

**Presented by Pistons Neighbors Program**

# **A Guide to Programming Parks and Public Spaces**

with takeaways from:

## **Let's play!**

**A Learning Series**





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# Introduction

In fall 2021, the Detroit Pistons Foundation partnered with Project Play: Southeast Michigan, the Detroit Parks Coalition, the City of Detroit, and The Work Department to host “Let’s Play!” The learning series was designed to provide tips, resources, and best practices for nonprofits and neighborhood organizations to produce engaging community-driven programming in public spaces.



The Program was sponsored by The Detroit Pistons Foundation, the William Davidson Foundation, and the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation.

This document provides key takeaways from the learning series and questions for reflection by topic:

- How to Develop Your Public Space Program
- How to Ensure a Safe and Secure Space
- How to Acquire City Permitting
- How to Get Your Project Funded
- How to Program with Purpose

The information is intended for individuals and organizations in Detroit who are just getting started with developing public space programming.





# Featured Spaces & Organizations

Detroit is home to a robust network of groups and organizations that actively steward neighborhood public spaces. They work in spaces of all shapes and sizes, including those that span hundreds of acres and those that occupy a single parcel on a residential street. The organizations included in this guide were invited to share their experience and expertise during the “Let’s Play!” series.

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## Belle Isle Conservancy + Belle Isle Park



ADDRESS:  
99 Pleasure Dr.  
Detroit, MI 48207

WEBSITE:  
[belleisleconservancy.org](http://belleisleconservancy.org)

Belle Isle is a 2.5-mile-long, 982-acre island park, located in the international waters of the Detroit River. Almost one third of this state park is a natural wooded area that is home to a wide variety of small animals and birds. The park features a number of historic public landmarks including the Belle Isle Aquarium, Belle Isle Casino, Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory, Dossin Great Lakes Museum, and the James Scott Memorial Fountain. It is visited by over 4 million people each year.

Belle Isle Conservancy is a nonprofit organization that works to protect, preserve, restore and enhance the natural environment, historic structures and unique character of Belle Isle as a public park for the enjoyment of all. The Conservancy works in close partnership with the State of Michigan’s Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the City of Detroit, and island







partners to bring additional resources to Belle Isle. In February of 2014 the DNR began managing Belle Isle as a state park under a 30 year lease with the City of Detroit, as part of the City's financial restructuring. The City retains ownership of the park, and the DNR manages the day to day operations of the park, including event bookings, infrastructure management, and environmental management. The Conservancy serves as an advocate for the park, bringing in volunteer resources, operating the Belle Isle Aquarium, creating public programming, and raising funds for needed projects and improvements on the island. The Conservancy's programming is always free, open to everyone, and connected to the organization's mission.

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## Chandler Park Conservancy + Chandler Park



**ADDRESS:**

12801 Chandler Park Dr.  
Detroit, MI 48213

**WEBSITE:**

[chandlerparkconservancy.org](http://chandlerparkconservancy.org)

Chandler Park is located on Detroit's east side and is one of four 200-plus acre parks that serve families from across the region. The Chandler Park Golf Course and Wayne County Family Aquatic Center have long been popular community destinations. The park is located south of I-94, north of Warren Avenue, just east of the Stallantis Assembly Plant.

The Chandler Park Conservancy is a nonprofit organization that formed in 2014 to develop exceptional educational, recreational and conservation opportunities at Chandler Park for youth and people of all ages. The Conservancy is working to develop a multi-facility urban conservation campus that serves as a "living lab" for environmental and ecology-related education. Planned or recently installed projects include outdoor sports venues for all ages and genders, community outing venues, community gardens & wetlands, a skatepark, native plant gardens and stormwater management system, a walking path, and other special installations.





## City of Detroit Parks and Recreation Department

The City of Detroit's Parks and Recreation Department has over 300 parks including green spaces, open spaces, athletic fields, community centers, courts, shelters, and even a historic fort. The Department oversees maintenance and improvements for these spaces, works with partners to develop programming, and focuses overall on connecting communities with the City's parks, programs, and facilities to positively impact their health and wellness.

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### Clark Park Coalition + Clark Park



ADDRESS:  
1130 Clark St.  
Detroit, MI 48209

WEBSITE:  
[clarkparkdetroit.com](http://clarkparkdetroit.com)

Located in southwest Detroit, the historic Clark Park features soccer and baseball fields, a regulation-sized outdoor hockey rink, play structures, picnic pavilions, walking paths, and a century-old tree canopy. Clark Park is located in the heart of Detroit's Latinx community, surrounded by dense residential neighborhoods and a vibrant commercial corridor. The park is also adjacent to a high school and two elementary schools, making it an essential space for area youth.

Clark Park Coalition was formed by concerned neighbors in response to City staffing challenges in the early 1990s. For nearly 30 years, the nonprofit has partnered closely with the City of Detroit to provide year-round programming for more than 1,200 young people each year. The Coalition serves southwest





Detroit's diverse population of Latinx and Black families, offering a variety of activities like baseball, softball, ice hockey, soccer, lacrosse, outdoor movie nights, and more. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the park has also hosted a city-run vaccination site.

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## Michigan Community Resources

Michigan Community Resources provides pro bono and low-cost legal and other professional services to Michigan nonprofit organizations. They do this through organizational development and by providing trusted guidance. Since their founding in 1998 they've provided more than \$16 million in free legal assistance to more than 1200 nonprofits throughout Michigan, and annually they serve about 400 nonprofit organizations across all their programs.

In its resource navigation capacity, Michigan Community Resources shares grant opportunities with its network and helps nonprofits hire consultants that can support their capacity building with grant writing, communications, data management, and other public-facing and back end needs.

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## NW Goldberg Cares



**BORDERS:**

West Grand Boulevard to the north, I-94 to the south, Grand River Avenue/I-96 to the west, and the John C. Lodge Freeway to the east

**WEBSITE:**

[nwgoldbergcares.com](http://nwgoldbergcares.com)

Founded in 2017, NW Goldberg Cares is a community development corporation located in the heart of Detroit's NW Goldberg neighborhood. NW Goldberg is a community of about 1,800 residents bordered by three highways and the historic West Grand Boulevard corridor. It is perhaps best known as the home







to the Motown Museum. NW Goldberg Cares aims to improve the lives of residents by incubating neighborhood businesses, building a strong community and ensuring a family friendly neighborhood. The organization has purchased a number of lots throughout the neighborhood and is working to transform them into pocket parks that provide active spaces and engaging programming for community members of all ages to gather, play, and learn. They engage 2000 residents annually, and have invested more than \$650,000 to create and improve public spaces since 2019.

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## People for Palmer Park + Palmer Park

**ADDRESS:**

910 Merrill Plaisance St.  
Detroit, MI 48203

**WEBSITE:**

[peopleforpalmerpark.org](http://peopleforpalmerpark.org)

Palmer Park is comprised of 296 acres of lawns and historic woodlands, tennis courts, a splash park, hiking and biking trails, Lake Frances and its lighthouse, an historic log cabin, the Detroit Mounted Police stables and more. Located between McNichols and 7 Mile Roads and west of Woodward Avenue in Detroit, it has been a treasured nature park and recreation site for more than 100 years. The surrounding area is known for its abundance of stately historic apartment buildings and homes. Recent park improvements include full-sized and junior tennis courts, walkways, a playground, fitness zone, pavilion and plaza, and park lighting.

