

# CHAPTER 7

## 2018-2022 MARINE CITY PARKS & RECREATION PLAN



Adopted by:

Marine City Planning Commission: January 8, 2018

Marine City Commission: January 18, 2018

### IN THIS PLAN:

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## COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

### INTRODUCTION

The availability of diversified recreation facilities and programs is an important component in evaluating the quality of life in a community. Those communities that have recreation facilities and programs available for residents are often perceived to be the most desirable in which to live and work. This perception will continue to be reinforced in the future as the leisure time for individuals and families increases. In recognition of this trend and the traditional role played by local governments in meeting the recreation needs of their residents, this Parks and Recreation Plan has been developed to help Marine City provide for the recreation needs of its residents, both now and in the future.

The Parks and Recreation Plan must be submitted to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to be eligible for new grant funding. The preparation of a recreation plan provides Marine City with an opportunity to consider the recreation needs of its residents. It also qualifies Marine City for possible State funding for expanding and/or improving the existing recreational areas within the City.

### REGIONAL SETTING

Marine City is located within southeastern Michigan, the most heavily populated region of the State, approximately 20 miles south of Port Huron and 50 miles northeast of Detroit. Situated at the confluence of the St. Clair and Belle rivers in southeastern St. Clair County, Marine City is one of a number of Michigan communities that are readily accessible by both land and water. The City is bordered by Cottrellville Township to the south and west, China and East China townships to the north and the St. Clair River to the east. Other nearby communities are the City of Algonac (roughly five miles to the south), the City of St. Clair (approximately six miles to the north), and Sombra, Ontario, Canada, which is directly across the St. Clair River from Marine City.

### PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN: JURISDICTION AND PLAN FOCUS

This 2018-2022 Parks and Recreation Plan covers all parks and recreation facilities and programs owned and operated by Marine City, spanning all of Marine City and serving both City residents and non-residents from neighboring townships.

Marine City has the responsibility to review and update the Parks and Recreation Plan every five years and to consider the conditions and trends affecting recreation. With each new update of the Marine City Parks and Recreation Plan comes an opportunity to proactively improve the quality of life for Marine City citizens.

### DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

To analyze the types of recreation facilities and amenities that are needed within the City, it is important to have a thorough description of the community's demographic features. Differences in

demographic characteristics may indicate issues or areas in recreation planning; may identify strengths or assets that can be further developed; or may identify weaknesses or problems that need to be addressed.

### Population

The population of Marine City was 4,172 according to the 2015 U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Since the 2010 U.S. Census, the population has decreased by 1.8%, or 76 people. The current population is less than the 1990 U.S. Census population which was 4,556. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) estimates the City's population will be 4,600 by 2040. This projection is a 10.3% increase from the current population.

Another important consideration in planning for future parks and recreation needs is the age of residents. The median age of Marine City's population is 43.4 years, older than the median age in 2010 (40.2 years) and 2000 (35.6 years). Almost half of the residents of Marine City are 45 years or older (47.6%). Since 2000 the population that is at least 45 years old has increased while the population of those under 45 years has decreased.

### Households

A household is defined as a person or group of people occupying a housing unit. The rate of increase in households is not equal to the rate of increase of housing units.

The average household in Marine City was 2.27 persons in 2015, a decrease from 2010 when it was 2.41 persons. Over the same time period the number of households increased from 1,765 to 1,837, an increase of 4.1%. Smaller household size has been a trend in Marine City going back to at least 1990. The trend of smaller households is not unique to Marine City as St. Clair County has seen a similar trend. SEMCOG forecasts that by 2040, both Marine City and St. Clair County will be made up of smaller households.

### Income

The median household income for Marine City was \$40,240 in 2015, which was lower than the median household income for St. Clair County of \$49,730. Out of the population of 4,172, a total of 606 people, or 14.5%, live below the poverty level. This number includes the 160 children under the age of 18 that live below the poverty level. Compared to St. Clair County, Marine City has a lower percentage of the population that lives below the poverty level and a lower number of children under the age of 18 living below the poverty level.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

The principal natural features of Marine City are the St. Clair River and the Belle River, which provide five miles of water frontage within the City limits. The St. Clair River is a significant international resource serving as the navigational link between Lake Huron and Lake St. Clair. The Belle River runs south from the northern City limits to a point just south of Chartier Avenue, where it joins with the St. Clair River. The St. Clair River runs from northeast to southwest forming the eastern boundary of the City.



## Topography

Topography refers to the elevations, relief features, or surface conditions of a geographic area. The understanding of topography is critical for a number of reasons. In terms of environmental quality, agriculture, and hydrology, understanding the topography of a community enables a greater understanding of watershed boundaries, drainage characteristics, water movement, and impacts on water quality.

The topography of Marine City, as well as most of St. Clair County, is relatively flat. The highest elevation of Marine City is 590 feet above sea level. The shoreline along the Belle River and St. Clair River is approximately 580 feet above sea level. Other than at the shorelines, changes in topographic relief throughout the City are gradual and not readily apparent.

## Climate

Climate conditions in Marine City are typical of most Southeast Michigan communities. Average yearly precipitation is approximately 30 inches. The coldest month of the year is January, when temperatures average 31 F and the hottest month is July, when temperatures average 83 F.

# ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

## INTRODUCTION

The Marine City Commission has ultimate authority over development and management of parks and recreation within the City. Responsibility regarding policy matters and physical development is also shared with the Marine City Planning Commission, which acts as an advisory body.

On March 20, 1980, the City Commission enacted Ordinance 80-1, §1, part of which created the Department of Recreation and the position of Recreation Director. The basic powers and duties of the Department of Recreation and the Recreation Director are explained in Section 2-23 of the Marine City Code:

*“The Department of Recreation shall plan, promote, organize, and supervise a comprehensive municipal recreation program and administer the same in the interest of the entire community. This department shall constantly evaluate the recreational interests and needs of the community and be responsible for effective communication of the recreation program to the citizens of the City.*

*The Department of Recreation shall be headed by the recreation director who shall be responsible for all matters pertaining to the administrative and professional duties involved in planning, developing, and directing a recreation program, so that the community recreational needs, interests and facilities are continuously being met, maintained, and improved upon.”*

The Recreation Director is responsible for all recreation programs including team sports, youth activities and adult cultural activities. The Recreation Director reports to the City Manager who in turn



**FIGURE 7-1: MARINE CITY RECREATION ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE**



reports to the City Commission. The City Manager and Recreation Director are together responsible for ensuring that the recreation policies adopted by the City Commission are adhered to by the Recreation Department.

Recreation programs are financed through participation fees and a yearly budget appropriation. Park maintenance costs are also financed through appropriated budgets; however, park development costs are budgeted through general funds and grant programs.

## Recreation Staff

In addition to the Recreation Director, which is a part-time position, the Recreation Department employs part-time staff and volunteers on a program-to-program basis.

## Recreation Budget

Recreation Department expenditures for the years 2013 through 2017 are shown in the table below. The recreation budget for the current year is \$41,930. Funding for the Recreation Department comes from grant funds and City funds. See Tables 7-1 and 7-2.

### St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Millage

The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) has a countywide millage for parks and recreation in St. Clair County. PARC dedicates 75% of the millage revenues to parks and recreation facilities that serve a countywide audience. PARC distributes the remaining 25% of the County Parks

# MARINE CITY MASTER PLAN

**TABLE 7-1: MARINE CITY RECREATION EXPENDITURES, 2013-2017**

Expenditures	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total	\$64,545	\$51,205	\$51,955	\$39,695	\$41,930

**TABLE 7-2: MARINE CITY PROJECTED PARKS AND RECREATION EXPENDITURES, 2017-2018**

Recreation	\$38,240
Parks/Beach	\$103,125

and Recreation Millage revenues to local units of government to enhance or expand local parks and recreation programs and facilities. Since 1994, the amount of money distributed to local communities has totaled more than \$12.6 million. This distribution has had a positive impact on the delivery of local parks and recreation services in every community in St. Clair County. The amount of local distribution is based on the number of residents living in each municipality or township. From 1994 to 2016, a total of \$361,872.51 has been distributed to Marine City for parks and recreation activities.

In order to receive these funds, communities must submit an annual report and show evidence of “maintenance of effort” to assure the funding is used to expand opportunities rather than to supplant existing local funding. In effect, local units of government must document that they have maintained their local financial support for parks and recreation services at a level equal to or greater than the amount they spent prior to the 1994 millage election.

## Donations

In November 2016, construction of the pavilion and restrooms at Mariner Park began. These amenities were gifted to the City by longtime resident and business owner Chafic Kadouh. A ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark completion of Mariner Park was held on July 10, 2017.

