

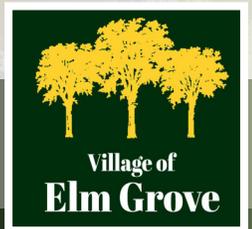


# 2025 VILLAGE OF ELM GROVE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (CORP)

ADOPTED: 4.22.25



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ASSOCIATES INC.  
*Shaping places, shaping change*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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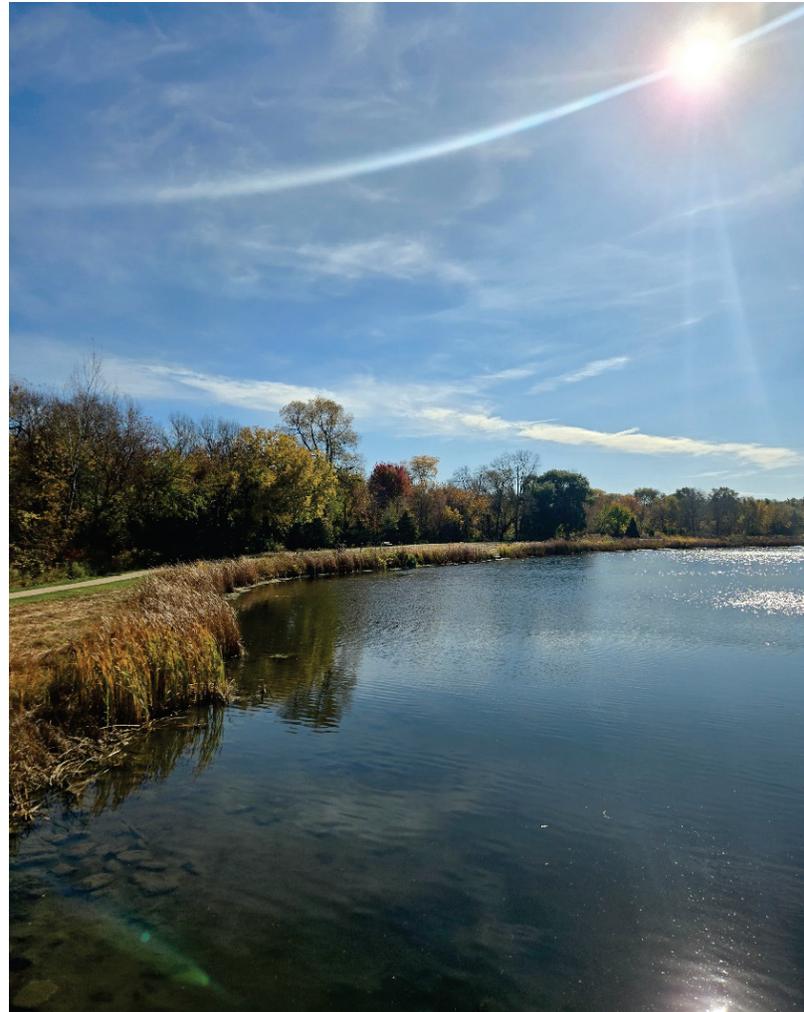
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2024-2025 Village of Elm Grove Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) was prepared in accordance with the guidelines that will make it certifiable by the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and qualify Elm Grove for matching grant funds.

- The Village has grown over the past decade and in 2022 had a population of 6,445. By 2035, it is projected that Elm Grove will have a population of 6,999. By 2045, it is projected to have a population of 7,424. See Chapter 1 and Appendix for additional demographic data.
- The Village of Elm Grove owns, operates, and maintains approximately 96 acres of developed and undeveloped parkland in 3 Community Parks and Special Use Areas. The Elmbrook School District and 2 private schools also contribute 4 outdoor recreation facilities in the Village. Additionally, there are multiple other municipal, county, and state parks and trails within close proximity of the community. However, more than 45% of Elm Grove parkland is environmentally constrained and presents challenges to its development for active recreation uses. See Chapter 2.
- Multiple forms of public participation were utilized in this planning process including Recreation Committee meetings, stakeholder interviews, and a community-wide online survey. See Chapter 3 and Appendix.
  - An online survey was utilized to gather over 448 people's opinions on current usage, prioritized park improvements, new facilities, and more.
  - Focus group interview sessions were conducted with Elm Grove representatives, local organizations, school district representatives, and interest groups and user groups to gather an understanding of existing issues and future opportunities.
  - The Recreation Committee participated in three total meetings throughout the process in reviewing documents, providing key insight and feedback, and recommending the plan for adoption.
- In comparison to other similar sized communities in the region and national averages, Elm Grove currently compares favorably in terms of residents per park and park acres per 1,000 residents, when looking at the total amount of parkland, both constrained and unconstrained parkland. See Chapter 5.
- A service area analysis was conducted to explore the geographic distribution of existing facilities in relationship to community residents. The majority of Elm Grove is well served by its central Community Park, Village Park, as shown on Map 2. Additional Neighborhood Parks and expansion of the Village Pathway System could help address lower service areas in the community.
- As of 2023, Elm Grove provides approximately 21.3 developed acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. For future planning purposes, the established standard for the Village moving forward should be the national standard of 10.8 acres per 1,000 residents. See Chapter 5.



## Elm Grove CORP Key Findings

Based on Village staff, Recreation Committee, and public input, the following key findings were identified and are addressed by this Plan's recommended policies and park improvements.

- Village Park is the centerpiece of the community, but updates to its central activity core, including the Pool House, playground, and pavilion area, are needed to meet modern programming needs.
- The Village is well served by its current park acreage. The Village is both land and budget constrained in its ability to grow the park system or acquire land. The focus of this Plan's recommendations should be on maintaining and improving existing park facilities and amenities rather than expanding the system through new parks.
- Many Village athletic fields require improved maintenance, regrading, field restoration, and exhibit poor irrigation that limit their usability.
- Paths and trails are heavily utilized by Village residents, and there is a desire to work with the Pathways Committee for additional connections between residential areas and Village amenities and destinations, including the parks.
- The Village should better utilize and promote its less frequented parks, including the South Park Facility and Blue Star Memorial, to supplement the overall park system and address geographic or programming gaps.
- Elmbrook Schools and two private schools hold a significant portion of open space and potential recreation space within the Village, however, the partnership between the Village and the schools for potential shared use facilities is underdeveloped.
- Improvements to wayfinding and signage on the Village pathway system and in Village parks are needed to better educate residents and visitors about the Elm Grove Park System.



# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS



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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

## INTRODUCTION

Communities throughout the world recognize that park lands, recreation trails, and natural areas are key components of high-quality living environments. Open spaces that allow people to connect with nature and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation create many benefits and serve many important functions, including creating and promoting activity within the community, supporting and accommodating healthy lifestyles, enhancing community building through participation in recreational activities, improving the aesthetics of public spaces, increasing property values, attracting visitors and tourists, shaping development patterns, and protecting the natural environment. The park and open space system of every community should be planned and designed to meet the diverse needs of its population. Proper recreation-based planning requires a focus on both the types of facilities needed to meet the needs of the community as well as the geographic distribution of those facilities relative to those who will use them.

The Elm Grove community's park, recreation, and open space system is one of its many important amenities. The existing system plays a key role in the community's high quality of life, however, there are opportunities for improvement to serve the Village's evolving population, protect and maintain its high-quality natural resources, and embrace opportunities for open space preservation and recreation.

### Outdoor Recreation In Wisconsin

According to the Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation, Wisconsin is home to over 15,000 inland lakes, 84,000 miles of rivers and streams, the 1,200-mile Ice Age National Scenic Trail, 7.5 million acres of public land, over 25,000 miles of groomed snowmobile trails, the third most ski resorts in the country, and 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations. In 2023, Wisconsin's outdoor recreation industry contributed a record-setting \$11.2 billion to the state's gross domestic product and the outdoor economy grew by over 9.4%. Additionally, the industry supports over 96,000 jobs across various sectors in the state. Overall, outdoor recreation throughout Wisconsin provides a high quality of life for residents, economic opportunity, public health benefits, community identity by highlighting cultural and historic resources, and natural resource preservation and enhancement. *(Source: Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation, 2024)*

This Village of Elm Grove Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) compiles, reviews, and updates information on the physical facilities and lands that make up the existing Village park and open space system, in addition to providing guidance for future improvement and expansion of the system. This document serves as an important element of Elm Grove's overall community planning program. As such, the CORP addresses the long-range park and open space needs of the community over the next decade, with a specific focus on park and recreation action items over the next 5-year period (2025-2030). Five years is generally considered a reasonable horizon in park planning because social, cultural, and political conditions tend to change enough over that time for the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations that derived from previous plans to be reevaluated.

This CORP has been prepared in accordance with guidelines that will make it certifiable by the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) and qualify the Village of Elm Grove for matching grant funds through the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the Federal Recreation Trails Act (RTA), and the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Local Assistance Grant Programs (State of Wisconsin). The CORP must be updated every five years to ensure that it reflects the current needs of the community and retains its WisDNR certification. The plan has also been prepared in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes 61.35, 236.29 and 66.0617.

This Plan is intended to build upon and refine the previous analysis and recommendations presented in the Village of Elm Grove 2015 Comprehensive Park and Open Space Plan and other plans and guidelines related to downtown Elm Grove. Elm Grove’s public parks and open spaces are operated and maintained by the Village’s Department of Public Works and Recreation Department. The Elm Grove park and open space system also includes facilities owned by the Elmbrook School District and private schools in the village. This CORP was prepared under the direction of Village staff, the Village of Elm Grove Recreation Committee, and Village Board. The purpose of the plan is threefold:

1. To guide the decisions of the Village and other providers of open space and recreational lands in the area in order to provide for the increasing demand for recreation facilities.
2. To recommend opportunities for recreation and open space improvements within the community.
3. To maintain Elm Grove’s eligibility for recreation grant funds with updates completed approximately every five years.

### **Intended Outcomes of This Plan**

This Plan was developed as a component of the Village of Elm Grove’s proactive, long-term community planning program and is intended to complement and support the community’s other long-term planning initiatives. The document has been designed to address Elm Grove’s park and recreational needs over the next 5 – 10 years, with intended outcomes including:

- Utilizing public feedback to guide the development of plan recommendations.
- Providing both overarching and facility-specific recommendations for improving the Village’s park system.
- Expanding regional outdoor recreation connections and networks between the Village and neighboring communities.
- Identify community prioritization opportunities to balance land, environmental, and capital resource constraints with the goals of the community.
- Maintaining the high level of park and recreation access in Elm Grove by preserving existing natural resources in the Village and investing resources in existing park and recreation facilities to extend their operation and sustainability.
- Improving resident quality of life by providing equitable access to a variety of recreational programs and facilities.
- Harnessing the power of a well-planned park and recreational system to create better health outcomes for residents, increase opportunities for social interaction and community culture building, and capitalize on recreational resources as activity generators to draw people to the Village.

## **GENERAL REGIONAL CONTEXT**

The Village of Elm Grove is located in southeastern Wisconsin in eastern Waukesha County. Adjacent to Milwaukee County, Elm Grove is about 10 miles west of downtown Milwaukee and approximately 11 miles from the shores of Lake Michigan to the east. Elm Grove encompasses approximately 3.3 miles and is bordered by North Avenue to the north, 124<sup>th</sup> Street to the east, Bluemound Road to the South, and Pilgrim Parkway to the west. The City of Brookfield in Waukesha County borders the Village to the north, west, and south while the City of Wauwatosa in Milwaukee County borders it to the east. The Village is highly developed with both residential and commercial uses and is considered a built-out community with limited opportunities to increase parkland or development outside of infill opportunities or redevelopment. There are no major vacant or agricultural areas within the Village that could provide growth or greenfield-style development.

The Village’s location in southeastern Wisconsin and the greater Milwaukee area, it is well connected to regional transportation infrastructure, including US Highway 45 and US Highway 18. The Village has one public transit route operated by the Milwaukee County Transit System. The community is bisected from east to west by Amtrak and Canadian Pacific Railway/Kansas City rail lines, which also run through the Village’s distinct downtown business district.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

According to the 2022 American Community Survey conducted by the United States Census, Elm Grove is currently home to approximately 6,445 residents, which is a 10% increase in population from 2010. The need for parks and recreational space is driven by the growing population of the community. Predicting how the community’s population might grow in the future provides important information about the amount of new parkland and recreational facilities that will be needed to serve the Village. The Village of Elm Grove experienced a 5% population decline between 1990 and 2010; however, it regained this population loss by 2020 and has surpassed the recent historical population high in 1990 (6,261). Over the last decade, Elm Grove population growth has outpaced that of Waukesha County, the State of Wisconsin, and many of its peer communities, including Greendale and Whitefish Bay.

FIGURE 1.1: POPULATION TRENDS

Municipality	1990	2000	2010	2020	2022*	2000-2010	2010-2022
<b>Village of Elm Grove</b>	<b>6,261</b>	<b>6,249</b>	<b>5,934</b>	<b>6,513</b>	<b>6,445</b>	<b>-5%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Village of Thiensville	3,301	3,254	3,235	3,290	3,279	-1%	2%
Village of Brown Deer	12,236	12,170	11,999	12,507	12,593	-1%	4%
City of Glendale	14,088	13,367	12,872	13,357	13,227	-4%	4%
Village of Greendale	15,128	14,405	14,046	14,854	14,722	-2%	6%
Village of Whitefish Bay	14,272	14,163	14,110	14,954	14,804	0%	6%
Waukesha County	304,715	360,767	389,891	406,978	407,290	8%	4%
Wisconsin	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,893,718	5,882,128	6%	4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 – 2020 Census.

\*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2022.

Predicting future population growth is challenging and somewhat inexact. It should be noted that Elm Grove’s actual future population will depend on social and economic trends, market conditions, sentiments toward growth, and development projects. The upcoming multifamily project and 21 new single family home lots, known as Caroline Heights, will likely impact future population trends; however, it is difficult to estimate those exact impacts at this time. According to developer projections, the new neighborhood could bring more than 500 new residents to Elm Grove in the next few years. See the Appendix for more details on the population projection methods analyzed. This set of projections was prepared specifically for this Plan and by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WisDOA). All are projected through 2045. These forecasts provide the basis for determining future need for parks and open spaces.

For the purposes of this CORP, the Village should utilize the Custom Linear Growth 2010-2022 plus Caroline Heights scenario as a reasonable, conservative estimate that would result in a total projected population of 7,290 residents by 2035 and 7,424 by 2045. This methodology used the linear growth rate from 2010 to 2022 (43 new residents per year) to project the population from 2025 to 2045, but includes the expected 504 resident increase from Caroline Heights added by 2030, and averages the remaining growth to reach the projected population of 7,424. The selected population projection forecast should be used to project future parkland and potential park impact fees needed in the Village.

FIGURE 1.2: VILLAGE OF ELM GROVE POPULATION PROJECTIONS

	2010	2022	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	% Change 2022-2045	Pop. Increase 2022-2045
WisDOA Projections*	5,934	6,445	5,990	6,000	5,860	5,625	-		
Linear Growth 1990-2022 (1)	5,934	6,445	6,462	6,491	6,520	6,549	6,577	2%	132
Linear Growth 2000-2022 (1)	5,934	6,445	6,472	6,516	6,561	6,605	6,650	3%	205
<b>Custom: Linear Growth 2010-2022 + Caroline Heights (1,2)</b>	<b>5,934</b>	<b>6,445</b>	<b>6,573</b>	<b>7,290</b>	<b>7,335</b>	<b>7,380</b>	<b>7,424</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>979</b>
Compounded Growth 1990-2022 (2)	5,934	6,445	6,463	6,493	6,522	6,552	6,583	2%	138
Compounded Growth 2000-2022 (2)	5,934	6,445	6,473	6,519	6,565	6,612	6,660	3%	215
Compounded Growth 2010-2022 (2)	5,934	6,445	6,585	6,824	7,073	7,330	7,597	18%	1,152

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2020 Census. \*Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2013 population estimate.

1. Extrapolated based on the average annual population change over the given years.

1.2 Extrapolated based on the average annual population change over the given years, accommodating the expected population increase with the completion of the Caroline Heights development project of approximately 504 residents.

2. Extrapolated based on the average annual percent change over the given years.

In 2022, the Village’s median age was 43, a decrease from previous decades but still higher than the statewide median age and in the average range of Waukesha County and other peer communities. The percentage of the Village’s population aged 18 and under was 26%, an increase from 2010. The percentage of residents under 18 was also higher than both the statewide total (21%) and countywide total for Waukesha County (25%), indicating that Elm Grove has a substantial and growing young population. Twenty one percent of the Village’s population was aged 65 and older – a higher percentage of the population than several peer communities and the statewide proportion. While the percentage of residents over 65 has increased slightly since 2010, the median age in the Village has decreased, indicating a population that is getting younger even as the Baby Boomer generation continues to move into retirement age. While it is important to keep in mind that the park and recreation system must accommodate the needs of a large percentage of residents who will be nearing or over the age of 65 in the next decade, the system will also need to accommodate the demands and needs of an increasingly young population.

FIGURE 1.3: AGE DISTRIBUTION COMPARISON

	Median Age			Percent Under 18			Percent Over 65		
	2000	2010	2022	2000	2010	2022	2000	2010	2022
<b>Village of Elm Grove</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>21%</b>
Village of Thiensville	43	45	46	21%	23%	15%	21%	21%	21%
Village of Brown Deer	42	42	43	20%	21%	20%	19%	17%	20%
City of Glendale	46	48	45	19%	17%	20%	25%	25%	26%
Village of Whitefish Bay	38	40	40	29%	29%	31%	12%	11%	15%
Village of Greendale	44	45	42	22%	21%	25%	20%	23%	22%
Waukesha County	38	42	44	26%	24%	21%	12%	14%	21%
Wisconsin	36	39	40	26%	21%	21%	13%	14%	19%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

The population of Elm Grove is predominantly white (89%). This data depicts a relatively racially homogeneous population, however, there have been increases in the number of people who identify as Black or African American, Asian, the “other” racial category, and who identify as being of Hispanic or Latino in origin. The percentage of residents that comprise these three categories makes up a total of 16% of the population, representing a significant diversification of the community’s

population in the last two decades with a 15% increase. Care must be taken during the planning process to include and represent the needs and desires of minority groups in planning for future park and recreation spaces within the community.

FIGURE 1.4: HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS COMPARISON

	Owner-Occupied Home Value	Median Owner-Occupied Costs per month with a mortgage	Median Household Income	Percent Owner Occupied	Average Household Size
<b>Village of Elm Grove</b>	<b>\$402,100</b>	<b>\$2,450</b>	<b>\$126,996</b>	<b>89.2%</b>	<b>2.85</b>
Village of Thiensville	\$316,500	\$1,770	\$85,542	65.0%	2.07
Village of Brown Deer	\$209,300	\$1,641	\$88,164	65.8%	2.20
City of Glendale	\$266,700	\$1,892	\$79,861	68.0%	2.21
Village of Whitefish Bay	\$472,800	\$2,684	\$142,356	81.5%	2.67
Village of Greendale	\$278,600	\$1,919	\$89,684	68.9%	2.38
Waukesha County*	\$407,600	\$2,025	\$98,630	75.2%*	2.43*
Wisconsin*	\$283,400	\$1,629	\$74,631	67.9%*	2.31*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2022; \*2023, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

The Village’s average household size increased between 2000-2022 from 2.49 to 2.85 persons per household, this is a substantially larger average household size than in many comparable communities. For comparison, the average household sizes in Waukesha County and in Wisconsin in 2023 were 2.43 and 2.31, respectively. Additionally, the Village has a very high rate of homeownership (89%) and a low vacancy rate of just 5%. According to the U.S. Census, there are a total of 2,562 housing units in Elm Grove, an increase in the last 10 years since the 2015 Park and Open Space Plan.

Utilizing the population projections and methodology described earlier in this plan, the projected number of households were also calculated. By 2045, it is projected that the Village could add 299 total new households. This projection methodology continued the 2022 household size as reported in the US Census American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. The Village’s 2022 average household size of 2.85 is significantly larger than neighboring communities, the county, and the state. Continuing to grow beyond this household size would be counter to many national and regional trends. If the Village is interested in better understanding the current and future household size in Elm Grove, they may want to update these calculations after updated Census estimates are published or conduct their own survey of Village households. Maintaining the current average household size still factors in the Village’s projected overall population growth and the general trend of larger than average households in Elm Grove while balancing the national and state-wide trend towards decreasing household sizes.

Parks and recreation are directly related to the community’s overall public health because they provide opportunities for residents to participate in physical activities, get outside, and improve health education. Waukesha County ranks among the healthiest counties in the state. Among communities within the County, Elm Grove provides a wide variety of park and recreational facilities and programming, however according to County level health data, there are still public health areas that can be improved in Waukesha County, including the percentage of adults with obesity, diabetes, and cancer. This information is important for assessing how healthy the Village of Elm Grove is today, while identifying areas of focus for improvement in the future.

A complete inventory, analysis, and review of Elm Grove’s natural resource components, data trends, and existing plans can be found in the CORP Appendix.



## ELM GROVE PARK SYSTEM AND CONSTRAINTS

As described above, the Village of Elm Grove is a highly developed and built-out community surrounded by incorporated cities like Brookfield and Wauwatosa, presenting limitations to the Village's ability to grow beyond its borders or increase development through infill. This not only has implications on its land use and population in the future but on the possibilities for the park system as well.

Constraints that could impact the future park system decision-making include:

**Land Availability** The Village of Elm Grove is 3.3 square miles in area and positioned in the urban and densely populated metro-Milwaukee area of southeast Wisconsin. This regional position provides a number of advantages including accessibility to transportation infrastructure, employment, and cultural amenities. However, it also limits the Village's ability to grow beyond its current boundaries and increase its footprint to accommodate demand for new residential or commercial development as well as more open space. Additionally, the highly developed nature of the Village means that there are limited open spaces or vacant areas that could be acquired to increase the park and open space system within the Village's existing boundaries. Therefore, it is important that the Village make the most of its existing park and open space areas. The Village can also consider policies that will look to add park and open space areas when redevelopment and infill projects are pursued or when infrastructure and environmental projects present new recreation opportunities like with the Underwood Creek Daylighting Project.