People for Palmer Park formed as a nonprofit in 2011, shortly after the City announced plans to close the park due to lack of funding. The organization is committed to the preservation and revitalization of the park. It partners with the City of Detroit to develop programming and support preservation and maintenance activities in the park. Through recreational activities, festivals, and other programming, the organization reaches over 10,000 people each year.







## Rocket Community Fund

The Rocket Community Fund is the philanthropic arm of Rocket Companies, which includes Rocket Mortgage, the nation's largest mortgage lender. It also coordinates team member volunteerism for Bedrock and other affiliated companies who comprise the Rock Family of Companies. Its strategy aims to support thriving, resilient, and inclusive communities through data-driven investments in housing, employment, and public life.

Through its For-More-Than-Profit model, the Rocket Community Fund recognizes that business and community are inextricably linked, and it purposefully brings together all of the assets of the Rocket Mortgage and Rock Family of Companies business – team member talent, technology, policy advocacy, and philanthropic resources – to invest in comprehensive community development in Detroit and across the country.

Alongside financial investments, the Rocket Community Fund has organized team members to provide more than 815,000 volunteer hours nationwide, including 415,000 in Detroit.





# How to Develop Your Public Space Program

▶ **WATCH THE SESSIONS:** 1) [How to Design Activities](#)  
2) [How to Work with Volunteers and Staff & How to Get the Word Out](#)

🗣️ **SPEAKERS:** Rochelle Lento, People for Palmer Park; Yvette Bass-Pullom, Program Director, Chandler Park Conservancy and Ayo Thomas, Engagement Associate, Belle Isle Conservancy

## Engage the community

The most successful programming will be that which is designed and developed based on community needs and interests. It is essential to engage community members at every stage – from big picture planning to participation in park activities. Getting input from the community to inform and improve programming is as important as getting the word out about the programming, and the tactics for both overlap. Rochelle, Yvette, and Ayo shared about how their organizations engage community members.

*A community informed vision helps organizations ensure programming aligns with what folks need and want.*

- People for Palmer Park undertook a master planning process in 2013. They engaged residents through focus groups and activities to find out what they envision for the future of the park. They now use the master plan as a benchmark to evaluate their work.
- In 2015 community residents and businesses on Detroit's east side worked together to envision a \$20 million revitalization plan for Chandler Park. Chandler Park Conservancy's two-person staff, along with their board, are tasked with implementing this plan. To date, they've raised approximately \$8 million towards park improvements, amenities, and programming.

### Reflect

1. Who is your park or public space for?
2. What role does your community play in envisioning the future of your park or public space?





## ***Solicit regular input from community members to ensure your organization addresses current needs and stays relevant for the future.***

- **Belle Isle Conservancy** has been exploring what the difference is between making your programming available to the public and developing programming for the public. When organizations create programming that they want to present, and don't consider what the public truly wants, the programming may not be relevant or successful. Programming that is created in response to a community identified need or desire will garner more support and success.
- **Belle Isle Conservancy** launched a community feedback campaign in 2021 to learn more about their audience and what they would like to see and do around the island. To understand if the campaign was a success, the Conservancy asks itself: Did folks give us their honest opinions? Did they answer our questions? Did we grow our network? Are there enough folks we can connect with beyond this survey to engage in deeper conversations?
- **Chandler Park Conservancy's** programming best practices amplify the need for a strong and transparent feedback loop with community members.

Their four best practices are as follows:

1. Utilize a bottom-up approach.
2. Include programming that is representative of the population you're serving.
3. Don't make promises you can't keep.
4. Keep residents and stakeholders abreast of all challenges and developments in the pipeline.

### **Reflect**

1. What role does your community play in developing, implementing, and evaluating programming?
2. What are your programming ideas and how will they benefit the community? For example:
  - Engage youth
  - Increase social interaction and build community
  - Celebrate culture, heritage, and identity
  - Reduce vandalism and petty crime
  - Promote community pride and stewardship
  - Increase access to healthy food or outdoor space and activities
  - Support relaxation, and reduce fatigue and stress
  - Encourage economic growth
  - Promote community health
  - Create learning opportunities







## ***Utilize multiple communication tactics to reach all community members effectively.***

- Chandler Park Conservancy recognizes how important it is to connect with everyone for partnership and input, especially folks that are elderly or don't have reliable internet access. Door-to-door flyering is their most effective method for reaching marginalized populations. There are people in the local community who haven't been to the park in a decade or more, and meeting folks at their doors allows Chandler Park Conservancy's staff and volunteers to share what's happening at Chandler Park and encourage them to visit or even just drive by.
- Chandler Park Conservancy maintains a database of individuals and their contact information, and has invested in robocalling and email marketing. They also maintain a large, active presence on social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- Word of mouth is key to participation in Chandler Park Conservancy's programming, especially when it comes to free events and programming. In this case, the quality of the programming is what drives referrals and participation.
- People for Palmer Park uses social media, an email newsletter, and the Nextdoor app to routinely share new programming ideas and gather feedback on programming from residents.
- Belle Isle Conservancy's community feedback outreach included print and digital postcards shared through many avenues. During the summer of 2021, staff were onsite for six weeks collecting feedback on iPads and paper surveys.

### **Reflect**

1. Who are the hard to reach groups in your community?
2. What tactics can you use to best engage your community?
3. How do you measure the impact of your community engagement?





## Structure your team

Develop an *internal structure* that helps you meet your goals. Rochelle, Yvette, and Ayo shared about how each of their organizations is structured.

**People for Palmer Park** is a primarily volunteer-run 501(c)(3) organization. They have a well-rounded board of directors with representation from the surrounding neighborhoods and a couple nearby cities. They also have a committee structure with six, functioning committees led by board members: finance, events, marketing, preservation, recreation, and one that focuses on the park's historic log cabin.

**Chandler Park Conservancy** is a 501(c)(3) with two paid staff members: Yvette Bass-Pullom, Program Director and Alex Allen, President and CEO. They work with the Conservancy's board to fundraise and implement Chandler Park's revitalization plan. Since the capacity of the organization's staff is limited, engaging volunteers is crucial to the success of their programming.

**Belle Isle Conservancy** is a 501(c)(3) organization. Its work is led by staff and supported by its board of directors, with representatives from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the City of Detroit, and the Belle Isle Conservancy's Emerging Patrons Council. It is a nonprofit partner to the State of Michigan's Department of Natural Resources.

Here's how Belle Isle Conservancy's staff work together and with partners to plan and implement programming:

1. Staff meet to discuss their vision for the year, what goals they seek to achieve, what modifications are needed to existing programming, and if new or different programs are needed to fill gaps they've identified.
2. For each event, staff contribute to a shared document, or event brief. The event brief includes the event's purpose, how it aligns with the organization's goals, the intended audience, key elements of the events, and what steps are needed such as permitting or acquiring other resources in order to implement the event.
3. Once the brief is complete, a kickoff meeting is held with key stakeholders (staff and island partners) to review the event brief, gather recommendations where there are gaps, understand roles and expectations of partners, and to set a cadence for check-ins to ensure the team's implementation is on time and successful.
4. Next, external talent and vendors are engaged to help fulfill elements of the event.



