

CITY OF FORT ATKINSON

COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN



FORT • ATKINSON
PARKS & RECREATION

2023 - 2028

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RESOLUTION NO. 1394

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2023-2028 CITY OF FORT ATKINSON COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the City of Fort Atkinson recognizes the importance and benefits of its parks and open space system has on the City’s character and quality of life and is committed to providing for the recreational needs of its current and future residents; and

WHEREAS, this plan intends to guide the continual improvement of the City’s park and open space system and to maintain the City’s eligibility for State and Federal park and recreation grants; and

WHEREAS, the City of Fort Atkinson Parks and Recreation Department has worked with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to prepare a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and solicited input from the public and key stakeholders regarding improvements to the City’s park system; and

WHEREAS, the City of Fort Atkinson Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2023-2028 encompasses a general outline and plan for the recreational development of the City of Fort Atkinson; and

WHEREAS, the City of Fort Atkinson Parks and Recreation Advisory Board recommended adoption of said plan on December 14, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the City of Fort Atkinson Plan Commission recommended adoption of said plan on January 24, 2023.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that by the City Council of the City of Fort Atkinson, Jefferson County, Wisconsin, adopts the City of Fort Atkinson Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2023-2028.

Adopted and effective this 7th day of February 2023.

CITY OF FORT ATKINSON


Christopher Scherer, Council President

ATTEST:


Michelle Ebbert, City Clerk/Treasurer/Finance Director



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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PLAN PURPOSE

The City of Fort Atkinson understands the benefits parks and open space have on its character and quality of life, and is committed to providing for the recreational needs of its current and future residents. This plan intends to guide the continual improvement of the City’s park and open space system, as well as maintain the City’s eligibility for State and Federal park and recreation grants.

This plan is a support document to the City of Fort Atkinson’s Comprehensive Plan. This plan, along with the City’s other long-range plans and development-related ordinances, will be used to implement the City’s parks and recreational programming. Specifically, this document provides:

- Information regarding demographic trends and natural resource concerns
- An inventory of existing park and recreational facilities
- An analysis of parkland and recreational needs and demands
- General policy direction regarding park and open space planning and maintenance
- Recommendations for improving existing park facilities
- Recommendations for new park and trail projects
- Strategies for implementation and funding

This plan identifies conceptual locations and recommendations for different types of parks and recreational facilities. In nearly every case, more detailed planning, engineering, study, budgeting, and discussions will be necessary before decisions are made to actually acquire land or construct recreational facilities.

CORPs & GRANT FUNDING

The Wisconsin Legislature created the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program (Stewardship) in 1989. Named for two of Wisconsin’s most revered conservation leaders, Warren Knowles (Governor 1965-1971) and Gaylord Nelson (Governor 1959-1963, U.S. Senator 1964-1981), the purpose of the program is to preserve valuable natural areas and wildlife habitat, protect water quality and fisheries, and expand opportunities for outdoor recreation. The conservation and recreation goals of the Stewardship Program are achieved through the acquisition of land and easements, development of recreational facilities, and restoration of wildlife habitat.

The Stewardship grant program is the most widely used recreational grant program in the state. Eligibility for the program requires that a community maintain a local comprehensive outdoor recreation plan (CORP), updated every five years, and that the project for which grant funding is sought is described in the CORP. Many other similar state and federal recreational grant programs have similar requirements or have shown a tendency to favor those grant applications which are supported through previous community planning efforts.

1.2 PLAN PURPOSE

In 2022, the City selected MSA Professional Services, Inc. to develop its first Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP). Preparation and adoption of this plan occurred over an nine-month period. Oversight for the project was provided by the Parks and Recreation Board—a diverse group of community stakeholders who are active in local parks and recreation. The Parks and Recreation Board (PRB) met three times with the planning consultant to provide policy recommendations and to review draft documents. Early in the planning process, the consultant facilitated an online community survey to gather citizen feedback on desired public park and recreational facilities. Multiple public engagement activities were also held over the summer to solicit the community’s input on the future of the City’s parks and recreational programming. It’s the City’s intention to update this plan every five years, both as a planning best practice and to remain eligible for State park and recreation grants (see side bar).

This plan was developed following the Guidelines for the Development of Local Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans, as laid out in the 2019-2023 Wisconsin State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) created by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). The plan content and format have been tailored to fit the needs of the community.

1.3 THE ROLE OF CITY PARKS

The benefits of parks go far beyond simply being spaces where people can recreate. Parks contribute to the physical and mental health of individuals and provide public safety, environmental, economic, and social equity benefits to our communities. Recently, parks have come to the forefront of public health discussions due to COVID-19. The pandemic put parks in the spotlight as more people sought outdoor recreation opportunities. It is important to remember the benefits parks provide to the communities they serve, which include:

PROJECT MILESTONES

JUNE 2022

- PRB Meeting 1: Kick-Off Working Session

JULY - AUGUST 2022

- Public Survey
- Public Engagement Pop-up Events
- Stakeholder Focus Groups

SEPTEMBER 2022

- PRB Meeting 2: Review Draft Recommendations

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2022

- Plan Development
- PRB Meeting 3: Review Draft Plan

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2022

- Plan Commission Meeting
- City Council Plan Adoption
- Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

BELONGING

Public parks are a unique amenity because they have the potential to be accessible to anyone in the community, regardless of age, gender, ability, socioeconomic status, race, or ethnicity. Though we often find that disparities exist in the distribution and quality of parks and recreation amenities, many parks and recreation departments across the U.S. are rethinking how to engage and provide benefits to residents who currently lack sufficient access to parks. If parks can become more inclusive, they have the potential to function as a nucleus of neighborhood activity. They can be places where residents gather for social events, recreational activities, and meetings about local issues, increasing social interaction and creating an overall sense of community.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

According to the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), when individuals spend time in green spaces, they experience fewer health issues, improved blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and reduced stress—which leads to a lower incidence of depression. According to NRPA’s report *The Economic Impact of Parks*, “diabetic individuals taking 30-minute walks in a green space experienced lower blood glucose levels than [those] spending the same amount of time doing physical activity in other settings. Thirty minutes of walking in nature resulted in larger drops in blood glucose than three (3) hours of cycling indoors.”

ECOLOGICAL HEALTH

While parks, forests, and trails create opportunities to improve the health of individuals, they also contribute to the greater ecological health of a community. Parks are often tied together with environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, floodplains, surface waters, or significant woodlands. These areas provide food and shelter for local wildlife and naturally retain stormwater. Individual parks can provide important “rooms” of natural resource activity; however, they become even more functional when they can be linked together through environmental corridors, or “hallways.” Wildlife, plants, and water all depend on the ability to move freely within the environment, or from “room to room.”

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Leisure time is an important component of everyone’s lifestyle, and increasingly people are choosing locations to live based on quality-of-life factors that include recreational amenities. According to the NRPA’s *Engagement with Parks Report*, four out of five adults in the US sought high-quality parks and recreation when choosing a place to live. The ability to retain and attract new residents has direct economic benefits to the City. For this reason, a great park, recreation, and trail system can contribute directly to a community’s economic development.

According to a study completed by NRPA and George Mason University, 72% of 70 studied communities use parks and recreation images in their economic development materials. The study notes that parks and recreation contribute to economic development through business and talent attraction, retention, and expansion. If a park system is designed with connections to regional destinations, additional visitors can also be brought into a community. This additional tourism can be a significant benefit to local businesses. This plan aligns with other regional and state plans to promote outdoor recreation across the greater area.

CONNECTIONS

Well-connected trail systems can provide an important alternate means of traveling for those who prefer to bike for health or environmental reasons and for those who lack other means of transportation due to age, income or disability. Shared-use paths also provide important connections to public transit. According to the National Household Travel Survey conducted by the Federal Highway Administration, 85% of transit trips begin and end with walking and nearly one in six walking trips is made for the purpose of accessing public transit.

IMPACT OF COVID-19

With the COVID-19 pandemic, communities across the country have seen increased usage of trails and parks. This increase is coupled with new uses for parks (for example, wi-fi hot spots), resulting in new design challenges and opportunities. It is likely these shifts will impact parks well into the future. We also anticipate the way parks are funded to shift, with a more diverse set of funding sources likely becoming available.

Chapter 2

ABOUT FORT ATKINSON

ABOUT FORT ATKINSON

The following chapter highlights community history, demographic information, and important natural resources in Fort Atkinson and Jefferson County. The information comes from a variety of resources, including the US Census, the Wisconsin Department of Administration, and the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

2.1 LOCAL & REGIONAL CONTEXT

Nestled on the banks of the Rock and Bark Rivers, the City of Fort Atkinson is located in Jefferson County in south-central Wisconsin. Fort Atkinson is located approximately 30 miles southeast of Madison, and 60 miles southwest of Milwaukee, and has good access to both metro areas via highway connections to I-94 and I-90, with U.S. Highway 12 connecting directly to Madison.

The City has kept its rich history alive through local attractions such as the Hoard Historical Museum, the Jones Dairy Farm Retail Store, and a historic shopping district. Its affordable cost of living and proximity to two major metro areas makes it a desirable hometown for families and residents of all ages.

2.2 DEMOGRAPHICS

This section describes some of the historic demographic trends for the City of Fort Atkinson as it pertains to population, age composition, housing, and school enrollment. This includes data from U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS), which is reported as a rolling average over a 5-year period, and the 2020 U.S. Decennial Census.

Population

The recent 2020 Census population count for the City is 12,579 residents. From 1980 to 2020, the population of Fort Atkinson grew by 28.6%, generally following the percentage growth trend for Jefferson County (28.2%) and the State (25.2%).

According to the WDOA population projections, the City is expected to add an additional 2,700 residents between 2020 and 2040. This is a 21.5%

increase over a 20-year period, or an annual growth rate of 0.78%. These projections are greater than the growth rates projected for Jefferson County (18.2%) and Wisconsin (10.1%). New park lands and facilities will likely be necessary to continue meeting the demands of new and growing neighborhoods.

Age Composition

Age composition is an important consideration in park and recreational planning as the needs and desires of individuals will vary based on their interests and physical abilities. Table 2.2 summarizes the age composition of the City’s population using 2016-2020 ACS 5-year estimates. Approximately 22.3% of the population is considered youth (<20 years old) which is slightly below the 2010 Census count (25.6%).

Approximately 25.5% of the population is considered at retirement age (>60 years old), which is higher than the 2010 Census count of 19.7%. This is an indication of a quickly aging community—a trend projected to continue as more Baby Boomers enter retirement and younger people have fewer children at older ages. Similar trends are being seen across the nation. The median age in the City rose from 37.2 in 2010 to 40.3 in 2020, which is about the same as the state median (39.6).

Housing

Based on 2016-2020 ACS estimates, there are 5,092 households in the City, 28.7% of which include at least one child under 18 years old. The total number of households increased by 188 since 2010; however, the number of households with at least one child under 18 years old declined from 33.9% of all households in 2010. The average household size in 2020 was 2.40 individuals, down from 2.44 in the 2010. This decrease follows national trends (and other communities across the state) showing decreases in average household size attributed largely to smaller family sizes, increases in life expectancy, and increases in single parent households.

Placement of future park and recreational facilities should consider where multi-family buildings are located or planned as these types of housing units generally lack access to green space and play equipment as compared to single-family lots.

2.3 NATURAL FEATURES

Lakes & Ponds

The most significant pond within Fort Atkinson is Haumerson’s Pond, located within the Bark River Nature Park. The pond is a former open clay pit and served as an outdoor ice rink as far back as the 1920’s. The facility has a dedicated organization, The Friends of Haumerson’s Pond, that has raised funds to bring back the skating rink and add year-round park facilities.

River & Streams

The Rock River and Bark River are the City’s most prominent surface water features. The Rock River traverses through the center of the City from east to west, while the Bark River connects to the Rock River near downtown in the eastern portion of the City. Another important surface water feature is Allen Creek, which cuts through the southwestern portion of the City just north of the Robert L. Klement Business Park. The Creek is the only waterway in Jefferson County that is considered an Exceptional Resource Water, meaning that it is characterized by excellent water quality and high-quality fisheries, and has a high recreational value.

Natural Areas

According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Wetland Inventory Maps, wetland habitats comprise approximately 400 acres within the City (not including small tracts of wetland that are less than five acres in size), most of which is located within the floodplain. These ecosystems help maintain the quality of the City’s groundwater and surface water, while also providing valuable habitats for fish, birds, and other wildlife. Wetland areas are generally located along the Rock and Bark Rivers and in several low-lying areas of the City.

The Glacial Heritage Area Project is an effort led by the DNR to establish a network of conservation areas, recreational facilities, and recreation trails in the Glacial Heritage Area of Southeastern Wisconsin. This area is centered on western Jefferson County, but includes portions of Dane County, Dodge County, Rock County, and Walworth County. The primary goal of the project is to help meet the demand for outdoor, nature-

Table 2.1 Population History & Projections

Source: 2020 US Census, WI DOA Population Projections

Population History & Projections			
	City of Fort Atkinson	Jefferson County	Wisconsin
1980	9,785	66,152	4,705,642
1990	10,213	67,783	4,891,769
2000	11,621	75,767	5,363,715
2010	12,368	83,686	5,686,986
2020	12,579	84,837	5,893,718
Projections			
2025	13,457	93,860	6,203,850
2030	14,039	97,305	6,375,910
2035	14,646	99,265	6,476,270
2040	15,279	100,300	6,491,635
Change			
1980-2020	2,794	18,685	1,188,076
2020-2040	2,700	15,463	597,917
Percent Growth			
1980-2020	28.6%	28.2%	25.2%
2020-2040	21.5%	18.2%	10.1%

Table 2.2 Age By Range

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Age by Range		
Age	Total	Percentage
0-9	1,170	9.4%
10-19	1,612	12.9%
20-29	1,619	13.0%
30-39	1,443	11.6%
40-49	1,623	13.0%
50-59	1,808	14.5%
60-69	1,673	13.4%
70-79	960	7.7%
80+	547	4.4%
Median	41.6	

Table 2.3 Housing Statistics

Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Fort Atkinson Housing Statistics	
Households	
2000	4,760
2010	4,904
2016-2020 ACS	5,092
Average Household Size	
2000	2.40
2010	2.44
2016-2020 ACS	2.40
% of Households with individuals under 18	
2000	31.4%
2010	33.9%
2016-2020 ACS	28.7%

ABOUT FORT ATKINSON

based, land and water recreational activities in the state by setting aside lands for hiking, biking, wildlife watching, camping, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, boating, and other activities.

Wildlife

There is a wide variety of wildlife in Jefferson County due to the presence of the Bark River, Rock River, Rose Lake, and Lake Koshkonong. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources maintains a Natural Heritage Inventory which locates and documents rare species and natural communities, including federal threatened and endangered species. A comprehensive list can be found through the DNR’s Natural Heritage Inventory (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/nhi/>).

The City’s natural resources are many and varied and provide an attractive character to the City and increase the potential for varied recreational opportunities. The greatest recreational potential for these corridors will be as linear parks and trail corridors linking the City’s recreation, employment, commercial and school sites.

2.4 EXISTING PARKS & OPEN SPACE

The City currently owns 15 parks under the following three classifications:

Neighborhood parks are sites with a smaller collection of recreational activities and typically are intended to serve residents that live nearest to the park. Facilities may include athletic fields, sports courts, playgrounds, and picnic areas. Neighborhood parks may or may not have permanent restroom facilities. Desirable size is between 3 and 10 acres. The following parks in Fort Atkinson are categorized as neighborhood parks:

- Barrie Park
- Endl Park
- Lorman Bicentennial Park
- Rotary Arrowhead Park
- Trailway Park

Conservancy parks are established primarily for protection and management of natural environments, with recreational facilities as a secondary objective. They often include walking trails and opportunities for watching wildlife. The following parks in Fort Atkinson are categorized as conservancy parks:

- Bark River Nature Park

Community parks are sites of diverse recreational activities and include a mix of facilities such as athletic complexes, large swimming pools, and baseball diamonds. Community parks tend to draw residents from around the community, not just those who live close by. These parks typically have permanent restroom facilities, and a desirable size is between 10 and 25 acres but will vary depending on the facilities offered. The following parks in Fort Atkinson are categorized as community parks:

- Jones Park
- Memorial Park
- Ralph Park
- Rock River Park

Special use parks are typically sites for specialized or single purpose recreational activities, such as golf courses, nature centers, skate parks and ball diamonds. In Fort Atkinson, they also include parks devoted to public memorials and sculpture. The following parks are categorized as special use parks:

- Klement Park
- Lions Park
- McCoy Park
- Riverside Park
- Wilcox Park

In addition to these park and open space facilities, Fort Atkinson also offers several other unique community facilities, including:

Downtown Riverwalk: The Riverwalk is comprised of a lighted, paved walkway that extends from just east of Purdy Street to Robert Street. The Riverwalk offers scenic overlooks, an amphitheater, boat docks, and benches, and has direct connections to Main Street, the Glacial River Trail, Purdy Street, and Lorman Bicentennial Park.

