

PARKS,
RECREATION &
FORESTRY

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



THE CITY OF
WATERTOWN

Opportunity runs through it.

THE MISSION

The City of Watertown Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department is committed to enriching lives, fostering a strong and healthy community, and preserving the natural and cultural assets that make our area a great place to live, work, and play.

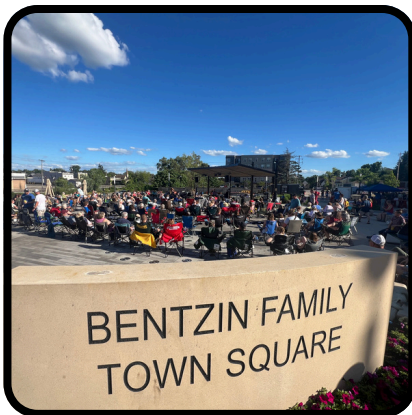
THE VISION

The City of Watertown Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department creates a vibrant and inclusive community where people of all ages and backgrounds can connect with nature, engage in healthy and active lifestyles, foster a sense of belonging, and experience the joy of leisure and cultural enrichment.

The City of Watertown Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department aspires to be a leader in promoting the well-being of our community by providing exceptional parks, facilities, programs, and services that enhance the physical, mental, and social health of our residents.

This report summarizes all sections of the department including:

Recreation & Enrichment
Parks
Forestry
Aquatics
Events
Senior & Community Center



RECREATION & ENRICHMENT

- New Sports Programs: 2 new gymnastics programs
199 participants
- Fitness Classes: 7 classes; 333 participants
- Youth Sports & Leagues: 28 programs;
1284 participants
- Adult Sports Leagues: 7 programs; 423 participants
- Enrichment Programs & Events: 19 programs;
441 participants

NOTE: Due to the support and understanding for the needs of the recreation section, the new Recreation Programmer position has, over the past year, led to significant developments, including the establishment of a yearly event schedule, the creation of participant policies, a comprehensive fee review for programs, and improved staff retention. Additionally, key programs such as Day Camp and Soccer have benefited from enhanced structure and the development of returning program staff.



PARKS

Between 8 park locations and 15 park shelter options, we had reservations totaling 302.

Maintains over 330 acres of parks and green spaces within the city.

- Events: Preparations and setups for 27 park events including Riverfest and Bentzin Family Town Square events
Attendance: 42,860
- Ball Diamonds: 15 fields/diamonds maintained; 390 field groomings per season
- Facility Maintenance: Open and prepare, as well as close and winterize all restrooms
- Memorial Benches: Installed 3 throughout the park system
- Weed Ordinances: 100 reviews, 19 mowings
- Aquatic Center: Prep pool for opening and fall winterization
- Renovations: Neighborhood park restroom restorations Union, Timothy Johnson, Lincoln & Clark Parks
- Shelter Roof Replacement: Riverside Celebration & Island, as well as the Senior Center shelter



FORESTRY

- 38th year of being a Tree City USA recipient
- 6,005 publicly owned trees with 93 different species along Watertown's streets and park system
- 41 ash trees were injected in 2024 and 21 ash trees to be injected in 2025.
- Tree Planting Program-44 trees were planted in the boulevard by the forestry staff on a 50/50 cost share. This is a yearly program starting soon.
- Right Tree Right Spot-100 trees were given away to residents in 2024, free of charge.
- Public urban forest has an estimated \$11 million replacement value.
- Some tree eco benefits are: ability to collect 1.3 million gallons of run-off annually, as well as pollution removal and carbon sequestered storage.
- According to the WI DNR, Watertown is a disadvantaged community with areas that will need tree canopy attention soon.



AQUATICS

Aquatic Center Attendance: 22,195

Indoor Pool Attendance: 8742

Pass Breakdown

Combination: Youth - 1; Adult - 17; Senior - 8; Family - 58

Indoor Pool: Youth - 0; Adult - 10; Senior - 9; Family - 16

Outdoor Pool: Youth - 44; Adult - 19; Senior - 25; Family - 231

New filtration system installed to reduce chlorine consumption and support environmental conservation efforts.



