

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

This parks and recreation master plan sets forth a vision for the City of Chelsea. It is a document to guide improvements and enhancements to the City of Chelsea's park system but also acts as basis for state funding eligibility. To become eligible for funding from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the City of Chelsea must have a parks and recreation plan that is reviewed, updated and adopted at least every five years.

The final version of the Chelsea Parks and Recreation Plan adopted by of the City Council will be incorporated into the City's Comprehensive Master Plan.

The plan presented in this document sets forth a vision for our City's park system and also for continuing to build partnerships with surrounding townships, local entities, and state agencies. One goal of these partnerships will be to link the rich natural and scenic recreational resources of the townships and county and state parks with Chelsea through pedestrian friendly walkways and non-motorized trails. These scenic state and county parks are a unique complement to the City's more "urban" park system.

The parks and recreation plan identifies needed improvements, acquisition of land for additional facilities and green space, upgrades, and possible re-designs of existing park facilities. It also addresses issues of access and walkability of sidewalks and pathways between and among these recreational resources. Further, for expanded recreational opportunities are proposed that have the potential to significantly expand parks and recreational resources of our community.

What is proposed in this document cannot be achieved quickly, although implementation of some parts can be initiated in the short term. Other components require designs, feasibility assessments, cost assessments, and, inevitably, financial resources beyond those available solely within the City of Chelsea's capital and operating budgets. Full implementation will require identifying external funding resources and presenting persuasive cases for external investments in our community's parks and recreational needs and opportunities.

It is important, if not essential, to begin the process of enhancing and expanding the recreational resources of Chelsea. The evidence documenting the value and benefits of rich recreational resources in cities is strong and compelling. Among these findings are the following:¹

¹ Sources:

- National Parks and Recreation Association, Urban Parks, <http://www.urbanparks.org/>
- National Planning Association, How cities use parks for...Smart Growth, <https://www.planning.org/cityparks/briefingpapers/smartgrowth.htm>

Community Development

- Parks are one of the quickest and most effective ways to build a sense of community and improve quality of life.
- Parks provide places for people to connect and interact in a shared environment.
- Parks that serve as central walking, resting, and meeting places can revive failing or threatened commercial areas.
- City parks offer children the daily benefits of direct experience with nature — the motivation to explore, discover, and learn about their world and to engage in health-promoting, physical activity.
- City parks offer children a sense of place, self-identity, and belonging as an antidote to social alienation, vandalism, and violence.
- Parks help build and strengthen community ties and bring diverse populations together.
- Creating an interconnected system of parks and open space is manifestly more beneficial than creating parks in isolation.

Economic Development

- Real property values are positively affected.
- Municipal revenues are increased.
- Affluent retirees are attracted and retained.
- Knowledge workers and talent are attracted to live and work in the city.
- Homebuyers are attracted to purchase homes.

Chelsea Recreational Vision

Chelsea endeavors to be a vibrant small city characterized by a strong and enduring sense of community. It seeks to create an amenity-rich residential and recreational urban setting with a sustainable quality of life for all its residents: an age-friendly community that is a rewarding healthy environment in which to grow up, to raise families, and to age in place. The creation of recreational amenities that enhance the lives of its residents and attracts visitors from its immediate region and beyond is an important building block of this effort. The vision that undergirds this plan for parks and recreation is as follows.

Chelsea will have an array of high quality, environmentally friendly parks and recreational facilities that serve all ages. Pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, trails, and crossings will link this network of well-maintained park facilities. The fulcrum of this network of recreational facilities will be a new all-ages community center ideally located at the corner of Trinkle and Freer Roads.

Chelsea will be the dynamic urban hub of its surrounding scenic and natural resource-rich immediate region including Lima, Sylvan, Lyndon Townships, and the adjacent part of Dexter Township. The City will seek to create partnerships with these adjacent communities to create and sustain linkages between and among their natural resource oriented recreational opportunities and the recreational opportunities of Chelsea.

The goal of these partnerships will be a network of trails for bikers and hikers that provide non-motorized access to [a] the amenities of the Townships and the City of Chelsea, [b] the recreational resources of Dexter, Manchester and Ann Arbor [c] the Huron River Watershed recreation area and [d] the non-motorized trail network under development within the State of Michigan.

Chelsea Today

The historic Village of Chelsea became a City on March 9, 2004. Today it is a vital small city in the midst of the surrounding townships of Sylvan, Lima, Lyndon, and Dexter.

The City's motto, "A city of history, a city of pride", reflects an enduring commitment to its environment, cultural heritage, and historic buildings. Much of the historic downtown lies within the Chelsea Commercial Historic District, which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2011. Although the Historic District primarily encompasses commercial buildings, it also incorporates public and religious buildings, as well a few residential structures.

Chelsea stands astride the nexus of two major transportation arteries, State Highway M-52 that is also the City's Main Street, and the railroad soon to be used by high-speed trains. Both of these transportation arteries fall under the control of the Michigan Department of Transportation [MDOT] and beyond the purview of the City of Chelsea. This segmentation of the City poses difficulties both in building a stronger sense of community and in creating a network of parks and recreational venues connected by safe walking streets and non-motorized pathways and trails.

Demographics

Within the 3.2 (square miles of the City limits, Chelsea's population, in 2020, was 5,467.² By 2040 this population is estimated to increase to 6,277, an increase of 1,327 over the thirty-year period 2010-2040.³ Children and seniors comprise slightly more than 45 percent of the City's total population. Children and youth ages 17 and under make up 22.7% of Chelsea's population. Seniors 65 and over are also 22.7% of the populace.

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Southeast Michigan Council of Governments [SEMCOG]. Population and Household Estimates, December 2014

³ This anticipated growth is consistent with Chelsea's historical growth. In 1990, the City of Chelsea's population was 3,772 and in 2014, its population was 5,165. Village of Chelsea's 1992 Community Recreation Strategy; Southeast Michigan Council of Governments [SEMCOG]. Population and Household Estimates, December 2014

Population by Age⁴

Age Group	Census 2010	SEMCOG 2040	Change 2010-2040
75+	765	1,321	556
65-74	358	585	227
60-64	265	294	29
35-59	1,668	1,593	-75
25-34	528	812	284
18-24	237	711	474
5-17	825	641	-184
Under 5	298	314	16
Total	4,944	6,271	1,327

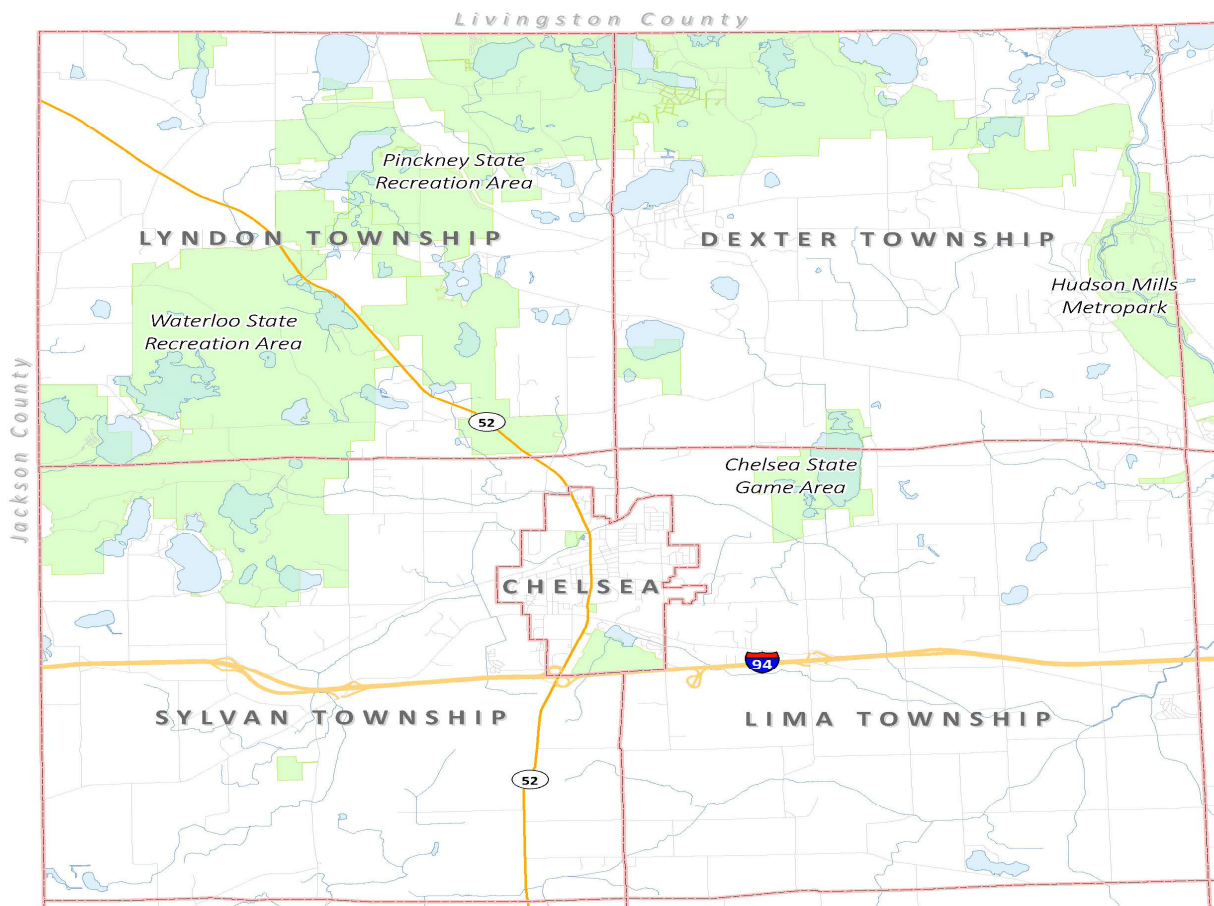
Projected changes in the demographic profile of Chelsea point to a substantial increase in the number of seniors even as the number of school-aged children slightly declines. *Chelsea will need a comprehensive strategy for attracting and retaining families with children to address this projected aging of its population. A high quality park system and a rich array of recreational opportunities will be an important component of this overall strategy.* Seniors and youth both will benefit from a community investment in age-friendly parks and connecting walking paths and trails.

⁴ SEMCOG

Regional Orientation

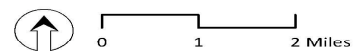
Located in the western part of Washtenaw County, Chelsea's immediate region is the bordering townships of Dexter, Lyndon, Sylvan, and Lima.

The Chelsea School District, which is the primary service district of the Chelsea park system, extends beyond these borders and includes not only the City and parts of Dexter, Lima, Lyndon Townships, but also Freedom, Sharon, Waterloo and Grass Lake Townships. The school district covers 125 square miles. All of the schools are located within the City limits (one high school, one middle school, and two elementary schools).