Glacial River Trail: Over time, the City, County, and State have worked together to connect bicycle trails throughout Jefferson County. The Glacial River Trail, which runs through the heart of Fort Atkinson and connects north and south along Highway 26, is a premier example of this. The paved, off road, multi-use path has become a significant component of the area’s tourism appeal and further promotes active lifestyles for City residents.

Table 2.4 Parks Facility Matrix

Park/Facility	Location	Acres	Swimming	Boat Launch	River Access	Fishing Pier	Playground Equipment	Baseball/Softball Diamond	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Pickleball Court	Volleyball Court	Soccer Field	Football/La Crosse Field	Obstacle Course	Archery Range	Ice Skating/ Hockey	Warming House	Wheels Park	Bandshell	Open Playfield	Fitness Trails	Bike/Walking Trail	Frisbee/Disc Golf Course	Open-Air Shelter	Enclosed Shelter	Restroom	Concession Stand	Grills	Drinking Water	Bleachers	Picnic Tables	Benches	Parking Lot				
Neighborhood Parks			10.6																																			
Barrie Park	210 Robert Street	1.4				✓														✓							✓					✓	✓	✓				
Endl Park	1350 Endl Boulevard	2.6				✓						✓																				✓						
Lorman Bicentennial Park	210 S. Water Street - W.	2.2			✓		✓																	✓							✓	✓	✓					
Rotary Arrowhead Park	951 Blackhawk Drive	3.1				✓																✓		✓								✓						
Trailway Park	418 Ramesh Avenue	1.3				✓																✓		✓								✓	✓					
Conservancy Parks			155.7																																			
Bark River Nature Park	550 S. 4th Street	100.7		✓		✓												✓	✓						✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓				
Rock River Park - Wetlands & Floodplain	1300 Lillian Street	55.0																																				
Community Parks			78.0																																			
Jones Park	615 Janesville Avenue	14.6					✓	✓																	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Memorial Park	520 Bark River Road	7.4					✓	✓																	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Ralph Park	600 Jefferson Street	13.0					✓	✓	✓													✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Rock River Park	1300 Lillian Street	43.0	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓						✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Special Purpose Parks			10.6																																			
Klement Park	1350 N. High Street	2.5		✓		✓																												✓	✓			
Lions Park	1130 Janesville Avenue	2.3																						✓		✓							✓	✓	✓			
McCoy Park	1202 Madison Avenue	2.2																					✓											✓	✓			
Riverside Park	Riverside Dr	2.8			✓																			✓														
Wilcox Park	317 Wilcox Street	0.8																				✓																
			lighted facility																																			

Fort Atkinson Family Aquatic Center: The outdoor Aquatic Center is located in Rock River Park and is open to City residents and non-residents from June through August. The facility offers features such as a 175-foot water-slide, a baby duck water-slide, a mini whale water-slide, tropical fish water-slide, a diving well with two diving boards, two sand playgrounds, sand volleyball court, gaga ball, and concessions.

Fort Atkinson Senior Center: The City’s senior center hosts a variety of activities Monday through Friday, including sewing, crocheting, knitting, internet training, dart ball, euchre, painting, fitness, wellness, trips, and other educational and leisure programs.

Municipal Building Gymnasium: This facility, more than 90 years old, is home to basketball and volleyball leagues, fitness, karate, pickleball, and youth sports programs. It is also the site for large community club events and election voting.

Downtown Pocket Parks: The City has four pocket parks downtown. Amenities include benches, planters, and decorative features such as a large clock.

Schools District Facilities

The City is part of the School District of Fort Atkinson. The 2021-2022 enrollment for the entire district was 2,591 public school students and 465 private school students. The following is a list

of public schools within Fort Atkinson and their recreational facilities:

Purdy Elementary
Serves pre-K through 5th grade students, and includes playground equipment for young children and a paved blacktop area with painted lines for foursquare and other games.

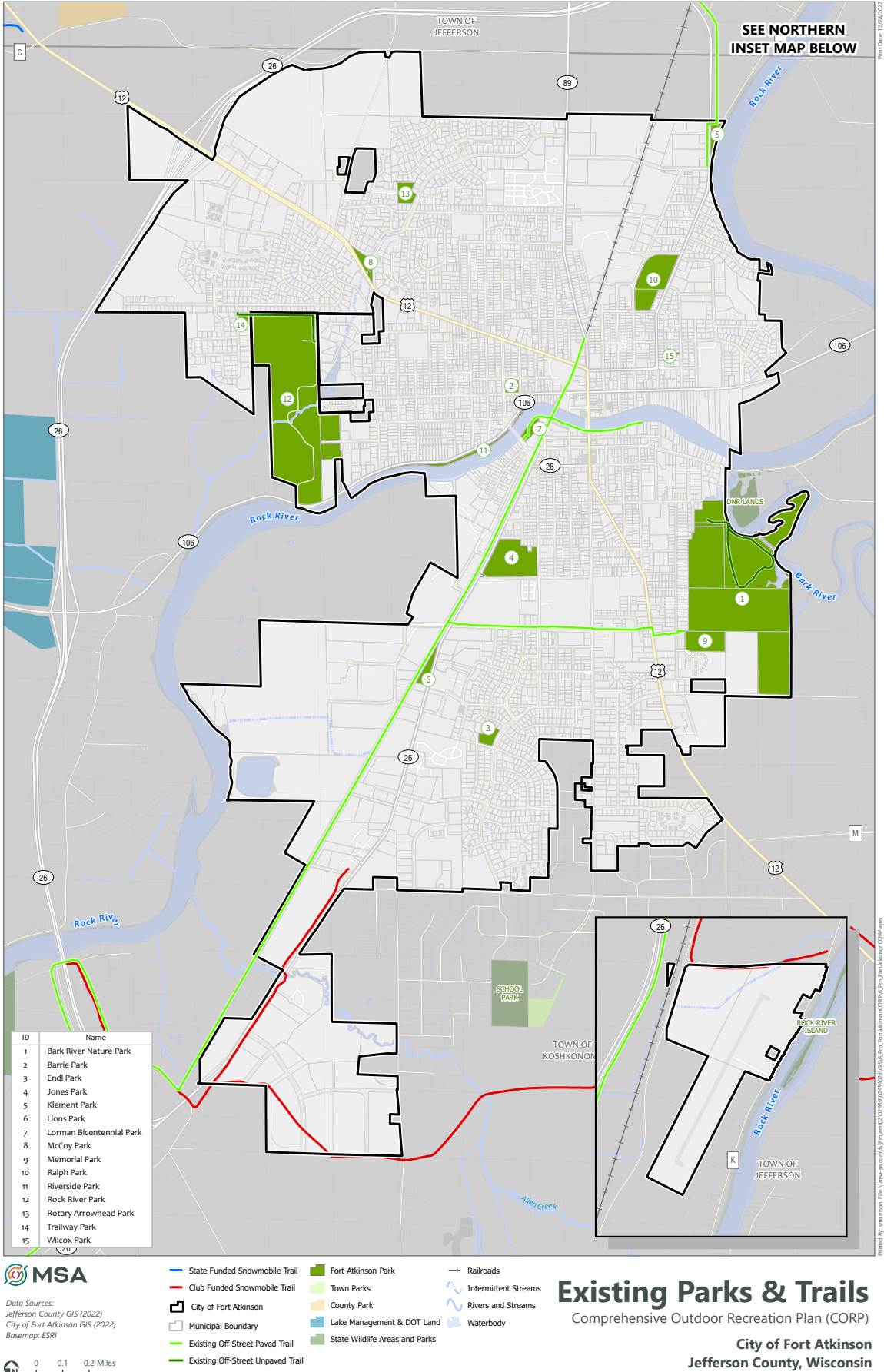
Rockwell Elementary
Serves pre-K through 5th grade students and includes recently upgraded playground equipment for young children and an open playfield.

Barrie Elementary
Serves pre-K through 5th grade students, and includes recently upgraded playground equipment for young children, a small softball diamond, and a paved blacktop play area with a small basketball court.

Luther Elementary
Serves pre-K through 5th grade students, and includes recently upgraded playground equipment for young children, two basketball courts (one with hoops set up for a full court or split into two half-courts), two baseball diamonds, and five soccer fields. There is a multi-use building for concessions and restrooms.

Fort Atkinson Middle School
Serves all public-school students in grades 6 through 8. There are outdoor basketball courts, and a stadium with a 6-lane, 400m rubberized track surrounding a grass football field.

Figure 2.1 Existing Parks & Trails Map



Fort Atkinson High School

Serves all public-school students in grades 9 through 12. The outdoor sports complex includes four baseball/softball diamonds, four tennis courts, three shot-put/discus throw circles, two linear jump tracks, a 6-lane, 400m rubberized track with a high jump pit that surrounds an artificial turf football field, and flex space for four practice fields. The school’s 25-meter indoor pool is open to the community for lap swimming and other pool-based health programming. The schedule varies throughout the year depending on the school year and swim team needs.

2.5 EXISTING LAND USE

According to the United States Census Bureau, the City has a total area of 5.8 square miles of land and water. Using 2020 Census data, the population density of Fort Atkinson is 2,222 inhabitants per square mile.

The cumulative effect of the existing land use patterns and roadway system divides the community into geographic neighborhoods that can limit access to recreation facilities. The primary barriers in Fort Atkinson include the Rock River, US 12, WIS-106/Riverside Drive, WIS-89, and Rockwell Avenue. Refer to Figure 2.2 for the City’s Existing Land Use Map.

2.6 FUTURE LAND USE

The future growth of the City is guided by the 2019 Comprehensive Land Use Plan (amended in 2022). The current plan sets forth the desired development pattern for the City over the comprehensive planning period. The plan also gives guidance to accommodate projected population, household, and employment growth; the infrastructure and institutions required to serve residential, business, and industrial uses; and the City’s agricultural and natural resource base.

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan identifies one key growth area for the community which is described below and shown in Figure 2.3.

Far Northwest Area

In 2016, Fort HealthCare bought a large parcel on the southwest corner of Highway 26 and Highway 12 interchange. The intended use of the land is for new construction of a hospital campus to replace the one currently located on Sherman Avenue.



