CITY OF CHIPPEWA FALLS
OUTDOOR PARKS & RECREATION PLAN
2013 – 2018

prepared by:

Chippewa Falls Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department
Chippewa Falls Planning & Economic Development Department

with assistance by:

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Adopted by Chippewa Falls City Council – September 17, 2013
RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE CITY OF CHIPPEWA FALLS
OUTDOOR PARKS & RECREATION PLAN, 2013-2018
AS THE OFFICIAL OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN
FOR THE CITY OF CHIPPEWA FALLS

WHEREAS, the City of Chippewa Falls, in cooperation with West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, has updated a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan for the City; and,

WHEREAS, this plan lists available outdoor recreation facilities and identifies foreseeable outdoor recreation needs for the City of Chippewa Falls; and,

WHEREAS, this plan identifies specific recommendations and priorities for improving the recreational facilities and opportunities within the City of Chippewa Falls; and,

WHEREAS, municipalities are required to have a community outdoor recreation plan on file with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in order to be eligible to obtain state and federal cost-sharing financial aids for the development of outdoor recreation facilities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council hereby adopts the City of Chippewa Falls Parks & Recreation Plan, 2013-2018 as the official outdoor recreation plan for the City of Chippewa Falls.

Dated this 17th day of September, 2013.

ADOPTED: SEP 17 2013

APPROVED: Mayor

ATTEST: Bridget Divens
City Clerk

Council President
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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

Leisure time is an important component of people's lifestyles, whether they live in urban centers or sparsely populated rural regions of the country. Shorter working hours, more disposable income, earlier retirement, and longer life spans have led to an increased demand for leisure-time activities, including outdoor recreation. As more and more people participate in outdoor activities, the increased pressures on existing recreational facilities may endanger the environmental qualities that residents and non-residents are attracted to in the first place. Consequently, there is a need to provide for increasing recreational demand while at the same time protecting natural resources for future generations.

Broadly defined, recreation is an activity or experience undertaken solely for the pleasure or satisfaction derived from it. Although recreational preferences may vary from individual to individual, recreation occupies a necessary and significant place in every person's life. It is important to provide a variety of parks and recreational facilities to offer opportunities for participation in a wide range of active and passive recreational pursuits. A primary purpose of the outdoor recreation plan for the City of Chippewa Falls, as herein presented, is to outline activities necessary to maintain and develop existing parks and to guide the acquisition and development of land for outdoor recreation activities as needed to satisfy the recreational needs and desires of the population of Chippewa Falls.

Overall, this plan is intended to provide direction to the City of Chippewa Falls in the development of parks and outdoor recreation facilities. It is an update of and builds upon the 2008 – 2012 City of Chippewa Falls Outdoor Parks & Recreation Plan and, as such, ensures the continuation of an orderly procedure to identify facilities that are needed, where they should be located, and generally when the facilities should be constructed. In addition, the plan will enable the City to participate in the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (LAWCON), the Stewardship Local Assistance Programs, and other related funding programs. Both the LAWCON and Stewardship financial aids programs are administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and can be used to assist in the construction of new outdoor recreation facilities as well as for the associated construction and improvement of existing recreational facilities.

The Chippewa Falls Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department took the lead role in managing the plan update with input from a steering committee. Where appropriate, information from the City’s Comprehensive Plan and other plans (e.g., Riverfront Master Plan) have been integrated into this document; these other planning efforts often involved significant public input. For instance, the City’s recent comprehensive planning effort involved a public survey, citizen work groups, and other focus groups. The final 2013–2018 City of Chippewa Falls Outdoor Parks & Recreation Plan update will adopted by the City in a properly noticed public meeting which will provide additional opportunities for public input on the City’s recreational amenities, goals, and recommendations discussed in this document.
The following material will state the goals and objectives, define certain types of recreation areas, inventory current community supplies of recreation areas and facilities, suggest standards for evaluating their size and subsequent ability to meet recreation needs, and offer an action program to the City designed to eliminate present recreation land deficiencies and to improve existing areas. The coverage and organization of plan content will, hopefully, provide a clear framework from which the City of Chippewa Falls can make efforts to meet daily outdoor recreation requirements, protect resources, and provide a more desirable community environment.
SECTION II

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLANNING AREA

A. PHYSICAL SETTING

The City of Chippewa Falls is located in the southwestern portion of Chippewa County in west-central Wisconsin. The City is 90 miles east of the Twin Cities and 194 miles west of Green Bay. Chippewa Falls is linked with Eau Claire, just four miles south, via USH 53 and with the Twin Cities via STH 29 and Interstate 94. STH 29 also provides the major east-west link between Chippewa Falls and the Fox Valley cities including Green Bay.

The topography of Chippewa Falls is quite irregular, alternating between steep hills and fairly level areas. Duncan Creek and the Chippewa River are approximately 840 feet above sea level. The highest areas in the City are about 80 feet above the valley floor in the northwestern and northeastern portions of the City where the land is relatively level. Chippewa Falls is located on the "Fall Line" in northern Wisconsin. The "Fall Line" marks the area of rapids or low cascades on major rivers (Chippewa River) and, hence, a source of water power.

B. POPULATION

The study of the local population is an important part of the planning process since people are the primary beneficiaries of the planning. Knowledge of the number of people in the planning area and projected changes in the population must enter into the various planning decisions regarding the future of Chippewa Falls.

Since the earliest population census in 1870, the City of Chippewa Falls has only experienced two decades in which the population has declined. The 1900 population census showed a decrease of 576 persons, which can probably be attributed to the declining lumber industry during that period. However, over the next seventy years the population grew steadily, averaging an approximate increase of 600 persons every ten years.

The most recent population decrease was indicated by the 1980 census. Between 1970 and 1980, the City’s population decreased by 81 persons from 12,351 to 12,270. However, the 1990 census shows that the population increased 3.9% from 1980 to 12,749. More recently, the 2000 census showed that the City’s population continued to increase during the 1990’s to a 2000 population of 12,925.

Population growth in the City of Chippewa Falls has been very strong since the 2000 census. According to the 2010 census, the City of Chippewa Falls had a population of 13,661, a 5.7% increase since 2000. The City of Chippewa Falls’ final population estimate, according to the Wisconsin Department of Administration, was 13,704, a .3% increase from the 2010 census population.
The Wisconsin Department of Administration provides population projections for all municipalities in Wisconsin. The following table provides those population projections for the City of Chippewa Falls:

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Chippewa Falls</td>
<td>12,925</td>
<td>13,494</td>
<td>13,989</td>
<td>14,573</td>
<td>15,136</td>
<td>15,624</td>
<td>15,989</td>
<td>+23.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*source: Wisconsin Dept of Administration population projections, 2008*

There are a number of indicators that support the notion that the population of the City will continue to rise over the next decade. Fairly recent improvements to the highway infrastructure will increase the total number of people living in the area, along with the City’s high quality of life, plentiful water, access to services, and location within the Eau Claire-Chippewa Falls metropolitan area. Also, the economy in the Chippewa Falls area has remained strong, and there is a diversified group of employers in the area. These combined factors, make it an attractive location for new businesses and families.

The distribution of population within the City of Chippewa Falls is also important to consider when planning new recreational facilities and considering the effectiveness of existing facilities. **Map 1** on the following page shows the 2010 distribution of the City’s population by census block. However, this data should be used with caution given the range of census block sizes. Further, large portions of some census blocks may not be populated, such as in the case of the census block which includes Irvine Park.

In planning for future outdoor recreation activities and facilities in the City of Chippewa Falls, it is important to consider the demographics of current residents. The City of Chippewa Falls’ population increased significantly in median age from 34.2 years in 1990 to 38.0 years in 2010. Chippewa’s County’s median age in 2010 was 40.1 years. Between 1990 and 2010, the City of Chippewa Falls also experienced a change in individuals that are 65 years of age and older. In 1990, 18.0 percent of the individuals fit into this category, while in 2010, 16.4 percent were 65 years of age and older. Even though the median age of the City is increasing, the amount and overall percentage of individuals of retired age in the City decreased.

In 2010, 13.7 percent of persons and 11.7 of families in the City were below the poverty line. Families with a female householder and no husband present, with related children under five years, had a poverty rate of 57.5 percent in 2010, up from 53 percent in 2000. The U.S. poverty rate is $11,170 for a household of one person and $23,050 for a household of four persons. The percentage of the non-Hispanic White population within the City has slowly decreased to 94 percent over recent years. Finally, the 2000 U.S. Census reported 19.0% of the City’s population 5 years and over had a disability; disability statistics are not available in more recent Census reports.
B. LAND USE

The City of Chippewa Falls covers just over 11 square miles at 7,570 acres. Of this, approximately 360 acres is surface water. This is an increase of about 13 acres compared to the total City acreage of 7,557 acres provided in the 2007 outdoor recreation plan.

The following land use and population projections are provided in the Chippewa Falls Comprehensive Plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use &amp; Population Projections 2011-2035</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected/Est.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(source: Chippewa Falls Comprehensive Plan)

Residential acreage represents the largest percentage of land use within the community, and is expected to continue to grow. In the past two decades, much of the newer residential development has occurred in areas where the average lot size is larger than in older neighborhoods. According to the City’s comprehensive plan, it is anticipated that newer development should occur in a denser fashion and that downtown, and the surrounding area of downtown, will be home to new higher density development. As new areas are developed for housing, existing neighborhood parks and playgrounds may no longer be accessible or within reasonable walking distance. In such cases, new neighborhood park facilities may be needed to accommodate new growth areas.

Non-taxable acreage, such as most outdoor recreational land, is not available in the Wisconsin Department of Revenue data. Currently, there are approximately 449 acres of parkland, an increase of 35 acres from 1999, as reported in the City’s 2003 outdoor recreation plan.

Since 2000, the large Casper Park facility was opened, but this largely replaced an area of comparable size originally purchased with Land & Water Conservation Funds for a park facility, but is now used as stormwater drainage ponds. During this time, other park facilities have been improved or small park areas opened (e.g., Mason Park), as well as some trail system improvements completed. But over the last two decades, recreational acreage in the City of Chippewa Falls has continued to decrease as a percentage of its overall land base, even though the City is experiencing significant residential growth.
SECTION III

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The function of any planning, whether in our personal lives or as a community, is to achieve goals and objectives. Individuals or communities seldom act without implicit goals and objectives; yet plans and actions without goals can often be wasted. Therefore, it is imperative that a community formulates goals (ends) that it hopes to attain. The purpose of this section is to outline the goals and objectives of the community in the area of outdoor recreation.

Goals may be defined as general statements of desirable ends while objectives are measurable statements of desirable ends. Objectives are usually specific, but at all times they are in harmony with stated goals. As community desires and needs change, so also must goals and objectives. Goals and objectives should be continuously refined.

The following goals and objectives represent the ends that a community may adopt to provide a sound basis for future outdoor recreation planning decisions. In addition to the goals and objectives, several principles are provided to describe why it is important to make serious attempts to attain the adopted goals and objectives.

A. PRINCIPLES

Attainment and maintenance of good physical and mental health is an inherent right of all residents of the City. The provision of public, general use of outdoor recreation sites and related open space areas contributes to the attainment and maintenance of physical and mental health by providing opportunities to participate in a wide range of active and passive outdoor recreation activities. Moreover, an integrated park and related open space system properly related to the natural resource base, such as the existing surface water network, can generate the dual benefits of satisfying recreational demands in an appropriate setting while protecting and preserving valuable natural resource amenities. Finally, an integrated system of public general use outdoor recreation sites and related open space areas can contribute to the orderly growth of the City by lending form and structure to urban development patterns.

Public, general use, outdoor recreation sites promote the maintenance of proper physical and mental health both by providing opportunities to participate in such athletic recreational activities as baseball, swimming, tennis, and ice-skating--activities that facilitate the maintenance of proper physical health because of the exercise involved-as well as opportunities to participate in such less
athletic activities as pleasure walking, picnicking, or just rest and reflection. These activities tend to reduce everyday tensions and anxieties and thereby help maintain proper physical and mental well-being. Well-designed and properly located public, general use, outdoor recreation sites also provide a sense of community, bringing people together for social and cultural as well as recreational activities, and thus contribute to the desirability and stability of residential neighborhoods and, therefore, the communities in which such facilities are provided. And, as the City grows, the economic importance of the park system for promoting tourism within the community is also growing.

The primary environmental corridors are a composite of the best individual elements of the natural resource base including surface water, streams, and rivers and their associated flood lands and shore lands; woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife habitat; areas of groundwater discharge and recharge; organic soils, rugged terrain, and high relief topography; and significant geological formations and physiographic features. By protecting these elements of the natural resource base, flood damage can be reduced, soil erosion abated, water supplies protected, air cleansed, wildlife population enhanced, and continued opportunities provided for scientific, educational, and recreational pursuits.

