



# City of Midland Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2015-2019





# City of Midland

## Parks & Recreation Master Plan 2015-2019

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# I. Introduction

## *About the City of Midland Parks & Recreation Master Plan*

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The City of Midland has developed this Parks & Recreation Master Plan to serve as a guideline to improve recreation facilities and develop new recreational opportunities. This document forms the basis to guide policy for implementation of improvements and new initiatives that will meet the recreational goals and interests of the Midland community.

This plan replaces the previous “City of Midland Parks & Recreation Master Plan 2010-2015.” This plan is a revision of the previous plan that was completed with the assistance of Spicer Group, Inc., and includes both original information and new information as appropriate. This plan was guided by the City of Midland Parks and Recreation Commission, with input from the Parks supervisory staff team and the assistance of consultant PM Blough, Inc. of Grand Haven, Michigan.

Before any recreation plan is adopted and enacted, it is first important to understand the needs of the residents, what recreational opportunities already exist, and what sort of projects are relevant for residents based on age, ability, population, density and the availability of recreational opportunities in neighboring communities. This plan has carefully considered input and suggestions via active communication from area residents, city officials and other community stakeholders. This input is a critical component to this plan, and, together, the voices of Midland have united to develop a recreation plan to enhance the quality of life for everyone.

The foundation for the development of the Midland Parks & Recreation Master Plan was based on the following goals:

- Involve the community in the process to develop a five-year Parks & Recreation Master Plan,
- Identify and map existing Midland recreational facilities,
- Build common ground among Midland stakeholders in addressing the future recreational needs and priorities of the City,
- Enable Midland to be eligible for financial assistance based upon the Parks & Recreation Master Plan,
- Facilitate interagency collaboration in establishing recreation goals, objectives and actions, and



- Continue to support and implement improvements for barrier-free, Universal Access to City parks.

Broadly speaking, Midland officials intend to use this plan to guide their work on all future recreational and parks projects within the City. It is also a strategic document that articulates specific goals to various agencies and organizations that fund local recreational and parks improvement projects. Specifically, this plan is developed in accordance with the guidelines for *Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans* published by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). A five-year, MDNR-approved recreation plan is necessary for the City of Midland to pursue MDNR-administered grants. This Parks & Recreation Master Plan is written for the City of Midland, and it covers all aspects of recreation within the community.





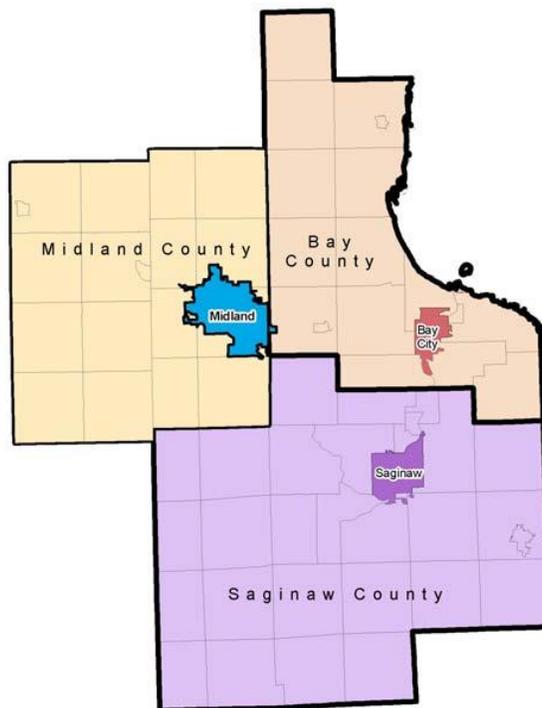
## II. Community Description

### *All about the City of Midland*

The City of Midland is the county seat and largest municipality in Midland County (see Figure 1). Located on the eastern side of the County, Midland is known as one of the three communities comprising the Tri-Cities, along with Bay City in Bay County and Saginaw in Saginaw County. These cities serve as the employment and commercial centers for the tri-county area, and are also key communities in the larger Great Lakes Bay Region. The jurisdiction of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan is the City of Midland.

