

VILLAGE OF VICKSBURG

2026-2030 PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Village of Vicksburg Parks and Recreation Board

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Adopted by the Vicksburg Parks and Recreation Board on December 22, 2025

Adopted by the Vicksburg Village Council on January 5, 2026



Assisted by The Mannik & Smith Group, Inc.
Photographs provided by Village of Vicksburg and by The Mannik and Smith Group, Inc

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INTRODUCTION

Parks and recreation in Vicksburg provides a wide range of community benefits. Recreation contributes to the mental and physical health of Village residents, providing a place for exercise, physical activity, relaxation, play, and sports. Parks provide valuable open space and help to protect environmental resources.

The purpose of the Village of Vicksburg Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to guide recreation planning and development efforts of the Village over the next five-year period, through 2030. The Plan identifies existing parks and recreational opportunities, assesses the need for future recreational needs, provides direction for the future development of the Village parks, and presents strategies to meet the recreational needs of a growing population.

Past parks and recreation plans for the Village of Vicksburg were adopted in 2014, 2020 and 2024. These plans guided the development of various parks projects including the market pavilion, various trail improvements and the creation of Oswalt Park. The purpose of this new updated Plan is to guide recreation planning and development efforts of the Village over the next five years. The current Master Plan is intended to meet state standards for community recreation planning that are necessary to gain eligibility for grant programs.

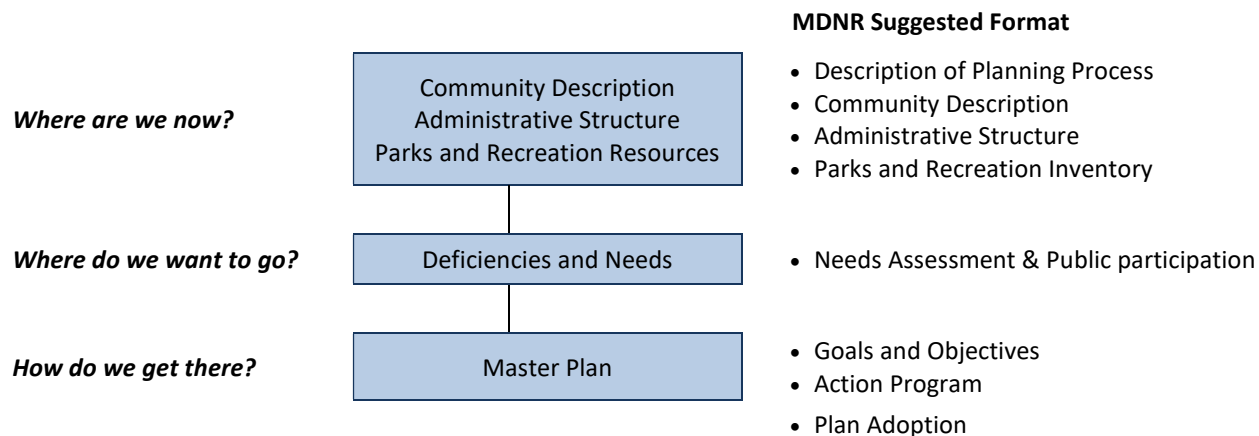
PLANNING PROCESS

The process used to generate the Plan consisted of three phases which are described below.

1. **Where are we now?** In this phase, the community's demographics and the administration of parks were reviewed and updated. The Village parks were examined and mapped to document the existing resources. The information is organized into three main categories: community description, administrative structure, and parks and recreation resources.
2. **Where do we want to be?** The second phase in the planning process consisted of an analysis of the community's parks to determine deficiencies and needs. Public input was sought to solicit ideas and suggestions about recreation preferences and desired improvements through an online questionnaire and at a public open house meeting. Input was also solicited from Village officials, community stakeholders, and staff.
3. **How do we get there?** Once needs were identified, the final phase involved the development of an action plan to support the community's vision for the parks and recreation system and provide for park development projects. Recommended projects were summarized in a capital improvement schedule, along with strategies for implementation. This phase also included preparation of a full draft of the Plan, which was presented to the Village of Vicksburg Parks and Recreation Board as well as the public for review and comment prior to adoption.

The following diagram illustrates the planning process and how it corresponds to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) suggested format described earlier.

Figure 1. Planning Process

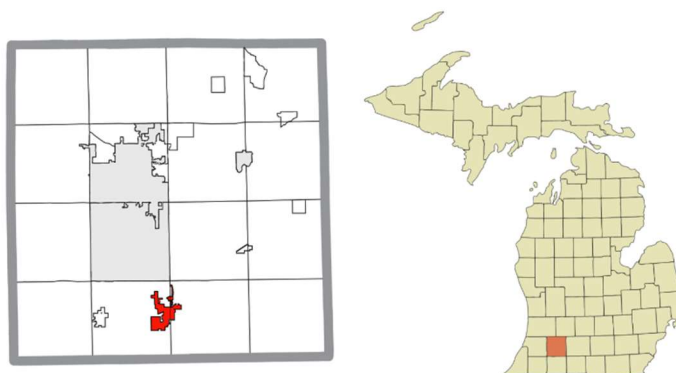


WHAT THIS PLAN CONTAINS

The Village of Vicksburg Parks and Recreation Master Plan follows the format suggested by the MDNR in the *Guidelines for the Development of Community Parks and Recreation Plans* (IC1924, Rev. 4/16/2021). The first chapter, **Community Description**, includes a summary on both the social and physical characteristics of the Village. The **Administrative Structure** chapter includes a description of how parks and recreation services are managed in the Village, including budget and funding information. The next chapter, **Parks and Recreation Resources**, describes the existing Village parks as well as those of the County and other parks located nearby. This chapter also includes an accessibility assessment and a description of the grant-assisted park projects. The **Needs Assessment** portion of the Plan presents the input received from local officials, staff, and residents, which helped in formulating the **Goals and Objectives** and **Action Program** chapters, which outlines an action plan with strategies for implementation.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AREA

The Village of Vicksburg is a small community in southern Kalamazoo County known for its mix of historic charm, natural beauty and modern amenities. Located about 20 minutes south of Kalamazoo, it offers peaceful, small-town lifestyle while still providing easy access to the larger city of Kalamazoo. Vicksburg is located approximately six (6) miles east of US-131 and ten (10) miles south of Interstate 94 (I-94).



COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Village of Vicksburg, was settled in 1831 by John Vickers when he built a brush dam over the eight-foot waterfall on Portage Creek and erected a log grist mill. The mill is believed to have been the first mill in Kalamazoo County. The dam created a pond that supplied water power to the mill and formed the sizeable Sunset Lake, around which pioneers built homes and set up businesses. On October 18, 1871, the village was incorporated as Brady, but one day later, a petition passed to rename it Vicksburg.

POPULATION TRENDS

Anticipated changes in the size, distribution, and age composition of the population will affect the need for future recreational facilities. According to the most recent census information (2020), Vicksburg is home to 3,706 people, an increase of 800 people from its 2010 population of 2,906. The most recent population estimate for the Village is 3,824 (July 2023, SEMCOG), indicating population increase.

Table 1. Vicksburg Village Population and Households, 2010 and 2020

Community	Population			Households		
	2010	2020	% change	2010	2020	% change
Village of Vicksburg	2,906	3,706	28%	1,120	1,598	43%
Kalamazoo County	250,108	261,670	5%	88,756	108,397	22%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010 and 2020)



POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

In addition to examining the number and distribution of people, it is important to understand the population characteristics of the community. Table 2 presents information on race, age, education, employment, income, disability status, and housing characteristics of the Village.

Table 2. Census Profile, 2020/2023 ACS

	number	%		number	%
TOTAL 2020 POPULATION (Census 2020)	3,706	100.0%			
TOTAL 2023 POPULATION (ACS 2023)	3,824	100.0%			
AGE (ACS 2023)					
Under 9 years	487	12.7%	40 to 49 years	637	16.7%
10 to 19 years	524	13.7%	50 to 59 years	480	12.6%
20 to 29 years	632	16.5%	60 to 69 years	215	5.6%
30 to 39 years	565	14.8%	70 to 79 years	175	4.6%
			Over 80 years	109	2.9%
			TOTAL	3,824	100%
MEDIAN AGE (years) (ACS 2023)	34.3				
POPULATION & HOUSEHOLDS (ACS 2023)					
Homeownership Rate	1,214	76.5%			
Housing Units	1,598				
Households (Occupied Units)	1,587	99.3%			
Vacant Housing Units	11	0.7%			
HOUSEHOLD TYPES (ACS 2023)					
Single Unit	1,332	83.4%			
Multi-Unit	266	16.7%			
Mobile Homes or Other	0	0.0%			
RACE AND ORIGIN (ACS 2023)					
White	3,628	94.9%			
Black or African American	18	0.5%			
Asian	39	1.0%			
Multi-Racial	92	2.4%			
Hispanic	47	1.2%			
TOTAL	3,824	100.0%			
HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL (ACS 2023)					
Graduate / Professional Degree	90	3.7%	Some College, No Degree	1,206	49.3%
Bachelor's Degree	353	14.4%	High School or equivalent	673	27.5%
			Did Not Graduate High School	123	5.0%

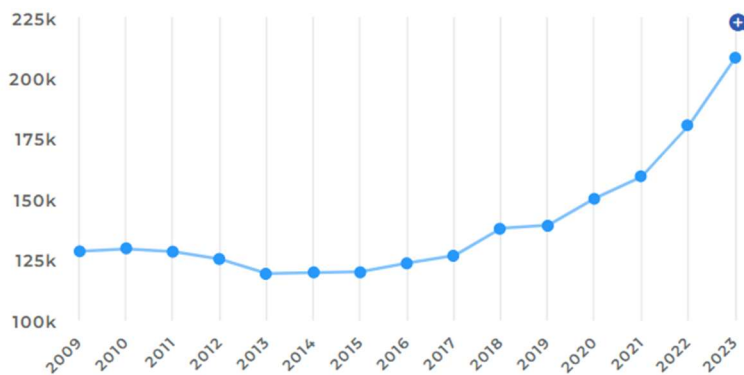
	number	%		number	%
JOBS BY INDUSTRY (ACS 2023)					
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	46	2.2%	Construction	168	8.0%
Manufacturing	385	18.3%	Wholesale Trade	25	1.2%
Retail Trade	278	13.2%	Information	13	0.6%
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	112	5.3%	Finance, insurance, real estate	41	1.9%
Professional, scientific & management	178	8.5%	Education Services	203	9.7%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	52	2.5%	Other services	90	4.3%
Public Administration	40	2.0%	Healthcare & Social Admin	293	13.9%
Administrative Support	61	2.9%	Accommodation Food Service	117	5.6%
			TOTAL	2,102	100%
POVERTY (ACS 2023)					
Persons in Poverty	196	5.1%			
INCOME (ACS 2023)					
Median Household Income (in 2023 \$)	\$70,070				
Per capita Income	\$34,330				
ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME (ACS 2023)					
\$200,000 or more	40	2.5%	\$40,000 to \$44,999	45	2.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	113	7.1%	\$35,000 to \$39,999	63	4%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	115	7.2%	\$30,000 to \$34,999	62	3.9%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	193	12.2%	\$25,000 to \$29,999	108	6.8%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	231	14.6%	\$20,000 to \$24,999	7	0.4%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	377	23.8%	\$15,000 to \$19,999	55	3.5%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	86	5.4%	\$10,000 to \$14,999	39	2.5%
\$45,000 to \$49,999	9	0.6%	Less than \$10,000	44	2.8%
			TOTAL	1,587	100%
POP BY HOUSING TYPE (ACS 2023)					
Married couples	2,438	63.8%			
Male householder	115	3%			
Female householder	566	14.8%			
Non-family	705	18.4%			
TOTAL	3,824	100%			
HOUSING VALUE (ACS 2023)					
Median Housing Value – in 2023 dollars	\$208,300				
Median gross rent	\$914				

