



City of St. Johns

5 Year Recreation Plan

2016-2020



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INTRODUCTION

The City of St. Johns is a tight-knit community that is invested in and proud of its park system. The Parks and Recreation Board has worked with the community to assess need and develop a plan of action for the next five years. This plan supports the goals of the Michigan DNR and is built around the guidelines of the City of St. Johns Parks and Recreation Mission Statement:

“Promote a broad, year round range of quality indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities to City residents of all ages and physical and mental abilities and encourage inter-generational participation in activities.”

The City of St. Johns Parks and Recreation Board has provided multiple opportunities for the general public to participate in the development of this plan and feel that this plan will address current and future parks and recreation needs of the community, given the fiscal limitations of the City. The City of St. Johns Parks and Recreation Master Plan was prepared based on the guidelines set forth by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Recreation Division. This document provides the information necessary to help the City visualize their short and long term parks and recreation goals.

This plan has been realized through a comprehensive planning process that addresses the parks and recreation needs of the City of St. Johns, and the greater community, and in addition establishes priorities for recreation development.

The City of St. Johns Parks and Recreation Board is proud of the work they have accomplished alongside the community with regards to facility improvements and programs. Since 2000 the following improvements have been made to the facilities within the City either with City tax dollars, grants or donated material, labor or money.

- Fantasy Forest Playground - City Park
- Performance Shell -City Park
- New Pavilion - City Park
- Handicapped viewing area - City Park
- Lest Thy Be Forgotten Memorial – City Park
- Main Pavilion Ceiling redone – City Park
- BMX Track – Main Park
- Pavilion Improvement- Main Park
- Tennis/Basketball Court addition – City Park
- Jaycee Park Renovation
- Kibbee St. Park Renovation
- Rotary Gazebo – Rotary Park
- Farmers Market Pavilion – Rotary Park
- Water Spray Park – City Park
- New Pavilion – St. Johns Depot
- Land acquired for a trailhead park at Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail.

Since 2000 the offerings for recreational activity have also increased. The City has gone from offering about 20 programs a year to over 55 programs a year.



COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

When beginning the planning process, it is important to first examine the population characteristics of a community. The characteristics and trends of a community provide important indicators as to what future recreation needs should be planned to accommodate. These factors include a variety of social and physical factors. Examinations of these provide a firm rational for basing future recreation decisions upon.

Location

The City of St. Johns serves as the county seat for Clinton County, Michigan. It is located approximately eighteen miles north of Lansing. Its location and main thoroughfares, M-21 and US-27, allow St. John to be a hub to central Michigan. The total population within the City of St. Johns is 7865, but the parks serve the Clinton County population of 75,382. (2010 Census)

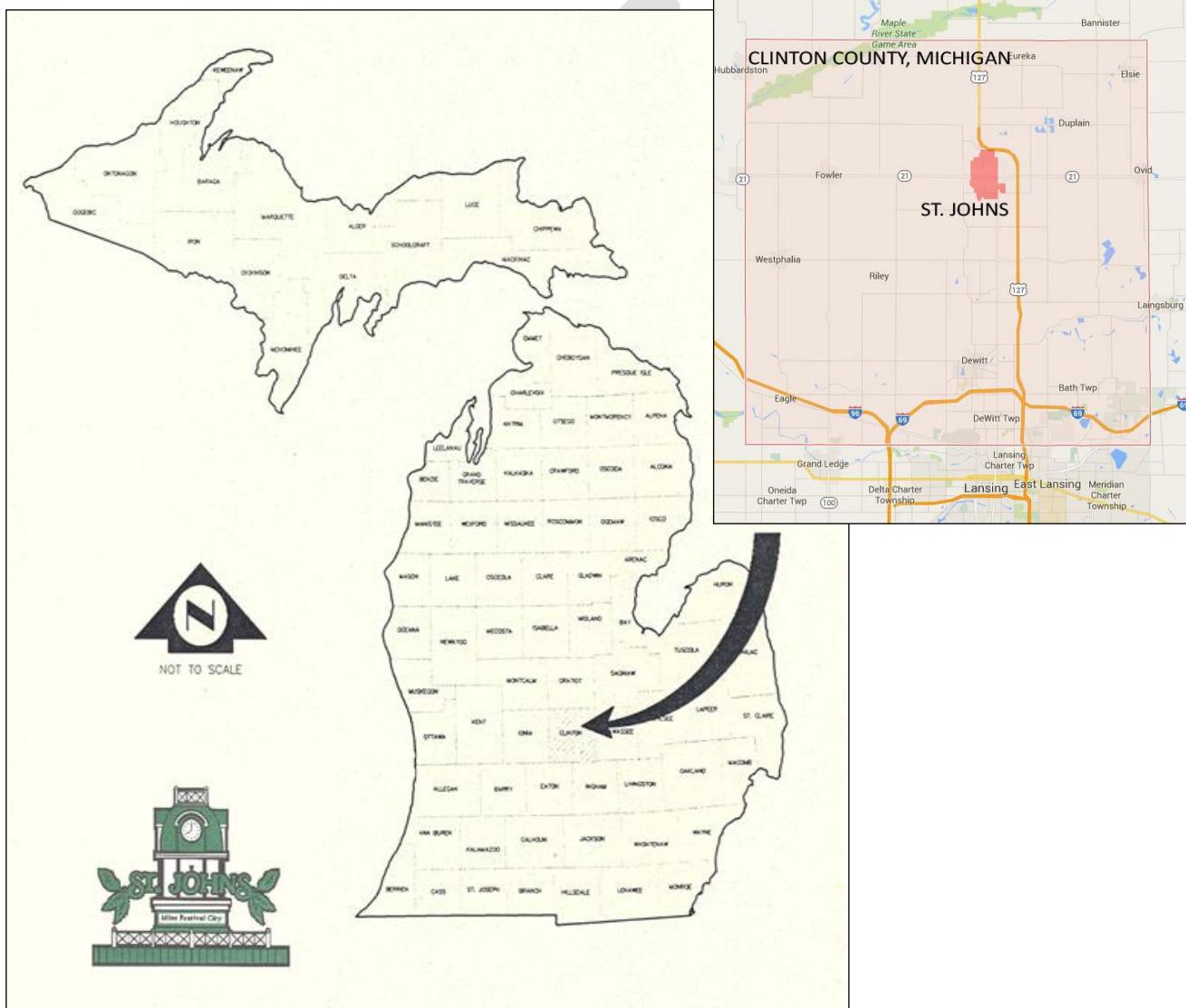


Figure 1: City of St. Johns Location



Population Age

Figure 2 displays the age classifications of area residents in five-year increments. The median age for the City is 37.2. The greatest percentage (60%) of the City of St. Johns population is under the age of 45. The distribution of the City of St. Johns population is more representative of an obelisk, than the typical pyramid with the young at the bottom. This depiction related that the age cohorts remain fairly high and equal, until age 45. At that point the percentage of people in each age classification begins to taper off. This equates to a relatively high demand for family oriented recreation. Over the next 20 years, the City of St. Johns is likely to experience a shift in demand with an increasing need for senior recreation activities. At this time, the board has recognized a lack of recreation opportunities for the teen age demographic and the senior citizen demographic.

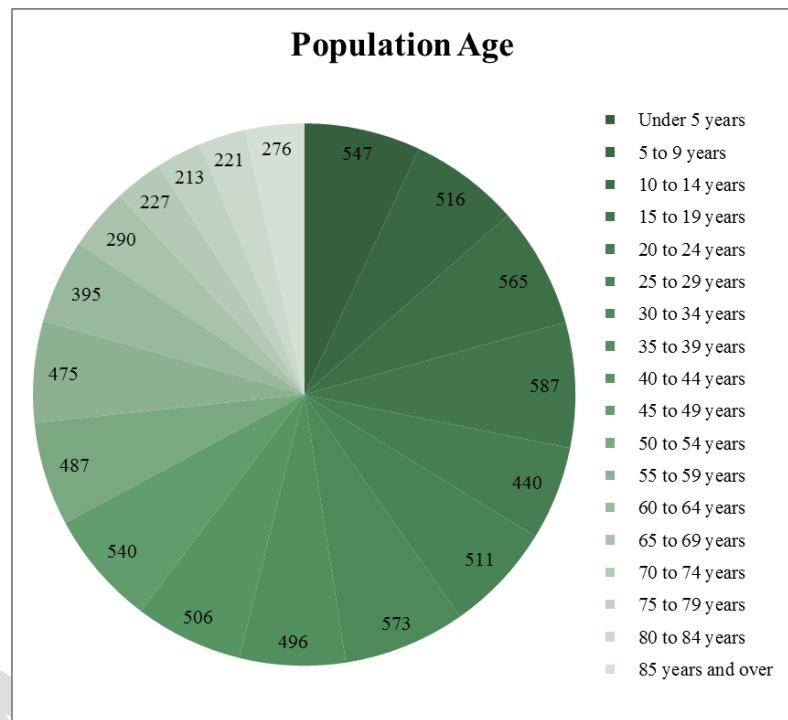


Figure 2: City of St. Johns Population and Age

Senior Citizens

20.6% of St. Johns residents are 60 years or older, leading to a relatively high demand for senior citizen activities and programs. Currently, senior citizen recreation programs are limited and the citizens are looking to expand these programs in the future. Many aspects of city parks are accessible to seniors, and popular events like concerts in the park help fill recreational needs of this demographic.

Disability

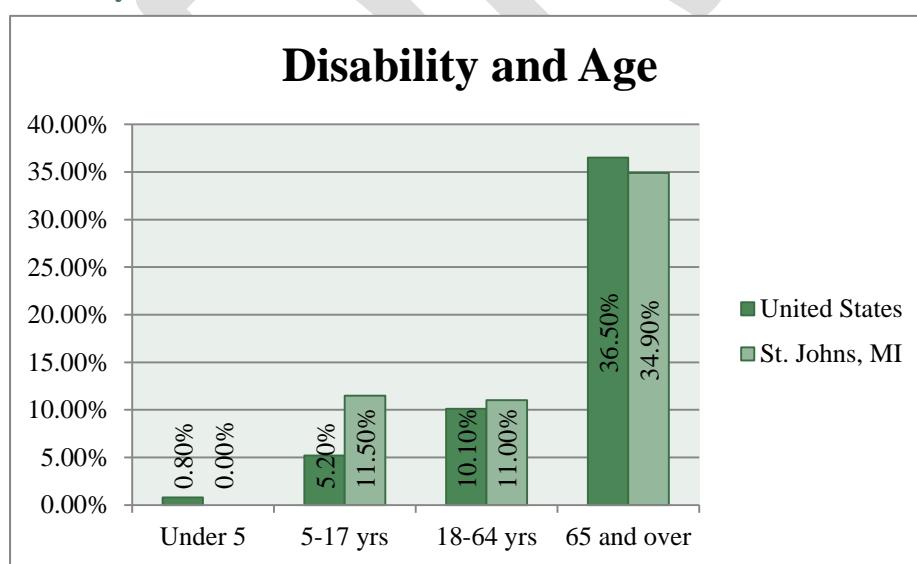


Figure 3: Disability and Age

It is the goal of the City of St. Johns to design with the full range of human abilities in mind. The total percentage of citizens classified as disabled in St. Johns is 27.7%, slightly higher than the US average of 24.2%. It is clear than in any case, design that incorporates accessible features into recreation opportunities is preferable.

Figure 3 compares the age distribution of disabled individuals in St. Johns vs. the United States. It is shown that St. Johns has almost double the average distribution of 5-17 year



olds with disabilities. It becomes especially critical to provide opportunities for this demographic in any future design project. The highest percentage of disabled individuals are 65 and over, consistent with the US average.