IRS 501(c)(3) is a special category for nonprofit charitable organizations that allows them to be tax exempt. Local organizations such as [Michigan Community Resources, Co.](#) [Act Detroit](#), and [Nonprofit Enterprise at Work](#) provide consulting and guidance to support you in determining the best structure for your organization.





## Reflect

1. What structure can best support your programming?
2. What is your vision for your organizational structure in the future?
3. What steps are you taking now to realize your future vision?
4. What's your team's process for working together to accomplish your goals?
5. In what ways can you improve your process for collaborating?







## Extend your capacity with partnerships

No one individual or organization can do it all. *Partner with others to better serve your community and fully realize your programming goals.* Since People for Palmer Park is a primarily volunteer-run organization, much of what they've been able to accomplish would not have been possible without external partners.

**Rochelle described some of the external partnerships they've developed:**

- **City of Detroit:** People for Palmer Park identifies who is responsible for what services at the City and forms relationships with those individuals. They consistently follow the appropriate protocols for event applications, special permit applications, capital improvements, etc. And they follow up with their contacts to ensure responsiveness, express appreciation, and demand accountability when necessary.
- **Home Depot:** This partnership has allowed People for Palmer Park to grow its community garden from four garden beds eight years ago to 24 garden beds, a rain catchment system, compost station, and greenhouse. Home Depot provides gift cards for materials and supplies as well as 30 volunteers on an annual community garden day. Home Depot's contributions amplify the efforts of residents who participate in the community garden day and rent out and maintain garden beds for a nominal fee.
- **KABOOM!:** This national nonprofit built a playscape under the direction of People for Palmer Park in just two days. KABOOM! provided materials, supplies, organizers, and skilled volunteers and over 200 community residents came out to help, too.
- **Michigan Handball Association:** The association raised money and led the work to fix up People for Palmer Park's dilapidated yet historic handball courts. People for Palmer Park contributed by obtaining approval from the City.
- **United States Tennis Association:** With support from USTA, People for Palmer's Park Tennis Academy, and Coach Leonora King have grown the training from 25 youth in the first year (2011) to full capacity at 150 youth.
- People for Palmer Park's yoga, t'ai chi, and bike ride activities as well as the Palmer Park Art Fair are almost entirely organized and led by partners.
- People for Palmer Park's internal committees engage local vendors as partners to bring their keystone events to life, including Harvest Festival, Winterfest, and Log Cabin Day.



**Reflect**

1. What type of support are you looking for from potential partners?
2. What existing partner relationships can you strengthen, and how?
3. What new partner relationships can you forge, and how?

**Ayo shared how Belle Isle Conservancy *identifies talent and vendors*, and how they're working to improve their process.**

- Belle Isle Conservancy often leans on referrals or recommendations from their existing network to source talent. For vendors, they sometimes use established partnerships or they put out requests for proposals (RFPs), and try to have at least three applicants.
- Currently Belle Isle Conservancy is working on tactics to expand their network in order to reach those who may be left out because of the digital divide and to fairly provide access and opportunities to community members, whether or not they already know them.

**Reflect**

1. What is your process for identifying talent and vendors for programs?
2. How might you grow your talent and vendor networks?





## Work with volunteers

Since the capacity of Chandler Park Conservancy's staff is limited, *engaging volunteers is crucial to the success of their programming.*

Yvette shared her approach to managing volunteers:

Volunteers participate in a number of positions to help the Conservancy offer programming that includes: basketball, football, soccer, lacrosse, skateboarding, pickleball; a senior appreciation day; a summer youth sports program; an environmental education program; and a gardening club. Here's how Chandler Park Conservancy works with volunteers:

- First, they identify a volunteer leader, someone who is personable and with whom they have an established relationship. The volunteer leader should have a clear understanding of the purpose and goals of the event or program.
- Chandler Park's Program Director and the volunteer leader meet to determine how many volunteers will be needed and what their roles and responsibilities will be. They put together a spreadsheet to document volunteer names and roles.
- Then they recruit volunteers from their existing network, as well as community organizations and schools on Detroit's east side. The volunteer opportunities often count towards required community services hours for high school students. Chandler Park Conservancy also partners with local businesses and corporations who facilitate employee volunteer days.
- Prior to the event, the volunteer leader hosts an orientation with the volunteers. Usually this is on the day of the event, but could also be a virtual orientation further in advance of the event. As budgets allow, Chandler Park Conservancy provides something for volunteers to wear that identifies them as volunteers, for example t-shirts, nametags or a lanyard. That way participants know who to go to for assistance.
- After the event, they collect feedback from the volunteers, often in the form of an after action review. They ask: *What are three things we will sustain or continue to do? What are three improvements to make?*

### Reflect

1. In what ways do you share leadership and decision making with volunteers?
2. What have volunteers helped you accomplish?
3. What challenges do you face in finding and managing volunteers?







# How to Ensure a Safe and Secure Space

▶ **WATCH THE SESSION:** [How to Ensure a Safe and Secure Space](#)

🗣️ **SPEAKER:** Anthony Benavides, Director, Clark Park Coalition

Drawing from his experience, Anthony Benavides, Director of Clark Park Coalition advised on how to keep your grounds and equipment safe and secure, and highlighted the critical role of safety partners.

## Keep your grounds safe

- Indicate when the park is closed with signage or by blocking off parking lots or other entrances with physical barriers. This will deter folks from using the park after hours, and potentially leaving trash, engaging in undesirable activities and/or making too much noise.
- Have a plan in place to manage trash. Clark Park Coalition encourages folks who are at the park or public space on the weekends to take their trash with them, since the City does not pick up trash on the weekends. For spaces that aren't serviced by the City, put in place an appropriate number of trash cans and solicit the help of volunteers to keep the area clean. Be sure to provide supplies like gloves and trash bags.
- Have clear sightlines and work to increase visibility. Clark Park Coalition has worked with the City to remove overgrown shrubs that created safety concerns. Adding lighting is key to increasing visibility too.
- Ensure safe pathways to get to the park or public space. Clark Park is surrounded by three schools, and a state grant to the schools resulted in repair of the sidewalks, removal of low hanging tree branches and dead trees, and the installation of speed bumps, stop signs and crosswalks around the park. Clark Park Coalition also hires students to help with sidewalk snow removal and cleaning.
- Mow grass regularly. Although the City does cut the grass at Clark Park, Clark Park Coalition often cuts it in between the City's visits. Take mowing seriously because it decreases insects and debris, and ensures fields are in play-ready condition.
- Inspect athletic fields daily to ensure there are no holes or debris that could injure kids while they're playing.





- Use the app Improve Detroit to report any problems at City parks, including Clark Park. For example, you can report lighting that's not working, abandoned or suspicious looking vehicles, trash, etc. Private parks should provide contact information on park signage to report problems.

