

EVER GREEN: An Enduring System of Parks and Greenways in Detroit



Taubman College of
Architecture + Urban Planning

Urban + Regional
Planning Program

University of Michigan,
Ann Arbor

April 2012

Cover Images

Top Left: Dequindre Cut <http://www.detroitriverfront.org/dequindre/>

Top Right: Maheras Gentry Park <http://detroit1701.org/Maheras%20Park.html>

Bottom Left: Clark Park Youth Ice Hockey <http://detroithockeynews.blogspot.com/>

Bottom Right: YMCA/Detroit Leadership Academy <http://hypnoticbuzz.com/children-new-playground/85136/>

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Executive Summary

Quality parks and greenways can stabilize neighborhoods, bolster economic development, and enrich quality of life. They also build a sense of community and sustain health and vitality at the neighborhood level. Given the recent budget crisis and consent agreement with the State of Michigan, Detroit is at a critical time in its redevelopment. Parks, recreation centers and greenways can play a role in reshaping a stable, strong and green city. This plan, *Ever Green: An Enduring System of Parks and Greenways in Detroit*, highlights a series of strategies for parks and greenways advocates to enhance the parks and greenway system, thereby enhancing the city itself.

Parks offer neighborhoods recreation and leisure amenities. Quality public green spaces can initiate neighborhood stabilization and provide landmarks that serve as points of pride and unity for residents.¹

Greenways encourage non-motorized transportation, such as biking and walking, and provide recreational opportunities. Neighborhood connectivity encourages residents and visitors to navigate the city in a safe and comfortable manner.²

Ever Green's ultimate goal is to provide streamlined and long-lasting strategies to better the physical layout and the administrative and funding system for the future of Detroit's parks and greenways.

Why Detroit Needs a Parks and Greenways Plan

Ever Green recommends ways to accomplish the following goals:

- Adjust parks and greenways to Detroit's smaller population
- Ensure that parks and greenways are properly maintained
- Increase access to parks and greenways
- Achieve stability in parks and greenways planning, funding, and management

Adjusting to Detroit's smaller population and evolving neighborhood patterns provides an

opportunity to improve current operations and introduce new planning, funding, and management models. Large budget deficits, population losses, and shrinking revenue sources imply that parks, greenways, and recreation centers will operate with decreased public funding. Outside funding resources and alternative management structures will be needed to create a parks and greenways system that is administratively and financially sustainable.

Detroit's Existing Parks and Greenways System

The current parks and greenways physical system is unevenly distributed and in poor or fair condition. An abundance of small parks leads to maintenance inefficiencies, prompting some individuals and non-profit organizations to construct and manage parks independently from the city. In addition, greenways continue to expand, playing an important role in providing alternative transportation routes and connecting the future parks system. The 2006 Detroit Recreation Department (DRD) Master Plan recommended downsizing the physical system to allow for adequate maintenance and management, and the Department of Public Works' Non-Motorized Transportation Plan outlines possible additions for on and off street greenways. *Ever Green* builds upon these plans in later chapters.³

Existing Management, Planning, and Funding System

The current management, funding, and planning system is complicated and disconnected. Understanding the multiple administrative and management roles highlights where problems exist and suggests ways to resolve these issues. The General Services Department (GSD) and the DRD play the largest role in managing, planning, and funding parks and recreation centers while the Department of Public Works (DPW) plays the main role in greenway development. County and state governmental entities, as well as non-profit organizations take on numerous management roles. However, no comprehensive parks and greenways plan exists to assist in guiding future development. In short, uncoordinated management, planning, and funding efforts increase the DRD and GSD's budget and service difficulties. Therefore, finding ways to coordinate efforts and reinforce alternative approaches to parks, recreation centers, and greenways management and funding is vital in creating an enduring parks and greenways system.

Benchmark Principles for Detroit's Parks and Greenways

Seven factors of excellence highlight the essential elements of a quality parks and greenways system:

- A clear expression of purpose



- An ongoing planning and community involvement process
- Sufficient assets in land, staffing and equipment to meet the system's goals
- Equitable access
- User satisfaction
- Safety from crime and physical hazards
- Benefits for the city beyond the boundaries of the parks

These principles can guide decisions that make Detroit's system suit the evolving population and neighborhood development patterns.

Applying Benchmark Principles for Detroit's Parks and Greenways

Detroit's parks and greenways' physical distribution can serve residents better. The following strategies suggest ways to alter the current physical structure:

Strategy 1: Create a comprehensive citywide parks, greenways, and recreation system.

A complementary parks and greenways system can enhance resident's connectivity to recreational amenities. Identifying how the parts relate to each other and to the system clarifies which elements and projects should receive priority.

- Connect residents to major parks with greenways
- Connect recreation centers to greenways
- Connect activity nodes such as hospitals and universities to the parks and greenways system

The plan provides support for the Detroit Greenways Coalition (DGC) plan to develop over 151 miles of on and off street greenways in Detroit. Of those proposed greenways, six segments could be prioritized since they reach the densest areas of the city, connect the most amenities such as schools and shopping hubs, and provide many off street options as preferred by city residents. These six prioritized routes include:

- Riverfront extensions east and west
- Conner Creek Greenway
- Outer Drive east and west
- Van Dyke north
- Inner Circle Greenway
- Livernois north

Strategy 2: Assure that recreational amenities are regionally distributed to increase access. The system should efficiently and equitably serve residents where need and population density are the highest rather than distributing resources on the basis of the geography alone.

- Emphasize residents' access to varied types of park and greenway amenities
- Provide more parks and access in high population density areas
- Promote adequate service levels in districts with high population density

Based on analysis that looks at population density, park size, walking distance access, and access to amenities, several areas of the city are priorities for

adding recreational amenities, adding mini parks, and closing mini and neighborhood parks.

Strategy 3: Introduce new types of parks into the system.

While the DRD has exceeded its goal of providing 5.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, Detroit provides less park space per resident than comparable cities such as Cleveland and Pittsburgh.

These new parks types could be added in the city:

- Skate parks
- Post industrial parks
- Boulder parks

A new and improved Detroit parks and greenways system could emerge and feature: comprehensive citywide connectivity among parks, greenways, and recreation centers; more parks and amenities in densely populated areas; fewer parks and amenities in areas with more vacant land; and a particular focus on parks and amenities that city residents want to use.

Strategies to Create an Enduring System of Parks, Greenways, and Recreation Centers in Detroit

Detroit's parks and greenways need effective funding and management with decreased city agency dependence. A high quality system demands that city agencies and park advocates

implement various management structures and a range of funding, administrative, and maintenance approaches. Government agencies, non-governmental actors, and informal community groups' cooperation and communication aid in creating a reliable system. The following strategies provide management entities with alternative administration and funding strategies.

Strategy 1: Encourage and facilitate non-municipal, private sector and non-profit management for more parks and greenways.

To decrease the DRD's and GSD's responsibilities, private sector and non-profit entities could support parks, greenways, and recreation centers through various management structures.

- Use, leverage and create conservancies to manage park, greenway, and recreation assets
- Strengthen and expand GSD's Adopt-A-Park program
- Promote corporate sponsorship and management for new and existing parks
- Encourage more public/private partnerships for Detroit parks and greenways
- Reduce city management of mini parks and encourage alternative management organizations for mini parks that have considerable use

Strategy 2: Recruit non-municipal public sector entities to manage more parks and greenways. Non-municipal support can lessen the administrative and financial burden on the DRD and GSD in managing Detroit's parks, greenways,

and recreation centers. The DRD and GSD can partner with several public sector entities such as the Huron Clinton Metropolitan Authority, Wayne County Parks, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

- Transition management of certain city parks to state entities
- Continue to take advantage of federal funding opportunities for parks and greenways
- Use the millages captured from Detroit residents for parks in Detroit

Strategy 3: Leverage non-traditional park resources to support parks and greenways.

Using workforce development programs offers an alternative maintenance structure for parks and greenways. Such programs train local workers. Communication is important for informing residents about parks and greenways updates, events, and programs.

- Leverage workforce development programs for maintenance
- Use all forms of communication outreach

Ever Green applies the strategies in two Detroit areas, Southwest Detroit and the Lower Eastside areas. The application demonstrates how these strategies relate to areas with dense population and with considerable amounts of vacant land.

Implementing *Ever Green's* Strategies in Southwest Detroit

The Southwest Detroit study area is a densely populated area located roughly five miles from the central business district near the city border with Dearborn. The area's smaller parks only serve about half of the population; therefore more parks may be created to satisfy the needs of residents. If Southwest Detroit gains new parks, these should be located so as to improve quality and access near the center and near west of the study area where there is high population density and residents lack access to parks. In addition, while much of the area has access to greenways, connectivity will be enhanced through future greenway expansion. Priority greenway routes in this area include the Inner Circle Greenway, Fort Street and West RiverWalk.

Several community organizations contribute to parks and greenways management and offer a good model for other non-municipal groups to follow such as the Clark Park Coalition and UNI. Expanding on their success, interested non-municipal entities could increase maintenance of the parks and greenways system through an expanded Adopt-A-Park program, matching grant program, and conservancies. For instance, expanding the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy westward, incorporating the greenways into a citywide greenways conservancy, and creating a park conservancy for Patton Park, similar to Clark Park, can enhance maintenance to key recreational amenities

Implementing *Ever Green's* Strategies in Detroit's Lower Eastside

set of goals, the Lower Eastside study area has the potential to become a citywide and regional waterfront recreational attraction.

The Lower Eastside study area is located approximately 4 miles east of downtown Detroit and adjacent to the Detroit River. This sparsely populated area with excess vacant land has experienced the closing of several small parks and playgrounds. With limited GSD and DRD resources, non-municipal groups will need to provide financial and administrative stewardship of the area's parks and greenways. The northeast section of the study area is lacking in access to mini and neighborhood parks, especially considering the closing of the three nearby mini parks. Therefore, if additional parks were to be added, they could be concentrated in that area. The area could also benefit from the addition of several proposed greenways. Analysis of population density, access to amenities, and off street routes, show that priority should be placed on development of the East RiverWalk from Gabriel Richard Park to the city limits.

Financial and administrative strategies focus on the Adopt-A-Park program for smaller parks, conservancies for several other parks, and an emphasis on bringing in new resources from potential partners such as the Environmental Protection Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA), especially for the riverfront parks. If stakeholder organizations can collaborate under a unified

Notes

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2. Ibid.
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Chapter 1: Why Detroit Needs a Parks and Greenways Plan

Parks and greenways contribute to making the city of Detroit a desirable place to live, work, or visit. The presence of parks and greenways can attract and retain residents to a neighborhood and offer safe, enjoyable, and local recreation opportunities. Detroit residents want a place to relax, exercise, interact with neighbors, and enjoy the outdoors, which park and greenway locations provide.

This plan, *Ever Green*, explains how Detroit residents, non-profit organizations, and city departments can support parks, greenways, and recreation centers without entirely relying on city government services. Large budget deficits, population losses, and shrinking revenue sources mean that parks and recreation centers will operate with less dependence on the city's general fund for both financial and administrative support. Greenways do not heavily rely on municipal funding and must continue to expand their reach for outside funding sources. This plan outlines alternative recommendations for the physical, financial, and administrative management of parks and greenways, taking into consideration the constraints facing city government while recognizing the importance of parks and greenways.

This plan is prepared for an advisory group, which includes representatives from:

- City of Detroit Recreation Department (DRD)
- City of Detroit General Services Department (GSD)
- Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan
- Detroit Greenways Coalition/Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance
- Detroit Parks Coalition
- The Greening of Detroit
- Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP)

Each of these organizations supports Detroit's parks and greenways system.

Management of parks and greenways is a big responsibility, made more complicated when undertaken by multiple groups. The DRD, GSD, Wayne County, State of Michigan, conservancies, non-profit organizations, corporations, and private sector groups all play a management role for Detroit parks. The city's Department of Public Works (DPW), the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), non-profit organizations, and foundations oversee Detroit's greenways. The DRD and GSD manage recreation centers. This plan describes how parks and greenways management organizations operate in Detroit and illustrates ways to make the system more efficient.

This plan offers recommendations to accomplish the following goals:

Adjust parks and greenways to Detroit's smaller population

Detroit's shrinking population means that some areas with few residents have plenty of parks and greenways, but other areas with dense population do not have enough parks, greenways, or recreation centers. Therefore, closing parks in some areas and creating them in others will match park facilities to current population patterns.

Increase access to parks and greenways

Detroit's current parks and greenways system offers various amenities, but residents in some areas do not have access to them. An improved parks and greenways system can locate amenities to provide all Detroiters, regardless of neighborhood, good access to various park and recreation amenities, from playgrounds to bike paths to baseball diamonds, within a reasonable distance.

Ensure that parks and greenways are properly maintained

The city's budget continues to decrease; therefore, city agencies cannot provide the levels of maintenance needed to ensure parks, greenways, and recreation centers remain usable. In this setting, a variety of non-municipal groups can supply maintenance and support services that city departments cannot.

Achieve stability in parks and greenways management, planning, and funding

The parks and greenways system in Detroit includes numerous entities that do not necessarily coordinate with one another. A more stable system will facilitate communication and planning among parks and greenways managers. This network will include city agencies, non-profits, community groups, corporations, and other stakeholders. To achieve financial stability, parks managers will need to find enduring sources of funding and administration instead of depending on grants, one-time donations, and volunteer efforts.

Ever Green makes recommendations for accomplishing these goals. The parks and greenways system's adjustment to Detroit's smaller population and evolving neighborhood patterns provides an opportunity to improve current operations and introduce new models of management, planning, and funding.

Detroit's fiscal crisis

For each of the last three years, Detroit has spent \$100 million more than it received in revenue.¹ A drop in tax revenue was a part of the problem; for instance, in fiscal year (FY) 2000 Detroit received \$654 million in tax revenue and by FY 2011 tax revenue dropped to \$610 million.² Analysts project that the city's structural deficit could reach \$140 million in FY 2012 if spending is not

cut or revenue does not increase.³ Detroit faced \$12 billion in long-term debt, including pension liabilities, as of June 2011, and a general deficit of \$197 million.⁴ Detroit Mayor Dave Bing said that the deficit will increase to over \$1 billion by FY 2015 without measures to cut expenditures and increase revenues.⁵ In April 2012, Detroit signed a consent agreement with the State of Michigan to allow financial oversight by the state to reduce the city's deficit and to work toward a financially stable Detroit.

In this challenging budget environment, Detroit officials have laid off employees and reduced city services. The various city agencies that support parks and greenways have experienced significant budget and staff reductions as well. As Figure 1.1 shows, the DPW budget has decreased by \$80 million over the past five years, and the GSD and DRD budgets have dropped by 30% and 50%, respectively. These reductions mean parks receive less frequent maintenance and capital investment. In fact, Mayor Bing proposed closing all recreation centers as city government officials search for ways to pare back expenditures.⁶

Plan context: Detroit's land use situation

Detroit's land use patterns reflect its shrinking population. The 2010 Census revealed a loss of more than 230,000 residents over the last decade.⁷ With the loss of three-fifths of its residents since

Figure 1.1 City of Detroit adopted budgets by department from fiscal 2007 through fiscal 2012



Source: Detroit Budget Department

Figure 1.2 Campus Martius ice skating rink



Photo Credit: American Planning Association

Figure 1.3 Bikers on the Detroit RiverWalk



Photo Credit: Transport Michigan

1950, Detroit is burdened with more than 90,000 vacant residential lots citywide.⁸ The GSD and DRD recognize this land use shift and recommend “repositioning” several parks in the 2006 DRD Master Plan (repositioning includes adding parks where population density is high and no parks exist and reducing a park’s size or number of parks where population density is low).⁹

Why Detroit needs parks and greenways

Parks offer communities recreation and leisure amenities and can support neighborhood revitalization. Quality public greenspaces can assist in stabilizing neighborhoods in transition and provide landmarks that serve as points of pride and unity for residents.¹⁰ Further, parks may contribute to environmental sustainability, improve physical health, and enhance overall quality of life for residents.

Greenways facilitate non-motorized transportation, such as biking and walking, and provide recreation opportunities. They promote neighborhood connectivity by encouraging residents and visitors to explore areas beyond their own neighborhoods. Biking and walking improve personal health by fostering an active lifestyle and by reducing vehicle traffic.

Greenways can support economic development by linking users to businesses, as the Corktown-

Mexicantown Greenlink and Southwest Detroit Greenway do. The Midtown Loop and Dequindre Cut further tourism by connecting popular city attractions.

Why Detroit parks and greenways need a new plan for financial and administrative sustainability

Ever Green recognizes that now is a transformative time in Detroit and aims to introduce new approaches during this critical decision-making time for the city’s future. As Detroit adjusts its parks system to its smaller population and evolving neighborhood patterns, parks advocates have a prime opportunity to improve current operations and introduce new models of management, planning, and funding providing residents with access to quality greenspaces that contribute to Detroit’s revitalization.

Since 2006, GSD has provided cost efficiencies and streamlined service delivery. GSD administers basic maintenance services, such as snow removal and grass cutting, although it currently has limited funding and staffing resources. DRD operates the city’s recreation centers and parks programming.

Detroit’s parks system has stakeholders ranging from informal volunteer caretakers to non-profit organizations to Detroit’s GSD and DRD. Detroit’s GSD and DRD are the primary stewards for operations, maintenance, and programming

of the city's parks and greenways. All of these entities are enthusiastic and interested in ensuring that parks and greenways remain viable in the city's neighborhoods. This plan emphasizes alternative strategies to decrease reliance on government administration and funding for parks and greenways. Given the city's challenging budget situation, organizations outside of city government will become increasingly important to the future of many park and greenways assets.

Formal collaboration for parks and greenways planning does not currently exist. Parks and greenways groups could coordinate projects aimed at promoting parks and greenways as a comprehensive system. *Ever Green* recommends ways to coordinate parks and greenways administration to create more stable management, planning, and funding of the system.

What this plan includes

Ever Green begins by examining the status of parks and greenways in Detroit (Chapters 2 and 3). Next, it describes what qualities are critical for creating an effective parks and greenways system in Detroit (Chapters 4 and 5) and proposes administration and funding approaches through which to achieve long-term stability in such a park and greenways system (Chapter 6). The plan concludes by applying these techniques in Southwest Detroit (Chapter 7) and the Lower Eastside (Chapter 8) to demonstrate the potential of these solutions.

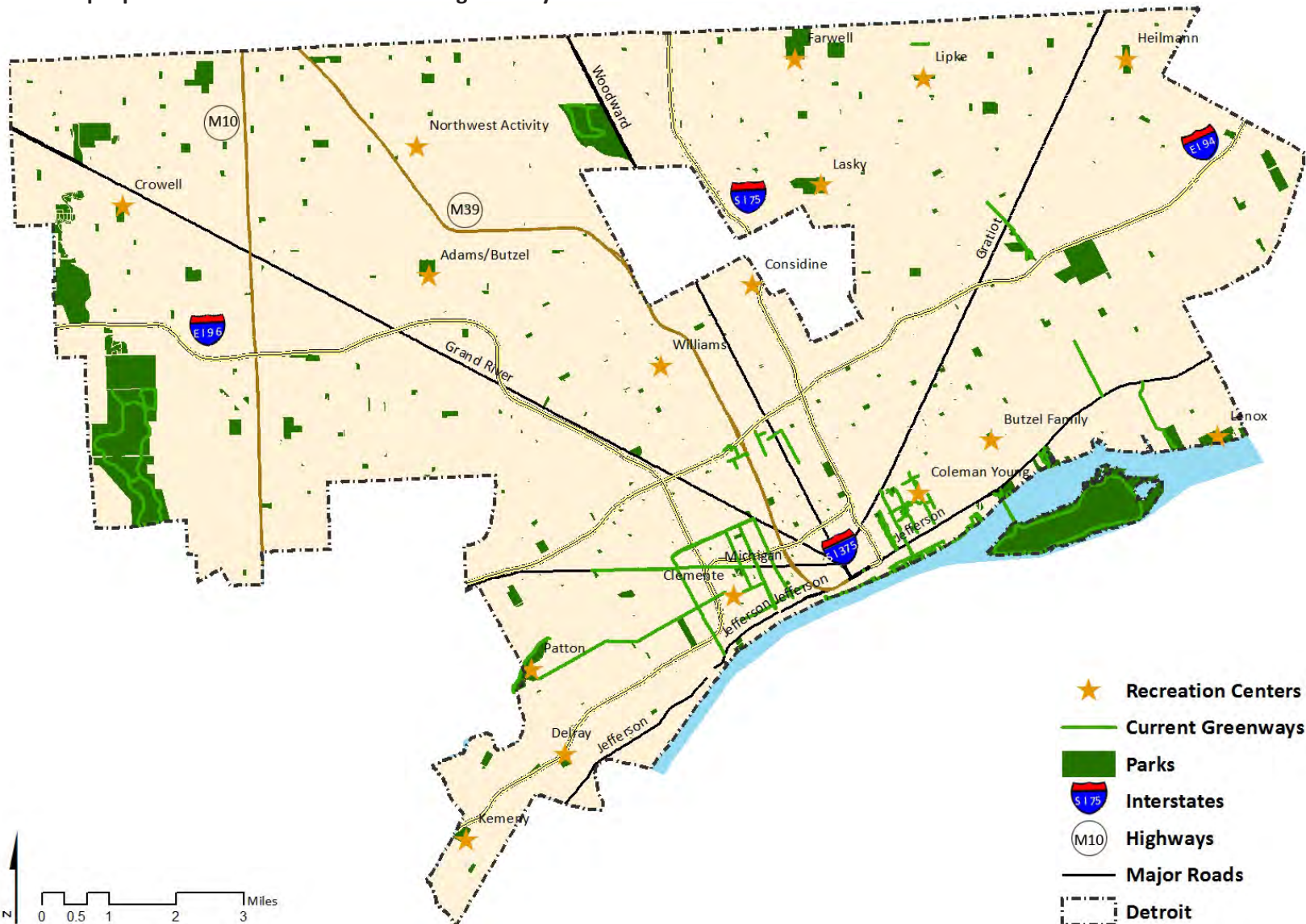
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9. Detroit Recreation Department, *Strategic Master Plan Volume II*, May 2006, <<http://www.detroitmi.gov/Portals/0/docs/recreation/pdf/PDF%20files/Final%20Report/Volume%20II.pdf>>.
10. Peter Harnik, "How Cities Use Parks for Community Revitalization," *American Planning Association*, 2002, <<http://www.planning.org/cityparks/briefingpapers/communityrevitalization.htm>>.

Chapter 2: Detroit's Existing Parks and Greenways System

This chapter gives an overview of the existing physical elements of the parks and greenways system (see Figure 2.1). Understanding the current situation provides the basis for describing desirable changes in the inventory (Chapter 5) and creating a financially and administratively sustainable system (Chapter 6). An inventory of parks, greenways, and recreation centers helps to show the quality of service and to estimate future physical improvement needs. The primary source of information in this chapter is the 2006 Detroit Recreation Department (DRD) Master Plan and priority greenway segments of the Department of Public Works (DPW) Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (as selected by the Detroit Greenways Coalition).

Figure 2.1 Municipal parks and recreation centers with greenways



Source: See Appendix A

Parks

Two parks “systems” exist in the City of Detroit. One is municipal parks, which are under the jurisdiction of the DRD. The other is non-municipal parks, which non-profits or other organizations have constructed and manage. Non-municipal parks are generally public parks but privately created and managed.

Municipal parks

The 2006 DRD Master Plan included 311 properties “currently developed, operated, and maintained

as DRD parks” in its park inventory. The Master Plan also noted an additional 49 properties “not developed for recreational use... typically greenbelts and parkways.”¹

The DRD Master Plan classified all municipal parks into five types as shown in Table 2.1. The Master Plan additionally created a classification of “Sports park” but did not classify any existing municipal facilities as such.

The DRD Master Plan gives the total area of municipal parks as 4,768 acres. The largest parks

in the system are Rouge Park (1,181 acres), Belle Isle (985 acres), Eliza Howell Park (251 acres), and Chandler Park (211 acres).² The Master Plan sets a goal of providing a level of service of 5.6 acres per 1,000 residents. The Trust for Public Land’s 2011 City Park Facts publication estimates the level of service in Detroit at approximately 6.5 acres per 1,000 residents.³ As shown in Table 2.2, compared to the levels of cities with similar population density, Detroit’s 6.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents is lower than the median of 7.3 acres and lower than comparable older cities such as Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Buffalo.

Table 2.1 Park classifications and descriptions, 2006

Park type	Mission statement/definition	Typical size	Service area	Number of parks
Mini park	Addresses limited, isolated, or specialized recreational needs at small sites in heavily developed areas and at sites with unique recreational opportunities.	0.5 to 2 acres	¼ mile radius	150
Neighborhood park	Serves as the recreational focus of the neighborhood, offers a balance of active and passive recreation activities to neighborhood residents, and provides facilities within walking distance of their homes.	5 to 10 acres	½ mile radius	122
Community park	Provides for active and passive recreational needs of several neighborhoods on a 30 to 50 acre site that is easily accessible by automobile or public transit. This type of park allows for group activities and other recreational opportunities not feasible at the neighborhood park level.	30 to 50 acres	3 mile radius	24
Regional park	Provides for active and passive recreational needs of the entire city or metropolitan area by preserving large open spaces, usually greater than 250 acres, that can accommodate recreational activities not feasible within smaller park classifications; easily accessible by automobile or public transit.	> 250 acres	City-wide	5
Plaza park	Public spaces set aside for civic purposes and commercial activities. They are usually located at the intersection of important streets or other significant locations. The landscape is mostly hard surface and may have trees or other plantings.	< 2 acres	Community-wide	10

Source: 2006 DRD Master Plan p. 30.

Table 2.2 Acres of parkland per 1,000 residents for cities of similar population density, FY 2010

City	Total park acres	Acres per 1,000 residents
San Jose, CA	15,982	16.6
St. Paul, MN	3,974	14.1
Pittsburgh, PA	3,120	10.1
St. Louis, MO	3,478	9.8
Buffalo, NY	2,180	8.1
Cleveland, OH	3,130	7.3
Rochester, NY	1,501	7.2
Detroit, MI	5,921	6.5
Gilbert, AZ	1,330	6
Las Vegas, NV	3,072	5.4
Stockton, CA	674	2.3
Median		7.3

Source: Center for City Park Excellence

Table 2.3 Existing amenities in Detroit parks, 2006

Amenities	Number	Per 10,000 residents
Softball/baseball field	122	1.71
Soccer field permanent	33	0.46
Football/rugby/cricket field	28	0.39
Tennis court	33	0.46
Multi-purpose court	21	0.29
Basketball court	119	1.67
Volleyball court	37	0.52
Horseshoe	26	1.71
Play equipment	107	0.46

Source: 2006 DRD Master Plan

Recreational amenities

The 2006 DRD Master Plan estimates that about one third of parks have at least one amenity such as softball and baseball fields, basketball courts, and play equipment (see Table 2.3). Though no standard exists for how many amenities a city should have, in comparison with other cities of similar population density, Detroit has a low level of most recreational amenities. For example, Pittsburgh has 4.1 softball and baseball fields per 10,000 residents, while Detroit has 1.7.⁴

Condition

The 2006 Master Plan includes a condition report for each park. Overall, the park system was “generally in need of repair and upgrading to properly provide desired recreation for city residents.”⁵ The Master Plan was designed to improve the quality and accessibility of recreational opportunities for the residents of Detroit. Although the plan is six years old, the condition of parks has not improved.

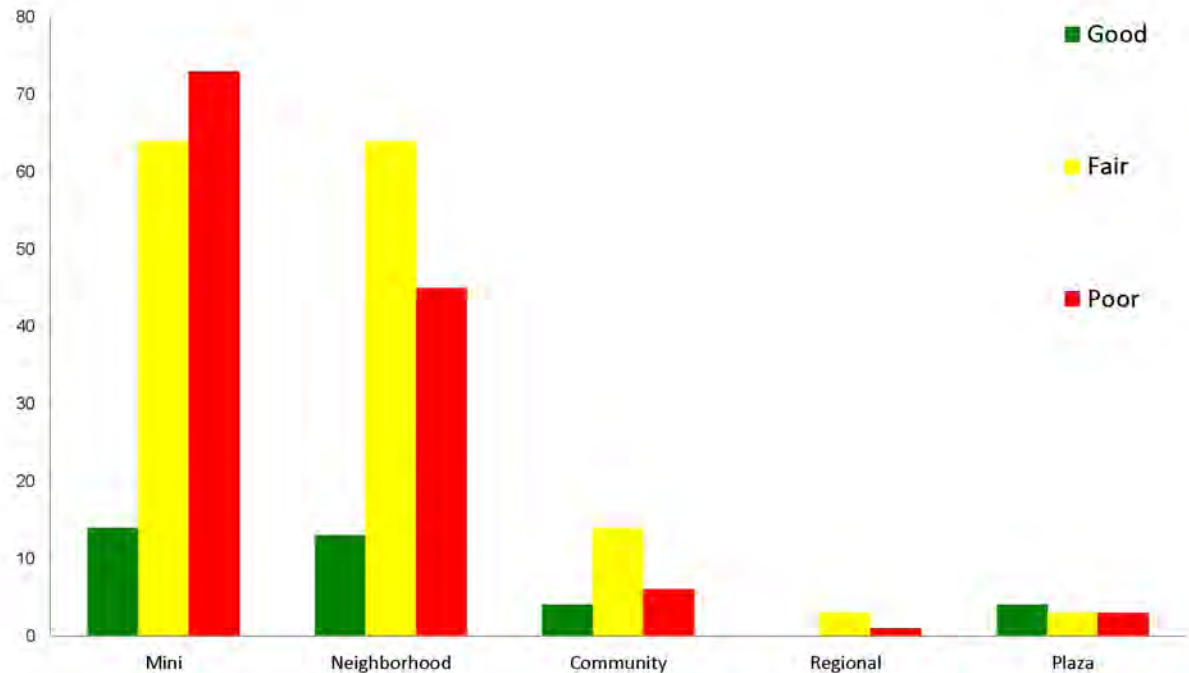
The DRD classified 125 of the parks (40%) as being in “poor” condition and acknowledged that city staff had been unable to maintain many of the parks properly (see Figure 2.2). Addressing this problem may include reducing the overall number of parks, as “operation, maintenance, and programming become increasingly inefficient and expensive when park properties are small and dispersed. Consolidation of properties

and increasing the average park size will help significantly in addressing the current maintenance backlog.”⁶ The strategy calls for repositioning, or closing, of 113 existing parks and creating 27 new parks, resulting in a system of 220 municipal parks.

Appendix A6 of the DRD Master Plan recommends a standard maintenance mode for each park type. The maintenance modes developed by the American Park and Recreation Society and National Recreation and Park Association can be thought of as “the way of” maintenance and range from the most intensive (Mode I – State of the Art) approaches to the least intensive (Mode VI – Minimum). Based on a recommended maintenance mode for each park type, DRD Master Plan Appendix A6 estimates the annual cost per acre for each type. Table 2.4 gives the DRD estimated cost per acre for the Detroit municipal parks system, resulting in an estimated cost of maintenance for all acres in the municipal park system.

The total cost to maintain city parks in 2006 at a moderate level was nearly \$14 million per year. Exactly how much of the General Service Department (GSD) budget is appropriated for parks is unknown, but these estimates show that the department is under-funded for the amount of municipal park land. In comparison, the 2011-2012 GSD budget allocated to maintenance was approximately \$9.1 million (see Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.2 Park condition, 2006



Source: 2006 DRD Master Plan

Definition: Repositioning

DRD refers to repositioning as the redistributing of park resources within the city through both closing parks and facilities which are located in over served areas and in poor condition and opening parks in areas “to fill the service area gaps to provide good accessibility and convenience for all city residents.”

Source: 2006 DRD Master Plan, p. 51-52

Definition: Condition ratings

- Good – No repair or replacement is necessary.
- Fair – Some repair is necessary to be considered “good.”
- Poor – Repair is not practical or cost effective and replacement is necessary.

Table 2.4 Maintenance cost of current system

Park type	Number	Total acres	Cost per acre	Total cost
Mini park	150	134	\$10,510	\$1,408,340
Neighborhood park	122	798	\$8,440	\$6,735,120
Community park	24	1004	\$2,604	\$2,614,416
Regional park	5	2899	\$832	\$2,411,968
Plaza park	10	20	\$33,340	\$666,800
				\$13,836,644

Source: DRD Master Plan Appendix A6 & Appendix B

Figure 2.3 Gap between park maintenance costs and estimated budget allocated for maintenance (of all city-owned public spaces), 2011-2012



Source: 2006 DRD Master Plan; GSD 2011-2012 adopted budget

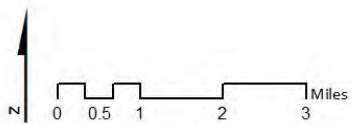
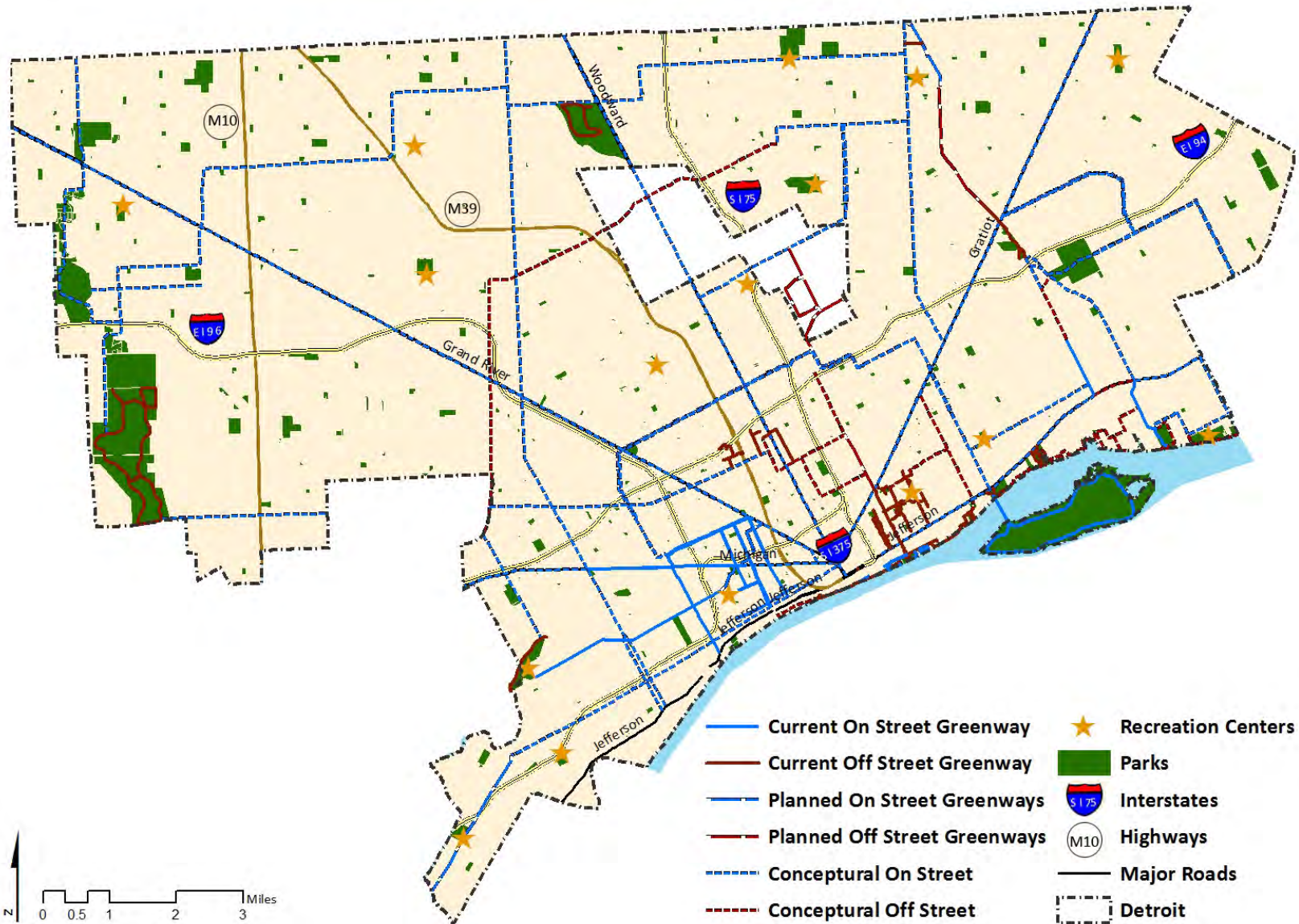
Recreation centers

Sixteen public recreation centers operate in the city.⁷ Fourteen are city-run recreation centers, and two are city-owned centers that non-profit organizations manage. According to the DRD Master Plan, 30 recreation centers existed in 2006 categorized into five types: recreation center, community recreation center, recreation support building, recreation support facility, and special use recreation center (for disabled users). The 2006 condition report showed that 22 of these facilities were in fair or poor condition. Given this situation, DRD has made closing recreation centers a priority. DRD closed many centers in poor condition, which are now vacant and boarded buildings in parks.⁸ Budget cuts have meant DRD has trouble maintaining a consistent level of recreation programming.

Greenways

Two types of greenways exist in Detroit: on street, such as bike lanes which share the road right-of-way, and off street, which includes separate waterfront greenways and greenways within parks. Approximately 52.5 miles of on street and off street greenways are in place in Detroit.⁹ The Detroit Greenways Coalition has selected 151 miles of the 2006 DPW Non-Motorized Urban Transportation Master Plan as priorities for implementation. Figure 2.4 shows the existing and potential greenway system.

Figure 2.4 Current and proposed greenways



Source: See Appendix A

Figure 2.5 Detroit RiverWalk



Photo Credit: Eric Dennis

Figure 2.6 Lafayette-Elmwood Park Greenway



Photo Credit: Eric Dennis

Existing Detroit greenways include the Detroit RiverWalk and Dequindre Cut, the Midtown Loop, the Conner Creek Greenway, the Southwest Detroit Greenway, and the Lafayette – Elmwood Park greenway. This list is not inclusive, but includes the best known greenway projects in the city.

Detroit RiverWalk

The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy has completed more than 2.5 miles of landscaped greenways, with plans for expansion. The completed section connects the downtown riverfront to various parks, plazas, and the Dequindre Cut Greenway.¹⁰

Dequindre Cut

This 1.2 mile greenway has repurposed the abandoned Grand Trunk Railroad line to connect the east riverfront to the Eastern Market District. A future project may extend this greenway to Mack Avenue.¹¹

Midtown Loop

The Midtown Loop, a project of Midtown Inc., is a 1.8 mile loop connecting several cultural attractions in midtown, including Wayne State University, the Detroit Medical Center, and the Detroit Institute of Arts.¹² To date, approximately half of the project has been constructed.

Conner Creek Greenway

A project of the Detroit Eastside Community Collaborative, the Conner Creek Greenway traces the original Conner Creek on Detroit's Eastside and links people, parks, green spaces, neighborhoods, schools, and shopping areas. Five miles of greenway have been completed with an additional four miles planned. The vision for the Conner Creek Greenway is to link several Eastside neighborhoods, social agencies, schools, recreation areas, and businesses.¹³

Southwest Detroit Greenway

A project of the Southwest Detroit Business Association, the Southwest Detroit/Dearborn Greenway has a vision to connect people to the nature, recreational opportunities, and culture of Southwest Detroit.¹⁴ A GIS analysis estimates that to date, 15 miles of new greenway connect Corktown to Southwest Detroit to Patton Park at the Dearborn border.

Lafayette – Elmwood Park greenway

This web of off street pathways crisscrosses the neighborhoods surrounding Lafayette and Elmwood Parks on the near Eastside. Unlike the non-profit sponsored greenways listed above, this network was built as part of an urban renewal project and is partially within the city park system. The pathways connect hundreds of apartment units

to marketplaces, schools, a library, and major thoroughfares. While some sections of the network are maintained, others show signs of neglect.

Other municipal greenways

In addition to Lafayette and Elmwood mentioned above, multi-use trails exist in regional parks including those on Belle Isle, Rouge Park, and Palmer Park.

Non-municipal parks

Non-municipal parks are public parks but created and managed by non-profit groups. As city officials remove parks and have difficulty maintaining remaining ones, non-municipal parks may take on a larger role in providing benefits to residents and visitors. Further, the work to create parks expresses the desire of residents and community-based non-profits for parks in certain locations in order to enhance the quality of life in the city.

No inventory exists for the number of non-municipal parks in the city, yet there are many instances of successful non-profit public park projects. For example, Focus: HOPE, a well-established non-profit organization, has instituted the HOPE Village Initiative, which concentrates on the neighborhood surrounding the Focus: HOPE campus. Focus: HOPE supports safe playgrounds and public spaces in this area; the organization created and manages two non-municipal parks.¹⁵ With the support of a Michigan “Cool Cities” grant,

Focus: HOPE created the HOPE Community park on Oakman Boulevard. The group also created a plaza park on Oakman Boulevard between 14th Street and La Salle.¹⁶

Conclusion

In 2012, Detroit’s parks remain unevenly distributed throughout the city. Park grounds and equipment are typically in fair or poor condition, and the high number of small parks leads to maintenance inefficiencies. The number of non-municipal parks in the city is increasing as more non-profit organizations and individuals show interest in constructing and managing parks. Greenways will also continue to increase, and these paths will play an important role in shaping the future system of park and greenway facilities. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the management, planning, and funding of the current parks, recreation centers, and greenways.

Campus Martius

The Detroit 300 Conservancy created and operates Campus Martius Park. While the City of Detroit owns the land, the Conservancy constructed the park and is responsible for its management, maintenance, and operation under an operating agreement with the City of Detroit.¹⁷ Campus Martius serves as a gathering place for residents, tourists, and downtown workers and is a catalyst for downtown development.

