



**DEFIANCE**  
PARKS & RIVERFRONT  
MASTER PLAN



*Defiance, Ohio*

# PARKS & RIVERFRONT

OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS // OCTOBER 2024

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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"Defiance Parks & Riverfront Opp Analysis - APPENDIX"*

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Defiance, Ohio, is a charming city situated at the confluence of the Maumee and Auglaize Rivers, with the Tiffin River flowing nearby. With a rich history dating back to its establishment as a fort in the late 18th century, Defiance has grown into a vibrant community that values its natural beauty and recreational spaces. The City's parks and riverfronts play a crucial role in the lives of its residents, providing spaces for relaxation, exercise, and social gatherings. These green spaces are not only essential for the well-being of the community but also serve as a testament to Defiance's commitment to preserving its natural environment and enhancing the quality of life for its citizens.

In recent years, there has been a concerted effort to further develop and improve Defiance's parks and riverfronts. Upon unifying the passions of residents and stakeholders to promote Defiance's quality of life in the 2023 Comprehensive Community Action Plan, the City of Defiance prioritized pursuing the public's desire to further develop the City's riverfronts and extend the improvements to include all of Defiance's City Parks.



This plan builds on that foundation and addresses the existing barriers to achieving these efforts.

The master planning process includes three phases. Phase 1 included a robust community engagement approach alongside a thorough review of current conditions. Phase 2 included diagrammatic plans for improvements in three of Defiance's riverfront parks, as well as implementation strategies for each. Phase 3, the Final Master Plan Design, will need to be authorized by the City. It includes a Final Master Plan Report, funding and financing needs assessment, partnering framework, and a detailed Implementation Plan to bring what's on paper to reality.

This process will create a community-led plan that enhances public health, promotes social justice, restores environmental quality, mitigates flood risks, and establishes vibrant, dynamic spaces along the river corridors.



November 5, 2024

Residents  
City of Defiance  
Defiance, Ohio 43512

## RE: PARKS AND RIVERFRONTS MASTER PLAN

Dear Defiance Community,

We always intend to inform our residents of what is happening in the City of Defiance, Ohio. Today, I am writing to let you know that we have completed **Phase One** of our **Parks and Riverfronts Master Plan**!

The design team was involved in an in-depth review and comprehensive examination of the current conditions of our parks and riverfronts. Part of this phase, and one of the most exciting, was the team undertaking an extensive community engagement initiative to ensure that the voices of Defiance residents were at the heart of this planning process. Seeing the Defiance residents get involved and take ownership of this plan is exciting!

The design team was involved in a **Family Fun Friday** event, gathering feedback from community members. The team hosted a workshop where residents shared ideas for our parks and rivers; this workshop was well attended. Two online surveys were conducted, which collected thoughts from a broad cross-section of our community. The input received has been **invaluable** in guiding the track of the project and ensuring that any future development of our parks and riverfronts will meet the needs and goals of the community.

The following steps in this exciting process will concentrate on **creating illustrative concepts** for our parks and riverfronts. These concepts will focus on the ideas we have gathered from the community to enhance the parks and provide specific strategies for bringing these concepts to fruition. Once these are in place, the final **Master Plan Report** will outline everything needed to turn these ideas into reality. This report will include an assessment of funding and financial needs and provide a step-by-step guide to help ensure that the improvements the community envisions can be successfully implemented.

We are thrilled about the process of this plan for Defiance and hope you are as well!

Respectfully,



Mayor Mike McCann  
The City of Defiance, Ohio

MIKE McCANN, Mayor  
RYAN MACK, City Administrator  
KIM SPRAGUE, Finance Director  
SEAN C. O'DONNELL, Law Director

# INTRODUCTION:

Plan Purpose,  
the Community,  
& Our Process

1

DRAFT



# DEFIANCE PARKS & RIVERFRONT MASTER PLANNING AREA

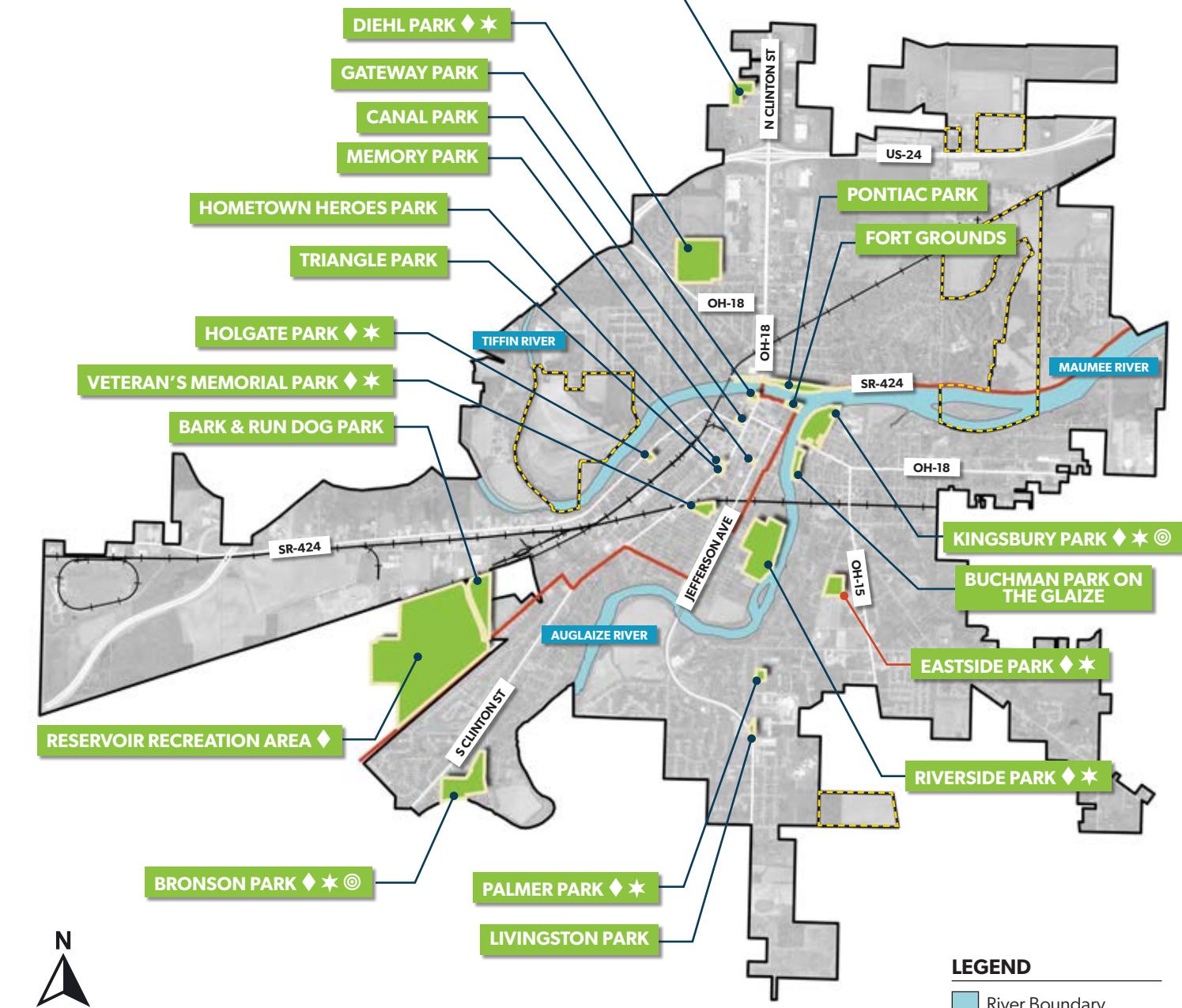
# *A Comprehensive Overview of the Jurisdictional and Service Boundaries for Community Recreation and Riverfront Facilities*

Located at the confluence of the Maumee and Auglaize Rivers, the City of Defiance encompasses three rivers and boasts twenty existing and planned parks. The riverfront areas are particularly noteworthy, as they highlight the City's unique geographical location and offer numerous recreational opportunities. The Maumee, Auglaize, and Tiffin Rivers not only provide stunning natural backdrops but also support a variety of water-based activities such as boating, kayaking, and fishing. Its extensive parks system, which includes both developed and natural spaces, provides ample opportunities for outdoor activities, from leisurely strolls along a trail to more adventurous pursuits in its green spaces.

The designated planning area for the City of Defiance Parks and Riverfront Master Plan closely mirrors the City's planning jurisdiction. This jurisdiction includes not only the City's established boundaries but also extends to Reservoir Park and Bark and Run Dog Park, situated on the southwest side just outside the city limits.

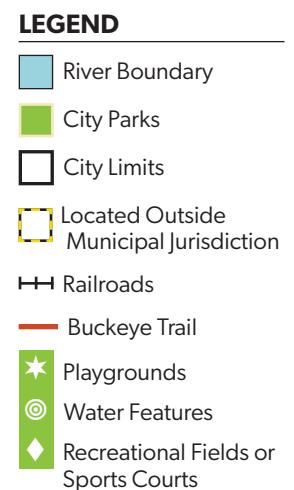


## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BASEBALL COMPLEX



**FIGURE 1:** Park Inventory Map

This map illustrates the location of all twenty parks included within this Master Plan. Many of the parks are situated in or near downtown Defiance near the confluence of the Auglaize and Maumee Rivers. Reservoir Park and Bark & Run Dog Park both fall outside city limits, but are still owned and managed by the City.



## Background & Purpose:

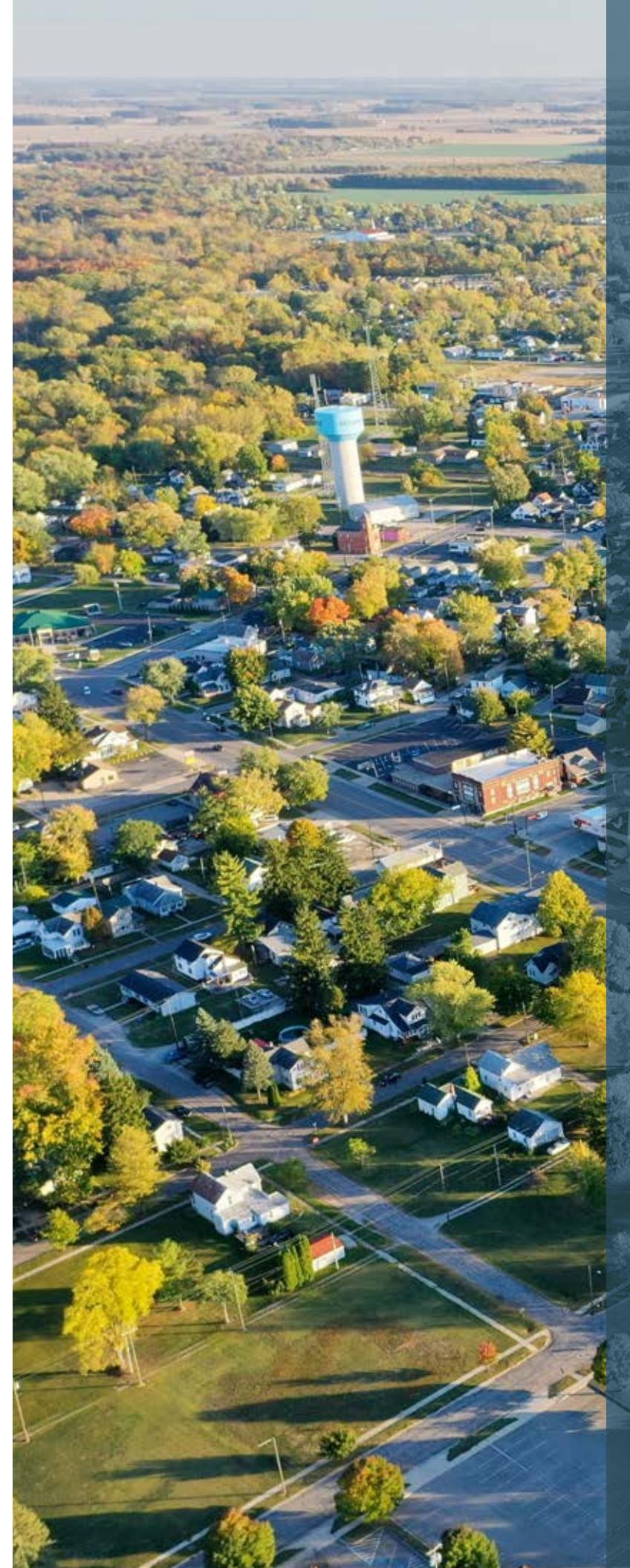
# THE CITY OF DEFIANCE PARKS & RIVERFRONT MASTER PLAN

**The goal of the Parks and Riverfront Master Plan is to create a community-driven roadmap that will improve overall public health and safety, advance social justice, restore environmental quality, reduce flood risks, and develop vibrant, activated places along the river corridors.**

Defiance, Ohio, offers a rich tapestry of natural beauty, historic significance, and a strong sense of community. The parks and riverfront areas are integral to the City's identity, providing residents and visitors with spaces for recreation, relaxation, and connection with nature. Recognizing the importance of these assets, the City of Defiance has embarked on a comprehensive planning process to envision their future.

This Master Plan is rooted in the City of Defiance's current conditions and projected growth. It sets forth a realistic vision for the future of the park system and riverfront areas, along with a practical roadmap for achieving that vision. A comprehensive community engagement approach and a detailed assessment of current conditions were used to ensure a community-driven vision for the future of Defiance parks and riverfronts.

Encompassing three rivers and twenty existing and planned parks, the Plan seeks to enhance and expand the existing open space system, providing recreational opportunities for all Defiance residents and ensuring they remain accessible and enjoyable for future generations.



## Project Vision:

Develop a community-supported Parks and Riverfront Master Plan that can be successfully implemented through capital projects, programmatic strategies, and operations.

## Project Objectives:

1. Develop Gateway Park with Maumee River boat/canoe/kayak access (DR-5)\*
2. Develop canoe/kayak activation nodes (CC-5)\*
3. Explore plan to implement shared use path connections at the confluence of the Maumee and Auglaize Rivers (CC-9)\*
4. Riverfront revitalization and shared use path connectivity trail system (Peddle & Paddle Plan) (CC-10)\*
5. Pursue the feasibility of developing a Preston Run Trail system (CC-14)\*
6. Riverside Park connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists (CC-17)\*
7. Development and funding of Buchman Park on the Glaize as a natural passive tribute park to the Native Americans who have resided in the Defiance Area
8. Promote access to parks through programming and communication efforts, while also improving parks to incorporate inclusive park amenities
9. Identify potential implementation strategies to improve park engagement for all by incorporating inclusive amenities

\*Information regarding these can be found in the 2023 "City of Defiance Comprehensive Community Action Plan."

## Project Goals:

1. Promote public health, safety, and social justice
2. Improve environmental quality and reducing flood risk
3. Develop vibrancy and placemaking along the river corridors
4. Improve connectivity to and between parks

# Community Profile: A SNAPSHOT OF OUR CITY

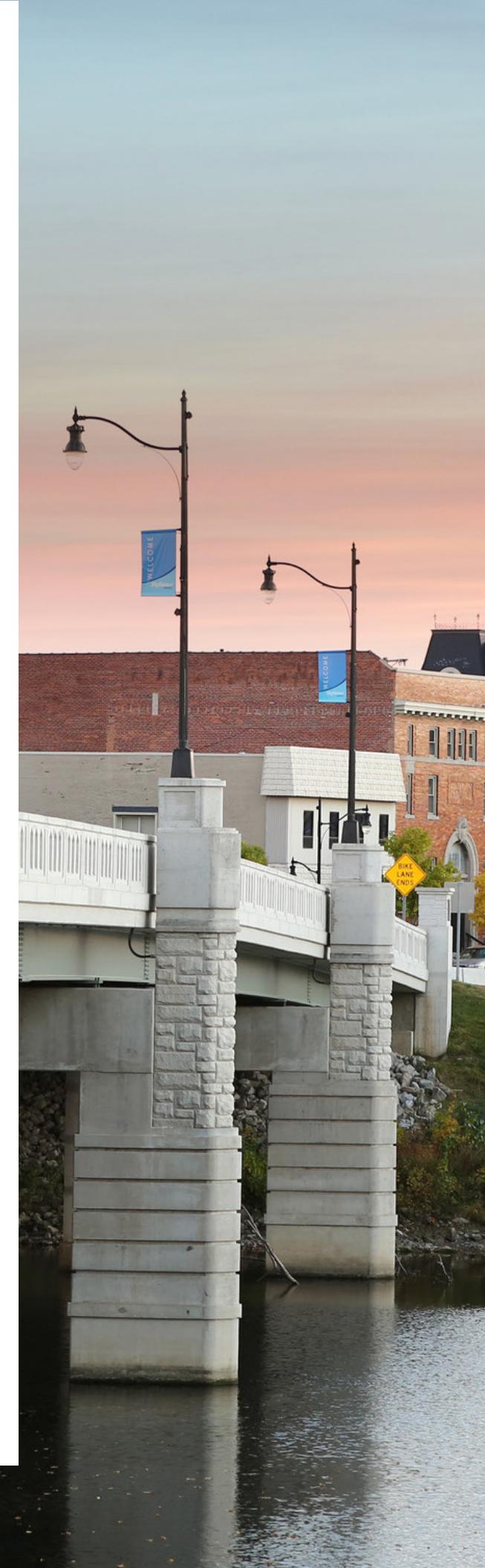
Defiance, Ohio, is the largest city and county seat of Defiance County. Nestled in the northwestern corner of the state, it is located 58 miles southwest of Toledo, Ohio, and 47 miles northeast of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Situated at the confluence of the Auglaize and Maumee Rivers, Defiance boasts a picturesque setting that has played a significant role in shaping its identity. While the confluence creates an intriguing backdrop for the City, many culturally important events have occurred at this landmark; the largest council of Native American tribes at its time took place at this monument, Johnny Appleseed settled on these shores for the greater part of fifteen years, and all land north to Canada is surveyed from a point at the confluence.

The City's history is deeply intertwined with its strategic location. Historically noted for its prime military and trading posts, Defiance once held the westernmost settlement of Fort Defiance in the late 1700s. During the War of 1812, General William Henry Harrison constructed Fort Winchester just south of Fort Defiance along the Auglaize River. The streets and properties of downtown Defiance follow the footprint of Fort Winchester to this day.

Founded in the early 19th century, Defiance has evolved from a small settlement into a vibrant community with a diverse range of amenities and services. In the 1850s, Defiance resident William Holgate famously rode to Columbus and successfully declared the City as the seat of the newfound Defiance County, a task that many others fought to achieve. The Holgate name continues to hold significance in the area with a dedicated park and preservation of the historic Holgate residence.

Today, Defiance is recognized for its strong sense of community, evident in its active local organizations, annual events, and commitment to preserving its historical legacy. In addition to its historical and recreational offerings, Defiance is known for its strong local economy, driven by a mix of manufacturing, agriculture, and small businesses.

***Understanding Defiance's demographics, growth patterns, and recreation trends can guide recommendations on the types and distribution of park and riverfront amenities needed by the community, as well as help forecast future needs.***



**FIGURE 2: Vicinity Map**

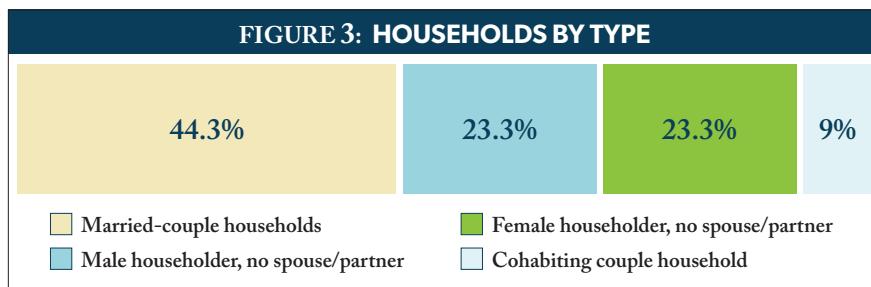
This map illustrates the general location of Defiance in relation to its greater surroundings.

# POPULATION

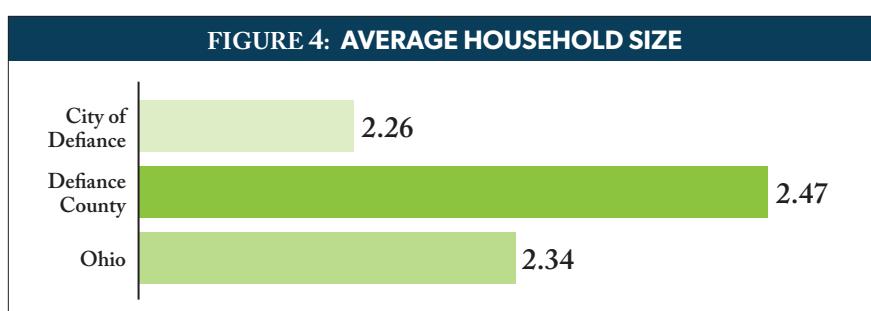
Since its incorporation as a town in 1823 and its designation as a city in 1881, Defiance has experienced steady population growth. Most census data reflects population increases each decade, ranging from 0.2% to as much as 114%. Even during periods of decline, the population decrease has never exceeded 2%.

The current snapshot of Defiance shows the 2022 population at 16,852 residents, reflecting a 0.71% increase over the past decade from 16,733. This aligns with the overall United States growth rate and stands out compared to Defiance County, which saw a 1.73% population decline. According to Aterio Datasets, Defiance is projected to grow to a population of 17,441 residents by 2030, representing a 3.5% increase.

The City of Defiance is home to 7,219 households. Of these, 44.3% (3,199 households) are married couples, 46.6% (3,371 households) are single-parent households, and 9% (649 households) are cohabitating couples.



At 2.26 persons, the average household size in the City is lower compared to both Defiance County (2.47 persons) and the State of Ohio (2.34 persons). While the average household size is 2.26 persons, the average family size is 2.78 members.



**FIGURE 5: POPULATION CHANGE, 2012-2022**

	CITY OF DEFIANCE	DEFIANCE COUNTY	OHIO	UNITED STATES
2012 Population	16,733	38,975	11,544,225	313,914,040
2022 Population	16,852	38,300	11,756,058	333,287,562
% Change, 2012-2022	+0.71%	-1.73%	+1.83%	+0.62%

**16,852**

TOTAL POPULATION  
OF DEFIANCE, 2022

**11.8  
MILLION**

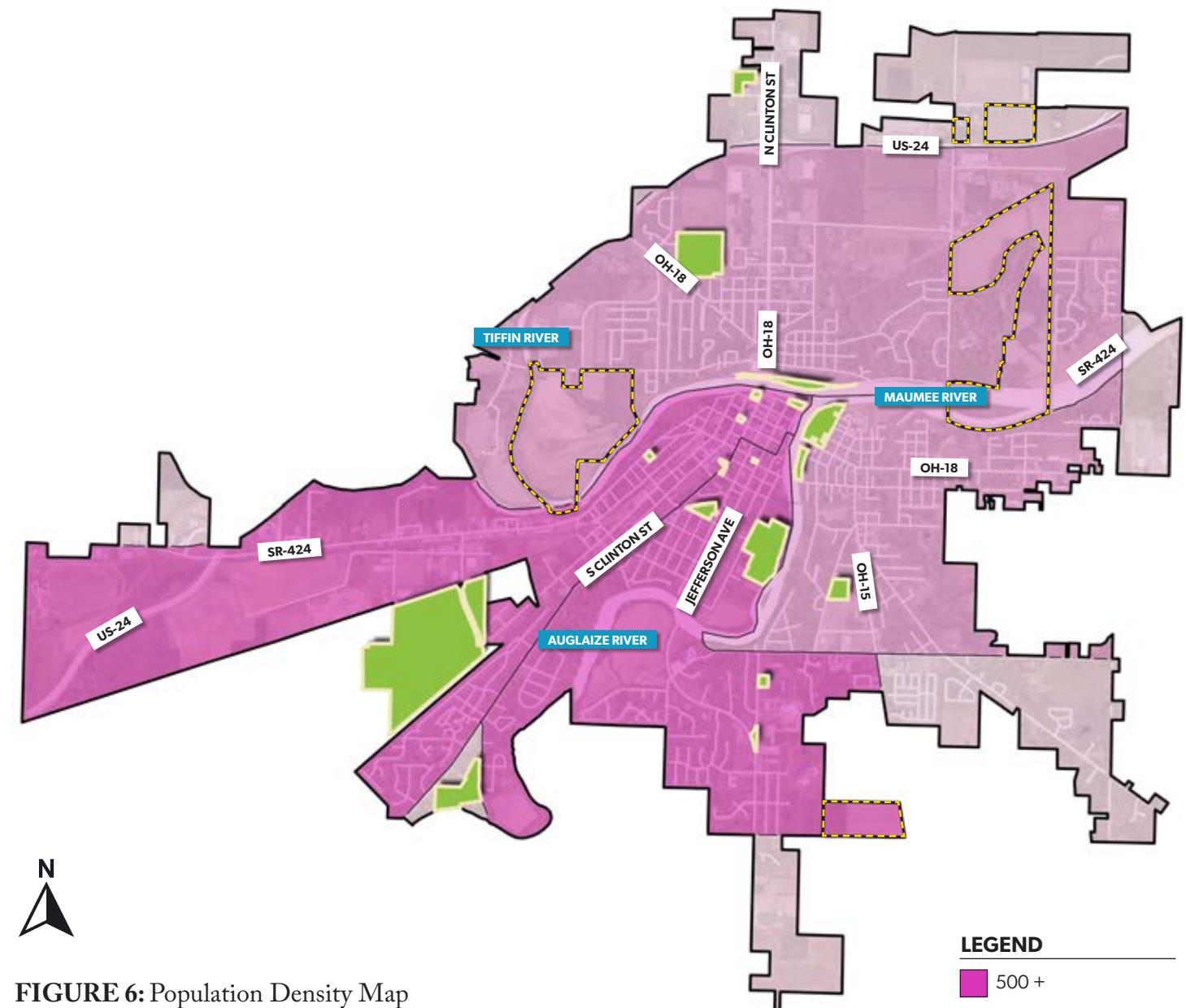
TOTAL POPULATION  
OF OHIO, 2022

**0.71  
PERCENT**

INCREASE IN CITY  
POPULATION,  
2012-2022

**+3.5  
PERCENT**

EXPECTED GROWTH  
RATE, 2030



**FIGURE 6: Population Density Map**

This map, segmented into U.S. Census Bureau tracts, visually represents the distribution of people per square mile across the City of Defiance. Higher population densities are found in the downtown area and in the southern and western parts of Defiance, south of the Maumee River.

0 2 4 6 8  
FEET IN THOUSANDS

**LEGEND**

- 500 +
- 100 - 500
- Less than 100
- City Parks
- Census Tract Boundary
- City Limits
- Located Outside Municipal Jurisdiction

\*Per the 2022 U.S. Census Tract Data. Population density is shown as people per square mile within the entire census tract which may extend beyond City limits.

# AGE & GENDER

The median age in the City of Defiance is 40.9 years, which is consistent with Defiance County, Ohio, and the United States. While Defiance technically has the highest median age, the difference is minimal.

Looking more closely at age distribution, several age groups account for more than 6% of the population: under 5 years old, 15 to 34 years, 40 to 44 years, and 60 to 69 years. These groups suggest a generational pattern, largely in line with Census population trends. Over 40% of the population is considered age-dependent, with 20.3% under 18 years old and 20.7% aged 65 and older.

The population breakdown by gender is relatively consistent, with 48.6% of the population as male and 51.4% as female, according to the American Community Survey.

FIGURE 7: MEDIAN AGE BY GENDER

**48.6**  
MALE POPULATION      **51.4**  
FEMALE POPULATION

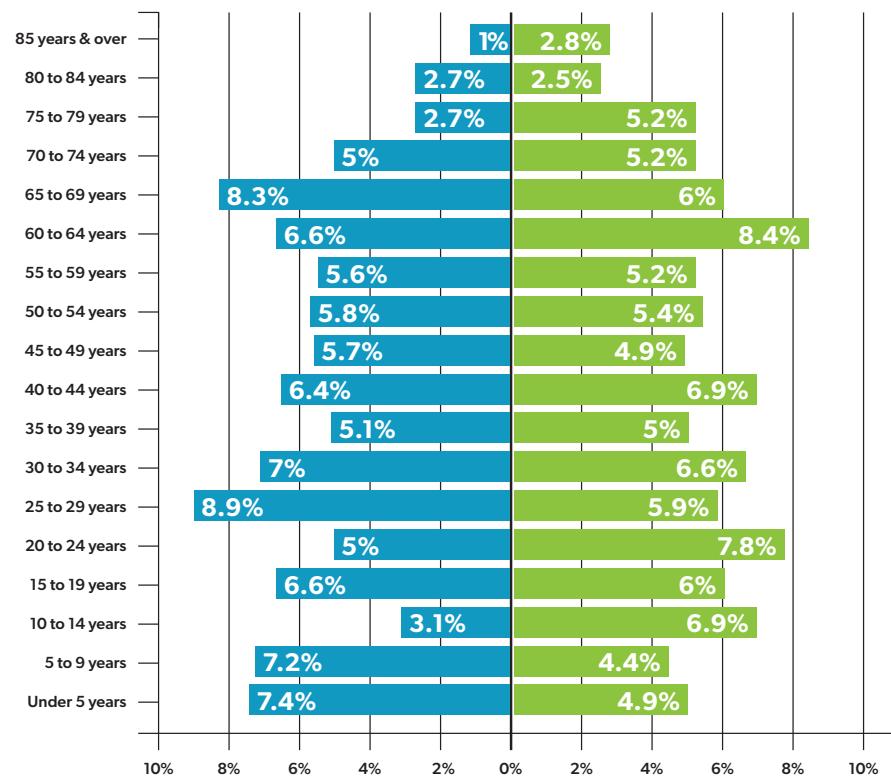


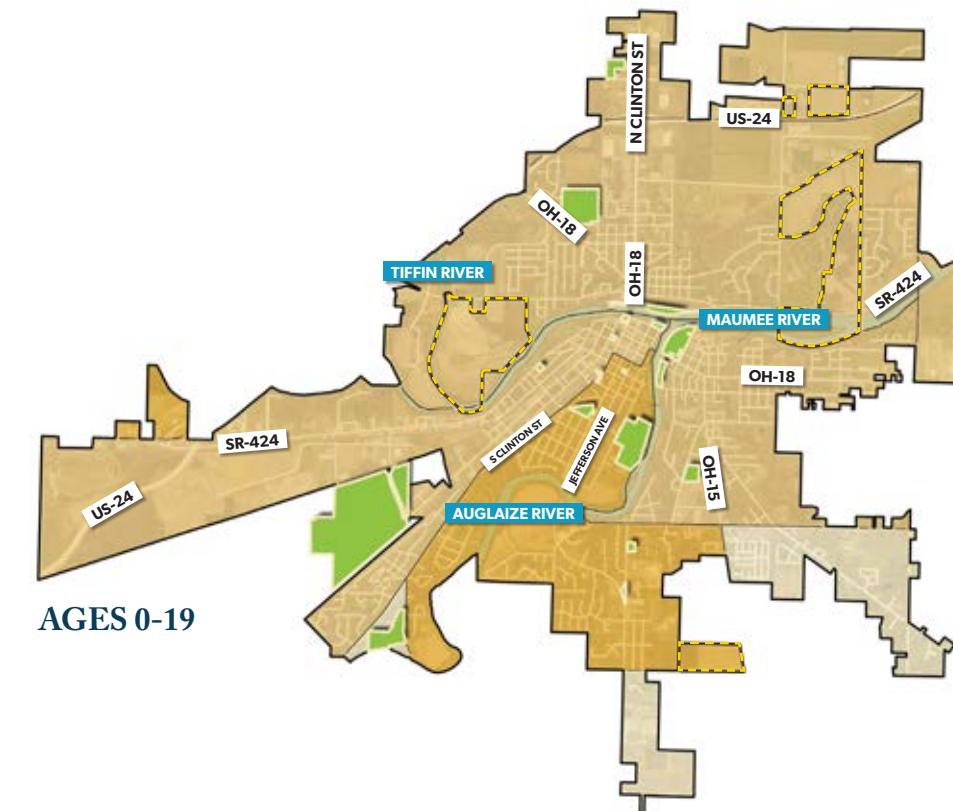
FIGURE 8: AGE OF CURRENT POPULATION

	CITY OF DEFIAENCE	DEFIAENCE COUNTY	OHIO	UNITED STATES
Median Age	40.9	40.8	39.9	39.2

**40.9**  
MEDIAN AGE

**23.2**  
PERCENT

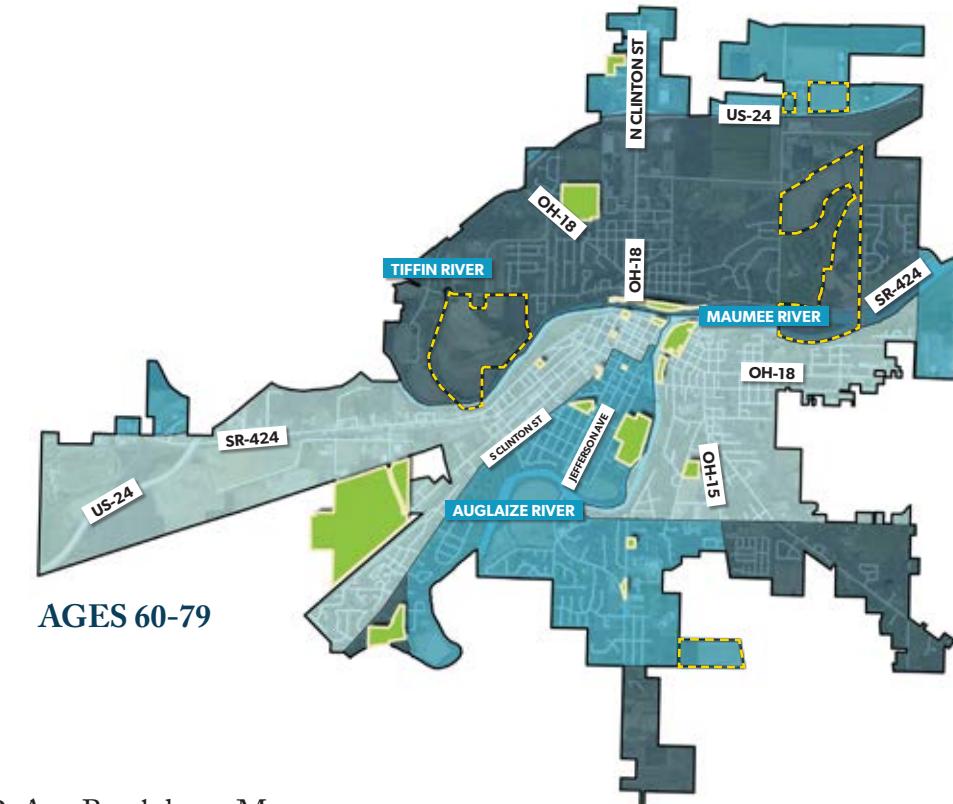
YOUTH POPULATION,  
AGES 0-19



**\*Per the 2022 U.S. Census Tract Data. Data shown represents the entire census tract which may extend beyond City limits.**

**20.7**  
PERCENT

SENIOR POPULATION,  
AGES 65+



**\*Per the 2022 U.S. Census Tract Data. Data shown represents the entire census tract which may extend beyond City limits.**

FIGURE 9: Age Breakdown Maps

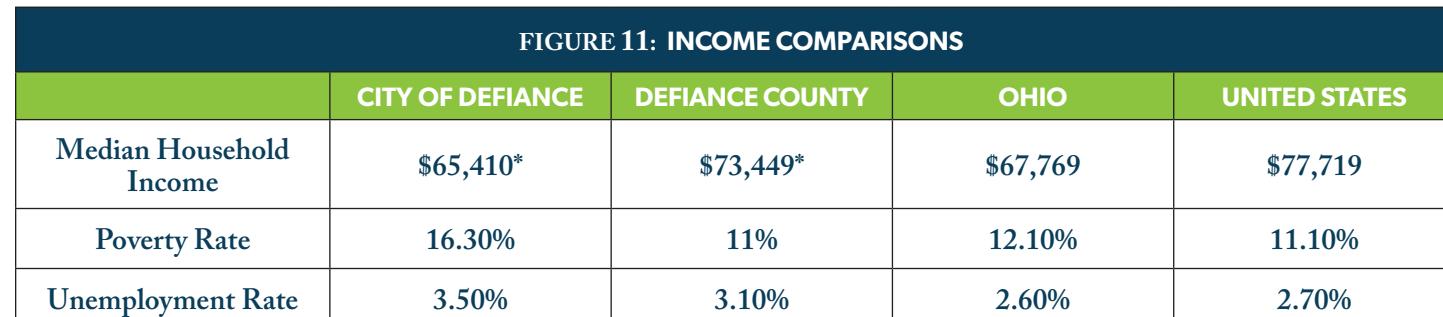
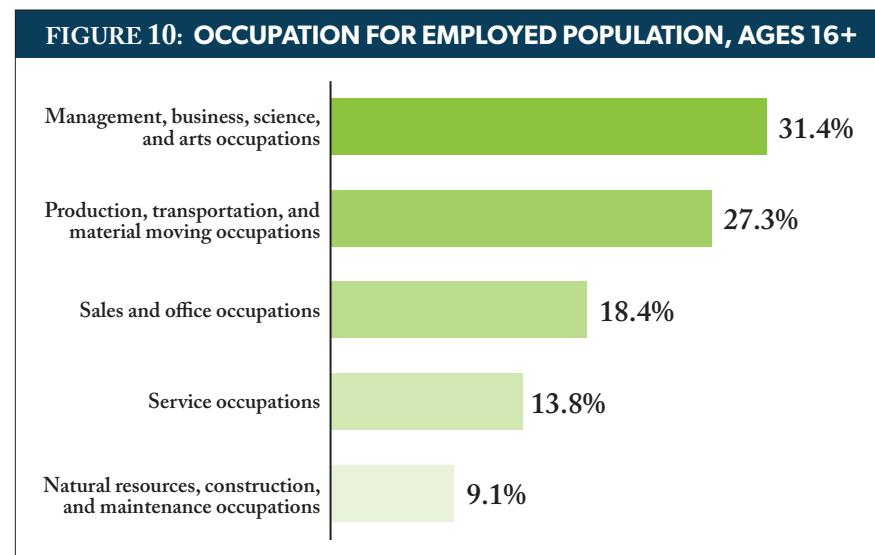
These maps, divided into U.S. Census Bureau tracts, represent the distribution of age groups across the City of Defiance. Broken into two age ranges, the maps show that the younger population are more prevalent south of downtown in central Defiance, while the older population can be found in both the northern and southern areas.