## Secure your equipment

- Be mindful of the quality and materials used for play structures. Clark Park Coalition avoids using plastic in their play structures, and has had to raise additional funds and wait longer to make improvements and additions with stainless steel.
- All materials used for other physical structures should be safe and long lasting, too. When the City shared an opportunity with Clark Park Coalition to put more lighting in the park, the Coalition pushed back against using aluminum poles and raised additional funds to get concrete poles. The concrete poles were not only sturdier, but also more consistent with other historic lighting at the park.
- Always get equipment with fewer moving parts. Moving parts will break faster and need to be serviced more often.
- Thoroughly check your equipment on a weekly basis.
- Keep equipment secure by labeling your equipment with your name or organization's name. This can help in case items are misplaced or stolen. Local police officers were able to identify and return Clark Park Coalition's snowblower when they spotted someone hauling it down the street in the middle of the night.
- Have people, including kids, label all their personal sporting equipment.
- Anchor down and lock up equipment to prevent theft. Clark Park Coalition even installed bike racks and provided kids with locks and chains for their bikes.
- Put a cage around air conditioning condensers to avoid theft for the aluminum parts.

## Lean on safety and security partners

- Get to know residents who live around the park or public space because they will share issues and concerns that you may not be aware of.
- Clark Park Coalition engages community residents as seasonal, part time, and full time volunteers and employees. People who invest their time and energy care about the space's upkeep, safety, and reputation.
- All the volunteer coaches Clark Park Coalition engages undergo background checks and receive training.





- Since Clark Park Coalition was formed in 1993 to improve the ill-maintained City park, they have worked in partnership with the City of Detroit. The City provides services like trash removal and grass mowing, and helps make structural improvements to the park.
- Clark Park Coalition has built positive relationships with neighborhood police officers so in an emergency situation there is already some trust and familiarity that has been established. Director Anthony Benavides advises others managing parks and public spaces to get to know their local police.
- In March of 2021, ATV joyriders damaged the fields at Clark Park right before the softball and baseball season were going to begin. Clark Park Coalition secured media coverage about the incident, which helped raise awareness and build partnerships. Rocket Community Fund stepped in to help assess the damage and quickly refurbished the field so the sports seasons could continue as planned. To avoid something similar happening again, the City was able to add large boulders around the field to prevent ATVs or other vehicles from doing any future damage.
- Clark Park Coalition partners with USA Hockey to teach kids how to skate and play ice hockey. The NHL funds the program and provides resources including coach registration and training.







# How to Acquire City Permitting

▶ **WATCH THE SESSION:** [How to Acquire City Permitting](#)

🗣️ **SPEAKER:** Tracey Jackson, Manager of Operations, City of Detroit Parks and Recreation Department

Tracey Jackson, Manager of Operations at the Parks and Recreation Department, helped demystify the City's permitting process with quick facts and tips, and an overview of general event types.

## Know the basics

- Acquiring a permit from the city is essential if you are hosting an event of any size. If you have a permit, the City can ensure the space is clean, the grass is mowed, and there aren't any competing events happening in the same space. Some permits have a cost to them while others are free.
- Permits are for the entire day, not by the hour.
- The City does not permit people to sell merchandise at parks, unless they are doing so as part of a larger event.
- Food vendors (food trucks, food carts) can apply for permits to sell food.
- Find the Parks and Recreation Department Covid safety protocols here: [detroitmi.gov/departments/parks-recreation/covid-19-parks-recreation-info/covid-safety-playbook](https://detroitmi.gov/departments/parks-recreation/covid-19-parks-recreation-info/covid-safety-playbook)
- Submit your application at least 60 days prior to your event. On average, it takes up to 21 days for application review and approval, but 60 days allows ample time to address any issues that may come up.
- Don't hesitate to reach out to the Parks and Recreation Department if it's been a couple of weeks and you haven't heard back about your application.
- The vast majority of permit applications are approved. A reason for denying an application would be if someone else has already booked the space for the same day. In that case, the Parks and Recreation Department will work with you to help find an alternate space that meets your needs.





## Understand permit considerations by event size

Event size	Sample Description	Cost	City Permit process
<b>Small – 10–20 people</b>	A cookout with friends where you'll use a barbecue and throw around a frisbee.	This type of event would not incur any permitting costs.	<p>This type of event is easy to approve, and may take as little as 24 hours to receive approval.</p> <p>By acquiring a permit, the City will not approve a permit for another event at the same space.</p>
<b>Medium – 50–100 people</b>	A family reunion or birthday party with tents and inflatables.	<p>This type of event would incur minimal costs for the equipment: \$30 for each tent and inflatable.</p> <p>If you add on shelters, there would be an additional cost of \$75–\$100 per shelter.</p>	This type of event is easily approved.
<b>Large – 200+ people</b>	A sponsored walk or rally. Structures such as stages and tents as well as services like having a street blocked off or turning on a fire hydrant may be required.	Permitting costs for special events are usually in the range of \$750 – \$1,500.	For events like these, additional permitting is required from other City departments so permitting is managed by the City's Special Events committee. Each department has a representative on that committee and they work together to help you acquire the appropriate permits and services, and determine applicable costs.





## Complete a permitting application

- If you are planning to have an event at a City park, you need to complete the Parks and Recreation Department's Event & Programming Application. Your responses will determine if the Parks & Recreation team needs to connect you with the Special Events committee or if they can fully assist you with acquiring the permit.
- There are parts of the Event & Programming Application that may not be applicable to you but are required on the digital form. In those cases please type in "does not apply to my event." For example, if you are hosting a casual, small event you likely don't need a site plan or security plan.
- Expect a representative from the Parks and Recreation Department to follow up with you if any of your responses raise questions or red flags.

Here are links to the City's permitting applications:

- **Event & Programming Application:** [app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e6b82ea649684b2a90ed6404eb2049aa](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e6b82ea649684b2a90ed6404eb2049aa)
- **Athletic Field Application:** [app.smartsheet.com/b/form/fc8e4a9875834e838b95aea11ba5b3df](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/fc8e4a9875834e838b95aea11ba5b3df)
- **Historic Fort Wayne Event + Programming Application:** [app.smartsheet.com/b/form/4d990923f44343d7b3c3a61f1f611783](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/4d990923f44343d7b3c3a61f1f611783)
- **Vendor Permit Application:** [app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e118a140c75e4af9932e54427dddb823](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e118a140c75e4af9932e54427dddb823)
- **Special Events Information:** [detroitmi.gov/departments/media-services-department/special-events](https://detroitmi.gov/departments/media-services-department/special-events)

### Reflect

1. What are your touchpoints with the City?
2. How would you describe your relationship with the City?
3. Do you have any upcoming events that you need permits for?
4. What questions do you have about acquiring City permits? (See the Directory on pg 35 to contact Tracey directly with questions.)





