



CITY OF NILES, MICHIGAN

COMMUNITY RECREATION PLAN

2021-2026

Our task must be to free ourselves... by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty.

— Albert Einstein

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City of Niles Public Park and Recreation Board wishes to thank all of the citizens who participated in the creation of this plan through the Park Survey, Community Recreation Plan Open House and public hearing process. Your contributions have made this effort a true *community* plan. Thank you.

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Special Acknowledgements

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
Abonmarche

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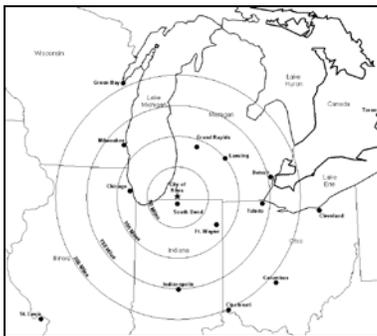
INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Community recreation plans serve a number of purposes. Perhaps the most important function of a recreation plan is to **guide local decision making affecting the development of parks and recreation areas**. A thorough and well-developed recreation plan will provide a clear and concise strategy for improving a community's recreational facilities. Adoption of a recreation plan also establishes five-year eligibility for recreation grants administered through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

The City of Niles has undertaken this 2021-2026 Community Recreation Plan in an effort to:

1. Maintain current park inventory
2. Identify parks and recreation structures needing to be rehabilitated or eliminated
3. Update the city of Niles community recreation plan;
4. Assess the recreational facilities and programs of the City and surrounding area;
5. Identify recreational deficiencies for city residents;
6. Provide a course of action for the city council to base its decisions over the next five years;
7. Prioritize recreational improvements and identify potential funding sources;
8. Promote economic development within the City of Niles and its surrounding area;

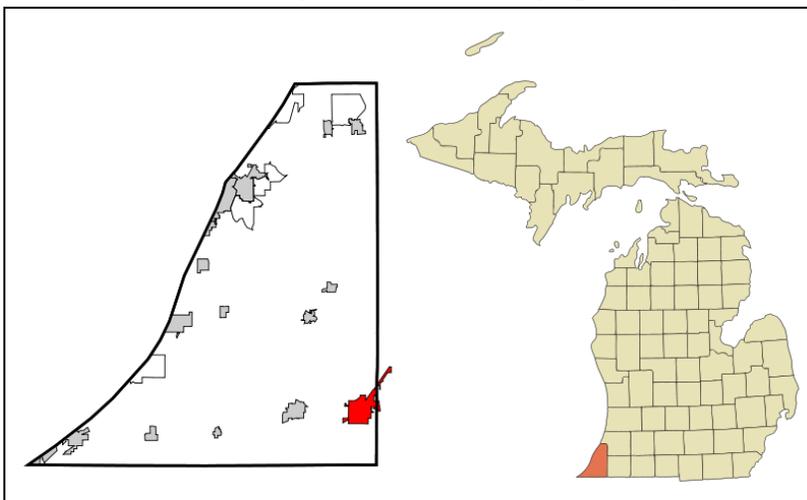
COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION



ABOUT NILES

The City of Niles is located in lower southwest Michigan on the Berrien and Cass County border. The principal city of the Niles-Benton Harbor Metropolitan Service Area, Niles is only three miles north of the Michigan/Indiana state line and is also regularly considered part of the South Bend metropolitan area.

Niles is a classic, small, Midwest town of 5.5 square miles in area, and about 12,000 in population. Over the years, the community has benefited from its prime location on the St. Joseph River and central position for trade. The natural and cultural features of Niles are what made the City; acres of well-kept green space, strong industry, quality housing and beautiful public amenities.



Between the late 1960's and late 1990's, the City of Niles suffered from a declining industrial base and associated decrease in population. However, efforts during the early 2000's worked to revitalize the downtown and recapture some of the commercial disinvestment that occurred over the past several decades. The City continues to benefit from commercial activity in its core.

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE AND PLANNING FOCUS

This plan has been prepared with input from the Public Park and Recreation Board (Park Board) for the City of Niles, but it is not limited by the City's political boundaries. As residents of the neighboring Townships visit and enjoy the parks and amenities in the City and vice-versa, we work to strengthen recreational linkages between the local units of government and establish new ones where possible. This is most notable in efforts to connect the multi-jurisdictional, Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail (IN-MI RVT) which stretches across Mishawaka and South Bend, Indiana through Niles Charter Township and the City of Niles; with new plans to stretch north to Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Additionally, planning and programmatic efforts throughout the City include input and support by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC), whose work and technical assistance have provided the City of Niles with opportunities that we otherwise did not have the capacity to progress and finalize. With the support and guidance of SWMPC, the City has advanced improvements of the Pucker Street Dam site, the IN-MI RVT and other important projects as part of this and previous 5-year P&R Plans.

As in previous years, this plan continues to apply a broader planning focus. Rather than pursue the development or redevelopment of a narrowly defined action program for a few select parks, the Park Board continues to opt for a more comprehensive view of the city's parks and recreation system. This system consists of the City's public parks, Niles Community Schools' facilities, nonprofit recreational facilities, private facilities, unique natural resources and regional parks and recreational facilities, both public and private. Declining resources both statewide and locally have made it a necessity to view recreation under a much wider lens in order to provide people with the greatest opportunity for leisure and recreation.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The City of Niles, Parks and Recreation Board, serve as advisers to the Niles City Council and to City staff on issues presented to the Board related to the subject of recreational services and parks usage. Like many older communities, the City of Niles' Parks Board was formed under PA156. Parks and recreation functions within the City of Niles are the responsibility of several City Departments, as well as a publicly appointed board, however, the City does not have a dedicated parks and recreation department. Instead, functions which are traditionally associated with parks and recreation are overseen jointly by the Department of Public Works and Community Development. Typically, either the Public Works Director or the Community Development Director could apply for grants, work with the City Council for approval to accept and commit funds, and/or purchase land on behalf of the community as necessary or warranted. Although the City lacks a parks and recreation department, it has an annual budget for these activities within its general fund. The annual budget in fiscal year 2021 (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021) is \$ 143,405; an additional \$153,813 is budgeted for the Plym Park Golf Course; those funds are strictly PPGC enterprise funds and do not include general funds.

The Responsibilities of the Board shall be:

1. To encourage citizen participation;

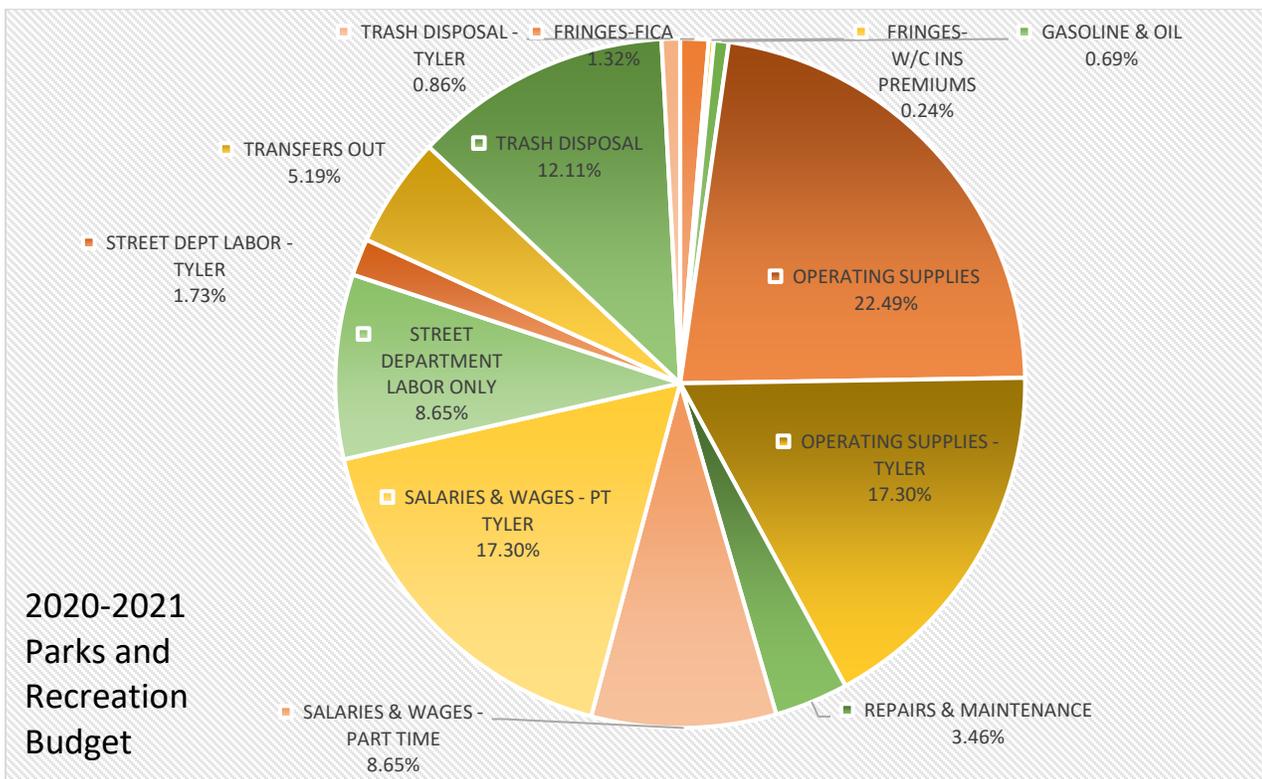
2. To present or discuss policies and programs affecting parks and recreation;
3. To study issues, trends and best practices as they relate to parks and recreation;
4. To provide input on the values, goals, and objectives of a program; develop program plans;
5. To contribute to continuous feedback; and make recommendations to City leaders for overall quality program/service deliveries;
6. To improve parks and establish/approve organized recreational programs, events and facilities;
7. To develop short-term and long-term plans involving public parks and recreational facilities and programs.

FUNDING

The parks and recreation budget is funded entirely through the City’s General Fund. The budget fluctuates each year- dependent on the resources available to the City.

Budget highlights include:

- The budget for parks and recreation in FY 2020 was \$155,097 or 1.99% of the general fund. The City has budgeted for FY 2021 \$143,405 or 1.89% of the general fund.
 - The City has been able to augment the P&R budget over the years by utilizing publicly available grant funds from entities like the Department of Natural Resources, Be Healthy Berrien and others.
 - Operating supplies 39.79% and 37.89%, respectively, account for the largest expenditures
 - Continued cuts in state revenue sharing necessitate limitations on capital improvements in the parks.



CITY OF NILES							
Budget Worksheet - GF (690) Parks and Recreation							
FY2021							
							2020-21
		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	10/19-03/20	2019-20	PROJECTED
<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Account Title</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Budget</u>
PARKS & RECREATION							
101-690-702-002	OVERTIME WAGES	0	0	0	0	0	0
101-690-702-012	STREET DEPARTMENT LABOR ONLY	6,890	4,399	3,990	1,862	7,000	5,000
101-690-702-013	STREET DEPT LABOR - TYLER	0	0	0	0	1,000	1,000
101-690-703-001	SALARIES & WAGES - PART TIME	2,235	0	0	1	10,000	5,000
101-690-703-050	SALARIES & WAGES - PT TYLER	12,288	8,911	3,241	104	10,000	10,000
101-690-714-001	FRINGES-FICA	1,063	949	232	99	765	765
101-690-714-003	FRINGES - MESC	4,636	4,690	0	0	0	0
101-690-714-012	FRINGES-W/C INS PREMIUMS	300	332	245	100	232	140
101-690-717-003	FRINGE - FICA ALLOCATION	0	0	0	0	0	0
101-690-727-001	OFFICE SUPPLIES	0	171	0	0	0	0
101-690-740-001	OPERATING SUPPLIES	12,335	9,387	10,214	3,857	15,000	13,000
101-690-740-010	OPERATING SUPPLIES - OTHER	125	0	0	0	0	0
101-690-740-050	OPERATING SUPPLIES - TYLER	11,635	15,497	4,890	2,615	12,000	10,000
101-690-756-004	GASOLINE & OIL	360	0	68	0	600	400
101-690-784-004	VEHICLE MAINTENANCE	0	0	0	0	0	0
101-690-801-001	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	0	4,540	7,193	7,650	0	0
101-690-813-001	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	68,782	81,119	74,864	17,615	82,000	82,000
101-690-813-002	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE - WORK AS	0	0	0	0	0	0
101-690-813-050	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES - TYLER	600	800	0	0	800	800
101-690-814-002	BASEBALL UMPIRES	0	0	0	0	0	0
101-690-815-001	TRASH DISPOSAL	5,085	6,353	6,652	2,767	7,000	7,000
101-690-815-050	TRASH DISPOSAL - TYLER	200	163	174	33	500	500
101-690-820-001	TRAVEL, TRAINING & CONFERENCE	47	26	0	0	0	0
101-690-830-001	DUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS	0	0	0	0	0	0
101-690-850-001	COMMUNICATIONS	936	936	1,014	390	1,000	1,100
101-690-880-001	COMMUNITY PROMOTIONS	1,019	1,133	1,073	5	2,000	1,500
101-690-880-002	COMMUNITY PROMOTIONS - GRANTS	0	0	0	0	0	0
101-690-880-003	PARK PROGRAMS	9,000	0	0	0	0	0
101-690-900-001	PRINTING & PUBLISHING	25	0	0	27	0	0
101-690-920-001	UTILITIES	0	0	0	0	0	0
101-690-931-001	BUILDING REPAIRS	253	0	0	0	200	200
101-690-932-001	REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	93	0	0	0	2,000	2,000
101-690-932-019	REPAIRS & MTNCE - VETERANS MEM	144	0	0	240	0	0
101-690-932-050	REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE - TYLER	0	1,016	0	0	0	0
101-690-956-008	MISCELLANEOUS	15	0	0	0	0	0
101-690-956-019	MISC. SELF BALANCING EXPENSES	0	0	0	0	0	0
101-690-974-001	LAND IMPROVEMENTS	0	8,496	0	0	0	0
101-690-978-001	OTHER EQUIPMENT CAPITAL OUTLAY	0	0	0	0	0	0
101-690-999-001	TRANSFERS OUT	3,000	3,000	3,000	0	3,000	3,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		141,066	151,918	116,850	37,365	155,097	143,405

PLYM PARK GOLF COURSE FUNDING

Plym Park Golf Course is a beautiful nine-hole course, owned and operated by the City of Niles. Located at the north end of the City, the course offers annual passes as well as daily greens fees and the clubhouse features a pro shop and snack bar. The course is a par 36 for men (3,148 yards) and par 38 for women (2,680 yards). Weekend tee times are required. A City Tournament is held each July, along with numerous other tournaments.

The budget for the Plym Park Golf Course (PPGC) is separately maintained. The PPGC budget for FY21 is \$153,813. Fund revenues are earned income and no general funds are used to offset costs at the course.

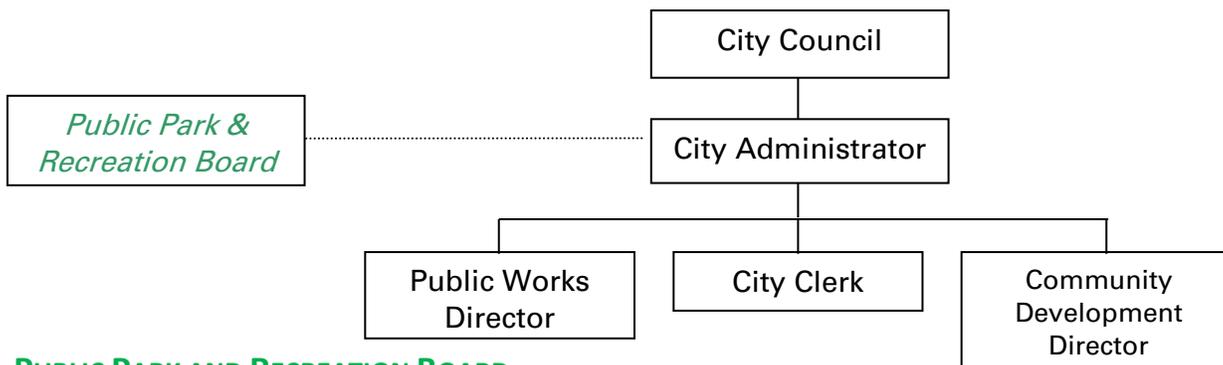
CITY OF NILES							
Budget Worksheet - Fund 584 (Plym Park Golf)							
FY2021							
Account Number	Account Title	2016-17 Actual	2017-18 Actual	2018-19 Actual	10/19-03/20 Actual	2019-20 Budget	2020-21 PROJECTED Budget
FUND REVENUES							
584-100-607-002	GREENS FEES	74,372	54,177	56,461	3,740	71,000	70,000
584-100-607-003	MEMBERSHIP FEES	20,238	14,025	16,550	1,020	18,000	17,000
584-100-607-005	CITY TOURNAMENT FEES	1,930	2,380	1,690	0	2,500	2,500
584-100-642-001	SALES - CONCESSIONS	6,887	4,823	4,990	409	8,000	7,000
584-100-645-001	SALES - GOLF MERCHANDISE	2,007	1,460	1,356	97	2,000	1,600
584-100-664-001	INTEREST	369	966	1,458	456	1,000	1,000
584-100-667-001	RENTAL OF PROPERTY	60,275	37,063	41,605	4,419	60,000	55,000
584-100-671-001	MISCELLANEOUS	1,259	924	(105)	377	1,000	1,000
584-100-674-001	CONTRIB FROM PRIVATE SOURCES	0	0	0	0	0	0
584-100-699-001	INTERFUND TRANSFER	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total FUND REVENUES:		167,337	115,818	124,005	10,518	163,500	155,100
EXPENDITURES							
584-542-702-002	OVERTIME WAGES	0	0	0	0	0	0
584-542-702-012	STREET DEPARTMENT LABOR ONLY	93	0	296	0	200	300
584-542-703-001	SALARIES & WAGES - PART TIME	66,950	62,754	68,645	17,010	61,594	58,767
584-542-703-002	OVERTIME WAGES PT	0	0	0	0	0	0
584-542-714-001	FRINGES-FICA	5,087	4,772	5,247	1,301	4,712	4,496
584-542-714-003	FRINGES - MESC	7,444	9,120	4,849	0	6,000	6,000
584-542-714-012	FRINGES-W/C INS PREMIUMS	994	824	613	232	595	550
584-542-717-003	FRINGE - FICA ALLOCATION	0	0	0	0	0	0
584-542-727-001	OFFICE SUPPLIES	2,414	3	0	0	500	500
584-542-740-001	OPERATING SUPPLIES	4,538	3,914	3,202	256	5,000	5,000
584-542-742-001	SUPPLIES - CONCESSION SALES	4,241	3,031	3,451	699	4,000	3,500
584-542-745-001	SUPPLIES - MERCHANDISE SALES	825	220	339	11	1,000	800
584-542-756-004	GASOLINE & OIL	4,099	8,651	5,053	1,369	4,600	4,000
584-542-784-004	VEHICLE MAINTENANCE	0	0	182	0	0	0
584-542-801-001	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	1,323	1,423	3,315	2,092	0	2,200
584-542-805-001	DONATED GREEN FEES	21	0	0	0	0	0
584-542-813-001	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	2,515	3,053	4,024	970	3,200	3,400
584-542-814-001	HIRED SERVICES	0	0	0	0	0	0
584-542-820-001	TRAVEL, TRAINING & CONFERENCE	0	0	0	0	0	0
584-542-830-001	DUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS	478	280	290	0	400	400
584-542-850-001	COMMUNICATIONS	1,931	538	808	(159)	1,000	1,000
584-542-900-001	PRINTING & PUBLISHING	804	501	826	138	800	850
584-542-920-001	UTILITIES	16,063	12,803	13,721	5,129	14,000	14,000
584-542-930-004	MTNCE - OTHER EQUIPMENT	9,863	9,153	13,104	2,718	10,000	10,000
584-542-931-001	BUILDING REPAIRS	2,879	252	1,351	0	4,000	4,000
584-542-932-001	REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	0	0	57	0	0	0
584-542-932-018	LAND REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	7,572	8,665	6,199	650	9,000	8,500
584-542-956-008	MISCELLANEOUS	20	0	(1)	0	500	500
584-542-956-011	CREDIT/DEBIT CARD FEES	1,200	1,732	1,470	567	1,800	1,800
584-542-956-015	BANK SERVICE FEES	0	0	0	0	0	0
584-542-956-021	BAD DEBTS EXPENSE	0	0	0	0	0	0
584-542-957-001	INSURANCE - GENERAL	1,933	2,025	2,229	2,284	4,000	3,000
584-542-959-020	INTEREST PD ON ELECT DEPT LOAN	424	331	334	0	300	250
584-542-965-004	CASH OVER/SHORT	(21)	(37)	17	0	0	0
584-542-968-001	DEPRECIATION EXPENSE	8,010	9,910	9,910	4,955	5,000	5,000
584-542-974-001	LAND IMPROVEMENTS	0	620	0	0	0	0
584-542-978-001	OTHER EQUIPMENT CAPITAL OUTLAY	2,363	0	0	8,397	15,000	15,000
584-542-999-001	DEBT SERVICE	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total FUND EXPENDITURES:		154,063	144,538	149,531	48,619	157,201	153,813
NET REVENUES (EXPENDITURES)		13,274	(28,720)	(25,526)	(38,101)	6,299	1,287
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE						141,672	147,971
PROJECTED ENDING FUND BALANCE						147,971	149,258

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **City Administrator:** Supervises the Community Development Director, Public Works Director and City Clerk. The City Administrator presents recreation information to the City Council and reviews the annual parks and recreation budget submitted by the Director of Public Works.
- **City Clerk:** Manages reservations of recreational facilities. Only two facilities require reservations - Plym Field and the Riverfront Park Amphitheater. Issues permits to vendors wishing to provide services in the parks.
- **City Council:** The City's elected representatives approve all grants, projects, plans and contracts. The Council also approves the annual parks budget.
- **Community Development Director:** Acts as the official staff liaison to the Park and Recreation Board, prepares the five-year parks and recreation master plan and prepares or supports the preparation of grant applications.
- **Public Park and Recreation Board:** This board consists of nine members who are appointed by the City Council. The board's primary responsibilities include the improvement of parks and the establishment of organized recreational programs. This board develops short-term and long-term plans involving public parks and recreational facilities and programs.
- **Public Works Director:** This individual manages parks budget spending. The Director handles mowing contracts and ensures that park equipment and park grounds are adequately maintained. Responsible for park/land reservations, which are required when requesting private use of any park.

The individuals and boards listed above are under the direct control of the City of Niles. However, other organizations not affiliated with the City also have an important role in delivering services. These organizations are best categorized as non-profits dedicated to recreational and fitness programming.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART – PARKS AND RECREATION



PUBLIC PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

The City's Public Park and Recreation Board was established in 1957. Required to be residents of the City, the P&R Board now hosts five volunteer members, appointed by majority vote of the City Council. The Mayor and City Administrator are ex-officio members and do not have voting authority. One Councilperson serves as a liaison between the Park Board and the City Council and the Community Development Director acts as the board's staff liaison to the City Administrator.

The Park Board does not have a formal relationship with Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, Niles Charter Township, Niles Community Schools or the YMCA of Greater Michiana. However, the Department of Public Works and the Community Development Director regularly communicate with these organizations to promote collaboration.

In recent years, the Park Board has dedicated itself to recreation planning and organizational improvement. Its accomplishments include:

1. The construction and completion of the Lakeland Hospital Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail Expansion
2. The completion of the connection throughout City of the Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail system with Niles Charter Township
3. Partnership with Ruff & Tumble Dog Park to install a new Bark Park in Riverfront Park South
4. The stewardship, cultivation and execution of City sponsored programs and events including the Niles Renaissance Faire, Third Thursdays and Summer My Way®

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Niles Community Schools: The NCS provides school parks at their facilities. Their extracurricular activities include Baseball, Softball, Football, Basketball and other sporting endeavors. The NCS maintains their parks and equipment within standards set by the Michigan Department of Education.

Greater Niles Little League: The GNLL merged from the Niles Babe Ruth Baseball League and the Niles FOP Little League. This league provides organized baseball for youth ages 6-18.

YMCA of Great Michiana: Utilizes Plym Park Softball Fields for its practices and Ring Lardner Middle School for games. YMCA offers open swim, organized swimming, cardio fitness classes, track, organized adult and youth softball, organized adult and youth basketball, and weight room. The YMCA also offers a staffed pre-school program, afterschool and summer programming for youth. A membership fee is required to use the YMCA's services and facilities. Development and installation of a new youth recreation center is planned for 2021.

RECREATION PROGRAM INVENTORY

Summer My Way: Summer My Way® (SMW®) SMW® emphasizes to youth the importance of physical activity. Childhood obesity rates in America have tripled over the past three decades, and today, nearly one in three children in America are overweight or obese. Chronic obesity-related health problems like heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, and asthma are more common in our society. Today's children experience a very different lifestyle. Walks to and from school have been replaced by car and bus rides. Gym class and after-school sports have been cut; afternoons are now spent with TV, video games, and the internet. Parents are busier than ever, and families eat fewer home-cooked meals. Snacking between meals is now commonplace. By making just a few lifestyle changes, we can help our children lead healthier lives. One of those changes is to

increase physical activity. SMW® strives to do just that. The curriculum teaches and promotes children to be physically active. It is the goal of SMW® to keep students moving!



Summer Concert Series: The Niles Summer Concert Series provides a special opportunity for all residents and visitors to experience a wide variety of music in a beautiful setting along the Saint Joseph River. Concerts are made possible by a partnership with Niles Music and More, a local nonprofit. During June, July and August, the series offers musical performances at the City's amphitheater. The City is very proud to host performances throughout the summer – all free of charge and open to the public.



Third Thursdays: Made possible by a partnership with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Third Thursdays are a fun way to get out and meet your neighbor while supporting downtown businesses; as well as interact with local artisans or craft brewers. During June, July and August, the DDA offers weekly gatherings and good times for a period of twelve weeks. The City is very proud to host its citizens as they meet and welcome one another safely.

