



MADISON  
PARKS

# Park & Open Space Plan Update

## Facilities Programs & Fees Subcommittee



*City of Madison*  
**Park & Open Space Plan**  
**2025-2030**

Adopted by Common Council October  
2025

POSP & Appendices Published:  
[https://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/  
about/park-open-space-plan](https://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/about/park-open-space-plan)

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the Park and Open Space Plan

- 5-year strategic plan
- Guides decision-making related to the following areas:
  - Park policies, land acquisition, development of park land/facilities, City funding & operations
  - State & Federal Grant eligibility

## 1.2. History of the City of Madison Park System

## 1.3 Summary of Accomplishments Since the Last Park and Open Space Plan

## 1.4 Madison Parks Vision and Mission Statements

- Everyone shall have access to an ideal system of parks, natural resources, and recreational opportunities that enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors.

## 1.5 Role of Parks and Recreation

- Public Health, Community well-being, Environmental health, Economic Vitality, Accessibility, Equity & Inclusion.

## 1.6 Planning Process



# Chapter 2: City of Madison Planning Considerations

## 2.1 Demographic Overview

- Madison is 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city in WI
- Population expected to exceed 340,000 by 2040 (WI DOA)

## 2.2 Related Planning Efforts

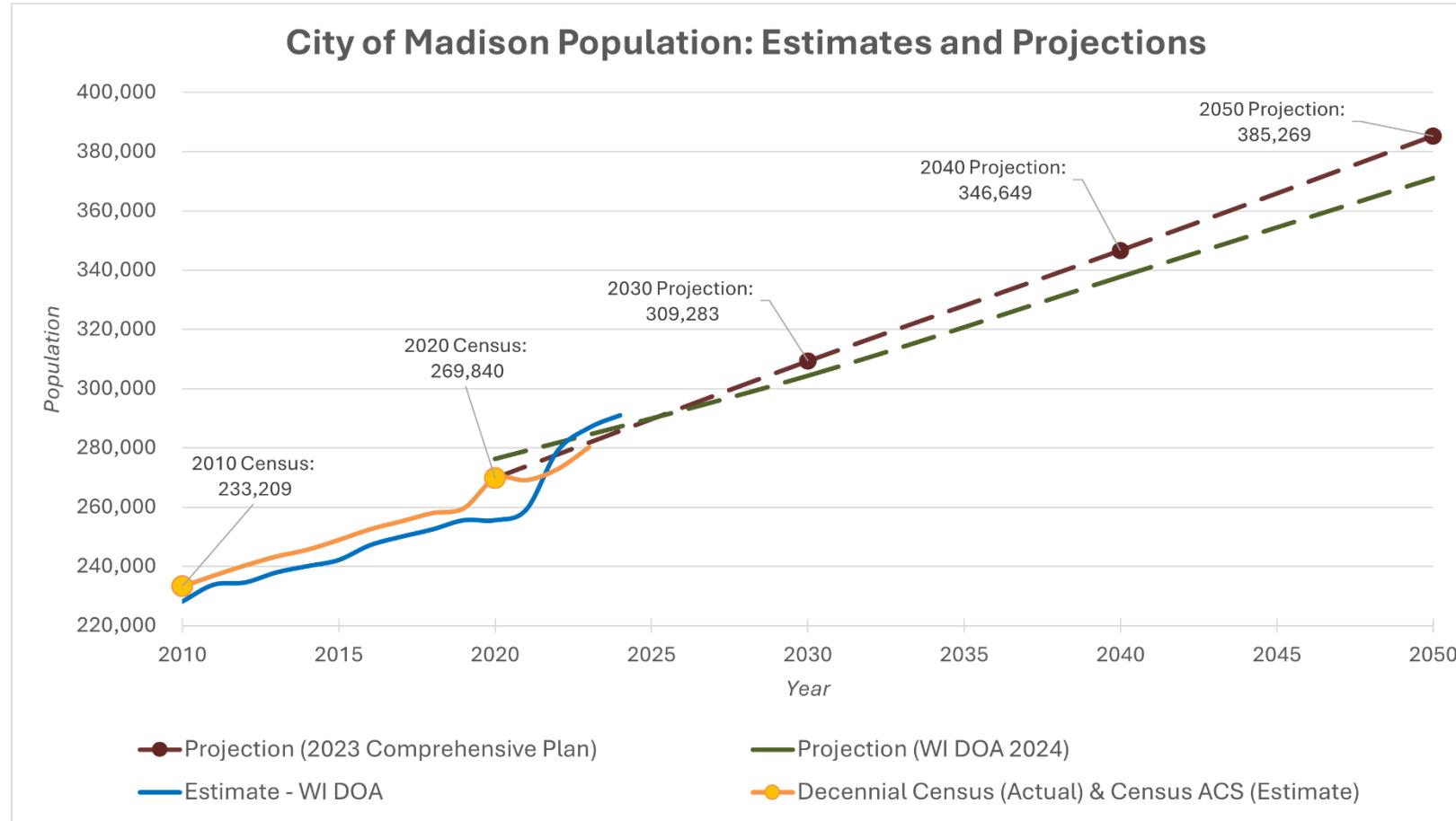
- Highlights other City planning documents
- Ties POSP to other plans
- Anticipates growth and changes in services

