



CITY OF
FENNVILLE

**Parks and Recreation
Plan**

2024-2028

Fennville, Michigan

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Introduction

Providing for community recreation is one of the most joyful tasks of local government. The creation of third spaces where residents and visitors can play, learn, and grow are essential to healthy and happy communities. It is our hope that through the public input received and the resources planned to be used that the City can provide quality recreation facilities and activities which will enhance the quality of life in Fennville.

The last three years, parks and recreation and planning have been at the very top of City Commission priorities, a theme which was reflected in our public input for this plan. Utilizing that public input, the below plan was created to set priorities for projects we have planned.

The city hopes that they will provide quality recreation planning and facilities for residents. This document forms the basis to guide policy for implementation of improvements that will meet the needs and desires of the Fennville Community members.



Section 1: Community Description

Data and Discussion of Social Characteristics

Community Description

Covering just over one-square mile, the City of Fennville is located in Allegan County in southwest Michigan. Being located within a short distance to the shore of Lake Michigan as well as within close proximity to fertile agricultural land and urban centers, the City of Fennville is located in a unique and prime geographic area that is well-positioned for both residential and economic growth and development, especially in the tourism sector.

The City of Fennville is a friendly and family-oriented agricultural community and its community members take great pride in the city's natural assets, neighborhoods, and local businesses. Community members in Fennville are engaged in community issues and stand for the principles in which they believe. Voices are strong and residents work collaboratively for the greater good. The City envisions a future in which they are a sustainable and well-connected City that welcomes, supports, and encourages innovation while celebrating the City's growing diversity.

The City Commission has established the following vision statement for the City: The City of Fennville strives to be a diverse and inclusive community, which will grow and prosper through sustainable actions to provide a home for generations. They accomplish that vision statement through the following adopted values: transparency, accountability, efficiency, openness, creativity, respect, inclusivity, and compassion.

Community Population

The most recent United States census, taken in 2020, establishes the population of Fennville at 1,745. The City provides recreation facilities to the Fennville Public Schools, which has a census population of 9,548, and provides facilities for tourists who visit our area. In general, the population of the City of Fennville skews young. Far more children live in the City than adults of retirement age which impacts recreation planning.

Number and Location of Households

The 2020 U.S. Census reports 642 housing units within the city with an estimate of 635 of them being occupied. The population of 1,745 establishes an average of 2.95 persons per household. Of these households, 483 of them are family households. Of

the total family households, 33.6% have children under the age of 18. Finally, 17.8% of homeowners live alone, with 5% of them being 65 years of age or older.

There are four apartment buildings in the city limits, including Woodridge and Maple Lane Apartments in the city's north-central area. Woodridge Apartments contains 52 units; Maple Lane consists of eight units. Heritage Homes has a development of townhouses for the disabled in the south-central area of the city, with a total of 11 units. Lexington Square is also located in the south-central area of the city, with 49 units.

Orchard Hills Mobile Homes Park is located in the northeast part of the city limits and has the capacity to accommodate 167 mobile homes.

Population Trends

The 2020 U.S. Census gave an official population of 1,745.

For the year 2028, the projected population for the City of Fennville is 1,874. Historically, population trends have increased modestly from decade to decade. Between 1970 and 1980, a total of 123 new residents were reported by Census figures. From 1980 to 1990, the population increased by 89 residents. The 2000 population reported by the U.S. Census was 1,459, an increase of over 40% from the 1990 census, and a higher count than the 1,075 projected by the WMRPC. However, the 2010 census reported the population at 1,398, showing a decrease of 61 residents since 2000, which reflects over 400 residents less than the projected numbers for this period. This is reflective of current economic conditions and the increase in people moving to where jobs are available. Despite the shrink in the previous decade, the City of Fennville is expected to grow in population in the near future, based on growth in outlying areas. The recreational needs of a growing populace are an important part of sensible community planning.

Population Distribution

The age of the community residents and its recreation needs are directly related. When the population's age is considered, the types of facilities needed and planning a municipality engages in will provide the most suitable services and facilities to residents. Age characteristics are provided in detail in the 2020 U.S. Census and a close examination of the data can be interpreted as follows:

According to the U.S. Census, 22.1% of the population is under 18 years old and 16.8% of people are over 65. It is typical of state and national trends to see an aging population due to declining birth rates, the lengthening of the average life span due to medical technologies, and the aging of the baby boomer population; however within the City we have a much larger percentage of the population under 64 years old than state and national averages.

Gender breakdown for the city is 915 males and 959 females¹. 726 individuals identify as being of Hispanic/Latino origin, or 41.6%. Racial distribution within the city is as follows:

¹ Per the 2022 American Community Survey, which estimates population growth since the previous census. Data from the 2020 Census was not available for this statistic.