Festivals



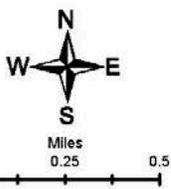
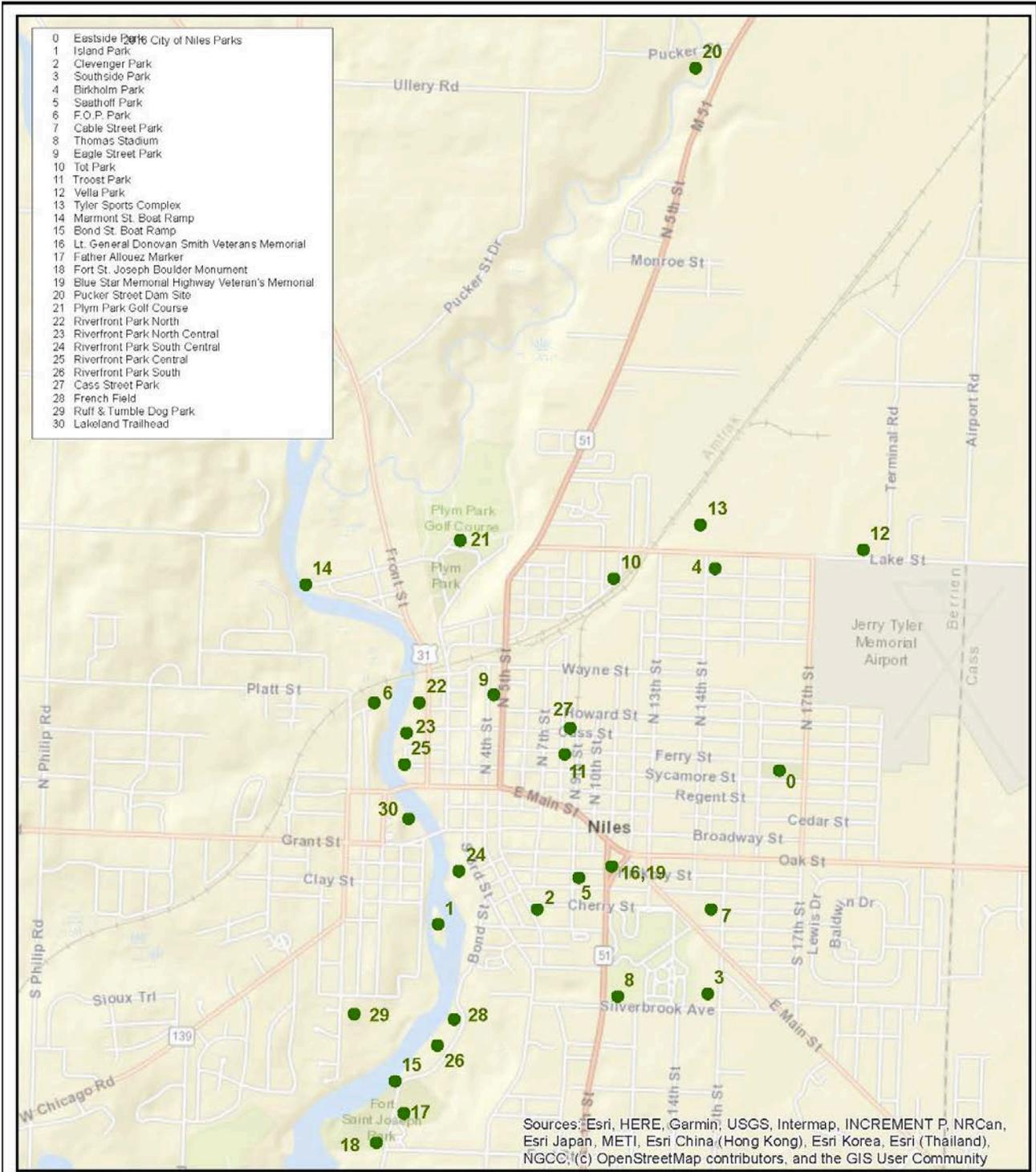
The annual [Niles Renaissance Faire](#) is one of Southwestern Michigan's newest but most popular family festivals. The event happens mid-May. All ages come in costume and join in the merriment and revelry through a variety of performances and vendors. Ongoing shows feature pirate lore, music, combat, magic, fairy tales and storytelling. Handcrafted items from local and traveling vendors include food and drinks, jewelry, costumes, ceramics, crafted items, replica weapons and much more- allowing the whole community to celebrate for the weekend.

The [Four Flags Area Apple Festival](#) happens each fall at the corner of Lake Street and 17th Street. Carnival rides, food vendors, arts and crafts booths, and live entertainment are part of the festivities.

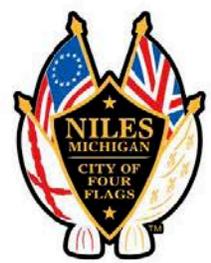
The annual [Niles Family Fun Fair and Music Festival](#) brings live bluegrass music to the Riverfront Park Amphitheatre.



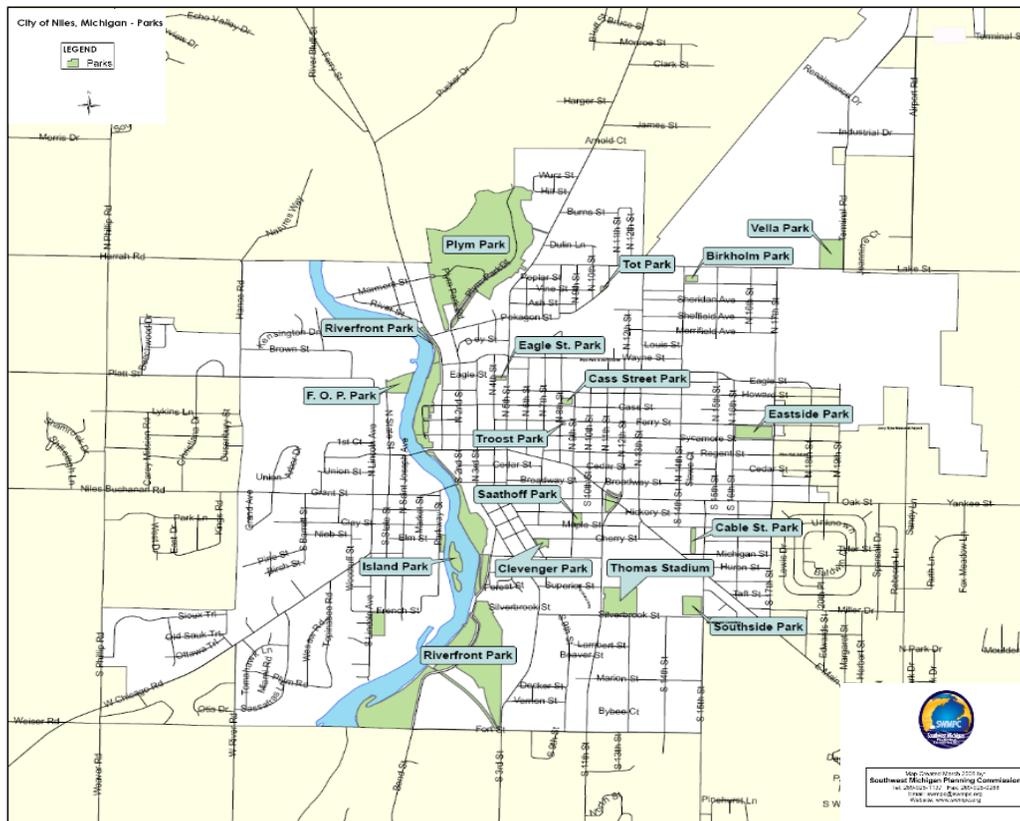
In January, the Downtown Development Authority hosts the annual [Hunter Ice Festival](#). The event showcases more than 150 ice sculptures in the downtown area. The festival is named in honor of the Hunters Brothers Ice and Ice Cream Company, the first documented commercial ice harvesting operation in Michigan.



2021 City of Niles Parks



CITY OF NILES- PARKS AND RECREATION INVENTORY



The City owns over 20 parks of varying size and use with nearly 90 acres of parks and recreation space and over 200 acres of greenspace; offering a per resident rate of: 143 residents per 1 acre of park land. Residents benefit from small neighborhood parks within walking distance to their homes and schools, as well as access to larger, regional, parks that serve to attract patrons and events from surrounding areas.

The following observations were made by city staff during its 2020 inventory of public parks:

- Staff reviewed 40 City controlled parks and recreation areas. Generally, the parks were found to be more well maintained during this 5-year plan period and scored over 7/10 on a general Likert scale developed to score the overall maintenance of the City’s recreation areas.
- Many City of Niles Parks rank low on the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design; staff and volunteers continue to seek guidance and funding to support installing compliance mechanisms to meet these standards.
 - 10 parks scored a 3 out of 5, indicating that most of the ADA Standards for Accessible Design have been met.
 - 8 parks scored 2 out of 5, indicating that some of the ADA Standards for Accessible Design have been met.
 - 10 parks scored a 1 out of 5 where none of the ADA Standards for Accessible Design have been met.
- Attention has been spent repairing peeling paint, deteriorating wood benches, and removing overgrowth along wide sections of the river.
- Efforts have been made to encapsulate the lead-based paint at all area parks.
- There has been ongoing vandalism to the City’s skatepark and other parks, costing the City thousands of dollars in clean-up efforts.
- Most of the City’s parks lack identification signage and many parking areas need upgrades.

The following information includes the public park inventory, with each park listed and inventoried for equipment and condition. Aerial photos of most parks are also provided.

IN-MI River Valley Trail

The Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail (IN-MI RVT) partners are working to create a 34-mile trail connecting Niles, MI to Mishawaka, IN. The completed trail would be used by commuters, students, families and tourists. The trail would connect people to:

- 4 universities and several schools
- 4 downtowns (Niles, Roseland, South Bend and Mishawaka)
- 16 parks and 2 YMCAs
- 5 hospitals or major medical facilities
- Dozens of historical and cultural attractions
- Businesses offering dining, lodging and shopping

Update on Progress Constructed since 2008

- Mishawaka's 6-mile downtown trail loop along the St. Joseph River
- The extension of the East Bank Trail through IUSB
- South Bend's 2.5 mile Riverside Trail
- St. Joseph County's Darden Road Trail
- New sidewalks along SR 933 between the East Bank Trail and Roseland Trail
- 2.25 miles of trail through the city of Niles
- 1.1 miles of Northside Trails through River Park, connecting the South Bend and Mishawaka trail systems
- Approximately 4.5 miles of connecting off-road trail around the University of Notre Dame and along SR 23
- 3.3 miles of Niles Township Trails north from the IN/MI State Line
- Mishawaka's extension of their downtown trails towards Merrifield Park
- Niles Township completed the Phase II to connect Brandywine Creek Nature Park to the Niles City trail at Fort Street and the City of Niles completed the trailhead at the Lakeland Health campus. These projects were both funded by the MDNR Natural Resources Trust Fund.
- A segment between Angela Blvd and the 80 Toll Rd entrance was completed.
- A new paved connection running north from the IMRVT at Darden Rd along Laurel Rd up to Brick Rd connecting Clay Park to the IMRVT.
- The City of Niles partnered with Lakeland Health Systems and expanded the IN-MI RVT onto their property located at Grant and N. St. Joseph Avenue. This expansion, all accessible, includes a fishing platform, boardwalk and plaza.

Trail Development Overview

- A large number of supporters turned out on August 9th, 2014 to cut the ribbon and open a new 3.3 mile section of the Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail. The new trail section is complete from the Indiana State line to Brandywine creek Nature Park (just north of US 12). The section represents Phase one for Niles Township of the 34-miles trail from Niles, MI to Mishawaka, IN. The Trail will help link communities together, promote tourism, and provide a great recreation opportunity.
- In 2010, the City of Niles completed 2.25 miles of trail from Plym Park to 3rd/Fort Street. In 2014, the City partnered with the County Health Department to install ten fitness stations along the trail.

- Future efforts will include connecting to Buchanan and Berrien Springs in Michigan. In Indiana, connections will be made to Elkhart and the Pumpkinvine Trail.
- In 2019 the City of Niles completed a trail expansion project onto the Lakeland Hospital Campus located at 31 N St Joseph Ave, Niles, MI 49120.



PARTNERS

Several organizations and agencies support the completion of this trail.

[Bike Michiana Coalition](#)

[Bike The Bend, Inc.](#)

[Berrien County Parks, Michigan](#)

[City of Niles, Michigan](#)

[City of Mishawaka, Indiana](#)

[City of South Bend, Indiana](#)

[Indiana Department of Transportation](#)

[Michiana Area Council of Governments](#)

[Michigan Department of Transportation](#)

[Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance](#)

[Michiana Watershed](#)

[National Park Service, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program](#)

[Niles Charter Township, Michigan](#)

[Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Southwest Michigan Planning Commission](#)

[St. Joseph County Parks, Indiana](#)

[Town of Roseland, IN Parks and Recreation](#)

Extending Beyond Niles/South Bend/Mishawaka

- View the proposed northern route of the [Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail from Niles to Berrien Springs view the map here!](#)
- To Berrien Springs -North of Niles is the former Interurban Rail Line that runs to Berrien Springs and Lake Michigan at St. Joseph, Michigan. Some of the land has reverted to adjacent farmers but the corridor is largely intact. There are also utility corridors from Niles north to the Kal-Haven Trail that could be

developed as trails. The longstanding dream has always been a continuous, dedicated trail from Michiana to Lake Michigan. We will continue to work in that direction.

- To Buchanan-West of Niles, the city of Buchanan has been steadily growing their urban landscape and their trail system along the McCoy Creek. The McCoy Creek Trail folks are very organized, dedicated group of advocates and it would be great to eventually connect the trail systems. Once a prospective route is identified, we will be able to coordinate growth in this direction.



RIVERFRONT PARK



*“Stretching nearly two miles along the eastern shore of the St. Joseph River, **Riverfront Park** is a beautiful recreation area with a charming amphitheater, picnic shelters, fishing spots, picturesque scenery, and much more. The entire park is connected by a wide paved trail.*

On the north side of Riverfront Park, there is a large skate park that has several challenging ramps for skateboarders. Not far away, there is a large playground with a playscape and swings. The park's amphitheater is used for concerts and events, such as the Niles Family Fun Fair and Music Festival. Near Main Street, a veterans

memorial honors the heroes from Niles' past.

Two large wooden fishing piers extend over the river, a short distance from the paved trail. Nearby there is a kayak launch.

The south side of the Riverfront Park has a boat launch with plenty of parking. Many old-growth trees tower over this part of the park and are beautiful during the fall. Near the dam, there are two picnic shelters with scenic views.”



Source: <http://www.eyeonmichigan.com/guides/niles/>

RIVERFRONT PARK- NORTH



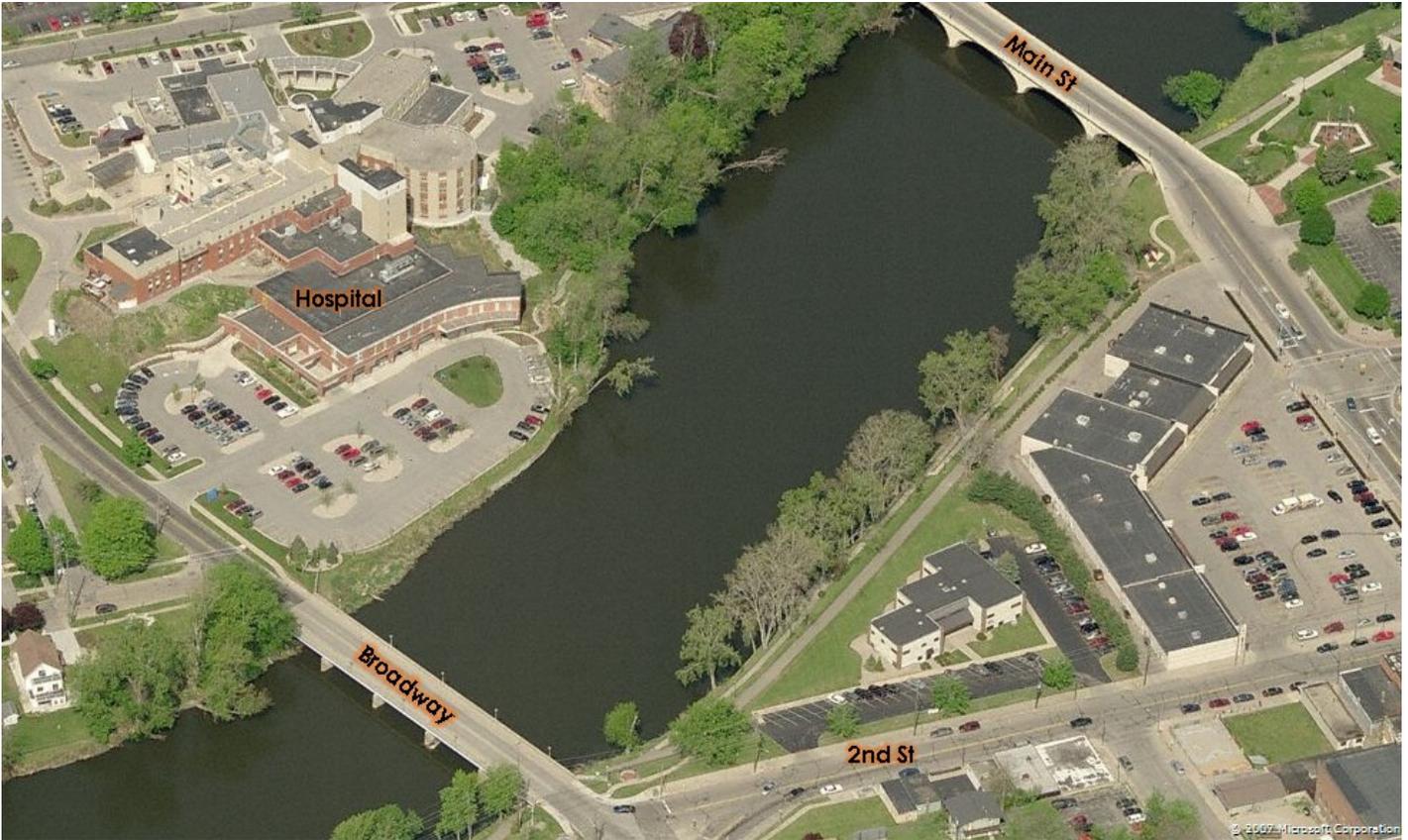
<p>RIVERFRONT PARK NORTH (Community Park) Hours: 8:00am – 10:00pm</p>	<p>Picnic Amenities: Good Condition Pavilion Picnic tables Benches Grills</p>
<p>Parking available within park and on street</p> <p>Public Restrooms Available</p>	<p>Play Structures: Available in adjacent section of park</p> <p>Sporting Features: Good Condition Skate Park – with bleachers Sand Volleyball Courts 7 Fitness Stations (installed 2013)</p>
<p>Amtrak Bridge to fishing pier. All park areas along east side of river from Amtrak Bridge south (includes skate park and sand volleyball courts).</p>	<p>Special Features: Good- Excellent Condition 3 Art/Mural/Sculptures/Educational Information Statue/Monument Saint Joseph River Observation Deck Fishing Pier Lighted Access to IN-MI RVT</p>
<p>Access to IN-MI RVT</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Acreage</p>	<p>3.3 acres</p>
<p>GPS Coordinates</p>	<p>41.83361439642055 -86.25935912132263</p>
<p>ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score</p>	<p>3</p>

RIVERFRONT PARK- NORTH CENTRAL



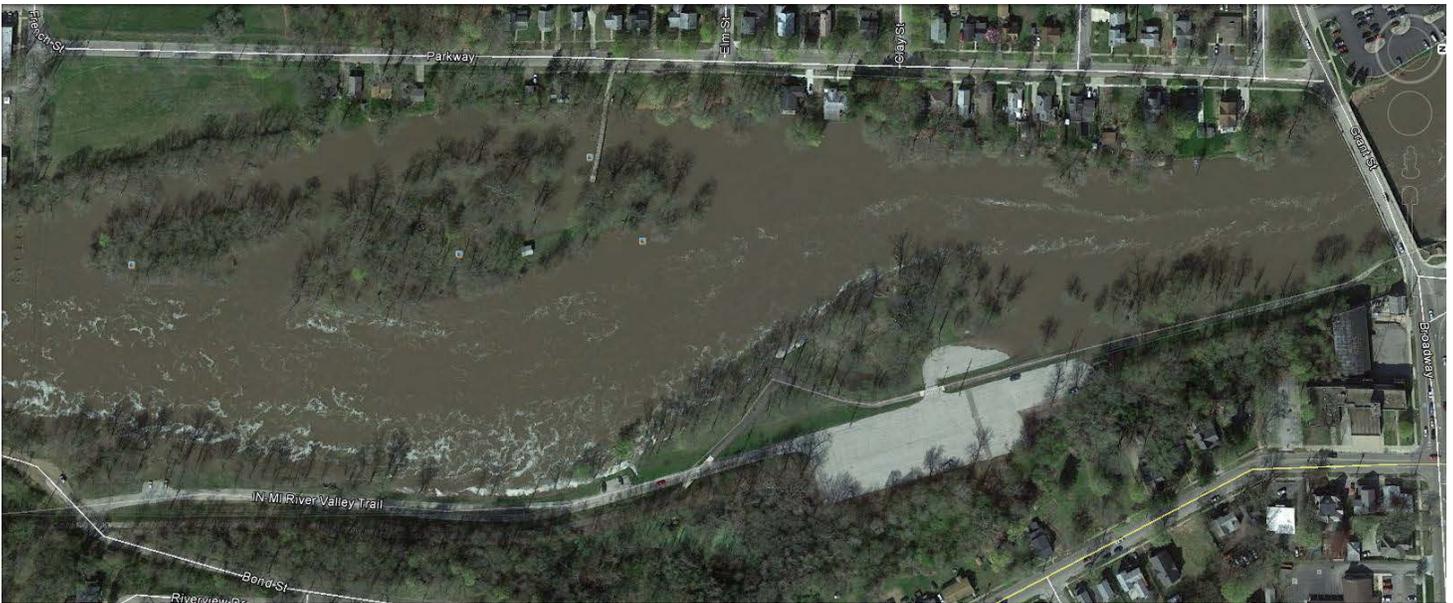
<p><u>RIVERFRONT PARK</u> <u>NORTH CENTRAL</u> (Community Park)</p> <p>Hours: 8:00am – 10:00pm</p>	<p>Picnic Amenities: Good Condition</p> <p>Picnic tables</p> <p>Benches and Swinging Benches</p> <p>Grills</p> <p>Bike Rack</p>
<p>Parking available within park</p>	<p>Play Structures: Good Condition</p> <p>Play Structure</p> <p>ADA Swings</p>
<p>Fishing Pier to Main Street along St. Joseph River</p>	<p>Sporting Features:</p> <p>11 Fit Equipment</p> <p>Special Features: Good- Excellent Condition</p> <p>Amphitheater</p> <p>Veterans Memorial</p> <p>3 Gardens</p> <p>3 Mural/Art Sculpture/ Educational Information</p> <p>2 Statue/Monuments</p> <p>Boat Dock/Fishing Pier</p> <p>Lighted Access to IN-MI RVT</p>
<p>Access to IN-MI RVT</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Acreage</p>	<p>4.2 acres</p>
<p>GPS Coordinates</p>	<p>41.83145600892535 -86.26037836074829</p>
<p>ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score</p>	<p>3</p>

RIVERFRONT PARK- CENTRAL



<p><u>RIVERFRONT PARK CENTRAL</u> (Community Park)</p> <p>Hours: 8:00am – 10:00pm</p> <p>Parking available within park</p> <p>Main St. south to Broadway along St. Joseph River</p>	Picnic Amenities: NOT AVAILABLE IN THIS SECTION OF RFP
	Play Structures: NOT AVAILABLE IN THIS SECTION OF RFP
	Sporting Features: NONE AVAILABLE IN THIS SECTION OF RFP
	<p>Special Features: Good Condition</p> <p>Pocket Park</p> <p>Wayfinding Signage</p> <p>Benches</p> <p>Fishing Access</p>
Access to IN-MI RVT	Yes
Acreage	.4 acres
GPS Coordinates	41.82982286018501, -86.25947594193266
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	3

RIVERFRONT PARK- SOUTH CENTRAL



*includes South Central Riverfront Park Boat Ramp

<p><u>RIVERFRONT PARK</u> <u>SOUTH CENTRAL</u> (Community Park)</p> <p>Hours: 8:00am – 10:00pm</p> <p>Public Restrooms Available</p> <p>Parking available within park</p> <p>Available for special use by approval of Niles City Council</p> <p>Broadway south to Bond St. along St. Joseph River</p>	<p>Picnic Amenities: Fair- Good Condition</p> <p>Picnic Tables</p> <p>Grills</p> <p>Bike Rack</p> <p>Pavilion</p> <p>Play Structures: NOT AVAILABLE IN THIS SECTION OF RFP</p> <p>Sporting Features: 2 Fitness Equipment (Installed in 2013)</p> <p>Special Features: Good Condition</p> <p>Boat Ramp</p> <p>Fishing Access</p> <p>Aquatic Fowl Viewing Area (Ducks/Geese/Swans)</p>
<p>Access to IN-MI RVT</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Acreage</p>	<p>7.8 acres</p>
<p>GPS Coordinates</p>	<p>41.82502837956518 -86.2566876411438</p>
<p>ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score</p>	<p>3</p>

RIVERFRONT PARK- SOUTH



*Includes the Bond Street Boat Launch

<u>RIVERFRONT PARK</u>	Picnic Amenities: Good Condition
<u>SOUTH</u>	2 Pavilions
(Community Park)	Picnic Tables
Hours: 8:00am – 10:00pm	Grills
Public Restrooms	Play Structures: NOT AVAILABLE IN THIS SECTION OF RFP
Parking available within park and along road	Sporting Features: Bond Street Natural, Canoe Launch
North of dam to south, also at French’s boat ramp area south of dam along St. Joseph River	Special Features: Good Condition Fort St. Joseph Historic Archeological Site Monument Ruff and Tumble Dog Park nearby
Access to IN-MI RVT	Nearby
Acreage	9.5 acres
GPS Coordinates	41.81850415557346, -86.25664472579956 Park
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	2