Ecological balance and natural beauty within the City are primary determinants of the ability to provide a pleasant and habitable environment for all forms of life and to maintain the social and economic well being of the City. And preservation of the most significant aspects of the natural resource base, that is, primary environmental corridors and prime agricultural lands, contributes to the maintenance of ecological balance and natural beauty.

**B. GOALS**

1. Provide an integrated system of public, general-use outdoor recreation sites and related open space areas which will allow for adequate opportunity for participation in a wide range of active and passive outdoor recreation activities.

2. Preserve sufficient, high-quality, open-space lands for protection of the underlying and sustaining natural resource base for the enhancement of the social and economic well being and environmental quality of the City.

3. Provide a system of public outdoor recreation sites that offer opportunities for individuals to become aware of our natural resources through a variety of educational tools and programs.
4. Provide the most efficient and economical satisfaction of outdoor recreation and related open space needs.

5. Provide a mix of affordable, quality outdoor recreation facilities, programs, and amenities at various scales and development intensities which meet the needs of residents while taking advantage of tourism opportunities.

C. OBJECTIVES

1. The public sector should provide general-use outdoor recreation sites sufficient in size and number to meet the active and passive recreation demands of the resident population. Such sites should contain the natural resource or man-made amenities appropriate to the recreational activities to be accommodated therein and be spatially distributed in a manner that provides ready access by the resident population.

2. Plan strategies should recognize and reflect the unique roles and other differences between neighborhood versus city-wide parks to best meet resident recreation demands.

3. Analyze the current park system to identify gaps in outdoor recreational sites or the potential overlap of recreational service areas. Plan strategies should address these gaps through acquisition and recreational facility development when feasible and consider alternative uses or sale of small, underutilized parks in areas where sufficient recreational alternatives exist.

4. To provide opportunities for rural residents to enjoy the community's parks, natural resources, and recreation areas.

5. To preserve and protect land uses adjacent to existing community parks and playgrounds. Consider acquisition of properties adjacent to existing parks as opportunities arise.

6. To coordinate the community's recreation program with the programs of other levels of government and with private enterprise to ensure maximum public benefit.

7. To provide educational opportunities that increase knowledge and awareness of natural resources, while instilling an environmental ethic in the community.

8. To provide access to, and adequate parking for, the use of natural resources.

9. To protect scenic values by controlling signage, junkyards, and other unsightly land uses and practices.

11. To provide for the recreation needs of the physically and mentally disadvantaged.

12. To provide for the periodic review and updating for the City outdoor recreation plan so that it will reflect the changing needs of the community's residents.
13. Maintain a program of hiring those people who are the best qualified to fulfill the responsibilities and requirements associated with parks and recreation planning, programming, and maintenance.

14. Areas of the City which are presently lacking adequate park area should be considered first when new additions to the City's park system are proposed.

15. Consider economic development and tourism benefits when evaluating and planning outdoor recreational facilities.
SECTION IV

PARKS AND RECREATION INVENTORY

The first step in developing a recreation planning program involves the inventory of the community's existing facilities. This inventory includes an estimate of the acreage of all parks areas as well as an analysis of the condition of each facility.

By showing the different types of parks that are available, along with their locations, it can be displayed that some areas of the City have an adequate supply of park land and recreational opportunities while other areas lack those same opportunities. This will be addressed further in the needs assessment plan section of this report.

A. PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

In contrast to county, state, and federal agencies which have quite varied and extensive recreation and resource protection responsibilities, city governments are most often concerned with meeting local, daily recreation needs. These local community needs can best be met by providing a variety of parks that serve all age groups of the resident population.

The National Recreational and Park Association published guidelines in 1983 which classified different park areas based on use, service area, size, and desirable site characteristics\(^1\). This classification system has been largely incorporated into this plan utilizing the following selected definitions of types of parks considered most appropriate for the City of Chippewa Falls.

It is important to note that all of the following types of parks may incorporate sites or features of social, historical, or cultural significance (e.g., historical marker, war memorial, art display, community bulletin board).

MINI-PARKS

A mini-park is a small, outdoor recreation area, typically less than 1-acre in size, that offers specialized facilities providing a single use or very limited number of amenities. Mini-parks will also serve a concentrated or limited population, such as very young children or senior citizens. Mini-parks are typically located in very close proximity to high-density residential development, such as a large apartment complex, townhouse development, or specialized housing for the elderly. However, mini-parks might also serve a principal commercial area with workers and shoppers the primary park visitors. Mini-parks can provide active (e.g., limited playground equipment) or passive (e.g.,

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benches, picnic tables) recreation opportunities. Most mini-parks are for daylight use only and must be easily accessible to their target users.

**Neighborhood Parks & Playgrounds**

Neighborhood parks and playgrounds are suited for intense development areas and should be easily accessible to their neighborhood population by both pedestrian and bike travel. The service area for neighborhood parks and playgrounds is approximately ¼ to ½ mile, with playground service areas potentially being larger. These facilities are typically for daylight use only, though some recreational court games and skating rings may be lighted. A neighborhood park or playground will typically offer a diversity of recreational amenities and is significantly larger than a mini-park. A desirable size for a neighborhood park and playground offering both passive and active recreational opportunities in an area of high-density urban residential development is 15+ acres. However, many neighborhood parks and playgrounds may be smaller, especially in smaller cities and villages. Neighborhood parks and playgrounds may also be provided in conjunction with a school district or other such facility.

A neighborhood park provides open space for passive recreation needs to serve a neighborhood. The physical concept generally involves an imaginatively landscaped natural environment with limited facilities for active use. Site development could include sidewalks or trails for strolling, benches, picnicking areas, and a limited amount of play equipment such as a sandbox, swing, slide, etc.

A neighborhood playground provides an area for active intensive play that serves a neighborhood. The physical concept involves a combination of paved and landscaped areas with an imaginative layout of facilities and equipment. This type of park may include some supervised playground program including games, physical skills, and low-level competition primarily for grade school age children. Activities and equipment may include swings, sandboxes, slides, climbers, fitness units, merry-go-round, etc., picnic tables, benches, grills, and parking. The playground may also include a ball field and basketball court primarily used by neighborhood and school children.

**Community Parks**

A community park serves several neighborhoods or the entire community and is generally larger (25+ acres) and much more spacious than a neighborhood park or playground. The community park is designed to serve a full range of ages, including teenagers and adults with various recreational activities. Community parks can include play fields, participation sports areas, (baseball/softball fields, typically designed for organized league play), swimming pools, basketball courts, tennis courts, volleyball, horseshoe area, and shuffleboard area. Often, community park amenities may be unique or large scale (e.g., water parks) not found elsewhere in a community. Community parks can also include picnic areas, sanitary facilities, shelter facilities, benches, playground equipment, concession buildings, and grills. The physical setting should
be a combination of game areas in a natural or landscaped setting, though a community park may also include prominent natural features such as water bodies. The service radius should be 1 to 2 miles allowing both daylight and evening use. Parking should also be provided in a sufficient amount to accommodate the use and character of the park, but the park should be easily accessible to the neighborhoods served.

### Regional Parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200+ acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passive &amp; active; multi-use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>significant natural resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may have unique or large-scale amenities and attractions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>serves a very large urban area or several communities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REGIONAL PARKS**

A regional park not only serves the entire community, but offers amenities which are an attraction to several communities within a one-hour driving time. In a large city, a regional park may function as a city-wide or community park. Regional parks are very large (200+ acres) and serves some or all types of a community's recreation needs. It can provide a wide range of activities for all age groups or it can be very specific (i.e., a zoo). In addition to some of the facilities provided by other types of parks, regional parks typically encompass or are contiguous to natural resources allowing for nature study, hiking and riding trails, marinas, boat launching, pond fishing, and numerous other nature-based activities. Regional parks often also include large, active play areas and game fields (e.g., soccer fields, basketball/volleyball courts) which allow for spectator viewing.

The physical concept of the regional park is generally a natural area imaginatively landscaped and providing picnicking and other passive activities as well as cultural and active needs served by general-purpose buildings and game fields. Regional parks provide a full range of urban area recreation needs and are used during both daylight and evening hours. Also, because people would more likely drive to a park of this type, parking and sanitary facilities are necessary.

**SPECIALIZED OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS**

Golf courses, outdoor sports complexes, historic sites, conservancy areas, fairgrounds, and floodplains are examples of specialized recreation facilities and open spaces. Most of these have limited active recreation value, are not developed as multi-purpose recreation areas, or are not always available for use by the public.

Although such areas are not considered in current recreation acreage totals computed for Chippewa Falls, it must be recognized that specialized areas are an important adjunct to a community and its outdoor recreation and open space program.
SUMMARY OF THE PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) classification system includes the following standards for the above five park types:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park Type</th>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Desirable Size</th>
<th>Acres/1,000 pop.</th>
<th>Use and Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mini-Park</td>
<td>&lt; 0.25 mile radius</td>
<td>1 ac or less</td>
<td>0.25 – 0.5 acres</td>
<td>specialized facilities serving a concentrated population (e.g., apartments, seniors, tots)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Park/Playground</td>
<td>0.25 – 0.5 mile radius up to 5,000 pop.</td>
<td>5+ acres ²</td>
<td>1 – 2 acres</td>
<td>intensive recreation area within safe walking distance; may be a school-park facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>1-2 mile radius</td>
<td>25+ acres</td>
<td>5 – 8 acres</td>
<td>may include both passive &amp; active recreation; easily accessible to neighborhoods served</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Park</td>
<td>several communities; w/in 1 hour</td>
<td>200+ acres</td>
<td>5 – 10 acres</td>
<td>contiguous to or encompassing natural resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized Area</td>
<td>varies; may be regional</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>located in the community; may include conservancy areas and greenspace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² The NRPA standard for the desirable size of neighborhood parks and playgrounds is actually 15+ acres. However, after consideration that such standards were developed with large, densely populated urban cities in mind, a decision was made to reduce the desirable size to 5+ acres to better reflect the park system and population characteristics of the City of Chippewa Falls.

The above definitions and standards are suggested guidelines for planning purposes and analysis based on commonly used terminology and the primary intent of each park type. Although other types of parks can be found in some of Wisconsin's cities and villages, the ones defined here are sufficient to analyze recreation areas in Chippewa Falls. Comparisons of park definitions, areas and services should not be made among the state's municipalities. Each community is unique in its size, demographics, geography, and distribution of population; therefore, the classifications applied in a given community result from a community's judgment of how that community's parks function in meeting local and nonresident recreation needs.

B. PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION INVENTORY (SUPPLY)

This section provides an inventory of the City's parks and recreation facilities. The inventory is separated by definition as described in the preceding section. In addition, recreation facilities associated with the City's schools are also inventoried and listed under public and parochial school grounds. The acreages provided for the individual park facilities are taken from Chippewa County G.I.S. data as of February 2008. Some variation in the actual acreages provided in past plans is to be expected.

Map 2 on the following page shows the location of the parks and recreation facilities within the City of Chippewa Falls and corresponds to the brief inventory description for each facility.
i. **MINI-PARKS**

1. **Simon Lyberg Park**
   - 0.2 acre
   - This is a very small park facility with some play apparatus.

2. **Ball and Knight Park**
   - 0.3 acre
   - This is a small area with some play apparatus. New design & equipment were completed in 2000.

3. **Alexander McBean Park**
   - 0.4 acre
   - This is a small open space with benches for passive recreational activities. Some new playground equipment was installed in Summer 2012.

4. **Mason Park**
   - 0.2 acre
   - The newest public park in the City, Mason Park is located at the corner of High Street and Grand Avenue adjacent to Duncan Creek. Picnic tables are provided at the site.

5. **Alexander Wiley Park**
   - 0.4 acre
   - This park is located at the corner of High and Spring Streets with benches for passive recreational activities. The Committee for 21st Century buried a two hundred-year capsule at this park in the year 2000, with two hundred items.

6. **L. C. Stanley Park**
   - 0.3 acre
   - This park was renovated in 1996 with City funds to comply with the National Playground Safety standards.

7. **Harmony Park**
   - 0.2 acres
   - This is a downtown, passive-use park used by the Main Street program for Thursday night concerts. At the site is a history of Chippewa Falls and dedication to the Chi-Hi Marching Band.

ii. **NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS**

Four school facilities-Parkview, Halmstad, Hillcrest, and Southview also effectively function as neighborhood parks/playgrounds when school is not in session. These facilities will be discussed in subsection vi.

