



CITY OF  
**HANCOCK**

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# RECREATION PLAN 2024 - 2028

Prepared by  
**WESTERN U.P. PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT REGION**



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# Acknowledgements

The purpose of this plan is to set forth a recreation strategy for the City of Hancock that addresses the forces of change, confronts future challenges, and provides direction for decision-making regarding investment in recreation projects in Hancock. This plan was developed in accordance with the guidelines for Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans published by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). A five-year, DNR-approved Recreation Plan is necessary for governmental entities to pursue DNR-administered grants.

## Mayor & City Council

Kurt A. Rickard, Mayor  
Lisa McKenzie, Mayor Pro tem  
Ron Blau  
Richard Freeman Jr.  
Amanda Lounibos  
Ryan Tanner  
Whitney Warstler

## City Manager

Mary Babcock

## Hancock Recreation Commission

John Diebel  
Dean Woodbeck  
Craig Pellizzaro  
Dave Dow  
Lisa McKenzie  
Brooke Harris  
John Erickson  
Michael Lancour

## Recreation Facilities

Maasto Hiihto Ski Trails  
Hancock Community Area  
    Hancock Driving Park  
    HoCo Arena  
    Hancock Dog Park  
Laurn-Grove Park  
Klondike Park  
Montezuma Park  
Memorial Park  
Pine Park  
Porvoo Park  
Terrace Park  
Third Street Park

Hancock Recreation Area (Beach & Campground)  
Hancock Labyrinth  
Ryan Street Community Garden  
Swedetown Creek Launch Area

This plan was prepared by the Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region.

All opinions and results contained in this document belong to the authors and do not represent positions taken by any of the above-mentioned agencies or institutions. All errors remain the responsibility of the authors.

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# Introduction

Recreation plays an important role in the City of Hancock residents' quality of life as well as the broader economy. Hancock, like much of the Upper Peninsula, is blessed with an abundance of natural outdoor amenities including all-season recreation trails, scenic forestland, crystal clear water, streams for fishing, playgrounds for all ages, and so much more. These assets offer residents unparalleled, year-round opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and entice tourists to visit the city while stimulating the local economy through spending on lodging, restaurants, and shopping. Recognizing the value of these amenities, economic development organizations and employers are leveraging outdoor recreation assets to attract new employees to work and play in Hancock.

Hancock is one of many local recreation asset stewards, with the broader network of assets owned and maintained by local governments, nearby communities, state agencies, conservancies, institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, recreation organizations, and private entities. The combination of these assets affords both residents and tourists an abundance of recreational opportunities and makes Hancock an incredibly unique destination for outdoor enthusiasts. It also emphasizes the importance of partnerships and collaborations, particularly on projects which cross municipal boundaries.

Because recreation is important to local livelihoods and lifestyles, Hancock has developed its 2024-2028 City of Hancock Recreation Plan to guide future recreation development and improvements. The Hancock Recreation Commission, with assistance from the Western U.P. Planning & Development Region (WUPPDR), completed an inventory of existing recreation assets and a city-wide survey to determine recreation goals, identify future needs, and establish an action program of facility improvements.



*Photo: An aerial view of downtown Hancock*

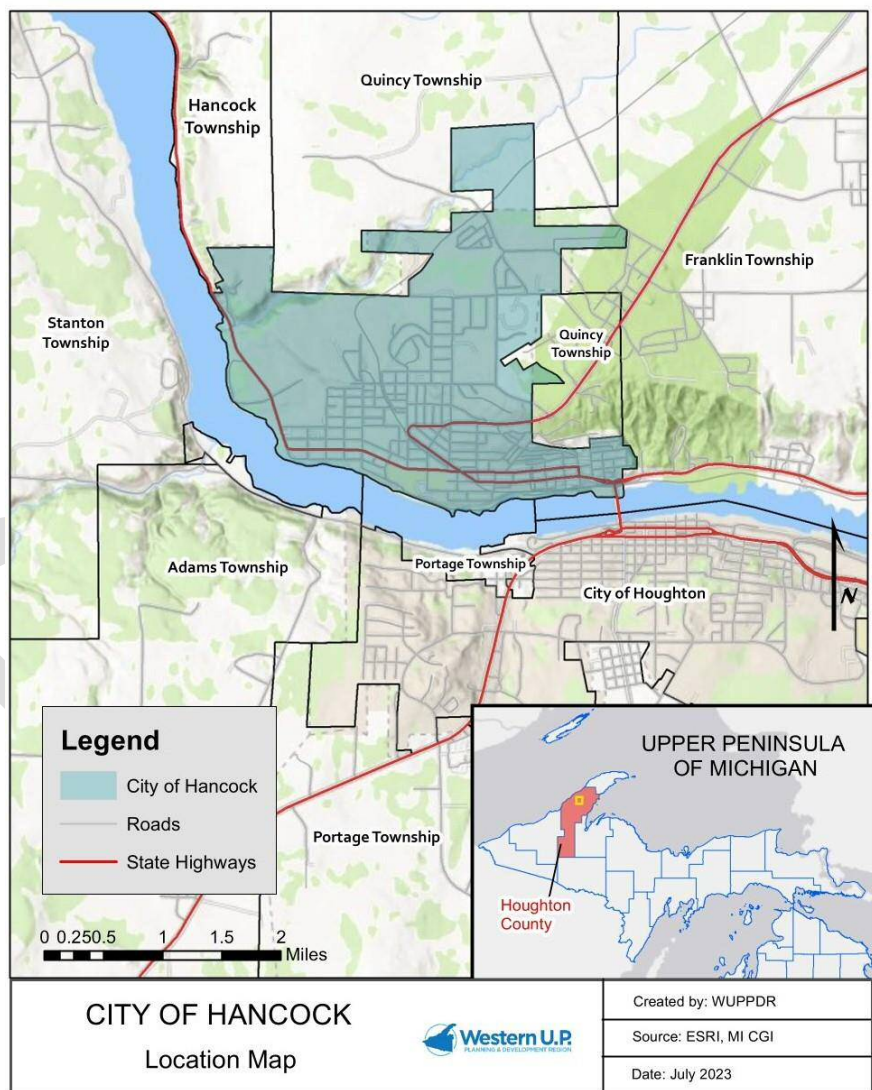


# Community Description

## Location

The City of Hancock is located on the north shore of the Keweenaw Waterway in Houghton County, Michigan (see Figure 1). Bordered by Franklin, Quincy and Hancock Townships to the east, north and west, respectively, the city has a total land area of 2.78 square miles (1,778 acres).

The City of Hancock was platted in 1859 and established as a village in 1863. The city, in its development, was sculpted out of the steep hillside northern bank of Portage Lake, is separated from the “mainland” by the Keweenaw Waterway and is connected to the rest of the county by the Houghton-Hancock Portage Lake Lift Bridge.



**Figure 1:** Location Map for the City of Hancock

### Population Characteristics

The City of Hancock's population is 4,501 as of the 2020 census, compared to a 2010 population of 4,634, representing a population loss of 2.9%. At the height of the copper boom in 1910, the Census Bureau recorded 8,981 residents of the city. University students who live in Hancock and attend Michigan Technological University bring the total population of Hancock to about 5,000.

Demographic information and characteristics can be reviewed below in Table 1. Senior citizens (65+ years) account for 21.9 percent of the City's population, slightly higher than the overall Michigan average of 17.9 percent. Additionally, 15.1 percent of the population are minors (under 18 years), slightly lower than the Michigan average of 21.5 percent.

An approximate 10.7 percent of the population has a disability, an important consideration for recreation planning.