	number	%		number	%
HOUSING VALUE (ACS 2023)					
\$750,000 or higher	0	0%	\$80,000 to \$89,999	63	5.2%
\$500,000 to \$749,999	13	1.1%	\$70,000 to \$79,999	12	1%
\$400,000 to \$499,999	123	10.1%	\$60,000 to \$69,999	0	0%
\$300,000 to \$399,999	105	8.6%	\$50,000 to \$59,999	0	0%
\$250,000 to \$299,999	174	14.3%	\$40,000 to \$49,000	0	0%
\$200,000 to \$249,999	230	18.9%	\$30,000 to \$39,999	0	0%
\$175,000 to \$199,999	120	9.9%	\$20,000 to \$29,999	0	0%
\$150,000 to \$174,999	52	4.3%	\$15,000 to \$15,999	36	3%
\$125,000 to \$149,000	174	14.3%	\$10,000 to \$14,999	7	0.6%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	74	6.1%	Less than \$10,000	0	0%
\$90,000 to \$99,999	31	2.6%	TOTAL	1,587	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2020) & 2020 and 2023 American Community Survey (ACS)



2023 MEDIAN HOME VALUE
\$208,300



* Data Source: 2023 [US Census Bureau](#), American Community Survey. Home value data includes all types of owner-occupied housing.

NATURAL FEATURES

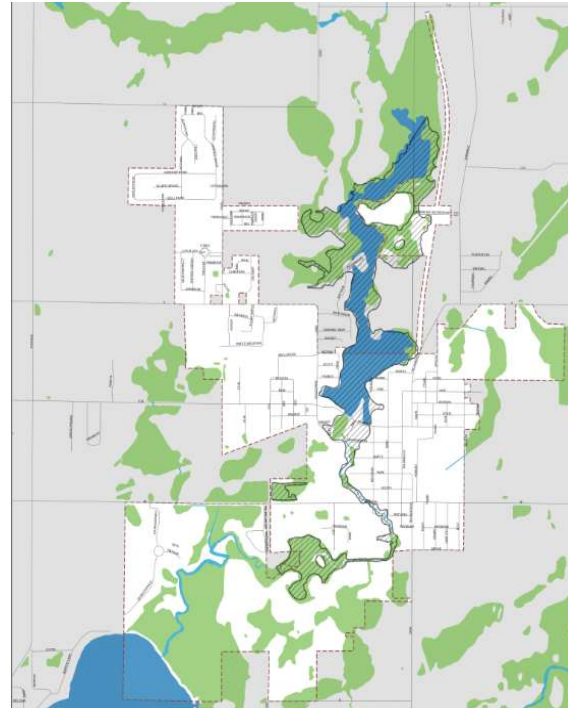
Like much of Michigan's southern Lower Peninsula, the landscape of the Vicksburg area was formed through glacial action. The glacier's movement shaped the topography and created the different types of soils. Much of Vicksburg is developed but some natural features exist including lakes, ponds, rivers, streams and a variety of wetland types are in the Village which are shown in Figure 2 below.

Wooded areas are found along the entire edge of the waterways. They provide protective buffers for the waterways and protect the watershed from siltation and soil erosion damage caused by stormwater runoff. The wooded areas also serve as a valuable wildlife corridor. Much of the heavily wooded areas around the waterways are identified as freshwater forested and shrub wetlands that exhibit temporary flooding (a few days to a few weeks) or seasonal flooding (primarily during the early growing season).

Surface waters in the Village of Vicksburg consist of the Portage Creek, Barton Lake and the main water feature, Sunset Lake. Sunset Lake remains an important aesthetic and recreational feature of the Village. It is approximately 140 acres and is located both within the Village of Vicksburg and Schoolcraft Township. The portion of the lake located in the Village of Vicksburg accounts for approximately 40 acres of the lake's surface and is drained by the Portage Creek that runs through Clark Park.

Figure 2. Natural Features Map

Source: Village of Vicksburg Comprehensive Master Plan; Adopted June 3, 2024



While the soil's poor drainage and wetness present some limitations for the development of recreation facilities, Sunset Lake provides great opportunities for outdoor recreation. The Village owns and operates Sunset Lake and Veteran's Memorial Park which are both located on Sunset Lake.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

In 1831, John Vickers built a brush dam over the eight-foot waterfall on Portage Creek and erected a log grist mill. The mill is believed to have been the first in Kalamazoo County. The dam created a pond that supplied waterpower to the mill, and formed the sizeable Sunset Lake, around which pioneers built homes and set up businesses. Vickers died in 1842. On October 18, 1871, the village was incorporated as Brady, but one day later a petition passed to rename it Vicksburg.

In the early 1900s, Vicksburg, MI was home to one of the most productive paper mills in the region: Lee Paper Mill. Producing over 17 tons of paper per day at its peak, and serving as Vicksburg's leading employer, Lee Paper Mill was an economic engine that never stopped turning. The Mill officially shut down in 2001, devastating the community. The Mill at Vicksburg is being restored and repurposed, relaunching every inch of its 416,000 square-foot building and 120-acre campus to its former glory. Its intent is to host events, breweries and distilleries, museums, outdoor spaces and live music which would occupy lively spaces filled with local visitors and tourists from all over the region.

Vicksburg is divided into various neighborhoods, corridors and districts. These include a historic downtown district, residential, multi-family residential, commercial, health, industrial, education and undeveloped open space. There have been several residential developments over the last decade which have brought neighborhoods to the community. The downtown historic district is a mixed commercial use and residential district and is primarily located along Main Street, Michigan Avenue and Kalamazoo Avenue. These structures primarily date back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which are now used for restaurants, shops and boutiques.

Figure 3, on page 10, illustrates the Village's existing land use. This map shows the clear distinction between residential districts, business districts, industrial districts and the Village's primary natural feature, Sunset Lake. The Village of Vicksburg, boasting 8 parks, are spread throughout the Village's 3.15 square miles.

As presented in Table 3, the Village of Vicksburg has seen slow growth of occupied housing units from 2010 to 2023.

Table 3. Housing Units

Housing Type	Census 2010	ACS 2023	Change 2010-2023
Single Family Unit	1,027	1,332	305
Multi-Unit Apartment	206	266	60
Mobile Home or Other	0	0	0
Total Net Housing Units	1,233	1,598	365

Source: Census.gov

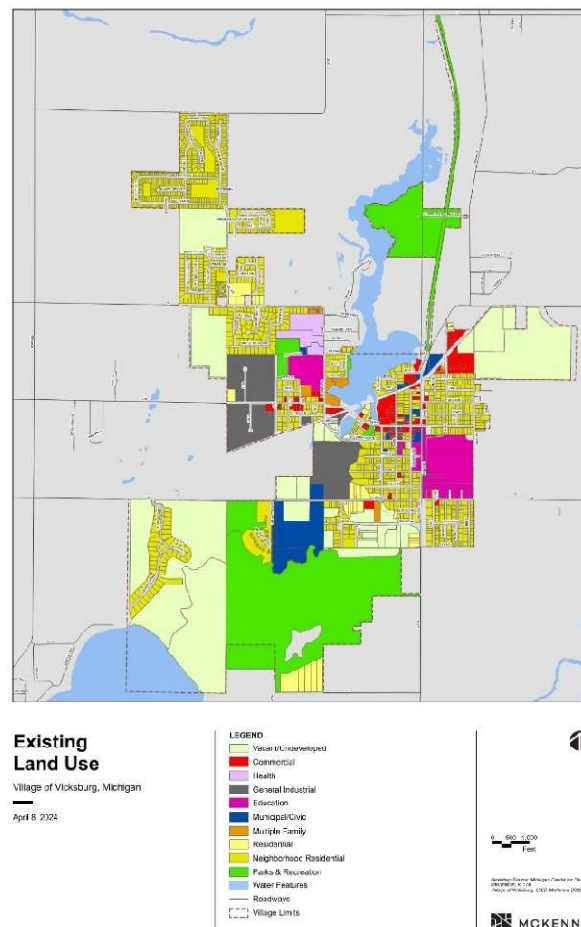
Single family residential, commercial districts and industrial districts take up large portions of the land use in the Village of Vicksburg. But opportunity remains with large areas of undeveloped and vacant land.

Table 4. 2020 Land Use Acreage

	Acres 2020	Percent
Single-Family Residential	455.6	22.6%
Single Family Residential Attached	34.3	1.7%
Multi-Family Residential	20.2	1.0%
Mobile Home	0.0	0.0%
Commercial	38.3	1.9%
Medical	28.2	1.4%
Industrial	262.1	13%
Recreation/Open Space	463.7	23%
Public/Quasi Public	189.5	9.4%
Undeveloped/Vacant	52.4	26%
TOTAL	2,016	100.00%

Figure 3. Existing Land Use

Source: Village of Vicksburg Comprehensive Master Plan; Adopted June 3, 2024



PLANNING INITIATIVES

While change is inevitable and growth in both population and housing will occur, the Village of Vicksburg is committed to managing that growth to enhance economic benefit, recreational activities, and overall quality of life for Village residents.

Various initiatives and organizations have relevance to the current plan. They include:

- 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan
- 2023 Strategic Plan
- Initiatives led by the Village of Vicksburg Downtown Development Authority
- Initiatives led by the Vicksburg Area Chamber of Commerce
- Initiatives led by the Vicksburg Historical Society

2024 Comprehensive Master Plan

The Village's Comprehensive Master Plan is the foundation for future land use and planning decisions in the Village. The Future Land Use Map was adopted with the Comprehensive Master Plan on June 3, 2024. The Zoning Map was most recently adopted in March of 2025. The Village's 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan included several community goals and actions that relate to Culture, Recreation & The Environment in the Village, which still have relevance to this plan.

- Provide, maintain, expand and improve the arts, culture and recreation system to incorporate a broader array of opportunities that will best serve the needs of Vicksburg's residents of all ages.
- Preserve, maintain and protect significant and sensitive natural features located in the Village and integrate natural feature preservation into land use decisions.