8. **Hiram S. Allen Park**
   - 2.8 acres
   - Allen Park is a small downtown leisure area close to Duncan Creek. The park contains a shelter and park benches. Most of the trees have been planted in memory of loved ones. Allen Park should be planned in conjunction with the Riverfront Park Master Plan.

9. **Frenchtown Park**
   - 3.7 acres
   - Also sometimes referred to as Bryant Park, this park is improved with playground equipment and has ample open space for soccer, Frisbee, playing catch, etc. Plans call for a shelter, parking area, and a picnic area.
10. James Buchanan Memorial Park 1.3 acres
This south side playground was renamed in honor of James Buchanan who died shortly after becoming Chippewa Falls' mayor. The park contains playground equipment, a basketball court, and two tennis courts.

11. Thaddeus Pound Park 1.5 acres
This park is developed with a youth ball diamond and includes an area with playground equipment.

12. Adams Park 5.0 acres
This site is presently undeveloped and is not used for any specific activities. The five acres is a wooded, natural area.

iii. COMMUNITY PARKS
13. William and Gertrude Casper Family Recreation Park 55.1 acres
In 1972, the City of Chippewa Falls purchased 49-acres of land for recreational purposes with ORAP and LAWCON funds. The site was originally proposed to be a recreational site with a pond maintained for stormwater retention. The City later found out that Federal regulations do not permit use of the purchased site as a stormwater retention pond. In order to use this natural pond area for stormwater retention, a suitable replacement site had to be provided for the planned Casper Park.

In 2010, the City received a matching grant from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program and purchased approximately two acres of land bordering the northwest corner of Casper Park. There are currently no specific plans for this acreage.

Today, Casper Park is the primary, active outdoor sports facility of the City. The facility boasts four softball fields, five soccer fields, and one baseball field. The softball fields are built to slow-pitch standards, but have portable fencing to accommodate fast pitch. Gannon Baseball Field is built to high school standards and is used by the School District, American Legion, and the Adult Chippewa River League. There has also been discussion of making Casper Park an all-year attraction by adding cross-country skiing and snowshoe trails.

14. Mary E. Marshall Park (9.2 ac) / Rose Garden (4.0 ac) 13.2 acres
The larger, west portion of this facility offers intensive and specialized, active recreational activities, many of which are not found in other areas of the community. Marshall Park provides a lighted softball diamond, basketball courts, and year-round restroom facilities. In 1996, three lighted tennis courts and a parking lot were completed. This is also the site of the Bernard F. Willi Outdoor swimming pool which was renovated in 1991 and opened to the
public in 1992. In 1999, a skateboard park was established, and new skateboard equipment was installed in 2007 which was funded by a donation from Northwestern Bank. The smaller, eastern portion of Marshall Park is the Rose Garden and Lily Garden which offer more passive, contemplative pursuits and an opportunity for the community’s master gardeners to show their skill. In cooperation with the University of Wisconsin-Extension Chippewa County, a Community Garden has been established between the pool and the Lily Garden offering citizens space to have their own garden plots. Ample open space exists at Marshall Park for additional activities. In the Fall of 2011 and 2012, a soft surface walking trail along Duncan Creek—from Jefferson Avenue to Bridgewater Avenue—was funded and installed by the Leinenkugel’s Brewing Company and their business partners as part of an ongoing water stewardship program.

While the Marshall Park/Rose Garden is smaller than accepted standards for a community park, this facility is immediately adjacent to the much larger Irvine Park and the smaller Hurd Picnic Place Park. In fact, there is a complimentary relationship between this community park and the larger regional park that is reflected in Irvine Park plans and public relations materials.

The City and the engineering firm Short Elliot and Hendrickson (SEH, Inc) completed a Marshall Park Master Plan in 2012. Among the plan recommendations is a general approach to locate more active activities away from Duncan Creek, which allows for more passive and contemplative spaces along the natural corridor.

15. Riverfront Park

This park is not yet developed, but is proposed as part of the Chippewa Falls Downtown Riverfront Plan completed in October 2007. As shown on Map 3, the Park would extend from River Street to the Chippewa River and from Bridge Street to Pine Street. This new Park will transform the gateway to historic downtown Chippewa Falls while maintaining this important floodway.

The Park would contain an amphitheater, enhanced wetlands, trails, and open lawns offering opportunities for civic events, fishing, and enjoyment of the natural setting. The plan also describes the relationship of this Park to adjacent Allen Park, Goldsmith Wildlife Refuge, and the City’s bike route system. To fully implement the Riverfront Park plan, land acquisition would required, including acquisition of some lots adjacent to Allen Park on the east side of Bridge Street. For more details, please refer to the Chippewa Falls Downtown Riverfront Plan.
iv. **REGIONAL PARKS**

16. **Irvine Park and Zoo**

   The original 85 acres of Irvine Park land was donated to the City in 1906 by William Irvine and the Chippewa Lumber and Boom Company to be maintained as a free park. Of the total 278.5 acres, approximately 43.5 acres comprised of the surface waters of Duncan Creek and Glen Loch. An additional 195 acres are the natural wooded areas and the zoo. The remaining 40 acres provide a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities including hiking, picnicking, playground apparatus, and passive areas. In May 2012, the City’s Parks, Recreation & Forestry Board unanimously passed a motion that the north end of the Park “be kept as a natural setting with no permanent structures”\(^3\). The 13.2-acre Marshall Park, 2.4-acre Hurd Picnic Place Park, 55-acre Kalk-Fatu Woodland Park, and 1.5-acre Erickson Park are also immediately adjacent to Irvine Park and must be planned for accordingly.

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\(^3\) The May 8, 2012, Board minutes define the north end as the park as “CTH S on the north boundary, at the intersection point of Ermatinger Drive/Irvine Park Drive on a line drawn East and West encompassing all Park property on the south boundary, Duncan Creek/Glen Loch on the east boundary, and the Kalk-Fatu Park donation on the west boundary.”
Because of the complexity of this park it will not be discussed at great length in this report. The Irvine Park Master Plan (1996) and the Irvine Park Zoo Master Plan (1989) were specifically prepared to address park planning and development needs. Due to its size and amenities, Irvine Park attracts visitors from outside the City making it a true regional park. As such, its facilities should not be depended upon to serve the function of a neighborhood park.

The City has contracted CBS Squared Inc. to design a new Welcome Center/Artifact Area, Small Mammal Building, and Bird Aviary which will be located at the entrance to the Zoo. The design will be completed in the Summer of 2013. Improvements to the Kell’s Corner, located at the Glen Loch Overlook, are also underway to improve traffic flow, viewing opportunities, and to correct stormwater problems at the site.

v. SPECIALIZED OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS
The specialized outdoor recreation areas offer residents and visitors unique experiences not typically offered at a neighborhood park or playground. Many of these undeveloped park areas are largely left in a natural state (e.g., woodlands, wetlands). While these facilities are very important to the community, their acreages should not be considered when using NRPA standards to help determine community recreation needs.

17. Kalk-Fatu Woodland Park
   This park is adjacent to Irvine Park. The park has a three mile trail that is used by runners and cross-country skiers. It is a natural park and must stay as is according to the wishes of the family who donated the land to the City. Walk bridges were built across several ravines in order to utilize as much of the park as possible while retaining its natural features.

18. Erickson Park
   This land was donated to the City for park purposes. A park plan has a boat landing with good access to Glen Loch, but is in need of improvements.

19. Goldsmith Wildlife Refuge
   As a wooded natural area along Duncan Creek, this site is a haven for birds and animals. Here they may live and be observed in a natural environment. The area is undeveloped and should be planned in conjunction with the Riverfront Park Master Plan.

20. Hurd Picnic Place Park
   This is a small, undeveloped, wooded area adjacent to Marshall Park. The owner, who sold it to the City for $1.00, wanted the area to be maintained as a natural, wooded site.
21. **Chippewa River Boat Landing**  3.1 acres
This is a small boat landing owned by the City on the Chippewa River between the Xcel/NSP Dam and the Lake Wissota Dam.

22. **Industrial Park Conservancy Area**  19.9 acres
This area is located next to the Chippewa River in the industrial park area. It has a small stream running through it which empties into the river. It is presently undeveloped. The area must be left in its natural state.

23. **Chippewa River Corridor**
This area is located along the Chippewa River from the Xcel/NSP dam to the Lake Wissota dam shown in the picture to the right. The corridor has many recreational opportunities that can be developed. A special plan was developed for the corridor that should be used for planning and development purposes (*Chippewa River Corridor Study*, July, 1988).

24. **Duncan Creek Floodplain**  N/A
This floodplain area is a natural linear recreation corridor presently undeveloped and privately owned in many portions. It is passively used by area residents for fishing and is an attractive, but hazardous area for children.

25. **Northern Wisconsin State Fairgrounds**  48.6 acres
The fairgrounds were recently purchased by a community foundation and are operated by a non-profit corporation (Northern Wisconsin State Fair Association). The grounds are used for a variety of activities. The Chamber of Commerce uses the site for promotional activities. Other activities include auto shows, dog shows, and Oktoberfest. Some facilities at the fairgrounds include buildings to house livestock and a track. The site is also used as a storage area during the winter months.

26. **Vic Mason Youth Sports Complex**  9.4 acres
This area is privately owned by the YMCA. It is specially designed for use by youth ages 5-14 and includes two Little League diamonds, one Pony diamond, and one T-Ball diamond. All four fields have dugouts, bleachers, concessions, and restrooms. Lights were added in 2011 thanks in large part due to a donation from the Casper Foundation, while the Minnesota Twins Community Fund contributed to toward a new T-ball field.

27. **Chippewa Falls Hockey/Ice Arena**  4.1 acres
This property is owned by the Chippewa Falls Youth Hockey Association. Though a lighted outdoor skating rink has been available during the winter months in the past, no outdoor recreation activities are currently offered at the site.
28. **Timber Terrace Golf Course**  
**abt. 50 acres**
Timber Terrace Golf Course is the only golf course within the City limits. This privately owned nine-hole golf course is located at 1117 Pumphouse Road on the north side of the Chippewa River. With 35 acres of greenways, the remaining acreage is largely a combination of wetlands and ponds which are managed as conservancy areas.

29. **Chippewa Falls Happy Tails Dog Park**  
**abt. 53 acres**
The Chippewa Falls Happy Tails Dog Park is a true partnership success story. Happy Tails is open dawn to dusk and 365 days a year. Over 9,000 dogs per year visit Happy Tails and the Park is frequently used by travelers given its proximity and visibility from Highway 29.

The bulk of the park (about 50 acres) is an open area which serves as a stormwater retention pond for nearby highway intersection improvements. This open area has been fenced in and designated as the large dog area with a 1-mile perimeter walking trail with benches and shade structures, waste bags, and trash containers. An 8,000 square foot small dog play area is also available on site. Other Park amenities include a paved parking area, safe double-gated entry to the large dog area, communication/message center, picnic tables and area, on-leash wooded area, Porta-Potty, and various waste management containers. A “Little Free Library” site will be added late Spring 2013.

While the City maintains the mowing and general landscaping within the large dog area as part of the stormwater retention pond, a non-profit group—Chippewa Falls Happy Tails Dog Park, Inc.—is responsible by agreement with the City for the installation and maintenance of other park areas and amenities, with the support of volunteer efforts and donations.

The group has a very active volunteer Board and is expected to soon have full 501(c)3 status. The Board of Directors partners with local “pet-friends” hotels/motels by advertising on its website and providing hotel guests travelling with dogs with “Welcome” bags, which includes a free pass to the Dog Park and other “goodies”. The Board is also very active in City planning efforts, Chamber of Commerce and Chippewa Falls Main Street activities, and other local charitable events through donations and training opportunities.

30. **Bicycle and Walking Trail System**  
**N/A**
The City of Chippewa Falls has made significant strides in the development of its trail system in recent years. Bicycle trails within the City are now marked and are a mix of on-street routes and off-street trail facilities. Map 2 shows that the Duncan Creek Parkway Trail link and the North Chippewa River Trail link are now complete, offering a loop around the northeast side of the City and providing access to the Heyde Center for the Arts, Leinenkugel Brewery, and the Chippewa Valley Museum of Industry and Technology, among other possible destinations.
The existing trail along Seymour Cray Boulevard provides a link to the Old Abe State Trail to the northeast which is completed to Cornell. More recently, the trail link along Park Avenue east of Seymour Cray Boulevard has been completed, along with an off-road trail along Highway 124 which was installed as part of the Highway 124/29 roundabout improvements. However, currently, there is not a complete connection from Highways 124/29 east and south to the current terminus of the Chippewa River State Trail south of the City. This is a notable gap in the regional Chippewa River State Trail system.

vi. **Public & Parochial School Playgrounds and Athletic Areas**

These school facilities have not been included in the overall totals for public (City) recreation facilities because they are not accessible to the general public at all times and they are not owned and maintained by the City.