Total population	1,745
White	1,037
Other Race Alone	347
Two or more races	290
Black	49
American Indian or Alaskan Native	15
Asian	7

According to the 2020 figures, the median household income in the City of Fennville was \$58,688, with the median household income for the state of Michigan being \$63,202. The number of households below the poverty line was 109, which is approximately 17% of the households. Due to the moderate household income levels and the number of people living below the poverty level, recreational facilities, which are free and open to the public, have been prioritized in this plan.

Population with Unique Needs

The following information is derived from the 2020 Census. According to the 2020 Census, the number of individuals with a disability in the City of Fennville is 331.

Table 2: Disabled Populations by Age in the City of Fennville

	Number of Individuals with a Disability	
<i>Persons under 18</i>	With a hearing difficulty	4
	With a vision difficulty	0
	With a cognitive difficulty	34
	With ambulatory difficulty	0
	With Self-care difficulty	0
<i>Persons 18-64</i>	With a hearing difficulty	2
	With a vision difficulty	7
	With a cognitive difficulty	39
	With ambulatory difficulty	59
	With Self-care difficulty	32
	With independent living difficulty	49
<i>Persons 64 or older</i>	With a hearing difficulty	11
	With a vision difficulty	9
	With a cognitive difficulty	17
	With ambulatory difficulty	43
	With Self-care difficulty	6
	With independent living difficulty	19

This Recreation Plan addresses the unique recreational needs of these individuals by planning and maintaining accessible facilities. In addition, areas of unmet needs for barrier free access have been identified and will become the focus of future planning as these facilities are brought up to standard, congruent with the financial resources of the City.

Description and Discussion of Physical Characteristics

Topography

Fennville's terrain, which covers one square mile, varies from level to gently rolling. The map of the City of Fennville Topography denotes five-foot contour intervals. A large hill exists along M-89 on the eastern side of the city. This hill crests, then runs downhill in a westerly direction to the railroad tracks. Along Landsburg Road, the land rises when heading north on Maple Street after Elm Street and becomes steeper near Landsburg Road. A ridge of hills also runs in a northwest direction from Elizabeth Street to the western city limits. The southwest portion of the city is located on flat, low-lying land.

The dominant physical characteristics of the city are Highway M-89, the east and west main route through the center of the city, and the CSX railroad running north and south through the east side of the city. The Allegan State Forest lies directly east of the City and Hutchins Lake lies to the southwest. Interstate I-196 is located approximately six miles west of the city and provides access to the City of Holland twenty miles to the north, and the City of South Haven, ten miles to the south.

Fennville is located approximately six miles east of Lake Michigan and shares tourism and light industry with the surrounding communities of Saugatuck, Douglas, Holland, Hamilton, Allegan and South Haven. The city lies in the west central part of Allegan County, in southwestern Michigan.



Water, Fish and Wildlife Resource

Those areas neighboring Fennville adjacent to streams and lakes provide high recreational value such as the newly developed Remington Forest located off 56th Street. Such areas provide some habitat for wildlife that co-exists with development. Nearby forested areas support species such as squirrel, rabbit, grouse, pheasant, partridge, woodcock, geese, duck, white tailed deer, and wild turkey. The area's fish species are dominated by trout, bass, walleye, bluegill, coho, and steelhead.

Transporation Systems

The City of Fennville has 7.1 miles of roadway. Most of the roads within the city limits are local residential streets which tend to carry only local and neighborhood traffic. Exceptions to this are the State Highway, M-89, which runs east and west through the center of the city and the CSX railroad, which runs north and south in the eastern part of the city.

Additional transportation is provided by the County, which operates a bus service that runs from Pullman to Fennville to Holland to Allegan, and to the Otsego/Plainwell area. This service, which was initiated in July 2000, runs an average of 275 to 300 trips per week, a total of 120 hours. The minimum cost is \$2.00 for a one-way ticket, or \$1 for senior citizens. Children under 5 ride free with a paying adult.



Section 2: Administrative Structure

Current Funding Sources

Funds for recreational programs and park operation, maintenance, and development are provided through the City’s operating and reserves budget. Major acquisitions and development projects are approved on a case-by-case basis. Funds for park projects come from both the General Fund and the Downtown Development Authority Fund for our parks within the DDA district.