2023 Strategic Plan

The Village Council, Village Manager and staff embarked on a thorough strategic planning process in early 2023. The result of this process was to create a vision of a desired two-year future of the Village of Vicksburg and to translate the plan into goals, expectations and objectives. The 2023 Strategic Plan showed several goals and actions that relate to Culture, Recreation & The Environment in the Village, which still have relevance to this plan.

- Mission: The Village of Vicksburg provides the highest quality of life through essential infrastructure, public safety, recreation, and welcoming growth within the constraints of fiscally responsible government.
- Expectation #3: Healthy Infrastructure and amenities ensure quality of life
 - New multi-facility park
 - Clark Park connector

Vicksburg Downtown Development Authority

The Village of Vicksburg's Downtown Development Authority was formed February 3, 1986, to enhance its downtown and plan and develop growth in its downtown district. At the October 16, 2019, Village Council meeting, it was unanimously voted upon to have the Village's Planning Commission serve as the

Downtown Development Authority Board as permitted pursuant to former 1932 PA 285 or the Michigan planning enabling act, 2008 PA 33, MCL 125.3801 to 125.3885.

The Planning Commission/DDA is led by a 9-member Board of Commissioners. The members are nominated by the Village President, subject to approval by the Village Council. The Planning Commission's primary role, related to DDA business, is the redevelopment of Vicksburg's downtown area.

Vicksburg Area Chamber of Commerce

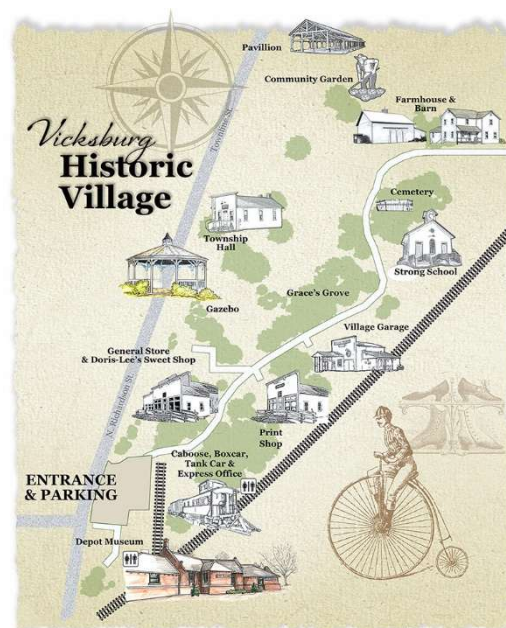
The Vicksburg Area Chamber of Commerce brings together business and the community through events, publications, fundraisers and projects to enhance the vitality and growth of the area and promote a quality business environment for the greater Vicksburg area. It is led by a Board of Directors.

The Vicksburg Area Chamber of Commerce is a membership based non-profit who provides resources, events, education, exposure and tools to the businesses of the community. Representing and advocating for business in the community, the chamber offers many exciting ways to learn, inform and network.

Vicksburg Historical Museum

The Vicksburg Historical Society is a non-profit organization run by a board of directors who run and operate the Vicksburg Historical Village and the Union Depot Museum. These spaces offer a journey back in time to life in the Village between the 1890's and 1930's including 11 historic and replica structures. The primary goal of the Vicksburg Historical Society is to focus on preserving and sharing the history of the Village through research, exploration and sharing the stories of the community.

The Vicksburg Historical Society leases the Historic Village from the Village of Vicksburg which is reviewed and updated every three years. The historical society operates the village and museum while the Village assists with regular maintenance and improvements.



Administrative Structure

The Village of Vicksburg is an incorporated Village in Michigan whose role it is to serve the residents, businesses and visitors. The Village of Vicksburg is governed by a seven-member Village Council, all elected by the voters of Vicksburg who each serve four-year terms. The Village Council work together to govern and address the needs of the community. The Village is also served by a Village Manager, Village Treasurer and Village Clerk. The Village Manager is hired by the Village Council. The Manager then supervises all Village department directors and staff to ensure the delivery of Vicksburg's high-quality public services.

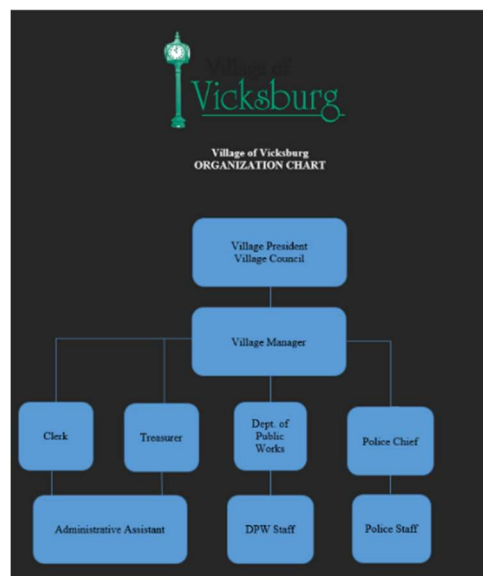
The Village of Vicksburg has a Parks & Recreation Board. It makes recommendations and provides input to the Village Council for maintaining and improving the natural and aesthetic qualities of the parks, the Historic Village, the Farmer's Market Pavilion and the Vicksburg Recreation Area. Their goal is to enhance the quality of life through the preservation and maintenance of the community parks. The seven-member board of the Parks & Recreation Board are appointed by the Village Council.

ADMINISTRATION

The Village Manager provides oversight and supervision to all Village staff and directors. Chapter 323 in the Village's Code of Ordinances (Adopted by the Village Council on 7/19/1999 by Ordinance No. 234) defines and regulates the Parks and Recreation Areas. It states that the Village Manager may authorize a Park Supervisor to care for the Villages parks and recreation areas. All Parks & Recreation operations and maintenance are the responsibility of the Department of Public Works (DPW). The Park Supervisor has the authority for all employees who may be required to operate the department.

The Public Works Department is established under the authority of Chapter X, Section 14, of the General Law Village Act. It has the authority to employ a director of public works, public works' employees and other necessary personnel is delegated to the Village Manager. The Director of Public Works shall perform the duties of street administrator, shall serve at the pleasure of the Village Manager and is subject to the direction of the Village Manager. The Department of Public Works is also responsible for the maintenance of the Village's streets and municipal water system. The Department of Public Works has one (1) Director and three (3) full-time personnel. In addition to permanent staff, the Director supervises other seasonal employees as needed.

Figure 4. Organizational Chart



FUNDING AND BUDGET

The fiscal year for the Village of Vicksburg is October 1 – September 30 of each year. Funding for parks and recreation is appropriated from the Village general fund. The General Fund budget is \$2,450,709. Of the General Fund budget, the Department of Public Works budget for fiscal year 2025-2026 is \$575,775 or 19.5% of the general fund. Of the Public Works budget, Parks & Recreation Department receives \$127,500 or 22% of the Public Works budget. This is a 36% increase from the fiscal year 2024-2025 budget.

Expenditures for equipment replacement and capital improvements are submitted each budget cycle and identified in the annual Capital Improvement Plan and financed through a variety of funding sources within and outside of the General Fund.

Table 5. Parks and Recreation Budget Summaries

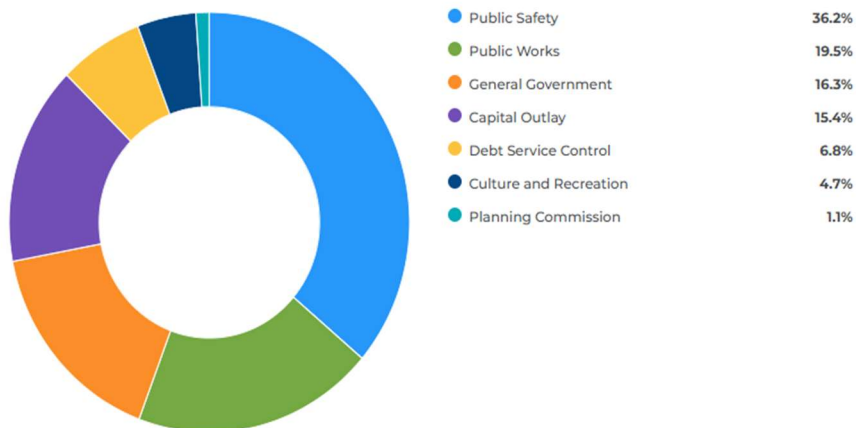
<u>Parks and Recreation, Trail System</u>	<u>Account</u>	<u>FY24 Actuals</u>	<u>FY 25 Approved</u>
Personal Services			
SALARIES/WAGES	101-751-703-000		\$0.00
WORKERS COMPENSATION INS	101-751-711-000	\$0.00	\$0.00
FICA - EMPLOYER SHARE	101-751-715-025		\$0.00
Total Personal Services		\$0.00	\$0.00
Operations			
OFFICE SUPPLIES	101-751-727-000		\$0.00
POSTAGE	101-751-728-000		\$0.00
BANK / FINANCE CHARGES	101-751-729-000	\$0.00	\$0.00
OPERATING SUPPLIES	101-751-740-000	\$14,453.93	\$20,000.00
WEBSITE SERVICES	101-751-740-012		\$0.00
EVENTS-SPECIAL	101-751-740-015	\$3,180.00	\$3,000.00
CLOSING COSTS	101-751-741-000		\$0.00
REPAIR/MAINTENANCE	101-751-775-000	\$31,508.42	\$37,500.00
WEED CONTROL	101-751-782-000	\$800.00	\$4,000.00
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	101-751-801-000		\$12,500.00
ATTORNEY SERVICES	101-751-801-001	\$0.00	\$0.00
ENGINEERING SERVICES	101-751-801-002	\$0.00	\$0.00
TRAIL SYSTEM DIRECTOR	101-751-801-011		\$0.00
TRAIL SYSTEMS /EASEMENTS	101-751-801-012		\$0.00
PROPERTY INSURANCE	101-751-810-005	\$2,381.33	\$3,750.00
LIABILITY INSURANCE	101-751-810-006	\$2,726.11	\$3,750.00
TELEPHONE	101-751-850-000	\$2,246.89	\$2,500.00
SECURITY MONITORING	101-751-850-001		\$0.00
SUMMER CONCERT PROJECT	101-751-870-000	\$0.00	\$0.00
COMMUNITY GARDENING PROJECT	101-751-875-000		\$0.00
TRASH COLLECTION	101-751-890-000	\$1,750.97	\$2,000.00
PRINTING AND PUBLISHING	101-751-900-000		\$0.00
ELECTRIC UTILITIES	101-751-920-001	\$9,434.80	\$12,500.00
GAS UTILITIES	101-751-920-002	\$7,003.11	\$9,000.00