The City of Chippewa Falls and the school district have a strong partnership regarding the sharing of outdoor recreational facilities and use agreements are in place. Currently, the outdoor recreation facilities of the Chippewa Falls United School District (see A-F below) are available for public use during non-school hours. The four public elementary schools-Parkview, Halmstad, Southview, and Hillcrest-do function as neighborhood playgrounds during non-school hours.

It is recommended that the City and school district continue to coordinate activities, to the extent possible, so the recreation facilities under each jurisdiction can be beneficial to both. No formal arrangement between the City and the private schools exist for the general public use of private school playgrounds and athletic fields during non-school hours.

The acreages for the following school facilities within the City of Chippewa Falls may include non-recreational structures and uses owned by the school.

A. **Parkview Elementary School** 2.0 acres
   Parkview has extensive playground equipment for grades 1-5, as well as open space for outdoor games.

B. **Halmstad School** 17.1 acres
   This school facility is a large flat open area that contains a play apparatus, three full-size soccer fields, backstops, and benches.

C. **Southview School** 4.3 acres
   This school has a large, open area available for field games. However, there are other active facility areas for specific activities including basketball and a play apparatus.

D. **Chippewa Falls Middle School** 10.0 acres
   This facility has open play field areas, a softball diamond, a baseball diamond, two marked off football fields and a soccer field area. During the winter, it is used for cross-country skiing.
E. **Hillcrest School**  
This site is included with the Chippewa Falls High School site described below.

F. **Chippewa Falls High School**  
This area does not include the football field and running track. The remaining seven acres, however, provide a large, open play field area, blacktopped courts, and playground apparatus for Hillcrest School which is located directly adjacent to the site. The area also includes a baseball diamond and two practice football fields.

G. **Holy Ghost Elementary School**  
This school recreation facility is blacktopped and contains a basketball hoop and playground apparatus.

H. **Notre Dame School**  
This area is primarily open with some playground equipment.

I. **St. Charles School**  
A small blacktopped area with play apparatus and basketball hoops, along with a ball field and a large, open play field, are provided on this site.

J. **McDonell Central High School**  
This is an open area suitable for field games such as soccer and football. It includes a backstop for baseball or softball.

K. **Christ Lutheran School Playground**  
In 2011, the Christ Lutheran School made over $40,000 in improvements at its playground. The improvements were completed by volunteers and the new equipment was funded with donations. This small playground has helped meet a critical need for such park amenities in this southeast neighborhood.

C. **NEARBY RECREATION FACILITIES OUTSIDE THE CITY**

City residents can also take advantage of a diversity of county, state, and other outdoor recreational facilities in the region. These facilities offer recreational opportunities which may be inappropriate or not found in the City, such as hunting, boating, and camping. Map 4 on the following page highlights the significant county and state recreational facilities within Chippewa County.

Map 4 excludes numerous recreational facilities which are operated by other local communities (e.g. Lake Hallie park/ballfields, Stanley campground) or are privately owned. For instance, as of 2010, there were approximately 1,687 campsites in Chippewa County of which about 1,412 were privately owned, including the 30 sites at the privately operated Fair Hill Campground located with the City of Chippewa Falls.
Of special significance to City residents is the 6,300-acre Lake Wissota and Wissota State Park just east to the City for boating, water-skiing, and fishing. Chippewa County also has nearly 81 miles of trout streams. Hunters have access to over 40,000 acres of hunting grounds in Chippewa County when Managed Forest Law lands and Forest Crop lands are included.
Regional trail linkages are also important for recreational planning, with the City of Chippewa Falls being an important part of the Chippewa Valley Trail System (see Map 5). This is a multi-use trail system for bicyclists, snowmobilers, hikers, horseback riders and in-line skaters. Altogether, the trail system will be 70 miles in length, connecting Cornell to Chippewa Falls to Eau Claire to Durand with a link to the Red Cedar State Trail which connects to Menomonie. At its north termination point in Cornell (Brunet Island State Park), the Chippewa Valley Trail System connects with the Chippewa County portion of the Ice Age Trail.

MAP 5

However, there is currently a gap in this system in the Chippewa Falls area with the northern portion (Old Abe State Trail) not fully connected with the Chippewa River State Trail portion to the south. The Chippewa Falls inset on Map 5 shows potential trail linkages within the City, but, as noted previously, this system within the City has not been completed. The Village of Lake Hallie has been utilizing and pursuing grant dollars to develop their portion of the Chippewa River State Trail and
help address the gap in the current system. The Chippewa County Outdoor Recreation Plan also identified the rebuilding of the Old Abe Trail between Jim Falls and Brunet Island State Park as a need.

D. ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

All park restroom facilities owned by the City of Chippewa Falls are accessible for persons with disabilities and meet ADA standards, including paved walkways.

Three park areas offer accessible playground equipment. Casper Park and Irvine Park near the pavilion are wheelchair accessible to the transfer points using a rubberized surface. Parents of children with disabilities had a large role in the design of the playground equipment area at Flag Hill in Irvine Park. However, contrary to thought, these parents requested that a paved or rubberized surface for wheelchairs not be installed under the playground equipment.

As can be seen in the diagram to the right, ADA design guidelines for park and playground accessibility contain many details and can be complicated.

These guidelines include details such as surface types, surface widths, slopes, handrails, and transfer stations. At least one of each type of ground-level play component that is present in the play area must be on an accessible route. However, the number and variety of ground-level play components required to be on an accessible route is also determined by the number of elevated components provided in the play area.

The U.S. Access Board has issued a guide to the ADA accessibility guidelines for play areas which is available at their website: www.access-board.gov. The City may be required to obtain professional assistance in meeting these guidelines.

Evaluating a Play Area for ADA Accessibility

SECTION V

RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A. STATE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (SCORP)

Assessing the outdoor recreation needs of Wisconsin's residents and visitors is a major component of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Outdoor recreation is a very broad concept. Activities range from shooting buckets to shooting bears, from just relaxing to rock climbing, or from solitary hiking to trekking at the State Fair. With many, often competing interests, it is necessary to assess the needs, plans, and issues involving outdoor recreation in the region.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources guidelines for outdoor recreation planning encourage local planning efforts to consider the needs, issues, and priorities identified in the SCORP. The 2011-2016 SCORP did not utilize a regional approach as was done in its previous SCORP. Some comparisons were made between communities of different sizes. Generally, smaller communities had more playgrounds, more parks, and often more park acreage per capita, while there were no significant differences between communities in terms of biking and hiking trails based on community size. Outdoor recreation participation rates among Wisconsin residents from the SCORP are discussed later in this section. But given the recreational trail discussions in the City’s ORP update, it is notable that 87.7 percent of Wisconsin residents “walk for pleasure” and a 48.7 percent bicycle, making these activities very important components of the recreational mix.

The importance of private-public partnerships, recreation’s role in promoting public health, accessibility to recreational options, and the positive tourism and economic impacts of outdoor recreation are some of the common themes found within the SCORP goals which have been integrated into the County’s outdoor recreation plan update.

B. CHIPPEWA COUNTY OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

The 2010-2015 Chippewa County Outdoor Recreation Plan identified goals and recommendations for the County parks and forests, as well as for the adjacent communities of the Town of Lafayette, Town of Wheaton, and the Village of Lake Hallie.
Chippewa County
The County’s portion of the plan recognized both the increasing demand for recreation facilities and the increasing financial challenges facing the County government. General plan recommendations included optimizing use of existing facilities and requiring park dedications with new development.

The County’ plan stated than the County should consider giving a priority to:

“the development on County land of hiking and biking trails within the former County farm area south of County I adjacent to the Chippewa River and the City of Chippewa Falls. The Chippewa County Board adopted a plan in 1997 recognizing the potential of these areas as a opportunity for hiking and as a potential trail connector for biking to the Old Abe Trail. The City of Chippewa Falls has completed a bicycle facility plan for the city which shows the potential for a trail connecting from the city to this area as well. The scenic location, close proximity to the Old Abe Trail and the City of Chippewa Falls, and the likelihood of increased growth in this immediate area, provides the opportunity for substantial use of these areas for pedestrian use and biking.”

The plan also addresses a variety of outdoor recreation uses which are limited or not available within the City or may be more appropriate for less populated areas (e.g., lake-use conflicts, the growing demand for ATV trails, snowmobile bridges, hunting, boat ramps).

Town of Lafayette
The Town’s portion of the 2010-2015 County Plan focused primarily on improvements at the Lafayette Ballfields and Park adjacent to the Town Hall, including plans for the development of a picnic area with a nature walking trail. One notable change since the previous plan is that the Town has formerly taken over Ray’s Beach on the shore of Lake Wissota as a recreational area, which has long been an informal destination of local residents.

Town of Wheaton
Located directly west of Chippewa Falls, the Town recognizes that City residents wish to utilize boat landings within the Town. Short-term plans include construction of a dock or pier at their boat landing near Loopy’s Saloon and Grill, while longer-term plans include a bike route and/or trail which connects Chippewa Falls to Eau Claire through the Town.
Village of Lake Hallie
The Village’s portion of the County Plan is of significance to the City of Chippewa Falls ORP due to proposed trail links. Short-term priorities included:

- develop CTH “J” portion of Chippewa River State Trail
- develop trail link from 130th Street to CTH “J” trail segment
- develop trail link from STH 29 bridge to 110th Street and 40th Avenue

C. CHIPPEWA FALLS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In December 2012, the City of Chippewa Falls adopted their updated comprehensive. The planning process incorporated a robust public participation through a steering committee, public opinion survey, focus groups, open houses, and a public hearing. This outdoor recreation plan relied upon and incorporates the public opinions and guidance from the recent comprehensive planning process.

The outdoor recreation-related issues, objectives, and strategies found in the comprehensive plan are integrated into various sections of this outdoor recreation plan. Some of these include:

- connecting destinations Citywide through a bike and pedestrian system
- provide safe biking and walking options; promote walkable neighborhoods
- increase downtown bicycle parking and create a more bike- and pedestrian-friendly downtown
- promote the City’s character, history, identity, arts/culture, and sense-of-place
- find the more cost-effective option to maintaining recreational facilities in good condition
- utilize and promote the riverfront as a recreational opportunities
- continue to implement the Downtown Riverfront Plan
- develop more public spaces downtown that promote social interaction
- examine feasibility of a regional park district
D. CITY RECREATIONAL NEEDS BY ACTIVITY

The first tool used to identify parks and recreation needs for the City considers participation rates and anticipated demand for particular activities and facility improvements.

i. PARTICIPATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The types of activities people enjoy and the number of people who engage in the activity are important tools to assess recreational shortfalls for the City, though such specific data is not available at the City level and the City has not recently performed such a survey. As an alternative, listed below are the twenty dominant recreational activities and percentage of people who engage in that activity in our Wisconsin DNR planning region.

Outdoor Recreation Participation Rates – Top 20 Activities
(Percent of Population)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walk for pleasure</td>
<td>85.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family gathering</td>
<td>81.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving for pleasure</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnicking</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycling</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boating (any type)</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshwater fishing</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit a beach</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow/ice activities (any type)</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming in lakes, streams, etc.</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warmwater fishing</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit a wilderness or primitive area</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit outdoor theme/water park</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorboating</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit a farm or agricultural setting</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming in an outdoor pool</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed camping</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive off-road</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain biking</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-road driving with an ATV</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2005-2010 SCORP, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
### Outdoor Recreation Participation Rates – Other Activities

(Percent of Population)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day hiking</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit other waterside (besides beach)</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running or jogging</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting (any type)</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowmobiling</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big game hunting</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target shooting</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit other waterside (besides beach)</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running or jogging</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting (any type)</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowmobiling</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big game hunting</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target shooting</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-road 4-wheel driving (SUV)</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive camping</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small game hunting</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafting</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coldwater fishing</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterskiing</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice skating outdoors</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature-based educational program</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-country skiing</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit a dog park to walk a pet</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disc golf</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis outdoors</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowing</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseback riding (any type)</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseback riding on trails</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt upland birds</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downhill skiing</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use personal watercraft</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowshoeing</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing in the Great Lakes</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-road motorcycling</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snorkeling</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayaking</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paintball games</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backpacking</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migratory bird hunting</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice hockey outdoors</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowboarding</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geocaching</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skateboarding</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scuba diving</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog sledding</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsurfing</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surfing</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2005-2010 SCORP, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
The above data was collected for six Wisconsin regions through a survey by the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE). Participation rates are based on adults 16 years and older. The region which includes Chippewa County had the highest participation rates in the State of Wisconsin in following categories:

- bicycling
- warmwater fishing
- visit other waterside (besides beach)
- primitive camping
- horseback riding (any type)
- horseback riding on trails
- visit outdoor theme or water park
- mountain biking
- drive off-road
- rafting
- disc golf
- off-road motorcycling
- geocaching

There are two important items to note when considering the above participation data:

1) Our planning region for the previous surveys is a large, mostly rural area. The results of this participation survey may not reflect participation rates by City residents.

