



Parks and Recreation Master Plan

City of Sault Ste Marie, Michigan

ADOPTED | January 16, 2023

2023-2027



Parks and Recreation Master Plan

City of Sault Ste Marie, Michigan

ADOPTED | January 16, 2023

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Acknowledgments

Thank you.

We greatly appreciate the participation and cooperation of community leaders, residents, and stakeholders in the preparation of the 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The content in this Plan reflects the ongoing collaboration between City staff, residents, volunteers, and boards and commissions.

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Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to the City of Sault Ste. Marie's 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This Plan reflects a vision for Sault Ste. Marie's parks and recreation facilities—their operations, maintenance, and enhancements for the next several years. It serves as a roadmap for future recreation facilities and programs by considering existing parks and programs throughout the City and the anticipated demand for additional or improved recreation facilities.

This Plan also forms the basis for potential recreation grant funding from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and other agencies and foundations and is effective from 2023 through 2027. Sault Ste. Marie's Plan was prepared in accordance with MDNR's Guidelines for the Development of Community Parks and Recreation Plans.

Most importantly, this Plan will act as Sault Ste. Marie's guidebook for community building as it relates to parks and recreation over the next five or more years.

Planning Summary

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan was prepared with technical assistance from McKenna, a planning and design consulting firm, and with the active involvement of the City's administration and staff.

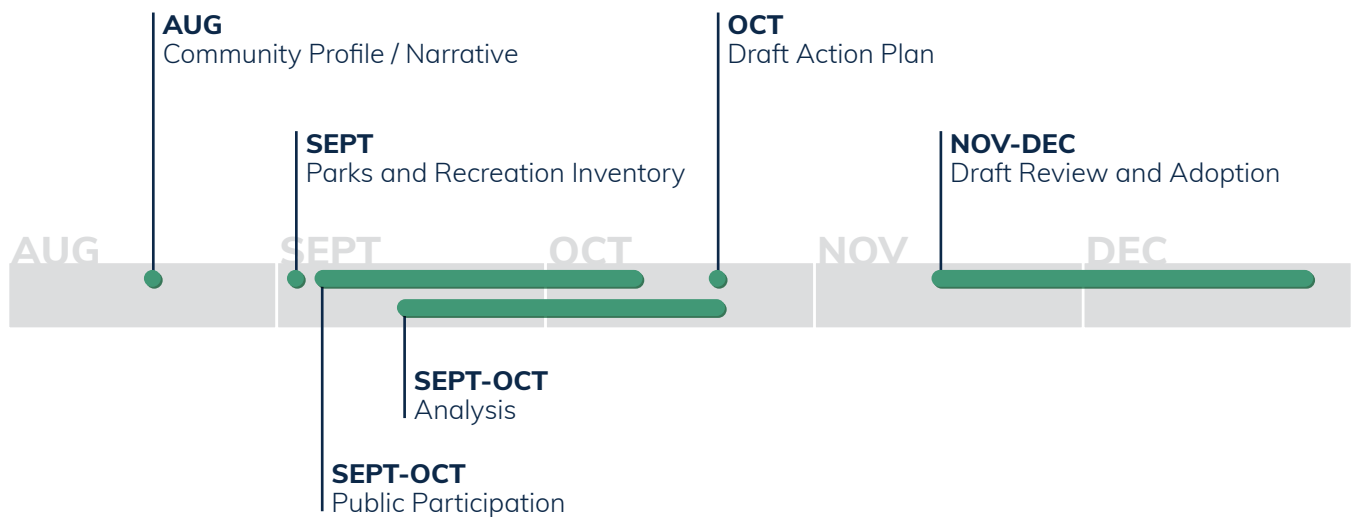
Why Plan? In Order to...

- Guide decision making
- Engage the community
- Assess existing conditions
- Set community goals and objectives
- Make the city eligible for grants

Citizen input and action, through an online survey, public workshops, public meetings, and a public hearing played a critical role in the development of the plan. As a result, recommendations described within the action plan reflect the needs and ideas of those who use the City's facilities.

Following several discussions held by Public Works staff and draft reviews by the Parks and Recreation Board and Planning Commission, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was submitted to the City Commission for public hearing and adoption. All public body meetings were open to the public for comment. Notices were posted beforehand, and advertised in the newspaper when required, as provided by the Michigan Open Meetings Act. Documentation of feedback was regularly posted online. The planning process kicked off in August 2022 and concluded with the adoption of the Plan in December 2022.

At a Glance



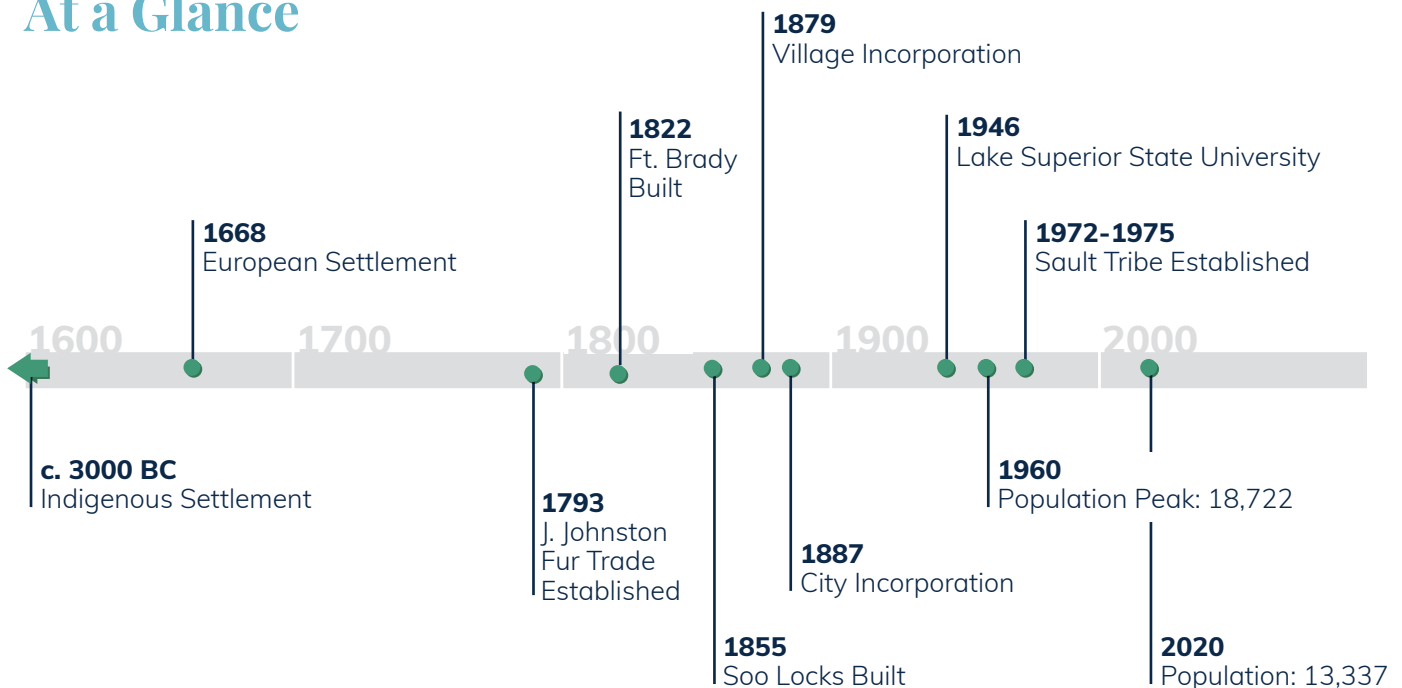
Community Description and Setting

A welcoming community, Sault Ste. Marie—affectionately called ‘the Sault’—maintains its small town feel while offering many recreational and cultural advantages. Sault Ste. Marie’s pedestrian-friendly downtown includes restaurants, art and antique galleries, specialty retailers, hotels, and professional services. The northern portion of the city, particularly the island in which the downtown is situated, supports several municipal, state, tribal, and federal operations. These include public and private utilities, university services, tribal holdings, the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Soo Locks shipping channel.

Sault Ste. Marie is located at the northern tip of the eastern end of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula and across the river from its international sister city, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. The City is strategically situated on the south bank of the St. Marys River at what has been called “the hub of the Great Lakes.” The St. Marys River itself is a significant global waterway, connecting Lake Superior to Lakes Huron and Michigan via the Soo Locks, which were built in 1855.

Sault Ste. Marie also enjoys one of the richest histories in the United States as the oldest European settlement in Michigan. Prior to French settlement in 1668, Sault Ste. Marie was called ‘Bahweting’ by the Anishinaabeg, an Upper Great Lakes network of fishing tribes, with local representation now known as the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. Archeological evidence shows Anishinaabeg settlements in the area dating 3,000 B.C. Bahweting, meaning ‘gathering place,’ remains a fitting description of the community’s identity and spirit. Sault Ste. Marie’s long and rich history manifests itself today in various historical structures, museums, walkways, and cultural activities. Maintenance and development of these resources are part of the community’s recreation plan.

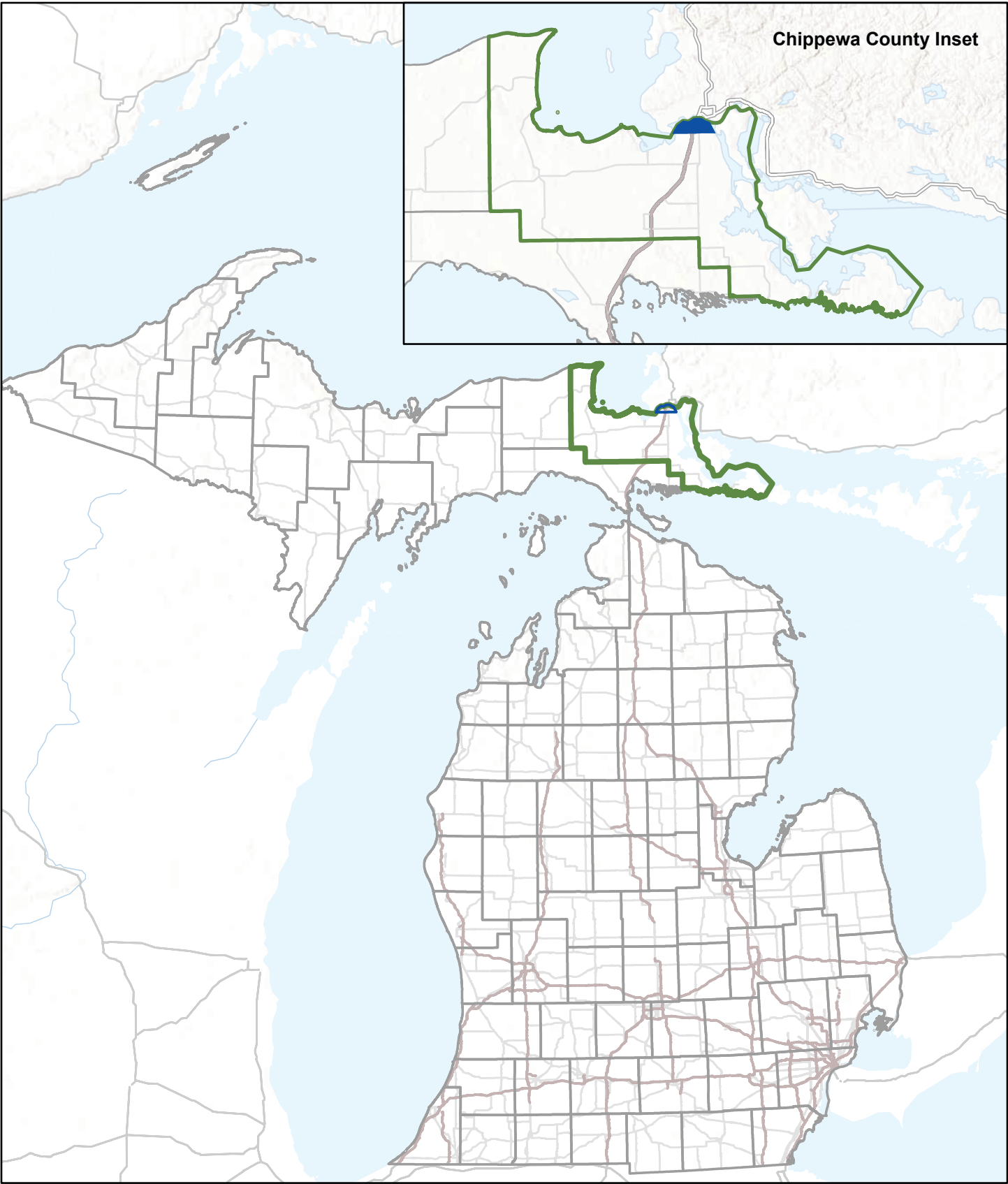
At a Glance





Physical Characteristics

Sault Ste. Marie is a historic community that has seen periods of both growth and decline. As such, pockets of developable land exist throughout the city, while the remainder of open land is preserved through state, federal, or tribal holdings. The existing land use patterns within the City show a concentration of commercial uses in the downtown core and along Ashmun/I-75 Business Spur. Residential uses radiate from this commercial backbone. A concentration of municipal, state, and federal uses can be found along the City's northern edge and at the southern junction of the US-Canada International Bridge. Industrial and mixed uses can be found along the water's edge. The City's downtown, primarily located on the island created by the Power Canal, is a lively and walkable district. The I-75 freeway splits the city in half on a north-south axis. Most commercial uses and low-medium density residential uses on smaller lots are found to the east. Rural residential uses on larger lots are found to the west. Smaller parks are found throughout the residential areas with larger parks and natural areas generally found at the east and west ends of the city, as well as in the center.




Regional Location

City of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan



December 12, 2022

- Legend
-  City of Sault Ste. Marie
 -  Chippewa County
 -  Counties



Demographics at a Glance

- **There was a decrease in population from 2015-2020.** This decrease was small and follows a decades-long trend more akin to gradual population stabilization.
- **There was an increase in populations aged 5-9, 25-44, and 65+.** Youth and retirees are the largest users of parks facilities, with young children more likely to participate in organized sports and seniors engaging in more passive recreation.
- **Sault Ste. Marie's total households are increasing while household size is decreasing.** Paired with other population data, this indicates growth in the population of singles and couples.
- **Nearly 18% of the City's population has a disability.** Higher than the national rate of 12.7%, special efforts must be taken to ensure trails, playscapes, and other amenities are accessible.
- **Seasonal tourism remains a significant economic driver.** It is important the parks system serves locals as well as regional/ international visitors. Parks can provide important community-building, cultural, and tourism value. Emphasis should be placed on providing year-round recreation opportunities.