WATER & SEWER UTILITIES	101-751-920-003	\$564.83	\$1,000.00
RENTALS	101-751-940-000		\$0.00
EQUIPMENT	101-751-943-000	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
DEPRECIATION EXPENSE	101-751-968-000		\$0.00
LAND PURCHASES-TRAIL SYSTEM	101-751-971-000		\$0.00
Total Operations		\$76,050.39	\$116,500.00
Capital Outlay			
LAND IMPROVEMENTS	101-751-974-000	\$17,643.50	\$2,500.00
CONSTRUCTION IN PROCESS	101-751-974-002	\$0.00	\$0.00
CAPITAL OUTLAY BUILDING	101-751-975-000		\$0.00
CAPITAL OUTLAY EQUIPMENT	101-751-977-000		\$0.00
CAPITAL OUTLAY - OTHER EQUIP.	101-751-977-002		\$8,500.00
Total Capital Outlay		\$17,643.50	\$11,000.00
Total Parks and Recreation, Trail System		\$93,693.89	\$127,500.00



TOTAL BUDGETED

\$2,450,709



VOLUNTEERS & PARTNERSHIPS

Volunteers, service clubs, community groups and government agencies, play an active role in supporting parks and recreation in the Village of Vicksburg. They include:

Civic and Other Organizations: Vicksburg Area Chamber of Commerce
Vicksburg Historical Society
Vicksburg Downtown Development Authority
Vicksburg District Library

Community Arts Partners: Vicksburg Arts

Community Sports Partners: AYSO Region 74 Youth Soccer
Vicksburg Little League Baseball
Vicksburg Rocket Football
Vicksburg Rocket Cheer
Vicksburg Youth Wrestling Club
Vicksburg Soccer Organization
Vicksburg Community Education

Local Service Clubs: Vicksburg Lions Club
Generous Hands
Vicksburg Rotary Club
South County Community Services

Fraternal Organizations: Knights of Columbus

Scouting Groups: BSA Unit 251
Girl Scout Troop 80289



PARK AND RECREATION INVENTORY

The residents of the Village of Vicksburg have a variety of available parks and recreational resources. These facilities vary in terms of ownership (Federal, State, County, local, schools, and private), size (small neighborhood playgrounds of less than one acre to large community parks with thousands of acres), and type (playgrounds, sports facilities, community parks, etc.). The purpose of this chapter of the plan is to describe the full range of recreational facilities in and around Vicksburg.

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES WITHIN VICKSBURG

The Village of Vicksburg owns and operates seven (7) parks and open spaces totaling 97.12 acres. They currently include community and mini parks with play equipment, picnic facilities, sports fields, and landscape areas. Vicksburg's four (4) community parks are the largest green spaces in the Village and offer the greatest array of recreational amenities. The Village's one (1) neighborhood parks provide residents with convenient access to greenspace within walking distances of nearby homes and the downtown. Two (2) mini parks are located within the Village, creating small green space in developed areas.

Figure 5. Vicksburg Village Parks (Kalamazoo County GIS)

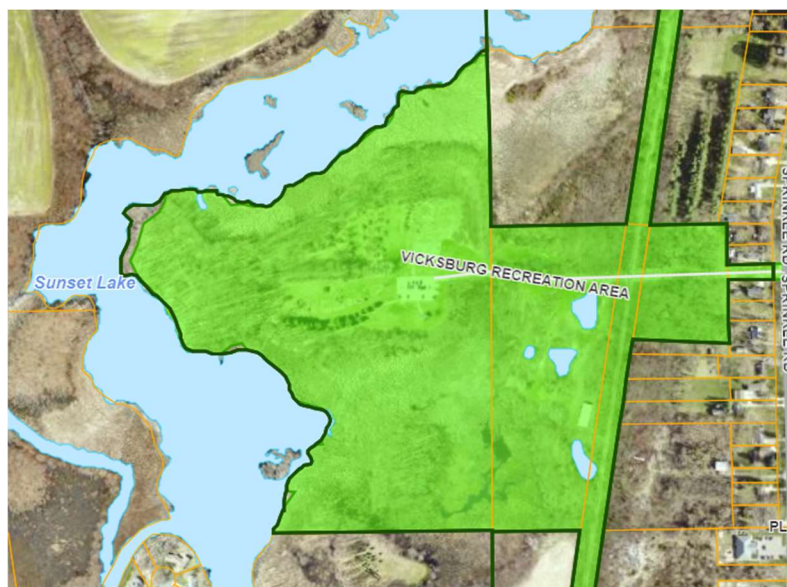


Community Parks

Vicksburg Recreation Area and Disc Golf Course

The Vicksburg Recreation Area and Disc Golf Course is an 86.16-acre community park located at 12538 S. Sprinkle Road. Its park site amenities include:

- Parking Lot
- 18-hole Disc Golf Course
- Picnic Tables and Benches
- Trailhead



Community Pavilion

The Community Pavilion is a 1.22-acre community park located at 300 N. Richardson Street. Its park site amenities include:

- Farmer's Market Pavilion
- Parking Lot
- Horseshoe Pits
- Picnic Tables and Seating



Historic Village

The Historic Village is a 6.25-acre community park located at 300 N. Richardson Street. Its park site amenities include the amenities below. The Historic Village has also been identified as the potential location of a future veteran's memorial.

- 11 Building Historic Village
- Walking/Driving Trail
- Vicksburg Historical Society Museum
- Gazebo
- Cemetery
- Educational Signs
- Benches and seating areas



Sunset Lake Beach Park

Sunset Lake Beach Park is a 1.44-acre community park located at 399 Page Street. Its park site amenities include:

- Picnic tables and benches
- Picnic Shelter
- Public Beach Access
- Walking Trails and Boardwalk
- Observation Deck
- Play Structure (Ages 2-5)
- Bike Rack
- Kayak Rental Station



Neighborhood Parks

Clark Park

Clark Park is a 1.7-acre neighborhood park located at 200 W. Prairie Street. Its park site amenities include:

- Boardwalk
- Observation Deck
- Play Structure (Ages 2-12)
- Picnic Tables and Benches
- Parking Lot



Mini Parks

Veteran's Park

Veteran's Park is a 0.21-acre mini park located at 328 West Prairie Street. Its park site amenities include:

- Sidewalk
- Benches



Oswalt Park

Oswalt Park is a 0.14-acre mini park located at 119 N. Main Street. Its park site amenities include:

- Picnic tables and benches
- Walking Paths
- Fire Pit
- Village Gateway
- Standing & Shaded Bar Structure



Other Parks & Recreation Facilities

Angels Crossing Golf Course

Angels Crossing Golf Club sits on the edge of Michigan's Schoolcraft Township in the beautiful Village of Vicksburg. Created by the glaciers thousands of years ago, this acreage occupies the area northeast of Barton Lake (just south of Kalamazoo, Michigan). The goal was to build a modern classic course with features to hold its own against modern equipment. Architect W. Bruce Matthews III, utilizes many of the Golden Age philosophies and improved upon those wherever possible. Those philosophies and Angels Crossing's bold and dramatic styling, provides linear and directional options to golfers and those options will change significantly as pin positions move across the giant contoured greens.

The quality, natural beauty and unique design of the property make Angels Crossing arguably the best golf course in the southwest Michigan and the Kalamazoo area. Recent awards include; *Golfweek's Best Courses You Can Play in Michigan* and *Golf Digest's – Best Places 4 1/2 -Star Award*. Angels Crossing is definitely not just "another" golf course, it is a true Michigan Golf Classic.

History of Angels Crossing Golf Club

In the early 1900s, the "Golden Age" of golf design was underway. C.B. MacDonald, Seth Raynor, Harry Colt, William Flynn, A.W. Tillinghast, James Braid, and Stiles & Van Kleeck were designing the courses many consider to be lasting classics today. Also in the early 1900's the paper boom was beginning across the Midwest. Vast timber ranges and plentiful waterways led to the development of small "mill" towns among the river valleys of Michigan.

The largest of its time was built in Vicksburg, eight miles south of Kalamazoo. The timeless courses of the "Golden Age" have become constants over the years, as were the mills that became the backbone of local economies throughout the twentieth century. At the end of the 1990's the bloom was off the paper boom and so the mills began to close. So what does a hundred year old "mill town" do when its largest employer closes? The choice is a simple one, either reinvent itself or simply fade away to the realm of used to be. In Vicksburg, Michigan, a group of selfless, civic minded individuals have chosen to create a destination to draw visitors and new residents to its community founded upon an affordable, nostalgic golf club and an overall quality of life. In October of 2009 the Village of Vicksburg acquired Angels Crossing.



Ball Field Properties

The Village owns three parcels of land on the western edge of the Village limits that they do not consider parks. They are dedicated baseball and softball fields which they lease annually to the Vicksburg Little League for their baseball and softball operation. On the northern of the three parcels, the Village has been discussing creating a new park with traditional play amenities including a playground, walking trail, picnic shelter and pickleball courts.



Schools and Churches

In addition to the Village parks there are schools, churches, and private properties and open spaces offering recreation opportunities to the residents of Vicksburg. The following is a brief overview of these facilities.

Public School Facilities

Vicksburg Community Schools is the public school district serving the Village of Vicksburg who serves over 2,205 students with a K-12 curriculum. The district emphasizes individual learning, community engagement, and transparency in budgeting and governance. It is a well-regarded district with strong academic performance and community involvement. The district has five (5) schools including Tobey, Indian Lake and Sunset Lake Elementary Schools, Vicksburg Middle School, Vicksburg High School and Vicksburg Pathways High School (alternative).

Private Schools

Vicksburg residents also have several private schools in and around the area for their residents to choose from, offering a variety of educational opportunities including religious and specialty programs. There are approximately ten (10) private schools located in or near the Village. These include a mix of Christian and Catholic schools, Montessori and specialty education programs, Co-ed and single-gender options as well as Boarding and day schools.

Universities and Colleges

While there are no public colleges or universities located directly in Vicksburg, there are 71 colleges or universities within 100 miles, and several are nearby in the greater Kalamazoo area. These include Kalamazoo Valley Community College (10 miles), Ross Medical Education Center (12 miles), Western Michigan University (13 miles), Spring Arbor University (15 miles).

Vicksburg Area Churches

The Village of Vicksburg has approximately 10 churches representing different denominations, some of which incorporate recreation facilities such as playgrounds, picnic areas, and open grass areas.



Private Recreation Facilities

There are no private recreation facilities located within the limits of the Village of Vicksburg. There are, however, a number of facilities within a short distance for their residents to enjoy.

Mezanmi Play Cafe

The Mezanmi Play Café is an indoor play café located in downtown Vicksburg. It is a cozy indoor play space and coffee shop designed for families with young children, especially ages 0-6. It blends imaginative play with a relaxing café experience for caregivers. The indoor play area is thoughtfully designed for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers with Montessori-inspired toys with safe and clean play zones. Menu highlights include hot and iced espresso drinks, chai tea, cold brews snacks and light bites.

Indian Run Golf Club

Indian Run Golf Club is a scenic and challenging 18-hole golf course located in Scotts, MI. It's known for its strategic layout, well-maintained greens, and welcoming atmosphere. Facilities include practice facilities, a pro shop, a banquet room and a bar and restaurant.