Annual/Projected Budgets

Table 3: City of Fennville Projected Parks Budgets 2024-2028

	Current Year	Projected			
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Operation and Maintenance	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Supplies	4,000.00	5,000.00	5,500.00	20,000.00	25,000.00
Recreation Programming	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
Capital Improvements	\$ 875,000.00 ²	\$ 950,000.00 ³	\$ 600,000.00 ⁴	\$ 100,000.00 ⁵	\$ 50,000.00 ⁶

The current and projected park budget above represents a significant investment into parks that has been unseen in Fennville history. With the help of some very generous grant programs, the City is well on their way to making capital

² Improvements to Paradise Park as described below

³ Improvements to Paradise Park and City Square as described below

⁴ Improvements to City Square and Mary Ann Moeller Wildflower Garden as described below, potentially development of park at former landfill site

⁵ Investment in adding to recreational inventory, security improvements

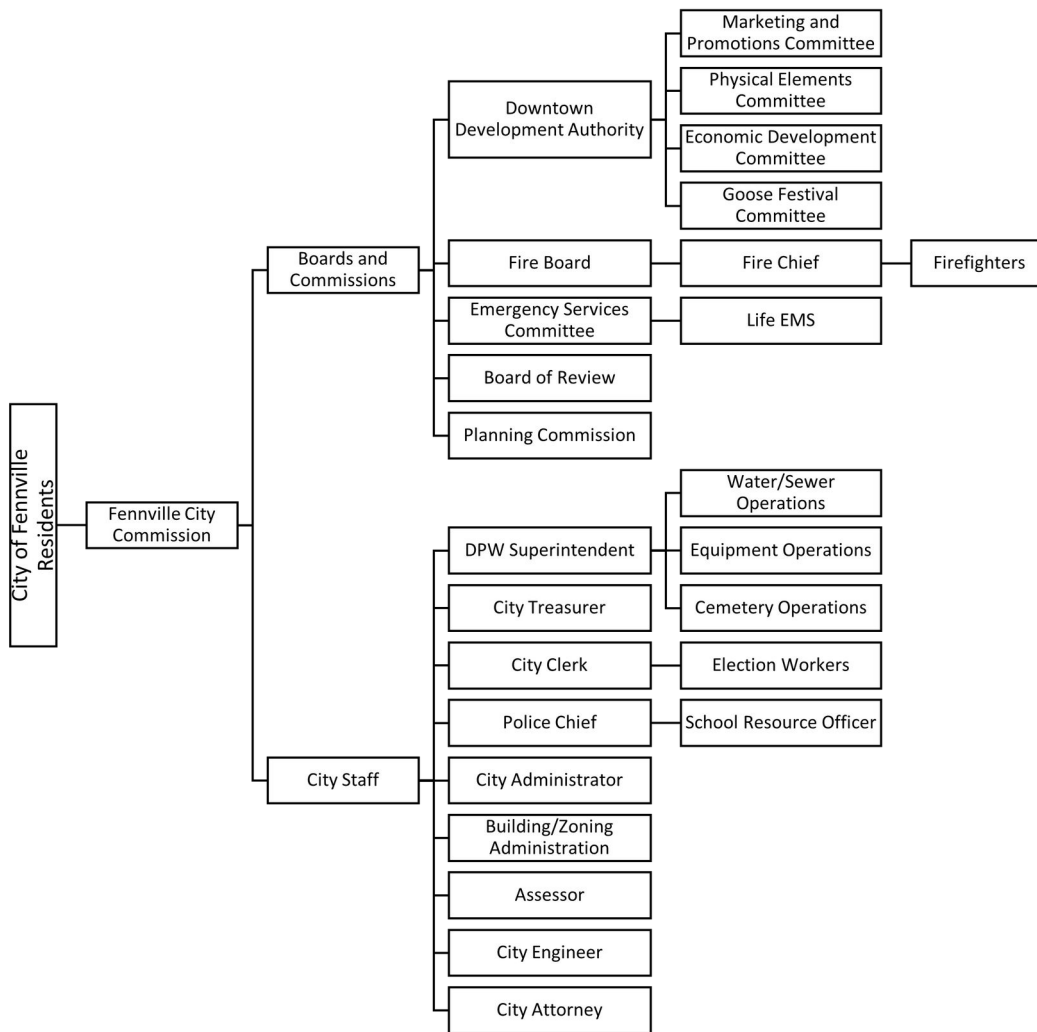
⁶ Investments in developing new parks

investments which will support our community for many years and is working on finalizing the timelines associated with these funding sources. The above budget table shows that as capital projects are increasing and are finished, the maintenance budget and the recreation programming budget increase alongside these investments.

The above budget does not include salaries for parks and recreation maintenance. We do not track those separately as there are no staff members fully dedicated to park and recreation upkeep. The maintenance costs above reflect line items like supplies, landscaping improvements, replacement parts, and utility costs associated with water and electricity.

Staff Descriptions and Organizational Chart

City Staff is comprised of six full time employees, and several contracted employees who assist. Of the three DPW employees, all three work on parks and recreation maintenance. Approximately 1.1 FTE is spent on general fund related DPW activities which includes parks and recreation. While the City Commission has the sole authority to commit funds for parks and recreation, accept grants, and purchase land on behalf of the community, they work closely with the City Administrator to provide recommendations on these items and enact the actions chosen by the City Commission.



Roles of Commission or Advisory Boards

As stated above, the Fennville City Commission plays the primary role in the establishment, operation, and development of recreation facilities and budgeting for parks and recreation. They have an internal committee, made up of three members, the Placemaking Committee, which serves as an advisory to the larger board on issues specifically affecting parks and recreation.

