



# Jackson County Recreation Plan

2025-2029 Edition



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This plan was prepared by:

**Jackson County Parks and Recreation Board**

David Elwell  
Kenny Price  
Jim Videto  
Janelle Merritt  
Michael Way  
Crystal Pfeifer  
Kelly Grygiel  
Geoff Snyder  
Ray Snell  
Margie Walz  
James E. Shotwell, Jr. (Steve)

**Jackson County Board of Commissioners**

District 1	Tony Bair
District 2	Margie Walz
District 3	Corey Kennedy
District 4	Phil Duckham
District 5	Chairman, James Shotwell, Jr.
District 6	Earl Poleski
District 7	John Willis
District 8	Darius Williams
District 9	Ray Snell
	Mike Overton, County Administrator

With assistance from:

**Jackson County Parks and Recreation Department**

Kyle Lewis	Parks and Recreation Director
Emily Thomas	Assistant Parks and Fair Director
Jackson McCloughan	Parks Superintendent
Stacy Curtis	Administrative Assistant

**Region 2 Planning Commission**

Jacob Hurt	Executive Director
Brett Gatz	Planner



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## Table of Contents

<b>Community Description</b>	7
Location	10
A Brief Socioeconomic Summary	10
<b>Administrative Structure</b>	13
Organizational Structure	15
Parks and Recreation Budgeting	16
Sources of Funding	16
Relationships with Other Public Agencies	17
Schools	17
Local, County, State, and Private Parks and Recreation Facilities	18
<b>Recreation and Resource Inventories</b>	19
Park Classification and Standards	21
Parks and Recreation in Jackson County	22
Resource Inventory	28
<b>Public Involvement</b>	31
Description of the Planning and Public Input Processes	33
Other Planning Efforts	35
<b>Goals and Objectives</b>	39
Mission, Vision, and Values	41
Goals and Objectives	41
<b>Action Plan</b>	45
Action Plan Implementation	47
Draft Capital Improvement Plan	50

## Appendices

A. Demographics	51
B. Recreation and Resource Inventories	57
C. Public Engagement	75
D. Mapping	95
E. Plan Adoption Documents and Resolutions	119

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Chapter 1

**Community Description**

Jackson County Recreation Plan: 2025 – 2029 Edition



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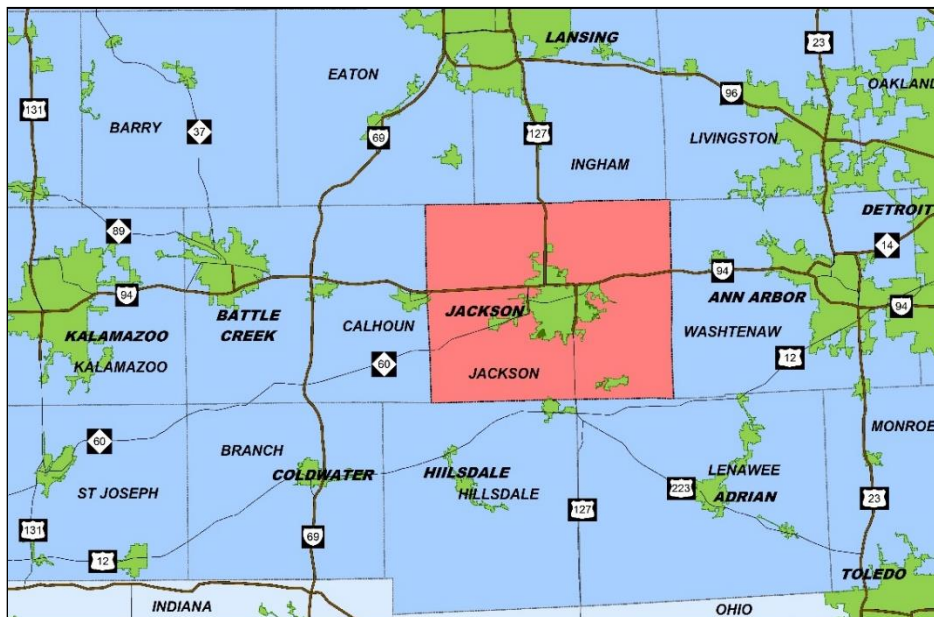
The purpose of this Parks and Recreation Plan is to inventory existing recreational opportunities and facilities available to residents of Jackson County, identify problems and future needs, and establish a plan which addresses identified problems and assures adequate recreational services and facilities in a programmed systematic manner for both the present and expected future population. The plan is intended to be a policy guide for Jackson County officials in developing efficient recreational services and facilities. This recreation plan evaluates the comprehensive recreational needs of the residents of Jackson County for playgrounds, neighborhood and community parks, regional parks, and recreational opportunities; and prescribes a plan that accommodates and fulfills these needs.

The 2025-2029 edition of the Jackson County Parks and Recreation Plan was developed in accordance with the Guidelines for the “MDNR Guidelines for the Development of Community Parks and Recreation” as revised by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in November 2018.

## Community Description

A priority of Jackson County is to develop and implement a recreation plan which responds to the recreational desires of its citizens and plans for enhancements to its parks and recreation programs. A sincere effort was spent in developing this plan which represents the projected needs for recreation facilities and services in Jackson County. For example, the plan provides a clear picture of the recreational opportunities available to residents regardless of who provides them. Nontraditional recreation opportunities such as historic districts/structures are catalogued as well as traditional parks and recreation facilities.

Regional Location



## Location

Jackson County is located in south-central Lower Michigan, close to the border with Northwest Ohio and Northeast Indiana. The Jackson Urbanized Area is located in the center of the County. Interstate Highway 94 (I-94) and United States Highway 127 (US-127) converge in Metropolitan Jackson, earning the area the nickname of “Crossroads of Michigan”. Those roads connect Jackson directly to Ann Arbor and Detroit to the east, Battle Creek and Kalamazoo to the west, Lansing to the north, and Toledo to the southeast.

Jackson County has a total land area of 720 square miles. In addition to the City of Jackson, the County includes 19 townships and 6 incorporated villages. The townships of Blackman, Leoni, Spring Arbor, and Summit are recognized as urban because the Jackson Urbanized Area extended well inside their boundaries in 2020 (see Appendix D for the Urban and Rural Jackson County map). The remainder of the townships and the villages are considered to be rural.

## A Brief Socioeconomic Summary

The composition of Jackson County’s population has an effect upon its recreational needs. Pertinent demographic components are listed below along with a brief paragraph describing the local situation. Jackson County data is compared with its statewide counterparts. Each component is described in greater detail in Appendix A of this document.

- **Population History & Projections.** The 2023 population for Jackson County was 159,424, a decrease of 0.6 percent from the 2020 population of 160,366. City of Jackson residents comprised 19.5 percent of the countywide population in 2020, down from 21 percent in 2010.
- **Age & Gender of the Population.** The estimated median age of a Jackson County resident in 2023 was 41.6 years, compared to 40.5 years statewide. Older Adults (ages 45 to 64), 26.9 percent, comprised the largest population cohort in the County in 2022, followed by Young Adults (25 to 44) at 24.7 percent. Males comprised an estimated 51% of the County population in 2022, compared with 49% statewide.
- **Racial & Ethnic Composition.** The population of Jackson County is fairly homogenous. An estimated 85 percent of County residents were white in 2022, compared to an estimated 79 percent statewide. Black residents comprised an estimated eight percent of the County population in 2022, compared with an estimated 14 percent statewide. An estimated four percent of County residents were Hispanic in 2022, compared with an estimated six percent statewide.
- **Disabilities of Residents.** An estimated 15 percent of Jackson County residents were disabled in some way in 2023, compared with 14.7 percent statewide. An estimated eight percent of County residents had an ambulatory disability in 2023, compared with seven percent statewide.
- **Household & Family Composition.** An estimated 66 percent of Jackson County households were comprised of families in 2023, identical to the statewide average. Single people comprised an estimated 29 percent of all County households in 2023, also identical to the statewide average.

- **Income & Poverty.** The median household income was \$63,338 for Jackson County in 2022, compared to \$69,183 statewide and \$74,755 nationally. Per capita personal income was \$48,818 for County residents in 2023, compared to \$61,144 statewide. An estimated 13.6 percent of the County population lived below the poverty level in 2023, nearly identical to the statewide rate of 13.5 percent.

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Chapter 2

**Administrative Structure**

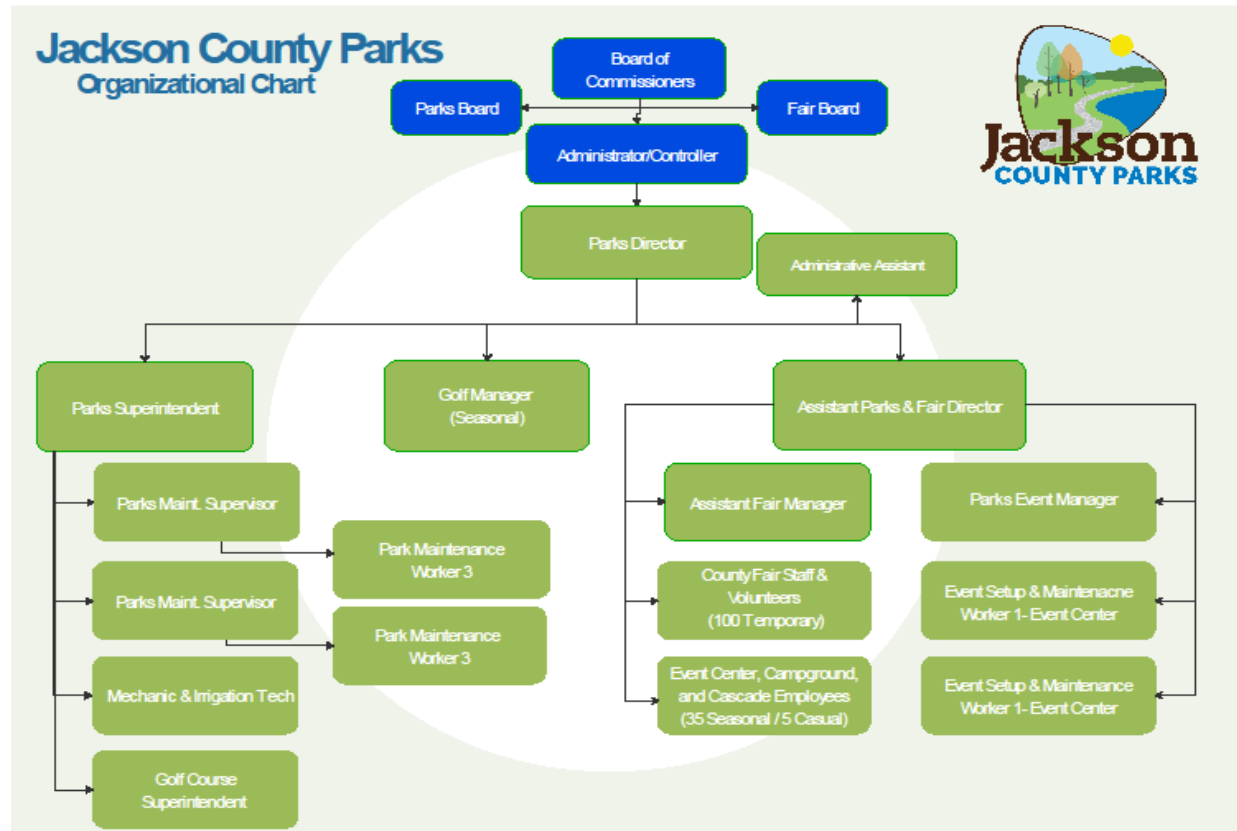
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## Administrative Structure

The authority to provide public park systems and recreation programs is granted by the State of Michigan. Jackson County’s park system is established under the authority of Public Act 156 of 1917, *Recreation and Playgrounds* (MCL 123.51 et seq.). The act allowed for the creation of the Jackson County Parks and Recreation Commission, under the control of the Jackson County Board of Commissioners.



## Organizational Structure

The Jackson County Parks Board was created by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. The membership consists of individuals whose experience, training or interest in the parks and recreation programs that qualify them to lend valuable assistance. The purpose of the Jackson County Parks Board is to implement the “Jackson County Parks and Recreation Plan;” and, operating and maintaining the Jackson County Parks system.

The Jackson County Parks Board is responsible for studying and ascertaining the county’s parks, preserves, parkways and recreation, and other conservation facilities; the need for such facilities; and, the extent to which the needs are currently being met, and to assist in refining, updating, and implementing the “Jackson County Parks and Recreation Plan.” The Park Board, is also charged with reviewing and recommending, to the County Board of Commissioners, priorities and goals to resolve conflicts in the “Jackson County Parks and Recreation Plan,” and making appropriate budget requests (see the organizational chart).

The Parks Board consists of eleven (11) members, including three county commissioner seats and eight at-large appointments to be made by the County Board of Commissioners. All appointments will be for a three-year term.

## **Parks and Recreation Budgeting**

The park system's operating budget, including revenue from the millage and fees for service, was \$2,841,790.00 in 2024. Approximately \$1,000,000 is spent annually on capital improvement projects. Capital projects are funded via the park millage, grants and private investment.

## **Sources of Funding**

Jackson County identifies several potential sources of revenue for recreation:

1. Jackson County Parks millage
2. Grants and donations awarded for specific projects
3. User fees for golfing, camping, pavilions, and other attractions (utilized to maintain those facilities)
4. Rental income from various special events, tradeshow, weddings, concession stands, and other partnerships (utilized to maintain those facilities)
5. The Michigan Transportation Fund Act (Act 51)
6. Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

## **Jackson County Parks Millage**

County residents approved a 10-year millage on August 7, 2018 in order to establish a stable, long-term funding source for county parks. The 0.5 mills approved by voters generates approximately \$2,800,000 per year to support county parks operations and capital improvements. The Jackson County Parks Department communicated thoroughly throughout the millage campaign process on how funds would be spent if the millage was successful. The educational campaign conveyed the following bullet points for park improvements:

1. Improvements to playgrounds / playground safety
2. Construct kayak / canoe launches, and fishing piers, creating improved access to lakes and rivers
3. Improved existing county trail maintenance and develop new connections to a state-wide trail
4. Repair / reconstruction of boat launch areas within County Parks
5. Beachfront / public swimming areas improvements
6. Restoration of the Cascades
7. Construct permanent county park restrooms
8. Development of a community dog park and installation of dog friendly watering stations and dump stations for waste disposal

## **Rental and User Fees**

The rent generated by concession stands and other commercial vendors contribute to the maintenance of the county system. The user fees charged for various facilities (i.e., golfing, camping, skateboarding, pavilions, etc.) contribute to the maintenance of those and other facilities within the park system.

## Grants and Donations

Grants are sought from various state, federal, and philanthropic sources for the acquisition of parkland and the development of a specific park, facility (e.g., trails, playgrounds, picnic shelters, sports facilities, etc.) or program. Donations from the general public and various service organizations for a specific park, facility, or program are also accepted. A portion of the local match required of most grants may also come from the general fund or donations. Many grants for parks and recreational facilities are likely to come from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund<sup>1</sup>.

## The Michigan Transportation Fund Act (Act 51)

The Michigan Transportation Fund Act (Act 51) states that “a reasonable amount, but not less than 1% of” funds allocated to the state or a county, city, or village “shall be expended for construction or improvement of non-motorized transportation services and facilities.” That set-aside can be used to fund “an improvement in a road, street, or highway which facilitates non-motorized transportation . . . or improvement of a sidewalk in a city or village, or any other appropriate measure.” The Michigan Department of Transportation, the Jackson County Department of Transportation, the City of Jackson, and the various villages within the county receive funding through Act 51. Coordination with those entities could result in the expenditure of Act 51 funds on non-motorized projects proposed within this document.

## Relationships with Other Public Agencies

Jackson County Parks is not the only supplier of parks and recreational opportunities to its residents.

### Schools

Local school districts are significant suppliers of parks and recreational opportunities to their students and boosters as well as the general public. The following school districts maintain recreation facilities within Jackson County (see Appendix D for the School Districts map):

Columbia School District	Hanover-Horton School District	Northwest Community Schools
Concord Community Schools	Jackson Public Schools	Springport Public Schools
East Jackson Community Schools	Michigan Center School District	Vandercook Lake Public Schools
Grass Lake Community Schools	Napoleon Community Schools	Western School District

The following school districts, which cover portions of Jackson County, provide recreation programs to their students although they maintain no recreation facilities within the county:

Albion Public Schools	Litchfield Community Schools
Chelsea School District	Manchester Community Schools
Homer Community Schools	North Adams-Jerome Schools
Leslie Public Schools	

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<sup>1</sup> This is a Federal program administered locally by the State of Michigan.

## **Local, County, State, and Private Parks and Recreation Facilities**

Some of the villages and townships within Jackson County also maintain parks, trails, and recreation programs. The same is true for the some of the surrounding counties and municipalities.

Jackson County participates with the other local governments within the county in the planning for and provision of recreation facilities as evidenced by the *Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan 2020* and the *Upper Grand River Water Trail Development Plan*.

The State of Michigan provides a variety of recreational facilities in the form of state game, wildlife, and recreation areas; state historic parks; and state parks in and around the county. Jackson County cooperated with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in the establishment of the Falling Waters Trail. A variety of private entrepreneurs and quasi-public agencies also provide recreation facilities and programs in and around the Township.

Please refer to Chapter 3 for a more detailed description of recreation facilities in Jackson County and the City of Jackson.

## **Public-Private Cooperation**

Cooperation between the public and private sectors is also active. For example, the Jackson County Parks Association, the Cascades Park Foundation, and Cascades Inc. volunteer their services to the County's park system. The Friends of the Falling Waters Trail was instrumental in the development and maintenance of the Falling Waters Trail.

Chapter 3

**Recreation and Resource Inventories**

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In order to plan for future parks and recreation facilities it is important to prepare a complete inventory of existing resources and facilities. The following inventory is comprised of all known parks and recreation facilities and programs available countywide, not just those owned and managed by Jackson County. The parks, facilities, and programs were identified through local knowledge and review of current and historic documents and maps.

## Park Classifications and Standards

It is also important to be able classify parks and recreation facilities and to apply standards to them in order to identify the need for additional parkland and recreation facilities in Jackson County.

### Types of Parks

Park systems are divided into several types:<sup>2</sup>

**Mini-Parks.** Small parks (less than an acre) which address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs.

**Neighborhood Parks.** Informal active and/or passive recreation parks which serve as the focus of the neighborhood; *this park type also serves as a mini-park for the area immediately adjacent to the facility.*

**Community Parks.** Parks which serve a broader focus than a neighborhood and may also preserve a unique landscape or open space; *this park type also serves as a neighborhood park for the area immediately adjacent to the facility.*

**Regional Parks.** Parks which serve the entire county as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces; *this park type also serves as a community park for the area surrounding the facility.*

**Connector Trails.** Linear parks which serve as non-motorized connectors among neighborhoods, business areas, parks, schools, and other destinations.

### Service Area and Acreage Standards

The park acreage standard advocated by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) is 10 acres for every 1,000 residents.<sup>3</sup> The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) recommends the following service areas and minimum sizes for each type of park.<sup>4</sup>

**Mini-Parks.** Less than ¼ mile service area and less than an acre in size

**Neighborhood Parks.** ¼-½ mile service area and a minimum size of 5 acres

**Community Parks.** ½-3 mile service area and a size of 30-50 acres

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<sup>2</sup> Springate, Lee, "Defining Parks and Park Systems," From Recreation to Re-creation: New Directions in Parks and Open Space System Planning, Megan Lewis, editor (PAS Report Number 551)

<sup>3</sup> National Recreation and Park Association, Open Space Guidelines & Standards, C. Castleman, compiler

<sup>4</sup> Grants Management Division, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans IC1924 (Rev.01/27/2006)

**Regional Parks.** Community-wide service area and a minimum size of 50-75 acres<sup>5</sup>. It is important to note that a single standard cannot meet the needs of all park systems. Accordingly, some of the parks may not meet the minimum size criteria for the assigned park type.

## Parks and Recreation in Jackson County

Mini, neighborhood, some community parks, and connector trails are provided by the City of Jackson and some of the other villages and townships which comprise Jackson County. Some regional parks and recreation facilities are provided by the State of Michigan, the City of Jackson and other organizations. Local and state governments and other organizations also provide a variety of recreation programs in addition to parkland. Jackson County Parks complement those systems by providing a system of regional and community parks, various connector trails, and recreation programs.

### Jackson County Parks

Jackson County’s park system is comprised of 18 parks encompassing 1,081 acres of parkland and 10.5 miles of trails (see Appendix D for the Jackson County Park Location and Coverage map). Most of the county parks are adjacent to water —providing opportunities for swimming, boating, and/or fishing— making them community facilities. The presence of modern campgrounds, the county fairgrounds, and significant cultural facilities make several parks regional facilities. Picnic areas, various sporting facilities, and toilet facilities are also available in many county parks. Please see Appendix B of this document for a complete listing of the recreation facilities found in each park and Appendix D for associated maps.

#### Jackson County Parks

# Name	Park Type	Size	BFA
1. Clark Lake County Park	Community	6.5 ac	2
2. Clear Lake County Park	Community	5.5 ac	1
3. Gillett's Lake County Park	Community	6 ac	2
4. Grass Lake County Park	Community	18 ac	3
5. Fairgrounds) James J. Keeley County Park (Jackson County)	Regional	44 ac	3
6. Lime Lake County Park	Community	321 ac	2
7. Little Wolf Lake County Park	Community	9 ac	2
8. Minard Mills County Park	Community	5 ac	2
9. Pleasant Lake County Park and Campground	Regional	21 ac	2
10. Portage Lake-Ready County Park	Community	6 ac	2
11. Round Lake County Park	Community	1 ac	1
12. Alfred R. Snyder County Park (Horton Mill Pond)	Community	61 ac	2
13. Sparks Foundation County (Cascades) Park	Regional	443 ac	3
14. Swains Lake County Park and Campground	Regional	25.5 ac	3

<sup>5</sup> The standard the MDNR uses for large urban parks is also used for regional parks in this report

15. Vandercook Lake-Townsend Beaman County Park	Community	21 ac	3
16. Vineyard Lake County Park	Community	9.5 ac	2
17. The Burns Property <sup>6</sup>	Regional	78.0 ac	1
18. Falling Waters Trail	Connector	10.5 mi	4
19. McCabe Property	Regional	47 ac	3

Given the estimated Jackson County population of 159,424 people in 2023, the county park system provides 68 percent of the acreage recommended per 100 residents. It must be noted that the service areas for the parks show that portions of the county are not served adequately. For example, much of Blackman Township as well as other villages and townships are not served by a community park. However, it is important to note that the service area for the four regional parks covers the entire county.

### Barrier-Free Access

It is important that the parks and recreation facilities operated by Jackson County and the City of Jackson be accessible to people with disabilities. After all, it is estimated that 15 percent of County residents had some type of disability in 2023 according to the American Community Survey and eight percent had an ambulatory difficulty. Accordingly, all of the parks provided by the city and county were also rated according to their level of barrier free access.<sup>7</sup> The number listed under the BFA column in the tables listing those parks equate to the barrier-free rating listed below:

#### Barrier-Free Access (BFA) Analysis

key description
1 = None of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
2 = Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
3 = Most of the facilities/park area meet accessibility guidelines.
4 = The entire park meets accessibility guidelines.
5 = The entire park was developed/renovated using the principal of universal design.

### Grant-Assisted Parks and Recreation Facilities

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has awarded 15 recreation grants to Jackson County. Please see the recreation grant history table located in Appendix B for a complete listing of those grants.

### Recreation Events and Programs

Tournaments and other golf outings occur at the 18-hole Cascades Championship Golf Course and the 9-hole Cascades Executive Course and driving range. Programs are also provided at the Cascades (an illuminated waterfall and museum) as well as the Cascades Rotary Community Band Shell. All of those events take place on the grounds of the Sparks Foundation

<sup>6</sup> The Burns Property is 78 acres of undeveloped land in Liberty Township.

<sup>7</sup> The analysis of barrier free access was provided by Jackson County and the City of Jackson, based upon its knowledge of the parks and understanding of barrier-free access. A professional analysis may produce different results.

County (Cascades) Park. A variety of other events are hosted in that park (please see Appendix B for a listing of those events). The Jackson County Parks Association hosts a variety of work bees and recreational events as well in the County's various parks. It should also be pointed out that some of the recreation providers listed in this chapter also provide recreational programs. For example, the various bowling alleys host bowling leagues and the City of Jackson provides a wide variety of recreation programming.

## Other Municipal Parks

The City of Jackson system is comprised of 26 parks, 3 off-road trails, and several miles of widened sidewalks. The existence of golf courses, a museum, a planetarium, and other unique destinations make Ella W. Sharp Park a regional facility. The presence of recreation centers and a pool and skateboard park make Horace Blackman Park, Martin Luther King Park (Howard Woods Complex), Loomis Park, and William Nixon Memorial Park community facilities. Almost a third of the parks serve neighborhoods. Over half of the city parks are very small, making them mini facilities. Green space, playground equipment, walkways and benches, and various sporting facilities are also available in many city parks. Some of the other villages and townships within Jackson County also provide parks and recreation facilities to their residents (please see Appendix B for a listing of those parks).

## Michigan Department of Natural Resources

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is a significant provider of regional parks and recreation facilities in Jackson County (see Appendix D for the Parks and Recreation Facilities map).

