

CITY OF MONROE PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



2023-2027



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Assisted by The Mannik & Smith Group, Inc.



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INTRODUCTION

Residents living in the City of Monroe are fortunate to have access not only to many City parks but also to a state park, a National Battlefield Park, and an International Wildlife Refuge, all within City limits and in close proximity to one another. These parks provide a wide range of benefits. People value the time they spend in them, whether walking, bicycling, playing basketball, or having a picnic. Parks provide measurable health benefits from providing direct contact with nature to opportunities for physical activity and social interaction. Public parks are often the “engine” that drives tourism in communities and this is particularly true for Monroe where great strides have been made in capitalizing on the location of the new River Raisin National Battlefield Park, Sterling State Park, and the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

The quality of life in the City of Monroe is directly linked to the recreational and leisure time opportunities which parks and recreation provide – and in turn this quality of life can serve as a stimulus in attracting economic development to the community.

Monroe’s last Parks and Recreation Master Plan was adopted in 2019. The plan was a thorough and well-articulated document describing the current conditions of the community and identifying key community goals. Progress was made on all the Plan’s goals with many of the objectives achieved, such as the development of Labor Park, the replacement of play structures at five parks, and the redevelopment of Father Cairns Park, which is slated for 2023.

The mission of the City of Monroe Parks and Recreation is to enhance the lives of its citizens and visitors by encouraging a healthy lifestyle and offering safe and quality parks and recreation experiences accessible to everyone that highlight our area’s natural and cultural resources.

The purpose of the current Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to update and guide recreation planning and development efforts of the City over the next five-year period, through 2027. The Plan identifies existing recreational opportunities, assess the need for future recreational needs, provide direction for the future development of parks and recreational programs, and develop strategies to meet the growing recreational needs of a changing population.

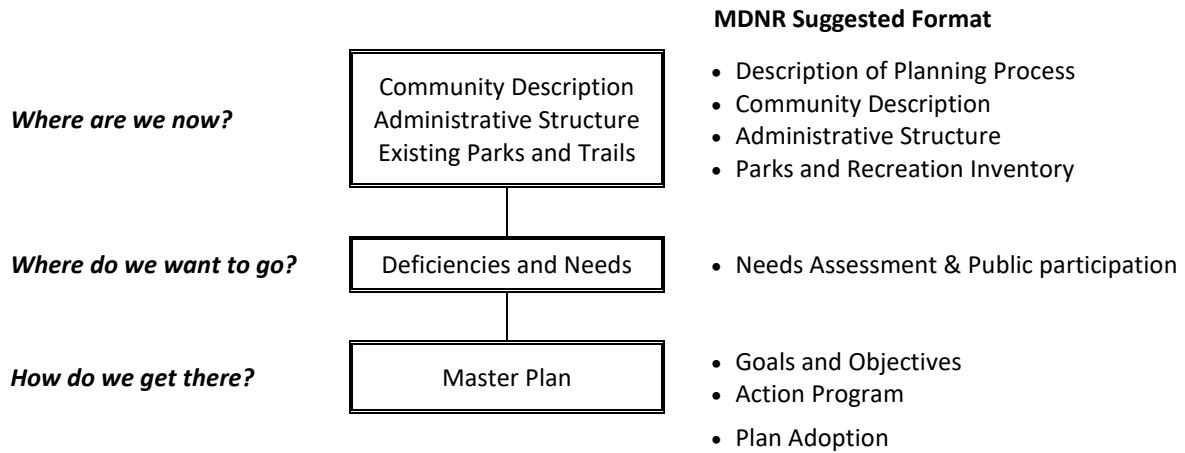
PLANNING PROCESS

The process used to generate the Plan consisted of three major phases which are described below.

- 1. Where are we now?** This phase involved a review of the planning context to provide a basis for this plan update. In this phase, the inventory of parks was updated to document the existing recreation resources. The background information is organized into three main categories: community description, administrative structure, and parks and recreation inventory.
- 2. Where do we want to be?** The second phase in the process consisted of a public engagement effort to solicit ideas and suggestions from the community about recreation preferences through an online questionnaire. Input was solicited from City officials, community stakeholders, residents, and staff.
- 3. How do we get there?** Once needs were identified, the final phase involved the development of goals and objectives as well as an action plan to support the community's vision for the park system and provide for park planning and development projects. Recommended projects were summarized in a capital improvement schedule, accompanied by strategies for implementation. This phase also included preparation of a full draft of the Plan, which was presented to the Citizens Planning Commission as well as the public for review and comment prior to adoption by City Council.

The following diagram illustrates the planning process and how it corresponds to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) suggested format in the Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans (2021).

Figure 1. Planning Process



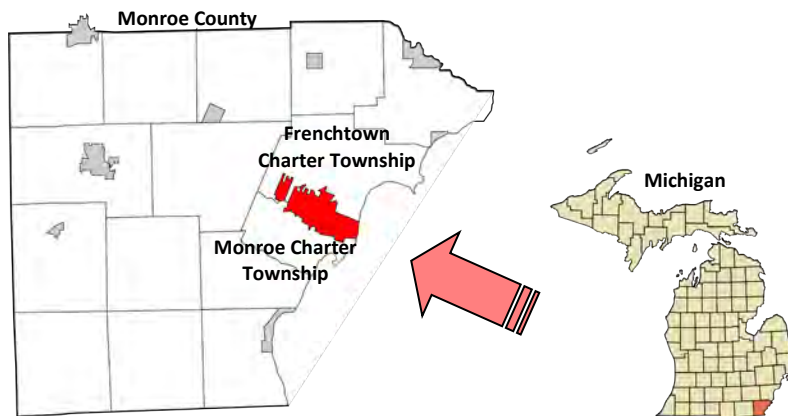
PLAN CONTENT

The City of Monroe Parks and Recreation Master Plan follows the format suggested by the MDNR. The first chapter, **Community Description**, includes an overview of the City existing characteristics and conditions. The **Administrative Structure** chapter includes a description of how parks and recreation services are administered in the City of Monroe including budget and funding information. The next chapter, **Parks and Recreation Inventory**, describes the existing City parks as well as those of the federal, state, and county governments, and the other nearby regional parks and recreation facilities. This chapter also includes an accessibility assessment of the parks and the status of previously awarded grant park projects. The **Needs Assessment** portion of the Plan presents the input received from local officials, staff, and residents, which helped in formulating the **Goals and Objectives** chapter. The **Action Program** chapter outlines an action plan with strategies for implementation. The final chapter, **Supporting Documents**, includes the information gathered through the planning process as well as the official resolutions and notices documenting the Plan's adoption by City Council

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The City of Monroe is located in the southeast corner of Michigan on Lake Erie, about 17 miles north of Toledo, Ohio, and about 35 miles south of Detroit. It is the county seat of Monroe County. The City of Monroe is the jurisdiction of this Plan. It is bordered by Frenchtown Charter Township to the north and Monroe Charter Township to the south.

Figure 2. Regional Setting



Source: Adapted from Wikipedia

Founded in 1785, Monroe is a community that has a shared vision that seeks to balance the opportunities of economic development with historic preservation. Monroe is Michigan’s third oldest community. Its location on the west shore of Lake Erie and the River Raisin made it a natural crossroads for the Native Americans and later the French missionaries and fur traders who settled here.

Although the region is influenced by the large urban areas of Detroit and Toledo, the community has remained, for the most part, a medium-sized town. The first three chapters of the Plan provide information on the social and physical characteristics of the City, the administration of parks and recreation services, and the existing park facilities to gain an understanding of the opportunities the City has to offer.

Originally called French Town, the settlement which is now within the City of Monroe, found itself caught between the British Army and the U. S. forces during the War of 1812. The U. S. forces including the Kentucky militia pushed the British Army back into Canada. Four days later the British counterattacked and 300 Americans were killed – making the Battle of the River Raisin the single most deadly battle for the U. S. in the war. “Remember the Raisin” became the American rally cry of the war after Indian allies of the British killed another 100 injured soldiers who were unable to retreat after the counterattack. The River Raisin Battlefield was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. In 2009, the federal government incorporated the River Raisin National Battlefield Park into the National Park System.

Source: downtownmonroemi.com/about/history



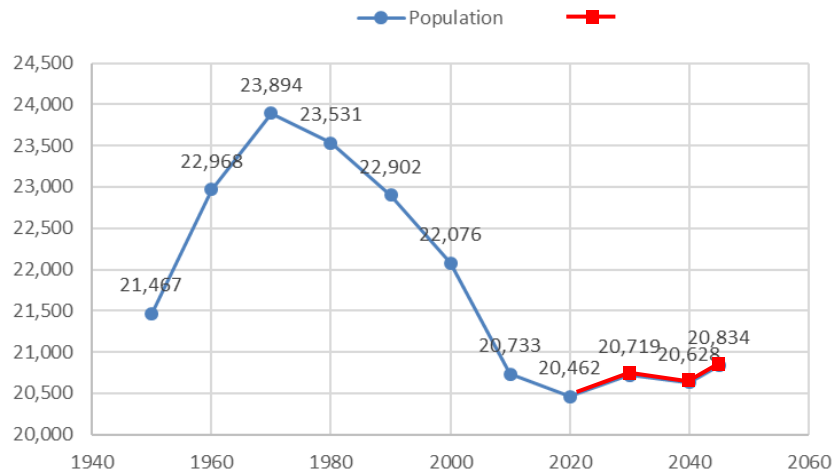
POPULATION TRENDS

Monroe residents consist of a diverse population base with diverse recreational needs. Anticipated changes in the size and age composition of the population will affect the need for future recreational facilities.

According to the most recent census information, the City of Monroe is home to 20,462 people, a very small decrease from the previous decennial figure of 20,733. The most recent population estimate for the City is 20,380 (SEMCOG, 2021), indicating a continued slight decrease in the population.

Population projections developed by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) predict a stable number of people for the City of Monroe, with population numbers barely increasing to 20,834 between 2020 and 2045 and the number of households increasing from 8,410 to 8,429. The City’s population age 65 and over, however, will continue to see a substantial change in the future. At the same time, a continued decline of the youth population is also predicted for people under 18 years of age.

Figure 3. City of Monroe Population, 1950-2045



Source: US Census Bureau, 2020 and SEMCOG 2045 Regional Development Forecast, July 2021

Table 1. Monroe and Adjoining Township Population and Households, 2010 and 2020

Community	Population			Households		
	2010	2020	% change	2010	2020	% change
City of Monroe	20,733	20,462	-1.3%	8,238	8,410	2.1%
Frenchtown Township	20,428	21,609	5.8%	7,958	8,836	11.0%
Monroe Township	14,568	14,391	-1.2%	5,719	5,792	1.3%
Monroe County	152,021	154,809	1.8%	58,230	62,152	6.7%

Source: US Census Bureau (2010 and 2020)

Table 2. Monroe Youth and Older Adults Trends, 2015 and 2045

	2015	2045	% Change 2010-2045		2015	2045	% Change 2010-2045
65 to 84	2,319	3,307	42.6%	Under 5	1,388	1,193	-14%
85+	588	1,539	161.7%	5 to 17	3,570	2,886	-19.2%

Source: SEMCOG 2045 Regional Development Forecast, July 2021

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

In addition to examining some of most notable demographic trends in Monroe, it is important to understand the population characteristics of the community. Table 3 presents the most recent information on race, age, education, employment, income, and housing characteristics of Monroe residents based on SEMCOG's Community Profile (July 2022).

Table 3. 2020 Community Profile

	number	%		number	%
AGE					
Under 5 years	1,674	8.6%	45 to 49 years	1,446	7.4%
5 to 9 years	1,237	6.3%	50 to 54 years	924	4.7%
10 to 14 years	1,203	6.2%	55 to 59 years	1,416	7.2%
15 to 19 years	823	4.2%	60 to 64 years	1,359	7.0%
20 to 24 years	1,230	6.3%	65 to 69 years	878	4.5%
25 to 29 years	1,492	7.6%	70 to 74 years	652	3.3%
30 to 34 years	1,670	8.5%	75 to 79 years	484	2.5%
35 to 39 years	1,142	5.8%	80 to 84 years	340	1.7%
40 to 44 years	1,111	5.7%	85+ years	462	2.4%
MEDIAN AGE (years)					
	37.1				
OLDER ADULTS AND YOUTH					
60 and over	4,175		Under 18	4,615	
65 and over	2,816		5 to 17	2,941	
65 to 84	2,354		Under 5	1,674	
85 and Over	462				
POPULATION & HOUSEHOLDS					
Group Quarters Population	609		Households (Occupied Units)	8,238	
Household Population	20,124		Residential Vacancy Rate	10.0%	
Housing Units	9,158		Average Household Size	2.44	
HOUSEHOLD TYPES					
With Seniors 65+	1,932		Live Alone, <65	2,080	
Without Seniors	6,316		2+ Persons, With children	2,446	
Live Alone, 65+	858		2+ Persons, Without children	2,864	
RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN					
Non-Hispanic	19,342	94.5%	Hispanic	1,120	5.51%
White	16,149	78.9%			
Black	1,575	7.7%			
Asian	164	0.8%			
Multi-Racial	1,304	6.4%			
Other	150	0.7%			
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL (ACS)					
Graduate / Professional Degree		11.4%	Some College, No Degree		26.0%
Bachelor's Degree		12.9%	High School Graduate		33.0%
Associate Degree		10.1%	Not High School Graduate		9.5%

Community Description

	number	%		number	%
JOBS BY INDUSTRY					
Natural Resources, Mining & Construction	540	5.0%	Administrative, Support & Waste Services	421	3.9%
Manufacturing	1,264	11.7%	Education Services	616	5.7%
Wholesale Trade	358	3.3%	Healthcare services	1,418	13.1%
Retail Trade	914	8.5%	Leisure & Hospitality	1,046	9.7%
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	473	4.4%	Other Services	784	7.3%
Information & Financial Activities	787	7.3%	Public Administration	675	6.3%
Professional & Technical Services	1,504	13.9%			
POVERTY					
Persons in Poverty	3,314	17.2%	Households in Poverty	1,377	16.7%
INCOME					
Median Household Income (in 2020 \$)	\$53,068		Per Capita Income (in 2015 \$)	\$27,175	
ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
\$200,000 or more	95	1.2%	\$35,000 to \$39,999	404	4.9%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	396	4.8%	\$30,000 to \$34,999	473	5.7%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	500	6.1%	\$25,000 to \$29,999	587	7.1%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	797	9.7%	\$20,000 to \$24,999	415	5.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1,066	12.9%	\$15,000 to \$19,999	337	4.1%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	833	10.1%	\$10,000 to \$14,999	549	6.7%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	620	7.5%	Less than \$10,000	722	8.8%
\$45,000 to \$49,999	187	2.3%			
\$40,000 to \$44,999	267	3.2%			
HOUSING TYPE					
Single Family Detached	6,210	69.8%	Mobile Home	14	0.2%
Multi-Unit Apartment	2,678	30.1%	Other	0	0.0%
			Total Housing Units	8,902	100.0%
HOUSING TENURE					
Owner occupied	5,290	59.4%	Vacant	654	7.3%
Renter occupied	2,958	33.2%	Total Housing Units	8,902	100.0%
HOUSING VALUE					
Median housing value	\$131,900		Median gross rent	\$757	
HOUSING VALUE					
\$1,000,000 or more	4	0.1%	\$100,000 to \$124,999	800	15.1%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	20	0.4%	\$80,000 to \$99,999	535	10.1%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	143	2.7%	\$60,000 to \$79,999	450	8.5%
\$250,000 to \$299,999	96	1.8%	\$40,000 to \$59,999	291	5.5%
\$200,000 to \$249,999	358	6.8%	\$30,000 to \$39,999	110	2.1%
\$175,000 to \$199,999	428	8.1%	\$20,000 to \$29,999	34	0.6%
\$150,000 to \$174,999	732	13.8%	\$10,000 to \$19,999	68	1.3%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	1,191	22.5%	Less than \$10,000	30	0.6%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2020 and American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2020

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The City of Monroe has a rich history, which is reflected in its many significant archeological and historical sites. The City's historic patterns of growth and development has resulted not only in important sites and artifacts, but in a landscape that gives the City a unique sense of place.

Early Settlements

The earliest known inhabitants were native Americans, primarily from the Ottawa and Pottawatomi tribes. While French explorers and missionaries from Montreal visited the area beginning in the late 1600s, the first European settlers in the area were French Canadians who settled in the 1780s. Having acquired land from the Pottawatomi natives, the first settlements were established on the River Raisin in what is now the City of Monroe.

The Ottawa and Pottawatomi Indians occupied villages in the area during the period prior to 1600. A variety of archeological sites representing encampments, burial grounds, and villages have been found throughout the area. Many trails were cut through the Michigan wilderness as a result of the migratory lifestyle of these Native Americans. These early trails are still visible today in the form of highways, which were developed along their routes.

French Canadians arrived in the 1780s and established the first permanent settlement along the River Raisin in the area now known as the City of Monroe. A trading post was established here in 1778. Francois Navarre was the first European settler in 1780. The first settlement was called French Town when about 100 French families came here from Detroit and Canada. Additional small settlements were founded along some of the nearby smaller rivers, including Stony Creek, Sandy Creek, Otter Creek, and La Plaisance Creek.

The original French and French-Canadian settlers divided land using a traditional system of parceling property into long, narrow pieces, each of which had frontage on the river, which was the main source of water, transportation, commerce, and communication. These French Claims, also known as long-lots or ribbon farms, persist today and give the City's landscape a unique quality. It was not until the early 1800s that the American rectangular survey, with its system of towns, ranges, and sections began to split up the land into the more familiar checkerboard pattern which covers the remainder of Monroe County and most of Michigan and the western United States.