Bark River Nature Park

Figure 2.2 Existing Land Use Map

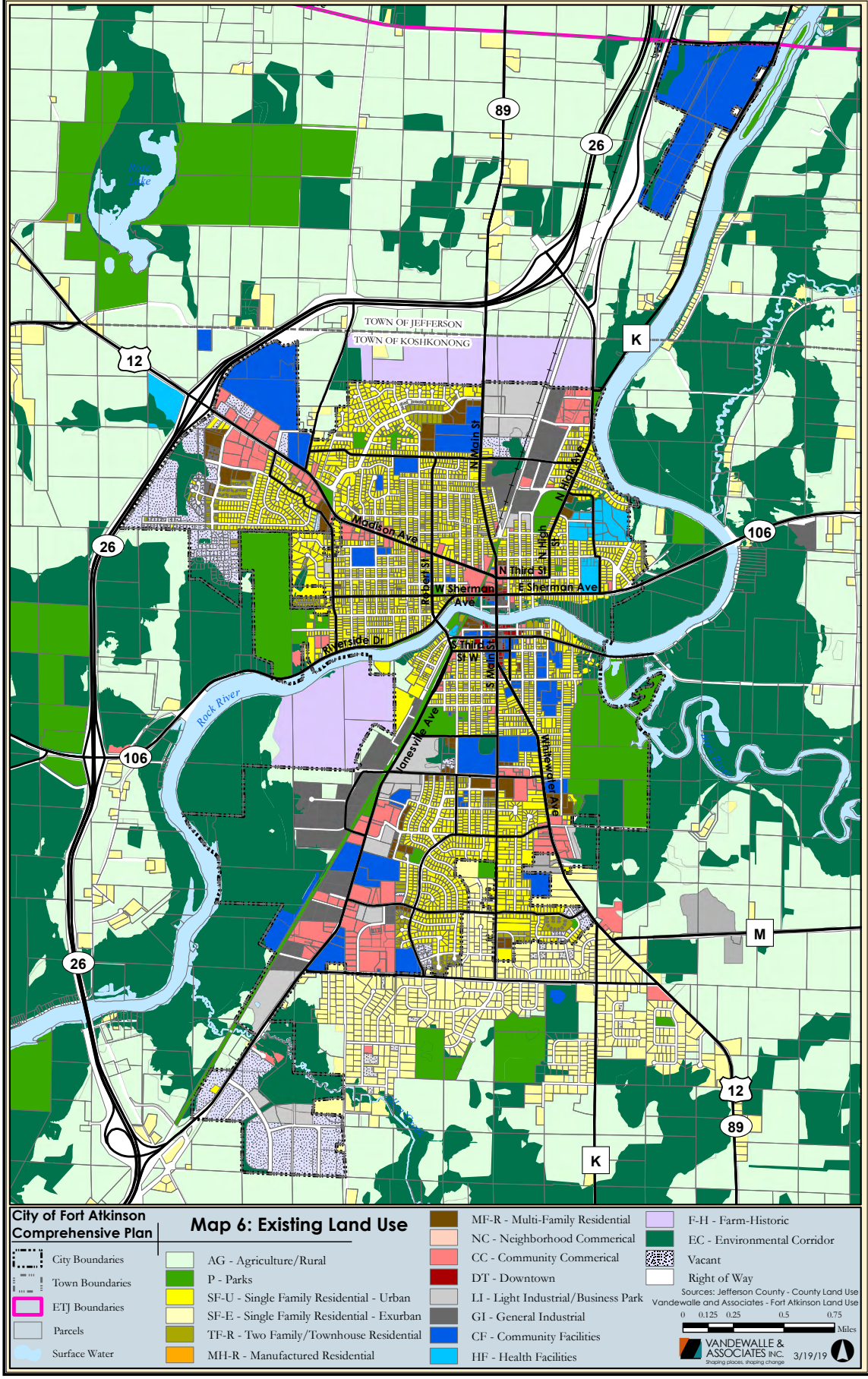


Figure 2.3 Future Land Use Map

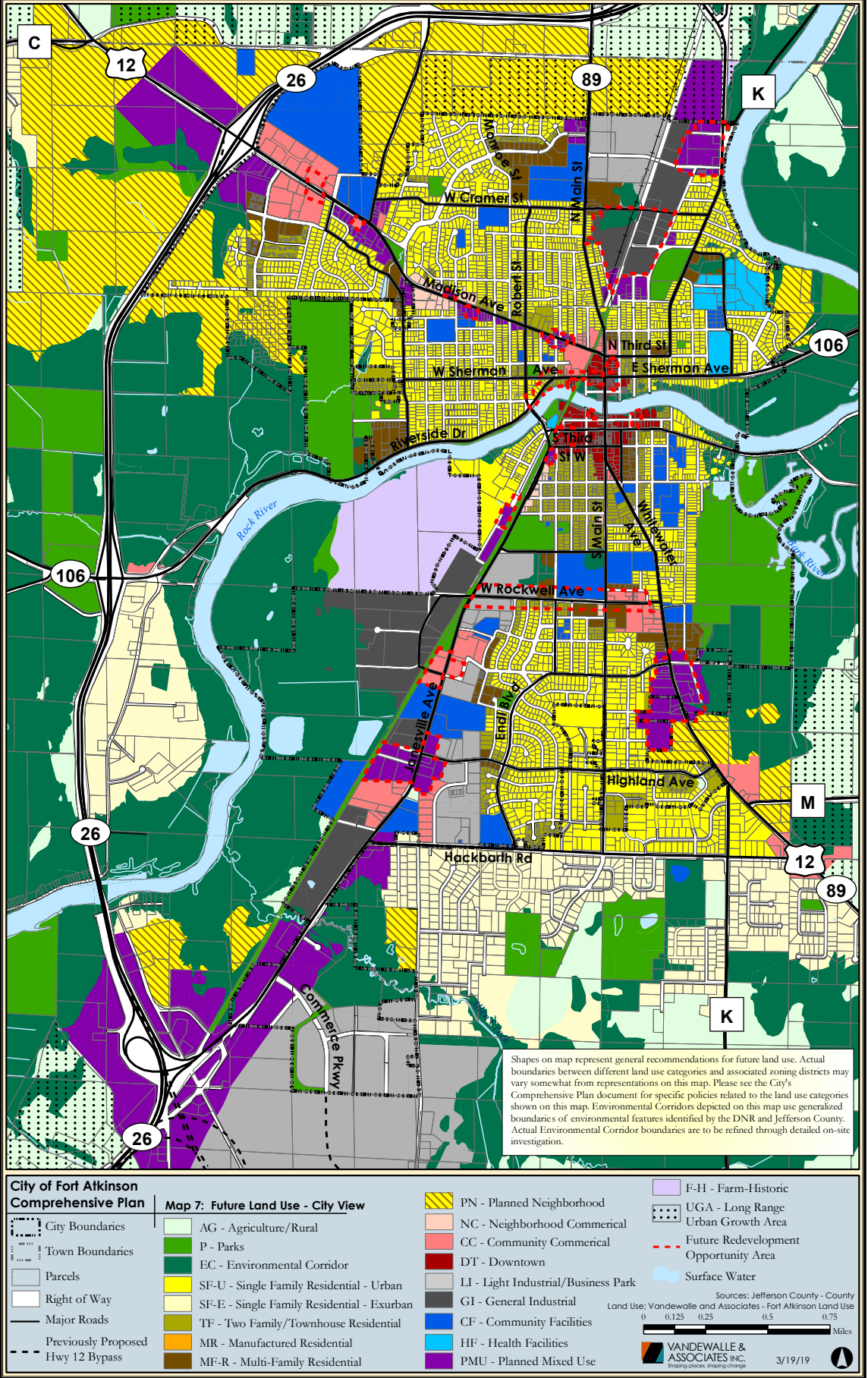
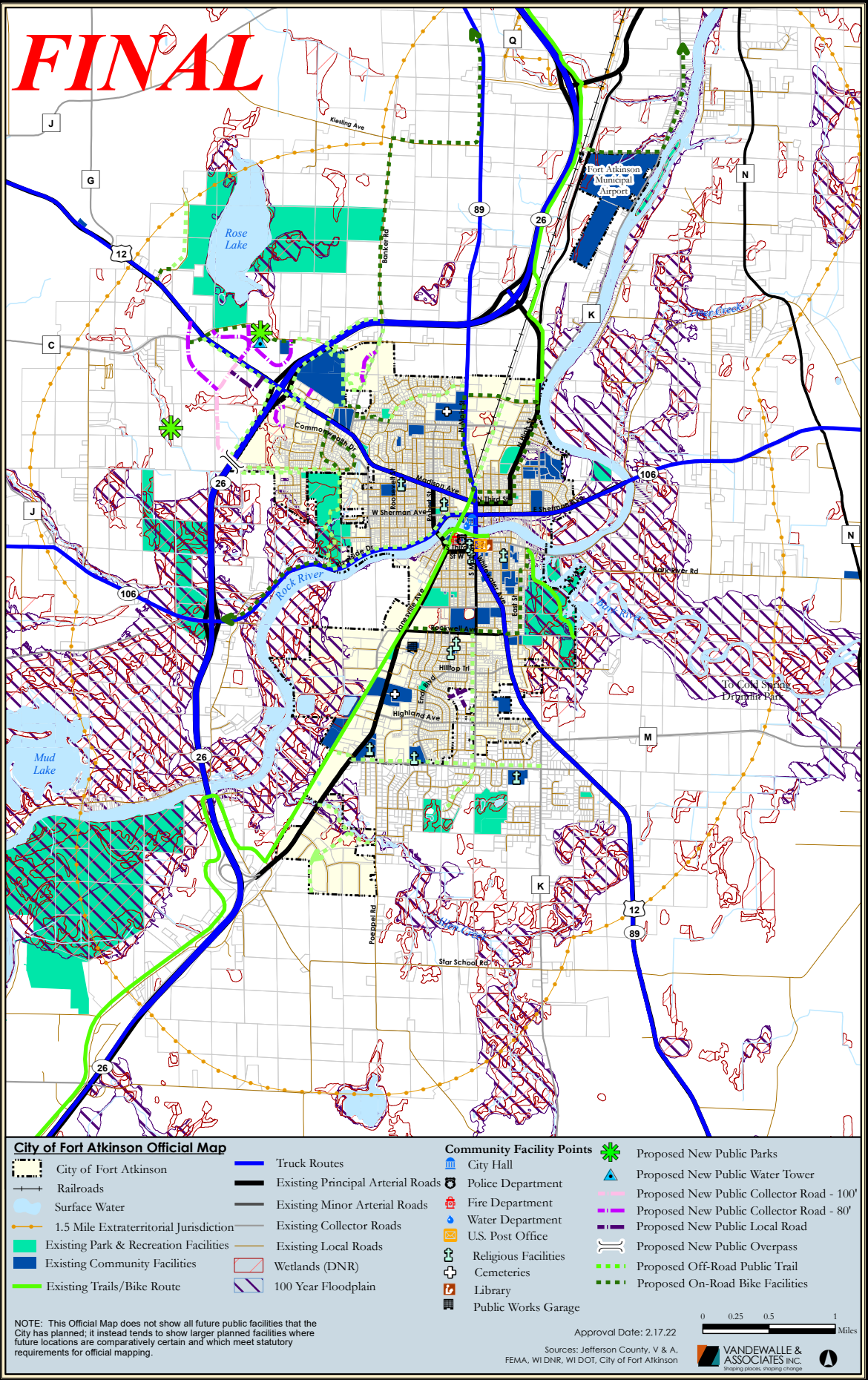


Figure 2.4 Official City Map (2022)



Chapter 3

GOALS & STRATEGIES

GOALS & STRATEGIES

3.1 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & POLICIES

The mission of the Fort Atkinson Parks & Recreation Department is “to enrich the quality of life for all participants by providing enjoyable, wholesome, recreational experiences.”

The following goals, objectives, and policies for the department come from the City’s 2022 Amended Comprehensive Plan.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal: Maintain and preserve existing facilities, effectively plan for future facilities that serve all residents, enhance opportunities for recreational tourism, and preserve the environmental integrity of the community.

Objectives:

- 1. Ensure the equitable distribution and maintenance of parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities throughout the City to provide all residents access to such facilities.
- 2. Provide safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access between residential neighborhoods and schools, parks, and other recreational facilities.
- 3. Work to permanently preserve environmental corridors and other environmentally sensitive areas for passive recreation and to protect natural resources.

Policies:

- 1. Provide neighborhood park facilities that are safely accessible by children within all residential neighborhoods.
- 2. Site new parks in areas that promote neighborhood accessibility and interaction. All new neighborhoods should be within walking distance of public park space.
- 3. Provide sufficient community park facilities to serve community-wide park and outdoor recreation interests.
- 4. In areas of the City that are not currently served by neighborhood parks, work to identify land appropriate for parkland acquisition.

- 5. Integrate drainage-ways, greenways, and environmental corridors into the City’s permanent open space system. Such environmentally sensitive areas should not be used as substitutes for Neighborhood or Community Parks due to the fact that such areas cannot typically be used for active recreation.
- 6. Provide “special purpose” parks, plazas, and open spaces within commercial and industrial areas that provide aesthetic enhancements in otherwise developed environments.
- 7. Continue to enhance the City’s trail system by linking Neighborhood and Community Parks, schools, and residential neighborhoods. Where feasible, the trail system should follow or utilize environmental corridors.
- 8. Continue to improve and expand access to the Rock and Bark Rivers, without impairing water quality or ecosystems.
- 9. Coordinate City park, trail, and open space planning and improvements with the Towns of Koshkonong and Jefferson and Jefferson County. Where feasible, provide continuous trail and pedestrian access between City and regional recreational facilities.
- 10. Require that all proposed residential developments dedicate land for public parks or pay a fee-in-lieu of park land dedication and/or park impact fee.
- 11. Design park facilities to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

National Park, Recreation, and Open Space Standards

The following policies have been adapted from the *National Park, Recreation, and Open Space Standards*, a publication of the National Recreation and Park Association, for application by the City.

- 1. The park and recreation system should provide opportunities for all persons regardless of race, creed, age, sex, or economic status.
- 2. Advance land acquisition based upon a park and open space system should begin immediately in order to prevent the loss of high quality sites to other development interests.

- 3. Facilities should be centrally located within the area that they are intended to serve and must have safe and adequate access, and be distributed so that all persons in the community can be served.
- 4. Land acquired for use as parks or recreation areas should be suitable for the specific intended use, and when possible, for multiple uses.
- 5. Land adjacent to recreation and open space areas should be used in ways that will not interfere with the purposes for which the recreation or open space land was intended, and in addition, recreation and open space areas should be compatible with surrounding land uses.
- 6. The design of individual park and recreation sites should be as flexible as possible to reflect the changing patterns of recreation needs in a given service area.
- 7. Special efforts should be made to provide for easy access to and the use of all facilities by the elderly, ill and handicapped, very young, and the other less-mobile groups in the community.
- 8. Recreation and open space land should be protected in perpetuity against encroachment by other uses that will inhibit the recreation or open space nature of the land.
- 9. Park and recreation areas should be used to separate incompatible land uses and guide future urban development.
- 10. Neighborhood and community level recreation areas should adjoin schools whenever possible. This can enhance the school environment and prevent duplication of facilities.
- 11. Citizen involvement in the recreation and open space decision-making process should be encouraged and expanded.
- 12. Facility development must be reviewed with safety in mind, adhering to accepted standards prior to installation.

COMPLYING WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The ADA, enacted in 1990, clearly states the right of equal access for persons to local government services, including parks. On September 15, 2010 the Department of Justice published revised final regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act. The 2010 Standards included new provisions for accessible design for recreational facilities such as playgrounds, swimming pools, fishing and golf facilities. Similar to when the original 1991 ADA Standards were adopted for public buildings, a community is required to complete a self-evaluation of their recreational facilities for ADA compliance by March 15, 2012. Those communities with 50 or more full or part-time employees are also required to develop a Transition Plan, which identifies what corrective work will be completed, when it will be completed, and the individual responsible for the corrective work. Any new recreational facilities designed, constructed, or shaped after March 15, 2012 are subject to the 2010 Standards. Any alteration (not simple maintenance, but something that changes the way the site is used) must make the element altered accessible and must create an accessible path of travel through the site or facility to that element.

There are some fundamental differences in how accessibility in the outdoors is accommodated compared to indoors or the built environment. While restrooms, shelters, interpretive centers, and parking lots, for example, need to follow detailed ADA guidelines, other improvements such as trails or swimming beach areas, for example, do not necessarily need to follow indoor or built environment ramp grades or surfacing requirements. A good rule of thumb for the City to follow is that anything constructed must not make the outdoor experience anymore difficult than what occurs naturally. Mother Nature does not have to comply with ADA, but the City does.

The New England ADA Center is a good resource to use and offers checklists to evaluate accessibility at existing park facilities. The fillable checklist forms can be found here: <http://www.adachecklist.org/checklist.html#rec>



Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF NEEDS AND DEMANDS

ANALYSIS OF NEEDS & DEMANDS

This chapter presents an analysis of how well the City’s existing park and recreation facilities satisfy current needs. The adequacy of the City’s existing park and recreation systems are evaluated using the following methods:

- Quantitative Analysis - a comparison of existing parkland acreage and population projections versus park and recreational agencies across the US, including a review of the amount of parkland available to City residents.
- Geographic Analysis - an analysis of the geographic distribution of park facilities within the City.
- Qualitative Analysis - a summary of public input regarding City parks and recreational facilities gathered through the community survey, public involvement meetings, and feedback from community organizations that use the City’s parks.
- Regional & State Insights - a summary of the demand trends in recreational amenities at the regional and state level.

4.1 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

An analysis of existing recreational land area is provided to determine if the recreational needs of residents are being met. This analysis is limited to space, or land, devoted to recreational uses owned by the City of Fort Atkinson. Currently, the City is providing approximately 255 acres of parkland in total, not counting school facilities, County facilities, or private facilities. This translates to 0.02 acres of parkland per person, or 20 acres per 1,000 residents.

Table 4.1 summarizes the current and projected supply and demand for total parkland acreage based on the City’s population. For the purpose of calculating anticipated parkland demand, a service level of 8 acres per 1,000 residents was assumed; this standard was established in Chapter 9 of the City’s recently amended 2022 Comprehensive Plan.

Using a level of service standard of 8 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, the City currently has surplus of 154.4 acres. Assuming the population projections are correct, and the City does not add additional parkland, the total surplus will shrink to

Table 4.1 Park Acreage Demand Analysis - Overall Acreage

Source: US Census Bureau & WI DOA Population Projections

Total Park Acreage Surplus/Deficit (in acres)					
Year	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Population	12,579	13,457	14,039	14,646	15,279
Total Supply (acres)	255	255	255	255	255
Demand (8 acres/1,000)	100.6	107.7	112.3	117.2	122.2
Surplus (8 acres/1,000)	154.4	147.3	142.7	137.8	132.8

Table 4.2 Park Acreage Demand Analysis - Active Recreation Acreage

Source: US Census Bureau & WI DOA Population Projections

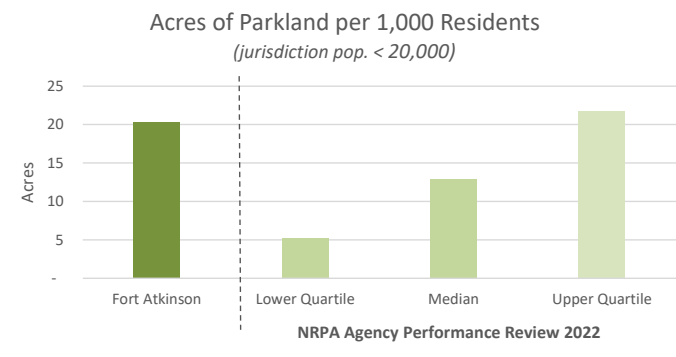
Total Park Acreage Surplus/Deficit (in acres)					
Year	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Population	12,579	13,457	14,039	14,646	15,279
Total Supply (acres)	200	200	200	200	200
Demand (8 acres/1,000)	100.6	107.7	112.3	117.2	122.2
Surplus (8 acres/1,000)	99.4	92.3	87.7	82.8	77.8

132.8 acres by the year 2040. This would translate to approximately 17 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents in 2040 if no additional parkland is acquired.

While Table 4.1 analyzes the supply and demand for parkland acreage overall in Fort Atkinson, Table 4.2 excludes parkland acreage that is not available for active recreational purposes, namely the 55 acres of wetlands and floodplain within Rock River Park. This exclusion reduces the City’s total acreage of parkland to 200, which in turn reduces the surplus of parkland (based on the 2020 population count) to 99.4 acres. By 2040, if no additional parkland is added, the surplus in active parkland will fall to 77.8 acres, assuming population projections are accurate.

Figure 4.1 Park Acreage National Comparison

Source: NRPA



ANALYSIS OF NEEDS & DEMANDS

Figure 4.1 shows the existing acreage per 1,000 residents for Fort Atkinson in comparison to other jurisdictions of similar size across the United States. The graph shows that the City is nearly on par with the upper quartile for parkland availability nationally among jurisdictions with less than 20,000 people.

While the City is providing a net surplus of developed parkland, it is important to continue to plat new residential neighborhoods with dedicated public parks. Proximity to parks is an important factor for quality of life, which in turn is important for retaining existing residents and attracting new residents. Neighborhood parks provide structured recreational opportunities for nearby residents in new subdivisions.

4.2 GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

While the total acreage of parkland is an easy indicator of the presence of parks and recreational space, it is not the only indicator of whether a community is meeting the park and recreation needs of its residents. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) advocates that the location of parkland, and the types of recreational facilities offered on that land, are just as important as the total acres available. A community with an excess of parkland, but few recreational facilities, is less likely to meet the needs of its residents than a community with a lesser amount of parkland but a larger variety of recreational opportunities. Fortunately, Fort Atkinson residents have access to a wide range of recreational facilities as summarized in Chapter 5 and Table 2.4 (page 9).

The NRPA, in partnership with the Trust for Public Land and the Urban Land Institute, promotes the 10-Minute Walk Campaign (<https://10minutewalk.org>) which advocates for “a great park within a 10-minute walk of every person, in every neighborhood, in every city across America.”

Using the 10-Minute Walk as a guiding principle, the green area in Figure 4.2 shows where City residents are within a 10-minute walk (approximately ¼ - ½ miles) of a City-owned park. This area is the aggregate of each park’s individual 10-minute walk radius. For areas outside the green 10-minute walk radius, the underlying residential zoning district is displayed. This is intended to represent areas

where people live, but are not within a 10-minute walk of a City park.

