

La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department

2022-2026

Strategic Plan



Contents

Acknowledgements.....4

Introduction.....5

 Mission Statement.....6

 Vision Statement.....6

History of the Parks System 7

Importance of Parks and Recreation 8

Purpose of Plan.....9-10

Chapter 1: Community Profile 11-12

Chapter 2: Community Findings 13-19

Chapter 3:Goals and Objectives..... 20-22

Chapter 4: Recently Completed Projects..... 23

 Veterans Point Marina Expansion.....24

 Houska Dog Park 24

 All Abilities Canoe/Kayak Launch..... 25

 Riverside Transient Dock..... 25

 Pettibone Park Road 26

 Burns Park 27

 Highland Park 28

 Pump House28

 Powell Basketball Court 29

 Badger Hickey Park 30

 All Abilities Trane Park 31

 Green Island Tennis Facility 32

 The Gateway Trail 33

Chapter 5: Capital Improvement Projects..... 34-38

Chapter 6: Current/Future Projects 39

 Riverside Levee 40

Kids Coulee.....	41
Green Island Tennis Facility	42
River Point District	43
Weigent Park Shelter	44
Fish Hatchery Building	44
Carroll Field Bathroom/Concessions Stand	45
Veterans Freedom Park Recreational Center	46
Chapter 7: Park Art/ Memorials	47-52
Chapter 8: Sustainability	53-56
Chapter 9: Parks	57-61
Chapter 10: Blufflands	62-76
Chapter 11: Marsh.....	77-79
Chapter 12: Forest Hills	80-81
Chapter 13: Aquatics	82
Erickson Pool.....	83
Veterans Memorial Pool.....	84
North Side Community Pool.....	84
Chapter 14: Ball Fields.....	85
Bluffview	86
Carroll.....	86
Copeland	86-87
Erickson	87
Goose Green.....	88
Houska.....	88
Weigent.....	88
Chapter 15: Waterways	89
Boat Landings	90
7 th Street.....	90

East Copeland	90
Municipal Landing.....	90
Veterans Freedom Park.....	91
Future Landing Projects	91
Municipal Harbor	92
Veterans Point Marina	93
Beaches	94
Black River Beach	94
Pettibone Beach	94
Chapter 16: Facilities	95
Black River Beach Neighborhood Center	96
Myrick Park Center.....	97
South Side Neighborhood Center	97
Chapter 17: Forestry.....	98-100
Chapter 18: Senior Programs/ Special Recreation	101-103
Chapter 19: Maintenance Plan	104-109

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Downtown Main Street
Friends of the Blufflands
Friends of the Marsh
International Friendship Gardens
La Crosse School District
Mississippi Valley Conservancy
Neighborhood Associations
Outdoor Recreation Alliance
University of Wisconsin – La Crosse
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Wisconsin Conservation Corps
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

INTRODUCTION

The La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department reflects the community's long held values and support for park land, forest, marsh, river front activities, green space, fitness, wellness, and fun. Today's system of urban parks, trails, forest, waterfront facilities, recreation facilities and programs is a major contributor to La Crosse's acclaimed high quality of life and the result of the leisure community support and investment. For over 100 years, the City of La Crosse has promoted the community's access to nature, health and wellness in the areas of parks, recreation and forestry.

This plan presents the framework and policy that will assist and guide the La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department in the stewardship of our parks, forest, riverfront, marsh, recreation facilities and programs. The plan includes broad policies and initiatives that will help shape the services that the department will provide to the community over the next five years and beyond.

The City Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Strategic Plan is the culmination of months of public outreach with community members, neighborhood associations, council members, user groups and partners. These conversations with the community will continue as we work together to accomplish the ambitious, but necessary steps to ensure that the parks, recreation and forestry system continues to enhance the lives of La Crosse community members.



Mission Statement

The City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department's mission is to enrich our community through stewardship of the environment and through provisions of quality recreation, facilities, and fun.

Vision Statement

Make La Crosse the best possible welcoming and inclusive community to live, work, and play in.



HISTORY OF THE PARKS SYSTEM

On May 15, 1908, at the request of Mayor Wendell A. Anderson, the La Crosse Common Council passed an ordinance establishing the La Crosse Park Commission and two park districts. Mayor Anderson appointed the first Park Board, consisting of Joseph M. Hixon, Lucian F. Easton, Edward L. Colman, Henry Gund and Fred Schnell. On November 18, 1908, the commissioners selected John Nolen as the landscape architect to provide the plans for the La Crosse park system. A few days later the Council confirmed the funding necessary to begin park development.

John Nolen studied landscape architecture at Harvard under Frederick Law Olmstead Jr. and Arthur Shurcliff. Mr. Nolen developed plans for the University of Wisconsin, the city of Madison and most importantly provided guidelines for Wisconsin's state park system. His completed park plan for La Crosse is summarized in a report titled 'The Making of a Park System in La Crosse' published in 1911.

John Nolen appreciated the outstanding natural resources of our area. He states that:

"The situation of the City is remarkable and of great beauty. With one of the finest parts of the Mississippi River on the west and a noble range of high and rugged bluffs on the east, it occupies a broad and fertile valley, offering an ideal site for both business and residence purposes. The most striking and characteristic natural features are, of course, the river and bluffs. It was decided at once that these should be included in the park plans and that all the forms of recreation that river and bluffs make possible should be provided."(Nolen 1911)

John Nolen's ideals have driven the development of the La Crosse park system. Through the generous donations and acquisitions of land, and the foresight of early citizens and elected officials, La Crosse parks continue to be successfully developed today. Currently the La Crosse Parks, Recreation, & Forestry Department maintains a 1,560-acre park system, consisting of 47 park sites, 18 parks shelters/pavilions, 12 athletic fields, an 18-hole frisbee golf course, 27 miles of paved trails, and 45 miles of natural surface trails. In addition, the department also has an 1,100-acre riparian marsh and 1,312 acres of public land across the bluffs on the city's east side. The department remains diligent in providing the best park development and maintenance possible for the City of La Crosse parks.



IMPORTANCE OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Purpose

- **Social benefits** by connecting people with neighbors of other ages, incomes, backgrounds, and abilities. Parks and recreational activities build community pride and spirit.
- **Economic benefits** by improving the quality of life in the community and helping to attract businesses and residents to the local area. Top-ranked parks and recreation programs and facilities are a competitive advantage for the entire area in economic development.
- **Environmental benefits** by connecting people with and educating them about nature. La Crosse is fortunate to have an abundance of natural resources and must continue to protect, sustain and restore our natural landscape, while at the same time offer recreational opportunities in harmony with nature.
- **Individual benefits** by promoting physical fitness and self-improvement. Opportunities for exercise and being outdoors results in greater physical fitness, emotional well-being, and connectivity to nature.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The groundwork for the Strategic Plan was compiled through community input, recreation partnerships, employee and city officials' input. This plan is a complete reflection of the importance of parks and recreation in the community of La Crosse and community-driven needs and desires for recreation facilities, trails, open spaces and recreation programs. The plan not only identifies these desired needs, but also provides an action plan for projects that include timelines, potential costs, and responsibilities.

Importance of the Plan

- Provides a guiding framework for current and long- term future of the City of La Crosse's Parks and Recreation system.
- Outlines the goals and objectives the City of La Crosse is aspiring to achieve.
- Includes public input from how residents use parks and recreation facilities and what they feel the priority of capital improvements should be for the system.
- Provides an inventory of existing conditions and recommendations for future parks, recreation facilities and programs, and development of open space areas and facilities.

Implementation

The Parks Department cannot accomplish the strategic plan's goals and objectives alone. Success will require partnership with the community, organizations, city officials and employees. Through partnerships, funding mechanisms, and leveraging available new and existing resources, the parks department can find ways to build on past accomplishments and create new opportunities for future success.

Next Steps

This strategic plan is a living document, one that is updated annually to reflect circumstances at that moment. We will update the plan each year, as planning staff and stakeholders will come together to discuss what needs to be amended for the following year.

Parks and Recreation Participation

Participation in parks and recreation programs and activities provide ample benefits to our community. Opportunities to participate provide a place for healthy activities that are accessible

to all ages. Community members are able to connect with one another through special events and programs.

The recreation staff coordinates many activities including youth recreation programs serving over 15,000 youth yearly. The adult sports program serves 190 softball teams, 50 basketball teams, 75 volleyball teams, 24 football teams, and 300 individual tennis players. In addition to adult sports, the department offers a wide variety of adult programs including: creative, enrichment, health, and wellness programs; cooking and fitness classes; numerous concerts and dances; and dementia education and support for care partners programs. The ever-growing senior programs offered by the department allow for education programs, computer classes, and the very popular Senior Excursion bus trips. The Special Recreation program provides recreational activities for individuals with special needs and the Special Olympics program is the 2nd largest program in the State of Wisconsin with over 500 participants. The department conducts numerous special events each year: Special Olympics Polar Plunge (\$150,000 raised); Youth Outdoor Fest (3,000 participants) Field of Screams (1,000 participants). In addition to these events, the department is also responsible for the Special Olympics Wisconsin District Softball and Bocce Tournament, the Special Olympics Wisconsin Regional Bowling Tournament, the Celebrate Summer Family Fun Fair, Pop Up Sledding, and Movies in the Park, to name a few other special events.

Community Partners

Community partnerships are effective and essential for maintaining and building the park system and its programs in La Crosse. Our partnerships are in all types of forms and may be long or short term. La Crosse has a long-standing history of working with the community to develop partnerships and utilize available resources. Parks are essential to the quality of the community. Many individuals, groups, and organizations enjoy being involved to help make the parks the best they can be. A partial list of partnerships includes: La Crosse Neighborhood Associations, Outdoor Recreation Alliance, Friends of the Blufflands and the Marsh, Mississippi Valley Conservancy, Neighborhood Associations, County of La Crosse, University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Conservation Corps, International Gardens, Downtown Main Street, Friends of Riverside, La Crosse School District, and all City of La Crosse Departments.

Chapter 1

Community

Profile

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The City of La Crosse offers spectacular views, a charming downtown life, and welcoming community. It is the largest city on Wisconsin's western border. A regional technology, medical, education, manufacturing, and transportation hub, companies based in the La Crosse area include Mayo and Gundersen Health Systems, Logistics Health Incorporated, Kwik Trip, La Crosse Technology, City Brewing Company and Trane. La Crosse is also a college town home to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, Viterbo University, and Western Technical College.

The City of La Crosse is positioned along the Mississippi River. Surrounding the relatively flat prairie valley where La Crosse is located are towering 500 ft bluffs, one of which is the City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department's own, Grandad Bluff, that overlooks the three-state region. This region is composed of high ridges with carved out valley, also known as coulees, a French term. That is where the city of La Crosse gets its nickname of the "Coulee Region". Among the bluffs in the city of La Crosse are trails, parks, facilities, programs for all ages, and recreational opportunities all provided by the City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department.

Demographics

The total population of the City of La Crosse is 51,567 with an expected growth of 2.2% per year. The metropolitan statistical area population is 133,665. City of La Crosse's median household income is \$56,552. The median age for the city is 28.8.