After the War of 1812, settlers began to arrive in large numbers to southeast Michigan. American settlers arrived in the area, established a small community and changed French Town to Monroe Town in honor of the president. Rural homesteads were established throughout the area, with land being cleared, farms established, industries developed, and communities built.

Historic Assets

Visitors interested in history are drawn to Monroe to visit the River Raisin 1813 battlefield site, which has become the River Raisin National Battlefield Park under the management of the National Park Service, and many of the other historic structures, sites, museums, and festivals throughout the area. Monroe's historic assets are recognized by historic site designations, historical markers, and memorials.

Monroe has three National Register of Historic Places historic districts: St. Mary's Church Complex Historic District, built between 1835 and 1839; the East Elm-North Macomb Street Historic District, with houses dating from the 1820s to the 1920s; and the Old Village Historic District, which was platted



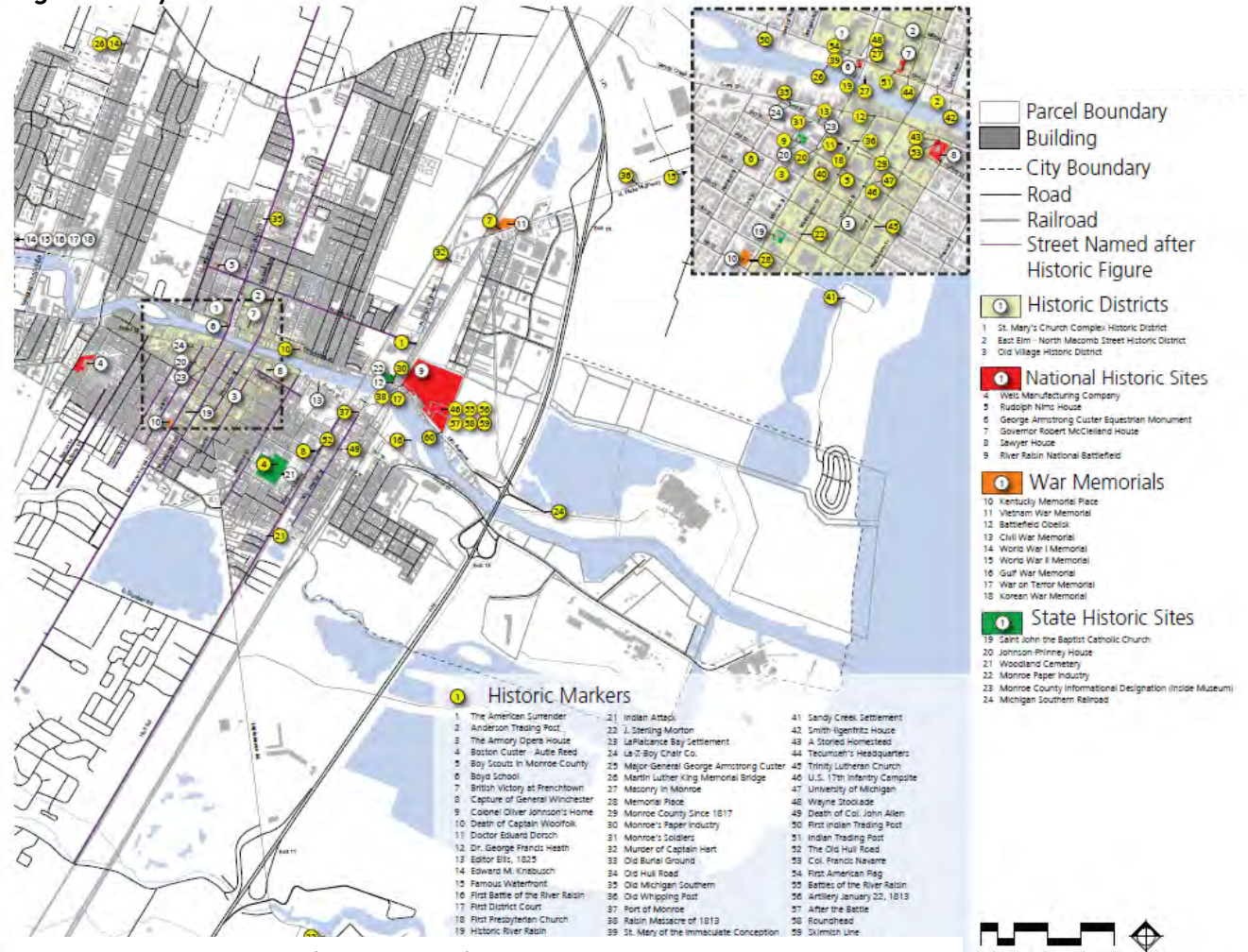
in 1817. The Old Village Historic District contains many street names with historical significance, from early settlers in Monroe to figures of the War of 1812 to U. S. Presidents.

Monroe also boasts six National Historic Sites: Weis Manufacturing Company, Rudolph Nims House, the George Armstrong Custer Equestrian Monument, the Governor Robert McClelland House, the Sawyer House, and the River Raisin National Battlefield.

War memorials in Monroe include the Kentucky Memorial Place, Vietnam War Memorial, the Battlefield Obelisk (War of 1812), the Civil War Memorial, WWI and WWII Memorials, the Gulf War Memorial, the War on Terror Memorial, and the Korean War Memorial. All of these war memorials, except for the Vietnam War Memorial and the Kentucky Memorial Place, are accessible via the River Raisin Heritage Trail. Monroe has six sites on the Michigan’s State Register of Historic Places: Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church, the Johnson-Phinney House, Woodland Cemetery, the Monroe Paper Industry, the Monroe County Informational Designation, and the Michigan Southern Railroad.

In addition to the historic sites and war memorials, there are nearly 60 historic markers located in the Monroe area. Each historic marker contains a description of the historical significance of the site. The Battles of the River Raisin, Tecumseh’s Headquarters, the Capture of General Winchester, and more can all be found on these markers. As depicted in Figure 4, the bulk of the markers are located within downtown Monroe, but they can be found as far out as LaPlaisance Bay and Sterling State Park.

Figure 4. City of Monroe Historic Assets



Source: River Raisin Heritage Corridor - East Master Plan, 2013

Today's Land Use

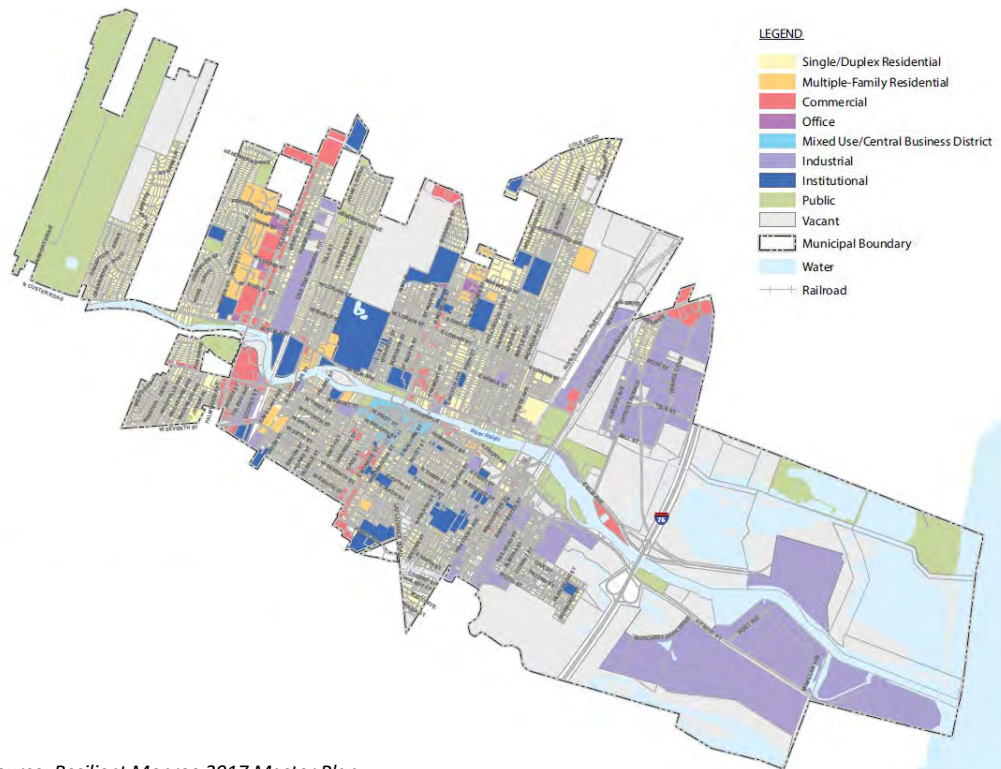
While the foundation of Monroe's built environment can be traced back to the late 1700s, today, Monroe is known for its tree-lined streets, well-established neighborhoods, and a distinct, centrally located, historic downtown. The River Raisin meanders through the community and provides locations for some of its scenic parks as well as the Downtown Riverwalk and the North Custer Road pathway.

The oldest neighborhoods were generally built in the late 1800s with relatively small lots placed on a grid street pattern and oriented along French Claim lot lines, perpendicular to both sides of the River Raisin and immediately adjacent to the downtown. The second phase of development occurred in the 1940s, also set on the French Claim street pattern and is primarily located on the north side of the River Raisin. Development took place during the 1960s and 1970s on the western edge of the City on land that was once farmland. These newer homes possess a different character than either of the previous developments with attached garages, larger lots, curvilinear, and cul-de-sac streets. The neighborhood street network is still largely oriented northeast and southwest, perpendicular and parallel to the River Raisin. The City's neighborhoods lack connectivity due to barriers such as rail lines or missed opportunities for connection.

The City's newest neighborhood, known as Mason Run, is located on the east side of the City and represents a return to traditional neighborhood elements. While the homes include the latest amenities, the neighborhood features an interconnected grid network of streets, shallow setbacks, alleys, and open spaces, which maintains the integrity of the City's traditional character and image.

Commercial development occurs in four main areas of concentration: Telegraph Road, Monroe Street, Dixie Highway, and a small node along Winchester Street in the southeast neighborhood of the City. These uses include shopping areas, retail and service uses, and auto-oriented facilities such as gas stations and drive-through restaurants. Office areas are located along Monroe Street, Macomb Street, and Telegraph Road. Telegraph Road and Monroe Street are the two important road corridors that function as the entrance to the City when coming from the north or south. North Dixie Highway contains a center of commercial businesses that cater to freeway travelers and is also considered a gateway to the City.

Figure 5. City of Monroe Existing Land Use



Source: Resilient Monroe 2017 Master Plan

Industrial concentrations are located on the east side of the City along both sides of Interstate 75. A strip of industrial uses exists north of the River Raisin east of Telegraph Road and a few small pockets are still scattered throughout the City on the south side of the River Raisin. The largest and most intense operations is the DTE Energy-Monroe Power Plant located on the eastern edge of the City. The current pattern of industrial uses along the expressway and extending east has created a barrier between the City and Lake Erie.

Government and institutional land uses include public buildings, schools, and places of worship. In keeping with the traditional development pattern of the City, these uses have become integrated into the neighborhoods. This has contributed to a comfortable, walkable environment for residents. According to SEMCOG, parks, recreation, and open spaces represent almost 11% of the City’s land area (see Table 4).

Table 4. 2020 Land Use Acreage

	Acres	%
Agricultural	116.4	1.8%
Single-Family Residential	1,207.2	18.5%
Multi-Family Residential	127.5	2.0%
Commercial (retail, office, mixed-use)	372.2	5.7%
Hospitality	29.9	0.5%
Medical	40.0	0.6%
Institutional	188.7	2.9%
Industrial	965.1	14.8%
Recreational/Open Space	716.4	11.0%
Cemetery	48.9	0.7%
Golf Course	7.3	0.1%
Parking	16.5	0.3%
Transportation, Communication & Utility	461.4	7.1%
Vacant	828.7	12.7%
Water	574.8	8.8%
Not Parceled	827.6	12.7%
Total	6,528.6	100.0%

Source: SEMCOG Community Profile

Table 5. 2010 Land Cover

	Acres	%
Impervious (buildings, roads, driveways, parking lots)	1,833	28.0%
Trees (woody vegetation, trees)	1,282	19.6%
Open Space (agricultural fields, grasslands, turf grass)	2,446	37.3%
Bare (soil, aggregate piles, unplanted fields)	216	3.3%
Water (Rivers, lakes, drains, ponds)	774	11.8%
Total	6,550	100.0%

Source: SEMCOG Community Profile (SEMCOG Land Cover data was derived from SEMCOG’s 2010 imagery. Acreages are approximate)

NATURAL FEATURES

The natural features of the City of Monroe have played a major role in influencing and attracting growth and development to the area. The City is in an area of little topographic relief with landforms and soils a result of glaciation and its position as a coastal area on Lake Erie. The soils of Monroe are generally silt loams and clay loams. The City's natural features offer opportunities for a wide range of recreational activities.

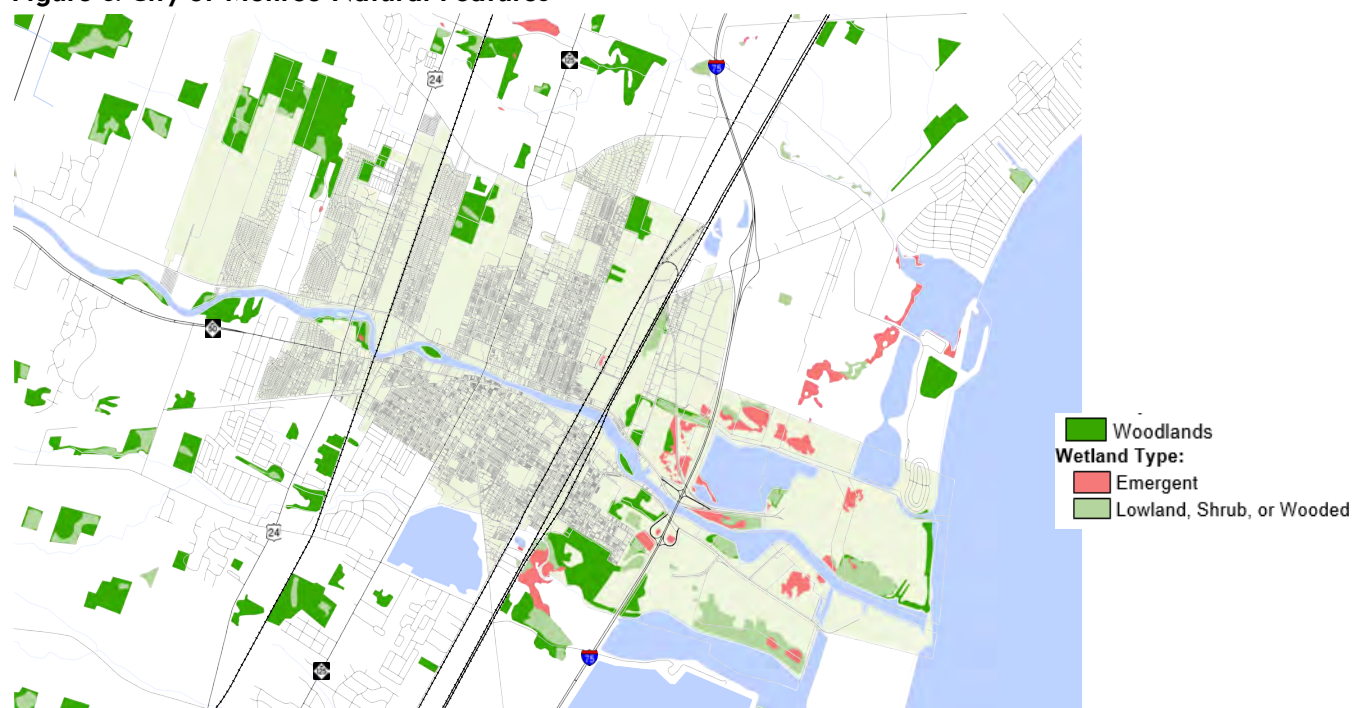
Lake Erie and the River Raisin are the primary water resources for Monroe. Sterling State Park provides access to the lake. Fishing and boating opportunities are extensive on the River Raisin from Hellenberg Park to its outlet, and on Lake Erie. The Monroe harbor provides excellent access to the Great Lakes system. Perch and walleye fishing attract sportsmen throughout the region.

Through the River Raisin Legacy project, four low-head dams in Monroe were modified or removed to create fish passage by installing rock arch rapids and opening 3.5 miles of river channel. A small channel adjacent to the Waterloo Dam was installed in Veteran's Park. When water levels are high in the Spring, this allows the passage of small boats as well.

Historically, the area was characterized as a marshy riverine wetland environment. Vegetation included various reed grasses and trees such as poplar, red oak, and willow trees along with shrubs and low brush such as dogwood and mulberry. Most of the area adjacent to the river was cleared with settlement. Vegetation in the urban environment of Monroe now includes maple, box elder, oak, and elm trees. Much of the Lake Erie marsh has been stripped of vegetation; however, remaining marshland continues to support indigenous plant and animal species as well as new varieties such as the American Lotus, introduced in the 19th century.

The riverine marsh environment continues to support such species as the great blue heron, egret, white crane, and the American bald eagle. Deer, rabbit, squirrel, raccoon, and forest birds inhabit the wooded areas of the City, particularly in and near Sterling State Park. Small ground animals common in this part of Michigan, especially in the wetlands, include opossum, muskrat, groundhogs, amphibians such as frogs and toads, and a variety of species of snakes and skunks.

Figure 6. City of Monroe Natural Features



Source: 2014 City of Monroe Parks and Recreation Master Plan

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Parks and recreation services in the City is the responsibility of the Mayor and City Council. Monroe, organized under a council-manager form of government, has a long history of support for parks and recreation, park land acquisition, and development.