BENTZIN FAMILY TOWN SQUARE EVENTS

54 City hosted events, 6412 attendance

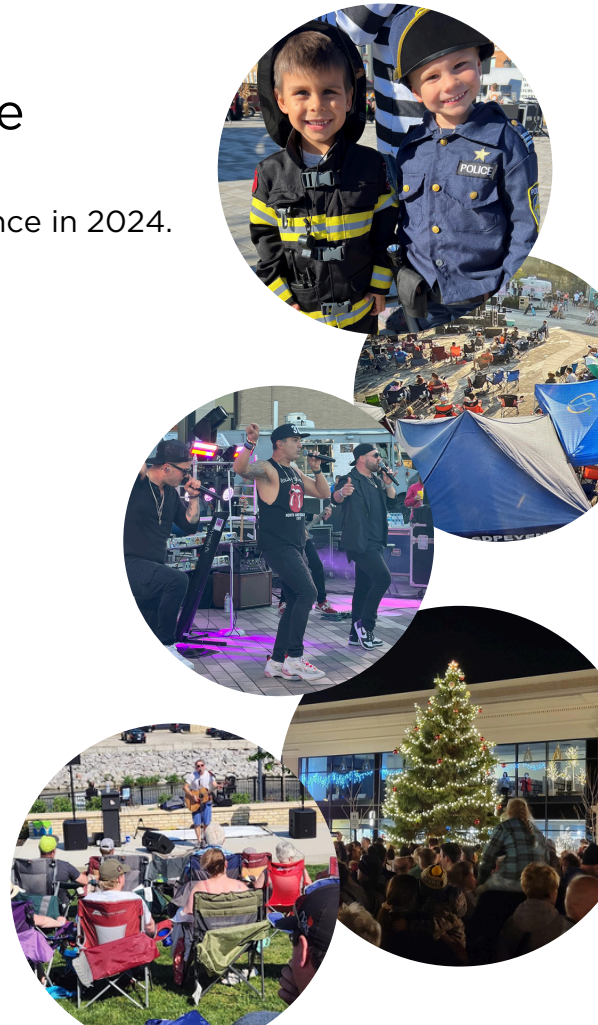
22 Reservations, 2464 attendance

Note: The Main Street bridge had a big impact on event attendance in 2024.

Water Street Closure Information

Month	# Days Closed per month	# Labor Hours Involved	# Events during closure	# Total Events
March	0	0	0	2
April	0	0	0	0
May	3	2	1	2
June	11	10	5	14
July	5	6	5	19
August	6	6	5	17
September	5	6	3	11
October	2	2	1	7
November	2	2	1	1
December	3	2	1	3
Totals	37	36	22	76

*To summarize, we hosted 76 events in the square and closed the road 37 days out of 365 days.



SENIOR CENTER

New Members: 119

Total Members: 813

Rentals & Programming Sessions: 1615

Rental and Programming Attendance: 23,858

New Programs: Caregiver Euchre; Chair Massage; Memory Cafe



GRANTS, SPONSORSHIPS & DONATIONS

Bentzin Family Town Square Events: \$37,000

Aquatics: \$2,000

Recreation & Enrichment: \$5,990

Senior & Community Center: \$28,000



LOOKING AHEAD 2025

- **We aim to expand our youth and adult recreation programs by introducing new activities and improving access to existing ones. We will also focus on increasing community engagement through partnerships with local organizations.**
- **We look forward to welcoming back our "Final Splash Bash" at the outdoor pool where we will be airing Lilo & Stitch this year. We will also continue to expand program offerings among various age groups.**
- **We will concentrate on expanding our events and creating more opportunities for private sponsorships to bring fresh, unique experiences to downtown Watertown. From live music to themed markets and family fun, we're committed to enhancing our lineup and strengthening community connections.**
- **We plan to incorporate additional family engagement opportunities (family nights, events, etc.), as well as additional senior activities/programs and seasonal/holiday celebrations.**
- **We are committed to enhancing our playgrounds, making upgrades as funding becomes available. Additionally, we are actively shaping the future of our parks with the Parks and Open Spaces Plan and the Riverside Master Plan.**
- **Our Forestry team continues to expand Watertown's urban tree canopy through grant funding and dedicated tree-planting programs, ensuring a greener and more sustainable community for generations to come.**