0      2      4      6      8  
FEET IN THOUSANDS

# INCOME, POVERTY & EMPLOYMENT

The City of Defiance has a median household income of \$65,410, which is lower than that of Defiance County, Ohio, and the United States. The City's poverty rate (16.3%) and unemployment rate (3.5%) are also higher than regional and national trends.

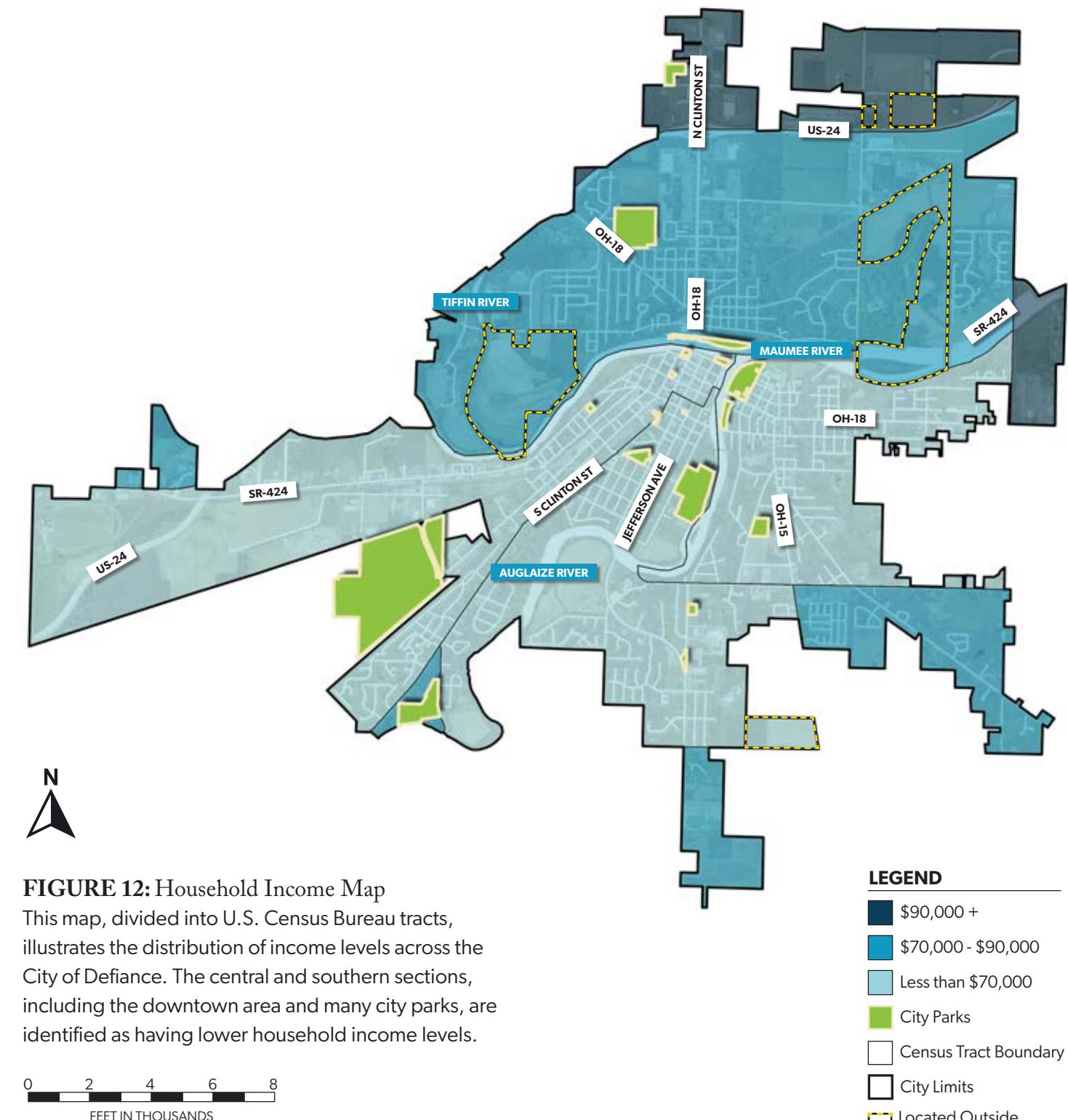
The occupational breakdown for employed residents aged 16 and over is shown below. It highlights that the largest sectors are management, business, science, and arts occupations (31.4%), followed by production, transportation, and material moving occupations (27.3%). A majority of residents (56.1%) both live and work in the City of Defiance, with an average commute time of 19.6 minutes. Among the employed, 85.4% drove alone, 6% carpooled, 4.2% worked from home, 3.3% walked to work, and 1.1% traveled to work by others means.



\*Source: Regional Growth Partnership in Northwest Ohio, 2024

## Summary of Park Users

The data indicates that the central part of Defiance, south of the Maumee River, has lower income levels compared to the rest of the city. Notably, the majority of the City's parks, 18 out of 20, are situated within or adjacent to this income zone. Additionally, the river confluence is located within this area.

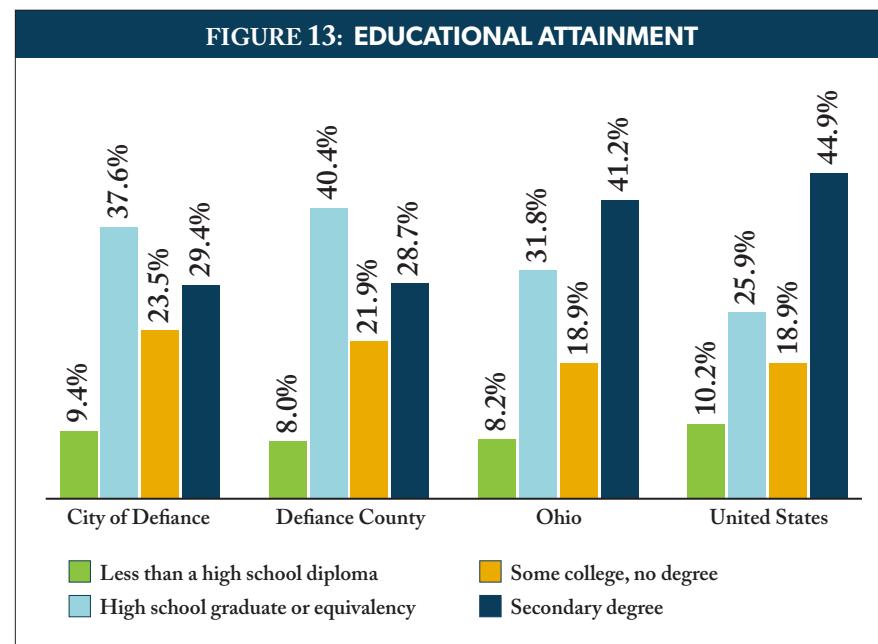


\*Per the 2022 U.S. Census Tract Data. Data shown represents the entire census tract which may extend beyond City limits.

# EDUCATION, HOUSING & SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

Over 90% of Defiance residents aged 25 and older have a formal education, with more than 50% having at least some post-secondary education experience, and nearly 30% holding a secondary education degree. However, the City of Defiance has a lower percentage of residents with post-secondary education compared to state and national trends.

Most homes in Defiance are owner-occupied, making up 67.7% of the housing stock (4,887 homes), while the remaining 2,332 units are renter-occupied. The median home value for owner-occupied housing is \$134,200, which is lower than county, state, and national averages. This is not unexpected, and reflects regional trends and the housing market in rural Midwestern areas. The median monthly housing cost for owner-occupied units is \$1,104, also below average. The median rent is \$626, consistent with Defiance County and lower than state and national trends.



**FIGURE 14: HOUSING COSTS**

	CITY OF DEFIANCE	DEFIANCE COUNTY	OHIO	UNITED STATES
Median Value Owner-Occupied Housing Units with a Mortgage	\$134,200	\$148,700	\$237,700	\$372,600
Median Monthly Housing Costs for Owner-Occupied Units	\$1,104	\$1,154	\$1,468	\$1,904
Median Contract Rent	\$626	\$617	\$822	\$1,220

**\$134K**

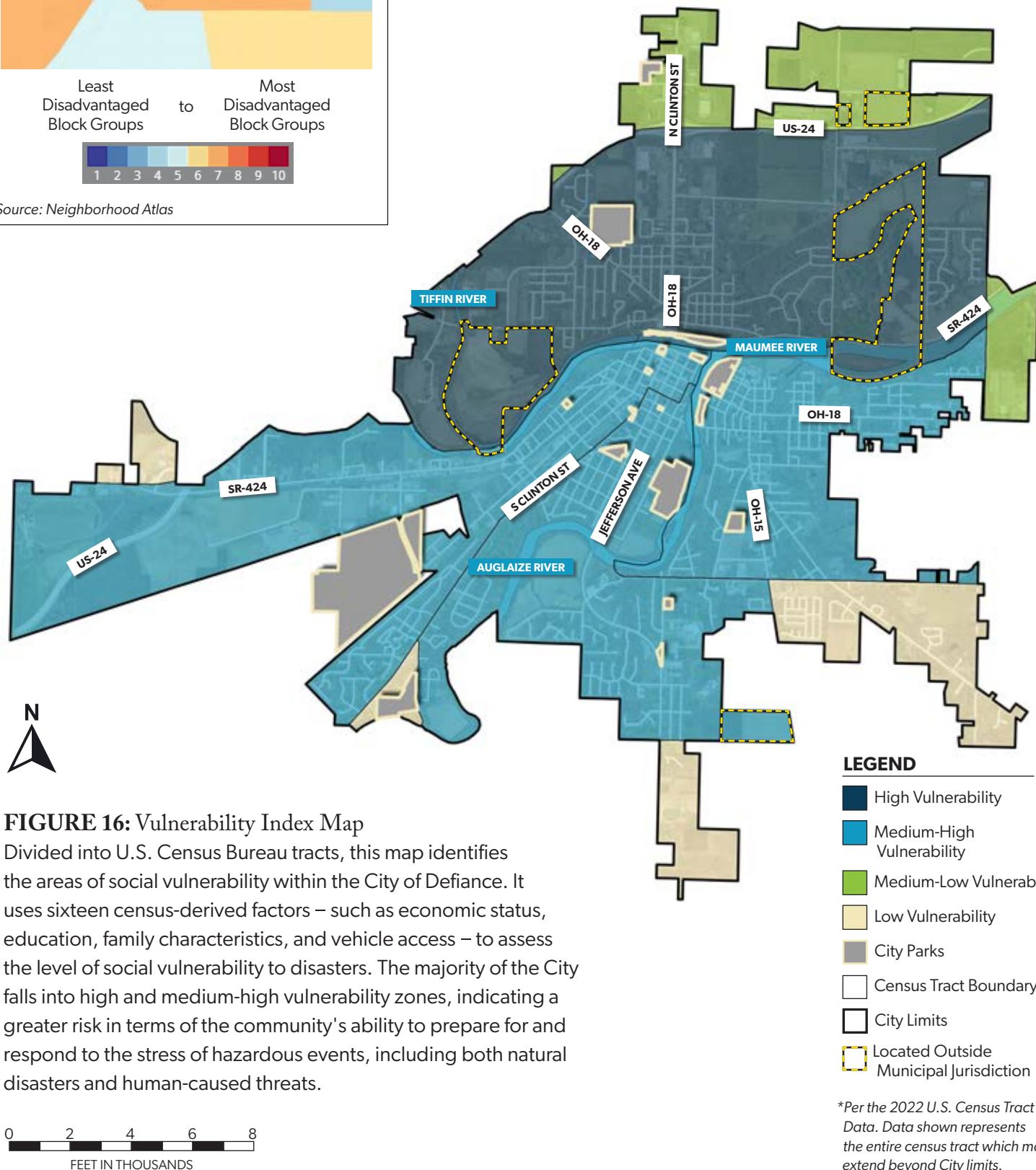
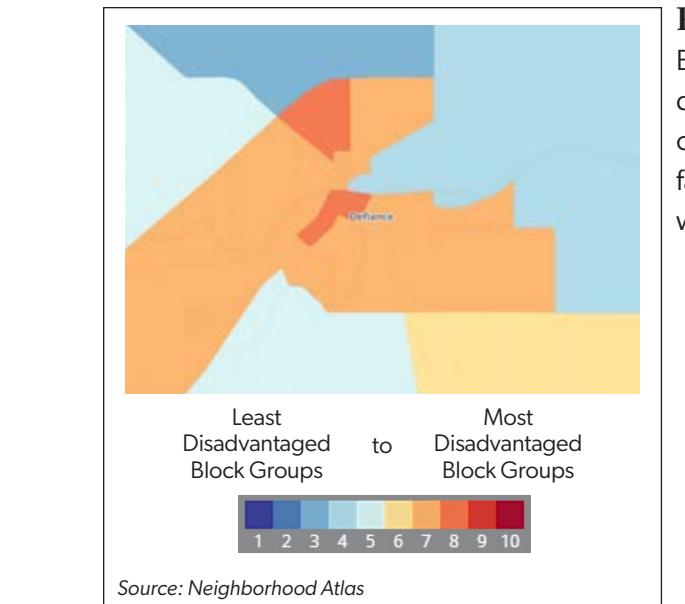
MEDIAN  
HOUSE VALUE

**67.7**  
PERCENT

OWNER-OCCUPIED  
HOUSING UNITS

**29.4**  
PERCENT

HAVE SECONDARY  
EDUCATION DEGREES



## Key Insights:

# A SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS REPORTS

A multitude of plans have been previously completed in and around the City of Defiance, Ohio. These existing documents were utilized to help the design team understand past planning efforts and their potential interactions with the Parks and Riverfront Master Plan. The summaries below provide a brief overview of the plans that directly or indirectly influence the current planning process.

The following plans have been reviewed:

1. Defiance Planning & Zoning Code Update
2. Community Health Improvement Plan
3. Comprehensive Community Action Plan
4. Projected Street Improvement Map
5. Capital Improvement Plan Map (2023-2033)
6. Downtown Redevelopment District / ED Plan
7. Destination Downtown Defiance
8. Defiance County Active Transportation Plan
9. Housing Opportunities Analysis
10. Community Strategic Plan
11. 1918 Market Study & UC Plan
12. Defiance Riverfront Master Plan
13. City of Defiance Strategic Plan & 2030 Land Use Plan
14. Access Management Plan

### DEFIANCE PLANNING & ZONING CODE UPDATE

Published: 2024

Overview & Importance	This shows zoning within the City of Defiance. A Zoning Map is also included as a separate document.
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### COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN (2022-2024)

Published: 2024

Overview	This County-wide plan addressed issues raised in the most recent Community Health Assessment (CHA), including how hospitals, health departments, and other community stakeholders will work to improve the health of the county.
Importance	Relevant recommendations to improve community health factors included community gardens, greater development and utilization of green spaces, development of complete streets, public transportation, and educational programs.



### COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

Published: 2023

Overview & Importance	Briefly describes themes and strategies for downtown renewal, preservation and prosperity, utilities, and connected community. Covers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brief history and past planning efforts</li><li>• Ideas from over 2000 survey respondents (residents and students) with demographic information and community comparison</li><li>• Existing Land Use Conditions Map (pg 27)</li><li>• Economic Development Incentive Map (pg 29)</li><li>• Pedestrian Connectivity Network Map (pg 34)</li><li>• Parks &amp; Rec overview with community generalization from survey (pg 35)</li><li>• Water Systems Maps (pg 41-44)</li><li>• Planning Areas Map with information on each (pg 45+)</li><li>• Potential River Activation Points, Community Assets, and Parks/Open Space Map (pg 95)</li><li>• Plan implementation with strategy, collaborating entity, and time frame (100+)</li></ul>
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### PROJECTED STREET IMPROVEMENT MAP

Published: 2023

Overview & Importance	Provides a map of street improvements, along with improvement types and the year each is slated for.
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### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN MAP (2023-2033)

Last Updated: March 2023

Overview & Importance	Lists type of improvement, broken down by anticipated year; shows locations of future improvements.
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### DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT / ED PLAN

Published: 2022

Overview	Ohio's DRD program allows municipalities to redirect up to 70% of future property tax growth in a 10-acre district with historic structures, for grants, loans, public infrastructure, and economic development operations. Defiance created 11 DRDs in 2022 to enhance economic development, catalyze reinvestment, create jobs, and improve the quality of life downtown.
Importance	Historical properties are referenced, as are the DRD locations. An Economic Market Analysis was done and described. GDP, personal income, and unemployment rate comparisons were also done.

### DESTINATION DOWNTOWN DEFIANCE

Published: 2020

Overview & Importance	This consists of slides regarding the downtown vision and what has been completed toward that vision. It also provides information on the Clinton Street Road Diet project, including statistics on pedestrian and bicycle crashes from 2009 to 2018. Additionally, it illustrates what's next in terms of downtown development and improvements.
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DEFIANCE COUNTY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (2020-2030)	
<i>Published: 2019</i>	
Overview	This plan outlines the vision, goals, and strategies needed to support increased modes of active transportation in Defiance County. It also documents the public involvement efforts that occurred during the planning process, provides information about existing conditions, analyzes where gaps, outlines plan recommendations and focus areas, and provides next steps in the form of implementation and evaluation items.
Importance	The plan provides survey analysis and results on safety, parks, trails, water recreation, and ideal transportation systems, along with 2017 demographic information, 2014-2018 crash statistics, and historic places. It also provides a Safe Routes to School travel plan, funding programs chart, and accessibility strategies.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES ANALYSIS	
<i>Published: 2019</i>	
Overview	It identifies housing opportunities within Defiance and strategies to facilitate housing development.
Importance	A survey (700+ people) indicated Clinton Street and downtown are the most popular places for renters to relocate. It provides information about downtown Defiance commercial environment, near and long-term downtown redevelopment opportunities, and the potential for a north and south downtown gateway. It also provides the breakdown of a market study.

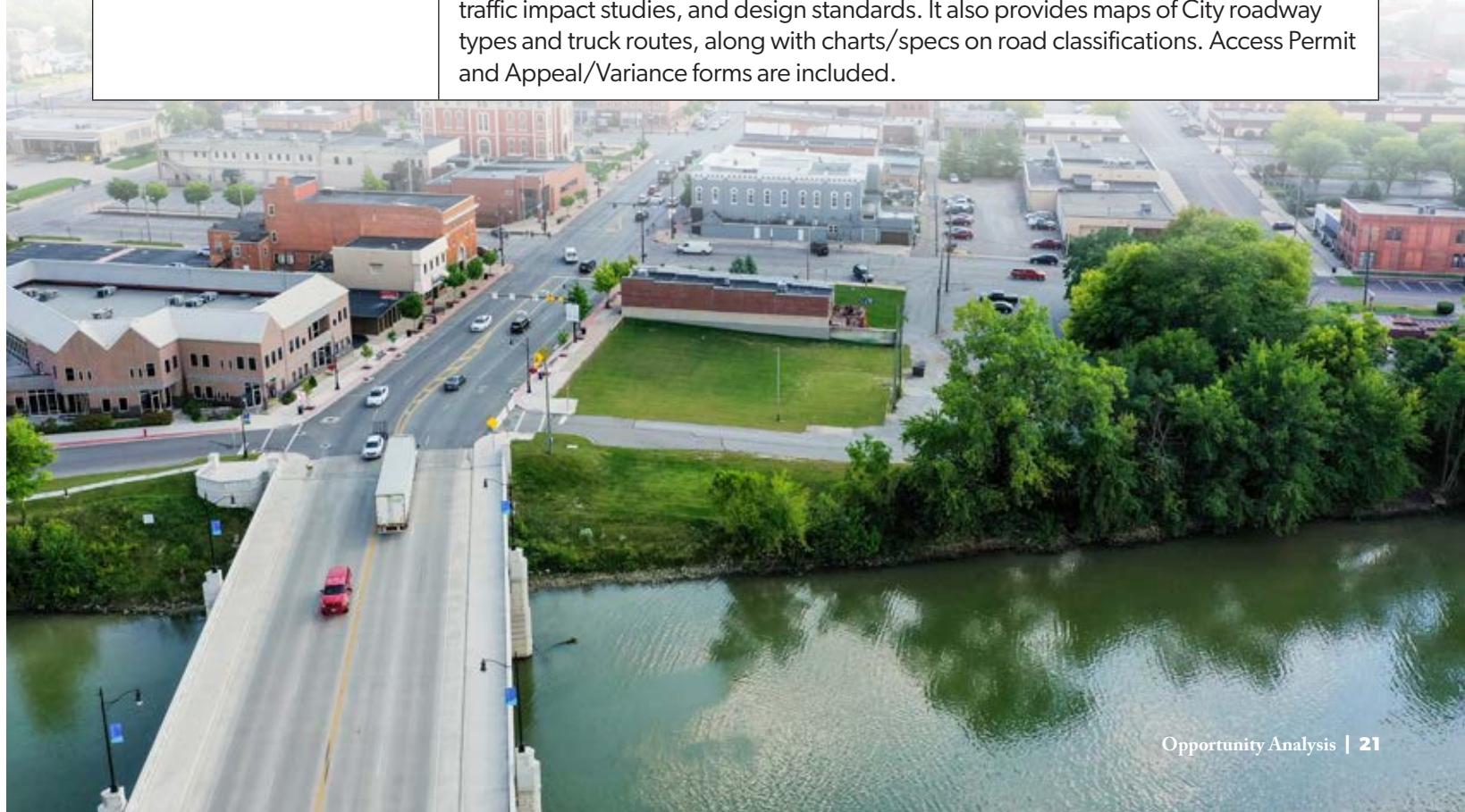
COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN (2018-2023)	
<i>Published: 2017</i>	
Overview	This plan specifies the community goals and strategies, broken into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connectivity</li> <li>• Culture &amp; Education</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Health &amp; Wellness</li> <li>• Housing, and Perception</li> </ul>
Importance	Along with bullet points of their goals and strategies, it lists guiding principles of the community, as well as their vision, mission, and pillars.

1918 MARKET STUDY & UC PLAN	
<i>Published: 2018</i>	
Overview	This study offers conceptual design/master planning for 629 Arabella Street to create a unified mixed-use campus as an anchor to the existing City Center Business District. The site is comprised of the old Defiance Jr. High School, built in 1918/1928 and on the Ohio Endangered Historic Site list.
Importance	The site is located downtown, north of Veterans Memorial Park. It recommends opportunities for added housing units, a hotel, event space, entertainment/ restaurants, and community programming.

DEFIANCE RIVERFRONT MASTER PLAN	
<i>Published: 2015</i>	
Overview & Importance	It provides a graphic master plan with callouts at the confluence of the Maumee and Auglaize Rivers.

CITY OF DEFIANCE STRATEGIC PLAN & 2030 LAND USE PLAN	
<i>Published: 2011</i>	
Overview	This plan provides recommendations and implementation steps for the revitalization of the Downtown District broken into key planning elements: image and theme, parking, streetscaping, focal points, traffic circulation, gateways, signage, land uses, buildings and historic resources, management and organization, marketing and promotion, technical and financing assistance. Note, this was developed at "what is probably the worst economic downturn that the City, State, and Country have experienced in several decades".
Importance	It calls out potential amenities and locations to capitalize on along the rivers, with pros and cons. Note, the Downtown District is defined as the area between the rivers to approximately Dearick Street on the south and the railroad tracks north of the river.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN	
<i>Published: 2009</i>	
Overview	It defines the principles and policies for access management on all roads maintained by the City of Defiance. It also provides guidelines to ensure that any new access onto a City street meets all safety and capacity requirements.
Importance	It provides information/processes/specifcs on Access Permits, roadway planning, traffic impact studies, and design standards. It also provides maps of City roadway types and truck routes, along with charts/specs on road classifications. Access Permit and Appeal/Variance forms are included.



## Planning Process:

# GUIDING THE WAY FORWARD

The City of Defiance Parks & Riverfront Master Plan will serve as a roadmap, shaping the future of the City's parks and riverfronts. Developed with public input and grounded in best practices, the Plan reflects the community's goals, concerns, and vision for what's ahead.

The planning process began with a kick-off meeting that brought together the City, steering committee, and design team. This initial meeting provided an opportunity for the team to collect in-depth information about the parks, riverfronts, and any relevant past or future plans that could influence the project. To ensure broad support and gather valuable insights, a comprehensive community engagement strategy was implemented. This strategy included conducting an online survey to reach a wider audience, interviewing key stakeholders to understand specific needs and concerns, hosting community workshops to foster dialogue, and other outreach efforts aimed at involving residents in shaping the future of their parks and riverfronts. These activities were designed to capture a diverse range of voices, ensuring that the plan reflects the community's aspirations and priorities.

In close collaboration with the Parks and Cemetery Director, a detailed inventory of each park was compiled. Additional research was also conducted, including valuable information obtained from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and the Andrew L. Tuttle Memorial Museum. These efforts helped lay the groundwork for site analysis and supported the steering committee in refining the project's goals and objectives.

Using this comprehensive data, the design team then identified opportunities for park improvements, focusing on those that met the community's needs and aligned with the overall vision for the future. The team shared these concepts with the steering committee and community members for further input, which helped refine them.

All efforts culminated into the final Master Plan, which not only outlined the proposed enhancements but also provided high-level cost estimates and a roadmap for implementing them over the coming years.

## LOGO DEVELOPMENT & USE

The green tree, forming the left side of the "D", represents the 20 City parks and the Defiance Parks & Recreation Department.



**DEFIANCE**  
PARKS & RIVERFRONT  
MASTER PLAN

The font was chosen because of its clean and bold style. The colors parallel the City logo, representing each of the three rivers.



Forming the right side of the "D", the three blue sections represent the rivers that flow through the City: the Maumee, Auglaize, and Tiffin Rivers.

This logo was developed to highlight the connection between the City's park system and riverfront. It provided a distinct identity for the Master Plan, helping to generate community interest and unify communication. The logo was used across a variety of mediums, both digital and print, including flyers, stickers, social media, and more. It was even featured on printed cookies.

## PROJECT SCHEDULE

May through October 2024

### PHASE 1: BASE INVENTORY & PROJECT ANALYSIS

This phase includes the Opportunity Analysis Report, identifying and evaluating potential opportunities for growth. It includes:

- Summary and project background
- Resource profiles
- Preliminary Summary of Funding Options
  - Community and stakeholder input

November 2024 through February 2025

### PHASE 2: PRELIMINARY PLANNING & DESIGN

Based on community and stakeholder input and achieving consensus on an overall strategy, Phase 2 identifies the most promising locations for improvements and preliminary implementation recommendations. This is done through two steps:

1. **Implementation Strategies and Diagrammatic Plan Improvements** - *Identifies a unified approach to aligning project goals and objectives by creating diagrammatic plans that outline proposed implementation strategies for improvements in the parks, riverfront, and connectivity corridors.*
2. **Master Plan Renderings** - *Refines and advances the selected diagrammatic plan improvements to a Master Plan rendering level, showcasing the proposed implementation strategies with accurate scale and location details.*



### Future Phase - Spring 2025

### PHASE 3: FINAL MASTER PLAN & DOCUMENTATION

This phase will document and secure approval for the finalized recommendations, along with detailed, step-by-step short-term implementation actions. This is done by refining Master Plan renderings and perspectives. It also includes:

- Final Master Plan Report
- Partnering Framework and Implementation Plan
- Public communication tools

# TAKING INVENTORY:

## Existing Resources & Implications

2

DRAFT

# UNDERSTANDING DEFIANCE'S RESOURCES & IMPLICATIONS

This section explores the unique assets and challenges within the Defiance community. It delves into the city's physical, economic, and social resources, examining how they interact and influence development opportunities. By analyzing these factors, we can better understand Defiance's potential for growth, revitalization, and sustainable development, providing a comprehensive foundation for future planning and decision-making.

## Zoning

"Public and Government Buildings or Uses" are permitted by right and without additional requirements in all zoning districts in the City of Defiance except in Floodplain (F-P) and Industrial Districts where they are conditional uses. The Zoning Code goes further to define a public use as "Public parks, schools and administrative, libraries, cultural and service buildings."

Defiance's parks along the rivers are understandably zoned Floodplain (F-P). Those parks include Buchman on the Glaize, a portion of Fort Grounds, Gateway Park, Kingsbury Park, Pontiac Park, and Riverside Park. These parks provide the greatest potential for activating the riverfront, but they are also the most susceptible to flooding.

Most of Defiance's larger parks that are not located along the riverfront are classified under the Special District (S-1) zoning. This District is for "large public or semi-public land holdings, land suitable for non-commercial recreation ... or land to be kept open to protect the source water supply." Defiance parks zoned Special District (S-1) include Bronson Park, half of Diehl Park, a portion of Fort Grounds, Palmer Park, and Veteran's Memorial Park.

The smaller parks within the Defiance municipal boundary have zoning that aligns with the primary zoning of the adjacent areas. For example, Canal Park, Hometown Heroes Park, and Memory Park are located near downtown Defiance, and like the surrounding area, they are zoned Central Business (B-2).

Reservoir Park and Bark & Run Dog Park are both outside of Defiance City Limits, thus assigned "Government" zoning by Defiance County.