Relationships with Other Agencies

Supplemental recreation programs, equipment or activities are provided by other entities including the Fennville District Library, Fennville Public Schools, Fennville Area Community Recreation, and other similar organizations. These organizations cooperate in providing an overall recreation program to the Fennville Community.

Much of the progress made in the availability of parks and recreation has been due to the cooperation of these agencies.

Fennville Area Community Recreation was established in 2003 to provide recreational programming and facilities for the school district. They have an indoor community center, and coordinate rec sports for the youth in our community, including youth volleyball, baseball, basketball, and soccer. They utilize the City facilities for sports, as well as the school facilities. The school district also owns tennis courts, which are utilized by the general public. The City coordinates with them on official use of our fields, as well as on programming offered. Collaboration between our entities will be increased as we embark on a joint facilities improvement grant in FY25, and begin to explore a more formal recreation authority for our region.

Our parks system does not currently have a friends or volunteer group, but as our recreation continues to grow and evolve, we are exploring that as well.



Section 3: Recreation Inventory

Description/Inventory of Recreation Opportunities within the Community's Political Boundaries

The City of Fennville owns and operates Four (4) Parks: Paradise Park, City Square, Hutchinson Garden, and the Mary-Ann Moeller Wildflower Garden.

Fennville Public Schools owns and operates one public park and several school fields and facilities. Improvements to the public park owned by the school will be made possible in 2025 through a grant from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity.

The site inventory for each of these areas includes an accessibility rating to determine the current status of the park's pathways, structures, and amenities. This ranking will help prioritize which parks should be first to receive accessibility improvements in terms of new paving, modified furniture, or replacement of structures. For accessibility assessments currently under construction, the accessibility rating given will be that which it will be when construction ends.

Accessibility assessment is provided based on the following scale:

- 1 = none of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 2 = some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 3 = most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 4 = the entire park meets accessibility guidelines
- 5 = the entire park was developed/renovated using the principles of universal design.

Along with the public schools, there are private schools, churches, and day care programs that provide recreational activities, such as playground equipment and ballfields. In addition, a list of the various public and private recreation facilities within the City and surrounding area follows later in this section.

Public Properties Facilities

In this section, each park or facility owned and/or operated by the City of Fennville is described along with an aerial of the site.

Leland Memorial Park/Paradise Park

Location:

North Maple Street and Second Street

Fennville, MI

Size:

5 Acres

Park Description/Overview:

This five-acre park, located on the north central portion of the City has a playscape and a picnic area. The playscape area is known as Paradise Park and the adjacent remainder of this park area is known as Leland Memorial Park. This area also provides two softball fields and a multipurpose field to be utilized by the community. There is a walking trail that circles the perimeter of the park, and a natural wetland area with a bridge. There is interpretive signage for the wetland area, produced quarterly by students at the local schools. In progress are a public restroom building and a monarch butterfly waystation.

The City received a DNR Trust Fund Grant of \$300,000 in 2021 for Phase I of the Paradise Park Improvements. That grant, partnered with a match of \$500,000 by the City led to improved parking, installation of the trail, preservation of the wetlands, and improved baseball and multipurpose fields. Construction on Phase I will be completed in June of 2024. This was the City's first DNR sponsored grant in our history since incorporation in 1891.

The City received a CDBG Public Gathering Spaces Improvement Grant of \$1,108,196 from MEDC for Phase II of the Paradise Park Improvements. That grant, partnered with a match of \$123,133 from the City will be under construction in fall of 2024 and be completed in June of 2025. That grant will cover the replacement of the play structure, addition of a toddler play area, addition of a fitness station, accessibility improvements, addition of a permanent restroom building, and installation of a monarch butterfly waystation.

Maintenance and Replacement:

Annual Maintenance Schedule

Annual maintenance at Paradise Park will include:

- Regular mowing by DPW
- Spot replacements of stone dust
- Landscaping care of landscaped areas
- Replacement of playground mulch
- Cleaning of restroom buildings (once completed)
- Sweeping/power washing trails

- Restriping parking lots
- Restriping fields
- Garbage removal
- Irrigation turn on and winterization
- Winterization of drinking fountain

Minor or Small Scale Infrastructure Replacement Schedule

Throughout this upcoming period, the minor replacements that are expected to be conducted are spot repairs to the safety surfacing (once completed), replacement of the roofs of the picnic shelters, and spot repairs to the bridge over the wetland. The DPW will also monitor for signs of decay on the new play structure, although minor repairs to the structure are not expected to be needed during this time period.

Large Scale Maintenance and Replacement Schedules

Grants will be completed as above during the lifetime of this plan. Replacement of the play structure, the fields, and the other construction described above will be conducted. Replacement of the roads on the north and south sides of the park will be conducted in 2025 and 2026. A security camera system will be installed for the park to help improve public safety.