Figure 4.2 shows that the majority of Fort Atkinson is well served by parks within easy walking distance, and the gaps that do exist appear on the outer reaches of the City, closer to its municipal boundary. The most notable areas outside the 10-minute walk radius are highlighted with circles on Figure 4.2 and described in detail below:

- **Yellow Circle:** Parcels zoned for Single Family Residential (10,000 sf) and Duplex Residential (9,000 sf) in the southeast corner of the City along Highland Ave and Radloff St.
- **Blue Circle:** Parcels zoned Single Family Residential (6,000 sf) in the northern portion of the City near Main St and Hickory St.
- **Purple Circle:** Parcels zoned Single Family Residential (15,000 sf) and Suburban Mixed Use in the northwest corner of City. On the ground however, this area is largely devoted to Fort Atkinson High School and commercial businesses, with most of the nearby residential land falling within the 10-minute walk radius.
- **Red Circle:** Parcels zoned Single Family Residential (15,000 sf) and Duplex Residential (9,000 sf) near Rock River Park. This gap in the 10-minute walk radius is likely attributed to the complicated nature of the City’s municipal boundary around this area. Additionally, even though homes in this area are adjacent to the park, they lack connection points into the eastern portion of the park and may only enter the park through its north or south entrances.

Profile of Prospective Park Users

Using information provided by ESRI ArcGIS Business Analysis, a demographic profile of prospective park users for each City park is summarized in Table 4.3. This includes 2021 population estimates for the number of residents within a 10-minute walk of each park, projected population increases by 2026 for select demographics, and 2021 median household incomes.

Barrie Park has the highest number of residents within its 10-minute walk radius at 2,716 people in 2021, with Lorman Bicentennial Park behind it at 2,057 people. Jones Park has the highest percent

Figure 4.2 Park Service Area Map

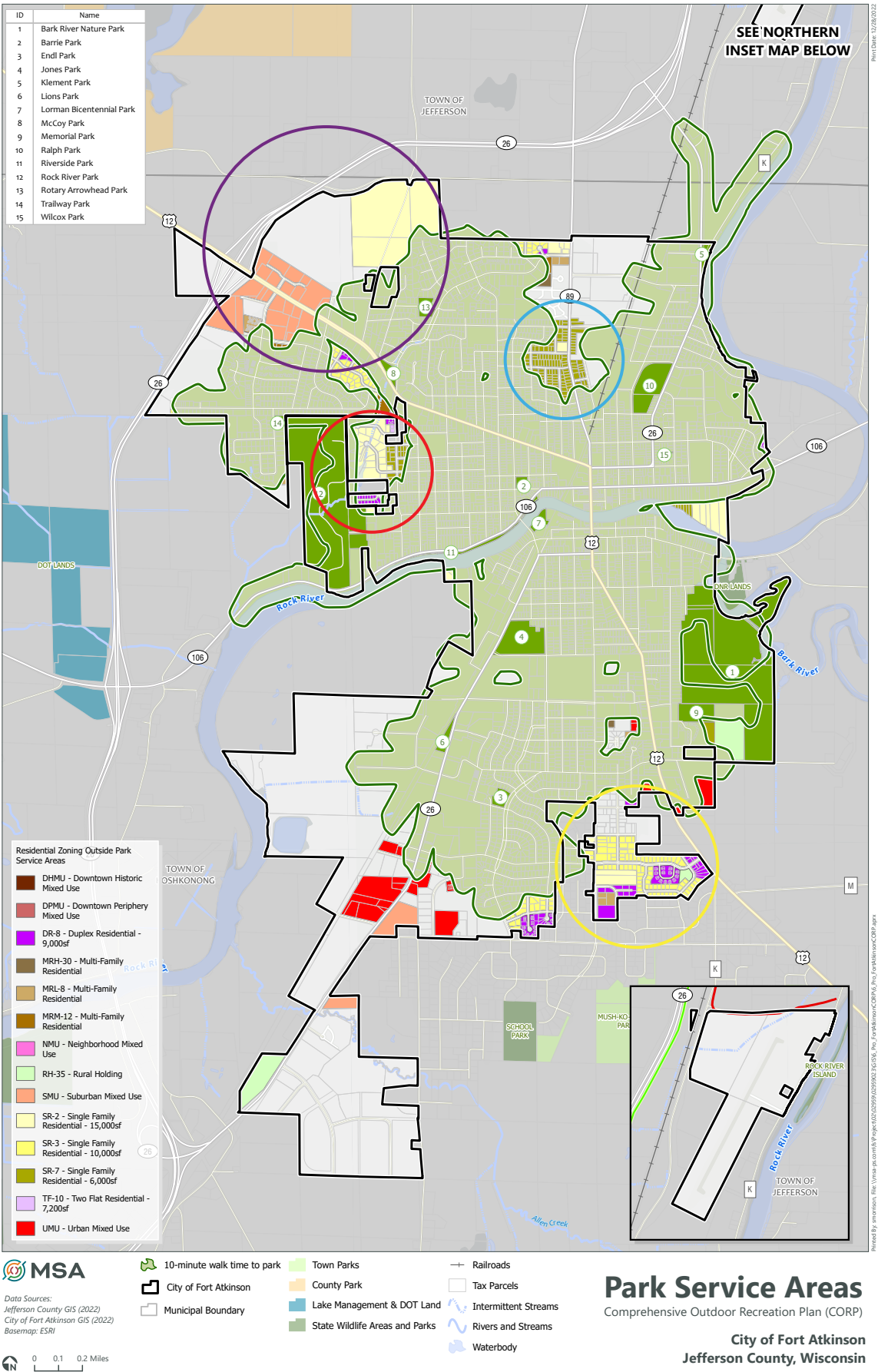


Table 4.3 Profile of Prospective Park Users, Source: ArcGIS Business Analyst

Profile of Prospective Park Users - Within 10 Minute Walk													
Parks	2021 Population	2026 Projected Population	Projected Population Increase (2021-2026)	2021 Percentage Non-White Population	2026 Projected Percentage Non-White Population	Projected Non-White Population Increase (2021-2026)	2021 Percentage Youth (< age 20)	2026 Projected Percentage Youth (< age 20)	Projected Youth Increase (2021-2026)	2021 Percentage Seniors (age 65+)	2026 Projected Percentage Seniors (age 65+)	Projected Senior Increase (2021-2026)	2021 Median Household Income
Neighborhood Parks													
Barrie Park (1.4 acres)	2,716	2,738	22	9.2%	10.4%	1.2%	24.5%	23.5%	-1.0%	16.4%	17.7%	1.3%	\$64,299
Endl Park (2.6 acres)	1,816	1,828	12	14.0%	15.7%	1.7%	26.1%	24.7%	-1.4%	18.1%	18.8%	0.7%	\$77,910
Lorman Bicentennial Park (2.2 acres)	2,057	2,076	19	11.5%	12.9%	1.4%	25.0%	23.4%	-1.6%	15.4%	16.9%	1.5%	\$55,873
Rotary Arrowhead Park (3.1 acres)	1,555	1,574	19	6.6%	7.5%	0.9%	21.4%	20.4%	-1.0%	20.1%	21.7%	1.6%	\$72,732
Trailway Park (1.27 acres)	772	789	17	5.7%	6.7%	1.0%	21.8%	20.7%	-1.1%	17.2%	18.8%	1.6%	\$70,533
Community Parks													
Jones Park (14.6 acres)	1,058	1,073	15	15.3%	17.1%	1.8%	27.7%	25.6%	-2.1%	13.8%	14.3%	0.5%	\$42,300
Memorial Park (7.4 acres)	864	879	15	7.5%	8.4%	0.9%	23.1%	22.0%	-1.1%	19.5%	21.6%	2.1%	\$62,674
Ralph Park (13 acres)	1,354	1,366	12	10.2%	11.5%	1.3%	21.7%	21.4%	-0.3%	21.1%	21.4%	0.3%	\$61,998
Rock River Park (43 acres)	102	104	2	5.9%	5.8%	-0.1%	21.6%	20.8%	-0.8%	16.7%	18.9%	2.2%	\$75,000
Nature Preserves													
Bark River Nature Park (100.7 acres)	729	742	13	5.6%	6.3%	0.7%	18.3%	16.0%	-2.3%	20.5%	24.0%	3.5%	\$51,672
Special Purpose Parks													
Klement Park (2.5 acres)	208	210	2	6.7%	7.6%	0.9%	20.2%	20.0%	-0.2%	24.5%	24.3%	-0.2%	\$58,089
Lions Park (2.3 acres)	842	850	8	13.4%	15.0%	1.6%	25.6%	24.2%	-1.4%	18.0%	19.1%	1.1%	\$75,470
McCoy Park (2.2 acres)	1,039	1,053	14	6.4%	7.4%	1.0%	21.2%	20.1%	-1.1%	19.8%	21.4%	1.6%	\$75,837
Wilcox Park (0.8 acres)	1,424	1,437	13	11.8%	13.3%	1.5%	22.4%	22.1%	-0.3%	19.6%	19.9%	0.3%	\$64,318

of non-white residents within its 10-minute walk radius at 15.3% in 2021 and is projected to increase by 1.8% by 2026.

Across the board, the percent of youth (under age 20) within a 10-minute walk of a park is projected to decrease by 2026, while the rate of seniors is projected to increase (with the exception of Klement Park).

Median household incomes (2021 estimate) for prospective park users ranged from \$42,300 (Jones Park) to \$77,910 (Endl Park). The City's median household income for 2022 is \$63,535 according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

4.3 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Survey

A public survey was available for residents to complete during the summer of 2022. 570 individuals completed at least one question from the survey; since the questions were not required, some respondents did not complete every question available. Highlights from the survey responses are detailed below, and the complete results for non-comment based questions can be found in Appendix A.

- 43% of respondents report walking or running for exercise 3 or more times per week. By contrast, 35% of respondents report biking for exercise 0 times in the past year. 37% of respondents did not report walking as a means of transportation at any point in the past year.

- The biggest barrier to walking more in Fort Atkinson was condition or lack of sidewalk (52% of respondents), followed by too much automobile traffic and the distance being too far (30% of respondents, respectively).
- The top barriers to biking more within the community were: condition or lack of bicycle lanes/off-road trails (41%), too much automobile traffic (39%), and condition of roads/ease of travel (38%).
- 72% of respondents report living within reasonable walking or biking distance from a City park or trail.
- 44% of respondents said a member of their household participated in City-sponsored recreation program in the past year; 53% reported no one had. This is likely attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on indoor activities. At the same time, 71% of respondents report that the City's slate of programming met the needs of their household.
- The most common activities or facilities survey respondents engaged in at City parks were: walking (72%), biking/bike trails (61%), swimming/aquatic center (57%), Riverwalk (50%), park shelters (39%), and playgrounds (38%). The least popular activities or facilities were: pickleball courts (4%), indoor and sand volleyball (4%), and horseshoe pits (1%).
- The top amenity survey respondents would like to see added to the Fort Atkinson Parks

ANALYSIS OF NEEDS & DEMANDS

system is a splash pad (35%), with an indoor pool (30%) and dog park (29%) close behind.

- Survey respondents’ favorite park was Jones Park at 63%, followed by Rock River Park and Bark River Park at 37% and 32%, respectively.

Public Engagement Pop-Up Events

The City also attended two community events to solicit feedback from the public on parks, trails, and recreational needs within Fort Atkinson.

Cruise Night Pop-Up Booth

On Monday July 11, MSA, City Staff, and PRB members staffed a public engagement booth at the Fort Atkinson Cruise Night. Feedback was obtained via two primary activities: 1) comment worksheet and map, and 2) a park modeling activity for kids. Feedback from discussion at the booth/comment worksheets included (24 comments total):

- Need a splash pad (Ralph Park or Jones Park as the preferred location)
- Need a fully ADA accessible playground for kids and adults
- Improve ADA accessibility of all parks
- Ralph Park – add small picnic pavilions
- Need to bring more people downtown and to the river
- Desire for more programming, concerts, walking paths
- City does a good job of park maintenance overall
- Endl Park needs attention
- Do more outreach about the great things Fort Atkinson offers – museums, parks, events
- Need more shade at pool
- Ensure parks have things to do for people of all ages
- Have more programming in the parks (e.g. concerts)

Kids created their own dream park by arranging laminated park amenities on a 12”x12” square of turf. The amenities selected most frequently were (10 dream parks total):

- Path (10)
- Themed Playground (9)
- Pond (7)
- Skate Park (7)

- Shelter (7)
- Sandbox (7)
- Adventure Play (7)
- Swings (6)
- Splash Pad (6)
- Picnic Table (6)
- Climbing Wall (6)

Farmer’s Market Pop-up Booth

On Saturday August 27th, MSA and City Staff managed a public engagement booth at the Fort Atkinson Farmer’s Market. This event was intended to solicit feedback on the preliminary recommendations gathered over the course of the summer for the CORP. Two activities were designed to share the preliminary recommendations with visitors at the Farmer’s Market: 1) individual park and park system-wide recommendations were displayed on printed out tables for visitors to “vote” if they agreed or disagreed with an items using green and red stickers, and 2) a map of the park system was displayed for visitors to place new amenities, using printed out icons, they would like to see added to specific parks.

The recommendation tables received 31 votes in all, the majority of them being green or “agree” votes. Only two items received “disagree” votes: adding a community garden to Wilcox Park, and repainting, replacing, or removing the metal play equipment at Jones Park.

Twenty new amenity icons were added to the park map, with the most common items being more bathrooms, bike racks, swing sets, and shade structures. Commonly discussed topics with market visitors included:

- The location of a potential splash pad and dog park
- Opportunities to make Wilcox Park more visible and used within the park system
- A desire for more bike trails and lanes throughout the city
- A desire for more public art within the park system
- A desire for a greater diversity of playground equipment throughout the park system

Community Organizations Focus Groups

MSA and City Staff held two virtual focus groups to better understand park, trail, and recreation needs from specific park user groups. Park users were identified at the beginning of the process by City Staff and the PRB. Focus groups were split into the following categories: 1) civic organizations, and 2) sports organizations. The major takeaways from each group are listed below.

Civic Organizations

- Need trail connections between parks
- Improve promotion of park and trail offerings - online and in physical kiosks
- Need to develop a dog park
- Need to find project champions (volunteer community members) to lead initiatives forward (e.g. disc golf tournament)
- Ensure the natural element of parks is not lost to active recreation needs
- Need more activities for adults and seniors (e.g. fitness classes, walking group, pickleball)
- Add pollinator gardens or meadows with educational signage
- Organize civic groups together once a year to discuss needs and accomplishments

Sports Organizations

- Ballfield lighting at Memorial Park needs to be updated and trees trimmed back to reduce shade
- Need to improve traffic flow in Memorial Park and Rock River Park (shared in/out lanes)
- Need additional space for parking at Memorial Park
- Need trail connections between parks
- With new ballfield facilities, ensure they are multi-use (e.g. use movable fencing so fields can be used for something else outside of baseball season)
- Focus on adding ADA accessibility to parks (e.g. parking, restrooms, site connectivity)
- Improve communication among all sports organizations in the community
- Girls’ sports in Fort Atkinson need to be prioritized (e.g. more leagues/teams, improved softball fields)

4.4 REGIONAL & STATE INSIGHTS

Insights from the Wisconsin Statewide Outdoor Comprehensive Recreation Plan (SCORP), 2019-2023.

Figure 4.3: Statewide Outdoor Comprehensive Recreation Plan Planning Areas

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



The recently updated Statewide Outdoor Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) features a Recreation Opportunities Analysis (ROA). The ROA examines existing outdoor-recreation opportunities compared to future opportunities in eight regions throughout Wisconsin. Jefferson County is located in the Southern Gateways region. The Southern Gateways region contains a variety of environments - rolling hills in the south, the centrally located Wisconsin River, and large marshes in the east - the combination of which provides a wide array of recreational opportunities.

The region also has a number of important geologic features, including Devil’s Lake - one of Wisconsin’s most popular recreation destinations. The rapid development around Madison has also increased demand for urban-based recreation opportunities such as dog parks, bicycle trails and developed sports facilities. The ROA found that residents of the Southern Gateways region participate in the following activities at higher rates than the State average:

- Bicycling on surfaced trails, mountain biking, and single track
- Tent camping
- Canoeing/kayaking
- Cross-country skiing/snowshoeing
- Fishing from shore, boat, canoe, and kayak
- Hiking, walking, and running on trails
- Big game hunting (deer, bear)

Chapter 5

RECOMMENDATIONS



RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 EXISTING PARK FACILITIES

The quantitative, qualitative, and geographic analysis discussed in Chapter 4 reveals the need for improvements to existing facilities, as well as the potential acquisition and development of new sites for future recreational use. It should be noted that some of the recommendations may require considerable cooperation with others, including the residents of Fort Atkinson, local civic and business associations, neighboring municipalities, Jefferson County, and State agencies. In nearly every case, more detailed planning, engineering, study, budgeting, and/or discussion will be necessary before decisions are made to actually acquire land or construct recreational facilities.

The recommendations of this plan are divided into four major sections:

- 1. Recommendations for existing park facilities
- 2. Recommendations for new park facilities
- 3. Recommendations for recreational trails
- 4. Miscellaneous recommendations

The timeline for completion of the recommendations is within the next five years, or the life of this plan. Due to budgetary constraints, it is unlikely that all of the recommendations within this chapter will be implemented in the next five years. Maintenance and improvement projects will be prioritized on an annual basis by the Parks & Recreation Director in conjunction with the City Council as part of the City’s annual budget. Any of the recommendations regarding locating new park facilities will be coordinated with land annexation and/or approval of development proposals; therefore, the timing is much more variable.