**TABLE 7-3: MARINE CITY MDNR GRANTS HISTORY**

Grant	Park	Details
26-01325 [1985] \$22,500	Waterworks Park	Develop seawall, walkway, lighting, benches, and pathways
TF98-110 [1998] \$15,400	Bridge to Bay Trail	Acquire .26 mile of abandoned CSX railroad right-of-way between DeGurse and Metropolis for Bridge to Bay Trail.
TF00-322 [2000] \$487,105	Krieg Riverfront Acquisition	Acquisition of 1/2 acre, including 151 ft of frontage on St. Clair River to extend Nautical Mile Riverwalk and park system
CM00-153 [2000] \$55,479	Bridge to Bay Trail	Construct multi-use path along .27-mile of abandoned CSX railroad right-of-way between West Blvd and Ward St.
TF10-163 [2010] \$37,500	City Beach Acquisition	Withdrawn

## Volunteers

From time to time, Marine City Recreation relies on volunteers to assist with special events, maintaining/cleaning parks, planting and gardening, and helping with recreation programs. The City has an “Adopt-A-Park” program that allows volunteers to give back to the community and keep the City beautiful. A volunteer application is available online at the City’s website. Upon completion of the application, City officials will assess an applicant’s interest and qualifications to determine if they are able to fulfill the volunteer request.

## RECREATION INVENTORY

### *MARINE CITY PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES*

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There are numerous local recreation facilities in Marine City owned by the City, the East China School District and private entities.

#### **City-Owned Recreation Facilities**

In terms of local recreation facilities, Marine City has approximately 40.5 acres of developed recreational uses spread among 14 facilities. Ten of the City’s recreation facilities consist of small parks located along the St. Clair River, from just north of Broadway down to Bridge Street. These facilities are: Marine City Beach, Mariner Park, Watchman Park, Broadway Park, Waterworks Park, Lighthouse Park/The Guy Center, Civic Women’s Club River Park, Corwin M. Drake Memorial Park, St. Clair Park, and Nautical Mile Park. All of these sites are used primarily for passive recreation such as picnicking and riverfront viewing. Two other parks, the King Road Park and the Ward-Cottrell Park, both on the west side of the City, are used more for active recreation activities, such as softball and tennis. Heritage Square is located at 300 Broadway at the site of the historic City Hall building. There is also a neighborhood playground at the South Main/Washington Mini Park. The following pages include a profile of each park in Marine City.

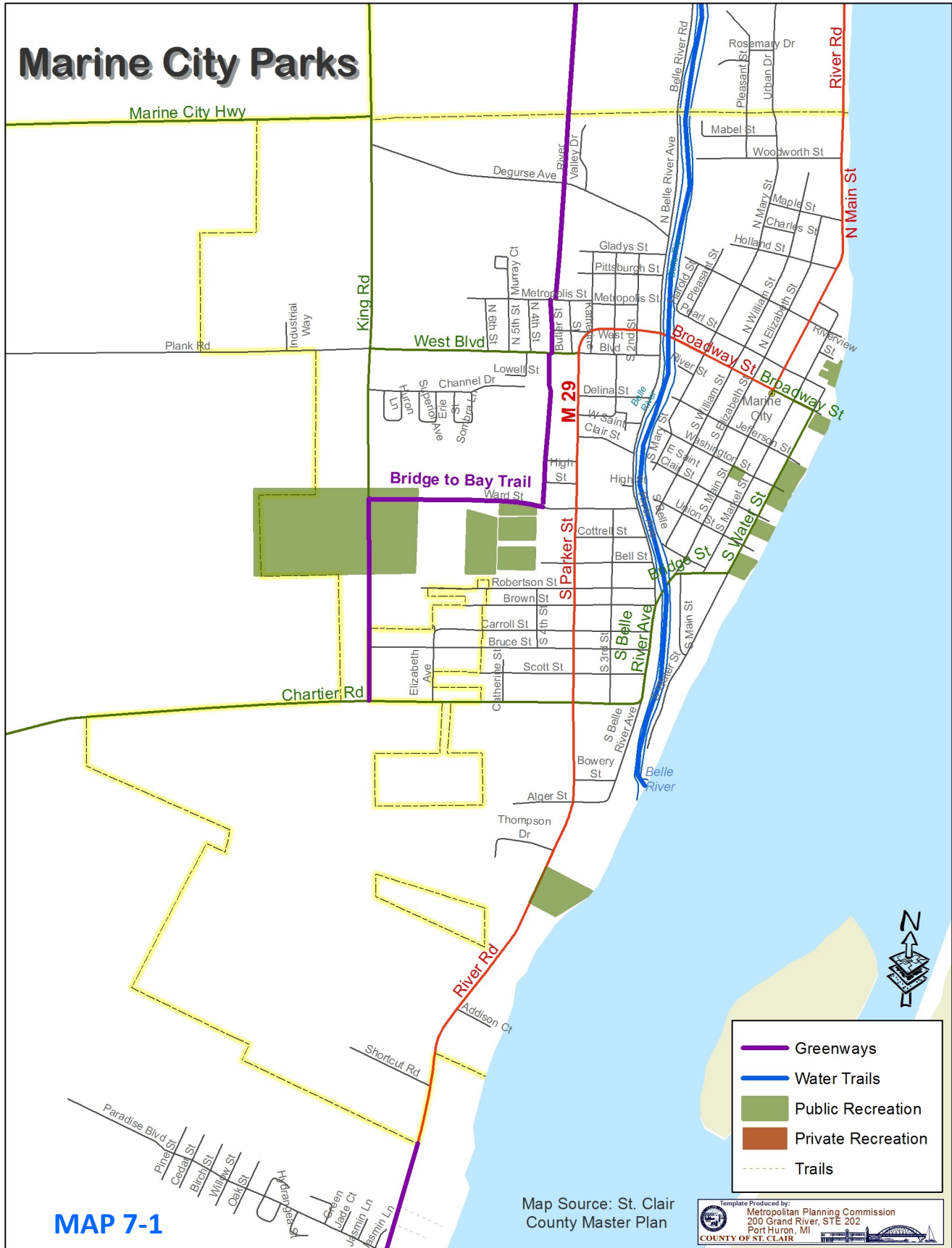
#### Accessibility Evaluation

In accordance with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Guidelines for Recreation Plans, an accessibility evaluation was completed for each park within the City. The evaluation was conducted by planners from the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission.

Each City facility was compared to the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design and given a ranking from 1-5, where:

- 1=none of the site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- 2=some site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- 3=most site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- 4=all site elements meet 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, and
- 5=the facility meets the Principles of Universal Design





## MARINE CITY BEACH

200 N. WATER STREET



### HIGHLIGHTS:

- ▶ 1.2 ACRES
- ▶ SWIMMING BEACH
- ▶ ST. CLAIR RIVER ACCESS
- ▶ PLAYGROUND
- ▶ FISHING ACCESS
- ▶ PAVILION/RESTROOMS
- ▶ MOBI MAT
- ▶ PICNIC TABLES
- ▶ BBQ GRILLS
- ▶ FREIGHTER WATCHING

ACCESSIBILITY RATING: 4





## **BROADWAY PARK**

### **WATER STREET AT BROADWAY**



#### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- ▶ 0.75 ACRE
- ▶ ST. CLAIR RIVER ACCESS
- ▶ FISHING ACCESS
- ▶ BATTLESHIP DECK GUN DISPLAY
- ▶ SIGHTSEEING BENCHES
- ▶ PICNIC AREAS
- ▶ FREIGHTER WATCHING

ACCESSIBILITY RATING: 4



***LIGHTHOUSE PARK/THE GUY CENTER 303 S. WATER STREET***



**HIGHLIGHTS:**

- ▶ 1 ACRE
- ▶ PECHE ISLAND REAR RANGE LIGHTHOUSE
- ▶ THE GUY CENTER
- ▶ ST. CLAIR RIVER ACCESS
- ▶ FISHING ACCESS
- ▶ SAND VOLLEYBALL COURTS
- ▶ PICNIC TABLES
- ▶ LIGHTED WALKWAYS
- ▶ FREIGHTER WATCHING

ACCESSIBILITY RATING: 3





## ***CIVIC WOMEN'S CLUB RIVER PARK*** WATER STREET



### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- ▶ 0.5 ACRE
- ▶ ST. CLAIR RIVER ACCESS
- ▶ FISHING ACCESS
- ▶ PICNIC AREA
- ▶ LIGHTED WALKWAY
- ▶ GARDENS AND TREES
- ▶ BENCHES
- ▶ DECORATED ARCHWAY
- ▶ FREIGHTER WATCHING

ACCESSIBILITY RATING: 4



## ***DRAKE MEMORIAL PARK***

***401 S. WATER STREET***



### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- ▶ 0.75 ACRE
- ▶ ST. CLAIR RIVER ACCESS
- ▶ FISHING ACCESS
- ▶ WATERFRONT AMPHITHEATRE
- ▶ OUTDOOR CONCERTS
- ▶ ANTIQUE SHIP ANCHOR
- ▶ FREIGHTER WATCHING
- ▶ NEXT TO BLUE WATER FERRY DOCK

