



# City of Inkster

Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan

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City of Inkster Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan 2015-19  
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### **Introduction**

The City of Inkster is 8 miles west of Detroit in western Wayne County. Inkster is clustered in western Wayne County among the cities of Dearborn Heights, Wayne, Garden City, Romulus, Westland and Taylor. It is blessed with almost 13% of its land base as parkland, most managed by Wayne County. It is challenged by many of the forces that have resulted in the City of Detroit and Wayne County losing population and suffering a declining tax base. This includes a loss of employment opportunities, especially in manufacturing, which in turn has impacted all other sectors of employment across the region. This has also negatively impacted property values. This loss of jobs and property valuation has limited the ability of Inkster to maintain its existing parkland due to reduced budgets.

In 2012 Inkster entered into a Consent Decree with the State of Michigan that imposed very strict financial restrictions on spending in order to turn its finances around before a financial emergency would be declared by the State and an Emergency Financial Manager appointed. This process coupled with a gradual economic rebound in the Michigan has begun to put the City on a firmer financial footing. However, it suffered a weather related park and recreation tragedy during January of 2014 when the pipes froze at the Dozier Recreation Center and the subsequent water inundation of the first floor of the Center resulted in more than \$200,000 worth of damage to this important community institution.

Fortunately, Inkster is resilient. At the Dozier Center, the Recreation Supervisor, other City employees and many volunteers, along with appropriate contractors have renovated the damaged portions of the Center and updated additional parts of the facility. A grand re-opening was held on Saturday September 20, 2014 to celebrate this remarkable achievement. Beyond the Dozier Center, working with Michigan State University Extension (MSUE), the community is fully engaged in work to “Reinvent Inkster”. This multi-year, multi-faceted community engagement and planning process includes seeking new economic opportunities, building community capacity and strengthening public facilities and services, including parks, recreation and open space.

The following park, recreation and open space plan integrates with the effort to Reinvent Inkster, better linking parks and recreation opportunities and services with resident needs and strengthening linkages with partners beyond the community in the commercial, non-profit and governmental sectors.

## Community Description

### Population Characteristics

Population data from the US Census Bureau indicates that Inkster's population has declined 16% between the 2000 and the 2010 Census, from 30,115 to 25,336. In terms of the age profile of Inkster's population, the population in 2010 is older with 49% age 35 or greater, compared to 45% in 2000. However, there have been population declines in every age group, with the steepest declines coming in those under 35. The median age of the population increased from 31.8 in 2000 to 34.2 in 2010.

Table 1. Inkster population trends 2000-2010 by age group.

Age Group	# 2000	% 2000	# 2010	% 2010
0-4	2,423	8	1,858	7
5-17	6,563	22	5,211	21
18-34	7,542	25	5,842	23
35-64	10,336	34	9,550	38
65 +	3,251	11	2,875	11
Total	30,115	100	25,336	100

US Bureau of Census, 2010 Census

The 2008-12 American Community Survey of the US Census Bureau estimates that 21% of Inkster's non-institutionalized population has some form of disability as defined by the American's with Disabilities Act. By age group, those over 65 are most likely to be disabled (47%), while those under 18 are least likely to be disabled (6%).

### Racial, Ethnic and Gender Population Dimensions

Inkster's population is primarily black (Table 2). The proportion of the population that is black has increased since 2000. Four percent of the population was of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity in 2000 and in 2010 it was 3%.

Table 2. Racial composition of Inkster 2000-2010.

Race	% 2000	% 2010
Black	68	73
White	25	20
Multi-racial	3	4
Asian	3	2
Native American or Pacific Islander	<1	<1
Some other race	1	1
Total	100	100

US Bureau of Census, 2010 Census

In 2000, 52% of Inkster's population was female and 48% male. In 2010 that had risen to 53% female and 47% male. Of Inkster's population during the period 2008-12, 20.7% were classified as disabled under the American's with Disabilities Act (US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2008-12 Inkster, MI).

**Households, Income and Housing**

In 2010, there were 9,754 households in Inkster with a mean household size of 2.6 persons and a median household income of \$28,095. In 2000 there were 11,169 households with a mean household size of 2.7 persons and a median household income of \$35,985. The percentage of persons below the poverty level in 2010 was 35.7% and in 2000 it was 19%.

In 2010, 44.2% of the housing units in Inkster were owner occupied, 40.2% renter occupied and 15.7% vacant. In 2000 there were 12,013 housing units with 53.9% owner occupied, 39.1% renter occupied and 7.0% vacant. In 2010 the median home value of owner occupied units was \$63,700, while in 2000 it was \$74,077.

**Education**

In 2010, for people 25 and older, 78.8% had graduated from high school and 10.2% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. In 2000, 78.8% had graduated from high school and 12.1% had earned a bachelor’s degree or higher.

**Employment**

The number of employed persons in Inkster declined from 2000 to 2010 by 36% . .

Table 3. Employment in Inkster 2000-2010.

Industry classification	# employed	%	# employed	%
Sales and office	2,988	25	2,025	26
Production, transportation and material moving	2,989	25	1,566	20
Management and professional	2,556	22	1,283	17
Service	2,375	20	2,293	30
Construction, extraction, maintenance, farming, fishing and forestry	1,042	9	507	7
Total (may not add to 100% due to rounding)	11,950	100	7,674	100

US Bureau of Census, 2010 Census

**Economy and City Government**

The City of Inkster entered into a Consent Decree with the State of Michigan in 2012 due to a dire financial situation. This is the step before the State declaring a financial emergency and appointing an Emergency Financial Manager. This creates very serious challenges for the City as a whole and park and recreation functions of the City in particular. However, it also sets the City on a path to future financial stability and strength.

**Administrative Structure**

**Role of Commission**

The City of Inkster Parks and Recreation Commission was inactive during the first 22 months of the Consent Decree with the State of Michigan. It began functioning again in September 2014. It is a citizen board that is advisory to the City Council. It has nine members, 6 of which represent

Districts in the city, two of which are mayoral appointments and one of which is a City Council appointment. The current membership of the Commission is:

Sandra French  
Sheila Garland  
Shelby Johnson  
Vernell Massey-Moner  
Normal McDaniel  
Gloria Mitchell  
Deborah Owens  
James Richard IV  
Tonia Williams, Chairperson

### **Parks and Recreation Department**

Due to the financial situation, the City Manager Richard Marsh also serves as the Park and Recreation Director. There is one employee, Park and Recreation Program Supervisor Craig Lewis and there is clerical assistance provided through the City Manager's office. There is cooperation with the City Department of Public Services for maintenance at parks such as mowing.

### **Funding**

Funding for the Parks and Recreation Department is provided by the City Council in its annual budget. The City does not have a separate capital improvement budget for the Parks and Recreation Department. For the adopted 2014-15 budget, the City generates 1.9814 mills of ad valorem property taxes for Parks and Recreation. This amounts to \$507,000 minus \$66,950 of subtractions for various debts payable from the fund to Wayne County and others and \$21,070 in internal fund transfers into Parks and Recreation for a net of \$476,220. These revenues are used for Parks and Recreation, Senior Citizen Activities and Administration. In total Parks and Recreation receives \$267,500 for operations. This includes overall Park and Recreation administration, operation of 13 parks and operation of the Dozier Recreation Center. The single largest expense is approximately \$100,000 for utilities for the Dozier Recreation Center.

The amount budgeted to Parks and Recreation has eroded significantly since the Consent Decree was signed in 2012, with the 2012-13 Park and Recreation budget activity of \$416,992 and the 2013-14 projected budget activity of \$476,110. One primary reason for this significant drop in operating budget is the elimination of general fund contributions to Parks and Recreation since the signing of the Consent Decree, with total reliance for Parks and Recreation funding on the millage and various rental and program fees, which tend to bring in only modest amounts of revenue. The Parks and Recreation millage is up for renewal by voters in 2015. It is projected by the City of Inkster that the Park and Recreation Fund balance will be out of deficit by FY 2015-16, provided the millage is renewed. This is a year earlier than projected in 2013 as Inkster's financial situation is slowly improving.

**Volunteers and Partners**

There is a considerable role for volunteers, but their status related to individual parks other than the Dozier Center is unclear. At the Dozier Center, Park and Recreation Program Supervisor Lewis has done an excellent job coordinating and encouraging volunteers. Their efforts have been critical in the recovery of the facility from the flooding that occurred in January 2014 due to frozen pipes. This has included cleaning out damaged carpet, washing all rooms and facilities, patching and painting walls and a myriad of other tasks.

