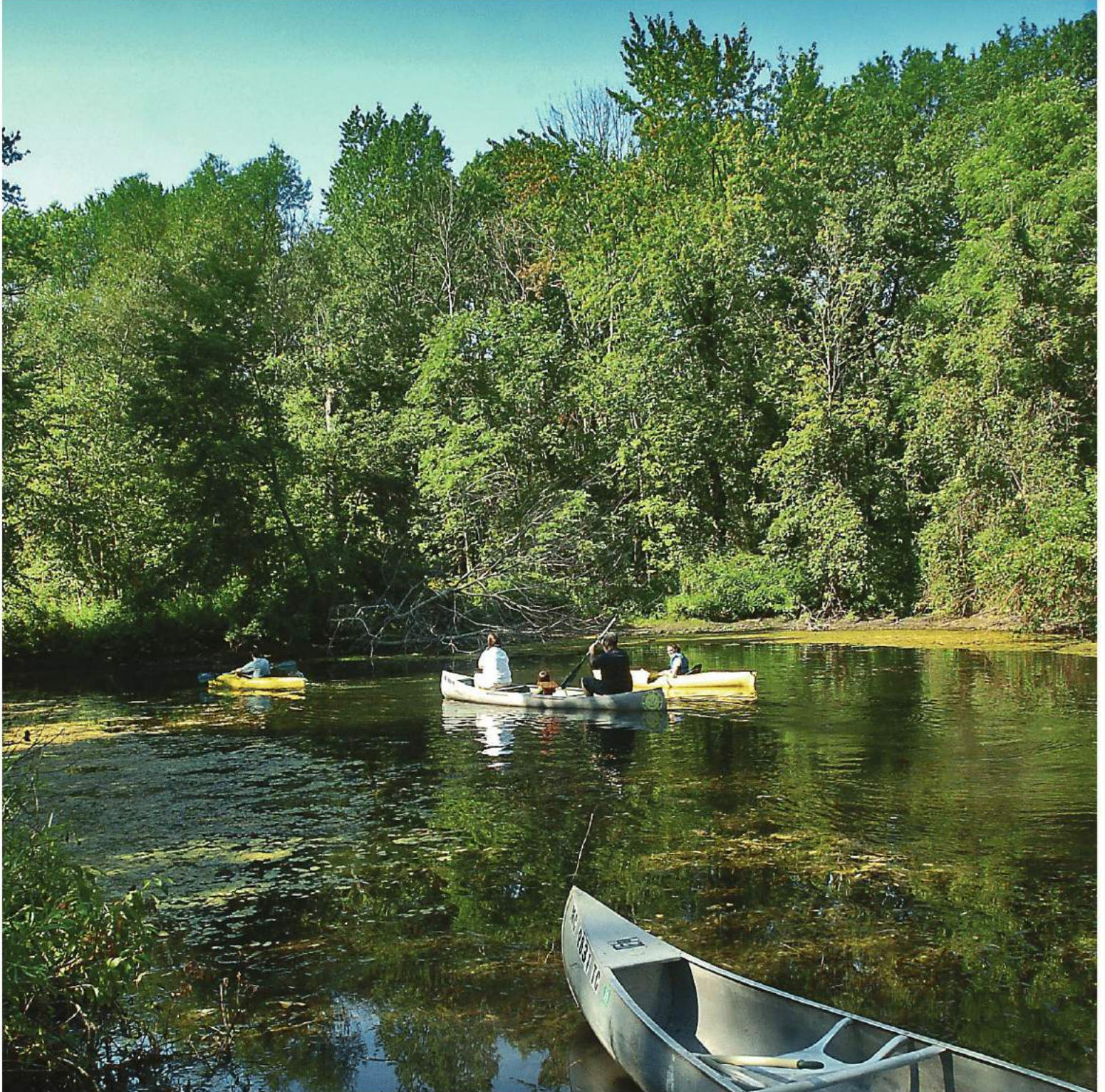




HUDSON MILLS MASTER PLAN



DRAFT

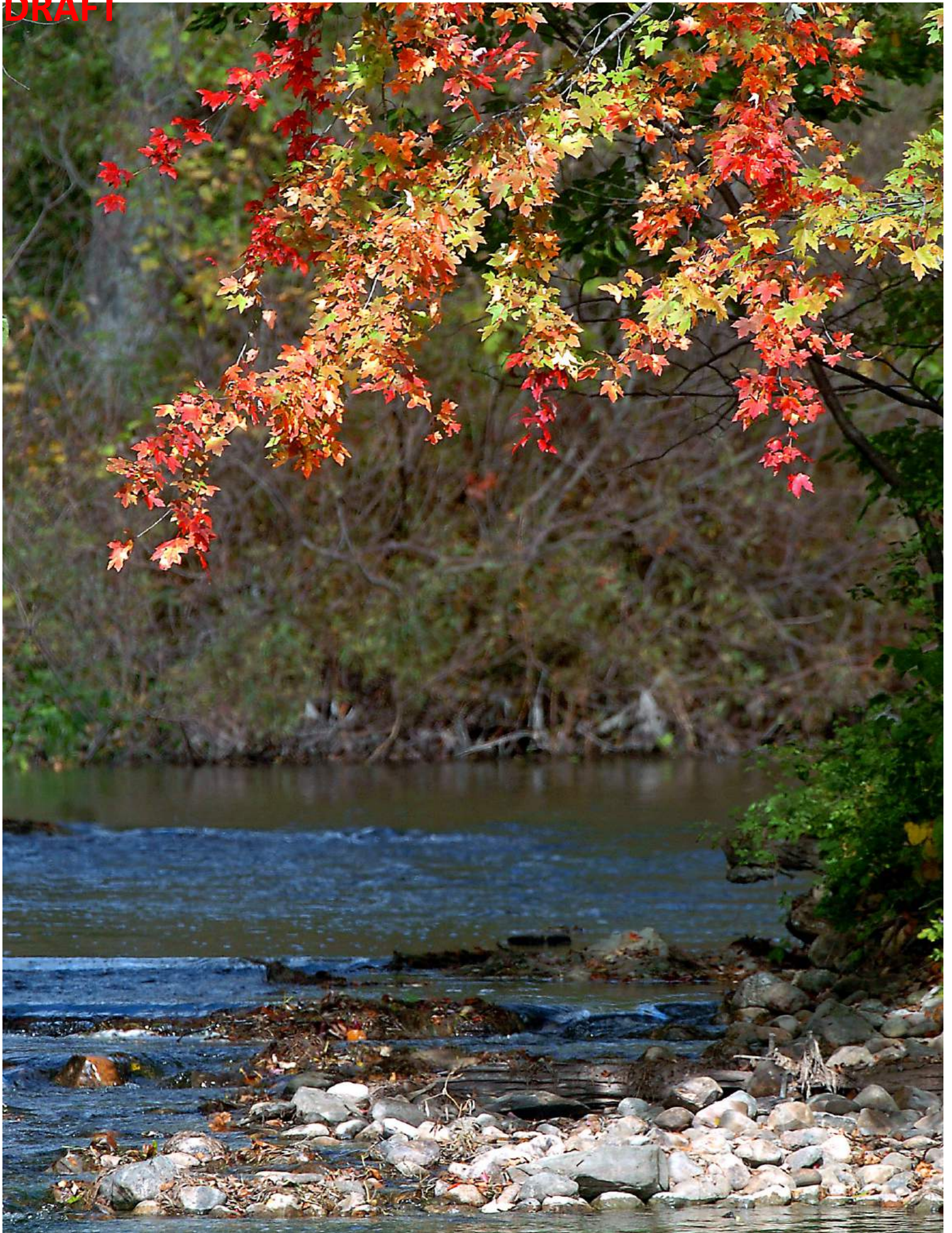
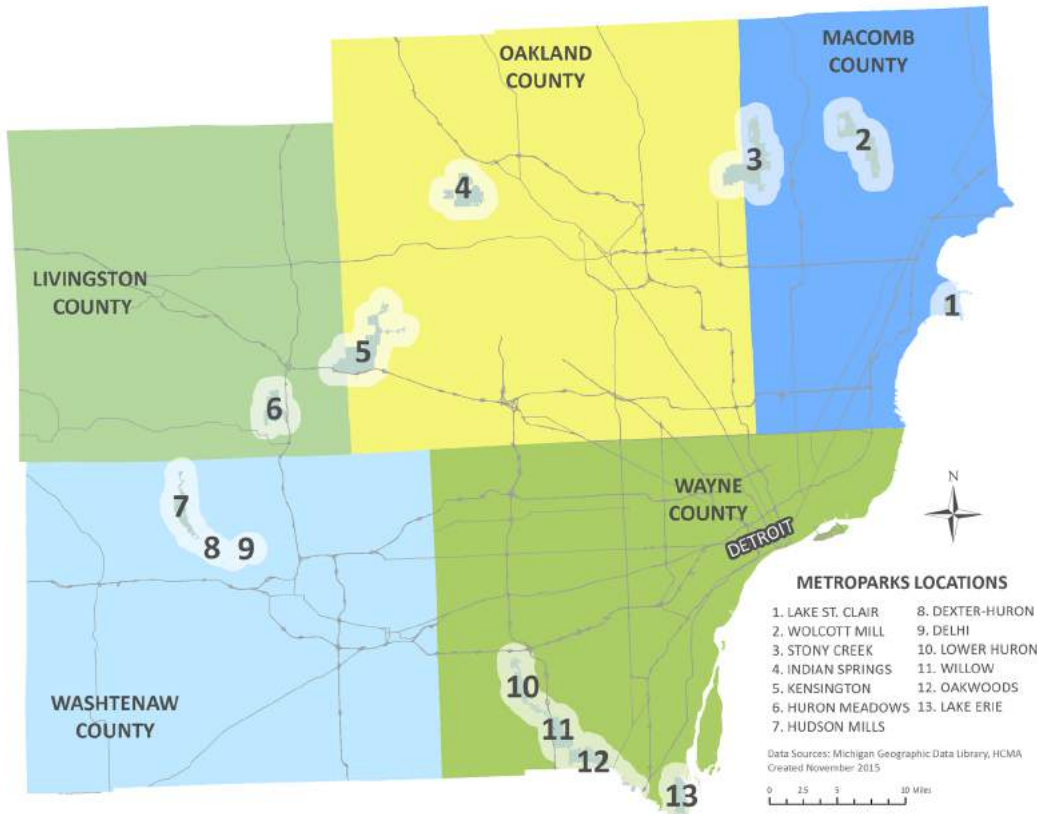


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INTRODUCTION

About the Metroparks

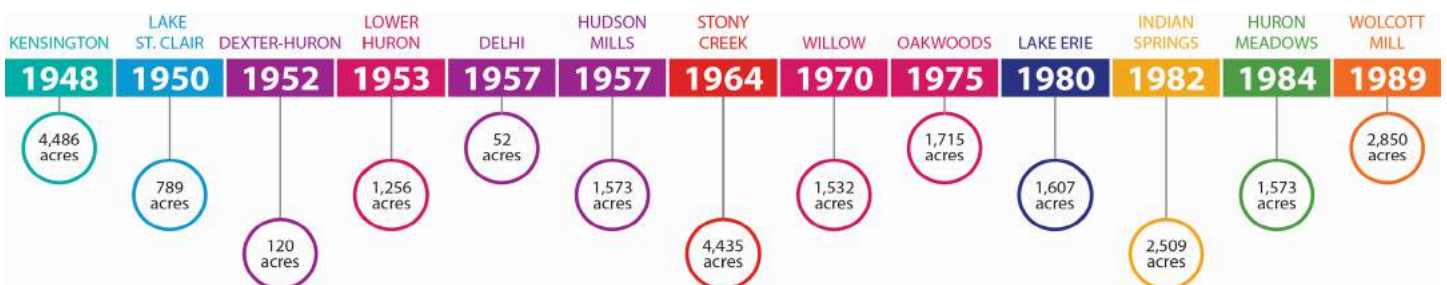


The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority was sanctioned by the Michigan State Legislature in Act No. 147 of the Public Acts of 1939. Named after the two longest rivers within its boundaries, the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority is a regional park agency consisting of 13 Metroparks encompassing approximately 25,000 acres of land within a five county area in southeast Michigan.

Much credit can be given to Henry S. Curtis and Harlow O. Whittemore for making the Metroparks a reality. The 1937 vision for a park system proposed a series of parks connected by a long parkway extending from Lake St. Clair along the Clinton and Huron rivers to Lake Erie below the mouth of the Detroit River.

Funding of the parks began in 1942 with a property tax levy, limited to one-quarter of one mill. The rate today has been adjusted to .2146 mills.

PARK DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE



Introduction

Administration & Operations

Board of Commissioners

A seven-member Board of Commissioners governs the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority. The Board of Commissioners meets the second Thursday of each month, where they make policy decisions for the Authority, including approving expenditures, acquiring land, planning of new parks and facilities, approving fees and charges, awarding contracts through competitive bidding, and other matters necessary to provide regional recreation. The Board appoints staff officers for the Metroparks.

Two commissioners, appointed by the Governor of Michigan for a term of four years, serve as representatives at large. Five commissioners, one each to represent the counties of Wayne, Macomb, Oakland, Livingston and Washtenaw, are appointed for a term of six years by the Board of Commissioners of the above-named counties.

Director is the Chief Executive Officer of the Metroparks, provides leadership and executive oversight of all administrative and operational activities.

Administrative Departments provide administrative support to operations, and guide the organization towards its mission.

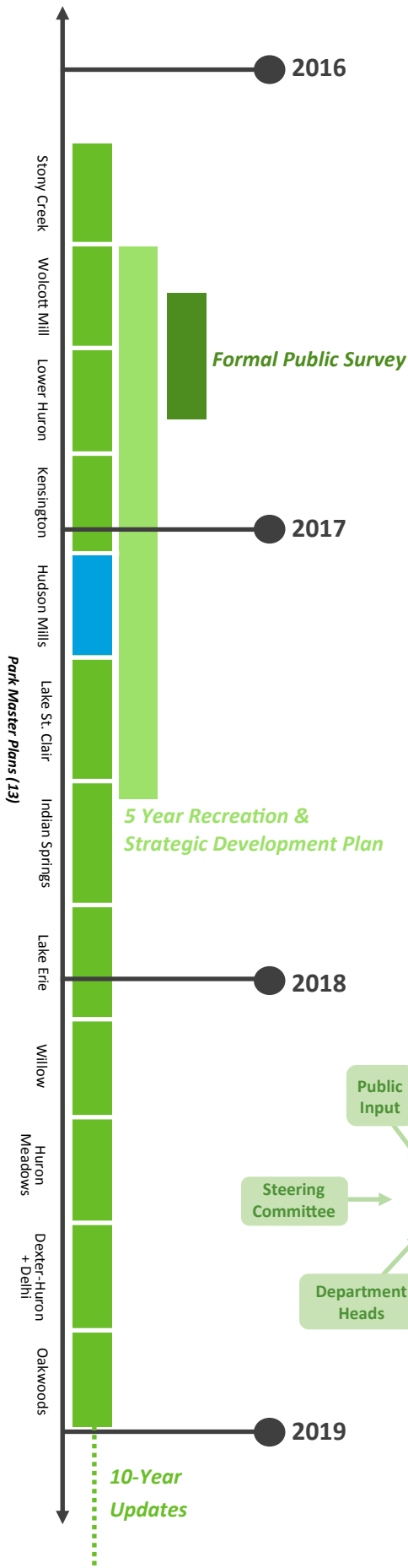
Operational Departments facilitate the day-to-day operations of the parks, making sure patrons have enjoyable and educational visits. They include Maintenance and Interpretive Services.

Metroparks Police ensure that everyone can enjoy the parks in a safe and secure environment.