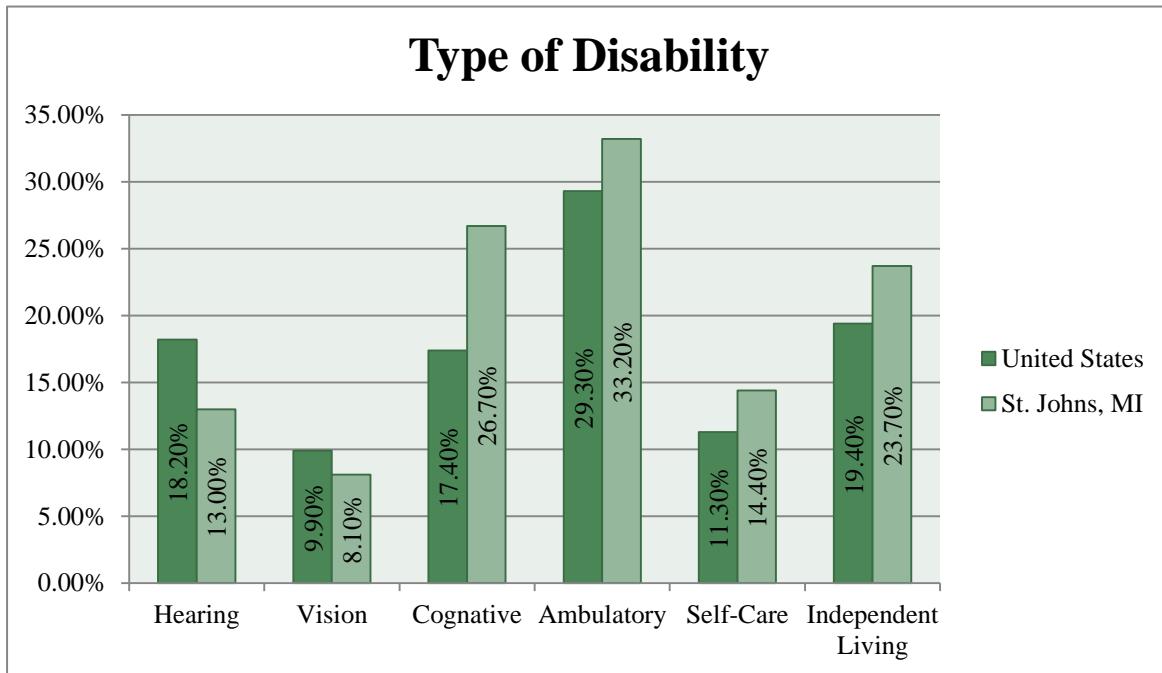


Figure 4: Type of Disability

Figure 4 shows an estimate from the US Census exploring the distribution of different types of disability in the City of St. Johns as compared to the US. The largest group in both the City of St. Johns and the US are those with ambulatory disability, making the ease of navigating city parks a high priority. Whether this ambulatory disability requires a wheelchair or careful, easy foot placement, the circulation systems within the parks should be evaluated and streamlined wherever possible. Creative recreation opportunities should be developed to involve all disabled individuals. The percentage of individuals with cognitive disabilities is significantly higher in the City of St. Johns than the US (26.7% and 17.4% respectively.) The city may choose to apply special focus on additional improvements and developments in a way that facilitates use by those with differing mental capabilities as well as physical.



ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Roles of Commissions and Advisory Boards, Staff Description, and Organizational Chart

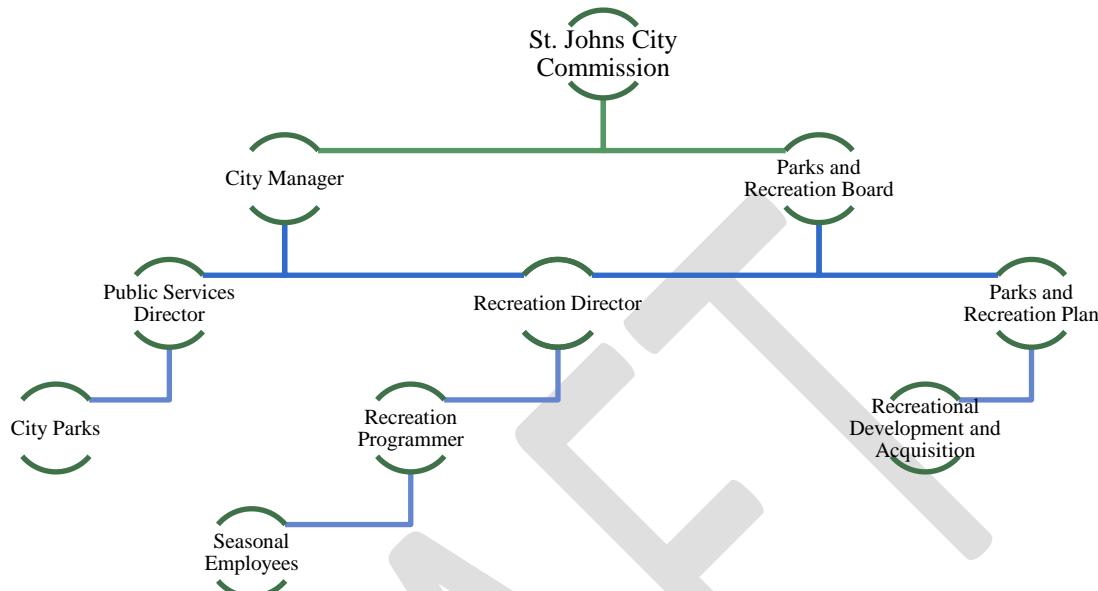


Figure 5: Administrative Structure

The City of St. Johns is a home rule city, with a commission / city manager form of government. Five City Commissioners are elected to overlapping four-year terms. The City Commission sets the policies and budgets for all City functions, including recreation. The Commission allocates funds for operations, maintenance, and capital improvements. The Commission also hires the City Manager and other City staff responsible for implementing the Commissions policies and operating City departments. This board of commissioners is enabled by Act 1905 PA 157; Township Parks and Places of Recreation.

The City Manager is responsible for and oversees the day-to-day operations of the City. They advise and consult with the City Commission and implement their decisions. The Public Services Director reports to the City Manager. They are responsible for maintenance of the parks, including equipment and buildings. The City Manager also oversees the Recreation Director. Recreation programs are administered by the Recreation Department, which is run by the Recreation Programmer. They supervise the Recreation Programmer, Pool Manager and other seasonal employees and provide staff support to the Parks and Recreation Board.

The City of St. Johns has a seven member Parks and Recreation Board. The City Commission established the Parks and Recreation Board in 1969 and follows policies and bylaws passed during their November 7, 2002 meeting. The City Commission appoints the members of the Board for staggered two-year terms. Members may be reappointed. There is no requirement for being appointed other than being City resident or owning a business in the City Limits. The City Commission always likes to have a City Commissioner and a representative of the school district on the Board. Other members are made up of civic leaders, educators, youth service professionals, business owners and recreation program participants.

The Parks and Recreation Board is an advisory board. It reviews the City's programs, facilities, budgets, special requests, and other items requested by the City Commission. The Board makes recommendations to the City Commission on programs and policies. The City Commission has the authority to commit funds, accept grants, and acquire land.



Annual Budgets 2015-2020

TABLE 1 City of St. Johns Projected Budget		
NAME	PARKS	RECREATION
2015-2016 (Actual)	\$261,415	\$140,647
2016-2017	\$151,650	\$142,000
2017-2018	\$156,650	\$144,000
2018-2019	\$162,650	\$146,000
2019-2020	\$162,650	\$148,000

Current Funding Sources

Monies that make up the budget come from the city's general fund. The Recreation Department budget, which funds recreation programming in the City parks and other facilities, has averaged \$122,400 over the last five years. The Parks Department which funds repair and maintenance of City parks has fluctuated over the years as larger improvements have been completed, but averaged \$175,600.

Volunteers

Volunteers play a vital role in the City of St. Johns. Since 2000, volunteers have been the driving force behind major building projects in the main City Park. In 2000, a group of area residents raised over \$110,000 for a wooden play structure. In 2004, another group of committed residents raised over \$100,000 for a performance shell to replace an existing shell that was outdated and undersized. Recently, a group of citizens was able to raise over \$246,100 (including foundation grants) to replace the failing City Pool with a new spray park, complete in 2015.

Volunteers are also important in the Adopt-a-Park program as well as coaches for many of the recreational programs.

Relationships; schools, public agencies, private organizations

The City Recreation Department has a good relationship with many of the other organizations in and around the city. There is a good working relationship between the School District and the City. Each uses the other's facilities for some of their programs. There is regular communication between the school and the City to improve the programs and resolve any problems. In the summer of 2010 the recreation department used the school district's indoor pool for swim lessons, open swim and lap swim. Since the outdoor pool at the City Park closed in 2009, all aquatic recreation programs have taken place at the high school pool. The Parks and Recreation Board includes the Facilities Director for the school and the city and school district have been working together to transfer the community education programs run by the school to the recreation department in order to save costs and eliminate duplication of services. The School Board and City Commission meet as needed to discuss issues of



importance between the two. Upper management for the city and school staff meet more regularly. The city and township subcommittees also conduct regular meetings.

The City Recreation Department works with the St. Johns Youth Baseball Organization by sharing facilities and equipment. We also work with Basketball University LLC to provide basketball instruction to our youth. Our adult exercise classes use local instructor to lead these programs.

The Recreation Department has taken on a larger role with St. Johns Mint Festival by offering a Co-ed Kickball, women's and men's slow-pitch softball tournament and co-ed volleyball tournaments.

Over the years the Recreation Department has worked with the Kiwanis Club, Jaycee Club, Rotary Club, various St. Johns High School Teams/Clubs, Chamber of Commerce, Clinton County RESA, Michigan Works – St. Johns and numerous businesses in St. Johns.



RECREATION INVENTORY

Methods

The recreation inventory began with a review of the City of St. Johns 2011-2015 Recreation Masterplan. Significant changes in the park system, such as the new spray park and other improvements, were recorded and updated. A tour of all City park facilities was conducted, comparing the previous plan's inventory to the existing park facilities. The inventory was updated accordingly.