**ACCESSIBILITY RATING: 3**





## ***NAUTICAL MILE PARK***

***477 S. WATER STREET***



### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- ▶ 1.2 ACRES
- ▶ ST. CLAIR RIVER ACCESS
- ▶ FISHING ACCESS
- ▶ PICNIC AREAS
- ▶ FREIGHTER WATCHING

ACCESSIBILITY RATING: 4



## KING ROAD PARK

6370 KING ROAD



### HIGHLIGHTS:

- ▶ 27 ACRES
- ▶ PLAYGROUND
- ▶ BASEBALL/SOFTBALL FIELDS
- ▶ PAVILION/PICNIC AREAS
- ▶ BBQ GRILLS
- ▶ RESTROOMS
- ▶ BASKETBALL COURTS
- ▶ ICE SKATING RINK
- ▶ SLEDDING HILL
- ▶ CONCESSION STAND

ACCESSIBILITY RATING: 3





## **WARD COTTRELL PARK**

**601 WARD AVENUE**



### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- ▶ 5.5 ACRES
- ▶ FOOTBALL FIELD
- ▶ BASEBALL/SOFTBALL FIELDS
- ▶ TENNIS COURTS
- ▶ PICNIC TABLES
- ▶ PLAYGROUND
- ▶ RESTROOMS
- ▶ CONCESSION AREA
- ▶ RUNNING TRACK

ACCESSIBILITY RATING: 3



# ***WATERWORKS PARK***

***WATER STREET AT JEFFERSON***



## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- ▶ 1.63 ACRES
- ▶ VETERANS' MEMORIAL
- ▶ POLICE MEMORIAL
- ▶ MARINE CITY FIREMAN'S MEMORIAL
- ▶ ST. CLAIR RIVER ACCESS
- ▶ FISHING ACCESS
- ▶ PICNIC AREAS
- ▶ LIGHTED WALKWAYS
- ▶ FREIGHTER WATCHING

ACCESSIBILITY RATING: 3





# HERITAGE SQUARE

**300 BROADWAY**



## HIGHLIGHTS:

- ▶ 1.8 ACRES
- ▶ HISTORIC CITY HALL
- ▶ BANDSTAND
- ▶ WEDDINGS/GATHERINGS
- ▶ BENCHES
- ▶ BARRIER-FREE PATHWAYS

ACCESSIBILITY RATING: 3



## ***SOUTH MAIN/WASHINGTON MINI PARK***



### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- ▶ 0.5 ACRE
- ▶ TOT LOT/PLAYGROUND
- ▶ PICNIC TABLE
- ▶ BENCHES
- ▶ BIKE RACK

ACCESSIBILITY RATING: 2

## ***WATCHMAN PARK***

***131 WATER STREET***

### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- ▶ 0.5 ACRE
- ▶ GRASSY POCKET PARK
- ▶ PUBLIC ART
- ▶ FREIGHTER WATCHING
- ▶ FISHING ACCESS
- ▶ BENCH SEATING

ACCESSIBILITY RATING: 1



## ***MARINER PARK***

### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- ▶ 50'X30' PAVILION
- ▶ ACCESSIBLE RESTROOMS
- ▶ ST. CLAIR RIVER ACCESS
- ▶ FISHING ACCESS
- ▶ FREIGHTER WATCHING
- ▶ PICNIC TABLES
- ▶ BBQ GRILLS

ACCESSIBILITY RATING: 5

### ***WATER STREET AT PEARL***



## ***ST. CLAIR PARK***

### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- ▶ 0.5 ACRE
- ▶ ST. CLAIR RIVER ACCESS
- ▶ FISHING ACCESS
- ▶ BARRIER-FREE WALKWAY
- ▶ OUTDOOR WATER FAUCET
- ▶ FREIGHTER WATCHING
- ▶ RESTROOMS

ACCESSIBILITY RATING: 3

### ***END OF ST. CLAIR STREET AT WATER***





### School-Owned Recreational Facilities

Besides city-owned parks, the East China School District provides recreational facilities for students. These facilities are also available on a limited basis to Marine City residents. Many of the City's recreation programs utilize these school facilities. The Marine City Middle School/High School athletic complex, on Ward Street between King Road and Parker Street, offers facilities for area-wide recreation including an indoor pool, a gymnasium with a full basketball court, tennis courts and an outdoor running track.

### Washington Life Center

The St. Clair County Council on Aging operates the Washington Life Center, located at 403 Mary St. The facility moved from the Cherry Beach Center in Cottrellville Township into the vacant Washington Elementary School building in October 2009. The center has much more space than the Cherry Beach Center had, which allows the COA to offer expanded classes and activities for seniors.

### Other Recreational Facilities in Marine City

The Marine City Marina is a commercial transient boat dock and boat refueling facility located on the Belle River at 1105 S. Belle River near Scott Street.

There is a privately owned banquet center with outdoor picnic grounds on the east side of King Road, just south of Marine City High School. Both the hall and the picnic grounds are available to the general public on a rental basis.

The Lions Club International-Marine City owns and operates a hall and outdoor picnic grounds on the south side of Ward Street, just east of the Ward-Cottrell Park. Both the hall and the picnic grounds are available to the general public on a rental basis.



## MARINE CITY RECREATION PROGRAMMING

The Marine City Recreation Department offers a variety of recreation programming for citizens to enrich their lives, enhance their education, and stay active. Recreation programs include the following:

- ▶ Swimming Programs/Lessons
- ▶ Gymnastics Programs
- ▶ Creative Kids Preschool Program
- ▶ Adopt-A-Park Program
- ▶ Discounted Detroit Zoo Tickets
- ▶ Discounted Detroit Red Wings Tickets
- ▶ Consumer Education Seminars
- ▶ S.C.O.R.E. (St. Clair County Organized Recreation for Everyone)
- ▶ Pickleball
- ▶ Adult Fitness and Exercise Programs
- ▶ Co-Ed Volleyball
- ▶ Indoor Walking

### Parks and Recreation Facilities in Neighboring Communities

There are a number of parks and recreation facilities in the townships surrounding Marine City that provide additional opportunities for Marine City residents to get outside and utilize different amenities. Table 7-4 details the inventory of facilities in Cottrellville, China, and East China townships.

## STATE AND REGIONAL RECREATION FACILITIES

On a regional basis, Marine City has two state parks within a short driving distance. These parks are Algonac State Park, approximately 2.5 miles south of Marine City on the St. Clair River and Lakeport State Park, approximately 25 miles north of Marine City on Lake Huron. Two other nearby state-run recreation facilities are the St. Clair Flats Wildlife Management Area on Harsens Island and Dickinson Island and St. John's Marsh in Clay Township. These areas offer facilities for hunting, fishing, swimming, and (at the flats) general boating. Together, the St. Clair Flats, the St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair offer over 50 miles of shoreline area for private and public use and are the area's greatest natural resources. The state also operates the Port Huron State Game Area in Grant and Clyde townships to the north.

The state also operates eleven public boat launch sites in St. Clair County along the St. Clair River, the Black River, the Pine River and Lake St. Clair. The MDNR owns and operates a public boat launch facility in Marine City on the St. Clair River at 1171 S. Parker (M-29), just south of the St. Clair County Road Commission Gravel Dock. This 4.04-acre facility contains one boat launch ramp and short-term parking for approximately 70-80 automobiles with boat trailers.

Throughout Metropolitan Detroit, the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority offers a series of thirteen "Metroparks." St. Clair County is not a member of the Authority. The closest of these Metroparks to Marine City is Lake St. Clair Metropark in Harrison Township in Macomb County. This park has a beach, two marinas, a boat launch ramp, a par three golf course, a miniature golf course, a swimming pool and splash pad, tennis and basketball courts, picnic areas, a baseball/softball area, a tot lot, a nature study



## PARKS & RECREATION PLAN 2018-2022

**TABLE 7-4: PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES IN NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES**

### **COTTRELLVILLE TOWNSHIP**

Park	Acres	Amenities
Cottrellville Township Park	17	Playground, ballfields, soccer fields, basketball/volleyball courts, picnic areas, restrooms
Riverside Park	2.8	River access, fishing access

### **CHINA TOWNSHIP**

Park	Acres	Amenities
Indian Trail Road Site	62.0	Playground, ballfields, soccer fields, restrooms
Neiman Park	3.5	Playground, ballfields, soccer fields, basketball courts, picnic areas, community center, horseshoe pits, restrooms
King Road/Belle River Site	14.0	Playground, river access, fishing access, trails, picnic areas, fire pit, restrooms
Recor Road Site	5.3	Undeveloped

### **EAST CHINA TOWNSHIP**

Park	Acres	Amenities
East China Park	81.0	Playground, ballfields, soccer fields, basketball courts, river access, fishing access, ice skating/inline skating, trails, tennis courts, pickle ball courts, picnic areas, dog park, restrooms, pavilions, freighter watching
River Park	0.20	Playground, river access, fishing access, picnic areas
Manor Park	1.6	Playground
Springborn Park	0.2	River access, fishing access, picnic tables, ADA-accessible kayak launch
Township Hall Site	13.0	

area and activity center, a nature trail and a bicycle/non-motorized vehicle/pedestrian pathway. In the winter, the park has areas for ice fishing, ice skating, and cross-country skiing. In September, the park hosts an “in the water” boat and fishing show.