Figure 2.7 HOPE Community park



Photo Credit: Michael Vos

Figure 2.8 Campus Martius park



Photo Credit: positivedetroit.net

Notes

1. GIS data acquired from Data Driven Detroit include 356 properties. Besides parks; those data also include cemeteries and parkways. The GIS maps created for the *Ever Green* plan show 304 parks that are common to both of these data sources. Detroit Recreation Department, *Strategic Master Plan Volume II*, 2006, p. 13, <http://www.detroitmi.gov/Portals/0/docs/recreation/pdf/PDF%20files/Final%20Report/Volume%20II.pdf> <http://www.detroitmi.gov/Portals/0/docs/recreation/pdf/PDF%20files/Final%20Report/Volume%20II.pdf>
2. Detroit Recreation Department, *Strategic Master Plan*, Appendix A, 2006 (provided by Tim Karl, Chief of Landscape Architecture, GSD, Detroit, February 2012)
3. Trust for Public Land, *2011 City Park Facts Report*, 2011, p. 17, <http://cloud.tpl.org/pubs/ccpe-city-park-facts-2011.pdf>.
4. Ibid., p. 24
5. Detroit Recreation Department, *Strategic Master Plan Volume II*, May 2006, p 15, <http://www.detroitmi.gov/Portals/0/docs/recreation/pdf/PDF%20files/Final%20Report/Volume%20II.pdf>
6. Ibid., p. 26
7. Detroit Recreation Department, "Recreation Hours" (City of Detroit, Accessed April 2012), <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/RecreationDepartment/RecreationCenters.aspx>
8. Closed recreation centers Include: Evans, Maheras, Bradby, Wigle, Kronk, South Rademacher, St. Hedwig, O'Shea, and Johnson.
9. The number is determined using geographic information systems software.
10. Detroit RiverFront Conservancy, *Dequindre Cut* (Detroit RiverFront Conservancy, accessed April 2012), <http://www.detroitriverfront.org/dequindre/>
11. Ibid.
12. University Cultural Center Association, *Midtown Loop Presentation* (UCCA and JJR, accessed March 2012), (http://www.detroitmidtown.com/05/doc_lib/Midtown_Loop_Presentation.pdf)
13. Conner Creek Greenway, "About Us" (Conner Creek Greenway, accessed March 2012), <http://www.connercreekgreenway.org/>
14. Southwest Detroit Business Association, *Greenways Project: The Greenlink is Here* (SDBA, accessed March 2012), <http://www.southwestdetroit.com/Community-Planning/Greenways-Projects-22.html>
15. Stephanie Johnson-Cobb, Community Development Specialist, *Focus: HOPE*, e-mail correspondence with Eric Dennis, April 17, 2012.
16. HOPE Village, *Summer in the City at Ford/LaSalle Park* (Focus: HOPE, 2012), http://www.focushope.edu/page.aspx?content_id=314&content_type=level3
17. Campus Martius Conservancy, "Conservancy Background" (Campus Martius Conservancy, accessed March 2012), <http://www.campusmartiuspark.org/conservancy.htm>

Chapter 3: Existing Management, Planning, and Funding System

As explained in the previous chapter, Detroit's parks and greenways system includes amenities of varying size and quality. The management, planning, and funding of this system is complex and sometimes disconnected. This chapter describes the roles of various entities in management of Detroit's parks, greenways, and recreation centers, as well as the system's planning and funding capacity.

Management

Detroit's parks, greenways, and recreation centers management system is extensive and complex. In addition to the several city departments with management roles, governmental entities at the county and state levels are also involved in parks and greenways management. In addition to government participation, non-profit organizations and volunteers provide planning, funding, maintenance, and programming to some of Detroit's recreation amenities. This section outlines the key actors involved in Detroit's parks, greenways, and recreation center management; the city departments' overall role; and ways non-municipal organizations take on parks and greenways management.

Key actors

The following list describes the roles of key governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as how they affect the management of Detroit's parks, greenways, and recreation centers.

Parks and recreation centers:

City of Detroit General Services Department (GSD)

The GSD is responsible for park design, planning, construction, and maintenance. The GSD also maintains recreation centers and manages the Adopt-A-Park program.¹

City of Detroit Recreation Department (DRD)

The DRD is responsible for recreational programming in public recreation centers and parks. The DRD is also responsible for managing lease or use agreements.²

Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

The DNR operates the only state park in Detroit. In addition, the DNR offers several grant programs for local parks, such as Recreation Passport Grants. In 2011, this grant program funded improvements to Detroit parks, such as Lorwyn E. Peterson Playfield.⁵ Negotiations are underway for the DNR management of Belle Isle as well.⁶

Wayne County Parks and Recreation Division

The Wayne County Parks Division collects taxes from Wayne County residents through a voter-approved 0.2459% millage.³ In Detroit, Wayne County operates the Chandler Park Aquatic Center and provides yearly financial support to the DRD for capital improvements in parks.⁴

Park non-profit organizations:

Some non-profit organizations (for instance, the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy and the Clark Park Coalition) take on capital improvements, operations, maintenance, and/or programming of a specific park or a group of related parks. This process is often in partnership with the DRD or GSD.

Park adopters

Park adopters are individuals, groups, non-profits, or corporations that formally adopt a park through the GSD's Adopt-A-Park program. These adopters take on maintenance tasks from the GSD.⁷

Informal caretakers

Informal caretakers include individuals or groups that manage and/or improve parks and public areas that are not adequately maintained. These caretakers often carry out maintenance or improvement plans without communication with the DRD or GSD.

Greenways:

City of Detroit Department of Public Works (DPW)

The DPW maintains city streets, traffic signs, and pavement markings and provides inspection services for all road construction work performed in the city's right-of-way, including bike lane improvements.⁸ The DPW also manages construction and controls state funding for most greenways. While the DPW has jurisdiction over on street greenways, implementation occurs in partnership with non-profit groups.

City of Detroit Recreation Department (DRD)

The DRD is responsible for design approvals of off

street greenways located within city parks (for instance, greenways within Maheras-Gentry Park, Gabriel Richard Park, and Patton Park).

City of Detroit General Services Department (GSD)

The GSD is responsible for park design, planning, construction, and maintenance.⁹ This includes maintenance of trails within parks (for instance, greenways within Rouge Park and Palmer Park), but not those managed by non-profits

Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)

MDOT is responsible for managing state roads in the city. MDOT is also a major financial contributor to greenway construction through federal grant programs (such as the Transportation Enhancement Program under the SAFETEA-LU bill).¹⁰

Greenway non-profit organizations

Greenway non-profit organizations (for instance, Detroit RiverFront Conservancy and Detroit Eastside Community Collaborative) are engaged in strategic planning, resource sharing, fundraising, construction, maintenance, and programming for greenways around the city. The groups are now working together to formalize an umbrella organization; the Detroit Greenways Coalition that will focus on coordination, planning, and advocacy.¹¹

Figure 3.1 Role of park, greenway, and recreation center actors in managing Detroit’s inventory of parks, greenways, and recreation centers

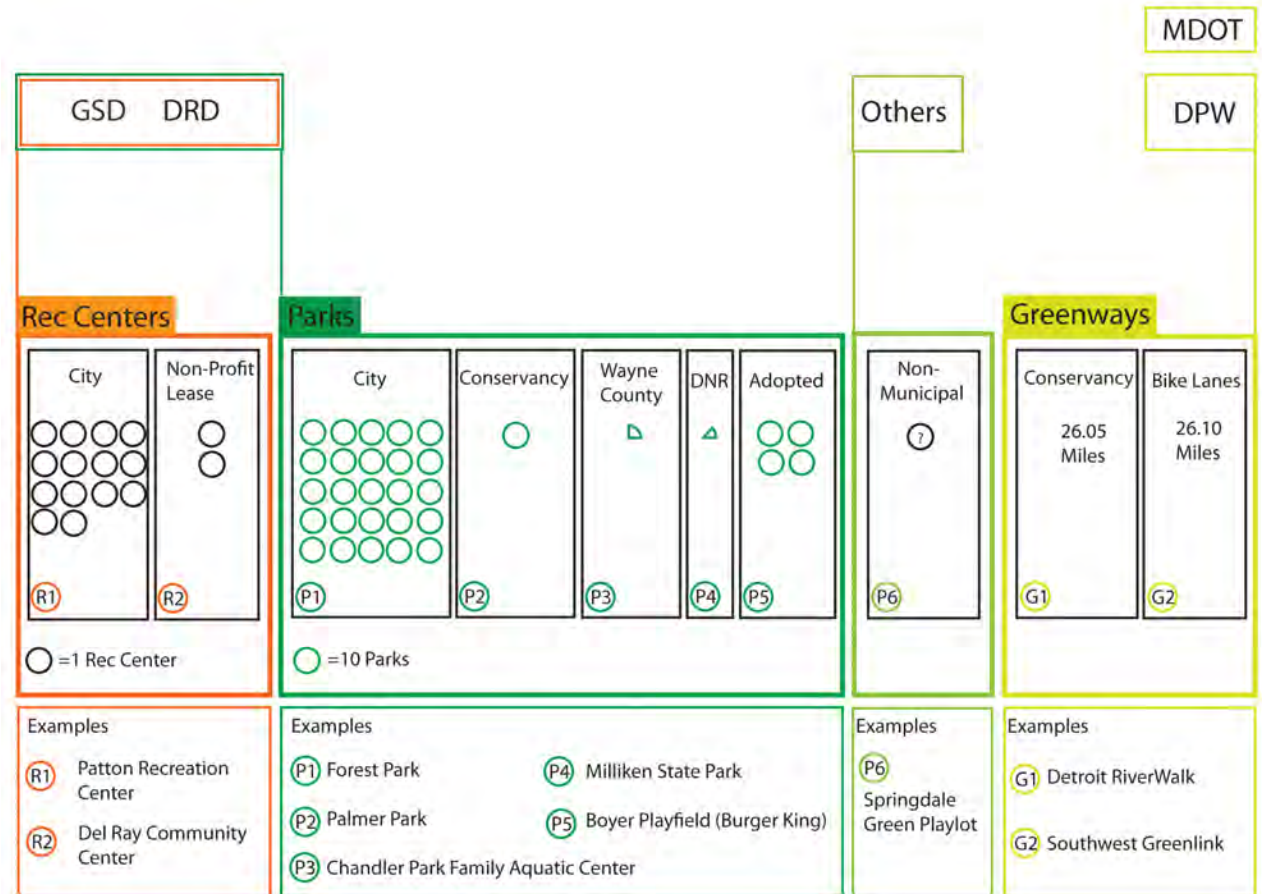


Figure 3.2 Dolores Bennett Park adoption by Lakeshore Engineering Services



Photo Credit: Detroit Free Press

Figure 3.3 The Dequindre Cut



Photo Credit: TheDetroit.com

Foundations

Foundations (for instance, the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan and the Kresge Foundation) make major financial contributions to greenway projects in Detroit. These contributions have paid for construction, planning, programming, and maintenance of the greenway projects.¹²

Figure 3.1 shows the key actors involved in the management of parks, greenways, and recreation centers. Along the bottom of the figure are park, greenway, and recreation center examples relating to each management category. This figure demonstrates that many different entities are involved in parks, greenways, and recreation center management, thus contributing to the complexity and fragmentation of the current system.

The city's role

The three main city agencies involved in parks, greenways, and recreation center management include the DRD, GSD, and DPW. Detroit city parks and recreation centers are under the jurisdiction of the DRD. This means that while the city owns park and recreation center property, the DRD controls it. As stated in the Key Actors section, the DRD focuses on programming within the parks and recreation centers, as well as managing leases and use agreements.

The maintenance of park land and recreation centers is the responsibility of the GSD. The GSD's Adopt-A-Park program allows interested parties to take over maintenance responsibilities. As of February 2012, the GSD staff listed 41 parks as "adopted" or "pending adoption" for the period of a year.¹³ This program decreases the financial burden on the city department by reducing the number of parks the GSD needs to maintain (see Chapter 6).

Finally, the DPW oversees and coordinates any work that affects city rights-of-way, such as on street greenway improvements and street signage. In short, these three city departments oversee the management of parks, greenways, and recreation centers; but non-governmental entities also provide management services to parks, greenways, and recreation centers. This non-governmental management can occur through the GSD's Adopt-A-Park program, as well as lease and use agreements and private provision of park spaces.

Leases and use agreements

The Detroit City Council must approve any lease, use, or maintenance agreement for a city-owned park, recreation center, or greenway. This differs from the Adopt-A-Park program, which only requires approval by the GSD.¹⁴ Non-governmental organizations wishing to take over management of a city-owned park or recreation center or build and maintain a greenway must sign a memorandum

of understanding (MOU), which outlines the management responsibilities of the organization (such as funding and ongoing maintenance).¹⁵ Once an organization establishes a use agreement, lease, or MOU with city departments, such as the DRD and DPW, operations and maintenance of city facilities become the organization's responsibility. For example, Detroit City Council approved a 30-year use agreement in 2005 between the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy and the DPW for the Dequindre Cut greenway.¹⁶ The use agreement stated that the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy would operate and maintain the greenway, while the city retained ownership.

Private provision of park space

Some non-profit organizations provide park services without coordinating with the GSD or DRD. Examples include the North Rosedale Civic Association, which maintains a park and community center in Northwest Detroit, and Urban Neighborhood Initiatives (UNI), which created and manages Springdale Green playlot in Southwest Detroit.

Along with these non-municipal park spaces, residents have made empty lots throughout the city into small parks and playlots. This plan refers to these vacant lot parks and gardens as non-municipal parks.

Planning

Planning for parks and greenways in Detroit is not coordinated because these functions occur in two different departments, the DRD and DPW. No master plans consider parks, greenways, and recreation centers as an integrated system. As described earlier, parks and recreation centers have their own set of actors and involved organizations, while greenways have another. They only occasionally overlap, when greenways fall within park property.

Municipal parks

The primary plan for the parks system is the Detroit Recreation Department Master Plan. This plan from 2006 envisions a park system maintained and operated by the City of Detroit with adequate services and convenient and equitable access for residents.

Departmental restructuring to consolidate services and resources led to the creation of the GSD in 2006. The DRD and GSD share the responsibility for implementing the 2006 DRD Master Plan; however, the DRD is responsible for long-term parks and recreation planning.

Recreation centers

The 2006 DRD Master Plan addressed recreation centers. The plan inventoried the 30 centers in

Figure 3.4 Considine Little Rock Family Center



Photo Credit: Google maps

operation at the time and provided recommendations. Many have since closed, but continued planning for the 16 remaining recreation centers is primarily the responsibility of the DRD. Lease agreements with Historic Little Rock Family Life Center at Considine, as well as with People’s Community Centers at Delray, pass planning responsibilities of these two recreation centers to non-governmental groups.

Greenways

The DRD Master Plan does not address greenways as a component of the parks and recreation system because the right-of-way falls under the jurisdiction of the DPW. In 2006, the DPW released the Detroit Non-motorized Transportation Master Plan in order to understand “the dynamics of the various types of corridors available and the varying needs of the end users.”¹⁷ The Detroit Non-motorized Plan provides destination and route analysis, and recommends various types of facilities such as bike lanes and

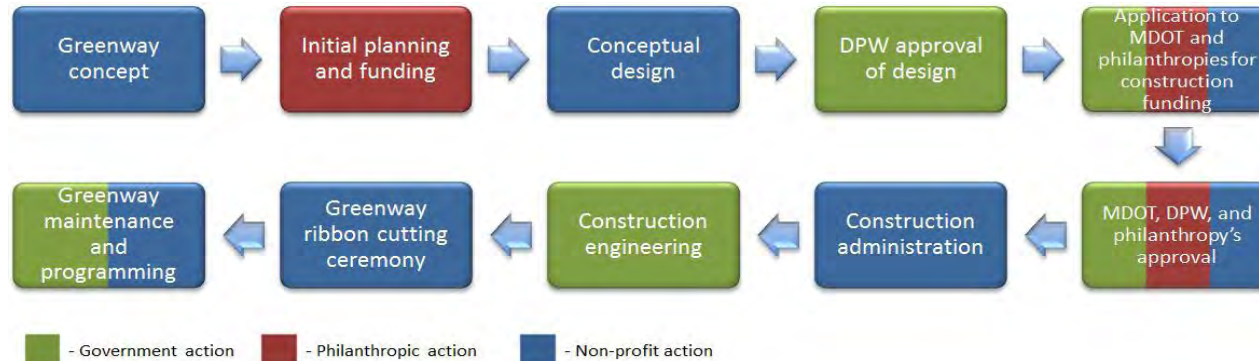
shared lane markings promoting safe bicycling on Detroit streets. City departments do little other greenway planning. A variety of nonprofit groups create additional greenway master plans with much of the funding and support from the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan. The Foundation created the GreenWays Initiative in 2001 to improve the natural landscape of the Detroit metropolitan area by linking neighborhoods and cities, while promoting the health of residents. Leveraging \$25 million of foundation and private funding, the program created a vision for greenways in Southeast Michigan and provided grants to projects through 2006.¹⁸

Non-profits supporting greenways include Southwest Detroit Business Association (SDBA) taking the lead in planning greenway connections between Dearborn, Springwells Village, and Corktown; the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy responsible for the RiverWalk and Dequindre Cut;

and the Detroit Eastside Community Collaborative (DECC) working on the Conner Creek Greenway. Their plans were not originally coordinated; however, these groups now work together on a comprehensive city-wide plan for greenways through the Detroit Greenways Coalition. The Detroit Greenways Coalition is now working on formalizing the organization as a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization.

Figure 3.5 shows the steps and stakeholders involved in the greenway planning and construction process. The colors represent the type of organization responsible for each step. Blue refers to non-profit organizations, red refers to philanthropies, and green refers to government. Boxes with multiple colors designate actions taken by multiple types of entities.

Figure 3.5: Process for greenway planning and implementation in Detroit



Non-municipal parks

In addition to city planning efforts, many non-municipal organizations also play roles in park planning. Most recently, the Detroit Works project analyzed parks type, repositioning, and quality referring to the 2006 DRD Master Plan. While no new plans have emerged from this process, recommendations on future actions regarding the number of parks and spending on them are expected.¹⁹

Non-profit organizations also plan for specific parks and neighborhoods. Planning for non-municipal parks created on vacant lots by organizations and neighbors is often ad hoc; however, structured examples exist including UNI's parks plan in Southwest Detroit.²⁰ UNI planned the non-municipal Springdale Green Playlot as well as changes for city-owned Weiss and Lafayette parks. Focus: HOPE does similar parks planning in its HOPE Village Initiative area. KaBoom, a national non-profit organization that supports community groups by helping install new playground equipment, has installed parks on vacant lots, such as those led by Rebuilding Communities, Inc., part of the Warren Conner Development Coalition on Detroit's Eastside.²¹ In most cases, the DRD never considers these community-based plans as the department makes decisions about park repositioning. While difficult, accounting for these non-municipal parks could allow the DRD to prioritize park creation in areas that are not served by either city or non-municipal parks.

Funding

The funding network for Detroit's parks, greenways, and recreation centers is complicated and piecemeal.

Municipal parks

Funding for city-owned parks primarily comes from the city government. The GSD provides grounds and facilities maintenance on city-owned property, and the DRD funds programming. Both departments rely on money allocated through the city budget. According to the Trust for Public Land, Detroit spent \$24.6 million, or about \$27 per resident, on parks and recreation in 2009, while the national median was \$84.²² This was based on an incorrect population estimate of 910,921.²³ However, using the Trust for Public Land spending figure and 2010 population, Detroit would still have spent only around \$34 per resident.²⁴ Figure 3.6, adapted from the Trust for Public Land report, shows how Detroit's per capita spending on parks compares with that of other large cities. It is third from last with little to no capital expenditure.

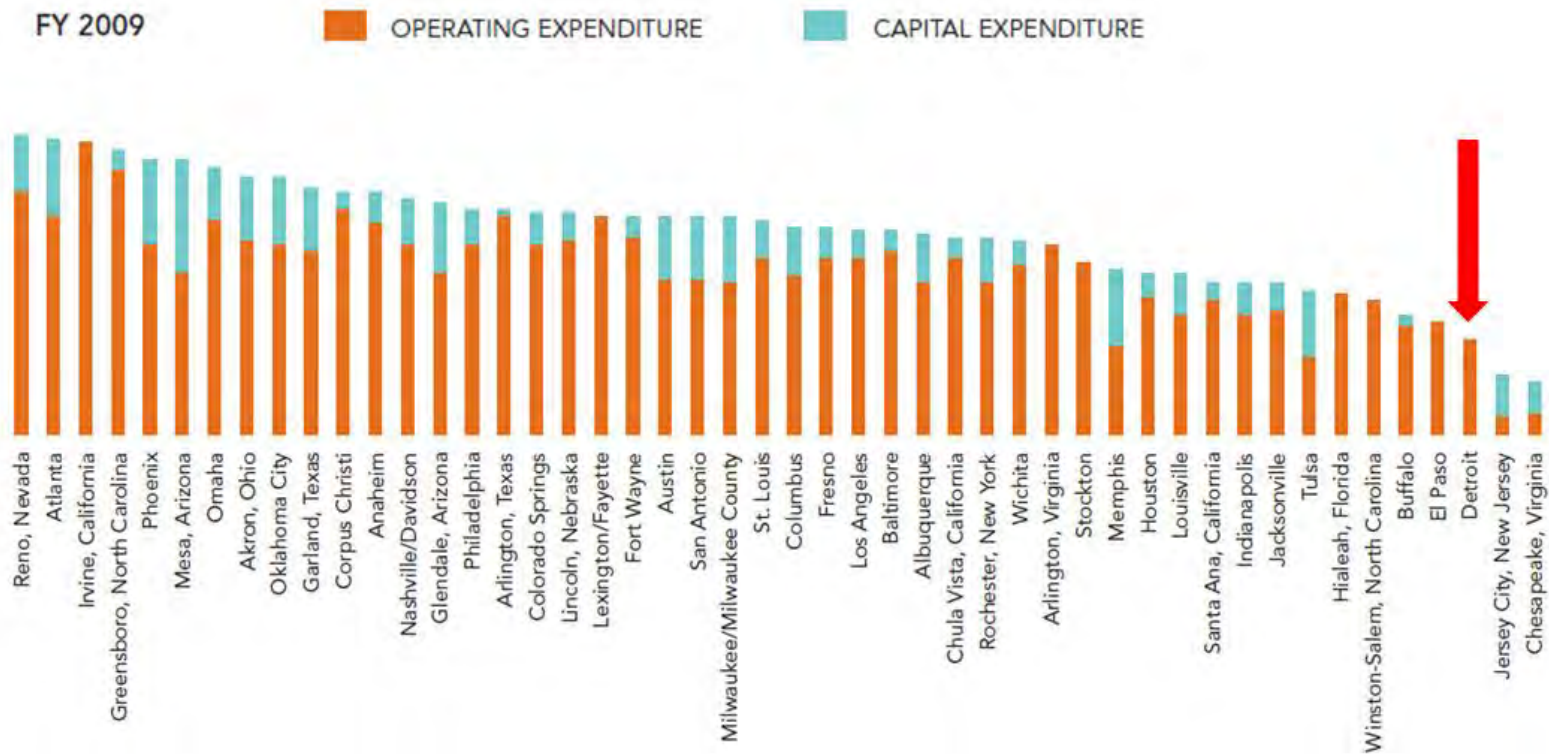
In fiscal year (FY) 2012, the DRD was appropriated nearly \$19.7 million.²⁵ The GSD received about \$18.7 million in appropriations in the FY 2012 budget for facilities and grounds maintenance.²⁶ The GSD uses this amount for maintenance of all city-owned properties, not just parks and recreation facilities; therefore, the amount of money actually

spent on parks is much lower. Removing costs associated primarily with buildings, design, Hart Plaza, and security, this plan estimates the GSD's parks maintenance budget to be around \$9.1 million. As stated in Chapter 2, the estimated maintenance cost according to the 2006 DRD Master Plan is upwards of \$13.8 million, which leaves a large gap to fill.

In addition, the 2006 DRD Master Plan calls for \$447 million in improvements without land acquisition costs.²⁷ This number does not support the highest level of service provision; rather, \$447 million is enough to support moderate levels of service. With current funding levels, park improvements will take longer than desired. In short, current public funding cannot provide parks maintenance at a desirable level.

Numerous non-profits and other organizations have stepped in to fill service voids created by the DRD's and GSD's chronic budget problems. For example, Clark Park Coalition has a handshake agreement with the city for shared management and maintenance responsibilities.²⁸ The GSD mows the grass every 20 days during the growing season. The Coalition mows between the GSD visits and operates the small recreation center and ice rink.²⁹ Additionally, People for Palmer Park were in discussions for a shared management and maintenance agreement with the DRD under guidance from the GSD in 2011.³⁰ These groups collect donations, apply for grants, and use volunteers to provide services.

Figure 3.6 2009 total spending on parks and recreation per resident in various U.S. cities.



Source: Trust for Public Land: City Park Facts 2011

Wayne County funds the operation of the Chandler Park Family Aquatic Center, at approximately \$1 million per year, and provides \$100,000 to \$600,000 in yearly support of capital projects in Detroit.³¹ An example of such a project is the improvements to the baseball diamond at Salsingar playground shown in Figure 3.7.

Lastly, the DNR provides grants for park improvements. Five Detroit parks are currently recipients of these grants.³²

Recreation centers

The DRD provides programming and staffing in recreation centers except where the center has been leased to another operator. Funding for the recreation centers is with the \$19.7 million appropriated to the DRD. Two specific centers have their own appropriations: Butzel Family Center within business operations at \$22,885 and the Northwest Activity Center at \$68,439.³³ The GSD is responsible for maintenance of the facilities, but the budget does not distinguish how much the GSD spends for recreation center maintenance.

Greenways

Non-profits traditionally create on and off street greenways with the DPW as a partner receiving money from the state and foundations. The DPW picked up efforts in the last several years since launching its non-motorized task force and began

installing bike lanes in the city last year. The FY 2012 budget appropriates \$3.2 million dollars to non-motorized transportation.³⁴ A variety of organizations are involved in greenways and a variety of greenway types are accessible in Detroit. Annual expenditures for each greenway range from \$90,000 to over \$5.8 million.³⁵

To build greenways, organizations such as the Southwest Detroit Business Association use grant money, often from the Community Foundation, to cover design and planning costs as well as twenty percent of construction costs. Federal funds through the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) usually cover 80% of construction costs.³⁶

In another example, the Dequindre Cut received \$3.4 million in grants from MDOT, the Michigan DNR Trust Fund, and the Greenways Initiative of the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.³⁷ The Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, the Kellogg Foundation, and the Kresge Foundation provided additional resources. Funding for Dequindre Cut maintenance comes from the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy through a \$2 million endowment.³⁸ Many of these funders continue to provide support to create and maintain greenways across Detroit. According to data from the Greening of Detroit, off street greenways cost just over \$31,300 per mile in maintenance each year.³⁹

Figure 3.7 Baseball diamond improvements at Salsingar playground funded by Wayne County



Photo Credit: Michael Vos

Figure 3.8 KaBoom playscape construction at the Paul Robeson Academy



Photo Credit: The Knight Foundation

Non-municipal parks

Some public areas such as Campus Martius are independent of city support. Coalitions of organizations come together and get funding to do their own projects. In the case of Campus Martius, the Detroit 300 Conservancy created the park on city land with funding from an extensive list of private donors. Non-profits often create parks, even when city-owned property is not available. Focus: HOPE constructed HOPE Community Park on the southeast corner of Oakman and Woodrow Wilson using funds from the Michigan Cool Cities Initiative and Local Initiatives Support Corporation along with trees from the Greening of Detroit. Funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, in addition to a community match and 300 volunteers helped create the KaBoom playscape at the Paul Robeson Academy.⁴⁰ KaBoom identifies the ideal community partner as a group serving low-income children which is able to provide land for the playscape (a 50 foot by 50 foot area is ideal), recruit 15 volunteers for planning and 100 or more to help in construction, and raise \$8,500 to \$10,000 to pay for the equipment.⁴¹

Conclusion

The bulk of park and recreation center management, planning, and funding occurs through the GSD and DRD, but a variety of alternatives already exist. Greenways use these alternative methods in concert with the DPW but could

benefit from increased coordination. In short, uncoordinated management, planning, and funding efforts increase the DRD's and GSD's budget and service difficulties. Therefore, finding ways to reinforce cooperation and coordination, as well as alternative approaches to parks, recreation centers, and greenways management and funding is vital in creating an enduring parks and greenways system.

In the following chapters, *Ever Green* examines a good parks and greenways system for the City of Detroit and what options exist for making management less financially and administratively burdensome for the GSD, DRD, and DPW. Going forward, long-term funding streams, rather than piecemeal grants, will strengthen Detroit's parks, recreation centers, and greenways. While one-time funding contributions are important, single-use grants and occasional volunteers cannot be the foundation of a good recreation system.

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Chapter 4: Benchmark Principles for Detroit's Parks and Greenways

As city officials and green space advocates assess Detroit's current parks and greenways and plan for new facilities in the future, a set of principles should guide analysis and decision-making. Peter Harnik, Director of the Center for City Park Excellence at the Trust for Public Land, proposes the following seven criteria as universal concepts to guide parks and greenways planning.¹

In adjusting its parks and greenways to the reality of a smaller city that uses a range of management models to operate its green spaces, Detroit city officials, concerned nonprofits' staff, and parks and greenways activists need criteria to help in making design, administration, and accessibility choices. Harnik's "Seven Factors of Excellence" can support parks evaluation and planning processes in Detroit and contribute to the creation and maintenance of a quality parks and greenways system. The Detroit Recreation Department (DRD) 2006 Master Plan acknowledges the city's commitment to providing high quality facilities, proper maintenance, high levels of accessibility for residents in all Detroit neighborhoods, and adequate funding to support the city's parks and greenway assets.² Harnik's factors enrich and expand upon the DRD's stated goals and provide park planners with further benchmarks to use in making parks and greenways planning decisions.

The seven factors of excellence

A clear expression of purpose

A parks and greenways plan presents a clear vision that indicates a strategic direction for a future system.³ A municipality may state its goals to provide open space for current residents' enjoyment and to preserve natural resources for future generations. As a statement of the parks department priorities and values, a parks plan defines the core services for the parks department to provide and outlines realistic expectations for the department. The 2006 DRD Master Plan states the document will help the department "fulfill its mission to secure greater efficiency in delivering high quality services that target the needs of the community and guide long-term capital development of the city's parks and facilities."⁴ One helpful addition to this statement might include the DRD's commitment to collaborating and communicating with the diverse group of parks stakeholders who care for and value the city's parks.

An ongoing planning and community involvement process

Changes within a parks and greenways system create numerous opportunities for resident involvement.⁵ Residents may feel commitment to parks when they see their opinions considered. Collaboration with non-profit conservancies and

service-provider organizations fosters a stronger public-private partnership that enhances private sector political support when needed.

To foster a collaborative planning process, parks leaders can design involvement procedures that unite city agencies, non-profits, informal neighborhood groups, and other organizations in a coordinated network. Written agreements with clear allocation of responsibilities, accountability, and time commitments will contribute to strong community engagement that can result in effective outcomes for parks and greenways.

Sufficient assets in land, staffing, and equipment to meet the system's goals

Though no required total park acreage exists for a city, an excellent system has enough land to meet people's demand.⁶ To ensure parks and greenways are in good physical condition, a city needs a large enough budget and sufficient staff to provide service and maintenance. Adequate assets for both capital investment and operations are necessary. Ultimately, this requires identifying the balance between adequate amount of access to parks and greenways for residents and the appropriately sized system that city departments and partner organizations can fund and manage.

Equitable access

Parks and greenways need to provide all residents with access, despite residents' location, race, income, age, and physical abilities.⁷ Residents ought to be able to access a range of park amenities within a reasonable travel time. In addition, park design should incorporate special accommodations for people with disabilities. Harnik recommends free use for at least 20% of residents, subsidized by a fee 80% of the population can afford.

User satisfaction

High usership is the "ultimate validation" that a park or greenway meets the needs of residents and visitors.⁸ Park planners should measure usership as best they can and supplement quantitative evaluation with qualitative feedback from residents. Evaluating usership and listening to residents can help guide efficient funding and maintenance decisions.

Safety from crime and physical hazards

A city's parks and greenways system should be safe, from both crime and physical hazards.⁹ While park planners cannot control all factors that affect crime, managing organizations can influence design, maintenance, amenities, and programming, which can contribute to reduced crime, vandalism, and harm from physical hazards.

Benefits for the city beyond the boundaries of the parks

Parks and greenways benefit not only the surrounding neighborhood but the city as a whole. Economic, health, environmental, and social benefits derived from park and greenway amenities offer value to users of all ages and abilities.¹⁰ While some of these benefits are hard to quantify, city officials, residents, businesses, and tourists would likely agree that parks enrich a city's quality of life. See Figure 4.1 for a summary of benefits parks and greenways can deliver. These factors should be considered when city officials consider which parks to close and open.

Why the seven factors are important to *Ever Green*

The preceding principles can guide park planning in any city, and they are relevant and important as Detroit's city agencies and parks advocates work to design and maintain parks and greenways given the city's evolving population and neighborhood development patterns.

The goals of the *Ever Green* plan are to (see Chapter 1):

- Adjust parks and greenways to Detroit's smaller population
- Increase access to parks and greenways
- Ensure that parks and greenways are properly

maintained

- Achieve stability in parks and greenways management, planning, and funding.

The seven factors support each of these goals and guide the recommendations in Chapters 5 and 6.

Figure 4.1 Widespread benefits of a strong parks and greenways system

Economic

- Increase property values around park spaces¹¹
- Stabilize economically challenged areas by revitalizing a neighborhood's physical environment¹²
- Boost tourism and promote economic development¹³

Environmental

- Improve air, soil, and water quality¹⁶
- Remove contaminants commonly found in urban areas¹⁷
- Educate residents on nature and vegetation by serving as outdoor classrooms¹⁸

Health

- Foster active lifestyles that contribute to reduced levels of obesity¹⁴
- Improve overall fitness and mental health and reduce health care costs¹⁵

Social

- Provide settings for interactions that strengthen social ties within the neighborhood¹⁹
- Relieve stress levels and feelings of aggression through outdoor recreation²⁰
- Unite children in active, productive activities²¹

Notes

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Chapter 5: Applying Benchmark Principles for Detroit's Parks and Greenways

This chapter offers recommendations to strengthen the physical parks and greenways system in Detroit. The strategies can help to transition the current Detroit system to one better reflecting the factors of excellence and better achieving the goals (see Chapter 4). The following list introduces strategies to enhance Detroit's current physical parks and greenways system. This chapter describes recommendations supporting the strategies.

Strategy 1: Create a comprehensive citywide parks, greenways, and recreation system

- Connect residents to major parks with greenways
- Connect recreation centers to greenways
- Connect activity nodes such as hospitals and universities to the greenways and parks system

Strategy 2: Assure that recreational amenities are geographically distributed to increase access

- Emphasize access to amenities by type
- Provide more parks and services in high population density areas
- Promote high service levels in districts with high population density

Strategy 3: Introduce new types of parks into the system

- Create sports-focused parks
- Create post-industrial parks
- Create boulder gardens

Table 5.1 shows how each strategy suggested in this chapter supports *Ever Green's* goals. Table 5.2 shows how each of the individual recommendations within each strategy supports *Ever Green's* goals.

Table 5.1 Strategies addressing goals

<p>Goal: Adjust parks and greenways to Detroit's smaller population</p>	<p>Goal: Ensure that parks and greenways are properly maintained</p>	<p>Goal: Increase access to parks and greenways</p>	<p>Goal: Achieve stability in parks and greenways planning, funding and management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assure that recreational amenities are geographically distributed to increase access • Introduce new types of parks into the system • Create a comprehensive citywide parks, greenways, and recreation system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Chapter 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a comprehensive citywide parks, greenways, and recreation system • Assure that recreational amenities are geographically distributed to increase access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Chapter 6

Table 5.2 Recommendations addressing goals

<p>Goal: Adjust parks and greenways to Detroit's smaller population</p>	<p>Goal: Ensure that parks and greenways are properly maintained</p>	<p>Goal: Increase access to parks and greenways</p>	<p>Goal: Achieve stability in parks and greenways planning, funding and management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more parks and services in high population density areas • Promote high service levels in districts with high population density • Create sports-focused parks • Create post-industrial parks • Create boulder gardens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Chapter 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize access to amenities by type • Connect residents to major parks with greenways • Connect recreation centers to greenways • Connect activity nodes such as hospitals and universities to the greenways and parks system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Chapter 6

Strategy 1: Create a comprehensive citywide parks, greenways, and recreation system

Municipal parks, non-municipal parks, greenways, and recreation centers should be considered an integrated and mutually reinforcing recreational system. Each park and greenway within the city-wide system plays a different role. Considering how these individual parts relate to each other and to the comprehensive system can clarify which elements and projects should receive priority.

Ever Green suggests modifications to the Detroit Recreation Department's (DRD) classification system to fit Detroit's physical layout and incorporate greenways. A new service radius for analysis of access to parks could depend upon an area's population density. Analysis based on this radius can show ways to create a parks and greenways system that distributes resources where residents need them. Table 5.3 shows the recommended service radii.

Recommendation: Connect residents to major parks with greenways

A city-wide parks, greenways, and recreation system should provide non-motorized transportation to major parks. This connection makes each park more accessible to residents who may not have a motor vehicle or for those who wish to travel via non-motorized means. Figure 5.1 shows the

Table 5.3 *Ever Green* service radii for parks and greenways

	Updated service area radius			2006 DRD Master Plan service area radius
	Population density* (average population per acre)			
	Low (0-6)	Medium (6-11)	High (11+)	
Local park				
Mini park	½ mile	3/8 mile	¼ mile	¼ mile
Neighborhood park	1 mile	¾ mile	½ mile	½ mile
Community park	4.5 miles	3 miles	1.5 miles	3 miles
City-wide park				
Regional park	City-wide			City-wide
Plaza park	City and region-wide			Community-wide
Sports park	City-wide			City-wide
Greenways				
On street greenway	1 mile	¾ mile	½ mile	Not included
Off street greenway	1 mile	¾ mile	½ mile	Not included

*Calculated for census tracts. Average for the city is 8.03 people per acre.

Source: 2006 DRD Master Plan

current areas of the city with greenway access. Few parks have convenient greenway connections. Most notably, Rouge Park and Palmer Park have greenways within them but no external connection; Belle Isle is connected to parts of the RiverWalk, but this particular section of the RiverWalk is fragmented; Patton and Clark Parks are both well connected along the Patton Park off street greenway and on street West Vernor greenway.

The Detroit Greenways Coalition proposed the development of over 151 miles of greenways throughout the city. Figure 5.2 illustrates how access to greenways would increase as a result of such development. The majority of Detroit residents would have access to a greenway within a reasonable walking distance based on their neighborhood's population density.

Future greenways offer many opportunities but also impose increased cost. Prioritizing future greenways is essential to efficiently use and distribute resources. Detroit residents prioritized off street greenways over on street greenways; during focus group meetings in winter 2012, residents noted that they would feel safer using off street greenways separated from auto traffic (see Appendix B).¹ Residents report that they use off street greenways, such as the Dequindre Cut and Conner Creek Greenway more frequently.²

Ever Green recommends prioritizing the construction of greenways that connect dense population areas to parks. Further, off street routes

should be emphasized due to user preference. Figure 5.3 illustrates which future greenways should receive priority. The prioritized greenways, shown in red, run through high population density areas and connect major parks via on and off road routes. *Ever Green* also factors in various amenities to the prioritization of future greenways. With the expansion and prioritization of greenways, major parks can become more accessible to Detroit residents. Many of the parks that were not connected would have stronger linkages. For example, Rouge Park would connect to the Outer Drive Greenway. In the Southwest, Patton Park would become better connected to the north by the off road Inner Circle Greenway. Finally, Chandler Park would connect to the expansions of the Conner Creek Greenway and the East Outer Drive Greenway.

Recommendation: Connect recreation centers to greenways

A comprehensive parks, greenways, and recreation system should recognize that many recreation centers act as activity hubs and are integral to a comprehensive parks, greenways, and recreation system. The prioritized greenway proposals, in Figure 5.3, provide access to several city recreation centers. Furthermore, these centers are often in large parks, thus linking recreation centers to the greenway system. A city-wide recreation system should connect to greenways to promote a comprehensive city-wide structure.

Recommendation: Connect activity nodes such as hospitals and universities to the greenways and parks system

A greenway can function to provide pedestrian and bicycling routes to connect various amenities. An analysis, in Table 5.4, reveals that at least 30% of certain types of amenities in Detroit are within one-half mile of greenways.