## 2.3 Environmental Factors

- Climate Change, Land Management, Urban Forest, Water Quality
- How these factors impact outdoor recreation and park system



# Growth of the City



71% of population identifies as white, 21% as BIPOC, 8% Latinx (U.S. Census Bureau)

Residents ages 20-34 account for 1/3 of the population (U.S. Census Bureau)

**Residents ages 65-84 is expected to increase by 50% by 2040 (WI DOA, 2017)**

City Goal: add 15,000 housing units by 2030

# Chapter 3: Parkland Inventory

## 3.1 City of Madison Park Classifications

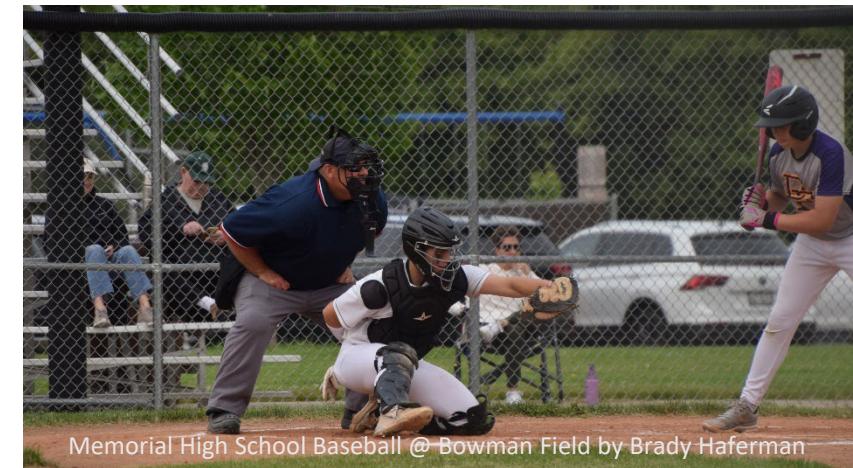
- Mini, neighborhood, community, conservation parks
- Greenways, open space, special use, sports complex, trafficways

## 3.2 City of Madison Park Facilities

- More than 290 parks
- Over 8,000 amenities within the system
- Above average through TPL for basketball, dog parks & playgrounds

## 3.3 Other Park and Open Space Facilities

- Highlight unique opportunities offered by others
- Added national facilities-Ice Age Trail



Memorial High School Baseball @ Bowman Field by Brady Haferman

# Chapter 4: Engagement Strategies & Recreation Facility Demand

## 4.1 Community Engagement

- Community Survey
- Focused BIPOC outreach
- Open Houses

## 4.2 Recreation Facility Demand

- Shelter Reservations
- Athletic Reservations & Survey
- Park & Street Use Events
- Specialty facilities: WPCRC, Golf, Olbrich



# Top Park Uses:

1. Physical fitness activities
2. Leisure activities
3. Attending festivals or events
4. Activities involving Madison's Lakes
5. Biking