**Environmental Conditions** Approximately 46%, or 62.5 acres, of the Village Park System acreage studied in this Plan is considered environmentally "constrained," meaning that it is in DNR wetland or SEWRPC Environmental Corridor. As defined by SEWRPC, environmental corridors are areas in the landscape that contain and connect natural areas, open space, and scenic or other resources, and include floodplain, wetland, woodland, drainageways, and steep slopes. Environmentally constrained areas are often not suitable for highly developed active recreation areas such as athletic fields and sport courts, as they are prone to flooding, poor drainage, or other environmental limitations. These constrained acres are better suited for passive recreation opportunities like nature trails, birding, native plantings, etc. Having such a significant portion of the park and open space system under environmental constraints creates limitations on the useability and developability of the Village's parks. While these areas are important to the environmental health of the Village and provide great beauty for the Village as well as habitat for important species of birds, wildlife, native plant species, and pollinators, when paired with the overall limitation on land in the Village, it further constrains improvement and growth potential in the park system.



**Capital Resources and Competing Priorities** Like many municipalities in the state of Wisconsin, the Elm Grove faces a significant challenge in balancing the competing interests and priorities of a modern community with limited budgets. The cost of providing municipal services continues to increase, stretching municipal budgets, while state-imposed tax levy limits constrain the Village's ability to increase its revenue. Therefore, different public interests such as basic service provision, infrastructure improvement, personnel, and community amenities and quality of life features, compete for the same limited capital resources. This requires Village staff and elected officials to make difficult decisions regarding project prioritization. Each decision-maker must carefully evaluate projects, including those recommended in the CORP, on a variety of criteria to determine its feasibility, including timing, project necessity or priority, the demands of other Village priorities, and the availability of funding. Under these constraints, it is possible that not all projects referenced in this CORP will be able to move forward or move forward in the timing identified by the Plan.

Instead, the Village should use the CORP in discussions about the allocation of resources and the prioritization of different projects and initiatives across the Village and its budget planning. To address these funding challenges, the CORP is also intended to assist the Village in pursuing other sources of funding, including state, federal, and private grant programs as well as to open conversations about new partnerships with potential sponsors or funding partners, including local corporations, financial institutions, philanthropists, and employers. Other public partnerships could also be explored to increase access to resources, including partnerships with the Elmbrook School District and Waukesha County as well as local organizations through community-led fundraising campaigns.

The CORP will present recommendations for the future of the Elm Grove park system so that it continues to serve residents and provide a critical community amenity. However, it is important to recognize constraints that the future park system, Village staff, elected officials, and residents must operate within. With these constraints in mind, the CORP serves as a guiding document presenting a menu of options that the Elm Grove community may choose to pursue if resources, including capital, land, and community will, are present. The CORP is not a directive or guarantee that the recommendations presented herein will be pursued or accomplished. Following adoption of the CORP, the Village should work with its staff, officials, and residents to determine priority projects and initiatives to investigate further and determine if the convergence of land, timing, and resources are present to accomplish the project.

# CHAPTER 2: EXISTING PARK & OPEN SPACE FACILITIES



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# CHAPTER 2: EXISTING PARK AND OPEN SPACE FACILITIES

The Village of Elm Grove provides various opportunities for residents to enjoy the outdoors. As provided below, Elm Grove’s park, recreation, and open space system consists of a range of facilities including passive recreation areas, playgrounds, pathways and walking trails, and athletic fields. Other publicly owned sites include those owned by the Elmbrook School District. In total, the Village and Elmbrook School District own and operate a total of 137 acres of parkland in 7 park and school facilities. The Village itself owns or operates 3 park sites, including the central Village Park, while the School District and private schools provide the community with 4 indoor and outdoor facilities.

The presence of outdoor recreation sites and open spaces add significant opportunities for dynamic activity, social connection, physical exercise, and numerous other health benefits to a community’s quality of life. They enhance the attractiveness of the community and foster a sense of civic pride and identity. Furthermore, even small green spaces, playgrounds, or parks create a sense of social cohesion and focal point for their surrounding neighborhood.

The Village’s Park system includes Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Special Use Areas, and Conservancy Areas located throughout the community. Elm Grove has a central, well-established, well-programmed gem in its central Village Park. Village Park is beloved by residents, is an attraction to new residents and visitors alike, and is the heart of the Village’s cultural and civic life. Because the Village is built-out and surrounded by similarly development municipalities like Brookfield and Wauwatosa, it does not contain any planned residential growth areas. A few redevelopment and infill opportunities exist in the Village. Future improvements to the park and recreation system will primarily need to be in the form of enhancements to existing facilities, strategic infill possibilities, adaptive reuse opportunities, and coordination with adjacent communities and entities to ensure that the recreational needs of Elm Grove residents are met.

## DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING PUBLIC PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES

A brief description of each of the community’s existing park and open space sites is included on the following pages. A full inventory of parkland and amenities is provided in Figure 2.1 Park Facility Matrix.



Village of Elm Grove Corp  
Map 1: Existing Facilities

- Park Type**
- Community Park
  - Special Use Facility
  - School District Facility
  - Private School Facility
  - Surface Water
  - Village of Elm Grove
  - Other Municipal Boundary
  - Buildings
  - Active Rail
  - Vacated Rail
  - Existing Bike/Pedestrian Paths
  - Off Road Path or Trail
  - On Road Bike Route or Lane
  - Pedestrian Path/Sidewalk

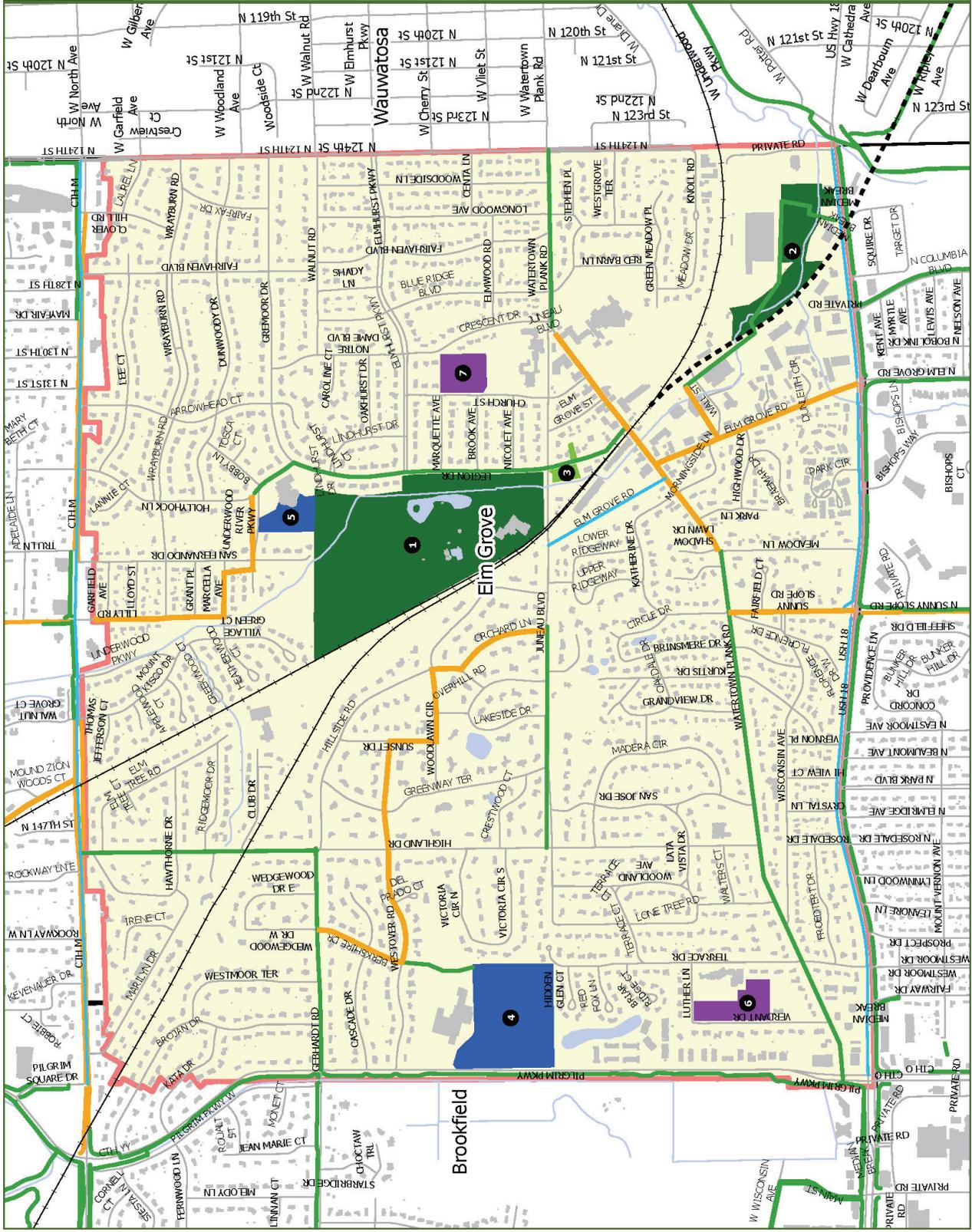
- Park Type Key**
- Community Parks:
1. Village Park
  2. South Park Facility
- Special Use Facility:
3. Blue Star Memorial
- School District Facility:
4. Pilgrim Park Middle School Recreation Area
  5. Tonawanda Elementary School Recreation Area
- Private School Facility:
6. Elm Grove Lutheran Church Recreation Area
  7. St. Mary's Church Recreation Area

0 250 500 1,000 Feet

Village of Elm Grove

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Date: April 22, 2025  
Sources: Village of Elm Grove, Waukesha County, State of Wisconsin, Ruckert, Mielke, FEMA, US Census Bureau



## Community Parks



**Village Park** is 78.9 acres in size and is the largest, most developed park in Elm Grove. Located in the center of the Village, just off the downtown business district, it also includes the Village’s civic campus with Village Hall, the Elm Grove Public Library, Elm Grove Police Department, and Elm Grove Fire Department and EMS. Village Park is accessible by car from the entrances at Juneau Boulevard to the south and Legion Drive to the east. There is also a pedestrian access point from Legion Drive, which connects the Park to the Village Pathway System. The Park is bordered by railroad tracks to the west and residential neighborhoods to the north. Village Park includes a long list of active and passive recreation amenities and hosts several community events and organizations each year.

The Park is home to the Elm Grove Public Swimming Pool and Splash Pad. The pool is considered in good condition and includes a diving board. The Splash Pad is the implementation of a recommendation from the 2015 Park and Open Space Plan and replaced the previous kiddie pool. The Pool area also includes the pool building, which has public restrooms and changing rooms as well as a check in desk and basic concession offerings.

One of Village Park’s central features is the 9.6-acre fishing pond. The pond is stocked with fish and includes two fishing piers. A pedestrian bridge crosses the pond and connects the east and west sides of the Village Park walking path. Village Park includes a 1.3-mile walking path loop around the park perimeter and nearly mile-long path around the perimeter of the pond. Non-motorized boating and swimming are permitted in the pond and it is bordered by tall grasses and aquatic plantings. Dogs are only permitted on the pathways and must be on a leash.

The center of Village Park, adjacent to the Pool, is also highly programmed for community gathering space and activity. This area includes a pavilion which can be rented by the public and holds up to 8 picnic tables, has electrical access, and a grill. It is used for community events, including music performances, movies in the park, Oktoberfest, and other celebrations. Lawn space and picnic tables also surround this area. The center of the park also holds a sand volleyball court, full basketball court, and playground.

Village Park is also home to many of the Village’s active playfields and sports facilities. These include 9 tennis courts, with 3 courts able to accommodate pickleball. Six of the tennis courts are lit to allow night play. In the past, 3 of the tennis courts were used for a winter ice rink. The tennis area also includes a hitting wall for solo play and practice. There are two softball fields in Village Park north of the tennis courts as well as 12 to 14 soccer fields. Eight soccer fields are positioned on the north side of the Park, while fields for younger children can be featured east of the tennis courts and north of the Public Library. The Village works with Elmbrook United Soccer Club, Elmbrook Little League, Junior Spartans Baseball, and other frequent user groups to program these fields and facilities.

The northern most point of the Park includes a sledding hill while the southern end of the Park has a gazebo for small gatherings as well as benches and passive recreation and picnicking areas. Parking is available west of the pool and at the civic campus buildings.

## Elm Grove Beer Garden

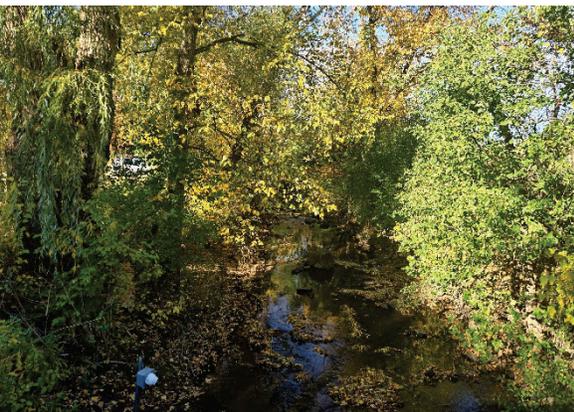
Since 2020, Village Park has also featured the Elm Grove Beer Garden in the center of the park. Open during the spring and into the fall, the Beer Garden is currently operated under a contract with a third-party vendor and includes a beer stand/truck, semi-lighted picnic area, and is often programmed to include food trucks and live music.

The Beer Garden has proven to be a very popular amenity in the Village and complements the other features and uses of the park as families can come to the Park to meet friends and neighbors and enjoy the beer garden while young children access the playground and sports fields.

There is interest from the community and vending partners to establish a more permanent space for the Beer Garden, including amenities from expanded power and water service to a multi-use structure.

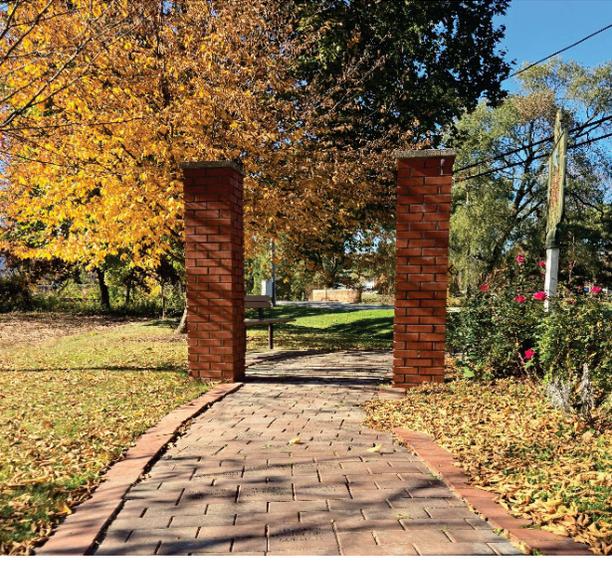


**South Park Facility** is a 15.3-acre park and open space area located at the southeastern edge of the Village along Bluemound Road. It includes a paved walking path which connects to the downtown business district, soccer fields, and an open play area. Underwood Creek runs along the west side of the park. It was acquired by the Village as a stormwater detention area. There is dedicated parking at this site and the pathway connects the Village to regional amenities like the Oak Leaf Trail and Greenway Trail systems at 124<sup>th</sup> Street and Bluemound Road.



# Special Use Area

**Blue Star Memorial Park** is located on the southwest corner of Juneau Boulevard and Legion Drive and consists of 1.3 acres of open space and native plantings. The northeast corner of the park also features a brick paved area and Blue Star Memorial to those who have served in the Armed Forces. This parkland was acquired with FEMA/CDBG funds as part of the Village's flood management program. The open space is primarily used for dry retention storage but also serves as passive greenspace with native plantings, a natural walkway, and informative signage with educational information on native plant species.

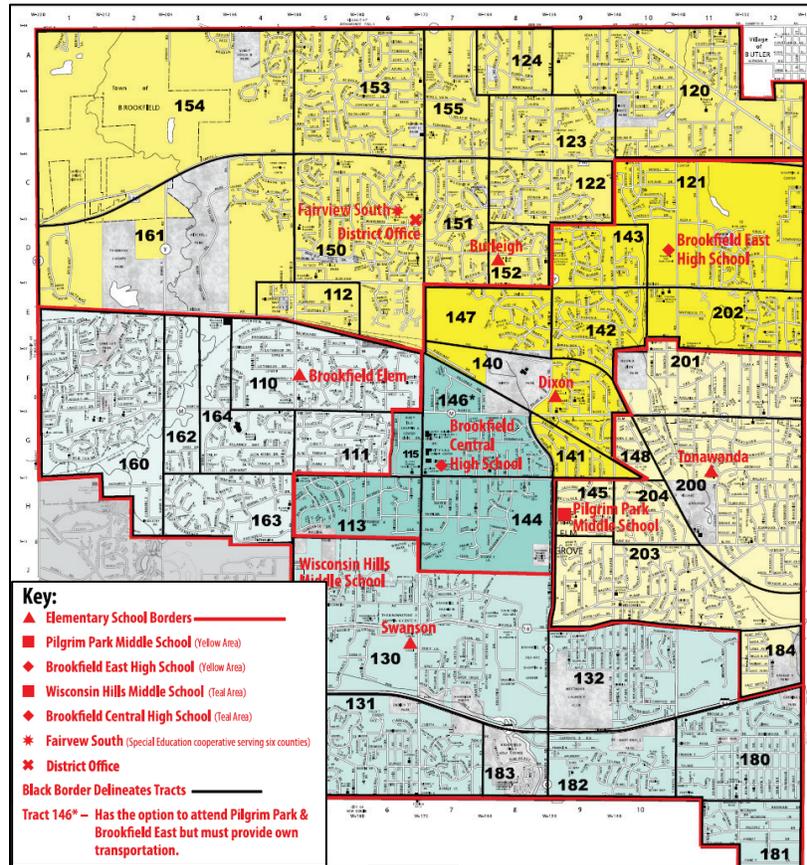


# School Facilities

The Village of Elm Grove includes two Elmbrook School District schools as well as two private schools. The Elmbrook School District serves the Elm Grove, New Berlin, and Brookfield. Tonawanda Elementary School and Pilgrim Park Middle School are located in the Village, however, all high school aged students from Elm Grove in the public school system attend Brookfield East High School. Elmbrook School District is a high performing school district and is a destination for families across the region.

The school facilities in the Village, both public and private, serve not only their students for sports, recreation, and physical education, but are also a resource to neighbors and residents who often use their outdoor facilities outside of school hours. The Elm Grove Recreation Department also works with the School District to use their facilities for indoor and outdoor recreation programming. As there is no high school in the Village, the school-based facilities are slightly more limited and on a smaller scale than typical high schools provide.

**Tonawanda Elementary School** is a 4.4-acre elementary school located on the northeast boundary of Village Park along Underwood River Parkway, Hollyhock Lane, and Legion Drive. Approximately 525 K4 through grade 5 students attend Tonawanda Elementary. The school's outdoor areas include a recently updated hard-surface recreation area with 1.5 basketball courts and playcourt areas for hopscotch and other blacktop games. The schoolyard also features 3 sets of play equipment and a soccer field. The school is one of the most accessible in the community for walkers and bikers and a significant portion of Tonawanda students bike or walk to school during the school year. Bike parking and vehicular parking are available on site.



## School Facilities

**Pilgrim Park Middle School** is located on the western boundary of the Village along Pilgrim Parkway. It includes approximately 26 acres of outdoor recreation space. Approximately 860 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders attend Pilgrim Park Middle School. The school grounds include 1 softball diamond, 2.5 basketball courts, play and fitness equipment, as well as an open play space and hard-surface play space with a painted track surrounding the basketball courts. Portions of the grounds are wooded and abut residential neighborhoods to the north and east. The school is accessible by a pathway along the west side of Pilgrim Parkway, however, there is no designated crossing point at the school's entrance.



**St. Mary's Visitation Catholic School** is located at 1260 Church Street and is just a quarter mile from Village Park. St. Mary's Visitation is a private school and educates students K3 through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The school grounds feature 5.2 acres of recreational space, including 2 half basketball courts, hard-surface play areas, 1 baseball/softball field, open play space, a sand-based playground and a fenced playground area with rubber-surface and a sandbox.



# School Facilities

**Elm Grove Lutheran School** is located at 945 Terrace Drive. The private school had been in operation since 1955; however, it suspended educational instruction for the 2024 school year. Whether it will continue operating as a school is unknown at the time of writing this Plan.

The church and school facilities are primarily located on the west side of the property along Verdant Drive. The property includes about 6.1 acres of recreational space, including a playground, 1 baseball/softball diamond, 2 half basketball courts, and open play space. Soccer goals are present on site, but a field is not lined, and the slope of the play area would make a full soccer field difficult to accommodate. While currently considered a school facility, the play area is immediately adjacent to residential neighborhoods and could also be considered a neighborhood park, especially if the facility does not return to instructional use.



## Private Recreation Facilities

- **Western Raquet Club** is a private, members only, recreational facility located on the northwest side of Village Park at 1800 Highland Drive. Its facilities include 4 indoor tennis courts, 14 outdoor tennis courts, indoor paddle tennis courts, a pool, including a zero-entry kiddie pool as well as 2 diving boards, patios, a poolside bar and grille, dining room and event spaces, a fitness center, and massage services. The Raquet Clubs offers group classes, teams, and instruction in fitness, tennis, and aquatic activities and also offers childcare.

## Regional and County Parks and Trails

There are no Waukesha County park facilities located within the Village of Elm Grove, however, both Waukesha and Milwaukee County Park facilities as well as City of Brookfield parks are an important part of the recreational infrastructure and opportunities in the area.