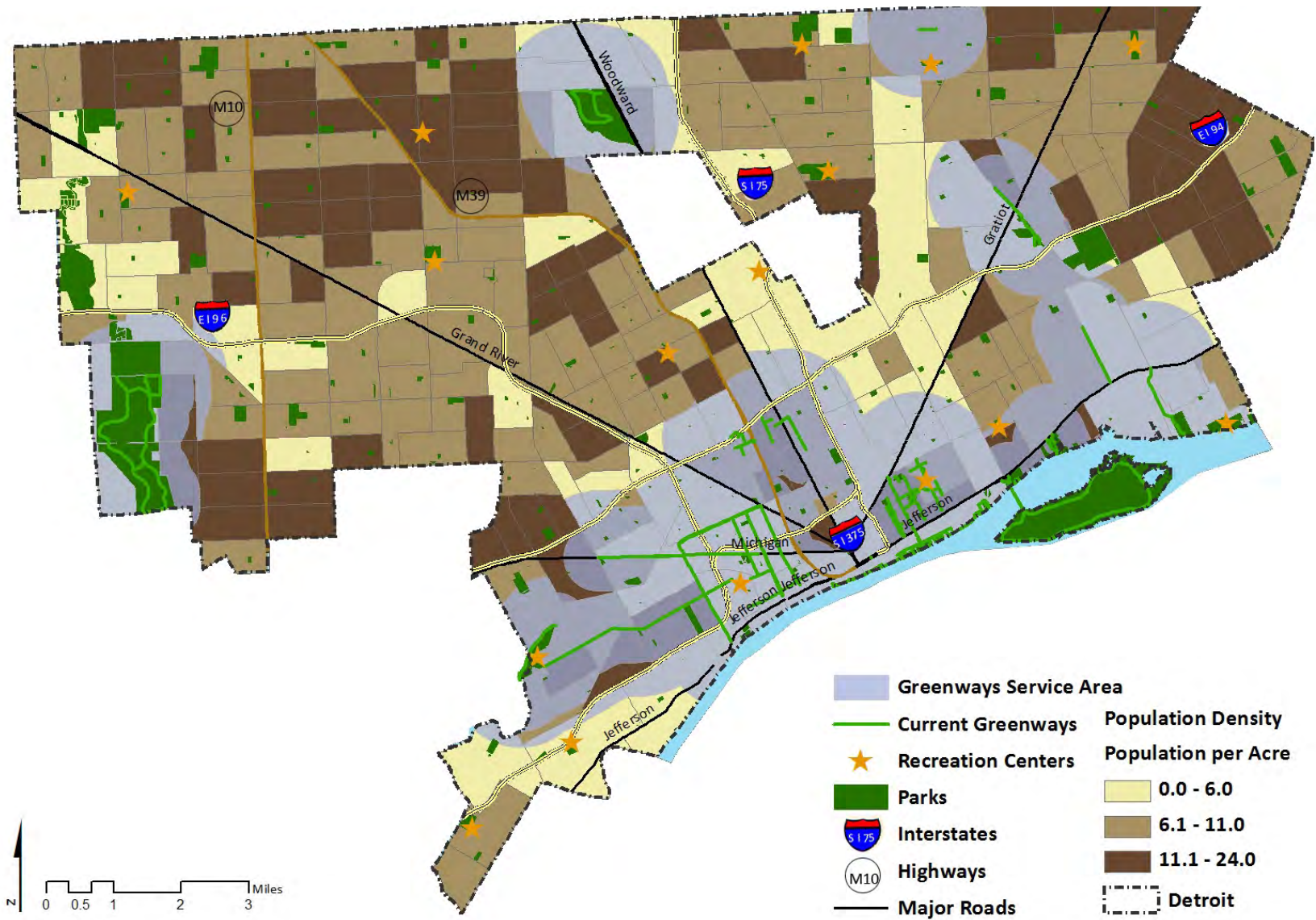
Other cities have worked to connect their parks and greenways. For example, Milwaukee is upgrading their parks and greenways connectivity. They extensively upgraded the city's non-motorized infrastructure to allow for added recreation and a better flow of non-motorized traffic.³

Table 5.4 Amenities within ½ mile of greenway

Amenities	Total number	Within ½ mile buffer of greenways	Percentage
Shopping centers	32	11	34%
Medical facilities	32	17	53%
Libraries	26	13	50%
Public schools	325	140	43%

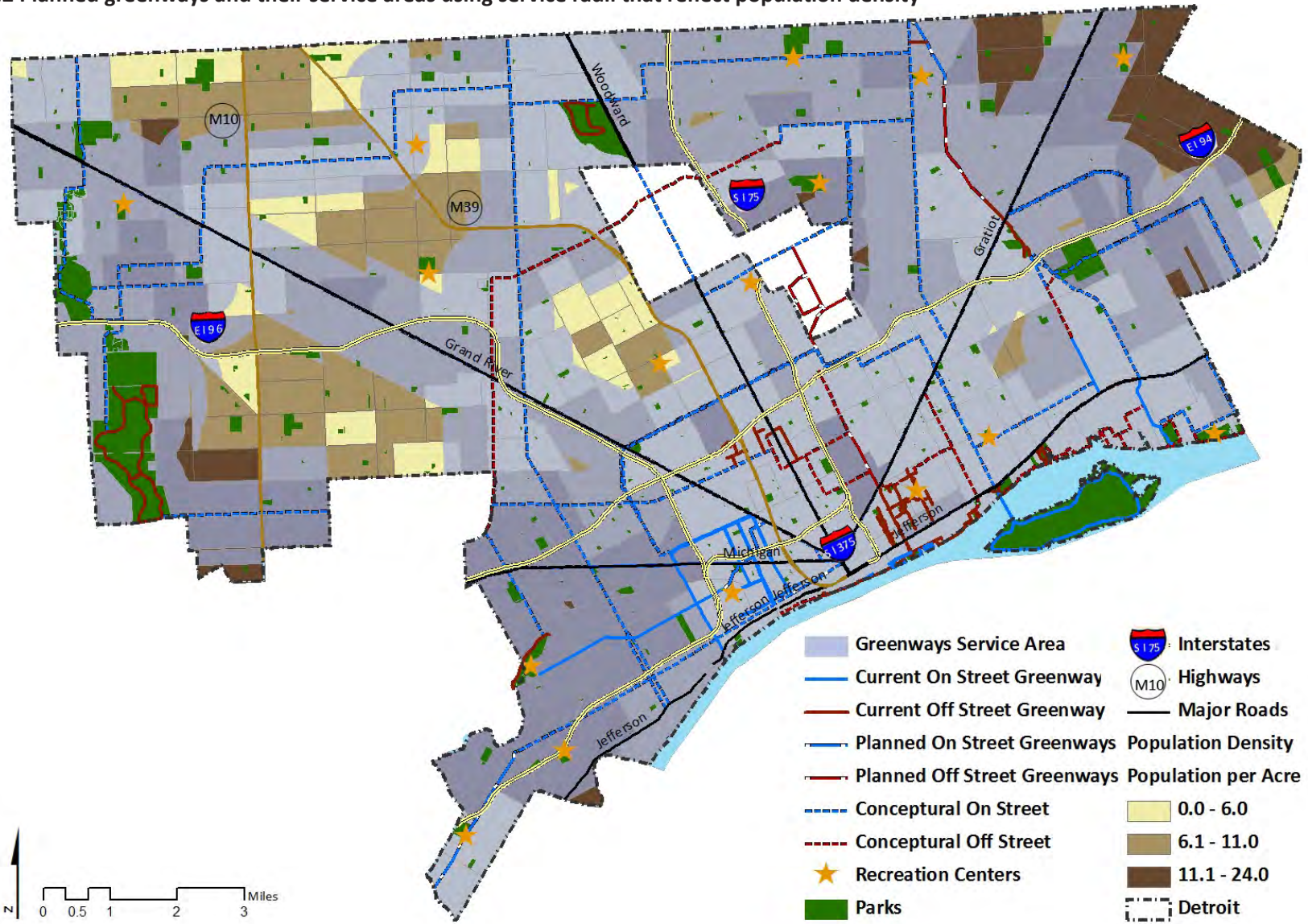
Source: Shopping Center 2003/ Medical Center 2003/ Libraries 2006/ Public schools 2006: Detroit Planning and Development Department , *GIS Layers*

Figure 5.1 Existing greenways and service areas



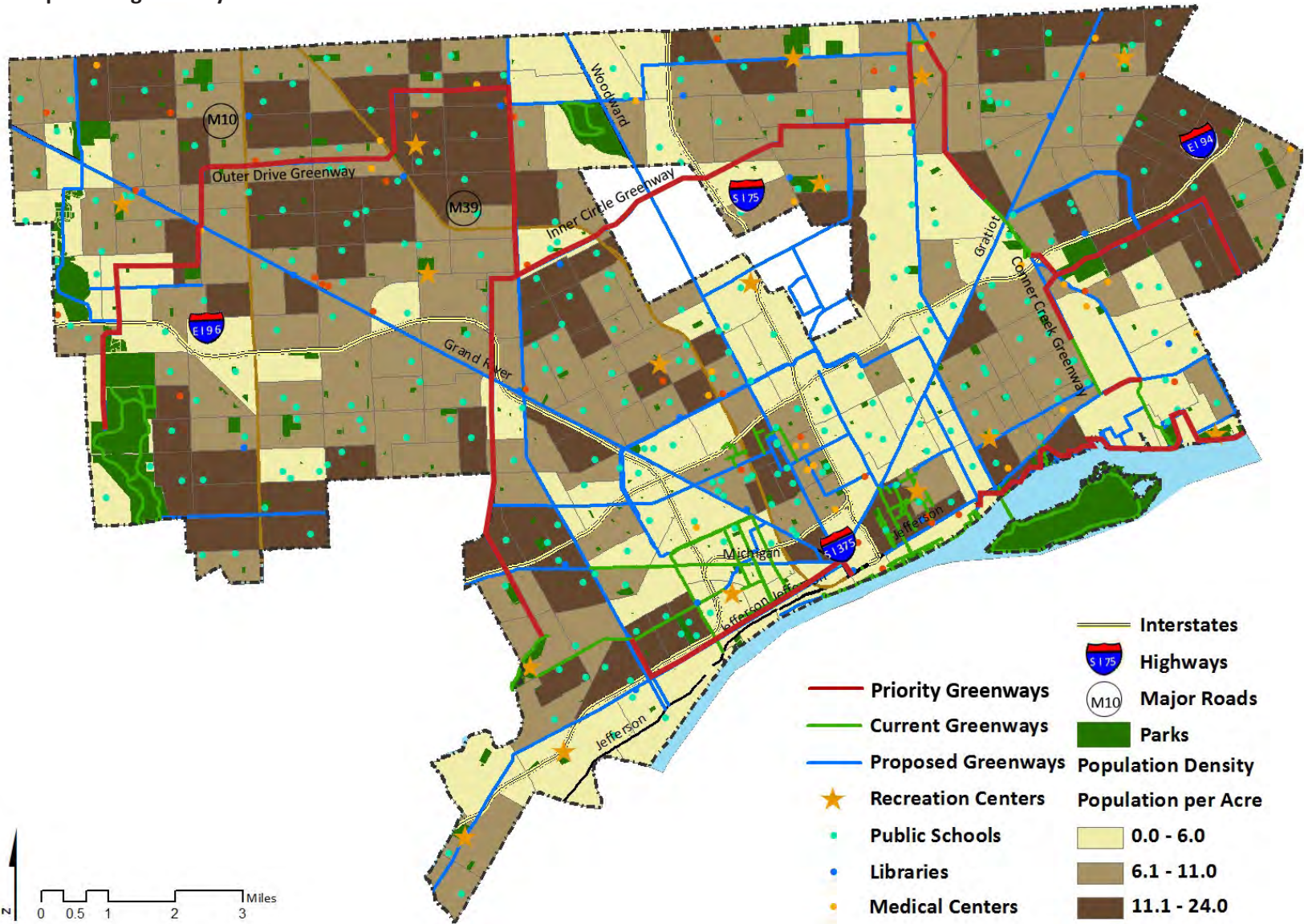
Source: See Appendix A

Figure 5.2 Planned greenways and their service areas using service radii that reflect population density



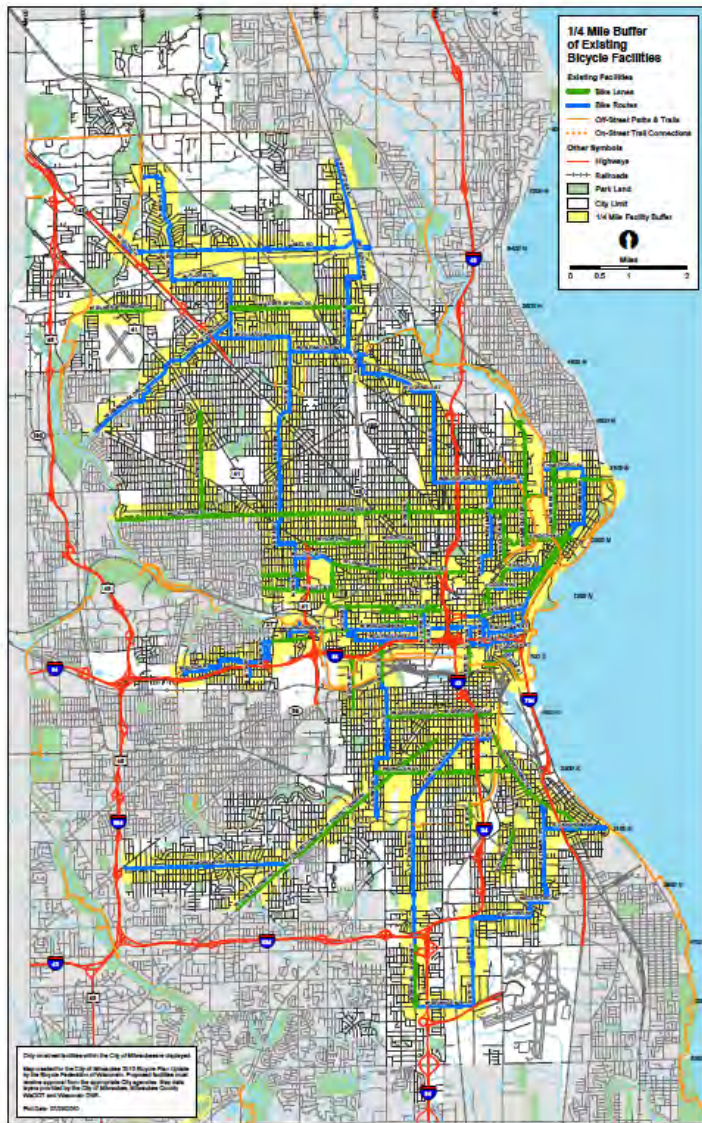
Source: See Appendix A

Figure 5.3 Prioritized planned greenways



Source: See Appendix A

Figure 5.4 Milwaukee on street greenways with service area coverage



Source: 2010 Milwaukee Bike Master Plan

Milwaukee Bike Plan

As of 2010, Milwaukee had over 110 miles of on street bike lanes and over three miles of bike paths and trails.⁴ Also in 2010, Milwaukee produced a new bike plan with two major goals applicable to *Ever Green*. First, the city will expand on street biking to ensure all residents live within ¼ mile of a bikeway.⁵ Second, the Milwaukee plan intends to “provide a comprehensive network of off street trails and paths that connect key destinations and provide recreational opportunities” for residents.⁶ A study conducted by the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin found that current trails were heavily used and needed to expand. Almost 40,000 people used the trail system during one month of observation.⁷ Figure 5.4 shows the 2010 Milwaukee Bike Master Plan with service area coverage.

Strategy 2: Assure that recreational amenities are geographically distributed to increase access

Strategy 1 concerned the connectivity of the citywide parks, greenways, and recreation system. Strategy 2 is designed to ensure that such a system efficiently serves Detroit residents. The system should serve residents where need is the highest (that is, where population is the most dense), rather than attempting to distribute resources evenly on the basis of geography alone.

Recommendation: Emphasize access to amenities by type

Every park may not have amenities for every user. However, a range of amenities should be accessible throughout a neighborhood. For example, parks that offer expansive sports fields might not need passive recreation amenities for elderly users or young families. Likewise, some parks may offer passive recreation opportunities and may not include athletic facilities. However, these different use amenities should be distributed throughout the city and suitable to the population. The priority areas, outlined in red in Figure 5.5, highlight where park amenities currently do not exist. Park amenities tend to concentrate in small clusters, as seen in Southwest Detroit, and are less prevalent in other areas such as the far west side and far Eastside. These two areas have high population density but lack concentrated recreational

amenities for residents.

Recommendation: Provide more parks and services in high population density areas

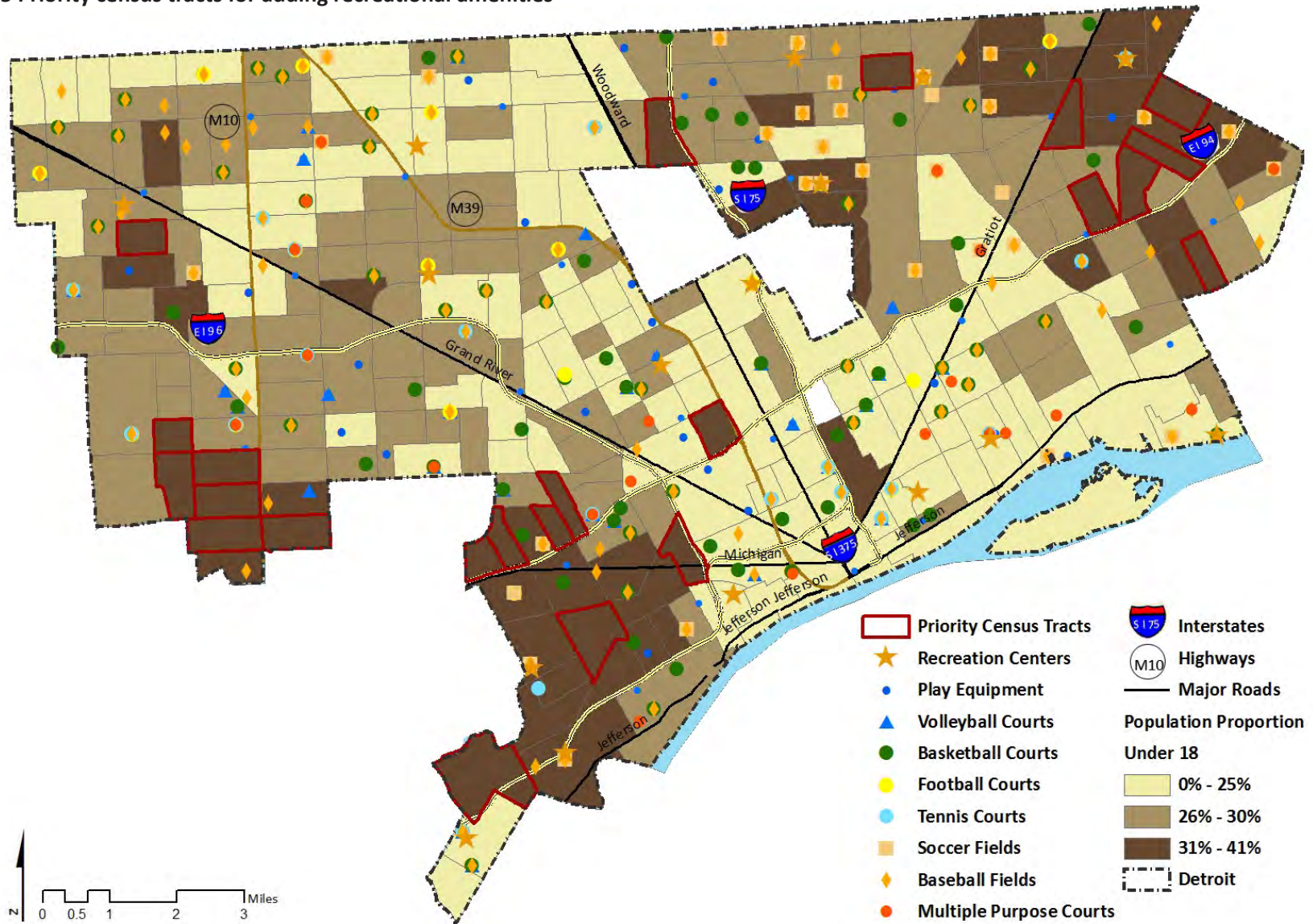
Detroit's population density varies across the city. As the city population decreased, some areas transitioned into low density areas more akin to suburban neighborhoods or rural areas than traditional urban areas. Such low density areas may not require the intensity of services that a dense urban area requires.

One example of how this recommendation can be applied is through examining the mini and neighborhood parks distribution. Smaller parks are inefficient for a city government to maintain; however, they are small enough to be candidates for various alternative management strategies such as the Adopt-A-Park program (see Chapter 6). Residents in many neighborhoods desire these types of parks. Figure 5.6 shows areas by population density where residents have access to a city-owned mini or neighborhood park. Areas highlighted in red may be potential areas for park construction. However, some of the highlighted areas may not need a mini or neighborhood park because they are near a play area within a community or regional park. Community and regional park accessibility was not considered in this analysis because they do not always serve the same functions as smaller parks. For example, though a resident may live near a regional park,

any play equipment within the park may still be inaccessible to that resident if it is on the other side of the large park. While the General Services Department (GSD) may not be financially able to construct new municipal mini or neighborhood parks, other groups could create and manage such parks in priority areas (see Chapter 6).

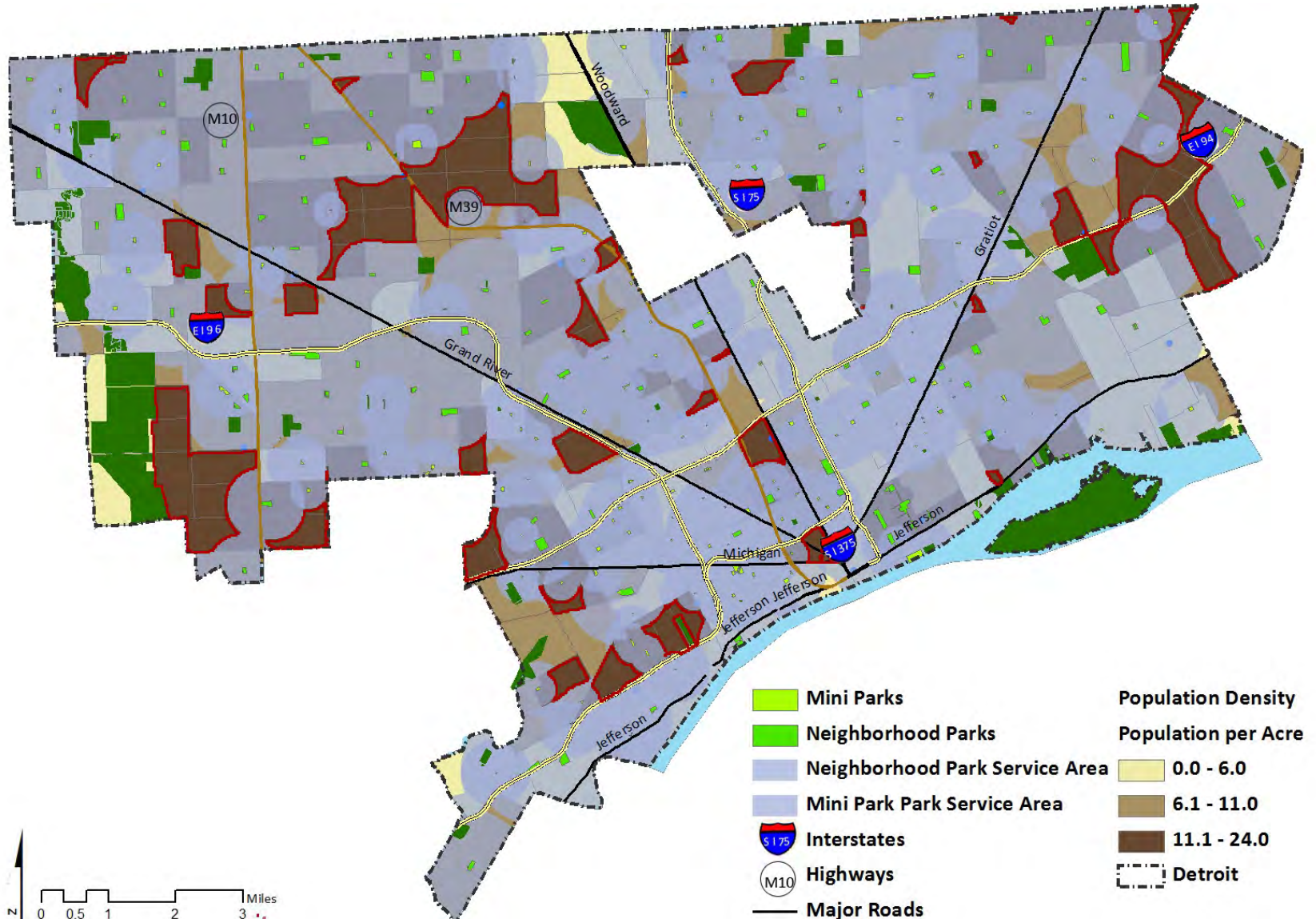
Areas served by a variety of parks may have more park capacity than local residents use or can maintain. Figure 5.7 displays service overlap areas in blue, areas that may be candidates for potential park closure or for shifting park maintenance responsibilities to a non-municipal entity. The blue areas in Figure 5.7 identify where mini park and neighborhood park service areas overlap. This analysis resembles that of the 2006 DRD Master Plan. In addition to having updated data, the *Ever Green* analysis builds on the DRD Master Plan by incorporating population density into the access analysis.

Figure 5.5 Priority census tracts for adding recreational amenities



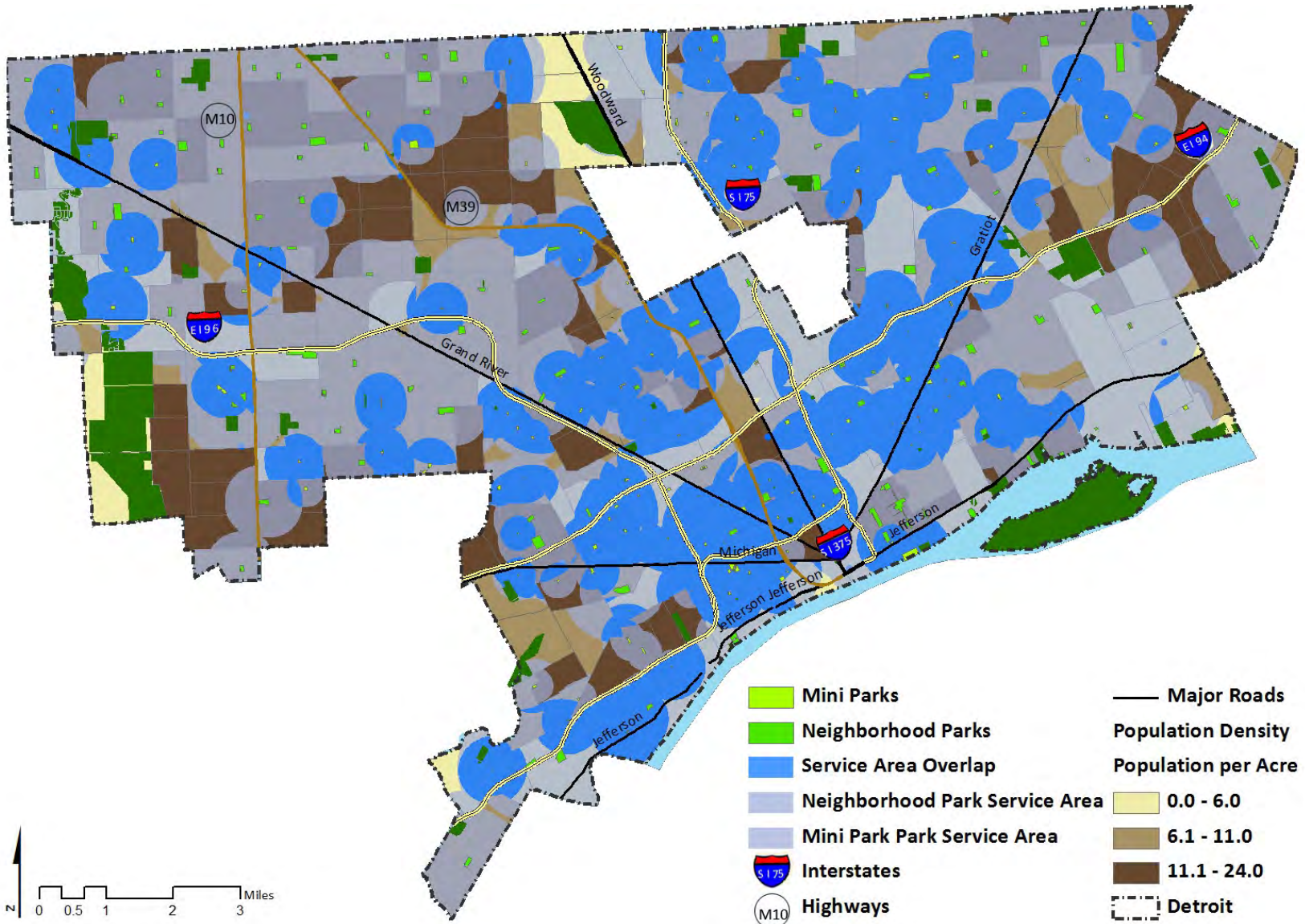
Source: See Appendix A

Figure 5.6 Priority areas for additional mini and neighborhood parks indicated by the red outline



Source: See Appendix A

Figure 5.7 Potential closings for mini parks and neighborhood parks indicated by service area overlap



Source: See Appendix A

Although a particular park may result in service area overlap, that does not necessarily imply that such a park should be closed. This analysis method is intended only as a starting point to consider which parks could be targeted for closure. Many parks can provide benefits beyond those to local municipal park users. For example, unique sites, historic sites, or parks along the riverfront could support tourism, environmental protection efforts, or economic development in nearby commercial areas. Additionally, *Ever Green* recommends that the GSD assess parks' use prior to closing a park. The most important criteria to consider before park closure are the views of people who live around it and their willingness to care for it. If residents living near a park demonstrate interest in a park, the municipality and non-profit organizations should make efforts to support them (see Chapter 6 for recommended strategies for doing so).⁸

Recommendation: Promote high service levels in districts with high population density

The land available for active recreation should be most accessible in places with the highest residential demand. Park acreage per 1,000 residents, defined as level of service, is an accessibility measure used by the Trust for Public Land.⁹ Some cities, such as Pittsburgh have a level of service of over 10 acres per resident. Examples of parks level of service for different cities is given in Table 2.2. The 2006 DRD Master Plan set a goal of at least 5.6 acres per 1,000 residents. *Ever Green*

categorizes park level of service into five types, as seen in Table 5.5.

Figure 5.8 clarifies which areas (outlined in red) may benefit from additional parks, based on a high population density and low level of service. This method of analysis is an alternative to that shown in Figure 5.6. These methods complement each other. For example, although Figure 5.6 may show that an area has park coverage based on falling within the service radius of a park, Figure 5.8 may show that such an area is still underserved based on the ratio of park acreage to population in the area.

None of these analyses should serve as the only method to decide where parks, greenways, and recreation centers should open or close. Such analyses demonstrate approaches to planning the parks, greenways, and recreation system. Any final decisions should also depend on community input.

Strategy 3: Introduce new types of parks into the system

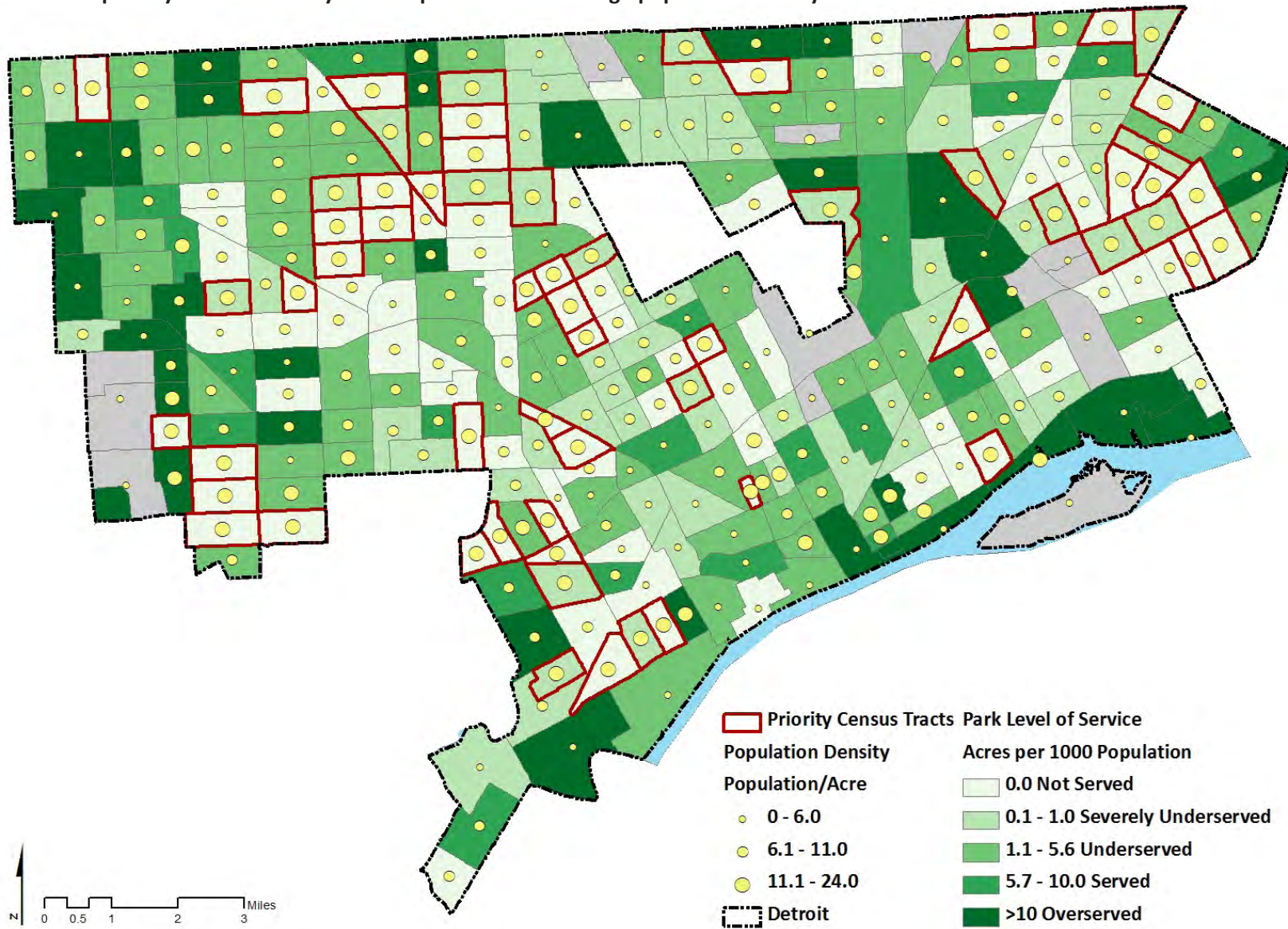
While Detroit exceeds its stated goal (5.6 acres per 1000 residents of park land) more park land could be provided based on benchmarks of other comparable cities (see Chapter 2). That fact paired with Detroit's surplus of vacant land provides opportunities for new parks and greenways. Land transformation can convert underused properties into city assets. New park types can enhance the

Table 5.5 Number of census tracts and population by level of service

Level of service	Definition	Number of census tracts
No service	0 acre/10,00 population	117
Severely underserved	0-1 acre/1,000 population	39
Underserved	1-5.6 acres/1,000 population	80
Served	5.6 – 10 acres/1,000 population	22
Well served	> 10 acres/1,000 population	39

Source: Population Data: Census 2010, Park Data: Data Driven Detroit GIS shapefile

Figure 5.8 Possible priority areas of the city for new parks: areas with high population density and low levels of service



Source: See Appendix A

current system and accommodate new users' desires.

Recommendation: Create a sports-focused park

The 2006 DRD Master Plan classified parks into six types (see Chapter 2). However, no parks in the city served as the "sports park" type. The DRD defines a sports park as one that "consolidates heavily programmed athletic facilities and associated fields at larger and fewer sites strategically located throughout the community."¹⁰ While sites such as Maheras-Gentry have some sports facilities, adding sports parks to Detroit can attract increased usership, promote physical activity, and encourage sports leagues.

Specialty sports parks such as skate parks would likely have high use. For example, some people at Palmer Park use a vacant pool facility for skateboarding.¹¹ Professional skateboarders have an ongoing fundraising effort to convert a vacant house and lots on the Eastside into a skatepark.¹² Also, the Roosevelt Park Conservancy is planning a skate plaza in Corktown.

Recommendation: Create post-industrial parks

Abandoned industrial sites with standing structures and facilities can offer new park location. Detroit's manufacturing heritage offers numerous opportunities for increased recreational amenities and tourism attractions, such as the Packard Plant.

Skate Park
 A special-use park, designed for skateboarding or bicycle tricks, provides special amenities such as half-pipes, quarter pipes, spine transfers, and handrails. Skatepark cost estimates can range from \$10,000 to \$50,000 depending on the desired size and equipment type.¹³

The Crooked River Skate Park in Cleveland, Ohio, is a part of the mayor and City Council's vision for enhancing the Flats district. The park managers expect to attract hundreds of people during the warmer seasons. Cleveland is the first major industrial Midwest City to use a skateboard park for downtown redevelopment. The design incorporates feedback and ideas collected at public meetings and comments in addition to input from skatepark design firms.¹⁴

Figure 5.9 Cleveland skateboard park



Source: Public Square Group

Figure 5.10 Gas Works Park: Seattle, Washington



Photo Credit: Lee Rentz

Figure 5.11 Boulder garden: Jackson, Wyoming



Source: American Alpine Club

Gas Works Park

In 1962, the City of Seattle acquired the Seattle Gas Light Company manufactured gas plant site to convert into a park. After 13 years of contamination remediation, the park opened to the public for passive recreational uses.¹⁵ Park management still uses natural processes to neutralize the soil and bioremediation tactics (i.e. planting trees, shrubs, and 18" of biomediated soil placed beneath grass fields to continue the remediation process.)¹⁶ The boiler house now serves as a picnic shelter and the exhauster-compressor building houses a children's play barn featuring brightly painted machinery. Since opening to the public, the park has gained much recognition, including the ASLA President's Award of Excellence in 1981.¹⁷ The City of Seattle and Puget Sound Energy Company fund the remediation practices. The total cost of creating the park, thus far, has been about \$90 million.¹⁸

Boulder Garden

Jackson's boulder park offers three artificial boulders for people with varying skills. The park received funding from private donations, grants, and foundations as well as land donation from the town of Jackson and maintenance from Teton County Parks and Recreation. The estimated cost for creating this park type is \$325,000.¹⁹

Recommendation: Create boulder gardens

A boulder garden consists of sculpted boulders intended for public climbing and opportunities to learn how to climb. Boulder gardens offer a few different boulders to give residents varying challenge levels. Such parks are typically located in a residential area and are best suited for seasonal use.²⁰ Many of these parks have been constructed in cities neighboring mountains to give residents a practice area, but installing a boulder garden in a place where rock climbing is not a common physical activity, such as Detroit, can add an innovative physical activity option for city residents and attract outside visitors.

Conclusion

If sufficiently implemented, a new and improved Detroit parks and greenways system could emerge. Such a system features:

- Comprehensive citywide connectivity between parks, greenways, and recreation centers.
- More parks and amenities in population dense areas of the city.
- Fewer parks and amenities in areas of the city with high vacancy.
- A focus on parks and amenities that city residents value.

With *Ever Green's* recommendations, Detroit's parks and greenways system can enhance

recreational services for city residents. Increased city-wide access to amenities improves health and mobility for residents. Greenways can increase residents' non-motorized transportation options and allow for healthy living by linking parks and greenways. Parks and greenways facilitate active lifestyles. Moreover, access to amenities, parks, and greenways will continue to change with the declining population. *Ever Green's* recommendations allow for the changes in parks and greenways to become more strategic and efficient. New types of parks could complement and expand on the existing system.

The DRD Master Plan recommends the system downsize from 311 municipal parks (in 2006) to 220 parks. *Ever Green* recommends an eventual system of either 239 parks using new system 1 or 298 parks if using new system 2 as shown in Table 5.6. New system 1 closes mini parks and neighborhood

parks that are located in the service overlap areas as identified in Figure 5.7 and are in poor condition according to the DRD Master Plan. New system 2 closes fewer mini and neighborhood parks because it has an additional criterion to consider: low population density. There are more mini parks and neighborhood parks in new system 2. A larger number of parks are closed in new system 1 because the population density could be low, medium, or high compared to new system 2 where only parks in low density areas are closed. The 2006 DRD Master Plan recommends 220 parks after repositioning, their main criteria for closing parks include: located in overlap areas (the *Ever Green* plan recommends a different service area buffer based on population density, while the 2006 DRD Master Plan uses a universal buffer for each park type) and in poor condition.²¹

Table 5.6 offers the maintenance cost differences

if the GSD continues to conduct maintenance. Ultimately, the two new system's total maintenance costs do not change much. However, if the park manager wishes to maintain the park differently than the GSD recommends for a typical mini park can be reduced from \$10,510 to, maintenance costs \$4,500-\$6,500 per acre (see Table 6.3, Appendix C, and Chapter 2 for maintenance costs). *Ever Green* finds that regardless of budgetary constraints, most of Detroit's parks should remain open. Therefore, alternative management strategies may be explored, as discussed in Chapter 6.

Table 5.6 Estimated cost for new systems

Park type	Average park area (acres)	New system 1				New system 2			
		Number of parks	Total area (acres)	Cost per acre	Total cost	Number of parks	Total area (acres)	Cost per acre	Total cost
Mini park	0.89	103	103	\$10,510	\$967,060	137	122	\$10,510	\$1,286,284
Neighborhood park	6.54	97	634	\$8,440	\$5,354,972	122	798	\$8,440	\$6,735,120
Community park	41.83	24	1,004	\$2,604	\$2,614,416	24	1,004	\$2,604	\$2,614,416
Regional park	579.80	5	2,899	\$832	\$2,411,968	5	2,899	\$832	\$2,411,968
Plaza	2.00	10	20	\$33,340	\$666,800	10	20	\$33,340	\$666,800
					\$12,015,216				\$13,714,588

Source: DRD Master Plan 2006; see also Table 2.4

Notes

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3. Milwaukee by Bike, *2010 Milwaukee Bike Master Plan* (City of Milwaukee, September 7, 2010), <<http://city.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/User/milbtf/MilwaukeebyBike2010-Plan.pdf>>.
4. Ibid. 1
5. Ibid. 1
6. Ibid. 11
7. Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin, *Off-street Bikeway Study: Milwaukee's Best Opportunities for Trail Expansion* (Bicycle Federation of WI, 2008), <http://city.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/User/milbtf/Final_report.pdf>
8. Peter Harnik, Director, Center for City Park Excellence – Trust for Public Land, personal interview with Ting Ma, February 29, 2012.
9. Trust for Public Land, *2011 City Park Facts*, (2011), p. 13, <<http://cloud.tpl.org/pubs/ccpe-city-park-facts-2011.pdf>>.
10. Ibid.
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12. Ashley C. Woods, "In Detroit, building a skateboard art park out of vacant homes and lots," MLive, 2012, <http://www.mlive.com/entertainment/detroit/index.ssf/2012/04/fund_a_skateboard_art_park_in.html>.
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14. Public Square Group, "Crooked River Skate Park - Cleveland's new skate park coming to the Flats" (2012), <<http://www.publicsquaregroup.com/cleveland-skatepark>>.
15. The Cultural Landscape Foundation, "Gas Works Park" (2011), <<http://tclf.org/landscapes/gas-works-park>> ; Environmental Protection Agency, *Reclamation and Redevelopment of Contaminated Land Volume I: US Case Studies*, (1986), p. 80-89, <nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPURL.cgi?Dockey=30002LP1.txt>
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20. City Data, "Buena Vista Boulder Garden" (2012), <<http://www.city-data.com/articles/Buena-Vista-Boulder-Garden-Buena-Vista.html#ixzz1rarlkLk1>>.
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Chapter 6: Strategies to Create an Enduring System of Parks and Greenways in Detroit

To create and sustain high quality parks and greenways in Detroit, city agencies and parks and greenways advocates should use a variety of management structures and a variety of funding, administrative, and maintenance approaches. Support systems that work for one park in Southwest Detroit may not be appropriate for a plaza park in the downtown area. What works for Belle Isle may not work in Chandler Park. To achieve long-term viability and financial stability, City of Detroit leaders and parks officials should allow each asset's stakeholders in Detroit's diverse parks and greenways to explore strategies that best support their needs. In turn, each park's stewards must pro-actively solicit support and shape management procedures that equip each space with reliable sources of funding for capital improvements and maintenance.