Chapter 2

Community

Findings

COMMUNITY FINDINGS

Introduction

In order to provide quality parks, trails and recreation activities, community engagement is an essential element of the parks and recreation planning process. Through public information sessions, surveys, and continuous collaboration with the 11 Neighborhood Associations, we are able to collectively capture the needs of the La Crosse community.

Survey Summary

- 412 survey responses from April 22 – May 7, 2019 through the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department were collected.
- 1,895 survey responses from September 24- December 1, 2019 through the City of La Crosse Planning Department were collected.

Survey Summary

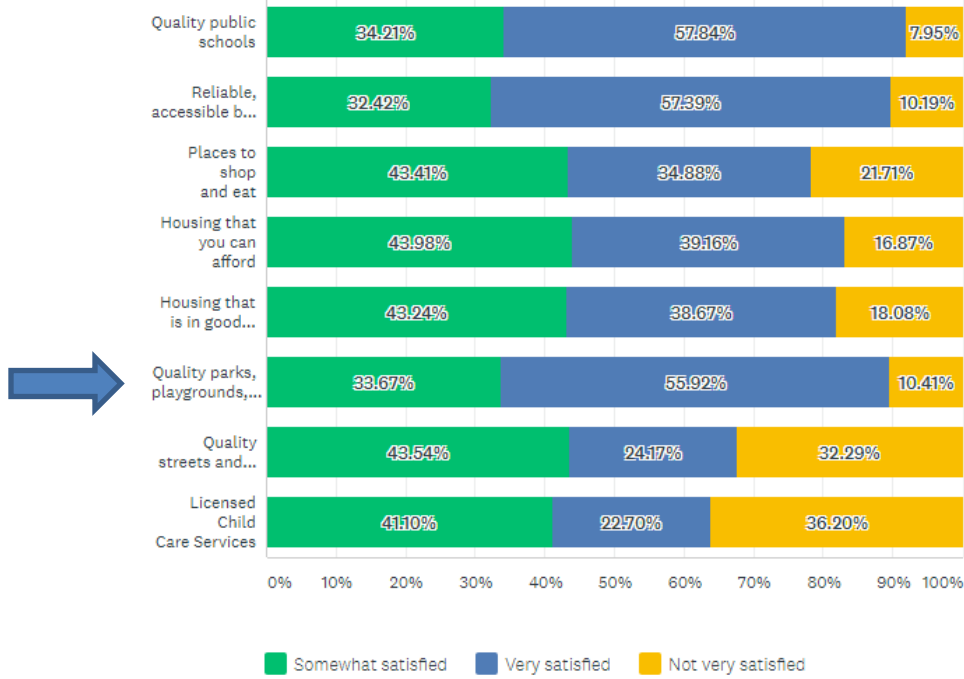
The citywide surveys were conducted to help guide the strategic plan. The results helped to identify residents' needs and desires specific to parks and recreation, as well as the support for additional recreation and park facilities. This survey helped the city gain a better understanding of the recreational interests of our community.

Findings

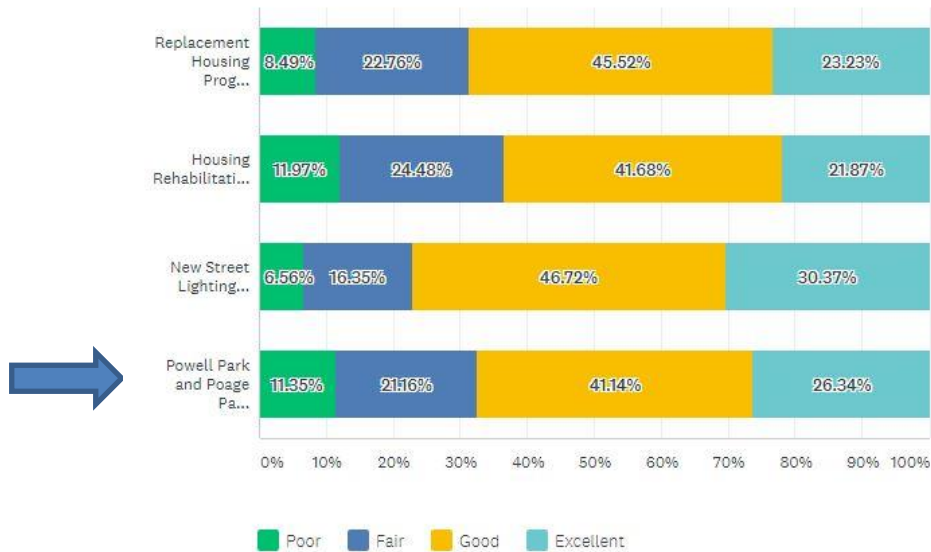
- When survey takers were asked how satisfied they were with the Quality parks, playground, trails, 1,429 respondents answered either somewhat or very satisfied. (87%)
- When surveyed, 77% of La Crosse Residents stated that Capital Improvements to parks and playgrounds were either moderately or very important to them.
- 85% stated that they were somewhat or very satisfied with their neighborhood. A common reason for that satisfactory: proximity to parks.
- Of the 1895 respondents, about 134 responses to the question "What do you like best about your neighborhood?" mentioned parks. General comments included:
 - Access to quality playgrounds (7)
 - Proximity to parks (120)
 - Walking trails (39)
 - Tree-lined boulevards (62)
 - Parks specifically mentioned: Trane, Copeland, Riverside, Weigent, Bluffview, Poage, Myrick

- Survey results showed that 67% of respondents thought the quality and effectiveness of the Powell Park and Poage Park renovations was either good or excellent
 - Some Comments in response to the Powell Park and Poage Park:
 - *“The Sensory Park at Powell is wonderful. Even non-sensory children enjoy this park. I'd love more parks to be converted.”*
 - *“I am thrilled with Powell Park and Poage park renovations and find these to be a huge asset to our community and our neighborhoods.”*
 - *“Fantastic job on Powell and Poage Parks. Love the play equipment, esthetically pleasing design and the splash pad at Poage is great! Love that you incorporated plants and rock-scaping as well. Hope this type of design and equipment become the standard for more park renovations. Wish the Weigent renovation used a similar esthetic and color scheme. The Weigent upgrade and color scheme is kind of ugly.”*
 - *“Commitment to parks, streets and the southside transformation is absolutely evident.”*
 - *“Like upgrades to city parks, especially making them friendly for individuals with disabilities.”*
- When asked for improving parks, trails and facilities in La Crosse, responses included the following:
 - *“new trails with connections to existing trails”*
 - *“More year-round activities for kids, improved perception of safety”*
 - *“Accessible playgrounds, shade spots, routine cleanliness of bathrooms”*
 - *“Plant more native trees and plants to support birds and pollinators”*
 - *“Maintain what we have to good quality”*
- Other comments regarding parks:
 - *“Would like to see community gardens in city parks.”*
 - *“Suggestion project: I would like to see CDBG for bathrooms in city parks and money for staff to maintain them.”*
 - *“Surveillance systems in city parks and restore Myrick park.”*
 - *“Additional investment in parks and trails throughout the city are always appreciated.”*
 - *“We need more parks and splashpads for kids of all ages.”*

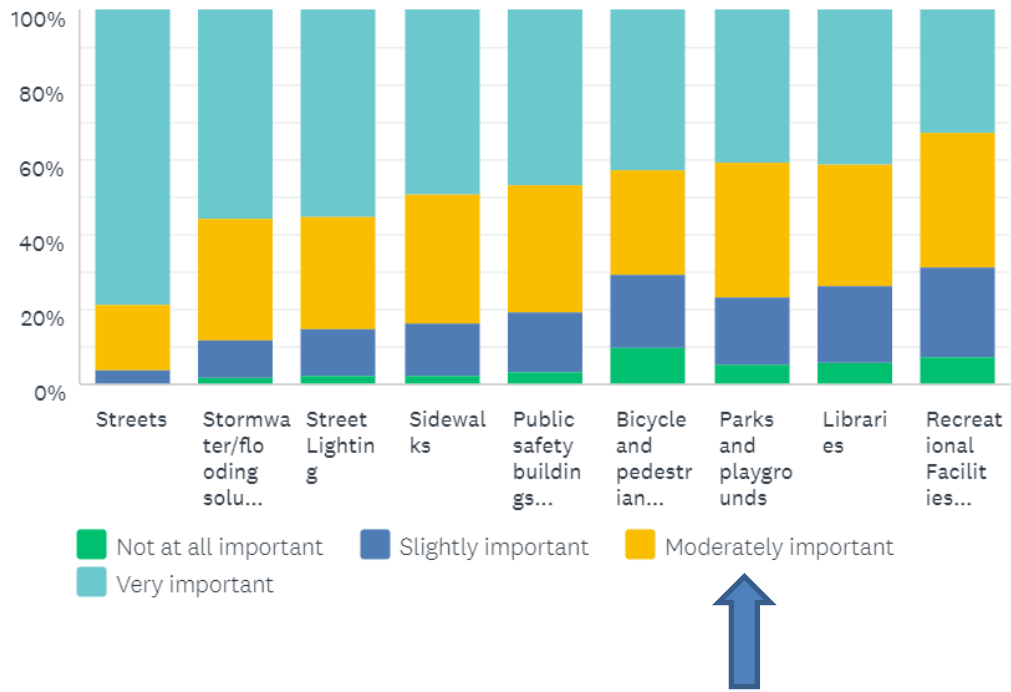
In your neighborhood, how satisfied are you with your access to the following resources?



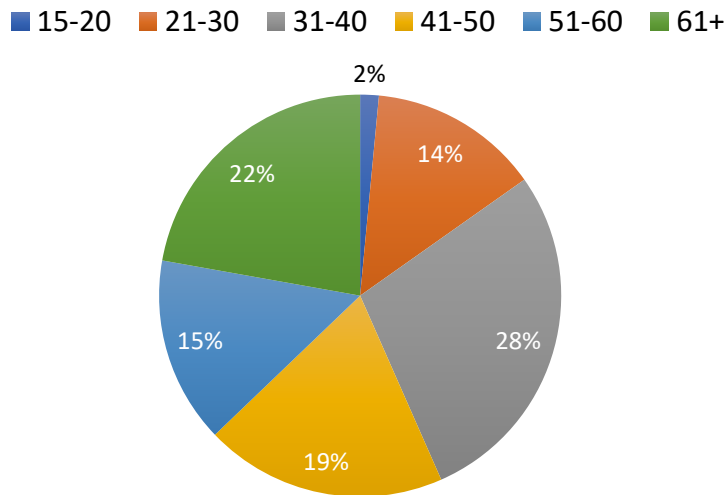
Rate the quality and effectiveness of the following City of La Crosse programs or projects. Please skip the question or mark "Not familiar with the Program" if you haven't heard of the program or don't know enough about it.



