



**Parks and Recreation
Master Plan**

2016-2020

St. Joseph City Commission

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Introduction

Park, recreation and green-spaces are important elements of all communities. The community of St. Joseph values its extensive, diverse and well-maintained park system. Residents recognize that properly planning for and funding an excellent park system is a critical component of continuing a high quality of life for its residents.

Purpose

The purpose of the plan is to provide a guide for planning future park improvements within the community for the next five years. In addition, the plan allows for potential funding from the State of Michigan for citizen-desired park improvements.

Planning Process

The process used to generate the Master Plan consisted of reviewing the results of the City Master Plan Community Survey, reviewing and updating the recreation inventory to reflect changes since the previous plan adoption, a public open house in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, a thirty-day public comment period and final plan development, concluding with a public hearing before the City Commission in advance of plan adoption.

Community Description

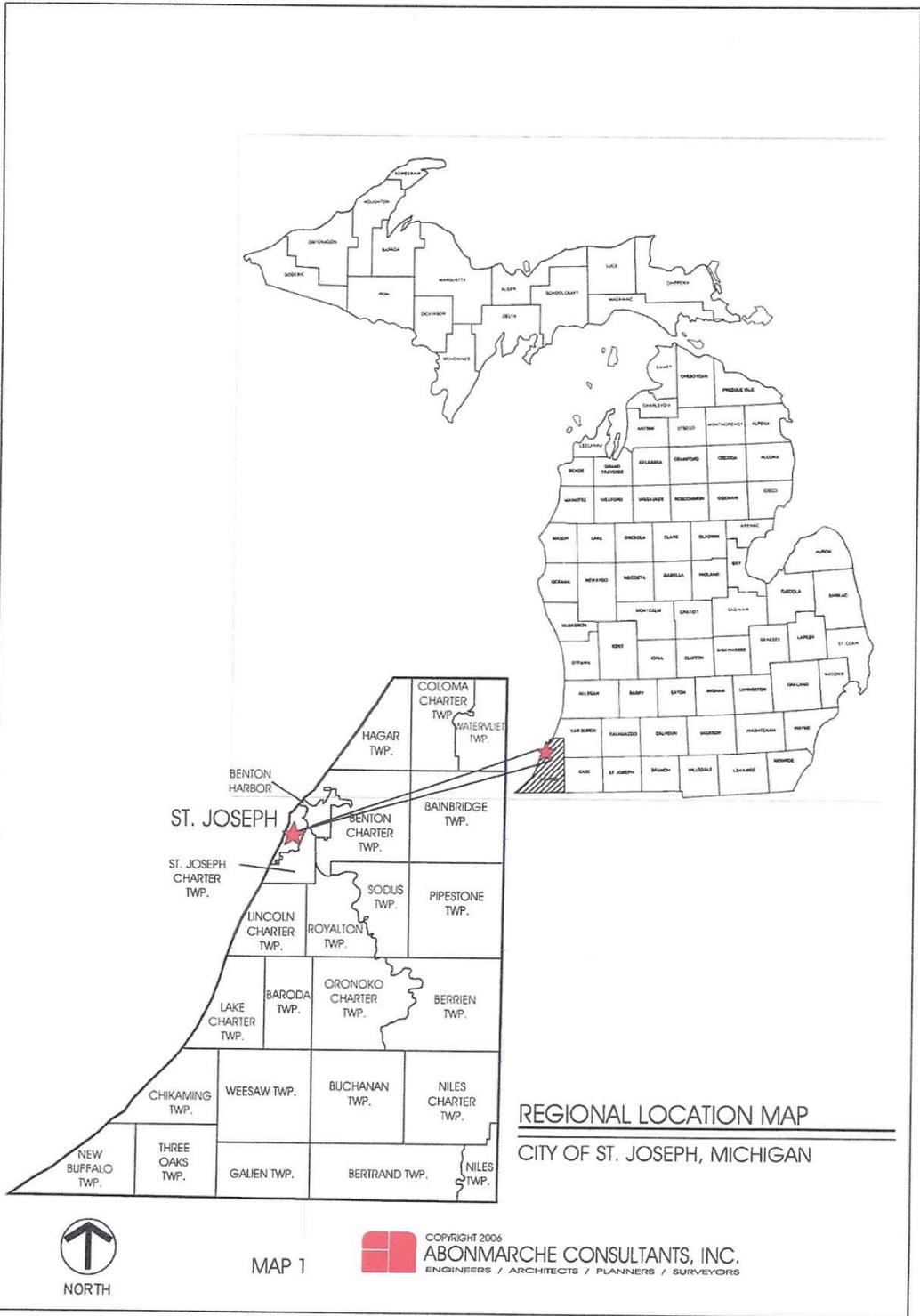
The City of St. Joseph (City) is located in Berrien County, on the eastern shores of Lake Michigan at the mouth of the St. Joseph River, and at the confluence of the St. Joseph and Paw Paw Rivers. The City has a shoreline of nearly 11 miles, including approximately 4 miles on Lake Michigan, 6 miles on the St.

Joseph River, and one mile on the Paw Paw River. The City's relationship with the waterfront is a dominant factor influencing the City's residential, economic, and recreational environments.

The City is also part of the "Twin Cities" area, a common name for a group of communities closely surrounding the cities of Benton Harbor and St. Joseph. This core area includes Benton Charter, Lincoln Charter, St. Joseph Charter, and Royalton Townships. These townships benefit from City residential and commercial development, and now have a greater portion of the area's population and tax base. The Twin Cities area has a total population of 64,000 that enjoy a significant number of unique economic, cultural, and recreational resources.

As with most cities, St. Joseph continues to experience transitions, particularly with commercial and industrial facilities. Harbor Shores Golf Course and its surrounding residential and commercial development and the Edgewater redevelopment into a new office and residential neighborhood are the most recent changes.

The City's natural beauty assets and small-town charm continue to attract residents and tourists. Newer attractions include the Silver Beach Center, and the Whirlpool Compass Fountain. These, and the annual festivals, farmers' market, and the many summer weekend events continue to make St. Joseph a city to visit often. This trend will continue and likely intensify in the future. The City's ability to plan for these trends will ensure that the City is in a position to guide the tourism growth, and accompanying changes in property ownership, and economic patterns.