Service area:

City of Fennville and surrounding communities

Aerial Overview:



Figure 1: Aerial Image Taken Before Construction Began



Figure 2: Rendering showing site plans for Phase I and Phase II of construction. The addition of the wetland, trail area, and new plantings are improving the area, along with the new baseball fields.



Figure 3: Completed Rendering of New Play Equipment, being installed in Fall 2024.

Park Amenities:

- Playground equipment (under construction)
- Benches
- Picnic Tables
- Pavilions
- Trash Receptacles
- Softball Fields (under construction)
- Multipurpose Field (under construction)
- Wetland Area with Bridge (under construction)
- Monarch Butterfly Waystation (under construction)
- Restroom Building (under construction)

Accessibility Overview: When construction is complete in 2025, the park will meet accessibility standards of 5. The completed fields will have concrete walkways leading to them, along with accessible walkways throughout the park. Under construction is a permanent accessible restroom, replacing the previous inaccessible portable restrooms. Increased accessibility in picnic areas is also being installed, along with a more accessible playground, which features partly safety surfacing, and accessible swings, and accessible routes leading into the play structure. The bridge built over the new waterway has an accessible viewing point as well. Sidewalk cracks throughout the park have been repaired. We have also increased the number of accessible parking spaces, from 2 to 5, with one of the new ones being a van accessible space.

Hutchinson Garden

Location:

100 West Main Street
Fennville, MI

Size:

.12 Acres

Park Description/ Overview:

The Hutchinson Garden exists just west of the Post Office at 100 West Main Street. This area consists of landscaping, seating areas, and parking availability.



Figure 4: Hutchinson Garden Aerial Image

Maintenance and Replacement:

Annual Maintenance Schedule

Annual maintenance at Hutchinson Garden includes:

- Cleaning of Clock V Public Sculpture
- Landscaping, Herbicide, and Cleanups
- Irrigation turn-on and winterization
- Winterization of drinking fountain

Minor or Small-Scale Infrastructure Replacement Schedule

Several monument plaques exist within the Garden, in 2023, the City had them revarnished, and will expect to do this again in 2026. There is also a desire to replace some plants within the grounds. Finally, the City hopes to replace the faded rubber on the picnic tables in 2025.

Large-Scale Maintenance and Replacement Schedules

No large-scale maintenance or replacements are expected during the upcoming time period.

Service area: City of Fennville and surrounding areas

Park Amenities:

Seating areas
Parking area

Accessibility Overview:

This park has an accessibility rating of 3. The park drinking fountain is at an accessible height for wheelchair users, as well as accessible for wheelchair users to wheel into. The two seating areas are not accessible currently but will be once they are replaced during the term of this plan. The van-accessible parking spot does not

currently have signage noticing it as such. The walkways within the garden are barrier free.

Mary Ann Moeller Garden

Location:

686 West Main Street

Fennville, MI

Size:

1 Acre

Park Description/ Overview:

This green space, located on the corner of M-89 and North 58th Street, was received as donation of a vacant parcel. This land has not been developed and the current plan is to maintain the area as a garden space as the property was received as a donation from Janice C. Hutchinson and has limited options due to a deed restriction. The Fennville Women’s Club planted a native species garden there in 2023 and plans to expand upon that garden in upcoming years.



Figure 5: Mary Ann Moeller Wildflower Garden Aerial View

Maintenance and Replacement:

Annual Maintenance Schedule

Annual maintenance at Paradise Park will include:

- Regular mowing by DPW
- Weeding and watering performed by community volunteers

Minor or Small-Scale Infrastructure Replacement Schedule

No minor replacements are expected at this time.

Large-Scale Maintenance and Replacement Schedules

The Fennville Women’s Club would like to expand their garden space and build a gazebo with a gateway sign on it.

Service area:

City of Fennville and surrounding communities

Park Amenities:

Wildflower Garden (planted fall 2023, has not yet been in bloom).

Accessibility Overview:

This park is undeveloped and does not currently have an accessibility rating. As development occurs, beyond the flowers planted, keeping an accessibility rating in mind will be important to continuing the development of this park.

City Square

Location:

116 South Maple Street

Fennville, MI

Size:

.52 Acres

Park Description/ Overview:

This green space is located across from the City Hall building on Maple Street. There is a southern green space, a middle green space, and a northern green space, all slightly separated by roads and parking lot entrances. The park has on-street parking available and a small public lot nearby. The area holds landscaping and picnic tables. The park is most utilized for our summer music series that takes place on Thursday evenings.

The City received a Revitalization and Placemaking Grant from MEDC for \$112,500 with a match of \$112,500 in 2023 which will be used to build a permanent amphitheater and public restroom on the southern square green space. That space will be under construction in 2024 and completed in 2025.