## State Parks

The DNR maintains the following parks which extend partially into Jackson County:

- Meridian-Baseline State Park, Henrietta and Rives Townships.
- Walter J Hayes State Park, Norvell Township
- Watkins Lake State Park, Norvell Township

Walter J Hayes State Park “offers a modern campground, a large swimming area, two boat launches, a fishing pier, trails, a picnic shelter, interpretive programs and more.”<sup>8</sup> The Meridian-Baseline State Park “contains the intersection of the Michigan meridian and the baseline used for the Michigan Survey. The park has two monuments that show where the two mismatched baselines meet the principal meridian at the North Initial Point and South Initial Point.”<sup>9</sup> The Watkins Lake State Park “is known for its quiet serenity, popular, 5-mile walking trail and opportunities for bird watching.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.michigandnr.com/parksandtrails/details.aspx?id=454&type=SPRK#overview>

<sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meridian-Baseline\\_State\\_Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meridian-Baseline_State_Park)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.michigandnr.com/parksandtrails/Details.aspx?id=746&type=SPRK>

## State Recreation and Game Areas

The DNR maintains the following state game and recreation areas which extend into Jackson County:

- Waterloo Recreation Area (Malan Waterfowl Production Area and Waterloo Game Unit), Grass Lake, Leoni, and Waterloo Townships
- Grass Lake State Game Area (Schlee Waterfowl Production Area), Grass Lake Township
- Sharonville State Game Area, Grass Lake and Norvell Townships

The Waterloo Recreation Area “is home to multiple campgrounds, cabins/yrurts, beaches, picnic areas, fishing lakes, nature trails, hiking trails, mountain biking trails, equestrian trails, the Gerald Eddy Discovery Center and much more.”<sup>11</sup>.

## DNR Boat Launches

Finally, the DNR also maintains 13 boat launches in Jackson County (please see Appendix B for a listing of those launch sites).

## Local Schools

Schools also provide a variety of recreational facilities. For example, elementary schools provide numerous playgrounds aimed at different age groups and sports fields. Middle and high schools provide football fields, ball diamonds and tennis courts. Elementary, middle, and high schools provide gymnasiums. Because of those facilities, schools generally function as community parks. The following school districts, which are also part of the Jackson County Intermediate School District, maintain facilities within Jackson County (please see Appendix D for the School Districts map and Appendix B for a listing of the schools in each district).

**Columbia School District.** The district covers the Village of Brooklyn and portions of Blackman, Columbia, Liberty and Norvell.

**Concord Community Schools.** The district covers the Village of Concord and portions of Concord, Parma, Pulaski, Spring Arbor, and Hanover Townships.

**East Jackson Community Schools.** The district covers portions of Blackman, Leoni, Summit, and Waterloo Townships.

**Grass Lake Community Schools.** The district covers the Village of Grass Lake and portions of Grass Lake, Leoni, and Waterloo Townships.

**Hanover-Horton School District.** The district covers the Village of Hanover and portions of Hanover, Liberty, Pulaski, and Spring Arbor Townships.

**Jackson Public Schools.** The district covers the City of Jackson and portions of Blackman, Liberty, Napoleon, and Summit Townships.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.michigandnr.com/parksandtrails/Details.aspx?type=SPRK&id=506>

**Michigan Center Schools.** The district covers a portion of Leoni Township.

**Napoleon Community Schools.** The district covers portions of Napoleon and Norvell Townships.

**Northwest Community Schools.** The district covers portions of Blackman, Henrietta, Rives, Tompkins, and Sandstone Townships.

**Springport Public Schools.** The district covers the Village of Springport and portions of Parma and Tompkins Townships.

**Vandercook Lake Public Schools.** The district covers portions of Summit Township.

**Western School District.** The district covers the Village of Parma and portions of Concord, Parma, Sandstone, and Spring Arbor Townships.

An additional 10 districts serve residents living on the periphery of Jackson County, but maintain no schools in the County. Various religious and other quasi-public and private educational institutions are also providers of recreational facilities.

## **Private and Quasi-Public Parks and Recreation Facilities**

A number of private and quasi-public institutions also provide recreation facilities (see Appendix D for the Parks and Recreation Facilities map).

### **Golf Courses**

There are 17 private golf courses operating in Jackson County, in addition to the public courses located in Sparks Foundation County (Cascades) Park and the City of Jackson's Ella Sharp Park (please see Appendix B for a listing of those private courses).

### **Camps and Campgrounds**

A number of organizations maintain camps in Jackson County for the use of their members. For example, the YMCA, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts organizations operate Camp Storer (Napoleon Township), Camp Teetonkah (Grass Lake and Leoni Townships), and Camp O' the Hills (Norvell Township), respectively. The Jackson Intermediate School District (ISD) operates Camp McGregor (Liberty Township). Various other philanthropic and religious institutions also operate camps in Jackson County. Finally, a variety of private campgrounds throughout Jackson County also provide individual campsites to patrons (please see Appendix B for a listing of those private campgrounds).

### **Nature Preserves**

The Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Audubon Sanctuary (Leoni Township) is a Michigan Audubon sanctuary "renowned for its Sandhill Cranes. Many pairs of cranes nest in the area and hundreds more gather here during fall migration (September to mid-November)."<sup>12</sup> Michigan State University's MacCready Reserve (Liberty Township) "is designated for education, research, and outreach programs in wildlife and forestry management. The lush environment includes 6.5 miles of trails, rolling terrain, towering hardwoods, natural springs, and colorful

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.haehnesanctuary.org>

wildflowers that create a diverse habitat for numerous species of birds.”<sup>13</sup> The Michigan Audubon Society (Spring Arbor Township), Nature Conservancy (Liberty Township), and the Michigan Nature Association (Napoleon and Norvell Townships) own additional preserves. Various clubs also own land in Jackson County for hunting and other purposes.

## **Recreation and Sport Centers**

Michigan International Speedway is the most conspicuous of the recreation and sports centers located in Jackson County. The YMCA of Jackson provides a variety of sports and recreational activities. The Optimist Ice Arena is also located in the City of Jackson. The Grass Lake Depot and Whistle Stop Park is available to rent for special events and the grounds are open to the public. Finally, several bowling alleys operate in Jackson County. Brooklyn Lanes serves the Brooklyn Area and Airport Lanes and Suburban Lanes serve the Jackson area.

## **Other Public and Private Facilities with Recreational Benefits**

Various other facilities provided publicly and privately also have recreational benefits (see Appendix D for the Other Facilities map):

## **Local Colleges**

There are several colleges which maintain campuses in Jackson County. Baker College’s local campus is located in Blackman Township, north of the Jackson County Airport. Jackson College’s main campus is located in Summit Township and its W.J. Maher Campus is located in Blackman Township. Spring Arbor University’s main campus is located in the unincorporated village of Spring Arbor. Many colleges provide access to collegiate sports and athletic facilities. County residents can also avail themselves of the other recreational facilities and programs hosted by those institutions. For example, The George E. Potter Center (Jackson College) “is comprised of the most versatile and complete performing arts complex in the area.”<sup>14</sup> The Ganton Art Gallery (Spring Arbor University) “is the largest single-space gallery in southern Michigan.”<sup>15</sup>

## **Airports**

Airports provide opportunities for recreational activities as well as transportation. For example, Reynolds Field (Jackson County Airport) and Shamrock Airport (Brooklyn) provide opportunities for recreational flying. Napoleon Airport provides opportunities for recreational flying and parachuting.

## **Sidewalks**

Most of the City of Jackson’s streets have sidewalks. All of the incorporated villages contain sidewalks along at least some local streets. Sidewalks also occur in other parts of Jackson County. Those sidewalks are used for exercise as well as transportation and may even connect with non-motorized trails.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.experiencejackson.com/business/maccready-reserve>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.jccmi.edu/entertainment-events/about-the-theatre/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.arbor.edu/venue/ganton-art-gallery/>

## Historic Sites

Jackson County contain many historic sites that have local, state, and/or national significance. The National Register of Historic Places contains 28 sites in Jackson County.<sup>16</sup> A total of 47 sites in Jackson County were are included on the List of Michigan State Historic Sites, including 9 informational/commemorative designations, 11 sites that are also on the National Register, and 1 demolished house.<sup>17</sup> The City of Jackson's Under the Oaks Neighborhood is a locally designated historic district and the City has also designated 42 other local historic districts.<sup>18</sup>

## Resource Inventory

In addition to parks and recreation facilities, Jackson County is also home to a wide variety of cultural and natural resources.

## Topography

With a change in elevation of 292 feet, the County's topography can be described as gently rolling and moderately hilly. Higher elevations are found in southwestern Jackson County (see Appendix D for the Topography map). Approximately 66% of the County drains into the Upper Grand River. To the west and southwest, approximately 22% of the County drains into t. The high point of 1,178 feet above sea level is located along the western border of Hanover Township, east of Grover Road and south of Folks Road. Low elevations are located along the County's water courses as well as the northeastern corner of the County. The low point of 886 feet is located along the northern border of Tompkins Township where the Grand River flows into Ingham County.

## Water Resources

Several watersheds dominate Jackson County (see Appendix D for the Watersheds map). Approximately 66% of the County drains into the Upper Grand River. To the west and southwest, approximately 22% of the County drains into the Kalamazoo River. To the southeast, approximately 12% of the County drains into the River Raisin. In addition to the three major rivers and their tributaries, Jackson County is blessed by many lakes and wetlands (see Appendix C for the Flood Zones and Wetlands map). Approximately 66% of the County drains into the Upper Grand River. To the west and southwest, approximately 22% of the County drains into it. For example, large lakes such as Columbia, Grass, Ackerson, Portage and Clark are located in the eastern half of Jackson County. Wetlands still exist in the City of Jackson as well as throughout Jackson County.

## Transportation

Jackson County and the City of Jackson share a well-connected transportation system (see Appendix D for the Transportation map). Approximately 66% of the County drains into the Upper Grand River. To the west and southwest, approximately 22% of the County drains into t.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/mi/jackson/state.html>

<sup>17</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Michigan\\_State\\_Historic\\_Sites\\_in\\_Jackson\\_County](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Michigan_State_Historic_Sites_in_Jackson_County)

<sup>18</sup> [https://library.municode.com/mi/jackson/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR\\_CH13HIPR\\_S13-21THJAHIDI](https://library.municode.com/mi/jackson/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_CH13HIPR_S13-21THJAHIDI)

Interstate 94 (I-94) traverses the County from east-to-west and skirts the northern boundary of the City. I-94 provides access to the major metropolitan areas of Chicago and Detroit. United States Highway 127 (US-127) runs through the center of the County as well as the City. It provides access to the Lansing area and other points north as well as Adrian and Toledo to the south. A wide variety of Michigan highways (e.g., M-50, M-60, M-106, etc.), county primary roads, and city major streets provide access to those major roadways. The City of Jackson and portions of the outlying urban townships are also served by a bus system.

## Soils

The types of soils found in Jackson County are important to its development. For example, the 2000-2025 edition of the *Jackson Community Comprehensive Plan* (i.e., the *Jackson County Master Plan*) identifies lands suitable for agricultural preservation as well as the establishment of greenways (see Appendix C for the Prime Farmland and Greenways map). Approximately 66% of the County drains into the Upper Grand River. To the west and southwest, approximately 22% of the County drains into t). That plan contains a map of ‘Agricultural Preservation Areas’ which identifies parcels of land eighty (80) acres or more in size with soils classified as prime or unique for agricultural production by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The location of active agricultural land, the location of agricultural and open space areas on township future land use plans, and existing proposed sewer service areas also impacted the designation of those areas. The ‘Jackson County Greenways Plan’ map contained in the document identifies a possible network of greenways which “generally follows wetland areas, drainage ways, and forested lands”.

## Land Use

The existing land use inventory conducted for the *Jackson County Master Plan* was used to analyze future land use. For that inventory municipal assessors assigned a numeric code to each property as part of the assessment process which was then translated into broad category. Please note that most rights-of-way and some lakes and ponds are not included in the calculations. For the purposes of this Plan, that data was then utilized to divide Jackson County into various land use categories (see the Property Assessment map in Appendix D).

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Chapter 4

**Public Involvement**

Jackson County Recreation Plan: 2025 – 2029 Edition



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## Description of the Planning Process

The steps utilized to develop the 2025 – 2029 edition of the Jackson County Recreation Plan included the following:

1. Jackson County recognized the need to update the Recreation Plan.
2. Jackson County Parks administration contracted with Region 2 Planning Commission to facilitate the development of the 2025 – 2029 edition of the Plan in the spring of 2024.
3. Region 2 staff assisted in updating the Plan and its appendices in the fall of 2024.
4. An online survey was conducted from June 11, 2024 through August 10, 2024 to obtain feedback from the general public.
5. After receiving feedback from Jackson County Parks administration, Region 2 staff reported the findings of the updated Plan chapters and appendices and the results of the survey to the Parks and Recreation Board.
6. The Parks and Recreation Board utilized the input collected through public involvement efforts to develop the goals and objectives and action program included in the Plan in the fall of 2024.
7. The Parks and Recreation Board provided the Plan for public review from December 7, 2024 through January 7, 2025 and held a public hearing on January 8, 2025. The Plan was approved by the Board and recommended for adoption by the County Board of Commissioners after the public hearing was closed.
8. The Jackson County Board of Commissioners adopted the Plan on January 21, 2025.

## Description of the Public Input Process

A variety of methods were employed to incorporate public input into the development of this plan.

### Surveys and Interviews

A couple of surveys and various interviews were conducted in order to collect the opinions of the general public and the local governmental jurisdictions which comprise Jackson County.

### General Public Survey

An online survey was conducted from June 11 through August 10, 2024, via SurveyMonkey, to collect the opinions of the general public regarding the provision of parks and recreation facilities in Jackson County. The survey was available on the Jackson County Parks website, as well as the Region 2 Planning Commission's website. To capture park users, the survey was also linked to a QR code on a sign at each County Park. Hard copy surveys were also available at the Jackson County Parks office, campgrounds, and the Cascades. The survey concluded the week of the Jackson County Fair, where staff were present at an informational booth providing the opportunity to take the survey on an iPad. The survey was also sent directly to

local leadership at townships and villages. A total of 531 people took the survey. The survey, which can be found in Appendix C, provided the following key insights:

### Demographic and Visitor Insights

**Participants:** A large majority of (91.3%) of respondents were Jackson County residents, with the remaining comprised of business owners (2.5%) and visitors (6.2%).

**Community Representation:** Summit Township (20.9%) and the City of Jackson (17.3%) reported the highest participation, while Spring Arbor and Leoni also showed strong engagement.

### Parks Usage and Visitation Patterns

**Popular Parks:** Sparks Foundation (Cascades) Park was the most frequently visited, with 27.9% of respondents visiting regularly and 26.7% occasionally. Other popular spots included Falling Waters Trail and Pleasant Lake County Park.

**Barriers to Park Usage:** Key deterrents for visitors included concerns over public safety (39.6%) and lack of activities of interest (35.6%). Limited restroom facilities and parking challenges were also noted.

### Community Desires for Park Enhancements

**Trail Expansion:** There is strong support (73.4%) for a regional trail system, with a majority favoring connectivity to surrounding communities.

**Water Recreation:** More than half of the respondents (50.2%) strongly support adding water trailheads and kayaking / canoeing access along the Grand and Portage Rivers and Chain of Lakes.

### Desired Facilities and Activities

**Top Amenities Requested:** Interest is high for canoe / kayak launches (51.5%), additional picnic areas (46.5%), beach access (36.3%), and splash parks / water slides (34.4%).

**Events and Programs:** Fireworks and Cascades Family Nights are popular, suggesting that similar community-focused events could enhance engagement.

### Partnerships and Communication

**Potential Partners:** Respondents suggest partnerships with local municipalities and nonprofit organizations to expand and maintain recreational facilities.

**Preferred Communication:** Email and social media are the top choices for updates on park events and improvements.

### Other Planning Efforts Impacting Jackson County Parks

Jackson County also participates in various regional nonmotorized trail planning and water trail planning efforts and facilitates master planning activities for individual county parks.

## Nonmotorized Trails

A regional nonmotorized trail is emerging in Jackson County. The Hiking Trail of the State of Michigan's *Iron Belle Trail* and *Route #1* of the *Great Lake-to-Lake Trails* are proposed to traverse the County from Munith in its northeast corner to Concord in its southwest corner, utilizing the same corridor (see the Major Community Facilities Map in Appendix D). Major portions of the corridor are already completed, including the Martin Luther King Junior Equality Trail, which traverses the City of Jackson, and Jackson County Parks' Falling Waters Trail, which traverses the Townships of Summit, Spring Arbor, and Concord and the Village of Concord. The Mike Levine Lakelands Trail State Park, which traverses the Townships of Waterloo, Henrietta, Leoni, and Blackman, will begin construction of the section that will link into the City's MLK Equality Trail at Monroe Street in 2025. Other trails also traverse portions of Jackson County.

### Hiking Trail of the Iron Belle Trail

"The Iron Belle Trail is Michigan's showcase trail that touches hundreds of municipalities and crosses through 48 different Michigan counties. Using existing trails, networks and some new connections, the trail extends more than 2,000 miles from the far western tip of the Upper Peninsula to Belle Isle in Detroit on a biking trail and hiking trail. The biking route utilizes many of the state's existing bike paths, bike lanes, and signed, designated biking routes as it travels up the east side of the state, while the hiking route utilizes sidewalks, trails, and the 1,000-mile plus North Country National Scenic Trail traveling up the west side of the lower peninsula" The hiking trail utilizes the MLK Equality Trail/Falling Waters Trail corridor, which is suitable for biking as well as hiking.

### Route #1 of the Great Lake-To-Lake Trails

The Michigan Trails & Greenways Alliance has identified 5 Great Lake to Lake Trail routes across the state. Route #1 of the Great Lake-to-Lake Trails will connect South Haven (Lake Michigan) with Port Huron (Lake Huron), utilizing the MLK Equality Trail/Falling Waters Trail corridor.

### Horton Road Trail, the Fourth Street Connector Development Project, and the Sparks Park Inter-City Trail Connector

Summit Township joined with the City of Jackson and Jackson County to submit complementary Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) applications to construct trails that connect Ella Sharp Park and Sparks Foundation County (Cascades) Park to the MLK Equality Trail/Falling Waters Trail corridor and each other and to provide trail loops in Summit Township and the City of Jackson. The local governments received Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund (MNRTF) grants in 2015 for the Horton Road Trail Development Project (TF 15-0069), the Fourth Street Connector Development Project (TF-15-0097), and the Sparks Park Inter-City Trail Connector Development Project (TF 15-0092) and all 3 trails are now open to the public. The Horton Road Trail and the Fourth Street Connector link with each other, the Weatherwax Trail, and the MLK Equality Trail to provide a connection to Ella Sharp Park as well as a trail loop. The Sparks Park Inter-City Trail Connector provides a connection between the trails in Sparks Foundation County (Cascades) Park, the MLK Equality Trail, and City of Jackson sidewalks and bike lanes to provide another trail loop.

## Teft Road

Spring Arbor Township submitted a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) application to construct a trail connecting the unincorporated village of Spring Arbor with the Falling Water Trail. The Township received a Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant in 2017 for the Teft Road Trail Development Project (TF-17-0064). The Teft Road Trail will also provide a connection between Spring Arbor University (via the sidewalk system in the unincorporated village of Spring Arbor) and Lime Lake County Park.

## Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan

The Region 2 Planning Commission, the City of Jackson, and Jackson County developed a nonmotorized plan that covers all of Jackson County in 2020. Potential on-road and off-road nonmotorized projects throughout Jackson County were identified in this document.

## On-Road Nonmotorized Transportation

With the exception of freeways, Jackson County's roads and street are available for use by pedestrians and bicyclists. *Consequently, this Recreation Plan states that Jackson County supports the goal of complete streets*, which "means roadways, planned, designed, and constructed to provide appropriate access to all legal users in a manner that promotes safe and efficient movement of people and goods whether by car, truck, transit, assistive device, foot, or bicycle," as defined by Public Act 51 of 1951 (State Trunk Line Highway System), as amended. Accordingly, Jackson County Parks officials will advise local governmental jurisdictions, the Jackson County Department of Transportation (JCDOT), and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) on future road and street projects within Jackson County regarding the inclusion of appropriate nonmotorized facilities (e.g., sidewalks, bike lanes, paved shoulders, trails, etc.).

## Water Trails

Water trails are comprised of canoe/kayak launch sites connecting together signed stretches of river (and lakes) maintained for paddling. The *Upper Grand River Water Trail Development Plan*, adopted by the Upper Grand River Watershed Council in 2017, proposes several water trails in Jackson County. The Upper Grand River Water Trail will flow from the Liberty Mill Pond (Liberty Township) to Eaton Rapids (Eaton County), as well as on the North Branch of the river from the unincorporated village of Michigan Center (Leoni Township) to the confluence with the main channel (City of Jackson). The Portage River Water Trail will flow from the Portage Lake Campground (Waterloo State Recreation Area (Waterloo Township)), to its confluence with the Grand River (Blackman Township). The Chain of Lakes Water Trail will flow from Little Wolf Lake County Park (Napoleon Township) to Leoni Community Park on the shore of Center Lake (unincorporated village of Michigan Center). Those trails were recognized as state-designated water trails by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) in 2018 and will be included in updates to the *Jackson County Recreation Plan* and likely other pertinent municipal recreation and master plans. Jackson County Parks plans to develop canoe/kayak launch sites in Little Wolf Lake County Park (Napoleon Township), on the Chain of Lakes, and Vandercook Lake County Park (Summit Township), on the Grand River, in the near future. Please see the water trail development plan for a complete listing of the proposed canoe/kayak launch sites. The Kalamazoo River Watershed Council has also designated portions of both branches of the Kalamazoo River as water trails. The water trail on the North Branch of the Kalamazoo River flows from the unincorporated village of Horton (Hanover Township) to the City of Albion

(Calhoun County), where it joins with the South Branch to form the Kalamazoo River. The water trail on the South Branch has also been designated, flowing from Scipio Township (Hillsdale County) to the City of Albion. A canoe/kayak livery already exists at the Twin Lakes Campground on the South Branch of the Kalamazoo River. Although the River Raisin has not been designated as a water trail, this plan recognizes that canoeing and kayaking take place on that watercourse in Jackson County and its potential for water trail development.

## **Public Involvement and Plan Adoption**

Public involvement was also an integral part of the Jackson County Recreation Plan approval process.

### **Parks and Recreation Board Meetings**

All meetings of Jackson County's Parks and Recreation Board are open to the public.

### **One Month Review Period**

The recreation plan was submitted for a one-month public comment period which began on December 7, 2024, and ended on January 7, 2025. The plan was available for review in the offices of Jackson County Parks and the County Administrator as well as online at <https://mijackson.org/3070/Parks-Recreation>.

### **Letters of Transmittal**

Letters of transmittal were sent to the County of Jackson and the Region 2 Planning Commission (R2PC) alerting those bodies of the recreation planning effort.

### **Public Hearing and Plan Approval**

A public hearing on the recreation plan was held on January 8, 2025 in the offices of Jackson County Parks at Keeley Park (200 W. Ganson Street, Jackson), during a regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Board. A Resolution of Approval was then passed by the Board. The Jackson County Board of Commissioners passed a Resolution of Adoption on January 21, 2025, in the 5<sup>th</sup> floor Commission Chambers of the Jackson County Tower Building (120 W. Michigan Avenue, Jackson), during a regular meeting.

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Chapter 5

**Goals and Objectives**

Jackson County Recreation Plan: 2025 – 2029 Edition



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## Mission

*The Jackson County Parks and Recreation System provides the environments that facilitate memorable experiences and enhance the quality of life in our community.*

## Vision

*Promoting a fun, healthy, active and environmentally-rich community.*

## Values

Jackson County Parks values:

- *[Its] customers, employees, volunteers, benefactors, business partners, community leaders and supporters*
- *[Its] availability to all people*
- *[Its] facilities and parks*
- *[Its] diverse scheduled activities, programs and unique experiences*
- *Fiscal responsibility*
- *[Its] guardianship and preservation of open spaces, natural resources and heritage*
- *[Its] leadership and partnerships within the community*
- *Wholesome family programming*

## Goals and Objectives

Jackson County Parks has identified the following goals and objectives:

### Goal #1: Improve Access to Lakes and Rivers

**Objective 1.1: Expand Water Trail Launch Areas:** Develop additional launch sites along the Upper Grand River Water Trail to increase access for canoes, kayaks, and boats, enhancing recreational options for all.

**Objective 1.2: Construct Accessible Fishing Piers:** Install fishing docks and piers at appropriate locations within parks to improve accessibility and provide designated fishing areas.

**Objective 1.3: Enhance Boat Launch Facilities:** Upgrade boat launch areas in suitable parks to accommodate increased demand and improve user experience.

**Objective 1.4: Improve Swimming Areas and Manage Erosion:** Implement safety and quality measures for swimming areas and address shoreline erosion, focusing on locations like Clark Lake’s eastern shoreline.

**Objective 1.5: Advocate for Partnerships for Future Water-Based Recreation:** Explore collaborative opportunities with local organizations and community partnerships to enhance water access and conservation efforts, with focus on clearing water trails and maintaining access points, the addition of unified water trail signage, and increased water trail safety.

## **Goal #2: Sustain and Expand Trail Networks**

**Objective 2.1: Maintain Trail Upkeep and Plan for Necessary Resurfacing:** Ensure regular maintenance, including resurfacing and crack sealing, to ensure trails remain safe and consistently in exemplary condition.

**Objective 2.2: Extend Trail Connectivity to Surrounding Communities:** Expand pathway from the Village of Concord to the Calhoun County line, and connecting more residents and visitors with local and regional trail systems.

**Objective 2.3: Enhance Trail Amenities:** Incorporate camping options, new trailheads, and improved signage to enrich the trail experience and accommodate a wider range of outdoor activities, exploring options for rustic camping sites for trail users.