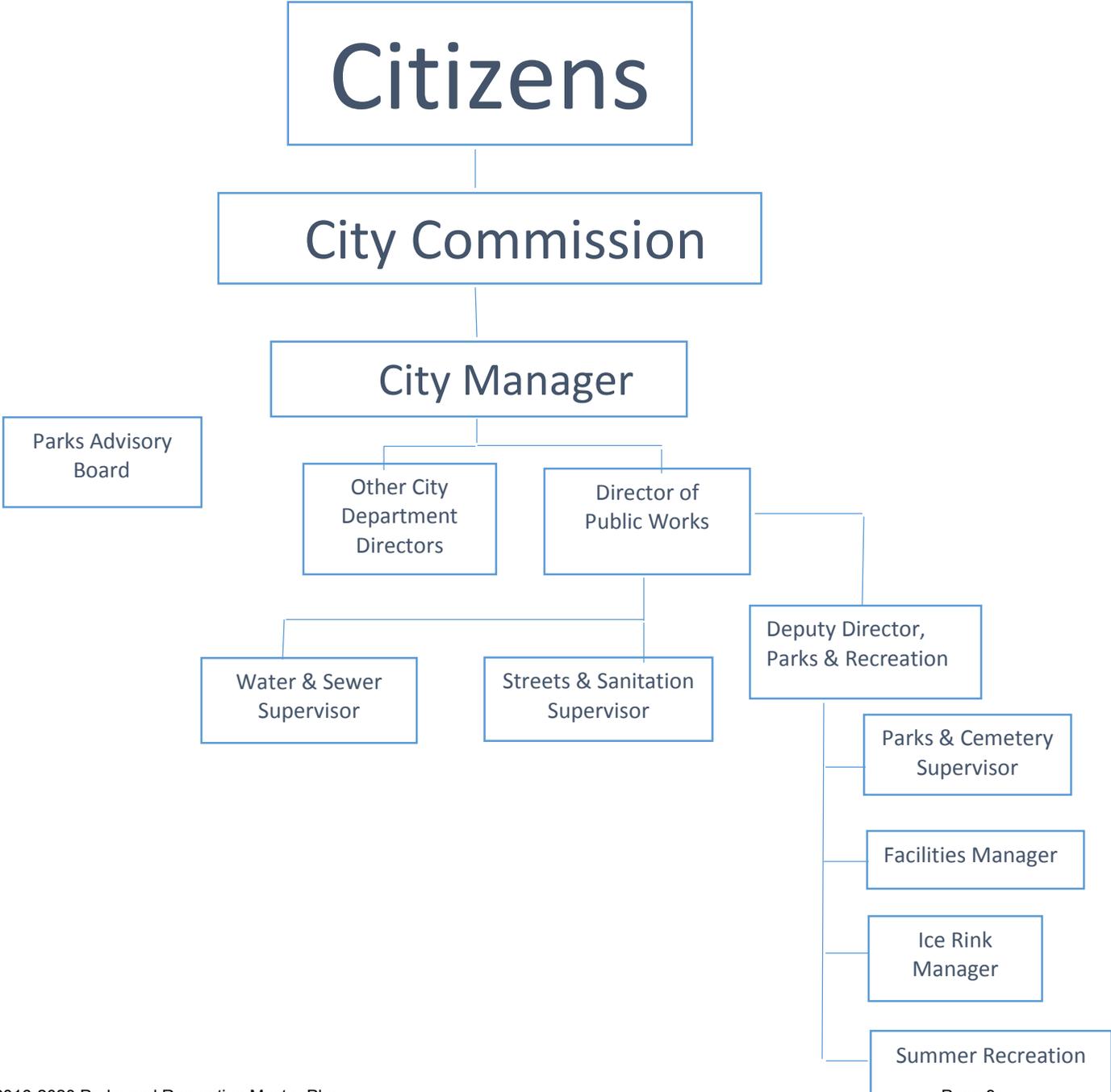


Administrative Structure

The City of St. Joseph is organized under a Commission-Manager form of government, and provides a full range of public services including general government activities, public safety, public works, and recreation to its residents.

The City Commission sets policy and directs the staff to implement and take action in support of those policies. The City Manager is the direct link between the Commission and the City's operations, and is responsible for day-to-day administration of the City. The City Manager supervises several department heads, which serve as senior staff and control the operations of their respective departments.

City of St. Joseph Organizational Chart



Parks Advisory Board

The Parks Advisory Board is made up of seven members of the community appointed by the City Commission. The Board advises and provides recommendations to the City regarding specific Park and Recreation - related issues.

Funding and Budget

General Park operation and maintenance funding is provided through the City's General Fund. Although some revenues are received from facility rental and parking fees, the great majority of parks and recreation funding is supplied through the City's general tax levy. Additional funding for capital improvements is provided periodically through the City's Capital/Special Projects Fund. In the 2015-2016 City Fiscal year, \$796,800 has been appropriated to operate the City's Parks System and Recreation programs.

Parks Department

101-751

Description	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Personnel	392,603.16	391,448.66	388,982.66
Supplies	34,461.36	46,926.91	51,423.10
Repair & Maintenance	9,143.78	14,215.78	7,753.71
Professional Services	12,852.70	3,722.10	75,431.62
Communications	1,312.71	1,169.74	1,207.52
Transportation/Education	1,033.57	9,243.26	385.00
Public Utilities	39,602.76	43,389.18	33,650.81
Routine Maintenance	48,561.06	38,270.43	49,196.05
Vehicle & Equipment Usage	78,040.61	51,595.23	95,324.64
Miscellaneous Expense	551.00	726.14	2,547.81
Bank Fees	0	40.00	1606.54
Recreation 101-756			
Salaries (Part-time)	20,520.44	22,416.78	8,505.00
FICA	1,792.31	1,862.15	805.56
Workers Compensation	464.19	604.78	203.75
Supplies	2,487.18	1,189.82	1,804.95
Professional Services	0	10,007.50	25,278.50
	\$643,426.83	\$636,828.46	\$744,107.22

In 2015-2016 the following Park Capital projects are tentatively planned (the budget is under development at the time this report was prepared): Tiny Tots Park Improvements, Kiwanis Park Improvements, Woodbine Lodge Roof Replacement, Riverview Park Septic System, Whirlpool Fountain Repairs. Total capital outlay is budgeted at \$405,000 for these improvements.

Volunteers

Service Clubs and community groups play an important role in providing volunteer labor and financial support for the park system. The Lions Club has "adopted" Lions Park Beach and provides an annual cleanup, and the Kiwanis Club has provided play equipment for several parks.

St. Joseph Public Schools and other Agencies

The City and St. Joseph Public Schools share facilities to make the best of the available recreational opportunities. For example, the High School baseball and softball fields are located in Dickinson Park and the high school cross-country teams utilize Riverview Park for their home meets, both of which are City facilities.

Maximum use of City and School District facilities is facilitated by such a cooperative approach. The City and the School District presently share the maintenance of Dickinson Park, where the School District maintains the park in the fall and spring, and the City maintains the park the rest of the year. There is similar cooperation with other agencies in the St. Joseph area, including St. Joseph Today, a non-profit group devoted to the promotion of the community through sponsoring various events to enhance the City, notably including sponsoring free concerts through the summer at the John E. N. Howard Bandshell.

