Village of Augusta Parks and Recreation Master Plan for period 2026-2036

Introduction

The Village of Augusta has developed this 10-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan after undertaking a thorough process of inventory, analysis, cross-community partnership and collection of public input. This plan serves as a roadmap for parks and recreation decisions made by the Village Council over the next ten years. It will identify future areas of focus, as well as providing clear recommendations to address gaps within the existing Village of Augusta Parks system through specific and measurable goals. Additionally, this plan will make the Village eligible for Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) administered grant programs. The following components can be found within this plan:

- Community Description
- Administrative Structure and Funding
- Recreation Inventory
- Goals and Objectives
- System Wide Recommendations
- Action Plan

Village of Augusta Mission Statement

To provide people with the highest quality and most effective opportunities to enjoy nature within the Village and beyond, while protecting natural resources, fostering economic activity, and preserving a diverse small-town charm.

Village of Augusta Brand

The Village of Augusta's "brand" describes how the Village wants its spaces, residents and municipal bodies/services to be perceived – both internally and externally.

In general, the Village of Augusta should be perceived as the following:

- A good partner and a group that others want to work with.
- Responsive.
- Responsible in its decision making and use of taxpayer dollars and time.
- Focused on creating an inclusive and accessible community.
- Focused on sustainable and creative solutions to the challenges faced by a modern-day community.
- Thoughtful in response and execution.
- Invested in the broader community.

In general, all actions and policies advanced by the Village of Augusta and its representatives (Village Manager, Council Members, DPW, Admin, Officers, etc.) should be filtered through the lens of these attributes. In the case of this 10-year Parks and Recreation plan, each goal and action taken toward a goal should be able to be confidently described as being taken in, or promoting the attributes listed above.

If an action is taken that does not meet or promote these criteria, the cost and benefits of that decision need to be carefully and thoughtfully weighed against the value of the Village's reputation and perception.

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Community Description

This 10-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan was prepared for the residents of our community, the Village of Augusta, Kalamazoo County, which is in Michigan's southwest Lower Peninsula. See figure 1 – Regional Location Map.

The Village of Augusta, located on the northeast corner of Kalamazoo County, offers residents ample access to the major commercial and residential centers of Kalamazoo and Battle Creek for its approximately 900 residents. Our Village - located just minutes from the downtown of both Kalamazoo and Battle Creek - is situated immediately north of the Kalamazoo River, and west of Fort Custer State Recreation Area.



Figure 1 - Regional location Map

Demographic Analysis

Based on available ACS data, the Village of Augusta maintains a stable population with Kalamazoo County, experiencing little change in overall population through the past four decades.

Year	Population
1980	896
1990	879
2000	899
2010	885
2020	899
2026 (estimate)	776

With a median age of 36.6, the Village of Augusta's population trends slightly older than the greater Kalamazoo County, at 35.

Figure 3 shows the population by age range.

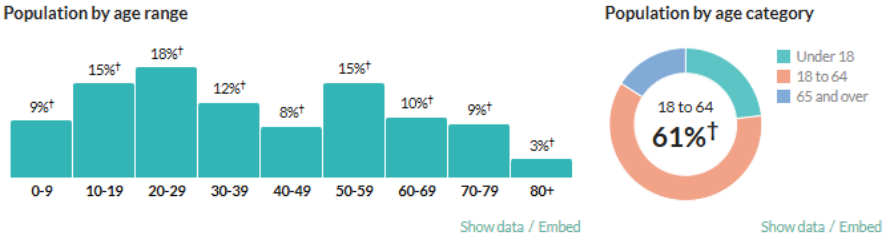

Figure 2 - Population by Age Range

Plan Jurisdiction and Focus

This plan has been prepared primarily for the use of the Village of Augusta in evaluating current and future needs for both active and passive recreation within its borders. Efforts have been made to coordinate the plan with the plans of surrounding municipalities, and with the plans of other recreation providers in the region including Kalamazoo County, Kalamazoo River Valley Trail Association, Battle Creek Parks and Recreation, Ross Township, Richland Township, Comstock Township, The City of Galesburg, and others. See figure 2 – Local townships map.

This plan is focused on all aspects of public recreation within the Village of Augusta including both active and passive recreation opportunities, as well as trailways.