The City received a Community Center Grant from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity for \$1,000,000 in 2024, of which \$330,000 will be used to develop a park on the northern square green space. Currently, the DDA hopes to put a small splash pad there, but is also considering other potential developments.

Maintenance and Replacement:

Annual Maintenance Schedule

Annual maintenance at City Square will include (after construction):

- Regular mowing by DPW
- Cleaning of restroom buildings
- Winterization of sound system/light system
- Maintenance of splash pad
- Landscaping maintenance

Minor or Small-Scale Infrastructure Replacement Schedule

No minor replacements are expected during this time period because of the construction schedules.

Large-Scale Maintenance and Replacement Schedules

Grants will be completed as above during the lifetime of this plan. The Amphitheater and public restroom will be completed in 2025 and the phase II improvements (probable splash pad) will be completed in 2026. Thereafter, it is our

hope that improvements to phase III (potential skate or dog park) will be completed in 2027 or 2028.

Service area: City of Fennville and surrounding area

Park Amenities:

Picnic Tables

Amphitheater (under construction)

Public Restroom (under construction)

Aerial Overview:



Figure 6: Aerial Overview of City Square (undeveloped). Phase I and Phase II are designed in Figure 7 and will be constructed in spring 2025 as a part of the MEDC Revitalization and Placemaking Program and the LEO Community Center Grant.



Figure 7: Master Plan for City Square Phase I and II (construction to be completed fall 2025)

Accessibility Overview:

This park is not developed yet, and therefore does not meet any accessibility standards. However, principles of universal design are being used in the design and will be incorporated as features are installed.

Table of Amenities in All Parks

	Paradise Park	City Square	Hutchinson Garden	Mary Ann Moeller Wildflower Garden
Playground	x			
Benches and Picnic Tables	x	x	x	
Trash Receptacles	x	x	x	x
Baseball and Softball Fields	x			
Multipurpose Field	x			
Wetland Area	x			
Native Species Gardens	x		x	x
Amphitheater		x		
Public Restroom	x	x		

Table of Facilities in All Parks

School Properties/Facilities

Facilities include gymnasiums in the High School, the middle school, and elementary school. The gymnasiums are used for boys' and girls' basketball, wrestling, volleyball, and other activities. The Community Athletic Center provides basketball courts, a track, a weight room, etc. New Soccer fields have been completed. A football field and practice field are west of the high school. These fields are used for practice and competition for rocket football, involving children from 6th grade through 12th grade. Rocket football is not school sponsored, it is a K-12 activity. Surrounding the football field is a track which is used for running events. A baseball field and a softball field are used for high school baseball and softball games. There are also two basketball courts and three tennis courts available for public use. The playground is located in the elementary area and consists of play equipment geared toward this age group. These facilities remain open to community use when school is not in session.

Description/Inventory of Recreation Opportunities Outside the Communities Political Boundaries

The following recreation facilities are located outside the City of Fennville but within reasonable range for accommodation of Fennville residents:

City of Fennville Cemetery: City owned property located within Manlius Township. Public land with paved roadways for leisurely walking and biking.

Hutchins Lake Access: Located in Clyde Township and provides boat launching and lake access to the general public.

Glenn Beach: Located in Ganges Township, Glenn Beach is .5-acre area open to the general public.

Pier Cove Beach: This 1.5-acre beach is located in Ganges Township, on Lakeshore Drive and 121st Avenue and is open to the public.

Scott Lake Access: Lee Township provides access to Scott Lake, located on 109th Avenue by the dam. Scott Lake Access is .1 acre and is open to the public.

Allegan State Game Area: Located on 118th Avenue, the State Game Area provides natural area and woods for the primary use of hunting and fishing. Other activities include wildlife viewing, bird watching, picnicking, and wildflower viewing. Camping is also available at Ely Lake County Park.

West Allegan County Park: This park is located in Ganges Township and provides a fenced tot lot, picnic pavilions, wooden stairs that access Lake Michigan Beach, and ADA accessible restrooms.

Allegan County Fairgrounds: This 83.2-acre facility has one acre of Kalamazoo River frontage, a small boat launch facility, display buildings used for Fair activities, and an 8,500-seat performance stage. Fennville Rod and Gun Club: This private club is open to the public on Tuesday from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. and Saturday from 12 p.m. until 5 p.m. Courses such as the hunter's safety course and handgun training for carrying concealed weapons is ongoing. Ranges for trap and skeet shooting are available, as is a rifle and pistol range.

New Richmond Bridge Park: This County Park located in Manlius Township allows the public access to the Kalamazoo River.

Kalamazoo River: Kayaking the Kalamazoo River is a popular recreational activity for many area residents and visitors. There are a variety of access points along the river from M-89 east of Fennville to New Richmond. The Allegan County Recreational Map details the locations of recreational opportunities and facilities outside the community's political boundaries.