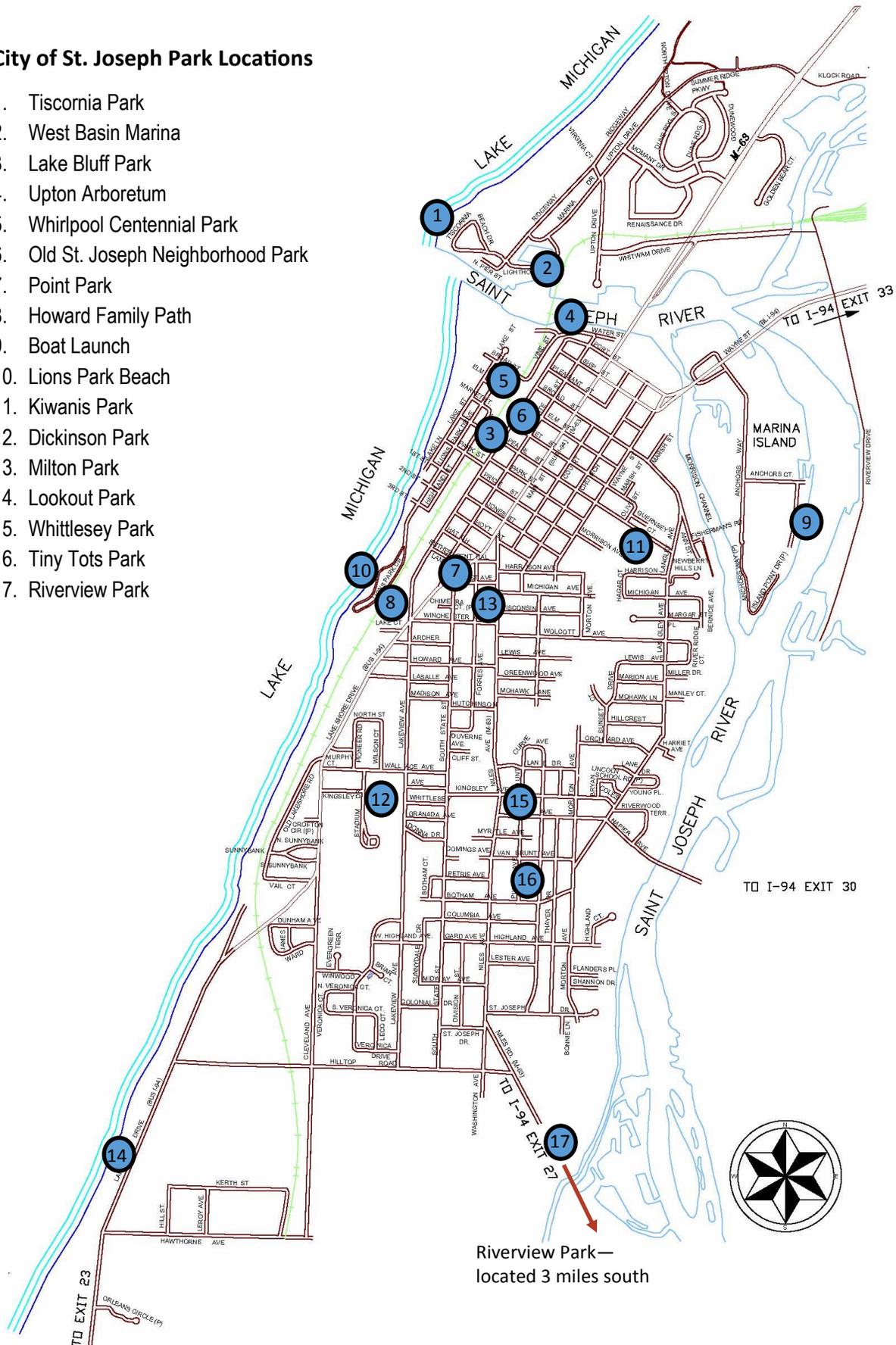
Recreation Inventory

The City of St. Joseph owns and/or operates seventeen park properties for its residents. Total park acreage exceeds 200 acres.

	Name	Facility Type	City Role	Acres	Service Area
1	Tiscornia Park Beach	Community Park	Own/operate	16	County
2	West Basin Marina	Special Use	Own/operate	7.96	Region
3	Lake Bluff Park	Natural Resource Area	Own/operate	7.34	Community
4	Upton Arboretum	Natural Resource Area	Own/operate	2.3	Community
5	Whirlpool Centennial Park	Community Park	Own/operate	5	Community
6	Old St. Joseph Neighborhood Park	Mini-park	Own/operate	0.17	Neighborhood
7	Point Park	Mini-park	Own/operate	0.3	Neighborhood
8	Howard Family Path (sole-use portion)	Park Trail	Own/operate	4.5	Community
9	Boat Launch	Special Use	Own/operate	3	County
10	Lions Park Beach	Community Park	Own/operate	17.22	County
11	Kiwanis Park	Community Park	Own/operate	19.2	Community
12	Dickinson Park	School-Park	Own/operate	8.39	Community
13	Milton Park	Neighborhood Park	Lease/operate	2.24	Neighborhood
14	Lookout Park	Natural Resource Area	Own/operate	14.5	Community
15	Whittlesey Park	Special Use	Own/operate	2.64	County
16	Tiny Tots Park	Mini-park	Operate	0.45	Neighborhood
17	Riverview Park	Large Urban Park	Own/operate	107	Community

City of St. Joseph Park Locations

1. Tiscornia Park
2. West Basin Marina
3. Lake Bluff Park
4. Upton Arboretum
5. Whirlpool Centennial Park
6. Old St. Joseph Neighborhood Park
7. Point Park
8. Howard Family Path
9. Boat Launch
10. Lions Park Beach
11. Kiwanis Park
12. Dickinson Park
13. Milton Park
14. Lookout Park
15. Whittlesey Park
16. Tiny Tots Park
17. Riverview Park



Park Descriptions

Tiscornia Park

This 16-acre park with beach front on Lake Michigan and access to the north pier and lighthouses has a designated swimming area, a pavilion overlooking the St Joseph River and a restroom facility. The large parking lot is a pay to park lot however City residents can obtain a sticker to park for free.

In 2013 the City of St Joseph received the inner and outer lighthouses from the Federal Government. In the summer of 2015 work began to restore both the inner and outer lighthouses to their original look of the 1930's. Beginning the summer of 2016 the City in conjunction with the local historical society plan to provide tours of the lighthouse for the public.



Margaret B. Upton Arboretum

The arboretum is a 2.3 acre linear park located along the south shoreline of the St. Joseph River. A concrete boardwalk and safety railing was built along the western portion of the site. The park contains numerous sculptures that are periodically replaced with new pieces by the Krasl Art Center. The park also contains a walking trail, drinking fountain, ornamental lighting, benches, swings and trees that have been botanically identified and labeled.

Whirlpool Centennial Park

Whirlpool Centennial Park was recently developed with an interactive fountain centered within the park. Prior to the development the area was a vacant parcel of approximately 3 acres. The area has always struggled with blowing sand from Silver Beach directly to the west. For many years the lot has been the location of the Venetian Festival and overflow lawn parking for Fourth of July and other summer events. Whirlpool donated the parcel to the city for the development of the fountain. Along with the fountain there is a small pump house and concrete boardwalk with bench seating that bisects the park. Dune grass plantings were added to the west of the fountain to block the sand and the area surrounding the fountain was planted with ornamental grasses and perennials. A lawn mound was developed to the east of the boardwalk. The park has become a very popular location during the summer. A parking lot to the south has recently been changed to a pay to park lot to provide accessibility and parking for the park.



Lions Park Beach

Lions Park Beach is a popular beach for city residents and visitors. This 17.22 acre park is located along the shoreline of Lake Michigan. The Parking is pay to park and the three park pavilions are always reserved during the summer months. The park also has a restroom/changing room's facility and playground area with picnic tables and grills. The St Joseph Lions Club has purchased equipment and items for the park and continues to help. This park is located north of the city water filtration facility.