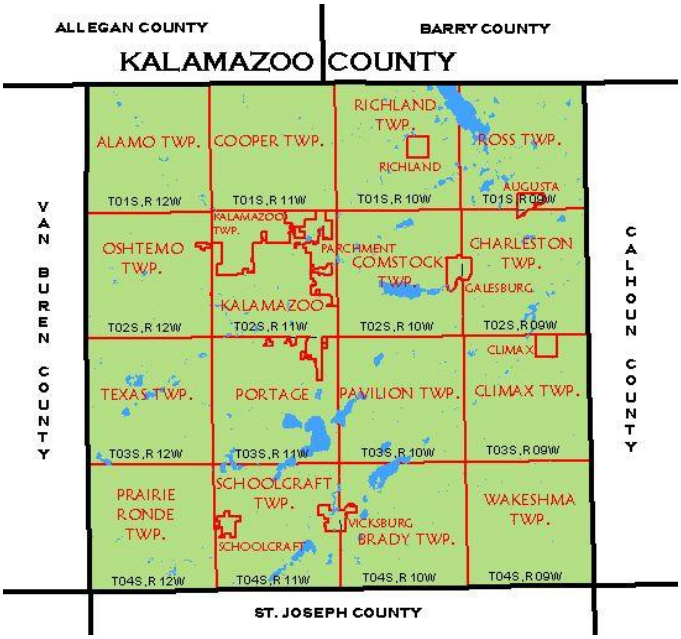

Figure 3 - Local Townships Map

Community Engagement Analysis

Through the creation and adoption of this plan, a variety of steps have been taken to engage the community to ensure broad alignment and specific community fit.

All draft revisions of this document have been discussed at posted public meetings, each with robust opportunity for community input. See appendix for meeting minutes. Additionally, in order to help prioritize projects within the plan scope, a ranked-choice survey was created and maintained on the Village of Augusta website. See appendix for survey.

Finally, prior to adoption, a public hearing will be held allowing for direct commentary from members of the community to the Parks and Recreation Committee. This will help to ensure that community alignment, expectation and understanding are all synchronized with the Board of Trustees intent and the actions laid out within this plan itself.

These robust methods of community engagement in the planning and adoption process help to shape confidence in the longevity and impact of this plan for the broader community.

Administrative Structure and Funding

The elected Village Council is responsible for recreation funding. The Village Council consists of seven members that are elected by the public. The Village does not have a Parks and Recreation department, or Parks Commission. Presently, the seven-member Council provides insight and guidance for the preparation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan by way of a 3-member sub-committee. The Village Manager's office is responsible for the administration and day-to-day management of all recreational facilities within the Village of Augusta.

The specific duties of the Village Manager's Office, as relating to the Parks and Recreation Plan include:

- Coordinate and maintain a 10-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- Develop park-specific management plans
- Make annual recommendations regarding appropriate budgets for Parks and Recreation expenses
- Encourage public involvement and stewardship
- Prepare grant applications
- Work in partnership with other stakeholders - including other municipalities - to support Parks and Recreation plans across the region.

The Village does not currently provide specific formal recreational programming for residents.

Village of Augusta Parks and Recreation Asset Inventory

The Village of Augusta maintains a variety of properties in its inventory. All properties are owned outright. See table for a brief description of each relevant parcel.

Facility Name	Acres	Features	Condition	ADA Status	Priority
N/A – Parcel 33-290-010	19.87	Mature native hardwood canopy, no road access.	Undeveloped	Not accessible	Low
Cemetery/33-438-010	4.80	Several unpaved roads, mature native hardwood canopy, small maintenance shed.	Regularly used as cemetery	Somewhat accessible	Low
Water Tower Park/34-310-830	1.60	Water tower, mature native hardwood canopy, rolling grassy area.	Undeveloped	Not accessible	Medium
Village Park/34-384-010	0.3	Library, minimalist playground set, Village Museum, electrical services, public parking.	Developed	Somewhat accessible	High
Unnamed Village Park/"The Pines"/33-489-010	1.60	Large open field, remnants of old foundation in center.	Undeveloped	Not accessible	High
108 S Chestnut St./34-360-270	.20	DPW Service Building	Developed	Accessible	Low
109 W. Clinton St./34-365-260	.20	Village Hall – small meeting area, desks for municipal use, garage for police cruiser	Developed	Accessible	Low
Augusta Drive Park/34-348-090.	1.60	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
West Land/34-348-013	22.40	Mixed native hardwood canopy, swampy/lowland terrain, regularly floods during high water.	Undeveloped	Not accessible	Medium

In addition to the 52.57 acres listed above, the Village owns and maintains a small variety of other municipal properties – including pump houses and other small accessory parcels totaling an additional 4.7 acres. It is unlikely that these acres would be considered for recreational development opportunities.