# How to Get Your Project Funded

▶ **WATCH THE SESSION:** [Get Your Project Funded](#)

🗣️ **SPEAKERS:** JJ Vélez, Rocket Community Fund and Matthew Schmitt, Michigan Community Resources

## Follow these grant seeking and grant writing tips

**Matthew Schmitt, Program Manager, at Michigan Community Resources offered helpful grant seeking and grant writing tips:**

- While there's an inherently competitive spirit to fundraising, collaborating with other nonprofits may advance your mission and appeal to funders' priorities. Consider opportunities to partner with others on grants to increase your impact.
- Know that some funding opportunities won't align with your mission. Don't chase the money. This leads to organizations taking on grants for programs that won't be successful, or that they wouldn't otherwise be doing, which stretches their capacity and limits them doing the things they should do. Instead keep abreast of potential funding opportunities and find ones that are a good match for you.
- Organizations that do not have official nonprofit 501(c)(3) status can often receive grants through fiscal sponsorship from a fiduciary. A fiduciary is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that would receive the grant money on behalf of the beneficiary, and then give it to the beneficiary. You want to have a good trusting relationship with your fiscal sponsor as well as an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) in place about how the money will be used and how the fiduciary may be compensated for their management of the finances.
- When you're approaching funding of any kind, you should be able to clearly describe your project and have answers to the following questions:
  - What is your project?
  - Why is your project important now?
  - What impact will your project have?
  - Does the community need or want this project? How do you know?
- Share your story and your passion. The unique reasons behind what draw you to the work you do will make you memorable to funders. You'll stand out in a pool of applicants.







- Often, organization founders and leaders do work pro bono and self-fund materials and programming costs in the beginning stages. Even when you aren't yet earning an income, be sure to track your time as well as expenses you incur. That way when you apply for a grant you will have a true understanding of costs and can budget accordingly.
- When you develop a grant proposal, give some thought to how your project might be split up in stages or what you might scale down if you don't receive the full grant. Often grant awards will be provided in pieces.
- Use words from the funder's value statements or commitment areas in your application. This will make it crystal clear to reviewers and funders how your work aligns with theirs.

## Think of funders as partners

Like you, funders are trying to do good work as co-investors. Work to build a trusting and transparent relationship with them. JJ Vélez, Director of Public Spaces at Rocket Community Fund shared some insight into working with funders:

- **Do your research.** Make sure you understand the goals, mission and strategy of the potential funder before reaching out.
- **Measurements matter.** Know your own goals and how you plan to measure success. Funders want to understand the impact of their investment on your work and your community.
- **Be creative and adaptive.** Hitting "submit" on your application is not usually the end of the process. Funders will often have questions or feedback, and may ask you to revise your proposal. If you are open to thinking creatively and collaboratively, you may find a bigger opportunity exists. When NW Goldberg Cares approached JJ Vélez about grant funding for a new basketball court, they talked together about the organization's vision. JJ provided feedback and connections to other resources, adopting the role of collaborator. In the end, the project's scale is bigger and will serve more people.
- **Understand grant cycles.** There is rarely a quick turnaround for grant funding. Funders have different cycles for when they review and approve grants. Some do it on a rolling basis, some within a set period of time each year. The review process for applications can also take time depending on the funder's internal process.

### Reflect

1. Where do you learn about funding opportunities?
2. What is your process for developing grant proposals?
3. What areas do you need assistance with?





# How to Program with Purpose

Daniel Washington and Jordan Yagiela of NW Goldberg Cares presented at the final, in-person event of the “Let’s Play!” series.

## Be intentional

NW Goldberg Cares was founded by Daniel Washington in an effort to combat gentrification and bring hope, resources, and amenities to his hometown. He isn’t trying to revitalize his community to attract development or outside interests, but rather to enhance the quality of life for residents of NW Goldberg and their future generations. Jordan Yagiela is NW Goldberg Cares’ Director of Programming.

NW Goldberg Cares has created four pocket parks to date and has a fifth one scheduled to open in the spring of 2022. Their goal is to make 20 pocket parks by the end of 2025. Pocket parks are on one to three parcels of land, and because of their smaller size they are more manageable, can be really intentionally designed, and are well integrated into daily community life. Community members are involved in every step of the process from determining the location of the pocket parks, participating in designing and building the physical space and structures, to informing programming. In addition, they have developed partnerships with a variety of funders, corporate volunteers, and other organizations to help bring their projects to life.

Undoubtedly, beautiful physical spaces can enhance a community and fulfill a need, like NW Goldberg Cares’ Rest & Ride Park that provides folks with a welcoming environment to wait for the bus as well as a covered bus shelter. But Daniel and Jordan can’t stress enough the importance of community-centered programming. Here are examples of their programming:

- Reading in the Holland Maze at the Holland Maze Literacy Park provides pre-K through 5th grade children with reading and music instruction to help develop literacy skills in a safe space.
- Play NW Goldberg provides kids in the neighborhood with safe opportunities to play outdoors and to try out sports like field hockey and lacrosse that aren’t otherwise accessible to them. Neighborhood police officers from the 3rd precinct also come out to play with the kids and build positive relationships with them.





- Music in the Park invites community members of all ages to participate in a collaborative songwriting process with neighborhood artist/award-winning singer-songwriter, Audra Kubat. In 2020, NW Goldberg Cares partnered with InsideOut, an event sponsored by the Detroit Institute of Art to bring framed reproductions to the parks, and the art was a source of inspiration for the songwriting.
- Fun in the Park at the Art Park encourages community members to spend relaxing, quality time together while enjoying the outdoors with life-size, card, board, and strategy games.

### Reflect

1. What motivates you in programming your park or public space?
2. What are your hopes and dreams for the future of your community?
3. How do you measure the impact of your programming?





# About the Partners

**The Detroit Pistons Foundation** hosts the Pistons Neighbors program each summer and fall. The program includes free youth programming in 5 parks each summer, and a fall training series designed to help organizations implement their own public space programming.

**Project Play: Southeast Michigan** is driven and funded by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation's Youth Sports & Recreation focus area, in partnership with the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan and the Aspen Institute Sports & Society Program. Project Play serves seven counties in the region: Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw, St. Clair, Monroe, and Livingston. Project Play envisions a community in which children are more active through sports, play, and recreation regardless of race, income, ZIP code, or ability.

**The Detroit Parks Coalition** is an alliance of organizations that connect Detroiters to beautiful, healthy, and well-maintained parks & public spaces. Members of the Detroit Parks Coalition supported this learning series by promoting events, hosting summer programming and as guest speakers.

**The Work Department** is a Detroit-based design and strategy studio. They provided program management, design, and facilitation for the learning series, and developed this resource guide.

**The Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation** supports organizations in Southeast Michigan and Western New York. Their funding priorities include Active Lifestyles, Caregivers, Entrepreneurship & Economic Development and Preparing for Success.

**The William Davidson Foundation** is a family foundation dedicated to advancing the economic, cultural, and civic vitality of Southeast Michigan, the State of Israel, and the Jewish community.







