood park we will help connect them to the resources and organizations that could aid them, even if they are not strictly in an area of consideration.

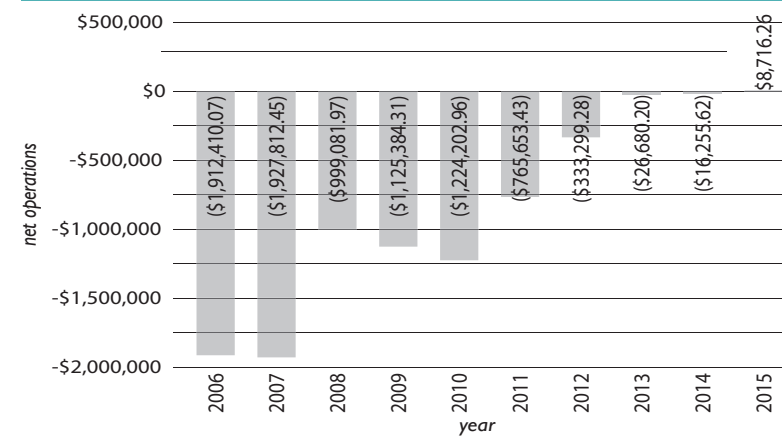
Facilitating community-led public planning ensures that new park amenities and investments are not solely guided by population numbers or place types, but also by the unique needs of the populations, especially the youth population, served by our parks and community centers.

Public planning is an important way to accomplish efficiently allocating limited resources by allowing residents to plan their most desired amenities and projects, guaranteeing improvements with the greatest impact and the largest return on investment. Properly maintained and utilized parks function as vital anchors in our neighborhoods that have faced decades of disinvestment.

PARKS MILLAGE REVENUE 2008-2015



PARKS NET OPERATIONS 2006-2015



Until 2015, the City of Flint had operated parks and golf courses at a deficit every year the previous 9 years.



STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

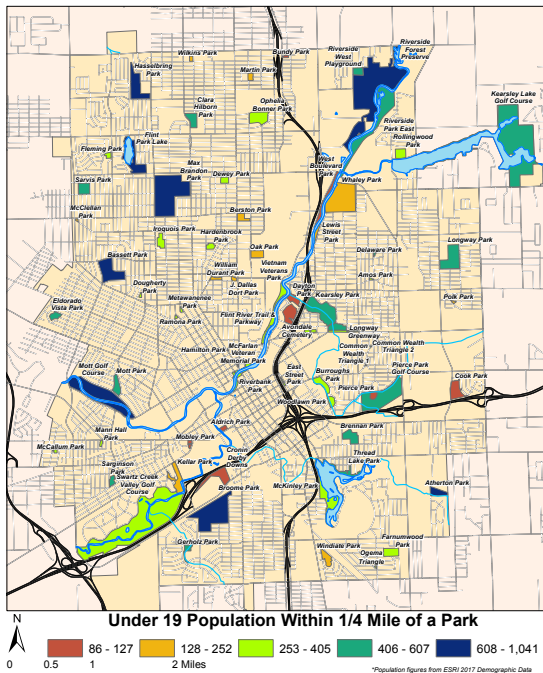
Goal: *Utilize a data-driven approach to prioritize capital investment to Flint's most vulnerable neighborhoods*

Using data concerning the youth population and poverty rates will allow for more equitable distribution of funding for park maintenance and investment. In neighborhoods that have been particularly impacted by blight and abandonment, investing in parks and community centers is a crucial strategy in stabilization.

Flint should explore opportunities to develop improvements adjacent to active community centers and schools when drafting park plans. Complementing amenities at these facilities provides an opportunity to build off of previous investment where residents and children are already visiting and limit the building of redundant amenities. Plans will also emphasize placemaking as a way to make park spaces engaging and raise the rate of use. For example, redeveloping old tennis courts or unused green space gives us a chance to activate underutilized spaces and adapt to the changing interests of the City's residents and children.

Quote Box:

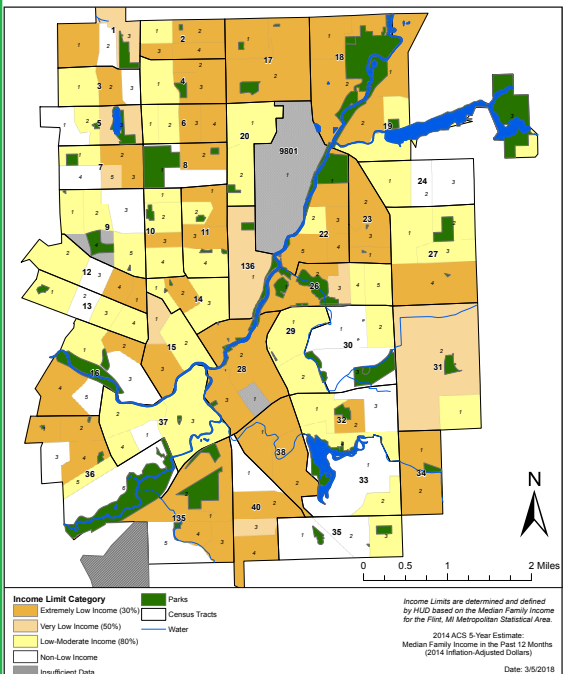
CONSIDERATION 1: HIGHEST YOUTH POPULATION WITHIN 1/4 MILE



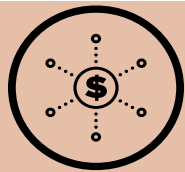
CONSIDERATION 2: ADJACENT TO AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY CENTER OR SCHOOL

Park	Community Center /School
Atherton	Manley Early Childhood Education
Bassett	Haskell Community Center
Berston	Berston Field House
Cronin Derby	Flint Southwestern Academy
Downs	Freeman Elementary
Farnumwood	Neithercut Elementary
Gerholz	Potter Elementary
Longway	McKinley Center
McKinley	Pierce Elementary

CONSIDERATION 3: LOW INCOME AREA



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STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

Goal: *Equitably distribute capital improvements and amenities using the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards per capita as a reference while planning with city residents*

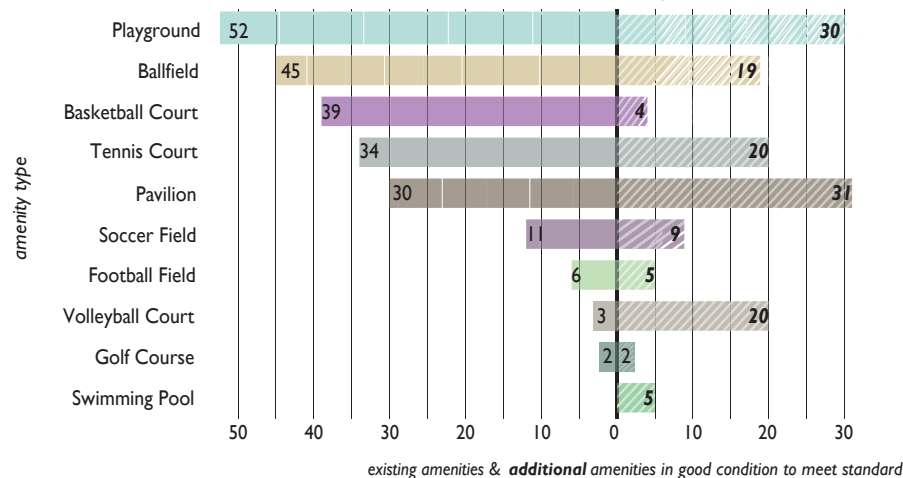
ACTION: Maintain a parks inventory assessment, tracking the condition of every amenity, park, and recreation facility to provide a geographical analysis

The NRPA is a recognized authority for parks and recreational planning in the United States and provides an extensive list of amenities standards per capita for park systems. While these standards serve as a “baseline”, Flint must respond to its demographic changes, available funding for installation and maintenance, and community planning to calibrate these recommendations to best fit the habits and desires of the community. For example, even though Flint would need many more volleyball courts and ballfields to meet NRPA standards for our population, we saw through our dollar exercises that these amenities are not currently popular with Flint residents.

Flint parks also need more than large amenity improvements to meet the needs of our residents. Items such as park signs, garbage cans, grills, picnic tables, and energy-efficient lighting, are also important investments to improve the usability of our parks.

In 2010 and 2016 Flint conducted Park Inventory Assessments rating the condition of amenities and the grounds in all city parks. Digital photographs were also taken and this information was compiled in GIS layers to display the overall condition of individual parks the park system as a whole. A regularly scheduled inventory assessment provides up-to-date data that informs planning decisions regarding the status and needs of the park system.

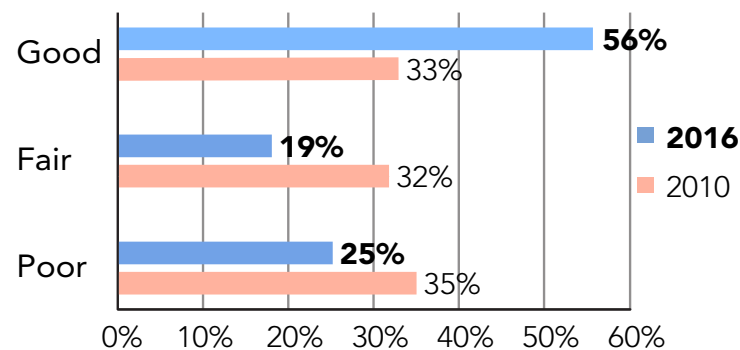
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT NEEDS: 100,000 PEOPLE



“DOLLAR EXERCISE” RESULTS FROM PLANNING WORKSHOPS



PARK CONDITIONS 2010 vs 2016



Flint has seen a marked improvement in the condition of city parks. Since 2010 parks in poor or fair conditions have decreased and the number of parks in good condition has increased 23%



STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

ACTION: Continue drafting individual Community Park Plans with the participation of park adopters, neighborhood groups, and citizens, guaranteeing that park amenities are developed where they fit best and are most desired

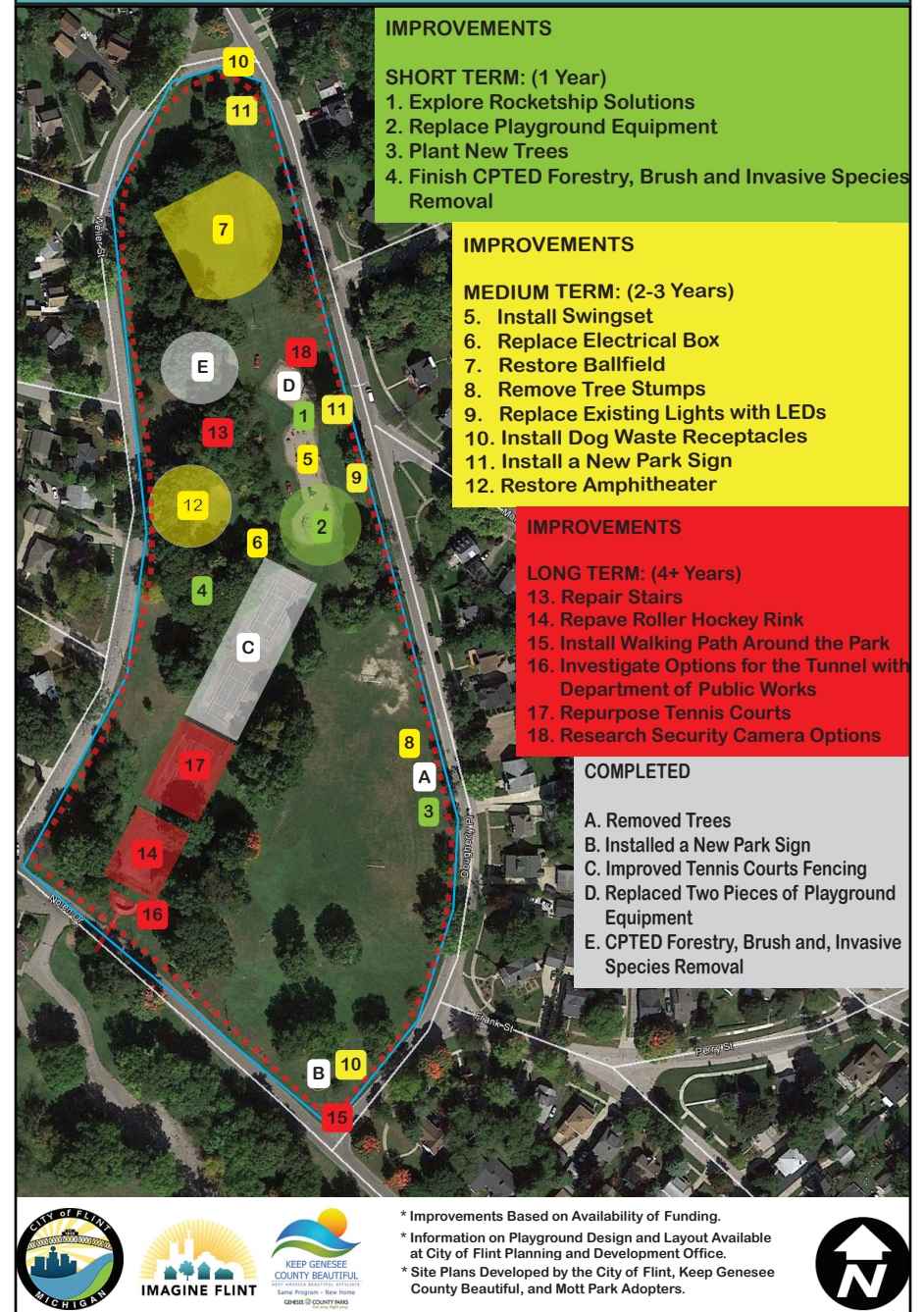
One objective identified in the *Imagine Flint* Master Plan that has been implemented is the creation of individual Community Park Plans. The Department of Planning and Development plans to draft three to five 5-Year Community Park Plans every year, eventually creating one for every City of Flint park. The process relies heavily on public participation and feedback, giving the community a voice to identify what maintenance and capital improvements they want for their neighborhood parks. These plans allow for the community to come together, form partnerships, leverage resources and increase their sense of ownership in parks.

