



2022 Parks & Recreation Master Plan



City of Muskegon Heights, Michigan



MUSKEGON HEIGHTS COMMUNITY PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The City of Muskegon Heights is a dynamic community with aggressive leadership seeking to improve the quality of life for all its citizens. Addressing the park and recreation needs of the community is one way in which the city seeks to improve the quality of life for Muskegon Heights residents.

The land mass of the City of Muskegon Heights is four square miles and contains 10,796 residents. The two regional parks, four neighborhood parks, one nature center and five public school playground/parks are strategically placed to serve residents within their neighborhoods and reinforce the concept of walkable communities.

PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of the Muskegon Heights Parks and Recreation Plan is to set forth a guide by which the city may assess and address its cultural and recreational needs. The plan provides an overview of the community and seeks to develop and coordinate a continuum of parks and recreation services.

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 school playgrounds and athletic facilities. Recreational programming is also an important consideration. The area of the plan is essentially limited to the city boundaries. However, consideration is also made of neighboring municipal facilities and regional facilities that influence use patterns. 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 Heights and the surrounding area grows and diversifies. A well-conceived strategy for 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 that are expected to occur, develops short and long-range goals and objectives, and presents an action plan and justification for the implementation of the goals and objectives and the maintenance of existing and resulting facilities. 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.

LOCATION MAP



COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The City of Muskegon Heights is a small community of 4.4 square miles located in Muskegon County near the shore of Lake Michigan, approximately forty (40) miles northwest of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Muskegon Heights is part of the Muskegon Urbanized area, which includes the Cities of Muskegon, Norton Shores, Roosevelt Park, and North Muskegon, and the Townships of Muskegon, Laketon and Fruitport. Muskegon Heights has the 5th largest population in the county, with a 2020 census population of 9,917 or about 5.6 % of the county total population of 175,824 residents.

According to the most recent community profile information the racial composition of Muskegon is: Black or African American 76%, White 19%, Two or more races 5%, Native American 1%.

The city can be characterized as a mature urban community of predominately single-family homes, significant industrial and commercial development, and a Central Business District which is in the midst of a great transition from a relatively strong retail / commercial district to a cluster of businesses without a distinct focus point or identifiable character.

Major traffic routes into the city include U.S. 31 and Interstate 96, with the Business Route for both bordering the city to the south and west. The Muskegon County Airport is located to the south of the city in nearby Norton Shores.

Household Income

Median household income was \$30,795 in 2019.

Physical characteristics/Topography

Mona Lake is located at the eastern edge of the City of Muskegon Heights. There are also several small rivers and creeks located throughout the city. The city is relatively flat without many elevation changes.

Soils and Vegetation

Because of the dunes along Lake Michigan, Muskegon's Heights soil is primarily sand, with a strip of clay running through the middle of the city.

Climate

Muskegon Heights has an average annual rainfall of 32 inches per year, and an annual average snowfall of 75 inches. The mean temperature in July is 80 degrees



and 31 degrees in January. Effects of Lake Michigan cause Muskegon Heights to be fairly cloudy.

Zoning

The city has nine different zoning districts. In addition, Muskegon has a Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals to regulate zoning throughout the community.

Land Use

Muskegon Heights is primarily a single-family residential community. Residential land uses constitute about 34% of the total land area of the city. The table below illustrates the types of land uses within the city limits.

GENERAL LAND USE	
USE	PERCENTAGE
Residential	33.8
Commercial	5.5
Industrial	6.2
Public, Semi-Public	11.5
Vacant	15.0
Right-of-way	28.0

Transportation

Muskegon Heights is accessible from every direction. US-31 runs north and south and I-96 and M-46 run east. The Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS) serves most of the county. The Muskegon Airport has daily flights to Chicago, and the Lake Express, a high-speed, cross-lake ferry service between Muskegon and Milwaukee, carries passengers and automobiles alike. Several trails provide non-motorized transportation alternatives within the city and connect to regional or other local trails.

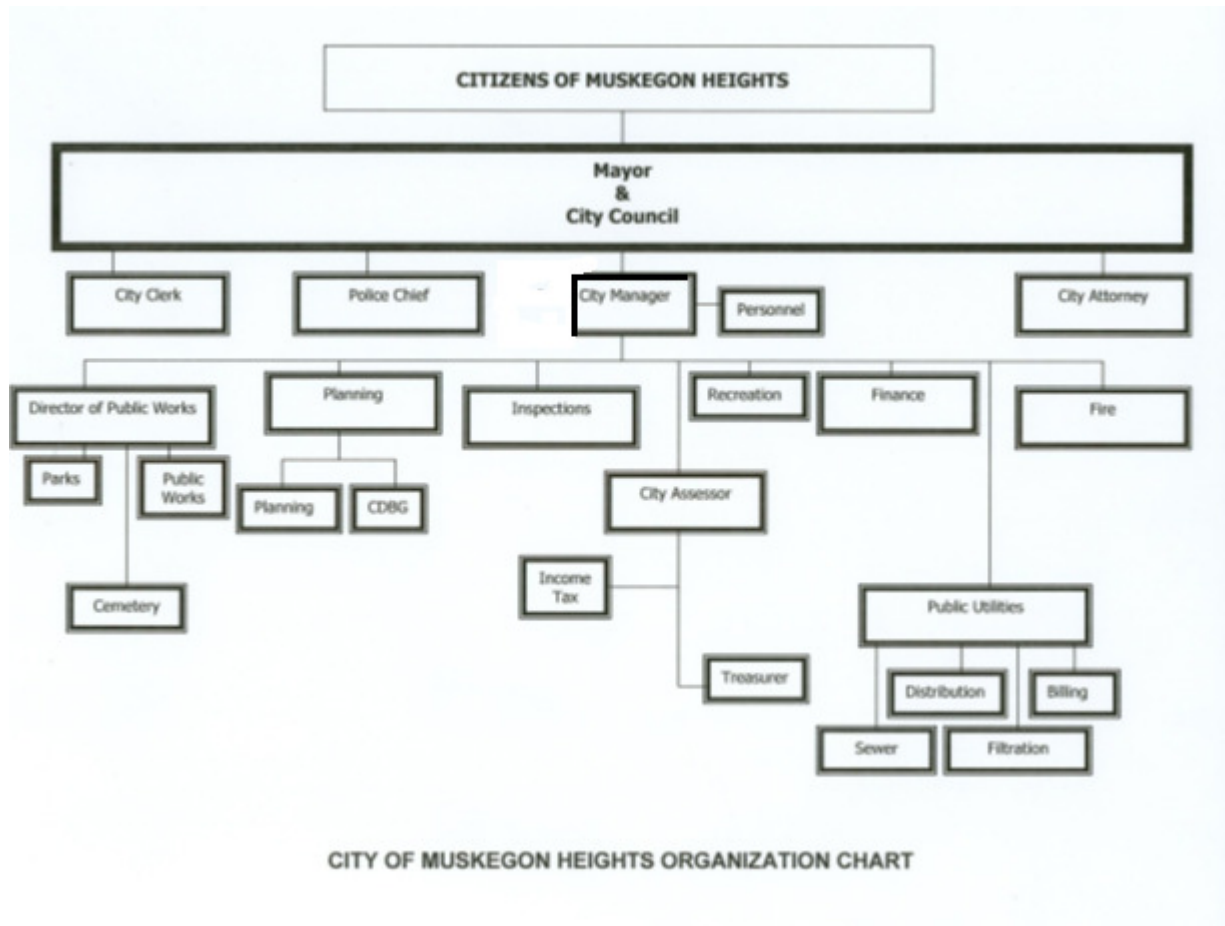


ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Role of the City Council

The City of Muskegon Heights is operated under a City Manager, City Council form of government. The Mayor presides over the City Council and is the Chief Executive Officer of the City. The City Council is responsible for establishing policies, approving contracts, and approving new rules and regulations.

