

# COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

PARKS, NATURE PRESERVE, AND SCHOOL GROUNDS

---



SPRING 2025

VILLAGE OF SHOREWOOD

Page intentionally left blank

# Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

## Plan Update Contributors 2024

### Parks and Public Spaces Committee

Heather Moran Mansfield, Chair/Parks subcommittee

Hanna Seegers, Vice-Chair

Robert Austin

Ian Berry, Parks subcommittee

Kristin Greenman

Paige Hammond

Mary Jorgensen

Andrew Kaczmarek

Donald Lodge, Parks subcommittee

Roger Mason

Alexander "Sandie" Pendleton

Raynie Pero

Ruth Williams, Parks subcommittee

### Village of Shorewood Administration

Chris Anderson, Assistant Village Manager

Leeann Butschlick, Director of Public Works

Bart Griepentrog, Director of Planning and Development

Updated photography by Patrick Manning

## Plan Update Contributors 2015

### ***Village of Shorewood Administration***

Ericka Lang, Planning Director

Leeann Butschlick, Public Works Director

### **Parks Commission**

Ellen Eckman, Chair

Sam Essak

Chris Gallagher

Mark Schill

Jaime Jacoby

Kathy Yanoff

Kenneth Cole

## Plan Contributors in 2007

### **Park Plan Steering Committee**

#### ***Residents***

Diane Buck, Chair

Dan Ford, Vice Chair

Dawn Anderson

Nancy Bornstein

Ann Brummitt

Richard Eschner

Chris Gallagher

Holly Morris

Kathy Papineau

### ***School District of Shorewood Recreation and Community Services Department***

Deb Stolz

### ***Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture***

Laurie Albano

#### ***Village Board***

Guy Johnson, Village President

Dawn Anderson, Trustee

Ellen Eckman, Trustee

Jeff Hanewall, Trustee

Margaret Hickey, Trustee

Michael Maher, Trustee

Michael Phinney, Trustee

#### ***School District of Shorewood***

Lindsey Jorgenson, Atwater Elementary School

Pat Hildebrandt, Lake Bluff Elementary School

Mike Gregornik, Shorewood High School

Donna Greutzmacher, Shorewood Intermediate

### ***Village of Shorewood Administration***

Ericka Lang, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Chris Swartz, Village Manager

Robin Mueller, Department of Public Works, Forestry

Judy Kaiser, Department of Public Works, Forestry

### ***2006 Prepared by***

Planning and Design Institute, Inc.

CYLA Design Associates, Inc. Oak Park, IL

Cedarburg Science Grafton, WI

Page intentionally left blank

## Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>EXISTING PARKS, NATURE PRESERVE AND SCHOOL GROUNDS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>GENERAL ISSUES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>EVALUATION &amp; RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>45</b>
	Atwater Park	45
	Hubbard Park	54
	River Park	60
	Estabrook Park	63
	Atwater School	69
	Lake Bluff School	71
	High School & Intermediate School	72
	Triangle Park	73
	Humble Park	74
	Concept Atwater Park	77
	Concept Hubbard Park	79
	Concept River Park	81
	Concept Estabrook Park	83
	Concept Oak Leaf Trail	85
	Concept Atwater Elementary School	87
	Concept Lake Bluff Elementary School	89
	Concept Milwaukee River Nature Trail	91
<b>7</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>93</b>

## APPENDIX

### FUNDING

### COST ESTIMATES 2007 PARK PLAN

Page intentionally left blank

# INTRODUCTION

## *Section 1*

Recreation opportunities and public open spaces represent an important measure of community livability, help maintain neighborhood value, and promote a high quality of life. Unlike communities that experience a trend of growth and expansion, the population base and municipal boundaries of Shorewood are effectively stable. Acquisition of additional public acreage for park and recreation uses remains limited, however, as land parcels within the Village undergo redevelopment or reclamation in the future, new opportunities to incorporate parks or public spaces will potentially arise.

This plan places an emphasis on enhancing and encouraging activation of existing public spaces that promotes greater outdoor public uses. This plan is an update of the 2015 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, adjusting for improvements realized since its adoption.



Figure 1 Atwater Park Overlook

## **KEY UPDATES SINCE THE 2015 PLAN**

This Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan represents an official guide for park and recreation facility development for the Village. It considers the ongoing work of the Parks Subcommittee to address current conditions of parks facilities, the wants of the community, and national trends so future planning can be responsive to the degree the Village of Shorewood is able. As this rewrite is a plan update and not an overhaul, there are key differences listed below.

### **SHORTAGE OF SUFFICIENT PARK SPACES**

Previously shared in Section 4 of the 2015 plan, there are just over 136.8 acres of parks, recreational facilities, and other grounds within the Village of Shorewood. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends 6.25 to 10.5 acres of park and recreation space per 1,000 population. The Village of Shorewood is within this threshold for total recreation space, but it is worth noting the majority of Shorewood's parks and recreation spaces are not controlled by the Village. Nearly seventy percent of this space is controlled by Milwaukee County due to Estabrook Park and Oak Leaf Trail.

### **CHANGES TO RECREATION NEEDS**

Another change of note not included in the 2015 update of the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan is the emergence in the popularity and demand for Pickleball. This sport has shown a steady increase in players locally and nationwide. The need for additional spaces to accommodate this swell of recreation demand is noticeable (especially among those Shorewoodians that wait their turn to play at the courts at Atwater Elementary School on a busy Saturday or evenings during the week).

In fact, Pickleball's participation rates are behind only (biking and running), and arguably the top group recreational activity. The rapid growth of pickleball highlights a need for additional court space. In 2023, pickleball participation was 36.5 million players in the U.S., with 2 of every 3 players being a "Core Player", or a player that plays the sport eight or more times per year. Moreover, according to 2023 data from Pickleheads.com, the number of pickleball courts in the U.S. was 10,320, but demand still outpaces supply.

Considerations for the placement of courts include sound analysis so as not to disturb neighbors. Locations were vetted that would fit within the noise contours and potential spaces in the Village include Lake Bluff Elementary School, Estabrook Park, and River Park. In any case, further evaluation of these spaces would occur in consultation with the stakeholder/partner.

Given this growth, investing in more pickleball courts will meet rising demand and foster community engagement in an increasingly diverse player base.

### **ADDITION OF ADEQUATE WRITE UP OF GREEN SPACE AND ASSOCIATED VOLUNTEER GROUP**

The 2015 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan lists the Nature Preserve/Nature Conservancy among the community amenities in Shorewood, but did not provide necessary background as to the features and benefits of this green space.

## Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Additionally, the newly formed Friends of Shorewood Nature Preserve was not in existence at the time of the 2015 update. As such, the 2024 plan update will add detail of the Friends of Shorewood Nature Preserve’s goals and Nature Preserve’s amenities of a landscape management plan that sets near term, short term, and long term goals for proper use and appreciation of this space.

<b>Goals</b> (page numbers correspond to the Marek Land Management Plan prepared August 2023)	<b>Near term 6-12 months</b>	<b>Mid Term 12-24 months</b>	<b>Long Term 2+ years</b>
<b>1. Removal of Invasive species, including Garlic Mustard, Buckthorn, Oriental Bittersweet, Dame's Rocket and Honeysuckle</b> (pp 4, 6, 7, 13)	X	X	X
<b>2. Cleanup and Management of Woody Debris</b> (p 6, 8 without controlled burns)	X	X	X
<b>3. Add Native Plantings</b> (pp 10, 11 and Table 2)	X	X	X
<b>4. Fence Removal</b>	X < 6 months		
<b>5. Apply for funding/ grants</b> (pp 11, 12)	X	X	
<b>6. Erosion Control and Rerouting of Trails near bluff edge</b> (p 11)			X
<b>7. Safe Beach Access (steps)</b> (p 13)			X
<b>8. Dune and Beach Restoration</b> (p 12)			X
<b>9. Add benches/ repair Amphitheater</b> (p 13)			x
<b>10. Ongoing Community Engagement</b> (p 8, 11, 12, 13)	X	x	X

### ATWATER PARK SITE CIRCULATION

A site circulation and landscape plan was completed for the upper Atwater Park area in 2024. The goal of the exercise was to provide a connection to the planned on-street ADA parking spaces to be constructed with the 2025 Wisconsin Department of Transportation Lake Drive/STH 32 improvements. This effort also aimed to review and improve the current pedestrian path layout in advance of replacement that is anticipated to be necessary in the very near future.

One of the requirements of the plan, in addition to making the circulation more user friendly, was to allow maintenance and emergency vehicles to be able to access Atwater Park from the north and south, however, the requirement limited options for significant path relocation. The concept includes improvement to pedestrian flow and additional space for amenities including benches and bike racks. The concept also identifies a location for a relocated flagpole and potential future foot wash station and suggests the addition of hardscape surrounding the Plensa statue at the south end of the park. The Plensa is a popular spot for photos and the foot traffic has destroyed much of the plantings surrounding the base.



feedback from the community. This would encourage residents and users of Shorewood's parks and open spaces to contact the Parks and Public Spaces Committee (through the Parks subcommittee) with new ideas, and new trends in recreational activities to determine if they are appropriate and recommended for inclusion in overall goals and recommendations. Additionally, continued monitoring of the goals in the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan by the Parks and Public Spaces Committee will allow the group to identify required next steps.

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan represents an official guide for park and recreation facility development for the Village. It considers both immediate needs and future concerns relevant to parks, trails, school grounds and open space areas. The plan strives to guide preservation and protection of natural and cultural resource features, and coordinate recreation facility improvements among various recreation management entities. It serves as an implementation tool that will enable the realization of a high quality system of recreational spaces. Each of the plan's recommendations responds to existing conditions and identified recreational needs.

Examination of existing acreage that accommodates active sports, such as baseball and soccer, was investigated during the original planning process and updated. The original plan identified underutilized open areas in parklands that were also considered for providing for additional field space for active sports. In the summer of 2022 Shorewood Village parks survey (listening sessions), 4.4% of survey respondents wanted improvements to athletic fields/sporting venues.

This plan represents an update of the 2015 plan, which was an update to the 2007 plan. Before that, Shorewood's previous park plan dated back to 1992. According to guidelines outlined by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), park and recreation plans must be updated every five years to retain eligibility for a variety of grant and funding opportunities at the state level.

## PLANNING PROCESS

The 2007 plan involved a planning process designed to assist the Village in formulating long-range improvements of public recreational space. The plan was developed through a collaborative effort by Village residents and stakeholders, the Village Park and Recreation Plan Steering Committee, and private consultants PDI. As part of that planning process, representatives from organizations and interested citizens were invited to participate.

Updating the plan in 2015 involved the Village, Parks Commission (which would become the Parks and Public Spaces Committee in 2021), and various stakeholders. Following approval of the updated Vision 2025 Plan early 2014, the Village created a Strategic Management Plan and formulated an Implementation Plan within the 2015 plan update to contribute to park improvement priorities.

The purpose of the 2025 update is to: 1. Provide the status of recommendations in the 2015 plan; 2. Provide new recommendations, and 3. Address Shorewood parks or public spaces and recreational activities not addressed in the 2015 plan. Examples are the growth in interest in pickleball in the community, and the inclusion of the Shorewood Nature Preserve.

## COMMUNITY SETTING

### Location and Park History

The Village of Shorewood is nestled between Lake Michigan on the east and the Milwaukee River on the west. Bordered on the south and west by the City of Milwaukee and by the Village of Whitefish Bay on the north, it is a community of 13,162. Recognized as the “most densely populated municipality in Wisconsin,” the Village encompasses approximately 1.5 square miles (1,002 acres). Originally part of the Town of Milwaukee, it seceded in 1900 to become East Milwaukee. In 1917, the Village officially modified its name to Shorewood.

Shorewood is characterized as a fully built or landlocked community, as vacant land is virtually absent. By 1940, over one-half of existing residential structures were constructed, and by 1950, approximately 80 percent of land within the Village was developed. While the configuration of roads and residential neighborhoods reflect logical and efficient design, the provision of adequate public open space and parks was largely overlooked by early Village founders.



*Figure 2 Hubbard Park*

## Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

To the credit of the Village, Milwaukee County, and philanthropic and citizen support, a significant percentage of public park and open space facilities in the community has been established through creative reclamation, conversion, and acquisition efforts. As a result, the Village and partnering interests have successfully assembled a park system that provides for a variety of active and passive recreational needs.