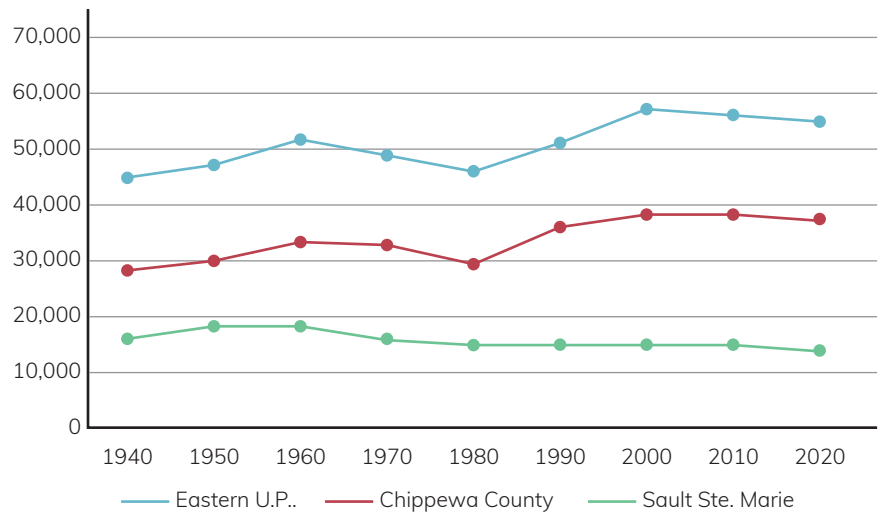
Demographic Characteristics

Sault Ste. Marie's current demographics and trends provide an understanding of the types of recreation facilities and amenities that are needed. The figures used in this Plan come from the US Census Bureau's 2016-2020 ACS 5-year data, which uses statistical sampling over a 5-year period to describe the average characteristics over the period of collection. Information for smaller geographic regions generally have a higher margin of error in statistical sampling, yet the ACS is considered very reliable and is a dataset that we believe can provide the most accurate portrayal of the changing population in the City. As of the writing of this Plan, 2020 Decennial Census data was still not widely available. Comparison data comes from 2011-2015 ACS 5-year data.

Population

Trends in the number of people residing in a community are an important indicator for parks and recreation planning. Growing communities have different parks and recreational needs than communities with stable or declining populations. Figure 1 and Table 1 highlight population changes over time.

Figure 1. Historical Population Trends, 1940-2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 1. Age Structure, 2015-2020

Age Group	2015 Population	2020 Population	Percent Change
Under 5 years	965	766	↓ 20.6%
5-9 years	713	770	↑ 8%
10-17 years	1,471	953	↓ 35.2%
18-24 years	2,389	2,289	↓ 4.2%
25-44 years	3,216	3,470	↑ 7.9%
45-65 years	8,829	8,697	↓ 1.5%
65 years and over	2,070	2,340	↑ 13%
Total Population	14,048	13,526	↓ 3.7%

Source: 2011-2015 and 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Race and Ethnicity

Understanding the racial composition of the City is the first step in ensuring representative decision-making. Certain groups may be underrepresented due to a variety of historical reasons and additional outreach may be required to incorporate valuable feedback and resources. Different accessibility and information-sharing techniques may be necessary for different groups. Table 2 illustrates the city's racial diversity. The categories used in Table 2 were established by the US Census Bureau.

Table 2. Race and Ethnicity, 2015-2020

Race or Ethnicity	2015 Population	2020 Population
One Race	94.6%	88.8%
Two or More Races	5.4%	11.2%
Hispanic (of any race)	1.5%	2.0%
Of One Race		
White	74.9%	73.4%
Native American	14.3%	12.0%
African American	4.4%	2.2%
Asian American	1.0%	0.4%
Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.5%
Other	0.1%	0.3%

Source: 2011-2015 and 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Households

Household growth has a different impact on demand for recreational services than population growth. If the population is growing faster than the number of households, this would suggest that more children are being born to existing households. If households are growing faster than population, this typically suggests that more singles or couples are moving into the community. Table 3 illustrates that total households are increasing.

Average household size is another indicator of community composition. Larger average household sizes generally mean more children and fewer single-parent families. Nationally, household sizes have been shrinking as young singles wait longer to get married and life expectancy increases for the senior population. Table 3 compares the City's household composition over time.

Table 3. Total Households and Size, 2015-2020

	2015 Households	2020 Households	Percent Change
Total	5,666	5,948	↑ 4.9%
Size (people per household)	2.32	2.11	↓ 9%

Disability

The number of residents impacted by a disability, as well as the range of disabilities, will shape the design and accommodations made in future City parks and facilities. Considering these differences in ability in planning for parks and recreation activities could result in positive health outcomes for a population that may already experience disproportionate difficulties on a day-to-day basis.

Table 4. Population with a Disability, 2015-2020

Disability Type	2015 Population	2020 Population	Percent Change
Hearing Difficulty	617	688	↑ 11.5%
Vision Difficulty	451	354	↓ 21.5%
Cognitive Difficulty	1,161	1,122	↑ 3.4%
Walking/Climbing Difficulty	1,362	1,108	↓ 18.6%
Self-Care Difficulty	345	322	↓ 6.7%
Independent Living Difficulty	878	813	↓ 7.4%
Total	2,732	2,374	↓ 13.1%

Economic Characteristics

Sault Ste. Marie's economy is built on tourism. The Soo Locks has traditionally drawn hundreds of thousands of visitors per year with tribal casinos contributing to tourism as well. This is reflected in the employment market, with the entertainment and retail industries accounting for over 30 percent of the City's workforce (Table 5). Other top employment sectors are education – largely due to the presence of Lake Superior State University—and public administration—likely due to a large federal workforce maintaining international transportation, trade, and security.

Table 5. Industry and Workforce, 2015-2020

Industry	2015 Population	2020 Population	Percent Change
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	20	41	↑ 105.0%
Construction	270	371	↑ 37.4%
Manufacturing	387	507	↑ 31.0%
Wholesale trade	83	215	↑ 159.0%
Retail trade	592	813	↑ 37.3%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	155	148	↓ 4.5%
Information	157	101	↓ 35.7%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	235	204	↓ 13.2%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	416	345	↓ 17.1%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	2,215	1,569	↓ 29.2%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	842	1,157	↑ 37.4%
Other services, except public administration	274	326	↓ 19.0%
Public administration	442	674	↑ 52.5%
Total	6,088	6,471	↑ 6.3%

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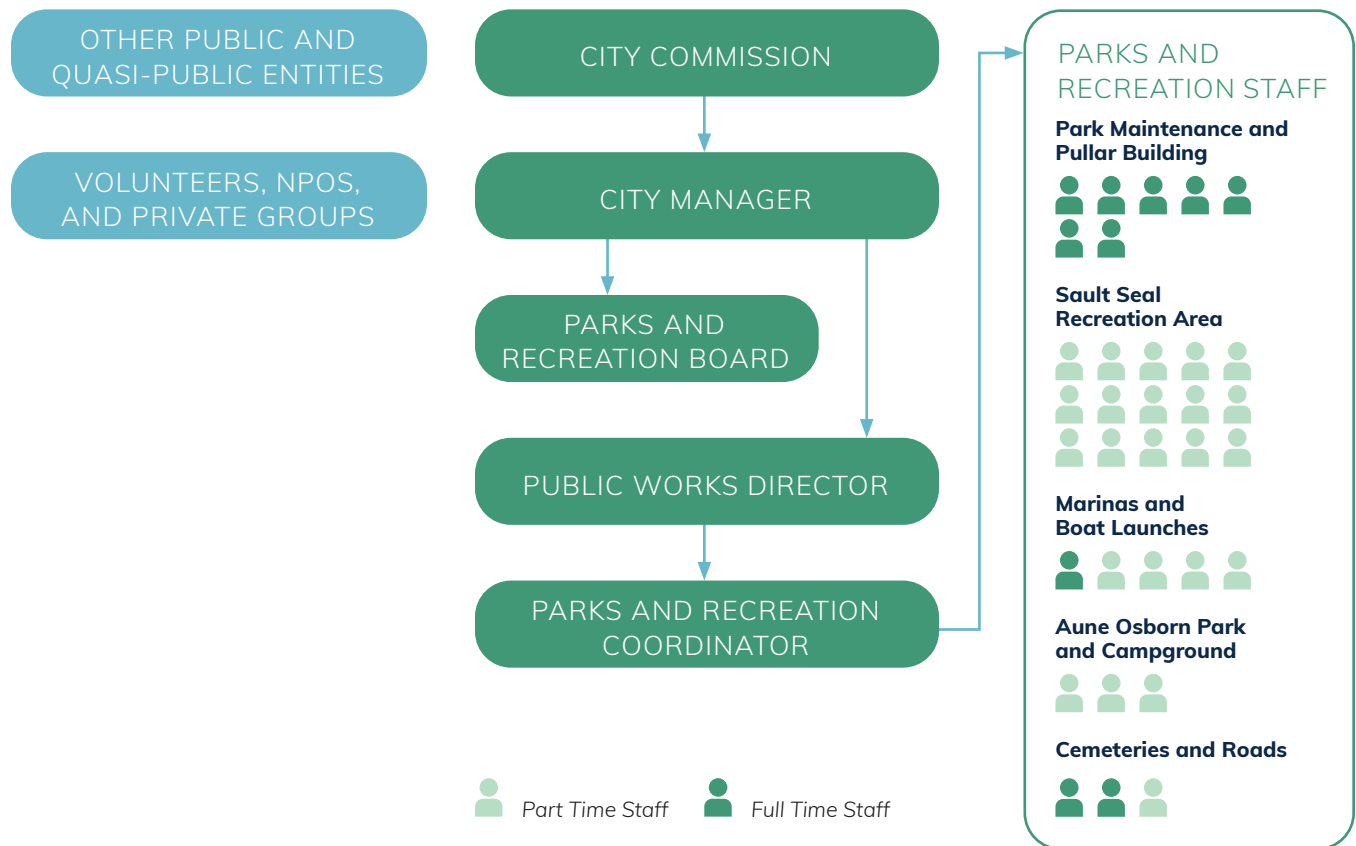
Administrative Structure, Funding, and Initiatives



Administration

Management and planning for Sault Ste. Marie's parks and recreation facilities is primarily completed by two groups: The Department of Public Works and the Parks and Recreation Board. Administration and oversight of these groups is authorized by the City Commission, which works in concert with the City Manager. Figure 2 shows the administrative organization of the City.

Figure 2. City of Sault Ste. Marie Organizational Chart



City Commission and City Manager

The City of Sault Ste. Marie is governed under a City Manager-Commission form of municipal government, as established in the City Charter of 1952. The City Manager is appointed by the City Commission and oversees the administrative functions of the City, including the operations of all City Departments and the appointment of Department Directors.

The City Commission is comprised of seven members, one of whom is the Mayor, and is elected at-large. The City Commission is responsible for establishing policies to guide the overall operation and development of Sault Ste. Marie. The Commission has final say on all decisions concerning land acquisition and major purchases based on recommendations from staff. The budget for recreation facilities and programs is adopted annually by the City Commission, as part of the total annual budget after appropriate public hearings. The City Commission is advised by several public boards and commissions, whose members are appointed by the City Commission.

Parks and Recreation Board

The Parks and Recreation Board, formerly the Community Services Board, was established in 1973 under the authority of Public Act 156 of 1917. The Board consists of nine members appointed by the City Commission for three-year terms and is the primary citizen committee responsible for parks and recreation programming.

The Parks and Recreation Board objectives and duties include:

- Advise the City Manager on various parks and recreation programming in the City, including the Pullar Community Building.
- Serve as a forum for the consideration of policy matters related to the operation of a park and recreation program.
- Advise the public about the policies established by the City Commission relating to park and recreation programs.
- Recommend to the City Commission fee schedules and the adoption of long-range programs for the development of park areas and facilities.
- Recommend to the City Commission the hiring of employees, the hours of operation, and the allocation of facility use.
- Approve capital purchases of equipment.



The Department of Public Works (DPW)

DPW oversees the operation of the City's recreational system, including indoor sports complexes, campgrounds, marinas, ball parks, and recreation areas totaling over 600 acres of park land and several miles of trails. DPW is also responsible for forestry items such as the removal, transplanting, and/or maintenance of street and park trees. Other responsibilities include placement of holiday decorations, maintenance of public horticulture gardens, and logistic support for the summer "Music In the Park" concert program. In addition, this department is responsible for park improvements, park signage, support for special events, maintenance of the Riverside and Maple Ridge Cemeteries, various contractual services such as forestry services, park mowing, and maintenance and repair of the City street system.



Public and Quasi-Public Entities

Various groups have overlapping goals and objectives related to parks and recreation, including:

- The Planning Commission, which serves to develop long-range plans for the development of land within the City.
- The Downtown Development Authority and the Economic Development Corporation, which have been partners in the creation of City parks within their jurisdiction.
- The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, which manages its own recreation facilities, has developed supplemental trail systems, and promotes environmental stewardship.
- Chippewa County, which contains a significant number of natural resources and recreational opportunities.
- Lake Superior State University, the State of Michigan, and the federal government, which each have jurisdiction over natural areas within the City and those that extend beyond its boundaries.
- The Seal Estate Board of Trustees, which serves to distribute earnings from the Augusta Hursley Seal Trust for the purpose of expanding and enhancing the City's parks and playgrounds.
- Sault Area Public Schools, which operates and manages several acres of its own parks, playgrounds, and natural areas.

Volunteers, Non-Profits, and Private Groups

While the jurisdiction of this plan is solely the City of Sault Ste. Marie, the City works in cooperation with other area recreation providers, with a long history of active financial participation by private groups, businesses, individuals, and non-profit organizations in the accomplishment of specific recreational projects.

- The Sault Ste. Marie Rotary Club, which works to maintain and enhance Rotary Island Park.
- OUT House Consortium, which is a non-profit organization that works to maintain and develop the Lower River Islands, particularly Steere Island and Voyageur Island. OUT House is also involved in the development of Ashmun Creek Trails.
- The Chippewa County Historical society, which works to protect and enhance historical sites, including several locations adjacent to City parks.
- Little Traverse Conservatory, which is heavily involved in natural preservation and education efforts in the region, particularly with the Ashmun Creek Trails.
- Chippewa Luce Mackinac Conservation District, which supports ongoing conservation efforts prioritizing native plantings, green infrastructure, and youth programming and education.
- Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission, which pursues collaborative planning efforts across several counties.

Further, other groups, including the Sault Area Sportsmen's Club, the Sault Foundation for Culture and History, the Sault Ste. Marie Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Pullar Recreation Committee, the Sault Country Club, Malcolm Park Pride, Project Playground, the Kaine's Rink Committee, Le Sault de Sainte Marie Historic Sites, the Chippewa County Community Foundation, service clubs, sports associations, and individuals have contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to park and recreation projects. These projects have included new boat ramps, a museum, Pullar and Kaine's Rink restoration efforts, a major athletic field renovation, marina development, historic homes rehabilitation, park and trail benches, waterfront walkways, the University's Norris Center recreation building, elementary school playground development, and ball field development.





Private non-profit groups also run the annual Salmon Derby and I-500 Snowmobile Race. The active participation by the community in the development of recreational facilities in the Sault is impressive and significant, and many of the facilities the community now enjoys would not have been possible without this participation.

A number of City-owned facilities are also maintained as part of lease agreements with private parties, including the George Kemp Marina and Water Street Historic Homes. All licenses and/or leases are approved by the City Commission and specific concession agreements, which are more private in nature, are created through a competitive public bid process.

The various community recreational programs would not be possible without volunteers who organize and oversee the programs.



Parks and Recreation Funding

The estimated Parks and Recreation operating budget, including capital outlay, for the 2022-2023 fiscal year is \$1,664,400. The various funds below describe the actual and adopted budget information for revenues and expenditures during the fiscal years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 (Table 6 and Table 7).

Funding for the maintenance and programming of Sault Ste. Marie's recreation facilities comes almost entirely from sub-accounts of the City's general fund. Significant spending also comes from various user groups. Revenues from user, service, and rental fees bolster most recreation funding. Businesses, corporations, private clubs, community organizations, and individuals intermittently contribute to recreation and other improvement programs to benefit the City. Additionally, the Augusta Hursley Seal Trust and the Osborn Trust provide supplemental revenue to support parks and recreation improvements and maintenance.

