



Parks and Natural Resources 10-year Strategic Plan 2023-2033

*Building connections in the community:
Neighbor to neighbor, neighbor to nature, and neighbor to history*

Why a 10-year Strategic Plan?

- ▶ Plan fulfills City Council 2023 Goal and Objective for Recreation & Parks
 - ▶ “Create and adopt a Parks Strategic Plan which includes funding, planning, maintenance, and staffing needs.”
 - ▶ “Review the short and long-term needs of the Park system to promote the City’s quality of life, and provide a plan to meet those needs, including funding.”
- ▶ A 50,000ft overview of possibilities and recommendations for the next 10 years
- ▶ Different than the Parks and Natural Resources 5-year Master Plan, which focuses mostly on more immediate needs



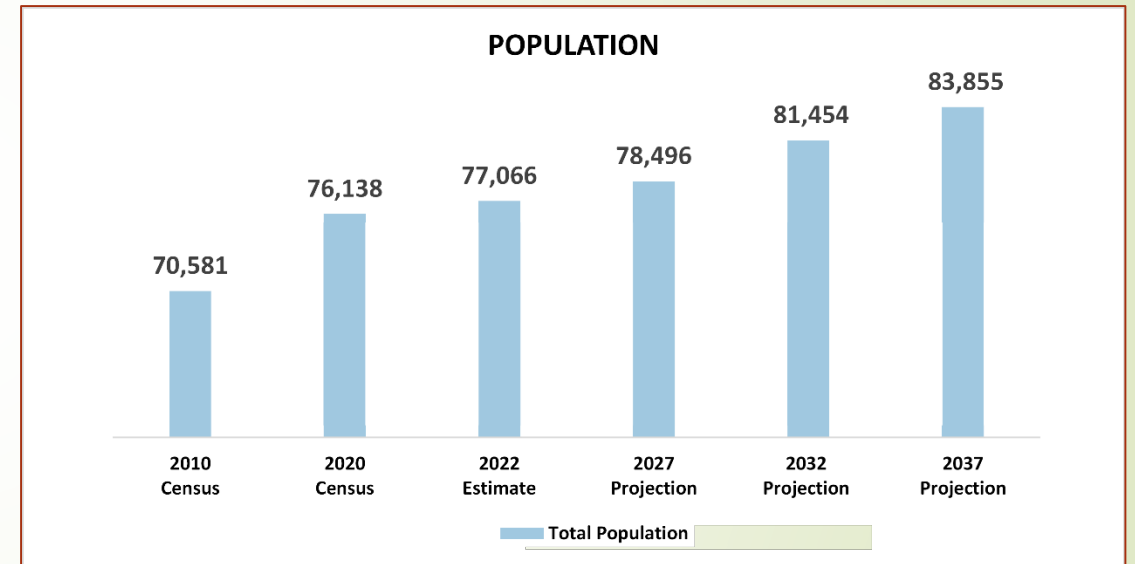
Overview of Planning Process

- Leadership Team Meetings – Monthly with PNR
- Background information gathering and analysis
 - Current Parks and Facilities Inventory
 - Operations and Maintenance Assessment
 - Demographic Trends
 - Recreation Trends Analysis
 - Program Assessment
 - Financial Status and Funding Opportunities
- Community Engagement
 - Stakeholder and Focus Group Interviews
 - Statistically-Valid Community Survey – Needs Assessment



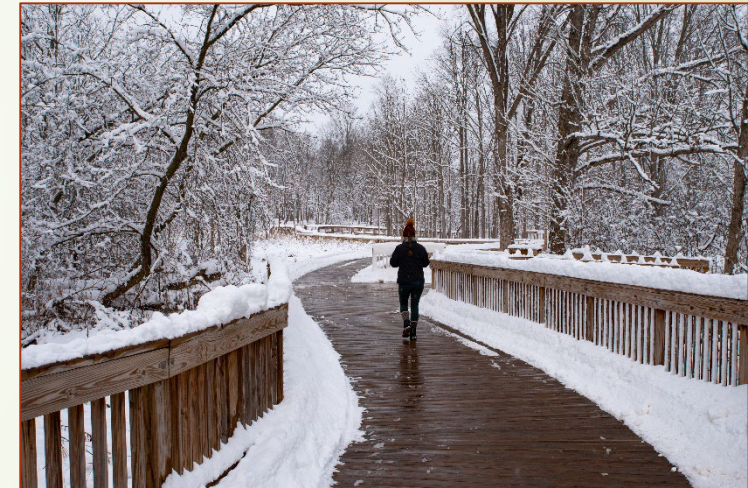
Noteworthy Population Trends

- Population is increasing
- Average age of population increasing
- Household income above state average
- Population and development is increasing, which increases demand for parks and open space
- Programs and facilities targeted at the younger families and older age brackets are needed



Noteworthy Recreation Trends

- ▶ In 2021, nationally 53% participated in at least one outdoor activity
 - ▶ For comparison, according to our Parks and Natural Resources resident survey, at least 70% of households use our parks/facilities at least once a year.
- ▶ Activity areas in Rochester Hills that are substantially above the national market potential include:
 - ▶ Fitness - Jogging/Running, Swimming, Weights, Yoga, Walking
 - ▶ Outdoor Activity – Bicycling (both road & mountain), Hiking, Kayaking, Fishing