Next Level Sports Center

Next Level Sports Center is a premier 30-acre athletic campus offering indoor and outdoor sports facilities, youth programs and training camps. Facilities include indoor and outdoor driving ranges, pickleball courts, batting cages, volleyball courts and lighted soccer fields. Program offerings include youth sports development including introductory sports for young children, skill-building leagues, camps and clinics. Also offered are elite training camps designed for high level athletes for improvement in speed, agility and strength. Facility rentals are also an option for birthday parties or team outings.

Oak Shores Resort Campground

Oak Shores Resort Campground is a peaceful, family-friendly destination nestled under mature oak trees along Thrall Lake, offering a blend of nature, recreation and relaxation. Campsite features include 65 campsites with full hook-ups for RV's, tents and other seasonal options. Amenities include a heated swimming pool, modern bathhouses, nature trails, fishing pond and lake access, a playground, cornhole and bike riding areas. Oak Shores is often described as a "hidden gem" in Michigan's camping scene offering a tranquil escape with plenty of outdoor fun.



Recreation Programs

The Village of Vicksburg offers no recreation programming. But do offer a number of special event opportunities throughout the year. Alternatively, programs are hosted by other community groups or partners at facilities throughout the Village.

Nearby Recreation Opportunities:

AYSO Region 74 Youth Soccer
YMCA Portage Branch
Vicksburg Little League
Vicksburg Rocket Football
Kingdom Sports
Dance and Tumbling (Community Education)
Summer Camps (Community Education)
Youth Basketball (Community Education)
Sanchin Ryu Karate Classes (Community Education)
The Art of Nature Summer Camp (Vicksburg Arts)
Kids Youth and Educational Art Programs (Vicksburg Arts)
Destination Art Series (Vicksburg Arts)
Tournament of Writers (Vicksburg Arts)
South County Fiber Arts (Vicksburg Arts)
Senior Arts Programs (Vicksburg Arts)

Village of Vicksburg Community Events:

Burg Days
Harvest Festival
Ice "Burg" Fest
Vicksburg Lions Club Summer Festival
Vicksburg Holiday Parade
Christmas in the Burg
Movies in the Park

Facility Rentals:

Community Pavilion



PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES AROUND VICKSBURG

Kalamazoo County Parks

While Vicksburg doesn't have a Kalamazoo County Park within its boundary, Prairie View County Park is not far. This 210 acre park is just 4.2 miles and an 8 minute drive from the downtown district. Located on the shores of Gourdneck and Hogset Lakes, the park offers a premier swimming beach and a pristine natural setting. Prairie View has 4 picnic shelters that are a perfect setting for any gathering. Park amenities include picnic shelters, a beach house and a dog park. The Prairie View Dog Park opened in the spring of 2010 and features 7 acres of fenced park area for dogs to exercise and socialize off-leash. The park has a grass area with plenty of shade trees and a wooded section with a walking trail. Plus, there is a special area for dogs under 25 lbs. Access to the dog park requires either payment of the daily vehicle entrance fee or an annual park pass.



Figure 6 depicts the location of Prairie View County Park and the other Kalamazoo County parks and recreation facilities located around Vicksburg.

Figure 6. Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation Facilities

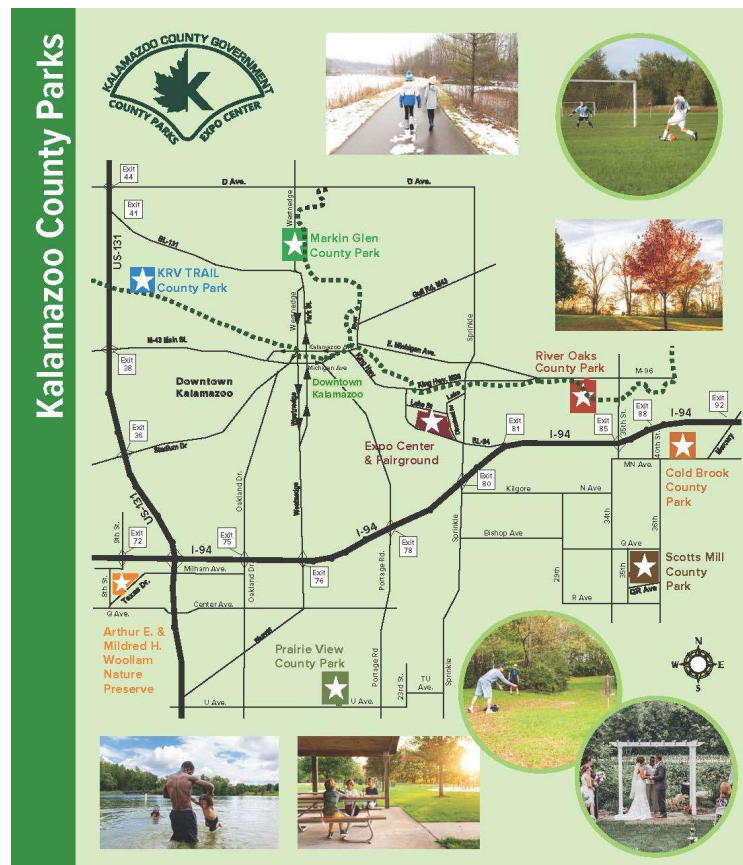


Table 6. Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation Facilities

Park	Location	Facilities	Acres
Expo Center & Fairgrounds	Kalamazoo Township	Home to the Kalamazoo County Parks Offices and maintenance operations. Facilities include a 90,000 square foot expo center, 14 barns, 220 campsites, a grandstand, outdoor event space and 4 horse arenas.	125
Cold Brook County Park	Charleston Township	Located on Portage, Blue and Long Lakes provide boating, swimming and camping facilities.	276
Kalamazoo River Valley Trail (KRV)	Various	The KRV is the County's linear County Park. The trail encompasses 25 miles and connects Oshtemo Township, Kalamazoo Township, the City of Kalamazoo, Parchment, Cooper Township, Comstock and Galesburg.	145
Markin Glen County Park	Cooper Township	Facilities at Markin Glen including fishing and swimming in two man-made lakes, camping, hiking trails and picnic shelters. The newest park feature is a 5-mile mountain bike trail.	160
Prairie View County Park	Schoolcraft Township	Prairie View County Park is located between Gourdneck and Hogset with significant frontage on both lakes. The park offers swimming, a large dog park, group picnic areas and group activities.	210
River Oaks County Park	Comstock Township	River Oaks Park is by far the largest of all the county parks and has direct access to Morrow Lake. A new splash pad, playground, picnic area and dog park were added in 2014. Recent improvements include new hiking trails and an automated irrigation system on its five soccer fields.	330
Scott Mills County Park	Pavilion Township	This park derived its name from the working 1870's water wheel-powered grist mill that is located on site. The park is home to the events hosted by the Scotts Olde Tyme Power and Equipment Association. Park amenities include a log cabin, hardwood forest and 10 acres of tillable land.	110
Arthur & Mildren Woollam Preserve	Texas Township	The park was the former Rota-Kiwan Boy Scout Camp which became a county park in 2021. Facilities include hiking trails, picnic shelters, a playground, fishing piers, a nature center, cabins, a large indoor lodge and Bass Lake and Scouters Pond.	212
TOTAL			1,568



Federal and State Parks and Recreation Areas

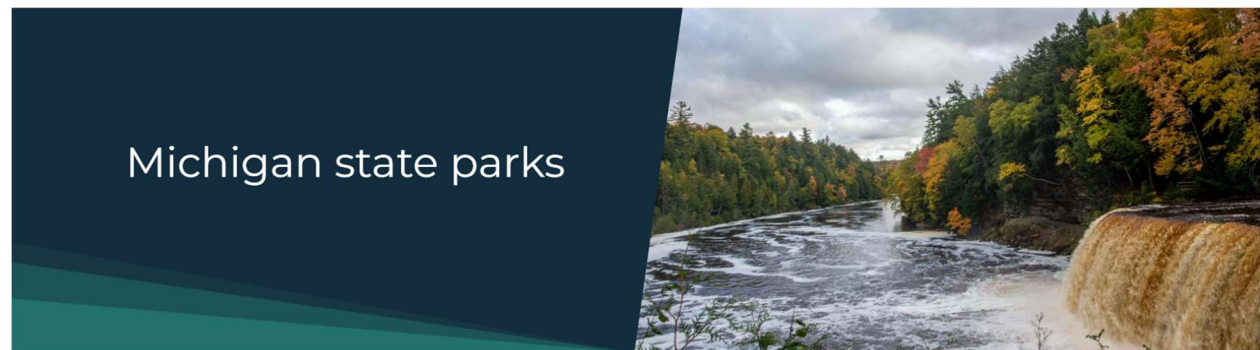
The United States government does not own or operate any outdoor recreational facility in Kalamazoo County. The State of Michigan, however, has several properties in the area.

State of Michigan facilities around Vicksburg in Kalamazoo County include the Fort Custer Recreation Area located at 5163 Fort Custer Drive, Augusta, Michigan 49012. Fort Custer State Recreation Area is a 3,033-acre park located between Battle Creek and Kalamazoo. The park features three lakes, the Kalamazoo River, a modern and equestrian campground, a swimming beach, boat rentals, more than 40 miles of trails, paddling and fishing opportunities, second-growth forests and remnant areas of prairie. The trail system is popular with mountain bikers, equestrians, hikers and dog sledders.



Originally farmland, the area was acquired by the federal government to establish Camp Custer, an induction and military training center for the U.S. Army during World War II. The land was deeded to the State of Michigan under President Nixon's Legacy of Parks in 1971.