In addition, there are a number of volunteers and partners who provide recreation programming at the Dozier Center. The following list is partial and is in force as of fall 2014. It provides a picture of the range of partnerships with many in the region.

Table 4. City of Inkster Parks and Recreation Partners

Organization	Contact	Program(s)
1. Meticulous Basketball	Marv Fox	Basketball Camps, Skills Training, Instructional Leagues
2. Inkster Karate Club	Sam Williams	Classes, Tournaments
3. Inkster Boxing Club	Turrek Fikes	Classes, Tournaments
4. Mr. Smooth	Calvin Sibert	Classes
5. ID3 Fitness Management	Doniel Calvin	Personal Training
6. Liberation Dance Center	Jamila Peterson	Classes
7. Devon Caldwell Music Inc.	Devon Caldwell	Lessons
8. Equipped	Fleta Fleming	Tutoring, ACT Prep Workshop
9. Y.E.S.	Josh Howard	Young Men’s Mentoring
10. Young Women of Virtue	Juanita Weston	Faith-Based Young Women’s Mentoring
11. Sisters Who are Powerful	Tania James	Young Women’s Mentoring
12. Foster Grandparents	TBD	Volunteer Services
13. Starfish Literacy Program	TBD	Scrabble Nights, Book Give-a-ways,
14. Alpha Kappa Alpha	TBD	Parks Initiatives
15. Top Ladies of Distinction	TBD	Volunteer Services
16. Seeds II Feed	TBD	Volunteer Services, Young Men’s Mentoring
17. Motor City Thunder AAU	TBD	Basketball Leagues, Tournaments
18. Inkster Legends	TBD	Basketball Camps, Inkster Sports Historic Exhibit

**Relationships with School Districts, Other Public Agencies and Private Organizations**

As part of the Reinvent Inkster process, one of the greatest concerns expressed by residents is the breakup of the Inkster Schools. The school district was officially dissolved in 2013. Now students attend schools in three districts as well as privately owned and charter schools. The three school districts are Wayne-Westland, Westwood and Taylor.

Private organizations that at one time were committed to help Inkster Parks are noted on signage at a number of Inkster Parks. The signs denote an “Adopt a Park” program and a local civic organization for the park in question. However, it is unclear if these organizations still exist and whether they are still involved in maintaining the parks. All parks where these signs were observed had significant maintenance issues as is noted in the recreation inventory.

## **Recreation Inventory**

### **Inventory Methods**

The inventory was conducted by Dr. Nelson and at times Alexis Horton and Craig Lewis (from the City of Inkster). It involved visiting and walking each park, taking pictures, making written notes and reviewing materials from previous park and recreation plans. There was no opportunity to assess accessibility of buildings at other than the Dozier Center as all permanent restroom facilities and community buildings were padlocked in the other parks. Field notes are found in Appendix A.

### **Facilities Inventory**

Inkster residents live in a unique community where almost 13% of the land area is public parkland, with more than 550 acres of Inkster's 4002 acres currently set aside as public parkland. The majority of this parkland acreage is owned by Wayne County, but is within the City of Inkster and fully available to its residents. In addition some schools, churches and non-profit organizations provide recreational space and opportunity, although some or all of the time it may be limited to school age children or members of these organizations.

### **City of Inkster**

The City of Inkster operates 13 parks. In addition the CSO Basin is operated by Wayne County and is named Inkster Park on Wayne County's signage at the site. The Inkster Greenway which was developed by the City of Inkster is sited in Lower Rouge Park and is also operated by Wayne County.



Figure 1. Locational map for City of Inkster.



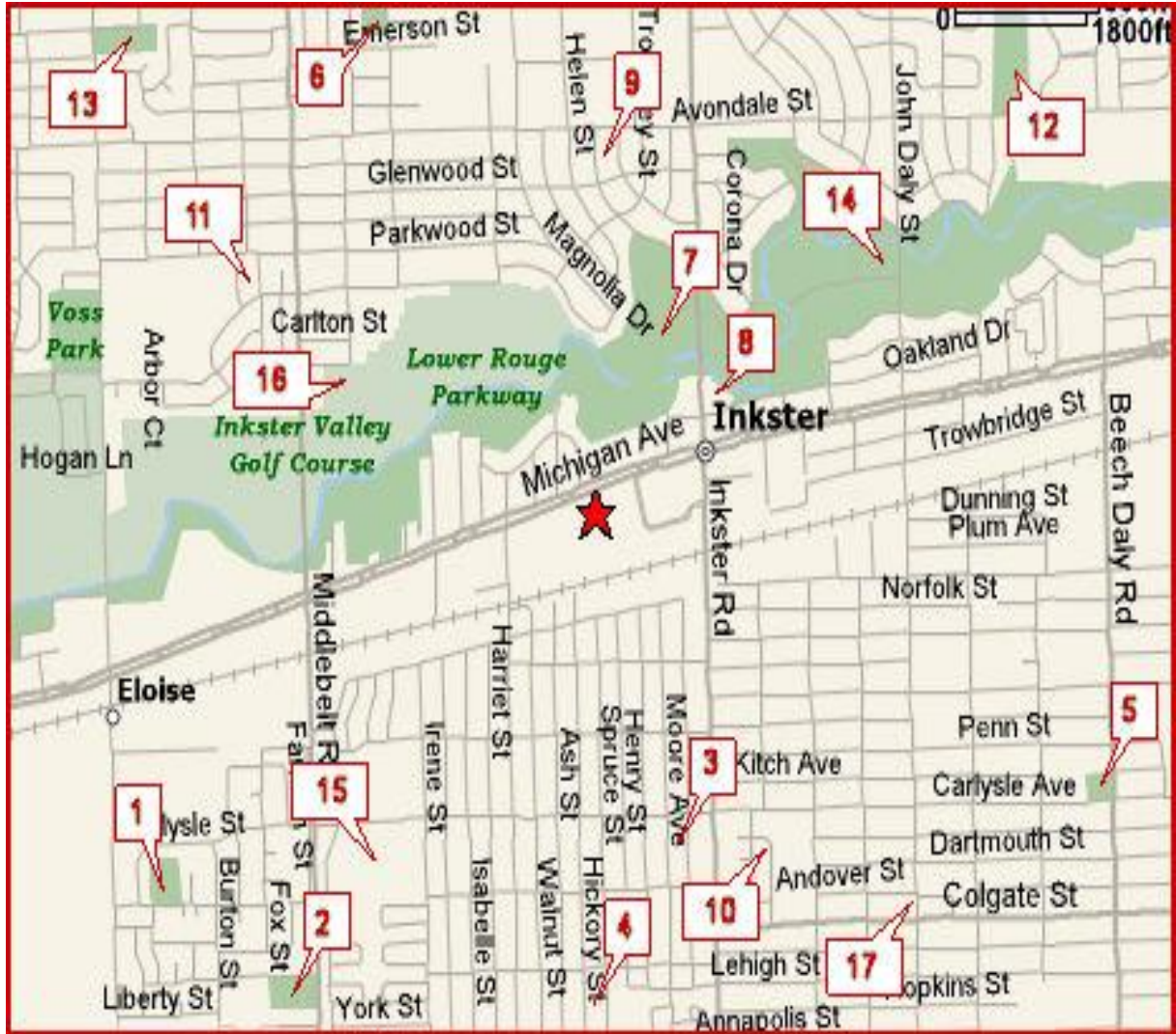


Figure 2 . Map of Parks in City of Inkster.

(Parks 7 and 14 are respectively Colonial and Inkster Parks. Both are Wayne County Parks, as is unnumbered Lower Rouge Parkway. The Inkster Greenway, a City of Inkster Trail is found within Inkster Park but is managed by Wayne County. Park 8 is Inkster CSO and is managed by Wayne County. )

Table 5. Inventory of City of Inkster Parks October, 2014.