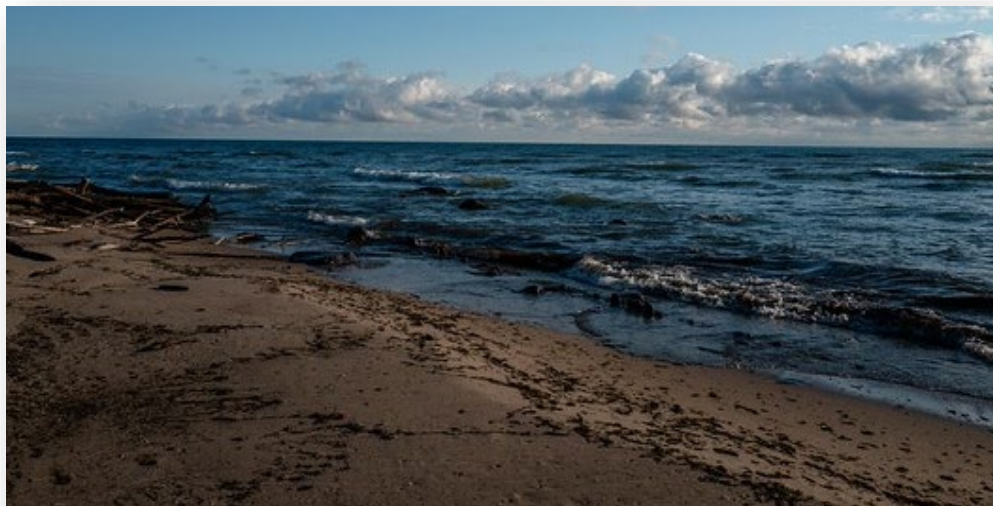
**TABLE 1: PARK DEVELOPMENT HISTORY**

SITE		FORMER USE
Atwater Park	Reclaimed	Lakeshore bluff environment that historically functioned as a "dumping ground" prior to being dedicated for recreational uses
River Park	Reclaimed	Acreage that once accommodated the Oakland Avenue Railyard (Milwaukee Electric Railway & Light Company)
Humble Park	Reclaimed	Acreage (1960s) that accommodated a service station facility
Oak Leaf Trail	Reclaimed	A converted rail corridor(1990s) for recreational use (details included in Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan)
Triangle Park	Residential Acreage	Residual residential parcel in the Kensington Heights neighborhood
Nature Conservancy/ Shorewood Nature Preserve	Acquired	Lakeshore bluff environment that represents an assembly of private residential parcels (1979)
Hubbard Park	Converted	River bluff environment adjacent to the Milwaukee River utilized for private leisure recreation since the late 1800s, and later converted to public use
Estabrook County Park	Established	River bluff environment bisected by a railroad spur, and located between a (former) railroad corridor and the Milwaukee River; established in 1936 by the County of Milwaukee, and designed by County Landscape Architect Alfred Boerner

# PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

## *Section 2*

Since the adoption of the 2007 Park Plan, subsequent related plans were also completed. This update incorporates recommendations from the 2009 River Riparian Plan and 2010 Atwater Park Master Plan. Recommendations in these plans have not been fully implemented. It remains likely that budgetary constraints, competition for capital improvement funds, and insufficient staff hours committed to park management have impeded intentions to enhance park facilities. Since the 2007 plan adoption, a Parks Commission (now the Parks and Public Spaces Committee) was formed to assist in prioritizing and implementing recommendations.



*Figure 3 Lake Michigan (from Shorewood Nature Preserve path)*

## VISIONING 2025

The purpose of the plan was to create a community-wide overall vision for Shorewood and was updated in 2014 with input from focus groups and at public workshops. Input was focused on what the community valued about living in Shorewood, what the concerns are regarding current issues in the community, and how a successful future of the Village could be envisioned.

Results. The plan's findings/recommendations dealt with many overall issues confronting the community, and parks were referenced in a general sense. As this plan is being updated, discussions are being initiated with the Village Board to identify when the Vision Plan/strategic plan for the Village will be updated.

## **RIVER DISTRICT RIPARIAN LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN (2019)**

A River District Riparian Land Management Plan was adopted in 2019 that addresses restoration of the bluff along the Milwaukee River extending from Hubbard Park to East Capitol Drive. Previous actions include reconstruction of the river trail in 2018 to address erosional areas, provided a stabilized trail, protected sensitive habitat areas, decommissioned social trails, and provides stabilized access to the river. Additionally, the Milwaukee River Greenway planning efforts to manage the 878 acres of trails and greenspace are a collaborative effort among multiple community partners.

## **ATWATER PARK SITE CIRCULATION PLAN (2024)**

Concurrent with the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan update, the Village's Department of Public Works also performed a site circulation plan analysis and update to plan for future hardscapes, sidewalks, and other elements to provide the best user experience of a key outdoor space in the Village.

CANOE/KAYAK LAUNCH CONSTRUCTION 2022

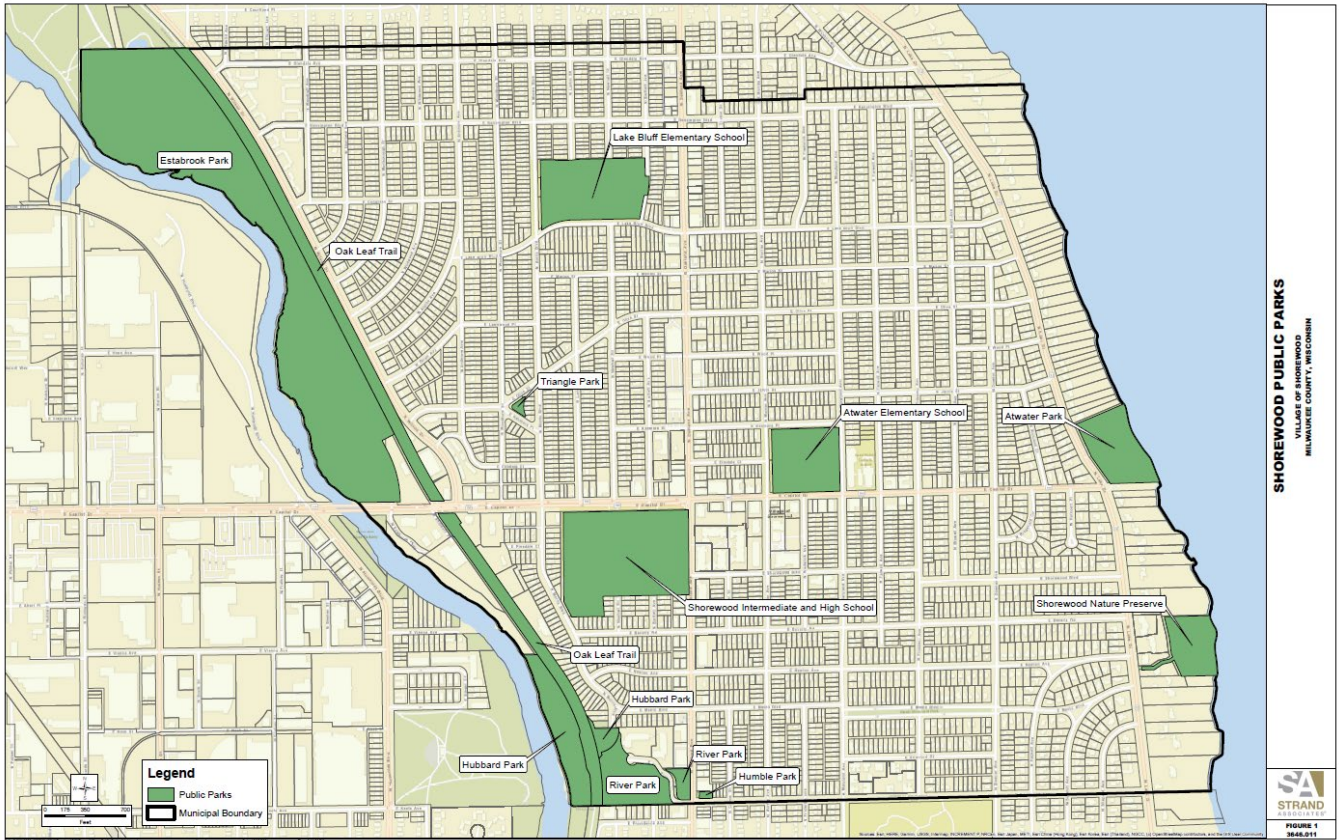
NATURE PRESERVE LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN 2019

TRIANGLE PARK IMPROVEMENTS

RIVER SITE RESTORATION PLAN 2009

# Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

## Parks, Nature Preserve, and School Grounds



# DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

## Section 3

An understanding of growth and composition of the local population provides an important foundation for the Village of Shorewood Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. The demand for recreational opportunities and facilities is influenced, in part, by demographic characteristics. This section evaluates historic trends in population and analyzes characteristics of the residents within the Village.

### POPULATION TRENDS

The population served by the parks and open space facilities in the Village of Shorewood is approximately 13,603 (as of the US Census, 2023). This figure represents a population decline of less than 2% since 2000.

However, new housing development since the last Census and publication of this plan has shown an upward trend.

**TABLE 2: POPULATION TRENDS, VILLAGE OF SHOREWOOD**

1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2020	2023 (latest avail.)
14,116	13,956	13,763	14,155	13,162	13,859	13,603

*Data from the United States Census Bureau and US Census Bureau Quick Facts, 2025*

## POPULATION BY AGE

The age distribution of a community is perhaps the most referenced population characteristic relevant to future park and recreational demand and needs.

The population of the Village increased by approximately 500 persons between 2010 and 2020. The largest increases were seen in the under 5 and 70-79 age groups. The largest decreases were seen in the 10-19 and 20-29 age groups. The following graph shows the change in age structure for the Village of Shorewood.

**TABLES 3: SHOREWOOD AGE GROUP DISTRIBUTION, 2010 - 2023**

Age Group	2010		2023		2010-2023
	Number	%	Number	%	Percent change
Under 5 years	658	5%	924	7%	+40%
5 to 9 years	648	5%	734	5%	+13%
10 to 14 years	777	6%	552	4%	-29%
15 to 19 years	699	5%	529	4%	-24%
20 to 29 years	2610	20%	2111	15%	-19%
30 to 39 years	1669	13%	2317	17%	+39%
40 to 49 years	1716	13%	1654	12%	-4%
50 to 59 years	1859	14%	1531	11%	-18%
60 to 69 years	1347	10%	1736	13%	+29%
70 to 79 years	664	5%	1080	8%	+63%
80 years and over	515	4%	514	%	-.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,162</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13,682</b>	<b>100%</b>	

*Census Bureau, 2010 and 2023 (demographics by age in most recent American Community Survey)*

## HOUSING

The total number of occupied housing units within the Village (2020) was 6,635. Although Shorewood is considered a fully built community, it remains likely that the Village will continue to experience an increase in housing units within the rental market. The diversity of housing in the Village of Shorewood is characterized by a high concentration of rental housing (52.3%) in 2020. This trend is largely due to the Village’s proximity to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Downtown Milwaukee and availability of rental housing for young urban professionals. There is a growing demand for multifamily housing versus purchasing a single-family home for some population sectors.



## STATEWIDE RECREATION TRENDS AND OBSERVATIONS

A review of the [Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2025-2030](#) provides participation rates of outdoor recreation activity. Additionally, the report underscores the fact that Wisconsinites historically participate in outdoor recreation at higher rates than the national average.

The following table was taken from the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, which updated the way survey data was collected to indicate a clearer picture of participation. In the past, asking for participation rates was a simple “yes or no.” The table below aims to inform agencies, municipalities, and organizations about insights that may help engage or re-engage people in specific outdoor activities. Below is information from the survey respondents (sent to 7,000 random residences in Wisconsin and 1,200 email addresses that represented a cross-section of Wisconsinites<sup>1</sup>).

**TABLE 4: PROJECTED TRENDS IN WISCONSIN OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES**

Table 4.2: Top 10 recreation activities that residents are estimated to **not** have done in the past 12 months but have done in the past, or are familiar with and may or may not be interested in pursuing.

