

## Chapter 9: Parks and Recreation

- Guide Village decisions on acquisition and development of parks, trails, and other recreational facilities
- Serve as the Village’s Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) for grant purposes

The Village provides several settings for residents and visitors to recreate and relax. The Village intends to maintain its existing parks and trails, and also to adapt, expand, and connect them in response to evolving demographics and interests. Weston’s recreation system serves as an economic driver, increasing resident attraction and tourism. The Village seeks partnerships with the D.C. Everest School District, Marathon County, and local groups to advance its recreational system vision.

### Priority Parks and Recreation Initiatives



Initiative <small>(Follow links for further details)</small>	Description	Funding/ Partnerships	Responsibility
<a href="#"><u>Improve Yellowbanks Park as a Nature-based Gathering Spot</u></a>	The Village’s vision for Yellowbanks Park features an accessible pier, improved canoe/ kayak launch, new bathrooms and shelters, expanded disc golfing, and better physical and programmatic connections between the park areas north and south of the Eau Claire River.	State Stewardship and Federal LAWCON (River Protection and Enhancement Grants); Marathon County Environmental Impact Funds; Partnerships with local disc golfing and watersports interests; Village utility	Parks Superintendent, with assistance from the Planning and Development Director and direction from the Parks and Recreation Committee on a master plan. Collaboration with Public Works and Utilities Department.
<a href="#"><u>Explore Recreational Opportunities on Weston’s South Side</u></a>	The Village intends to build on recreational lands south of Highway 29 to increase local recreational opportunities, reduce demands on other Village parks like Kennedy Park, and advance tourism-related development. This area south of Highway 29 might include tournament-ready softball and baseball fields, fishing and other passive use areas, bicycling, and playground facilities.	State Stewardship and Federal LAWCON for land acquisition; Tax Incremental Financing; Marathon County Environmental Impact Funds; Partnerships with non-profit recreational organizations, the D.C. Everest School District, Marathon County, and others	Parks Superintendent, with guidance from the Village Administrator, Parks and Recreation Committee, and Village Board, in collaboration with Public Works and Utilities and Planning and Development Departments
<a href="#"><u>Improve Accessible Facilities in Village Parks</u></a>	The Village has a lack of fully accessible park space, particularly for children. As upgrades to parks are contemplated, playgrounds and other recreational facilities should be designed to accommodate users of varying abilities. In addition, developing a “boundless playground” would offer an exciting place for children of all abilities.	Volunteer support can be used to reduce installation expense; Collaboration with School District on “boundless playground,” and naming rights in exchange for large monetary donation	Parks Superintendent, subject to the approval of the Parks and Recreation Committee and Village Board
<a href="#"><u>Develop and Maintain an All-season Multi-use Trail Network</u></a>	Trails should connect neighborhoods with parks, shopping, and jobs. Regional linkages enhance experiences and economic activity. The Village will support the State and County’s efforts to finish the Mountain-Bay Trail and build a southwest trail to Rothschild.	State Stewardship and Federal LAWCON; WisDOT TAP-21; Marathon County Environmental Impact Funds; “Complete streets” funding; MPO and local cycling group collaboration; Developers	Parks Superintendent, in collaboration with Public Works and Utilities Department and Planning and Development Department

## 9.1. Purpose

The Village of Weston recognizes the importance of providing quality recreational experiences for its residents and visitors. To achieve these experiences, parks and other recreational sites must be conveniently located, interconnected, provide a variety of recreational opportunities, and possess natural and site characteristics that unlock those opportunities. In turn, a complete recreational system helps attract and retain residents and serves as a springboard for community and economic development.

As the Village has grown and demographics and interests have changed, the demand for recreational space and activities has increased and become more diverse. This suggests a need to improve existing facilities, provide additional and different facilities, and respect the natural resources that characterize the Village’s recreational spaces. Limited fiscal resources also affect decisions to modify or improve the park and recreational system.

This chapter serves as the Village’s “comprehensive outdoor recreation plan,” in combination with the Parks and Recreation chapter of the Conditions and Issues volume of this Comprehensive Plan. It is intended to guide decisions on the acquisition and development of parks, natural resource areas, trails, and other recreational resources in the Village. Its particular focus is on Village facilities, but facilities run by other governmental and private entities are also considered, as is collaboration with these other entities. School-based recreational facilities and private and non-profit recreational facilities are shown on Map 9-2.

The adoption of this chapter by the Village Board, and subsequent approval by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR), makes the Village eligible for the subsequent five years to pursue funding through the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (LAWCON), the State Acquisition and Development of Local Parks Program (ADLP), the Urban Greenspace Program, and through other State grant-in-aid programs under the “Stewardship” umbrella.

Historically, the Village has had its “comprehensive outdoor recreation plan” as a separate, stand-alone plan from its Comprehensive Plan. For this cycle, the Village decided to

### Top 10 Reasons to Enhance Recreational Opportunities

1. Promote physical activity, which is critical to maintaining human health.
2. Improve moods and enhance mental wellness.
3. Increase value of nearby properties.
4. Provide buffer and respite from continuous suburban development.
5. Provide wildlife habitat.
6. Facilitate social interaction for community cohesion and pride.
7. Provide locations for organized activities for all ages.
8. Associated activities provide a refuge of safety for at-risk youths.
9. Provide outlets for people with disabilities to actively engage in the community.
10. Embody Wisconsin tradition of preserving public lands for all.

Edited from “The Erosion of Our Communities: Cutting Parks and Recreation” written by Steven J. Thompson, CEO, Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association

Adopted January 10, 2015

combine these plans into one document to assure coordination, aid in implementation, and capture opportunities that cross categorical areas of community development. There are particular linkages between the recommendations of this chapter and those in the Land Use, Economic Development, Housing and Neighborhood Development, Intergovernmental Cooperation, and Implementation chapters. A successful and integrated park and recreational system is critical for the Village to achieve its overall vision.

State law requires comprehensive plans to be updated at least once every 10 years. Comprehensive outdoor recreation plans must be updated at least once every 5 years, meaning that this chapter will need to be updated twice as often as the remainder of the Comprehensive Plan. As described in the Implementation chapter, there is also an annual cycle to consider amendments to this Comprehensive Plan, within which park and recreational system information and directions may be amended. Each of these amendments should be forwarded to the WisDNR.



## 9.2. Goal

Weston will provide, maintain, and collaborate on trails, parks, playgrounds, and open spaces that encourage an active, engaged, and healthy community.

## 9.3. Objectives

1. Correlate park and recreational opportunities with community growth and evolving interests and demographics.
2. Provide places for traditional summer sports, along with alternative and all-season recreational opportunities.
3. Link park and recreational system development with community, economic, utility, transportation, and tourism development for mutual benefit.
4. Collaborate with other public, non-profit, private entities on recreational facilities.

## 9.4. Policies

1. Address emerging interests in non- and less-organized sports and other alternative and passive recreational activities in a manner that recognizes that tastes and trends will likely change again in the future. 
2. Repurpose parks with developable land or facilities that are outdated or underutilized, in order to meet emerging recreational needs and interests.
3. Add all-season (winter) recreational opportunities to the community, particularly in existing parks and corridors.
4. Preserve, enhance, and celebrate natural resources as a component of park and recreational system development and to serve growing interests in passive recreational activities. 
5. Collaborate with public entities like the D.C. Everest School District, Marathon County, the Wausau Area MPO, and adjacent communities on the delivery of recreational facilities and trail connections. 
6. Collaborate with non-profit and private entities with a mission and interest in developing recreational facilities or co-hosting events in the Weston area. 
7. Factor in and attempt to quantify the tourism and other economic benefits of proposed park and recreational facilities as part of the development phase.
8. Pursue revenue-generating recreational activities, which can aid the development of new facilities and the maintenance of existing ones.
9. Develop an appropriate and equitable user fee system to help offset maintenance and operation costs.
10. Pair recreational facility development with other planned Village improvement projects, such as utilities and roads, wherever practical.
11. Use the Village's capital improvements program as a guide to direct planned recreational facility development in conjunction with other capital needs.

## 9.5. Facility Acquisition and Development Initiatives

The following pages further describe the implementation priorities included on the cover page of this Chapter, and other initiatives the Village may undertake or promote concerning the development and acquisition of new and existing park and recreational facilities. Under Wisconsin’s comprehensive planning statute, these are referred to as “programs.”

### 9.5.1. Improve Yellowbanks Park as Nature-Based Gathering Spot

The Yellowbanks Park site has long been identified as a place for park facility redevelopment, improvement, and expansion—focused around its attractive and active riverfront and wooded setting.