2) The participation rates do not necessarily reflect demand. In some cases, participation in a particular activity may increase if residents are given access to that activity.

The 2011-2016 SCORP included some projected trends in Wisconsin outdoor recreation activities:
ii. **CITY RECREATIONAL FACILITY PRIORITY ANALYSIS**

To obtain a more local perspective on outdoor recreation needs and demands, a facility priority survey was distributed to the City Park Board, Aldermen, and staff involved in recreational planning, services, or decision-making as part of the City’s 2008 to 2012 Outdoor Recreation Plan. These results were reviewed as part of this plan update and determined to be relevant with the possible addition of snowshoeing. Since the previous outdoor recreation plan, the City Parks Department has noted a significant increase in requests for snowshoeing trails, which is an activity not included in the survey.

### Park Facility Priority Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outdoor Recreational Activity</th>
<th>Level of Current Activity</th>
<th>Priority for Additional or Improved Facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Priority</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized Outdoor Sports</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycling</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium Priority</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking/Jogging</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball/Softball Fields</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer Fields</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming (beach &amp; pool)</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playgrounds</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Open Space (passive)</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnicking</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Basketball Courts</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird Watching/Wildlife Viewing</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Country Skiing</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Skating/Hockey</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog Parks</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing/Kayaking</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Priority</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking/Backpacking</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Biking</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golfing</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowmobiling</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downhill Skiing</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseback Riding</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorboat/Waterskiing</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jet Skiing</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATV trails</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = Low  
2 = Medium  
3 = High
For the various outdoor recreation activities in the survey, respondents gave a rating of “High”, “Medium”, or “Low” for their perception of the level of current activity and the need for additional or improved facilities. The results were then averaged, with a score of “1” meaning the activity was a low level of use or priority, while a “3” meaning the activity has a high level of use or priority. The survey results are shown in the table on the following page.

The survey activities were based on the prioritized list of activities in the City’s 2003 outdoor recreation plan, allowing for comparison. Overall, the priorities remain fairly unchanged. Cross-country skiing and picnicking may have decreased slightly as a priority, slipping into the medium or moderate category. Camping, hiking/backpacking, and mountain biking also may have decreased slightly in priority to the low priority category.

These local priorities are also fairly consistent with the regional supply shortages identified in the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for developed settings. Basketball courts, tennis courts, and soccer fields are all moderate-to-high local priorities and the City currently offers such amenities at various parks. Trailerable boat launches and marinas were not mentioned specifically in the local survey, though the City has identified two such park locations and the current lack of access to a larger lake makes a marina within the City not feasible at this time.

The notable exception when comparing the SCORP regional needs to the local priorities in the above table are golf courses. The SCORP indicates that golf courses are in short-supply within the region, but this was a low priority locally. Respondents to the local survey may feel that the four golf courses in the immediate area (Ojibwa, Lake Wissota, Timber Terrace, and Lake Hallie), and others in the larger region, sufficiently meet the demands of resident golfers. It is likely that some respondents also feel that the private sector is in a better position to develop golf courses, and so golfing was given a low priority in the survey.

The activities in the survey are not all inclusive. Certain existing outdoor activities (e.g., zoo, skate park) where not included in the 2003 ORP prioritization, so were not included here as well. Further, demand will change for activities over time as trends and interests change (e.g., Frisbee golf, aquatic centers, geocaching, nature interpretive centers).

E. AVAILABILITY OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The second tool used to identify parks and recreation needs for the City considers the amount and types of parkland available in the context of the potential recreation population. This analysis will use the National Park and Recreation Association’s general service standard of 10 acres of public recreation land per 1,000 residents.
i. **Potential Recreation Population**

The City could base its analysis of park land availability solely on its resident population. However, residents of neighboring communities and visitors are also City park users and impact the park system. The potential recreation population (PRP) includes the City population, population of adjacent jurisdictions, and visitor population.

The projected 2015 potential recreation population is shown in the table below. Estimates on the number of hotel/motel users were derived by using the total number of rooms available in the five hotel/motels in Chippewa Falls in 2012 (237 rooms) and the 52.7 percent 2012 occupancy rate for the City’s largest three hotels. Additional assumptions included a conservative two occupants per room and the percentage of users each season as provided in the previous plan. Camping statistics were established by a similar method using the total number of camping sites located in the area and user patterns derived by Lake Wissota State Park; the number of area campsite have not significantly changed since the previous plan. No assumptions or projections were made regarding growth in hotel/motel rooms, campsites, or related occupancies.

Without additional survey work, there is no reliable method of estimating what percentage of the population from the various municipalities included in the table utilize the City’s park system and how their frequency of use might vary. School age-children who attend a school in the City of Chippewa Falls, and their families, would likely have a high utilization rate. It is also expected that non-City residents would be more likely to use some of the more unique offerings of the City’s park system which are not available within their own communities, such as the athletic fields at Casper Park, the pool or skate park at Marshall Park, and the zoo or band shell at Irvine Park. But, in short, if the populations of adjacent communities and visitors are considered, the potential outdoor recreational land needs more than doubles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Chippewa Falls</td>
<td>14,573</td>
<td>14,573</td>
<td>14,573</td>
<td>14,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. of Lake Hallie</td>
<td>6,915</td>
<td>6,915</td>
<td>6,915</td>
<td>6,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Anson</td>
<td>2,315</td>
<td>2,315</td>
<td>2,315</td>
<td>2,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Eagle Point</td>
<td>3,571</td>
<td>3,571</td>
<td>3,571</td>
<td>3,571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Hallie</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Lafayette</td>
<td>6,759</td>
<td>6,759</td>
<td>6,759</td>
<td>6,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Tilden</td>
<td>1,477</td>
<td>1,477</td>
<td>1,477</td>
<td>1,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Wheaton</td>
<td>2,957</td>
<td>2,957</td>
<td>2,957</td>
<td>2,957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chippewa Falls Area</td>
<td>39,025</td>
<td>39,025</td>
<td>39,025</td>
<td>39,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel/Motel</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>1,468</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total PRP</strong></td>
<td>39,503</td>
<td>40,816</td>
<td>39,630</td>
<td>39,229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the Dog Park, there is also some evidence that it is becoming a known and planned for stop for highway travelers with pets, and is not reflected in the above recreation population numbers. The numbers also do not consider day trips from residents outside the immediate area or those staying in homes of residents, including some of those using the Chippewa River State Trail.

The most important result of this analysis is the recognition that:

- the area’s population continues to grow
- area residents constitute the largest percentage of park and outdoor recreation users
- visitors and travelers are also park and outdoor recreation consumers which can contribute to local businesses and services.

ii. AVAILABLE PUBLIC PARK ACREAGE

The City’s public park acreage has stayed relatively unchanged since the previous outdoor recreation plan, with the addition of two acres at Casper Park and the Dog Park the only notable additions. There have been trail improvements in recent years, as well as additional private open space identified for recreational uses, as discussed previously.

Using the inventory provided previously in Section IV. B., the City has the following available public park acreage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>est. Acres of Natural or Wooded</th>
<th># of Public Parks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mini-Parks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Parks &amp; Playgrounds</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Parks</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Parks</td>
<td>278.5</td>
<td>238.5 (w/ zoo &amp; water)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Specialized Parks</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>450.5</td>
<td>323.4</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of gross acreage, the City’s supply of 451 acres of public parkland far exceeds the minimum service standard. However, about 80 acres of this parkland includes natural areas that are managed as conservancy lands. An additional 238.5 acres are the natural wooded areas, surface waters, and zoo at Irvine Park. In the City’s 2003 outdoor recreation plan, these natural areas and the zoo were excluded from calculating park acreage need. However, the above totals do not include trail corridors, privately-owned parks, and many of the specialized parks (e.g., Dog Park, golf course, fairgrounds).
iii. **Public Parkland Availability Analysis**

The City of Chippewa Falls has a current population of about 14,000 which is projected to increase to 14,300 in 2010. Based on the standard of 10 acres of public recreation land per 1,000 population, the City should have between 140 to 150 acres of park land for its residents. If the undeveloped natural areas, surface waters, and zoo are subtracted from the total public park acreage, the City of Chippewa Falls currently has 125 acres of City-owned developed parkland. This indicates that the City has a wealth of natural, undeveloped parkland, surface waters, and wooded forest areas, but 20-30 acres of developed parkland may be still be needed to meet City resident needs. The planned development of Riverside Park with an expanded Allen Park as envisioned in the *Downtown Riverfront Plan* would fill this gap.

However, if the City considers the potential recreational population of adjacent communities and visitors, the potential demand increases to 350 to 370 acres of park land. This need is over 2.5 times greater than the current City parkland supply if the zoo, natural wooded areas, conservancy, and surface water acreage are not included.

It should be understood that even where a surplus of recreational land is found, urban areas may still have a need for additional parks for several reasons including: 1) the spatial distribution of existing parks does not provide sufficient access for residents of the community; 2) the standard may be met in terms of acreage but have been met only through the provision of only one or two parks; and 3) much of the land area listed as existing recreation acreage which accounts for the surplus is either undeveloped or does not provided the amenities which are in demand.

In the case of Chippewa Falls, 78% (353 of 448 acres) of its total public recreation acreage is concentrated in the Irvine Park area (Irvine, Kalk-Fatu, Marshall, Erickson, Hurd). And a large percentage of this area (Kalk-Fatu, Glen Loch, Hurd, zoo) are specialized recreational amenities which must largely be kept in their current state. There are some smaller park areas throughout the community that are either undeveloped (Adams Park) or underdeveloped (Goldsmith Wildlife Refuge, Chippewa River Corridor) which limit or restrict their use.

F. **Distribution of Outdoor Recreational Facilities**

The third aspect of a parkland needs analysis is distribution. Even though the total number of acres of park and recreation land may be deemed sufficient to meet the need of the City and the outlying areas, certain neighborhoods lack facilities in an acceptable range.

i. **Park Service Areas for Existing Neighborhoods**

To analyze distribution, we apply the National Recreation and Park Association service area standards to the City’s parks. Of particular interest are the service areas for the mini-parks (up to 0.25 miles) and the neighborhood parks and playgrounds (up to 0.5 miles). This distribution is shown on *Map 6* on the following page.
In Map 6, the playground areas of four elementary schools- Parkview, Halmstad, Southview, and Hillcrest-are included as public neighborhood parks with a 0.5 mile service area. These facilities do not fully provide your typical public park role, but the playgrounds are currently used by neighborhood children when school is not in session. In addition, policies regarding public use of the school playgrounds are potentially subject to change in the future.

Map 6 also treats the playground areas at Irvine Park and Casper Park as potential neighborhood parks. However, residents within 0.5 miles of these two areas may be less inclined to allow their younger children to visit these larger parks which typically attract park-goers from much larger areas. Neighboring residents may also avoid these parks altogether when these regional park are most busy, such as during large sporting events at Casper Park or a wedding reception/family reunion at Irvine Park. Due to its specialized nature and ability to attract users communitywide, the Dog Park is not included on Map 6.

Also notable on Map 6 is the service area of a private park associated with a large residential subdivision on the City’s northeast side. Currently, almost half of this subdivision has been formally platted. The park area on the east side of the subdivision was constructed for the primary use of residents within the same subdivision which is bounded by Seymour Cray Blvd to the west.

The previous map demonstrates that gaps exist in the service areas of City’s park system. The 2-mile service area for the two existing community parks (Casper and Marshall) encompass the majority of the community, except for portions of the City’s far east side which currently has no public park areas. However, these community parks provide a unique role very different that the roles of the mini-parks and neighborhood parks and playgrounds. Under the best circumstances, all City residents should be within the service areas of both a community and a neighborhood mini-park.

Map 7 on the following page provides a better picture of the service gaps in the City’s park system as it relates to the City’s 2000 population. The viewer must use the population information cautiously, since some census blocks are quite large in area, though the actual population may be concentrated in a portion of that census block. Also, the service areas do not consider other natural or man-made barriers which may exist, such as the Chippewa River or topography.