These plans are created following the consideration guidelines detailed in this document with thought also given to the size, geographic features, and conditions of existing amenities in each park. For example, the size of a park or the concentration of children near it may warrant larger or multiple playgrounds or pavilions.

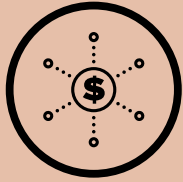
With community-led planning and feedback we can prioritize the most desirable development in the most underserved neighborhoods to receive the greatest impact and the best return on investment.

Site plans that have been completed are in the appendix.

SAMPLE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SITE PLAN: MOTT PARK 2015-2019



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STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

Goal: *Develop partnerships and funding strategies with stakeholders to provide parks and recreation infrastructure that meet the needs of the community and is maintainable by the City and its community partners*

Despite the very small City staff and budget, an impressive amount of improvements and parks planning has taken place thanks to grants and partnerships. During 2017 the City of Flint had at least one partnership in 59 of our 70 parks, or 84%. Partnerships range in size and type from individuals, block clubs, churches, and neighborhood associations to major institutions or non-profits.

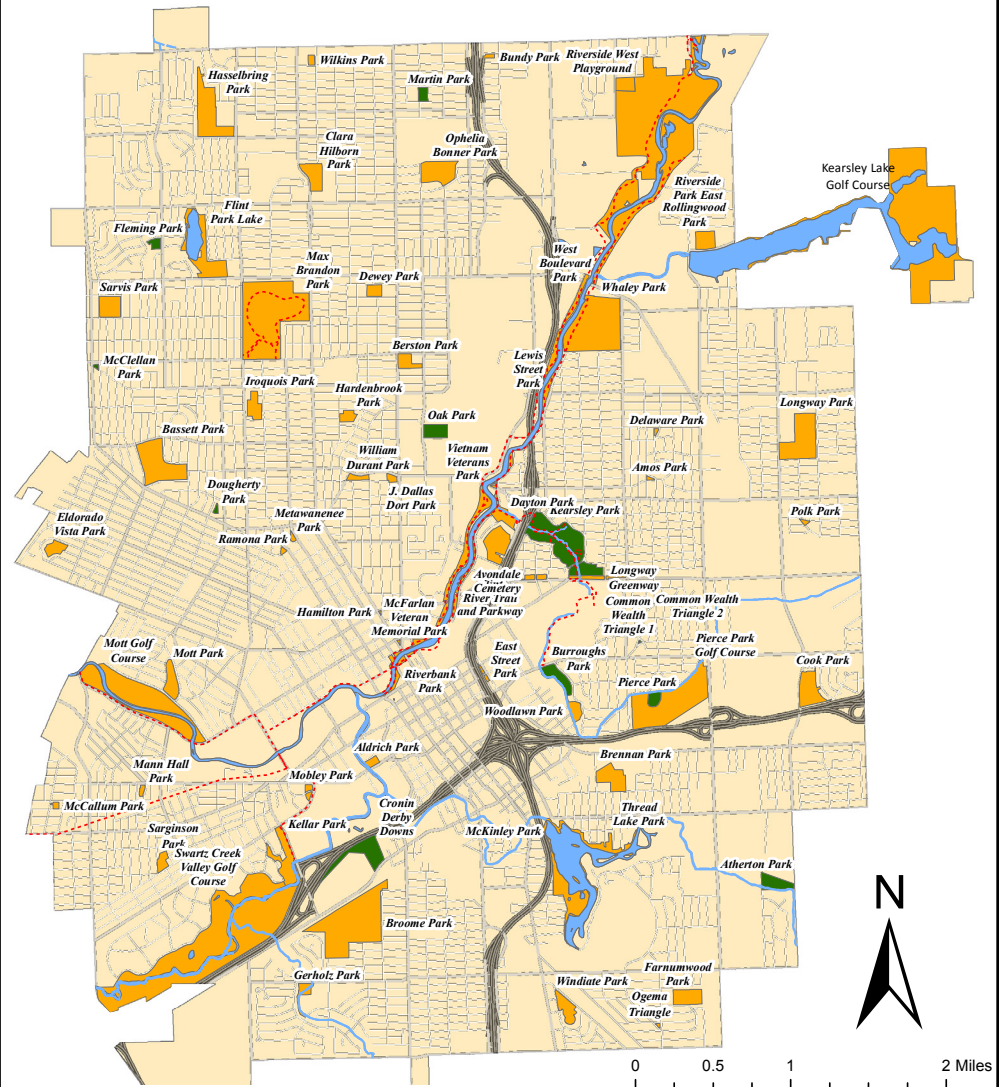
Park partners through the Adopt-a-Park Program save the City of Flint over \$150,000 in mowing services and \$25,000 in utility costs per year and have added over \$500,000 worth of park improvements!

Continuing to build the capacity of existing partners, while forging new ones, and pursuing grant opportunities will help supplement the millage, complete necessary maintenance and capital improvements, and provide exceptional services to Flint residents.

Quote Box:

PARK PARTNERSHIP MAP CITY OF FLINT

SPRING 2018



*Current Partners are always looking for additional volunteers.
Visit www.kgcb.net for more information

- Existing Partnership
- Open for Adoption
- Trails



PARTNER PROFILE



**KEEP GENESEE
COUNTY BEAUTIFUL**
KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE

The Flint Adopt-a-Park Program is administered by Keep Genesee County Beautiful (KGCB), a program of Genesee County Parks, to provide technical support to volunteer groups helping to complete maintenance, programing, natural landscaping projects, and capital improvements in City of Flint Parks. Adopt-a-Park partners commit hours of hard work throughout the year to keep our parks attractive and safe, encouraging residents across the city to enjoy the benefits of park usage and to increase community pride, awareness, and stewardship in Flint Parks.

Although numbers for dollars invested and volunteer hours served exist, the true value of the program is incalculable. Adopt-a-Park partners were able to install numerous playgrounds and amenities, and conduct dozens of clean-ups during a time of need when City staffing was drastically cut and the former Parks and Recreation Department duties were being shifted. KGCB's Adopt-a-Park program now stands as an innovative example nationwide for how local residents can be empowered to reclaim their neighborhood parks, guide public planning, and serve as park stewards.

Below is only a snapshot of some of the improvements completed by KGCB and Park Adopters throughout the entire park system. Flint parks would truly not be the amazing recreation spaces they are today without their dedication and tireless work.

PARK ADOPTER COMPLETED PROJECTS (2011 - 2016)

Bassett Park - fencing repairs, safety improvements, new seating, new playground equipment, and improved lighting
Berston Park - basketball court improvements, new playground equipment
Brennan Park - basketball court improvements, ball field improvements
Cook Park - improved seating, new playground equipment
Delaware Park - seating, playground, and landscaping improvements
Durant Park - fencing repairs, ball field improvements, new playground equipment, basketball court improvements, safety improvements
Gerholz Park - tennis court repairs and improvements
Hardenbrook Park - volleyball, ball field, and basketball court improvements, fencing repairs, new pavilion (2), picnic tables, and grills
Hasselbring Park - basketball court and ball field improvements, new grill, seating and landscaping improvements
Longway Park - new playground equipment and improvements, ball field improvements, seating repairs
Mann Hall Park - fencing repairs, new playground equipment, new pavilion, new benches, picnic tables, and grills
Max Brandon Park - new playground equipment, Genesee County Parks partnership
Mott Park - new playground equipment and improvements, seating repairs
Rollingwood Park - pavilion and basketball court improvements, new fencing, new playground equipment, new picnic tables and grills, seating repairs
Sarginson Park - playground, basketball court, and seating improvements, new ball field, new benches, picnic tables, and grills
Sarvis Park - playground and basketball court improvements
Windiate Park - pavilion and playground improvements
Woodlawn Park - new picnic tables and grills, basketball court and soccer field improvements, new playground equipment, pedestrian bridge repair work

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PARTNER PROFILE



GENESEE COUNTY PARKS

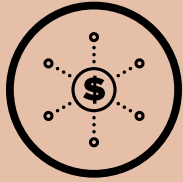
Get away. Right away.

In 2014, the City of Flint entered into a formal partnership with the Genesee County Parks & Recreation Commission to manage Max Brandon Park, Flint Park Lake, Thread Lake Park, and McKinley Park. In 2016, the City expanded the agreement to include an additional 12 parks and open spaces totaling over 500 total acres.

Furthermore, in the Fall of 2015, the County Parks installed new, modern playgrounds into Max Brandon Park and Flint Park Lake. These new playgrounds represent a near \$110,000 capital investment. While this partnership does require the City of Flint to contribute \$20,000 annually until 2021, it is estimated that Genesee County Parks provide up to \$500,000 worth of services in return!

Because of this incredible partnership, Flint residents now enjoy parks that are patrolled by deputized County Parks Rangers, are provided free-to-very low cost family programming and activities, are provided increased event services, and receive regular maintenance including weekly mowing! Currently, Genesee County Parks are spearheading the implementation of the Riverfront Restoration Project, including overseeing construction at Chevy Commons, the removal of Hamilton Dam, and trail expansion.





STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

ACTION: Establish a centralized Flint Parks Fund to reduce the overhead and duplication of services across the funding community and maximize return on investment of projects

Creating a central fund would better connect the network of funders, partners, volunteers, and resources to complete comprehensive park projects with a variety of components. Only individual amenities and piecemeal projects are being done with the current nature of assembling partners and funding from a vast array of organizations across the city and even the country.



Centralizing funding and creating an unified parks action plan can prevent duplication of services and investment, and could reduce overhead.

ACTION: Diligently recruit new partnerships and aggressively seek grants to complete short term and long term capital improvements.

Currently, the City is working on \$2.62 million in grant funded parks and community center projects (not including those awarded for Chevy Commons) in addition to the work of different park partners. Flint has completed \$1.4 million in projects just since 2015! Current and recent major projects include but are not limited to:

Project	Cost	Status
Chevy Commons & Riverbank Park	(\$14 million+)	ongoing
City Wide Trail Projects	(\$1.8 million)	ongoing
Haskell & Berston	(\$100,000)	ongoing
McKinley Park	(\$300,000)	ongoing
Max Brandon Park	(\$87,500)	complete
Brennan Park I & II	(\$85,500)	complete
Berston Playground	(\$100,000)	complete
Dewey Park / Foss Ave.	(\$47,200)	complete

Quote Box:

GUIDING PRINCIPLE:
ACCESS AND EQUITYEQUITY &
ACCESS

Prioritize geographic and demographic equity and provide residents with free, barrier-free access to safe and attractive parks and natural areas throughout the city

While data-driven prioritization is important, certain partnerships, grants, and special circumstances do come up to present investment for a specific park or park feature. In these cases the City will take advantage of these opportunities.

Goal: *Empower and guide resident and community partners in all ways possible to identify, fund, and complete park projects, and assist in solving problems that a park may be facing*

ACTION: Work with park partners to explore any and all opportunities and hold community meetings to draft individual Community Park Plans, aid in grant writing, and connect with funders to install park amenities

ACTION: Utilize City of Flint Americorps VISTA members to seize opportunities to bring new members into the Adopt-A-Park Program and connect them to organizations that can help with funding and capacity building services

*5-7 Americorps VISTAs serve with the City of Flint Department of Planning and Development over the course of a year. These Americorps members are involved with numerous projects to implement the goals of the **Imagine Flint** Master Plan and are engaged with the community to build the capacity of not only the City but also our community partners*



Sarvis Park Clean-up, 2016

Parks are anchors for both neighborhoods and the city at-large, and are natural stimulants to civic life. They serve as active gathering places for neighborhood engagement and interaction, and are often integral to the community's sense of character and identity. The City's commitment to working with all residents within our parks while encouraging improvements and events will promote continued civic involvement in Flint's parks, community centers, and open spaces.

Neighborhood engagement, listening to residents and groups at community meetings, is the City's best way to connect with park users and learn the community's need. Constant contact and putting in the face-time is the best way to keep up with the current realities that our community partners and park users face.

It is vital that Flint prioritizes geographic equity and empower groups, organizations, and volunteers throughout the park system. With the reality of limited parks staff bandwidth and park funding, problems will arise without solutions to immediately address them. Flint is committed to working with partners to connect them to other organizations and resources so that issues can be resolved more promptly than if the City had to work alone. By empowering residents and partners, no neighborhood park will be left behind or ignored.



EQUITY & ACCESS

Goal: *Support free, unrestricted access to safe and attractive parks, natural areas, waterways, and open spaces*

ACTION: Manage a reporting system to address issues submitted by park users and keep park data up to date while empowering our park partners to rectify problems together throughout the entire city

ACTION: Incorporate comprehensive criteria for park accessibility and ADA compliance in inventory assessments to identify access and utilization barriers in Flint parks

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has established guidelines to provide barrier-free accessibility at public facilities. Including criteria in the Inventory Assessment to assess accessibility and a range of barriers in Flint Parks, as well as strategies for overcoming common issues will be beneficial to addressing visitor needs.

As Community Park Plans are being considered and parks and facilities are improved a high priority is placed on upgrades that provide barrier free access. For example, improvements should include proper surfacing for wheelchairs, accessible picnic tables, and play equipment with universal access.





