

Parks and Recreation Master Plan  
2018-2022

City of Walled Lake, Michigan

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The participation and cooperation of community leaders, residents, and members of civic organizations in the preparation of the Walled Lake Parks and Recreation Master Plan is greatly appreciated. In particular, the efforts of the following individuals are acknowledged:

### Mayor

Linda S. Ackley, MPA

### Mayor Pro-Tem

John Owsinek

### Walled Lake City Council

Casey Ambrose

Tamra Loch

Bennett Lublin

Susan Helke

Gabriel Costanzo

### Walled Lake Parks and Recreation Commission

Tamra Loch (City Council Representative)

Tim Moore, Chairperson

Reuben Cheney

Robert Palmer (Planning Commission Representative)

Kyle Hecht

Sarah Skronek

## Table of Contents

I. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION .....	1
II. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE .....	3
III. RECREATION INVENTORY .....	5
IV. RESOURCE INVENTORY .....	17
V. DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AND PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS .....	18
VI. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.....	28
VII. ACTION PROGRAM .....	30
APPENDIX A.....	32

## I. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

### A. Location

The City of Walled Lake covers an area of approximately 2.9 square miles and is in the southwestern portion of Oakland County. The City is named after Walled Lake which is located on the southern edge of the City. It borders the City of Novi to the south, Village of Wolverine Lake to the north and Commerce Township on the east and west. Walled Lake is 12 miles south of Pontiac, 9 miles northwest of Farmington, and 27 miles northwest of Detroit. Due to the proximity of I-96, 3 miles to the south, and M-5, a few miles to the east, regional highway access is convenient.

The jurisdiction of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan is the City of Walled Lake. The Master Plan's focus includes both recreation facilities and programs.

### B. History

Walled Lake was situated along the path of an old Indian trail that bridged Grand Rapids with Detroit. The area of Walled Lake was first settled by the Pottawatomie Indians on the western shore of the lake. It is believed that the lake was named after a geological formation that resembled a stone wall, rising five or six feet above the water's edge along the western bank.

Walled Lake was founded in 1825 by Walter B. Hewitt, formerly from New York State who built a log cabin near the lake for his family. Many of the first settlers in the area shared the lake with the Pottawatomie Indians. A trading post was established in 1830 and the first general store in 1833. The first hotel, the Pioneer Inn, was a large frame structure built in 1840 by Harmon Pettibone on the corner of what is now East Walled Lake and Liberty Streets.

A stage route between Pontiac and Milford was established through Walled Lake in 1851. In 1883, the Grand Trunk Railroad was built through the locality.

Early in the 20th Century, the character of the rural community began to change. The beauty of the countryside and the recreation facilities offered by the lake brought many "summer people" from Detroit and surrounding areas to Walled Lake where former homes were converted to summer cottages and boating and fishing were enjoyed. In 1913, a "Jazz" hall was established along the lake, drawing more people to this remote area.

By World War I, solid gravel roads had been built to and from Pontiac and Detroit. Their presence and the establishment of a bus line in 1924, brought large crowds to the village and adjacent Novi Township, encompassing the southern edge of the lake. Walled Lake became the largest and best known public access lake near Detroit. Bathhouses and cabanas were built in the early 1920's to accommodate the bumper-to-bumper traffic of

sunbathers. By the mid 1920's the Walled Lake area became known as the “Playground of Detroit.” Walled Lake became a Village in 1929.

Walled Lake Amusement Park, built in 1929 on the southern shores, continued to attract thousands of visitors each year until 1969. But even more glamorous in its day was the Walled Lake Casino - the mecca of the young and wealthy who came to the shores of the rural lake on warm summer nights to dance and listen to music played by some of the biggest name bands in the United States from the late 1920's to the mid 1960's.

The City of Walled Lake was incorporated in 1954 and adopted a Council-Manager form of government.

### C. Population

In 2010, the population of Walled Lake was 6,999 (Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2010 Census of Population and Housing). The estimate for 2020 is a population of 7,331 (Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments).

## II. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

### Role of the Parks and Recreation Commission

The Parks and Recreation Commission was established by Ordinance to act as an advisory body to the City Council (Chapter 54 of the City Code). The Commission consists of one member of the Planning Commission plus six additional residents and one recently appointed Council Representative. Each member has a three-year term. The Parks and Recreation Commission meets the second Monday of each month at 7:30 PM in the Walled Lake City Hall Council Chambers. All meetings are open to the public with notice posted beforehand at City Hall.

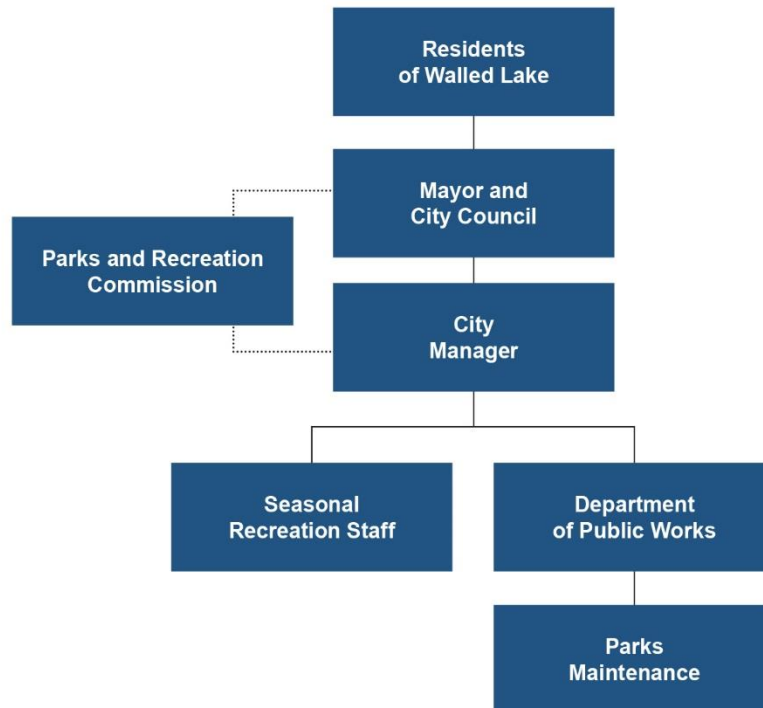
The Commission works together to bring fun and entertaining activities to the residents of Walled Lake and surrounding communities.