## **Goal #3: Address Key Deterrents to Park Visitors**

**Objective 3.1: Increase Park Safety:** Improve lighting and add security cameras where appropriate to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all park users.

**Objective 3.2: Upgrade Restroom Facilities:** Replace portable toilets with permanent restrooms when feasible, particularly in higher-traffic parks.

**Objective 3.3: Enhance Parking and Accessibility:** Expand and improve parking facilities at park sites, including additional paved and accessible spaces.

**Objective 3.4: Develop a Comprehensive Trail Guide:** Collaborate with the City of Jackson to develop recognizable, unified signage for all trails across Jackson County, establishing a clear and cohesive system that enhances community connectivity and ease of navigation.

## **Goal #4: Create Engaging Community Spaces and Enhance Quality of Life**

**Objective 4.1: Expand Community Events:** Support and grow events at venues like The Cascades and Keeley Park, encouraging activities such as fireworks celebrations, year-round festivals, and family-friendly gatherings that build community spirit and involvement.

**Objective 4.2: Partner with Local Organizations:** Collaborate with community groups, nonprofits, and schools to support events and programs within park spaces.

**Objective 4.3: Increase Barrier-Free Access:** Improve accessibility across all facilities to accommodate people of all abilities, with a focus on adding accessible playgrounds and inclusive recreational spaces.

**Objective 4.4: Promote Health and Recreation for All:** Encourage active, healthy lifestyles by raising awareness of parks and recreational programs, fostering an environmentally rich and engaging community atmosphere.

**Objective 4.5: Explore New Opportunities as They Arise:** Explore unanticipated and time-sensitive opportunities for new / improved parks and recreation facilities / programs and seek funding for / developing them, as appropriate, without amending this plan.

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Chapter 6

**Action Plan**

Jackson County Recreation Plan: 2025 – 2029 Edition



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## Action Plan Implementation

By using the comprehensive planning process of trend identification, public input, and public meetings, Jackson County Parks established a framework for the implementation of the following action plan. The action plan consists of the goals and objectives, referenced in chapter five, that recommend improvements and enhancements of Jackson County Parks and Recreation facilities and programming, as well as identifying the tools needed for implementation of the Recreation Plan components.

This implementation and action plan for Jackson County Parks outlines a four-year timeline for prioritized projects and improvement initiatives. Aligned with Jackson County's goals, these projects target accessible water and trail amenities, enhanced park safety, and community-focused recreational spaces to foster public health, connectivity, and environmental conservation. This chapter provides a roadmap for translating the county's strategic objectives into actionable steps, ensuring each project maximizes community engagement and sustainability.

### 2025 IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

**Key Goals:** Improve Access to Lakes and Rivers, Address Key Deterrents to Park Visitors, Create Engaging Community Spaces.

**Projects:** Grass Lake Tennis/Pickleball Court (\$250,000), Pleasant Lake Playground (\$200,000), Trail Improvements (\$100,000), Little Wolf Lake Kayak Launch (\$75,000), Swains Lake Fishing Pier (\$125,000).

#### Actions:

1. **Expand Water-Based Recreation:** Launch improvements at Little Wolf Lake to provide accessible kayak access and fishing opportunities. Enhance Pleasant Lake and Swains Lake with erosion management and designated fishing areas for safety and water quality.
2. **Trail and Playground Developments:** Complete playground installations at Pleasant Lake and trail improvements to encourage diverse activities. Include new signage and parking to address accessibility and safety.
3. **Community and Safety Enhancements:** Install lighting at high-use areas and renovate picnic shelters and restroom facilities to support year-round community events at these sites.

**Expected Outcomes:** Enhanced water and land access across Jackson County, improved visitor safety and accessibility, and increased options for community gatherings and recreational events.

### 2026 IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

**Key Goals:** Sustain and Expand Trail Networks, Increase Barrier-Free Access, Promote Health and Recreation.

**Projects:** Accessible Playground at Sparks Foundation (\$500,000), Vandercook Lake Dog Park (\$200,000), Parking Lot Improvements (\$100,000), Cascades Park Renovations (\$3,500,000).

**Actions:**

1. **Accessibility and Inclusion:** Develop accessible playgrounds and dog parks at Sparks Foundation and Vandercook Lake to accommodate people of all abilities and encourage community inclusivity.
2. **Trail and Parking Upgrades:** Continue trail connectivity by improving access points and developing parking areas with accessible spaces. Upgrade lighting and signage along the Cascades Park for enhanced visitor experiences and trail guidance.
3. **Cascades Major Renovations:** Start extensive renovations to preserve historical features, ensure safety, and incorporate sustainable designs, supporting both everyday use and annual events.

**Expected Outcomes:** Increased accessibility for all visitors, a stronger regional trail network, and enhanced health and recreational spaces for diverse community engagement.

## 2027 IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

**Key Goals:** Sustain and Expand Trail Networks, Address Key Deterrents to Park Visitors, Enhance Community Spaces.

**Projects:** Falling Waters Trail Improvements (\$1,000,000), Swains Playground (\$100,000), Grass Lake Playground (\$75,000).

**Actions:**

1. **Trail and Playground Upgrades:** Implement comprehensive resurfacing and enhancements along Falling Waters Trail, ensuring safety and ADA compliance. Install updated playground equipment at Swains and Grass Lake parks, supporting families and child-friendly recreation.
2. **Safety and Accessibility:** Replace older restroom facilities and improve trail signage for easier navigation. Ensure the newly added playgrounds and other high-traffic areas are well-lit and equipped with cameras where appropriate.
3. **Funding and Grant Applications:** Pursue additional grant opportunities for trail and equipment upgrades to supplement the county budget and expand programming and outreach.

**Expected Outcomes:** Improved safety and ease of access, enhanced trail experiences, and increased family-friendly recreation options, supporting Jackson County's goals for quality of life.

## 2028 IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

**Key Goals:** Improve Access to Lakes and Rivers, Sustain and Expand Trail Networks, Promote Health and Recreation.

**Projects:** McCabe Property River Access Development (\$200,000), Splash Pad Renovations (\$500,000), Trail Connection from Concord to Calhoun County Line (\$1,100,000), Vineyard Lake Playground (\$60,000).

### Actions:

1. **Water and River Access:** Develop river access at the McCabe Property, supporting recreational paddling and fishing along the Upper Grand River Water Trail. Incorporate accessible designs for inclusivity.
2. **Regional Trail Expansion:** Complete Concord to Calhoun County Line trail connection to link Jackson County trails with regional and statewide routes, expanding options for non-motorized travel.
3. **Splash Pad and Playground Upgrades:** Renovate splash pads with sustainable materials and replace Vineyard Lake playground equipment, focusing on inclusivity and durability.

**Expected Outcomes:** Expanded water access and enhanced regional trail connectivity, increasing recreational options and supporting Jackson County's goals for community health, safety, and inclusivity.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Jackson County Parks will oversee project progress with bi-annual reviews to assess completion rates, budget adherence, and community satisfaction. Performance metrics include increased park attendance, trail usage, and public engagement, ensuring the ongoing alignment of completed projects with Jackson County's recreational goals and objectives.

## Capital Improvement Plan

A draft Capital Improvement Plan for Jackson County Parks that aligns with the proposed implementation efforts described previously can be found below:

**Jackson County Parks – Draft Capital Improvement Plan: 2025 – 2029**

**2025**

Grass Lake Tennis / Pickleball Court	250,000
Minard Mills Renovations	80,000
Minard Mills Playground	60,000
Pleasant Lake Playground	200,000
Swains Lake Fishing Pier	125,000
Complete Vision Plans for Swains Lake, Vandercook Lake	15,000
Trail Improvements	100,000
Clark Lake Restroom / Demo	50,000
Little Wolf Lake Kayak Launch Development	75,000
Cascades Manor House Roof	40,000
Driveway Improvements	20,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,015,000</b>

**2026**

Inclusive Playground – Sparks Foundation County Park	500,000
Sparks Park Restroom	50,000
Dog Park Implementation – Vandercook Lake County Park	200,000
Parking Lot / Drive Improvements	100,000
Pleasant Lake Retaining Wall Replacement	50,000
Implement Kayak Access Site at Parnall or Keeley Park	75,000
Cascades Renovations	3,500,000
Rustic Camping Opportunities for Trail Users	75,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,550,000</b>

**2027**

Falling Waters Trail Improvement	1,000,000
Inclusive Playground – Vandercook Lake County Park	400,000
Swains Playground	100,000
Grass Lake Playground	75,000
Grass Lake Fishing Pier	125,000
Gillette's Lake Playground Replacement	75,000
Cascades Golf Course Irrigation Replacement and Cart Path Replacement	2,500,000
Lime Lake Restroom	35,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,235,000</b>

**2028**

McCabe Property Development – River Access	200,000
Splash Pad Renovations	500,000
Picnic Shelter Roofing Replacements	100,000
Sparks Park Basketball Court Replacement	50,000
Erosion Control at Swains Lake, Clark Lake, Lime Lake	150,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>

**2029**

Trail Connection – Concord to Calhoun County Line	1,100,000
Vineyard Lake County Park Playground	60,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,160,000</b>

Appendix A

## Demographics

Jackson County Recreation Plan: 2025 – 2029 Edition



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The composition of Jackson County’s population can have an effect upon its recreational needs. For example:

**Population History & Projections** – establish the need for general recreational facilities (standards for which are based upon the size of the population).

**The Age & Gender of the Population** – further refine the need for general recreational facilities balanced among various age groups and gender interests.

**Racial & Ethnic Composition** – further refine the need for general recreational facilities balanced among the various interests of racial and ethnic groups.

**The Disabilities of Residents** – establish the need for special recreation facilities and disability accommodations to general recreation facilities.

**Household & Family Composition** – further refine the need for general recreational facilities balanced between family-oriented and individual activities.

**Income** – helps to illustrate the need for publicly-funded recreational facilities.

### Population History & Projections

Jackson County’s 2023 population of 159, 424 was a decrease of 0.6 percent from its 2020 population of 160,366. Measured in ten-year increments, since 1990 through 2020, the County has shown positive growth for each ten-year period, although its growth rate for each period has been slower than Michigan’s decennial growth for each period. Overall, between 1990 and 2020 the County recorded a growth rate of 7.1 percent. Assuming a growth rate of 1.75 percent between 2023 and 2029, the County’s anticipated 2029 population would be 162,214.

Jackson County Population Over Time		
	Population	Growth Rate
2023	159,424	(0.6%)
Growth: 2020 – 2023		
2020	160,366	0.1%
Growth: 2010 – 2020		
2010	160,248	1.2%
Growth: 2000 – 2010		
2000	158,422	5.8%
Growth: 1990 – 2000		
1990	149,756	7.1%
Growth: 1990 – 2020		

## Age & Gender of the Population

The estimated median age of a Jackson County resident in 2023 was 41.6 years, compared to 40.5 years statewide. Older Adults (ages 45 to 64), 26.9 percent, comprised the largest population cohort in the County in 2022, followed by Young Adults (25 to 44), at 24.7 percent. Males comprised 51 percent of the County population in 2022, compared with 49 percent statewide.

Population by Age, 2022	Value	% of Total
Total	160,637	100%
Preschool (0 to 4)	8,745	5.4%
School Age (5 to 17)	25,094	15.6%
College Age (18 to 24)	14,666	9.1%
Young Adult (25 to 44)	39,609	24.7%
Older Adult (45 to 64)	43,282	26.9%
Older (65 plus)	29,241	18.3%

## Racial & Ethnic Composition

The population of Jackson County is fairly homogenous. An estimated 85 percent of County residents were white in 2022. Black residents comprised an estimated eight percent of the County population in 2022, while Hispanic residents constituted four percent of all residents.

## Disabilities of Residents

An estimated 15 percent of Jackson County residents were disabled in some way in 2023, including eight percent with an ambulatory disability.

## Households & Family Composition

Families comprised 66 percent of all Jackson County households in 2023, with single people representing 29 percent of all County households.

## Income & Poverty

An estimated 13.6 percent of the Jackson County population lived below the poverty level in 2023, which was nearly identical to the statewide poverty rate of 13.5 percent.

Jackson County’s median household income of \$63,338 in 2022 trailed both Michigan’s \$69,183 and the national median household income of \$74,755 by a significant amount. It was even worse for County residents when comparing per capita personal income. Jackson County residents’ per capita personal income in 2023 was \$48,818, which was 80 percent of Michigan’s \$61,144 and 70 percent of the United States’ \$69,810.

<b>Jackson County Income Comparison</b>		
	<b>Median Household Income: 2022</b>	<b>Per Capita Personal Income: 2023</b>
Jackson County	\$63,338	\$48,818
Michigan	\$69,183	\$61,144
United States	\$74,755	\$69,810

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Appendix B

**Recreation and Resource Inventories**

Jackson County Recreation Plan: 2025 – 2029 Edition



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## Jackson County Parks

Information on the recreation facilities available in each county park follows:

### 1. **Clark Lake County Park**, 3708 Ocean Beach Road, Columbia Township

Signature facilities:

- Water access
- Swimming area
- Boat launch

Standard facilities:

- Green space
- Picnic area (including grills)
- Playground equipment
- Portable toilets

### 2. **Clear Lake County Park**, 6693 Clear Lake Road, Waterloo Township

Signature facilities:

- Water access
- Swimming area

Standard facilities:

- Green space
- Picnic area (including a shelter)
- Playground equipment
- Portable toilets

### 3. **Gillett's Lake County Park**, 480 Gillett's Lake Road, Leoni Township

Signature facilities:

- Water access
- Swimming area

Standard facilities:

- Green space
- Picnic area
- Playground structure
- Softball backstop
- Portable toilets

### 4. **Grass Lake County Park**, 400 N. Lake Road, Village of Grass Lake

Signature facilities:

- Water access

Swimming area  
Boat launch

Standard facilities:

Green space  
Picnic areas (including grills and a shelter (by reservation))  
Playground structure  
Modern restrooms  
Concession stand

**5. James J. Keeley County Park (County Fairgrounds), 200 W. Ganson Street, Jackson**

Signature facilities:

American 1 Event Center  
Jackson County Fairgrounds  
Indoor Pickleball

Standard facilities:

N/A

**6. Lime Lake County Park, 5501 Teft Road, Spring Arbor Township**

Signature facilities:

Water access  
Boat launch  
Swimming area

Standard facilities:

Green space  
Picnic area (including grills and tables)  
Portable toilets

**7. Little Wolf Lake County Park, 4925 Wolf Lake Road, Napoleon Township**

Signature facilities:

Water access  
Swimming area

Standard facilities:

Green space  
Picnic area (including a shelter)  
Playground equipment  
Portable toilets

**8. Minard Mills County Park**, 8975 Springport Road, Tompkins Township

Signature facilities:

- Water access

Standard facilities:

- Green space
- Picnic area (including tables, grills, a shelter (by reservation), etc.)
- Ball diamond
- Playground area
- Modern restrooms

**9. Pleasant Lake County Park and Campground**, 4401 Styles Road, Henrietta Township

Signature facilities:

- Water access
- 60 modern campsites (including water and electricity, restrooms with hot showers, a sanitary dump station and a water tower)
- 3-hole disc golf course
- Swimming area
- Fishing

Standard facilities:

- Green space
- Horseshoe pits
- Picnic areas (including three shelters (by reservation))
- Shuffleboard courts
- Biking area
- Play structure

**10. Portage Lake-Ready County Park**, 6990 Portage Lake Road, Waterloo Township

Signature facilities:

- Water access
- Swimming area
- Boat launch

Standard facilities:

- Green space
- Picnic area (including grills)
- Playground equipment
- Portable toilets

**11. Round Lake County Park**, 11980 Round Lake Road, Liberty Township

Signature facilities:

- Water access
- Boat launch

Standard facilities:

- Green space
- Picnic area (including grills)
- Playground equipment
- Flowing well
- Portable toilets

**12. Alfred R. Snyder County (Horton Mill Pond) Park**, 120 3rd Street, Hanover Township

Signature facilities:

- Water access
- Fishing

Standard facilities:

- Green space
- Picnic area (including a shelter)
- Playground equipment
- Gazebo
- Pit toilets

**13. Sparks Foundation County (Cascades) Park**, 1401 S. Brown Street, City of Jackson and Summit Township

Signature facilities:

- Water access
- The Cascades (an illuminated waterfall built on a 500-foot hill with six giant fountains, musical accompaniment, and museum)
- 9-hole Cascades Executive Course and driving range
- 18-hole Cascades Championship Golf Course
- Cascades Manor House (banquet facility)
- Cascades Ice Cream Co.
- Cascades Rotary Community Band Shell
- Fishing pier (disability accessible)

Standard facilities:

- Green space
- Picnic areas (including a shelter (by reservation))
- Basketball court
- Playground structures
- Modern restrooms
- Portable toilets

**14. Swains Lake County Park and Campground**, 7400 Pulaski Road, Pulaski Township

Signature facilities:

- Water access
- 56 modern campsites (including water and electricity, restrooms with hot showers, a sanitary dump station and a water tower)

- Swimming area
- Boat launch
- Trails (biking, hiking & nature)
- Fishing

Standard facilities:

- Green space
- Picnic areas (including 3 shelters (by reservation))
- Playground areas (sandbox)
- Softball diamond
- Basketball court
- Volleyball area
- Horseshoe pits

**15. Vandercook Lake-Townsend Beaman County Park**, 407 Parkway Street, Summit Township

Signature facilities:

- Water access
- Swimming area
- Boat launch

Standard facilities:

- Green space
- Picnic area (including a shelter)
- 2 ball diamonds
- Playground area
- Restrooms

**16. Vineyard Lake County Park**, 175 North Drive, Columbia and Norvell Townships

Signature facilities:

- Water access
- Swimming area
- Boat launch

Standard facilities:

- Picnic areas (including grills and tables)
- Playground equipment
- Portable toilets

**17. The Burns Property**, 2399 E. Liberty Road, Liberty Township;

Signature facilities:

N/A

Standard facilities:

N/A.

## 18. **Falling Waters Trail**, Martin Luther King Equity Trail to the Village of Concord

Signature facilities:

10½ mile, 12-ft wide asphalt pathway  
Water access – Concord Trailhead

Standard facilities:

Portable toilets at Weatherwax Road, Teft Road, and Concord Trailheads

## 19. **McCabe Property**, Junction of Grand and Portage Rivers (future development, open for use)

Signature facilities:

N/A

Standard facilities:

N/A

## Recreation Grant History

### 1. **Sparks Park Development**

Project No. 26-00765

Year: 1976

Grant Amount: \$32,747.36

**Scope Items:** 4 tennis courts, 6 horseshoe pits, landscaping, and parking.

**Project Description:** 4 tennis courts, parking, 12 horseshoe pits, landscaping, and LWCF sign.

**Current Usage:** Tennis Court surfacing developed large cracks over the past several years and courts have been closed due to unsafe conditions. Horse shoe pits and landscaping are still active in the park.

### 2. **Pleasant Lake County Park**

Project No. 26-00788

Year: 1976

Grant Amount: \$13,645.84

**Scope Items:** Lighting, picnic equipment, play equipment, shelter, site improvements/seeding, and 2 basketball courts.

**Project Description:** Shelter, 2 basketball courts, picnic equipment, site improvements and seeding, lighting, and LWCF sign, basketball court, dumping station

**Current Usage:** All equipment, structures and facilities are still in place. The shelter is scheduled to be replaced in 2010. Basketball court surfacing is in need of crack repair and resurfacing. Play equipment is still in place and has been maintained to industry standards.

### 3. Sparks Foundation County Park

Project No. 26-01060 K2  
Year: 1978  
Grant Amount: \$18,730.00

**Scope Items:** Concession/comfort station and landscaping.

**Project Description:** Comfort station/concession building, landscaping, and LWCF sign.

**Current Usage:** Concession stand and comfort station has been updated and maintained, still in use.

### 4. Swains Lake County Park

Project No. 26-01211  
Year: 1981  
Grant Amount: \$44,885.40

**Scope Items:** Parking improvements and restroom/bathhouse.

**Project Description:** Develop: restroom/bathhouse facilities, parking area, and LWCF sign.

**Usage:** The parking area was upgraded in 1999 and the bathhouse was replaced in 2012.

### 5. Nonmotorized Recreation Trail System

Project No. TF86-259  
Year: 1986  
Grant Amount: \$54,700.00

**Scope Items:** N/A.

**Project Description:** Development of a nonmotorized trail from the Village of Concord to Swains Lake County Park.

**Current Usage:** The Trail was used for several years. Jackson County Road Commission widened the adjacent road in 2005, removing the pathway in the process and re-building the path as a widened shoulder.

### 6. Nonmotorized Pathway

Project No. BF91-252  
Year: 1991  
Grant Amount: \$37,500.00

**Scope Items:** costs and markings.

**Project Description:** 9-ft asphalt pathway in Sparks Foundation Co. Park to Cascades Falls.

**Current Usage:** 9 foot asphalt pathway has been maintained and sees heavy use throughout the year.

## 7. Pleasant Lake Park Improvements

Project No. BF92-126  
Year: 1992  
Grant Amount: \$63,750.00

**Scope Items:** 2 picnic shelters, 2 shuffleboard courts, burial of overhead lines, contingency, 2 horseshoe courts, parking improvements, playground equipment/tables, restroom renovation, and 1 sand volleyball court.

**Project Description:** Construct picnic shelters, sports and play equipment, and picnic area, renovate restroom/parking lot and bury overhead wires.

**Current Usage:** All improvements are still intact and used.

## 8. Grass Lake Park Improvements

Project No. TF94-114Cla  
Year: 1994  
Grant Amount: \$104,300.00

**Scope Items:** Construct seawall, contingency, increase/improve parking, landscaping and tree replacement, picnic shelter, play equipment/tables, restroom/concession building, and upgrade board launch.

**Project Description:** Improvements include boat launch, parking, restroom/concession building, picnic shelter, and play equipment.

**Current Usage:** All improvements are still in use and in use. The concession stand not in service at this time.

## 9. Vandercook Lake Park Improvements

Project No. TF95-066  
Year: 1995  
Grant Amount: \$157,500.00

**Scope Items:** Basketball court/drinking fountain, exercise path, new picnic shelter, parking improvements, playground equipment/picnic area, restroom/concession building, tree replacement/landscaping, and upgrade boat launch accessories.

**Project Description:** Construct concession/restroom building and picnic shelter; upgrade boat launch access on Vandercook Lake, parking lot, basketball court, playground equipment, exercise path, and drinking fountain.

**Current Usage:** All facilities are in good condition and still in use. The exercise path was removed from project scope.

## 10. Swains Lake Park Improvements

Project No. TF99-209  
Year: 1999  
Grant Amount: \$88,750.00

**Scope Items:** 10 grills, benches, trees, and picnic tables; new play unit structure; parking lot and drive improvements; picnic shelter and walkway; and upgrade boat ramp/parking area.  
**Project Description:** Improvements to Swain's Lake Park, including a new picnic shelter, playground equipment, walkway, upgrading the parking lot, drive, and boat ramp.  
**Current Usage:** All items are in place and being used.

## 11. Falling Waters Trail Project

Project No. TF05-117  
Year: 2005  
Grant Amount: \$500,000.00

**Scope Items:** Bridge railings, landscaping, restroom, signage, trail construction, and trailhead.  
**Project Description:** Development of a 10.3-mile trail, bridge, trailhead, and restroom to connect Jackson City, Concord Village and the Townships of Concord, Spring Arbor and Summit to Lime Lake County Park.  
**Current Usage:** All items are in place and in excellent condition

## 12. Sparks County Park Urban Fishing Project

Project No. TF08-085  
Year: 2008  
Grant Amount: \$360,000.00

**Scope Items:** Landscaping, parking, permit fees, picnic shelter with electrical, pond and stream construction, sidewalks, signage and site amenities, 2 gateway entrance structures, and wood fishing platform.  
**Project Description:** Development will include an accessible urban fishing pond and stream, picnic shelter, sidewalks, signage, benches, tables, and fishing platforms.  
**Current Usage:** All items are in use and fully maintained.

## 13. Sparks County Park Trail Connector Acquisition

Project No. TF11-085  
Year: 2011  
Grant Amount: \$187,500.00

**Scope Items:** N/A.  
**Project Description:** Acquisition of approximately 40 acres to develop a non-motorized pathway connection and greenbelt between the Inter City Trail and Sparks Foundation County Park.  
**Current Usage:** Connector has been constructed on acquired property and is used daily.

#### 14. Swains Lake County Park Restroom Replacement

Project No. RP12-429  
Year: 2012  
Grant Amount: \$45,000.00

**Scope Items:** Demolition - existing facility, new restroom/shower facility, permit fees, septic system/drain field, signage, site restoration/landscaping, and walk paths.  
**Project Description:** Development to include replacement of the restroom/shower facility at Swain's Lake County Park and Campground.  
**Current Usage:** Restroom/shower facility is in excellent condition and is used daily by campers and park visitors.

#### 15. Sparks Park Inter-City Trail Connector Development Project

Project No. TF15-0092  
Year: 2015  
Grant Amount: \$173,500.00

**Scope Items:** Boardwalk, overlook or observation deck, signage, and trail 6' wide or more.  
**Project Description:** Development to construct 1/2 mile of trail through a natural setting that includes wetlands, uplands, and wooded areas. The trail will connect to the Inter-City Trail on the south end and Sparks Park on the north end. The project will also include a parking lot on the north end and 250 feet of boardwalk with an observation deck in the wetland areas. The project will provide access to a natural area and wildlife viewing opportunities in an urban setting.  
**Current Usage:** All items are in place, in excellent condition and used daily.