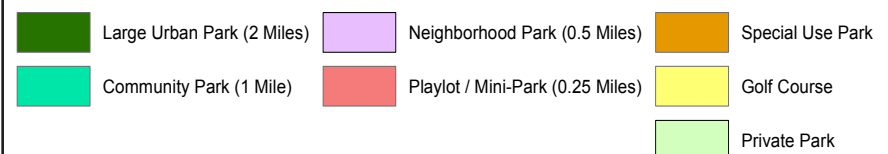
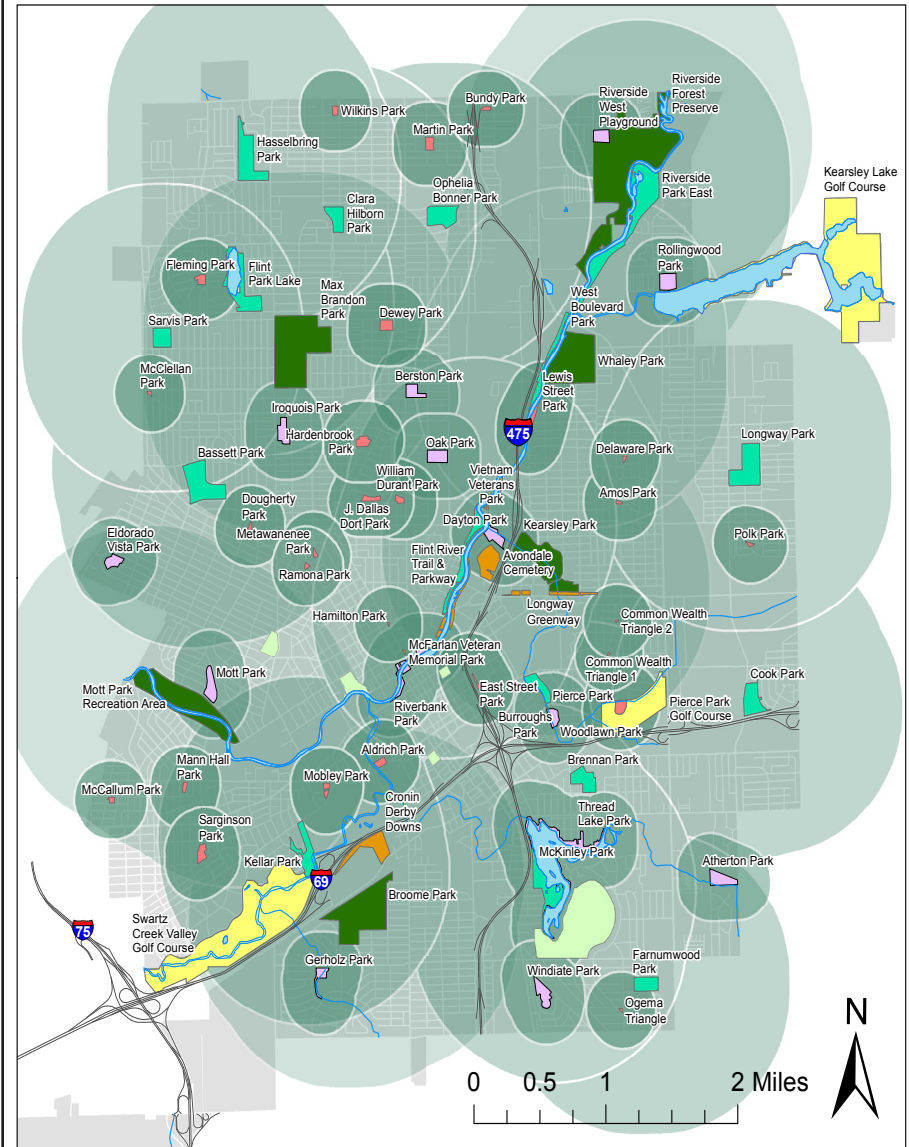
EQUITY & ACCESS

ACTION: Engage the Flint community to support the use of parks and recreation facilities across population demographics while improving diversity and promoting cross-cultural education

Just as it is important that Flint works in every park and that no park is left behind, it is equally important that no population group be left behind. Because of the importance parks serve as gathering space and neighborhood stabilization, it is vital that parks are accessible and inviting to children and their parents, college students and young professionals, and grandparents and aging seniors. Through our engagement efforts we develop park plans that guide investment that meets the needs of the unique neighborhood and its diversity of residents.

Together, the service areas of every park in Flint covers nearly the entire city. This means that every mini-park, neighborhood park, community park, and large urban park can reasonably be reached by residents within their 1/4 to 2 miles service areas. It is vital that parks are accessible, and walkable when possible, so that all residents can access the benefits parks provide, such as community gathering space, recreation space for exercise and sports, and a natural setting for respite from city life. Flint is planning to conduct a geographic needs assessment and a more comprehensive accessibility analysis to better map and comprehend each parks assets, possibilities for investment, and to better grade each parks accessibility for all park users.

PARK SERVICE AREAS CITY OF FLINT



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: SAFETY AND SECURITY



SAFETY & SECURITY

Provide safety and security to increase park use, promote partnerships and volunteerism, and foster a sense of community

Goal: *Foster parks as safe and welcoming spaces for gathering, recreation, and enjoyment*

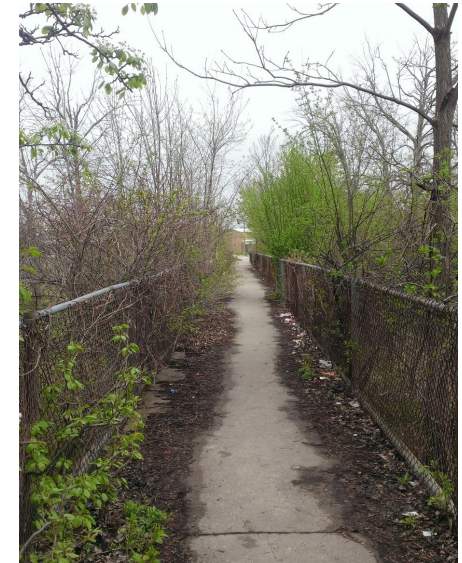
A priority for capital investments is to improve safety and security. In addition to reducing risk of injury and subsequently liability, a safe park improves the park usage, promotes volunteerism, and fosters a sense of community pride.

ACTION: Implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) tactics to better control proper access, clear sight lines, and remove hazardous conditions in parks

CPTED is a multidisciplinary crime prevention approach rooted in the belief that a well designed public realm can lead to a reduction in both the perception and occurrence of crime. Instead of using only traditional policing methods, CPTED aims to preemptively deter criminal activity, increase safety, and reduce fear in potential crime hotspots.

Where appropriate, concepts of CPTED should be applied to the City's parks and open spaces as an initial effort to improve safety and security. City staff should be trained in the appropriate application of CPTED techniques, and local residents should be educated about the benefits of neighborhood maintenance for park safety.

Quote Box:



Pedestrian bridge in Atherton Park before and after CPTED, 2015



DRAFT



SAFETY & SECURITY

ACTION: Prevent unnecessary repair or replacement costs in parks by adding bollards, cables, and gates to prevent dumping and unauthorized vehicles such as four-wheelers and dirt-bikes

ACTION: Replace old amenities that are damaged or that no longer meet modern safety standards and create safety hazards.



Removal of unsafe equipment, Mott Park, 2016

ACTION: Encourage interdepartmental collaboration and explore the use of security cameras in parks by partnering with Flint Police and the 'Project C.A.T.T. EYE' Program

Project C.A.T.T. EYE (Crime Area Target Team) is made up of a group of officers who target high crime areas in the City of Flint through 24 hour monitoring of the video feeds of cameras installed at local businesses. The project consists of real-time crime fighting and community policing aimed at improving quality of life, neighborhood safety, community revitalization, and economic growth.

ACTION: Transition lighting in and around Flint's parks from costly and inefficient bulbs to solar or LED lighting to increase visibility, meet **Imagine Flint** energy efficiency goals, and greatly reduce utility costs

Lighting in and around Flint's 70 park properties is made up of City owned lights and Consumer Energy owned and operated lights. Of the Consumer Energy lights in or adjacent to Flint parks, 29 have Mercury Vapor bulbs and 123 are High Pressure Sodium bulbs. Assuming an estimated cost of \$2,500 per Mercury Vapor and \$300 for High Pressure Sodium, converting all of the Consumers Energy owned lights in or adjacent to parks would cost \$109,400. This investment would save the City of Flint an estimated \$26,786 annually, meaning it would pay for itself in approximately 4 years.





SAFETY & SECURITY

ACTION: Advocate for the demolition of substandard structures on lots adjacent to parks

Blight elimination on lots that border parks opens up possibilities for reuse. Most importantly, removing unsafe and damaged structures that made parks seem dangerous and uninviting will reshape public image and encourage recreation use.

This land could be taken on, maintained, and productively utilized by another neighbor, church, or community group. In certain circumstances the land could be incorporated into the park, increasing the amount of green space in the City.



Hardenbrook Park and adjacent substandard properties (Flint Property Portal)



DRAFT

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Implement natural landscaping and green infrastructure in our parks to improve environmental quality, foster neighborhood stewardship, and to limit the City's carbon footprint

Goal: *Prioritize the improvement of the ecological health, access, and recreation opportunities of Flint's natural systems through responsible planning and natural landscaping projects*

ACTION: Transform underutilized and inactive parkland into passive-use sites by transitioning manicured turfs into native vegetation with pollinator gardens, rain gardens, and native grasses to increase beauty, enhance native systems, and reduce maintenance costs

ACTION: Prioritize sustainable and energy efficient construction and/or improvements at parks and community centers

There are many benefits to developing natural landscaping in part of Flint's

park system, the most tangible being a reduction in operating expenses. For every 25 acres transitioned from turf grass to native vegetation, over one million dollars in maintenance costs are saved over ten years. In addition to reduced maintenance, natural landscaping creates a healthier, more resilient environment by increasing local biodiversity and combating destructive invasive species. It also improves permeability and naturally manages stormwater runoff.

Natural landscaping does **not** mean areas of a park are being forgotten or removed as open space available to the community.

Daylighting long-buried streams and natural landscaping

in parks can enhance the way in which residents engage with the environment. Natural systems and native species provide unique opportunities to learn about the region's environmental heritage through informational signage, outdoor classrooms, and interactive gardens. Wildflowers and ornamental shrubs and trees can improve the appearance and visual diversity of the City, creating more fulfilling experiences.

Community engagement with park users and neighbors along with surveying geological features will help guide decisions about which parts of a park are good candidates for natural landscaping and where the city can daylight streams.

Quote Box:



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

ACTION: Seek funding and partnerships to develop specific projects for the restoration and enhancement of natural areas to improve the health of the city's ecosystem as it relates to open spaces and parks

ACTION: Develop interpretive, place-based education materials to engage diverse audiences by demonstrating the relevance of parks and natural systems on civic and daily life

The City engages diverse audiences and stakeholders to share their accounts of the history and relevance of parks and natural processes to their lives, thus activating parks through exploration of their contemporary and historical significance. The National Parks Service makes recommendations on developing interpretive signage and programming that engage audiences, encourage shared stewardship, and create opportunities for lifelong learning. Such an approach may facilitate audience interaction with one another and with resources that parks provide.

When partnering with community and conservation groups to complete green infrastructure projects there is an opportunity to bring in more community members to help do the work and learn in a hands-on way. Installing signage that details the natural processes and why the project is so important to the ecology of Flint and beyond provides unique opportunities to display the region's environmental heritage and stewardship.

Lewis Street Eco-Park Rain Garden Expansion, 2017



PARTNER PROFILE



GENESEE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Genesee Conservation District (GCD) is a division of state government that the City of Flint partners with that is instrumental to building capacity and implementing environmental features, open space, and parks goals of the **Imagine Flint** Master Plan.

GCD is one of nearly 3,000 conservation districts in the United States and are a locally controlled resource management agency that provides technical assistance at the local level, assisting people in implementing ecologically-friendly practices on their land, in their homes, and in their daily lives. In Flint, the Genesee Conservation District is contracted to remove hazardous trees when needed and has been active in providing technical support during our numerous tree planting and natural landscaping projects throughout the city. In 2017 alone GCD was on-site helping at Cronin Derby Down Park with Southwestern Academy students, and at Atherton Park and Lewis Street Park, among many others.

Tree Planting and Duck Habitat Build at Cronin Derby Down Park, 2017



GUIDING PRINCIPLE: FLINT RIVER SYSTEM REVITALIZATION & ACCESS

The Flint River, 2016

credit: Flint River Watershed Coalition



FLINT RIVER SYSTEM REVITALIZATION

Use placemaking and natural landscaping to transform the river, creeks, lakes, and riverfront into clean and appealing recreation and entertainment destinations

Goal: *Protect, enhance, and promote the Flint River and its watershed, including lakes, and tributary creeks and streams, as appealing and valuable community assets*

The Flint River is the most prominent natural feature in Flint. At 142 miles in length it forms a drainage network that spans approximately 1,332 sq. miles. The river is linked to several tributary waterways: Gilkey Creek, Swartz Creek, Thread Creek, Kearsley Creek, Brent Run Creek, Carman Creek, and the Robinson Drain. The creeks expand the river's broad floodplain, creating a series of greenbelt fingers that have recreational and ecological benefits. Blue/green corridors link water with green infrastructure such as parks, nature preserves, woods, and wetlands. The purpose of creating these corridors is to restore urban waterways, provide recreational space, and reduce the risk of flooding.

Plans were created in 2014 for both Thread Lake and Flint Park Lake, while an assessment report was created for Kearsley Reservoir, by Michigan State University in partnership with the Flint River Watershed Coalition. These documents detail the current conditions, existing improvement efforts, potential future opportunities, and goals and action steps to improve and realize recreation opportunities for Flint's lakes.