PNR Program Assessment (Outdoor Engagement and Museum)

- ▶ Most programs are popular and well aligned with national trends and local interest
- ▶ Our program lifecycle proportion needs to be more balanced (e.g. new, mature, decline)
 - ▶ We have too many programs in the new and declining areas and need more in the mature area to stabilize programs and decrease staff workload
- ▶ A cost recovery model should be implemented based on how a program is categorized, with those programs that provide more public benefit (versus private benefit) being subsidized more
- ▶ Programs should be categorized as **core mission, important, or value added** to help determine cost recovery and level of team resources to devote





Potential Funding Sources for Consideration

- ▶ A variety of additional sources may be available if desired
 - ▶ Operational (a few examples)
 - ▶ Many surrounding communities have operational millages for Parks and Recreation
 - ▶ Parks Impact Fees could be used for developing neighborhoods
 - ▶ Tax Increment Financing could be utilized to develop gathering areas, parks and events, as well as support maintenance
 - ▶ External
 - ▶ Fundraisers and donations can be significant if a conscious fundraising program is built
 - ▶ Volunteering, while indirect, can save substantial staff hours if managed as a consistent program
 - ▶ Sponsorships and Foundations can also be a source of funds, although not as regular

Recommendations & Strategies

➤ Rochester Hills Recognition

- Pursue NRPA agency accreditation to develop community and team pride
- Pursue the national Gold Medal Award through NRPA – a best of the best award

➤ Staffing

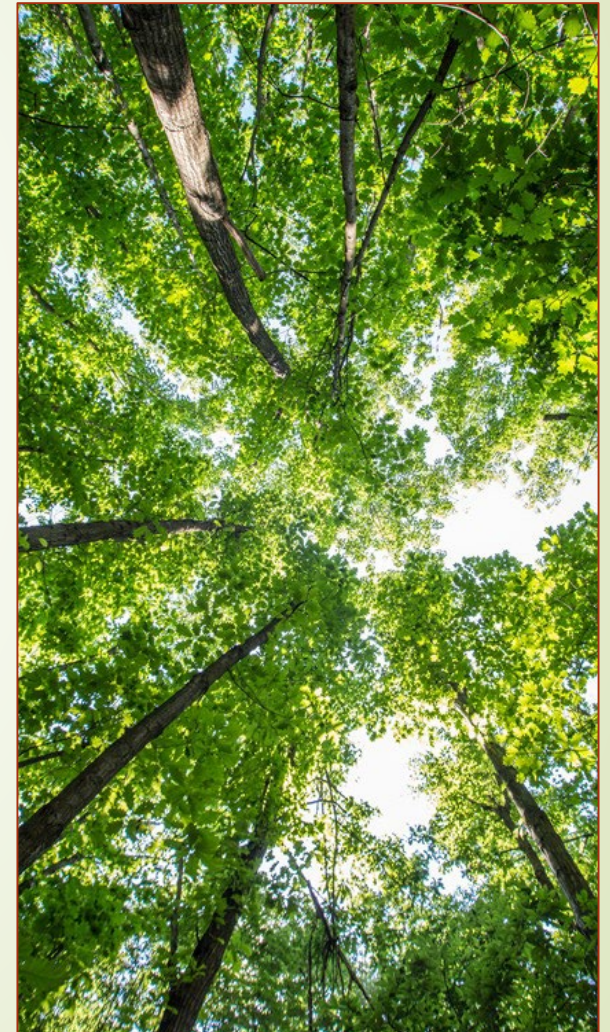
- Grounds Maintenance FTEs are 37% below similar sized communities nationally.
 - Recommend a combination of contracting, service reduction, and staff increases until it reaches at least 35 developed acres per FTE. Current staffing is 45 acres per FTE.
 - Our level of visits (1,300,000+) is at the top of similar sized communities nationwide, putting a large strain on operations.
 - 50% of current FTEs are seasonal, which are getting much harder to hire.
- Increase Administrative staff to allow a focus on developing stronger philanthropy, proactive business planning, customer input, and volunteer systems.



Recommendations & Strategies

(pg 2 of 3)

- ▶ Natural Resource Management
 - ▶ Consider developing city-wide tree coverage goals and a canopy protection plan
 - ▶ Develop tree care management plans for park properties
 - ▶ Develop a formal policy in line with national best practices to preserve a minimum of 40% of total park land as natural and minimally developed
- ▶ Maintenance and Operations
 - ▶ Review internal service levels delivered from other Departments bi-yearly
 - ▶ Enhance the organization structure by designating shifting levels of responsibility to allow organic management of projects
 - ▶ Prepare a park site management plan for each location to establish desired levels of operations and maintenance, as well as a method of evaluation





Recommendations & Strategies

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► Programming and Events

- Develop a systematic volunteer management and engagement system
- Develop formal agreements with partners to enhance capacity
- Explore enhancing the 30-year partnership with RARA, to determine how to enhance resident service and improve the synergy that occurs in traditional parks and recreation agencies

► Funding

- Develop a formal sponsorship and philanthropy program
- Create a stronger financial link and business management principals to balance operations and capital needs
- Increase the number of funding sources for operational support and long term stability
- Develop increased funding similar to other national top tier agencies with a population similar to ours

Thank you and Discussion