#### 16. Vandercook Lake County Park Development Project

Project No. TF19-0028  
Year: 2019  
Grant Amount: \$173,500.00

**Scope Items:** Canoe/Kayak launch, paved ADA parking spaces, access pathway 6' or more, signage.  
**Project Description:** Development to improve access to the trailhead of the Upper Grand River Water Trail with the addition of an ADA-compliant canoe launch at Vandercook Lake in Townsend Beaman County Park, a 21-acre park in Summit Township just south of Jackson. In addition to improved water access the project also includes the addition of ADA-compliant paved parking spaces, ADA-compliant access route from the parking lot to the restrooms and interpretive signage to describe the water trail.  
**Current Usage:** All items are in place, in excellent condition and used daily.

## 17. Grand – Portage River Parcel Acquisition

Project No. TF20-0045  
Year: 2020  
Grant Amount: \$162,900.00

**Scope Items:** N/A.

**Project Description:** Acquisition of an estimated 47.6 acres of park land at the confluence of the Grand and Portage rivers. This additional land will provide access to both the Portage River and Grand River for outdoor water-based recreation activities such as canoeing, kayaking and fishing, as well as for the Lakelands Trail linkages within Jackson County.

**Current Usage:** The property is open to the public.

## 18. Sparks County Park Pickleball Courts

Project No. TF21-0115  
Year: 2021  
Grant Amount: \$300,000.00

**Scope Items:** N/A.

**Project Description:** Development project that includes the addition of a pickleball court complex to Sparks Foundation County Park (Cascades Park). The complex will include eight courts and is a renovation of the former tennis courts, which haven't been used since 2008. The project will include an 8-foot-wide access pathway that connects to Jackson County's state-wide trail network, a shade structure, and fencing. Cascades Park is a regional draw and is widely known for its world-famous Cascade Falls.

**Current Usage:** All items are in place, in excellent condition and used daily.

## Jackson County Recreation Event and Programs

Information on the recreation events hosted by Jackson County – all of which take place in Sparks Foundation County (Cascades Falls) Park or James J Keeley Park – follows:

- Fireworks and Entertainment:
  - On or around Memorial Day
  - On or around July 4<sup>th</sup>
  - On or around Labor Day
- Cascades Falls Family Nights
- Community Band Shell Concerts
- Food Truck rally
- Halloweentown
- Craft Shows
- Jackson County Fair

## Other Municipal Parks

**Blackman Township.** Rod Mills Memorial Park, Parnall Complex

**Columbia Township.** Columbia Township Hall, Columbia Township Park, and Columbia Lions Park

**Grass Lake Township.** Grass Lake Community Sports and Trails Recreation Park, and Grass Lake Township Office/Park

**Hanover Township.** Bibbins Lake Park, Perrin Park, Veteran's Ball Field

**Leoni Township.** Peter Alec Ball Park, Leoni Community Park, Bender Park, and trails along Ann Arbor Road and Page Avenue

**Liberty Township.** Liberty Township Hall Park

**Napoleon Township.** Napoleon Village Park, Napoleon Lions Park, and the Girls' Softball Field

**Norvell Township.** Ahrens Park

**Pulaski Township.** Pulaski Township Hall Park

**Rives Township.** Rives Township Ballfield Park and Veterans Memorial, Lansing Avenue Fire Station Park, and a potential park site along the Grand River at the intersection of Territorial and Johnston Roads

**Spring Arbor Township.** Fritz Gallagher Park, Harmony Park, and King Road Park (undeveloped)

**Summit Township.** Probert Road Trail

**Tompkins Township.** Tompkins Township Park

**Waterloo Township.** Waterloo Township Hall and Park

**City of Jackson.** Beech Tree Park, Best Field, Horace Blackman Park, Gov. Austin Blair Memorial Park, Bloomfield Park, Betsy Butterfield Memorial Park, Norm Cregar Memorial Park, Downtown Riverfront Park, Exchange Park, Ganson Street Park, Grand River Memorial Park, Bucky Harris Park, Martin Luther King Center, Kiwanis Park, Leekes Park, Lions Park, Loomis Park, Elnora Moorman Plaza, William Nixon Memorial Park, New Leaf Park, Optimist Park, Rotary Park, Friendship Park, Ella W. Sharp Park, Under the Oaks Park, Withington Park, Workers Memorial Park, and Martin Luther King Equality Trail

**Village of Brooklyn.** Swain Memorial Park and Weatherwax Park

**Village of Concord.** Norman Gottschalk Park and public access to the Concord Mill Pond and Paddock Lake (boat launch)

**Village of Grass Lake.** Village Community Events Park

**Village of Parma.** Groner Memorial Park

**Village of Springport.** Springport Community Park and Sykes Memorial Park

## **DNR Boat Launches**

- Center Lake, Leoni Township
- Crispell Lake, Liberty Township
- Gilletts Lake, Leoni Township
- Grass Lake County Park, Village of Grass Lake
- Leoni Township Park, Leoni Township
- Lime Lake County Park, Spring Arbor Township
- Maple Grove Bridge (Grand River), Rives Township
- Mud Lake, Waterloo Township
- Pine Hills Lake, Hanover Township
- Portage Lake, Waterloo Township
- Swains Lake County Park, Pulaski Township
- Tompkins Bridge (Grand River), Tompkins Township
- Trestle Bridge (Grand River), Tompkins Township

## **Local Schools**

### **Columbia School District**

1. Columbia Elementary School
2. Columbia Upper Elementary School
3. Columbia Central Jr. and Sr. High Schools (Fitness Center)
4. Columbia Options High School

### **Concord Community Schools**

5. Concord Elementary and Middle Schools
6. Concord High School

### **East Jackson Community Schools**

7. East Jackson Elementary School
8. East Jackson Secondary School
9. East Jackson Alternative School

### **Grass Lake Community Schools**

10. George Long Elementary School and Little Warriors Pre-School and Daycare
11. Grass Lake Middle School
12. Grass Lake High School

### **Hanover-Horton School District**

13. Hanover-Horton Elementary School and Early Impressions Preschool & Childcare Center
14. Hanover-Horton Middle and High Schools

### **Jackson Public Schools**

15. Bennett Elementary School
16. Cascades and Frost Elementary Schools
17. Dibble Elementary School
18. Hunt Elementary School
19. Northeast Elementary School
20. JPS Montessori Center
21. Sharp Park IB World School
22. Middle School at Parkside and Fourth Street Learning Center
23. Jackson High School and Jackson Pathways

### **Michigan Center Schools**

24. Arnold Elementary School
25. Keicher Elementary School
26. Michigan Center Jr./Sr. High School

### **Napoleon Community Schools**

27. Ezra Eby Elementary School and Pirates Cove Pre-School and Child Care
28. Napoleon Middle School
29. Napoleon High School
30. Ackerson Lake High School and Community Center

### **Northwest Community Schools**

31. Northwest Early Elementary School
32. Northwest Elementary School
33. R.W. Kidder Middle School
34. Northwest High School
35. Northwest Alternate High School

### **Springport Public Schools**

36. Springport Elementary, Middle, and High Schools

### **Vandercook Lake Public Schools**

37. Townsend Elementary School
38. Vandercook Lake Middle/High School

## Western School District

39. Bean Elementary School
40. Parma Elementary School
41. Warner Elementary School
42. Western Middle and High Schools
43. Western Career Prep High School

## Private Golf Courses

#	Golf Course	Number of Holes	Location
1	Arbor Hills Golf Club	18-Holes	Spring Arbor Township
2	Burr Oak Golf Club	18-Holes & Range	Sandstone Township
3	Calderone Golf Club	18-Holes	Grass Lake Township
4	Clark Lake Golf Course	27-Holes	Columbia Township
5	Concord Hills Golf Course	18-Holes	Pulaski Township
6	Country Club of Jackson	27-Holes	Summit Township
7	Country Town Golf Course	9-Holes	Springport Township
8	Deer Run Golf Course	9-Holes	Liberty Township
9	Gauss's Green Valley Golf Course	18-Holes	Napoleon Township
10	The Grande Golf Club	18-Holes	Summit Township
11	Hankered Hills Golf Club	27-Holes & Range	Henrietta Township
12	Hickory Hills Golf Course	36-Holes & Range	Summit Township
13	Hill's Heart of the Lakes Golf Course	18-Holes	Village of Brooklyn and Columbia Township
14	Lakeland Hills Golf Club	18-Holes	Leoni Township
15	Pine Hollow Golf Course	18-holes	Leoni Township
16	Waterloo Golf Course	18-Holes	Waterloo Township
17	Whiffletree Hill Golf Club	18-Holes	Concord Township

## Private Campgrounds

#	Facility Name	Jurisdiction
1	All Seasons Resort	Grass Lake Township
2	Four Seasons Campground	Grass Lake Township
3	Greenwood Acres Campground	Leoni Township
4	Oak tree travel trailer Camp	Leoni Township
5	Happy Valley Campground	Norvell Township
6	Sauder's Pier 66 Marina, Camper, and Trailer Park	Norvell Township
7	Standard Interstate Campground	Parma Township
8	Big 9 Sportsman's Club	Pulaski Township
9	Twin Pine Campground	Pulaski Township
10	Hidden Hills Campground	Rives Township
11	Andy's Acres Travel-Trailer Park	Waterloo Township
12	Feldkamp's Campground	Waterloo Township

#	Facility Name	Jurisdiction
13	Locust Grove Co-op Campground	Waterloo Township
14	Robinhood of Sherwood Forest Campground	Waterloo Township

Appendix C

## Public Engagement

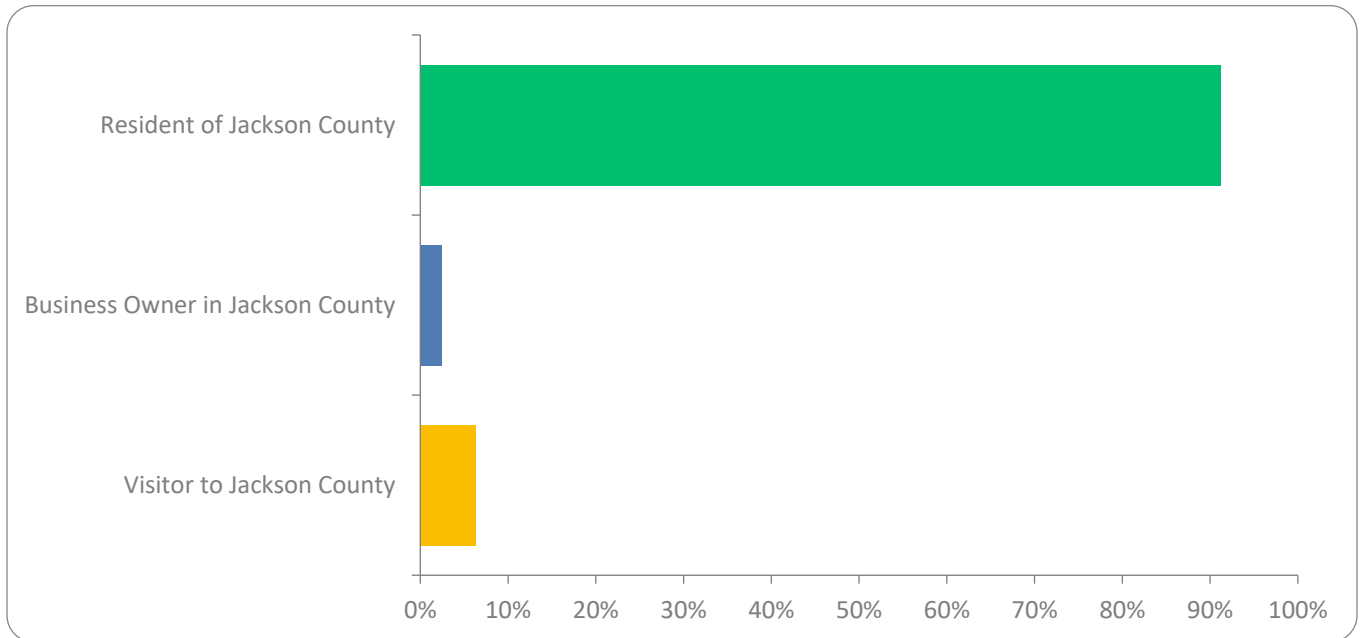
Jackson County Recreation Plan: 2025 – 2029 Edition



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**Q1: To better serve our community and visitors, we'd like to know a bit more about you. Are you a:**

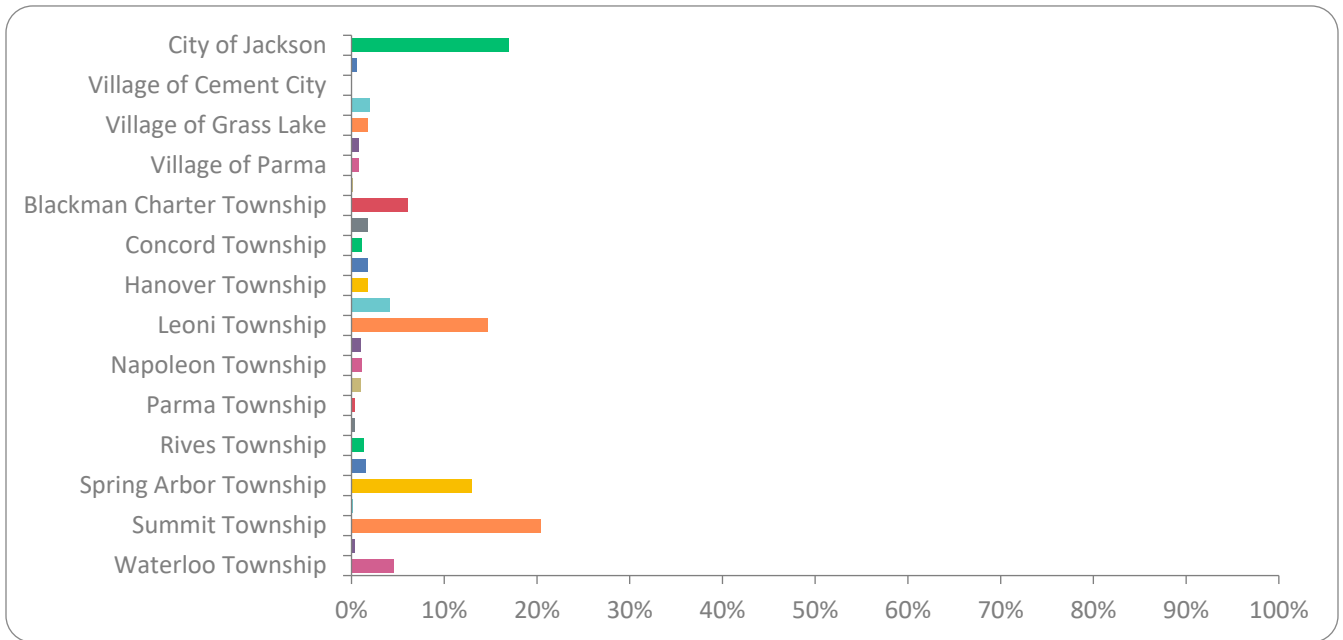
Answered: 526 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Resident of Jackson County	91.25% 480
Business Owner in Jackson County	2.47% 13
Visitor to Jackson County	6.27% 33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>526</b>

**Q2: If you're a resident, which area of Jackson County do you reside in? If you're a business owner, where in Jackson County is your business located? If you're a visitor, which park in Jackson County are you visiting?**

Answered: 508 Skipped: 23



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
City of Jackson	16.93%	86
Village of Brooklyn	0.59%	3
Village of Cement City	0.00%	0
Village of Concord	1.97%	10
Village of Grass Lake	1.77%	9
Village of Hanover	0.79%	4
Village of Parma	0.79%	4
Village of Springport	0.20%	1
Blackman Charter Township	6.10%	31
Columbia Township	1.77%	9

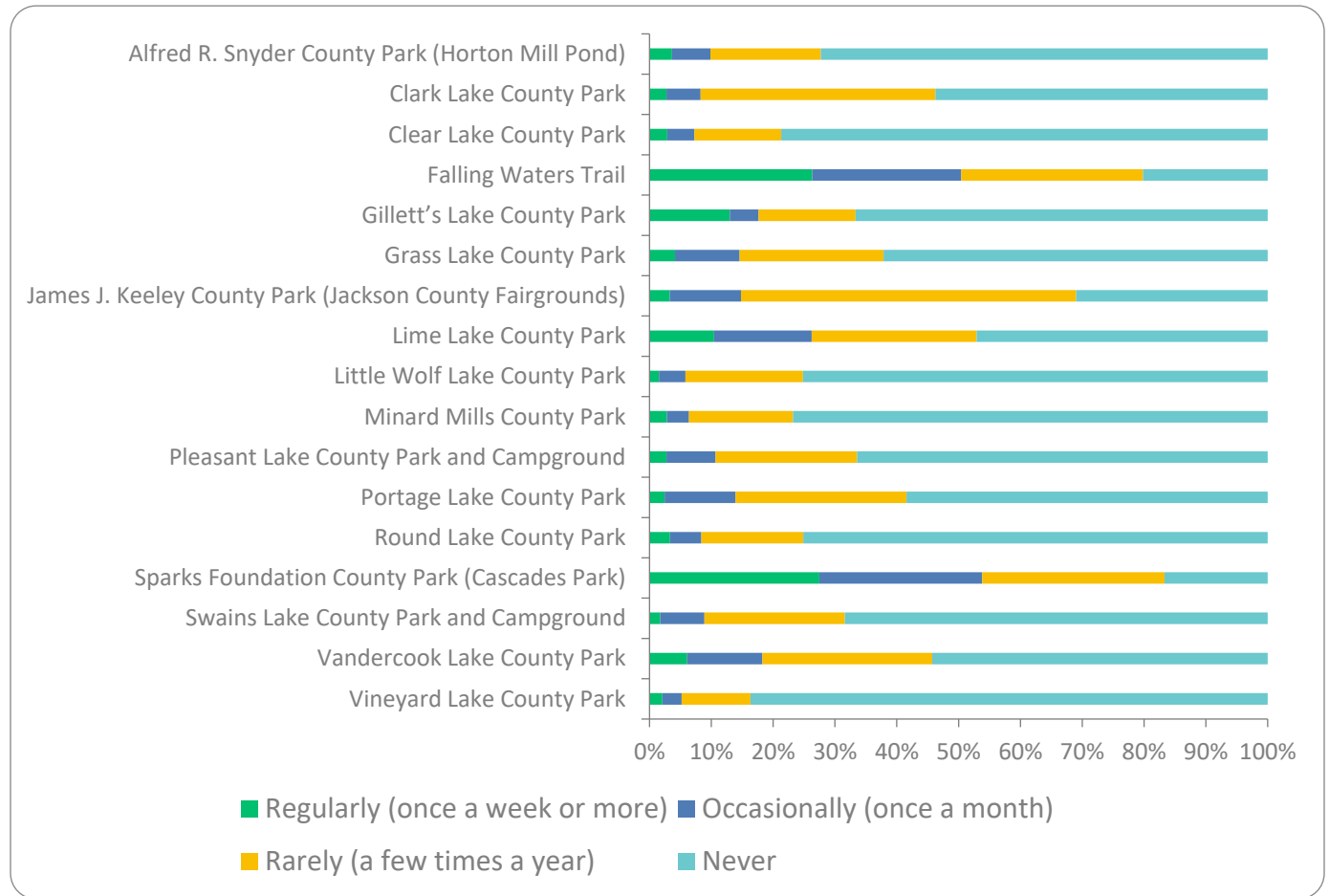
Concord Township	1.18%	6
Grass Lake Charter Township	1.77%	9
Hanover Township	1.77%	9
Henrietta Township	4.13%	21
Leoni Township	14.76%	75
Liberty Township	0.98%	5
Napoleon Township	1.18%	6
Norvell Township	0.98%	5
Parma Township	0.39%	2
Pulaski Township	0.39%	2
Rives Township	1.38%	7
Sandstone Charter Township	1.57%	8
Spring Arbor Township	12.99%	66
Springport Township	0.20%	1
Summit Township	20.47%	104
Tompkins Township	0.39%	2
Waterloo Township	4.53%	23
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>508</b>

Q3 What is your age:

old

### Q4: Select the following County Parks you have visited in the last year:

Answered: 528 Skipped: 3



	REGULARLY (ONCE A WEEK OR MORE)	OCCASIONALLY (ONCE A MONTH)	RARELY (A FEW TIMES A YEAR)	NEVER	TOTAL
Alfred R. Snyder County Park (Horton Mill Pond)	3.69% 14	6.33% 24	18.21% 69	73.61% 279	379
Clark Lake County Park	2.75% 11	5.50% 22	38.00% 152	53.75% 215	400
Clear Lake County Park	2.86% 11	4.42% 17	14.03% 54	78.70% 303	385
Falling Waters Trail	26.55% 120	24.34% 110	29.65% 134	20.35% 92	452

Gillett's Lake County Park	13.09% 53	4.69% 19	15.80% 64	67.16% 272	405
Grass Lake County Park	4.15% 17	10.49% 43	23.41% 96	62.44% 256	410
James J. Keeley County Park (Jackson County Fairgrounds)	3.32% 14	11.61% 49	54.74% 231	31.28% 132	422
Lime Lake County Park	10.44% 43	15.78% 65	26.70% 110	47.09% 194	412
Little Wolf Lake County Park	1.52% 6	4.30% 17	18.99% 75	75.19% 297	395
Minard Mills County Park	2.82% 11	3.59% 14	16.92% 66	77.18% 301	390
Pleasant Lake County Park and Campground	2.74% 11	7.98% 32	22.94% 92	66.58% 267	401
Portage Lake County Park	2.45% 10	11.52% 47	27.70% 113	58.58% 239	408
Round Lake County Park	3.31% 13	5.09% 20	16.54% 65	75.32% 296	393
Sparks Foundation County Park (Cascades Park)	27.60% 122	26.47% 117	29.64% 131	16.74% 74	442
Swains Lake County Park and Campground	1.73% 7	7.16% 29	22.72% 92	68.40% 277	405
Vandercook Lake County Park	6.08% 25	12.17% 50	27.49% 113	54.26% 223	411
Vineyard Lake County Park	2.07% 8	3.11% 12	11.14% 43	83.68% 323	386

Q5 List any additional parks you frequent that were not included in this list.

roads Betsy Butterfield Loomis Park Loomis Cascades county Rod Mills  
yall Ella Sharp open Park Nixon  
Ella Sharp Park Sharp Park None needs fair Lake

## Q6: How do you rate the Jackson County Parks System

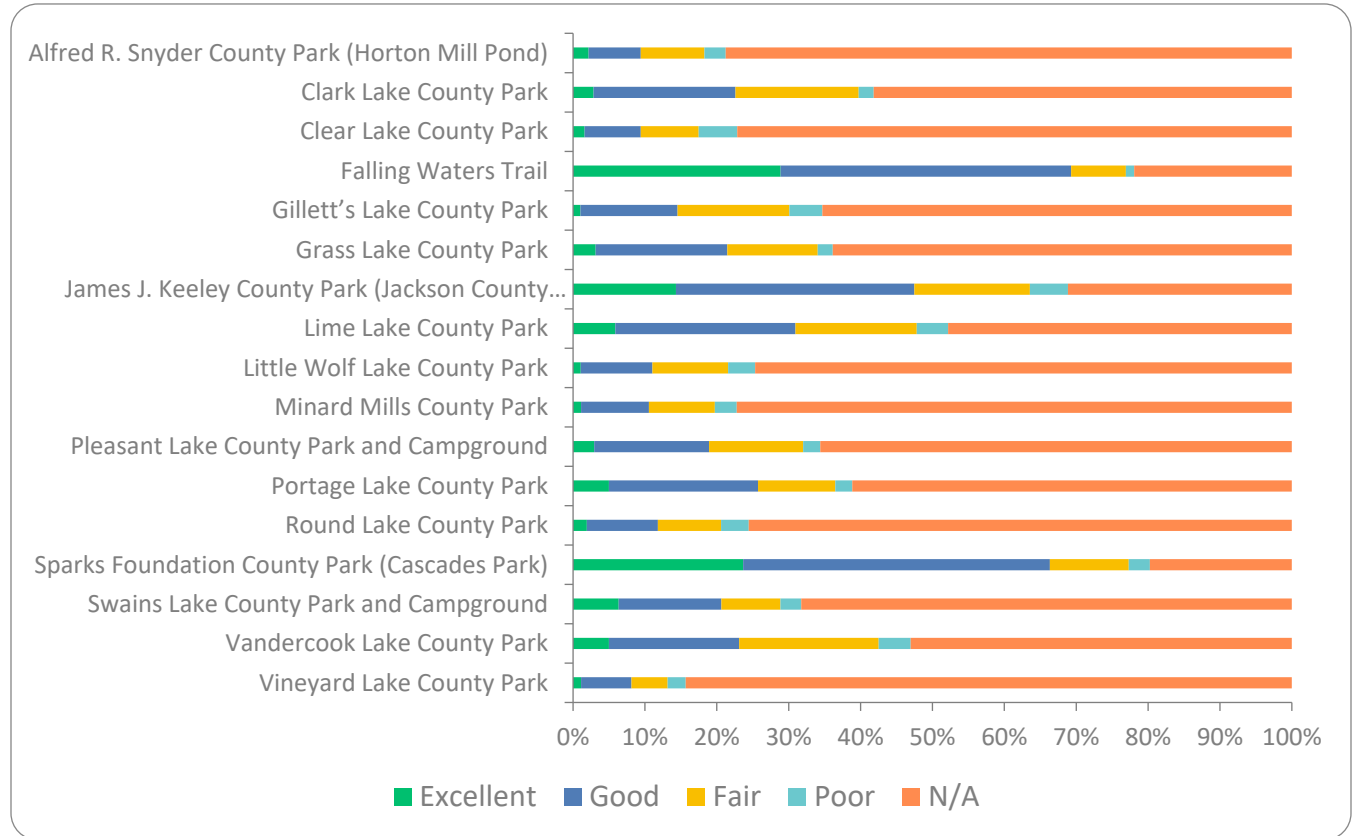
Answered: 487 Skipped: 44



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
★	2.26%	4.72%	26.49%	47.43%	19.10%	487	3.76
	11	23	129	231	93		