Cooperation and communication between government and non-government agencies, as well as among community groups, can create a more reliable, sustainable system than exists now. Given Detroit's array of parks, recreation centers, and greenways, a range of approaches and management models is needed to meet the needs of each space.

The new system: Expanding and formalizing non-municipal management

Going forward, Detroit’s municipal agencies will not have sufficient resources to care for all of the city’s parks, recreation centers, and greenways. This will mean that non-municipal organizations (non-profits, neighborhood groups, corporations, philanthropy, other governmental entities, and others) will become vital partners in funding, managing, and maintaining Detroit’s collection of parks and greenways. In the “new system,” city agencies will evaluate which services they can provide to which classes of assets and will choose among a range of alternatives in determining which roles they can realistically assume for each park classification. This must be done in an open and transparent process that engages residents and other stakeholders in the decision

making process. When city agencies choose to support some assets and not others, non-municipal entities may want to expand their roles or take on new responsibilities. Roles will range from public leadership to non-municipal management, as Figure 6.1 shows.

In the “new system,” city agencies will increasingly take on the role of “coordinator” and “facilitator,” rather than “manager” and “operator.” This model will relieve the agencies of responsibilities that they lack resources to fulfill and will benefit residents by identifying partner organizations that are able to provide support services for parks and greenways. Formalizing the partnerships will help ensure quality service provision and appropriate accountability for the parks deemed worthy of future investment.

Proposed Strategies and Recommendations

This chapter offers recommendations to create a financially and administratively enduring park and greenway system in Detroit. The following strategies include recommendations for funding and administrative approaches to support Detroit’s parks, recreation centers, and greenways.

Strategy 1: Encourage and facilitate non-municipal private sector and non-profit management for more parks and greenways

- Reduce city management of mini parks and encourage alternative management organizations for mini parks that have considerable use
- Strengthen and expand the General Services Department’s (GSD) Adopt-A-Park program
- Encourage more public/private partnerships for Detroit parks and greenways
- Promote corporate sponsorship and management for parks and greenways
- Use, leverage, and create conservancies to manage park, greenway, and recreation assets

Strategy 2: Recruit non-municipal public sector entities to manage more parks and greenways

- Use the millages captured from Detroit residents for parks in Detroit
- Transition management of some city parks to state entities
- Use federal funding opportunities for Detroit parks and greenways

Table 6.1 shows how each strategy suggested in this chapter supports *Ever Green’s* goals. Table 6.2 shows

Figure 6.1 “The new system”: A range of management models



how each of the strategy’s recommendations supports *Ever Green’s* goals.

Table 6.1 Strategies addressing goals

<p>Goal: Adjust parks and greenways to Detroit’s smaller population</p>	<p>Goal: Ensure that parks and greenways are properly maintained</p>	<p>Goal: Increase access to parks and greenways</p>	<p>Goal: Achieve stability in parks and greenways planning, funding and management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Chapter 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and facilitate non-municipal private sector and non-profit management for more parks and greenways • Recruit non-municipal public sector entities to manage more parks and greenways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Chapter 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and facilitate non-municipal private sector and non-profit management for more parks and greenways • Recruit non-municipal public sector entities to manage more parks and greenways • Use non-traditional park resources to support parks and greenways

Table 6.2 Recommendations addressing goals

<p>Goal: Adjust parks and greenways to Detroit’s smaller population</p>	<p>Goal: Ensure that parks and greenways are properly maintained</p>	<p>Goal: Increase access to parks and greenways</p>	<p>Goal: Achieve stability in parks and greenways planning, funding and management</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce city management of mini parks and encourage alternative management organizations for mini parks that have considerable use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use, leverage, and create conservancies to manage park, greenway, and recreation assets • Strengthen and expand the General Services Department’s Adopt-A-Park program including a matching grant component • Promote corporate sponsorship and management for parks and greenways • Leverage workforce development programs for maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Chapter 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage more public/private partnerships for Detroit parks and greenways • Transition management of some city parks to state entities • Use federal funding opportunities for Detroit parks and greenways • Use the millages captured from Detroit residents for parks in Detroit • Use all forms of public outreach

Strategy 3: Leverage non-traditional park resources to support parks and greenways

- Leverage workforce development programs for maintenance
- Use all forms of public outreach

Strategy 1: Encourage and facilitate non-municipal, private sector and non-profit management for more parks and greenways

To reach the goals of proper maintenance as well as stable funding and management, Detroit's General Services Department (GSD) and Recreation Department (DRD) should reduce their roles in park, greenway, and recreation center management. The physical size of the city-operated system should align with the costs that the GSD and DRD can afford. To decrease their responsibilities, the DRD and GSD can encourage private sector and non-profit entities to support parks, greenways, and recreation centers. The following recommendations outline how the GSD's Adopt-A-Park program, public/private partnerships, corporate sponsorships, and conservancies can help the DRD and GSD decrease their management burden.

Recommendation: Reduce city management of mini parks and encourage alternative management organizations for mini parks that have considerable use

Mini parks range in size from half an acre to five acres, and 150 mini parks existed in the city in 2006. These parks are the linchpins of neighborhood green space because residents can reach them easily and the parks can serve most immediate recreation purposes, such as benches for older people and play equipment for children. However, city officials struggle with maintaining mini parks and rarely give them the same attention as other larger parks. Due to the lack of maintenance and the importance of mini parks, local organizations and small businesses may wish to take up maintenance tasks.

Cost implications

Two major barriers hinder local organizations and small businesses from taking care of mini parks. Many worry that they will not be able to meet the requirements of a formal agreement due to tight resources. (See the next section for more about the Adopt-A-Park process.) Tight budgets and lack of expensive, professional-grade lawn equipment can make maintaining and operating parks more difficult, or at least more daunting, for local organizations. Table 6.3 offers a cost breakdown for basic maintenance. The listed maintenance items represent flexible operating costs per acre that change with different maintenance levels. Level 1 is the highest level of maintenance with weekly mowing and trash pickup; Level 4, the minimum level, provides mowing and trash removal only as needed. Table 6.4 shows capital costs for the equipment necessary to carry out maintenance tasks such as a lawnmower and snow shovel.

Detroit has 150 mini parks that would cost more than \$1.4 million annually if maintained adequately by the GSD (see Chapter 2). By reducing the GSD's mini park management responsibilities and promoting park adoption these parks could receive better maintenance at lower cost.

Management implications

A handful of Detroit neighborhood organizations successfully manage parks. Urban Neighborhood Initiatives in Springwells Village, for example (see Chapter 7), is a community development organization that views surrounding parks as major assets to the neighborhood.

Identifying and recruiting other like-minded organizations could reduce management and cost responsibilities of the GSD. These groups would likely benefit from training and technical assistance described in more detail in the recommendation regarding the Adopt-A-Park program. In addition, usership data would be useful when deciding which parks need greater maintenance or where local support may exist for adoption. By distributing a parks survey, an organization can find out which mini parks are well supported by others, which mini parks are used but require the GSD maintenance, and which mini parks have little use or support. (See Appendix D for an example of a park usership survey.) An organization adopting a park could use this survey to collect needed usership data, such as a resident's frequency of park visits; satisfaction with programs, recreational facilities, and maintenance; and additional comments.

The GSD and DRD have limited administrative resources, and mini parks rarely have individual conservancy groups; therefore, a city-wide parks conservancy could collect usership data. This city-wide parks conservancy model will be explained later in this chapter. The conservancy could collect usership data for individual mini parks through mail, website, or in-person survey distribution.

Recommendation: Strengthen and expand GSD Adopt-A-Park program including a matching grant component

A number of organizations support parks by helping maintain them. As of 2012, 41 parks were on the the GSD adopted parks list, but some groups care for parks and do not want a formal agreement because of tight budgets or concern about commitment. Groups may not want the full burden of maintenance on their shoulders if the GSD steps away. However, formalizing the Adopt-A-Park relationship is beneficial. Knowing what parks need ongoing maintenance from the GSD and which ones other organizations are caring for can help the GSD more efficiently allocate resources. The existing Adopt-A-Park program has the potential to provide a strong source of support for a sizable number of parks. The Adopt-A-Park Program should focus on neighborhood and mini parks as they are smaller and therefore more manageable for adopters with few resources.

Table 6.3 Annual costs per acre for mini parks maintenance by a park adopter

Maintenance Operating Costs	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Lawn care/Mowing	\$530.00	\$185.75	\$83.75	\$45.50
Fertilizer	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00
Irrigation	\$3,600.00	\$3,600.00	\$3,600.00	\$3,600.00
Litter Control	\$1,326.00	\$206.00	\$153.00	\$25.50
Pruning	\$357.00	\$357.00	\$357.00	\$357.00
Insect Control	\$33.81	\$33.81	\$33.81	\$33.81
Snow Removal	\$8.38	\$8.38	\$8.38	\$8.38
Surfaces	\$204.00	\$204.00	\$204.00	\$204.00
Inspections	\$256.50	\$128.25	\$85.50	\$21.38
Total	\$6,515.69	\$5,023.19	\$4,725.44	\$4,495.57

Source: See formulas, data, and definitions of maintenance levels in Appendix C

Table 6.4 Capital costs for maintenance tools and equipment

Maintenance Equipment Costs	Price
Troy-Bilt 17.5 HP Shift-on-the-Go 42" Riding Mower	\$1,049.00
Blue Hawk 20" - Wood Garden Shovel	\$14.98
Troy-Bilt 123cc 21" Single Stage Gas Snow Blower	\$323.09
True Temper 24" Steel Snow Shovel	\$15.98
True Temper 4 Cu. Ft. Steel Wheelbarrow	\$34.98
Agri-Fab 40" Steel Spike Aerator	\$149.00

Source: Lowes.com

Successful Adopt-A-Park programs exist in different forms.¹ Based on the way programs work in Chicago; Seattle; and San Jose, an improved GSD Adopt-A-Park program could:

- Launch a citywide marketing campaign to recruit new adopters with a focus on institutional adopters, such as universities, public hospitals, and corporations to take over small parks in their vicinity. Adding material to the GSD website or distributing brochures to community groups could help immensely.
- Set minimum commitments for length of adoption and number of volunteer workdays by adopters in their park.
- Introduce a training program to educate adopters on park maintenance and operations (including code enforcement, safety measures, and liability issues).
- Initiate a neighborhood matching fund to provide a cash match for neighborhood-based projects. (See the Seattle example and information following for more about matching funds.)
- Consider creating an Adopt-A-Park endowment fund by partnering with foundations and a non-profit such as the Greening of Detroit to provide all adopters with a baseline of funding for maintenance. Such a fund could pay for gloves, trash bags, gardening tools, and first aid kits. This gives a role to groups with a passion for parks but inadequate capacity for assuming responsibilities.

San Jose, California Adopt-A-Park

San Jose, California, has a robust Adopt-A-Park and Adopt-A-Trail program run by the city government.² The program offers a list of all adopted parks, as well as the required forms community groups and volunteers must fill out to participate. After making an agreement, the city agency provides training for group leaders or involved individuals. Any agreement requires at least one year of service with a minimum of once-per-month involvement at the chosen park. The program also offers recognition in the form of certificates and a plaque at the site once the adopter reports 60 volunteer hours. The plaque stays in place as long as the volunteer relationship remains active.

- Match non-profits with corporations to form partnerships. Corporations may want to donate money or encourage their employees to participate in a community workday. Non-profits can put such donations to good use and can assemble and coordinate groups of volunteers. An example of this in Detroit is the work Motor City Blight Busters did with the support of Lear Corporation. (See more about this partnership in the section on public-private partnerships.)
- Recognize adopters with an official certificate of adoption and signage at the park.
- Offer credit toward high school students' required service learning hours for time spent volunteering in the parks. Service learning enriches the learning experience by developing civic and social responsibility and addressing

Seattle, Washington Adopt-A-Park

The Seattle Adopt-A-Park program is like many others in cleaning up parks, planting trees, and repairing and installing new equipment, but Neighborhood Matching Funds, a municipal grants program, complements it. The Department of Neighborhoods has distributed funds to projects throughout the city since 1988.³ These funds foster collaboration between community groups and the city government by providing funding match. Residents must provide volunteer labor, materials, or cash match to show support for projects. Physical improvements such as play equipment require a 1:1 match while non-physical options such as planning and events only require ½:1 match. Over 20 years, the Neighborhood Matching Funds program contributed \$42 million to 3,500 projects, with \$64 million community match, and 400,000 hours of volunteer labor from 65,000 individuals.⁴ The city budget funds the Neighborhood Matching Fund program, and the appropriation allows city departments such as Parks and Recreation to spend less by shifting costs to neighborhood groups who participate. Figure 6.2 shows students after cleaning up Dakota Place Park, which is officially adopted by the Tilden School.

community needs – all part of working with the park and greenway system. Individual volunteer groups may include high school students, or a group of students could be supervised by a member of an affiliated Adopt-A-Park group such as the Greening of Detroit or Detroit Parks Coalition.

- Host an annual Adopt-A-Park celebration and thank you event for all adopters.

Adopt-A-Park could offer two tracks for adoption:

- Community Adopter (1 year commitment)
- Corporate/Institutional Adopter (1 year minimum commitment; option for 3 or 5 year commitment)

Four levels of commitment from adopters are possible:

- Improvements Sponsorship: can include minor renovations, painting, plantings, small community events, or occasional clean-up projects. Having an option for small projects, such as new benches, may draw participation from organizations that cannot commit to regular mowing or trash removal. A clean-up project may include litter and brush removal once per year. The GSD remains the primary maintenance provider.
- Shared Maintenance Sponsorship: can provide some maintenance services such as monthly mowing. This option allows for less GSD presence without lowering park level of service by performing maintenance activities every other week.

City of Chicago Adopt-A-Park program

The City of Chicago and Chicago Parks District Adopt-A-Park program is run through the Friends of the Parks organization. Since 1975, Friends of the Parks has advocated for parks, established new parks, and coordinated volunteers. The Adopt-A-Park program requires groups to work at least four days a year on projects ranging from litter removal to planting trees and repairing equipment. Friends of the Parks and the Chicago Parks District supply the tools for each job. Friends of the Parks recognizes park adopters with certificates, as well as mention in their newsletter. Additionally, volunteer benefits include service learning hours for high school students, invitation to annual events such as Friends of the Parks volunteer appreciation party, and pride in taking care of valuable park space.⁵ Figure 6.3 shows high school students helping Friends of the Parks spread mulch.

- Ongoing Maintenance Sponsorship: can provide maintenance, including mowing and snow removal, once each week or ten days. This option fully relieves the GSD of ongoing maintenance responsibility which requires time as well as money.
- Major Projects Sponsorship: can involve sizable donations for major capital projects, large scale community events, or endowment creation. This option exists for larger capacity organizations to fund the GSD projects in parks.

Figure 6.2 Tilden School students clean up Dakota Place Park in Seattle



Photo Credit: westseattleblog.com

Figure 6.3 High schoolers work with Friends of the Parks in Chicago



Photo Credit: dailybag.com

A flexible structure can provide adopters with various options to support parks at appropriate levels for their budgets and volunteer availability. Adopters can propose an adoption program that they can achieve, that fits group goals, and that meets the park facility's needs.

Cost implications

An improved Adopt-A-Park has cost implications for the GSD or another operating agency as well as for the organizations and people adopting parks. Adopt-A-Park administration costs are estimated at approximately \$300 per year per park for the GSD.⁶ These funds cover volunteer management costs, including administrative staff time, screening potential adopters, training adopters, and general management of the program.

Many park adopters take on costs associated with maintenance. Table 6.3 shows estimates for basic costs for mini parks maintenance; between \$4,000 and \$7,000 per acre compared to the figure of \$10,510 per acre derived from the 2006 DRD Master Plan for the GSD's maintenance at an appropriate level (see Chapter 2). If adopters can maintain parks for 30 % less than the GSD, promoting park adoption and facilitating non-municipal management makes financial sense.

Many Detroit residents are enthusiastic about their local parks; however, their neighborhood organizations often lack the capacity to manage a park independently. To provide financial support

to adopters, the GSD's Adopt-A-Park system could imitate the Seattle Adopt-A-Park system, in which the Neighborhood Matching Fund offers matching grants to adopters. The GSD could offer annual, matching grants of \$2,000 that the adopting organization could match through financial resources or volunteer hours. While this amount of money would not cover the entire annual maintenance cost of mini parks, it could encourage more adoptions by giving small organizations more capacity to manage a mini park. For 100 mini parks, this program would cost the GSD \$200,000 per year. The 2006 DRD Master Plan estimates adequate maintenance of mini parks to cost \$10,510 per acre. Since the average mini park size is 0.9 acres, mini park maintenance is approximately \$9,400 per park.⁷ Therefore, the GSD would need to spend \$940,000 to maintain 100 mini parks adequately. If adopters take on 100 mini parks, then the GSD would spend only \$200,000 annually. Recognizing that the GSD might not have the financial and administrative capacity for this type of program expansion, foundations and corporate philanthropy could facilitate the creation of a Neighborhood Matching Fund or preferably, an endowment fund for grants and purchase of maintenance tools. Assuming a 5% annual return, the endowment for this fund would need to be \$4 million to generate \$200,000 in annual income.

Adoption of parks frees the GSD and DRD to focus more on non-adopted parks. Even a couple of parks completely taken care of by a non-city entity may make the investment in a matching grant program

endowment, administration, and education worthwhile.

Management implications

The GSD should continue administering Adopt-A-Park and invest in its improvement. More use of the program can reduce the burden on the GSD for parks maintenance. If the GSD cannot provide funding for staff and administration of the program, the department could consider handing it to a non-profit such as the Greening of Detroit or Detroit Parks Coalition. In either management scenario, foundation and corporate involvement could help fund capital improvements and adopter startup costs through an endowment with a match from the adopter. In addition, Ever Green recommends that the GSD use the Adopt-A-Park agreement form shown in Appendix E of this plan. This agreement form will enhance, simplify, and better coordinate Detroit's Adopt-A-Park program and could be posted on the GSD's website, along with a list of parks that are available for adoption.

Recommendation: Encourage more public-private partnerships for Detroit parks and greenways

The GSD, DRD, and DPW can seek private sponsorship for parks, greenways and recreational programming throughout the city. Privately sponsored initiatives could include sports leagues, seasonal festivals, children's activities, and

educational events. Local businesses interested in community engagement could find such sponsorship activities attractive opportunities to contribute to quality of life in the city.

More than just programming, the GSD encourages private support for parks projects by providing prospective donors with cost estimates and guidelines for specific capital improvement projects (for example, playground equipment, tennis courts, park benches). Information provided to potential donors could also include sponsorship and donation opportunities beyond one time capital improvement and infrastructure projects, such as on-going support for individual park and greenway facilities. Similar to Adopt-A-Park, these partnerships involve private companies and community organizations, but they may also include direct involvement from the GSD or DRD in providing services using donated money and labor. The DPW could have a similar arrangement to support greenways in Detroit.

Large corporations, including Blue Cross Blue Shield, Quicken Loans, and Strategic Staffing Solutions have demonstrated interest in becoming more active in neighborhood affairs by providing housing stipends to entice their employees to live in Midtown and downtown Detroit. The companies want to invest in quality of life for their employees and customers. Parks and greenways can capitalize on that enthusiasm.

Figure 6.4 First Detroit Red Wings outdoor practice – Clark Park



Photo Credit: Flickr.com/Tom Gromak

Clark Park Coalition and Detroit Red Wings partnership

A successful public-private partnership in Detroit took place in February 2012. Tim Hortons and Kroger sponsored an outdoor practice for the Detroit Red Wings in Clark Park. Part of the National Hockey League's "Hockey Weekend Across America" program, the hour-long Saturday event attracted more than 2,000 fans. Attendees brought canned goods and used hockey equipment for donations, or \$2 to support the Clark Park Coalition. The event collected nearly 900 food items for Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan, \$1,799 in cash donations to benefit Clark Park Coalition, and 189 pieces of used hockey equipment for Clark Park and the Detroit Hockey Association's hockey programs.⁸ Following the Red Wings practice, Kroger sponsored an open public skate.

Figure 6.5 Skating at Motown Winter Blast 2012



Photo Credit: Flickr / femaletrumpet02

Figure 6.6 James T. Hope Playfield



Photo Credit: Michael Vos

Motown Winter Blast

More than thirty local and national corporations sponsored Motown Winter Blast in 2012, shown in Figure 6.5, a series of events in and around Campus Martius Park. With many corporations expanding and new companies entering the city, potential exists for continued and even increased corporate philanthropy in community activities, many of which can focus on parks. Corporations may help sponsor other seasonal festivals or sports leagues.

Cost Implications

The GSD has responsibility for donor solicitation and public-private project facilitation. For the program to have the greatest reach and impact, the GSD could devote a full-time staff person to organizing private sector support for parks initiatives. For greenways, someone employed within the DPW or a member of the Detroit Greenways Coalition can focus on private sector initiatives. For combined service for parks, greenways, and recreation centers someone employed in a city-wide or regional conservancy could coordinate donations for a comprehensive system. The cost to employ a director of public-private partnerships would be about \$100,000 (including employee benefits).¹¹ This investment might enable the GSD, DPW, or a conservancy to attract local and national donations and sponsorships that would generate contributions far greater than this amount.

Management implications

Expanding public-private partnerships for parks programming and individual improvement projects improves service delivery. The GSD remains the manager of parks facilities but also solicits donations and coordinates projects. Other groups such as the DPW, the Detroit Greenways Coalition, and other conservancies also benefit from soliciting donations. These partnerships are possible anywhere in the city and depend on donor preference.

Lear Corporation's park donation

In August 2010, the Lear Corporation pledged \$5 million to support Detroit's revitalization, including parks projects. Lear's donation funded new infrastructure and repair of existing facilities in addition to resurfacing parking lots and trimming trees at James T. Hope Playfield, shown in Figure 6.6. The entire 17-acre site was cleared of debris and maintained as part of this project as well. Motor City Blight Busters does ongoing work, and Lear helped pay for the equipment and supplies.¹⁰ Lear's contribution also supported summer programming at the Ravendale Community Center on Detroit's east side.¹¹ Although Ravendale is not a DRD recreation center, Lear's contribution shows the interest and potential for involvement by the private sector.

Recommendation: Promote corporate sponsorship and management for parks and greenways

The GSD could facilitate private operation of public parks. Such arrangements may work most often for parks near downtown or adjacent to a corporate office or local business. Businesses that surround a park benefit from park improvements and increased maintenance and may be willing to support such efforts financially or administratively. In addition, the DPW and the Detroit Greenways Coalition could solicit support from corporations and institutions adjacent to greenways.

Several greenway segments run adjacent to corporations including DTE Energy, Chrysler LLC, and St. John Health near the Conner Creek Greenway, the DMC near the Midtown Loop, and Marathon Oil and the MGM Grand Casino near the Southwest Detroit Greenway.

The GSD or DPW could endorse business-led park and greenway leadership and transition operational responsibility to private sector groups willing to finance infrastructure near their businesses or developments. One such way is through the creation of business improvement districts (BIDs) such as the BID that supports Bryant Park in New York City.¹²

The 2006 DRD Strategic Master Plan indicates a number of other city-owned spaces near the

central business district. Four of these parks could potentially benefit from sponsorship and management from nearby corporations.

- Michigan-Third Street Park is a small plaza park next to the MGM Grand Detroit and near DTE Energy, and either of these could take interest in its upkeep.
- Grand Circus Park, shown in Figure 6.7, is a larger plaza park surrounded by possible sponsors such as the Broderick Tower Redevelopment, the Madison Building, Comerica Park, Fox Theatre and Fillmore Detroit music venues, and the Detroit Opera House.
- Capitol Park, shown in Figure 6.8, is near the Westin Book Cadillac Hotel and is a short walk from Campus Martius and the Compuware Building with Compuware and Quicken Loans as possible supporters.
- Harmonie Park is another small plaza park located east of Grand Circus Park. This could be an attractive spot for surrounding businesses' involvement.

The Downtown Detroit Partnership (DDP) already provides some maintenance to downtown parks, such as Grand Circus Park, through a voluntary BID.¹³ Finding an increased role in parks' capital improvements and in care for an expanded number of parks for the DDP or the creation of a new BID would further enhance downtown and free the GSD to attend to parks in neighborhoods. Other areas of the city with strong corporate presence could also establish a BID.

Authorized under Michigan law, a BID is an area with defined boundaries where a governing board is allowed to collect money for development and improvements through an assessment on the taxable non-residential properties.¹⁴ BID establishment begins with a petition to the city clerk including the boundaries; listing of tax parcels by number, highlighting assessable ones; and signatures of at least 30 percent of the property owners. A meeting is then held to create a BID plan including the board of directors, list of improvement projects, and proposed financing. Once approved by city officials, final approval of a zone plan occurs if more than 60 percent of the property owners in the BID vote for adoption.¹⁵

Cost implications

The GSD has a responsibility to maintain the Michigan-Third Street, Grand Circus, Capitol, and Harmonie parks, but others groups such as the DDP and the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC) have taken on some work.¹⁶ These parks are good candidates for sponsorship based on proximity to business entities with capacity to operate them independently. The four parks are classified as plaza parks totaling 5.6 acres.¹⁷ Using the \$33,340 per acre cost for plaza parks maintenance reported in Chapter 2, these parks would cost over \$187,000 per year for the GSD to maintain adequately. In order to offer better service to downtown, an expanded role for the DDP or a BID could direct resources from local businesses toward the parks.

Figure 6.7 Grand Circus Park in downtown Detroit



Photo Credit: en.wikipedia.org

Figure 6.8 Capitol Park



Photo Credit: Detroityes.com

In New York City's Bryant Park, the BID started with 34 properties assessed at \$0.10 per square foot.¹⁸ In 2010, assessments generated \$900,000 for Bryant Park in addition to other revenues from park fees and restaurant leases.¹⁹ While New York City still owns the park, the funds go to a private manager. Similar assessment generation in Detroit might cover estimated maintenance costs and could help with capital projects as well. The West Vernor and Springwells BID is an example currently working in Detroit. While not maintaining parks, the BID collects 2 percent on the assessed values in the zone or \$307,000 for projects.²⁰

Management implications

Transitioning plaza parks management from the the GSD to businesses or business organizations frees public resources for better use elsewhere in the system. Corporate involvement also gives the potential for new parks and park improvements added into the park system without the requirement of city involvement. Most, if not all, parks in the central business district and its vicinity, as well as parks and greenways near other major corporations such as Chrysler and DTE Energy on the east side, have the possibility of coming off city management and allowing the GSD to focus on neighborhood parks in areas where private resources are thinner.

Recommendation: Use, leverage, and create conservancies to manage park, greenway, and recreation assets

Conservancy organizations have offered models of park, greenway, and recreation center management in cities around the country, including Detroit. These organizations are non-governmental entities that take on varying management roles that range from providing partial support to operating independently from the city government.²¹ Figure 6.9 displays the range of ways conservancies can function.

Conservancies have historically leveraged foundation, governmental, and non-profit funding in order to provide a certain park, neighborhood, or city with maintained and managed recreation assets. Conservancy groups often form as an effort to maintain or upgrade a park, greenway, or recreation center when a city government lacks capacity or interest regarding ongoing maintenance. Conservancies often function as public-private partnerships, where the city retains ownership of park land but relinquishes operation and maintenance responsibility of the park or greenways in question. As outlined in Figure 6.9, conservancies can take on different management roles. In addition to these roles, alternative scales of conservancy organizations exist, from a single park to a city-wide, theme-based conservancy. The following are examples of conservancies at these different scales and how they could apply to Detroit.

Single park conservancy

Detroit has several examples of conservancies (or groups that function like conservancies) servicing single parks, such as Belle Isle, Palmer Park, and Clark Park. These groups formed around Detroit’s large parks, and fit under the “Partner” or “Early Partner” categories in Figure 6.9, since they still require maintenance assistance from GSD. An “Operator” conservancy example outside Detroit is the City Park Improvement Association, which maintains and operates City Park in New Orleans, Louisiana. At 1,300 acres, the park is a

regional attraction, hosting 11 million visitors each year.²² The Association receives very little public operational support and relies on volunteers, as well as revenue from donations and park amenities, such as stage areas, golf courses, and wedding spaces.²³ The Association also receives capital support from the City of New Orleans; however, damage from Hurricane Katrina prompted state support of park operations, amounting to 19% of the park’s \$11 million total operating budget in 2009.²⁴

An example of a single park conservancy that is “Nearly Independent” is the Central Park Conservancy in New York City. The conservancy undertakes maintenance and programming in Central Park, while receiving operational support funding from New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.²⁵ Through a public-private partnership with the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Conservancy provides 90% of Central Park’s maintenance operation, and 85% of the park’s \$42.4 million annual budget.²⁶ Although the density of surrounding land uses, as well as Central Park’s international reputation

Figure 6.9 Conservancy models



Source: Adopted from Maud Lyon, “Conservancy Models” (Cultural Alliance for Southeast Michigan, provided March 29, 2012)

has contributed to the Conservancy's success, this model is one that Detroit's park management groups can aspire to replicate. While single park conservancy models are effective, they only apply when significant local interest in the park exists, as these conservancy models require extensive financial and administrative resources.

Theme-Based Conservancy

Theme-based conservancies create networks that allow park or greenway advocacy groups to work cooperatively to achieve common goals. For example, a theme-based conservancy could include: For example, a theme-based conservancy could include:

- Regional park conservancy
- City-wide parks conservancy
- Waterfront parks conservancy
- Greenways conservancy
- City-wide recreation center conservancy

Regional park conservancy

The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy (PPC) is a public-private partnership that provides funding and operation resources for Pittsburgh's four regional parks.²⁷ The PPC and the City of Pittsburgh signed a public-private partnership agreement in 1998, allowing the PPC to work with Pittsburgh Public Works and the Department of City Planning to restore the city's four regional parks (Schenley, Frick, Highland, and Riverview).²⁸ Since 1998, the PPC has expanded its efforts to include other city parks, such as Schenley Plaza, Mellon Square,

Mellon Park, and Cliffside Park. While three of these additional parks are high-profile or downtown parks, Cliffside Park, shown in Figure 6.10, is a neighborhood park in Pittsburgh's low income, Hill district. The PPC partnered with the Find the Rivers! organization in the Hill district to renovate the dilapidated park.²⁹ This example shows that regional park conservancies can have the capacity not only to manage a city's regional parks but also to provide funding and administrative resources for smaller scale projects.

This type of regional park conservancy system could apply in Detroit by having one conservancy supporting Palmer Park, Rouge Park, Patton Park, and Chandler Park. Park advocates could be more effective at applying for grants and public funding by working cooperatively rather than competitively.

City-wide parks conservancy

The City Parks Conservancy of Little Rock, Arkansas, is an example of a city-wide parks conservancy. This group differs from Pittsburgh's regional park conservancy model since the City Parks Conservancy does not focus on specific city parks. Rather, the Conservancy focuses on park advocacy across the city. In addition to fundraising for park capital improvements, the Conservancy collaborates with the Little Rock Parks and Recreation Department (LRPR) on park maintenance tasks and works to "motivate private philanthropy and community awareness" of city park importance.³⁰ The Conservancy advertises the LRPR's Adopt-A-Park program, as well as coordinates volunteers for LRPR's tree planting and

trail maintenance programs.³¹ In short, the primary focus of this conservancy is support and advocacy for all city parks.

Similar to the City Parks Conservancy in Little Rock, the Detroit Parks Coalition also focuses on parks advocacy to all city parks by focusing on community engagement, volunteer coordination, and partnership with the city (the GSD and DRD). Through this community engagement and city-wide cooperation, the Coalition connects existing non-profit efforts with the GSD's maintenance efforts.³² The Coalition could transition to a greater role in parks advocacy and coordination throughout Detroit by becoming a non-profit that encourages city-wide collaboration on parks issues.

Figure 6.10 Pittsburgh's Cliffside Park



Photo Credit: Flickr.com

Waterfront parks conservancy

The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy is an example of a waterfront parks and greenways conservancy. The vision for this conservancy includes 5.5 miles of riverfront greenways, parks, and plazas, between the Ambassador Bridge and Gabriel Richard Park.³³ Figure 6.9 classifies this conservancy as “Nearly Independent,” as it is responsible for maintenance, improvements, operations, and programming of the RiverWalk in perpetuity. The RiverFront Conservancy is also responsible for managing the Dequindre Cut greenway, which extends from the conservancy’s RiverWalk to Eastern Market. Under the current plans, the eastern expansion of the RiverWalk will stop at Gabriel Richard Park at the foot of the bridge to Belle Isle. However, other riverfront parks and greenways exist to the east that the conservancy could manage, as determined in the Greenways Master Plan for the Greater Riverfront East completed in 2011.³⁴ In the future, the RiverFront Conservancy could extend the east RiverWalk, connecting other riverfront parks, such as Erma Henderson Park, with the existing Conner Creek Greenway and the riverfront parks in the Creekside neighborhood. Chapter 5’s prioritized greenways map shows this extension.

City-wide greenway conservancy

As recommended in Chapter 5, Detroit’s greenways system should connect residents to major parks, connect recreation centers to greenways, and increase accessibility to activity nodes. A city-wide greenways conservancy could help Detroit attain this connected system through coordinating the

municipal and non-municipal actors involved in greenway planning, construction, and maintenance. The Detroit Greenways Coalition could transition into a formal entity that facilitates city-wide greenways management. Currently, the coalition includes 15 stakeholder groups, ranging from city departments to non-profit organizations.³⁵ This conservancy group could advocate for greenways across Detroit through community engagement, volunteer coordination, and municipal partnership. By collaboratively working with greenways advocacy groups, as well as the DPW, GSD, and DRD, the conservancy could efficiently manage financial and administrative resources, making long-term planning and funding more stable.

City-wide recreation center conservancy

Residents and elected officials have begun working on a proposal for a Detroit recreation conservancy to keep many of the public recreation center maintained and operating. Spearheaded by a Detroit City Council member, the proposed recreation center conservancy will be modeled after the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy.³⁶ The RiverFront Conservancy has achieved its success through extensive foundation and grant support, as well as a partnership with the DRD, allowing use of city-owned park land. A recreation center conservancy could have similar potential, with several corporate entities, such as General Motors and Marathon Petroleum, previously donating or pledging significant funds for recreation center capital projects.³⁷

In short, these five conservancy models might manage recreation assets at various scales, although they are not the answer for every park, greenway, and recreation center in Detroit. Conservancies are not simple to create, often requiring extensive financial and administrative resources. The RiverFront Conservancy, has received extensive foundation support (over \$9.6 million in 2010), and its downtown location generated support from various downtown corporations.³⁸ Support for less visible, neighborhood projects is typically harder to obtain from these types of donors.

Cost Implications

The cost implications of creating or expanding conservancies in Detroit vary based on the management role of the conservancy. “Supporter” conservancies, as outlined in Figure 6.9, would have smaller operating budgets than would “Nearly Independent” conservancies. “Nearly Independent” conservancies, such as the RiverFront Conservancy, could potentially remove nearly all park maintenance and programming from the GSD and DRD for the parks they include. These “Nearly Independent” conservancies are expensive to create and sustain as they require large annual operating budgets to manage all park or greenway maintenance and programming. For example, the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy received over \$50 million in support from the Kresge Foundation, the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, and the Kellogg Foundation

Figure 6.11 The Detroit RiverWalk in front of the Renaissance Center



Source: Flickr.com / newspapermann

during the initial phase of the RiverWalk.³⁹ This is a unique example since this money was mostly used for capital improvements along the riverfront; however, the RiverWalk greenway is still very expensive to maintain and program. In 2010, the RiverFront Conservancy spent \$1.2 million on general operations and \$950,000 on fundraising.⁴⁰ This does not include the \$3.7 million spent on east RiverWalk capital improvements. While the philanthropies supporting the RiverFront Conservancy provide yearly grant opportunities in the Detroit region, they are not a long-term, consistent source of funding at such a high level.⁴¹ “Partner” and “Early Partner” conservancies offer limited management resources, but they require less initial financial and administrative resources to create, and they could remove some of the maintenance and programming responsibilities from GSD and DRD through contracts for specific services.

Management Implications

Central to the strategy of reducing the GSD’s and DRD’s role as service providers is the long-term lease or use-agreement with conservancies of all scales and roles, as outlined in Figure 6.9. This would include agreements with existing groups such as the Clark Park Coalition and People for Palmer Park and could extend to new types of conservancies.

Strategy 2: Recruit non-municipal public sector entities to manage more parks and greenways

Governmental entities beyond the city offer potential funding and management opportunities for parks, greenways, and recreation centers in Detroit. These governmental entities include regional authorities (such as Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority and Wayne County Parks and Recreation Division), state authorities (such as the Michigan Department of Natural Resources), and federal authorities (such as the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Interior). Using non-municipal, public sector support can lessen the administrative and financial burden on the DRD and GSD in managing Detroit's parks, greenways, and recreation centers. The following recommendations outline how the DRD and GSD can draw on the potential resources of these public sector entities.

Recommendation: Use the millages captured from Detroit residents for parks in Detroit

Detroit taxpayers support both the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority and the Wayne County Parks and Recreation Division through millages. To provide Detroit residents with equitable service for the financial support they contribute, these entities could take on a greater role in financing and administering park assets in Detroit.

Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA)

In 2011, the HCMA collected \$1.7 million (.2146 effective millage rate on \$8.2 billion in taxable property value) from Detroit residents. This amounts to 18.5% of funds collected from Wayne County and 5.8% of the HCMA's millage collection from all five counties in its jurisdiction.

The HCMA does not operate any park facilities in Detroit, despite collecting nearly \$2 million annually from the city. The HCMA's mission is to "provide safe and secure facilities and recreational opportunities for the citizens we serve,"⁴² and the organization's Strategic Plan calls for "provid[ing] outdoor based recreation and education that is enjoyable, safe, FUN, and accessible to a large and diverse population at a reasonable cost."⁴³ Operating and maintaining a park in Detroit would contribute to this goal. Further, the HCMA has set a goal for changing its "current culture of insularity,"⁴⁴ an inward looking organizational environment.

The HCMA also faces financial challenges (it has significantly reduced its staff in recent years and estimates that its property tax revenues will decrease by \$10 million between the years 2009 and 2013) and has indicated that it could not assume responsibility for a Detroit facility without an additional source of revenue, despite the tax receipts from the city.⁴⁵

HCMA has experience working in Detroit. HCMA conducts interpretive nature programming in Detroit Public Schools. From 2005-2009, HCMA

partnered with the Detroit Zoo to operate the Belle Isle Nature Zoo (the partnership was not renewed after it expired in 2009). Twice during the 1970s, HCMA developed plans to operate Belle Isle. These proposals were rejected by the city administration at the time because the City Council did not want to relinquish control of one of its assets.⁴⁹ In the 1990s, HCMA explored partnering with Wayne County and the city government to operate Fort Wayne and the State Fair grounds. A memorandum of understanding was developed and approved by the Metroparks Board and the Wayne County Board, but the City Council rejected it on similar grounds of not wanting to give up control of the park. Additionally, HCMA has had conversations with the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy about participating in the RiverWalk Project, but high environmental clean-up costs halted discussions.⁵⁰

Wayne County

Since 1996, Wayne County residents have supported county parks through a voter-approved 1/4 mill.⁴⁸ In 2011, Wayne County Parks and Recreation Division collected \$10.7 million from their .2459 millage, including more than \$2 million from Detroit residents.⁴⁹ Wayne County Parks operates 13 parks throughout the county, none of which are located in Detroit. Wayne County does, however, oversee the Chandler Park Aquatic Center within Chandler Park, spending \$1 million of the county millage annually on its management.⁵⁰

Detroit residents contribute approximately one-fifth of the county's millage funds. In return, Wayne County provides support for capital improvements to the DRD and offers financial support for a select list of parks for which the GSD has requested county assistance, in addition to operating the Chandler Park Aquatic Center. While these contributions help the city, Wayne County Parks and Recreation Division has the potential to expand its role in Detroit by taking on the management or improvement of more park spaces, especially large facilities.

Future new millage

Proposing a new Detroit millage to fund parks and greenways within the city could provide an additional source of revenue for capital and maintenance costs. To pass a new millage, the state legislature must authorize Detroit to present a potential millage to voters as a ballot item. In recent years, Detroiters have considered introducing new millages for cultural and recreation activities, but these proposals have not gained much traction. In 2010, the Detroit Zoo received permission from the state to ask voters about increasing the mill collected from Wayne, Macomb, and Oakland Counties from .1 to .2 mills, but the Zoo has yet to add the proposal to a ballot. More encouraging, however, is the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) millage. Wayne and Macomb Counties have approved the creation of an arts authority which would oversee the institution and dispersion of DIA millage funds. Oakland County is scheduled

to consider the authority in May 2012. The arts authority would levy a 0.2 property tax mill to fund an operating endowment for the museum. If the millage passes, the DIA has promised to provide free admission to residents in the counties who pay the millage.⁵¹

Given that the Detroit City Council is proposing to increase income taxes within the city while cutting city services, a proposal for a new millage to support parks and greenways may need to wait for better times.⁵²

Cost implications

Based on its 2011 budget, the HCMA spent an average of \$3.2 million on annual operations per park (most metroparks are greater than 1,000 acres).⁵³ Several parks required less than \$2 million annually to operate and maintain. If the HCMA devoted the nearly \$2 million collected from Detroit residents to operating a park within the city's borders, this amount would likely be enough to operate a facility on par with the quality of an HCMA metropark, especially given that most Detroit parks are significantly smaller than a metropark.

