



## SECTION IX: ACTION PLAN

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Numerous projects are completed in City parks every year. These may be large, capital improvements requiring larger amounts of funding, renovation projects completed by City staff, or special or ongoing projects completed by volunteers. As demonstrated in Section VIII (Major Park and Recreation System Infrastructure Needs Assessment), there are far more projects than can be completed over the course of this PROS Plan cycle, and it is a challenging task to determine priorities. Making matters more complicated, unanticipated projects arise that must be completed to maintain the operation of a facility or to assure safety of citizens.

In order to provide flexibility while addressing park system needs, several types of projects in the capital improvements plan are identified generally rather than as specific park projects. For example, the maintenance of trails and pathways was a high priority for residents; however, there are far more paths than can be repaired each year. There is also a desire to complete trail systems such as the Border-to-Border trail. Consequently, two categories were developed for yearly attention to address both repair and development of trails. The order of their attention is based on the amount of use they receive, their condition and safety. These are then reviewed each year to determine how much can be accomplished given the budget allocation.

A balance must also be achieved between types of projects to maintain what we have while keeping current with trends and providing desired amenities. For example, every year several recreation facilities, such as a pool or ice arena, receive some upgrade or modernization to accommodate customers, improve energy efficiency or barrier free access, and maintain the viability of the resource. Basic infrastructure, such as parking lots and restrooms, must also be repaired and updated and require significant financial resources. Additionally, larger new amenities, such as a skate park, are desired and should be addressed to eliminate deficiencies within the park system. To provide a balance, the capital budget is divided between the different types of resources to assure that the entire system is addressed at some level. The exhaustive list provided in the previous chapter helps staff to make sure that they are referring back to priorities stated during the public process while developing the Capital Improvements Plan

## SECTION IX: Action Plan

### **A. Staff Projects**

Staff projects include amenities such as drinking fountain replacement, interior restroom renovations, bench and picnic table renovations. These projects are completed on a rotating basis to keep facilities updated and to improve barrier free accessibility.

Each year, as time and budget permits, projects are identified, either in conjunction with other projects or as a group to improve efficiency. For example, drinking fountains were replaced at ten parks that were in need of upgrades for barrier free access. The parking lot at Bandemer Park is being repaved after the bridge repair to complete the appearance and usability of the lot.

### **B. Volunteer Projects**

Volunteer projects occur primarily in natural areas through the Natural Area Preservation Program as well as in other parks, through the Adopt-a-Park Program. The types of projects that have been traditionally completed include:

- Neighborhood groups volunteer to plant flowers at park signs, help to spread woodchips at playgrounds, and mulch around newly planted trees primarily at their local neighborhood park.
- Eagle Scouts often approach the parks staff to do construction projects to complete their badge requirements. Projects have included boardwalks, signs, small bridges, and pathways.
- Individuals and groups, such as schools, fraternities, sororities and service groups, collect trash from parks, help clear trails, and plant trees.
- Work days are organized to clean up and plant flowers in the downtown and collect trash from the Huron River.

Expansion of the Adopt-a-Park program is envisioned to include more projects at recreation facilities. Incorporating more volunteers with programming, maintenance at facilities, planting, and flower bed maintenance is being explored.

### **C. Capital Projects**

The City of Ann Arbor's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) forms a starting point for the capital projects portion of the budget. Every two years the complete six-year plan is reviewed, modified, and updated. Projects considered to be capital improvements are generally large, expensive, and relatively permanent in nature.

The City staff and the City Planning Commission initiated changes to the CIP process to develop an improved manner in which to prioritize projects. In 2010, City teams were formed to identify capital needs associated with the various categories of infrastructure assets, such as streets, water treatment and parks. A tool was developed to help prioritize needs and was customized within each service area to make it more pertinent to the type of asset being evaluated. These were then tied to availability of funding and capacity of staff to perform the projects.

Parks and Recreation piloted a prioritization model tool to develop a more detailed, clear prioritization of projects. In developing the tool, staff and key stakeholders met to create criteria

## SECTION IX: Action Plan

and a ranking system that would be applicable to the park system, its facilities, and infrastructure assets. The criteria are weighted to convey the relative importance of each category. For example, safety and code compliance received a higher weighting than aesthetics. These are then plugged in to a model that tallies the scores and the justification for the ranking. Other City departments have begun to use this model to develop their CIP projects.

Using this PROS Plan as the starting point, facilities are evaluated and prioritized according to a myriad of factors. Construction projects are chosen each year according to the condition of the facility, community desires for amenities, and adherence to codes. Other factors, including ability to maintain an amenity and its financial impact, are important in placing projects in the queue in any fiscal year. Playgrounds, for example, are replaced if there are dangerous components that cannot be repaired or if they no longer meet safety or ADA guidelines. A heavily used asphalt path that is badly cracked and considered dangerous would rank higher for repair if it was a heavily used amenity. Creation of new facilities that will create additional maintenance burden have in recent years ranked lower because of the emphasis on taking care of existing parks in difficult financial times.