Table 6. Recreation Revenue – User, Service, and Rental Fees (Fiscal Years 2021-2022 Actual Activity and 2022-2023 Commission Approved Budget)

Division Detail	2021-2022 Actual	2022-2023 Budget
Pullar Fees (Plus Advertising)	142,700	145,000
Kaine's Rink	3,000	1,500
Aune Osborn (Less Surcharge Refunds)	238,800	542,000
Harvey Marina	36,400	30,000
Sherman Park (Plus Campground + Pavilion)	5,000	15,000
Sault Seal Recreation Area	30,100	60,000
Kemp Marina (Plus Fuel Sales)	200,406	185,000
Carbide Dock	65,500	120,000
Cemetery (Plus Columbarium Revenue)	30,800	22,000
Community Gardens	1,700	1,000
Ballfields	1,300	2,000
Total	755,706	1,123,500



Table 7. Recreation Expenditures
(Fiscal Years 2021-2022 Actual Activity and 2022-2023 Commission Approved Budget)

Division Detail	2021-2022 Actual	2022-2023 Budget
Cemetery	104,300	118,100
Harvey Marina	4,000	7,200
Carbide Dock	48,300	65,500
Kemp Marina	168,600	175,500
Aune Osborn Campground	208,500	241,000
Parks Maintenance	529,200	485,800
Pullar Community Building	375,600	405,600
Sault Seal Recreation Area	46,600	64,600
Beautification	617	6,300
Historic Homes	2,400	19,800
Capital Outlay - Parks Equipment	-	75,000
Total	1,448,117	1,664,400

Decreases in parks maintenance are attributed to changes in personnel retirement expenses.

Public Works

Parks and recreation funding is largely grouped under two ‘functions’ within the City’s budget. The ‘Public Works’ function shows as a line item in the budget and includes, among several departmental activities, the provision of services and maintenance for the City’s cemeteries, Harvey and Kemp Marinas, and Carbide Dock. These funds support salaries and benefits, part time and seasonal wages, supplies, administrative expenses, equipment repair and maintenance, and building maintenance for these facilities

Culture and Recreation

The other main function is ‘Culture and Recreation’ and contains the bulk of recreation funding activities, covering expenses for over 30 municipally-owned or operated parks as well as the City’s historic homes. These funds support salaries and benefits, part time and seasonal wages, supplies, administrative expenses, park maintenance, building maintenance, lawn care services, sanitation services, and utilities.

User Groups

User and volunteer groups continue to be a critical resource in the maintenance and operation of various park assets, including Malcolm Park ballfields. These groups collect fees associated with team play, which is used for maintenance efforts. For Malcolm Park alone, nearly \$70,000 is expended each year to maintain the complex.

Augusta Hursley Seal Trust

The City of Sault Ste. Marie was named beneficiary in the will of Augusta Hursley Seal, a long-term resident who passed away on November 7, 1983. The bequest was in the form of stock which, when sold, exceeded one million dollars.

In her will, Mrs. Seal specified that the bequest be used:

“...For the exclusive purpose of the expansion of its present recreation system, playground, and parks, or the acquisition on new recreation sites as the City shall determine in its sole discretion, for the use and benefit of the people of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.”

The City subsequently created a blue ribbon “Advisory Committee Regarding the Financial and Legal Management of the Seal Estate” which met between February and August 1984, and which resulted in the creation of the Augusta Hursley Seal Trust in March of 1985; subsequently approved by the City electors on June 10, 1985 as a charter amendment. The Seal Trust is structured to permanently protect the principal and to provide an annual distribution of the interest income to the City for permitted recreational projects. Various restrictions apply on both the amount made available as well as the amount that can be spent on any one project in a given year.

Osborn Trust Fund

The interest earnings on the Osborn Trust Fund, established in 2003, are to be used for public purposes relating to the interpretation, presentation, research, preservation, education, and development of the City’s history and historical heritage. Funding is approved by the City Commission based on recommendations from the City’s Historical Development Commission.

Grant History

When preparing a Recreation Plan, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources requires that information be provided concerning grants that have been received in the past for acquisition or development of recreation facilities. As of October 2022, Sault Ste. Marie has received the following MDNR grants:

Table 8. Grant History (1968-2021)

Project Name Year Status	Project Description	Grant Number	Grant Amount
Sherman Park 1968 Complete	Clearing and placement of 50 camping sites; construction of parking area, lifeguard raft, and roadway.	26-00139	5,107
Minneapolis Woods Park – Sault Seal Recreation Area 1968 Complete	Construction of an addition to existing warming house, grading/finishing work on the luge run, and LWCF sign.	26-00140	3,000
Mission Road Park 1968 Complete	Construction of a toilet / shower building with under ground electrical wiring for travel-trailer parking spaces, parking area and road purchase, and placement of playground equipment, landscaping, tables, grills, and two shelters.	26-00141	16,000
Sault Ste. Marie Waterfront Picnic Area 1977 Complete	Development of lighting and underground wiring, picnic equipment, picnic shelter, site improvements, safety railing, boardwalks, sidewalks, drinking fountain, sprinklers, necessary pipe, playground, and LWCF sign	26-00979	58,520.54
Sault Ste. Marie Sherman Park 1979 Complete	Overhead wire burial and development of fencing, picnic equipment, and road and parking lot paving.	26-01057	9,062.10
Sherman Park 1988 Complete	Construction of restroom, playground, parking lot paving, boat launch, LWCF signs, and area paving at Sherman Park.	26-01475	81,193.11
Pullar Building Rehabilitation 1990 Complete	Rehabilitation of existing building infrastructure, lighting and electrical improvements, insulation and drop ceiling, dehumidifiers, and building painting	BF90-287	110,000
Ashmun Bay Park Acquisition 1997 Complete	Acquisition of 49.7-acre parcel of land for park and public boat launch on the upper St. Marys River.	TF97-234	547,500
Aune Osborn Campsite Upgrade 1999 Complete	Upgrade of existing group campsites to individual modern sites at Aune Osborn Campground along the St. Marys River, including development of paved access roadways, pads, and electric and water services.	CM99-246	106,000

Project Name Year Status	Project Description	Grant Number	Grant Amount
Sherman Park Beach Improvements 2003 Complete	Improvement of accessibility to beach, area enhancement, replacement of playground equipment, installation of volleyball courts, picnic shelter, and landscaping, and relocation of the main park entrance to improve Sherman Park on upper St. Marys River.	TF03-116	198,300
Ashmun Bay Park Trail Parcel Acquisition 2007 Complete	Acquisition of a 3,500' linear strip adjoining the south shore of the existing 50-acre Ashmun Bay Park for a linear trail to provide access to Ashmun Bay Park and become a connecting segment of a larger trail system.	TF07-105	36,000
Ashmun Bay Park Entrance Parcel Acquisition 2007 Complete	Acquisition of 2.76 acres at the entrance to Ashmun Bay Park currently leased from Canadian National Railroad.	TF07-174	100,000
Rotary Park Development 2008 Complete	Development of universal accessibility improvements to an island park on the St. Marys River, including scenic and natural viewing areas, a play area, and fishing and kayaking opportunities.	TF08-068	299,700
Sherman Park Picnic Shelter Development 2009 Complete	Development of open-air picnic shelter and four picnic tables at existing beach at Sherman Park.	TF09-105	42,200
Carbide Dock Rehabilitation 2022 In-Progress	Development to include flexible plaza, passive green space, and riverwalk; dock rehabilitation; fishing opportunities; salmon run.	TF19-0110	300,000
Total Distributed Funds:			1,912,583

LWCF: Land and Water Conservation Fund



Related Initiatives

There are several related planning initiatives that are relevant to the provision of recreation opportunities within Sault Ste. Marie. Each initiative is described in further detail in Table 9:

Table 9. Sault Ste. Marie Parks and Recreation Initiatives

Initiative	Summary	Parks and Recreation Implication
Carbide Port Dock Rehabilitation Plan 2022	In 2021 and 2022, the City solicited bids for a plan to transform Carbide Dock and Alford Park, including flexible plaza space, passive recreation, fishing and boating opportunities, and landscaping. Partial mobilization, demolition, and construction has been undertaken in 2022, with a complete bid to go before the City Commission in early 2023. Work is anticipated to continue into at least 2024.	The Engineering Department is in the process of demolition and construction. At full-build, the development will provide increased boating and fishing access, more park space, and a more complete shoreline, increasing park attendance and connectivity.
Safe Routes to School Resolution 2020	Efforts to improve sidewalk infrastructure, walkability, and safety have been underway throughout the city by filling gaps in the sidewalk network and connecting the City's public schools.	Sidewalks are critical links to park and recreation facilities, particularly for children and teens. As primary users of parks, this population will benefit from a safer, more complete non-motorized network.
Rotary Park Concept Plan 2018	Proposed accessible pavilion, bathrooms, walkways, parking, and landscaping within Rotary Park, just north of the fishing pond.	Improvements to this area fulfill several action items identified in the last recreation plan.
Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Strategy 2017	The City's Economic Development Strategy is a long-range plan for the continued growth of the City. The Strategy focuses on various initiatives to spur economic growth in the Downtown and in the region.	Several areas have been identified within the documents as priority redevelopment sites, including Ashmun Bay and Carbide Dock. These sites are currently under City ownership and will be undergoing improvements over the next several years.
Sault Ste. Marie Non-Motorized Transportation (NMT) Plan 2012	In partnership with the Sault Tribe, the NMT Plan provides recommendations to support non-motorized transportation throughout the city, with goals to make walking and bicycling in the City safer, more comfortable, and convenient. The policies outline proposed changes that will strengthen the City's support for non-motorized transportation. A map showing existing and proposed multi-use and bike paths is included in the Appendix.	Efforts to enhance the City's NMT infrastructure will increase access to parks and recreation facilities. In addition to creating a more robust Downtown, enhancements to this system will drive further investment and usership in more isolated recreation areas, including Ashmun Bay and Ashmun Creek.
Complete Streets Resolution 2010	The City Commission adopted a Complete Streets Resolution on August 2, 2010. Resolutions are often procedurally easier to enact than ordinances, and they can be an effective first step for local governments.	Elements of Complete Streets can facilitate better pedestrian connections to various parks and recreation facilities.



Parks, Recreation, and Trails Inventory



City Parks and Facilities

The Sault Has:

4 Mini Parks



4 Neighborhood Parks



7 Community Parks



1 Large Urban Park



4 Natural Resource Areas



11 Special Use Areas



Community Buildings



Marinas



Boat Launches



Community Gardens



Skate Park



Snowmobile Track

Following is a comprehensive inventory of parks and recreation facilities that are operated under the jurisdiction of the City of Sault Ste. Marie. The City owns, operates, and/or leases 30 parks and recreation facilities, detailed to the left, which also includes two campground facilities. Each park includes a list of existing amenities as well as a list of suggested opportunities, which were derived from the public participation process; staff input; and various existing community policies, plans, and programs

Classification

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is a national, non-profit service organization dedicated to advancing parks, recreation, and environmental efforts that enhance the quality of life for all people. Since 1983, NRPA has used park classifications to help assess park and recreation needs. In 2022, the NRPA launched a new park evaluation system that no longer includes the traditional classifications. However, these classifications have been retained herein to help bridge the gap between the two evaluation systems and provide for clear comparisons against the City's past parks and recreation plans.

Mini-Park (Pocket Park)

Small, specialized parks, often less than an acre, that serve the needs of residents in the surrounding neighborhood. A mini-park may serve a limited population or a specific group such as tots or senior citizens.

- Lower Coast Guard Area
- Maple-Ashmun Park
- Market Corner and Pavilion
- Weber Park

Neighborhood Park

Multi-purpose facilities that provide more active recreation activities, such as field/court games, crafts, playgrounds, skating, picnicking, etc. Neighborhood parks typically serve up to 5,000 residents.

- Algonquin Park
- St. Marys Park
- Shunk Road Memorial Park
- Chandler Park

Community Park

Parks that offer a variety of recreation facilities to meet the diverse needs of residents from many neighborhoods. Community parks may include areas suited for intense recreational facilities, such as athletic complexes and swimming pools. These parks usually contain other facilities not commonly found in neighborhood parks such as nature areas, picnic pavilions, lighted ball fields, and concession facilities.

- Alford Park / Carbide Dock
- Ashmun Bay Park
- Aune Osborn Park
- Malcolm Park
- Project Playground
- Rotary Island Park
- Sault Seal Recreation Area

Large Urban Park / Signature Park

Parks that serve a broader purpose than community parks and are used when community and neighborhood parks are not adequate to serve the needs of the area. The focus is on meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique natural features.

- Sherman Park

Special Use Park / Facility

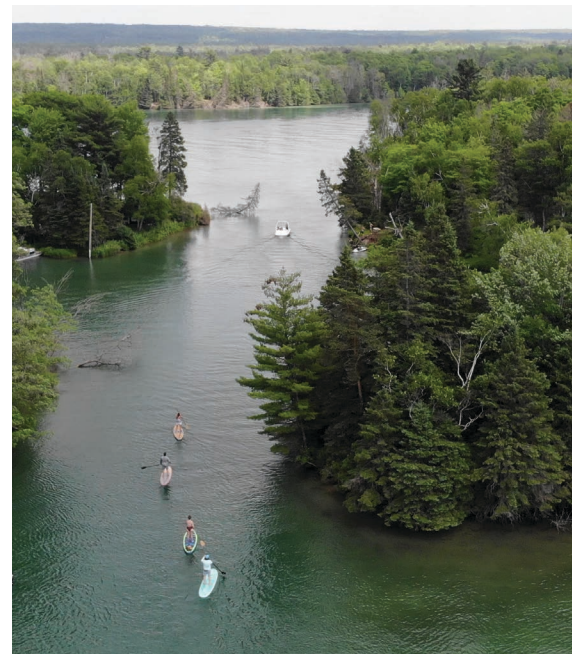
Facilities for specialized or single-purpose recreation activities, such as historical areas, nature centers, dog parks, sports complex, golf courses, arboretums, etc. There are no specific standards for size or acreage since each site will vary, each site is unique to the community it serves.

- Harvey Marina
- I-500 Snowmobile Track
- Kaine's Rink
- Kemp Marina
- Mission Street Boat Launch
- Pullar Community Center
- Shallows Boat Launch
- Skateboard Park
- 2 Community Gardens
- William Gregory Boat Launch

Natural Resource Area

Lands set aside for the preservation of significant natural resources, landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics and/or buffering.

- Ashmun Creek Trails
- Lakeshore Park
- Lower River Islands
- Ravine Park



Inclusive Play

For children with and without disabilities, the community playground can facilitate a positive environment for physical activity and inclusion.

The ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), signed into law in 2010, detail enforceable standards for physical accessibility. However, these standards do not include elements designed for children with Down syndrome, sensory disorders, and visual and hearing impairments.

New attention has been focused on inclusive playgrounds and universal design that can serve a diverse population, including children with physical, cognitive, emotional and sensory disabilities.

The following elements are considered essential activities for inclusive play:

- Sensory play
- Music
- Swinging
- Spinning
- Sliding
- Socialization/imaginative play
- Safety, comfort, and access

Sources: United States Access Board, Landscape Structures; InclusivePlaygrounds.org

Barrier Free Accessibility

The American Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires all areas of public service, including parks and recreation facilities, to have barrier-free accessibility. An evaluation of Sault Ste. Marie parks and recreation facilities was conducted as part of the inventory in the summer of 2022. In accordance with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources requirements, facilities were evaluated to determine if a person with any of the following criteria can safely and independently access and use the park or facility:

- Has limited sight or is blind
- Uses a wheelchair
- Has a hearing impairment or is deaf
- Uses a walking aid
- Has a mental impairment

A five-point evaluation system was used to rank each facility's accessibility, described below. Each park facility was given an accessibility ranking, ranging from Level 1 (lowest score—not accessible) to Level 5 (highest score—universally accessible).