## Land Use

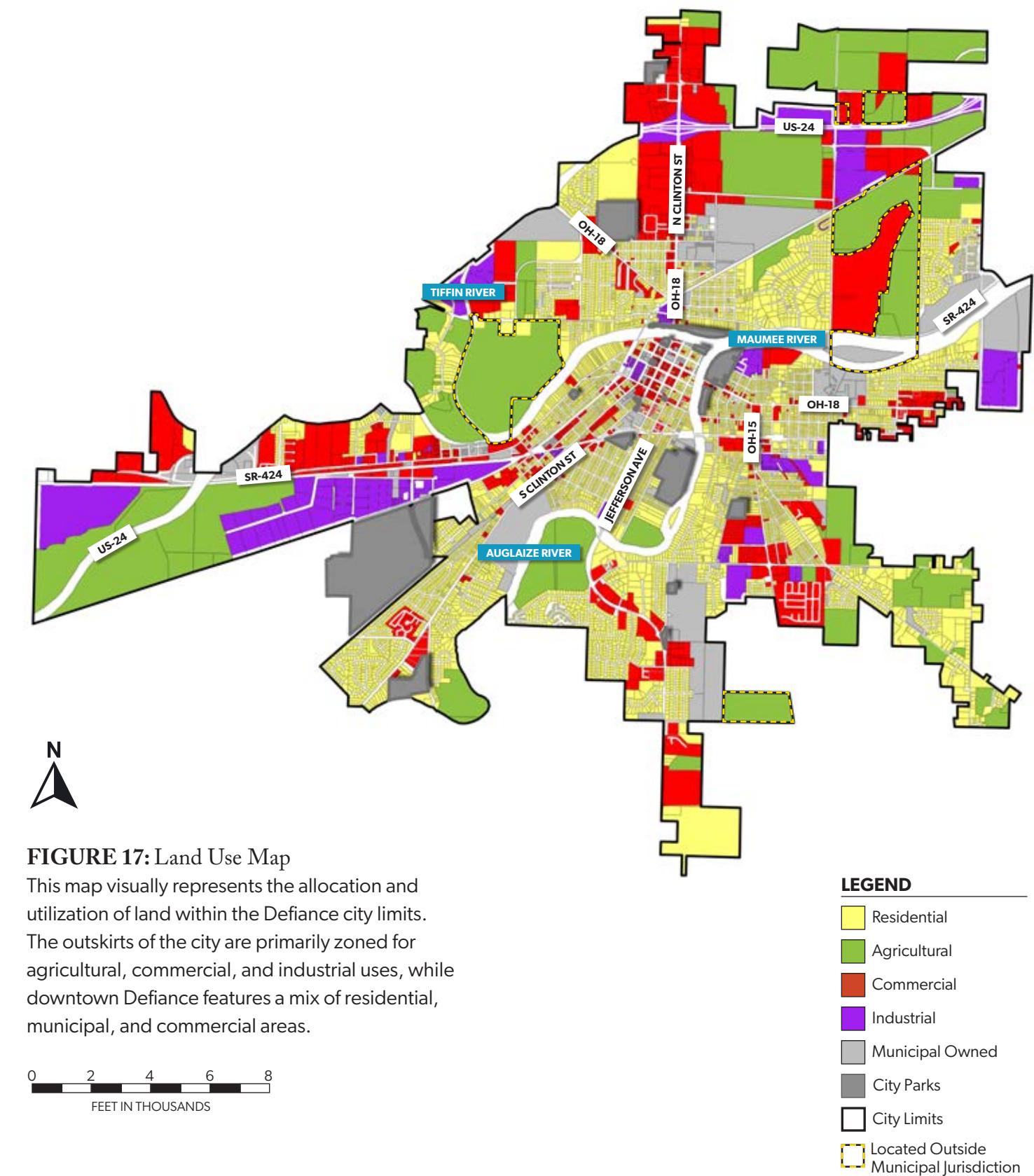
Both natural and man-made features have been determining factors in the locations of certain land uses in the City of Defiance. Historically, development was centered around the confluence of the rivers and the convergence of railroads. While the railroads are less prominent features today than what they were decades ago, one could say Defiance was built around "R and R" – rivers and railroads.

The community's core is primarily a grid-iron pattern of commercial development (downtown) with some remaining industrial development in key areas along the rivers and railroads. Small lots created dense residential neighborhoods near the core, which still exist today. Further from the core, residential lots grew larger and neighborhoods less dense.

Commercial and industrial growth has developed in strategic areas along major corridors like US 24, State Road 424, State Road 18, and State Road 15. Notable land uses include Defiance College north of the river confluence; two hospitals; and a thriving, historic downtown.

## Parcel Ownership Summary

Most of Defiance's parks are located within residential zones, which is significant as it offers accessible recreational opportunities and enhances neighborhood aesthetics and community engagement. The abundance of parks can also boost property values, stimulate economic development, and help protect the City from adverse environmental effects. The concentration of parks in the downtown and river confluence areas is particularly important, as they attract visitors to the downtown, creating positive economic impacts for local businesses.





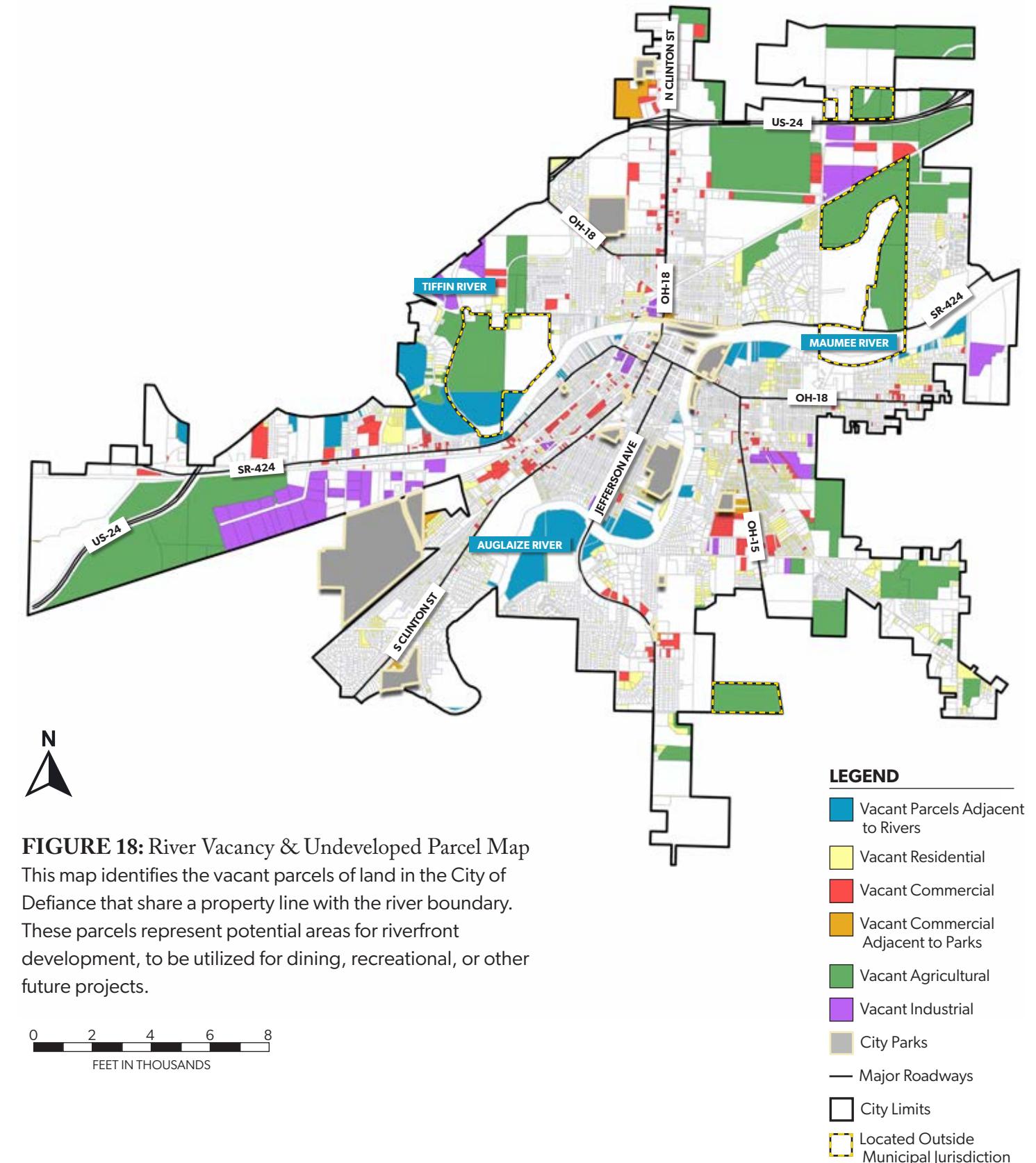
## Vacant & Undeveloped Parcels

Like many communities, Defiance has a variety of vacant parcels scattered throughout the City. Some of these parcels have been cleared and are open land, while others still contain buildings in either functional or deteriorating condition. These vacant parcels represent significant opportunities for the City to be proactive in shaping its future. Whether through repurposing these spaces for new parks, community uses, or even expanding existing parks, Defiance has the potential to enhance the quality of life for its residents. Vacant parcels offer the flexibility to meet community needs — whether that's by introducing more recreational areas, addressing gaps in park accessibility, or creating spaces for public gatherings and events.

One notable area of opportunity lies along the rivers, where many historically flood-prone properties have been converted into parks and green spaces. The City has played an active role in acquiring flood-prone properties with the goal of mitigating environmental impacts and creating valuable open spaces for the community. Not all acquired properties need to be programmed with amenities; even leaving these areas as green space, covered with native vegetation, can contribute to environmental health by supporting the river's ecosystem, providing floodwater retention zones, and expanding the City's natural landscapes.

Beyond the rivers, there are additional vacant properties throughout Defiance, highlighted in Figure 18, that present similar opportunities. These properties can be transformed into new green spaces, community gathering spots, or expanded park areas, based on the preferences and priorities of residents. As part of this master planning process, identifying and evaluating these potential sites is crucial. The goal is not just to catalog available land but to engage the City and the community in a dialogue about what they want these spaces to become. Whether it's creating playgrounds, sports fields, natural preserves, or simply open green areas, the possibilities are diverse and, with careful planning, can significantly contribute to the City's livability, economic vitality, and environmental health.

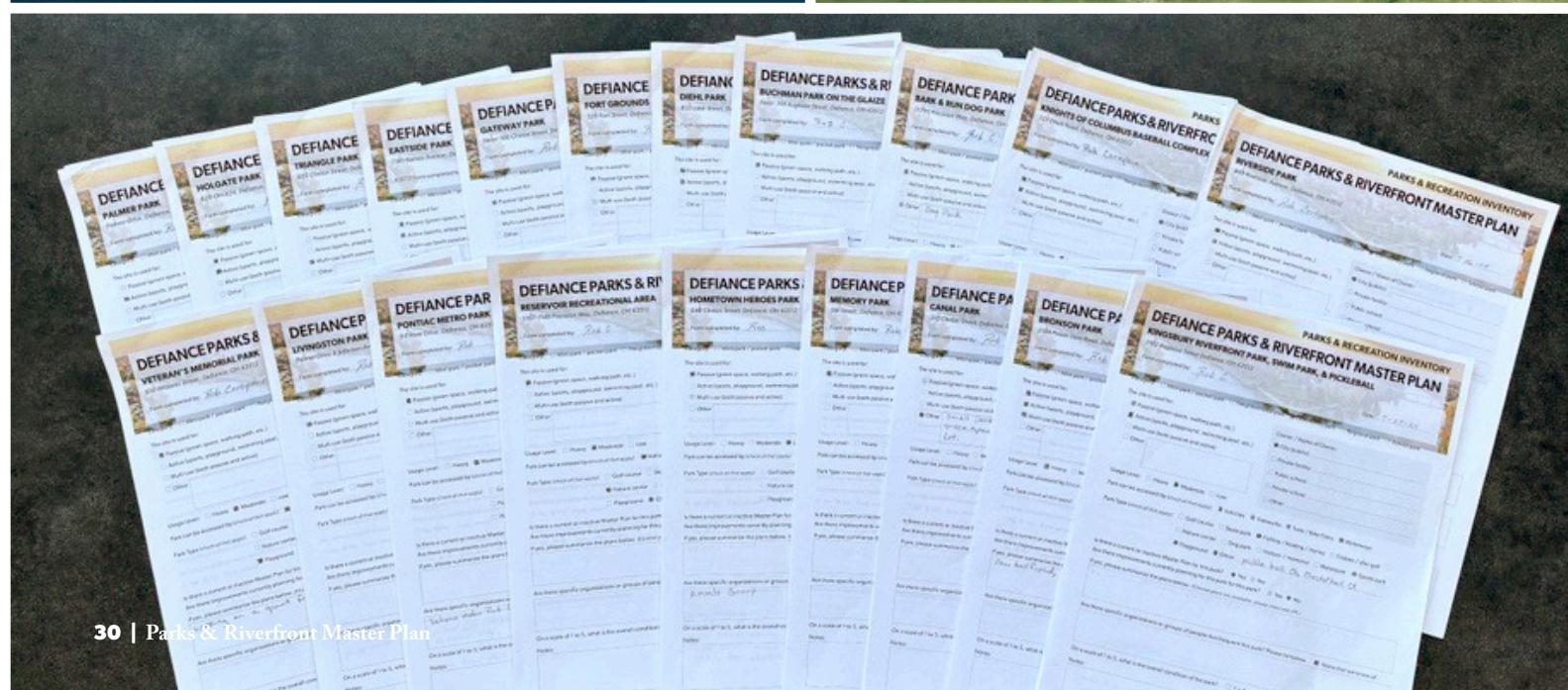
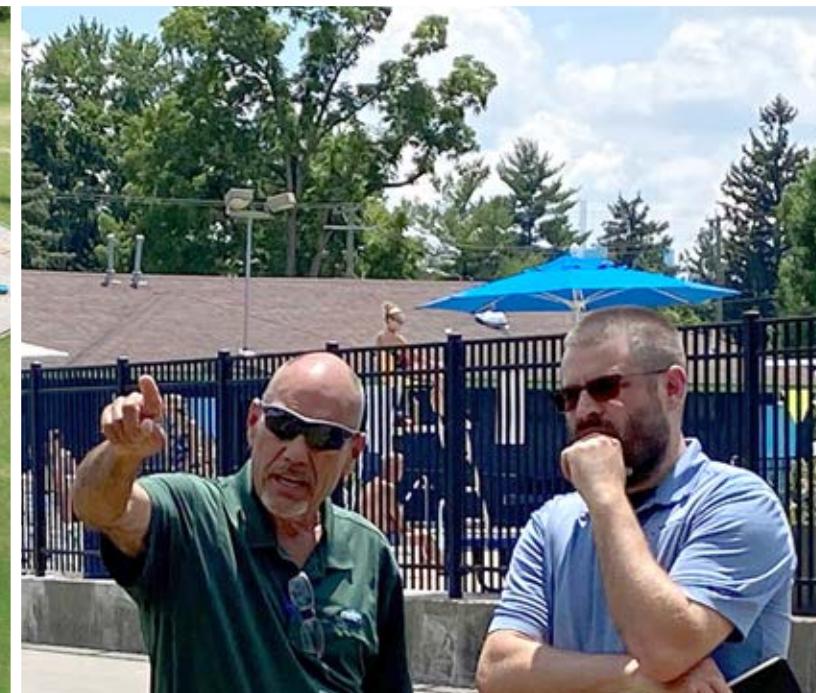
A key objective of this Master Plan is to identify these potential opportunities, and gauge the City and community on their needs and aspirations.



# Natural & Structural Resources: PARK INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

The following pages offer a detailed breakdown of each park within the Master Plan. For every park, you'll find an overview that highlights its amenities, location, and unique features. Additionally, each park profile includes a comprehensive assessment of its perceived strengths and liabilities. This analysis is designed to provide a clear understanding of what the park offers, while also identifying areas for potential improvement to better serve the community's needs.

The park inventory was completed using a comprehensive approach, drawing on various sources of information. This effort was carried out in close collaboration with the Parks and Cemetery Director, who provided a detailed inventory of each park's existing features and amenities. In addition to this, the design team conducted on-site visits to each park to observe firsthand the unique opportunities and constraints present in the landscape. During these visits, the team documented the sites through drone photography, capturing valuable aerial perspectives. Furthermore, the team reviewed all existing and proposed projects, as well as any future plans for each park, to ensure a thorough understanding of both the current conditions and long-term vision for the park system's development. This multi-faceted approach allowed for a well-rounded and informed evaluation of the entire park network.



## Natural & Structural Resources:

# BARK & RUN DOG PARK

APPROXIMATELY  
17.1  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive / Dog Park	Moderate	Community Park	Good	Limited Accessibility



Located south of the City and considered a part of the Reservoir Recreational Area, Bark & Run Dog Park is a membership-driven recreational facility tailored specifically for dogs and their owners. Developed and maintained by a group of local veterinarians, the park features separate fenced areas for large and small dogs, ensuring a safe and enjoyable environment for pets of all sizes. Each fenced area is one-acre, providing plenty of room for dogs and owners to play ball. With ample space for running, playing, and exercising, the park includes various amenities such as agility equipment, shaded pavilion areas, benches for pet owners, and water stations to keep dogs hydrated.

The open layout and agility features provide valuable opportunities for dogs to socialize and engage in physical activity, contributing to their overall health and well-being.

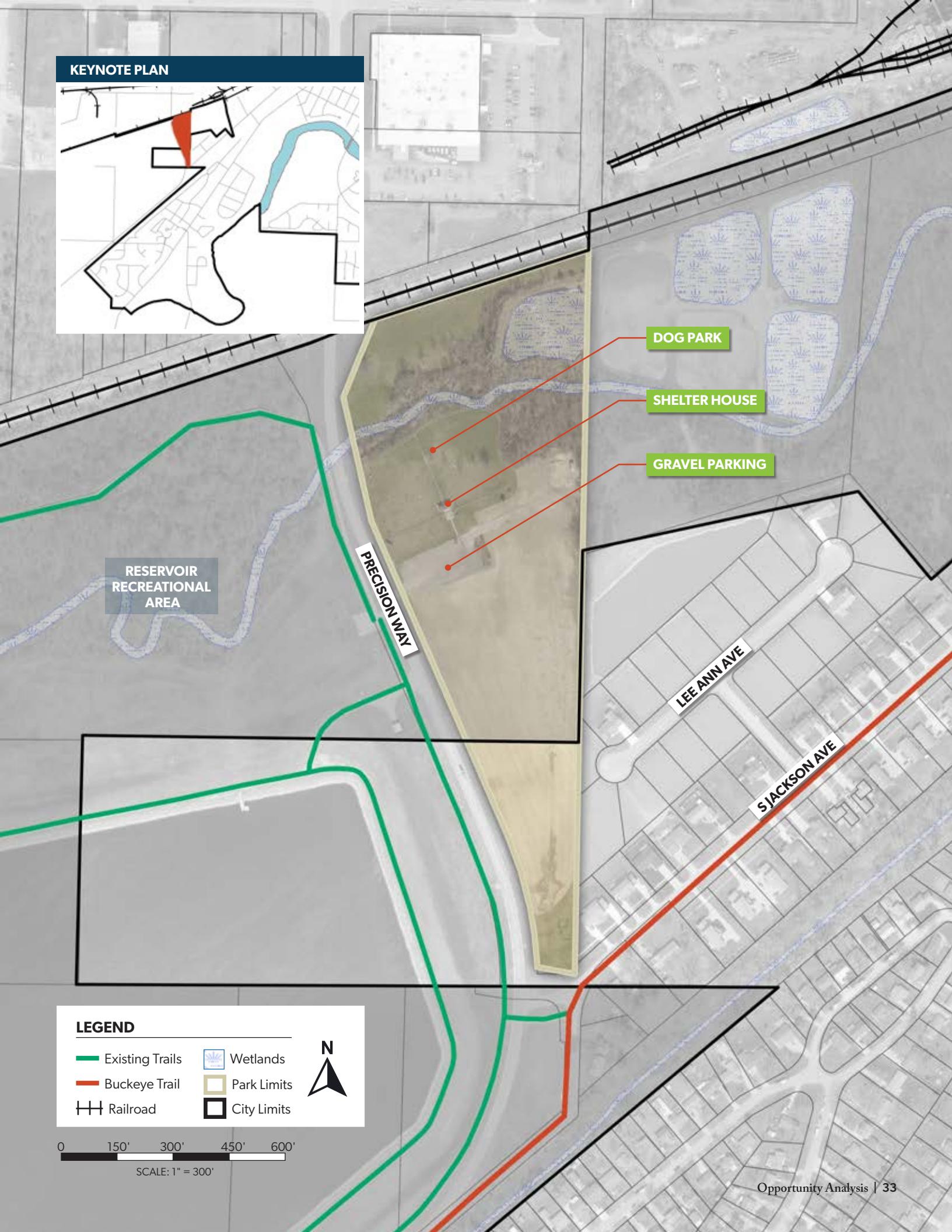
### STRENGTHS

- Accessible routes from parking lot to park
- Separated areas for designated play zones
- Agility equipment / obstacle courses for dogs
- Shaded shelter house with seating
- Private membership provides revenue and self monitoring of site

### LIABILITIES

- No water supply available
- No restroom
- Aggregate lot / unfinished parking lot
- Entry sign is not consistent with other City parks
- Not open to anyone without membership

### PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



## Inventory Photos: Bark & Run Dog Park



SHELTER HOUSE



AREA FOR SMALL DOGS



AREA FOR LARGE DOGS

"My big dogs like to run and they get socialized [at Bark & Run Dog Park]."



AGGREGATE LOT



PLAY OBSTACLES

Bark & Run Dog Park was chosen as this person's favorite park because:

"I am able to take my dog somewhere in a well maintained area with only people who pay for the park."



PARK SIGN



PARK RULES



DONATION BOARD



INFORMATIONAL SIGN



ENTRY GATE



ADDITIONAL SEATING



SWING BENCH

# Natural & Structural Resources: BRONSON PARK

APPROXIMATELY  
**23.2**  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive / Active	Heavy	Community Park	Excellent	Mostly Accessible

Bronson Park, located south of the City along the Auglaize River, was named after Edward S. Bronson who served as the Mayor of Defiance for four-terms (1916-1917, 1928-1929, 1946-1947, and 1948-1949). Bronson left a lasting impact on the City by modernizing its railways, schools, fire and police departments, and public water purification systems, among other things. The park was named after him in 1964.

This park was once home to the Bronson Pool, which hosted swim lessons and served as the base for the Defiance Blue Dolphin swim team. The outdoor facility, located at the northern edge of the park, was demolished in 2016 with the hope of a future splash pad being developed in its place. Two years later, the Defiance Splash Park opened to the public. By repurposing the Bronson

pool facility, the site was reinvented – offering an ADA compliant and free water amenity to the community.

In 2021, additional improvements were made including upgrades to the shelter houses and swing benches, new playground equipment, and an ADA compliant sidewalk connecting the parking lot to the shelter houses. Today, the park also features two sand volleyball courts, two ball fields, and a basketball court.

A multi-use walkway connecting Bronson Park with the Defiance Splash Park was also installed, funded through State Capital Appropriations. Not only does this walkway contain pockets of play along the route, it also doubles as a Storywalk® and provides an interactive way for families to read an entire picture book as they travel along the path.

## STRENGTHS

- Accessible by vehicles, sidewalks, waterways, and pedestrian / bicycle trails
- Accessible multi-use route from Bronson Park to the Defiance Splash Park
- Potential for a canoe/kayak activation node
- Shelter house rentals
- Security lights are located on all buildings
- Electricity and water are available on site

## LIABILITIES

- Potential for flooding events
- Ball fields need improved
- Most users don't realize this park is located on the river

## PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



## Inventory Photos: Bronson Park



BALL FIELD



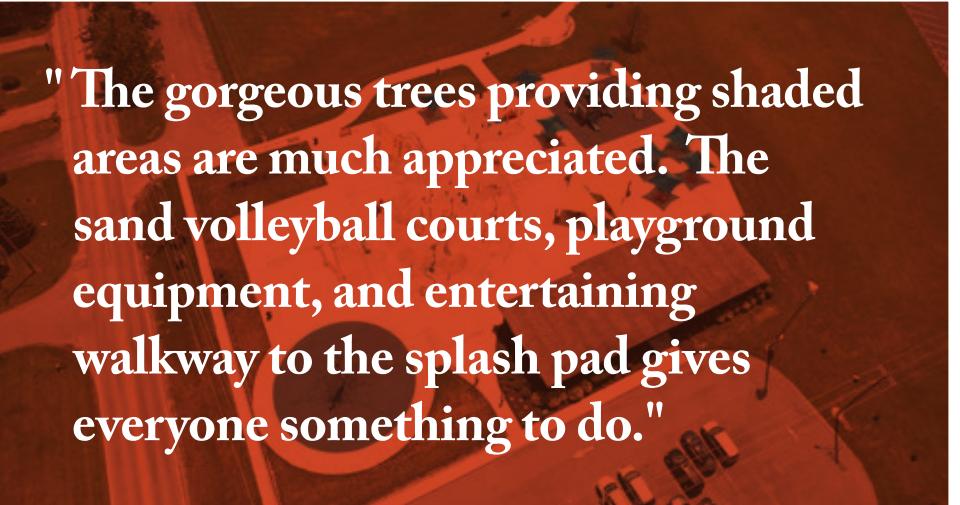
CLIMBING EQUIPMENT



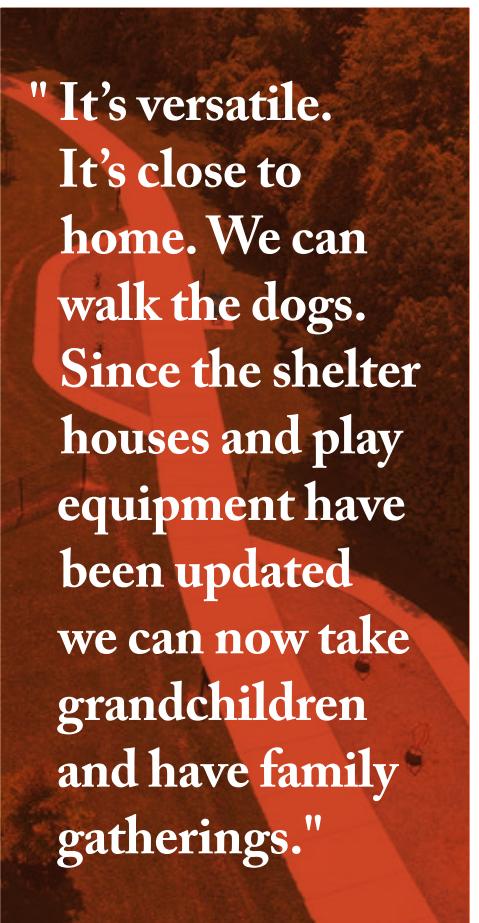
RESTROOM / CHANGING FACILITY



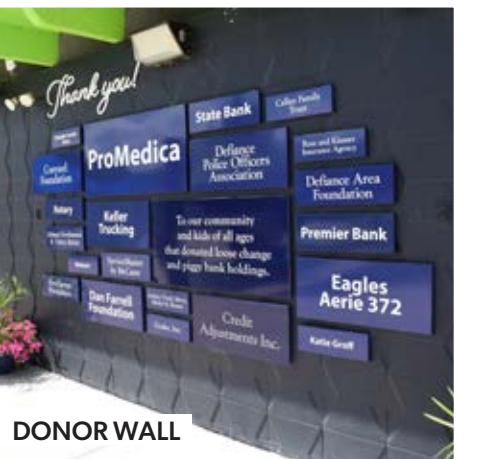
RESTROOM FACILITY



"The gorgeous trees providing shaded areas are much appreciated. The sand volleyball courts, playground equipment, and entertaining walkway to the splash pad gives everyone something to do."



SHADED SEATING



DONOR WALL



READING TRAIL



RESTROOM MURAL



WATER FOUNTAIN & MURAL



PLAYGROUND



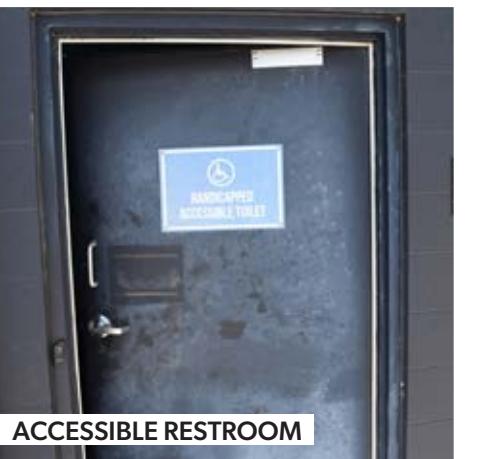
SAND VOLLEYBALL & BASKETBALL COURTS



SHELTER HOUSE



HISTORICAL POOL IMAGE



ACCESSIBLE RESTROOM



PLAYGROUND



SWINGS



"Lots of great equipment for the kids. Very shaded. Great place to gather."

## Natural & Structural Resources:

# BUCHMAN PARK ON THE GLAIZE

APPROXIMATELY  
**4.1**  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive	Low	Community Park	Fair	Not Accessible



Buchman Park on the Auglaize is a natural park situated along the east bank of the Auglaize River, located on Auglaize Street between the Second Street and Hopkins Street bridges.

The park is named after Randy Buchman, a long-time Defiance history expert, and will honor his life's work and the native populations that used to reside in and around the City. While many groups frequented the Defiance area, the Shawnee were the most significant.

Currently, the park offers ample greenspace and a swing bench overlooking the Auglaize River, as well as access to the riverbanks. Historical markers are also present. This park is meant to be a passive and reflective space.

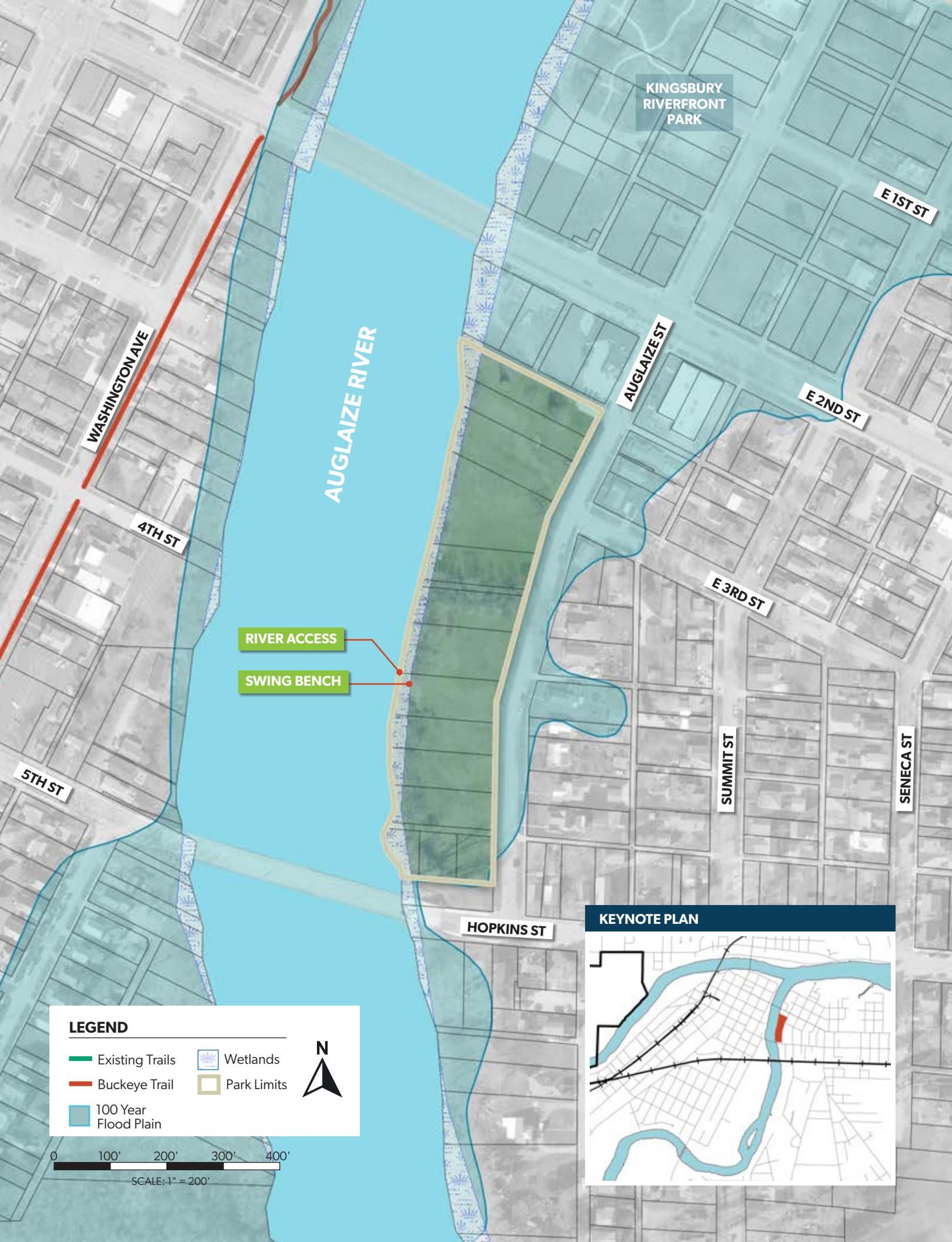
### STRENGTHS

- Riverfront access
- Strong historical design intent due to its namesake
- Proximity to neighborhoods

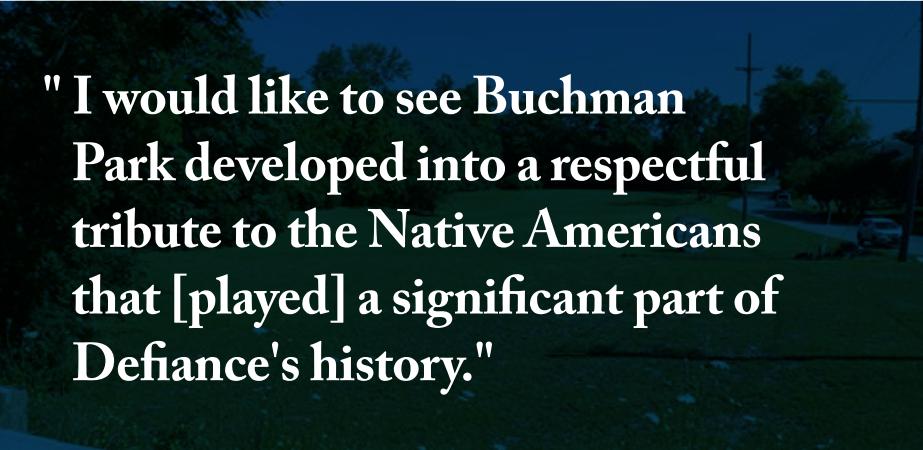
### LIABILITIES

- No existing sidewalks
- Potential for flooding events
- No on-site or roadside parking
- Park includes multiple CSO outfalls

### PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



## Inventory Photos: Buchman Park on the Glaize



# Natural & Structural Resources: CANAL PARK

APPROXIMATELY  
0.5  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive	Low	Community Park	Fair	Mostly Accessible

The floods of 1913 caused significant damage in Defiance, notably impacting the Miami and Erie Canal Lock No. 37. By 1917, most of the bridges crossing the canal in the downtown area had been removed, and the canal was gradually filled and drained. The remnants of Miami and Erie Canal Lock No. 37 remained exposed for decades until they were partially renovated in 1997.