REGIONAL LOCATION

City of Chelsea
Washtenaw County



Source: Washtenaw County GIS

Carlisle/Wortman Associates
6-5-15



Environmental Conditions

Chelsea contains significant natural features to consider with respect to future land use. Creeks, ponds, and woodlands make an important contribution to the quality of life in the City. Protection of these natural resources surrounding the City is important to preserving the small town character of the community.

Topography

The scenic topography found in western Washtenaw County was formed 15,000 to 30,000 years ago during the most recent glacial period. Due to the glaciers, much of the City land is rolling. The surrounding land has even steeper slopes, which adds to the scenic beauty of the area and makes the area desirable for recreational use.

Soils, Lakes and Wetlands

Substantial woodlands and wetlands exist in the City of Chelsea and the surrounding townships. In the City, some of the most significant wetlands are those lining Letts Creek and other associated tributaries. Letts Creek flows through the north part of the City eventually joining the Huron River and Lake Erie. In the east side of the City there are wetland areas by the cemetery, along the edge of Beach Middle School, the new high school and between the Washtenaw Street Education Center and Pierce Lake Elementary School as well as by the new high school. There also are wetlands in the southwest of the City located near South Meadows Elementary School. The Chelsea Hospital, located in the center of town, is built on a former bog. Wetlands also are located in the west side of the City, some as great as 5 acres. There is a long extending muck line around the west side, defining an outward boundary for the City. The City of Chelsea also is home to Pierce Lake, which is located in the southwestern quadrant of the City. The surrounding townships also feature lakes and wetlands of varying size and type including marshes, bogs and fens. Wetlands are home to many aquatic species and are linked with the hydrologic system. As a result, wetlands are vital to the environmental quality of the area.

Woodlands and Vegetation

Areas of natural woodlands are found both around the edges of the City and within the City. Woodlands, native plants, and abundant wildlife contribute to the quality of life in and around the City. The trees and plants establish the City as a relaxed, rural setting. The mature trees and vegetation naturally maintain clean air; reduce soil erosion, runoff and flooding; help moderate ground-level temperatures and provide wildlife habitat. Many areas in the City are home to deer, rabbits, snakes, skunks, raccoon, pheasants, fox, birds, and other kinds of animals. These animals add to the education and enjoyment of the people in the City.

CHAPTER 2 – ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Administration

The Chelsea City Council established the Parks and Recreation Committee in for the purpose of updating the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Committee, which consists of community volunteers, is working in conjunction with the Chelsea Planning Commission, which is in the process of updating the City's Comprehensive Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Chelsea City Council

Mayor Melissa Johnson
Mayor Pro Tem Cheri Albertson
Council Member Peter Feeney
Council Member Jennifer Kwas
Council Member Tony Ianelli
Council Member Jane Pacheco
Council Member Charles Wisely

Parks and Recreation Committee

Sam Angus
Erin Brayton
Kate Mehuron
Melissa Johnson
Shawn Personke
Andrew Thompson

Staff – John Hanifan, City Manager

Chelsea's Park and Recreation Structure

Historically, the majority of recreational programming has been provided cooperatively by the City of Chelsea and the Chelsea School District. The City and the school district have a long history of working together to provide recreational services to the Chelsea area. In 1971, the then Village of Chelsea and the school district entered into a joint agreement to provide for the delivery of recreational services. In January of 2014, at the recommendation of the Chelsea Recreation board, the agreement was dissolved. Currently, the Chelsea School District, which is the only school district serving the City of Chelsea and most of the surrounding townships, runs the Chelsea Community Education and Recreation program, which sponsors and administers the majority of the local recreation activities. This program serves the residents of the Chelsea School District and works with and/or provides recreational programming to other local municipalities. The City continues to be a supporter of the Chelsea Community Education and Recreation programs and contracts with it for a number of recreation services. A copy of the agreement is included as an attachment. Both the City and the Chelsea School District provide space and facilities for recreational programming, with the Chelsea School District providing the majority of space and facilities. Each entity maintains the parks, fields, and playgrounds under its direction with their own maintenance departments.

2021 -22 City of Chelsea Parks Budget (to be inserted when adopted)

The Chelsea School District owns and maintains most of the recreational facilities in town including the majority of playing fields. These fields are used by the middle school and high school athletic teams, as well as private club-sponsored travel teams and the house and travel teams of Community Education and Recreation. The City owns two ball fields and three public parks, one of which – Timbertown - includes the only city-owned multi-purpose field.

The relationship between the City and the School District remains very cooperative and it is anticipated that the two entities will continue to work closely together to provide recreational services. However, it is also recognized that there is increasing demand by school athletics to use existing school facilities and that community recreation groups can no longer rely on the use of school facilities for recreational services for the City of Chelsea and the greater Chelsea area. As mentioned, the City of Chelsea has 3 public parks. Two of the parks, Timbertown and its partner park, Veteran's Park/Weber Fields, are located in the north end of town. Chelsea's third park, Pierce Park, is located in the southern portion of the City. The neighborhood recreational needs of the residents that reside in between these parks have primarily been served by school facilities. It should be noted that use of school facilities by the public is limited to use that does not conflict with school programming.

CHAPTER 3 – RECREATION INVENTORY

The Parks Committee made site visits to each of the facilities listed to visually inspect and assess each one. Known existing physical characteristics from past recreation plans –acreage, property boundaries, structures, etc. – were verified.

The City of Chelsea’s three parks consist of approximately 35 acres of dedicated and developed parkland. School facilities, a Washtenaw County golf course and nature area, the Chelsea Fairgrounds, private facilities, and the surrounding townships also provide sources of recreation for City residents. The highest concentration of City parks are located in the northwest quadrant of the community with the remainder spread throughout the southern half of the City. In addition to the facilities provided by the City, the school district owns and controls numerous facilities and, through its Community Education and Recreation program provides classes and activities that serve a variety of interests. However, the Community Education and Recreation programs and classes are scheduled around the availability of school facilities.

Health and wellness have always been an important component of living in Chelsea. As the City of Chelsea, and the surrounding townships grow, so does the demand for recreational and healthy living opportunities for people of all ages.

Chelsea Parks and Recreation Areas

Appendix B includes a compilation of the existing recreation facilities that are available to the citizens of the Chelsea area. These facilities are a combination of those owned by the school district, those owned by the City, and private facilities used by organizations in the Chelsea area. Table 1 enumerates the park size and type of activities found in each of the recreation areas.

The Washtenaw County Park Commission operates Pierce Lake Golf Course and Park primarily as a recreational golf facility. It is the only County park in the City of Chelsea and includes an 18-hole golf course with a clubhouse and picnic pavilion; the golf course is open to the public. The park’s boundaries are Interstate 94 on the south, Freer Road to the east, Pierce Lake on the north and M-52 to the west of the park. It has significant tracts of mature trees, numerous wetland areas, and two large ponds utilized for irrigation. In addition to the golf course, there is a nature path that runs from Old U.S. 12 through the county park. This park encircles $\frac{3}{4}$ of Pierce Lake. This path is popular with birders and is the only public nature area regularly open to residents and visitors in the City of Chelsea. This park is underutilized due to the incomplete trail system and general lack of good public access. There is minimal signage about the trail and the park at this location and minimal information about the park on the City and County websites.

Pierce Park is a community park, located on South Main near Old US-12, has a paved path, play structures, some open space, a large, covered gazebo, a new smaller gazebo, and a parking lot. The gazebos are used for community events as well as private gatherings. The playground equipment currently consists of one small play structure and some swings. The park has mature trees and green open spaces. This park underwent a re-design in 2019. This park is the location for “the rock.” The public is permitted to paint messages on the rock. The trees near “the rock” have also been painted. The trees are not a designated message space. The parking lot contains spaces for approximately 25 vehicles. The parking lot, which is the entrance point to the park, is where portable restroom facilities and a large dumpster are located. Trash and/or recycling receptacles are not located throughout the park. This park has frontage on Main Street, the

Chelsea Hospital south drive, commercial property to the south, and hospital grounds to the east. The City maintains this park. The southern end of the park is affected by storm water run-off.

Veterans Park, a small community park, located at the corner of Sibley and North Main, includes a granite memorial that honors local veterans. There are picnic tables and benches, as well as a wooden ship play structure and a swing set. The wooden ship is in need of maintenance and lacks an adequate fall zone. Letts Creek runs alongside the park, with residential and municipal parcels on the south banks of the creek. Weber Fields, commonly known as Dana Fields, are adjacent to Vet's Park and are connected by a shared parking lot with parking for approximately 40 vehicles. At this site, there is a building with bathrooms and concession space for the two adjacent ball fields. The ball fields were upgraded recently and have new dugouts and enhanced fencing. The concession stands and restroom facilities are open on a limited basis. The parks also are served by portable restroom facilities and a large dumpster which are situated between the two parks at the entrances to the ball fields. The fields represent the only facilities used by Chelsea Community Education and Recreation that are not located on school owned properties. Although Weber Fields and Veteran's Park are adjacent, the design of the parks, which are separated by a partial fence and a parking lot, makes them feel very disconnected. Open fields and sections of trees and brush link this park area to Timbertown to the west. The City maintains these park facilities. A pathway, which was created years ago by a local community group, connects Weber Fields to Timbertown. Many park users are unaware of this connection as the trail is not marked and has not been maintained.

Timbertown is a community park built by a volunteer community effort and Leathers Incorporated of Ithaca, NY. In 1996, the team designed and built Timbertown's complex play structures to resemble downtown Chelsea. The wooden play structure incorporates a toddler area with a sandbox, a water feature, slides, and swings among other unique features. Although community groups renovated the park in 2007, the play structure requires annual monitoring and upkeep including replacement of wood, spraying for hornets, sand for the sand box and maintenance of the water feature. Annual maintenance is needed in part due to the heavy use by visiting and local school, daycare and community groups. Adjacent to the play structures are a pair of sand volleyball courts, which have recently been revitalized, and the only multi-purpose field (it has been used for football, soccer, ultimate frisbee, baseball, and kite flying) that the City owns. This area is undeveloped and allows for multiple uses. Some local athletic clubs, including the Monitors and Merrimack historic baseball clubs, have utilized this open space on a seasonal agreement with the City Council. Both the multi-purpose field and the volleyball courts are areas that could be used for community programming. A community garden is also located adjacent to the creek on the east side of the park near the path that connects Timbertown with Veteran's Park/Weber Fields. On the grounds, there is a large pavilion with picnic tables and water fountains. The park also includes a seating reflection area with a mosaic, The Pathway to Renewal, which was created by a community group that included local artists and private individuals. The mosaic was vandalized and is in need of repair. This area will either need to be restored or, alternatively, the space could be re-designed for re-use. Timbertown has parking for approximately 40 vehicles. The park is served by portable restroom facilities and a dumpster for trash. There are currently no permanent restroom facilities.