The mission statement of the Monroe's Parks and Recreation:

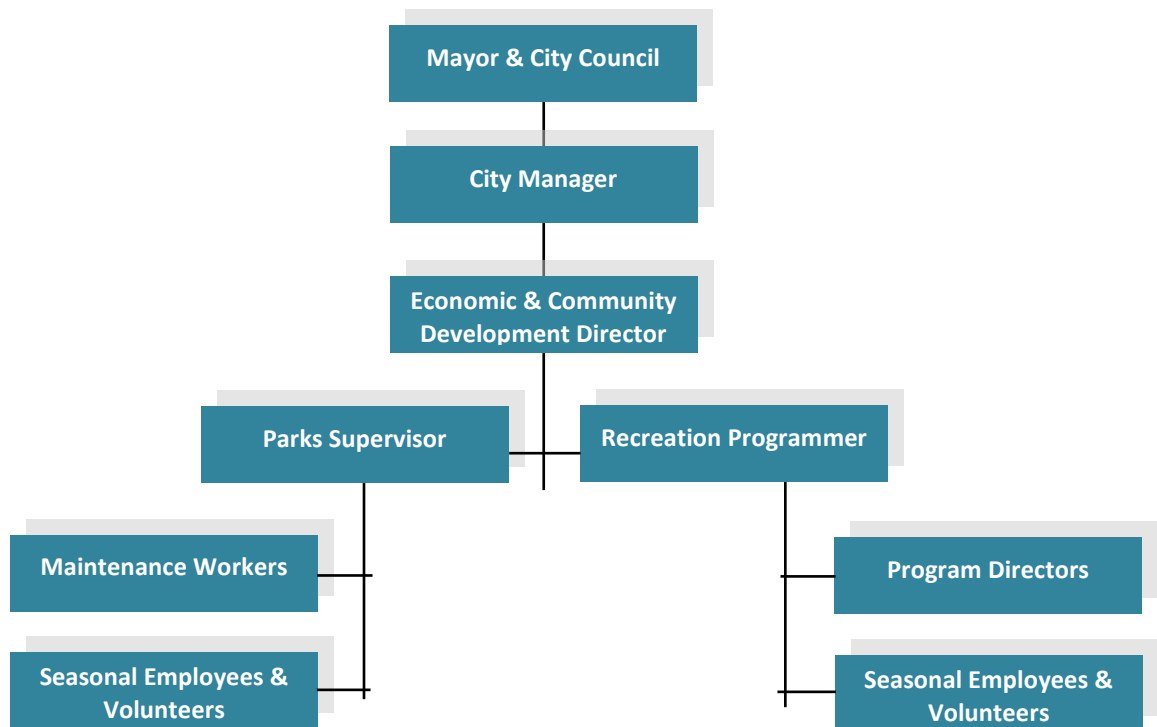
To enhance the lives of its citizens and visitors by encouraging a healthy lifestyle and offering safe and quality parks and recreation experiences accessible to all that highlight our area's natural and cultural resources.

ADMINISTRATION

The City of Monroe is the only municipality in Monroe County that provides a Parks and Recreation Department that is staffed year-round with both full-time and seasonal employees to carry out the parks and recreation services.

Parks and Recreation is a division of the Economic and Community Development Department. The decision to reorganize and incorporate the Parks and Recreation Department into Economic and Community Development as a distinct division was a conscious decision of the Monroe City Council. It was recognized that participation in organized recreational programs was diminishing not only in Monroe but nationwide and that the focus needed to be on individual and small-group recreational opportunities. A concerted effort was made to improve the quality of parks, along with pedestrian and bicycle trails. Additionally, the City committed to expanding the number of community events it plans but also providing support to other organizations hosting community events.

Figure 7. Organizational Chart



The City of Monroe did not abandon recreational programs but instead contracted with local non-profit organizations to provide youth and adult programming. The Recreation Programmer position is now focused on community events and rental of park facilities. Staffing for the Parks and Recreation operations includes a Parks Supervisor, two full-time maintenance workers, a full-time maintenance worker transferring from the Department of Public Services for the months of April through November, and a number of seasonal positions.

Decisions regarding Parks and Recreation programming and capital improvements are made by the Monroe City Council in conjunction with the Economic and Community Development Director and the City Manager. In December 2022, the City Council approved the dissolution of the Monroe Parks and Recreation Commission and the creation of a Trails Advisory Committee. The Monroe Citizens Planning Commission will also play an active role in reviewing future park plans.

FUNDING AND BUDGET

Parks and recreation funding is a line budget item within the overall City budget. The proposed budget is submitted to the City Manager and Finance Director for review and presented to the City Council for adoption as part of an overall City budget.

Table 6. Parks and Recreation Budget

	2021-2022 Projected Budget	2022-2023 Adopted Budget
Revenues	\$ 24,308	\$ 14,660
Expenses		
Parks and Recreation General Administration	\$ 337,770	\$ 222,735
Parks & Playgrounds	\$ 667,381	\$ 690,481
Parks and Recreation Programs	\$ 32,926	\$ 34,498
Battlefield Visitor Center	\$ 522,750	\$ 525,959

The parks and recreation administration and programming expenditures are funded through parks and recreation fees and other revenues, with the balance funded from the City general fund. The current fiscal year budget for Parks and Recreation programs and facilities can be seen in Table 6 above. The budget is not anticipated to increase significantly in the next fiscal year. Park land acquisition and development are funded through grants, land donation, and the City’s general fund. Table 7 outlines the City’s capital improvement program for 2023-2024 as it relates to the City parks.

Table 7. Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Plan 2023-2024

Project	Cost
Munson Park Adult Soccer Field Replacement	\$ 20,000
Munson Park Soccer Goal Replacements	\$ 12,000
Veterans Park Fish Passage Stabilization	\$ 30,000
St. Mary’s Park Development Design	\$ 350,000
Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Development	\$ 450,000
Total	\$ 862,000

VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Approximately 300 seasonal volunteers are utilized as coaches, team managers, and special events or activity coordinators. As an example, the Monroe Area Soccer Association (MASA) manages a full-scale soccer program for over 1,000 participants annually using volunteers.

Stewardship Monroe, a volunteer program through the Parks and Recreation Department, offers opportunities for volunteers to assist or run various programs, such as the community garden plots, fishing groups, bike maintenance, exercise in the park, and assisting league directors.

The Parks and Recreation Department has partnered in the past with the Michigan DNR in providing “Recreation 101” offerings for residents. This program provides a free opportunity to learn a new sport or skill without cost to the participant.



Partnership with the Monroe Public Schools includes not only some special event programs, but facility use as well. Tennis courts owned by the City of Monroe are used by the Monroe Public School tennis program. The Monroe High School cross country team meets are held at Munson Park.

The City continues to share recreational facilities with the Monroe Public Schools and other local parochial schools. Tennis courts are also utilized by parochial school teams such as St. Mary’s Catholic Central High School. The City regularly opens up parks for cross country meets, tournaments, and other school sponsored events. Finally, the City partners with the Monroe Public Schools for annual events such as the Daddy-Daughter Dance and Mother-Son Bowling.

The City also began a similar partnership with the River Raisin National Battlefield Park for special events at their new Education and Event Center including movie nights.

PARKS & RECREATION INVENTORY

The residents of Monroe have a variety of available parks and recreational resources. These facilities vary in terms of ownership, size, and type. The purpose of this section of the plan is to describe the full range of parks and recreational facilities available to residents within and around the City of Monroe.

PARKS WITHIN THE CITY OF MONROE

Monroe includes a remarkable amount of park land – around 300 acres for a population of 20,733. Residents have access not only to numerous City parks but also to a State Park, a National Battlefield Park, and an International Wildlife Refuge, all within City limits and in close proximity to one another.

City Parks

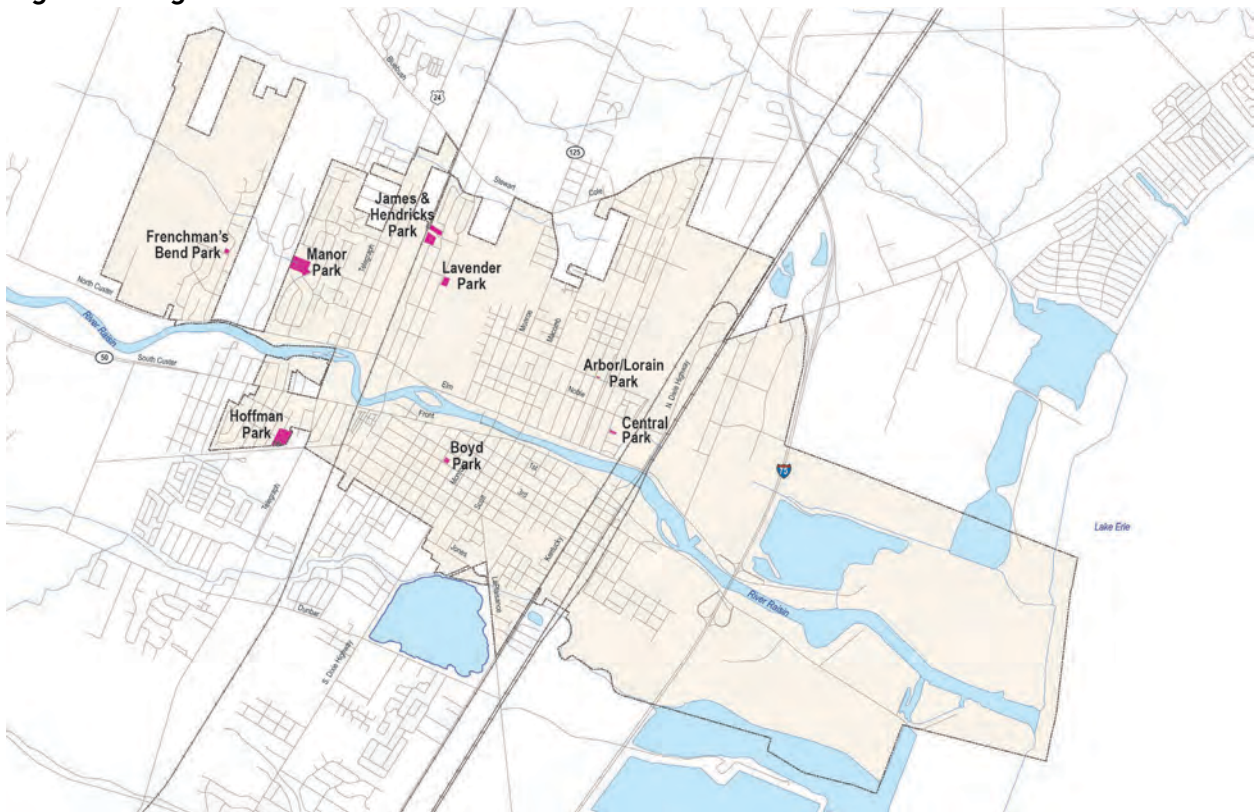
The City of Monroe operates 32 parks consisting of approximately 300 acres of land. They include neighborhood parks, community parks, the River Raisin Heritage Trail and associated parks and open spaces, and small landscape and open space areas. The following is an overview of the parks followed by a detailed inventory of the recreation facilities they include presented in Table 8.



Neighborhood Parks include Frenchman's Bend, Manor, James and Hendricks, Lavender, Arbor Lorain, Central, and Hoffman parks. These parks are the basic unit of the City park system and serve as the recreation and social focus of the neighborhoods in which they are located. They accommodate both informal active and passive recreation including play structures and seating. They are meant to be within walking distance of the neighborhoods they serve.



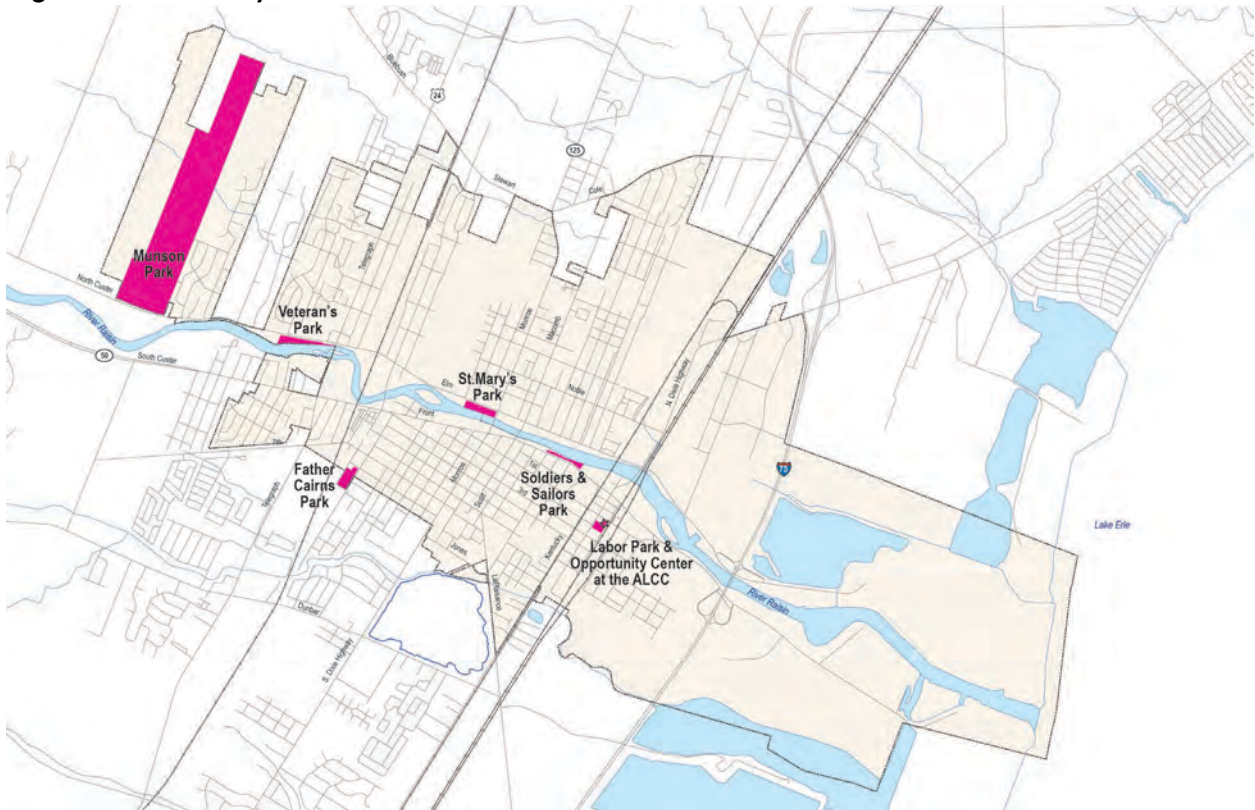
Figure 8. Neighborhood Parks



Community Parks within Monroe include Munson, Veteran’s, and St. Mary’s parks on the north side of the River and Father Cairns, Soldiers and Sailors, and Labor parks on the south side of the River. These parks focus on meeting community-based recreation needs and generally accommodate parking areas, active sport activities, picnic shelters, community-wide event spaces, memorials, and other park amenities such as playgrounds and restrooms.



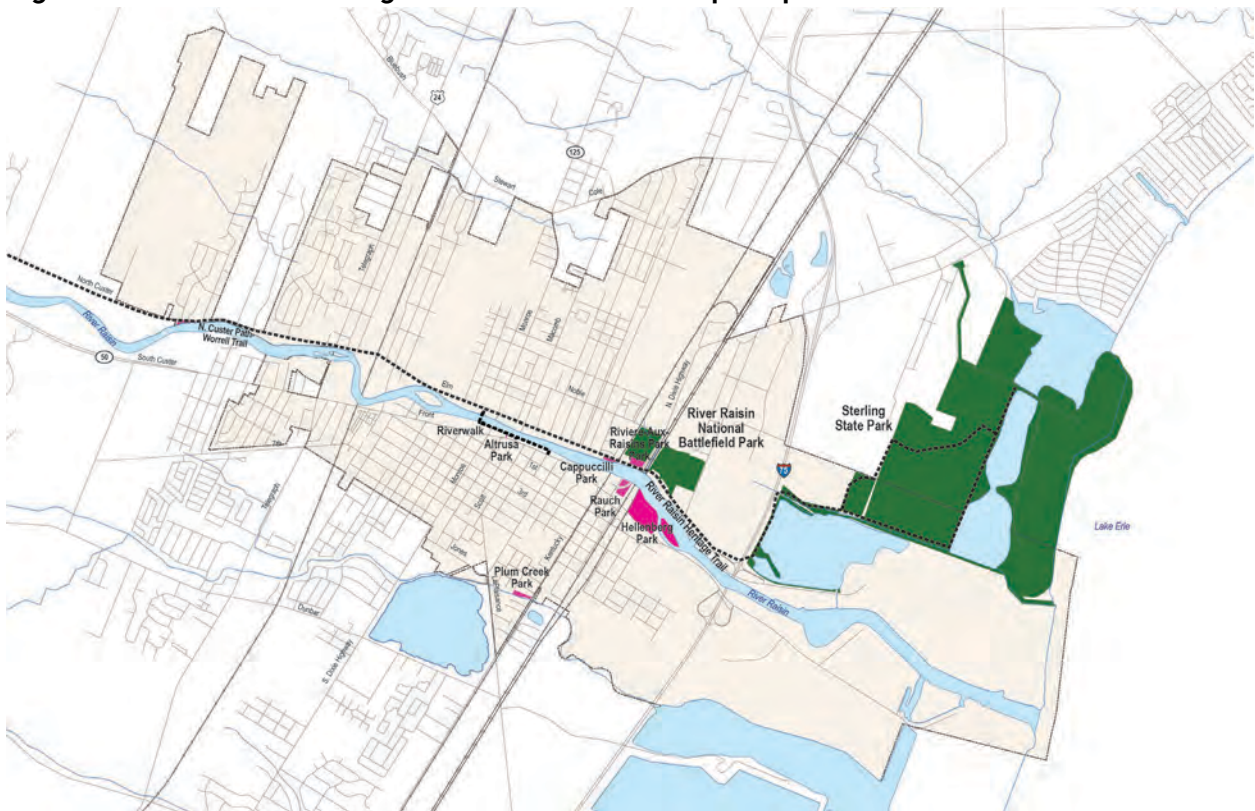
Figure 9. Community Parks



The **River Raisin Heritage Trail and associated parks and open spaces** include the Mark Worrell/North Custer Path, the Downtown Riverwalk, and the Heritage Trail along the River Raisin with several associated smaller parks and passive open spaces including Worrell, Altrusa, Cappuccilli, Rivière-aux-Raisins, River Raisin Memorial, Rauch, and Plum Creek. Hellenberg Park, formerly a community park is planned to be part of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park improvements providing connections to the City and areas south of the River Raisin.