The Parks and Recreation Commission principally advises the City Council on matters related to the operation and maintenance of park facilities and seasonal programming.

### Organizational Chart and Staff Description

The City Manager is ultimately responsible for implementing the parks and recreation program as approved by Council.

Parks and recreation services are provided by the City Administration as illustrated in the following chart:



### Annual Budget and Operations

The City owns and maintains seven parks and hires part-time staff in the summer to assist in recreation and special events programming with coordination by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The 2017-2018 total budget for Parks and Recreation is \$55,000. The proposed budget for 2018-2019 is \$57,600.

### Current Funding

Funding for the Parks and Recreation is generated from the General Fund, donations, fundraising, and grants. The City has an option of requesting a millage from the voters.

### Programming (Relationship with School District)

The responsibility for recreation programming in the Walled Lake Consolidated School District rests with the Director of the Community Education Department.

In addition to recreation and leisure activities, this department is responsible for community service programs, adult high school completion, special events programming, and other community education programs. Recreation facilities owned by the schools are maintained by school district maintenance staff and part-time seasonal employees.

The City of Walled Lake and the Walled Lake Consolidated Schools District have a symbiotic relationship. City parks are used for school picnics and activities. The School District offers the use of their facilities and parking during City events.

### Roles of Volunteers

Volunteers serve on the parks and recreation committee and assist with the organization and preparation (e.g. attending meetings, gathering sponsorships and donations, etc.) of civic events and fundraisers. They also volunteer for various roles and responsibilities during these events.

### III. RECREATION INVENTORY

Site visits were conducted by the Parks and Recreation Committee Summer 2017 to inspect all parks and recreation facilities within the City. The Department of Public Services did a physical inspection and grading of all inventory on January 3, 2018. Programming and special event information was provided by the City.

#### Park and Recreation Inventory

See Table 1: Parks and Recreation Facilities and Map 1: Existing Land Use & Park Locations.

#### Programs

The Parks and Recreation Commission sponsors the following annual events:

- Easter Egg Hunt
- Farmers Market
- Memorial Day Parade
- Beach Party and Market Day
- Tree Lighting Ceremony



*Farmers Market Banner*

All City events are open to the public, including Walled Lake residents and residents from surrounding communities. The City advertises events in local newspapers, radio, cable TV to encourage area residents outside the City to come to Walled Lake.

#### Park and Recreation Descriptions (see Table 1 for park inventories)

**Mercer Beach (0.8 acres):** Mercer Beach is named in honor of E.V. Mercer. Prior to 1908, the Milford Telephone Company provided Walled Lake telephone service. “MA4” was the exchange. The Home Telephone Company was established in 1908. In 1920, E.V. Mercer owned and managed the Home Telephone Company.



*Mercer Beach*

The City of Walled Lake purchased and combined multiple pieces of property, including E.V. Mercer Family’s existing beach, to form the City Park now known as Mercer Beach.

Located on East Walled Lake Drive, ¼ mile east of N. Pontiac Trail.



**Pratt Park (0.25 acres):** Pratt Park is named in honor of Leland F. Pratt (1923-1971). Leland Pratt gave 16 years of dedicated Police service to the City of Walled Lake. He was Chief of Police from 1964-1971. He died in office.

Located adjacent to the City of Walled Lake City Hall, Library and Fire Station at 1499 E. West Maple Road.



*Pratt Park*

**Riley Park (1.1 acres):** Al Riley, a local gas station owner and Optimist, transferred ownership of his land, now known as Riley Park, to the Walled Lake Optimist's Club. On October 19, 1971, the Walled Lake Optimist's Club donated Riley Field to the City of Walled Lake. The park, previously known as Riley Field, remained a popular baseball and softball field for many years prior to the re-location of the Banks-Dolbeer-Bradley-Foster Farmhouse to this location.



