



October 8, 2024

Detroit City Council  
2 Woodward Avenue  
Coleman A. Young Municipal Center  
Detroit, Michigan 48226

RE: Authorization to Seek MDNR Approval of Conversions of Use of Three City Parks.

Honorable City Council --

The General Services Department - Parks and Recreation ("GSD / DPR") is seeking your Honorable Body's approval to execute and submit an application to the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources (the "MDNR") for approval of the City's prior conversion of Wick Park, Wigle Field, and Brush-Adelaide Playground (the "City Properties") from their prior recreational use to their present non-recreational uses.

The City Properties were acquired or improved with financial assistance from the MDNR with Michigan Natural Resource Trust funds ("MNRTF"), Michigan Recreation Bond Funds ("MRBF") and Federal Land Water Conservation Funds ("LWCF" which, along with the MNRTF and MRBF are collectively referred to as the "Grants"). The use of the Grants required the City Properties be used for recreation purposes. Each of the City Properties has previously been converted from recreation purposes to non-recreational uses. Their conversions of use require the consent of the MDNR and the National Parks Service ("NPS").

This approval is necessary for GSD-DPR to continue to qualify to apply for additional MDNR grants in the future. Obtaining the approvals is a lengthy process which begins with execution and filing of an application with the MDNR. Hence this request.

To obtain approval of the changed uses of the grant-encumbered Properties, the City must make up for the lost parkland. To be acceptable to the MDNR, the replacement property must be of greater recreational usefulness and monetary value than the converted parkland.

**Replacement Property:**

The City of Detroit purchased the former 120-acre Rogell Golf Course located at 18600 & 18601 Berg Road (District 1) in 2018, intending to use a portion of the property as mitigation (replacement) property for the conversions of the City Properties. The MDNR approved the use of the Rogell property for that purpose in the same year.

Per the Mayor's direction approximately 22+ acres of Rogell 18600 Berg along 7 Mile Road will be split from the parcel and transferred to PDD / Detroit Economic Growth Corporation for retail development. The remaining 69+ acres of 18600 Berg coupled with 18601 Berg 28+ acres will comprise the (the "Replacement Property"). Additional materials & mapping is available upon request.

**Background on the Converted City Park Properties:**

Wick Park used Federal LWCF for improvements in 1968. It was sold in 2008 and its current use as a parking lot serves renovated, historic apartment buildings located at the convergence of MLK Drive, Davenport and Cass Avenue in District 6.

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Wigle Playfield was improved using both Federal LWCF and MDNR grant funds in 1968 and 1992 respectively. This park was transferred to the Planning and Development Department (PDD) in 2018 for use in the Midtown West Development bringing new housing and retail to District 6 in a phased development plan. As of 2024, Midtown West is partially completed, with some land now being marketed.

The Wigle development agreement awarded DPR a one-acre replacement park located at 910 Brainard which was designed by GSD Staff with the amenities completed and paid for by the developer. Detroiters are already enjoying this new playground and skate park.

Brush-Adelaide playground (251 and 254 Adelaide / District 5) is comprised of two small lots residing across the street from each other. It received improvements under a LWCF grant in 1968. The north parcel 254 Adelaide was sold in 2020 to a private entity; the lot remains vacant. The south parcel 251 Adelaide is under City/PDD jurisdiction and is currently being marketed for a new housing development.

The GSD / DPR has the following offerings in Districts 5 and 6 to provide new and expanded recreational opportunities to replace those which uses were converted:

- John R – Watson Park located at 202 Watson in District 5 Brush Park has been expanded and is currently undergoing \$900,000 renovation to include a dog park, new playground, picnic area, walkways etc.
- 4<sup>th</sup> – Charlotte Park located at 3008 Fourth Street in District 6 has also been expanded in size and improved with a new Pistons basketball court, outdoor fitness and play equipment.
- 4<sup>th</sup> – Calumet Tot Lot located at 4245 Fourth Street is now under lease from DWSD and has been transformed with colorful play amenities for young children in this District 6 neighborhood.
- One-acre Wigle Replacement Park located 910 Brainard in District 6 was recently completed and offers a half-court basketball, skate park and playground.

State and Federal Park conversions are a lengthy administrative process as summarized below.

**Conversion Process Summary:**

- Seek Council approval and authorization to seek a Conversion with the MDNR; authorization for the Director of the GSD to execute and submit a conversion application.
- Meet all MDNR requirements to satisfy the application such as acquiring surveys, appraisals and review appraisals of the Properties and the Replacement Property, environmental screenings, advertised community engagement sessions for all properties, measuring community statistics, creating mapping and exhibits etc.
- Prior to the submission of the Conversion application, a public meeting before Council must be conducted (MDNR conversion requirement). The meeting must allow for public comment and provide a 30-day notice.
- The submitted conversion application is reviewed and approved by both the MDNR and Federal government. Upon approval, a Grant Amendment document will be issued for the Properties, officially removing the grant encumbrances from City responsibility. The Conversion Grant Amendment will be presented to Council through Resolution for review, questions and authorization.

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- A True Certificate Resolution of this authorization will be obtained from the City Clerk's office. A Declaration of Notice (MDNR conversion requirement) assigning an MDNR encumbrance to the Rogell property will be prepared by the Law. All documents will be recorded at the Wayne County Register of Deeds.
- The Conversion process concludes. Park construction, and improvements can begin.

The GSD / DPR respectfully asks your Honorable Body for (1) Authorization of the Director of the GSD to seek MDNR approval for a Conversion; (2) Authorization to execute and submit an application to the MDNR for the conversions of former the City Park Properties.

Respectfully,

  
Crystal Perkins  
Director, General Services Department



**COUNCIL MEMBER** \_\_\_\_\_

**WHEREAS**, the General Services Department – Parks and Recreation (“GSD / DPR”) is asking for City Council Authorization to seek a Conversion with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (“MDNR”) and to also execute and submit an application for grant related conversion of Wick Park, Wigle Field and Brush-Adelaide Playground the (the “City Properties”) in Districts 5 and 6; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Properties all received improvements using either State or Federal grant funding at various times during their recreational use; and

**WHEREAS**, the MDNR and Federal Land Water Conservation Funding (“LWCF”) documents defines “a conversion” as a change of use from recreation to other uses for public and/or private development; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Properties under conversion provided the land needed for the development of new/future housing options, increased parking amenities and retail for the greater good of residents; and

**WHEREAS**, to obtain National Park Service (“NPS”) and MDNR approvals, the former parkland that is subject to the conversion must be replaced with alternative property that is equal or greater in recreational usefulness and monetary value than the parkland to be converted; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2018 the MDNR confirmed acquisition of the Rogell parcels at 18600 & 18601 Berg (the “Replacement Property”) could be an acceptable replacement for the City Property as to its recreational usefulness and authorized the City to proceed with the remaining steps of the conversion application process; and

**WHEREAS**, a 97+acre portion of Rogell Park in will be used as a Replacement Property for these conversions and will subsequently be developed and opened for public use; and

**WHEREAS**, additionally the GSD - DPR has since provided new and expanded replacement park options in District 5 and 6 for community enjoyment; and

**WHEREAS**, this Honorable Body is being asked to provide its support for the Proposed Conversion in satisfaction of applicable conversion application requirements; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**

**RESOLVED**, that this Honorable Body hereby expresses its support of the MNDR Proposed Conversion of the City Property; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the execution of the application for the conversion of the City Properties by the Director of the City’s General Services Department is authorized, and the submission of the application to the MDNR is approved.

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