# Community Feedback

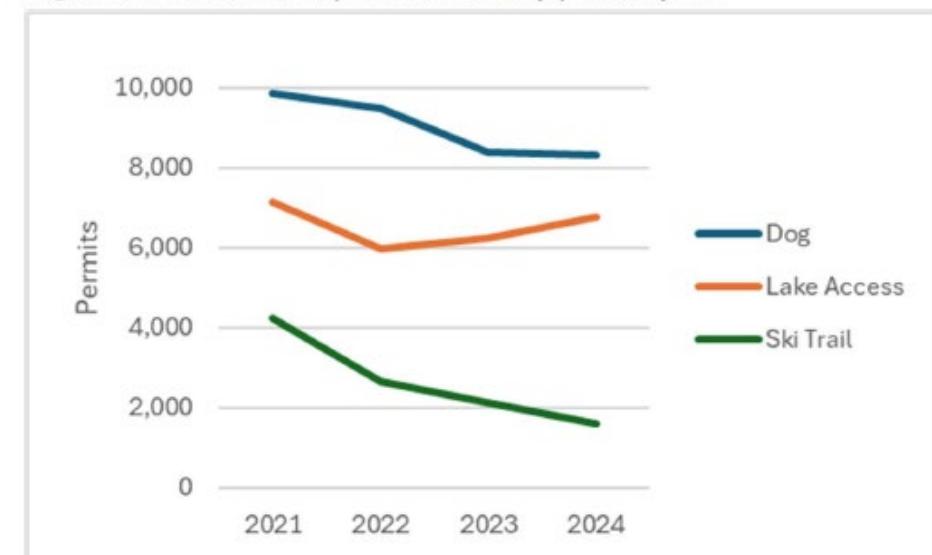
- Residents agree that parks are integral to City's character
- Need for SAFE & WELCOMING spaces for all
- Desire to balance development of parks with conserving environment
- Prioritize maintenance & repair of existing facilities
- Increased basic facilities (benches, shelters, drinking fountains & clean restrooms)
- Increased programming responsive to community needs, especially for teens
- Better connection between parks, walking & biking trails
- Increased Strategic partnerships
- Improved access to parks and amenities year-round
- Increased specialty facilities-skate parks, pickleball, dog parks



# Use of Parks (in 2024)

- Shelter Reservations:
  - More than 2,000 reservations
  - Most Reserved: Garner, Highland Manor & Brittingham
- Athletic Uses
  - Top 3 sports: soccer, pickleball & tennis
  - Top 3: Garner, Quann & Reindahl Parks
    - New Sports: Futsal, Camogie, Rolfball
  - Needs Identified
    - More field space and multi-field play options
    - Lighting to extend the playing season
- 924 Park Events

Figure 1a. Number of permits sold by permit year



# Chapter 5: Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment

## 5.1 Quantitative Analysis – Park Acreage and Parkland Per Capita

- Service level goal: 10 acres per 1,000 residents
- 5,755 acres of parkland or approximately 19.77 acres per 1,000 residents

## 5.2 Geographic Analysis

- Lack of mini & neighborhood parks: Sherman & Kennedy Heights, University Hill Farms
- Infill areas: East & West Towne Mall areas, Downtown

## 5.3 Regional and Statewide Planning Efforts

- State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2025-2030)
  - Recently Adopted, identifies trends, areas of focus for Madison Area
  - Discusses trends in investment in Parks
- Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan (2025-2030)
  - Not adopted yet, currently undergoing final public engagement
  - Identifies areas for potential partnership
- Themes in State & County Plans:
  - Climate change impacts on recreation, funding concerns, improving environment