*Gazebo at Riley Park*



Adopted: July 21, 2009

Table 4: Parks and Recreation Facilities Inventory

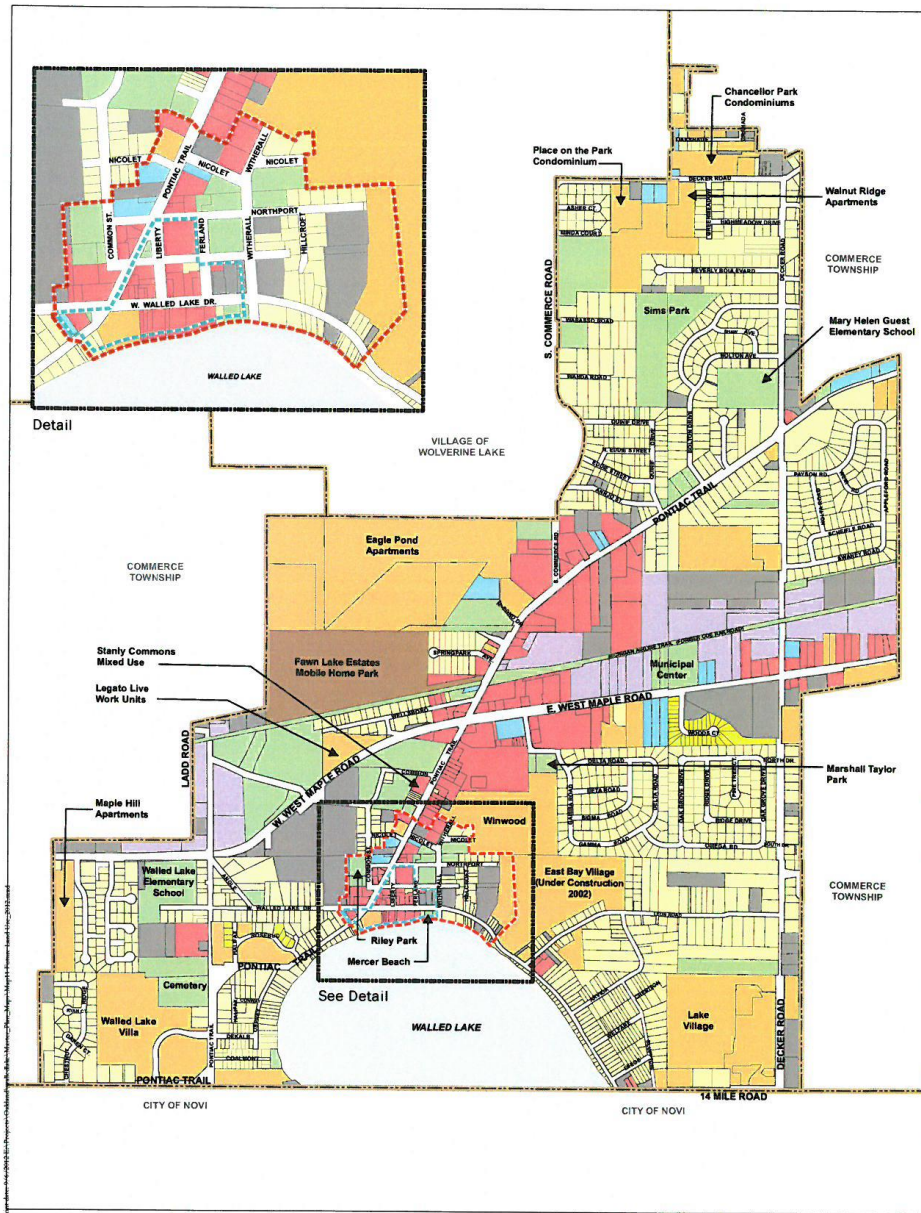
FACILITY NAME	ACRES (or length for linear parks)	IMMEDIATE SERVICE AREA (e.g. neighborhood, community, line, etc.)	AMENITIES			PASSIVE AREAS										PLAY AREAS							PLAY STRUCTURES & GROUNDS						INDOOR FACILITIES								ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENT (see 15)	NOTES			
			Parking Lots	Concessions	Portable Restrooms (Indoor)	Storage	Vending Machines (Printing Foundation)	Baseball Courts (Indoor)	In-Line Skating Area	Skate Park	Trampoline	Track (Indoor)	Trenches	Hurt Mitt	Pathway	Exercise Equipment	Pavilion	Picnic Areas	Stage/Band Shelter/Ampitheater	Spectator Seating	Hill (Bumpers) (Ball Field)	Cross Country Skating	Skid Hill	Football	Lighting	Multiple Purpose Field	Outdoor Pool	Sand Volleyball Court	Soccer	Metal Play Structures	Modular Play Equipment	Playgrounds	Restroom Structure	Timber Play Structure	Fitness Center	Cymnasium			Ice Skating Rink	Meeting Rooms	Pool (P)/ Pool Lanes (11)/ Beach(es)
Hirom Sims Memorial Park	15.10	CP	X								X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X							X												2	1/2 mile paved trail, several accessible pathways.		
Pearl Park/Veterans Memorial	0.25	MP/SU	X		IR					X	X	X																										2	Veteran's Memorial adjacent to Library. 200 feet of beach (open, adjacent to commercial district, parking, toilet van, fence and facilities.		
Mercer Beach	0.80	SU	X		PR					X	X	X																											4-5		
Marshall Taylor Park	3.00	NP	X							X	X	X	X																									3			
Riley Field Park	1.10	NP/SU	X		PR					X	X	X	X																										4-5	Park sign needed.	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20.25</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	

Legend:  
 X indicates one (1) or more facilities present  
 (R) indicates reserve facility  
 S: Service Area  
 NP = Nature Park  
 LP = Linear Park  
 MP = Mini Park  
 NP/SU = Neighborhood Park  
 SU = Special Use / Community Park

ACCESSIBILITY:  
 1 = none of the facility/park area meet accessibility guidelines  
 2 = some of the facility/park area meet accessibility guidelines  
 3 = most of the facility/park area meet accessibility guidelines  
 4 = the entire park meets accessibility guidelines  
 5 = the entire park was developed/revised using the principle of universal design

AK = Mini Mat  
 R = Round in Flat Rubber  
 WC = Wood Chips

Parks and Recreation Master Plan  
 City of Walled Lake, Michigan



**Map 2  
Existing Land Use**

City of Walled Lake, Michigan

**Existing Land Use Categories**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

0 500 1,000 Feet

4/30/2013

**McKenna**  
ASSOCIATES



Base Map Source: Oakland County Planning Department, 2007  
Data Source: McKenna Associates, 9/2012

**Hiram Sims Memorial Park (15.1 acres):** The largest of Walled Lake’s six parks, the Hiram Sims Memorial Park land was purchased from Hiram Sims in the late 1960’s. Originally known as Quinif Park, the park was dedicated July 4, 1974 and renamed Hiram Sims Memorial Park.

Located on Quinif, north of N. Pontiac Trail, ¼ mile east of S. Commerce.



*New Playground*



*Existing Pond*



*Volley Ball Court & Picnic Area*

**Marshall Taylor Park (3 acres):** Marshall E. Taylor, two-time Mayor of Walled Lake (1961-1962 and 1971-1973), was first elected to the Walled Lake City Council in 1954. Dedicated to public service, Marshall E. Taylor also served on the Oakland County Board of Supervisors (1954-1969), was a three-time Mayor Pro-Tem, Street Administrator, member of the Public Safety Committee, member of the Walled Lake Optimist’s Club, functioned as a school crossing guard, and even found time to direct traffic at St. Williams Parish on Sunday mornings. The park was rededicated, in honor of Marshall E. Taylor, on July 27, 1997.



*Tot-Lot*

Location: Gamma Street, south off E. West Maple Road, ¼ mile east of N. Pontiac Trail.