- **Fox Brook Park (Waukesha County)** Fox Brook Park is located at 2925 Barker Road in the City of Brookfield. The park totals 223 acres and it includes a 25-acre lake and swimming beach, a mile-long paved trail around the lake with 3 wildlife viewing observation decks. There 178 acres of wetlands, protected natural habitat, and open space areas. As a former gravel pit operation, the lake allows boating and scuba diving and reaches up to 30 feet deep. The picnic shelter and Fox Brook Lodge are available for rent and the Tap Yard Beer Garden is open from Spring to Fall.
- **Eble Ice Arena (Waukesha County)** Eble Ice Arena provides indoor ice skating and hockey. Operated by Waukesha County Parks, Eble offers figure skating for adults, seniors, and youth, hockey leagues and camps, and public skating opportunities. The facility can also be rented for private parties and events.
- **Mitchell Park (City of Brookfield)** Located adjacent to Fox Brook Park; Mitchell Park is a City of Brookfield facility that encompasses 405 acres. The park includes accessible play equipment, baseball/softball diamonds, sledding, cross country skiing, picnicking, canoe access areas, archery range, fenced dog exercise area, nature trails, bike paths and trailhead for the City's Greenway Trail System and the Waukesha County Fox River Trail, and passive and natural areas. It is also home to the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for Fine Arts which includes an outdoor theater and performance space.
- **Wirth Park (City of Brookfield)** Wirth Park is a 135-acre community park located just northwest of the Elm Grove Village boundary. Wirth Park includes baseball/softball fields, open play area, tennis courts, soccer fields, volleyball, sledding, skiing, nature trails, bike paths, and a skate park. Wirth Park is also home to the Wiberg Aquatic Center. In 2024, Wirth Park also opened an upgraded, accessible, and ADA compliant playground.
- **Mound Zion Park (City of Brookfield)** Mound Zion is a 49-acre park located just north of the Elm Grove Village boundary. It includes a picnic shelter, bike paths, nature trails, and trailhead. The park is almost entirely an environmental corridor that includes wetland, floodplains, and woodland and a portion of the Underwood Creek. It also includes a 45-acre area of Zion Woods Natural Area.
- **Dousman Stagecoach Inn Museum (City of Brookfield)** Home to the Elmbrook Historical Society, Dousman Stagecoach Inn Museum was built in 1843 and operated as an inn for travelers using the plank road from Milwaukee to Watertown, Wisconsin. Located in Brookfield on the west side of Pilgrim Parkway, the property includes 21-acres of former farm land and is considered a park and recreation facility. The property includes gardens, picnic tables and shelter, and a passive, natural recreation area. The Dousman Trail runs along the front of the property, providing a bicycle and pedestrian connection from Bluemound Road to North Avenue.
- **Oak Leaf Trail (Milwaukee County)** The Oak Leaf Trail provides over 135 miles of recreational trail across Milwaukee County. The trail takes users from the shores of Lake Michigan, through the heart of the City of Milwaukee and west into suburbs like Greenfield and beyond. Elm Grove residents can most easily connect to the Oak Leaf Trail Root River Line near the South Park Facility at Bluemound Road and 124<sup>th</sup> Street.



- **Brookfield Greenway Trail (City of Brookfield)** The Greenway Trail System is a comprehensive city-wide off-street system of recreational trails managed by the City of Brookfield to link city and regional parks and other destinations. Connections to the Greenway Trail from Elm Grove are primarily found on the southeast side of the Village near the South Park Facility (Bluemound Road and 124<sup>th</sup> Street), along North Avenue with connections to Mound Zion Park, and Wirth Park, and Pilgrim Parkway with access to the Dousman Trail via the Pilgrim Park Connector Trail from Village Park.

### State of Wisconsin Parks and Trails

State parks and natural areas exist as conservation and recreational areas typically isolated from population centers. These facilities play an important role in providing larger swaths of preserved wilderness that are often accessible for recreational use and encourage regional tourism. Facilities located near Elm Grove in both Waukesha County and other area counties act as an important part of the regional recreational system surrounding the Village.

- **Lakeshore State Park:** This 22-acre park is located on the shores of Lake Michigan in downtown Milwaukee, making it the only urban state park in all of Wisconsin. The park includes a 1.7-mile paved hiking and bicycling trail, water access for canoes and kayaks, fishing areas, a small beach, boat slips, and a bridge that connects the park to the Summerfest grounds.
- **Kettle Moraine State Forest – Lapham Peak Unit:** Located in nearby Delafield, Lapham Peak’s glaciated topography provides excellent hiking, backpacking, and cross-country skiing opportunities. The park features camping areas, a nature center, picnic and shelter areas, a performance stage, and a 45-foot observation tower located at the highest point in Waukesha, 1,233 feet above sea level.
- **Kettle Moraine State Forest – Southern Unit:** located in Waukesha County, this portion of the Kettle Moraine State Forest spans more than 22,000 acres, stretching from Dousman to Whitewater. This park features three family campgrounds, horseback riding trails, and several paddling, swimming, and fishing opportunities.
- **Glacial Drumlin State Trail:** Running through Waukesha, this 52-mile bike trail follows an abandoned railway, running through farmlands, several small towns in the area, and connecting the Milwaukee metropolitan area to Madison.
- **Hank Aaron State Trail:** Another state facility located in the greater Milwaukee area, this 14-mile paved trail connects American Family Field with State Fair Park, Lakeshore State Park, the Oak Leaf Trail, ultimately creating a continuous east-to-west connection from the shores of Lake Michigan to the Milwaukee/Waukesha County line.
- **Havenwoods State Forest:** Wisconsin’s only urban state forest, Havenwoods sits on 237 acres of grasslands, woods, and wetlands in the northwestern corner of the City of Milwaukee. The park features 6 miles of hiking trails, four ponds, a 120-foot bridge, and several picnic areas.

Figure 2.1 below summarizes all amenities offered at each park location within the Village of Elm Grove described above.

FIGURE 2.1: PARK FACILITY MATRIX

Elm Grove Park Facility	Recreational Acres	Baseball/Softball Diamonds	Basketball Courts	Benches	Football Fields	Grills	Soccer Fields	Tennis Courts	Flex Tennis/Pickleball Courts	Volleyball Courts	Sledding Hill	Parking	Open Play Field	Public Indoor Restrooms	Outdoor Shelter	Play Equipment	Trail System	Water Fountain	Picnic Tables	Fishing	Informational Signage
Village Park	78.9	2	1 Full Court	36		2	12	6	3	2	X	X	X	X	2	X	X	1	41	X	X
South Park Facility	15.3						1					X	X				X				
Blue Star Memorial	1.3			3													X				X
Tonawanda Elementary School	4.4		1 Full Court 1 Half Court	2			1					X				X					
Pilgrim Park Middle School	26	1	2 Full Courts 1 Half Court									X	X			X					
St. Mary's Visitation Catholic School	5.2		2 Half Courts									X	X			X					
Elm Grove Lutheran School	6.1	2	2 Half Courts	5								X	X			X					

Table Guide: X indicates the presence of an amenity in a park; a number indicates the quantity of an amenity or facility in a park.



# CHAPTER 3: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



VANDEWALLE &  
ASSOCIATES INC.

# CHAPTER 3: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

## PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY

The Village of Elm Grove conducted an online questionnaire via Survey Monkey from October 30, 2024, to November 20, 2024. In total, 448 people provided feedback in the public survey. Overall, the survey focused on obtaining public opinion and feedback on the current levels of park use, current conditions, and future needs of the Elm Grove park and recreation system. All survey results can be found in the Appendix.

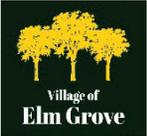
**TAKE THE Elm Grove Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan SURVEY**

**WE NEED YOUR INPUT TO GUIDE THE FUTURE OF RECREATION IN ELM GROVE!**

Help shape the future plans and vision for the Village's park facilities and programs by taking a quick, **10-15 minute survey**. Visit the Village website or scan the code at the right to get started.

The community survey is available from **October 30<sup>th</sup> - November 20<sup>th</sup>** and is part of the Village of Elm Grove's 2024 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP).

*The Village of Elm Grove thanks you for your time and input!*



Scan with your phone to get to the survey quickly!



[tinyurl.com/ElmGroveCORP](https://tinyurl.com/ElmGroveCORP)

Of the 448 respondents, 88% were Village residents and the rest were mainly users, including those that participate in Elm Grove recreational programming from neighboring villages and cities. Nearly 25% of respondents have lived in the Village for 21 years or more, although there was moderate distribution among newer residents as well. Additionally, over 56% of respondents were between the ages of 30-49. The survey also captured responses from 103 members of the public age 60 and older. This indicates that the survey reached a wide-ranging age demographic for most segments of the population. Nearly 60% of respondents have 4 or more residents in their household and 82% had at least one minor (age 18 or under) in the household.

Survey respondents were asked what types of activities and programs they participate in currently, their perceptions of the quality of the community's recreational programming offerings, what priorities are needed at various park facilities throughout the community, the use of the pathway system, and what types of large-scale, small-scale, and specialized park and recreation facilities are needed to serve Village residents, among other questions. For some of these questions, participants were asked to rank options based on a High, Medium, or Low priority.

Overall, the results of the public survey provide valuable insights into the perspectives, desires, and needs of the community. Over 80% of respondents reported that they have walked to a park and 55% of respondents have biked to a park in the last year. The survey revealed that nearly 48% of respondents went to an Elm Grove park on a weekly basis. While Village Park is obviously the most visited park facility in the Village, 61% of respondents indicate that have used the Village Pathway System. On the flipside, only 4% of respondents ranked the South Park Facility in the top 3 facilities visited, suggesting that the facility is underutilized. When asked when residents leave the Village for recreation, answers included a number of neighboring community parks with amenities that include ADA accessible playgrounds, dog parks, pickleball, swimming, and bike and walking trails.

The survey results indicate a high level of use and satisfaction with the existing park system. More than 70% of respondents felt that Elm Grove had the appropriate number of parks. Among the types of facilities respondents would like to see more of, top responses included restrooms (35%), nature trails (32%), paved trails (33%), updated playground equipment (31%), beer garden expansion (32%), winter trails (21%), dog park (15%), and events pavilion (24%). Open answer responses also included amenity improvements like trash receptacles, lighting in the activity area, particularly the playground, and safety improvements to the playground.

FIGURE 3.1: TOP IDENTIFIED ACTIVITIES IN VILLAGE

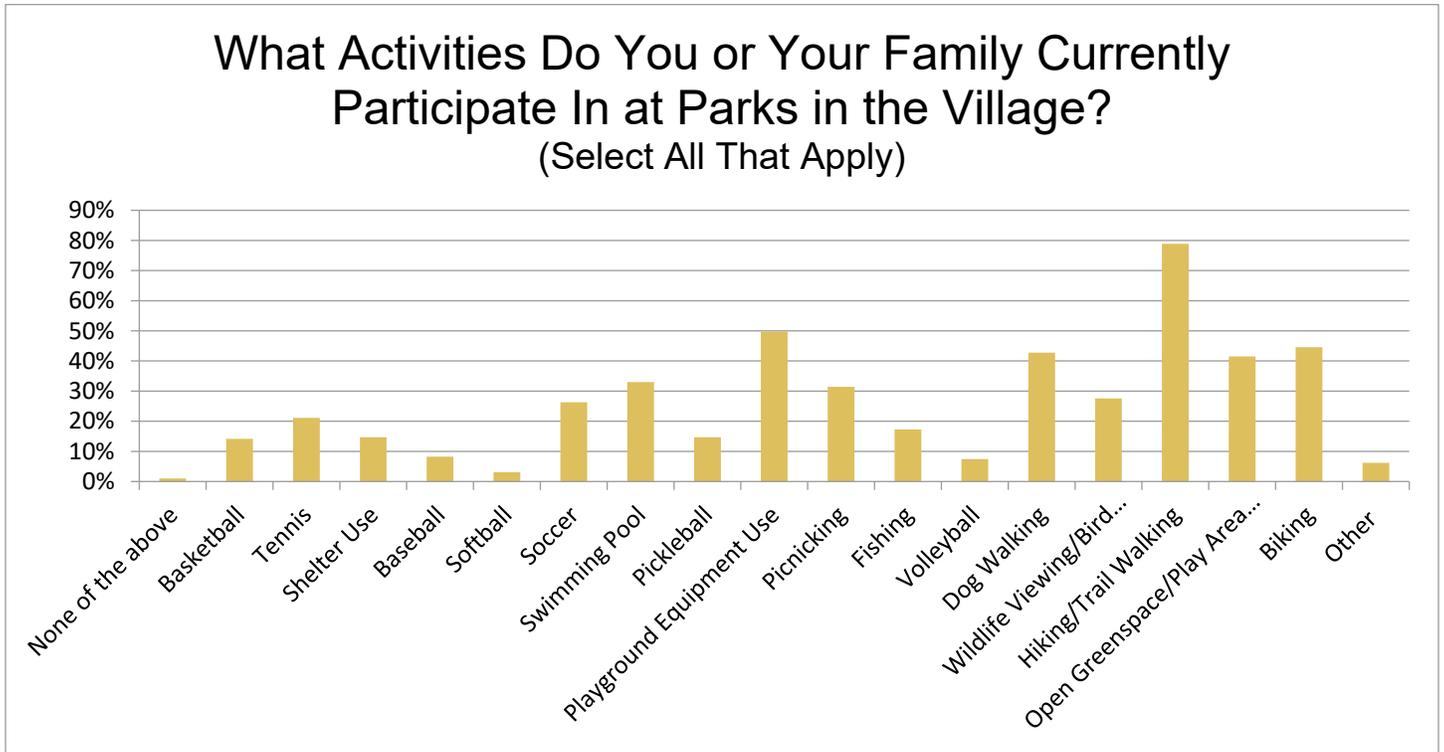


FIGURE 3.2: PERCEPTION OF ELM GROVE PARK SYSTEM

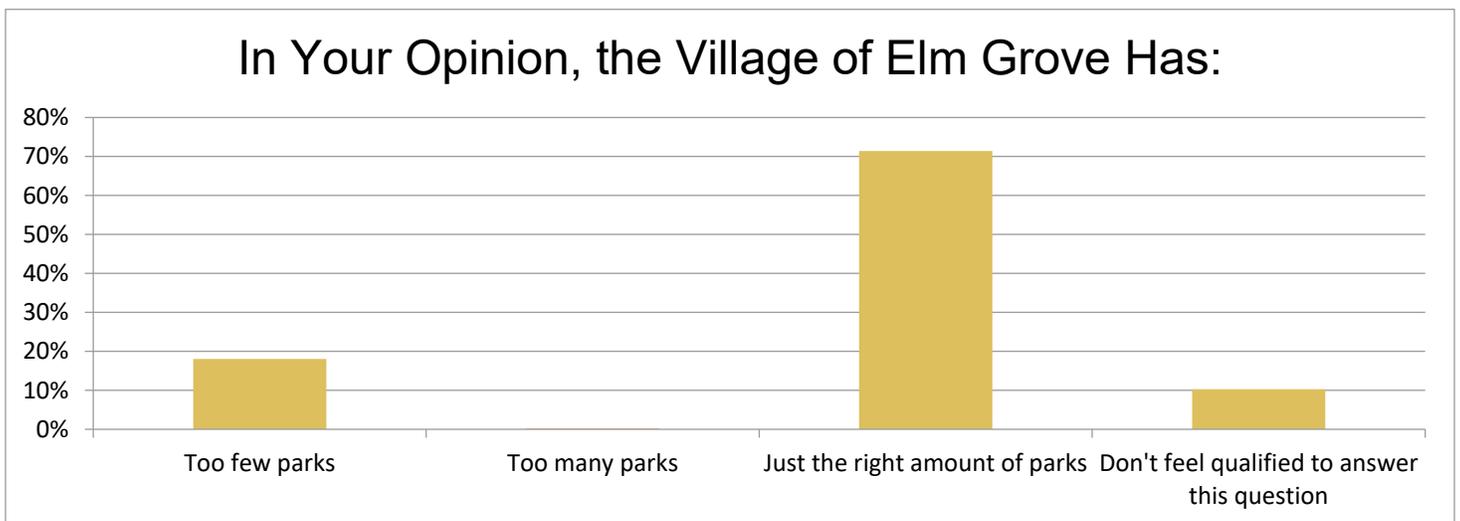
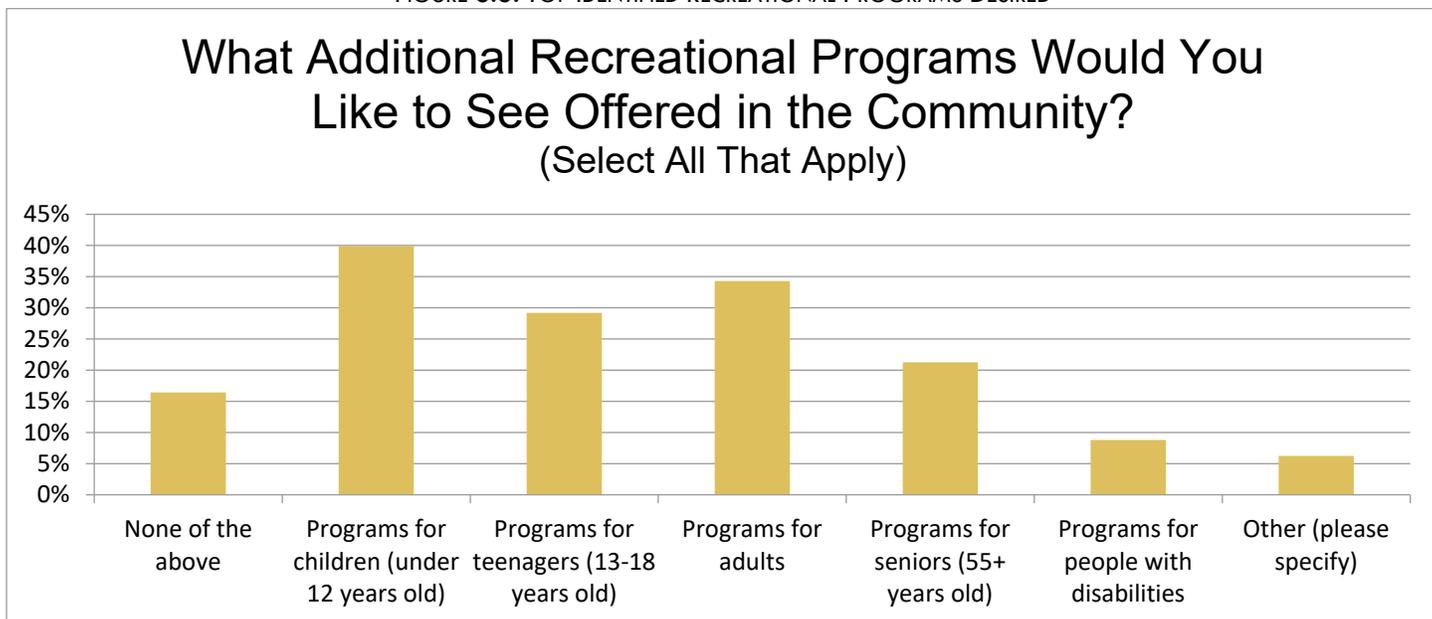


FIGURE 3.3: TOP IDENTIFIED RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS DESIRED



Respondents were asked about the community’s existing recreational programming, revealing that 71% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with recreational program offerings. Over 58% of respondents indicated that a member of their household had participated in a youth sports program and 27% of respondents participated in an adult fitness or enrichment activity through the Elm Grove Recreation Department. When asked what types of programming should be further expanded, participants indicated the desire to see more programs for younger children, teenagers, and adults. Recommendations for future programming include fine arts classes, cooking, crafting, and updated fitness options like pickleball.

FIGURE 3.4: FUTURE PARK RESOURCE PRIORITIES

	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	No Opinion	Weighted Average
Focus on upgrading and maintaining existing facilities in the community’s parks and public spaces	66%	29%	3%	2%	2.6
Continue to develop opportunities to expand the existing trail and pathways systems between parks and Village points of interest and activity	57%	30%	12%	1%	2.5
Promote more activities and community gathering opportunities (festivals, programming, events, public art, etc.) throughout existing parks	27%	49%	22%	2%	2.1
Acquire or convert additional parkland for natural resource preservation and passive recreational uses (ex. walking paths, open areas, nature areas, picnicking, etc.)	26%	39%	32%	2%	1.9
Expand and improve winter activities, including skating, sledding, as well as indoor activities	19%	42%	36%	3%	1.8
Acquire additional parkland for small neighborhood parks (ex. playground equipment, shelter, open playfield, etc.)	12%	27%	57%	4%	1.5
Other	38%	4%	8%	50%	2.6

When asked to prioritize how the Village should invest resources in the park and recreation system, two thirds of respondents (66%) said that upgrading and maintaining the existing park system facilities is a high priority. As the next highest priority, 57% of respondents indicated expanding the trail and pathways system is most important. Generally, most respondents did not prioritize acquiring additional parkland or property for the future of the park system.

Another important question was how well the Village is maintaining its existing park and recreation facilities. Overall, nearly 85% respondents expressed that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the maintenance of existing park facilities. However, suggested areas for improvement include the condition and cleanliness of park restrooms, maintenance of sports fields including the soccer and baseball fields in Village Park. Just over 93% of respondents indicated that they feel very safe or have no safety concerns in using the community's park and recreation system, and less than .5% expressed some level of unsafety. Improvements to lighting, maintenance or brush and overgrowth, and improvements to pathway and crossing safety were the primary recommendations for safety improvements.

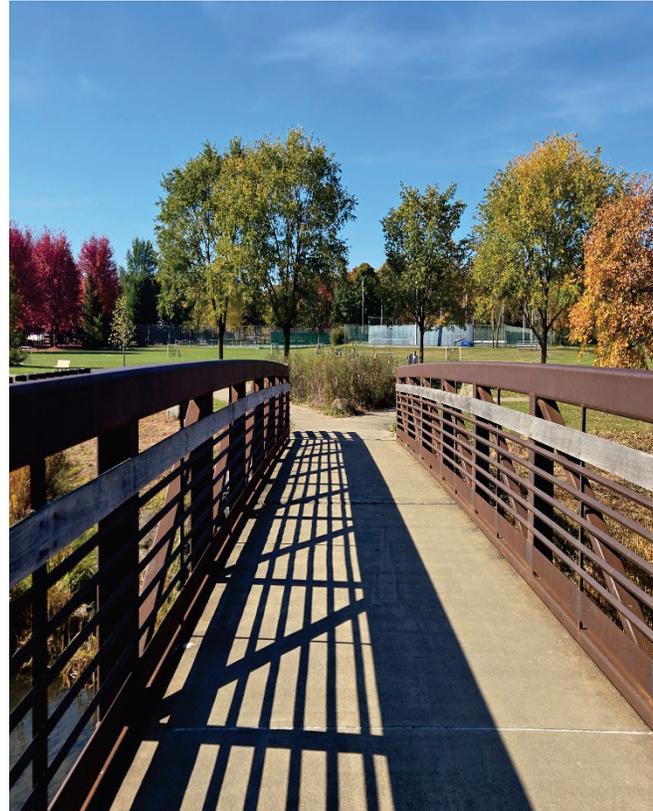
## **SITE VISIT AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

On October 13, 2024 planning consultants coordinated with Village and staff to conduct a tour of the community and its various park and open space assets to gain further understanding and familiarity with specific sites, the community's characteristics and values, and recreational opportunities. The data gathered in this site visit informed the CORP's existing conditions analysis and recommendation development.