## ***ST. CLAIR COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES***

St. Clair County currently owns eight properties devoted to parks and recreation activities that total 1,010 acres. These are:

▶ Goodells County Park	366 acres
▶ Columbus County Park	411 acres
▶ Fort Gratiot County Park	30 acres
▶ Woodsong County Park	33 acres
▶ Fort Gratiot Light Station	5 acres
▶ Wetlands County Park	5 acres
▶ Marine City Dredge Cut Access	.34 acre
▶ Wadhams to Avoca Trail	160 acres (12 miles long)

### **Goodells County Park**

Facilities at the park include the Visitors Center, two playgrounds, river and fishing access, a seasonal ice skating rink, trails, four picnic shelters, a community center, historic buildings, a BMX track, a radio-controlled model airplane airfield and truck track, a butterfly garden, five special events buildings, the "Splashpad," equestrian facilities, and areas for outdoor events.

The "Splashpad" has 11 spray features that include two water cannons, five dumping buckets, ground geysers, and a rainbow water tunnel. The "Splashpad" is open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and admission is free. In February 2006, the County received a Facility Design Award from the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association (MRPA) for the Goodells County Park Splashpad. This award recognized the Splashpad as the first water play facility in the state that uses and recycles water that is supplied by a well rather than a municipal water system.

The Historic Village at Goodells County Park contains the Lynn Township Schoolhouse (1885), and the C.C. Peck and Company bank (1908). Visitors will also see the Columbus Bible Church (1860), the Murphy/Ryan farmhouse (1872) and the Mudge Log Cabin (1863). The latest addition to the Historic

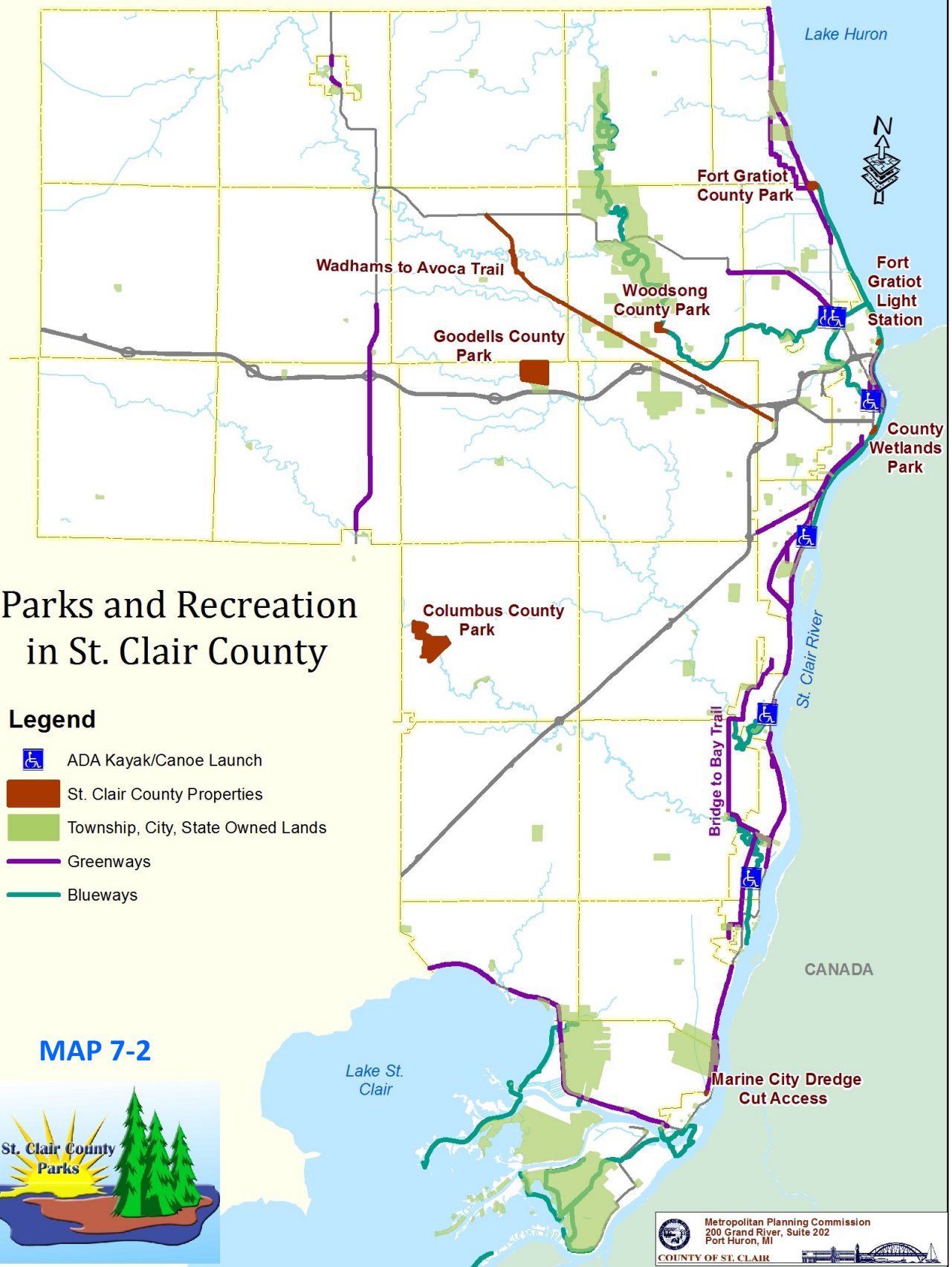


## Parks and Recreation in St. Clair County

### Legend

-  ADA Kayak/Canoe Launch
-  St. Clair County Properties
-  Township, City, State Owned Lands
-  Greenways
-  Blueways

**MAP 7-2**





Village is the Columbus Bible Church. The Church was moved to the park and restored, complete with its twelve-foot tall windows and spectacular bell tower.

### **Columbus County Park**

Through five separate transactions, the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) owns 411 acres of property in Columbus Township. PARC used a \$65,800 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant in 2016, to secure the final 26 acres. In 2007, PARC used a \$1.4 million MNRTF grant to secure 291 acres for the park.

Phase 1 construction at Columbus County Park was completed in early 2010. Phase 1 included constructing the main entrance on Bauman Road, a park roadway, a 100-car parking lot, erosion control and drainage improvements, underground utilities, a water well and development of a lighted sledding hill.

Other facilities at the park include mountain biking trails, walking trails, horse trails, fishing access, and permit-only hunting. The Belle River runs through the park, totaling 1.6 miles of frontage. A historic gambrel roof barn is located at Columbus County Park near Bauman Road and is used for maintenance and storage. The barn was restored by Columbus Township.

Construction of an energy efficient park Lodge with modern restroom facilities, a picnic pavilion, offices and storage rooms was completed in 2012. Activities at the park include picnics, weddings, educational programs, and meetings.

### **Fort Gratiot County Park**

Fort Gratiot County Park is located in the northeast part of St. Clair County, just off M-25 on Metcalf Road. This 30-acre park offers breathtaking views of Lake Huron and 852 feet of shoreline and beach. It also includes picnic areas, restrooms, a children's playground, and paved walking trails.

Fort Gratiot County Park is also home to the 1971 Tunnel Explosion Memorial which commemorates the construction accident that took the lives of 22 men working on the water intake tunnel located beneath the park. The 1971 Water Tunnel Explosion committee raised funds for the memorial which



was erected in 2007. The Michigan Historic Commission dedicated a State Historical Marker at the site to mark the 40th anniversary of the tragedy.

Other improvements at the park include ADA-accessible restrooms and a playscape in 2007, as well as an overflow parking area in 2008. In early 2009, two picnic pavilions were completed and additional sections of boardwalk were installed on the beach.

### **Woodsong County Park**

On December 30, 2008, St. Clair County purchased the 33-acre Camp Woodsong site from the Michigan Waterways Council of the Girl Scouts of America. The property is located off of Abbottsford Road, at the east end of Rynn Road, in Clyde Township. St. Clair County purchased the property for \$400,000 using a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant. The western half of the property features existing buildings that include a garage, pavilion, two vault toilets and group camping areas. The eastern half of the property has scenic, steep slopes that travel down to 2,800 feet of Black River shoreline. The site also has a rustic parking lot, and an ADA trail and kayak launch on the Black River is planned for the future.

