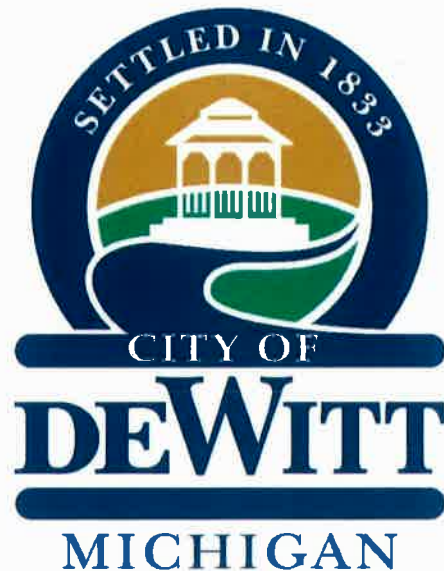


City of DeWitt Parks,
Recreation, Cemetery and Tree
Commission

City Park Facility and
Equipment Improvement Plan
2022-2037



November 17, 2021

City of DeWitt Parks & Recreation Plan

Parks, Recreation, Tree & Cemetery Committee

November 17, 2021

Play equipment typically has a 20-year lifespan and the City of DeWitt has the unusual situation of having all playground equipment in six of seven parks hit that mark in the last four years. In addition, the City has three other passive parks that do not have play structures, Elmwood Park, Triangle Park and City Hall Park. This plan looks at prioritizing the six city parks and upgrading/replacing recreational assets over a 10 to 15-year period with a proposed integrated plan for short-, mid- and long-horizon projects from a mix of funding sources.

The City Council may wish to consider the potential for individual family donations to specific park projects, to be commemorated in discrete bricks or other manner as a means of attaining more rapid progress and more appealing features. A public appeal is likely to be embraced in our family-oriented community.

#1 Priority – Riverside Park *(24-yr-old play equip, installed 1996.)*

This park is located closest to the downtown district and serves as a destination park for many visitors, residents and non-residents alike. The park consists of space for children's play; adult recreation primarily for river access; social opportunities with pavilion and restrooms; and lawn space for car shows, movies in the park and similar social events. The city's Historic DeWitt walking tour of several historic homes also launches from this location.

Park Theme: A river-side family recreation opportunity.

Functional Opportunities

- Updated playground equipment befitting the central downtown park location with a central play structure theme
- Expanded playground from 500 sq. ft. to 1,000 sq. ft. is proposed with two separate age clusters of equipment – maintain existing location
- Expanded parking onto vacant city-owned lot south of nonmotorized trail/tree line/dumpster.
- New pavilion on spare lot to expand rental social opportunities.
- Concert program platform for weekly performances throughout summer.
- Facelifts to two park buildings to reinforce Historic DeWitt brand.
- Library-created walking story tour.

Obstacles

- High soil berm artifact of interurban RR that bisects park property that could be removed, utility towers replaced.
- Need to acquire two remaining residential parcels fronting Bridge Street.
- Resurface/relocate nonmotorized trail.

Playmats vs. Safety Mulch

The Committee is recommending that bark mulch beneath play equipment be replaced with the poured-in-place rubberized safety surface. The All-Kids Park, constructed in 2009, currently has a similar surface under the swings, and they are beginning to need repair or replacement. The poured-in-place safety surface has a 10-year warranty, but due to the annual flooding in Riverside Park this application would need to be further researched with the manufacturer to ensure the warranty would be honored. There are other parks in the DeWitt area have such rubber mats, which are cleaner for kids, less likely to give splinters, and requires less maintenance by the DPW staff.

PROJECT GRID	Short Horizon (1-2 yrs.)	Medium Horizon (3-7 yrs.)	Long Horizon (7-15 yrs.)	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Play Structure	XX(5-12 yr old age group equipment)			\$100K-\$125K	City Budget
Play Structure	XX (2-5 yr old age group equipment)			\$100-\$115K	City Budget
Resurface nonmotorized	XX			\$15K	City Budget
New parking lot	XX			\$175K	City Budget
Restroom/pavilion facelift	XX			DPW	City Budget
New pavilion			XX	\$45-\$60K	Grant
Concert platform		XX		\$TBD	Grant
Concert Series		XX		\$6-8,000/yr	City or DDA
Berm removal			XX	\$TBD	Grant
Lot acquisition			XX	\$TBD	Grant
PIP Safety Surface			XX	\$15-\$20K	Grant/City



Riverside Park

#2 Priority – Sports Park *(20-yr-old play equip, installed 1997)*

The 2020 Community Survey indicates this is DeWitt's second-most popular park with a full focus on children's sports activities. The DeWitt Area Recreational Authority has concentrated its youth soccer, flag football program and Special Events, i.e. Flashlight Pumpkin Hunt, at the Sports Park. This park is located on the southern edge of the city with a shared-use path on two sides of the park that connect to several additional miles of pathways in the City and DeWitt Charter Township. The path system does have a direct connection to the downtown district, approximately 1-mile to the north.