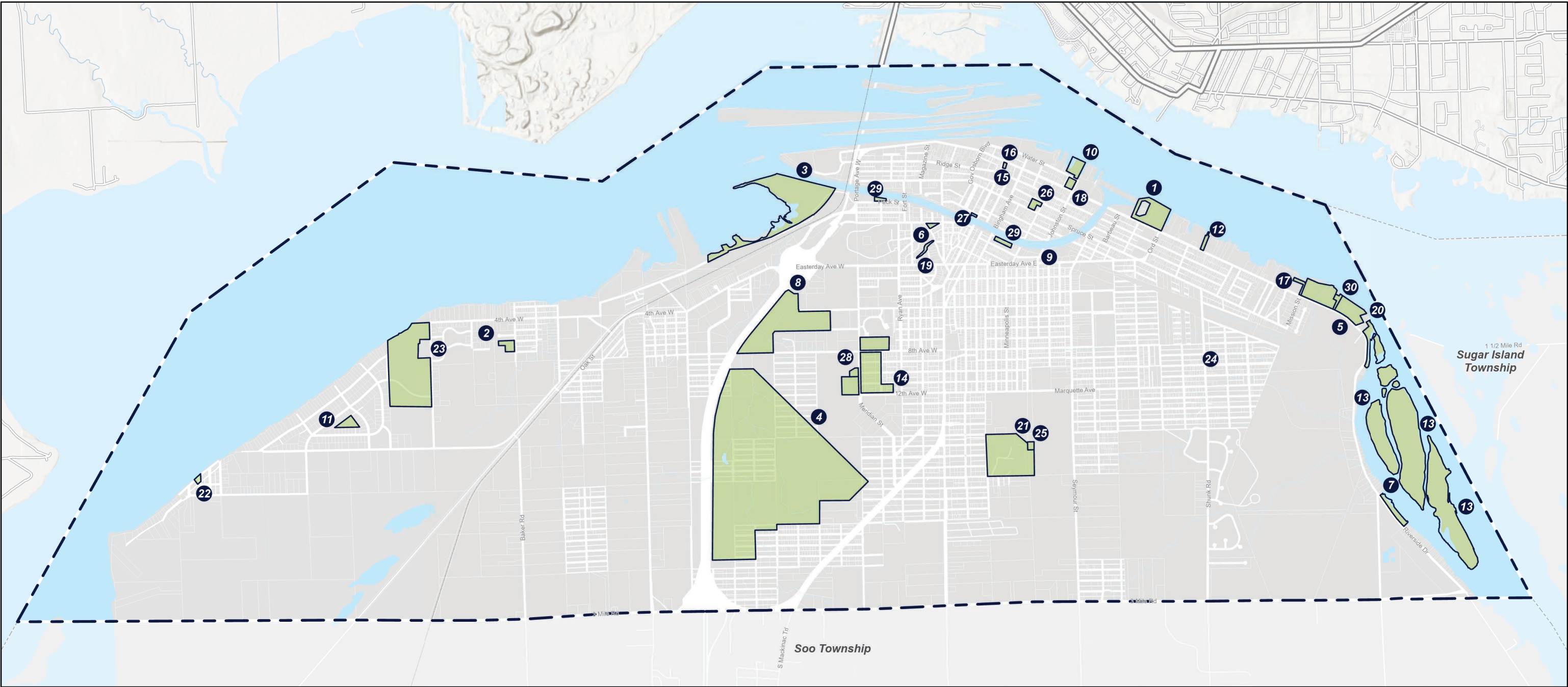
LEVEL 1. The park is not accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities. The site includes little paved areas and the facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas are not accessible.

LEVEL 2. The park is somewhat accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities. Either the parking area or pathways are paved, but not both. Many of the facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas are not easily accessible.

LEVEL 3. The park is mostly accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities. Most of the parking areas and pathways are paved, and some of the facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas are accessible but may not be completely barrier-free.

LEVEL 4. The park is completely accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities. Parking areas and pathways are paved, and most of the facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas are easily accessible.

LEVEL 5. The entire park was developed or renovated using the principles of universal design, a design approach which enables all environments to be usable by everyone, to the greatest extent



City Park Inventory

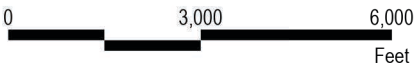
City of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

December 15, 2022

Legend

- Park
- Tax Parcel
- Railroads
- Lake, River, Stream, or Drain
- City Boundary
- Other Municipal Boundary

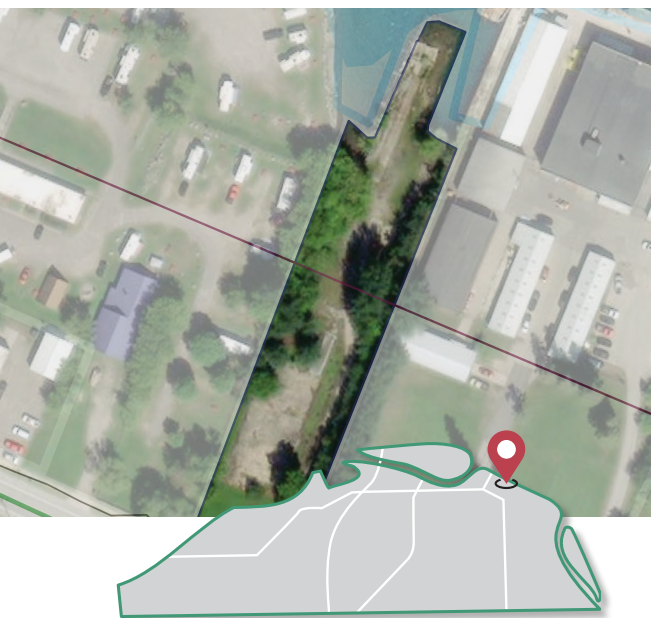
#	Park Name	#	Park Name	#	Park Name
1	Alford Park / Carbide Dock	11	Lakeshore Park	21	Sault Seal Recreation Area
2	Algonquin Park	12	Lower Coast Guard Park	22	Shallows Boat Launch
3	Ashmun Bay Park	13	Lower River Islands	23	Sherman Park
4	Ashmun Creek	14	Malcolm Park	24	Shunk Road (Memorial) Park
5	Aune Osborn Park	15	Maple/Ashmun Pocket Park	25	Skateboard Park
6	Chandler Park	16	Market Corner	26	St. Mary's Park
7	Harvey Marina	17	Mission Street Boat Launch	27	Weber Park
8	I-500 Snowmobile Track	18	Pullar Community Center	28	Project Playground
9	Kaine's Rink	19	Ravine Park	29	Community Garden
10	Kemp Marina	20	Rotary Island Park	30	William Gregory Boat Launch



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
Data Source: McKenna, 2022.



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MINI PARK | 0.12 ACRES

Lower Coast Guard Area

ACCESSIBILITY

1

The Lower Coast Guard Area was acquired from the Department of the Interior and offers water views and space for picnics. Public input indicates interest in prioritizing the development of this area into a functional pocket park, which could serve to buffer the nearby campground and adjacent marine supply store. Enhancing this space would also enhance the non-motorized network along this popular spur.

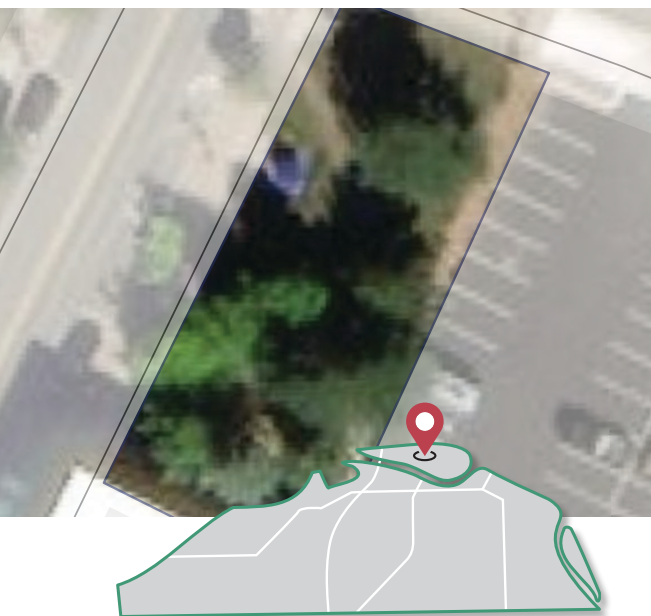
Amenities

- Benches / picnic area
- Pier
- Water viewing

Opportunities

- Accessible parking and paths
- Portable restroom and screening.
- Lighting.
- Pavilion and enhanced picnic area.
- Shoreline remediation and beach access.
- Gardens.





MINI PARK | 0.16 ACRES

Maple-Ashmun Park

Located downtown at Maple and Ashmun and serving both residents and visitors, this pocket park offers a shaded spot to sit and relax. The space is programmed with green infrastructure and provides visitors with helpful wayfinding signage.

ACCESSIBILITY

4



Amenities

- Benches
- Gardens
- Picnic tables
- Wayfinding signage
- Musical flowers
- Mini library
- Pervious hardscape

Opportunities

- Continued park maintenance
- Bollard lighting along the canopied walkway





MINI PARK | 0.30 ACRES

Market Corner and Pavilion

Market Corner and Pavilion offers the community a weekly Farmer's Market during summer months, providing fresh, local food and goods. This area includes attractive hardscaping, a fountain, and a covered parking area (the cover is removed during winter months). With its central location, this park is an asset and has great potential for future programming.

ACCESSIBILITY

4



Amenities

- Pavilion and seasonal Farmer's Market
- Benches / picnic areas
- Gardens
- Public art (sculptural fountain)
- Lighting
- Pervious hardscape

Opportunities

- Expand or provide visual buffer from large parking lot.
- Playground or 'climbable' art
- Permanent or portable restroom, with screening.
- Winter events



MINI PARK | 0.30 ACRES

Weber Park

Located in Downtown Sault Ste. Marie at Peck and Ashmun Streets, the park is a passive green space dedicated to recreation benefactress Augusta Hursley Seal.

ACCESSIBILITY

4



Amenities

- Benches and tables
- Shade trees
- Flower beds
- Public art (statue)
- Annual Christmas tree installation
- Pervious hardscape
- Water viewing

Opportunities

- Continued park maintenance
- Additional lighting along paths, possibly bollard lighting



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK | 9.83 ACRES

Algonquin Park

Located at 6th Avenue and 20th Street, Algonquin Park offers abundant open space, including a large undeveloped wooded area, and opportunities for active recreation. The park primarily serves the immediate neighborhood, tucked away from major roads. The wooded area directly south of the park contains extensive informal ATV trails.

ACCESSIBILITY

1



Amenities

- Benches
- Ball field
- Basketball court
- Playground

Opportunities

- The park is in need of updated courts and play equipment
- Public input and conceptual plans indicate this area as suitable for a dog park/run
- Accessible paths to different play areas and a small wooded trail
- Lighting at the courts and potential pathways
- Permanent or portable restrooms
- Landscaping, tree planting, and/or rain gardens





NEIGHBORHOOD PARK | 2.71 ACRES

St. Marys Park

Located on the City's downtown island at Armory Place and Kimball Street, St. Marys primarily serves the residents living on the island's east side. The parks is leased by the City from St. Marys Catholic Elementary School.

ACCESSIBILITY

2

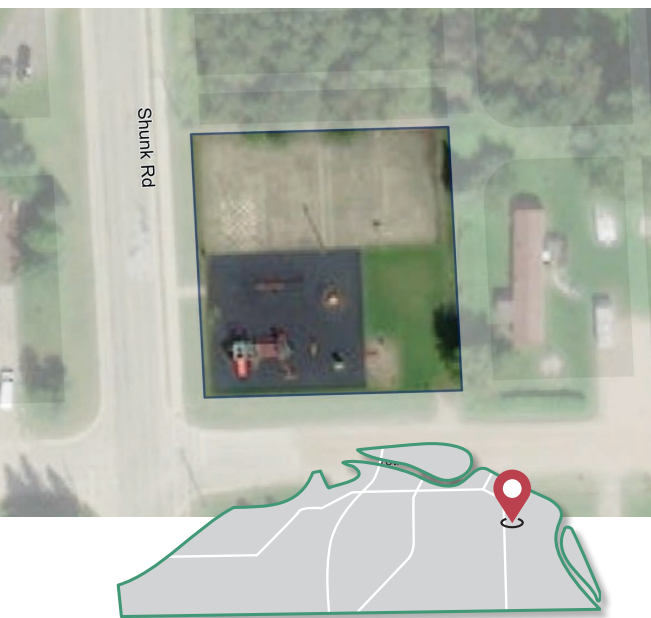


Amenities

- Playgrounds, swings
- Benches
- Adjacent ball field
- Nearby tennis court (school)
- Nearby basketball court (school)
- Open green space

Opportunities

- Graded paths to different play areas and seating areas
- Additional lighting
- Gardens
- Ballfield fencing replacement



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK | 0.40 ACRES

Shunk Road (Memorial) Park

Located at 10th Avenue and Shunk Road, this fenced park provides neighborhood kids with opportunities for active recreation. The park sports a variety of activities and is an important asset in this area.

ACCESSIBILITY

3



Amenities

- Playground
- Basketball Court
- Fitness Equipment

Opportunities

- Patch and paint concrete play area.
- Drinking fountain
- Gardens





NEIGHBORHOOD PARK | 0.62 ACRES

Chandler Park

Located in Neighborhood 4, Chandler Park offers residents a large, grassy open area and smaller playground for active recreation.

ACCESSIBILITY

2

Amenities

- Benches / picnic area
- Playground equipment
- Sledding hill

Opportunities

- Accessible paths and parking
- Lighting
- Additional landscaping
- Public art or 'climbable' art





ACCESSIBILITY

1



COMMUNITY PARK | 16.9 ACRES

Alford Park/Carbide Dock

This site is located just east of the Hydropower Plant and Power Canal, at E. Portage Avenue and Salmon Run Way. Closed in 2016 due to sediment issues, the park is expected to reopen in the near future with a slate of new amenities. The site has seen the recent construction of the LSSU Center for Freshwater Research and the surrounding area continues to generate local and visitor traffic. The site has great potential for further activating this portion of E. Portage.

Opportunities

- Because the site is currently closed, existing amenities cannot be listed; however, a development plan for the site has been created over the last year and is included in the Appendix
- Passive green space, benches.
- Riverwalk
- Landscaping and water features
- Refurbished dock and storage/loading areas
- Paved road and additional parking
- Restroom



COMMUNITY PARK | 175.71 ACRES

Ashmun Bay Park

ACCESSIBILITY

2

This large park is close to downtown and offers the only major boat launch into the upper river. The City acquired the park space in 2000 with funding from the Natural Resources Trust Fund. In 2004, a multi-phased Master Plan was completed. Phases 1 and 2 included property acquisition for trail development.



Amenities

- Pier and boat launch
- Trails
- Benches
- Water viewing

Opportunities

- An approved development plan is included in the Appendix.
- Trails and paths connected to the City's non-motorized network.
- Restrooms.
- Pavilions, benches, and picnic areas.
- Rustic camp sites.
- Shoreline remediation and landscaping.
- Ramp repair or replacement





ACCESSIBILITY

3

COMMUNITY PARK | 16.10 ACRES

Aune-Osborn Park

Aune-Osborn Park is a larger waterfront property on the lower St. Marys River that is functionally divided into two parts. The western end is used as a tourist campground. The eastern end is largely undeveloped but is used for water sightseeing. Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) grant funds were used here to construct 20 new modern campsites.