**Veterans’ Memorial Park (0.25 acres):** Dedicated on Memorial Day 1999, Veterans’ Memorial Park contains the Veterans’ monument. The monument, erected in 1990, was the creation of former Walled Lake resident Frank Horencamp. The park is dedicated to the memory of the many men and woman that put themselves in harm’s way, especially those that sacrificed the ultimate.



*Veterans' Memorial Park*

Located in front of Walled Lake City Hall and Library at 1499 E. West Maple Road.

**Michigan Airline Trail (5.4 miles):**

A cross-state "super" trail, the Michigan Airline Trail, follows what was once the Michigan Airline Railway, from South Haven to Port Huron. Eleven existing multi-use trail sections follow this 200+ mile historical route, including the Kal-Haven, the Kalamazoo River



Trailway, the Battle Creek Linear Path, the Falling Waters Trail, the Jackson Intercity Bike Trail, the Lake Lands Trail, the Huron Valley Trail, the West Bloomfield Trail, the Clinton River Trail, the Macomb Orchard Trail and the Bridge to Bay Trail.

The portion of trail, formerly Coe railroad, runs through the communities of Commerce, Walled Lake, and Wixom and measures approximately 28,800 linear feet or 5.45 miles. The trail starts on the west side of Haggerty Road on the east to just west of Wixom Road on the west.

It bridges the gap between the Huron Valley Trail, the West Bloomfield Trail and the M-5 Metro Trail. The Coe Railroad Corridor in the City of Walled Lake extends from the intersection of the Coe Railroad with the western border of the City of Walled Lake, just west of Ladd Road to the eastern border of the City of Walled Lake, midway between Decker Road and Welch Road.

The Walled Lake Depot has been identified as a trailhead. Trailheads are locations that include multiple amenities like vehicle parking, bike parking, water fountains, restrooms, and trail map kiosks. Additionally, trailheads are marked with prominent signs and wayfaring.

## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL FEATURES

### Walled Lake Library

The Walled Lake Library is located adjacent to City Hall on E. West Maple Road and serves a broad network of communities through membership in The Library Network consortium. The Library offers books, computer workstations, videos, and compact discs as well as a wealth of children and adult activities.



*Sculpture at Library*

### Stonecrest School

Stonecrest School was the first school in Walled Lake and today the building has earned the status as a State of Michigan historic destination. The school, located on Liberty at N. Pontiac Trail, was built in 1860 by Joseph B. Moore who later became a Supreme Court Justice in the State of Michigan. The building was used as a school until 1896 when it went into private ownership. Later, the Civic Welfare Society deeded it to the Commerce Township Area Historic Society. Currently the school is used by the historic society for community events and is rented for private functions.

Table 2, Analysis of Existing Facilities, provides classifications and further comments on each of the parks. In 2017, the Parks and Recreation commission performed a walk through of the park facilities. Their comments and recommendations have been added to this table.

Table 2  
Analysis of Existing Facilities

Type of Facility	Recreation Standards <sup>1</sup>	City of Walled Lake Facilities	Comments/Recommendations
Mini-Parks	Mini-Parks are small, specialized parks, usually less than an acre in size, that serve the needs of residents in the surrounding neighborhood. A mini-park may serve a limited population or specific group such as tots or senior citizens.	Pratt Park has the greatest potential for being developed as an inter-generational park due to its proximity to the Library and City Hall.  A former well site on the north side of N. Pontiac Trail, east of S. Commerce Road, could be developed into a mini-park.	The NRPA recommends 0.25 to 0.50 mini-park acreage per 1,000 residents.  Additional seating and accessible walkways should be added at Pratt Park to accommodate seniors.  Other general maintenance should be continued included mulching and weed control, tree trimming, and table repairs.
Neighborhood Parks	Neighborhood parks are typically multi-purpose facilities that provide areas for intensive recreation activities, such as field games, court games, crafts, playgrounds, skating, picnicking, etc.  Neighborhood parks are generally 15 acres or more in size and serve a population up to 5,000 residents located within ¼ to ½ mile radius from the neighborhood they serve.	Riley Park and Marshall Taylor Park, although small in acreage, provide recreational opportunities for adjacent residential neighborhoods.  In addition, two elementary schools (M.H. Guest and Walled Lake) provide many recreation opportunities (e.g. playgrounds, soccer fields, basketball courts, and open space) normally found in neighborhood parks.	One to two acres of neighborhood parks are recommended per 1,000 residents.  Exterior and interior renovations to the Banks-Dolbeer-Bradley-Foster Farmhouse should be undertaken. Special programming can also be held at this park due to the historic farmhouse.  At Riley Park, the gazebo needs maintenance. Other general maintenance should be continued included mulching and weed control, tree trimming, and general repairs.  For Marshal Taylor Park, general maintenance should be continued included mulching and weed control, tree trimming, and general repairs.

<p>Community Parks</p>	<p>Community Parks typically contain a wide variety of recreation facilities to meet the diverse needs of residents from several neighborhoods. Community parks may include areas for intense recreation facilities, such as athletic complexes and swimming pools. These parks usually contain other facilities not commonly found in neighborhood parks such as nature areas, picnic pavilions, lighted ball fields, and concession facilities.</p>	<p>Hiram Sims Memorial Park is the City's largest park and functions like a Community Park, since it offers unique recreation opportunities that draw residents from several neighborhoods.</p>	<p>The NRPA's standard requirement for community parks is 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 residents. Many facilities typically found in a community park are lacking in the City. Additional tennis courts, and little league fields have been identified as needs within the City. As the population continues to grow, demand for these facilities will increase. If areas cannot be identified within the City where these facilities can be developed, then partnerships with neighboring communities to share facilities should be considered.</p> <p>Sims Park, provides the community with a wonderful asset for both passive and active recreational opportunities. Use of this facility could be enhanced through special activities and annual events sponsored by the City. Protection of the natural environment, especially preservation of the two ponds and wildlife habitats, is important.</p> <p>The parking lot and courts need resurfacing and a number of the provided facilities are dated and can be improved. General maintenance should be continued included mulching and weed control, tree trimming, and power washing.</p>
<p>Regional/ Metropolitan Parks</p>	<p>Regional parks are typically located on sites with unique natural features which are particularly suited for outdoor recreation, such as viewing and studying nature, wildlife habitats, conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, camping and trail use. Many also include active play areas.</p>	<p>The City is served by over 25,000 acres of regional parks, including many State, County and HCMA parks within a short drive of Walled Lake.</p>	<p>Regional parks typically serve several communities within a 30-60-minute drive. The City of Walled Lake is surrounded by an abundance of regional facilities within a short driving distance.</p>