Location Map

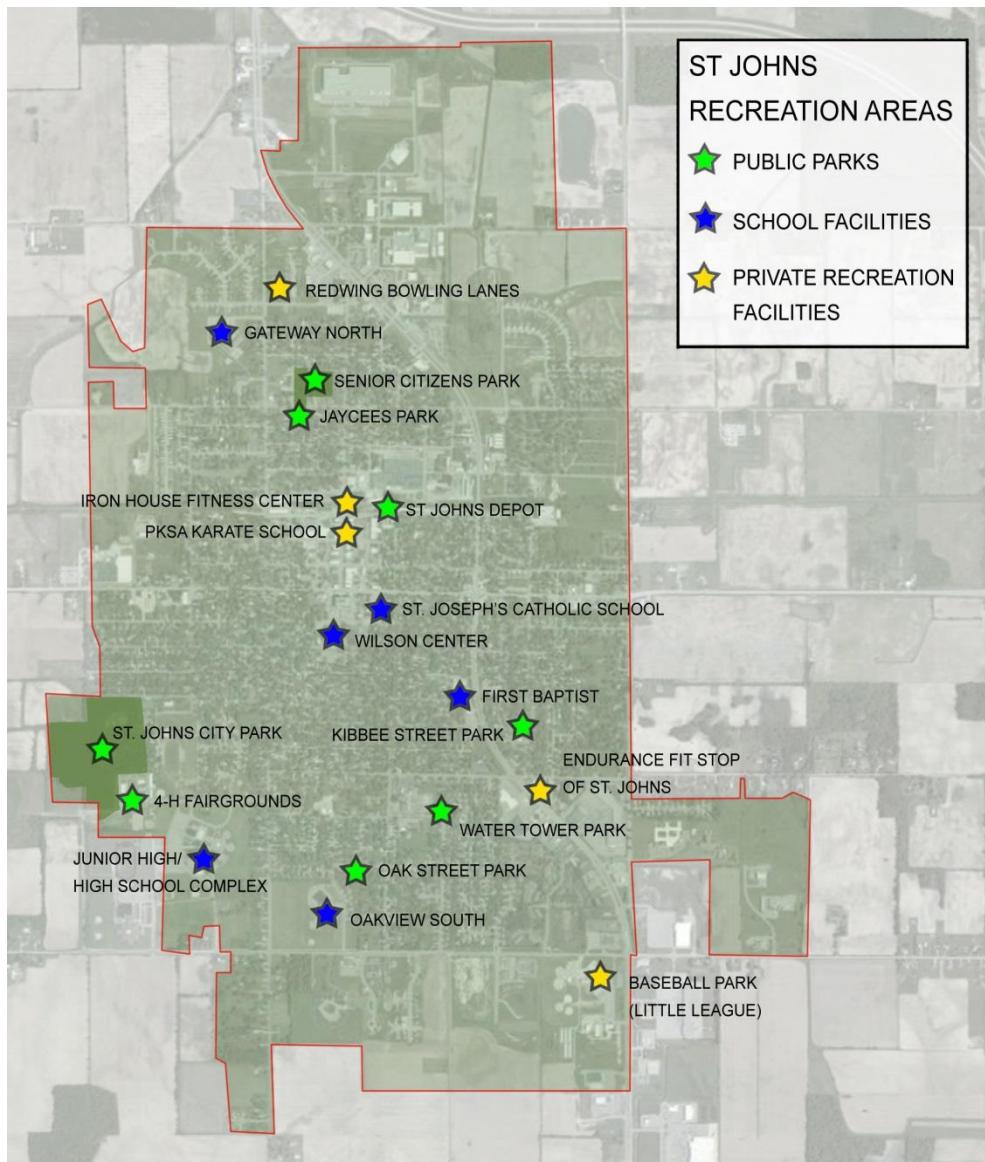


Figure 6: St. Johns Recreation Locations



Park Inventory

The parks and recreation facilities of the City of St. Johns were surveyed and classified into an inventory, which will be used as a basis for determining need for specific recreational facilities within the City. The inventory has been broken into multiple categories including regional, public, school, and private facilities. This list was compiled by using the previous Parks and Recreation Master Plan, other City Resources and Clinton County 2015-2019 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

Regional Facilities

On a regional basis, the City of St. Johns is within 20 miles of several regional facilities (Table 2). These facilities mainly provide opportunities for recreational activities related to rivers. Sleepy Hollow State Park provides numerous water related recreation activities, including fishing, boating, hiking, cross-country skiing, camping, and swimming.

TABLE 2
City of St. Johns **REGIONAL** Public Recreational Facilities Inventory

NAME	FACILITIES AVAILABLE
Looking Glass River	Boat Launch
Maple River	Boat Launch
Maple River State Game Area	Observation Deck
Grand River	Boat Launch
Muskrat Lake	Fishing, Boat Launch
Sleepy Hollow State Park	Fishing, Boating, Hiking, Cross-Country Skiing, Camping, and Swimming Beach
Francis Motz County Park	Sand Beach and Swimming Area, Beach house with 7 Unisex Restrooms, Paved Walkways and Parking Lot, Picnic Tables, Grills, Fishing Pier and a Covered Pavilion.
Clinton Lakes	272-acre property, fishing, hiking trails, nature watching. -Big Clinton Lake - 90-acre lake found within Clinton Lakes County Park -Little Clinton Lake - 12-acre lake found within Clinton Lakes County Park



Local Facilities

The following table is a comprehensive list of public and private recreational facilities within the City of St. Johns.

In St. Johns, just as in many Michigan communities, the local schools provide a valuable resource of recreational facilities and programs to the community. For this reason, an inventory of the school facilities has been included in the inventory.

Private recreational facilities, while generally pay-per use, provide an excellent source for recreational opportunities that help to alleviate the pressures on public facilities. An inventory of the private recreational facilities in the City of St. Johns was also included as part of the local facilities inventory.

TABLE 3 City of St. Johns LOCAL Recreational Facilities Inventory		
NAME	FACILITIES AVAILABLE	
Public Facilities		
Jaycee Park – Mini-Park An area for families to play and exercise.	Playground Equipment Drinking Fountain Benches	Picnic Table Grills (2)
Kibbee Street Park - Mini-Park An area for families to play and exercise.	Playground Equipment Benches Drinking Fountain Picnic Table	Grill Basketball Hoop Bike Racks
Oak Street Park – Mini-Park An area for families to play and exercise.	Playground Equipment Open Play Area Picnic Table	
Senior Citizen Park-Mini-Park Passive, relaxing recreation.	Basketball Hoops (2) Tennis Courts (2) Benches Picnic Shelter	Restrooms Grills (2) Gliders (2)
St. Johns City Park – Large Urban Park	Tennis Courts (2) Performance Shell Picnic Pavilion Playgrounds (2) Picnic Shelters (4) Benches Picnic Tables Accessible Restrooms Trails (3) Paved 1/4 mile track Youth Soccer area Drinking Fountains Shuffleboard Court	Grills Covered Benches Full Basketball Court ½ Basketball Court Softball Diamond (1) Flying Disc Golf Course Sand Volleyball Court Warming House Seasonal Skating Rink Sledding Hill Wooden Play Structure Water Spray Park



St. Johns Depot and Rotary Park	City festivals and events Picnic Pavilion Gazebo	Train Depot (Museum) Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail Access
4-H Fairgrounds (County Operated)	Smith Hall Animal Barns	Restrooms Arena
Public School Facilities		
Gateway North	Soccer Field ½ Court Basketball Courts (2) Baseball Backstop Swing Sets (2)	Play Structures (2) Picnic Tables Gym
Junior High/ High School Complex	Baseball Diamonds (2) Practice Cages (4) Soccer Net (6 sets) Soccer Fields (6) Soccer/Football Field	Football Field Middle School Track Tennis Courts (10) Gyms (3)
Oakview South	Soccer Field ½ Court Basketball Courts (2) Baseball Backstop Swing Set	Play Structures (2) Picnic Tables Gym Quiet Area
Wilson Center	Gym Playground	Auditorium Meeting Rooms
Private School Facilities		
First Baptist	Playground Gym	Soccer Field Benches
St. Joseph's Catholic School	Gym Basketball Hoop	Playground
St. Johns Lutheran Church	Gym Basketball Hoop	Playground
Private Facilities		
Baseball Park (Little League)	Baseball Diamonds (5)	Batting Cage
Clinton Memorial Physical Rehab. and Occupational Center	Exercise and Rehabilitation Center	
Endurance FitStop of St. Johns	Weight training, fitness	
Iron House Fitness	Weight training, fitness	
PKSA Karate School	Karate and Fitness	
Redwing Bowling Lanes	Bowling Alley	

Currently, the City of St. Johns owns several parks. There are five neighborhood parks and one Main City Park. The neighborhood parks contain facilities ranging from benches and grills, to playground equipment, and sports facilities. Table 29 lists each parks type, service area, accessibility, acres and features.



TABLE 4
CITY OF ST. JOHNS RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

	Main City Park	Jaycee Park	Kibbee St. Park	Water Tower Park	Oak St. Park	Senior Citizen Park	Rotary Park
Park Type*	LUP	MP	MP	MP	MP	MP	CP
Service Area**	SJA	NB	NB	NB	NB	NB	SJA
Accessibility Rating***	3	4	4	1	1	1	2
Acres	92.5	0.62	0.3	0.72	0.7	1.59	1.9
Ball Diamond	x						
Basketball	x		x	x	x		
Gazebo							x
Ice Rink	x						
Open Play Field	x						
Pavilion	5					x	x
Performance Shell	x						
Picnic Area	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Playground	x	x	x	x	x		
Grills	x	x	x			x	
Drinking Fountains	x	x	x	x			x
Restrooms	x					x	x
Sand Volleyball	x						
Sledding Hill	x						
Tennis Courts	x					x	
Trails /Paths	3						x

* Park Type

CP = Community Park

LUP = Large Urban Park

MP = Mini-Park

NP = Neighborhood Park

**Service Area

NB =

Neighborhood

SJA =

St. Johns Area

***Accessibility Rating

1 = none of the facilities/park area meets

accessibility guidelines

2 = some of the facilities/park area meets

accessibility guidelines

3 = most of the facilities/park area meets

accessibility guidelines

4 = the entire park meets accessibility guidelines

5 = the entire park was developed /renovated using
the principals of universal design



Park Descriptions and Accessibility Assessment

The parks in St. Johns are being constantly evaluated for effectiveness, safety, and accessibility. Based on priorities set in past recreation plans and community input, several projects targeting accessibility have been completed in recent years, including accessible picnic pavilions, upgraded restroom facilities, and improved parking and facility access. All present and future renovations are completed with the principles of universal design in mind.

Jaycee Park

Jaycee Park is a mini-park (0.62 acres) located at the corner of Ottawa Street and Gibbs Street. Designed as a space for families to play and exercise, the park features play equipment, grills, drinking fountains, benches, bike racks, and a picnic table. Renovated in 2009, the park has accessible sidewalks to all park features, as well as a new accessible drinking fountain and parking. Based on accessibility guidelines, the site would be ranked 4- the entire park meets accessibility guidelines.



Kibbee Street Park

Kibbee Street Park is a mini-park (0.30 acres) located on the corner of Kibbee Street and South Traver Street. Designed as a place for families to play and exercise, it features a half-court basketball hoop, play equipment, a picnic table, benches, and bike racks. Also renovated in 2009, the park has connective sidewalks to all major features and an accessible drinking fountain. Based on accessibility guidelines, the site would be ranked 4- the entire park meets accessibility guidelines.





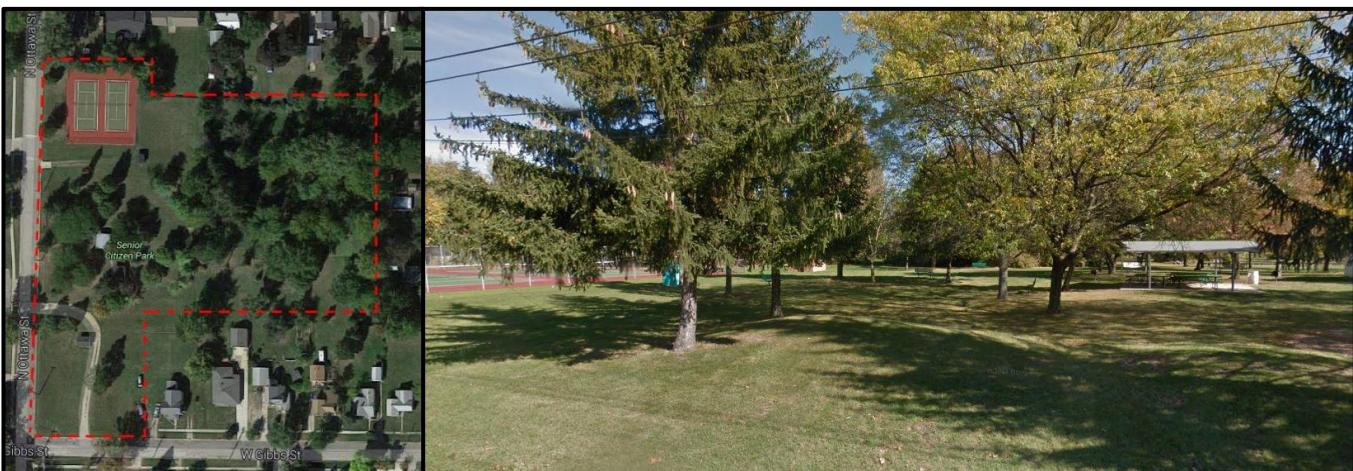
Oak Street Park

Oak Street Park is a mini-park (0.7 acres) located along East Oak Street at its intersection with Wight Street. The park was converted from a small orchard to a community park in the 1970's. It has play equipment and a picnic table, as well as a large open grass area for free play. The park is less than $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from Oakview South Elementary School, which has a substantial play area in place. Underutilized and not wishing to duplicate an existing resource, the park has undergone little renovation. The community may be ready to explore a new use for the site, such as a community garden or a dog park. Based on accessibility guidelines, the site would be ranked 1- none of the facility currently meets accessibility guidelines. Playground equipment was installed before US Consumer Product Safety Commission standards were established. They have no safety surfacing and no sidewalks. Playground does not meet barrier free compliance.