Introduction

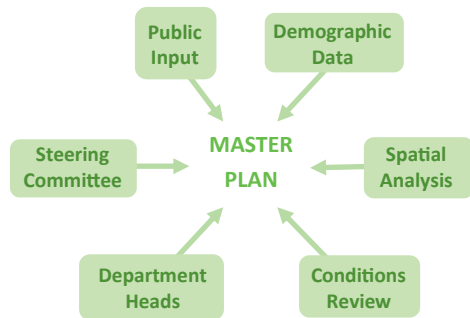
Planning Process



Several factors contribute to the recommendations that will be proposed for Hudson Mills in the master plan. One of the most important is the public input collected through meetings, questionnaires, and online comments. This reveals the public's hopes and expectations for the park and significantly influences plan recommendations. A master plan steering committee was formed to include park employees with exceptional knowledge of Hudson Mills and surrounding community, who along with the experienced Metroparks department heads provide their professional opinions.

The Metroparks Planning Department has scheduled an aggressive timeline for completing all 13 park master plans in three years. Each park will be given a planning window of six months, with overlap between parks. The order of the parks in the planning process was determined by staff based on current and planned park projects, planning need, geography, and park popularity.

The Planning Department collects demographic and spatial data to inform master plan recommendations. Demographic data looks at the density, age, race, income, language, and other factors of the regional population. Spatial data, usually analyzed through Geographic Information Systems software, looks at the physical location of the parks in relation to other recreation opportunities, transportation facilities, population centers, important natural resources, and more. Finally, the Planning Department conducts a review of park conditions to identify areas needing improvement and areas experiencing success.



The master plans are intended to be living documents, modified as needed to reflect changing conditions in the parks. However, they focus on park developments over the following ten years, and will be updated every decade through a formal planning process similar to the current one.



The Steering Committee for the Hudson Mills Master Plan met on 3/7/17

HUDSON MILLS TODAY

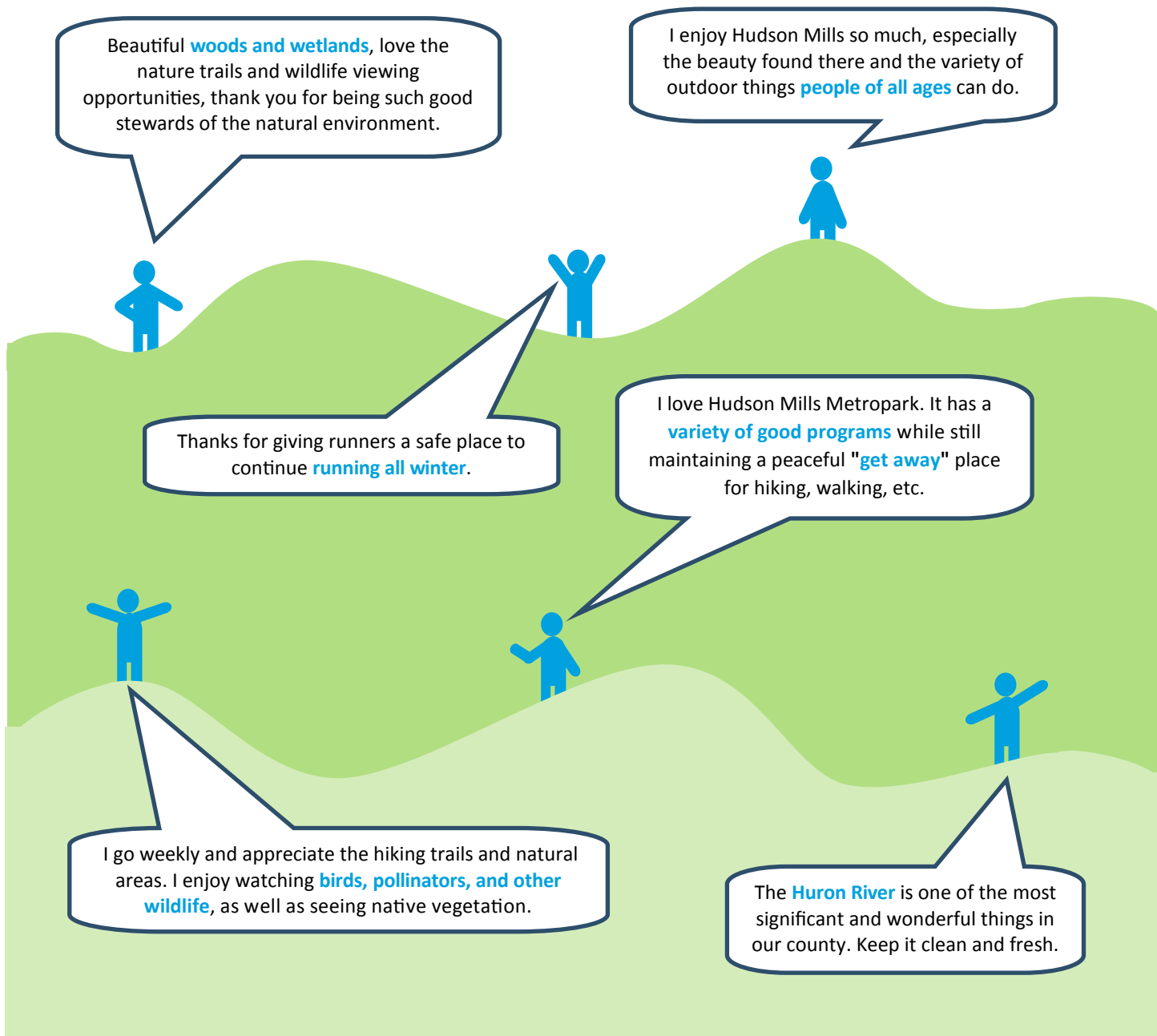
Character

The following responses to our survey questions highlight the many facets of Hudson Mills that form a unique experience. Visitors use this versatile park for both passive recreation, such as birdwatching and picnicking, and active recreation, such as running and paddling. Survey respondents care about the preservation of this space into the future.

NEEDS

- Better highlight and advertise special character of park
- Expansion of available events and activities at park

OPPORTUNITIES



Beautiful **woods and wetlands**, love the nature trails and wildlife viewing opportunities, thank you for being such good stewards of the natural environment.

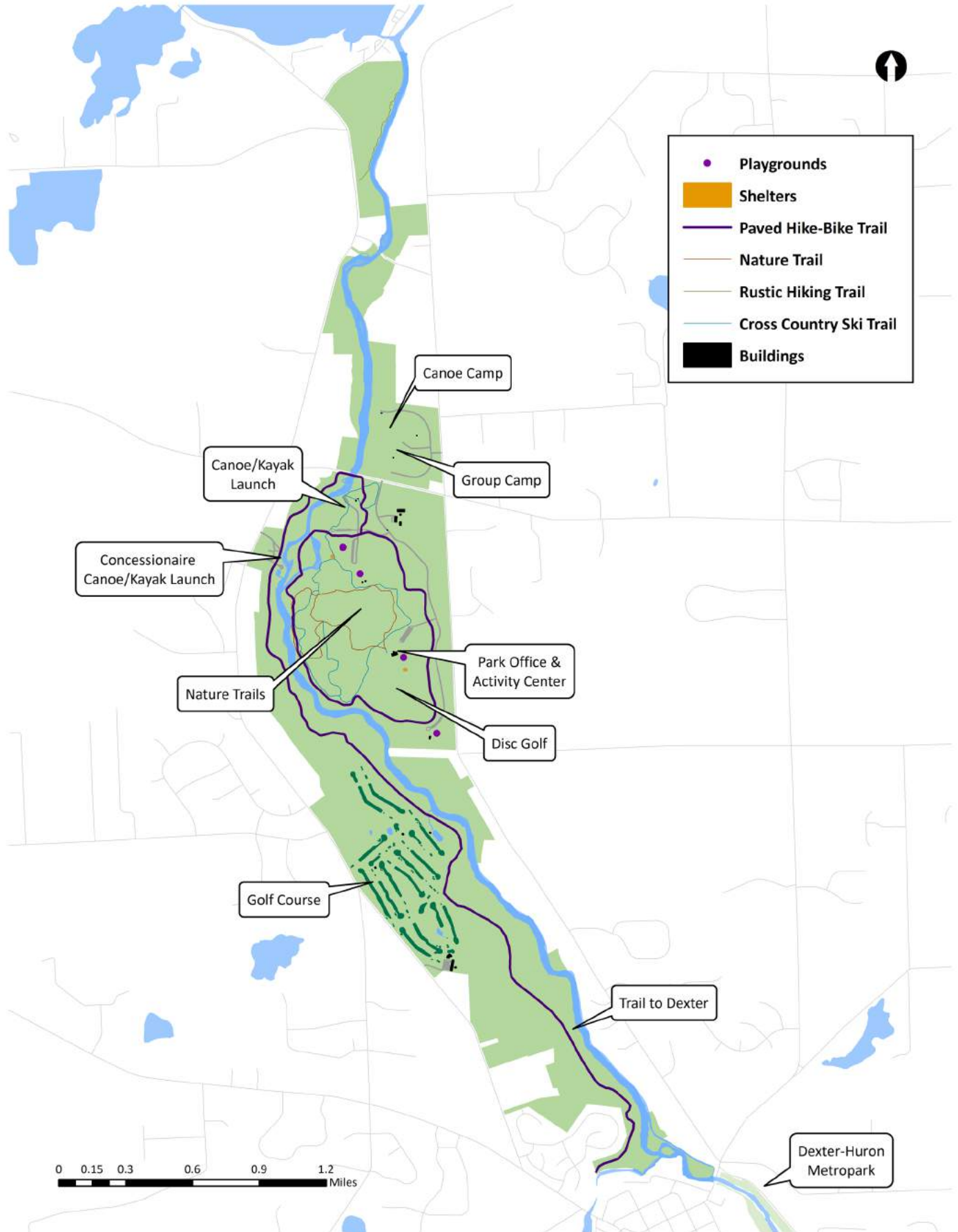
I enjoy Hudson Mills so much, especially the beauty found there and the variety of outdoor things **people of all ages** can do.

Thanks for giving runners a safe place to continue **running all winter**.

I love Hudson Mills Metropark. It has a **variety of good programs** while still maintaining a peaceful "**get away**" place for hiking, walking, etc.

I go weekly and appreciate the hiking trails and natural areas. I enjoy watching **birds, pollinators, and other wildlife**, as well as seeing native vegetation.

The **Huron River** is one of the most significant and wonderful things in our county. Keep it clean and fresh.

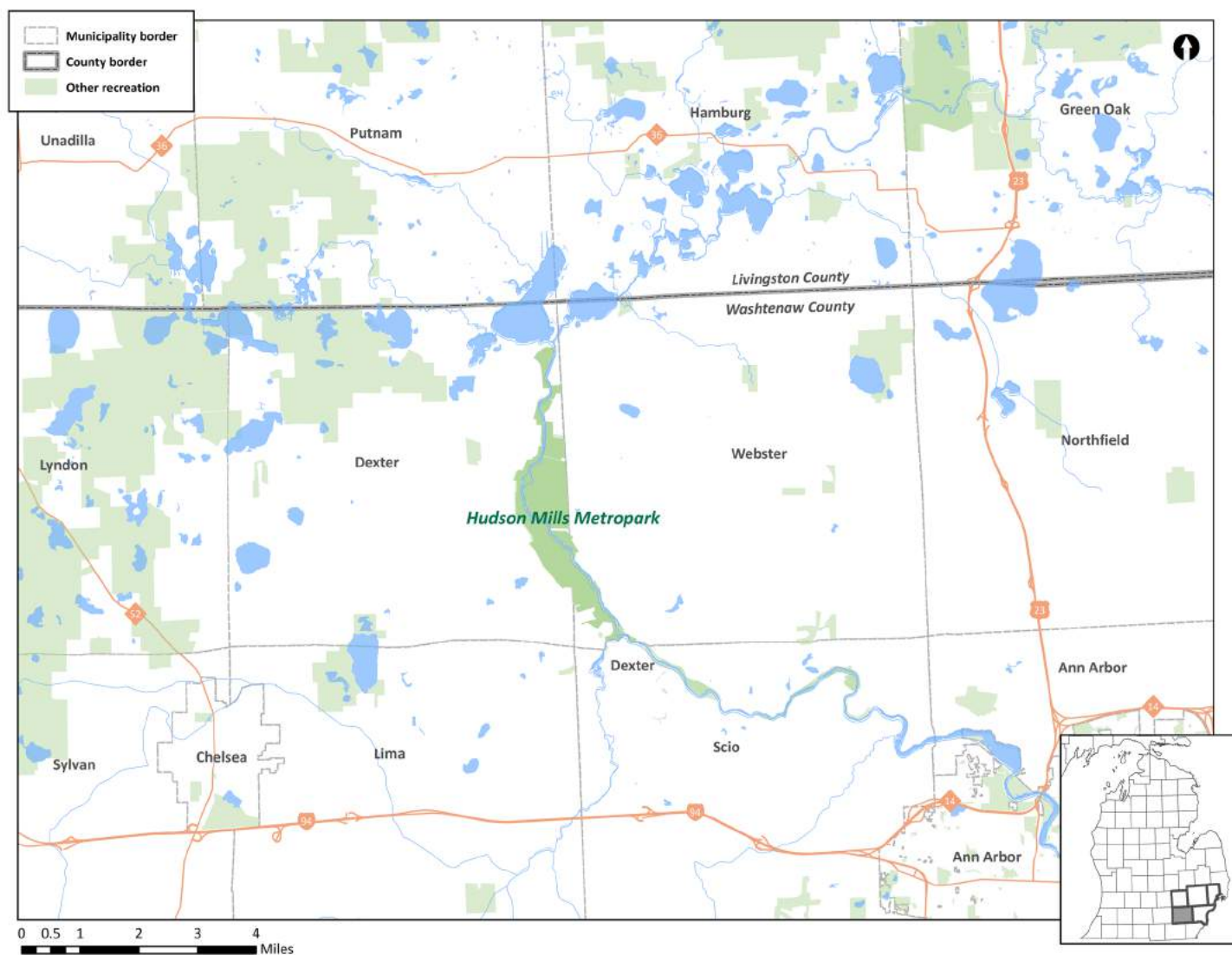


Hudson Mills Today

Location

Hudson Mills Metropark is located in Washtenaw County, near its northern border with Livingston County. Most of the park is in Dexter Township, with a small amount extending into Webster Township. The park abuts the City of Dexter.

At its northernmost extent, Hudson Mills reaches McGregor Road, to the east it runs along Dexter-Pinckney, its western boundary is Huron River Drive, and to the south it extends nearly to Central Street in Dexter. The park is situated on the Upper Middle Huron River and is in a Natural Rivers district.*



*From the MDNR website: “The Natural Rivers Program was developed to preserve, protect and enhance our state’s finest river systems for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations by allowing property owners their right to reasonable development, while protecting Michigan’s unique river resources.” Natural Rivers districts are subject to development restrictions within a designated buffer of the riverbank.