Today, this historical site has been transformed into Canal Park. Located downtown, it features an amphitheater that celebrates the area's heritage and offers a vibrant space for community events.



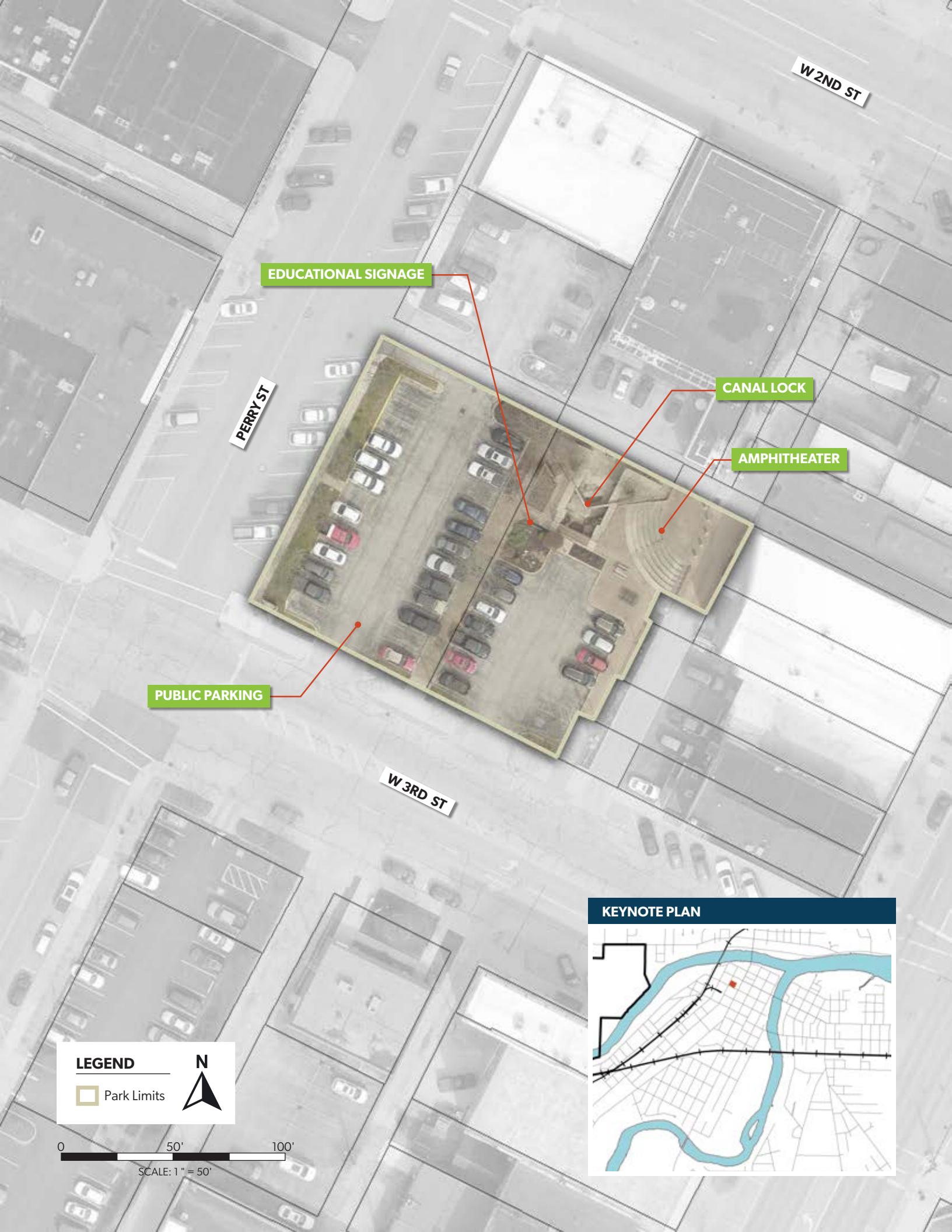
## STRENGTHS

- Strong historical significance
- Electricity and water are available on site
- Located within downtown
- Adjacent parking

## LIABILITIES

- Small site with limited greenspace
- No shade components
- Needs additional seating, such as benches or new table seating
- Needs identification signage
- Needs additional ADA seating opportunities

## PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



## Inventory Photos: Canal Park



AMPHITHEATER



PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING



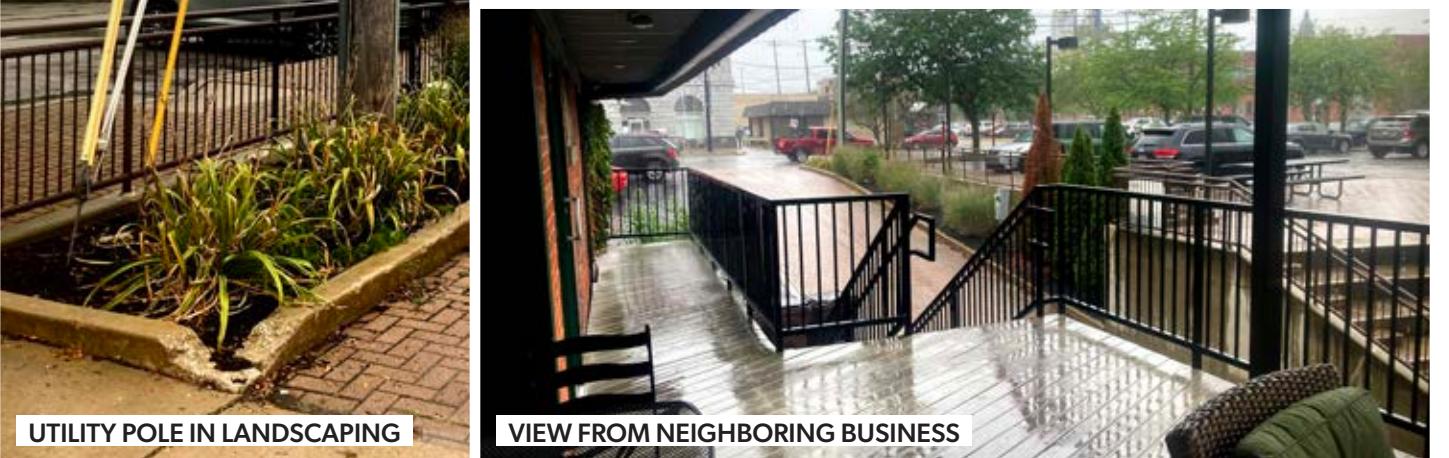
UTILITY POLE IN LANDSCAPING



EDUCATIONAL SIGNAGE



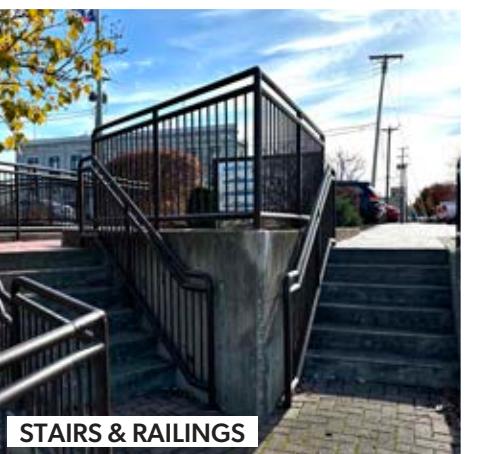
PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING



VIEW FROM NEIGHBORING BUSINESS



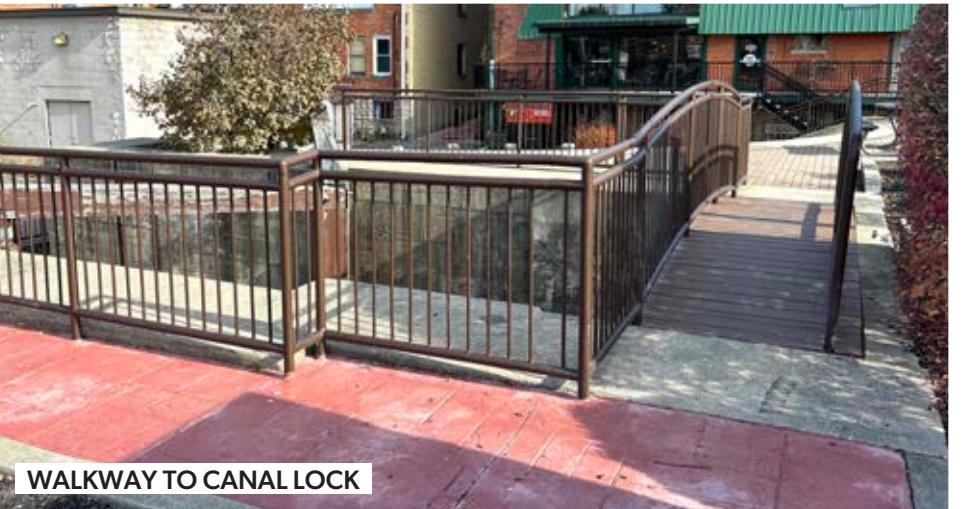
OVERLOOKING THE AMPHITHEATER



STAIRS & RAILINGS



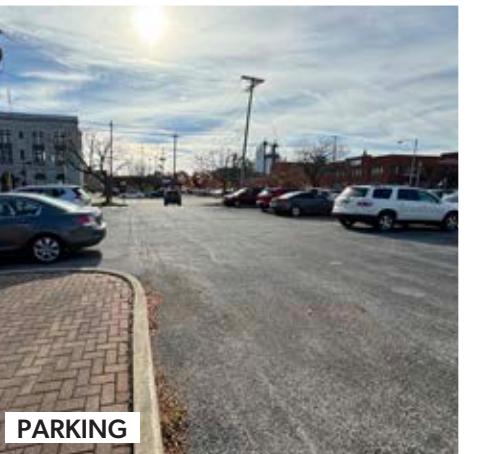
PEDESTRIAN ALLEYWAY



WALKWAY TO CANAL LOCK



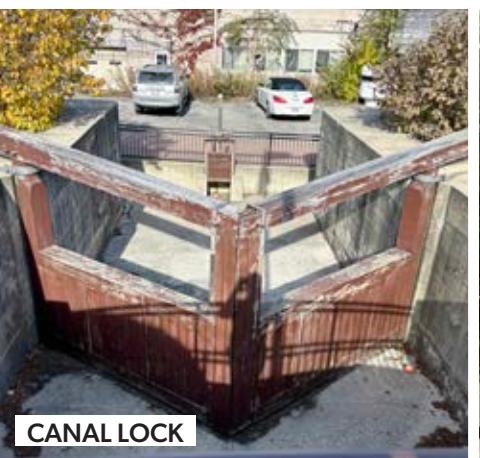
PARKING SIGNAGE



PARKING



LANDSCAPING & SIGNAGE



CANAL LOCK



CANAL LOCK



SEATING

# Natural & Structural Resources: DIEHL PARK

APPROXIMATELY  
**38.5**  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive / Active	Moderate	Community Park	Good	Somewhat Accessible



Located on the City's northwest side, the park features two large covered shelter houses, a basketball court, four softball fields, a baseball diamond, and a playground. Soccer can also be played at this park. Additionally, Defiance Softball and the Defiance Baseball Association's 15U team consider this park their home, hosting three tournaments each summer. They have also partnered with the Special Olympics to host t-ball games.

One of the biggest attractions is the Kid's Creation Playground which provides kids with an opportunity to use their imagination as they run through the fort or sit in the Native American teepee.

## STRENGTHS

- Shelter house rentals
- Illuminated by field lights and security lights
- Electricity and water are available on site
- Multiple playgrounds
- Prominent park north of the Maumee River
- Two fields have irrigation

## PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



## Inventory Photos: Diehl Park



PARK RULES



MEMORIAL SIGN



RESTROOMS



WALKWAY



KIDS CREATION - PLAY AREA



"I enjoyed going to the Hot Air Balloon Festival when it was at Diehl Park."

"[My son] loves having the freedom to run and climb and play and it's easy to use his imagination there. We like that it's open, yet enclosed, and not near a lot of traffic."



DUGOUT



PRESS BOX



ACCESSIBLE BLEACHERS



STORAGE / SEATING FACILITY



KIDS CREATION - SWINGS



BASKETBALL COURTS



PLAYGROUND



BATTING CAGE



SCOREBOARD



RESTROOM FACILITY



DUMPSTER & STORAGE AREA



"Kids Creation is huge and can keep kids occupied for hours."

# Natural & Structural Resources: EASTSIDE PARK

APPROXIMATELY  
**7.0**  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive / Active	Moderate	Community Park	Excellent	Mostly Accessible

Formerly known as Compo Park, Eastside Park is located southeast of downtown Defiance and nestled in a residential area. It features a blend of open green spaces and recreational facilities, and the park's quiet, shaded areas and walking paths offer a serene setting for a leisurely stroll or a moment of reflection. A swale is also located south of the play areas.

Over the last five years, as part of the Eastside Neighborhood Revitalization Project, the park has been re-energized with new playground equipment, a basketball court, ball diamond, and shelter house. Playground structures are included for both 2-5 and 5-12 age ranges. The park has also been connected to neighborhoods on the east side of Ottawa Avenue through the construction of a multi-use path.

An Ohio NatureWorks Grant was secured and paired with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monies

and State Capital Appropriations along with donations from Mercy Health to help fund recent improvements within this park.



## STRENGTHS

- Accessible by vehicles, sidewalks, and pedestrian / bicycle trails
- Shelter house rentals
- Electricity and water are available on site
- Adjacent to residential trail
- Open space available

## PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



## Inventory Photos: Eastside Park



PARK SIGN



RAIN GARDEN



DOG WASTE STATION



SIDEWALK



BASEBALL / SOFTBALL FIELD

" We love Eastside Park and the updates. We have kids from young to older, so the basketball courts at both Eastside and Bronson help."



BASKETBALL COURT



PLAYGROUND SIGNAGE



WALKWAY



SHELTER HOUSE



NATUREWORKS PLAQUE



AERIAL VIEW



AERIAL VIEW OF PLAYGROUND



UNDEVELOPED ENTRY DRIVE



PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT



PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT



CLIMBING EQUIPMENT



PEDESTRIAN TRAIL



AERIAL VIEW OF SHELTER HOUSE

"[Eastside Park] is a great park and has adequate shade for kids."

# Natural & Structural Resources: FORT GROUNDS

APPROXIMATELY  
1.9  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive	Moderate	Community Park	Good	Mostly Accessible

Fort Grounds is a historically significant site that commemorates the City's rich heritage. Located at the confluence of the Maumee and Auglaize Rivers, this area was once home to Fort Defiance, a key military outpost during the Northwest Indian War. Today, Fort Grounds serves as a public park and a reminder of the region's strategic importance in American history.

The park features well-preserved remnants of the original fort, along with informative plaques and markers that educate visitors about the area's past. The serene environment, with its mature trees and scenic river views, provides a peaceful setting for reflection and exploration. Walking paths wind through the grounds, allowing visitors to take in the historical significance while enjoying the natural beauty of the location.

Among the historical markers is the grave of Johnny Logan, a Native American boy that joined American forces during

## STRENGTHS

- Has electricity and water on-site
- Part of Ohio's Buckeye Trail and the North Country Trail
- Direct access to the Maumee River
- City property available to the south and west
- Strong historical significance
- Adjacent to library
- Property provides fantastic views of confluence

## PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



## LIABILITIES

- Potential for flooding events
- Deteriorating stairs leading to the river
- Lack of accessible river access
- Lack of accessible routes to monument
- Historic archaeological limitations
- Retaining wall





# Natural & Structural Resources: GATEWAY PARK

APPROXIMATELY  
**2.8**  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive	Low	Community Park	Fair	Not Accessible

Located just west of the Purple Heart Bridge in downtown Defiance, Gateway Park is an undeveloped piece of land along the Maumee River. Due to its prime location along the river and close proximity to Fort Grounds and Pontiac Park, Gateway Park has the potential to become a significant space as you enter downtown Defiance.

Historically, this was the location that the Miami and Erie Canal entered downtown. There are remnants of Canal Guard Lock 39 and the old mule bridge underneath the asphalt.

The Diehl Brewing Company historically sat on the north side of the Maumee River. Christian Diehl moved to Defiance in 1870 after gaining experience as a brewmaster throughout the United States and Germany. Within one year of employment, Diehl acquired enough shares in the company to achieve part ownership and eventually purchased the establishment in 1885.

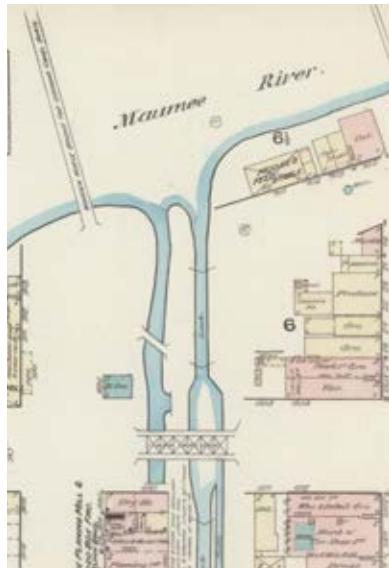
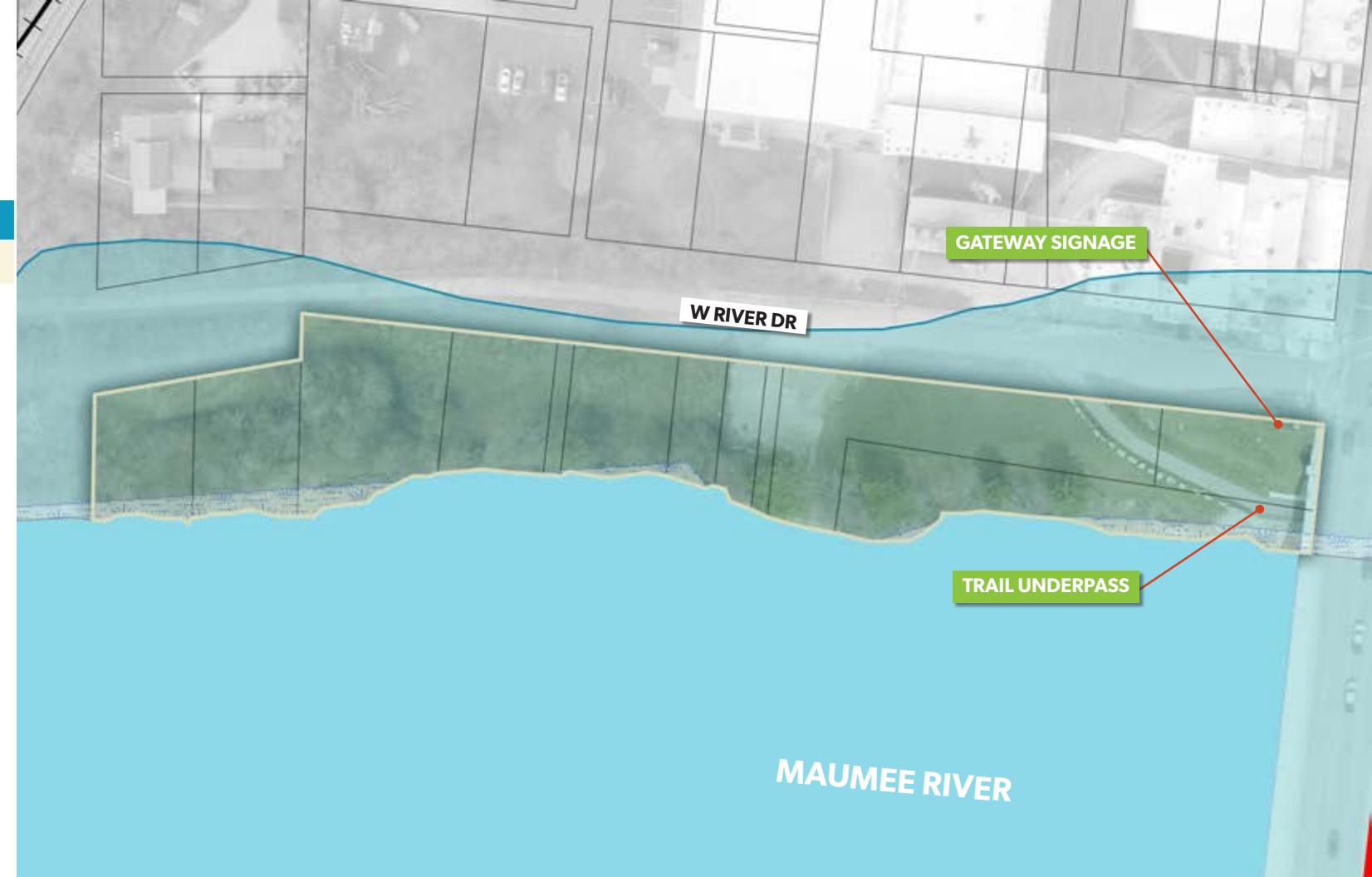
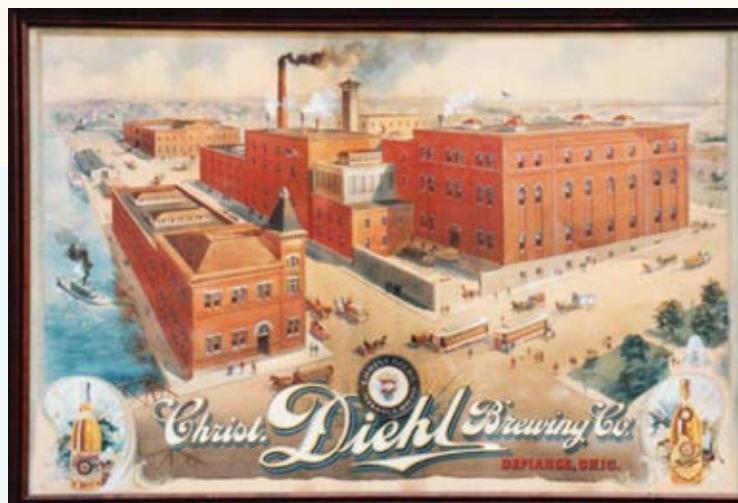
## STRENGTHS

- Has the potential to be a true gateway into downtown
- Accessible by vehicles, sidewalks, and waterways
- Lot has electrical access at 1st and Clinton Streets
- Riverfront access
- Sidewalk connections into downtown

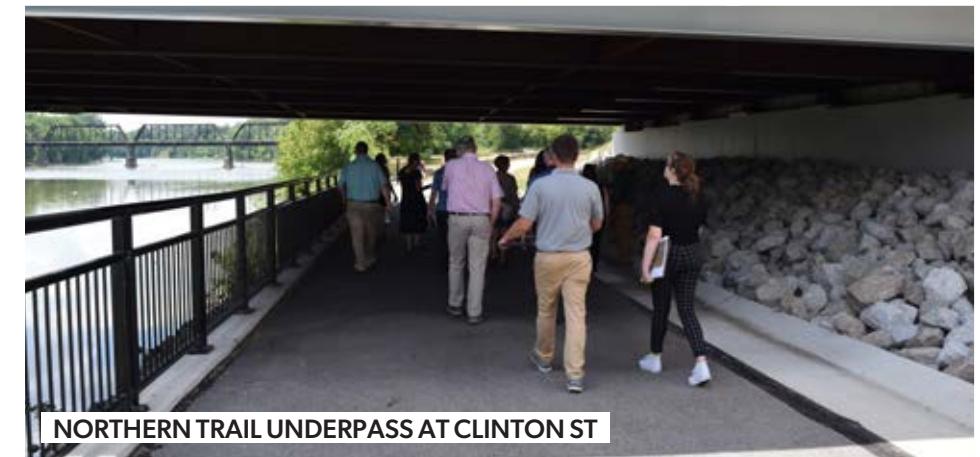
## LIABILITIES

- Potential for flooding events
- Log jam forming at bridge
- Vehicular circulation challenges as Clinton Street is a prominent roadway

## PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



## Inventory Photos: Gateway Park



**"I would like to think of the downtown space near Clinton Street bridge as an area of outdoor concerts / music events with food vendors and boat parking on the river."**



# Natural & Structural Resources: HOLGATE PARK

APPROXIMATELY  
1.1  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive / Active	Moderate	Community & Neighborhood Park	Fair	Limited Accessibility

Holgate Park, located just west of downtown Defiance, is a neighborhood park enjoyed by families of all ages. The park occupies the former site of the Second Ward School, which was demolished in the 1940s. In 1994, the Defiance City Board of Education gave permission to name the plot William C. Holgate Park, in memory of one of Defiance's most prominent early citizens who was instrumental in the establishment of Defiance County.

The park includes a recently renovated basketball court, along with new playground equipment, landscaping, and a shelter house installed in 2019. Fencing for a baseball diamond exists, but the ball field itself needs to be redone.

## STRENGTHS

- Shelter house rentals
- Open space available
- Quality basketball court
- Proximity to neighborhoods with sidewalk connections

## LIABILITIES

- Parking lot needs paved
- Does not have a restroom facility
- Needs additional routes to play structures
- Ball field needs redone
- Gazebo needs renovated
- Need shade structure for playground area
- Playground does not include an accessible safety surfacing

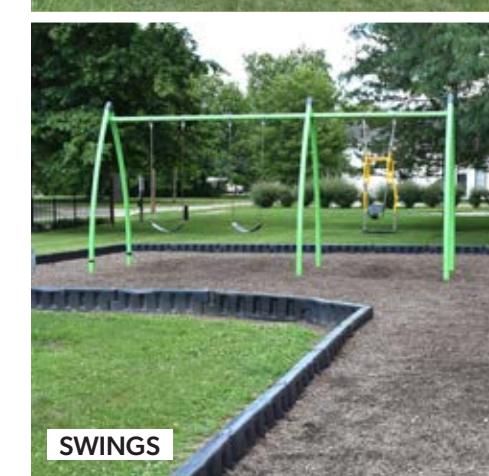
## PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



## Inventory Photos: Holgate Park



"Holgate [Park] is fenced behind the basketball rim, and surrounded by friendly neighbors that makes it feel safe for my kids to go to."



"Holgate Park, is the closest to me. I walk my dog there a few times a week."



# Natural & Structural Resources: HOMETOWN HEROES PARK

APPROXIMATELY  
0.5  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive	Low	Community Park	Good	Mostly Accessible

Established in 2013 as a tribute to local veterans and community heroes, Hometown Heroes Park provides both a place of honor and a recreational space for the community. Designed to celebrate those currently serving our country, the park features identification boards that pay homage to local military personnel. With its serene environment and well-maintained green spaces, it offers a peaceful setting for reflection.



## STRENGTHS

- Conveniently located near downtown
- Close proximity to Triangle Park
- City's primary park honoring active military personnel

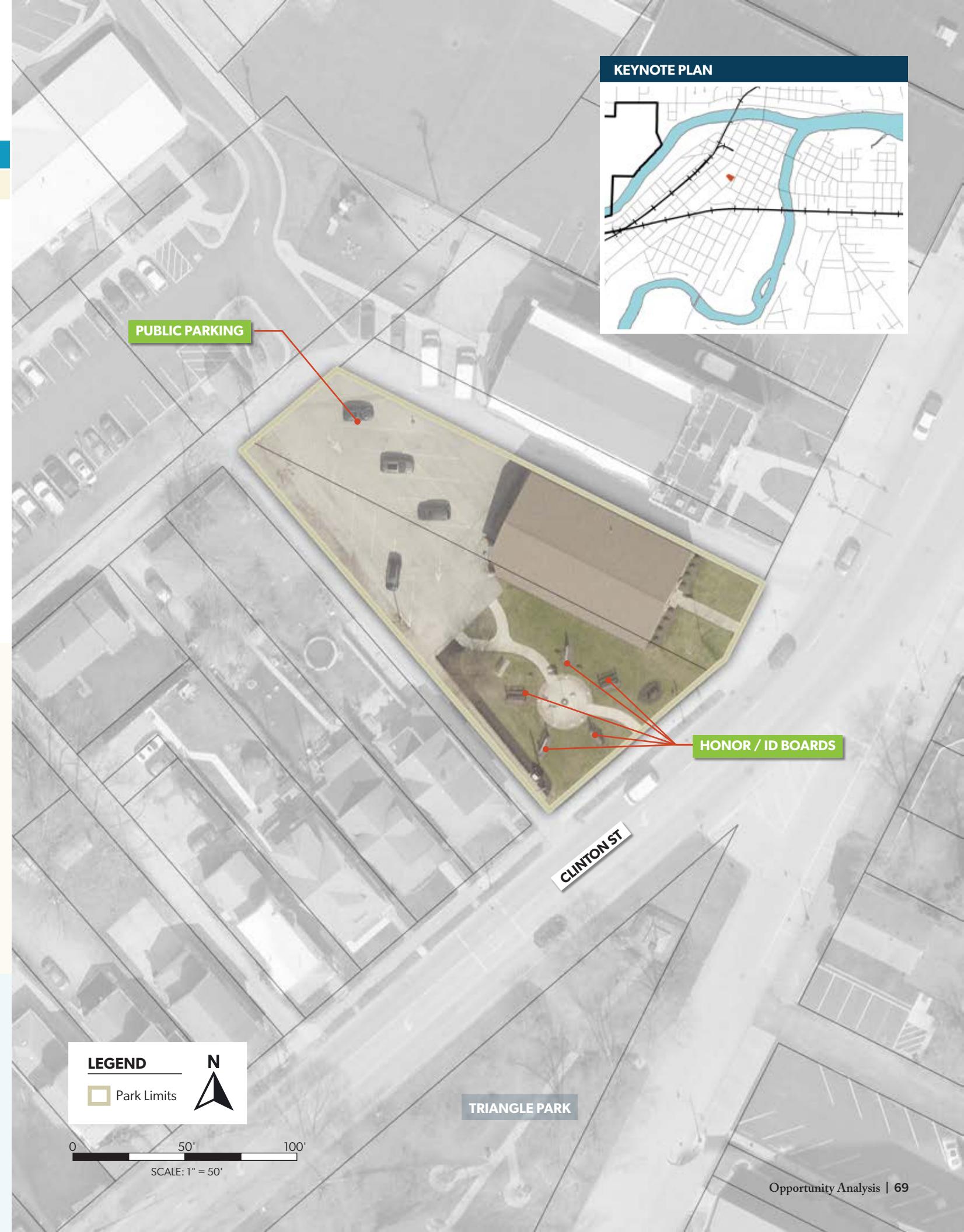
## PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



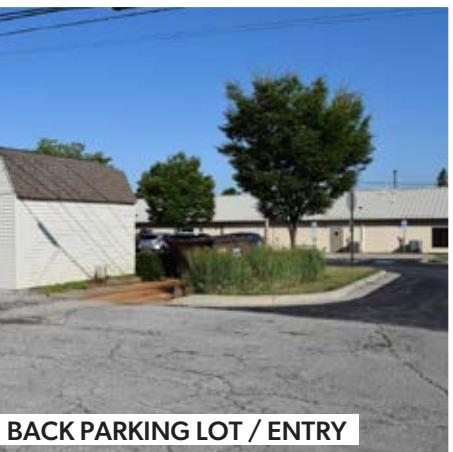
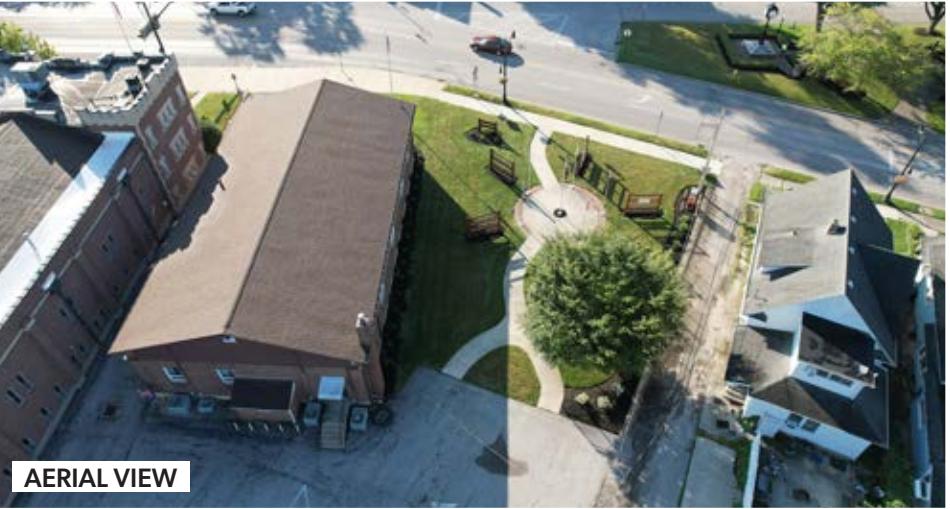
On-Site Parking

## LIABILITIES

- Not all identification boards are illuminated
- No drinking fountain
- Seating is limited and not accessible
- There are no ADA compliant parking spots or accessible paths to benches or identification boards



## Inventory Photos: Hometown Heroes Park



## Natural & Structural Resources:

# KINGSBURY RIVERFRONT PARK, SWIM PARK & PICKLEBALL

APPROXIMATELY  
**17.7**  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive / Active	Moderate	Community Park	Excellent	Mostly Accessible
Centrally located on the east side of the City, along the banks of the Maumee and Auglaize Rivers, this scenic park offers a blend of natural beauty and recreational amenities, making it a popular spot for both passive and active outdoor activities. The land was donated to the City under the condition that it be named after Defiance lawyer B. B. Kingsbury.		court (September 2024), and a playground area. The playground features a play structure for a 5-12 age range, along with swings, rocking equipment, sensory play panels, and more. It also features a swim park with a water slide and wading pool. To help fund recent improvements, an Ohio NatureWorks Grant was secured and paired with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monies, State Capital Appropriations, and donations from the Defiance Area Foundation.		
Situated in a floodplain, the park is a popular spot for residents to fish along the banks of the Auglaize River. The park also features a flood pole, marking the 1913 flood that devastated Ohio and recording significant floods that have occurred since.		The ball field, home to many of the Defiance Baseball Association teams, hosts tournaments throughout the season. Additionally, the park features a variety of events during the summer and fall including "Music in the Park" and the annual "Jazz Fest".		
The park includes a ball field, six remodeled shelter houses, six pickleball courts, a newly renovated basketball				

### STRENGTHS

- Accessible by vehicles, sidewalks, waterways, and pedestrian / bicycle trails
- Has an accessible play equipment
- Shelter house rentals
- Potential for a canoe/kayak activation node
- Electricity and water are available on site
- Existing community favorite park
- Park provides excellent view of confluence
- Home to City's only community swimming pool
- Park frequently hosts large community events

### PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



## Inventory Photos: Kingsbury Riverfront Park, Swim Park & Pickleball



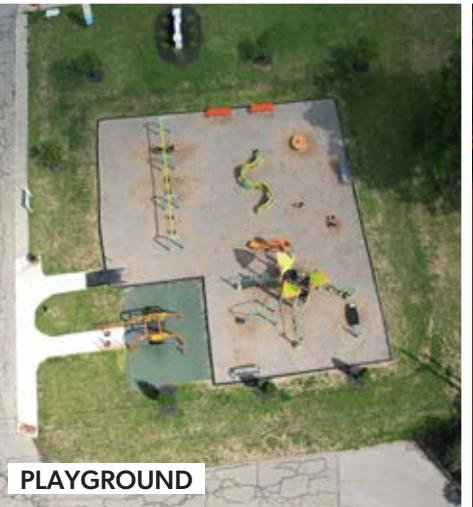
LANDSCAPE ALONG RIVER



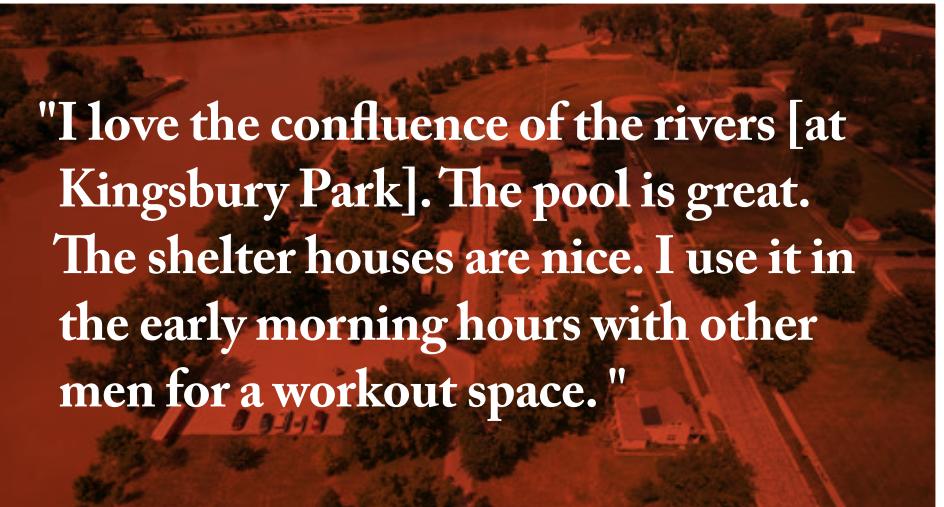
FLOOD POLE OPEN SPACE



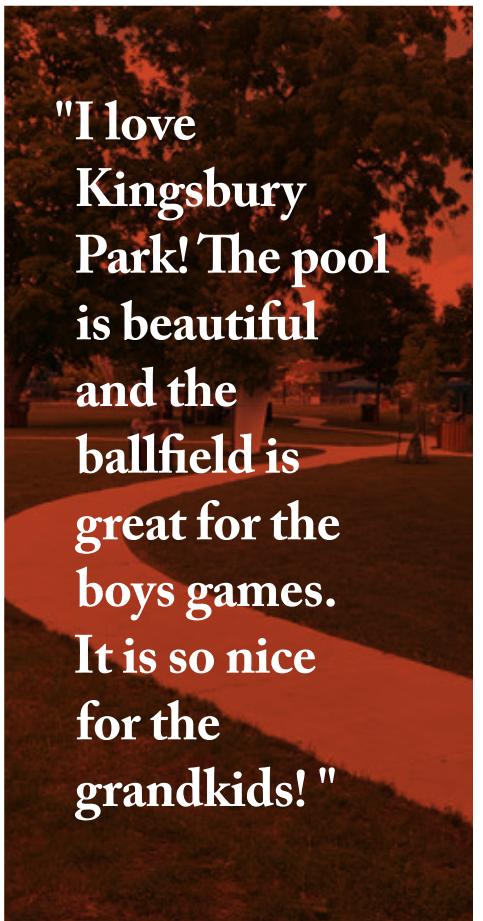
ENTRY SIGN & SIDEWALK



PLAYGROUND



"I love the confluence of the rivers [at Kingsbury Park]. The pool is great. The shelter houses are nice. I use it in the early morning hours with other men for a workout space."