PLYM PARK AND GOLF COURSE



Park	Equipment or Facility
<p>PLYM PARK (Community Park) Parking lot available and on-street parking</p> <p>Public Restrooms Available</p>	<p>Picnic Amenities: Good Condition Pavilion Picnic Tables Grills</p> <p>8 tennis courts – 4 lighted, good condition – reconstructed in 2004, resurfaced in 2007, repaired 2015 with pickleball stripes 18-hole golf course- good condition</p> <p>Playground – includes climbing equipment; good condition- updated 2009</p>
<p>PLYM PARK GOLF COURSE Public Golf Course 9 holes M-F \$ 9.50 Sat/Sun \$10.50 18 holes M-F \$16 Sat/Sun \$18 Cart Fees (2 people) \$12.00 Sat/Sun \$24.00</p>	<p>2 Batting Cages- 2 softball field backstops 1 practice softball field – fair condition 1 game softball field – fair condition 1 basketball court – fair condition 1 soccer field – good condition</p>
<p>Access to IN-MI RVT</p>	<p>Yes- added 2011/12</p>
<p>Acreage</p>	<p>19 acres</p>
<p>GPS Coordinates</p>	<p>41.843446, -86.256698.</p>
<p>ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score</p>	<p>3</p>

EASTSIDE PARK



Park	Equipment or Facility
<p><u>EASTSIDE PARK</u> (Neighborhood Park) Sycamore & 17th Street Open: 8:00am – 10:00pm Parking available on street</p>	<p>Picnic Amenities: Fair Condition Picnic Tables Grill Pavilion- roof needs replaced Water Fountain (drain is failing)</p>
<p>Public Restroom</p>	<p>Play Structures - Excellent condition Plays Structure (Installed 2003) Swings Benches</p>
	<p>Sporting Features: Fair Condition Softball Backstops- needs repaired Soccer- needs crossbar Basketball Hoops- no court</p>
<p>Access to IN-MI RVT</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Acreage</p>	<p>4.6 acres</p>
<p>GPS Coordinates</p>	<p>12613841.109 126299.019</p>
<p>ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score</p>	<p>3</p>

ISLAND PARK



Park	Equipment or Facility
<p>ISLAND PARK (Neighborhood Park)</p> <p>Closed to the Public Until Further Notice due to a community wide flood in 2017 that caused catastrophic damage to Island Park. While some funds have been recouped from insurance to restore the bridge, no funding is available at this time to restore the island.</p> <p>Parking available along Parkway St.</p>	<p>Picnic Amenities Pavilion- Damaged</p>
	<p>Play Structures All damaged</p>
	<p>Wooden Bridge- New in 2020</p>
Access to IN-MI RVT	No
Acreage	3.5 acres
GPS Coordinates	12607899.234 123626.511
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	5

CLEVENGER PARK



Park	Equipment or Facility
CLEVENGER PARK (Neighborhood Park) South 5 th St. at Cherry St.	Picnic Amenities: Fair-Good Condition Pavilion Picnic Table Grill Water Fountain
No Public Restrooms	Play Structures: Fair Condition Benches Play Structure (installed 2005) Swings (installed 2001) Merry-Go-Round
Parking available along street	Sporting Features: Good Condition Baseball Back Stop
Access to IN-MI RVT	No
Acreage	1 acre
GPS Coordinates	12609625.947 123890.903
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	2

SOUTHSIDE PARK



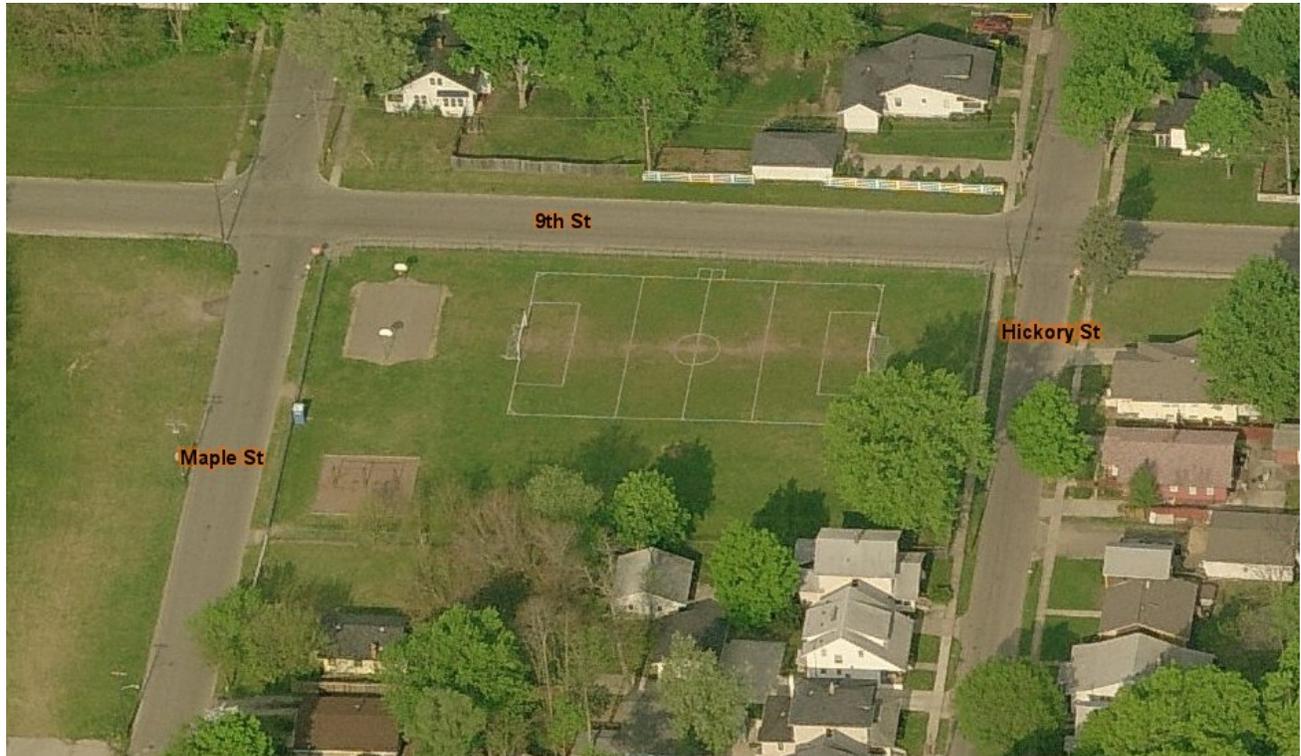
Park	Equipment or Facility
<p><u>SOUTHSIDE PARK</u> (Neighborhood Park) Open 8:00am – 10:00pm 15th Street at Silverbrook St.</p>	<p>Picnic Amenities: Good Condition Picnic tables Grills Pavilion Drinking fountain</p>
<p>No Public Restrooms</p>	<p>Play Structures: Good Condition Play Structure– installed in 2005 Swing set</p>
<p>Parking Available on Street</p>	<p>Sporting Features: Fair Condition Basketball Courts and Nets Softball Back Stop</p>
<p>Access to IN-MI RVT</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Acreage</p>	<p>3.8 acres</p>
<p>GPS Coordinates</p>	<p>12612590.791, 122415.643</p>
<p>ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score</p>	<p>1</p>

BIRKHOLM PARK



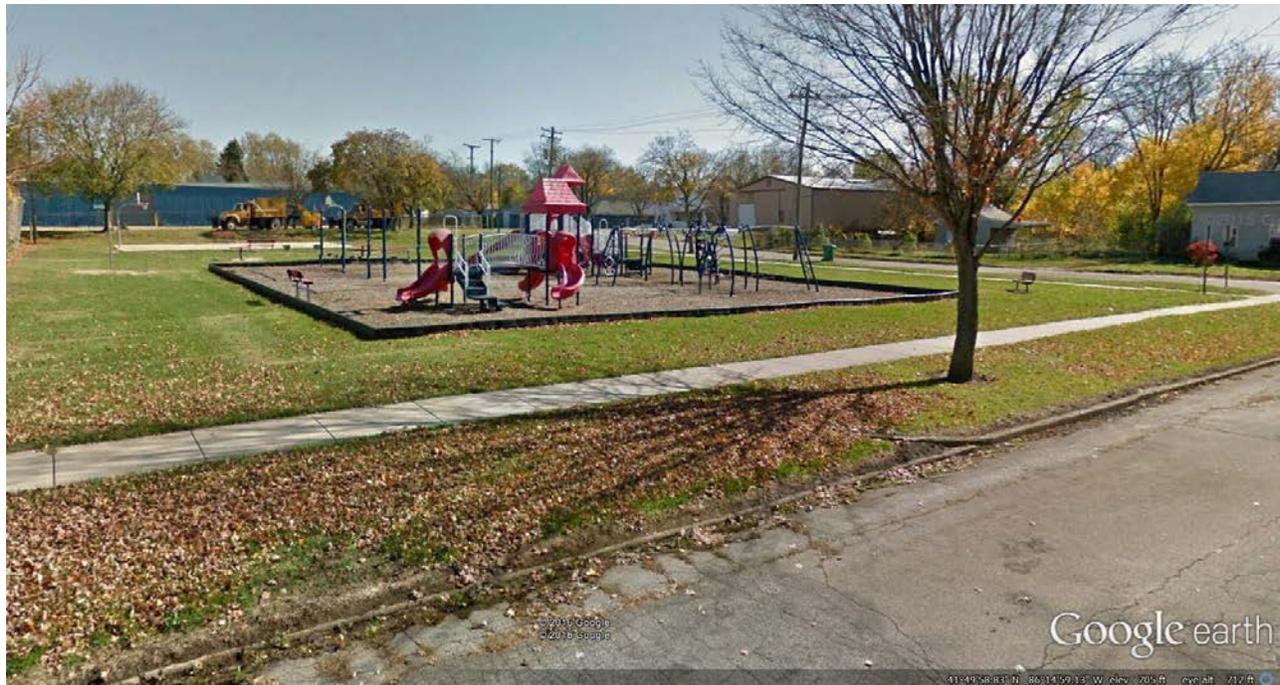
Park	Equipment or Facility
<p><u>BIRKHOLM PARK</u> (Neighborhood Park) Clarendon Avenue at 14th Street</p> <p>Hours: 8:00am – 10:00pm</p> <p>No Public Restrooms</p> <p>Parking Available on Street</p>	<p>Picnic Amenities: Fair-Good Condition Picnic Table</p> <p>Play Structures: Fair – Good Condition Swing Sets Rocket Climbing Structure Monkey Bars 5 Total Play Structure</p> <p>Sporting Features: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE</p>
<p>Access to IN-MI RVT</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Acreage</p>	<p>.8 acres</p>
<p>GPS Coordinates</p>	<p>12612712.463 129810.304</p>
<p>ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score</p>	<p>1</p>

HUNTER- SAATHOFF PARK



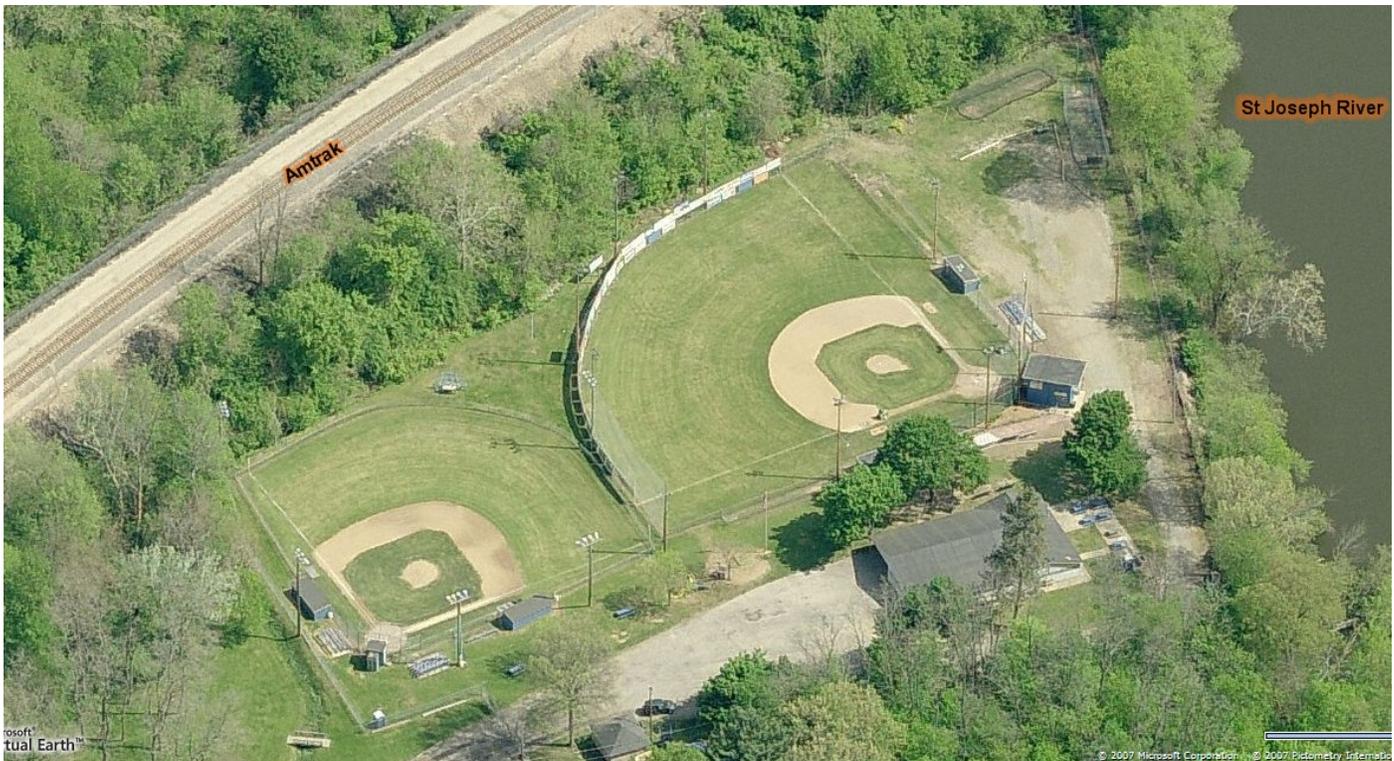
Park	Equipment or Facility
<u>HUNTER- SAATHOFF PARK</u> (Neighborhood Park) 9 th Street at Maple Street Hours: 8:00am – 10:00pm No Public Restrooms Parking Available on Street	Picnic Amenities: None onsite Play Structures: Fair- Good Condition Swing set (Installed 2001)
	Sporting Features: Fair- Good Condition Basketball Court and Hoops: (installed 2005) Non-Regulation Soccer field Fence Damage
Access to IN-MI RVT	Future Connectivity Planned
Acreage	1.1 acres
GPS Coordinates	12610342.796 124434.757
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	1

CASS STREET PARK



Park	Equipment or Facility
<p>CASS STREET PARK (Neighborhood Park) Cass Street at 9th Hours: 8:00am – 10:00pm</p> <p>No public restrooms</p> <p>Parking Available on Street</p>	<p>Picnic Amenities: Tables Grills Benches</p> <p>Play Structures: Excellent Condition- (Installed 2008) Swing set Play Structure ADA Accessible Benches</p> <p>Sporting Features: Good Condition Basketball Court and Hoops: (installed 2008)</p>
Access to IN-MI RVT	No
Acreage	0.604 acres
GPS Coordinates	41.8331267670913 -86.24960124492645
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	4

F.O.P. PARK



<p><u>F.O.P. PARK</u> (Special Use Park- fee) North State Street at St. Joseph River Hours: varies</p> <p>2 Regulation Baseball Diamonds Available for Special Use</p> <p>Private Restrooms Available</p> <p>Parking Available onsite</p>	<p>Picnic Amenities: Poor - Fair Condition Picnic Tables FOP Lodge (built 2013)</p>	
	<p>Play Structures: Fair Condition Play Structure Swings Benches</p>	
	<p>Sporting Features: Fair- Good Condition Batting Cages Dugouts Baseball Fields Field Lighting</p>	<p>Announcer Box Bleacher Seating Benches Field Fences Score Boards</p>
<p>Access to IN-MI RVT</p>	<p>No</p>	
<p>Acreage</p>	<p>4.7 acres</p>	
<p>GPS Coordinates</p>	<p>12606791.378 127479.592</p>	
<p>ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score</p>	<p>3</p>	

CABLE STREET PARK



Park	Equipment or Facility
<p>CABLE STREET PARK (NEIGHBORHOOD PARK) Cable Street at 15th Street Hours: 8:00am – 10:00pm No Public Restrooms Parking Available on Street</p>	<p>Picnic Amenities: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE</p> <p>Play Structures: Good Condition Play Structure: (Updated 2012) Monkey Bars Swings Climbing Structure Benches</p> <p>Sporting Features: Poor Condition Non-regulation Soccer Field: Poor Condition</p>
<p>Access to IN-MI RVT</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Acreage</p>	<p>1.8 acres</p>
<p>GPS Coordinates</p>	<p>41.82368866829224, -86.24040378231696</p>
<p>ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score</p>	<p>2</p>

THOMAS STADIUM



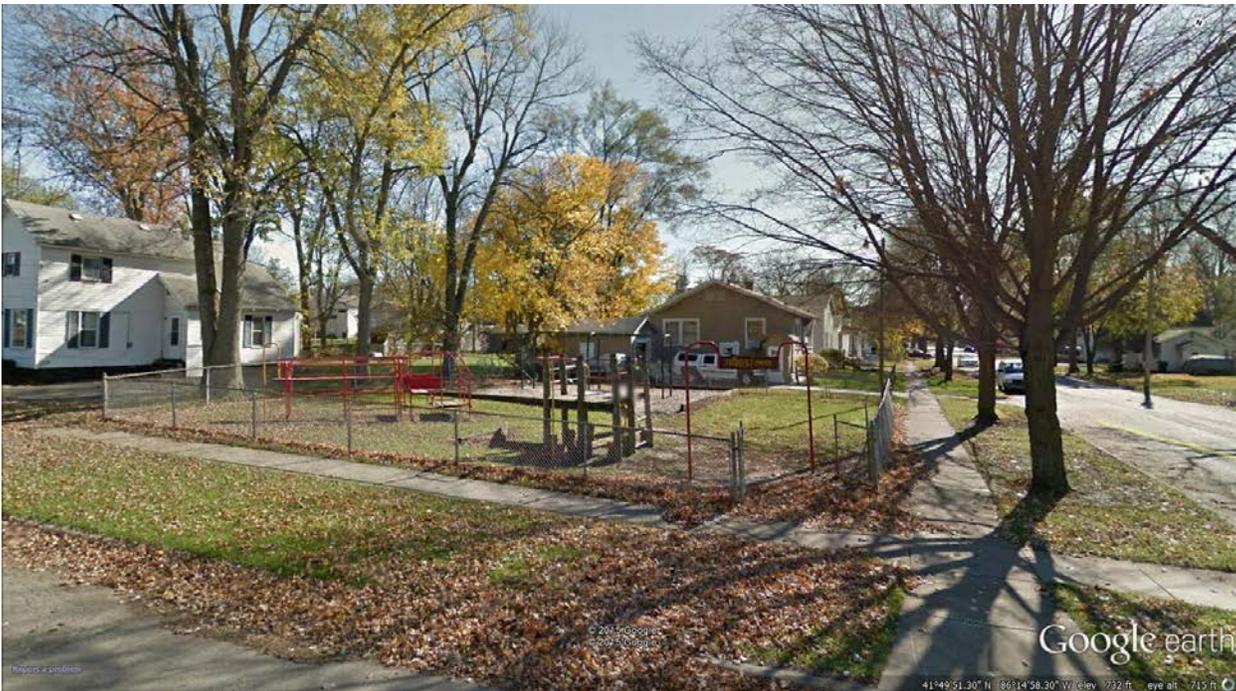
Park	Equipment or Facility	
<p>THOMAS STADIUM (Special Use Park) Hours: varies</p> <p>2 Regulation Baseball Diamonds Available for Use</p> <p>Facebook</p> <p>Parking Available Onsite (Paved 2006)</p>	Picnic Amenities: Excellent Condition	
	Pavilion	
	Play Structures: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE	
	Special Features:	
	Mural	
	Advertising	
	Sporting Features: Excellent Condition	
	Batting Cages	Benches
	Dugouts	Field Fences
Babe Ruth Baseball Field	Score Boards	
Field Lighting	Restrooms	
Announcer Box	Bleacher Seating	
Access to IN-MI RVT	No	
Acreage	9.6 acres	
GPS Coordinates	41.82005399984108, -86.24615497465166	
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	3	

EAGLE STREET PARK



Park	Equipment or Facility
EAGLE STREET PARK	Picnic Amenities: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
(NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)	Play Structures: Poor – Fair Condition
EAGLE STREET AT 5 TH STREET	Swings
HOURS: 8:00AM – 10:00PM	3 Play Structures
PARKING AVAILABLE ON STREET	Spring Rocker
Access to IN-MI RVT	Sporting Features: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
Acreage	No
GPS Coordinates	.3 acre
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	41.83447511515728, -86.25424945266865
	1

TROOST PARK



<u>TROOST PARK</u> (NEIGHBORHOOD PARK) North 8 th Street at Ferry Street Hours: 8:00am – 10:00pm Parking Available on Street	Picnic Amenities: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
	Play Structures: Poor – Fair Condition Swings Play Structures (updated 2003)
	Sporting Features: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
Access to IN-MI RVT	No
Acreage	.1 acres
GPS Coordinates	12610108.036 126584.436
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	2

VELLA PARK



<u>VELLA PARK</u> (Special Use Park- leased to Niles Community Schools) Lake Street at Terminal Road Hours: varies Parking Available Onsite Regulation Softball Field Available for Use	Picnic Amenities: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
	Play Structures: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
	Sporting Features: Fair -Good Condition Bleachers Softball Field: Excellent Condition Dugouts Announcers Box Batting Cage Pitching Cage Score Board Shed Water Fountain: Poor Condition
Access to IN-MI RVT	NO
Acreage	6.2 acres
GPS Coordinates	12615291.514 130145.316
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	2

FRENCH FIELD



<u>FRENCH FIELD</u>	Picnic Amenities: None available onsite
Privately Owned Park available for unorganized/neighborhood related recreation activities	Play Structures: None available onsite
Parking is available On Street	Sporting Features: Backstops for baseball/softball/soccer Condition: Good
Access to IN-MI RVT	No
Acreage	1.8 acres
GPS Coordinates	41.818792 -86.263425
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	1

TYLER SPORTS COMPLEX



<p><u>TYLER SPORTS COMPLEX</u> (Special Use Park- fee) Lake Street at 13th Street Hours: On Demand with Permit Parking Available Onsite Regulation Softball Field Available for Use</p>	<p>Picnic Amenities: Excellent Condition Picnic Tables Play Structures: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE Sporting Features: Excellent Condition (Built 2014) Bleachers 3 Softball Fields (Fast/Slow Pitch) Shed</p>
<p>Access to IN-MI RVT</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Acreage</p>	<p>23.06 acres</p>
<p>GPS Coordinates</p>	<p>41.841378 86.241119</p>
<p>ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score</p>	<p>4</p>



BOND STREET BOAT RAMP



<p><u>BOND ST. BOAT RAMP</u> (Special Use Facility)</p> <p>Bond Street across the St. Joseph River from French Paper Company</p> <p>Parking Available Onsite Lot</p> <p>Open to the Public</p>	<p>Picnic Amenities: Available in adjacent Riverfront Park South Park Pavilion Restrooms Benches</p> <p>Play Structures: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE</p> <p>Sporting Features: NONE AVAILABE ONSITE</p> <p>Special Features: Good Condition Natural/Unimproved Boat ramp</p> <p>Bond Street Boat Ramp: Unimproved Boating Access Site – A designated boat launch location for trailered boats, without a formal launch ramp.</p>
<p>Access to IN-MI RVT</p>	<p>Nearby</p>
<p>Acreage</p>	<p>.2 acres</p>
<p>GPS Coordinates</p>	<p>41.81569 -86.260282</p>
<p>ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score</p>	<p>2</p>

MARMONT ST. BOAT RAMP



<u>MARMONT ST. BOAT RAMP</u> (Special Use Facility)	Picnic Amenities: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
	Play Structures: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
	Sporting Features: NONE AVAILABE ONSITE
Marmont Street at River Street Parking Available Onsite Lot	Special Features: Poor – Fair Condition Boat ramp
Open to the Public	Marmont Street Boat Ramp: Boating Access Site – A designated boat launch location with a ramp and supporting, infrastructure.
Access to IN-MI RVT	No
Acreage	.2 acres
GPS Coordinates	12605593.461 129537.969
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	2

RIVERFRONT PARK SOUTH CENTRAL BOAT RAMP



<p><u>RIVERFRONT PARK SOUTH</u> <u>BOAT RAMP</u> (Special Use Facility)</p> <p>Riverfront Park South Central access from Bond Street</p> <p>Parking Available Onsite Lot</p> <p>Open to the Public</p>	Picnic Amenities: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
	Play Structures: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
	Sporting Features: NONE AVAILABE ONSITE
	Special Features: Poor – Fair Condition Improved Boat ramp Monument: French Paper Company- Good Condition
Access to IN-MI RVT	Yes
Acreage	.2 acres
GPS Coordinates	41.824837 -86.256655
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	1

LT. GENERAL DONOVAN SMITH VETERANS MEMORIAL



Park	Equipment or Facility
<u>LT. GENERAL DONOVAN SMITH</u> <u>VETERANS MEMORIAL</u> (Special Use Park) OPEN TO THE PUBLIC NO PARKING AVAILABLE SOUTH 11 TH STREET AT EAST MAIN STREET	Picnic Amenities: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
	Play Structures: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
	Sporting Features: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
	Special Features: Good- Excellent Condition Monument - City of Niles Sign – Excellent Condition Perennial Garden – Good Condition Light Holiday Tree- Good Condition
Access to IN-MI RVT	No
Acreage	1 acre
GPS Coordinates	12610913.707 124636.997
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	1

FATHER ALLOUEZ HISTORICAL MARKER



<u>Father Allouez Marker</u> (Special Use Facility)	Picnic Amenities: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
	Play Structures: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
	Sporting Features: NONE AVAILABE ONSITE
Bond Street at Fort Street Parking Available Along Street Open to the Public	Special Features: Fair Condition Father Allouez Monument Bench Staircase
Access to IN-MI RVT	Yes
Acreage	.2 acres
GPS Coordinates	12607162.241 120344.061
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	1

FORT ST. JOSEPH MONUMENT



<u>Fort St. Joseph Boulder Monument</u> (Special Use Facility) Bond Street at Front Street Parking Available Along Street Open to the Public	Picnic Amenities: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
	Play Structures: NONE AVAILABLE ONSITE
	Sporting Features: NONE AVAILABE ONSITE
	Special Features: Fair Condition Fort St. Joseph Boulder Bench Staircase
Access to IN-MI RVT	Yes
Acreage	.2 acres
GPS Coordinates	12607162.241 120344.061
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	1

BLUE STAR MEMORIAL HIGHWAY VETERAN’S MEMORIAL



Park	Equipment or Facility
<u>BLUE STAR MEMORIAL HIGHWAY VETERANS MEMORIAL</u> (Special Use Park) OPEN TO THE PUBLIC NO PARKING AVAILABLE MAIN STREET AT FRONT STREET LOCATED INSIDE RIVERFRONT PARK	Picnic Amenities: Available in adjacent park
	Play Structures: Available in adjacent park
	Sporting Features: Available in adjacent park
	Special Features: Good-Excellent Condition Monument – Veterans Memorial – Excellent Condition Monument- Garden Club- Excellent Condition Perennial Garden – Good Condition Flag Posts- Good Condition
Access to IN-MI RVT	Yes
Acreage	.1 acre
GPS Coordinates	12610913.707 124636.997
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	4

PUCKER STREET DAM SITE

Park	Equipment or Facility
<u>PUCKER STREET DAM SITE-</u> <u>FORMERLY LOSENSKY PARK</u> (BOAT LAUNCH- TEMPORARILY CLOSED) <i>CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC IN 2021 DUE TO DAM REMOVAL PROCESS</i> NO PARKING AVAILABLE	Picnic Amenities: Future Development
	Play Structures: None available at this park
	Sporting Features: Future Development
	Special Features: Future Development
Acreage	75+ acres
GPS Coordinates	12610913.707 124636.997
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	Future Development will ensure ADA Compliance

Pucker Street Dam, also known as the Niles Hydroelectric Light Dam, was actually two dams on the same site. Converted in 1891 by the old Niles Electric Company from an old wooden dam made up of whole trees and mud, initially built as a grist mill dam at the site, it was intended to power the Niles municipal street lights and was soon acquired by the city. A concrete dam was constructed in 1928 over the existing wooden structure.