Activity	I have done this in the past, but not recently	Activity	I'm familiar with this and interested in doing it	Activity	I'm familiar with this and <u>not</u> interested in doing it
Camping - Tent	41 %	Managing land (e.g., restoring habitats, building trails)	25 %	Trapping	65 %
Fishing	33 %	Bicycling - ebike	25 %	Rock climbing outdoors with climbing gear	60 %
Visiting a nature center	33 %	Snowshoeing	22 %	Winter biking ("fat tire")	58 %
Bicycling - Regular bicycle	32 %	Camping - RV/pop-up/van	21 %	Inline skating/Roller blading	56 %
Picnicking	30 %	Foraging or gathering (e.g., wild edibles, medicinal plants)	20 %	Mountain biking - ebike	55 %
Camping - RV/pop-up/van	30 %	Gardening	18 %	Hunting	50 %
Motorboating (including pontoons)	30 %	Horseback riding	18 %	Downhill skiing/Snowboarding	48 %
Using splash pads or outdoor pools	29 %	Snowmobiling	17 %	Bouldering outdoors (with crash pads)	46 %
Snowmobiling	29 %	Cross-country skiing	17 %	Mountain biking - Regular bicycle	45 %
Swimming in lakes, ponds, or rivers	28 %	Riding a motorized vehicle (ATV, 4WD, motorcycle)	17 %	Water skiing, wakeboarding	45 %

Source: DNR data (see Appendix E)

<sup>1</sup> Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2025-2030 pp. 29

Recreation associations in Shorewood, such as the Milwaukee Kickers, Bavarian United Soccer Club, Whitefish Bay-Nicolet-Shorewood Youth Lacrosse Club, and the Shorewood Little League (baseball and softball), demonstrate increasing local interest in active team sports as evidenced by rising rates of participation. Additionally, involvement in team sports spans a range of ages, and therefore requires appropriately-scaled fields and facilities to accommodate differing skill levels.



*Figure 4 Soccer fields at Estabrook Park*

# EXISTING PARKS, NATURE PRESERVE & SCHOOL GROUNDS

## *Section 4*

This section presents an overview of the existing parks, nature preserve, and school grounds within the Village of Shorewood. This comprehensive inventory serves as basis for analysis and recommendations contained in this plan.

### EXISTING PARKS, NATURE PRESERVE, AND SCHOOL GROUNDS

There are approximately 136 acres of public outdoor recreation space within the Village of Shorewood. The Village, Shorewood School District, and Milwaukee County own and manage publicly accessible recreation acreage in the community. Partnerships between the Village and other recreation management authorities represent a crucial element regarding future use, development and maintenance of various public recreation sites.

**TABLE 5: RECREATION FACILITY MANAGEMENT**

Management Authority	Acres	% of Total Recreational Space
Village of Shorewood	33.7	24.6%
Milwaukee County	93.6	68.4%
Shorewood School District	9.5	7.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>136.8</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Village of Shorewood Park Facilities

Although Village parks represent only 24% of total outdoor public space, they are traditionally considered the mainstay of recreational venues in Shorewood. Maintenance and improvements to parks are undertaken by the Department of Public Works. The municipal budget includes annual funding for park maintenance and improvements via the Capital Improvement Fund.

## School District of Shorewood Facilities

The School District of Shorewood, which holds seven percent of outdoor public space, affords opportunities for the community to utilize elementary school grounds and recreational facilities during after-school hours, weekends and during the summer. Two elementary school campuses, the intermediate school and high school are used by the general public, the School District of Shorewood Recreation and Community Services Department, and local youth sports organizations.

Facilities that are common to elementary schools include playgrounds, soccer fields, baseball and softball diamonds, paved play areas, and tennis courts. Although the Village does not manage the school grounds, residents may utilize outdoor facilities for recreation when not being utilized by the schools.

## Milwaukee County Park and Trail Facilities

Milwaukee County maintains jurisdiction over 93 (68%) acres of public parks and natural areas in the Village of Shorewood, and over 15,000 acres in Milwaukee County. Within Shorewood, the County has authority over and manages enhancements and maintenance of Estabrook Park and a 1.6-mile off-road section of the regional Oak Leaf Trail that traverses the former railroad grade. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends 6.25 to 10.5 acres of park and recreation space per 1,000 population. The Village of Shorewood is within this threshold for total recreation space, but it should be noted that the majority of Shorewood's parks and recreation spaces are not controlled by the Village.

**TABLE 6: EXISTING PARKS, NATURE PRESERVE, AND SCHOOL GROUND ACREAGE**

Facility	Park Classification	Acres
<b>Village Parks</b>		
Atwater Park	Neighborhood Park	6.8
Hubbard Park	Neighborhood Park	6.1
Humble Park	Mini Park	0.2
Triangle Park	Mini Park	0.3
River Park	Special Use Park	5.4
<b>Village Greenspace</b>		
Nature Preserve	Natural Area	8.3
<b>County Parks &amp; Trails</b>		
Estabrook County Park	Community Park	74.2
Oak Leaf Trail	Trail Corridor	19.4
<b>Public School Grounds</b>		
Atwater Elementary School	School Ground	3.6
Lake Bluff Elementary School	School Ground	5.9
High School/Intermediate School	School Ground	6.6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>136.8</b>

## PARK AND RECREATION STANDARDS

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) have traditionally recommended standards to assess demand for park land in urban areas. Historically, NRPA standards recommended a range of 6 to 10.5 acres of developed park land per every 1,000 residents. An analysis of park, open space and school ground acreage reveals that the recreational space within the Village equates to approximately 9.3 acres per 1,000 population. The overwhelming majority of acreage occurs within one park facility (Estabrook County Park).

As previously stated, NRPA standards traditionally served as a benchmark to analyze the deficiencies of a local park system. Yet a more realistic measure of park quality considers the individual character of site, location, access, maintenance levels, diversity of offerings, and the range of amenities. These characteristics influence the intensity of recreational use to a greater degree than the amount of available acreage.

## OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL AMENITY & RESOURCE INVENTORY

To validate future recreational needs and amenities, inventory of the existing facility base was completed in 2021 and updated. This analysis examines parks, the Nature Preserve, and school grounds. The following table lists primary recreational uses within specific sites:



Figure 5 Milwaukee River off Estabrook Park

**TABLE 7: INVENTORY OF PRIMARY PARK USES**

Facility	Primary Recreational Uses	
<b>Atwater Park</b>	Scenic viewing /Leisure Resting/Public Art Walking Children's Play	Volleyball (sand) Picnicking Swimming (beach)
<b>Hubbard Park</b>	Scenic viewing /Leisure resting Walking Picnicking Beer Garden	Fishing (river) Canoeing/Canoe Launch Special community events
<b>Humble Park</b>	Leisure resting	
<b>Triangle Park</b>	Leisure resting Unstructured play	
<b>River Park</b>	Baseball/Soccer Picnicking Biking	Walking Leisure Resting
<b>Nature Preserve</b>	Walking Nature Viewing	Education (Amphitheatre and nature programs)
<b>Estabrook County Park</b>	Baseball/Softball Soccer Volleyball (sand) Disc Golf Unstructured field-play Cross-country skiing	Fishing (river) Walking/Jogging Bicycling Picnicking Nature Viewing Dog Park
<b>Oak Leaf Trail</b>	Bicycling Walking/Jogging	Inline Skating
<b>Atwater Elementary School</b>	Children's Play Soccer Baseball/Softball Community garden plots	Tennis Pickleball Unstructured field-play Ice skating
<b>Lake Bluff Elementary School</b>	Children's Play Soccer Baseball/Softball Community garden plots	Tennis Unstructured field-play Ice skating
<b>High School and Intermediate School</b>	Track Football Tennis courts Outdoor fitness station	Open space Baseball/Softball Soccer

Recreational facilities maintained by the Village represent a fraction of total facilities available to Shorewood residents. The majority of land-consumptive recreational uses, such as baseball, softball, soccer and tennis are accommodated within School District and County facilities. This fact demands that the Village approach its park and recreation planning in a collaborative and cooperative manner, and consider various options to assist in shared funding and management of extraterritorial recreation venues.

# Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

**TABLE 8: SUMMARY OF ACTIVE SPORTS AMENITIES AND ORGANIZED PLAY AREAS**

Sports Amenities	Quantity TOTAL	Village	Schools	County
Baseball/Softball Diamond (youth)	6	1	4	1
Soccer Fields	9 2 (U6) 3 (U7/U8) 2 (U9/U10) 2 (U11/U12) 0 (U13)	2	4	3
Tennis*	7	-	7	-
Children's Play	8	2	4	2
Volleyball (sand)	4	2	-	2
Skatepark	0	-	-	-

\*2012 two courts were removed from Lake Bluff Elementary and planned replacement



Figure 6 Shorewood Nature Preserve

## SUMMARY

In recent years, the level of service offered by park and school grounds in Shorewood has experienced a modest gain. However, it must be recognized that recreational opportunities in the Village depend heavily on upgrades and offerings made possible by the School District and County. While a cursory analysis of parkland acreage indicates that the Village is compliant with traditional standards outlined by the NRPA, it should be acknowledged that (1) school grounds are not available for use during school-hours and during programmed events and (2) that the County must permit regional use of facilities for soccer, baseball and softball. Rising recreation demands will continue to rely on these non-municipal providers for recreational space.

# GENERAL ISSUES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## *Section 5*

### GENERAL ISSUES

The Parks Subcommittee reviewed the current status of the features of each park in 2021 and updated the inventories. In 2022, the Parks Subcommittee led community input sessions and online surveys to understand the opportunities for further improvement of parks and public spaces. The following issues and themes relevant to park, nature preserve, and school ground facilities emerged from when the plan was originally adopted and from recent input.



Figure 7 Entrance to Hubbard Park

### **Additional Parkland**

As a fully-built community, an increase in the quantity of parkland or public recreational acreage will generally be limited to areas that undergo redevelopment. Therefore, augmenting existing quantity of parkland acreage will require creative strategies endorsed by the Village. Opportunities to acquire path, trail or shoreland easements in conjunction with private redevelopment should be prioritized as a requirement by the Village in development submissions, if applicable. Public plazas and outdoor gathering spaces should also be promoted within redeveloping areas of the Business District, as well.

As of the writing of this update, the Parks and Public Spaces Committee (through its Other Spaces Subcommittee) has prioritized identifying opportune spaces to be activated for outdoor recreation. One such space is a vacant lot on the northeast corner of N. Oakland Ave and E. Marion Street. This previously occupied space has a need for site remediation since it was previously a dry cleaner, but the Shorewood Business Improvement District has also expressed interest and presented to the Committee on desires to add this space to the Village's spaces for the community to recreate.

### **Park and School Ground Funding and Maintenance**

Budgets for park and school ground development must competitively vie with other capital improvement projects at the municipal, school district, and county levels. While funding of park and school grounds maintenance occurs on an annual basis, the majority of efforts focus on retaining the existing level of service and quality. In some parks, park amenities have outlived their functional use, and are in need of replacement. In 2024 the Village created Policy 45, a Donation Policy that identifies the manner in which donations made for park improvements shall be processed..

### **Trail Connectivity and Design**

The interconnectivity of parks and public spaces is important to ensure all Shorewood residents have access to parks and public spaces regardless of mobility or access to modes of transportation. As such, the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan must work in conjunction with the Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety plan to encourage multimodal access to all parks and public spaces. Please refer to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Plan for more details.

### **Active Team Sports Fields**

Active sports fields that include soccer, football, baseball/softball, and tennis/pickleball are located in several parks and school grounds. Participants and sponsors of active sports indicated the current number and sizes of fields are insufficient to meet existing and growing interest in activities such as little league baseball, softball and soccer. While soccer activities may occur within the outfields of baseball diamonds during the fall season, they must forfeit use of ball fields during the spring season when baseball activities commence. This limitation places hardships on soccer uses. In addition, there are no full size baseball fields which limits the use of any Shorewood parks for baseball competitions.

Additionally, the inadequate quality of the field turf and moderate level of maintenance of Estabrook Park fields is of concern. In 2011 Lake Bluff Elementary fields were redone, eliminating flooding that often occurred on one of the ball fields. Atwater Elementary School's baseball diamond is used for t-ball and by very young baseball players; some improvements would also make it suitable for older youth softball players.

The most recent concern for users of our recreational spaces (as well as the trends nationwide) point to the need for additional pickleball fields. There are currently four courts available in the Village, and the Parks Subcommittee has worked with partners and the local pickleball community to develop and advocate for suggestions to grow available courts in the Village. More details can be found in the **Introduction** section.