<b>Table 1: Basic Demographics &amp; Characteristics</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
<b>Total Population<sup>1</sup></b>	4,501	100%
<b>Race<sup>1</sup></b>		
White	4,021	89.3%
Black	66	1.5%
American Indian & Alaska Native	37	0.8%
Asian	82	1.8%
Other (Including two or more races)	295	6.6%
<b>Age<sup>1</sup></b>		
Under 5 Years	196	4.3%
5 to 9 Years	154	3.4%
10 to 19 Years	529	11.8%
20 to 29 Years	1,053	23.4%
30 to 39 Years	509	11.3%
40 to 49 Years	402	8.9%
50 to 59 Years	437	9.7%
60 to 69 Years	483	10.7%
70 to 79 Years	378	8.4%
80 & Above	361	8.1%
<b>Sex<sup>1</sup></b>		
Male	2,272	50.5%
Female	2,229	49.5%
<b>Disability<sup>2</sup></b>	(of total civilian noninstitutionalized population estimate of 4274)	
With a Disability	458	10.7%

1= 2020 Decennial Census ; 2= American Community Survey 2021 5-Year Estimates



## Housing

The City of Hancock's vacancy rate (12.7%) is roughly equivalent to Michigan's overall vacancy rate of 11.6% according to the 2020 Decennial Census. Of occupied housing units, the City has far more renters (49.7%) compared to the state's overall rental rate of 29.1% (2020 Decennial Census). This is due largely to Michigan Technological University students rental housing needs.

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	2,278	100%
Vacant Housing Units	289	12.7%
Occupied Housing Units	1,988	87.3%
Owner-Occupied Housing Units	1,000	50.3% (of all occupied housing units)
Renter-Occupied Housing Units	988	49.7% (of all occupied housing units)

*1= 2020 Decennial Census*

## Poverty & Income

The City of Hancock has a higher estimated overall poverty rate (22.2%) than the state of Michigan (13.4%) according to the American Community Survey 2021 5-Year Estimates. However, poverty among people under the age of 18 is much lower in the City of Hancock (4.0%) compared to the state of Michigan (18.2%). The City of Hancock's median household income of \$43,514, about 35% lower than the state median household income of \$66,986.

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
<b>Below Poverty Line</b>		
All Ages	780	22.2%
Under 18	23	4.0%
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$43,514	

*2= American Community Survey 2021 5-Year Estimates*

## Education

Primary and secondary schools in the City of Hancock are within the Copper Country Intermediate School District, which serves Houghton and Keweenaw counties. Hancock Public Schools has roughly 700 students across its elementary, middle and high schools, servicing the townships of Franklin, Quincy, Hancock, and the City of Hancock.

Post-secondary education includes nearby Houghton's Michigan Technological University, a public college with a total student population of over 7,000. Hancock's Finlandia University recently closed in May 2023. This small, private college previously had a total enrollment of about 400 students. The City of Hancock is currently working on preserving three university buildings Wargelin Hall, Nikander Hall, and Mannerheim Hall, from abandonment to provide upkeep and security until a longer-term buyer is found.

There are also two community education organizations which provide additional resources. Kaleidoscope, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, provides educational resources in the form of classes and community events that support homeschooling and traditional schooling families. The Community Alliance for Progressive Education (CAPE) provides hands-on learning to broaden education opportunities drawing from a range of alternative education models.

The City of Hancock has very similar educational attainment statistics to the overall state of Michigan, as seen in Table 4 below. However, attainment of a bachelor's degree or above in the City of Hancock is much higher than in the overall state of Michigan, 47.1% and 31.7% respectively. This is largely due to the employees of Michigan Technological University, the area's largest employer.

	<b>City of Hancock</b>	<b>Michigan</b>
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2.2%	2.5%
9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade, No Diploma	4.3%	5.5%
High school graduate or equivalent	23.2%	28.7%
Some college, no degree	16.7%	21.8%
Associate degree	6.5%	9.8%
Bachelor's degree	25.3%	19.2%
Graduate or professional degree	21.8%	12.5%

<sup>2</sup>= American Community Survey 2021 5-Year Estimates

### **Economy & Employment**

Throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the economy of Hancock and the Keweenaw Peninsula flourished with strong copper mining and smelting industries. By the mid-1910s, lower copper prices began to cause decline in these industries, and by 1968, virtually all mining activities had ceased.

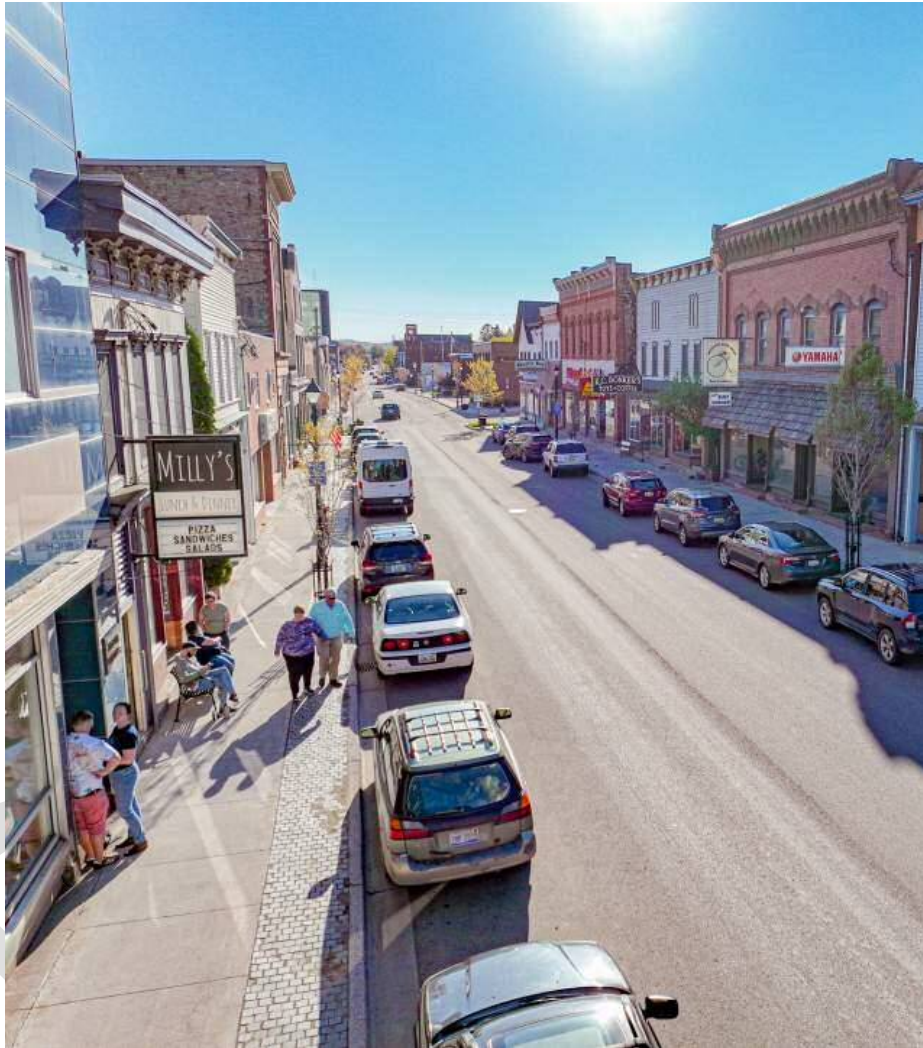
Today, Michigan Technological University, UP Health System-Portage, governmental agencies and four-season tourism provide diversity to the economy. A strong winter tourism season exists due to the area's heavy snowfall, while summer tourism is fostered by the area's many lakes, forests, and parks. Many snowmobilers and skiers now visit the Keweenaw Peninsula due largely to an outstanding, well-connected trail system, reliable snow conditions, favorable temperatures and breathtaking beauty. People choose Hancock to work, live and play because of its easy access to the outdoors and the many recreational opportunities available.