The Chelsea Dog Park is located on McKinley Street, near the water purification plant. This approximately 1.1 acre fenced area was created in 2017. This green space, which has not been formally designated a park, includes agility training amenities, a bench and water for the dogs. Users register with the City and pay an annual license fee.

The following Map – Community Parks - shows the park locations and potential new parks:

CHAPTER 4: DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AND PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

The Parks and Recreation Committee, whose task it was to create a 2020 Chelsea Parks and Recreation Master Plan, regularly met for approximately one year to review previous City plans, gather community input and to visit City parks and recreation areas. The steering committee utilized several sources of information to create the 2020 Chelsea Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Those sources include:

- The 2015 – 2019 Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- The 2020 City of Chelsea Comprehensive Master Plan
- The 2004 Chelsea Recreation Plan
- The 1992 Chelsea Recreation Plan
- The Community Recreation Strategy of the Chelsea Citizens Ad Hoc Committee
- Feedback from the Chelsea's City Council, Planning Commission, City professional staff, Chelsea School District, community organizations and local businesses
- Feedback from the community
- Community member resources
- Site visits to City parks and land, the Pierce Lake Golf Course and Park (a Washtenaw County park located in the City of Chelsea), and the Washington Street Education Center (WSEC; home to Chelsea Community Education and Recreation)

Elements of the Planning and Public Participation Process

To ensure that information necessary to update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was gathered, the Parks and Recreation Committee not only reviewed the above listed documents and conducted site visits, but also interacted with and gathered input from City administration and the public. While the committee gathered received comments and feedback in a variety of ways, the primary sources to gather information were public meetings and an online survey. The committee met regularly throughout 2014-2021. The meetings were public and public participation was included on the meetings' agendas. The public was also invited to attend a Town Hall meeting on July 12th, 2021, 2020. The Town Hall Meeting was conducted as an open house with information stations situated around the park for attendees to study and comment. There were stations representing geographic areas of the City and recommendations for improvements and/or enhancements that included the following areas:

- Pierce Park
- Timbertown
- Veteran's Park/Weber Fields
- Lett's Creek Linear Park
- A regional "Loop" trail connecting Chelsea to the Border-to-Border Trail and the Lakelands Trail
- Additional prospective facilities

Each station displayed maps, pictures, and information related to each sub-area. City staff and Parks and Recreation Steering Committee members were present at each station to provide specific information on each topic, answer questions, and record comments. Participants also were asked to provide comments on open-ended questions related to each sub-area as well as to provide any ideas, needs or wants not already identified by the committee. Similarly, the public also was asked to participate in an online survey to provide feedback about the City of Chelsea's Park and Recreation system and proposed plan.

A complete overview of the planning process used by the steering committee includes the following steps:

- Regular Parks and Recreation Steering Committee meetings; meetings commenced in August of 2019; all meetings were open to the public
- Description of the community
- Inventory of existing city facilities
- Resource inventory for possible new acquisitions/park expansion(s)
- Description of the City's park and recreation administrative structure
- Coordination of the draft document with interested parties
- An overview presentation of the parks committees proposed plan to the City Council March ____, 2021 ~~16, 2020~~; this presentation was recorded and could be viewed on the local access channel as well as at the City's website
- Town Hall meeting ~~March 31, 2020~~ July 12, 2021
- Consideration of public comments (**APPENDIX C INCLUDING PUBLIC HEARING MEETING AND TOWN HALL MEETING COMMENTS**)
- Public Participation through on-line survey – results included as Appendix D

Appendix C - Not complete - public comment section is still open/active

Final presentation of the plan to the City Council; this presentation was recorded and could be viewed on the local access channel as well as at the City's website.

CHAPTER 5: ACTION PROGRAM

ACTION PLAN

Parks and recreation contribute greatly to the quality of life and the economic vitality of our city. Accordingly, the committee spent significant time reviewing and evaluating our current park system and, along with input from the public, identified strategies and concepts to improve, strengthen and grow our park system.

Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives were identified and are intended as a framework for parks and recreation decision-making:

- 1) ensure that parks are welcoming and accessible for people of all ages and that the diverse needs and interests of the community are met
- 2) preserve, improve, and expand existing parks and green spaces
- 3) create new parks
- 4) connect park and recreation areas
- 5) **acquire and dedicate new lands for additional parks and recreation**
- 6) **establish a Community Center for year-round indoor recreation and social interaction**
- 7) **enhance and expand the recreational opportunities available in Chelsea**

Under each broad goal, specific actions are recommended. Explanations of the objectives are described in each goal section. Additionally, action items are noted as short term (year 1-3) or long term (year 3-5) and are listed on page 35, in Table 1, 2021 – 2025 Parks Plan Capital Improvements Schedule

Welcoming and Accessible Parks

The vision for Chelsea's park system is to be welcoming and accessible for people of all ages and abilities and to support the diverse needs and interests of our community. To meet this goal, the committee outlined specific projects and actions. Action items include basic maintenance and upgrades to all existing parks by replacing or repairing old equipment and facilities that are in disrepair, outdated, or dangerous. It also includes improving the accessibility and usability of the city parks as well as enhancing their appearance through appropriate landscaping, facilities, and maintenance. All upgrades must meet safety and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility standards. The recommendations are based on the needs identified by visits and observations to the parks, input from the public, and discussion at park and recreation committee meetings.

Proposed actions include:

- Development of Community Center
- Acquire and dedicate additional land for parks and recreation

- Create new and enhance non – motorized connections (Letts Creek Linear Park)
- Create outdoor multi-purpose sport courts (pickleball, basketball, four-square, etc)
- Create additional multi-purpose fields for active recreation
- Remove/replace outdated play equipment
- Maintain safety surfaces under play structures to regulated depth and fall zone
- Refurbish athletic field surfaces as needed
- Devise strategy to develop Community Pool and/or Splash Pad
- Refurbish and/or improve parking areas, walkways and other paths as needed
- Replace and/or add park furnishings such as benches and shelters as needed
- Ensure that all parks have good signage including maps that show the City’s entire park system and non-motorized pathways
- Add bicycle racks at all of the parks
- Maintain buildings, structures, and picnic shelters in good condition with roof repair, exterior painting, and other;
- Manage existing plant materials with the removal of dead trees and replace with appropriate trees and/or shrub plantings
- Install trash and recycling receptacles that complement the parks
- Improve and/or add restroom facilities to existing parks
- Utilize building materials that reflect the character of the city, such as stone and brick, are long lasting, and are complimentary to a park setting
- Work with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Chelsea Garden Club, and other civic groups to continue to add attractive landscaping by park signs, park entries, and at other locations
- Establish community wide park clean up and improvement days
- Work with Chelsea Community Education and Recreation as well as other community groups to expand programming at the city’s parks; regularly review and monitor programming to keep abreast of current interests and to ensure appropriate enrollment

Preserve, Improve, and Expand Existing Parks and Green Spaces

The City has opportunities to improve and expand its current parks as well as to work with other private and municipal entities for increased use and accessibility to other green spaces within the city limits.

Existing City Parks

The existing City of Chelsea park system consists of three parks and is comprised of 35 acres. While the parks are primarily defined, there are some opportunities for expansion and improvements. The only potentially expandable park now designated as City parkland is Timbertown. There are two potential opportunities for expansion. The first is to expand the park south to include the old city well space that is located near the Department of Public Works. This space is ideal for an open green space and possible pavilion and is located near the planned non-motorized connector between the City of Chelsea and Westchester Farms in Sylvan Township. It is also located next to several employment centers would be to provide easy access for those wishing to walk or go outside during a lunch break or after work. Another potential opportunity is conversion of the open space that spans the connection between Vets/Weber and Timbertown parks. It is approximately ten (10) acres of open field and some brush/woodland area. Currently,

this woodland area provides a nice separation between the ball fields and Timbertown and is home to a variety of wildlife.

A goal of this plan is to improve the quality of our existing parks and to encourage the interaction and the pleasant experience of all park users. The City of Chelsea should seek to improve its park and recreation system in the following ways:

Pierce Park



Pierce park – east view

Short Term

- Continue to implement re-design: new play elements, benches, signage, bike racks
- Work with Community Education and Recreation and/or other community groups to develop appropriate programming such as tai chi and/or yoga

Long Term

- Install new play structures to ensure that children of all ages and abilities can play safely at the same time



East View of Play Scape and Path

Veterans Park/Weber Fields



Veteran's Monument

Short Term

- Add additional landscaping and screening along M-52 to reduce noise and other traffic impacts
- Add park signs and bike racks
- Foster quiet and reflective nature of the park
- Relocate or remove ship
- Remove fencing between parks to improve access and safety

- Relocate and upgrade trash and recycling receptacles and portable toilets



Possible Trail under M-52

Long Term:

- Improve concessions building
- Create an east-west pedestrian path under M-52 at Letts Creek, a key component to connecting parks and the two halves of the city
- New play elements closer to/at Weber Fields



Concessions Stand and Restroom

Timbertown



Timbertown Play Structure

Short Term

- Continue to prioritize preservation of field/green space
- Update and maintain current wood play scape, including sand for the sandboxes and maintenance of the water feature
- Establish limitations on vehicle traffic on open field to increase safety and to preserve the field
- Improve path to community garden to limit vehicle traffic and improve non-motorized accessibility for garden users
- Re-establish the trail connector to Veteran's Park, incorporating it into the linear park
- Annually re-establish sand volleyball courts



Sand Volleyball Courts

- Create an annual safety and maintenance checklist for play scape, to ensure optimal operation of its components

- Add new signage and bike racks
- Relocate and upgrade trash and recycling receptacles and portable toilets

Long Term

- Improve restroom facilities with screening or shelter
- Build additional picnic shelter/gazebo
- Work with community groups to restore or re-design the Pathway to Renewal reflection area

Chelsea Dog Park:

Short Term

- New Signage with consistent theme of the other parks.
- Additional waste bin by start of the pathway
- Dirt to fill in holes dug by the dogs
- Shade element
- Benches at the park and along the pathway

Long Term

- Add separate facility for smaller dogs at current or other location
- Improve access/lock system

Washtenaw County's Pierce Lake Golf Course and Park

While not City owned, Chelsea is fortunate to have Pierce Lake Golf Course and Park within the City's boundary as it provides diverse opportunities for recreation. This county park includes a popular 18-hole golf course and a nature area that is situated on the course's northern boundary. A boardwalk and paved trail wind along wetlands and scenic Pierce Lake. Sandhill cranes, swans, red foxes, painted turtles, and a variety of other birds have all been spotted at the park. Despite the unique features of this natural park, it is underutilized, most likely because the public walking paths are unmarked and incomplete. The current pathway, which includes boardwalk and paved trails, encircles $\frac{3}{4}$ of Pierce Lake. To increase the utility of this pathway and its attractiveness to park users, the City should work jointly with the County to complete this pathway around the southeast corner of Pierce Lake so that it connects with the Fairways neighborhood. It is noted that there are a significant number of residences near Pierce Lake and that completion of the pathway so that pedestrians can completely circumscribe the lake utilizing sidewalks and pathways would likely attract more users and qualitatively add to the park users' experience. It is noted that no other City park space exists in this section of the City. In addition to working jointly to complete the pathway, the City and County should work together to promote the existing park uses and to identify other potential uses. There is a unique opportunity to collaboratively work together to increase programming and winter activities at Pierce Lake Golf Course and Park. Cross-country skiing and winter festival activities were identified as potential options to increase usage of this park year round.