Bandshell at Barrie Park

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS



BARRIE PARK

Park Address: 210 Robert Street
 Park Size: 1.4 acres
 10-Minute Walk Population (2021): 2,716 residents

EXISTING FACILITIES

TYPE	INSTALL YR	ISSUES
Playground Equipment	1990	Paint peeling/cracking on older metal play equipment
Bandshell	1972	
Restroom	2013	
Drinking Water	2010	
Picnic Tables		
Benches		
Parking Lot		
Fountain (120 yrs old)	2007	Cracks in water line and foundation



RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY	COST ESTIMATE
New updated playground staying with ages 2-5; increase footprint for a playground overall.	6+ yrs	\$180,000
Add shade structure to bandshell.	6+ yrs	TBD
Fix crack in fountain's water line and foundation.	1-3 yrs	\$25,000+
Consider updating bandshell's speaker and microphone system.	6+ yrs	\$20,000+
Repaint caterpillar play equipment.	3-5 yrs	Maint. (\$2,500)
Install a bike rack.	1-3 yrs	\$500/ea.
Add more trees/shade.	6+ yrs	\$500/ea.
Add swing set.	6+ yrs	\$10,000

SITE PHOTOS



BANDSHELL



METAL PLAY EQUIPMENT



PLAYGROUND



PICNIC TABLES & RESTROOMS



ENDL PARK

Park Address: 1350 Endl Boulevard
 Park Size: 2.6 acres
 10-Minute Walk Population (2021): 1,186 residents

EXISTING FACILITIES

TYPE	INSTALL YR
Playground Equipment	2003
Backstop	
Soccer Field	2010
Grills	2003
Picnic Tables	2003
Paved Walkway	2004



RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY	COST ESTIMATE
Regrade soccer field.	6+ yrs	\$20,000 - \$80,000
Install a drinking fountain.	3-5 yrs	\$9,000
Install more benches and picnic tables.	1-3 yrs	\$3,000/ea.
Install swing set.	6+ yrs	\$10,000

SITE PHOTOS



PLAYGROUND



PICNIC TABLES & GRILLS



GREENSPACE



HISTORICAL MARKER



LORMAN BICENTENNIAL PARK

Park Address: 210 S. Water Street - W.
 Park Size: 2.2 acres
 10-Minute Walk Population (2021): 2,057 residents

EXISTING FACILITIES

TYPE	INSTALL YR
Playground	2004
Riverwalk	2000
Drinking Water	
Picnic Tables	
Benches	
Parking Lot	2000



RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY	COST ESTIMATE
Add shade (umbrellas) to the tables.	3-5 yrs	\$1,500/ea.
Add restrooms with a lift station.	6+ yrs	\$200,000
Add dog related features (i.e. drinking fountain for dogs).	3-5 yrs	\$10,000
Construct a shelter/shade structure.	6+ yrs	\$60,000
Add more flood tolerant trees (ex. Sycamore).	1-3 yrs	\$500/ea.
Add bicycle parking.	1-3 yrs	\$500/ea.

SITE PHOTOS



SCULPTURE &
LITTLE FREE LIBRARY



PLAYGROUND



MEMORIAL



GAZEBO



ROTARY ARROWHEAD PARK

Park Address: 951 Blackhawk Drive
 Park Size: 3.1 acres
 10-Minute Walk Population (2021): 1,555 residents

EXISTING FACILITIES

TYPE	INSTALL YR
Playground	2019
Bike/Walking Trail	2020
Picnic Tables	2020



RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY	COST ESTIMATE
Install benches.	3-5 yrs	\$1,200/ea. (Bench Only)
Install drinking fountain.	6+ yrs	\$9,000
Improve sidewalk access to park from adjacent neighborhoods.	6+ yrs	\$50,000
Consider creating a community garden at location; investigate water access and neighbor buy in.	3-5 yrs	TBD

SITE PHOTOS



PICNIC TABLES



OPEN GREENSPACE



PLAYGROUND



TRAIL/PLAYGROUND



TRAILWAY PARK

Park Address: 418 Ramesh Avenue
 Park Size: 1.3 acres
 10-Minute Walk Population (2021): 772 residents

EXISTING FACILITIES

TYPE	INSTALL YR
Playground	2014
Open Playfield	2014
Bike/Walking Trail	2014
Picnic Tables	2014
Benches	2014



RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY	COST ESTIMATE
Install a drinking fountain with dog fountain at the bottom.	6+ yrs	\$10,000
Add trees for shade or shade structures.	3-5 yrs	\$500/ea.
Consider adding ADA play equipment.	3-5 yrs	\$140,000
Install a small pavilion.	6+ yrs	\$480,000

SITE PHOTOS





COMMUNITY PARKS



JONES PARK

Park Address: 615 Janesville Avenue
Park Size: 14.6 acres
10-Minute Walk Population (2021): 13,54 residents

EXISTING FACILITIES

TYPE	INSTALL YR
Playground Ages 2-12	2015
Playground Ages 5-12	2005
Baseball/Softball Diamonds	
Open Air Shelter	
Restroom	
Concessions Stand	2002
Grills	
Drinking Water	2010
Grandstand	1925
Picnic Tables	
1st Base Stadium Seats	2015
3rd Base Stadium Seats	2005
Parking Lot	



RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY	COST ESTIMATE
Install new scoreboards.	3-5 yrs	\$15,000/ea.
Add shade to cover people standing at the concession stand.	3-5 yrs	TBD
Repave parking lot and access drive off of S 6th St.	3-5 yrs	\$68,000
Repaint, replace, or consider removing metal play equipment (eastern half of the park).	3-5 yrs	Maint. OR replace \$240,000
Repave or remove remnants of walking paths in eastern half of the park.	3-5 yrs	\$15,000
Consider removing or updating horseshoe pits.	6+ yrs	\$3,500 - \$5,000
Add shade over playground.	6+ yrs	\$15,000/ea.
Add small picnic pavilions.	6+ yrs	\$60,000/ea.
Consider installing a splash pad near the bike path.	6+ yrs	\$200,000 - \$350,000 (\$120/SF)
Consider adding fitness equipment.	6+ yrs	\$80,000
Create a tree planting program.	1-3 yrs	TBD
New shelter on east boundary, convert current shelter to storage.	6+ yrs	\$250,000+
Add bicycle parking.	1-3 yrs	\$500/ea.

SITE PHOTOS



GRANDSTAND



SWING SET



BALLFIELD



PLAYGROUND



MEMORIAL PARK

Park Address: 520 Bark River Road
 Park Size: 7.4 acres
 10-Minute Walk Population (2021): 864 residents

EXISTING FACILITIES

TYPE	INSTALL YR
Playground	2006
Baseball/Softball Diamond	1950's
Open Air Shelter	2003
Restrooms	2011
Concessions Stand	2011
Drinking Water	
Bleachers	2018
Picnic Tables	
Parking Lot	



RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY	COST ESTIMATE
Improve traffic flow within park, especially on weekends when families visit the compost pile. Define/paint existing parking stalls. Expand parking.	3-5 yrs	\$1,500/ new stall \$10,000 - \$15,000 to repaint existing stalls
Replace and update ballfield lighting system.	3-5 yrs	\$72,000 (1,200 per light fixture)
Trim trees to reduce the amount of shade cast on baseball diamonds and use of lights.	1-3 yrs	Maint.
Extend paved path to playground equipment.	3-5 yrs	\$8/SF Concrete
Update/renovate bathrooms; consider adding more bathrooms.	6+ yrs	\$30,000-\$45,000
Expand ballfield fence distances.	3-5 yrs	\$35,000 - \$50,000/field
Add bicycle parking.	1-3 yrs	\$500/ea.

SITE PHOTOS





RALPH PARK

Park Address: 600 Jefferson Street
 Park Size: 13 acres
 10-Minute Walk Population (2021): 1,354 residents

EXISTING FACILITIES

TYPE	INSTALL YR
Playground	2007
Baseball/Softball Diamond	
Bike/Walking Trails	
Open Air Shelter	
Restroom	1981
Concessions Stand	1981
Grills	
Drinking Water	2008/2020
Bleachers	2009
Picnic Tables	
Benches	
Parking Lot	
Wheels Park	2020
Basketball Court	2010
Storybook Walk	2022



Photo Credit: Google Maps

RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY (LOW-MED-HIGH)	COST ESTIMATE
Install signage off of Hake St. to showcase what the park has to offer (wheels park, basketball courts, diamonds, etc.); include flowers or other landscaping to make the signage inviting.	3-5 yrs	\$5,000/sign; \$6,000 Landscape
Update corner shelter and make it bigger.	3-5 yrs	\$150,000
Install new scoreboard.	1-3 yrs	\$15,000 per field
Extend paved path/create a connection to smaller playground adjacent to red and blue playground.	3-5 yrs	\$4,500
Consider replacing smaller playground (paint rubbing off and sun damage).	3-5 yrs	\$200,000
Install lights at Fort Wheels Park; consider putting them on a timer.	3-5 yrs	\$5,000/pole
Consider installing a splash pad in open lawn area adjacent to Wheels Park.	6+ yrs	\$150 - \$170+ /SF
Consider installing pickleball courts, with shade, in open lawn area adjacent to Wheels Park.	6+ yrs	\$180,000
Consider installing a dog park in open lawn area adjacent to Wheels Park.	6+ yrs	\$40,000
Potentially add parking.	6+ yrs	\$60,000

SITE PHOTOS



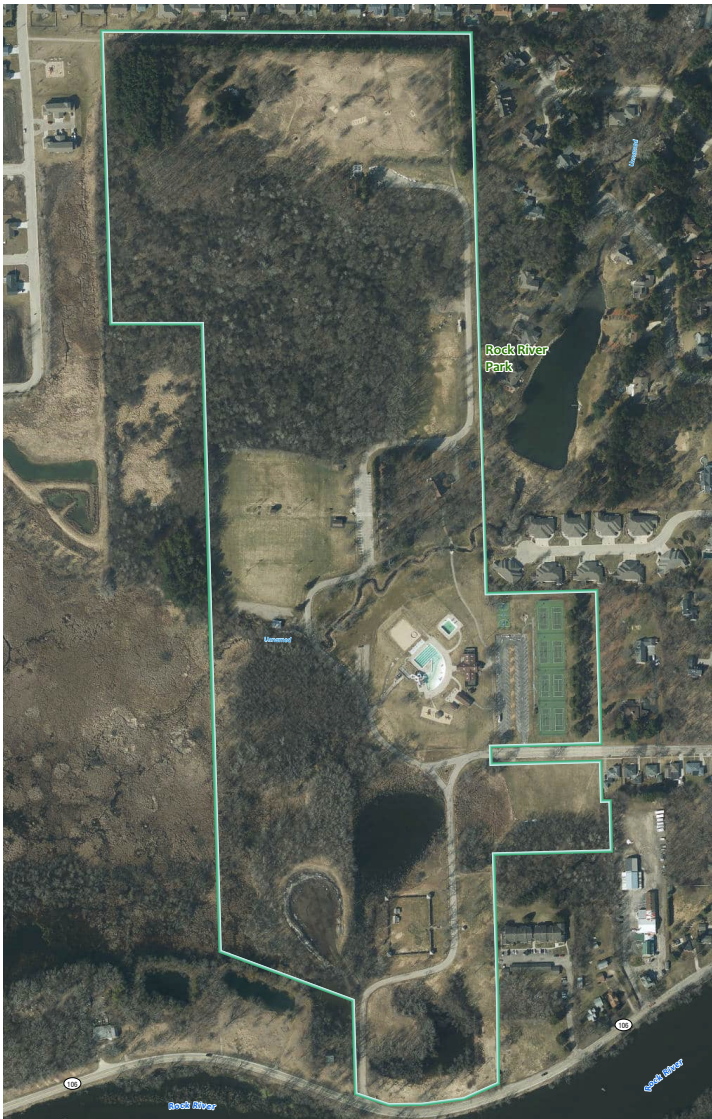


ROCK RIVER PARK

Park Address: 1300 Lillian Street
Park Size: 43 acres
10-Minute Walk Population (2021): 102 residents

EXISTING FACILITIES

TYPE	INSTALL YR
Swimming	1992
Playground at Aquatic Center	1992
Basketball Court	
Tennis Courts	1999
Football/La Crosse Field	1990's
Obstacle Course	2008
Archery Range	2015
Bike/Walking Trail	
Frisbee/Disc Golf Course	2015
Rotary Pavilion	1999
Playground at Rotary Pavilion	2004
Restrooms	2000
Football Field Concession Stand	1998
Clubhouse	
Grills	
Drinking Water	
Bleachers	2008
Picnic Tables	
Benches	
Parking Lot	



RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY	COST ESTIMATE
Build up area across from Pavilion for more parking.	3-5 yrs	\$1,500/stall
Designate parking stalls and handicap stalls (especially near the Clubhouse and pavilion).	1-3 yrs	\$500/ea.
Install signage for overflow parking off of Lilian St.	1-3 yrs	\$5,000/sign
Consider installing a splash pad in the pool area.	6+ yrs	\$120/SF
Replace aging and broken wood fencing.	1-3 yrs	\$80/LF
Pave all parking lots.	3-5 yrs	\$100,000
Assess the cost of replacing football facilities.	6+ yrs	\$80,000/field
Add more shade/umbrellas to pool area.	3-5 yrs	\$20,000/ea.
Expand disc golf facility to 18-holes and hold a community tournament.	3-5 yrs	\$20,000 - \$70,000
Upgrade/replace basketball hoops and lights.	3-5 yrs	\$2,000/ea.
Acquire the four former homes (Jefferson County-owned) along the west side of the park's highway 106 entrance. If/when acquired, install a new gateway or landscaping feature on the land.	6+ yrs	TBD
Install new playground equipment at Rotary Pavilion.	6+ yrs	\$200,000
Improve trail routes.	3-5 yrs	\$35 LF (asphalt)
Enhance clubhouse parking.	3-5 yrs	\$1,500/stall

SITE PHOTOS



ROCK RIVER PARK - SITE PHOTOS CONT.