### **Fort Gratiot Light Station**

The Fort Gratiot Light Station is the oldest lighthouse in Michigan. As the shipping needs on the Great Lakes increased in the 1820's, so did the need for a navigational aid at the mouth of the St. Clair River. In August of 1825 the first lighthouse in Michigan was built at Port Huron. The original tower was located near the base of the present day second span of the Blue Water Bridge. It was 32 feet high above ground level, 18 feet in diameter at the base, and tapered to nine feet across at the top.

The Coast Guard maintained the Fort Gratiot Light Station from the 1930's until they moved next door into the new station that was built in 2004. The property was officially transferred to St. Clair County in 2010. Restoration of the lighthouse was completed in 2013, and other property repairs and additions have been made using Michigan Coastal Zone Management Grant funding. The restoration of the tower was made possible by the "Save America's Treasures" grant program and a match from the City of Port Huron. The tower reopened for tours in the summer of 2012. The Port Huron Museum serves as a partner in leading tours of the site, programming, and private reservations. Friends of the Fort Gratiot Light Station raise funds for building restoration projects and provides volunteers.

### **Blue Water River Walk and Wetlands County Park**

The Blue Water River Walk is almost one mile long and runs along the St. Clair River shoreline immediately south of the mouth of the Black River in Port Huron. It is less than a mile downriver from the Blue Water Bridge to Sarnia and the southern end of Lake Huron. Owned by the Community Foundation of St. Clair County, the Blue Water River Walk is open to the public year-round. The river walk features an observation deck, a pedestrian trail, an outdoor classroom, shoreline and habitat restoration, a fishing pier and public art.

The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission purchased 4.85 acres of land using two MNRTF grants and received a \$1,039,500 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to develop a 2.75-acre wetland on the very southern end of the river walk.

## Pine River Nature Center

The St. Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency's Pine River Nature Center is an educational facility whose mission is to promote the awareness, understanding and stewardship of the Blue Water Area's natural and cultural heritage. The center provides programs for local schools to enhance their science and mathematics curricula with outdoor-based field studies correlated with the Michigan Curriculum Framework and offers outdoor recreation and environmental education opportunities for area residents.

The Pine River Nature Center opened to the public in the May of 2003. The Nature Center sits on 111 acres of property, with over 4,800 feet of the Pine River meandering through it. Since opening, over 21,900 students from around St. Clair County have visited the center for programs. Activities and events at the center include the following:

- ▶ Opportunities to hike over two miles of trails (open daily from dawn to dark).
- ▶ Browse the indoor displays and live animals.
- ▶ Read about nature or do research in the library.
- ▶ Attend public programs, including star gazing parties and nature walks.
- ▶ Volunteer to help with special events and school programs.
- ▶ Adopt-a-Trail.
- ▶ Visit the universally-accessible (ADA) tree house.

## GREENWAYS AND TRAILS

Greenways are corridors of land recognized for their ability to connect people and places together. According to the EPA, greenways promote outdoor recreation, catalyze economic development, increase adjacent property values, celebrate historical and cultural assets, promote conservation and environmental education and improve quality of life. Greenways have multiple purposes, but from a recreation perspective they have two major functions:

1. To link and facilitate hiking and biking access between residential areas and parks.
2. To provide opportunities for the linear forms of outdoor recreation (i.e. hiking, jogging, bicycling, equestrian riding, and walking) in which many St. Clair County residents engage today. These recreation activities require the development of trails along the greenways.

There are two primary trail systems within St. Clair County: the Wadhams to Avoca Trail and the Bridge to Bay Trail.

### Wadhams to Avoca Trail

In 1999, St. Clair County PARC purchased the surface rights to 9.82 miles (100 acres) of right-of-way from CSX Railroad and began developing it as the Wadhams to Avoca Trail. In 2001 and 2004, PARC purchased two additional properties totaling 17.65 acres adjacent to the trail north of Imlay City Road for a trailhead and parking. In 2003, PARC purchased the surface rights to an additional two and a half miles of CSX Railroad right-of-way totaling 17.66 acres from Wadhams Road to Griswold Road. The trail is over 12.4 miles long and contains 160 acres. To date, the 640-foot Mill Creek Trestle has been decked and railed for pedestrians and bike riders. Three acres of land southeast of the Trestle was purchased to create a horse crossing at Mill Creek.





At the south end of the trail in Kimball Township, over five miles of trail have been paved starting at McLain Road running southeast to Griswold Road. The paved section of the trail passes through a developing residential area and is heavily used by residents.

In a joint effort with the St. Clair County Road Commission, a hybrid pedestrian signal was installed in 2010 where the trail crosses Wadhams Road. It was the first time this type of signal has been used for a trail crossing in Michigan. The signal prompts flashing lights to stop traffic when a pedestrian wishes to cross the road.

Designated parking areas are located at the Wadhams Road, Imlay City Road, Lapeer Road and Avoca Road trailheads. The non-motorized trail is open to walkers, bicyclists and equestrians.

### **Bridge to Bay Trail**

The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission is working in conjunction with 13 local units of government to develop a 54-mile paved trail from Lakeport State Park to New Baltimore. St. Clair County helps to plan and promote the trail while each local unit of government is responsible for constructing their section of the trail. Even though PARC plays an instrumental coordinating role in the development of the Bridge to Bay Trail, the property that makes up that trail is owned by various municipalities and townships. Most trail construction projects are funded by grants. PARC usually helps to fund the local match required for trail construction grants.

The Bridge to Bay Trail extends from St. Clair County's northern border; under the Blue Water Bridge; through Port Huron, Marysville, St. Clair, Marine City, and Algonac; and past state and municipal parks, museums, gazebos, and lighthouses. Sometimes the trail is within reach of the water's edge and sometimes a few miles inland. It connects communities together for walkers, joggers, strollers, and bicyclists of all ages. The trail varies from a ten-foot wide separated paved pathway in the right of way along a road, or a five-foot wide dedicated bike lane.

The trail can potentially link to the Wadhams to Avoca Trail within St. Clair County, the Discover Michigan Trail, the Macomb Orchard Trail, and the St. Clair Parkway Trail in Lambton, Ontario, Canada via ferry. As of 2017, roughly 25 miles of the 54-mile Bridge to Bay Trail is complete.

Funding for the Bridge to Bay Trail comes from the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Millage, local government funds, and grants. Grant money for the trail has been provided by the United States government through federal transportation grants, and by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF).

THE BLUEWAYS OF ST. CLAIR

One of the goals included in St. Clair County’s 2007-2011 Master Recreation Plan was to explore developing a system of water trails in St. Clair County. The St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC), in partnership with PARC, applied for and was granted a Michigan Coastal Zone Management Grant to create a ‘Blueways vision’ website for the shoreline of St. Clair County.

Research began in 2009 to find all the public access points along waterways in the County. Next, public input was gathered for popular paddling routes and put-ins. The website was built up with paddling routes, access pictures, information on restaurants, motels, museums and other points of interest. One will find information on the major rivers in the County, including the Black River, Belle River, Pine River, Lake Huron, St. Clair River, and the St. Clair River delta, which is the largest freshwater delta in North America.