The group that met to develop the criteria included Parks and Recreation Facility Supervisors, Maintenance Supervisors, Parks Managers, Park Planners, Forestry, and Natural Areas staff. The Park Advisory Commission was also involved in the process, and presented the final version.

The following capital projects criteria are a product of those efforts. They cover the breadth of issues that staff considered including safety, customer service, aesthetics, fiscal responsibility, and environmental sustainability.

### **D. Capital Projects Criteria**

Legend:

- Concepts to illustrate category
- 1-4 Scores to indicate levels of compliance
- a-d Examples to illustrate compliance levels

#### **1. Environmental**

- Reduces energy consumption, such as incorporating solar/wind energy or high efficiency fixtures
  - Reduces environmental impact, such as increasing opportunities for recycling and storm water attenuation
  - Explores use of innovative materials, such as recycled construction materials
  - Preserves and/or enhances the natural environment, such as restoration of a degraded prairie
1. Negatively impacts environment
  2. Project does not improve environment
    - a. Pave or resurface parking lot with impermeable surfacing
  3. Project does not impact environment
    - a. Construct parking lot with code-required detention and include storm water mitigation to balance development

## SECTION IX: Action Plan

4. Project improves environment:
  - a. Replace impermeable asphalt lot with pervious pavement – construct parking lot using innovative recycled materials and exceed storm water standards to improve water quality, such as porous pavement and bioswales.

### 2. Safety

- Protects health, safety, lives of citizens
  - Addresses a known safety concern
  - Eliminates hazards and reduces risks
  - Creating an environment that encourages feeling of safety and wellbeing
1. Creates hazard or negative impact on safety, creates hazardous situation
  2. Project will not significantly change safety
    - a. Asphalt walks cracked, but no trip hazards: seal coat to maintain life of path
    - b. Playground equipment outdated, but still meets safety codes, refill safety surfacing
  3. Project improves safety standards
    - a. Asphalt walks cracked, but no trip hazards: cracks filled to maintain surfacing
    - b. Playground area with some non-compliant elements, but minimal safety hazards: elements replaced
    - c. Branches on trees trimmed to maintain health
    - d. Trees around play area are limbed up to allow for greater visibility
  4. Project essential to protect safety
    - a. Asphalt walks cracked with trip hazards: replace walk with new
    - b. Playground area with safety hazards replaced in entirety to bring all elements into compliance with safety guidelines
    - c. Diseased/dead trees removed/replaced adjacent to use areas/user proximity and private property

### 3. Social, Cultural, Recreational and Aesthetic Considerations

- Address needs and desires of community as determined in the PROS Plan and through public input and other long-range plans
  - Provide cultural activities that enhance appreciation for the arts
  - Appropriately utilize (while preserving and restoring) areas of natural, historical, or architectural significance
  - Provide creative designs that beautify the park system
  - Provide environmental education opportunities that enhance appreciation of natural resources
1. Project does not address needs of community
    - a. Facilities are not provided that are desired by the community
    - b. Funded facility only serves a small segment of the community
  2. Project maintains status quo
    - a. Basketball court resurfaced to maintain playability
    - b. Play area refurbished in same location and with similar equipment

## SECTION IX: Action Plan

3. Project upgrades existing facility to encourage greater use
  - a. Replace gravel walk with asphalt to allow for wider range of users
  - b. Provide barrier free surfacing for existing play area
4. Project provides new facility/experience/program for underserved population
  - a. Create an innovative, entirely barrier free play area that includes programming opportunities
  - b. Provide innovative facility for underserved population, such as skate park
  - c. Construct a new park linkage, such as a route for bicycles and pedestrians that makes the river front accessible and/or connects parks.

### 4. User Experience

- Assure that recreational opportunities are balanced throughout the park system, including passive and active, winter and summer, daytime and evening, structured and non-structured, natural areas and developed parks.
  - Afford opportunities for all, regardless of age, socio-economic status, and physical ability
  - Provide high quality, well-built, state-of-the-art facilities
1. Project lowers level of service
    - a. Facilities no longer function well for type of activities
    - b. Repairs to infrastructure items are not addressed
  2. Project maintains level of service
    - a. Upgrade a system that helps employees but that customers do not benefit
    - b. Continue to minimally repair aging locker rooms
  3. Project addresses convenience and customer service
    - a. Provide technology to allow customers to register for classes at any facility
    - b. Cosmetic rehabilitation of locker rooms (paint, etc)
  4. Project improves convenience and customer service
    - a. Provide technology for online registration of classes
    - b. Entirely rehabilitate locker room facilities to provide better experience

### 5. Financial Impact

- Achieve savings and/or enhance operation and maintenance practices
  - Utilize state of the art technology that is geared toward achieving energy and operating savings
  - Generate or increase revenue
1. Project increases operating and/or maintenance costs
    - a. Installation of a new soccer field, new areas to be mowed
    - b. Buy new, smaller equipment
  2. Project has no effect on operations and/or maintenance costs