Tenney Park by Luna Collins

# Chapter 6: Funding Mechanisms

## 6.1 Park Development Resources

## 6.2 Park Operational Resources

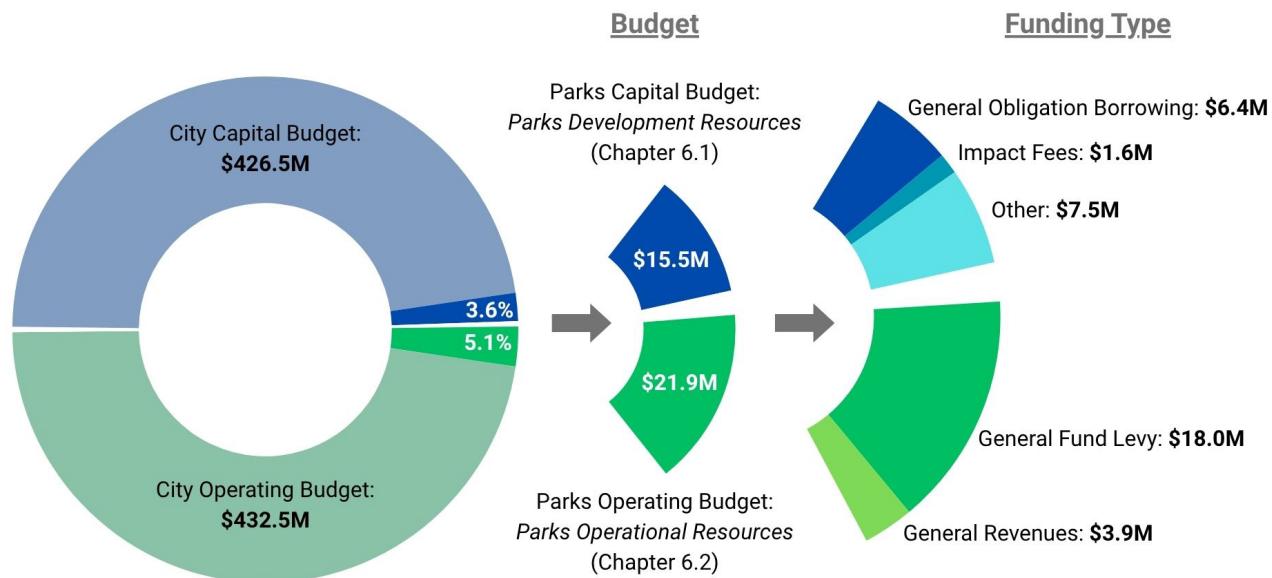
## 6.3 Alternate Funding Sources

- Key Partnerships: MPF, OBS, LakeWay & others
- Assigns value to volunteer efforts
  - (\$1.04M in 2024)