See figure 3 for locations of parcels within the Village.

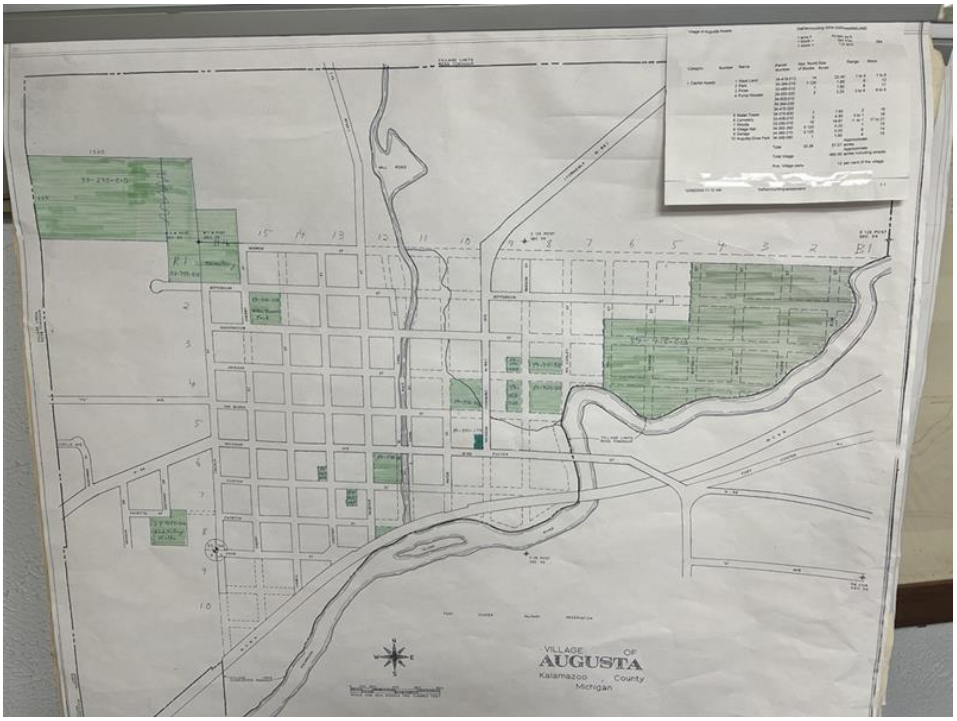

Figure 4 - Village Property Map

Sources of Funding and Parks and Recreation Budget

The Village of Augusta has historically budgeted funds for parks on an annual basis, which come directly from the Village General Fund. Park maintenance has historically only consisted of basic mowing/groundskeeping and funds for those activities have been used directly from the General Fund.

At present, there is no consistent planned use of funds from either the Parks and Recreation budget - or the general fund - focused on improvement to amenities, improvement to the sustainability/ecosystems within Village of Augusta parks, management of invasive species within parks, operation of public facilities, delivery of

public programming or other similar uses typically associated with a Parks and Recreation budget.

See table below for the Village of Augusta Parks and Recreation budget over the previous five years.

Fiscal year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Parks and Recreation Budget	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000

Historically, the Village of Augusta has applied for few grants to help fund its Parks and Recreation opportunities, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources does not have any record of the Village of Augusta receiving any grants in the past.

In order to further develop the Village of Augusta's parks, a budget should be developed that supports the primary goals of development within the Village of Augusta parks system, which can be supplemented by the occasional project-specific grant. Estimates are tabulated below based on preliminary research and evaluation of projects of similar size.

Project Description	Estimated Project Cost
Feasibility and community studies for park locations	10,000
Construction of non-motorized path to "The Pines" parcel on Southway	100,000
Playground replacement	85,000
Furniture and site amenities upgrades	60,000
Raised pedestrian crossings downtown	300,000
Safety improvements to North Country trail	200,000
Parks Maintenance Plan	10,000

An example budget is provided below, based on above estimates and completion of plan goals within proposed timeline. It should be noted, however that as part of the Village of Augusta's annual budgeting process, the Park and Recreation subcommittee will need to perform fiscal analysis and planning to propose specific budgetary amendments that will support a given years' projects. As such, this tabulated budget projection is to give a general sense of the increase needed, not to specifically accomplish the goals within this

plan. Note that the budgeting process for the Parks and Recreation committee will follow the Village of Augusta's fiscal year – which begins on March 1st.