## SECTION IX: Action Plan

- a. Replace a mower that has broken with the same type of mower
3. Project produces a net savings in operations and/or maintenance costs
  - a. Existing soccer field has automated irrigation added and field aerated
  - b. Take areas out of mowing to decrease energy costs and staff time
4. Project produces/increases revenue
  - a. Add a splash pad at a pool to attract more families
  - b. Add picnic shelter to increase rentals
  - c. Replace lighting at shelters with LED lights

### 6. Regulatory Compliance

- Adhere to regulations and standards the City is bound to uphold
  1. Project in violation of regulatory issues
    - a. Unsafe playground equipment is not replaced in a timely manner
    - b. Playground equipment does not meet standards set by Americans with Disabilities Act
    - c. Parking lot does not have required number of barrier free parking spaces
  2. Project does not meet existing standards
    - a. Bicycle path does not meet current AASHTO guidelines for width and level of service
    - b. Playground equipment not in compliance with Consumer Product Safety Commission and ASTM guidelines
  3. Project meets existing standards
    - a. Project, such as bicycle path, accommodates all users by meeting AASHTO guidelines and for width
  4. Project exceeds standards
    - a. Building uses LEED standards to achieve environmentally sustainable facilities
    - b. Rain gardens are constructed in parks to accept runoff from surrounding area

From these criteria, the CIP plan is developed. This document is revisited every year, with later fiscal year projects reprioritized as issues develop. The general categories, such as trails and pathways, game courts, and park roads and parking lots, are evaluated yearly according to use levels and condition. Targeted specific projects, such as painting of the Buhr Ice arena, are scheduled to assure the integrity and safety of existing infrastructure.

### D. DRAFT CIP Project Schedule for 2011-2015

Project Name	Priority	Cost Estimate
<u>FY 2011</u> Trails and Pathways – Repairs and Reconstruction (annual)	Urgent	\$175,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Veterans Memorial – Maple Road,</li><li>• Cobblestone Service Drive/Walk</li><li>• Easy Street Entrance to Buhr Park</li></ul>		

SECTION IX: Action Plan

Playground Improvements (annual)	Urgent	\$250,000
• Wheeler Park		
• Bader Park		
Tennis and Basketball Court Renovations (annual)	Urgent/Important	\$150,000
• Veterans Memorial Park		
• West Park Master Plan Implementation	Urgent/Important	\$200,000
Buhr Park Ice Arena Steel Painting Infrastructure	Urgent/Important	\$150,000

FY2012

Trails and Pathways – Repairs and Reconstruction (annual)	Urgent	\$175,000
Playground Improvements (annual)	Urgent	\$250,000
Tennis and Basketball Court Renovations (annual)	Urgent/Important	\$150,000
Park Bridge Repairs (annual)	Urgent	\$250,000
Park Roads and Parking Lots (annual)	Urgent/Important	\$250,000
Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage	Desirable	\$115,000
West Park Master Plan Implementation	Urgent/Important	\$333,333
Cobblestone Farm Kitchen	Important	\$175,000
Skate Park Facility	Desirable	Unfunded

FY2013

Trails and Pathways – New Construction (annual)	Urgent	\$200,000
Trails and Pathways – Repairs and Reconstruction (annual)	Urgent	\$250,000
Playground Improvements (annual)	Urgent	\$270,000
Tennis and Basketball Court Renovations (annual)	Urgent/Important	\$150,000
Park Bridge Repairs (annual)	Urgent	\$250,000
Park Roads and Parking Lots (annual)	Urgent/Important	\$250,000
Exterior Shelter Lighting	Important	\$ 45,000
Picnic Shelters	Important	\$200,000

FY2014

Trails and Pathways – New Construction (annual)	Urgent	
Trails and Pathways – Repairs and Reconstruction (annual)	Urgent	\$175,000
Playground Improvements (annual)	Urgent	\$250,000
Tennis and Basketball Court Renovations (annual)	Urgent/Important	\$150,000
Park Bridge Repairs (annual)	Urgent	\$250,000
Park Roads and Parking Lots (annual)	Urgent/Important	\$250,000
Gallup Canoe Livery	Important	\$165,000
Historic Preservation Projects	Important	\$ 60,000
Garden Homes Path Lighting	Important	\$225,000
Mack Pool Repair	Desirable	\$100,000
Bandemer to Barton Underpass	Urgent/Important	\$2,500,000

FY2015

Park Roads and Parking Lots (annual)	Urgent/Important	\$500,000
Tennis and Basketball Court Renovations	Urgent/Important	\$300,000
Park Bridge Repairs	Urgent	\$500,000
Playground Improvements	Urgent	\$270,000
Trails and Pathways – New Construction	Urgent	\$600,000

SECTION IX: Action Plan

Trails and Pathways – Repairs and Reconstruction	Urgent	\$250,000
Allen Creek Greenway	Desirable	\$200,000
Baseball Field Infield Replacement	Desirable	\$260,000
Baseball Field Infield Replacement	Desirable	\$150,000
Bryant and Northside Community Centers	Desirable	\$250,000
Fuller Pool Spray Park	Desirable	\$500,000
Veterans Memorial Park Pool and Deck Improvements	Desirable	\$400,000