ROTARY PAVILION INTERIOR



TENNIS/PICKLEBALL COURTS



AQUATIC CENTER



FOOTBALL FIELD



DISC GOLF ENTRANCE

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NATURE PRESERVES

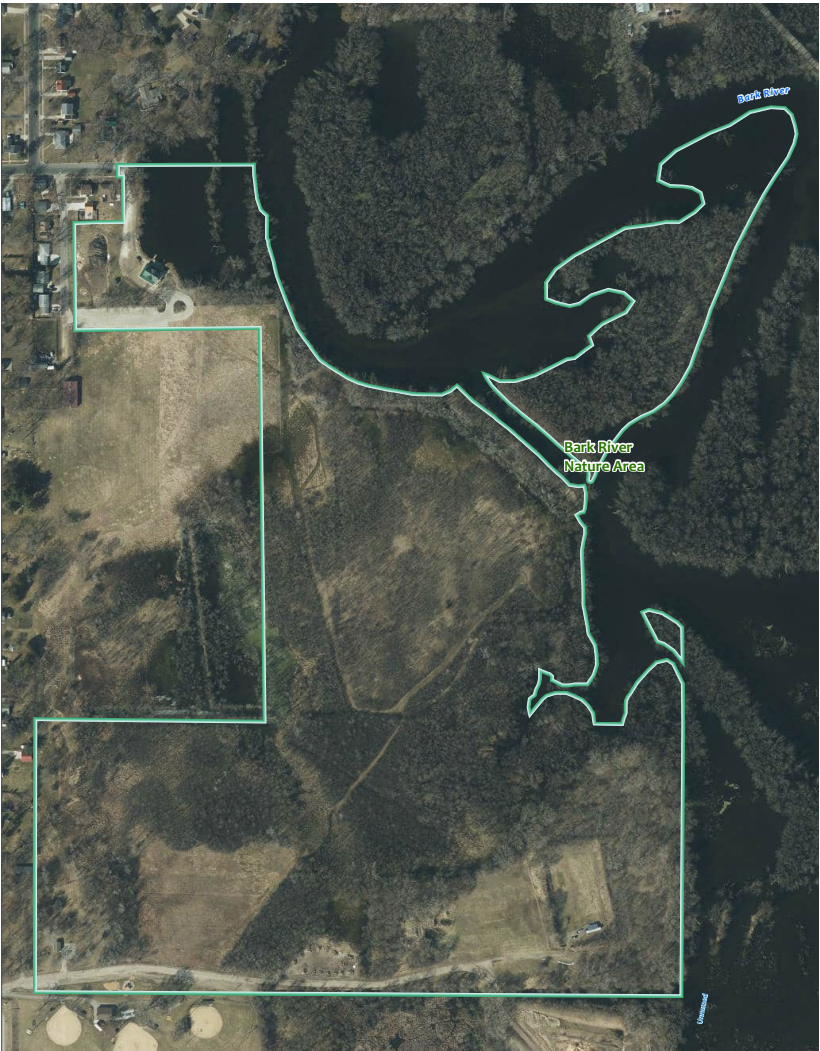


BARK RIVER NATURE PARK

Park Address: 550 S. 4th Street
 Park Size: 100.7 acres
 10-Minute Walk Population (2021): 729 residents

EXISTING FACILITIES

TYPE	INSTALL YR
Boat Launch	
Fishing Pier	
Ice Skating/Hockey	
Warming House	2015
Bike/Walking Trail	
Drinking Water	
Picnic Tables	
Benches	
Parking Lot	2020
Haumerson's Pond	
Trail Signage	2020



RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY (LOW-MED-HIGH)	COST ESTIMATE
Look to acquire the School District land and possibly use as soccer fields if necessary.	6+ yrs	Easement or Agreement
Install a garage/concessions building to store equipment and winter materials.	3-5 yrs	\$350,000

SITE PHOTOS



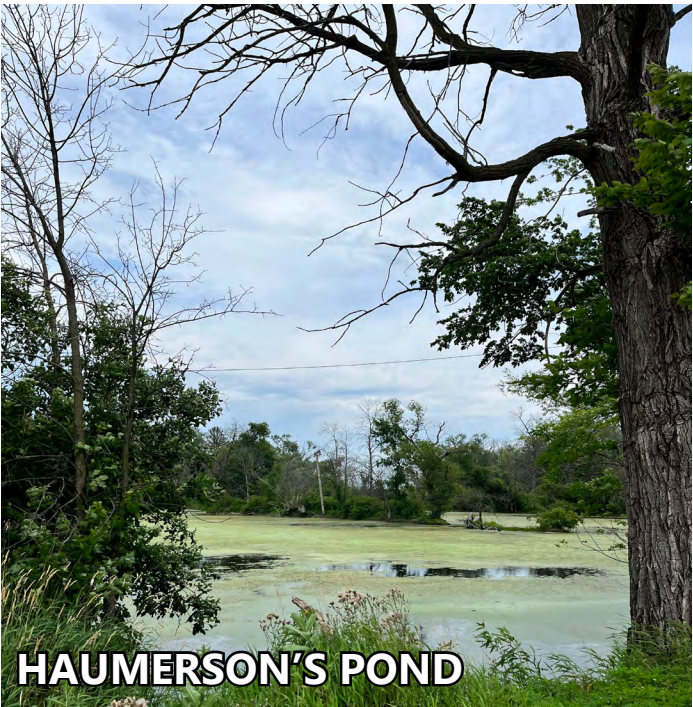
WETLANDS



ENCLOSED SHELTER



TRAIL SIGNAGE



HAUMERSON'S POND

SPECIAL USE PARKS



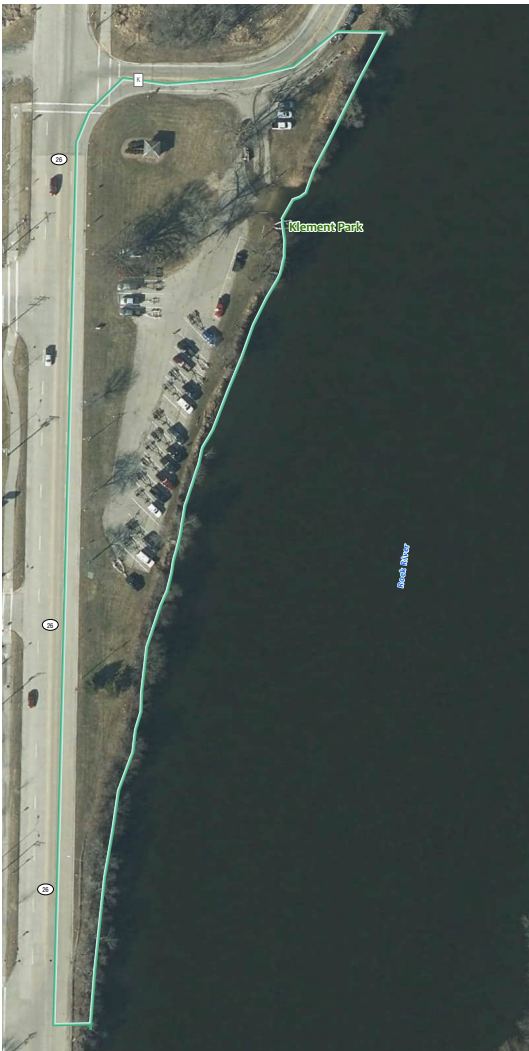


KLEMENT PARK

Park Address: 1350 N. High Street
 Park Size: 2.5 acres
 10-Minute Walk Population (2021): 208 residents

EXISTING FACILITIES

TYPE	INSTALL YR
Boat Launch	1989
Fishing Pier	1989
Benches	
Parking Lot	1989



RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY (LOW-MED-HIGH)	COST ESTIMATE
Potentially install a second boat ramp with Marina and boat slips – possibly bid out to business and a portion is designated for the City.	6+ yrs	\$300,000
Resurface parking lot.	3-5 yrs	\$18,000 - \$20,000
Install an open air pavilion with picnic facilities.	6+ yrs	\$60,000
Install lighting for boat launch.	6+ yrs	\$5,000/pole

SITE PHOTOS



BENCHES



PARKING LOT



SIGNAGE



BOAT LAUNCH



LIONS PARK

Park Address: 1130 Janesville Avenue
 Park Size: 2.3 acres
 10-Minute Walk Population (2021): 842 residents

EXISTING FACILITIES

TYPE	INSTALL YR
Bike/Walking Trail	2005
Open Air Shelter	2006
Picnic Tables	2006
Benches	
Parking Lot	2006



RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY (LOW-MED-HIGH)	COST ESTIMATE
Install drinking fountain.	3-5 yrs	\$9,000

SITE PHOTOS



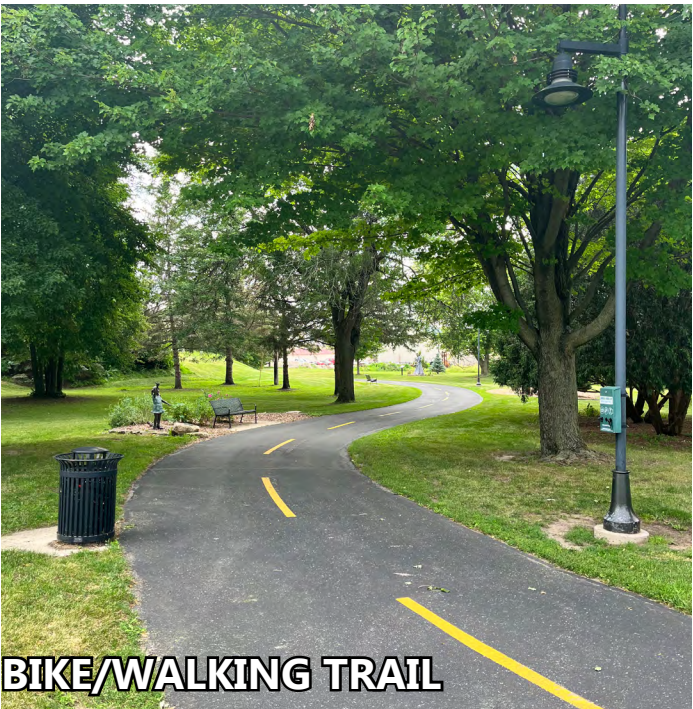
OPEN AIR SHELTER



BENCH & PUBLIC ART



PUBLIC ART



BIKE/WALKING TRAIL

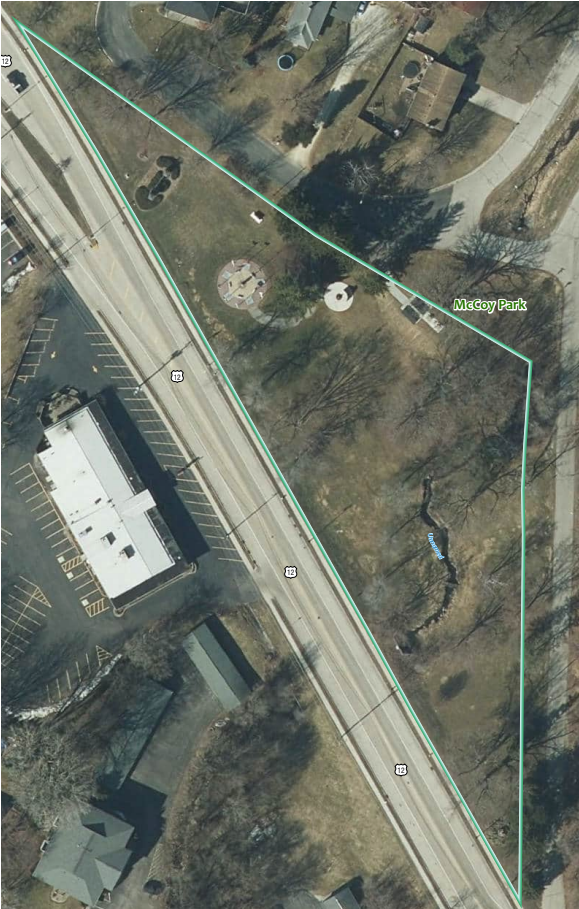


MCCOY PARK

Park Address: 1202 Madison Avenue
 Park Size: 2.2 acres
 10-Minute Walk Population (2021): 1,039 residents

EXISTING FACILITIES

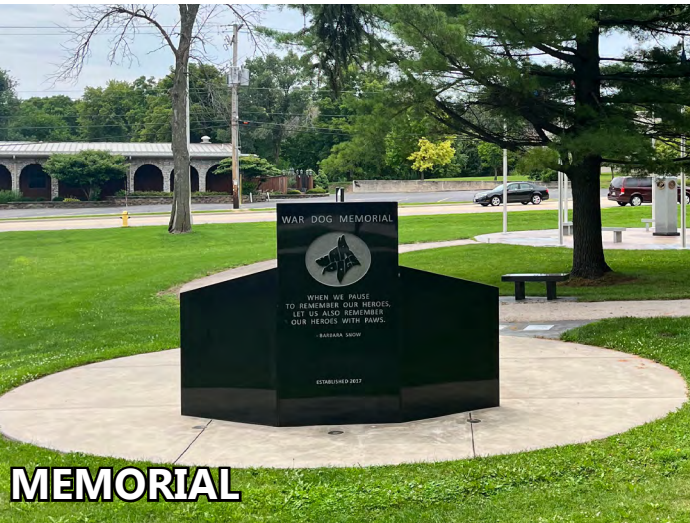
TYPE	INSTALL YR	ISSUES
Bike/Walking Trail		
Picnic Tables		
Benches		
Parking Lot	2013	
War Dog Memorial	2016	Crack in foundation
Veteran's Monument	2013	



RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY (LOW-MED-HIGH)	COST ESTIMATE
Create a monument plan.	3-5 yrs	TBD

SITE PHOTOS



RIVERSIDE PARK

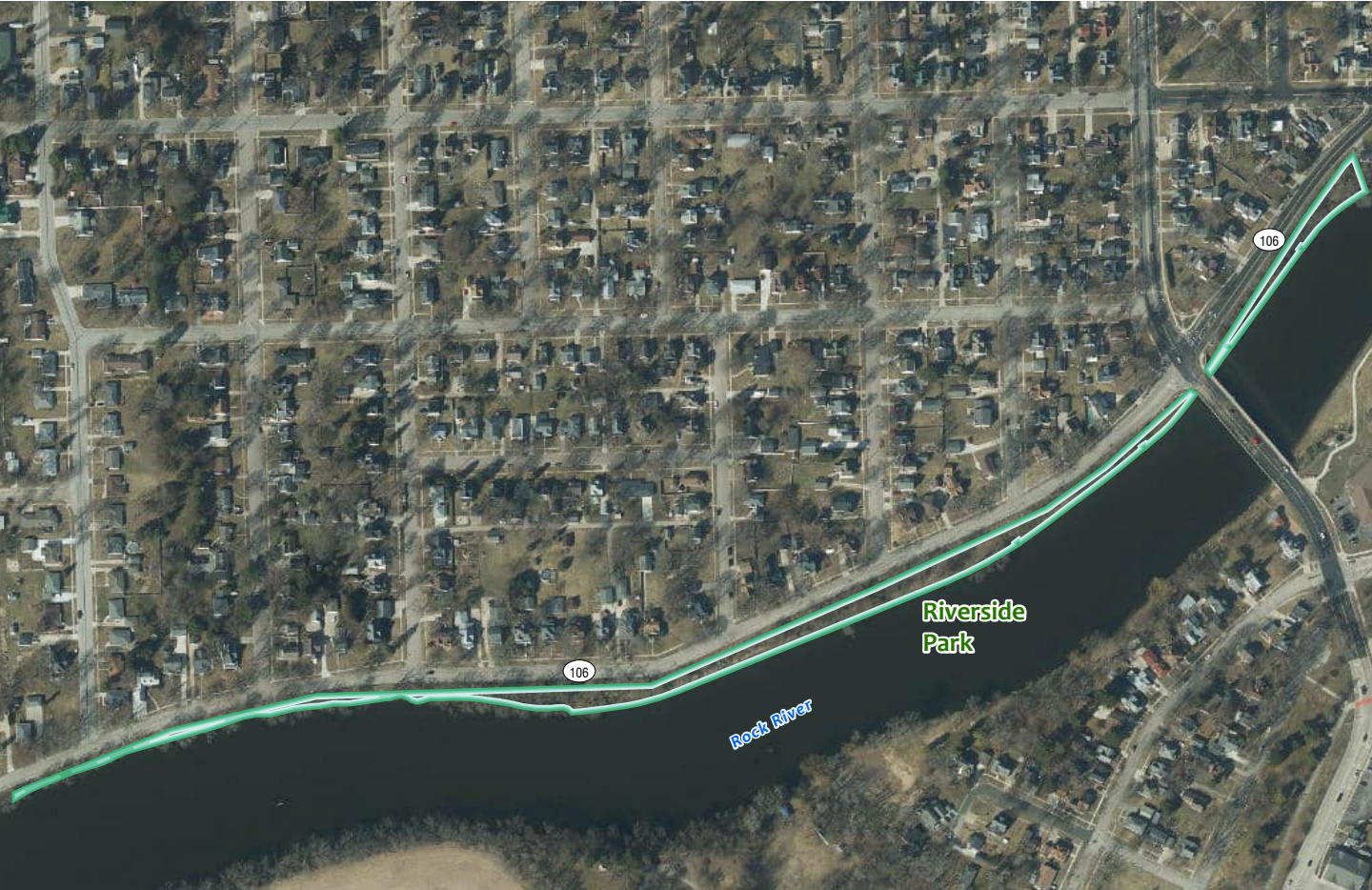
Park Address: Riverside Dr
Park Size: 2.8 acres
10-Minute Walk Population (2021): unavailable

EXISTING FACILITIES

TYPE	INSTALL YR
Greenspace	
Benches	

RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY (LOW-MED-HIGH)	COST ESTIMATE
Improve fishing and picnic areas.	3-5 yrs	TBD
Consider trail connection to Robert Street.	1-3 yrs	TBD



WILCOX PARK

Park Address: 317 Wilcox Street
Park Size: 0.8 acres
10-Minute Walk Population (2021): 1,424 residents

EXISTING FACILITIES

TYPE	INSTALL YR
Greenspace	1972

RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY (LOW-MED-HIGH)	COST ESTIMATE
Improve awareness of park, including entrance point.	3-5 yrs	\$5,000
Consider development of a public food forest through a collaboration with Heart of the City.	3-5 yrs	TBD



RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2 PROPOSED PARK FACILITIES

The four proposed neighborhood parks displayed in Figure 5.1 originate from the City’s Amended 2022 Comprehensive Plan. In discussions between MSA and City Staff, it was determined that the results of this plan’s geographic analysis paralleled these conceptual locations for new parkland identified in the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, those proposed locations are carried forward and reiterated in this plan. The decision was also made to only include in this plan proposed park locations that fell within the City’s existing municipal boundary. For additional proposed park locations outside current City boundaries, please refer to page 133 in the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

The four proposed neighborhood parks in Figure 5.1 are all located within areas of the City where future residential growth is mostly likely to occur (see Figure 2.3 Future Land Use Map on page 13). In particular, the two proposed parks in the northeast portion of the City, near Fort Atkinson High School, are likely to be included in the planned Banker Road subdivision project. The proposed parks in the southeastern portion of the City would help fill the service gap identified in the 10-minute walk park service analysis (see the yellow circle in Figure 4.2 on page 21).

