

# **Imagine Flint Comprehensive Plan Update 2024-2025**

**Environmental Features, Open Space, & Parks  
initial discussion**

July 18, 2024  
2pm to 4pm - Gloria Coles Flint Public Library

# Agenda

1. Introductions of Comprehensive Plan Update oversight leadership team
2. Mindfulness moment
3. Ground rules
4. Purpose of conversation
5. Overview of Comprehensive Plan Ch.7 & examples of work completed
6. Objectives discussion  
(pg 147 in Chapter 7 of the Imagine Flint plan)
  - a. What has been accomplished?
  - b. Does this objective still align with community?

# Introductions



Regina Laurie,  
Lead Facilitator



Emily Doerr,  
City of Flint -  
Director of Planning  
& Development



Tyler Bailey,  
City of Flint -  
Deputy Director of  
Business Services



Ashly Harris,  
City of Flint -  
Deputy Director of  
Community  
Services



Cade Surface,  
The Crim Fitness  
Foundation -  
Director of Urban  
Strategies

With support from  
the New Urban  
Mobility Alliance

# Mindfulness moment

Icebreaker – Please take a minute to discuss with your neighbor: “What’s on your mind for the rest of the day?”

# Ground/group rules

1. Participate with intention. When speaking, share what you think in a constructive manner.
2. Appreciate the diversity of perspectives. Everyone is coming to the meeting with a unique set of experiences. Listen to learn and chart a path forward.
3. Maintain a respectful space. Treat each other with kindness and respect and give speakers your full attention.
4. Listen deeply. Listen intently to what is said, to the feelings beneath the words.
5. When things get difficult, turn to wonder.
6. Silence phones.

# Goals of today's conversation

- ▶ Get us all on the same page regarding the objectives that were laid out by Flint's residents a decade ago regarding parks and open spaces in the city.
- ▶ To understand how much has been accomplished from the previous plan, both perceived and actual
- ▶ To begin assessment for which previous strategies still align with residents.

# What is a Comprehensive Plan and what is the process going forward?

- ▶ What is a comprehensive plan? The guide to a community's vision for future development
- ▶ Why is it important? The plan will help identify resources, needs, and goals, and help develop consensus.
- ▶ The comprehensive plan update process will take an expected 18 months and include at least 50 public meetings and other engagement events where all residents will be invited to contribute feedback and ideas, so today will not be the opportunity for you to help shape our city's plan.

# How your input will be utilized

- ▶ Your input will inform the engagement process going forward
- ▶ It also helps the team understand key areas of concern that still remain from the 2013 comprehensive plan



Data for this week: The City of Flint 2019 Parks Plan is a 58-page document with an immense amount of info

[https://www.cityofflint.com/wp-content/uploads/Executive-Summary\\_UPLOADED-COPY.pdf](https://www.cityofflint.com/wp-content/uploads/Executive-Summary_UPLOADED-COPY.pdf)

## HOW DOES FLINT COMPARE TO PARKS AND RECREATION NATIONAL AVERAGES?

The incredible decline in Flint's population over the last few decades has resulted in a large surplus of parkland and greenspace per resident. The City now has over double the national average of the amount of parkland per 1,000 residents, as reported by National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). Flint also has fewer residents per park than the national average, meaning our parks are less crowded. Most glaring, however, is the amount of staff and operating expenditures per capita Flint has to manage such a large parks system. The City has less than one full-time parks staff member for not just every 10,000 residents, but **for all 97,386\* residents!** Additionally, because expenditures are tied to the declining parks millage, Flint spends 21 times less than the average parks and recreation agency.