After 1908, Niles began purchasing power from larger companies. By 1981 the Pucker Street Dam supplied only 2% of the city's electrical needs and was used primarily during times of peak needs. At this time the dam is no longer producing electricity and has been removed.

According to the HAER, the Niles Public Works took over the old Pucker Street Dam in 1895. The only extant parts of the dam that date to the original construction are portions of the exit raceway leading from the old powerhouse.

RUFF & TUMBLE DOG PARK



Park	Equipment or Facility
<u>RUFF & TUMBLE DOG PARK</u>	Picnic Amenities: nearby
(DOG PARK)	Play Structures: none available at this park
Riverfront Park South – 950 Bond Street	Sporting Features: none available at this park
RESTROOMS NEARBY	Special Features: 2 Bark Parks- one for small dogs Agility features for dogs
PARKING AVAILABLE ONSITE	
Acreage	1.3
GPS Coordinates	41.8188967702501, -86.25607441752678
ADA Standards for Accessible Design Score	4



Ruff and Tumble Dog Park celebrates grand opening

By Scott Novak

Published 8:58 am Monday, July 30, 2018

NILES — There were plenty of tails wagging Saturday as more than 100 people and their dogs visited South Riverfront Park to celebrate the opening of Ruff & Tumble Dog Park. The park is Niles' first dog park in history.



The Four Flags Chamber of Commerce helped to commemorate the occasion with a ribbon cutting ceremony. Park founder Katrina Andrews snipped through the ribbon with her own dog Roo by her side.

The city of Niles helped to prepare the park for the opening Saturday, with a thorough cleaning. Many city officials attended the grand opening, including Mayor Nick Shelton, Councilman Daniel VandenHeede and City Administrator Ric Huff.

Throughout the afternoon, dogs of all sizes and ages ran through the approximately acre and a half space, while owners tossed them toys or simply watched them run around.

Funds for the park were raised by the community. Andrews applied for a matching grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to receive additional money. She had to raise \$35,000 by Monday to get the grant. In an earlier interview, Andrews said she was confident that the remaining funds would be raised at the grand opening. The nonprofit announced Saturday night that it had met its fundraising goal of \$35,000. By obtaining this goal, the park will receive a matching grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Benches will be the first thing to be added to the park with the grant money.



Photos and article shared with permission from *Niles Daily Star*.



St. Joseph and Dowagiac River Water Trails

The following activities are available:

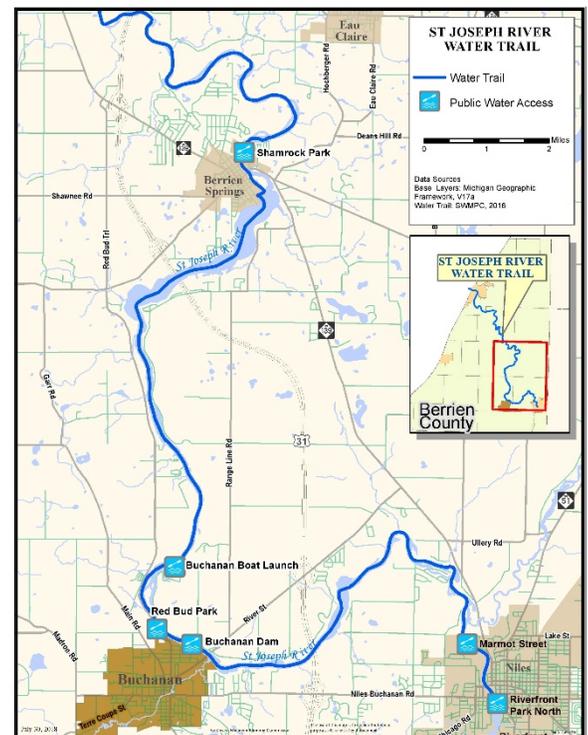
- Canoeing
- Kayaking
- Wildlife Watching

The St. Joseph River Water Trail traverses 66 miles of scenic riverway nearing communities like Niles, Buchanan, St. Joseph, Berrien Center, Eau Claire and others. In Niles, it meets the Dowagiac River Water Trail which goes from Dodd Park, a Cass County Park near Summerville to where the Dowagiac River connects to the St. Joseph River Trail. There is one dam on the Dowagiac River at Pucker Street; however, this dam is slated for removal by 2020. There is a Niles City park (formerly Losensky Park) at the dam and portaging is possible. There is another access point along M139 just north of Niles owned by the MDNR. This is the last access before entering the St. Joseph River in Niles. The Dowagiac River offers great fishing and is known for brown trout fishing and its steelhead and salmon runs.



The City of Niles Supports local Southwest Michigan Planning Commission Water Trail Goals:

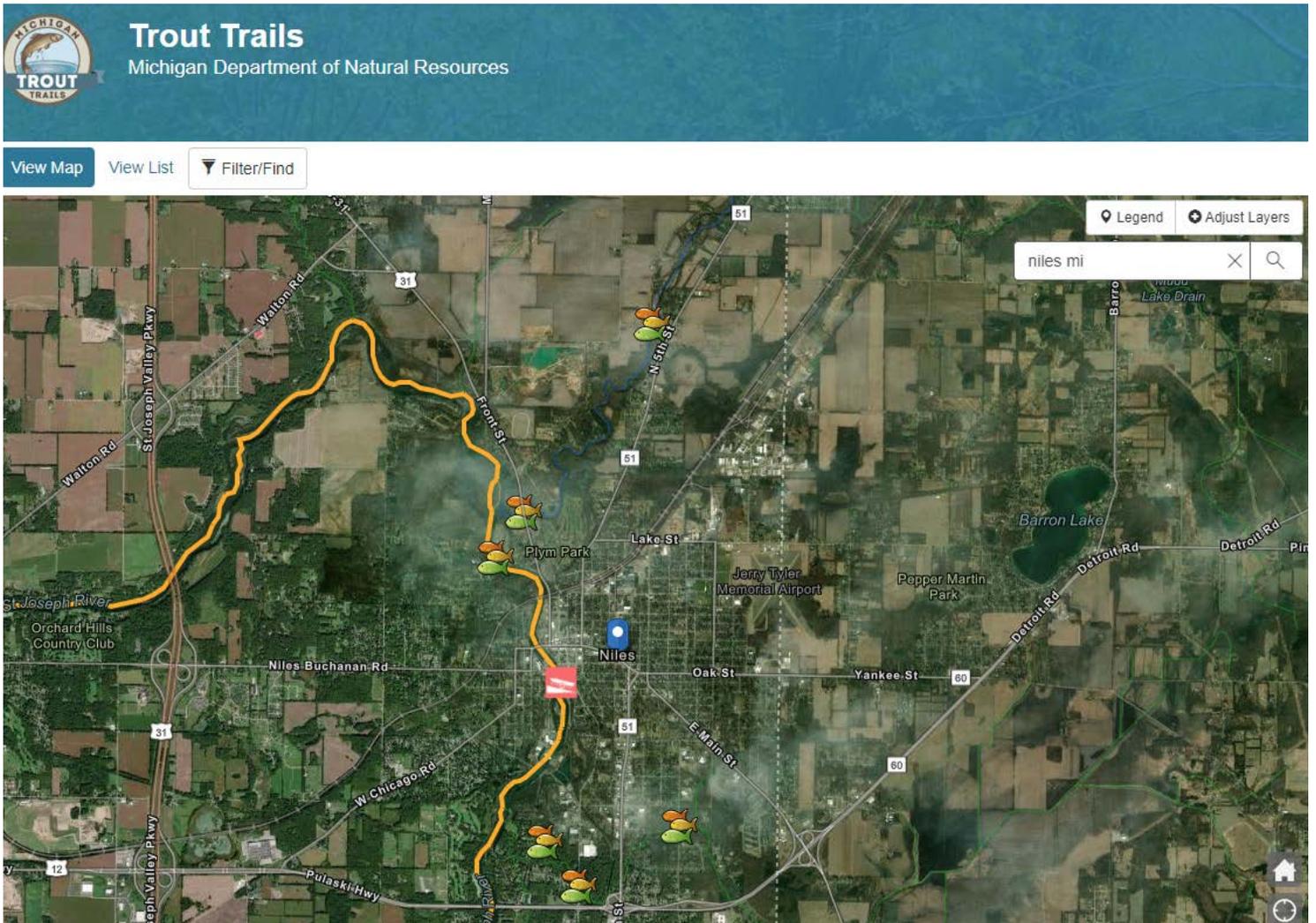
- Embrace National Park Service National Water Trail Best Management Practice (BMP) criteria.
 1. Establish public access points that provide recreational opportunities that accommodate a diversity of trip lengths and provide access to a variety of opportunities for recreation and education.
 2. Provide trail users with opportunities to learn about the value of water resources, cultural heritage, boating skills, and outdoor ethics.
 3. Provide opportunities for communities to develop and implement strategies that enhance and restore the health of local waterways and surrounding lands.
 4. Encourage community support and advocacy for maintenance and stewardship of the water trail.
 5. Provide the public with accessible and understandable water trail information, including details for identifying access and trail routes; cultural, historic, and natural features; hazards; and water quality. Promote the water trail to the community and broad national audience.
 6. Demonstrate ability to support routine and long-term maintenance investments on the water trail and construct, design, and maintain facilities incorporating sustainability principles.



7. Maintain a water trail plan that describes a vision, desired future conditions, and strategies to strengthen best management practices.

- Provide Water Trail users access and restroom facilities every five miles. Acquire land to develop facilities where necessary.
- Establish universal access for Water Trail users at sites where installation of universal access is feasible.
- Ensure camping or paddler-friendly lodging a minimum of every ten miles along the Water Trail.
- Install signage and other amenities at access sites for canoe and kayak users for the Water Trail.

MDNR TROUT TRAILS



Dowagiac River City of Niles Park



Fish Species

Brown Trout

Species Description

Upstream of Pucker Street Dam most brown trout are 8-12 inches, but fish larger than 20 inches are commonly reported by anglers. Brown trout up to 23 inches have been collected during the DNR Fisheries surveys. Downstream of Pucker Street Dam many brown trout larger than 20 inches are captured in this part of the river. Adult steelhead average 7-10 lbs. Chinook Salmon and Coho Salmon sizes vary depending on prey fish abundance in Lake Michigan. Mostly resident fish, but some brown trout move into the river from Lake Michigan. Wild steelhead adults are present most of the year. Wild Chinook and Coho salmon are present in September-mid October.

Geographic Coordinates

Lat:41.865092 / Long:-86.243557

Noteworthy

The current is swift and many spots are too deep to wade. Anglers often fish from shore below the dam or launch at the City of Niles property and fish out of a canoe or rowboat.

Fishing Regulations

Upstream of Pucker Street Dam is a designated Type 4 trout stream. Brown trout are stocked in this stream reach annually. There may be some immigration of wild fish from tributary streams. Downstream of Pucker Street Dam is a designated Type 3 trout stream. Please refer to the Inland Trout and Salmon Stream Regulations in the current Michigan Fishing Guide for regulations for both areas. Downstream of the dam is a mixture of stocked and wild brown trout.

Directions to Site

The City of Niles Park is located off Pucker Street about 0.2 miles west of the M-51 intersection. A gravel parking lot and carry-in access for canoes or small boats is available. Canoes/boats must be carried a distance of 100 ft from the parking lot to the launch area below the dam. This site used to be called Losensky Park. There is also a place to take out canoes upstream of the Pucker Street Dam and portage (~300 ft) around the dam.

Regional Visitor Information (URL)

swmichigan.org

Dowagiac River DNR Access at M-139



Fish Species

Brown Trout; Steelhead

Species Description

Many Brown Trout larger than 20 inches are captured in this part of the river. Adult steelhead average 7-10 lbs. Chinook and Coho salmon sizes vary depending on prey fish abundance in Lake Michigan. Wild steelhead adults are present most of the year. Wild Chinook and Coho salmon are present in September-mid October.

Geographic Coordinates

Lat:41.844482 / Long:-86.262556

Noteworthy

The current is swift and many spots are too deep to wade. Anglers typically launch at this access site and fish out of a canoe or rowboat. A private canoe livery uses a portion of this site through a permit from the DNR.

Fishing Regulations

Dowagiac River at M-139 is a designated Type 3 trout stream. Please refer to the Inland Trout and Salmon Stream Regulations in the current Michigan Fishing Guide. Mixture of stocked and wild brown trout. Mostly resident fish, but some brown trout move into the river from Lake Michigan.

Directions to Site

The DNR access site is located on the west side of M-139 about 0.3 miles south of the Pucker Street intersection. Gravel parking lot and carry-in access for canoes or small boats. Canoes/boats must be carried a distance of approximately 10 feet from the staging area to the river.

Regional Visitor Information (URL)

swmichigan.org

St. Joseph River Marmont Street Park



Fish Species

Steelhead

Species Description

Adult Steelhead average 7-10 lbs. Chinook Salmon and Coho Salmon sizes vary depending on prey fish abundance in Lake Michigan. A mixture of stocked fish and wild brown trout from tributaries may be found. Brown trout are rare in this stream reach, but a few fish move upstream from Lake Michigan during the fall and other fish may occasionally move into the river from tributary streams. Steelhead (mixture of stocked fish and wild fish from tributaries) are the primary species targeted by anglers. Steelhead are most abundant during September through April. Some steelhead move into the river during the summer, but these fish have to take refuge in or at the mouths of coldwater tributaries during hot weather. Wild and stocked Chinook Salmon and Coho Salmon are present in September-mid October.

Geographic Coordinates

Lat:41.83949 / Long:-86.26655

Noteworthy

Marmont Street City Park is open from 8:00 am to 10:00 pm. This stretch of the St. Joseph River is navigable. During all seasons, boaters should be alert for shallow riffles, boulders, and logs. This is especially true during low water when it may be necessary to walk the boat over riffles. There is a rustic toilet at the site.

Fishing Regulations

The St. Joseph River is a designated Type 3 trout stream. Please refer to the Inland Trout and Salmon Stream Regulations in the current Michigan Fishing Guide.

Directions to Site

Marmont Street City Park is located at the end of Marmont Street approximately 0.3 miles west of the intersection with M-139. A concrete boat launch and small parking lot.

Regional Visitor Information (URL)

swmichigan.org

NILES COMMUNITY SCHOOLS – INVENTORY

- **NILES SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL (1441 EAGLE STREET)**
Track, football field, baseball field
- **RING LARDNER JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL (801 NORTH 17TH STREET)**
Softball field, soccer field, football field, basketball court
- **BALLARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (1601 CHICAGO ROAD)**
3 separate playgrounds
2 medium-sized play structures
3 basketball half-courts – all in good condition
3 soccer fields
1 football field (used for Rocket Football)
1 field used mostly for soccer
- **EASTSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (315 NORTH 14TH STREET)**
Basketball court
Playground structure (installed 2000)
- **SOUTHSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (1450 SILVERBROOK RD)**
Practice ballfield
- **NORTHSIDE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER (2020 NORTH 5TH STREET)**
Playground structure (installed 2000),
Practice ballfield
- **OAK MANOR SCHOOL (ONE TYLER ST.)**
3 Playground structures (2 small, one medium)
Basketball court
- **HOWARD/ELLIS SCHOOLS (2788 MANNIX ST.)**
4 small playground structures
Soccer field
Regulation size baseball field (Champs Field)

NILES BUCHANAN YMCA OF GREATER MICHIANA PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

Address or closest intersection:
905 N. Front St., Niles, MI 49120

Hours of Operation:

M – Th: 5:00am – 10:00pm

Friday: 5:00am – 9:00pm

Saturday: 8:00am – 4:00pm

Sunday: 10:00am – 3:00pm

Fees: Varies, Scholarships Available

GPS Coordinates:

41.83722099590388, -

86.25871038635948

Parking Available Onsite

Number of Spots Available: 249



Item	Condition	Rehab Date
6 Lane, 25 Yard Indoor Pool	Excellent	2015
Warm Water Therapy Pool	Excellent	2014
1/10 of a mile indoor rubber track	Excellent	2006
Cybox Fitness Training Center	Good	2006 – 2014
Free Weight Room	Good	2006
Aerobics Room	Excellent	2006
Fitness Class Room	Excellent	2006
State Licensed Preschool	Excellent	2006
Babysitting Room	Excellent	2006
Playground	Good	2006
Full Size Gymnasium	Good	2006
Massage/Reflexology	Good	2013
Gym, Park and Youth Center Addition Under Construction	Construction	2020



LOCATION AMENITIES

Child Watch

6-Lane Pool

Warm Water Therapy Pool

Gymnasium with 2 Full Courts

1/10 of a Mile Indoor Track

Cardiovascular Center

Free Weight Room

CYBEX Strength Training Equipment

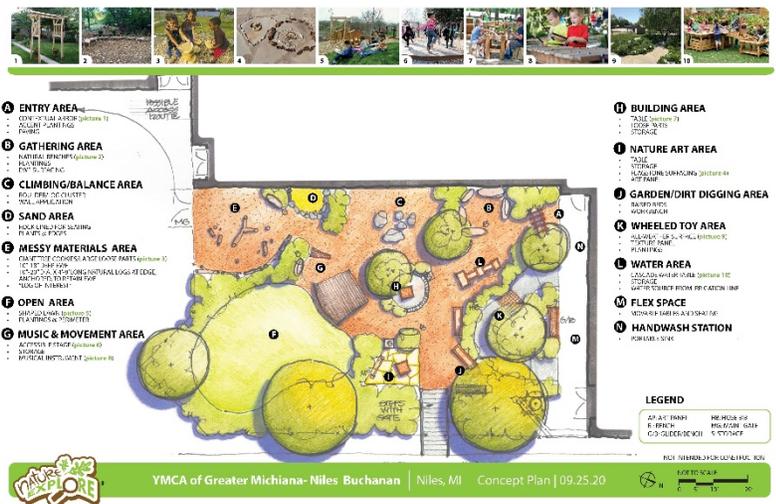
Special Needs/Family Locker Rooms

Aerobic Room/Track Aerobic Area

State Licensed Preschool

Babysitting Room (Infant to 12 Years) with
Outdoor Playground

Men's & Women's Locker Rooms with Sauna





LOCAL GOLF COURSES

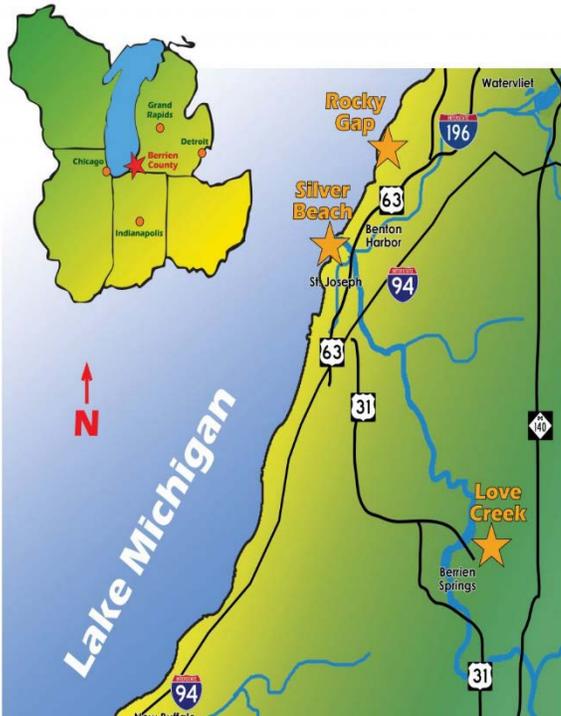
ORCHARD HILLS COUNTRY CLUB– 2841 Niles-Buchanan Road west of Niles. 18 holes, private

PLYM PARK GOLF COURSE – 401 Marmont Street Niles, MI 49120. 9 holes, public

COUNTY PARKS & NATURE CENTERS

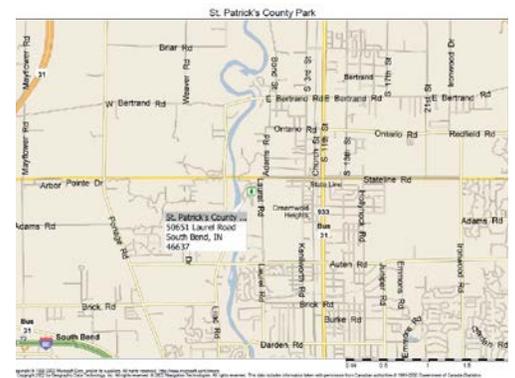
Madeline Bertrand County Park – located at 3038 Adams Road, south of Niles along the state line. Hiking and bicycling trails. Trails are groomed and lighted for cross-country skiing in winter and ski rentals are available. One of the park's most unique and popular features is a challenging, 18-hole Disc Golf course. Covered shelters, an indoor lodge, scenic picnic areas, and children's playground structures make Bertrand a favorite location for family and group outings.

Love Creek Nature Center – located at 9228 Huckleberry Road in Berrien Center, about nine miles north of Niles, 150 acres, educational programs, lighted cross-country and hiking trails, 4.25 mounting bike trail open from spring through fall.



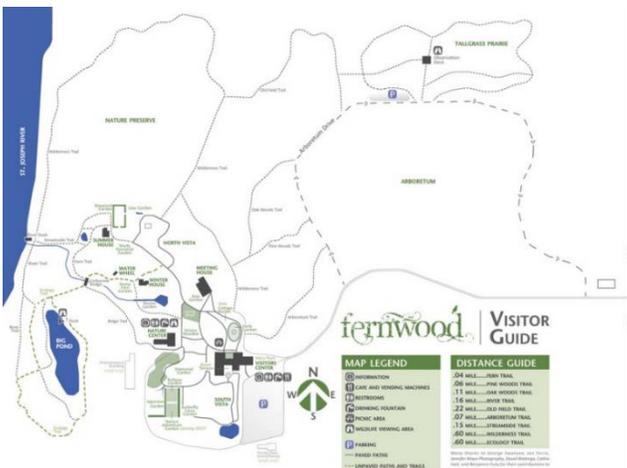
<http://www.berriencounty.org/355/Parks>

St. Patrick's County Park (Indiana) – located on Laurel Rd north of Auten, 398 acres of wooded trails, hiking, picnic sites, canoe rentals, winter inner tubing, cross country ski trails and rentals, Robert J. Fischgrund Center for the Performing Arts. <http://www.sjcparks.org/592/St-Patricks>



FERNWOOD BOTANICAL

GARDEN AND NATURE PRESERVE – located five miles northwest of Niles, along the east bank of the St. Joseph River, Fernwood is a special place where people, plants, and wildlife come together. Eight acres of beautiful gardens are tucked into a scenic valley along the St. Joseph River, completely surrounded by forest. There are miles of trails to explore. Indoors, visitors enjoy the nature center, fern conservatory, café, gift shop, and art gallery. Fernwood offers many possibilities for learning and enrichment, including concerts, classes, trips, exhibits, and special events.



<http://www.fernwoodbotanical.org/>

CAMPGROUNDS

RIVERFRONT CAMPGROUND – located just north of Niles on BR-31, 130 spacious sites along the beautiful Dowagiac River and a private fishing lake. Walk the nature trails along the calming waters of the Dowagiac River where you can fish, tube, canoe, swim, picnic or barbecue. Guests find a special solitude not found in other campgrounds.

SPAULDING LAKE CAMPGROUND – 2305 Bell Road, located in the beautiful southwest region of Michigan's Lower Peninsula between Chicago & Detroit, just 20 miles from the towering dunes of the shores of Lake Michigan. Easily accessible from all of the major highways in the area, we are nestled in the quiet rolling hills in one of the most peaceful settings you will find. Spaulding Lake is the closest RV park to the University of Notre Dame.

MISCELLANEOUS

HACKER'S GOLF AND GAMES – 3019 S. 11th Street, mini-golf course, go-karts, batting cages, a driving range, game room and pro shop.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING & PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Development of this plan was a joint effort of the City's Community Development Director, Director of Public Works and the Niles Public Park and Recreation Board. The Park Board led the process while the Community Development Director functioned as a facilitator and staff liaison.

The Park Board began the planning process by outlining the plan's goals and objectives. It concluded with final adoption of the plan. A main priority that emerged from preliminary discussions was the need to maximize community input in developing the plan.

THE SURVEY

The Board decided that a community-wide survey would be the most effective method of involving Niles citizens. A Survey Monkey survey was prepared by the Board and Community Development Director to gather public opinion about the City's parks and recreation facilities and issued via social media, press release and email blasts. A link on the City's website homepage also made the survey widely available.