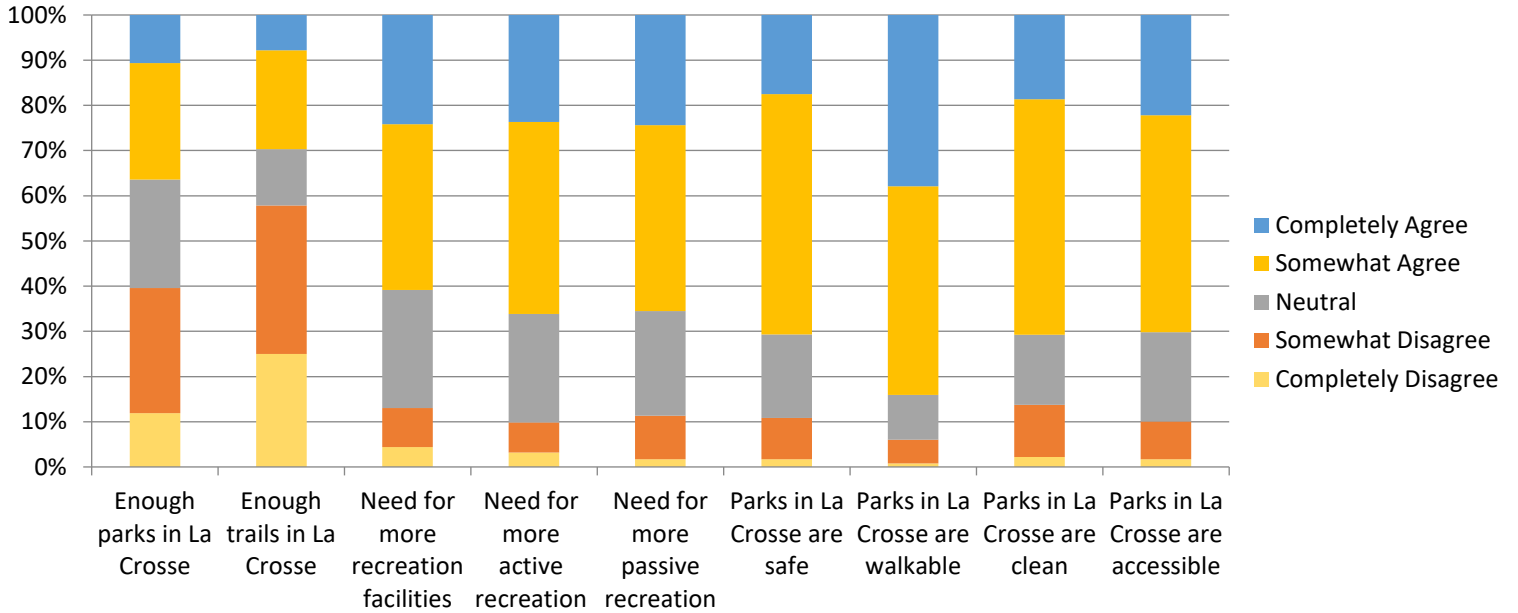
How important are the following capital improvements?



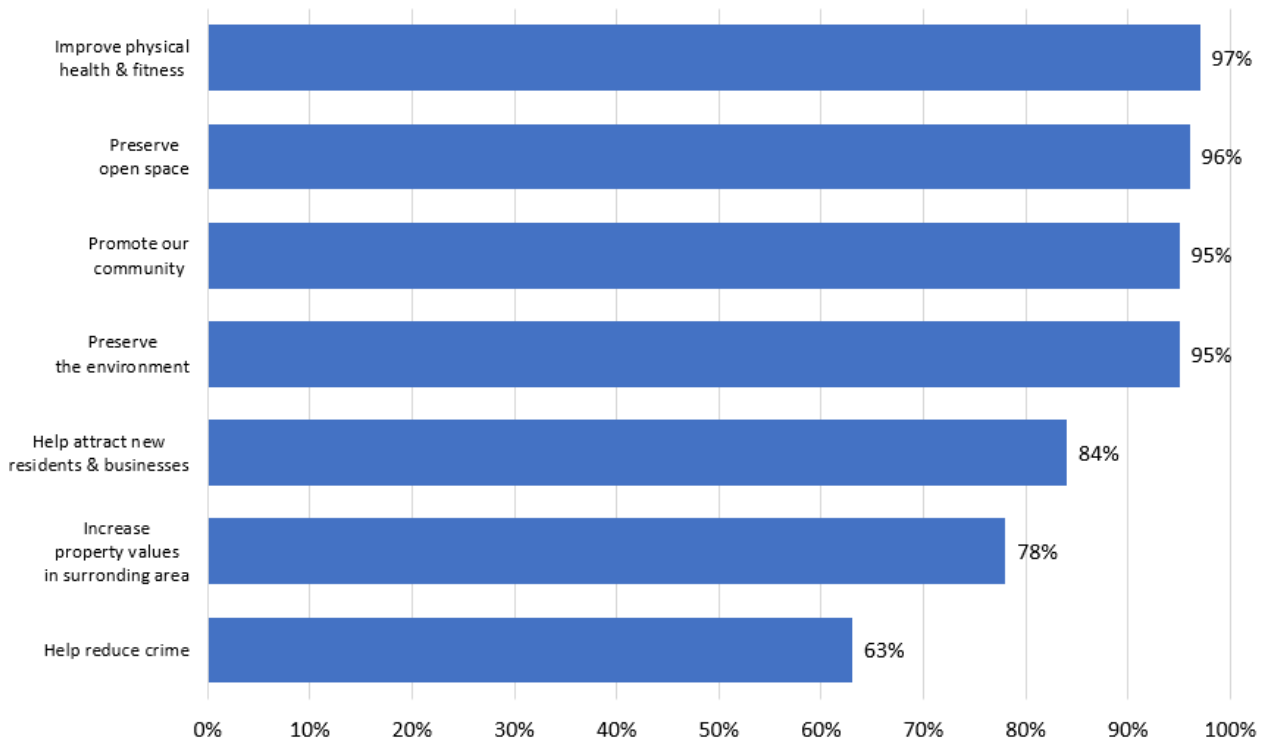
Age of Respondents



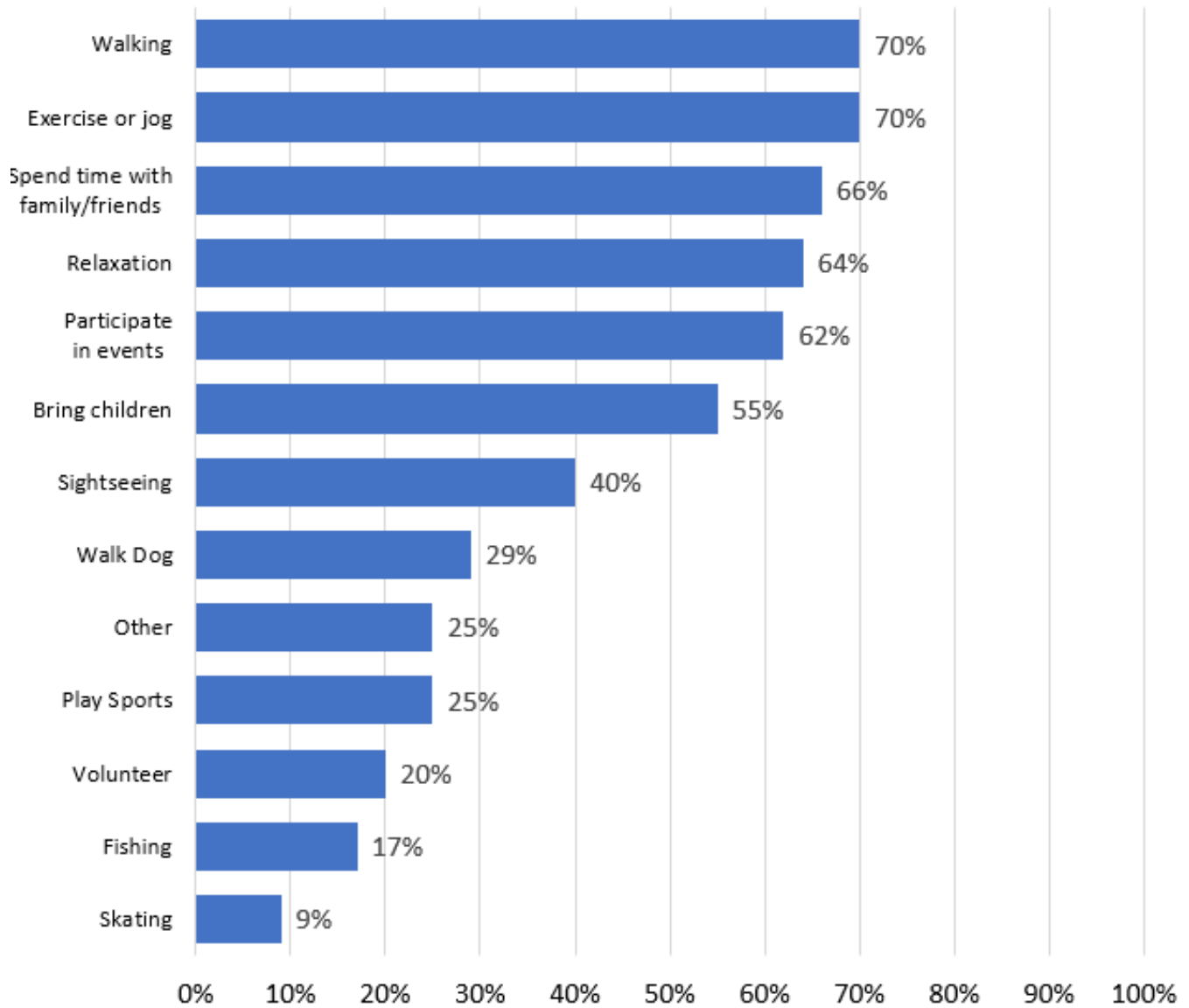
Indication of agreement with statements about parks, trails, and recreation activities



Benefits of La Crosse Parks & Trails



Why do you visit parks in the City of La Crosse?



Chapter 3

Goals &

Objectives

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives provide the framework for guiding future recreation needs for City of La Crosse residents. These goals and objectives will serve as a guide for the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department's annual budget, capital plans, and work plans. These goals will be worked on over the course of the next five years. Each goal was taken into consideration by looking at the assessment needs of the city and the public input.

Goal 1 - Maintain long-term fiscal stability through responsible management, diversified revenue and beneficial partnerships.

Objectives:

- Partner with communities, organizations and businesses to support local initiatives, impact the local economy and generate revenue.
- Work with all levels of government to secure consistent, dedicated funding for park development, maintenance, and operations.
- Increase revenue and develop sustainable spending practices throughout the system that consider the short- and long-term costs and priorities for projects, programs and/or services.

Goal 2 - Protect and manage natural resources through sustainable management practices.

Objectives:

- Focus on habitat protection, conservation and restoration on threatened resources such as wetlands, urban forests, bluff lands, rural landscapes and forests.
- Partner with other organizations to improve resource management education while maintaining the natural, scenic, and agricultural land.
- Improve air and water quality through the protection of open space, land stewardship, and public awareness.

Goal 3 - Engage people with nature and outdoor recreation.

Objectives:

- Encourage people to experience the natural environment by providing and maintaining trails and access points that serve people of all ages and abilities.
- Develop a strong connection between neighborhood and park center programming and the natural areas in the park system.

- Enhance educational experiences to connect visitors to natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

Goal 4 - Provide a safe place to play, recreate, contemplate, and celebrate.

Objectives:

- Identify recurring safety concerns and devise new prevention plans using available resources.
- Pursue public and private partnerships to promote safety in the parks and expand available resources.
- Modify behavior that may cause harm to persons, the environment, or property within the park system.