<p>Special Use/ Conservancy Parks</p>	<p>Special use recreation facilities are typically single-purpose recreation facilities, such as golf courses, nature centers, outdoor theaters, interpretative centers, or facilities for the preservation or maintenance of the natural or cultural environment. Protection and management of the natural/cultural environment may be the primary focus with recreation use as a secondary objective.</p>	<p>Mercer Beach, which has 200 feet of frontage on the lake, is a good example of a special use park.</p>	<p>Improvements that would enhance Mercer Beach and elsewhere along the lake include a boardwalk, viewing deck, gazebo, pier, permanent restrooms and other amenities.</p>
<p>Passive Parks</p>	<p>The primary purpose of passive areas is to provide relief from highly developed residential and commercial neighborhoods. Facilities may include sitting areas and other pedestrian amenities, landscaping, monuments and fountains, and historical features.</p>	<p>Veterans’ Memorial, a small passive park, is in front of the Library.</p>	<p>Additional passive parks could be developed in connection with some of the historic sites and buildings located in the City. Potential exists for the development of a passive park at the former well site.</p>
<p>Linear Parks</p>	<p>A linear park is any area developed for one or more modes of recreation travel, such as hiking, bicycling, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, canoeing, horseback riding, and pleasure driving.</p> <p>Park trails are multi-purpose trails located within greenways, parks and natural resource areas. Focus is on recreational value and harmony with the natural environment.</p> <p>Connector trails are multi-purpose trails that emphasize safe travel for pedestrians to and from parks and around the community. Focus is as much on transportation as it is on recreation.</p>	<p>Michigan Airline Trail of Walled Lake, Wixom and Commerce</p>	<p>Development of a linear park trail along the railroad right-of-way and lakefront is in the design stages.</p> <p>The City wants to tie the community together with a sidewalks and pathways gap infill program and non-motorized pathway master plan.</p>




Accessibility Assessment

Access to parks can be improved not only by installing additional barrier-free pathways, but by providing wayfinding signage to the parks and within the parks; better field identification; installation of large print on signage and Braille for those who are visually impaired; and strategically located barrier-free parking and drop-off areas.

See Table 1: Parks and Recreation Facilities for specific assessments of each park.

Status Report for all MDNR-Grant Assisted Parks and Recreation Facilities

Project #	Title	Year	Elements	Status
26-01060	Sims Park Magic Square	1978	Basketball Courts and Lighting	Fair
BF91-384	Hiram Sims Memorial Park	1991	Access drive; fitness trail; renovate ballfield	Good
TF97-089	Mercer Beach 	1997	Ship play structure and rubber safety surface (1,200 sf); 2 whale spring riders; decorative fence (200 LF); 6 benches, 5 trash receptacles; concrete sidewalk (1,500 sf) stone retaining wall (200 LF); barrier-free boardwalk (60 LF); landscaping; grading, topsoil and seed; 3 signs; cabana restroom enclosure; decorative pavers (400 SF); shower unit	Poor-Fair

## IV. RESOURCE INVENTORY

### Environmental Features

The topography in Walled Lake is generally flat, although there are some areas that could be characterized as gently rolling. The City is located on the drainage divide between the Huron River and Rouge River watersheds. Consequently, the northern portion of the City drains toward Wolverine Lake and the southern portion of the City discharges into Walled Lake. Elevations generally range between 940 and 950 feet throughout the City.



*Walled Lake*

The lake is considered by many to be the City's most valuable natural asset. The lake covers 670 acres. About 460 acres, or about 69 percent, are deeper than four feet. The lake exceeds 50 feet in depth at its deepest point.

The lake is used primarily for fishing, swimming, and boating. Water quality is generally considered good. Most of the lakefront property is privately owned. Walled Lake and Novi have municipal lakefront parks, but there is no state or regional access. Walled Lake's park is approximately 100 feet in width and 60 feet in depth. Because of its limited size, its only practical use is as a beach; there is insufficient space for boat launching facilities and water-related recreation uses.

Numerous wetlands are found in the city including in the Hiram Sims Park where walkers see beautiful lily pads and cattails. The wetlands are habitat to various wildlife including waterfowl, shore birds and birds of prey including bald eagles and hawks, turtles, minks, frog, muskrats and fish.

Two general types of soils are found in Walled Lake. The southerly portion of the City, which is part of the Rouge watershed drains toward Walled Lake, consists of "well drained to somewhat poorly drained loamy soils," according to the Oakland County Soils Survey. The northerly portion of the City, which is part of the Huron River watershed, consists of "well drained sandy soils."

The City receives approximately 31 inches of precipitation and 32 inches of snow fall annually. Yearly temperatures average 73 degrees in the summer and 25 degrees in the winter. This climate is suitable for a variety of outdoor recreational activities throughout the year such as: swimming, boating, hiking, ice fishing, cross country skiing, etc.

## v. DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AND PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

This analysis is the most recent of several planning documents pertaining to parks and recreation that have been prepared for the City of Walled Lake since the 1960's. The previous Master Recreation Plan was approved by the City Council and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in 2009.

The City of Walled Lake Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2018-2022, was prepared by the City's Parks and Recreation Commission. The City of Walled Lake Parks and Recreation Commission is responsible for guiding the existing and future conditions of the City's Parks and Recreation facilities. The plan was prepared with the assistance of McKenna Associates, a planning consulting firm, and with the active involvement of the City administration. Citizen input, through public hearings and workshops, also served as key contributions to this report.

Throughout the process, all meetings were open to the public. Notices were posted beforehand, and advertised in the newspaper, as required by the Open Meetings Act.