According to the American Community Survey 2021 Estimates, the City of Hancock has a similar employment rate to the state of Michigan, 59.2% and 56.6%, respectively. The City's unemployment rate (1.6%) is significantly lower than the state's (4.2%). About 39.2% of the City's population is not in the labor force, including retirees and children. Education and healthcare services are the largest employers in the City of Hancock, accounting for 35.1% of employment, much higher than the state (23.0%). Additionally, arts, entertainment, and

recreation account for 13.1% of the City’s employment, much higher than the state’s (8.1%), indicating strong recreational and tourism economies in the area.

### Transportation

Two major highways, U.S. Route 41 and Michigan Route 26 (the Portage Lake Lift Bridge),



*Photo: Looking westward in Downtown Hancock (photo by Visit Keweenaw)*

serve the City of Hancock. A third highway, Michigan Route 203, is a lakeshore spur route that connects Hancock with the Village of Calumet to the north. Houghton County Memorial Airport (CMX) is located 6.5 miles northeast of the City via U.S. Route 41.

The City of Hancock is also the beginning of the Copper Country Trail National Byway, which follows US-41 for 47 miles from its southernmost point of the Portage Lake Lift Bridge to the northernmost point of historic Copper Harbor. There are multiple routes off US-41 including M-26, M-203, and Brockway Mountain Drive, among others. The National Byway programming primarily focuses on the history of the Keweenaw Peninsula, highlighting copper mining and cultural heritage sites along the route.

The City of Hancock’s location offers the potential for drawing visitor dollars. The inherent “funnel effect” in play when traversing the Portage Lake Lift Bridge into Hancock steers visitors destined for the Keweenaw Peninsula directly into the City’s primary traffic stream.

Hancock is served by the Indian Trails bus line that runs to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The City of Hancock operates an on-demand bus to take city residents anywhere in the cities of Hancock, Houghton, and Ripley.

### Land Use

The land use in the city is mainly urban developed land which includes houses, yards, buildings, roads, and parking lots, followed by less than a third of mixed and deciduous forest types. Wetland comprises less than five percent of the total city area with areas of less than a couple percent making up the remaining barren land, coniferous forest, and grassland.

**Table 5: Land Use Percentages in Hancock, MI**

Land Use Type	Percentage
Urban	62%
Mixed Forest	14%
Deciduous forest	13%
Wetland	4%
Barren Lands	2%
Coniferous Forest	1%
Grassland	1%

*\*(based on USGS 2020 land use data)*

### Natural Features and Geology

The landscape surrounding the City of Hancock has a billion-year-old geologic history centered on the Mid-Continent Rift system that connects the Keweenaw Peninsula with Isle Royale. This rift created the Lake Superior basin, which encompasses the city and surrounding area. The City of Hancock itself is primarily underlain by Portage Lake Volcanics (basalt), Copper Harbor Conglomerate, with other facies of Nonesuch Formation (shale), and Freda Sandstone.

The relationships with the landscape in the Keweenaw area in which the City of Hancock occupies has been active for thousands of years. This history starts with ancient copper mining sites from over three thousand years back, followed by the Anishinaabe nation, the copper boom of 1840-1910 which brought European immigrants to the land to mine copper deposits that occupy the formations in the region. The steep hillside that gives Hancock its characteristic appearance was created by a combination of geologic rifts and outflows of ancient glacial lakes eroding the landscape to how it looks today.

### Soils and Vegetation

The greater Keweenaw soil consists primarily of deep well-drained soils in sandy deposits on



glacial formations from the most recent glacial period, the Pleistocene. These soils have moderate to moderately rapid permeability. Locally in the City of Hancock, most soils are made up of cobbly or gravely sandy loam soil with a thin covering usually two inches or less of topsoil. There are also some less prominent instances of silty loam soil and sand deposits especially near the city bounds along the portage coastline. There is also an area that is actively worked as an open mine for gravel and sand.

The area's natural vegetation is primarily composed of mixed forest and deciduous forest but there are also some minor areas under five percent of the total land that have wetland, grassland, and coniferous forest which is the edge of a planted stand of red pine.



*Photo: Portage Lake Lift Bridge and Portage Lake (photo by Ramada)*

### **Water Resources**

The City of Hancock is on the northern side of Portage Lake. Portage Lake is part of the Keweenaw Waterway which extends from Lake Superior (northern entry) to the Keweenaw Bay of Lake Superior near Baraga (southern entry). This waterway is partially man-made as areas were dredged in the 1860s to allow freighters to access Houghton and Hancock to provide the cities with goods, as well as retrieve copper during the mining boom. Today, these water

resources are used for various recreational activities including boating, kayaking, swimming, and more. Year-round fishing is another popular activity in area's waters, for both recreational and economic purposes, with abundant species including Northern Pike, walleye, smallmouth bass, perch, and lake trout.

### **Climate**

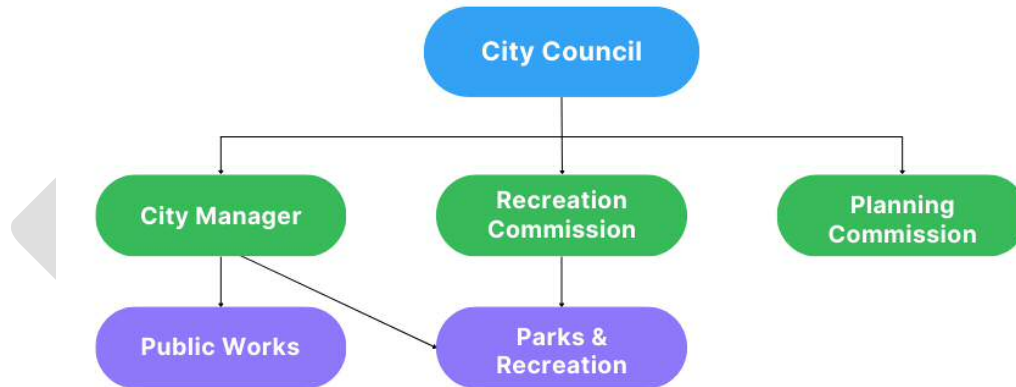
The climate of the City of Hancock is seasonal and varies in the peak of summer with average highs in the 70s °F and lows in the mid-50s °F to the heart of winter with average highs in the low-20s °F and lows in the low-10s °F. Generally spring is cool and brief while fall occurs in September with winter following usually around mid-November. The area receives an average of 32 inches of rain annually. Lake Superior insulates the Keweenaw Peninsula creating milder winter temperature conditions than the surrounding areas but also catalyzes lake effect snow yielding an average accumulation of 205 inches of snow annually. The city is located in the USDA plant hardiness zone of 5b (-15°F to -10°F).



# Administrative Structure

To encourage open communication between citizens and their government, the City of Hancock uses a council – manager form of government that is governed by a seven-member council. The Recreation Commission oversees recreational programming and reports to the Hancock City Council. Upon the recommendations of the Recreation and Planning Commissions, the City Council designates funds as necessary for programming and infrastructure improvements. The City also has a 1 mil tax that funds recreation programs. The City Manager coordinates recreation development and directs Department of Public Works staff in maintaining facilities. Figure 2 depicts the City’s organizational structure. Hancock’s recreation programs and sites are supplemented by Hancock Public Schools and the Copper Country Intermediate School District, which are available to residents. Other recreation partners include Copper Country Junior Hockey Association, Copper Country Little League, Hancock Beautification Committee, and the Copper Country Old Timers (CCOT).

The City of Hancock also partners with the Hancock Trails Club (HTC, formerly the Keweenaw Nordic Ski Club), a local non-profit organization that maintains and coordinates improvements to the Maasto Hiihto / Churning Rapids Trail System.