Results

To present the survey results that were used to develop this recreation plan, the main findings are listed in bullet form below, and then followed by tables and charts, which depict the respondent's answers in a simple graphic format.

- Respondents live throughout the community. Riverfront Park 56.86% is overwhelmingly the favorite City park and then Island Park at 14.29%; and at least 71.58% go a City park at least once a month.
- Most respondents reported attending the park to interact with the trail, play equipment or sporting features. When asked, the top five features requested included a #1- splashpad, additional hiking trails, children's play equipment, picnic areas/pavilions, kayaking and river tubing- the latter of which could be possible within the scope of the Draft Pucker St. Dam Park Master Plan.

- The community has generally noticed that there are specialized ADA features at some parks- notably swings or access to trails.
- Respondents felt that the Niles does a good job offering festivals, arts related and cultural events.
- On the negative side: many respondents did not feel that the Summer Parks Program was a valuable program; 65% felt the community is not known for its parks system; just over 50% felt the parks could be better or were being poorly maintained and parks are not easy to access. As a note on the latter- in reviewing the Google Maps data, it was found that many City parks were not labeled. Staff spent time ensuring all parks were noted on Google as of January 2021.
- When asked, 77% felt that Parks and Recreation facilities and service are important to our community and worthy of taxpayer support even if that meant that they would have to pay a small special assessment to ensure the ongoing development and maintenance of our City parks and trails. While just over 25% felt that to the extent possible, parks and recreation facilities and services should be paid for by those who use them instead of the general taxpayer. It is important to note that 72% still feel that the City of Niles should also invest in additional parks and recreation facilities.
- When asked, 59% felt that Niles should create an indoor/outdoor sports complex; 82% felt Niles should build an open-air farmers market that can double as event space and 77% felt the community should expand the trail system.
- When asked, 71% said we should improve access to the St. Joseph River while only 61% felt we should improve access to the Dowagiac River.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SURVEYING THE COMMUNITY

A variety of public input methods are available to local units of government such as the City of Niles. The Park Board felt that the best way of learning the views of a large cross section of the community would involve a survey. A survey was selected because Niles has a history of poor participation during community workshops and focus group meetings unless a controversial issue is being discussed. Niles is also a diverse community, with racial representation and household income patterns that are similar to those in most of the United States. Perhaps most importantly, 24% of the City's population between the ages of 21 and 64, and 45% of the population above the age of 65 have a disability¹. Notably, during a pandemic, garnering public input during public meetings is almost impossible. Furthermore, expecting people with mobility challenges and other impairments to attend forums and other public meetings would have unfairly limited their participation, thereby excluding an important group from the process.

Being able to communicate with every household and business and provide each with an opportunity to comment on the plan was a decisive factor in selecting the survey method. The Park Board assessed the City's capacity and determined the ability to use its utility billing system as an instrument to deliver and obtain input was the most preferable option. Based on the favorable survey response rate the decision was a sound one.

¹ Disabled persons are defined as those who experience sensory, physical, or mental impairment or experience difficulty with self-care, going outside the home or working a job. Source: US Bureau of the Census: 2000 Census

OTHER FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PLAN

While the survey serves as the primary method of obtaining public input, its results only represent a portion of the ***Basis for Action***. The park board has taken other factors into consideration during the creation of the action plan. These factors include:

- The Pucker Street Dam Removal Plan and Pucker Street Dam Park Master Plan
- The IN-MI River Valley Trail Plan
- Strategies and recommendations listed in the 2016 City of Niles Parks and Recreation Plan.
- Policy direction provided by the Niles City Council annual strategy session (retreat).
- Goals and objectives identified during the Park Board's own meetings.

DEVELOPING THE ACTION PROGRAM

Information gathered from the different sources previously listed were used to develop the *Action Program*. In its most simple form, an action program is a list of specific projects and activities that are proposed for each year that is covered by a plan's scope. In Niles' case, the Park Board has created an action program that covers a five-year period (2021-2026), which includes all projects and activities that are sponsored or undertaken by the City of Niles *and* are related to recreation. Capital improvements are listed as well as recreational programming such as NB-YMCA's Summer My Way® and Niles Music and More's Summer Concert Series. The Park Board believes that capital improvements and recreational and cultural programming are equally important aspects of strengthening a community's quality of life. That is, bricks and mortar should be complemented by memorable experiences.

The Park Board members began by discussing problems associated with the City's park system. This was followed by an inventory of park equipment by City staff during the summer of 2020. Information gathered from the survey was then reviewed to learn the community's wants. The survey's open-ended question also provided an extensive list of peoples' concerns, which were grouped by category. This gave the Park Board much greater insight into the issues surrounding the City's park and recreation system.

The working sessions led to the creation of a detailed *Action Program*. During the Summer of 2020, the Park Board members devised a five-year capital improvement schedule and action program. Beginning January 8, 2021, the P&R Plan will be available for public comments and recommendations for a minimum of 30 days.

While the *Action Program* on the pages that follow amounts to a short list of projects and programs, it is based on a large amount of information gathered over an extended period of time. **Most importantly, public input is the foundation of this Action Program.** The Park Board is proud to have crafted a plan that reflects the wants and desires of the residents of Niles rather than those of a select few individuals who have been appointed to represent the community's interests. Thus, this is truly a community recreation plan.

FUTURE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

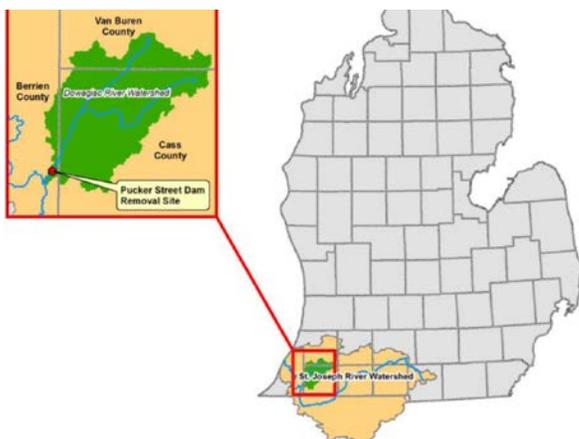
- Goal: Provide new recreational opportunities to City of Niles residents and the surrounding communities in the form of the following objectives, including but not limited to;
 - Incorporate the former Pucker Street Dam site into future fishing park and recreation area with possibility for two phases of recreation development
 - Construction/land allocation for water splash pad or water feature
 - Repair or plan for repairs at Island Park
 - Support the installation of the YMCA Park
 - Install and maintain public arts projects in the parks
 - Land Allocation/reconstruction of historical Fort Saint Joseph replica
 - Construction/land allocation for expansion of the riverfront trail system thereby extending the Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail
 - Construction/land allocation for permanent facilities for the Niles Farmers Market
 - Construction/land allocation for permanent housing of the outdoor ice rink
 - Provide permanent restroom facilities in or near Riverfront Park
 - Improve walkability of the downtown core and connecting parks
 - Incorporate ADA-compliant play and other structures into additional park facilities
 - Provide additional rubbish receptacles throughout park system
 - Update picnic and play equipment at parks with poor or fair condition grades
 - Seek funding opportunities to augment general and project funding for park system
 - Provide dog waste disposal systems at all city parks
 - Increase landscaping in parks
 - Support the development of youth programs and a center to provide a safe environment for youth before/after school and during out of school breaks.

PLANNING PROJECTS

PUCKER STREET DAM

<https://www.swmpc.org/puckerstdam.asp>

Overview of Pucker Street Dam Removal



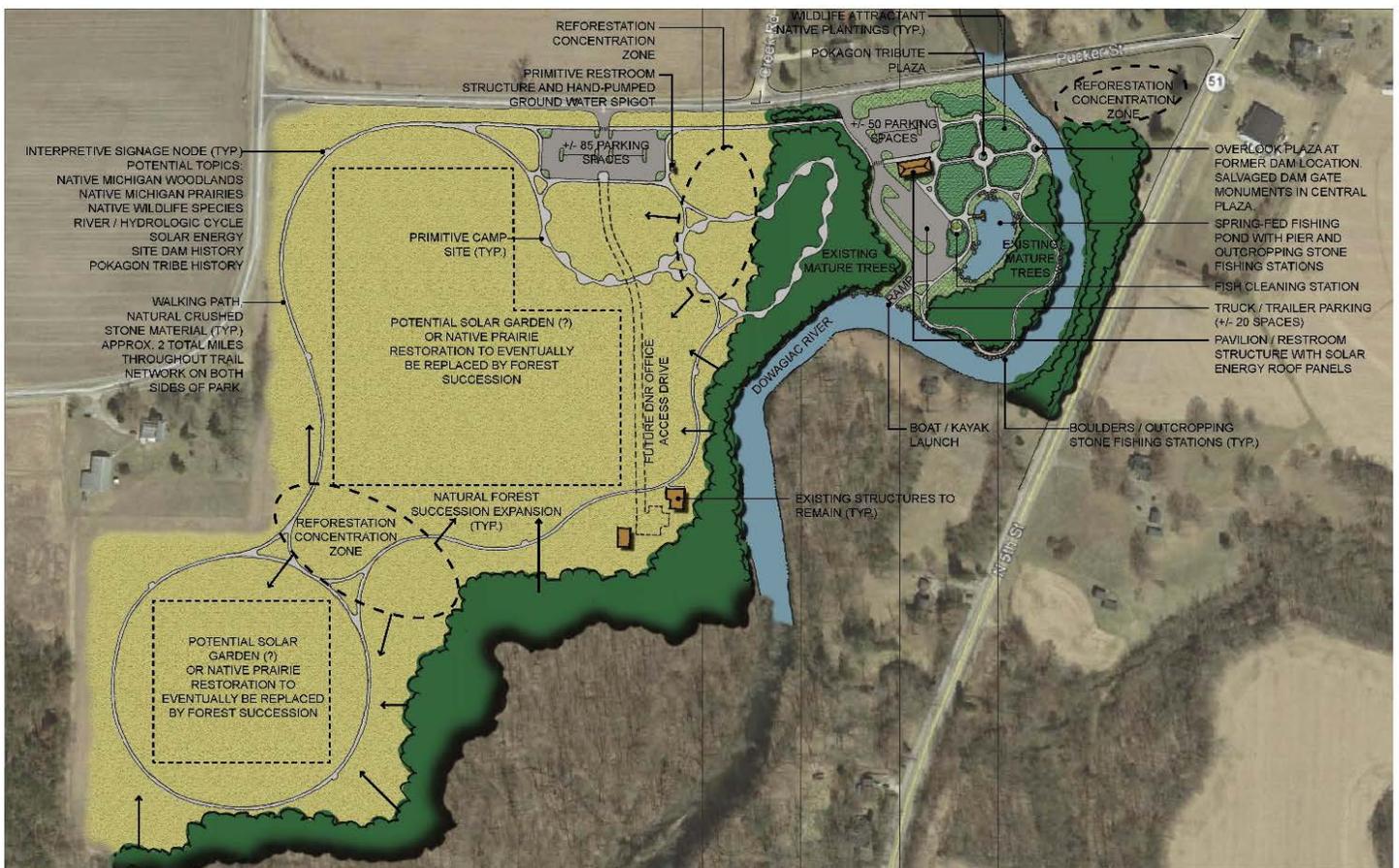
The City of Niles is working with partners to restore the Dowagiac River to a free-flowing river by removing the Pucker Street Dam. The Potawatomi Resource Conservation & Development Council and several partner organizations completed the St. Joseph River Watershed Fish Migration Barrier Inventory in 2011 funded by USFWS, which ranks the Pucker Street Dam as the highest priority dam in the entire watershed for removal. Pucker Street Dam is located only about 3 miles from the confluence with the St. Joseph River and is responsible for closing off almost the entire Dowagiac River Watershed and all of its tributaries (159 miles) to the St. Joseph River. Coldwater streams with a high gradient

will also help the City of Niles dismantle a structure that served a useful purpose at one time, but now has become an eyesore, liability and a nuisance for management.

Partnerships: There is great momentum to restore the Dowagiac River system. A significant channel restoration and floodplain reconnection project was completed upstream at Dodd Park. The Pucker Street Dam removal is a critical component of restoring this river system.

Project Objectives

- Remove the Pucker Street dam to provide ecosystem restoration that eliminates habitat fragmentation, creates fish passage, and allows for connectivity in a system that supports ecologically diverse habitats upstream and downstream of the site.
- Restore the physical and biological processes to reference status, or better, of the existing conditions in the watershed.
- Remove an unsafe and deteriorating structure.
- Contribute to the overall goal of expanding and enhancing a unique and popular large cold water fishery in southern Michigan.
- Ensure public access for fishing and paddling/boating is improved.



NILES DAM PARK MASTER PLAN
 PREPARED FOR: CITY OF NILES, MICHIGAN
 DATE: NOVEMBER 2020

PREPARED BY: **ABONMARCHÉ**

SCALE: 1" = 100'

0 100 200 400

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NORTH

Dam Removal Process Update

Data Collection:

The data collection phase has been completed. The depth of refusal to find the original stream channel location, topographical survey, hazardous material investigation of the building, sediment sampling and soil borings are complete. The volume of sediment is more than expected and original channel depth and location will have more impact on the upstream Pucker Street bridge than anticipated. Additional data gathering on wetlands and endangered species was conducted Summer 2016.

Concept and Final Design Development: This phase is complete. This step has involved landowners and the public. The dam is fully removed and contractors have begun repairing and sculpting the river with the support and oversight of the DNR, highly trained engineers, environmental experts, City staff and many others. The Master Plan for the park has been developed and public input is being actively sought. Initial input is very positive and already, City planners have incorporated the suggestion of the spring-fed fishing pond to support not only the growth and development of native fish but also educational programs for young fishers.



Final Design/Obtain NEPA and SHPO approvals/Develop Bid Documents: This phase is complete. SHPO approval has been received. The MDEQ permit has been applied for and MDEQ held a public hearing on the permit application. A public comment period was held on Draft Environmental Assessment and the Final EA has been completed. A Finding of No Significant Impact has been issued by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The City has received the EGLE permit to remove the dam. The City also had to secure over 40 temporary construction easements from landowners upstream of the dam. The City has awarded the construction project

contract to Milbocker & Sons of Allegan, MI.

Dam Removal and River Restoration: Removal of the powerhouse occurred in August 2019. Losensky Park will be closed periodically during construction. The City will do its best to keep the boat launch portion of the park open when possible, but due to safety reasons, it will have to be closed at times. The park will be open for fishing from Sept 1 - Oct 31, 2020. The access roads upstream of the dam were built over the winter of 2019-2020. Starting in April 2020, a coffer dam and sediment trap was built, sediment is being dredged and managed, the river channel will be sculpted upstream of the dam, the Pucker Street bridge will be stabilized. With a slow drawdown, the dam will be removed in sections. Restoration efforts will begin with stabilizing the river channel where needed and planting banks /riparian areas. Restoration efforts are expected to continue through 2021.

Monitoring: The MDNR, with assistance from the Pokagon Band, City of Niles and Wightman Environmental Inc., have been monitoring turbidity and other parameters during construction. Further the City of Niles has partnered with Trout Unlimited to install a Mayfly monitoring station that monitors temperature, conductivity and depth continuously. Data can be reviewed at http://monitormywatershed.org/sites/Dowagiac_PuckerSt/

Funding Update

The City of Niles is applying to many sources to help fund the dam removal and river restoration project.

Grants awarded to date:

2013 Michigan Department of Natural Resources - Aquatic Habitat - \$200,000

FY 2014 US Fish & Wildlife Service Fish Passage - \$200,000

2014 National Fish & Wildlife Foundation - Sustain our Great Lakes - \$362,854.51

2014 Great Lakes Fishery Trust - \$400,000

2014 Michigan Department of Natural Resources - Dam Management – \$90,750

FY 2015 US Fish & Wildlife Service Fish Passage - \$300,000

MDNR Dam Management (additional) - \$100,000

FY2017 Great Lakes Fish & Wildlife Restoration Act - \$166,115.94

FY2019 Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act - \$41,865.00

Additional Links

[Dowagiac River Restoration – Pucker Street Dam Removal Presentation](#)

[Map of Pucker Street Dam Project Location in Michigan](#)

[Project Site Location Map](#)

[Aerial Photo of Pucker Street Dam](#)

[Map of Wetlands to be Reconnected with Dam Removal](#)

[Cross Section of Dam Area \(shows high gradient of the river in this section\)](#)

[History of Pucker Street Dam](#)

[Photos - Current and Historical](#)

In the News

[Four DNR Dam Management Grant Program recipients to share \\$350,000](#)

PUBLIC ARTS

Public art can be broadly defined as any work of art placed in a public space. Expanding on this idea, public art programs are created to provide administration of public art in a community. This may include commissioning artwork for permanent or temporary display, purchasing existing artwork for permanent or temporary display, maintaining a public art collection, developing educational programming, creating public art informational materials, seeking out partnerships with public and private entities, as well as many other activities (Americans for the Arts, 2003). Niles has a Public Arts Commission with 5 to 7 elected members elected to advise on public arts.

NILES PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION VISION STATEMENT:

We envision creating a destination that celebrates diversity, history, and culture through the Arts.

NILES PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION MISSION STATEMENT:

Making art accessible for everyone.

RECENT PROJECTS:



Richard Hunt's *Hybrid Form II*, in its new location.

In 2017, the NPAC planned for the reinstallation of the internationally-known Richard Hunt Sculpture, 1974 Hybrid Form #2, made of welded Corten steel, next to the new Main Street Bridge. A reception at the site was held with the artist in attendance. A new marker was installed near the sculpture. The new location is more visible and offers residents a chance to interact with the sculpture.

The NPAC has also participated with other city events, such as Third Thursday, which encourages residents to meet downtown and support local business. A “selfie” photo contest was held during the summer of 2019.

Programs which welcome home locally-grown Niles artists are being planned for the future.

CULTURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In 2009, the City Council adopted a Cultural Economic Development Plan that arose from the Downtown Development Authority and the Niles Main Street Program. The CEDP calls to identify, strengthen and strategically employ local and regional cultural assets for economic development. While little work has gone into affecting the key strategies outlined within the CEDP, a renewed interest has been sparked as a result of local PlaceMaking efforts. Upon discussion with the PlaceMaking Steering Committee, it was determined that Niles' best features include the rich history, culture and availability of luxurious green spaces. As such, beginning in 2016, as part of the community's master planning process, the CEDP will be reviewed and updated and a reaffirmation and implementation by the City Council will be requested.

Long-term Cultural Economic Development Goals



In 2009, the Steering Committee determined four, long term goals that would strengthen and employ Niles' local cultural and creative assets as a means of enhancing the community's economic development and quality of life. Planners identified four critical opportunities for cultural economic development: Cultivate and attract creative professionals: artists, designers, and writers; maximize benefits from festivals and special events; build on heritage strengths: St. Joseph River, Fort St. Joseph, and Four Flags history; and market Niles in the region and beyond.

GOAL 1. Build a Creative Economic Environment: conditions develop for creative individuals and businesses to thrive in Niles.

GOAL 2. Develop Niles Heritage: Niles becomes a heritage tourist destination.

GOAL 3. Promote Niles: becomes positioned as a cultural attraction for regional visitors, businesses, and new residents.

GOAL 4. Organize for Cultural Economic Development: Niles develops sustained capacity to implement this plan and realize cultural economic development.

NILES CULTURAL ASSETS

History and Heritage: The site where the city was built has famously flown the flags of four nations. Four Flags is an important part of City heritage and branding and the name has been adopted by many businesses and institutions. Four flags are displayed throughout the community and in promotions.

Fort St. Joseph is an important historic site, the location for scholarly and public archeology, and historic re-enactments. Western Michigan University, in partnership with the City, conducts annual archaeological investigations.

Niles History Center

The Niles History Center (NHC) is comprised of the Fort St. Joseph Museum and the Historic Chapin Mansion. Located in the former carriage and boiler house of the Chapin Mansion, the Museum preserves and interprets Niles history and artifacts, from the prehistoric age through the modern era. The museum has important collections spanning natural history, archaeology, military, railroad and business and industry.

The Historic Chapin Mansion was built as a private residence in 1882, served as City Hall from 1933-2012 and is now being rehabilitated into a public space. Tours and programs are held each year at the Chapin Mansion. In 2019, a major project was completed to restore the north façade and add an ADA-compliant entrance.



Historic Chapin Mansion



Fort St. Joseph Museum

The Niles History Center is involved in various initiatives throughout the City. Downtown Historical Walking Tours are held several times a year. The NHC works with WMU and the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project to investigate the history of the 17th century Fort. A 2016 effort created an exhibit called *Profiles and Portraits, Niles' African American History*. The exhibit centered on black leaders and the City's African American corridor: Ferry Street School, a school for African American children in Niles, Mount Calvary Church, and the state's first Black Masonic Lodge, John W. Moore Lodge.

Native American history and the nearby contemporary Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians reminds residents and visitors of a long-standing culture that still contributes to the unique sense of place in Niles.

Niles Historic Train Depot



Railroads were a critical part of Niles history with a nationally significant historic depot used as a set in several films. The railroad continues to connect Niles with major population centers. Once high-speed rail is established, Niles will become even more accessible and attractive for creative businesses with ready access to major markets.

Famous citizens include: automotive pioneers John and Horace Dodge, retailer Montgomery Ward, musician Tommy James and

author Ring Lardner.

Niles District Library

The Niles District Library is a valued public resource for books, information, and community events. They offer public meeting spaces and programs for people of all ages. The Library has a curated exhibition space that shows local artists.



Authentic Home Town Feel of Niles

Survey results indicate most residents feel Niles is a great community with a small town feel. It is on the verge of renaissance. There are many long-time family-owned businesses, with some carried on by new families. These assets should be featured by telling the Niles stories associated with these businesses and historic buildings. People have a welcoming attitude and are generally tolerant of diversity (important to attract creative businesses.) Events are family-friendly. Many people describe Niles as a great place to raise families.

Downtown Development Authority

The Downtown Development Authority is an active program, recognized locally and historically as a leader. Over the last decade, downtown property owners removed aluminum skins and restored historic building facades. Streetscape improvements have been completed. Downtown historic architecture is mostly intact and has earned a National Historic District designation. Downtown is compact and walkable. There is direct access from Main Street to the river and park. Restaurants, cafes, and specialty shops are starting to repopulate buildings.

Two film theaters attract regional audiences. Second and third floor spaces are well suited to development for residential, cultural/creative, and commercial development. There is some infill potential.

Special Events

Niles is well known for family-friendly cultural events. These include: The Fort St. Joseph Archeology Open House, the Hunter Ice Festival, Third Thursdays, the Niles Family Fun Fair and Music Festival, Free Summer Movies in the Park, Free Summer Concert Series, Niles Renaissance Faire, Niles Haunted House, Four Flags Area Apple Festival, Downtown Trick-or-Treating, and Small Business Saturday.



Location

Niles is the center of the Michiana region with ready access to large markets in South Bend, Chicago, and Detroit. Niles is a transportation hub with the existing Amtrak -- potential highspeed rail link between Chicago and Detroit, and major highways. Niles is near major universities and colleges.

Affordable real estate

Commercial and residential real estate is available and more affordable in Niles than in nearby cities. Affordable real estate in proximity to major markets demonstrates potential to attract creative businesses who can establish in Niles. An artist relocation program could work, especially if one or more spaces could be prepared as a creative incubator. The former Simplicity factory would be ideal for a film studio, arts museum or an interactive industry museum.

Artists and creative workers

Niles is home to many fine visual and performing artists, filmmakers, and craftspeople, some with national reputations. Design firms and architects have located here. There is good potential for one or more clusters of creative professionals related to design and fine papers. Niles is seeing a rise in the number of local artisans popping up in downtown over the last few years- we are delighted with the economic impact and tourism their wares and offerings provide to the broader community.

Environmental resources



Niles has always been a river town and the St. Joseph River is an important part of the town's history that is still a major resource. The community has largely maintained open access to the river. Cultural events, outdoor recreation, dining, entertainment, and new developments are located along the river. The River trail is a great attraction and an expansion is planned. The Fernwood Botanic Garden and Nature Preserve offers a nature center, trails, gardens, conservatory, art gallery, gift shop, and café. There are snowmobile trails managed by the Four Flags Snowmobile club.

City supportive of cultural development

The City of Niles and the DDA have been proactive to redevelop downtown, to recruit creative businesses, and to produce cultural events. The City has streamlined permitting processes. City leaders realize the potential of cultural economic development and are open to integration of cultural economic development plan into Master Plan. The DDA board and staff have taken excellent advantage of this cultural economic development planning to identify and mobilize cultural resources for economic development.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS SCHEDULE & ACTION PROGRAM

Rather than prioritize projects and activities listed with the *Action Program*, the Park Board chose to include only those projects deemed to be of high value to the City of Niles. This method substantially shortens the list of potential projects and brings greater focus to those items that have been identified for inclusion within this plan.

The Park Board will pursue an aggressive development plan which includes a combination of city, state and private resources. Michigan Department of Natural Resources funding will be sought for large capital-intensive projects, such as the extension of the IN-MI River Valley Trail, Splash Pad or Water Feature and the Niles Dam Park. Although the City Council has placed a freeze on capital improvement spending for the past several years, the Park Board will seek to reinstate a minimum of \$50,000 per year to provide for equipment and facilities maintenance and upgrades. Foundations and private contributions may also be utilized for projects involving public art, museum development and property acquisition in the future.

Public Input on Draft 2021-2026 City of Niles Parks and Recreation Plan

Duration of Draft Plan Public Review Period 1/8/2021 – 2/8/2021

Draft P&R Plan Posted on [City's Website](#): 1/8/2021

Legal Notice in SB Tribune: 1/8/2021

Mayor Shelton posted to his Facebook account to seek input/comments; this was shared to a private (not official) City of Niles Facebook page with 8.6k followers as well: 1/19/2021

Niles Daily Star ran an advertisement notifying residents that the draft PR plan was available on the City's website and provided a link for 1 week as a courtesy to the City.