	<b>Flint*</b>	<b>NRPA†</b>
Park Land	19.3 acres per 1,000 residents	9.6 acres per 1,000 residents
Residents Per Park	1,475 residents per park	2,266 residents per park
Staff Members	0.025 staff members per 10,000 residents	7.3 Staff members per 10,000 residents
Operating Expenditures	\$3.61 per resident	\$77.32 per resident
Percent Recovery of Operating Expenditures by Revenue Generation	0%	29%

\* 2016 Census estimate of 97,386 residents

† National averages based on 2017 NRPA Field Guide <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/research-papers/agency-performance-review/>

## Additional parks-related data points:

- The number of full-time employees has dropped from 75 in 2007 to just .5 of a full-time equivalent employee in 2024.
- Likewise, the parks millage, which is the only dedicated source of funding for parks administration, operations, and maintenance within the city, has been in steady decline since first being approved in 1996. It started above \$750,000 and in 2024 is estimated at \$335,000.
- Fortunately the C.S. Mott Foundation has awarded a \$620,000 grant for the Parks Partnership Agreement!

# Final data slide: Goals of Equity and Access

- ▶ There has been an increase in the disabled population in Flint which is crucial to keep in mind for development of recreational facilities

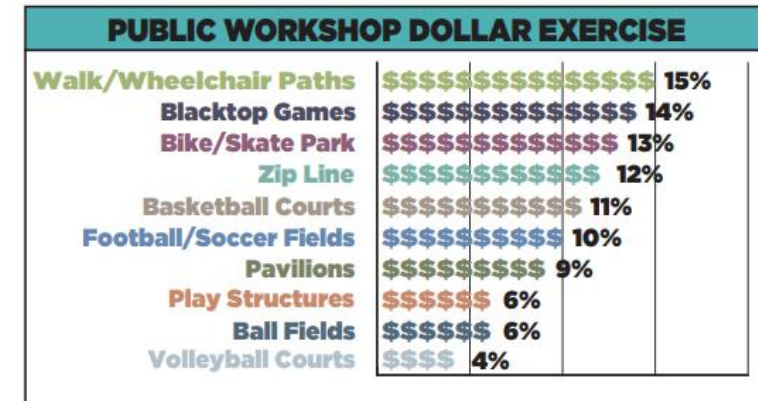
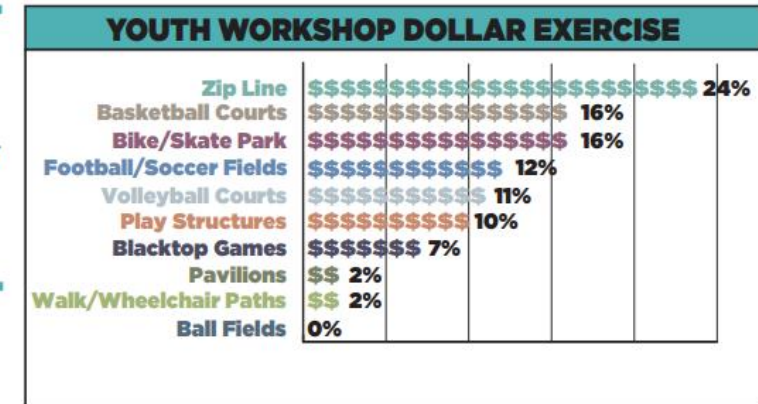
	2010	2022
With Disability in MI	13.6%	14.3%
With Disability in Genesee County	15.5%	18.1%
With Disability in Flint	20.8%	24.1%
Employed With Disability in Flint	2,674	3,631
Unemployed With Disability in Flint	1,562	5,895
With Disability Not in Labor Force	8,972	6,790

## 2019 PARKS PLAN PROCESS

Two sets of community input meetings were held in November 2017 to discuss the 2019 *Parks Plan*; one meeting for the youth of Flint and two for the general public.