NEEDS

Define and protect areas with important biodiversity features

Create a resilient network of biodiverse areas in the park

OPPORTUNITIES

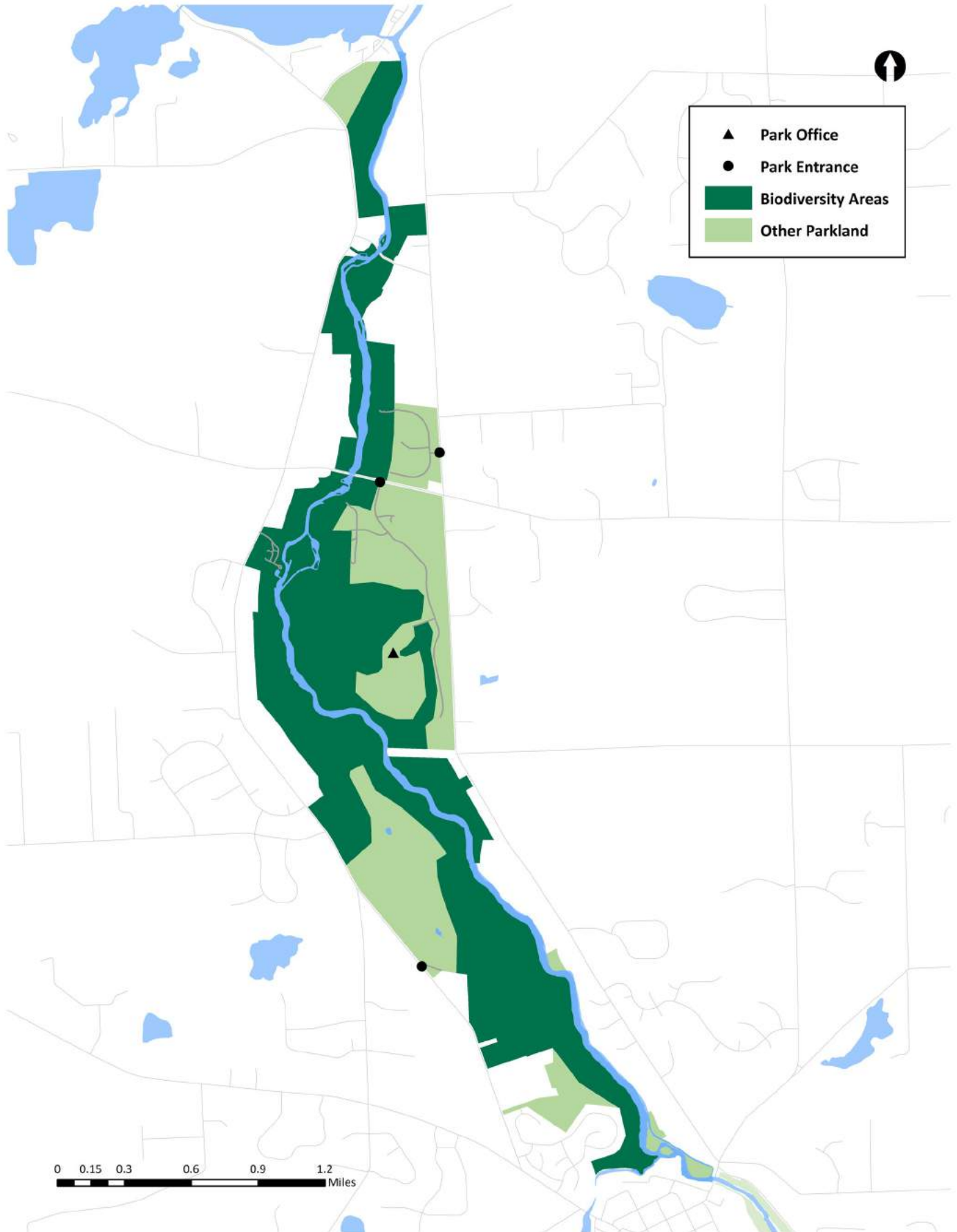
Biodiversity refers to the variety of life present in a given area, often measured by number and distribution of species. It is important to preserve because it provides humans with ecological services such as clean water and oxygen, leads to greater resistance and resilience during natural and human-caused disturbances, and reduces the risk of disease.

Biodiversity Areas

Identifying biodiversity areas can help inform the development of current and future park amenities, allowing the Metroparks to fulfill its mandate and mission statement of protecting the natural resources of the communities it serves. Development within biodiversity areas is carefully reviewed to minimize unnecessary disruption.

The following criteria for determining biodiversity areas were adapted from a matrix that the Natural Resources Department uses to determine work priorities throughout the park system. The following page shows a map of proposed biodiversity areas in Hudson Mills.

Metric	What	Why	Metric	What	Why
Elemental Occurrence	the presence of a species under legal protection, or of a complete system recognized as in condition similar to pre-settlement	statutory, occurrences protected by law from intentional take	Percent Invasive Species Cover	percentage of total acreage with invasive plant coverage	areas with few invasive species require less work, have greater return on investment
FQA (Floristic Quality Assessment)	presence of plant species likely to occur in conditions similar to pre-settlement	determines the ecological value of a system based on its floral assemblage	Community Ranking	rank assigned by the state due to natural community rarity or rate of decline	assesses the vulnerability of each natural community within the state
FQI Connectivity	the presence of a quality habitat (greater than 35 FQI) within 100 feet of another	connected habitats provide diverse resources and facilitate migration, increase species fitness	Wetlands	the presence of wetlands	wetlands tend to have greatest diversity, and are also critical to promote healthy water resources
Size	acreage of the habitat in question	large habitats provide more diverse resources and facilitate migration, increase species fitness, resilience	Habitat Connectivity	the presence of a complementary habitat within 100 feet of another	connected wetlands promote genetic diversity conservation and water quality



NEEDS

Better educate about and preserve important cultural features

Draw new visitors with programming/education based on history of park

OPPORTUNITIES



Picnicking at the historic sawmill site



Historical marker unveiled in the park, 1971

Cultural History

Water Power

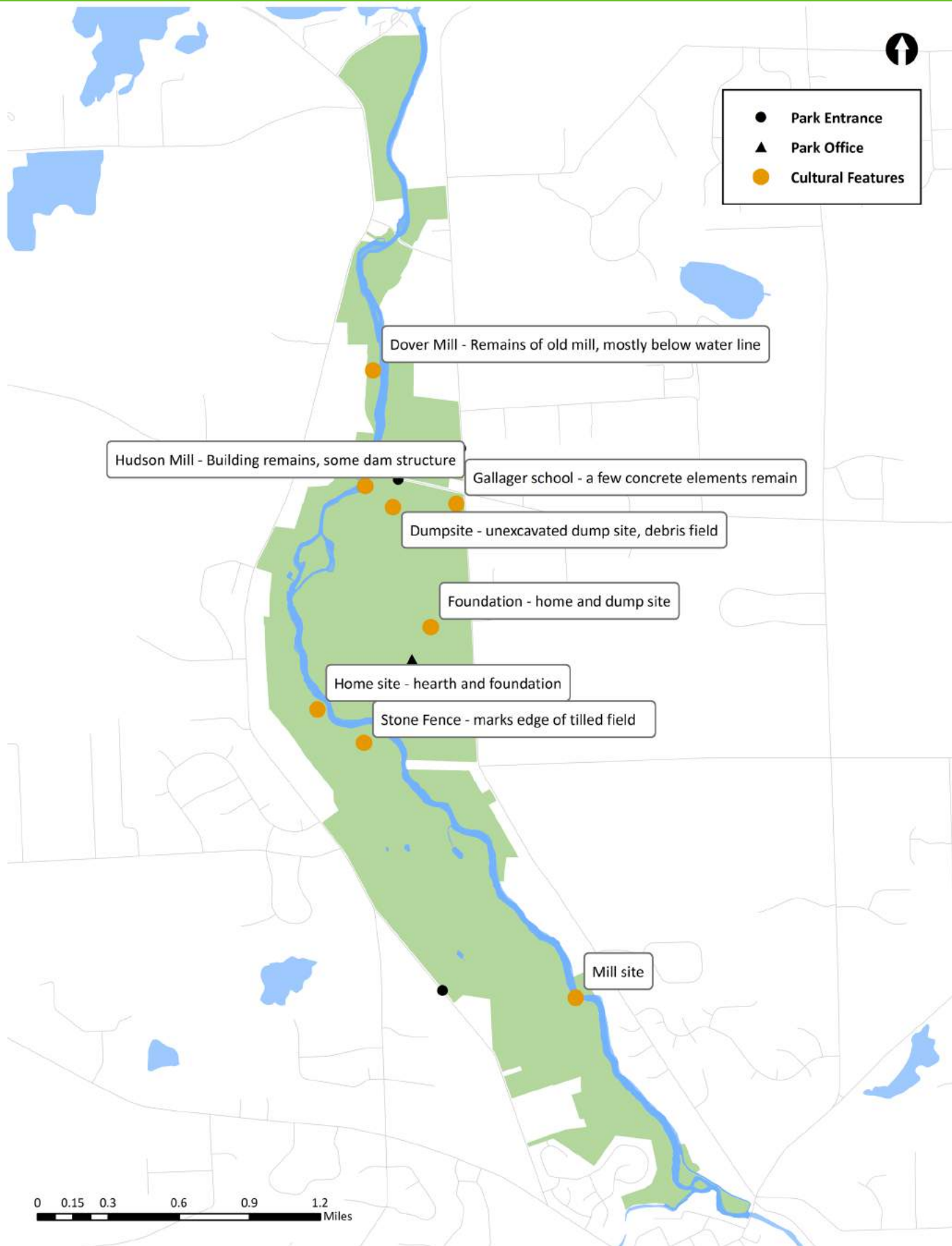
The boundaries of Washtenaw County were established in 1822, and a settlement called Hudson Mills grew near the intersection of North Territorial Road and Dexter-Pinckney Road.

The settlers utilized the great water power of the Huron River and in 1827, Cornelius Osterhaut built a sawmill near the current Rapids View picnic area. The sawmill was needed to cut the lumber used to build the settlers' homes, shops and barns. In 1846, a gristmill was located on the river at this site, followed by a cider mill and a plaster mill. The gristmill was known as Hudson Mill, and primarily processed wheat and corn. A general store, hotel and a pulp mill were later established.

The hamlet of Hudson Mills was prosperous as long as the mills were running, however, in 1903, the pulp mill was sold, taken down, and relocated to the new owner's farm in Webster Township.

Recent years have unearthed various remnants of history in Hudson Mills Metropark. Aside from the evidence of the mills from the 1800s, house foundations, stone walls, and even pieces of an old school remain.

In 1971 Hudson Mills, collaborating with the Dexter Area Historical Society, received a historical marker to commemorate the area's importance to the milling industry, the contributions of Osterhaut, and the visible remains of historic structures in the park.



Infrastructure

In order to serve the varied needs of park visitors, Hudson Mills contains a number of buildings, surfaces, facilities, and activity areas. Many of these were constructed years or decades ago, meaning that they may need to be repaired or replaced in the near future.

The infrastructure necessary to maintain the activities available in Hudson Mills includes roads, parking lots, trails, pipes, utilities, picnic shelters, and much more. Since maintaining infrastructure is costly, it is important going forward to avoid overbuilding and collocate facilities to minimize paving, pipes, and other materials. Several recreation areas managed by state, county, and local governments are close to Hudson Mills, and a goal in the planning process is to ensure that the facilities and infrastructure in the park complement and do not duplicate those nearby.



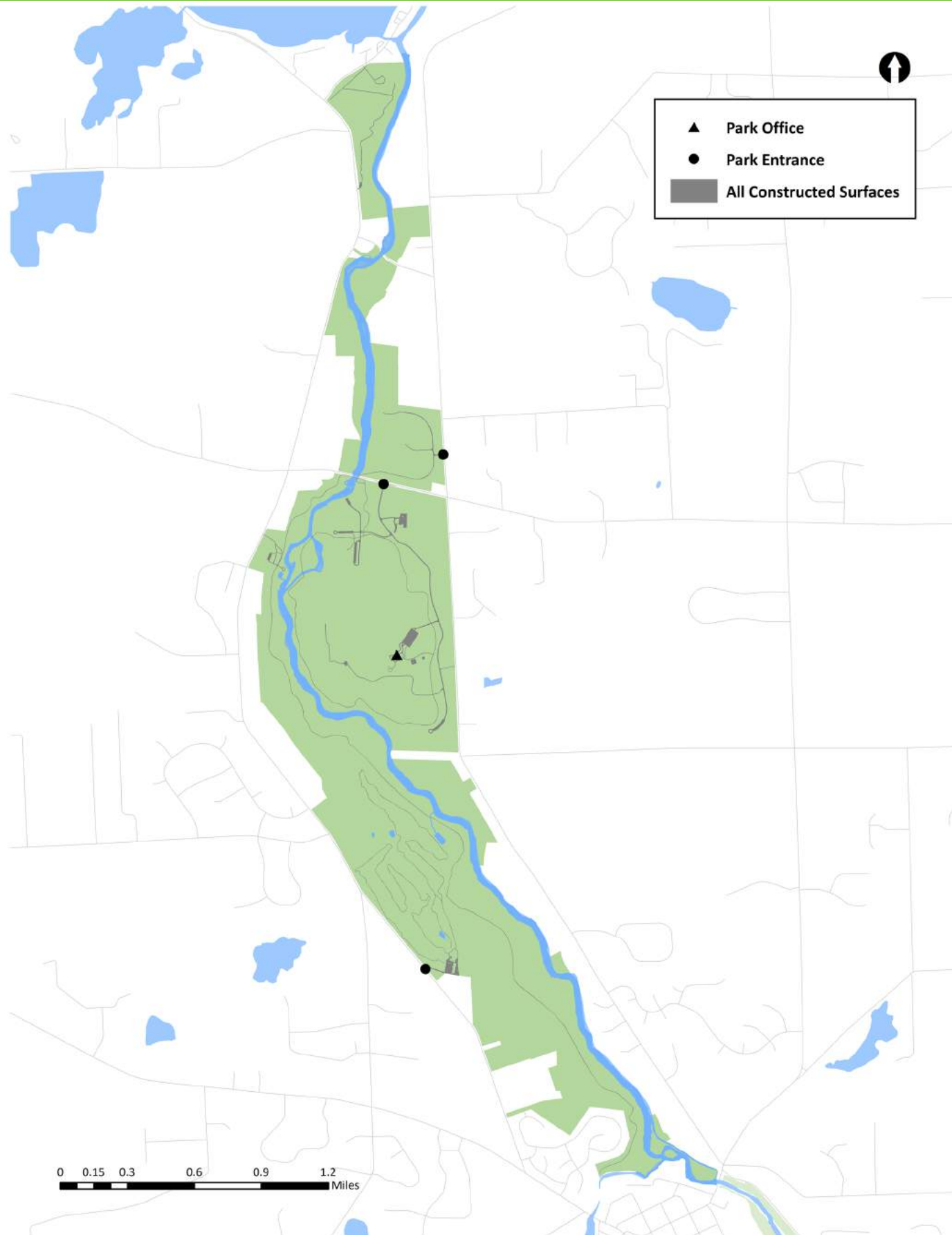
NEEDS

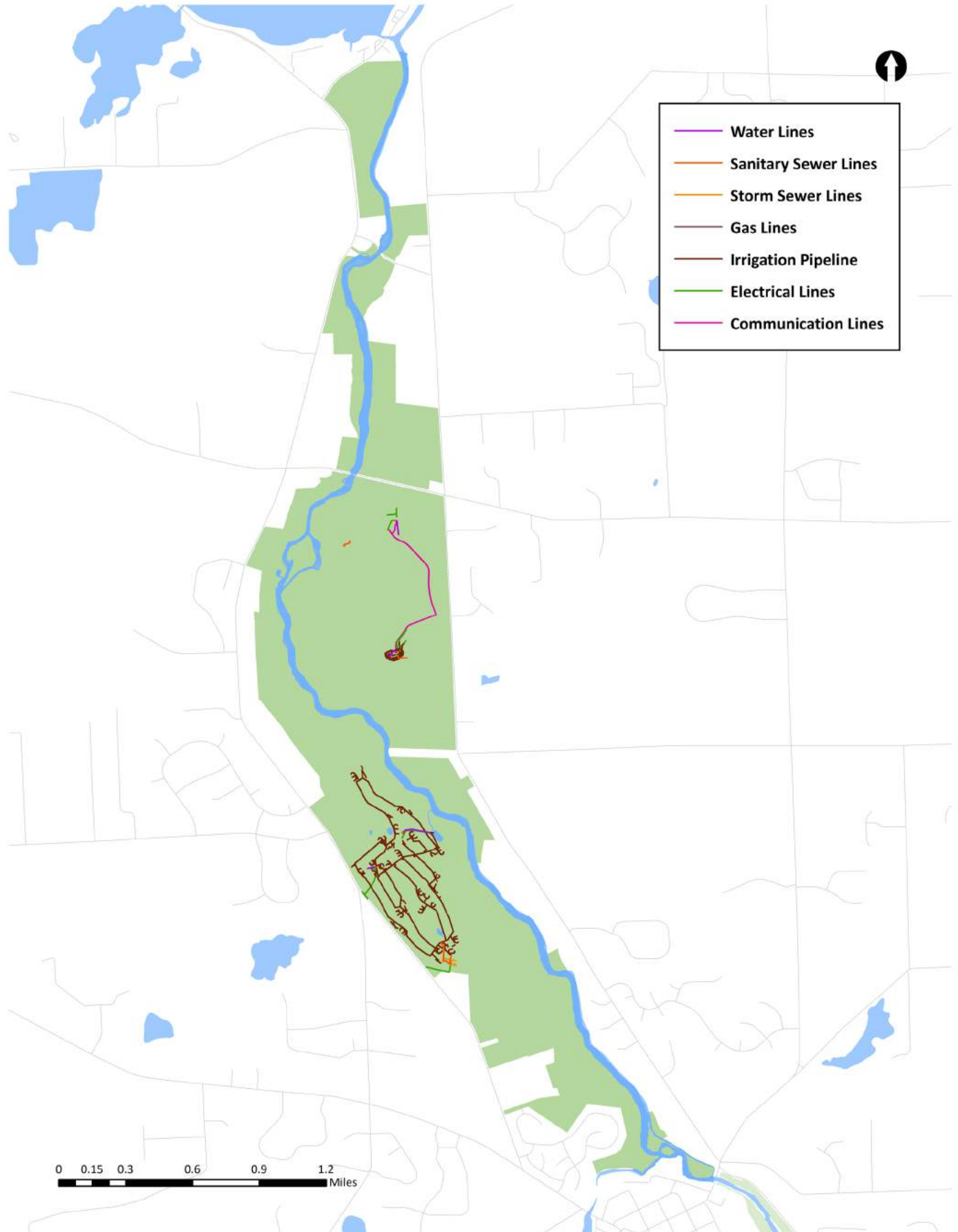
Address aging and overbuilt infrastructure

