

VI. Recreational Needs Analysis

The number and type of parks and recreation facilities needed within a community depends on the recreational needs and wants of the residents of the community. Identified recreation needs and wants of community residents provides the basis for justifying funding and maintaining existing recreational facilities. Most recreational needs and wants can be identified using the following five methods:

1. Comparison of current acreages to acreage standards
2. Comparison of current service areas to service area standards
3. Comparison of current facilities to facility standards
4. Review of existing quantitative studies
5. Soliciting public input

It is important to use all five of these methods in determining the need for additional parks and/or recreational facilities in the Village of Weston. Each method focuses on one specific element of recreation. Taken individually, they do not provide an accurate representation of community-wide recreation needs. However, taken as a group, recreation needs and wants can be aggregated and identified, and additional or new parks and recreation facilities can be justified.

Recreation Land Needs

Two methods of determining the need for additional recreational lands in the Village involves analyzing existing park size and location and comparing them to accepted standards. These methods will help determine the need for additional recreation land to serve the recreation needs of Village residents.

Recreation Acreage Requirements

The first method of evaluating a community's recreational acreage needs is to determine the number of people the existing system serves or has the capacity to serve and then compare it to National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards. This is accomplished by assigning an acreage requirement for recreation areas per 1000 persons in the Village. For this plan, the standard of 12 acres active use land per 1000 people is used as a basis for determining acreage needs. This Village park acreage should be distributed throughout the community, so that all residential areas, age groups, and activity needs are served in the best and most cost-efficient manner.

**TABLE 6-1
Parkland Needs**

2013 acreage needs (based on 2013 population of 15,045)

Acreage Need (12 acres/1000 population of 15,045)	180.5 acres
Supply (Village Parks)	316.4 acres
Acreage Surplus	135.9 acres

2016 acreage needs (based on 2016 projected population of 15,276)

Acreage Need (12 acres/1000 population)	183.3 acres
Supply (Village Parks)	316.4 acres
Acreage Surplus	133.1 acres

Utilizing the park standards above and the acreage totals for each park type (see Table 5-1), current parkland supply was calculated. Table 6-1 portrays the results of this comparison. The Village currently provides 21.03 total acres of parkland per 1,000 population, or about 9 total acres per thousand more than the recommended standard.

Using the projected 2016 population of the Village, it is also possible to project the recreational acreage needs for that time. According to Table 6-1, the Village will have a surplus of 133.1 acres or about 20.7 acres of parkland per 1000 population. Not included in the 2016 numbers is the possible acquisition of addition parkland in the Village.

If the schools active use recreation areas were added to the Village park acreage, the acreage ratio would increase dramatically to about 29.8 acres per 1000 population, resulting in a significant parkland surplus. However, the adjusted total is somewhat misleading. The five school recreation areas that account for the 131.3 acres of school recreation land are classified as neighborhood park facilities and are restricted in public use and are competitive sport facility areas and do not help supply recreation facilities to many village residents.

Recreation Service Area Requirements

The second method of evaluating a community’s parkland needs and adequacy of service is to plot park service areas on a base map and then identify areas that are not being served. As a minimum, residential groupings should be served by either a neighborhood park or community park facility. To measure the adequacy of service the Weston park system provides residents within the Village, park service areas were determined. Utilizing the park service radius criteria established by the NRPA, park service areas were mapped for existing neighborhood and community parks (see map 3).

Map 3 shows the concentration of Village parks within the older, more urbanized areas. Many residents of the Village are well served by outdoor recreation facilities. However,

there are several neighborhoods that are not currently served by community or neighborhood parks. These areas are basically on the fringe of the urbanized sections of the Village; primarily north of CTH SS (Ross Avenue), west of Fuller Street, and southeast of CTH JJ. The Corporaal Property was sold in 2006 due to it not being developable with all the wetland area. In its place the Conservancy Area will be located in that area of the Village and the Village continues to pursue other opportunities to purchase more parkland in that region of the Village.

Future Residential Growth Areas

It is important to know where future growth is likely to occur in the Village so as to project future population concentrations and project future park service areas. These factors become very important when recommending the location, type, and size of future park areas.

Future residential growth areas in the Village are identified in the demographics section of this report. The Village demographics suggest steady growth in the fringe areas of the Village. Most of the residential growth will likely occur to the east of the Village's older urban core, mostly north of State Highway 29 and south of Ross Avenue, and near the Eau Claire River. Finally, significant residential growth is expected to occur in the South and Southeast sections of the Village. These areas include East of CTH X, (Camp Phillips Road), and South of State Highway 29.

Future Park Locations

As was previously stated, Village residents should be served by either a neighborhood park or community park. The Village is currently looking for more land in the south/southeast section of the Village for more parkland.

The Village should continue to acquire and develop neighborhood parks in future developing areas. The Village is projected to continue to grow to the northeast, east, south and southeast of the Village. As the Village grows to the east future park locations should be provided both north and south of State Road 29. However, actual park locations will vary, due to availability of land and actual development patterns. Map 4 shows general location of future parks.

Recreation Facility Needs

The third method of determining recreational needs in a community is to compare existing facilities to accepted standards or guidelines. These standards are recommended by the National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) as part of a universal guideline for communities to follow. Basically, the standards suggest how many users a particular recreational resource or facility can support each day. These standards are primarily directed toward municipal park systems, such as the Village of Weston Park System. The standards used for the Village of Weston are shown in Appendix C.