CONCESSION / RESTROOMS



PRESS BOX



SWIM PARK



PICKLEBALL COURTS



SANITATION BUILDING



SOUTHEAST CORNER OF PICKLEBALL COURTS



PLAYGROUND



NORTHEAST PARKING LOT



SHELTER HOUSE



SWIM PARK FACILITY



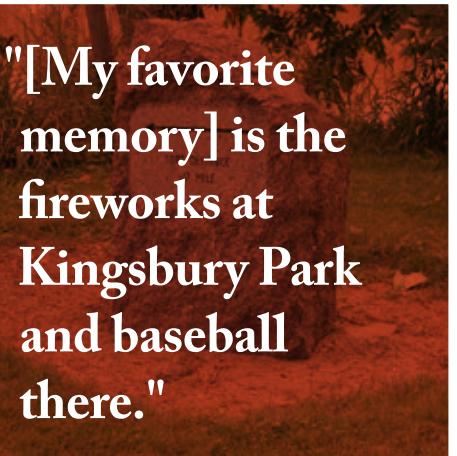
RIVER ACCESS



BASKETBALL COURT



COMMUNICATION BOARD



"[My favorite memory] is the fireworks at Kingsbury Park and baseball there."

# Natural & Structural Resources: KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BASEBALL COMPLEX

APPROXIMATELY  
**7.6**  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive / Active	Moderate	Community Park	Good	Mostly Accessible

Located at the north end of the City, the Knights of Columbus Baseball Complex features two lighted ball fields and four sets of bleachers, along with batting cages and pitching mounds for practice. Sheltered, open air seating is located on either side of a centrally-located concession and restroom facility.

Parking for this facility is provided via a shared parking lot with the adjacent Knights of Columbus building.



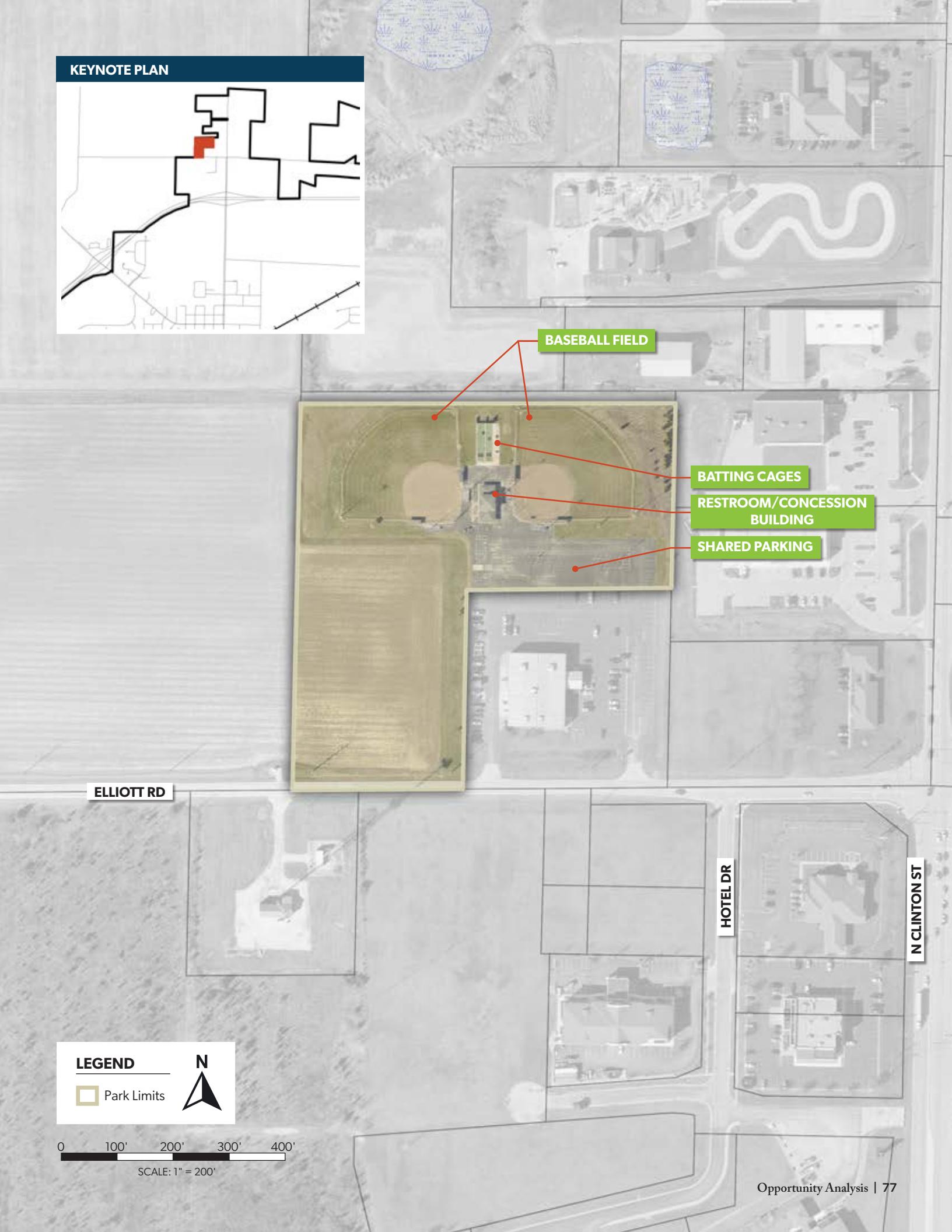
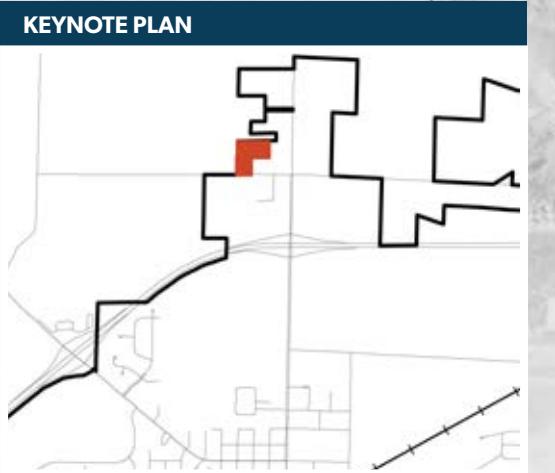
## STRENGTHS

- Fields are illuminated
- Plenty of parking for both fields
- Dedicated league users and volunteers aid with park maintenance

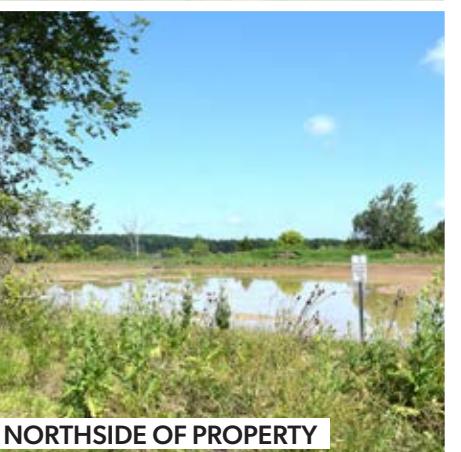
## LIABILITIES

- No drinking fountain
- No shade components
- Designated ADA walkway from parking lot is needed
- Lack of additional family play opportunities
- City does not own the property

## PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



## Inventory Photos: Knights of Columbus Baseball Complex



# Natural & Structural Resources: LIVINGSTON PARK

APPROXIMATELY  
1.8  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive	Low	Community Park	Fair	Not Accessible

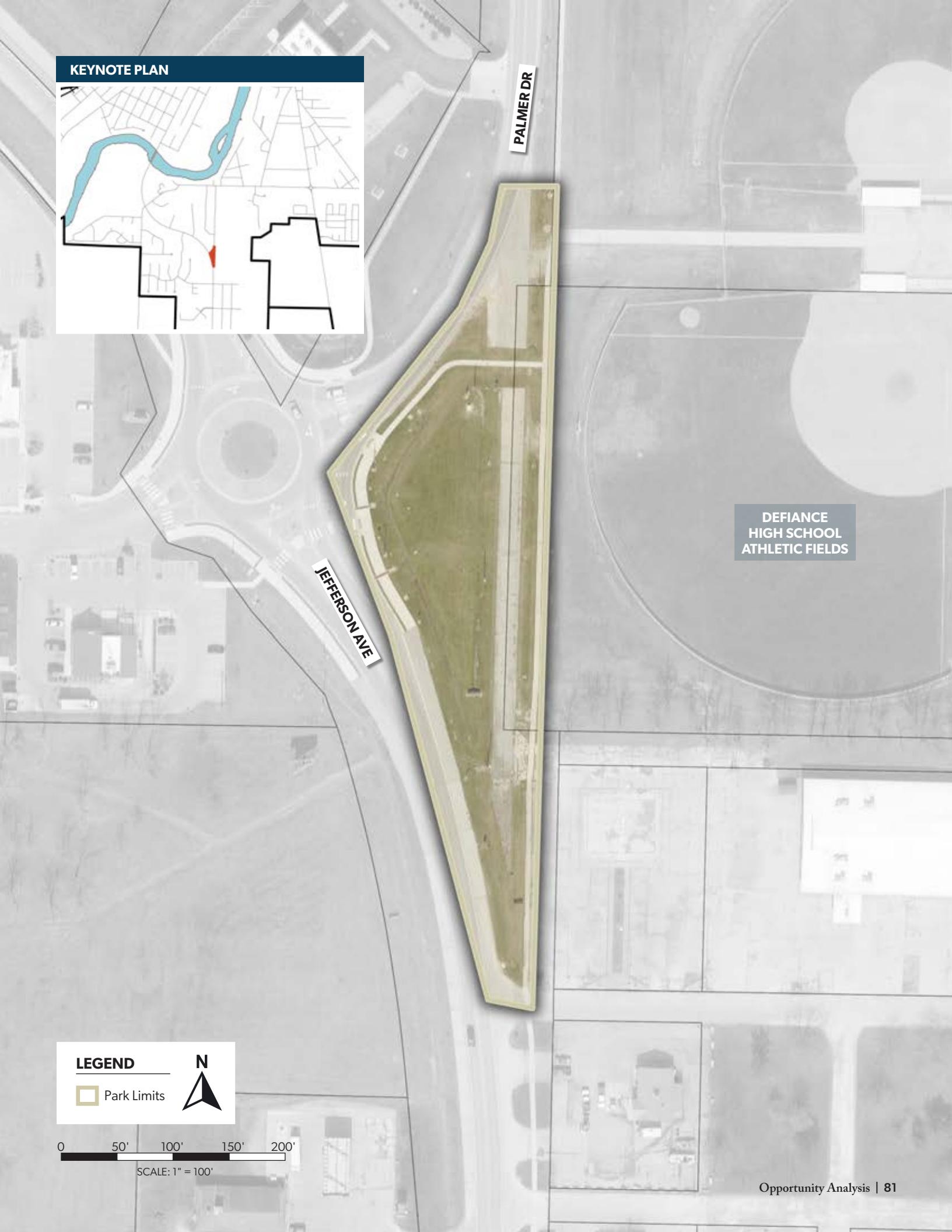


## STRENGTHS

- Potential for natural stormwater management and gateway plantings
- Potential for utilizing adjacent vacant or inactive parcels for partnerships or shared parking opportunities
- Proximity to Defiance High School and the YMCA

## LIABILITIES

- Sidewalks are needed
- Signage is needed for identification
- Existing drive is in rough shape



# Natural & Structural Resources: MEMORY PARK

APPROXIMATELY  
**0.3**  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive	Low	Community Park	Good	Not Accessible

Memory Park is located in downtown Defiance, just west of the Auglaize River, at the corner of 5th Street and Jefferson Avenue. With mature trees and clear signage, the park offers a serene, green space. Positioned next to the funeral home, it is designed to provide a peaceful, reflective environment for those mourning the loss of loved ones.



## STRENGTHS

- Opportunities to incorporate seating and pathways
- Conveniently located near downtown
- Proximity of accessible walkways leading to downtown, neighborhoods, and adjacent funeral home

## PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



## LIABILITIES

- Lighting is needed
- Parking is limited
- No walkways into the interior of the park
- No seating opportunities



# Natural & Structural Resources: PALMER PARK

APPROXIMATELY  
**2.0**  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Active	Moderate	Community Park	Good	Mostly Accessible



Palmer Park is located just west of the Fred J. Brown Stadium, adjacent to Defiance High School. It features five tennis courts with two sets of bleachers, and a playground. This facility is often used for high school tennis activities.

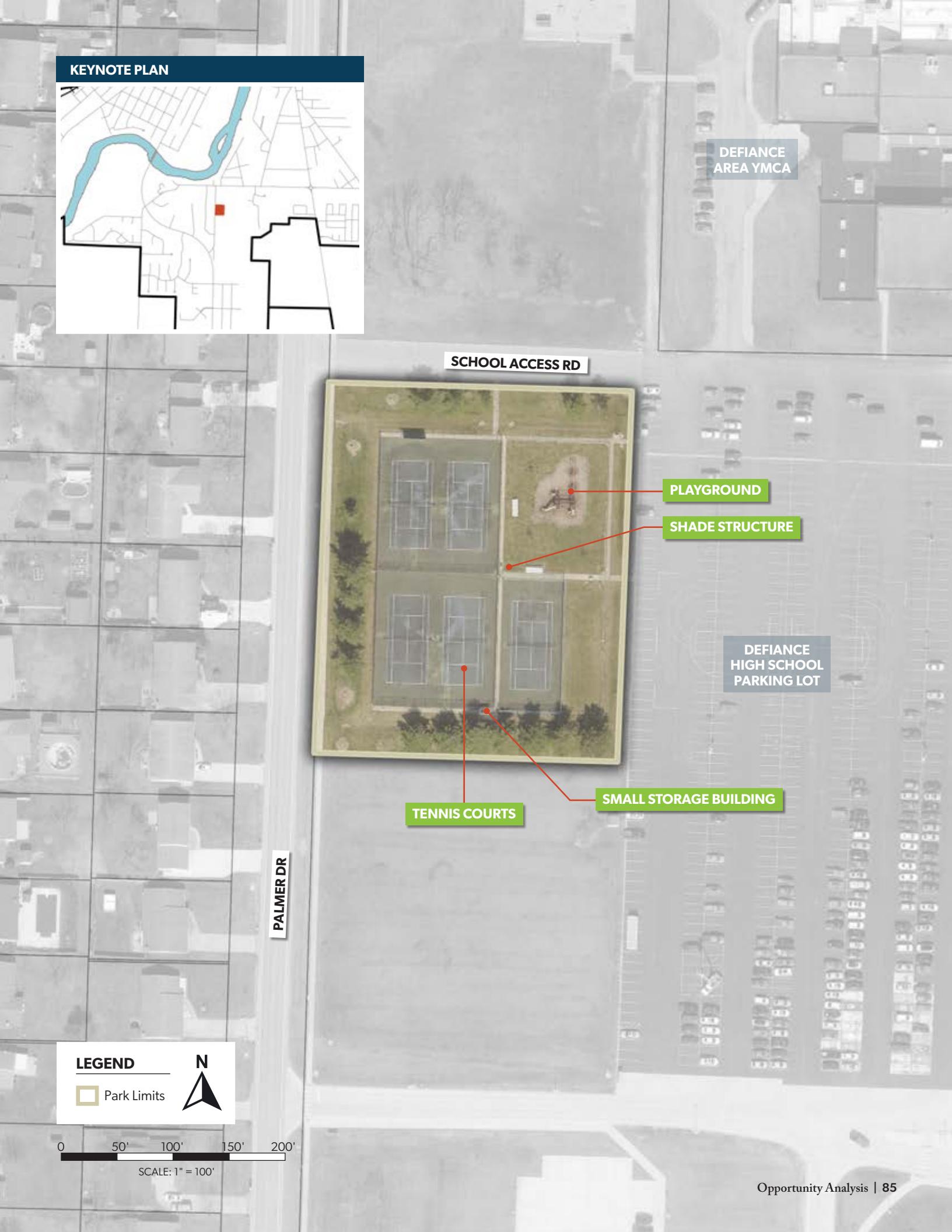
## STRENGTHS

- Close proximity to Defiance High School and the YMCA
- Accessible pathway around the tennis courts

## LIABILITIES

- Shade components are needed
- Benches are needed along tennis courts and within playground area
- Lighting is needed for tennis courts
- ADA compliant parking spaces are needed
- No accessible pathway to playground or connections to neighborhoods
- City does not own the property

## PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



## Inventory Photos: Palmer Park



AERIAL VIEW



STORAGE SHED



TENNIS COURTS



SHADE SCREEN



AERIAL VIEW



ENTRANCE TO TENNIS COURTS



PLAYGROUND



AERIAL VIEW



DRINKING FOUNTAIN



TIRE SWING



WALKWAY FROM PARKING LOT



AERIAL VIEW

# Natural & Structural Resources: PONTIAC METRO PARK

APPROXIMATELY  
8.0  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive	Moderate	Community Park	Good	Mostly Accessible

Positioned north of downtown along the Maumee River, this County-owned park is named after Ottawa Indian Chief Pontiac – who is believed to have been born at this location in 1712.

Between the years of 1811 and 1828, Johnny Appleseed established a nursery on the north side of the Maumee River, what is now Pontiac Metro Park. During this time, Defiance served as his primary residence.

Pontiac Metro Park provides downtown river access, with a boat launch and ample parking. Scenic views of the confluence, along with river-oriented seating and updated landscaping provide a peaceful environment that is perfect for relaxing.

Pontiac Park features a meandering walkway (which is also part of Ohio's Buckeye Trail), the Zonta Fountain, three swing benches, a large gazebo, and ten picnic tables. It is also home to the Old French Indian Apple

Tree marker, a historic marker for the Bark Cabin Home of Cooh-coo-chee, the "Healing Hearts" memorial bench, and a monument for local Sam Hornish, Jr. who won the Indianapolis 500 in 2006.

Residents meet at Pontiac Park for the City's annual fireworks display and Christmas light display, along with car shows, boat shows, war re-enactments, and special events such as weddings. It is also an area that is heavily fished, and many area professionals eat lunch at the park throughout the week.

Located in a floodplain, the park is host to a flood pole which marks the 1913 flood that devastated Ohio. It also marks significant floods that have occurred since.

Pontiac Metro Park is owned by Metro Parks, but it lies within the City boundaries and is commonly maintained by City parks staff.

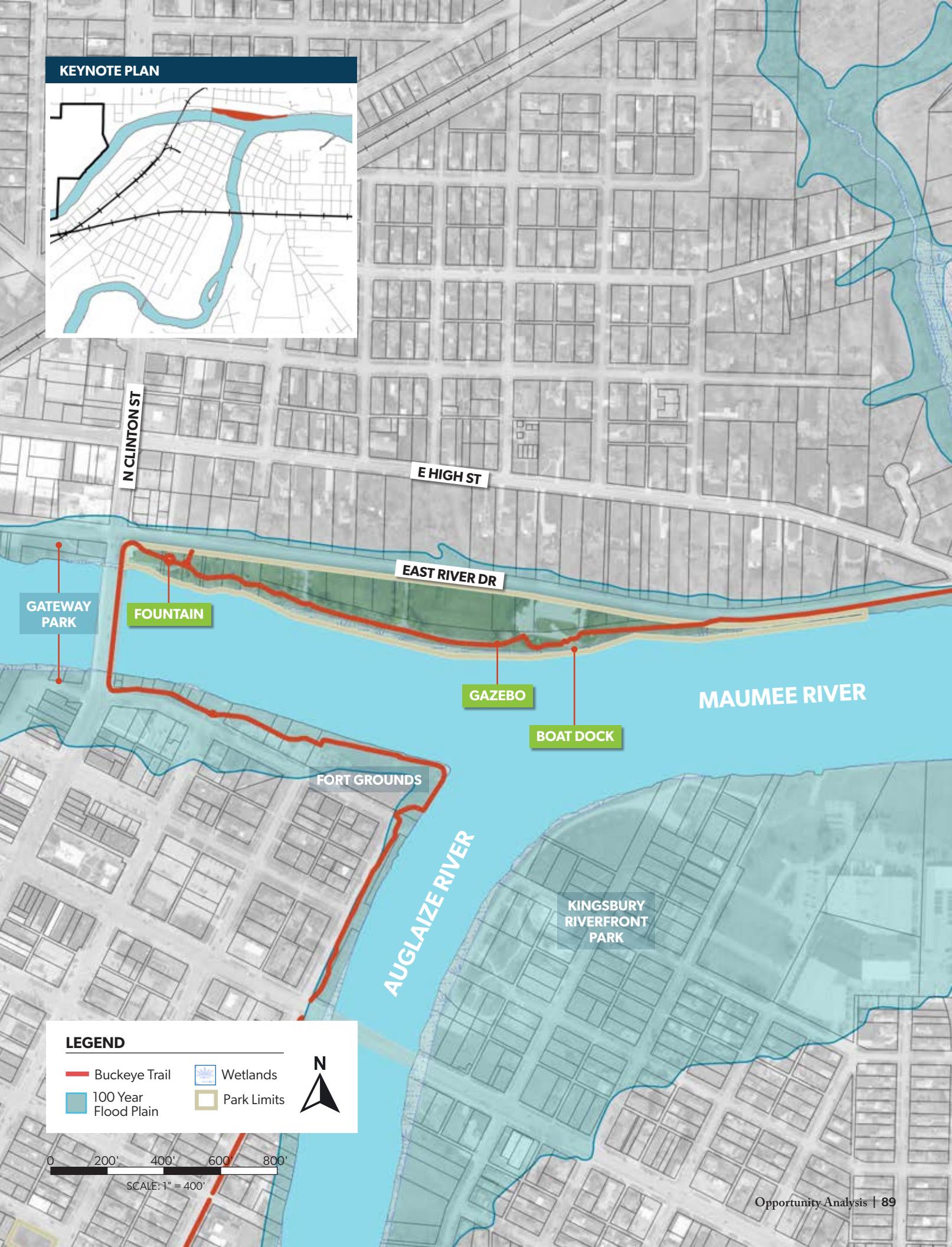
## STRENGTHS

- Accessible by vehicles, sidewalks, waterways, and pedestrian / bicycle trails
- Ample parking
- New bollard lighting
- Gazebo rentals
- Part of Ohio's Buckeye Trail and the North Country Trail
- Park frequently hosts larger community events
- Park is a collaboration with Metro Parks

## LIABILITIES

- Potential for flooding events
- Historical markers have an inconsistent look
- Boat dock needs improvements
- Riverside roadway needs improvements
- Park includes multiple CSO outfalls
- Riverside roadway is located in close proximity to the riverbank, making it vulnerable to erosion

## PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



## Inventory Photos: Pontiac Metro Park



BOAT DOCK / RIVER ACCESS



MILE MARKER



SIGNAGE

"For 30 years we have enjoyed the improvements and upkeep at the park. Fireworks ... walking through the park with my dog or grandchildren, watching the river during all of the seasons, seeing the bridge replacement, and reading the history of the area are what I enjoy about the park."



FLOOD POLE

"I love the vicinity to the river, the ease of getting in and out, the landscaping, and available seating."



GAZEBO



WALKWAY



AERIAL VIEW



HEALING HEARTS



HISTORICAL SIGNAGE



AERIAL VIEW



SWING BENCHES



AERIAL VIEW



WALKWAY



SIGNAGE AT FOUNTAIN

"I can park my car and enjoy the view while I read, study, meditate, and pray."

# Natural & Structural Resources: RESERVOIR RECREATIONAL AREA

APPROXIMATELY  
**186**  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive / Active	Moderate	Community Park	Good	Mostly Accessible

Reservoir Recreational Area is located southwest of Defiance, just outside City limits. It features an area for fishing and boating, disc golf, and nature trails. Residents also visit the park in winter months for sledding.

Holding approximately 350-million-gallons of water, the reservoir was built in 2008 to function as a pre-treatment basin. In the past, serving as the sole water supply for the City of Defiance, water from the Maumee River was pumped directly to the treatment plant. However, nutrient levels in the river fluctuate dramatically and can cause treatment challenges. The creation of the reservoir ensured the availability of more consistent water for the City's treatment plant when the Maumee River's water quality falls below optimal levels.

Approximately 1.25 miles of trail runs along the perimeter of the reservoir's upper bank, offering unobstructed views. Benches are spaced along the stone walkway,

with handicapped parking conveniently located near the boat ramp. Additionally, an 8-foot-wide nature trail, which transitions into a boardwalk, extends from the parking lot through approximately 2,500 feet of natural wooded area before connecting to the 'lower' pathway around the reservoir. These trails incorporate a section of the historic Miami and Erie Canal along Canal Road and link to Ohio's Buckeye Trail.

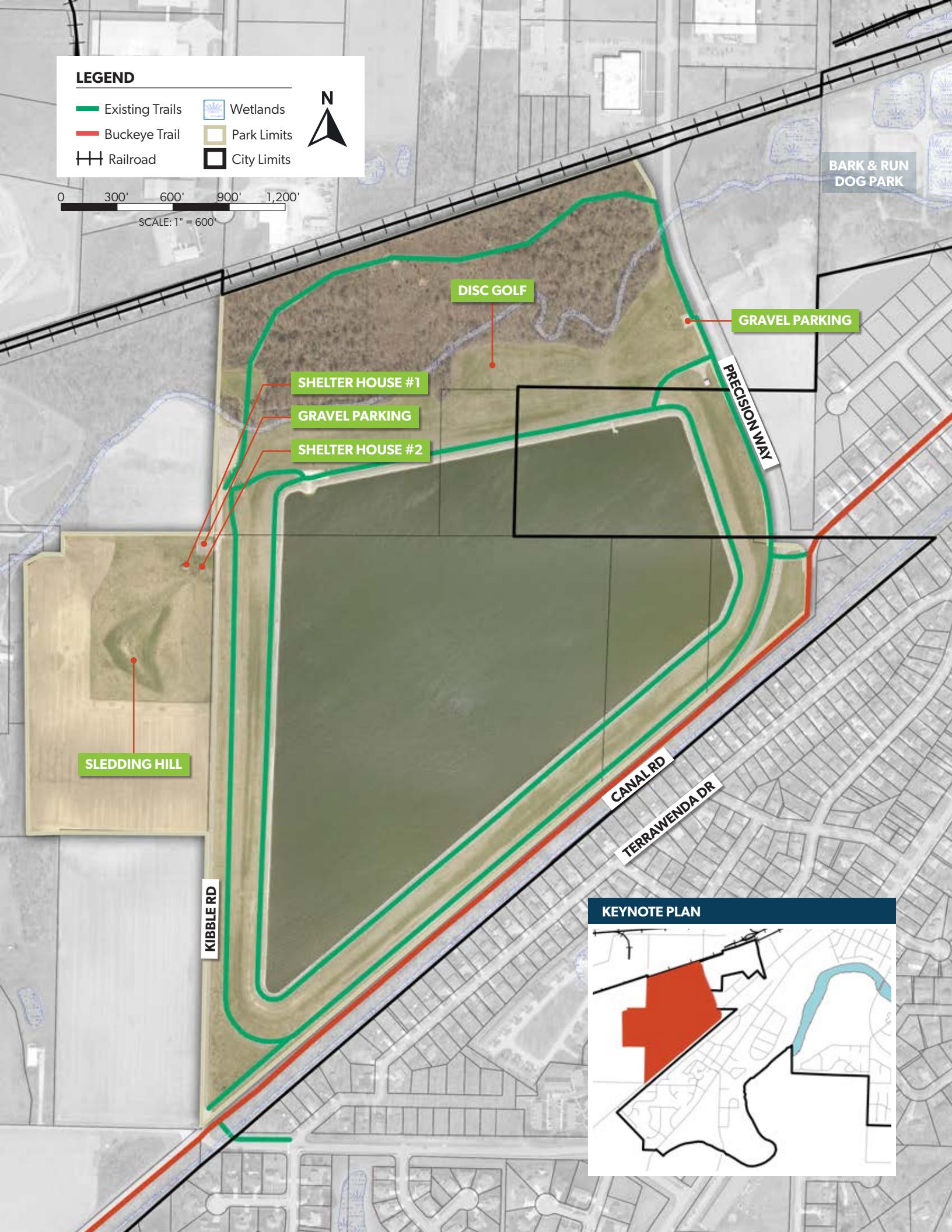
The ODNR stocks the reservoir with a variety of fish including bluegill, channel catfish, largemouth bass, saugeye, walleye, and yellow perch. A boat ramp provides access to the water for fishing, but gasoline motors are not permitted.

Additionally, this site also includes Wertz Park, located southwest of the Reservoir. The park includes three small pavilions, a gravel parking lot, and a sledding mound, all equipped with some security lighting.

## STRENGTHS

- Accessible by vehicles, sidewalks, and pedestrian / bicycle trails
- Part of Ohio's Buckeye Trail and the North Country Trail
- Park is heavily frequented by the community's trail users
- Contains the City's largest boardwalk with interpretive components included throughout
- Adjacent to Bark & Run Dog Park
- Park contains one of the few winter-specific amenities within the City's parks system

## PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



## Inventory Photos: Reservoir Recreational Area



DISC GOLF



ENTRY TO BOARDWALK



AERIAL VIEW

"[My favorite park is the] Reservoir Recreational Area because our whole family can walk the boardwalk, including my husband who uses a wheelchair and scooter."