Chapter 4

Recently

Completed

Projects

**Veterans Point Marina Expansion
120 Clinton St**

This expansion added thirty-two 12.5' x 24' slips to the existing ninety-two slip facility.



**Houska Dog Park
700 Houska Park Dr**

Houska Dog Park opened in spring of 2021 with the additional lighting and soil remediation to the north side.

Houska Dog Park Features Include:

- Waste stations
- Weaving posts
- Running ramp
- Dog Barrel
- Dog Table
- Leash Post



**All Abilities Canoe/Kayak Launch
1000 Boathouse Dr**

The installation of an all abilities canoe/kayak launch at Veterans Freedom Park includes refurbished transient dock that the launch is attached to with an ADA compliant walkway/gangway.



**Riverside Transient Dock
100 Block State St**

The transient pier system has been installed along the Riverside Park sea wall.

Positive aspects of this project include:

- Transient mooring for concerts or other events in the park
- Transient mooring for folks visiting downtown La Crosse shops and restaurants
- Transient mooring site for the “Big Boats” that visit La Crosse.



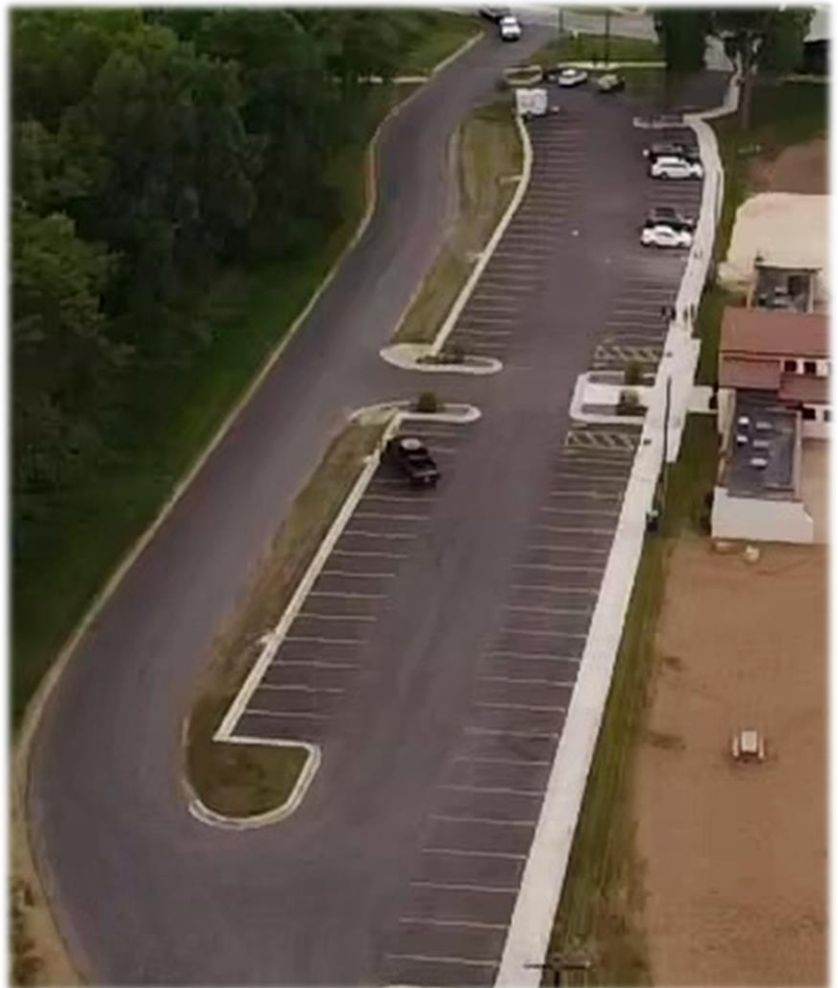
**Pettibone Park Road
301 Pettibone Drive South**

Partnership: Pettibone Association

Over time, the beach, boat club, and marina users of the park have grown and the existing parking lot and road path ways could no longer meet the capacity of the users of the park. The existing parking lot was moved up to the entrance of the beach house and moved the road way to the west end of the existing parking lot. This allows increased safety of beach-goers and allows for larger vehicle traffic to access the southern end of Barron Island.

Pettibone Park Features:

- Relocated Pettibone Drive
- Redesigned parking lot
- Connected water & sewer facilities
- Raised the road out of the flood plain



2022-2026

Burns Park
702 Main Street

Partnership: Downtown Neighborhood Association, Downtown Mainstreet, Inc., Washburn on the Park Apartments, Ho-Chunk Three Rivers House

The surrounding neighborhood and the Downtown Neighborhood Association showed interest in revitalizing the park, and made it their goal to maximize the available park space. The upgrades to this park were an essential piece of the vision of the downtown plan.

Burns Park Features:

- New playground with natural structures
- Shade structure
- Tables



2022-2026

**Highland Park
2500 Highland St**

In 2019, the Hintgen Neighborhood Association prioritized dedicating over \$100,000 in neighborhood funding toward the renovation of Highland Park. Per neighborhood vote, Highland Park has become the city's very first park to host a natural playground design. A natural playground is a play environment that consists of elements and textures from the earth. This project was completed in summer 2020.

Highland Park Features Include:

- Tree logs/stumps
- Boulders
- Plants
- Drainage paths



**Pump House
119 King St**

The Pump House theater renovation is now complete with new flooring, retractable risers, cove lighting, and automatic shades that block or allow the natural light, while the original paneled wood ceiling from the 1880 remains.



**Powell Basketball Court
1002 West Ave S**

Powell Park now has a full court basketball court in its northwest corner. The placement and location of this basketball court was selected by the Powell – Poage- Hamilton Neighborhood Association in 2019. This addition of the basketball court is a replacement of the court lost at 7th and Farnam Street. This project was completed in fall 2020.



**Badger Hickey Park
Palace Street & Charles Street**

Partnership: Logan Northside Neighborhood Association

Badger Hickey Park is located on the north side of La Crosse on the corner of Palace Street & Charles Street. The Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department worked with the Logan Northside Neighborhood Association and the Badger Hickey Park Improvement Committee to complete the addition to the park. This project was completed in spring 2021.

Badger Hickey Park Features Include:

- Half Basketball Court
- Zipline



**All Abilities Trane Park
1500 Chase Street**

Partnership: Gundersen Health System, La Crosse Area Autism Foundation, La Crosse County

Trane Park was named in honor of Reuben Trane and Family and was developed with a \$35,000 gift from the Trane Company in 1954. The All Abilities Trane Park Project transformed the existing park into a common space where children and adults can play together, regardless of their cognitive, sensory, or physical needs. This project was completed in June 2021.



**Green Island Tennis Facility
2312 7th Street South**

Partnerships: University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, Coulee Region Tennis Association and Aquinas High School

Green Island Park was created in 1980, and the ice arena was officially opened in January 1983. In January 2018, the Parks & Recreation Department was approached by members of UWL, Aquinas, and La Crosse Team Tennis Association (LTTA) about coming together and creating a large tennis complex that everyone from the community could enjoy. Two of the three phases for this project are complete.

Green Island Park Features Include:

Phase 1:

- 13 outdoor tennis courts

Phase 2:

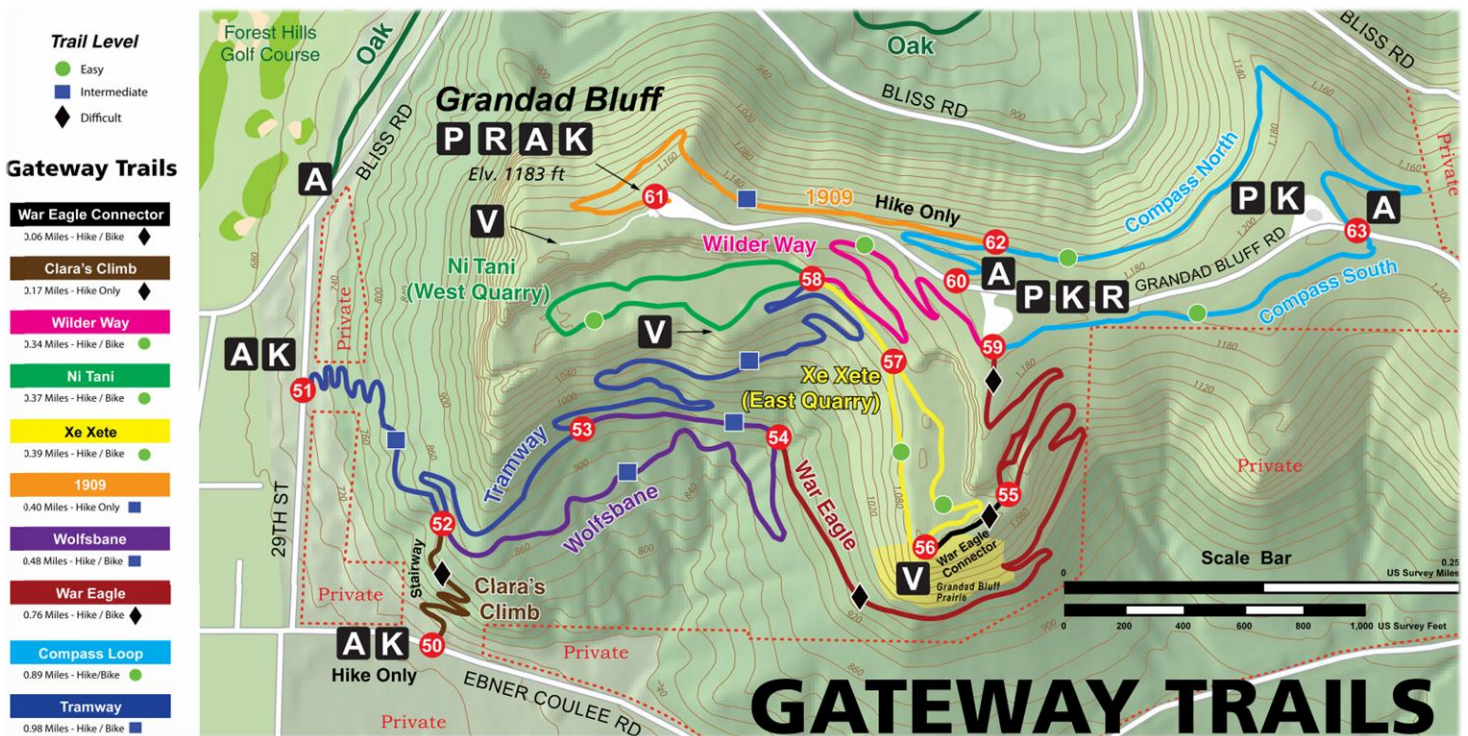
- Lighting of seven outdoor courts



The Gateway Trail

Partnership: Outdoor Recreation Alliance of the 7 Rivers Region

Grandad Bluff Trail Project is located on Grandad Bluff Park property. The area that was transformed is currently laden with invasive species and rogue trails. The new trails are professionally designed sustainable trails that will protect the area from washouts and reduce environmental damage. The shared use trails lead well intentioned explorers away from sensitive areas that are home to rare species that need our protection. An additional aspect of this project will include a family zone/picnic area also located on the floor of the old quarry zone near the green level trails. The project added approximately 5.5 miles of shared use trail.