**Q7: Please rate each county park or recreation facility based on the following attributes: Proximity, Event Space, Sports, Outdoors, Play Equipment, Campgrounds, Fitness, and Picnic Shelters.**

Answered: 511 Skipped: 20

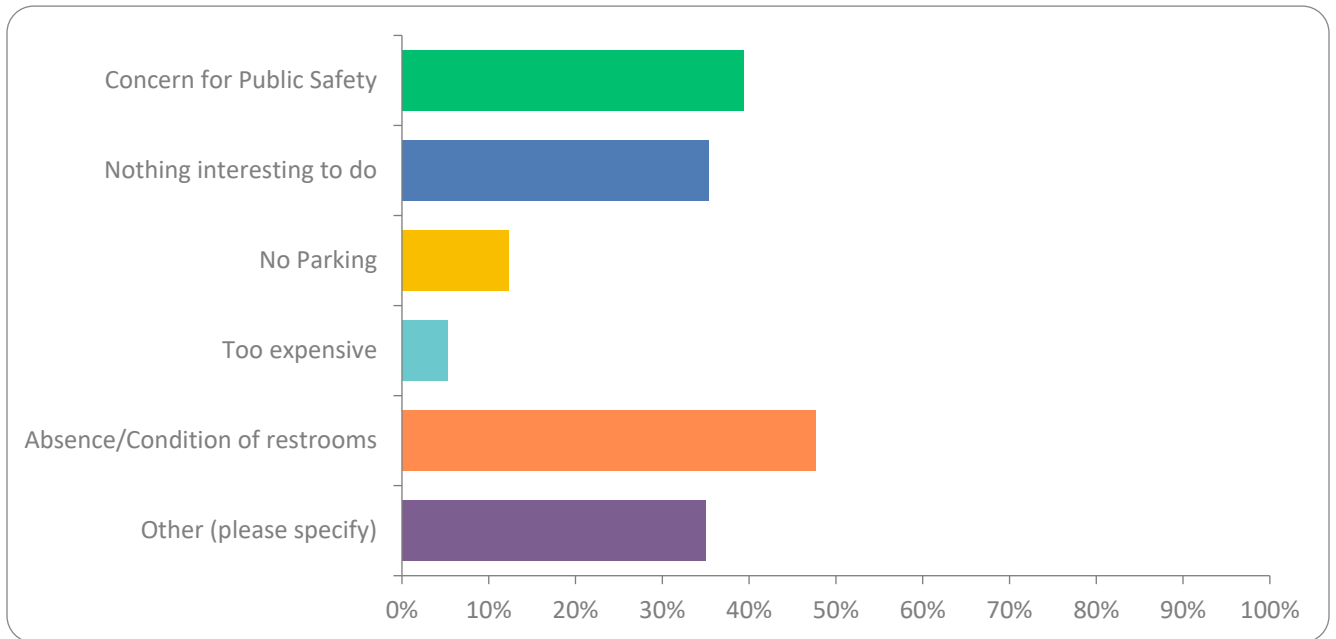


	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	N/A	TOTAL
Alfred R. Snyder County Park (Horton Mill Pond)	2.15% 8	7.26% 27	8.87% 33	2.96% 11	78.76% 293	372
Clark Lake County Park	2.86% 11	19.74% 76	17.14% 66	2.08% 8	58.18% 224	385
Clear Lake County Park	1.61% 6	7.80% 29	8.06% 30	5.38% 20	77.15% 287	372
Falling Waters Trail	28.87% 125	40.42% 175	7.62% 33	1.15% 5	21.94% 95	433

Gillett's Lake County Park	1.02% 4	13.52% 53	15.56% 61	4.59% 18	65.31% 256	392
Grass Lake County Park	3.14% 12	18.32% 70	12.57% 48	2.09% 8	63.87% 244	382
James J. Keeley County Park (Jackson County Fairgrounds)	14.32% 57	33.17% 132	16.08% 64	5.28% 21	31.16% 124	398
Lime Lake County Park	5.88% 23	25.06% 98	16.88% 66	4.35% 17	47.83% 187	391
Little Wolf Lake County Park	1.08% 4	9.97% 37	10.51% 39	3.77% 14	74.66% 277	371
Minard Mills County Park	1.11% 4	9.44% 34	9.17% 33	3.06% 11	77.22% 278	360
Pleasant Lake County Park and Campground	2.93% 11	16.00% 60	13.07% 49	2.40% 9	65.60% 246	375
Portage Lake County Park	4.99% 19	20.73% 79	10.76% 41	2.36% 9	61.15% 233	381
Round Lake County Park	1.92% 7	9.89% 36	8.79% 32	3.85% 14	75.55% 275	364
Sparks Foundation County Park (Cascades Park)	23.66% 97	42.68% 175	10.98% 45	2.93% 12	19.76% 81	410
Swains Lake County Park and Campground	6.35% 24	14.29% 54	8.20% 31	2.91% 11	68.25% 258	378
Vandercook Lake County Park	4.99% 19	18.11% 69	19.42% 74	4.46% 17	53.02% 202	381
Vineyard Lake County Park	1.12% 4	7.00% 25	5.04% 18	2.52% 9	84.31% 301	357

## Q8: What factors discourages you from visiting a park/recreation facility?

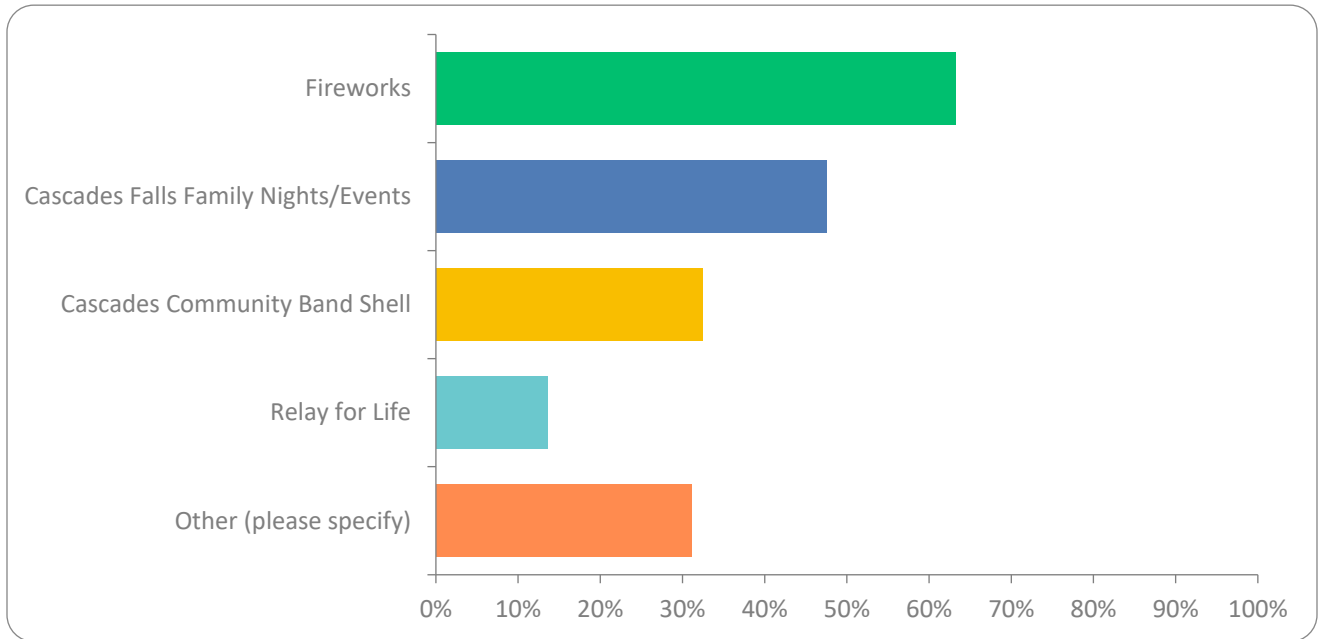
Answered: 458 Skipped: 73



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Concern for Public Safety	39.30%	180
Nothing interesting to do	35.37%	162
No Parking	12.23%	56
Too expensive	5.24%	24
Absence/Condition of restrooms	47.60%	218
Other (please specify)	34.93%	160
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>800</b>

## Q9: Which events at County Park do you participate?

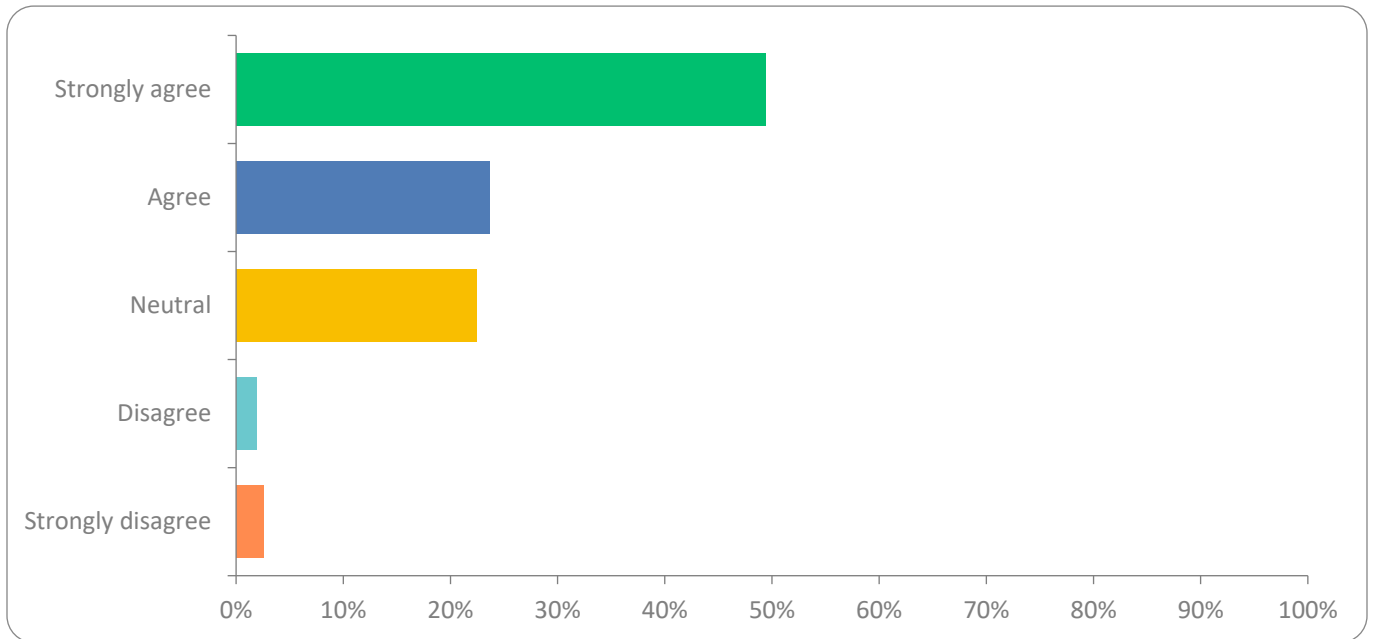
Answered: 389 Skipped: 142



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Fireworks	63.24%	246
Cascades Falls Family Nights/Events	47.56%	185
Cascades Community Band Shell	32.39%	126
Relay for Life	13.62%	53
Other (please specify)	31.11%	121
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>731</b>

## Q10: A regional trail system should be expanded within Jackson County

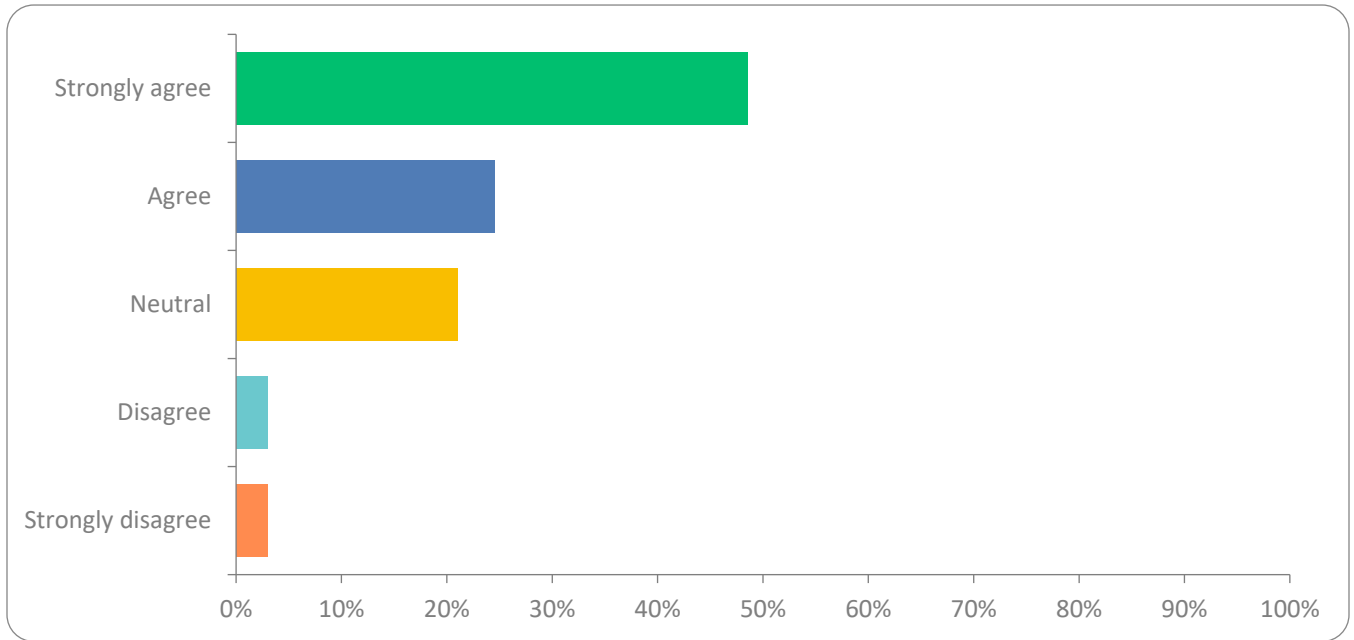
Answered: 512 Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	49.41%	253
Agree	23.63%	121
Neutral	22.46%	115
Disagree	1.95%	10
Strongly disagree	2.54%	13
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>512</b>

**Q11: A regional trail system should be expanded to connect to adjacent communities around Jackson County, creating an extensive non-motorized network.**

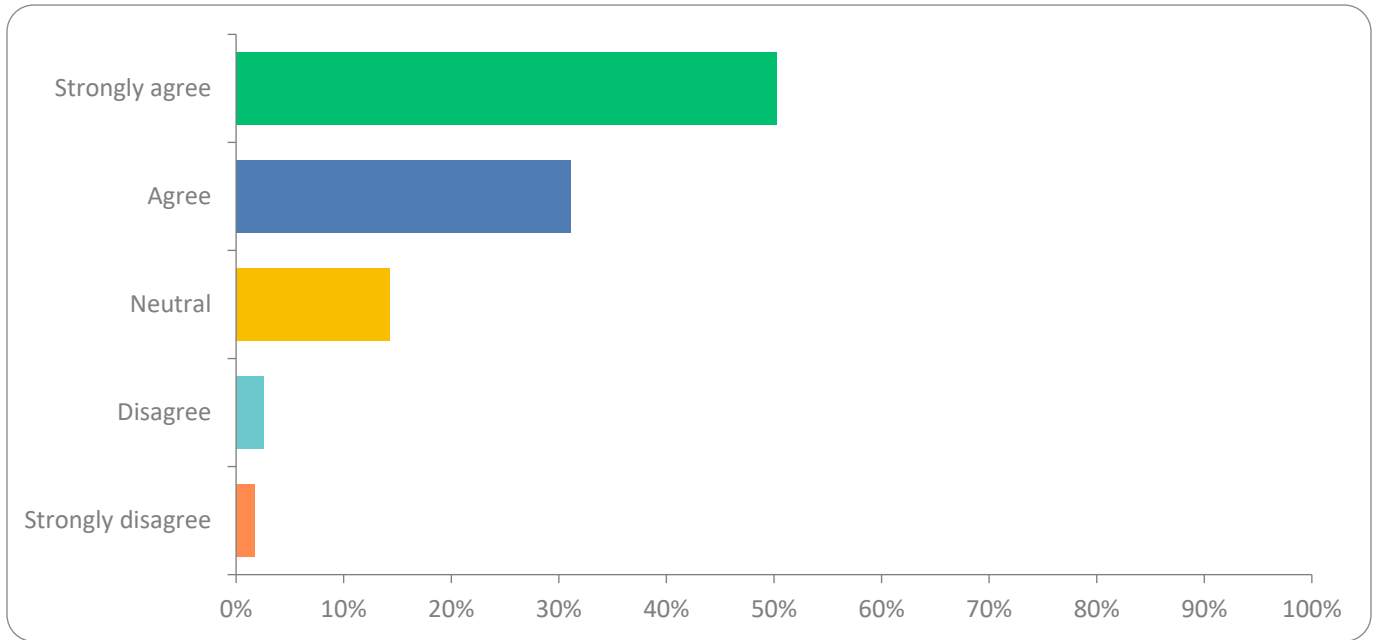
Answered: 509 Skipped: 22



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	48.53%	247
Agree	24.56%	125
Neutral	21.02%	107
Disagree	2.95%	15
Strongly disagree	2.95%	15
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>509</b>

**Q12: I would support the establishment of water trailheads, and canoe/kayaking launches, along the Grand River, Portage River, and the Chain of Lakes.**

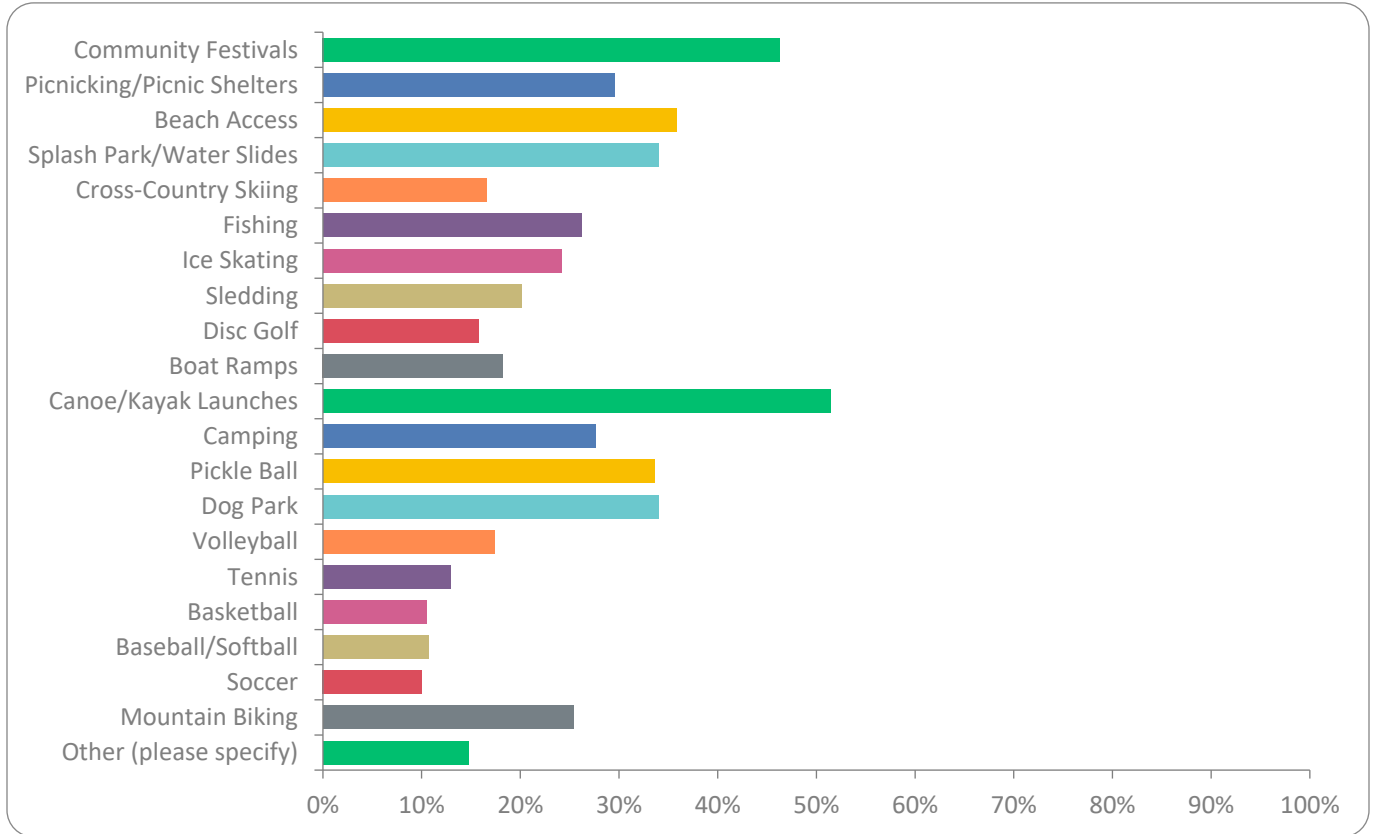
Answered: 511 Skipped: 20



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	50.29%	257
Agree	31.12%	159
Neutral	14.29%	73
Disagree	2.54%	13
Strongly disagree	1.76%	9
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>511</b>

### Q13: What additional activities would you like to see more of in Jackson County Parks? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 488 Skipped: 43



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Community Festivals	46.31% 226
Picnicking/Picnic Shelters	29.51% 144
Beach Access	35.86% 175
Splash Park/Water Slides	34.02% 166
Cross-Country Skiing	16.60% 81
Fishing	26.23% 128

Ice Skating	24.18%	118
Sledding	20.08%	98
Disc Golf	15.78%	77
Boat Ramps	18.24%	89
Canoe/Kayak Launches	51.43%	251
Camping	27.66%	135
Pickle Ball	33.61%	164
Dog Park	34.02%	166
Volleyball	17.42%	85
Tennis	12.91%	63
Basketball	10.45%	51
Baseball/Softball	10.66%	52
Soccer	10.04%	49
Mountain Biking	25.41%	124
Other (please specify)	14.75%	72
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2514</b>

Q14 Jackson County Parks currently partners with local municipalities to expand existing or create new recreation facilities. Who would you like to see us partner with, and/or do you have ideas for additional partnerships?

pickleball courts falling water trails Blackman add people Twp  
Spring Arbor Township Na community N trail  
None parks building bike Lake Township Jackson County  
ideas Partner great Grass Lake Columbia Township City Jackson

Q15 Please share any features or amenities from other county parks or recreation facilities that you would like to see implemented in Jackson County Parks.

go pool new security repair Drinks open Indoor Falling Waters Trail s showers Updated  
really changing paved equipment along great Nature seating well care splash pad  
recreational think fences Jackson courts Gilletts Lake make Bike trail dogs play areas  
safety Ella Sharp love parking lot pickleball courts rivers bathrooms  
space water access need county see trees better many  
areas Please parks beach Cascades know nice  
center trails public restrooms accessible facilities exercise  
activities kayak launch dog park love see lighting spring arbor  
Jackson County Lake County Park road seems maintained walk stations free  
around clean pickle ball court amazing maybe community especially children Fix  
another safe Bike campground options Water fountains Upgrades lake patrols outdoor d  
people system outside kayaking

Q16 How would you like to be notified about park events, improvements, etc.

