

City of East Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department
Splash Pad Frequently Asked Questions

June 6, 2022

1. What Is a Splash Pad?

A splash pad is a recreation area that consists of water play amenities, with no standing water. This type of play amenity provides a sensory experience for kids that encourages interaction between other users and parents and children. Typically, a splash pad has textured non-slip concrete or rubber surface with ground nozzles that spray water upwards out of the splash pad's deck. There may also be other water features such as buckets or arches that drop water on the pad users from above.

2. What are the hours of operation proposed for the splash pad?

Splash pads are generally open 11am – 6pm, during the warmest part of the day. The exact hours of operation will be determined during the implementation process after community input is received.

3. Is a splash pad wheelchair accessible?

The proposed splash pad will be designed to allow for wheelchair access to and throughout the water play area.

4. What age of users is a splash pad designed for?

A splash pad can be enjoyed by users of all ages, but typically the play amenities are designed for users of ages 2-5 or 5-12.

5. How do you plan to reduce risks to the kids who use the splash pad?

The city plans to partner with a professional consultant to complete the design of the proposed splash pad at Manhattan Park. To minimize the risk of injury, the consultant will be tasked to utilize splash pad industry best practices throughout their design, including the use of appropriate materials and surfacing, as well as considering traffic patterns of the users when transitioning between play amenities. We also will have specific rules in place that are developed with ensuring the safety of the splash pad users in mind.

6. What is the plan to ensure water pressure safety for the children?

The consultant that we select for this project will be experienced in splash pad design and will have relevant experience working with splash pad safety requirements and best practices. We will work alongside our consultants and the splash pad equipment manufacturing company that we select to ensure we are meeting all safety requirements and exceeding requirements whenever possible.

7. How do you plan to keep the water clean and safe for everyone playing at the splash pad? Who is going to staff this to make sure this happens?

There are two main types of systems for splash pads, and we are still in the process of determining if a freshwater system or a recirculation system is best for East Grand Rapids. A recirculation system treats water and reuses it over time. If we do implement a recirculation system, we will work with our design consultant to meet industry best practice standards for the treatment of the water, and we will also rely on our partners at the Kent County Health Department to help develop policies and procedures for the safe operation of the splash pad. We currently partner with the Kent County Health Department for the safe operation of the Wealthy Pool, and they will continue to support our operations as it relates to public health for the proposed splash pad at Manhattan Park. City Parks and Recreation Department staff currently are responsible for the monitoring and maintenance of the Wealthy Pool water filtration system, and we anticipate they will be responsible for the splash pad as well.

8. Do we have any idea how much all the chemicals, staffing, repairs are going to cost and how the city plans to pay for this year after year?

Actual projected costs for the proposed splash pad at Manhattan Park will be dependent upon final design that will outline the number of water features, the type of system (freshwater vs. recirculation), and the size of the system (number of gallons used). Also, the hours of the splash pad and the staffing level desired will play a role in the annual cost as well. These operational costs will be refined as we collect more input from the community and as the conceptual design moves forward with more specific details. A realistic range of annual costs, depending on the final details, is \$25,000 - \$75,000. The current operational expenses for the Parks and Recreation Department come from the City's General Fund, and future splash pad operational costs are expected to be covered by the General Fund as well.

9. What is the average lifespan of a splash pad?

A typical lifespan for splash pads is approximately 15-20 years, depending on use levels, maintenance levels and what type of amenities are selected. Once a final plan is developed, city staff will present future funding options to the City Commission for their consideration, such as setting up a replacement fund that receives annual contributions over time.

10. If the splash pad is located at Manhattan Park, what are the plans to increase parking when games are in session and the splash park open?

We do anticipate that the proposed splash pad will be well used and will likely result in increased visits to the park. While we are anticipating additional visits to the park by splash pad users, the typical splash pad season in Michigan is generally Memorial Day to Labor Day, so it will not overlap our busiest of seasons at Manhattan Park in the spring and fall, such as soccer Saturdays. Also, we anticipate many splash pad users will frequent the splash pad during hottest part of the day, typically the daytime hours,

which will not overlap our evening program times. While we do not expect significant parking issues due to the proposed splash pad at Manhattan park, city staff have solicited the services of a professional engineering firm to develop an implementation plan for Manhattan Park, and the process will include evaluating layout options for planned park improvements as well as identifying opportunities for additional parking on site.

11. How many months a year are you planning to have the splash pad open and running?

Outdoor splash pads in Michigan typically are operational Memorial Day to Labor Day, so we anticipate the proposed Manhattan Park splash pad would be open for approximately 12-14 weeks of the year. Some splash pad areas have play features that can be utilized without water, and those amenities would be open for use year-round.

12. Will there be a lifeguard on duty?

Since there will be no standing water on the pad, no lifeguard will be required to be on duty.

13. What other amenities are proposed at Manhattan Park to support the splash pad?

We are currently working on a site plan for Manhattan Park with exact amenities and layout. The final design will include a restroom facility with changing areas, many seating opportunities, picnic areas, shade structures, new pavilions available for public use and rentals, along with a new playground in proximity to the splash pad.

14. Will you allow for rental of the splash pad to private groups?

The conceptual plans for Manhattan Park include multiple pavilions and group picnic areas in proximity to the splash pad that will be available for reservation for private parties and gatherings. There has not yet been a community discussion about the rental of the proposed splash pad for private groups.

15. Will you staff the splash pad during all operational hours?

Staff will be on site daily to empty garbage cans and to check for any maintenance related issues as is current practice for other city parks, but the exact level of staffing at the splash pad will be determined later in the design process once the type of system (fresh water vs. recirculation) is finalized, among other design details.

16. What is the timing of the splash pad implementation?

The earliest proposed timeline for a splash pad construction project and other related amenities at Manhattan Park is the summer of 2024. The city has applied for grant funding for the project, and final award decisions will be made in the winter of 2023. Following the potential grant award, additional preliminary design work and community engagement will be necessary for the project to be ready for final design and bidding.

17. What are the rules of the splash pad?

The final rules will be established later in the planning process. All splash pad rules will coordinate with the East Grand Rapids Parks Rules, which can be found here:

<https://www.eastgr.org/DocumentCenter/View/57/Park-Rules-and-Regulations?bidId=>

18. How do you plan to handle users that are not following the rules of the splash pad, such as children without supervision, etc.

Splash pad rules will be posted on site. In keeping with our policy for rule enforcement at other parks, city personnel will respond to complaints of splash pad rules not being followed and will address them on a case-by-case basis.

19. Can dogs use the splash pad?

Dogs are not allowed on a splash pad that is licensed by the State of Michigan per the "Public Act and Rules Governing Public Swimming Pools." If the East Grand Rapids splash pad is not required to be licensed by the State, which is dependent upon the type of system that is used (freshwater versus recirculation), the final determination about dogs on the splash pad will be addressed during the process to finalize the splash pad rules.

*This FAQ page will be updated over time as more detailed information becomes available.