Organized in 1887, Midland was settled as a lumbering and fur trading community. In 1890, The Dow Chemical Company was founded in Midland and the city continues to serve as the world headquarters for this Fortune 500 company. The successes of Herbert Henry Dow and the generosity of The Dow Chemical Company and its employees have enabled Midland to develop an

abundance of recreational assets that are unmatched within similar communities in Michigan. Midland is also the home of major manufacturing facilities for the Dow Corning Corporation, the site of Northwood University's Michigan campus and home to MidMichigan Medical Center – Midland, the flagship of the MidMichigan Health system.



**Figure 1** – The City of Midland is located in eastern Midland County with a small portion located in western Bay County.

**According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the population of Midland was 41,863.** This makes up a little more than 50% of the population of Midland County at 83,629.

It should be noted that a small portion of the City of Midland lies within Bay County. The population of the portion of Midland located within Bay County was 157 according to the 2010 Census.



The July 2013 U.S. Census estimate of the population of Midland was 42,181, showing that the population has increased by 0.8% since 2010.

Other general population characteristics regarding Midland are shown below in Figure 2.

**Figure 2 – Midland Demographic Data (2010 U.S. Census)**

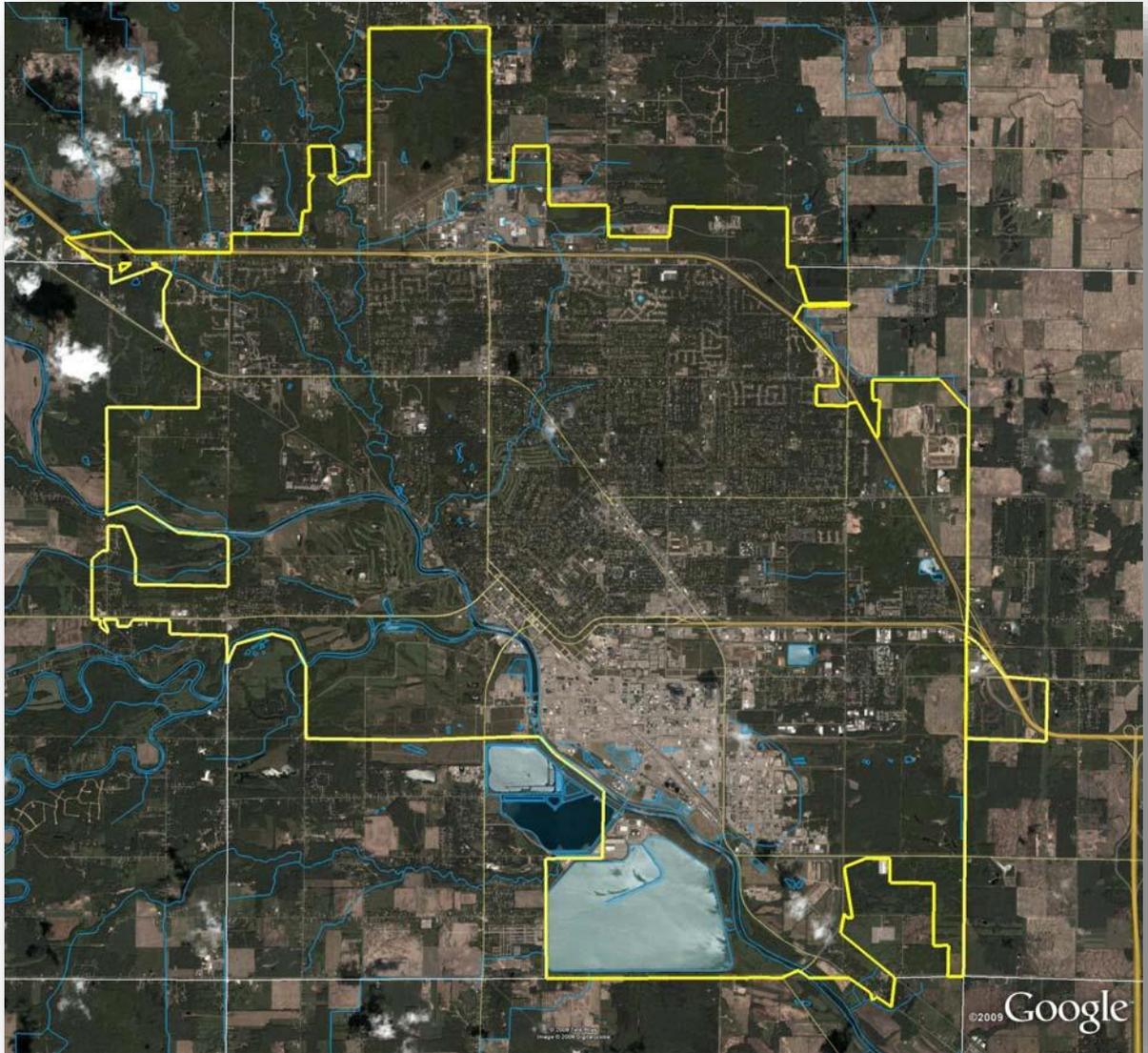
Population	41,863
Median Age	38.3 years
Total Households	17,506
Median Household Income	\$50,479
Population with bachelor’s degree or higher	42.0%