The City Manager is responsible for 12 departments and 77 full time employees. The City Manager is responsible to the City Council.



City Departments

The Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for the preservation, maintenance and conditioning of parklands and facilities for public recreational use as well as public cemeteries. Major activities are administration and clerical support for all maintenance functions such as turf maintenance, building and play apparatus maintenance, leaf, rubbish and litter pickup, shrub and garden planting and care, mechanical equipment maintenance and repair, construction of sidewalk and parking lot snow/ice removal for selected areas.



The current employee level for the Department of Public Works is one (1) full time director, (1) full-time secretary, (2) foreman and (5) full time employee. All employees are paid out the city's general fund.

The Cemetery and Parks Program is under the direction of the Department of Public Works Director. A foreman is in charge is in charge of maintenance for all city owned cemetery and a separate foreman is in charge of all city owned park facilities.

Turf maintenance is a primary task of the Parks & Cemetery Program, which tries to maintain a 10-day cutting cycle. No chemicals or fungicides are used and only high traffic areas are fertilized.

The Planning Departments responsibility is to identify, secure and distribute financial, social and cultural resources to the community in a manner in which all members share in the wealth and experiences equally. The Planning Department provides general administration, executive supervision, goal formulation, research design, and evaluation of data necessary for the orderly development and redevelopment of the City. All services are provided in accordance with the policies, procedures, and programs established by the City Council.

In relationship to parks and recreation services, the Planning Department is responsible for the development of the five-year parks and recreation plan, infrastructure financing and development, grant and construction management. The Planning Department is also staff to the Community Development Committee and the Muskegon Heights Planning Commission. The Planning Department has the authority to commit funds for parks and recreation, accept grants and purchase land on behalf of the community.

Community Development Committee /Recreation Committee

The Community Development Committee (CDC) is a standing committee of the Muskegon Heights City Council, responsible for the oversight of the Planning Department. The CDC is responsible for the Five Year and Annual Community Development Block Grant Plan. The CDC is also responsible for infrastructure improvements in relationship to parks development and maintenance. In relationship to the Five-Year Parks and Recreation plan, this committee also serves as the recreation committee.

Parks and Recreation Stake Holder Focus Group

The Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan was developed as a collaborative among the following groups:

- Muskegon Heights City Council
- Muskegon Heights Planning and Community Development Department
- Muskegon Heights Public School District
- Muskegon Heights Downtown Development Authority
- Muskegon Heights Recreation Department
- Muskegon Heights Festival in the Park
- Local residents



The Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan was reviewed by the Muskegon Heights Citizens Review Committee, the Muskegon Heights Community Development Committee, the Muskegon Heights Planning Commission and the Muskegon Heights City Council. A public review period began December 13, 2021 and ended January 14, 2022.

Annual and Projected Budgets for Operations, Maintenance, Capital Improvements and Recreation Programming

In 2022, \$80,300 is allocated for operation of the Parks & Recreation Department. Future funding is anticipated to increase by at least 1% for each of the next five years.

The City of Muskegon Heights has an adopted 2021-2027 capital improvement plan and has \$658,500 allocated for capital improvements in 2022.

Current Funding Sources

General Fund - The Muskegon Heights General Fund is responsible for funding the parks and recreation budget. It is derived from funding from fees, fines, taxes, special assessments, and state grants. The General Fund balance for 2022 is \$10,497,582.

Muskegon Heights Downtown Development Authority, Tax Increment Financing - The Muskegon Heights Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is a committee of city residents and local businesses owners. The DDA has the ability to use Tax Increment Financing to improve public infrastructure within the DDA boundary. Rowan Park is located within the DDA district. TIFA financing could be used to make improvements within the park.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) - The City of Muskegon Heights is a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) Entitlement Community. The City has administered CDBG funds for the last 45 years. The city uses CDBG Funding as a primary source of revenue for park infrastructure improvement as well as recreation program operational funding. Capital improvements are included in the City's Five -Year Plan and implemented through annual funding grants. All city parks are located in CDBG target areas and are eligible for a limited amount of CDBG funding. It should be noted that CDBG funding is used to leverage funding from federal, state and local organizations.

State and Federal Grants - Since 2006, the city has been awarded several State and Federal grants to improve Mona Lake Park. These grants included:

- Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) Cities of Promise grant - \$100,000
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund - \$500,000
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Land and Water



- Program - \$120,00
- Community Development Block Grant - \$970,000.

The funds were used for several major upgrades to Mona Lake Park, including:

- Construction of a new fishing pier.
- Construction of a boat launch.
- Basketball court improvements.
- Installation of two soccer fields.
- Baseball field improvements, including new scoreboards, bathrooms, dugouts and bleachers.
- Installation of lighting and security cameras.
- Connection of bike trail to the Norton Shores and regional bike trail system.
- Installation of underground sprinkling system.
- Shoreline cleanup and installation of habitat for fish and wildlife.
- Installation of coarse beach sand.

Role of Volunteers and Organizations

The annual Festival in the Park is a community-wide event that takes place in June of each year. The event is operated by a volunteer committee of approximately sixty individuals. The three-day celebration starts with a parade through the City's Central Business District which ends at Rowan Park.

Relationship with School Districts and Public Agencies Involved in Recreation

The Muskegon Heights School District and the City of Muskegon Heights have a long-standing partnership in the development and use of school district property as neighborhood parks for the entire community. The Department of Interior has funded the development of these parks under the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) Program. The Muskegon Heights Public School District has 8 public school sites which provide neighborhood recreation facilities including school gymnasiums, a swimming pool, playgrounds and equipment, and playfields. The school district also transports young residents to City league practice and home games. In the inverse, the city has allowed the use of the West Heights Park as a practice field for the high school football team. It is also anticipated that as a result of grants submitted under this plan, the school will be able to utilize the city parks and playfields for city league football, basketball, baseball and soccer games.

It also should be noted that the Muskegon Heights Public School District, in conjunction with several other public-school districts in West Michigan, use Johnny O. Harris Park as an outdoor science laboratory. Little Black Creek meanders through Johnny O. Harris Park and is used to instruct elementary children in the effects of water pollution on the environment. In 2006, the city received a MDNR Land and Water Grant to build a boardwalk and observation deck along the creek for the benefit of the students.