Throughout the month of October and November, planning consultants with the support of Village staff conducted 4 stakeholder focus group interviews. Focus groups were organized around common themes, including Civic and Nonprofit Organizations, Schools, Students, and Youth, Small Businesses and Economic Development, and Recreation and Frequent User Groups. Each focus group discussion dug deeper into key topics about the current park and recreation system, how it was serving different populations and constituencies, and what members of each group would like to see added or improved about the Elm Grove park system in the future. Discussions were robust with committed focus group members sharing a variety of insights. A few key themes emerged from these discussions:

- The existing Elm Grove Park system is very strong and Village Park is a centerpiece of the community – Elm Grove would not be Elm Grove without Village Park.
- The park system would be best served in the future by maintaining the assets that the Village has and maximizing use of the existing spaces.
- The Pathway system is important to the Village's quality of life and additional connections and safety improvements should be made so that all residents are able to access Village parks and other destinations.
- The sports and playfields in the Village are well located, but key maintenance and drainage issues at Village Park and the Sout Park Facility limit their usability and durability.
- Village Park is very versatile and can be used for many different activities at the same time. Some improvements and updates could be made to more dated facilities like the pool house and playground.

The feedback received from each of these events informed the development of this Plan and its recommendations.



## **PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE**

Following a kickoff with Village Staff, staff and planning consultants engaged the Village's Recreation Committee in a kickoff meeting on October 3, 2024. This kickoff meeting outlined the CORP planning process and intended outcomes for the plan, while also soliciting input from the Committee on key priorities for the CORP and the Elm Grove park system in the future. Planning consultants also reviewed the public participation plan for the CORP including the development of the survey and the stakeholder focus groups. Recreation Committee members expressed the importance of identifying additional funding sources for Plan recommendations and future park and trail systems beyond the Village's general budget and tax levy. These alternatives could include state, federal, and private grants, as well as fundraising campaigns. The feedback of the Recreation Committee was key in informing the development of the community survey and the goals, objectives, and policy recommendations of this CORP.

On January 23, 2025 consultants and Village staff met with the Recreation Committee to review the first draft of the CORP. Comments and edits from the Recreation Committee were incorporated into the draft in preparation of the Public Open House. Comments and directives from the Recreation Committee included:

- Address the constraints on the Village to realize future parkland goals, including constraints on land as a built-out community, environmental constraints and the environmental limitations of the Village and its parkland, and budget and resource constraints to fund park projects in light of budget and taxations caps.
- Recognize the Caroline Heights development population increase in the population projections.
- Update the grants resource list to better identify opportunities for the Village.
- Include language describing the CORP as a guiding document, rather than a directive, which is dependent on a variety of factors including timing, public interest, and capital resource availability.

## **PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE**

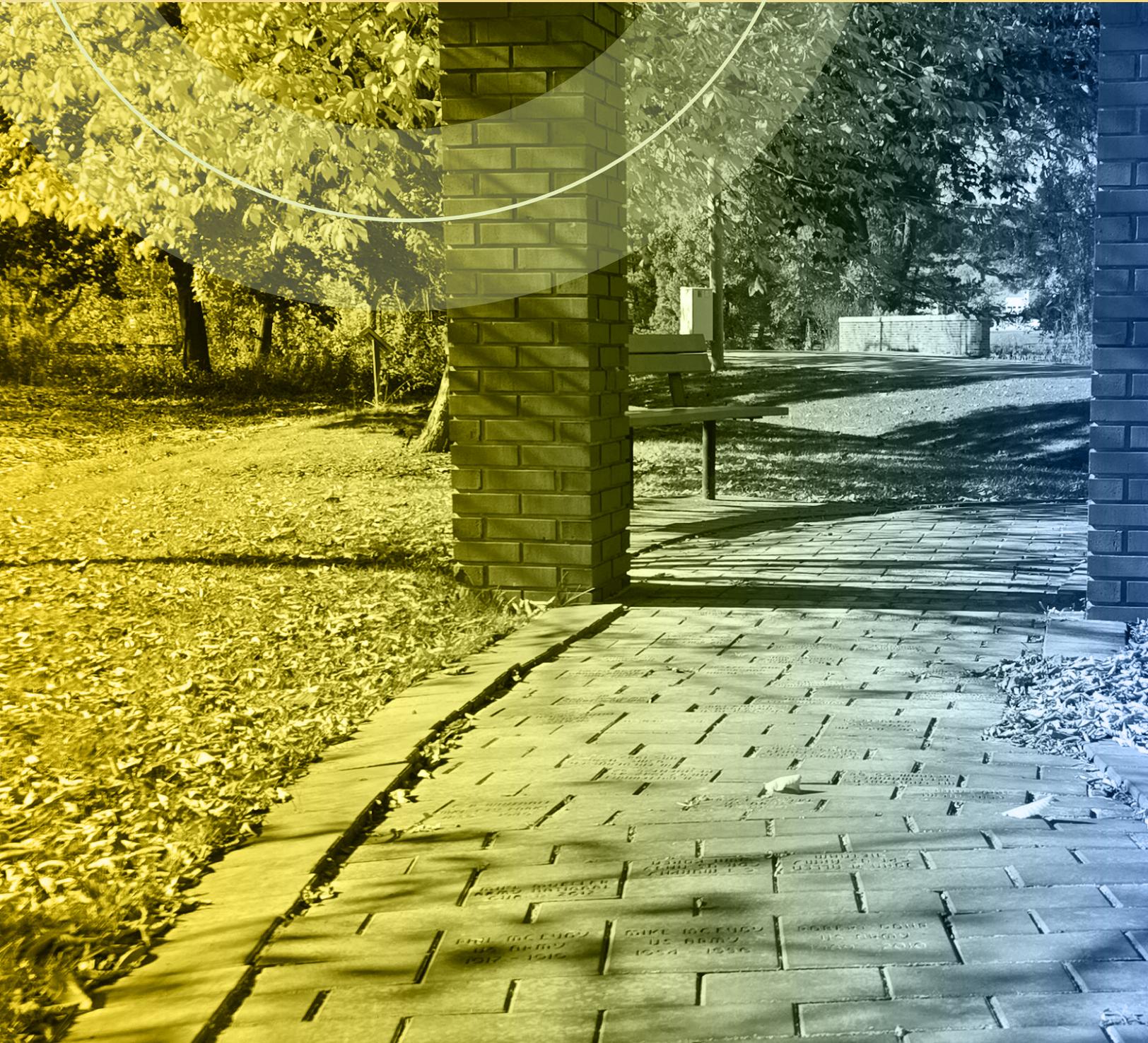
On February 20, 2025, the Village hosted a Draft Public Open House at Village Hall. The Open House included an opportunity for members of the public to review the draft plan's key findings, recommendations, and the Village Park Concept Plan. The public also had an opportunity to leave a variety of comments on the CORP and recommendations as well as prioritize implementation initiatives. The Open House also included a joint meeting of the Recreation Committee and Village Board of Trustees. Following a presentation on the CORP, the public had the opportunity to make verbal comments followed by comments and input from the Recreation Committee and Village Board members. The overall response to the draft CORP was positive and there was discussion about how to take the CORP to the next steps for implementation and pursuing additional resources such as grants. Additional comments and directives from the joint meeting, the Recreation Committee and Village Board included:

- Consensus that the CORP sought and received a large amount of community input and that the resulting recommendations are reflective of the desires of the community.
- The Village will need to come together, including members of the Village's boards and commissions, to prioritize Plan recommendations and projects and determine which are most feasible.
- The Village will need to pursue grants and other resources to accomplish projects. The Village should have conversations with other communities on how they accomplished and funded similar projects.
- Update the CORP's Action Plan Matrix to include a line to initiate the CORP update process in four years rather than waiting for the CORP to expire.

# CHAPTER 4: GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & POLICIES



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# CHAPTER 4: GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

In order to conduct a thorough and accurate planning process, it is important to establish a set of goals, objectives, and policies that will serve as the basis for the recommendations in this Plan.

**A Mission Statement** is the overall purpose of the plan in relationship to the parks and recreational system.

**Goals** are broad statements that express general public priorities. Goals are formulated based on the identification of key issues, opportunities, and priorities that affect the park system.

**Objectives** are more specific than goals and are usually attainable through strategic planning and implementation activities. Implementation of an objective contributes to the fulfillment of a goal.

**Policies** are rules and courses of action used to ensure plan implementation. Policies often accomplish a number of objectives, sometimes simultaneously.

The following mission statement and list of goals, objectives, and policies are based on the information that has been presented in the previous chapters of this Plan, including public input and discussions amongst Village staff, focus groups attendees, and Recreation Committee members.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Village of Elm Grove's staff and elected officials' aim is to maintain and improve quality of life, provide efficient and high quality public services, provide high quality community events and activities for all residents and visitors, preserve lands and natural resources of significant natural beauty, ecological importance, and historic value, and maintain long-term fiscal sustainability. The Elm Grove Recreation Department also abides by the following mission statement:

### Village of Elm Grove Mission Statement

The Village of Elm Grove Recreation Department is committed to improving the quality of life for all residents of Elm Grove. This is accomplished by providing high quality parks and open spaces, facilities, programs, and special events.

## GOALS

1. Ensure the provision of sufficient parks, passive and active recreation facilities, and open space areas to meet the needs of all community members and provide all residents with access to high quality recreation opportunities.
2. Maintain and protect the Village's natural resources, park facilities, and recreational amenities for the benefit of current and future residents, to promote public health, and to provide diverse recreational opportunities for residents now and in the future.
3. Maintain and expand a safe, accessible, and interconnected pedestrian and bicycle network to connect the Village's park and recreation system to areas of activity and community neighborhoods.
4. Maintain close partnership between the Village of Elm Grove and Elmbrook School District, and private schools and churches to manage, develop, promote, and enhance recreational and athletic facilities and programs for Elm Grove residents.



## OBJECTIVES

1. Provide quality outdoor recreation facilities and adequate open space lands with barrier-free access that go beyond ADA facility requirements and incorporate universal and inclusive design for each neighborhood of the community.
2. Integrate park, recreation, and natural resource preservation in land use planning policies and administration.
3. Provide diverse and equitably located recreational opportunities so that residents of all ages, all abilities, and in all neighborhoods have an equal opportunity to enjoy the park and open space system.
4. Collaborate with other units of government, including neighboring communities, Waukesha and Milwaukee Counties, WI DNR, and the Elmbrook School District on park and recreation system planning and existing park and open space improvements.
5. Plan and implement a comprehensive network of pedestrian pathways and bicycle routes in the Village that serve neighborhoods, schools, parks, playgrounds, and activity centers and connect to broader regional trail networks.
6. Leverage public-private partnerships, local associations and foundations, and other creative funding sources to help improve and meet the long-term park and recreational needs of the community.

## POLICIES

1. As opportunities become available and where practical, the Village should consider purchasing properties adjacent to existing parks to allow for the expansion of existing parks. The Village will need to evaluate each opportunity to determine which properties will sufficiently meet the future needs of the park system and the availability of resources for acquisition.
2. Identified neighborhood park improvements should be designed and planned to enhance neighborhood cohesion and provide a common neighborhood-gathering place. All parks should have multiple ADA accessible access points from surrounding neighborhoods.
3. Review possibility for unconstrained parkland dedication requirement or fee-in-lieu standards for all new development and require park improvement fees. Include provision that parkland dedication is primarily unconstrained acreage that allows for active recreation development. Ensure that all departments responsible for providing or maintaining adequate park facilities are involved in development review.
4. Coordinate park system and connectivity improvements and any relevant land acquisitions with local, county, and state agencies to ensure an interconnected system of outdoor recreational facilities within the Village and its surrounding area.
5. Master plans should be considered for all future parkland development and existing parkland improvements. These plans should indicate the future use of the facilities, equipment, and park grounds.
6. Work with neighboring jurisdictions, Waukesha County, and the state to coordinate bicycle and pedestrian planning and planning for potential future alternative transportation corridors. The provision of safe and convenient bike connections between park and open space facilities should be emphasized in on-going Village planning and acquisition efforts and should follow State and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards.
7. Coordinate and pursue the development of trail connections to the Oak Leaf Trail, Hank Aaron State Trail, Brookfield Greenway Trail, and other regional trails with local jurisdictions.
8. Partner with the Junior Guild, Women's Club, Elmbrook School District, Elm Grove Police Department, local businesses, or other local interest groups to grow bicycle and pedestrian education programs and other training to increase bicycle safety and the utilization of trails, paths, sidewalks, and streets for active transportation.



9. Continue to coordinate the public use of indoor and outdoor school recreation facilities with the Elmbrook School District and local private schools and churches.
10. Preservation of environmental corridors in their natural state should receive special attention to ensure the maintenance and integrity of wildlife habitats, natural drainage areas, areas for passive, outdoor recreation, and woodlands, where appropriate.
11. Utilize management practices that protect and enhance the natural features of all Village parks. This includes efforts to establish and maintain buffers for sensitive environmental areas, minimize fertilizer and pesticide use, and implement native species plantings in landscaping initiatives, to the extent possible.
12. Continue to provide recreation facilities that are designed for the safety and convenience of the age groups that use them, the effectiveness of supervision, and the quality of the recreation experience.
13. Continue to market the park system's facilities and programs to the community by utilizing the Village and School District's websites, social media, email lists, recreational guides, signage, and developing new informational publications either in print or online as needed. Coordinate with the School District and local partners to make these resources widely available.
14. Improve wayfinding and identification signage at all Elm Grove park and recreation facilities, and develop Village trail maps and signage indicating points of interest within the community at key bicycle and pedestrian network locations.
15. Coordinate with the Village Sustainability and Beautification Committees as well as the School District to develop additional educational, cultural and arts programming, events, and activities to further activate the community's park and recreation facilities and preserve and protect the community's natural resources.
16. Where feasible, develop trails and other facilities to encourage active winter recreational activities such as cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.
17. Continue to fund the modernization of facilities and equipment in older parks, provide new facilities and equipment in undeveloped or partially developed parks, and monitor and maintain existing park equipment to ensure longevity and safety.
18. When planning for facility and equipment improvements, consider incorporation of sustainable building materials, design elements, and renewable resources.
19. Integrate passive and interactive public art features that celebrate and explore Elm Grove's culture, character, history, and native ecology into existing and new park developments, including interesting architectural or design elements in new structures and playground equipment expansion or upgrades.
20. The Village should take measures to ensure that existing park facilities are upgraded to comply with and go beyond ADA design guidelines. All new park development and amenity improvements should be inclusive, accessible, and to ADA design standards at a minimum. Future parks and amenities should be designed so that they are barrier-free and accessible to persons with disabilities.
21. Participate in future updates to the Waukesha County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans and Parks and Open Space Plans.
22. Consider developing and adopting a "Health in All Policies" initiative so that public health is integrated in all decision-making process Village-wide.
23. Utilize grants, fundraising campaigns, and other funding sources as well as the Village's 5-year Capital Improvements Plan to pursue and implement the recommendations of this Plan. Grants and alternative fundraising approaches are recommended to be explored and incorporated into the project funding plan before including in the Capital Improvements Plan.





# CHAPTER 5: PARK & OPEN SPACE STANDARDS



VANDEWALLE &  
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# CHAPTER 5: PARK AND OPEN SPACE STANDARDS

In order to guide the park planning process, it is important to establish a set of minimum standards for park and recreational facilities. Such standards enable a community to quantitatively measure how well its existing facilities are meeting the needs of residents and to plan for future facilities based on projected population growth. As such, park and recreation standards are commonly developed using a ratio of the number of minimum acres recommended per 1,000 residents.

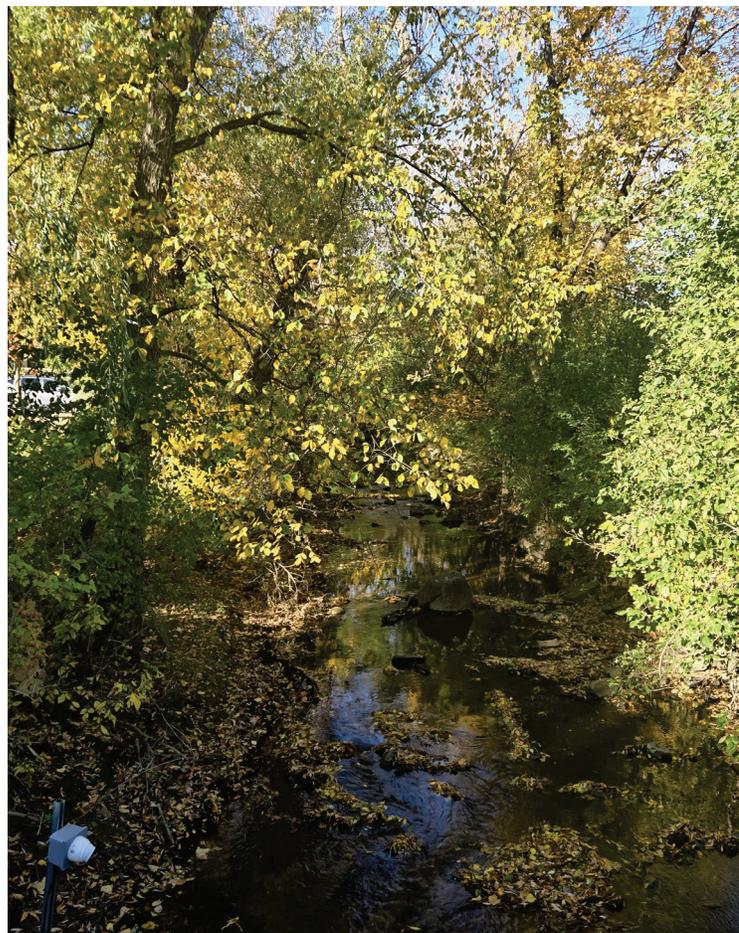
The following section details the local standards for park and recreational facilities. These standards are a combination of National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines and best practice for Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans. A calculation of community-specific standards is more likely to identify those park system deficiencies that would not otherwise be captured by universal or national standards. Furthermore, a locally derived standard does a better job of considering the quality of the park system as well as the quantity of park and recreational facilities provided.

For a full description of each park type in the Village, see Chapter 2.

## NATIONAL STANDARDS AND COMPARABLE COMMUNITY'S STANDARDS

To understand the role that the Village's Park and Trail System should play in providing park and recreation services, it is useful to understand the role of a municipal park system in the context of national, state, and county services provided.

- **National Parks** are scattered throughout the United States with massive tracts of land that serve as vacation destinations or wilderness areas. They are run by the Department of Interior of the United States government. There are no National Parks in Waukesha County.
- **State Parks** exist as conservation areas, scenic drives, or as weekend getaways, typically away from population centers. State Parks are often designed to encourage tourism, but their primary purpose is to serve residents of their respective states. Nearby State Park and Natural Areas include Lakeshore State Park, the Kettle Moraine State Forest – Lapham Peak Unit & Southern Unit, the Glacial Drumlin State Trail, Hank Aaron State Trail, Havenwoods State Forest, and Richard Bong State Recreation Area.
- **County Parks** function to fill in the gaps that municipal and state governments do not serve. The gaps can include serving a municipal function in portions of a county with municipalities too small to have enough resources to provide parks, conserving large areas of open space that municipalities cannot, or as a tourist venue for people from outside the county. Fox Brook and Minooka Park are examples of county parks located in the region.
- **Municipal Parks** exist to serve residents of municipalities, sometimes on an hourly basis, as hosts for active athletic or recreation programs. The two most common types of municipal parks are Neighborhood and Community parks. Neighborhood parks are usually 1-10 acres in size and have a 1/3-mile service radius. Community parks are generally larger (10+ acres) and typically serve larger portions of the community with a 1-mile service radius.



The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) compiles data from around the U.S. on park and recreational departments and services provided. It is important to compare the services that Elm Grove provides to the national averages as a benchmark for analysis. A few of the most applicable metrics include:

FIGURE 5.1. COMPARABLE COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

	NRPA Standard (2023)	Elm Grove Park System
Total Park Acres per 1,000 Residents	10.8	21.3
Average Number of Residents per Park	2,287	921
Full Time Park and Recreation Employees (per 10,000 Residents)	8.9	1

Another method in evaluating the existing Elm Grove Parks System is comparing it to other similar sized municipalities. In Figure 5.2, five other communities were selected that ranged in size between 7,658 – 14,904 in total population. Generally, Elm Grove has slightly fewer developed municipally owned parks and School District facilities when compared to some other peer communities. However, the Village of Elm Grove compares favorably with other municipalities in terms of the total number of residents per park and acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. In terms of the number of developed park acres per 1,000 residents, Elm Grove surpasses both the national benchmark standard and has more parkland per 1,000 residents than nearly all comparable communities.

To note, like Elm Grove, some communities have significant amounts of their existing total park acres that are constrained by environmental factors such as rivers, streams, steep slopes, natural areas, floodplain, and wetlands. Many do not account for that factor in their park planning, thus total acres shown below could include both constrained and unconstrained land totals for comparison communities.

FIGURE 5.2. COMPARABLE COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

Municipality	2022 Population	Number of Municipal & School District Owned Parks	Residents Per Park	Total Acres*	Acres Per 1,000 People
<b>Village of Elm Grove</b>	<b>6,445</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>921</b>	<b>137.2</b>	<b>21.3</b>
City of Glendale	13,227	7	1,890	26.4	2.0
Village of Thiensville	3,279	2	1,640	16.6	5.1
Village of Whitefish Bay	14,804	9	1,645	41.5	2.8
Village of Greendale	14,722	10	1,472	119.8	8.1
Village of Hales Corners	7,658	4	1,915	32.5	4.2
Village of Sussex	11,750	18	653	291	24.8
Average of Comparable Communities	10,269	8	1448	95	10
<b>NRPA Standards (2023)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>National Average: 10.8</b>

\* Neighborhood and Community Parks as well as outdoor School District facilities are included in the total number of parks and acres shown above.  
 Source: V&A and Village of Elm Grove, City of Glendale, Village of Thiensville, Village of Hales Corners, Village of Sussex, Village of Whitefish Bay, Village of Greendale, and the National Park and Recreation Association.

While it is important to evaluate Elm Grove based on both national averages and neighboring Wisconsin municipalities, it is difficult to do a one-to-one comparison between parks departments. This is because of the variability in department structure, amenities, distribution of county and state parks, and the number of natural resources in the area. Therefore, this comparison should be taken as context for the Elm Grove system and not necessarily a judgement or a direct benchmark for performance.

# ELM GROVE PARK STANDARDS

Overall, the Village currently maintains a rate of service of approximately 21.3 total park acres per 1,000 residents. Because of the projected future increase in the population over the next 10-20 years, the acres per resident performance is expected to decrease slightly over the planning period. If the Village wishes to maintain or increase its performance, additional park land will need to be acquired or new partnerships with nearby public and private entities will need to be formed. Below, in Figure 5.3, is the breakdown of the total park acres per 1,000 residents rates using Elm Grove’s 2022 total population. Currently, the Village exceeds its parkland standards.