**Figure 2:** City of Hancock Administrative Structure

The City of Hancock’s recreation budget varies by year. The current budget for 2023-2024 shows \$235,000 for park operations, \$103,362 for the campground, \$27,000 for Hancock Beach, \$775,000 for Maasto Hiihto / Churning Rapids Trail System, and \$214,000 for Lurn-Grove Park and HoCo Arena. The total amount allocated for recreation-related spending is \$1,354,362. The City’s Council allocates funds based on operation and capital improvement needs.

# Recreation Inventory

The following recreation inventory describes all parks, natural areas, other public spaces and recreation facilities within and near the City of Hancock - used by city residents - with an emphasis on land and facilities the city owns or operates. Additionally, accessibility assessments and rankings are provided for each city-maintained site based on the parameters outlined in the Michigan DNR's "*Guidelines for the Development of Community Parks and Recreation Plans*". as follows:

- 1=none of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 2=some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 3=most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 4=the entire facilities/park meets accessibility guidelines
- 5=the entire facilities/park was developed/renovated using the principles of universal design

More than just an item on a checklist, universal design is an integral part of recreation facility development. The approach helps to maximize the return on investment in recreation by making facilities as safe and user-friendly as possible. Assessments were completed by members of the Hancock Recreation Commission with direction by WUPPDR staff.

The City of Hancock has had nine previous DNR grant-funded projects on record:

## **Grant Number: 26-01023 T3**

- Facility: Hancock Bathhouse
- Year: 1977
- Development Scope Item: Develop bathhouse/restroom and concession building/ first aid/ storage.
- Status: Site has been updated and maintained since originally built. The basic layout is the same with added updates for ADA access and additional amenities for outdoor recreation.

## **Grant Number: 26-01450**

- Facility: Hancock Beach
- Year: 1986
- Development Scope Item: Parking lot, walkways, volleyball courts, picnic tables, playground equipment
- Status: Additional volleyball court added, new accessible paths paved, additional accessible swing set, watersports venue added, new recreational pier, upgraded playground equipment

**Grant Number: BF89-544**

- Facility: Shoreline Observation Deck
- Year: 1989
- Development Scope Item: Add observation deck to shoreline. Gravel parking. Lighting. Amenities
- Status: Original site has expanded to include a staircase down from the Observation Deck to the paved DNR trail. Boardwalk has been extended. Pavilion constructed. Amenities added.

**Grant Number: BF92-023**

- Facility: Tezcuco Street Deck
- Year: 1992
- Development Scope Item: Continuation of waterfront observation deck/dock
- Status: Additional dock/boardwalk extension has been completed. Pavilion, swings, and gardens added to the area.

**Grant Number: BF89-544**

- Facility: Driving Park All-Season Building
- Year: 2000
- Development Scope Item: Construct 1,872 foot all-season building with restrooms
- Status: The project has been completed and all capital improvements are in good working order.

**Grant Number: TF01-153**

- Facility: Portage Lake Waterfront Boardwalk Addition
- Year: 2001
- Development Scope Item: 220 foot addition of waterfront boardwalk including fishing access.
- Status: Additional dock/boardwalk extension has been completed. Pavilion, swings, and gardens added to the area.

**Grant Number: TF11-021**

- Facility: Navy Street Park Boardwalk Development
- Year: 2011
- Development Scope Item: Additional 382 feet of universally accessible boardwalk

- Status: Landscape and a swing set have been added. The covered pavilion with restrooms is available for public use. Electricity will be extended from the pavilion.

**Grant Number: TF16-0013**

- Facility: Hancock Waterfront Recreational Pier
- Year: 2016
- Development Scope Item: Grading, asphalt paving, recreational pier, kayak launch
- Status: Since completion, outdoor paddle sports rental venue has been added.

**Grant Number: RP19-0067**

- Facility: Hancock Campground Bathhouse Renovation
- Year: 2019
- Development Scope Item: Renovation to meet requirements for accessibility. Upgrade electrical.
- Status: The project has been completed and all capital improvements are in good working order.

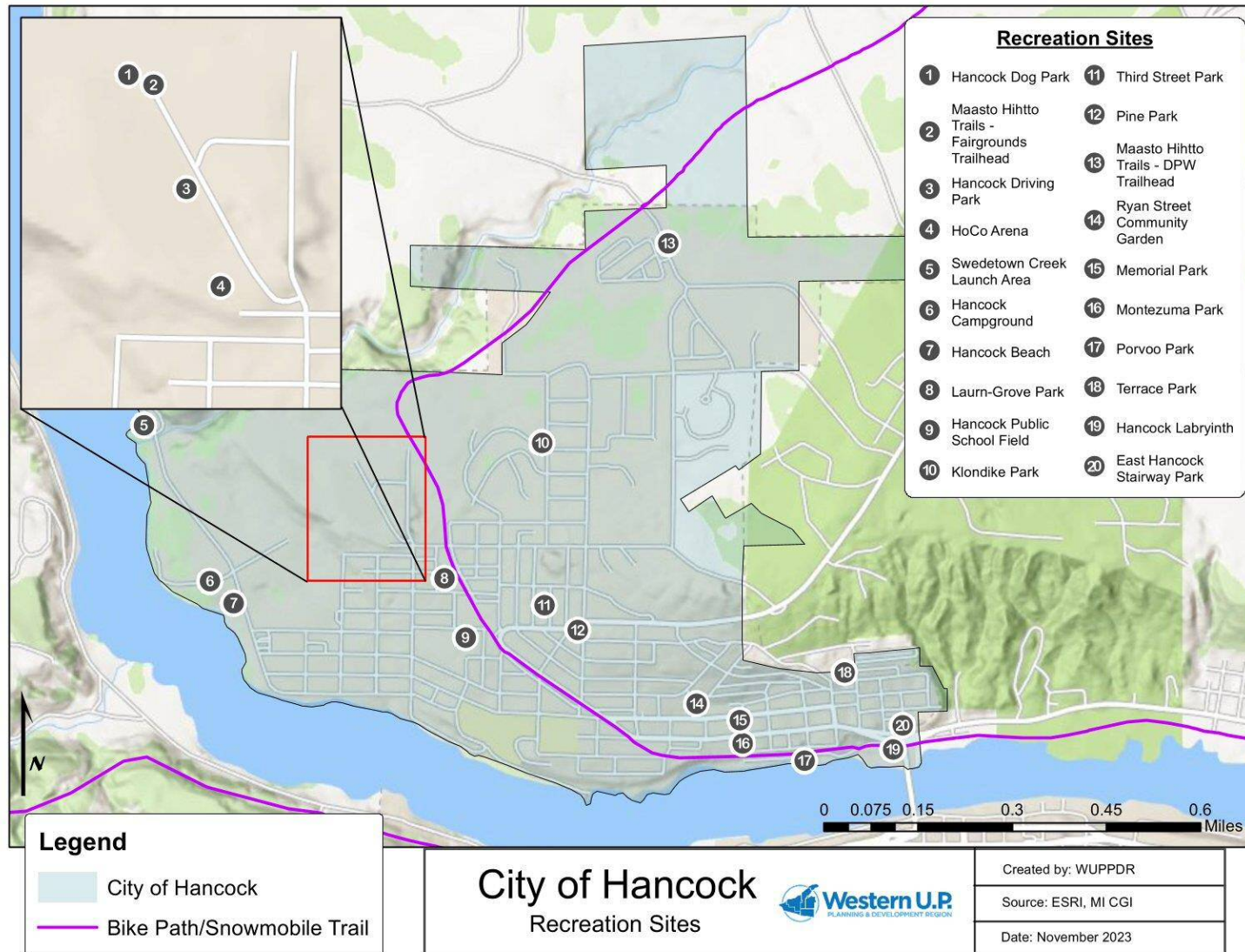


Figure 3: City of Hancock Recreation Sites – Locations Map

## Facilities Owned by the City of Hancock (see Figure 3: City of Hancock Recreation Map)

### Hancock Community Area

#### 1. Hancock Dog Park

Located north of the Driving Park, the Hancock Dog Park was constructed in 2022. The dog park has separate fenced-in areas for small and large dogs, sheltered benches, dog stations, and drinking water access for dogs. Accessibility assessment = 1