Joint Recreation Programs

In the past, the city and the School District have worked together in combining resources



to renovate the Martin Luther King School Park. A majority of the future programs will be a joint venture of both the city and the School District.

Coordination with Non-Public Groups and Other Jurisdictions

The following programs were provided by other joint ventures of the city and contracted agencies:

- Mission for Area People, Path Finders Program
- Cooperative Extension Service (4-H) -Nutrition Program
- Muskegon County Health Department -Special Health Subjects
- Temple Cares for People- Farm Program



RECREATION INVENTORY

Methods Used to Conduct Inventory

The City of Muskegon Heights Planning Department was tasked with updating the recreation inventory from previous years.

Inventory of All Community-owned Parks & Recreation Facilities

The parks in Muskegon Heights are classified into four different types of parks. Park classification is determined by the following factors in the chart below:

Classification	General Description	Primary Service Area
Community Park	These parks focus on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	As needed to accommodate desired uses.
Neighborhood Park	These parks are located within neighborhoods and serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is in informal active and passive recreation.	¼ to ½ mile distance and uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers.
School Park	These parks are owned by the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District, which allows the general public to utilize the facilities after school hours.	Determined by location of school district property.
Natural Resource Areas	These parks include land that is set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space and visual aesthetics.	Resource availability and opportunity.

COMMUNITY PARKS:

MONA LAKE PARK

Location: Seaway Drive south to Mona Lake between Hoyt and Green Avenue.

Size: 34 Acres

Description: Mona Lake Park is the largest park in the Muskegon Heights system. Mona Lake Park is located on Seaway Drive-Business U.S.31, which is the southern border of the city. The City's motel cluster is located directly across the highway from Mona Lake Park. The park includes the northern shoreline of Mona Lake, which is a contributory of and provides access to Lake Michigan. Mona Lake Park is the City's only source of outdoors water recreation for the citizens of Muskegon Heights. Because of the easy, visible access to the highway, the park



serves the entire City, in addition it has been long been considered a destination center for African Americans in Western Michigan. The boat launch facility on Mona Lake and is heavily used in the summer. Tourists visit the site during peak recreation periods with heavy use occurring during the spring to fall fishing seasons. The park has seen major improvements over the past decade including the addition of a new fishing pier and major improvements to the baseball, basketball and soccer fields.

Facilities: One (1) little league baseball diamond with fence, backstop, dugouts, bleachers, scoreboard and utility shed; one (1) softball diamond with backstop and fence; one (1) boat launching ramp and parking spaces; four (4) basketball courts; four (4) shuffleboard courts; five (5) horseshoe pits; eight (8) benches; a two (2) story brick pavilion (with toilets, concession area, covered picnic decks and a rentable community room); paved parking lot; six (6) lighted tennis courts with a practice wall; one (1) restroom facility; one (1) maintenance building; beach and swimming area; twelve (12) barbecue grills with picnic tables during summer months; two (2) swing sets containing six (6) swings; two (2) slides, (1 large, 1 small); and, two (2) play structures.

Conditions: This park has recently received major redevelopment efforts. Continued maintenance is needed because of heavy use. The pavilion on Mona Lake is boarded up and unused. The City is actively accepting development proposals from private parties to bring the building back into use.

The park contains a wide variety of facilities including large picnic areas, baseball and softball diamonds, basketball courts, tennis courts and three baseball field. Non-resident tennis groups often use the tennis courts. The open field areas along Seaway Drive are used by a number of organizations for large rally and exhibit type events.

Mona Lake Park is isolated from the rest of Muskegon Heights by the heavily traveled Seaway Drive. Pedestrian access across this four-lane divided highway is hazardous and needs improvement. The City should conduct a traffic study at this intersection and should consider options for better pedestrian access.

Much of the ADA concerns at this park have been addresses during the recent upgrades.

ROWAN PARK

Location: Entire block between Broadway Avenue, Columbia Avenue, Maffett and Baker Streets.



Size: 1.5 Acres

Description: Rowan Park is located in the heart of the City's Central Business District. It is approximately one city block in size. It is the location of the Muskegon Heights Festival in the Park. In the summer, community based organizations use the park for summer concerts, rallies and flea markets.

This park is very important to the revitalization of the City's downtown area and could become a cultural destination for the enjoyment of outdoors concerts and ethnic festivals.

Rowan Park also provides green space for downtown shoppers, local business and residents of the 90 unit, senior citizen's public housing complex. Half the park is occupied by a parking lot for the Central Business District use and elderly housing residents.

Facilities: Four (4) benches; parking lot; small plaza with a clock tower and round performance platforms; 2 shuffleboard courts, 2 chess tables, drinking fountain.

Condition: The open portion of the park is generally well maintained. Trash receptacles need to be emptied on a regular basis and the plaza and walk areas need to be swept on a very frequent basis. Some of the lighting in the park needs to be replaced. This park is highly visible to downtown patrons and requires constant attention due to heavy use and its high image location. The park size could be expanded and a new permanent stage with necessary equipment could be built in order to support economic development activities in the Central Business District. The historic former Strand Theater building has been vacant for many years and site just west of the park. Redevelopment efforts for the building could include a heavy focus on the park.

The park is very accessible to those with disabilities and complies with ADA standards.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS:

JOHNNY O. HARRIS PARK

Location: East of Jarman Street Between Summit Avenue and Broadway Avenue. Near Woodcliffe Subdivision.

Size: 10.5 Acres

Description: Johnny O. Harris Park is located near the eastern boundary of Muskegon Heights. Little Black Creek runs through the center of the site and two (2) foot bridges along a central path links the park together. It is designed to accommodate large numbers of people for



a wide variety of day uses. The park provides for a combination of uses varying from athletic activities with some spectator seating to passive activities including picnicking and adult games. The baseball field and the basketball courts are located in a floodplain area. Restrooms, maintenance building and parking lot are on high ground adjacent to the park. The picnic area overlooks the baseball field and open areas and a ridge that runs along the western border of the site. This park is valuable to the surrounding residential neighborhood. In addition, it has been used by the City of Muskegon for softball league play.

Facilities: Two (2) slides; two (2) swing sets; one (1) spring ride; one (1) horseshoe pit; one (1) shuffleboard court; one (1) monkey bar; two (2) barbecue grills; one (1) lighted softball diamond with backstop and bleachers; one (1) drinking fountain; five (5) picnic tables; four (4) basketball courts; one (1) restroom facility; one (1) equipment building; and a paved parking lot.

Condition: This park has gone through a major rehabilitation with the majority of infrastructure improvements substantially completed. Starting in 2000, the city used a combination of funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Community Development Block Grant Program, the U.S. Department of Interior, Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program and Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Land and Water Program to upgrade the park. The goal of the park renovation was to make this park accessible to people with physical disabilities. The total cost of the park rehabilitation was approximately \$275,000. The following improvements were made: construction of two (2) picnic shelters, upgrading of the restrooms, new playground equipment, installation of a water sprinkling system, baseball field upgrade, basketball court improvements, bridge improvements and the construction of a walkway and observation booths along Little Black Creek.