FIGURE 5.3 CURRENT VILLAGE OF ELM GROVE PARK STANDARDS

	2022 Elm Grove Population	2024 Total Park Acres	2024 Total Acres Per 1,000 Residents	Elm Grove CORP Standard: Park Acreage Per 1,000 Residents	Total Acres Needed to Meet Standard	Additional Acres Needed to Meet Standard
Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, and Outdoor School District Facilities	6,445	137	21.3	10.8	75.6	0

Note: Total acres are defined as the total land area within all existing Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, and Outdoor School District Facilities. All figures used in this table are rounded.

Source: V&A and Village of Elm Grove

There may be opportunities to acquire a few key pieces of land to augment the park system as the community grows and develops, however, the Village of Elm Grove is severely limited in the opportunity to acquire additional parkland. Some of these future opportunities should not be discounted and could include natural resource protection opportunities, public greenspace, expansion opportunities for existing facilities, and trails to connect existing or future parks, and commercial areas. Previous Village Park and Open Space plans have identified the NRPA standards as the Village standard for future park needs. While the current park system exceeds national standards, the NRPA standards should be used as the local standard to determine future parkland acreage needed to meet projected population growth.

## SERVICE AREAS

Map 2 depicts the service areas of Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, and outdoor School District facilities based on their location within the community. This analysis is utilized to determine the existing service coverage of the Village Park and Recreation System, in addition to forming the basis of the recommended new park locations as discussed in Chapter 7.

Park service areas were divided into two different distances based on the size, number of amenities, and ability to serve multiple recreational functions:

- Neighborhood Parks & Special Use Facilities: 1/3 Mile Service Area
- Community Parks & School District Facilities: 1 Mile Service Area

In most municipalities, service areas range between 1/4 – 1/3 mile because of the need to accommodate all modes of transportation access, especially people who may not own or be able to operate a vehicle (children, disabled individuals, the elderly, etc.). A 1/4 – 1/3 mile radius is seen as representative distance of mobility or how far most individuals can walk comfortably depending on age, health, and other factors. An additional consideration in the service areas provided by each Neighborhood and Community Park are access barriers (large roadways, natural features, bridges, etc.) and general development density. There were no significant barriers identified to constrain Elm Grove’s service areas.

Between the larger service areas provided by the Village Park as a central community park, the South Park Facility, public and private school facilities, and the overall small size of the community, the entire Village has ready access to park and recreational facilities. A small corner of the southwest of the Village is outside the Village Park service area. Improvements to Elm Grove Lutheran, in partnership with property owners, could create a more neighborhood-oriented park that serves those residents. Park service areas are illustrated in Map 2.

## PROGRAMMING AND STAFFING

As of 2024, the Village of Elm Grove provides an exceptional range of recreational programming through its Recreation Department. Recreation Department staff work with other Village Departments and local clubs, teams, schools, and civic organizations to provide recreational activities throughout the community's park and recreation facilities throughout the year. Elm Grove residents and families are also able to access various local sports clubs and teams as well as athletics and recreational activities through the Elmbrook School District.

Public input throughout the planning process indicated significant positive feedback about the community's existing recreational programming offerings. Residents strongly value Elm Grove's recreational programs, viewing them as vital amenities that improve residential quality-of-life, promote activity, and create community connections. Community members appreciate the strong variety of programming offered, indicating that there are classes and activities that appeal to many interests and age groups within the community.

The Recreation Department produces Winter-Spring, Summer, and Fall Recreation Guides each year, providing various adult, youth, and teen programs including sports, health and wellness activities, arts activities, and aquatics.

The Department also coordinates Elm Grove's seasonal community events and holiday celebrations, including the summer's Tunes on Tuesdays, Friday Flicks, Fourth of July, Memorial Day, and WinterFest. Community partners including the Elm Grove Community Foundation organize events like Oktoberfest, which are also held in Village Park.

The Recreation Department is staffed by one full time employee, a Recreation Manager, and approximately 40 seasonal staff. Maintenance of park facilities is accomplished in partnership between the Recreation Department and Department of Public Works, which has 9 full-time employees. In order to provide the high level of service that the Village desires, it is recommended that at a minimum the existing ratio of full-time to part-time staff, in addition to the ratio of programming to maintenance staff remain the same over the next five years. However, if new or expanded programming, facilities, or land acquisition takes place, additional staff should be considered, and it is recommended to maintain the existing level of service. According to the National Recreation and Park Association's 2023 Park and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks Field Report, the national average of full-time park employees per 10,000 people in a jurisdiction is 8.9. This translates to approximately 5.7 parks and recreation staff are needed to meet the national benchmark based on the Village's current population.



Village of Elm Grove Corp  
Map 2: Existing Facility  
Service Areas

- Park Type**
- Community Park
  - Special Use Facility
  - School District Facility
  - Private School Facility
  - Surface Water
  - Village of Elm Grove
  - Other Municipal Boundary
  - Buildings
  - Active Rail
  - Vacated Rail
  - 1/3rd Mile Service Area - School and Special Use Facilities
  - 1 Mile Service Area - Community Parks
  - Existing Bike/Pedestrian Paths
  - Off Road Path or Trail
  - On Road Bike Route or Lane
  - Pedestrian Path/Sidewalk

- Park Type Key**
- Community Parks:
1. Village Park
  2. South Park Facility
- Special Use Facility:
3. Blue Star Memorial
- School District Facility:
4. Pilgrim Park Middle School Recreation Area
  5. Tonawanda Elementary School Recreation Area
- Private School Facility:
6. Elm Grove Lutheran Church Recreation Area
  7. St. Mary's Church Recreation Area

Scale: 0 250 500 1,000 Feet

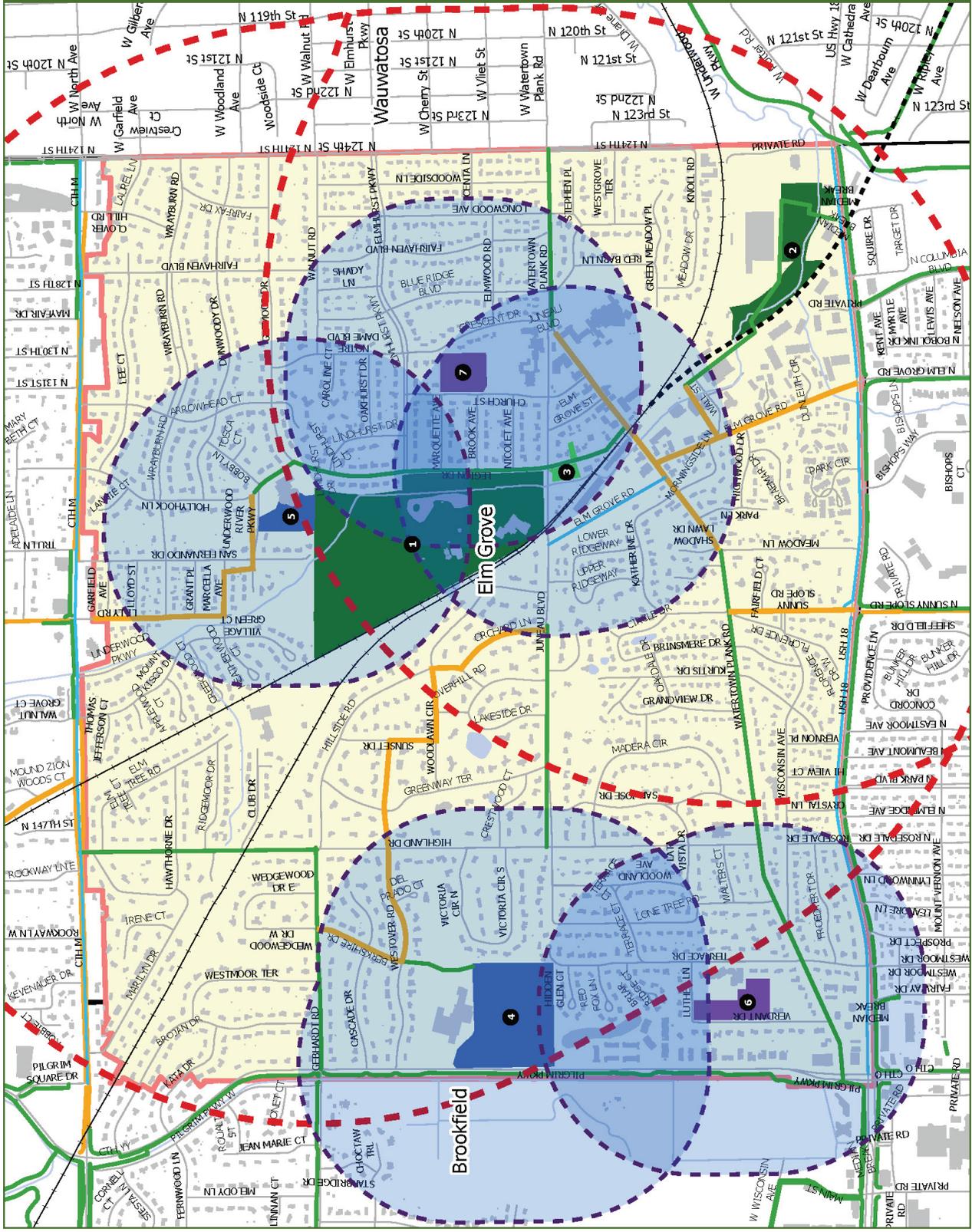
Logo: VANDERWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC. 2022

Logo: Elm Grove

North Arrow

Date: April 22, 2025

Source: Village of Elm Grove, Waukesha County, State of Wisconsin, Ruekert, Mielke, FE, MA, US Census Bureau



# CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING PARK & OPEN SPACE SYSTEM



VANDEWALLE &  
ASSOCIATES INC.



# CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING PARK AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

This Chapter presents an analysis of how well Elm Grove’s existing park and recreational facilities meet community needs, evaluating the following components:

- An application of established local and national park and recreational facility service standards to reliable population projections for the Village (Chapter 5).
- A qualitative analysis of the Village’s park system based on both an understanding of the Village’s goals and objectives and an evaluation of the local demand for parkland and recreational facilities.
- An analysis of the geographic distribution and accessibility of each park location.
- A consideration of public input regarding the future of the Village’s park and open space system.
- A review of the Wisconsin’s State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

The results of this analysis will serve as the basis for the recommendations presented in Chapter 7.

## QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

As described elsewhere in the Plan, the Elm Grove park system contains both constrained and unconstrained acreage. Constrained acres are those with environmental limitations that prevent development and are better suited for passive recreation and natural areas. Unconstrained acres are those best suited for recreational development and active recreation such as playfields, courts, and gathering structures. The quantitative analysis below looks at both the constrained and unconstrained acres in the Village and how they might impact future service needs.

### Existing Facilities

As documented in Chapter 5, Elm Grove’s existing park acres exceed the CORP standard for a total of 10.8 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents (Figure 6.1). In calculating and analyzing the future park acres needed to accommodate the Village’s growing population, the parks areas of all Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Special Use Areas, and School facilities were determined.

FIGURE 6.1: TOTAL PARKLAND BY TYPE

Park Type	2023 Total Acres	2023 Total Acres Per 1,000 Residents
Neighborhood	0.0	0.0
Community	94.2	14.6
Special Use	1.3	0.2
Total Village Owned/Operated	95.5	14.8
School Facilities (Public and Private)	41.7	6.5
Total All Facilities	137.2	21.3

The Village of Elm Grove’s 2022 population was used to calculate the above (6,445). Total acreage includes both constrained and unconstrained areas. Source: V&A and Village of Elm Grove

### Future Park System Needs

The future recreation needs of the Village are determined by applying the recommended minimum acreage standards to a reasonable population projection for the Village in future years. This type of needs assessment is included in part to satisfy Wisconsin Statutes 66.0617 and 236.29 regarding the collection of fees (which the Village does not collect), and also to assist the Village with planning and budgeting for the development of future parks.

Again, for the purposes of this Plan, Elm Grove should utilize the national standard of 10.8 acres per 1,000 residents. Based upon the analyses provided in this Chapter and in Chapter 5, the Village chose to pursue this standard because it accommodates future population growth while recognizing limitations to acquire new parkland. Figures 6.2 and 6.3 show the minimum additional park acreage that would be needed to accommodate the Village’s projected population in 2035 and 2045.

Figure 6.2 presents the 2035 park acreage needs projection which is a 10-year timeframe. The 2035 projection will be used to determine parkland acquisition and improvement recommendations based on what the Village can reasonably expect to accomplish in the 10-year timeframe. Based upon the analysis presented below, Elm Grove is expected to exceed overall parkland needs by 61 acres in 2035, accommodating the future population and maintain the intended level of service.

FIGURE 6.2: PARK ACREAGE NEEDS, 2035

2024 Total Acres	2024 Recreation Acres Per 1,000 Residents	Elm Grove CORP Park Acreage Standard Per 1,000 Residents	2035 Total Acres Needed to Meet Projected Population Standards*	2035 Additional Acres Needed to Meet Standards*
137	21.3	10.8	79.2	0

Note: Total acres are defined as the total land area (constrained and unconstrained) within all existing Neighborhood and Community Parks, Special Use Areas, and School facilities. All figures used in this table are rounded.

Source: V&A

\*Population projection in 2035: 7,335

Figure 6.3 shows that, based on the population projections in Chapter 1 and local standards, Elm Grove is expected to exceed overall parkland needs (including constrained and unconstrained parkland) by 57 acres in 2045.

FIGURE 6.3: PARK ACREAGE NEEDS, 2045

2024 Total Recreation Acres	2024 Recreation Acres Per 1,000 Residents	Elm Grove CORP Park Acreage Standard Per 1,000 Residents	2045 Total Acres Needed to Meet Projected Population Standards*	2045 Additional Acres Needed to Meet Standards
137	21.3	10.8	80.2	0

Note: Total acres are defined as the total land area (constrained and unconstrained) within all existing Neighborhood and Community Parks, Special Use Areas, and School facilities, not including portions of the site containing school buildings. All figures used in this table are rounded.

Source: V&A

\*Population Projection in 2045: 7,424

Figure 6.4 describes the amount of constrained acreage within the Elm Grove park system overall as well as in each park area.

FIGURE 6.4: ELM GROVE CONSTRAINED PARKLAND ACREAGE

Elm Grove Park Facility	Total Recreation Acres	Constrained Acres	Percent Constrained
Village Park	78.9	38.7	49.1%
South Park Facility	15.3	7.7	50.6%
Blue Star Memorial	1.3	0.2	12.2%
Tonawanda Elementary School	4.4	2.6	57.8%
Pilgrim Park Middle School	26.0	12.3	47.1%
St. Mary's Visitation Catholic School	5.2	0.0	0.0%
Elm Grove Lutheran School	6.1	1.0	16.7%
<b>Total Park System</b>	<b>137.2</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>45.6%</b>

Note: Total Recreation Acres include the full footprint of the park facility (not including school buildings, etc.)

Constrained Acres includes WisDNR wetland and SEWRPC Environmental Corridors

Source: V&A

When removing the constrained acres from the Village Park System acreage, the Village meets its standard of 10.8 acres per 1,000 residents at its current population. However, accounting for projected population increases, the Village would no longer meet this standard for developable acres by a slight margin.

FIGURE 6.5: ELM GROVE CONSTRAINED PARKLAND ACREAGE

Year	2024 Total Unconstrained Acres	Elm Grove CORP Park Acreage Standard Per 1,000 Residents	Total Unconstrained Acres Needed to Meet Projected Population Standards	Additional Acres Needed to Meet Standards
2024	74.8	10.8	69.6	0
2035	74.8	10.8	75.6	4.4
2045	74.8	10.8	80.2	5.4

Note: Unconstrained Acres are those developable areas not in WisDNR wetland or SEWRPC Environmental Corridors  
 Constrained Acres includes WisDNR wetland and SEWRPC Environmental Corridors  
 Source: V&A

With this limitation in mind, the Village should move forward with enhancing its constrained acres to the extent possible by promoting and enabling passive recreation in these spaces and enhancing its natural beauty through best management practices. The Underwood Creek Daylighting Project is a great example of this practice. Also, the new recreation acreage created by the Underwood Creek Daylighting Project has not been factored into these future parkland calculations as it has not been constructed yet but is anticipated.

Additionally, the Village should explore establishing a policy that future residential development and infill projects provide open space that is suitable for active outdoor recreation. Also, the Village should look to work with private property owners and the Elmbrook School District to establish shared use policies that increase public access to additional recreational amenities that may not be Village owned. Finally, the Village should look for potential property acquisition opportunities to expand unconstrained, developable parkland, understanding that this is extremely difficult given the developed nature of the Village.

### Caroline Heights Project

Caroline Heights is a new housing development currently under construction near downtown Elm Grove, redeveloping the historic School Sisters’ of Notre Dame campus. The housing project will bring new and varied housing stock to the community and brings new energy to the center of the Village.

Caroline Heights will be a 237-unit apartment community offering one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom apartments. Two prominent historic buildings along Watertown Plank Road, Notre Dame Hall and Maria Hall, will be converted into 35 apartments, and three new apartment buildings with 202 apartments will be built on the campus. The development with the adjacent neighborhood also includes 21 single family homes. This infill development is one of the few opportunities to add housing units and population to the Village.

The new development will be well connected to the Elm Grove downtown commercial district and Village Park by the Pathway System along Watertown Plank Road and Juneau Boulevard.



Source: Mandel Group, 2024

## QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Although quantitative standards provide a good basis for formulating the recommendations, a thorough assessment of the Village's existing facilities must include an analysis that takes into consideration those characteristics that make Elm Grove unique from other communities. This includes:

- Identifying those park system deficiencies and strengths that are not captured by universal standards.
- Ensuring that future parks and recreational facilities are tailored to meet the needs of Elm Grove residents.
- Allowing for the establishment of a more reasonable and specialized level-of-service standard by which the Village can plan its future park system.

Important factors to consider include the following:

- The quantitative analysis presented earlier in this Chapter includes outdoor school recreational facilities even though the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources does not consider these areas in the calculation of total parkland within a community. While they are prioritized for school district-based activities and can be closed to the public on occasion, Elm Grove's Village owned and operated facilities and the school facilities, both public and private, are thoroughly intertwined and treated as a cohesive system of park and recreational amenities. Both Village-owned and public and private school facilities have been considered cohesively in the calculations and analysis of this Plan.
- There are several significant county-owned outdoor recreational facilities surrounding Elm Grove, the amenities of which contribute significantly to the availability and accessibility of park and recreational spaces for area residents. Amenities offered by other adjacent local municipalities, Waukesha and Milwaukee Counties, and the state also contribute to the area's overall parks, recreation, and open space system. Each serves Elm Grove residents, although several are most practically accessible by vehicle or bicycle.
- Village residents have access to many recreational facilities, however, the survey results (see Appendix) indicated there is interest in some additional facilities and amenities such as:
  - Improved sports courts, playfields, and pickleball courts.
  - Increased multi-use paths and trails, especially ones that provide connection between neighborhoods and Village Park.
  - Dog Park.
  - Improved and expanded restrooms.
  - Improved and expanded shelter space and improvements to the Pool House.
  - Expanded and updated playground equipment that is more modern and more accessible.



## GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The location and distribution of the park and open space facilities in relation to a community's residents is also an important indicator of how well existing facilities meet the needs of the community. Map 2 illustrates how effectively the Village of Elm Grove's parklands serve the various developed areas of the community. These service areas are based on the local standards identified in Chapter 5.

The area served by a park is influenced by several factors. These include the size of the park, location, transportation accessibility, and natural or manufactured barriers. Displaying park service areas based on these factors suggests locations where additional park facilities might be necessary to serve residents.

The development pattern in Elm Grove is very compact, a product of the community's historic development practices and overall small size. The central location of Village Park, its adjacency to the downtown commercial district, proximity to schools, and its co-location with the Village's civic buildings make it an accessible heart of Village life and culture. Many neighborhoods are able to access Village Park via the Pathway System, however, better connecting residential areas with this destination and providing safe crossings at major intersections will make the Park more accessible to more residents.

While the Village is well served by parkland overall, there are currently no identified Neighborhood Parks. In the future, the Village could consider opportunities to acquire land within residential areas to create pocket neighborhood parks or could partner with school facilities to help their facilities better orient to the surrounding neighborhood and serve as a Neighborhood Park. Neighborhood Parks help plug gaps in areas of the Village where access to Village Park, particularly by foot or bicycle, is more difficult.

As the Village continues to grow or if it grows at a greater rate than projected, future gaps in park and recreation facility service areas may need to be addressed. While not required in this Plan at this time, the addition of small amounts of new parkland through infill development or redevelopment projects, will ensure future residents have equitable access to all types of parklands, open space, and recreational opportunities.

## **REVIEW OF THE WISCONSIN STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN 2024-2028 (SCORP)**

The last component of this needs assessment involves a review of the State of Wisconsin's 2024-2028 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR). The 11 main strategies identified in this plan are listed below and can help inform the areas of focus of the Elm Grove CORP.

1. Provide more opportunities for outdoor recreation close to home.
2. Provide needed recreation facilities.
3. Improve affordability of participation.
4. Develop and enhance mentoring programs.
5. Create more welcoming outdoor spaces.
6. Improve the distribution of information on recreation opportunities.
7. Expand and diversify funding sources.
8. Adapt to new conditions for outdoor recreation.
9. Adapt management of recreation opportunities and facilities.
10. Mitigate climate change.
11. Create an implementation plan that identifies desired outcomes as well as the group(s) to coordinate and advocate for outdoor recreation throughout Wisconsin.



# CHAPTER 7: PARK FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS



VANDEWALLE &  
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# CHAPTER 7: PARK FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides detailed recommendations to expand and improve Elm Grove's existing park and open space system based on current deficiencies and opportunities identified in the preceding chapters of this Plan and collected through public input in the planning process. These recommendations are also guided by the goals, objectives, and policies outlined earlier in this Plan.

Based on the Village's projected population in 2035 (7,335 residents) and 2045 (7,424 residents), and its local standard of 10.8 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, Elm Grove would not need to provide additional acres of total parkland (constrained and unconstrained) by 2035 nor 2045, but should consider expansion opportunities when they are presented, particularly for unconstrained acres. In order to accommodate the current needs and desires of residents and to accommodate the population in the future, it is primarily recommended that improvements and additions to existing parks be made. This Plan also recommends additional trail and pathway connections to existing parklands and Village destinations. The recommendations of this Plan assume that Elm Grove will continue to grow at a moderate rate, and that park and open space planning should be oriented toward serving a growing population. The timing of any park acquisitions and development should coincide with the actual demand for recreational facilities in the Village's developed and redeveloped areas.