*Photo: Hancock Dog Park signage (photo by Keweenaw Report)*

#### 2. Hancock Driving Park

Owned by the City of Hancock, this 16.3-acre community park is located north of the HoCo Arena. The Hancock Driving Park hosts the annual Houghton County Fair in August. The Hancock Driving Park includes three fenced baseball and softball fields. The Four Seasons Chalet is a heated multipurpose building located at the park with restrooms. The park also has a parking area and equipment storage. Accessibility assessment = 3

#### 3. HoCo Arena

The HoCo Arena (formerly Houghton County Arena) is a multi-purpose facility located in Hancock and managed by the City of Hancock. The arena includes a winter ice rink, serving as the primary facility for over 600 junior hockey players, as well as senior and high school teams. Public skate times are available, as well as scheduled skates for youth and senior citizens. The ice rink is maintained for at least six months of the year and is one of three managed ice rinks available in the Houghton/Hancock area. When the ice is off from March through September, the rink area is available for group/organizational rentals. The grounds are used extensively for 4-H, the County Fair, a rest station for the adjacent Maasto Hiihto Trail system, and other recreational and community programs. The most recent renovations to the facility include a new refrigeration system, energy efficient lighting, and ADA compliant bleachers. Accessibility assessment = 2



*Photo: HoCo Arena Ice (photo by Finlandia University)*



## **Hancock Recreation Area**

### **4. Hancock Campground**

This city-owned 19-acre campground includes a boat launch, playground, potable water, ADA accessible restrooms and showers, laundry, electricity, and sanitary disposal. There are 72 campsites available – 58 for recreational vehicles (all with electricity, some with water hookup) and 14 rustic tent sites. Guests can reserve sites online. A registration attendant is available throughout the daytime hours with firewood and ice available for purchase. A parking lot is



*Photo: Hancock Campground*

available near registration and trailer parking is available near the boat launch. The campground is well-shaded with a dense mix of hardwood and softwood trees. On the south side of the campground, a walking trail leads to the nearby Hancock Beach. Accessibility assessment = 3

### **5. Hancock Beach**

Hancock Beach is a 10-acre city-owned recreational area with a picnic area, swimming beach, recreational pier, playground equipment, accessible swing set, sand volleyball courts, and horseshoe pits. A pavilion is available for reservations online. A large parking lot, restrooms, and a changing house are available for guests. The concession building sells snacks/ice cream and rents out paddle boards and kayaks. A trail on the north side of the beach area leads to the nearby Hancock Campground.

Accessibility assessment = 3



*Photo: Hancock Beach*

## 6. Laurn-Grove Park

This 1.3-acre city-owned park is located between Emery and Roberts Streets, bordering the DNR trail. Laurn-Grove Park is used year-round. In the winter, an outdoor rink, alongside the warming shelter, is used for hockey and ice skating. In the summer, the rink is used for basketball and ball hockey. The park also includes two playground structures including a swing set and benches, and a fenced court used for tennis and pickleball. The park is dedicated to two Hancock sailors who died in World War II.

Accessibility assessment = 3



*Photo: Laurn-Grove Park*

## 7. Klondike Park

On the northwest corner of Poplar Street and Crestwood Drive, this 0.1-acre city-owned park includes a playground structure and gazebo. The park is located at the former site of the City of Hancock water tower.

Accessibility assessment = 3

## 8. Third Street Park

Third Street is a 0.5-acre city-owned park located north of Highway 41 off Third Street. The park is well-shaded and features a playground structure, a swing set, a basketball court, benches, and a sheltered picnic table. Accessibility assessment = 3

## 9. Pine Park

Pine Park is a 0.45-acre city-owned park located off Highway 41 on the corner of Pine Street and South Elevation Street. The park is well-shaded and includes a playground structure, park benches, flower beds, and tables.

Accessibility assessment = 3



*Photo: Pine Park sign*

## 10. Memorial Park

Memorial Park, a 0.1-acre city-owned site, is located on Quincy Street across from City Hall. Memorial Park includes a granite memorial honoring Hancock residents who died in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. A metal monument recognizes the five branches of the U.S. military. The park also includes flower gardens, benches, and tables. Hancock's annual Christmas Tree lighting is located at Memorial Park.



Accessibility assessment = 4

### 11. Montezuma Park

This 1-acre city-owned park is located south of Hancock Avenue on Montezuma Street. Montezuma Park includes a playground structure and swing set. At the center of the park, a flower garden was built to honor the Gold Star Families, the families of fallen members of the U.S. Armed Forces. The park features a stone sofa built in the 1930s/Great Depression by the Conservation Corps. The staircase at the south of the park leads to the DNR trail and waterway.

Accessibility assessment = 2



*Photo: Montezuma Park*

### 12. Porvoo Park

Named after Hancock's sister city in Finland, Porvoo Park is a 0.3-acre city-owned park located along the Portage Canal waterfront on Navy Street, with close access to the DNR trail. A pavilion located at the park can be rented for events and public restrooms are available. The park features a boardwalk along the waterfront, benches, picnic tables, a swing set, and fishing areas. Two herb gardens are available for public use. Porvoo Park also has a bicycle rack and bike repair station.



*Photo: Porvoo Park boardwalk*

### 13. Terrace Park

Located on Dunstan Street, Terrace Park is a 1.3-acre city-owned park. The park includes tennis and basketball courts, a playground structure, swing set, picnic tables, and benches. There is also a rustic baseball area.

Accessibility assessment = 3



*Photo: Terrace Park sign*

#### 14. East Hancock Stairway Park

East Hancock Stairway Park is a 0.3-acre city-owned park located on A Street. This park features benches and landscaping. The park overlooks the Portage Lake Lift Bridge and has a historic Great Depression-era stairway to East Hancock.

Accessibility assessment = 1

#### 15. Ryan Street Community Gardens

The Ryan Street Community Gardens were established in 2010 and has continued to expand each year. It was originally built on three lots of empty land on the first block of Ryan Street in downtown Hancock by a volunteer group. The garden, originally on Finlandia's campus, feeds, educates and serves the community. Since Finlandia's closing in 2023, the City of Hancock has purchased the land and it has become a publicly owned park, thus preserving the gardens for future generations to enjoy.