# Appendix A: Detroit Pistons Foundation

## Let's Play! A Learning Series

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### Session 1

Develop Your Public Space Program: How to Design Activities with Rochelle Lento, People for Palmer Park

[Watch Session 1](#)

[Review Session 1 Slidedeck](#)

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### Session 2

Develop Your Public Space Program: How to Work with Volunteers and Staff + How to Get the Word Out with Ayo Thomas, Belle Isle Conservancy and Yvette Bass-Pullom, Chandler Park Conservancy

[Watch Session 2](#)

[Review Session 2 Slidedeck](#)

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### Session 3

Ensure a Safe and Secure Space with Anthony Benavides, Clark Park Coalition

[Watch Session 3](#)

[Review Session 3 Slidedeck](#)

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### Session 4

Permitting and the City of Detroit Parks and Recreation Department with Tracey Jackson

[Watch Session 4](#)

[Review Session 4 Slidedeck](#)

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### Session 5

Get Your Project Funded with JJ Vélez, Rocket Community Fund and Matthew Schmitt, Michigan Community Resources

[Watch Session 5](#)

[Review Session 5 Slidedeck](#)

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### In-Person Event

Guest speakers Daniel Washington and Jordan Yagiela from NW Goldberg Cares

[Review NW Goldberg Cares Slidedeck](#)





## Detroit Pistons Foundation Neighbors Program

The Detroit Pistons Foundation hosts the Pistons Neighbors program each summer and fall. The program includes free youth programming in 5 parks each summer, and a fall training series designed to help organizations implement their own public space programming. Support for the program was provided by the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation and the William Davidson Foundation.

### Detroit Parks and Recreation

Email: [DetroitRecreation@detroitmi.gov](mailto:DetroitRecreation@detroitmi.gov) Phone: (313) 224-1100

115 Erskine, Detroit, MI 48201

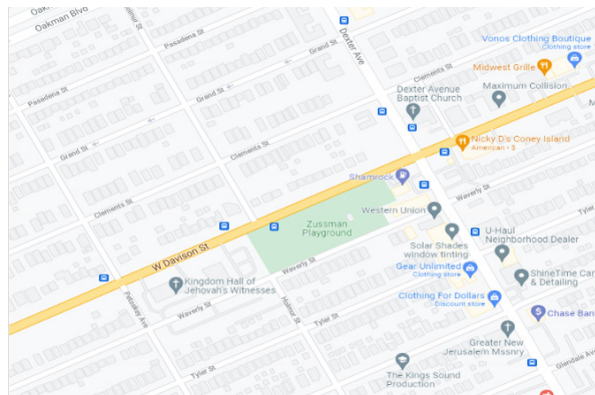
Monday-Friday 9:00AM-4:30PM

[detroitmi.gov/departments/parks-recreation](http://detroitmi.gov/departments/parks-recreation)

## 2021 Neighbors Program Parks

### Zussman Playground

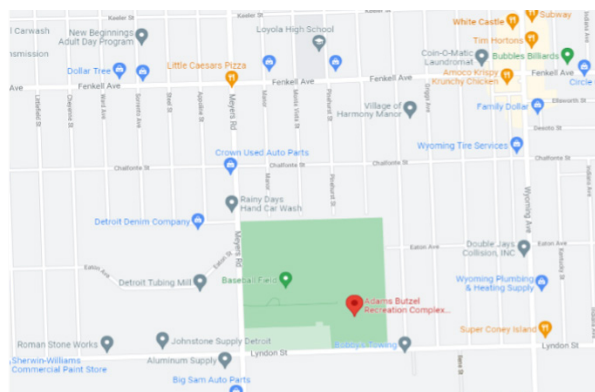
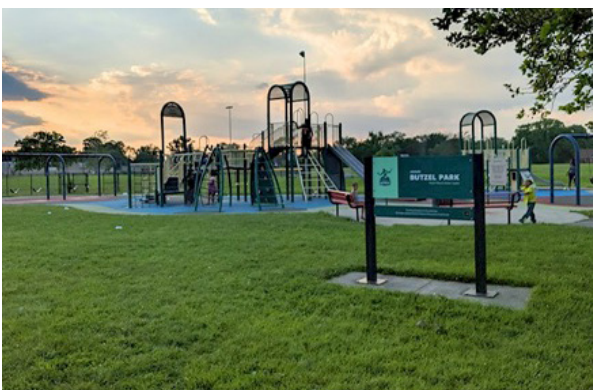
3800 Waverly St., Detroit, MI 48238



### Adams Butzel Complex

10500 Lyndon St., Detroit, MI 48238

[detroitmi.gov/departments/parks-recreation/community-recreation-centers/adams-butzel-complex](http://detroitmi.gov/departments/parks-recreation/community-recreation-centers/adams-butzel-complex)





## Butzel Family Center

7737 Kercheval St., Detroit, MI 48214

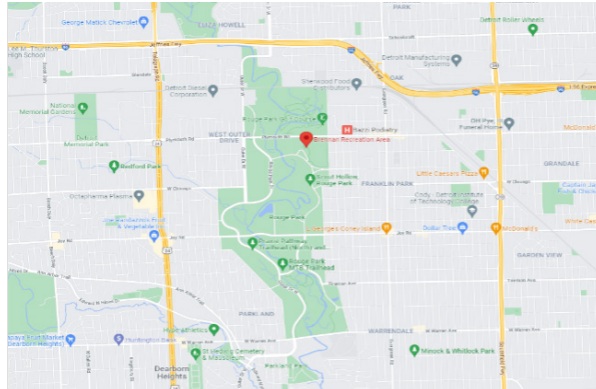
[detroitmi.gov/departments/parks-recreation/community-recreation-centers/butzel-family-center](http://detroitmi.gov/departments/parks-recreation/community-recreation-centers/butzel-family-center)



## Rouge Park

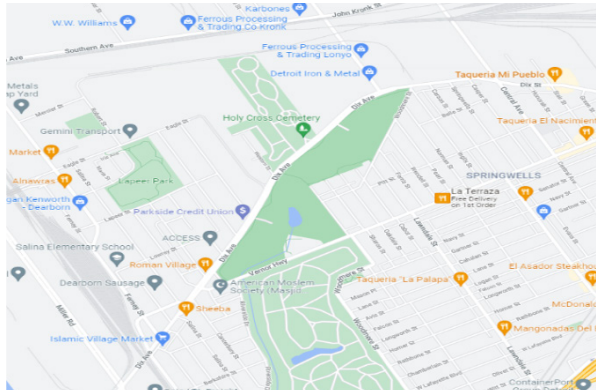
21415 Plymouth Rd., Detroit, MI 48228

[rougepark.org](http://rougepark.org)



## Patton Park

2301 Woodmere, Detroit, MI 48209





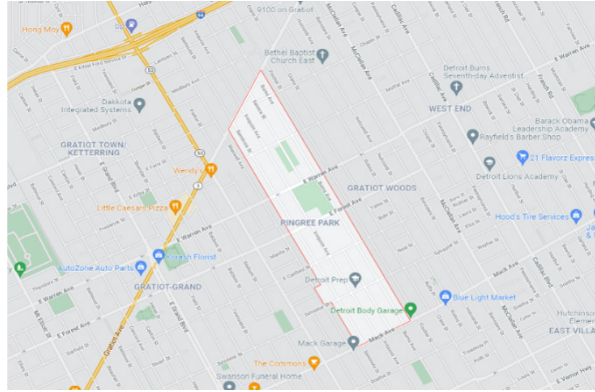


## 2020 Neighbors Program Parks

### Pingree Park

East Forest Avenue and Iroquois Avenue across from Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church