### **Design Quality**

The design of park spaces does not consistently incorporate high quality materials or construction. Overall, there appears to be variance in the quality and condition of park furnishings, such as lighting, benches, trash receptacles and signage. Moreover, there is a general absence of noteworthy built features or seasonal flora within park spaces.



Water bodies and riparian corridors that abut park spaces in the Village represent a valued resource. While the water's edge is generally reachable by means of paths or trails, there is a need to improve access through trail development, wayfinding signage, and path amenities.

### **Natural Resource Restoration and Protection**

The majority of park and open space facilities within the Village are characterized by natural resource components, such as riverine and beach environments, woodlands, wetlands, and bluff features. Major portions of Hubbard Park, Estabrook Park, Atwater Park and the Nature Preserve are designated as Primary Environmental Corridors by the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), and are further regulated by State and Federal environmental mandates. Additionally, parklands that abut the Milwaukee River are afforded an extra measure of protection and regulation through the Village Shoreland Ordinance (Ordinance No. 1917, October 2006). Therefore, protection and restoration of ecological integrity should remain an important objective of future parkland management.

### **Special Use Facilities**

As part of the community engagement process (2022 Parks Listening Sessions) to inform the Parks Subcommittee about the desired traits and features of parks and outdoor recreation space in the Village, the following report of survey responses is available [here](#). By and large, respondents to the survey agreed that there were enough “active” and “passive” recreation opportunities (87% and 78% respectively).

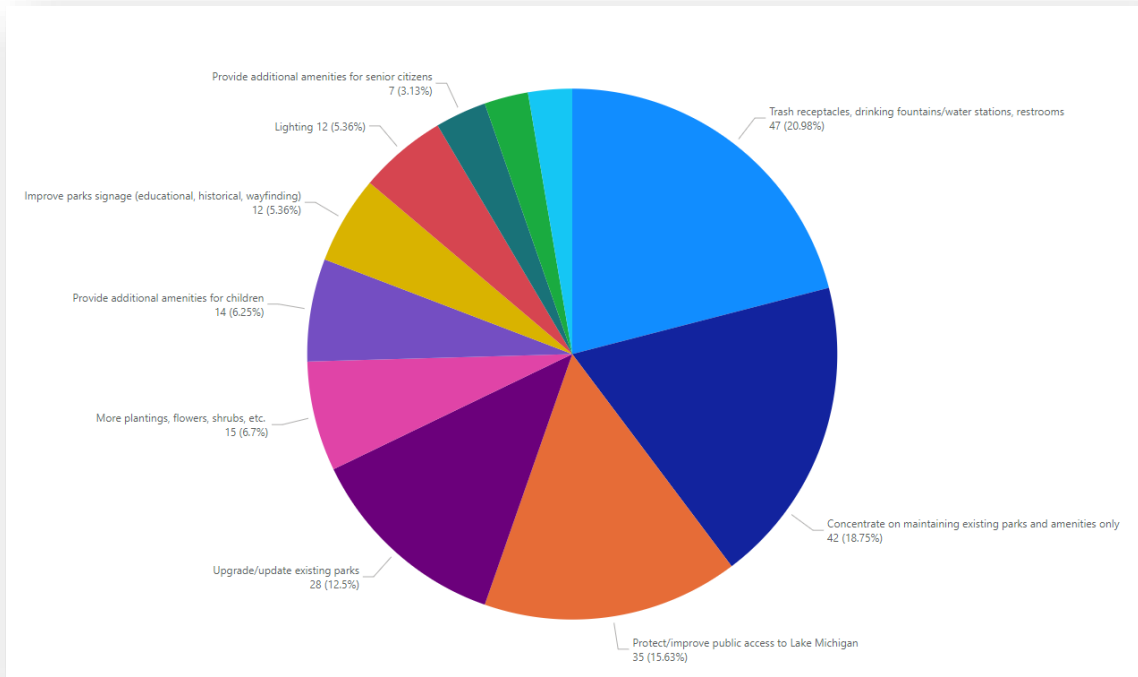
A “wish list” of special-use facilities was developed throughout the original planning process, and included a skate park, beach house, baseball/softball fields, soccer fields, a batting cage, and boating facilities. Future implementation of a portion of these facilities will rely on partnerships between the Village, Milwaukee County, special interest and not-for-profit organizations.

### **River District Riparian Land Management Plan**

A River District Riparian Land Management Plan was adopted in 2019 that addresses restoration of the bluff along the Milwaukee River extending from Hubbard Park to East Capitol Drive. Previous actions include reconstruction of the river trail in 2018 to address erosional areas, provided a stabilized trail, protected sensitive habitat areas, decommissioned social trails, and provides stabilized access to the river. Additionally, the Milwaukee River Greenway planning efforts to manage the 878 acres of trails and greenspace are a collaborative effort among multiple community partners.

# Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

**GRAPH 1: SUMMARY OF HIGHEST NEEDS IN VILLAGE PARKS/RECREATION SPACES**



## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This section includes a series of goals and objectives that are designed to guide park, school ground and recreational facility development in the Village of Shorewood.

**Goals:** broad statements that describe general aspirations and desired future outcomes.

**Objectives:** measurable and specific actions that typically occur within a specified timeframe.

### GOAL 1: PARK DEVELOPMENT

**A range of recreational opportunities that serve the passive and active needs of citizens and visitors in the Village of Shorewood is supported through facility design and recreational programming.**

#### Objectives

- 1.a. Ensure that a variety of recreational elements and spaces accommodate the needs and desires of different age groups, accessibility, and skill levels.
- 1.b. Support the development of a detailed site plan for each park, nature preserve, or school ground facility (when substantial improvements are needed) that includes the design development, construction drawings, cost estimates and a maintenance budget.
- 1.c. Construct and maintain athletic facilities within existing park and school ground site to meet local demands for active sport uses and to provide high quality facilities.



Figure 8 Playground at Atwater Park

## GOAL 2: PATH ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY

**Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between parks, regional trails and the Village is enhanced through improved access, trail development and maintenance.**

### Objectives

2.a. Goals for path access and connectivity are included in the 2024 Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Plan Update, which was reviewed and recommended by the Parks and Public Spaces Committee.

## GOAL 3: DESIGN STANDARDS

**The standards of park and recreational facility design achieve a high level of aesthetic and functional quality.**

### Objectives

3.a. Promote a unified design theme throughout the parks that is represented by signage, fencing, furnishings, lighting, construction materials and techniques, and landscape treatment that is consistent and committed to quality.

3.b. To the greatest extent possible, ensure that the design of landscape and ornamental features, such as stairs, walls, entry monuments and paving are of high quality and durable natural materials that remain timeless in their appeal.

3.c. Incorporate more extensive use of vegetation in park spaces that contribute to aesthetic appeal, benefit wildlife, and provide greater interest of the ground plane.

## GOAL 4: UNDERUTILIZED AREAS

**Underutilized areas of parks and school grounds -- those which could potentially encourage more intensive use -- are activated through facility upgrades and development.**

### Objectives

4.a. Where appropriate, maximize the use of open areas within school grounds and parklands to accommodate sports fields and associated facilities.

4.b. Ensure that public spaces that appear underutilized for recreational purposes are not undermined by issues related to security or the perception of unsafe conditions.

4.c. Consider facility development within underutilized areas, as appropriate, for implementation. An emphasis could focus on new recreational amenities that cater to youth and young adult populations.

4.d. Encourage public awareness of nature areas, such as the Nature Preserve and the Milwaukee River Greenway trails, for passive recreational uses and natural resource stewardship.



## **GOAL 5: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

**Components of the natural environment associated with park sites and trail corridors are protected, enhanced and restored.**

### **Objectives**

- 5.a. Protect natural areas of parks that are of high ecological value from future recreational use and facility development.
- 5.b. Ensure that active recreational facilities are designed so that their normal use does not degrade natural resources components.
- 5.c. Actively promote and fund removal and obliteration of non-native and invasive flora in park areas and corridors that are candidates for ecological restoration.
- 5.d. Restore ecological health in natural areas through planting of native species that contribute to aesthetic qualities and benefit wildlife.
- 5.e. Recognize the importance of environmental features, such as bluff lands, wetlands, woodlands, and shorelands. Implement the goals/projects of the five year vegetation maintenance plan identified in the River District Land Management Plan.

## **GOAL 6: CULTURAL RESOURCES**

**Historic structures and cultural landscape features are retained and restored to their traditional condition for the benefit of future generations.**

### **Objectives**

- 6.a. Recognize, protect, and rehabilitate unique historic and cultural resources in parks that contribute to the historic character of Shorewood.
- 6.b. Interpret historically significant areas, stories or features in parks through wayside or exhibit signage.

## **GOAL 7: PARK MAINTENANCE**

**Maintenance of the park and trail system is supported through appropriate levels of staffing and funding.**

### **Objectives**

- 7.a. Ensure that the Village allocates sufficient funding for maintenance and development of park and open space sites.
- 7.b. Evaluate maintenance staffing levels and increase as required to provide proper care of park facilities is implemented.

## Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

- 7.c. Continue to enhance usage of water wise landscape principles, such as using low water demand plants, installing efficient irrigation systems, and improving soil with adequate organic material.
- 7.d. Require that park designs consider long-term maintenance costs and water costs.
- 7.e. Improve athletic field maintenance in order to reduce the risk of injuries and prolong seasonal use.

## GOAL 8: COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

**Cooperative relations between the Village and various other entities enables facility development, use and programming.**

### **Objectives**

- 8.a. Established in 2007, the Parks Commission, now the Parks Subcommittee of the larger Parks and Public Spaces Committee monitors potential park improvements and champions the plan.
- 8.b. Continue to partner with the Shorewood School District and Shorewood Recreation Advisory Committee; community groups Friends of Atwater Beach, Friends of Estabrook Park, and Friends of Shorewood Nature Preserve; and Milwaukee County Parks and Milwaukee River Greenway Coalition in the provision of existing and new recreation uses, and to maximize the value of capital expenses.



Figure 10 Milwaukee River

## **GOAL 9: SAFE FACILITIES**

**Recreational facilities within the Village are perceived as safe environments.**

### **Objectives**

- 9.a. Replace deteriorating recreation equipment and furnishings with items that provide longevity and safety of users.
- 9.b. Consider night lighting of park and pathway facilities to increase safety of recreational spaces and improve the perception of safety.
- 9.c. Involve Public Safety officers and Village Staff in the review of park and trail design plans to ensure that safety issues will be addressed.
- 9.d. As warranted, increase Village police presence through bicycle or foot patrols in areas where safety concerns have been identified.

## **GOAL 10: FUNDING**

**Economic sustainability and stability of parks is afforded through efficient use of financial resources.**

### **Objectives**

- 10.a. Ensure that sufficient funding of park improvements is allocated for long term maintenance and operations on an annual basis and to afford opportunities to seek matching monies through grant awards.
- 10.b. Aggressively seek matching funding sources for park and school ground improvements through local, state and federal means.
- 10.c. Seek appropriate private and not-for-profit sponsorship opportunities for developing specific features within public parks.
- 10.d. Work with local sports organizations, the Shorewood School District, and Milwaukee County to define mutually compatible facility needs and mechanisms for the development, construction, operation and maintenance of these facilities.

# EVALUATION & RECOMMENDATIONS

## *Section 6*

The evaluation of park and recreational facilities considers a number of factors, such as use levels, facility quality, presence or absence of user amenities, recreational trends, and human observation. Instead of utilizing a traditional “demand and needs” quantification to evaluate park facilities, this evaluation represents a qualitative appraisal that is more suited to the conditions and constraints inherent to Shorewood.

Recommendations for park enhancements follow the descriptive evaluation of park sites. Individual recommendations are illustrated on accompanying concept plans found at the end of this section.

### **ATWATER PARK EVALUATION**

#### **UPPER TERRACE STRENGTHS**

**Flexibility of the space.** In general, the upper terrace is simplistic and informal in its design layout. The terrace affords opportunities for self-actualized forms of recreation, such as picnicking, scenic viewing, and walking. The only programmed space is found in the northern area of the park (children’s playground).

**Public Art.** In 2010 a sculpture by international artist Juame Plensa was donated and placed in Atwater Park. The 2010 Atwater Park Master Plan designated a contemplative area in the southern section of the upper park terrace area.