Midland is approximately 36 square miles in size, making it as large as many townships in the state of Michigan, and the fifth largest city in Michigan in terms of land area. See Figure 3 for an aerial view of the City of Midland. Major traffic carriers include US-10 which runs near the eastern and northern boundaries of the city. M-20 carries traffic westward toward Mount Pleasant.

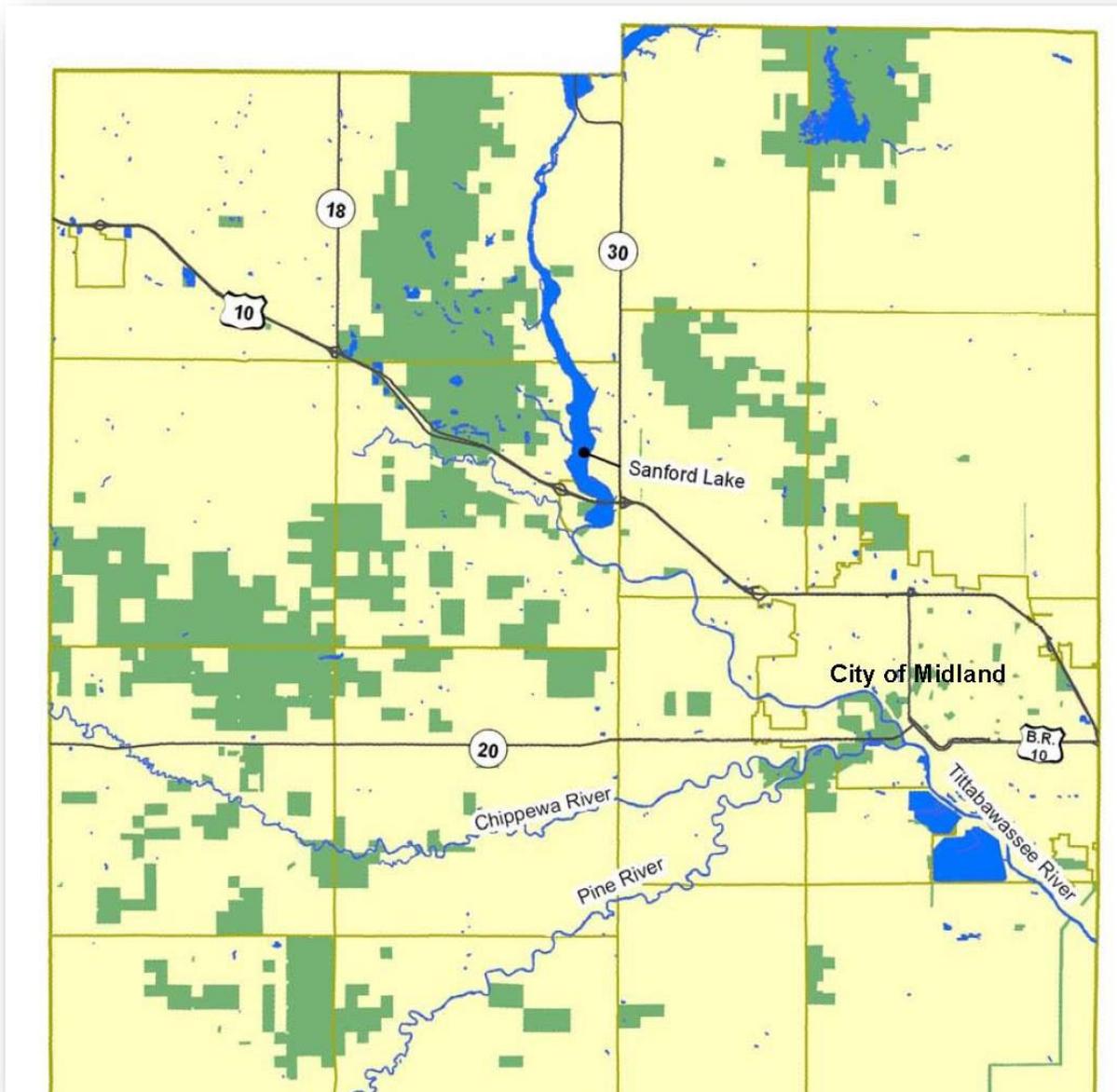
Two major waterways converge in Midland. The Chippewa River flows easterly from Isabella County into the Tittabawassee River in downtown Midland. The Tittabawassee River rises in Roscommon County and flows generally southward through Gladwin, Midland, and Saginaw Counties. It flows into the Saginaw River. Both rivers provide various sources of recreation in Midland.