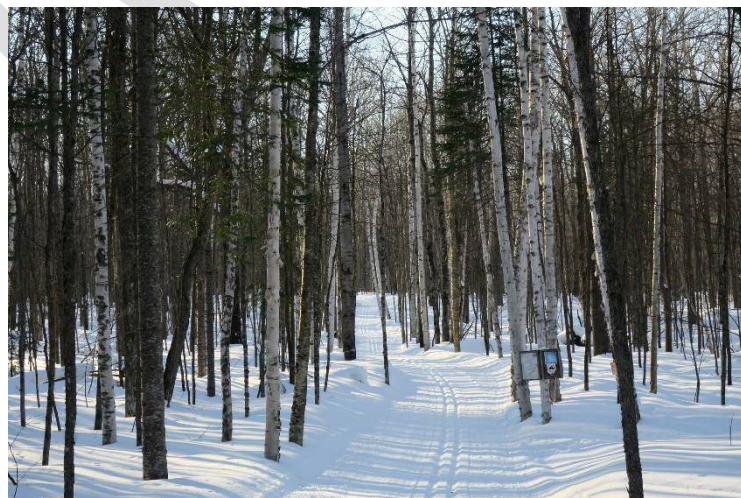
Accessibility assessment = 1



*Photo: Ryan Street Community Garden hosts workshops for all ages (Photo by Ryan Street Community Garden)*

#### 16. Maasto Hiihto Trails

The Maasto Hiihto Trails are a community-multi use recreation trail system located on mostly private land. Access is maintained through annual agreements with landowners. The Maasto Hiihto Trails connect to the Churning Rapids trail system (located on private land protected by conservation easements), including around 26 kilometers of trails in the combined system. The trails are used



*Photo: Maasto Hiihto Trails showcasing winter recreation opportunities (photo by Hancock Trails Club)*



for mountain biking and walking during the summer. In the winter, the trails are maintained for skiing, snowshoeing, and snowbiking by the city in partnership with the Hancock Trails Club. Maasto Hiihto trailheads are located at the Chalet at the Houghton County fairgrounds, and Tomasi Road near the Hancock Department of Public Works garage. Churning Rapids trailheads can be accessed through the connection to Maasto Hiihto trails or by the Christensen Road trailhead (private property) in Hancock Township. The trails are dog-friendly and feature beautiful natural assets including the Swedetown Creek Gorge and the John Christensen wildlife preserve.

Accessibility assessment = 1

### 17. Swedetown Creek Launch Area

Boat launch originally maintained by the DNR at the mouth of Swedetown Creek on M203. Parking area with paddlecraft boat launch for easy access to Portage Waterway, includes a shoreline nature area.

Accessibility assessment = 1

### 18. Hancock Labyrinth

The Hancock Labyrinth, located at the base of the Lift Bridge near the Ramada in Hancock, was built in 2000 and led by community artist Mary Wright. Gardens and sculpture were added in 2003 by community artists and volunteers. Plantings are maintained by the Hancock Beautification Committee.

Accessibility assessment = 1

## State Owned Facilities

### 1. Bike Path & Snowmobile Trail

This DNR trail is paved from the Portage Lake Lift Bridge to just north of Ingot Street. Portions of the trail have parallel paved (motorized) and gravel (non-motorized) segments to accommodate all traffic types. The trail connects to the greater Keweenaw unpaved trail system.

### 2. F.J. McLain State Park

Located along M-203 nine miles north of Hancock on Lake Superior, this 443-acre State Park is a popular destination for visitors and locals. The park is located along two miles of Lake Superior sand beach. Activities at the park include camping, hiking, rock hounding, fishing, beachcombing, swimming, sightseeing and skiing. There are 92 modern campsites and a few rustic cabins available. This park also offers picnic shelters with grills and fireplaces, two playground structures, a dedicated area for



*Photo: Campsite 91 overlooking Lake Superior at F.J. McLain State Park (Photo by Cold Coast Travel)*

leashed pets, and a concessionary/store during the camping season. Modern restrooms and a sanitation station are also available at this site.

## Local Recreation

### 1. Houghton County Marina

The Houghton County Marina is located just outside the City of Hancock east of the Portage Lake Lift Bridge and is owned by Houghton County. This full-service marina offers 54 slips, both seasonal and transient, gas/diesel fuel, a pump-out station, picnic facilities, ice cooler, and nautical charts.

## Keweenaw National Historical Park

### 2. Keweenaw National Historical Park

The Keweenaw National Historical Park commemorates the heritage of copper mining on the Keweenaw Peninsula and its mines, its machinery, and its people, using 20 existing Heritage Sites located throughout the Keweenaw Peninsula. The Calumet Visitors Center in the historic Union Building is open to the public year-round and has two floors of fully accessible interpretive exhibits and a bookstore.

### 3. Quincy Mine

The Quincy Mine, just north of the City of Hancock, produced copper throughout the first half of the 20th Century, closing mining operations in 1945. The Quincy Mine Hoist Association owns the property and offers guided tours and a ride on a cog-rail tram car to a lower mine entrance. The Quincy Mine is a cooperating site of the Keweenaw National Historical Park.



*Photo: Quincy Mine (Photo by Pure Michigan)*

### 4. Quincy Smelter

The Quincy Mining Company built the Quincy Smelting

Works on the shore of the Keweenaw Waterway, just east of the City, in 1898 and operated there until 1971. The complex was left intact and, starting in 2007, interested parties stabilized the structures. The Quincy Smelter Association and the Quincy Mine Hoist Association provide guided tours of the site during the summer.



**5. Finnish American Heritage Center & Historical Archive**

Located in downtown Hancock on Quincy Street, the Finnish American Heritage Center contains the Finnish American Historical Archive, the Finnish American Folk School, the Martha Wiljanen Community Hall, the Finlandia University Art Gallery, and the offices of The Finnish American Reporter. It hosts programming and exhibits which highlight Finnish-American culture, a culture deeply imbedded within the city's history.

**Keweenaw Land Trust****6. Pilgrim Community Forest**

The Pilgrim Community Forest was established by the Keweenaw Land Trust in the fall of 2014. The 276-acre forest is just minutes from Houghton/Hancock and part of the larger Pilgrim River Conservancy Project. This conservation area has a variety of forest and habitat types, with about one mile of the Pilgrim River's main channel and a 2.5-mile recreation trail.

**7. Boston Pond Nature Area**

Boston Pond Nature Area is a family-friendly roadside park located directly off of highway US-41, west of the Houghton County Airport. Featuring a mid-size pavilion, easy walking trail, and viewing pier along the shore of Boston Pond, this nature area is a great space for small gatherings and easy access to nature.

**8. Paavola Wetlands Nature Area**

The nature area contains miles of hiking trails suitable for visitors of all ages and accessibility. The trails are usable year-round, with some of the best times to visit when there is enough snow to snowshoe out through the wet areas surrounding the pond. In addition to the gentle hiking trails, Paavola also offers a universally accessible crushed-gravel trail linking vantage points on the beaver pond and farmstead clearing. This looped trail, perfect for those with families or disabilities, takes you through a range of forested and wetland habitats and is an important component of the Copper Country Trail. Hunters are welcome to use the 40 acres located north of Highway US-41. There is a large parking area and trailhead with a pit toilet for the public to use during your visit.

**9. Hungarian Falls Nature Area**

Hungarian Falls is a local hotspot featuring moderate to advance hiking trails along both sides of the falls. The upper access trail is an easier walking trail that leads to the top of the cascading falls. This is a rustic hiking and nature area. There are few fences or barriers. Please consider your risk when viewing and enjoying the Falls. A pond is dammed off at the top of falls, a great place to see natural wildlife and fish. Open all year, both locals and visitors enjoy the views of the unique geology, fishing opportunities, and scenic hiking trails.

## Institutional Recreation

### Michigan Technological University

#### 1. Mont Ripley

Mont Ripley is a ski hill owned and operated by Michigan Technological University located just outside the City of Hancock in Ripley, east of the Portage Lake Lift Bridge. Mont Ripley is the oldest ski area in Michigan. It is open during the winter season and offers a complete rental shop, as well as skiing and snowboarding lessons. There are 24 trails, a terrain park, and a tubing park. High-tech snow machines supplement the 20 feet of natural snow Mont Ripley receives each year. Mont Ripley hosts a racing league for adults as well as ski, snowboard, and boardercross racing, and is home to various school-based ski teams. A local National Ski Patrol chapter provides first aid and other services as needed.

#### 2. Student Development Complex

Owned and operated by Michigan Technological University, this 235,000-square-foot (SF) university recreational complex located in Houghton features an ice arena, multi-purpose room, pool, gymnasium, fitness center, racquetball/squash courts, dance room, a music room, and shooting range. The adjacent Gates Tennis Center offers four indoor courts and an equipment shop. The greater community can buy visitor/member passes to access these facilities.