**High visibility and accessibility.** The upper terrace represents the smallest section of the park (approximately the same surface area as a football field) but supports the greatest concentration of activity and use. The average depth of the terrace (street-to-bluff) is 110 feet and therefore allows for good visual access throughout the ground plane. The park is sited along one of the most heavily traveled street corridors in the Village and is viewed by numerous passers-by daily (14,200 vehicles per day, annual average daily traffic, Wisconsin Department of Transportation Traffic Count Map, 2023 latest available).

**Unobstructed views to the lake.** The primary attraction of the upper terrace is the view to the lake and shoreline. Atwater Park is the only public space within the Village that affords unobstructed visual access to these natural resources (the Nature Preserve provides for access, but the views are limited from the upper elevations).

**Playground Area.** The upper playground was replaced in 2015 with a portion ADA accessible. It is sited in an appropriate location, at the northern end of the park and is a short and convenient distance from the street. As the only programmed space within the upper terrace, the location allows for active play without disrupting more tranquil areas of the park that are utilized for passive uses, such as viewing scenery and sitting.

**Seating wall.** With the restoration of the bluff and upper path in 2011, a seating wall of large limestone blocks runs adjacent to the southern upper path, allowing for leisure activity and enjoying the views of the lake.

**Gate.** A decorative iron gate feature was added at the top of the bluff path, connected to the bunker building. The gate was put in place in 2012 to deter access to the beach after the park is closed.



Figure 11 Atwater Park Upper Terrace

## **UPPER TERRACE WEAKNESSES**

**Existing “centerpiece” of the park.** The overlook platform (veteran’s memorial), flagpole, paved plaza, and walkways that lead to these elements comprise the primary built features of the upper terrace. These centrally-located built features direct park users to the stairway. Paving stones surrounding the veteran’s memorial and flagpole have sunk and should be replaced.

This feature affords spectacular panoramic views of the Lake Michigan environs design perspective. However, this central element is understated and does not serve as a “signature” or compelling feature of the park. The configuration also obstructs set up, views and use of the upper terrace lawn area for large community events.

**Absence of high quality landscape design.** Design details of the park do not reflect high quality materials and craftsmanship observed in neighboring private residences. While it is appropriate that the park remains fairly simple in its design, there is an absence of built features, such as entry monuments that could enhance the function and aesthetic qualities of the park. These elements are likely to be addressed with features identified in the 2024 Atwater Park Site Circulation plan, which speaks to new monument signage and building hardscape seating around the Plensa sculpture, due to the popularity of visitors to the park convening here for pictures.

## **BLUFF STRENGTHS**

**Choice of access (stairs or path).** Access to the lower beach area is accommodated through two access routes – a direct stairway and a circuitous (switchback) path. Park users may choose which route to utilize, and may select a combination of routes that incorporates both path and stairs.

**Path grade.** The path grade affords an alternative route that is less strenuous than the stairs, and is especially appropriate for accessibility based on age or physical ability. Due to the steepness of the stair route, the pathway represents a preferred course to access the beach. The path also allows for maintenance vehicles to access the lower areas of the park.

In 2011 the upper portion of the bluff path was replaced due to erosion caused by stormwater runoff. The new path section is ADA compliant, but the remaining lower portion is not.

**Native plant restoration.** A plan created in the late 1990s which outlines vegetation restoration strategies had been partially implemented up to 2006. Following bluff restoration work in 2011, a five-year plant restoration plan was developed and is being implemented. Revegetation efforts are succeeding and the bluff landscape is ecologically meaningful and provides long-term stability of the bluff.

## **BLUFF WEAKNESSES**

**Stair feature.** The stairway represents the central element within the bluff environment. It is characterized by a very steep tread, and is strictly utilitarian in its design. The condition of the stair treads is fair. It is likely that many able-bodied beach-goers utilize a combination of paths that includes (1) the asphalt pathway to the intersection of the stairs at mid-bluff, then (2) the stairs to the activity zone of the beach. If this method of obtaining access to the lower areas of the park is verified, then the upper portion of the stair feature becomes of less importance to the circulation system.

**Pathway experience.** The asphalt pathway (switchback) represents a highly-functional element of the park, but does not provide for interesting “episodes” along its length. While continual views of the lake and lower beach are afforded throughout the duration of the path, there are no opportunities to sit along the pathway to rest or view the lake environment. The entire stretch of trail is exposed to sun and natural elements and lower sections of the path pavement exhibits cracking due to soil creep.

**Bluff land restoration.** While revegetation efforts have been and continue to be implemented, there are portions of the bluff that are characterized by non-desired and non-native plant species. In addition to low ecological value, these areas do not contribute in a positive manner to visual aesthetics.

**A visually-delineated property boundary.** The park boundaries that abut neighboring private residences are marked by the absence of a tree canopy, as the former tree species were clear-cut to the park border. This severe visual delineation

Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan does not imply “natural,” and appears to contradict intense efforts to establish a native plant palette within the bluff environment.

## BEACH STRENGTHS

**An accessible beach.** The beach environment is relatively level, and is approximately 2 acres in size and nearly 900 feet in length. During the summer season, the sand surface is graded weekly, and a sporadic measure of success has been achieved in reducing the effects of decomposing Cladophora and bacteria associated with stormwater runoff.

**Seclusion.** The steep backdrop of the bluff provides a sense of remoteness for beach users, and affords a somewhat natural experience within the confines of the most densely- developed municipality in the State of Wisconsin.

**Playground and boardwalk.** As identified in the 2010 Atwater Park Master Plan, a boardwalk was built in 2010 from the base of the stairs extending north for 160 feet. A new playground was installed in 2012 off the northern edge of the boardwalk, providing new and creative ways for children to recreate at the beach. A shade structure was added on the boardwalk in 2014.



Figure 12 Atwater Beach

## BEACH WEAKNESSES

**Absence of shade and user amenities.** Except for the one umbrella shade structure added in 2014, the beach area is without permanent or semi-permanent (dismountable) structures that would otherwise provide “creature comforts” or “drawing cards” for park users. In particular, there are no shade structures or facilities that afford a retreat from exposure to the sun. The addition of the playground provides recreation for children but there are no other formal recreational amenities provided for other users, such as permanent volleyball nets and concrete table tennis platforms.

**Location of path (asphalt) terminus.** The grade of the asphalt pathway that provides access to the beach (maintenance vehicles and pedestrians) leads to the south end of the beach in a zone that is not highly active by visitors. It is likely that many beach

users traverse the bluff via the pathway to the point where it intersects with the stairs, and then continue down the staircase. However, this does not provide a feasible option for small children, parents with strollers, or physically challenged persons.

**Pier deterioration.** The three breakwater structures or piers that extend from the beach into Lake Michigan are constructed of stacked concrete masonry units, and exhibit signs of corrosion. While these features were constructed for the purpose of protecting the beach and shoreline from erosion, they are now visually unappealing and detract from the physical environment of the beach. The public is prohibited from accessing these structures.

**Lack of foot wash station.** There is currently no foot wash station in the park or beach area, which invites beach goers to wash their feet in the sink of the bathroom at the top of the terrace, causing maintenance issues. However, the Atwater Park Site Circulation Plan took this feedback received during the 2024 joint Public Engagement meetings and included a foot wash station in the plan.

**Water and Beach Quality.** Use of the beach during the warm season is sometimes hindered due to poor water quality, and the presence and odors from decaying algae. While stormwater overflow within the Village occurs, other factors such as invasive mussel species contribute to detrimental qualities of the beach.

Adverse impacts generated by poor water and beach quality not only discourage use of the shoreland, but also negatively influence air quality within the park's upper terrace and bluff environment. In 2010 an Ecological Study was completed for Atwater Park and water quality testing is completed routinely throughout the summer months.

## **ATWATER PARK RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **UPPER TERRACE**

Upper Terrace recommendations can be found in the 2024 Atwater Park Site Circulation Plan.

**BLUFF**

- 1) **Construct viewing/seating deck overlooks (2)** along the outer edge of the pathway. Decks would afford opportunities to rest, and provide opportunities for interpretive signage and views along the pathway. Consideration should be given to utilizing temporary (seasonal) canopies that offer shade during summer months of use. Interpretive signage should also be incorporated along the pathway to communicate the social and natural history of the site.
- 2) **Continue to restore and maintain native vegetation on the bluff** and aggressively manage invasive species. Ensure that fruit-bearing shrubs which enhance foraging habitat for migratory birds are included as a component of the plant palette.

**BEACH**

- 3) **Complete construction of a boardwalk south of the bluff stairs**, between the asphalt pathway and the beach that directs pedestrian traffic to a more active area. A section of the boardwalk was completed in 2011, connecting from the bluff stairs northward. The remaining boardwalk should diverge from the southern path terminus to the base of the stairway.
- 4) **Install seasonal tensile shade structures** for the beach and on new deck platforms to encourage use. Canvas canopies supported by metal pole structures would be appropriate, especially if this sheltering theme is repeated along the path.
- 5) **Complete installation of (2) seasonal above-grade deck platforms** along the toe of the bluff south of the bluff stairs and near shade structures to provide a hard-surface for seating or beach equipment storage.
- 6) **Supply seasonal portable toilets with a privacy screen.**
- 7) **Investigate the impact that a reconstruction of the breakwater/pier structure** would have on improving the beach's quality and accessibility for park users. Depending on the outcome of that investigation and the availability of needed funding, consider the reconstruction of the breakwater/pier structure or partial renovation of initial section for seating and viewing the lake.
- 8) **Construct a new pavilion, providing a cafe/concession and overlook, restrooms, a multipurpose room, and equipment storage**, located approximately where the old beach house was.

# HUBBARD PARK EVALUATION

## DEVELOPED AREA STRENGTHS

**Non-programmed nature of the space and solitude.** The simplicity of Hubbard Park provides a refuge from urban environments, and represents a hallmark of this space.

**Unobstructed views and access to the river's edge.** The views to the Milwaukee River corridor from the lower and upper terraces of the park, accompanied by the natural setting of the site, are perhaps the most valued characteristic of the park. Access to the water's edge in the vicinity of the lower terrace and along the nature path allow park users to experience the water resource in an informal fashion.

**Cluster of historic built features.** The grouping of four historic structures and cultural landscape features that embody railroad development and Works Progress Administration efforts from the 1930s represent important components of the built park environment that possess greater potential for interpretation and public uses.

**Maintain summer concert series** at lower level of the park.

**Continue support of** Hubbard Park Lodge and River Club as a private restaurant and outdoor space as a Beer Garden.

## DEVELOPED AREA WEAKNESSES

**Pedestrian access from adjacent parks and trails.** Although Hubbard Park may be accessed via tunnel systems (pedestrian and vehicles) that connect to the adjacent neighborhood, there is no direct access between Hubbard Park and the adjacent Oak Leaf Trail or River Park with one exception. In 2014 a Beer Garden was opened between the Hubbard Lodge and the River Club. During hours of operation, a gate is open from the Oak Leaf Trail. There is also no formal pedestrian access from River Park to the two tunnel entrances.

**Inability to "wayfind".** The linear configuration of park acreage, limited means of accessing the site, and arrangement of paths and buildings is somewhat unordered, and may generate confusion for persons that visit the park. In particular, the pathway configuration within the lower terrace terminates at the boat (storage) house, and the nature trail that extends northward along the river's edge often goes unnoticed.

**Dearth of bench seating in lower levels.** Even though the most commanding views of the River occur from the upper area of the park, the lower terrace provides for a distinctive feeling of enclosure and offers a private experience near the water's edge. However, bench seating is limited in this portion of the park.

**Pronounced isolation from public and infrequent utilization of the park** may deter certain users who perceive the park as unsafe.

**Prohibition of meandering between Beer Garden and other areas of the park with beverages.** The Beer Garden has been successful but due to how the park is oriented, adults may not leave the upper area with an alcoholic beverage to accompany children who want to explore the river's edge.

**Lack of bicycle parking in lower level of park.** There are no bicycle racks located in the lower level of the park or the parking lot. Bicycle racks were added in the upper level as part of the Beer Garden in 2014.

## NATURAL AREA STRENGTHS

**Integrity of ecological components.** The presence of mature stands of black oaks, “high order” ground-level vegetation and limited invasion from non-native plant species represents a stable and very uncommon natural environment within the urbanized area of Milwaukee.