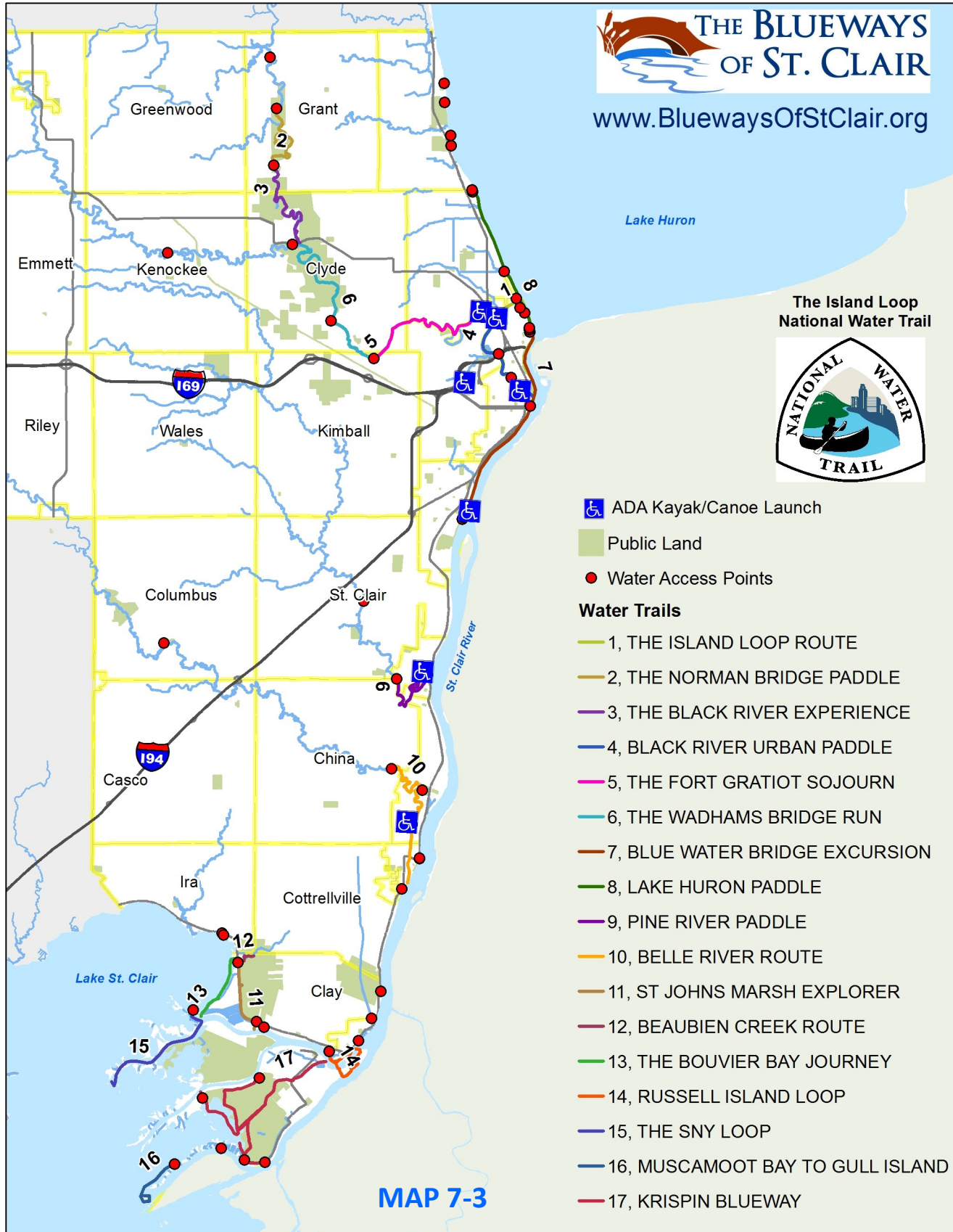
The Blueways website lists 17 different paddling routes, totaling 151 miles, in nine unique bodies of water and lots of valuable information related to paddling and shoreline recreation. The website is very dynamic, with driving directions between favorite points, aerial imagery maps, weather report links, and a “Birds Along the Blueway” section for birding enthusiasts. Check out St. Clair County’s Blueways website at [www.BluewaysOfStClair.org](http://www.BluewaysOfStClair.org).

Island Loop National Water Trail

The 10.2-mile Island Loop National Water Trail was the first national water trail to be designated in Michigan and the 14th in the United States. The trail makes a loop from the Black River, to the Black







River Canal, to Lake Huron, into the St. Clair River and back to the Black River. It also passes the oldest lighthouse in Michigan, the Thomas Edison Museum, the Huron Lightship Museum, and the Acheson Maritime Center. It also navigates between the United States and Canada for 2.5 miles and meanders through Fort Gratiot Township, Port Huron Township, and the City of Port Huron.

## PLANNING PROCESS AND PUBLIC INPUT

### THE PLANNING PROCESS

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The success of any planning process is reliant upon stakeholder involvement. Marine City has committed itself to pursue a proactive public outreach effort throughout the development of this plan. Efforts focused on soliciting community involvement to maximize awareness of the recreation planning process.

#### 2018-2022 Parks and Recreation Plan Development

The process that led to the development of this five-year Parks and Recreation Plan included:

- ▶ A decision by the Marine City Commission to update both the City's Master Plan and the Parks and Recreation Plan into a combined document.
- ▶ Contracting the services of the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission to manage the project and complete the update.
- ▶ A review of existing planning documents by the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission.
- ▶ Two online leadership surveys distributed to members of the Marine City Commission, Planning Commission, and other key stakeholders in City administration.
- ▶ A public visioning workshop held on July 19, 2016 held at the Washington Life Center to focus on the comprehensive Master Plan update.
- ▶ A brainstorming session on future land use in the City at the April 10, 2017 Planning Commission meeting.
- ▶ A public visioning workshop held on April 24, 2017 at the Marine City Fire Hall focused on parks and recreation in Marine City.
- ▶ Drafting of the combined Master Plan/Parks and Recreation Plan.
- ▶ Review of the combined Master Plan/Parks and Recreation Plan document by the Planning Commission and the Marine City Commission.
- ▶ A 63-day public review and comment period that began on October 27, 2017 and ended on December 29, 2017. The 63-day public review and comment period is statutorily required by Public Act 33 of 2008 (Michigan Planning Enabling Act) and included the 30-day review period required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for the review and comment on parks and recreation plans.
- ▶ A public hearing held on February 8, 2018 to receive additional citizen comments.
- ▶ Adoption of the Parks and Recreation Plan by the Marine City Planning Commission at its January 8, 2018 meeting.
- ▶ Adoption of the Parks and Recreation Plan by the Marine City Commission at its January 18, 2018 meeting.





- ▶ Transmission of the 2018-2022 Parks and Recreation Plan to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR).
- ▶ Transmission of the combined Master Plan/Parks and Recreation Plan to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) and the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission.

### OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC INPUT

Public input was essential for the development of the combined Master Plan/Parks and Recreation Plan for Marine City. The City hosted two public visioning workshops to provide residents and business owners with opportunities to brainstorm with their fellow citizens on the type of community they envision Marine City to be in the future.

#### Local Leadership Survey

At the start of this planning process in 2016, members of the City Commission, Planning Commission, City Administration, and other members of City boards and commissions were given an online survey to establish a framework on the key planning issues related to the update of the City's Master Plan. In early 2017, these stakeholders were once again given an online survey focused specifically on parks and recreation issues in Marine City. A summary of input from the leadership surveys can be found below.

#### Summary of input on parks and recreation issues from June 2016 Leadership Survey

- ▶ Marine City's waterfront location and access to the St. Clair and Belle Rivers are important assets for the community.
- ▶ The community needs more interactive public attractions, such as tall ship visits, public art exhibits, and pickleball tournaments.
- ▶ The City needs to provide residents with the ability to register and pay for recreation programs online.

- ▶ Improvements are needed within the City's recreational programming.
- ▶ I would like to see more playgrounds.
- ▶ The City is not leveraging its waterfront to its full potential.
- ▶ The waterfront needs boardwalk improvements.
- ▶ Improve the downtown park where teenagers gather and play. We need a gathering place for teens.
- ▶ The City needs more recreation opportunities for both kids and senior citizens.
- ▶ The City should explore the potential for a skate park.
- ▶ Make improvements to the beach, such as a splash pad, playground equipment, a handicapped-accessible kayak launch, a handicapped-accessible beach mat from the sidewalk to the water's edge, and aesthetic landscaping.
- ▶ We need to continue to take pride in our recreational assets and roads.
- ▶ The City needs more promotion and public awareness that Marine City is designated as a "Trail Town."

### Summary of input on parks and recreation issues from April 2017 Leadership Survey

- ▶ City leadership is generally satisfied with the recreational programs offered by the City and feel that the City should explore offering additional programming.
- ▶ The City needs benches and places to sit when visiting parks or taking kids to the playground.
- ▶ City parks are well-maintained and there is an adequate amount of parkland in Marine City.
- ▶ The City should explore adding amenities to the beach.
- ▶ There is a need for more parking at waterfront parks.
- ▶ Explore ways to increase handicapped-accessibility at City parks.
- ▶ The waterfront parks offer a spectacular view of the St. Clair River and passing ships.
- ▶ The playgrounds in the parks are fun and well-maintained.
- ▶ The trail system in Marine City is well-maintained and used frequently; it is internationally linked to Canada and connects to the Bridge to Bay Trail. Marine City has been awarded the title of being a "Trail Town" because of its land and water trails.
- ▶ The City needs lifeguards at the beach.
- ▶ There is a lack of restroom facilities downtown.
- ▶ The Recreation Department does not have their own community center. It would be nice to have a regional community building for the City and townships to share.
- ▶ The City needs to make sure teens and seniors have sufficient areas and activities available.

### **Public Visioning Workshop #1: July 19, 2016 - Washington Life Center**

A Master Plan visioning workshop was held on July 19, 2016 at the Washington Life Center. A total of 28 people attended the workshop. During the meeting, attendees were split up into groups to have smaller discussions on a variety of brainstorming questions. Relevant parks and recreation input included:

### What do you love about living in Marine City?

- ▶ Freighters
- ▶ People
- ▶ Theaters/Entertainment
- ▶ Beaches and Parks





- ▶ Waterfront
- ▶ International crossing
- ▶ Boating/Kayaking
- ▶ Boardwalk within a downtown district
- ▶ Walkable community
- ▶ Small town feel

What are the most important issues the parks and recreation plan should address?