Thread Lake, 2012



FLINT RIVER SYSTEM REVITALIZATION

ACTION: Support partnerships that increase recreational opportunities, family programming, environmental education, and events along the Flint River and the City's lakes and creeks

Flint and its community partners, such as the Flint River Corridor Alliance and the Flint River Watershed Coalition, help implement goals of the Imagine Flint Master Plan that relate to the Flint River system and build on the transformational projects being completed within the Flint River watershed to create appealing recreational destinations for residents and visitors alike. By doing so, the City can increase appreciation for the natural environment and facilitate exercise and active lifestyles.

ACTION: Increase public access to waterfronts while preserving and enhancing views of the natural area by developing fishing piers, kayaking and canoe launches, overlooks, and trail connections

ACTION: Install green infrastructure in parks away from bodies of water to improve groundwater quality, mitigate the risk of flooding, and naturally treat storm and rain-water

ACTION: Pursue "daylighting" projects to restore existing streams and their natural systems

ACTION: Support the Flint Riverfront Restoration Project and expand its efforts throughout the city to add value to all residents



Gilkey Creek, 1971



Flint River Flotilla, 2015



FLINT RIVER SYSTEM REVITALIZATION

Goal: *Prioritize land and water trail investment that connect neighborhoods to parks, recreation facilities, the Flint River Trail, and other regional trails.*

ACTION: Support the completion of trail projects such as the Grand Traverse Greenway and Genesee Valley Trail extension

ACTION: Create wayfinding signage to showcase trail entrances and demonstrate the connections between green spaces and different parts of the city

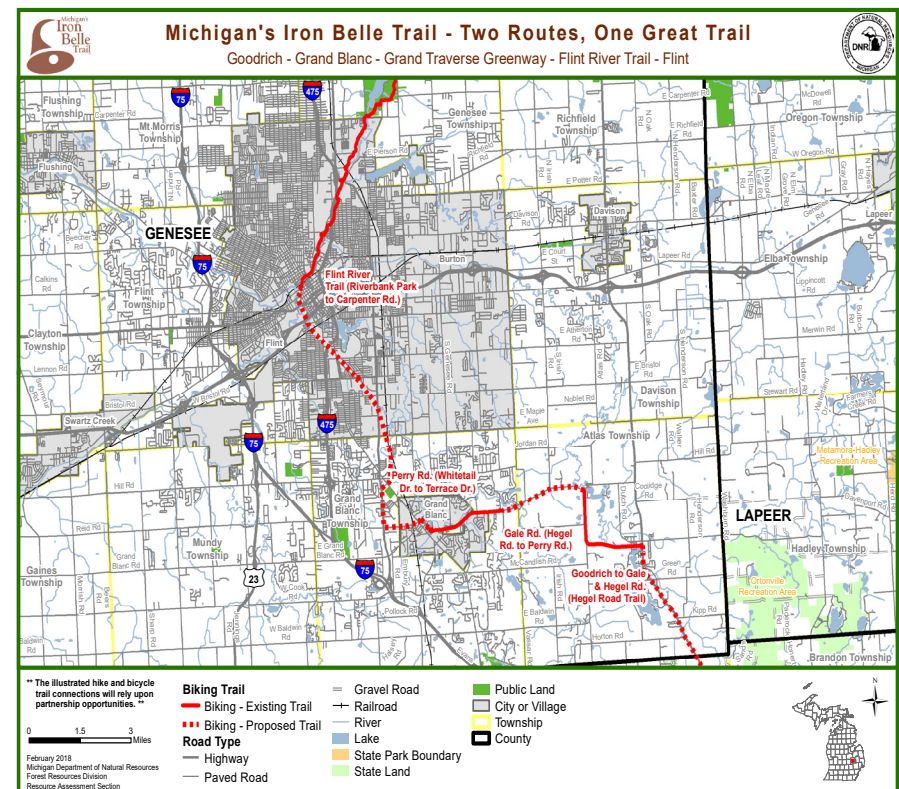
ACTION: Work with the State of Michigan, Genesee County, and adjacent municipalities to connect the Flint River Trail system to neighboring communities

The Flint River Trail is a key exercise and transportation corridor for bicyclists, runners, and walkers. The trail and its linkages to other trail systems and city parks is a building block to further improve access to recreation and natural areas. Pedestrian paths and trails were the most voted for amenity projects by residents during the two planning workshops' "dollar exercises".

The Flint River Trail is part of the Michigan's Iron Belle Trail that will connect Belle Isle Park in Detroit to Ironwood in the Upper Peninsula when completed. The Iron Belle Trail is the longest designated state trail in the country, with a hiking route 1,221 miles long and a bicycle route 798 miles.



The 2014 Genesee County Regional Non-Motorized Plan includes a number of trail projects that should be considered within Flint as regional trail connections. That plan has identified the Flint River Trail, Genesee Valley Trail, and Grand Traverse Greenway as the top 3 priority trail projects in the county.



DRAFT

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT	
GOAL	ACTION
<i>Utilize a data-driven approach to prioritize investment to Flint's most vulnerable neighborhoods</i>	Consider parks with the highest youth populations within 1/4 mile, parks that are adjacent to an active community center or school, and parks in low-moderate income areas affected by blight and crime
<i>Equitably distribute capital improvements and amenities using the National Recreation and Park Association standards per capita as a reference while planning with city residents</i>	Maintain a Parks Inventory Assessment, tracking the condition of every amenity, park, and recreation facility to provide a geographical numeric analysis
	Continue drafting 5-Year Community Parks Plans with the participation of neighborhood groups and citizens, guaranteeing that park amenities are developed where they best fit and are most desired.
<i>Develop partnerships and funding strategies with stakeholders to provide parks and recreation infrastructure that meet the needs of the community and is maintainable by the City and its community partners</i>	Establish a centralized Flint Parks Fund to reduce the overhead and duplication of services across the funding community and maximize return on investment
	Diligently recruit new partnerships, aggressively seek grants, and leverage resources to complete short term and long term capital improvements

ACCESS AND EQUITY	
GOAL	ACTION
<i>Empower and guide resident and community partners in all ways possible to identify, fund, and complete park projects, and assist in solving problems that a park may be facing</i>	Work with park partners to explore any and all opportunities and hold community meetings to draft 5-Year Community Park Plans, aid in grant writing, and connect with funders to install park amenities
	Utilize City of Flint Americorps VISTA members to seize opportunities to bring new members into the Adopt-a-Park Program and connect them to organizations that can help with funding and capacity building services
<i>Support free, unrestricted access to safe and attractive parks, natural areas, waterways, and open spaces</i>	Manage a reporting system to address issues submitted by park users and keep park data up to date while empowering our park partners to rectify problems together throughout the entire city
	Incorporate comprehensive criteria for park accessibility and ADA compliance in inventory assessments to identify access and utilization barriers in Flint Parks
	Engage the Flint community to support the use of park and recreation facilities across population demographics

SAFETY AND SECURITY

GOAL	ACTION
<i>Foster parks as safe and welcoming spaces for gathering, recreation, and enjoyment</i>	Implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) tactics to better control proper access, clear sight lines, and remove hazardous conditions in parks
	Prevent unnecessary repair or replacement costs in parks by adding bollards, cables, and gates to prevent dumping and unauthorized vehicles such as four-wheelers and dirt bikes
	Replace old amenities that are damaged or that no longer meet modern safety standards and create safety hazards
	Encourage interdepartmental collaboration and explore the use of security cameras in parks by partnering with the Flint Police and the 'Project C.A.T.T. EYE' Program
	Transition lighting in and around Flint's parks from costly and inefficient bulbs to solar or LED lighting to increase visibility, meet Imagine Flint energy efficiency goals, and greatly reduce utility costs
	Advocate for the demolition of sub-standard structures on lots adjacent to parks

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

GOAL	ACTION
<i>Prioritize the improvement of the ecological health, access, and recreation opportunities of Flint's natural systems through responsible planning and natural landscaping projects</i>	Transform underutilized and inactive parkland into passive-use sites by transitioning manicured turfs into native vegetation with pollinator gardens, rain gardens, and native grasses to increase beauty, enhance native systems, and reduce maintenance costs
	Prioritize sustainable and energy-efficient construction and/or improvements at parks and community centers
	Seek funding and partnerships to develop specific projects for the restoration and enhancement of natural areas to improve the health of the City's ecosystem as it relates to open space and parks
	Develop interpretive, place-based education materials to engage diverse audiences by demonstrating the relevance of parks and natural systems on civic and daily life

FLINT RIVER SYSTEM REVITALIZATION AND ACCESS	
GOAL	ACTION
<i>Protect, enhance, and promote the Flint River and its watershed, including lakes, and tributary creeks and streams, as appealing and valuable community assets</i>	Support partnerships that increase recreational opportunities, family programming, environmental education, and events along the Flint River and the City's lakes and creeks
	Support the Flint Riverfront Restoration Project and expand its efforts throughout the city to add value to all residents
	Increase public access to waterfronts while preserving and enhancing views of the natural area by developing fishing piers, kayaking and canoe launches, overlooks, and trail connections
	Install green infrastructure in parks away from bodies of water to improve groundwater quality, mitigate the risk of flooding, and naturally treat storm/rain-water
	Pursue 'daylighting' projects to unbury existing streams and restore natural systems
<i>Prioritize land and water trail investment that connect neighborhoods to parks, recreation facilities, the Flint River Trail, and other regional trails</i>	Support the completion of trails projects such as the Grand Traverse Greenway and the Genesee Valley Trail extension as well as pursue new trails
	Create wayfinding signage to showcase trail entrances and demonstrate the connections between green spaces and different parts of the city
	Work with the State of Michigan, Genesee County, and adjacent municipalities to connect the Flint River trail system to neighboring communities



Hasselbring Park Senior Center, July 2015

Providing even the most basic of park services in the face of a steadily declining population and park millage drastically limits the amount of projects and improvements the City of Flint can take on, relative to its need. It is prudent that Flint not detail plans for specific projects given the changing levels in funding and the challenge of assembling partners and volunteers.

Drafting 5-Year Community Park Plans at individual parks with park adopters and neighborhood stakeholders has been the best way to identify specific projects wanted by the community and to meet the goals and objectives of the *Imagine Flint* Master Plan and this Park System Plan. The planning process relies heavily on public input and there are numerous opportunities to gather feedback and make revisions to guarantee the community's vision is being created.

To use Mott Park as an example, the community identified a variety projects to improve the park:

Short Term; 1-2 Years

- * Install Solar/LED lighting
- * Restore ballfield
- * Repair tunnel and stairs
- * Install dog waste receptacles

Medium Term; 3-5 Years

- * Improve fence line around tennis courts
- * Remove growth around tennis court
- * Remove tree stumps
- * Install new park sign
- * Replace box for meters
- * Replace hazardous playground equipment

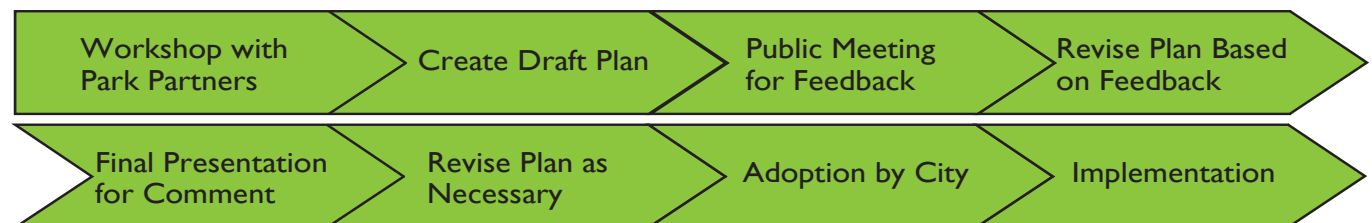
Long Term; 5+ Years

- * Repave Roller Hockey Rink
- * Install walking path around park
- * Install camera with signs
- * Update amphitheater

The next steps would be to then seek new partners and funders to support specific improvements. The City of Flint can continue to find in-kind ways to leverage support such as provide letters of support and assist with grant initiatives.












































































This process and the partnerships that form are great examples of how the City and members of the community can come together to cultivate park stewardship and act on the guiding principles of Strategic Investment, Access and Equity, Safety and Security, Environmental Sustainability, and Flint River System Revitalization and Access.

















































Quote Box:



There are types of projects we plan and complete within the City's Capital Improvement Plan and 5-Year Community Park Plans with our community partners. With strategic planning and community partnerships the City of Flint has completed projects that relate to all five guiding principles. These demonstrate the City's trajectory and commitment to the goals stated in the 2013 *Imagine Flint* Master Plan and this 2019 *Parks Plan*.

The following pages list major completed and ongoing projects undertaken by the City of Flint with community partners during the years the 2013-2017 Parks and Recreation Plan was in effect with more detail on our demonstration projects.