Redevelop park areas to better serve visitors and environment

OPPORTUNITIES

Hudson Mills Infrastructure	
Public bldgs / avg age	2 / 30
Service bldgs / avg age	4 / 30
Comfort stations / avg age	3 / 29
Paths & trail miles	19.06
Road miles	3.22
Parking lot acreage	5.77
Playgrounds	4
Percent of park mowed	9.5
Picnic shelters	3
Sand volleyball courts	6
Baseball fields	4
Fishing platforms	0
Tennis courts	2
Ice skating rinks	0
Basketball courts	0
Public canoe/kayak launches	1





Hudson Mills Today



Activity Center

The Activity Center hosts events such as maple sugaring and also serves the functions of park office and nature center. This multifunctionality means that sometimes space is tight and uses conflict. Outside the building, a playground and court sports complete the Activity Center area.

Border-to-Border Trail

Once completed, this trail will run from Washtenaw County's border with Livingston County north of Hudson Mills to its border with Wayne County east of Ypsilanti. A segment of the trail runs through Hudson Mills on the west side of the river, and is planned to eventually run the length of the park.

Golf Course

The course has struggled recently due to declining interest in golf, competition in the surrounding area, and aging infrastructure.



Facilities & Centers

Hudson Mills features several facilities that define its character and enhance the recreational experience of visitors. Some of these either require an admission fee, are available for rentals, or sell concessions, supplementing park revenue. As with all park infrastructure, it is a priority to keep the facilities well-maintained and replace them when no longer functional.

Disc Golf Courses

Two disc golf experiences can be found in this park: the Original and Monster courses. Both are popular with the growing community of disc golf enthusiasts and draw visitors to Hudson Mills from across the region.

Canoe/Kayak Launches

Hudson Mills is a stop on the Huron River Water Trail and features a launch for paddlers to ride the popular leg down through the rapids at Delhi.

Group and Canoe Camps

Across North Territorial Road from the majority of the park, the Group Camp allows scouts and other organized youth groups to experience the outdoors on the banks of the Huron River. An area is also set aside for canoe camping as part of the Huron River Water Trail.



Hudson Mills Today

The Metroparks are moving towards a more data-driven approach to developing facilities. In order to best serve the residents of southeast Michigan and use resources wisely, the Planning Department has identified the location of similar facilities and programs. The goal for future development is to avoid duplication and instead offer unique facilities that fill recreation voids in the geographic area where the park is located.

The map below shows the location of aquatic facilities, golf and disc golf, neighborhood sports facilities, interpretive programs, and campsites that compete with those offered at Hudson Mills. Relatively few of these facilities and programs are available in the five-mile radius around the park, with the exception of boat launches. This may present opportunities for Hudson Mills to meet the recreational needs of the area in new ways moving forward.

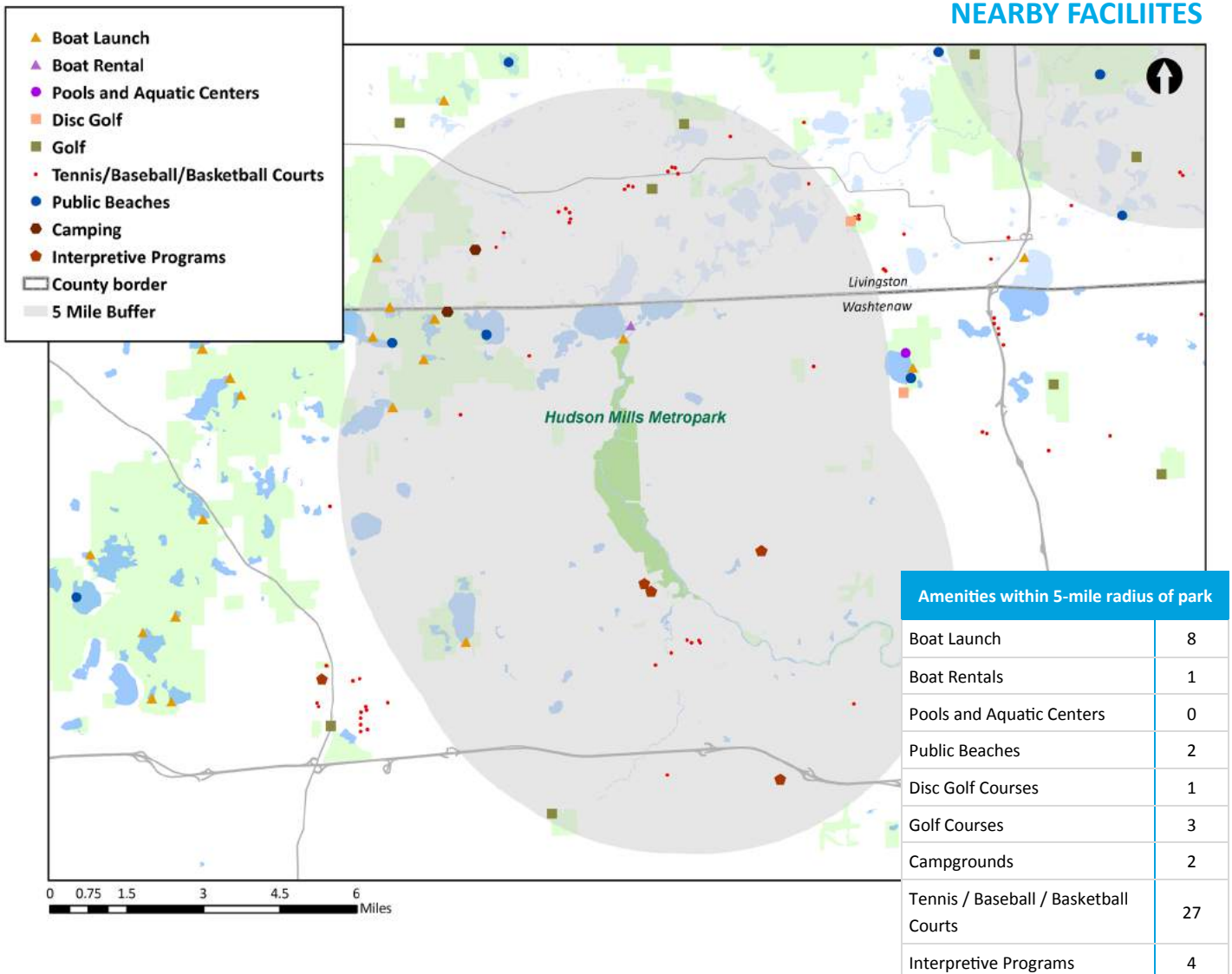
NEEDS

Identify areas of facility duplication

Provide unique recreational facilities to draw visitors from across the region

OPPORTUNITIES

NEARBY FACILITIES





NEEDS

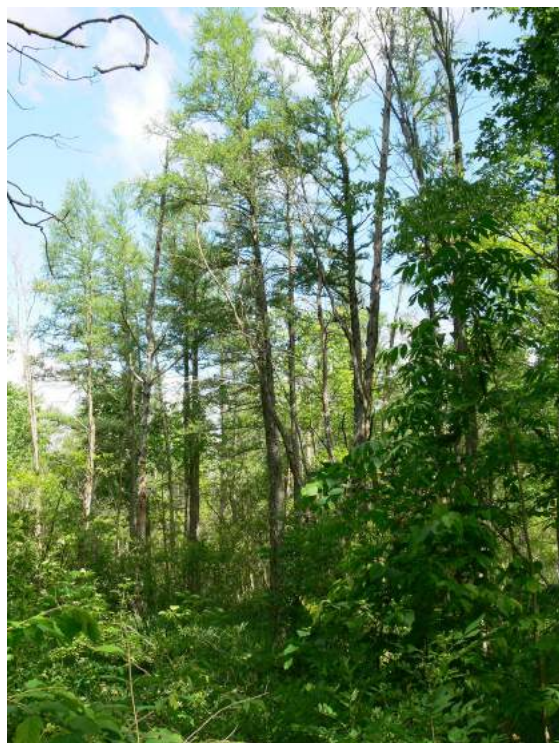
- Work with county to address park boundary issues
- Create good working relationship with neighbors and partner organizations

OPPORTUNITIES

Grants

Over its history Hudson Mills has received several grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for land acquisition, trail development, and more. The land specified as the project area of those grants was encumbered in perpetuity—meaning it may never be converted into a private or non-recreational use. All of Hudson Mills is encumbered, as shown on the following page.

The generous grants from the DNR and other sources have allowed the Metroparks to develop the high-quality recreation facilities at Hudson Mills.



Encroachments

The Planning Department has worked with Hudson Mills park staff to identify external encroachments on park boundaries. These include private development on park property, dumping waste, and breaking through fence lines. Together with a combined map of county parcels in relation to historic HCMA-created parcels, this will help staff resolve existing property issues.

Since Hudson Mills abuts several residential backyards, it is important to work with neighbors to discourage illegal paths into the park and identify areas where a formal pedestrian entry point may be necessary to serve a neighborhood.

Informal Access Points

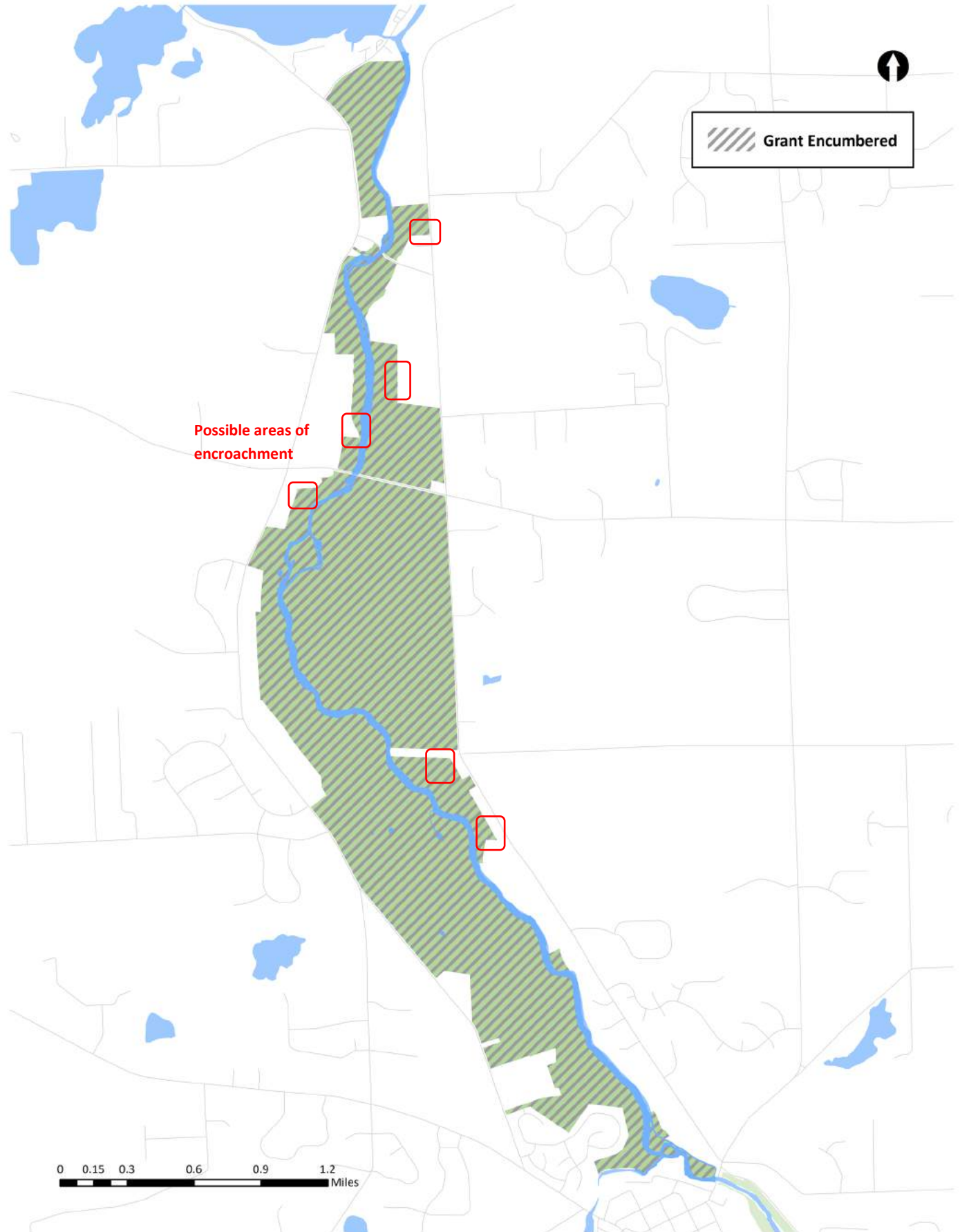
Certain spots on the park border are open to pedestrian access but not formally designated as an entrance. These must be monitored and considered in the planning process. Individuals may park on adjacent streets and enter the park on foot, affecting the tolling revenue of the park and potentially causing negative traffic impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.

Easements

Hudson Mills contains various utility easements, meaning that utility providers are allowed to use certain sections of land to run power lines or other equipment, in order to provide service to the surrounding area. In the future, the Metroparks will collaborate with surrounding municipalities and agencies to link into existing utilities rather than building park-specific utilities—thus furthering the vision of a lean, efficient park system.

Adjacent Property Uses

Property uses surrounding the park include agricultural, residential, and limited commercial. The park is also adjacent to Stinchfield Woods, a field research area of the University of Michigan that is open to public use.



Hudson Mills Today

Vehicular Wayfinding

Standardization

Currently the Metroparks include signage installed at various times with various standards and designs. This does not reinforce the parks working together as a system and can be confusing for visitors. As older signs reach the end of their lives, they will be replaced with new, standardized signs.

Simplicity

In many parks, including Hudson Mills, an abundance of signage is not necessarily useful for directing visitors. Minimizing duplication of signs and expressing sign information simply will make navigation easier for users of the park.

Symbols

Symbols are useful for expressing information in a small amount of space, and also make park facilities more accessible for visitors who have trouble reading or speaking English. A standard set of symbols has been developed for use in wayfinding signage.