Description of Community's Barrier-Free Compliance Status and Unmet Needs

Hutchinson Garden is designed with paved walkways and surrounding sidewalks and barrier free curbing allows access. The seating areas in Paradise Park are barrier free and accessible. Improving tables to be barrier free will be a focus of increasing accessibility. Additional work must be done to complete the construction projects that are in progress on Paradise Park and City Square in order to ensure barrier free standards continue to be met. And as design work commences on the Mary Ann Moeller Wildflower Garden, care must be given to ensure that barrier free standards are incorporated.



Section 4: Public Input and Planning Process

Planning Process

Our planning process began in September 2023, with the review of our previous plan and creation of our survey. Following the results from the survey, the Placemaking Committee met to go over the results and develop a strategic plan for the parks system. A system planning process was used throughout the process.

Early Public Input

Development of the recreation plan began with a survey sent out to community members. It was available for the entire month of October. The survey was posted on our city website and Facebook page. A QR code that led to the survey was also posted at City Hall. We received 61 responses from a group of diversely aged individuals. These responses were mainly from permanent or part-time residents, but three visitors also completed the survey

Below is a summary of the results:

- Most respondents were full-time residents (93.4%), with one part-time resident and three visitors.
- The majority of people rated Leland Memorial Park (Paradise Park) as their favorite park we offer (88%).
- 96% of people rated summer as their favorite time to visit the parks, with spring, fall and winter following.
- Over half (52.5%) of people ranked the condition of the parks as fair, 30.5% of people ranked them as good, 13.6% of people rated them as poor and 3.4% of people rated them as excellent.

- 58.6% of people stated that our parks require additional maintenance, with 41.4% of people saying they are well maintained.
- When asked why community members do not use the parks, 44% of people said they are not interested in the features offered, 28% said they did not feel safe at the parks, 24% said they were not well maintained, 20% said they are too busy, 12% said they are not accessible, 1% said they are too small for their needs and 3% had other reasons not stated.
- The facilities that community members marked as most needed are a splash pad (58.3%), paved walking/biking paths (38.3%), dog park (33.3%), a playground (30%), ice skating (28.3%), basketball courts (20%), and soccer fields, unpaved walking/ biking trails, and baseball fields (all 18.3%), pickleball courts (15%), and volleyball courts and picnic shelters (both 13.3%). It should be noted that there were other options, but they all received less than 10% of the votes.
- When asked what future improvements people would like to see they responded with upgrades to existing parks (65.6%), maintenance of existing parks and facilities (47.5%), building new facilities and acquiring natural areas (both 27.9%), and developing new parks (26.2%).
- Survey takers were most appreciative of the community athletic center, the library, and the various community events put on by the city.
- Areas that have been noted for improvements include adding bathrooms to athletic spaces, increased hours of operation for the community athletic center, and better communication of services offered.
- All of these responses imply that we have opportunities to grow. We are currently in the midst of renovating Leland Memorial Park/Paradise Park, which will add to the overall appeal of our parks. We have also recently received a grant to add an amphitheater to our City Square green space.

Description of Public Involvement Process Used in Development Plan

All information was received from the general public, the city commission, city employees, and the school district and prioritized in the development of the recreation plan.

A 30-day public comment period was opened on March 7, 2024, and was closed on April 15, 2024.



Section 5: Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps

Goals and Objectives

In defining the action program, the formulation of community goals and objectives for the provision of recreation is a vital component. The goals and objectives represent the purposes for a community's role in providing recreation to its residents as well as outlining the direction that the community's effort should take in the long term. Goals are the general targets for which a community aims for while objectives are the specific steps that can be taken towards that goal. A recreation plan identifies those actions that can be undertaken to implement the objectives and fulfill the community's goals.

The goals and objectives for the City in meeting the recreation needs of residents are outlined below.

Goal 1

Provide comprehensive community-based recreation opportunities that improve the overall quality of life for all City of Fennville area residents.

Objective

The various input received from the community during this planning process has provided many suggestions for our future park facilities and recreational programs. City of Fennville will continue to use these suggestions to guide their planning for the future.

Potential Actions

- Provide recreational opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Construct recreational facilities such as paved walkways, ballfield, basketball court, pickleball court, play areas, ADA parking, picnic pavilion/ picnic facilities and other recreational facilities as priority items identified in community input sessions.
- Look at options for improving educational and interpretive signage in all the parks including signs for persons of various disabilities.
- Finalize construction of grant opportunities received, and continue seeking funding for desired improvements, utilizing this to create multi-generational and accessible recreational opportunities within the City.

Goal 2

Provide quality leisure time activities with special consideration given to improve health and fitness.

Objective

A community's recreational facilities and programs offer the community an opportunity to enjoy nature and take part in activities that will improve health and fitness. The City of Fennville community realizes the importance of providing top quality park facilities and programs and also would like to improve the health and fitness of its residents.