In fiscal year 2011, Wayne County spent \$16.4 million to operate its 13 parks, an average of \$1.3 million per park.⁵⁴ Millage funds collected from Detroit residents would likely support an additional Wayne County managed park in addition to the Chandler Park Aquatic Center, which costs the

county about \$1 million to operate annually. The Aquatic Center's operating budget is also supported by user fees.⁵⁵

Management implications

If the HCMA or Wayne County assumed management responsibilities for certain parks within Detroit, city agencies could be relieved of significant responsibilities. At the same time, Detroit residents might receive better parks services.

Regional parks and their related greenways would be good candidates for transfer to the HCMA. Rouge Park stands out as a facility that might fit well within the HCMA's portfolio. As a large park with a river and with regional appeal, Rouge has a great deal in common with the HCMA's current

Figure 6.12 Fort Wayne



Photo Credit: cxmagazine.com

facilities, and the HCMA would potentially be able to charge a user fee (to all users or non-Detroit residents only). Fort Wayne is another site that could work well within the HCMA's profile of parks and management model. The Lower Eastside's collection of riverfront parks may also be attractive to the HCMA. Although the authority would have difficulty charging a user fee in this area, the HCMA may be enticed by the possibility of managing these parks along the river so that they can become a major regional asset.

Wayne County Parks has two options in supporting parks and greenways in Detroit. The entity could provide greater financial support to the GSD, DRD, or DPW for managing and maintaining Detroit parks and greenways. Another role Wayne County could play in Detroit could involve managing a park with appeal to county residents outside Detroit, such as 1) Patton Park, which borders Dearborn, 2) Eliza Howell Park, which borders Redford Charter Township, or 3) Fort Wayne, which could be a regional tourist attraction. Wayne County could also consider expanding its role in Chandler Park by taking on management responsibilities on the site beyond the Aquatic Center (the city departments currently spend about \$150,000 annually to operate the park).⁵⁶

Recommendation: Transition management of some city parks to state entities

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) mission is the "conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations."⁵⁷ This could take the form of assuming management responsibility of some parks in Detroit. The DNR already operates the William G. Milliken State Park and Harbor, but other opportunities exist for the DNR to become more involved in Detroit. State officials have stated a goal of improving access to state parks for the state's urban residents.⁵⁸

A plan is under discussion to lease Belle Isle to the DNR.⁵⁹ Belle Isle has particularly appealing size and regional draw. Belle Isle is the largest park in the city and attracts around 3 million visitors per year.⁶⁰ It has one access point, so collection of an entrance fee from visitors without a "recreation passport" is possible, and many natural amenities exist on the island.

In addition to Belle Isle, the DNR could help manage other riverfront properties, as they do with the William G. Milliken State Park, shown in Figure 6.13. An example of such a park is Riverside Park in Southwest Detroit or the riverfront parks on Detroit's far eastside including Maheras-Gentry Park and Lakewood East.

Cost implications

State management would reduce a burden on city departments. Currently, DRD has a budget appropriation of \$992,060 for Belle Isle operations.⁶¹ As part of the state park system, a user fee of \$10 in the form of the DNR's Recreation Passport would likely be instituted to cover costs of operation. Once paid, the passport is good for a full year and offers users access to any state park. All Michigan residents must purchase the passport at the park if they do not already have one, and non-residents pay \$8 for a daily pass.⁶² However, this may not be equitable for all Detroit residents, so a system offering free admission to those with a state-issued ID showing a Detroit address may be reasonable. As the recreation passport is connected to vehicle license plates, pedestrians and cyclists could have free access. 100,000 passports sold at \$10 each, or 4 % of annual visitors paying such a fee, would cover the currently budgeted DRD operating costs of Belle Isle.

A cost estimate for other riverfront parks can come from the 2006 DRD Master Plan numbers (see Chapter 2). Riverside Park costs about \$168,000 per year; Maheras-Gentry, \$137,000; A.B. Ford, \$88,000; and Riverfont-Lakewood, \$73,000. In total, the cost for a city agency to maintain these parks adequately would be \$466,000 or about half that of Belle Isle.

Management implications

DNR management of an asset such as Belle Isle would allow the GSD and DRD to focus elsewhere in the city while keeping the benefits that Belle Isle offers to the city. State management may rule out management by others such as the Huron-Clinton Metroparks or a regional parks conservancy, but collaboration with other entities is also possible. The DNR is looking for partnerships with corporations, the Belle Isle Conservancy, and RiverFront Conservancy to help with the park and necessary infrastructure improvements.⁶³ Taking on a collection of additional riverfront parks could add to the DNR portfolio and create an expansive, well-maintained network of parks along the Detroit River.

Recommendation: Use federal funding opportunities for Detroit parks and greenways

The federal government offers many different funding opportunities applicable to parks and greenway projects. These funding opportunities can provide large amounts of grant money to parks and greenways projects; however, these opportunities rely on federal appropriations, which often fluctuate from year to year. Some of the entities that contribute funding to park and greenway related projects include the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior, the Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Department of Transportation.

Detroit's Recreation Department, as well as non-profit organizations such as the Greening of Detroit, the Belle Isle Conservancy, and the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy have previously received federal funding through several of these channels.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Improving the shoreline through restoration and economic development projects will benefit water quality and help preserve the Detroit River shoreline as a natural, historical, and cultural resource. The EPA has several programs that can benefit Detroit parks and greenways. These programs include the American Heritage Rivers Initiative and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

The American Heritage Rivers Initiative designates rivers to receive federal aid to further three objectives: natural resource protection, economic revitalization, and historic and cultural preservation. The Detroit River was designated as an American Heritage River. This initiative leveraged funding for several projects along the riverfront, including significant federal funding for Milliken State Park.⁶⁴

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) improves environmental quality in the Great Lakes region by addressing the EPA's "Areas of Concern" through habitat restoration and water quality projects.⁶⁵ The EPA labels the Detroit River as an Area of Concern due to the impaired water quality resulting from decades of shoreline industrial uses.⁶⁶ Given this designation, the EPA

could provide funding for waterfront or watershed restoration. The DRD has already used this funding resource to complete two projects on Belle Isle: the \$1.45 million Blue Heron Lagoon project, and the \$530,000 South Fishing Pier project.⁶⁷ For both projects, the DRD provided an approximate \$30,000 funding match, in addition to implementing a community outreach and education program with local non-profits such as Friends of the Detroit River, Friends of Belle Isle, and Bird Studies Canada.⁶⁸ Non-governmental organizations have also used GLRI funding in the past. For example, the Greening of Detroit has partnered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Forest Service to improve soil and water quality by planting over 2,100 trees between March and May 2012.⁶⁹ Regarding greenway improvements, the GLRI could provide future funding for green infrastructure in Detroit, given the Initiative's long-term goal of "slowing overland flow" of urban runoff.⁷⁰ The GLRI is particularly useful for waterfront parks and parks that fall within the 100 year floodplain, as it could provide funding for natural shoreline improvements, making shoreline structures less vulnerable to flooding, while providing recreation opportunities, such as fishing and canoeing.

U.S. Department of Interior (Interior)

Interior has many grant programs relating to enhancing the country's parks system. Some existing Interior programs that benefit municipal and non-municipal parks include: the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program; the Outdoor

Recreation/Acquisition, Development, and Planning program; and the Cultural Resources Management program. These grant opportunities offer local governments, as well as non-profit organizations the funding to create, renovate, and maintain parks and greenways, as well as cultural resources such as Fort Wayne.⁷¹ Given Fort Wayne's historical designation, any improvements to buildings must be historically accurate; therefore, materials often cost much more than materials used in typical GSD building maintenance.⁷² The Interior's grant opportunities offer support for these expensive renovations, and thus would be very useful for Fort Wayne.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps)

The Corps's Civil Works Program supports water resources development, management, and restoration through investigations and surveys, engineering and design, construction, and operation and maintenance tasks. In FY 2012, the program had 15 programs in the state of Michigan.⁷³ While these projects are not within Detroit's city limits, this program can offer funding for future waterfront projects.⁷⁴ All of the waterfront parks and proposed waterfront greenways can benefit from Corps funding. The Corps is very active in dredging the Rouge River commercial harbor; however, the 4.5 miles of designated federal channels does not extend up to Rouge Park.⁷⁵ Therefore, funding for improvements to Rouge Park is unlikely. Similar to the GLRI, the Civil Works Program could benefit shoreline parks, as well as parks within the 100 year floodplain.

U.S. Department of Transportation

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), created several programs that support greenways. Michigan's Department of Transportation (MDOT), which administers this federal funding source for Michigan, can fund up to 80% of greenway construction costs. In Detroit, MDOT has typically funded greenway projects at the maximum 80%.⁷⁶ SAFETEA-LU supports greenways through the Transportation Enhancement (TE) Program, Safe Routes to School program, as well as the Recreational Trails Program.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a small national program promoting safe routes to schools through improving walking and biking facilities such as bike lanes, sidewalks, and off street greenways.⁷⁷ Schools must submit a plan to make walking and biking safer and more appealing transportation options.⁷⁸ The plan should include interest surveys of parents and students as well as walking and bicycle audits. Potential infrastructure projects include on street and off street bicycle lanes. In 2010, Detroit's Noble Elementary School completed a \$480,000 project including sidewalk, crosswalk, and signage improvements.⁷⁹ Other Michigan schools have used SRTS funds to install bike paths and to implement school-based bicycle and pedestrian education programs.⁸⁰

Figure 6.13 William G. Milliken State Park



Photo Credit: Flickr.com / Michigan Communities

Figure 6.14 The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative



Photo Credit: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/aocs/>

Another SAFETEA-LU program relevant to greenway development is the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). This program specifically funds motorized and non-motorized trail development. Eligible projects include maintenance and restoration of existing trails, acquisition of easements or property for trails, development and rehabilitation of trail linkages, and distribution of educational materials.⁸¹ In FY 2012, the U.S. Department of Transportation

apportioned about \$2 million to the state of Michigan.⁸² The Michigan Department of Natural Resources controls this funding source.⁸³ The U.S. House of Representatives extended the SAFETEA-LU through June 30, 2012; however, long-term funding is unstable due to the budget and political uncertainty of the election year.⁸⁴ This act is crucial to greenway project funding; therefore advocacy in support of the act's extension is needed.

Strategy 3: Leverage Non-Traditional Park Resources to Support Parks and Greenways

Recommendation: Leverage workforce development programs for maintenance

Workforce development programs provide youth and adults with skills training and job preparation. Non-profit groups in Detroit have begun to connect workforce development with green space assets, and potential exists to expand workforce training programs to benefit parks and greenways.

The Greening of Detroit conducts a workforce development program to train adults and youth in forestry, agriculture, and landscaping. The Greening also employs more than 200 young people every summer to plant trees and flowers. In 2010, the Greening launched the Greenway Maintenance Pilot Project in partnership with the Detroit Greenways Coalition. Funded by a grant from the

Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, the project aims to “create a long-term maintenance plan and use educational programming and service days to engage the community.”⁸⁵ Project crews routinely collect litter, sweep trails, cut grass, water plants, and weed the greenways, in addition to undertaking more specialized tasks such as pruning, planting, repairs, addressing illegal dumping, or removing graffiti.

The Detroit Eastside Community Collaborative, Southwest Detroit Business Association, and Northwest Detroit Neighborhood Development worked with the Greening to implement the program. Given the success of the Greening's greenway program, this project could include more Detroit greenways and potentially some parks as well.

Detroit has additional successful workforce development programs. Detroit GreenWorks Solutions (DGWS), a collaboration of nonprofit organizations in Southwest Detroit, trains job seekers to work in various green industries in the city. Through DGWS, Southwest Detroit residents receive employment training and connection to job opportunities in green industries, such as weatherization, deconstruction, landscaping, and forestry. Training includes educational field trips where trainees hone their landscaping and forestry skills on City of Detroit property. Such service to city facilities could expand to provide long-term maintenance support through enhanced partnerships with the GSD and non-municipal park

managers. Trainees receive a Landscape Industry Certification.⁸⁶

Another strong Detroit workforce program is Young Detroit Builders (YDB). This program helps disadvantaged youth between the ages of 18 and 24 to learn job and life skills while working on housing improvement and community service projects. With training components dedicated to tree planting, painting, basic building construction, and clean-up projects, YDB is well suited to take on a dedicated parks and greenways service track.⁸⁷

Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit is an additional workforce development program ripe for parks and greenways service within the city. Committed to job skills training, vocational evaluation, and community service, Goodwill Industries aims to put unemployed Detroiters to work through training in the city.

One project in which Goodwill workers participate is the Downtown Detroit Partnership's Clean Downtown program. In partnership with city agencies, Clean Downtown provides cleaning services for 39 miles of sidewalks and 72 bus shelters in addition to litter removal, weeding, and other maintenance and public safety related tasks in downtown.⁸⁸ In areas beyond downtown, Clean Downtown works with non-municipal groups, including the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy, East Jefferson Corridor Collaborative, Eastern Market Corporation, and Midtown Detroit, Inc.

As the group aims to provide an “environment that supports a vibrant and sustainable downtown” and “a presence on the streets...to enhance public safety,”⁸⁹ Clean Downtown could expand its services to parks and greenways. With experience working with both municipal and non-municipal organizations, Clean Downtown could provide quality maintenance support services to green spaces near the downtown area.

Additionally, in 2010 Goodwill launched Green Works Inc., an asset recovery and recycling service for municipalities, utilities, automotive suppliers, and automobile manufacturers. The program promotes recycling and improves efficiency for this wide variety of organizations.⁹⁰ Evidence of Goodwill’s budding interest in green efforts, Green Works could be expanded to include asset recovery and repurposing in Detroit’s park and recreation facilities. Green Works could also train workers to install more efficient, “greener” energy systems within recreation centers and other indoor park facilities.

Cost implications

Though grant support is needed to launch and administer workforce development programs, the benefits generate significant cost savings. Participants in workforce development programs can receive less compensation than workers not part of the program. The Greening of Detroit’s workforce program pays each worker a living wage, which is still about half of what a union employee

would receive.⁹¹ The Greening of Detroit’s current annual budget for their workforce development program is \$1.07 million.⁹² This includes both the adult training and the youth employment aspects of the program. Typically, workforce development wages range between \$12 and \$15 an hour.⁹³ In comparison, union wages were \$25 an hour in 2006.⁹⁴ Union workers once opposed using workers in training for the parks and greenways for jobs traditionally assigned to them, but union members now accept the program given the city’s struggles to keep up with maintenance services.⁹⁵

In recent years, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided federal funds for workforce development. As the provisions of the stimulus act expire, stable sources of support for workforce development are in jeopardy. An additional threat to workforce development initiatives in Detroit is Mayor Bing’s recent proposal to eliminate the city’s Workforce Development Department.⁹⁶ Without an official city agency dedicated to workforce training, non-municipal groups may need to play a greater role in helping workers prepare for and find jobs.

Management implications

All the above Detroit workforce development programs are potential partners for parks and greenways services. Two of these organizations are the most likely to play a role in parks work in the short term. With its recent greenways experience, the Greening of Detroit is a strong candidate to

expand workforce development in service of the city’s parks and greenways. Greening may not be able to oversee a large workforce program citywide because of its small staff, but the organization could assist others such as Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision or even the Department of Public Works in initiating similar programs citywide or in specific neighborhoods.

Goodwill Industries is a second partner poised to expand its work to parks and greenways. The organization has existing relationships with city agencies and non-profits that can develop further to provide supports to park spaces in downtown and neighboring areas.

Recommendation: Use all forms of public outreach

Park managers use various forms of outreach to ensure that a substantial population can learn about park events, new parks, programming, safety concerns, and other park issues important to residents. Residents need to be aware of which entity, the GSD, DRD, or a non-municipal group, is responsible for the care of their park, what services the group will provide, how to volunteer and contribute to the park’s care, and what activities are offered at the park so that they can participate.

The GSD offers a contact person through its website for residents to call if they have a concern, but the agency could take several steps to improve

Sustainable South Bronx workforce development program

Other cities and regions have also had success with leveraging workforce development programs to service parks and greenways. Sustainable South Bronx (SSBx), a non-profit group that works in the South Bronx and under-served urban communities outside of the Bronx to address environmental, economic, and social issues through green job training, community greening programs, and environmental education, is well known for its Bronx Environmental Stewardship Training program (BEST). BEST provides training and certification courses on subjects from asbestos removal to urban forestry and connects program graduates with jobs in local green businesses. BEST is a premier example of green-collar education developed specifically to meet the economic and environmental needs of low-income neighborhoods. With the cost of the program at about \$7,000 per student, including work clothes and a roughly \$600 stipend at graduation, the BEST program has successfully attracted funding from many private donors and foundations.⁹⁷

SSBx has also launched a nationwide consulting service to help cities and other groups organize green-collar job resources to address civic issues such as storm-water management, public health, law enforcement, and quality of life. SSBx could help Detroit's GSD and non-municipal park managers to create effective job-training programs to connect the unemployed with meaningful park work that provides value to Detroit neighborhoods.⁹⁸

Across the country, other notable workforce development programs connect to park maintenance. The Missouri State Parks Youth Corps organizes the "Think Outside" program to train youth aged 17-21 to serve the state's 85 state parks and state historic sites. The New Jersey Youth Corps employs young adults between the ages of 16 and 25 to conduct community service throughout the state, including forestry and park projects and maintenance work in urban parks.⁹⁹

Figure 6.15 Sustainable South Bronx's BEST program



Photo Credit: Green for All

Figure 6.16 Sustainable South Bronx



Photo Credit: Deep Green Living

communications with residents and community groups, especially park adopters and prospective adopters. For example, the GSD does not provide any up-to-date information on its website about how the Adopt-A-Park program works, which parks are adopted, or how to become an adopter. Such information would greatly improve the success of the program by increasing the number of adopters and providing current adopters with more guidance on how to care for their facilities. Additionally, acknowledgement of a park's adopter could be evident at the park.

Non-municipal parks groups, such as Clark Park Coalition and People for Palmer Park, reach residents in their respective neighborhoods through multiple methods. These organizations serve as communications models for city agencies through their use of detailed, updated, and user-friendly websites and Facebook outreach in addition to more traditional paper fliers posted in local businesses, schools, and other neighborhood locations.

To connect with Detroit's residents, park managers from the GSD and other groups could follow the lead of non-municipal parks organizations, such as Clark Park Coalition, in using both traditional communications media such as print mailings and neighborhood fliers as well as more modern techniques such as Facebook and Twitter. Nearly half of all American adults own a smart phone, a statistic that does not vary significantly across ethnicity or income.¹⁰⁰ This makes internet

communication an attractive way to reach many Detroit residents, even those without regular access to a computer.

Websites, Twitter accounts, and Facebook pages are also useful in gathering information from park users. These channels can provide planners with information on facility usership as well as specific requests and concerns. Park managers can also use social media to survey park users on who is using the facilities and how. Online surveys are easy to set up and cost effective solutions for gathering public input on park operations. Focus group meetings and other face-to-face interactions (perhaps in schools, churches, or other neighborhood settings) complement online communication efforts. Such in-person meetings are important to reach those without internet access and to provide for a more personal method of communication about maintenance efforts, volunteer opportunities, and park programming.

The DRD, GSD, and non-municipal managers must also consider multi-lingual communications to engage all residents and reach underserved groups. Outreach material can include multi-lingual information brochures, YouTube, and Twitter, among other social outreach tools.¹⁰¹

Cost implications

Recognizing the value of community outreach in accomplishing its goals, the Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP), a community driven planning

process dedicated to finding ways to use vacant land to improve quality of life in Detroit's Lower Eastside Neighborhood, devoted about 65% of a \$300,000 grant to engagement efforts with neighborhood residents. LEAP used these funds to rent meeting space, provide refreshments, acquire technical equipment (for instance, audio/visual devices and computers), conduct canvassing, and print post cards.¹⁰² LEAP's outreach efforts represent an ambitious campaign that may not be feasible for groups with more modest budgets. However, communications conducted through less expensive online initiatives and use of other existing neighborhood publications, such as school newsletters and block club fliers, are also effective.

Management implications

The GSD and DRD are responsible for disseminating information related to their operations, a costly initiative beyond their core management and maintenance functions. To reduce administrative burdens and leverage existing communications media that target similar audiences, these agencies can partner with local schools, neighborhood watch groups, and block clubs to distribute and collect information.

Conclusion

The strategies proposed in chapters 5 and 6 aim to help Detroit's parks and greenways system reach the "Seven Factors of Excellence" described by

Figure 6.17 Palmer Park outreach materials



Photo Credit: <http://www.facebook.com/events/376817512341051/>

People for Palmer Park

People for Palmer Park (PFPP) board members prioritize citizen engagement. Most members are active in the neighborhood and publicize Palmer Park issues through multiple methods, including homeowners' association meetings, social media (Twitter and Facebook), face-to-face interaction with people at the park, and various neighborhood organization gatherings, such as a local gardening interest group.

Peter Harnik (see Chapter 4). By addressing these seven factors, Detroit’s parks and greenways system can effectively serve current and future residents by providing quality and accessible parks facilities that receive support through enduring financial and administrative management structures. Figure 6.19 summarizes how each proposed strategy addresses Harnik’s seven factors.

Ever Green’s strategies also support the goal of adjusting services to match a parks and greenways system that serves Detroit’s smaller population by recommending where parks are needed and

realistic options for maintaining them. Chapter 6 offers a range of funding and administrative options to ensure that the parks and greenways that the smaller city needs are properly maintained. Because Detroit’s park spaces vary in size, type, and condition, the management models that suit them also vary. This chapter includes alternatives from which park managers can choose to best suit their situations. Above all, *Ever Green’s* strategies and recommendations are motivated by increasing access to parks and greenways for all Detroiters and creating structures to achieve financial and administrative stability for these facilities.

facilities. Guided by Harnik’s “Seven Factors of Excellence” and *Ever Green’s* goals, this enhanced system will reduce the financial and administrative burden on Detroit’s DRD and GSD by recruiting a diverse group of funders and managers.

The following two chapters will include an analysis of parks and greenways in specific areas of Detroit (Southwest Detroit and the Lower Eastside). Chapters 7 and 8 will offer management and funding recommendations for parks and greenways in each area, serving as guides for other areas of Detroit to implement the recommendations proposed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Figure 6.18 LEAP’s Facebook outreach



Photo Credit: LEAP Detroit

As Chapters 5 and 6 have made clear, Detroit officials might improve the quality of public park and greenway service provision by shifting away from the role of direct provider and implementing a new system of park and greenway management. Figure 6.20 summarizes this new system (as described by the strategies and recommendations) by indicating the new roles for municipal and non-municipal actors in parks and greenways management and funding.

In conclusion, the recommendations described in this chapter provide Detroit’s park and greenway management entities with alternative administration and funding strategies. These strategies will help Detroit’s parks and greenway system address access issues for a smaller population while creating a financially and administratively enduring system of quality

Figure 6.19 Applying proposed strategies to Harnik’s “Seven Factors of Excellence”

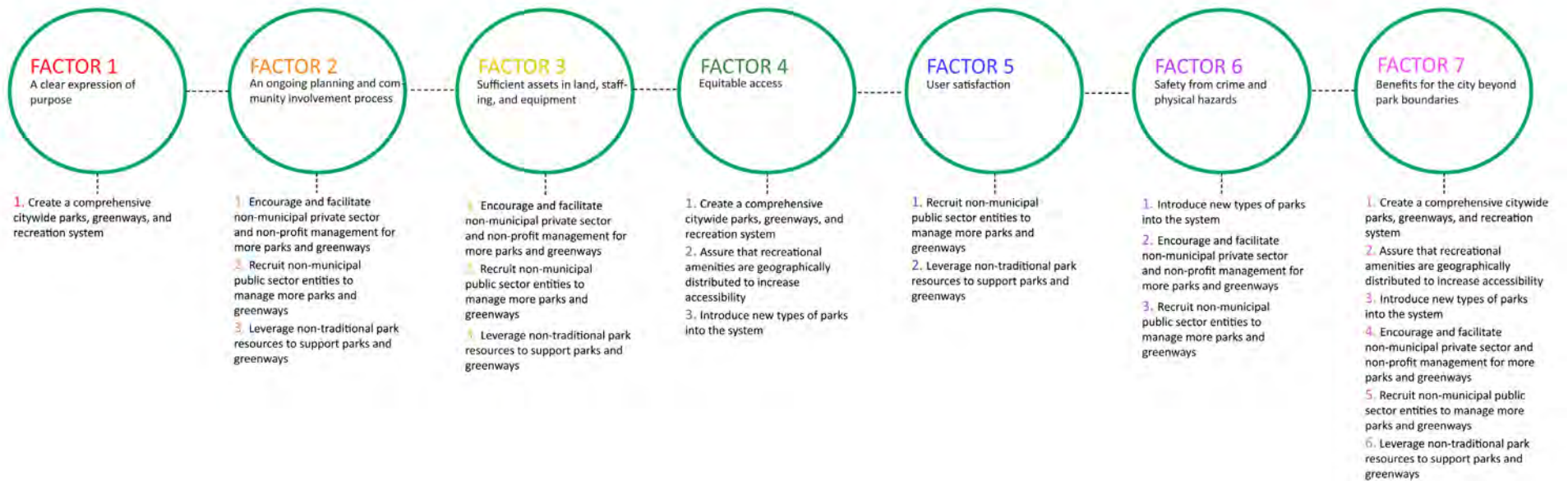


Figure 6.20 A network of municipal and non-municipal players



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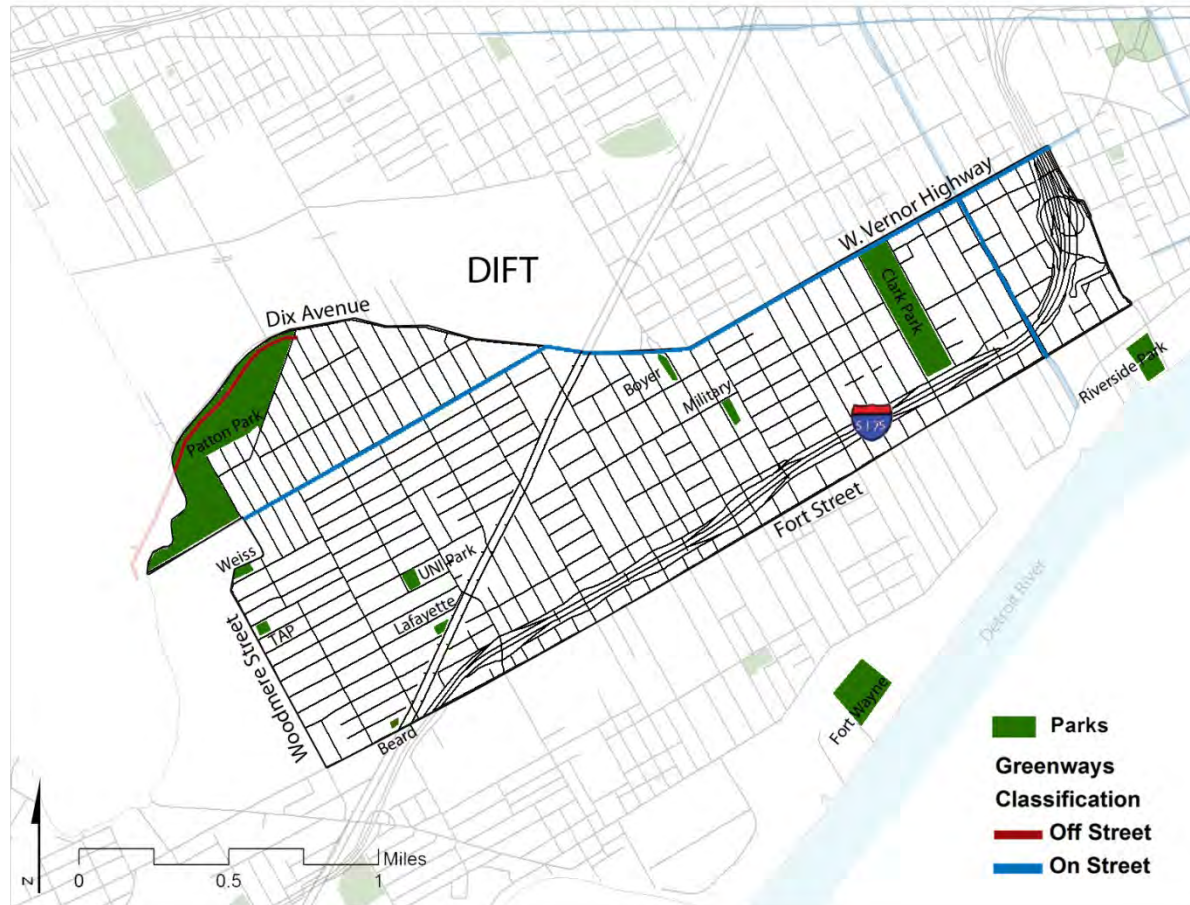
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Chapter 7: Implementing *Ever Green's* Strategies in Southwest Detroit

This chapter takes the information, analysis, and recommendations from the previous chapters and applies these to a section of Southwest Detroit. Using Southwest Detroit as an area to test ideas, this chapter demonstrates how *Ever Green's* recommendations can lead to a more financially and administratively sustainable collection of parks and greenways in a relatively dense, stable Detroit neighborhood with strong grassroots support for parks and greenways. First, the chapter provides background about the parks and greenways system. Second, it describes key stakeholders involved in the system. Finally, it concludes with recommendations for how to improve both the physical and administrative parks and greenways systems.

Figure 7.1 Southwest Detroit study area with existing parks and greenways



Source: See Appendix A

Background

Southwest Detroit is located roughly five miles from the central business district near the city border with Dearborn (see Figure 7.1). The area grew as an important industrial area and residential neighborhood for those who worked in the nearby factories. One of the largest parts of this industrial base is the Ford Rouge plant in nearby Dearborn. Interstate 75 is a major highway that cuts through the area along with a number of railroad tracks serving the industrial base and the Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal (DIFT).

Southwest Detroit residents

The area of study includes significant portions of the Springwells and Vernor/Junction Master Plan neighborhoods and a very small part of the West Riverfront. The area also includes most of the Hubbard Farms/Southwest neighborhood identified in the Detroit Works Project as having a population greater than 30,000 and population density between 6,450 and 8,205 people per square mile, which is above the city average. Around 70 percent of the population in Southwest Detroit is Hispanic or Latino, leading to the name Mexicantown for a commercial district in the area that serves a regional market. Two-fifths of area residents are either between 5 and 17 years old (23%) or 45 and 64 (18%).¹ These figures help to illustrate how busy the area can be and why parks and greenways can retain and attract residents to the area.

Current parks and greenways system

There are nine municipal parks, one recreation center, two non-municipal parks, and a greenways system located in the Southwest study area.

Municipal parks

Southwest Detroit includes many types of green spaces, from small neighborhood parks to large community parks. The area's best known city-owned parks are Patton Park, Clark Park, Riverside Park, and the Fort Wayne historical site. Parks within walking distance are especially important in Southwest Detroit, where children under the age of 17 account for 31% of the population and seniors (aged 55 and above) are expected to make up 16% by 2014.² The neighborhood also includes a system of greenways that connects Southwest to other neighborhoods and to neighboring municipalities. Table 7.1 provides a current list of all municipal parks. Beard Park and Military Park are closed due to lack of maintenance and local disinvestment.

The following maps illustrate park and greenway service area coverage using the accessibility analysis described in Chapter 5.

Figure 7.2 shows that only about half of the study area is served by mini parks. Two issues must be noted here. First, this analysis did not consider non-municipal parks, which add to the parks in

Table 7.1 Municipal parks in the Southwest study area

Park	Size (acres)	Location	Classification	Condition*
Beard Park	0.33	8902 W. Fort	mini	closed**
Lafayette-NYCRR Playlot	0.56	8118 W. Lafayette	mini	fair
Weiss Playlot	0.83	9215 Mandale	mini	fair
Military-Regular Playground	1.66	1238 Military	mini	closed**
Boyer Playground	1.77	6203 W. Vernor	mini	poor
Riverside Park	19.96	3085 W. Jefferson	neighborhood	temporarily closed
Clark Park	29.82	4301 W. Vernor	community	fair
Patton Park	84.99	8151 Dix	community	fair
Historic Fort Wayne	~96	6325 W. Jefferson	historical site	not available

* Condition rating given by DRD in the 2006 Master Plan

** No longer receives maintenance services, although remains city-owned property

Source: 2006 DRD Master Plan

Figure 7.2 Mini parks with 1/2, 3/8, and 1/4 mile service area buffer, 2006



Source: See Appendix A

the western section of the study area. Second, although mini parks do not serve the area well, neighborhood and community parks supplement the lack of mini parks as seen in Figures 7.3 and 7.4. Also, this analysis does not take into account the closed parks. To be consistent, we used the same parks data for the entire plan, which included parks currently closed. If Military Park is not included, a large gap exists in the middle of the map where residents do not have access to a mini park. The closure of Beard Park has less effect on residents' park access because Lafayette Park is nearby.

Figure 7.3 demonstrates that Southwest Detroit does not have sufficient access to neighborhood parks. Interstate 75 serves as a major obstacle to residents accessing Riverside Park. Further, Figure 5.6 highlights three areas that potentially need mini and neighborhood parks. Residents living further west in the Southwest study area can access a cluster of municipal and non-municipal parks. Residents living in the areas further east are well served by Clark Park. However, residents who live between the east and west buffer areas are still not served by mini or neighborhood parks. Military Park's closing makes the gap larger. Moreover, Figure 5.8 recommends these areas could use more parks because of the high population density.

Figure 7.4 illustrates that all residents in the study area have access to Patton Park and Clark Park. This is important because both parks offer numerous activities and spaces for recreation.

Recreation centers

Currently two recreation centers exist in the Southwest study area. One located at Patton Park and another at Clark Park. The Detroit Recreation Department (DRD) recommends one recreation center per 45,000 to 50,000 residents.³ The two recreation centers meet this benchmark for the study area.

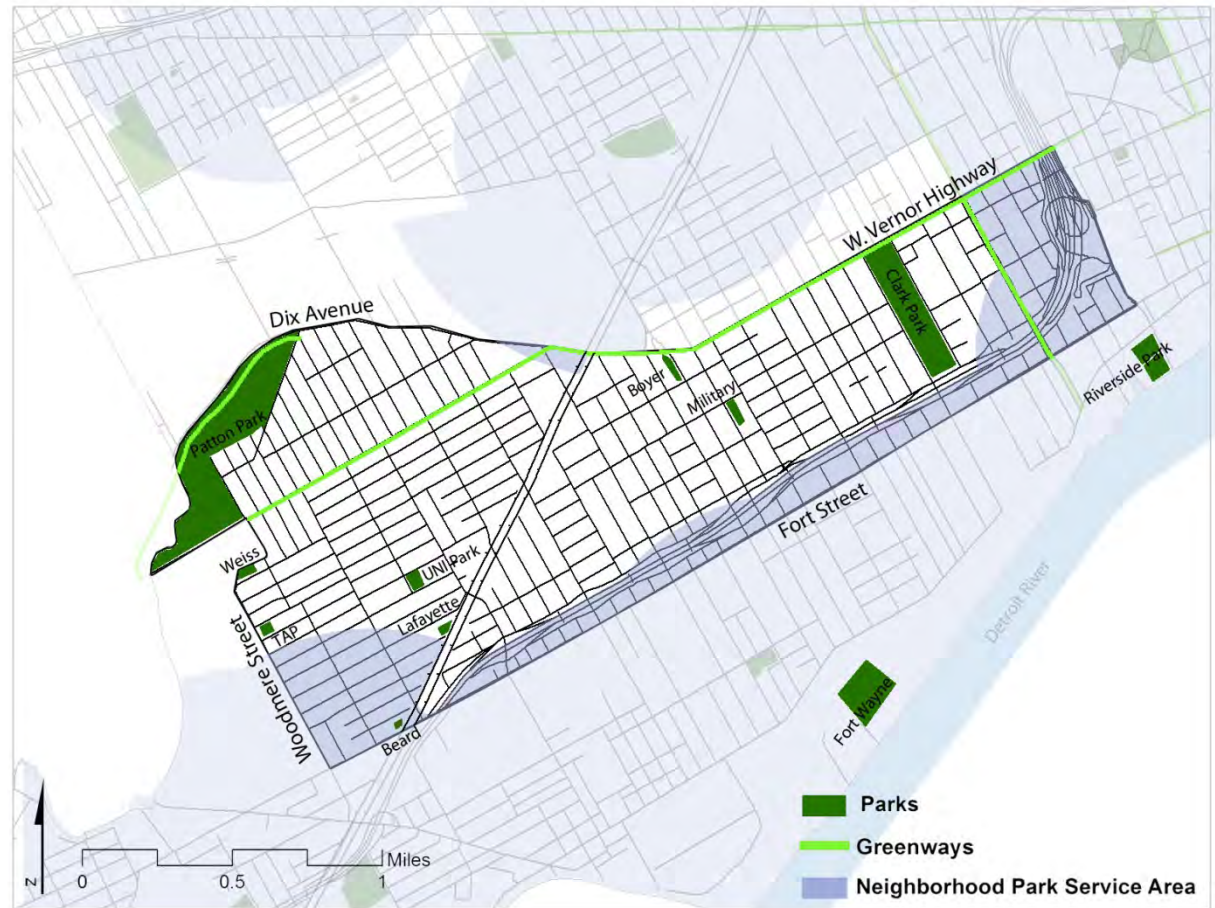
Patton Park Recreation Center is the largest facility, serving many of the neighborhoods in Southwest Detroit and neighboring Dearborn. The center, which received a \$10 million renovation in 2006, includes a swimming pool, basketball gym, cardio and weight room, and computer room.⁴

In addition, Clark Park also offers a small recreation complex according to the 2006 DRD Master Plan. Clark Park recreation center is not a full service recreation center like Patton, but the building offers a preparation area for skaters in the winter, restrooms during the year, a kitchen, and storage capacity.⁵ The small recreation complex is leased to the Clark Park Coalition and primarily serves as a programming facility for the park.

Greenways

Southwest Detroit includes a greenways system of about four miles of on street bike lanes along W. Vernor and W. Grand Boulevard and a mile of off street greenways running through Patton Park.

Figure 7.3 Neighborhood parks with 1 mile, 3/4 mile, and 1/2 mile service area buffer, 2006



Source: See Appendix A

Figure 7.4 Community parks 4.5 mile, 3 mile, and 1.5 mile service area buffer, 2006



Source: See Appendix A

The Southwest Detroit/Dearborn Greenway begins in Patton Park in Detroit and travels to Lapeer Park in Dearborn. The Southwest Detroit Business Association (SDBA) envisions that the Southwest Detroit/Dearborn Greenway will complete the perimeter of Patton Park and continue to the Rouge River. SDBA also aims to connect the greenways system across Southwest Detroit to historic Fort Wayne, Clark Park, and the Detroit RiverFront.⁶ A diverse coalition of stakeholders including SDBA, MDOT, the cities of Detroit and Dearborn, the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, Wayne County, and various non-profit organizations provided the financial support for the greenways projects.