EDUCATIONAL SIGN



RESERVOIR OVERLOOK



SEATING AREA



BENCH



TRASH RECEPICAL



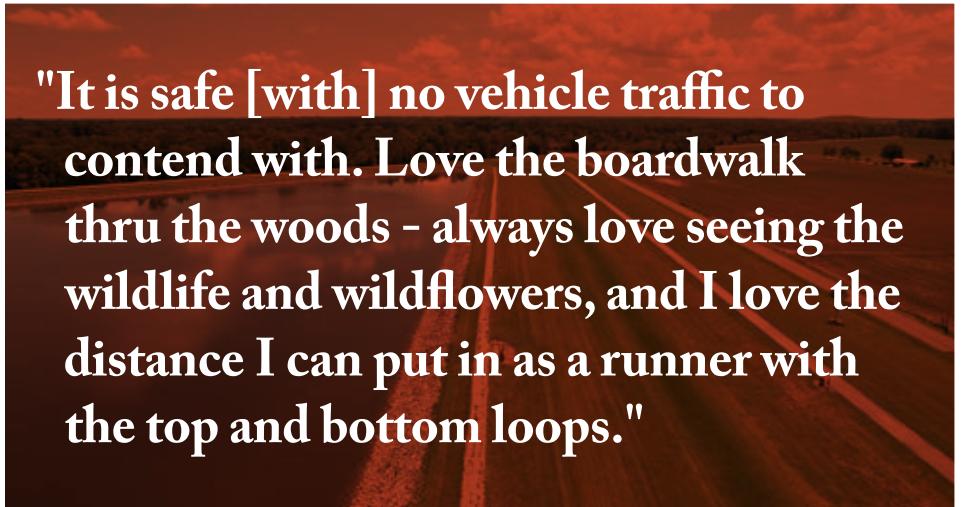
AERIAL VIEW



EDUCATIONAL SIGNAGE



BOARDWALK FOUNDATION



"It is safe [with] no vehicle traffic to contend with. Love the boardwalk thru the woods - always love seeing the wildlife and wildflowers, and I love the distance I can put in as a runner with the top and bottom loops."



OPEN AREA



GRAVEL PARKING LOT



AERIAL VIEW



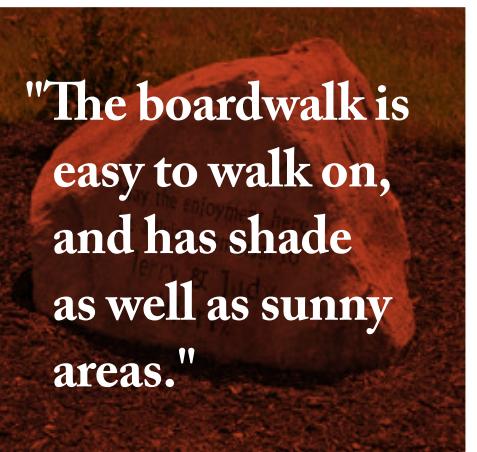
SHELTER HOUSE



SLEDDING HILL



AERIAL VIEW



"The boardwalk is easy to walk on, and has shade as well as sunny areas."

# Natural & Structural Resources: RIVERSIDE PARK

APPROXIMATELY  
**35.5**  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive / Active	Moderate	Community Park	Good	Limited Accessibility

Situated on the west banks of the Auglaize River, just south of downtown, Riverside Park offers five soccer fields, including three tot fields and two full-size fields—one of which doubles as a football field with goal posts. The park also includes a ball field, shelter house, playground equipment, and a recently updated restroom facility.

The park is utilized by Defiance soccer leagues and groups from the local YMCA.



## STRENGTHS

- Shelter house rentals
- Handicap parking spaces are available
- Electricity and water are available on site
- Natural woodlands
- Adjacent to river
- Potential for riverfront access
- Presence of wildlife

## LIABILITIES

- Does not have ADA accessible routes from the parking lot to key site amenities
- Ball field needs updated
- Need playground shade components
- Potential for flooding events
- Most users don't realize this park is located on the river

## PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



## Inventory Photos: Riverside Park



AERIAL VIEW



FOOTBALL FIELD



SOCCER SIGNAGE



WOODLAND TRAIL



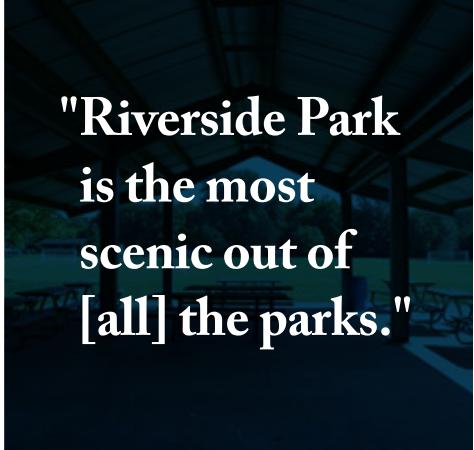
PARKING LOT



PARK SIGN



SPORTS FIELDS



"Riverside Park  
is the most  
scenic out of  
[all] the parks."



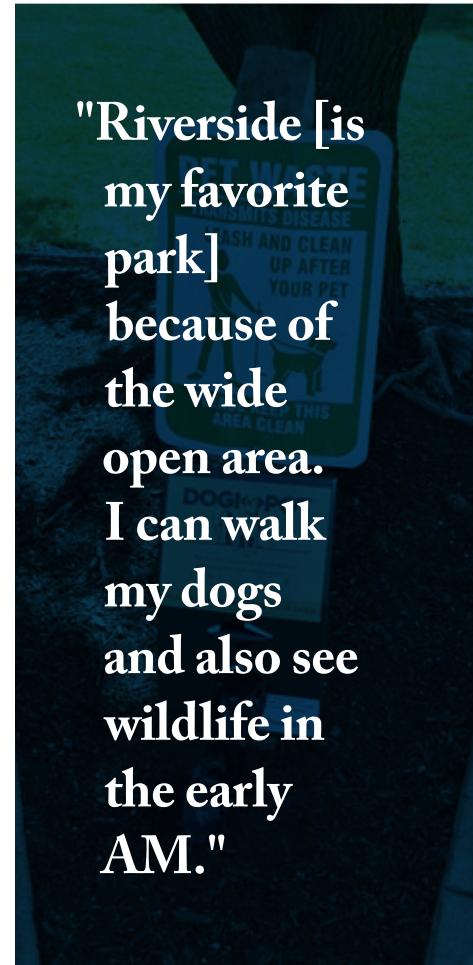
SHELTER HOUSE



PLAYGROUND



PLAYGROUND SEATING



"Riverside [is my favorite park]  
because of the wide open area.  
I can walk my dogs and also see  
wildlife in the early AM."



WOODLAND TRAIL



PLAYGROUND LIGHTING



RESTROOM



SOCCER FIELDS

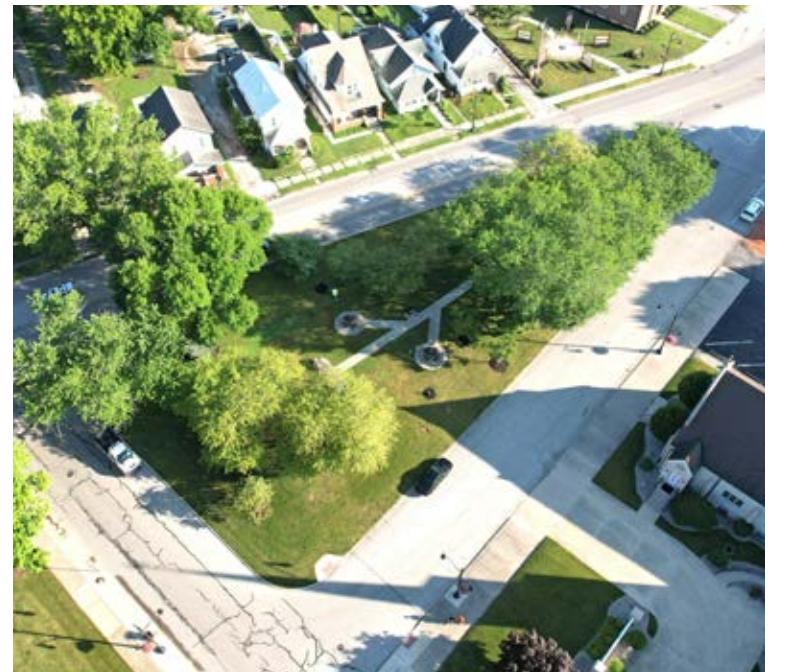


RESTROOMS

# Natural & Structural Resources: TRIANGLE PARK

APPROXIMATELY  
**0.4**  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive / Active	Moderate	Community Park	Good	Mostly Accessible



Triangle Park, originally part of Defiance City Schools property donated by the Latty and Holgate families in the 1860s, has long been a downtown focal point and popular gathering spot. Formerly known as Monumental Park, it has historically served as a central gathering space for Defiance residents. The park once housed WWII cannons (now located at Fort Defiance) and the Grand Army of the Republic statue (now located in Riverside Cemetery).

In 2014, a community effort led by Historic Homes of Defiance resulted in the addition of a town clock, and in 2015, an air pump for bicyclists was installed by Historic Homes of Defiance and the Defiance Development and Visitor's Bureau.

Today, Triangle Park hosts concerts and "Music in the Park" events, picnics, and serves as a popular meetup for cyclists. It also hosts Santa's House during the Christmas season where the community can visit with Santa.

## STRENGTHS

- Conveniently located near downtown
- Accessible by vehicles, sidewalks, and pedestrian / bicycle trails
- Area is well-lit
- Located adjacent to Hometown Heroes Park
- Contains a dynamic viewshed of the downtown streetscape looking northward

## PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES

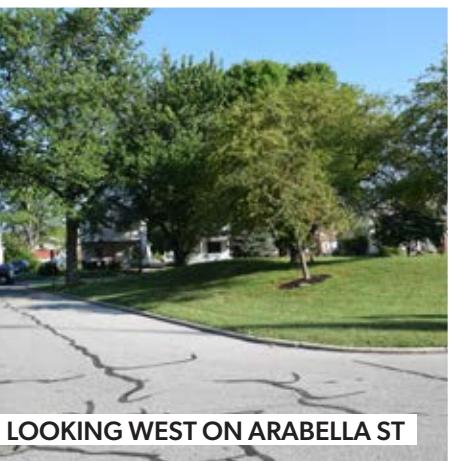
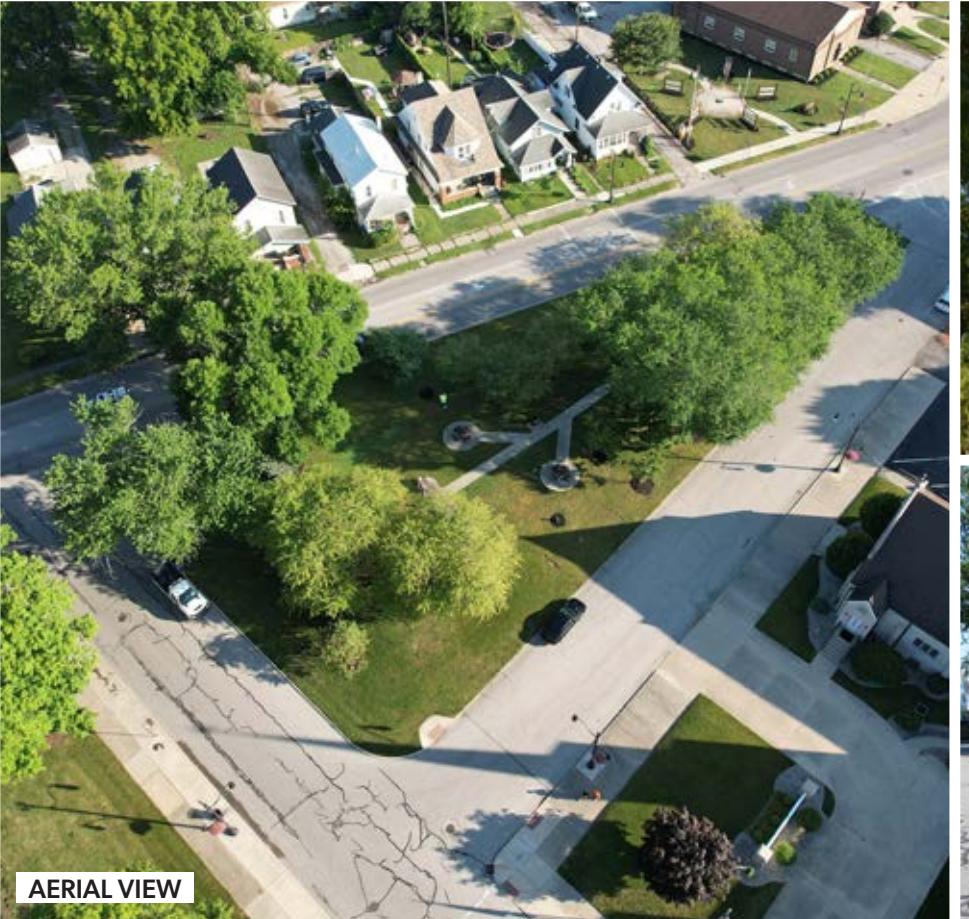


## LIABILITIES

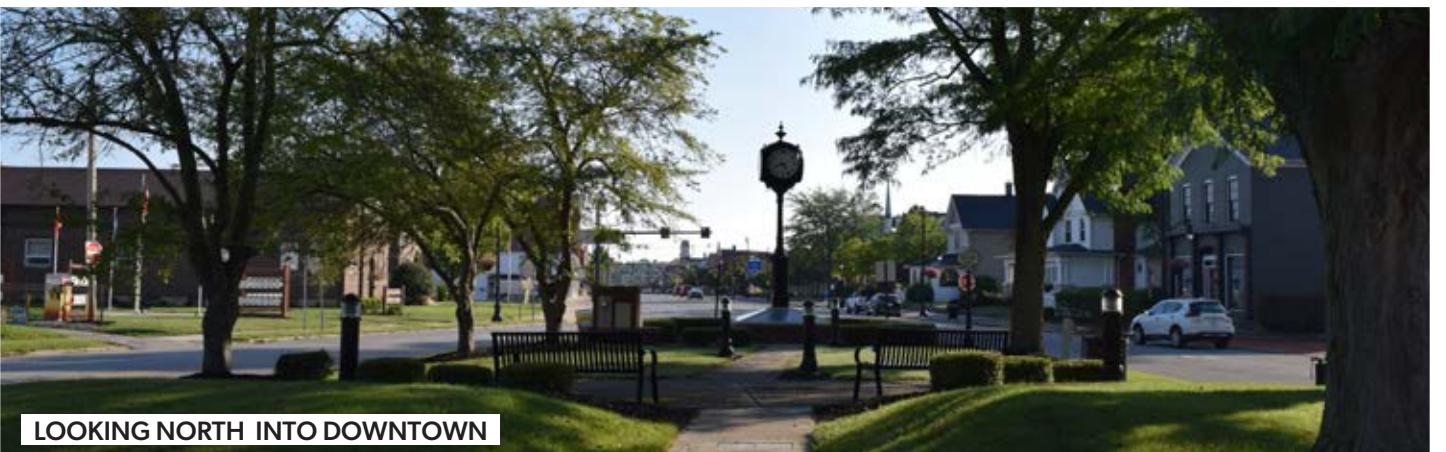
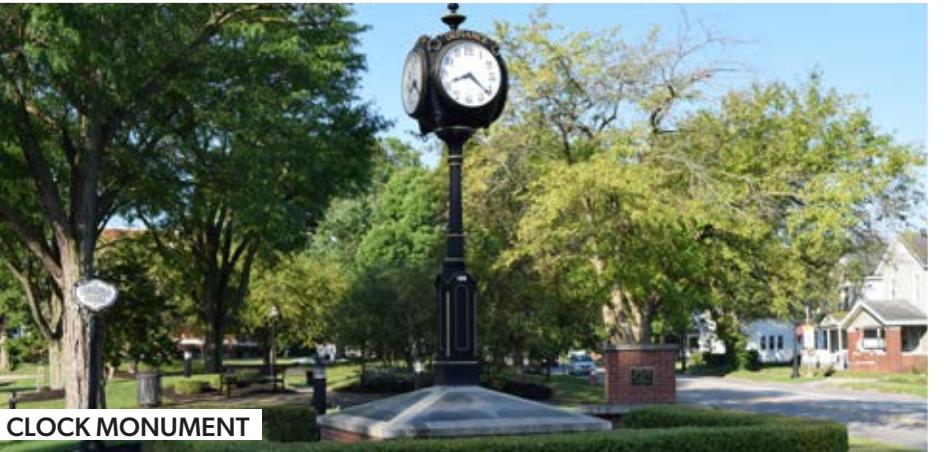
- Exposed aggregate walkway with cracking
- Slopes greatly exceed ADA maximums
- Safer pedestrian crossings are needed between Triangle Park and Hometown Heroes Park
- Lack of parking opportunities adjacent to the park
- Lacking accessible connections and walkways to adjacent neighborhoods



## Inventory Photos: Triangle Park



"I like the walkability to Downtown and the charm with the benches and trees."



"Triangle Park represents the culture and appreciation of our downtown. [It's] also a great place for a small venue. The clock is awesome."



"Triangle Park is the heart of Defiance."

## Natural & Structural Resources:

# VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK

APPROXIMATELY  
**5.1**  
ACRES

USE	USAGE LEVEL	CATEGORY	PARK CONDITION	ADA EVALUATION
Passive / Active	Moderate	Community Park	Fair	Limited Accessibility

Formerly known as "Veteran's Memorial Park at Latty's Grove," the park was established in 1947 and is situated on the south side of downtown Defiance. It was dedicated as a "living memorial," serving as a call for a strong national defense to uphold the ideals for which soldiers of all wars have fought and sacrificed.

A memorial grove of trees was dedicated after WWII to honor the 148th Regiment, a famed unit of the 37th Infantry Division that spearheaded Pacific campaigns under the command of a Defiance leader. Throughout Defiance's history, soldiers have frequented this land, from Native American councils to the War of 1812. Organized by Mayor Bronson, the park serves to honor all of Defiance's heroes.

Today, the park features two shelter houses, a playground (for ages 5 to 12), and public restrooms, along with a ball

### STRENGTHS

- Handicap parking spaces are available
- Tennis courts and shelter houses are illuminated
- Shelter house rentals
- Accessible route to restroom facility
- Located directly within neighborhoods
- On-street parking is available along nearly the entire southern edge of the park

### PARK AMENITIES/FACILITIES



### LIABILITIES

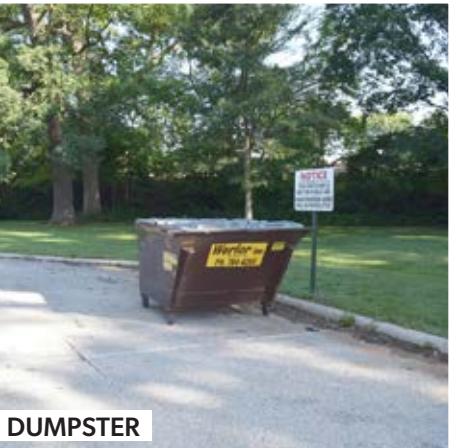
- All sports facilities need renovated
- Shelter houses need improvements
- Playground needs shade components
- Aged equipment with no accessible routes to access playground
- No accessible routes or walkways are provided to the adjacent neighborhoods
- Noise from trains



## Inventory Photos: Veteran's Memorial Park



"Veterans Memorial is my favorite because I have been going to that park since I was young. I have had many family birthdays, anniversaries, and lots of picnics there. Now I am older and take my grandkids there...they call it the choo choo train park."



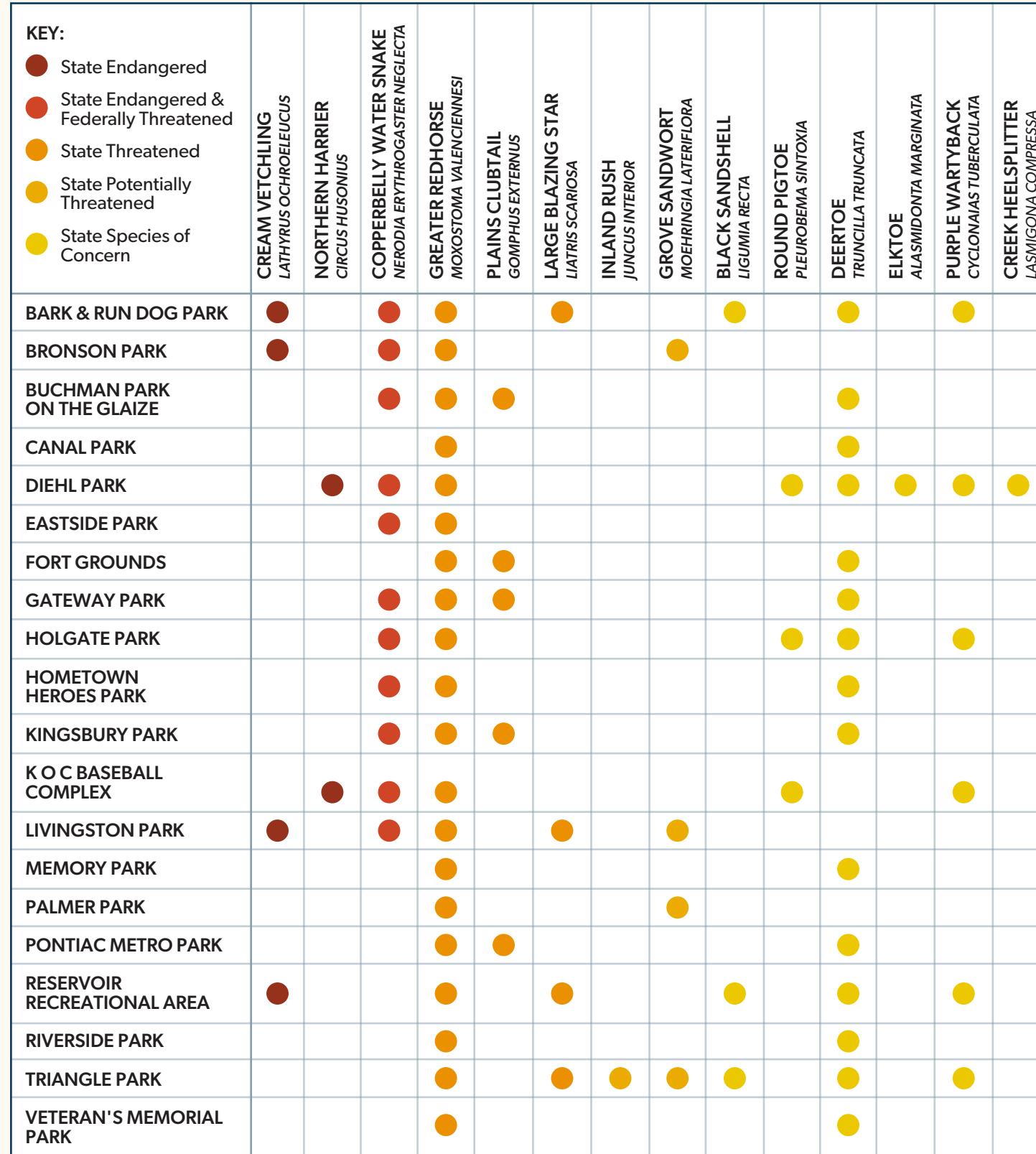
"It has plenty of parking, huge shady trees, and I like to watch the trains go by."



# SPECIES OF INTEREST

The ODNR highlighted several species that range from federally endangered to state species of concern. The table below and the map to the right show where specific species have been found in the past.

**FIGURE 19:** Species of Interest in Defiance Parks. The chart identifies the areas within the scope of work that endangered or special interest species have been identified by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).



**NOTE:** The ODNR provided GIS data for a limited amount of the species of interest (documented on the map below). Refer to the chart on the left for a full list of species documented within one mile of the project scope.

Species identified on the map include:

- Grove Sandwort
- Large Blazing Star
- Elktoe
- Plains Clubtail
- Cream Vetchling
- Purple Wartyback
- Black Sandshell
- Inland Rush
- Deertoe
- Round Pigtoe
- Creek Heelsplitter

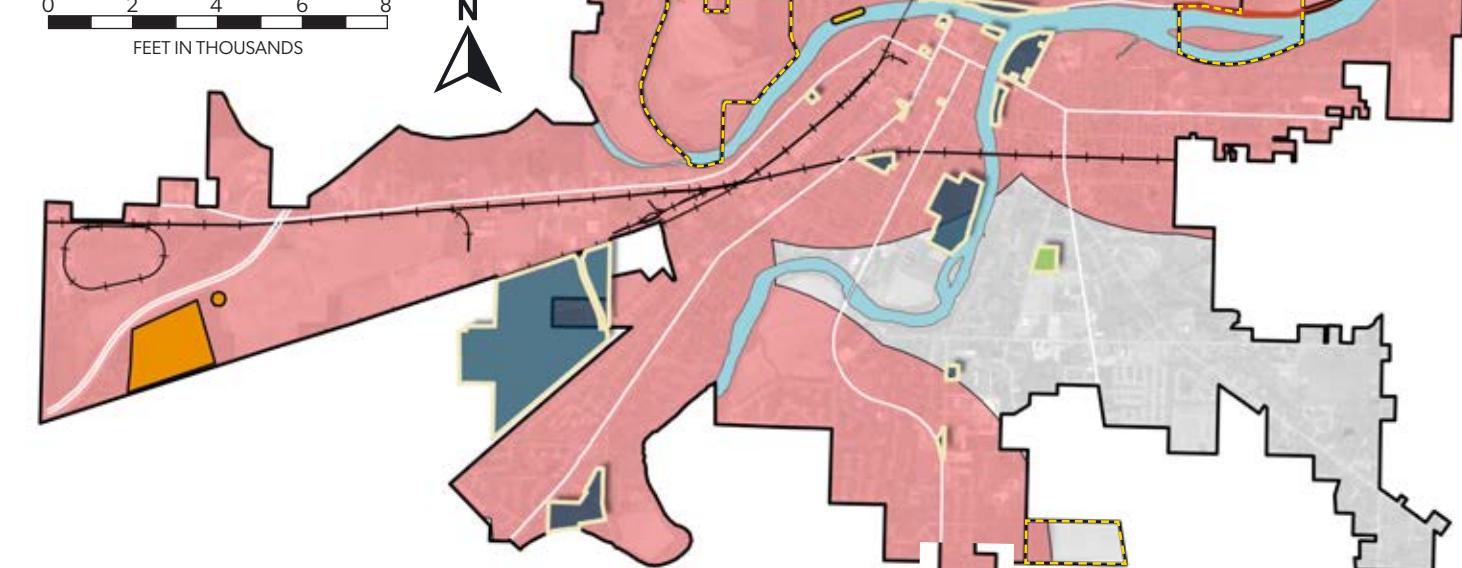
## LEGEND

- State Threatened
- State Potentially Threatened
- State Species of Concern
- 1-Mile Buffer of all Identified Zones
- City Parks within 1-Mile Buffer
- City Parks Outside of 1-Mile Buffer
- Rivers
- Railroad
- City Limits
- Located Outside Municipal Jurisdiction

**FIGURE 20:** Species of Interest Map

This map identifies the areas within the scope of work that endangered or special interest species have been identified by the ODNR.

0 2 4 6 8  
FEET IN THOUSANDS



## Entire study area has the potential of critical habitat for:

- Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*) - State and Federally Endangered Species
- Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) - State Endangered Species
- Tricolored Bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) - State Endangered Species
- Clubshell (*Pleurobema clava*) - Federally Endangered Species
- Northern Long-Eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) - State and Federally Endangered Species
- Rayed Bean (*Villosa fabalis*) - Federally Endangered Species
- Northern Riffleshell (*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*) - Federally Endangered Species
- White Catspaw (*Epioblasma obliquata perobliqua*) - Federally Endangered Species
- Rabbitsfoot (*Quadrula cylindrica cylindrica*) - Federally Threatened Species

Special care should be taken to ensure that development does not impact habitat for the above species. Further research may be required for each project to determine if improvements interrupt ecological functions.

# RIVER RESOURCES

The Maumee, Auglaize, and Tiffin Rivers converge in and around the City of Defiance, creating a network of waterways that have been central to the region's development. These rivers not only provide critical ecological habitats and support local biodiversity but also offer numerous recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

## Maumee River

The Maumee River, flowing through the heart of Defiance, Ohio, is a vital waterway that plays a significant role in the region's geography, history, and ecology. Originating from the confluence of the St. Joseph and St. Marys rivers in Fort Wayne, Indiana, the Maumee River traverses approximately 137 miles northeast before emptying into Lake Erie at Toledo. In Defiance, the river is further enhanced by the confluence with the Auglaize River, marking a key juncture in its journey. The Maumee River's expansive watershed, the largest in the Great Lakes system, spans over 6,300 square miles across Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan, making it a critical component of the hydrology in the western Lake Erie basin.

Historically, the Maumee River has been a crucial artery for transportation, trade, and military strategy. The river was a lifeline for Native American tribes and early European settlers, serving as a key route for movement and commerce. The establishment of Fort Defiance at the confluence of the Maumee and Auglaize rivers in 1794 by General Anthony Wayne underscores the river's strategic importance during the Northwest Indian War and the War of 1812. The river's name, derived from the Miami tribe, reflects its deep cultural and historical roots in the region.

Ecologically, the Maumee River is a haven for biodiversity, supporting a wide range of aquatic and terrestrial species. Its waters are home to fish like walleye, smallmouth bass, and catfish, making it a popular destination for anglers. The river's floodplains and wetlands provide crucial habitats for migratory birds, amphibians, and other wildlife, while also playing a key role in the health of the western Lake

## STRENGTHS

- River runs adjacent to several parks
- Has an access point within Pontiac Metro Park
- Considered a scenic waterway and water trail
- Recreational opportunities including kayaking, boating, fishing, wildlife observation, overlook platforms, riverside trails, etc.

## LIABILITIES

- River has several Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) which release directly into it
- Earthwork and vegetation removal should be limited along the river
- Impervious improvements should be limited as much as possible

## Endangered Species in the Maumee River

### FEDERALLY ENDANGERED



Northern Riffleshell  
*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*



White Catspaw  
*Epioblasma obliquata perobliqua*



Clubshell  
*Pleurobema clava*



Rayed Bean  
*Villosa fabalis*

### FEDERALLY & STATE ENDANGERED



Indiana Bat  
*Myotis sodalis*



Northern Long-Eared Bat  
*Myotis septentrionalis*

### STATE ENDANGERED



Tricolored Bat  
*Perimyotis subflavus*



Little Brown Bat  
*Myotis lucifugus*



Northern Harrier  
*Circus hudsonius*



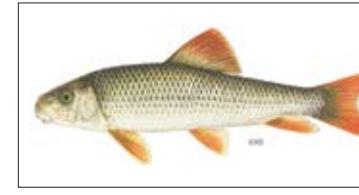
Copperbelly Water Snake  
*Nerodia erythrogaster neglecta sodalis*

### FEDERALLY THREATENED



Rabbitsfoot  
*Quadrula cylindrica cylindrica*

### STATE THREATENED



Greater Redhorse  
*Moxostoma valenciennei*



Plains Clubtail  
*Gomphus externus*



Large Blazing-star  
*Liatris scariosa*



Inland Rush  
*Juncus interior*



Grove Sandwort  
*Moehringia lateriflora*

### STATE SPECIES OF CONCERN



Black Sandshell  
*Ligumia recta*



Round Pigtoe  
*Pleurobema sintoxia*



Deertoe  
*Truncilla truncata*



Elktoe  
*Alasmidonta marginata*



Purple Wartyback  
*Cyclonaias tuberculata*



## Endangered Species in the Auglaize River

### FEDERALLY ENDANGERED



Northern Riffleshell  
*Epioblasma rangiana*



White Catspaw  
*Epioblasma obliquata perobliqua*



Clubshell  
*Pleurobema clava*



Rayed Bean  
*Villosa fimbriata*

### FEDERALLY & STATE ENDANGERED



Indiana Bat  
*Myotis sodalis*



Northern Long-Eared Bat  
*Myotis septentrionalis*

### STATE ENDANGERED



Tricolored Bat  
*Perimyotis subflavus*



Little Brown Bat  
*Myotis lucifugus*



Cream Vetchling  
*Lathyrus ochroleucus*

### STATE ENDANGERED & FEDERALLY THREATENED



Copperbelly Water Snake  
*Nerodia erythrogaster neglecta sodalis*

### FEDERALLY THREATENED



Rabbitsfoot  
*Quadrula cylindrica cylindrica*

### STATE THREATENED



Greater Redhorse  
*Moxostoma valenciennei*



Plains Clubtail  
*Gomphus externus*



Large Blazing-star  
*Liatris scariosa*

### STATE POTENTIALLY THREATENED



Grove Sandwort  
*Moehringia lateriflora*

### STATE SPECIES OF CONCERN



Deertoe  
*Truncula truncata*

## Auglaize River

Originating near Harrod in Allen County, the river travels approximately 113 miles northwest before merging with the Maumee River in downtown Defiance. As a key tributary to the Maumee, the Auglaize River contributes to the broader watershed that ultimately drains into Lake Erie, playing a vital role in the region's hydrology. The river meanders through several Ohio counties, where it serves as a crucial natural resource.

Historically, the Auglaize River holds deep cultural significance, particularly for Native American tribes who inhabited the region long before European settlers arrived. The name "Auglaize" likely stems from a French interpretation of a Native American word meaning "fallen timber," reflecting the river's historical landscape. The river was central to transportation, trade, and settlement patterns among Native American communities. During the Northwest Indian War, the river's strategic importance was highlighted when General Anthony Wayne established Fort Defiance at the confluence of the Auglaize and Maumee rivers in 1794, marking the site as a critical military post.

Ecologically, the Auglaize River is a vital habitat for a variety of wildlife, particularly fish species like smallmouth bass, walleye, and northern pike. Its floodplain and riparian zones provide essential ecosystems for birds and other wildlife, contributing to the region's biodiversity.

Similar to the Maumee, the Auglaize River offers a wealth of recreational opportunities. Anglers are

drawn to the river for its diverse fish populations, while canoeing and kayaking enthusiasts appreciate its scenic and tranquil waters. Due to its slower current, residents and visitors are able to swim in the river as well. Several parks along the river in Defiance provide residents and visitors with access to green spaces, walking trails, and picturesque river views.