Some additional improvements to consider at this would be the construction of a second bathroom on the Southside of the park, connection of walkways in the park with sidewalks around the park to install an exercise endurance track.

Some access issues remain for those with disabilities. The City will look to make improvements to ADA standards.

WEST HEIGHTS PARK

Location: South from Barney to Hovey and west on Hackley Avenue to Eight Street and the railroad tracks.

Size: 4.5 Acres



Description: West Heights Park is a large neighborhood park located in the north-western quadrant of Muskegon Heights. It provides a variety of services including athletic fields, children's play equipment and passive picnic areas. The park serves all age groups, but focuses on the 5-39 age group with emphasis on ages 5-18. The park lacks shaded areas and therefore its use is minimal for the elderly residents. However, the large open area does provide space for park patrons to participate in field games such as football, soccer, etc.

Facilities: Three (3) basketball courts in great condition; two (2) shuffleboard courts; three (3) barbecue grills; one (1) softball diamond with backstop, once (1) maintenance building with restrooms that needs repairs, five (5) swings that need to be replaced, one (1) sandy play area, various football training equipment.

Condition: Some of the facilities are in poor condition. Football goal posts need repair. The maintenance building needs a new roof. Swing sets need to be replaced or removed. The cyclone fence for the baseball diamond is damaged and needs repair or replacement.

Some access issues remain for those with disabilities. The City will look to make improvements to ADA standards.

POLAR BEAR MEMORIAL PARK

Location: Airline at Leahy Street

Size: .75 Acres

Description: Polar Bear Park is the smallest park in the City. It's main function is use as a Veteran's Memorial Park and is the site for the city's Veteran's Day Ceremony. It provides limited open space for surrounding residents.

Facilities: Five (5) benches, two (2) tables, one (1) grill, and two (2) monuments.

Condition: The park is well maintained and the grass is regularly cut. Both Veteran's monuments are in great condition.

This park is mostly accessible for those with disabilities. The City should consider additional pavement for picnic area access.

DOWNTOWN POCKET PARK

Location: Broadway Avenue between Peck Street and Baker Street, inserted between two downtown commercial buildings on Broadway Avenue, directly across from the Frank Lockage Memorial Clock Tower in



Rowan Park.

Size: Less than 1/4 acre.

Description: The Downtown Pocket Park is a small urban space used for seating in the downtown area. It links Broadway Street stores with the Farmer's Market and City Buildings.

Facilities: Planting, benches, trash receptacles.

Condition: The park is well maintained and in good condition.
The park is completely accessible to those with disabilities.

SHERMAN POCKET PARK

Location: Southwest corner of E Sherman Blvd/Hoyt St.

Size: Less than 1/4 acre.

Description: The Sherman Pocket Park is a small space that was developed to beautify the Sherman corridor.

Facilities: Bus shelter, paved walkway, landscaping.

Condition: The park is well maintained, however, irrigation needs to be installed for continuous maintenance. Addition landscaping would increase beautification of the area.

MARTIN LUTHER KING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (CITY-OWNED)

Location: 660 East Barney Avenue

Size: 8.3 Acre

Facilities: Inside - multi-purpose room, Outside - Two (2) swing sets; (2) basketball courts; one (1) baseball diamond with backstop and bleachers; two (2) tables with chairs, four (4) grills; and a picnic area and restroom facility.

Condition: Most of the park is open field that needs to be cut more often. One of the basketball hoops needs a backboard and rim. The restroom facility is in very poor condition and should be removed. All of the grills are old and worn out and need to be removed.

Some access issues remain for those with disabilities. The city will look to make improvements to ADA standards.



NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS:

LITTLE BLACK CREEK NATURE PARK

Location: East of Wood Street and south of Summit to Mona View Cemetery near the Woodcliffe Subdivision.

Size: 20 Acres

Description: This park is located to the south of Johnny O. Harris Park. This Nature Park is a large, passive, natural area with footbridges, observation platforms, a specimen tree and flower area. A large portion of the site is in wetlands contiguous to Little Black Creek.

Facilities: Footbridges and observation platforms.

Condition: Low areas surrounding this segment of Little Black Creek are gradually being encroached upon by various developments. Some of the observation platforms and footbridges need to have boards replaced.

Some access issues remain for those with disabilities. The city will look to make improvements to ADA standards.

SCHOOL PARKS:

MUSKEGON HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL

Location: 2427 Jefferson Street

Size: 8.2 Acres

Facilities: Inside - one (1) larger gym, one (1) auditorium with stage, one (1) indoor swimming pool, Outside - one (1) football field with goalpost, scoreboard, speaker system, lights, and grandstand. One (1) rubber surfaced track with pole vault, and long jump runways.

Condition: Inside facilities are newer and in great condition.

LINDBERG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Location: 160 E. Barney Avenue

Size: 7 Acres

Facilities: Inside - small gym, Outside – one (1) basketball hoop; one (1) bench; five (5) swings; two (2) climbing structures, one (1) merry-go-round.



Condition: Playground equipment is in need of upgrading or removal. Basketball hoop needs a rim. Climbing structures need to be painted.

MUSKEGON HEIGHTS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Location: 55 E. Sherman Blvd.

Size: 8 Acres

Facilities: Inside - 1 small gym - 1 larger gym, Outside - one (1) softball field with backstop; four (4) tennis courts; one (1) small basketball court; and, two (2) soccer nets, one (1) community garden with raised beds.

Condition: Tennis courts area is being used for parking by the Board of Education, court surfaces are becoming weed infested and considerable debris exists throughout. At the Middle School site (directly east), the baseball diamond is used as a practice field. The basketball court needs new rims. One of the soccer nets needs to be replaced.

EDGEWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Location: 3028 Howden Street

Size: 3 Acres

Facilities: Inside - multi-purpose room; Outside - five (5) swing sets; three (3) slides; three (3) climbing poles; three (3) various size monkey bars; four (4) spring rides; three (3) small basketball courts; (2) play structures for small kids and, one (1) bench.

Condition: Half of the park is newer equipment for smaller children. All of this equipment is in great shape. However, half of the park is older, outdated equipment that needs repairs or removal. All of the basketball hoops need new rims. All of the swings on the older side need to be replaced. One of the climbing structures is bent and needs to be removed.