Yellowbanks Park is a 52.8 acre community park straddling the Eau Claire River. Originally a County Park, Yellowbanks Park remains a popular location for area residents. Its more developed north bank includes pit-toilet restrooms, two open-sided shelters, two paved parking lots that service each shelter, a drinking fountain, picnic tables, grills, children’s playground equipment, and a sand volleyball court. The south bank currently includes an 11-hole disc golf course served by a parking lot, and is on Weston utility-owned land. The two sides of the park are connected by the Camp Phillips Road bridge on the east end, which includes a multi-use path.

The Village intends to complete a master plan for redevelopment and expansion of Yellowbanks Park, with assistance from a professional parks designer/landscape architect. The master plan would be built around a detailed map that will highlight proposed changes, such as the example from another community included on this page. In order to properly guide installation, the Yellowbanks Park Master Plan would also include a phasing schedule and construction cost estimate. This information would assist with capital improvement planning and grant applications.

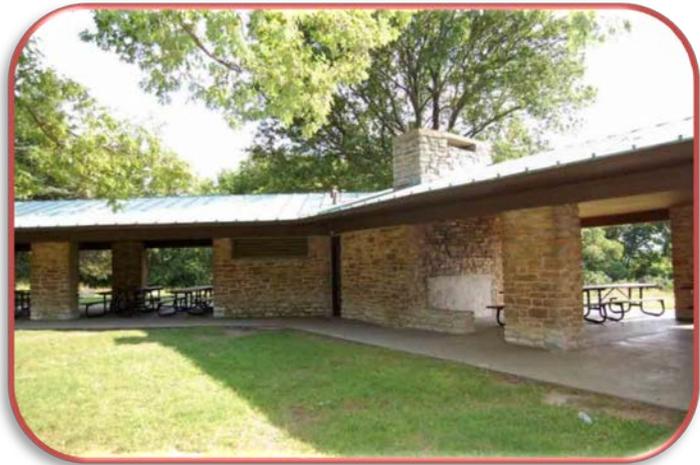


**Example of a park master plan map from a resource-based recreational facility in another Wisconsin community.**

Suggested components of the master plan and Yellowbanks Park improvement include:

- Disc golf course expanded to an 18-hole, tournament-ready facility.
- Installation of an accessible kayak and canoe launch near the restored embankment, perhaps coupled with a fishing pier.
- A new parking lot associated with the launch and restored beach, possibly relocating the current volleyball court.

- A new well and well house on the south bank, and extension of public water and sewer to the Park.
- New combined shelter/bathroom/storage/maintenance facilities on both sides of the River, replacing existing, outdated facilities. The well house on the north side of the Park may also be combined with this facility.
- Improved and expanded playground equipment, possibly including the “boundless playground” described later in this chapter.
- New landscaping.
- A community gathering space, such as an amphitheater, would provide an outdoor meeting space for Village events and private functions. (If space is a constraint at Yellowbanks, Kennedy Park might be a viable alternative.)
- Improved trails into wooded areas and along the riverfront. While the Central Wisconsin Offroad Cycling Coalition still identifies Yellowbanks Park as a potential site for an off-road mountain biking course, there are significant space, use conflict, and soil constraints here. See the further discussion of siting opportunities later in this chapter.
- If possible, improved access between the north and south parts of the park via a dedicated bike and pedestrian crossing over the Eau Claire River.
- Explore opportunities for park expansion. The Girl Scouts of the Northwestern Lakes own property directly west of Yellowbanks Park, north of the Eau Claire River. This property is not currently listed by the Girl Scouts as actively used site. If it becomes available for acquisition, it could provide a means of park expansion. There are also two other camp sites in the immediate area – Camp Phillips Boy Scout Camp and YMCA Camp Sturtevant.
- Coordination with the ANR gas pipeline easement that runs north to south through the park. The type and extent to which new facilities can be built will be impacted by proximity to this easement and subject to the limitations it imposes. Generally, parking is an acceptable facility in the easement, but buildings are not.



**Combined park facilities can be designed for multiple purposes and to blend with natural surroundings.**

Map 9-1 on the following page will guide park master planning and Village decision making related to Yellowbanks Park, prior to completion of the park master plan.

NORTHWESTERN AVENUE

COUNTY HIGHWAY X

CAMP PHILLIPS ROAD



Yellowbanks Park		
Priority	Potential Future Project	Cost
1	Finish construction of disc golf course	\$50,000
2	New play structure near shelter #2	\$400,000
3	Upgrade pit toilets to septic system	\$80,000
4	Reconstruct volleyball courts	\$1,000
5	Install park trees/landscaping	\$5,000
6	Construct canoe/kayak landing	\$20,000

Village of Weston  
Comprehensive Plan

9-1

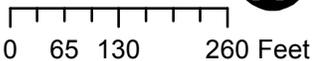
Legend

- P Parking
- ▲ S Shelter
- Surface Water
- ◆ PG Playground
- ◆ V Volleyball
- Parkland
- R Restrooms

Yellowbanks Park



Date: August 12, 2014  
Adoption Date: January 10, 2015  
Created by the Village of Weston  
Tech. Services Department



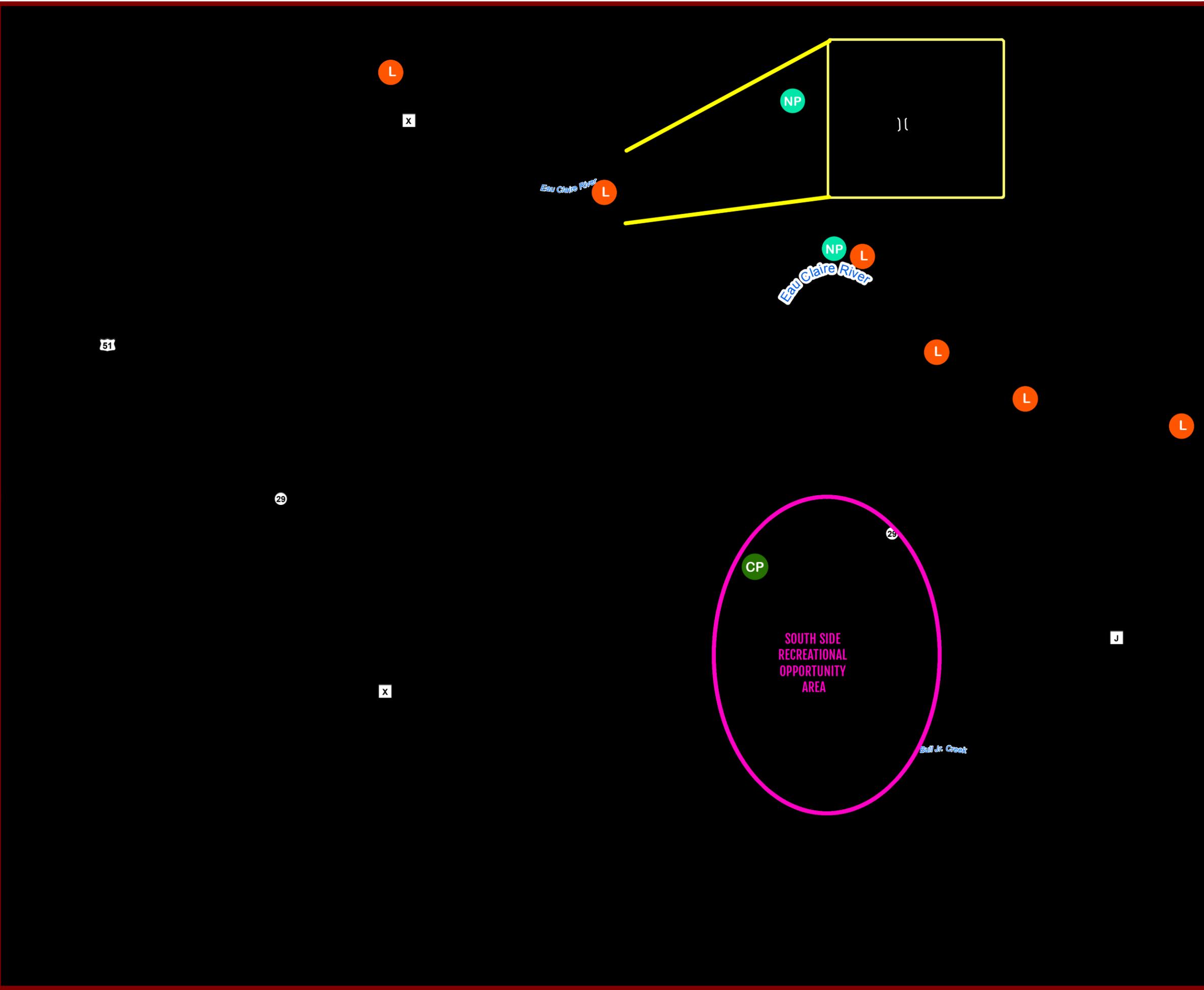
Future Parks and Recreational Facilities

Map Data Date: January 20, 2015  
Map Adoption Date: January 10, 2015  
Created by the Village of Weston  
Tech. Services Department

0 1,250 2,500 5,000 Feet

Legend

- Surface Water
- Village of Weston Boundary
- Other Municipalities
- Existing Facilities**
- Off-Road Trail
- On-Street Connector
- Municipal Buildings
- Public Parks
- Privately Owned Recreational Facilities
- Public School Recreational Facilities
- Future Facilities**
- Canoe/Kayak Launch Site
- Neighborhood Park Site
- Community Park Site
- Off-Road Trail
- On-Street Connector
- Conceptual Snowmobile Connection



### 9.5.2. Explore Recreational Opportunities on Weston's South Side

There are existing recreational facilities near Weston Avenue, south of Highway 29, including the Crane Meadows Golf Course, Dale E. Smith Waterfowl Refuge, and Weston Trap Club. The area also has natural features such as ponds, wetlands, and wooded areas; associated limitations to private development; and excellent regional access via the Highway 29/J interchange.