**Ability to traverse the river’s edge.** Within the Village of Shorewood, Hubbard Park affords easy access to the Milwaukee River. The nature trail along the River that extends northward to Estabrook Park is also an appreciated resource.

## NATURAL AREA WEAKNESSES

**Visual presence of the nature trail.** The nature trail, while informal, is only discovered by happenchance. There is no signage or logical connections that enable for ease of wayfinding.

**Unrecognized natural merits.** Hubbard Park supports high-order flora, but is not promoted as a special feature of the park.

**Degradation of Milwaukee River Bluff.** The numerous informal paths which have developed on the bluff are contributing to the bluff’s degraded condition including soil compaction and erosion.

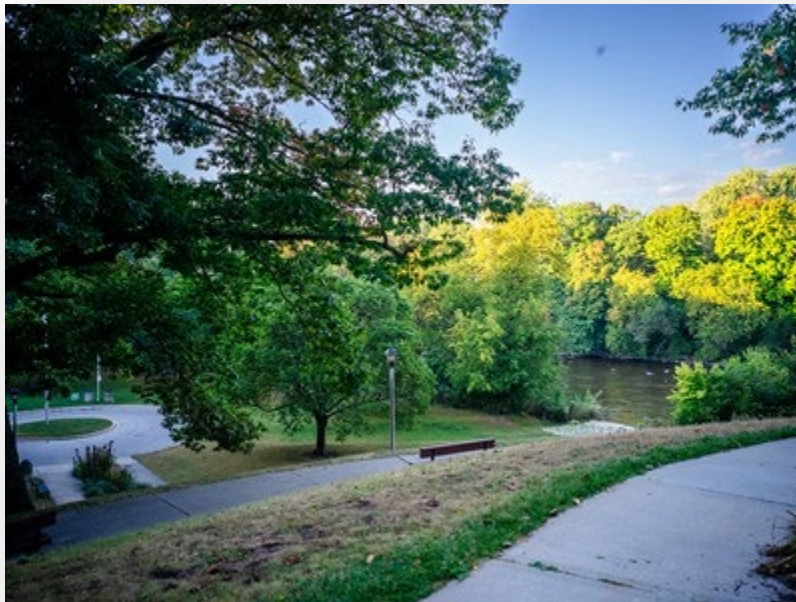


Figure 13 Hubbard Park

# HUBBARD PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

## DEVELOPED AREA

- 1) **Work with Milwaukee County Parks to construct a path** between the Oak Leaf Trail and the Lower Terrace that mirrors the primary entrance to River Park on the east side of the trail. At present, a mountain bike spur is found in this location. The trail into Hubbard Park should closely follow the existing path that runs alongside the northeast face of the Youth Pavilion. Trail development will require the following treatment measures:
  - Embankment stabilization
  - Signage and barriers that discourage social trail development within the upland environment of the bluff (boulders/ natural fencing)
  - Path stabilization and surface hardening (porous pavement)
  - Signage/entry monument at intersection with the Oak Leaf Trail
  - Extension of the trail that directs pedestrian and bike traffic through the lower lawn area
- 2) **Construct path from River Park to lower vehicle tunnel entrance to Hubbard Park.** In the absence of access from the Oak Leaf Trail at the southern end of River Park, access via the northern end of River Park may be an acceptable alternative. Access by this route would also require signage and a path from the trail.
- 3) **Establish entry monument / sign** at the new pathway at the intersection with the Oak Leaf Trail.
- 4) **Construct a paved path extension** within the lower terrace area that diverts from the Youth Pavilion toward the river's edge and connects to the existing concrete path at the base of the terraced slope. Benches should be installed along this curved sidewalk path to encourage more use of this area of the park.
- 5) **Install native shrub and perennial plantings in the lower terrace** on the south side of the concrete pathway extension, to define the ground plane and provide habitat for urban wildlife that utilize the site. While this will require elimination of some open turf area, the uses for visitors in this area is somewhat limited at present.
- 6) **Construct a canoe launch** at the river's edge. Establish a formal path connection to the cul-de-sac drop off to facilitate loading and unloading of watercraft. Strongly consider the use of native stone materials to resemble a natural rock outcropping.
- 7) **Construct a fishing / access steps** that provide river access at various points in the river.
- 8) **Excavate the limestone retaining wall near the Youth Pavilion** at the base of the bluff to the north. Expose the limestone and remove invasive plants, thereby commemorating this historic landscape (railroad) feature. This area should be restored with native groundcovers. Add safety amenities to overpass, deterring recreation at site.

## Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

- 9) **Construct concrete bench pads** and install new bench seating in the lower terrace along the existing sidewalk in the vicinity of the limestone retaining wall.
- 10) **Stabilize and formalize the nature path along the side of the river** that extends northwards to Estabrook Park and southwards to the City of Milwaukee along the river frontage. Continue working with the Milwaukee River Greenway Coalition.
- 11) **Replace luminaries / light portions of park lamp fixtures** (12) with a design that is more contextually fit with the Hubbard Park Lodge (1930s).
- 12) **Fabricate and install interpretive signage** (3) and a park map that allows visitors to understand the cultural and natural history of park resources and current efforts by the Milwaukee River Greenway Coalition.
- 13) **Replace wooden stairs and seating benches**, as appropriate. Ensure that deteriorating wood is either restored, or that the replacement of these features ensures long-term durability.

### NATURAL AREAS

- 14) **Remove invasive and unhealthy vegetation** (such as buckthorn) to improve ecological condition of the bluff and river edge environments, and revegetate with native, fruit-bearing shrubs and trees to enhance bird and wildlife habitat. Remove hazardous or unhealthy trees to allow for sunlight to reach the ground plane.
- 15) **Supplement native vegetation** in areas of disturbance, including along portions of the river's edge to discourage Canada geese from accessing the lower turf area. Establish perennial beds and native shrubs to further deter unwanted wildlife.
- 16) **Install "restoration in progress" signage** in discrete locations along the lower nature trail, thereby discouraging foot traffic along the bluff slope and alerting bikers to consider the ecological sensitivity of the riverine environment.
- 17) **Protection of ecologically significant plant community** which includes endangered species. Area directly north of Hubbard Park should be managed as a sanctuary so as to protect one of the few remaining high quality plant community remnants in Southeastern Wisconsin.

## RIVER PARK EVALUATION

### STRENGTHS

**Well-maintained sports fields.** River Park provides high-quality facilities for young adult and youth active sports. The park maintains excellent turf play fields (baseball/ soccer) that are irrigated and programmed for both practice and game play. Pesticides are not used to maintain the fields. Support facilities include a shelter, restrooms and a pavilion structure.

**Well-maintained pavilion and restrooms** open to the public during Little League games, offering food and beverages.

**Access to the Oak Leaf Trail.** River Park is easily accessed via the Oak Leaf Trail, and provides a direct connection to the Oakland Avenue business district through the southern section of the park.

**Permanent batting cage.**

### WEAKNESSES

**Lack of turf area for soccer use.** River Park represents the only Village-managed recreation space that accommodates soccer uses for practice, game play and clinics. At present, soccer is played in the open field area within the western area of the park, and is limited to one soccer field. Although public schools provide use of playfields for soccer league play, school grounds are also utilized by programs managed through the School District Recreation Department.

**Lack of additional ball diamonds.** As the Village's premier baseball facility (Spector Field), River Park provides a high quality level of service for competitive Little League games. However, the absence of a second baseball diamond prevents consolidation of local baseball activity within a single park site.

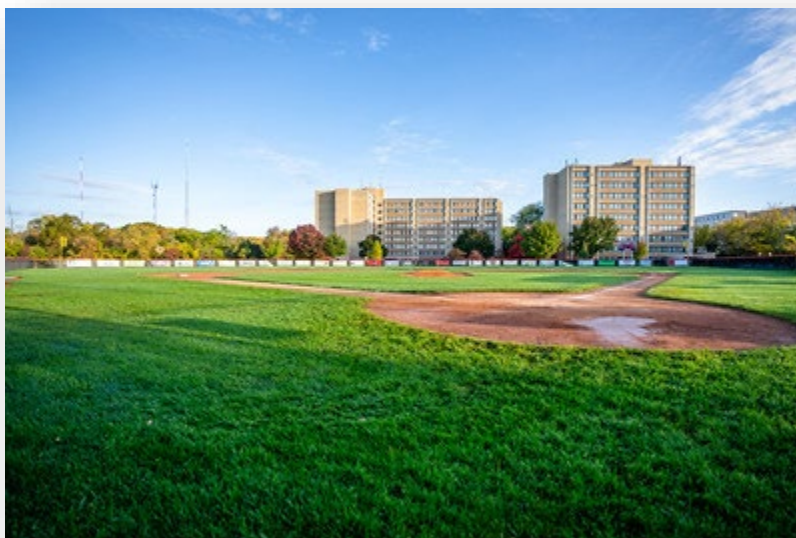


Figure 14 Spector Field at River Park

## Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

**Absence of a circuit pathway system.** Although the existing path affords a direct connection between Oakland Avenue and the Oak Leaf Trail, it does not provide for a circuit that allows park users to access the park from various locations.

**Underutilized acreage.** The southwest corner of the park is marked by remnants of an earlier park design and includes a covered picnic shelter. A shuffleboard was removed in 2009 to help improve the space. The shelter feature is not fully integrated into the remainder of the park design and is not of high-quality design.

**Lack of diverse park offerings.** River Park provides well maintained active sports fields for youth, but diverse recreation offerings for other age groups is currently limited. A playground or pickleball court(s) in the southwest corner could serve to meet community and family needs.

## RIVER PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) **Add bike racks in park.** No bike racks exist.
- 2) **Construct a circuit-path (8' width) around the western edge of the sports fields** that enables park users to travel the periphery of the park, and gain access along a choice of entry points. The path should link to the existing sidewalk near the multi-family housing complex and extend into the southern wooded area.
- 3) **Remove the planting node along the existing path** near the open shelter and replace with bench seating.
- 4) **Install benches along the entire circuit path.**
- 5) **Install lighting along the entire circuit path.**
- 6) **Plant street tree vegetation** (buffer) along the northern perimeter of the baseball field and soccer field to provide for visual screening of the urban environment to the north.
- 7) **Install additional plantings** along the Oakland Avenue pedestrian entry.
- 8) **Replace the open picnic shelter** at a location adjacent to the northwest face of the existing enclosed pavilion.
- 9) **Construct a small tot lot playground or pickleball courts** near the existing ball diamond (to the west or south of the concession/restroom facility), and ensure that seating and shade is provided for caregivers.
- 10) **Construct a path from Edgewood Avenue** into the park along the southern park boundary.

## ESTABROOK PARK EVALUATION

### STRENGTHS

**Diversity of active and passive recreational uses.** Estabrook Park maintains significant natural areas along the bluff and upland areas, and accommodates passive and active recreational uses through sports fields, picnic areas, sand volleyball courts, an in-line hockey court, playgrounds, disc golf, a nature trail, a dog park, beer garden, the Shorewood Farmer's Market, and a paved (10' wide) bicycle/pedestrian route.

### WEAKNESSES

**Pedestrian and bicycle access from the Village and the Oak Leaf Trail.** Due to its location along the western periphery of the Village, and barriers such as Wilson Drive, convenient access to the park is limited. In particular, there is only one formal access from the Oak Leaf Trail that traverses the park's eastern boundary, and three formal access points from the Village (E. Congress Street tunnel, E. Kensington and the sidewalk on Capitol Drive).

**Lack of visitor use during some seasons.** Like many outdoor recreation areas, Estabrook Park is most heavily used during summer months and on weekends. Although there are reservable picnic sites in the park, there are no covered picnic shelters that typically generate greater demand and use.

**Deterioration of Building Structures.** Estabrook Park was established during the 1930s, and retains both building and landscape features that were constructed as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Two of the three buildings of historic interest (southern restroom facility, lower falls restroom/pavilion, maintenance/restroom building) are underutilized (and often closed to use) due to deterioration and risks of vandalism.



Figure 15 Estabrook Park

**Invasive Plants.** Estabrook Park is characterized by pockets of high quality vegetation, intermingled with zones that support substantial invasive plant species. In particular, buckthorn and garlic mustard are common.