[theneighborhoods.org/neighborhoods/pingree-park](http://theneighborhoods.org/neighborhoods/pingree-park)

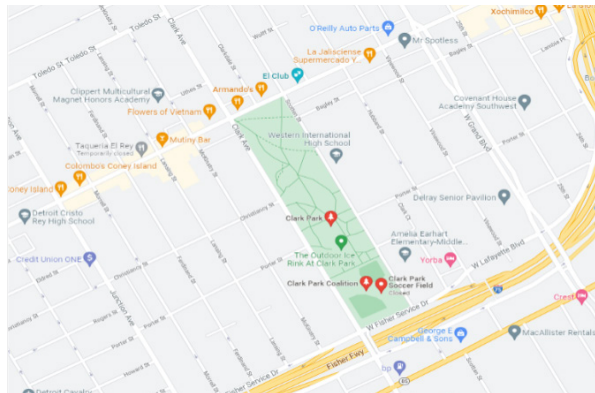


### Clark Park

1130 Clark St., Detroit, MI 48209

[detroitmi.gov/departments/parks-recreation/parks/clark-park](http://detroitmi.gov/departments/parks-recreation/parks/clark-park)

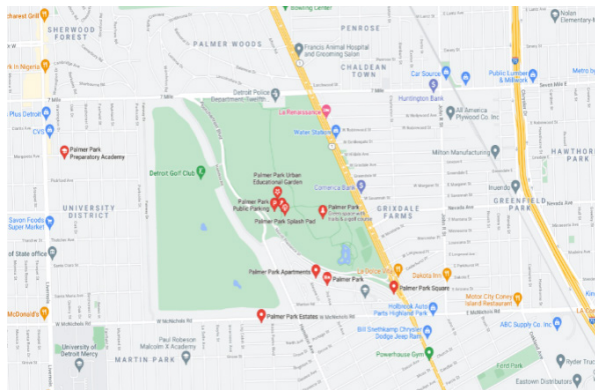
[clarkparkdetroit.com](http://clarkparkdetroit.com)



### Palmer Park

910 Merrill Plaisance St., Detroit, MI 48203

[peopleforpalmerpark.org](http://peopleforpalmerpark.org)



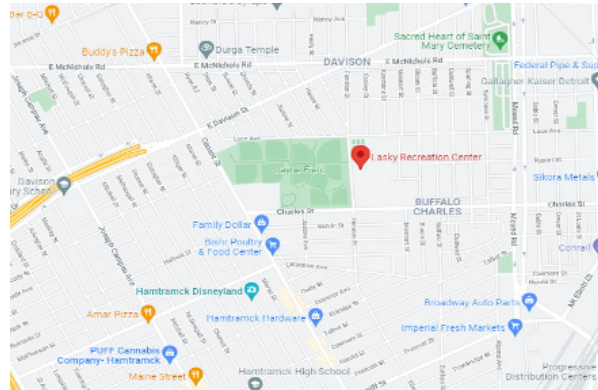




## Jayne Field / Lasky Recreation Center

3200 Fenelon St., Detroit, MI 48212

[detroitmi.gov/departments/parks-recreation/community-recreation-centers/lasky-recreation-center](http://detroitmi.gov/departments/parks-recreation/community-recreation-centers/lasky-recreation-center)