Despite its beauty, the Auglaize River faces environmental challenges, such as nutrient runoff from surrounding agricultural lands and the threat of flooding during heavy rains or snowmelt. Nevertheless, the Auglaize River remains a cherished natural asset in Defiance, embodying the area's rich history, ecological diversity, and recreational appeal.

### ODNR NOTES:

- Low impact development is recommended to limit impacts to the ecological system
- Best management practices should be implemented and stormwater properly addressed with new development near the river
- Pay special attention to endangered and threatened species habitat. Limit any impacts to critical ecological areas

### STRENGTHS

- River runs adjacent to several parks
- Navigable from the Maumee River confluence to Wapakoneta, OH

### LIABILITIES

- No river access within the City (nearest access point is at Five Mile Creek)
- Earthwork and vegetation removal should be limited along the water's edge
- Impervious improvements should be limited as much as possible

## Tiffin River

The Tiffin River is an essential natural feature in Northwest Ohio, particularly within the Defiance area. The Tiffin River begins near Hudson, Michigan, and flows southwest for approximately 54 miles before joining the Maumee River near Defiance.

The Tiffin River has a rich history, with its surrounding areas once home to Native American settlements and later to early European pioneers. The river's name honors Edward Tiffin, Ohio's first governor, and reflects its importance to the state. While the river was originally known as Bean Creek in Michigan, its name change to Tiffin River underscores its significance as it enters Ohio, where it has long served as a vital resource for agriculture, transportation, and community development.

Ecologically, the Tiffin River supports a diverse array of plant and animal species, thanks to its relatively undisturbed natural state. The river's floodplains and wetlands provide crucial habitats for birds, fish, and other wildlife, contributing to the region's biodiversity. Unlike many other rivers in the area, the Tiffin River has fewer dams, which helps preserve its ecological integrity and supports a healthy environment for aquatic life.

### STRENGTHS

- Has an access point at the Dey Bridge Launch
- Ideal for canoeing and kayaking



The Tiffin River is also a cherished recreational resource in Defiance and the surrounding areas. Its calm waters and picturesque surroundings make it a popular spot for fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and bird watching.

A river access point is located at Dey Bridge Launch, along the east side of the river. This access point is steep, approximately 100-feet down to the river, and is located approximately three-quarters of a mile north of the Maumee River.

### ODNR NOTES:

- Low impact development is recommended to limit impacts to the ecological system
- Best management practices should be implemented and stormwater properly addressed with new development near the river
- Pay special attention to endangered and threatened species habitat. Limit any impacts to critical ecological areas

### LIABILITIES

- Access point is a steep 100-foot climb
- Earthwork and vegetation removal should be limited along the water's edge
- Impervious improvements should be limited as much as possible

## Endangered Species in the Tiffin River

### FEDERALLY ENDANGERED



Northern Riffleshell  
*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*



White Catspaw  
*Epioblasma obliquata perobliqua*



Clubshell  
*Pleurobema clava*



Rayed Bean  
*Villosa fabalis*



Indiana Bat  
*Myotis sodalis*



Northern Long-Eared Bat  
*Myotis septentrionalis*

### FEDERALLY & STATE ENDANGERED



Tricolored Bat  
*Perimyotis subflavus*



Little Brown Bat  
*Myotis lucifugus*



Northern Harrier  
*Circus hudsonius*

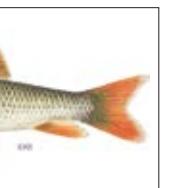


Rabbitsfoot  
*Quadrula cylindrica cylindrica*

### STATE ENDANGERED



Greater Redhorse  
*Moxostoma valenciennei*



Large Blazing-star  
*Liatris scariosa*



Black Sandshell  
*Ligumia recta*



Creek Heelsplitter  
*Lasmigona compressa*



Round Pigtoe  
*Pleurobema sintoxia*



Deertoe  
*Truncilla truncata*

### FEDERALLY THREATENED



Elktoe  
*Alasmidonta marginata*

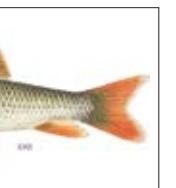


Purple Wartyback  
*Cyclonaias tuberculata*

### STATE THREATENED



Northern Riffleshell  
*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*



White Catspaw  
*Epioblasma obliquata perobliqua*



Clubshell  
*Pleurobema clava*



Rayed Bean  
*Villosa fabalis*



Indiana Bat  
*Myotis sodalis*

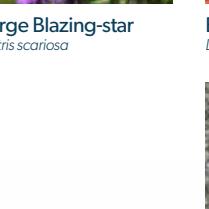


Northern Long-Eared Bat  
*Myotis septentrionalis*

### STATE SPECIES OF CONCERN



Northern Harrier  
*Circus hudsonius*



Rabbitsfoot  
*Quadrula cylindrica cylindrica*



Creek Heelsplitter  
*Lasmigona compressa*



Deertoe  
*Truncilla truncata*



Purple Wartyback  
*Cyclonaias tuberculata*



Northern Riffleshell  
*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*



White Catspaw  
*Epioblasma obliquata perobliqua*



Clubshell  
*Pleurobema clava*



Rayed Bean  
*Villosa fabalis*



Indiana Bat  
*Myotis sodalis*



Northern Long-Eared Bat  
*Myotis septentrionalis*



Northern Riffleshell  
*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*



White Catspaw  
*Epioblasma obliquata perobliqua*



Clubshell  
*Pleurobema clava*



Rayed Bean  
*Villosa fabalis*



Indiana Bat  
*Myotis sodalis*



Northern Long-Eared Bat  
*Myotis septentrionalis*



Northern Riffleshell  
*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*



White Catspaw  
*Epioblasma obliquata perobliqua*



Clubshell  
*Pleurobema clava*



Rayed Bean  
*Villosa fabalis*



Indiana Bat  
*Myotis sodalis*



Northern Long-Eared Bat  
*Myotis septentrionalis*



Northern Riffleshell  
*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*



White Catspaw  
*Epioblasma obliquata perobliqua*



Clubshell  
*Pleurobema clava*



Rayed Bean  
*Villosa fabalis*



Indiana Bat  
*Myotis sodalis*



Northern Long-Eared Bat  
*Myotis septentrionalis*



Northern Riffleshell  
*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*



White Catspaw  
*Epioblasma obliquata perobliqua*



Clubshell  
*Pleurobema clava*



Rayed Bean  
*Villosa fabalis*



Indiana Bat  
*Myotis sodalis*



Northern Long-Eared Bat  
*Myotis septentrionalis*



Northern Riffleshell  
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White Catspaw  
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Clubshell  
*Pleurobema clava*



Rayed Bean  
*Villosa fabalis*



Indiana Bat  
*Myotis sodalis*



Northern Long-Eared Bat  
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Clubshell  
*Pleurobema clava*



Rayed Bean  
*Villosa fabalis*



Indiana Bat  
*Myotis sodalis*



Northern Long-Eared Bat  
*Myotis septentrionalis*



Northern Riffleshell  
*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*



White Catspaw  
*Epioblasma obliquata perobliqua*



Clubshell  
*Pleurobema clava*



Rayed Bean  
*Villosa fabalis*

# Existing Floodplains & Floodways: PERMITTING & ODNR COORDINATION

Having three rivers at the heart of a city is a unique asset, but it also comes with significant responsibility. When making improvements along the river corridors, it's essential to consider the potential impacts on both upstream and downstream communities. To address this, regulations at the local, state, and federal levels have been established to protect these vital resources.

Locally, Chapter 1333 of the Defiance Flood Plain Code and Standards outlines the key components reviewed at the municipal level. The process begins by ensuring that proposed improvements conform to the zoning district's use requirements or by obtaining a special exception. From there, the improvements are reviewed across three key categories:

## 1. PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT IS IN THE FLOODPLAIN AND IS LESS THAN 5 ACRES

Professionally certified plans must be developed with the following summary:

- Structure finished floor elevation (FFE) must be 1-foot above base flood elevation or provide floodproofing
- If the base flood elevation is not established, the FFE shall be 2-feet above the highest adjacent natural grade
- Existing survey and contours
- Proposed fill
- Proposed FFE, contours, and elevations
- Water and wastewater designed to minimize infiltration of floodwaters into the system

## 2. PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT IS LOCATED IN ZONE A (FLOODPLAIN WITHOUT A BASE ELEVATION) AND ENCOMPASSES 5 OR MORE ACRES

In addition to the requirements from item 1 above, a hydrologic and hydraulic study must be completed, providing the base flood elevation.

## 3. PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT IS IN THE FLOODWAY OR ALTERS A WATERCOURSE

In addition to the requirements from items 1 and 2 above, the following items are necessary:

- A hydrologic and hydraulic study must be completed demonstrating that the proposed development will not increase water surface elevation during the occurrence of the base flood and that there will not be a reduction in the flood-carrying capacity
- All state and federal permits (Army Corps of Engineers Section 10 and Clean Water Act Section 404)

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) reviewed the project scope and will require further coordination with their programs prior to design and development of the parks and riverfront areas.

### • ODNR Scenic Rivers Program

Because the Maumee River is considered part of the ODNR Scenic Rivers Program, coordination will be required with the regional contacts to ensure the ecological integrity is maintained. This program has jurisdiction over land within 1,000 feet of the river that is not municipally owned. While much of the property within this Master Plan is owned by the City, the Scenic Rivers Program provides guidance for best design practices adjacent to the Maumee River and its tributaries. This includes, but is not limited to, maintaining or improving riparian corridors, encouragement of low impact development, design suggestions for trail and recreational improvements, ideal stormwater practices, and preferred erosion control methods.

### • ODNR Office of Real Estate and Land Management

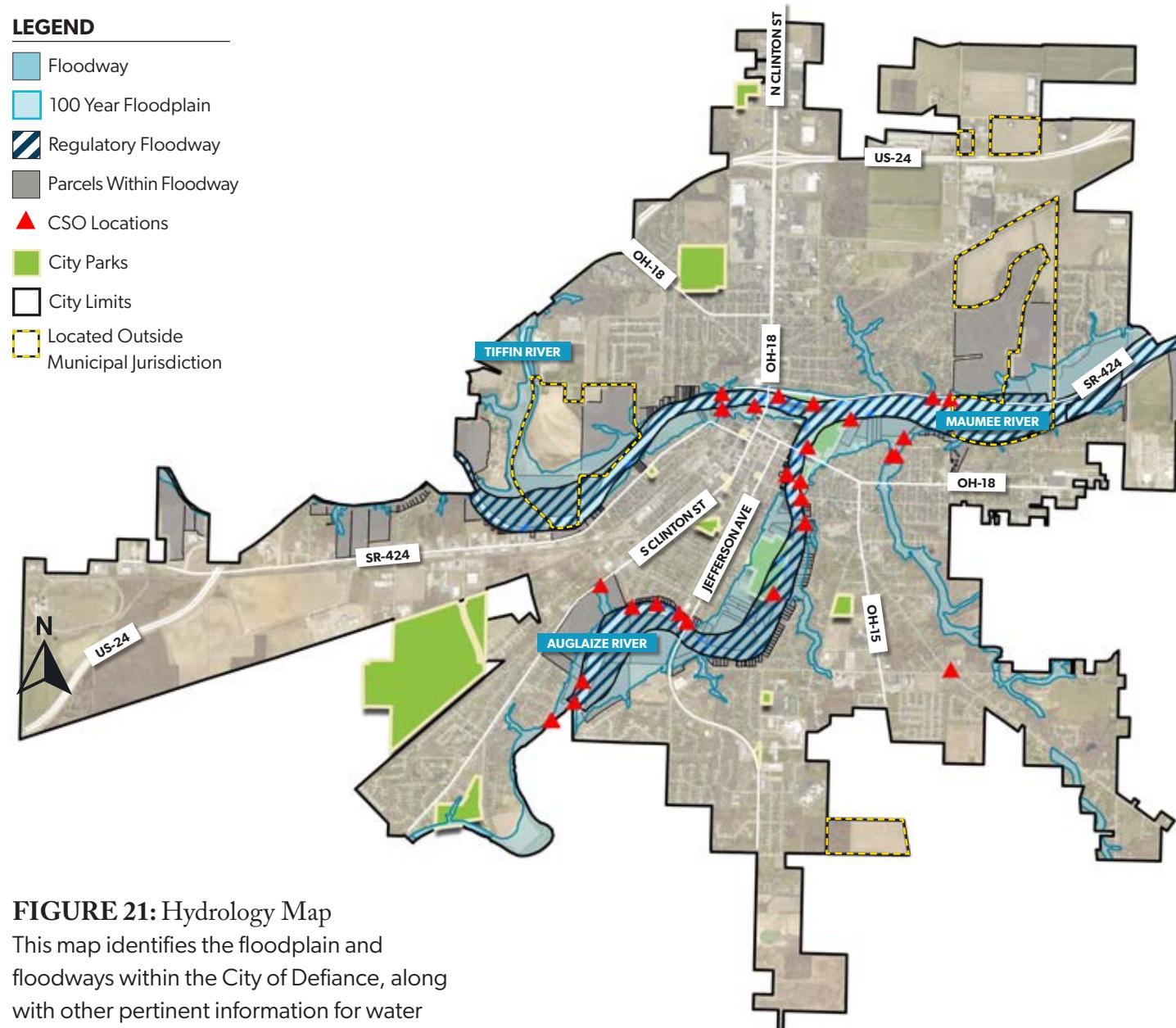
Portions of the Maumee River overlap with the state historic canal system. Coordination with the Office of Real Estate and Land Management will be required to ensure there are no impacts to this infrastructure.

### • ODNR Department of Wildlife (DOW)

There are several species of endangered and threatened mussels, bats, and other wildlife within the project area. The DOW recommends the use of Best Management Principles and stresses that development limits impact to streams, wetlands, and other water resources. Habitat surveys may be required in certain areas of improvement to verify that development will not negatively impact critical zones for these identified species.

In addition to state regulations, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Water holds jurisdiction over the three rivers. Floodway permitting in Ohio may require various components, depending on specific factors. These requirements could include:

- Floodplain Permit
- Development
- No-rise Certificate
- Letter of Map Revision (LOMAR)
- Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMAR)



**FIGURE 21: Hydrology Map**

This map identifies the floodplain and floodways within the City of Defiance, along with other pertinent information for water resource management and future infrastructure development.

# Existing Connectivity: EVALUATING PEDESTRIAN NETWORKS

A recurring theme identified through community engagement was the need for more connections to parks and trails. As shown in Figure 22, the team assessed park accessibility based primarily on a walking distance of 1/8 to 1/4 mile, which is roughly a 10-15 minute walk. The evaluation reveals a high density of parks in the downtown area, while some perimeter parks provide limited access to neighborhoods on the outskirts.

For residents living beyond the 10-15 minute walking range, parks are still accessible, but reaching them is less convenient. One common solution communities use to advance connectivity is the implementation of trails or walkway improvements. These pedestrian pathways enhance safe access to parks and other community amenities by allowing people to move more easily through neighborhoods. As depicted in Figure 1, the Buckeye Trail runs prominently through Defiance, linking people to the river and downtown. The Buckeye Trail is also part of the larger, multi-state North Country Trail system. While gathering community input, residents expressed the need for additional access points to the Buckeye Trail, making it easier for more people to use the trail and connect with the broader community.

Concerns were also raised about road and railroad crossings, highlighting the importance of ensuring safe passage for residents as they move throughout the City. Although plans for future trails aim to further improve the flow of pedestrian traffic, it's important to note that many of the existing sidewalks outside the core of downtown are only on one side of the street. While this doesn't severely limit mobility, it does reduce safe and convenient access for some residents.

The analysis of existing walkways and trails indicates a need for more routes to better connect the community—not just to parks, but also to downtown and the river confluence. These enhancements won't just improve pedestrian flow and connectivity, they will also stimulate the local economy by encouraging foot traffic and increasing activity in the downtown area.



WALKABILITY SCORE\*

\*TAKEN FROM FORT GROUNDS



BIKEABILITY SCORE\*

\*TAKEN FROM FORT GROUNDS

## DEFIANCE PARKS

- 1 Bark & Run Dog Park
- 2 Bronson Park ♦★◎
- 3 Buchman Park on the Glaize
- 4 Canal Park
- 5 Diehl Park ♦★
- 6 Eastside Park ♦★
- 7 Fort Grounds
- 8 Gateway Park
- 9 Holgate Park ♦★
- 10 Hometown Heroes Park
- 11 Kingsbury Riverfront Park, Swim Park, & Pickleball ♦★◎
- 12 Knights of Columbus Baseball Complex ♦
- 13 Livingston Park

♦ Recreational Fields | \* Playgrounds | ◎ Water Features

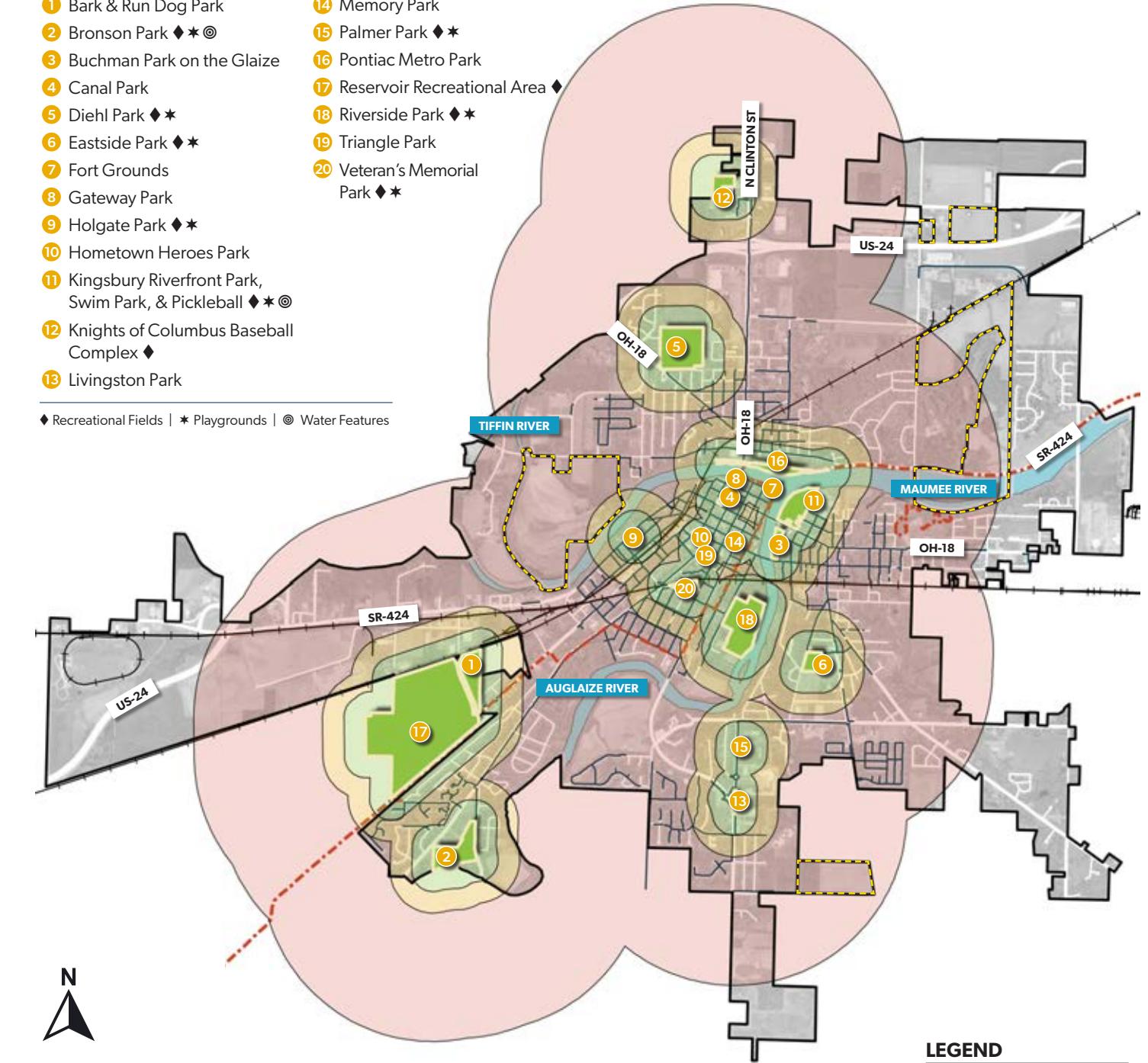


FIGURE 22: Walkability & Accessibility Map

This map visually represents the ease with which residents and visitors can navigate the City of Defiance on foot and access parks and amenities. Parks within downtown Defiance are connected, however the parks located in northern and

0 2 4 6 8  
FEET IN THOUSANDS



## Cultural & Historic Resources: EXPLORING DEFIANCE'S HERITAGE

The Great Black Swamp, also known as the Black Swamp, was a vast wetland that once covered much of Northwest Ohio and Northeast Indiana, including the area that is now Defiance, Ohio. This swamp, formed thousands of years ago after the last Ice Age, resulted from melting glaciers that left behind water, clay, and dense forests. The decomposing leaves and plant material that accumulated in the water turned it black, giving the swamp its name. Spanning approximately 100 miles in length and 25 miles in width, the Great Black Swamp covered an estimated 1,500 square miles.

Native Americans took advantage of the confluence and resided in the area that is now Defiance. Many historians believe that Odawa Chief Pontiac was born near Defiance in 1712. He assumed power in the area at a critical point in history and assembled a large group of Native American Nations in opposition of European settlers, including the Shawnee, Delaware, Chippewa, and other Great Lakes Tribes. He led the charge against the British in what is now considered "Pontiac's War" from 1763-1764, during which many of the British outposts were eliminated west of the Appalachian Mountains. Chief Pontiac traveled to New York in 1766 to negotiate a peace treaty as neither side was approaching a concrete victory, and was assassinated shortly after by a member of the Peoria Tribe in Illinois. Chief Pontiac's legacy lives on in the community with historical markers in Pontiac Metro Park. Native American Nations continued to reside in the area through the 1800s, with one of the largest councils held at the confluence in 1792. The Delaware, Miami, Ottawa, Potawatomi, Seneca, Shawnee, and Wyandot are among the recorded Nations that frequented Defiance in the 1700s to mid 1800s.

General "Mad" Anthony Wayne built Fort Defiance in 1794 as the westernmost outpost at the time. The fort housed around 200 soldiers during the Indian Wars. After his victory at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, General Wayne enhanced Fort Defiance to withstand canon fire for fear of retaliation. Fort Defiance never saw battle and was abandoned in 1796.

Just south of Fort Defiance on the Auglaize River, William Henry Harrison built Fort Winchester for use during the War of 1812 and was the first line of defense until the construction of Fort Meigs. Fort Winchester hosted many decorated soldiers during the war and was abandoned in 1815. Settlers then developed the space and the streets of Defiance follow the footprint of Fort Winchester to this day.

Captain Benjamin Logan captured a young Shawnee boy in 1786 and subsequently adopted him as Johnny Logan until a treaty returned the boy to his people. In 1812, Johnny Logan enlisted to join the American troops against the English. While under the command of General William Henry Harrison, he was accused of disloyalty and attempted to escape. Logan was captured by British sympathizers and died shortly after this encounter. His body was carried back to Fort Defiance and buried with full military honors, making Johnny Logan the only Native American to receive this ceremony in the state. A historical marker at Fort Grounds Park highlights his legacy and burial place.

The Village of Defiance was incorporated in 1836 and its first mayor, John Lewis, was elected. Shortly after, in 1842-1845, the Miami and Erie Canal opened and connected Defiance to Toledo and Cincinnati. The Miami and Erie Canal also connected to the Wabash and Erie Canal, allowing access west to Fort Wayne and beyond. The canals provided an essential transit system until the railroads emerged in the 1850s. The infrastructure has largely been removed throughout present day Defiance.

In 1845, Defiance resident William Holgate famously rode to Columbus and successfully declared the City as the seat of the newfound Defiance County. When he returned, Defiance residents celebrated this feat at Fort Grounds.

As the railroads rose in popularity and the canals retired, trustees sold canal lands to the north of downtown Defiance to build the Defiance Female Seminary in 1850. The institution was founded by the United Church of Christ to educate young women. In 1903, the school officially became Defiance College and continued to grow in the following decades.

Between the mid 1800s and early 1900s, the Old Defiance Junior High School, Defiance County Courthouse, and Defiance Public Library became landmarks in downtown Defiance. The old high school remains prominent at the end of Clinton Street before it veers west and offers a great opportunity for revitalization. The library, funded by an Andrew Carnegie Grant, continues to serve the community and programs several events throughout the year.

The City of Defiance, carved from the heart of the Great Black Swamp, has since grown into a hub of industry, commerce, and tourism for the Northwest Region.

## What we've learned

Overall, Defiance is fortunate to have a strong foundation in its parks system, with a wide range of properties, resources, and amenities. This success is driven by passionate staff and leadership who are dedicated to the community's well-being and consistently go the extra mile. The community itself also plays a crucial role, showing their support in many meaningful ways. Based on what we've learned, below are several additional insights and possible opportunities to build on the strong foundation and address current challenges.

1

A key to the continued success of the parks in Defiance is implementing a succession plan for when current leadership retires. Strong leadership and dedication have been instrumental, so preparing for a future transition is essential to maintain the momentum and progress achieved so far.

2

Staffing limitations present a challenge that needs to be addressed. The current team is proactive and efficient, but strategies like allowing some lawn areas to naturalize or mowing less frequently could free up time and resources for other important projects. Prioritizing quick, impactful projects that can be completed in-house aligns well with the Master Plan's goals. However, more full-time employees are needed to meet ongoing demands, especially with future improvements requiring maintenance. Currently, much of the staff consists of seasonal workers focused on the pool, park mowing, and cemetery upkeep.

3

The community appears eager to contribute their time and effort to support the parks system. Establishing an organized volunteer schedule would provide opportunities for residents to get involved and participate in maintaining and enhancing these spaces.

4

Discussions about the best practices of inclusivity and accessibility often arose during community outreach. The conversations focused on different components ranging from lack of accessible pathways and playground components to the overall lack of pedestrian connections to the parks and riverfront. Promoting inclusive design with proposed development would improve park engagement for all users.

5

Community feedback highlighted that programming within the parks is limited and varies from park to park. Active parks have strategic partnerships with youth and adult sports leagues, such as the Defiance Baseball Association and local pickleball and tennis groups. The library also hosts specific programs in the parks, and larger festivals and events are held within the park system. While these events bring life to the parks, the community expressed a desire for more frequent programming that is well-publicized and easily accessible.

# FUNDING PATHWAYS:

Exploring Our  
Options

# 3

DRAFT

# UNDERSTANDING DEFIANCE'S FUNDING RESOURCES & IMPLICATIONS

Securing funding for park, recreation, and riverfront projects is a multifaceted challenge, involving diverse sources and strategies to ensure the sustainability and growth of community spaces. This chapter delves into various funding pathways available to municipalities like Defiance, highlighting both public and private financing options, and providing practical examples and strategies to maximize funding potential. By understanding and leveraging these funding opportunities, communities can create vibrant, well-maintained parks and recreational facilities that serve the public for years to come.

## Local-Public Funding

Most communities, Defiance included, allocate funds for park and recreation expenditures in their annual budget. In addition to including expenditures in the annual budget, some communities include larger expenditures in the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Defiance's current CIP includes park associated improvements, as well.

Some communities create a Park and Recreation Fund account. This is created under the premise that the funds were originally approved for parks and recreation; and the funds should remain for that purpose after the budget year. Funds should not be depended on for annual expenses, but rather for large capital expenditures. At the end of the budget year, any annual budget funds that were not spent throughout the year are transferred to the Park and Recreation Fund account. As the years go by and the funds accumulate, it can be used to finance larger projects. (If it is depended on annually for regular operation and maintenance expenses, the Fund does not add any value.) One great thing about a Park and Recreation Fund is it changes the "use it or lose it" mindset that often comes with the annual budget process.

Defiance City Ordinance 7675 (1167.13 Public Sites, Open Space, and Natural Features) establishes a park and playground fee requirement for all new subdivisions within the City of Defiance. This fee, at \$100 per lot being created, ensures that any increase in dwelling units contributes financially to public recreation spaces. A "Land Dedication in Lieu of Fees" clause is also applicable, allowing the dedication of the open space for public park and playground use in lieu of the fee. The value of the dedicated land must equal or exceed the park and playground fee otherwise payable. While most developers prefer land dedication, implementing the fee requirement will help the City secure the funds and resources needed for ongoing maintenance of the specific neighborhood park or for larger capital projects through a Park and Recreation Fund.

Coordination with the Defiance County / Metro Parks Board offers additional opportunities to assist in funding projects within Defiance City Parks, particularly Pontiac Park. Pontiac Park is a Defiance County Park funded, in part, by the Defiance County / Metro Parks Board. In addition to the annual budget appropriations from Defiance County, the Metro Parks Board can create a Park and Recreation Fund account for the same reason as above. Coordination with the County / Metro Parks Board will be key to funding improvements at Pontiac Park.

General Obligation (GO) Bonds are another financing mechanism available to local governments for larger capital projects. GO Bonds are commonly used by Ohio's local municipal governments and offer long-term, fixed rate financing. These bonds are backed by the general revenue of a local government.

Finally, a local government or park owner may institute user fees for parks and/or recreational programs. The admission fee for the Kingsbury Pool is one example of a user fee. A fee to sign up for a park program is another example.



## Local-Private Funding

Engaging the community and publicizing capital parks projects can open a host of private, local funding opportunities.

The Defiance Area Foundation currently has a "Sherwood Memorial Park" fund, but no other funds directly support Defiance City Parks. Establishing park-specific and/or project-specific funds at the Defiance Area Foundation offers community members an easy way to contribute to parks and projects to show support and receive the tax deduction benefit. These contributions can come in the form of memorial gifts, bequests, or trusts.

The Coressel Charitable Trust is a local charitable organization that has supported Defiance Park Projects in the past. The City should maintain and nurture these interactions into long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships.

Offering sponsorship opportunities and/or naming rights for park projects is another avenue to obtain private, local funding. Sponsorship opportunities can offer buy-in at many different levels allowing any size business to support a project. For example, a "sponsor a piece of the playground" fundraiser assigns different dollar values to various components of a playground: a curly slide for \$5,000 or a swing for \$250 would allow large businesses and organizations to participate without excluding the smaller businesses that often want to be part of local projects. Recognition of these opportunities is then made in the form of a single plaque or a sign that lists those who sponsored the project. Of course, offering naming rights to a funder that covers the entire cost of a project is another option.

Smaller grassroots fundraising should not be overlooked. The funds brought in through these smaller efforts might not be as significant as other fundraising, but the real value in grassroots fundraising is the momentum and involvement of the community. It's a great way to get

youth, younger populations, and recreational clubs involved. This is the concept that \$1 from 100 people is worth more than \$100 from one person because of the involvement of the community. Grassroots fundraising can be a game-changer for projects. Once the community is involved, larger players will get on board as well.

Grassroots efforts can encompass a wide range of activities, from online crowdfunding campaigns like GoFundMe to t-shirt sales, donation jars at local businesses, and food sales. They can also include annual fundraising events such as a 5K family fun run, a "party in the park," dog-days at the pool (after the season ends), or a pickleball tournament, with proceeds benefiting a specific park facility or program. Additionally, event sponsors can help offset hosting costs, thereby increasing the funds dedicated to the park or project.

The mindset of the fund-raisers is critical. People often dread the thought of asking for money. Challenge those doing the "asking" to think of it as offering an opportunity to be part of something big and something that will serve the community for decades. Go in with the attitude that your funder will want to be part of the project, and remember that often, a "no" answer reveals information that may result in success later.

Local fundraising efforts – whether through sponsorships, naming rights, or grassroots initiatives – result in an opportunity to cultivate long-term partnerships. These partnerships can be invaluable when the park or project has unforeseen needs, such as unexpected maintenance or a special cleanup. Companies, clubs, and organizations that helped fundraise or contributed to a project will be vested in it long-term and are more likely to pitch in and help when needed.

Local governments are also exploring the concept of Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) for larger municipal projects. The most successful BOTs create a public-private partnership that involves a private developer constructing and owning a facility that is leased to a local government



for a certain period of time. At the end of that term, the facility's ownership is transferred to the local government. From a park perspective, this is most applicable to a community center, recreation center, or some other built structure, as opposed to a playground or trail.

## State & National Funding

The State of Ohio and Federal Government offer multiple grants and funding opportunities for park and recreational land acquisition and development to local governments. While most of the programs are administered through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), there are additional opportunities from state and national budget allocations. The convergence of three rivers is a unique asset that has attracted attention from the Army Corps of Engineers, Ohio State Representatives, and US Congress Representatives.

Through the Ohio Development Department, Defiance has made use of its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds of \$150,000 approximately every other year. These funds can be used for public park projects if the parks are in qualifying areas of the City or if the project serves a targeted population.

**Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF)** are federal funds administered by the National Park Service. The funds are provided to the State of Ohio and distributed to local governments for the acquisition, development, and redevelopment of recreational facilities. To be eligible for LWCF, a project must be in accord with Ohio's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The maximum grant award is \$500,000, and the funds can be used for up to 50% of the project cost.

**GLRI Forest Restoration Program** is a grant provided by the U.S. Forest Service, offering funding ranging from \$50,000 to \$300,000 to support projects in the Great Lakes basin. These projects aim to address invasive species, design nature-based infrastructure for stormwater management, or restore and connect coastal and riparian forest habitats.

**Ohio NatureWorks** is funded through a long-standing State of Ohio bond issue. It is a 75% reimbursement grant up to \$150,000 per county for the acquisition, development, and redevelopment of recreational facilities. The City of Defiance has used Ohio NatureWorks as a funding source in the past, but typically does not apply every year in an effort to share funds with Defiance County and other municipalities within Defiance County.

**Cooperative Boating Facility Grant** is a grant program through the ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft offering 100% reimbursement for projects that improve or develop recreational boating access for motorized watercraft at public facilities. Eligible projects include ramps and docks, as well as access roads, lighting, parking, and restrooms that support these facilities.

**The Paddling Enhancement Grant** is similar to the Boating Facility Grant but geared toward hand-powered watercraft. Neither program is accepting applications at this time, but would be excellent fits for Defiance riverfront activation.

**The Pool Safely Grant Program (PSGP)** is offered by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSP) and provides funding and resources to assist in implementing enforcement and education programs. CPSP will award up to a total of \$3 million in two-year grants to assist in reducing deaths and injuries from drowning and drain entrapment incidents in pools and spas. The Kingsbury Splash Park might be able to benefit from this program.

