

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF GROWING GREAT PARKS



NEWS RELEASE

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Oakland County Parks celebrates opening of Red Oaks Park Oct. 30

\$7.1 million investment transforms former Ambassador Park in Madison Heights

MADISON HEIGHTS, MI – Oct. 7, 2026 – Oakland County Parks will celebrate the grand opening of Red Oaks Park, formerly Ambassador Park, in Madison Heights with a community celebration from 3 to 5 p.m. Friday, Oct. 30. The public is invited to attend the free event.

The celebration will feature a DJ, climbing tower (closed-toe shoes required), giant Connect 4, Jenga and Tetris games, cornhole, tours of the new playground and park tours. Costumes are encouraged; treats will be handed out at stations in the park.

Oakland County Parks invested \$7.1 million to transform the 7-acre park. The project was funded through the Oakland County Parks Healthy Communities Park and Outdoor Recreation Investment Plan, including \$2.75 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding and \$4.39 million from the Oakland County Parks Capital Improvement Program.

“The revamping of Red Oaks will delight park patrons for years to come,” said Oakland County Executive Dave Coulter. “Our late dear friend and County Commissioner Gary McGillivray was a huge advocate for county parks and would have been proud to see this newly polished gem in his district.”

A centerpiece of the renovated park is the McGillivray Play Garden, honoring Gary R. McGillivray, who served as an Oakland County commissioner from 2008 to 2023 and on the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission from 2011 to 2023. He was serving as chair of the Parks Commission when he died in 2023.

McGillivray was passionate about public service and creating opportunities for residents to enjoy the outdoors and connect with their communities.

Other new and improved park amenities include:

- A new playground

- A restroom building with a shade structure and porch swings
- Hammocks
- A newly configured parking lot with improved stormwater retention
- Improvements to the sledding hill

“Red Oaks Park is a great example of what our parks are all about — creating spaces where people can come together, enjoy the outdoors and make memories,” said Parks Commission Chair Ebony Bagley. “Gary McGillivray played such an important role in shaping Oakland County Parks into what it is today, and it’s special to see his vision, legacy and commitment to our communities continue through projects like this one. I’m excited for families to experience and enjoy this park for years to come.”

The project is part of Oakland County Parks’ Healthy Communities investment strategy and reflects Mission 26, Oakland County Parks’ framework for expanding access to high-quality parks, natural spaces and recreation opportunities across the county.

Oakland County Commissioner Ann Erickson Gault, who represents Hazel Park, Madison Heights and portions of Troy, said the renovated park provides a welcoming and accessible place for people of all ages and abilities to play, walk, relax and connect with nature.

“This project is a wonderful example of what can happen when we work together,” said Erickson Gault. “Oakland County, Oakland County Parks, the city and, most importantly, our residents came together to reimagine this park in a way that reflects what our community wants and needs.”

Madison Heights Mayor Corey K. Haines said the city appreciates the county’s investment in the community.

“We are grateful to Oakland County for its investment in Madison Heights and to everyone who helped turn this vision into reality,” Haines said.

Andrew McGillivray, Gary McGillivray’s son, said his father would have been proud to see the renovated park open for families.

“Dad dedicated 40 years of his life to building a better community in Madison Heights, one piece at a time. He would be incredibly proud to see what this new park has turned out to be, and so glad to see this investment in the city he loved,” Andrew McGillivray said. “Our family is deeply honored by this tribute, and we are grateful to see Oakland County Parks continuing to fulfill his vision of an increased county parks presence in Southeast Oakland County. The McGillivray Play Garden ensures his passion for public service will live on through the families who play here.”

Red Oaks Park, formerly Ambassador Park, is located at 600 E. 13 Mile Road in Madison Heights. The park is part of Red Oaks County Park, which also includes a dog park, golf course, nature center and waterpark.

Through a partnership agreement, Red Oaks Park is managed and operated by Oakland County Parks and owned by the City of Madison Heights.

Oakland County Parks currently operates or manages approximately 7,362 acres across 19 active sites. Additional park sites in Troy and Southfield are scheduled to open in 2027.