Pierce Lake Golf Course boardwalk

Existing Green Spaces

In addition to formal parks owned and operated by the City, there are a number of green spaces throughout the City that have been used as park spaces. The City should work continuously to achieve the goal of maintaining current parkland and green spaces throughout the City. The City owns an undeveloped, residential sized lot that is located in the DDA district on Park Street next to the Purple Rose Theatre. While this lot has not been designated as a park, it is currently used as a sledding hill and unofficial park. This parcel of land is unique as there is no other undeveloped land in the City of Chelsea that can be used for sledding. The sledding hill regularly attracts families and children of all ages in the wintertime and would likely be better utilized even more if it were identified as an official park. While this committee recommends that this parcel be formally identified as a City pocket park, any development plan will need to keep in mind any deed restrictions as well as the interests of residents and local businesses. As part of the evaluation process, it should be noted that there are limited City owned green spaces in the downtown district at this time, there are no parks located in this section of the City that serve the residents in the surrounding neighborhoods, and that this is one of the few attractions in the commercial district

that is geared towards children. The development of Palmer Commons has provided additional green space in the DDA district and is ideal for community events.

In addition to land owned by the City and County, there is potential for ongoing partnerships with both the Chelsea District Library and the owners of the McKinley property, which is located between Main Street/M-52 and McKinley Streets. On the northeast corner of Orchard Street and Main Street, adjacent to the historic McKune House, there is a residential sized lot, known as Katie's Korner, which is owned by the Chelsea District Library. There is a lawn, a shade tree, and some basic landscaping. While this area is visually attractive and utilized for library and other public events, the City should continue to work with the Library to identify ways to increase usage. Increased outdoor seating and additional landscaping that reduces the impact of traffic are two considerations. The McKinley property, which is a redeveloped commercial property, includes a pavilion, a water fountain and attractive landscaping. The owners of the property have allowed public events to take place in this outdoor space. The outdoor space also is used occasionally by businesses located at the property. This space, which is some of the nicest outdoor space in the downtown district and is probably the quietest place to eat outdoors, is underutilized. The City should continue to work with the owners of the McKinley property to encourage public use and access.

CREATE NEW PARKS

A traditional measure of adequate parkland is 10 acres per 1000 people.⁷ The City of Chelsea's population, in 2020, was 5,467 people with a projected population of 6,277 in 2040.⁸ Chelsea's current park system is comprised of 35 acres, with the last addition to the system occurring in the 1990's. Using the traditional parkland standards, the City should strive to increase its parkland to accommodate growth and the different needs and interests of its growing population. While Chelsea is approaching "build-out," there are a few parcels of undeveloped land within or next to our boundaries and the City should take advantage of opportunities to provide additional parks while it is still possible. Although many of the remaining parcels are clustered in commercial and industrial districts, which may make them impractical for development as parks, there are a few undeveloped residential, municipal and school parcels that could be acquired and/or developed and designated as parks.

Create New Park Spaces: Existing City Land

Traditional Parks

The City owns a total of 31.3 acres of land at the Water Purification Plant located on McKinley Street. The City uses only a portion of this land.⁹ To maximize the use of the land, the northern portion of the property (10+acres) that currently is maintained as a lawn area could be converted

⁸ SEMCOG. Population and Household Estimates, Dec. 2014.

⁹ It is anticipated that there will be minimal growth of the Water Purification Treatment Plant and that much of the remaining acreage will not be needed for water treatment purposes.

to a neighborhood park. Similarly, the front lawn space (5.3 acres) that is currently maintained but underutilized could be re-designed as a park with both open space and play structures as well as benches. An existing trail that connects these two spaces could be improved by landscaping and seating. A small parking lot could act as trail head for a linear park and could provide overflow parking for North Creek Elementary events. It is noted that this northeastern quadrant of the City is the densest in terms of population and that no City park currently serves this area. The majority of residential lots in this portion of the City are smaller and residential developments in this area of the City have not included designated park space for active recreation.

Create New Parks/Community Center at the Corner of Freer and Trinkle Roads

Based on the recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Committee, the City of Chelsea acquired approximately 7.7 acres at the corner of Freer Road and Trinkle Road. This property would be ideal for community center, fields and other park and recreational facilities such as a splash pad and/or outdoor sports courts and should be formally designated as park land.

Short Term

- Dedicate the 7.7 acres as park land

Long Term

- Develop and design new indoor and/or outdoor facilities

Create New Parks and Recreational Opportunities at the Water Purification Plant and by the Department of Public Works/Old Well Field

There is an opportunity to continue to convert underutilized municipal land to green space and parkland.

Short Term

- Establish additional north and west trail connections
- Dedicate Dog Park as an official City park



- Beautify trail along Letts Creek and connect to linear park
- Dedicate the green space/old well field south of Timbertown as park land.

Long Term

- Identify space for play structure or similar active recreation area on five-acre lawn at McKinley
- Establish an additional active or passive park/recreation area north of dog park
- Park land dedication of green spaces at McKinley and water purification plant.



5 acres green space, east view.

In addition to conversion of the underutilized land at the Water Purification Plant, the City could review the new water treatment facility on Werkner Road north of downtown, which is another municipally owned space (24.25 acres)), for public recreation. Because it is not now readily accessible by pedestrians, it could be a destination park. That is, a park that is not immediately accessible by pedestrians. While there may be some restrictions on use owing to the provision of municipal services at the site, parts of the parcel may be suitable for large sports fields like those for football and soccer. The City should assess the viability of the site for recreation and continue to pursue opportunities with local sports clubs and Chelsea Community Education and Recreation to assess the need for such a use. Any such assessment also should consider other City needs that may work well at this site such as a solar farm.

EXTEND LINEAR PARK AT LETTS CREEK

The areas adjacent to Letts Creek, which contain large sections of undeveloped land and which are owned in part by the City and by the School District, should be incorporated into a linear park system. The presence of the creek provides a unique opportunity to create a continuous non-motorized pathway along the waterway that could connect new parks at the Water Purification Plant with existing City parks including Vet's Park, Weber Fields, and Timbertown. Additionally landscaping and screening of plant operations could transform this area, which currently is used by many, including school-aged children, as an informal pathway, into a very pleasant pathway. Ideally, this linear park would connect with trails beyond the City limits. Should any new development occur along sections of Letts Creek not owned by the City, it must be sensitive to this linear park concept and make accommodation for this eventuality. The City may need to ensure the granting of easements and access through any developed sites.

Letts Creek Linear Park

- Complete the linear park to connect with regional Border to Border trail connections
- Add Connector to Westchester Farms
- Add Connector to downtown via Timbertown area to North Street.



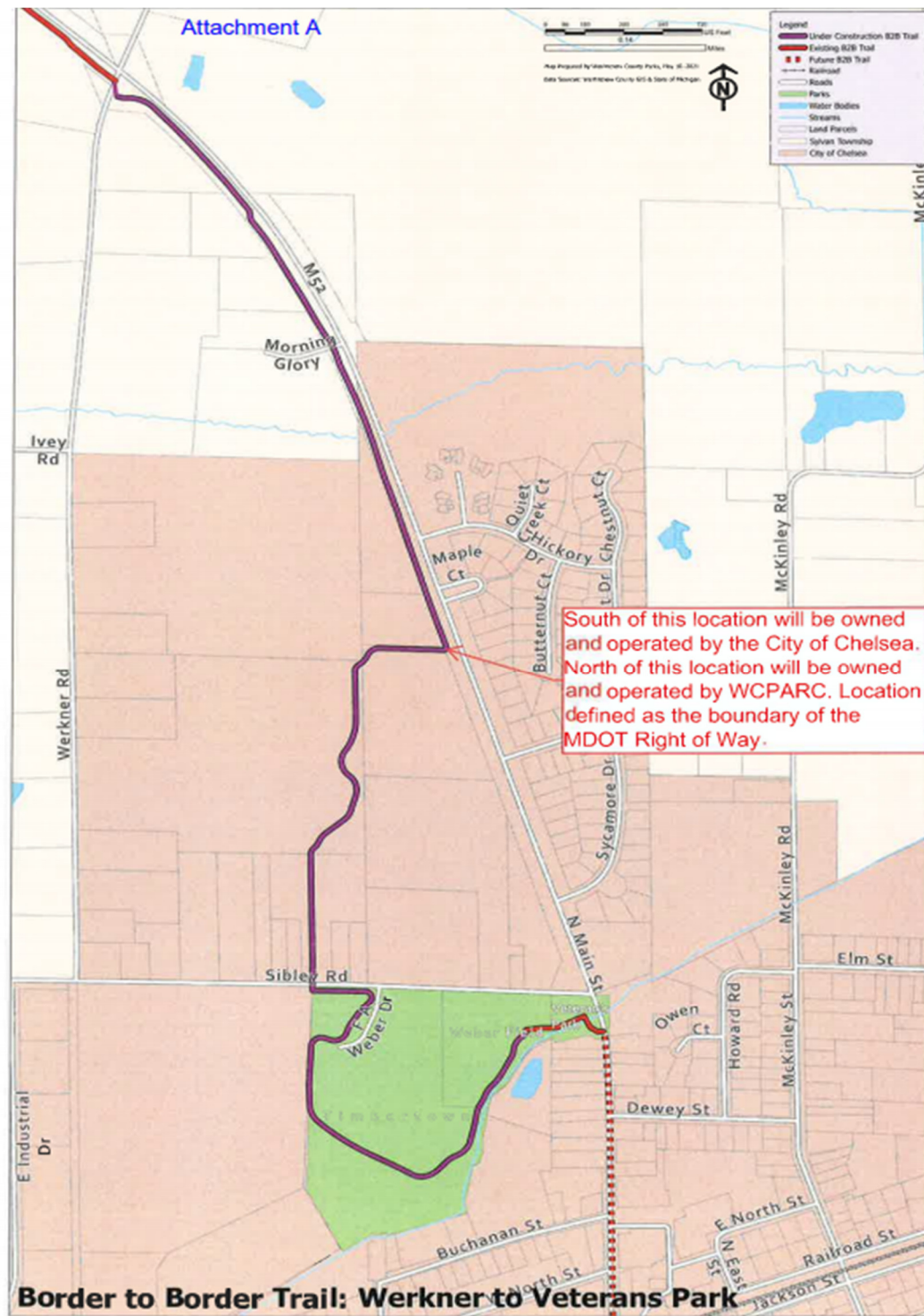
Looking west along Letts Creek



Looking Northeast along Letts Creek, toward Water Purification Plant

2021 Letts Creek Connector to Border to Border Regional Trail

This segment will be under construction in summer/fall 2021 and completed by October 2021.