**Overlapping and Shared Boundaries.** Estabrook Park is owned and managed by Milwaukee County, yet the park acreage lies within the municipal boundaries of three communities -- the Villages of Shorewood and Whitefish Bay and the City of Milwaukee. The southern two-thirds of the park (between the lagoon feature and Capitol Drive) lie within the Village of Shorewood. The northern portion of the park (Lower Falls fishing area as well as the parking lot that serves this facility) is within the boundaries of the City of Milwaukee. Furthermore, the west bank of the Milwaukee River corridor falls within the jurisdictions of both the Cities of Glendale and Milwaukee. The complexity of municipal boundary configurations that overlay this County-owned park may represent an obstacle to creating municipal partnerships that assist with implementation of park improvements.



*Figure 16 An Estabrook Park Volleyball court*

## ESTABROOK PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

The Village of Shorewood should establish a cooperative relationship with Milwaukee County Parks in pursuing the following projects within Estabrook Park:

### MAINTENANCE BUILDING AREA

- **Construct a path connection between the lagoon feature** in Estabrook Park and west Glendale Avenue in Shorewood at the intersection of Wilson Drive. Crosswalk design should be implemented to reduce conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians.
- **Complete a formal hard path between Wilson Drive and Kensington Boulevard** to the Oak Leaf Trail and into the park.
- **Strengthen pedestrian access at Congress Street and Estabrook Park** that includes at-grade crossings.
- **Secure a trail easement and construct a path at West Olive Street** that extends between the Village and the Oak Leaf Trail in the vicinity of the existing radio tower.
- **Construct a shelter / pavilion at the southern end of the lagoon.**
- **Remove out-building structures at the rear of the maintenance building** to accommodate construction of the trail linkage.

### LOWER FALLS RECREATION AREA

- **Improve turf quality and drainage of the open field** to the north of the building to accommodate greater active sports uses.
- **Construct a covered picnic shelter** in the vicinity of the large parking lot to help activate this space for other uses.
- **Construct a skate park** that is accessible from the multipurpose pathway and parking facilities, and is visible from the roadway.
- **Replace the bleachers at the baseball diamond.**
- **Work with Milwaukee County and other partners to install pickleball courts.**
- **Remove the in-line hockey court.**
- **Formalize social paths along the River**, and include wayfinding signage.

## **SOUTH PICNIC AREA**

- **Restore existing restroom** (seasonal use).
- **Construct a covered picnic shelter** to help activate this space.
- **Regrade the existing soccer fields** in the southern portion of the park to accommodate larger fields for active play than currently exist. Ensure appropriate field maintenance.

## **NATURAL AREAS THROUGHOUT THE PARK**

- **Remove dense understory shrubs** surrounding parking lots and open areas, including picnic areas. Most of these shrubs are characterized as invasive species (e.g., honeysuckle, common buckthorn). In addition to improving the ecological benefits of the sites, vegetation removal will afford greater visibility into common space.
- **Target the higher-quality woods along the Milwaukee River** and in the central portion of the park for management, mainly in the form of invasive species control. Some plantings of native shrubs and trees along woodland edges, such as native ornamental tree species, should also be implemented. This entire corridor that abuts the Milwaukee River represents a candidate for grant funding potential as it is an important, well-known bird and wildlife habitat.

## OAK LEAF TRAIL EVALUATION

### STRENGTHS

**High quality standard of trail design.** The Trail follows the original grade of the rail line, and is of adequate width for commuter and recreational uses. Anticipated extension of the Trail to the northern Milwaukee County line will likely generate greater use of the Trail through Shorewood.

### WEAKNESSES

**Access to and from Village destinations.** At present, access is limited between the Trail and the Village. Before the reconstruction of the Trail bridge over Capitol Drive in 2010, formal trail entrance was at River Park at the south and Congress Street at the north. When the new bridge was constructed, new entry ramps were built on the north and south side of Capitol Drive. A wood chipped path was added at Wilson in 2014. Other points of entry are substandard or have been established as dirt paths.

**Visibility and the Perception of Hazards.** Most of the Trail corridor that extends through Shorewood is visually screened by vegetation or by the rear faces of buildings. Much of the vegetation alongside the corridor is of poor quality, and is marked by invasive species and unhealthy tree specimens. Perceptions of danger and unsafe conditions are a result of poor visual access to the Trail. However, the screening creates a natural corridor appreciated by users.

## ATWATER SCHOOL EVALUATION

### STRENGTHS

**High visibility, access, and diversity of uses that accommodate school and community recreational programs.** The central location of the school within the Village, and proximity to the commercial district promotes the site for community (after-school) uses. The school grounds provide facilities that are shared between school and community.

### WEAKNESSES

**Drop-off lanes at the Kindergarten Wing.** The existing drop-off feature remains closed to vehicles due to poor design and hazardous conditions. The acreage that accommodates the drop-off is therefore underutilized. At present, curb-side drop-off at this location is not a viable and safe option during school hours.

**Poor Condition of Sports Fields.** The multi-purpose soccer and baseball/softball fields to the rear of the school is characterized by a poor and uneven soil substrate that does not support healthy growth of turf. This condition generates a safety hazard, especially for soccer participants.

**Dearth of shade within playgrounds.** There is not sufficient protection from sun within the Kindergarten (east) and Elementary (west) playgrounds.

## ATWATER SCHOOL RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) **Upgrade the existing rear turf playfield** through regrading, soil amending and irrigation. Ensure that the quality of the turf is adequate for both game and practice purposes.
- 2) **Upgrade the existing baseball/softball diamond** and realign peripheral fencing to accommodate bleacher seating.
- 3) **Modify the existing parking and loading area** north of the Kindergarten Building to provide for 15 parking spaces. Reconfiguration of the driveway and parking area could potentially accommodate an additional 10-14 spaces to be rented to Village residents, and generate a constant stream of revenue for improvements of the Atwater School grounds.



## **LAKE BLUFF SCHOOL EVALUATION**

### **STRENGTHS**

**Diversity of uses that accommodate school and community recreational programs.** Lake Bluff Elementary school grounds provides facilities that are shared between school and community, and include sports fields and playgrounds.

**Sizeable expanse of open turf for active sports.** Other than River Park – which was designed primarily for active sports uses – the school grounds at Lake Bluff Elementary accommodate the most intensive uses for baseball, softball and soccer. In 2011 the fields were regraded and repositioned. The two tennis courts were removed as part of the project.

**Ice skating rink** was regraded for improved use.

### **WEAKNESSES**

**Lack of shared pickleball/tennis courts.**

## **LAKE BLUFF SCHOOL RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1) **Reconstruct the warming hut.**

## HIGH SCHOOL & INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL EVALUATION STRENGTHS

**Athletic field** used for track, football, and soccer was completed in 2008. Another added amenity is the inclusion of a batting cage. The field utilizes artificial turf. SIS and the Recreation Department also utilize the field when available.

**Bioswales and rain gardens** were added to the Oakland Avenue parking lot when it was resurfaced, capturing and filtering stormwater runoff.

**New stadium seating and upper media box** was constructed following the new athletic field.

**Concessions, bathrooms and team rooms** under current bleachers.



Figure 18 Shorewood High School Athletic Facilities

## WEAKNESSES

**Underutilization of front lawn** along Capitol Drive, encompassing 2.8 acres of the high school campus. It spans over 1,000 feet of Capitol Drive and contains swaths of underutilized space. The buildings on the parcel have setbacks in excess of 150 feet from Capitol Drive. This condition de-emphasizes the architectural significance of the school as there is no definitive edge to differentiate the school property from the public way along Capitol Drive. The front lawn is currently used for informal play and various Recreation Department classes.

**Limited number of tennis courts** is used by the High School and SIS and restricts full access during the tennis season.

## HIGH SCHOOL & INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) **Create a defined edge along the lawn** to better define the school property and create additional space for public events, such as by building a series

of colonnades along Capitol Drive to create a series of plazas.

- 2) **Screen community gardens** along the eastern side of the campus.
- 3) **Install shrub plantings** along key areas, delineating changes in space, such as between the front lawn and athletic field entrance.

## TRIANGLE PARK EVALUATION

### STRENGTHS

**Appropriately located** in the middle of Shorewood's northwest residential one- and two- family neighborhood and has the potential to serve as a play area for neighborhood children. The park is 0.22 acres.

## TRIANGLE PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

No recommendations.



Figure 19 Triangle Park

## HUMBLE PARK EVALUATION

### STRENGTHS

**Serves as a gateway** into the community when entering from the southern border of Shorewood, along Oakland Avenue. Entry markers made of brick and ornate iron arches line both sides of Oakland Avenue as well.

**Interior paths match pedestrian foot traffic**, crossing the space diagonally at Oakland Avenue and Edgewood Boulevard.

### WEAKNESSES

## HUMBLE PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

No recommendations.

# IMPLEMENTATION

## *Section 7*

This Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan sets forth a bold road map for future recreation facility development and potential open space acquisition for the Village of Shorewood as available and appropriate. The planning process that enabled the development of the Outdoor Recreation Plan commenced with the adoption of the document in 2007 and an update to the plan in 2015. The following section highlights several next steps that should be undertaken to begin the process of plan implementation. These include:

- Utilize the plan on a daily basis;
- Ensure that municipal funds for recreation facility improvements are included in the annual municipal budget;
- Promote cooperation and participation among various agencies, organizations, community groups and individuals;
- Prepare annual goals;
- Explore possible funding sources and implementation techniques.

### **USE THE PLAN ON A DAILY BASIS**

The plan serves as a resourceful inventory of public recreation spaces, and represents the Village's official guide for park and recreation improvements. It is essential that the plan is used as a reference tool among Village staff when considering policies and actions that directly and indirectly involves the management, maintenance, security, and development of public recreational spaces.

## **ENSURE ALLOCATION OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDS**

The strongest tool for implementing the plan is the Capital Projects Fund. It establishes schedules and priorities for park improvements annually. Although funding of recreational facility improvements will rely on various extramural sources and partnerships, inclusion of park enhancements within the Capital Projects Program is paramount for plan success.

## **PROMOTE COOPERATION AND PARTICIPATION**

The Village of Shorewood should assume a primary leadership role in providing recreational experiences within the community. However, to carry out some of the recommendations set forth in this plan, the Village will need to rely on cooperation from other groups and organizations. In order for the plan to be successful it must be based on a strong partnership between the Village, the School District of Shorewood, Milwaukee County, other public agencies, programming affiliates, neighborhood groups and organizations, and the private sector. The Village should lead and promote the cooperation and collaboration required to implement the new plan. The Village's partners should include:

- Other governmental and service districts, such as the City of Milwaukee, City of Glendale, Village of Whitefish Bay, Milwaukee County Parks and Recreation Department, and School District of Shorewood
- Affiliate organizations, such as the Friends of Atwater Beach, the Friends of Estabrook Park, the Cambridge Woods Neighborhood Association, the River Revitalization Foundation, Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers, and Milwaukee River Greenway Coalition
- Independent recreation organizations such as the Shorewood Kickers (soccer), Shorewood Little League, Shorewood Girls Softball, Shorewood Lacrosse Club, School District of Shorewood Recreation and Community Services Department
- Builders and developers that undertake redevelopment projects on parcels contiguous to park sites, trail corridors or river environments
- Village residents that participate in on-going park and school ground planning and budgeting processes
- Property owners, who control acreage that affords opportunities to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to parks, trails and river environments

## **PREPARE ANNUAL GOALS**

The Village, in conjunction with the Parks and Public Spaces Committee should continue to develop annual goals as part of the implementation for this plan. Each of this plan's recommendations will entail a multi-step process that should be recognized and addressed. The annual goals

will serve as an implementation action agenda which highlights the improvements, developments, designs and other activities to be undertaken during the next few years.

In order to remain current, the action agenda should be updated once a year.

## EXPLORE FUNDING SOURCES AND IMPLEMENTATION TECHNIQUES

The recommendations of the plan vary greatly in financial considerations necessary to implement and to develop facilities. Since many of the projects and improvements called for in the plan will require matching funds, others will require sources, such as bonding, or special technical and/or financial assistance.

The Village should continue to explore and consider the wide range of local, state and federal resources and programs that may be available to assist in the implementation of the plan's recommendations.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following table combines each park and open space recommendations used as a starting point to create an implementation plan and prioritize recommendations.