Park and Map Number	Acres and Signage	Facilities	Accessibility	Key Challenges
Dozier Recreation Center #16	7.4 acres. Rec. Bond sign in lobby.	Outdoor pool, gymnasium with multiple racquet ball courts now used as various activity rooms (e.g. boxing), many other activity rooms that host seniors, youth, etc., weight room, locker rooms, etc. Outdoor tennis courts and relatively new playscape.	Facility is accessible with appropriate parking for the disabled, elevator, accessible restrooms. Grounds are firm with minimal slope and are accessible	Flood on January 8, 2014 due to frozen pipes caused extensive damage that has been repaired by the City using some insurance proceeds plus significant volunteer labor and contractors. Outdoor tennis courts in disrepair. Otherwise facility is well run and in serviceable condition.
Lemoyne #2	5.1. LWCF emblem present but naming sign old and faded.	Ball diamond, disused tennis courts converted to basketball courts but vandalized with equipment stolen, other functional paved basketball courts, locked restroom building, one portajohn	Grounds are firm with minimal slope and are accessible. Restroom building was padlocked and not available for public use and thus is not accessible. The portajohn in place is far from most facilities and does not appear to be accessible.	Ball diamond is unmaintained and apparently unused. Basketball courts that are unfenced are used and functional. Restrooms locked and unusable.
Wheatley #5	8.4. No LWCF or other grant signage visible.	Ball diamond with newer light poles and newer dugouts and bleachers Small play structure. 6 picnic tables, 5 in good shape, 1 decrepit. Paved basketball courts in decent condition.	Bathrooms locked and unusable so unable to determine accessibility on summer weekday at 10:45AM. Grounds are firm with minimal slope and are accessible	Ball diamond grown up with rank grass, trees growing through bleachers. Used needle on ground near locked restrooms. Trash, household items and yard waste dumped next to basketball courts.

Park and Map Number	Acres and Signage	Facilities	Accessibility	Key Challenges
Westwood #12	9.9 acres. LWCF sign near playground on post.	Newer playground. Baseball diamond. 0.4 mile paved walking trail. No visitors. Substantial parking area with crumbling asphalt.	Playground inaccessible to those with disabilities as down in a pit with no entrance ramp. Restroom building closed and padlocked so unable to assess for accessibility but not accessible to anyone in current condition.	Playground grown up with weeds, filter fabric in rolls, waterlogged and sited in excavated low spot. Abandoned baseball diamond. Paved walking trail that was accessible. Lots of tagging and expletives spray painted on building. Grass not mowed.
King Memorial #1	4.2 acres. No sign recognizing any grant activity. Sign noting park name almost invisible under vines on South side of park.	Ball diamond, basketball courts, small shelter building. All in disrepair. No bathrooms.	No facilities to access as no bathroom available. Grounds are firm with minimal slope and are accessible	Abandoned ball diamond, overgrown and fencing disappearing under growth of Virginia Creeper and other vines. Basketball court area overgrown with many cracks in paving and backboards missing and little evidence of use. Shelter building in disrepair. Lots of litter. This park is a mess.
Demby #4	2 acres. LWCF sign spray painted with graffiti.	Locked community building with bars on doors, no windows. No open bathrooms. Play structure. Basketball courts being used by 3 youngsters in fair condition.	No opportunity to assess accessibility as community building locked. Playground in a pit with steep sides so inaccessible. Grounds are firm with minimal slope and are accessible	Community building locked and defaced by graffiti. Playground defaced by graffiti/expletives. Poor lawn maintenance.
Inkster	3.4 acres.	Basketball courts in	Restrooms	Looked good. No

Park and Map Number	Acres and Signage	Facilities	Accessibility	Key Challenges
CSO #8	Now run by Wayne County	good condition. Children's play equipment in good condition. Restrooms in good condition and open.	accessible.	major challenges except for sidewalk in front buckled and inaccessible to those in a wheelchair.
Kennedy #13	5.3 acres. LWCF sign on fence on West end of park.	Baseball diamond abandoned. Concrete pads and light poles where former unknown facilities once stood.	No facilities to access. Site flat and firm.	Abandoned ball diamond with rusting fencing. No clear purpose or use for park.
Dartmouth Square #17	2.3 acres. No grant related signage.	Newer playground equipment in 6" deep pit. Small shelter with picnic table and no benches for table.	Grounds are firm with minimal slope and are accessible. Playground inaccessible as no clear ramp down into pit with playscape. No restroom facility so no way to assess accessibility.	Lots of litter. Water standing in pit with playground. Lack of mowing. No restroom. No shade.
Bel Aire #6	1.5 acres.	Playground with some newer equipment. No visitors.	Grounds are firm with minimal slope and are accessible. No restroom to evaluate for accessibility.	Not recently mowed. No shade. No visible restroom.
Manor #9	1.2 acres. LWCF sign.	Playscape module.	Grounds are firm with minimal slope and are accessible	Park is overgrown with grass to mid-calf. Playscape module tagged with considerable graffiti.
Moore St. Mini #3	0.3 acres. No grant related signage.	Rusting old playground equipment. One picnic table.	Grounds are firm with minimal slope and are accessible. No restroom.	Grass is 18" high.
Parkwood #11	2.0 acres. No grant related signage.	Mowed grass area. No visible facilities.	Grounds are firm with minimal slope and are accessible.	Unknown utility for area other than green space.
Wellington	0.5 acres.	Mowed grass area.	Grounds are firm	No shade. No

Park and Map Number	Acres and Signage	Facilities	Accessibility	Key Challenges
#10		Small playscape module.	with minimal slope and are accessible.	restroom.
Inkster Greenway Trail #14	Unknown MNRTF sign	Paved 10 foot wide multi-use trail. Links with Inkster Park (Wayne County) with access to restrooms, playgrounds and Rouge River.	Trail fully accessible including ADA accessible parking	No major challenges. Area in good shape and well maintained by Wayne County.

**Pictorial Record of City of Inkster Park Inventory**

Following is a pictorial record of the parks and some of their challenges as well as the required pictures of grant acknowledgement signs if present.



Figure 3. Parks and Recreation Program Supervisor Craig Lewis in lobby of Dozier Center with Rec Bond Fund sign in Summer 2014. Supervisor Lewis has successfully enlisted many from the community to rehabilitate the Dozier Center after the January 8, 2014 flood in the lower level. The facility is improving daily.



Figure 4 . Lemoyne Park sign with LWCF acknowledgement, adopt a park organization the Southwest Block Club listed and poor conditions in many aspects of the park including the sign.



Figure 5 . Lomoyne former tennis courts reconditioned for basketball and then stripped of backboards and rims by vandals.





Figure 6 . Disused bleachers in Wheatley Park at ball field with trees protruding during summer 2014.



Figure 7. Trash dumping adjacent to Wheatley Park basketball courts in Summer 2014.



Figure 8. Westwood Park with LWCF logo on path to playground and vandalism on padlocked restroom facility near parking area Summer 2014.



Figure 9. Vandalized sign in Westwood Park welcoming walkers to 0.4 mile trail around park perimeter in Summer 2014. Trail was in serviceable condition, but asphalt was beginning to buckle in places.



Figure 10 . Abandoned, obsolete basketball court at King Park in Summer 2014.



Figure 11. Signage at King falling into disrepute in Summer 2014. No LWCF acknowledgement sign found and all facilities in poor condition.



Figure 12. Vandalized picnic pavilion with upside down table and unknown other equipment on concrete floor at King Park in Summer 2014. Note light poles for unused ball diamond in background.



Figure 13. Vandalized grant recognition signs at Demby playground for both the Miracle Network that apparently sponsored the playground and LWCF. In addition the playground is in a depression that fills with water during rainy periods and is inaccessible to the disabled.





Figure 14. Co-author Alexis Horton conducting inventory of sunken, vandalized playground at Demby.



Figure 15. Wayne County Park sign at site of Inkster CSO, showing its management by Wayne County Parks.



Figure 16. Disused ball diamond and vandalized, decrepit entry sign to Kennedy Park showing LWCF logo.



Figure 17. Overgrown playground at Dartmouth with newer playground equipment and a lack of maintenance.



Figure 18. Inaccessible design for playground at Dartmouth with 4-6 inch dropoff to playground from sidewalk. In addition playground has litter, rolled filter fabric and lacks evidence of maintenance.



Figure 19. Sign for Bel Aire Park with playscape in background and adopt a park partner North Central Civic Association named, but actions not apparent.



Figure 20. Manor Park sign with LWCF logo and playscape which is tagged with graffiti on underside of slide. Grass is approximately 12” high.