Finished projects	Completion	Guiding Principles				
Professional Playground Installation (3 - Flint Park Lake, Max Brandon Park, Longway Park)	2015					
Partner and Community Playground Builds (7 - Brennan Park, Berston Park, Mott Park, Sarginson Park, Hasselbring Park, Broome Park, Sarvis Park)	2016-Ongoing					
Annual Tree City USA and Arbor Day Tree Planting Celebrations (Longway Park, Cronin Derby Down Park, Atherton Park)	2015-Ongoing					
Ball Field Improvements (Kearsley Park, Brennan Park, Longway Park Farnumwood Park)	2015 - 2017					
Chevy Commons Phase I & II (capping of existing surface, addition of new soil, new pedestrian paths, tree and vegetation planting)	2015-2016					
Genesee Valley Trail Completion	2015					
Lewis Street Park Rain Garden and Eco-Park (expand rain garden, rebuild fishing piers, installing environmental education)	2015 & 2017					
Atherton Park Improvements (CPTED projects, clear sightlines, remove hazardous trees)	2016					
Max Brandon Eco-Park (removing invasive species and hazardous trees, expanding wetland, construction of boardwalk overlook, installing environmental education)	2016					
Pavilion Builds (Foss Neighborhood, Dewey Park, Brennan Park)	2016					
Riverbank Park Improvements (Upgrades to ADA standards, barrier-free access to amphitheater stage and entire park, new railings, landscaping enhancements and kayak access to river.)	2016					
Basketball court resurfacing and improvements (Flemming Park, Brennan Park, Dewey Park, Cook Park)	2017					
Consumers Energy - River Remediation	2017					
Disc golf course build (Mott Park Recreation Area)	2017					
Stevens Pedestrian Bridge Replacement	2017					

Ongoing and <i>Potential</i> Projects	Guiding Principles				
Additional Conservation and Floodplain Protection					
Annual Arbor Day Celebration Tree Plantings					
Bennan Park Improvements Phase III					
Chevy Commons Phase III & IV					
Comprehensive Access Analysis					
Daylighting Brent Run Creek					
Flint Kids Play Community Builds					
Flint Riverfront Restoration Project					
Genesee Valley Trail Extension					
Geographic Needs Assessment					
Grand Traverse Greenway					
Mott Park Recreation Area Paddler's Landing					
Placemaking Redevelopment Projects					
Thread Creek Wetland conservation					
Utah Dam Removal					

PROJECT PROFILE: FLINT RIVERFRONT RESTORATION

The Flint Riverfront Restoration Plan is a multi-organization project between the City of Flint, Genesee County Parks, and other stakeholders. This plan provides a vision to transform a neglected resource in the Flint River into a healthy and vibrant community asset. Projects of the plan call for the rejuvenation of the river and riverfront through the creation of water-based recreational opportunities, park improvements, underutilized property redevelopment, enhanced community connectivity, ecosystem restoration, and improved stormwater/flood control.

Some of the projects being undertaken are the removal of the Hamilton and Fabri Dams, restoration of the river banks, removal of contaminated sediment behind the dam, the naturalization and update of sections of Riverbank Park and river banks, cap sections of the river bottom, creation of improved fish passages, allow for water recreation through downtown Flint, and improvement of the Stevens Pedestrian Bridge.

It is worth noting that when discussing the Flint River Restoration that the City of Flint is not only focusing on major projects being completed in the Downtown area, but along the entire run of the Flint River, from Carpenter St. at the northern border to Ballenger Hwy. at the southwest corner of the City. These improvement projects will be to the benefit of the entire City.



The Flint River, 2016

PROJECT PROFILE: CHEVY COMMONS

Currently in its 4th phase, Chevy Commons is a multi-million dollar partnership project to turn the former “Chevy in- the-Hole” automotive factory from a polluted brownfield into a 60 acre park and natural area.

Chevy Commons features winding walking paths through native grassland prairies, wetlands, and wooded areas along the Flint River. Just south of downtown Chevy Commons borders the Flint River and Kettering University and is linked to the rest of Flint and neighboring municipalities through the Flint River Trail, the Genesee Valley Trail, and soon, the Grand Traverse Greenway.



“Chevy In The Hole” circa 1930



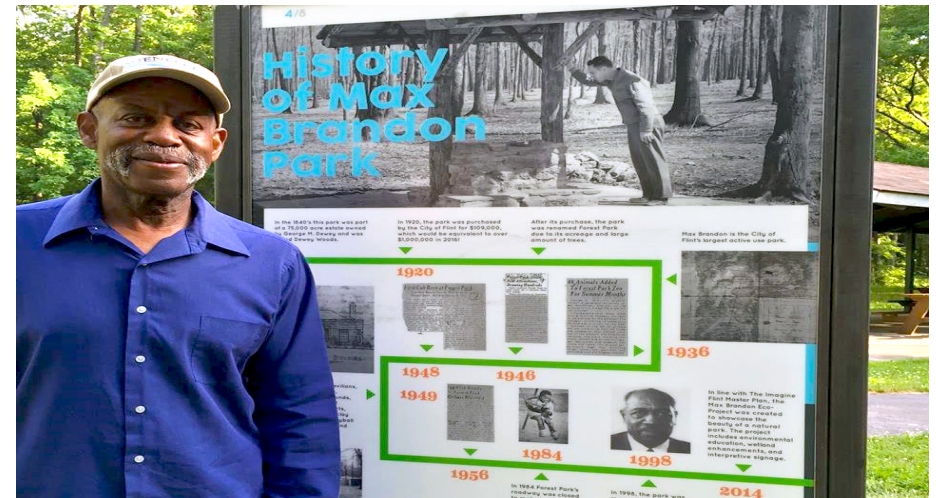
Photo credit: Kris Johns 2016

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PROJECT PROFILE: MAX BRANDON ECO-PARK

Completed in the Spring of 2016, a \$137,500 expansion and enhancement of the wetland area to naturally manage rainwater and provide increased habitat, install bicycle racks, and clear brush in accordance with CPTED guidelines. This project has also provided passive and active environmental education through in-class curriculum and interpretive signage. The Max Brandon Eco-Park project has also proved replicable. The City has taken this demonstration natural project and already applied it to Lewis Street Park.

Pictured clockwise from top left: wetland site before construction; one of the interpretive signs along the walking path; Max Brandon Jr.; and the wetland site after construction of the dock.



COMMUNITY BUILDS & AMENITIES

PARTNER & COMMUNITY PLAYGROUND BUILDS

Over the last three years the City of Flint as worked with community partners and volunteers to install new playgrounds all over the city. Flint has used strategic planning to place playgrounds in parks with the most children nearby. Not only do these modern playgrounds replace outdated play equipment that no longer meet safety standards, but they are based on designs that have been chosen by the kids and the community.

Volunteers have contributed over \$200,000 in donated labor to install over \$260,000 in new playground equipment across ten parks with **SIX new community playgrounds builds planned for 2018 alone!**



AMENITY PROJECTS

While the Department of Planning and Development creates 5-Year Community Park Plans with community partners every year, we are also committed to implementing the community's vision for their neighborhood park. The process relies heavily on public participation and feedback, giving the community the opportunity to identify what maintenance and capital improvements they deem necessary. These plans allow for the community to come together, form partnerships, leverage resources, and increase their sense of ownership in parks.

Recent projects include pavilion builds, basketball court improvements, Flint's first and only disc golf course, and walk/bike trails across a variety of park types throughout the city.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY & EDUCATION

CRONIN DERBY DOWNS DUCK HABITAT

Students at Southwestern Classical Academy teamed up with University of Michigan-Flint Outreach and the Genesee Conservation District to plant trees and install a rain garden/duck habitat at Cronin Derby Downs in 2016-17. The new rain garden will help alleviate flooding in the area and serve as a natural habitat for the ducks that have lived around the school grounds for decades. This place-based project was student-led and tied to in-class curriculum through active environmental education.

LEWIS STREET ECO-PARK

Completed in the summer of 2017, this project expanded a rain garden and bioswale done by the Master Plan Task Force and their partners, to increase the amount of rainwater managed naturally and prevent stormwater runoff into the adjacent Flint River. The project also provided CPTED tree and brush removal, interpretive signage on rain gardens and the Flint River Watershed, repaired fishing docks, and installed new bicycle amenities along the Flint River Trail. This project replicated components of the Max Brandon Eco-Park and will also serve as a template for future Eco-Park projects.



Cronin Derby Downs, 2017



New fishing dock at Lewis Street Eco-Park, 2017



PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Two sets of community input meetings were held during November 2017 to discuss the 2019 Parks Plan, one meeting for the youth of Flint and two for the general public. Because the plan update is derived from the 2013 *Imagine Flint Master Plan for a Sustainable Flint*, guiding principles were established while many potential goals were derived from the master plan and past parks and recreation master plans.

YOUTH WORKSHOP

At the youth meeting, children were broken up into groups and had 20 minutes to discuss why or why they did not use Flint parks and to list the activities they liked doing, what they wished they could do, and what are some ideas they have seen and would like to see in Flint. This list was then given to a second table for them to discuss and whittle down to their favorite three ideas. These “top three” lists were ultimately compiled all together as a master list and then every child voted for their top choices in a “dollar exercise”, where each

student was given ten “J. Dallas Dort Dollars” to vote on amenity options as they saw fit. By recording the students’ votes and comparing the results to what park amenities Flint has historically installed, the City gets a good idea if, 1 - recreation interests are changing and 2 - what recreation opportunities are most important to Flint’s youth, “Youth” being one of the guiding principles of the *Imagine Flint Master Plan*.

The top three amenities the kids chose were zip-lines, basketball courts, and skate parks. Currently, Flint has no zip-lines and only one skate park so there is a chance to

explore opportunities to install these new ideas.

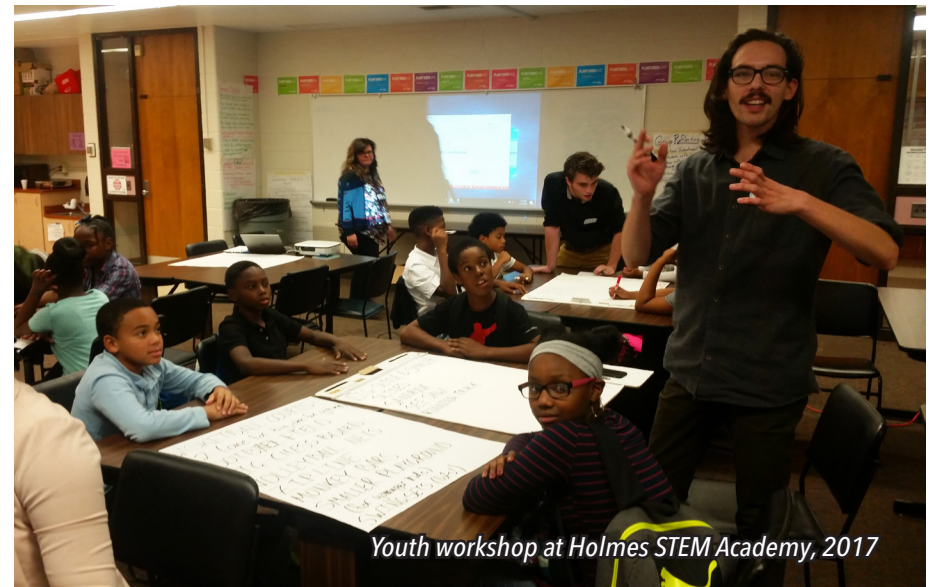
*Please note - the 2019 Park Plan has not been finalized or adopted. The text in this section is a placeholder but aligns with the schedule the City is hoping to follow**

Spring 2018 Notice of the Availability of the Draft Plan for Public Review and Comment.

Summer-Fall, 2018 Public Hearing about the Draft Plan and then a vote of adoption by Flint City Council

By March 1, 2019 Approved plan is submitted to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources

December 31, 2023 Plan expires



COMMUNITY INPUT OUTREACH

City staff posted a public announcement for the general public input meetings by posting on the *Imagine Flint* and the Flint Parks and Recreation Facebook pages, distributing fliers at City buildings and the Flint Farmers Market, encouraging city planning commission members to attend, and personally inviting key stakeholders. These two events were open to the public and held at the Berston Field House and the Brennan Senior Center to discuss possible goals, the general public's concerns, and the current realities facing Flint's parks.

GENERAL PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

The general public meetings had two parts. First, each of the five guiding principle with two or three possible goals and/or strategies were listed on a sheet of poster board allowing every community member a chance to add their own thoughts, concerns, and possible gaps concerning Flint parks as they pertain to the five guiding principles, while Planning Division Americorps VISTAs were on hand to discuss questions and talking points. The second part entailed "dollar exercises" where each participant was given "J. Dallas Dort Dollars" representing the Parks Millage and tasked with

prioritizing their tax dollars for certain parks improvement projects. A second dollar exercise was also conducted to choose among 10 specific amenity possibilities that aligned with amenities that came directly from the youth meetings.

The Berston session was attended by 25 individuals on November 9, 2017, and the Brennan session was attended by 27 individuals on November 14, 2017.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT

In total, 52 individuals participated in the two general public meetings, 25 students in the youth workshops, and ___ filled out the questionnaire during the public input phase of this plan. Attendees included community residents of all ages, park adopters, city council members, planning commission members, and city staff. A copy of the questionnaire and a summary of the input from the community meetings is included in the appendix.



Youth Workshop at Holmes STEM Academy, 2017



Berston Field House Workshop, 2017

INCORPORATION INTO PLAN

The combined feedback was reviewed by the City of Flint Planning and Zoning Division staff and used to update the goals, action items and funding priorities that are included in this Parks Plan. Feedback for the draft of the plan was advertised and posted for public review for one month at the Planning Division office, the City of Flint Municipal Center, the public library, Hasselbring, Brennan, and Berston Community Centers, and on the city website.