Looking East, Letts Creek – Under M-52



Conceptual Path Route

Create Pocket Parks and Parklets

Pocket parks are defined as “urban open spaces on a small-scale [that] provide a safe and inviting environment for surrounding community members. They also meet a variety of needs and functions, including: small event space, play areas for children, spaces for relaxing or meeting friends, taking lunch breaks, etc. .”¹⁰ Incorporation of gathering spaces throughout the City, especially in the downtown district, would enhance the sense of community and would complement the use of the district as an event space. Similarly, incorporation of additional green spaces would increase the charm and aesthetics of the downtown area. While much of the downtown has long been established, there continue to be opportunities for incorporation of permanent green spaces. The conversion of the sledding hill to an official pocket park has been identified as one example. Others potential locations include the side yard by the police station, the corner of South and Main Streets, downtown alleyways and any new development projects. On Park Street, there is the opportunity for a pocket park/sled hill adjacent the Purple Rose Theatre.

As another alternative to traditional green spaces, parklets, which are the conversion of parking spaces into mini urban parks, are a way to incorporate meeting and gathering spaces. Parklets are often created by building a platform that extends the sidewalk into the parking space. Benches, tables, chairs and planters are then added to transform the space. They are designed to enhance the streetscape, and can be seasonal or permanent.¹¹

Establish Pocket Parks and Parklets

Short Term

- Formally designate sledding hill, located on Park Street, as a pocket park
- Identify other potential locations
- Create parklet program that outlines procedures and guidelines



Parklet example

¹⁰ National Parks and Recreation Association

¹¹ Grand Rapids, Michigan has established a parklets manual.

Potential Locations:

- 1) Police Station “side yard”
- 2) Downtown Alleys
- 3) Park and Middle Street parking spaces

Pocket Park Example 1



Pocket Park Example 2



Pocket Park Example 3



New Park Space Opportunities: Acquisitions and/or Partnerships

The Chelsea School District owns a natural area that is located across from Beach Middle School. The City should pursue a cooperative agreement with the school district to formally establish this natural area as a park. There are no current City parks that feature a natural area and this addition would greatly add to the diversity of the City's park system while maintaining the school's immediate access to a nature area. Should this parcel be added to the City's park system, the City should consider adding a small gravel parking lot for park users and for overflow school event parking.

Other potential private acquisition sites include the undeveloped green space east of the Chelsea Ridge/Belsar Estates neighborhood and current green space in the Chelsea Fairways subdivision. Additionally, there also is undeveloped land on Dexter-Chelsea Road that is close by the Heritage Pointe/Heritage Farms neighborhood that is currently undergoing significant expansion. All Neighborhood parks in each of these areas would enhance our park system and greatly benefit the surrounding neighborhoods, which currently do not have any City parks nearby.

These include:

- Natural area near Beach Middle School
- Vacant Land – corner of Werkner and Sibley Road (s)
- Undeveloped land on Dexter-Chelsea Road (ideal for sports fields and sport courts)
- Green space in Chelsea Fairways Subdivision
- Property east of Chelsea Ridge/Belser Estates

Community Center

In addition to traditional outdoor parks, the City should seek to add a community center to its Parks and Recreation plan. A community center has long been a requested facility.

The new property at Freer and Trinkle would be a great location for the Community Center. It is centrally located to the schools and the Chelsea Senior Center and is close to two major neighborhoods—Chelsea Ridge/Belser Estates and Chelsea Fairways. The City currently does not own any indoor facilities and Community Education and Recreation, which provides much of the community programming, has relied on the use of school facilities. However, use of school facilities is in high demand by school and other community groups. To ensure that community recreation and programming for residents is available during appropriate times, the City should pursue development of a community center that can offer an array of cultural, educational, and recreational activities for people of all ages and abilities. The Community Center would provide year-round recreation and socialization opportunities. Such a facility would add to and re-enforce the sense of community that makes Chelsea so attractive. The facility could provide a community gymnasium as well as a community pool and/or splash pad as well as other facilities that City does not currently have such as outdoor courts for pickleball and basketball, and skate amenities.

Growth and New Park Spaces:

As the City anticipates growth, it needs to plan for additional park spaces. New residential developments pose a great challenge to the parks and recreation environment in a small city like Chelsea. New developments are built on the borders of the City and are farther from the already established parks. Historically, usable park spaces have not been designed as part of new residential developments. Consequently, the growth of the park system has not kept pace with the number of new residences. This effectively diminishes park space accessibility to all of Chelsea's residents. New residential development must include park and recreation opportunities as integral elements. Just as streets, utilities and storm water management are required elements of developments, parks and open space also should be required.

Park space is an important aspect of the quality of life in Chelsea and should be required in all future planning activities. All park and green spaces should be usable park space and accessible to all Chelsea residents. Similarly, all new developments should include a plan to connect to existing or planned pedestrian/bicycle paths. The City of Chelsea should carefully review new developments to ensure that parks and green space as well as non-motorized connections are incorporated into new site plans.

Connect Parks and Recreation Areas

Perhaps the most neglected element of our parks and recreation "system" is the interconnection of the parks, green spaces, and recreational spaces that exist both in and outside of the City. Whether the parcels are government owned, school owned, or privately held, they are not connected nor are they easily and readily accessible by pedestrians or bicyclists. Implementation of a non-motorized path and trail system that connects parks and recreation areas as well as completion of sidewalk connections throughout the City of Chelsea would greatly improve access to the parks and recreation "system" while simultaneously dramatically increasing the opportunities for recreational biking, walking, and running.

Within the City, a non-motorized pathway and trail system that connects the western and eastern sections of the City with a pedestrian crossing, preferably under M-52, and along the proposed linear park along Letts Creek should be a primary development goal. This pathway would not only connect the highest concentration of the City's residents but would also act as the connecting link to a more regional effort to connect, by non-motorized pathways, to the Waterloo Recreation area and beyond to the much-lauded Lakeland trail north of the City and to the very popular Border-to-Border trail east of the City in Dexter. This regional connection would vastly increase the recreational opportunities of Chelsea area residents and also likely would have a positive economic benefit for both the businesses and residents of Chelsea.

Using the Letts Creek linear park as the focal point of the pathway, Chelsea should seek to create linkages to other recreation areas from the parks and North Creek Elementary School that are connected by this pathway. Specifically, Chelsea should pursue non-motorized access points through the municipal lots on North Street. The pathway could link the City streets to Timbertown through this municipal lot; a bridge at this location could create a western crossing for Letts Creek. This linkage could make a loop that further connects to South Meadows and then on to the large school district property that includes the Washington Street Education Center, Pierce Lake School and Chelsea High School and then on to Beach Middle School before circling back to North Creek Elementary and the adjacent Letts Creek linear park and pathway. While the City did add bike

lanes on Freer Road as part of its Chelsea POP Tactical Urbanism project in 2020, there is a need for a non-motorized and pedestrian crossing across the railroad tracks and Dexter-Chelsea Road that would allow for greater connectivity between neighborhoods and core services and schools. Because the majority of recreational and community programs operated through the Chelsea Community Education as well as school athletic programming, occurs at schools, it is paramount that good non-motorized connections exist so that people of all ages can access these sites without the need of vehicular transportation.

The City also should pursue connections to and through other privately held lands such as the grounds of Chelsea Hospital and Silver Maples Retirement Community (adjacent to the hospital grounds and already connected to the hospital by pedestrian pathway to each other and to the Washington Street Education Center). Additionally, as expressed earlier, the City, in cooperation with the Washtenaw County Parks Department, should expand the pedestrian opportunities through Pierce Lake Golf Course.

Appendix E includes a proposed regional trail initiative, The Washtenaw County Border to Border Trail". The maps in the appendix show the relationship of the regional trail and the proposed connections to the City of Chelsea, specifically the proposed Letts Creek Linear Trail Connector.

The City of Chelsea should continue to work on completing the sidewalk system throughout the City, in both residential and commercial districts. The lack of connectivity discourages walking and biking. While incomplete sidewalks occur in many residential areas in town, some notable absent connections near park and recreation areas include:

- the north end of Main St. at Sibley Road where the sidewalk ends south of Letts Creek
- the lack of a non-motorized pathway north of the Border-to-Border trail on Freer Road to Dexter-Chelsea Road and the neighborhoods north of the railroad
- the discontinuous pathways and sidewalks around Pierce Lake and sidewalks to Pierce Lake Golf Course
- the lack of a sidewalk connecting Chelsea Ridge/Belser Estates with the Chelsea High School.

Going forward, all site plans reviewed by the City of Chelsea Planning Commission must include the installation of elements that accommodate pedestrian traffic and sidewalks before the granting of a certificate of occupancy. The City should pursue linking improvements to streets to improvements in pedestrian pathways.

To further assist connections and linkages, improved and additional signage that identifies and direct pedestrians or vehicles to the various park and recreation facilities should be installed. Similarly, at each park, installation of a map of the parks and recreation system, including the non-motorized pathway, would help familiarize park users with the recreational opportunities available to them.

Long Term Planning Recommendations and Strategies

This plan identifies the building blocks in order to create recreational amenities that will enhance the lives of its residents and attracts visitors from its immediate region and beyond. The City established a Parks and Recreation Committee that will annually review the plan, assess park inventory and programming needs, and incorporate elements of the plan into a recommendation to the City. The City reviews the recommendations each year during its visioning and budgeting processes. To maintain grant eligibility, the City should formally update its Parks and Recreation Master Plan every five years.

In the short and long term, the financial burden associated with parks and recreation is significant. The City of Chelsea should enlist all of its resources including this document and Chelsea's Comprehensive Master Plan, the Chelsea School District, private sources, Washtenaw County, and the State of Michigan to aid in the support of parks and recreation in our community. Ultimately, we, the citizens of Chelsea, will need to invest in this endeavor to the extent possible. We recognize the limitations of a small community and believe we should actively seek additional outside funding sources to support Chelsea's parks.

TABLE 1

2021 – 2025 Capital Improvements Schedule¹³

Dog Park	Proposed Improvement	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Year
	Signage	\$1,000	General Fund	2021
	Shade Element	\$5,000	General Fund	2022
	Benches in the park and along pathway	\$5,000	General Fund/ bench donation program	2021
	Dirt/Turf Repair	\$1,000	General Fund	2021
Pierce Park	Proposed Improvement	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Year
	Seating	\$5,000	General Fund/ bench donation program	2022
	Play Structure	\$150,000	Grants	2023
Weber Fields	Proposed Improvement	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Year
	Play Structure/Element	\$25,000	General Fund	2022
Veterans Park	Proposed Improvement	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Year
	Additional Landscaping/screening	\$10,000	General Fund	2023
	East –West Pedestrian “under pass” under the M-52	\$750,000	Grants or TAP Funds	2023

¹³ The Capital Improvement Schedule(CIP) is based on a calendar year.