Trail Wayfinding

Standardization

Trail types present in the Metroparks include shared use, mountain bike, ski, nature and rustic, and equestrian. Despite their different functions, these trails together create a complete recreation system, so signage will be based on a uniform template.

Flexibility

In order to serve the differing needs of users on these various trail types, the signage template will allow for removable panels and be customized to fit the needs of that user group.

Legibility

For many people, the easiest way to orient oneself in a new environment is through use of a map. For greater ease of use, all new trail wayfinding signs will include a map marked with a “you are here” symbols and the location of important park features and amenities.

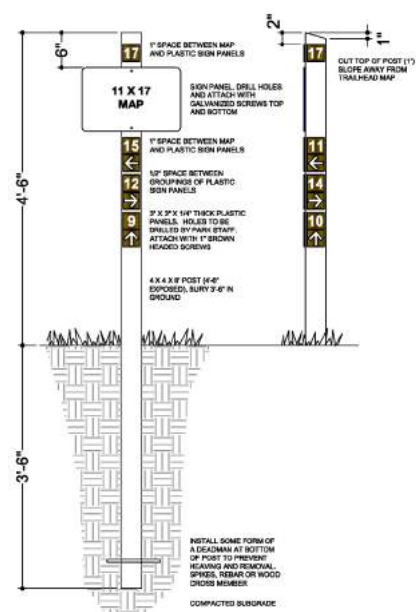
Wayfinding

NEEDS

Replace outdated, confusing, inconsistent signs

Create consistent, convenient wayfinding system to give visitors confidence

OPPORTUNITIES



Trails

As part of the master planning process, staff have categorized and defined the various types of trails in the park, inventoried the miles, and specified the uses and design of each. This formal listing allows for assessment of availability of trails for various users in comparison to user group demand. It will also lead to more standardized maintenance and rule enforcement processes.

NEEDS

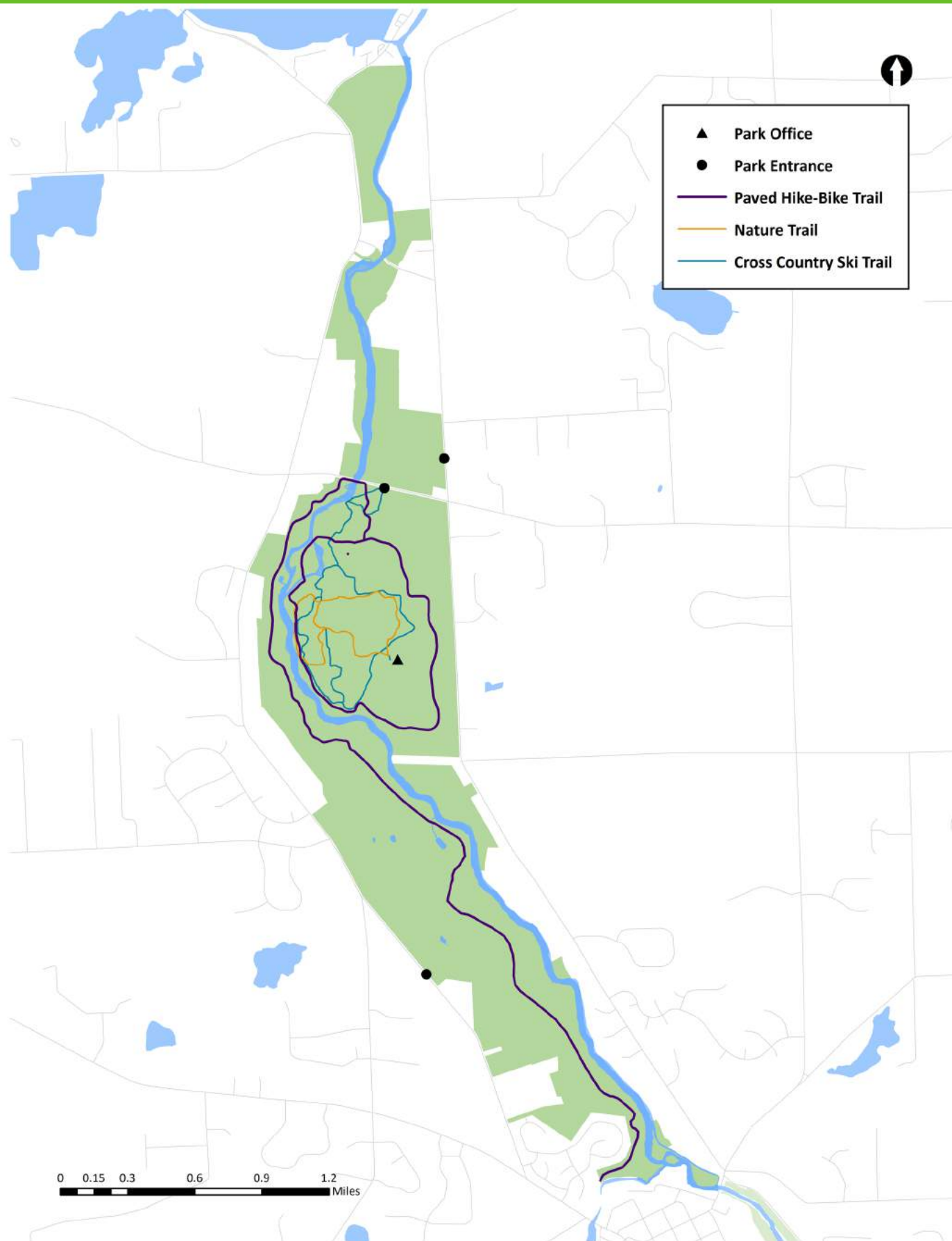
Complete Border-to-Border connection, identify opportunities for new trails

Draw new visitors to the park with a high-quality trail network

OPPORTUNITIES

Trail Type	Miles in park	Allowed Uses	Prohibited Uses	Surface
Shared-Use Trail (Hike-Bike Trail)	7.28	Non-motorized traffic and pets.	Horses and motorized vehicles such as golf carts, scooters, and hover-boards.	10' wide, typically asphalt, some small sections may be concrete or boardwalk.
Nature Trail	1.9	Pedestrian use only; hiking and walking. Snowshoeing is permitted on all nature trails except those designated for cross-country skiing. Cross-country skiing is permitted on designated trails only.	Motorized vehicles, running, jogging, pets, bikes and horses.	Trail surfaces vary and include asphalt, aggregate, mulch and compacted earth. Portions of these trails are accessible, but most are not ADA-compliant.
Rustic Hiking Trail	0.16	Pedestrian use only; running, jogging and pets. Snowshoes and cross-country skiing are permitted	Motorized vehicles, bikes and horses.	Width and material vary, often dirt trails.
Cross-Country Ski Trail	3.79	Cross-country skiing only. Many are used for other activities during the summer.	Motorized vehicles, snowshoes, hiking, bikes, horses and pets.	Snow covered.

This park includes both a paved loop surrounding the central activities, and a connector that is part of both the Washtenaw County Border-to-Border Trail and the statewide Iron Belle Trail. The connector runs south into the City of Dexter, and will eventually run north of North Territorial Road to connect with the Lakelands Trail and Livingston County. Trail connections are important to county and state leaders and will be a focus in planning moving forward.



Accessibility

To remain compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Metroparks are responsible for ensuring that park space is accessible to all members of the public. In the development of this master plan, planning staff has taken an active role in locating the less accessible park amenities, so that all guest can enjoy the park. A survey of several areas has resulted in a list of accessibility issues present at Hudson Mills Metropark. These areas are highlighted below and shown on the map on the following page.

NEEDS

Pursue improvements to park accessibility

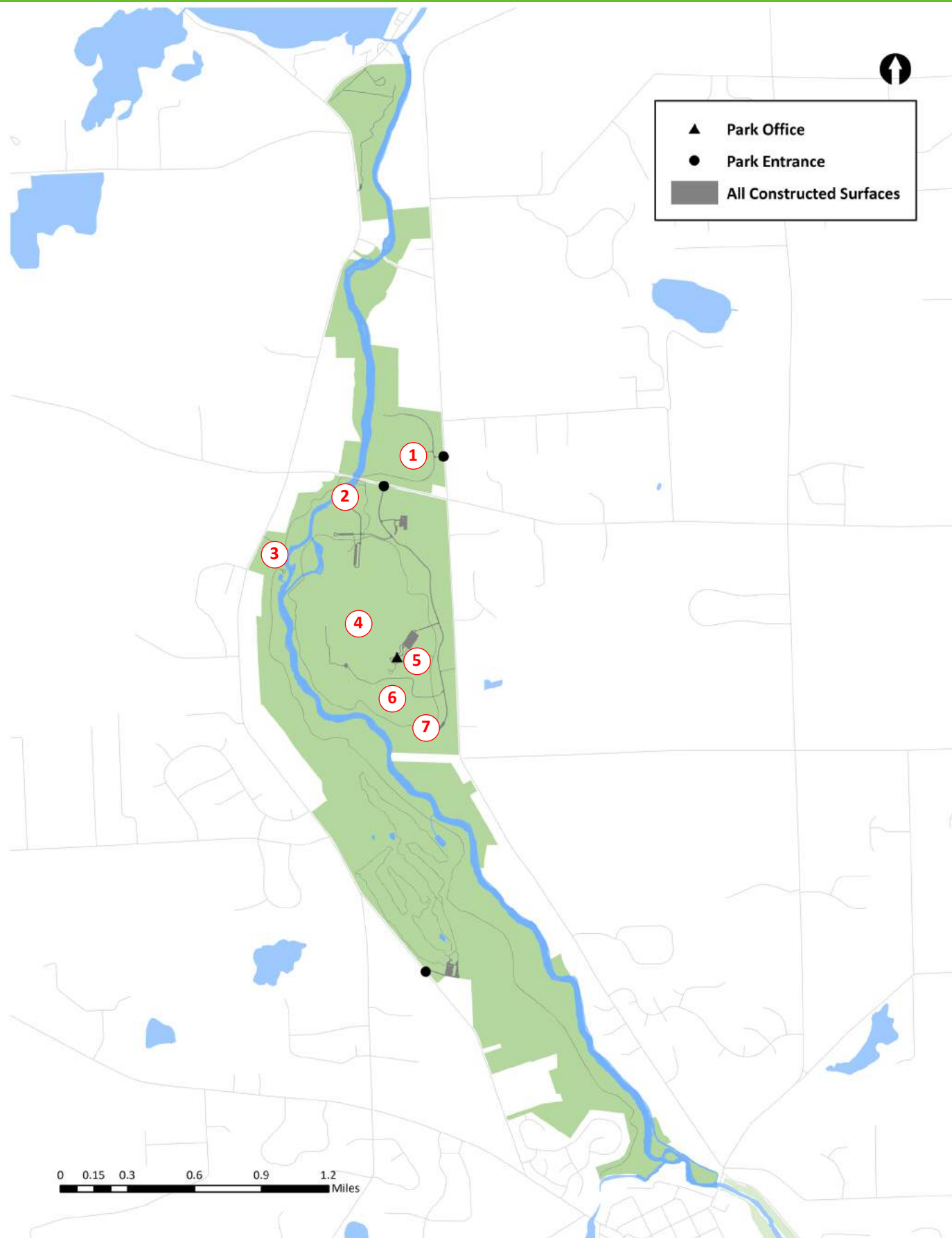
Ensure that users of all abilities feel empowered to take full advantage of the park

OPPORTUNITIES

	Area	Description
1	Group Camp	Needs accessible walkways and restrooms.
2	Rapids View	Needs accessible launch system and information kiosk. Needs accessible parking, walkways, restrooms, picnic tables & grills for shelters.
3	Skip's Canoe Launch	May need accessible launch system. May need accessible parking.
4	Nature trails	Should be modified to be accessible trail.
5	Activity Center	Needs accessible walkways for outdoor sports fields, accessible picnic tables & grills for shelters. Needs accessible walkways and restrooms. Play area needs accessible swing.
6	Disc Golf Courses	Need accessible walkways and restrooms.
7	Pine View	Needs accessible walkways and restrooms, picnic tables & grills for shelters.
	Parkwide	Parking lots need updates to ADA pavement striping and signage.

By working with the ADA Checklist provided by the ADA National Network and the Institute for Human Centered Design, the Metroparks are able to prioritize accessibility improvements of park entrances, services, public restrooms, and other park amenities. The areas mentioned, in addition to others, were identified using the recommended methods for all HCMA parks.





REVENUE

Revenue Sources

2016 Operations Revenue

Revenue Source	2016 Total \$	% of Revenue
Tolling	441,439	44.97
Golf	378,164	38.52
Disc Golf	35,155	3.58
Boat Rental Concessionaire	28,042	2.86
Special Events	23,589	2.40
Picnic Shelter	12,225	1.25
Ripslide	20,392	2.08
Food Bar	15,257	1.55
Nature Center	14,160	1.44
Miscellaneous	7,399	0.75
Group Camp	3,231	0.33
Cross Country Ski	2,635	0.27
	981,688	100.00

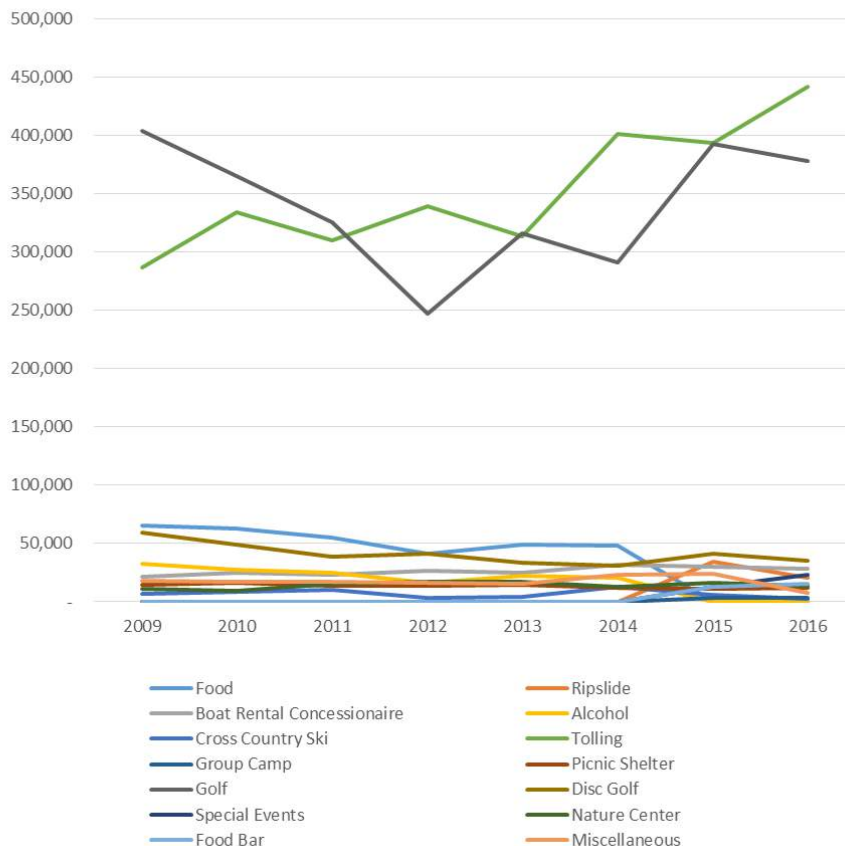
NEEDS

Diversify sources of revenue

Offer new and exciting activities/ programs to visitors to both boost tolling and gather user fees

OPPORTUNITIES

REVENUE TRENDS 2009-2016—Hudson Mills, Dexter-Huron, Delhi



The Metroparks 2016 General Fund revenue equaled \$50,080,002. The 2016 operations revenue for Hudson Mills was approximately \$981,688, comprising 2% of all Metroparks revenue.

As the chart illustrates, nearly all Hudson Mills revenue comes from park entrance tolling and golf.