### ATWATER PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

	<b>Upper Terrace</b>
1	Remove the inner pathways that lead to the overlook feature to open up the park
2	Expand the existing overlook feature that builds upon the current viewshed, and establishes a more prominent signature element within the upper terrace
3	Construct entry gateway features (4) adjacent to the north and south pathways that formalize entry into the park environment.
4	Create contemplative area at the south end of the park, moving the Graves Memorial Rose Garden and Veterans Memorial there in combination with a garden and existing Plensa sculpture
5	Redesign seating nodes
6	Construct permanent shade/arbor structures at seating nodes
7	Replace benches (14)
8	Install shrub and perennial plantings along the periphery of the lawn area
	<b>Bluff</b>
9	Construct viewing/seating deck overlooks (2)
10	Continue to restore and maintain native vegetation on the bluff
	<b>Beach</b>
11	Complete construction of a boardwalk south of the bluff stairs
12	Install seasonal tensile shade structures for the beach and on new deck platforms
13	Relocate the sand volleyball facility to the north
14	Supply seasonal portable toilets with a privacy screen

## Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

15	Investigate the impact that a reconstruction of the breakwater/pier structure would have on improving the beach's quality and accessibility for park users
16	Construct a new pavilion, providing a cafe/concession and overlook, restrooms, a multipurpose room, and equipment storage

### HUBBARD PARK

1	Work with Milwaukee County Parks to construct a path between the Oak Leaf Trail and the Lower Terrace
2	Construct path from River Park to lower vehicle tunnel entrance to Hubbard Park
3	Establish entry monument / sign at the new pathway at the intersection with the Oak Leaf Trail
4	Construct a paved path extension within the lower terrace area that diverts from the Youth Pavilion toward the river's edge
5	Install shrub and perennial plantings in the lower terrace on the south side of the concrete pathway extension
6	Construct a multi-purpose overlook platform and canoe launch at the river's edge
7	Construct a stone fishing / viewing platform that provides river access
8	Excavate the limestone retaining wall near the Youth Pavilion at the base of the bluff to the north
9	Construct concrete bench pads and install new bench seating in the lower terrace along the existing sidewalk
10	Stabilize and formalize the nature path along the side of the river
11	Replace luminaries / light portions of park lamp fixtures (12) with a design that is more contextually fit with the Hubbard Park Lodge
12	Fabricate and install interpretive signage (3) and a park map
13	Replace wooden stairs and seating benches, as appropriate
14	Remove invasive and unhealthy vegetation
15	Supplement native vegetation
16	Install "restoration in progress" signage in discrete locations along the lower nature trail

### RIVER PARK

1	Construct a circuit-path (8' width) around the western edge of the sports fields
2	Construct a boardwalk stairway and path to the Hubbard Park parking lot
3	Remove the planting node along the existing path near the open shelter and replace with bench seating
4	Add bike racks in park
5	Install benches along the entire circuit path
6	Install lighting along the entire circuit path
7	Plant street tree vegetation (buffer) along the northern perimeter of the baseball field
8	Install additional plantings along the Oakland Avenue pedestrian entry
9	Establish entry monument / sign at the path access location at the Oak Leaf Trail and along Oakland Avenue
10	Replace the open picnic shelter at a location adjacent to the northwest face of the existing enclosed pavilion
11	Construct a small tot lot playground or other playscape near the existing ball diamond
12	Construct a skatepark in the southwest corner of the park
13	Construct a path from Edgewood Avenue into the park along the southern park boundary
14	Replace/improve public parking lot signage

### ESTABROOK PARK

	<b>Maintenance</b>
1	Construct a path connection between the lagoon feature in Estabrook Park and west Glendale Avenue
2	Complete a formal hard path between Wilson Drive and Kensington Boulevard to the Oak Leaf Trail and into the park
3	Strengthen pedestrian access at Congress Street and Estabrook Park that includes at-grade crossings
4	Secure a trail easement and construct a path at West Olive Street that extends between the Village and the Oak Leaf Trail
5	Construct a shelter / pavilion at the southern end of the lagoon

6	Remove out-building structures at the rear of the maintenance building
<b>Lower Falls Recreation Area</b>	
7	Improve turf quality and drainage of the open field to the north of the building
8	Construct a covered picnic shelter in the vicinity of the large parking lot
9	Construct a skate park that is accessible from the multipurpose pathway
10	Expand the existing baseball diamond for adult leagues
11	Remove the in-line hockey court
12	Formalize social paths along the River, and include wayfinding signage
<b>South Picnic Area</b>	
13	Restore existing restroom
14	Construct a covered picnic shelter
15	Regrade the existing soccer fields in the southern portion of the park
<b>Natural Areas Throughout the Park</b>	
16	Remove dense understory shrubs surrounding parking lots and open areas
17	Target the higher-quality woods along the Milwaukee River and in the central portion of the park

### OAK LEAF TRAIL

1	Construct new trail connections between the Village and the Oak Leaf Trail at Hubbard Park, Olive Street, Alpine Avenue, Glendale Avenue, and Kensington Boulevard
2	Remove invasive vegetation within the trail corridor
3	Install and maintain native vegetation
4	Create signing at key access points

### ATWATER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1	Construct a new tot-lot playground adjacent to the Kindergarten Wing
2	Upgrade the existing rear turf playfield
3	Upgrade the existing ball diamond
4	Reconstruct the existing vehicular drop-off lane and the Kindergarten entry court
5	Modify the existing parking and loading area north of the Kindergarten Building to provide for 15 parking spaces
6	Install shade trees within the west paved playground area
7	Install shade trees within the west paved playground area

### LAKE BLUFF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1	Reconstruct tennis courts (2) in the northeast section
2	Remove and reconstruct the warming hut and garage structure to the south
3	Implement formal pedestrian entryways along the north boundary

### HIGH SCHOOL AND INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

1	Create a defined edge along the lawn
2	Screen community gardens along the eastern side of the campus
3	Install shrub plantings along key areas, delineating changes in space

### TRIANGLE PARK

1	Relocate flagpole to edge of park
2	Construct natural or formal playscape

# APPENDIX

## FUNDING

There are a number of potential funding sources available to help finance implementation of recreation facilities. The Village should also coordinate efforts with other units of government, governmental departments and public agencies and private and non-profit agencies to help fund and implement the recommendations presented in this Plan.

In addition to extramural funding, costs associated with recreation facility improvements and maintenance should be incorporated in Village Capital Improvement plans and programs.

### GRANT PROGRAMS

**The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program** was established by the Wisconsin Legislature in 1989 for a ten-year period. In 2007 the program was renewed to fiscal year 2019-

20. The goals of the Stewardship Program are to protect and restore nature-based outdoor recreation areas and areas having scenic or ecological value. Nature-based can best be described as activities where the primary focus or purpose is the appreciation or enjoyment of nature. The Stewardship Program is financed through the issuance of general obligation bonds and is expected to distribute about \$80 million annually statewide for the ten-year period of the program. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administers the Stewardship Program.

*The Stewardship Program is an umbrella for a number of subprograms, each with its own goals, priorities, and criteria, which are summarized below. Projects submitted for grants under the Stewardship Program must be included in a locally-adopted park plan.*

**Urban Green Space (UGS)** is a Statewide program which provides up to 50 percent matching grants to local and county units of government and NCOs to acquire or protect scenic, ecological, or other natural features within or near urban areas and provide land for nature-based outdoor recreation, including noncommercial gardening. These funds can be used for the acquisition of land only. [Application deadline - May 1 of each year]

(The DNR defines “nature-based” outdoor recreation as activities where the primary focus or purpose is the appreciation or enjoyment of nature. Such activities include hiking, bicycling, wildlife or nature observation, camping, nature study, fishing, hunting, picnicking, cross-country skiing, canoeing, and multi-use trail activities. Playgrounds are also considered “nature-based” facilities. Support facilities such as access roads, parking, signs, utility and restroom buildings, and habitat restoration are also eligible for funding under the Stewardship program).

---

**Urban Rivers (URGP)** is a Statewide program which provides up to 50 percent matching grants to local and county units of government and NCOs to purchase land or easements, or to develop shoreline enhancements on or adjacent to rivers that flow through urban or urbanizing areas. This program is intended to preserve or restore urban rivers or riverfronts for the purpose of revitalization and nature-based outdoor recreation activities. NCOs can use these funds for the acquisition of land or easements only. [Application deadline - May 1 of each year]

**Acquisition of Development Rights** program is a Statewide program which provides up to 50 percent matching grants to local and county units of government and NCOs to acquire development rights (conservation easements) in areas where restrictions on residential, commercial, or industrial development would help protect natural, agricultural, or forestry values and enhance nature-based outdoor recreation. [Application deadline - May 1 of each year]

**The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)** program was established by the U.S. Congress in 1964 to provide funding for the acquisition of land for park or open space preservation purposes and the development of outdoor recreation facilities. In Wisconsin, LAWCON funds are administered by the DNR. Up to 50 percent of project costs are eligible for funding under this program. The “nature-based” restriction in the Stewardship Program does not apply to LWCF funds. [Application deadline - May 1 of each year]

**The National Trails Program (RTP)** grant program provides funds through the transfer of Federal gas taxes paid on fuel used by off-highway vehicles. These funds are used to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized trail uses. The program is administered by the DNR. Funds are available to county and local units of government, State and Federal agencies, school districts, and qualified trail organizations. Matching grants for up to 50 percent of the cost of a recreational trail project are available. [Application deadline - May 1 of each year]

**The Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program** provides grants of up to 50 percent to county and local units of government and nonprofit conservation organizations for urban forestry activities. Eligible activities include development of an urban forestry plan or urban open space program, development of a tree ordinance, development of a public awareness program, conducting street tree inventories, and tree planting and maintenance. Reimbursement is limited to \$25,000 per project. [Application deadline - October 1 of each year]

**The River Protection Grant Program**, administered by the DNR, is intended to protect or improve rivers and natural river ecosystems, including water quality, fisheries habitat, and natural beauty. \$300,000 is distributed annually statewide. The program includes the following two subprograms:

**River Planning Grants.** This program provides grants of up to 75 percent to county and local units of government, nonprofit conservation organizations, and qualified river management organizations. Eligible activities include river organization

development, educational efforts, assessments of water quality and aquatic life, and non-point source evaluations. Reimbursement is limited to \$10,000 per project. [Application deadline - May 1 of each year]

**River Management Grants.** This program provides grants of up to 75 percent to county and local units of government, nonprofit conservation organizations, and qualified river management organizations. Eligible activities include purchase of land or easements, development of local ordinances, and restoration of in-stream or shoreland habitat. Reimbursement is limited to \$50,000 per project. [Application deadline - May 1 of each year]

**The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21),** (formerly ISTEA, TEA 21) continues the integration of bicycling and walking into the transportation mainstream. It enhances the ability of communities to invest in projects that can improve the safety and practicality of bicycling and walking for everyday travel.

MAP-21 combined previously separate Transportation Enhancement (TE), Recreational Trails, Safe Routes to School (SRTS), and Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Programs (BFPF) into one funding program called the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), under SAFETEA-LU.

**Transportation Alternative Program.** (TAP) Transportation alternatives are transportation-related activities that are designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of transportation systems. The transportation enhancements program provides up to 80 percent matching grants for the implementation of a variety of non-traditional transportation projects, including the restoration of historic transportation facilities, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, landscaping and scenic beautification, and mitigation of water pollution from highway runoff. Most of the requests and projects awarded in Wisconsin have been for bicycle facilities. Examples of bicycle projects include multi-use trails (in greenways and former rail trails, for example), paved shoulders, bicycle lanes, bicycle route signage, bicycle parking, and overpasses or underpasses.

Transportation enhancement activities must relate to surface transportation. Federal regulations restrict the use of Federal funds on trails that allow motorized vehicles, except snowmobiles.

**Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program.** (CMAQ) is under MAP-21. The purpose of the CMAQ program is to provide up to 80 percent matching grants for projects and programs that reduce motor vehicle travel and/or emissions in areas that have failed to meet air quality standards for ozone, carbon monoxide (CO), or small particulate matter. Bicycle and pedestrian projects are eligible for CMAQ if they reduce the number of vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled. Almost all bicycle projects eligible for TAP grant programs are likely to be eligible, but a higher burden of proof that the project will reduce air pollution is required. Non-construction activities such as maps and brochures are also eligible for funding.