Map 3 shows the approximate locations for future recreational facilities and pathways in the Village. More precise boundaries for park expansion should be determined during formulation of specific, detailed site redevelopment plans or when lands are acquired. Proactive identification of lands suitable for active parks or natural areas worthy of conservation is recommended early in all future development processes.

## Key Findings

Based on Village staff, Recreation Committee, and public input, the following key findings were identified and are addressed by this Plan's recommended policies and park improvements.

- Village Park is the centerpiece of the community, but updates to its central activity core, including the Pool House, playground, and pavilion area, are needed to meet modern programming needs.
- The Village is well served by its current park acreage. The Village is both land and budget constrained in its ability to grow the park system or acquire land. The focus of this Plan's recommendations should be on maintaining and improving existing park facilities and amenities rather than expanding the system through new parks.
- Many Village athletic fields require improved maintenance, regrading, field restoration, and exhibit poor irrigation that limit their usability.
- Paths and trails are heavily utilized by Village residents, and there is a desire to work with the Pathways Committee for additional connections between residential areas and Village amenities and destinations, including the parks.
- The Village should better utilize and promote its less frequented parks, including the South Park Facility and Blue Star Memorial, to supplement the overall park system and address geographic or programming gaps.
- Elmbrook Schools and two private schools hold a significant portion of open space and potential recreation space within the Village, however, the partnership between the Village and the schools for potential shared use facilities is underdeveloped.
- Improvements to wayfinding and signage on the Village pathway system and in Village parks are needed to better educate residents and visitors about the Elm Grove Park System.

# VILLAGE PARK

As previously described in this Plan and as evidenced from the public input survey and stakeholder feedback, Village Park is the heart of Elm Grove. It is the Village's largest and most programmed park. It is home to the Village's civic and cultural buildings like Village Hall and the Public Library. It is host to many of the Village's most important community gatherings and special occasions and it is a daily destination for the majority of residents in Elm Grove. Village Park showcases the best of the Village: its natural beauty, its community spirit, and its commitment to its resident's mental, social, and physical health. Village Park will continue to play an important and central role in the Elm Grove's Park System into the future as some of the primary active recreation space and the largest number of unconstrained parkland acres in the Village.

As Village Park looks to continue its service to the community, programming and special enhancements are recommended to keep up with the Village's modern needs and expectations. These recommendations are highlighted in the following conceptual park plan. A conceptual park plan provides a high-level description of potential future improvements, amenity updates, and general special layout recommendations that can be used in the implementation of the plan, pursuing additional resources and grants, or in guiding more detailed design and engineering. The following conceptual park plan was informed by input from Village staff, Recreation Committee, and public input via the survey and the stakeholder focus groups.

## Concept Park Plan Highlights:

The conceptual park plan includes a number of recommendations across the entirety of the Park, including entryway improvements, updated playfields, bike parking, and a new expanded entry path, as well as recommendations for a more prominent beer garden and pavilion that can be phased over time. The activity core, centered around the pool, playground, beer garden, and pavilion, represents some of the greatest programming opportunities in the Park. Potential new structures and playgrounds will come with substantial price tags and will require additional design and engineering. Therefore, the conceptual park plan makes recommendations that can be accomplished over time with increasing levels of permanent development and infrastructure. For example, initial improvements to the event area could include a basic vendor gazebo and seating area expansion. Over time, additional seating and a permanent patio can be added, before eventually moving to a fully enclosed, multi-purpose shelter and performance area. Further activation of the central core and improvements to the playing fields and courts will enhance the recreational experience in Village Park as well as deepening its position as a place for community gatherings.

## Improvements in the Village Park Concept Plan include:

- **Additional Athletic Fields and Courts**
  - Add 2 flexible tennis/pickleball courts to the east of the existing northside courts.
  - Convert the 3 southern tennis courts to pickleball courts.
  - Redesign the youth soccer fields to the east of the tennis courts to provide 3 fields.
  - In future improvements, consider adding lights to the additional courts.
- **Inclusive Playground Expansion**
  - Make modern equipment upgrades to the existing playground to improve safety and increase accessibility.
  - Design and create an accessible playground expansion to the south of the existing playground, further connecting it to the activity core.
  - Add an interactive wall feature to separate the pool mechanicals and the playground area. Wall features could include art, climbing, enrichment, etc.
  - Consider a sandbox or sensory play area to replace the children's sand-play area provided by the sand volleyball courts.
- **Additional Fishing Pier and Kayak Launch**
  - Add a fishing pier to the north and east sides of the pond.
  - Create a combination kayak/paddle sport launch-fishing pier on the south side of the pond.



Example Interactive Feature Wall

- **Pool House Improvements**

- Improve and expand the public restrooms in Village Park as part of improvements to the Pool House and future gathering shelter, including handicap and family accessible restrooms.
- Prepare an architectural study to determine the desired uses for the Pool House, including improvements to the changing facilities, concessions area, gathering space, rental stand, and other modern uses. Use the architectural study to determine if renovation or a new building would be required to meet these goals.
- Depending on the priority uses identified for the Pool House and if a new building is deemed necessary, consider combining the Pool House functions and beer garden and gathering space enhancements.

- **Gathering Space Enhancements**

- Build up current beer garden area and shelter enhancements over time to ultimately create a permanent multi-use Village Park building and gathering space. The build-up takes place over the 3 concepts shown below. Concepts could be phased according to community vision, priorities, and resources.

Concept One: No Demolition Required

- Construct a paved access drive between the pool fence and the vendor area to provide access for vendor vehicles and food trucks.
- Construct a basic, permanent vending structure with access to utilities including electricity and water to allow for food preparation.
- Install or facilitate an A/V system for music and use during Village events.
- Provide a lockable vendor storage area.
- Construct a concrete patio surrounding the vending structure to limit damage to grass lawn, provide seating, and space for music.
- Convert the sand volleyball courts to establish an expanded flexible lawn space that can serve as an area for passive recreation and play, lawn games when vending area is open, and as a preferred area for tents during larger community events such as Oktoberfest.
- Install a multi-directional lighting structure that can serve the flexible lawn/event space and the basketball court.



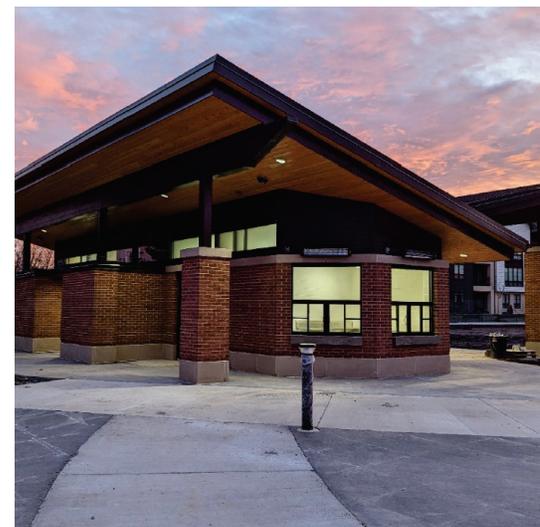
*Example Accessible Playground*

Concept Two: Enhanced Concept One

- Expand the paved seating area surrounding the vendor gazebo and add picnic tables on a more durable material than the existing lawn grass.
- Install permanent poles that can serve multiple functions during events, including stringing café lights, provide a power source, expand A/V speakers.

Concept Three: Full Build-Out Scenario

- Design and construct a permanent multi-use Village Park building that incorporates multiple uses, including:
  - Food and beverage vending area.
  - Catering kitchen for events.
  - Restrooms facing the playground area.
  - An amphitheater or stage that can serve as daily covered seating for beer garden and park users, be enclosed as an ice rink warming shelter, and opens to the lawn seating area. Face the stage to the southeast to minimize sun conflicts.
- Expand the open lawn area for seating, events, and passive recreation.
- Existing pavilion could stay or be removed depending on final design.



*Example Multi-Purpose Park Building*

- **Create a Core Entry Area and Entry Path**
  - Construct a new primary pedestrian entrance for the beer garden and gathering area.
  - Include an entryway marker, sign, art, or gateway to create a sense of place when entering the core area.
  - Add bike parking and bike repair station that is easily accessible to the core area in addition to the bike parking for the pool.
  - Widen entry path to core area to better accommodate bicycle traffic, connecting to Park entrance on Legion Drive.
- **Future Memorial Walk Area**
  - Create a Memorial Walk area as a place to focus future memorial donations, including trees, benches, and other amenities along pathways and away from the activity core to prevent future conflicts with park improvements.
- **Long Term Civic Expansion Area**
  - Reserve the area to the north of the Village Hall and Public Library for future expansions. In the meantime, use the space for youth soccer fields.

FIGURE 7.1 ADDITIONAL VILLAGE PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

Village Park
Recommended General Site Improvements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to remove invasive species, restore native species, and continue ongoing maintenance programs.</li> <li>• Explore additional natural paths in the wetland area to the north of the Park, including connections to San Fernando Boulevard and Tonawanda Elementary School.</li> <li>• Improve crossing and intersection safety into the Park, particularly for bicyclists, pedestrians, and children using the Pathway System to access the Park. Intersection safety enhancements should be explored on Juneau Boulevard, Elmhurst Parkway, and Legion Drive.</li> <li>• Install a wayfinding kiosk with a Village Park map that also identifies connections to the Pathway System and other Village destinations, like the downtown commercial district.</li> <li>• Work with the Elm Grove Public Library to explore the creation of an outdoor classroom or outdoor library space</li> <li>• Preserve space to the north of the Civic Campus for future building expansion.</li> <li>• Install a bike repair station in Village Park in the new bike parking area.</li> <li>• Explore partnerships with the Elm Grove Business Association and other business owners to bring vendors into the Park beyond just special events (coffee stand, market day, etc.).</li> <li>• Expand utility access (electrical and water) in the Park to better serve the beer garden and events.</li> <li>• Explore feasibility of including renewable energy sources to Village Park, including solar lights.</li> <li>• Add EV charging facilities to the Village Park parking area.</li> <li>• Explore variety of options to expand restroom access in Village Park, from temporary facilities to non-plumbing toilets, to full indoor restrooms. Include a maintenance plan, environmental impact, and required resources analysis for these options to ensure they can provide a high-level of service.</li> <li>• Consider landscaping improvements and increased buffering along the railroad tracks on the west side of Village Park.</li> <li>• Study drainage improvement options to improve condition of the north side soccer fields and baseball diamonds.</li> <li>• Continue to work with Elmbrook United Soccer, Elmbrook Little League, and other youth sports organizations on the use and maintenance of Village Park playfields.</li> </ul>

# Elm Grove Village Park & Village Center

## Overall Concept Plan

Elm Grove, Wisconsin

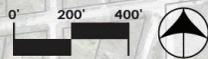


### Legend

- Surface Water
- Wetlands
- 100 Floodplain
- Existing Paths
- Existing Sidewalks
- - - New Paths
- - - New Boardwalks
- Existing Memorial Trees
- Existing Memorial Benches

Revised: April 22, 2025

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**Elm Grove Village Park**  
 Park Core Concept Plan 2  
 Elm Grove, Wisconsin



- Legend**
- Surface Water
  - 100 Floodplain
  - Existing Paths
  - New Paths
  - Existing Memorial Trees
  - Existing Memorial Bench

Revised: April 22, 2025

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0' 30' 60'

# Elm Grove Village Park

## Park Core Concept Plan 3

Elm Grove, Wisconsin



**Legend**

- Surface Water
- 100 Floodplain
- Existing Paths
- New Paths
- Existing Memorial Trees
- Existing Memorial Bench

Revised: April 22, 2025

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0' 30' 60'

# RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING PARKS

Park improvement recommendations were developed through feedback from the Recreation Committee, Village staff, and the public, a review of the goals, objectives, and policies of existing plans, and the inventory and analysis of existing park and recreation system conditions within Elm Grove. This comprehensive analysis led to the following list of existing park recommendations.

Over the next 5 years, it is unrealistic to think that all projects for each park and trail will be implemented. To account for this, the recommendations provide a broad range of projects that can be implemented incrementally in the short, medium, and long term as deemed feasible by the Village.

FIGURE 7.2 RECOMMENDED EXISTING PARK & RECREATION FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

General Improvements for All Facilities	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve identification signage at each park facility.</li> <li>• Improve wayfinding signage and pathway connectivity between parks through an updated Village Sign Plan.</li> <li>• Implement security upgrades, including establishing or improving lighting and electricity at all Village-owned park facilities. Determine a priority improvement plan based on funding and utility and infrastructure availability.</li> <li>• Add bicycle racks at each Village-owned park facility via a Village Bike Rack and Bike Parking Program.</li> <li>• Where appropriate, add benches, shade trees, and integrate defined native prairie planting areas, pollinator gardens, and additional walking pathways into existing parks.</li> <li>• With the Village Sustainability Committee, install more garbage and recycling receptacles in Village-owned parks and along paths.</li> <li>• When investigating upgrades to lighting and electrical infrastructure in Village-owned parks and paths, explore the feasibility of utilizing renewable energy sources, including solar, and use of timers to be sensitive to wildlife.</li> <li>• Review the feasibility of installing EV charging stations at Village Park and the South Park Facility.</li> <li>• Develop a regular maintenance and replacement schedule and equipment log for all playground equipment and park amenities.</li> <li>• Implement accessible and universal design features in parks, including when upgrading playground equipment and ground surfaces, shelter, and restroom access, and by providing contiguous paved pathway access to amenities within each park.</li> <li>• Explore feasibility of increasing restroom access in all Village parks, including exploration of a variety of facility types.</li> <li>• Develop a regular maintenance schedule and perform systematic routine maintenance of the existing sports playfield facilities in each park to increase playfield quality, grading, and drainage.</li> <li>• Maintain and develop additional pathways to connect park and recreation facilities to surrounding neighborhoods, schools, the downtown commercial district, and to neighboring municipal, county, and state trail systems.</li> <li>• Publish a park map with available features/amenities to increase awareness of all Village-owned Parks and the Pathway System.</li> <li>• Integrate any new neighborhoods or redevelopment projects into the parks and Pathway System by ensuring access to pathways and key destinations and to accommodate any increase in population.</li> <li>• Work to increase coordination and partnership with school-owned facilities within the Village to increase shared public access to indoor and outdoor school facilities.</li> <li>• Review opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure in Village Parks.</li> <li>• Review opportunities to use sustainable design elements and materials when designing and constructing future park and pathway improvements.</li> </ul>
Specific Improvements for Existing Parks	
Site Name	Recommended Site Improvements
<b>South Park Facility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a more memorable Village-oriented name for the park in accordance with Village park naming regulations.</li> <li>• Install identifying signage at Bluemound entry.</li> <li>• Study drainage needs to maintain soccer fields on remaining portion of the site.</li> <li>• Study the feasibility of establishing a dog park on a portion of the site. If feasible, pursue engineering and design for a dog park.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a Park Master Plan based on drainage study and feasibility of dog park and other improvements.</li> <li>• Enhance natural trail areas along Underwood Creek on Village-owned property on the east bank of the creek. Enhancements could include natural paths, seating, public art, enhanced natural landscape, and creek enhancements.</li> <li>• Install trailhead features in the parking area to identify connection to nearby Oak Leaf and Hank Aaron Trails, including bike parking, bike repair station, trash and recycling receptacles, and informational kiosk.</li> <li>• Add an informational kiosk that includes a full Elm Grove Pathway System Map.</li> <li>• Add garbage and recycling receptacles.</li> <li>• Add seating along pathway.</li> <li>• Add bike parking.</li> </ul>
<b>Blue Star Memorial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain native planting and pollinator gardens.</li> <li>• Create and maintain natural walking paths.</li> <li>• Maintain and update as needed informational signage.</li> <li>• Consider a public art installation compatible with its floodplain status.</li> <li>• Expand passive recreation area, plantings, and walking paths on the Village-owned land on the west side of the Creek.</li> </ul>
<b>Specific Improvements for Existing Outdoor School Facilities*</b>	
<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Recommended Site Improvements</b>
<b>Tonawanda Elementary School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install crossing and safety enhancements to enable more walking and biking to school.</li> <li>• Create an on-street bike lane on Hollyhock Lane from North Avenue to Underwood River Parkway in the short term and study the long-term feasibility of an off-street path.</li> <li>• Maintain programming relationship with Tonawanda to host school events and programming in Village Park.</li> <li>• Explore a partnership to utilize the school's indoor recreation facilities for recreation programming.</li> </ul>
<b>St. Mary's Visitation Catholic School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the off-street pathway on Juneau Boulevard from Watertown Plank Road to Legion Drive.</li> <li>• Establish a designated bike route on Crescent Drive from Watertown Plank Road to Elmhurst Parkway.</li> <li>• Consider a partnership with the school for shared use of the play field for expanded recreational programming, if needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Pilgrim Park Middle School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore feasibility of a lighted crossing signal on Pilgrim Parkway to create a safe crossing environment from the Dousman Trail on the west side of Pilgrim Parkway.</li> <li>• Study the feasibility of an off-street path on the east side of Pilgrim Parkway to create a safe walking and biking environment for students.</li> <li>• Work with Elmbrook School District to create an extension of the path at Westover Road through the east side of the school grounds, potentially connecting at Terrace Drive.</li> <li>• Discuss the School District's future plans for its outdoor recreation facilities, including the open space to the south of the property. Consider future shared use opportunities.</li> <li>• Explore a partnership to utilize the school's indoor recreation facilities for recreation programming.</li> </ul>
<b>Elm Grove Lutheran School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the future of the school and the use of the fields with Elm Grove Lutheran leadership.</li> <li>• If no longer a school facility, consider establishing a shared use recreation facility with public access to the playfields and playground to create a new Neighborhood Park.</li> <li>• Work in partnership with Elm Grove leadership to support playground improvements and accessibility updates to create a more usable space for the property owners and neighborhood.</li> </ul>

\*All recommendations for School Facilities are in willing partnership with the Elm Grove School District or private property owner. Recommendations do not suggest Village action or intervention without full property owner cooperation.

# RECOMMENDED NEW PARKS

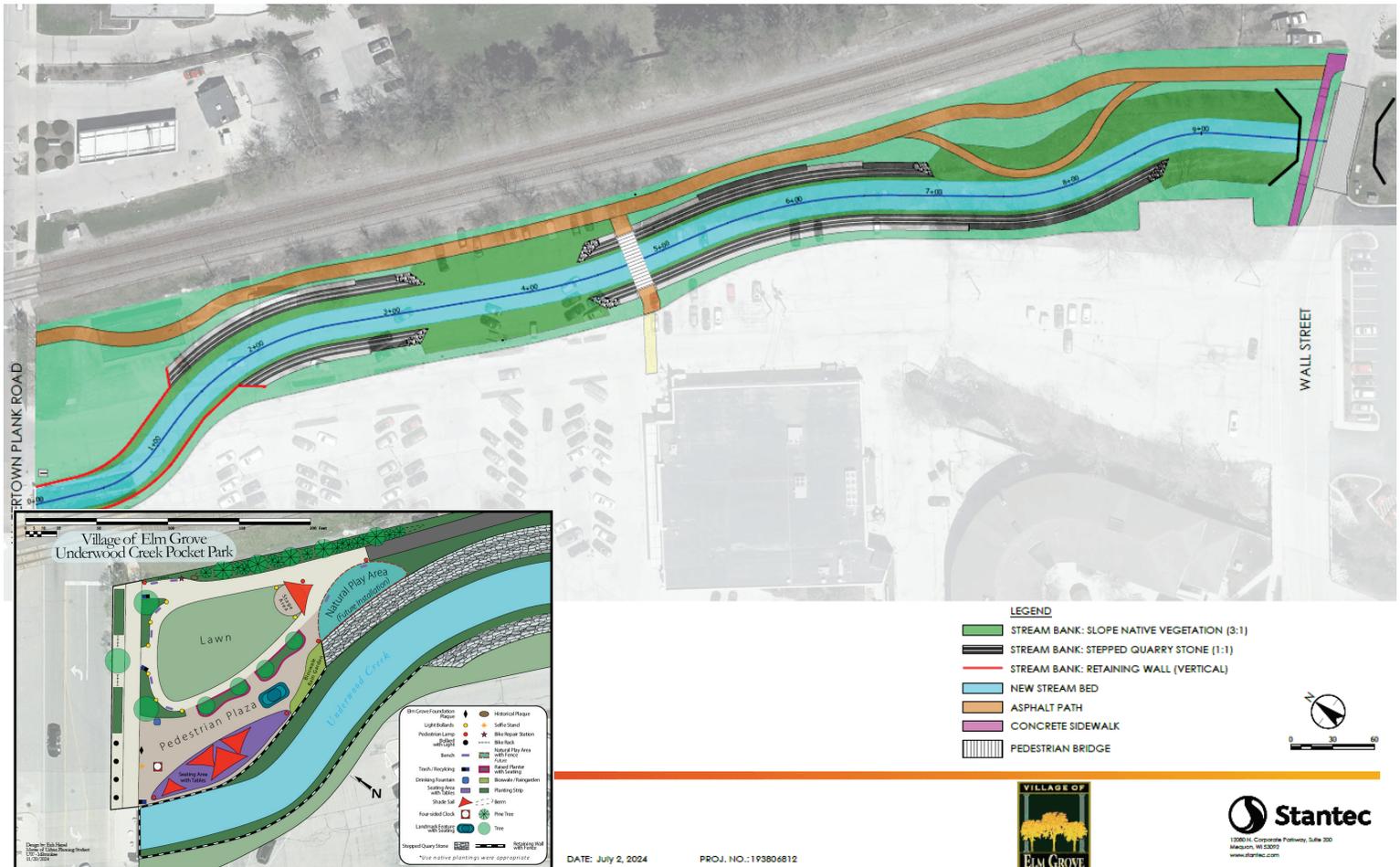
Future infill development and population growth in the Village may result in the need for the addition of a minimal amount of park space to the overall park system in the coming decades. No new parks are recommended as part of this plan. However, the Village should continue to add park acreage where possible when opportunities for unconstrained acres become available while also enhancing the useability of its natural areas that are constrained for development. Additional Neighborhood Parks should be prioritized if acquisition opportunities are presented. Parkland appropriate for a Neighborhood Park could include smaller lots or greenspace in residential areas. The Underwood Creek Daylighting Project will also bring new recreational green space into the Village park and recreation system. Continuing to pursue opportunities for green corridor connections and making Underwood Creek more accessible for recreation, potentially through corridor acquisition and development, could expand the park system for residents in the future.