The southeastern portion of the city is largely industrial, dominated by Dow Chemical production facilities. Much of the area west of Eastman Avenue and west of the Tittabawassee River is woodlands, recreation lands, or green space.

Throughout the remainder of Midland County, there are large tracts of public or semi-public lands in the County, which are mostly controlled by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Another 40,000 acres belongs to the AuSable State Forest, also managed by the MDNR. Figure 4 shows these lands, based on mapping data created by the Nature Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited. The Pine, Chippewa and Tittabawassee Rivers are the three major rivers that flow through Midland County. They are complimented by Sanford Lake, which is actually a widened portion of the Tittabawassee River.



**Figure 3 – Aerial view of the City of Midland**



**Figure 4** – Location of major rivers, lakes, and roadways in Midland County. The green shaded areas show publicly and privately held conservation and resource lands. The two bodies of open water in the southern portion of Midland County near the Tittabawassee River are a brine pond for The Dow Chemical Company and a cooling pond for Midland Cogeneration Venture. (Source: *The Nature Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited*)



## III. Administrative Structure

### *About Midland's Parks & Recreation Department*

#### **Management, Staff, and Policy-Making Bodies**

The Charter of the City of Midland established a Parks and Recreation Commission to serve as an advisory body to the City Council under Michigan Legislation 1929 PA 312 Metropolitan District Act. This nine-member commission includes representatives from different institutions, industries, government departments, and from the public at large. Parks and Recreation Commissioners are volunteers from the community at large who by experience have evidenced interest in development of park and recreation services for public use. Commissioners apply for a position on the commission as vacancies occur, and are then interviewed and appointed by the City Council to serve three-year terms.

Duties of the Commission include advising the City Council on policies, budgets, and improvements for the approximately \$5 million allocated annually to Parks & Recreation. The Commission meets a minimum of six times annually, more often if required. The Commission will also hold separate meetings for public hearings as needed.

To assist the Commission, Midland has a Parks & Recreation Department under the direction of the City Manager. This Department is managed by the Public Services Director with an Assistant Director, and a Recreation Manager. They oversee staff in five divisions: Forestry, Parks, Midland Cemetery, Horticulture and Recreation. The organizational chart in Figure 5 illustrates the relationship of the Commission and staff to other components of the City's structure. The Currie Golf Course and Midland Civic Arena are two other City recreation offerings and are managed as stand-alone enterprise operations under the direction of the Assistant City Manager.

Each division of the Parks & Recreation Department has a specific role. The Parks division maintains more than 2,700 acres of parks, play areas, parking lots, roadway medians and parkways, floodplain areas, sports fields, 35 shelters and buildings and an outdoor public swimming pool. The Parks division also helps organize special events.

