



DRAFT COPY: FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

Thank you for taking the time to read the Draft Executive Summary of the Draft 2019 *Parks Plan*! This summary presents an overview of the guiding principles that guide current park planning in Flint and the goals and actions within the 2019 *Parks Plan* document.

The Draft 2019 Parks Plan will guide project development within the Flint 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 2012-2017 *Parks and Recreation Plan*. This plan is aligned with the 2013 *Imagine Flint: Master Plan for a Sustainable Flint* and as such is a complete overhaul of previous plans with an emphasis on equitable planning techniques. The Draft 2019 *Parks Plan* will also allow for the pursuit of Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) grants as well as establish a basis for other funding opportunities.

The full Draft 2019 Parks Plan can be accessed at: www.ImagineFlint.com

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.

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

To learn about upcoming workshops please contact:
Adam Moore, amoore@cityofflint.com | 810-766-7426 x3029



Mott Park Recreation Area, 2017 | Learn to disc golf



Chevy Commons, 2016 | Cycling Circles



Cronin Derby Downs, 2017 | Duck habitat creation



Hasselbring Park, 2017 | Community Playground Build

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 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 capita 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

‡ National averages based on 2017 NRPA Field Guide <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/research-papers/agency-performance-review/>

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

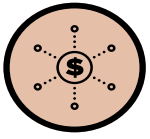
The principles, goals, and proposed actions of the Draft 2019 Parks Plan derive from and build on the 2013 **Imagine Flint** Master Plan. All components are supported by, or are an update of, the goals, objectives, and guiding principles of the “Environmental Features, Open Space, and Parks Plan” chapter 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 last Parks and Recreation Plan of 2012-2017, the functions of the former Parks and Recreation Department have been absorbed into the Planning and Zoning Division . The number of full-time 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 2015, actual millage revenue stood at just \$314,000, decreasing \$466,000 (or 60%) over the previous seven years. Of those restrained funds, over 75% goes to just paying utilities and mowing of the parks. Together, these limitations have curtailed the bandwidth of the City to carry out parks operations.

DRAFT

To further implement the goals and objectives of the **Imagine Flint** Master Plan and the Draft 2019 *Parks Plan*, the City of Flint will conduct equitable park planning for project-based improvements based on the following guiding principles:



Strategic Investment:

Through data-driven, strategic investment we provide a more equitable and efficient use of our very limited resources. Due to decreased funding and the high cost of capital improvements, **Imagine Flint** calls for prioritizing investment in parks. Prioritization of investments into our most vulnerable areas does not mean ignoring or abandoning other areas, it simply looks for the highest return on investment for our limited funding, time, and energy. Conducting community-led public planning is an important way to allocate limited resources, by allowing the City to prioritize residents' most desired amenities and projects, guaranteeing improvements are implemented quickly with the greatest impact.



Equity and Access:

It is vital that Flint prioritizes geographic and demographic equity and empowers community partners to address park needs and cultivate continued civic involvement throughout the city. While data-driven investment 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.

Imagine Flint calls for the City to work to provide residents with unrestricted access to safe and attractive parks and natural areas across the park system. By following Universal Access guidelines that provide a higher level of access than the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards in all future capital improvement plans, the City can provide public amenities that are accessible to all park visitors.



Safety and Security:

A priority for capital improvements is to provide safety and security. In addition to reducing risk of injury and subsequent liability, a safe park increases park use, promotes partnerships and volunteerism, and fosters a sense of community. These benefits extend beyond parks to improve and stabilize neighborhoods.

Through implementation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines, the City may make a park feel safe by opening up sight lines and removing obstacles and hazardous conditions. The City can greatly improve the perception of its parks and prevent unnecessary repair or replacement costs by repairing fencing, bollards, cables, and gates to prevent dumping and unauthorized vehicles such as four wheelers and dirt bikes.



Environmental Sustainability:

Capital improvement plans can prioritize the improvement of the ecological health, accessibility, and recreational opportunities of Flint's natural areas and systems. By implementing natural landscaping and green infrastructure in our parks Flint can improve environmental quality, foster neighborhood stewardship, and limit the City's carbon footprint.