Hudson Mills, Dexter-Huron, and Delhi are considered together in the budgeting process, and the budgeted 2017 operations revenues for the three parks are \$1,065,488, while estimated 2017 operations expenses are \$2,652,306. Property tax and other revenue will subsidize 59% (\$1,556,573) of the parks' operating budget.

Revenue

Visitors

Hudson Mills Metropark is a regional park and can draw from the 1,663,101 people that live within a 30 mile radius (approximately a 45-minute drive) of the park. Certain events and activities may draw visitors from greater distances.

Vehicle entries to Hudson Mills Metropark have hovered between 200,000 and 250,000 since 2009, fluctuating through the years but facing a slight decline overall. Weather often plays a role in attendance to the park; activity areas greatly affected by weather are the trails, golf course, disc golf courses, and shelter rentals. This may explain the dip in attendance visible in 2011.

Consolidation of statistical information is needed to better assess vehicle entries, park users, event attendance, event participants and activity participation within the park. This information will help with marketing of events, activities and future analysis of the park.



Nature Walk



Family Picnics

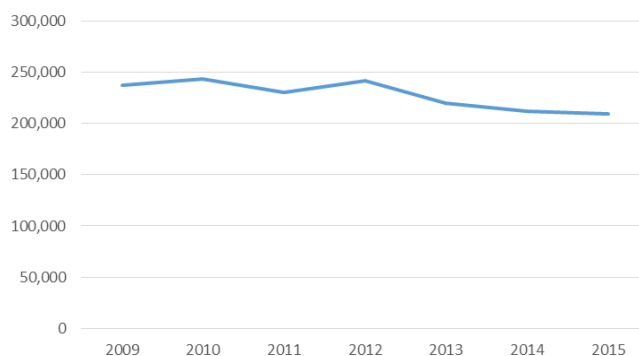
NEEDS

Increase awareness of park and vehicle entry numbers

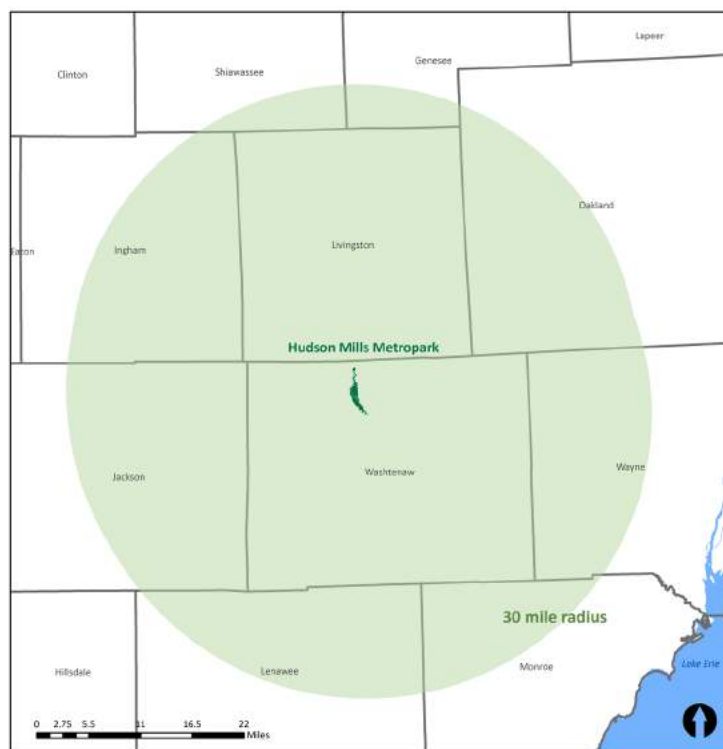
Attract new users and maintain robust visitor data

OPPORTUNITIES

VEHICLE ENTRIES 2009-2016



Hudson Mills Metropark 30-Mile radius



Programs & Events



Fireworks



Easter Egg Scramble



Chill at the Mill

NEEDS

Increase revenue and visitation

Draw new users with exciting, engaging programs and events

OPPORTUNITIES

Hudson Mills hosts dozens of events each year, organized either by park staff or outside groups. Many of these are interpretive programs for both children and adults to explore the natural and cultural assets of the park. Some promote artistic enrichment, and others encourage physical activity or advocate for a cause. Scouting, school field trip, and homeschool programs are also held regularly. Currently interpretive programs take place in and around the Activity Center and on the nature trails.

Recent events include:

- Journey to the Sugar Bush
- Salamander Migration
- Easter Egg Scramble
- Mother's Day Wildflower Walk & Brunch
- Amazing Amphibians
- Aqua Explorers
- Disc Golf Camp
- Chill at the Mill
- Dog Days of Summer
- Fireworks
- Wetland Discoveries
- Halloween Fun
- Santa Central
- Incredible Insects
- Antique Tractor Show

COMMUNITY INFLUENCES

Population

The population of the communities surrounding Hudson Mills is aging rapidly and changing in mobility. The percentage of households without access to an automobile is rising in the region and Washtenaw County, with more rapid change in the municipalities directly surrounding Hudson Mills. The Metroparks were created at the time of the auto boom, when it was assumed that every family would have a car to take out to the countryside on the weekends. Since habits and lifestyles are changing, the Metroparks must look into innovative ways to provide access to the parks for all.

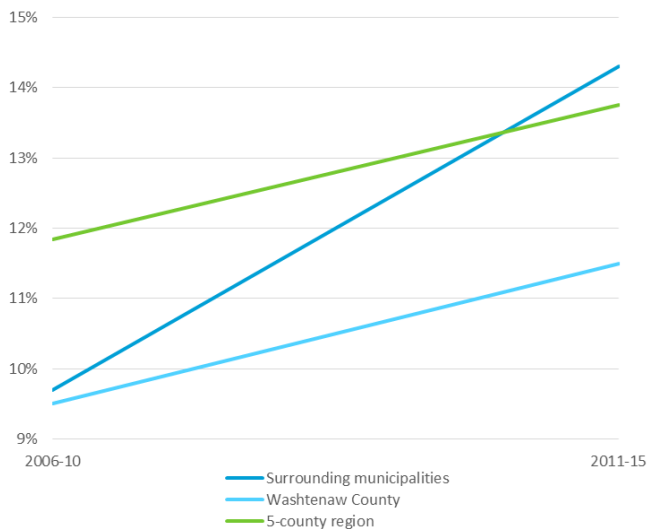
The percentage of individuals over 65 years of age is rising quickly in the region, in Washtenaw County, and most dramatically in communities surrounding the park. Older adults have distinct needs, often requiring accommodations for mobility and accessibility of park features such as trails and buildings. This is important to keep in mind when planning the future of a park serving an older population.

NEEDS

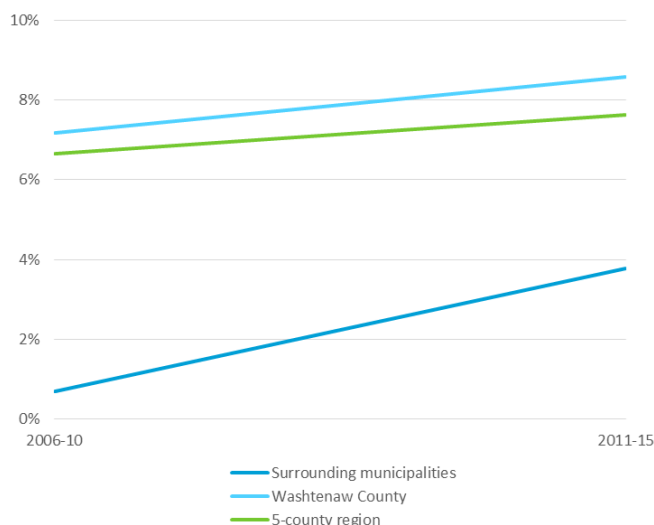
Address changing needs of new population demographics

Develop an accessible, welcoming park with something for everyone

OPPORTUNITIES



CHANGE IN PERCENT OF POPULATION OVER 65 YEARS, FROM 2006-10 through 2011-15 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)



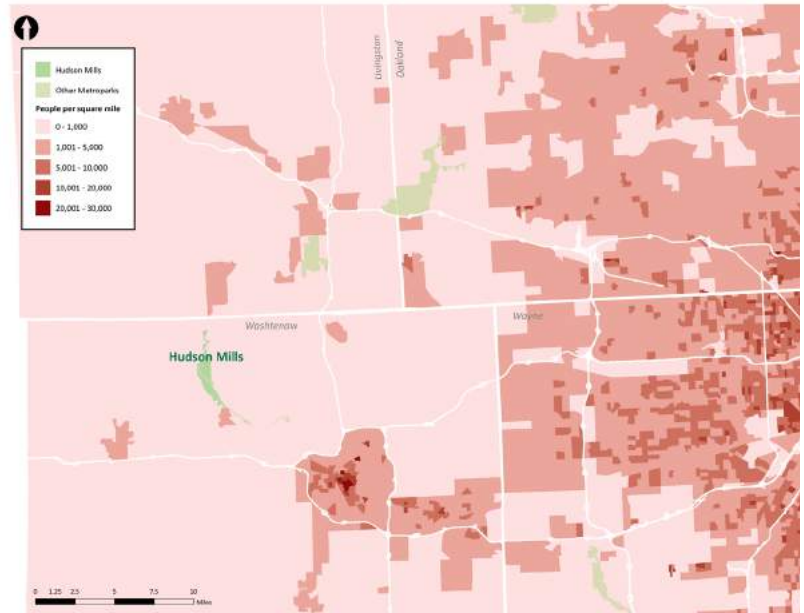
CHANGE IN PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO CARS AVAILABLE, 2006-10 through 2011-15 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)

Community Influences

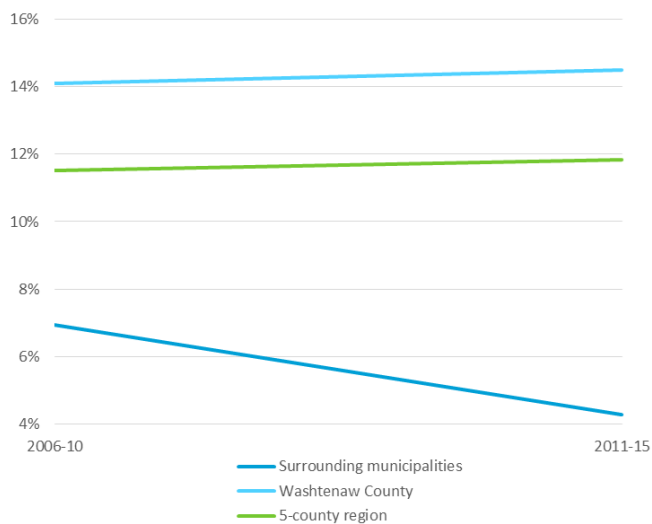
As shown below, Hudson Mills is located well west of the suburban ring around Detroit, largely in the midst of rural low-density areas with less than one thousand residents per square mile. It is near a few communities of slightly higher density and the population hubs of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. All this creates unique land use and park access challenges and opportunities.

While on average the five-county region is falling in population density, the population in Washtenaw County and the municipalities surrounding Hudson Mills has risen slightly, creating increased demand for recreation in the area. They still remain well below the regional average.

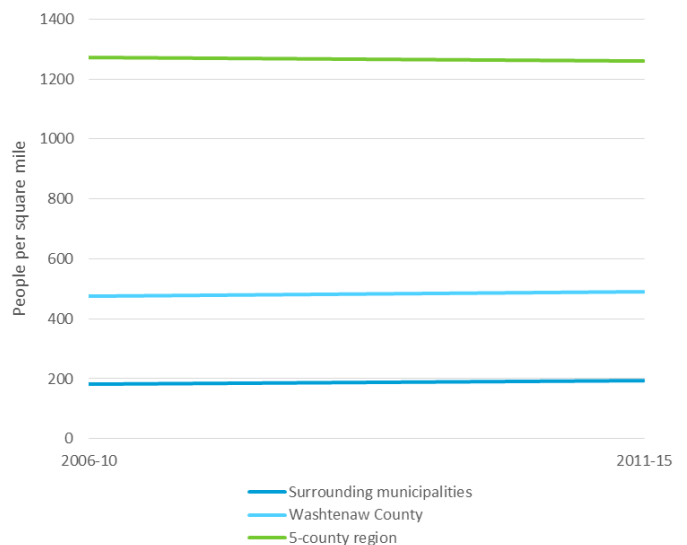
Although most households in the area still speak English as their first language, Washtenaw County and the region at large are seeing an increase in households speaking languages other than English at home. Because of this growing linguistic diversity the Metroparks are working towards more universal signage design, with a focus on easily understandable symbols. The municipalities bordering Hudson Mills do not follow this trend, having decreased numbers of speakers of other languages.



POPULATION DENSITY BY CENSUS TRACT, 2010-14



CHANGE IN PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS SPEAKING LANGUAGE BESIDES ENGLISH AT HOME, 2006-10 through 2011-15 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)



CHANGE IN AVERAGE POPULATION DENSITY, 2006-10 through 2011-15 (Source: US Census American Community Survey)

Community Influences

NEEDS

Improve park connectivity with community

Create good working relationship with surrounding municipalities

OPPORTUNITIES

Dexter Township

- Retain rural character and open space
- Appreciation for and cooperation with public lands
- Seeking funding for sidewalk and path installation
- Completion of Border 2 Border Trail important

Webster Township

- Experiencing transition from agricultural to residential land uses
- Protection of natural resources through Preservation Overlay District
- Encouraging cluster housing developments

City of Dexter

- Continued participation in regional efforts
- Infill and mixed use development in Central Business District
- Increased bicycle and pedestrian connections, especially Border 2 Border Trail

Washtenaw County

- Focus on sense of place and sustainability
- Manage population growth through efficient development
- Encouraging infill and urban service districts
- Natural Areas Preservation Program building greenbelt around urbanized area

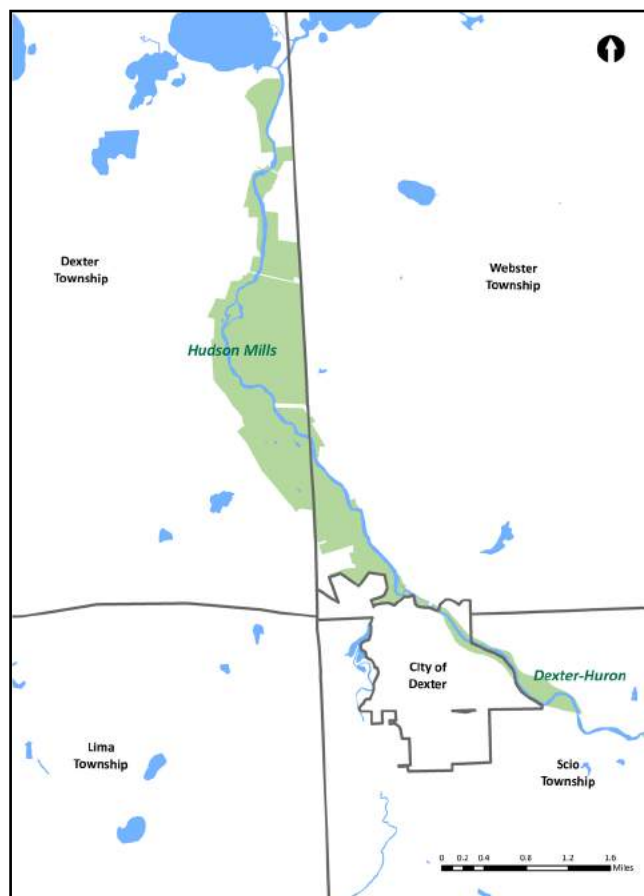
Huron River Watershed Council

- Improve climate resiliency of communities on the watershed
- Green infrastructure for local governments program
- Collaboration in stormwater management efforts
- RiverUp! program supporting placemaking in river towns
- Huron River Water Trail partner facilitation

Projects/Initiatives

Understanding the goals and plans of municipalities bordering and/or containing Hudson Mills is essential for a collaborative, comprehensive planning process. Planning staff researched the published master plans and recreation plans of surrounding municipalities, counties, and regional agencies. These provided a basic idea of the direction planned for each, especially regarding land use, development, and recreation.