## Underwood Creek Daylighting Project

The Underwood Creek Watershed drains 18 square miles in 12 linear miles of stream throughout Brookfield, Elm Grove, and Wauwatosa. The section of the Creek that runs through downtown Elm Grove was channelized and covered with a parking lot in the 1960's. This concrete confinement channeled the water under the parking lot and under Sendik's before it reappears south of downtown.

Due to the deterioration of the enclosure and as part of the Elm Grove Flood Management Program, the residents of the Village voted in November 2024 to approve daylighting Underwood Creek. Daylighting is the process of re-opening a waterway that has been artificially channeled underground in a pipe.

The Underwood Creek Daylighting project will involve bringing the creek to the surface, naturalizing the bank, reestablishing wildlife habitat, including for salmon and other aquatic life, and creating nearly 3 acres of new open space and path connection. Preliminary concepts also include a new pocket park adjacent to Watertown Plan Road. These new amenities are reflected in Map 3 as future additions to the Elm Grove Park and Pathway Systems.



## SPECIAL USE FACILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the planning process, unique recreational opportunities were identified. In the future development and upgrades of existing parks, it is recommended that the Village consider the following special use facilities, amenities, and partnerships as population and demand increases:

### Pickleball Courts

Pickleball is an increasingly popular recreational pastime across the country. The game is fast becoming a popular alternative to tennis and the nature of the gameplay allows it to be accessible to many different age groups. Pickleball is particularly popular with middle-aged and older recreationists, who make up a large segment of Elm Grove's population. Pickleball court markings currently exist on 3 of the tennis courts at Village Park, but public input in the planning process identified interest in the installation of additional dedicated pickleball courts. Developing dedicated courts with wind barriers, permanent nets, and high visibility markings could allow Elm Grove to compete as a prominent destination for play and better serve residents. Specifically, the southern 3 tennis courts could be converted to 6 permanent pickleball courts. Additionally, if 2 new courts are also added, these could be flexible tennis and pickleball courts to further supplement the courts in Village Park. Opportunity for increasing the number of pickleball courts at Village Park or within other existing parks is highly recommended.

### Steps to Acquire Additional Parklands and Reconfigure Existing Parks

There are several key steps to expanding existing parks and redesigning facilities to make the most efficient use of space that allows for the development of additional playfields. These include:

1. **Identification of land suitable for expansion.** There are many factors that should be considered in the identification of land for the park including, but not limited to, size, location, accessibility, topography, proximity to utilities, buildability, and constraints. An investigation of all land within the Village and directly adjacent to the Village and School District's existing facility boundaries should be evaluated. During this investigation, preliminary site suitability and site selection analysis should be done to ensure identified properties are adequate to facilitate the desired size, facilities, layout, etc.
2. **Property negotiation and acquisition.** The vast majority of lands identified in step one will most likely yield sites that are privately held. Through property owner outreach, the Village can determine willingness to sell, land price, and donation opportunities to narrow the pre-identified sites into one or a select few best-fit options. Property acquisition will require several steps including fundraising, grant procurement, or budgeting; negotiation of land sale price; property transfer; entitlements; and potentially Comprehensive Plan Amendments.
3. **Park master planning.** In advance of major improvements to existing parks or after an existing park has been expanded, it is recommended that a Park Master Plan be developed to determine its future programming, amenities, layout, and facility makeup. This process will include detailed engineering plans for park development, community, and stakeholder engagement, estimated costs, implementation strategies, and Village adoption.
4. **Bidding, awards, and construction.** Utilizing the Park Master Plan, the Village will need to acquire and/or allocate funds toward the construction of the new park. This can come in form of donations, grant procurement, sponsorships, budgeting, or more likely a combination of each. The project will then need to be bid out for construction and contractors will need to be selected to complete the work. Following bid awards, construction can commence.

There are many challenges to acquiring and developing new park and recreation facilities in a built-out community. However, these steps will provide the Village with the best chance in adequately planning for, funding, and developing the facility over the planning period.

## Permanent Outdoor Events & Performance Venue

To provide a better space for community programming and further activate Village Park, the Village should consider an update to the pavilion and surrounding area to create a multi-use space that can accommodate community events, private parties, and a more permanent space for the Elm Grove Beer Garden. Village Park is already used for community celebrations and the pavilion and lawn areas are frequently programmed for events and gatherings. Infrastructural limitations, including utility access, as well as the size, position, and seasonality of the pavilion keep it from being able to meet the modern needs of the community. Redesigning a portion of Village Park to provide a formalized multi-use performance and events space in conjunction with efforts to regularly activate it with diverse programming options could be an excellent way to draw even more activity to the Village Park and foster community connections. The conceptual park plan for Village Park outlines phased improvements for the outdoor space and pavilion.

## Dog Park

The public survey revealed that many community members would like the option of using a dog park within Elm Grove. Because dogs are only permitted on the pathways within Village parks and must be leashed, a dog park with appropriate dog runs and small and large dog areas, would provide a new space for Village dog owners to enjoy. The Village should further study the possibility of a dog park within the Village, potentially at the South Park Facility. The South Park Facility could be a location for the dog park because it has a designated parking area, is accessible by the Village pathway system, and is mostly surrounded by commercial and industrial uses, limiting concerns for noise complaints from residential neighbors. A feasibility study for the dog park would need to carefully look at drainage issues as South Park Facility is a flood detention area.

## Community Gardens

Community gardens provide benefits to both the environment and the health and wellbeing of community members. Community gardens increase the availability of nutritious food, providing increased access to fresh produce to help residents create healthier lifestyles. They also strengthen community ties, reduce environmental hazards, and water runoff, and contribute to the creation of more sustainable food systems. Opportunities to grow food locally reduce the environmental and financial costs of transporting food to stores, helping to improve air quality. The installation of gardens creates additional habitat, increasing local biodiversity of both plants and animals. Community gardens also play a role in waste reduction, allowing neighborhood residents to compost their food waste. Establishing community gardens in existing or future Village parks is a great way to activate underutilized park areas. The Village should consider establishing community gardens in Village Park and work with neighborhood groups and the Village's schools to establish community gardens on school properties or in residential neighborhoods. The Village could work with its volunteer organizations to establish a community garden program and set guidelines for creating community gardens on non-Village property.

## What Makes a Great Dog Park?

Many communities across the country have tackled the question of how to develop a dog park that best fits the needs of the population. While it is unlikely that it will be feasible to include every one of the following amenities in any given dog park, it is recommended that each of these attributes be considered in the development of any new dog park in the community.

- 5 to 10 acres in size.
- Water source for both humans and dogs.
- On-site parking.
- Relatively flat land with some naturally shaded areas (or shade structure).
- Clearly posted guidelines and rules for the park users.
- Designated walking path in addition to an open space area.
- Separate small and large dog areas.
- Benches, waste containers, and bag holders are dispersed throughout the park.
- Perimeter fencing and double-gated entryway.
- On-site restrooms.
- Partnership with the Humane Society, nonprofit, private entity, or volunteer organization to help operate, maintain, and sustain the park long-term.

## **ADA Accessibility & Universal Playground Design**

It is recommended that as upgrades and improvements are made to each playground in the Village, whether Village-owned or on public or private school property, ADA accessibility standards are incorporated into designs and implemented incrementally over the planning period. Focus should be placed on making improvements based on similar types of projects (sidewalks, pavement stripping, signage, etc.) as part of an annual line item in the Village's Capital Improvements Plan. Additionally, with any new facility upgrades, replacements, or construction, special attention should be placed on creating an equitable and fully ADA accessible facility that reflects all federal guidelines, and when possible, goes beyond these standards. The playground in Village Park is very popular and highly utilized, but survey input indicates a desire for the equipment to be updated to be larger, safer, and more modern. The playground in Brookfield's Wirth Park was frequently mentioned as an inspiration for future playgrounds in Elm Grove. Creating a future playground in Village Park that is also ADA accessible and incorporates inclusive design is recommended.

ADA accessibility considerations include ensuring that there are accessible paved or rubberized surface pathways from public sidewalks to the various amenities within each park that are easily navigable for all park users. The design of new park equipment and playground features should also incorporate the principles of universal design. Universally designed facilities are thoughtfully designed to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialization. Playground design should be inclusive and accommodate and challenge users at their own developmental levels so that as many children as possible can enjoy the community's playgrounds. Universally designed playgrounds include equity and flexibility in use and provide assorted sizes and spaces to allow for individuals of varying abilities to use assistive devices or personal assistance. Key design strategies include:

- Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information.
- Provide facilities that are compatible with and present options for a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations.
- Eliminating unnecessary complexity.
- Providing choice and flexibility in methods of use of various playground features.
- Providing adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance.

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# CHAPTER 8: OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS



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# CHAPTER 8: OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides detailed recommendations on other key components that play a role in the community's park and open space offerings including natural resources, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and programming. These recommendations are also guided by the goals, objectives, and policies outlined earlier in this Plan.

## NATURAL AND OPEN SPACE AREAS RECOMMENDATIONS

The Village of Elm Grove is extraordinarily green and lush with many areas of mature trees and neighborhoods with full tree canopies. For more than 30 years, Elm Grove has been recognized as a Tree City, highlighting its excellent maintenance and care for its urban forest. The Village also holds national designations as a Bird City (2011), which recognizes its abundance of bird habitat, and as a Bee City (2020), for its care for pollinator habitat. In 2023, Elm Grove became the first Village in Wisconsin to be part of the National Wildlife Federation Community Habitat Designation. As a certified Community Wildlife Habitat community, the Village promotes the use of native trees and plants, landscapes, and designs with wildlife in mind, and works to reduce the use of pesticides and chemicals in its practices. Through multiple departments, the Village works with passionate community members, including those on the Sustainability and Beautification Committees, to achieve and maintain these designations and do the hard work of keeping the Village's commitment to sustainable, wildlife, and environmentally friendly practices. The Village's Sustainability and Beautification Committees work to eradicate invasive species, including clearing park areas, wetlands, and pathway areas of invasive plants, and promote pollinator and biodiversity friendly gardening practices in both publicly and privately owned spaces. The Elm Grove Beautification Committee's Invasive Species Task Force was a Southeast Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium (SEWISC) grant recipient in 2023 and was recognized with the WI DNR Invasive Crusader Award for their efforts eradicating NR-40 species from public property. The Village should continue to work with and support these Committees and other volunteer organizations to maintain and protect the Village's natural resources and natural areas.



In addition to the Village's substantial forestlands, the Village also has wetland, environmental corridor, and floodplain areas that make proper stormwater management and flood control practices important. Much of the Village's recreation space was acquired through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Mitigation program. This limits the amount of development permitted in these areas, but does create space for natural beauty and passive recreation. The Underwood Creek Daylighting Project will provide approximately 3 acres of new natural, passive recreation as well as a pathway connection and additional amenities. Similar environmentally sensitive pathway projects should be considered by the Village where permissible in its wetland and environmental corridor areas.

FIGURE 8.1 NATURAL AND OPEN SPACE AREA GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended Improvements	
<b>General Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish more passive trails and strategically acquire adjacent properties, if possible, to expand connections to existing parks and to provide an expanded trail network.</li> <li>• Continue to remove invasive species, restore native species, continue ongoing maintenance programs.</li> <li>• Work with the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) to enhance stormwater management and green infrastructure throughout the Village and in Village parks.</li> <li>• Continue forestry and wildlife habitat management programs to maintain Village designations.</li> <li>• Establish identification signage for natural areas and along pathways to educate passersby about the wildlife habitat or native plant species.</li> <li>• Consider establishing a rain garden or pollinator garden at South Park Facility.</li> <li>• Update the Village Tree Inventory to assess current tree canopy health.</li> <li>• Consider the development of permissible pathways in Village wetland and environmental corridor areas, including at the northern edge of Village Park connecting to San Fernando Drive.</li> </ul>

## BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The Elm Grove Pathway System is extremely popular with residents. In fact, 84% of survey respondents indicated that their family use the Village’s walking paths, 43% of residents walk their dogs in the Village, and 45% bike in the Village. The popularity of these activities indicates the importance of having a safe, well-marked, and well-connected trail and pathway system in the Village. In particular, connecting the pathway system to important destinations like Village’s parks and the downtown commercial district helps reduce the community’s dependence on cars, reducing traffic and improving safety and air quality in the Village. Forty-five percent of survey respondents indicated they would like to see more off-street pathways in the Village as well as more paved pathways and on street bicycle facilities.

The Village’s Ad Hoc Pathways Committee has worked over the last several years to review the existing pathway system and make recommendations for future improvements and connections, particularly those that will provide safe routes to schools and other Village destinations. These recommendations provide the foundation for the recommendations in this Plan. In some cases, the CORP’s Pathway recommendations extend beyond the Pathways Committee’s plan to show potential opportunities to further expand the system if grants or other resources become available. All Pathway System recommendations will require future design and engineering to confirm feasibility, appropriateness for the road segment, and resource availability. The Village can also consider a phased implementation approach that prioritizes the segments identified with the Pathways Committee’s plan recommendations with the future option to expand to the CORP recommendation. The most appropriate facilities and connections can also be further studied in a Village bicycle and pedestrian plan as recommended by this CORP. The Pathways Committee’s plan can be found in the Appendix for reference.



Constraints like road and shoulder widths, topography, Right-of-Way, and private property boundaries can limit the feasibility of on- and off-street facilities. Newly constructed paths on Highland Drive, Gebhardt Drive, and Sunnyslope Road demonstrate the types of pathway connections that are possible. The Village can also consider identifying roads and streets best suited for walking and biking and designate on-street walking and biking routes. Signage and published pathway maps can help identify these routes. Traffic volume and speeds should be considered when designating routes to ensure safety for all street users.

## Proposed Pathway System Improvements

This Plan recommends off-street paths and trail segments within the community's existing boundaries. These trails and paths are essential to linking existing neighborhoods and future redevelopment areas to on-street bicycle routes, parks and environmental corridors, existing school sites, community amenities and destinations, and to the expanding regional trail network.

Unpaved natural trails serve to connect facilities within developed parks and can serve as the main recreational element of an undeveloped park or passive recreation area. This type of trail is most appropriate for natural areas such as Blue Star Memorial, wetland areas on the northside of Village Park, and other similar environmental corridors.

Pathway System recommendations are primarily for multi-use path and routes that will accommodate walkers, bikers, and users of mobility devices, both motorized and non-motorized. The specific design of the pathway connection should be studied by the Village and its engineering partners. Specific path types are not specified in this plan. However, if the Village is studying the development of new pathway connections, the Village should establish a policy of first exploring the feasibility of off-street facilities, like 6 to 10 foot paved paths, and if the street cross section does not allow for off-street facilities, consider on-street facilities with an appropriate level of painting, signage, and protection from traffic. Figure 8.2 describes different bicycle and pedestrian facilities while recommended Pathway System connections are listed in Figure 8.3 and depicted on Map 3.

It is also recommended that the Village implement, where appropriate, other pedestrian safety treatments that enhance the active transportation experience, such as buffer areas between sidewalks and roadways, curb bump-outs, and pedestrian islands in medians on heavily traveled roads. All improvements must be designed and constructed in accordance with the requirements of the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

## Community-Wide Benefits of Trails

Trails and paths provide tangible benefits to communities across the country as they promote physical and mental health, offer inclusive and equitable outdoor recreation opportunities, stimulate economic development, and provide sustainable transportation infrastructure. Together, these benefits increase the local quality of life for all residents and visitors of the community.

Physical and Mental Health: A 2014 study by the American Journal of Public Health found that there is a direct and significant, measurable correlation between how close people live to bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure and the amount of weekly exercise people get. Additionally, a 2011 study by the American Heart Association found that every \$1 invested in building trails is a direct correlation to \$3 of saved medical costs. Finally, a 2019 study by University of Exeter published in the Scientific Report found that 2 hours a week in the outdoors has a measurable impact on mental health. Proximity also matters, as most people studied lived within 2 miles of trail.

Equity: Trails promote social, racial, gender, and economic equity through strengthening the community, building sustainable interactions and outdoor recreation opportunities, and improving quality of life. Trails are the most potent tools in maintaining and improving urban viability and appealing to a broad range of demographic groups in choosing where they live, work, and play.

Sustainable Transportation: Trails are truly infrastructure that enhances quality of life through connecting communities and destinations, spurring economic development locally and regionally, reducing our collective carbon footprint, and preserving the natural environment.

Source: *American Trails, 2022*

## Types of Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

This plan discusses a number of options for types of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Figure 8.2 on the following page outlines the common features of various on- and off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This facility typology can be used as a starting place for community discussions on Pathway System connections and future engineering studies on the feasibility of these facilities in the Village of Elm Grove.

FIGURE 8.2 BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITY TYPOLOGY

On-Street Facilities	
Bike Routes, Bike Boulevards, and Sharrows	<p><b>General Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preidentified and preferred routes for bicycle travel on existing streets.</li> <li>• Low-speed and low-volume streets under 2,000 vehicles per day.</li> </ul> <p><b>Elements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage.</li> <li>• Speed and volume management measures to discourage through trips by motor vehicles.</li> <li>• Painted pavement markings (Sharrows).</li> </ul>
Bike Lanes	<p><b>General Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defined portion of the roadway designed and designated for one-way bicycle travel only.</li> <li>• Must be a minimum of 5 feet wide on roadways of at least 32 feet in width.</li> <li>• When used with on-street parking, must be a minimum of 12 feet wide combined.</li> </ul> <p><b>Elements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage.</li> <li>• Striping, painted lanes, or bicycle symbols.</li> <li>• Painted buffer striping, bollards, or on-street parking buffer (sometimes).</li> </ul>
Intersection Improvements	<p><b>General Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design features to increase safety when crossing roadways for pedestrians and bicyclists.</li> <li>• Typically, customized per intersection.</li> </ul> <p><b>Elements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bump-out curbs or painted bike boxes.</li> <li>• Crosswalk paint, raised surface, or alternative materials used on roadway surfaces to call attention to the crosswalk.</li> <li>• Signaled crossings, pedestrian-activated flashing beacons and signage.</li> <li>• Pedestrian crossing islands.</li> <li>• Mid-block crossings.</li> </ul>
Off-Street Facilities	
Multi-Use Paths	<p><b>General Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated off-road facility for two-way bicycle and pedestrian travel on a paved or crushed rock surface.</li> <li>• Safest facility for recreational users of all ages and abilities.</li> <li>• Typically, 10-14 feet wide.</li> </ul> <p><b>Elements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paved or crushed rock surface.</li> <li>• Center stripe to separate oncoming traffic.</li> <li>• Typically, within its own dedicated right-of-way.</li> </ul>
Trailheads	<p><b>General Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct access points to major off-street paths and trails.</li> <li>• Helps connect on-street facilities with off-street facilities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Elements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage.</li> <li>• Vehicle and bike parking area.</li> <li>• Maps, kiosk, or other information materials are provided.</li> <li>• Restrooms, picnic tables, benches, or shelters (sometimes).</li> </ul>
Sidewalks	<p><b>General Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Off-street, pedestrian-oriented facilities.</li> <li>• Minimum of 4 feet wide.</li> </ul> <p><b>Elements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paved surface.</li> <li>• Accessible and marked intersection crossings.</li> <li>• Typically, a portion of the right-of-way.</li> </ul>