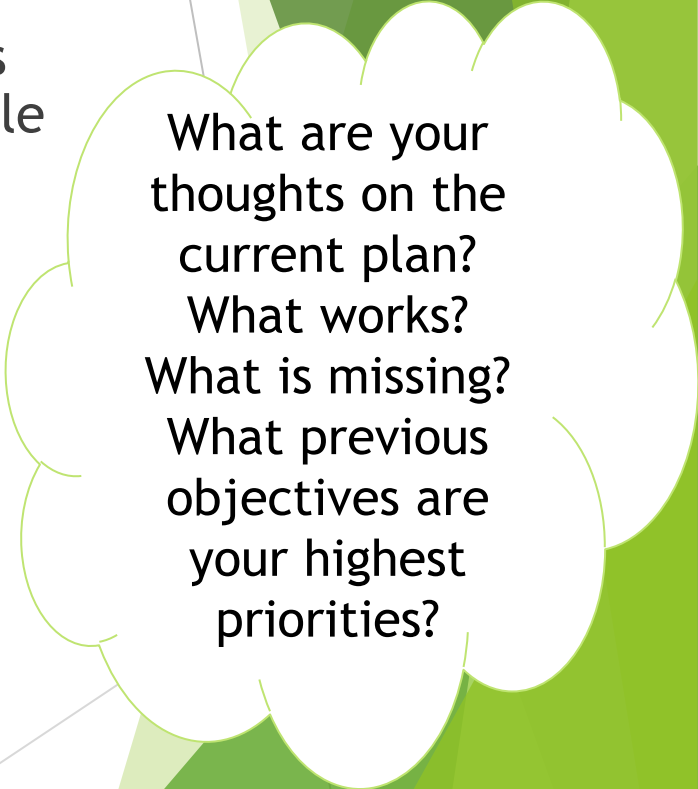
**Youth Workshop** - At the youth meeting, children created “top three” lists that were ultimately compiled together as a master list and then every child was given ten “J. Dallas Dort Dollars” to vote on amenity options as they saw fit.

**Public Workshops** - At the general public meetings community members added their own thoughts, concerns, and possible gaps concerning Flint parks as they pertain to each of the five guiding principle and two or three possible goals and/or strategies. A second part entailed a “dollar exercises” like at the youth workshop where everyone used “J. Dallas Dort Dollars” to prioritize their tax dollars to fund certain park improvement projects and amenities that aligned with the choices chosen by Flint youth. Graphs of the results are to the right.



# Overview of chapter 7 (environmental features, open space, and parks) objectives

- ▶ **Objective 1:** Improve the ecological health of Flint's natural systems through responsible planning and development.
- ▶ **Objective 2:** Protect, enhance, and promote the Flint River and its watershed, along with other tributary lakes and streams, as valuable community assets.
- ▶ **Objective 3:** Create, integrate and maintain blue/green infrastructure centered around the Flint River system
- ▶ **Objective 4:** Provide parks, open space, and recreation infrastructure that both meets the needs of the community and is maintainable by the City and its community partners
- ▶ **Objective 5:** Reduce the City's overall carbon footprint
- ▶ **Objective 6:** Establish a new park management framework and secure resources necessary to maintain the City's parks and open spaces.
- ▶ **Objective 7:** Engage the Flint community to support the programming and use of park and recreation facilities