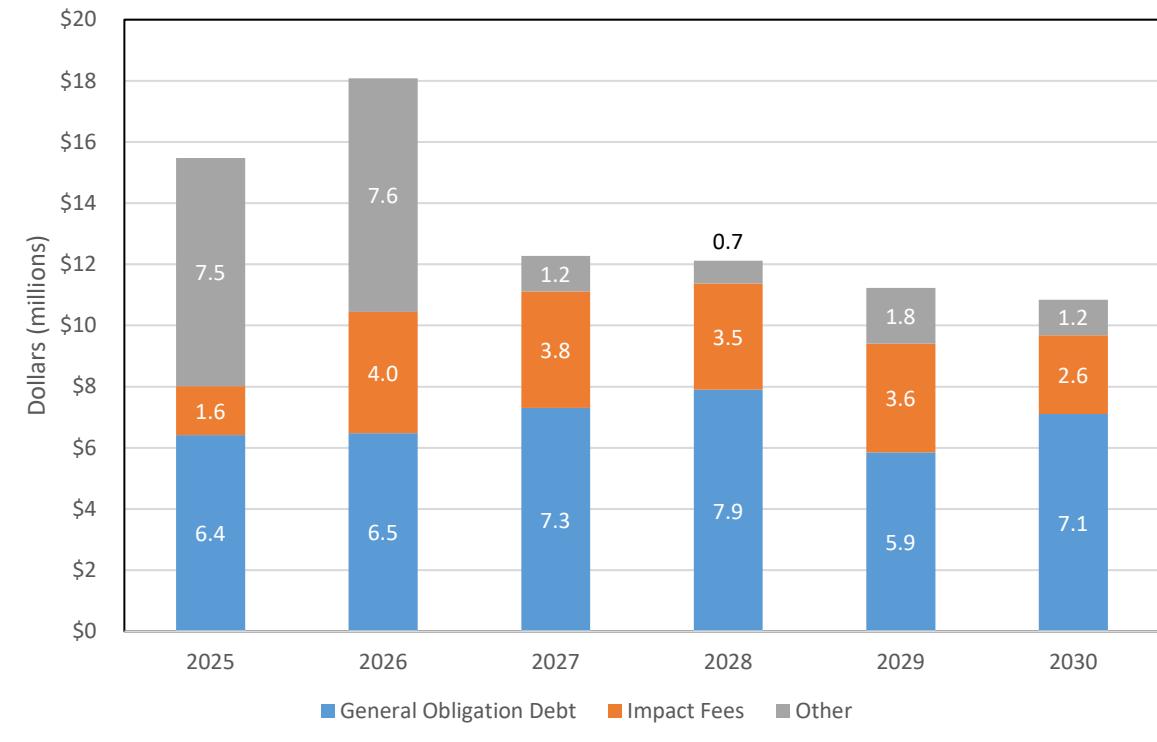
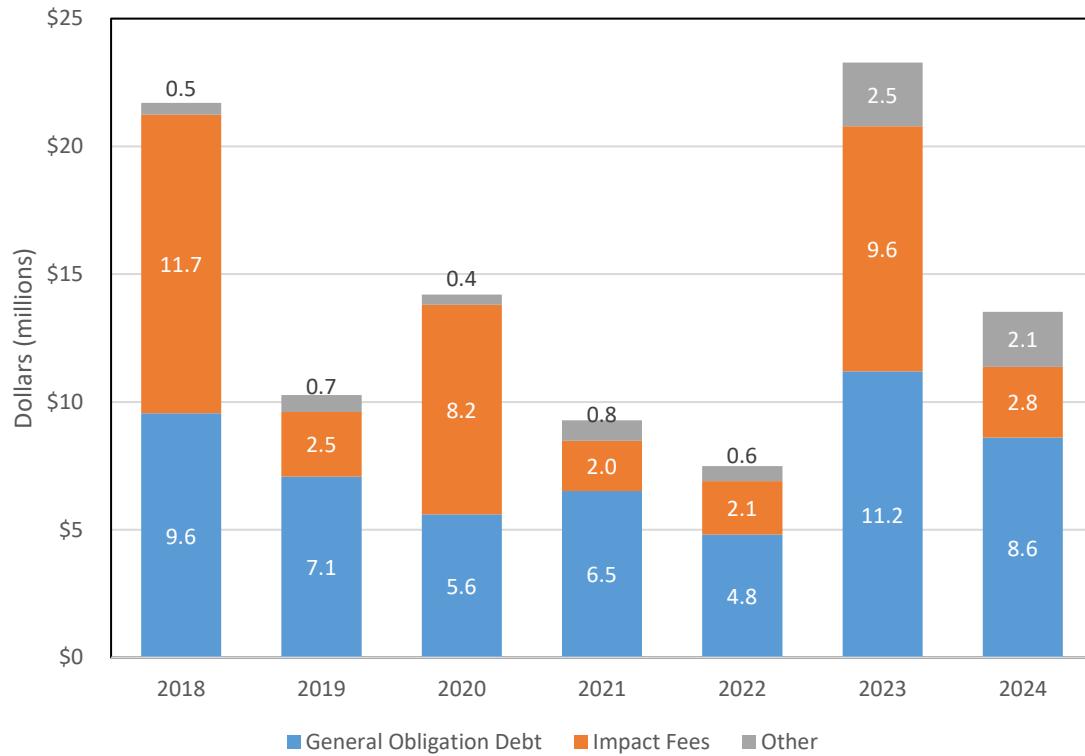
## 6.4. Park System Growth Considerations