Chapter 5

Capital

Improvement

Projects

CIP Process

Capital Improvement Projects are submitted by each city department and are projects they would like to see completed. Projects are identified as the department’s needs and wants within the city for the next five years. The city is allotted a certain budget each year, and there are a few committees that oversee these projects to determine which ones go through or not. Projects are first reviewed by the City Planning Commission. The commission shall prepare and submit a five-year capital projects budget to the Common Council through its Finance & Personnel Committee. As much as the department wants to see all projects approved, it doesn’t always happen; however, those projects can be resubmitted during the following cycle in hopes it is selected to be completed.

Key

SOF	Source of Funds
NBI	New Bond Issue
CBDG	Community Development Block Grant
TIF	Tax Incremental Fund
OTHER	Other (Grants & Donations)

2022

Park/Site	Project Description	Amount	SOF
Myrick Park	Fixing up of 20-year-old Kid’s Coulee	\$500,000	NBI
Carroll Park	Bathroom construction, paving parking lot & utility work	\$450,000	NBI
Trails/Bluffland	Continued development & maintenance of City Trail System	\$200,000	NBI
Riverside Park	Fish hatchery building rehab	\$500,000	NBI
Erickson Park	Renovation of tennis & basketball courts	\$150,000	TIF
Riverside Park	Assess current electrical grid	\$100,000	NBI
Forest Hills	Replace irrigation system	\$300,000	NBI
Copeland Park	Complete Walk of Fame & sidewalk connecting ball park to splash pad	\$350,000	TIF
Crowley Park	Replace playground surface	\$100,000	NBI
Copeland Park	Rehab of shelters	\$30,000	NBI
Lueth Park	Upgrades, pedestrian access and rec facilities	\$50,000	NBI
Hass Park	Update to Hass Park	\$200,000	NBI
City Wide	City wide fence repair	\$50,000	NBI

City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Strategic Plan

2022-2026

Springbrook Park	Enhance park lighting	\$30,000	NBI
Marsh	Hydrological reconstruction site plan	\$100,000	NBI
Chad Erickson Memorial Park	Trail stabilization	\$75,000	NBI
4 TH & Adams St	Beautification of median	\$25,000	NBI
Fiesta Ct	Beautification	\$30,000	NBI
Riverside Park	Replace south bathrooms	\$250,000	NBI
Riverside Waterway	Comprehensive Front side park site plan and North to Copeland	\$500,000	NBI
Municipal Harbor	Utilities work at harbor	\$40,000	NBI
Municipal Harbor	Add asphalt and curb to parking lot	\$750,000	TIF
		Total	\$4,780,000

2023

Park/Side	Project Design	Amount	SOF
Trails/Bluffland	Continued development and maintenance of City Trail System	\$200,000	NBI
Myrick Park	Fixing up of 20-year-old Kid's Coulee	\$500,000	NBI
Forest Hills	Rebuild of four west tennis courts	\$300,000	NBI
Erickson Park	Parking lot for pool	\$150,000	TIF
East Copeland	Parking lot replacement	\$400,000	TIF
Copeland Park	Rehab of shelters	\$300,000	NBI
Riverside Park	Levee-Phase III	\$4,500,000	TIF,NBI
Northside Pool	Replacement of 22-year-old slide	\$350,000	NBI
Houska Park	Pedestrian Bridge Replacement	\$250,000	NBI
Riverside Waterway	Comprehensive Front side park site plan and North to Copeland	\$500,000	NBI
Forest Hills	Replace irrigation system	\$300,000	NBI
Marsh	Hydrological reconstruction site plan	\$100,000	NBI
Seminary Park	Update to Seminary Park	\$100,000	NBI
		Total	\$7,950,000

2022-2026

2024

Park/Site	Project Description	Amount	SOF
Trails/Bluffland	Continued development and maintenance of City Trail System	\$200,000	NBI
West Copeland	Parking lot replacement	\$600,000	TIF
Copeland Park	Rehab of shelters	\$300,000	NBI
Forest Hills	Replace irrigation system	\$300,000	NBI
Marsh	Hydrological reconstruction site plan	\$100,000	NBI
Erickson Pool	Mechanical system upgrade	\$200,000	NBI
Riverside Waterway	Comprehensive Front side park site plan and North to Copeland	\$500,000	NBI
Glendale Park	Update to Glendale	\$100,000	NBI
Total		\$2,300,000	

2025

Park/Site	Project Description	Amount	SOF
Trails/Bluffland	Continued development and maintenance of City Trail System	\$200,000	NBI
Copeland Park	Rehab of shelters	\$300,000	NBI
Forest Hills	Replace irrigation system	\$300,000	NBI
Marsh	Hydrological reconstruction site plan	\$100,000	NBI
Northside Pool	Mechanical system upgrade	\$200,000	NBI
Merry Meadows Park	Update to Merry Meadows	\$100,000	NBI
Total		\$1,200,000	

2026

Park/Site	Project Description	Amount	SOF
Trails/Bluffland	Continued development and maintenance of City Trail System	\$200,000	NBI
Marsh	Hydrological reconstruction site plan	\$100,000	NBI
Municipal Harbor	Addition of transient dock to west point	\$250,000	NBI
Southside Neighborhood Center	Roof repairs	\$30,000	NBI
Coulee Park	Update to park	\$100,000	NBI
Green Island Tennis Facility	Reservice of outdoor courts	\$70,000	NBI
Total		\$750,000	

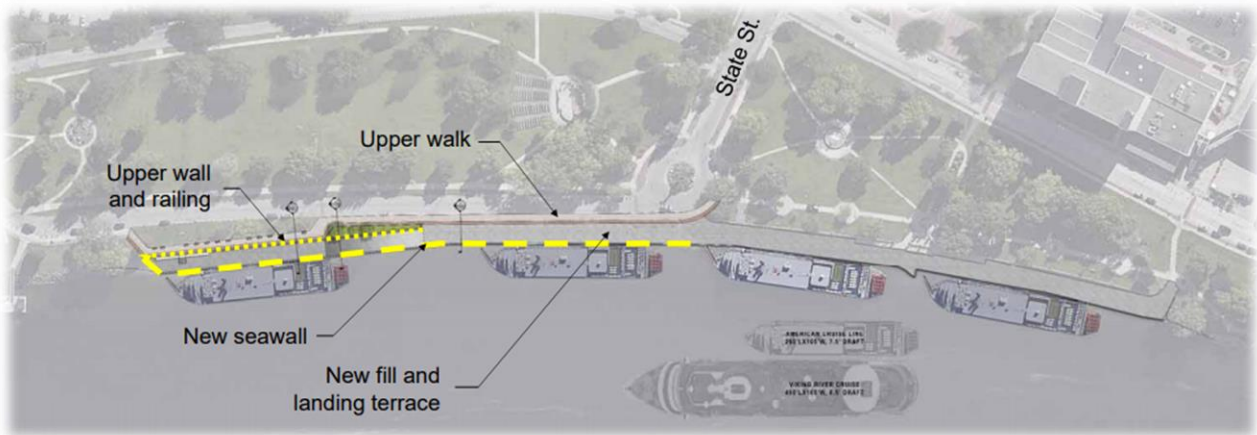
Chapter 6

Current/Future

Projects

**Riverside Levee
100 Block State St**

The City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department has entered into an agreement with Smithgroup JJR to design an addition to the Riverside Levee in Riverside Park. The proposal will look at an addition and the necessary planning, permitting, and engineering for construction of a cruise ship landing/port expansion along the La Crosse waterfront. This expansion of the Riverside Levee would accommodate an additional two to three cruise vessels docking at the levy simultaneously during the boating season. This levee will not only be a great addition to Riverside Park but will also bring additional passengers and tourists into La Crosse’s crown jewel on the river and into downtown La Crosse.



Kids Coulee
2107 La Crosse St

Kids Coulee Playground was built by volunteers in 1994. This state-of-the-art playground located in Myrick Park was built by over 3,700 volunteers and more than \$190,000 was donated to make this dream a reality. It includes a variety of play structures and features. \$50,000 was funded in the 2020 Capital Improvement Project to develop a conceptual design and specifications towards renovation.



**Green Island Tennis Facility
2312 7th Street South**

Partnerships: University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, Coulee Region Tennis Association and Aquinas High School

Green Island Park was created in 1980, and the ice arena was officially opened in January 1983. Over the last 30 years, the City of La Crosse has enjoyed hockey, figure skating, broomball, and Learn to Skate programs at the Green Island Ice Arena. In January 2018, the Parks & Recreation Department was approached by members of UWL, Aquinas, and La Crosse Team Tennis Association (LTTA) about coming together and creating a large tennis complex that everyone from the community could enjoy.

Green Island Park Feature to Complete:

Phase 3:

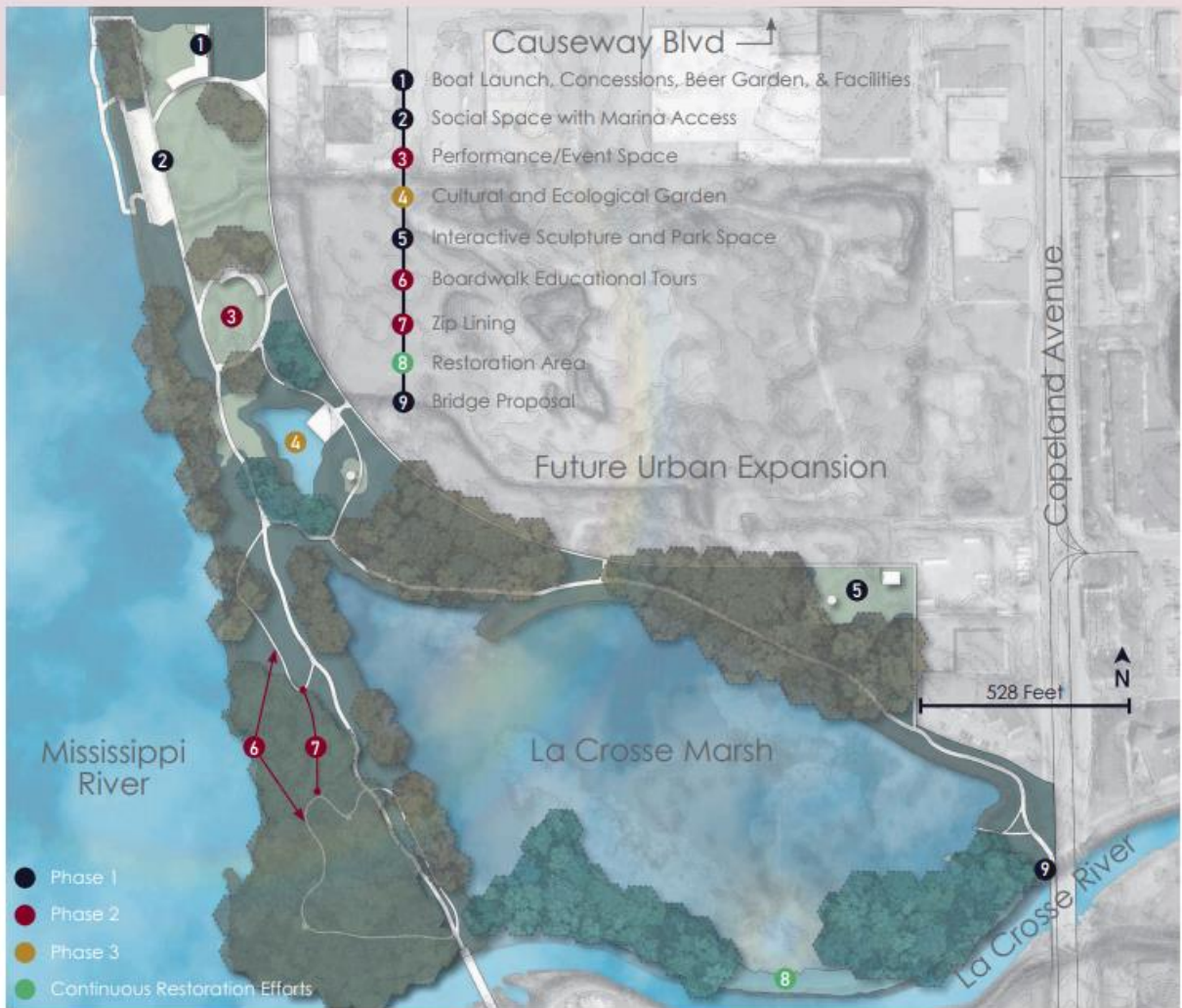
- Six indoor courts & enclosure



River Point District

River Point District is a forward-thinking vision for a vibrant, contemporary, mixed-use waterfront neighborhood where abundant natural surroundings create opportunities for unique community amenities and inspiring development. Located in the heart of La Crosse at the confluence of the Mississippi, Black and La Crosse Rivers, River Point District will establish a dynamic, sustainable neighborhood within the area’s overall urban fabric and seamlessly connect the community to the rivers and downtown. Among the district will be dedicated park land with different amenities and features.

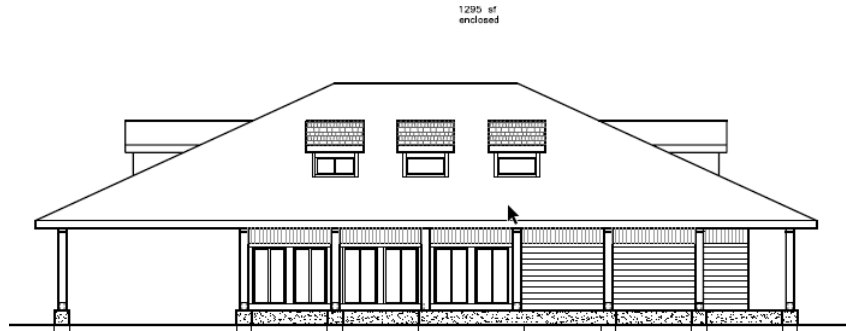
RIVER POINT PARK | MASTER PLAN



**Weigent Park Shelter
1500 Cass St**

Partnership: Weigent- Hogan Neighborhood Association

The shelter in Weigent Park will be replaced with a new and modern facility with upgrades to the building and restrooms to make this facility more user friendly for not only the summer programming activities but a usable space for all activities within the park.



**Fish Hatchery Building
520 Veterans Memorial Dr E**

Phase one of the renovation has started on the Fish Hatchery Building. Phase one includes new windows and doors with an estimated completion of December 2021.



**Carroll Field Bathroom/Concessions Stand
1717 Marco Drive**

The new bathrooms at Carroll Park are being considered due to the age of the old structure and the additional capacity that is needed in the park with the addition of two new fields (Carroll North and South). The new concession stand will increase the attractiveness of the area as the City of La Crosse places bids for local, regional and national tournaments.



Veterans Freedom Park Recreational Center

This project is being funded by donations collected by the La Crosse Curling Club.

This building will primarily be used for curling. Curling is a sport for everyone regardless of age, economic situation, gender or physical condition. Dedicated curling ice will allow La Crosse Curling Club to offer high quality curling to our community in order to continue the expansion and growth of curling in La Crosse. It will enable the La Crosse Curling Club to offer area youth a wholesome after-school and weekend winter athletic activity on a broad scale. The facility will be available to Viterbo and UW-L collegiate teams and competitions. The facility will be a fully equipped shelter for City use and public rental at Veterans Freedom Park. It will be a park facility with washrooms, a kitchen, a smaller enclosed social area and a large enclosed open area.



Chapter 7

Park Art/ Memorials

The City of La Crosse has many statues, sculptures and memorials throughout the parks. Each one tells a story, has significant meaning or is a piece of history. Incorporating public forms of art throughout parks will enhance livability and economic validity, bring diverse groups of people together to appreciate and celebrate history and heritage, enhance learning, raise awareness of social issues and bring beauty and meaning to the park's environment.

The City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department is dedicated to maintaining these pieces of art. Many have been relocated or repainted to help preserve them for future years. They are evaluated on a regular basis to assess the needs and planned accordingly.



Anidonts: (La Crosse St) Myrick Park Entrance



Lyra Sculpture: (1502 Marco Dr) Municipal Harbor



The Eagle: (2nd and Main St) Riverside Park



Locomotive: (400 Clinton St) Copeland Park



La Crosse Players: (500 2nd St S) Civic Center Park



Ellen Hixon: (2030 Grandad Bluff Rd) Grandad Bluff



Walter 'Babe' Weigent: (1500 Cass St) Weigent Park



George C. Poage: (500 Hood St) Poage Park



A Simpler Time: Riverside Park



Workers Monument: (2312 7th St S)
Green Island Park



Eagle Watch Area: US HWY 53



Grandad Bluff Plaque: (3020 Grandad Bluff Rd) Grandad Park



Wall Memorial: (1200 La Crosse St) Lueth Park

International Friendship Gardens Memorials



Veterans Freedom Park Memorials



Korean War Veterans Memorial



Tank



US Cadet Nurse Corps Memorial



World War I Memorial



Hmong-Lao Vietnam Memorial

Chapter 8

Sustainability

Parks, Recreation & Forestry-Sustainability

This chapter of the Strategic Plan aims to further limit environmental impact and enhance the livability of La Crosse. It sets realistic targets, identifies ways to implement them and establishes regular monitoring of the department's progress. It is integral to our promise to deliver the best to our city and the people who live here.

The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department would like to make certain that principles of sustainability in the City of La Crosse are followed to improve our quality of life by meeting present environmental, economic, and social needs without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same.

Achievement of 2019: In an effort to make the city a healthier place for those who live and play, the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department made the decision to stop using glyphosate-based herbicides and pesticides in all City parks. Organic compounds have been used on a trial basis and the department will continue to use alternatives to glyphosate-based chemicals.

Goal A: Develop an Integrated Pest Management Plan by 2021 that includes purchasing policies to reflect the department's commitment to non-glyphosate-based products.

A well-defined Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a program that should be based on prevention, monitoring and control, which offers the opportunity to eliminate or drastically reduce the use of pesticides and to minimize the toxicity of and exposure to any products which are used. IPM does this by utilizing a variety of methods and techniques, including cultural, biological and structural strategies to control a multitude of pest problems.

Essentials to a successful IPM Plan include:

Monitoring. This includes regular site inspections and trapping to determine the types and infestation levels of pests at each site.

Record Keeping. A record-keeping system is essential to establish trends and patterns in pest outbreaks. Information recorded at every inspection or treatment should include pest identification, population size, distribution, recommendations for future prevention, and complete information on the treatment action.

Action Levels. Pests are virtually never eradicated. An action level is the population size which requires remedial action for human health, economic, or aesthetic reasons.

Prevention. Preventive measures must be incorporated into the existing structures and designs for new structures. Prevention is and should be the primary means of pest control in an IPM program.

Tactics Criteria. Under IPM, chemicals should be used only as a last resort, but when used, the least-toxic materials should be chosen and applied to minimize exposure to humans and all non-target organisms.

Evaluation. A regular evaluation program is essential to determine the success of the pest management strategies.

Goal B: Provide advocacy and education to the La Crosse Common Council regarding the importance of a City Sustainability Coordinator to assist with assessment of current practices and implementation of new ones.

As the City of La Crosse joins other municipalities with setting carbon neutral goals and building sustainability plans to combat climate change, a City Sustainability Coordinator is a desired asset to all departments to assist in integrating sustainability principals and goals into La Crosse's projects and programs.

Goal C: When planning new areas of landscaping and transforming existing ones, the following guidelines will be followed:

1. Retain as much of the pre-existing landscape as possible during new construction, including the soil, rocks, native vegetation, wetlands and contours. This will minimize disturbances, which can open up an area to invasive species. It can also keep costs down, as fewer new plants, soil amendments and habitat enhancements will be needed.
2. Maintain high quality soils that will hold water and supply plants with proper nutrients. During construction, leave as much existing topsoil as possible. When new soil is brought in, ensure that it is certified weed free, in order to prevent the spread of new invasive species. Using compost and other natural products for mulch and fertilizer will help enhance the soil and feed the native plants. Good quality soil will reduce the need for fertilizers.
3. Connect new landscape components with the surrounding native vegetation to create larger contiguous areas of habitat. By reducing the number of roads, parking lots and turf areas, or by placing these together, habitat quality will be enhanced.
4. Use native plants, especially trees, in riparian buffers around any stream, river or wetland. Riparian buffers help to filter pollutants before they reach water bodies and the vegetation.
5. Reduce turf to only those areas essential for recreational and other human use activities. Turf offers little habitat benefit and is not as effective as many native plants in pollution filtration, flood prevention and erosion control.
6. Identify and remove invasive plant species whenever possible. Invasive plants have a number of detrimental effects on a natural habitat.

Goal D: Effective storm water management/protection of wetlands.

1. Create natural storm water management systems and other green infrastructure such as rain gardens and swales with native grasses. These systems help to minimize downstream flooding, recharge and filter groundwater and are more cost-effective and environmentally sound than human-made systems of pipes and storage tanks.
2. Protect wetlands from disturbance and fill. Avoid placing construction projects, active recreation areas and roads or parking lots near wetlands. Natural wetlands provide many benefits to the environment that cannot easily be duplicated with man-made ones.
3. Minimize non-porous surfaces like roads, parking lots and paved trails. Consider replacing asphalt and concrete with porous pavement, mulch paths, gravel lots and native vegetation. Porous surfaces help to recharge ground water, reduce erosion, lessen flooding events and filter out pollutants. When non-porous surfaces must be used, arrange them in an area where they will not fragment habitat, make them as small of an area as possible, and keep them far away from water bodies.

Goal E: Use green building practices in new and retrofit construction projects.

Projects may include renewable lighting and HVAC sources, low flow toilets, motion-sensors on lights and recycled-content carpets, walls and ceiling panels. Solar energy shall be implemented in all new construction. Green buildings are not only economically smart, they also may be healthier for the people that live, work and spend time inside.

Specific buildings to have lighting retrofit updates by 2021 include:

1. Black River Beach Neighborhood Center
2. South Side Neighborhood Center
3. Green Island Ice Arena

Goal F: Increase accessibility to city parks, buildings and programming.