Senior Citizen Park

Senior Citizen Park is a mini-park (1.59 acres) located at the corner of Ottawa Street and Gibbs Street, across the street from Jaycee Park. Designed for passive recreation, the park features a picnic shelter, tennis courts, basketball hoops, glider playground equipment, benches and restrooms. Based on accessibility guidelines, the site would be ranked 1- none of the facility currently meets accessibility guidelines. There are no sidewalks leading to any facility in this park. The bathroom does not meet barrier free design.

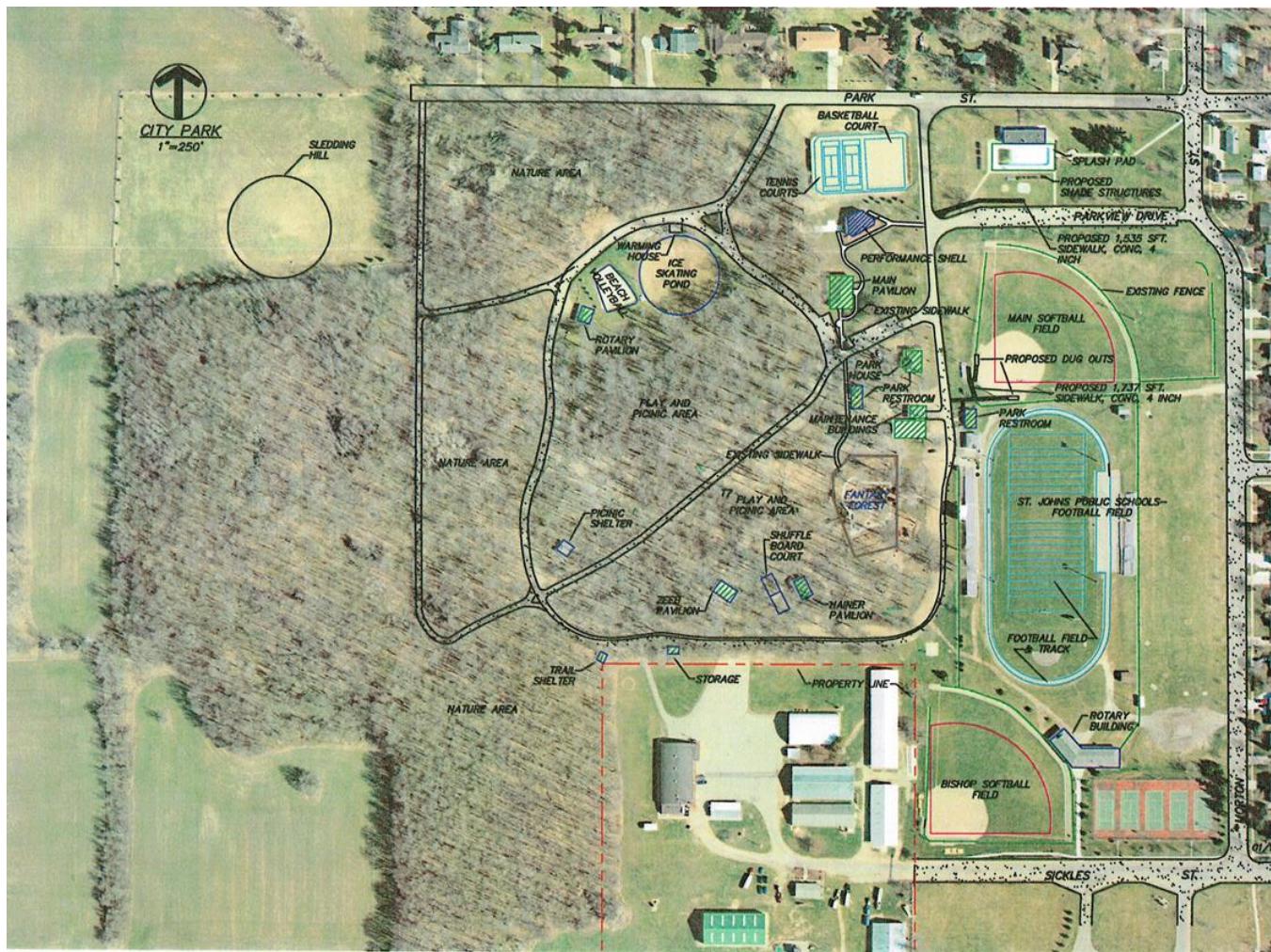




St. Johns City Park

The Main City Park is the largest park in the city (92.5 acres) and hosts the majority of the city's recreational activities and amenities. Categorized as a Large Urban Park, it serves not only the City of St. Johns but surrounding communities as well. The park has many athletic facilities, including a baseball/softball diamond, basketball courts, a disc golf course, shuffleboard court, sand volleyball court, tennis courts, and a youth soccer field. The park has several picnic shelters/pavilions and restroom facilities, some of which are accessible. It also has several play areas, including the community-funded "Fantasy Forest", a popular wooden play structure. Nature walking trails connect various aspects of the park and provide for passive recreation. A new spray park and renovated performance shell provide for many activities in the warmer months, while a seasonal skating rink, warming house, and sledding hill provide winter recreation.

Based on accessibility guidelines, the site would be ranked 3- most of the facility currently meets accessibility guidelines. In the last 5 years, the main restrooms and pavilion have been renovated for universal accessibility. Within the park there are paved walkways to all pavilions, Performance Shell, and Fantasy Forest. Wooded walking/jogging trails are not barrier free. Walkway improvements planned for Spring 2016 will allow for even better access within the park.





St. Johns Depot and Rotary Park

Rotary Park is a community park (≈ 1.9 acres) located along the recently developed Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail. The depot was purchased in 1998, with additional surrounding lands acquired in 2010. Adjacent to downtown, this renovated train depot hosts city events and serves the new trail users. The trailhead park is under design all will be completed in Fall 2016. Based on accessibility guidelines, the site would be ranked 2- some of the facility currently meets accessibility guidelines. All new developments are planned to be fully accessible.



Water Tower Park

Water Tower Park is a mini-park (0.72 acres) located at the corner of Elm Street and Swegles Street. The park has a $\frac{1}{2}$ court basketball hoop, picnic area, and playground equipment. The park land is leased from the adjacent hospital, which makes investment in improvements difficult to justify. Communication should be opened about purchasing this land or more permanently acquiring the property. Playground equipment was installed before US Consumer Product Safety Commission standards were established. Most do not have safety surfacing and there are no sidewalks. Playground does not meet barrier free compliance. Based on accessibility guidelines, the site would be ranked 1- none of the facility currently meets accessibility guidelines.





Previous grant status report

The City of St. Johns has received numerous grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources since 1972 (See Table 5).

Table 5				
Grant Assisted Projects				
Grant Number	Year	Project	Location	Status
26-00267	1972	St. Johns City Park	Main City Park	Closed
26-01023 Q3	1977	Main Park Restrooms	Main City Park	Closed
26-01060 W	1978	Northside Tennis Courts	Senior Citizen Park	Closed
BF89-359	1989	Veteran's Memorial Swimming Pool Renovation	Main City Park	Closed
26-01670	2006	Kibbee St Park and JC Park Renovations	Jaycee and Kibbee Parks	Closed
TF09-169	2009	St. Johns Trailside Parkway Acquisition	Rotary Park	Closed
TF14-0109	2015	St. Johns Trailside Park Renovation	Rotary Park	Active
26-01741	2015	St. Johns City Park Improvements	Main City Park	Active



PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process began with a review of the 2011-2015 Five Year Parks and Recreation Plan that was adopted in February of 2011. The plan outlined the goals for the development of park and recreational opportunities within the City for 5 years.

A kick-off meeting discussing the results of the previous masterplan and general ideas for the new plan took place on September 23rd, 2015. At this point, it was determined that a thorough and well distributed survey would be vital to the success of the new masterplan, and several revisions of the survey took place during the next month.

The survey was distributed to the community on October 21st, 2015 and responses were accepted through November 17th, 2015. These responses were reviewed with the Parks and Recreation Board at a meeting on November 18th, 2015. The main body of the masterplan was also distributed for preliminary review by the board. The meeting participants discussed objectives and a plan of action for the new masterplan based on the survey feedback.

The survey feedback and meeting discussion were incorporated into and updated list of goals and objectives, which was then translated into an action plan for the city. This plan and the main body of the masterplan were reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Board at a meeting on December 14th, 2015. Changes from this meeting were incorporated and the masterplan was posted for public review on _____.

(Further description of the next stages of the process will follow here)



PUBLIC INPUT

Methods

Public input was the primary guide to developing this masterplan. Several methods were used, including a community survey at the beginning of the process, a public posting of the plan for community review, and a community meeting near the end of plan development.

The community survey was developed based on the previous recreation plan's questions and responses. Several recreation plans, including the State of Michigan and Clinton County, were reviewed for applicable questions to incorporate into the survey. Special care was taken to process and incorporate any written feedback received during the last community survey. Developed online using Survey Monkey, the community survey was distributed using the city's website and social media presence, and sent to approx. 800 recipients on the city's email database. A press release was also sent out in a local newspaper giving residents options to take the survey. Community members could take the survey online, call the City Offices to have a paper copy mailed, or access paper copies at the City Library and City Hall. An effort was made to reach as many citizens as possible. Overall, 287 people responded to the survey, representing approx. 3.6% of the population of the City of St. Johns. This group is believed to be representative of the city as a whole. Survey responses are incorporated into the Action Program Rationale and a full copy of the survey and responses can be found in Appendix A: Survey and Results.

(Discussion of public review period, community meeting and approval process will go here.)



Notice of plan availability for review
(document copy)

Notice of meeting after review period
(document copy)

Minutes from public meeting
(document copy)



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Provide safe, inclusive community based recreational opportunities that improve the overall quality-of-life for all Saint Johns area residents.

Parks provide a natural gathering place for the community as well as provide for free or low cost recreational activities. Therefore it is important to continue to provide and improve these facilities. The City will, based on community input, continue to provide and improve these facilities.

Objective: Continue to, based on community input, to improve and upgrade the City of St. Johns recreational and support facilities that residents can be proud of.

Objective: Provide better and increased access to and through the City Parks and Trails System

Objective: Add passive and active programming based on community input and available financing.

2. Promote development of a non-motorized pathway system throughout the City to encourage interaction and participation, improve pedestrian safety, and strengthen non-motorized linkages between City Parks and other recreational facilities.

Paths and trails are a high priority with the residents. St. Johns currently has few trails, but with the construction of the Fred Meijer CIS Trail, they have seen a rise in non-motorized activity in the city. Connecting the rail trail with the City Park and other points of interest is a high priority for the community. 78% of survey respondents place a high or moderate funding priority on increasing trail connectivity within the community.

Objective: Expand non-motorized pathways in St. Johns, with focus on existing paths and points of interest.

Objective: Evaluate options for safely moving pedestrian traffic across Old U.S. 27 to expand non-motorized park access from the east side of the highway.

Objective: Pursue a partnership with Clinton County to connect the Fred Meijer CIS Trail to Motz Park and possibly other county resources.

3. Promote regional cooperation between the City of St. Johns, Clinton County, surrounding townships, the St. Johns School District, and other public and private organizations within the County to better provide comprehensive recreational opportunities to the residents of St. Johns and Clinton County.