Accessibility Assessment

The accessibility assessment was conducted by the Planning Department and compares each facility to the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

Accessibility Grading System	
Accessibility Grade	Definition
1	None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
2	Some facilities meet accessibility guidelines
3	Most facilities meet accessibility guidelines
4	The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
5	The entire park was developed using the principals of universal design

Accessibility Scores for City-Operated Parks	
Park	Accessibility Score
Mona Lake Park	3
Rowan Park	3
Johnny O Harris Park	2
West Heights Park	2
Polar Bear Memorial Park	4
Downtown Pocket Park	5
Martin Luther King Jr School	3
Little Black Creek Nature Park	3
Sherman Pocket Park	5

Addressing Accessibility

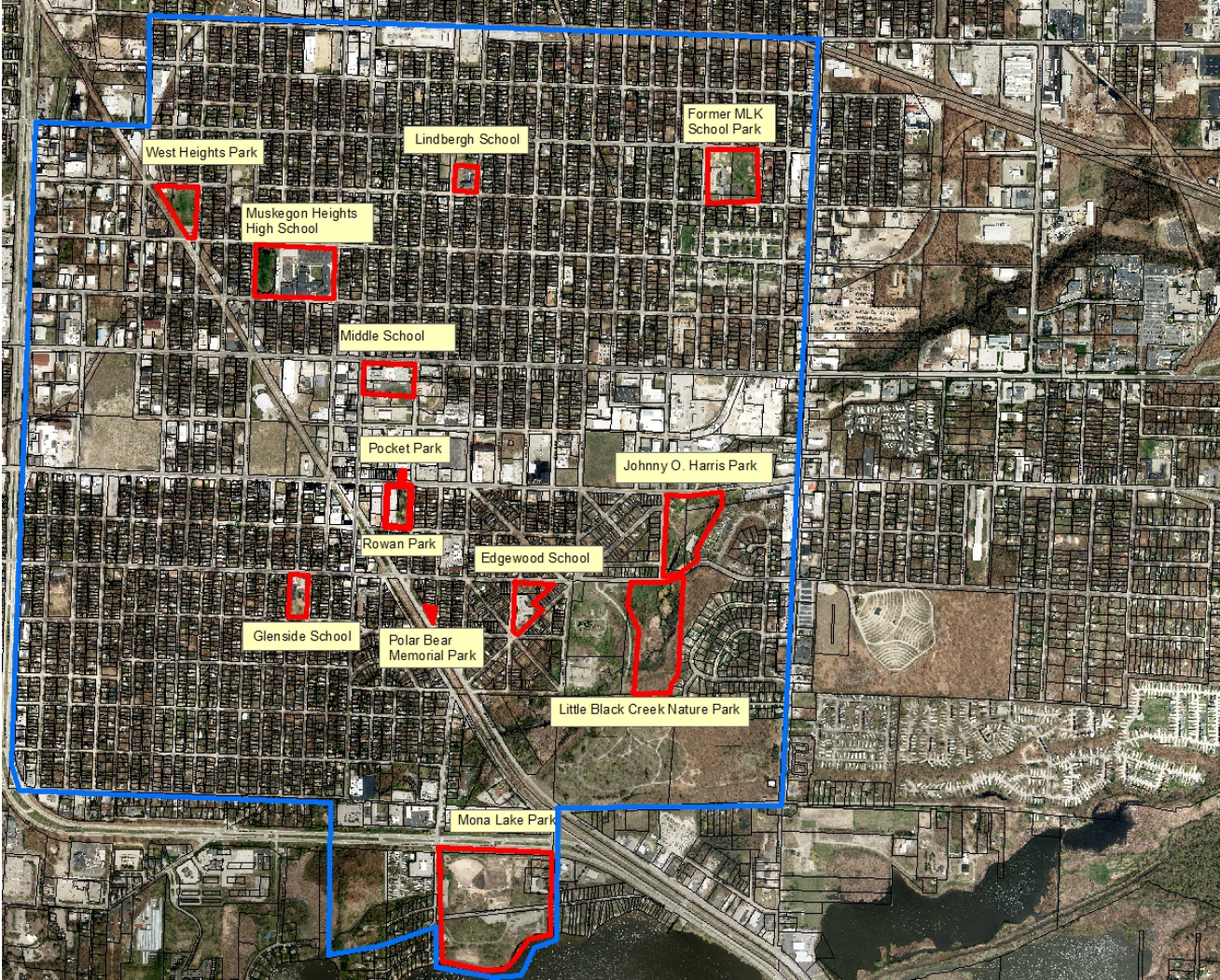
The city plans on addressing accessibility issues at each park whenever a renovation to each park occurs. See the capital improvement schedule for more information.

Status Report for all Grant-Assisted Parks & Recreation Facilities

See the status report for all grants attached at the end of this document.



PARKS LOCATION MAP



DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING & PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Comparison to Recreation Standards

- Recreation Interest of the Community
 - Muskegon Heights is a city populated by many children under 10 years old and many adults over 60 years. Public recreation for these two groups spans the gamete from outdoors field sports, baseball, football, soccer, track and field, and skating. Indoor recreation such as basketball draws young and old residents. Swimming has started to draw youth to the public school's swimming pool.
- Recreation Opportunities in Nearby Communities
 - The nearby City of Muskegon offers many passive recreation opportunities such a museums and theaters. The local colleges offer weekend educational opportunities.
- Open Space Needs / Natural Area Preservation
 - The city is interested in creating a green belt along Little Black Creek in the Mona Lake Watershed. The north end of the greenbelt would start at Johnny O. Harris Park and connect the Muskegon Heights Nature Park, unnamed wetlands, Mona View Cemetery with Mona Lake Park and an additional wetland on the south adjacent to Mona Lake. This area needs to be defined by survey and dedicated to conservation use by the City Council.

Planning Process

- As part of the budgeting process in 2021, it was determined that City staff would rewrite the Parks & Recreation Master Plan. Staff reviewed the 2016-2021 Parks & Recreation Master Plan and updated it as necessary. A visual inspection of all of the parks and their amenities was conducted by the Planning Department. The planning process also included public input, which is described below. The revised document was then reviewed by department supervisors.
- Internal plan review analysis included evaluation by the following committees: Citizens Review Committee, Community Development Committee, Muskegon Planning Commission and the Muskegon Heights City Council.



Public Input Process

- **Recreation Survey.** A recreation survey was created and placed on the City’s website on September 30, 2021. The survey was also available to pick up at the Hackley Public Library, Baker College, Muskegon Community College and at City Hall. Neighborhood Associations were given copies of the surveys to pass out to residents at their monthly meetings. Brief presentations were given at the monthly meetings regarding the Parks & Recreation Master Plan updating process and residents were encouraged to attend the public input meetings and public hearings. See a copy of the workbook and survey attached at the end of this document.
- **Parks & Recreation Workshop.** A workshop for the update of the Five-Year Plan was held on November 4, 2021 in the City Chambers at City Hall. Attendees were given a workbook with park information and were asked to look at various maps. They were also asked to share ideas and visions for all of the parks and recreation opportunities. See a copy of the workbook and survey attached at the end of this document.
- **Major Stakeholder Committee.** The major stakeholders in the local continuum of recreation services are the following organizations: Muskegon Heights Public Schools, Muskegon Heights Festival in the Park, Muskegon Heights Downtown Development Authority and the City of Muskegon Heights Recreation Department. All named organization assisted in the identification of recreation needs and possible solutions.
- **30-Day Public Review Period.** The draft plan was available to review from December 13 until January 14. Copies of the plan were available at City Hall, The city website and the library. See the 30-day public review notice at the end of this document.
- **Public Hearing.** The city held a public hearing regarding the adoption of the 2022 Parks & Recreation Master Plan on January 24, 2022. No written or oral comments were received on the project. See the public hearing notice located at the end of this document. Also see the adopted resolution at the end of this document.



GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goal 1

Provide recreational facilities and cultural opportunities to support the growth of the tourism industry in Western Michigan, Muskegon County and in the City of Muskegon Heights.

Objective 1

Develop a Marketing Strategy for the City of Muskegon Heights that will focus on the commercial, recreational and cultural offerings available within the city. Use the Marketing Strategy to encourage local residents and outside tourists to utilize the available recreational and cultural institutions in Muskegon Heights.

During the Parks & Rec Plan Workshop, it was noted that the City of Muskegon Heights is easily accessible off of US Business Route 31 and has public access onto Mona Lake. The city also holds many cultural festivals and is also home to the James Jackson Museum of African American History. Many people commented on the survey that a marketing strategy or promotional piece would help draw more people to the park.

Goal 2

Provide City Parks to enhance and contribute to the urban living environment.

Objective 2

The city will continue to rehabilitate the existing parks within the community. Rowan Park, Johnny O. Harris Park, Little Black Creek Nature Park and many small parks throughout the city need to replace broken light posts, fences, playground equipment and bathroom facilities. The city will seek all possible grant funding options to pursue the upgrades at these parks.

Many City Council noted that parks can enhance the quality of life in a community by providing the quality of life in a community by providing quiet places for citizens to relax, socialize and exercise.

Goal 3

Provide accessible, enriching recreational opportunities and experiences for the entire community.

Objective 3

The city will continue to work with neighborhood groups and community organizations to find better ways to service people's recreational needs. The city will utilize social media for outreach to the community to determine their recreational desires and transportation needs. The city will reach out to organizations such as Disability Connection to perform an evaluation of the accessibility of the city's parks.

Survey results show that there are limited program offerings for youth, senior citizens and those with disabilities. Facilities must become accessible to the entire community.



They must be barrier free and accessible to everyone. Individual programs should be offered within neighborhoods and public transportation should be available to all park facilities.

Goal 4

Provide for a safe environment for park users.

Objective 4

The city will work with neighborhood groups to evaluate the perceived level of safety in the parks. City Police Officers will be involved in this process so they may incorporate new mechanisms into patrolling the parks.

Attendees of the Parks & Rec Workshop noted that park utilization depends heavily on how safe the users feel. Guests of the parks must feel that they and their vehicles will be safe during their visit.

Goal 5

Preserve the natural resources of the city for present and future generations.

Objective 5

All lands within the city that have sensitive environmental characteristics will be identified. Then the appropriate zoning restrictions should be implemented at these properties to preserve the natural environment. The city will create new zoning districts, such as “Environmental Conservation District” and “Natural Recreational District” that will set specific regulations at these properties to ensure the preservation of their natural features.

Attendees of the Parks & Rec Workshop noted that the city has an abundance of natural resources. Mona Lake, Little Black Creek and many other streams and wetlands can be found throughout the city. The City should make efforts to preserve these natural treasures through the use of zoning regulations.

Goal 6

Support and maintain neighborhood parks in order to provide recreation opportunities within a walkable distance.

Objective 6

The city will seek funding opportunities to replace existing amenities in all of the parks. Most parks have damaged equipment that needs to be replaced, this may include: playground equipment, athletic infrastructure, restrooms and walking paths.

The City Council has noted that the city has many parks located throughout the different neighborhoods in the community. It is the goal of the Council to maintain and improve these parks as to provide recreational opportunities, including to those with limited transportation options.



Goal 7

Continue to collaborate with the Muskegon Heights Public School District to upgrade and expand neighborhood school playground/park facilities.

Objective 7

The City of Muskegon Heights will work with the Muskegon Heights Public School District to provide a Capital Improvements Plan for upgrading the school-park plan.

Attendees at the Parks & Rec Workshop noted that the City of Muskegon Heights and the Muskegon Heights Public School District have an agreement to allow citizens to utilize school parks during after school hours. The city will continue this collaboration to upgrade and expand these parks to provide more recreational opportunities to the neighborhoods.

Goal 8

Take advantage of the natural resources and existing infrastructure at Mona Lake Park to increase tourism and provide recreational opportunities to citizens.

Objective 8

The city will seek funding opportunities and private developers to complete the development as described in the plan for the Mona Lake Park waterfront. This includes pavilion redevelopment, street improvements, amphitheater and a seawall/beach extension.

The recreation committee reviewed the redevelopment plans for the Mona Lake Park waterfront and recommends using city resources, including the applying for grant funding, to bring the development to fruition.

Goal 9

Utilize Rowan Park as a hub for downtown development and recreational opportunities.

Objective 9

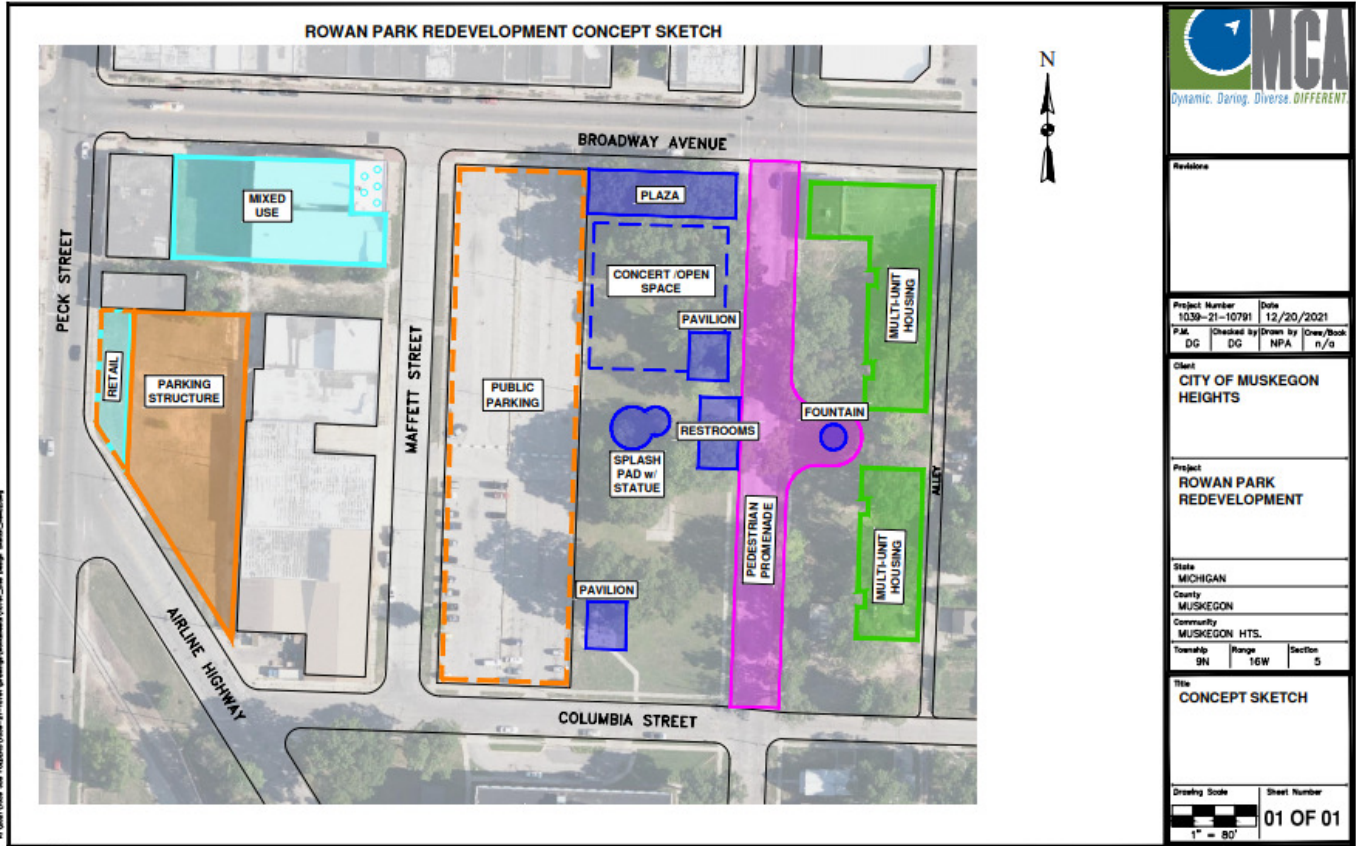
The city will seek funding opportunities and private developers to complete the development as described in the redevelopment plan for Rowan Park. This includes a public plaza, concert space, pavilions, splash pad, statue, pedestrian promenade, multifamily housing, mixed use development and a parking structure.