Amenities

- Benches, pavilions, and picnic areas
- Pier and boat launch (William Gregory Boat Launch)
- Restrooms, showers
- Water viewing
- Campgrounds
- Multipurpose field
- Fish cleaning station

Opportunities

- An asset management plan is included in the Appendix.
- Accessible parking
- Upgraded pavilions and picnic areas
- Rustic campsites/expansion of camping area.
- Waterfront accessible paths and benches
- Tree planting and landscaping
- Potential summer/winter event space, revenue generation





COMMUNITY PARK | 44.64 ACRES

Malcolm Park

Malcolm Park serves as the community's principal ball field facility. The park consists of ten ball fields, most with complete dugouts and bleachers, and is a hub for active recreation. User groups, such as Malcolm Park Pride and Sault Area Little League, are primarily responsible for recreation programming of Malcolm Park and invest considerably in its maintenance.

ACCESSIBILITY

2

Amenities

- Ball fields (10), including backstops, bleachers, and dugouts
- Benches / picnic areas
- Restrooms and concession stand
- Drinking fountain
- Pavilion

Opportunities

- An Asset Management Plan and MI Sparks Grant application are included in the Appendix.
- Upgraded pavilion
- New equipment (mower)
- Continue fencing repairs
- Continue bleacher and dugout replacements
- Upgraded storage building (8th and Meridian)
- Improved drainage and grading
- Playground equipment
- Parking lot improvements
- Bathroom upgrades/demolish obsolete structure
- Reconfigure where different groups play





COMMUNITY PARK | 1.97 ACRES

Project Playground

Project Playground is part of the larger Malcolm Park complex and is located at the terminus of 10th Avenue at Meridian Street. The park was built through community action and donations and has seen continued investment over the years, including a soon-to-be-completed splash pad and restroom.

ACCESSIBILITY

3



Amenities

- Playground
- Pavilion
- Restrooms
- Splash pad
- Trails

Opportunities

- An asset management plan and development plan for the splash pad are included in the Appendix.
- Continued park maintenance and community partnerships.
- Enhanced trail system; connect to City's non-motorized network.





COMMUNITY PARK | 4.16 ACRES

Rotary Island Park

Located just east of Aune-Osborn Campground, Rotary Island offers a spectacular view of the St. Marys River. It is leased from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and managed by the Rotary Club. The park will eventually become a gateway to the Lower River Island park system and feature additional amenities.

ACCESSIBILITY

2



Amenities

- Playground
- Paved parking
- Benches / picnic areas
- Restrooms
- Youth fishing pond
- Water viewing

Opportunities

- An asset management plan and approved development plan can be found in the Appendix, part of which proposes a pavilion, a permanent restroom, and additional tree plantings and landscaping throughout the site.
- Continued bridge maintenance connecting the island to the mainland.





COMMUNITY PARK | 32.98 ACRES

Sault Seal Recreation Area

ACCESSIBILITY

1

The Sault Seal Recreation Area is the City's premier winter recreation facility and offers a tubing facility with three wire rope lifts, a beginner's ski hill, snowboarding, winter trails for cross country skiing and a warming building with concessions and restrooms. It is continuously improved through a citizen effort called 'Project Park'.

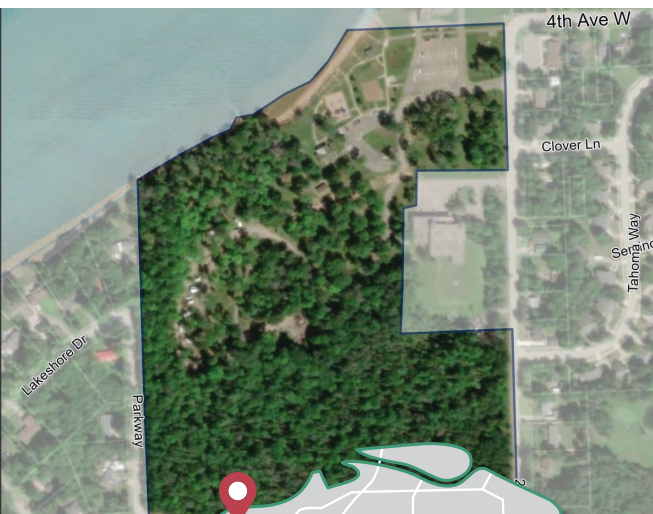
Amenities

- Sledding hill
- Tubing + lift
- Downhill and cross-country skiing areas
- Restroom
- Warming station / concessions
- Hiking Trails

Opportunities

- Firepits
- Enhanced trail system - connect to non-motorized network
- Pavilion or picnic area for summer trail use
- Consider





ACCESSIBILITY

3

LARGE URBAN PARK | 75.52 ACRES

Sherman Park

The City's flagship park, located on the upper St. Marys River at 4th Avenue and 24th Street, Sherman Park contains a variety of facilities, including the City's only public beach.

Amenities

- Beach
- Trails
- Playground
- Benches / picnic areas
- Volleyball courts (2)
- Restrooms
- Ball field
- Pavilion
- Campground
- Grills

Opportunities

- An asset management plan and development plan are included in the Appendix.
- Beach enhancements and accessibility
- Campground buildout
- Pavilion and maintenance building upgrades
- Additional lighting and security system





SPECIAL USE | 51.97 ACRES

I-500 Snowmobile Track

The I-500 Track, located adjacent to I-75 at the end of 4th Avenue, is a one-mile oval course used once a year by a nonprofit organization for the annual I- 500 Snowmobile Race.

ACCESSIBILITY

1



Amenities

- Snowmobile track
- Concessions
- Benches

Opportunities

- Accessible/paved parking and paths
- Seasonal prairie plantings to reduce summer maintenance
- Potential summer event space/revenue generation





SPECIAL USE | 1.76 ACRES

Pullar Community Center

The City's main indoor community facility, located at the corner of E. Portage Avenue and Johnston Street, the 'Pullar' has a regional draw, used for hockey and skating as well as concerts, teen dances, circuses and other special events. The community has undertaken fundraising efforts to support significant rehabilitations at the Pullar recently. Maintenance of the Pullar remains a priority and improvements are

ACCESSIBILITY

2



Amenities

- Shower
- Restrooms
- Ice Skating
- Concessions
- Benches

Opportunities

- Facility and equipment upgrades
- Accessibility improvements within seating and team player areas.
- Exterior landscaping/gardens



SPECIAL USE | 0.90 ACRES

Kaine's Rink

A local piece of hockey culture, Kaine's Rink has been used by generations of hockey players. Located at on Easterday Avenue at Johnston Street, the rink is seasonal and ice conditions depend largely on local weather conditions. The rink is available for rent for non-ice events and houses tree sales in the summer along with other community activities.

ACCESSIBILITY

1



Amenities

- Restrooms
- Indoor ice rink
- Benches

Opportunities

- Facility and equipment upgrades.
- Paved/accessible parking and approach.
- Improved site drainage and landscaping.





SPECIAL USE | 5.34 ACRES

George Kemp Marina

Kemp Marina is located just southeast of the Soo Locks, containing 58 slips with direct access to the St. Marys River. Fully accessible and with several amenities, the marina typically runs at capacity and the City regularly maintains all marina information on the City website and Facebook page.

ACCESSIBILITY

5



Amenities

- Free Wi-Fi
- Courtesy gas grills
- Power/water stations at each dock
- Gas/diesel services
- Septic pump out service
- Courtesy bikes
- Restrooms and showers
- Nearby Downtown Business District
- Museums and historical sites
- Boating and fishing
- R&R Marine store

Opportunities

- An approved development plan is included in the Appendix
- As-needed repairs are allocated annually from the operational budget; items that need to be addressed include electric short switches, outdated fuel pumps, water lines, and decking; wave attenuator panels
- A component of the development plan, a capital improvement project was completed in 2022 on the break wall and walkway as well as utility connections in this area, costing approximately \$900,000



SPECIAL USE | 3.68 ACRES

Charles T. Harvey Marina

Harvey Marina is located across from the Lower River Islands, providing 30 slips with access to the Lower St. Marys River,. the City regularly maintains all marina information on the City website and Facebook page.

ACCESSIBILITY

1

Amenities

- Restroom
- Multipurpose building
- Boating and fishing access
- Paddler dock
- Water and vessel viewing
- Nearby Sault Tribe recreation and businesses

Opportunities

- Conceptual development plans are included in the Appendix. Possible improvements include hammock posts, viewing decks, tree planting and landscaping, shoreline remediation, paved parking, and upgraded facilities
- As-needed repairs are allocated annually from the operational budget, ranging from \$500 to \$1,500 per year
- Some decking has started to be replaced in 2022; the marina is also in need of launch ramp maintenance or replacement





SPECIAL USE | 0.90 ACRES

Mission Street Boat Launch

Located at the corner of E. Portage Avenue and Mission Street, adjacent to Aune-Osborn Park and Campground, the Mission Street Boat Launch contains a concrete boat launch with one transient dock. Though technically part of the Sault Ste. Marie Water Treatment Facility to the west, the gravel parking area and large grassy area are used by boat launch users. The park is used primarily for launching recreational boats into the lower St. Marys River.

ACCESSIBILITY

1



Amenities

- Boat launch
- Benches
- Water viewing

Opportunities

- Permanent dock installation
- Additional landscaping



SPECIAL USE | 0.90 ACRES

Shallows Boat Launch

ACCESSIBILITY

1

A very small park located at Shallows Beach Avenue and Forrest Boulevard, this is used as the second of two boat launches/access points to the upper St. Marys River. Though not suitable for large boats, this facility is ideal for launching small personal watercraft.



Amenities

- Boat launch
- Water viewing
- Benches

Opportunities

- Paved/level parking
- Rain gardens
- Signage





SPECIAL USE | 1.0 ACRE

William Gregory Boat Launch

Located within Aune-Osborn Park, this boat launch is open to the public and contains two launch docks with access to the St. Marys River. Though technically a part of the larger Aune-Osborn parkland, this

ACCESSIBILITY

3



Amenities

- 2 launch docks
- Water viewing
- Fishing
- Fish cleaning station

Opportunities

- Dock repair and replacement
- Paved/accessible driveway and path
- Additional landscaping





ACCESSIBILITY

1



SPECIAL USE | 2.26 ACRES

Community Gardens

The City operates two community gardens, one of which is located off Bingham Avenue, south of the Power Canal and adjacent to the Power Canal non-motorized trail. The second garden is located on Peck Street, between Fort Street and W. Portage Avenue. Plots are leased to individuals and nonprofits to cultivate food and flower beds, serving an important function to local residents.

Amenities

- Gardening
- Water spigots
- Water viewing
- Non-motorized trail

Opportunities

- Shaded picnic area
- Accessible parking
- Additional landscaping/rain gardens



SPECIAL USE | 0.5 ACRES

Skate and Bike Park

ACCESSIBILITY

1

The Skate and Bike Park serves as the community's principal skateboarding facility, located just east of Sault Seal Recreation Area and south of the high school. The park consists of six different ramps and four rails for active use. It is adjacent to the High School Backlands, which contains rectangular fields and a pavilion.

Amenities

- Ramps and rails
- Benches
- Picnic Table

Opportunities

- More central relocation
- Art feature - graffiti wall
- Water fountain





NATURAL RESOURCE AREA | 300+ ACRES

Ashmun Creek Trails

ACCESSIBILITY

1

The Ashmun Creek Trail network consists of several established trails with educational signage, used by local organizations for hikes and educational purposes. Due to the creek's sensitive soils, topography, and connection to the St. Mary's River, this site is most appropriate for further natural-area type programming and development. Little Traverse Conservancy, OUTHouse Consortium, and the Chippewa Luce Mackinaw Conservation District are interested in enhancing this area.

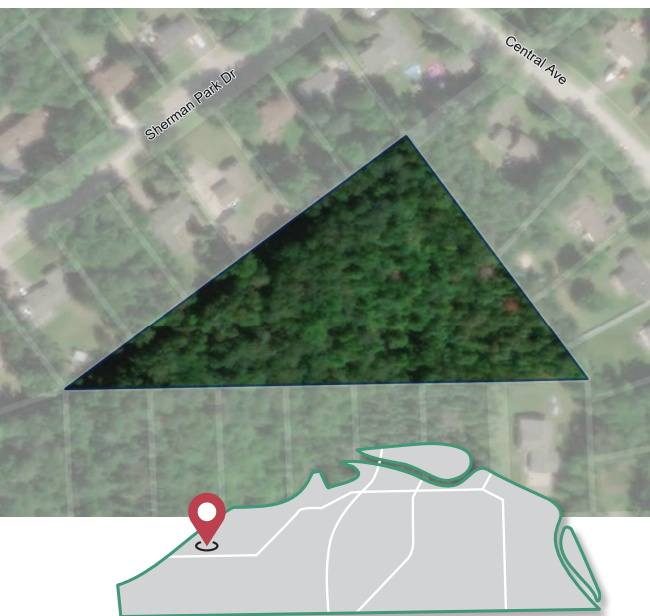
Amenities

- Hiking trails
- Wooded/natural areas

Opportunities

- A development plan is included in the Appendix.
- Continue to develop trail system - connect to City's non-motorized network.





NATURAL RESOURCE AREA | 3.26 ACRES

Lakeshore Park

Lakeshore Park is located at the center of the triangular region bound by Sherman Park Drive, Central Avenue, and South Drive. Originally, this area was set aside for future development as a neighborhood park facility, and is currently covered in dense, mature vegetation.

ACCESSIBILITY

1



Amenities

- Wooded area.

Opportunities

- Unpaved trail/pathway.
- Passive education plaques.



NATURAL RESOURCE AREA | 62.5 ACRES

Lower River Islands

ACCESSIBILITY

1

The Lower River Islands are located in the southeast corner of the City, south of Rotary Island Park, within the St. Marys River.

This archipelago is currently under a lease agreement for cleanup and future development. Watercraft access is available to Voyageur Island and includes boardwalks, hiking trails, and observation decks. The other islands may remain undeveloped natural areas which are not open to the public.



Amenities

- Trails
- Observation decks
- Boat/Kayak launch
- Fishing
- Water viewing

Opportunities

- A development plan is included in the Appendix.
- Pedestrian bridge connecting Rotary Island.
- Accessible paths, picnic area
- Public campsites





NATURAL RESOURCE AREA | 1.76 ACRES

Ravine Park

ACCESSIBILITY

1

This is a largely undeveloped green area located between North and South Ravine Streets. It includes a paved non-motorized portion of South Ravine Street between McCandless Street and Hillside Street, which was closed due to speeding concerns. This park primarily serves the immediate neighborhood, with little room for improvements due to its placement and topography.