Notice of Public Hearing in SB Tribune: 1/20/2021

Notice of Public Hearing in Niles Daily Star: 1/23/2021

Public Hearing: 2/8/2021

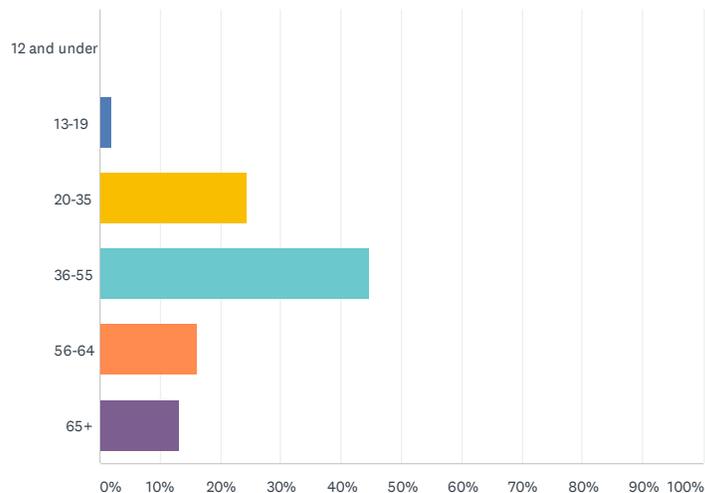
Comments Received: The Mayor received a comment on his FB page noting that we needed to include a splashpad

Note- while the City of Niles has a Parks and Recreation Board- they are advisory in capacity and do not make formal resolutions. As such, we are only including their minutes showing notice of recommendation of the 2020-2026 Parks and Recreation Plan to the Niles City Council.

City of Niles 5 Year Parks and Recreation Plan Survey

Q1 Age

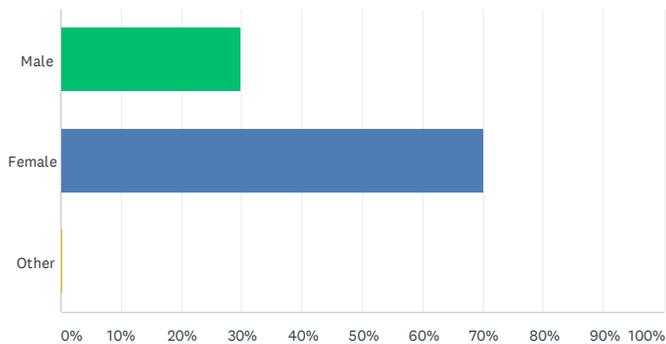
Answered: 379 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
12 and under	0.00%	0
13-19	1.85%	7
20-35	24.27%	92
36-55	44.59%	169
56-64	16.09%	61
65+	13.19%	50
TOTAL		379

Q2 Gender

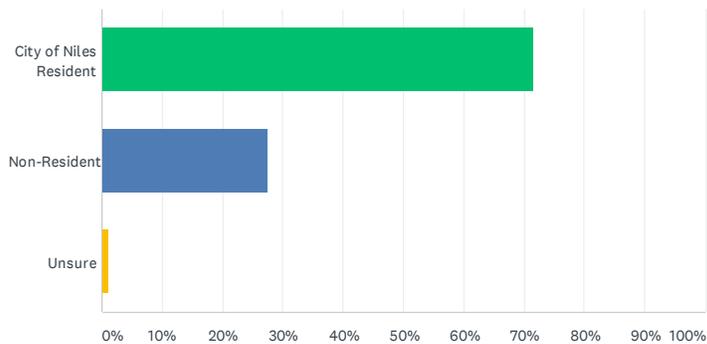
Answered: 378 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	29.63%	112
Female	70.11%	265
Other	0.26%	1
TOTAL		378

Q3 City of Niles Residency

Answered: 377 Skipped: 6

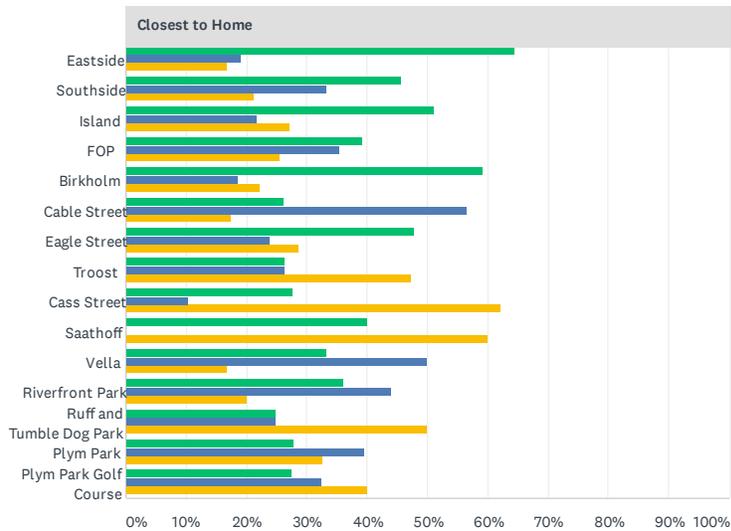


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
City of Niles Resident	71.62%	270
Non-Resident	27.32%	103
Unsure	1.06%	4
TOTAL		377

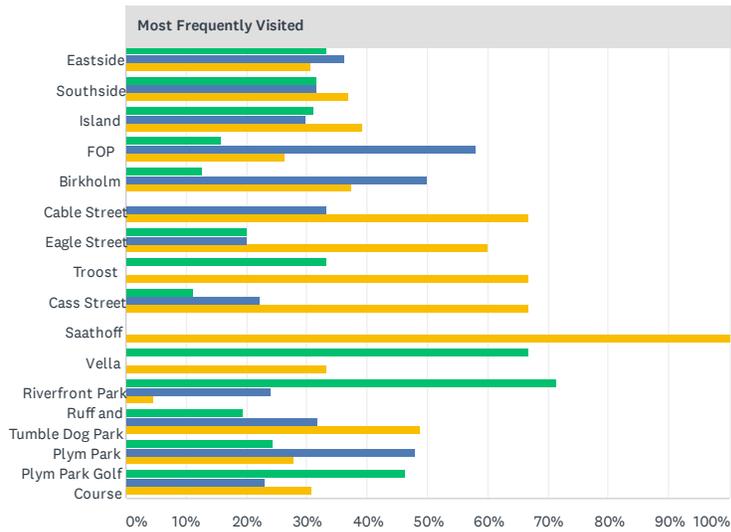
City of Niles 5 Year Parks and Recreation Plan Survey

Q4 We would like to better understand the use of the Niles parks overall, in your neighborhood, and through the city. In the table below, please identify the park that is closest to your home as well as which parks you visit the most.

Answered: 372 Skipped: 11



Closest Next Closest 3rd Closest



1- Most Frequently Visited 2- 2nd Most Visited 3- 3rd Most Visited

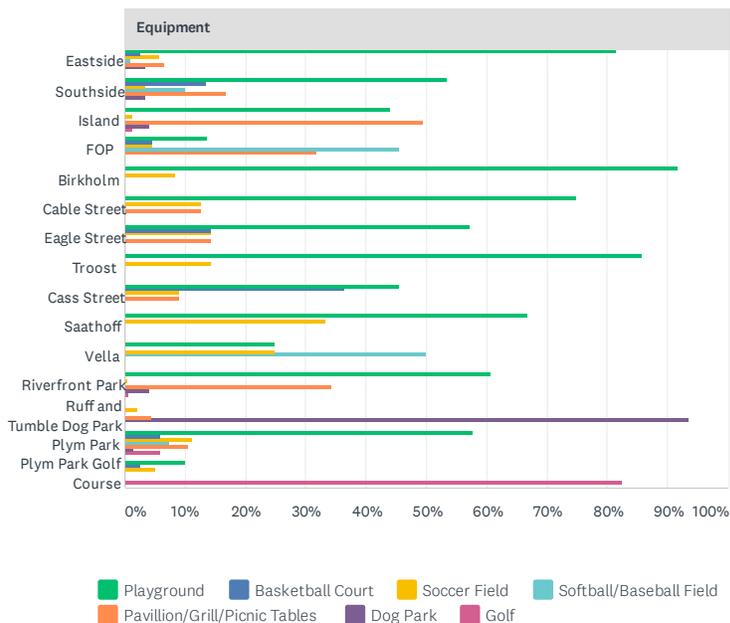
City of Niles 5 Year Parks and Recreation Plan Survey

Closest to Home					
	CLOSEST	NEXT CLOSEST	3RD CLOSEST	TOTAL	
Eastside	64.39% 85	18.94% 25	16.67% 22	132	
Southside	45.61% 26	33.33% 19	21.05% 12	57	
Island	51.09% 47	21.74% 20	27.17% 25	92	
FOP	39.22% 20	35.29% 18	25.49% 13	51	
Birkholm	59.26% 16	18.52% 5	22.22% 6	27	
Cable Street	26.09% 6	56.52% 13	17.39% 4	23	
Eagle Street	47.62% 10	23.81% 5	28.57% 6	21	
Troost	26.32% 5	26.32% 5	47.37% 9	19	
Cass Street	27.59% 8	10.34% 3	62.07% 18	29	
Saathoff	40.00% 2	0.00% 0	60.00% 3	5	
Vella	33.33% 6	50.00% 9	16.67% 3	18	
Riverfront Park	35.90% 84	44.02% 103	20.09% 47	234	
Ruff and Tumble Dog Park	25.00% 8	25.00% 8	50.00% 16	32	
Plym Park	27.72% 28	39.60% 40	32.67% 33	101	
Plym Park Golf Course	27.50% 11	32.50% 13	40.00% 16	40	
Most Frequently Visited					
	1- MOST FREQUENTLY VISITED	2- 2ND MOST VISITED	3- 3RD MOST VISITED	TOTAL	
Eastside	33.33% 35	36.19% 38	30.48% 32	105	
Southside	31.58% 6	31.58% 6	36.84% 7	19	
Island	31.25% 20	29.69% 19	39.06% 25	64	
FOP	15.79% 3	57.89% 11	26.32% 5	19	
Birkholm	12.50% 1	50.00% 4	37.50% 3	8	
Cable Street	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	66.67% 2	3	
Eagle Street	20.00% 1	20.00% 1	60.00% 3	5	
Troost	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	66.67% 4	6	
Cass Street	11.11% 1	22.22% 2	66.67% 6	9	
Saathoff	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 2	2	
Vella	66.67% 2	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	3	
Riverfront Park	71.32% 184	24.03% 62	4.65% 12	258	
Ruff and Tumble Dog Park	19.51% 8	31.71% 13	48.78% 20	41	
Plym Park	24.37% 29	47.90% 57	27.73% 33	119	
Plym Park Golf Course	46.15% 12	23.08% 6	30.77% 8	26	

City of Niles 5 Year Parks and Recreation Plan Survey

Q5 For the 3 parks that you selected as the most frequently visited, please identify the activities that you participate in or use most often.

Answered: 332 Skipped: 51



Equipment	PLAYGROUND	BASKETBALL COURT	SOCCER FIELD	SOFTBALL/BASEBALL FIELD	PAVILLION/GRILL/PICNIC TABLES	DOG PARK	GOLF	TOTAL
Eastside	81.30% 100	2.44% 3	5.69% 7	0.81% 1	6.50% 8	3.25% 4	0.00% 0	123
Southside	53.33% 16	13.33% 4	3.33% 1	10.00% 3	16.67% 5	3.33% 1	0.00% 0	30
Island	44.00% 33	0.00% 0	1.33% 1	0.00% 0	49.33% 37	4.00% 3	1.33% 1	75
FOP	13.64% 3	4.55% 1	4.55% 1	45.45% 10	31.82% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	22
Birkholm	91.67% 11	0.00% 0	8.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12
Cable Street	75.00% 6	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8
Eagle Street	57.14% 4	14.29% 1	14.29% 1	0.00% 0	14.29% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7
Troost	85.71% 6	0.00% 0	14.29% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7
Cass Street	45.45% 5	36.36% 4	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	11
Saathoff	66.67% 2	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3
Vella	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	50.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4
Riverfront Park	60.58% 166	0.00% 0	0.36% 1	0.00% 0	34.31% 94	4.01% 11	0.73% 2	274
Ruff and Tumble Dog Park	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2.17% 1	0.00% 0	4.35% 2	93.48% 43	0.00% 0	46
Plym Park	57.78% 78	5.93% 8	11.11% 15	7.41% 10	10.37% 14	1.48% 2	5.93% 8	135
Plym Park Golf Course	10.00% 4	2.50% 1	5.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	82.50% 33	40

OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)

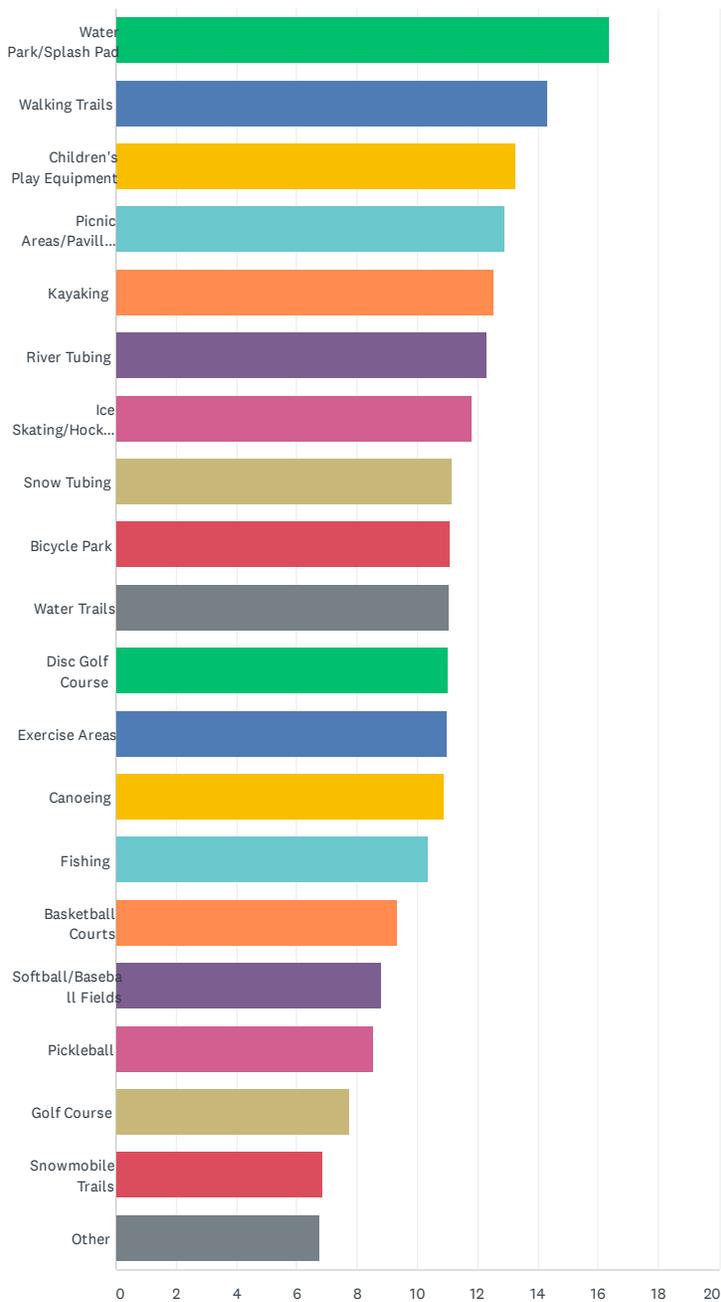
- 1 Tyler's Sports Complex
- 2 Thomas stadium! All summer long
- 3 trails
- 4 Troost park is unsafe. Adults loiter making it uncomfortable to bring children.
- 5 Just to go for walks or take my dog to island park to play. I feel safer than ruff and tumble dog park
- 6 Pavilion & Walking along the river.
- 7 for Island and Riverfront: Fishing!!!!!!!
- 8 Just comments I want to make. We have too many parks. We need to close some, sell them and then make a few great parks.
- 9 Walking
- 10 THIS IS AN AWFUL SURVEY
- 11 River walk
- 12 Cycling and walking
- 13 River walk
- 14 I run, jog or walk the trails. I do not use any of the other facilities.
- 15 Don't use the two that are closest
- 16 River walk
- 17 None
- 18 Tennis at Plym Park, walking at Riverfront Park
- 19 Also relaxing and walking at all 3
- 20 Just walk by the river
- 21 A lot of Pokémon playing
- 22 Trail
- 23 Riverfront and plym park I use for walking the dog. Its great for exercise and to clear you head
- 24 Walking trail
- 25 mostly walk around, and will fish at riverfront and island
- 26 The area by the DAM
- 27 Staged exercise equipment along the walking route
- 28 South Riverfront Park Fort St. Joseph
- 29 Love the ampitheatre and walking trail at Riverfront!
- 30 I walk in these parks. My husband runs along riverfront
- 31 Walking trail
- 32 Walking/biking trails
- 33 Walking
- 34 Tennis courts and walking trail at Plym
- 35 Fishing, swings, relaxing.
- 36 Trail
- 37 Walking paths only at riverfront
- 38 walking trail
- 39 I use the walking path at Riverfront Park the most but was not an option
- 40 Would love to see Island Park open again.
- 41 Car show!
- 42 We use the whole park where Ruff & Tumble is for the pavillion, open area for kites, and taking photos in general.
- 43 Tennis courts!!
- 44 Tennis courts at Plym, riverwalk at riverfront park
- 45 TENNIS courts!!!
- 46 Running path
- 47 Riverfront & Plym Park walk path

- 48 The bike path
- 49 Walk and bike the trail
- 50 Tennis / Pickleball
- 51 Walking trail
- 52 I also walk daily at Riverfront
- 53 Walking trail at Riverfront
- 54 Trails
- 55 Walking path in Riverfront park and to south.
- 56 River walk
- 57 Riverfront Park river walk & trail
- 58 Other than Dog Park mostly Pokemon Go is Played at visited parks. Also walking at Riverfront and Plym
- 59 walking path at Riverfront
- 60 Use parks for circuit training and walking/running
- 61 Tennis courts at Plym
- 62 Walking paths
- 63 Riverfront-trail
- 64 Walking along riverfront
- 65 walking/ biking
- 66 Music, walk
- 67 Trails
- 68 Riverfront - use the walk/bike path mostly and pavilion when Zumba is there
- 69 The park closest to my home is not even in the list.
- 70 Using the walking path that runs thru
- 71 Walking at riverfront
- 72 Tennis courts at Plym are primary reason we go there
- 73 city festivals
- 74 Skatepark
- 75 Drive down to eat lunch by the river from the comfort of our vehicle
- 76 Walking trail!!
- 77 Troost is a complete eye sore !! definitely needs some TLC!!
- 78 Concerts and events
- 79 Skatepark
- 80 Fishing at riverfront and island when it was accessible.
- 81 Trails
- 82 Plym - jog around perimeter
- 83 trail
- 84 Concerts and events at Riverfront Park

City of Niles 5 Year Parks and Recreation Plan Survey

Q6 What facilities, equipment or programs would you like to see added to the Niles park system? Please rank them in order of preference (1 = most important, 2 = next most important, etc).

Answered: 370 Skipped: 13



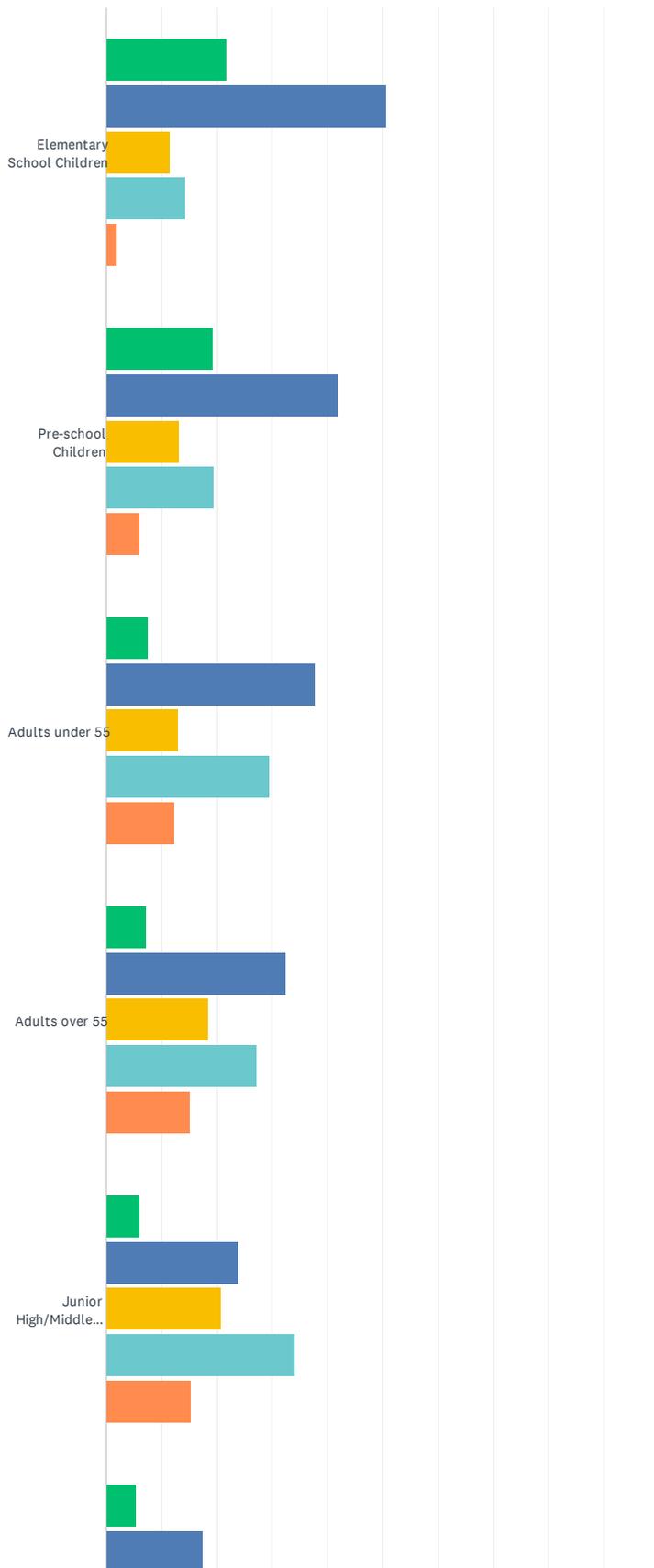
City of Niles 5 Year Parks and Recreation Plan Survey

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Water Park/Splash Pad	47.27% 156	9.39% 31	7.27% 24	3.94% 13	3.33% 11	3.64% 12	3.03% 10	2.12% 7	1.52% 5	1.82% 6	1.21% 4	2.12% 7	2.42% 8	0.91% 3	2.4
Walking Trails	13.31% 41	8.77% 27	12.66% 39	10.06% 31	7.79% 24	7.14% 22	6.49% 20	2.60% 8	4.22% 13	3.57% 11	3.57% 11	2.92% 9	3.25% 10	2.27% 7	2.6
Children's Play Equipment	5.78% 17	15.65% 46	9.52% 28	8.16% 24	6.12% 18	7.14% 21	5.44% 16	4.08% 12	2.72% 8	4.76% 14	3.06% 9	4.76% 14	3.06% 9	2.72% 8	4.4
Picnic Areas/Pavillions	3.72% 11	9.80% 29	10.14% 30	10.47% 31	9.12% 27	5.74% 17	4.39% 13	5.74% 17	6.42% 19	3.04% 9	5.74% 17	5.41% 16	2.03% 6	1.01% 3	2.7
Kayaking	5.57% 16	9.06% 26	7.32% 21	5.92% 17	9.06% 26	6.97% 20	8.36% 24	4.88% 14	6.27% 18	4.18% 12	3.83% 11	2.79% 8	4.53% 13	2.09% 6	3.8
River Tubing	4.61% 13	6.03% 17	8.87% 25	6.74% 19	8.16% 23	7.09% 20	3.55% 10	8.16% 23	6.03% 17	5.67% 16	4.96% 14	2.84% 8	5.67% 16	3.90% 11	5.3
Ice Skating/Hockey Rink	5.02% 15	9.70% 29	6.35% 19	7.02% 21	4.35% 13	3.68% 11	5.35% 16	5.35% 16	5.69% 17	4.68% 14	8.03% 24	5.02% 15	5.69% 17	4.68% 14	4.0
Snow Tubing	2.11% 6	3.51% 10	6.67% 19	5.61% 16	8.42% 24	3.86% 11	7.37% 21	8.07% 23	7.02% 20	6.32% 18	3.51% 10	8.42% 24	2.46% 7	4.91% 14	2.4
Bicycle Park	3.53% 10	6.01% 17	7.07% 20	5.30% 15	3.89% 11	5.30% 15	6.01% 17	6.71% 19	3.89% 11	5.30% 15	4.95% 14	6.01% 17	5.65% 16	6.01% 17	5.6
Water Trails	1.05% 3	7.02% 20	3.86% 11	4.21% 12	8.07% 23	6.32% 18	5.96% 17	5.61% 16	7.72% 22	5.96% 17	6.67% 19	4.56% 13	4.91% 14	6.32% 18	4.2
Disc Golf Course	6.76% 19	5.34% 15	4.98% 14	6.41% 18	5.69% 16	4.63% 13	3.20% 9	6.76% 19	4.27% 12	4.98% 14	3.91% 11	4.27% 12	3.91% 11	4.98% 14	8.1
Exercise Areas	4.23% 12	5.99% 17	3.87% 11	5.28% 15	5.28% 15	5.99% 17	7.39% 21	5.63% 16	6.69% 19	4.23% 12	4.93% 14	3.52% 10	4.93% 14	6.69% 19	3.8
Canoeing	1.75% 5	3.86% 11	5.61% 16	7.72% 22	5.61% 16	7.37% 21	7.72% 22	7.37% 21	3.51% 10	4.56% 13	3.86% 11	3.51% 10	5.96% 17	4.91% 14	4.2
Fishing	2.45% 7	4.55% 13	4.55% 13	4.55% 13	6.64% 19	5.59% 16	5.59% 16	4.55% 13	4.55% 13	6.29% 18	5.24% 15	5.24% 15	4.20% 12	4.90% 14	6.9
Basketball Courts	1.80% 5	3.96% 11	3.96% 11	3.96% 11	2.16% 6	4.68% 13	2.16% 6	4.68% 13	5.40% 15	8.99% 25	5.40% 15	5.76% 16	6.47% 18	6.47% 18	5.7
Softball/Baseball Fields	1.09% 3	1.09% 3	4.36% 12	3.64% 10	1.09% 3	3.64% 10	3.64% 10	3.64% 10	5.82% 16	4.73% 13	9.45% 26	4.00% 11	9.45% 26	10.18% 28	4.3
Pickleball	4.29% 12	2.86% 8	1.79% 5	2.86% 8	3.21% 9	3.57% 10	3.57% 10	3.21% 9	2.86% 8	5.00% 14	3.93% 11	7.14% 20	5.00% 14	6.79% 19	6.7
Golf Course	1.09% 3	5.43% 15	2.54% 7	1.45% 4	1.45% 4	3.99% 11	3.26% 9	3.26% 9	3.62% 10	5.07% 14	5.43% 15	3.62% 10	5.43% 15	3.99% 11	4.7
Snowmobile Trails	0.74% 2	0.74% 2	1.48% 4	1.85% 5	2.58% 7	1.48% 4	4.06% 11	0.37% 1	5.54% 15	4.06% 11	3.32% 9	8.12% 22	4.43% 12	7.01% 19	6.6
Other	4.21% 11	1.53% 4	1.92% 5	2.30% 6	1.15% 3	2.30% 6	1.15% 3	4.21% 11	3.45% 9	3.45% 9	3.83% 10	3.83% 10	4.98% 13	3.07% 8	5.3

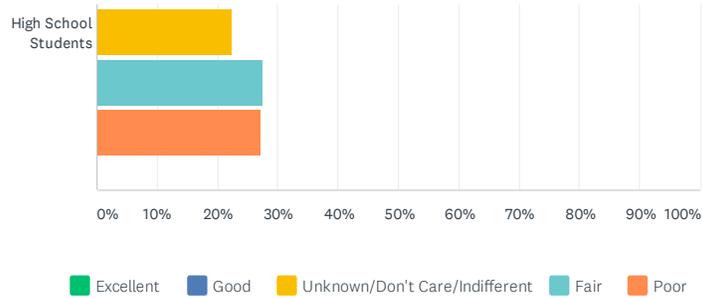
City of Niles 5 Year Parks and Recreation Plan Survey

Q7 How would you rate the City of Niles parks and recreation facilities for each age group?

