

## **Plan Purpose**

This 2023 City of Muskegon Community Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a guide for the future development of recreation opportunities for the residents and visitors of the City. The plan addresses current recreation issues and identifies future needs of the community and the means for meeting those needs over the up-coming five-year period. It addresses both short and long-range goals and objectives and identifies an action program by which these goals and objectives can be accomplished. In addition, the plan serves as an educational tool to acquaint local officials and residents of the need for a sound and balanced recreation program.

This Plan has been developed both to reflect the needs and goals of the community and to meet the Michigan Department of Natural Resources requirements for qualifying for Federal and State funding assistance. These funds are available for land acquisition, facility development, and improvements to new and existing parklands.

## **Plan Scope**

The scope of this plan includes the City's active and passive recreation facilities, undeveloped open space and linear "green" corridors within the city boundaries. However, consideration is also made of neighboring municipal facilities and regional facilities that influence use patterns. Recreational programming is also an important consideration in the plan. In terms of time, the Capital Improvement Schedule of this document covers development over the next five years. However, the Goals and Objectives developed to guide recreation planning may continue to be relevant for many more years to come.

The following Parks and Recreation Plan is an outgrowth of the impending need for increased recreational programs and facilities as the population of the City of Muskegon and the surrounding area grows and diversifies. A well-conceived strategy for the acquisition of land, the development of facilities, expansion of programs, and the continuation of on-going operation and maintenance practices will assist the City in meeting future recreational and leisure-time needs as they develop.

This recreation plan identifies facility and program needs, develops short and long-range goals and objectives, presents an action plan which includes maintenance of all facilities, and provides justification for the implementation of the goals and objectives. The plan is task specific on the short range elements and more generalized on the long range elements to allow some degree of flexibility to respond to changes in need or interest at the local level. Deviations to the plan would, however, be subject to review and analysis prior to the modification of this plan.

## **Plan Process and Development**

This 2022 Community Park and Recreation Plan was developed by the City, with the assistance of MCSA Group, Inc, a park and recreation planning consultant. City staff met regularly with representatives of MCSA Group, between November 2021 and February 2022 for the development of this Plan.

Criteria considered and evaluated for plan development evolved from the examination of goals and recreation standards determined through a wide variety of input sources. This information was collected from the inventory and review of existing facilities; the City of Muskegon Community Parks and Recreation; the identification of recreation needs and deficiencies; public opinion; current statewide

recreation issues and priorities; and future expectations. Public input was sought throughout the process by means of a public survey to solicit public desires and concerns regarding parks and recreation.

In 2023, it was determined that a more robust and intentional process of soliciting public input was needed to inform the updating of this master plan. Consequently, city staff has developed a community needs assessment (survey) and will be planning public engagement meetings and events with local neighborhoods. The feedback received from the community will be used to prioritize the allocation of funding and provide critical data for long-term parks & recreation planning and improvements. An equity-centered capital improvement plan will also be developed. This tool is a non-biased scoring system that is proven to drive equitable outcomes and ensure a proportional and equitable distribution of funds are allocated to all parks in our system. This plan scores each individual park under two different categories, park characteristics and community characteristics.

The City of Muskegon Parks & Recreation master plan will rely heavily on community feedback. We encourage every citizen to share their feedback and ideas for your local park system. Our top priority is the improvement of quality of life as well as the physical and mental wellbeing of our community.