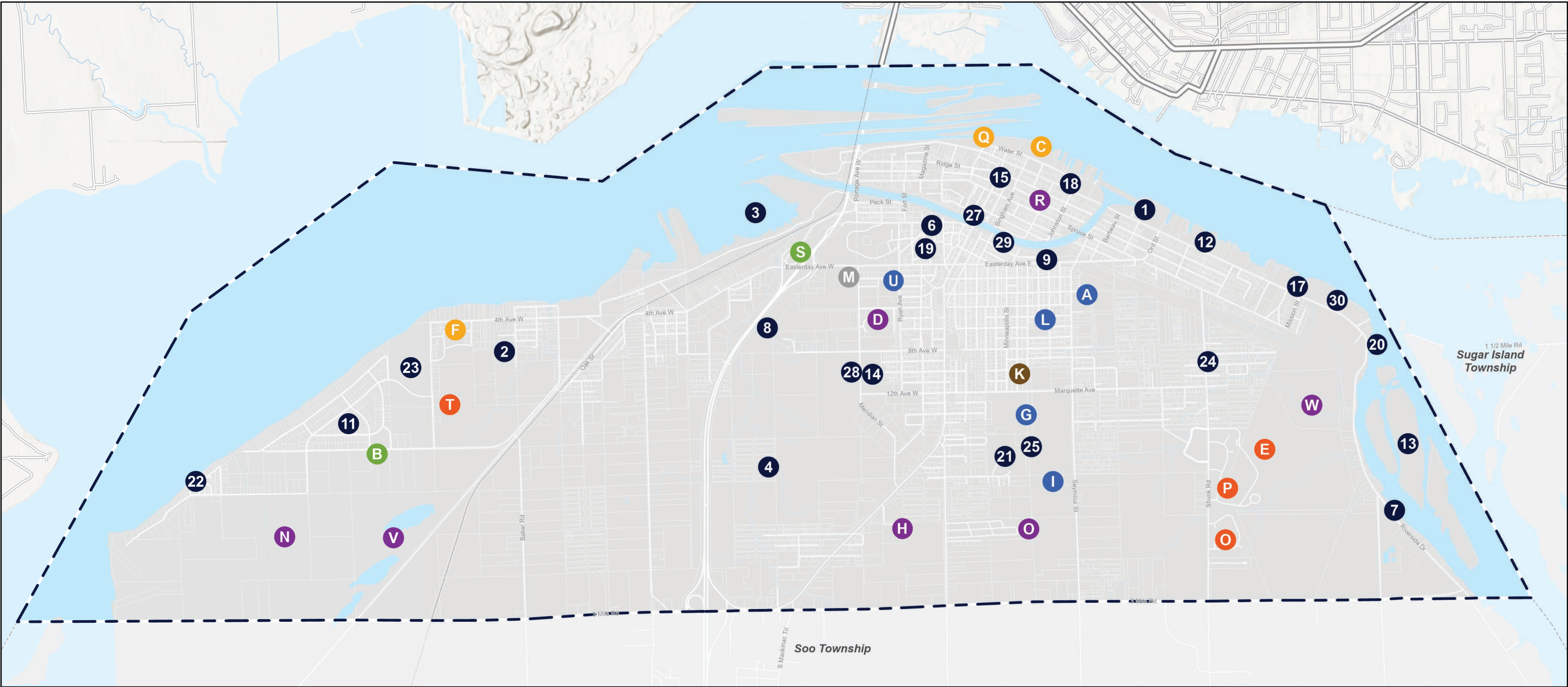
Amenities

- Paved path
- Wooded area

Opportunities

- Non-motorized connection to path.





All Park Inventory

City of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

December 15, 2022

- City Parks**
 - 1 Alford Park
 - 2 Algonquin Park
 - 3 Ashmun Bay Park
 - 4 Ashmun Creek
 - 5 Aune Osborn Park
 - 6 Chandler Park
 - 7 Harvey Marina
 - 8 I-500 Snowmobile Track
 - 9 Kaine's Rink
 - 10 Kemp Marina
 - 11 Lakeshore Park
 - 12 Lower Coast Guard Area
 - 13 Lower River Islands
 - 14 Malcolm Park
 - 15 Maple/Ashmun Pocket Park
 - 16 Market Corner
 - 17 Mission Street Boat Launch
 - 18 Pullar Community Center
 - 19 Ravine Park
 - 20 Rotary Island Park
 - 21 Sault Seal Recreation Area
 - 22 Shallows Boat Launch
 - 23 Sherman Park
 - 24 Shunk Road (Memorial) Park
 - 25 Skateboard Park
 - 26 St. Mary's Park
 - 27 Weber Park
 - 28 Project Playground
 - 29 Community Gardens
 - 30 William Gregory Boat Launch

- Sault Tribe Parks**
 - E Chi Mukwa Community Rec Center
 - O Saultier Drive Playground
 - P Shawano Drive Playground
 - T Tanglewood Golf Course
- Sault Area Public Schools Parks**
 - A A.J. Van Citter's Athletic Field
 - G Sault High Sports Complex
 - I High School Backlands
 - L Lincoln School
 - U Washington School
- State of Michigan Parks**
 - B Algonquin Ski Trails
 - S State Rest Area
- LSSU Parks**
 - M LSSU Norton Center

- Private Parks**
 - D Bridge Village Playground
 - H Edge of the Woods Playground
 - M Hobbins-Meyer Nature Preserve
 - N Rapids Drive Playground
 - R St. Mary's Park
 - V Donaldson Moore Nature Preserve
 - W Sault Ste. Marie Country Club
- Sault Housing Commission Parks**
 - K Kimball Street Playground
- Federal Parks**
 - C Brady Park
 - F Coast Guard Housing Park
 - Q Soo Locks Park



Basemap Source: MCGI, Version 17a.
Data Source: SSM, 2022. McKenna, 2022.



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Public School Facilities

The Sault Area Public Schools operates the following facilities which total over 160 acres. Though not under the City's jurisdiction, these facilities provide recreational opportunities to the people of Sault Ste. Marie and should be considered in recreational planning decisions.

SPORTS COMPLEX | 12.14 ACRES

A.J. Van Citter's Athletic Field

Outdoor multipurpose recreation field just south of Sault Area High School.

NATURAL RESOURCES AREA | 120.0 ACRES

High School Backlands

Large undeveloped area to the south of Sault Area School and east of Sault Seal Recreation Area that has great potential for future recreational development and contains a pavilion and snowmobile trail.

SCHOOL PARK | 9.18 ACRES

J.K.L. Bahweting Anishinabe

Located at 8th Street and Marquette Avenue, this public school academy contains play structures, a ball court, and open space. It serves as the neighborhood's primary park facility.

SCHOOL PARK | 7.39 ACRES

Lincoln School Park

Located at 7th Avenue and Swinton Street, this park contains play structures, ball courts, baseball backstops, and open space. It serves as the neighborhood's primary park facility.

SPORTS COMPLEX | 15.7 ACRES

Sault High Sports Complex

This sports complex primarily serves the students of the school system and the community. It contains fitness facilities, tennis courts, soccer field, and basketball courts.

SCHOOL PARK | 7.36 ACRES

Washington School Park

Located at Ryan Avenue and Dillon Street, this park serves as the chief recreation facility for children ages 5-12 in the surrounding neighborhood. It contains play structures, basketball courts, a baseball backstop, and a soccer field.



Tribal, State, and Federal Facilities

There are several different Tribal, Federal, and State jurisdictions that operate park lands and recreational facilities within the City of Sault Ste. Marie. These recreation providers offer opportunities to City residents and visitors alike and contribute greatly to local recreation as well as the City's cultural tapestry. These jurisdictions include the State of Michigan (417 acres), Lake Superior State University (40.65 acres), United States Coast Guard (2.26 acres), Sault Housing Commission (1.6 acres), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (26.96 acres), and The Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians (an estimated 19.5 acres). The continued cooperation between these recreational providers and the City allows City residents and tourists to experience a breadth of quality recreation in a small-town environment.



NATURAL RESOURCES AREA | 411.76 ACRES

Algonquin Ski Trail

State of Michigan

A major Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) land holding, this area contains several miles of trails used in the winter for cross-country skiing and snow shoeing. In the summer the trails are used by outdoor enthusiasts and hikers. The large piece of land includes a variety of undisturbed natural ecosystems including lakes, marshes, and woodland habitats. A portion of the MDNR trails were lighted through a local fundraising effort.

NATURAL RESOURCES AREA | 120.0 ACRES

Brady Park

Federal

Adjacent to the Soo Locks, this park is the site of the annual City fireworks display. The park is host to several significant historical monuments, displays, and a sacred Anishinabeg burial ground.

SPECIAL USE | 9.26 ACRES

Chi Mukwa Community Recreation Center

Tribal

Located on the Sault Tribe's 225-acre Methodist Mission Reserve property, Chi Mukwa (Big Bear) is available for use by the community. It houses two year-round ice rinks, gymnasium, exercise facilities, a day care center, sauna, and pro shop, and has accommodations for meetings and parties. Other amenities include a playground, grills, ice hockey, skating, track, and concessions.

MINI PARK | 1.6 ACRES

Kimball Street Park

Sault Housing Commission

A small pocket park on Kimball Street, just north of Marquette Avenue, this facility is managed by the Sault Housing Commission. It contains a play structure, basketball court, and benches.

SPORTS COMPLEX | 40.64 ACRES

Norris Center

Lake Superior State University

The Norris Center at Meridian Street and Easterday Avenue has an extensive collection of indoor and outdoor facilities and is a part of LSSU's campus. It includes several amenities such as rock climbing, gym equipment, track, tennis courts, an ice arena, and swimming pools, among others.

MINI PARK | 0.10 ACRES

Saultuer Drive Playground

Tribal

This small playground on Saultuer Drive is part of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians' 85.6 acre reserve.

MINI PARK | 0.14 ACRES

Shawano Drive Playground

Tribal

This small playground on Shawano Drive is part of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians' 85.6 acre reserve.

COMMUNITY PARK | 13.52 ACRES

Soo Locks Park

Federal

Soo Locks Park, located off Water Street along the St. Marys River, is a major regional tourist attraction. This well-maintained park is located directly next to the Soo Locks and contains a variety of amenities including a viewing platform, benches, fountain, monuments, restrooms, and an information center.

SPECIAL USE | 40.64 ACRES

State Welcome Center

State of Michigan

The Welcome Center is operated by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MODT) and includes a border information center, restrooms, benches, grills, and a picnic area.

SPECIAL USE | 134 ACRES

Tanglewood Golf Course

Tribal

Tanglewood is an 18-hole golf course providing recreational opportunities in a natural setting with several amenities, including the club house and bathroom facilities.

Private Parks and Facilities

Several parks owned and operated by private entities serve to supplement the publicly-owned recreation areas and provide unique experiences.

MINI PARK | 0.54 ACRES

Bridge Village and Playground

Used by residents of Bridge Village, located in the residential development's commons area and contains a playground.

MINI PARK | 0.80 ACRES

Edge of the Woods Park

This small playground near Meridian and 4th is part of the Edge of the Woods apartment complex, serving primarily the complex's residents.

NATURAL RESOURCE AREA | 214.7 ACRES

Hobbins-Meyer Nature Preserve

This large wildlife preserve was donated to Little Traverse Conservancy in 2005 by the Meyer family. This preserve is located south and east of Bermuda Avenue.

MINI PARK | 0.2 ACRES

Rapids Drive Playground

This small private park within Lake Superior Estates contains a small playground and basketball court.

SPECIAL USE |

Sault Ste. Marie Country Club

The Country Club is a par 71, Jerry Matthews design located off Riverside Drive and includes a clubhouse and bathroom facilities. The golf course gets excellent views of the St. Marys River and passing freighters.



Facilities Analysis

NRPA publishes the NRPA Agency Performance Review, which is an annual report that summarizes national parks and recreation facility provisioning across municipalities and recreation agencies. The Review includes benchmarking data contributed by 1,000 agencies to the Park Metrics database. The Park Metrics database separates the data based on size of jurisdiction being served.

The Park Metrics provide a snapshot of Sault Ste. Marie’s parks and recreation offerings in comparison to data from similarly sized peer communities. This information must be combined with information about the community’s specific needs and experiences to identify the optimal mix of facilities and programming. In the case of this Plan, the community engagement process and other analyses provided the necessary context.

Parkland

The City of Sault Ste. Marie has an abundance of parkland for its relatively small footprint, which does not account for the additional school, state, federal, tribal, and private parkland available to residents. The following table shows how Sault Ste. Marie compares to national standards found in the NRPA Park Metrics database as well as how park density compares across the City’s census tracts.

Table 10. Sault Ste. Marie Parkland Acreage Analysis

National Average	Average for Populations <20,000	Sault Ste. Marie (City Parks Only)	Sault Ste. Marie (All Parks)
10.4	12.9	35.76	81.8

Sault Ste. Marie Parkland Density per Census Tract

Census Tract	Park Area in Acres	Sault Ste. Marie (City Parks Only)	Sault Ste. Marie (All Parks)
9702	139.6	2669.2	0.05
9703	36.1	822.0	0.04
9704	3.85	349.2	0.01
9705	381.9	4397.1	0.09
9706 (partial)	260	1262.7	0.21

Outdoor Facilities

Sault Ste. Marie has built a comprehensive range of outdoor park and recreation facilities. The table on the following page reveals that the city provides a variety of facilities that are listed in the NRPA Park Metrics database. Compared to peer communities, Sault Ste. Marie clearly excels in terms of the range of outdoor facilities it offers in some categories, such as the number of ball fields and playgrounds. In addition, the city offers residents and visitors unique outdoor activities, such as skiing opportunities, camping, and hiking. Most communities with a population less than 20,000 cannot make this claim.

Table 11. Analysis of Outdoor Park and Recreation Facilities in Sault Ste. Marie

Facility Type	Percent of Agencies that Provide the Facility	Presence of the Facility in Sault Ste. Marie	Median Number of Residents per Facility	Number of Facilities Recommended	Number of Facilities Currently in Sault Ste. Marie
Playgrounds	95%	Yes	1,986	6.7	8
Tot Lots	45%	No	6,642	2.0	-
Basketball Courts	86%	Yes	3,750	3.6	3
Tennis Courts	78%	Yes	2,723	4.9	1
Pickleball Courts	18%	No	3,446	3.9	-
Volleyball Courts	48%	Yes	5,400	2.5	2
Ballfields (youth)	79%	Yes	3,107	4.3	12
Rectangular Fields					
Multipurpose	68%	Yes	4,362	3.1	1
Soccer	50%		3,504	3.8	
Football	35%		8,004	1.7	
Multipurpose - Synthetic	22%		12,962	1.0	
Dog Parks	67%	No	11,100	1.2	-
Swimming Pool	53%	Yes*	8,637	1.5	*1, public beach *1 private pool (Country Club)
Community Gardens	51%	Yes	8,773	1.5	2
Skate Parks	39%	Yes	11,100	1.2	1
Ice Rinks (Outdoors)	18%	Yes*	7,997	1.7	2 (indoors)
Golf Course (18-hole)	29%	Yes*	9,183	1.5	*2, private/tribal
Driving Range Stations	26%		5,055	2.6	

Based on NRPA Metrics published in the 2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review.