A kickoff meeting was held with City Staff on November 8, 2017 to discuss the project, collect data, and review existing documents. A special meeting with the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on December 7, 2017 to further clarify the objectives. A public notice was published in the Spinal Column News Weekly newspaper on xxx notifying the public that a workshop would be held by the Parks and Recreation Commission on xxx to hear comments on updating the Parks & Recreation Master Plan and non-motorized trail development in the City.

The following issues were discussed at the December 7, 2017 Parks and Recreation Workshop:

### ACHIEVEMENTS

- Equipment maintenance at all parks by DPW team within limited budget
- Walled Lake Farmers Market on Wednesdays –13th consecutive year
- Park patronage is high
- Beach/Beach Party-Market Day Weekend
- Memorial Day parade
- Holiday events
  - Sims – Easter Egg Hunt
  - Fire Hall – Tree Lighting and Santa
- Free concerts and movies in the park
- Purchase of Michigan Air Line Trail

## ACTION ITEMS

- Increase focus on environmental stewardship
- Control beach erosion due to storm water run-off utilizing green infrastructure technology
- Safer pedestrian crossings to parks
- Recommend to council and assist in implementing a solution to 20-year old Foster Farmhouse disrepair problem
- Support Council in expanding walkability of city
- Repair or remove Gazebo in Riley Park depending on use
- Unified look to lighting, picnic tables, benches, trash receptacles and flower pots around city
- Standardize mulching and weed control processes
- Plant additional trees at Mercer Beach
- Increase handicap accessibility to beach and showers and port-a-john
- Enclose port-a-johns at Hiram Sims Park
- Protect beach from neighboring restaurant parking lot
- Resurface walking path in Hiram Sims Park
- Repair or remove exercise stations depending on use
- Support committee to rehabilitate the Veterans Park Memorial including research into lost and missing name plates

## WISH LIST

- New parking lot at Hiram Sims
- Resurface courts at Hiram Sims
- Expand Farmer's Market facilities and participants

## TRAIL WAY

- Develop attractive and usable trailhead that supports seniors and handicap accessible use
- Support businesses in wayfinding signage ideas for trail users to
- Generate annual maintenance plan for trail that includes active protection and maintenance of wetlands and other natural areas

## PUBLIC SURVEY

The City of Walled Lake created an online survey to seek input from the public on the City's parks and recreation facilities and activities. The online survey launched in conjunction with the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony held on December 4, 2017. 63 people responded to the twelve-question survey. The full results of the survey can be found in the appendix.

Q9 What do you feel are the top three (3) recreational priorities for Walled Lake in the next 10 years?



*Word Cloud for Top Priorities Responses*

One of the goals of the survey was to identify the recreation priorities of the public for the next ten years. The survey allowed the respondent to write in their top three priorities. These responses are summarized as follows:

Priority #1

- Maintenance of parks
- Provide connections to the Airline Trail
- Protect Mercer Beach

Priority #2

- Provide more activities for all ages
- Hold more community events

Priority #3

- Improve park amenities
- Provide more parking for Mercer Beach
- Acquire more park land

On January 10, 2018 a notice was placed on the City website, posted at City Hall, and published in the Spinal Column News Weekly newspaper notifying the public that the draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan was available for the required 30-day review period starting January 9, 2018 and that a public hearing would be held by City Council on February 19, 2018.

A copy of the draft plan was made available to the public at City Hall and the Library.

On February 12, 2018, the Parks and Recreation Commission recommended approval of the draft plan to City Council.

A public hearing was held, after the required 30-day review period, by the City Council on February 19, 2018 to hear public comment and adopt the Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2018 - 2022. The final adopted plan was sent to the MDNR February 20, 2018.

Comparison to Recreation Standards

The provision of parks and recreation facilities are vital to a community’s quality of life for its residents and those from outside the community alike. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has established a set of standards based on the size of the community as determined by population and the ratio of the acreage or facilities to the population. These standards establish a baseline for assessing the community’s parks and recreation facilities, but can be tailored to meet the needs of the specific community. Standards can be increased or decreased based on the facility or activity desired or those which are not needed or wanted in the community, such as badminton courts versus the desire for increased tennis courts or soccer fields. Table 3 identifies the NRPA standards and the number of park acres present in the community compared to the recommended standards. Table 4 identifies the recommended number of facilities based upon existing and future population.

Table 3: Park Acreage Evaluation

Type of Facility	Recommended Min. Acreage Per 1,000 Residents <sup>1</sup>	Existing Acreage <sup>2</sup>	Need Based on Standard <sup>3</sup>	Bonus/(Deficiency)
Mini Parks <sup>4</sup>	0.25	0.25	2.1	(1.85)
Neighborhood Parks	1.0	4.10	8.2	(4.1)
Major Parks	5.0	15.1	40.9	(25.8)
Regional Parks <sup>5, 6</sup>	5.0	25,311	40.9	N/A
Special Use Facilities <sup>7</sup>	Variable	0.8	N/A	N/A
Linear Park <sup>8</sup>	Variable	5.45 Miles	N/A	N/A

Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Based on National Recreation and Parks Association recommendations.

<sup>2</sup> Includes all existing public acreage in the Walled Lake Parks and Recreation Commission service area, excluding school acreage.

<sup>3</sup> Based on ESRI 2013 population estimate for the City of Walled Lake: 8,184.

<sup>4</sup> The need for mini-parks is also addressed partially by private common areas, apartment and



---

---

condominium recreation areas (acreages not determined).

<sup>5</sup> Includes acreage for regional Oakland County, HCMA, and State Parks only.

<sup>6</sup> It would be misleading to assess the adequacy of regional park resources based on recommended acreage for the City's population, since the regional resource must serve a much broader segment of the metropolitan area.

<sup>7</sup> Mercer Beach

<sup>8</sup> Michigan Airline Railway Trail Rails-to-Trails non-motorized pathway connecting Commerce Township, the City of Walled Lake, and the City of Wixom.