John & Dede Howard Family Recreational Path

This multi-use path is located along approximately 5 acres of city owned land and provides accessible linkage for area residents above the 60 foot tall bluff and the beachfront via a wooden bridge and accessible switchback ramp system. The path continues to the north through a wooded area to the west of the railroad tracks and then connects to Silver Beach, Whirlpool Centennial Park and the Upton Arboretum. New improvements include lighting and benches.

Lake Bluff Park

This linear park of over 7 acres in size is located along the west side of Lake Boulevard at the top of the approximately 60 foot bluff that runs from Park Street north. The park also has a recently renovated restroom facility that is accessible via a ramp. The park has numerous memorials and provides outstanding views of Lake Michigan, the lighthouse, and the newly developed Whirlpool Fountain. The mature trees and passive seating areas adjacent to the walk add shade and gathering areas. Throughout the summer months the park is used for farmers markets, craft shows, festivals and many other events. The Howard band shell at the northern end of the park holds concerts and has been the location for many weddings.

St Joseph Neighborhood Park (Bear Park)

This small neighborhood park of .17 acres is used for passive recreation. It contains a sculpture of a bear (Josie) and her cubs. The Old St Joseph Neighborhood Association provides financial support for maintenance and upkeep of the park.

Point Park (Froggy Park)

This park is located at the intersection of State and Main Streets and gets its official name from the triangular pointed shape of nearly 1/3rd of an acre. Area residents refer to it as Froggy Park due to the fountain sculptures within the pool area. The park is strictly passive with ornamental lighting and two teak benches.

Lookout Park

Lookout Park is located at the south end of the city limit along a scenic overlook for Lake Michigan. The park is over 14.5 acres in size and runs for over one half mile in length along the west side of Lakeshore Drive. The park extends west to a bluff along Lake Michigan, with shore protection measures to prevent erosion. The park is strictly passive with a parking lot and observation platform. A City welcome sign is located near the parking lot entrance drive. The park is not continuous as the park consists of individual parcels that the city has acquired one by one over the past 40 years. Individual residential lots currently interrupt the continuity of the park. The City would like to develop this park in the future as the southern city limit terminus for a waterfront path system.

Dickinson Park

Dickinson Park is over 8 acres of land adjacent to St. Joseph High School that is the location of two ball diamonds that are utilized for home fields by the school baseball and softball teams located immediately to the south. The northern and eastern portion of the park has mature deciduous trees. The park is also utilized by area residents as an informal dog walk area and doggy waste stations have been added. Area residents also enjoy chipping golf balls and other recreational activities within the space.

Milton Park

Milton Park is located on the site of the old St. Joseph High School. The park is 2.24 acres and has many mature trees, and numerous paths with passive seating areas. The park is used primarily by neighborhood residents as it does not contain parking other than on street. There is also a tot age play structure and a wooden amphitheater for community use. Recently ornamental fencing was added on the two sides of the park adjacent to busy streets.





Tiny Tots Park

This small corner park is less than 1/2 acre in size and is owned by the Kiwanis Club of St Joseph but maintained and operated as a city park by the City of St Joseph. The park was designed as a neighborhood park for younger children. There is existing playground equipment with safety surfacing and a picnic table. The park is contained by white vinyl fencing on the street sides and older chain-link on the residential neighborhood sides.

Whittlesey Park

This 2.64 acre park is the location of the John and Dede Howard Ice Arena with an NHL-size refrigerated open-air rink under a roof. The building has a warming hut, locker rooms, concession and restroom facilities. The arena is used for open recreational skating as well as by area hockey leagues. The park also has a large parking lot with lighting. To the north of the ice arena is an open lawn area that is utilized as an informal dog run area and for open sports and rec program activities. New ornamental 4' high fencing was installed around the perimeter of the park and a landscape planter with ornamental trees and perennials was added within the asphalt parking lot area. The north and west sides of the building was also landscaped to soften the appearance of the structure for the neighborhood residents. The park is the home of the City Summer Recreation Program that runs during the months of June and July. The program is free and open to the children of city residents.



Kiwanis Park

This park has the largest acreage (19.2) within the city limits. The Kiwanis Club through various fundraisers and volunteer work projects make improvements to the park. This park has a lighted ball field used by area leagues, a park shelter, restrooms, a dog park and playground equipment and a large parking lot. The park is also the location of the John and Dede Howard Skate Park. This facility contains above ground ramps, grind rails etc. The park is located in a low lying area and over

the years has had problems with drainage. Recently drainage tiles were added as under drainage for the ball field outfield. Planned improvements for 2010-11 included reconstructing the asphalt road and parking lot and additional drainage improvements.

Boat Launch

The Boat Launch provides public access for boaters with trailers. This 3 acre facility has a large parking lot to accommodate vehicles and trailers. The parking facility is a pay to park facility with a self-pay machine. There is a park shelter and a port-a-john and metal storage facility. Recently completed new restrooms and fish cleaning station in 2012-2013 through a grant from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust.



Riverview Park

This is the largest park (107 acres) owned by the City of St Joseph. It is located within St. Joseph Charter Township, adjacent to the St Joseph River. The park is more natural in appearance and character and contains a lodge and two shelters. These facilities are at a premium during the summer months and a rental fee is charged for their use. The park also has many picnic tables and grills scattered throughout. There are two ball fields. The lighted baseball field has a concession stand, bleacher seating, a drinking fountain and landscaping. There are numerous parking areas throughout the park and adjacent to the loop drive system. There is also a boat launch with parking for boat trailers. Low water levels and silting in the location of this launch has limited the usage.

West Basin Marina

This City owned marina is located at 273 Marina Drive (Latitude/Longitude 42°07'N86°30'W), and has 94 total slips, 84 seasonal and 10 transient, ranging from 30' to 50' in length. West Basin Marina has a convenient location just inside the pier heads (no bridges), one block from the public beach at Tiscornia Park and next to the St. Joseph River Yacht Club.

School Properties

Lincoln Public School

This school property provides a large playground area and green space that is open for the public to use after school hours.

Stubblefield Tennis Courts

This tennis complex located at the High School provides eight courts with lighting for the community to use. The City maintains the restroom facility in the summer time for community use.

Berrien County Parks

Berrien County provides five county parks to its residents. (Descriptions provided by Berrien County Parks)

Rocky Gap

Overlooking Lake Michigan from a bluff in Benton Township, Rocky Gap County Park provides a quiet place to enjoy the Lake Michigan shoreline. There's a beach with 1,100 feet of lake-frontage, an overlook platform, and spectacular views of the lake. It is an ideal location to take a relaxed lunch break, enjoy a sunset, or cool off with a quick swim.

Silver Beach

Located in St. Joseph at the mouth of the St. Joseph River, Silver Beach County Park features a clean, wide beach on Lake Michigan and public access to the South Pier.

Love Creek

Love Creek winds its way through this rolling 150-acre natural area outside of Berrien Springs, Michigan. Six miles of hiking trails provide access to a variety of habitats, including a mature Beech-Maple forest with spectacular spring wildflowers.