Timber Town	Proposed Improvement	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Year
	Maintenance on existing play structure	\$5000	Friends of Timber Town	2022
	Additional Small Shelter	\$15,000	General Fund	2023
	Improved Rest-room Facilities	TBD	Grants	2024
Non-motorized Path/Trail	Proposed Improvement	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Year
	Extend Linear Trail – East/West Connector from along Letts Creek	\$300,000 (City will need \$100,000 Matching funds)	Connecting Communities Grant Funds	2022
*New Park north of Water Purification	Proposed Improvement	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Year
	Beautification of Trail along Letts Creek	\$5,000	Grants/Donations	2024
	Park design/ Play Elements	\$150,000	Grants	2025
*New Park at McKinley	Proposed Improvement	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Year
	Play Structure Recreation Elements	\$150,000	Grants/Donations	2025
	Landscaping	\$20,000	Grants	2025

	Proposed Improve ment	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Year
Community Center	Community Center to include gymnasium, indoor pool and outdoor splash pad	\$8,000,000 – \$12,000,000	General Fund/Grants/Donations	2023
Pierce Lake Golf Course	Proposed Improve ment	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Year
	Program Winter Activities in partnership with Washtenaw County	TBD	Grants/Donations/In-kind Services	2023
	Complete Trail Loop around Pierce Lake	\$100,000	Grants	2025
New Park Land	Purchase additional land to develop desired community facilities including	\$250,000 - \$1,000,000	General Fund/Grants/Donations	2021-20255 (ongoing)

	additional sports fields, natural areas, outdoor sports courts			
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In order to accomplish the recommended actions during the next five years, it will be necessary to secure adequate funding. The current budget provides a limited amount of money for parks and recreation facilities. Therefore, the following strategies are recommended to proceed as planned.

Apply for Federal Funding

At the federal level, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) funds Transportation Enhancement (TE) activities. To be eligible, a project must fall into one of the 12 TE activities and relate to surface transportation. A minimum 20 percent local match is required for proposed projects and applications are accepted online on an on-going basis. Activities which might apply to the City of Chelsea include:

- Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles including new or reconstructed sidewalks, walkways, curb ramps, bike lane striping, wide paved shoulders, bike parking, off-road trails, bike and pedestrian bridges, and underpasses
- Provision of safety and educational programs for pedestrians and bicyclists designed to encourage walking and bicycling

Apply for State Funding

At the state level, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) continue to be the primary funding sources for parkland acquisition and development. The new Recreation Passport grant also offers some state funding to local units of government. The MNRTF provides funding for the purchase and development of parkland for natural resource-based preservation and recreation.

Grant proposals must include a local match of at least 25 percent of the total project cost. There is no minimum or maximum for acquisition projects. For development projects, the minimum funding request is \$15,000 and the maximum is \$500,000. Applications are typically due April 1st.

The LWCF is a federal appropriation to the National Park Service, which distributes funds to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment for development of outdoor recreation facilities. The focus of the program has recently been on trail way systems and other community recreation needs such as playgrounds, picnic areas, skate parks, ball fields, soccer fields, and walking paths. Minimum grant requests are \$30,000 and maximum grant requests are \$75,000. The match percentage is 50 percent of the total project cost. Applications are typically due on April 1st.

The new Recreation Passport grant program offers funding for the development of public recreation facilities for local units of government. Minimum grant requests are \$10,000 and maximum requests are \$40,000. The local match obligation is 25 percent of the total project cost.

Other funding conducted in partnership with the MDNRE is available through other state government divisions, such as the Fisheries Division (Inland Fisheries Grant) and the Forest, Mineral, and Fire Management Division (DTE Energy Foundation Tree Planting Grant and Forest Stewardship – Outreach and Education Grant).

Apply for Other Grant Funding

There are also a variety of other grant programs available for the establishment of greenways/pathways or greenway-related facilities and parks and recreation such as the Chelsea Wellness Foundation, Chelsea Community Foundation, Ralph C Wilson, Jr. Foundation, etc.

Seek Other Sources of Funding

In addition to Federal, State and foundation grants, the City should set and charge rental fees for groups wanting to reserve City and park facilities, including but not limited to ball fields, volleyball courts, and pavilions, to help defray the costs of maintaining the parks. Such fees are a common and necessary component of many park and recreation departments. The City of Chelsea also should seek to work with park and recreation advocates and other interested community groups such as Rotaty, Kiwanis, Chelsea Area Friends of Recreation, to help support, improve and maintain the City of Chelsea's parks, facilities and pathways. Finally, the City of Chelsea should investigate additional creative sources of funding such as donations, attracting sponsors, holding fund-raising events, to secure funding for park acquisition and development.

Table 2: Action Items¹⁴

1. Dedicate identified city land as park land
2. Expansion of Recreation
3. Work with community groups, including Community Education and Recreation and Washtenaw County Parks, to increase programming at the parks

¹⁴ Action items are recommendations that can be completed utilizing a minimal amount of city resources.

APPENDIX B – FACILITY INVENTORY

APPENDIX B"

Parks and Recreation Facility

The City of Chelsea has approximately 32 acres of City dedicated and developed parkland. School facilities, a large Washtenaw County golf course, the Chelsea Fairgrounds, private facilities and the surrounding townships also provide sources of recreation for City residents. Recreation facilities are spread throughout the City with the highest concentration of City parks located in the northwest quadrant of the community. In addition to the facilities provided by the City, the school district also offers an abundance of facilities, programs, classes and activities that serve a variety of interests. All of these elements contribute to a healthy quality of life and are important as the community grows and changes. This chapter provides a detailed inventory of all these facilities in order to have a solid understanding of current conditions.

Chelsea Parks and Recreation Areas

The following is a compilation of the existing recreation facilities that are available to the citizens of the Chelsea City Area. These facilities are a combination of those owned by the school district, those owned by the City and those donated for recreation used by organizations in the Chelsea Area. Table 1 on the following page enumerates the park size and type of activities found in each of the recreation areas. The location of the existing parks and recreation areas are depicted on the attached Map titled "Existing Public and Private Recreation Facilities

TABLE 1**Existing Parks and Recreation Inventory, Chelsea City Area**

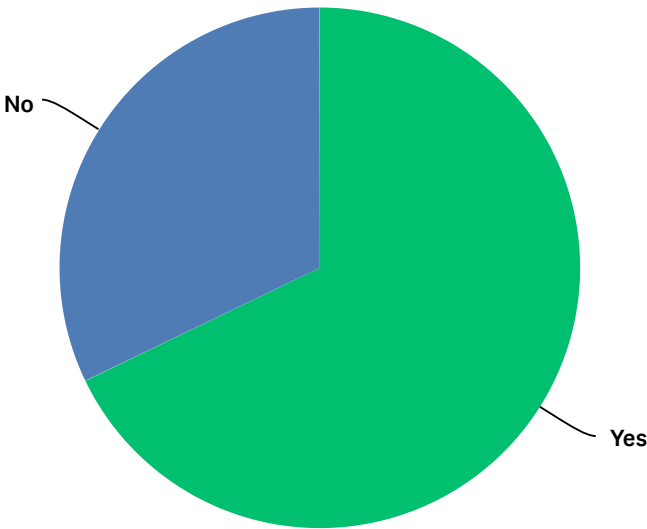
Park Name	Acres	Developed	Golf course	Playground Equipment	Ballfields	Soccer	Basketball	Tennis	Volleyball	Football	Horseshoes	Track & Fitness	Bleachers	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Area	Parking	Paths & Trails	Bridges	Restrooms
Beach Middle School	51	Y	-	-	3	1	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	-	-
Chelsea High School		Y	-	-	2	3	-	10	-	1	-	-	Y	-	-	Y	-	-	-
Weber Fields	5.5	N	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	Y	-	-	T
Fairgrounds	28.8	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	Y	-	-	Y
North Street Wellfield	~15	N																	
North Creek Elementary School		Y	-	Y	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-
Pierce Lake Elementary School		Y	-	Y	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-
Pierce Lake Golf Course	238	Y	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y	Y
Pierce Park	5.1	Y	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y	-	-	T
South Elementary School		Y	-	Y	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	Y	-	-	-
St. Mary's Catholic Church Fields	~ 12	N	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-
Timbertown	20	Y	-	Y	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	T
Vacant Tot-Lot adjacent to Purple Rose	~1	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-
Veteran's Park	1.4	Y	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	-	Y	T
Vogel Fields (aka Werkner Road Wellfield)	~19.5	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Washington Street Education Center	30	Y	-	-	4	-	2	4	-	2	-	1	Y	-	-	Y	Y	-	Y

*Parks in the blue rows are City of Chelsea Community Parks

*Restrooms denoted with "T" have seasonal availability.

Q1 Are you a City of Chelsea Resident

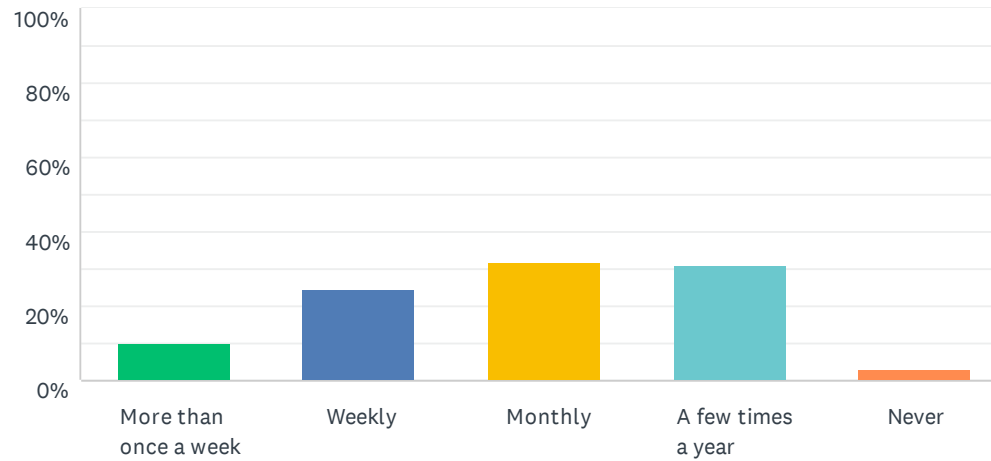
Answered: 417 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		67.87%	283
No		32.13%	134
TOTAL			417

Q2 On average, how often do you visit public parks in the City of Chelsea?