#### 3. Tech Trails

The Michigan Tech Trails, owned and operated by Michigan Technological University, offer an extensive trail system in Houghton with many access points for mountain biking, hiking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing. An indoor community wax space is available.



*Photo: Michigan Tech offers all-season access on their well-maintained trail system (photo by Michigan Tech)*

Equipment rental is also available through Michigan Tech's outdoor

adventure program. Passes to the trails can be purchased through Michigan Tech or the Keweenaw Trail Alliance package, allowing community access to all local trail systems.

## **Hancock Public Schools**

4. **Hancock Middle/Central High School**

These school facilities include a football field, regulation soccer field, and two gyms with basketball courts.

5. **Gordon G. Barkell Elementary School**

The school facilities include two playgrounds, outdoor basketball courts, nature trail, soccer fields, a small pavilion, and a gymnasium. HTC maintains groomed ski trails.

6. **Hancock Public School Field**

Hancock Public School Field (formerly McAfee Field), refurbished in 2011, hosts the Hancock Central High School varsity and JV football teams. The field features a lighted Pro Grass artificial turf playing surface and a state-of-the-art Daktronics LED video scoreboard. Originally owned by Hancock Public Schools, Hancock Public School Field was sold to Finlandia University in 2009. Hancock Public Schools has recently repurchased the field following Finlandia University's closure.

7. **Copper Country Intermediate School District (CCISD) Playground**

The CCISD-owned neighborhood park is on 0.3 acres and includes a playground, walking path, and basketball court.

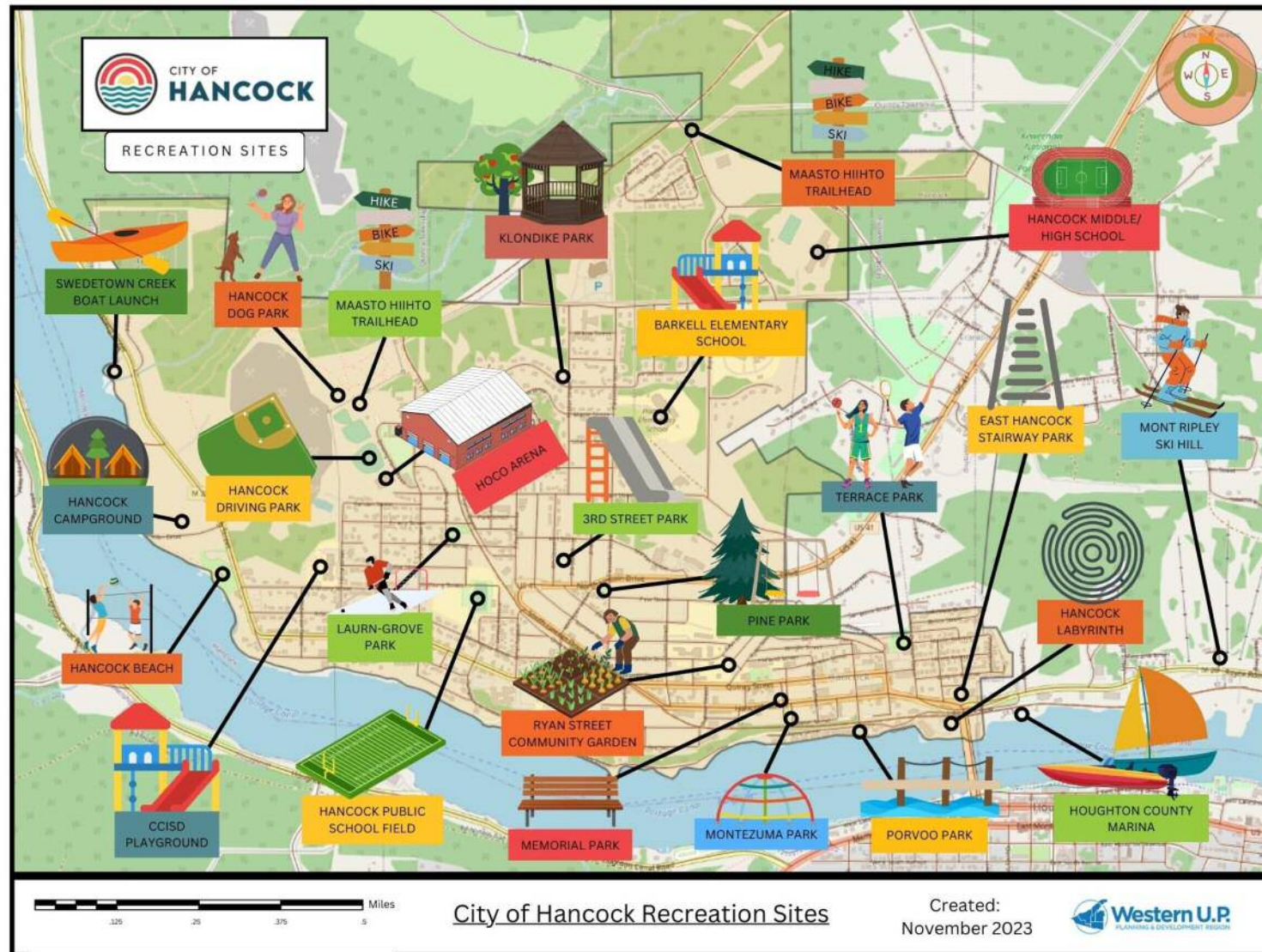


Figure 4: City of Hancock Recreation Sites – Locations Map (Illustrated)

# Goals and Objectives

## Recreation Goals:

The City of Hancock has identified six goals for recreation within the community, as follows:

1. To provide recreational facilities, programs, and opportunities to sufficiently meet the recreational needs of all residents of the City of Hancock and its visitors;
2. To conserve land and water resources within the city for future generations including preservation of open space and improving public access to the waterfront;
3. To improve boardwalks and docks along waterways to increase access to the city for watercraft users;
4. To spend limited recreational funds efficiently as possible;
5. To provide access to all recreational facilities for handicapped citizens and visitors;
6. To continue developing a network of non-motorized pathways to serve the community during all four seasons.

## Recreation Objectives:

The City of Hancock is active in pursuing recreational goals as improvements are ongoing, shown through completed capital improvement activities since 2016.

**Table 6:** City of Hancock Completed Recreation Projects (since 2016)

<b>Project</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Funding Source(s)</b>
Beach Recreational Pier	\$380,000	City/Recreation Millage/MDNR
3rd Street Park Playground	\$25,000	City/Recreation Millage
Driving Park – Fence Extension	\$20,000	City/Recreation Millage/ Portage Lake Little League
Terrace Park Tennis Court & Playground	\$100,000	City/Recreation Millage/PHF
Laurn-Grove Park –Pickleball	\$58,000	City/Recreation Millage
Houghton County Arena – 5 Yr. Capital Contribution	\$60,000	City/Recreation Millage
Beach Install Handicap Swings	\$4,000	City/Recreation Millage/KCF
Bike Fix it Station/Bike Racks	\$4,500	City/Recreation Millage/KCF
Driving Park Playground Equipment	\$30,000	KNSC/Foundations/City
Montezuma Park Playground	\$16,500	City/Recreation Millage
Bike & Pedestrian Signage	\$2,835	City/Recreation Millage
Maasto Hiihto Middle Bridge Replacement	\$26,000	City/KNSC/Foundations



Trail Equipment	\$35,000	Recreation Millage/KNSC
Hancock Campground Bathhouse	\$240,000	MNRTF/City/Recreation Millage
Hancock Beach Kayak Launch	\$20,000	MNRTF/City
Driving Park Infield Upgrades/Stipends	\$30,000	MNRTF/City
Campground Restroom/Shower Accessibility Restoration	\$242,000	LEO/MDNR/City/CCOT/School
Klondike Park Playground Equipment	\$25,000	LEO/MDNR/City/CCOT/School
Hancock Dog Park	\$52,000	MEDC/City
Driving Park Equipment Building Maintenance	\$20,000	LEO/MDNR/City/CCOT/School

#### Helpful Acronym Key

KNSC	Keweenaw Nordic Ski Club (now called Hancock Trails Club)
MDNR	Michigan Department of Natural Resources
PHF	Portage Health Foundation (now called Copper Shores Community Health Foundation)
KCF	Keweenaw-Area Community Foundation
MEDC	Michigan Economic Development Corporation
LEO	Labor and Economic Opportunity
MNRTF	Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund
CCOT	Copper Country Old Timers Hockey



# Action Program

The action program identifies needs which are most evident at the present time and for which developing trends indicate an imminent need. The action program is not intended to be all inclusive but used rather as a guide for recreation development. This recreation plan should remain somewhat flexible to account for changing lifestyles, increased leisure time and new ideas so that it will always be consistent with contemporary needs and strive to provide the best overall recreation opportunities available for the City of Hancock residents and visitors.