5.3 PROPOSED RECREATIONAL TRAILS

Similar to the proposed new parks discussed above, it was determined that the results of this plan’s geographic analysis paralleled the conceptual locations for new recreational trails identified in the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, those proposed Off-Road and On-Road Trails are carried forward and reiterated in this plan.

Figure 5.1 also proposes several trail segments beyond those identified in the 2022 Amended Comprehensive Plan. These segments were determined during this CORP’s planning process and are described in more detail as follows:

Segments A & B: These are two alternative paths to connect the current gap between existing trails that end along the Fort Atkinson River Walk and pick up again at the Bark River Nature Park. Segment A would be a on-road connection primarily along

Milwaukee Ave and Zida St. Alternatively, Segment B would extend the Fort Atkinson Riverwalk along the Rock River to eventually connect within Bark River Nature Park. Both of these segments are conceptual and require further analysis to determine their feasibility.

Segment C: This is a conceptual trail to connect the existing path within the Bark River Nature Park to the entrance of Memorial Park along Bark River Dr. This segment would pass through land that is currently undeveloped and requires further study to determine a best route that minimizes disturbance to the natural environment, while also creating a viable connection between key City parks.

Segment D: This path along Lorman St would act as a spur from the proposed extension of the Glacial River Trail along the railroad right-of-way to Ralph Park.

Finally, the results of the public survey identified several intersections that Fort Atkinson residents believe to be unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclist to cross. The City should analyze infrastructure improvements to improve bicyclist and pedestrian crossings at the locations identified in Figure 5.1, and described in more detail below:

Intersection a: Woodland Dr and N High St, near Klement Park.

Intersection b: Sherman Ave and Riverside Dr, near Barrie Park.

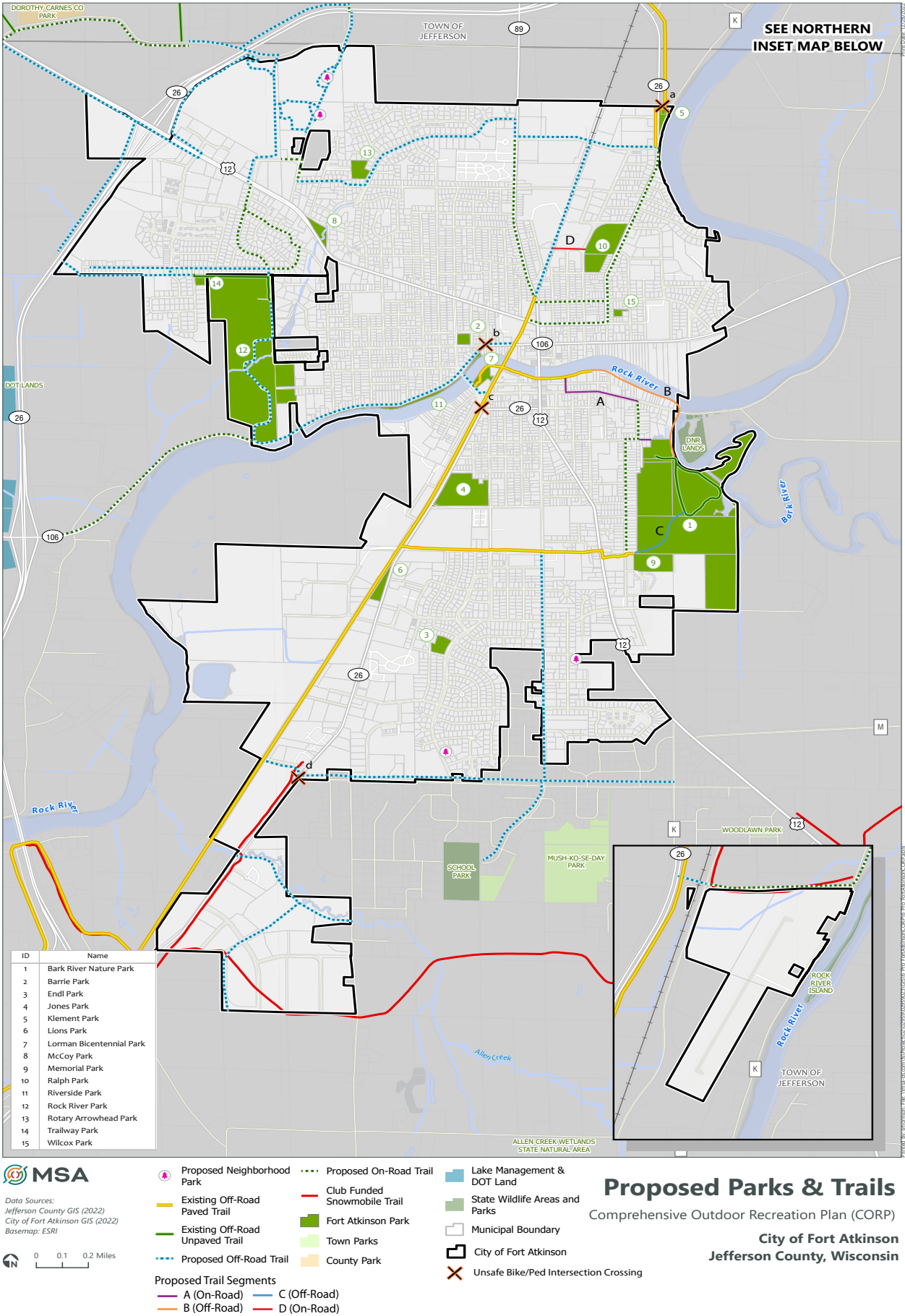
Intersection c: S 3rd St, Robert St, and Janesville Ave, near Glacial River Trail.

Intersection d: Hackbarth and HWY 26.

5.5 OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The following list of recommendations are more general or apply across the park system as opposed to individual parks. The priority level for each recommendation is listed in parenthesis, where a 1 indicates a high priority (completed in the next 1-3 years), 2 indicates a medium priority (completed in the next 3-5 years), and 3 indicates a low priority (completed beyond the next 6 years).

Figure 5.1 Proposed Parks, Trails, and Intersection Improvements



General Parks & Trails

- Review and revise Section 70.04.04 Park Development Fees in Lieu of Land Dedication of the City's Land Division and Development Ordinance; clarify the distinction between fees in lieu of parkland dedication and park development fees (1)
- Build all-inclusive, accessible play structures within the parks system that are accessible for both children and adults (2)
- Install or designate more handicap parking stalls within all parks (2)
- Increase public awareness of park offerings, facilities, and amenities (1)
- Create more opportunities for nature watching and mindfulness within the parks system, with Wilcox Park as one potential location to expand this offering (2)
- Create more engagement with and access to the river throughout the parks system (2)
- Conduct an ADA audit and develop an ADA transition plan for parks (2)
- Design park facilities to meet the requirements of the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) (1)
- Ensure all city parks are viewable/searchable in google maps (2)
- Display, or make available, a park system map on the City's website (1)
- Create a park system-wide sculpture garden concept plan (2)
- Create off-road trail connections between all City parks (2)
- Address rusting in the railings and mulch wash out issue along the Fort Atkinson Riverwalk (maintenance item) (1)

General Recreation

- Create a walking group/meet-up for seniors to foster physical and mental wellness (1)

- Consider a city-sponsored, community event at the end of August before the beginning of the school year. Use it as a draw to bring in people from outside Fort Atkinson (1)
- Expand programming at parks, especially concerts (1)
- Create swim lessons specifically for children with special needs, disabilities, and/or autism (2)
- Expand recreational programming targeted for 2-3 year old range (there is a gap between infants to 2-year old's and 4 to 5 year old's) (1)
- Expand recreational programming offerings for adults in evening hours. Program recommendations include: tap dance, Zumba, yoga, pickleball, fitness classes, badminton, and softball. Bring back adult water aerobics class (2)

Partnerships

- Foster greater connection and collaboration between civic organizations that tend to focus on individual parks; consider holding annual or twice a year meetings (1)
- Find a community member to champion the creation and management of an adult disc golf league/meet-up (1)
- Improve communication and collaboration between sports organizations within Fort Atkinson (between leagues of the same sport, different sports, and age groups) (1)
- Promote the City to both tourists and potential new residents as a destination for natural resources and outdoor recreation (1)
- Coordinate City park, trail, and open space planning and improvements with the towns of Koshkonong and Jefferson and Jefferson County. Where feasible, provide continuous trail and pedestrian access between City and regional recreational facilities (1)

Chapter 6

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter summarizes tools and mechanisms that the City can use to fund implementation of the park, trail, and open space recommendations discussed in Chapter 5. This chapter also outlines the process for plan adoption and plan amendments.

6.1 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Maintenance and operational expenses of the City’s Parks & Recreation Departments are generally funded through property taxes and user fees. As the park system grows, the funding needed to meet the basic maintenance and operational costs also grows. Often there are insufficient funds to undertake major capital improvement projects. There are a wide variety of potential funding sources to assist with up-front capital costs, including acquisition of land and the development of new recreational facilities.

Grant Programs

An important source of funding is grant programs offered by state and federal agencies, especially the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Table 6.1 provides a summary of common state and federal park and recreation grant programs. The table is not an exhaustive list of grant programs, rather those that are typically used by municipalities. Other grant programs may exist and information regarding funding details shown in Table 6.1 should be verified with grant providers prior to seeking grant funding.

Community Fundraising & Volunteer Groups

Community groups and civic organizations are sometimes willing to organize fundraising efforts to assist with costs, and they may also be able to marshal volunteer labor to assist with small development projects such as trail creation or playground installations. Local business and corporate support should also be sought. Funders can be acknowledged with plaques, signs, or walkway bricks, including the option of park or feature naming rights for major donors.

501(c)3 Foundation

The City can set up an endowment fund as an additional means of providing continual financial support for park acquisition and development. An endowment fund works like a permanent savings account. The amount individuals give, which is the principal, is never spent. Only the interest income

is spent, thereby providing a continual source of monies. A park endowment fund can provide a means for residents to make gifts of any size (including estate bequests), with the certainty that the money donated will only be used for the advancement of recreation in the community. Gifts to an endowment fund are typically tax deductible under federal and state law.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

As part of a broader plan to redevelop an area, the City can use tax increment financing to assist with parkland or trail acquisition and development. There are some limitations to what revenues from a TIF district can be used to pay for, generally the costs of constructing public buildings cannot be funded with TIF. The City currently has three active TIF Districts, TID #6, #7, and #8. In 2022, the City has also proposed the creation of two additional TID’s, #9 and # 10. The TID’s were created for the purpose stimulating redevelopment and new public and private investments.

Parkland Dedication

Per the City’s Land Division and Development Ordinance, parkland is to be set aside when new subdivisions are platted in Fort Atkinson. For single family homes and duplexes, 1,000 square feet (SF) of land per dwelling unit shall be set aside for public parks, trails, or other recreation activities. For multi-family dwelling units and commercial or industrial land, the rate is 750 SF per dwelling unit or 4% of the total acreage of the site, respectively.

Fees in Lieu of Land Dedication

When it is determined by the Plan Commission that a proposed subdivision cannot set aside land at the rates described above, fees in lieu of land dedication can be provided to the City to help fund future park, trail, and recreation needs. According to the City’s 2023 fee schedule, \$1,600 per dwelling unit/lot, or 8% of the raw land value, shall be paid by the developer to the City.

Table 6.1 State and Federal Funding Opportunities

Funding Programs By Category	Maximum Award	Application Due Date	Granting Agency
Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program			
The Stewardship Program was established in 1989 to preserve Wisconsin’s most significant land and water resources for future generations and to provide the land base and recreational facilities needed for quality outdoor experiences. These goals are achieved by acquiring land and easements for conservation and recreation purposes, developing and improving recreational facilities, and restoring wildlife habitat. This is an umbrella program that funds the following grants:	50% local match required	1-May	DNR
Aids for the Acquisition and Development of Local Parks (ADLP)			
• Helps to buy land or easements and develop or renovate local park and recreation area facilities for nature-based outdoor recreation purposed (e.g., trails, fishing access, and park support facilities).			
Urban Green Space (UGS)			
• Helps to buy land or easements in urban or urbanizing area to preserve the scenic and ecological values of natural open spaces for nature-based outdoor recreation, including non-commercial gardening.			
Urban Rivers (UR)			
• Helps to buy land on or adjacent to river flowing through urban or urbanizing areas to preserve or restore the scenic and environmental values of riverways for nature-based outdoor recreation.			
Acquisition of Development Rights Grants (ADR)			
• Helps to buy development rights (easements) for the protection of natural, agricultural, or forestry values, that would enhance nature-based outdoor recreation.			
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON)			
• This fund is used to implement projects that are identified by both the local and the state Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. • In general, land acquisition, development, and renovation projects for public outdoor recreation purposes are eligible LWCF projects. LWCF does not include the “nature-based outdoor recreation” restriction that the Stewardship Local Assistance Programs do.	50% local match required	1-May	DNR
Recreational Trails Program Grant			
• Eligible projects include: maintenance and restoration of existing trails, development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages, construction of new trails, and acquisition of easement or property for trails. • May only be used on trails which have been identified in or which further a specific goal of a local, county or state trail plan included or reference in a statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan required by the federal LAWCON.	Up to 50% of the total project costs of a recreational trail project. Payments are reimbursements on costs incurred after project approval.	1-May	DNR
Urban Forestry			
Provides technical service and financial assistance to communities for developing urban forestry programs. Priorities include: 1) Communities needing to develop an urban forestry plan; 2) Communities needing worker training; and 3) Communities needing to conduct a street tree inventory. Eligible projects include 1) Undertaking street tree inventories; 2) Training for Village tree workers; 3) Developing urban open space programs; 4) Developing urban forestry plans; 5) Developing a tree ordinance; 6) Developing a public awareness program; and, 7) Tree planting and maintenance	50% local match required. Grants range from \$1,000 to \$25,000.	1-Oct	DNR
Lake Protection and Classification Grants			
• Designed to assist lake users, lake communities and local governments as they undertake projects to protect and restore lakes and their ecosystems. Eligible projects include: • Purchase of property or a conservation easement • Restoration of wetlands • Development of local regulations or ordinances • Lake classification projects that allow counties to design and implement local land and water management programs that are tailored to specific classes of lakes in response to various development and recreational use pressures (these grants are limited to \$50,000). • Lake protection projects recommended in a DNR-approved plan including watershed management, lake restoration, diagnostic feasibility studies, or any other projects that will protect or improve lakes.	25% local match required. \$200,000 maximum per project.	1-May	DNR
Recreational Boating Facilities Grant			
• Construction of capital improvements to provide safe recreational boating facilities and for feasibility studies related to the development of safe recreational facilities. • Also includes purchase of navigation aids, dredging of channels of waterways, and chemically treating Eurasian water milfoil.	50% local match required	Established quarterly	DNR
Sport Fish Restoration Funding			
• Sport Fish Restoration - Fishing Pier (SFR-FP) grants may be used to construct fishing piers that are primarily designed to provide public access for shore fishing. • Sport Fish Restoration - Boat Access (SFR-BA) grants may be used to construct motorboat access projects. Eligible components include boat ramp construction and renovation, along with related amenities such as parking lots, accessible paths, lighting, and restroom facilities.	25%-50% local match required	1-Oct 1-Feb	DNR

IMPLEMENTATION

6.2 COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES

Table 6.2 compares numerous aspects of Fort Atkinson’s park system against some of its regional and statewide municipal peers in terms of total population size.

For municipalities that base their land dedication requirements on a per dwelling unit basis, Fort Atkinson’s requirement of 1,000 SF per single-family home or duplex is less than the Village of Mukwonago (3,049 SF per dwelling unit). The Cities of Whitewater and Elkhorn are nearly on par with Fort Atkinson at 1,047 and 1,045 per dwelling unit, respectively. The City of Jefferson requires double the square-footage per dwelling unit in comparison to Fort Atkinson.

For park impact/development fees, the Village of Waunakee is charging the highest rates amongst the highlighted communities. All other highlighted communities are charging less than \$1,500 per dwelling unit.

Fort Atkinson’s operational parks budget is most similar to the City of Whitewater. For Fort Atkinson, it is important to note that the figures cited in Table 6.2 include all culture and recreation expenditures, including salaries and benefits.

Fort Atkinson’s Full Time Equivalent (FTE) count is less than the City of Whitewater (28) and Village of Waunakee (35.4), however these communities have larger total populations and more total parks.

6.3 PROPOSED PARK DEVELOPMENT FEE

While parkland dedication or fees in lieu ensure sufficient parkland available to meet the needs of new residents, park development fees fund the new park amenities/facilities residents will use. State statutes allow park development fees to be collected based on maintaining, not increasing current park service levels. These fees must be used within eight years or returned to the developer, with interest.