MUNICIPALITY MAP



Community Influences

Relevant Planning Documents

A Comprehensive Plan for Washtenaw County, 2004

“Parklands and recreational opportunities promote mentally and physically healthier citizens. Washtenaw County is fortunate to have a comprehensive park system providing a wide range of recreation experiences.... Public park and natural areas acquisition programs also play a significant role in promoting a sense of place by integrating parks and open space acquisitions into regional and county-wide open space systems and protecting important natural resources throughout the County.” pg. 8-3

SEMCOG Green Infrastructure Vision for SE Michigan, 2014

“Public accessibility to the green infrastructure network is paramount, including access to parks, trails, water, and ensuring public spaces are designed for all residents.” P 1

Dexter Township Master Plan, 2011

“Participate with Washtenaw County, Livingston County, the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, and other regional partners to identify current parks and recreational resources of the region and address the current and future recreational needs of Dexter Township and the surrounding area.” pg. 86

Webster Township Master Plan, 2010

“It is the intent of this plan to preserve the continuity of natural features in order to protect the integrity of ecological systems. To further this goal, the Township will study new requirements for preserving connected open space corridors and the preservation of wildlife habitats. This includes participating in any multi-jurisdictional planning efforts to preserve open space and wildlife corridors.” pg. 39

Village of Dexter Master Plan, 2012

“Strive to make every Village park and recreation site accessible through design of an all-season system of non-motorized pathways, trails, sidewalks and bike paths linking Village neighborhoods with both Village and adjacent non-Village parks, greenways, pathways, recreation venues, schools and commercial retail areas.” pg. 22

Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission Master Plan, 2014

“The County also cooperates with other levels of government and pertinent organizations to protect open space and natural areas that are threatened by urban sprawl, and provides recreational facilities and programs for use on an inter-community or countywide basis.” pg. 9

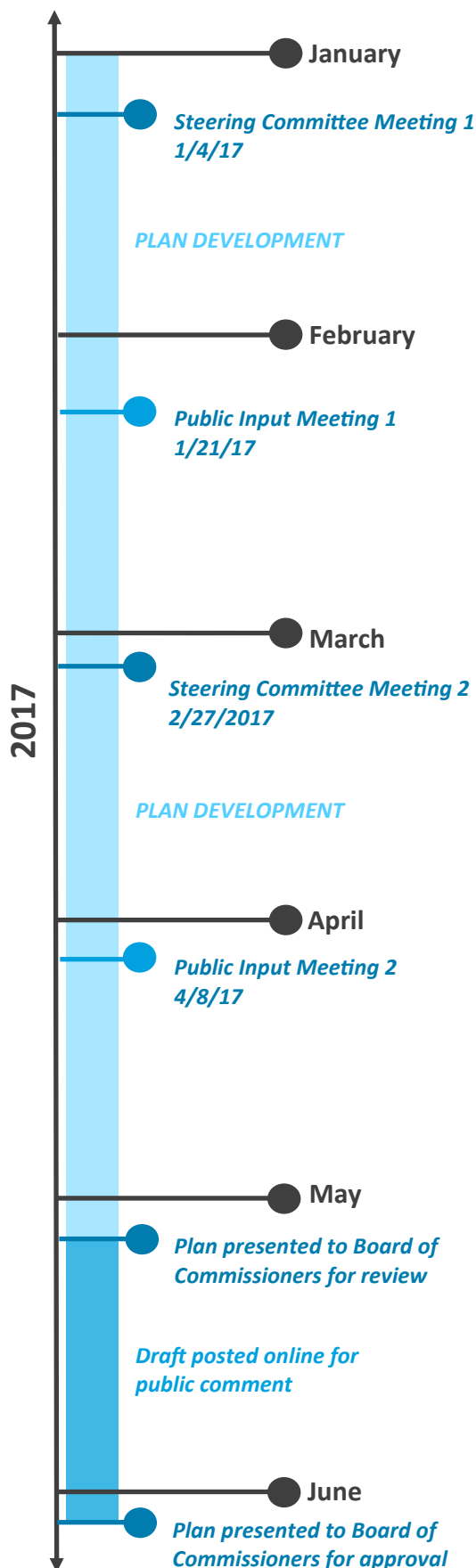
Since the development and land use decisions of bordering communities and other governmental agencies directly impact the park, these neighbor master plans were reviewed and taken into account when creating this document. The opinions and ideas expressed by residents and leaders in these municipalities give Hudson Mills a wider context and in many cases underscore the importance of the park’s resources to citizens.

Hudson Mills is part of a broader system of recreation and green space that includes other Metroparks as well as local, county, and state parks and greenways. Due to this, recreation and green infrastructure plans were also considered in creating the Hudson Mills Master Plan. Many communities are currently advancing their non-motorized networks, seeking grant funding to create greenways and paths, and cooperating to provide linked green and recreation spaces to their constituents.

Several other state, county, and local parks are located close to Hudson Mills Metropark, leading to exciting opportunities for non-motorized connections and collaboration among agencies.

PUBLIC INPUT

← Outreach Process



Since this park belongs to the people of southeast Michigan, the Planning Department aimed to include the public in multiple stages of the planning process.

The planning process began with a meeting of the steering committee, which identified organizations and individuals with significant investment in the park for targeted invitations to the public meeting. A strategy for soliciting general participation in the public meeting was also discussed.

The next step was a public meeting with community members to gather initial ideas about the direction of the park. A general park feedback survey was posted online and advertised by Metroparks social media.

These ideas were taken into account, along with staff feedback and other data, in developing initial recommendations. These were then presented to the public at a second meeting, and feedback was collected, analyzed, and incorporated into a draft Master Plan document.

This document was posted online in May for final public comment, which influenced the final Master Plan sent to the Board of Commissioners for approval in June.

Public Meeting 1 - 1/21/17

- Explanation of and timeline for the planning process
- General park information and map
- Regional map on which participants placed stars to indicate their place of residence in relation to the park
- Exercise in which participants placed pom-poms representing resources in jars representing activities, expressing their opinion on where investments should be made
- Opportunity to fill out survey in person

Public Meeting 2 - 4/8/17

- Short presentation on survey results, community influences, and intended projects
- Opportunity for participants to write down feedback on intended projects

Results

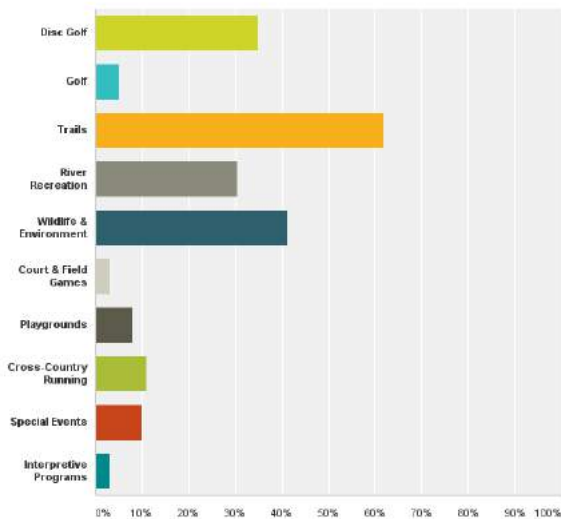
Natural resources advocates were well-represented in public input for the Hudson Mills Master Plan. Both public meetings were combined with informational sessions on natural resources management in the Metroparks Western District. At the first meeting, the Wildlife & Environment category was heavily favored in the pom-pom activity. River Recreation and Trails followed, with Interpretive Programs and Disc Golf also claiming several votes. Special Events, Cross Country Running, and Playground only received a few pom-poms each, and Court and Field Sports and Golf had one. In the questionnaire, respondents advocated for improved wildlife habitat, stronger and more nuanced invasive species control, protection of native species, decreased mowing and clearing, and enhanced water quality.

Disc golf enthusiasts made up a large portion of questionnaire respondents, expressing a desire for updated courses that serve experienced players and can host championship events. The questionnaire respondents noted that the two courses are outdated and that newer courses feature a more interesting layout, more variety, and more challenges, facilitating leagues and events. In general, disc golfers want to feel that their sport is respected and appreciated, and that the fees they pay are used to make noticeable course improvements. Some feel that the bag tag fee is too high, and requested a higher level of maintenance on the course, including invasive species removal, tree planting, and winter upkeep. Better signage and amenities were mentioned, and the most popular request, installation of improved baskets, is already underway at Hudson Mills.

Appreciation for the trails in the park was also expressed in the questionnaire. Over 60% of respondents listed trails as one of their top three areas of the park, and several mentioned issues with trails in the open-ended responses. User conflict is a challenge at Hudson Mills due to the variety of activities that take place on the trails, and all user groups are interested in seeing improved and extended trails. Pavement maintenance was noted as a point of concern, as well as improving maps and signage, adding amenities, and focusing on connectivity with larger trail systems such as the Border-to-Border trail.

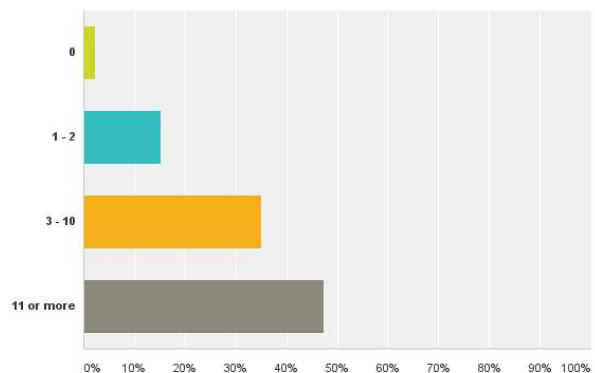
Q6 What is your favorite part of the park or activity within Hudson Mills Metropark? (Choose up to 3.)

Answered: 515 Skipped: 91



Q3 Approximately how many times do you visit Hudson Mills Metropark in a year?

Answered: 602 Skipped: 4



Public Input

Questionnaire Response Topics

Trails

- Plow path to Dexter in winter
- Repave paths
- User conflict on trails
- Improve signage and maps
- Provide bike sharing/storage
- Extend paved trails
- Improve restrooms
- Groom and extend ski trails
- Add bike lanes
- No smoking near trails
- Border-to-Border connection
- Add mountain bike trails
- Add bicycle repair station
- Continue to provide safe edges

Golf

- Keep golf course open
- Cut rough lower
- Turn into trails area
- More sand, larger greens
- Design for beginners
- Add benches
- Replace carts
- Convert into urban bike park
- Too much space used for course

Maintenance

- New equipment
- More pet waste receptacles
- Better road plowing
- Update infrastructure
- No smoking
- Better enforcement of rules

Environment

- Plant more trees
- Less cutting and mowing
- Improve wildlife habitat
- Protect native plants/wildlife
- Leave areas undeveloped
- Control invasives
- Restore eroded areas
- Reduce impervious surfaces
- Develop volunteer groups
- Protect Huron River
- Protect eastern massasauga

Programming

- Offer archery programs
- More homeschooling programs
- Stargazing nights
- Nature walks
- More programming for kids
- More concerts and shows
- More races
- Improve interpretive exhibits

River

- Add white water play area
- Canoe/kayak/tube rental
- Add accessible launch
- Increase parking
- Water park using the river

Amenities

- Better restrooms
- Water bottle refill stations
- Better picnic areas/shelters
- Improved and healthier snacks

Disc Golf

- Provide greater variety
- Design a more difficult layout
- Maintain course better all seasons
- Improve signage and maps
- Replace baskets (in progress)
- Include options for other abled
- Add benches, restrooms, trash cans
- Lower fees
- Improve runoff situation
- Increase respect for sport
- Clear invasives on course
- Separate course from trails
- Offer more events and leagues
- Offer free disc golf for children

Facilities

- Better sports fields
- Reopen tennis courts
- Dog-friendly areas
- Dark sky area
- Add pickleball courts
- Add a nature center
- Splash pad instead of slide
- Playground in south of park

Access

- Longer hours
- Less expensive pass
- Annual pass vehicle lane
- Military discount
- Reduce senior price
- Multi vehicle discount for families



Public Input

Participation



NEEDS

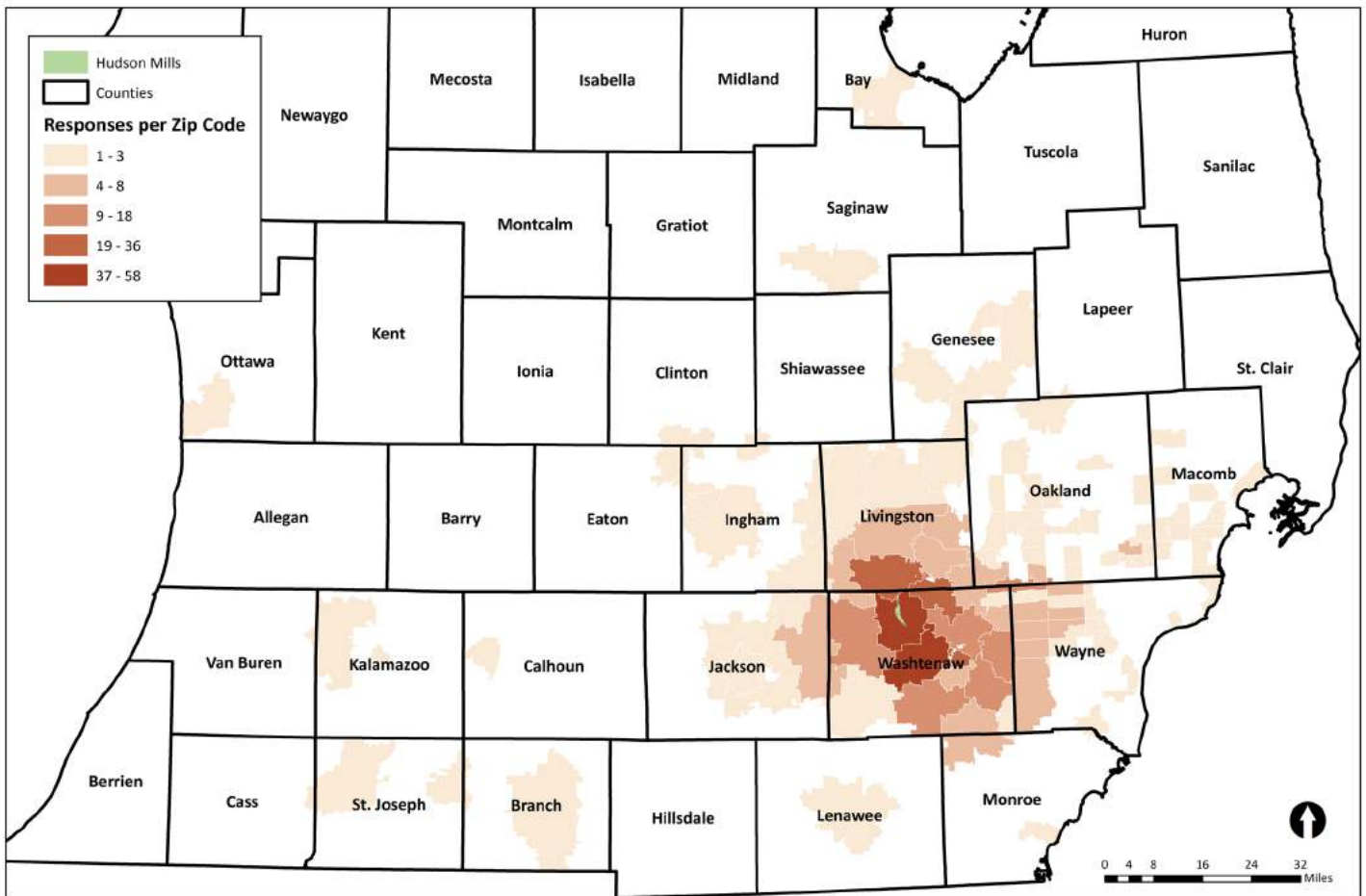
Incorporate variety of opinions and user groups into master plan

Create vibrant park through robust, transparent public outreach

OPPORTUNITIES

The Hudson Mills Master Plan online and hard copy questionnaire received 606 responses, and 37 individuals attended the two public meetings. While the great majority of respondents were located in the zip codes closest to the park, input came in from 19 counties in Michigan, as well as a couple of other states.