Potential Actions

- Provide both passive and active programming for a variety of ages and abilities of the population.
- Add recreational facilities based upon recreation trends and input from the community.
- Continue adding to recreational programming and events offered by the DDA.
- Develop DDA Committee to manage performance arts programming.

Goal 3

Develop a system of park facilities that promote four-season use.

Objective

Provide residents with opportunities for recreation that provide multiple seasons of use within the City and the respective park facilities.

Potential Actions

- Construct compatible yet diverse uses within the parks that promote spring, summer, fall and winter uses.
- Explore options for all-season facilities such as warming shelters in the parks as appropriate.

Goal 4

To enhance the quality of life in the City by providing multi-generational, fully accessible and safe recreational facilities that are responsive to the needs of all residents with high quality recreational facilities that efficiently utilize available resources.

Objective

- Develop a variety of recreational facilities that reflect the changing and diverse needs of the City residents.
- Develop certain recreational facilities as identified by the survey and needs assessment and establish priorities for their development.
- Utilize design, construction, and maintenance practices that maximize the benefits provided for the resources expended.
- Plan improvements that offer both active and passive recreation opportunities.
- Develop unique recreational opportunities for elderly and physically challenged citizens. Every recreational opportunity should be fully accessible to all individuals whenever possible.
- Provide play areas that are in conformance with the “Playground Equipment Safety Act”.
- Work with police to make park safety improvements.
- Work with DPW to make a more robust maintenance management program.

Goal 5

Continue the improvement and development of Universal Design Concepts at any and all township park locations in accordance with the park’s development master plan.

Objective

Develop new facilities and programs at the park including new restrooms, picnic facilities, paved parking, walking paths, new play equipment and lighting.

Potential Actions

- Provide for universally accessible play areas, picnic facilities and shelters.
- Provide for paved parking areas and trails to provide barrier-free access to all areas.
- Provide additional non-motorized trails to better connect community destinations and areas.
- Improve signage for any visually or physically impaired park users.
- Improve security features by installing additional lighting and cameras to deter crime.

Goal 6

Provide additional non-motorized trails for recreational and transportation use.

Objective

Providing the community with trail system which is our “safe highway” across the community connecting our schools, parks and the downtown district is a high priority in our community.

Potential Actions

- Explore cooperative effort with the surrounding communities to promote, manage, oversee, plan and seek joint funding for trails in the regional area and to avoid duplication of efforts and to enhance the connect-ability of the trails and ensure the best regional outcomes.

Goal 7

Acquire and retain public land for future generations.

Objective

As the City of Fennville community continues to grow our local officials need to be conscious of the need for acquiring additional park land as it becomes available.

Potential Actions

- Acquire new public lands to meet the future recreational needs of the community.
- Preserve and protect open space and other important natural features in the Fennville area.
- Develop programs for evaluating future land acquisition.
- Preserve floodplains and wetlands for recreation purposes whenever possible.
- Work with developers to clean up the former landfill site and retain it for use as a public park.
- Work with the Women’s Club to expand the Mary-Ann Moeller Wildflower Garden site, and create a master plan for expansion.

- Work with the DDA to develop “pocket parks” and recreational opportunities throughout the downtown and alley areas.

Goal 8

Create new partnerships and collaboration.

Objective

As Michigan continues to redevelop, it is important to take advantage of collaborations and partnerships as a cost-effective way to offer recreational programs in the community.

Potential Actions

- Encourage the cooperation and participation of adjacent communities in the formation of a regional recreational advisory board in an effort to combine resources and avoid duplication of facilities and services.
- Utilize public and private sector cooperation in the promotion of recreation and the improvement of recreational opportunities.
- Encourage the participation of volunteers in the development of recreational facilities.
- Partner with Fennville Area Community Recreation, Fennville District Library, the Saugatuck Center for the Arts and other community organizations to offer year-round programming in the parks.
- Publish annual “guide to recreation” with partner organizations to encourage community involvement.
- Partner with arts organizations to bring additional public art to the City to enhance our recreation spaces.
- Officially incorporate into the destination marketing organization in Saugatuck to begin more deliberate incorporation into regional recreation planning.

Goal 9

To continually improve the quality of and the opportunities for recreation in the City by reassessing community recreation needs, trends, and characteristics.

Objective

Allow the City to be more proactive in planning.

Potential Actions

- Periodically update this Recreation Plan.
- Develop an expanded survey to ensure public needs and desires in areas of parks & recreation.

- Develop community park advocates through the establishment of a Parks and Recreation Board or Committee.
- Provide opportunities for the involvement of City residents in the identification, selection, and development of recreational facilities.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the City's efforts in fulfilling identified goals and objectives by providing opportunities for township residents to evaluate the progress of recreational development.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the City's efforts in providing fully accessible opportunities for township residents.
- Facilitate regular meetings of the Placemaking Committee.

Appendixes

Planning Commission Meeting Documentations

Minutes

Affadavit

Etc.