

## **Spotlight on Grand Rapids Age-Friendly Parks**

Getting outside for health and wellness has never been more important. Age-Friendly Grand Rapids, along with Parks and Recreation, will help you find the park space that meets your needs just in time for warm weather.

### **What Makes a Park “Age-Friendly”**

Through our Age-Friendly listening tour and multiple subsequent conversations, we learned what older adults look for in a park space. Older adults seek parks with basic amenities such as parking, restrooms, drinking fountains, seating, and accessible walking paths. In addition, older adults appreciate natural beauty with the accompanying tranquility, plants, and fresh air. The option for outdoor exercise beyond walking is also a plus, and intergenerational playgrounds and facilities are becoming increasingly popular with older adults. Think pickle ball and exercise equipment for all ages!

### **Why Getting Outdoors is Important**

Numerous scientific and other research articles tout the benefits of being outdoors for older adults as well as the general population. Health and wellness benefits include: more exercise, increased immunity, better sleep, sharper focus, added social activity, and even heightened creativity.

### **What Is New and Age-Friendly in Parks**

The evergreen millage approved by Grand Rapids voters in 2019 supports continued improvements in our parks. Watch for new and improved recreation features, accessibility upgrades to walking paths, restrooms and parking lots. Site amenities like benches, drinking fountains, picnic areas, lighting and signage are also in the works.

### **Find Age-Friendly Parks**

The Parks and Recreation Department is a strong partner in the Age-Friendly Grand Rapids' effort to become certified as an Age-Friendly Community by the World Health Organization. Parks and Recreation has created a list of the twenty-eight parks that are the most Age-Friendly and their corresponding amenities and features. Check out our map to find the parks that meet your needs. Hover over the location to find details about what is available at each location. Plan to visit an Age-Friendly park soon!