With the Sports Park being located on the edge of the city, and not encouraging dwell time or downtown business support. It is on the fringe of extensive nonmotorized pathways that now run along DeWitt Road to the south into the township where additional linkages are planned, and along Herbison Road to the east and west. With nice restroom facilities and water source, it may have potential as a cyclist stopover.

Functional Opportunities

- Replace play structure
- Maintain same footprint
- Consider walking path around sports fields
- Resurface parking lot
- Pavilion maintenance

- Fence repair
- Concrete slabs for bleachers at the ball fields
- New dugout(s)
- New pavilion
- Additional storage structure
- Re-Purpose Field #1

PROJECT GRID	Short Horizon (1-2 yrs.)	Medium Horizon (3-7 yrs.)	Long Horizon (7-15 yrs.)	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Play eqpmt.	XX			\$85K-\$110K	City Budget
Repave parking lot	XX			\$125K-\$150K	City Budget
Pavilion Maint	XX			\$2,000	DPW
Fence Repair		XX		\$10-\$15K	DPW
Bleacher concrete	XX			\$4K-\$5K	DPW
New pavilion		XX		\$45K-\$60K	Grant
Storage bldg.		XX		\$50K-\$75K	City Budget
New Dugout(s)		XX		TBD	Grant/City Budget
Walking Path			XX	TBD	Grant/City Budget



Sports Park

#3 Priority – McGuire Park *(20-yr-old play equip, installed 2000)*

Probably the most under-utilized park, McGuire Park has approximately 900’ of undeveloped riverfront in need of clean-up, tree removal/trimming and attention to the riverfront platform. There is opportunity for the park activities to extend toward the river and the non-motorized path is in need of resurfacing. The site has good bathroom/drinking fountain facilities, a rent-able picnic pavilion, full-sized basketball court and a good-sized parking lot. This park has a 500 sq. ft. play equipment footprint.

The space is especially suited to teen/adult play with the basketball court and space for pickleball courts. DARA utilizes the greenspace for their Little Kickers program in the fall. McGuire Park is located along the city’s biking trail.

Functional Opportunities

- Replace playground equipment – maintain location and footprint
- Construct pickleball courts – 2-4 courts depending on space and user frequency
- New benches
- Resurface bike path
- Minor pavilion and landscape maintenance – re-painting, trimming trees and shrubs
- Soccer field improvements for DARA Little Kickers
- Create more accessibility to park from river and from park to river
- Create adult exercise “stations” along non-motorized trail

Obstacles

- Overly shaded, inaccessible riverbank with fallen trees.
- Need to pull park activities back away from Main Street toward the riverbank and the unused land there.
- Area from non-motorized path to river bank floods frequently in the spring and fall.

PROJECT GRID	Short Horizon <i>(1-2 yrs.)</i>	Medium Horizon <i>(3-4 yrs.)</i>	Long Horizon <i>(7-15 yrs.)</i>	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Play eqpmt.		XX*		\$100-\$125K	City Budget
Resurface nonmotorized	XX				City Budget
Pickleball courts		XX		\$150K	Grant
New Benches		XX		\$1,200	City Budget
Pavilion Maint.	XX				In-House
Landscape Maint.	XX				In-House
Accessibility		XX	XX		Grant

PROJECT GRID	Short Horizon (1-2 yrs.)	Medium Horizon (3-4 yrs.)	Long Horizon (7-15 yrs.)	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Exercise Stations	XX			\$TBD	City Budget
Soccer Field	XX	or XX		\$TBD	In-House?
Improve Drainage	XX			\$2,500	In-House
Pedestrian Bridge			XX	\$TBD	Grant
Viewing Platform			XX	\$TBD	Grant



McGuire Park

#4 – Memorial Park *(no play equipmt.)*

This is DeWitt’s contemplative park and the Commission is recommending this not be changed. The white Victorian-style gazebo is a symbol of DeWitt and supports the Historic DeWitt mantra. It is incredibly popular for Senior Prom/Homecoming photos, wedding photos and ceremonies; other ceremonies and special occasions. It is the site of the Ox Roast frog jumping contest on the undeveloped grass. At other times, people can be seen sitting and reading, watching the river and otherwise relaxing in the “room” like green space. The DeWitt Millennial Garden Club does an excellent

job with the cultivated gardens surrounding the park gazebo. The space also exhibits the city's only public art.