#### Parkwood

There is no sign at Parkwood denoting a park. The grass is mowed and the property adjoins a church with no clear demarcation between ownerships.



Figure 21. Knee high grass at Wellington Park and sign prohibiting ball playing with playscape in background with graffiti on underside of slide on left.





Figure 22. New Inkster Greenway Trail is in excellent condition with MNRTF recognition sign as it winds through Wayne County’s Inkster Park.



Figure 23. Moore Street Mini park overgrown in Summer 2014. Swing set is missing swings.

### **Status Report for Grant Assisted Parks and Recreation Facilities**

Most parks in the City of Inkster are grant assisted, primarily through the federal land and Water Conservation Fund per a September 2014 report from the Michigan DNR found below.

City of Inkster Park and Recreation Grants History  
from Michigan DNR Grants Management 9/9/14

**Project No. 26-00182**            Project Year: 1969  
Project Title: Northern Park (aka King Park)  
Project Status: Closed            Grant Amount: \$21,952.50  
Project Description: Comfort station with utilities, multiuse hard surface area with ancillary facilities, underground lighting, drinking fountain, parking area, fencing, sidewalks, playground equipment, softball backstop, fence, drainage, grading and landscaping.

**Project No. 26-00183**    Project Year: 1969  
Project Title: Northwest Park (aka Kennedy Park)  
Project Status: Closed  
Grant Amount: \$19,110.50  
Project Description: Comfort station, shelter, fencing, ball courts, tennis court/ice rink, parking and playground equipment, install drainage sewer and water lines.

**Project No. 26-00573**            Project Year: 1975  
Project Title: Oak Grove Park (aka Wheatley Park)  
Project Status: Closed            Grant Amount: \$20,156.00  
Project Description: Lighting of ball diamond, fencing and LWCF sign

**Project No. 26-01030**            Project Year: 1978  
Project Title: Inkster Lighted Courts  
Project Status: Closed            Grant Amount: \$50,362.83  
Project Description: Develop: Slighted tennis courts, and LWCF sign (Note: located at Inkster Recreation Complex)

**Project No. 26-01454**            Project Year: 1986  
Project Title: Inkster Park Development  
Project Status: Closed            Grant Amount: \$50,000.00  
Project Description: Development at Oakgrove Park, Westwood Park, Wellington Park, LeMoyne Gardens and Manor Park

**Project No. BF91-119**            Project Year: 1991  
Project Title: Parks Improvement Program  
Project Status: Closed            Grant Amount: \$161,250.00  
Element: Demby Kennedy, King, Bel-Aire Westwood Oak Grove  
Project Description: Renovate King, Demby, Kennedy, Bel-Aire, Oak Grove & Westbrooke Parks  
Landscape, equipment, lighting, etc.

**Project No. BF91-121** Project Year: 1991

Project Title: Rec. Complex Renovation

Project Status: Closed Grant Amount: \$75,000.00

Element: Pool Roof Renovation, Pool Filtration System

Project Description: Renovation roof, parking lot, sprinkler system, pool filtration, racquet courts, etc.

**Project No. 26-01578** Project Year: 2001

Project Title: Park Playground Improvement

Project Status: Closed Grant Amount: \$73,500.00

Element: Demolition of equipment, Safety surfacing, Play equipment, Accessibility paths, Site amenities

Project Description: Rehabilitate and upgrade three (3) neighborhood park facilities located in densely populated areas lacking sufficient recreation opportunities.

**Project No. TF10-027** Project Year: 2010

Project Title: Inkster Park Greenway Trail

Project Status: Active

Grant Amount: \$408,000.00

Element

Site work, landscaping, erosion control

Trail (includes culverts) - 2,444 feet

Boardwalk Bridge Signage

Site amenities

Element

3 ADA parking spaces at CSO basin

Project Description: Development will include 2,444 LF of trail between Inkster Road and John Daly Road along Wayne County parkland adjacent to the Lower Rouge River.

**Project No. 26-01702** Project Year: 2010

Project Title: Wheatley Park Redevelopment Project

Project Status: Active

Grant Amount: \$75,000.00

Element

Playground structures

Surface material

Labor

Project Description: Development to include playground equipment.

**Project No. TF11-145**      Project Year: 2011

Project Title: Inkster Greenway Trail

Project Status: Active

Grant Amount: \$192,500.00

Element

Erosion protection Site preparation, Earthwork, Asphalt trail, Boardwalks, Bridges

Element

Signage

Furniture and landscaping

Utilities

Project Description: Development to include construction of a section of trail from Inkster Road to Justine Court within the Lower Rouge Parkway System.

### **Status Report Forms**

These are filed separately as they would not copy so could not be included in the electronic version of the plan. In summary as the preceding pictures indicate, there are a substantial number of facilities that are obsolete and others with serious maintenance and vandalism issues. The facilities that are in good condition and effectively functioning are the Dozier Recreation Center and the Inkster Greenway Trail and Inkster CSO. The latter two sites are managed by Wayne County Parks. Other parks, such as Wheatley Park, could be quickly put back in highly serviceable condition with a more effective and aggressive maintenance regime. Still others such as King and Kennedy have obsolete facilities. Coupled with minimal maintenance and vandalism, these parks now have little utility to citizens. At Demby, Westwood and Lemoyne, there are some useable assets, but vandalism and lack of management has reduced their value to the community (e.g. vandalized playground at Demby, locked community building at Demby with no restrooms, single portajohn in remote location at Lemoyne, no restrooms at Demby or Westwood, walking trail at Westwood with uneven asphalt and dead ash trees dotting the landscape, vandalized repurposed tennis courts to basketball courts at Lemoyne). At the smaller neighborhood and pocket parks (Bel Aire, Dartmouth, Manor, Moore Street, Parkwood and Wellington) minimal maintenance resulting in knee high grass has limited use, as well as accumulated trash and litter, often paired with graffiti that may be related to gang activity at the site during night time hours.

### **Description of the Planning Process**

The planning process was integrated with the Reinvent Inkster Planning process (community development planning) facilitated by Michigan State University Extension and led by Glenn Pape and Richard Wooten. This provided access to a very wide range of citizens from many perspectives, as well as businesses, non-profit organizations, the faith based community, etc. The process is described in great detail at:

<http://www.cityofinkster.com/Community/ReinventInkster.asp>. It is also described in Appendix B.

As one aspect of the Reinvent Inkster Planning process, at various public meetings citizens were asked a series of questions about Inkster. Their responses are below.

**Reinvent Inkster Workshops Input 2014**

(Public input notes courtesy of Glenn Pape, MSUE and the MSU Land Policy Institute)

***What is the largest problem facing the City of Inkster?***

- Poor leadership*
- Need an Inkster school system*
- People can't come together/selfish people*
- Lack of jobs*
- Outside groups taking our social programs*
- Unqualified people in key roles in Inkster School District leadership*
- Nothing to draw young people*
- Need more community pride*

***What is stopping Inkster from getting better?***

- Poor leadership*
- Need to take advantage of funding*
- Need summer programs for kids*
- People don't trust the City*
- Inkster does not cut grass and keep it attractive*
- People struggling financially*
- Kids don't respect seniors*
- Poor finances*
- Need Inkster school system*

***What is the outside perception of Inkster?***

- Low budget Detroit*
- Little Saigon/perceived as violent*
- Poor city*
- Poor city image*
- As a bad/terrible place/looks bad*

***What makes Inkster unique?***

- Family friendly/strong history*
- Respect seniors*
- Strong church groups*
- Can come together in a crisis/problem*

\*\*\*\*\*

***What is the largest problem facing Inkster?***

- Financial stability (lack of)*
- Lack of leadership at many levels*

*Citizens not voting*  
*Apathy*  
*Vacant housing*  
*Poor code enforcement*  
*Group homes*  
*Absent property owners*  
*Crime*  
*Slumlords*  
*Drugs*  
*Too many organizations*  
*Poor City services*  
*Poor City maintenance*  
*Lack of police enforcement*  
*No youth programming*  
*Poor communication*  
*No schools*  
*Citizens not responsive/lack of participation*  
*Poor morale in both residents and city*  
*Joblessness*  
*No tax base*  
*Lack of businesses (e.g. grocery, coffee shops, restaurants, etc.)*