The State of Michigan has six other parks within a two-hour drive of Vicksburg. They include Yankee Springs Recreation Area (5,200 acres), Van Buren State Park (880 acres), Grand Mere State Park (985 acres), Holland State Park (142 acres), Saugatuck Dunes State Park (880 acres) and Warren Dunes State Park (1,952 acres)



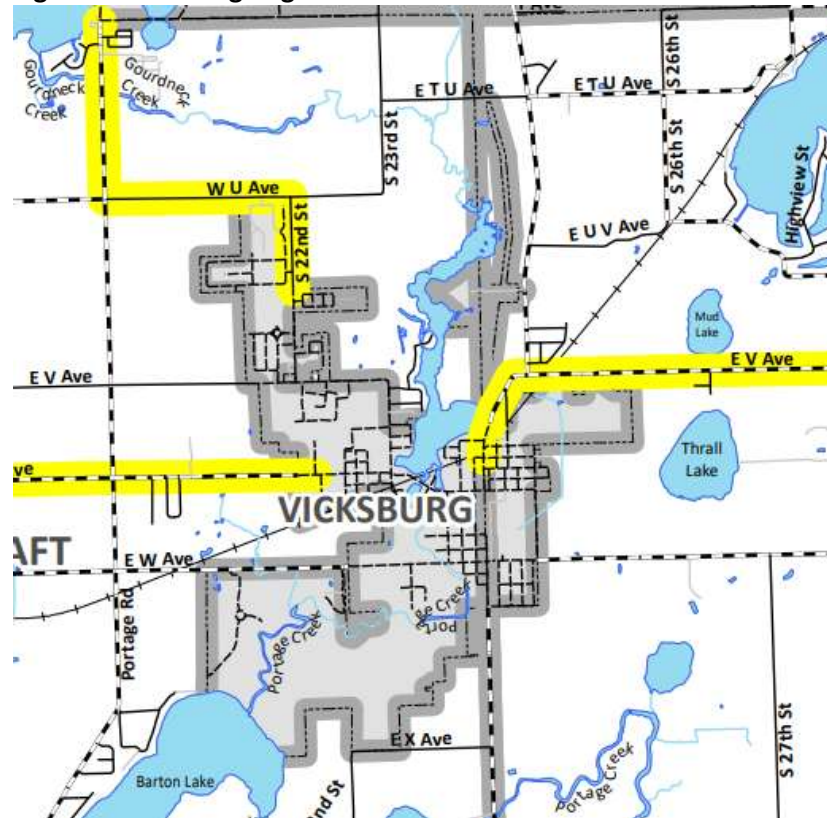
LAND AND WATER TRAILS

Non-motorized trail systems in Kalamazoo County and in Vicksburg are extensive with major trails, complete streets visioning and within existing parks. Several plans helped build the land trail vision including the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County Non-Motorized policy, the State of Michigan 2020 Southwest Region Non-Motorized Plan and developments already completed by Kalamazoo County including the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail and the Village of Vicksburg with the non-motorized trail.

Vicksburg Non-Motorized Trail: A 1.8-mile non-motorized trail that includes views of Sunset Lake and wooded areas. Near the Middle of the trail is the Vicksburg Recreation Area. Walkers, joggers, rollerbladers and bicyclists are welcome. Trail expansions are currently active to connect Vicksburg to surrounding communities to the north to Portage and west to Schoolcraft. If completed to the north to Portage, trail connectivity would connect Vicksburg to South Haven, Michigan.



Figure 7. Vicksburg Regional Nonmotorized Network



Source: Kalamazoo County Roads

Water trails have become an important recreation resource in Michigan. Water trails are designated routes along a river, lake, canal, or bay specifically designed for people using small boats like kayaks, canoes, single sailboats or rowboats.

Kalamazoo County has developed a Kalamazoo River Valley Trail Map and trail system. Additionally, the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council has been working with partners to develop a Heritage Water Trail along the Kalamazoo River. Once complete, the trail will showcase the excellent paddling opportunities found in Kalamazoo County. The Michigan Great Lakes Water Trails help identify and designate water trails. They assist with possible launch sites and other improvements. The Heritage Water Trail includes twenty miles of state-designated natural river, several large areas of undeveloped forested river environment and beautifully diverse paddling opportunities.

The Village of Vicksburg does not have any river access, but does have access to its own Sunset Lake offering water recreational opportunities. Already provided by the Village is a canoe and kayak rental opportunity at Sunset Lake Beach Park which is available to all park users. This is a great opportunity to utilize the lake as an asset rather than a barrier.

Figure 8 depicts the Kalamazoo River Water Trail

Figure 8. Kalamazoo River Water Trail



Source: Kalamazoo River Watershed Council

ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENT AND GRANT-ASSISTED PROJECTS

The Village of Vicksburg parks system is intended for use by all people, regardless of their disability status. It is the intent of the Village to comply with the appropriate accessibility standards and guidelines for play areas, outdoor developed areas, parking areas, and other facilities, which fall under the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All recent improvements to the Village parks have been designed to comply with or exceed accessibility guidelines and standards, and to retrofit, when appropriate, those facilities which pre-date ADA standards.

A critical component in planning for recreation facilities is providing access to accommodate the needs of all people, including those with disabilities. The ranking system suggested by the MDNR Guidelines was used to evaluate the accessibility of the Village parks. The ranking system ranges from 1 to 5 as follows:

1. None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines.
2. Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
3. Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
4. The entire park meets accessibility guidelines; and
5. The entire park was developed/renovated using the principles of universal design.

Each of the parks was evaluated using the MDNR ranking system. The elements evaluated include parking areas, paths of travel from parking to activity areas, the activity areas themselves, and support facilities such as restrooms and surfacing. Table 7 presents the results of this evaluation. It is the intent of the Village of Vicksburg that current and future park projects comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations. Deficiencies will be corrected with park renovation and improvements.

Table 7. Accessibility Assessment

<u>Park</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Park</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Park</u>	<u>Rating</u>
Vicksburg Recreation Area	2	Community Pavilion Area	3	Historic Village	2
Sunset Lake Beach Park	3	Veteran's Park	2	Clark Park	2

GRANT HISTORY

The Village of Vicksburg has received one grant that has been used to develop and improve the Village parks. Table 8 lists the grants which have been awarded to Vicksburg Parks & Recreation. Future grants should be sought from Michigan Department of Natural Resources (mDNR), Michigan Department of Transportation, Transportation Alternatives Grants (mDOT TAP), Kalamazoo County Parks Millage funds and Michigan Cultural Arts & Culture Council Grants (MCACA). There are no required post-completion self-certification reports to be submitted as part of this master plan.

Table 8. Grant Assisted Projects

Park	Year	Grant Type	Project elements	Grant Award
Historic Village Depot	2024	CN Railroad	Restoration and rehabilitation of the depot building including original typing of bricks	\$12,500



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A critical component in the recreation planning process is determining the needs and desires of the community as a basis for an action plan to improve the parks and recreation system. Needs and preferences provide the rationale for the formulation of goals and objectives that lead to an action plan. To assess needs and desires, consideration was given to current recreation trends and input from community stakeholders, public officials, and residents of Vicksburg.

PARK ACREAGE COMPARISON

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends a minimum amount of parkland to adequately serve a given population size. The NRPA guidelines provide minimum recommended parkland and facility development standards that are applicable nationwide for recreation planning purposes. While the standards are useful benchmarks addressing minimum park acreage, a park and recreation system should be tailored to meet the needs of the community it pertains to.

According to the NRPA, parks are categorized as mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, and regional parks. The mini, neighborhood, and community parks are *close-to-home* parks, designed to satisfy the recreational needs of local communities as described on the right. Close-to-home parks would include all the Village parks. According to NRPA standards, the suggested amount of *close-to-home* parkland is 6.25 to 10.5 acres for every 1,000 residents.

NRPA Close-to-home Parkland:

Mini-Park: Addresses limited recreational needs; serves an area less than ¼-mile distance.

Neighborhood Park: Is the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreation and social focus of a neighborhood; focus is on informal active and passive recreation; serves an area ¼ to ½ mile distance and is uninterrupted by non-residential roads or other physical barriers.

Community Park: Serves a broader purpose than neighborhood parks; focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs and preserving unique landscapes and open spaces; usually serves two or more neighborhoods at ½ to 3-mile distance.

Regional parks serve a broader area (40-mile distance) and focus on meeting the recreation needs of the region as well as preserving unique areas. Regional parks would include the County parks as well as the federal and state-owned recreation areas described in the preceding chapter. The NRPA also recognizes other types of parks such as school properties that can contribute to the parks and recreation system.

Table 9 presents a comparison of the NRPA suggested parkland standards with existing parks based on a Village population of 3,706 in 2020 and project population of 3,824 in 2023. According to these standards, local Village of Vicksburg parks do meet the recommended acreage for total *close-to-home* parkland. Vicksburg residents are also well-served by the regional park facilities provided by Kalamazoo County, federal, and state governments that are located nearby.

Table 9. Comparison to Suggested Parkland Acreage Standards

Type of Park	NRPA standard Acres/ 1000 Pop.	Suggested 2020 Pop. 3,706	Suggested 2023 Pop. 3,824	Existing
Close to Home Parkland	6.25 - 10.5 Acres	26.2 acres	25.4 acres	97.12 Acres
Regional Parks	15 - 20 Acres	423.1 acres	410 acres	1,568 Acres

STATE AND NATIONAL RECREATION TRENDS

In 2023, the outdoor recreation participant base grew 4.1% to a record 175.8 million participants: 57.3% of all Americans aged six and older. The number of participants increased through demographics and activities as new, more casual participants began hiking, biking, camping, running, and fishing. In 2023, 7.7 million Americans tried one or more outdoor recreation activities for the first time. New and young outdoor recreation participants are driving growth and increased diversity in the outdoor recreation participant base, including increasing numbers of women, people of color, and seniors. The growth that began in 2016 and accelerated during the COVID pandemic is showing few signs of slowing.

Table 10. National Sports Participation, 2023

Activity	Participation Percent
1. Hiking	20.0%
2. Fishing	18.2%
3. Running, Jogging, and Trail Running	17.9%
4. Camping	17.7%
5. Bicycling	17.2%

Source: Outdoor Participation Report, 2024, the Outdoor Foundation



These trends are consistent with trends observed in Michigan. According to a survey of Michigan residents conducted as part of the 2023-2027 Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Michigan’s overall outdoor recreation participation rate is 95%. Eighty-six percent of Michiganders are involved in trail activities and “other” outdoor activities. Water activities logged 80% participation, snow activities 40% and wildlife activities 52%. The top 10 activities by frequency were ranked (see appendix B), with the percentages of Michigan residents participating and total annual occasions of participating included. From this list, the top three, in ascending order, were visiting the beach but not swimming (60% – 49,959,236), going for a walk on local unpaved trails or paths (62% – 380,532,847) and going for a walk on local streets or sidewalks (80% – 1,156,390,531).

Monitoring parks and recreation trends is important in determining how parks and recreation services should evolve. The implication of the trends noted above along with the demographic and physical characteristics of the Vicksburg area can be summarized as follows:

- Recreation facilities and programs should respond to the high number of young families with children currently living in Vicksburg as well as the expected increase of seniors in the future.
- There is a need for more parks as well as additional pathways and trails to accommodate both bicycle and pedestrian use and to contribute to a healthy and walkable community.
- Sunset Lake is the greatest natural asset of the Village. Encouraging its use for recreation while maintaining its ecological functions should be a priority.

PUBLIC INPUT

A critical component in the recreation planning process is to determine the needs and desires of the community as a basis for an action plan to improve the parks and recreation system. Needs and preferences provide the rationale for the formulation of goals and objectives that lead to an action plan. To assess needs and desires, consideration was given to current recreation trends and input from community stakeholders, public officials, staff, and residents of Vicksburg.

Online Survey

Residents were invited to provide ideas and suggestions for the Village parks and recreation system through an online survey available throughout the development of this plan starting in May of 2025. The survey was advertised on the Village's website and through social media. The online questionnaire was designed to solicit feedback on suggestions for improvements to the Village park system. 148 surveys and comments were received and compiled. Key findings from the survey are outlined below. A full review of the survey with responses can be found at the end of this plan.