The recreation committee reviewed the redevelopment plans for Rowan Park and recommends using city resources, including the applying for grant funding, to bring the development to fruition.



Redevelopment Plans

Rowan Park Redevelopment Plan



Revisions		
Project Number	Date	
1039-21-10791	12/20/2021	
P.M.	Checked by/Drawn by	
DC	DC NPA n/g	
Client		
CITY OF MUSKEGON HEIGHTS		
Project		
ROWAN PARK REDEVELOPMENT		
State		
MICHIGAN		
County		
MUSKEGON		
Community		
MUSKEGON HTS.		
Township	Range	Section
9N	16W	5
Title		
CONCEPT SKETCH		
Drawing Scale	Sheet Number	
1" = 80'	01 OF 01	



Moan Lake Park Waterfront Redevelopment Plan



- Extend beach and seawall
- Pavilion redevelopment
- Amphitheater
- Street improvements

ACTION PROGRAM & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS SCHEDULE

The Action Program and Capital Improvement Schedule for the City of Muskegon Heights states the proposed course of acquisition and development action that will be taken over the next five-year period. The Goals and Objectives serve as the guidelines for the development of the Action Program. The Capital Improvement Schedule will focus on the needs identified in the Action Program and will project potential expenditures for the five-year action period on a year-by-year basis, beginning in 2022 and extending through 2026.

The Action Program focuses on the reduction of current deficiencies and the expansion and improvement of facilities in a manner that not only meets current needs but diversifies the quantity and quality of recreational opportunities within the city. The Action Plan describes specific actions to be taken to address needs and the Capital Improvement Schedule specifically itemizes those projects which will be most feasible during the next five years. The proposed schedule will allow for flexibility as funds become available and as opportunities are presented. Proposed actions involve improvements to existing facilities and the addition of new facilities and programs as outlined below.

This action program looks at some of the potentials that might evolve in the next five years. A degree of flexibility should be maintained to take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves, which will revise and refine these actions based upon both funding opportunities and community opinion.

Capital Improvement Schedule

As stated in the Action Program, improvements and development will occur as funds and opportunities evolve. Assistance will be solicited from all available sources and will include both physical and financial support. Local businesses, service organizations, land developers, governmental agencies and the school district will be solicited for monetary and material support. The city will also seek funding assistance from all available sources such as trusts, charitable foundations, and all Federal and State funding programs.

The following schedule is a breakdown of the anticipated projects and projected funding for the next five years beginning in 2022. All projections are based upon year 2022 costs and will be refined as the program progresses and the scope of work is determined. Changes in the program may occur if projected funding levels increase or decrease, but it is anticipated that the changes would be related more to adjustments in the time schedule rather than specific projects. Proposed projects will be scaled back as necessary if funding goals are not met.



Year	Project	Total Project Costs
2022	<u>Mona Lake Park Waterfront Redevelopment</u> Street improvements, pavilion redevelopment, beach/seawall expansion, amphitheater, ADA improvements	\$1,500,000
2022	<u>Rowan Park Redevelopment / Strand Theater Redevelopment</u> Public plaza, concert space, pavilions, splash pad, statue, pedestrian promenade, multifamily housing, mixed use development, parking Rowan Park Redevelopment structure ADA improvements	Rowan Park \$3,000,000 Strand \$15,000,000
2023	<u>Johnny O Harris Park Improvements</u> New playground equipment, bathroom improvements, ADA improvements	\$210,000
2024	<u>West Heights Park Improvements</u> New playground equipment, bathroom improvements, ADA improvements	\$120,000
2025	<u>Polar Bear Memorial Park Improvements</u> New grilling equipment and seating	\$7,500
2026	<u>Sherman & Downtown Pocket Park Improvements</u> New planters, seating, trash receptacles, landscaping	\$20,000
2026	<u>Martin Luther King Jr School Park Improvements</u> Sports facilities improvements, playground improvements, bathroom improvements, ADA improvements	\$120,000



Muskegon Heights Parks & Recreation Master Plan Workbook & Survey

Parks Map Parks Inventory



MONA LAKE PARK

- One (1) little league baseball diamond with fence, backstop, dugouts, bleachers, scoreboard and utility shed
- One (1) softball diamond with backstop and fence; one (1) boat launching ramp and parking spaces
- Four(4) basketball courts
- Four (4) shuffleboard courts
- Five (5) horseshoe pits
- Eight (8) benches
- Two (2) story brick pavilion (with toilets, concession area, covered picnic decks and a rentable community room)
- Paved parking lot
- Six (6) lighted tennis courts with a practice wall
- One (1) restroom facility
- One (1) maintenance building
- Beach and swimming area
- Twelve (12) barbecue grills with picnic tables during summer months
- Two (2) swing sets containing six (6) swings
- Two (2) slides, (1large, 1 small)
- Two (2) play structures

ROWAN PARK

- Four (4) benches
- Parking lot
- Small plaza with a clock tower and round performance platforms
- Two (2) shuffleboard courts
- Two (2) chess tables
- Drinking fountain

JOHNNY O. HARRIS PARK

- Two (2) slides
- Two (2) swing sets
- One (1) spring ride
- One (1) horseshoe pit
- One (1) shuffleboard court
- One (1) monkey bar
- Two (2) barbecue grills
- One (1) lighted softball diamond with backstop and bleachers
- One (1) drinking fountain
- Five (5) picnic tables
- Four (4) basketball courts
- One (1) restroom facility
- One (1) equipment building
- Paved parking lot

WEST HEIGHTS PARK

- Three (3) basketball courts
- Two (2) shuffleboard courts
- Three (3) barbecue grills
- One (1) softball diamond with backstop
- One (1) maintenance building with restrooms
- Five (5) swings that need to be replaced
- One (1) sandy play area



- Various football training equipment

POLAR BEAR MEMORIAL PARK

- Five (5) benches
- Two (2) tables
- One (1) grill
- Two (2) monuments

POCKET PARK

Pocket Park is a small urban space used for seating in the downtown area. It links Broadway Street stores with the Farmer's Market and City Buildings.