Table 4: Recreation Facilities Evaluation

Type of Facility	Standard <sup>1</sup>	Existing Public Facilities	Existing School Facilities <sup>2</sup>	Total Existing Facilities	Need Based on Standard <sup>3</sup>	Bonus/ (Deficiency)
Basketball Courts <sup>4</sup>	1/5,000	3	2.5	5.5	2	3.5
Tennis Courts	1 court/ 2,000	1	0	1	4	(3)
Volleyball	1 court/ 5,000	1	0	1	2	(1)
Baseball/Softball Diamonds	1/5,000 Lighted 1/30,000	1 (0 lighted)	0	1 (0 lighted)	2 0 lighted	(1) 0 lighted
Football Fields	1/20,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
Soccer Fields	1/10,000	0	3	3	1	2
Golf Courses - 9 hole <sup>5</sup>	1/25,000	0	0	0	0	(0)
Golf Courses - 18 hole <sup>5</sup>	1/50,000	0	0	0	1	0
Driving Range <sup>5</sup>	1/50,000	0	0	0	0	0
Swimming <sup>6</sup>	1/20,000	1 outdoor	0	1	1	0
Ice Rinks – Indoor	1/100,000	0	0	0	--	--
Ice Rinks – Outdoor	Depends on climate	0	0	0	--	--
Running Track (1/4 mile)	1/20,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
Playgrounds/Structures <sup>7</sup>	1/3,000	5	2	7	3	4
Picnic Areas	None Published	5	1	6	--	--
Trails	1 system per region	1	0	1	1	0
Multiple Recreation Indoor Court (Basketball, Volleyball)	1/10,000	0	2	2	1	1

Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Number of facilities per population (Michigan Department of Natural Resources Suggested Standards).

---

---

<sup>2</sup> Includes public schools located in the City of Walled Lake only

<sup>3</sup> Based on 2013 ESRI population estimates for the City of Walled Lake: 8,184, and rounded to the nearest whole number.

<sup>4</sup> Two backboards were equal to 1 court.

<sup>5</sup> Includes public courses

<sup>6</sup> This figure includes Mercer Beach.

<sup>7</sup> This figure includes school playgrounds.

## RECREATION DEFICIENCIES

### Service Areas

The City is well built out with limited areas for future development. There is a good distribution of existing parks. However, the southeast portion of the City is lacking mini and neighborhood parks. Because the City is a compact community, access to most parks by car is relatively easy. A City wide non-motorized sidewalk and pathway system being developed by will provide greater park access to residents, especially youth and teens.

### Facilities

Table 3 outlines park acreage standards recommended by the National Recreation and Parks Association. These standards recommend minimum acreage per 1,000 residents based on the type of recreation facility. According to this analysis, the City is underserved by the following facilities:

- Mini-Parks: need 1.85 acres
- Neighborhood Parks: need 4.1 acres
- Major Parks: need 25.8 acres

The deficiency in neighborhood parks and major parks can be partially satisfied by existing school sites and regional parks.

Table 4 outlines recreation standards recommended by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). These standards recommend minimum standards for different recreation facilities based on existing and projected population. According to this analysis, the community is underserved by the following:

- Three (3) additional tennis courts
- One (1) additional volleyball court
- One (1) baseball field and one (1) football field
- One (1) ¼ mile running track

The raw numbers do not address the quality of the existing parks and recreation facilities. Upon closer examination, deficiencies or limitations may be apparent because of the location, accessibility, lack of safety material, maintenance, level of development, and individual size of existing and available open space.

These numbers also may not truly indicate the status of a surplus or deficiency. Local conditions, interests, and trends must be considered. When evaluating these numbers as a literal interpretation, the comparisons could be misleading. School sites may provide certain facilities, such as football and athletic fields. However, access to school athletic facilities may be limited. Other facilities, such as soccer fields and ice-hockey rinks, may actually be deficient due to the tremendous interest in those activities in the Southeast Michigan area, although numbers may indicate a surplus of such facilities. Private businesses may also provide some of these facilities and services (e.g. Soccer Zone in Novi and Total Sports in Wixom).

The information and comments gathered through the public input process indicates a need for more facilities. Many of the participants' sentiments reflect the deficiencies identified above and other facilities that are not measured at the national level.

- Provide additional athletic fields
- Increase the amount of park land
- Provide more playground equipment
- Increase the amount of walking or bike trails
- Need more activities for younger people and families

### Existing Conditions

Overall, many of the parks and recreation facilities in the community are well maintained, but could use additional financial resources to make additional improvements and more substantive upkeep. Some of the park facilities are still lacking accessible pathways to certain facilities within the parks.

The need for more amenities such as park signs (e.g. Riley Park); additional seating, shade structures, and dog waste boxes; restroom facilities with running water; additional accessible pathways; landscaping and tree planting; improved soil/turf conditions on fields; sport lighting; installation of water amenities; and installing environmental educational venues were observed.

### Accessibility

Access to parks can be improved not only by installing additional barrier-free pathways, but by providing wayfinding signage to the parks and within the parks; better field identification; large print on signage and Braille for those who are visually impaired; and strategically located barrier-free parking and drop-off areas.



### Programs

The Commission offers a wide variety of activities, programs and special events throughout the year.

*Accessible Path Needed*

### Safety

Safety and the perception of safety are important to increasing the use of existing parks. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a program adopted nationally that increases the perception of safety for a normal user and the perception of risk for a would-be offender. CPTED “is [the] proper design and effective use of the built environment which can lead to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime and an improvement in the quality of life...” (National Crime Prevention Institute, 1986). Four principles are utilized:

1. Natural Surveillance – the placement of physical features, activities and people in such a way as to maximize visibility;
2. Natural Access Control – the physical guidance of people coming and going from a space by the judicious placement of entrances, exits, fencing, landscaping and lighting;
3. Territorial Reinforcement – the use of physical attributes that express ownership, such as fences, pavement treatments, art, signs and landscaping; and
4. Maintenance – regular maintenance gives the impression that parks and facilities are cared for and watched. Poor maintenance makes the parks and facilities feel abandoned and encourage vandalism and graffiti.

The Commission will consider adopting and utilizing the CPTED program in their facilities and programming.