Almost the entire study area has access to greenways (see Figure 7.5). Residents' ability to move around via multiple modes of transportation complements the variety of parks in the area. In addition, as seen in Figure 7.6, four proposed greenways may increase access to parks and non-motorized transportation in the future. The analysis was based on the proximity of these greenways to amenities, such as parks, schools, shopping areas, and medical centers, as well as population density of the neighborhoods served by the greenways. Also, due to focus group feedback, priority was given to off street greenways. Greenways along Fort Street, Livernois, the western extension of the RiverWalk, and the creation of an off street Inner Circle greenway north of Patton Park would bolster the greenway infrastructure in the area. The Livernois, Fort Street and Inner Circle

Table 7.2 Recreation centers in the Southwest study area

Recreation Center	Location	Classification
Patton Community Center	2301 Woodmere	recreation center
Clark Park Building	1130 Clark	recreation center

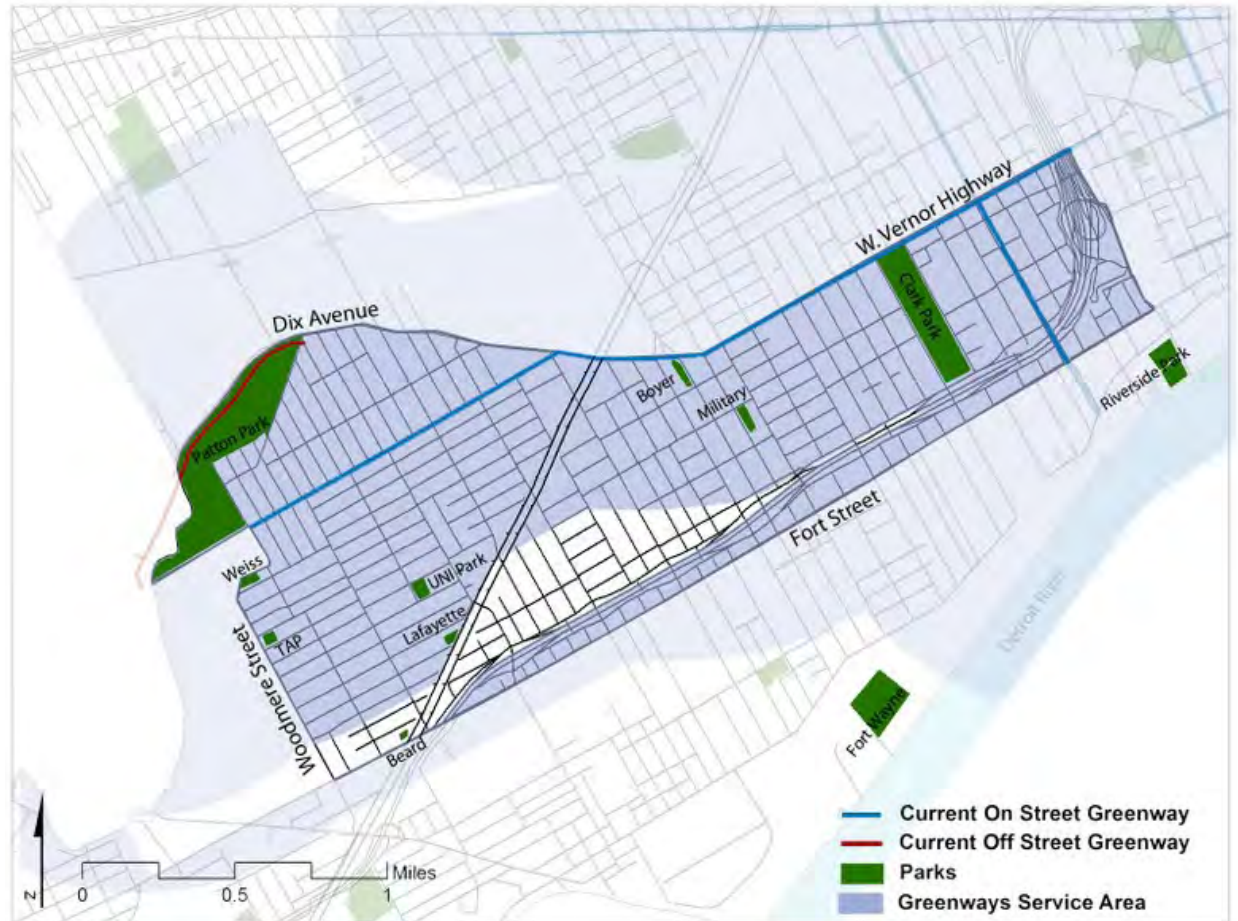
Source: DRD Website

Table 7.3 Greenways in the Southwest study area (total > 5.0 miles)

Greenways	Size (miles)	Classification
W. Vernor	3 mi	on street
Patton Park	1 mi	off street
W. Grand Blvd	.82 mi	on street

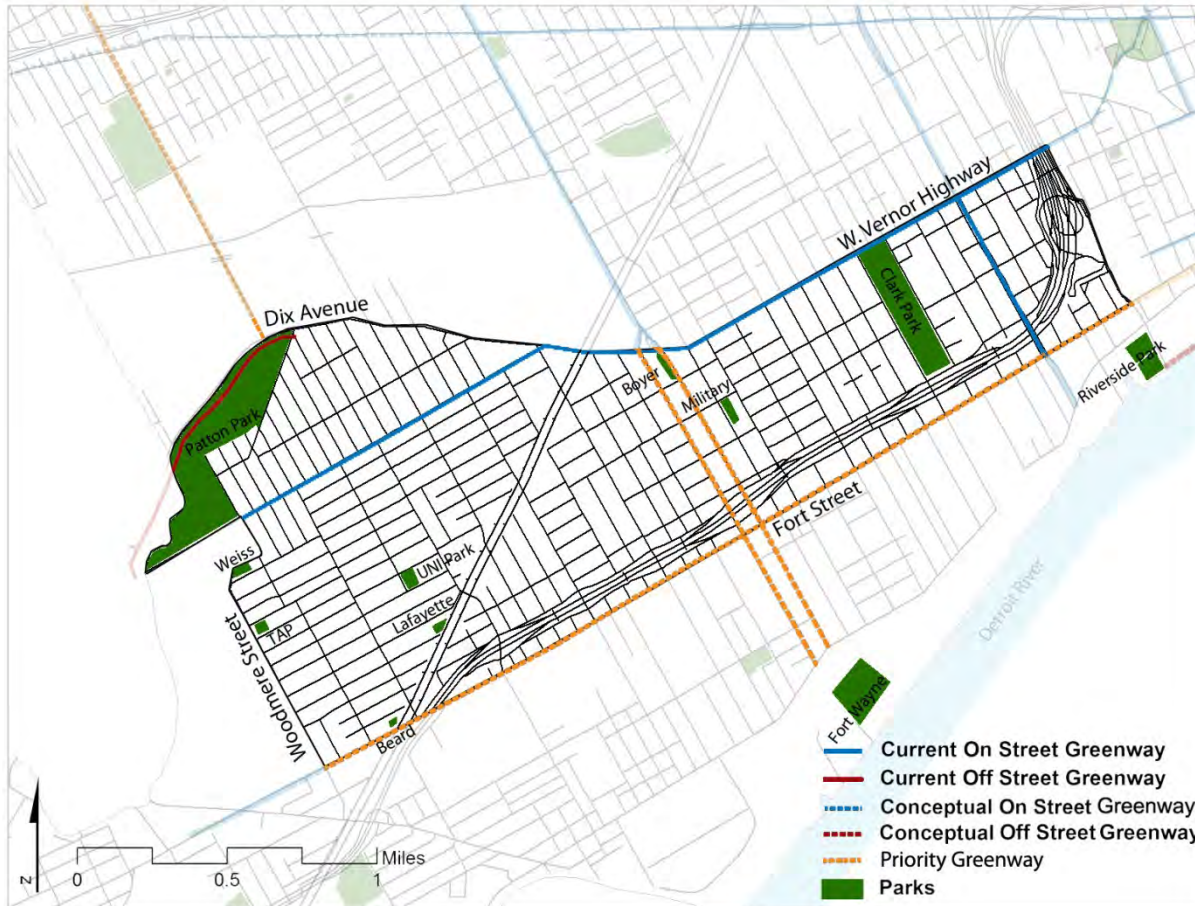
Source: GIS data created by Isaac Gilman with guidance from Todd Scott's updated Google map

Figure 7.5 Current greenways with 1/2 mile, 3/4 mile, and 1 mile service area buffer, 2006



Source: See Appendix A

Figure 7.6 Priority and conceptual greenways



Source: See Appendix A

greenways are all prioritized greenways referenced in Figure 5.3.

Non-municipal parks

Southwest Detroit is also notable for two non-municipal mini and plaza parks that are under the care of two non-profits (see Table 7.4). Urban Neighborhood Initiatives(UNI) owns and operates Springdale Green Playlot, while Young Nation owns and operates the The Alleyway Project (TAP) Gallery. TAP Gallery is considered a public art plaza, which is not a DRD park type but offers amenities similar to a plaza park.

If included in the analysis, the two parks would create a larger buffer zone in the western area of the study area. UNI's park would add a large service area north of the park, extending close to the West Vernor Greenway. The south and east would remain covered due to Lafayette Park, but boost access to mini parks. Also, TAP would extend service west, further filling in the white space seen in Figure 7.2. The service area to the north and south already covered by Weiss Park but will reinforce the area's public spaces.

The study area has a mix of park types, but the area lacks neighborhood parks, and mini parks. Patton Park and Clark Park offer full coverage as community parks, but they may not offer the same amenities found in smaller parks. Additionally, residents may need to walk long distances to reach

Table 7.4 Non-municipal parks in the Southwest study area

Park	Size (acre)	Location	Classification
Springdale Green Playlot	0.80 (est)	8263 Longworth	mini
The Alleyway Project (TAP)Gallery	0.50 (est)	9235 Avis St.	public art plaza

these larger parks. If Southwest Detroit gains new parks, these should be located so as to improve quality and access near the center and near west where residents lack access to neighborhood and mini parks.

Agencies involved in Southwest Detroit

The DRD, General Services Department (GSD), and Department of Public Works (DPW) oversee parks and greenways management and maintenance (see Chapter 3), except in the two non-municipal parks, Springdale Green Playlot and the TAP Gallery. Due to tight city budgets, non-municipal agencies in the study area may play a helpful role in future management and maintenance of the parks and greenways in Southwest Detroit. The following list aims to highlight a few non-governmental organizations that are involved in the management and maintenance of the parks and greenways.

The Clark Park Coalition

The Clark Park Coalition, mentioned previously, started as a support system for Southwest Detroit's Clark Park. The GSD provides basic maintenance

services to Clark Park, but the Coalition organizes its own programming and conducts its own fundraising activities. Clark Park is a strong anchor in the area, like a "town square."⁷ Clark Park is one of the city's park gems, as it offers amenities and programming unavailable in many neighborhoods and serves as a successful model for resident leadership of a park.

The Historic Fort Wayne Coalition

Historic Fort Wayne Coalition is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving Michigan's military history. The Coalition supports the DRD by organizing the Historic Fort Wayne Flea Market and other events and by preserving the Fort's structure and facilities.⁸

Southwest Detroit Business Association

Southwest Detroit Business Association (SDBA) is a non-profit organization "committed to facilitating the continuation and enhancement of a stable, economically healthy Southwest Detroit." Part of SDBA's mission involves supporting initiatives that "enhance the climate for public and private investment and economic growth and act as a

vehicle for cooperative ventures that support economic development," including green space projects.⁹

SDBA is heavily involved with the greenways that run through Southwest Detroit and along Patton Park. Since 2004, SDBA has partnered with the City of Detroit, the City of Dearborn, and other groups to create a greenway link between Detroit and Dearborn. The first phase of this project created an off street greenway along Patton Park's north side, providing a connection to other greenways in Dearborn. Recently completed, Phase II added on street greenways along many major roads throughout Southwest Detroit and Corktown.

Urban Neighborhood Initiatives (UNI)

UNI is a neighborhood community development organization. Its goal is to "make urban neighborhoods vital, healthy environments that strengthen individuals and support families."¹⁰ One way UNI accomplishes this mission is through a commitment to parks as a community development tool. UNI owns Springdale Green Playlot and has adopted Weiss Park and Lafayette Playlot.¹¹

Potential Southwest Organizations

There a number of other organizations and coalitions in the study area that may assist the parks and greenways system in the future. These include, but are not limited to, Southwest Solutions, Bridging Communities, Southwest Detroit

Figure 7.7 New playground equipment at the renovated Lafayette Playlot



Photo Credit: Isaac Gilman

Environmental Vision (SDEV), the Detroit Parks Coalition, and the Detroit Greenways Coalition.

Municipal parks

The following section describes the seven city-owned parks in the area. Administrative and funding recommendations are discussed where applicable.

Lafayette Playlot

Classification: Mini Park
Size: 0.56 acres
2006 Condition: Fair¹²

This mini park is located in a sheltered area at the southern end of Springwells Village. The park has two entrances, one located at the end of a dead end street and another located through an alley that leads to Chamberlin Street. UNI has adopted the park; the park is the site of a KaBoom designed playlot.

Administrative and funding recommendations

UNI could remain the official adopter of this park. Lafayette Playlot and UNI may benefit from a maintenance approach, where UNI mows the lawn, maintains the surfaces, and picks up litter for less than \$2,500 annually. A non-profit may raise this annual amount through fundraising or volunteer events. The DRD Master Plan estimates that GSD

would need to spend \$5,000 annually to maintain this park adequately (see Chapter 2).

An alternative way to support funding and management is the creation of a neighborhood grant matching program or preferably a mini park endowment (see Chapter 6) administered by the GSD, DRD, or a citywide parks conservancy (see Chapter 6). The GSD could help by offering matching \$2,000 grants to UNI for continued adoption of Lafayette Playlot. The DRD may need support from foundations and corporate philanthropy to accomplish a successful Adopt-A-Park Program.

Furthermore, a mini park endowment fund would require support from non-municipal entities to reach an amount that provided enough income to pay for mini park maintenance.

Both the Adopt-A-Park program and mini park endowment allow consistent cash flow to UNI to purchase more equipment for volunteers to use or pay for staff to use current push mowers and hand tools.

Weiss Playlot

Classification: Mini Park

Size: 0.83 acres

2006 Condition: Fair¹³

UNI has adopted this mini park, which is located

Figure 7.8 Weiss Park ADA-compliant playscape



Photo Credit: Isaac Gilman

adjacent to the Woodmere Cemetery. In 2010, the park received a \$375,000 renovation with help from UNI, the Kresge Foundation, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the Skillman Foundation, and others. The park is ADA compliant (Figure 7.7).¹⁴

Administrative and funding recommendations

UNI could remain the adopter of this park. Similar to maintenance for Lafayette Playlot, annual maintenance services may cost less than \$2,500 for lawn maintenance, surface care, and litter removal. According to the DRD, Weiss Park would cost approximately \$8,100 per year for the GSD to maintain adequately (see Chapter 2).

An alternative way to support funding and management is the creation of a neighborhood grant matching program or preferably a mini park endowment. Both programs could allow consistent cash flow for UNI to purchase equipment for volunteers or paid staffers (see Chapter 6).

Boyer Playground

Classification: Mini Park
Size: 1.77 acres
2006 Condition: Fair¹⁵

Boyer Playground is located at the busy intersection of Vernor and Dragoon next to a Burger King restaurant. The park has play equipment, tagged

with graffiti. Proximity to busy intersections leads to traffic and noise concerns.

Administrative and funding recommendations

The Burger King has adopted the park.¹⁶ The franchise owner contracts out regular lawn maintenance.¹⁷ Estimated cost for GSD annual maintenance at an adequate level for Boyer would be about \$17,000 (see Chapter 2). Using a low maintenance approach, this number can be closer to \$8,000 (see Chapter 6). Although Burger King is a corporation, the franchise owner pays for current maintenance. He is able to do so because he owns multiple franchises, but maintenance costs still affect how well the park is maintained.¹⁸ This Adopt-A-Park relationship could continue and be supported by the GSD through a matching grants program or income from an endowment (see Chapter 6). Such support could enable the franchise owner to have more frequent or better maintenance.

Boyer is within the West Vernor and Springwells Business Improvement District (BID).¹⁹ Therefore, an alternative includes using BID funds to help maintain the park and make improvements to it (see Chapter 6).

A third alternative is to close this park. The park is located at the corner of Dragoon and West Vernor. Large trucks often drive by, increasing the local air pollution and possible automobile accidents. The park is difficult to access and feels unsafe

because of the location. Instead of Boyer Park, the reopening of Military Park might serve as a better place for a recreation space (see Potential Parks).

Riverside Park

Classification: Neighborhood Park
Size: 19.96 acres
2006 Condition: Poor²⁰

Located on the Detroit River, Riverside is made up of three parcels next to the Ambassador Bridge (Figure 7.9). It has ball diamonds, a boat launch, and spectacular views. This park is surrounded by industrial uses and in March 2012 was closed indefinitely for contamination testing and clean-up.²¹ Despite Riverside's location, it gets a lot of use. On a post-closure visit, the park still had many users present along the river and barbecuing near the parking lot. Riverside is the only location on the west side of Detroit with access to the river. Therefore, the park is a key part of the Detroit parks system, and better connections to both its neighborhood and an extension of the RiverWalk could bring it needed attention.

Administrative and funding recommendations

Using numbers from the 2006 DRD Master Plan, the estimated annual city department cost for adequate maintenance of Riverside is \$168,000 (see Chapter 2). If HCMA, DNR, or a conservancy takes over the management, the responsibilities of

the GSD and DRD could be greatly reduced.

A number of options exist for alternative management for Riverside because of its riverfront location. One alternative involves the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA). The location along the riverfront may appeal to HCMA for a metropark, especially if Riverside were one of a few riverfront properties the HCMA took over. Funding could come from the HCMA's budget, of which Detroit property taxpayers contributed \$1.7 million (see Chapter 6).

Management by the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is another alternative for Riverside. The DNR could manage the park in a way similar to their management of the William G. Milliken State Park on Detroit's east side.

For both these agencies, combined management with other riverfront parks could be desirable (see also Chapter 8). A theme-based conservancy could also manage all waterfront parks (see Chapter 6). One possibility for this exists if Riverside Park is connected to downtown as part of the Detroit RiverWalk and managed by the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy.

In addition to management alternatives, funding opportunities for projects along the waterfront exist with U.S. EPA grants for Great Lakes Restoration and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers programs for water resources development, management, and restoration. Grants from the EPA to reduce runoff

Figure 7.9 Baseball diamond at Riverside Park in view of the Ambassador Bridge



Photo Credit: Michael Vos

and contamination from surrounding industrial uses may particularly apply to Riverside (see Chapter 6).

Clark Park

Classification: Community Park

Size: 29.82 acres

2006 Condition: Fair²²

Clark Park is located along Clark Street between Vernor and I-75. The Clark Park Coalition manages the site, which has ball diamonds, tennis courts, and an outdoor ice rink during the winter. The DRD pays for utility costs, and the GSD provides some maintenance that includes mowing the lawn every 20 days during the growing season.²³

Administrative and funding recommendations

The Clark Park Coalition already manages much of Clark Park with support from the GSD and DRD. This conservancy-style model has survived, but city budget cuts may mean fewer roles for the GSD and DRD. The DRD notified the Clark Park Coalition that the Coalition will have to pay for utilities from now on. Management of the park could continue in this way but may not be sustainable. If a city-wide conservancy existed, the Clark Park Coalition could benefit from such an entity. A regional conservancy could connect Clark Park with Friends of Palmer Park, the Belle Isle Conservancy, and the Chandler Park Promise Coalition. Cooperation and collaboration on funding opportunities would

benefit all parties.

Another funding alternative is public-private partnerships (see Chapter 6). Clark Park Coalition has hosted events, including a public practice of the Detroit Red Wings. This event collected donations for the park. Kroger also participated in the event by sponsoring an open skate. Leveraging corporate partnership opportunities like these helps parks groups to fund maintenance and programming.

Workforce development is another alternative for Clark Park. Funding cuts in recent years have resulted in lower levels of service at the park. To support the services DRD and GSD do provide, a workforce development program could work with the Clark Park Coalition. The proximity of Western International High School also provides a possible partnership where students could join the program. The size and variety of amenities at Clark Park means such a program could teach several skills ranging from tending to the ice rink and tennis courts to mowing the lawns.

Patton Park and Recreation Center

Classification: Community Park and Recreation Center

Size: 84.99 acres

2006 Condition: Fair²⁴

Patton Park is bordered by Dix and West Vernor and lies on the border between Detroit and

Dearborn. In addition to ball diamonds, soccer fields, picnic space, and a playlot, Patton Park includes a DRD recreation center. The recreation center has a gym and a pool, making it a well-used asset in Southwest Detroit. The Southwest Detroit/Dearborn Greenway begins in Patton Park and runs to Lapeer Park in Dearborn.²⁵

Administrative and funding recommendations

The 2006 Master Plan estimates the annual cost for a community park such as Patton Park at \$2,604 per acre (see Chapter 2), or about \$211,000 annually.

The GSD and residents are trying to start a conservancy to manage Patton Park as a single park.²⁶ As one alternative, a conservancy makes sense for Patton Park because it is a large park with many amenities and public support. As a new conservancy, Patton Park could fit the “supporter” or “early partner” model as shown in Figure 6.9. City agencies would continue management operations at first. Eventually, with enough support the conservancy could take over certain functions. Similar models in Detroit, including Palmer Park and Clark Park, show this model is an effective way to reduce some GSD and DRD responsibility while improving services to residents.

A second conservancy of interest is a theme-based recreation center conservancy. Such an organization could manage all city recreation centers and relieve DRD and GSD of responsibility for the Patton Recreation Center.

Another type of conservancy for Patton Park could be a regional parks themed one. As a larger park with regional draw, Patton could join other parks such as Rouge Park, Palmer Park, and Chandler Park to coordinate advocacy efforts and cooperatively obtain funding similar to what is done successfully in Pittsburgh (see Chapter 6).

Other non-conservancy alternatives may exist because of Patton Park's location on the border with Dearborn. Detroit and Dearborn worked together to create the greenway connection between Patton and Lapeer parks. Both cities receive funding from Wayne County's parks millage. Coordination between the DRD, GSD, and the Dearborn Recreation Department could benefit both cities, and a joint project between them could appeal to the county when distributing funds.

Interest may also exist in making Patton Park a county park because it draws regionally from multiple municipalities. Wayne County collects a millage of more than \$2 million from Detroit residents (see Chapter 6). Not all of this returns to Detroit. \$1 million goes to operation of the Chandler Park Aquatic Center and other varying amounts come back in the form of grants for capital improvement projects (see Chapter 3). Wayne County could expand its role in Detroit by taking on management of Patton Park where the estimated cost of \$211,000 fits within the amount already drawn from the city.

Figure 7.10 The General George S. Patton Recreation Center after 2006 renovation



Photo Credit: Isaac Gilman

Historic Fort Wayne

Size: ~96 acres

Historic Fort Wayne is located at the base of Livernois at West Jefferson on the Detroit riverfront. It is the site of a National Historic Landmark. The City of Detroit operates the fort seasonally along with the Historic Fort Wayne Coalition. The fort hosts a flea market and other public events. Think Detroit PAL invested in soccer fields on the site and runs annual youth soccer leagues here.

Administrative and funding recommendations

The historic nature of Fort Wayne makes it an appropriate site for state or federal involvement.

The federal government could consider Fort Wayne for a new national park. The National Park Service manages areas in order to “leave resources ‘unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.’”²⁷ All proposed parks must meet four standards of national significance. First, the site must be an exceptional example of its type, in this case a fort. Second, the site must possess great value for interpreting themes of the country’s heritage. Third, outstanding opportunities for public recreation or scientific study must be present. Finally, it must retain its integrity as an example of the resource.²⁸ If Fort Wayne meets

these criteria and passes a congressional vote, it could become a national park.

Federal designation of Fort Wayne as a national monument is another alternative. National monuments do not require U.S. Congressional approval. Instead, the President has the ability to declare any structure of interest a national monument according to the American Antiquities Act of 1906.²⁹ This could be an easier process to navigate for Fort Wayne compared to national park designation. This system is administered under the U.S. Department of the Interior.³⁰

Fort Wayne has important historic value, particularly for the State of Michigan. An alternative to federal involvement is the opportunity to be a state historic museum much like Fort Mackinac and Fort Michilimackinac. These are state owned and operated by Mackinac State Historic Parks, a branch of DNR.

Fort Wayne could benefit from transfer to the state or federal government because it would operate from a new funding stream and reduce the city’s maintenance and administrative costs, currently appropriated at \$224,764 in the City of Detroit fiscal 2012 budget.³¹ Additionally, Wayne County could operate Fort Wayne using its millage collected from Detroit residents. As described above for Patton Park, which has a similar estimated operating budget, the county does not reinvest as much as it could, and expanding its presence in Detroit is an option.

Finally, in addition to transfer of ownership, an alternative for Fort Wayne is to use federal funding from the Cultural Resources Management Program of the U.S. Department of the Interior (see Chapter 6). These funds are specifically for historic structures and help pay for expensive materials such as copper gutters required for designated historic museums of a certain period.

Potential parks

Military-Regular (Closed)

Classification: Mini Park

Size: 1.66 acres

2006 Condition: Poor³²

This repositioned park is located a few blocks away from Boyer Park. The 2006 DRD Master Plan recommended that this park be improved.³³ However, visits to the site reveal that the play equipment no longer exists, and the grass is overgrown. Figure 7.11 shows the current state of this park.

Administrative and funding recommendations

This park could replace Boyer Park in giving residents of this area access to a mini park. Military Park is located in an area, away from traffic and pollution from trucks. Although all play equipment is gone, the land is still useful. In fact, Google Map

images show the park has soccer striping, indicating that people were using the park even after the park equipment was removed. According to the DRD, a two-acre park's standard features cost \$81,672.³³ These include:

- Two bay swing (2)
- Slide
- Climber
- PIP rubber surfacing
- Benches (2)
- Picnic tables (2)
- Signage (3)
- Trash receptacles (4)

Maintenance costs are roughly \$16,000 annually to maintain this size park according to the DRD Master Plan (see Chapter 2). Using the simpler maintenance costs for mowing, surface maintenance, and litter control for level 1 service would cost about \$2,500 (see Table 6.3).

Also, a local organization could adopt this park. Like Weiss or Lafayette parks, Military has the potential to be a neighborhood asset. First, the GSD must improve communication about the Adopt-A-Park program (see Chapter 6). Providing clear information about the program offers more opportunities for organizations to get involved. Military could benefit from this. If an adoption occurs, the adopting body could benefit from training and a neighborhood grant matching program (see Chapter 6). This would help cover annual maintenance costs.

Figure 7.11 Military-Regular Park was closed and remains an empty lot owned by DRD



Photo Credit: Isaac Gilman

Figure 7.12 Patton Park off street greenway



Photo Credit: Isaac Gilman

Greenways

Classification: On and Off Street

Size: > 5mi

The study area has three greenway segments, one that runs from Dearborn to 21st Street at the edge of Corktown; a second is located on a portion of W. Grand Boulevard; and a third, the Patton Park Greenway, is an off street greenway located along Patton Park's northwest edge (see Figure 7.12).

Administrative and funding recommendations

SDBA could remain responsible for the greenways. The organization has demonstrated successful management of the system and plans to add more improvements to the area with better street lights, and continued maintenance along the greenways. Furthermore, an expansion of the system, as seen in Figure 7.6, could remain the responsibility of SDBA and its partners. In the past, uncoordinated, piecemeal greenway efforts forced greenway projects in the same area to compete for funding.³⁵ Consolidating greenway management within the same organization would help in increasing efficiencies and collaboration.³⁶

Another possibility, similar to keeping resources and management under one organization, is to create a city-wide greenway conservancy. This approach would foster greater cooperation, helping to ensure that all of Detroit's greenways will have access to

funding opportunities. Maintaining the one-mile stretch of off street greenway running along Patton Park costs about \$43,000 annually.³⁷ In 2010, maintenance for about five miles of greenways located at Patton Park, Conner Creek, and Lyndon cost roughly \$145,000.³⁸ Creating a conservancy offers a central location to provide management and disperse funding for the greenways.

Leveraging a workforce development program for many of the greenways is another viable alternative. The Greening of Detroit hosts a workforce development program that partners with the greenways coalition to help maintain the greenways (see Chapter 6). Further development of these programs by Greening of Detroit, Detroit GreenWorks Solutions, Young Detroit Builders, and Goodwill, can help bring stronger greenways maintenance services to Southwest Detroit. Many of these programs require grant support to begin, but lower wage rates and investment in local residents can benefit the area. The Greening of Detroit currently spends about \$1 million annually on their city-wide program (see Chapter 6).

Potential greenways

While residents have adequate access to greenways based on the service area analysis in Chapter 5 and Figure 7.5, several priority greenway routes in the area could provide better connections across the city. These include part of the Livernois Greenway, the Inner Circle Greenway, the West RiverWalk,

and the Fort Street Greenway. These three priority greenways can make the Southwest study area better connected to parks, recreation centers, and various neighborhoods.

The DPW can create the conceptual on street greenways. Furthermore, SDBA may continue to support the additional maintenance and programming of the greenways along Livernois and Fort Street. In addition, the Detroit Greenways coalition can provide support to the off street greenway along the Inner Circle. Alternatively, if a greenway conservancy is created, either for off street greenways or for the city-wide system, such a conservancy could fund and maintain the greenways in the area. The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy could be responsible for development of the west riverfront into Riverside Park and potentially beyond. This expansion should be studied further.

Similar to a park conservancy, a greenway conservancy would require foundation, philanthropic, and grant support. The Detroit Greenways Coalition could transition into a more formal entity and continue to partner with municipal agencies and advocacy groups (see Chapter 6). In 2010, the RiverFront Conservancy spent over \$6 million on operations, fundraising and capital improvements (see Chapter 6). This money was not all spent on greenways but demonstrates how much the continued building of greenways throughout the city might require.

Figure 7.13 The Alleyway Project provides passive recreation opportunities in addition to public art



Photo Credit: Isaac Gilman

Non-municipal parks

The following section describes the two privately owned parks in the area. Administrative and funding recommendations are discussed where applicable.

The Alleyway Project (TAP) Gallery

Classification: Public Art Plaza

Size: 0.50acres (est)

Young Nation, a nonprofit organization, created this space for street art and community building in 2010. Young Nation now oversees and runs The Alleyway Project (TAP). The small but distinctive lot encourages people to express themselves through various art gatherings and encourages neighbors to get involved and support their local public space.

Administrative and funding recommendations

Young Nation runs this plaza; it offers a model of alternative management for other areas of the city with vacant land.

This space will not necessarily have access to a possible GSD matching grant program or endowment. Instead Young Nation continues to seek foundation support and volunteers to fund and manage their space. TAP was funded through Community Public Arts Detroit (CPAD), which is a College for Creative Studies (CCS), Skillman

Foundation, Kresge Foundation, and J P Morgan Chase Foundation initiative.³⁹ The total grant from CPAD was \$40,000.⁴⁰ Six thousand dollars was spent on a participatory design process, led by the Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC).⁴¹ The participatory process included neighbors and youth. The \$6,000 also paid for the master plan, which was created at a reduced rate by the DCDC.⁴² Furthermore, \$3,200 was spent on material for Studio Luevanos (the garage located on the lot where supplies and learning space are located); \$4,000 was spent on materials for the lots that are seen in Figure 7.13; \$400 was spent on purchasing the two lots; and \$1,200 was spent on materials for the murals.⁴³ The rest of the funding was spent on staff, artist commissions, and youth stipends. TAP estimates many of these numbers were matched 2:1 through in-kind donations and volunteer time.⁴⁴

Springdale Green Playlot

Classification: Mini Park
Size: 0.80acres (est)

UNI constructed and retains ownership of this non-municipal park in Springwells Village. Springdale Green Playlot was constructed in 2005 for \$350,000 with the assistance of Wayne County Parks Division.⁴⁵ The park is located across the street from the All Saints Neighborhood Center, where UNI runs most of its programming. The park draws frequent use and supports a strong neighborhood.⁴⁶

Figure 7.14 Springdale Green Playlot is a non-municipal park created by UNI



Photo Credit: Isaac Gilman

Administrative and funding recommendations

UNI owns and operates this park. UNI officials maintain the park with support from two sources. UNI employs a local “handyman” to maintain the park, which is less expensive than hiring a landscaping company. The organization also uses volunteers to clean the park. Springdale Green is a simple park, which makes the playlot easy to maintain. Overall, their goal is to spend less than \$2,500 annually on park maintenance. In contrast, the DRD Master Plan estimates that a park like Springdale Green would require \$8,000 for a city department to maintain adequately.⁴⁷

Conclusion

Southwest Detroit’s greenspaces vary greatly. The area’s mini parks serve about half of the population, with the majority of the parks still open and in use. The closure of Military decreases residents’ access to mini parks. If parks were to be added to the area, the area of most need would be around Military Park and to the west. The only neighborhood park is Riverside, which offers valuable river access but was recently closed due to suspected contamination. These types of parks are extremely important to neighborhoods, and non-municipal organizations may support them in the future. The two non-municipal parks may provide good examples of support for future parks in the area. In addition, parks advocates should continue conversations with possible support partners such

as Wayne County, the DNR, and the Department of Interior to determine the appropriate partnerships to provide a quality system of parks and greenways. Also, Clark Park and Patton Park both provide recreation spaces for the entire study area and will also require new models of operation such as conservancies.

The greenways also provide a major recreation asset in the area. The greenways are well supported and managed. With interest in future greenway expansion, future management and funding may take the form of a greenway conservancy, more support from SDBA and the Detroit Greenways Coalition, or in the case of the riverfront, support from the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy. The future greenways will increase residents’ access to many parts of the area and provide more recreational opportunities.

Notes

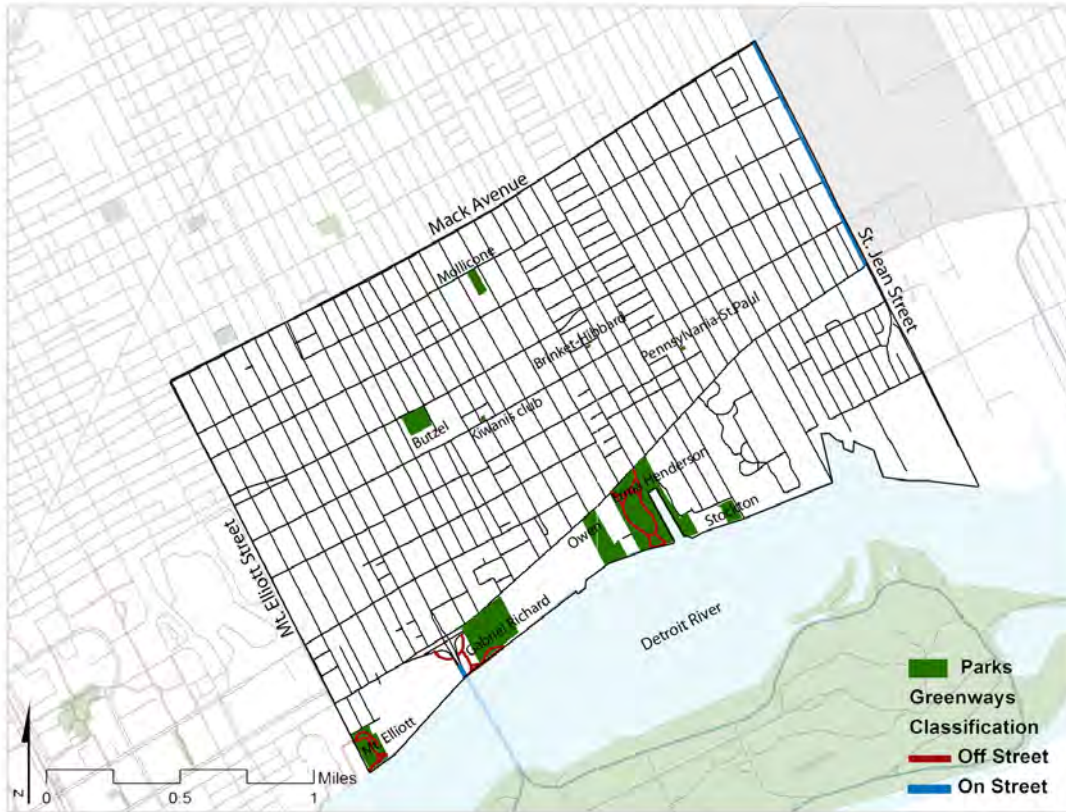
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Chapter 8: Implementing *Ever Green's* Strategies in Detroit's Lower Eastside

This chapter investigates how *Ever Green's* strategies can improve the parks and greenways system, as did Chapter 7, but in Detroit's Lower Eastside area. First, the chapter discusses the background of the current parks and greenways system. Next, it discusses the agencies that serve local parks and greenways and identifies potential parks and greenways partners. Lastly, the chapter offers recommendations for how to improve current and potential Lower Eastside's parks, greenways, and recreation centers and to identify possible recreational spaces within the existing physical system.

Figure 8.1 Lower Eastside study area



Source: See Appendix A

Background

The Lower Eastside study area is located approximately three miles east of downtown Detroit adjacent to the Detroit River. Approximately 90% of the land is residential. However, Jefferson Avenue is a heavily trafficked corridor, linking commercial, industrial, and mixed uses near the riverfront. Over 20,000 vehicles per day travel on Jefferson Avenue.¹

Figure 8.1 shows the Lower Eastside study area. It is approximately four square miles and bordered by Mack Avenue (to the north), Detroit River (to the south), Mt. Elliott Street (to the west), and St. Jean Street (to the east). The study area is notable for residential pockets within stretches of vacant land and open space, and for valuable riverfront real estate.²

Lower Eastside residents

In 2010, the study area's total population was approximately 12,000.³ Population density per square mile is 3,602 people (5.62 people per acre).⁴ This is lower than the average population density in Detroit of 5,144 per square mile.⁵ About 89% of residents in the Lower Eastside are African American.⁶ More than 50% of the residents were over 45 years old in 2010⁷, which is higher than the city's overall percentage of residents age 45 and over (36%).⁸

Lower Eastside residents value their neighborhood parks and greenways. The Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP) survey results report parks to be the Lower Eastside's second most popular attraction.⁹ The survey asked residents what they like most about their neighborhood, and "14% stated parks – second only to sense of community (22%)."¹⁰

Current parks and greenways system

Municipal parks

Six active municipal parks and four closed parks exist in the Lower Eastside study area. In 2006, three parks were in good condition, three were in fair condition, and four were in poor condition. All four parks in poor condition have closed since 2006 according to a recent General Services Department (GSD) maintenance spreadsheet.

The following maps display park service area coverage using the accessibility analysis described in Chapter 5. The service buffer for mini parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks uses *Ever Green's* recommended service area radii for varying population density (see Table 5.3). Chapter 5 analyses and Figure 8.2 suggest that the mini park service area can be improved upon by adding new mini parks, though Figures 8.3 and 8.4 suggest low need for additional neighborhood and community parks. The GSD will not take on additional mini parks; rather local organizations (discussed in the following section) would need to facilitate all new park management.

Table 8.1 Municipal parks in the Lower Eastside study area

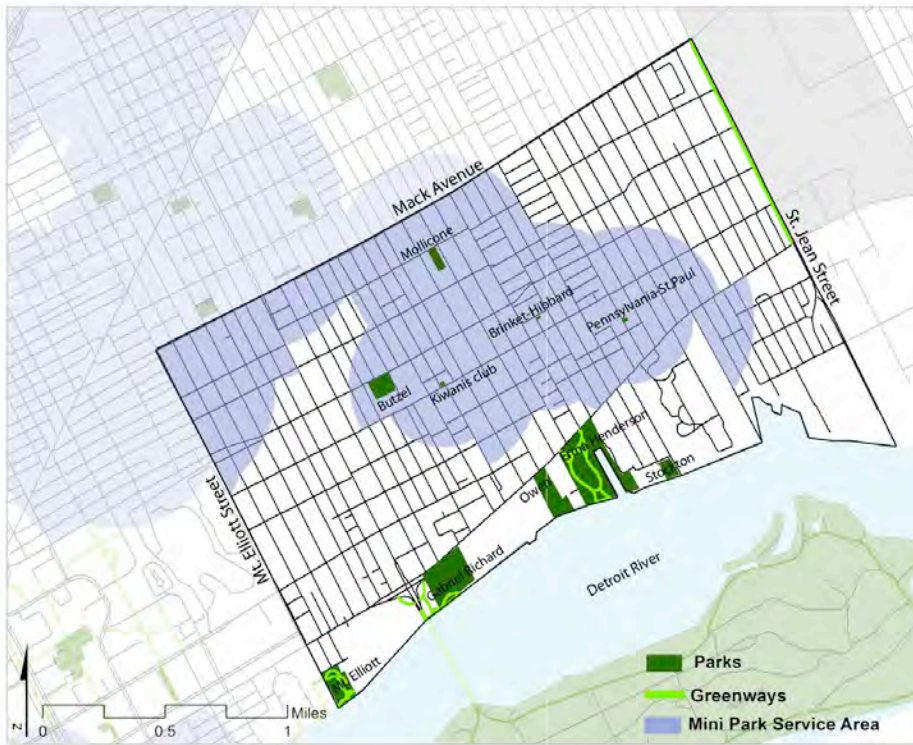
Park	Size (acres)	Location	Classification	Condition*
Pennsylvania-St.Paul	0.13	1536 Pennsylvania	mini	closed**
Brinket-Hibbard	0.16	2156 Hibbard	mini	closed**
Kiwanis club	0.93	6531 Kercheval	mini	closed**
Mollicone	2.19	2969 Burns	mini	good
Stockton	2.75	9250 Dwight	mini	good
Butzel	4.23	7700 E. Vernor	neighborhood	fair
Mt. Elliott	8.15	110 Mt. Elliott	neighborhood	good
Owen	8.26	8380 E. Jefferson	neighborhood	closed**
Gabriel Richard	22.87	7130 E. Jefferson	neighborhood	fair
Erma Henderson	33.66	8598 E. Jefferson	community	fair

* Condition rating given by the DRD in the DRD 2006 Master Plan

** No longer receives maintenance services, though remains city-owned property

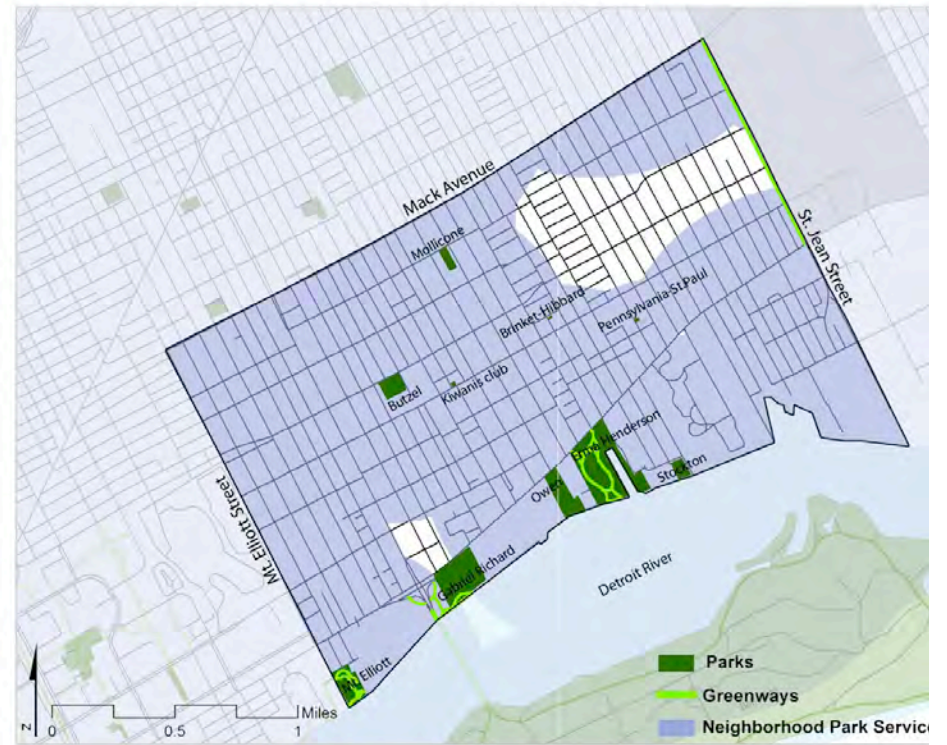
Source:DRD 2006 Master Plan

Figure 8.2 Mini parks with 1/2, 3/8, and 1/4 mile service area buffer, 2006



Source: See Appendix A

Figure 8.3 Neighborhood park with 1 mile, 3/4 mile, and 1/2 mile service area buffer, 2006



Source: See Appendix A

Figure 8.2 illustrates that residents of many parts of the Lower Eastside did not have access to mini parks in 2006. Since 2006, three mini parks (Pennsylvania-St. Paul Park, Brinket-Hibbard Park, Kiwanis Club Park) have closed creating a larger area where residents have no access to mini parks. Mini parks provide residents with convenient and desirable recreational amenities and therefore as many residents as possible should have access to them.

Both Figures 8.3 and 8.4 illustrate that neighborhood and community parks serve almost the entire study area. As Figure 8.3 shows, a small area north of Gabriel Richard Park had poor access to neighborhood and mini parks, although residents do have access to community parks and the waterfront parks (see Figure 8.4). However, the area in white in the northeast section of the study area is lacking in access to mini and neighborhood parks, especially considering the closing of the three nearby mini parks as noted above. Therefore, if additional parks were to be added, they could be concentrated in the northeast section of the study area.