Fiscal Year	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Projected Budget	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Proposed Budget	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000

Primary Plan Goals

The Village of Augusta has a variety of goals in relation to the recreation opportunities within its park system, including:

- Create a walkable village.
- Support the revitalization of the downtown area through preservation and expansion of the Village parks system.
- Support the planning process and construction of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail through the Village of Augusta, north of the Kalamazoo River.
- Improve safety and access to North Country Trail trailheads in and adjacent to the Village of Augusta.
- Establish and maintain a clear schedule of maintenance for all trails and parks within the Village of Augusta.
- Improve furniture and amenities available in Village of Augusta parks – benches, picnic tables, bike racks, etc.
- Support the use of Village Parks for non-traditional activities/opportunities such as concerts, gatherings, etc.
- Improve access to the canal for recreational opportunities.
- Explore opportunities to create a community garden/native greenspace within Village of Augusta limits.

Create A Walkable Village

Research suggests that walkable communities may provide benefits related to public health, transportation efficiency, economic vitality and quality of life. With many of these benefits being focused in areas that are a core part of the Village of Augusta's brand, continuing to focus on developing in a manner consistent with the Village's brand and mission statement should remain a priority.

In order to further develop a walkable Village, the Village of Augusta should focus on pedestrian safety and access to commercial, residential, mixed-use and recreation areas.

Specifically, the Village should look to complete the following phased actions:

- Construct or improve a non-motorized access path to "The Pines".
- Create raised-grade (sidewalk grade) pedestrian walkways at all crossings in the downtown commercial corridor.
- Partner with MDOT to evaluate pedestrian crossing improvements from north-south across M96.
- Improve maintenance and upkeep of sidewalks (snow removal, edging) through public announcements, programs to distribute essential materials, updated ordinance materials and improved ordinance enforcement.

Support the revitalization of the downtown area through preservation and expansion of the Village parks system.

At present, the only available playground equipment is a set of dated pieces in the Village Park. These pieces include an antiquated metal slide, and a large swing set with four swings. Each of these items is embedded into the earth and sits atop a sandy area. This equipment is used frequently, but is dated and could provide better opportunities for recreation and play if it were thoughtfully expanded.

Due to the size and limitations of the Village Park – which currently hosts the Village of Augusta museum, the McKay Library, the playground equipment, a handful of picnic tables, and a large memorial – it is recommended that the focus for new growth in the Village park system be shifted to "The Pines" located in the southwest corner of the Village bounds, at the end of Southway street. See Figure 5 for details.