Flint engages diverse audiences and stakeholders to share their accounts of the history and relevance of parks and natural processes in their lives, thus activating parks through exploration of their contemporary and historical significance. When green infrastructure projects are installed there is an opportunity complete the work with community members and Flint Community School students while they 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.



Flint River System Revitalization:

The Flint River system and its watershed have been and continue to be vital resources of Flint. By implementing projects that feature placemaking and natural landscaping there is an opportunity to transform the river, creeks, lakes, and riverfronts into clean and appealing recreation and entertainment destinations. Projects should increase waterfront park space and accessibility. Ongoing projects like the redesign of Riverbank Park, completion of Chevy Commons, and the Flint Riverfront Restoration Project increase the Flint River system's connectivity to downtown and Flint's neighborhoods.

Land and water trail investment is a vital strategy to link neighborhoods by non-motorized connections to parks, recreation facilities, the Flint River Trail, and Michigan's Iron Belle Trail and other regional trails.

ACTION PLAN

Providing even the most basic of park services in the face of a steadily declining population and park millage drastically complicates the amount of projects and improvements the City of Flint can take on relative to its need. Because Flint faces certain realities the average municipality does not, it is prudent that Flint not list detailed plans for the entire park system given the changing levels of funding and the challenge of assembling partners and volunteers. Instead, Flint relies on a flexible framework based on our park guiding principles when planning projects.

Drafting short-term Community Park Plans at individual parks with neighborhood stakeholders has been the best way to identify specific projects desired by the community while referencing the goals and objectives of the **Imagine Flint** Master Plan to guarantee the community's vision is being reflected and that improvements will have the greatest impact on their neighborhoods. The planning process relies heavily on public input and there are numerous opportunities to gather feedback and make revisions.

After individual short-term park plans are drafted the next step is to seek partners and funders to support improvements. The City continues to find in-kind ways to leverage support such as define the scopes of work, meet with contractors, and assist with grant initiatives. These small-scale plans are easy to replicate and are implemented quickly so as to provide immediate impact. This process and the partnerships that form are great examples of how the City and members of the community 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.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT	
GOAL	ACTION
<i>Utilize a data-driven approach to prioritize investment to Flint's most vulnerable neighborhoods</i>	Consider parks with the largest 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 individual Community Parks 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
<i>Develop partnerships and funding strategies with stakeholders to provide parks and recreation infrastructure that meets 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 of projects
	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 of 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 while improving diversity and promoting cross-cultural education

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 restore existing streams and their natural systems
<i>Prioritize land and water trail investments 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

2019 PARKS PLAN PROCESS

Two sets of community input meetings were held in November 2017 to discuss the 2019 *Parks Plan*; one meeting for the youth of Flint and two for the general public.

Youth Workshop - At the youth meeting, children created “top three” lists that were ultimately compiled together as a master list and then every child was given ten “J. Dallas Dort Dollars” to vote on amenity options as they saw fit.

Public Workshops - At the general public meetings community members added their own thoughts, concerns, and possible gaps concerning Flint parks as they pertain to each of the five guiding principle and two or three possible goals and/or strategies. A second part entailed a “dollar exercises” like at the youth workshop where everyone used “J. Dallas Dort Dollars” to prioritize their tax dollars to fund certain park improvement projects and amenities that aligned with the choices chosen by Flint youth. Graphs of the results are to the right.

YOUTH WORKSHOP DOLLAR EXERCISE					
Zip Line	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	24%
Basketball Courts	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	16%
Bike/Skate Park	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	16%
Football/Soccer Fields	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	12%
Volleyball Courts	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	11%
Play Structures	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	10%
Blacktop Games	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	7%
Pavilions	\$\$				2%
Walk/Wheelchair Paths	\$\$				2%
Ball Fields	0				0%

PUBLIC WORKSHOP DOLLAR EXERCISE					
Walk/Wheelchair Paths	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	15%
Blacktop Games	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	14%
Bike/Skate Park	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	13%
Zip Line	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	12%
Basketball Courts	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	11%
Football/Soccer Fields	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	10%
Pavilions	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	9%
Play Structures	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	6%
Ball Fields	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	6%
Volleyball Courts	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$	4%

Park Adopter and Public Workshops - To stay informed follow us on Facebook @COFParksRec!