Recreation centers

The Lower Eastside has one recreation center, Butzel Family Center, located adjacent to Butzel Park (see Figure 8.4). This center is a well-used multipurpose community center offering various programs and services. In 2007, about \$350,000

was spent on recreation center improvements.¹¹ The 2006 Detroit Recreation Department (DRD) Master Plan repositioning strategy suggested closing this center and opening a new one closer to Mack and Conner Avenues. Because residents and nonprofit organizations support the Butzel Center's continuing operation, this recreation center should remain open. The DRD continues to provide significant recreation center programming and intends to continue such support in the future.¹²

Greenways

Three greenways serve the Lower Eastside study area: the Conner Creek Greenway, RiverWalk East, and Erma Henderson Park Trails. The Detroit Eastside Community Collaborative (DECC) and the RiverFront Conservancy have plans to extend the Conner Creek Greenway and RiverWalk Greenways, respectively.

Figure 8.5 shows the current greenways listed in Table 8.3 in blue and red. This map uses three criteria. The RiverWalk extension will provide

different types of buffers: ½ mile, ¾ mile, and 1 mile, based on low, medium, or high population density. For example, the area around Erma Henderson is high density and uses the ½ density radius, whereas the area north of Kercheval is medium density and uses the ¾ mile radius. Plans for additional greenways, some under development, include the Kercheval Greenway, Detroit Belt Line, a small portion of the Elmwood Connector, and Jefferson Avenue Greenways (see Figure 8.7 and section on potential greenways). *Ever Green* endorses the development of each of the greenways but has selected priority routes.

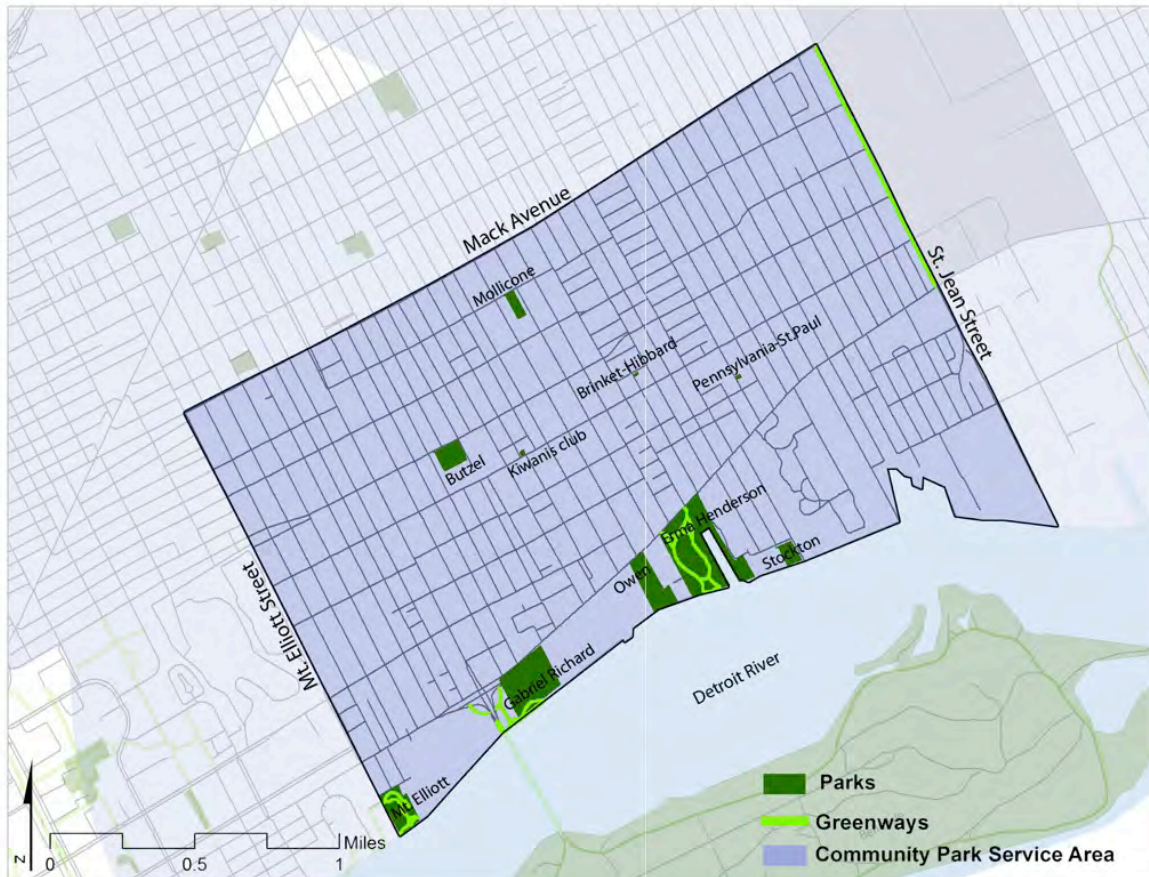
Chapter 5 of this plan details priority greenways for development. That analysis was based on the proximity of these greenways to amenities, such as parks, schools, shopping areas, and medical centers, as well as the population density of the neighborhoods served by the greenways (see Figure 5.3). Due to focus group feedback, priority was given to off street greenways. The RiverWalk's eastern extension, shown in gold in Figure 8.6, has priority in this study area based on Chapter 5

Table 8.2 Recreation centers in the Lower Eastside study area

Recreation Center	Size (square feet)	Location	Classification	Condition*
Butzel Family Center	~40,594	7700 E. Vernor	recreation center	good

* Condition rating given by the DRD in the 2006 Master Plan
Source: See Appendix A

Figure 8.4 Community park 4.5-mile service area buffer, 2006



Source: See Appendix A

Lower Eastside residents the health benefits of a connected greenway system for outdoor recreation and the economic benefits of the RiverWalk as a regional tourist attraction.

Non-municipal parks

Ever Green does not include non-municipal parks in the study area accessibility analysis. Some projects do exist, such as the Indian Village Association's community botanical garden. However, non-municipal management for recreational benefit is not prevalent. The abundance of vacant land provides opportunity to expand the parks, greenways, and recreation system. Non-municipal groups can assume leadership roles in new park creation to serve residents.

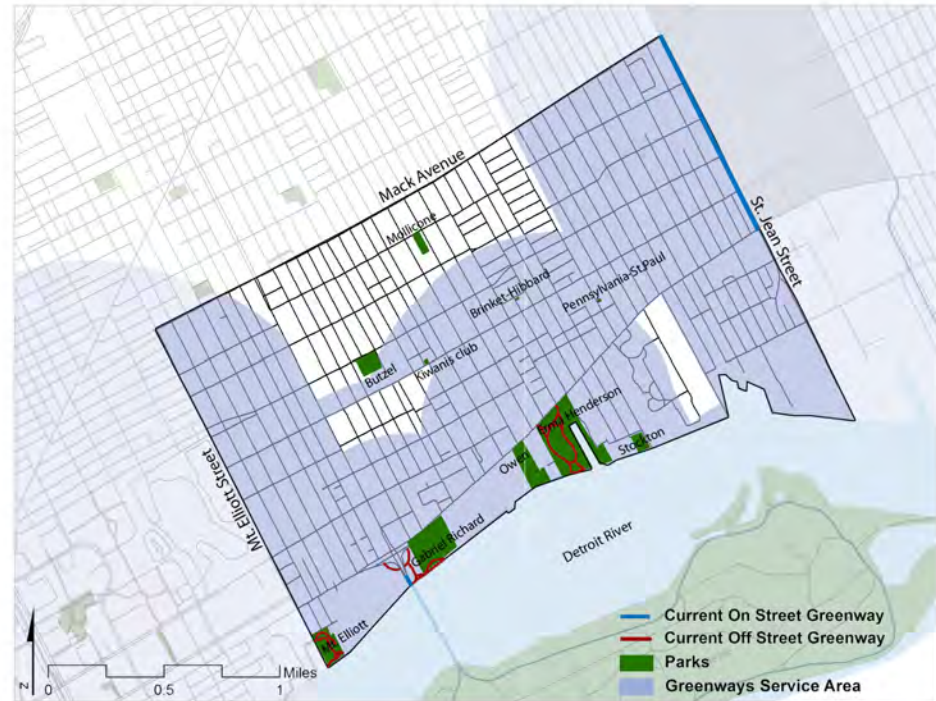
The waterfront has strong park enhancement and development potential, especially to extend the current RiverWalk to connect with a comprehensive greenways system.

Lower Eastside organizations involved in parks and greenways

To ensure resiliency of the parks and greenways system, various city departments, organizations, and interest groups should share responsibility for management and maintenance. This resulting system should be collaborative and have a unified vision.

Detroit Eastside Community Collaborative (DECC)

Figure 8.5 Current greenways with 1/2 mile, 3/4 mile, and 1 mile service area buffer, 2006



Source: See Appendix A

DECC is dedicated to “revitalizing Detroit’s Eastside through information sharing, joint advocacy, and collective action.”¹³ Its primary project is the Conner Creek Greenway, a connector for Eastside residents and visitors to the Detroit River. Conner Creek Greenway’s main goal is to link the Eastside communities with social agencies, schools, and recreational areas. DECC has completed nearly half of the nine planned miles.¹⁴

Detroit RiverFront Conservancy

The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy maintains the Detroit RiverWalk greenway, including those features in Mt. Elliott Park and Gabriel Richard Park. The Conservancy plans to link the two parks together with the rest of the RiverWalk into a continuous waterfront greenway.¹⁵ The Villages Community Development Corporation’s Greater Riverfront East Environmental Network (GREEN) Master Plan envisions the RiverWalk to extend east along the riverfront, through the Lower Eastside study area, to Windmill Point Park located near the Gross Pointe border.¹⁶

Gleaners Community Food Bank

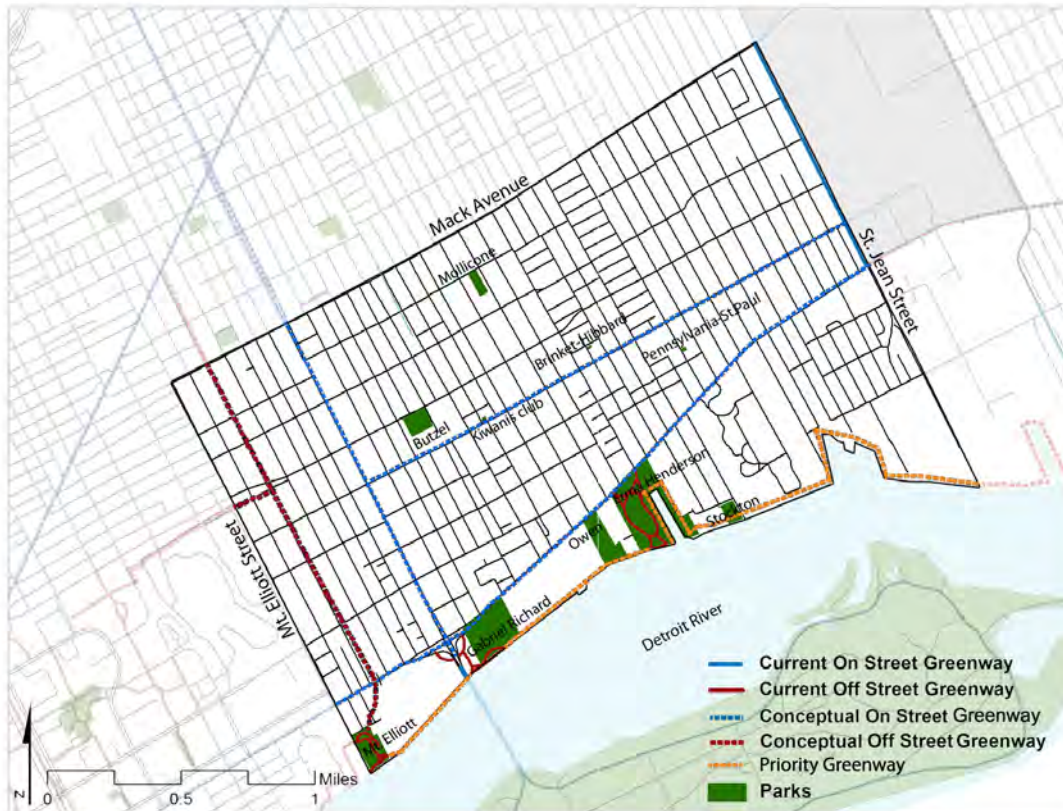
Gleaners started in 1977 to solicit surplus food for safe food storage, distribute food citywide, and link available food to the hungry.¹⁷ In 2010, Gleaners developed a 3-year strategic plan to expand its outreach and education programs, teach families how to budget, and shop and prepare economical

Table 8.3 Greenways in the Lower Eastside study area (total >3.0 miles)

Greenway	Size (square feet)	Location	Classification
Conner Creek Greenway	0.9 miles	St. Jean Street	on street
RiverWalk East	1.2 miles	Detroit riverfront	off street
Erma Henderson Pathway	0.8 miles	Erma Henderson Park	off street

Source: DECC, RiverFront Conservancy, Google Maps

Figure 8.6 Priority and conceptual greenways



Source: See Appendix A

and nutritious meals.¹⁸ Additionally, Gleaners has recently completed a feasibility study for the proposed Belt Line Greenway. Implementation of Gleaners' strategic plan involves transforming Lower Eastside vacant parcels into gardens and enhancing community outreach efforts. Gleaners has more than 400 local partners including local, statewide, and national hunger relief organizations, such as Feeding America, Food Bank Council of Michigan, and Forgotten Harvest, and receives support from corporate donors like Kroger.¹⁹

Jefferson East Business Association (JEBA)

JEBA is an economic development agency dedicated to promoting "business and residential growth and development" on Detroit's Lower Eastside. The group focuses on supporting commercial activities by addressing physical changes in the Jefferson East Business District. JEBA believes improving the neighborhood's attractions and amenities, with an emphasis on recreational waterfront properties and recreation facilities will help to make Jefferson Avenue a "destination district" with vibrant retail and commercial activity.²⁰

The East Jefferson Streetscape and Parking Plan, a key JEBA and East Jefferson Commercial initiative, aims to make the neighborhood more walkable and bike friendly is also highlighted in the GREEN Master Plan. This plan includes safer sidewalks and crosswalks, new parking arrangements, bike path design enhancements, and roadways that encourage slower automobile traffic. All of these

additions support JEBA's goal of enlivening the Jefferson Avenue Corridor to promote economic development in the area and the greenways plan to connect neighborhoods to one another and to the Detroit River.²¹

The Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP)

LEAP, a program of the Warren Conner Development Coalition, was created in 2009 as a "community-driven project designed to engage residents in the process of transforming vacant land and property into uses that improve Detroit's Lower Eastside quality of life."²² The Erb Family Foundation, Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), and other sources provide funding for LEAP's 3-year process to develop a plan that addresses the area's vacant land.²³ LEAP's vision is to transition and rezone vacant commercial corridors into "green thoroughfares."²⁴

LEAP initially was a vacant land reuse planning steering committee that consisted of 7 Lower Eastside community development organizations and headed by the Warren Conner Development Coalition (W/CDC). W/CDC, a founding partner of the DECC, instituted the Chandler Park Promise Coalition. Warren Conner Development Coalition plays an active role in revitalizing parks and greenways throughout the Lower Eastside area.²⁵

The Villages Community Development Corporation

This organization works within the Lower Eastside study area and encompasses neighborhoods such as Indian Village, The Gold Coast, and Islandview Village. The Villages recently received a grant from the Kresge Foundation for community enhancements, particularly to revitalize the Jefferson Avenue commercial corridor.²⁶ Additionally, it plays an active role with the GREEN Master Plan to extend greenways throughout the Eastside's riverfront areas.²⁷ This initiative received funding from the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.²⁸

Potential Lower Eastside organizations

Other organizations work in the area and can be potential parks and greenway partners. These include: the Detroit Greenways Coalition, Detroit Parks Coalition, EarthWorks, Genesis HOPE, Mt. Elliott Business and Community Association, Messiah Housing Corporation, and the Waldorf School. This list is not exhaustive, but includes organizations that have mission statements and projects that could include parks and greenways.

Municipal parks

The following section describes the six active and four formerly active city-owned parks in this study area. Administrative, funding, and other recommendations are discussed where applicable.

Ever Green includes the four closed parks because they were included in the DRD's 2006 Master Plan, though over the past six years little public effort has been made to preserve these parks. Whether or not the GSD resumes maintenance, these parks remain city-owned property and have not yet been transferred to an alternative management entity.

Parks between Jefferson Avenue and Mack Avenue

Two municipal parks exist in the study area north of Jefferson Avenue. Both parks offer local residents a range of recreational amenities and have similar features. Similar administrative and funding approaches could apply to both.

Thomas Mollicone Playground

Classification: mini park
Size: 2.19 acres
2006 Condition: good

Thomas Mollicone Playground is located in a historic neighborhood and sits adjacent to Nichols School.

Funding and administrative recommendations

The GSD should encourage a neighborhood group or the Nichols School to adopt the park. Although the school would bear additional expense in assuming park management responsibilities,

Figure 8.7 Thomas Mollicone Park



Photo Credit: 2006 DRD Master Plan

students would gain the opportunity to learn about nature, plant a community garden, and play outdoors. Nichols School might be able to form a partnership with Gleaners Community Food Bank, Earthworks and the Greening of Detroit to support an onsite garden for the students' benefit. Maintenance costs would total about \$16,000 per year if the park were maintained at the DRD's current standards (see Table 2.4). However, the Nichols School could manage the park for \$10,000 if adopting minimal park maintenance (see Appendix C). However, some park adopters, such as UNI in Southwest Detroit, report much lower maintenance costs for a park of this size when maintenance is supplied privately (see Chapter 7). Resources can also be gained through a citywide parks conservancy as recommended in Chapter 6.

Butzel Park

Classification: Neighborhood Park and Recreation Center
Size: 4.23 acres
2006 Condition: fair

This neighborhood park has a multi-use tennis/basketball court, play equipment, and picnic shelters.

Funding and administrative recommendations

With a variety of amenities making it attractive to a wide range of residents, Butzel could inform more residents about its programming and offerings

as well as volunteer opportunities. Several communications strategies are outlined in Chapter 6.

The DRD cannot continue to maintain and upgrade facilities. Launching a workforce development program at the Butzel Family Center could offer another alternative to support the park's operations. Such a program, perhaps operated in cooperation with an area non-profit such as LEAP, Villages CDC, or the Greening of Detroit could provide residents with needed job skills and training while helping to maintain the park and Family Center. The recently renovated center is an appealing place to conduct a workforce development program, and Butzel's range of maintenance and administrative needs could use several different workforce skills, from youth program development at the Family Center to tennis court maintenance.

Parks between Jefferson Avenue and the Detroit River

Five municipal parks exist south of Jefferson Avenue in the Lower Eastside study area. All of these parks have riverfront access. Thus these parks have many features and potential administrative and funding strategies in common. Because a relatively high level of park service exists, residents in this area are "overserved" (see Figure 5.8). However, *Ever Green* recognizes that these riverfront parks can provide citywide and regional benefits.

Figure 8.8 Butzel Park Athletic Field



Photo Credit: Google Maps

These parks could potentially support broader efforts such as environmental protection, economic development and tourism, and community development. The existing riverfront parks could be a priority for various organizations.

Due to the similarities of the Lower Eastside riverfront parks, potential may exist to combine these park sites under a common management strategy. For example, a combination of sites can group together to qualify for organizational management by the Michigan DNR or HCMA to take on a group of similar parks.

Partnerships to support these parks could include potential managers working with the US Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program to support resource development, management, and restoration through investigations and surveys, engineering and design, construction, and operation and maintenance tasks. Potential managers could also explore a partnership with the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) fund for park enhancements to purchase land or land easements for public recreation or protection of public lands. The DNR could also assist in land development through the Natural Resources Trust Fund or Land and Water Conservation Fund, provided the project has a five year recreation plan.³²

Alternately, a regional non-profit conservancy could possibly assume a role in the management of these parks. A strong option for such an

arrangement would be an expanded role for the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy. The RiverFront Conservancy RiverWalk Greenway already maintains facilities in a dedicated right-of-way in Gabriel Richard and Mt. Elliott Parks. The GREEN Master Plan envisions the extension of the Detroit RiverWalk project through the other 3 parks in the study area: Owen Park, Erma Henderson Park, and Stockton Park. At minimum, rights-of-way for the RiverWalk extension in these parks could be secured to prevent future development from impeding RiverWalk expansion. An expanded RiverWalk and well maintained riverfront parks could become a tourist destination as well as an amenity for Detroit residents. The following descriptions touch briefly on how each park could contribute to such a vision.

Stockton Park

Classification: Neighborhood Park
 Size: 2.75 acres
 2006 Condition: good

Stockton Park is a well-used neighborhood park located on the riverfront adjacent to the Manoogian Mansion in the historic Berry Subdivision. This park offers a playlot, walking track, and public access to the riverfront.

Stockton Park is a valuable neighborhood asset. Additional amenities such as a sports court, benches, and tables can improve use accessibility. If residents express interest, neighborhood

groups could expand the park to the surrounding vacant land to enhance the riverfront experience and preserve ecologically sensitive landscapes. Further developing Stockton Park presents the opportunity to energize local residents and enhance neighborhood quality. The Detroit Planning and Development Department oversees the riverfront lots to the east of the park, providing a potential for expansion of the park or Detroit RiverWalk without an expensive land acquisition process.

Funding and administrative recommendations

This park is well maintained. To ensure that this maintenance level continues, a local homeowners association or similar organization could share maintenance responsibilities with the GSD through a strengthened and expanded Adopt-A-Park program that involves shared responsibilities by the park adopter and GSD (as discussed in Chapter 6). While mini parks are very inefficient for the GSD to maintain, larger neighborhood parks such as Stockton Park may be more appropriate for the GSD to keep some maintenance responsibilities. The 2006 DRD standards estimate maintenance costs at about \$16,000 per year (see Table 2.4). However, some park adopters, such as UNI in Southwest Detroit report much lower maintenance costs for a park of this size when maintenance is supplied privately (see Chapter 7).

Figure 8.9 Stockton Park Play Equipment



Photo Credit: Eric Dennis

Figure 8.10 Mt. Elliott Park



Photo Credit: The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy

Mt. Elliott Park

Classification: Neighborhood Park
Size: 8.15 acres
2006 Condition: good

The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy plans to renovate Mt. Elliott Park as a part of the East Riverfront connection project's phase 1 (spring 2012). The park is located on the Detroit River between the Harbortown property and the former Uniroyal Tire site. A 1.25-mile RiverWalk connects Stroh's River Place and Mt. Elliott Park. The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy currently plays a large role in strengthening this riverfront recreation space.

Funding and administrative recommendations:

Mt. Elliott Park is likely too large and active for small organizations or park adopters to assume sole responsibility. This park already benefits from RiverFront Conservancy involvement. A sustainable management model for this park will likely include continued involvement from the RiverFront Conservancy and other organizations as described in the beginning of this section.

Owen Park

Classification: Neighborhood Park, closed; receives no maintenance or improvements
Size: 8.3 acres
2006 Condition: poor

Owen Park is currently listed as "closed" to maintenance services by the GSD. However, this site receives heavy use from residents fishing from the shore and has the potential to become a stronger city asset. The site extends to the riverfront from Jefferson Avenue, providing a rare view of the Detroit River from Jefferson Avenue. As the park has been listed as closed by the GSD, current users must jump a curb off Jefferson with their vehicles and traverse an informal dirt road to access the waterfront. Apartment buildings and a full-service grocery store surround it, and Indian Village neighborhood is nearby, across Jefferson.

Funding and administrative recommendations

Owen Park is likely too large and active for small organizations or park adopters to assume sole responsibility. A sustainable management model for this park will likely include securing an easement to protect public access to the riverfront, involvement from the RiverFront Conservancy, and other organizations as described in the beginning of this section. Much of the park space can be used for habitat restoration, in addition to improving fishing access for the established fisher population.

Gabriel Richard Park

Size: 22.87 acres
Classification: Neighborhood Park
2006 Condition: fair

Gabriel Richard Park is a city focal point due to its adjacency to the MacArthur Bridge to Belle Isle. The RiverFront Conservancy constructed and maintains a waterfront pathway, a plaza, public restrooms, and a pavilion. A high use bus stop is located nearby on Jefferson. The park facilities are adjacent to the vacated US Armory.

Funding and administrative recommendations

Gabriel Richard Park already benefits from RiverFront Conservancy involvement. A sustainable management model for this park will likely include continued involvement from the RiverFront Conservancy and other organizations as described in the beginning of this section. Maintenance costs would be about \$195,000 per year if maintained to the DRD's recommended standards (see Table 2.4).

Erma Henderson Park and Marina

Classification: Community Park and Marina
 Size: 33.66 acres
 2006 Condition: fair

Erma Henderson Park is a large riverfront park with 5 distinct areas: marina, east playlot, north playlot, main lawn, and riverfront promenade. The main lawn gently slopes down from East Jefferson to a riverfront promenade. The north playlot has a basketball court and play equipment. The east playlot is cut off from the rest of the site, but has access to the riverfront and historic Berry

Subdivision. Erma Henderson is regularly used for fishing and socializing at the waterfront.

The marina has 243 new floating slips, a parking lot, and marina central building. The mayor's office recently announced that the marina runs a \$540,000 annual deficit and would not reopen in 2012.³¹ However, after a backlash by boaters who use the marina, the city council announced that it would remain open.³²

Funding and administrative recommendations

The marina has revenue generating potential. A well-managed public-private partnership could benefit boaters and the city budget. Boaters who protested the marina closing claimed that the city has mismanaged it.³³ A successful manager might negate the need for city subsidy of the marina. A sustainable management model for this park may include involvement from the RiverFront Conservancy and other organizations as described in the beginning of this section. Between the park and marina, this site has high potential as a neighborhood and regional asset and could possibly draw the support needed to form its own conservancy. Maintenance costs for the parkland are about \$90,000 per year if maintained to the DRD's recommended standards (see Table 2.4), not including the marina. Such resources might come from a multitude of sources, such as local boating clubs and Indian Village neighborhood groups.

Figure 8.11 Owen Park, road access to riverfront



Photo Credit: Eric Dennis

Figure 8.12 RiverWalk facilities in Gabriel Richard Park



Photo Credit: Eric Dennis

Figure 8.13 Erma Henderson Marina



Photo Credit: Eric Dennis

Figure 8.14 Erma Henderson walking path



Photo Credit: Eric Dennis

Potential parks

The Lower Eastside can benefit from increased park spaces. Parks encourage the physical and mental well-being of urban residents and surrounding neighborhoods. Park benefits include active and passive recreation options and increased property values yielding higher property tax revenues. Offering safe recreational options can enhance Detroit's outdoor amenities and help residents reach personal health goals and to enjoy the outdoors.³⁴

Potential parks between Jefferson Avenue and Mack Avenue

Residents of many areas of the Lower Eastside cannot access a mini park within 1/2 mile. Mini parks differ from neighborhood and community parks because of the recreational amenities that they provide a nearby neighborhood. A mini park tends to cater to the neighborhood's distinctive character rather than provide general amenities for an anonymous population.

The mini municipal parks, Pennsylvania–St. Paul Park, Brinket-Hibbard Park, and Kiwanis Club No.1 Park have closed in the past six years. If nearby residents express desire for a mini park, an alternative management entity could revitalize one of these properties. Another organization can adopt the parks individually or purchase the land

from the DRD. As Chapter 6 highlights, the GSD could initiate an Adopt-A-Park endowment fund that could be used in this area. If not operated by the DRD, a citywide foundation or an Eastside non-profit, such as the Warren Conner Development Coalition, can support this fund and provide park adopters with starting maintenance funds. Lastly, non-profit organizations, as described previously in this chapter, can partner with corporations to care for a particular park. Together, they can sponsor cleanup days, assemble volunteer groups, and create mini park spaces. According to the DRD standards, the total maintenance costs would range from approximately \$1,400 to \$9,700 per year (see Table 2.4). Though, if the new management entity wishes to adopt a mini park at a different level than the DRD, at the maximum maintenance level, the total cost would be \$1,600, though at a minimum level, the costs could total about \$1,000 (see Table 6.3 and Appendix C for further cost information). Another alternative would be for a private entity to create a new park in the northeast section of the study area as highlighted in Figure 8.3. For instance, if the Hantz Farms development moves forward, Hantz Farms could designate public park space that would also complement the development.

Potential parks between Jefferson Avenue and the Detroit River

As Chapter 5 and Figures 8.2 and 8.4 suggest, sufficient park amenities exist in this area to serve

residents. Parks systems can generate revenue through increased tourism, especially along the riverfront area. The Detroit riverfront can help shape the city's identity and could become a signature attraction, thus attracting businesses and tourists to the Lower Eastside. Additionally, these parks could support environmental protection and community development.

Harbor Hill Marina and St. Jean Boat Launch

The Lower Eastside marina district separates the Jefferson Village Subdivision development from the Detroit River. Significant infrastructure investment is developing this into a new residential area.

Redeveloping the Harbor Hill Marina and St. Jean Boat Launch as a public amenity could increase riverfront access. The redevelopment of the marina and/or boat launch could promote recreational use for both tourists and residents. The St. Jean Boat Launch is set up for launching boats and parking. Currently un-maintained green space between the parking area and the river could be developed for passive recreation uses.

Funding and administrative recommendations

A sustainable management model for this park may include involvement from the RiverFront Conservancy and other organizations as described in the section on current riverfront parks. Additionally, marina redevelopment could benefit the nearby Jefferson Village subdivision.

Further, riverfront access can encourage economic development, and this site could interest the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC). The St. Jean Boat Launch is a rare public launch facility in this area. Local boating or fishing clubs may also want to support efforts to increase use of the site.

Harding Street Canal

The most convenient water access from the Jefferson Village subdivision is to a small canal located between Harding and St. Clair Streets. The canal serves as an informal gathering space and fishing area. Land redevelopment around the canal to create a park and fishing site could provide recreational opportunities for the neighborhood and visitors from elsewhere. The canal is a unique water asset with the potential to attract visitors from across the region.

Funding and administrative recommendations

A sustainable management model for this park may include involvement from the RiverFront Conservancy and other organizations interested in riverfront development, as described previously in this chapter. The GREEN Master Plan proposes a RiverWalk bridge over the mouth of the canal. Additionally, DEGC may desire to support infrastructure development to provide connections between the riverfront and the residential district. Sinbad's Restaurant and Marina, Kean's Marina, and St. Clair Yacht sales border the canal mouth; these businesses may have interest in the economic and

Figure 8.15 St. Jean Boat Launch



Photo Credit: Eric Dennis

Figure 8.16 Harding Street Canal



Photo Credit: Eric Dennis

Figure 8.17 Hurlbut Memorial Gate



Photo Credit: Wikipedia Commons

neighborhood development potential of creating an attractive and safe park around the canal.

Water Works Park

The Water Works Park water intake and treatment facility is owned by the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD). It has been in continuous use since 1879 and once was the site of a public park. However, the park has been closed for decades due to security concerns. Water Works Park II, an effort to re-open areas of the park, was halted after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. However, the riverfront area is occasionally opened for public events such as hydroplane boat races.³⁵ DWSD may remain willing to open small portions permanently to reintroduce the public to this historic park. This area of the waterfront has been incorporated into expansion plans for the RiverWalk.

Funding and administrative recommendations

A sustainable management model for this park may include involvement from the RiverFront Conservancy and other organizations as described in the section on current riverfront parks. This park could draw significant financial support from a variety of public and philanthropic sources. A trust exists for perpetual Water Works Park maintenance, created under the will of Chauncy Hurlbut, which supported the Hurlbut Memorial Gate restoration in 2007. Additionally, Water Works Park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and qualifies for related grant funding.³⁶

Greenways

RiverWalk East

Classification: Off street

Size: 1.2 miles

The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy's East RiverWalk encompasses 3.5 miles of riverfront between Joe Louis Arena and Gabriel Richard Park. Within the study area, the Conservancy manages 1.2 miles of greenways. This calculation includes the walking and biking paths within Mt. Elliott Park and Gabriel Richard Park.

Funding and administrative recommendations

Through the East Riverfront capital campaign and significant support from foundations, the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy has provided funding for building, operating, maintaining, and programming for Detroit's East Riverfront.³⁷ The final phase of the East Riverfront construction is a \$35 million initiative funded through the Conservancy's endowment, the East Riverfront capital campaign, and foundation support.³⁸ This final phase includes development of the public access portion of the Uniroyal site after the contaminated site has been remediated.³⁹ The Uniroyal site will provide the connection between Mt. Elliott Park and Gabriel Richard Park, thus connecting the RiverWalk to Belle Isle through the MacArthur Bridge.

The DRD should continue to work with the Conservancy by facilitating public access easements on city-owned park land and negotiating riverfront access with private landowners. The Potential Greenways section of this chapter outlines the planned extension of the RiverWalk to connect more riverfront parks along the Lower Eastside's shoreline.

Conner Creek Greenway

Classification: On street
Size: 0.9 miles

The 0.9-mile section of the Conner Creek greenway within the study area includes bike lanes in each direction of St. Jean Street from Mack to Jefferson.

Funding and administrative recommendations

The Detroit Eastside Community Collaborative coordinated the capital financing for this greenway project. To ensure continued use, the Detroit Department of Public Works (DPW) should maintain a regular street-sweeping schedule. Greenway improvements are planned for the 0.2-mile portion of Conner Creek greenway between Kercheval Street and East Jefferson Avenue. The Potential Greenways section of this chapter outlines additional details of this planned enhancement. The planned expansion of the greenway will depend on philanthropic, foundation, and government support (through state and federal transportation

grants).⁴⁰ In addition, city departments such as the DRD, DPW, and GSD can provide partnership opportunities. Finally, DECC could consider a partnership or merging with the Detroit Greenways Coalition or a city-wide Greenways Conservancy as described in Chapter 6.

Erma Henderson Pathway

Classification: Off street
Size: 0.8 miles

This pathway provides 0.8 miles of walking and bike paths throughout the park.

Funding and administrative recommendations

These paths are currently maintained by the GSD. In the future, the RiverFront Conservancy can serve as a potential funder for greenway beautification, maintenance, and future construction. If the planned extension of the East Riverfront, described in the following section were to be built, it would connect the Lower Eastside's other riverfront parks. This would create a more expansive system of greenways for Lower Eastside residents, thus providing health benefits in addition to the economic benefits of the RiverWalk as a regional attraction. The Conservancy could also partner with other parks stakeholders, such as local boating clubs and Indian village neighborhood groups in order to engage Lower Eastside residents and park users. The cost implications of the RiverWalk extension are described in the following section of

this chapter.

Potential Greenways

Chapter 5 of this plan suggests priority greenways for development. This analysis was based on the proximity of these greenways to amenities, such as parks, schools, shopping areas, and medical centers, as well as the population density of the neighborhoods served by the greenway. The RiverWalk's Eastern extension, which runs through the study area, has priority in this study area based on the Chapter 5 criteria. When fully implemented, the East RiverWalk will connect downtown Detroit to Grosse Pointe Park through a continuous, 7.4 mile greenway.⁴¹ Current planning by the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy extends to Gabriel Richard Park; however, this extension to Grosse Pointe would provide Eastside residents with additional riverfront access.⁴² The East RiverWalk extension would provide health benefits through increased exercise opportunities and economic benefits since the RiverWalk draws visitors from around the region (see Chapter 4). The three stages of the East RiverWalk expansion are estimated to cost a total of \$146.3 million.⁴³ Within the Lower Eastside study area, the project cost is approximately \$56 million.⁴⁴ The funding will likely come from the Conservancy's East Riverfront capital campaign, in addition to donations, and federal transportation grant funding administered through Michigan's Department of Transportation and the various state and federal partners described in Chapter 6 such as the DNR,

EPA, and Army Corps of Engineers.

In addition to the RiverWalk extension, five planned greenway implementation and enhancement projects exist in this study area. As outlined in the GREEN Master Plan, these five potential greenways include the Elmwood Connector, the Belt Line Greenway, the Kercheval Greenway, the East Jefferson Streetscape, and the Conner Creek Greenway.⁴⁵ The GREEN Master Plan estimates the project costs for these five potential greenways, including a cost range dependent on the extent of greenway infrastructure installed.

Elmwood Connector

The Elmwood Connector is a proposed 1.5 mile off street link between the proposed Beltline greenway in the Eastside study area to the Dequindre Cut near the Eastern Market District.⁴⁶ By connecting the Lower Eastside to the Dequindre Cut and downtown area, this link greatly expands the non-motorized transportation options of Eastside residents. This project is estimated to cost between \$2.2 million and \$5.2 million, and will use existing off street paths surrounding the high-density residential developments in Elmwood Park.⁴⁷

Belt Line Greenway

The Belt Line Greenway is a proposed 2-mile off street greenway, using a former railroad corridor to connect the existing RiverWalk to Vernor Avenue.⁴⁸

This project will include pocket parks, parking, storm water management systems, and natural areas. This project is estimated to cost between \$3.3 million and \$7.5 million to construct.⁴⁹

Kercheval Greenway

The Kercheval Greenway is a proposed 2.3-mile on street greenway following Kercheval Street.⁵⁰ Since the street has four lanes and is below traffic capacity, ample room exists for introducing bicycle lanes, stormwater management infrastructure, and other pedestrian amenities.⁵¹ This route will provide access to the downtown and Eastern Market areas, and it will connect the Belt Line Greenway to the Conner Creek Greenway. This project is estimated to cost between \$3.5 and \$20.4 million.⁵²

East Jefferson Streetscape

The East Jefferson Streetscape is a 5.9-mile on street greenway project that will transform East Jefferson Street into a complete street, facilitating automobile and pedestrian use of the street.⁵³ Improvements will include bike lanes, lane reductions, landscaping, and center medians. This project is estimated to cost between \$27.1 million and \$77.8 million.⁵⁴

Conner Creek Greenway Enhancements (St. Jean)

The enhancements to Conner Creek Greenway will include a 0.2-mile segment of St. Jean Street, between Kercheval Street and East Jefferson Street.⁵⁵ While St. Jean Street already has bicycle lanes, enhancements to the Conner Creek Greenway will include widening a shared use path, intersection improvements, and lighting. This project will cost between \$0.4 million and \$1.5 million.⁵⁶

These potential greenways can connect riverfront parks to Lower Eastside neighborhoods, as well as downtown and Eastern Market. Riverfront greenways can be coordinated through the riverfront park conservancy previously mentioned or the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy. In addition to the riverfront, a citywide greenway conservancy, as outlined in Chapter 6, could provide greenway advocacy, management and fundraising. This citywide greenway conservancy could also provide the DRD and GSD with a single organization with which to coordinate, creating more stability and consistency in Detroit greenways and parks planning.

Regarding funding, federal opportunities outlined in Chapter 6, such as the U.S. DOT's SAFETEA-LU, in addition to state level resources through Michigan's Department of Transportation and Department of Natural Resources will play a large role in

greenways funding. These opportunities often require a funding match, which could be provided through partnerships with a citywide greenways conservancy, existing greenway organizations, or philanthropic organizations.

Conclusion

Green spaces in the Lower Eastside vary greatly in type, quality, and use. In this sparsely populated area with abundant vacant land, the maintenance of small parks and playgrounds is inefficient and does not draw users. With limited GSD and DRD resources, the Lower Eastside may largely depend on non-municipal groups, such as the RiverFront Conservancy, for financial and administrative stewardship of its parks and greenways. Some amenities away from the waterfront such as Butzel Park and Family Center and Mollicone Park, have extensive resident support to remain operational.

Local stakeholders along East Jefferson Avenue and Detroit's riverfront can facilitate the enhancement of parks and greenways on the Lower Eastside. The riverfront parks and greenways provide economic benefits to the study area through attracting regional users. By extending the current greenways network, Lower Eastside residents will gain access to citywide amenities, such as Eastern Market and the downtown area. While Jefferson Avenue is a major barrier to accessing riverfront parks, a riverfront greenway can ease this burden by

connecting the Conner Creek Greenway, located at the study area's east boundary, to Mt. Elliott Park. If local stakeholder organizations collaborate under a unified set of goals or through citywide parks or greenway conservancies, the Lower Eastside can be an impressive waterfront recreational attraction with benefits that stretch beyond the park boundaries.

