



City Council

<i>Mayor</i>	Michael C. Taylor
<i>Mayor Pro Tem</i>	Liz Sierawski
<i>Councilwoman</i>	Deanna Koski
<i>Councilman</i>	Michael V. Radtke Jr.
<i>Councilwoman</i>	Maria G. Schmidt
<i>Councilman</i>	Henry Yanez
<i>Councilwoman</i>	Barbara A. Ziarko

City Manager Mark D. Vanderpool

Dear Sterling Heights Residents:

It is with no doubt that we are in uncharted territory as it relates to everyday life. Information is being presented from every angle, be it the news, social media, or conversations with friends and family, and information about our great Sterling Heights park system is no different. Because the information can be difficult to sort through, I wanted to take the time to share with you factual information about our parks, as well as guidelines that everyone must follow to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

First things first, yes, all Sterling Heights parks remain open for use. Governor Whitmer's executive order 2020-21 clearly states individuals may leave home or place of residence and travel as necessary to engage in outdoor activity including walking, hiking, running, cycling or any similar activity allowing for six feet of social distancing from people not living in the same household. This is the number one exception to her stay at home order (Section 7). Parks are essential to help us maintain physical and mental health and may be the only outlet people have to take advantage of these benefits. However, park use can be counterproductive to both individual and public health if we do not follow the guidelines set forth below:

1. If you are sick (even if not diagnosed with COVID-19), please stay home.
2. The parks are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and should only be used during these times. At any point, we may need to shorten open hours to help slow the spread. Please stay tuned to City information channels for the most up-to-date information.
3. Park amenities that encourage gathering of people are closed (e.g. skatepark, playgrounds, athletic courts and fields, pavilions, restrooms, etc). The Parks and Recreation Department has put up caution tape, erected signs stating the closures, removed basketball rims and more. Essentially, the trails and undeveloped green spaces remain open for your use.
4. Groups of people and any pets not living in the same household are not permitted to gather within six feet of each other in public parks.
5. When using the trails, sidewalks or other park areas, please be conscious of your spacing with other patrons. Move further to the side when passing, wait to throw away your garbage until another patron is done, do not share benches or picnic tables, etc.



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6. The parking lots have been set up with cones blocking off every other parking space to promote social distancing. Please park only in the available parking spaces, and do not move cones to park closer to where you want to be.

7. By law, all park patrons are required to dispose of trash properly and clean up after their pets. This is not new information but a reminder to be courteous and keep parks clean so staff does not have to touch trash that may be contaminated.

In closing, it is going to take all of us working together to help make a difference in the fight against COVID-19. If an amenity is closed, we require all residents to stay away. We also urge parents to monitor where kids are going and what they are doing as we have found many instances of teens and kids gathered in the parks. As we have been told, the virus may be less fatal to kids but can be easily transferred to other more vulnerable populations. And most important, be a good neighbor and fellow resident. I am proud to work in this great City and have seen first-hand how we can collectively make a change for the better. It is important to remember that while these closures are painful, they are temporary. Following the above guidelines and other Center for Disease Control recommendations will help get life back to normal faster than if we choose not to follow them.

The Parks and Recreation Department will continue to update our residents on the status of parks, programs and events as things continue to progress. We strongly encourage residents to follow us at [facebook.com/shparksandrec](https://www.facebook.com/shparksandrec). If you have questions about the Parks and Recreation Department and/or how COVID-19 is impacting a department function that you are interested in, please visit www.sterling-heights.net/communityinfo or do not hesitate to contact us at 586-446-2700 or by email at recreation@sterling-heights.net.

Sincerely,

Kyle R. Langlois, CPRE
Parks and Recreation Director