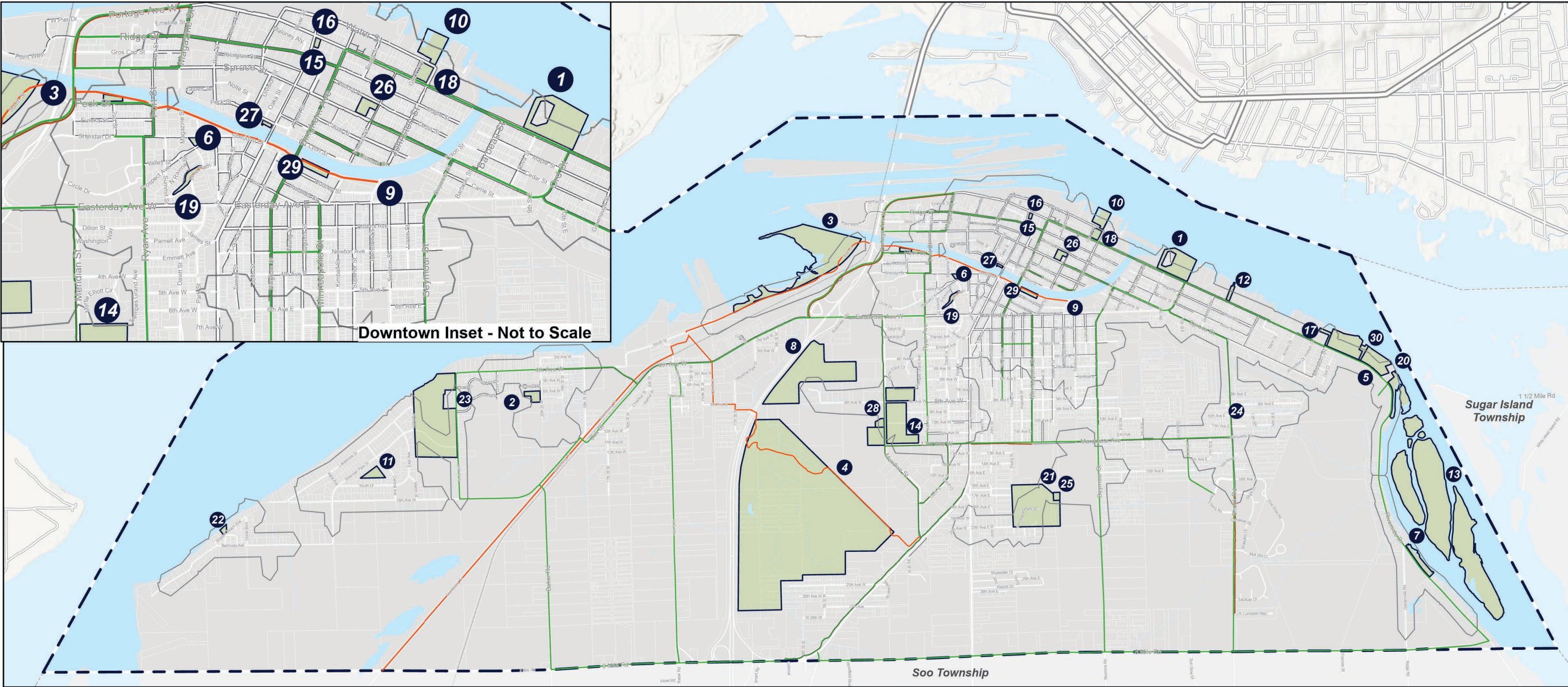
Based on NRPA data from communities with a population of less than 20,000.

The figures reflect the number of facilities needed to achieve a Median Number of Residents per Facility in Sault Ste. Marie based on the 2020 U.S. Census population of 13,337.

Walkability

The Map on the following page shows the area of the city that is within a 10-minute walk of a City park or recreation facility, via streets, sidewalks, bike paths, or multi-use paths - also known as the service area. The areas outside of the 10-minute walk boundary represent the areas underserved by parks. The majority of Sault Ste. Marie is served by a facility; areas that appear to be underserved are characterized by sparse rural development (i.e., 14th Street) or primarily commercial (i.e., I-75 Business Spur and 3 Mile Road). Further, many of these areas have access to other recreation facilities, such as private golf facilities, public school facilities, or State-owned parkland. The expansion of the non-motorized transportation network will make these areas more accessible to public park and recreation facilities.





City Park Walkability Analysis

City of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

December 15, 2022

- Legend
- Sidewalk
 - Bike Path
 - Multi-Use Path
 - 10-minute Walk from Park Center
 - Park
 - Tax Parcel
 - Railroads
 - Lake, River, Stream, or Drain
 - City Boundary
 - Other Municipal Boundary

#	Park Name	#	Park Name	#	Park Name
1	Alford Park / Carbide Dock	11	Lakeshore Park	21	Sault Seal Recreation Area
2	Algonquin Park	12	Lower Coast Guard Park	22	Shallows Boat Launch
3	Ashmun Bay Park	13	Lower River Islands	23	Sherman Park
4	Ashmun Creek	14	Malcolm Park	24	Shunk Road (Memorial) Park
5	Aune Osborn Park	15	Maple/Ashmun Pocket Park	25	Skateboard Park
6	Chandler Park	16	Market Corner	26	St. Mary's Park
7	Harvey Marina	17	Mission Street Boat Launch	27	Weber Park
8	I-500 Snowmobile Track	18	Pullar Community Center	28	Project Playground
9	Kaine's Rink	19	Ravine Park	29	Community Garden
10	Kemp Marina	20	Rotary Island Park	30	William Gregory Boat Launch



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.
Data Source: Sault Ste. Marie, 2022. McKenna, 2022.



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Planning and Public Input





Planning Process

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) provides guidance on the preparation of parks and recreation master plans. The City, in collaboration with City administration, staff, residents, and community leaders, has fulfilled the requirements of the MDNR, following six key tasks:

Understand Community Context

In order to develop the Plan, the first step was to meet with the City leadership and discuss aspects of the City's physical and social environment. Using the past plan's goals, objectives, and action items, conversations around the community's future took shape. Furthermore, it was essential to understand the administrative structure of parks and recreation services, funding, and grant history. Additionally, several important stakeholders were identified for further discussions.

As a result of these initial meetings, further analysis of the City's land use and natural features was undertaken, along with a demographic profile of the community, including age, disability status, households, and economic data. Further, an understanding of the historical significance of the area helped establish a community identity, leading to multiple important initiatives regarding natural and historical lands.

Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Inventory

Through site visits, mapping, and written analysis, a comprehensive inventory of the City's parks and recreation facilities was completed by the project consultant and City staff. Among the information included are park size, barrier-free accessibility, recreation amenities, equipment, and other physical attributes.

Public Participation

The City has consistently emphasized public participation in its planning efforts. As such, robust, early public engagement was critical. First, a project website was created to host all public information including important dates and relevant documents. Using the website, an online survey was launched and physical copies were made available at City Hall to solicit comments from the public regarding both general and specific parks and recreation needs. In tandem with the survey, an online mapping tool was developed to glean location-specific comments data for facilities.

In addition to the online participation, two public workshops were conducted, focused primarily on 'going where the people are' to solicit feedback and advertise the project and online tools. The draft Plan was also presented to the Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Board during regularly scheduled meetings, where residents could provide input.

Analysis

Several analyses were performed to better understand the data collected through conversations with City officials and staff, fieldwork, and the results from the online survey. The analysis of connectivity/ walkability, parkland and facility metrics, and demographics served as the foundation of the recommendations, with public input serving to refine and enhance the structure of the plan.

Action Plan

A detailed action plan was developed based on the completion of the above analysis. This plan offers recommendations on what projects should be prioritized and be accomplished within the next five years and is available as a separate document for staff to record, refine, and evaluate. Additionally, long-range, community-wide objectives are identified.



Plan Completion and Adoption

The 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Plan was made available for public review for 30 days. Residents and stakeholders were encouraged to review the Plan and provide comments. The Plan was advertised through the City's website, social media, and a public notice in the local newspaper.

Residents were able to physically review the plan at the:

- Bayliss Public Library – Reference Desk
- Pullar Community Building – Lobby
- City Hall – Engineering Department

On December 19, 2022, the City of Sault Ste. Marie held a public hearing at the regularly scheduled City Commission meeting. The public hearing was advertised and posted in accordance with Michigan law. This was an additional opportunity for residents to voice any opinions about the plan.

On January 16, 2023, the City Commission approved a resolution to adopt the City of Sault Ste. Marie's 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan at a regularly scheduled meeting. A copy of the resolution was certified by the City Clerk and transmitted to EUPRPDC, Chippewa County, and the MDNR.

Public Participation

An essential task in the recreation planning process is to determine the needs of the community early on. Where data serve as the technical foundation of recommendations, community needs serve as the basis for refining and enhancing the Action Plan.

The City used several outreach methods throughout the planning process for robust and open community input. Participants at such events included residents, specific parks and recreation stakeholders, and community organizations' representatives. In total, there were three key methods used as part of this program to help achieve meaningful public engagement.

Find the Parks Planner “Mobile Workshop”

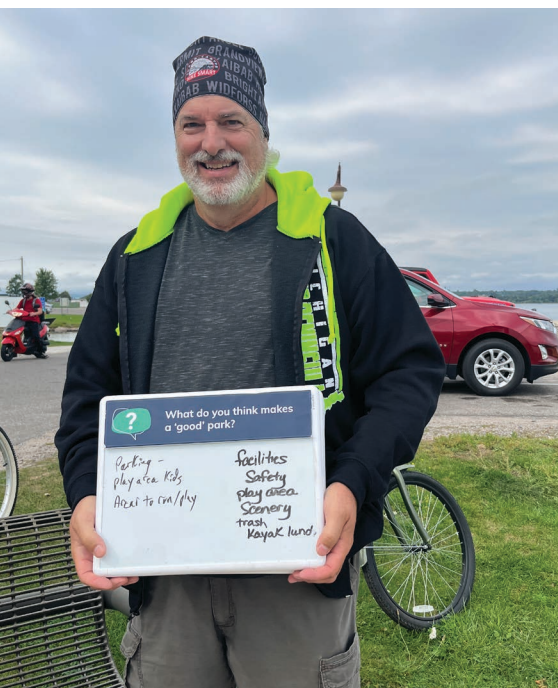
The first of two public participation events was a ‘Mobile Workshop’ held on September 10, 2022. For this event, staff traveled to several popular city parks over the course of five hours to engage with people where they were. The intent of this workshop was to speak with as many park users as possible, encourage the use of the recently launched survey and comment map, and have folks participate in a broad visioning exercise. In total, over 60 people participated in the exercise and the City received over 50 unique comments.

Mobile Workshop Takeaways

Safety + Maintenance

- Surveillance, safer equipment, accessible areas, and trash pickup were brought up frequently during this workshop.
- Continued maintenance of sidewalks, docks, and sports equipment—year-round—was also a priority.
- Volunteer programs already in place can be bolstered to mitigate these concerns.





Variety + Amenities

- The importance of having 'something for everyone' was not understated, regardless of age or ability. Both passive and active solutions should be explored.
- Interestingly, users noted that the separation of amenities for different age groups in different parks (rather than within the same park) was a plus.
- Water accessibility was a highpoint of many conversations, with users expressing the need for maintained public beaches; this is in addition to basic amenities like restrooms, drinking fountains, and picnic areas.

Online and Hard Copy Surveys and Online Comment Map

The City launched an online and hard copy survey related to the City's overall parks and recreation program. Additionally, an online comment map was developed to solicit open-ended, location-specific feedback. Links to the survey and comment map were made available at the project website, on social media, and through hard copy fliers and email distribution. Hard copy surveys were available at City Hall. The survey and comment map were made available for 38 days. At the end of the survey period, the City received the following number of responses:

- **Survey.** 109 responses
- **Comment Map.** 63 comments
- **Website.** 417 unique users

Survey Takeaways

Destinations

- When asked which facilities they visit the most, the largest share of respondents said: Rotary Island (74%), Sherman (65%), and Sault Seal (45%)

Activities

- When asked which leisure activities they typically participate in, respondents said: Hiking/Camping (20%), Exercise/Fitness (19%), and Boating/Fishing (17%)



Hindrances

- For those that do not frequent City parks and facilities, folks responded that poor maintenance (24%) and not knowing the location of parks and facilities (12%) were the main reasons.

Needs

- When asked if a certain facility or program falls short, meets, or exceeds community needs, the largest share of respondents that answered 'meets need' identified the following: Athletic Fields, Playgrounds, Ice Arenas, Ice Skating, and Golf Courses.
- Conversely, the largest share of those that answered 'falls short' identified the following: Aquatic Programs, Walking/Biking Trails, Nature Education, Community Events, and Dog Parks.

New Opportunities

- When asked which new or enhanced recreational opportunities they would like to see in the City, respondents identified the following: Hiking/Walking Trails (71%), Restrooms (58%), Swimming (49%), Adult Fitness (46%), and Dog Park (46%).



Comment Map Takeaways

Waterfront Access

- The most 'Liked' comment on the map expressed the need for fishing access in the Alford Park/Carbide Dock area.
- The second most 'Liked' comment focused on cleaning up Ashmun Bay to increase access for swimming and fishing.
- The third most 'Liked' comment praised the Lower Coast Guard Area as having great potential but being underutilized.

Connections

- Another popular comment focused on connecting Downtown to Sherman Park via non-motorized transportation (bike paths).

Events

- Another comment heralded Aune Osborn Park as a premier event/programming space with lots of potential.

Downtown

- Several comments touched on park access Downtown, expressing the need for additional amenities, particularly playground equipment.
- Additionally, participants voiced the desire for additional or alternate days and times for the Farmer's Market. The City can work with market operators to support alternate days.

Open House and Presentation / Farmers Market “Field Day”

The second of two public participation events was intended to be an ‘Open House’ style workshop on October 4, 2022, where staff hosted stakeholders at City Hall for drop-by conversations. The intent of this event was to display the data received through the survey and the previous workshop while getting participants to prioritize amenities they would like to see in the parks. This was also the final push for additional online engagement. With lower-than-expected turnout rates for the Open House, it was decided to mimic the previous workshop by hosting a ‘Field Day’ at the Farmers Market the following day. There, staff spoke to dozens of patrons as they perused the market stalls. Responses were largely in line with feedback received through the other participation opportunities.

Field Day Takeaways

Amenities + Connections

- Public art, such as a graffiti wall, historic statues, and ‘climbable’ art
- Green infrastructure, including rain gardens, impervious walkways, and flowerbeds.
- Restrooms
- Walking/hiking/biking paths

Community Building + Events

- Music festivals
- Art festivals
- Nature education programs



Action Plan

The Action Plan describes recommendations for improvements and enhancement of the Sault Ste. Marie parks and recreation facilities and programming, as well as identifying the tools needed for implementation of the plan components.

A complementary component of the Action Plan is the Capital Improvement Schedule. Action strategies that may require significant capital investment from the community have been organized into a five-year plan. The specific projects have been prioritized in the Capital Improvement Schedule to better manage the Department of Public Works budget and equally distribute the projects over a five-year cycle. The timing of these projects may be influenced, moved, or eliminated depending upon economic conditions, available funding, and/or grant awards. However, the spirit and intent of the project priorities are well-defined in the Capital Improvement Schedule.

The Action Plan is organized into two sections:

- Goals, Objectives, and Actions
- Five Year Capital Improvement Schedule

Goals, Objectives, and Actions

To provide a guideline for decision making, the City developed a list of goals, objectives, and actions (GOAs) based on the previous 2017-2021 Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the results of demographic analysis and public participation. The following GOAs are intended to provide an operational framework for future decisions related to the provision of parks and recreation for Sault Ste. Marie. GOAs should be reviewed annually by the Parks and Recreation Board and DPW and modified as necessary. Specific action items relating to these goals and objectives can be found in the Capital Improvement Schedule.

Goal 1.

Better maintain existing parks and recreational facilities.

The total population of Sault Ste. Marie has stabilized over the past several decades and year-over-year tourism remains steady. Further, the City has an abundance of parkland, both under its jurisdiction and through outside entities, often exceeding national standards. These existing facilities should be prioritized and continual evaluation is required to balance the enhancement/addition of amenities with lean operating costs. Continued maintenance improves the sense of security.