The Village intends to build on these recreational lands and natural amenities south of Highway 29 to increase local recreational opportunities, reduce demands on other Village parks like Kennedy Park, and advance tourism-related development. Ideas to explore include:

- **Regional Sports Complex.** The Village will explore development of a sports complex in the Weston Avenue corridor. The complex would expand recreational opportunities for residents of Weston, residents of nearby communities, and tourists. This, in turn, can drive business and tourism development (see sidebar to right).

Currently, athletic fields in Weston are scattered in parks that are either crowded (Kennedy) or less accessible for regional use (Robinwood and Machmueller). One proposed element of the Regional Sports Complex is a set of baseball and/or softball fields, designed to host school and league tournaments. This would require the acquisition of additional lands south of Highway 29 that are suitable for sports field use. There is an unmet demand for tournament space in the area, particularly for girls' fast pitch softball. Teams currently travel to Stevens Point (33 miles), Lake Hallie (100 miles), Rhinelander (68 miles), and Wisconsin Dells (111 miles) for tournaments. Since tournaments often stretch over two or more days, affordable overnight accommodations are needed and available in Weston.

Other facilities could be combined on the same site as the baseball and/or softball fields. These include the "boundless playground" described later in this chapter. Sports complexes often include large playgrounds as complementary facilities, providing captivating places for children to play while a parent or older sibling is playing ball.

#### Economic Impact of Recreation Attractions

Since their operational costs often exceed their revenues, a budgetary analysis of investments in parks and recreation departments often reveal little return on investment. This is a simplistic view, since the return on investment is often seen in the community rather in a municipal budget.

Economic impact analysis can reveal the impact of tourism generated by park attractions, such as festivals or sports tournaments. These analyses find that these attractions can be major drivers of economic health.

While most significant recreation centers generate economic activity, tourism can be difficult to measure, as its impacts overlap in several industries, such as retail and hospitality. Also, as a note of caution, such analyses often only measure gross economic benefits. Infrastructure and events costs, for example, can negate the positive benefits otherwise made by offering an attraction.

Source: National Recreation and Park Association



This photo, of the ball fields in the City of Verona, Wisconsin's community park, illustrates how a major sports complex, appropriately sited, can influence adjacent commercial development (Source: Dane County DCIMap)

- **Prohaska Tree Farm.** The Village has the opportunity to acquire an approximately 80 acre parcel east of Ryan Street and north of and Weston Avenue, known as the Prohaska Tree Farm. This property is wooded and has five ponds. The current owner would like to make this land available for fishing, should it be converted to a Village recreational facility. Other adjacent sites may also be available for acquisition, which the Village may pursue if opportunities present themselves.
- **Off-road Cycling Facility.** Additionally, the Prohaska Tree Farm or other south side lands could become home to an off-road mountain bicycling facility, likely in conjunction the Central Wisconsin Off-Road Cycling Coalition (CWOCC). See the extended discussion later in this chapter about mountain biking facilities.

These recreational ideas for Weston's south side may proceed independently or in concert. In either case, the Village will seek collaboration and partnerships with a variety of organizations. These may include the D.C. Everest School District, Marathon County, the Wausau Region Chamber of Commerce, youth and adult softball and baseball organizations, CWOCC, and current golf course and trap club owners. The Village will also seek funding associated in the form of grants, specifically Stewardship/LAWCON for land acquisition.

### 9.5.3. Improve Accessible Facilities in Village Parks

Many of Weston's park facilities are aging and have not kept pace with the phenomenal growth seen in Weston over the past 20 years. Further, handicapped accessible facilities, now required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), are generally lacking in Weston. The ADA specifically requires that "each service, program or activity conducted by a public entity, when viewed in its entirety, be readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities." Finally, modern and dynamic park facilities are a key component of resident attraction to a community.

The Village endeavors to make all park facilities barrier free, meeting the intent of the ADA. The Village will work to upgrade its existing park and playground facilities to meet accessibility standards when opportunities present themselves. Several of the potential

Adopted January 10, 2015

projects for each of the parks, presented on the maps in this chapter, will improve accessibility once implemented. As new park equipment and facilities are built, they will be designed to be barrier free and accessible to all park users.

In collaboration with others in the community, the Village also desires to site and develop a “boundless playground.” Playgrounds that provide children of varying abilities a range of experiences that allow them the developmental and physical benefits of unstructured play are often called accessible or boundless playgrounds. The idea for a boundless playground has support and interest from both the Village and D.C. Everest School District. Partnering with the School District could help with funding and maintenance of the eventual site.



**Conceptual rendering of a “boundless playground” in Weston (Source: Park & Play Structures, 2010)**

Boundless playgrounds also provide access for children in wheelchairs and accommodates for other disabilities as well. The United States Access Board guidelines stipulate that children limited by wheelchairs and other disabilities should not only have access to playground equipment, but be able to play with it with minimal assistance. Ramps and decks, though they provide a way to navigate the play structure, are not considered play components. Swings, playhouses, and slides, as examples, are considered play components. Providing these elements makes a playground inclusive for children of all abilities.

The Village will seek partnership with the School District, private donations of time and money, and grant dollars if available in the siting, development, and maintenance of the boundless playground.

There are several sites in Weston being considered for the boundless playground site. These include Yellowbanks Park, the possible Regional Sports Complex described in Section 9.5.2, the Weston Elementary School site and Kellyland Community Park. The benefits and limitations of each of these sites are listed in Figure 9-1.

The Weston Elementary School is the preferred location. The site provides good access to the community and support from the School District administration. Until 2014, the Village maintained an ice rink at Weston Elementary School. The Village has since decided to abandon the rink at this location, choosing instead to focus on the ice rink located at Kennedy Park. Accessible to both a school parking lot and Sternberg Avenue, the general area of the former ice rink would seem suitable for a boundless playground.

**Figure 9-1: Opportunities and Constraints for Potential Boundless Playground Sites**

Site	Opportunities	Constraints
<u>Weston Elementary School</u> (preferred site)	+ Open and flat land + Proximity to school + Support from school officials + School may generate interest from more donors + Walkable from nearby neighborhoods + Center of population and activity	- Expected traffic increases on nearby streets - More complex intergovernmental relations - Potential time-of-day use restrictions during school year - Crossing improvements on nearby streets warranted
<u>Yellowbanks Park</u>	+ Known and popular site in community + Cross-benefits with other on-site recreational offerings	- Space competition with other facilities & easements - Not a nature-based activity - Location on northwest part of community - School support questionable
<u>Potential Regional Sports Complex South of Highway 29</u>	+ Cross-benefits with other on-site recreational offerings + Regionally accessible	- Not walkable - Requires site acquisition - May be more long-term than other options - School support questionable
<u>Kellyland Community Park</u>	+ Land availability in underused soccer fields + Central location + Available parking	- School support questionable - Not highly visible - Other uses being considered for underused soccer fields - Park geared towards older residents - Potential conflicts between dogs and young children

**9.5.4. Develop and Maintain an All-season Multi-use Trail Network**  

Within Weston, there are several local and regional multiuse, off-street trails. Such trails provide for bike and pedestrian access. Depending on surfacing and corridor width, some also provide access for in-line skating, cross-country skiing, and/or snowmobiling. The Village desires to interconnect existing trails to form a system, as represented in Map 9-2. Such an interconnected network will better connect neighborhoods with parks, shopping, and jobs. Further, regional links beyond Weston’s boundaries and loops will enhance experiences and economic activity. Where possible, new trails should use existing environmental and utility corridors. Recommended efforts include:

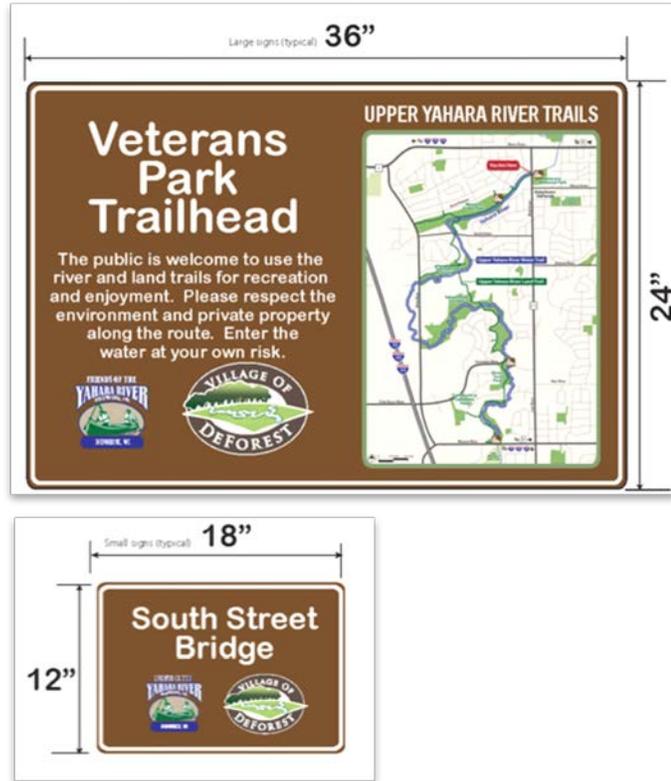
- **Mountain-Bay Trail Completion.** The Weston Municipal Center is the current western terminus for the 83-mile Mountain-Bay State Trail. The Village intends to support the

County and State partners, whose task it is to complete the remaining stretch of Mountain-Bay Trail west to Rib Mountain (which provides part of the trail's name) and to Wausau. There are areas along and parallel to the trail that the Village has paved in order to accommodate pedestrians. These sections of the trail are not part of the official Mountain-Bay Trail. Connections to the local street network should be provided wherever possible. Support facilities and amenities along the trail are also advisable, such as bike storage and maintenance racks and informational kiosks. The Village has developed a special zoning district to guide development along the trail to assure compatible adjacent development.

- **Eau Claire River Trailhead Improvements.** There have been issues between trail users and residents living on Ryan Street, near the south entrance to the trail. The area would benefit from a more defined parking area, which is currently unpaved and not organized to handle more than a handful of vehicles. The north entrance to the trail is currently underutilized, and construction of a more formal entrance at Kellyland Park could relieve some of the congestion seen at the southern entrance. Expanding the trail to include an internal loop may also be desirable. Finally, a better connection from the parking lot to the actual trail at either end of the trail should alleviate issues between property owners and trail users.
- **Eau Claire River Trail Extension.** The Village's trail along the Eau Claire River is a local attraction and recreational centerpiece. The Village will explore opportunities to extend this trail to the east or west along the River corridor. In places, the trail may need to utilize existing streets and bridges where public lands or easements are unavailable. Safely and conveniently getting cyclists and pedestrians to the River Trail from existing neighborhoods is also a priority. Support facilities and amenities should be provided along the trail route.
- **Southwest Off-Road Trail Extensions.** As seen on Map 9-2, the Village intends to extend the Birch Street multi-use path from Weston Avenue to Shorey Avenue. At the Birch/Shorey intersection, several connections are advised, including a southern connection to Howland Avenue, an eastern connection to Camp Phillips Road, and a western connection to Alderson Street. The Alderson Street extension would provide a logical link to the Rothschild trail network. At a minimum, sidewalks separated from the street pavement in this area are advised.
- **Other Regional Connections.** The 2007-2012 Marathon County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan suggests creating a Wausau to Weston connection along the Northwestern Avenue rail corridor. The Village has anticipated this addition by including a proposed route on Map 9-2, and will work with the County to achieve this connection. Also depicted on the map are proposed off-street paths leading to proposed on-street connectors as planned by the neighboring communities of Kronenwetter and Rothschild. Thus, the proposed off- and on- street routes in Weston contribute to connecting many municipalities within the Wausau metro area.
- **Snowmobile Trail Connections to Mountain-Bay.** In winter, snowmobile trails are a popular form of entertainment and recreation. They are also a significant driver of winter tourism. Weston is part of a larger snowmobile network. The Village includes several logical starting points to access the snowmobile trails, particularly the Mountain-Bay Trail. The Village will seek to improve linkages within the Village limits, such as providing a better linkage between the Mountain-Bay Trail and the hotels and other amenities along Highway 29, perhaps by working with ATC to use its power line

easement, and by providing more ways to cross the Eau Claire River if possible. Providing and assigning designated parking spaces at trail access points in places like the Weston Municipal Center, possibly with a nominal fee to offset costs, will help drive trail usage.

- **Eau Claire River Water Trail.** The Village desires to expand use of the Eau Claire River for canoeing, kayaking, tubing, fishing, and swimming. To maintain a successful water trail, navigability during most times of the year is key, including the maintenance of sufficient water flow and the cleaning of woody and other debris. Other potential barriers, such as bridges and underpasses, need to be considered. Map 9-2 shows potential locations for water trail launches, some of which are used informally today. Launches should be designed with a firm surface for launching (despite changes in sedimentation levels), a launch area of 15 to 25 feet long and 6 to 12 feet wide, slopes of not more than 15 percent (or 8.33 percent to meet ADA accessibility standards), and water level of at least two feet. Also, handrails or other support structures, including step-down designs or ropes, help paddlers balance their weight during put-in and take-out. Launches should also be accompanied by convenient parking areas. Trailhead signs and bridge underpass signs installed along the water trail also would provide users an easy way to identify progress along the trail and ease when finding their destination.



Providing signs along a water trail helps users with navigation. This example is from DeForest, WI.

### 9.5.5. Collaborate on Development of an Off-Road Bicycling Facility

The Central Wisconsin Off-Road Cycling Coalition (CWOCC) desires to make the Wausau area a regional mountain biking destination. The official designation being sought is as an International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) Ride Center. The IMBA Ride Center designation represents IMBA's Model Trail recognition for large-scale mountain bike facilities that offer something for every rider. CWOCC believes that the Wausau area is ideally positioned among existing Ride Centers, and contains the amenities to meet the IMBA's criteria. The Village of Weston supports CWOCC's efforts to get the Wausau area accredited as an international mountain biking destination.

CWOCC has identified Weston as a potential collaborator on its mountain biking master plan and desire to be an IMBA Ride Center, and the Village has mutual interest. This master

plan envisions a regional series of trail sites located in various municipalities, with different sites geared toward different types of users and terrain. Each trail site should be within a 30-minute radius from a designated geographic spot in the Wausau area.

Potential Weston sites for such a course include the 40-acre D.C. Everest School Forest on Heeren Street, Yellowbanks Park, and the Prohaska Tree Farm or other lands south of Highway 29. CWOCC has already completed some preliminary analysis for each site, summarized in Figure 9-2 below.

**Figure 9-2: Opportunities and Constraints for Off-Road Bicycling Sites in Weston**

Site	Opportunities	Constraints
<u>Prohaska Tree Farm South of Highway 29</u> (preferred site)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Adjacent to other recreational opportunities</li> <li>+ Easy access from CTH J/STH 29 interchange</li> <li>+ Regional accessibility</li> <li>+ Develop trail for snow bike use, allowing for usage in most seasons</li> <li>+ Ideal siting for a “gateway” trail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potential for conflict with passive recreational uses planned in other areas of this site (e.g., fishing)</li> <li>- Power and pipeline easements may limit where trails could go</li> </ul>
<u>Yellowbanks Park</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Suitable site area and terrain, including pump track</li> <li>+ Available public space</li> <li>+ Known and popular site in community</li> <li>+ Cross-benefits with other on-site recreational offerings</li> <li>+ Adjacent to existing off-road trail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Could be significant space competition with other existing and planned facilities and easements, which would require master plan to sort through</li> <li>- Potential conflict between activities, notably disc golf versus cyclists</li> <li>- Likely opposition from local disc golf group</li> <li>- Sandy soils at the site may be susceptible to erosion</li> </ul>
<u>D.C. Everest School Forest - Heeren Street Site</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Suitable site area and terrain</li> <li>+ Several stakeholders may assist share costs and responsibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potentially incompatible uses and user groups.</li> <li>- Planned trail loop extends into privately owned land</li> <li>- Rural location not ideal</li> <li>- Wetlands and power line easement may impede sustainable construction</li> <li>- School District not supportive</li> </ul>

Recommended master planning processes for the Prohaska Tree Farm will further explore the alignment of the off-road bicycling facility mountain at this location.