The draft plan was presented at a public hearing on (date) and recommended for adoption and approved by city council on (date). Copies of the public hearing notice, meeting minutes, and resolutions are included in the appendix.*

* Please note the draft plan has not been finalized, this language is a placeholder *



Holmes STEM Academy Students, 2017



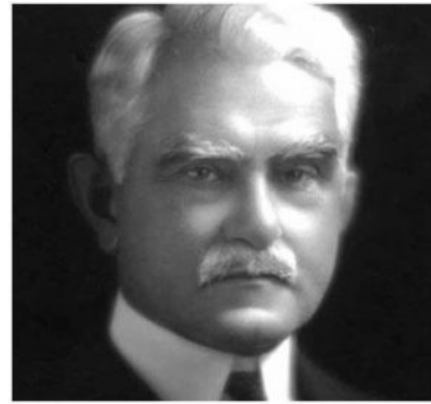
Community Workshop, Brennan Senior Center, 2017



In October 2013, the City of Flint adopted its first master plan since 1960. The *Imagine Flint Master Plan for a Sustainable Flint* was a highly participatory and community-led effort that laid the groundwork for the city to reinvent itself by focusing on social equity, sustainability, adapting to change and reshaping the economy, improving residents' quality of life, providing for Flint's youth and dedicated civic life. A significant portion of the *Imagine Flint* plan focuses on the City's comprehensive public park system.

PARK SYSTEM HISTORY

Flint has a traditionally rich parks system that values equity and access. The Flint parks system was laid out by John Nolen in the 1920 City of Flint Plan and included small parks and play lots within a five to eight-minute walk (1/4 mile) of each residential area, as well as large city parks connected by a series of park circuit drives to create continuous pleasant boulevards throughout the city. This design reflected a prevailing view of parks in



J. DALLAS DORT, C. 1920

this era as necessary places for recreation, inspiration, and escape from city life.

J. Dallas Dort, a carriage maker and auto pioneer, was instrumental in developing the parks system by creating a parks board, providing financial support, and donating land for parks. Due to Dort's leadership, the City of Flint adopted an ordinance to name the parks system "J. Dallas Dort Memorial Park System."

Understanding that Flint residents and community members value their park land, the City's master plan places a high priority on both community partnerships and strategic investment to improve the conditions of the 70 parks and green space

properties located in Flint.

Because no general fund dollars are currently available and a declining parks millage is the sole dedicated source of funding for parks and recreation, Flint utilizes committed community volunteers and a wide array of partnerships to plan and complete improvement projects. These partners help shape the near-future plans of parks and recreation to guarantee the City is using funds wisely and cultivate these spaces with an emphasis on community input and sound ecological practices. This plan focuses on the 70 recreational facilities and 56 non-recreational green spaces within the City of Flint which total 1,881 acres.



Placeholder

RESTRUCTURING

Under the charter of 1975, the City created the Flint Department of Parks and Recreation, which replaced the Flint Recreation and Park Board, to administer the responsibilities of the City for parks and recreation. Since the previous Parks and Recreation Master Plan of 2013-2017, the former Parks and Recreation Department has ceased to exist and all of its functions have been shifted to the City of Flint Department of Planning and Development.

FORMER DEPARTMENT DISTRIBUTION

Of the former Parks and Recreation Department, the Forestry Division was eliminated in FY 2013, its functions being contracted out to the Genesee Conservation District as needed.

The formal City Golf Division was eliminated in FY 2012 due to budget constraints, with operations being transferred over to a private entity. Flint Golf, LLC maintains and operates the 27-hole Swartz Creek and the 18-hole Kearsley Lake golf

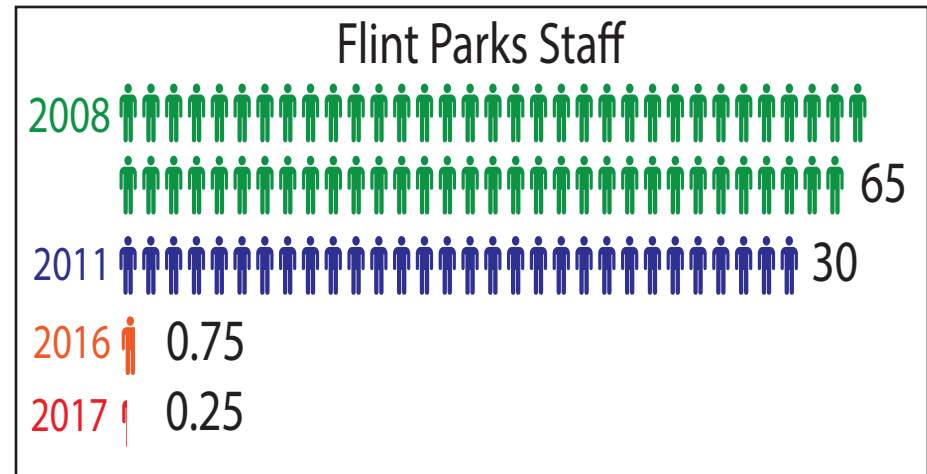
courses. The Mott Park Public Golf Course has been adopted by community members and transformed into the Mott Park Recreation Area as a multi-use city park now hosting annual events, a sizable pedestrian path, Flint's first and only disc golf course, with funding secured for a "paddler's landing" to be built in 2018. The City is currently exploring ways to transform the former Pierce Park Golf Course into a multi-use recreation area as well while leasing the former clubhouse.

The Senior Centers Division has also been eliminated. The City of Flint currently has three community centers and two senior centers operated by either the Department of Planning and Development or the Department of Public Works.

CURRENT FUNCTIONS

Currently the day-to-day functions, grant writing, project management, and funding decisions are carried out by a combination of part-time hours spent by Planning and Development employees. While all of these individuals are full-time government employees,

parks and recreation administration represents only a portion of their responsibilities with the City. Flint does not currently have any staff members whose sole responsibility is the administration of parks and recreation.



PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

Flint now classifies its facilities according to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources model. This allows for standardized comparisons to the MDNR, the National Recreation and Park Association, and other organizations that use this system when discussing recommendations based on their classifications. MDNR uses a hierarchy of park classifications to create a structure for assessing facilities and services.

The classification system includes:

- **Mini-parks/Playlots**

(Service area - 0.25 miles. Serves limited population)

- **Neighborhood Parks**

(5 to 10 acres. Service area - 0.5 miles)

- **Community Parks**

(10 to 50 acres. Service area - 1 miles)

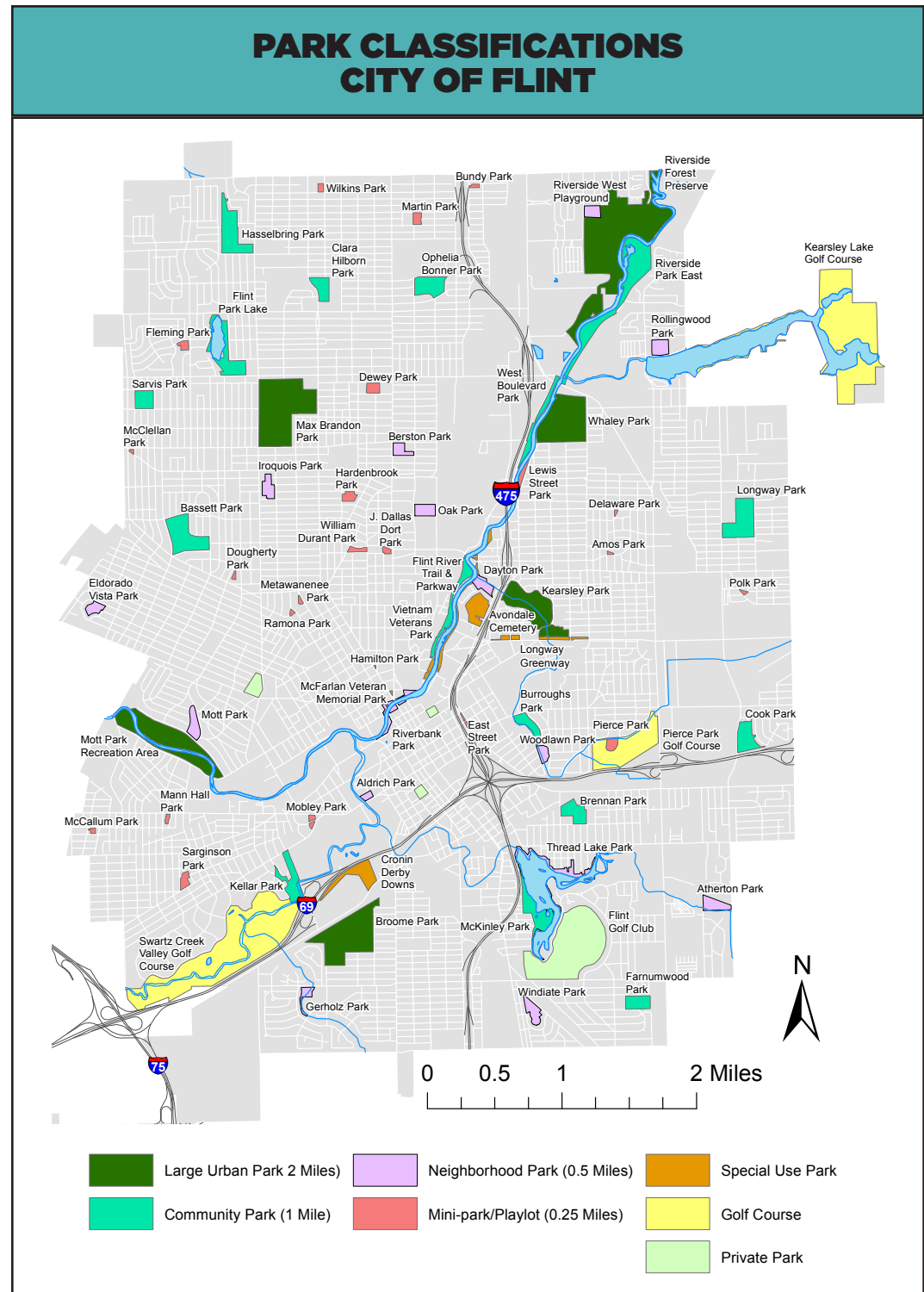
- **Large Urban Parks**

(more than 50 acres. Service area - 2 miles)

- **Special Use Parks**

(single interest activities)

DRAFT



INVENTORY ASSESSMENT

A detailed Inventory Assessment of the amenities within the park system was conducted in 2016 as an update to the one completed in 2010. 70 parks and trails were assessed using a detailed conditions and inventory assessment that rated the parks' condition, amenities, and accessibility. Additionally, digital photographs were taken, documenting the parks to create a visual reference for the sites.

PRIVATE-PUBLIC PARKS

There are four private parks that are publicly accessible in the city, Flint Memorial Park, Ballenger Park, Wilson Park, and Sit-Downers Memorial Park.

Quote Box

COMMUNITY CENTERS

The City of Flint has two active community centers, Berston and Haskell, and a third, the McKinley Center, is currently inoperable due to a fire in 2016 that destroyed the observation deck that overlooked Thread Lake and left the community center damaged. The two senior centers, Brennan and Hasselbring, no longer have City staff operating these facilities, but the City is responsible for capital repairs and in some cases, utilities.

All active buildings are well utilized, with programming at all of the centers provided by various non-profit partners. Some are utilized to the point that they physically cannot accommodate more users without capital investments, an indication of the need for more centers and partners to help with programming, especially for youth. Utilization of senior and community centers can be a key component in implementation of *Imagine Flint* Master Plan objectives and there are opportunities to build off of previous investment through adaptive reuse of Flint Community School facilities.

Hardenbrook Park, 2017



Hasselbring Park Senior Center, 2016

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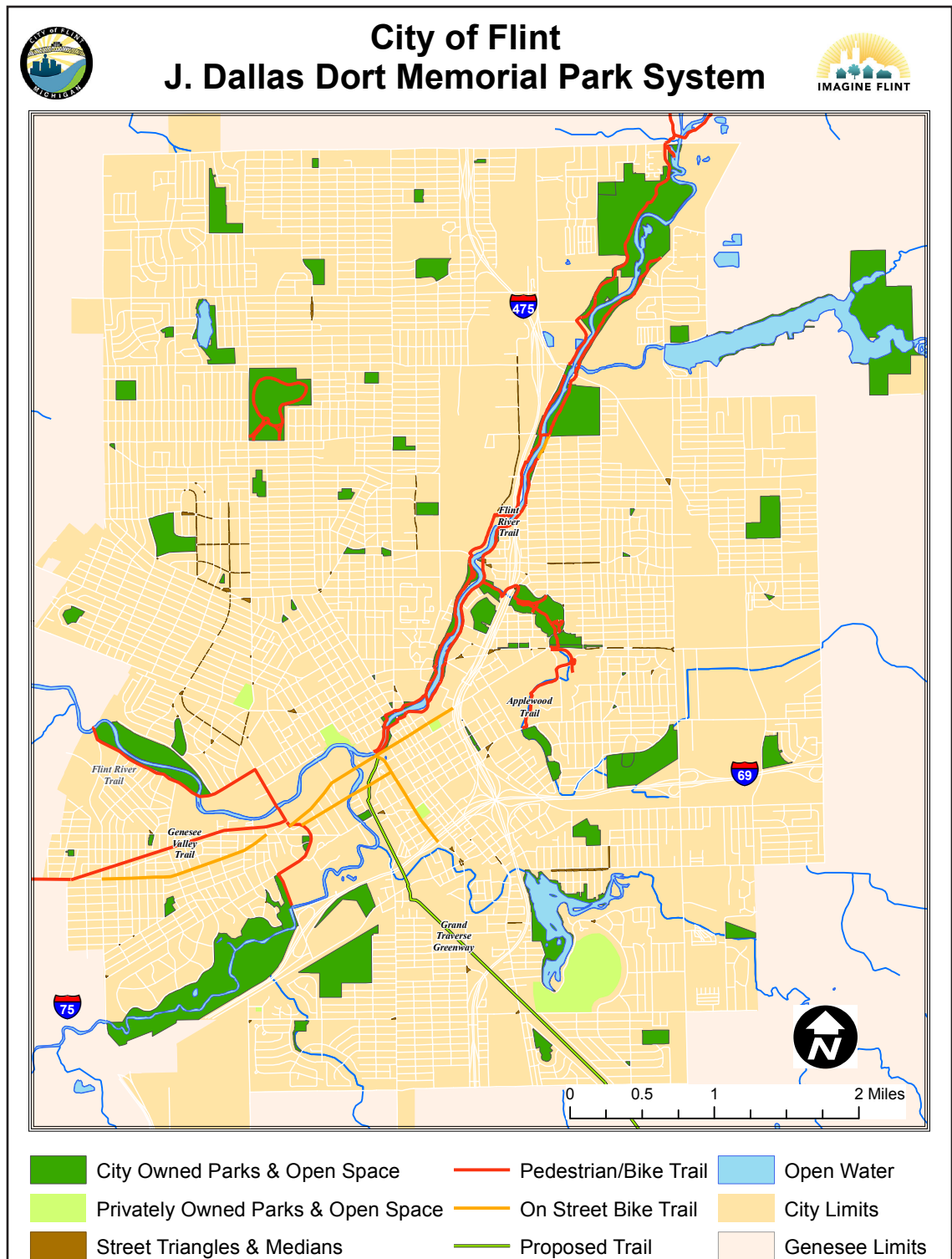
TRAILS

The Flint River Trail is a collection of trail segments running along and near the Flint River for nearly 24 miles. Much of the trail is on both east and west banks of the river, extending from the University of Michigan-Flint campus downtown to Bluebell Beach at Mott Lake north of the city, and reaching even further north to Genesee Charter Township via East Coldwater Road.