Galien River County Park Preserve

This undeveloped property includes a mix of upland and wetland habitats along the Galien River. The wetland area is particularly significant in that it is a part of the larger "New Buffalo Marsh," a Great Lakes marsh that formed along the Galien River just upstream from the river's mouth at Lake Michigan.

Madeline Bertrand

Located just south of Niles, Madeline Bertrand County Park offers a public area of natural beauty along the St. Joseph River. Trails lead through pine and oak forests offering opportunities for hiking and bicycling. Trails are groomed and lighted for cross-country skiing in winter and ski rentals are available. One of the park's most unique and popular features is a challenging 18-hole Disc Golf course. Covered shelters, an indoor lodge, scenic picnic areas, and children's playground structures make Bertrand a favorite location for family and group outings.

Private Recreational Facilities

The City of St. Joseph and its surrounding area provide numerous private opportunities for recreational pursuits and activities. A listing of these service providers can be found by contacting St. Joseph Today and/or the Southwestern Michigan Tourist Council.

Accessibility Assessment

A critical component in planning for park facilities is providing barrier-free access in order to accommodate the needs of all people, including those with disabilities. The ranking system suggested by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment Guidelines (2006) was used to evaluate the parks. The ranking system ranges from 1 to 5 and is described as follows:

- 1. None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
- 2. Some of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
- 3. Most of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
- 4. The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
- 5. The entire park was developed/renovated using the principles of universal design

Each of the parks was evaluated using the ranking system. The specific elements considered include parking, paths to travel from parking to activity areas, activity areas, support facilities such as restrooms and surfacing.

Current and future park projects are designed to comply with or exceed accessibility guidelines and standards of the American with Disability Act (ADA). Current deficiencies regarding accessibility are mainly the result of older equipment or facilities which predate ADA standards. It is the intent of the City of St. Joseph to update these facilities with park upgrade and renovation projects as funding allows.

Current Park Assessment with Feature Detail

Facility	Ranking	Features Meeting ADA Guidelines	Features Not Meeting ADA Guidelines	Facility	Ranking	Features Meeting ADA Guidelines	Features Not Meeting ADA Guidelines
Tiscornia Park	2	Parking, picnic shelter, restrooms, pier access.		Milton Park	2	Paths	
West Basin Marina	2	Parking, boardwalk. Office Restrooms	Restrooms, piers.	Dickinson Park	1		Dugouts, bleachers, press box.
Lake Bluff Park	3	Parking, restrooms, observation platform.	Picnic tables, stairs to bottom of bluff.	Whittlesey Park/Howard Ice Arena	4	Parking, warming shelter, ice surface, restrooms.	
Upton Arboretum	2	Observation deck, upper path.	Parking, lower paths, gazebo.	Lookout Park	3	Parking, viewing platform.	
Kiwanis Park	2	Restrooms.	Parking (accessible route), playground equipment (accessible route), dog park (accessible route), skate park (accessible route).	Tiny Tots Park	1		Playground equipment (accessible route).
Point Park	1		Bench and Fountain access	Riverview Park	2	Woodbine Lodge and Briarwood access, baseball field restrooms.	Parking, path, Woodbine Lodge restrooms, Briarwood restrooms, picnic grove access, playground equipment (accessible route), pier.
Boat Launch	3	Parking, Restrooms & Fish Cleaning station	Piers.	Old St. Joseph Neighborhood Park	2	Parking.	
Lions Park Beach	2	Parking, restrooms, shelters.	Playground equipment (accessible route).	John and Dede Howard Family Recreation Path	3	Parking, path, bridge at southerly end of path.	

MDNRE Grant Inventory

The City of St. Joseph has received seven grants from the State of Michigan for Park projects.

1972 Grant Number 26-00287

Dickinson Park Development \$57,809

Two baseball diamonds and seven tennis courts were developed under this grant.

The two baseball diamonds remain and are in good condition; one is regularly used as the St. Joseph High School baseball home field, and the other as the St. Joseph High School softball home field, in addition to community uses.

The tennis courts were developed on a separate parcel leased from the St. Joseph Public Schools on a long-term lease. The original 20-year lease expired in 1991 and was extended for an additional 10 years, lapsing in 2001; the St. Joseph Public Schools now control the property. The tennis courts underwent a major reconstruction in 2004 and were rebuilt as eight courts, with lighting. The tennis courts serve as the home to the St. Joseph High School tennis teams, and also are available to the public when not reserved for school use.

1976 Grant Number 26-00713

Tiscornia Park \$28,710

This grant added a restroom facility/storage building, including installing associated utilities.

These facilities are in fair condition and remain in regular use. Over recent years, the City staff has come to the conclusion that these restrooms are not in an optimum location, and hopes to construct a new restroom facility near the entrance to the north pier, in the hope that a more convenient location will encourage persons fishing on the pier to make use of the restroom facility instead of the more informal opportunity offered by the waterfront location.

1977 Grant Number 26-01023 C2

Tiscornia Park \$46,940

This grant improved the park access road and parking lot. These facilities are in good condition and remain in regular use.

1978 Grant Number 26-01060 L1

Dickinson Park Restrooms \$12,586

Restrooms and a sidewalk were developed under this grant.

The restrooms and sidewalk remain, and are in good condition. However, both were located on a parcel leased from the St. Joseph Public Schools on a long-term lease, as described in the previous grant. The St. Joseph Public Schools now controls the restrooms and sidewalk, although both remain available to the public as part of the school tennis facility.

1992 Grant Number BF92-002
Lions Park Development I \$138,750

The park roadway system and parking areas were improved, a playground area and restroom facilities were added.

All facilities are in good condition and in regular use.

1997 TF97-111
Lookout Park Expansion \$145,000

This acquisition grant purchased one parcel of property, tax code 11-76-0034-0099-00-0, with approximately 149.8' of frontage on Business Loop – 94 and on Lake Michigan, and which separated two City-owned park parcels. Acquiring this property permitted the combination of these parcels into one large park nearly ½ mile in length. This parcel remains part of Lookout Park. It is currently an undeveloped, passive portion of the park, lying between the northerly parking lot and the southerly parking lot and lookout structure.

1999 Grant Number CM99-091
American Legion Baseball Field Upgrade \$78,750

The primary baseball field at Riverview Park received a lighting upgrade, and was modified to make the facilities ADA-accessible.

These facilities remain in fair condition and in regular use.

2011 TF-11-095
Lions Park Beach Improvements \$247,100

New restroom facility, picnic pavilion and additional sidewalks were added under this grant.

These facilities remain in good condition and in regular use.

Planning and Public Input

Parks and Recreation planning plays an important role in maintaining the quality of life in a community. The purpose of the plan is to serve as a guidance document for directing the City in the future planning, development and operations of its park system.

Parks Plan Committee

The 2016-2020 City of St. Joseph Parks and Recreation Plan was developed by City Staff with input from the Public, City Commission and Parks Advisory Board.

Parks and Recreation Survey

A public survey was sent to all residents of the City of St. Joseph in 2015 as part of the City's Master Plan process. Residents were asked to complete the survey about the City of St. Joseph. The City received 1,044 responses. Also the city encouraged residents to attend the February 11 Parks Advisory Board Meeting so that staff could gather additional input for the Master Plan.