It makes financial and practical sense to coordinate recreation within the city in a way that is aware and supportive of the surrounding areas. The City and School District have been working together for years providing shared recreation programs and facilities. Further collaboration with the County and other organizations will prove to an important component in providing quality recreational programs and facilities to the St. Johns Community.

Objective: Continue to work with the existing partners to provide recreational programming and facilities.



Objective: Continue to explore options for new and expanded partners, providing additional recreational opportunities.

4. Enhance the quality of local neighborhoods through establishment and maintenance of quality neighborhood parks conveniently located to all City residents.

Park facilities are among the most visible indicators of community identity and pride. Every park in the system was shown to be the most important park to several responding households, with all parks being used by individuals on a bi-weekly basis or more frequently. Several respondents said clean and quality restrooms and playground areas were the most important features of a park.

Objective: Continue to upgrade playground equipment and access, paying special attention to universal access.

Objective: Keep parks well maintained and safe.

Objective: Investigate all appropriate methods to provide facilities, including providing incentives to private developers and promoting donation of property and facilities.

5. Provide universally accessible recreation opportunities designed with all community members in mind.

The City wishes to provide recreational activities for residents of all abilities. With ambulatory and cognitive disabilities shown to be higher than the national average, special care should be taken to actively incorporate facilities for these users.

Objective: Partner with organizations that service disabled individuals to better understand and provide for community needs.

Objective: Make sure that all improvements and upgrades to park facilities, where feasible, are universally accessible.

6. Strengthen the role of the City of St. Johns as a regional provider/ coordinator of recreational opportunities and develop a plan that maximizes the impact of existing and future recreation providers.

Due to its centralized location and rural surroundings, the city is the major recreational provider for the central and northern part of the county. Many people from within and outside the City look for us for recreational programming, yet many are not aware of the programming we offer. Several survey respondents were unaware of multiple parks, recreation resources and facilities.

Objective: Expand current internet presence, including the city website, to provide information on facility locations, features, and recreation programs.

Objective: Explore implementing a streamlined online registration process for community recreation events and programs to increase accessibility of the programs

Objective: Develop a cohesive community signage package to provide wayfinding and facility awareness in the community, especially along established non-motorized pathways.



Objective: Explore the possibility of creating a Recreation Authority with other municipal groups and recreation providers.

Objective: Explore additional methods to improve community awareness of recreation programs and facilities

Objective: Encourage citizen involvement in the park system through volunteer programs, interpretive programs and the decision making process. Consider implementing regular online community surveys to monitor progress and gain input on specific recreation decisions.

7. Acquire property, as necessary, to meet the long-term recreational needs of City residents.

In the past, the City has purchased valuable parks and recreation land, but has also sold land to other entities providing them with land to expand their facilities. Local officials must be conscious of the need to retain and acquire additional parkland.

Objective: Retain existing parkland to meet recreational needs of the City.

Objective: Encourage the use of open spaces for recreational purposes.

Objective: Evaluate every opportunity to expand the park system and take action where practical. Natural conservation should be considered in addition to facility expansion.

8. Promote healthy, active lifestyles through the St. Johns Parks and Recreation facilities and programs.

Considering national problems of obesity, heart health, diabetes, and other health issues, it is important to take into consideration the health impact of new and existing facilities and programs. 79% of survey respondents feel that the improvement of health and fitness programming would have a positive impact on their satisfaction and 61% currently use the parks for fitness and exercise. 61% feel that the development and improvement of walking and biking trails within the park system would have a very positive impact on their satisfaction, and 18% cite “lack of trails” as a reason for not using the park system more frequently.

Objective: Promote awareness of existing facilities and programs that support healthy lifestyles and choices.

Objective: Provide additional health and fitness programming.

Objective: Provide additional facilities and opportunities, including walking and biking trail systems, which foster healthy choices and lifestyles.

Objective: Provide innovative recreation opportunities for all seasons that encourage active year-round lifestyles.



ACTION PROGRAM

The action plan for the City of St. Johns Parks and Recreation Plan includes proposed action items including capital improvements, organization, and recreation programming changes. Priority rankings were based on survey responses, goals, and discussion within the Recreation Board. Project types consist of; Capital Improvements (C), which involve monetary investment in new facilities or equipment, Maintenance (M), which involve renovating and maintaining existing features, and Planning (P), which involve brainstorming ideas and generating community buy-in for new developments.

TABLE 6
City of St. Johns 2016-2020 Action Items

Park	Project	Project Type	Related Goal	Priority
Jaycee Park	Landscaping	C	1, 4	Low
	Pavilion	C	1, 4	Low
Kibbee Street Park	Landscaping	C	1, 4	Low
	Pavilion	C	1, 4	Low
	Replace Existing Fencing	M	1, 4	Low
Oak Street Park	Park Improvement Plan – explore alternative playground options (ex. nature playground)	P	1, 4	Medium
Senior Citizen Park	Construct Parking Lot	C	1, 4, 5	Medium
	Construct Accessible Walk System	C	1, 4, 5	Medium
	Restroom Renovation	M	1, 4, 5	Medium
	Play Equipment – Install new swings	C	1, 4, 8	Medium
St. Johns City Park	Improve Sidewalk Circulation System	C	1, 4, 5, 6, 8	High
	Renovate Bath House at Spray Park	M	1, 3, 4, 5, 8	High
	Improve Trail System	M	1, 4, 5, 6, 8	High
	Renovate and Upgrade Fantasy Forest Play Structure	M	1, 4, 5	High
	Renovate Warming House	M	1, 4, 6, 8	Medium
	Expand and Improve Sledding Hill	C	1, 4, 6, 8	Medium
	Landscaping Improvements	M	1, 4,	Medium
	Install Additional Playground Equipment	C	1, 4, 5, 8	Medium
	Main Pavilion Exterior Renovation	M	1, 4	Medium
	Expand and Improve Sand Volleyball Court	C	1, 4, 8	Low
	Construct New Soccer Field	C	1, 4, 8	Low
	Improve Park Roads	M	1, 4, 5	Low
St. Johns Depot and Rotary Park	Park Improvement Plan (East Side)	P	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8	Medium
	Playground Equipment	C	1,3,4,6,8	Medium
	Parking Lot Expansion	C	1, 5	Low



	Senior Citizen Amenities	C	1, 4, 5, 8	Low
Water Tower Park	Construct Accessible Walk System	C	1,2,4,5	Medium
	Land Acquisition (Purchase from Hospital)	P	1, 4, 7	Low
	Playground Equipment (remove and replace)	C	1,3,4,6,8	Low
	Park Improvement Plan	P	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8	Low
Other	Trail Connections – CIS Trail to Main Park	P, C	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8	High
	Trail Connections – CIS Trail to Jaycee/Senior Citizens Park	P, C	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8	Medium
	Trail Connections – CIS Trail to Kibbee Street Park (may include overpass at highway 27)	P, C	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8	Medium
	Implement Park Signage System	C	1, 3, 4, 6	Medium
	Revise City Recreation Website	M	1, 3, 6	Medium
	Park Lighting & Safety Evaluation (All Parks)	P	1, 4	Medium
	Fell Property Development Plan/ Community Building	P	1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8	Low
	Identify Location for Community Dog Park	P	1, 3, 4, 5, 8	Low
	Identify Location for Community Skate Park	P	1, 3, 4, 5, 8	Low
	Identify Location for High Ropes Course	P	1, 3, 4, 5, 8	Low
Recreation Programming	Increase health and fitness classes offered	NA	1, 3, 5, 6, 8	Medium
	Increase open swim and swimming class options at High School Pool	NA	1, 3, 5, 6, 8	Medium
	Amenities for Aquatics Program	NA	1, 3, 5, 6, 8	Medium



Rationale for Action Program

Jaycee Park

In line with masterplan goals 1 and 4, park improvements such as landscaping installations and a picnic pavilion would strengthen the neighborhood park for the surrounding community. Jaycee Park was recently renovated with new playground equipment and a sidewalk circulation system and meets most community needs at this time, making further improvements relatively low priority.

Kibbee Street Park

Kibbee Street Park could see additional improvements in the future including landscaping installations, a picnic pavilion, and replacement of existing aged fencing. These improvements support goals 1 and 4 by strengthening the park and providing a safe environment. The park play equipment and sidewalk system was recently renovated and currently meets the needs of the surrounding community, making further improvements a relatively low priority.

Oak Street Park

Oak Street Park has been underutilized in the past, partly due to its proximity to the local elementary school, which has an excellent traditional play structure. The Park Improvement Plan would encourage community input on alternative site uses, such as a nature-based playground, skate park, or dog park. In the interest of not duplicating existing resources, improvements with traditional playground equipment are now being pursued for the site. The site currently does not offer much to residents and has relatively low use numbers. Improvement to this park would meet goals 1 and 4. Priority for this project is moderate as the needs of the community are largely met by the nearby playground.

Senior Citizen Park

Senior Citizen Park is adjacent to Jaycee Park and its facilities will service both parks' users. The park has existing restroom facilities that are in poor condition. Frequent vandalism on site causes some hesitation to replace these facilities until a vandal-proof solution can be found. There is strong support for improvement of restrooms in the community survey and these renovations would meet goals 1, 4 and 5. Until a solution that prevents vandalism can be found, the priority to upgrade these bathrooms is moderate. There is currently no walk system or parking lot on the site, and the addition of both these aspects would greatly increase the accessibility of the park (goal 5) while meeting goals 1 and 4 by providing a safer park. Additional play equipment, such as a new set of swings, would add variety to the site while meeting goals 1, 4 and 8. Both of these upgrades are a moderate priority for the city.

St. Johns City Park

The main city park is the largest park in St. Johns and is the most important park to 87% of the survey respondents. Recent additions include a new spray park and upgraded restroom facilities. Improvements to part of the sidewalk system and disc golf course are planned for Spring 2016. With the completion of the spray park, plans to renovate the adjoining bathhouse have been an important part of the discussion. It is believed the renovation of this facility is a high priority for the safety and convenience of park users, meeting goals 1, 3, 4, 5,



and 8. The circulation system within the park is lacking in several areas, both in paved and unpaved trails. Walking trails are some of the most used and most important features for survey respondents, and the improvement of both paved and unpaved systems would meet goals 1, 4, 5, 6, and 8. These improvements are placed as a high priority.

Winter activities were expressed to be important in the survey results, and renovations to the sledding hill and the warming house would support winter recreation in St. Johns. Improving these features is a moderate priority for the city and would meet goals 1, 4, 6, and 8.

The play areas in the main city park are often crowded and interest was expressed in the survey in providing a separate playground area. This additional playground equipment could help meet goals 1, 4, 5, and 8 and is a moderate priority.

The Fantasy Forest play area is one of the most unique and popular parts of the Main City Park, with 87% of survey respondents using the play area. The wooden structure is beginning to show its age and renovations will soon be necessary. The park is often crowded, especially at peak times, and expansion will be explored. Renovations to the Fantasy Forest will meet goals 1, 4 and 5 and is a high priority.

Landscaping was listed as one of the most important features to survey respondents and landscape improvements within the park are a moderate priority. These improvements would meet goals 1 and 4.

The Main Pavilion is a very noticeable part of the main park and is beginning to show wear. Exterior renovation would meet goals 1 and 4 and is a moderate priority.

The park road system varies in quality and safety, some of it being unpaved. The improvement of these roads would benefit park users while meeting goals 1, 4 and 5. The current roads are functional and improvement will be costly, so the priority for this renovation is relatively low.

The sand volleyball court is used by 31% of respondents and plays an important role in local league competitions. There is currently no soccer field in the main city park, but 49% of respondents feel that the addition of a soccer field would have a positive effect on their satisfaction. A potential site for the soccer field would be where the current BMX Track is located. The expansion and improvement of the sand volleyball court and the addition of a soccer field would meet goals 1, 4 and 8 of the masterplan and is a relatively low priority at this time.