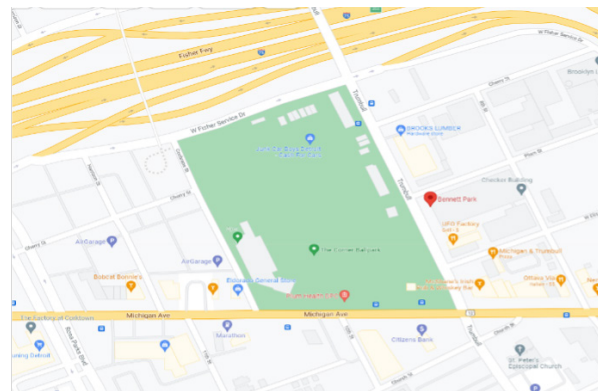
Adam Butzel

See 2021 park section

## 2019 Neighbors Program Parks

### Bennett Park

50 W. Lisa Dr., Detroit, MI 48202



### Rouge Park

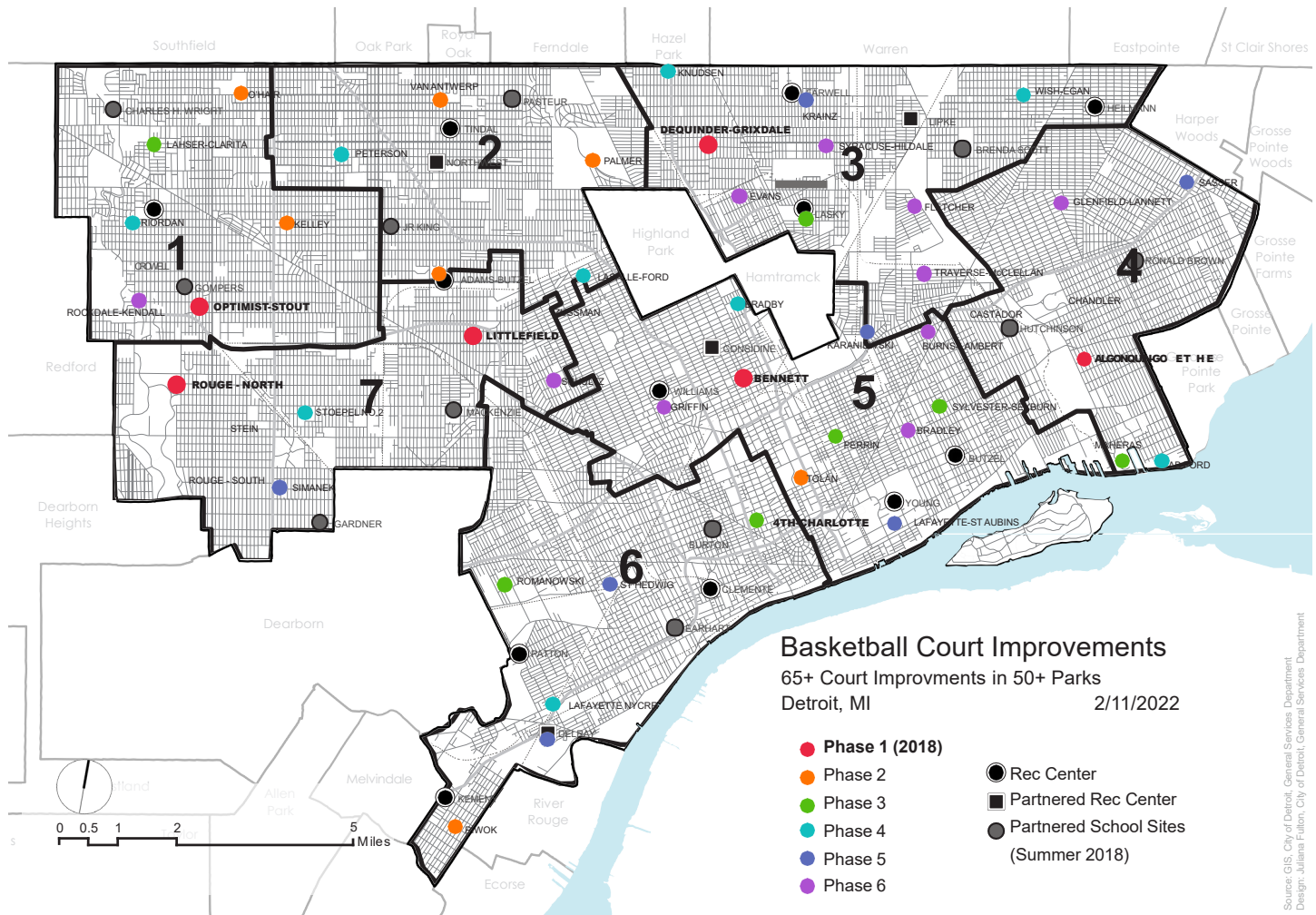
See 2021 park section





## Detroit Pistons Court Renovations

The Detroit Pistons and the City of Detroit's Parks and Recreation Department have teamed up to renovate 60 basketball courts over the course of 6 years throughout the city of Detroit, beginning in 2018. Their work is driven by their commitment to provide safe places for children to play, and their hope that providing every child with a basketball will encourage health and wellness to last a lifetime. They believe that basketball should not just be a sport for some, but accessible to everyone.





# Appendix B. Directory

## Belle Isle Conservancy

[belleisleconservancy.org](http://belleisleconservancy.org)

Ayo Thomas, Community Engagement Associate

[thomasa@belleisleconservancy.org](mailto:thomasa@belleisleconservancy.org)

## Chandler Park Conservancy

[chandlerparkconservancy.org](http://chandlerparkconservancy.org)

Yvette Bass-Pullom, Program Director

[yvettejoy.cpc@gmail.com](mailto:yvettejoy.cpc@gmail.com)

(313) 499-1956

## CITY OF DETROIT

### City of Detroit Parks and Recreation Department

[detroitmi.gov/departments/parks-recreation](http://detroitmi.gov/departments/parks-recreation)

[detroitrecreation@detroitmi.gov](mailto:detroitrecreation@detroitmi.gov)

(313) 224-1100

115 Erskine, Detroit, MI 48201

Monday-Friday 9:00AM - 4:30PM

Tracey Jackson, Manager of Operations / (313) 407-8440

Grace Wembley, Reservation and Events Coordinator / (313) 720-5432

### City of Detroit General Services Department

#### Park Mowing + Trash Pick Up

For questions or comments on mowing or trash pick ups in a City park

(313) 224-5555

(313) 628-0900

#### Park Repairs

Report any damaged or broken park equipment, such as swings, to the Park Development Unit

(313) 628-1134





## **Permits for Sports or Events**

Any event of over 25 people in a park should apply for a permit at:  
[detroitmi.gov/recreation](http://detroitmi.gov/recreation)

Picnic Shelters and Sports Fields are on a first-come-first-served basis if not reserved  
(313) 224-1100

## **Park Patrol**

During the summer season there is a designated Detroit Police Unit just for City Parks.  
They operate 11am-11pm Tuesday-Sunday

To report non-emergency safety issues:

[CityWideParks@detroitmi.gov](mailto:CityWideParks@detroitmi.gov)

(313) 596-6643

(734) 931-0846

For emergencies call 911

## **General Parks Hot-Line**

For other questions or concerns

(313) 224-5555

## **Forestry**

Report a dead or hazardous tree or request a new tree on City property or in the public  
right of way (between a City street and sidewalk)

(313) 871-5461

## **Vacant Lot Cutting**

All vacant lots within the City will be cut 4 times this summer.

(313) 224-5555

## **Department of Health and Wellness**

(313) 628-2100

## **Adult Well Being Services**

(313) 925-1135

## **Clark Park Coalition**

[clarkparkdetroit.com](http://clarkparkdetroit.com)

Anthony Benavides, Director / [benavidesacpc@gmail.com](mailto:benavidesacpc@gmail.com) / (313) 919-1421







### **Detroit Parks Coalition**

[detroitparkscoalition.com](http://detroitparkscoalition.com)

(313) 499-1767

### **Michigan Community Resources**

[mi-community.org](http://mi-community.org)

Matthew Schmitt, Program Manager / [mschmitt@mi-community.org](mailto:mschmitt@mi-community.org)

### **Northwest Goldberg Cares**

[nwgoldbergcares.com](http://nwgoldbergcares.com)

Daniel A. Washington, Executive Director / [daniel@nwgoldbergcares.com](mailto:daniel@nwgoldbergcares.com) /  
(313) 522-6816

Jordan Yagiela, Director of Programming / [jordan@nwgoldbergcares.com](mailto:jordan@nwgoldbergcares.com) /  
(248)763-5248

### **People for Palmer Park**

[peopleforpalmerpark.org](http://peopleforpalmerpark.org)

Rochelle Lento, Executive Director / [info@peopleforpalmerpark.org](mailto:info@peopleforpalmerpark.org)

### **Project Play: Southeast Michigan**

[projectplaysemi.org](http://projectplaysemi.org)

[projectplay@cfsem.org](mailto:projectplay@cfsem.org)

(313) 887-6111

### **Rocket Community Fund**

[rocketcommunityfund.org](http://rocketcommunityfund.org)

JJ Vélez, Director of Public Spaces at Rocket Community Fund /  
[jjvelez@rocketcommunityfund.org](mailto:jjvelez@rocketcommunityfund.org)





# Appendix C. Funding Resources

## Funding Resources

### KABOOM! Grants

[kaboom.org/grants](http://kaboom.org/grants)

### Kresge Foundation Opportunities

[kresge.org/grants-social-investments/current-funding-opportunities](http://kresge.org/grants-social-investments/current-funding-opportunities)

### Home Depot Foundation Grants

[hcorporate.homedepot.com/community/home-depot-foundation-grants](http://hcorporate.homedepot.com/community/home-depot-foundation-grants)

### Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds

[cfsem.org/special-opportunities/ralph-c-wilson-jr-legacy-funds](http://cfsem.org/special-opportunities/ralph-c-wilson-jr-legacy-funds)

### Rocket Community Fund Public Spaces Investment Strategy

[workdept.box.com/s/ru7f7tzlbp37lp5x3zz2a0xv1bsbq0gr](http://workdept.box.com/s/ru7f7tzlbp37lp5x3zz2a0xv1bsbq0gr)

### USA Hockey Grants

[usahockeyfoundation.com/page/show/781468-grant-information-and-procedures](http://usahockeyfoundation.com/page/show/781468-grant-information-and-procedures)

### United States Tennis Association (USTA) Grants

[usta.com/en/home/coach-organize/tennis-support/grants-assistance.html](http://usta.com/en/home/coach-organize/tennis-support/grants-assistance.html)

### Standard Components of a Grant Proposal 2020 from Michigan Community Resources

[workdept.box.com/s/vr9oinibpc0ly6q139dryz8636879wcy](http://workdept.box.com/s/vr9oinibpc0ly6q139dryz8636879wcy)