17 residents attended this meeting.

Survey Results

How important are each of the following to your decision to live in the St Joseph Community?

1. Amenities such as libraries and parks

	Results
Average	4.29
Total Respondents	960
% Not At All Important (1)	1.0
% Somewhat Not Important (2)	2.2
% Neutral (3)	12.2
% Somewhat Important (4)	36.1
% Very Important (5)	48.4

2. Recreational Opportunities (Beaches, Parks)

	Results
Average	4.41
Total Respondents	955
% Not At All Important (1)	1.2
% Somewhat Not Important (2)	1.4
% Neutral (3)	10.4
% Somewhat Important (4)	29.1
% Very Important (5)	58.0

How important are the following improvements over the next 10 years?

3. Improve existing municipal parks

	Results
Average	3.52
Total Respondents	987
% Not at all Important (1)	4.0
% Little Importance (2)	7.8
% Moderately Important (3)	38.7
% Important (4)	31.8
% Very Important (5)	17.7

4. Create new recreation facilities

	Results
Average	2.98
Total Respondents	978
% Not at all Important (1)	13.3
% Little Importance (2)	18.5
% Moderately Important (3)	37.0
% Important (4)	19.5
% Very Important (5)	11.7

How would you rate the importance of the following community services, facilities and activities?

5. Outdoor Recreation activities and or sports leagues

	Results
Average	3.69
Total Respondents	993
% Not at all Important (1)	3.7
% Little Importance (2)	7.5
% Moderately Important (3)	30.0
% Important (4)	33.4
% Very Important (5)	25.4

6. Local Parks

	Results
Average	4.17
Total Respondents	1002
% Not at all Important (1)	1.1
% Little Importance (2)	2.0
% Moderately Important (3)	16.8
% Important (4)	38.7
% Very Important (5)	41.4

7. Sports and Recreation Facilities

	Results
Average	3.49
Total Respondents	994
% Not at all Important (1)	4.0
% Little Importance (2)	10.2
% Moderately Important (3)	35.0
% Important (4)	33.9
% Very Important (5)	16.9

8. Need more leisure/recreation for youth/teens

	Results
Average	3.77
Total Respondents	974
% Not at all Important (1)	3.0
% Little Importance (2)	6.4
% Moderately Important (3)	27.8
% Important (4)	35.9
% Very Important (5)	26.9

9. Expand recreation trail system in natural areas along rivers, Lake Michigan and ravines.

	Results
Average	4.01
Total Respondents	983
% Not at all Important (1)	3.7
% Little Importance (2)	5.1
% Moderately Important (3)	18.1
% Important (4)	32.8

% Very Important (5)	40.4
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What would your priority be in funding various community services?

10. Maintain Public Beaches

	Results
Average	3.45
Total Respondents	979
% This service should be reduced or eliminated to lower taxes or fees (1)	.6
% This service could be scaled back to free up resources for more important things (2)	1.1
% This service seems about right "as is" (3)	61.3
% This service could be increased if resources can be made available from less important services (4)	26.1
% This service should be expanded even if it is necessary to raise taxes or fees to do so (5)	10.8

11. Maintain Public Parks (Other than beaches)

	Results
Average	3.41
Total Respondents	979
% This service should be reduced or eliminated to lower taxes or fees (1)	.3
% This service could be scaled back to free up resources for more important things (2)	1.6
% This service seems about right "as is" (3)	63.9
% This service could be increased if resources can be made available from less important services (4)	24.9
% This service should be expanded even if it is necessary to raise taxes or fees to do so (5)	9.2

12. Acquire New Public Parks

	Results
Average	3.37
Total Respondents	974
% This service should be reduced or eliminated to lower taxes or fees (1)	.5
% This service could be scaled back to free up resources for more important things (2)	2.9
% This service seems about right "as is" (3)	64.0
% This service could be increased if resources can be made available from less important services (4)	24.3
% This service should be expanded even if it is necessary to raise taxes or fees to do so (5)	8.3

13. Acquire New Public Parks

	Results
Average	2.84
Total Respondents	965
% This service should be reduced or eliminated to lower taxes or fees (1)	12.4
% This service could be scaled back to free up resources for more important things (2)	18.7
% This service seems about right "as is" (3)	46.9
% This service could be increased if resources can be made available from less important services (4)	16.5
% This service should be expanded even if it is necessary to raise taxes or fees to do so (5)	5.5

14. Summer Recreation Program

	Results
Average	3.18
Total Respondents	937
% This service should be reduced or eliminated to lower taxes or fees (1)	2.8
% This service could be scaled back to free up resources for more important things (2)	5.7
% This service seems about right "as is" (3)	67.9
% This service could be increased if resources can be made available from less important services (4)	18.6
% This service should be expanded even if it is necessary to raise taxes or fees to do so (5)	5.1

If you could have one amenity added to the park you most often visit

Restrooms at Howard Bandshell
Another bench at the Howard Family Path pedestrian bridge
Picnic tables at Lake Bluff Park Too many dogs everywhere
Jogging paths and exercise stations at Howard Family Path
Goose dropping removal at the Boat Launch
Private entrance to Dog Park at Kiwanis Park
Dog drinking fountain at Riverview Park Parking at Silver Beach
Raked beaches at Lions Park Beach
Dune path replacement at Tiscornia
Restroom at Milton
Bathroom at Milton
Kiosk, better fencing and pavilion at Look Out Park
Pedestrian crossing improvement at Milton Park
Benches and swings at Tiscornia
Dog area at Lions Park Beach
Drinking fountain at Whittlesey None at Lake Bluff Park
Places to sit at Milton and Lake Bluff Park
Bathrooms open all year at Lake Bluff Park
None
Buy back Jefferson School and use as a neighborhood park
Update playground at Tiny Tots
Bike rack at Milton and Lions Park Beach
Tennis Courts at Kiwanis
Swings on the dune at Tiscornia
Real sand at Lions Park Beach
Shade pavilion at Tiscornia
Bathrooms and more seating at Whirlpool Compass Fountain
Improved launch at Morrison Channel Personal watercraft rental at Tiscornia
Restrooms near Bandshell
Shade at Whirlpool Compass Fountain Bike trail at Look Out Park
Containers for garbage
More covered tables at Lions Park Beach
Charge non-residents to park at Lions Park Beach
Happy as they are
Clean off duck poop from docks at Boat Launch
More trash bins at Margaret B Upton Arboretum
Playground for 8-11 year olds at Milton Park
No more additions at Lake Bluff Park
Bathrooms, tables and seating at Whirlpool Compass Fountain
More seating and shade at Whirlpool Compass Fountain
Swings on the dune at Tiscornia
Charge high fees for non-City residents to use parks
Doors on restrooms at Kiwanis
Walkways at Tiscornia
Indoor driving range at Dickinson Park,
Tennis Courts at Kiwanis
More art on the beach and waterfront
More benches at dog park at Kiwanis
More handicap parking at Bandshell
Allow pets at Lions Park Beach

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS...