***What is the outside perception of Inkster?***

*Crime*  
*Nobody wants to live here*  
*City government not amenable to people*  
*Council not amenable to people*  
*No schools*  
*Poor*  
*No city services*  
*No code enforcement*  
*Neighborhoods run down*  
*No police*  
*No jobs*  
*Water bills*  
*High taxes*  
*Lack of coordination among neighbors*  
*Loss of positive activities and festivals*  
*Shrinking city with no growth*

***What makes Inkster unique and special?***

*Near airport*  
*Low cost property*  
*Tax rate*  
*Golf course*

*Famous individuals*  
*Michigan Avenue*  
*CSO Basin*  
*Small community*  
*Local neighborhood parks*  
*Display at CAW Museum*  
*African American community*  
*Deep family roots*  
*Rail transportation*  
*Senior citizen population*  
*Rouge Greenway Park*  
*Dept Human Services and Social Security Administration offices here*  
*Very talented youth*  
*Churches*  
*Community organizations*

***What is stopping Inkster from getting better?***

*Lack of \$*  
*Lack of accountability*  
*Lack of leadership from businesses, council/mayor, citizens, City administration, ministers*  
*Lack of vision*  
*Lack of morale*  
*Lack of participation by Caucasians and others*  
*Lack of collaboration among organizations*  
*Lack of the right kind of noise*  
*Lack of business association*  
*Egos and personal agendas*  
*Lack of state and county support*  
*Need a plan to deal with problems*  
*Need better understanding of problems*  
*Lack of qualified leaders*  
*Communication issues city to city and city to residents*  
*Reverse neighborhood decline*  
*Identify qualified leaders*  
*Revise codes to make them quick and simple*  
*Fix sidewalks*  
*Lack of resident owned businesses*

***What is the one most important action Inkster could take to improve recreational opportunities for your household?***

*Quality parks and recreation facilities in Inkster*  
*Lacking bike/walking trails*  
*Youth activities needed*  
*Empty, poorly maintained parks and facilities (e.g. bathrooms, drinking fountains)*  
*Wheatley Park*



*Programs for seniors to kids*  
*Like existing senior programs*  
*Need updated and modernized rec center and pool*  
*South side facility needed*  
*Transportation to Dozier Rec Center*

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***What is Inkster's role in the region?***

*Minority population community*  
*Access*  
*Bedroom community*  
*Tourist housing*

***What is the largest problem facing Inkster?***

*Lack of \$/tax revenue for City*  
*Crime/safety*  
*Vacant homes*  
*Lack of public schools/divided into 5 districts*  
*Brain drain/loss of talent*  
*Lack of development*  
*Businesses do not work together*  
*Community organizations don't work together*  
*Lack of voting*  
*Social services bring poverty to Inkster*  
*Commercial property used for non-taxed uses*  
*Public housing*  
*Need leaders with long term thinking*  
*Lack of sustainable thinking*  
*Lack of long term plan*  
*City makes it difficult for business*  
*Lack of coordination between city and businesses*  
*Cost of water/sewer*

***What is the outside perception of Inkster?***

*Country town where they grow corn*  
*Michigan Ave with development options, lack of retail, lack of plan*  
*Bad roads*  
*No schools*  
*Crime*  
*Vacant homes/blight*  
*Poverty*  
*African American lacking diversity*  
*Lacks public transit*

*Nothing going on/no activities/Inkster can't manage activities  
Inkster does not have what younger people want  
Lost cause – throwing more money at bad causes  
Bad press/violence  
Poor quality housing/public housing*

***What can Inkster do to be a more business friendly community?***

*City needs to work more with businesses  
More emphasis on buy local goods/services  
Promote local business chamber  
City tax rate too high  
City needs to focus on business development  
Resolve city staff turnover  
Improvement assistance  
Tax incentives  
City needs to reach out and work with businesses  
Support start-ups and youth  
Support live here/work here  
Acknowledge and spotlight businesses  
Fix zoning  
Consistent, level playing field  
Improve city governmental relations to state and federal government  
Business retention program*

***What makes Inkster unique and special?***

*Good people/residents nice, decent  
Location with US 12 (MI Ave), Airport, highways, Center City Detroit, employment opportunities nearby  
Family oriented  
Heritage  
Rouge corridor  
Famous people  
Community oriented  
Owner occupied  
Athletic history  
Large number of community organizations  
Large number of churches  
Green/natural features  
Inkster Valley Golf course  
Family health facility  
Chamber of Commerce  
Government and Social Services located in Inkster  
Land redevelopment  
Starfish Headstart*

***What is stopping Inkster from getting better?***

- \$*
- Effective voluntary leadership*
- Involvement beyond same old/same old*
- Citizen attitude*
- Lack of ownership*

\*\*\*\*\*

***What is the largest problem facing Inkster?***

- Economy*
- Crime*
- Lack of things to bring people to Inkster*
- Diminished tax base*
- No school system*
- Divided community (e.g. political, programs, etc.)*
- Lack of positive activities and support systems*
- Lack of business to provide real jobs*
- Too much red tape*

***What makes Inkster unique and special?***

- Sense of community as a result of Inkster's history*
- Neighborhoods*
- Close knit families*
- Genuine concern for the community*

***What is stopping Inkster from getting better?***

- State of Michigan*
- Wayne County*
- City administration*
- Lack of \$*
- Lack of vision from city leaders*
- Lack of pride in newer residents*
- Apathy*
- Feeling of hopelessness*

***What is the Outside perception of Inkster?***

- Dangerous/lack of police*
- Boring*
- Uneducated*
- Mini-Detroit*

*Unstable/schools/protection*  
*Unimportant*  
*Detroit "Wanna-be"*  
*Poor*

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***What is the largest problem facing the City of Inkster?***

*Crime*  
*Jobs*  
*Broke/no \$\$*  
*Safety/crime*  
*Lack of Education*  
*No School District*  
*Lack of Recreation*  
*No imagination*  
    - *Think outside box*  
    - *No Diversity*  
*Public Transportation*  
*Taxes and Water not being paid*  
    - *Lose services*  
*Trust*  
*Lack of Motivation*  
    - *Many levels*  
*Past negative social issues not relevant to now/today*

***What Makes Inkster unique and special?***

*Location*  
*Amenities in Area*  
*Sr. Citizen services*  
*History*  
    - *Annapolis Park/Inkster H.S. Graduates*  
*Starfish*  
*Community Cohesiveness*  
    - *Sticks together*  
*Services within city available walking distance*

***What is stopping Inkster from getting better?***

*People of Inkster*  
*Complain but don't act*  
*Don't vote on issues*  
*Uneducated voter*  
*Revenue sharing-lack of*  
*"Always been that way" attitude*  
*Self-perception low*  
*City not progressive*

*City pride*

*Lack of leadership*

*Rumors-negative perceptions*

*Residents “enabled” in past*

- *Outside assistance cutoff*

*Lansing*

- *Lack of representation*

*Media*

*Schools*

*Stereotypes*

*Lack of youth leadership – no school district focus*

*Gang violence*

*Need more community leadership*

*Decision makers don’t listen to youth*

*Youth not encouraged to (take leadership role offer opinions)*

*Job training*

*Translation*

***What is the one most important action the City of Inkster can take to improve recreational opportunities?***

*Want pool back*

*Rec Center Reopening 7/17*

*Need more opportunities, period*

*Jazz Festival & in general*

*Parade*

*Parks – Clean-up & reopen*

- *Update restrooms, play equipment*
- *No maintenance at any*
- *Safety (use)*

*More commitment from parent/guardian to continue*

*Commitment to participate*

*Trust that will happen & continue*

*Need P & R dollars – grants?*

*Introduce new recreation activities*

*Offer activities for all skills, ages, abilities*

*Year round activities*

*Develop calendar, pop up activities on reg. basis*

*Social activities needed*

- *Girl & boy scouts/clubs*

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***What is the outside perceptions of Inkster?***

*Lawless & not safe*

*Crime*

*Poor – Economically*

*All Black Community*

*Under educated  
On its way to not being a city  
Nobody in Inkster cares  
Bad neighborhoods*

***What is Special & Unique Inkster?***

*Great History & in a museum (C.A.W. Museum)  
No bad weather  
Marvelettes  
Golf Course  
Location  
Multiple Generations here  
Small hometown feel  
Greenway  
Seed to feed event*