What Map 7 does show is that the central portion of the City is well-served by existing recreation facilities. The combination of City parks and school facilities provides sufficient recreation facilities within one-quarter to one-half mile of most residences in this area. The only possible exception to this is a gap in the Albert Street/Superior Street areas. Map 7 also shows the relative importance of the 0.4-acre Alexander McBean Park to the east of downtown and the slightly smaller L.C. Stanley Park toward the City’s northwest side. Both of these mini-parks lie within established residential neighborhoods and are the only public park areas for their respective areas.
Note: The Primary growth areas are approximated for general park planning purposes only. These general areas are anticipated to experience significant residential growth in the next 5-10 years. Other areas of the City may also experience residential growth within this timeframe for which park services may be needed.
In summary, the following existing residential neighborhoods are most deficient in parkland and facilities for active recreational use:

1. **Pumphouse Road – Dutchman Drive Neighborhood (a/k/a “The Flats”)**
   “The Flats” has experienced significant multi-family development in the last 10-15 years, though no provisions were made for a neighborhood park or playground. Topography and the railroad tracks are further barriers to use of existing parks in the larger area. The Flats are the single, most significant, existing gap in the service areas of the City’s park system. The City should seek opportunities to acquire a site for playground facilities within or near “The Flats” neighborhood.

2. **Water Street-Well Street Area**
   This old neighborhood located near The Flats on the north side of Grand Avenue is also underserved by outdoor park facilities. McBean Park helps alleviate some of this demand, but it is small in size with limited amenities. Options to consider include an expansion and further development of McBean Park or the development of a new neighborhood park. If appropriately located, a neighborhood park and playground of sufficient size might meet the needs of residents of this area, as well as those residents of the nearby “Flats”, though the barrier created by the railroad tracks would need to be addressed.

ii. **PARK SERVICE AREAS FOR ANTICIPATED GROWTH AREAS**

The City’s 2012 Comprehensive Plan identifies no specific new park facilities or programming. The Comprehensive Plan advocates for infill and downtown residential development, rather than contemplating annexation. Map 7 shows two anticipated residential growth areas in the City over the next 5-15 years as identified by the City Planning, Transit, & Economic Development Office.

On the City’s northeast side, additional residential units are planned as part of an expansion of an existing subdivision development which was formerly part of the Chippewa County Farm Property. However, this growth area has the benefit of access to a private park and open space provided by the developers and convenient access to the bike trail.

A second residential growth area is located on the City’s northwest side. Currently, this growth area is largely unserved by a public mini-park or neighborhood park, though green space and walking trails have been privately provided for some residents.

As new development occurs, additional parkland acquisitions will be needed to serve new residents in these and other areas of the City of Chippewa Falls. Land acquisitions should come primarily from land dedications required as part of the plat approval process.
The following anticipated growth areas will potentially need new or additional parkland within the planning horizon of this document include the:

1. **Expanded Northeast Neighborhood (former Chippewa County Farm Property)**
   The developer of the existing residential Lake Wissota subdivision in this area has provided a private park area for residents. Depending on the nature and design of future residential growth in this area, additional park amenities may be needed, such as an additional mini-park with playground equipment or additional amenities at the existing private park. The City should discuss these potential needs with the developer as part of any future plat approval process to ensure that the outdoor recreation needs of neighborhood residents are addressed.

2. **Northwest Neighborhood**
   The nature of the residential development and the availability of private park amenities will drive the City’s decisions regarding park facilities in this neighborhood. The City’s previous outdoor recreation plan suggested that when land north of Bridgewater Street and west of Terrill Street is platted, a 5- to 10-acre neighborhood park should be dedicated to the City, as part of the platting process. Facilities at the park should include playground equipment, playfields, and picnic areas. However, development since that time has included privately dedicated open space and walking trails.

**G. IMPROVEMENT NEEDS OF EXISTING PARK FACILITIES**

While the previous sub-section identified areas of the City which do not have convenient, safe access to park facilities, this sub-section identifies improvement needs and opportunities at existing park facilities.

**Irvine Park**

The *Irvine Park Master Plan*, which was updated in 1996, calls for a number of facility improvements, but does not recommend any major changes in overall management direction. Some of the specific recommendations for the park which have not yet been completed include:

- **Bridgewater Picnic Area**
  - New restroom

- **Park Office and Museum**
  - New building with access to utilities
  - Centralized artifact display
  - Visitor and employee parking areas
  - Bus loop
  - Overflow parking area

- **Bear Den Road**
  - Closed to automobile use
Duck Pond/Pavilion Area
- Reroute automobile traffic
- Unified picnic and play area
- New parking

Zoo Complex
- Relocate maintenance area
- Expand at present location
- Create centralized walkway
- Additional parking
- Reconfigure animal enclosures

Buffalo Picnic Area
- New parking

Overlook Picnic Area
- Reroute road
- New shelter and picnic area
- Additional parking

Elk Picnic Area
- New drive and parking area
- Close Bluff Drive to automobiles

Northern Park Area
- New road segment for interior park turn around

The large piece of playground equipment located by the Activity Building should be removed and replaced with equipment that complies with the National Playground Safety Standards. As discussed previously, design work for a new welcome center, small animal building, and aviary is anticipated to be completed in 2013. It is also the City’s current policy is to maintain the northern part of the Park as a natural setting with no permanent structures.

**Marshall Park/Hurd Picnic Place**
Marshall Park contains sufficient vacant areas for further development. As part of its recently adopted Master Plan, the recommended priority improvements for Marshall Park are:
- Park shelter for large groups and expand the bathroom facility
- Replace fencing, bleachers, and warm-up area for the softball field
- Reconfigure parking lots
- Construct a new bathhouse at the outdoor pool
- Move basketball and skateboard facilities closer to Bridgewater Avenue to provide better access to Duncan Creek

While the smaller, adjacent Hurd Picnic Place must largely remain in a natural state according to the terms of the land donation, some minor improvements (e.g., walking path, benches, interpretive signage) could be added to improve accessibility and use.
Erickson Park
Erickson Park was donated to the City and offers excellent access to Glen Loch. However, significant efforts are needed to improve and maintain this park:

- Improve or replace boat launch
- Install a handicap fishing pier
- New picnic facilities and shelter
- New access drive and parking
- Access to Irvine Park by foot
- New hiking and snow shoe trails

The lake access provides additional opportunities this park, such as the potential rental of paddleboats with a water route to a feature or attraction at Irvine Park on the opposite shore.

Thaddeus Pound Park
Thaddeus Pound Park is presently used primarily for youth softball. There is some playground equipment at the site. Parking is a problem, and the City should consider purchasing adjoining land to expand the parking area. The playground equipment should be removed and replaced with equipment that complies with the National Playground Safety Standards. The park will continue to function as the primary park for the area north of STH 124 and southeast of CTH J (Park Avenue).

Buchanan Memorial Park Improvements
Improvements planned for Buchanan Park, which functions as the primary neighborhood park for the area south of Canal St., include demolition and replacing the two tennis courts, resurfacing the basketball courts, construction of a small park shelter, and beautification with additional tree and shrub planting.

Adams Park Improvements
Currently, Adams Park is undeveloped, and, for all practical purposes, is not accessible for public use. As such, this growing area of Chippewa Falls is currently without adequate park facilities. The site master plan for Adams Park, prepared in 1985, calls for playground equipment, a shelter, tennis courts, a skating rink, and a sledding area. These improvements should be phased in as future residential development occurs in the area. Installation of improvements at Adams Park will address the current facility deficiency in the Summit Avenue-Pine Ridge area. The immediate need is to provide proper signage to identify the site as a public park.

Frenchtown Park
This is a four-acre park which has been developed with limited facilities. Given the size of the park and available land, there are many options available which would make this area more accessible and useable by the public, while maintaining its neighborhood park status. Plans call for a shelter, parking area, and a picnic area.

Allen Park and Goldsmith Wildlife Refuge
Access, parking, visibility, and use of Allen Park could be increased. The adjacent Wildlife Refuge remains undeveloped and has very poor access for public use. While maintenance of the natural environment is important for the Refuge, access improvements are needed to make the park available.
for passive use (e.g., walking, birdwatching). Both of these park areas are part of the Downtown Riverfront Plan which recommends a combination of land acquisition, parking improvements, and trail development to improve access.

**L.C. Stanley and Alexander McBean Parks**
It must be kept in mind that both of these mini-parks are currently the only public park lands for their respective neighborhoods. Options to further develop and expand the parks should be considered and discussed with the respective neighborhood residents when such opportunities arise.

**Happy Tails Dog Park**
The current plan of Chippewa Falls Happy Tails Dog Park, Inc. include surveying current and potential Park users to obtain input on their Park use and possible future amenities, including a possible pavilion. Options to make potable water available at the site are also currently under consideration. More directional signage is a short-term goal, and the Board has been considering WisDOT attraction signage on Highway 29 for Exit 79, but this is quite costly.

**G. OTHER OUTDOOR RECREATION NEEDS**

i. **Riverfront Gateway Festival Park**
The major community park improvement that the City is planning to undertake over the next decade is the improvement of City-owned land along the north side of the Chippewa River between the two bridges in the downtown area. This area has been referred to as Riverfront Gateway Festival Park or, more simply, Riverfront Park.

As discussed previously, a master plan for Riverfront Park is included as part of the *City of Chippewa Falls Downtown Riverfront Plan* completed in October 2007. The plan also encompasses areas on the east side of Bridge Street, and recommends acquisition of floodplain parcels adjacent to Allen Park and improved linkages to and within the Goldsmith Wildlife Refuge. The master plan recommends development of Riverfront Park in three phases as resources become available.

The City owns a large portion of the required land along the River and a large, concrete, stormwater facility will no longer be needed and should be removed. The City has been actively acquiring property for the project with a goal of completing the acquisition and demolition phase and commencing with a more detailed design phase within the next eight to twelve months.

Once fully developed, the Park will contain an amphitheater, enhanced wetlands, trails, and open lawns offering opportunities for civic events, fishing, and enjoyment of the natural setting. Riverfront Park should become the City’s primary downtown park and site for riverfront festivals, as well as providing economic benefits by attracting
visitors to downtown Chippewa Falls. The Park will also be the junction for several important City and regional bike trails, and a trailhead/parking area for accessing these trails is proposed to be adjacent to the market/pavilion area. The park will also enhance access to the river for fishing and canoes, accompanied by shoreline stabilization efforts. For more information, please refer to the Downtown Riverfront Plan.

**ii. RECREATIONAL TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS**

According to a 1999 Community Opinion survey, an improved recreational trail system for biking, hiking, and walking is one of the highest recreational priorities in Chippewa Falls. The City’s 2012 Comprehensive Plan update included several goals, objectives, and strategies regarding biking and walking, such as:

- provide safe biking and walking options and connections throughout the community,
- increase the amount of bicycle parking downtown
- create a more bike- and pedestrian-friendly downtown
- create and promote a safe and healthy walking route through downtown
- promote mixed-use development and walkable neighborhoods

These sentiments are also consistent with the results of the priority analysis and the SCORP regional outdoor recreation participation rates discussed previously.

Overall, the combination of street right-of-way and off-street trails should provide a system that allows community residents and visitors the opportunity to utilize alternative modes of transportation in the City.

Several studies and plans have been prepared in recent years identifying specific trail improvements. In 1995, the City of Chippewa Falls adopted a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan that identifies both improvements with street rights-of-way and recommended off-street trail improvements. The 1999 City of Chippewa Falls Comprehensive Plan also identified recreational trail improvements which have been incorporated within this plan. In addition, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has adopted the Chippewa Valley Trail System Master Plan that identifies the primary regional trail corridor serving the Eau Claire-Chippewa Falls area.

Recreational trail improvements over the next ten years should include:

- construct the Casper Park Connecting Trail and pursue development of a related trailhead
- construct the Southeast Trail system (lesser priority)
- further improvement of internal trail systems within existing parks

**Casper Park Connecting Trail**

This connecting trail is crucial to providing a trail link between the newly developed Casper Park and the rest of the community, as well as filling the much needed link to the Chippewa Valley Trail. The trail would link to the Chippewa River State Trail to the south following an old railroad grade, then continuing on this grade past Casper Park, then turning east along the south side of the Chippewa
River with a connection to the current trail which crosses River at Bridge Street. Grant dollars have been obtained by the City to develop this trail, and design and coordination on required land is moving forward.

The establishment of a trailhead with parking and some basic amenities within the City could serve as a springboard to the City’s internal bike trail/route network and encourage trail users to visit the new Riverfront Park and commercial and retail business located in downtown Chippewa Falls. The trailhead should be conveniently located for visitors, while promoting local tourism opportunities. In Summer 2013, the City acquired a property which could potentially serve as a trailhead site located south of the Chippewa River along Canal Street. In this area, flood mitigation grant dollars are being used to help offset some of the land acquisition costs, while returning more land along the river to a natural state as conservancy.