Email newsletter Local news event fine park FB Text posted  
gmail.com Online Facebook Newsletter Email  
radio social media county Mail updates website Via  
news list pages E Mail yahoo.com

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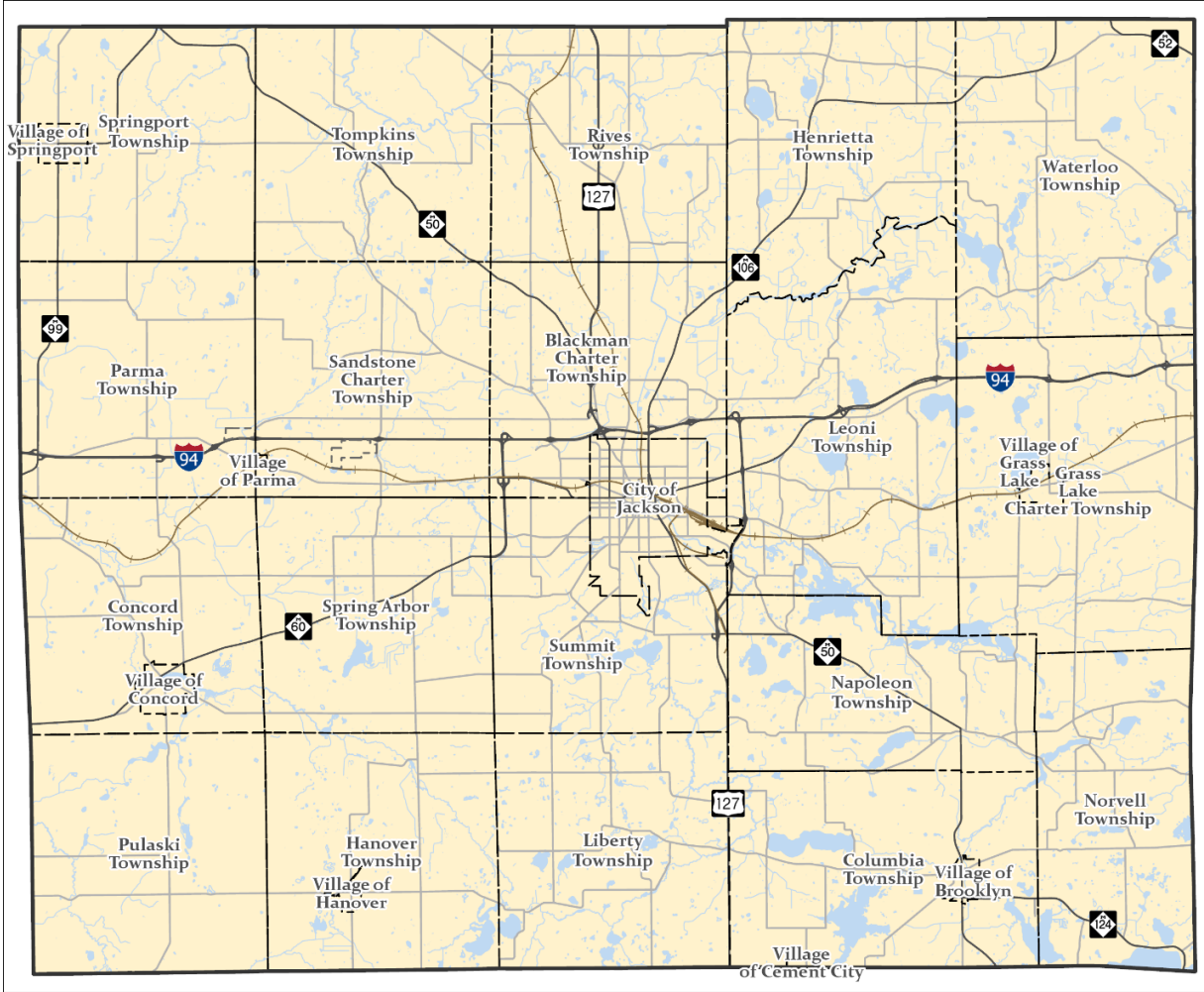
Appendix D

## Mapping

Jackson County Recreation Plan: 2025 – 2029 Edition



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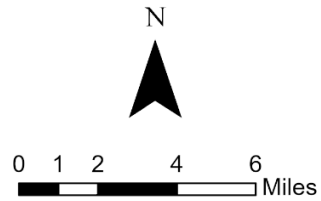


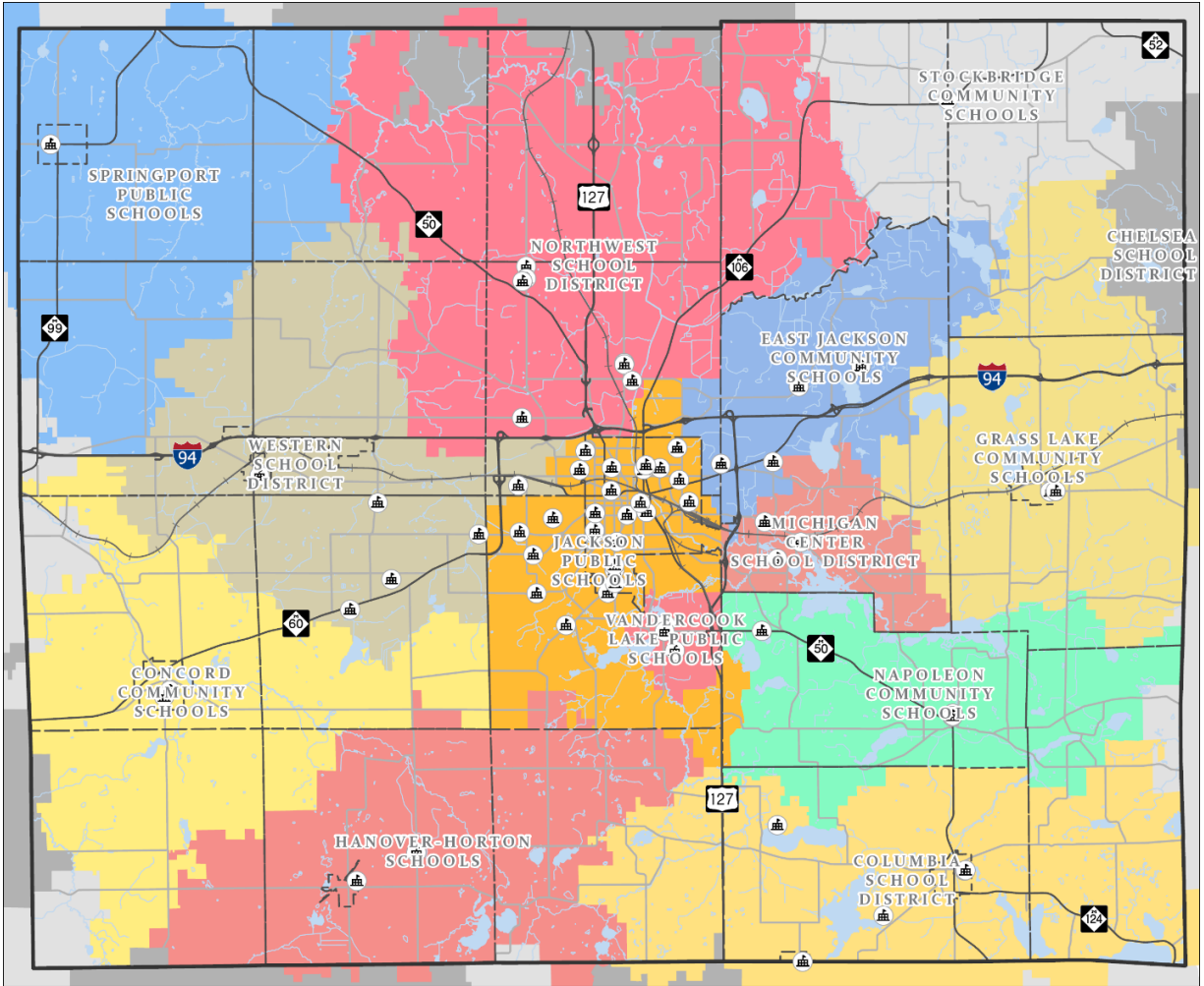
## Jackson County Recreation Plan

### BASE MAP

#### Legend

- Governments**
- Municipal Boundaries
- Jackson County
- Transportation**
- Highways
- County Primary Roads
- Railroads
- Hydrology**
- Lakes
- Rivers



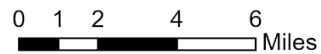


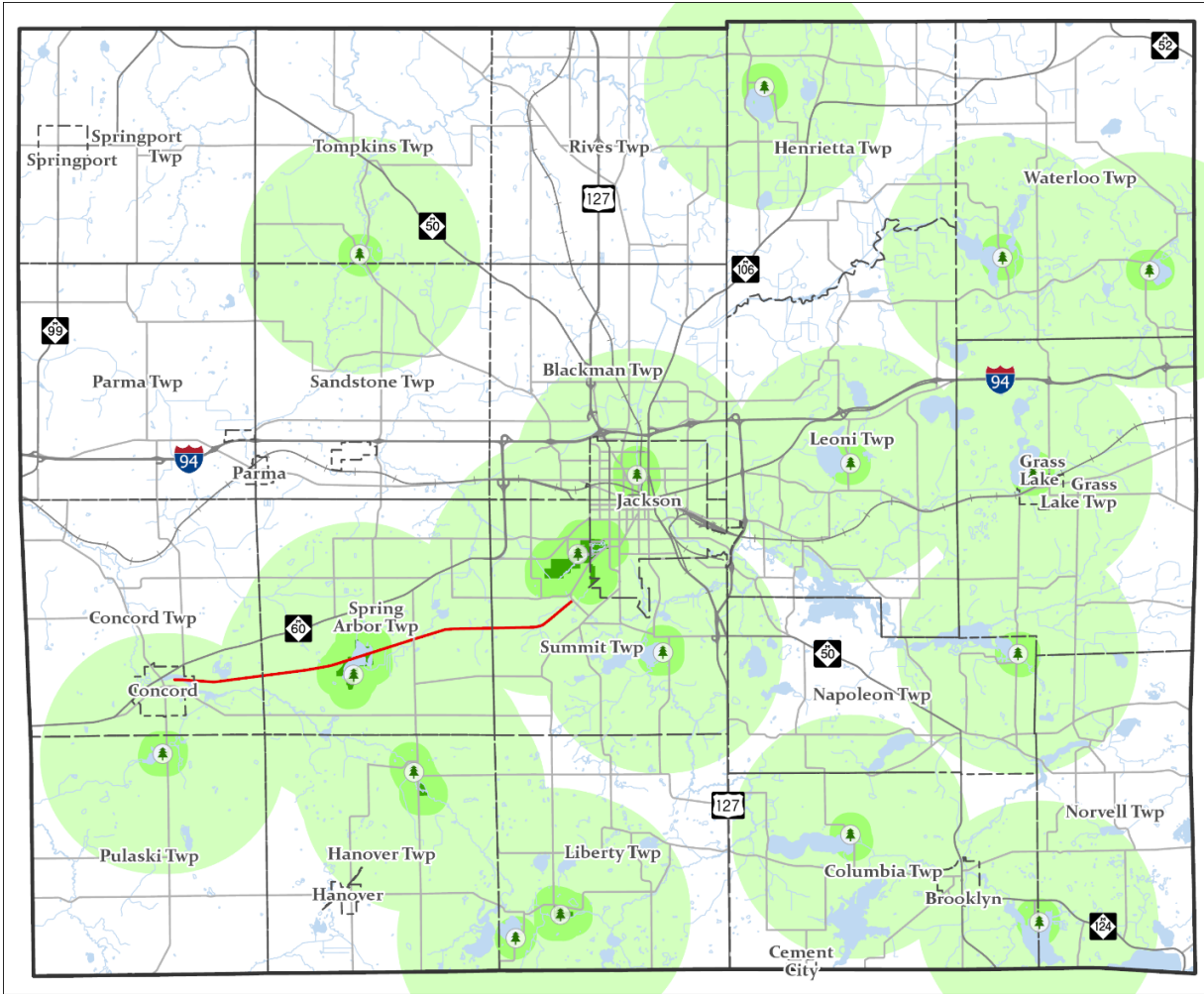
## Jackson County Recreation Plan

### SCHOOL DISTRICTS

#### Legend

- School Districts in the Jackson ISD
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- School Districts in Other ISDs
- 
- School Sites