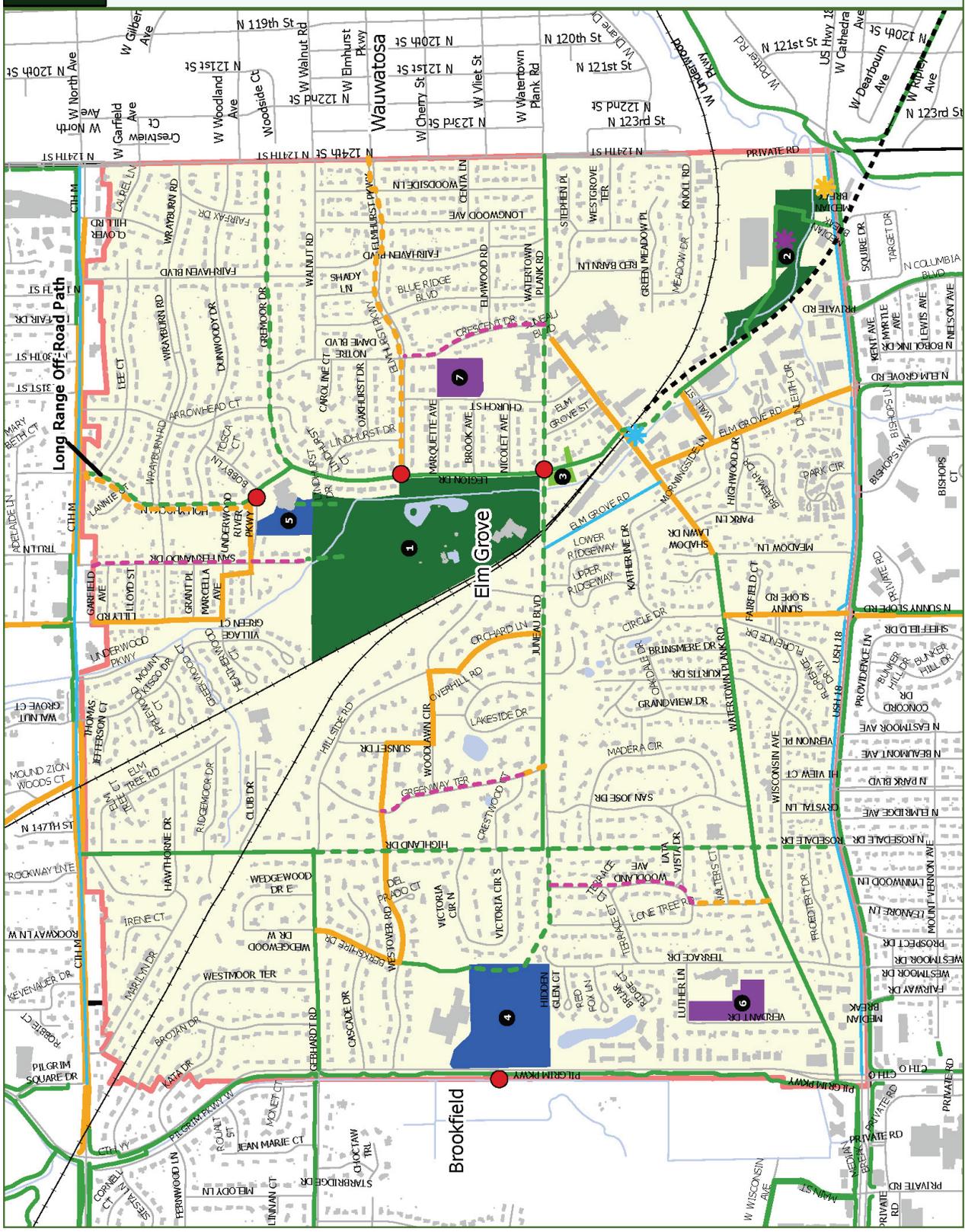
FIGURE 8.3 PATHWAY SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended Improvements	
<b>General Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain access to the established Pathway System throughout the Village and ensure adequate connectivity between all path segments within the Village.</li> <li>• Complete a Village Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to create more detailed recommendations for bicycle and pedestrian network improvements and create guidelines for educational, enforcement, and active transportation promotion programs.</li> <li>• Establish enhanced crossings and pedestrian network connections at the park entrances and in the downtown commercial district.</li> <li>• Promote Elm Grove's unique, interconnected Pathway System as an asset to current and future residents, as well as an asset to leverage in the community's economic development strategy.</li> <li>• Create and publish an Elm Grove Pathway Map designating the existing facilities, including on- and off-street facilities as well as designated walking and biking routes.</li> <li>• Develop and install unified wayfinding signage and trail network maps at key locations along the Village's Pathway System, especially. Develop a Village Sign Plan to guide installation and design standards.</li> <li>• Add trailhead facilities at South Park Facility as connection point between the Village Pathway System and regional trails.</li> <li>• As arterial streets are resurfaced or reconstructed study the potential for improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to be included in the new design.</li> <li>• Coordinate with stakeholder groups such as the Elmbrook School District, surrounding communities, nonprofits, Village Committees, and others to develop unique cultural, artistic, historical, or natural science installations, features, and programs along the Village's Pathway System. Such programs can help activate these important amenities, promote physical activity, help create a sense of place, contribute to tourism and economic development.</li> </ul>
<b>Off-Street Paths (Multi-Use Paths)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>San Fernando Drive</b> to Village Park – Elevated Wetland Path.</li> <li>• <b>Tonawanda School</b> to Village Park – Elevated Wetland Path.</li> <li>• <b>Gremoor Drive</b> from 124<sup>th</sup> Street to Legion Drive.</li> <li>• <b>Juneau Boulevard</b> from Crescent Drive to Village Park entrance.</li> <li>• <b>Juneau Boulevard</b> from Village Park entrance/railroad tracks to Orchard Lane.</li> <li>• <b>Highland Drive</b> from Gebhardt Road to Watertown Plank Road.</li> <li>• <b>Underwood Creek Daylighting Path Project.</b></li> <li>• <b>Long Term: Hollyhock Lane</b> from North Avenue to Underwood River Parkway.</li> </ul>
<b>On-Street Paths (Bike Lanes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hollyhock Lane</b> from North Avenue to Underwood River Parkway.</li> <li>• <b>Elmhurst Parkway</b> from 124<sup>th</sup> Street to Legion Drive.</li> <li>• <b>Greenway Terrace</b> from Juneau Boulevard to Crestwood Court.</li> <li>• <b>Lone Tree Drive</b> from Lata Vista Drive to Watertown Plank Road.</li> </ul>
<b>Bike Routes, Bike Boulevards, and Sharrows</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>San Fernando Drive</b> from North Avenue to Village Park.</li> <li>• <b>Crescent Drive</b> from Elmhurst Parkway to Watertown Plank Road/Juneau Boulevard.</li> <li>• <b>Greenway Terrace</b> from Westover Road to Juneau Boulevard.</li> <li>• <b>Woodland Avenue</b> from Juneau Boulevard to Lata Vista Drive.</li> </ul>
<b>Intersection Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Elmhurst Parkway</b> and Legion Drive.</li> <li>• <b>Juneau Boulevard</b> and Legion Drive.</li> <li>• <b>Enhance intersection</b> and crossing safety at all park entrances.</li> </ul>

# Village of Elm Grove CORP

## Map 3: Recommended Facilities

- Park Type**
- Community Park
  - Special Use Facility
  - School District Facility
  - Private School Facility
  - Surface Water
  - Village of Elm Grove
  - Other Municipal Boundary
- Other Recommended Facilities**
- Buildings
  - Active Rail
  - Vacated Rail
  - Existing Bike/Pedestrian Paths
  - Off Road Path or Trail
  - On Road Bike Route or Lane
  - Pedestrian Path/Sidewalk
  - Recommended Bike/Pedestrian Paths
  - Off-Street Path
  - On-Street Bike Facility
  - Designated Bike Route/Bld
- Other Recommended Facilities**
- Intersection Improvement
  - New Mini Park
  - New Special Use Area
  - New Trailhead
- Park Type Key**
- Community Park
  - 1. Village Park
  - 2. South Park Facility
- Special Use Facility:**
- 3. Blue Star Memorial
- School District Facility:**
- 4. Pilgrim Park Middle School Recreation Area
  - 5. Tonawanda Elementary School Recreation Area
- Private School Facility:**
- 6. Elm Grove Lutheran Church Recreation Area
  - 7. St. Mary's Church Recreation Area
- Scale:** 0 250 500 1,000 Feet
- North Arrow:** N, S, E, W
- Logos:** Village of Elm Grove, WANDERLITE & ASSOCIATES INC.



## Regional Trail Connections

Elm Grove is positioned to access a number of trail systems in surrounding municipalities as well as regional and state trails. Providing safe bicycle and pedestrian connections to these trails allows Elm Grove residents to plug in to a network of regional destinations, providing the kinds of recreational and active transportation opportunities that make Elm Grove an attractive place to live for current and future residents. Surrounding regional trails include:

**Oak Leaf Trail (Milwaukee County)** The Oak Leaf Trail provides over 135 miles of recreational trail across Milwaukee County. The trail takes users from the shores of Lake Michigan, through the heart of the City of Milwaukee and west into suburbs like Greenfield and beyond. Elm Grove residents can most easily connect to the Oak Leaf Trail Root River Line near the South Park Facility at Bluemound Road and 124<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Brookfield Greenway Trail (City of Brookfield)** The Greenway Trail System is a comprehensive city-wide off-street system of recreational trails managed by the City of Brookfield to link city and regional parks and other destinations. Connections to the Greenway Trail from Elm Grove are primarily found on the southeast side of the Village near the South Park Facility (Bluemound Road and 124<sup>th</sup> Street), along North Avenue with connections to Mound Zion Park, and Wirth Park, and Pilgrim Parkway with access to the Dousman Trail via the Pilgrim Park Connector Trail from Village Park.

**Hank Aaron State Trail:** Another state facility located in the greater Milwaukee area, this 14-mile paved trail connects American Family Field with State Fair Park, Lakeshore State Park, the Oak Leaf Trail, ultimately creating a continuous east-to-west connection from the shores of Lake Michigan to the Milwaukee/Waukesha County line.

As local and regional trail networks develop and expand, the Village should ensure that residents are able to access these trails via the Village Pathway System and road network.

## Wayfinding and Pathway Identification System

The ability to navigate a community safely and effectively is just as important as providing infrastructure to facilitate travel. A key to improving bicycle and pedestrian navigation throughout Elm Grove can be accomplished by increased signage, particularly through wayfinding signage that directs users to key destinations and better identifies destinations and amenities in the Village. Bicycle and pedestrian-oriented signage assists not only users in finding and navigating bike routes, bike lanes, and pathways, it also helps notify drivers of areas where those users are more prevalent. Additionally, providing important destination-oriented signage gives all people the ability to find key locations within the Village, which increases safe travel along designated routes, boosts economic activity at key locations, and provides the community with opportunities to brand itself through unique signage. Signage updates can also include signage at playgrounds and other recreation facilities about the safe and age-appropriate usage of equipment and facilities. The Village should establish a community-wide Sign Plan that explores new branding and identity elements but also highlights key locations and emphasizes awareness and safety for both bicyclists and pedestrians and drivers.



## RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

The public input survey conducted among Village residents as part of this planning process confirmed a high level of satisfaction with the recreational programming provided by the Village. More than 70% of respondents indicated they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the quality of the Village’s recreation programming. More than 85% of respondents indicated that they or a member of their family had participated in a Village recreation program or event. Nearly 60% of respondents participated in youth sports programs, while 27% participated in an adult enrichment or fitness program. These survey results not only speak to the value that residents place on the Recreation Department and the programming they provide but to the popularity of these programs among Elm Grove residents and families.

The survey also identified some opportunities for improvements to recreational programming that could enhance the experience for residents, both in the variety and quantity of programming and the condition of the facilities where programming is held.

### **Sport and Fitness Industry Association Sports, Fitness, and Leisure activities Topline Participation Report, 2024**

The Sport and Fitness Industry Association conducted a national survey in 2023 of a random sample of over 18,000 Americans. The findings help to provide large trends related to inactivity, demographics, and participation. A few data points that are important for the Village to consider over the next five years are:

- 22% of the US population, or 68.6 million people, is inactive, meaning that they do not participate in any level of calorie burning activities in an average week. While a striking number, the rate of inactivity has been on the decline since 2018 with more and more Americans participating sports and activity.
- Team Sports, Water Sports, and Winter Sports each saw an increase in participation from 2023.
- Pickleball continues to be the fastest-growing sport over the past 3 years, with participation seeing a 51.8% increase in participation from the prior year.
- The most popular activities by age group:
  - Baby Boomers are participating in more team sports than in years past.
  - Gen Xers have high participation rates in fitness and outdoor sports but have seen an increase in team sport participation.
  - Millennials prefer to participate in a diverse set of activities across many different types.
  - Gen Zers are the most active generation in outdoor sports like hiking, rock climbing, kayaking, etc.

As Elm Grove’s population continues to grow and change and the desire for more recreational programming increases, the Village should explore opportunities to develop new programming. This could include educational, skill building, and arts classes, fitness or exercise classes, and sports leagues. However, in exploring this opportunity it is recommended that they consult with various other established community organizations to avoid any duplication of offerings. Additionally, the Village should pursue new partnerships to develop new programming and to find new facilities for indoor programming to expand the capacity and resources of the Recreation Department’s staff and facilities, particularly if the demands for programming begin to extend beyond the current capacity of staff. Potential partners could include the Elmbrook School District, Elm Grove Women’s Club, local businesses and employers, local artists, and non-profit organizations.

FIGURE 8.4 RECREATION PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

General Recommendations	
<b>Village Recreation Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore expanding recreational programming offerings to include more programs for young children as well as for adults and seniors.</li> <li>• Explore expanding programming to include additional crafts, arts and photography, robotics, chess, and other requested programs.</li> <li>• Establish more partnerships to expand recreation programming content, including finding specialist instructors in the community like local artists, craftspeople, or business professionals.</li> <li>• Explore partnerships with the Elmbrook School District to utilize their indoor recreational facilities for Village programming.</li> <li>• Explore increasing rental and participation rates, particularly for non-Elm Grove residents.</li> <li>• Work with local non-profit groups to identify and promote more volunteer opportunities.</li> <li>• Work with the Village’s Sustainability and Beautification Committees to provide public birding, apiary, and native plant education and participation events.</li> <li>• Investigate making technological improvements to Village Hall activity rooms to ensure their usability for recreational programming.</li> <li>• Work with neighboring communities like Brookfield and Wauwatosa on shared programming opportunities.</li> <li>• Utilize all Village communication channels to share information about recreational opportunities.</li> <li>• Publish the seasonal Recreation Guides in large print and in digital and hard copy formats.</li> </ul>



# CHAPTER 9: IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN



VANDEWALLE &  
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# CHAPTER 9: IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

In striving to achieve the vision and goals of this Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, specific follow-up actions will be required. This final chapter is intended to provide a roadmap for these implementation actions by identifying priority programs and actions. This Chapter, in combination with Chapter 7 and 8, should be utilized to help guide project implementation by the Village of Elm Grove over the next 5 years.

## PLAN UPDATES

The Plan was prepared in accordance with guidelines that will make it certifiable by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) and will qualify the Village for matching grant funds through the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON) and State of Wisconsin Stewardship Funds. In order to remain eligible, the Plan must be updated every five years to ensure that it reflects the current needs of the community and retains its WisDNR certification. Based on this deadline, Elm Grove should update this Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan in 2030 (i.e., five years after 2025), at the latest. A year prior to the update, the Village should review the CORP's implementation progress and determine the need for a full update and if use of a consultant is required. The Village should continue to monitor any changes to state or federal regulations related to grant eligibility over the next five years.



## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLANNING

After the adoption of this Plan, the Village should consider creating a new Park Improvement Capital Plan for 2025 and onward. The Village's new Park Improvement Capital Plan should be redesigned to incorporate and address the recommended park improvements found throughout this Plan.

For each recommended park improvement identified as part of this study, each project has a wide variety of variables associated with their implementation in each individual site where they are recommended to be developed. To estimate budgeting for each project, it is recommended that more detailed analysis related to the individual park site be completed to determine accurate cost estimates for specific projects. Bicycle and pedestrian improvements should be proactively planned to align with the CIP road improvement schedule. Figure 9.1 outlines high-level estimated costs for various facilities referenced in this Plan.

Figure 9.1 Estimated Facility Costs

Projects Estimated Between \$0 and \$100,000	
Proposed Project Type	Estimated Cost Range
Park Master Plan	\$10,000-\$20,000
Playground Equipment (new or replacement)	\$70,000-\$600,000
Playground Surface (replacement)	\$50,000-\$150,000 (\$5/sf Engineered Wood Fiber, \$25/sf Poured-in-Place Rubber Surfacing)
Open Air Shelter (new or replacement)	\$50,000-\$100,000
Outdoor Lighting on Courts	\$100,000/4 courts
Paved Trail*	\$40/lf
Unpaved Trail (Walking or Mountain Bike)*	\$15/lf
Boardwalk Trail	\$250/lf
Bike Rack (Paved Platform)	\$1,500/each
Bike Repair Station (Paved Platform)	\$5,000/each
Bocce Ball Court	\$25-\$40/sf
Stormwater or Environmental Restoration Plan	\$25,000-\$45,000
Upgrades to Baseball/Softball Fields	\$50,000-\$125,000 (not including lighting)
New Soccer Fields	\$25,000-\$50,000 (not including lighting or stands)
On-Site Parking (replace or expand)	\$2,000/parking stall
Benches and Picnic Tables	\$1,200/each
Wayfinding System (Planning & Design)	\$25,000-\$40,000
Wayfinding Signage	\$800/each

\*Village currently plans for 6ft paths, could potentially be expanded to 10ft where needed/feasible

Projects Estimated Between \$100,000 and \$1,000,000	
Proposed Project Type	Estimated Cost Range
New Baseball/Softball Fields	\$180,000-\$250,000
New Baseball Field Lighting	\$150,000-\$175,000 (each field)
New Soccer/Football Field Lighting	\$150,000-\$165,000 (each field)
Permanent Bathrooms (new or replacement)	\$250,000-\$500,000 (\$250/sf)
Permanent Bathrooms and Showers (new or replacement)	\$350,000-\$700,000 (\$280/sf)
Concession Buildings (new or replacement)	\$350,000-\$700,000 (\$280/sf)
Skate Park	\$250,000-\$500,000 (10,000 sf)
Sport Court, Tennis Court, Pickleball Court, Futsal Court (new or replacement)	\$50,000 per court w/ lighting \$180,000 (4 courts no lighting) \$250,000 (4 courts w/ lighting)
Pedestrian Bridge	\$500,000-\$1,000,000

Source: Vandewalle & Associates and Parkitecture + Planning, 2024

Following adoption of this Plan, the Village, including staff, the Recreation Committee, the Village Board, and other relevant groups, can consider a few steps to prepare for implementation of the plan. These include:

**Community Project Prioritization** Utilize the Plan's recommendation and Action Plan Matrix to confirm Village priorities on projects it is most interested in exploring further.

**Community Fundraising Infrastructure** Work with Village boards, committees, and citizen groups to identify fundraising opportunities and create or mobilize community fundraising campaign development and communication strategies.

**Grant Exploration** Village staff, boards, and committees can begin identifying potential grant sources that match project priorities to determine application requirements and timelines. A list of common grant sources is included in the Appendix.

**Plan Promotion and Awareness** Creating excitement and public interest in the CORP and its recommendations is important to the successful implementation of its recommendations. The Village should work with its boards and committees as well as citizen organizations to raise awareness of the Plan following its adoption. Community ownership of the Plan, particularly from residents, is often critical in ultimately having the support needed to make investments in the Plan's implementation.

## ACTION PLAN MATRIX

Figure 9.2 provides a detailed list and timeline of the major actions that the Village intends to complete in implementing this Plan. Often, such actions will require substantial cooperation with other Village Departments, the Elmbrook School District, state and local governments, non-profits and volunteer groups, and local organizations and entities throughout the area. This list is not exhaustive, but includes actions that if taken over the next five years can accomplish the recommendations found in Chapters 7 and 8 of the CORP. The recommendations of this Plan and the actions described in Figure 9.2 are meant to provide guidance to the Village and its decision makers. Adoption of this Plan does not indicate that all of these recommendations will be pursued, but indicates the vision and opportunities for the future of the Village park and recreation system. The Village Board may choose to pursue additional actions or prioritize other actions as conditions change. Such determining factors include timing, public interest, and available resources.

The table has three different columns of information, described as follows:

**Action Item:** The first column lists the actual steps, strategies, and actions recommended to implement key aspects of the Plan.

**Potential Partners:** The second column assumes Village staff would take the lead on each action item, but also lists Village committees, agencies, or other groups who would be a great partner in the pursuit of accomplishing the Action Item.

**Implementation Timeframe:** The third column is the suggested timeframe for the completion of each recommendation. It reflects the priority attached to the recommendation. Each timeframe is defined as follows:

- Ongoing means that the Action Item may be underway or will take place throughout and beyond the planning period and it remains a priority moving forward. These Action Items should be continuously reevaluated to make sure that progress is being made.
- Short means that the Action Item should be pursued over the next 1-2 years, following the adoption date of this Plan.
- Medium means that the Action Item should be pursued over the next 3-5 years, following the adoption date of this Plan.
- Long means that the Action Item should be pursued 5+ years, following the adoption date of this Plan.

There are a number of potential funding sources available to help finance implementation, including state and federal grant programs. These funding sources are included in the Appendix. It should be noted that funds from many of these grant programs are subject to change due to fluctuations in federal, state, and local budgets.

Figure 9.2 Action Plan Matrix

Action Item	Potential Partners	Timeframe
Participate in any future updates to the Waukesha County Park and Open Space Plan and any regional bicycle and pedestrian plans.	County, Wisconsin Bike Fed	Ongoing
Work and coordinate with adjacent municipalities as well as State agencies on any future plans for parks, recreation, and bicycle and pedestrian planning in and around the Village.	WisDNR, WisDOT, City of Brookfield, City of Wauwatosa	Ongoing
Create a Parks Improvement Capital Plan to prioritize and implement the recommended improvements to each existing facility as detailed in Chapter 7.	Village Board	Ongoing
Annually review the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan at a Parks and Recreation Committee meeting to track progress and set priorities for the upcoming year.	Elm Grove Recreation Committee	Ongoing
Develop and maintain a community-wide online Pathway System Map.	Elm Grove Recreation Department Staff, Village staff	Ongoing
Actively pursue grant opportunities as they arise that align with the recommendations of this Plan.	Village staff	Ongoing
Implement the Village Park Concept Plan	Village staff, Recreation Committee, non-profit organizations, local business sponsors	Ongoing
Utilize management practices that protect and enhance the natural features of Village parks. This includes efforts to establish and maintain buffers for sensitive environmental areas, minimize fertilizer and pesticide use, and integrate native species plantings into landscaped areas	Elm Grove Recreation Department, Elm Grove Sustainability Committee, Elm Grove Beautification Committee	Ongoing
Rename the South Park Facility to create more awareness for the facility and its recreation opportunities	Village Board	Short
Initiate an architectural study of the Village Park Pool House facility to determine the future of the structure	Recreation Committee, Village Board	Short
Explore new partnerships with the Elmbrook School District and private school leadership to discuss future use plans, potential shared use agreements, communications and promotions, and indoor recreational facility usage	Elmbrook School District, private school leadership	Short
Complete a Village Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Village staff, non-profit organizations	Short
Establish Village bike parking standards for institutional and commercial facilities via a newly established Bike Rack and Bike Parking Program. This could be incorporated into a Village Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.	Village staff, Village Board	Short

Action Item	Potential Partners	Timeframe
Design and install an off-street path that connects the north side of Village Park with San Fernando Drive	Village staff, WisDNR	Short
Create an ADA and accessibility improvements priority list, identifying key locations for upgrades	Village staff, local non-profit organizations	Short
Work with the Elmbrook School District to implement a Safe Routes to School Plan and participate in future School District planning efforts and updates to the Strategic Plan.	Elmbrook School District	Short
Improve wayfinding and identification signage at all Elm Grove park and recreation facilities via a Village Sign Plan that also makes recommendations for Village branding and identifies key destinations. This could be in conjunction with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.	Village Staff	Short
Establish a Parks Friends Groups or other volunteer initiative to assist with park fundraising and maintenance.	Village Staff, local recreational organizations, non-profits, and stakeholders	Short
Develop relationships and information sharing between local stakeholder groups to highlight events, programming, and recreational opportunities in Elm Grove.	Village Staff, local recreational organizations, non-profits, and stakeholders	Short
Engage with the Elm Grove Business Association to explore potential partnerships and sponsorship opportunities	Local philanthropic organizations and employers	Short
Create and adopt an Official Map that reflects Map 3 and aligns with the Village Comprehensive Plan to proactively plan for paths and trails within the Village.	Plan Commission	Medium
Complete a Park Master Plan for the South Park Facility, including a potential dog park and drainage needs to maintain active playfields	Elm Grove Recreation Department, Elm Grove Recreation Committee, local recreational organizations	Medium
Develop a public art program/initiative to increase public art installations in local parks	Local arts groups, local philanthropic groups, Elmbrook School District	Medium
Initiate an update to the CORP four years following the adoption of the 2025 CORP, including review the level of update is needed and if a consultant should be engaged	Village staff, Elm Grove Recreation Committee	Medium
Implement the Village Park architectural study and depending on its recommendations, pursue the development of a multi-purpose gathering and event space	Village Board	Long

VILLAGE BOARD ADOPTION ORDINANCE

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