

## **B. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION**



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#### I. Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission's Role in the Community

A brief summary of pertinent statistics of Washtenaw County starts with its location in southeast Michigan, covering 720 square miles of area (see Figure 2). It is home to five cities (Ann Arbor [also the County seat], Chelsea, Milan, Saline, and Ypsilanti), three incorporated villages (Barton Hills, Dexter, and Manchester) and 20 townships. The American Community Survey put the population in 2008 at 347,670 citizens. The County spans urban, suburban, to rural settings, and is home to 2 major universities (University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University, 2 major rivers (the Huron River and River Raisin) and dozens of lakes. Washtenaw County's website can be found at [www.ewashtenaw.org](http://www.ewashtenaw.org).

Parks and recreation services can best be provided through a system in which government at all levels, as well as public and private organizations combine and collaborate to provide recreational services.

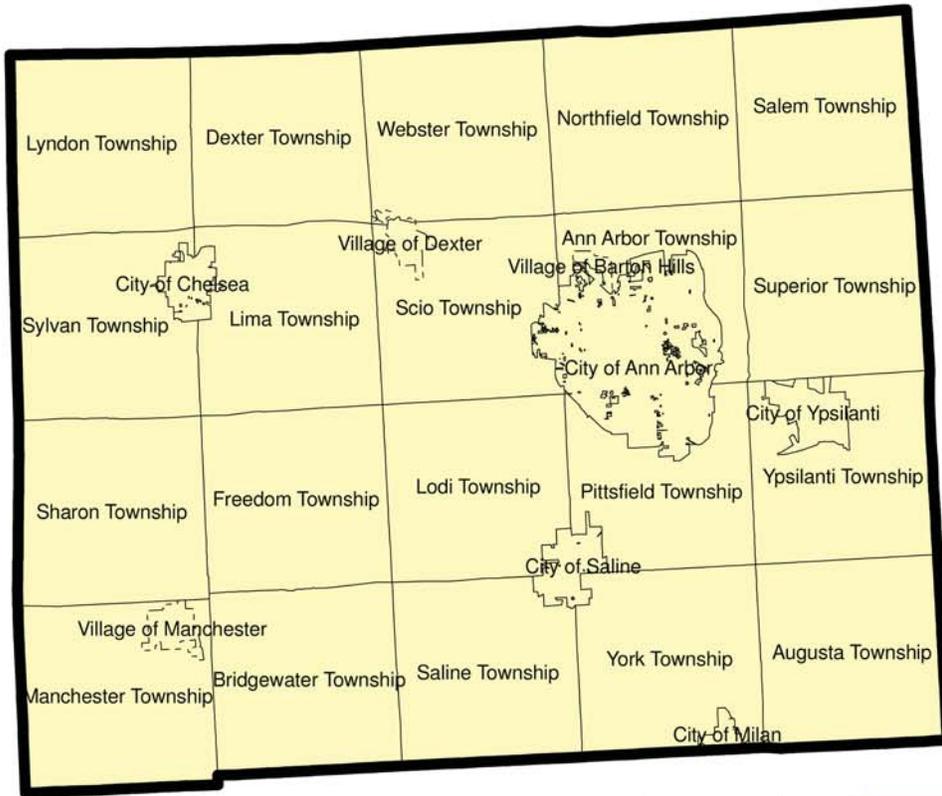
The local and regional recreation and open space classification system as suggested by Lancaster, Mertes, and Hall (presented in Appendix A and discussed in Section E) is generally accepted as the system of categorizing park facilities based on user groups and service area. The classification system also acknowledges that each level of government (local, county, regional, and state) contributes to the development of a comprehensive recreation program throughout the community.

Local municipalities are responsible for providing public recreation facilities for frequent, short-term use by local residents.

WCPARC has assumed the responsibility to supplement recreational facilities and programs at the County level that cannot be provided at the local level due to budgetary constraints, maintenance obligations, the level of priority municipalities are able to place on parks compared to other essential services, or various other reasons. Since County facilities supplement local facilities, they should be readily accessible to population concentrations. The County also cooperates with other levels of government and pertinent organizations to protect open space and natural areas threatened by urban sprawl, and provides recreational facilities and programs for use on an inter-community or county-wide basis.

# WASHTENAW COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

## Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2010 - 2014



**Washtenaw Map**  
Not To Scale



**County Area Map**  
Not To Scale



**Washtenaw County**  
**Figure. 2 Regional Location**

Source: <http://www.mcgi.state.mi.us>

# WASHTENAW COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

## Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2010 - 2014



On a regional level, the Huron Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA) has the responsibility to provide services for a geographic area much greater than the County level, consistent with a regional recreation plan. HCMA provides large-scale and special facilities to accommodate large numbers of users in well-defined active and passive recreational activities.

State government (highest level of recreation in the County, since there are no Federal parklands) has responsibilities in numerous program areas. The state acquires and develops land in southeast Michigan for large scale or special park and recreation areas, legalized hunting sites, water access, and boating sites. Selected sites near and within urban areas are chosen to conserve unique natural resources where population densities are greatest. State recreational areas also provide extensive natural areas where development and user impacts are minor, serve as a public land trust conserving their aesthetic, scenic, and open space values, and as buffers for their more intensive recreational facilities.

A summary of specific local, regional, and state recreational opportunities is provided in Section D.

Finally, when a park functions close to the community level as WCPARC does, the public expects their parks system to take a leadership role in addressing current topics of interest; for example:

- Providing community spaces in addition to recreation spaces.
- Aid communities by providing economic benefits.
- Providing green initiatives.
- Preserving critical ecological and wildlife habitat.
- Providing a mechanism to resolve stress.
- Countering the trend toward inactivity in a computer-driven society.
- Assisting in the control of obesity.
- Providing organized structured activities for at-risk youth.
- Providing a safe recreational environment for all ages.



Youth Participating in Environmental Stewardship.  
Source: WCPARC

### Section B – Community Description

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