MARTIN LUTHER KING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Inside multi-purpose room
- Two (2) swing sets
- Two (2) basketball courts
- One (1) baseball diamond with backstop and bleachers
- Two (2) tables with chairs
- Four (4) grills
- Picnic area and restroom facility.

LITTLE BLACK CREEK NATURE PARK

- Footbridges and observation platforms.

MUSKEGON HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL

- One (1) larger gym
- One (1) auditorium with stage
- One (1) indoor swimming pool
- One (1) football field with goalpost, scoreboard, speaker system, lights, and grandstand
- One (1) rubber surfaced track with pole vault and long jump runways.

LINDBERG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Small gym
- One (1) basketball hoop
- One (1) bench
- Five (5) swings
- Two (2) climbing structures
- One (1) merry-go-round

MUSKEGON HEIGHTS MIDDLE SCHOOL

- One (1) small gym
- One (1) larger gym
- One (1) softball field with backstop
- Four (4) tennis courts
- One (1) small basketball court
- Two (2) soccer nets
- One (1) community garden with raised beds

EDGEWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- One (1) multi-purpose room
- Five (5) swing sets
- Three (3) slides
- Three (3) climbing poles



- Three (3) various size monkey bars
- Four (4) spring rides
- Three (3) small basketball courts
- Two (2) play structures for small kids and
- One (1) bench.



Survey

1. Which parks have you visited in the past year?

2. What age group do you fall in (circle one)?
 - 18-29
 - 30-49
 - 50-64
 - 65 and older

3. What new park amenities would like to see (basketball courts, pickle balls courts, nature paths, etc) and where (name the park)?

4. What current amenities do you notice being used the least?

5. Have you noticed any park equipment that needs to be repaired or removed?

6. What youth sports/programs should the City invest money into?

7. What would you like to see the Mona Lake Park Pavilion be redeveloped into (restaurant, entertainment, lodging, etc)?

8. Would you support a redevelopment of the Strand Theater property that focuses on putting Rowan Park as the feature element of the building?

9. Would you support improvements at Mona Lake Park that would feature street improvements, amphitheater, seawall and beach extension?



10. Would you support the addition of a splash pad at Rowan Park?

11. Would you support the extension of Rowan Park by closing Baker St and connecting it to the green space on the other side?



PUBLIC NOTICE CONFIRMATION

	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Order Confirmation</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">Ad Order Number 0010186138</p>	6954670	652231
<p>Customer CITY OF MUSKEGON HEIGHTS DEPT OF PLANNING Account: 1000488459 CITY OF MUSKEGON HEIGHTS DEPT OF PLANNING 2724 PECK ST MUSKEGON MI 49444 USA (231)733-8830</p> <p>FAX: JAaron-Shyne@CityofMuskegonHeights.org</p>		<p>Payor Customer CITY OF MUSKEGON HEIGHTS DEPT OF PLANNING Account: 1000488459 CITY OF MUSKEGON HEIGHTS DEPT OF PLANNING 2724 PECK ST MUSKEGON MI 49444 USA (231)733-8830</p> <p>PO Number Sales Rep. Joseph Rosa Order Taker Joseph Rosa Order Source Special Pricing</p>	
<p>Tear Sheets 0 TearsheetsCost \$0.00</p> <p>Proofs 0</p> <p>Affidavits 1 AffidavitsCost \$10.00</p> <p>Blind Box</p> <p>Promo Type</p> <p>Materials</p> <p>Invoice Text</p>		<p>Net Amount \$187.87</p> <p>Tax Amount \$0.00</p> <p>Total Amount \$187.87</p> <p>Payment Method Invoice</p> <p>Payment Amount \$0.00</p> <p>Amount Due \$187.87</p>	

Ad Schedule

<p>Product MLive.com</p> <p># Inserts 1</p> <p>Cost \$16.17</p> <p>Ad Type MI CLS Liner</p> <p>Pick Up #</p> <p>External Ad #</p> <p>Production Method AdBooker</p> <p>Run Dates Sort Text 12/13/2021 PARKSRECREATIONMASTERPLANADOPTIONPUBLICHEARINGNOTICENOTICEOF30DAYREVIEWPERIODNOTICEISH</p>	<p>Placement/Class Announcements</p> <p>POS/Sub-Class Public Notices</p> <p>AdNumber 0010186138-01</p> <p>Ad Size 1 X 49 li</p> <p>Ad Attributes</p> <p>Color <NONE></p> <p>Production Notes</p>
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<p>Product Muskegon Chronicle</p> <p># Inserts 1</p> <p>Cost \$161.70</p> <p>Ad Type MI CLS Liner</p> <p>Pick Up #</p> <p>External Ad #</p> <p>Production Method AdBooker</p> <p>Run Dates Sort Text 12/13/2021 PARKSRECREATIONMASTERPLANADOPTIONPUBLICHEARINGNOTICENOTICEOF30DAYREVIEWPERIODNOTICEISH</p>	<p>Placement/Class Announcements</p> <p>POS/Sub-Class Public Notices</p> <p>AdNumber 0010186138-01</p> <p>Ad Size 1 X 49 li</p> <p>Ad Attributes</p> <p>Color <NONE></p> <p>Production Notes</p>
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Ad Content Proof

PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN ADOPTION PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE & NOTICE OF 30-DAY REVIEW PERIOD

Notice is hereby given that the City of Muskegon Heights will hold a Public Hearing regarding the adoption of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as part of its regularly scheduled meeting on January 24, 2022 at 5:30 PM at 2724 Peck St, Muskegon Heights, MI 49444. The public is invited to attend and offer comments. Comments may be submitted in writing and directed to Mike Franzak, Zoning Administrator at Muskegon Heights City Hall at 2724 Peck St, Muskegon Heights, MI 49444.

A draft of the City of Muskegon Heights Parks and Recreation Plan will be available for public review and comment for a period of one month beginning Monday, December 13, 2021. Copies of the draft plan may be viewed at City Hall, on the City's Website and at the Muskegon Heights Branch Library. The new Parks and Recreation Plan is a guide to park and recreation development over the next five years. For additional information please contact Mike Franzak, Zoning Administrator, at 231.724.6982.