Objective	Action	Relevant Facilities	Priority
1.1 Maintain, improve, repurpose, and/or relocate park equipment and facilities as needed to better serve the population; Create new facilities in existing parks.	Relocate skate park equipment to a more central location	Alford/Carbide Lower Coast Guard Aune Osborn	Medium
	Improve or replace worn play equipment to ensure user safety and accessibility	Sherman Algonquin	High
	Improve or replace worn pavilions and picnic areas	Aune Osborn Algonquin Lower Coast Guard	Medium
	Create an off-leash dog run/dog park	Aune Osborn Alford/Carbide Algonquin	Medium
1.2 Enhance waterfront access throughout the system.	Install/improve beaches in existing parks	Sherman Ashmun Bay Aune Osborn Harvey	High
	Install/improve fishing piers, docks, and launches in existing parks	Alford/Carbide Ashmun Bay Lower Coast Guard Shallows Boat Launch	High

Objective	Action	Relevant Facilities	Priority
1.3 Implement standardized park design for all Sault Ste. Marie parks including signage, installation of trees, improved landscaping, benches, bike racks, and waste receptacles.	Install additional waste and recycling receptacles at major parks	Sherman Rotary Island Aune Osborn Alford/Carbide	Medium
	Install/improve accessible bathroom facilities, either permanent or portable	Rotary Island Sherman Market Corner Shunk Ashmun Bay Alford/Carbide	High
	Install/improve benches across the system	System-wide	Medium
	Plant additional trees and landscaping within large, grassy parkland	Aune Osborn Rotary Island Harvey Alford/Carbide	Medium
1.4 Adapt land uses to reduce lawncare costs and improve stormwater management.	Convert portions of larger parks not used for active recreation into lower-maintenance gardens and ground cover. Use native plantings, rock gardens, prairie plantings, to ensure resilience.	Malcolm I-500 Aune Osborn	Medium
			Low
1.5 Utilize CPTA Principles to maintain safety and security.	Install lighting or motion sensor lighting to parks to improve visibility after dark, focusing on walking paths	Sherman Park Aune Osborn Lower Coast Guard Ravine	High
	Install cameras at higher risk sites to curb vandalism	Sherman Park Skate Park	Medium
	Add attractive fencing around entire parks or portions containing playgrounds.	Sherman Algonquin	Low
	Create a volunteer-based park safety watch system	System-wide	Low

Goal 2.

Connect park system to encourage active lifestyles and mobility.

Sault Ste. Marie has an active resident base that includes runners, cyclists, walkers, skaters, hockey players, golfers, etc. Tapping into these groups can help foster community health more broadly. In addition, tourists and visitors often look for low-cost, low-impact ways to travel to different amenities throughout the City.

Objective	Action	Relevant Facilities	Priority
2.1 Increase non-motorized transportation connections between parks, historical sites, community facilities, and shopping districts.	Implement the City's Non-Motorized Transportation Plan and incorporate Complete Streets principles into road and sidewalk improvement programs.	System-wide	High
	Implement Safe Routes to School to improve accessibility for kids and teens.	System-wide	High
	Provide for protected bike lanes on busy roads.	System-wide	High
	Develop low-impact trail systems in undeveloped areas to improve connectivity.	Project Playground Ashmun Creek	High
	Coordinate with MDOT to ensure City interests are met during state road improvements.	System-wide	High
	Continue working with Sault Tribe, LSSU, and federal and state park providers to develop interconnected pathways.	System-wide	High
	Partner with Chippewa-Luce-Mackinaw Conservation District to develop road and trail improvements using green infrastructure.	System-wide	High
2.2 Develop and promote programming that encourages active lifestyles and mobility.	Walk/Bike to Work days, 10,000 Steps challenges, half marathons, geocaching, etc.	System-wide	Low
	Provide City bikes or scooters to improve mobility access.	System-wide	Medium
2.3 Develop a wayfinding program for the trail/path network that directs users of the non-motorized paths to City parks and other destinations.	Install signage or markers to direct users to commercial and waterfront areas	System-wide	Medium

Goal 3.

Provide parks and recreation facilities and programming that meet the needs and interests of the entire community.

Sault Ste. Marie is a diverse community and certain groups may be more impacted by the availability of certain parks and recreation opportunities, including older adults and seniors, children, and people with disabilities. Providing well-balanced activity choices can improve quality of life, including passive and active recreation and educational opportunities. Residents, visitors, and businesses can all benefit from increased amenities, events, and programming.

Objective	Action	Relevant Facilities	Priority
3.1 Upgrade facilities to incorporate universal design and barrier-free standards.	Install ADA-compliant paths and entrances into play areas.	System-wide	High
	Install ADA-compliant restroom facilities, water fountains, and parking areas	System-wide	High
3.2 Create opportunities for environmental and cultural education programs for children and teens.	Partner with SAPS, LSSU, Tribe to develop youth programming	System-wide	High
	Encourage passive education through signage and native plantings	System-wide	Low
3.3 Incorporate community art, sculptures, and/or performance spaces into park design.	Install climbable art pieces within grassy areas.	Pocket parks Aune Osborn Sherman Rotary Alford/Carbide	Low
	Install stepped platform, amphitheater, or clamshell.	Aune Osborn Alford/Carbide	Low
3.4 Continue to provide and promote community events and year-long recreation opportunities	Install fire pits and seating for winter activities.	Sault Seal Aune Osborn Market Corner	High
	Establish festivals, including art festivals, fairs, and flea markets	System-wide	Medium
	Provide additional or alternate days/times for the Farmers Market	Market Corner	Medium
	Host/lease space for food trucks and other mobile vendors	Market Corner Aune Osborn Rotary Island	Medium

Goal 4.

Partner with other entities to provide programming and support thoughtful expansion and maintenance efforts.

Sault Ste. Marie is enriched by strong volunteer efforts, including the newly launched Adopt-a-Park program, partnerships with various public, non-profit, and private organizations, and independent citizen initiatives. These connections should be leveraged when considering expansion, maintenance, and special projects.

Objective	Action	Relevant Facilities	Priority
4.1 Recruit and empower nonprofit and business organizations to assist with park improvement projects and continued maintenance	Partner with the Economic Development Corporation to enlist new and existing businesses to support parks.	System-wide	Medium
	Consider additional leases or sale of land with performance guarantees	System-wide	Medium
	Increase opportunities for donations, sponsorships, and fundraising efforts such as 'Sponsor a Tree, Bench, or sign programs	System-wide	Medium
4.2 Expand the Adopt-a-Park volunteer program to promote active citizenship in the maintenance of parks and facilities.	Expand the Adopt-a-Park volunteer program to promote active citizenship in the maintenance of parks and facilities.	System-wide	Medium
	Coordinate with Sault Area Public Schools and PTOs to promote volunteerism in schools.	System-wide	Medium
	Develop specialized volunteer groups over time	System-wide	Low
4.3 Continue working with local organizations, clubs, and institutions to provide a wealth and variety of organized activities and programs within the community. This includes:	Host annual meetings with Malcolm Park user groups to determine inventory, maintenance, and scheduling needs.	Malcolm Park	High
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Bike-Friendly Soo - NMT education and programming b. Chippewa Luce Mackinac Conservation District - passive education, native planting program c. "Theatrical" programming that involves the schools, library, and residents d. Seasonal, including winter activities e. Art and cultural programs f. Teen and youth programming during the summer and utilizing extended hours 	System-wide	Medium

Goal 5.

Promote parks and recreation opportunities and increase customer service and efficiency.

During public participation, several users mentioned being unaware of the available parks and recreation opportunities in the City, effectively preventing them from enjoying these facilities. This is likely more prevalent in the tourist population, who have little to no familiarity with the parks system. Further, encouraging the use of these facilities through various means helps promote safety, community, and inclusion.

Objective	Action	Relevant Facilities	Priority
5.1 Expand web-based marketing efforts to inform residents of programs and events.	Consider creating a DPW or Parks and Recreation social media page for the City, link to City website.	System-wide	Medium
	Update the City website regularly to inform the public of upcoming projects	System-wide	High
	Make use of digital fliers and email lists to market upcoming parks improvements or events.	System-wide	High
	Ensure all city parks and recreation facilities are searchable on Google, and include pictures from the inventory	System-wide	Medium
5.2 Develop digital and physical parks maps, signage, and informational material to promote facilities and programs.	Place durable, attractive bulletin boards at major parks to post information and system maps	Sherman Alford/Carbide Aune Osborn Rotary Island Market Corner	Medium
	Post maps on the City website and indoor facilities.	Pullar Kaine's	Medium
5.3 Review the Parks and Recreation Master Plan annually to establish priorities and responsibilities with the Parks and Recreation Board and community partners. Perform a complete update every five years to maintain grant eligibility.	Gather community input regularly and at different times of the year	System-wide	High
	Establish annual or bi-annual meetings with stakeholders	System-wide	High
	Make amendments to the Parks and Recreation Plan as needed to incorporate significant projects or priority changes	System-wide	High

Five-Year Capital Improvement Schedule

This section summarizes the overall system recommendations as well as specific improvements to individual parks. Some are multi-year efforts that will mostly involve staff time and coordination, while others are park improvements that require capital investment.

Priorities should be reviewed on an annual basis and adjusted to respond to updated findings and identification of funding opportunities. Costs should be closely monitored, as the proposed plan estimates are strictly preliminary.

Actual costs for each project will be more specifically determined as site surveys, programming elements, and engineering plans are developed. If funding levels are lower than required to implement the plan based on the schedule provided, the implementation could be stretched over additional years.

Table 12. Capital Improvement Parks and Recreation Plan

Proposed Improvement	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
Algonquin Park							
Install pathways	X		X			15,000	GF, G, P3
Install pavilion/picnic area		X				7,000	GF, G, P3
Repair ball court	X					5,000	GF, G, P3
Install ball field				X		15,000	P3
Alford Park/Carbide Dock							
Implement development plan	X	X	X			TBD	G, GF, P3
Ashmun Bay Park							
Design and develop	X	X	X	X	X	TBD	GF, P3
Install beach				X	X	75,000	GF, G, P3
Install restroom/drinking fountain		X				25,000	GF, G
Install pavilions/picnic areas	X					16,000	GF, G
Install pathways	X	X				15,000	GF, G
Install additional parking		X				10,000	GF
Install lighting			X	X		3,000	GF
Ashmun Creek							
Design and develop	X	X	X	X	X	TBD	P3, GF
Install additional pathways			X	X	X	30,000	GF, G, P3
Install educational signage		X	X	X		5,000	GF, D, P3
Aune Osborn Park							
Plant interior trees.	X	X				3,000	GF
Funding Sources: GF General Fund G Grants D Donations P3 Public/Private Partnerships							

Proposed Improvement	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
Repaint campsite numbers	X					TBD	GF
Increase ampage		X				TBD	GF
Improve waste disposal	X					TBD	GF
Install benches						4,000	GF, D
Replace pavilions/picnic areas						10,000	GF, G, D
Install pathways						20,000	GF, G
Install portable restroom, screening						5,000	GF
Chandler Park							
Add lighting.	X	X				2,000	G, P3
Provide ADA parking		X				2,000	GF
Install pathways					X	5,000	G, P3
Install rain gardens			X			3,000	G, P3
Community Garden							
Pave driveway/parking	X					7,000	GF, D
Install pathways		X				5,000	GF
Install rain garden			X			3,000	GF, D
Install picnic tables	X					2,000	GF, D
Plant interior trees		X		X		1,000	GF, D
Harvey Marina							
Design and develop		X	X			TBD	G, P3
Restroom/facility improvements	X					5,000	GF
Pave parking lot		X				8,000	GF
Install pavilion, picnic tables			X			8,000	GF, P3
Install hammock posts			X			TBD	P3
Install pathways				X		10,000	GF, G
I-500 Snowmobile Track							
Install seasonal prairie	X	X				3,000	GF, D, P3
Kemp Marina							
Install gazebo	X					35,000	GF, G, P3
Lakeshore Park							
Install pathways						15,000	GF, G
Lower River Islands							
Implement development plan	X		X		X	TBD	D, G, P3
Lower Coast Guard Park							
Design and develop	X	X				TBD	GF, G, P3 (FOTR)
Install benches, pavilions			X			10,000	GF, G
Funding Sources: GF General Fund G Grants D Donations P3 Public/Private Partnerships							

Proposed Improvement	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
Install portable restroom, screening				X		5,000	GF
Malcolm Park							
Improve drainage throughout using engineering and green infrastructure		X	X	X		150,000	GF, D, P3
Gravel/pave parking lot and drive east of Bunker Field	X					25,000	GF, D, P3
Install pathways to seating		X	X			15,000	GF, G
Install additional seating	X					15,000	GF
Replace fencing	X	X	X	X	X	140,000	GF, P3
Replace storage building		X	X			100,000	GF, P3
Renovate Synette-Suggitt Field	X	X				465,000	GF, G, P3
Renovate Bunker Field			X	X		250,000	GF, G, P3
Maple/Ashmun Park							
Install picnic table	X					1,000	GF
Market Corner							
Expand area	X			X		TBD	GF
Install playground		X				20,000	GF, G
Install permanent pavilion			X			15,000	GF, G, D, P3
Install portable restroom, screening					X	5,000	GF
Mission Street Boat Launch							
Plant interior trees					X	1,000	GF, D
Install rain gardens				X		3,000	GF, D
Project Playground							
Complete splash pad/restroom	X					300,000	GF, G, P3
Trail enhancements	X	X				10,000	GF, G
Pullar Community Building							
Install new floor	X	X				500,000	GF
Equipment installations	X	X				260,000	GF
Ravine Park							
Install multi-use path along McCandless			X			20,000	GF, G, P3
Rotary Island Park							
Implement development plan	X	X	X			TBD	GF, G, D, P3
Install restroom/drinking fountain	X	X				15,000	GF, P3, G
Install pavilion	X	X				20,000	GF, P3, G
Install trees and landscaping		X	X			8,000	GF, P3
Funding Sources: GF General Fund G Grants D Donations P3 Public/Private Partnerships							

Proposed Improvement	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
Sault Seal Recreation Area							
Install fire pits	X		X			5,000	GF, G, P3, D
Install picnic area		X				3,000	GF, D
Enhance/maintain trails	X	X	X	X	X	5,000	GF, G, P3
Shallows Boat Launch							
Install dock		X				10,000	GF
Install picnic table	X					1,000	GF
Sherman Park							
Enhance/expand campground	X	X				750,000	GF, G, D
Enhance/maintain beach	X	X	X	X	X	25,000	GF, P3
Install security cameras, lights		X				3,000	GF
Replace play equipment	X					60,000	GF, G, D
Upgrade restroom		X				40,000	GF
Skate/Bike Park							
Relocate equipment		X				30,000	GF, D
St. Marys Park							
Plant interior trees					X	1,000	GF, D, P3
Install pathways		X				5,000	GF, P3
Weber Park							
Install covered picnic area			X			3,000	GF, G, P3
All Facilities OR Location TBD							
Expand Adopt-a-Park program	X	X	X	X	X	TBD	GF
Implement NMT Plan / Complete Streets / Sidewalk Gap Program		X	X	X	X	1,300,000	GF, G, D, P3
Inclusive/accessible playground enhancements	X	X				TBD	GF, G, D, P3
Install drinking fountains	X	X	X	X	X	50,000	GF
Install recycling cans	X					15,000	GF
Continue general landscaping and maintenance	X	X	X	X	X	500,000	GF
Install pickleball court(s)		X				50,000	G, GF, D
Install public art	X		X		X	TBD	D, P3, GF
Update signage/wayfinding	X	X	X	X	X	TBD	GF, G
Funding Sources: GF General Fund G Grants D Donations P3 Public/Private Partnerships							

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