The Parks Committee has observed that despite the meditation use of the space, there are no benches in the park! Four poured concrete pads with Victorian-style benches could be placed within the park to optimize enjoyment of the space. To accommodate ADA accessibility, at least one of the benches should have a concrete walkway. Benches could be sponsored with discrete nameplates.

Park Theme: Reflective, contemplative space suitable for photos, ceremonies, frog jumping contests and relaxation. Not a place for play equipment or parking.

Functional Opportunities

- Enhance seating opportunities – and Victorian historic theme – with benches.
- The south end of this park (a former home) is under-utilized and is no longer being considered for parking. There is no seating from which to contemplate the public art.
- Planting DeWitt's next-generation Christmas tree(s) on this lot.
- Implement components of 2016 Master Plan as funds are available

Obstacles

- None identified

PROJECT GRID	Short Horizon (1-2 yrs.)	Medium Horizon (3-7 yrs.)	Long Horizon (7-15 yrs.)	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
4 benches, concrete pad, walkway	XX			\$4K-\$6K	City Budget, Donors
Additional Sidewalks		XX	XX	\$12-\$14/sq.ft.	Grant/City



Memorial Park

#5 – River Trail Park, a.k.a. the Dinosaur Park *(20 yrs. old, installed 2000)*

This park is very child-focused with approximately 500 sq. ft. of play equipment, excellent bathrooms, separate parking lot and a small pavilion often rented out for children’s birthday parties. The committee is in 100% consensus that it needs to remain a dinosaur-themed playground by popular demand! The site is small, probably only the one hub of playground equipment and a few free-standing play features are needed. This section is cut off from the Riverside Park by the berm.

Functional Opportunities

- Replace playground equipment – maintain Dinosaur Theme
- Consider renaming the park – Dinosaur Park

Obstacles

- None noted.

PROJECT GRID	Short Horizon (1-2 yrs.)	Medium Horizon (5-6 yrs.)	Long Horizon (7-15 yrs.)	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Dinosaur-themed structure		XX		\$125K-\$140K	City Budget



River Trial Park

#6 – Percy Carris Park *(20 yrs. old, installed 1996)*

This is a small neighborhood pocket park in an area with a considerable number of families with children. In addition to the pocket park with swings and a few other small attractions (1960's era equipment), the City of DeWitt owns the land on the west side of Cherry Street. This site would be a good basketball court for the teenagers in the area. There is no available off-street parking for this park.

Functional Opportunities

- Create new teen play space with a poured basketball court on the west side of Cherry Street.
- Small play structure (300 sq. ft.) on the east side of Cherry Street.
- Neighborhood engagement meetings to gather input on the style of playground equipment

Obstacles

- The land that could be used for the basketball court hasn't previously been developed and its suitability isn't known.

PROJECT GRID	Short Horizon <i>(1-2 yrs.)</i>	Medium Horizon <i>(3-7 yrs.)</i>	Long Horizon <i>(7-15 yrs.)</i>	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Play equipment		XX		\$90K-\$110K	City Budget
Basketball court (space very limited/flooding)			XX	\$TBD	Grant



Percy Carris Park

#7 – Millbrook Park *(20 yrs. old, installed 1999)*

This is a neighborhood park that has the appearance of a private subdivision playground. Any visitors must park on-street, either on Westbrook or Manchester or walk to the park. It is older equipment and likely only used by those who know it's located there. The site also has a very large grassy area, which is not used for any structured recreational activities.

Functional Opportunities

- Replace older equipment
- Neighborhood engagement meetings to gather input on the style of playground equipment
- Parks expansion could occur with development of vacant land to the north-west

Obstacles

- Parking and visibility of the location to overcome the appearance of a private park

PROJECT GRID	Short Horizon <i>(1-3 yrs.)</i>	Medium Horizon <i>(3-7 yrs.)</i>	Long Horizon <i>(7-15 yrs.)</i>	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Play equipment			XX	\$90K-\$110K	City Budget



Millbrook Park

#8 – All Kids Playground Park *(12 yrs. old, installed 2009)*

This is DeWitt’s outstanding universally-accessible park for kids. It is popular with musical equipment, a ramp-accessible structure, paved circuit of attractions, a stage and swings. A performing stage has deteriorated and was recently removed. It has separate parking and shares the bathrooms for Riverside Park.

Functional Opportunities

- Replace play equipment in the long-term.
- Maintenance as-needed

Obstacles

- None identified.

PROJECT GRID	Short Horizon (1-2 yrs.)	Medium Horizon (3-7 yrs.)	Long Horizon (7-15 yrs.)	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Play Equip.			XX	\$135-\$150K	Grant
Wheel Chair Accessible Swing	XX			\$1K-\$2K	City Budget



All Kids Playground Park