Chippewa Valley Trail-Park Avenue Trail
As discussed previously, the Chippewa Falls area is the notable gap in this regional trail. Currently, the Old Abe State Trail portion terminates on the northeast side of the City while the Chippewa River State Trail portion terminates south of the City. Completing the final portion of the trail through the City is a priority for completing the Durand to Cornell link. When complete, the Chippewa Valley Trail through the City will become an important destination for tourists.

The Casper Park Connecting Trail constitutes the largest gap in this regional trail network. However, two smaller gaps also currently existing in the City. First, a connection must be made between the Casper Park trail link to the existing Park Avenue connecting trail to the south. In addition, the east end of the Park Avenue connecting trail must be completed between Peterson Lane and Seymour Cray Blvd.

Chippewa Off-Road Bike Association (CORBA) Proposal
Consistent with the Wisconsin outdoor recreation emerging trends identified previously, CORBA is currently proposing the development of a looped, off-road bike trail system north of the Chippewa River in the St. Joseph area. The facility would be volunteer developed and managed. The proposal is actively under discussion by the City, since a significant part of the trail system would be located on City-owned property.

Southeast Trail System
As development occurs on the City’s southeast side, there is growing need for a biking and walking trail system for this area. The Southeast Trail System would serve the existing neighborhood north of Halmstad Grade School, as well as new residential development planned for the north and east. The existing Seymour Cray Blvd trail would also need to be extended to the south so the Southeast system is connected to the rest of the City’s trails. Unlike the previously mentioned trail priorities,
the Southeast trail system is not a key connecting trail for the existing City or regional systems and is currently a lesser priority.

**Internal Park Trails**

Maintenance and improvement of trail systems within existing parks is an ongoing necessity. Use of some parks (e.g., Hurd, Goldsmith) could be expanded with the construction of walking paths or trails. Where appropriate, and as resources allow, handicapped accessibility should be provided. A pedestrian and bike network is a major component of the master plan for Riverfront Park and is crucial to connecting the proposed park to adjacent, existing park lands (e.g., Allen) and the rest of the downtown area.

There has been interest in installing a pedestrian or walking bridge across the ravine in Irvine Park between Kell’s Corner and the wooded area to the north; there was a walking bridge at this site many years ago. The bridge will allow a closer viewing of the Glen Loch Dam. There is also a trail loop that is not developed but currently used by a few adventurous park users and the City is considering improving that trail loop through the woods.

A group of local residents have also expressed interest in the construction of a second walking bridge over Duncan Creek at the former site of Burnt Bridge (or the old Highway “S” bridge). This walking bridge would not necessarily be internal to an existing park facility, but adjacent park area may be identified and preserved in the future.

**iii. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS**

Seven other planning documents have been prepared previously which incorporate recommendations for outdoor parks and recreation facilities in the City. These are mentioned here primarily to encourage their use, since they often provide additional specifics not found within this report. In each case, they include their own needs analysis, recommendations, and action plans. These seven plans are:

- Irvine Park Master Plan (1986, 1996) *includes Zoo, Hurd Park, & Marshall Park areas*
- Irvine Park Tree Management Plan (2007)
- Irvine Park Zoo Master Plan (1989)
- Chippewa River Corridor Study (1987)
- City of Chippewa Falls Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (1995)
- City of Chippewa Falls Downtown Riverfront Plan (2007)
- Comprehensive Plan for Chippewa Falls (1999)
- WisDNR Chippewa Valley Trail System Master Plan (1996)
- Chippewa Falls Tree Inventory & Long-Range Management Plan (2002)

Generally, the recommendations within this outdoor recreation plan update are consistent with these other planning documents to the extent reasonable and possible. Background information and recommendations of these plans are repeated in other sections of this report, including the recommendations and implementation strategies found within the action plan described in Section VI. However, in a few cases, this report may reflect updated information, new conditions, or changing priorities. Some other parks (e.g., Adams) and trails have specific master plans, conceptual
designs, and other documents which should also be referenced when considering specific layouts and amenities at these facilities.
SECTION VI
ACTION PLAN

This action plan outlines a generalized program for improvement to the outdoor recreation facilities in the City of Chippewa Falls. This plan does not constitute a capital improvement program. It does, however, provide a guide for the elected officials and their designated boards and committees. Utilization of this document will allow local officials to appropriate tax dollars for outdoor recreation facilities in an informed manner and to integrate these recommendations into the City’s capital improvements planning efforts.

The basis for the plan recommendations has been field inspections, analyses, and discussions with community officials. It is recognized that not all of these plan recommendations will be achievable during the next five years. Generally, strategies still unaddressed in previous City outdoor recreation plans have been integrated into this document as demand warrants.

All improvements listed in the various sections of the action plan may not be eligible for funding under WisDNR Stewardship Local Assistance or Federal Land & Water Conservation programs, but a truly comprehensive analysis of a community’s outdoor recreation facilities means that all areas in need of improvement should be considered. It is only then that an action plan can be formulated. In some cases, other planning documents (e.g., Downtown Riverfront Master Plan) are referenced, rather than repeating the pertinent strategies here.

The recommendations that follow are aimed at satisfying relevant needs for acquisition, development, and general program improvement. They are based on deficiencies related to facilities, space, and operations. They are not, however, intended to satisfy all recreational needs in Chippewa Falls since there is no practical way the City can offer such a program. The main objective of the action plan section is to provide citizens of the City and their guests with the best recreational program possible under the many constraints of government financing and the interests of private enterprise.

A. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Distribution of Parks

1. **Mini-Parks**: Phase out smaller, underutilized mini-parks (e.g., Ball & Knight, Simon Lyberg), and serve these areas with larger, multi-use neighborhood parks as needed. Low acreage parks are difficult and expensive to maintain, and offer little opportunity for multi-uses. These parks should be phased out and replaced with larger facilities that are less expensive to maintain and offer a wider array of uses. Avoid the acquisition of new mini-parks, unless they perform a unique and specialized cultural, environmental, or recreational role (e.g., historic site, scenic overlook, trailhead).

2. **Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds**: Distribute and develop such parks within residential areas to serve each neighborhood conveniently. Topography, man-made physical barriers,
distance to other parks, site characteristics, and population distribution should all be considered when identifying potential locations for new parks. Develop these parks with a variety of both passive and active recreational amenities.

3. **Community Parks**: Upgrade and/or maintain community park facilities in terms of quality and breadth of facilities provided (including parking and restroom facilities) and improve the attractiveness of the natural setting through landscaping where needed. Whenever possible, integrate nature-based programs that provide educational opportunities for park users. Specialized recreational equipment and facilities which attract residents from throughout the City are better located in the community parks, rather than in the smaller neighborhood parks. Generally, community parks and the regional park complex (i.e., Irvine and adjacent special parks) do not serve the same function as neighborhood parks and playgrounds.

4. **Park Acreage Deficit**: Based on the analysis in Section V.D., the City currently has a 25- to 30-acre shortage of public park lands to meet the current needs of its residents. This shortage would be addressed through the planned development of Riverfront Park. However, the deficit is greater if potential visitor populations from adjacent communities is considered. The City should continue with implementation of Riverfront Park plans, while acquiring additional park lands in underserved neighborhoods.

**Park Amenities and Design**

5. **Municipal Swimming Facilities**: Considering the City’s close proximity to Lake Wissota, Chippewa River, and the Bernard F. Willi Municipal Pool at Marshall Park, the City’s residents have adequate swimming opportunities. However, the City should continue to maintain its efforts towards programs and pool maintenance.

6. **Cross-Country Skiing and Snowshoeing**: This is an activity that can be engaged in without benefit of developed trails. It is also an activity that is non-consumptive of resources, good for personal health, and generally not offensive to residents or wildlife. It is recommended that the City support this activity by encouraging the opening of private lands and by availing lands under its control to use by cross-country skiers and snowshoers.

7. **Historical Preservation**: A program to identify, study, record and preserve sites and events of regional or local historical interest should be started in the City. Although the City is without staff to carry out this proposal, it can encourage others to do so by providing “in kind” services or direct financial support. Civic minded organizations like Optimists, Kiwanis, Lions, and Rotary may find such a program highly rewarding.
8. **Specialized Facilities:** Encourage development of specialized facilities by private enterprise. Facilities such as golf clubs and marinas can be an important adjunct to public use and should be emphasized.

9. **Emerging Trends:** Monitor emerging outdoor recreation trends to address changing needs and demands, while mitigating potential negative impacts new uses may have on park facilities.

10. **Environmental Education:** Environmental education should remain a critical component of both outdoor recreation planning and park amenities. This will foster an environment where an appreciation of our physical surroundings can flourish.

11. **Provision for Physical and Mental Disadvantages:** A segment of the population who would like to avail themselves of public parks are restricted because they suffer a physical or mental impairment. City officials must recognize that present programs more often than not have little to offer these people in the way of safe and pleasurable recreational experiences. Therefore, it is recommended that all parks scheduled for refurbishment be planned to include features that will aid handicapped people. Examples of specialized features could include hard surfaced walkways, wide doorways, grab rails in restrooms, special seating at spectator events, and special playground apparatus.

12. **Park Safety:** For existing and new park areas, safety aspects should be considered. All playground equipment should meet the latest safety standards set by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

**Park Acquisition and Development**

13. **Use of Easements:** Utilize easements in order to limit land acquisition costs for neighborhood parks. The City is encouraged to procure easements for the use of presently vacant property in locations appropriate for neighborhood park development.

14. **Park Dedication:** Require residential subdividers to dedicate a portion of subdivided land for permanent park and open space use in areas experiencing significant residential growth. By State Statute, a municipality may accept a fee in lieu of park land dedication and improvements, provided that the fee bears a rational and proportionate relationship to the need for the improvement.

   Neighborhood parks may be acquired in this manner in newly developing residential areas. Local land owners should also be encouraged to dedicate land to the community for recreation uses. Numerous small town memorial parks have been acquired through the generosity of local
citizens. If citizens are made aware of community needs, this form of private action may continue to enrich the public resources of the City.

The success of a program based in part on dedicated park land rests with the adoption and use of a strong subdivision ordinance by the City. Currently, the City subdivision ordinance is quite limited in its requirement:

*In subdividing property, due consideration shall be given to the dedication of suitable sites for schools, parks, and playgrounds, so as to conform as nearly as possible to the recommendations of the Plan Commission in its master plan of the City.*

The following is a sample of a possible modification to park dedication section of such an ordinance:

**Sample – Dedication of lands for parks and playgrounds**

The subdivider shall designate on every new preliminary plat of a residential subdivision an area of land suitable for park or playground purposes, and shall dedicate said land to the public. The amount of land to be provided shall be at least one acre of land for every 25 proposed residential dwelling units within the plat. However, the total amount of land dedicated for public purposes or otherwise provided for meeting objectives need not exceed one-third (1/3) of the total area of the plat.

The City reserves the right to select those lands within the plat it considers best suited to meeting the recreational needs of the City, providing such selection does not violate other provisions of this ordinance. If no land in the plat is selected for recreational purposes due to unsuitability or other reasons, the City shall require the subdivide to pay to the treasurer $100.00 per parcel before the plat is approved. Revenues received in such a manner shall be deposited in a special account to be used exclusively for public recreational purposes in the City. A like payment will be made for each parcel in a certified survey before survey approval is given.

15. **Economic Consideration.** This plan focuses on the benefits of the park system on residents of the City. However, many of the City’s outdoor recreation facilities have an important economic and tourism role by attracting visitors to the City. The quality of park facilities, amenities, and programs also play an important role in attracting and retaining residents, and contributes to the City’s image as a vibrant community which is a positive place to live, raise a family, or start a new business. These additional benefits should be considered, and if possible, quantified, when considering a new park facility. Such considerations may also impact park design and amenities. The City should continue to look for innovative ways to work the Chamber, Main Street Association, local businesses, and other partners to co-market its park amenities and the City as a great place to visit, shop, work, play, and live.

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16. **Capital Improvement Program**: Community officials should develop a five-year capital improvement program to prioritize and guide outdoor recreation improvements and leverage grants and other financial assistance. The program should identify project priorities, be flexible and subject to annual review. Although it is unlikely that all of the recommendations in this plan will be undertaken within the next five years, there is an outstanding opportunity for inroads to be made.

17. **Operations & Maintenance**: Long-term operations and maintenance costs should be part of the planning and decision-making for new park facilities, amenities, and programs. A seasonal schedule for facility maintenance should be maintained. Incorporate the most significant maintenance projects into the five-year capital improvements plan.