Regardless of location, the Village (or the School District) and CWOCC would have detailed roles to play in site development, operation, and management, which would be formalized

by agreement. The Village (or School District) could function as the land manager and be responsible for major site infrastructure and land acquisition, where applicable. CWOCC would fundraise, develop, and maintain the trails; develop appropriate signage; and provide seasonal opening and closing dates.

CWOCC's 2013 long-range plan for mountain biking for the Wausau area includes the following recommendations for areas seeking IMBA designation, which Weston supports:

- **Bicycle Parking.** Installing bike racks in each site would provide secure parking for residents and visitors. A set of bicycle parking recommendations from the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP) can be found in Figure 9-3, which are advisable both for mountain biking sites and Village-wide. The amount of space needed for a bike rack, and how to determine good bike rack designs are included in those guidelines.

**Figure 9-3: Bicycle Parking Guidelines**

**Bicycle Parking Guidelines**  
*A summary of recommendations from the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals*

- 1) **Bicycle Parking Space Size, Access Aisles, and Vertical Clearance**
  - a) Required bicycle parking spaces shall be at least 2 feet by 6 feet.
  - b) An access aisle of at least 5 feet shall be provided in each bicycle parking facility.
  - c) Such space shall have a vertical clearance of at least 6 feet.
- 2) **Bicycle Rack Design**  
 Structures that require a user-supplied locking device
  - a) shall be designed to accommodate U-shaped locking devices, & support the bike frame at two points.
  - b) All lockers and racks must be securely anchored to the ground or the building structure to prevent the racks and lockers from being removed from the location.
  - c) The surfacing of such facilities shall be designed and maintained to be mud and dust free.
- 3) **Bicycle Rack Location on Site**
  - a) Bicycle parking facilities shall be located in a clearly designated safe and convenient location.
  - b) The design and location of such facility shall be harmonious with the surrounding environment.
  - c) The facility location shall be at least as convenient as the majority of auto parking spaces provided.

**Examples of Bicycle racks that do not meet the design requirements above:**



Grid or Fence Style Racks



Wave or Ribbon Style racks



Racks that hold the bike by the wheel with no way to lock the frame and wheel to the rack with a U-lock

**Examples of Bicycle racks that do meet the design requirements above:**



Madrax Spartan Rack



Madrax Sentry Rack

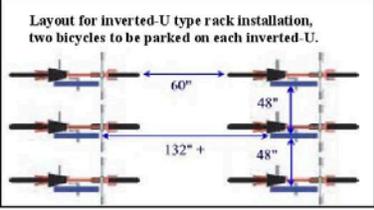


Dero Campus Rack



Saris City Rack

**Layout for inverted-U type rack installation, two bicycles to be parked on each inverted-U.**



**Inverted-U Type Racks**



Dero Bike Hitch
Saris Post & Ring
Dero Swerve Rack

If you have questions about whether a particular bicycle parking rack you are considering using meets these requirements, please contact NCWRPC planner: Fred Heider, AICP at [fheider@ncwrpc.org](mailto:fheider@ncwrpc.org). (Rev. 6-2014)

Layout created by City of Madison

- **Bike-friendly Lodging.** Specific bike facilities at each hotel are important when enticing people to visit the local trails. At least 25% of available rooms/hotel sites should be “bicycle-friendly” within the region near the Ride Center. In addition to outdoor parking facilities (described above), hotels, motels, and campgrounds should have bike washes, secure bike storage, and/or allow bikes in rooms.

### 9.5.6 Expand Recreational Facilities for the Aging Population

Weston’s population aged 55 and over has increased faster than other age groups over the past decade, which is expected to continue for the next 20 or so years. Many of the facilities in Weston’s parks do not offer much for this group of residents. The Village, therefore, desires to offer recreational amenities that provide an aging population with new ways to exercise and enjoy Weston’s park system.

An expanded trail network, advised above, is one way that the Village can grow recreational opportunities for the senior population. This will particularly be the case if trails can be expanded into locations that provide other passive recreational opportunities, such as birding and fishing.

Pickleball is game that combines elements of badminton, tennis, and table tennis. It uses a badminton court but a lower net like tennis. These elements, combined with the use of a wiffle-type ball, makes for an alternative to tennis or other high impact sports that is easier on the body. It is gaining in popularity among all ages, but has a particular enthusiasm among active seniors. The Badger State Games had its 2014 pickleball tournament at Greenheck Fieldhouse. A pickleball league is also hosted there. The City of Wausau has four pickleball courts.



**Pickleball is played in teams and can be played outdoors or indoors.**

The Village endeavors to site outdoor pickleball courts in the community. At the time of writing, the best site for development of pickleball courts in Weston is Kellyland Park, potentially to replace a soccer field. The soccer fields here are no longer heavily utilized. Existing parking and the compatible dog park and trail uses also support Kellyland as a location for additional senior-oriented activities like pickleball. Machmueller Park may also serve as another appropriate Village-owned site for pickleball. Other potential locations include the Aspirus YMCA, which may be able to provide space for outdoor courts given their interest level. The YMCA already provides programs for active seniors. Another appropriate general location, mindful of the need for physical activities within walking distance of existing senior living centers, would be near Camp Phillips Road and Weston Avenue.

## 9.6. Operational Initiatives

The following pages describe initiatives designed to assure the safe and efficient operation of Weston's park and recreational facilities. The following initiatives may seem basic and generic compared to the site-specific previously discussed, but they are essential for the upkeep and maintenance of the Village's park system. Maintaining an adequate staff to maintain the park system is also a priority. The Village will add new staff as practical.

### 9.6.1. Provide Sustainable Funding for Weston's Parks

The Village will develop sustainable funding and cost-control mechanisms for park and recreation acquisition, development, program operation, and management. The Village will also utilize this chapter's maintenance program recommendations as a guide to establish annual operational budgets.

An appropriate and equitable use fee system will help offset maintenance and operations costs. Some programs already issue fees for services, such as the summer and after school programs and admission to the Aquatic Center. Creating more revenue generating activities, or applying fees to other group and individual users of parks, would help assure that those benefitting from the parks pay a fair share.

Other potential funding mechanisms include:

- Requiring payment in lieu of dedication of parkland (where no land is desired) and/or park development or impact fees on new development in order to meet future needs for space and facilities.
- Encouraging developer-installed trails and recreational facilities in dedicated parks or as components of their developments are also a way to expand and pay for park facilities.
- Utilizing the capital improvements program as a guide to establish yearly park capital budgets.
- Pursuing the development of revenue generating recreational activities, which can aid in the development of new facilities and/or the maintenance of existing facilities
- Pursuing grant funding through State and Federal programs, and through the County's Environmental Impact Fund, which can aid in the purchase or development of desired park system improvements.
- Realizing the potential for donations to aid in park system development, including naming rights.

### 9.6.2. Develop Formal Joint Use Policies

The Village currently charges all user groups for field use or requires the group to invest in the fields. Developing more formal joint use policies among the Village, D.C. Everest School District, Wausau /Central Wisconsin Convention and Visitor's Bureau (WCWCVB) and recreational associations would help develop, maintain, improve, and expand Village park facilities in a cost-effective manner. These policies often take the form of agreements outlining the revenue and maintenance needed for park facilities that receive use from multiple parties.

### **9.6.3. Improve Park Security**

Park facilities should be designed to maximize user security and minimize the probability of vandalism. This includes providing adequate visibility to and from active use areas, lighted (where appropriate) to provide safety at night, and utilizing materials that are vandal resistant and safe. The Village will maintain a surveillance and monitoring program to promote safe use in parks and reduce the opportunity for vandalism. Also, existing park facilities will be evaluated and upgraded, as necessary, to provide adequate security and safety.

### **9.6.4. Improve Playground Safety**

The Village will identify and replace all playground equipment that does not meet Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) or American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) International safety guidelines. The Village will also provide a safe “fall zone” directly under play equipment and within the use area around the play equipment. Commonly used resilient surfaces are sand, pea gravel and bark or wood chips, to a depth of 10 to 12 inches. Additionally, to meet ADA requirements, resilient rubber or a similar product provides safe, barrier-free access to transfer points on the play equipment.

