



# MAIN STREET PARK ALLIANCE

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## Chelsea's Gathering Space

**For Immediate Release**

### **Main Street Park Alliance Celebrates Milestone!**

Chelsea, MI - On Wednesday, July 16, Main Street Park Alliance (MSPA), in partnership with the City of Chelsea, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), Washtenaw County Brownfield Authority, Washtenaw County Parks and the City of Chelsea Parks & Recreation Commission, held a groundbreaking at the site of the future Main Street Park. State Representative Kathy Schmaltz and State Senator Sue Shink joined a crowd of local supporters and MSPA board members for this milestone event.





After a brief deluge of rain, Project Lead Joe Ziolkowski kicked off the ceremony, reflecting on all of the work and people who made this project a reality, “This project would not be possible without this group standing here right now, and so many others who have contributed time, talent and money to make this project a reality. We intentionally put the word Alliance in our name, not because it made our name sound fancy, but because we knew from the start it would take an alliance of civic-minded people working together to solve the problem of this previously undevelopable brownfield.”

Ziolkowski’s remarks were followed by representatives from environmental grant providers Carrie Geyer from EGLE, Paula Holtz from MEDC, Sam Baushke from Washtenaw County Brownfield Authority, and Coy Vaughn of Washtenaw County Parks. City of Chelsea Mayor Jane Pacheco spoke about the due diligence of the City Council and staff to make this public-private partnership a success. All speakers remarked on the creative and persistent efforts that it took to address this problem property within downtown Chelsea. Ziolkowski concluded the ceremony with a golden shovel presentation to board members John & Anne Mann, who have provided community leadership and tireless fundraising efforts on behalf of the park. The sunshine came out again as all parties joined in a celebratory shovel scoop of dirt near the future park pavilion.



The groundbreaking marks a major milestone in a citizen-led effort to create a safe, inclusive, and active public space. The project is the result of a grassroots public-private partnership fueled by thousands of volunteer hours, steadfast community support, and collaboration across local and state agencies. The Main Street Park Alliance has successfully navigated a \$2 million environmental remediation, a robust public input process, and an ambitious fundraising effort to bring the project to this moment.

“This project has always been about more than just building a park—it’s about bringing people together to solve a long-standing problem,” said Joe Ziolkowski, Lead Developer & Member of the Board of Directors for the Main Street Park Alliance. “What began as a shared dream among community members is now taking physical shape thanks to the persistence, generosity, and determination of this community.”

As construction begins, the project enters its final phase. The Main Street Park Alliance has raised \$9.6 million towards the \$10.5 million project goal. Fundraising will continue until every dollar is raised. Upon completion, the park will be transitioned to the City of Chelsea, ensuring long-term public ownership and stewardship.

Main Street Park will feature accessible pathways, green spaces, community gathering areas, and active recreation areas suitable for all ages and abilities. The park is designed to

be both a local destination and a regional gateway to outdoor activity in Western Washtenaw County.

*Photos courtesy of Kate Zurenko.*

For more information and updates, visit [www.mainstreetpark.org](http://www.mainstreetpark.org).

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Main Street Park Alliance's mission is to create an intergenerational community park for Chelsea. Through the power of grassroots volunteerism, they will revitalize this downtown property for a better human experience.

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