**B. COORDINATION & COOPERATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

Outdoor recreation planning and park development requires a high degree of coordination between agencies and participation from the public. And more than ever, park improvements, and even some operational expenses, require donations in terms of financial and/or volunteer support from non-municipal sources, yet greater demands are being placed on private resources for their time and funds. The following recommendations are made to ensure such cooperation.

1. **General Public Participation**: City residents are often very willing and interested in getting involved in the development of their parks. The City of Chippewa Falls enjoys a strong history of such community involvement, such as during the design of handicapped-accessible playground area at Irvine Park and the Garden Club’s efforts at the Rose & Lily Garden. The City should stay committed to this high level of community involvement, including obtaining input from residents during the design and development of any new neighborhood parks. Residents of all ages should be invited to participate in recreation planning and programming.

2. **Service Club Involvement**: Involve organized service groups in needed park and recreation development, including development of competitive sports areas and neighborhood parks. Traditionally, service groups have played an active part in the activity of this type and should be encouraged. In addition, service groups could help to meet the need for neighborhood facilities by supplementing municipal financial resources and providing organization and volunteer labor.

3. **Participation by Other Special Interests**: Efforts to obtain input of other special interests should also be made during the design and development of specific park amenities. For instance, a local bird-watching club might be contacted for input on the design of nature trails and interpretive signage at Goldsmith Wildlife Area, while area youth can be empowered to provide input on decisions involving the skate park. Coordination with the Chippewa Falls Chamber of Commerce is also recommended for large outdoor recreation events (e.g., soccer or softball tournaments) and the Chippewa Falls Main Street Association in the implementation of the Downtown...
Riverfront Master Plan and other downtown parks and trails. The City’s relationship with Chippewa Falls Happy Tails Dog Park, Inc., is a great success story and model for such cooperation. Similar partnerships could be formed with historical groups (e.g., Chippewa Falls Historical Society, Museum of Industry & Technology) to incorporate signage and amenities within the City parks to highlight the City’s history and enhances sense of place. The City’s partnership with UW-Extension Chippewa County for the community gardening program is another excellent success story.

4. **City Intra-Agency Coordination:** The Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry is supervised by a seven-member Park Board, consisting of a member of the City council and six electors of the City who are appointed by the Mayor and subject to the approval of the City council. It is recommended that the Park Board work closely with other units of government and City departments to ensure efficient park and recreation operations. The Board should work closely with the City council, plan commission, and the Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry.

5. **Municipal School District Cooperation:** Promote continued and increased cooperation between the City and School District in meeting recreational needs. Increased municipal use of existing school facilities during non-school hours should be encouraged. Both City and school facilities should be planned and used jointly whenever possible to discourage duplication of effort.

6. **Intergovernmental Cooperation:** Efforts should be made to coordinate County, town, and Village recreation programs with City programs in order to better serve area residents. Such coordination is particular vital for the completion and continued maintenance of the Chippewa Valley Trail System and the linkage of any local trail networks in the future.

7. **Park System Continuity:** Parks and outdoor recreation development should occur within the context of the entire park system, the bike/pedestrian trail, and the development trends of the City of Chippewa Falls.

8. **Regional Use Facilities:** Continue to evaluate the range of services provided at regional park facilities and analyze potential financing alternatives, including the potential establishment of a regional park district and obtaining financial support from non-City sources.
C. ACQUISITION & DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are a series of recommendations for the future improvement and development of the City of Chippewa Falls outdoor recreation system. The recommendations are organized into sections by a relative timeline, though actual implementation will vary as opportunities, funding, and other resources allow. Within the individual sections, the recommendations are not prioritized.

The City will pursue grant funding for the implementation of many of these recommendations. Partnering with residents, local businesses, special interest groups, and the Chippewa Falls School District will also take place to help address related costs. Though the City will coordinate with the School District in these endeavors, the City of Chippewa Falls does not assume financial responsibility for development of School District facilities.

On-Going Recommendations

1. Implement the recommendations of the Irvine Park Master Plan as identified previously in this plan.

2. Implement the recommendations of the Downtown Riverfront Master Plan. This is perhaps the most important park acquisition the City can make over the next five years. Improvement of this area will make a spectacular entryway to the downtown area and serve as an excellent location for festivals and other events. Also, nature-based educational opportunities should be considered while designing the park. Pursue State and federal funding to assist in the completion of this project. Coordinate with improvements for Allen Park and Goldsmith Wildlife Refuge, including the acquisition of adjacent properties.

3. Avoid the creation of small mini-parks and neighborhood parks less than 5 acres, unless there is a specific, unique purpose. For existing mini-parks and small neighborhood parks in underserved areas (e.g., Stanley, McBean, Pound) look for expansion opportunities. If a new neighborhood park is developed which encompasses the service area of an existing mini-park or small neighborhood park, consider the closure of the smaller parks.

4. Continue the excellent partnership between the City and Chippewa Falls Happy Tails Dog Park, Inc. for maintenance, operation, and future amenities of the Dog Park. Build upon the opportunities the Dog Park provides as a growing attraction for highway travelers and as a very visible reflection of the community for visitors. Work with the corporation and WisDOT to explore potential signage on Highway 27.

5. Continue to monitor the outdoor recreational supply and demand for residential growth areas (e.g., northwest side, former County farm). As new residential development proposals are received for growth areas, ensure that adequate acreage for new
neighborhood parks and trail corridors, including both passive and active recreation opportunities, are established and developed with the assistance of the developers. Work with developers and landowners to encourage walking and biking trail linkages to growth areas.

**Short-Term Recommendations (1-5 years)**

1. Commence with Phase I of the *Downtown Riverfront Master Plan* which includes shoreline/wetland enhancements, land acquisition, parking garage, and sewer system improvements. Begin the acquisition of land adjacent to *Allen Park* and *Goldsmith* as identified in the Master Plan, and coordinate planning for these other parks as part of the *Downtown Riverfront Master Plan* activities.

2. Update the *Irvine Park Master Plan*. Identify those areas to be maintained in a natural state and appropriate management activities for these areas.

3. Remove the large piece of playground equipment near the Activity Building in *Irvine Park* and replace with new equipment that complies with National Playground Safety Standards. Continue to address stormwater management concerns within the park.

4. Remove the playground equipment at *Thaddeus Pound Park* and replace with new equipment that complies with National Playground Safety Standards.

5. Complete the bobcat and cougar exhibit at *Irvine Park Zoo* with the assistance of private donations. Continue with development of a new welcome center, small animal building, and aviary.

6. Provide proper signage for *Adams Park* and phase-in those improvements identified in the 1985 *Adams Park Master Plan* as previously discussed as development occurs in the area. Installation of improvements at Adams Park will address the current facility deficiency in the Summit Avenue-Pine Ridge area.

7. Identify and develop a park in the *Pumphouse Road-Dutchman Drive (a/k/a/ “The Flats”) area*. This is an area where there is a high concentration of people and no park space. Acquisition of parkland for this area should occur during the time frame of this plan; perhaps, including a trailhead park in conjunction with the bike/pedestrian trail.

8. Improve the *Erickson Park* facilities, including picnicking area, handicap fishing pier, boat ramp resurfacing, and new hiking/snowshoeing trails.

9. Complete the *Chippewa Valley Trail* link through the City by completing the *Casper Park Connecting Trail*. Develop a trailhead with parking and appropriate amenities, likely located between Canal Street and the Chippewa River, perhaps as a medium-term objective.
10. The Bernard F. Willi Pool bathhouse needs to be remodeled or replaced in the immediate future. A new evaluation should be completed on the Bernard F. Willi pool in order to update the facility with the latest standards.

11. Continue to work with the COBRA group to explore their proposal for a possible off-road bike trail.

Medium-Term Objectives (3-10 years)

1. Complete Phase I of the Downtown Riverfront Master Plan and commence with Phase II including shoreline enhancements, streetscaping, plaza development, and park and trail improvements. Complete the acquisition of lands adjacent to Allen Park and Goldsmith as identified in the Master Plan.

2. Continue with implementation of those recommendations of the 2012 Marshall Park Master Plan as summarized earlier in this report.

3. To provide for added enjoyment and increased opportunities to the City’s south-side residents, it is recommended that Buchanan Memorial Park’s recreation facilities be expanded. The tennis courts are essentially unusable and the while the basketball courts are in poor condition, they still receive high use. Other improvements could include lighting and metering the two tennis courts, construction of a small shelter, a public drinking fountain and continue beautification including more trees and shrub plantings.

4. Integrate nature-based activities and walking paths into the wooded areas of Casper Park. These paths should be developed and groomed for cross-country skiing and snowshowing, and possibly an ice rink, thus making Casper Park a four-season destination. Determine an appropriate use for the mostly recently acquired two acres at Casper Park.

5. Continue to develop walking paths and internal trail networks within existing parks, especially for those wooded, natural park areas such as Hurd, Goldsmith, and Kalk-Fatu. Look for opportunities to integrate nature-related interpretative signage as part of these networks and, potentially, a nature center. Work with community members to consider development of walking bridges at Kell’s Corner in Irvine Park and at the former Burnt Bridge site.

6. Partner with local community groups to develop a historical resource inventory of the City and prepare a historic preservation plan.

7. Update the City of Chippewa Falls Outdoor Recreation Plan no later than 2019.

8. An additional neighborhood park is needed in the Water Street-Well Street area on the City’s near northeast side. A strategically located neighborhood park at “The Flats” may alleviate this need, if adequate access is provided, though physical barriers exist. As an
option, improvement and/or expansion of **McBean Park** may help meet neighborhood recreational need; this small park offers some amenities, but more are needed to meet neighborhood demand. If a new, larger park is developed in this area, consideration can be given to abandoning the small McBean Park.

9. Consider City participation in certification and recognition programs which are consistent with and support the City’s outdoor recreation goals, such as the Tree City USA and Bird City Wisconsin programs.

**Longer-Term Objectives (5+ years)**

1. Complete Phases II and III of the **Downtown Riverfront Master Plan** within 15 years. Phase III includes completing the park landscaping, trail networks, related streetscaping, and the amphitheater, including improvements along the west edge of **Allen Park**.

2. New development on the south-east side of Chippewa Falls between Highways 29 and 124 in the **Halmstad School neighborhood** is increasing the need for a neighborhood park. This area is currently served by school playgrounds and the small **Lyberg Park**, though these facilities do provide amenities comparable to a true neighborhood park. Create a new neighborhood park in this area, perhaps by expanding or replacing the current Lyberg Park.

3. The City’s **near-west side** is underserved by park lands. Playground and sports fields at the High School/Hillcrest provide some relief, but lacks full neighborhood park amenities. The Albert Street/Superior Street residential neighborhoods have no convenient park access whatsoever. Investigate options to increase park access for these neighborhood, including the development of a small neighborhood park should opportunities arise. Riverfront Park, once developed, may also assist with this underserved area. Improvement and/or expansion of **Stanley Park** may also provide needed outdoor recreational resources on the City’s west side.

4. Construct the **southeast trail system** through the general areas shown on Map 2 as resources allow and demand warrants. The trail route shown on Map 2 is for general planning purposes only; the finalize route needs to be determined and will vary from Map 2.

5. Once the Chippewa River Trail System through Chippewa Falls is complete, develop a **bicycle route map/brochure**, which also identifies potential destinations, for residents and tourism purposes.

7. As residential development in this area occurs, proceed with development plans for **Frenchtown Park** to include added parking, shelter, and picnic area.

8. When opportunities arise and deemed feasible, acquire land adjacent to **Thaddeus Pound Park** for additional parking.
D. OUTDOOR RECREATION FUNDING

The City of Chippewa Falls will continue to identify and leverage a mix of funding resources and partnership support from a wide variety of potential sources for outdoor recreation improvements and maintenance.

Grant dollars from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (e.g., Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program), Federal sources (e.g., Recreational Trails Act, Land & Water Conservation Fund), or foundations have long been key to major park improvements in Wisconsin communities. Additional grant dollars are available depending on the nature of the activity (e.g., arts or educational programming) or attributes unique to the site (e.g., historic preservation, resource conservation, acquisition of floodplain properties, brownfield remediation).

City financial resources potentially include standard operating budgets and general fund dollars; capital improvements budgets; loans, bonding, and notes; user fees; and developer impact fees and contributions. Donations of volunteer time, dollars, or property from local residents, businesses, and partner organizations are becoming increasingly important. The successful partnership with Happy Tails demonstrates that the City does not have to “do it all” on its own. The most appropriate mix of such funding sources for future, major outdoor recreation projects should be incorporated into the five-year capital improvements plan.