This includes but is not limited to: assessing current public transportation routes and schedules in collaboration with the La Crosse Municipal Transit Department; increasing compliance with ADA design and multi-language signage; engaging and including a diverse group of community members in planning and development of new projects.

Goal G: Partner with local organizations to highlight and increase educational offerings to the public regarding sustainable practices.

This includes but is not limited to collaborating with organizations that are currently involved in connecting people to sustainable practices via community gardens, boulevards, rain gardens, food spaces, and lawns.

Chapter 9

Parks

PARKS HISTORY

On May 15th, 1908 the La Crosse Common Council passed an ordinance creating two park districts in La Crosse. The area south of the La Crosse River was named the first district and the area north of the La Crosse River was named the second. The ordinance also provided for the establishment of the Board of Park Commissioners. The ordinance, initiated by the current Mayor at the time, Dr. Wendall A. Anderson, marked the first significant official interest in the city's few parks. The board, composed of J.M Hixon, L.F. Easton, E.L. Colman and Henry Gund, selected John Nolen, a noted landscape artist and advisor, to design a park system for the city.

A public meeting was held on November 18, 1908, to give an overview of the plans and to gain support from the citizens. Nolen's plan included the proposal of improving and creating Copeland, Levee, Grandad Bluff, and La Plume Island, which still exist today.

Despite the Board of Park Commissioners in 1908, a few parks were already established with Burns Park in 1852 and Myrick Park (then Lake Park) in 1873. Pettibone Park was also established before the 1908 ordinance, and it was donated by A.W. Pettibone. Pettibone Park was still considered part of Minnesota at that time, but boundaries were later changed where it became land within Wisconsin.

Six months after that first public meeting in November 1908, enough money was raised to start working on Nolen's plan, and it has brought us where we are today. Currently the La Crosse Parks, Recreation, & Forestry Department maintains a 1,560-acre park system, consisting of 47 park sites, 18 parks shelters/pavilions, 12 athletic fields, an 18-hole frisbee golf course, 27 miles of paved trails, and 45 miles of natural surface trails. In addition, the department also has an 1,100-acre riparian marsh and 1,312 acres of public land across the bluffs on the city's east side. All of these parks are unique to La Crosse and provide the community with a wide variety of opportunities for leisure activities.

Types of Parks

Community parks are readily accessible from arterial streets and the commuter/recreational trail system. These parks may include playfields and courts for organized sports, a playground, and facilities for day use activities including a picnic shelter, restroom, seating, and walking paths.

Neighborhood parks are centrally located within areas of residential development. These areas typically include playgrounds, open space for informal games and activities or play courts.

Amenities listed are recently completed or forecasted projects only

Community Parks

- Carroll Park 1717 MARCO DR
 - Paving of parking lots
 - Final utility work and bathrooms
- Chad Erickson Park & Vietnam Veterans Pond 3601 PARK LANE DR
- Copeland Park 1130 ROSE ST
 - Shelter rehab
- Erickson Park 2423 21ST PL S
 - Parking lot
- Grandad Bluff 3020 GRANDAD BLUFF RD
 - Improve security
- Green Island Park 2312 7 ST S
 - Tennis courts/facility (See recently completed and upcoming projects)
- Houska Park 700 HOUSKA PARK DR
 - Dog park (See recently completed projects)
 - Lighting
- Lueth Park 1200 LA CROSSE ST
 - Improve lighting
- Myrick Park 2107 LA CROSSE ST
 - Kids Coulee makeover (See upcoming projects)
 - Renovate bathroom
 - Light conversion to LED
- Pettibone Park 101 PETTIBONE DR S
- Poage Park 500 HOOD ST
- Riverside Park 100 BLOCK STATE ST
 - Levee (See upcoming projects)
 - Transient docks (See recently completed projects)
 - Replace South bathrooms
- Springbrook Park 3519 SPRINGBROOK WAY
- Trane Park 1500 CHASE ST
 - New all abilities playground (See recently completed projects)
- Weigent Park 1500 CASS ST
 - New shelter (See upcoming projects)



Neighborhood Parks

- Badger/Hickey Park 1007 PALACE ST
 - Zipline and half basketball court (see recently completed projects)
- Bluffview Park 2800 JACKSON ST
- Burns Park 702 MAIN ST
 - Playground (See recently completed projects)
 - Replace perimeter sidewalk
- Cameron Park 400 KING ST
- Civic Center Park 500 2 ST S
- Clayton E. Johnson Park 4701 33RD ST S
- Coulee Park 1201 COULEE DR
 - Update in 2026
- Crowley Park 2100 CAMPBELL RD
 - Resurface playground
- Diagonal Park 2935 23RD ST S
- Glendale Park 2600 29TH ST S
 - Update in 2024
- Goose Green Park 629 KANE ST
 - Replace ball field fence
 - Add park lighting
- Goosetown Park 1400 LA CROSSE ST
- Hass Park 3600 EASTER DR
 - Update in 2022
- Highland Park 2500 HIGHLAND ST
 - New natural playground (See recently completed projects)
- International Friendship Gardens 405 E VETERANS MEMORIAL DR
- Merry Meadows Park 4200 MEADOWLARK LN
 - Update in 2025
- Powell Park 1002 WEST AVE S
 - Basketball court (See recently completed projects)
- Pumpkin Patch Park BRICKYARD LN
- Red Cloud Park 416 POWELL ST
- Roellig Park 600 LOSEY BLVD N
- Roesler Park COUNTY ROAD MM
- Schuh Park 2225 HORTON ST
- Seminary Park 3400 E AVE S
 - Update in 2023
- Sherwood Park 3300 NOTTINGHAM ST
- South Goose Green Park 1012 ST ANDREW ST
- South Library Park 1616 FARNAM ST
- Starlite Park 2421 HENGEL CT

2022-2026

- Upper Hixon Forest 800 MILSON CT
- Verchota Park 1825 22ND ST
- Veterans Freedom Park 120 CLINTON ST
 - Recreational center (See upcoming projects)
- Wittenberg Park 2940 GEORGE S



Chapter 10

Blufflands

La Crosse Blufflands – Introduction/Purpose

The City of La Crosse - Blufflands Plan is supplemental to the department’s Strategic Plan. This plan is intended for the use of decision makers, advisory boards and the general public. This Bluffland Plan is used to identify the development of recreation opportunities, acquisition and restoration of natural areas. This plan includes sound guidelines for managing, protecting and restoring natural communities while coexisting with recreation users for the mutual benefit of the land.

La Crosse Parks, Recreation & Forestry has a unique opportunity not only to create miles of recreational trails, but also create beautiful, diverse, and healthy natural areas to attract a wide spectrum of nature enthusiasts. The bluff ecosystems, habitat, environmental quality, and recreational opportunity they provide for our human health is highly valued. Sustainable land management is a top priority that satisfies the needs of all habitat types as well as ensuring that the recreational potential for user groups is inclusive. The quality land management practices identified in this plan take our ecosystem health into high consideration when developing sustainable trails, natural areas and trailhead facilities. As La Crosse continues to develop an increasing need for recreational hiking, biking, trailhead parking, neighborhood access trails, signs and maps, a more comprehensive plan may be developed.

Vision: Protect the land through multi-resources management

Mission: The La Crosse Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department is committed to improving our wildland management by increasing partnership relations, conducting management on a landscape level, and considering the recreational abilities and needs of all user groups.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1 - Continue to Evaluate and Update Existing City Parks, Facilities, Trails, and Natural Areas to Meet Developing Growth Patterns.

Objectives:

- Project future growth patterns and recreational needs.
- Periodically conduct a survey of residents and visitors to solicit input regarding park land and recreation needs.
- Identify the needs of residents at all age levels and physical abilities.

Goal 2 - Develop Policies and Procedures for Public Use of Parks, Facilities, Trails, and Natural Areas.

Objectives

- Develop policies and procedures for the use and care of parks, trails, facilities, and natural areas.
- Annually review park ordinances and policies for parks, trails, facilities, and natural areas.

- Inventory and update park signage annually.
- Develop a plan and funding mechanism to install signage at property boundaries.

Goal 3 - Cooperate and Coordinate with Neighboring Cities, Villages, Towns, Counties, and Property Owners to Provide Recreational Activities, Education, and Preservation of Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources for the Enjoyment and Benefit of all Citizens.

Objectives:

- Provide assistance with parks and recreation planning services to neighboring communities.
- Utilize, when practical, a multi-jurisdictional approach to acquiring and developing outdoor recreation facilities, and land.
- Manage lands and resources to protect rare plant communities, threatened wildlife species, and scenic beauty.

Goal 4 - Continue to Provide and Enhance Public Access to Recreational Lands.

Objectives:

- Continue to develop an interactive mapping system showing all public lands and water access points.
- Promote awareness of existing recreation lands, facilities, and opportunities available to the public.
- Continue to meet Americans with the Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for accessibility throughout parks, programs, facilities, and recreation.

Goal 5 - Conserve Wetlands, Urban Forests, Blufflands, Rural Landscapes and Forests through Partnerships and Incentives.

Objectives:

- Encourage large-scale land conservation partnership projects.
- Manage lands and resources to protect rare plant communities, threatened wildlife species, and scenic beauty.
- Increase the number of pollinators and beneficial insect species in the city.
- Continue to plant native herbaceous species in parks and public lands.

Goal 6: Promote Outdoor Recreation as a Means of Improving Public Health.

Objectives:

- Promote activities that offer health benefits of moderate and enjoyable physical activities for all ages, such as walking, biking, nature study, etc.
- Continue the dialogue between recreation and conservation organizations, and public outdoor recreation providers and local health agencies.

Goal 7: Establish Great Parks and Community Green Spaces.

Objectives:

- Create and enhance a new generation of safe, clean, accessible, and connected parks, natural areas, and community green spaces.

- Continue to apply for funding to communities through the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program to acquire and develop local parks and greenway spaces.

Goal 8: Conduct ecological assessments and natural resource inventory of natural areas.

Objectives:

- Work with conservation organizations to conduct Ecological Assessments of City natural areas.
- Maintain an accurate database of findings.
- Work with area experts to make improvements to restore natural area.

Goal 9: Enhance funding and financial stability through alternative funding sources.

Objectives:

- Provide a robust, long-term, and stable funding framework for outdoor recreation facilities and lands in Wisconsin.
- Identify ways for all participants in outdoor recreation to contribute equitably to the development and management of recreation opportunities.

History of the La Crosse Blufflands

In 1911, landscape architect John Nolen wrote the first park plan for the City of La Crosse. In this plan, Nolen recommended the area around Grandad Bluff and Miller’s Coulee (current day Hixon Forest) as the site for the City’s largest and most beautiful park, with the goal being a park of more than 400 acres when complete. Nolen considered the site “as good an illustration of ready-made park as could be found, and except for road making, the cost of its improvement will be slight.”

A group of citizens lead by Mrs. Gideon Hixon (Ellen) purchased the north and west slope of Grandad Bluff, saving the bluff from destruction. In 1912 the land was donated to the City of La Crosse for the purpose of a park and became known as Hixon Forest. It was at this time the civic activists raised money to purchase the park and annex it into the city in an effort to prevent this portion of the City’s eastern skyline from being quarried and logged. Over time, as a result of fire suppression and conservation efforts, Hixon Forest has turned into a predominantly Oak-Hickory forest, with small remnant prairies located on some of the steeper sites.