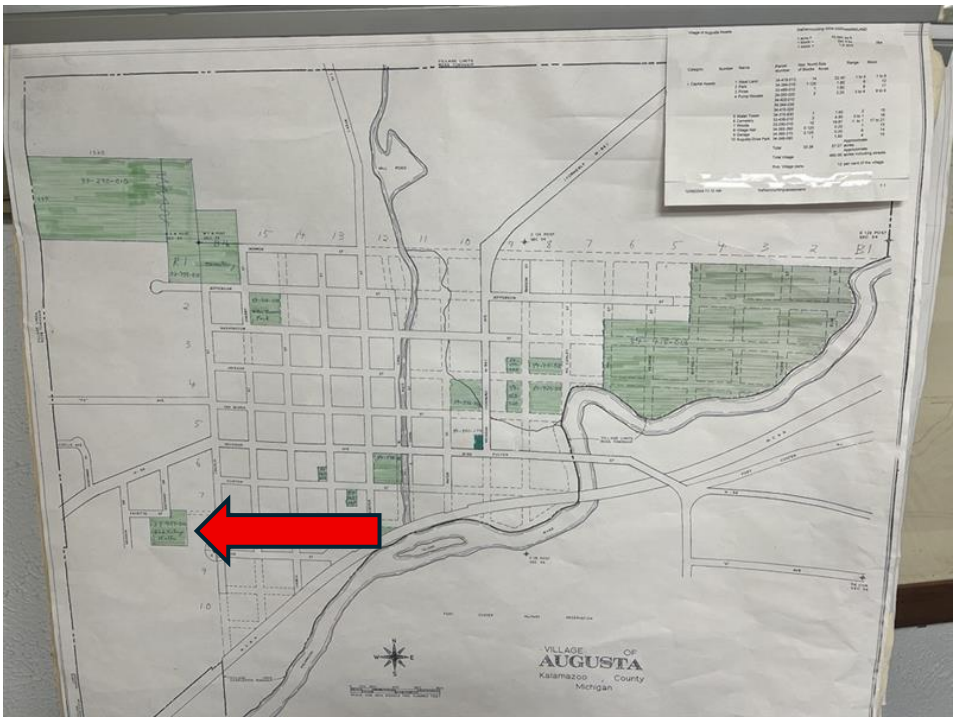

Figure 5 - Location of "The Pines"

The current Village park faces a challenge of modern setback requirements, severely limiting what could be built or added to the space without seeking a variance, or compromising on the accessibility of the new features – either of which could negatively impact funding. In current state, the Village Park has historical features, alternative uses (craft show, car show) and is used regularly by community partners (August McKay Library) and any modifications should be thoughtfully executed after substantial community input and understanding.

At 1.6 acres, and currently unoccupied, early analysis suggests that “The Pines” location could be a suitable location for the unencumbered installation of new playground equipment, a gazebo for events, or other similar infrastructure to support residents’ recreational wants and needs. At present, The Pines’ lack of centrality, lack of signage, and limited sidewalk/cycling access could limit the benefits that might otherwise be seen by investing. It is recommended that the Village explore opportunities to connect Fayette St. between Southway and Lincoln via a non-motorized path prior to investing further in The Pines.

To specifically improve the playground equipment the Village should look to accomplish the following items:

- Host a community event to formally name the space.

- Perform (or partner to perform) a feasibility study on “The Pines” to understand the best placement for playground equipment, understand the potential catchment area of the facility, and create a budget for improvements.
- Draft and implement a community survey to understand the community preference for playground equipment, to understand community thoughts on best location, pieces of equipment, etc.
- Seek community feedback for other uses of the park, and work with community partners to prioritize funding toward those uses.

Support the Planning Process and Construction of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail Through the Village of Augusta

The Village of Augusta’s location between the cities of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo makes for an ideal central hub to connect trails through.

With the terminus of the Battle Creek Linear Path at Fort Custer State Recreation area, and the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail’s current end in Galesburg, supporting the connectivity of these two trails would provide an unbroken non-motorized route from Lake Michigan to Lake St. Clair near Detroit.

This hub serves not only to support recreational opportunities within the Village of Augusta, but across the entire width of the state. Beyond supporting recreational walking, running, cycling and other non-motorized activities, the trail also serves as a central artery for non-motorized commuters along the trail.

In order to support this effort, the Village of Augusta will focus on the following:

- Partner with Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation department to ensure community awareness in the Village.
- Provide opportunity for public input at least twice through the process of planning.
- Draft and review a future trail maintenance plan as a subsection of the Village Manager’s master maintenance plan.

Improve Safety and Access to North Country Trail

The North Country Trail passes through the Village, with a local trailhead located within Village of Augusta limits in the 700 block of East Augusta Drive.

The trailhead is currently accessible by automobile, and has a small (12 car) dirt parking lot. Additional access is provided via the non-motorized path (non-protected 8' shoulders) which runs parallel to E. Augusta Drive through Village limits. The Village of Augusta should explore opportunities to expand non-motorized access to the North Country Trail through joining the non-motorized path with sidewalks within the Village, and installation of protective barriers along the non-motorized path to provide safer walking/cycling opportunities.

- Investigate opportunities for installation of protective barriers along the non-motorized path to the North Country trailhead.
- Investigate opportunities to ensure that access to the North Country trailhead is fully ADA accessible.

Establish and Maintain a Clear Schedule of Maintenance for All Trails and Parks Within the Village

The anticipation of and planning for the maintenance of our parks is critical to providing a consistent and high quality experience for residents and non-residents alike. Ensuring that the Village Parks and Recreation properties are maintained will help to demonstrate a high level of commitment to the lands within the Village of Augusta's care. The Village Manager's office should prioritize the creation of a maintenance schedule for all affected properties, including - but not limited to - the following items:

- Anticipated schedule for mowing, leaf cleanup, and snow removal seasonally.
- Anticipated schedule for parks-specific equipment maintenance and upkeep.
- Regular reviews of trees, shrubs, grasses or other plants situated on affected properties to evaluate for health of the trees and safety of users.
- Planting and watering schedule for any new shrubs, grasses, trees or annuals that might be planted.
- Regular accessibility assessments of Village assets.