Contextualizes park system growth/resources over time

### Parks Division Budget Within City's Adopted 2025 Budget



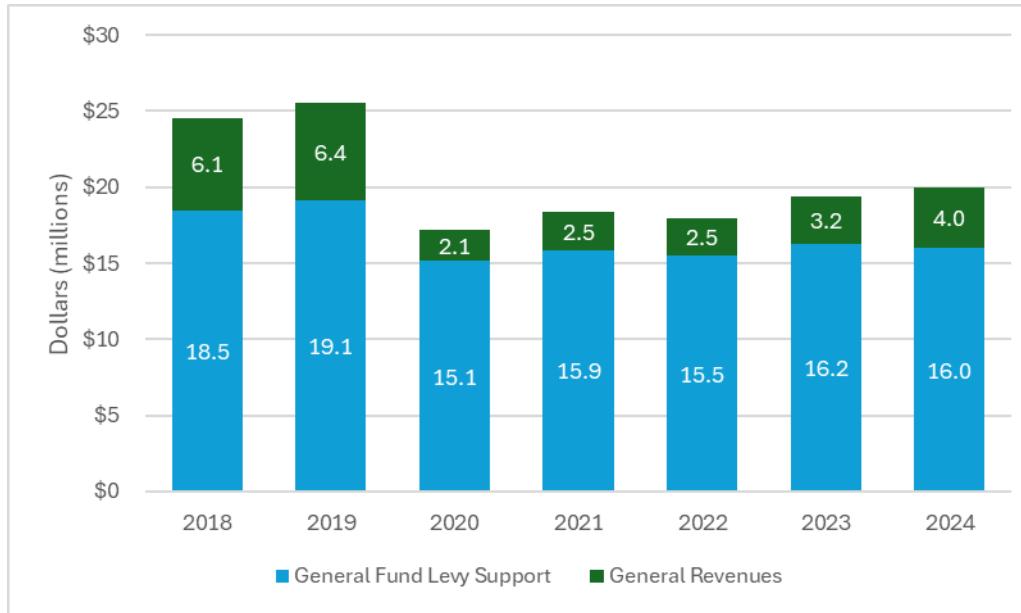
# Capital Resources



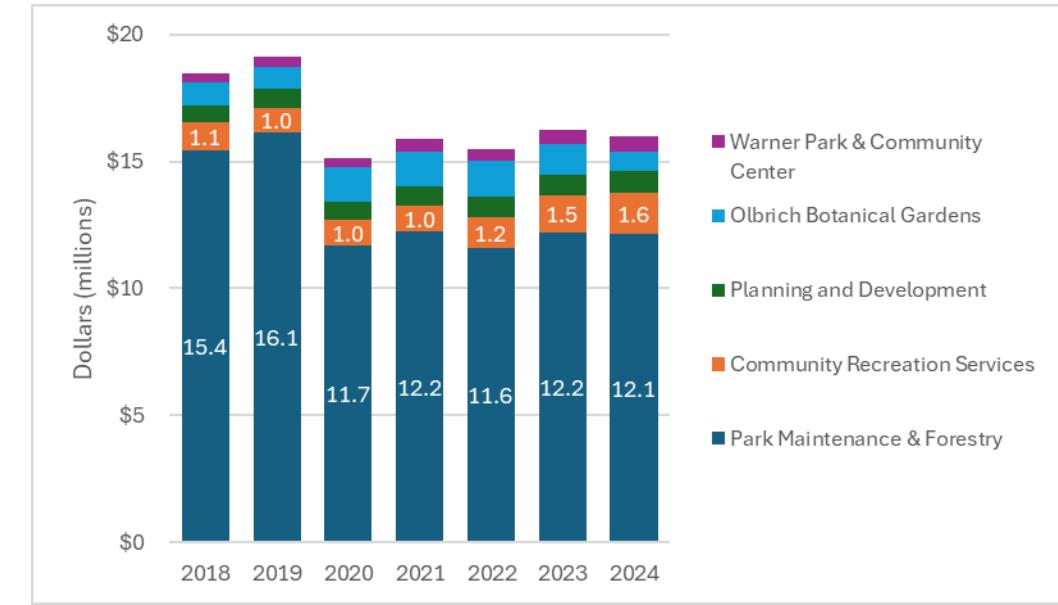
2018-2024 GO Support ~\$7.6 million

2025-2030 GO Support ~\$6.8 million

# Operating Resources



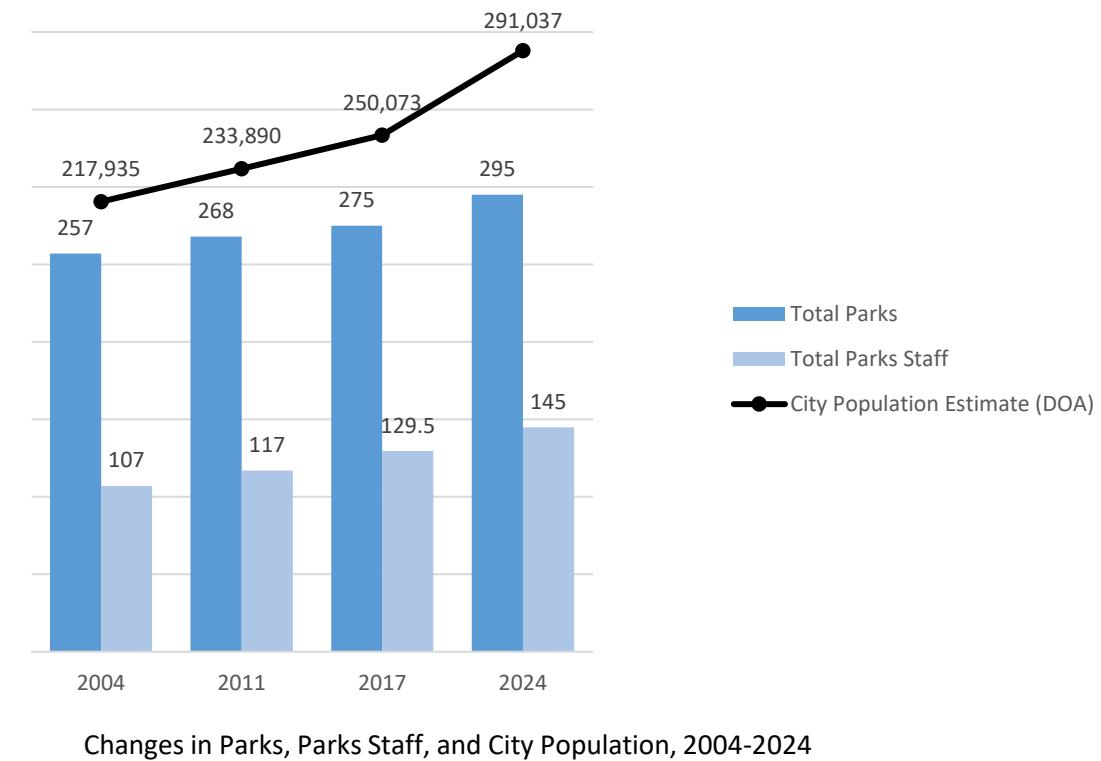
Parks Division Operating Revenues by Funding Source (2018-2024)



Parks Operating Expenses by Section, 2018 through 2024

# 5 Major Factors Impacting Park Resources

- Long-standing, reliable funding sources are not increasing at corresponding levels of resource demand = alternate funding sources & strategic partnerships
- Rapid population growth and increased housing density = new parks to maintain service standards.
- Increased daily use and longer seasons = more resources.
- Historic facilities and aging infrastructure = increased maintenance.
- Facilities and programming have been added responsive to the needs of the community.



# Chapter 7: Recommended Strategies

- Land Use and Transportation: Compact Land Use | Efficient Transportation
  - **Increase connectivity between parks to enhance access.**
- Neighborhoods and Housing: Complete Neighborhoods | Housing Access
  - **Reduce parkland deficiencies and respond to increasing residential density.**
- Economy and Opportunity: Growing Economy | Equitable Education and Advancement
  - **Create welcoming and inclusive park spaces and programming.**
  - **Foster meaningful connections with groups and organizations that advance the vision of the Parks Division.**
- Culture and Character: Cultural Vibrancy | Unique Character
  - **Improve public access to lakes and waterways.**
  - **Protect and celebrate the community's cultural richness.**



# Chapter 7: Recommended Strategies

- Green and Resilient: Natural Resources | Parks and Recreation
  - **Protect and enhance natural resources.**
  - **Improve the park system's capacity to adapt to environmental challenges.**
- Effective Government: Efficient Services | Community Facilities | Regional Transportation
  - **Develop new parks and amenities in a fiscally sustainable manner.**
  - **Secure sufficient resources to sustain service levels across the growing and changing park system.**
  - **Pursue regional solutions to regional issues.**
- Health and Safety: Equitable Health Outcomes | Safe Community
  - **Promote the physical and social health of the diverse community.**



Demetral Park by Wendy Murkve