Figure 10. River Raisin Heritage Trail and Associated Open Spaces



Small landscape areas and passive open spaces include the landscape areas at the intersection of Front, Third, and Union streets and at Front and First streets, as well as Memorial Place on Monroe Street, the skate park at Noble and North Dixie Highway, and the open spaces located in the Mason Run residential development. They are generally passive open spaces with landscape features and sometimes walkways.



Figure 11. Small Landscape Areas and Passive Open Spaces



The City also maintains some facilities on school grounds such as a playground at the Orchard Center (Monroe Public Schools). In addition, the City owns the Opportunity Center at the ALCC (Arthur Lesow Community Center) and the Sawyer Homestead which are operated by separate non-profit management groups.

Table 8. City of Monroe Parks and Recreation Facilities

	Park Name	Size (Ac)	General Purpose	Lighted Ball Field	Baseball Field (no lights)	Softball Field (no lights)	Football	Soccer	Sand Volleyball	Basketball	Pickleball	Tennis Court	Walking Path	Play Structure	Swings	Other Play Equipment	Splash Park	Boat Launch	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Tables	Grills	Restrooms	Park Lighting	Signage	Parking Lot	Benches	Bike Rack	Fix-it Bike Station	Irrigation System	Skate Park	Performance Area	Memorials & Monuments	Other		
Neighborhood Parks	Arbor-Lorain Park	0.1	Play											•	•								•		•	•									
	Boyd Park	0.5	Play & picnicking										•	•	•	•				•				•		•	•					•			
	Central Park	0.4	Play										•	•														•							
	Frenchman's Bend Park	0.4	Play & picnicking										•	•										•		•	•								
	Hoffman Park	2.7	Play & picnicking											•										•		•	•								
	James & Hendricks Park	3.5	Play & picnicking										•	•												•	•								
	Lavender Park	1.2	Sports, play & picnicking							•				•	•									•		•	•								
Manor Park	5.5	Sports, play & picnicking									•		•	•				•							•	•									
Community Parks	Father Cairns Park	4.2	Sports & play						•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•							Improvements planned for 2023 park renovation	
	Labor Park	0.1	Play & gathering space									•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•							
	Munson Park	214.0	Sports, play & picnicking	•	•			•	•			•	•	•	•				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•					
	St. Mary's Park	3.0	Concerts, play, walk & picnicking							•		•	•	•	•					•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•					•		Bocce courts	
	Soldiers & Sailors Park	1.2	Sports, play, & picnicking							•		•	•	•						•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•							•	
	Veteran's Park	2.3	Play, picnicking & river viewing										•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•						•	
River Raisin Heritage Trail & Associated Parks & Open Spaces	Downtown Riverwalk	0.5 mi.	Pedestrian path										•												•									Part of DDA	
	Altrusa Park	0.1	Picnic & performance										•							•												•		Part of DDA - Connection Riverwalk-downtown	
	Cappuccilli Park	1.9	River viewing & picnicking										•						•	•	•			•	•	•								Open Lawn	
	Elm Avenue Bike Path	0.8 mi.	Non-motorized multi-use path										•												•										
	Hellenberg Park	9.2	Boat launch, sports & play							•			•					•						•	•									Part of River Raisin Heritage Corridor-East Master Plan	
	Plum Creek Park	2.4	Passive open space										•																					Part of River Raisin Heritage Corridor-East Master Plan	
	Rauch Park	2.1	Passive open space										•											•										Part of River Raisin Heritage Corridor-East Master Plan	
	River Raisin Memorial	0.4	Passive open space										•																					Part of River Raisin Heritage Corridor-East Master Plan	
	Rivière-aux-Raisins Park	1.9	Passive open space										•																				•	Part of River Raisin Heritage Corridor-East Master Plan	
Worrell Park	1.0	Passive open space										•													•		•						Grass & flower bed - Connected to trail		
City Gateway & Special Purpose Sites	Front/Third/Union Park	0.1	Passive open space										•																					Flower bed	
	Gateway Park	0.4	Passive open space									•																						Flagpoles, low wall with City sign	
	Noble/Dixie Skate Park	1.7	Play and passive open space																										•						
	Memorial Place	0.7	Historic passive space										•										•	•									•	Flower bed & signed monument	
Landscape Areas	Elliot Park	0.4	Passive open space									•													•			•						Lawn area & landscaping	
	Crescent Park	0.7	Passive open space									•													•									Lawn area	
	Median Park	0.3	Passive open space									•																						Lawn area	
	Noble Park	0.5	Passive open space									•																						Lawn area	
Undeveloped	Oak Forest Park	7.0	Undeveloped																															Wooded area	
	Mill Race Park	14.2	Undeveloped																																
Indoor Facilities	Opportunity Center at the ALCC	0.9	Recreation center & services							•											•			•										Indoor Recreation Center game tables	
	Sawyer Homestead	1.1	Historic building and garden																															Rental facility	
School District Properties	MLK Park – Orchard Center	-								•		•	•	•	•				•	•	•		•	•	•	•							Maintained by the City		
	Navarre Park & Playground	-																							•								Maintained by the City		
	Roessler Field at Riverside School	-		•	•																			•									Maintained by the Schools		

State and Federal Land

The City of Monroe includes within its boundary Sterling State Park, the River Raisin National Battlefield Park, and part of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

With over 1.2 million visitors a year, Sterling State Park is one of Michigan's most heavily used State Parks. Located on Lake Erie, it includes a campground, swimming beach, hiking trails, fishing, boating, and nature study areas. A pedestrian and bicycle connection to the park exists from Elm Avenue through the River Raisin Heritage Trail.



The United States government owns and operates two important outdoor recreational facilities in the City of Monroe: the River Raisin National Battlefield Park and the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

The U. S. Department of Interior's National Park Service took over land formerly owned by the City of Monroe, as well as other properties, to form the River Raisin National Battlefield Park. This site commemorates the 1813 battle which took place at this location. Recreational facilities include an interpretive museum and outdoor displays and open space. Plans (See Figure 27) for the area around the National Battlefield Park are underway through a partnership between the Monroe Historical Society and the City of Monroe with input from the National Park Service and the River Raisin National Battlefield Park Foundation. Once established, it will incorporate a larger, National Battlefield site, with distinct activity zones including a visitor center, a recreated River Raisin settlement, a reenactment zone, and an entertainment zone with an amphitheater, and other features tied to downtown Monroe and the greater Monroe region through the River Raisin Heritage Trail.



The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service established the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge along the Detroit River and western Lake Erie. The refuge consists of nearly 6,000 acres of unique habitat, including islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals, and waterfront lands within an authorized boundary extending along 48 miles of shoreline, including all of Monroe County's Lake Erie coastal areas. Units within the City of Monroe include Ford Marsh, and Plum Creek Bay, which are not open to the public.



County, School, and Private Recreation Facilities

The County of Monroe owns and operates two small facilities located in the City: Loranger Square containing 1.5 acres of land with a plaza, large pavilion, fountain, picnic tables, and seating, and St. Antoine Cemetery on North Custer Road containing 1.2 acres of land with a monument and a walking path.



The Monroe Public Schools operate four schools within City limits. They are listed below:

- Arborwood North Elementary School, located at 1135 Riverview Avenue, includes 6.7 acres of land with a soccer field, ball field, picnic shelter, walking path, several play structures, play equipment, and swingsets.
- Arborwood South Elementary School (former Cantrick School), located at 1008 Riverview Avenue, includes 20.2 acres of land with a soccer field, ball field, tennis courts, playground, swingset, and an indoor gymnasium.
- Manor Elementary School, located at 1731 W. Lorain Street, contains 8.8 acres of land with a soccer field, ball field, basketball court, play structure, games, and several swingsets.
- Monroe Middle School, located at 503 Washington Street, includes an auditorium and indoor gymnasium.

In addition, the area private schools also include playground areas and/or indoor gymnasiums such as St. John's Catholic School, St. Mary's Catholic Central High School, St. Michael's Catholic School, and Trinity Lutheran School. The Monroe Family YMCA on Elm Avenue features nine acres of land with an indoor pool, gymnasiums, fitness center, indoor tennis, classrooms, and more.

Table 9. County, State, and Federal Owned Sites

Park	Location	Facilities/Activities	Acres
Monroe County Parks			
Heck County Park	Frenchtown Township	Vietnam veterans memorial and museum, pavilion, paved trail, playground, basketball court, sled hill	15
Nike County Park	Frenchtown Township	Model aircraft area, dog training area, pavilions, and playground	80
Vienna County Park	Bedford Township	Ball fields, soccer fields, disc golf course, pavilions, nature trail, and playground	57
Waterloo County Park	Monroe Township	Pavilions, accessible fishing pier, river access, canoe/kayak launch, paved trail, and playground	9
West County Park	Dundee Township	Restored natural habitat, river access, nature trails, and shelters	60
State Park and Recreation Areas			
Sterling State Park	City of Monroe + Frenchtown Township	Lake Erie beach, boat launch, campground, fishing, playground, nature and multi-use trails	1,300
Crystal Waters State Game Area	London Township	Hunting, fishing, hiking trails	680
Petersburg State Game Area	Summerfield Township	Hunting	935
Pointe Mouillée State Game Area	Berlin Township	Hunting, fishing, shooting range, boat ramp	3,466
Erie State Game Area	Erie Township	Hunting, boat launch	1,519
I-75 Rest Area	Monroe Township	Restrooms, picnic area, tourist information	25
US-23 Rest Area	Summerfield Township	Restrooms, picnic area, tourist information	28
I-275 Rest Area	Ash Township	Restrooms, picnic area, tourist information	35
Bolles Harbor Access Site	Monroe Township	Boat launch, fishing, restrooms, parking	77
Otter Creek Access Site	LaSalle Township	Lake Erie access, fishing pier, restrooms	26
Swan Creek Access Site	Berlin Township	Boat ramp, fishing, restrooms	2
Federal Land			
Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge	Erie, Berlin, & Frenchtown Townships & City of Monroe	Future visitor center & picnic pavilions, boat docks, pier, trails, hunting, fishing, nature interpretation, wildlife viewing	6,000
River Raisin National Battlefield Park	City of Monroe	Visitor center, picnic shelter, memorials, interpretive signs, open space	40
Total			14,354

LAND AND WATER TRAILS

Trail systems in the City of Monroe include the River Raisin Heritage Trail, the upcoming Monroe Loop Trail, and various other trails, walkways, and pathways within existing parks.

The River Raisin Heritage Trail is the designation given to the Sterling State Park trail system and its connection to the River Raisin National Battlefield Park and points beyond. The system includes the City's Riverwalk path, and the pathways, sidewalks and paved shoulder along Elm Avenue and North Custer, currently terminating at Territorial Park at the intersection of North Custer and Raisinville Road which encompasses the historic Navarre-Anderson Trading Post.

Figure 13. River Raisin Heritage Trail



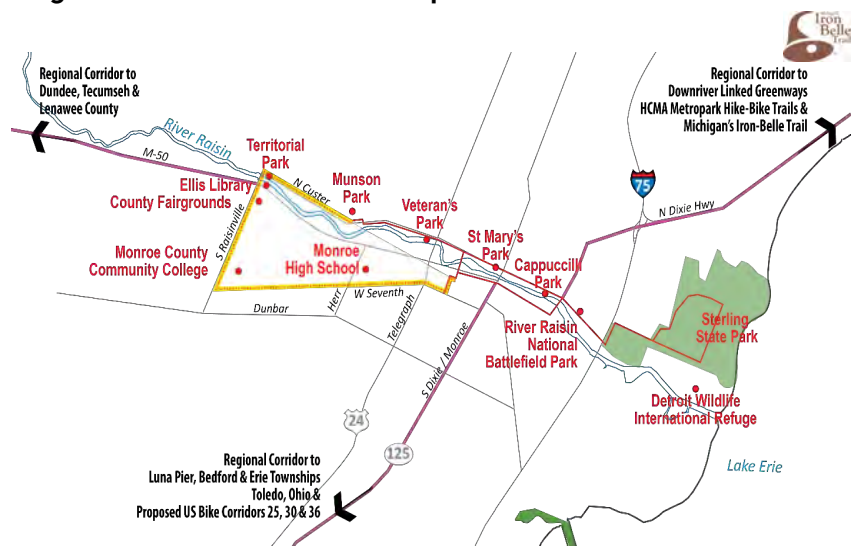
Source: . rtrail.com

The Monroe Loop Trail, planned to be built in 2023, is a paved shared use path that extends the River Raisin Heritage Trail from Munson Park west to Raisinville Road, south to the Monroe County Community College, and circles back to the City on the south side of the River following a former railroad bed and West Seventh Street.

It is a multi-community project involving the City of Monroe, Frenchtown and Monroe Townships, together with the County of Monroe as the lead agency.

The regional vision for non-motorized corridors in the Monroe area has evolved to include a system of on-road and off-the-road facilities. Figure 16, on next page, illustrates the corridors planned for improvements based on the 2021 Monroe County Trail and Bicycle Plan.

Figure 14. The Monroe Area Loop Trail



The River Raisin Heritage Trail and the Loop Trail are planned to connect north to the Downriver Linked Greenways as shown on Figure 16 by way of North Dixie Highway, U. S. Turnpike Road, and West Jefferson Avenue - Michigan’s first road. The south connection to the Toledo trail system would follow Monroe Street/South Dixie Highway.

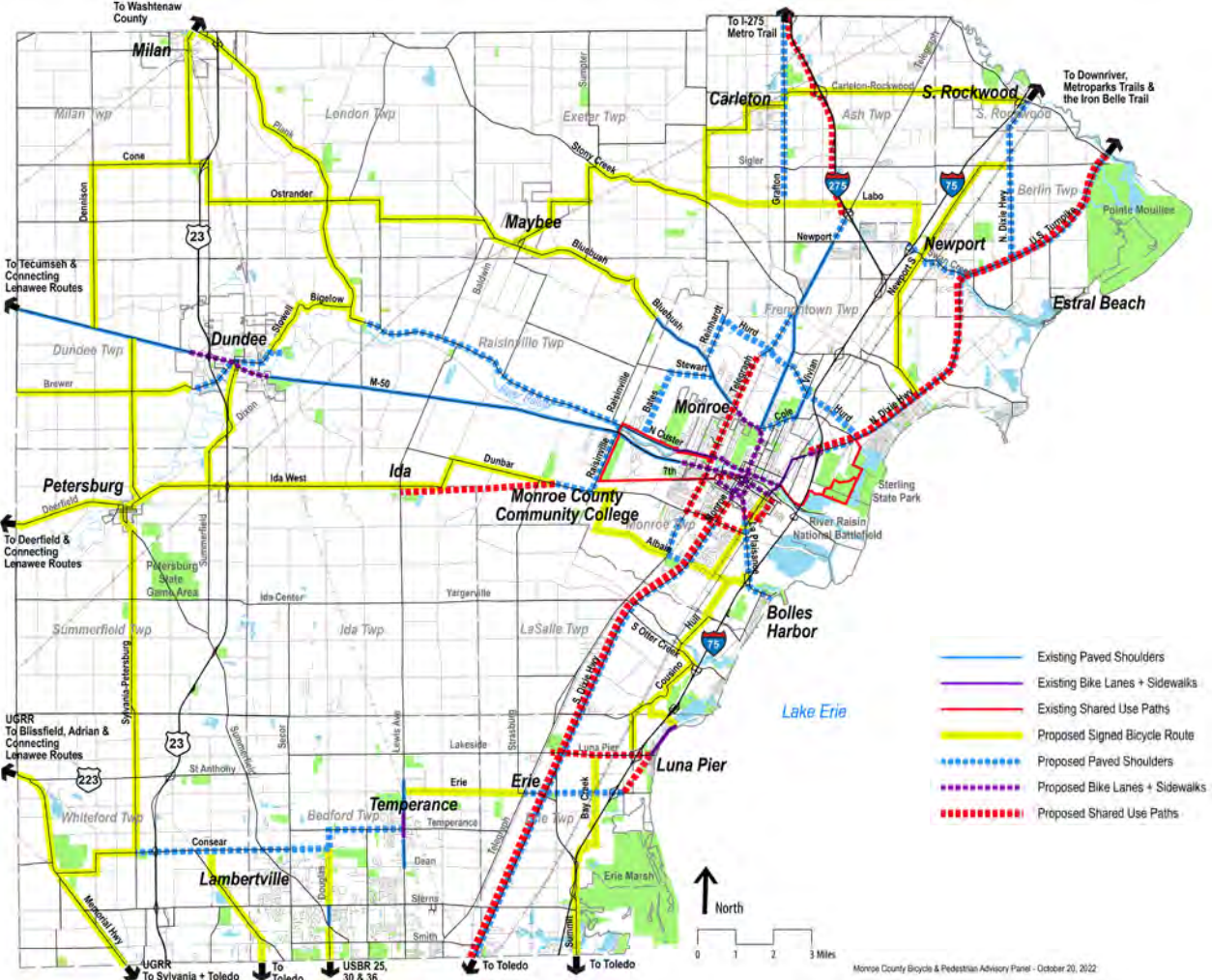
The North-South Dixie Highway corridor is also envisioned to be part of the Great Lakes Way, an interconnected system of greenways and blueways stretching from Erie Marsh at the southeast corner of Monroe County to southern Lake Huron through Lake Erie, the Detroit River, Lake St. Clair, and the St. Clair River. In Monroe County, the Great Lakes Way supports both the green and blue way connections from Lake Erie Marsh in Erie Township to Pointe Mouillee State Game Area in Berlin Township, connecting the landmarks of Sterling State Park and the River Raisin National Battlefield Park, as well as the water trail connections from Lake Erie inland along the River Raisin, Swan Creek, and the Huron River.