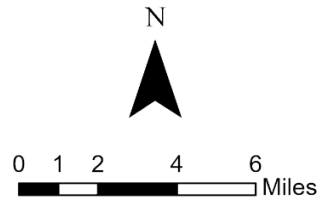


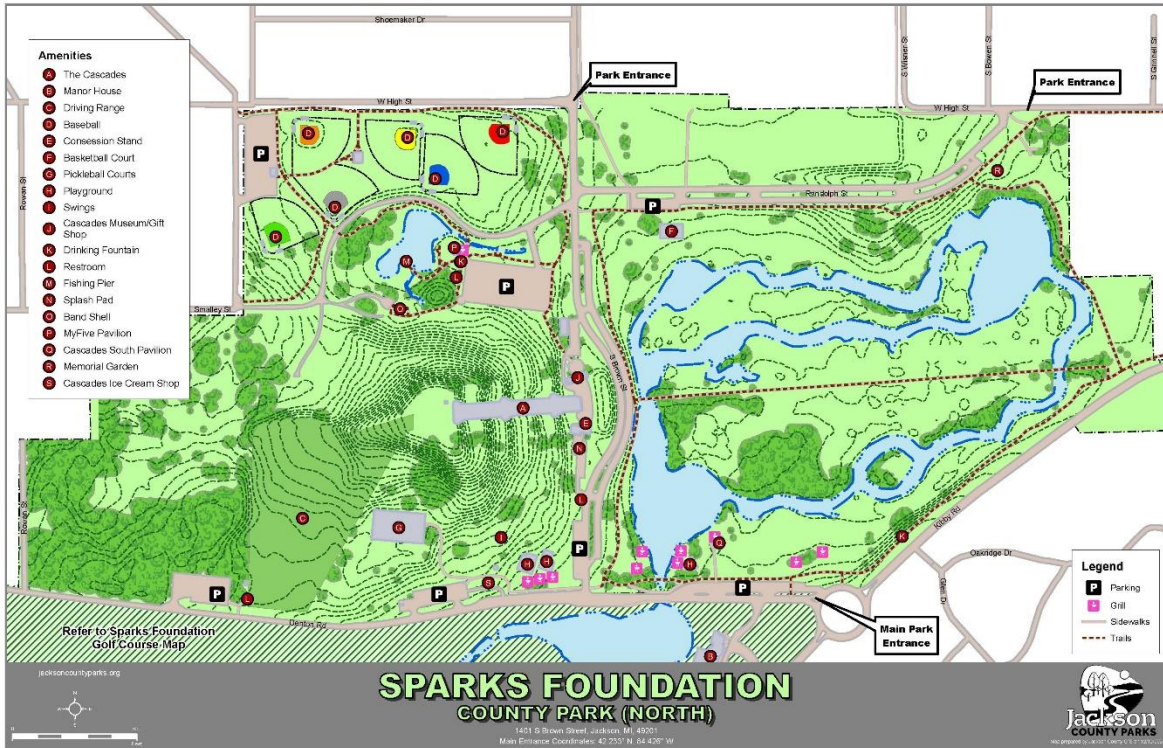
## Jackson County Recreation Plan

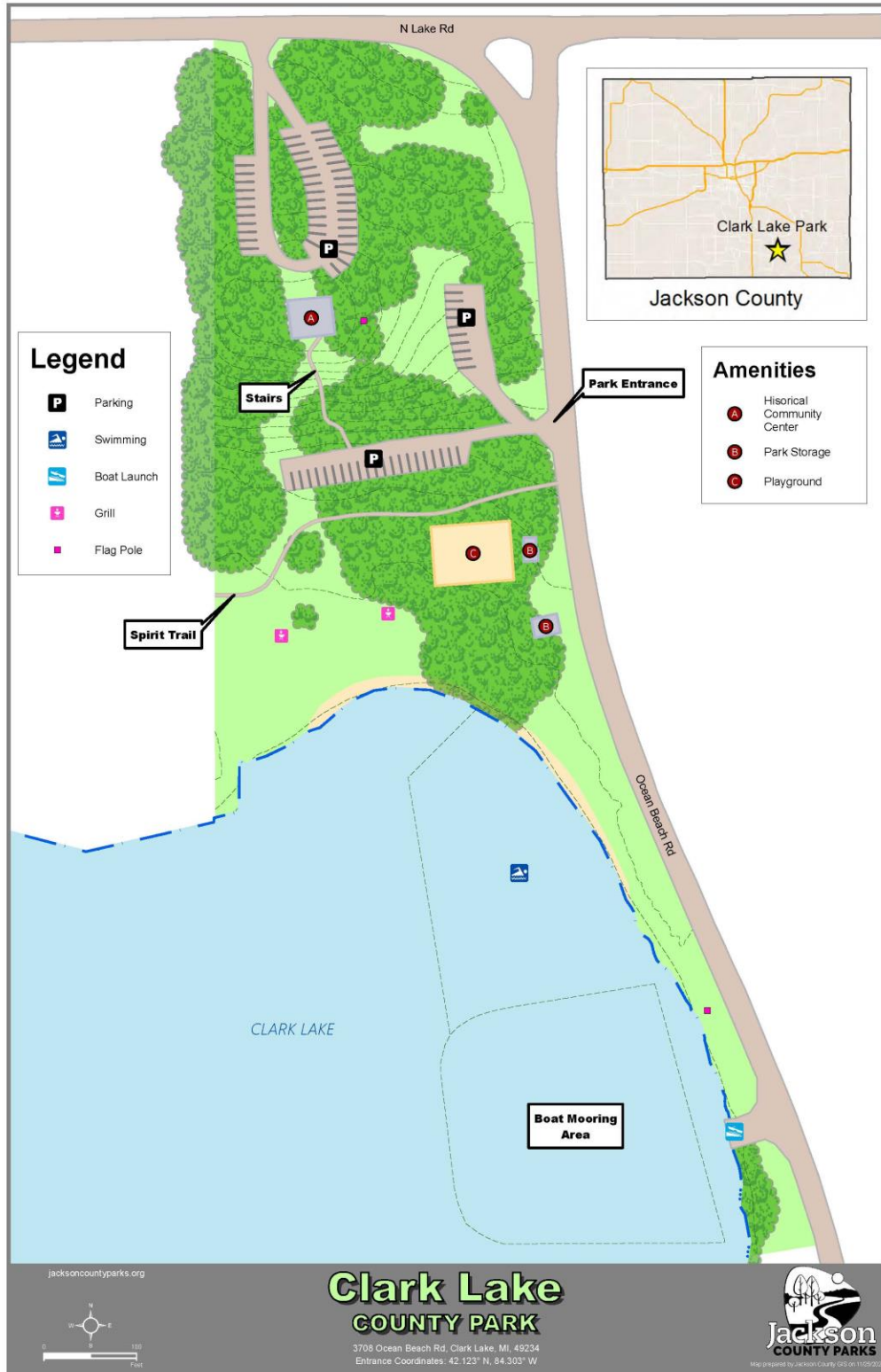
### JACKSON COUNTY PARK LOCATION AND COVERAGE

#### Legend

-  County Parks
-  Falling Waters Trail
-  Half-Mile Buffer
-  3-Mile Buffer



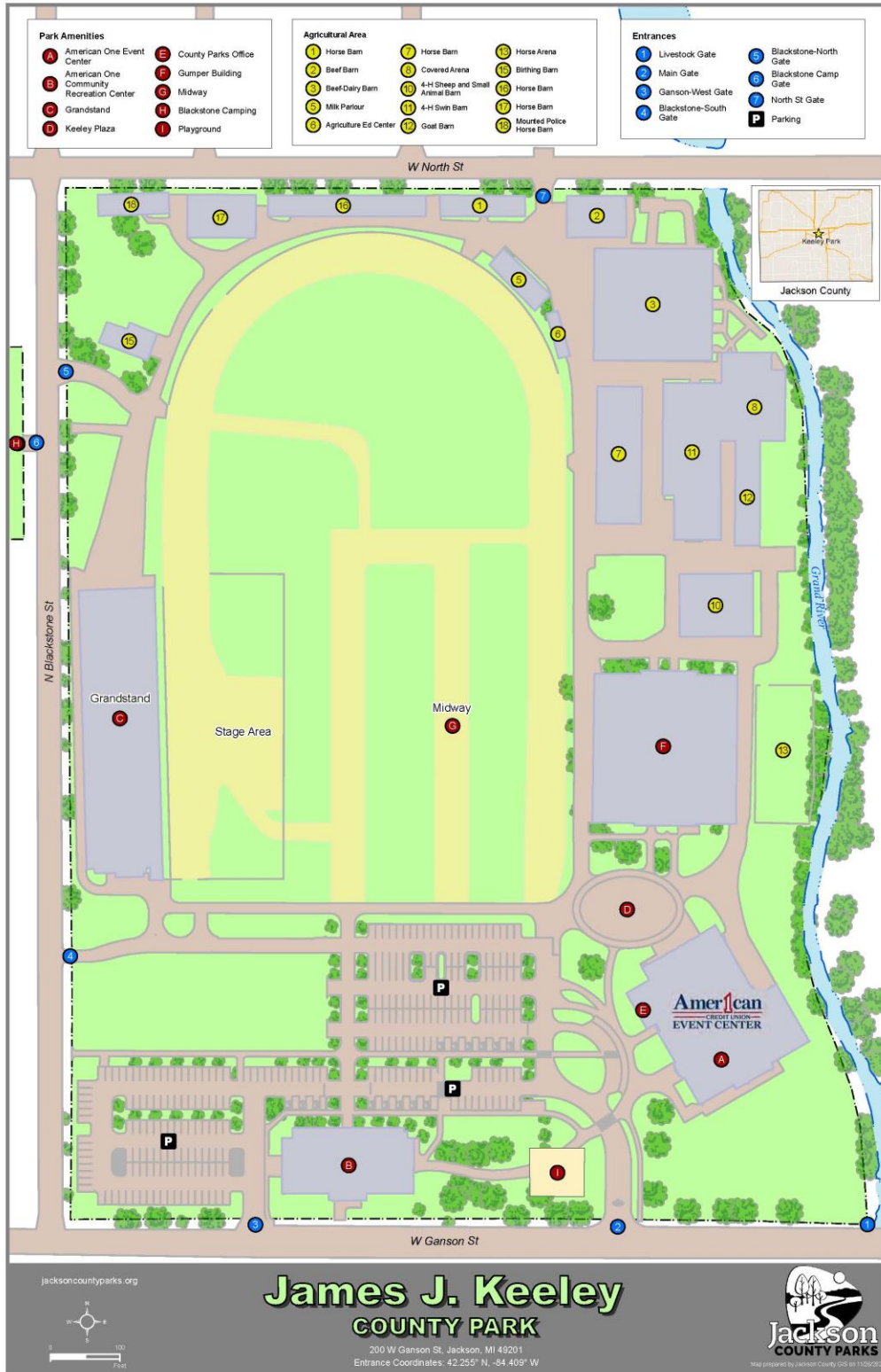


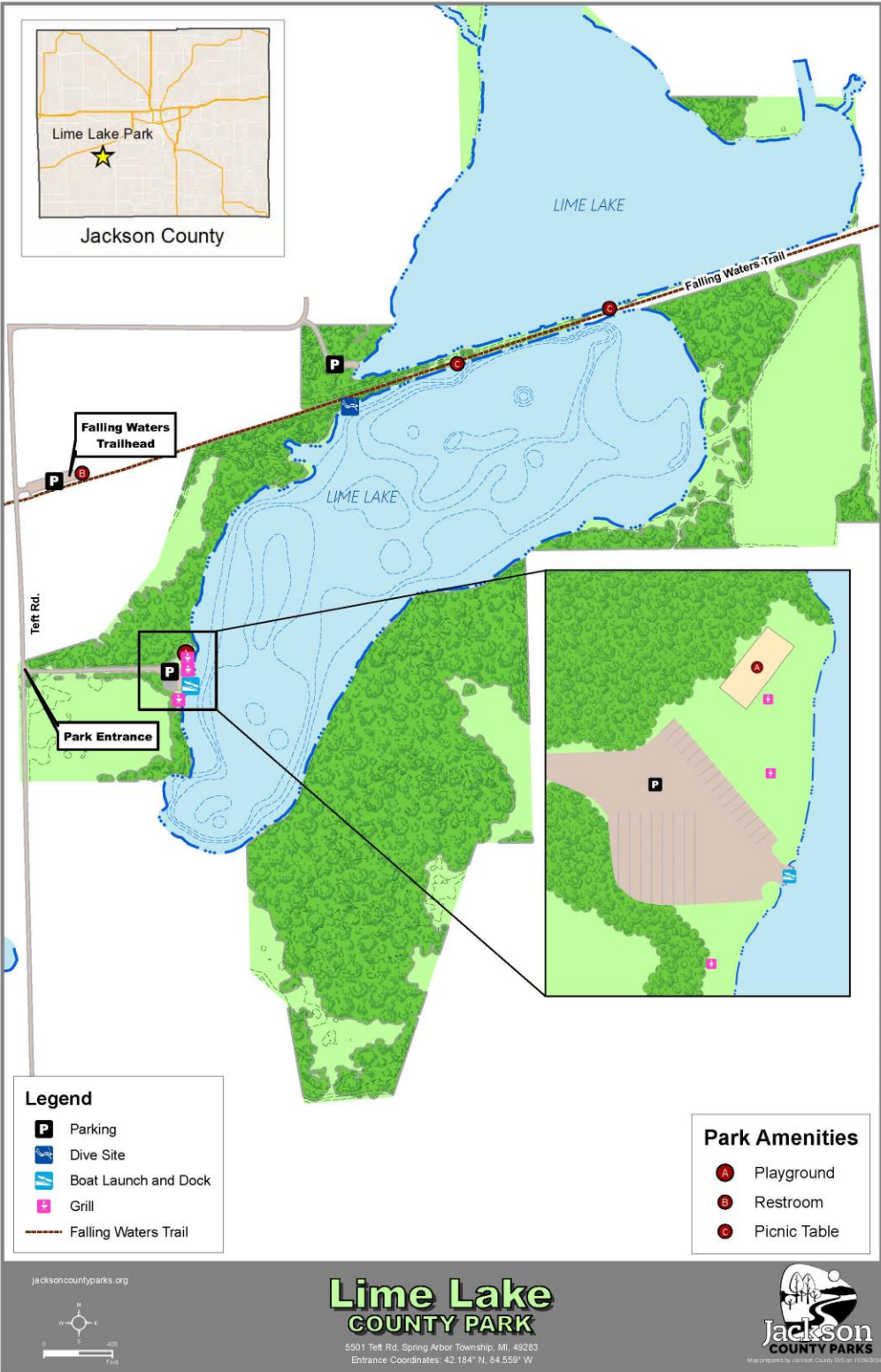










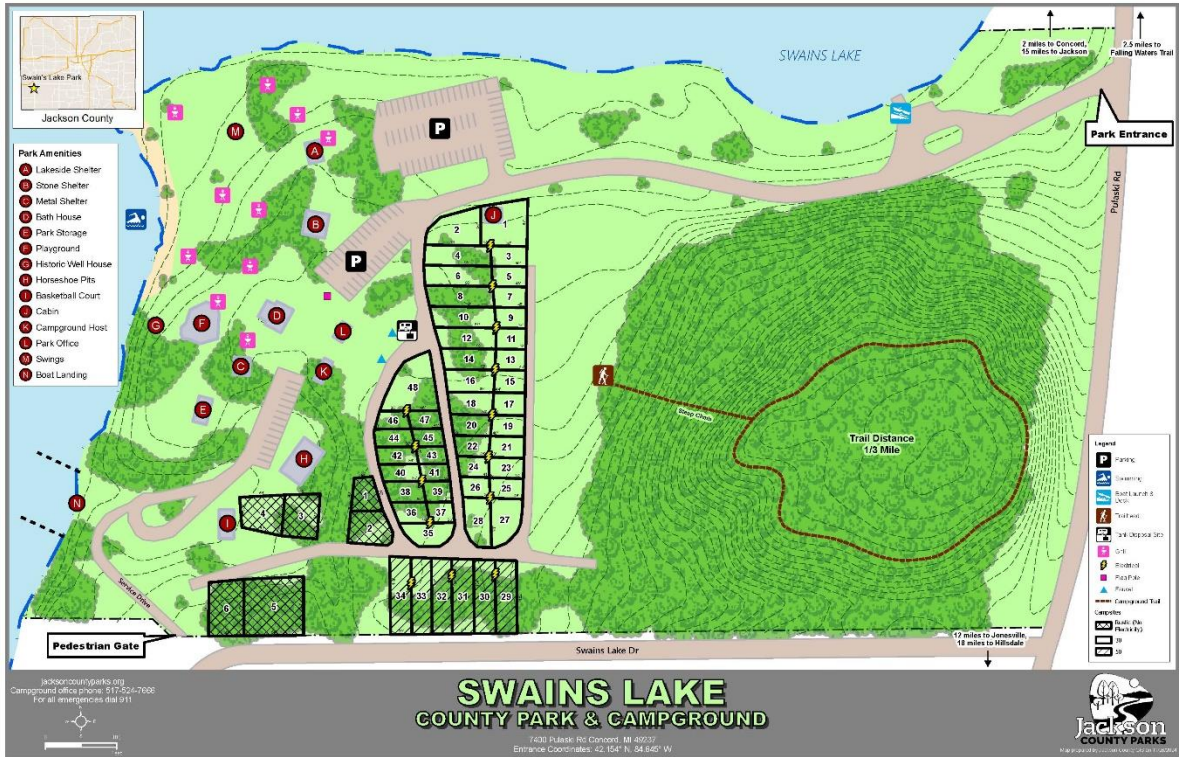


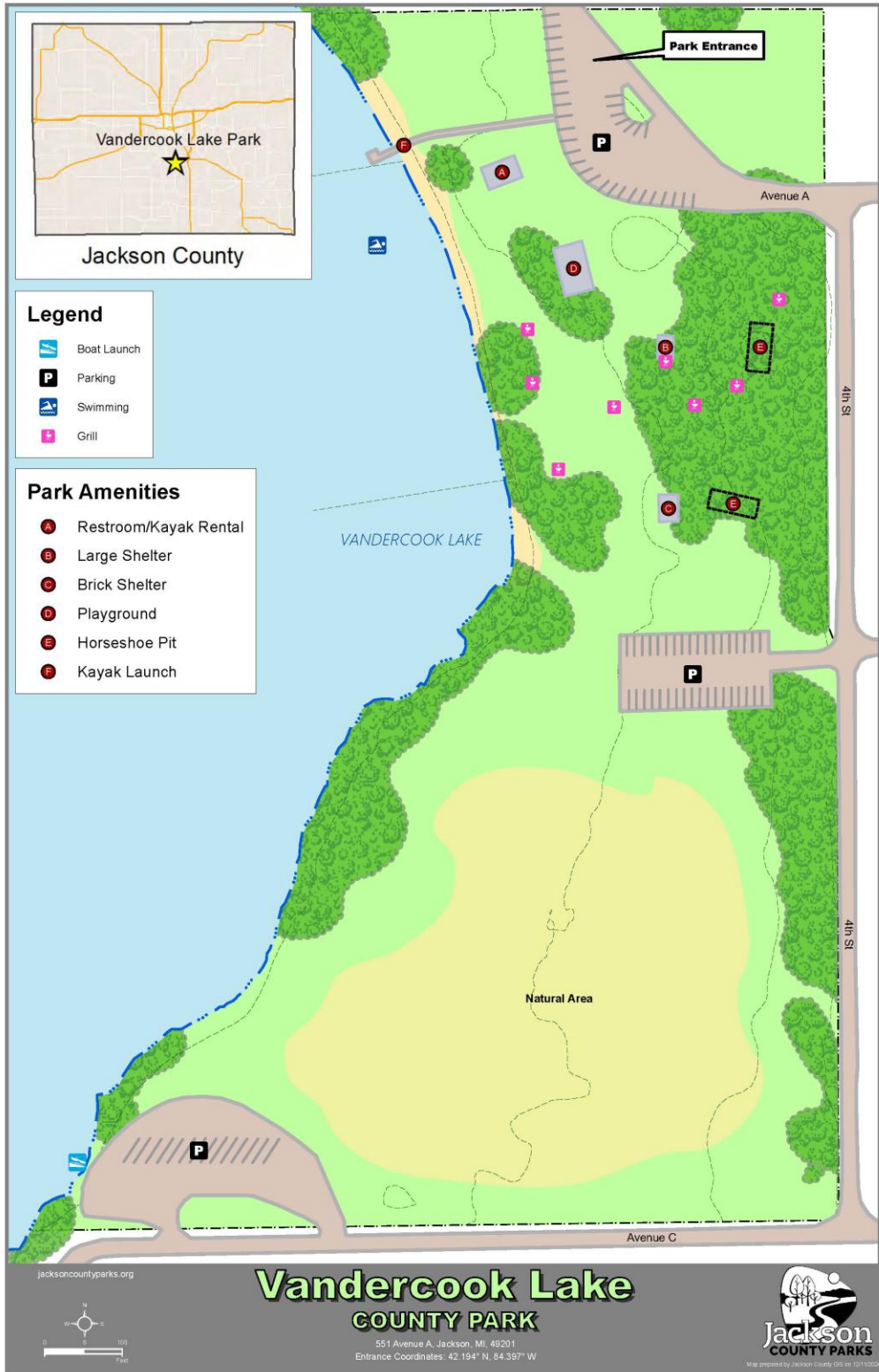




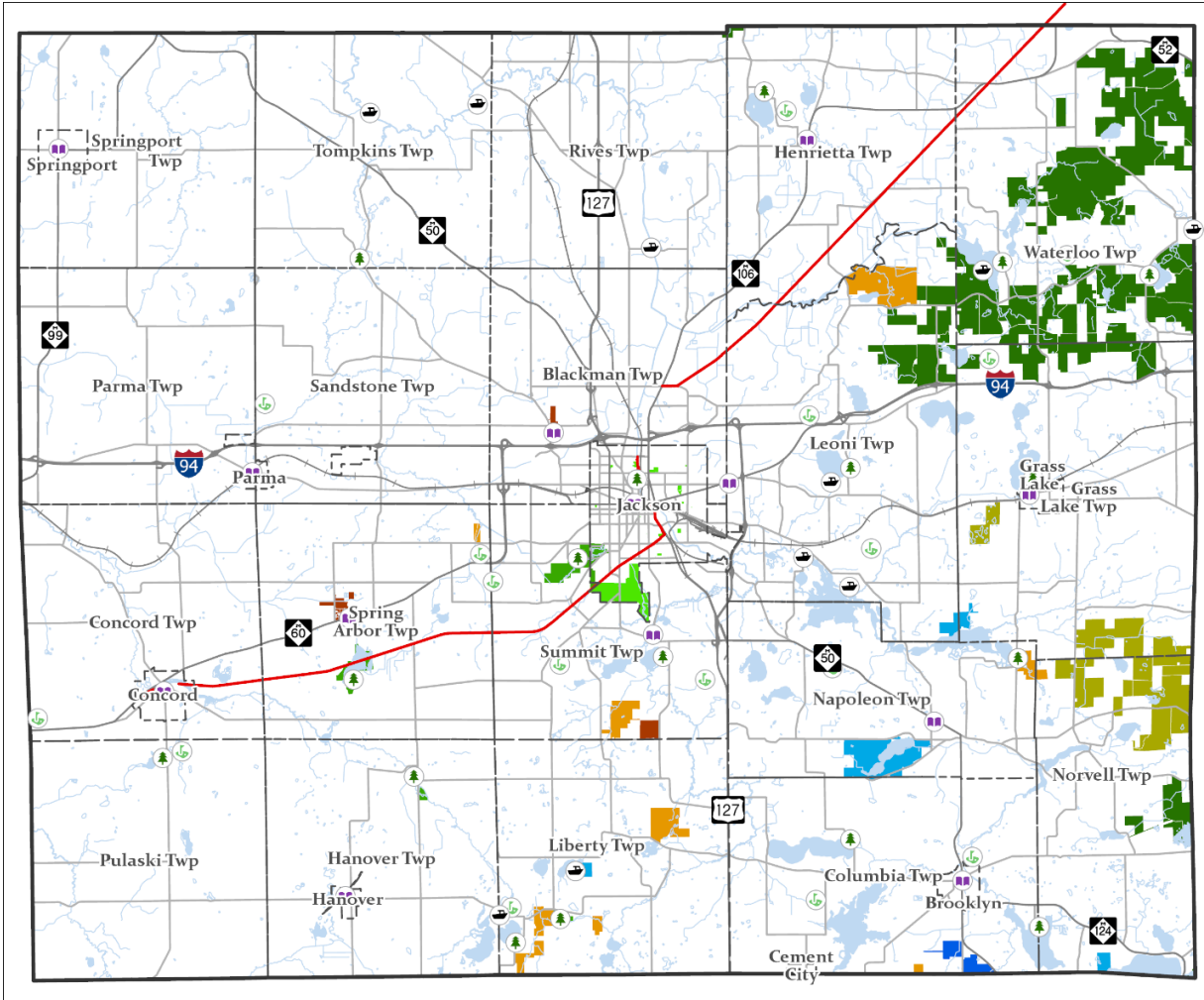






















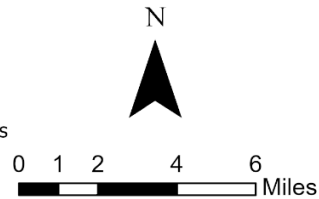


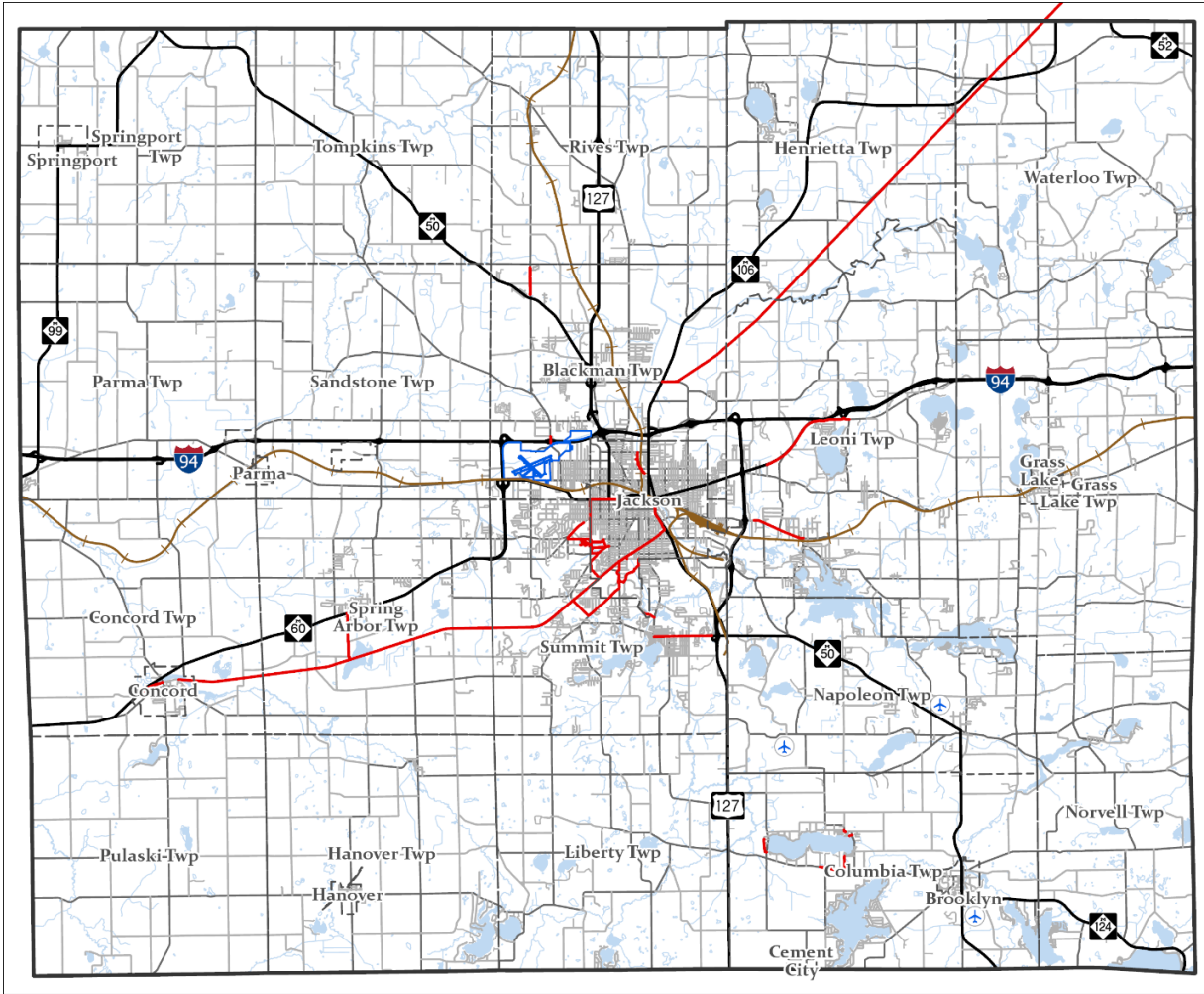
## Jackson County Recreation Plan

# PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

### Legend

-  County Parks
-  Iron Belle/GLTL Trail
-  City of Jackson Parks
-  State Parks/Recreation Areas
-  State Game Areas
-  Nature Preserves
-  Colleges and Universities
-  Camps
-  Michigan International Speedway
-  DNR Boat Launch Sites
-  JDL Library Branches
-  Privately-Owned Golf Courses



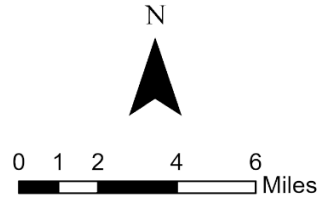


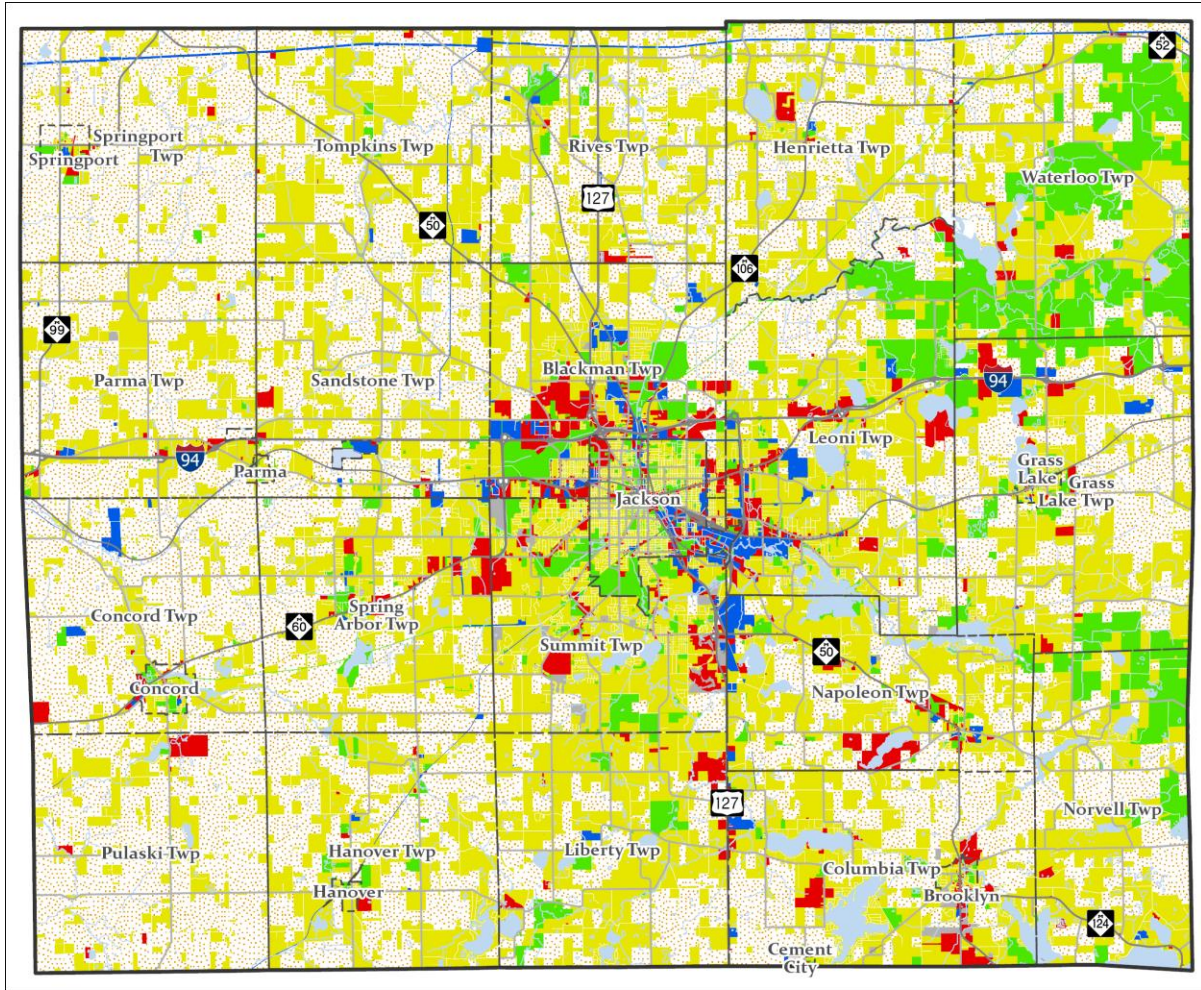
## Jackson County Recreation Plan

# TRANSPORTATION

### Legend

- Highways
- Primary Roads
- Local Roads
- Railroads
- Jackson County Airport
- Other Airports
- Non-Motorized Trails



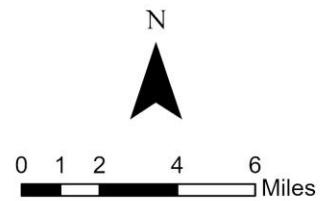


## Jackson County Recreation Plan

### EXISTING LAND USE

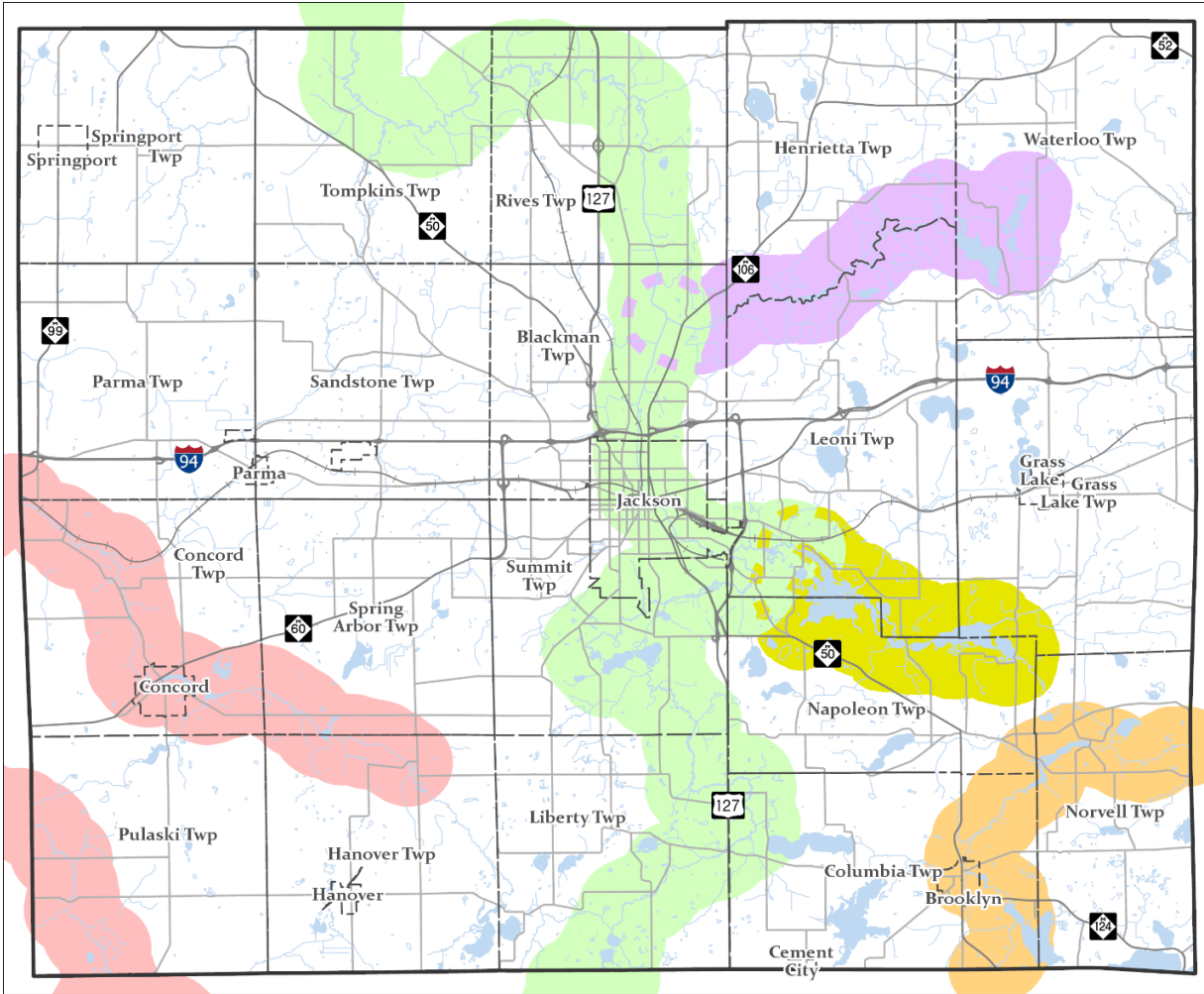
#### Legend

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public
- Residential
- Other



**Jackson**  
COUNTY PARKS

**Region 2**  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
Serving Hillsdale, Jackson & Lenawee Counties

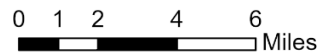


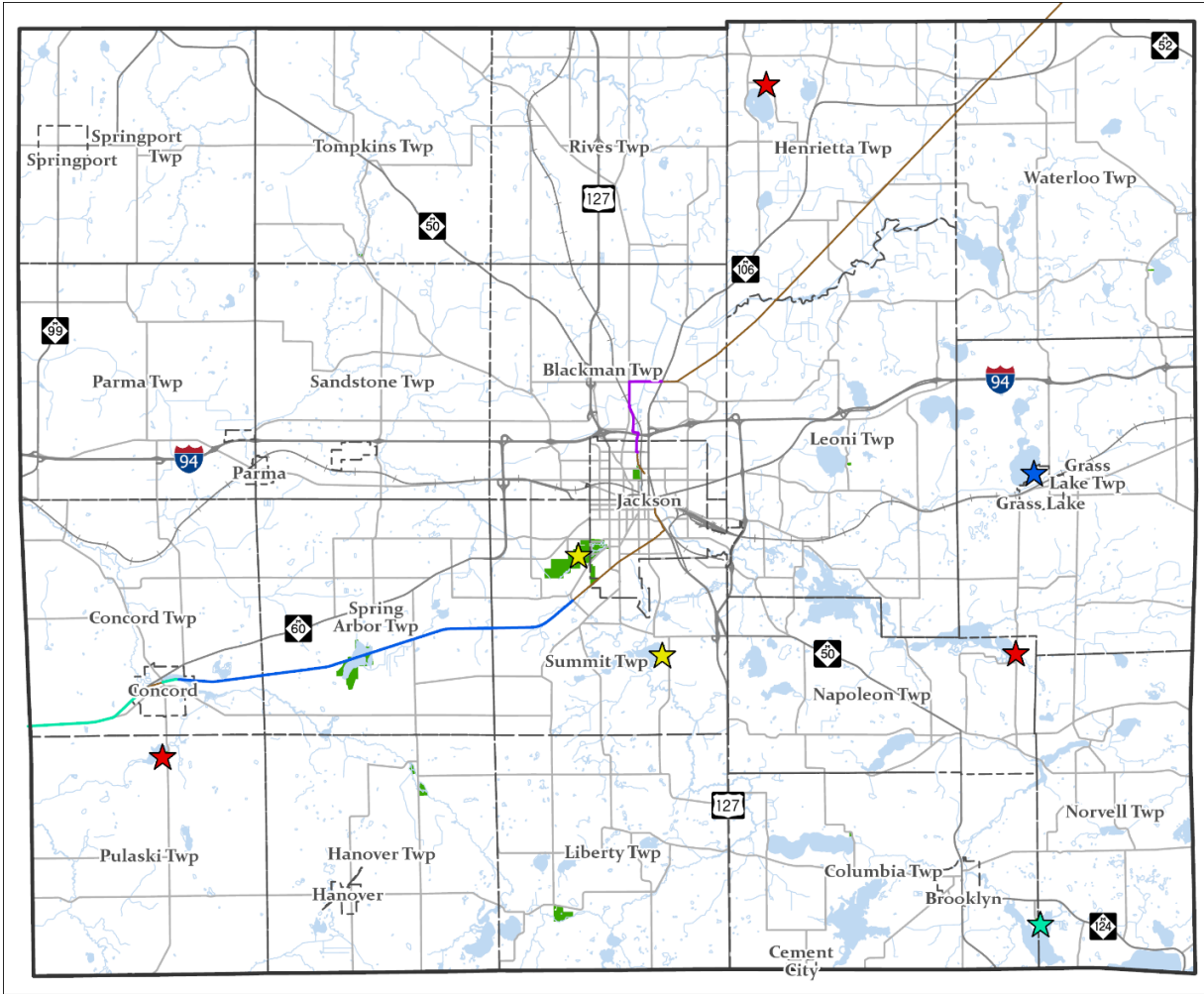
## Jackson County Recreation Plan

# WATER TRAILS

### Legend

- Upper Grand River
- Chain of Lakes
- Portage River
- Kalamazoo River - North and South Branches
- River Raisin