### **9.6.5. Incorporate WiFi into Park Shelters**

As presented in the Broadband Technology chapter, residents desire more widespread wireless internet access throughout the Village. More and more people are reliant and expecting wireless connectivity. Offering wireless capabilities in park shelters with proper security is one way of providing that access in places that receive consistent and concentrated public use. It is also a tool to market Weston as a connected community. Wireless networks will have a filter for appropriate use and a time limit for users in order to prohibit loitering and inappropriate usage. The Village will focus on high-traffic parks like Kennedy, Yellowbanks, and Machmueller for WiFi access.

### **9.6.6. Promote Private Providers of Recreation**

The Village of Weston will continue to collaborate with other providers of recreation, but will not itself develop recreational programming. The Village also relies on other providers to meet certain recreational space needs in the area. For instance, no park in the Village park system has tennis courts, but a sufficient number of tennis courts are provided by the D.C. Everest High School. Similarly, the Village lacks indoor recreational facilities, but a private market already exists through the school district and other providers. The Village has no plans to provide recreational programming or indoor facilities beyond what already exists.

### 9.6.7. Execute Specific Improvement Plans for Each Existing Park

The Village has an attractive array of existing neighborhood and community parks that will require maintenance and may warrant improvement. These include Yellowbanks Park, which is targeted for more extensive improvement and is described earlier in this chapter. The following is an overview of the other parks in the Village's system, depicted on Map 9-2 and described more fully in the Conditions and Issues volume of the Comprehensive Plan:

- **Kellyland Community Park** is a 105.6 acre community park complex in the northcentral part of the Village. Kellyland Park includes as components the 40 acre Weston Dog Park on a remediated landfill and a 20.6 acre area along the Eau Claire River, formerly known by some as the Callon Nature Area. The northern component contains an open play area, children's play equipment, a basketball court, horseshoe pits, four soccer fields with bleachers, an open shelter, picnic tables, benches and grills, a restroom, two unpaved parking lots, and a paved parking lot that also services the Weston Dog Park component to its south. The Weston Dog Park includes picnic tables, benches, a small dog exercise area, and beginner-level dog agility course obstacles. It is a popular Wausau area dog park destination.
- **J.F. Kennedy Park** is a 38.8 acre, heavily developed and utilized community park on the Village's southwest edge, directly north of D.C. Everest High School. Kennedy is home to the Weston Aquatic Center, which serves residents from Weston and nearby communities. Kennedy Park also has three baseball diamonds; two irrigated, regulation sized soccer fields; one sand volleyball court with permanent standards; two horseshoe pits; one lighted hockey rink; one lighted open skating rink and warming house with restroom facilities; an 8,000 square foot concrete skate park; one open sided shelter building; two freestanding permanent restroom buildings; two children's play equipment areas; an unstructured open play area; two small sledding hills; picnic tables; grills and benches, and approximately 250 parking stalls divided among four paved parking lots and two unpaved lots.



**The Weston Aquatic Center is one of several heavily utilized facilities in Kennedy Park.**

- **Machmueller Park** is a 32.1 acre park community park on Weston's northeast side, along the border with the Town of Weston. The Town of Weston participated in the purchase of a portion of Machmueller Park, but has generally not been responsible for the general maintenance or the improvements that were completed at this Park (except for fencing on the tee ball baseball fields). Machmueller's facilities include children's play equipment, a Little League baseball field, three tee ball fields, one regulation sized soccer field with bleachers, a large open play area, a "born learning" trail for young children, a walking path with fitness course, an open shelter, picnic tables and grills, a paved road into the park, and a large paved parking lot.

- **Robinwood Park** is a 5.1 acre neighborhood park with a Little League baseball diamond, children’s play equipment, a basketball court, open play areas, an open shelter, picnic tables and grills, two paved parking lots, and restrooms.
- **Sandhill Meadows Park** is a 2 acre neighborhood park with a children’s play equipment area, a soccer field, a volleyball court, a basketball hoop, an open shelter, grills, restrooms, and a paved parking lot.
- **Williams Park** is a 2.5 acre neighborhood park with a sand volleyball court, an open play area, children’s play equipment area, picnic tables, grills, benches, and approximately seven off-street lighted parking stalls in an unpaved lot.

The Village will continue to perform systematic, routine maintenance of these parks and their equipment. Routine maintenance is considered to be the routine repair and upkeep of existing park facilities, such as painting a shelter building. Routine maintenance of park facilities does not appreciably increase the value or usefulness of the park, and is traditionally funded through the Parks, Forestry & Recreation Department’s operations budget. This includes replacing old and deteriorating recreation equipment, and meeting federal and industry guidelines as practical.

Capital improvements to a park are the addition of labor and materials that improve the overall value and usefulness of that park. Capital improvements are designated and funded individually through segregated municipal funds. Non-routine maintenance of park facilities, such as replacing a playground or upgrading a toilet facility to be barrier free, usually would be considered a capital improvement.

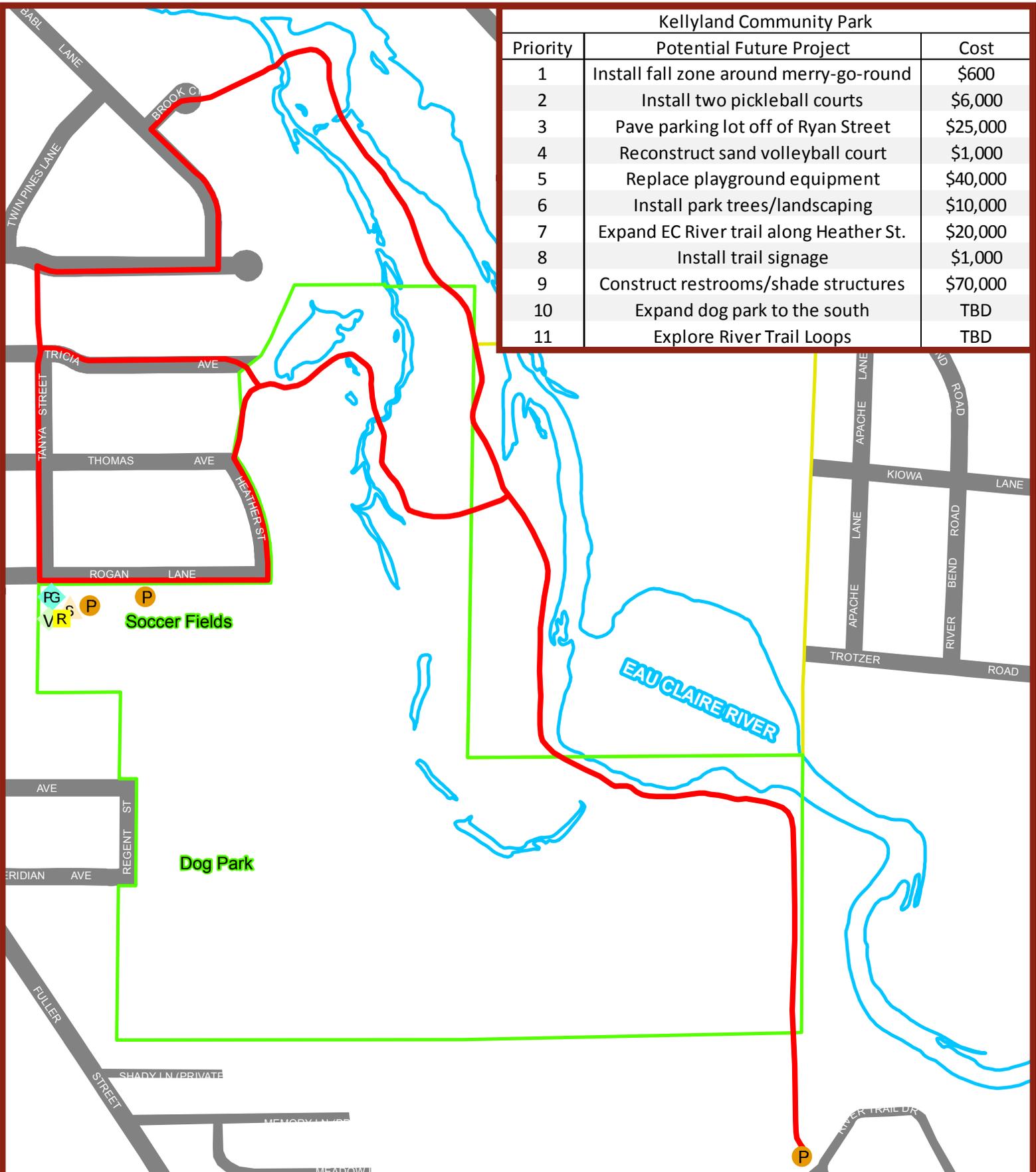
Capital improvements are generally ranked according to their importance and priority in the overall development of the park. Improvements to existing facilities will usually rank the highest in the capital improvements program, while new facilities are usually ranked lower. Improvements that correct health and safety hazards are always highly-ranked.