Answered: 372 Skipped: 11



City of Niles 5 Year Parks and Recreation Plan Survey



	EXCELLENT	GOOD	UNKNOWN/DON'T CARE/INDIFFERENT	FAIR	POOR	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Elementary School Children	21.70% 79	50.55% 184	11.54% 42	14.29% 52	1.92% 7	364	2.24
Pre-school Children	19.28% 70	41.87% 152	13.22% 48	19.56% 71	6.06% 22	363	2.51
Adults under 55	7.44% 27	37.74% 137	12.95% 47	29.48% 107	12.40% 45	363	3.02
Adults over 55	7.12% 26	32.33% 118	18.36% 67	27.12% 99	15.07% 55	365	3.11
Junior High/Middle School Children	6.09% 22	23.82% 86	20.78% 75	34.07% 123	15.24% 55	361	3.29
High School Students	5.54% 20	17.45% 63	22.44% 81	27.42% 99	27.15% 98	361	3.53

IF YES, WHAT SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE?

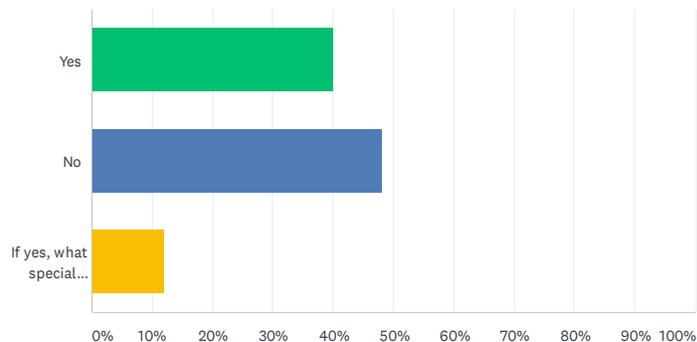
- 1 Swings
- 2 Drinking fountain
- 3 drinking fountains, but they don't work and I wouldn't want to use them.
- 4 Riverfront is realitvly new and complies already
- 5 Wheelchair accessible swing
- 6 Wheel Chair swing at riverfront
- 7 Wheelchair swings
- 8 Handicapped Parking
- 9 Ada swings
- 10 Riverfront has special parking and an ADA seing
- 11 Wheelchair swing
- 12 Niles is a community of elders. Seeing the additional effort by the city to make walkways handicap accessible makes me proud of my town.
- 13 Wheelchair swing
- 14 Special needs swing but the chains are broken
- 15 Swings
- 16 At Riverfront Park, there is a wheelchair accessible swing.
- 17 I have seen swings
- 18 Sidewalks, ramps. I would like to see restroom facilities - both accessible and non-accessible - at the Riverfront, so people don't have to use local businesses.
- 19 Ada swings, water fountains, safety surfacing material
- 20 Special swings
- 21 I remember seeing special swings for children with disabilities and also a wheelchair friendly one at Riverside.
- 22 Wheelchair swing
- 23 Riverfront has a wheelchair swing
- 24 Wheelchair swing
- 25 Riverfront park equipment
- 26 Swings and ramps
- 27 Riverfront Park swing
- 28 Swings for people in wheelchairs / with disabilities
- 29 handicap swing
- 30 Swings
- 31 Wheel chair accessible playground
- 32 Parking availability
- 33 wheelcare access water fountains parking
- 34 Ramps
- 35 Handicap accessible equipment
- 36 Special swing for wheelchair at Riverfront
- 37 Swing at riverfront
- 38 Swings, ramps
- 39 Swing at Riverfront
- 40 Swings trail access
- 41 Accessability, wheel chair swing,paved walk ways
- 42 Handicapped swings
- 43 Wheelchair swings
- 44 Tennis courts at Plym, riverwalk at riverfront park
- 45 TENNIS courts!!!
- 46 Running path
- 47 Riverfront & Plym Park walk path
- 48 The bike path
- 49 Walk and bike the trail
- 50 Tennis / Pickleball
- 51 Walking trail
- 52 I also walk daily at Riverfront
- 53 Walking trail at Riverfront
- 54 Trails
- 55 Walking path in Riverfront park and to south.

- 56 River walk
- 57 Riverfront Park river walk & trail
- 58 Other than Dog Park mostly Pokemon Go is Played at visited parks. Also walking at Riverfront and Plym
- 59 walking path at Riverfront
- 60 Use parks for circuit training and walking/running
- 61 Tennis courts at Plym
- 62 Walking paths
- 63 Riverfront-trail
- 64 Walking along riverfront
- 65 walking/ biking
- 66 Music, walk
- 67 Trails
- 68 Riverfront - use the walk/bike path mostly and pavilion when Zumba is there
- 69 The park closest to my home is not even in the list.
- 70 Using the walking path that runs thru
- 71 Walking at riverfront
- 72 Tennis courts at Plym are primary reason we go there
- 73 city festivals
- 74 Skatepark
- 75 Drive down to eat lunch by the river from the comfort of our vehicle
- 76 Walking trail!!
- 77 Troost is a complete eye sore !! definitely needs some TLC!!
- 78 Concerts and events
- 79 Skatepark
- 80 Fishing at riverfront and island when it was accessible.
- 81 Trails
- 82 Plym - jog around perimeter
- 83 trail
- 84 Concerts and events at Riverfront Park

City of Niles 5 Year Parks and Recreation Plan Survey

Q8 All new or modified public parks are required to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) such as designated parking, safety surfaces for wheelchairs, drinking fountains at designated heights, etc. For the parks that you most frequently visit, are you aware of any special accommodations to conform to the ADA?

Answered: 363 Skipped: 20

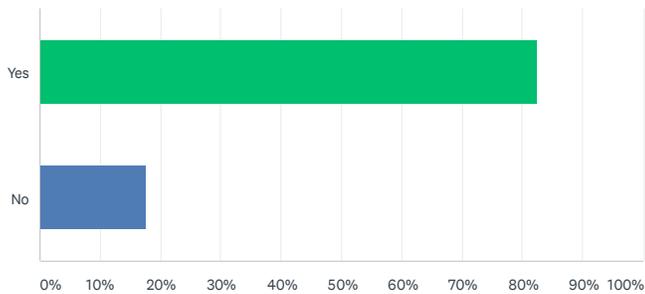


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	39.94%	145
No	48.21%	175
If yes, what special accommodations have been made available?	11.85%	43
TOTAL		363

City of Niles 5 Year Parks and Recreation Plan Survey

Q9 The City of Niles has an appropriate amount of park and recreation land for a City that is 5.5 square miles.

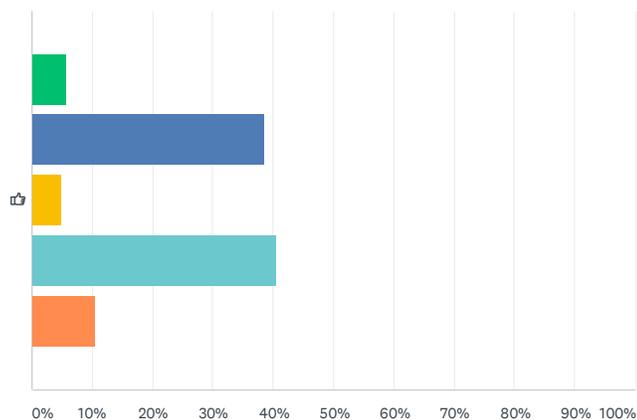
Answered: 365 Skipped: 18



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	82.47%	301
No	17.53%	64
TOTAL		365

Q10 Niles has a great variety of park facilities

Answered: 374 Skipped: 9

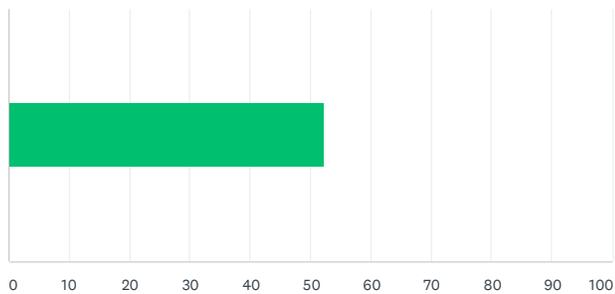


■ Poor
 ■ Fair
 ■ Unknown/Don't Care/Indifferent
 ■ Good
 ■ Excellent

	POOR	FAIR	UNKNOWN/DON'T CARE/INDIFFERENT	GOOD	EXCELLENT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
👍	5.61%	38.50%	4.81%	40.64%	10.43%	374	3.12
	21	144	18	152	39		

Q11 Summer My Way is a quality summer parks program

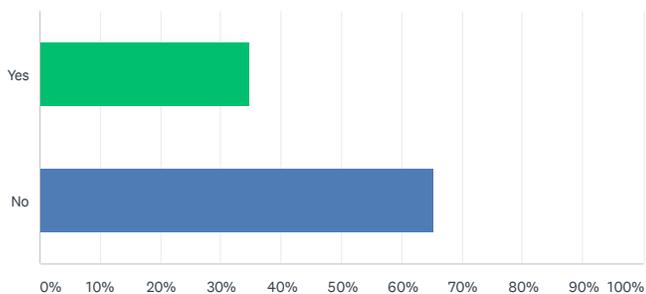
Answered: 359 Skipped: 24



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
	52	18,791	359
Total Respondents: 359			

Q12 Niles is known for the open space/green/natural areas

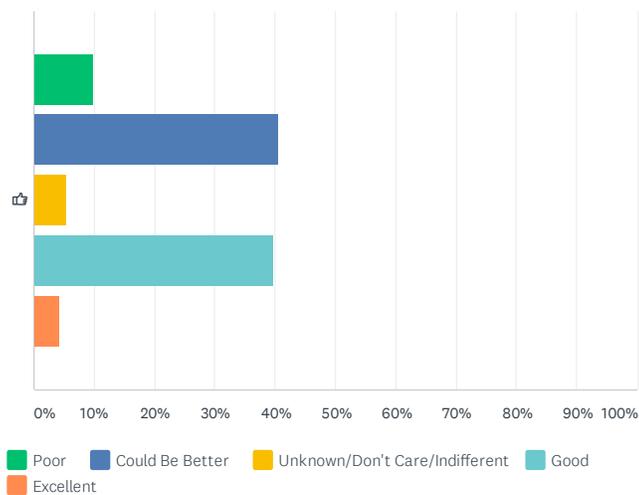
Answered: 368 Skipped: 15



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	34.78%	128
No	65.22%	240
TOTAL		368

Q13 The City keeps the parks in good repair

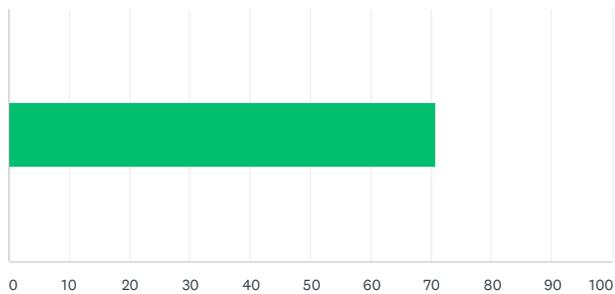
Answered: 374 Skipped: 9



	POOR	COULD BE BETTER	UNKNOWN/DON'T CARE/INDIFFERENT	GOOD	EXCELLENT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
👍	9.89% 37	40.64% 152	5.35% 20	39.84% 149	4.28% 16	374	2.88

Q14 City of Niles parks are easy to access

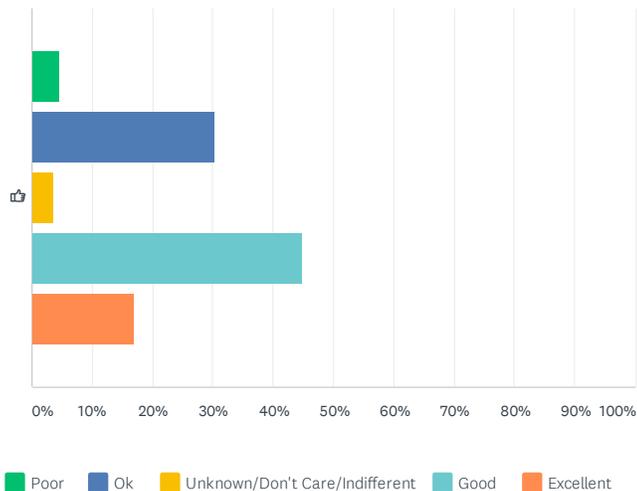
Answered: 371 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
	71	26,208	371
Total Respondents: 371			

Q15 Niles does a great job offering festivals, arts related and cultural events

Answered: 373 Skipped: 10

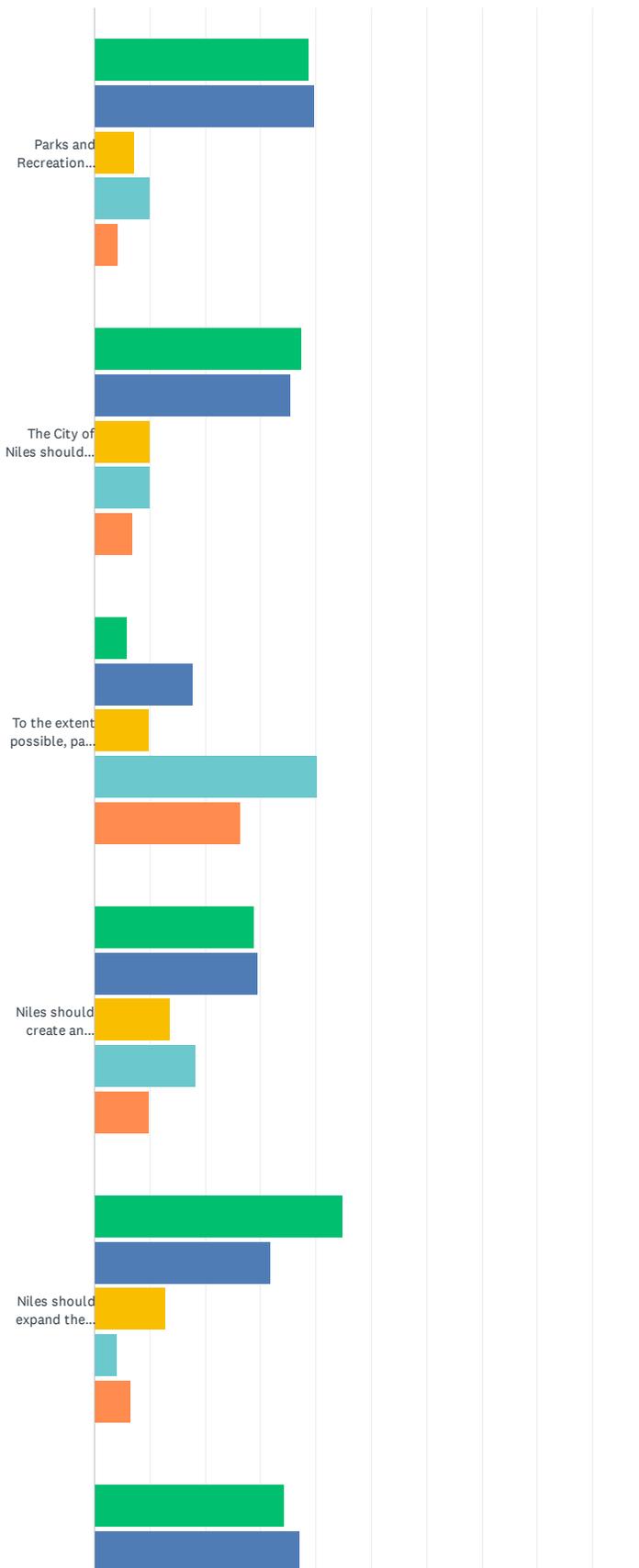


	POOR	OK	UNKNOWN/DON'T CARE/INDIFFERENT	GOOD	EXCELLENT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
👍	4.56%	30.29%	3.49%	44.77%	16.89%	373	3.39
	17	113	13	167	63		

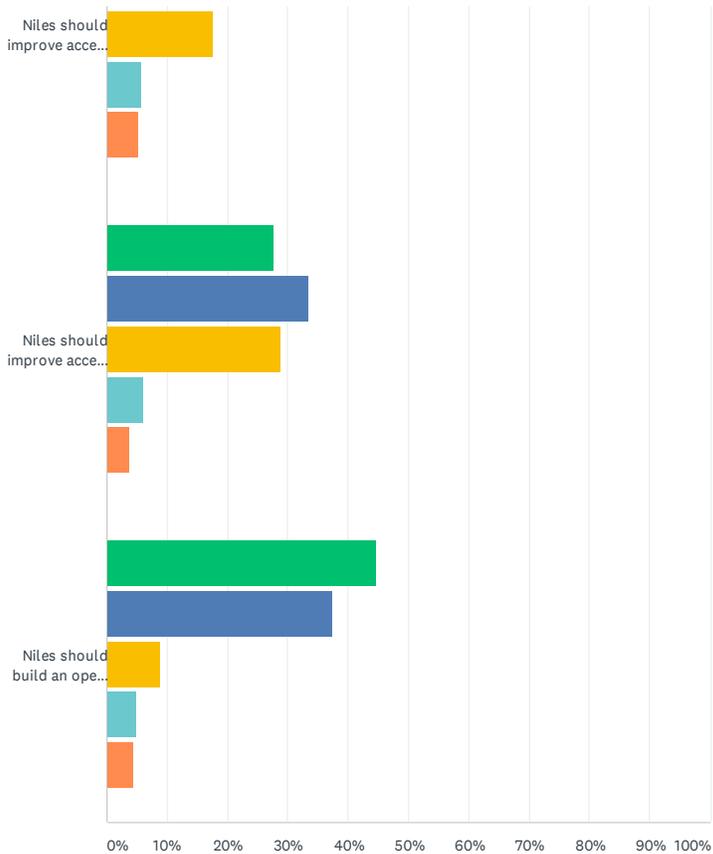
City of Niles 5 Year Parks and Recreation Plan Survey

Q16 Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

Answered: 377 Skipped: 6



City of Niles 5 Year Parks and Recreation Plan Survey



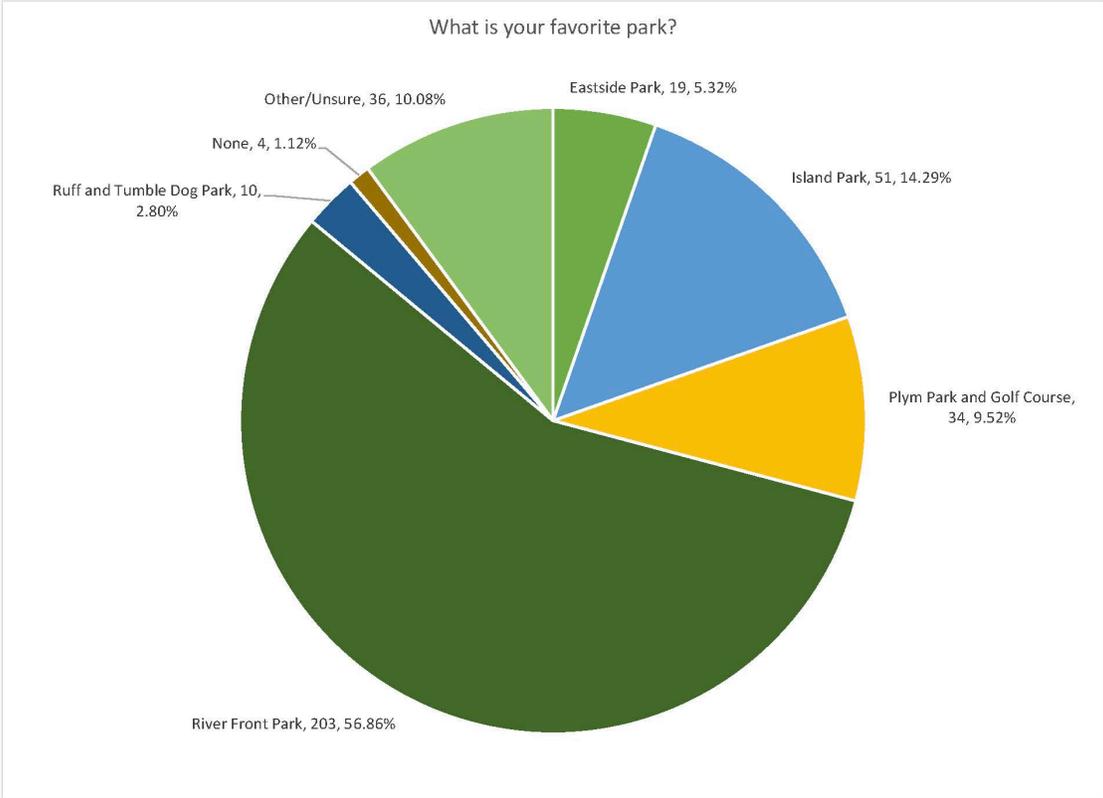
I agree 100% This is a reasonable idea Unknown/Don't Care/Indifferent
I am not sure this could work Please don't/Bad idea

City of Niles 5 Year Parks and Recreation Plan Survey

	I AGREE 100%	THIS IS A REASONABLE IDEA	UNKNOWN/DON'T CARE/INDIFFERENT	I AM NOT SURE THIS COULD WORK	PLEASE DON'T/BAD IDEA	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Parks and Recreation facilities and service are important to our community and worthy of taxpayer support even if that means I would have to pay a small special assessment to ensure the ongoing development and maintenance of our City parks and trails.	38.73% 146	39.79% 150	7.16% 27	10.08% 38	4.24% 16	377	2.01
The City of Niles should invest in additional parks and recreation facilities.	37.50% 141	35.37% 133	10.11% 38	10.11% 38	6.91% 26	376	2.14
To the extent possible, parks and recreation facilities and services should be paid for by those who use them instead of the general taxpayer.	5.85% 22	17.82% 67	9.84% 37	40.16% 151	26.33% 99	376	3.63
Niles should create an indoor/outdoor sports complex.	28.88% 108	29.41% 110	13.64% 51	18.18% 68	9.89% 37	374	2.51
Niles should expand the trail system.	44.86% 166	31.89% 118	12.70% 47	4.05% 15	6.49% 24	370	1.95
Niles should improve access to the St. Joseph River	34.40% 129	37.07% 139	17.60% 66	5.60% 21	5.33% 20	375	2.10
Niles should improve access to the Dowagic River	27.61% 103	33.51% 125	28.95% 108	6.17% 23	3.75% 14	373	2.25
Niles should build an open air farmers market that can double as event space	44.62% 166	37.37% 139	8.87% 33	4.84% 18	4.30% 16	372	1.87

Q17 My favorite park in the City of Niles is

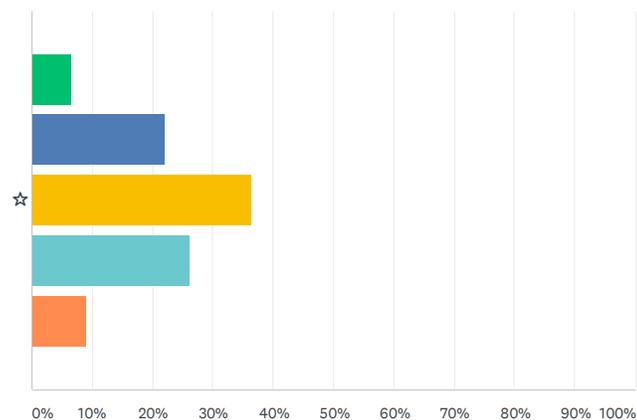
Answered: 351 Skipped: 32



City of Niles 5 Year Parks and Recreation Plan Survey

Q18 The City of Niles Parks system meets my family's needs

Answered: 359 Skipped: 24



- We leave town to go to the park
- We sometimes go to a City park (less than 6x a year)
- The parks are nice. Wwe go at least once a month.
- We like parks. We go at least once a week.
- We love the parks. We go at least 3x a week.