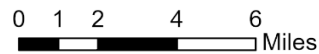


## Jackson County Recreation Plan

# ACTION PROGRAM

### Legend

- ☆ County Parks with Actions
- 2025 Actions
- 2026 Actions
- 2027 Actions
- 2028 Actions
- Iron Belle/GLTL Trail
- Trails Currently in Development
- FWT - 2027 Improvements
- Planned Trails - 2028



Appendix E

## **Plan Adoption Documents and Resolutions**

Jackson County Recreation Plan: 2025 – 2029 Edition



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## 2024 - Parks

Posted on: December 6, 2024 | Last Modified on: December 6, 2024

### NOTICE OF 30-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD FOR THE 2025-2029 5-YEAR PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

#### 2025-2029 5-YEAR PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN



#### Public Review Period:

December 7, 2024 – January 7, 2025

Notice is hereby given to any and all interested parties that Jackson County is seeking public comment on its 2025-2029 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The required 30-day public review and comment period will begin on December 7, 2024 and will end on January 7, 2025. Jackson County Parks is preparing this 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan in accordance with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) requirements. When completed, this Plan will serve as a guide for the development of community recreation facilities and programs over the next 5 years. Beginning on December 7, 2024, the draft 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan is accessible [here](#). A physical copy of the draft plan is also be available at the Jackson County Parks office at the American 1 Event Center (128. W. Ganson St., Jackson MI 49201) during normal business hours. Please submit comments via email to [klewis@mijackson.org](mailto:klewis@mijackson.org) with "Jackson

#### Tools

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#### Categories

- [All Categories](#)
- [2024 - Home](#)
- [2024 - Transportation](#)
- [2024 - Health](#)
- [2024 - Sheriff](#)
- [2024 - Treasurer](#)
- [2024 - Parks](#)
- [2024 - District Court](#)
- [2024 - Friend of the Court](#)
- [2024 - Circuit Court](#)
- [2024 - Clerk](#)

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**Jackson County Parks Board (Wednesday, January 8, 2025)**

*Generated by Stacy Curtis on Tuesday, January 7, 2025*

**Members Present:** Ray Snell, Kelly Grygiel, Geoff Snyder, Margie Walz, Kenny Price, Mike Way, Kevin Lavery, Dave Elwell, Janelle Merritt, James Shotwell

**Members Excused:** Crystal Pfeifer

**Members Absent:**

**Staff Present:** Kyle Lewis, Emily Thomas, Stacy Curtis, Jack McCloughan, Mike Overton, Jacey Hutchins, Kailee Bates

**Visitors:** Cmr. Tony Bair, Jacob Hurt

**1. Call to Order by Parks Director, Kyle Lewis at 8:02am**

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Election of Officers 2025**

Chair: Elwell Nominate Mike Way - Price Seconds

Motion Carries

Vice Chair: Walz nominates Janelle Merritt, Price Seconds

Motion Carries

**4. Approval of Agenda**

**Motion By: Price**

**Second By: Walz**

**Final Resolution: Motion Carries**

**5. Public Comment - None**

Comments: A. Each Individual will state their name, and have three (3) minutes to address the Board. You may only address the Board once under this public comment opportunity and may not yield your time to others. Board members will not debate or answer questions at this time.

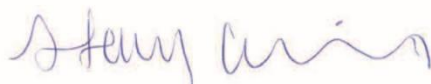
**6. Public Hearing - 2025-2029 5-YEAR PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN**

**Open Meeting**

**Motion By: Snell**

**Second By: Walz**

**Final Resolution: Motion Carries**



Elwell - I found a number of typo errors I will send along and I will forward those to Kyle. I frequently hear about not having a county park in Blackman Township - I think it would be beneficial if the county contributed - perhaps a small grant program to let townships apply to help with their park systems. Keeley Park should include the indoor pickleball court as a signature offering and adding the Parnall complex in Blackman Township. Suggesting keeping in mind that Blackman township has a site on the river where they contemplated putting in a kayak launch. I'm not suggesting we come up with a plan today but we should think outside the box so park millages aren't competing for renewal. It could be as small as Kyle or staff looking at grants and helping townships write them.

Merritt - great job to region 2. Voices and input matter and is nice to see it incorporated

Snell - Agree with Elwell regarding Blackman Township. Would be nice to see a grant opportunity in there during the next millage.

Shotwell - I find it difficult now that Blackman Township. Blackman chose to separate themselves from the County Parks system, if they chose to flip that we could work together and have one large park system. Having access to the river through Birdland would mean traveling through a neighborhood. Some organizations chose where they are today and we will partner - there is a lot of things to consider when it comes to Blackman Township

Close to the public hearing

**Motion By: Price**

**Second By: Snell**

**Final Resolution: Motion Carries**

#### **7. Consent Agenda**

Action, Comments: A. Approval of Consent Agenda

Minutes: B. December 5, 2024 Minutes

Comments: C. November 2024 Financial Report

Comments: D. November 2024 Financial Summary

Comments: E. Monthly Claims Report - November

Comments: F. Communication

**Motion By: Snell**

**Second By: Price**

**Final Resolution: Motion Carries**

#### **8. Business Introduction**

Comments, Informational: A. Monthly Staff Report

Action, Comments: B. 2025 Meeting Schedule

**Approve 2025 meeting schedule**

**Motion By: Shotwell**

**Second By: Walz**

**Final Resolution: Motion Carries**

Action, Comments: C. Resolution of Approval, Jackson County Recreation Plan 2025-2029 edition

**Resolve to adopt the Jackson County Recreation Plan 2025-2029 Edition**

**Motion By: Elwell**

**Second By: Snell**

**Final Resolution: Motion Carries**

Elwell - Should Stacy's title be changed?

Roll Call

Walz - Yes

Price - Yes

Shotwell - Yes

Elwell - Yes

Merritt - Yes

Lavery - Yes

Snell - Yes

Grygiel - Yes

Snyder - Yes

Way - Yes

Action, Comments: D. Cascades Fireworks Display Contract

**Approval of 3 Year agreement with Wolverine Fireworks Display Inc for a total of nine firework shows at the Cascades in 2025, 2026 and 2027**

**Motion By: Price**

**Second By: Snell**

**Final Resolution: Motion Carries**

Price - are they assuming all three shows are timed the same?

Comments: E. 2024 Annual Report

Elwell - Tower Ballroom rental - is that pretty much only on weekends? Can we add this into board docs as well as our website?

Shotwell - I think you need to add that the parks department has leveraged 8 million dollars from state funds on page 1 or 2. Have we considered talking to the historical society about showcasing buildings/projects along the new part of the trail?

Grygiel - Will the annual report get sent out in a newsletter?

Elwell - if you send me the link I'll put it on the township website.

Merritt - If you share your JTV link we can share it

Price - can we do better showcasing things happening like the new tree on top of the Cascades on social media in 2025?

**Recommend its acceptance to the board of commissioners**

**Motion By: Snyder**

**Second By: Shotwell**

**Final Resolution: Motion Carries**

#### **9. Public Comment - None.**

Comments: A. Each Individual will state their name, and have two (2) minutes to address the Board. You may only address the Board once under this public comment opportunity and may not yield your time to others. Board members will not debate or answer questions at this time.

#### **10. Director's Comments**

Comments, Discussion: A. Director's Comments

Excited about 2025 with staffing changes and upcoming impactful projects

#### **11. Commissioner's Comments - None.**

Comments, Discussion: A. Commissioner's Comments

#### **12. Adjournment to the Call of the Chair Mike Way at 8:55am**

Comments: A. Adjournment

**JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**RESOLUTION No. 01-25.02**  
**Jackson County Recreation Plan, 2025-2029 edition**

*WHEREAS*, the County of Jackson formed a Parks Board to make recommendations regarding the Jackson County Parks system, which includes the responsibility to develop a 5-Year Recreation Plan, and

*WHEREAS*, the 5-Year Recreation Plan describes the physical features, existing recreation facilities, and the desired actions which can be taken to improve and maintain the park system during the 2025-2029 time period, and

*WHEREAS*, the Jackson County Parks Department solicited suggestions and questions from the general public and municipalities through recreation surveys, and

*WHEREAS*, the Parks Department, with guidance from the Jackson County Park Board, contracted with the Region 2 Planning Commission to develop the Recreation Plan for the benefit of Jackson County Parks and to assist the County of Jackson in meeting the recreation needs of its community, and

*WHEREAS*, after the one-month review period, held between December 7, 2024 and January 7, 2025, and the public hearing, held on January 8, 2025, the Jackson County Parks Board voted to approve the 2025-2029 edition of the Jackson County Recreation Plan and to send it to the Jackson County Board of Commissioners for adoption, and

*NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED* the Jackson County Board of Commissioners hereby adopts the 2025- 2029 edition of the Jackson County Recreation Plan.

---

James E. Shotwell, Jr., Chairman  
Jackson County Board of Commissioners  
January 21, 2025

STATE OF MICHIGAN            )  
  ) ss.  
COUNTY OF JACKSON         )

I, Cierra L. Sowle, the duly qualified and acting Clerk of the County of Jackson, Michigan, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a Resolution adopted by the County Board of Commissioners of the County of Jackson, State of Michigan, at a regular meeting held on January 21, 2025 at which meeting a quorum was present and remained throughout and that an original thereof is on file in the records of the County. I further certify that said meeting was conducted and public notice of said meeting was given pursuant to and in full compliance with the Open Meetings Act, being Act No. 267, Public Acts of Michigan, 1976, and that the minutes of said meeting were kept and will be or have been made available as required by said Act.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cierra L. Sowle, County Clerk/Register of Deeds



**Tuesday, January 21, 2025  
Board Agenda**

**Tower Building  
5th Floor  
120 W Michigan Ave  
7 p.m.**

**1. CALL TO ORDER - by Chair James E. Shotwell, Jr**

---

**Subject**                    **A. Pledge of Allegiance**  
Meeting                    Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda  
Category                    1. CALL TO ORDER - by Chair James E. Shotwell, Jr  
Access                      Public  
Type                         Comments, Procedural

**Subject**                    **B. Invocation-Commissioner Earl Poleski**  
Meeting                    Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda  
Category                    1. CALL TO ORDER - by Chair James E. Shotwell, Jr  
Access                      Public  
Type                         Procedural

**Subject**                    **C. Roll Call - County Clerk/Register of Deeds Cierra Sowle**  
Meeting                    Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda  
Category                    1. CALL TO ORDER - by Chair James E. Shotwell, Jr  
Access                      Public  
Type                         Comments, Procedural

**2. AGENDA**

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**Subject**                    **A. Approval of Agenda**  
Meeting                    Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda  
Category                    2. AGENDA  
Access                      Public

Type	Action, Comments
Recommended Action	Approval of the Agenda

**Motion & Voting**

Approval of the Agenda

Motion by Ray Snell, second by Darius Williams.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Tony Bair, Margie Walz, Corey Kennedy, James Shotwell, Earl Poleski, Darius Williams, Ray Snell, John Willis

**3. AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS**

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>A. None.</b>
Meeting	Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda
Category	3. AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS
Access	Public
Type	Comments

**Executive Summary:****4. COMMUNICATIONS/PETITIONS**

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>A. None.</b>
Meeting	Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda
Category	4. COMMUNICATIONS/PETITIONS
Access	Public
Type	Comments

**Executive Summary:****5. SPECIAL ORDERS/PUBLIC HEARINGS**

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>A. None.</b>
Meeting	Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda
Category	5. SPECIAL ORDERS/PUBLIC HEARINGS
Access	Public
Type	Comments

**Executive Summary:****6. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>A. Public Comment Guidelines: Each individual will state their name, and have three (3) minutes to address the Board. You may only address the Board once</b>
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**under this public comment opportunity and may not yield your time to others. Board members will not debate or answer questions at this time.**

Meeting Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda  
 Category 6. PUBLIC COMMENTS  
 Access Public  
 Type Information

Public Comment Guidelines: Each individual will state their name, and have three (3) minutes to address the Board. You may only address the Board once under this public comment opportunity and may not yield your time to others. Board members will not debate or answer questions at this time.

## **7. SPECIAL MEETINGS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

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**Subject A. None.**  
 Meeting Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda  
 Category 7. SPECIAL MEETINGS OF STANDING COMMITTEES  
 Access Public  
 Type Comments

### **Executive Summary:**

## **8. MINUTES**

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**Subject A. Approval of Minutes December 17, 2024**  
 Meeting Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda  
 Category 8. MINUTES  
 Access Public  
 Type Action, Comments, Minutes  
 Recommended Action Approval of Minutes December 17, 2024  
 Minutes [View Minutes](#) for Dec 17, 2024 - Board Agenda

### **Motion & Voting**

Approval of Minutes December 17, 2024

Motion by Ray Snell, second by John Willis.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Tony Bair, Margie Walz, Corey Kennedy, James Shotwell, Earl Poleski, Darius Williams, Ray Snell, John Willis

**Subject B. Approval of Minutes January 2, 2025**  
 Meeting Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda  
 Category 8. MINUTES

1/23/25, 1:39 PM

BoardDocs@ Plus

Access Public

Type Action, Comments, Minutes

Recommended Action Approval of Minutes January 2, 2025 Organizational Meeting

Minutes [View Minutes](#) for Jan 2, 2025 - Organizational Board Agenda

**Motion & Voting**

Approval of Minutes January 2, 2025 Organizational Meeting

Motion by Ray Snell, second by John Willis.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Tony Bair, Margie Walz, Corey Kennedy, James Shotwell, Earl Poleski, Darius Williams, Ray Snell, John Willis

**9. CONSENT - PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION**

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**Subject** A. Approval of Consent Agenda

Meeting Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda

Category 9. CONSENT - PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION

Access Public

Type Action, Comments

**Executive Summary:**

**Motion & Voting**

move 10 b to 14 b

Motion by Earl Poleski, second by Margie Walz.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Tony Bair, Margie Walz, Corey Kennedy, James Shotwell, Earl Poleski, Darius Williams, Ray Snell, John Willis

**Subject** B. SHERIFF Inmate Medical Contract RFP ACH

Meeting Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda

Category 9. CONSENT - PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION

Access Public

Type Action, Comments, FULL BOARD

Recommended Action Approve proposed contract

**Executive Summary:**

**File Attachments**

[ATT PST ACH Contract 2025 01.pdf \(7,569 KB\)](#)

[ATT PST ACH 2025 01.pdf \(133 KB\)](#)

[SR PST ACH 2025 01.pdf \(830 KB\)](#)

**Subject** C. ANIMAL SHELTER New FTE Kennel Attendant

**Meeting** Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda

**Category** 9. CONSENT - PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION

**Access** Public

**Type** Action, Comments, FULL BOARD

**Recommended Action** Approve new FTE Kennel Attendant

**Executive Summary:**

File Attachments  
[SR PST Full Time Kennel Attendant 1 2025 .pdf \(515 KB\)](#)

**10. CONSENT - GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

**Subject** A. ADMINISTRATOR/CONTROLLER Landfill(Dalton Rd.) Purchase

**Meeting** Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda

**Category** 10. CONSENT - GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Access** Public

**Type** Action, Comments, FULL BOARD

**Recommended Action** Approve purchase of Landfill

**Executive Summary:**

File Attachments  
[SR GG Landfill Purchase.pdf \(125 KB\)](#)  
[ATT GG Jackson County Dalton Landfill.pdf \(6,947 KB\)](#)

**Subject** B. HR Proposed Wage Increase for Elected Officials and BOC

**Meeting** Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda

**Category** 10. CONSENT - GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Access** Public

**Type** Action, Comments, FULL BOARD

**Recommended Action** Approve salary increases of 3% for each of the listed Elected Officials (EO), Under Sheriff, Chief Deputy Clerk, and Jackson County Board of Commissioners effective January 1, 2025.

**Executive Summary: BOC is responsible for establishing compensation and benefits for the Elected Officials of Jackson County. The last wage increase approved for Elected Officials was February 15, 2022.**

File Attachments  
[SR\\_EO and BOC Salary 01 2025 .pdf \(105 KB\)](#)  
[2025 Elected Officials Compensation Analysis \(2\).xlsx \(19 KB\)](#)

**Subject** C. PARKS Jackson County Recreation Plan 2025-2029 Edition

Meeting Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda

Category 10. CONSENT - GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Access Public

Type Action, Comments, FULL BOARD

Recommended Action Resolve to adopt Jackson County Recreation Plan 2025-2029 Edition

**Executive Summary:**

File Attachments  
[SR\\_GG Recreation Plan Resolution 1 2025.pdf \(688 KB\)](#)  
[ATT\\_GG JacksonCoRecPlan2 1 2025rev.pdf \(11,312 KB\)](#)  
[RES\\_GG 01-25.02 Parks Resolution of Adoption Recreation Pan 1 2025.pdf \(66 KB\)](#)

**Subject** D. PARKS Cascades Fireworks Display

Meeting Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda

Category 10. CONSENT - GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Access Public

Type Action, Comments, FULL BOARD

Recommended Action Approval of 3-year agreements with Wolverine Fireworks Display, Inc. for a total of nine firework shows at the Cascades in 2025, 2026, and 2027

**Executive Summary:**

File Attachments  
[SR\\_GG Cascades Fireworks Display 1 2025.pdf \(682 KB\)](#)  
[ATT\\_GG Labor Day Fireworks 1 2025.pdf \(564 KB\)](#)  
[ATT\\_GG Independence Day Fireworks 1 2025.pdf \(351 KB\)](#)  
[ATT\\_GG Memorial Day Fireworks 1 2025.pdf \(670 KB\)](#)

## **11. CONSENT - HUMAN SERVICES**

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**Subject**

**A. HEALTH DEPARTMENT FY2025 KOHA Agreement with Smiles on Wheels for Barry/Eaton County Services**

Meeting	Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda
Category	11. CONSENT - HUMAN SERVICES
Access	Public
Type	Action, Comments, FULL BOARD
Recommended Action	Approve Smiles on Wheels agreement

**Executive Summary:**

File Attachments

[SR\\_HS\\_JCHD\\_KOHA\\_Barry\\_Eaton\\_HD\\_1.5.2024.pdf \(451 KB\)](#)

[ATT\\_HS\\_JCHD\\_SOW\\_Oral\\_Health\\_Assessment\\_Contract\\_Barry-Eaton\\_HD\\_1.6.2025.pdf \(195 KB\)](#)

[ATT\\_HS\\_JCHD\\_KOHA\\_state\\_and\\_Barry\\_Eaton\\_confirmation\\_of\\_approval\\_rev1.pdf \(226 KB\)](#)

**12. CONSENT - OTHER BUSINESS**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>A. Claims December 1-31, 2024</b>
Meeting	Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda
Category	12. CONSENT - OTHER BUSINESS
Access	Public
Type	Action (Consent), Comments
Recommended Action	Approval of the Claims December 1-31, 2024

*Our adopted rules of Parliamentary Procedure, Robert's Rules, provide for a consent agenda listing several items for approval of the Board by a single motion. Most of the items listed under the consent agenda have gone through Board subcommittee review and recommendation. Documentation concerning these items has been provided to all Board members and the public in advance to assure an extensive and thorough review. Items may be removed from the consent agenda at the request of any board member.*

**13. STANDING COMMITTEE - PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>A. None.</b>
Meeting	Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda
Category	13. STANDING COMMITTEE - PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION
Access	Public
Type	

**Executive Summary:**

**14. STANDING COMMITTEE - GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>A. None.</b>
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Meeting	Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda
Category	14. STANDING COMMITTEE - GENERAL GOVERNMENT
Access	Public
Type	Action

**Executive Summary:**

## Motion &amp; Voting

To adopt the staff recommendation.

Motion by Earl Poleski, second by John Willis.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Tony Bair, Margie Walz, James Shotwell, Earl Poleski, Ray Snell, John Willis

Nay: Corey Kennedy, Darius Williams

**15. STANDING COMMITTEE - HUMAN SERVICES**

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>A. None.</b>
Meeting	Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda
Category	15. STANDING COMMITTEE - HUMAN SERVICES
Access	Public
Type	

**Executive Summary:****16. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>A. None.</b>
Meeting	Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda
Category	16. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
Access	Public
Type	Comments

**Executive Summary:****17. NEW BUSINESS**

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>A. Appointment of Commissioner - Supervisor's Committee</b>
Meeting	Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda
Category	17. NEW BUSINESS
Access	Public
Type	Action, Comments

**Executive Summary:****18. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>A. Public Comment Guidelines: Each individual will state their name, and have two (2) minutes to address the Board. You may only address the Board once under this public comment opportunity and may not yield your time to others. Board members will not debate or answer questions at this time.</b>
Meeting	Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda
Category	18. PUBLIC COMMENTS
Access	Public
Type	Comments, Information

Public Comment Guidelines: Each individual will state their name, and have two (2) minutes to address the Board. You may only address the Board once under this public comment opportunity and may not yield your time to others. Board members will not debate or answer questions at this time.

**19. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>A. Comments</b>
Meeting	Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda
Category	19. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS
Access	Public
Type	Comments

**20. CLOSED SESSION**

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>A. None.</b>
Meeting	Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda
Category	20. CLOSED SESSION
Access	Public
Type	Action, Comments, Information
Recommended Action	Motion to go into closed session

**21. ADJOURNMENT**

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>A. Adjourn Motion</b>
Meeting	Jan 21, 2025 - Board Agenda
Category	21. ADJOURNMENT
Access	Public

Type	Action
Recommended Action	Motion to adjourn meeting.

Motion & Voting

Motion to adjourn meeting.

Motion by Ray Snell, second by Darius Williams.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Tony Bair, Margie Walz, Corey Kennedy, James Shotwell, Earl Poleski, Darius Williams, Ray Snell, John Willis



# JACKSON

January 23, 2025

Ms. Nan Hawley  
Jackson County Planning Commission  
120 W. Michigan Avenue, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Jackson, MI 49201

Transmitted via email to [region2planning@mijackson.org](mailto:region2planning@mijackson.org)

Subject: ***Jackson County Recreation Plan, 2025-2029 edition***

Dear Ms. Hawley:

Jackson County Parks recently drafted the 2025-2029 edition of their Recreation Plan. Local units of government must have recreation plans approved by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in order to maintain eligibility for federal and state funding for recreation projects. Local units must also provide copies of the document to the County Planning Commission and the Region 2 Planning Commission.

The current draft of the 2025-2029 edition of the *Jackson County Recreation Plan* can be downloaded from the following link: [https://www.co.jackson.mi.us/DocumentCenter/View/20925/JacksonCoRecPlan\\_DRAFT](https://www.co.jackson.mi.us/DocumentCenter/View/20925/JacksonCoRecPlan_DRAFT)

Please contact me at (517) 768-6705 if you prefer a paper copy of the document.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jacob Hurt  
Executive Director  
Region 2 Planning Commission

cc: Mr. Kyle Lewis, County Parks Director, Jackson County ([klewis@mijackson.org](mailto:klewis@mijackson.org))

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# JACKSON

January 23, 2025

Mr. Jacob Hurt  
Executive Director  
Region 2 Planning Commission  
120 W. Michigan Avenue, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Jackson, MI 49201

Transmitted via email to [jhurt@mijackson.org](mailto:jhurt@mijackson.org)

Subject: ***City of Jackson and Jackson County Joint Recreation Plan, 2025-2029 edition***

Dear Mr. Hurt:

Jackson County Parks recently drafted the 2025-2029 edition of their Recreation Plan. Local units of government must have recreation plans approved by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in order to maintain eligibility for federal and state funding for recreation projects. Local units must also provide copies of the document to the County Planning Commission and the Region 2 Planning Commission.

The current draft of the 2025-2029 edition of the *Jackson County Recreation Plan* can be downloaded from the following link: [https://www.co.jackson.mi.us/DocumentCenter/View/20925/JacksonCoRecPlan\\_DRAFT](https://www.co.jackson.mi.us/DocumentCenter/View/20925/JacksonCoRecPlan_DRAFT)

Please contact me at (517) 768-6705 if you prefer a paper copy of the document.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jacob Hurt  
Executive Director  
Region 2 Planning Commission

cc: Mr. Kyle Lewis, County Parks Director, Jackson County ([klewis@mijackson.org](mailto:klewis@mijackson.org))

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