The maps on the following pages provide potential capital projects that the Village may undertake for each existing park, aside from Yellowbanks Park which is addressed earlier in this chapter. Included are projected costs of most proposed capital projects, in 2014 dollars.

### **9.6.8. Pursue Further Parkland Acquisition in Conjunction with Community Expansion**

In addition, Map 9-2, earlier in this chapter, identifies two potential additional neighborhood parks to the north of the Eau Claire River, east of the current Village limits. As the planned residential development in that area occurs, the Village anticipates obtaining 5 to 10 acres in each location through developer dedication. For the first potential park site, access to the Eau Claire River is preferred. Neighborhood park development should include active and passive short-term recreational opportunities, such as a ball field, accessible playground, and shelter. The second potential site would be adjacent to Machmueller Park.

Kellyland Community Park		
Priority	Potential Future Project	Cost
1	Install fall zone around merry-go-round	\$600
2	Install two pickleball courts	\$6,000
3	Pave parking lot off of Ryan Street	\$25,000
4	Reconstruct sand volleyball court	\$1,000
5	Replace playground equipment	\$40,000
6	Install park trees/landscaping	\$10,000
7	Expand EC River trail along Heather St.	\$20,000
8	Install trail signage	\$1,000
9	Construct restrooms/shade structures	\$70,000
10	Expand dog park to the south	TBD
11	Explore River Trail Loops	TBD



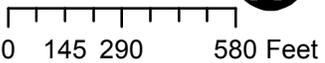
**Village of Weston  
Comprehensive Plan 9-3**

**Legend**

- Parking
- Shelter
- Parkland
- Playground
- Volleyball
- DC Everest Property
- Restrooms
- Eau Claire River Trail
- Surface Water

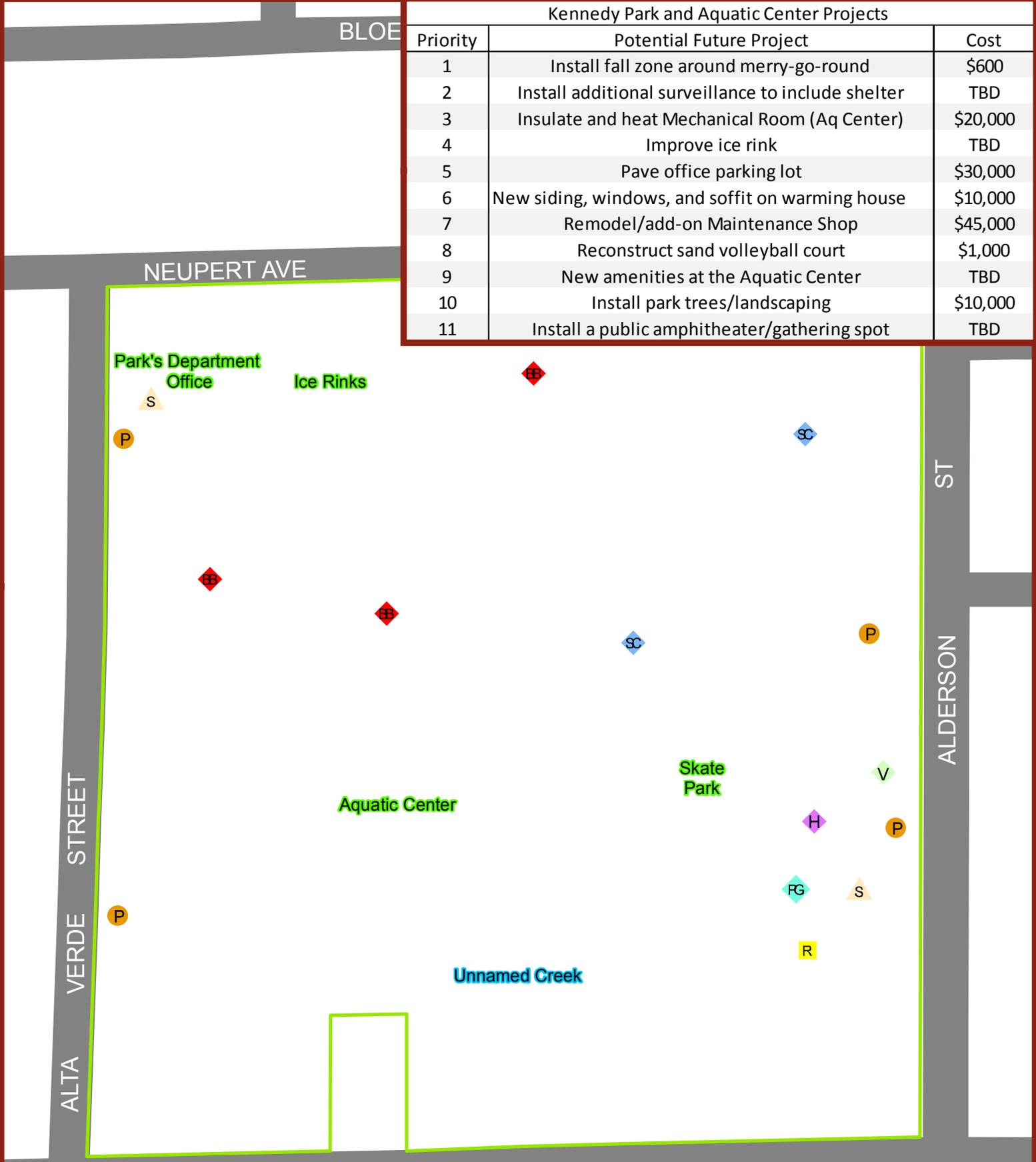
**Kellyland Community Park**

Date: August 12, 2014  
Adoption Date: January 10, 2015  
Created by the Village of Weston  
Tech. Services Department



### Kennedy Park and Aquatic Center Projects

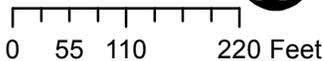
Priority	Potential Future Project	Cost
1	Install fall zone around merry-go-round	\$600
2	Install additional surveillance to include shelter	TBD
3	Insulate and heat Mechanical Room (Aq Center)	\$20,000
4	Improve ice rink	TBD
5	Pave office parking lot	\$30,000
6	New siding, windows, and soffit on warming house	\$10,000
7	Remodel/add-on Maintenance Shop	\$45,000
8	Reconstruct sand volleyball court	\$1,000
9	New amenities at the Aquatic Center	TBD
10	Install park trees/landscaping	\$10,000
11	Install a public amphitheater/gathering spot	TBD



## Village of Weston Comprehensive Plan

## 9-4 Legend

Date: May 20, 2014  
 Adoption Date: January 10, 2015  
 Created by the Village of Weston  
 Tech. Services Department



John F. Kennedy Park

- P Parking
- FG Playground
- SC Soccer
- R Restrooms
- V Volleyball
- H Horseshoe
- S Shelter
- EB Baseball
- Parkland

Vilas E. Machmueller Park		
Priority	Potential Future Project	Cost
1	Install volleyball court	\$2,000
2	Install basketball court	\$5,000
3	Install Pickleball courts	\$3,000
4	Install park trees/landscaping	\$2,000
5	Expand parkland	TBD