Park & Facility Visitation

The most visited Parks are:

2025 Survey Result	
1	Recreation Area & Disc Golf Course
2	Oswalt Park
3	Community Pavilion Area
4	Clark Park
5	Historic Village

Park & Facility Improvements

Recreation Area & Disc Golf Priorities:

2025 Survey Result	
1	Permanent Restrooms
2	New Play Structure
3	Additional Trails
4	Improvements to existing trails
5	Mountain Biking Trails

Clark Park Priorities:

2025 Survey Result	
1	Permanent Restrooms
2	New Play Structure
3	Development of Trails
4	Additional Seating and Picnic Tables
5	Improvements to Parking Lot

Sunset Lake Park Priorities:

2025 Survey Result	
1	Permanent Restrooms
2	Addition of Water Activities
3	New Play Structure
4	Trail Connectivity
5	Improvements to the Boardwalk

Historic Village Priorities:

2025 Survey Result	
1	Permanent Restrooms
2	Trail Connectivity
3	Improvement to existing trails
4	Improvement to parking lot
5	Additional Parking

Park Facility and Program Preference

Respondents top five choices for preferred recreation facilities in order of importance are:

2025 Survey Result	
1	Sidewalks/trails for walking
2	Nature Areas with Nature Trails
3	New Playground Structures
4	Beach & Lake Facilities
5	Bike Lanes and Bike Paths

Respondents top five choices for preferred recreation programs in order of importance are:

2025 Survey Result	
1	Children programs
2	Family programs
3	Concerts, Shows & Movies
4	Teen Programs
5	Special Events

Respondents top choices for special events currently offered:

2025 Survey Result	
1	Farmer's Market
2	Burg Days of Summer
3	Community Gardens
4	Movies in the Park

Park Priorities

Respondents top priorities for general park improvements in order of importance are:

2025 Survey Result	
1	Maintain/renovate existing Village parks
2	Enhance the management of the parks' trees and natural habitats
3	Prioritize connectivity to all Village parks and to the downtown
4	Prioritize public art in the parks, along trails and in the downtown
5	Prioritize the improvements of parks & trails along Sunset Lake

Arts Priorities

Respondents top priorities for the arts in the Village of Vicksburg in order of importance are:

2025 Survey Result	
1	More performing arts opportunities to attend
2	Public art in the downtown
3	Art Events in the Parks (art in the park, festivals, etc.)
4	Public art in the parks
5	Art classes or programs for myself or my family

As part of the survey, an open ended question was asked about any other considerations for the Village of Vicksburg Parks & Recreation System:

Common Comments

- Permanent restrooms
- More children focused programs or events
- Feature Sunset Lake
- Create a Parks & Recreation Department
- Update existing park amenities
- Addition of pickleball courts
- Added connectivity to community parks with regional connectivity

New Park and New Park Amenity Ideas

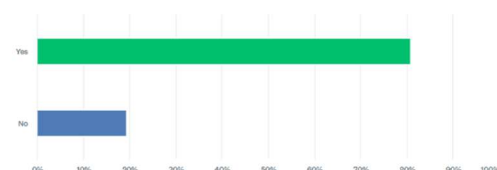
- Splash Pad
- Pickleball Courts
- Feature play structure
- Lake amenities
- Performance Venue
- Install water fountains in the parks

Demographics

80.7% of respondents are Village of Vicksburg Residents

Are you a resident of the Village?

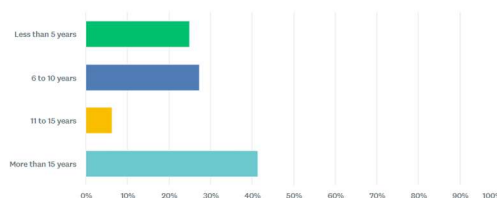
Answered: 145 Skipped: 3



52.3% of respondents have lived within the Village of Vicksburg for less than 10 years

How long have you lived in the Village of Vicksburg?

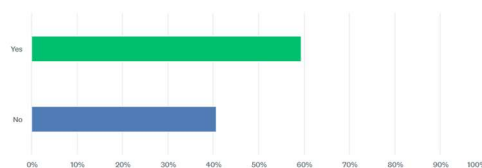
Answered: 128 Skipped: 20



59.4% of respondents supported a veteran's memorial to be installed in the parks system.

Provided here is a draft rendering of a veteran's memorial. Would you like to see a veteran's memorial like this at the Historic Village?

Answered: 138 Skipped: 10



Public Input Meetings

Two (2) public input meetings and opportunities were hosted throughout the Village during the master plan process. Potential improvements derived from the online survey, current park conditions and needs were presented at a public meeting. A voting and comment charette exercise was held with attendees to gather more public feedback with similar questions that were asked in the survey.

1. Wednesday, August 20, 2025, at Burg Days of Summer Special Event
2. Monday, September 22, 2025, at the regular Vicksburg Parks & Recreation Board meeting

Suggestions were received from meeting attendees through the charette exercise and open comment. Some of the top themes from these meetings include:

1. More options and programs for kids and teenagers
2. Continue the trail connection to Portage and to Schoolcraft
3. Connect Farmer's Market Pavilion to the downtown
4. Connect Sunset Lake Park to the downtown
5. Permanent Parks & Recreation staff
6. Install water fountains
7. Determine the priorities and framework for art in the Village.



VIRTUAL STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Two separate virtual stakeholder meetings were held with community partners. Contact was also made to other partner organizations, youth sports groups, performing and fine arts groups and users of Village parks & facilities. A conversation about their relationship with the Village, park improvements, facility usage and organizational priorities were all discussed. Details and themes of these meetings included:

September 10, 2025: Vicksburg Arts

1. Great relationship with the Village
2. Outdoor performing arts are popular and heavily talked about
3. Idea Generated Include:
 - a. Art in the Park Event
 - b. Facilitated Community Art Build
 - c. Mobile art stations
 - d. Linear art trails and art in parks
 - e. Installation of interactive art or musical equipment

October 3, 2025: Vicksburg Historical Society

1. Good relationship with the Village
2. Walkthrough annually with the Village for needs and wants
3. Three-year lease agreement with the Village for use of the Historic Village property
4. Capital Improvement Requests:
 - a. Security and camera system
 - b. Bathroom renovation and ADA accessibility improvements
 - c. Storm door on the express office
 - d. Weather stripping on all doors
 - e. Removal of cupola on barn
 - f. Pave gravel trail/road

PUBLIC REVIEW AND PUBLIC HEARING

Once a draft Parks and Recreation Plan was completed, it was made available for the required 30-day public review from November 21 to December 21, 2025. The availability of the draft plan for public review was advertised in the Kalamazoo Gazette in their December 14, 2025 publication and available on the Village's website. Copies of the draft plan were available for consultation at Village Hall.

The Parks and Recreation Board hosted a public hearing and considered the comments received from the public at a scheduled meeting on December 22, 2025 where minor changes were made to the document and the plan was recommended to the Village Council at their January 5, 2026 meeting. The Village Council subsequently adopted the Plan.

Copies of the Parks and Recreation Board and Village Council resolutions, as well as the public notices regarding plan availability and public hearing, the minutes of the public hearing, and letters of transmittal are uploaded to the MDNR MiGrants website as required.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives were formulated to provide direction and a long-term vision for the Village of Vicksburg's park system. They are broad enough to encompass the suggestions expressed from the public, Village officials, staff, as well as to meet the observed deficiencies in the recreation resources of the area. They also consider demographic changes, current and anticipated growth and development, the area's existing conditions, and recreation trends.

GOAL 1. PARK MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS

Maintain and improve the Village parks to ensure clean, safe, attractive, and high-quality recreational experiences.

It is important to maintain and improve existing park facilities to ensure public safety and continued enjoyment. This includes upgrading aging equipment, removing barriers, and general park upkeep.

- 1.1 Upgrade or repair aging play equipment, paved surfaces, park structures, and furnishings;
- 1.2 Improve the parks' accessibility by removing barriers to universal access;
- 1.3 Continue renovations and improvements to outdoor aquatic facilities

GOAL 2. PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE NETWORK

Make it safer and easier for more residents to walk and bike in the Village.

There is an opportunity to plan for and continue to develop an interconnected network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that provide safe and efficient travel between key places within Vicksburg including parks, neighborhoods, schools, downtown, and neighboring communities.

- 2.1 Continue to invest in community connectors to existing parks including to and from Sunset Lake Park and the Community Pavilion/Historic Village.
- 2.2 Work with community partners and neighboring community leaders to continue regional trail development to the City of Portage and to the City of Schoolcraft.

GOAL 3. PRIORITIZE CULTURAL & FINE ARTS

Create an established organizational structure and process for arts opportunities within the Village of Vicksburg.

Arts are a priority within the Village and with the Parks and Recreation Board. Time and energy should be spent creating a framework for local artists to be more engaged, partners should be identified, and an arts master plan should be completed in coordination with this plan.

- 3.1 Partner with Vicksburg Arts to lead Village efforts for public and fine arts.
- 3.2 Collaborate to create partnerships with local artists to create a framework and plan for public arts and art programming opportunities.
- 3.3 Identify funding from community partners, Village funds, or private funding sources to support local arts in the parks, downtown or along trails.

GOAL 4. ESTABLISH A PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Start a parks & recreation department underneath the supervision of the Village Manager to assist with the management of the parks, recreation programming and special events.

There is feedback through this master planning process to support the establishment of starting a Parks & Recreation Department. This should include park rentals, special events and recreation programming.

- 4.1 Work with Village Administration and the Village Council to brainstorm the goals and objectives for the department and plan the budgeting and organizational framework.
- 4.2 Discuss with community partners the priority of the city's programming efforts as to not create unnecessary competition.
- 4.3 Take the feedback from this survey to build the basis for recreational programming opportunities.

GOAL 5. CREATE A FEATURE PARK OR PERFORMANCE VENUE

Invest in a feature park or performance venue to establish a regional draw into the community for special events.

There is feedback throughout this planning process that supports the thought that the Village of Vicksburg is a regional draw for its historic charm, cleanliness and special events. The Village should invest in creating a feature park, park play structure or performance venue.

- 5.1 Identify which park should be utilized as a feature or regional draw park
- 5.2 Complete a feasibility and master plan study specifically on the development of a feature park or venue.
- 5.3 Collaborate with Village partner organizations and existing event organizers to determine whether a feature park or outdoor performance venue should be a priority.
- 5.4 Collaborate with Village Administration to find community support, sponsorships and other potential funding opportunities for such a development.

ACTION PROGRAM

The following describes the specific projects and actions which are recommended to be accomplished during the planning period. Illustrations and plans showing the proposed park improvements and actions are also included to depict the proposed actions.