St. Johns Depot and Rotary Park

The St. Johns Depot and Rotary Park is located along the Fred-Meijer CIS Trail and the construction of a trailhead park is underway. The park is a long, thin strip and there are currently no plans for the east side of the site. Alternatives to explore for this area include play equipment, artifact display areas (to tie into the historic train depot), a skate park, or a high ropes course. Amenities for senior citizens, such as glider swings and fitness stations, will also be explored and incorporated. A parking lot expansion may become necessary as the park expands, but is a relatively low priority in comparison with other site improvements. The level of community support or interest in each of the options would be collected in the Park Improvement Plan. This plan would be a critical step before further improvements can take place and is a moderate priority. The projects for this site have the potential to meet goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8.



Water Tower Park

Water Tower Park presents a unique challenge within the city park system. The park land is owned by the adjacent hospital and is leased to the city (for only 1 dollar) on a yearly basis. Until the park land can be acquired, park improvements are difficult to justify as they may not belong to the city in the long term. Regardless, the improvement of the park is important to citizens and to the city. A park improvement plan, featuring an accessible walk system and new playground equipment, could meet goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8. This plan has a relatively low to moderate priority until the land can be permanently acquired. The possibility of acquiring the land or signing on longer lease in cooperation with the hospital should be explored as a part of this plan.

Trail Connections

The addition of non-motorized trail connections throughout the city relate directly to goal 2 and have been a priority for the city since the completion of the Fred Meijer CIS Trail. The desire for these trail systems have been expressed by the community survey. Providing a pedestrian connection from the CIS Trail to the Main City Park has the highest priority, as this is the park that has the most users and the most regional draw. Connection to Kibbee Street Park would involve getting pedestrians across highway 27, something the community has wanted to do for some time. Connecting to both Kibbee Street Park and Senior Citizens/Jaycee Park are moderate priorities for the community. These trail connections are consistent with goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Dog Park

The idea of a dog park has been discussed for years in St. Johns. 58% of survey respondents feel the addition of a dog park would positively affect their satisfaction with the parks, but 9% feel it would have a negative impact. The demand for a park is present, but it must be located wisely with proper community guidance and input. Potential locations at the BMX track in the main city park or at the Depot lot, but many other potential locations should be explored. The planning for and eventual creation of a dog park would meet goals 1, 3, 4, 5 and 8 and is a low priority.

Skate Park and High Ropes Course

A skate park has been discussed for years as a means to engage the teenage demographic in St. Johns. This proposed facility had mixed reviews in the community survey, with 35% feeling it would have a positive impact and 13% feeling it would have a negative impact on their satisfaction. Another possible engagement solution is a high ropes course, which would require more long term city involvement but is more supported by the community. 47% feel a high ropes course should have funding priority, while 32% feel a skate park should be funded. Either facility could be an exciting new addition to St. Johns and the surrounding region, and a community discussion should be opened. The planning for and construction of a skate park or high ropes course would meet goals 1, 3, 4, 5, and 8 and is a low priority for the community.



Website Revisions and Park Signage System

The community survey has revealed that many park users have trouble finding information on St. Johns parks, and some do not know that certain parks exist within the system. In order to better promote park use, several projects have been developed with a moderate priority. Revisions to the city website including a park map and facility list would provide information to the average user at a relatively low cost to the city. This could also be applied to recreational programs. A consistent park signage system would also help citizens locate parks and develop a sense of identity for neighborhood parks and for the St. Johns park system. This become especially important for wayfinding as non-motorized trails are developed. The improvement of the website and park signage system meets goals 1, 3, 4, and 6 and are both a moderate priority to complete.

Lighting/Safety Evaluation

Poor night lighting was given as a top reason for not using the parks more often by 26% of respondents. Lighting has been updated in some areas of the Main City Park, but a further evaluation of the lighting and safety of the parks may be warranted. This is a moderate priority for the city and would meet goals 1 and 4.

Recreation Programming

The majority of recreation program users feel that offering more health and fitness classes and swimming classes would have a positive impact on their satisfaction with the St. Johns Recreational Programming. Additional classes are limited by the availability of instructors and facilities, but the option to expand wherever possible should be explored. Amenities related to these classes, such as inflatable obstacles and fitness equipment, will also be pursued. This is a moderate priority for the city and would meet goals 1, 3, 5, 6, and 8.

Fell Property Development Plan/ Community Building

A community building has been discussed for years within the City of St. Johns and would have a very positive impact on recreation opportunities and programs offered. A proposed site for the community building is the Fell Property (adjacent to the Main City Park), which would have space for the facility and walking/skiing trails. Due to the large investment this would require, careful planning and proper funding sources must be in place before construction. The development of the community building is a relatively low priority due to financial reasons, but would meet goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8 of the masterplan. Below is a further description of what this community building could offer.

The community building would be used to house various community recreation needs; including multi-use courts, fitness center area, track, game-room/arcade, classroom/meeting room and multi-use room. Size of the building would be about 44,000 square feet and with costs projected to be approximately \$150 square foot for a total of 7 million dollars.

Fitness Center Area

The fitness center area would be located inside the track next to the multi-use courts in a 50x60 foot area. This area would be appropriate for young children to help them establish a healthy lifestyle, adults who accompany their children or simply wish to improve their health, and for older citizens who wish to exercise, but may have difficulties with the equipment found in traditional gyms. Equipment would be comprehensive and include the traditional equipment found in exercise facilities, as well as specialized and alternative forms of equipment to address the special needs of area residents. This type of exercise facility directly supports the Mission Statement



of the Parks and Recreation Plan to support inter-generational recreational activities and address the recreation needs of all segments of the population.

Multi-use Courts

It is proposed that the two courts would be side by side 50 ft. x 94 ft. Courts could be used for basketball, indoor tennis and additional volleyball courts if needed. In making them multi-use we would be able to accommodate three needs that were indicated in the survey.

Track

The proposed track would be a 4-lane track that would circle the two multi-use courts and would be an eighth of a mile long. The track would provide for additional walking the jogging areas as indicated in the survey.

Multi-use Room

The multi-use room would be used for soccer, floor-hockey, $\frac{1}{2}$ court basketball, and volleyball. This multi-use room would house a soccer field/ floor hockey, three $\frac{1}{2}$ court basketball courts, and three regulation size volleyball courts.

Game Room/Arcade

The game room would house various video games for people to play. This would satisfy the number two need from the results of the November 12, 2003 public planning meeting.

Class Room /Meeting Room

This room would be available for community meetings, provide space to hold community enrichment classes, and also used a room to hold birthday parties or other special events.



RJM Design Inc.

Land Planning • Landscape Architecture

POST-COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORTS



APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION

Official resolution of adoption

Commission/board resolution

(Copy) letter to county planning agency

(Copy) letter to regional planning agency



Appendix A: Survey and Results

The City of St. Johns is working to update our 5-Year Parks and Recreation Masterplan. Your responses to this survey will help to shape the actions of the city over the next five years. This short survey will ask about your park and recreational program use, as well as your thoughts on future park funding. Your participation is voluntary and all respondents will remain anonymous. This survey should take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Thank you again for your time!

St. Johns Recreation Areas

1. Do you or members of your household visit any St. Johns Parks?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	96% 275
No	4% 12
Total	287

Public Park Facilities

2. What age are the park users in your household? (Please check all that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses
5 and under	35% 82
6-10	45% 105
11-20	42% 99
21-30	16% 38
31-40	31% 72
41-50	21% 50
51-60	13% 30
61-70	7% 16
71 and older	5% 12
Total Respondents: 233	

**3. How frequently do you or members of your household use each park?**

	2 times a week or more	Twice a month	A few times a year	Never	Total
St. Johns City Park	22% 50	37% 85	41% 96	0% 1	232
St. Johns Depot	6% 12	12% 23	52% 97	29% 55	187
Kibbee Street Park	7% 11	7% 11	27% 45	59% 97	164
Jaycee Park	5% 8	6% 10	33% 56	56% 95	169
Water Tower Park	5% 9	8% 14	25% 41	62% 103	167
Oak Street Park	4% 6	4% 7	19% 29	73% 114	156
Senior Citizen Park	2% 3	6% 10	12% 18	80% 123	154

4. Please select the park you would consider most important to your household.

Answer Choices	Responses
St. Johns City Park	87% 203
Jaycee Park	3% 7
Kibbee Street Park	3% 7
Water Tower Park	3% 6
Oak Street Park	2% 4
Senior Citizen Park	1% 3
St. Johns Depot	1% 3
Total	233

**5. How frequently do you or members of your household use each park feature?**

	2 times a week or more	Twice a month	A few times a year	Never	Total
Restrooms	17% 36	29% 63	50% 107	4% 8	214
Trash Receptacles	17% 36	27% 56	50% 104	6% 12	208
Paved Parking	19% 39	28% 57	44% 91	10% 20	207
Fantasy Forest	20% 42	28% 60	39% 82	13% 27	211
Paved Walking Trails	22% 46	20% 43	47% 99	11% 24	212
Play Equipment	21% 46	23% 50	40% 85	16% 34	215
Natural Walking Trails	20% 43	23% 50	43% 92	14% 31	216
Benches	16% 33	23% 46	47% 96	14% 28	203
Picnic Tables	11% 22	18% 38	59% 123	12% 26	209
Sledding Hill	9% 18	11% 23	62% 128	18% 37	206
Picnic Pavilion	5% 11	13% 27	62% 128	19% 39	205
Water Spray Park	13% 27	12% 24	38% 76	37% 74	201
Ball Fields	4% 8	11% 22	37% 74	48% 95	199
Basketball Courts	5% 9	11% 21	31% 60	53% 102	192
Bike Racks	7% 13	10% 19	24% 48	59% 116	196
Tennis Courts	4% 7	8% 16	33% 65	55% 107	195
Ice Skating Pond	6% 11	4% 7	33% 66	58% 114	198
Soccer Fields	6% 12	7% 14	21% 39	66% 124	189
Volleyball Courts	4% 7	7% 13	20% 38	69% 132	190
Warming house	3% 6	4% 7	27% 51	66% 124	188
Grills	4% 7	2% 4	19% 36	76% 145	192
Disc golf course	2% 4	2% 4	10% 19	85% 158	185
Shuffleboard court	1% 1	2% 4	6% 11	91% 171	187

Comments

- Love the spray park
- Would like to see more trees planted for shade and more landscaping is also more appealing
- Would like to see a skate park for kids
- Each year my family and myself use these.
- I didn't realize that there even is a disc golf course. We would use this, if I knew where the baskets are.
- Fantasy forest needs to be repaired, refreshed, and updated
- We use and enjoy the parks often.
- Obviously the warming house and skating pond will only be used in the winter.
- My family and grandkids use many things at the park. Spray Park has no appeal in its appearance. Looks like old bucket turned upside down Hoping a much more appealing design
- I use the parks with grandchildren. Will frequent the spray park. Love city park! I don't know where the senior citizens park is.
- The cost for the spray park was ridiculous.....The veterans pool should have been repaired at a lower cost and was something all ages could use....just another thing taken away.
- Would use disc golf if it was up.
- I didn't know we had shuffleboard or disc golf, would love more info on those!
- Attend summer's "music in the park".
- I attend summer's "music in the park".
- There is a huge difference in how many times I use each feature depending on the season. For most I would say I use the feature monthly or more often.
- It would great if there were more play equipment for kids to play on, so we didn't have to drive to Dewitt and Lansing parks.
- Really would like to know where the disc golf is.
- "We visit about once a week during the summer. Other than that less frequently."
- "Grandkids always wanna go to fantasy forest every chance they can."
- They love it there.
- But wish they had a snack pavilion to buy things from like back when they used to have one."
- Warming house?????
- No more \$ into the spray park
- None
- We would go to the water tower park more if it had decent equipment. It's a joke right now.
- Was unaware of disc golf course but would use it.
- Some of the items on the list that have never been used are not because we haven't had interest; but we live out in the county and aren't city residents so the need to use them is greatly lowered.