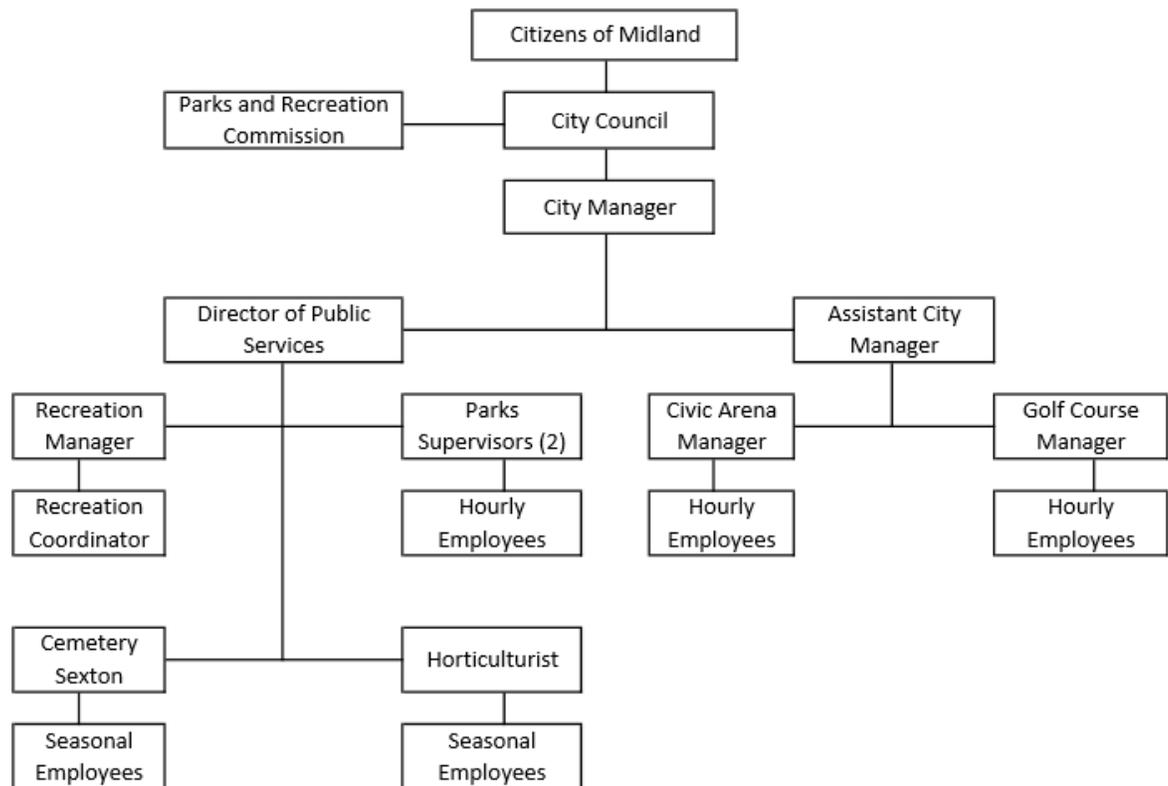
The Forestry division is charged with planting, maintaining, and replacing more than 55,000 trees in parks and street outlaws. Special care is given in selecting species of trees that flourish in specific conditions. The division is also active in Arbor Day events.



The Golf Course division operates and maintains the Currie Golf Course, including both clubhouses and the driving range. The primary task of this division is to provide well groomed, competitive and attractive golf courses that are affordable for the public.

The Cemetery Sexton maintains the Midland Cemetery and continues to improve the appearance of the facility through landscaping and turf management.

The Recreation division assists in managing the numerous programmed sports offered by the City, including adult and youth softball, adult kickball, and beach volleyball. Staff also administers toboggan rentals, cross-country ski rentals, swimming programs, summer concert series, and many other activities and special events. This Division also operates the picnic shelter and Chalet rental programs.