Notes

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Appendix A: Map Sources

Data layers for Chapter 2:

Data layers common to all Chapter 2 maps:

Recreation centers: Detroit Recreation Department, *Recreation Centers*, <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/RecreationDepartment/RecreationCenters.aspx>

Parks: Data Driven Detroit and DRD, *Master Plan Appendix B – Park Condition and Capacity Reports*, (Detroit Recreation Department, 2006)

Detroit city boundary: City of Detroit, *Download GIS Files*, (Planning and Development Department, Accessed January, 2012), <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/PlanningDevelopmentDepartment/Planning/InformationServiceandMapping/CommunityInformationandMapping/AdvancedMaps/DownloadGISFiles.aspx>

Detroit River: Ting Ma, clipped from census tracts data from ESRI Tiger shapefiles 2010

Interstates: Isaac Gilman, selected from Data Driven Detroit, *Detroit Roads*, received January 2012

Highways: Isaac Gilman, selected from Data Driven Detroit, *Detroit Roads*, received January 2012

Major roads: Isaac Gilman, selected from Data Driven Detroit, *Detroit Roads*, received January 2012

Figure 2.1 Municipal parks, greenways, and recreation centers

Current greenways: created by Isaac Gilman with guidance from Todd Scott's updated Google map

Figure 2.4 Current and proposed greenways

Current/planned/conceptual greenways: created by Isaac Gilman with guidance from Todd Scott's updated Google map, the Detroit Greenways Coalition, and the Detroit Greenways Map created by the Detroit Greenways Coalition (2009)

Data layers for Chapter 5:

Data layers common to all Chapter 5 maps:

Detroit city boundary: City of Detroit, *Download GIS Files*, (Planning and Development Department, Accessed January, 2012), <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/PlanningDevelopmentDepartment/Planning/InformationServiceandMapping/CommunityInformationandMapping/AdvancedMaps/DownloadGISFiles.aspx>

Detroit River: Ting Ma, clipped from census tracts data from ESRI Tiger shapefiles 2010

Interstates: Isaac Gilman, selected from Data Driven Detroit, *Detroit Roads*, received January 2012

Highways: Isaac Gilman, selected from Data Driven Detroit, *Detroit Roads*, received January 2012

Major roads: Isaac Gilman, selected from Data Driven Detroit, *Detroit Roads*, received January 2012

Figure 5.1 Existing greenways and service areas

Current greenways: created by Isaac Gilman with guidance from Todd Scott's updated Google map

Greenways service areas: created by Ting Ma from current greenways layer

Recreation centers: Detroit Recreation Department, *Recreation Centers*, <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/RecreationDepartment/RecreationCenters.aspx>

Parks: Data Driven Detroit and DRD, *Master Plan Appendix B – Park Condition and Capacity Reports*, (Detroit Recreation Department, 2006)

Population density: population data from Detroit Census 2010; census tracts data from ESRI Tiger shapefiles 2010

Figure 5.2 Planned greenways and their service areas using service radii that reflect population density

Planned and conceptual greenways: created by Isaac Gilman with guidance from Todd Scott's updated Google map, the Detroit Greenways Coalition, and the Detroit Greenways Map created by the Detroit Greenways Coalition (2009)

Current greenways: created by Isaac Gilman with guidance from Todd Scott's updated Google map

Greenways service areas: created by Ting Ma

Recreation centers: Detroit Recreation Department, *Recreation Centers*, <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/RecreationDepartment/RecreationCenters.aspx>

Parks: Data Driven Detroit and DRD, *Master Plan Appendix B – Park Condition and Capacity Reports*, (Detroit Recreation Department, 2006)

Population density: population data from Detroit Census 2010; census tracts data from ESRI Tiger shapefiles 2010

Figure 5.3 Prioritized planned greenways

Priority greenways: created by Ting Ma

Recreation centers: Detroit Recreation Department, *Recreation Centers*, <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/RecreationDepartment/RecreationCenters.aspx>

Shopping centers (2003)/ medical centers (2003)/ libraries (2006)/ public schools (2006): Planning & Development Department <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/PlanningDevelopmentDepartment/>

[Planning/InformationServiceandMapping/CommunityInformationandMapping/AdvancedMaps/DownloadGISFiles.aspx](http://www.detroitmi.gov/Planning/InformationServiceandMapping/CommunityInformationandMapping/AdvancedMaps/DownloadGISFiles.aspx)

Current/proposed greenways: created by Isaac Gilman with guidance from Todd Scott's updated Google map, the Detroit Greenways Coalition, and the Detroit Greenways Map created by the Detroit Greenways Coalition (2009)

Parks: Data Driven Detroit and DRD, *Master Plan Appendix B – Park Condition and Capacity Reports*, (Detroit Recreation Department, 2006)

Population density: population data from Detroit Census 2010; census tracts data from ESRI Tiger shapefiles 2010

Figure 5.5 Priority census tracts for adding recreational amenities

Priority census tracts: created by Ting Ma

Recreation centers: Detroit Recreation Department, *Recreation Centers*, <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/RecreationDepartment/RecreationCenters.aspx>

Multiple purpose courts/Baseball fields/Soccer fields/Tennis courts/ Football courts/Basketball courts/Volleyball courts/ Play equipment: DRD, *Master Plan Appendix B – Park Condition and Capacity Reports*, (Detroit Recreation Department, 2006)

Population proportion (under 18): population data from Detroit Census 2010; census tracts data from ESRI Tiger shapefiles 2010

Figure 5.6 Priority areas for additional mini parks and neighborhood parks indicated by red outline

Mini parks/neighborhood parks/parks: Data Driven Detroit and DRD, *Master Plan Appendix B – Park Condition and Capacity Reports*, (Detroit Recreation Department, 2006)

Mini park/neighborhood park service areas: created by Ting Ma from mini parks and neighborhood parks layers

Population density: population data from Detroit Census 2010; census tracts data from ESRI Tiger shapefiles 2010

Figure 5.7 Potential closings for mini parks and neighborhood parks indicated by service area overlap

Mini parks/neighborhood parks/parks: Data Driven Detroit and DRD, *Master Plan Appendix B – Park Condition and Capacity Reports*, (Detroit Recreation Department, 2006)

Mini parks/neighborhood parks service area: created by Ting Ma from mini parks and neighborhood parks layers
Service area overlap: created by Ting Ma from mini

parks and neighborhood park service area layers

Population density: population data from Detroit Census 2010; census tracts data from ESRI Tiger shapefiles 2010

Figure 5.8 Possible priority areas of the city for new parks: areas with high population density and low levels of service

Priority census tracts: created by Ting Ma

Population density: population data from Detroit Census 2010; census tracts data from ESRI Tiger shapefiles 2010

Acres per 1000 population: created by Ting Ma from parks layer and population density layer

Data layers for Chapter 7:

Layers common to all Chapter 7 maps:

Current greenways: created by Isaac Gilman with guidance from Todd Scott’s updated Google map, the Detroit Greenways Coalition, and the Detroit Greenways Map created by the Detroit Greenways Coalition (2009)

Parks: Data Driven Detroit and DRD, *Master Plan Appendix B – Park Condition and Capacity Reports*, (Detroit Recreation Department, 2006)

Roads: Data Driven Detroit, *Detroit Roads*, received January 2012

Figure 7.1 Southwest Detroit study area with existing parks and greenways

Used common layers

Figure 7.2 Current mini park service area with buffers

Mini park service areas: created by Ting Ma from mini park layer

Figure 7.3 Current neighborhood park service area with buffers

Neighborhood park service areas: created by Ting Ma from neighborhood park layer

Figure 7.4 Current community park service area with buffers

Community park service areas: created by Ting Ma from community park layer

Figure 7.5 Current greenways service area with buffers

Current greenways service areas: created by Ting Ma from current greenways layer

Figure 7.6 Current and conceptual greenways with priority

Conceptual/priority greenways: created by Isaac Gilman with guidance from Todd Scott’s updated Google map

Data layers for Chapter 8:

Data layers common to all Chapter 8 maps:

Current greenways: created by Isaac Gilman with guidance from Todd Scott’s updated Google map, the Detroit Greenways Coalition, and the Detroit Greenways Map created by the Detroit Greenways Coalition (2009)

Parks: Data Driven Detroit and DRD, *Master Plan Appendix B – Park Condition and Capacity Reports*, (Detroit Recreation Department, 2006)

Roads: Data Driven Detroit, *Detroit Roads*, received January 2012

Figure 8.1 Lower Eastside study area

Used common layers

Figure 8.2 Current mini park service area with buffers

Mini park service areas: created by Ting Ma from mini park layer

Figure 8.3 Current neighborhood park service area with buffers

Neighborhood park service areas: created by Ting Ma from neighborhood park layer

Figure 8.4 Current community park service area with buffers

Community park service areas: created by Ting Ma from community park layer

Figure 8.5 Current greenways service area with buffers

Current greenway service areas: created by Ting Ma from current greenways layer

Figure 8.6 Current and conceptual greenways with priority

Conceptual/priority greenways: created by Isaac Gilman with guidance from Todd Scott's updated Google map



Appendix B. Focus Group Meetings

Four focus groups were by various facilitators listed below on behalf of the Detroit Food and Fitness Collaborative's effort to gain knowledge about a variety of issues related to the built environment in Detroit. Focus Groups were held at Storehouse of Hope Client Choice Emergency Food Pantry (in the North End), the Brightmoor Client Choice Emergency Pantry, the Warren-Conner, Vanguard Youth remedial workshop Development Center, and Triumph Hospital. The focus groups were February 9th, 15th, 16th & 28th 2012.

**Vulnerable Populations Focus Group
North End & Brightmoor Neighborhoods
Facilitator Linda S. Campbell
February 9th, 2012**

Participants:

North End: 11 participants
Brightmoor: 12 participants
23 participants total

On a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being very important and 1 being not important at all, how important is regular physical activity or exercise to you?

- Rating of 10 = 6 people North End; 9 people Brightmoor
- Rating of 9 = 3 people North End; 1 person Brightmoor
- Rating of 8 = 3 people North End

What if anything, do you usually do for exercise or physical activity? (Brightmoor & North End combined)

- 9 people mentioned that they walk (around the community or as a mode of transportation--to a destination and back)
- 5 people mentioned that they bike (4 people in Brightmoor group said they are bike riders)
- 2 mentioned basketball
- 1 mentioned yoga
- 3 mentioned strength training/gym

Where do you usually exercise?

- 10 mentioned in neighborhood (3 North End ; 7 Brightmoor)
- 3 mentioned at home (1 North End ; 2 Brightmoor)
- 1 mentioned gym; 1 Emerson Park; 1 rec center for basketball (all Brightmoor)
- 1 mentioned Northland Mall (Brightmoor)

Is safety a factor in whether or not you are physically active?

- 9 people said yes in the North End. Some comments:

"In the North End, everybody is walking. As everyone has seen on Woodward, cars jump the curb—you have to be careful and keep your eyes peeled.", "Traffic dangers.", "You also watch where you walk, sidewalks are so uneven and icy.", "When the weather's bad you have to be careful of ice.", "And there are no lights on Holbrook at night. When the streetlights come on its dark down Holbrook.", "Up and down Second Ave, there are no lights.",

"Poor lighting is a problem."

- 10 people said yes in the North End. Some comments:

"Recently there were stray dogs. Lighting is an issue. We already deal with deer but the dogs are the worst. Pits and bigger dogs.", "Cars – folks driving fast", "I have spray and a stick. I don't let nobody by me.", "Basically dogs and cars.", "People fly through stop signs.", "Some of the abandoned buildings are an issue - sometimes I walk down Schoolcraft. Sometimes if the fellows are outside of the businesses, then I can walk down to Evergreen. But there are those abandoned buildings; you don't know what's behind the trees. So I tend to walk in the street to give myself some running room."

Is weather a factor in whether you are physically active?

- North End: 4 people mentioned yes and that they dress for the weather or sometimes don't go out in the cold

"For people with disabilities with wheelchairs and hover-rounds safety and weather is a factor."

- Brightmoor: 8 people mentioned yes. Comments include:

"If it's really icy, I'll walk in the building – 3 floors up 3 floors down.", "For me it may be but for younger people it may not be. Abandoned houses don't have salt or shoveled snow on the sidewalk in front of them.", "Weather doesn't bother me unless I catch a cold.", "If it rains you can't play basketball. So it would be hard sometimes.", "If it snows heavily, you can't go down the sidewalks, you don't want to walk in the street but sometimes you have

to.” “I have asthma so it always affects me.”

Are there any other things that either get in the way of, or prevent you from getting physical activity that you would like to share? (North End and Brightmoor combined)

- 2 mentioned physical pain or disabilities
- 4 mentioned illness
- 1 mentioned personal safety
- 4 mentioned sometimes too tired/busy
- 1 mentioned lack of child care
- 1 mentioned transportation

Do you prefer to be physically active by yourself, in small groups (2-5 people) or a large group? (North End and Brightmoor combined)

- 8 mentioned small group
 - 7 mentioned either/no preference
 - 4 mentioned by myself
 - 1 mentioned large group
 - Comments: “Depending on the activity – if you need motivation, I need a larger group, but if you are trying to exercise to burn carbs, a small group.”
- About how often would you say use the city’s parks and recreation centers for physical activity?

Is there anything that might encourage you to use local parks and recreation centers more often for physical activity?

- North End comments: “I use Considine Recreation Center” , “In the summertime I use the parks on a daily basis but in the winter I use the recreation centers”, “I haven’t been to the park in years – it’s too dangerous”,

“I “live” at Belle Isle”, “I go to the park whenever I can get there, especially in the summertime”, “I might go to the park before the recreation center”, “I haven’t been to the park in years”.

- Brightmoor comments: “3-4 times – Rouge Park”, “I use Rouge too, this time of the year maybe 1-2 times, but in the summer a lot.”, “Me and my grandchildren usually go out to Belle Isle – mostly in good weather.”, “I frequent city parks when it’s hot outside and when you want to get away.”, “I usually take my kids to Rouge Park to sled – but we didn’t get enough snow this year.”, “I cannot remember the last time I used the park or recreation center.”, “Most of the time I go up to Central School on the west side and walk the track.”, “An indoor recreation center I used to attend they closed OSheay on Capital and Greenfield. Outdoors I always use Stoepel Park. In the summertime we play football and basketball.”, “I don’t use the recreation centers or parks.”, “I don’t use the parks or recreation centers. My kids go to Joe Dumars.” (Private fitness center), “I walk from here to Cromwell. And I walk Emerson Park, Stoepel Park and Belle Isle. And at I - 59 we camp a lot. They have a 12-mile bike trail and I ride the whole thing.”

To improve parks, North End participants mention:

- Cleaning them up (removing glass from ground)
- Adding security (vandalism, kids who start trouble)
- Add something fun to do
- Brightmoor participants mention:
- More activities in general and activities for

seniors at recreation centers and in Brightmoor. “People want variety of activities so they can keep their minds active.”

- Increase funding for recreation centers in the city. “We used to have some beautiful recreation centers. I’m looking at it from the standpoint that it needs to be upgraded. More people would come out to something that looks nice.” “The one that is on Rosa Parks and 12th – Joseph Walker William Center – if we had something like that, everybody would come.” (This center has a number of organized activities and also a major swimming pool with lots of meeting space)

Do you think that you would be physically active or more physically active if there was an organized fitness program in your neighborhood?

- All answered “yes” in both neighborhoods except 1 person in Brightmoor who said “no”.

If the gym in a neighborhood school were open to the community after school hours, do you think that you would go there for physical activity or exercise?

- All answered yes in Brightmoor. All but 2 people answered “yes” in North End.
- Would need to have security (2 mentions)
- Would need to have swimming pool

Are you familiar with the greenways concept? Have you used a greenway before? If so, how often do you use them?

- In North End participants were not familiar with greenways and were given an explanation.

Appendix B. Focus Group Meetings

- In Brightmoor, 4 people were familiar with greenways and group was given an explanation. Two people mentioned being on one before (to bike and walk).

Are you familiar with the complete streets concept? If so, what do you think are the benefits and drawbacks to complete streets?

- No participants in either focus group were aware of complete streets, but were given an explanation.

Would you like to have complete streets in the North End?

(All said “yes” in North End. When asked about the benefits North End participants responded):

- Everybody wins
- It would be nice for people to ride bikes
- For the people who are afraid to come out, you’d have your own lane for the hover round
- They like to get out too, they don’t like to just sit around
- Right now they are in the middle of the street riding up and down
- Somebody got killed right up on Warren and John C. Lodge this way

When asked about the benefits Brightmoor participants responded:

- Beneficial to people on these motor scooters
- Children
- Blind/visually impaired
- Disabled – people who can’t walk
- I won’t trip and fall – I saw in the news the guy

fell in the hole nearby.

- There wouldn’t be as much traffic.
- It would be lit up better.
- It might control the speed of cars.
- You might need some people to stop the cars – somebody with a sign – like a safety guard.

When North End asked about any negatives to complete streets:

- They wouldn’t use them
- The space that they take up
- Speed - people have to slow down, the speed limit would have to go down for cars

Before we conclude, is there anything else that you would like to add?

- “We need to get educated on the importance of regulating diabetes, heart disease, especially for African Americans and how exercise can help us address those illnesses.”
- “I want an affordable YMCA – they have one in Detroit, downtown, and we can’t afford it.”
- “Really the Y downtown is just a country club for corporate people. We ain’t down there.”
- “And the Boys and Girls club is where you have to go.”
- “A school on Puritan – they changed it to a charter school and then closed it down. That school should be open, I paid that much taxes and that building is closed. You shouldn’t close down something viable in the community. I see the kids hanging out and you wonder why. You got a country club Y downtown; you got to pay big bucks down there.”

- “I would like to see something outside – some basketball courts.”
- “Organized activities for the kids.”
- “They don’t have nothing in the neighborhood for these kids.”
- “Some self-defense classes.”
- “They need more police input – very seldom do you see police over here.”
- “Particularly the kids, they need something to do.”

Greenway Focus Group

Facilitator: Libby Levy

Note takers: Isaac Gilman and Eric Dennis

February 15, 2012

Favorite place in Detroit and why?

RiverWalk:

- Free Physical and non Physical Activities
- Water
- Opportunities to walk
- Relaxing

Belle Isle:

- Relaxing atmosphere
- Breeze
- Used to have more activities.
- “My home”

Are you familiar with the greenways concept? Are you familiar with any local greenways?

- Most were tentatively “somewhat” familiar (75%).
- About half were familiar with one or more

specific Greenways

- RiverWalk, Dequindre Cut, Conner Creek, AB Ford Park (the walkways in AB Ford were considered a greenway though they are not part of the official greenway system that the Detroit Greenway Coalition recognizes)
- It was not always clear which greenway participants were referring to. One participant referred to the trails and boardwalk at A. B. Ford Park as a greenway. Others seemed to use “RiverWalk” to refer to Maheras Gentry Park, as well as the Riverfront Conservancy Riverwalk.

Have you used a greenway before? If so, how do you use them?

- All have used greenways. There was still some confusion about what is a greenway
- At least one participant had used Dequindre Cut and Conner Creek, but did not realize those were greenways.

Walking groups VERY popular until it got cold (Esp. Conner Creek Greenway).

- Some very active walkers during summer months on RiverWalk or Maheras Gentry.
- Non-temperate weather (cold) a significant deterrent from sticking to walking routines.
- One participant lives “14 houses” away from A. B. Ford Park and uses it very frequently during summer for walking, passive enjoyment, socializing.
- One participant started a walking club at Maheras Gentry.
- Fresh Air

- Sunshine
- Benches
- Socializing/ people watching
- Walk dog
- No participants have used greenways for non-recreational travel.
- One participant had biked Dequindre Cut. Two other participants have gotten bikes stolen and not replaced them. The rest did not consider themselves bicyclists.

When you are on a greenway, who do you see using it?

- Often small children and families in summer (especially during Titan football practice in Conner Playfield along the Conner Creek Greenway).
- Tends to be younger kids
- Bike riding on RiverWalk & Dequindre Cut
- Fishermen and children fishing (Riverfront parks such as AB Ford, Mariners, etc.)
- Others in walking club
- Not many young people in parks, some small kids w/ parents in playgrounds
- Business has increased recently on RiverWalk and Dequindre Cut
- Conner Creek Greenway is never very busy, but does have steady light usage.
- Dequindre Cut used frequently
- Always a few people using Conner Creek Greenway
- Church baseball/basketball leagues for children often using the parks

What do you like/dislike about greenways? How are

they seen in your neighborhood?

- Overall, not many dislikes- Mostly just positive responses. “We want more!”
- Path to walk without worrying about cars.
- More relaxing than walking on street.
- Would like more.
- Location close to home is important.
- Large interest in expansion of greenways. Want a connection from Dequindre Cut to Mack Ave.
- Location away from cars (i.e. shared-use off-road path) is important.
- Much appreciated when there is a higher level of human activity. Feels safer, secure.
- Neighborhood folks generally like greenways.
- Dislike: “piece of steel” at entrance to Conner Creek Greenway – dangerous.
- Maheras Gentry has good programmed activities like walking clubs and even yoga groups.
- Has recently had a crowd of “riff-raff” that uses the park after dusk (when Belle Isle closes) and trashes it.
- Lots of activities for kids: Basketball tournaments and Baseball games
- People generally feel safer when greenways are well lit in the evenings. However, there is adequate lighting at Maheras Gentry Park and it doesn’t deter undesirable element.
- General concern about state of city’s parks. Not as safe or clean as they used to be.
- Belle Isle particularly loved, heavily used. But increasing trash and safety issues. Trash and litter.

How much is safety a factor in whether or not you use a greenway?

- HUGE. Safety is the biggest factor. Push for uniformed security or authority, i.e. “park rangers.”
- Weather also a factor. Not many willing to deal with snow.
- Trash does not seem to be a direct factor, but clean areas much appreciated.
- Want security guards
- Better lighting will help too

What would make you use the greenways, or make you use them more often?

- Safety
- Lighting
- Fitness classes
- Easy access.
- One participant would like to walk to Maheras Gentry from home, but does not feel safe walking through the neighborhood to get there.
- Bus stops at parks, particularly for elderly.
- Very little interest in walking on streets/ through neighborhoods for recreation.
- General desire to step out of home on to active, well-lit, safe greenway for recreational walking.
- Some did not like to walk alone, others didn’t mind
- Popular idea that many people don’t use parks because they don’t have restrooms. Port-a-potties not generally acceptable or accessible. Agreement that restrooms would have to be monitored to keep them clean and safe.
- Water (drinking) fountains.

What types of programming would you like to see on greenways and what would you participate in?

- Fitness classes
- Walkathon
- Posted mile markers (self-guided walk markers).
- Walking club
- Entertainment (calypso band, gospel band)
- Refreshment stand

For those of you that have used a greenway for biking, describe your experience riding on a greenway.

- Only one participant had biked a greenway (Dequindre Cut)
- Enjoyable
- Few participants know family member who bike greenways.
- Two participants had not replaced their bikes since the last time they were stolen.
- For those who ride bicycles, do you feel safer riding on a greenway than on a street? Explain.
- Off-road greenway viewed as much safer than street or sidewalk.
- Most participants have seen people using bike lanes.
- Consensus that bike lanes on street much less safe/desirable as off-road.
- Although if people are more responsible, riding on the street is ok
- Sidewalks were bumpy and not well maintained
- Bike lanes do help control traffic better, but they are for more advanced bicyclists.

Where do you usually engage in physical activity?

- Colman Young Recreation Center
- Water aerobics
- Exercise class
- A couple participants were unaware that the Coleman A Young Rec center had re-opened.
- Church workout room & gym
- Zumba and Ballroom dancing class
- Walking group
- A couple participants had active gym memberships. A couple had gym memberships in the past, but no longer.
- Exercise class at commercial center.

How often do you use city parks for physical activity? Recreation centers? Is there anything that would encourage you to use local parks and rec centers more often for physical activity?

- One participant walked Belle Isle every Sat during summer.
- A couple participants estimated once per week.
- A couple participants used parks around a couple times a summer.
- Summer= heavier use
- Not much professed use of “parks” – but “greenways” at Maheras Gentry and A.B. Ford very popular.
- At least one participant did not engage in physical activity, but brought children to parks regularly.
- Four participants used to participate in water aerobics once or twice per week at Colman Young Rec Center.
- Couple concerns about going out after dark

(Day classes preferable to a couple participants to evening classes so that they did not have to travel after dark.)

- Colman Young was the only center that any participants have used – though they were aware of a couple more nearby (i.e. Butzel for volunteer activities)
- Maintenance of facilities is an issue. (Pool is often down)
- Clean.
- Safe.
- Clean restrooms.
- Better signage for educating
- Restrooms a huge issue, people don't want to run home or "use a tree"

What is your understanding of complete streets?
Can you think of any benefits to complete streets?

- Nobody was aware of what "complete streets" meant.
- Once explained, everyone thought it was a good and important concept.
- Additional thoughts?
- Parks should have volunteer or paid park rangers
- Should have police authority
- Better to prevent people from littering than pick it up the next morning
- Enforce civility, educate about stewardship
- Belle Isle authorities used to enforce litter laws when at least one participant was a child.
- Not much interest in passive recreation. Walking, programming, activities valued.
- Citizens should take more pride
- No ideas about how to instill pride in derelict

users.

- How do you motivate kids these days?
- If parents are the key, how do you motivate them?
- Certain areas, streets, neighborhoods still have pride and are taken care of.
- One participant has experience with a small park across the street. Each neighbor cuts the grass directly across the street so that between the few houses, the grass is cut somewhat regularly.
- Maybe schools should get involved: community service
- Community groups do most clean-ups. Wayne county corrections department has done some.
- Safety: Law enforcement has to come. Citizens can't police some of the riffraff. Park rangers.
- Traffic has tripled in Maheras Gentry Park since they began kicking riffraff off Belle Isle at dusk.
- Rec centers: Keep them open.
- Add more Youth programs
- Not enough usage to keep many open, but need to concentrate youth activities, promote them and give young people something constructive to do.
- Rec centers wonderful daytime activities for retired people.
- Library programs also useful.
- Youth aren't using because they don't know about it – transportation, limited activities.
- Maybe rec centers need more things that kids like.
- Not promoted enough. People don't know about activities at rec centers.
- Not safe to ride in street.

- Kids not doing what they used to do – now into video games, etc.
- Parents need to kick them out the house.
- Some local neighborhoods culture of "kids having kids." Kids have too much attitude.
- Rec centers can have outreach to schools, churches to advertise programming.
- Get schools more involved in neighborhood would help out a lot.
- The city doesn't have dogcatchers anymore. Whatever happened to the dogcatchers? There are still dogs.
- There are big dangerous potholes in some streets and sidewalks.
- Sidewalks are very treacherous in the winter. Businesses and residents should shovel more.
- Everyone would like more greenways.
- Very important they be safe and clean

Complete Streets Focus Group

Facilitator: Todd Scott

**Note Takers: Isaac Gilman and Brent Schleck
February 16, 2012**

Introduction

Number of people attending: 15 including Facilitators and note takers

Note: Some people didn't know what complete streets are or what the focus group will be talking about. The scope of this session: The entire city, not just Osborn. The city's money for complete streets does not come out of general funds, but rather it comes out of a gas tax.

How do you get around in Detroit? How often do you drive? Bike? Bus? Other modes of transportation?

- Walking
- Drive, but sometimes walk when the weather is nice
- Walking along yields safety issues
- Some bike
- When doing outreach from block to block, walking
- Driving is very convenient, but would like to walk if it was more safe
- Some obstacles to walking
- Stray dogs
- Speeding traffic – specifically outer drive (overweight trucks that are flying)
- Difficult to cross streets like these
- Also, potholes caused by these large trucks
- Hoover and 7 mile – cars are speeding and there is increased 7 mile traffic due to the closing of 6 mile
- Yielding less walking
- One example is a woman that used to walk 4 miles everyday – now physical and safety issues keeps her from doing so
- Walking mostly for health reasons
- Very little walking at night
- Due to safety issues
- Lighting issues
- Fair – “like a combat zone” so they don’t stop at stop signs, just yield then go
- Lance to 7 mile around the law school area – at night it is a war zone – not safe for kids to walk home at night after studying

- Removal of blighted houses – big issue
- Not good for learning
- Need federal dollars to take care of the blighted homes – the city does not have the money to do anything about this
- Another issue is abandoned homes being broken back into after boarded up
- Blighted houses first obstacle
- In this focus group, this seems to be the primary concern
- Along with the nested effect of these houses (drugs, skip houses)
- Stray Dogs second obstacle
- Sidewalks that are not maintained (shoveled, cleaned, etc.) – Third obstacle
- Joy Road – cars going very very fast – Fourth obstacle
- Not local people – mostly non-local, young people
- We need to start taking action – not taking focus groups
- “beating a dead horse”
- Tree falls are a problem (fallen trees, roots uprooting sidewalks)

When or if you bike, what are biking conditions like?

- Try to stay off the sidewalks due to the maintenance issues (like tree roots and stray dogs)
- Did a good job with the handicapped ramps – but the roots of the trees make it very difficult
- Blight
- Recycle some houses to employ people

What are your thoughts about the Detroit public transportation system?

- Over crowding
- Disabled busses on the road (example is that some busses are not very well maintained)
- Safety issue of people standing around at bus stops
- Senior citizens - Snow removal at bus stops to ease the burden of crossing over plowed snow piles
- Priority seating for seniors

Do you know what a greenway is, and if so do you use them?

- It seems that everyone is using the greenways (like the RiverWalk, Dequindre Cut, etc.)
- It is clear that people want to see more of them
- No/few safety concerns on greenways like Milbank
- no traffic
- very few, if any, stray dogs
- Conner Creek Greenway – Can only get federal funding if the project is done in phases

Do you use the city parks and recreation centers? If not why?

- Everyone pretty much uses both parks and recreation centers
- Obstacles:
- Cut the grass
- Kids were coming out and beginning to play even before they were finished cutting
- Example of school principal having residents/parents come and volunteer to cut the grass

- around play areas
- One major issue of grass cutting is that you need to pick up the trash before cutting in order to keep from destroying your machine
- Pool open longer
- Replace or repair machines
- City needs to prioritize spending
- Example of a water main break immediately after repaving a street resulting in a patchy road
- Small parks
- Low maintenance parks
- Thoughts on increasing the local, small parks
- If a group takes down a fence that is owned by the city, then they get in trouble

Youth Focus Group

Facilitator: Linda S. Campbell

February 28, 2012

Introduction

The Detroit Food and Fitness Collaborative is working across many neighborhoods in Detroit with activities that improve the participation of community members in various activities. This evening I will be asking you questions about your physical fitness activities and the kind of physical fitness activities you would like to see in your neighborhood. We are particularly interested in what youth have to say about this issue.

The way a focus group works is as follows: I ask you a series of questions and you give your answer. There is no right or wrong answers, just your opinion or what you believe to be the case. With

your permission we will record the answers but will not use your name. The results of the focus group report will be shared with you at a later date. Before we start I will need to get your permission to ask the questions. Do I have your permission. Please say so by raising your hand. Permission was unanimous to participate in the focus group.

First, on a scale of 1 to 10, how important is regular physical activity or exercise to you?

- 10,10,10,5,5,9,6,10,10,10,5,7,10,9,10,8,7,3

What, if anything do you currently do for exercise or physical activity?

- Running
- Walking around the school
- Playing basketball
- Volleyball
- Walking
- Long boarding
- Walking home
- Playing basketball
- Running track
- Football
- YMCA
- Working out
- Lifting weights
- Bike riding
- lifting weights

Where do you usually engage in physical activity? (probe such as at home, walking, around the neighborhood)

- Outside

- My home
- School
- Gym
- The streets
- Vanguard
- After school football field
- Outside in the neighborhood

Is safety a factor in whether or not you are physically active? (probe: if so, in what ways does safety affect your ability to be physically active)

- 10 people say safety is a factor for them. (i.e. watching out for cars, watching out for dogs, encountering other people that might create problems for them.)

Is the weather a factor in whether you are physically active? (Probe: How does the weather affect your ability to be physically active?)

- 5 people say weather is a factor. And how does it affect their ability (i.e. "I can't play basketball when the school is closed.")

Are there any other things that either get in the way of, or prevent you getting physical activity that you would like to share? (Probe: Transportation? Childcare? etc.)

- When there are children around
- Sometimes peer pressure stops me from exercising especially when they want to do something else
- I have to babysit
- The lack of space to exercise; not enough time sometime with school, work and other things to

do; transportation is a problem.

Do you prefer to be physically active by yourself, in small group (2-5) people; or in a large group?

- 5 people say large group.
- 7 people say they prefer alone.

About how often would you say that you use the city's parks and recreation centers for physical activity? Is there anything that might encourage you to use local parks and recreation centers more often for physical activity?

- There were 14 responses to yes that they live near a park and/or recreation center.
- People responded that they do not use the parks because they aren't safe.
- There were 6 people who agreed that the parks are bad and people are worried about personal safety

What would encourage them to use the parks and/or recreation centers.

- Security should be provided.
- The parks should be clean
- Get rid of the gangs
- Make the parks more eye appealing "when things look nice people are attracted"
- Have activities that everyone enjoys doing

Do you think that you would be physically active or more physically active if there was an organized fitness program in your neighborhood (e.g. Zumba, a walking club; or yoga)?

- 11 young voted yes

• "I would need motivation"

If the gym in a neighborhood school were open to the community after school hours, do you think that you would go there for physical activity or exercise? (Probe: why or why not)?

- 7 People stated that they would go if there were recreation opened after school.

Are you familiar with the greenways concept? Have you used a greenway before? If so, how do you use them (transportation, exercise, etc.) and how often?

- There were only 3 people who knew about the greenway.
- Once the facilitator explained the concept of greenways, one person named the Dequinder Cut as an example of a greenway.

Are you familiar with the complete streets concept? If so, what do you think are the benefits and drawbacks to complete streets? (No one was familiar with the concept of complete streets.

Facilitator explained the concept of complete streets and then the participants knew more about the idea)

- The benefits of complete streets are: "there are a lot of handicapped people and there should be complete streets for them." "The streets would be safer"
- There were 6 people who voted to have complete streets
- Finally before we conclude, is there anything else that you would like to add?

- More swimming pools; Pool tables; a lot of responses about how clean the pools need to be;
- More recreation centers would be good.

Appendix C: Maintenance Costs for a One-Acre Park

This appendix shows the formulas used to calculate the numbers presented in chapter 6 and referenced in chapters 7 and 8. These numbers are calculated based on a one-acre park at a “level 1” service. Level of services is described in Table C.1. Tampa Bay Engineering figures were originally calculated in 2000. All costs taken from the document were converted to 2012 dollars to reflect most current values. The figures are useful to Detroit because they may help explain the costs for basic maintenance care for mini and neighborhood parks. This list does not include capital costs. Rather, this document may assist non-municipal organizations in thinking about the costs they would bear in future adoption of a park or in maintenance of a newly created park.

1. Turfcare¹

- a. Mow 1 acre 1 time per week- 39 weeks (not in winter)
 - i. Operator- \$12.75 per hour² with 1 person mowing= 39 weeks * \$12.75 per hour
 - ii. 42” Mower (Tampa had 72”) costs \$4.00 per hour (price of 1 gallon of gas) * 1 hour * 39 weeks
- b. Aeration of 1 acre, 2 times per year for 3 hours
 - i. Vehicle cost \$4.00 per hour (gas price) * 1 hour * 4 times per season
 - ii. 1 hour of operator time * \$12.75 per hour³

2. Fertilizer⁴

- a. \$ 100 per acre * 1 acre * 2 times a year

3. Irrigation⁵

- a. Repair- \$1,000 per acre*1 acre
- b. Water Costs- \$1,000-5,000 per acre⁶ * 1 acre
- c. Power Costs- \$100 per year

4. Litter Control (year round)⁷

- a. 1 acre @ .5 acre per hour per day (2 hours), 52 weeks @ \$12.75 per hour⁸

5. Pruning⁹

- a. 3(estimated) Large Trees¹⁰ @ 1 per hour= 3 hour
- b. 10(est.) Deciduous Shrubs¹¹ @ 2 per hour= 5 hour
- c. 40(est.) Small Trees¹² @ 2 per hour= 20 hour
- d. Labor Rate= \$12.75 per hour¹³ * 28 hours

6. Insect Control¹⁴

- a. Spraying .25 hour per acre * 1 acre
- b. .25 hour operation @ \$12.75 per hour¹⁵
- c. .25 hour spray machine @ \$2.50 per hour
- d. Insecticide costs 1 gallon @ \$30 per gallon

7. Snow Removal¹⁶ (70” of snow in Detroit in 2010—rounded up)¹⁷

- a. 1 acre= 43,560 square feet
- b. 1,876 linear feet of pathway¹⁸
- c. Removal 21” snow blower .10 hour per 1,000 square feet. = .5 hour (rounding up)
- d. 1 (est.) blowers available @ \$4.00 per hour for .5 hour
- e. Operator @ \$12.75 per hour¹⁹

8. Surfaces²⁰

- a. Sweep 1,876 linear feet²¹ – 1 hour * 10 = 10 *

Labor @ \$12.75 per hour²²

- b. Wash 1,876 linear feet²³ – 2 hours * 3= 6 * Labor @ \$12.75 per hour²⁴

9. Inspections²⁵

- a. Supervisor 1 hour per day average * 12 months * \$15 per hour²⁶
- b. Crew .5 hour per day * 12 months * \$12.75 per hour²⁷

Table C.1. Parks and greenways maintenance levels

HIGH	Maintenance Level	Applicable Parks/Greenways	Maintenance Activity	Frequency
	Level 1	State of the art maintenance applied to a high quality diverse landscape. Usually associated with high traffic urban areas.	Mowing	Weekly
			Trash removal	Weekly
			Snow removal	As needed
			Facilities maintenance	Monthly
	Level 2	Moderate level maintenance-associated with locations with moderate to low levels of development, moderate to low levels of visitation.	Mowing	Monthly
			Trash removal	Monthly
			Snow removal	As needed
			Facilities maintenance	Bi-Monthly
	Level 3	High visitation natural areas-usually associated with large urban or regional parks. Size and user frequency may dictate resident maintenance staff. Road, pathway or trail systems relatively well developed. Other facilities at strategic locations such as entries, trail heads, building complexes and parking lots.	Mowing	Quarterly
			Trash removal	Bi-Monthly
			Snow removal	As needed
			Facilities maintenance	Quarterly
Level 4	Minimum maintenance level low visitation natural area or large urban parks which are undeveloped.	Mowing	As needed	
		Trash removal	As needed	
		Snow removal	As needed	
		Facilities maintenance	Yearly	
LOW				

Source: National Recreation and Park Association²⁸

Notes

1. Tampa Bay Engineering, Inc., Appendix 6: Park Maintenance Standards, (Tampa Bay Engineering, Inc., December 2000), pp. 1-27, http://www.myoldsmar.com/pages/depts/oldsmarfl_leisure/MasterPlan/appendix_6.pdf
 2. Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, The Greening of Detroit's Greenway Maintenance Pilot Project Report (Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, December 16, 2010), pp. 1-22
 3. Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, The Greening of Detroit's Greenway Maintenance Pilot Project Report (Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, December 16, 2010), pp. 1-22.
 4. Tampa Bay Engineering, Inc., Appendix 6: Park Maintenance Standards (Tampa Bay Engineering, Inc., December 2000), pp. 1-27, http://www.myoldsmar.com/pages/depts/oldsmarfl_leisure/MasterPlan/appendix_6.pdf
 5. Ibid.
 6. Philip Cheng, City Auditor's Report: Audit of Park Maintenance (City of North Las Vegas, December 22, 2010), pp. 1-16, <http://www.cityofnorthlasvegas.com/Departments/CityManager/PDFs/AuditOfParkMaintenance101222.pdf>
 7. Tampa Bay Engineering, Inc., Appendix 6: Park Maintenance Standards (Tampa Bay Engineering, Inc., December 2000), pp. 1-27, http://www.myoldsmar.com/pages/depts/oldsmarfl_leisure/MasterPlan/appendix_6.pdf
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 11. Ibid.
 12. Ibid.
 13. Ibid.
 14. Tampa Bay Engineering, Inc., Appendix 6: Park Maintenance Standards (Tampa Bay Engineering, Inc., December 2000), pp. 1-27, http://www.myoldsmar.com/pages/depts/oldsmarfl_leisure/MasterPlan/appendix_6.pdf
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 16. Tampa Bay Engineering, Inc., Appendix 6: Park Maintenance Standards (Tampa Bay Engineering, Inc., December 2000), pp. 1-27, http://www.myoldsmar.com/pages/depts/oldsmarfl_leisure/MasterPlan/appendix_6.pdf
 17. William Deedler, Winter Final Review Southeast Lower Michigan Including Snowfall (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, April 21, 2010), pp. 1-8, <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/images/dtx/climate/winter0910review.pdf>
 18. Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, The Greening of Detroit's Greenway Maintenance Pilot Project Report (Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, December 16, 2010), pp. 1-22
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Notes

19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Tampa Bay Engineering, Inc., Appendix 6: Park Maintenance Standards (Tampa Bay Engineering, Inc., December 2000), pp. 1-27, http://www.myoldsmar.com/pages/depts/oldsmarfl_leisure/MasterPlan/appendix_6.pdf
26. Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, The Greening of Detroit's Greenway Maintenance Pilot Project Report (Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, December 16, 2010), pp. 1-22.
27. Ibid.
28. James D. Mertes, Park, recreation, open space and greenway guidelines. (National Recreation and Parks Association, Published: Arlington, VA, 1995).

Appendix D: Park User Survey Example

Appendix E: Adopt-A-Park Agreement Form Example

Appendix E: Adopt-A-Park Agreement Form Example

City of Detroit Adopt-A-Park Program
 Adopter's Memorandum of Understanding

Adopt-A-Park Agreement

The City of Detroit recognizes the group/individual named below as being responsible for the maintenance tasks at _____ (NAME OF PARK).

The adoption of _____ (NAME OF PARK) will begin on _____, 20__ and will be offered for renewal by October 1 of each subsequent year.

_____ Group Representative (please print)	_____ Signature
_____ Group Name	_____ Date
_____ Street Address	_____ Postal Code
_____ Home Phone Number	_____ Business Phone Number
_____ Fax Number	_____ Email Address

Number of participants in group: _____
 How many years would you like to adopt for: 1 year ___ 3 years ___ 5 years ___
 Is this an Agreement Renewal? YES _____ NO _____

Which of the following best describes your group? (PLEASE CHECK):

Business _____	Sports Group _____
School _____ (Grade level)	Individual/ Family _____
Youth Group _____	Church group _____
Service Group _____	Other _____
Community Group _____	

City of Detroit Adopt-A-Park Program
 Volunteers' Memorandum of Understanding
 Name of Park _____

City of Detroit Adopt-A-Park Program
 Adopter's Memorandum of Understanding

How did you find out about the Adopt-A-Park Program? (PLEASE CHECK):

Website _____	Newspaper/Media _____	Other _____
Brochure _____	Friend _____	

Terms and Conditions

1. Term:
 - a. Subject to City's right to terminate, this agreement shall be in full effect for one year beginning _____.
 - b. Renewal of the agreement shall be offered by October 1 of each subsequent year.
2. Conditions:
 - a. The participant(s) shall develop and follow a regular schedule of maintenance of the property as agreed upon by the General Services Department and report any park hazards to City staff.
 - b. The City of Detroit may photograph or videotape the events or activity in which the participant is participating for purpose of promoting the City of Detroit and its services/programs, with the following understanding that no compensation of any kind will be paid to the participant.
3. Access:
 - a. Volunteers are allowed to access City property for the purpose of carrying out the terms of this agreement.

The City of Detroit reserves the right to terminate this agreement at any time.

_____ Signature Adopt-A-Park Participant	_____ Date	_____ Signature Parent of Participant Under 18	_____ Date
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FOR GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT USE ONLY

Signature: _____ Adopt-A-Park Coordinator	Date: _____
Signature: _____ General Services Department Director	Date: _____

Source: City of Erie Adopt-A-Park Program, Volunteers' Memorandum of Understanding

City of Detroit Adopt-A-Park Program
 Volunteers' Memorandum of Understanding
 Name of Park _____