1. Maintain and upgrade existing Village parks (all parks)

This action includes replacing old equipment which is in a state of disrepair, outdated, or is dangerous, as well as improving the appearance of the parks and properties through appropriate landscaping and upkeep. All upgrades must be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and efforts should be taken to remove all existing barriers to universal access. Proposed projects include:

- A. Replace or upgrade aging play equipment as needed.
- B. Remove barriers to universal access.
- C. Ensure safety surfaces under playground equipment meet regulated depth and fall zones.
- D. Refurbish parking, walkways, sports courts, and other concrete and paved surfaces as needed.
- E. Replace and add park furnishings such as benches, trash receptacles, pet waste dispensers and signs.
- F. Maintain buildings, structures, and picnic shelters in good condition with roof repair, exterior painting, and other renovations.
- G. Manage and improve existing tree canopy and vegetation.

Park improvements were identified during the park site audits and are denoted below as immediate action items, intermediary action items and long-term action items:

<u>Park</u>	<u>Immediate Action</u>	<u>Intermediary Action</u>	<u>Long-Term Action</u>
Recreation area & Disc Golf Course	• Increase signage within the park • Replace disc golf hole signs • Provide a park map in display	• Repair the parking lot and concrete surrounds • Create connectivity from park to trail • Clear and Repair overlook • Add art along bike trail • Add exercise equipment along trail • Identify location for community garden	• Add permanent restrooms • Add picnic shelter • Add outdoor adventure activities or other park amenities • Master Plan for possible feature park amenity or dog park
Community Pavilion Area	• Replace or renovate horseshoe pits	• Pave gravel lot	• Create connectivity to historic village • Add permanent restrooms (Share with Historic Village)
Historic Village	N/A	• Make gazebo accessible • Pave gravel trail	• Pave the parking lot • Addition of Veteran's Memorial • Add permanent restroom (Share

			with Pavilion)
Sunset Lake Park	• Add swimming buoys • Weed and clear boardwalk areas • Remove dead tree next to shelter • Add more seating • Rent out park shelter	• Add accessible beach mats • Add swings to play structure • Repair or replace boardwalk	• Add permanent restrooms • Replace picnic shelter • Replace play structure • Add water activities or programming • Master Plan for possible feature park location
Veteran's Park	• Replace park benches with new • Trim down waterfront for better viewing • Add bike repair station, gazebo and create trailhead • Consider renaming	N/A	• Add inter-park connectivity to the benches and waterfront. • Create pier or water overlook feature • Add small parking lot
Clark Park	• Remove stump in center of park • Remove concrete pad in center of park • Add more trash cans • Maintain or remove western staircase • Add park seating	• Add nature-based accessibility off Prairie Street entry • Add public art • Add safety lighting • Add landscaping areas	• Add inter-park connectivity through the park • Update play structure and swings • Add permanent restrooms • Master Plan for possible feature park location
Oswalt Park	• Move some picnic tables off gravel areas	N/A	• Replace gravel with turf or other accessible, low maintenance surface

2. Pedestrian and Bicycle Network

This action includes:

1. Create a Village wide non-motorized transportation plan to assist the Village with trail and sidewalk priorities, funding identification, public outreach and connectivity parks, neighborhoods, and community facilities.
2. Work to identify sidewalk gaps in existing infrastructure which prohibit movement between residential areas, Village parks and its downtown.
3. Continue working with community stakeholders, partners and neighboring communities to complete regional connectivity efforts to the north to Portage and to the west to Schoolcraft.

3. Prioritize Cultural & Fine Arts

This action includes:

1. Collaborate with Vicksburg Arts to create arts goals of the Parks & Recreation Board either within its bylaws, strategic plan or the city code of ordinances
2. Create a process for public art in parks and in the Village
3. Create a database of local artists or art organizations which the Parks & Arts Commission supports
4. Work with city leaders to create an Arts District where art priorities and goals can be focused.
5. Work to create an arts master plan which will assist with all previous action items

4. Create a Parks & Recreation Department

Throughout this master planning process, it was mentioned in various areas of the feedback that residents would like to see a Parks & Recreation Department.

1. Work with the Village Manager and Village Council Liaison to see if there is an appetite for a department
2. Determine an organizational structure of the department
3. Determine the budgeting and finance of the department and where it will sit within the city wide budget (General Fund, Special Revenue Fund, etc.)
4. Create a business plan or strategy for the Parks & Recreation Department determining primary goals and objectives, revenue streams, staffing levels and levels of service.
5. Study existing rental rates, fees and special event processes for a streamline opportunity for all residents, non-residents and non-profit organizations.

5. Create a Feature Park or Performance Venue

Throughout this master planning process, it was mentioned in feedback that they would like to see a feature park, feature play structure, feature recreation amenities or performance venue.

1. The Parks & Recreation Board, with staff support, should identify the park which it would like to explore as its feature within the community.
 - a. The existing ballfield park concept could become the top priority of the Parks & Recreation Board to create a feature park. The concept rendering is complete, and discussions started several years ago with partner organizations.
 - b. The Vicksburg Recreation Area, Sunset Lake Park and Clark Park have been identified as possible feature park locations in this master plan.
 - i. Vicksburg Recreation Area: Nature Trails, Mountain Biking, Outdoor Adventure or High Ropes Course
 - ii. Sunset Lake Park: Beach renovation, feature play structure, water play amenities and water recreation
 - iii. Clark Park: Feature play structure and performance venue
2. Discuss with the Village Council the ideas to determine future funding capabilities or grant application strategies
3. Work with a consultant to complete a feasibility study, public engagement, park master plan and concepts.

PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since the last Parks & Recreation Master Plan, the Village of Vicksburg has spent over \$30 million in park projects and capital improvements. Shown below in Table 11 below are a list of those park projects accomplished since the last parks & recreation plan was adopted in 2020.

Table 11. Park Project Accomplishments Since 2020

Project	Cost	Funding Source
Oswalt Park Development	\$300,000	MEDC, Foundation, DDA, Local
New Park System Picnic Tables	\$40,000	DDA, General Fund
Kayak Rental Station at Sunset Lake Park	\$20,000	General Fund
New Disc Golf Baskets at Vicksburg Recreation Area	\$12,000	General Fund
Memorial Benches at Vicksburg Recreation Area	\$2,200	Private Donations

PROJECT SCHEDULE

Table 12 lists the individual projects along with the specific tasks to be accomplished, the project objective reference, a cost estimate, and potential funding sources. Projects identified in the annual Capital Improvement Plan have also been added to this project schedule. Short-term (ST) projects are recommended for completion within one to two years while long-term (LT) projects may take longer to be completed, within five to six years. Mid-term is between the two (MT). On-going projects (OG) include activities occurring on a regular basis.

Table 12. Capital Improvement Schedule

Project/Tasks	Goal	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Time Frame
Annual General Park Improvements	1	\$100,000	General Fund	ST
Multi-Purpose Park at Little League	1	\$1,800,000	mDNR Grant	MT
Sunset Lake Park Improvements	1	\$10,000	General Fund	MT
Parking Lot Upgrades at the Recreation Area	1	\$150,000	General Fund	LT
Clark Park Play Structure Improvement	1	\$300,000	GF, MEDC, Grants	LT
Veteran's Memorial at Historic Village	1	\$200,000	GF, MEDC, Grants	LT

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

To accomplish the recommended actions during the next five years, it will be necessary to secure adequate funding. The current budget provides a limited amount of money for parks and recreation facilities. Therefore, the following strategies are recommended in order to proceed as planned.

Apply for Federal Funding

At the federal level, MDOT offers Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds. A minimum 20 percent local match is required for proposed projects and applications are accepted online on an on-going basis. Activities may include:

- Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles including new or reconstructed sidewalks, walkways, curb ramps, bike lane striping, wide paved shoulders, bike parking, off-road trails, bike and pedestrian bridges, and underpasses;
- Provision of safety and educational programs for pedestrians and bicyclists designed to encourage walking and bicycling; and
- Acquisition, planning, designing and constructing abandoned railway corridors.

Apply for State Funding

At the state level, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) continue to be the primary funding sources for park land acquisition and development. The Recreation Passport grant also offers some state funding to local units of government.

The MNRTF provides funding for the purchase and development of parkland for natural resource-based preservation and recreation. Grant proposals must include a local match of at least 25% of the total project cost. There is no minimum or maximum for acquisition projects. For development projects, the minimum funding request is \$15,000 and the maximum is \$300,000 in 2025. Applications are typically due by April 1st each year.

The LWCF is a federal appropriation to the National Park Service, which distributes funds to the MDNR for development of outdoor recreation facilities. The focus of the program has recently been on meeting community recreation needs such as playgrounds, picnic areas, skate parks, ball fields, soccer fields, and walking paths. Minimum grant requests were \$30,000 and maximum grant requests were \$500,000 in 2025. The match percentage is 50% of the total project cost. Applications are due by April 1st each year.

The Recreation Passport grant program offers funding for the development of outdoor public recreation facilities for local units of government. Minimum grant requests are \$7,500 and maximum requests are \$150,000 in 2025. The local match obligation was 25% of the total project cost. Applications are usually due by April 1st each year.

Other funding programs conducted in partnership with the MDNR are available through other state government divisions, such as the Fisheries Division (Fisheries Habitat Grant Program) and the Forest Resources Division (Community Forestry Grant Programs).

Other funding conducted in partnership with the MDNR is available through other state government divisions, such as the Fisheries Division (Inland Fisheries Grants) and the Forest Resources Division (Community Forestry Grants). The Inland Fisheries program considers projects that enhance habitat and fisheries, riparian property for public fishing use, water quality, and ecology. Minimum grant requests are \$25,000 and maximum requests are \$1.5 million depending on the theme in 2025. The local match obligation is 10% of the total project cost. Applications are due in early 2026.

Municipalities may use Community Forestry grants to develop a management plan for a municipal forest which would include a component targeting outreach to private landowners. Grant requests range from \$5,000 to \$30,000 depending on project category.

DTE Energy Foundation and Consumers Energy (CE) also offer tree planting grants for up to \$4,000 for DTE and \$3,000 for CE to local municipalities in its service areas. Applications are due in October (DTE) or July (CE) with awards announced in June for the DTE Energy Foundation program.

Apply for Other Grant Funding

There are also a variety of smaller grant programs available for the establishment of greenways/ pathways or greenway-related facilities such as PeopleForBikes. PeopleForBikes is sponsored by the American Bicycle Industry. Their mission is to put more people on bikes more often. The program funds projects in three categories: facility, education, and building. In the past, requests for funding could be up to \$10,000 for projects such as bike paths, trails, lanes, parking, and safe routes to school. Applications for 2025 are not yet announced.

The DALMAC Fund also contributes grants to expand bicycling in Michigan. A total of \$173,079 were awarded in 2025 with typical grant awards ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000. The next round of applications will be due on March 1, 2026.

Seek Other Sources of Funding

The Village of Vicksburg should investigate additional sources of funding. Seeking donations, attracting sponsors, and seeking out other revenue sources are methods that should continue to be pursued aggressively to raise funding for park acquisition and development.