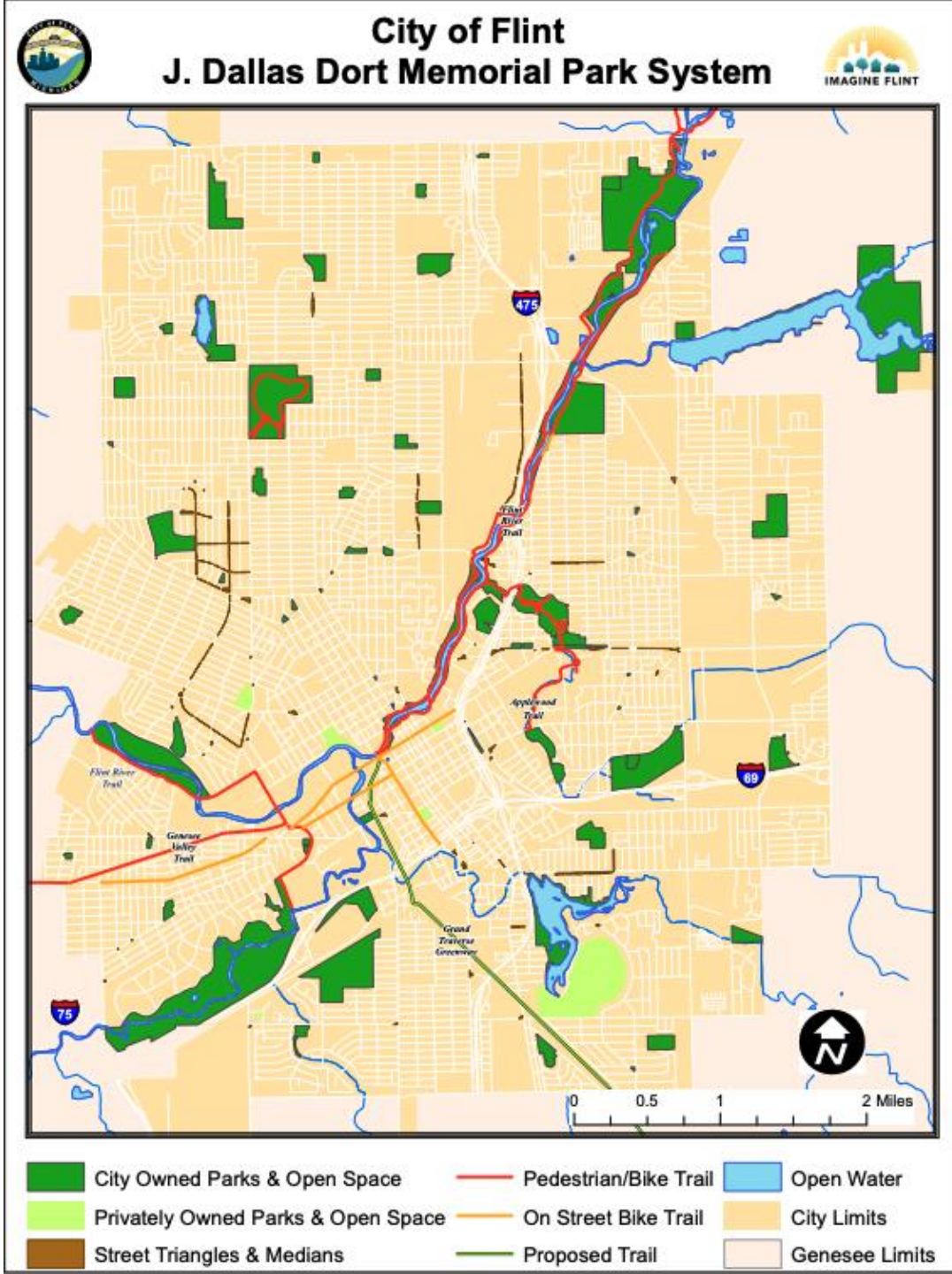
What are your thoughts on the current plan?  
What works?  
What is missing?  
What previous objectives are your highest priorities?

## Examples of work that has happened

- Parks Partnership Agreement in place between City of Flint and Genesee County Parks for mowing / trash removal / light maintenance of all 72 parks, managing park online reservation process, and naming Genesee County Parks as project manager for Grand Traverse Greenway
- Transition of Mott Park Golf Course into Disc Golf Course; renovation of Mott Park Clubhouse
- MOU between City of Flint and Pierce Park Nature Preserve for grant applications for bioswales, other green infrastructure



**Between 2015 &  
2020 ~40 new  
playgrounds were  
added to city parks**



# Discussion format

- ▶ We will now go through each objective for you to discuss in small groups. Please fill out your answers as you go in the survey - link on next slide (8 minutes)
- ▶ After each objective discussion groups will be given the opportunity to report out to the larger group some of the highlights of their conversation (4 minutes)
- ▶ We will repeat for all 7 objectives.
- ▶ Refer to page 147 in Chapter 7 of the plan.