Connecting path at Look Out Park
Basketball court at Whirlpool Compass Fountain
Better lighting at Riverview
Need beach restored at Lions Park Beach
Restrooms at Howard Bandshell
Cross Country Ski Rental at Lions Park Beach
Recycling Center at Lake Bluff Park
Close off Lake Blvd and Port Street by Bandshell
Restrooms at Margaret B Upton Arboretum
Covered picnic area at Lions Park Beach Benches at Whirlpool Compass Fountain
Restrict dogs and water all turf at Dickinson Park
A walkway from beach to pier at Tiscornia
Bench at Dickinson
Restroom improvements at Tiscornia More swings at Lake Bluff Park
Steps to get to the water at Lions Park Beach Waste can at Jefferson School Park
Foot shower at Jean Klock Park Landscaping at Point Park
Drinking fountain at Howard Family Path
Doing good job with benches, doggie bags, trash
More benches at Whirlpool Compass Fountain Reserved Parking for Residents
Bike Racks at all Parks
Disc Golf at Riverview Park
Get bikes off sidewalks and Howard Bridge
Overall extremely pleased with St. Joseph parks.
Great Job
Make busy roads priority for bike and walking lanes
Add more bike racks downtown.
Connect parks with paths
We really like the dog friendly drinking fountains
Lake Bluff Park lighting
Kiwanis water ponding problems
Whirlpool Compass Fountain needs security patrol
Remove dead trees at Tiscornia
Add disk golf at Riverview
More playground toys at Milton
Sand at Lions Park Beach
Tree care at Riverview
Everything looks so nice everywhere
Need place to take dogs to the beach
Boat Launch goose droppings
Kiwanis- security and speeders are a problem
Clearing along river at Riverview
Beach at Lions Park Beach
More tables needed at Riverview
Bear Park never gets used- too much overgrowth
Whirlpool Compass Fountain needs more tables and benches
Lions Beach needs to be raked and litter picked up
Picnic tables at Whirlpool Compass Fountain needed
Playground equipment for 5 and older age group needed at Milton
Sand at Milton Park
A park north of the river is needed
Parks are adequate
Open air rink needed at Howard Ice arena

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS...

Playground repair at Tiny Tots
Tennis courts at Kiwanis
Updated restrooms and walkway to beach at Tiscornia
Sand at Lions Park Beach
Trash at Lighthouse at Tiscornia
Kiwanis Playground equipment
Lions Park Beach sand and Boat Launch bird droppings cleanup
We are happy with parks we use
Fence at Milton obstructs traffic view
Need more tables along Lake Bluff Park
Drainage at Kiwanis and maybe a path for walking
Plant trees along Lake Bluff Park, Tiscornia
Beach needs better grooming at Lions Park Beach
Lions Park Beach needs stick and stones removed
Dog Park needs better grass maintenance
Plant more trees in Lake Bluff Park for shade
Add a community pool at Kiwanis
General upkeep at Kiwanis
Walkways at Tiscornia Beach
Kiwanis Park aesthetics-needs to look better
Kiwanis softball field
Lions Park Beach entrance and exit
Allow free parking at Whirlpool Compass Fountain
Clean beach and restrooms at Lions Park Beach
Need more benches at Whirlpool Compass Fountain
Water feature at Milton Park is needed
Clean up-fix up Kiwanis Park
Beach at Lions Park Beach
Kiwanis is shabby
Lions needs more security and Kiwanis needs overall maintenance
I think they are in pretty good shape- Thank you
Lions Park Beach needs way to get to water
Stairway and ramp repairs and revisions
Kiwanis Park roads and more paths to amenities
Dog Park needs better drainage
More police presence during festivals at Tiscornia
Great City, great parks, great City workers. Thank you so very much
Address the drainage problem at the dog park
This wonderful town needs a downtown parking facility
I just moved to St. Joe and it has been the best experience ever.
Impressed with everything
Good work is being done by the City in maintaining and operating the parks
Continue to enhance our parks with plantings and flowers
Please charge at Lions Beach so we can find a place to park and have a picnic
Should be more emphasis on recycling in the parks
More continuity with the biking and walking trails
Enjoy the parks and thank you for making the City beautiful and enjoyable
Do not like the minced rubber at the parks prefer the sand
St. Joseph is a wonderful place to grow up and grow old
Best thing for bicyclist is to fix streets
City should consider building a parking garage

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS...

Thank you for the opportunity to share any views

You all do a good job-Thanks

Use seniors to work in the parks

Extend the walking paths

Do better job of picking up brush and providing transportation for seniors

Underground parking garage could solve congestion downtown

Use more community service to maintain parks

A new parking garage is needed

Lower taxes

New ideas useless without addressing parking

Difficult to drop off handicap people at Bandshell.

St Joseph is beautiful

Need more City-wide bike lanes

Proud to be a member of the community.

Love how the town is managed

Please make improvements to Kiwanis Park

Provide a moving people carrier between the bluff and Silver Beach

Need more signs for out of town people to find things

Parks are kept so nice and clean

We need a public swimming pool

Grass too tall in the medians.

Love the Fountain Grateful for our parks.

Really advance the quality of life in St. Joe.

Need more public toilets

Daughter and family visit the parks several times a summer

City has made great improvements.

Concentrate on taking care of what we have

This is a beautiful and well planned City.

Thank you for doing things right

Please allow City residents to buy on street parking pass for summer

Parking continues to be biggest problem

I have family that visits several times a year I don't want my City taxes to increase

We love walking and biking.

Our parks add so much to our City

Thank you for such a beautiful town and community- you do a great job

Move transient docks from West Basin Marina to south side of the river

Add stop sign to corner of Lake Blvd and Ship Street.

Start an adopt-a-park program

Parking downtown was a real challenge this summer

We love to walk, need a safe path along Lakeshore drive

City has good mix of fee and non-fee facilities

Really appreciate the dog bags and trash bins, need to cite owners of overgrown bushes and trees to.

Parks are adequate, need more police patrols

Lower taxes and clear sidewalks of brush, trees and grass

Proper pruning of trees would improve view at Lake Bluff and Look Out.

Need park north of the river

Make existing roadways more bike friendly

I think it is wrong to charge visitors from other areas

We love living here.

Let's keep small town charm

Add junior skating lessons at Ice Arena

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS...