***What Purpose does Inkster Serve?***

*Home  
Access Corridor  
Test Market*

***What is Stopping Inkster from Getting Better?***

*Unorganized  
Politics  
\$\$  
Unable to work together  
Incorrect or bad decisions based on lack of knowledge  
Lack of community involvement  
Council needs training  
Lack of trust in council & administration  
Lack of transparency  
Apathy*

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***Biggest Problem Facing Inkster?***

*\$  
No Schools  
Shortage of Police  
High Taxes  
High Water Rates  
Tension between manager & mayor  
Decline in population  
Abandoned houses  
Lack of civic engagement  
Lack of businesses  
Blight & trash*

*Lack of unity*  
*Poor communication/all ways*  
*Lack of city staff & services*  
*Lack of youth activities*  
*Lack of local jobs/high unemployment*  
*Isolated from other govt's*  
*Lack of male role models*

***Are there good Parks in your neighborhood?***

*Lemoyne Park*  
*Centrally located*  
*Wheatley Park*  
*Needs upkeep*  
*Nothing there to do*  
*Some good parks*  
*Parade – Memorial Day*  
*Six square miles & easy to learn*  
*Historical cemeteries*  
*Oldest person in U.S.*  
*Walk to library*

***What is the Outside Perception of Inkster?***

*Violent*  
*Poor*  
*No Jobs for Youth*  
*No School system*  
*Hick, country, no class “That Black place”*  
*Inept, unable to handle “own matters”*  
*No leadership*  
*-Organization*  
*-mayor can't do things/hands tied*  
*Throughout all organization*  
*Not qualified leaders*  
*Nepotism & cronyism gone wild*  
*Drug infested*  
*Unslightly*  
*Public housing city*  
*Place where you don't need to show people respect.*

***What makes Inkster Unique and special?***

*History*  
*- First black radio station*  
*- First mowtown hit*  
*- Roots written here*  
*- Malcom X*

- *Jazz and music*

*Family literacy movement*

*Untapped potential (faith and civic orgs.)*

*Re-developable land*

*Community leaders that care*

*Location – Access/near everything/20 miles to 4 universities/airport/shopping centers*

*Friendly – in spite of all the issues people care.*

***What is stopping Inkster from getting better?***

*Leadership – lacking city and state*

*\$\$*

*Lack of unity*

*Residents not caring*

*Religious leadership not explaining past Sunday.*

*Complacency/hopelessness*

*Lack of a plan*

*Resignation*

*Unified school system*

*Attention to small details*

*Lack of vision*

*Lack of Business*

*Lack of outside investments*

*City difficult to deal with so firms locate elsewhere.*

***Are there good Parks & Rec. Facilities within each neighborhood?***

*Rec Center closed*

*Lemoyne Park is best*

*Wheatley Park used by kids but no trash cans*

*Parks not maintained*

*No programming*

*Youth Park jobs lacking/ending*

*U of M Parks plan late 90's*

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***What is the Largest Problem facing Inkster?***

*Crime*

*Children Dispersed into for Scout District*

*Lack of \$\$*

*Political system seemed hell bent on destruction of Inkster*

*Lack of Leadership*

*Years of mismanagement*

*High taxes & high water bills*

*Malaise, apathy, hopelessness*

*Dumping ground for “others” and no support provided*

*City inundated with sex offenders & felons*



*City works against community groups*  
*Not cutting grass on vacant properties & public housing*  
*Corruption within the city government*  
*Infrastructure/roads*  
*Emergency shelters*  
*Smart meters*  
*Different treatments from city on permits/zoning*  
*Poor City Leadership*  
*Residents – apathy – complacent*  
*Lack of vision*  
*Entitlement mentality*  
*Housing*  
*Not going after resources*  
*Business environment*  
*Blight*  
*Confused community – no identify*  
*Safety*

***What makes Inkster Unique & Special?***

*Bedroom Community*  
*Location -15 miles, 3 airports*  
*Interstates*  
*Rail*  
*Waterways*  
*Senior friendly*  
*Legacy – churches/connections/know everybody*  
*Strong will*  
*Historical legacy – ford – black owned business – music*  
*Senior knowledge*  
*Children & Youth Creative & talented*  
*Strong block clubs*  
*Strong neighborhoods*  
*NGO's working well in community*  
*Resourceful*

***What is Inkster's Role in the Region?***

*Test bed – grants/research/social programs*  
*Commuter Routes*  
*Water Recycling site*  
*Cheap housing*  
*Short term housing - get started and move on*  
*Airplane landing route*

***Outside Perception of Inkster***

*A bunch of poor GM/Ford/Chrysler/Dow*

*No good Black people  
Lumped in with Detroit, Flint  
Violent, robbery  
Stereotyped, racial bias  
Too much public housing  
Little Saigon  
Rent City  
Inkster: Where you get beaten or killed  
Slum lord heaven  
No city government, no police no rules  
No economy base  
No community services  
Bad schools  
Kids are thugs  
Lack of retail  
Stupid community  
Un-educated  
Poverty  
DHS/SSA Office – Poor & Welfare  
Put it in Inkster if we don't want it  
Drug infested  
Gang Violence  
Trashy community  
Residents don't care  
Blight  
Devon Gardner and others*

***Are there Quality Parks & Rec Facilities you can walk to?***

*No quality parks in walking distance  
Tyrone Wheatly Park  
No functioning rec. facility*

***What is stopping Inkster from getting better?***

*Lack of a plan  
Lack of community buy-in  
Silos  
Residents  
Inflight  
Lack of visionary leadership  
Missing catalyst or spark  
Money  
Denial & lack of responsibility*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Future Actions**

**Connect neighborhoods**

*Bike lanes*  
*Sidewalks*  
*Crosswalks*  
*Bus routes*  
*Dedicated SMART bus*  
*Bicycle parking*

**Michigan Ave.**

*Median improvements*  
*Diverse mix of retail*  
*Mixed use buildings*  
*Slow down traffic*  
*Downtown Inkster sign*  
*Business incubator district*  
*Nodes*  
*Points of interest through art*

**Neighborhoods**

*Solve vacant lots*  
*Encourage neighbors to cut un-mowed grass*  
*Adopt a park program for neighborhoods*  
*Keep historic character of Inkster*  
*Organizing community beautification*  
*Themed artwork in parks*

**Sense of Place**

*Establish a farmers market*  
*Have competitions for the best block*  
*Have an Inkster Jazz Fest*  
*Annual Inkster parade*  
*Neighborhood festivals*

**Grow Jobs**

*Pop-up retail*  
*Assist/Accelerate/Attract*

**City Services**

*City needs to lead by example*  
*Make it easy to open a business*  
*Innovation project manager/director position*  
*Rapid response for home purchase inspections*  
*Updated vacant property list*

*Consider land bank*

*Process/incentive to sell properties and have them occupied within 6-9 months*

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On August 25, 2014 the final charrette for Reinvent Inkster was held at the Dozier Recreation Center. 55 people attended the meeting and participated in the charrette including Dr. Nelson and Alexis Horton. The goal was to define a draft plan framework for reinventing Inkster, including a vision of the future, along with key assets and action items to reach the vision. The notes of the meeting are from Alexis Horton.

**Envision Inkster in 10 years**

Participants were asked to write down what they wanted to see in Inkster in ten years. Then each voted to determine the top ideas and establish top three choices.

Visions

- Fully functioning school system (#1 pick)
- Music Venues
- Recreational Buildings
- Elimination of Blight
- Walkable community
- Mall
- More businesses downtown
- More Jobs (#2 pick)
- More residents/low-cost housing/affordable housing
- Safety (#3 pick)

Assets

- Residents
- Dozier Rec Center
- Seniors
- History
- Churches
- Parks
- Western Wayne Family Health Center

Group Data

Table 1: Visions- Stable Jobs, School system, Safety

Assets- People, Dozier Rec Center, Western Wayne Family Health Center

Table 2: Visions- Eliminate blight, Improve infrastructure, Change city charter

Assets- close to metro parks, golf course and park, Justice Center

Table 3: Visions- Businesses on Michigan Avenue, Community involvement, Return of schools

Assets- Library, Seniors, Rec Center

.....