**Recreational Trails Grants** are Federal Highway Administration funds that cover the cost of land acquisition and development of trails. The maximum grant award is \$150,000 with a required 20% match.

**The Clean Ohio Trail Fund** finances trails to improve outdoor recreation opportunities in the State of Ohio by funding land acquisition, trail development, and sometimes the costs of engineering and design. The maximum grant award is \$500,000 with a required 25% match. Projects awarded a Clean Ohio Trail Grant must be completed within 15-months.

Depending on the project, government grant funds targeting specific issues may be available to help fund park projects.

- **Public Health and Mental Health:** The impact parks, recreation, and natural environments have on public and mental health creates an additional funding opportunity for projects that enhance these amenities.
- **Placemaking:** The movement towards intentional placemaking may provide additional grant opportunities.

- **Historic Preservation Funds** through the National Park Service: Supports projects that preserve, maintain, or enhance historic or cultural resources.
- **The National Endowment for the Arts:** Funds projects that integrate the arts in various forms. This can include performing arts, such as concert series held in parks, as well as physical features like sculptures or murals incorporated into park settings.
- **Environmental:** Grants targeting environmental conservation may support park projects that incorporate eco-friendly practices and enhance natural habitats.
- **Energy Conservation:** Funding opportunities for energy conservation may be available for park projects that include energy-efficient technologies and sustainable infrastructure.

Many private foundations give across the nation, specifically in locations where they maintain stores or facilities. These foundations typically participate in improving the local community in a way that supports the foundation's philosophy. The key is to understand the foundation's philosophy and to tie a park and/or recreation project to that philosophy and the foundation's desired outcomes. A few examples of large private foundations include:

- Lowe's Hometowns provides grants to restore and revitalize community spaces.
- The Wal-Mart Foundation offers grants that strengthen local communities.
- The American Cancer Society funds sunshades.
- T-Mobile supports small towns each year by awarding grants towards projects desired by a community.

As with any project, securing funding and financing can be challenging and often involves unexpected issues. However, it's important to view fundraising as a chance to build connections and relationships that will extend beyond the project's completion.

# YOUR VOICE MATTERS:

## Community Engagement

4



# OUTREACH METHODS & COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Community engagement is a cornerstone for successful urban planning, ensuring that the voices of residents, stakeholders, and local organizations are heard and integrated into the development process. This section outlines a variety of strategies designed to foster meaningful participation in the City of Defiance Parks & Riverfront Master Plan.

## Overview

The Master Plan outlines a long-term vision for the City's recreational amenities, encompassing local parks, playgrounds, sports fields, rivers, trails, and open spaces. Shaped by public discussions regarding the importance of parks and river recreation in Defiance, the result is a community-driven, data-informed, and actionable vision.

Overall, the process gathered input from approximately 846 people. The Steering Committee, including City staff, consisting of 18 individuals from diverse backgrounds, offered invaluable guidance and leadership throughout the process.

## Outreach Methods

Extensive input from community members, stakeholders, and Steering Committee members was considered to ensure that the needs of the community were collected and understood.

Engagement opportunities included XX stakeholder focus groups, participation in one community event, two community workshops, and 3 Steering Committee meetings, and two online surveys.

## Communication Tools

Multiple methods of engagement were utilized to encourage all community members to participate in the process. Engagement was advertised through press releases to local media, flyers, social media, the City of Defiance website, project advocates through the Steering Committee, and by word of mouth.

FIGURE 23: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
<b>FAMILY FUN FRIDAY EVENT</b>	
Participants	115 - 130
<b>SURVEYS</b>	
Online Survey 1 Responses	543
Online Survey 2 Responses	63
<b>COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS</b>	
Workshop #1 - Participants	60
<b>STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS</b>	
Participants	32
<b>STEERING COMMITTEE &amp; CITY STAFF</b>	
Members	18
<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY INPUT</b>	
	831 - 846

# What we heard

- 1 The community expressed that many were unaware of some parks, or the amenities and programming they offer. A more strategic approach to promoting the parks through enhanced communication and collaboration with community partners should be prioritized to increase park usage and awareness.
- 2 While improving awareness can help make parks feel more welcoming, some community members find that the parks are not designed with their needs in mind. Prioritizing inclusivity in park improvements is essential. For instance, none of the playgrounds in the park system currently offer fully accessible play surfaces.
- 3 There is a strong desire within the community to see Defiance's environmental, historical, and cultural attributes reflected in the parks, whether through physical improvements or programming.
- 4 The community overwhelmingly expressed a desire to engage with the rivers. Some prefer active use, such as kayaking or boating, while others prefer passive enjoyment through scenic views from a walking trail or a local restaurant. No matter the level of interaction, the central theme is the desire for more opportunities to connect with the river.
- 5 Throughout the community engagement process, a common request was to focus on improving and maintaining the existing parks, rather than expanding the system with new ones.



# Community Engagement: FAMILY FUN FRIDAY EVENT

On August 2, 2024, the design team attended a City of Defiance Family Fun Friday event to talk with the community, obtaining their thoughts and ideas on the City parks and riverfronts and answering any questions they had.

The theme for the August Family Fun Friday event, was a scavenger hunt based on the book "We're Going on a Bear Hunt." The design team's booth was located at the "crossing of the river" in front of Defiance Karate LLC, on Clinton Street.

During the event, the team spoke to approximately 45 families, and used interactive boards to gain community input from both adults and children.

A flyer was also handed out including information about the community on-line survey and the Master Plan's social media page.

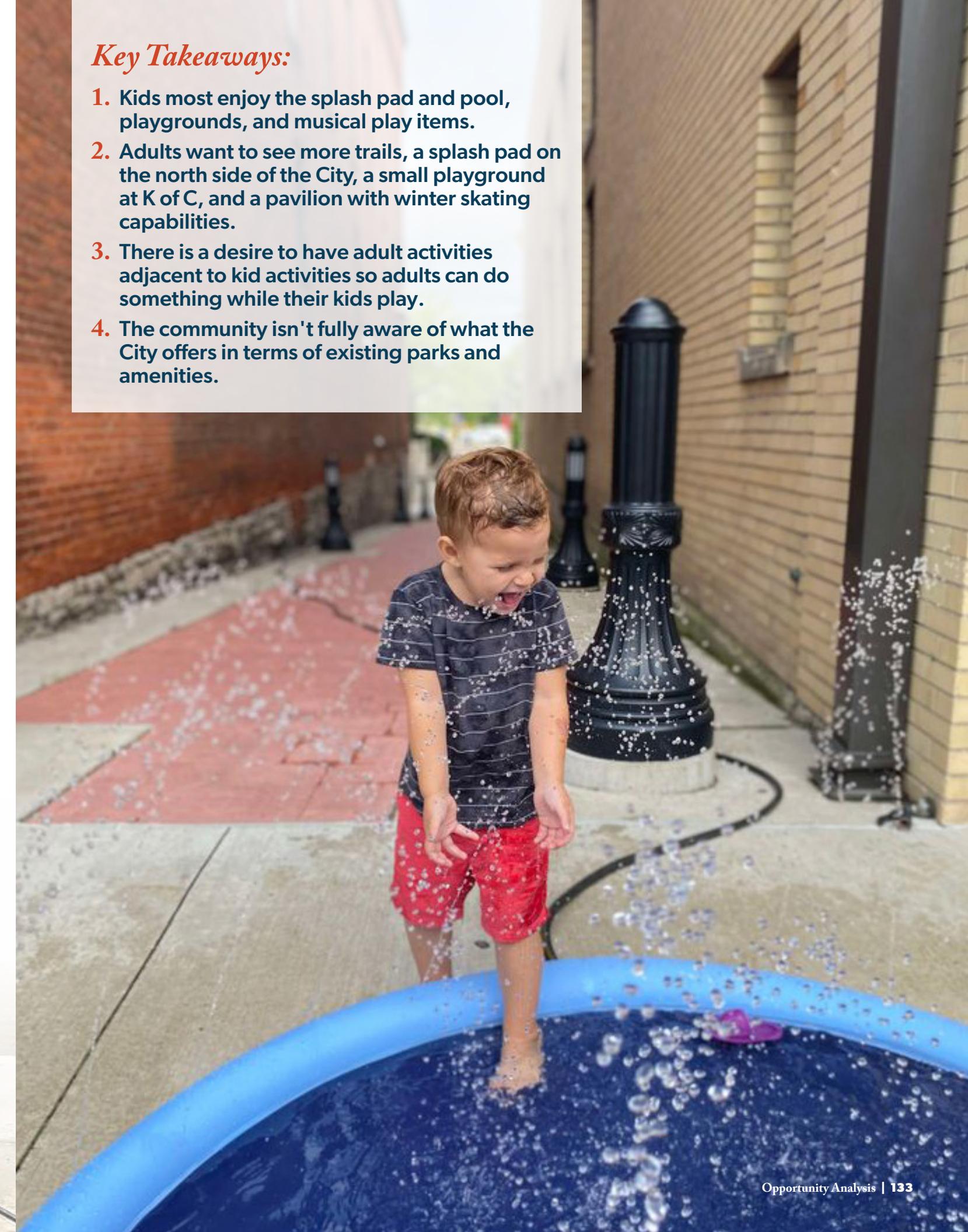
During the event, the design team derived a variety of insights ranging from communication to popular existing features. After speaking to community members, it became evident that the community is not fully aware of the existing amenities and features of the parks. Enhancing communication strategies and possibly adding a staff member focused on communication and programming could bridge this gap, bringing more people into the parks and introducing them to lesser-known locations.

Public feedback indicates that the current outreach plan is effective, as many community members were already aware of or had participated in the survey. The feedback also highlights a strong desire for more trails and facilities that cater to both adults and children, such as activities for adults adjacent to kid activities, ensuring that everyone has something to engage with. Specific requests include a splash pad on the north side of town, a small playground for young children at the Knights of Columbus Baseball Complex with protective netting if necessary, and a pavilion with winter skating capabilities. The popularity of existing features in the eyes of the children, like the splash pad, pool, playgrounds, and musical play items, further reinforce the community's engagement with the parks.



## Key Takeaways:

1. Kids most enjoy the splash pad and pool, playgrounds, and musical play items.
2. Adults want to see more trails, a splash pad on the north side of the City, a small playground at K of C, and a pavilion with winter skating capabilities.
3. There is a desire to have adult activities adjacent to kid activities so adults can do something while their kids play.
4. The community isn't fully aware of what the City offers in terms of existing parks and amenities.



## Interactive Board Results:

### POSTER 1 (interacting with children)

Place a sticker on your 3 favorite things to do when you play at a park!

- Baseball - 4
- Playground - 9\*
- Basketball - 3
- Trails - 3
- Splash Pad - 20
- Swimming Pool - 18
- Soccer or Football - 5
- Swing - 6
- Music - 7

\*Includes 4 votes for the playground shown in the back of the basketball photo

Children also noted that they would like to see the following brought to Defiance:

- Lazy river
- Playground zipline
- Library / relax and read
- All-inclusive playgrounds for children of all abilities, especially very young kids



### POSTER 2 (interacting with adults)

Place a sticker on your 3 favorite activities to do at a park!

- Pickleball - 3
- Sit / Relax -
- Kayak / Canoe - 4
- Trails - 13
- Picnic - 1
- Swimming Pool - 2
- Fish - 4
- Disc Golf - 1
- Sand Volleyball - 0

Adults also noted that they would like to see the following brought to Defiance:

- More walking trails
- Outdoor exercise area at Reservoir Park



POSTER 1: Children were asked to place a sticker on their 3 favorite things to do when they play at a park, as well as write-in additional favorites if applicable.



POSTER 2: Adults were asked to place a sticker on their 3 favorite park activities, as well as write-in additional favorites if applicable.



POSTER 3: The community was asked to answer three questions, writing their answer on a sticky note and adding it to the board.

### POSTER 3 (interacting with adults)

Question: Which parks function great for their current events and activities? Why?

Responses:

- Love fireworks on the river
- Splash pad at Bronson is wonderful
- We need activity for the older kids like skate board parks, bike parks, roller skating parks, water slides, and go carts

Question: Which parks require the most improvements? What is needed?

Responses:

- Diehl Park needs some love
- Tennis courts
- Diehl Park needs fixed or redone

Question: What activities would you like to see available on the rivers?\*

Responses:

- More boardwalk trails
- Big metro park (like Glass City in Toledo)
- Splash pad on north side of town
- Parks and family activities
- Something for the adults to do while at the parks with the children
- Reroute downtown traffic; block off downtown streets for dining and live music; utilize riverfront; kayak/canoe launches
- Small playground at K of C for tournaments, for younger siblings
- Water / activity park near Diehl would be great
- Pavilion for winter skating
- Increased river access
- Canoe launch and liveries / rentals
- More walking trails
- Reservoir is underused – increase programming
- There are no winter activities – consider indoor or outdoor ice skating spaces

\*Note, most answers included ideas for the parks system as a whole, not specifically the rivers.

# Community Engagement: PUBLIC SURVEY SUMMARY

A statistically valid online survey was conducted, providing valuable insights into the community's thoughts and needs regarding both the parks system and riverfronts within the City of Defiance. Below is a summary of responses, with a full list of questions and answers available in the Appendix document. The survey was open from July 27 through September 12, 2024.

543 responses were received

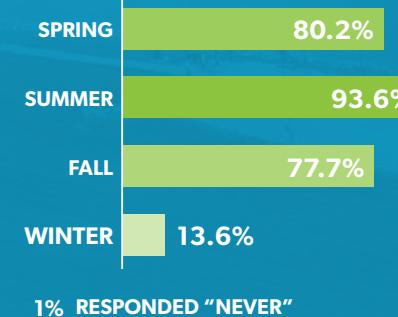


## CITY OF DEFIANCE DEMOGRAPHICS:

**79.8%**

OF RESPONDENTS LIVE  
OR WORK WITHIN THE  
CITY OF DEFIANCE.  
AN ADDITIONAL, 17.6% LIVE  
WITHIN DEFIANCE COUNTY.

### WHEN ARE YOU MOST LIKELY TO VISIT DEFIANCE PARKS?



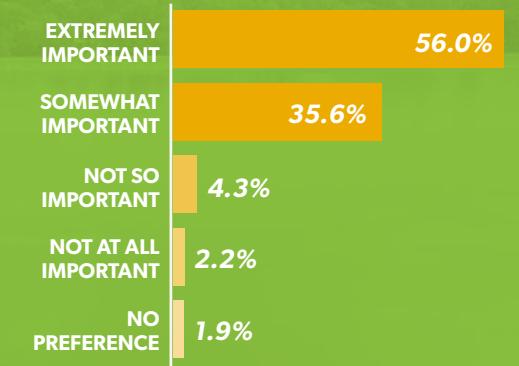
### THE FOLLOWING METHODS ARE USED FOR TRAVEL TO AND FROM THE PARKS:



91.3% DRIVE  
33.5% WALK  
13.0% BIKE

2.4% OTHER (skateboard, kayak/boat, motorcycle)  
1.3% DO NOT VISIT THE PARKS

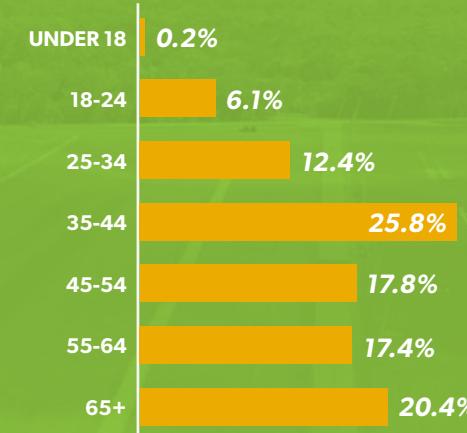
### HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR THE CITY OF DEFIANCE TO INVEST MORE MONEY IN DEFIANCE PARKS?



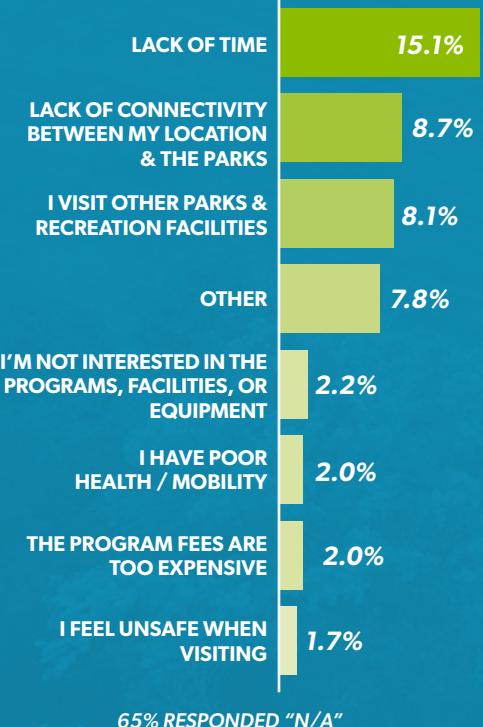
### WOULD THE AVAILABILITY OF AMENITIES ON OR NEAR THE WATER SUCH AS DINING, ICE CREAM, SHOPPING, WATERCRAFT RENTAL, AND OTHERS ENCOURAGE YOU TO USE THE WATERWAYS MORE OFTEN?

**74.2%**  
SAID YES

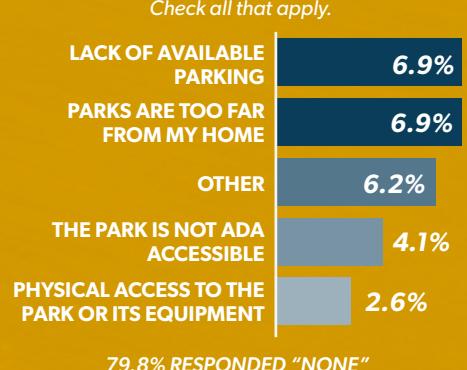
### AGE BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS:



### IF YOU DO NOT VISIT DEFIANCE PARKS, WHAT KEEPS YOU FROM DOING SO? Check all that apply.



### DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING PHYSICAL BARRIERS RESTRICT OR PREVENT YOU FROM USING DEFIANCE PARKS? Check all that apply.



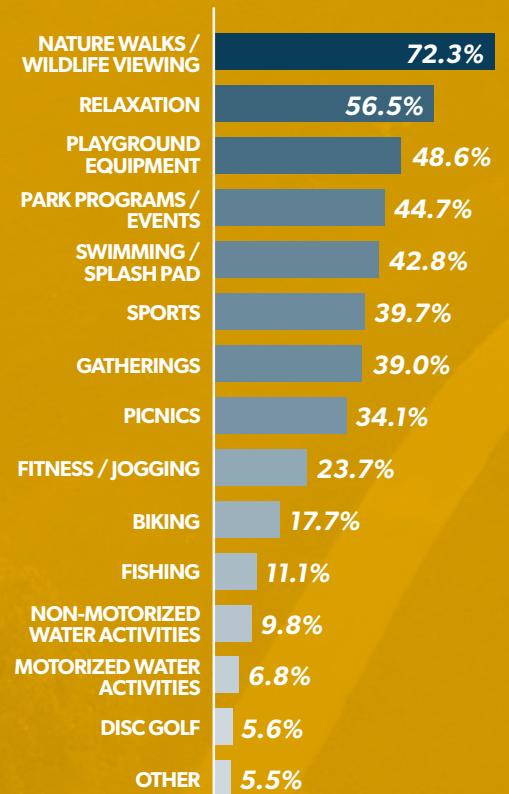
### WOULD THE AVAILABILITY OF AMENITIES ON OR NEAR THE WATER SUCH AS DINING, ICE CREAM, SHOPPING, WATERCRAFT RENTAL, AND OTHERS ENCOURAGE YOU TO USE THE WATERWAYS MORE OFTEN?

**74.2%**  
SAID YES

**94.6%**

OF RESPONDENTS AGREE,  
OR STRONGLY AGREE,  
THAT DEFIANCE PARKS ARE  
AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE IN  
THE COMMUNITY.

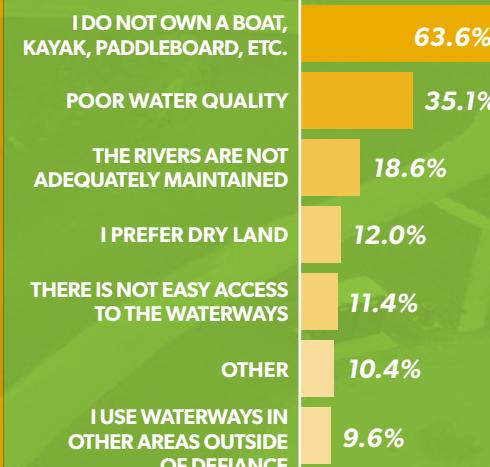
### WHAT SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES DO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY ENGAGE IN WHEN VISITING DEFIANCE PARKS? Check all that apply.



### DO YOU USE LOCAL RIVERS FOR WATER SPORTS OR BOATING, INCLUDING NON-MOTORIZED ACTIVITIES?

**54.4%**  
SAID YES OR THAT  
THEY WOULD LIKE TO

### IF NO, WHY NOT? Check all that apply.



**79.8%**

OF RESPONDENTS SAY  
THEY ARE RESIDENTS OF OR  
WORK WITHIN THE CITY OF  
DEFIANCE. AN ADDITIONAL  
17.6% LIVE WITHIN  
DEFIANCE COUNTY.

### WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR INFORMATION ABOUT PARK EVENTS AND PROGRAMS?



### WHAT ARE THE 5 MOST IMPORTANT PARK PROGRAMS THAT YOU FEEL THE PARK DEPARTMENT SHOULD PROVIDE?

#### TOP 5 ANSWERS



## WHAT PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES WOULD YOU LIKE THE CITY OF DEFIANCE TO ENHANCE OR ADD?

Choose your top 5 priorities.

### TOP 9 ANSWERS

1 OUTDOOR PERFORMANCES / CONCERTS

2 PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

3 PROGRAMS FOR TEENS

4 WATER ACTIVITIES ON THE RIVERS

5 ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES (I.E., ZIPLINING, ROPES COURSES, ETC.)

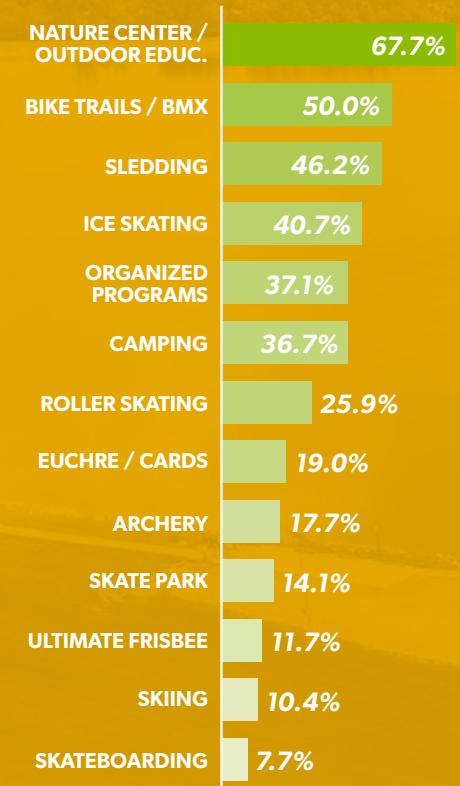
6 PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

7 OUTDOOR FITNESS PROGRAMS

8 PROGRAMS FOR SENIORS

9 NATURE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

## IDENTIFY THE TOP 5 PARK ACTIVITIES YOU AND YOUR FAMILY WOULD BE MOST LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE IN, IF AVAILABLE.



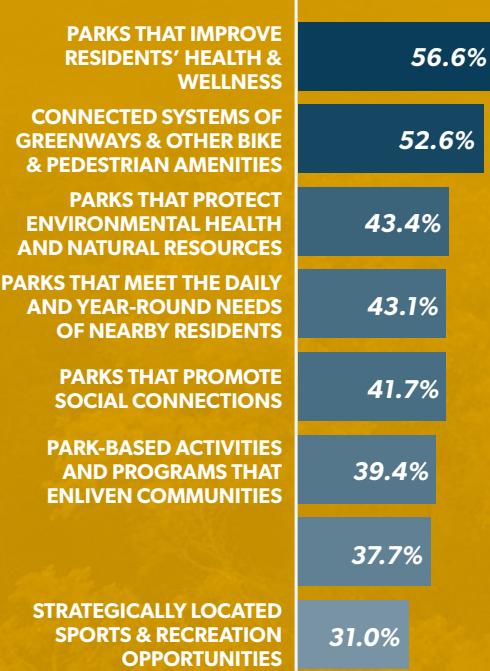
## TO ENSURE THE MASTER PLAN PROMOTES AN EQUITABLE PARKS AND RIVERFRONT SYSTEM, WHAT COMMUNITIES DO YOU THINK SHOULD RECEIVE PARTICULAR FOCUS DURING THE PLANNING PROCESS AND IN THE FINAL PLAN?

Choose your top 3 priorities.

### TOP 5 ANSWERS

- 1 WATERWAYS (MAUMEE, AUGLAIZE, & TIFIN RIVERS)
- 2 THOSE LOCATED ALONG THE RIVERS
- 3 THOSE WITH THE GREATEST NEED FOR THE BENEFITS PROVIDED BY PARKS & OPEN SPACES
- 4 THOSE WITH THE GREATEST NEED FOR THE HEALTH & WELLNESS BENEFITS OF PARKS
- 5 THOSE WITH A HISTORY OF DETERIORATING PARKS & OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES/SERVICES

WHEN YOU IMAGINE WHAT THE DEFIANCE PARK SYSTEM COULD LOOK LIKE IN 25 YEARS, WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT COMMUNITY BENEFITS YOU HOPE BECOME PART OF THE VISION AND ROADMAP PROVIDED BY THIS MASTER PLAN? *Check all that apply.*



## WHAT ARE THE FIRST 3 WORDS THAT COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF DEFIANCE PARKS OR RIVERS?



## WHAT FACILITIES SHOULD THE CITY OF DEFIANCE FOCUS ON?

Choose your top 5.

### TOP 5 ANSWERS

1. IMPROVING EXISTING PARK SITES
2. PAVED PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE TRAILS
3. RESTROOM FACILITIES
4. CANOE / KAYAK LAUNCHES
5. CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN PARKS

## Your ideas for the future of the parks:

"...Ensure small parks in the low income areas are built and maintained well. Maybe a fitness park with free heavy duty outdoor exercise equipment."  
*"I would love an indoor park for year-round access. More accessibility at all parks."*

*"Pontiac would be good for both a public, free dog park, and a skating rink, as both could handle a flood with proper construction."*

*"There is an old rail line that runs behind defiance reservoir that seems to be used only for storing train cars not in use. It would be so great to see that rail line paved as a multi-use walking/biking trail."*

*"Defiance really needs a fully enclosed inclusive playground..."*

*"Availability of drinking water throughout, shaded walking trails, fun and educational plaques/markers...whatever gets people out walking and appreciating nature."*

*"More trail/sidewalks to run safely on!"*

*"I would love to see one of the parks feature winter activities. I know the sledding hill at the reservoir was an asset but an ice rink would be beneficial and maybe a place that focused on winter activities. I also wish we had a skate park. That focused on space to skate as a family and for skateboard and biking tricks."*

*"Amphitheater for more live music to promote local music scene/talent. Look at Toledo's new Glass City Park for examples for kayak rentals, walking trails and community area. Great area to do so many things."*

## Your ideas for the future of the riverfronts:

*"I think if Defiance had boat docks/launches located on the Maumee near the downtown area, plus opportunities for eating, drinking, shopping, and relaxing, it could be a wonderful attraction for residents and out-of-towners. A band shell, ice cream, food, drink, picnic tables and shelter houses on the river would be a nice draw..."*

*"It would be awesome to open a spot or several spots that allow people to enjoy our rivers; like free swimming in the river..."*

*"Dockage accessibility for downtown. Promoting shared history via education and monumental/historical markers. Renovate boat launch and street parking at Pontiac."*

*"...Getting some sort of conference/event center that overlooks the water along the riverfront would be great."*

*"I feel if there were restaurants/bars/shops along the riverfront with outdoor seating, it would encourage people to enjoy the space. Because of flooding, a nice food truck alley could be a good alternative to permanent structures. A nice well-kept public restroom would be a must."*

*"Develop riverside commercial zones. Focus obtaining land and NEW develop almost solely along the riverside..."*

*"Installation of canoe/kayak ramps with rental availability. Ideally, have two locations (one along the Maumee and another on the Auglaize) so that people may travel between these two points via water."*

*"Riverside parks that were fully enclosed with public docking would be fantastic. My son who happens to have autism loves going for pontoon rides, if docks were available to access an inclusive park my dream would come true!"*

*"Nightlife for the river. More non-fast food restaurants on the river!"*

## Community Engagement: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

The community workshop opened with a statement from Mayor McCann and a presentation of the project to date. The design team explained the overall project scope and the results of the public survey. The end of the presentation featured a separate survey for the attendees to vote on amenities they would like to have in the Defiance park system. After the presentation, the group moved to the interactive boards where the community was able to express their ideas.

The handout on the right was advertised to the public in the beginning of August up until the workshop on September 23rd. It was posted on the City's website, the Facebook page (Defiance Parks & Rivers) for this master planning project, and in the windows of many downtown businesses. It was also handed out during the Family Fun Friday event on August 2nd. The goal of the workshop was to engage members of the community and offer a platform to voice their opinions and provide input to aid in developing the programming for the parks and riverfronts. A handout with a map of the project area and an explanation of the project schedule was also available at the sign-in area.

The community workshop captured a wide range of the local population, including families of all ages and residents that had not yet participated in one of the public events. Many are passionate about the Defiance area and were able to express their thoughts and ideas for improvements. Most of the 60 attendees stayed after the presentation to engage with the idea boards and provide further input at this critical stage of opportunity and analysis. The final boards with feedback can be found in the Appendix document with further explanations of the received input.



## COMMUNITY WORKSHOP SURVEY

A 21-question survey was given at the end of the community workshop to gain insight on specific amenities. The survey was then posted to Facebook the following day. Below is a summary of responses, with a full list of questions and responses available in the Appendix. The survey was open from September 23 through September 26, 2024. A total of 63 responses were gained, 49 from the workshop and 14 from social media.



# Stakeholder Engagement: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GROUPS

## Real Estate

- Increase trail connectivity
- Opportunities for development
- Empty lot next to Circle K has potential for mixed use / housing development
- Great need for more housing, especially apartment-style
- "I would love for Defiance to be a destination..." Bring amenities to Defiance that draw surrounding communities to the area
- Engage with riverfront and provide spots for boats to dock and spend the day

**"The parks look the best they ever have with the recent improvements."**

- Real Estate

## Downtown / Arts / Culture / Tourism

- Expressed importance of Native American recognition in the development of Buchman Park and provided resources on the history
- Implement new recreational activities, including kayak access, ice skating, camping opportunities, and pontoon rentals
- Need a permanent, outdoor amphitheater as rentals are expensive
- Emphasized importance of partnering with nearby organizations, such as youth and sport groups

## Youth Leagues

- Defiance does not have a large, indoor sports facility to allow for winter time practice or tournament hosting
- Provide programming that engages the teenage population
- Defiance sports programs are engaging with the Special Olympics and would benefit from accessible sport facilities

## Health & Wellness

- The City population has a shorter life expectancy that directly correlates to exercise; provide outdoor recreation, especially to the east side and other lower income areas
- Need to change the stigma that the rivers are "dirty" because they are an amazing asset to the City

**"We need a commemorative space for Native Americans - this story hasn't been told yet."**

- Downtown / Arts / Culture & Tourism

## Park-Centric

- Requests for bike trails that accommodate families
- Metro Park board is working to institute self-serviced kiosks for canoes and kayaks
- Hopkins Street to 2nd Street does not flood - potential for riverfront access without fears of flooding
- Emphasized importance of beautification for existing parks and development along the rivers, from a DORA District to marinas

## Financial Institutions

- Sand volleyball is popular for teenagers, but could use improvement
- Expressed that public may use rivers if they were cleaner - poor reputation
- Need for destination dining and amphitheater space

## Adult Athletic Clubs & Avid Fitness

- Need for winter activities; ice rink, cross country skiing, etc.
- Add outdoor exercise equipment within existing parks
- Need to ensure improvements will be maintained after construction
- Great support for levies – the community sees the impact through the parks as a result

## Educational Resources

- Library hopes to expand children services and provide free events
- Pursue more H2Ohio funds to provide more wetlands
- Implement an educational corridor along the rivers, including the library, proposed annex, and 102 Washington Avenue
- Provide free community spaces and partner with local organizations for programming
- Defiance is on the pathway for migratory birds - provide bird watching spaces
- Explore and recognize other historically significant aspects of Defiance beyond Fort Grounds and Buchman Park

**"This area has so much history that hasn't been shared or given equal weight."**

- Educational Resources

## Water Recreation

- Shade determines how long people stay at a park
- Continue providing programs to engage children in the summer
- Top concerns: improve overall connectivity, provide pedestrian access across rivers, and provide public restrooms throughout
- Implement better outreach methods to inform the community
  - Highlight existing trails, provide QR codes or handouts with park amenities and programs

## Accessibility & Seniors

- Need to provide accessible and inclusive playgrounds, including adult changing tables in restroom facilities
- Seating areas should provide more shade, be near restrooms, and have accessible pathways
- Improve overall crosswalks, curb ramps, and street crossings as many are not safe for people of all abilities
- A free nature center would be a great amenity for the senior community, with animal education, bird watching, etc.
- Parking areas available at parks need to allow for bus parking and unloading, many existing parks do not have enough space
- Consider providing elevators for access to elevated viewing areas

## Large Local Industries

- Improve pedestrian access across the rivers – there are safety concerns over sidewalks on existing bridges
- Need more housing available in the area – no rental opportunities or affordable housing
- Provide amenities and activities for young professionals, nothing to draw them to Defiance today
- Overall connectivity has improved over the years but there are limits as sidewalks and paths end; provide loops or continuous trail opportunities

**"Positive improvements at Reservoir - would love to see that energy put into downtown parks."**

- Large Local Industries



**DEFIANCE**  
PARKS & RIVERFRONT  
MASTER PLAN



**OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS // OCTOBER 2024**