Figure 15. The Great Lakes Way



Source: Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan

Figure 16. Monroe County Trail and Bicycle Network



Source: Monroe County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Panel, 2022

Monroe County developed a comprehensive master plan for the region’s water trails on the River Raisin and Lake Erie in 2014. The Plan identifies specific recommendations for possible launch sites and other improvements. Figure 17 depicts the water trails planned for the River Raisin within the City of Monroe. While rock arch rapids have been installed along the River to restore fish passage through an initiative known as the River Raisin Legacy Project, the low head dams which are located east of Roessler street, west of Veteran’s Park, and by Cappuccilli Park still prevent the free passage of canoes or kayaks for those who do not wish to portage or navigate through rapids. The passages could be modified to facilitate the flow of small boats.

Figure 17. Monroe County Water Trails - City of Monroe Area



Source: Monroe County Water Trail Master Plan, 2014

SEMCOG has launched the Southeast Michigan Trail Explorer which enables users to look at trail views from their mobile device in a similar way as Google Street Views. Miles of the region’s land and water trails can now be explored online including 14 miles of the River Raisin Heritage Trail and 30 miles of the River Raisin water trail.



RECREATION PROGRAMS

Monroe boasts a wealth of recreation programming options for nearly every interest and age group, ranging from sports leagues to gardening, nutrition classes, and more. In 2021, the City of Monroe contracted with local non-profit organizations to provide youth and adult programming using City Parks and facilities. The City now focuses on community events.

As shown in Table 10 below, some of the most well-attended programs are the concerts in the park (which saw an attendance of more than 38,000 in 2022), the spring and summer adult softball league, and dancing programs such as the Daddy-Daughter Dance and Court Dance. Programs are held all over the City, including concerts in St. Mary’s Park, sports programs at Munson Park, and the tot lot program at various parks. Some programs have a participation fee, while many others are available free to residents.



Monroe residents are able to sign up for recreation programs online through the City’s website. The City’s Parks and Recreation Department also publishes a newsletter highlighting the program offerings for the season. The Department maintains a Facebook page to notify residents of pertinent information in real-time and provides a convenient way for residents to interact with the Department online.

Table 10. Recreation Programs

Program/Activities	2019 Resident	2019 Non-Resident	2019 Total	2020 Total	2021 Resident	2021 Non-Resident	2021 Total	2022 Resident	2022 Non-Resident	2022 Total
Spring Adult Softball Teams										28
Spring Adult Softball										480
Summer Adult Softball Teams			53				24			32
Summer Adult Softball	204	66	871		74	338	412			640
Fall Adult Softball Teams			13				16			21
Fall Adult Softball	40	163	203		22	218	240			300
Adult Indoor Volleyball Teams			9							
Adult Indoor Volleyball	19	61	80							
Summer Youth Ball	200	181	381		86	106	192			272

Program/Activities	2019 Resident	2019 Non-Resident	2019 Total	2020 Total	2021 Resident	2021 Non-Resident	2021 Total	2022 Resident	2022 Non-Resident	2022 Total
Fall Youth Tee Ball Teams										14
Fall Youth Tee Ball										130
Daddy Daughter Dance	186	267	453	508				177	270	447
Garden Plots	9	10	19	13	6	6	12	14	10	24
Scavenger Hunt										9
Mother Son Bowling	28	76	104					27	82	109
Family Story Time MCLS			23							
Adult Sand Volleyball	9	26	35							
Tennis										20
Track	10	7	17							
Park Rentals	72	30	102		29	22	51	83	50	133
Tot Lot			2,123							2,175
Concerts in the Park			18,748				3,362			38,281
Bark in the Park										160
Historic Monroe (Museum)	75	108	183							
Adult Yoga	232	527	759				100			131
Kids Free Yoga	12	15	27							
Abs & Glutes							29			
AKC Canine Classes	9	6	15							
Cardio Dance/Drumming							91			149
Pickleball	43	33	76							
Body Sculpt/Fit Cardio							52			
Tai Chi in the Park	30	28	58							
Court Dance			462				161			481
Adult Wiffleball Teams										7
Adult Wiffleball										42
Adult Soccer Spring Teams			5							4
Adult Soccer Spring	14	53	67							49
Adult Soccer Summer Teams			4							3
Adult Soccer Summer	13	36	49		10	38	48			34
Adult Soccer Fall Teams			4				6			
Adult Soccer Fall	12	40	52		12	59	71			
Family Dance Party										175
Womens Self Defense										
Line Dancing			150				55			267
Monday Fun at Manor Park	43	33	76							
Adaptive Tee Ball										50
Preschool Football										5

ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENT AND GRANT-ASSISTED PROJECTS

A critical component in planning for recreation facilities is providing access to accommodate the needs of all people, including those with disabilities. The City park system is intended for the use by all persons, regardless of their ability status. It is the intent of the City to comply with accessibility standards and guidelines for play areas, outdoor developed areas, parking areas, and other facilities which fall under the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All recent improvements to City parks have been designed to comply with or exceed accessibility guidelines and standards, and to retrofit, when appropriate, those facilities which pre-date ADA standards.

Each of the City parks was evaluated using the MDNR suggested ranking system. The elements evaluated include parking areas, paths of travel from parking to activity areas, the activity areas themselves, and support facilities such as restrooms and surfacing. Table 11 presents the results of this evaluation. The ranking system ranges from 1 to 5 as follows:

1. None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines;
2. Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines;
3. Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines;
4. The entire park meets accessibility guidelines; and
5. The entire park was developed/renovated using the principles of universal design.

Table 11. Accessibility Assessment

Type of Parks	Park Name	Rating	Evaluation
Neighborhood Parks	Arbor-Lorain Park	3	The new play structure has an accessible component but there is no accessible swing. Most activity areas are connected to the sidewalk system.
	Boyd Park	4	The play structures have accessible components and all park activity areas are connected to the City sidewalk system.
	Central Park	4	There is a new accessible play structure connected to City sidewalks.
	Frenchman’s Bend Park	4	The new play structure has an accessible component and is connected to the sidewalk system.
	Hoffman Park	3	The new play structure has an accessible component. However, there is no accessible route to the play structure.
	James & Hendricks Park	4	The play structure has an accessible component and is connected to the sidewalk system.
	Lavender Park	2	The play structure has an accessible component but an accessible swing is lacking. There is no accessible route to the play structure, bench, swings, or tennis courts.
	Manor Park	2	The play structure has an accessible component but an accessible swing is lacking. The parking area does not include a barrier-free space and there is no accessible routes to the play structure, bench, swings, paved area, or picnic shelter.
Community Parks	Father Cairns Park	-	The park is planned to be redeveloped in 2023 using the principles of universal design.
	Labor Park	5	The park was redeveloped in 2019 using the principles of universal design.
	Munson Park	3	Most of the park facilities (parking areas, play structure, swings, picnic tables, grills, restrooms, picnic shelters, tennis courts, front ball fields, skate park, soccer concession) include accessible components and are connected to accessible routes.
	St. Mary’s Park	3	The play structure has an accessible component. The parking area and most park activity areas (bandshell, picnic shelter, and restrooms) are connected to City sidewalks. However, there are no accessible routes to

Type of Parks	Park Name	Rating	Evaluation
			the play structure, basketball court, tennis courts, or bocce courts.
	Soldiers & Sailors Park	3	The new play structure is accessible and most park activity areas are accessible. However, there are no accessible routes to the picnic shelter, swings, and half basketball court.
	Veteran's Park	4	The parking area includes barrier-free spaces. The new play structure includes accessible components (swings and more) and is connected to an accessible route. In addition, there are accessible picnic tables and restrooms. In addition, most activity areas are connected to accessible routes except for a picnic shelter.
River Raisin Heritage Trail & Associated Parks & Open Spaces	Riverwalk	3	The riverwalk is accessible. A safe guardrail along the River Raisin's edge is needed.
	Altrusa Park	2	There is an accessible picnic table, but it is not connected to an accessible route. In addition, the connection to the Riverwalk is not barrier free.
	Cappuccilli Park	3	The walkway is accessible. The picnic tables and shelters are not connected to the accessible walkway.
	N. Custer/Elm Avenue Path	4	The pathway is accessible.
	Hellenberg Park	2	The parking area includes barrier free spaces. The basketball court is connected to the City sidewalk . However, the restrooms are not accessible.
	Plum Creek Park	-	No park facilities.
	Rauch Park	4	The walkways are accessible and connected to City sidewalks.
	River Raisin Memorial	-	No park facilities. The property is located along City sidewalks.
	Rivière-aux- Raisins Park	4	Historical Stone monument. The path running along Dixie Highway is accessible.
	Worrell Park	4	Located along the North Custer Road pathway, the Park is accessible.
City Gateway & Special Purpose Sites	Front/Third Park	4	No park facilities. Located along City sidewalks.
	Gateway Park	4	Plaza and flagpole areas are accessible and connected to City sidewalks.
	Noble Skate Park	4	Skate park is accessible and connected to City sidewalks.
	Memorial Place	4	The walkways are accessible and connected to City sidewalks.
Landscape Areas	Elliot Park	4	The seating area is accessible and connected to City sidewalks.
	Crescent Park	4	The walkways and benches are accessible and connected to City sidewalks.
	Median Park	-	No park facilities.
	Noble Park	3	The walkway is accessible but there is no connection along Baptiste Avenue to City sidewalk along Noble Avenue.
Un-developed	Oak Forest Park	-	No park facilities.
	Mill Race Park	-	No park facilities.
Indoor Facilities	Opportunity Center at the ALCC	3	The community center includes accessible restrooms and an elevator, is connected to City sidewalks, and includes an accessible route from the parking area.
	Sawyer Homestead	3	The historic building is connected to the City sidewalk system and includes an accessible route to the parking area.

Monroe has received many grants for park development and improvement which have included MDNR grants as well as other programs such as the Community Foundation of Monroe County Access to Recreation program. Table 12 lists all the MDNR grants received by the City. Post-completion self-certification reports are being submitted as required for each of these grants.

Table 12. MDNR Grant Assisted Projects

Park	Year & Grant #	Amount	Project elements	Condition
Munson Park	1978 LWCF 26-01060 Z2	\$180,000	Development of 3 ball fields with backstop and fencing, restroom/ concession/ storage building, 4 tennis courts, 2 parking lots, access drive, recreation pond, bleachers, litter containers, landscaping, signage, spectator area, and drainage improvements.	All these elements are intact and in good condition. The concession building and tennis courts have been upgraded and additional facilities have been added since this part of the park was developed.
Hellenberg Park	1985 LWCF 26-01417	\$105,000	Development of a boat launch, parking lot improvements, new parking lot, landscaping, park bridge, and support facilities.	All the project elements are intact and maintained in good condition. Additional facilities have been added since 1985.
Munson Park Phase III	1985 LWCF 26-01422	\$65,000	Development of an accessible playscape, picnic shelter/restrooms, pond lighting, landscaping, signage, and sledding hill.	The playscape was replaced by a larger one. The other facilities are intact and maintained in good condition.
Hellenberg Park	1988 MNRTF TF88-259	\$190,200	Acquisition of 2.5 acres of land adjacent to existing park.	Recreation facilities were developed on that portion of the park property.
Dick Waters Swimming Pool	1990 BF90-193	\$175,000	Renovation of the outdoor pool, four tennis courts, playground, and band shell.	The pool which was jointly operated by the City, the Monroe YMCA, and the Monroe Public Schools was closed in 2014 due to cost constraints.
Riverwalk Extension	1997 MNRTF TF97-072	\$290,125	Extension of a walkway along the River Raisin connecting Downtown with Soldiers and Sailor Park.	The Riverwalk is intact and in good condition. It is currently being considered for another extension.
Munson Park Soccer Complex	1999 CM99-25	\$233,879	Development of 12 soccer fields, exercise trail, and drainage improvements.	The soccer fields are in good condition and well-used by the community soccer groups.
Munson Park Improvements	2002 LWCF 26-01599	\$195,416	Improvements to the drive and parking, concession building development including utility extensions and connectors, tennis court reconstruction, and development of a skate park.	All the project elements are intact and maintained in good condition.
River Raisin Corridor Urban Recreation Connections	2014 MNRTF TF14-0208	\$4,086,200	Land acquisition of riverfront properties and open land adjacent to the River Raisin National Battlefield Park as part of the River Raisin Heritage Corridor - East Master Plan.	This grant is not closed.

LWCF: Land and Water Conservation Fund, MNRTF: Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, BF: Recreation Bond Fund, CM: Clean Michigan Initiative

NEEDS ASSESSMENT & PARK PLANS

A critical component in the recreation planning process is determining the needs and desires of the community as a basis for an action plan to improve the park and recreation system. Needs and preferences provide the rationale for the formulation of goals and objectives that lead to an action plan. To assess needs and desires, consideration was given to current City plans and initiatives and input from community stakeholders, public officials, and the residents of Monroe.

PARK ACREAGE COMPARISON

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends a minimum amount of parkland to adequately serve a given population size. The purpose of the NRPA guidelines is to provide minimum parkland and facility development standards that are applicable nationwide for recreation planning purposes. While the NRPA standards are useful benchmarks addressing minimum park acreage, a parks and recreation system should be tailored to meet the needs of the community.

According to the NRPA, parks are categorized as mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, and regional parks. The mini, neighborhood, and community parks are the *close-to-home* parks, designed to satisfy the recreational needs of local communities as described on the right. According to NRPA standards, the suggested amount of *close-to-home* parkland is 6.25 to 10.5 acres for every 1,000 residents. The close-to-home parks include all the City parks.

NRPA Close-to-home Park Land:

Mini-Park: Addresses limited recreational needs; serves an area less than ¼ mile distance.

Neighborhood Park: Focus is on informal active and passive recreation; serves an area ¼ to ½-mile distance and is uninterrupted by non-residential roads or other physical barriers.

Community Park: Serves a broader purpose than neighborhood parks; focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs and preserving unique landscapes and open spaces; usually serves two or more neighborhoods at ½ to 3-mile distance.

Regional parks serve a broader area (an area within a 40-mile radius) and focus on meeting the recreation needs of the region and preserving unique areas. Regional parks in Monroe include the County Parks as well as the federal and state-owned parks and recreation areas described in the preceding chapter. The NRPA also recognizes other types of parks such as school grounds which can contribute to the local park and recreation system.

Table 12 presents a comparison of the NRPA suggested parkland standards with existing parks based on the 2020 City population of 20,462. According to these standards, local and regional parks meet the suggested minimum acreage for total *close-to-home* and *regional* parkland. Monroe residents are particularly well-served by the City parks and regional park facilities provided by the federal, state, and county governments that are located nearby.

Table 12. Comparison to Suggested Parkland Acreage Standards

Type of Park	NRPA Suggested Amount Acres/ 1000 Pop.	Suggested Acreage per 2020 Population (20,462)	Existing Acreage
<i>Close-to-Home</i> Parkland	6. 25 - 10. 5 Acres	128– 215 Acres	286 Acres
Regional Parks	15 - 20 Acres	307 – 409 Acres	14,354 Acres
Public Schools	-	-	36.7 Acres

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The current Parks and Recreation Plan planning process included public input received through an online survey of residents during March and April 2022.

Parks and Trails Survey

Residents were invited to provide ideas and suggestions for the City parks, trails and recreation system through an online survey. More than 425 responses from City residents were received and tabulated. Key findings from the survey are outlined below as it relates to park improvements. Trail improvement findings are found in Part II, Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.



Park Visitation

The top four most visited neighborhood parks are:

1. Manor Park
2. Frenchman's Bend
3. Lavender Park
4. Arbor Lorain

The top three most visited community parks are:

1. Munson Park
2. St Mary's Park
3. Veteran's Park

The top three most visited River Raisin Heritage Trail and associated parks and open spaces are:

1. N. Custer/Elm Avenue Path
2. Downtown Riverwalk
3. Cappuccilli Park

The top three most visited or seen City gateways/landscape areas are:

1. Noble/Dixie Skate Park
2. Front/Third/Union
3. Memorial Park

New Park Facility Preference

In general, respondents top choices for preferred recreation amenities in order of importance are:

1. Sidewalks/paths for walking
2. Nature trails
3. Bike lanes/paths for bicycling
4. Playground structures
5. Canoeing/kayaking
6. Picnic areas and pavilions

Recreation Program Preference

The top City program offerings that are most important to respondents include:

1. Concerts in the Park
2. Community garden plots

Park Improvements

Desired priorities for park improvements are:

1. Develop and implement a citywide walk/bike plan;
2. Maintain and improve existing community and neighborhood parks;
3. Prioritize improvements of parks and trails along the River Raisin and its connectivity to the City center;
4. Promote and support the continued development of the River Raisin National Battlefield Park.
5. Work to enhance the management of the parks' trees and natural habitat to ensure best stewardship practice;

Some of the additional specific suggestions for new park improvements include:

- Dog Park
- Kayak/canoe launch
- Fishing and fish educational programs
- More flowers
- More shared use pathways
- More walkways
- More swings for little ones
- Connected system of dedicated bike lanes
- Increased connectivity to City center
- More walking trails

Millage

Support for a millage for the maintenance and development of City Parks was positive with 68% in favor and only 8% against. This left 24% of respondents undecided on this issue.