Table 6.3 (page 74) lays out the methodology for a proposed park development fee for the City of Fort Atkinson. Several assumptions were used in this calculation. Typical neighborhood and community park amenities, and their associated cost estimates in 2022 dollars, were used to determine a typical total cost for developing each park type. Additionally, since improving parkland usually involves some degree of utility work, an estimated average cost of road/utility work in Fort Atkinson was used: \$1,000 per linear foot (LF).

Key to this calculation is the projected number of new housing units the City will need over the next ten years, and the corresponding amount of new park acreage, based on the projected population increase. Using information provided in Table 2.1 (pg. 7), the City will need an estimated 608 new dwelling units over the next 10 years (an increase of 1,460 people between 2020 and 2030 divided by 2.4 people per household). These units are estimated to be a mix of 60% single family/duplex/condominium and 40% multifamily units, based on insight provided by City staff. Next, the City’s parkland dedication requirements for those unit types are applied to estimate the total acreage of new parks to be created, and the cost per acre is applied to the total projected new park acreage. The park improvement fees are calculated such that the fee for multifamily units is 75% of the fee for single family/duplex/condo units. If all of the projected units are constructed and fees paid, the total fees equal the anticipated costs.

By this methodology laid out in Table 6.3, each single family/duplex/condominium unit should be charged \$4,162 and each multifamily unit should be charged \$3,122.

6.4 PLAN ADOPTION & AMENDMENTS

This plan is adopted as a complement to the City’s Comprehensive Plan. As such, procedures for adoption of this plan, and future amendments, shall follow similar Board/City Council approvals, as highlighted below:

Table 6.2 Comparable Communities

	City of Fort Atkinson	City of Jefferson	City of Whitewater	City of Elkhorn	Village of Waunakee	Village of Mukwonago
Park Impact Fees	"The fee shall be established by resolution by the City Council. Residential fees shall be determined by residential unit and Commercial/Industrial fees shall be determined by acreage."	\$600 per institutional residential unit and \$1,000 per all other dwelling units	\$514 per proposed dwelling unit (annually adjusted for inflation with a base year of 2002)	• \$874 per single-family unit • \$681 per multi-family unit	• \$2,755.36 per single-family DU • \$1,873.64 per multi-family DU	• \$600 per 1-bedroom dwelling unit • \$900 per 2-bedroom dwelling unit • \$1,200 per 3+ bedroom and single-family unit
Land Dedication Requirements	• 1,000 SF per single-family or duplex DU • 750 per multi-family DU • 4% of total acreage for commercial or industrial property	2,000 SF per dwelling unit, or a minimum of 2 acres in total	1,047 SF per dwelling unit	0.024 acres per dwelling unit (1,045 SF per dwelling unit)	• Land equal to ten percent of the total area proposed to be subdivided.	0.07 acres per dwelling unit (3,049 SF per dwelling unit)
Fees in Lieu of Land Dedication	\$1,600 per dwelling unit or lot, or 8% of raw land value	Not specified in fee schedule	\$218 per dwelling unit (annually adjusted for inflation with a base year of 2002)	\$535 per dwelling unit	• \$475 per single-family DU • \$315 per duplex or multi-family DU	\$942 per dwelling unit
Capital Park Department Budgets (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022)	• 2019: unavailable • 2020 actual: \$530,000 • 2021 actual: \$1,350,000 • 2022 proposed: \$1,437,844	• \$0	• \$0	• \$0	• 2021: \$703,000 (parks) • 2021: \$85,000 (bike/ped)	• 2019: unavailable • 2020: \$530,000 • 2020: \$1,350,000 • 2022: \$1,437,844
Operational Park Department Budgets (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022)	• 2019: unavailable • 2020: \$1,782,650 • 2021: \$1,893,566 • 2022 Proposed: \$1,458,592 (includes all Culture & Recreation expenditures, including salaries & benefits)	• 2021: \$284,336 (Park Maintenance) • 2021: \$78,546 (Aquatics Center) • 2021: \$208,661 (Recreation) • 2021 Total: 571,543 (includes salary/wages, fringe benefits, contractual services, supplies and expenses)	• 2019: \$1,148,391 • 2020: \$1,225,417 • 2021: \$1,129,164 • 2022 Proposed: \$1,308,755 (includes salary/wages, benefits, supplies and expenses)	• 2019: unavailable • 2020 actual: \$228,700 • 2021: \$290,862 • 2022 Proposed: \$341,640	• 2021: \$521,005 (parks) • 2021: \$20,000 (forestry) • 2021: \$1,347,769 (recreation) • 2021 Total: \$1,888,774 (includes salary/wages, benefits, supplies and expenses)	• 2019: \$158,047 • 2020: \$176,624 • 2021: \$157,362 • 2022 Proposed: \$187,471
FTE & PTE Parks & Recreation Employees	• FTE: 18	• FTE: N/A	• FTE: 28	• FTE: N/A	• FTE: 35.4 (shared with DPW & Library)	• FTE: N/A
Total Number of Parks	15	12	21	9	32	9
Total Park Acreage	255.0	Unknown	239.8	124.0	397.0	380.1
Acres/1,000 residents	20.3	Unknown	16.1	12.0	31.5	45.3
2020 Census Population	12,579	7,793	14,889	10,317	12,613	8,384

Table 6.3 Proposed Park Development Fee Calculation

Park Improvement Costs			
Typical Neighborhood Park	Price	Typical Community Park	Price
Playground Equipment (1)	\$50,000	Playground Equipment (1)	\$80,000
Baseball/Softball (1 unit)	\$200,000	Batting Cage (1)	\$25,000
Basketball Court (1)	\$75,000	Baseball/Softball (1 lit)	\$400,000
Tennis Court/Pickleball (2)	\$110,000	Tennis Court/Pickleball (4)	\$220,000
Bike/Walking Trail (1,200 LF)	\$30,000	Soccer Field (2)	\$90,000
Open-Air Shelter w/ Picnic Tables (1)	\$30,000	Bike/Walking Trail (3,600 LF)	\$90,000
Soccer Field (1)	\$60,000	Open-Air Shelter w/ Picnic Tables (1)	\$45,000
Signage	\$5,000	Enclosed Shelter w/ Restroom (1)	\$400,000
Landscaping & Lighting	\$45,000	Bleachers (2)	\$30,000
Turf/Site Work	\$60,000	Parking Lot (100 stalls)	\$120,000
Engineering - 10%	\$70,000	Signage	\$7,500
		Landscaping & Lighting	\$60,000
		Turf/Site Work	\$140,000
		Engineering - 10%	\$160,000
A. Total Park Improvement Costs	\$735,000		\$1,867,500
B. Typical Park Size in Acres (based on current City parks)	2		20
C. Total Park Improvement Costs Per Acre (A/B)	\$367,500		\$93,375
D. Adjacent Road and Utility Improvement Cost Per Acre (assumption of \$1,000/LF based on City estimates)	\$147,580		\$46,669
E. Average Improvement Cost/Acre (C+D)	\$515,080		\$140,044
Current Acres per 1,000 Residents	0.8		6.2
F. Current Percent of Total Acres per 1,000 Residents	11%		89%
G. Average Improvement Cost Per Acre [(Neighborhood Parks E*F)+(Community Parks E*F)]	\$181,298		

Projected Development Fee			
H. Projected Population Increase from 2020 to 2030	1,460		
I. Projected Additional Dwelling Units Increase from 2020 to 2030	608		
	Single Family/Townhome/Duplex (60%)	365	
	Multifamily (40%)	243	
J. Additional Acres of Parkland Needed	Single Family/Townhome/Duplex (1,000 SF/unit)	8.4	
	Multifamily (750 SF/unit)	4.2	
	Total Acres	12.57	
K. Average Improvement Cost Per Acre	\$181,298		
L. Projected Cost of all Improvements (J*K)	\$2,278,712		
M. Improvement Cost Per Dwelling Unit (L/I)	Single Family/Townhome/Duplex	\$4,162	
	Multifamily	\$3,122	

Parks & Recreation Board Recommendation

The Board shall meet to review the plan and pass a motion to recommend approval of the plan or plan amendment.

Public Hearing

Prior to adopting this plan, or plan amendment, the City may hold a public hearing to discuss the proposed plan or plan amendment though it is not required by state statute or the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The meeting notice should provide a method for submitting written comments, and those comments should be read or summarized at the public hearing. A public hearing may be held by either the Parks & Recreation Board or City Council.

Plan Adoption

This plan and any future amendments become official City policy when the City Council passes, by a majority vote of all elected members, an adoption ordinance. The Council may choose to revise the recommended plan prior to adoption.

Plan Amendment vs. Plan Update

Amendments can be made at any time, but the City should not amend the plan more than once per year. A common recommended approach is to establish a consistent annual schedule for consideration of minor plan amendments. This plan should be updated every five years in order to maintain eligibility for Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Stewardship Funding. Unlike an amendment, a plan update would revisit the entirety of the plan content and include more robust opportunities for public participation.

6.5 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS SUMMARY

The Parks & Recreation Board prioritized the recommendations for each existing park, as seen in Chapter 5. Table 6.4 lists these priority improvements by park. High-priority improvements should ideally be implemented over the next three years (2024-2026). Medium-priority improvements should ideally be implemented between 2026-2028, and low-priority improvements beyond 2028.

Table 6.4 Existing Park Improvements

Park Recommendations	Priority		Cost Estimate (in 2022 \$)
Bark River Nature Area			
Look to acquire the School District land and possibly use as soccer fields if necessary.	Low	6+ yrs	Easement or Agreement
Install a garage/concessions building to store equipment and winter materials.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$350,000
Barrie Park			
New updated playground staying with ages 2-5; increase footprint for a playground overall.	Low	6+ yrs	\$180,000
Add shade structure to bandshell.	Low	6+ yrs	TBD
Fix crack in fountain's water line and foundation.	High	1-3 yrs	\$25,000+
Consider updating bandshell's speaker and microphone system.	Low	6+ yrs	\$20,000+
Repaint caterpillar play equipment.	Medium	3-5 yrs	Maint. (\$2,500)
Install a bike rack.	High	1-3 yrs	\$500/ea.
Add more trees/shade.	Low	6+ yrs	\$500/ea.
Add swing set.	Low	6+ yrs	\$10,000
Endl Park			
Regrade soccer field	Low	6+ yrs	\$20,000 - \$80,000
Install a drinking fountain.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$9,000
Install more benches and picnic tables.	High	1-3 yrs	\$3,000/ea. - Bench or Table with concrete pad
Install swing set.	Low	6+ yrs	\$10,000
Jones Park			
Install new scoreboards.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$15,000/ea.
Add shade to cover people standing at the concession stand.	Medium	3-5 yrs	TBD
Repave parking lot and access drive off of S 6th St.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$68,000
Repaint, replace, or consider removing metal play equipment (eastern half of the park).	Medium	3-5 yrs	Maint. OR replace \$240,000
Repave or remove remnants of walking paths in eastern half of the park.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$15,000
Consider removing or updating horseshoe pits.	Low	6+ yrs	\$3,500 - \$5,000
Add shade over playground.	Low	6+ yrs	\$15,000/ea.
Add small picnic pavilions.	Low	6+ yrs	\$60,000/ea.
Consider installing a splash pad near the bike path.	Low	6+ yrs	\$200,000 - \$350,000 (\$120/SF)
Consdier adding fitness equipment.	Low	6+ yrs	\$80,000
Create a tree planting program.	High	1-3 yrs	TBD
New shelter on east boundary, convert current shelter to storage.	Low	6+ yrs	\$250,000+
Add bicycle parking.	High	1-3 yrs	\$500/ea.

Table 6.4 Existing Park Improvements

Klement Park			
Potentially install a second boat ramp with Marina and boat slips – possibly bid out to business and a portion is designated for the City.	Low	6+ yrs	\$300,000
Resurface parking lot.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$18,000 - \$20,000
Install an open air pavillon with picnic facilities.	Low	6+ yrs	\$60,000
Install lighting for boat launch.	Low	6+ yrs	\$5,000/pole
Lions Park			
Install drinking fountain.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$9,000
Lorman Bicentennial Park			
Add shade (umbrellas) to the tables.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$1,500/ea.
Add restrooms with a lift station.	Low	6+ yrs	\$200,000
Add dog related features (i.e. drinking fountain for dogs).	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$10,000
Construct a shelter/shade structure.	Low	6+ yrs	\$60,000
Add more drought tolerant trees (ex. sycamore).	High	1-3 yrs	\$500/ea.
Add bicycle parking.	High	1-3 yrs	\$500/ea.
McCoy Park			
Create a monument plan.	Medium	3-5 yrs	TBD
Memorial Park			
Improve traffic flow within park, especially on weekends when families visit the compost pile. Define/paint existing parking stalls. Expand parking.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$1,500/ new stall \$10,000 - \$15,000 to repaint existing stalls
Replace and update ballfield lighting system.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$72,000 (1,200 per light fixture)
Trim trees to reduce the amount of shade cast on baseball diamonds and use of lights.	High	1-3 yrs	Maint.
Extend paved path to playground equipment.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$8/SF Concrete
Update/renovate bathrooms; consider adding more bathrooms.	Low	6+ yrs	\$30,000-\$45,000
Expand ballfield fence distances.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$35,000 - \$50,000/field
Add bicycle parking.	High	1-3 yrs	\$500/ea.
Ralph Park			
Install signage off of Hake St. to showcase what the park has to offer (wheels park, basketball courts, diamonds, etc.); include flowers or other landscaping to make the signage inviting.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$5,000/sign; \$6,000 Landscape
Update corner shelter and make it bigger.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$150,000
Install new scoreboard at each field.	High	1-3 yrs	\$15,000 per field
Extend paved path/create a connection to smaller playground adjacent to red and blue playground.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$4,500
Consider replacing smaller playground (paint rubbing off and sun damage).	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$200,000
Install lights at Fort Wheels Park; consider putting them on a timer.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$5,000/pole
Consider installing a splash pad in open lawn area adjacent to Wheels Park.	Low	6+ yrs	\$150 - \$170+ /SF
Consider installing pickleball courts, with shade, in open lawn area adjacent to Wheels Park.	Low	6+ yrs	\$180,000

Table 6.4 Existing Park Improvements

Consider installing a dog park in open lawn area adjacent to Wheels Park.	Low	6+ yrs	\$40,000
Potentially add parking.	Low	6+ yrs	\$60,000
Riverside Park			
Improve fishing and picnic areas.	Medium	3-5 yrs	TBD
Consider trail connection to Robert Street.	High	1-3 yrs	TBD
Rock River Park			
Build up area across from Pavilion for more parking.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$1,500/stall
Designate parking stalls and handicap stalls (especially near the Clubhouse and pavilion).	High	1-3 yrs	\$500/ea.
Install signage for overflow parking off of Lilian St.	High	1-3 yrs	\$5,000/sign
Consider installing a splash pad in the pool area.	Low	6+ yrs	\$120/SF
Replace aging and broken wood fencing.	High	1-3 yrs	\$80/LF
Pave all parking lots.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$100,000
Assess the cost of replacing football facilities.	Low	6+ yrs	\$80,000/field (storage, bleachers, paths, benches, etc)
Add more shade/umbrellas to pool area.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$20,000/ea.
Expand disc golf facility to 18-holes and hold a community tournament.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$20,000 - \$70,000
Upgrade/replace basketball hoops and lights.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$2,000/hoop; \$5,000/pole
Acquire the four former homes (Jefferson County-owned) along the west side of the park’s highway 106 entrance. If/when acquired, install a new gateway or landscaping feature on the land.	Low	6+ yrs	TBD
Install new playground equipment at Rotary Pavillion.	Low	6+ yrs	\$200,000
Improve trail routes.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$35 LF (asphalt)
Enhance Rotary Pavillion parking.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$1,500/stall
Rotary Arrowhead Park			
Install benches.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$1,200/ea. (Bench Only)
Install drinking fountain.	Low	6+ yrs	\$9,000
Improve sidewalk access to park from adjacent neighborhoods.	Low	6+ yrs	\$50,000
Consider creating a community garden at location; investigate water access and neighbor buy in.	Medium	3-5 yrs	TBD
Trailway Park			
Install a drinking fountain with dog fountain at the bottom.	Low	6+ yrs	\$10,000
Add trees for shade or shade structures.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$500/ea.
Consider adding ADA play equipment.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$140,000
Install a small pavilion.	Low	6+ yrs	\$480,000
Wilcox Park			
Improve awareness of park, including entrance point.	Medium	3-5 yrs	\$5,000
Consider development of a public food forest through a collaboration with Heart of the City.	Medium	3-5 yrs	TBD
Total (not including maintenance and per-item costs)	\$3,488,000 - \$3,708,000		