	WE LEAVE TOWN TO GO TO THE PARK	WE SOMETIMES GO TO A CITY PARK (LESS THAN 6X A YEAR)	THE PARKS ARE NICE. Wwe GO AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH.	WE LIKE PARKS. WE GO AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK.	WE LOVE THE PARKS. WE GO AT LEAST 3X A WEEK.	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
☆	6.41% 23	22.01% 79	36.49% 131	26.18% 94	8.91% 32	359	3.09

RESPONSES

- 1 Incorporate Native plants, edible plants and educational plaques about the benefits of biodiversity. Also, looking into better path development, something that complements nature instead of removing it.
- 2 Under the current leadership Thomas stadium has fallen into disrepair and the organization has no vision for the future. There are many ways to increase the level of youth baseball as well as increase the number of players and fans. For decades Thomas was a safe gathering place for our kids, I'd love to see it back to what it was or better. I know I'm not alone. We believe the city needs to wipe out the current leadership and replace it with people who want to see growth and help contribute to the city.
- 3 Security/cameras Citations for littering
- 4 Close down all of the parks and build and maintain a new one, centrally located, that has all amenities.
- 5 Monitor the trash and late night teens. Find a way to get rid of the vagrants
- 6 Invest and care about Thomas stadium
- 7 Winter Activities
- 8 I would love to see a splash pad or an indoor playground for kids
- 9 Patrol parks more often and discourage drug, alcohol, homeless sleeping in park.
- 10 Splash pads. Event board up to date. Play day meet ups schedule to meet kids their own age. App to see all parks. Where to get city of nils park maps
- 11 More input for natural animals to live in and around.
- 12 Splash pad! More restrooms at parks
- 13 Increase special events
- 14 PUT LIGHTS UP ON PATH VERY IMPORTANT
- 15 Use the marijuana money to do all the things that you want to do to the city do not give the politicians any of it and use it for the good of the people that would be the wisest thing to do and it would get the community on your side
- 16 Make the park colorful for kids bright colors makes kids happy. Rock climbing is really good for everyone. make a small one for little kids, make another for junior high and adults. More picnic areas and grills and flower garden and statues are very nice to have in our area.
- 17 Increased law enforcement patrols. Maybe install cameras or emergency alert buttons if patrols cannot be increased.
- 18 Maintenance
- 19 More hiking/walking/biking trails, outdoor event spaces, outdoor festivals & community events.
- 20 Clean them up better. Better policing of people.
- 21 Splash pad at plym park
- 22 Have park programs for kids in the summer with free lunch
- 23 Improve aesthetics, landscaping. Add native prairie plants and wildflowers to help environment, bees, beneficial insects.
- 24 Add in summer and winter activities likes a splash pad/skating/snow tubing
- 25 More of a verity and more for teens
- 26 More craft, food or winter programs.
- 27 Encourage people to pick up their trash. A lot of them are very littered.
- 28 More public activities/events schedules.
- 29 Update playground equipment or paint and repair existing

- 30 Close half of the parks, sell the property and then make a few great parks and facilities. Island park is a waste of money and should be permanently closed.
- 31 Put in a SPLASH PAD
- 32 Get rid of the homeless
- 33 Police patrol them
- 34 Budget for upkeep and reduce some of the smaller ones to improve the larger ones.
- 35 You won't get any responses to this. It's too much and too hard to follow. I've lived here my whole life and I would NEVER consider #13 on your map a park. It's locked with a gate and only open for games. NOT A PARK. SMH
- 36 Get a splash pad. There is not one around. I have to drive 30-40 minutes to get to one.
- 37 Possibly, just better awareness of where they are and what they offer. Restrooms. And by the way, the map above and the question following are AWFUL. Can't tell what's where.
- 38 Kid's Splash Pad is an Excellent idea, & fun for adults too! Safety, decent lighting, improved sidewalks, public restrooms! Quiet spaces like a zen garden... Gardens & appealing Landscaping would be great :-)
- 39 do a better job mowing and cleaing brush so you can see and access the river
- 40 Add a splash pad and a permenant ice skating rink (like the one in St. Joseph MI
- 41 Offer more opportunities for teenagers and young adults. Disc Golf and fun activities that can occupy time.
- 42 Clean up the dog poo left by scummy pet owners
- 43 Give the Teenagers Something to do. Not all are interested in the skate park. We want them to be more active but Niles has nothing for them to do.
- 44 Maintenance is key. Most parks are neglected and not updated regularly
- 45 Have regular cleanliness inspections and equipment replacement.
- 46 More lighting and police patrols (or citizen trail watchers) that are intermittent and don't follow a routine. I enjoy walking the trails in the evening, but there are some interesting folks that take over and intimidate others. I want the relaxation of the trail, not the fear or the drama.
- 47 I would love to see Island Park open as a venue or a Quiet Park. (Feel like is a bit dangerous for children) How about some kids playground equipment at French field?!
- 48 It would be nice if there was more to do, especially for teens and young adults. Like if there were even just more events at the park not targeted at only old people
- 49 Offer more activities for our youth
- 50 Keep them Clean. Keep the materials up to date. And keep community events happening
- 51 Clean them up. Have real bathroom facilities. Improve the grassy areas and make them pleasant to sit in.
- 52 Add a splash pad
- 53 Kill weeds /etc. can't even see the river most places at river front
- 54 I play tennis at Plym Park. These courts are in dire need of re surfacing...almost dangerous to play on due to numerous cracks. It would be great if these could be updated and court lights on at night in the summer. Also, a paved parking lot for the tennis courts. Riverfront Park is great but many times trash is overflowing. Needs to be checked daily in summer and maybe more police presence.
- 55 Capture some of those personal profits from festivals like Blue Grass to supplement maintenance of the park.
- 56 I think Niles should invest in additional activities to entertain teenagers, help keep them off the streets. I think investing in existing parks would be more beneficial than building new parks. I think Niles would benefit greatly from some type of indoor sports facility, our weather is

terrible and indoor space could help with the winter blues or cabin fever.

- 57 Niles need water pads (water park)
- 58 Have a few more trash cans perhaps
- 59 We need to have more for the kids to do.
- 60 More fountains would be nice :)
- 61 I'm going to be honest, I think the city of Niles should work on Main Street appearances first. The weeds and half filled flower beds are such an eyesore. I've always been proud of Niles Main Street but this year is just horrible.
- 62 Fix island park add splash pad
- 63 Somehow enforce no smoking. Children don't need to breathe that in when trying to enjoy fresh air.
- 64 Keep smokers and dogs away from kids play areas, it is not sanitary for kids rolling in grass where dogs shit
- 65 Better allocate tax dollars or perhaps a special assessment equally applied to each parcel rather than based on assessed value.
- 66 Plant trees or flowers by the river walk by the skate park
- 67 Splash pads!
- 68 Splash pad for children
- 69 Maybe update drinking fountains
- 70 Parks dept with an activities director. Splash pad. Bike rentals.
- 71 Splash pad
- 72 Keep them clean and maintained.
- 73 Maintain the golf course
- 74 Put in more equipment and other gaming stations
- 75 Splash pad, extend knowledge of activities and parks
- 76 East side Park equipment is in need of repair. Teens are constantly destroying the picnic tables and playground equipment.
- 77 Trails would be nice. I love odd fellows park but unfortunately that's not in the city. More wooded trails would be nice but I'm not sure where this would be appropriate.
- 78 more American ninja warrior style training type things. Riverfront park edge of river areas better maintained so people can fish in more spots.
- 79 Additional parking for parks, a lot of the time you cannot park close. More walking trails outside of Riverfront. More playground equipment for preschool aged children.
- 80 Parks could use some improvement. Plym Park Golf Course is in terrible condition and it costs entirely too much for its condition. Might I suggest converting it to a 9-hole Par 3 course that would be good for beginners and eliminating the portions closest to the river, which is in the worst shape. Drainage will always be an issue with those holes near the river and making such a conversion could increase play for beginners and kids.
- 81 Clean them. Weed.
- 82 Roaming police patrols
- 83 Splash pad
- 84 Splash pad
- 85 Have more walking and bike trails throughout the city. At the park by the DAM have a bathroom, a drinking fountain would be nice, for the dogs too and more picnic tables. Have a more signs, like the one near the volleyball court/skate park, it shows a map of the city with various locations marked out. Maybe have a QR code one them so someone can just scan it and have it as they explore the city. I love that someone put orange paint on the uneven

sidewalks by the river (across from the hospital). I really wish Island park was open again!!!! There should be at least one trash can down the walking trail section (between Bond St. and 3rd St.) and those bags for the dog poop need to be down there too. The homeless people hanging out by the river (by the ducks) is not safe and they are using the port a potty and have trails into the woods... Post a no dumping sign near the swampy side of the large parking lot (near where the ducks are). On the south side of the lot someone recently threw 5-6 bags of large trash bags in the water. The city needs to cut the overgrowth next to the river from Bond St. going north towards the park (by the ducks). That area used to be kept cut 10+ years ago. Now when going passed it you can not even see the river!!!! There are some large pot holes down there too that need attention. It would be nice if the names of all the different parks were posted in a prominent location at each park...For example, No one really knows which Riverfront park is which. Hense, why I keep saying the one with the ducks. Thank you, Teddi Kella

- 86 Perform the required and regular maintenance. The city let's things deteriorate, due to lack of maintenance, until it becomes too expensive to fix. This is due to absolutely poor management at city hall.
- 87 They need to look at the parks from surrounding cities, especially the ones in South Bend and Mishawaka that offer splash pads.
- 88 Splash pad!
- 89 Open island park
- 90 More activities and bring back the farmers market
- 91 Splash pads please
- 92 We lived in multiple cities due my husband work. So far everywhere we lived park and recreation had sport programs for kids, spring and summer vacation camps etc.. Niles is in a dire need of childcare, after school and school vacation camps. No one in the city feels this need on an affordable way. Lots of families struggling. Please build an indoor/outdoor sport complex . Many families would benefit from it.
- 93 Budget more money towards the parks. Admin overloads other entities by a higher percentage. Spread the monies to departments like the park board who needs money to update and improve parks.
- 94 Fix island park regardless of the cost
- 95 Many of the parks are in need of more general maintenance and cleaning. Some parks also have outdated playground equipment and efforts should be made to remedy it.
- 96 A figure skating ice skating rink
- 97 Cass street is listed as a park but not on the number map. I needed to cancel my Cass st entry and enter Troost, no way to do that. What a mess.
- 98 Finish connecting the trail system. Create an elevated crossing at US12 to keep bikers and walkers safe! That's a busy highway! Keep utilizing the amphitheater for music concerts and festivals. Bring back a great farmers market where it is seen, to not only draw locals, but people passing through.
- 99 Splash pads at a few of the parks
- 100 Splash pad
- 101 Add a splash pad
- 102 More parking, Riverfront always full from movies.
- 103 Better maintenance is step one
- 104 Maintain grounds, including trash, and definitely fixing lighting on light poles and lampposts for safety.

- 105 In Riverfront Park, build Public Restrooms
- 106 Make them clean and with no commercial encroachment like front street bar. Need to be reinvesting in golf course and review fee schedule for golfing. Reopen island park. Making some effort rather than ignoring the poor equipment because it's not important to the person in charge or their fiefdom
- 107 Get a splash pad!!!! The dog park would be even better if they had one also but I understand that may take awhile, if ever
- 108 More walking/biking trails
- 109 Keep them clean and in good shape
- 110 Spend the money for upkeep. Check on federal grants, ask for volunteers each week to upkeep
- 111 We do go to our city parks every other week. Or if we need just a quick park outing. However, if we want a good quality park day, we go to other cities parks. We drive 30 minutes just to get to parks with splash pads. When we drive to a park in another city, their businesses also get my business, all because of their park. Niles has a lot of parks. But honestly, they are all not good. I would rather have fewer great parks than a lot of very poor parks, which is what we
- 112 Open Island park
- 113 Have some type of recreation for elderly people. maybe card tables. ?
- 114 have less parks and improve the remainder.
- 115 Fix Island Park
- 116 Better maintenance and parking.
- 117 Splash pad
- 118 Better maintenance of the less used parks. Update or rebuild pavilions in Riverfront South. Riverfront park south is a beautiful park and with a little love it could really be a great place to be. Install flags in specific locations to cut down on geese traffic
- 119 Community support goes a long way. The splash park for the kids is a nice idea - I know that families take their children elsewhere to use one. And definitely do something about restroom facilities for the central part of Riverfront park. Even temporary handicap accessible Johns would be helpful for now - placed where it wouldn't be a hike to get to.
- 120 supply more funding for maintenance of existing equipment.
- 121 Better upkeep on equipment, graffiti mostly. Also being sure to mention events openly well before. I always hear about fun stuff afterwards.
- 122 Keep them cleaner. Always see trash and bird or dog poop which makes going to parks undesirable
- 123 Comfortable and practical seating areas, game areas
- 124 Address the homeless issue , better lighting along path and also the vagrants ..
- 125 More drinking fountains , bugs cleaned out of lights around park. Weed wack around all trees around river, More lights on walking path. More bands to listen to.
- 126 All the parks should be updated not just some. Cherry street park is small an unkept. Small children go there it's muddy an the equipment is outdated. What can we do to correct it.
- 127 Splash pad/Water park
- 128 Splash pad!!
- 129 Troose park needs cleaned up and equipment painted. I wont let my gkids go there.
- 130 Update and become relevant
- 131 Keep the Dowagiac River clear and clean for those kayaking, tubing and fishing.
- 132 Update play equipment for children.
- 133 Reopen Island Park

- 134 N/a
- 135 Boat ramp on the Dowagiac after the dam is gone
- 136 Not sure
- 137 Make sure they correct typos in questions like this.
- 138 Additional bike trails throughout the city. Connections to the existing trail would be good
- 139 Check out Mishawaka's Central Park on how to do a Park right and utilize land properly. Also, connect Riverfront Park with FOP Park via a river bridge, like island park
- 140 Bike paths, wooded walking trails, soccer fields
- 141 More overhead shelter at dog park.
- 142 Niles had good parks we need a splash pad for the locals to keep people in niles we leave niles alot to go get wet often.
- 143 Add an area more appealing for teenages so they stop acting crazy at Riverfront. My sis n law & I have had to yell or almost call police several times for them almost running little kids over while playing tag, pushing the swings so hard they get wrapped around the top beam and leave so kids can't swing, and climbing on equipment in unsafe ways that the little kids then try to copy.
- 144 I think adding things for older kids/adults to do would be great! There's not much to do other than play on the equipment
- 145 Tennis courts are becoming cracked and unlevel at Plymm Park - would love to see this repaired. Would love to see more groups work together to volunteer to help keep parks clean and presentable. Maybe having someone coordinating this effort... Would love for more current/updated information about events happening downtown and at parks on website. Would love for better bathrooms at Plymm. Would appreciate if there was a website that listed various groups meeting at the various parks for various activities, especially if they are open groups and inviting others to join them.
- 146 Invest in space and equipment that entertains our teens. Bring back your free park Summer program. Kids could show up and do a craft any time they were available. It was good investment in kids and assured they were in a safe place.
- 147 Offer more variety, more benches and tables. Old people love to play games, chess, checkers and the like. Water features are needed.
- 148 Add water features for summer
- 149 Don't forget about seniors and disabled needs. Maybe add some exercise equipment for seniors
- 150 Upgrade park equipment every so often
- 151 Splash pads and snow tubing would be very appealing and bring out of towners in to use
- 152 Splash pad.
- 153 More stuff for high school aged kids
- 154 Better upkeep on the parks. Newer playground equipment at the parks that havent been updated in 40+ years. Splash pad/ waterpark.
- 155 upgrade some of the equipment
- 156 Raise the money by special assessments to invest in reasonable but popular improvement requests. Provide free park passes to residents and sell park passes to non-city residents.
- 157 Use social media to advertise the events and market those events.
- 158 A good ice rink with night skating. Like Merrifield in Mishawaka. Have the trees lighted around the amphitheatre & light the amphitheatre too - freeze the parking lot if possible -would be BEAUTIFUL. Sell hot chocolate!!
- 159 Include the fastest growing sport in North America and make a destination venue for pickleball

- 160 Clean up geese poop more regularly
- 161 N/A
- 162 Put lights up at the Fireman's Park Pickleball Courts, please. Thank you!
- 163 Update play area, make the parks look nicer
- 164 Larger Pickleball park that can host a tournament.
- 165 Build a pickleball facility big enough to hold a tournament, 8 to 12 courts could work. One of the largest Paddle manufacturers is in Niles and is growing everyday
- 166 Keep safe and clean.
- 167 There needs to be trash cans there are very few! Pickleball courts would be amazing
- 168 Add lights to carrier fields and better maintain the parks we have.
- 169 Update them, think central park in Mishawaka
- 170 Revitalize Island park.
- 171 A Pickleball court park that could host tournaments.
- 172 If there was the funding all this would and could be great for Niles. The built farmers market with ready build tables, and shading will bring our of a market to Niles. Easing the vendors need to bring own set up, allowing more product. Indoor like south bend would be amazing too.
- 173 clean up island park, but dont add playground equipment and just a place to walk and maybe take in the scenary, add picnic tables to the most used! thanks for having this survey and doing what your doing!
- 174 Cleanliness
- 175 Maintain them!
- 176 Better programs
- 177 A farmers' market/outdoor event space would be awesome. It would also be great to add an attraction outside of just downtown.
- 178 Splash pad! Infant swings
- 179 Make more accessible for wheelchair
- 180 New park equipment at some parks. Swings etc
- 181 Reopen island park
- 182 remove outdated equipment and add more lights
- 183 We would love to have a splash pad since the closest we have found was downtown mishawaka, but as far as cost, that is a problem. My mortgage / taxes already just went up \$50 and I'm not ok with another increase.
- 184 More variety Outdoor flea market produce arts and crafts
- 185 for get island park put in a splash pad at river front park the island will just flood again
- 186 I hate to say it but maybe do less/have less maintenance on some of the services that aren't used often, to help prioritize those that are. Also, what about a concession stand or something to raise some funds at your more popular locations/days/nights or events? They did this with the Indiana Dunes and it seems to have been successful so far.
- 187 Separate ice hockey and figure skating rinks
- 188 Add a splash pad!
- 189 Two ice rinks, one for hockey one for recreational/Figure Skating
- 190 Open up access to island park , stop wasting money on so called art pieces
- 191 For a town the size of Niles, they are far above average. I don't know much that could be improved unless there could be a pier into the river that could be fished from for those without a boat.
- 192 Open air farm markets, resale areas, bike rental, scooter rental, and community flea market

- once a month.
- 193 Add a Pavillion to Cass Street Park, extend the park towards Howard street....as green space. Tear down the dilapidated buildings in the area making it safer for the children within that neighborhood.
- 194 Add more activities and a water splash pad
- 195 Reopen Island Park
- 196 I would love more hiking trails and other walkable/runable spaces. I really like the exercise equipment along the river trail and would enjoy more of that. Services to utilize the river right downtown would also be fun (kayak rental, etc.)
- 197 Upgrade/Maintain the Riverfront Amphitheater and surround areas. That area should be a cultural centerpiece of our downtown. There should be a drive to encourage local merchants to participate in events, and the events roster should be expanded to include art fairs (think Leeper Park), concerts with larger named acts that leverage local acts as openers, and more community centered events - like tomorrow's Hometown Reunion show.
- 198 Involve citizens to take pride, and clean up after themselves
- 199 Maintain and improve the parks that are already here... love the idea of up-grading the farmers mkt and putting in some kind of a sm to med event center. The tubing of the Dowagiac river is near impossible now with all the debris and lower water levels but I enjoyed doing it as a kid, would love to see that brought back. The idea of an ice rink and snow tubing is great! The parks being used in winter would be a wonderful thing.
- 200 More things for disabled people to do
- 201 I think a splash pad would be nice. More easily accessible parking downtown as well. There are so many things coming to the area with little parking or far away parking. An event for free fishing day would be fun for kids.
- 202 I think the city of Niles could benefit from a change of scenery. It's time to add something new.
- 203 Build a splash pad! It is the one major thing that our parks don't have that I believe would be used the most. We end up driving 30 minutes to central park in mishawaka, and it would be great to have one close.
- 204 The landscaping this year has not been taken care of as it always has in the past at Riverfront Park. I pick up a lot of trash a Plym Park daily. There are a lot of residents in Niles who are complaining about our homeless living in the parks. Some no longer take their children to Riverfront Park because of it. Is there something positive that we can do for our homeless?
- 205 Remind the Parks Board that using city tax money to sponsor festivals is not their job. And . . . if general city tax money is used, any proceeds should go back to the General Fund specifically for park maintenance, upkeep, etc.
- 206 Splash pad!!
- 207 Love the splash pad idea. Keep advertising and getting the word out about our amazing parks we have to offer!
- 208 More activities
- 209 N/A
- 210 More seasonal activities like water park/ice rink.
- 211 Add more activities for people of all ages, bring more festivals
- 212 There are almost too many parks. Maybe consolidate or close under used parks and improve/expand existing parks that are being used by a lot of people.
- 213 More activities
- 214 Fix the bridge to Island Park, leave the playground equipment (it's been there since I was

young) and reopen it to enjoy again!!

- 215 I don't use the kids equipment but it seems some parks have really nice and some have old chipping painted equipment. If you keep that up more adults will want to take their kids there. Publicize them better, run a full page ad or article once a week talking about the different parks, what you can do at them, if you can rent space, who you contact if there's a problem, keep trash cans handy and emptied. Mowing and leaves are rarely ever a problem and that's nice because some places it is but not in town.
- 216 More variety!
- 217 Create safe spaces for middle schoolers and teens
- 218 Invest in ice hockey and lacrosse to keep up with neighboring communities. St Joseph has two ice hockey rinks and Stevensville and Edwardsburg have huge soccer /lacrosse fields.
- 219 get rid of the poison ivy
- 220 Keep clean
- 221 We need water park bad I have 3 and 5 year old and the parks in summer time are too hot and slides are too hot to use I think water park or pool would be a good idea
- 222 Fund ongoing maintenance. Embarrassing the disrepair and unkept flower beds etc.
- 223 Nature Preserve with trails
- 224 More variety in parks, theyre all mostly the same
- 225 Newer,updated equipment and grounds,splash pads, bathroom facilities.
- 226 Fix island park
- 227 I do think the dog park should be maintained by the dog owners who use it
- 228 I think that the river is highly underutilized. I would love to rent a kayak or canoe from either the city or an approved vendor. I live in the township and literally would kayak every week.
- 229 Splash pad!!!!
- 230 Keep them clean and perhaps do video monitoring on the River Front Parks.
- 231 Have a parks department & a natural space, a preserve, with trails.
- 232 Fund a a park department to insure that parks are well maintained. I don't think we need new parks. We need to take care of what we have.
- 233 We leave Niles for other parks when we want to change it up. Splash pads, unique playgrounds, bigger parks where toddler can play away from teenagers
- 234 Water feature, vendors,
- 235 More trash cans available
- 236 build a mock fort like up near mackinaw bridge
- 237 Just updating some of the parks equipment
- 238 Add a splash pad
- 239 Continue to maintain what we have while allowing improvements to be funded, if we want them, through grass roots funding programs and grants. Our park footprint is big enough.
- 240 Continue with activities like music and movies in the park
- 241 Fix and maintain what we have.... add things like splash pad and tubing only if funds are secured through donation and it can be maintained.
- 242 Not every festival need fair rides Maybe a larger music festival than the bluegrass..... with out fair rides. Make Niles a destination rather than a drive through
- 243 I think we have a nice park Rec system for our size town.
- 244 Maintain all of the parks we have now. Yes even Island Park.
- 245 Better custodial maintenance and a splash pad for summer
- 246 —More trash pick up and disposal —More regular security and/or police presence, especially along Riverfront Park and trails —Public bathrooms —build racquetball courts —build soccer

and football fields —open a farmer's market —decorate the Christmas tree with better/bigger lights for the Christmas tree lighting

- 247 Maintenance, cleanup, pavilions, proper seating to accommodate all ages
- 248 More pavilion and eating areas A splash pad would be awesome
- 249 I think the City of Niles should add shelters and rent them out for a small fee to help improve condition of each park. I have found city and towns in other areas that do this to expand things and opportunities at their parks.
- 250 Quality of the river if possible. And more activities available for middle schoolers, high schoolers, and 20-25 year olds.
- 251 The play equipment at all the parks are in very bad shape. Graffiti and trash everywhere. It seems that no one is maintaining any of them. We stopped going to parks around here when my children were old enough to sound out graffiti! We travel to Berrien Springs or Mishawaka for park play.
- 252 I wouldn't mind as a township citizen to buy a \$5/\$10 donation pass to the parks. But I might be a minority.
- 253 Have more picnic/pavilion area and give citizens free entry and charge nonresidents. Upgrade the parks... There are no decent picnic areas to sit down at a table and have a picnic. I cant take my toddlers to very many parks. Having a park on the river that isnt gated is just naive maybe expect a dock/walkway with railing?
- 254 More picnic area
- 255 Probably need fewer parks in order to be excellent with those that were left!
- 256 Utilize water for kids
- 257 More upkeep
- 258 Help rebuild or reopen the island park
- 259 Add a public pool or splash pad some people cant drive all the way to the lake. A lot of people go to Mishawaka because they have pools or splash pads
- 260 We have a lot of park space but it is not well used at all. Our playground equipment needs improved. We NEED a splash pad. We need to make our parks something that draws others to our town. Mishawaka and South Bend both have far better parks and we do often drive 25+ minutes just to go to a park that meets our families needs better. We "settle" for Niles parks when we need quick park outings. But when we drive to other parks...their restaurants and local businesses get our money, all because their park got us there.
- 261 Fence by river front park, I'm always scared a small child is going to fall in the river
- 262 Add a splash pad
- 263 The City of Niles can build Splash Pad for family and a decent Basketball Court.
- 264 Everything is going well.
- 265 Budget more maintenance funding
- 266 Safer roads around parks. People fly down east sides Sycamore Street and that causes me as a parent to limit my child's free play
- 267 Handicap accessible swing at Riverfront Park needs shade over it. :(Hot days it gets
- 268 We really need sun shelter over the tables at the Skatepark
- 269 Foot bridge across river
- 270 More variety of activities
- 271 Make more accessible for seniors. Activities for seniors.
- 272 Toddler play space
- 273 Bring in some sort of water entertainment for the kids whether its a splash pad or a community pool with slides, etc

- 274 Consolidate. Sell some land for other development and use the money to improve what has been designated as strategically important.
- 275 Certain parks in our town look so run down and not welcoming. We still have play ground equipment at a couple parks that need to be painted and really need to be updated. Also, SPLASH PADS !! South Bend parks are awesome , kids and families love them!! We need one for the kids in our community and we have plenty of space !!
- 276 Build parks for older elementary school kids not just parks for small toddlers
- 277 Add new modern skate park equipment
- 278 The amount of garbage and goose feces in riverfront park at any given time is ridiculous. Keep them clean. Add more trash cans. Police people feeding ducks and geese. I saw a cop sit there and just watch them get fed the other day. It's illegal and bad for th animals.
- 279 Splash pads for children and high school students working at the parks with fun programs for children. More handicap equipment.
- 280 See #9 - same answer here
- 281 Nothing besides adding things for people
- 282 Spend some money