The Village Manager's Office should prioritize the creation of a maintenance plan.

Improve Furniture and Amenities Available in Village Parks

Village parks serve as places to recreate and enjoy nature actively and passively; key to connecting with our environment is a selection of amenities that feature the design and material choices that fit within the scope of the natural world around us. As the Village seeks to create robust maintenance and improvement schedules, providing furniture and site amenities that fit the scope of each project will be crucial.

A selection of picnic tables, benches and bike racks should be featured in each Village park to promote human interaction with the space and support primarily pedestrian/non-motorized access to parks.

The Village should take the following actions:

- Vet local Landscape Architects for partnership to help with selection and location of new amenities.
- Purchase new, fully accessible amenities.

Support the Use of Village Parks for Non-Traditional Recreation Opportunities

Various requests have been made to the Village to utilize our communities' park spaces in various non-traditional ways; from performances to a variety of athletic programs, community events and cultural programming. While not all of these requests may fit the Village's vision for what fits within the community, there should be ample process and support to confidently deliver an answer to these inquiries, and efforts should be made to provide the appropriate facilities/venue for the style of event that fit the Village brand.

The Village should draft and adopt a set of ordinances and policies that govern how parks are used and how the Board responds to a request for use.

- Review current ordinances.
- Draft/update ordinances.

Additionally, the Board should direct the Parks and Recreation committee to understand and explore the implementation of additional community events in parks spaces, such as:

- Farmers' Markets
- Makers' Markets
- Movies/Music in the park
- Local campaign events

Improve Access to the Canal and Support Trout

The canal – running north to south into the Kalamazoo River is a defining feature of the Village of Augusta, bisecting the Village nearly in half. Currently, the canal features steep banks, with limited opportunities to for recreation. Additionally, the canal has limited pedestrian-friendly crossings, with one historic pedestrian-only bridge.

To support improved access, the Village should explore multiple options for the banks of the canal, including small over-look/observation platforms, stairs down the banks to the water, and a pedestrianized bridge at Clinton St. to support recreation along the south-eastern bank of the canal.

In addition to improving access to the canal for people, efforts should be made to reintroduce and support trout in the canal through the development and implementation of a stream-redesign that would increase velocity, add calm pools, add brush cover, and eliminate storm-water runoff into the canal.

With the complexity of this project, it is recommended that the Village create a comprehensive canal project plan – including all points of access, bridges, paths/walkways/stairs, and the rewilding of the stream – so that steps can be taken in a linear and non-overlapping manner that reduces double handling and waste.

- Investigate opportunities for habitat enhancement and restoration.

Create a Community Garden and Native Greenspace

The Village of Augusta should investigate available land to utilize or reconfigure for the purpose of supporting a small community garden/native greenspace. Supporting native pollinators, caterpillars and birds is a critical endeavor and eliminating current non-native grass species to provide native habitat would support the Village and residents' sustainability goals, while also improving residents' experiences and interactions with nature and potentially reducing the maintenance bill of the taxpayer by eliminating the need for some amount of mowing.

As the Village of Augusta explores various goals for expanding recreation in relation to "The Pines" Park – improved non-motorized access, implementation of playground equipment, etc. – it is recommended that the current Village Park space be evaluated for limited use as native garden space, with a variety of highly productive native plants to support pollinator and insect populations.

- Investigate the spatial requirements and needs of potential native plant infill.

- Create a concept drawing to share with the community and partners.
- Draft and distribute a community-input survey.

Implementation Matrix

In order to help track progress, and plan for budgeting – the following proposed implementation matrix can be used as a visual reference to understand where each project falls within the 10-year scope of this plan.

With limited time and resources, it is important that the Village of Augusta effectively visualize its' parks and recreation plan to evaluate for gaps and conflicts.