May 23, 2018 at Berston Field House, 6:00 - 7:30pm, 3300 N. Saginaw St., Flint, MI 48505

May 24, 2018 at Brennan Senior Center, 5:30 - 7:00pm, 1301 Pingree Ave., Flint, MI 48503



Youth Workshop at Holmes STEM Academy, 2017



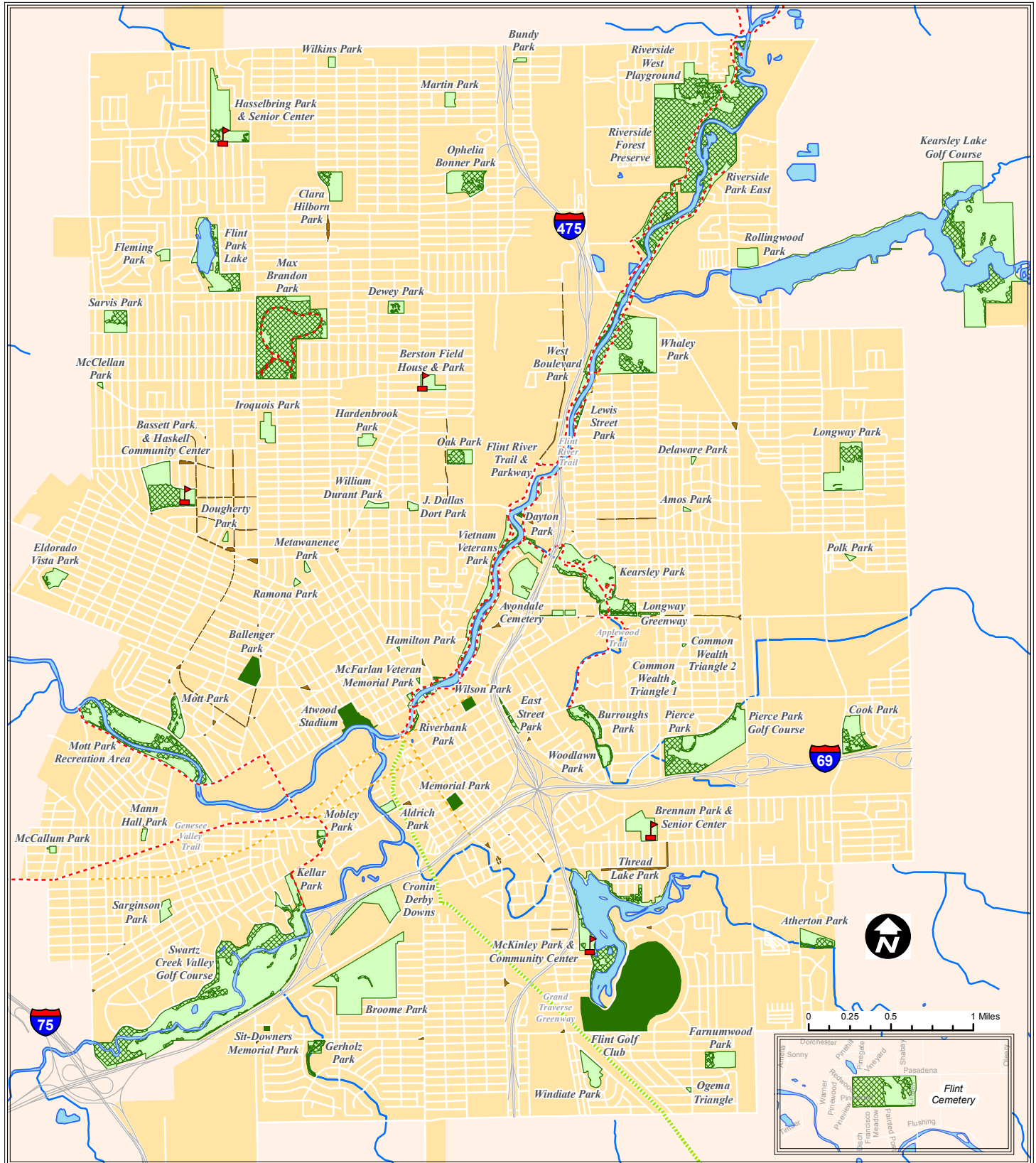
Public Workshop at Berston Field House, 2017

DRAFT



City of Flint

J. Dallas Dort Memorial Park System



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