6. For what reasons do users in your household visit City of St. Johns Parks? (Please check all that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses
Casual or Informal Use	86% 198
Community Events	61% 142
Fitness and Exercise	61% 140
League Sports/Games	29% 66
Youth Program Activities	29% 66
Other (please specify)	4% 10
Total Respondents: 231	

Other (please specify)

Kids

Mint Fest

Family fun

Park concerts, spray park, grandchildren's' play

Playground

To take my class on field trips to our local parks.

Our 1.5 year old loves the play equipment

My kids like to play at the playgrounds.

None

Just to play, take pictures



7. Please select the 4 features you would consider to be the most important when visiting a park.

Answer Choices	Responses
Restrooms	69% 147
Play Equipment	60% 127
Natural Walking Trails	41% 87
Trees and Landscaping	33% 70
Water Spray Park	32% 67
Paved Walking Trails	25% 52
Trash Receptacles	24% 51
Picnic Tables	22% 47
Sledding Hill	15% 32
Picnic Shelters	15% 31
Benches	14% 30
Ice Skating Rink	8% 18
Ball Fields	8% 16
Paved Parking	8% 16
Basketball Courts	6% 12
Grills	4% 8
Soccer Fields	4% 8
Volleyball Courts	3% 7
Tennis Courts	2% 5
Bike Racks	2% 4
Other (please specify)	2% 4
Total Respondents: 212	

Other (please specify)

Natural Woods (with no man-made improvements. Leave nature to be nature.)

Dog Area!

Play equipment

Openness security



8. How would the improvement or addition of the following features impact your satisfaction with the City of St. Johns parks?

	Very Positive Impact	Somewhat Positive Impact	No effect	Negative Impact	Total
Restrooms	65% 133	29% 60	5% 11	0% 0	204
Walking and biking Trails	61% 124	33% 66	5% 10	1% 3	203
Playgrounds	59% 116	29% 56	12% 23	1% 1	196
Park Lighting	51% 102	39% 77	10% 19	1% 2	200
Trees and Landscaping	44% 88	41% 83	14% 29	0% 1	201
Picnic Areas	40% 79	47% 93	13% 25	0% 0	197
Water Spray Parks	49% 97	24% 48	22% 43	4% 8	196
Benches	33% 63	51% 97	16% 31	1% 1	192
Sledding Hills	37% 71	42% 81	18% 34	3% 5	191
Sledding Hill	38% 72	41% 79	18% 35	3% 5	191
Community Centers	37% 71	37% 70	24% 46	2% 4	191
Additional Parks	34% 64	27% 52	32% 61	7% 14	191
Dog park	33% 64	24% 47	33% 63	9% 18	192
Ice Skating Pond	23% 44	35% 67	40% 77	3% 5	193
Grills	19% 36	29% 55	50% 94	2% 4	189
Basketball Courts	17% 33	34% 64	45% 86	4% 8	191
Roller Blading Rinks	19% 36	29% 56	45% 86	7% 13	191
Soccer Fields	14% 26	35% 66	45% 85	5% 10	187
Volleyball Courts	14% 26	31% 59	51% 95	4% 8	188
Hockey Rinks	16% 31	23% 44	55% 106	5% 10	191
Skateboard Facilities	14% 27	21% 40	52% 98	13% 25	190
Shuffleboard Facilities	6% 12	21% 39	66% 124	7% 13	188

Comments

- The bathrooms have needed an upgrade for years.
- I believe a skate park would hit a demographic in our area that needs a safe place to go.
- I would love to see XC skiing during the winter months on the existing natural trails. It could be done very similar to Fitz park in Grand Ledge.
- Not sure our population really warrants additional parks, but different types of play experience would be great. A nature-based playground would be a nice complement to existing play options.
- Someone needs to fix the sculpture at the band shell. The treble clef is backwards and it makes our community look dumb.
- I think there are enough parks and would rather increase have the amount of equipment and activities increased at the existing parks.
- Improvement of restroom, Senior Park/Jaycee park area needs restroom not a portapotty. Reclear Paths in main park, Put gravel in spots prone to water holes in dirt.
- We would like to see the ice skating pond improved, it is a far distance to travel to Lansing for ice skating and could improve use of the park during winter.
- We need to ramp up the winter activities.
- The water tower park just removed the old dangerous swings and replaced them, which is great. But the slide was also removed and not replaced. The chipped and old riding animals and monkey bars are still there. There isn't much for little ones to do. When can we expect to have our park updated like the other parks in the city have been?



9. Which of the following factors, if any, do you feel limit your park use? (Please check any that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses
Not enough time	38%
Poor night lighting	27%
No reason in particular	22%
Condition or availability of restrooms	21%
Lack of trails	18%
Not sure where the parks are	11%
Not maintained well enough	10%
Too far from home	10%
Other (please specify)	9%
Don't have the right facilities	8%
Too crowded	7%
Admission fees	7%
Don't feel welcome	6%
Not enough parking	5%
Disability preventing use	3%
Not interested in visiting parks	2%
Too hard to get to	1%
Total Respondents: 212	

Comments:

- Water fountain
- We love the parks.
- Our parks really are not that hard to get to, but a better trail system linking all parks would probably get more people to use them. For example, Kibbee St Park is on the east side of US27, and there is no safe and pedestrian-friendly crosswalk ANYWHERE crossing 27. (it's kind of ridiculous, actually!)
- Sledding hill caused me to fall since the stairs were too slick. It would be nice to have a stationary rope cemented there to grab onto.
- I don't feel like there are any restrictions; we love the city parks!
- We frequent the parks, they are a great place for kids and for walking
- We use the parks quite often. I don't think anything in particular limits our use. I supposed we are limited by time in a way.
- no shade for hot sunny days
- Water tower park has no equipment to play on anymore.
- I checked not the right facilities in regards to the

Jaycee park. Not safe for kids! My kids (4, 8) have gotten hurt there every time we go there.

- Any improvement to the ball fields and skating rink would be greatly appreciated
- Could use a playground on the other side of the park like it had before. Grandkids say it's too crowded there. The playground gets way too crowded at fantasy forest area every summer. Needs to be bigger or add some more equipment on another area.
- Annoying pets are unsafe
- Need to leave restrooms open all the time. All of the parks should have a restroom year around.
- Not enough park equipment for little ones
- Security. If you are talking our parks, then an occasional drive by from the police is useful. Sometimes things go on that it would be nice if law enforcement was readily available. They don't always require a 911 call, but just a presence. Like unattended kids hanging around misusing play equipment, climbing on the roofs of structures....
- Park closes too early. Would love to walk the trails at night.
- Teenagers!



10. How would you describe your overall satisfaction with the St. Johns Parks?

Answer Choices	Responses
Very Satisfied	36% 76
Somewhat Satisfied	53% 112
Somewhat Dissatisfied	4% 8
Very Dissatisfied	1% 2
Comments	6% 12

Comments

- While the park system is good in St. Johns, ongoing investment in maintaining park infrastructure is important to ensure that the parks continue to be an asset for the community. We love the trees at the City Park for the shade they provide. So many of the smaller parks have little or no shade.
- Room for improvements And why is there a depot in the town when there is no train that will ever come through.
- Our City park is one of the nicest parks I have ever seen
- Spray park biggest waste of money. Only small children can use?????what were u thinking???
- I really think they are fantastic. I wish some additional equipment would be put in the Water Tower Park. This is the closest to my home, I think we would visit it more often if there was more to do there. But we visit the City Park very often and love it!
- More toddler friendly activities.
- We love Fantasy Forest (except when it's full of cursing teenagers), but we live right across the street from the water tower park which is severely neglected. No more slide, one dangerous climbing structure, old and chipped ride on animals.
- Main park is too small. I would prefer more green spaces in the city.

Recreation Programs

11. Do you (or members of your household) participate in City Recreational Programs?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	55% 116
No	45% 96

12. What age are the City Recreation Program users in your household? (Please check all that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses
5 and under	25% 28
6-10	53% 59
11-20	41% 45
21-30	9% 10
31-40	23% 26
41-50	16% 18
51-60	4% 4
61-70	4% 4
71 and older	1% 1
Total Respondents: 111	



13. How frequently do you or members of your household participate in each City Recreational Program?

	Twice a week	Twice a month	A few times a year	Never	Total
Concerts in the Park	6% 6	14% 15	59% 61	21% 22	104
Special Events	3% 3	11% 11	66% 64	20% 19	97
Summer Camps	6% 6	7% 7	52% 49	34% 32	94
Swimming Classes	5% 5	9% 9	39% 37	47% 45	96
Health and Fitness Classes	3% 3	8% 7	38% 35	51% 47	92
Basketball clinic	1% 1	8% 7	34% 30	56% 49	87
Arts and Crafts	2% 2	4% 4	37% 33	57% 51	90
T-ball Leagues	6% 5	2% 2	30% 25	62% 52	84
Softball Leagues	6% 5	9% 8	16% 14	70% 62	89
Volleyball Leagues	7% 6	3% 3	17% 15	72% 63	87
Open Gym Basketball	3% 3	5% 4	19% 16	73% 63	86
Open Gym Volleyball	2% 2	8% 7	14% 13	76% 69	91
Kickball League	1% 1	3% 3	24% 21	71% 61	86
Football Leagues	5% 4	4% 3	13% 11	79% 67	85
Open Gym Soccer	4% 3	4% 3	6% 5	87% 71	82
Karate	1% 1	2% 2	6% 5	90% 75	83

Comments:

- We were saddened by the removal of the pool from the city park. Love and support the spray park, but miss the city pool.
- concerts every wednesday
- Cannot really ask yearly. This is a seasonal question.
- Our kids are just getting old enough and they will be enrolling in more of these activities in the coming years
- Arts and crafts? For adults?
- My kids would like to participate in the summer camps, but they are scheduled right in the middle of the day and both parents work. Morning (8:00),afternoon (3:00)or evening would be better.
- Biddy basketball every year



14. How would the improvement or addition of the following programs impact your interest in the City of St. Johns Recreational Programs?

	Very Positive Impact	Somewhat Positive Impact	No effect	Negative Impact	Total
Special Events	36% 66	47% 86	16% 30	1% 1	183
Health and Fitness Classes	40% 73	39% 71	21% 39	1% 1	184
Swimming Classes	40% 72	37% 67	22% 39	1% 1	179
Concerts in the Park	39% 70	40% 73	20% 37	1% 1	181
Nature Education Programs	32% 57	43% 77	24% 43	1% 2	179
Summer Camps	34% 61	34% 61	32% 57	1% 1	180
Walking Clubs	31% 54	36% 64	33% 58	0% 0	176
Dance, Music, Theater	30% 54	38% 68	33% 59	0% 0	181
Open Gym Activities	28% 50	36% 63	36% 63	1% 1	177
Arts and Crafts	27% 48	35% 62	36% 64	1% 2	176
Senior Programs	21% 36	27% 48	51% 89	1% 2	175
T-ball Leagues	20% 35	24% 41	53% 91	3% 5	172
Basketball Leagues	18% 31	24% 42	57% 98	1% 2	173
Basketball Clinic	17% 30	25% 44	56% 97	1% 2	173
Soccer Leagues	17% 29	23% 40	58% 99	2% 3	171
Kickball League	15% 25	26% 44	59% 100	1% 1	170
Softball Leagues	14% 24	28% 48	57% 100	1% 2	174
Football Leagues	18% 32	18% 32	61% 105	2% 4	173
Volleyball Leagues	17% 29	21% 36	62% 108	1% 1	174
Ice Hockey League	14% 25	21% 36	63% 109	2% 4	174
Tennis Leagues	14% 24	22% 38	63% 110	2% 3	175
Karate	12% 21	24% 42	60% 104	3% 5	172
Horseshoe	12% 20	22% 38	65% 111	2% 3	172
Roller Hockey League	12% 21	20% 34	65% 112	3% 6	173

Comments

- volleyball leagues for middle and high school ages would be fun.
- I wish there were more basketball skills camps.
- During the Fall and Winter - I would like to see the parks/city cemetery open to Bow-and-Arrow hunting. The woods/fields could be leased to hunters on seasonal basis and doing so would do a few things: 1.) Improve the wildlife in the parks/city. Hunters are the best conservationists on the planet, and allowing hunting would ONLY improve the wildlife. 2.) Allowing hunting with Bow-and-Arrow ONLY would ensure safety for park-goers and hunters alike. 3.) Leasing hunting-rights to individuals on a seasonal basis would also raise additional funds for the city (prime land currently leases for 10-30 dollars per acre). 4.) This could allow city-residents an opportunity to learn how to hunt, conserve, and manage different forms of wildlife. Some other localities do allow ARCHERY hunting on city-property, and this is something that would dramatically improve the city parks, and certainly drive up usage.
- More open swim hours would be great!
- Why is negative even an option? That's odd...these are benefits. You would be better off asking if we feel where the money for improvement should go.