Need irrigation wherever landscaping is put in.
Need more parking downtown
How about bike paths along the busy roads
Continue to provide services that attract tourists
Some more little picnic tables on the bluff and more swings
Parking is becoming even more of an issue
Public needs a wellness park with exercise equipment
Dog walkers should not have extended leashes- keep them in their own yards
We need more parking in St. Joseph
Keep on keeping on.
Change is always good
Covered seating area by the compass fountain
City does an excellent job with our parks
I am proud of our City.
It is really nice as it is right now
Lions Park is way below standards,
Could not see river at Riverview, summer help is very lazy
Disk golf, disk golf, disk golf
Wells Field is a tremendous asset to the development of our youth, City should support more
Right now the City does a very good job with our parks
Thanks for the survey to find the top ideas to make a more perfect City
Thanks for all you do! SJ is a beautiful place to live and have visitors
Please add steps from the upper road at Lions to the Howard path
Great crowds downtown.
Need to make crossing Main Street safer
City staff should be thanked for the job they do
Additional plantings should be added if irrigation can be included
The parks we have our great and have come a long way in recent years
Please forward a suggestion to Silver Beach to install a mat like the one at Tiscornia
Ice Arena should be free admittance for City residents
Continue to work on developing biking and walking trails around the City
Our City does a great job
Need more parking
Add bike lanes to Benton Harbor and Fairplain across bridges, add walking access to Kiwanis
You are doing a terrific job, thank you for all the hard work
I really appreciate the parks considering we are a smaller town
Why are some of the parks fenced off?
City looks very good right now
We moved here to enjoy the lake
I appreciate the City asking the citizens for their input
We need to stop building condos
Keep up the good work
Fencing looks great along the parks, Kiwanis looks neglected, below the bluff is great
Thanks
We are very pleased with the overall park maintenance the City provides in our parks
Chain link at Tiny Tots needs repaired

Public Review and Final Adoption

A draft plan was prepared by Staff and reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Plan Committee. This plan was then presented to the Parks Advisory Board for comment. This draft plan was then made available for public review for one month beginning on January 23, 2016. Copies were placed at City Hall and the St. Joseph Public Library. The plan's availability for public review was posted in the local newspaper and the City's Webpage. Following the month long public review the St. Joseph City Commission held a public hearing on the Plan at its February 22 meeting. Following the public hearing the plan was adopted by the City Commission.

Goals and Objectives

The City of St. Joseph Parks and Recreation Plan identifies goals and objectives for the next five years. These goals are based upon input from the Citizens, elected officials, appointed officials and City staff. These goals are long range in nature and intended to be broad in scope and flexible enough to handle future change in recreational needs and funding resource availability.

PARK MAINTENANCE

- Park maintenance and upgrades should continue to be a priority for the City. "Maintain what we have".
Continue to focus on similar design elements and fixtures in the park system.
Improve the aesthetics and look of the park system by increasing plantings and their maintenance and removing unnecessary signage.
- Continue to eliminate non-barrier-free conditions in the park system when improvements occur.

PARK FUNDING

- Parks are an important/essential component of the City. Funding should reflect this priority when possible.
- Continue to seek outside funding sources whenever possible for park improvements and renovations.
- Continue to investigate and implement user fees for non-residents when practical.

PARK DEVELOPMENT

New park development should not take place at the expense of the existing system.
New development should focus on linear parks and trail ways to encourage walking, biking and connectivity of the community.

RECREATION PROGRAMMING

- Investigate whether to provide additional active recreational programming for its residents.

Action Plan

The action plan provides a proposed manner in which the goals and objectives can be met over the next five years of the Parks and Recreation Master plan. All of the action items are a result of the four goals.

Tiscornia Park

Identify necessary signage and remove all other.

Change the lighting to match the city standard.

Revise the current ticket machine configuration to make it accessible for wheelchair users.

Add another picnic pavilion.

Design and build new interpretive center with history of St Joseph Lighthouse - adjoined to restrooms.

Add more ADA parking near new interpretive center and accessible route to pier.

Security Camera on pier and lighthouse.

Plant native trees to replace those that have been removed.

Upton Arboretum

Provide boat cleats for temporary transient boat tie down.

Improve the eastern seawall to match the western with additional concrete boardwalk and railing.

Provide accessible routes to the boardwalk and eastern portion of the park.

Continue bicycle/pedestrian trail to the east.

Continue Art Display.

Whirlpool Centennial Park

Install additional benches/seating (possibly artistic/unusual style).

Add a restroom/changing room near the pump house.

Provide a shade structure possibly to the south side of the park that would not block views.

Install more benches on the west side possibly adding extra hard surface.

Consider options to expand parking.

Remove vegetation around fountain.

Improve Dune Grass plantings to the west of Fountain.

Lions Park Beach

Add parking to upper road.

Add steps from upper road to Howard Family Path.

Improve access from the bridge to the upper road.

Add steps from upper road to lower road.

John & Dede Howard Family Recreational Path

Add drinking fountains along the path.

Clean up sand and relocate to beach rather than adjacent to trail.

Remove grape vine and other noxious growth from woodland.

Thin trees to allow the desirable to mature.

Seal trail surface.

Bluff Park

Keep south end natural with mature trees and scrub growth rather than open up the views as most views below are backyards of residents on Vine Street.

Design an ADA accessible switch back trail to below the bluff and Whirlpool fountain area.

Discourage further development of park with monuments.

St Joseph Neighborhood Park (Bear Park)

Continue current maintenance plan.

Pointe Park (Froggy Park)

Add landscaping and flower plantings.

Repair/ Replace existing sidewalk around base of fountain.

Improve connectivity to other parks.

Lookout Park

Annually thin/remove overgrowth to open up views of lakeshore while retaining slope coverage to prevent erosion.

Consider site for future picnic pavilion and restroom. Build informational kiosk for City visitors.

Standardize amenities to meet City standards (benches, trash receptacles, lighting etc.).

Add artwork/sculptures.

Consider adding accessible drinking fountain.

Improve landscaping.

Dickinson Park

Add restroom/concession/storage building with a scoring tower for the softball field.

Install play structure.

Improve/pave parking area.

Add fencing to enclose both fields.

Construct bicycle pedestrian pathway connecting with Milton Park.

Milton Park

Redo the drinking fountain pads to meet ADA.

Eliminate existing wood amphitheater.

Restore the area to a sloped lawn surface that the small children could sled on.

Construct bicycle pedestrian pathway connecting with Dickinson Park.

Tiny Tots Park

Replace vinyl and chain link with city standard ornamental fencing.

Improve accessibility.

Whittlesey Park

Install accessible play structure.

Kiwanis Park

- Complete additional drainage improvements and rain garden in existing low area near the park entrance.
- Replace old boulders and wooden bollards with split-rail fencing to keep vehicles off lawn areas.
- Install new entrance signage.
- Remove dead trees.
- Renovate restroom to meet all current guidelines and improve appearance.
- Provide accessible routes to existing amenities.
- Open views into park along Pearl Street.
- Construct Dog Park shade structure and additional improvements.
- Add walking path into park.
- Develop wildflower/nature area with mowed trails.
- Consider sled hill and possible location options.
- Construct Pickleball courts

Boat Launch

- Remove scrub growth and clean-up shoreline and add riprap stepped areas for fishing access.

Riverview Park

- Improve boat launch facility and add accessible kayak launch.
- Renovate existing park shelters.
- Renovate existing bleachers.
- Rip-Rap improvements along the river.
- Add Disc Golf course.
- Improve ADA access to all park facilities.

Other City Open-Space

- Develop various canoe/kayak launching facilities at existing City owned properties along the River.
- Develop a river trail from Riverview Park to the Margaret B. Upton Arboretum.

Other City Non-Park Areas

- Continue to design and implement bike/walking trails along City Right-of-Ways and Easements.

Top five (5) priorities for the next five years (2016-2020)

Accessible Kayak launches
Enhance Whirlpool Compass Fountain area with restroom & shade structure
Restroom/Interpretive facility construction at Tiscornia Beach
Improve and enhance the Howard Family Path, extend as possible
Whittlesey Park Improvements