The Applewood segment of the Flint River Trail runs through Dayton Park and Kearsley Park south to Burroughs Park near I-69. Another Flint River Trail segment runs through Chevy Commons and Kettering University and along Mott Park Recreation Area to the western border with Flint Charter Township. The Flint River Trail is part of the state's Iron Belle Trail that will connect Belle Isle Park in Detroit to Ironwood in the Upper Peninsula when completed.

The Genesee Valley Trail connects to the Flint River Trail at Chevy Commons and runs west for 4.5 miles along the old CN railroad line, past Genesee Valley Mall and eventually to the Flint Township Nature Park.

The Grand Traverse Greenway is a proposed 3 mile trail following a former CSX railroad from beyond Flint's southern border to downtown. The Grand Traverse Greenway will serve as a key portion of the Michigan Iron Belle Trail and will connect with both existing pedestrian/bike trails in Flint.





MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES GRANT HISTORY

The following information is based on files provided by MDNR staff, showing grant assisted facilities in the last 25 years. The full recreation grant history can be found in the appendix.

PROJECT	PROJECT INFORMATION	PROJECT YEAR	GRANT AMOUNT
5 NEW PLAYGROUNDS	Develop 5 new playgrounds at: Sarvis, Hardenbrook, Iroquois, Durant, Brennan.	1992	\$225,000
FLINT PARK LAKE DEVELOPMENT	New park, boat ramp, fishing pier, picnic & parking area, playground, basketball court, softball field	1993	\$127,900
KEARSLEY PARK DEVELOPMENT	Playground equipment, improvements to pedestrian link with Dayton park, ball field, pedestrian bridge, parking improvements	1999	\$700,592
FLINT PARK LAKE DEVELOPMENT	Construction of a boat ramp with adjacent fishing pier, parking lot, paved walking path, and picnic area	2000	\$151,787
GRAND TRAVERSE GREENWAY PROPERTY ACQUISITION	Acquisition of an abandoned rail corridor for the development of a 3-mile regional trail extension connecting Riverbank park to the Flint River Trail.	2008	\$525,000
RIVERBANK PARK DEVELOPMENT	Development to include upgrading to ADA standards, barrier-free access to amphitheater stage and entire park, new railings, landscaping enhancements and kayak access to river	2012	\$300,000
MCKINLEY PARK IMPROVEMENTS	Development project at McKinley Park for waterfront access improvements on Thread Lake and a new playground. Waterfront improvements include a fishing deck, kayak launch, overlook, access paths, exercise stations and a pavilion. The application was initiated by a local business looking to revitalize the neighborhood and surrounding area	2013	\$225,000

DRAFT

GOING FORWARD

As Flint continues to face its challenges head-on we are committed to providing parks and open space that are safe, ecologically healthy, and fun for our community! We could not do park clean-ups, community events, playground builds, and so much more without your support and hard work, so we sincerely thank every volunteer, community partner, and funder that make this work possible! We believe our park system is an incredible asset to Flint and we are excited to continue our work with you to improve parks, community centers, and open space throughout the city and to work toward implementing the goals laid out in the ***Imagine Flint*** Master Plan.

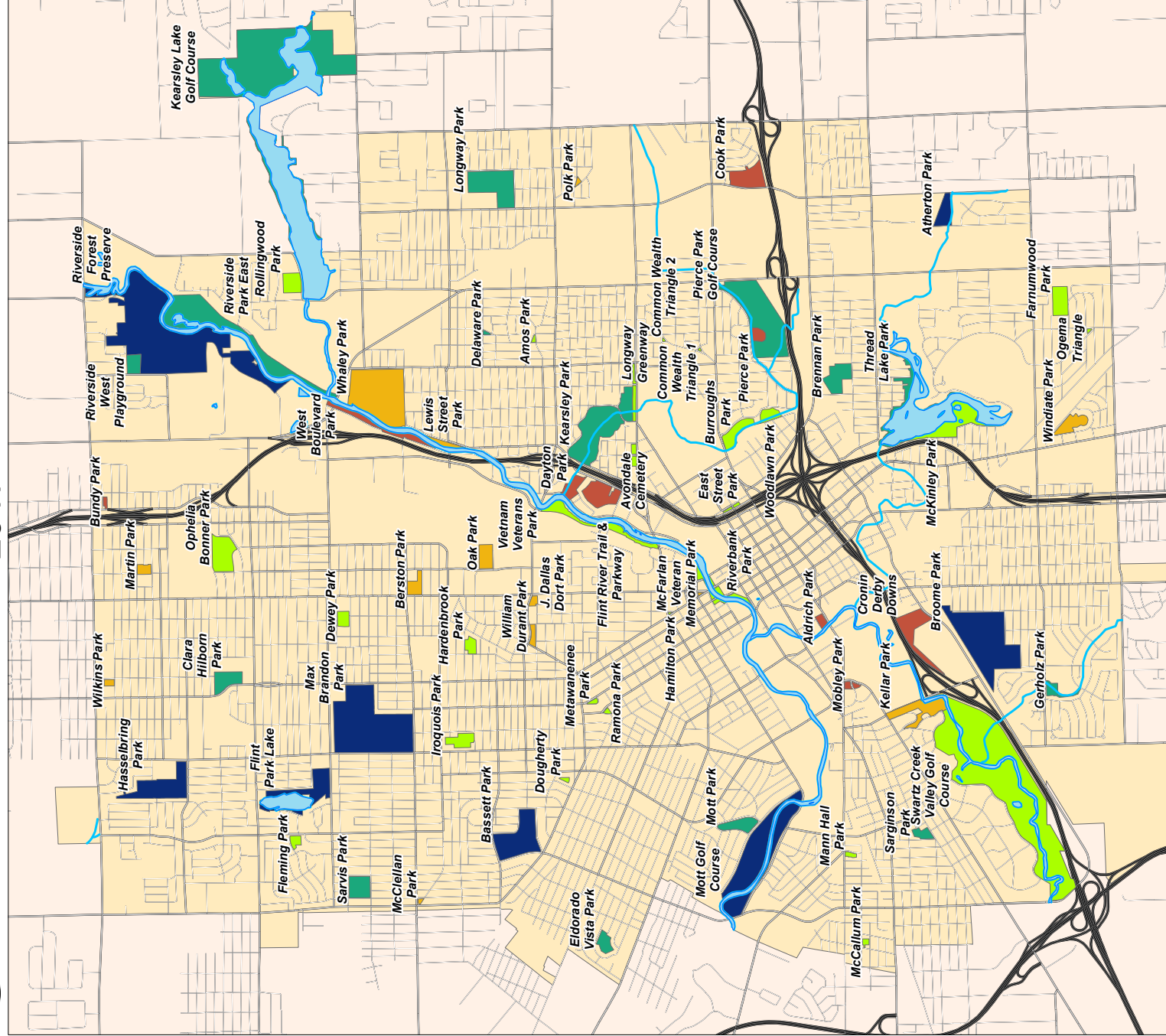
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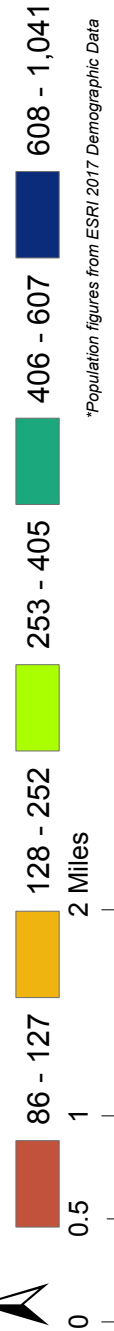
APPENDIX A: Youth Population Around Parks



Youth Population Around Parks 2017



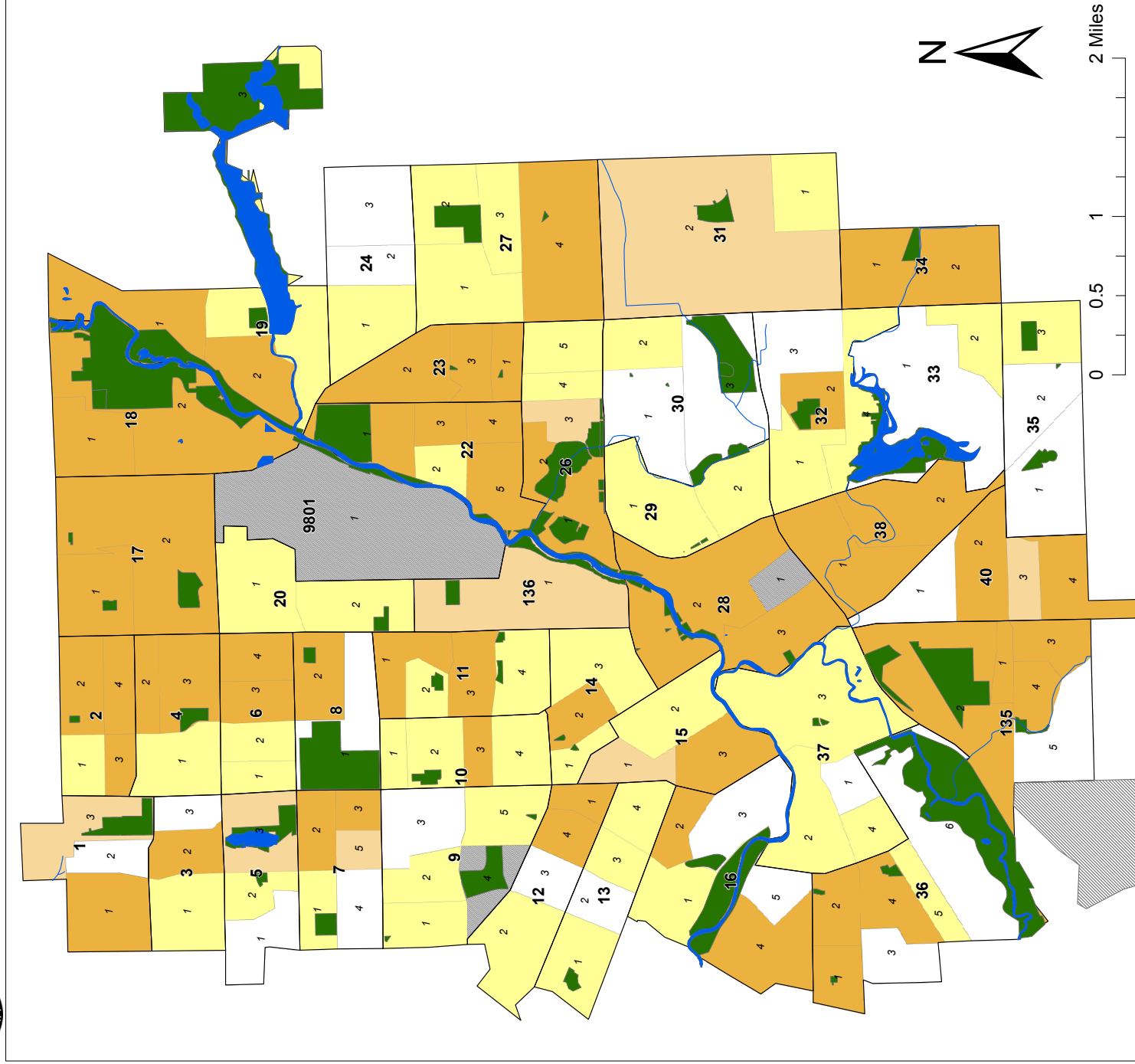
Under 19 Population Within 1/4 Mile of a Park



*Population figures from ESRI 2017 Demographic Data



Census Tracts and Block Groups with Extremely Low, Very Low, and Low Income



Income Limit Category

- Extremely Low Income (30%)
- Very Low Income (50%)
- Low-Moderate Income (80%)
- Non-Low Income
- Insufficient Data