# QR code to survey



<https://qrco.de/bfEiO7>



## **Objective # 1:** Improve the ecological health of Flint's natural systems through responsible planning and development

*“Sustainable planning promotes a healthy ecosystem, protects natural resources by reducing sprawl, and increases water and air quality. Such efforts are particularly important in disadvantaged neighborhoods where Flint's industrial past most negatively affected the environment.”*

### Questions for discussion:

- What has been accomplished?
- Where have things improved / particular bright spots?
- Where have things gotten worse?
- Does this objective still align with you/the community?

**Objective # 2:** Protect, enhance, and promote the Flint River and its watershed, along with other tributary lakes and streams, as valuable community assets.

*“Transforming the Flint River and its lakes and streams into clean, appealing, and recreational destinations facilitates exercise and healthier lifestyles, stimulates appreciation for the natural environment, and drives new economic investment. Revitalized outdoor spaces also create new venues for civic engagement, while providing youth with safe spaces for recreation.”*

Questions for discussion:

- What has been accomplished?
- Where have things improved / particular bright spots?
- Where have things gotten worse?
- Does this objective still align with you/the community?

## **Objective # 3:** Create, integrate, and maintain blue/green infrastructure centered around the Flint River system.

*“Acquiring and preserving a “greenbelt” of land around the Flint River protects the river from development and pollution and promotes recreation. It also absorbs rainwater, reduces flooding, and lessens the burden on the City’s sewer infrastructure.”*

### Questions for discussion:

- What has been accomplished?
- Where have things improved / particular bright spots?
- Where have things gotten worse?
- Does this objective still align with you/the community?

**Objective # 4:** Provide parks, open space, and recreation infrastructure that both meets the needs of the community and is maintainable by the City and its community partners.

*“A healthy, safe, and equitable system of parks provides unmatched quality of life benefits to residents and youth. The City must identify and rectify service gaps, maintenance needs, and accessibility issues.”*

Questions for discussion:

- What has been accomplished?
- Where have things improved / particular bright spots?
- Where have things gotten worse?
- Does this objective still align with you/the community?

## **Objective # 5: Reduce the City's overall carbon footprint**

*“A healthy, safe, and equitable system of parks provides unmatched quality of life benefits to residents and youth. The City must identify and rectify service gaps, maintenance needs, and accessibility issues.”*

### Questions for discussion:

- What has been accomplished?
- Where have things improved / particular bright spots?
- Where have things gotten worse?
- Does this objective still align with you/the community?

**Objective # 6:** Establish a new park management framework and secure resources necessary to maintain the City's parks and open spaces.

*“A new innovative and sustainable parks framework is needed to reduce City costs while increasing park access and appearance. This will include close civic partnerships with community groups, volunteers, the county and state governments, and non-profit orgs.”*

Questions for discussion:

- What has been accomplished?
- Where have things improved / particular bright spots?
- Where have things gotten worse?
- Does this objective still align with you/the community?

## **Objective # 7:** Engage the Flint community to support the programming and use of park and recreation facilities.

*“Residents must drive the implementation of the Environmental Features, Open Space & Parks Plan and be continuously engaged. A new citizen’s park advisory council will advocate on behalf of the community and youth will be provided with new forums for civic and recreational engagement.”*

### Questions for discussion:

- What has been accomplished?
- Where have things improved / particular bright spots?
- Where have things gotten worse?
- Does this objective still align with you/the community?

# Next steps for participants

1. Come to our meeting next week to discuss Infrastructure and Community Facilities, same place and time
2. Spread the word! Encourage folks to join our next meetings and to watch the recordings online
3. Read through the implementation plan to provide additional feedback in the future.
4. This is the first series of meetings to kickoff the update to the plan. Stay tuned for information on upcoming events.