The Michigan Municipal League performs an annual risk management assessment of all municipal facilities including parks. Recreation staff should perform and keep inspection logs for each facility to help prioritize on-going maintenance, repair and replacement.

## VI. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### A. Long-Range Goals

1. **Expand Recreation Opportunities.** Increase recreation opportunities, particularly outdoor park facilities and trails, which meet the needs of all segments of the population including youth, young adults, families, the elderly and persons with disabilities.
2. **Address Residents' Preferences.** Provide parks and recreation facilities and programs that are based on the preferences of residents in the City of Walled Lake.
3. **Maintain Fiscal Responsibility.** Develop parks and recreation facilities and programs based on a sound fiscal policy. Consider the use of volunteers, state and federal funding programs, and other funding sources.
4. **Natural and Aesthetic Qualities of Parks.** Provide parks and recreation facilities that not only satisfy recreation needs, but also complement the topography and natural terrain and contribute to the aesthetic quality of the City.
5. **Cooperation with the School District.** Cooperate with the Walled Lake Consolidated School District in the planning and programming of parks and recreation facilities. Written agreements of cooperation should be entered when appropriate.
6. **Reduce Duplication of Services.** Strive to reduce duplication in recreation services. Overall recreation planning should consider existing facilities and programs offered by the school district, adjacent municipalities, and other agencies.
7. **Consider Maintenance Needs.** Consider the cost of maintenance and operation in designing new recreation facilities. Projections of costs should be compared to future revenue projections for the life of the facilities.
8. **Upgrade Existing Facilities.** Maximize the use of parks and recreation facilities by upgrading existing facilities to make them safer and more accessible.
9. **Improve Accessibility.** Improve the accessibility to parks, recreation facilities, and programs by residents of Walled Lake, particularly for youth, young adults, families, elderly and persons with disabilities. Provide trail and pathway linkages from neighborhoods and business districts to parks and school sites.
10. **Continue the Planning Process.** Maintain the ongoing parks and recreation planning process. The parks and recreation master plan should be reviewed annually and updated at least every five years.
11. **Promotion.** Continue to promote activities and special events sponsored by the City of Walled Lake and the Walled Lake Community Education Center, using all media

types. A brochure should be developed showing park and school facilities with a schedule of dates and activities of annual events including a list of key officials and phone numbers.

## B. Parks and Recreation Objectives

1. **Community Parks.** The City may want to explore opportunities to acquire a new site for a community park to replace the ballfields lost to the Maple Road extension located behind the Walled Lake Community Education Center (the former Junior High School site).
2. **Neighborhood Parks.** Continue to develop Sims Park as a neighborhood park designed for community and family activities. Focus on protection of the natural environment especially preservation of the two ponds and wildlife habitat.
3. **Waterfront Protection.** Explore opportunities to acquire additional lakefront property for public beach use and to expand Mercer Beach if the opportunity arises. Develop and implement a unified waterfront plan that utilizes green infrastructure technology and supports accessibility to all residents.
4. **Additional Facilities.** Construction of adequate support facilities, such as restrooms, concession stands, off-street parking, and barrier-free facilities, are important to make the best use of the parks.
5. **Optimize Park Use.** Optimize the use of all parks and recreation facilities through multiple use of park space, adequate maintenance, and timely repair and replacement of facilities.
6. **Recreation Programs.** Continue to support and expand recreation programs and festivals in cooperation with the Walled Lake Consolidated School District.
7. **Acquisition and Expansion.** Consider purchasing additional land for parks and recreation use. Land acquisition efforts should be guided by two principal objectives: the need for uniform geographic distribution of facilities and the need for adequately-sized parks. With respect to acquisition and expansion, consideration should be focused on the following:
  - a. Possible acquisition of land in the southeast part of the City to serve the recreation needs of existing residents.
  - b. Possible utilization of wetland areas for recreation purposes
8. **Needs Survey.** A city-wide recreation needs survey should be completed on a regular basis to determine with greater accuracy the recreation needs and desires of residents.



9. Park Design and Landscaping. Enhance the appearance of all parks, recognizing the significance of parkland to the overall character and image of the City. A five-year landscaping/tree planting and lighting program will be developed for all parks.
10. Promotion. Prepare and update a brochure showing park and school facilities, with a schedule of dates, times and activities for special events. A list of key officials and phone numbers could also be included.

## VII. ACTION PROGRAM

The Action Program is the part of the master plan where the City identifies how they intend to meet, or work towards meeting goals and objectives over the next five years (See Map 1 for Locations).

Environmental Stewardship – solicit grant funding for green infrastructure solutions to storm water management control and retention at all parks. Emphasize the native elements of the parks including the city’s profuse wetland areas by developing signage explaining the various features.

Veteran recognition – actively support Mayor Ackley’s Veteran’s commission in refurbishing the veteran’s memorial by assisting with the research of the missing nameplates from the memorial.

### Trailhead Development: “Michigan Air-Line Railway Trail”

The City of Walled Lake as part of the Commerce Walled Lake Wixom Trailway Council has acquired a new trail (5.45 miles) named “Michigan Air-Line Railway Trail” and is working toward the development, construction, operations and management of a rails-to-trails system linking the “West Bloomfield Trail” to the “Huron Valley Trail”.

### Accessible pathways

Provide additional handicap accessible pathway links within parks (e.g. Sims Park) to required facilities and program areas emphasizing protection, preservation and appreciation of the native landscape.



*Michigan Star Clipper Dinner Train*

### Non-Motorized Pathway Master Plan

Identify existing pathways, gaps, and future development of sidewalks, pathways, and bike lanes throughout the City. Provide design standards, sign guidelines, and estimated development costs and identify possible funding sources.



Focus attention on the missing links in the City's non-motorized pathway system between neighborhoods, schools, parks, and business districts.

### Interpretive Panels

Install additional interpretive panels and wayfinding signs within the park system.



*Interpretive Panel at H. Sims Memorial Park*

### Sports Facilities

Rehabilitate or install new tennis courts and sports fields to meet the demands of the community.

APPENDIX A