Respondents Demographics

The majority of survey respondents reside north of the River, have lived in Monroe for more than 15 years, are between the ages of 25 to 34 years old, and have no children at home.

- Respondents are distributed as follows in the City:
 1. NW Quadrant-north and west of River/Monroe Street: 195 respondents
 2. NE Quadrant-north and east of the River/Monroe Street: 115 respondents
 3. SE Quadrant-south and east of the River/Monroe Street: 64 respondents
 4. SW Quadrant-south and west of the River/Monroe Street: 52 respondent
- 63% have lived there more than 15 years
- Ages:
 - <25: 36 respondents
 - 25-34: 114 respondents
 - 35-44: 102 respondents
 - 45-54: 75 respondents
 - 55-64: 58 respondents
 - >65: 40 respondents
- Live with children:
 - None: 222 respondents
 - One: 80 respondents
 - Two: 71 respondents
 - Three: 32 respondents
 - More than three: 18 respondents

CITY PARK PLANS

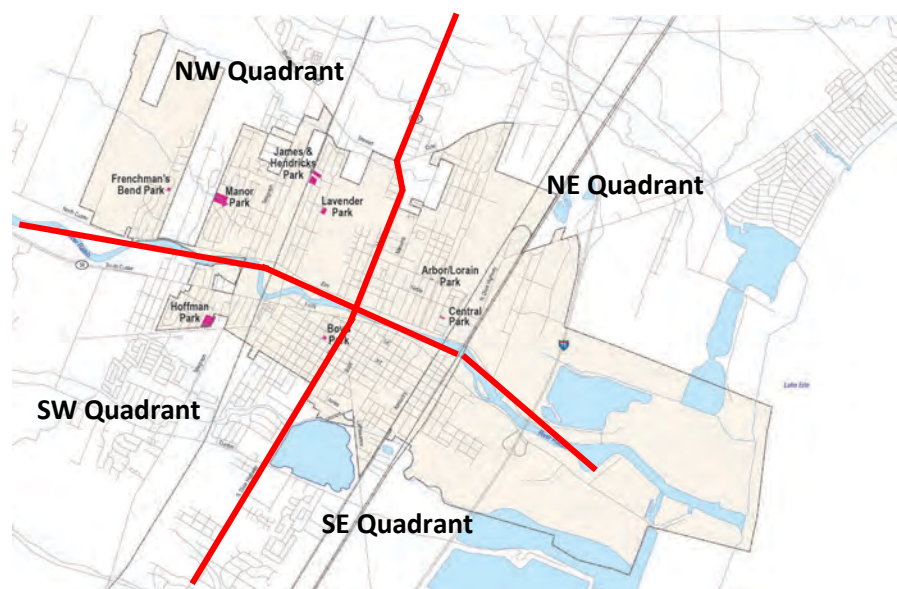
The 2018 and 2014 City Parks and Recreation Master Plans outlined action programs which have provided a strategy and road map for the development of the City’s parks and recreation facilities. A significant number of actions have been accomplished such as the decommissioning of Winston and Calgary parks, repurposing of the parks planned along the River Raisin Heritage Corridor, site development plans for six City parks, the redevelopment of Labor Park in 2021, the replacement of play structures in several City neighborhood and community parks, and the redevelopment of Father Cairns Park, slated to be constructed in 2023.

A review and assessment of the City park plans were conducted to inform the action program and provide valuable information and insights on the future improvements of the City parks and recreation system. Some of these plans are based on recent park planning effort including the 2019 Riverwalk Concept Plan, and the recently updated River Raisin Heritage Corridor-East Master Plan (2022).

Neighborhood Park Plans

Neighborhood parks function as the basic unit of a park system and serve as the recreation and social focus of a neighborhood. They act as gathering places where neighbors form social ties. The 2014 City Parks and Recreation Master Plan provided valuable information regarding the City’s neighborhood parks and suggestions for improvements. It included a “pedestrian shed” analysis done using Census 2010 data and ArcGIS mapping. This analysis provided an estimate of the number and age of the population living within a quarter mile radius of each of the City neighborhood parks and some of the school sites. The following discussion highlights neighborhood park suggestions structured by City quadrants roughly defined by the River Raisin and Monroe Street.

Figure 18. Neighborhood Parks per City Quadrants

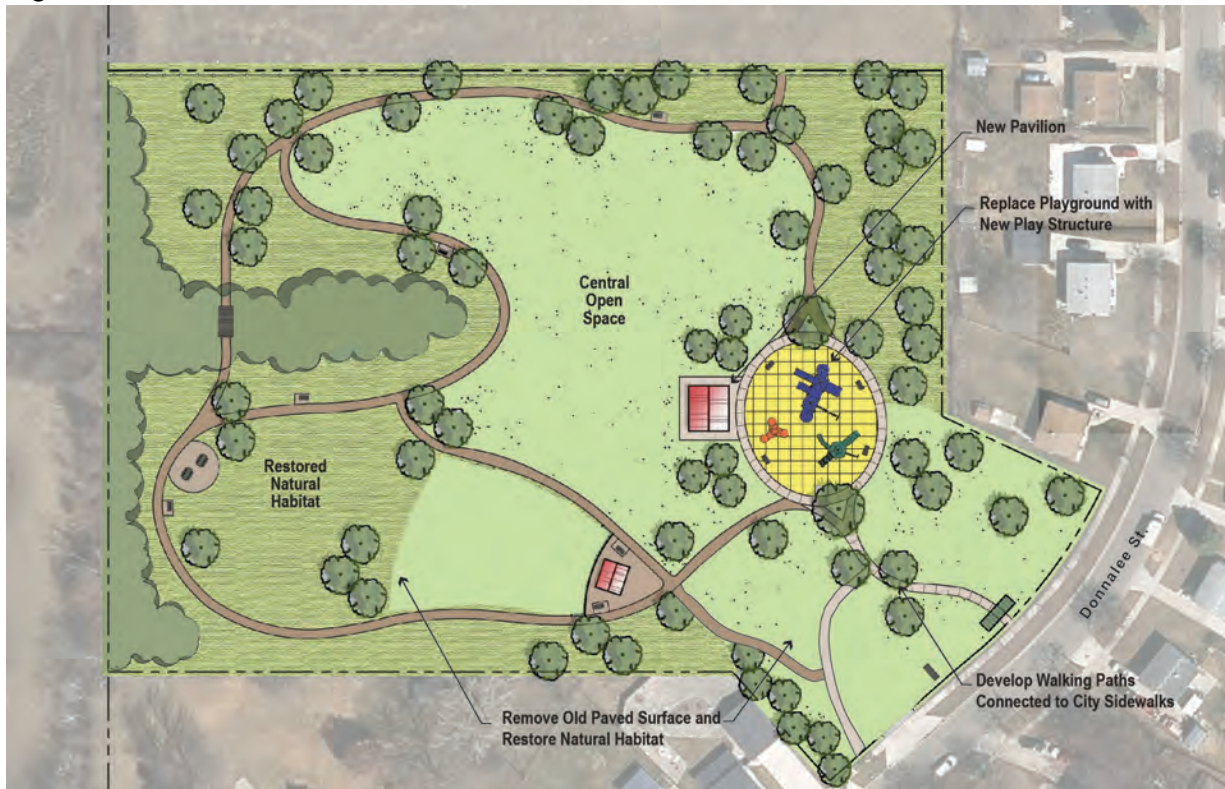


Northwest Quadrant

- Frenchman’s Bend Park is the only neighborhood park serving both the Frenchman’s Bend and Cranbrook Estates residential subdivisions. It had an estimated 390 residents in 2010 living within a quarter mile with an estimated 16% under 15 years old and 19% over 65. A new, upgraded play structure was recently installed at Frenchman’s Bend Park.
- Located next to Manor School, Manor Park is the only neighborhood park within the Riverside Manor residential subdivision and the residential area extending east to Telegraph Road. Manor Park had an estimated 863 residents living within a quarter mile in 2010, 23% of whom were less than 15 years old. The park currently includes facilities that are no longer in use such as an inline skating surface. Poor soil conditions and drainage have resulted in pavement and court surfaces that are prone to heaving and cracking and that are hard to maintain.

- Manor Park is planned to be redeveloped as a passive park with walking paths, a picnic pavilion, updated play structure and equipment. Community gardens are also being considered for this site. Drainage improvements, restoration of natural habitat, and extensive plantings are also planned along the park's edges.

Figure 19. Manor Park Plan



Source: Adapted from *Planning a Legacy: Envisioning the Parks of the City of Monroe Through Six Master Plans, 2017*

- The Roessler-Lavender neighborhood, which is bounded by Elm Avenue, Stewart Road, the railroad track, and the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (SSIHM) property, includes two neighborhood parks: James and Hendricks Park and Lavender Park which had similar characteristics in terms of the population age distribution living within a quarter mile in 2010.
- James and Hendricks Park had an estimated 531 residents living within a quarter mile with 32% of residents over 65 and 12% under 15. Only an estimated 325 residents lived within a quarter mile of Lavender Park in 2010 with 33% over 65 years old compared with 13% under 15. A new, upgraded play structure was installed at James & Hendricks Park. Lavender Park could appropriately incorporate recreation amenities aimed at an older population.

Northeast Quadrant:

- Arbor-Lorain Park is one of two neighborhood parks serving the entire northeast quadrant. A new, upgraded play structure was installed in 2022.
- A new playstructure was also installed at Central Park in 2022 making this open space a new neighborhood park serving the residents located nearby.
- The former Christiancy School property, located on Lincoln between Elm and Noble Avenues, had a large estimated number of residents living within a quarter mile (1,141) in 2010 with 23% under 15 and only 8% over 65. This would make the property very well suited for the development of playground equipment.

- An estimated 661 residents lived within a quarter mile of Arborwood South School with slightly more residents under 15 (20%) than residents over 65 (17%). This mix would make the property equally suited to children’s activities and amenities for seniors. Both Arborwood North and South currently feature several play structures and play equipment which were recently updated by the Monroe Public Schools.
- Greenwood Townhouses, a residential development located at the east end of Greenwood Avenue, incorporates a small park with a playground, swingset, basketball court, ball field and other elements. The park is located on land owned by the Monroe Housing Commission and serves the need of residents living nearby.

Southeast Quadrant:

- While maintaining its use as a neighborhood park, Labor Park was redeveloped as a community park.
- Navarre Field, a property belonging to Monroe Public Schools, contains a mix of school athletic facilities. An estimated 658 residents lived within a quarter mile in 2010, 21% of whom are under 15, and 8% over 65. Upgrading the play equipment at this location would potentially fulfill a neighborhood need.

Southwest Quadrant

- With an estimated 501 residents living within a quarter mile in 2010, Hoffman Park serves a fairly equal mix of residents under 15 and over 65 years old (19% and 16% respectively). A new, upgraded play structure was installed at Hoffman Park. A portion of this park property has been envisioned to be repurposed for the development of new homes along a road connecting two dead-ends. The central area would be left for the neighborhood park and connected to City sidewalks.

Figure 21. Hoffman Park Potential Development



Source: City of Monroe 2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan

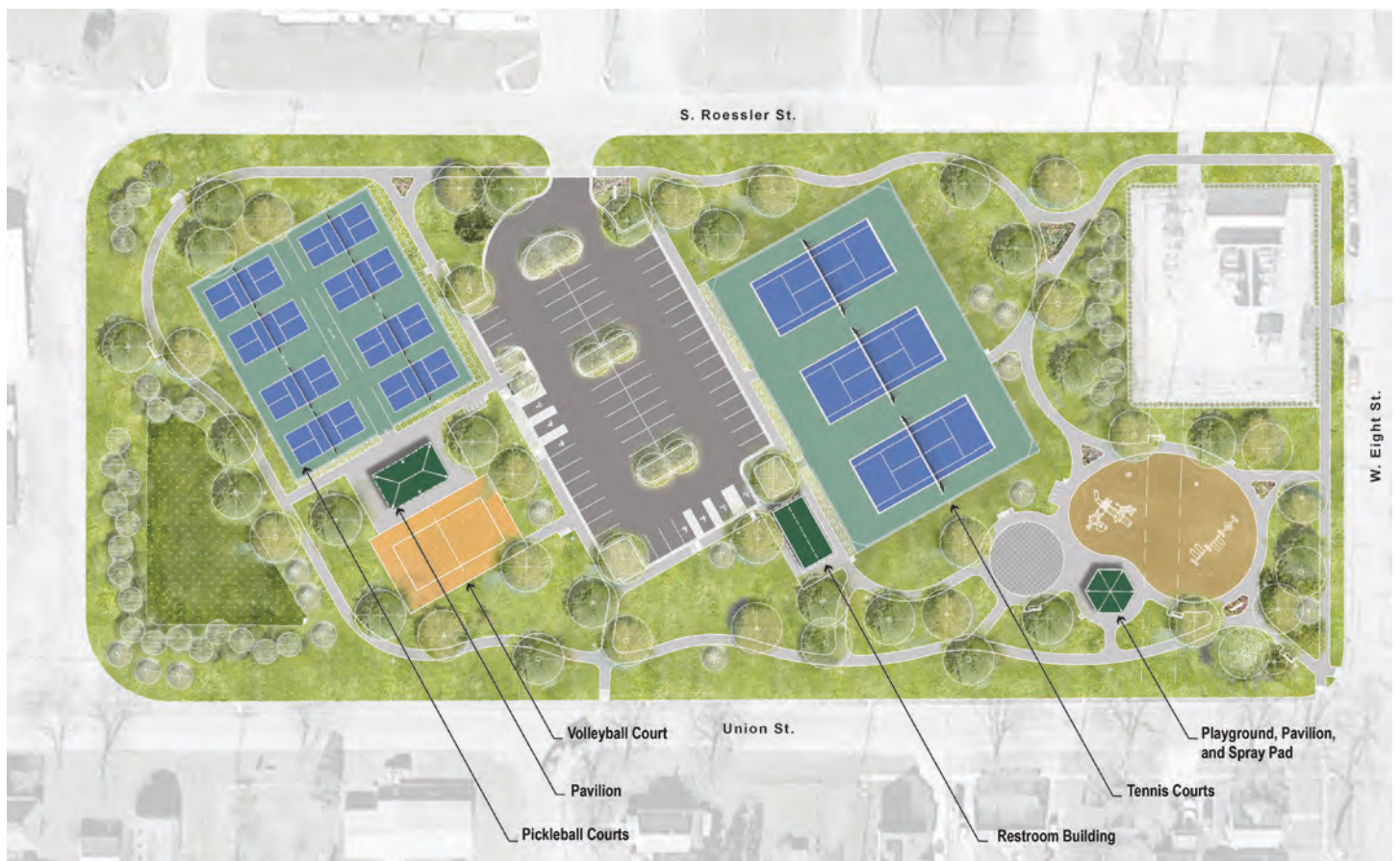
- Father Cairns Park had a high estimated number of residents within a quarter mile (1,038), with 23% under 15 years old and 13% above 65. This park will be redeveloped as a community park while maintaining its use as a neighborhood park (see next page).
- Boyd Park had a high estimated number of residents living within a quarter mile (1,223) in 2010, with 23% under 15 and only 7% above 65 years of age. This park is very attractive and serves the area well. A new, upgraded play structure was recently installed at the Park.

Community Park Plans

- Father Cairns Park will soon become an important community park destination in an area of the City that has been underserved. The project involves the development of multiple court games while maintaining a neighborhood use with playground, splash pad, and walking paths (Figure 22).

The park facilities will include include a parking area, eight pickleball courts, a sand volleyball court, three tennis courts, picnic pavilions, a play structure and swing set, splash pad, restroom, walking paths, and extensive tree plantings. The contract was just awarded and construction is scheduled to start in 2023.

Figure 22. Father Cairns Park Plan



Source: Russell Design, 2022

- Labor Park has recently been completely redeveloped to serve both as a neighborhood park and an extension of the Opportunity Center at the ALCC (Arthur Lesow Community Center). The park has transformed this City block into a community gathering place with a splash pad, a play structure and equipment, a picnic pavilion, and container community gardens.