The following table lists future projects prioritized by year to meet the recreation goals and needs of the city. The Recreation Committee prioritized the projects based on results from the recreation surveys and on ideas from the Recreation Commission and community. It is the intention of the Hancock Recreation Commission to review and amend this plan and implementation schedule as needed to support local efforts in recreational programming.

**Table 7: 5-year Action Program**

Priority	Year	Project	Cost	Funding Source
1	2024	Ice Arena Restrooms	\$50,000	City
2		Navy St. Bicycle / Pedestrian Paved Trail	\$200,000	City/MNRTF/DNR
3		Storage Shed/Announcer Booth Givens Field (Little League)	\$20,000	City/School/Foundation/Volunteers
4		Develop intracity winter walking trails	\$20,000	Foundation
5		Secure permanent access to the Maasto Hiihto Trail System & Easement for access to Churning Rapids	\$1,200,000	City/HTC/ MNTRF
1	2025	Install permanent public restrooms at Quincy Green	\$200,000	MNTRF/DNR/City
2		Upgrade Porvoo Park boardwalk	\$500,000	MNTRF/DNR/City
3		Driving Park Upgrades irrigation	\$150,000	City/School/Foundation/Volunteers
4		Maasto Hiihto Trail System equipment replacement	\$40,000	City/HTC/Foundations
5		Ice Arena – Alternative season use, turf, general maintenance	\$300,000	MDNR/Foundation/City
6		Access trail fitness Station between Hancock Beach & Campground	\$4,000	City
7		ADA camping cabin at Hancock Campground	\$50,000	Copper Shores / City / MDNR/ Keweenaw Community Foundation
1	2026	Ice Arena Elevator	\$300,000	City/Passport

2		Quincy Green – skating, splash pad	\$200,000	MNTRF/DNR/City
3		Laurin-Grove Upgrades roof over ice surface and misc. up	\$650,000	MNTRF/DNR/City
4		Develop boardwalk at the mouth of Swedetown Creek, parking lot upgrades, kayak launch area	\$300,000	MNTRF/City
5		Driving Park Upgrades including infield ADA compliant walkway	\$25,000	City/School/Foundation/Volunteers
1	2027	Install Hancock Campground electrical service	\$80,000	City
2		Create transient boat slips at Porvoo Park	\$250,000	Boating Infrastructure Grant
3		Soccer Field	\$250,000	City/Soccer Groups/DNR/LEO/Foundations
4		Connect Hancock Campground to M203 Maasto Hiihto Trailhead via trail	\$200,000	City/MNTRF/DNR
5		Driving Park Upgrades pavilion	\$150,000	City/School/Foundation/Volunteers
6		Softball field	\$250,000	City/Softball Groups/ DNR/LEO
1	2028	Ice Arena Zamboni	\$150,000	City/Hockey Groups/Foundations/DNR
2		Alternative access to Maasto Hiihto to replace Tomasi Dr. access	\$60,000	MNTRF/DNR/City
3		Trail system maintenance equipment building	\$300,000	City/HTC/Foundation/DNR
4		Walking trail from Business & Tech Park connecting to trails	\$50,000	City/DNR/Foundations/ Schools
5		Archery Range	\$20,000	City/Local Organizations

### **Sources of Funding:**

The City of Hancock utilizes several funding sources for recreation projects, including:

**Table 8:** Possible Project Funding Sources

<b>Description</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>Source</b>
Local Funds	—	City/ Millage
Community Foundations/Other (local service organizations and businesses)	—	Local
Hancock Trails Club (HTC)	—	HTC

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)	—	GLRI
Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)	75/25 grant	DNR
Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	50/50 grant	DNR
Boating Infrastructure Grants (BIG)	75/25 grant	DNR
Recreation Passport Grant Program	75/25 grant	DNR
Snowmobile Trail Improvement Fund	—	DNR
Off-Road Vehicle Trail Improvement Program	-	DNR
Waterways Program	50/50 grant	DNR
Coastal Management Program	50/50 grant	EGLE
Miscellaneous Grants	—	Varied

# Planning and Public Input

The Hancock City Council and Recreation Commission recognize the need for a recreation plan to effectively maintain current recreational resources and identify opportunities for investments to enhance and improve recreational assets for city residents and visitors. The approval of an updated recreation plan is an important step to the financing and future completion of city recreation projects. The City Manager and the Recreation Commission facilitated the recreation plan update process. The City Manager contracted with Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR) to work with the committee in updating this plan.

On July 21, 2023, the Recreation Commission held a kick-off meeting and met with WUPPDR to overview the plan update process, discussing opportunities for public engagement and input. The group determined that a community survey was the most effective means of gathering public input from its wide array of stakeholders.

A survey of City residents and individuals that utilize Hancock's recreational facilities which include but are not limited to non-resident property owners, guests, and patrons at local businesses was conducted to gather public opinion to inform the plan's recreation goals, action plan, and project justifications. A copy of the survey can be found in **Appendix A**. Beginning on August 16, 2023, the survey was hosted online using Survey Monkey and physical copies were made available at the Hancock City Hall, the Portage Lake District Library in Houghton, and the WUPPDR office in Hancock. Links to the survey were published in the Daily Mining Gazette, as well as WUPPDR's and Hancock's websites (**Appendix B**). The survey generated responses from 492 participants (survey results summary in **Appendix C**). Based on survey results and needs identified by the Recreation Commission, a list of prioritized recreation projects was created.

A public draft of the recreation plan was made available online on Hancock's and WUPPDR's websites and social media pages. Printed copies were made available at the Hancock City Hall and WUPPDR offices in Hancock. A public notice (**Appendix D**) was published in the Daily Mining Gazette on December 6, 2023, announcing the 30-day public review period and the date and location of a public comment session. Residents were instructed to submit written comments to WUPPDR via mail or email by January 6, 2024.

A public meeting was held on January 17, 2024, to receive public comment on the draft recreation plan. **Appendix E** provides a copy of the agenda and minutes while **Appendix F** summarizes the written comments received during the public comment period and the public meeting. At the Hancock City Council meeting following the public hearing, the 2024-2028 City of Hancock Recreation plan was adopted by the city council (**Appendix G**).

# Appendix

**Appendix A:** 2023 Hancock Recreation Survey

**Appendix B:** Press Release for 2023 Hancock Recreation Survey

**Appendix C:** Hancock Recreation Survey Results

**Appendix D:** Public Review Notification and Affidavit of Publication

**Appendix E:** Agenda and Minutes from Public Hearing

**Appendix F:** Written Comments Received During Public Comment Period

**Appendix G:** Agenda, Minutes, and Adoption Resolution

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