Survey Response Zip Code Map



Action Plan

Needs & Opportunities

Based on the assessment of park conditions, demographic research and spatial analysis, public input, and staff input, the needs and opportunities listed throughout this document were developed.

Needs

- Better highlight and advertise special character of park
- Define and protect areas with important biodiversity features
- Better educate about and preserve important cultural features
- Address aging and overbuilt infrastructure
- Identify areas of facility duplication
- Work with county to address park boundary issues
- Replace outdated, confusing, inconsistent signs
- Complete Border-to-Border connection, identify opportunities for new trails
- Pursue improvements to park accessibility
- Diversify sources of revenue
- Increase awareness of park and vehicle entry numbers
- Increase revenue and visitation
- Address changing needs of new population demographics
- Improve park connectivity with community
- Incorporate variety of opinions and user groups into master plan

Opportunities

- Expansion of available events and activities at park
- Create a resilient network of biodiverse areas in the park
- Draw new visitors with programming/education based on history of park
- Redevelop park areas to better serve visitors and environment
- Provide unique recreational facilities to draw visitors from across the region
- Create good working relationship with neighbors and partner organizations
- Create consistent, convenient wayfinding system to give visitors confidence
- Draw new visitors to the park with a high-quality trail network
- Ensure that users of all abilities feel empowered to take full advantage of the park
- Offer new and exciting activities/programs to visitors of the park to both boost tolling and gather user fees
- Attract new users and maintain robust visitor data
- Draw new users with exciting, engaging programs and events
- Develop an accessible, welcoming park with something for everyone
- Create good working relationship with surrounding municipalities
- Create vibrant park through robust, transparent public outreach



With these in mind, the following list of projects, plans, and studies was developed. Major and minor projects have been identified as priorities and assigned a timeline, and the accompanying studies have been listed. These pages should serve as a blueprint for the future of the park over the next ten years.

Action Plan

Large Facilities

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2017-2021)	Mid-Term (2022-2026)	Long-Term (10+ years)
Implement golf course repurposing plan	Interpretive	Planning, Engineering, Operations,		TBD	x		
Implement Activity Center improvement plan	Engineering	Planning, Operations		TBD	x	x	

Signage

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2017-2021)	Mid-Term (2022-2026)	Long-Term (10+ years)
Roadside wayfinding/directional signage updates - parkwide	Planning	Maintenance, Operations		\$15,000	x		
Replace park entrance sign and interchangeable letter sign on Huron River Drive	Planning	Maintenance, Operations	Dexter Township	\$2,500	x		
Trail wayfinding signage improvements and possible path relocation	Planning	Maintenance, Interpretive, Operations		\$5,000	x		
Interpretive signage improvements - nature trails and EMR managed lands	Interpretive	Planning, Maintenance, Operations		\$5,000	x		

Action Plan

Infrastructure / Small Facilities

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2017-2021)	Mid-Term (2022-2026)	Long-Term (10+ Years)
Pavement projects (list developed annually, as needed)	Engineering	Planning, Operations	Contractors	various	x	x	x
Accessibility improvements, including interiors and walkways - parkwide	Engineering	Planning, Operations	Contractors	various	x	x	
Replace pedestrian bridges (2) on hike-bike trail	Engineering	Planning, Operations	Contractors	TBD			x
Rapids View improvements: develop accessible canoe/kayak launch, replace/relocate comfort station, expand parking	Planning	Engineering, Operations	Contractors, MDNR, HRWC	TBD	x		
Develop small playground at Oak Meadows	Planning	Engineering, Operations	Contractors	\$80,000	x		
Replace dilapidated tennis courts with new recreational feature (e.g. spray pad)	Engineering	Planning, Operations	Contractors	TBD	x		
Develop hike-bike trail connector from loop to the Activity Center parking lot	Engineering	Planning, Operations	Contractors	TBD		x	
Canoe/kayak camp improvements: replace/relocate pit toilets, replace fire pits, replace fire pit seating	Planning	Maintenance, Operations	MDNR, HRWC	TBD		x	
Replace disc golf baskets on Monster	Planning	Operations		TBD	x		
Border-to-Border (B2B) hike-bike trail extension development (to Lakelands	Planning	Engineering, Operations	WCPARC, MDNR	TBD	x	x	
Canoe livery launch improvements	Planning	Engineering,	Concessionaire	\$12,000	x		
Replace existing and add new tollbooth	Engineering	Operations,		\$300,000	x		

Natural Resources

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2017-2021)	Mid-Term (2022-2026)	Long-Term (10+ years)
Vegetation Management (annual)	NR	Operations		\$30,000	x	x	x
Threatened habitat restoration (Wet-mesic prairie/Oak Barren/Tamarack)	NR		USFWS, TNC, MDNR, NGOs	\$130,000	x	x	
Sustainability initiatives	NR	Operations, Planning,		TBD	x	x	x
Hazardous waste removal (annual)	NR	Operations		\$2,000	x	x	x
Early detection, rapid response. Invasive species surveys and control in high	NR	Interpretive	NGOs	\$12,000	x	x	x
Restoration of former farmed fields	NR		Contractors	TBD	x	x	x
Conduct prescribed fire in adapted	NR		Contractors	\$4,000	x	x	x
Oak wilt control and prevention	NR	Operations,	MDNR	\$4,500	x	x	x
Deer cull to maintain deer at roughly 15/ square mile	NR	Police, Operations,	MDNR, NGOs		x	x	x
Japanese Knotweed monitoring and	NR		Contractors	\$5,000	x		
Landscape Tree planting diversification	NR	Operations		\$2,000	x	x	x
Fish habitat improvements	NR		MDNR, NGOs,	\$125,000	x	x	



Action Plan

Area Plans/Studies/Initiatives

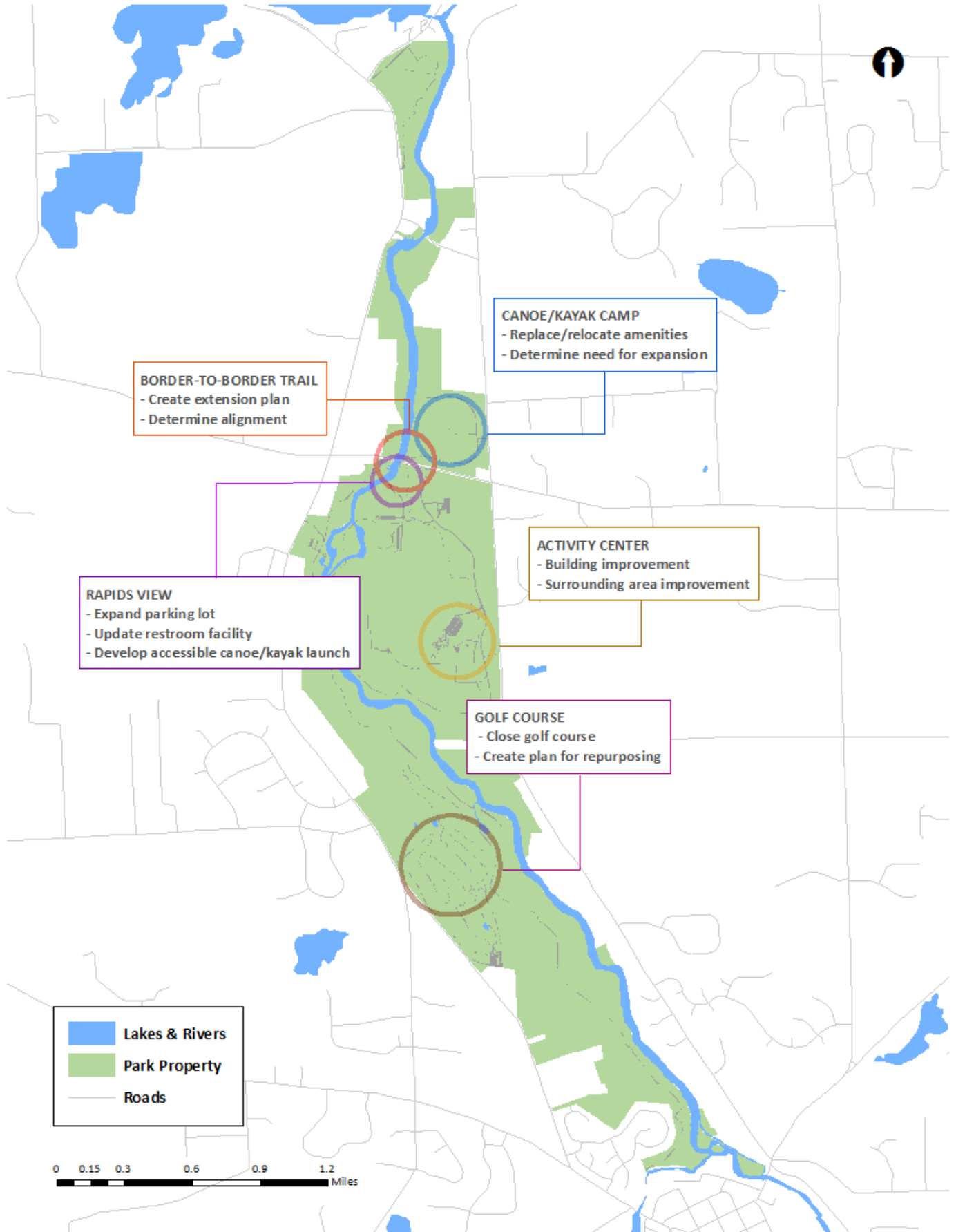
After identifying the need for changes or improvements based on user feedback and staff research, in-depth evaluation and planning must be carried out to gain a detailed understanding of problems and opportunities and determine the best strategies based on existing conditions and resources. Sometimes a process to formally monitor facility usage and gauge popularity is necessary. These studies often result in a scope of work, a work plan, and in some cases a site plan that give staff a roadmap for planned changes. Recommended studies are listed below:

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2017-2021)	Mid-Term (2022-2026)	Long-Term (10+ years)
Update trail maps to show opportunities for walking/hiking/trail running	Graphics	Planning		staff time	x		
Establishment of a comprehensive Oak Wilt monitoring and treatment protocol	NR	Operations	MDNR	\$10,000	x		
Establish Invasive Species Control Tracking Website	NR	IT	MNFI, MISIN	staff time	x		
Comprehensive wildlife surveys and mapping (birds, insects, freshwater mussels)	NR	Interpretive	NGOs, Consultants, MNFI	\$35,000	x		x
Golf course repurposing plan: develop an outreach facility including canoeing, kayaking, and bike rental with connection to B2B trail	Planning, Interpretive	Engineering, Operations		staff time	x		
Activity Center improvement plan: identify opportunities to improve building and surrounding areas for increased visitor use.	Planning	Engineering, Operations		staff time	x		
Rapids View selective redevelopment plan	Planning	Engineering, Operations		staff time	x		
Oak Meadows play area site plan	Planning	Engineering, Operations		staff time	x		
Tennis court area site plan	Planning	Engineering, Operations		staff time	x		
Canoe/kayak camp improvements site plan	Planning	Operations		staff time	x		
Evaluate opportunities for including family/bike camping at Group Camp	Planning	Operations		staff time	x		

Area Plans/Studies/Initiatives (cont'd)

Description	Dept. Lead	Other Depts.	Other Partners	Cost Estimate	Short-Term (2017-2021)	Mid-Term (2022-2026)	Long-Term (10+ years)
B2B extension plan	Planning	Engineering, Operations	WCPARC, MDNR	staff time	x		
Planning for portage improvements at Fluke Dam (partnership)	Planning	Engineering, Operations	HRWC	staff time		x	
Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake population assessment and habitat improvements	NR	Int.	Consultants	\$55,000	x		
Fisheries assessment	NR		MDNR	\$25,000	x		
Grassland Management Plan (biennial)	NR	Ops, Int.			x	x	x
Deer program evaluation (vegetation study)	NR	Int.	Contractors	\$30,000	x		x





Action Plan

Key Projects

Golf Course

2017-2021

Participation in golf has been declining nationwide, due to factors such as low interest among young adults. This golf course also faces competition from several nearby courses and struggles to cover expenses with revenue. With expensive updates necessary to keep the course operating into the near future, a more financially sound option is to close the course and transition the land into a less intensive use, such as an outreach facility with canoeing, kayaking, bike rentals, and a formalized connection to the Border-to-Border trail.

Needs:

- Less intensive use for building and grounds

Solutions:

- Close golf course
- Create plan for repurposing



Activity Center

2017-2026

This area features a number of different uses, all of which may benefit from a rethinking of the area as a whole. The building holds both the park office and numerous interpretive programs that take place throughout the year. In the surrounding area, visitors use the disc golf courses, trailheads, the playground, and various sports courts. A plan will be created to improve both the building itself and the surrounding area, considering new attractions and potentially taking advantage of the golf course repurposing to ensure adequate space for all activities.

Needs:

- Increase visitor use

Solutions:

- Improve building
- Improve surrounding area
- Consider new features or attractions



Action Plan

Rapids View

2017-2021

This is a popular access site for both the Huron River Water Trail and the Border-to-Border Trail, and due to increasing use is in need of both expanded parking and an updated restroom facility. As part of the ongoing initiative to enhance accessibility throughout the Metroparks, this area has been identified for installation of an accessible canoe/kayak launch. Together these elements form a selective redevelopment plan that will improve overall use experience at Rapids View.

Needs:

- Accommodation for growing use
- Increased accessibility

Solutions:

- Expand parking lot
- Update restroom facility
- Develop accessible canoe/kayak launch



Border-to-Border Trail

2017-2026

This trail is part of the statewide Iron Belle Trail and will eventually extend from Washtenaw’s eastern boundary with Wayne to its northern boundary with Livingston. One of the gaps that still exists in this vision is between North Territorial Road, within Hudson Mills, and Livingston County, as well as connection with the Lakelands Trail. An extension plan, involving coordination between the counties and HCMA, will determine the preferred trail alignment.

Needs:

- Connect gaps in existing trail

Solutions:

- Create extension plan and determine alignment



Action Plan

Canoe/kayak camp

2022-2026

This campground facilitates multi-day paddling trips on the Huron River Water Trail, and has the potential for improvement as the trail becomes increasingly popular. Amenities such as pit toilets, fire rings, and seating will be replaced and/or relocated.

Needs:

- Improved facilities

Solutions:

- Replace/relocate toilets, fire rings, seating
- Determine need for additional capacity



Other Projects

• Walkway and interior accessibility improvements

Due to growing awareness that park facilities do not meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, increasing accessibility will be an ongoing focus. Buildings will be rebuilt and retrofitted to improve ease of access, and paved paths will be constructed to better connect parking with recreational activities.

• Oak Meadows small playground

Staff have identified a need for more play areas at Hudson Mills. Due to its use as a trailhead, large amount of parking, and location near the entrance to the park, Oak Meadows is the ideal location.

• Disc Golf basket replacements

The current baskets are aging and no longer adequate for the high volume of disc golf players at Hudson Mills. They will be replaced with high-quality modern baskets.

• Restoration of former farmed fields

Parts of Hudson Mills previously used as farmland require special restoration practices to nurture healthy ecosystems. These include planting native species and improving hydrology.

• Trail wayfinding signage and path realignment

The nature trails at Hudson Mills can be confusing and require better wayfinding signage. Realignment of some adjacent maintenance paths may also improve the user experience.

• Eastern massassauga population assessment and habitat improvements

Hudson Mills contains land designated as “managed” under the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for the federally protected eastern massassauga rattlesnake. In these parts of the park, special efforts must be made to ensure healthy habitat for the snakes and to monitor population changes.





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