Table 4: Visions- Bike transit, Youth activities, Walkable downtown  
Assets-Michigan Avenue, Parks, land for redevelopment

Table 5: Visions- Development of Michigan Avenue corridor, Access to healthy food, Increase  
in recreational opportunities  
Assets- People, Vacant land for redevelopment, rec center

Table 6: Visions-Trusted government, Single home ownership, Increased job opportunities  
Assets-History, Location, Community

Table 7: Visions-Viable businesses, Transportation improvements, Recreation and entertainment  
Assets- Location, Large roads, Library/Golf course

In summary, across all the Reinvent Inkster public input process a number of key suggestions  
were made related to the future of Inkster Parks and Recreation properties, facilities and services.  
These include:

- Have a summer program for kids
- Quality parks and recreation facilities in Inkster
- Have bike/walking trails
- Have youth activities
- Empty, poorly maintained parks and facilities (e.g. bathrooms, drinking fountains)  
Wheatley Park
- Have programs for all ages, especially seniors and kids
- Update Dozier Recreation Center and its pool
- Provide a Recreation Center on the South side of Inkster (South of Michigan Ave.)
- Provide transportation to Dozier Rec Center
- Want pool back
- Have Inkster Jazz Festival
- Clean-up & reopen parks including
  - Update restrooms, play equipment
  - Have regular maintenance
  - Provide safety through citizen use
- Seek recreation grant funding
- Introduce new recreation activities
- Offer activities for all skills, ages, abilities
- Year round activities
- Develop a recreation calendar including pop up activities on reg. basis
- Provide social activities needed
- Provide Girl and Boy Scout opportunities; Boys and Girls Club
- Establish a Farmers Market
- Walkable community



In addition, two citizen meetings were specifically devoted to the future of parks and recreation in Inkster. On July 17, 2014 a focus group of 5 invited youth ages 16-19 and one adult and facilitator Richard Wooten from MSU Extension met with Alexis Horton at 11AM at Christ Temple City of Refuge in Inkster to discuss the question:

**“What is the most important action the City of Inkster can take to improve recreation?”**

The youth responded:

- Open community pool again
- Open recreation center
- Allow use and upkeep of park restrooms
- Security for parks
- Add basketball courts with rims
- Lobby to bring Jazz Festival back
- Create year round recreation options/programming
- Introduce new recreation opportunities
- Community health/fitness opportunities

The youth participants were very passionate and vocalized their ideas very well. The participants placed heavy emphasis on community building, consisting of establishing a sense of pride within the city so that people will want to bring money into the city and make changes.

On Tuesday October 7, Dr. Nelson and Alexis Horton met with the Inkster Park and Recreation Commission at their regularly scheduled public meeting at the Dozier Recreation Center to discuss the challenges and the solutions to those challenges for Inkster Parks and Recreation. Present at the meeting were:

Craig Lewis, Supervisor of Parks and Recreation  
Sandra French, P & R Commissioner  
Sheila Garland, P & R Commissioner  
Shelby Johnson, P & R Commissioner  
Vernell Massey-Moner, P & R Commissioner  
Normal McDaniel, P & R Commissioner  
Gloria Mitchell, P & R Commissioner  
Deborah Owens, P & R Commissioner  
James Richard IV, P & R Commissioner  
Tonia Williams, P & R Chairperson

Dr. Nelson facilitated the group to identify the key challenges for Inkster Parks and Recreation and solutions to those challenges. They responded:

### **Challenges for Parks and Recreation**

- Too many restrictions on volunteerism

- Need to meet current & future recreation needs rather than those of the past
- Soccer needed
- Need focus on exercise/fitness/wellness
- Need health classes
- Family oriented rehabilitation services needed in Rec Center
- Lack of promotion
- Empty parks/not maintained
- Need walking/bicycling trails
- No sidewalks
- Lack up to date equipment
- More sports opportunities needed besides what is available in parks and Rec center
- If there was better maintenance it would equal more participation
- Need mentoring for youth
- Need better info to residents
- Lack of \$\$ influences everything else

### **Solutions for Parks and Recreation**

- Need to prioritize and organize
- Need to identify and tap funding sources
- Need efficient/effective communication
- Need professional direction for parks and recreation
- Seek/find sponsors & volunteers
- Less restrictions on sponsors and volunteers
- Think short and long term about programs and sponsorship
- Revitalize Adopt a Park
- Radio/TV/media advertisements
- Need government support at many levels – city, state, etc.
- Achieve greater energy efficiency
  - Lights/insulation/HVAC
- Need grant writer for Parks and Recreation and the City of Inkster as a whole

Based on this substantial public input, the following goals, objectives and action program are proposed.

### **Goals and Objectives**

The goals and objectives for the Inkster 2015-19 Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan are significantly different from those in the 2009-14 Plan. That former plan had a huge array of goals and objectives, and an accompanying action program that proposed millions of dollars in investment in infrastructure and at every park in the system. Over the period, very little of that plan was realized and the funding to maintain the existing infrastructure was inadequate to the need.

Based on public input, the available funding for parks and recreation and the senior author's judgment after 35 years in the field, the following is the goal and specific objectives to reach this goal.

For 2015-19, the goal of the Inkster Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan is provide sustainable park and recreation opportunities, facilities and programs for the residents of Inkster.

The specific objectives to reach this broad goal are:

1. Reduce operations costs at park and recreation facilities through greater efficiency and partnerships.
  - a. Conduct an energy audit at the Dozier Center in cooperation with DTE and other partners. Based on the results of that audit and its recommendations, seek grants and other funds to upgrade the energy efficiency and sustainability of the facility. Currently the energy bills for the Dozier Center alone account for 25% of the park and recreation millage on an annual basis. This is not sustainable and needs to be remedied to provide the funds necessary from existing sources to better serve residents with programming and provide the local match for park and recreation facility upgrades. This will meet a key suggestion of the Park and Recreation Commission to achieve greater energy efficiency.
  - b. Divest of smaller neighborhood parks either to community organizations willing to provide public recreation or exchange those lands and facilities to willing purchasers. These parks include Dartmouth Square, Bel Aire, Wellington, Manor, Parkwood and Moore Street Mini. These are small parks with very local service areas that have little potential to expand their ability to serve the community. In return, invest in the acquisition and development of a north/south trail route to connect the southern part of Inkster (South of Michigan Avenue) to the Inkster Greenway Trail. This trail connecting Inkster N/S and linking to the E/W trail will bring the community together and clearly meets a number of goals cited by the public for a walkable community, trails, year round activities and linkages across the community. This will meet key suggestions of the Park and Recreation Committee and the public to prioritize and organize, find sponsors and volunteers,
2. Provide improved summer maintenance and programming at major parks including Dozier Center, Wheatley, Lemoyne, Demby, King, Westwood and Kennedy.
  - a. At Dozier Center continue on the trajectory started by Park and Recreation Program Supervisor Lewis to expand partnerships to provide programming and revenue to cover that programming from participants and other partners.
  - b. At Dozier Center, continue the level of citizen involvement from the Center renovation following the flood to other aspects of operations and maintenance.
  - c. At Wheatley, Lemoyne, Demby, King, Westwood and Kennedy clearly identify one or more community organizational partners to formally adopt each park with a written binding agreement. The City, working in conjunction with the organizational partners and citizens should develop a specific plan for park improvement, programming and operations. As part of this effort, a summer college intern seeking a career in parks and recreation or a similar field should be



hired for each park each summer to work with the organizational partners in park maintenance and provide direct recreation programming to residents, effectively using volunteers from the partner organization(s) and the community. This would provide a way to open currently shuttered facilities at Demby, Westwood, Wheatley and Lemoyne and get at least portable restroom facilities into King and Kennedy. This will meet many of the suggestions from the public input process including summer program for kids, youth activities, regular and improved maintenance, cleanup and re-open parks, introduce new recreation activities, offer activities for all skills, ages and abilities, professional direction for parks, revitalize adopt a park, open restrooms and support community fitness.

- d. At Lemoyne work to establish a community garden on the plot of land already tilled for this purpose. Link this garden to either a food bank or the establishment of a Community Farmers Market at the park one afternoon and early evening a week. This meets the suggestion of a farmers market.
3. Continue the development of Phases II – IV of the Inkster Greenway Trail as proposed in the 2009-14 Plan. This involves continuing cooperation with Wayne County as the trail runs through Wayne County parkland. This will support key community and Park and Recreation Commission suggestions to provide community health and fitness, create a walkable community, offer activities for all skills, ages and abilities, have bike/walking trails, walkable community and year round activities.

#### **Action Program**

To be developed once there is agreement on the goal and objectives. This should NOT be a laundry list like the 2009-14 action program.