In order to project facility deficiencies, Weston’s existing facilities were compared to the NRPA standards and assumptions previously outlined. Table 5-2 (page 33) summarizes the current recreation facilities within the Village, while Table 6-2 reveals the results of this analysis. Based on these national standards, the Village of Weston has two community-wide recreation facility deficiencies. The Village of Weston has one softball field and no tennis courts. However, two private recreation suppliers in the Village have softball fields at their facilities and the D.C. Everest School System provides tennis courts.

It should also be stressed that a comparison of Village-wide recreation facilities to national standards is not necessarily indicative of actual needs.

Also, when a new neighborhood or community park development is recommended for a new residential area, typical facilities should be provided in addition to the results of Table 6-2. This is due to the fact that park facilities must be located throughout the community so that all residents have equal access to them.

**TABLE 6-2
Recreation Facility Analysis**

FACILITY	TOTAL FACILITIES	CURRENT NEEDS	2016 NEEDS
Baseball Diamond	5	Adequate	Adequate
Basketball Court	2.5	Adequate	Adequate
Volleyball Courts	5	Adequate	Adequate
Horseshoe Pits	4	Adequate	Adequate
Hockey Rinks	1	Adequate	Adequate
Soccer Fields	8	Adequate	Adequate
Softball fields	1	2	3
Outdoor Pool	1	Adequate	Adequate
Tennis Courts	0	6	7
Ice Skating Rink	2	Adequate	Adequate
Restrooms	7	Adequate	Adequate
Shelter	7	Adequate	Adequate
Play Areas	8	Adequate	Adequate
Trail System	3	Adequate	Adequate

Information Gathering for Recreational Needs

The fourth method of determining recreation needs in the community is by using local, regional, and state quantitative recreation studies that apply to the area. These quantitative studies are statistically defensible surveys, polls, and other instruments that help identify user trends, needs, and wants by soliciting user responses to uniform sets of questions. These studies are very useful since they are a good indicator of recreation needs as perceived by recreation users.

SCORP Analysis

In an attempt to define the recreational needs at a more community-wide level, the Wisconsin State Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) developed the 2011-2016 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Traditionally, needs assessment through the SCORP process was accomplished by comparing the existing supply of outdoor recreation facilities with an estimate of the demand for these facilities. Where demand exceeded the “appropriate” supply, a need was established for an area. However, this simplistic methodology was clouded and confined by the tenuous nature of the components of the study.

To improve the quality of outdoor recreation needs assessment, the WDNR, as a part of the SCORP, developed a new method in which needs assessment is determined by first, a county-by-county supply analysis and second, statewide citizen survey results. This defensible methodology is complex, but serves to better identify recreational needs at a community level.

The objectives of the needs assessment are as follows:

1. Assist sub-state jurisdictions in planning for outdoor recreation development and land acquisition.
2. Act as one of many decision-making tools in the Open Project Selection Process, which determines where funds from outdoor recreation aid programs such as LAWCON and ADLP will be directed.
3. Combine the views and expert opinions of outdoor recreation enthusiasts with physical supply of outdoor recreation in order to resolve perceived and actual need.

Tables 6-3 and 6-4 illustrate the Top 10 outdoor recreational activities in Wisconsin. The information was obtained from the 2011-2016 SCORP in the recreational demand section. The information is viewable at www.dnr.wi.gov/planning/scorp/data.html.

Table 6-3
Top 10 Outdoor Recreation Activities
2004-2009

Activity	Wisconsin %
Walking for Pleasure	87.7
Gardening of Landscaping for pleasure	65.4
View/photograph natural scenery	65.3
Attend outdoor sports events	65
Family gathering outside	63.5
Visit nature centers, etc.	63.5
View/photograph other wildlife	57.9
Driving for pleasure	52.8
View/photograph wildflowers, trees, etc.	52.4
Sightseeing	50.6

Table 6-4
Top 10 Comparison

1999-2004		2004-2009	
Activity	% Wisconsin	Activity	% Wisconsin
Walking for pleasure	85.8	Walking for pleasure	87.7
Family gather outside	78.9	Gardening or landscaping for pleasure	65.4
View/photograph natural scenery	67.5	View/photograph natural scenery	65.3
Gardening or landscaping for pleasure	65.3	Attend outdoor sports events	65
Visit nature centers, etc.	65.3	Family gathering outside	63.5
Driving for pleasure	60.3	Visit nature centers, etc.	63.5
View/photograph other wildlife	57	View/photograph other wildlife	57.9
Attend outdoor sports events	56.9	Driving for pleasure	52.8
Picnicing	56.6	View/photograph wildflowers, trees, etc.	52.4
Sightseeing	55.3	Sightseeing	50.6

Activities in green represent an increase in the Top 10
 Activities in red represent a decline in the Top 10
 Activity in blue represents a new addition to the Top 10

Village of Weston Recreation Issues

The fifth, and probably most important method for determining recreational needs in the community, is to identify and analyze specific recreational issues that are important in the Village of Weston. The four previous methodologies to identify recreational needs are basically quantitative and general in nature, and are very good in identifying general park acreage and facility needs in a community. However, every community has a number of special issues, concerns, and wants that might not be reflected in the results of these quantitative methodologies. Specific issues and concerns are identified through public input, input from Village staff, and input from interest groups or other agencies. These special issues are then analyzed and reviewed to see if these are actual needs that should be addressed. The result of this analysis is then combined with the recreation needs identified in the previous four sections, to become the basis for the action plan and capital improvements program.