- ▶ The City needs a transient dock/marina facility
- ▶ Bicycling/Walkability
- ▶ Kayaking
- ▶ Refocus recreation
- ▶ We need park development plans - develop what we have
- ▶ Need more senior-friendly amenities - ADA, activities, access
- ▶ Splash pad
- ▶ Lack of camping facilities and vacation tourism
- ▶ Waterfront access for canoeing and kayaking
- ▶ Trail towns working with businesses
- ▶ Get schools and recreation department together for kids

Imagine it is 25 years from now and you are flying over Marine City. Describe what you see:

- ▶ Pedestrian-friendly
- ▶ Our parks are full
- ▶ Community vegetable farm
- ▶ Fully accessible waterways
- ▶ Airboat/ferry
- ▶ More transportation/ride sharing/bike rental
- ▶ Safety paths/bike trails

## MARINE CITY MASTER PLAN

- ▶ Transient boat wells
- ▶ People walking around and enjoying the community
- ▶ A summer creative arts center
- ▶ A harbor/deep water port with international connections
- ▶ Challenge courses/Recreation camping (outdoor connections)
- ▶ Ice arena
- ▶ Green areas for socializing
- ▶ Indoor recreation complex
- ▶ Water park for adults
- ▶ Recreational vehicle (RV) park
- ▶ Outdoor learning environment

### **Public Visioning Workshop #2: April 24, 2017 - Marine City Fire Hall**

A parks and recreation visioning workshop was held on April 24, 2017 at the Marine City Fire Hall. A total of 16 people attended the workshop. During this workshop, attendees were presented with a series of discussion topics and questions to garner input on parks and recreation in Marine City. Input from this open discussion included:

#### Trail Towns:

- ▶ Facility by bridge closest to downtown where kayakers can tie off
- ▶ Road endings are an opportunity to create water access points
- ▶ Kayak launch at the north end of the beach
- ▶ Need kayak access on Belle River as the St. Clair River is not for beginners
- ▶ Lacking signage, specifically wayfinding signs pointing out downtown
- ▶ Bridge Street - kayak launch on Belle River

#### Waterfront Parks:

- ▶ Walkway around Marine City beach
- ▶ Open area behind beach is a possibility for tent only camping





- ▶ Designate a specific area in parks for memorials
- ▶ Update park inventory
- ▶ Dock along St. Clair River for tall ships, etc.
- ▶ Broadway, Drake, Nautical Parks have outside plugs for charging devices
- ▶ Add more parking - explore angled parking instead of parallel parking

### Interior Parks:

- ▶ *Safe Routes to School* is addressing safe pedestrian access to King Road Park
- ▶ Need a dog park
- ▶ Paved parking and camping in King Road Park
- ▶ Explore possibility to acquire Washington Life Center park
- ▶ Leasing Washington Life Center for playground or other opportunities
  - Building under utilized
  - Professional Assessment of the building and space
- ▶ Walkway around King Road Park, shade, Basketball courts re-done, lighting for ice rink
- ▶ Paved driveways
- ▶ Staffing issues may arise if a splash pad is installed
- ▶ More toddler ideas at Tot Lot
- ▶ Community Garden
- ▶ Add a swimming pool or splash pad
- ▶ Opportunities for pocket parks

### Recreation Programming:

- ▶ Limited funding can be problematic
- ▶ More teen programs (14-17 year old) and more for young professionals
- ▶ Programming for young couples with toddlers
- ▶ Opportunity for an Ambassador Program to train young people
- ▶ Shuffleboard
- ▶ If staffing is sufficient, more bus trips
- ▶ Wi-Fi in parks/Charging stations
- ▶ Three parks have power and availability to charge
- ▶ Programs are constantly evolving based on attendance
- ▶ Recently opened a preschool
- ▶ The problem is lack of staffing
- ▶ Slow Roll bicycle events and/or walking clubs with neighboring communities

### Kids/Youth:

- ▶ More opportunities for young couples with toddlers
- ▶ Age appropriate programming
- ▶ Splash pad
- ▶ Tot Lot
- ▶ Water play
- ▶ Refrigerated ice rink
- ▶ Playgroups at parks

# MARINE CITY MASTER PLAN



- ▶ Kindergarten to 2nd grade snug bugs
- ▶ K-2nd grade theater classes, arts and culture

## Aging Population/Elderly:

- ▶ Washington Life Center has extensive programming
- ▶ Senior pool program
- ▶ Physical therapy, recreational therapy
- ▶ Knights of Columbus does bingo
- ▶ Card party at church
- ▶ Nutrition and transportation

## Parks as a Showcase of the Community to Draw in Residents:

- ▶ Best assets – parks and rivers
- ▶ Having a downtown
- ▶ Economic aspect of trails – utilize more
- ▶ Partner with restaurants/businesses for bike racks/charging stations/fix-it stations
- ▶ Signage/advertising
- ▶ Partnership with Algonac State Park
  - Transportation to and from Algonac State Park
- ▶ Freighter watching
- ▶ Grant money for kiosk at Lighthouse Park or an application specific to Marine City
- ▶ Partner with other organizations
- ▶ Don't forget other parts of town besides downtown

## Other Ideas for the Future:

- ▶ Marina
- ▶ Parking structure
- ▶ Water park
- ▶ Something for parents as well as kids
- ▶ Regional recreation center with amenities - gym and pool
- ▶ Dock on the St. Clair River
- ▶ Fishing pier
- ▶ BMX bicycle track at King Road Park
- ▶ Zip line
- ▶ Tours of lighthouse



## PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

### ***KEY ISSUES RELATED TO PARKS AND RECREATION IN MARINE CITY***

In the coming years, there are a number of trends in Marine City that will have important implications for recreation planning, including:

#### **Aging Population**

The first issue is that Marine City will continue to be the home for an increasingly aging population. The median age of City residents is 43.4 years and more than half (55%) of the population is at least 40 years old.

The aging of the “baby boom” generation is changing the age structure of communities across the state of Michigan. Those born during the baby boom of 1946 to 1964 created a bulge of persons in their forties and fifties. In the 2010 Census, the largest age group was persons aged 45 to 54. As the largest age cohort moves into their fifties and sixties in the next decade and their seventies and eighties in the following decade, there will be a significant increase in the already large elderly population.

As more and more residents retire, there will be an increased number of older residents with the time and income to spend on leisure. This is true for a number of reasons. More people are living longer, more people are retiring earlier, and retirees are more active in lifestyle than ever before.

#### **“Brain Drain”**

There are very few 20 to 24 year olds in Marine City and St. Clair County. This information suggests that few persons this age stay after high school graduation. The loss of young adults in the State of Michigan has been well-documented in recent years. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, there were 179 residents (4.3%) between the ages of 20 to 24. The exodus of young adults is continuing in the present decade. This loss of college-aged young adults and college graduates has been nicknamed the “brain drain.”

#### **Recreational Opportunities for Youth**

According to the 2015 American Community Survey, the greatest percentage of the City’s population, 31.8%, is within the 45 to 64 age group. The next largest percentage of the population, 29%, is under 24 years of age and 11.5% are under 10 years old, which suggests that, in addition to providing more services for the elderly within the community, Marine City may also need to target more recreational opportunities toward young children and teenagers.

#### **Economic Development and Placemaking**

Quality of life can be defined in many ways; however, most definitions are likely to include parks and recreation opportunities as a major component. On a global scale, there are no great communities that do not have great parks and recreation amenities. In today’s world, economic development efforts start with being able to market a high quality of life. Companies now look beyond simple infrastructure

concerns when deciding where to locate. They look for areas that offer recreational, cultural, and entertainment amenities – all things that factor into a high quality of life. Companies go where talented individuals are located. Talented individuals choose where they live based on quality of life issues.

The term “placemaking” can mean many different things. When it comes to community planning, it often means simply creating better community spaces. By creating more functional, interesting places, shops and businesses can thrive, jobs can be created and sustained, and the already high quality of life in Marine City will increase. Recreation plays a huge role in effective placemaking, because people want to live in places that have options for recreation, options for entertainment, and other options for how they spend their time.

Downtown Marine City has experienced a great deal of placemaking success over the past five years. The establishment of three theaters and a variety of retail shops, bars, and restaurants has transformed downtown Marine City into a thriving center of activity. These economic development efforts have been bolstered by the fact that Marine City’s downtown waterfront is lined with a number of beautiful riverfront parks.

### ***FACILITIES COMPARISON TO NATIONAL RECREATION STANDARDS***

The existing recreation facilities were compared against the guidelines set by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) to determine if the existing facilities are adequate to meet the needs of residents in comparison to national standards. Table 7-5 identifies the NRPA guideline for each facility type, the recommended number of facilities and the existing number of facilities, and the surplus or deficiency.



