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Lansing Parks and Recreation Receives Three Statewide mParks Awards

(LANSING) – Mayor Andy Schor today announced that mParks recognized the City of Lansing Department of Parks and Recreation with several awards during their annual conference at the end of January. The department was recognized in three categories: Innovative Programming, Park Design and Landscape Design. mParks represents, supports and trains parks and recreation agencies throughout Michigan.

“Parks and recreation options are important for residents to be excited about our community,” said Mayor Schor. “Our team continues to develop fun and innovate programming options in our parks and public spaces. I am proud of the Lansing Parks and Recreation Department for achieving statewide recognition from mParks.”

The **Innovative Programming Award** recognized the Lansing Teen Voices program operating out of Letts Center. This program was developed with the leadership of Rae Oviatt, a Ph.D. candidate at Michigan State University, and is supported by Lansing Parks and Recreation Programmer Maggie Darnell. Lansing Teen Voices works with teens to identify social issues that are important to them and helps them explore how they can make a positive impact in that area. This past summer the teens focused on bullying and developed storytelling skills to present their experiences at a Lansing Storytellers event hosted by the Lansing State Journal.

The **Park Design Award** honored Rotary Park. Rotary Park features a sandy beach and patio, a vibrant plaza with a large gas fireplace, a magical lighted forest and a new venue for small concerts and events under the bridge. This is an enjoyable attraction during the day and in the evening, the park illuminates with lights under the bridge and in the forest that change color with the music. This \$1.8

million park was made possible by the fundraising efforts lead by the Community Foundation, allowing tax dollars to focus on other projects. Rotary Park was created in partnership with the City of Lansing, Wieland Construction, Landscape Architects & Planners Inc. and the Capital Region Community Foundation.

The **Landscape Design Award** celebrated the Scott Park Sunken Gardens and the efforts around reconstructing this historical gem. The garden was meticulously moved approximately 400 ft. to the southwest, brick- by -brick and stone -by stone. At the start of the project, each plant required removal and replanting at nearby Cooley Gardens. Because the new site is in more direct sunlight than the original garden, the City and the BWL collaborated with the Garden Club of Lansing to move half of the plants back to the Sunken Garden and purchase more colorful plants and flowers that are better suited for the space. The remaining plants from the original garden remain at Cooley Gardens.

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