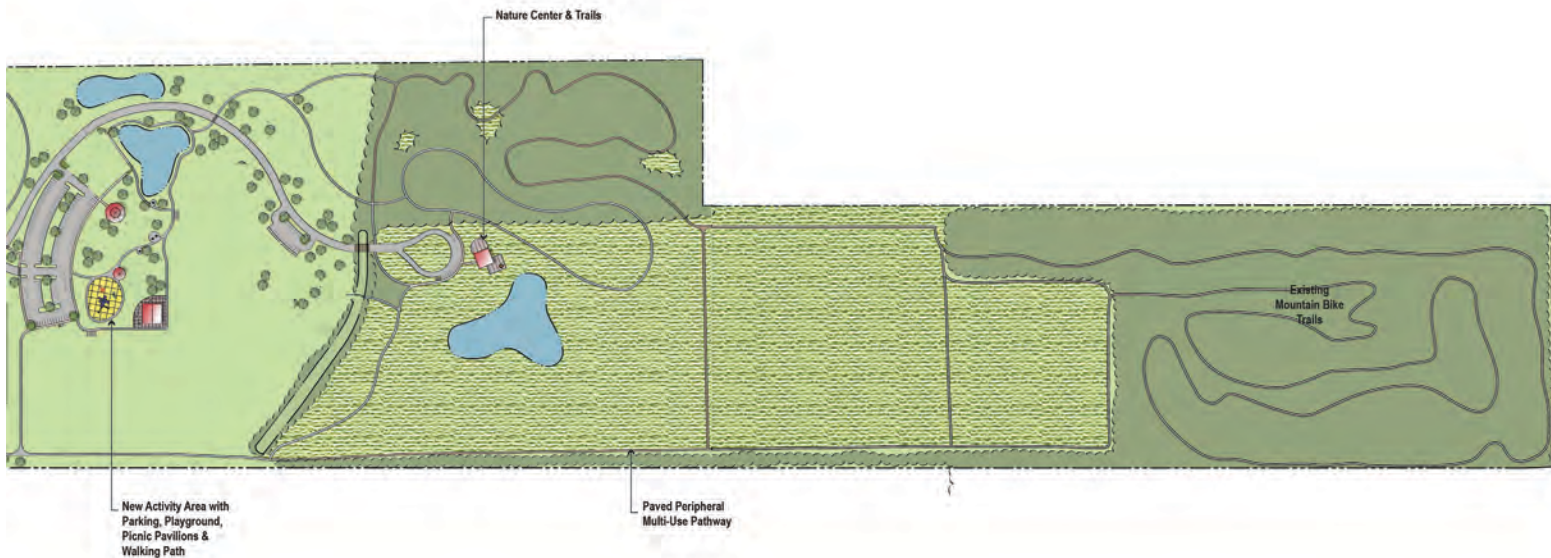
Figure 20. Labor Park



- The plan for Munson Park is extensive with a complete transformation of the front part of the park to include a new boulevard entry, open areas with walkways, a reshaped, more natural pond, a new playground, splash pad, and adaptive ballfield, four picnic pavilions, and restrooms.

The central portion of the park would remain focused on organized sports with expanded ball fields and support facilities including expanded parking and improved accessibility. A future new activity area including additional parking, playground, and picnic pavilions would be located beyond the soccer fields. The back portion is envisioned to remain natural with continued restoration of natural habitat and would be enhanced with a pond, small nature center, nature trails, and wildlife viewing as well as a peripheral paved multi-use path.

Figure 23. Munson Park Plan



Source: Adapted from *Planning a Legacy: Envisioning the Parks of the City of Monroe Through Six Master Plans, 2017*

- The vision for St. Mary’s Park is a vibrant downtown riverfront park, opening up views and access to the River Raisin by creating a riverfront esplanade with seating and overlooks. New play structures, a splash pad, and picnic shelters are proposed to complement the existing tennis and bocce courts or corn holes. A new amphitheater providing better access is envisioned. Plazas, seating areas, and walkways are proposed for pedestrian circulation and connection to the Martin Luther King pedestrian bridge, Monroe Street, and downtown.

Figure 24. St. Mary’s Park Plan



Source: Adapted from *Planning a Legacy: Envisioning the Parks of the City of Monroe Through Six Master Plans, 2017*

- Soldiers and Sailors Park is also planned to include a walkway along the Raisin River; however, the shoreline would maintain a natural vegetative buffer and be enhanced with overlooks and seating areas. An enlarged playground, enhanced war memorial, and a new picnic pavilion would be some of the proposed features of the park complementing the existing basketball and tennis courts.

Figure 25. Soldiers and Sailors Park Plan

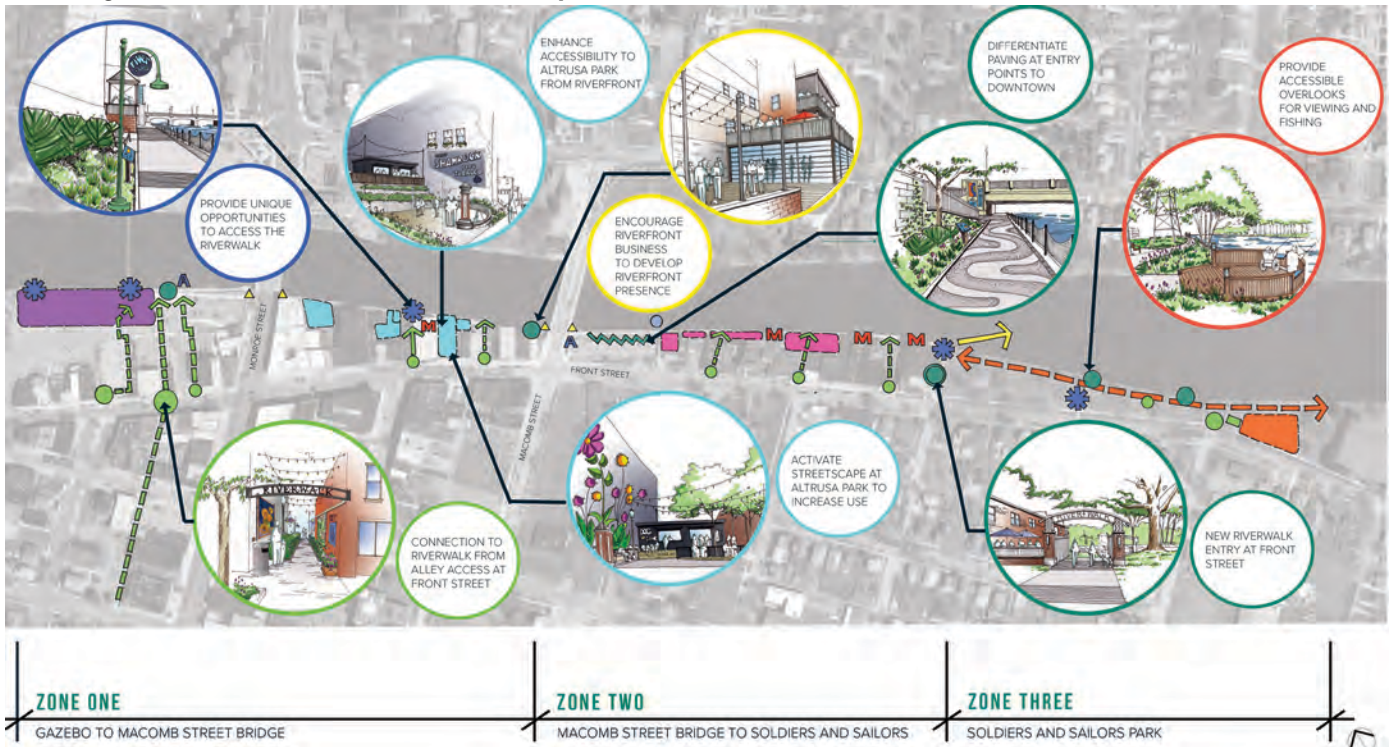


Source: Russell Design, 2020

Riverwalk and River Raisin Heritage Trail Associated Park Plans

- The vision for the Downtown Riverwalk is to address maintenance and safety issues; improve connections by adding access points and visibility; enhance pedestrian amenities with benches, trash receptacles, signage, art, lighting, and music; and boost adjacent buildings and properties by activating storefronts along the River, improving undeveloped open space, and adding murals. In addition to extending the riverwalk through Soldiers and Sailors Park as mentioned, two other zones are defined with concepts for improvements illustrated below.

Figure 26. Downtown Riverwalk Concept



Source: Russell Design, 2020

- As advanced in the 2022 River Raisin Heritage Corridor East Master Plan Update, a number of park spaces are planned to be incorporated within the River Raisin Battlefield Area, which include:
 - The visitor or education center for the Park including education areas, a re-created french settlement, and a reenactment zone.
 - Rivière-aux-Raisins Park and the River Raisin Memorial, which will become part of the re-created french settlement.
 - Rauch Park, also located on the south side of the River Raisin, a welcome area which will become the site of a waterfront park.
 - Hellenberg Park, located immediately across the River from the current National Battlefield Park, planned to provide open areas for passive outdoor recreational use in harmony with contemplative and historical uses. Walking trails would connect parking areas to the River Raisin with river overlooks for fishing and connect to the Sterling Island pedestrian bridge. A central open area for a native plant meadow or an additional passive outdoor recreational area. New picnic pavilions and an accessible canoe and kayak launch with a fishing platform would be added north of the Sterling Island pedestrian bridge.
 - A new greenway between the two railroads which will connect the Park south with Plum Creek Park and the Plum Creek Unit of the International Wildlife Refuge.
 - The Heritage Trail, which would be enhanced and extended along both sides of the River Raisin connecting the Park to Downtown Monroe and many of the other community parks.

Figure 27. River Raisin National Battlefield Park Concept



Source: 2022 River Raisin Heritage Corridor – East Master Plan Update

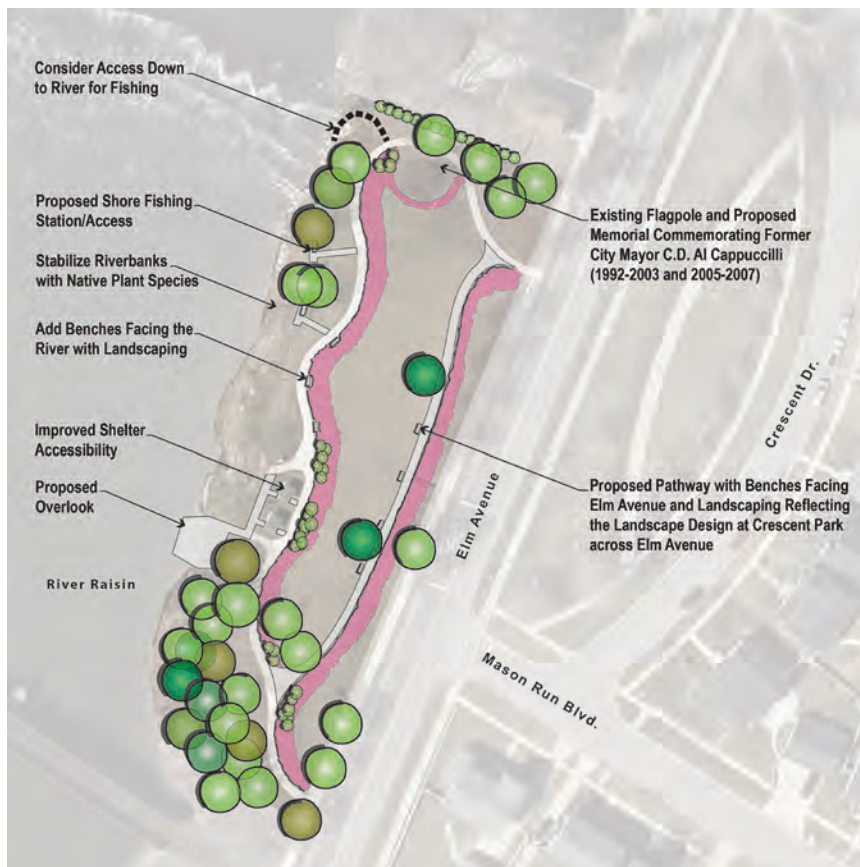
Figure 28. River Raisin Heritage Corridor Welcome Area Sketch



Source: River Raisin Heritage Corridor – East Master Plan, 2013

- Cappuccilli Park, along Elm Avenue, is the first park along the River Raisin Heritage Trail west of the National Battlefield site. The open space also faces the front of the Mason Run residential development. The Park is envisioned to mirror the open space across the street and provide a visual connection to the River. Pedestrian amenities and a signage commemorating former City Mayor C.D. “Al” Cappuccilli would also enhance this space.

Figure 29. Cappuccilli Park Concept



Undeveloped Park Plans

- The development of Mill Race Park was envisioned in 2013 during the Resilient Monroe planning process and the concept was further refined in 2017 to include vehicular access, an accessible canoe/kayak launch, a picnic pavilion, a system of walkways, boardwalks, and viewing platforms along the River Raisin with connections to the adjacent neighborhood. A disk golf course is being considered for this site as is a shared use path along the river which would continue east under the Telegraph Road bridge and reach Front Street through a ProMedica owned property. The feasibility of the accessible launch will need to be considered in light of the close proximity of the low head dams in the River. Portages and other improvements may need to be in place to make this an accessible navigable segment of the River.

Figure 30. Mill Race Park Plan



Source: *Planning a Legacy: Envisioning the Parks of the City of Monroe Through Six Master Plans, 2017*

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Parks provide inherent positive environmental, recreation, and public health benefits to Monroe residents. Enhancing and promoting Monroe's parks and public places is a shared vision to the City's successful placemaking. The goals and objectives provide direction for the shared long-term vision of Monroe's park system. They are broad enough to encompass the suggestions expressed from the public, officials, staff, and meet the observed deficiencies of the area's resources. They consider demographic changes, current and anticipated growth, the area's physical resources, and the on-going City plans and initiatives.

GOAL 1. PARK MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

Provide safe, high-quality recreational experiences that increase residents' quality of life.

The maintenance and improvement of existing City park facilities is essential to ensure continued enjoyment and safety. This includes upgrading aging equipment, removing barriers to access, and general park upkeep. This also includes developing new recreation facilities to meet the changing recreational needs of residents.

- 1.1 Continue to offer high quality recreation programming and services for residents;
- 1.2 Ensure park facilities and equipment are well-maintained, clean, and safe to use;
- 1.3 Upgrade or repair aging play equipment, paved surfaces, park structures, and furnishings as needed;
- 1.4 Ensure that all parks meet accessibility standards;
- 1.5 Maintain, preserve, and enhance the City's neighborhood parks as the key focal point of the neighborhoods;
- 1.6 Continue to implement the park plans envisioned for the City parks; and
- 1.7 Incorporate an annual capital improvement budget and maintenance program for the City's budgeting process.

GOAL 2. RIVER RAISIN CORRIDOR - LAND & WATER RECREATION

Fully capitalize on the River Raisin for land and water recreation.

Linked by a river trail system through the City, the River Raisin corridor serves as the primary natural asset and recreation corridor for the City. It connects several of the community parks, the downtown, the River Raisin National Battlefield Park, the International Wildlife Refuge, and Sterling State Park. It is the principal recreation asset of the City's park system and provides a framework for developing land and water trails to connect parks and community facilities thereby serving to promote active lifestyles and enhance the health and well-being of City residents.

- 2.1 Work with the River Raisin Watershed Council, the River Raisin Institute, Monroe County, other state and regional agencies, and the City Commission on the Environment and Water Quality to protect the water quality of the River Raisin, remove invasive species, and restore natural habitat;
- 2.2 Make the riverfront park properties a priority for future improvements (Elm Avenue Pathway, Worrell, Veteran's, St. Mary's, Riverwalk, Altrusa, Soldiers and Sailors, Cappuccilli, and Hellenberg);
- 2.3 Coordinate with Monroe County and other agencies interested in developing a system of land and water trails to organize a management structure to oversee and implement the system;
- 2.4 Evaluate the potential to use the River Raisin as a kayak adventure course, including determining where appropriate depth can be achieved through channels and the most appropriate points to access the River Raisin for recreational use such as canoeing/kayaking and fishing;
- 2.5 Extend the riverwalk along the south side of the River to Hellenberg Park; and
- 2.6 Enhance and promote the River Raisin Heritage Trail, Elm Avenue Path, and Riverwalk by providing trail heads and coordinated wayfinding and interpretive signage with pedestrian amenities such as seating areas, restrooms, and other support facilities.

GOAL 3. HERITAGE, ARTS AND CULTURE

Continue to build on and promote Monroe as a heritage and cultural tourism destination.

With the National Battlefield, State Park, Wildlife Refuge, and the City's strong heritage, Monroe is uniquely positioned to offer a cultural tourism destination. Cultural tourism refers to travel designed around an area's cultural offerings, including performance, artistic, architecture, historical, recreational, and natural resources.

- 3.1 Continue to work with the River Raisin Heritage Corridor Advisory Commission, Monroe County Historical Society, and the River Raisin National Battlefield Park Foundation to implement the River Raisin Heritage Corridor-East Master Plan and coordinate unified park facilities and recreation programs;
- 3.2 Explore program opportunities to partner with interest groups to provide public art and interpretation of historic events within City parks;
- 3.3 Establish a "Veteran's Honor Trail" that would link Heck Park, Soldiers and Sailors Park, Veteran's Park, Memorial Place, and the National Battlefield Park as a commemorative trail with educational interpretive stations; and
- 3.4 Partner with the River Raisin National Battlefield Park and the Monroe County Historical Society to design and install a cultural asset wayfinding system.

GOAL 4. PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE NETWORK

Connect City parks and facilities and connect the City to the region.

The City Trails Advisory Committee developed a plan for an interconnected network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that provide safe and efficient travel for both commuting and recreation between key places within Monroe, including parks, neighborhoods, schools, downtown, and neighboring communities.

The City Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was developed as a stand-alone document.

GOAL 5. STEWARDSHIP

Ensure high-quality operation, maintenance, and stewardship of parks.

Park stewardship is a value embodying responsible planning and management of resources, both physical and financial.

- 5.1 Manage and enhance the parks' trees and natural habitat to increase the park system resiliency;
- 5.2 Incorporate best practice standards for storm water management with park improvements;
- 5.3 Develop an asset management plan for existing facilities and natural resources, establish maintenance standards, and ensure adequate funding for operation and maintenance is in place;
- 5.4 Continue to evaluate and monitor recreation programs to assess their value to the overall system, make sure they respond to changing needs, and work to broaden participation;
- 5.5 Foster partnerships with health providers and agencies to coordinate services and activities; and
- 5.6 Actively pursue opportunities to leverage funding through public and private grant programs, sponsorships, and donations to assist in park and trail development.

ACTION PROGRAM

The action program details the manner in which the goals and objectives will be met. It includes a list of specific projects as well as strategies for implementation.