#### **Appendix A - Field Inventory of Inkster Parks with Field Notes**

Chuck Nelson and Alexis Horton 8/14/14

##### **Dozier Community Center #16 on map**

Renovation in progress, concerns about opening occurring too quickly, insurance company cancelled them after claim that involved flooding from January water break/pipe freezing.

##### **Dartmouth Square - #17 on map 10:30AM**

No bathrooms, picnic tables with no benches. Newer playground equipment in a mess with filter fabric on ground in rolls and evidence of flooding. Lots of litter on site, tall/rank grass starting to grow in playground area. Old swings. Site not accessible as in a pit so person in chair couldn't get to it. No visitors.

##### **Wheatley – #5 on map 10:45 AM**

Ball diamond with newer light poles and newer dugouts and bleachers

Field grown up with rank grass, trees growing through bleachers

Small play structure

Bathrooms locked and unusable so unable to determine accessibility. Needle on ground nearby.

1 wooden picnic table overgrown with brush and weeds, 5 others in better shape made from metal and vinyl coated.

Cars driving through parking lot across lawn to basketball courts

Accessible drinking fountain but no water to drink. Non-functional

Dumping area by basketball courts with yard waste, brush, trash, broken furniture. No visitors.

**King Memorial - #1 on map 11:10AM**

Abandoned baseball diamonds with light poles, light fixtures. Difficult to figure out where one would park as no clear lot or on-street parking. Doesn't appear to have been used for years. No visitors. No bathrooms.

**Kennedy - #13 on map 11:25AM**

Concrete slabs in far reaches of outfield that appear to have been location of former building(s). There are power poles nearby connected to nothing. Big rusty chain link fence separating on-street parking from ball diamond. Only new thing on diamond is a new board in the dugout area bolted to old dugout bench that is rotted. No restrooms. Large very faded and damaged sign about non-discrimination based on race. No visitors. Less than ¼ mile from Garden City Civic Center area with large well maintained ball field complex.

**Belair - #6 on map 11:45AM**

Playground with some newer equipment. Not recently mowed. No shade. No visible restroom. No visitors.

**Westwood - #12 on map 12:10PM**

Newer play equipment. Grown up with weeds, filter fabric in rolls, waterlogged and sited in excavated low spot, inaccessible to those with disabilities. Abandoned baseball diamond. Paved walking trail that was accessible. Restroom building closed and padlocked. Lots of tagging and expletives spray painted on building. No visitors.

**Wellington - #10 on map 12:25PM**

Small overgrown play structure with brush growing through it. Little evidence of any use. No parking, no bathroom, no drinking water. Kids slide. No useful shade. Sign says no ball playing. No visitors.

**Demby - #4 on map 12:40PM**

Locked community building with bars on doors, no windows. No open bathrooms. Newer play structure tagged and spray painted with expletives, including over donation panel mentioning that the playground is a Children's Miracle Network donation. 3 kids playing basketball.

**Lemoyne - #2 on map 1PM**

Abandoned tennis courts with fence around apparently converted to basketball courts (e.g. lines and posts but backboards gone). Other basketball courts with backboards on larger area with some bent rims, some in better shape. One adult shooting free throws. Another woman parked in a car reading. Abandoned baseball diamond. Garden area plowed up but no plants/crops.

Draft 11/14/14

Abandoned small portable stage under a tree. Old sign about non-discrimination falling into disrepair. Portajohn.

Chuck Nelson and Alexis Horton 8/25/14

**Inkster CSO - # 8 on map**

6:35PM appears to be part of Wayne County Park. No visible signage at location listed on 2009-14 plan map denoting City of Inkster Park. Sidewalk in disrepair along Inkster Road.

**Ice Arena/Civic Center - Not on map, but listed in 2009-14 plan 6:40 PM**

Arena closed. Building locked. Parking lot had sinkhole the size of a compact car with flagging tape. No apparent attempts at repair of sinkhole. Signs on building suggest it was last open for Toys for Tots near Christmas some previous year. No visitors.

Attend Reinvent Inkster Planning Session at 7-9 PM at Dozier Community Center. 55 people in attendance.

Chuck Nelson and Craig Lewis 9/16/14

**Manor- #9 on map**

Park is overgrown with grass to mid-calf. Playscape module tagged with considerable graffiti. Pictures taken.

**Moore St. Mini - #3 on map**

Park is overgrown with grass to knee high. Dysfunctional swing set and one picnic table. Couple at table in heated argument so didn't photograph more than one picture.

**Dozier Community Center - #16 on map**

Met volunteers actively working to renovate lower level of rec center in weightroom and other areas doing tasks including painting, patching walls to repair damage from flood of January 8, 2014 and other tasks. New gym floor is excellent and highly serviceable. Working toward grand re-opening September 20, 2014. Recreation coordinator Lewis is very motivated, organized employee able to effectively supervise volunteers and encourage excellence.

Chuck Nelson and Alexis Horton 10/7/14

Took additional pictures of grant acknowledgement signs if found at all parks and visited Parkwood.

**Parkwood**

Mowed grass area with no signage to designate it as a park.

**Appendix B**

*Excerpts from Speech from Mayor Hilliard on the State of City, 2014 relating to Reinvent Inkster, March 13, 2014*

*IV. SELF SUFFICIENCY*

*I pray the state will heed my and other local leaders' call for action and support. But don't think for a second, Inkster, that we have the luxury to wait for state government to do right by us. We don't. And we're not. Rather, we're forging ahead with cogent plans to Reinvent Inkster.*

*Indeed, Michigan State University Extension recently gave our Reinventing Inkster Task Force a shot in the arm by pledging its technical support of this effort to develop an 18-to-36 month community and economic strategic plan.*

*The goal here is simple: Come up with pragmatic ideas for diversifying and growing Inkster's tax base; and pinpoint opportunities for collaboration with neighboring cities to save money.*

*Task force members represent an array of public, private and non-profit partners, including:*

- The Inkster Housing Commission;*
- SEMCOG;*
- The Boji Group;*
- Starfish Family Services;*
- Wayne Metro Community Action Agency;*

*It's also time for us to reconsider our charter, Inkster. Few cities that are our size elect their legislative bodies by districts. Rather, they have at-large governing bodies, drawing the best and brightest to serve their jurisdictions, regardless of where they live.*

*The people in our community have robust character. Volunteerism is high. We must nurture that spirit at every chance, starting with the charter amendment I am proposing.*

*You should know, too, the administration is having discussions with neighboring Cities for shared services opportunity, like collaborating on purchase orders, acquisition of street-sweepers and parks maintenance.*

*Know, too, Inkster that we are preparing RFPs for the sale of some prime real estate in our community – namely the Civic Center and the remaining parcels in Annapolis Pointe subdivision.*

*The latter, in particular, is critical to our future. Recall that we bonded for the public infrastructure at Annapolis Pointe and intended to pay that debt with real property taxes on homes within the subdivision. But the developer of the project left us holding the bag when the residential mortgage bubble popped a few years ago.*

*Selling those outstanding parcels to a new developer to finally get them on the tax roll represents sorely needed revenue for our city.*

*In the interim, our capable state lobbyist Kenneth Cole continues to prepare for introduction of a bill to give us and similarly situated communities some relief associated with such debts.*

*Relatedly, we plan to auction thousands of commercial, industrial and residential parcels later this year to augment our general fund with both short-term and long-term revenue.*

*We're also negotiating with Romulus School District on a plan that would see the City of Inkster assume control of the closed Inkster High School and lease space within the facility to, repurpose and reuse.*

*And we're preparing to open our new \$6.7 million Justice Center on Michigan Avenue near Bayhan this summer.*

*That's not all.*

*Last fall, we had the ribbon cutting for our Inkster Greenway Trail, for which we have scored, to date, some \$2 million in competitive grants to pave a scenic walking and biking track along the Rouge River.*

*The trailhead might eventually serve as the future home of our once-burgeoning Summer Jazz Festival. But at minimum, it'll be a place where families and seniors can get some fresh air and exercise this summer and beyond.*

*Make no mistake: A lot of exciting developments are happening in Inkster. Now is a pivotal moment in the history of our city."*

This project focused on updating the five year Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan of Inkster, Michigan. It involved public listening sessions, a mail survey to a sample of registered voters, and development of a draft plan.



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