# PARKS & RECREATION PLAN 2018-2022

**TABLE 7-5: PARKLAND ACREAGE AND FACILITY ANALYSIS**

Park/Activity	Standard	Population (2010)	Population (2040)	Recommended Size/ 2010 Population	Recommended Size/ 2040 Population	Existing Acreage/ Facilities
Community Park	5-8 acres per 1,000	4,248	4,600	21 - 33 acres	23 - 36 acres	41
Neighborhood Park	1-2 acres per 1,000 people	4,248	4,600	4 - 8 acres	4 - 9 acres	41
Children's Play Lot	1 lot per 3,000 people	4,248	4,600	1 lot	1 lot	4 lots
Basketball Court	1 court per 10,000	4,248	4,600	1 court	1 court	1 court
Softball/Baseball Diamond	1 diamond per 5,000 people	4,248	4,600	1 diamond	1 diamond	4 diamonds
Running Track	1 track per 20,000 people	4,248	4,600	1 track	1 track	1 track (school)
Swimming Pool	1 pool per 20,000 people	4,248	4,600	1 pool	1 pool	1 pool (school)
Nature Trails	1 trail per 20,000	4,248	4,600	1 trail	1 trail	1 trail
Tennis Court	1 court per 2,000	4,248	4,600	2 courts	2 courts	2 courts
Soccer Field	1 field per 10,000	4,248	4,600	1 field	1 field	-
Ice Rink	1 rink per 100,000	4,248	4,600	1 rink	1 rink	1 rink
Volleyball	1 court per 5,000	4,248	4,600	1 court	1 court	1 court

Source: Lancaster, R.A., Ed. *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*. Alexandria, VA: NRPA, 1983; Mertes, J.D. and J.R. Hall. *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*. Alexandria, VA: NRPA, 1995.

## RECREATION GOALS AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS

### RECREATION GOALS AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Marine City's Parks and Recreation Plan is a blueprint for the future, guiding recreation investment and improvements in the community for the next five to ten years. Below is a summary of the goals and strategic actions for the future of parks and recreation in Marine City. For each goal, the community identified specific strategic actions to help achieve the goal.

1

## **Provide parks and recreation opportunities and amenities for citizens of all ages and abilities.**

- ▶ Anticipate the needs of children, senior citizens, and young professionals and plan recreation facilities accordingly.
- ▶ Explore opportunities to increase barrier free accessibility at all City-owned parks and recreation facilities to ensure ADA-compliance.
- ▶ Consider offering age-specific programming based on the changing demographics of the community.
- ▶ Regularly engage citizens of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to garner input on future parks and recreation amenities and activities.
- ▶ Work to increase and maintain public access to the St. Clair River and the Belle River.
- ▶ Attract children and young families into Marine City with quality recreational experiences

2

## **Promote Marine City as a waterfront “Trail Town” that offers experiences other communities cannot.**

- ▶ Capitalize on Marine City’s unique waterfront location along an international border with Canada.
- ▶ Increase access and infrastructure for hike/bike trails, canoeing and kayaking, boating, swimming, camping, and other outdoor activities.
- ▶ Strengthen the connection between parks and recreation and economic development to enhance all placemaking efforts.
- ▶ Explore opportunities for developing a marina/transient docking in Marine City.
- ▶ Implement a robust wayfinding system in the downtown and make connections between land and water trails, the downtown, and neighborhoods.
- ▶ Continue to hold signature community events and festivals.
- ▶ Work with community partners to establish, promote, and grow a “Michigan Stage Festival” in Marine City.

3

## **Ensure Marine City has adequate financial resources for parks and recreation facilities and programs.**

- ▶ Develop long-term funding plans for the most effective use of St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Millage funds.
- ▶ Aggressively pursue public and private grants and donations.
- ▶ Encourage cooperation amongst communities regarding the joint use of existing and future recreation facilities.



4

## **Deliver outstanding recreation programming and quality public services to all stakeholders.**

- ▶ Continue to offer programming that enriches citizen's lives by providing social activity, physical activity, educational enhancement, and leisure enjoyment.
- ▶ Identify new programs that appeal specifically to kids, young professionals, and the elderly population. Offer programs that cover each of those age cohorts.
- ▶ Stay abreast of national and state recreation trends to learn about new programs and how people are recreating.
- ▶ Monitor and adjust program offerings to reflect changing recreation preferences.
- ▶ Identify potential partnerships to offer new programs.
- ▶ Encourage cooperation with the East China School District in providing school facility usage for community recreation programs.

5

## **Develop existing park facilities with features and amenities that bring citizens and visitors back on a regular basis.**

- ▶ Explore active recreation options for King Road Park, such as a BMX bicycle track, a disc golf course, a dog park, and other in-demand amenities.
- ▶ Develop ADA-accessible walkways and trails to enhance connectivity.
- ▶ Ensure parks and facilities are well-maintained and safe at all times.
- ▶ Develop a long-term plan for developing camping facilities at an appropriate location.
- ▶ Explore adding new amenities to Marine City Beach.
- ▶ Identify a potential location to develop a Splash Pad.
- ▶ Ensure adequate parking is available for park patrons.
- ▶ Improve and maintain park infrastructure. Replace high maintenance items with more sustainable, low maintenance items.
- ▶ Add benches in appropriate locations throughout City parks.
- ▶ Explore offering free Wi-Fi and charging stations in City parks.

6

## **Support the continued development and utilization of an interconnected system of land and water trails in Marine City and beyond.**

- ▶ Support the continued development of the Bridge to Bay Trail.
- ▶ Explore opportunities and partnerships to add new connector trails to existing bike trails and water trails.
- ▶ Ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) along all trail routes.
- ▶ Continue utilizing Safe Routes to School funding for implementation of trail extensions in appropriate areas.
- ▶ Develop a local Complete Streets policy to consider multi-modal aspects of future road projects.
- ▶ Promote walking as a means of transportation and highlight alternatives to vehicle transportation.
- ▶ Improve walkability and mobility throughout the community.

## 7

### Expand the range of recreation facilities available to residents.

- ▶ Develop a long-term plan to utilize the Guy Center as a community center for people of all ages.
- ▶ Explore the feasibility of acquiring the large tract of property between DeGurse and Gladys Street for development of a municipal park.
- ▶ Provide neighborhood level pocket parks to meet the needs of neighborhoods citywide.
- ▶ Evaluate and meet the need of recreation facilities in relationship to the specific growth of individual programs or changing community interests.
- ▶ Explore opportunities to transform waterfront street ends into parks or access points.

## ACTION PLAN: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

### INTRODUCTION

Through public input, planning analysis, and input from City officials, the planning goals and strategic actions identified earlier in this Action Plan established a framework for capital improvements at park and trail facilities and enhancements to recreation programming intended to bolster the quality of life for residents.

Strategic actions that require significant capital investment have been organized into a Capital Improvement Program. The timing of these projects will be driven by, changed by, or eliminated depending on the City's fiscal situation, regional economic conditions, and available funding.

### FUNDING SOURCES

**DON:** Donation

**MDNR:** Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment

**GF:** General Fund

**HPTC:** Historic Preservation Tax Credits

**LWCF:** Land & Water Conservation Fund

**MDOT:** Michigan Department of Transportation

**MNRTF:** Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund

**PARC:** St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Millage Distribution

**SHPO:** Michigan State Historic Preservation Office

**TAP:** Transportation Alternatives Program (MDOT & SEMCOG)



# PARKS & RECREATION PLAN 2018-2022

**TABLE 7-6: PARKS AND RECREATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

Project	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding
Downtown Riverwalk Construction - Phase II	\$381,000	MDNR, TAP, GF, PARC
Downtown Riverwalk Construction - Phase III	\$370,000	MDNR, TAP, GF, PARC
Nautical Mile Park Expansion	\$365,000	MDNR, LWCF, GF, PARC
Bicycle Path Construction	\$550,000	MDNR, TAP, GF, PARC
300 Broadway Restoration Project	\$2,500,000	MDNR, SHPO, GF, DON, HPTC
Splash Pad Construction	\$450,000	MDNR, LWCF, GF, DON, PARC
King Road Park Utility Improvements and Lighting	\$100,000	MDNR, GF, PARC
Marine City Beach Improvements and Lighting	\$21,000	MDNR, MDEQ, LWCF, GF, PARC
King Road Park Parking Lot Paving	\$150,000	MDNR, GF, PARC
King Road Park Bike Racks, Cement Pads & Playground Improvements	\$30,000	MDNR, TAP, GF, PARC
Pecche Island Rear Range Lighthouse - Interior Repairs and Painting	\$50,000	MDNR, MDEQ, GF, PARC
Public/Private partnership or acquisition of property for transient boat dockage	\$500,000	MDNR, MDEQ, GF, PARC, Donation
Strategic acquisition of property for potential development of municipal park	TBD	MDNR, GF, PARC, Donation

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