- like to see a senior only softball league
- Winter groups



15. Through what media have you heard about St. Johns Recreational Programming and events? (please check all that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	52% 102
Word of mouth	49% 96
Website	41% 81
Newspaper	34% 67
Email	30% 59
Parks and recreation seasonal brochure	20% 40
Program fliers	17% 34
Visited or called a parks/rec office	11% 22
None	4% 8
Other (please specify)	2% 4
Radio	2% 3
Total Respondents: 196	

Other: website, Childs School, very little advertisement, School

16. What is the best way to let you know about recreation programs and events in the future?

Answer Choices	Responses
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	50% 99
Email	29% 57
Parks and recreation seasonal brochure	8% 16
Newspaper	5% 10
Website	5% 9
Program fliers	3% 5
Other (please specify)	1% 1
Radio	0% 0
None	0% 0
Total	197

Other: newspaper and social media



17. How satisfied are you with the current City Recreation Programs in St. Johns?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Very Satisfied	20%	39
Somewhat Satisfied	65%	129
Somewhat Disatisfied	5%	10
Very Disatisfied	1%	2
Comments	9%	17
Total		197

- I don't use them so I have no opinion at this time.
- Some are good, some are not. A lot depends on the volunteer coaches. Some are into it, some are not.
- Nothing for Teenager/Young Adults. We all feel the need to go to lansing or east lansing. Do something about that. We always hear about the old-timers going to city dances and stuff like that? Why isn't there more of that?
- For a small time I think we have great space for parks
- I'd like to see more open swim options.(both lap swim and fun swim for kids)
- I liked it when you sent fliers home through the schools.
- I have personally only used the water aerobics on occasion.
- The only thing that prevents us from using more of the children's programs is our work schedules. The end times didn't correspond with when we were available to pick them up.
- Very Satisfied - This is one of the greatest part of living in Saint Johns. I always rave to people when they ask if I enjoy living in Saint Johns.
- Baseball!!
- I wish there was spring/winter or fall swimming lessons. The only ones I ever see are during the summer and with summer camps/vacations and other summer activities it isn't always convenient.
- Because we live outside of the city limits I find it hard to find information about programs. I would like to see more information dispersed to perhaps the surrounding school districts too for those of us that live close enough to St. Johns but not within the school district also have the opportunity to sign up for classes and programs.
- Would like to see more kid friendly equipment at the parks instead of empty fields.
- Better publication of the city leagues standings would be greatly appreciated. Especially by the sponsors of city league teams. I see very little coverage now, where it used to at least be in the paper every week. You would think it would be much easier and free-er to put it on the city website or facebook. There is no reason other than a trophy that no one knows about, for businesses to sponsor city league teams

18. Recognizing that there is limited funding available, how would you prioritize the following areas?

Comments (see results on next page):

- Rock Climbing Area? You guys are just ASKING for a lawsuit...
- High ropes and rock climbing would be amazing but aren't a priority and, of course, who can use them when and how they would be managed and maintained is questionable.
- I would like to see a paved bike walking path that goes around the entire city
- I love the idea of connecting parks with trails!
- Connect with Motz park
- Ropes course would be amazing. I would pay to do that.
- Fix the softball fields and the skating rink could use some more lights. It gets dark early in the winter and it's hard to skate under just 1 or 2 lights
- Please update water tower park!



	High Priority	Moderate Priority	Low Priority	Total	Weighted Average
Playgrounds	55% 102	33% 60	12% 22	184	1.43
Preserving unique natural areas	39% 70	39% 71	22% 39	180	1.17
Connecting parks and communities with trails	39% 70	39% 70	22% 39	179	1.17
Extended hiking trails (natural surfaced trails more than 5 miles)	40% 75	36% 67	24% 44	186	1.17
Upgrading park restrooms	35% 64	46% 84	19% 34	182	1.16
City Park Renovations	31% 56	51% 91	18% 33	180	1.13
Natural-surfaced paths in parks	23% 41	53% 93	24% 43	177	0.99
Nature programs	16% 29	54% 97	30% 54	180	0.86
Paved trails in parks	19% 33	45% 79	37% 65	177	0.82
Buying land to expand existing parks	25% 44	32% 57	43% 77	178	0.81
Park shelters or lodges	19% 33	42% 74	39% 69	176	0.80
Mountain bike trails	19% 35	40% 73	41% 74	182	0.79
Rock Climbing Area	16% 29	31% 57	52% 95	181	0.64
High Ropes Course	16% 29	31% 56	53% 95	180	0.63
Cross country ski trails	16% 28	31% 55	54% 96	179	0.62
Off-leash dog parks	19% 34	23% 42	58% 103	179	0.61
Outdoor amphitheaters	11% 20	36% 63	53% 92	175	0.59
Agricultural education	10% 17	39% 67	52% 90	174	0.58
Skate Park	10% 17	22% 38	69% 121	176	0.41
Disc golf courses	9% 16	19% 34	72% 127	177	0.37
Equestrian Trails	3% 6	20% 36	76% 135	177	0.27



19. Please indicate your level of support for these possible sources of additional funding to improve St. Johns parks and trails:

	Strongly Support	Moderately Support	Neutral	Moderately Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Total	Weighted Average
Expand park system funding from St. Johns general tax base	19% 34	30% 54	35% 63	10% 18	6% 10	179	0.47
Ask voters to support a new millage for the St. Johns Park and Trail system	22% 41	28% 52	23% 43	13% 24	14% 25	185	0.32
Increase non-resident fees for parks	16% 29	33% 58	26% 46	13% 23	12% 22	178	0.28
Increase fees for parks uses that already have fees	4% 7	27% 48	34% 61	21% 38	14% 25	179	-0.15
Develop new user fees for activities that are currently free	6% 10	22% 39	32% 58	21% 38	19% 34	179	-0.26

Comments:

- The only way I would support new millage is if all including equestrians could use it.
- ANOTHER MILLAGE!? Stop asking for more money. Re-appropriate the money you already have! You still need to have the ROAD millage re-approved for the roads to get finished correct? One tax-gouge at a time please! Damned big-government "tax-and-spend" liberals. Leave our taxes alone! We already pay too much. Please focus ONLY on how to lower taxes! NOT how to take/spend more of our money! Mooches.
- The City built the spray park using many donations but we can't expect to pay for all our public services this way. We need to educate people that paying higher taxes for a wonderful park system raises property values.
- Which parks have fees now?
- If fees are going to be increased for users, I think it is important to have low-income assistance to participate. I think it would be a very bad idea to make the parks and activities unavailable to youth due to expense.
- I don't think it needs to expand. It will expand itself if the fix what they already have



20. Under what conditions might you support a tax millage for St. Johns parks and trails?
(Please choose all that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Funds can only be used where needed to operate, expand and improve the city park system	40%	76
Must be renewed by voters every 5 years	39%	73
Unsure	24%	45
I do not support a millage	22%	41
Funds can only be used to acquire new land for city parks and trails	15%	28
Must be renewed by voters every 10 years	6%	11
Other (please specify)	3%	5
Total Respondents: 189		

Comments:

- Themed fundraisers at the parks. People love zombie runs. Or summer picnics to benefit parks (using the grills and picnic tables), scavenger hunts, relay races, etc. Get people TO the parks to raise money for the parks. People who don't use the parks won't vote for the millage, but people who participate in the events will.
- I want a better sledding hill!! Toboggan Run ?
- Do not use anymore money to connect more trails, only use funds to pave current trails
- Required extensive oversight to combat corruption by city officials. Small town politics and good ol boys and all.
- Only if there is a plan to improve playground equipment

21. What best describes the area that you live in?

Answer Choices	Responses	
City of St. Johns	64%	125
Bingham Township	13%	25
Greenbush Township	6%	11
Essex Township	5%	10
Olive Township	3%	5
Riley Township	3%	5
Ovid Township	2%	4
Bengal Township	2%	3
Victor Township	2%	3
Other (please specify)	2%	3
Duplain Township	1%	1

Other: Newark township near Ithaca, Washington township, Moving to city next year from Greenbush



22. What is your age?

Answer Choices	Responses	
17 or younger	1%	1
18-20	4%	8
21-29	14%	27
30-39	36%	70
40-49	26%	50
50-59	10%	19
60 or older	10%	19
Total		194

23. What is your gender?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Male	23%	43
Female	77%	148
Other (please specify)	0%	0
Total		191

24. How much total combined money did all members of your household earn last year?

Answer Choices	Responses	
\$0 to \$9,999	2%	3
\$10,000 to \$24,999	4%	7
\$25,000 to \$49,999	15%	28
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20%	39
\$75,000 to \$99,999	20%	38
\$100,000 or more	24%	46
Prefer not to answer	16%	30
Total		191



“Thank you for your input!

The results from this survey will be incorporated into the new 5-Year Recreation Master Plan. This plan will be posted for community review during the month of January at the St. Johns City Hall and the Briggs Public Library. It will also be available online through the City Recreation website and social media page.

City Website: <http://cityofstjohnsmi.com/Departments/ParksandRecreation.aspx>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stjohns.recreation>

A community review meeting will take place at the end of January before the plan is submitted to the state. Please email Bill Schafer at BSCHAFER@CI.SAINT-JOHNS.MI.US or call 989-224-8944 ext. 227 if you have questions or concerns about this survey or the 5-Year Recreation Master Plan.”

25. General Comments

- Please paint the amphitheater, it looks unfinished and it's embarrassing. Many people share this opinion. Red, black, and white would give a cohesive look when people come from out of town for footballs games. Painting the hideous green on the spray park building would be a good idea too. With so many non-local people visiting the park for games, it'd be a great way to show we are a town that takes pride in our parks. If people like how we present our parks and buildings they would be more likely to consider SJ as a place to relocate to. Bad paint jobs can have a drastic effect on peoples' perceptions of a town. Right now, our current paint jobs scream "we don't care".
- Overall, we go to the City Park a fair amount during the year, but do not really know enough about what the other parks offer that would be better than the City Park so we have not visited.
- I wish there were more sports programs for kids, but in 6 week increments, so more kids could participate. Like, after age 8, the only basketball is through SYAA, and not all of us want to take our kids to bball 3 times a week. I know that you'd have a lot of interest in shorter, not-super-competitive programs. Some parents and kids still just want to have fun and learn, not dedicate our lives to a sport.
- No more taxes, please?! We already give you guys way too much of our money. Consider allowing/leasing hunting rights in certain city parks/areas. Work to lower taxes rather than raising them.
- Headed in the right direction!
- I would love to see an indoor walking/running track
- Again, please update the water tower park. I love having a park close by for my kids but we don't go often because it's old, ugly, and not much to do for little ones.
- I think having an indoor walking/running track or one that could be available to the public would be beneficial to many residents, especially during the winter months and inclement weather days.
- I would pay to get into the spray park so it could be expanded.