Primary Plan Project	Estimated Fiscal Period Start/End	Potential Funding Sources
Establish and maintain a clear schedule of maintenance for all trails and parks within the Village of Augusta.	2026-2036	General fund
Support the planning process and construction of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail through the Village of Augusta, north of the Kalamazoo River.	2026-2030	N/A
Support the revitalization of the downtown area through preservation and expansion of the Village parks system.	2027-2030	General fund, Parks and Recreation budget, Grants
Create a walkable village.	2027-2036	General fund, Local Streets fund, grants
Improve furniture and amenities available in Village of Augusta parks.	2028-2033	General fund, Parks and Recreation budget, Grants, local donations/partners
Improve access to the canal for recreational opportunities.	2030-2035	General fund, Grants
Explore opportunities to create a community garden/native greenspace	2031-2033	General fund, Grants, donations/community partners

within Village of Augusta limits.		
Improve safety and access to North Country Trail trailheads in and adjacent to the Village of Augusta.	2032-2035	General fund, Grants
Support the use of Village Parks for non-traditional activities/opportunities such as concerts, gatherings, etc.	2035-2036	General fund

Appendix

Community engagement documentation..

Village of Augusta Parks and Recreation Committee meeting minutes – 2026

Village of Augusta survey data.

June 10th, 2026

5:00 PM

Village of Augusta Minutes

Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting

Open Regular Meeting With Roll Call:

Ann Daly, Chris Thomas, Andy Ackley, Jeff Heppler

Old Business:

1. **Draft 10-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan.**

Discussion followed regarding the draft 10-Year Master Plan presented.

Audience Comment:

Multiple members of the audience expressed their support for the current draft document, and shared that they were excited for this to move forward.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:00 PM

July 15th, 2026

5:00 PM

Village of Augusta Minutes

Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting

Open Regular Meeting With Roll Call:

Ann Daly, Chris Thomas, Andy Ackley, Jeff Heppler

Old Business:

1. **Draft 10-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan.**

Discussion followed regarding the updated draft 10-Year Master Plan presented.

Specific discussion ensued around the budgeting, ADA, community engagement and timeline sections.

2. **Community Engagement Discussion**

Minutes from the previous meeting were discussed.

Discussion occurred around a community input survey for the priority of open items.

Audience Comment:

None.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:00 PM

July 29th, 2026

5:00 PM

Village of Augusta Minutes

Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting

Open Regular Meeting With Roll Call:

Ann Daly, Chris Thomas, Andy Ackley, Jeff Heppler

Old Business:

1. **Draft 10-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

Discussion followed regarding the updated draft 10-Year Master Plan presented.

Specific discussion ensued around the budgeting, (calendar vs. fiscal quarters) ADA compliance, community engagement sections, and the implementation matrix.

2. **Community Engagement Discussion**

Minutes from the previous meeting were discussed.

Discussion occurred around the implemented community input survey for the priority of open items. The committee decided to close the survey on the 31st of July, 2026 to collect and analyze responses.

3. Implementation Matrix Discussion

Discussion ensued around a variety of methods to create and utilize the implementation matrix.

4. Next Meeting and Next Steps

Plans for updating the draft plan were discussed. The group discussed dates for the next meting, and for a public hearing.

Audience Comment:

Audience participants commented on the survey – with a commentor indicating their support for closing the survey on 7/31/2026.

A commenter discussed plans they have implemented before and made suggestion around how to structure the implementation matrix.

A commenter mentioned several tools that could be used to review the document prior to adoption to ensure completeness.

An audience member expressed support for the committees' work.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:00 PM

Response No.	Walkable Village	Improve Playground Equipment in One or Multiple	Improve Safety And Access To North Country Trail	Explore Creating Community Gardens	Improve Access To Canal For Recreational Purposes	Improve Furniture And Amenities Available In The Parks
1	17	26	8	5	12	15
2	6	7	7	10	9	9
3	8	1	8	10	9	7
4	3	3	8	7	1	9

5	6	5	4	6	5	3
6	6	4	11	8	10	3
Total Responses	46	46	46	46	46	46
Response Value Total	131	104	164	161	146	123
Weighted Average	2.85	2.26	3.57	3.50	3.17	2.67

On the 1 - 6 ratings scale for each segment, the order of preference is as follows:

	Total	Average
Improve Playground Equipment	104	2.26
Improve Furniture & Amenities	123	2.67
Walkable Village	131	2.85
Improve Access to Canal	145	3.17
Creating Community Gardens	161	3.5
Improve Safety / Access to N.C.T.	164	3.57