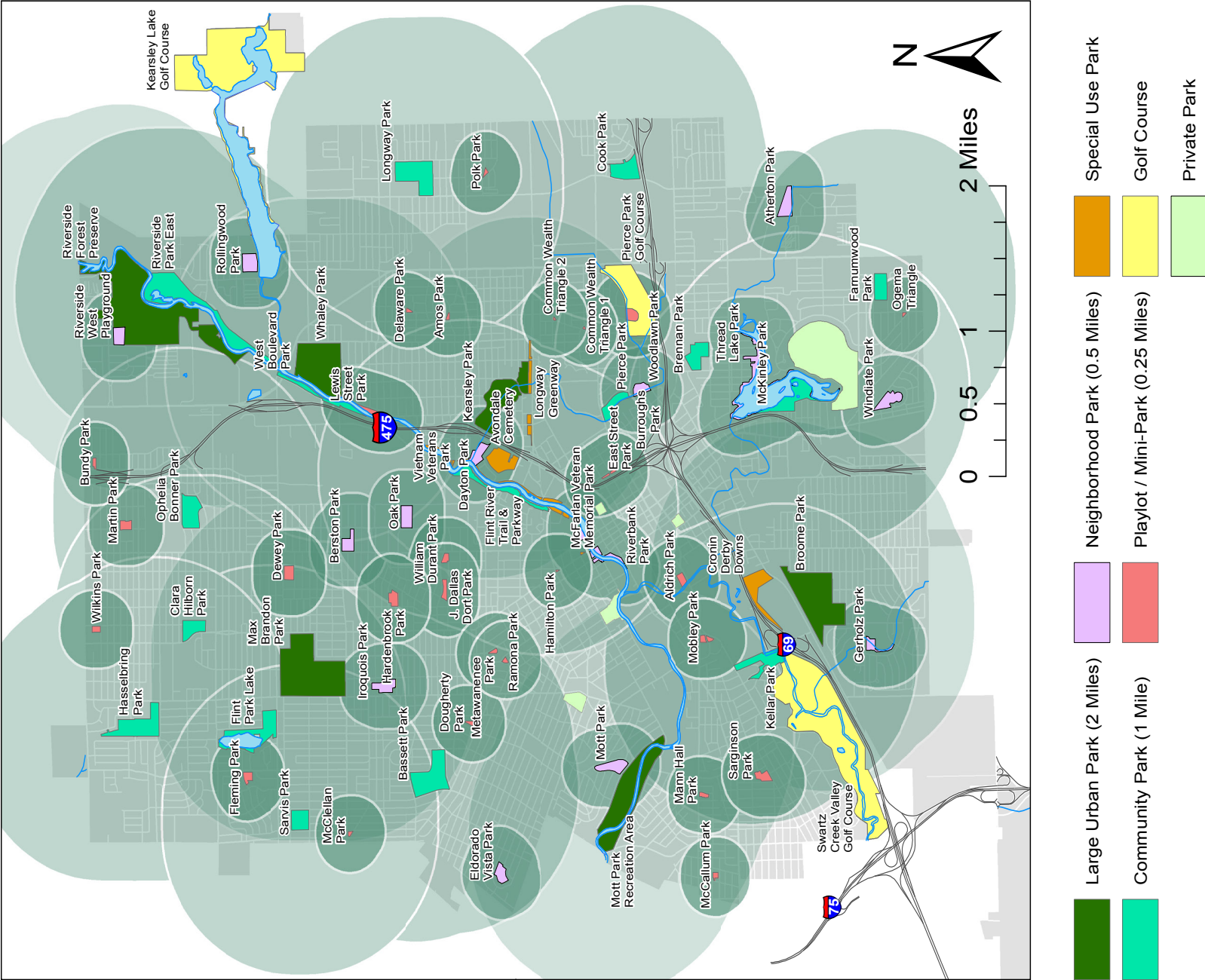
- Parks
- Census Tracts
- Water

Income Limits are determined and defined by HUD based on the Median Family Income for the Flint, MI Metropolitan Statistical Area.

2014 ACS 5-Year Estimate:
Median Family Income in the Past 12 Months
(2014 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)

Date: 3/5/2018

APPENDIX C: Access/Service Area Map

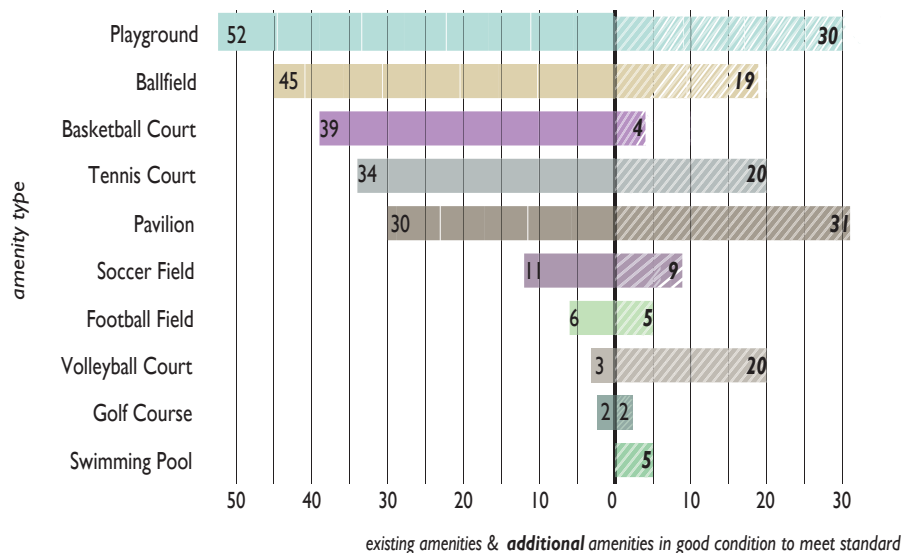


APPENDIX D: Capital Improvement Needs

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT NEEDS (for a population of 100,000)

Amenity	Cost per	Need	Total Cost
basketball (min: resurface / line court, replace backboard, post, rim, net, add benches)	\$ 15,000	4	\$ 60,000
tennis court (min: resurface, add posts & nets, repair fencing)	\$ 14,000	20	\$ 280,000
football (level / line field, permanent goals with bleachers)	\$ 3,000	5	\$ 25,000
soccer (level / line field, permanent goals with bleachers)	\$ 3,000	9	\$ 45,000
ballfield (little league sized with backstop, bases, bleachers, diamond dust in-field)	\$ 35,000	19	\$ 676,666
pavilion (20 x 20 metal with cement pad, tables, grill)	\$ 35,000	31	\$ 1,085,000
playground (medium sized with professional install & safety surface)	\$ 75,000	30	\$ 2,250,000
sand volleyball (permanent nets with corner posts, sand playing surface)	\$ 3,000	20	\$ 100,000
swing set with seats (2 regular swings, 1 toddler seat with professional install & safety surface)	\$ 10,000	38	\$ 380,000
18-hole golf	multimillion	2	-
aquatic facility (swimming pool)	multimillion	4	-
Total			\$ 4,901,667

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT NEEDS (for 100,000)



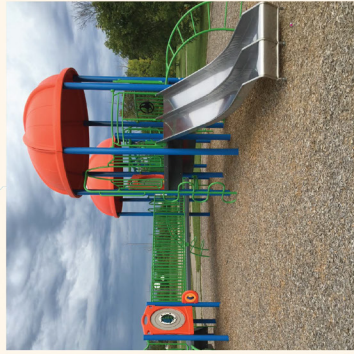
SMALL AMENITY NEEDS

Small Amenity	Cost per	Need	Total Cost
park sign	\$ 3,000	70	\$ 210,000
garbage can (in ground)	\$ 579	210	\$ 121,590
bench with back	\$ 500	35	\$ 17,500
bench	\$ 289	35	\$ 10,115
bike rack	\$ 312	70	\$ 21,840
grills	\$ 544	50	\$ 27,200
picnic tables	\$ 1,092	100	\$ 109,200
convert light to LED (mercury vapor)	\$ 2,500	29	\$ 72,500
convert light to LED (high-pressure sodium)	\$ 300	123	\$ 36,900
park rules sign	\$ 200	140	\$ 28,000
gates	\$ 5,000	22	\$ 110,000
bike trail signs	\$ 250	150	\$ 37,500
Total			\$ 816,345

APPENDIX E: Public Input Materials

7 NEW PLAYGROUNDS IN 12 MONTHS

FLINT PARK LAKE



MAX BRANDON PARK



LONGWAY PARK



MOTT PARK



STAY CONNECTED!
@COParksRec
#SupportFlintParks

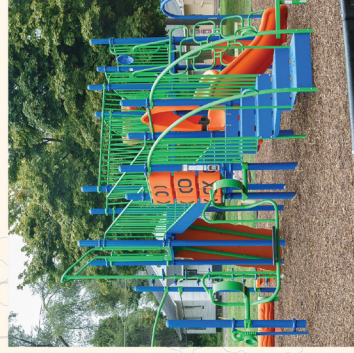
SARGINSON PARK



BRENNAN PARK



BERSTON PARK



\$400,000+
INVESTED FROM GRANTS
3,000+ HOURS
OF VOLUNTEERS' TIME
THANK YOU
TO ALL OF OUR
PARTNERS, FUNDERS, &
VOLUNTEERS



2016 - 2017 PARKS IMPROVEMENTS & INVESTMENTS

COMMUNITY-BUILT PLAYGROUNDS

HASSELBRING PARK

BROOME PARK

SARVIS PARK

DISC GOLF COURSE

MOTT PARK GOLF COURSE

BASKETBALL COURT RESURFACING & IMPROVEMENTS

FLEEMING PARK

DEWEY PARK

BRENNAN PARK

COOK PARK

THANK YOU!

TO ALL OF OUR PARTNERS, FUNDERS, & VOLUNTEERS...

\$632,000 INVESTED

3,500+ HOURS OF VOLUNTEER'S TIME

3,200 TREES, SHRUBS, & FLOWERS PLANTED

IN THE PAST YEAR!

PARTNER-LED IMPROVEMENTS:

\$230,000 INVESTED

CITY-LED IMPROVEMENTS:

\$402,000 INVESTED

NATURALIZATION & ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

LEWIS STREET ECO-PARK

CRONIN DERBY DOWNS

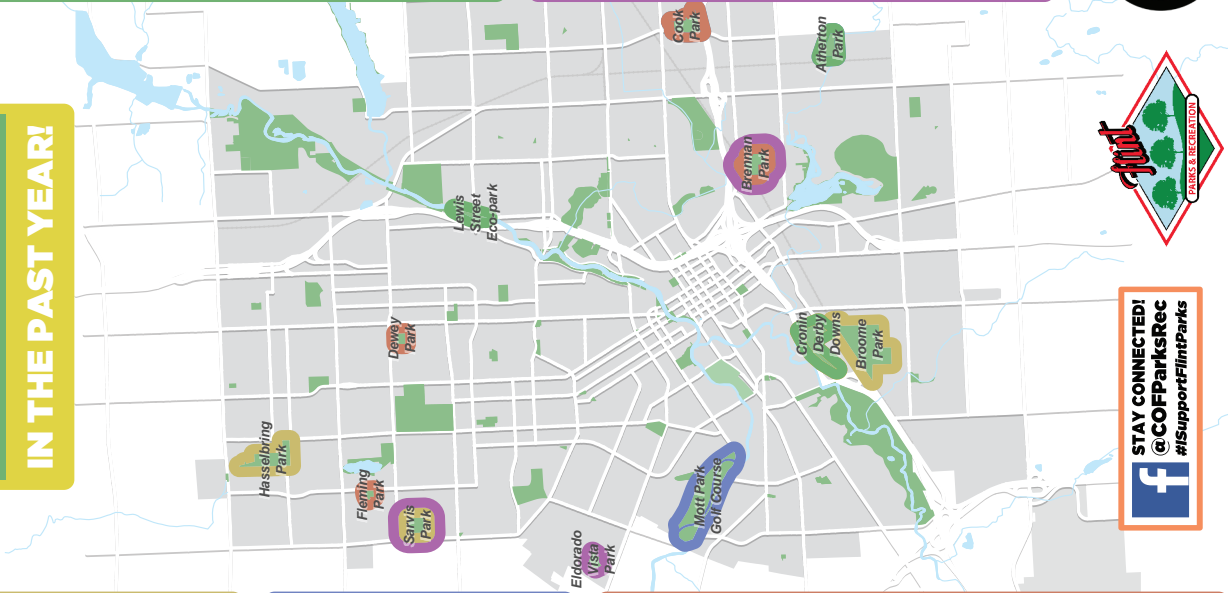
ATHERTON PARK

5-YEAR COMMUNITY PARK IMPROVEMENT PLANS

BRENNAN PARK

SARVIS PARK

ELDORADO VISTA PARK



ASSETS

**70 recreational facilities & 56 non-recreational facilities
(1,881 total acres)***



**MINI PARKS /
PLAYLOTS
(≤5 ACRES):**

*27 facilities
(47.9 acres)*



**NEIGHBORHOOD
PARKS
(5-10 ACRES):**

*14 facilities
(114.0 acres)*



**COMMUNITY
PARKS
(10-50 ACRES):**

*16 facilities
(326.3 acres)*



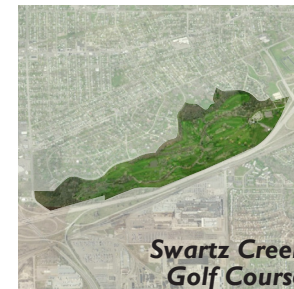
**LARGE URBAN
PARKS
(>50 ACRES):**

*5 facilities
(499.5 acres)*



**SPECIAL USE
PARKS & TRAILS
(SINGLE-INTEREST
ACTIVITY)**

*4 facilities
(41.3 acres)*



**HISTORIC GOLF
COURSES:**

*4 facilities
(469.1 acres)*



CEMETERIES:

*2 facilities
(85.4 acres)*



**TRAFFIC
TRIANGLES &
MEDIANS:**

*52 facilities
(61.9 acres)*

park classifications based on MDNR Classification System for local and regional recreation

** Some acres are water*