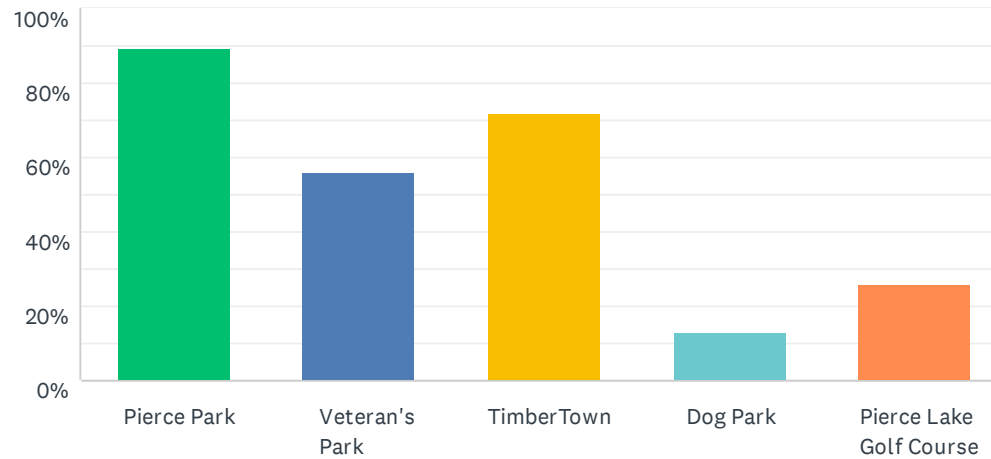
Answered: 418 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More than once a week	10.05%	42
Weekly	24.40%	102
Monthly	31.82%	133
A few times a year	30.86%	129
Never	2.87%	12
TOTAL		418

Q3 Which Public Parks have you visited in the past year?

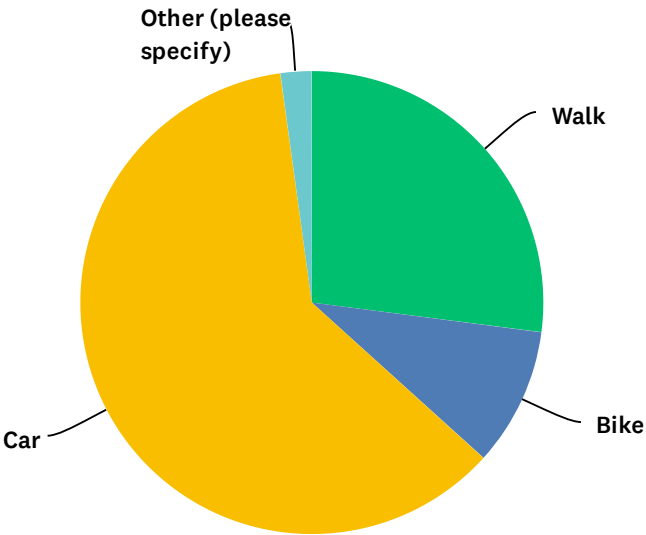
Answered: 413 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Pierce Park	89.59%	370
Veteran's Park	56.17%	232
TimberTown	71.91%	297
Dog Park	12.83%	53
Pierce Lake Golf Course	26.15%	108
Total Respondents: 413		

Q4 How do you typically get to Public Parks in Chelsea?

Answered: 414 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Walk		27.05%	112
Bike		9.66%	40
Car		61.11%	253
Other (please specify)		2.17%	9
TOTAL			414

Q5 What changes, programs or facilities would you like to see at Veteran's Park in the next 5 years?

Answered: 286 Skipped: 132

Q6 What changes, programs or facilities would you like to see at Timbertown in the next 5 years?

Answered: 305 Skipped: 113

Q7 What changes, programs or facilities would you like to see at the Dog Park in the next 5 years?

Answered: 261 Skipped: 157

Q8 What changes, programs or facilities would you like to see at Pierce Park in the next 5 years?

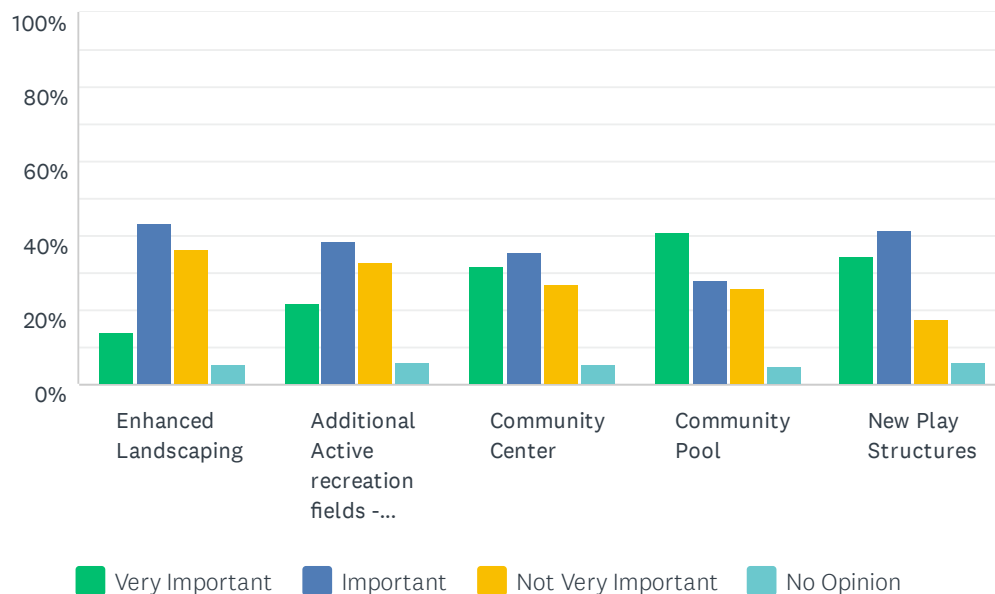
Answered: 298 Skipped: 120

Q9 In your opinion, what can Chelsea add to improve Parks and Recreation over the next 5 years?

Answered: 308 Skipped: 110

Q10 Please rank the following improvements to Chelsea Parks

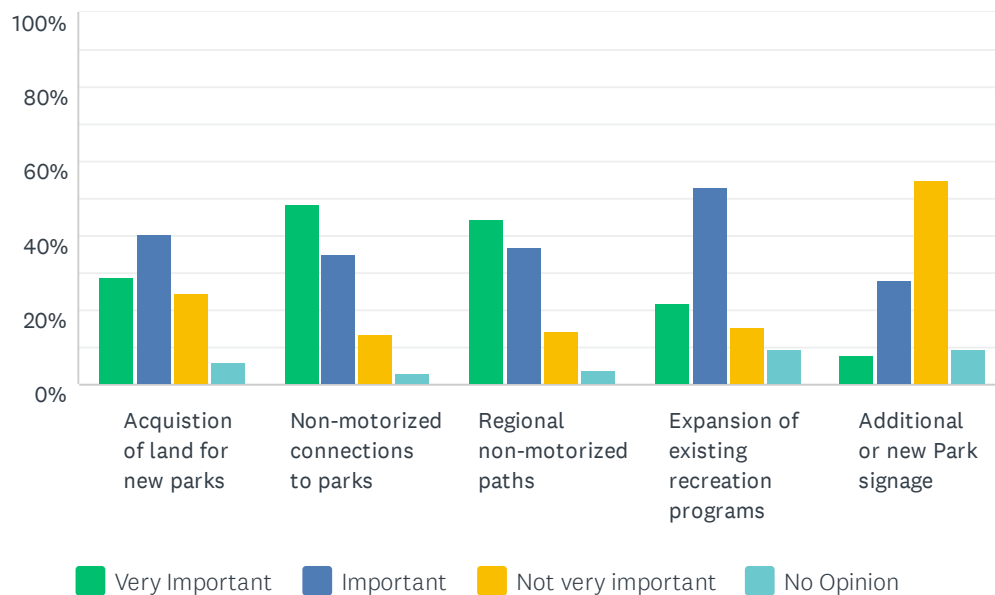
Answered: 411 Skipped: 7



	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NO OPINION	TOTAL
Enhanced Landscaping	14.07% 56	43.72% 174	36.68% 146	5.53% 22	398
Additional Active recreation fields - Soccer fields, Baseball diamonds, etc	22.00% 88	38.75% 155	33.00% 132	6.25% 25	400
Community Center	32.24% 128	35.26% 140	26.95% 107	5.54% 22	397
Community Pool	41.04% 165	28.11% 113	25.87% 104	4.98% 20	402
New Play Structures	34.73% 141	41.63% 169	17.73% 72	5.91% 24	406

Q11 Parks Planning - How important are the following to you?

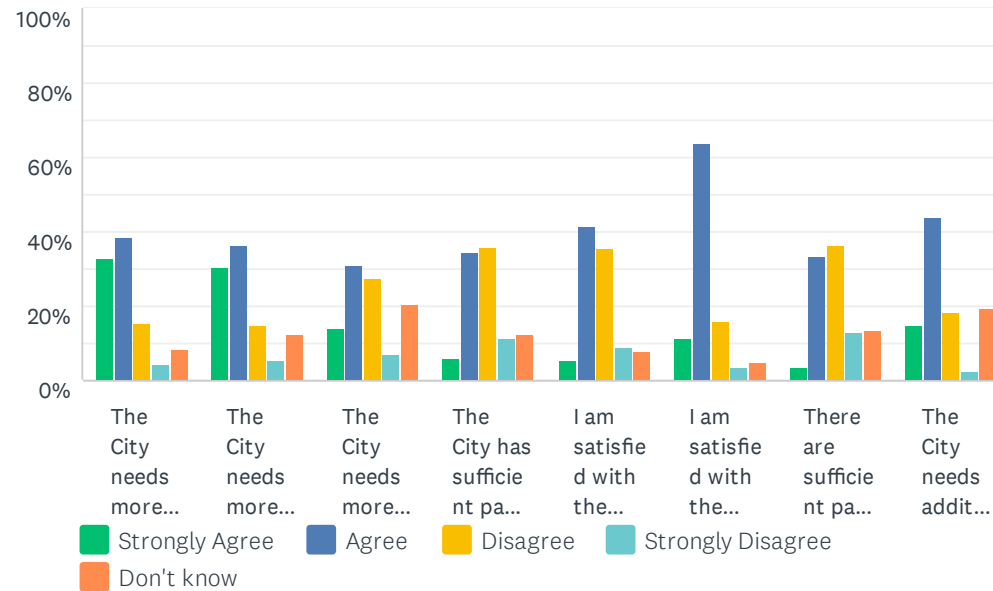
Answered: 412 Skipped: 6



	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Acquisition of land for new parks	29.02% 119	40.49% 166	24.63% 101	5.85% 24	410	1.77
Non-motorized connections to parks	48.41% 198	35.21% 144	13.45% 55	2.93% 12	409	1.55
Regional non-motorized paths	44.47% 181	36.86% 150	14.50% 59	4.18% 17	407	1.60
Expansion of existing recreation programs	22.11% 90	52.83% 215	15.48% 63	9.58% 39	407	1.87
Additional or new Park signage	7.88% 32	27.83% 113	54.93% 223	9.36% 38	406	2.01

Q12 Level of Satisfaction - These questions pertain only to City of Chelsea parks and facilities.