PARK STRATEGIES

The 2014 and 2018 park strategies recommended for each City-owned park are still valid and have been updated to reflect current circumstances. Five park strategies are recommended and are presented in Table 14 as follows:

1. **Maintain and Upgrade:** Taking care of what we have by maintaining existing assets in good repair is the first park strategy. It includes the continued maintenance of parks with the replacement/repair of aging play equipment as needed, the addition of accessible routes, refurbishing safety surfaces, resurfacing of parking, court games, and pathways, structure repair and renovation, management of the existing tree canopy and vegetation. This strategy is supported by **Goal 1: Park Maintenance and Improvement.**
2. **Improve:** This action includes the improvement of the existing community and neighborhood parks with the addition of new recreation facilities and the phased redevelopment of the larger parks. As funding is secured, the implementation of the park plans will need to be re-aligned with grant potentials and the available funds. This strategy addresses most particularly the objectives listed in **Goal 1: Park Maintenance and Improvement** and **Goal 2: River Raisin Corridor: Land and Water Trails.**
3. **Repurpose:** This action includes the development of parks as planned in the River Raisin Heritage Corridor – East Master Plan Update and coordinated with an advisory team. Transferring ownership to the National Battlefield Park for their use and exploring organizational approach to managing the repurposing of these properties will need to be considered. This strategy is supported by **Goal 3: Heritage, Arts and Culture.**
4. **Decommission:** Some City-owned properties may be better served if they are decommissioned. Oak Forest Park is a left-over piece of wooded land tucked between residential developments, which is difficult to access. Conversations with adjacent property owners should be started to explore management solutions. In addition, a portion of Hoffman Park may be considered for a residential development increasing connectivity while maintaining its neighborhood park use. This strategy is supported by **Goal 5: Stewardship,** particularly fiscal responsibility.
5. **Develop:** This action includes the development or redevelopment of parks including Manor, Father Cairns, and Mill Race parks. Similarly, as was recommended in the previous Parks and Recreation Master Plans, the former Christiancy Elementary School presents the opportunity for the development of a new neighborhood park to serve this underserved area of the City. This strategy addresses the need to meet the changing recreational needs of residents which was part of **Goal 1: Park Maintenance and Improvement.**

Park land acquisition is encouraged and an important policy that is presumed with this plan, particularly properties that would provide river access, present opportunities for park and trail development, and continue to further the City's major initiatives. With DTE Energy's plans to decommission its plant in the future, there may be an opportunity to restore this property as natural Lake Erie shoreline habitat thereby creating additional parkland.

Table 14. Park Strategy

Type of Parks	Park Name	Maintain+Upgrade	Improve	Repurpose	Decommission	Develop	Action
Neighborhood Parks	Arbor-Lorain Park						
	Boyd Park						
	Central Park						
	Frenchman’s Bend Park						
	Hoffman Park						Consider for residential development with a small neighborhood park
	James & Hendricks Park						
	Lavender Park						
	Manor Park						Phase in development
Community Parks	Father Cairns Park						Construction for 2023
	Labor Park						
	Munson Park						Phase in development
	St. Mary’s Park						Phase in development
	Soldiers & Sailors Park						Riverwalk extension & other improvements
	Veteran’s Park						Consolidate shelters
River Raisin Heritage Trail & Associated Parks & Open Spaces	Altrusa Park						Coordinate with DDA
	Cappuccilli Park						
	Elm Avenue Bike Path						Widen to meet AASHTO standards
	Downtown Riverwalk						Coordinate with DDA
	Hellenberg Park						Implement per RRHC-EMP
	Plum Creek Park						Implement per RRHC-EMP
	Rauch Park						Implement per RRHC-EMP
	River Raisin Memorial						Implement per RRHC-EMP
	Rivière-aux-Raisins Park						Implement per RRHC-EMP
	Worrell Park						
City Gateway & Special Purpose Sites	Front/Third/Union Park						
	Gateway Park						
	Noble/Dixie Skate Park						Improve as a City gateway
	Memorial Place						
Landscape Areas	Elliot Park						
	Crescent Park						
	Median Park						
	Noble Park						
Undeveloped	Oak Forest Park						Decommission
	Mill Race Park						Phase in development
Indoor Facilities	Opportunity Center at the ALCC						Operated by the Monroe County Opportunity Program (MCOP)
	Sawyer Homestead						Operated by the Sawyer Homestead group
Other	Other properties such as the former Christiancy School grounds and Greenwood Park						Discuss long range agreement/ disposition with Monroe Public Schools & Monroe Housing Commission

RRHC-EMP: River Raisin Heritage Corridor – East Master Plan

ACTION PLAN

Table 15 lists the individual projects along with the specific tasks to be accomplished, the project objective reference, a construction cost estimate, and potential funding sources. In addition, the projects are listed in a sequential order and a time frame for completion has been assigned. Short-term (ST) projects are recommended for completion within one to two years while long-term (LT) projects may take longer to be completed, within five to six years. Mid-term is between the two (MT).

Table 15. Capital Improvement Projects

Project	Goal	Cost Estimate	Time Frame	Funding Sources
Fr. Cairns Park Redevelopment Construct parking area with access from Roessler Street, concrete walkways, pickleball courts, tennis courts, volleyball court, restroom building, 2 picnic pavilions, play equipment, spray pad, site furnishings, park sign, and landscaping.	1	\$3,250,000 <i>Actual Cost</i>	ST	Grants, General Funds, CDBG Funds
Hellenberg Park Improve river access with accessible launch.	1+2	\$75,000	ST	Grants, General Funds
Riverwalk Lighting and Security.	2	\$390,000	ST	DDA, General Funds
Soldiers & Sailors Park – Phase 1 Extend Riverwalk through Soldiers and Sailors Park, add observation decks and areas, seating, shore retaining walls, and landscaping.	2	\$844,100	ST	DDA, General Funds
Monroe Loop Greenway Develop the City-owned properties along the former railroad bed as a greenway extension of the Loop Trail from the intersection of Roessler Street and Fifth Street to downtown with a trail, plazas, seating areas, and other amenities.	2+4	See Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan	ST	Grants, General Funds, CDBG Funds
Cappuccilli Park Install fishing stations, overlook, additional pathway, landscaping and interpretive signs (honoring former Mayor Cappuccilli).	2	\$500,000	MT	Grants, General Funds
Mill Race Park Development – Phase 1 Construct an entry drive and gravel parking area, trails, pathway, boardwalk, plaza, canoe/kayak launch, park sign, and landscaping.	2	\$407,500	MT	Grants, General Funds
Mill Race Park Development – Phase 2 Build concrete walks and connections to adjacent neighborhood, surface parking area, install large picnic shelter, viewing platforms add interpretive signage, site furnishings, and natural habitat restoration.	2	\$525,400	MT	Grants, General Funds
Manor Park Redevelopment Remove pavement, grade and improve site drainage, construct perimeter walking trail, concrete walkways, install picnic shelter, play equipment, site furnishings, natural habitat restoration, and landscaping.	1	\$605,000	MT	Grants, General Funds
Soldiers & Sailors Park – Phase 2 Replace play equipment, add picnic pavilion with restroom, build new war memorial plaza, enhance entryway, and add site furnishings and landscaping.	2	\$807,400	MT	Grants, General Funds

Project	Goal	Cost Estimate	Time Frame	Funding Sources
St. Mary's Park Redevelopment – Phase 1 Develop east park area with enhanced pedestrian connections through parking area, addition of a promenade along the waterfront with plazas, overlooks, seating areas, improved connection from pedestrian bridge with central gathering area with treillis, tree groves and landscaping.	2	\$1,162,700	MT	Grants, General Funds
Land Acquisition Former Christiancy School Property Park Development.	1	TBD	LT	Grants, General Funds, Donations
St. Mary's Park Redevelopment – Phase 2 Develop west park area with new playground, splash pad, picnic pavilion, a west promenade along the waterfront with plazas, overlooks, seating areas, refurbished bandshell with improved accessibility.	2	\$1,116,300	LT	Grants, General Funds
Munson Park Redevelopment – Phase 1 Redevelop the front part of the park with a new boulevard entry and addition of parking areas, along with a new, centrally located playground, splash pad, restroom building, landscape open areas with walkways, reshaped natural pond, and landscaping.	1	\$3,993,700	LT	Grants, General Funds
Munson Park Redevelopment – Phase 2 Develop an adaptive ball field, improve and expand existing ball fields, add a picnic pavilion.	1	\$1,554,700	LT	Grants, General Funds
Munson Park Redevelopment – Phase 3 Resurface drive and parking areas, add picnic shelters/areas, furnishings, and other recreational amenities. Reassess desired future phases for park plan implementation.	1	\$1,017,300	LT	Grants, General Funds

Abbreviations: TBD: To be determined

General Note: Construction cost estimates are for budgetary purposes only. Further investigations will be necessary to determine an engineers' probable cost opinion. Costs do not include any fees/amounts associated with conducting topographic survey, developing engineering design plans, or overseeing construction and performing inspections. An additional range of 10 to 30% may cover these costs, depending on the complexity of the project and the source of funding.

OTHER INITIATIVES

In addition to the park strategies discussed, other actions and initiatives are recommended with this plan which involve many more community stakeholders than just the City including the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, the River Raisin National Battlefield Park, Sterling State Park, Monroe County, the Monroe County Historical Society, Monroe Public Schools, the Community Foundation of Monroe County, Monroe County Community College, and other agencies.

Water Trails

The River Raisin corridor provides opportunities for the development of a water trail that connects waterfront parks and serves to promote active lifestyles and enhance the health and well-being of City residents. Coordination with Monroe County, the National Battlefield Park, the State Park, and the International Wildlife Refuge will be important in developing a water trail on the River Raisin. Clearly, there is a need to evaluate the most appropriate points to access the River for canoe and/or kayak use and to assess the potential to use the River Raisin as a kayak adventure course. This would include determining where appropriate depth can be achieved through channels particularly for the stretch within the City which still has a few low head dams. Once a route and access points have been ascertained, developing launches, portages, and signage from both the water and land user points of view can proceed. Promoting the water trail through marketing and programming will also become an important element of this initiative.

Land Trails and Connections

This initiative also involves the City as well as the region's stakeholders and includes three distinct components: the extension of the Riverwalk, the continued development of the River Raisin Heritage Trail, and the development of on-street bicycle facilities within the City.

The extension of the **Riverwalk** is a project already initiated by the City Downtown Development Authority and is envisioned to eventually reach Rauch Park or what will become a waterfront welcome area as part of the River Raisin Heritage Corridor – East Master Plan. As described, enhancements are planned to incorporate lighting, overlooks, fishing stations, seating, and more.

The continued development of the **River Raisin Heritage Trail** is envisioned as developing connections both north to Iron Belle State Trail through North Dixie Highway and Michigan's first road (U. S. Turnpike Road) and west to form the Monroe loop which will connect Territorial Park, the County facilities along Raisinville Road, the Monroe County Community College, Monroe High School, and West Seventh Street back to the City. The next step is to extend the trail as a linear park to connect to the City's downtown. Once established, trailheads may be developed with coordinated wayfinding and interpretive signage and amenities such as seating areas, restrooms, and other facilities.

There is also an opportunity to implement the citywide interconnected network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that provide safe and efficient travel for both commuting and recreation. This initiative entail making it easier and safer to walk and bike to more places in the City by developing a mix of both on-street and off-street bicycle facilities, as well as other "complete streets" infrastructure implemented with street construction and improvement projects.

River Raisin Heritage Corridor – East Master Plan

The continued work to implement the River Raisin Heritage Corridor - East Master Plan is an on-going initiative that has seen great strides in the past 10 years since it has been initiated. As progress is made, it will be imperative to continue to coordinate and further the partnerships built with the area recreation providers and community stakeholders to promote the shared-use of the area's parks and recreation facilities. This is important not only to coordinate the unified development of the planned park projects but also to organize events and programming such as historic interpretation programs and a cultural asset wayfinding system.

Operations, Programming, and Administration

There is a need to ensure that existing City park facilities are maintained to a high quality standard and to continue developing outstanding facilities and programs. Park facilities and recreation programs that are safe, functional, well-maintained, and continue to respond to the changing needs of the community are essential to the success of the City of Monroe parks and recreation services.

Fiscally sound administrative and operational strategies will need to be put in place to sustain outstanding services. This will entail monitoring fees and costs for recreation programs and services, establishing a cost recovery policy based on the desired level of community subsidy, working to increase revenues, developing a maintenance plan for each park to include routine and preventive maintenance tasks, and scheduled improvements. Increasing staffing and maintenance equipment to support additional facilities, and providing proper training and management of personnel will become equally important to continue to provide quality services.

With the Monroe area parks and recreation resources owned and operated by a variety of public and quasi-public entities, the role of the City Parks and Recreation Department will need to evolve as a recreation facilitator and coordinator.

City Parks and Recreation Services

Parks and recreation services include a variety of venues, such as children play activities, walking, biking, historical interpretation, canoeing and kayaking, bird watching, musical performances, and organized sports. In the last few years, parks and recreation services have continued to shift along with the relationship to the Monroe City Council Goals which emphasize investment in recreational, cultural, and historical assets. This goal ties together the local parks and recreation services with efforts to expand access to the River Raisin, build a strong relationship with the River Raisin National Battlefield Park, bolster arts and cultural events, and develop a bicycle and pedestrian network. The alignment of these interconnecting initiatives led to the dissolution of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission and to the creation of the Trails Advisory Committee. In this way, parks and recreation becomes an underpinning of Monroe's quality of life.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

To accomplish the recommended actions during the next five years, it will be necessary to secure adequate funding. The current budgets provide a limited amount of money for parks and recreation facilities. Therefore, the following strategies are recommended in order to proceed as planned.

Apply for Federal Funding

At the federal level, MDOT, in conjunction with SEMCOG, funds Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). A minimum 20% local match is required for proposed projects and applications are accepted online on an on-going basis. Activities may include:

- Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles including new or reconstructed sidewalks, walkways, curb ramps, bike lane striping, wide paved shoulders, bike parking, off-road trails, bike and pedestrian bridges, and underpasses;
- Provision of safety and educational programs for pedestrians and bicyclists designed to encourage walking and bicycling; and
- Acquisition, planning, designing and constructing abandoned railway corridors.

The City of Monroe is designated an "Entitlement Community" by the federal government due to median family incomes and other impact factors and received Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Funds must be used to benefit low and moderate income families and neighborhoods. The planned development of Labor Park will be funded through CDBG funds.

Apply for State Funding

At the state level, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) continue to be the primary funding sources for parkland acquisition and development. The new Recreation Passport grant also offers some state funding to local units of government.

The MNRTF provides funding for the purchase and development of parkland for natural resource-based preservation and recreation. Grant proposals must include a local match of at least 25% of the total project cost. There is no minimum or maximum for acquisition projects. For development projects, the minimum funding request is \$15,000 and the maximum is \$300,000 in 2022. Applications are typically due April 1st.

The LWCF is a federal appropriation to the National Park Service, which distributes funds to the MDNR for development of outdoor recreation facilities. The focus of the program has recently been on meeting community recreation needs such as playgrounds, picnic areas, skate parks, ball fields, soccer fields, and walking paths. Minimum grant requests were \$30,000 and maximum grant requests were \$300,000 in 2022. The match percentage is 50% of the total project cost. Applications are usually due on April 1st.

The Recreation Passport grant program offers funding for the development of outdoor public recreation facilities for local units of government. Minimum grant requests are \$7,500 and maximum requests are \$150,000 in 2022. The local match obligation was 25% of the total project cost. Applications are usually due on April 1st as well.

The Michigan Spark Grant is a new program to help local communities that create, renovate, or redevelop public outdoor opportunities including completing critical trail projects. Criteria include public benefit, financial considerations, access to project site, access to new opportunities for people of all abilities, clarity of scope and ability to execute, renovation and long-term maintenance. The first round of applications launched in October 2022 with two more rounds of applications and grant awards expected in 2023 making approximately \$65 million of coronavirus state and local fiscal recovery funds available. Projects must be completed in 2026.

The Coastal Zone Management Program provides grant funds to coastal communities to protect and restore healthy coastal ecosystems including fish and wildlife habitat, creating and enhancing public access to the Great Lakes and coastal resources, preserving historic maritime structures, revitalizing urban waterfronts, minimizing the loss of life and property in areas vulnerable to coastal hazards including erosion, floods, and dangerous currents, and increasing recreational opportunities along Michigan's Great Lakes coast. The program is administered by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. It is a state/federal partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Grants are usually due by December 31st with maximum grant awards no more than \$100,000 and a one to one match required.

Other funding conducted in partnership with the MDNR is available through other state government divisions, such as the Fisheries Division (Inland Fisheries Grants) and the Forest Resources Division (Community Forestry Grants).

The Inland Fisheries programs consider projects that enhance habitat and fisheries, riparian property for public fishing use, water quality, and ecology. While not currently offered, they may become available in the future.

Municipalities may use Community Forestry grants to develop a management plan for a municipal forest which would include a component targeting outreach to private landowners. Grant requests may be up to \$20,000 depending on the project type and applications are usually due in the middle of the summer. DTE Energy also offers tree planting grants for up to \$3,000 to local municipalities in its service area.

Apply for Other Grant Funding

There are also a variety of smaller grant programs available for the establishment of greenways/ pathways or greenway-related facilities such as Bikes Belong Coalition. The Bikes Belong Coalition is sponsored by members of the American Bicycle Industry. Their mission is to put more people on bikes more often. The program funds projects in three categories: facility, education, and capacity building. Requests for funding can be up to \$10,000 for projects such as bike paths, trails, lanes, parking, and safe routes to school. Applications are reviewed on a quarterly basis.

The DALMAC Fund also contributes grants to expand bicycling in Michigan. Awards of approximately \$10,000 are typically granted and applications are due at the beginning of March with final decisions made by mid-May.

Seek Other Sources of Funding

Foundations, private grant opportunities, business sponsorships, donations, and corporate grants are additional sources of funding which should be aggressively pursued to raise funds for park and trail development.