**Village of Weston  
Comprehensive Plan 9-5**

**Legend**

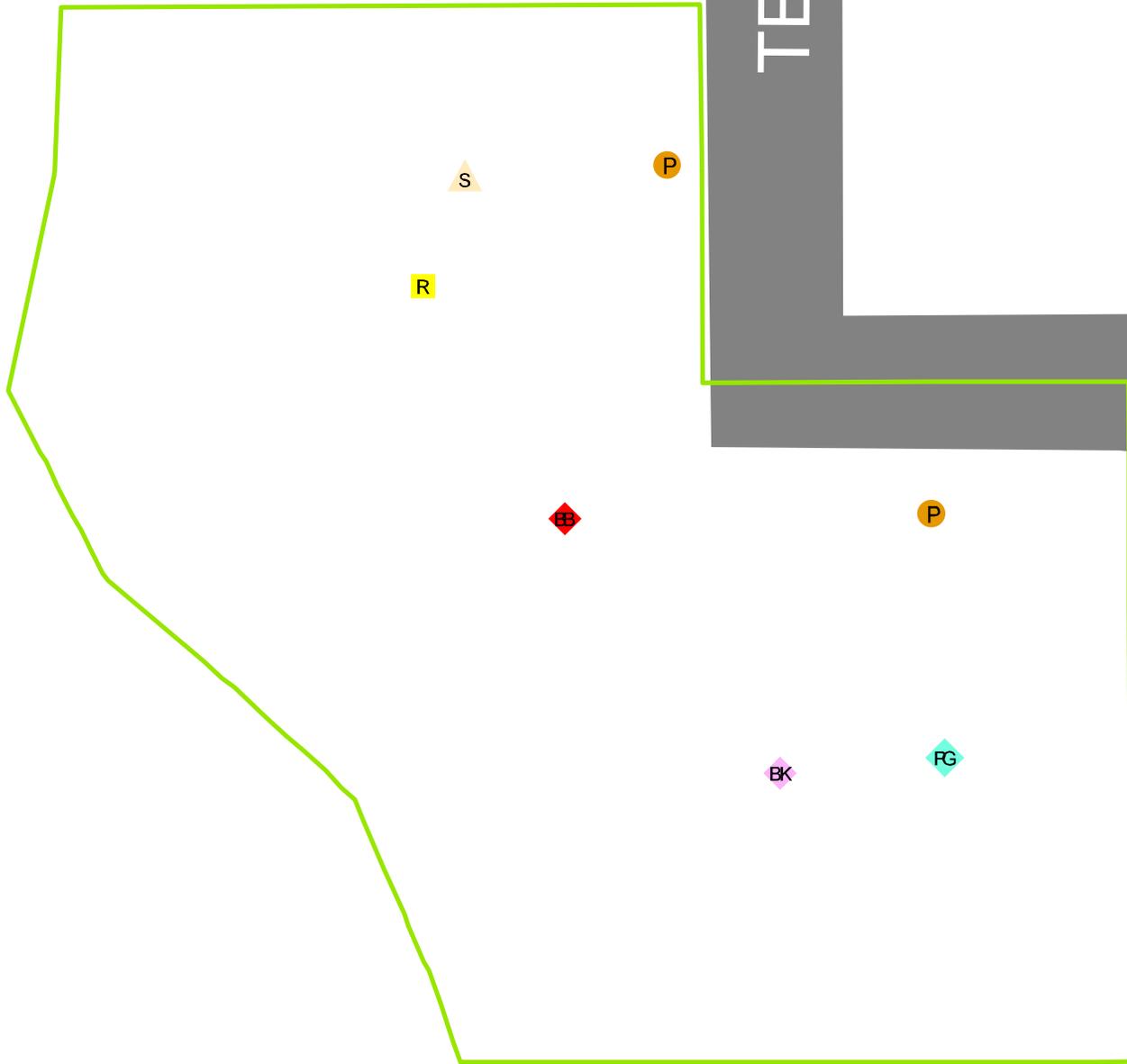
- Parking
- Playground
- Fitness Trail
- Restrooms
- Baseball
- Parkland
- Shelter
- Soccer
- Surface Water

# JALEN CIR

## Robinwood Park

Priority	Potential Future Project	Cost
1	Install fall zone around play area	\$2,000
2	Construct sand volleyball court	\$2,000
3	Install park trees/landscaping	\$5,000

# TEAGAN L



## Village of Weston Comprehensive Plan

9-6

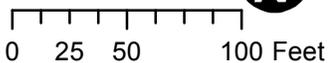
### Legend

- Parking
- ◆ Playground
- Parkland
- Restrooms
- ◆ Baseball
- ▲ Shelter
- ◆ Basketball

### Robinwood Park



Date: August 13, 2014  
 Adoption Date: January 10, 2015  
 Created by the Village of Weston  
 Tech. Services Department



# SHOREY AV

Sandhill Meadows Park		
Priority	Potential Future Project	Cost
1	Install fall zone around merry-go-round	\$600
2	Reconstruct sand volleyball court	\$1,000
3	Install park trees/landscaping	\$5,000



## Village of Weston Comprehensive Plan

9-7

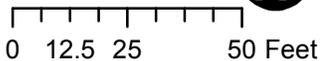
### Legend

- Parking
- ◆ Playground
- Parkland
- Restrooms
- ◆ Soccer
- ▲ Shelter
- ◆ Volleyball

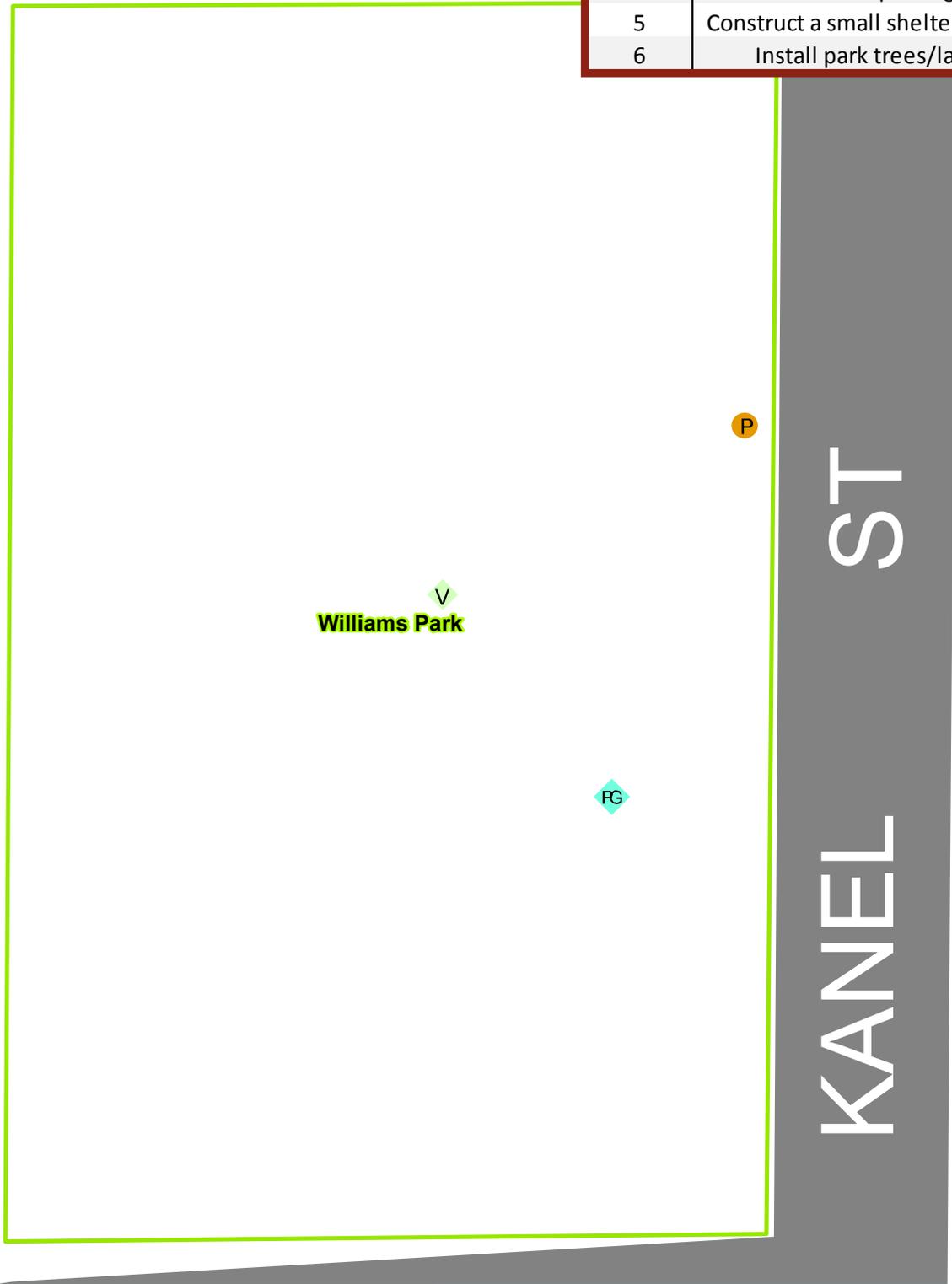
### Sandhill Meadow Park



Date: August 13, 2014  
Adoption Date: January 10, 2015  
Created by the Village of Weston  
Tech. Services Department



Williams Park		
Priority	Potential Future Project	Cost
1	Install play equipment for 2 - 5 year olds	\$30,000
2	Install fall zone around playground	\$1,500
3	Reconstruct sand volleyball court	\$1,000
4	Pave parking lot	\$3,000
5	Construct a small shelter w/bathrooms	\$40,000
6	Install park trees/landscaping	\$5,000



**Village of Weston  
Comprehensive Plan 9-8**

**Legend**

- Parking
- ◆ Volleyball
- ◆ Playground
- Public Parks

**Williams Park**



Date: August 13, 2014  
Adoption Date: January 10, 2015  
Created by the Village of Weston  
Tech. Services Department