Answered: 409 Skipped: 9

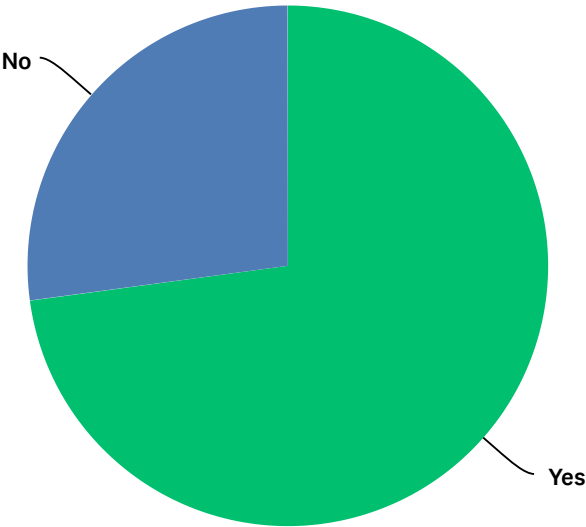


City of Chelsea 2020 - 2024 Parks and Recreation Master Plan

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
The City needs more publicly owned undeveloped open space - preserves, trails, etc	32.92% 134	38.33% 156	15.48% 63	4.67% 19	8.60% 35	407
The City needs more indoor recreation space i.e. a Community Center	30.71% 125	36.36% 148	14.99% 61	5.65% 23	12.29% 50	407
The City needs more publicly owned sports fields	14.14% 57	31.02% 125	27.54% 111	6.95% 28	20.35% 82	403
The City has sufficient parks and recreation opportunities for children	5.88% 24	34.31% 140	35.78% 146	11.52% 47	12.50% 51	408
I am satisfied with the amount and availability of park land in Chelsea	5.68% 23	41.48% 168	35.56% 144	9.14% 37	8.15% 33	405
I am satisfied with the maintenance and up-keep of parks in Chelsea	11.30% 46	64.13% 261	15.97% 65	3.44% 14	5.16% 21	407
There are sufficient parks and recreation opportunities for Adults in Chelsea	3.70% 15	33.58% 136	36.54% 148	12.84% 52	13.33% 54	405
The City needs additional recreation programming	15.02% 61	44.09% 179	18.72% 76	2.46% 10	19.70% 80	406

Q13 Are you aware that you can reserve pavilions at Pierce Park and TimberTown?

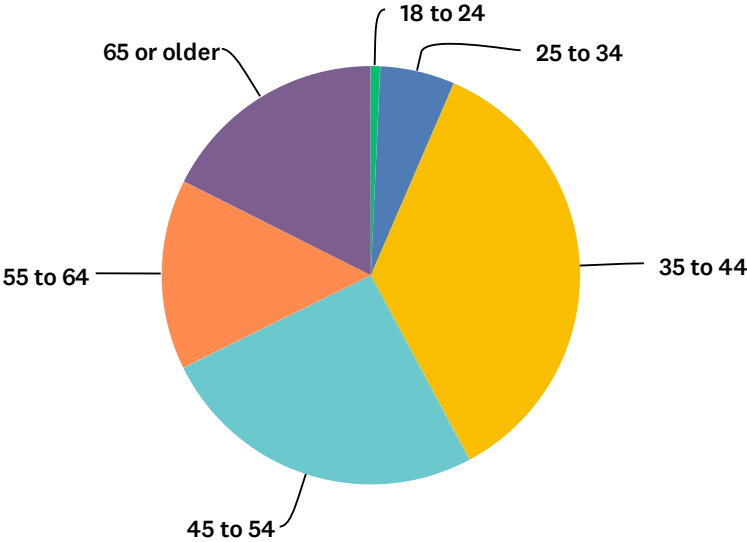
Answered: 413 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		72.88%	301
No		27.12%	112
TOTAL			413

Q14 What is your age?

Answered: 415 Skipped: 3

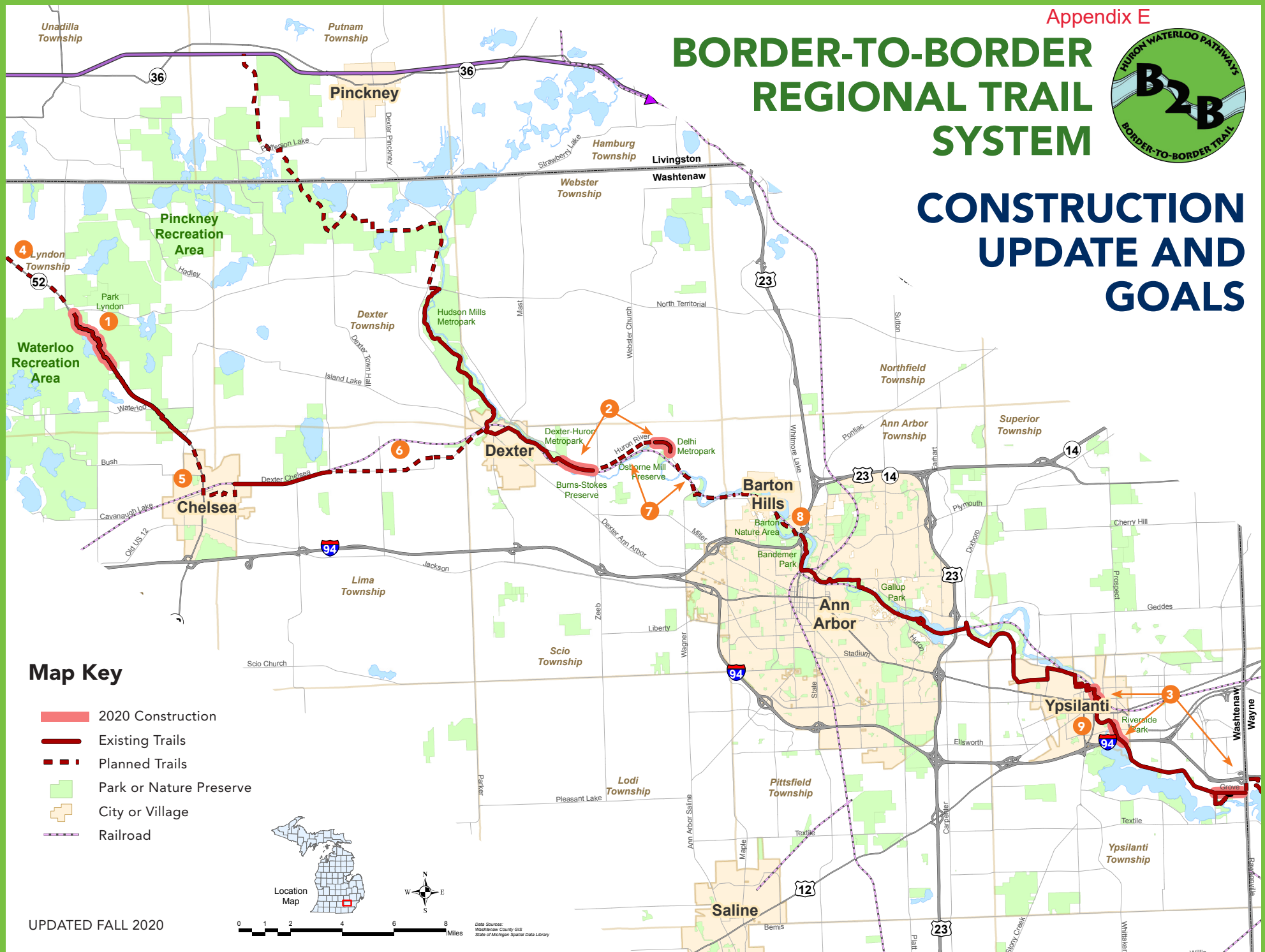


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
18 to 24	0.72%	3
25 to 34	5.78%	24
35 to 44	35.66%	148
45 to 54	25.54%	106
55 to 64	14.70%	61
65 or older	17.59%	73
TOTAL		415

BORDER-TO-BORDER REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM



CONSTRUCTION UPDATE AND GOALS



UPDATED FALL 2020

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

2020 COMPLETED CONSTRUCTION

Chelsea-Stockbridge Connection ①

2.1 mile trail segment beginning at the Green Lake Campground, extending to North Territorial Road.

Dedicated **B2B Trailhead** near the intersection of North Territorial Road and M-52, adjacent to the Lyndon Township Hall. Includes 50 parking spaces, bathrooms, picnic tables and other amenities.

M-52 Tunnel located adjacent to Green Lake connecting the Waterloo and Pinckney Recreation Areas.

Dexter-Ann Arbor Connection ②

Dexter-Huron Metropark to Zeeb Road, **1.1 mile** segment which includes two new bridges over the Huron River.

0.8 mile segment traversing the Delhi Metropark along the Huron River.

Ypsilanti ③

Frog Island Park, Forest Avenue to Cross Street, reconstruction of a **0.25 mile** segment of the 30+ year-old trail along the Huron River.

Grove Road, Water Street trail to I-94, replacement of **0.45 miles** of an old narrow sidewalk with a 8-10' wide concrete pathway.

Grove Road, North Hydro Park to Wayne County Border, includes two construction segments in the same area totaling **0.36 miles**, connecting North Hydro Park to neighborhoods, Grove Road, and Rawsonville Elementary School.

2020 RECAP 8 PROJECTS / 5.06 MILES / A TUNNEL / NEW TRAILHEAD

2021/2022 TRAIL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Chelsea-Stockbridge Connection ④

3.0 mile segment from North Territorial to the Jackson County border.

Chelsea Connection ⑤

1.1 mile segment from Werkner Road to Timbertown and Veteran's Park, completing the connection into Chelsea.

Dexter-Chelsea ⑥

Extension of the current trail along Dexter-Chelsea Road.

Dexter-Ann Arbor Connection ⑦

1 mile segment from Zeeb Road to Delhi Metropark, including the fourth new bridge over the Huron River.

1.1 mile segment connecting Delhi Metropark to Wagner Road including the fifth new bridge. Final design, permitting and funding activities.

Ann Arbor ⑧

0.6 mile segment traversing the Barton Nature Area in Ann Arbor which will connect to the future Bandemer Park Tunnel, linking to the Barton Nature Area.

Bandemer Park Tunnel, continued construction engineering, permitting and fundraising for this effort.

Ypsilanti ⑨

Riverside Park, 0.5 mile segment reconstruction of this 30+ year-old trail with an 8-10' wide trail.

Grove Road, I-94 overpass improvements. Final design and permitting.

Wayfinding

Installation will begin on a county-wide system of wayfinding kiosks, signs, maps and trail information across the B2B trail system.