**Figure 5** – City of Midland Parks & Recreation organizational chart



<b>Staff Summary</b>	<b>Full-Time Employees</b>	<b>Seasonal Employees</b>
<i>Office Staff</i>		
Account Clerk III	1	
Office Assistant	1	
<i>Parks Division</i>		
Parks Supervisor	2	
Equipment Operator	10	
Facilities Maintenance	2	
Senior Utility Person	4	
Forestry Worker	4	
Seasonal Workers		24
<i>Recreation Division</i>		
Recreation Manager	1	
Recreation Coordinator	1	
Seasonal Workers		30
<i>Horticulture Division</i>		
Horticulturist	1	
Seasonal Workers		18
<i>Cemetery</i>		
Cemetery Sexton	1	
Seasonal Workers		4
	<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>Seasonal</b>
<b>Total Employees</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>76</b>

**Figure 6 – 2014 City of Midland Parks & Recreation Staffing Chart**

With the Commission and Parks & Recreation staff in place to accept public input, manage general operations and oversee planning activities, it is the City Council that makes the final decisions regarding parks and recreation. The Council has the ultimate authority to commit funds for parks and recreation, accept grants and purchase future park land on behalf of the City.



## Funding and Budgets

Funding for parks and recreation in Midland primarily comes from the City's General Fund. Other sources of funding include user fees, pavilion rentals, program fees, season passes, grants, and donations. Final expenditures for last fiscal year as well as the adopted budget for the current fiscal year are shown below in Figure 7.

**Figure 7 – Midland Parks and Recreation Budgets**

	<b>FY13/14</b>	<b>FY14/15</b>
Operations and Maintenance	\$3,954,106	\$4,308,356
Programming	\$671,306	\$675,296
Capital Improvements	\$70,708	\$109,800
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$4,696,121</b>	<b>\$5,093,452</b>

## Volunteer Assistance

At present, Midland Parks and Recreation partners with many organizations and individuals to enhance the City's parks and recreation offerings. The Adopt-A-Park and Adopt-A-Project Programs match groups and organizations with volunteer opportunities at a particular park to assist the Parks Division in cleaning, maintaining, and even creating new features in our parks. The City supports multiple Eagle Scout projects annually to enhance parks with benches, bird houses, play equipment, and numerous other projects. Community garden clubs volunteer to plant and maintain large landscape areas throughout the City. Civic clubs partner with the City on park clean up, including most recently the removal of invasive plant species. The City's Recreation Division receives volunteer assistance from the public at large to support the annual Santa Calling program to allow children to receive a call from Santa in early December. In addition, Midland Parks and Recreation partners with the ROCK Youth Center to provide teen volunteers for the annual Zombie Run held at the City Forest. The City also works with the Midland Softball Association, a volunteer board of softball enthusiasts, to provide one of the largest amateur softball programs in the region.



## Relationships with Other Agencies Involved in Recreation

The City of Midland Parks and Recreation Department has a variety of relationships with other agencies to enhance recreational opportunities available to the community.

- The City works cooperatively with Midland County Parks and Recreation to share equipment and labor on special projects, which helps both agencies to get jobs done in-house at less expense than hiring contractors.
- The City partners with the Midland Area Community Foundation to oversee and maintain the Fun Zone, a community-built wooden playscape located in Plymouth Park. The Community Foundation also maintains endowment funds to support maintenance of the Tridge, park sculptures and horticulture needs of large community landscape features.
- The City has a strong relationship with the Downtown Development Authority, providing assistance with set up and clean up for DDA events.
- The City partners with the Midland Public Schools to share facilities and sports fields as needed.
- The City consults regularly with Chippewa Nature Center and Dow Garden staff on conservation, natural resources and horticulture-related matters to educate city staff on current trends/issues.
- The City consults regularly with the Great Lakes Loons minor league baseball staff on ball diamond maintenance issues and shares supplies/equipment as needed.
- The City partners with the Midland Tennis Center and the Midland Girls Softball Association to provide administrative support for youth tennis and softball programming.
- The City also partners with the Midland Dolphins Swim Club, Northwood University, area Little Leagues, the Chemical City Band, Bullock Creek Public Schools, the Midland Community Center, the Midland Area Sports Capital Committee, SOS Animal Shelter, Humane Society of Midland County, the ROCK Youth Center and the Special Olympics to provide equipment, facilities and services to support events for these groups.



These partnerships allow us to further our resources and the resources of the organizations to provide more extensive programming and facilities to our residents. Parks and Recreation staff track the activities of these and other community recreation providers to avoid duplication of services.