Over the years, various trails sprang up through the forest. The first trails including the Bittersweet and Bur Oak trails follow the historical scars left behind from 60 years of quarrying. In 1976 the first trail located more commonly in Hixon Forest was the Bicentennial Trail. This was the impetus for further trail development in the forest and marsh. The River to Bluff trail was completed in 1988, making it possible to hike from the Mississippi River to the top of the bluffs without crossing a city street. This travers is still made possible today with pedestrian highway and railroad underpasses.

From 2002 to 2012 an additional ~ 1,000 acres of land was purchased through the La Crosse Bluffland Protection Program; a partnership program with Mississippi Valley Conservancy. Today these lands are protected with conservation easements for generations of enjoyment

In more recent times smaller pieces of land surrounding Hixon Forest and Grandad Bluff Park were acquired through purchase or donation to now encompass approximately 2,300 acres of public land.

Trails Overview

The City of La Crosse has a diverse trail system that includes wide paved trails to narrow singular direction trails. The same goes for the type of users of the trails. Users include, but are not limited to hikers, bikers, cross country skiers, snowshoes, dog walkers, and bird watchers. For the purpose of this plan it will be focused on natural surfaced bluffland trails.

Hixon Forest, the most highly trafficked natural area in the City of La Crosse that continues to evolve with the community and their desired needs. In 2016 the addition of a second railroad forced the alteration of the golf course and thus provided the parks with an opportunity to rework many maintenance heavy trails with modern best management practices. The most notable replacement was of the “TNT’ trail with the Rotary Vista Trail. This trail was built to accommodate more users, include scenic overlooks and traverse the land in a sustainable way that reduces erosion, maintenance needs and the ecological impact. This is a multi-use trail that allows users to traverse from the La Crosse west side to another popular trail system called Upper Hixon. Upper Hixon was developed with a partnership between the City of La Crosse and volunteer recreation organizations. Initially developed as a mountain bike optimized trails these trails are now managed as multi use and continue to be adjusted to broader user groups.

The City of La Crosse desires to develop and improve the recreational experiences available to be inclusive to all trail users. The City also recognizes the diversity of experiences that trail users seek and discloses it important to note that some properties may be better geared to certain desired experiences. For example, some trails may offer a contemplative experience while others a rigorous exercise experience. The experiences are subsequently a result of the permitted activities that vary as a result of how the properties were acquired. The City believe that obtaining trail plans for sustainable, well designed trail systems that provide user groups with an enjoyable experience takes time and planning. Quality trail designs are done best when they tackle large tracts of land from the beginning to development.

The City is dedicated to working with community experts, volunteers and organizations including Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Board of Park Commissioners, Mississippi Valley Conservancy, WisCorps, University of Wisconsin – La Crosse Recreational Management advisors, Outdoor Recreation Alliance, Friends of the Blufflands, Friends of the La Crosse River Marsh, La Crosse Bluffland Coalition, and certified trail builders as it relates to trail design and planning.

Summer Trail Inventory

Trail maps available on City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department website.

Trail Name	Location	Permitted Uses	Trail Width	Difficulty	Distance in Miles
Vista	Hixon Forest	Hike/Bike	48"	Intermediate	3.6
Bicentennial	Hixon Forest	Hike/Bike	6'-10'	Intermediate/Difficult	1.8
Birch	Hixon Forest	Hike Only	48"	Easy	1
Hickory	Hixon Forest	Hike Only	48"	Intermediate	1.5
Savanna	Hixon Forest	Hike Only	18" - 36"	Intermediate	.3
Oak Trail	Hixon Forest	Hike Only	18"-24"	Intermediate	2
Log Loop	Hixon Forest	Hike/Bike	3'-5'	Intermediate	.55
Aspen	Hixon Forest	Hike/Bike	36"-48"	Difficult	.65
Wood Duck	Golf Course/Hixon Forest	Hike/Bike	48"	Easy	1.1
Moonshine	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	18"-36"	Intermediate	.13
Hill Pig	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	18"	Difficult	.15
Vader	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	3'-5'	Difficult	.25
Still Hill	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	18"-24"	Intermediate	.32
Boulder	Upper Hixon	Hike Only	24"-36"	Intermediate	.35
Jedi	Upper Hixon	Bike (One Directional)	3'-5'	Difficult	.45
Nerfherder	Upper Hixon	Bike (One Directional)	3'-5'	Difficult	.5
boB	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	18"-36"	Difficult	.6
Mr. Hyde	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	36"	Intermediate	.6

City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Strategic Plan

2022-2026

Stinkys	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	18"-24"	Intermediate	.75
Chicanery	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	18"-36"	Difficult	1
OB1	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	36"-48"	Intermediate	1.0
Quarry	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	18"-24"	Intermediate	1.0
Prairie Loop	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	5'-8'	Easy	1.7
Twister	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	18"-5'	Easy	2.0
War Eagle	Gateway	Hike/Bike	18"-30"	Difficult	.06
Clara's Climb	Gateway	Hike Only	18"-24"	Difficult	.17
Wilder Way	Gateway	Hike/Bike	36"-48"	Easy	.34
Ni Tani	Gateway	Hike/Bike	34"-36"	Easy	.34
Xe Xete	Gateway	Hike/Bike	34"-36"	Easy	.39
1909	Gateway	Hike Only	34"-36"	Intermediate	.4
Wolfsbane	Gateway	Hike/Bike	18"-30"	Intermediate	.48
War Eagle	Gateway	Hike/Bike	18"-30"	Difficult	.76
Compass Loop North	Gateway	Hike/Bike	24"-36"	Easy	.55
Compass Loop South	Gateway	Hike/Bike	34"-36"	Easy	.34
Tramway	Gateway	Hike/Bike	34"-36"	Intermediate	.98

Winter Trails Inventory

*Summer Trails remain open throughout winter months. Additional winters uses included I table below. *Trail maps available on City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department website.*

Trail Name	Location	Permitted Uses	Trail Width	Difficulty	Distance in Miles
Skemp	Hixon Forest	Ski/Snowshoe	10'	Beginner/Intermediate	3.54
Snow Bike Trail	Hixon Forest	Snow Bike	10'	Beginner	.47

The City of La Crosse has a series of rustic natural trails located throughout the La Crosse Blufflands. These lands present opportunities for habitat and trail improvement, trail development and connectivity to neighborhoods and other municipality owned land.

Property Name	Location	Permitted Uses	Trail Width	Difficulty	Distance in Miles
Skemp	3998 Co Rd B, La Crosse, WI	Hike Only	6' - 15'	Intermediate	1.0
Mathy	N3084 Co Rd FA, La Crosse, WI	Hike/Bike	3' - 10'	Intermediate	1.55
Dobson	5784 Thistledown Dr. La Crosse, WI	Hike Only	1' - 4'	Intermediate	1.0
Hass	3909 Easter Rd, La Crosse, WI	Hike Only	2' - 4'	Intermediate	1.2
Juniper/Welch	3638 Crown Blvd, La Crosse, WI	Hike Only	2' - 4'	Intermediate	1.0

Trail Design

The City of La Crosse is committed to increase and improve the recreational experiences available to all users. The current use on existing developed public lands with trails is increasing and there is a need to expand trail improvements and development to additional lands to avoid overcrowding. Trails should be located and constructed in such a manner as to minimize maintenance and maximize access. Trails should follow natural contours where possible and respect surrounding landforms. Trail slopes should match expected user volumes and types.

As new types of recreation are developed it will be important to consider the impacts it may have on the community, trail system and users.

Special considerations for sensitive areas

Special location or construction methods may be necessary to reduce impacts and minimize disturbance in environmentally sensitive areas. Examples of visually or environmentally sensitive sites include: wetlands, highly visible hillsides, significant vegetation areas, highly erodible soils, unstable slopes, and ridgelines. Techniques, such as site-specific trail routing, erosion control measures, site specific adjustment of construction standards, and site-specific construction practices should be implemented to minimize environmental, visual or construction impacts. Each environmentally sensitive site is unique, specific trail proposals through such locations need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Trail Maintenance

The City Parks Department is committed to building and maintain only what can be maintained. Seasonal trail fees and fundraisers could be implemented to offset trail maintenance and management contracts.

Trailhead Improvements

The City desires to better accommodate the public during their visit to our natural areas. Trailhead improvements may include improving parking areas, information kiosks, restroom facilities, drinking fountains, bike repair stations and shelters to accommodate more user groups.

Identified desirable trailhead improvement and development locations

- Hixon Forest – Parking lot improvements, restroom facility and potable water
- Upper Hixon - Restroom facility, shelter and paved parking surface
- Mathy Quarry - Improved parking capacity, potable water
- Grandad Bluff Park - Improved parking areas, education signage and potable water
- Miller Bluff - Improved parking area

Natural Resource Management and Restoration of La Crosse Natural Areas Overview

The City Parks Department has a long history of preservation and restoration of natural areas. Since the largest gift of Hixon Forest, the City has acquired ~2,000 acres of property that could have been otherwise sold to developers. Some of the properties more impacted than the others from agriculture and rock quarrying, these lands pose different challenges to restore than more primitive unimpacted lands.

By increasing the biodiversity of native plant species, we will be improving the quality and bounty of the food chain for all species groups. With the threat of non-native invasive species, the necessity to increase native plant diversity is becoming progressively more prevalent. Even the untrained eye can notice the visual environmental difference between a healthy, diverse understory and one crowded with invasive. As our wildlife search for the dwindling supply of nutritious native species and our tree seedlings get outcompeted or soil, space and light our next generation could see a dramatic shift towards an impenetrable jungle of invasive monocultures. Invasive management of 2,819 acres doesn't happen overnight or even over ten years. Restoring land to its historic and geographic habitat must be strategic and calculated. Restoration practices are also unique because of the diverse ecosystems that exist within each Blufflands property. Restoration practices include but are not limited to invasive cutting, pulling, girdling and treating, deer management, tree removal, prescribed fire, and native plantings. This plan focuses on restorative efforts primarily focused on prairies because of their globally rare sensitive habitat. Though volunteer work and grants the prairies will be expanded to include restoration of the hardwood timbers encompass many of the City's public lands. Several test timber stand improvement projects are being monitored for effectiveness and feasibility.

Prairie Management

To retain and restore the prairie communities within the City Blufflands the following is recommended:

- Prairie remnants found on scattered sites throughout the forest shall be protected and restored to remain as prairie remnants. Management priority shall be placed on those remnants most threatened by succession.
- The use of fire, as well as selective cutting and tree girdling may be used in order to carry out these management objectives, as well as to enhance biodiversity, attempt to restore natural processes to the forest, and reduce potentially hazardous situations.
- Herbicides should be used sparingly, and spraying avoided in sensitive areas.

Forest Management **Review the Hixon Forest Comprehensive Management Plan for a more comprehensive understanding of the forest management recommendations provided here.*

To retain and restore the health of Hixon Forest, the following is recommended:

- The existing forest canopy of Hixon Forest shall be maintained to the extent possible.
- The management for communities such as oak woodland or savanna shall be focused upon existing edge and open areas.
- Remnant oak opening sites shall be restored to or remain as oak openings.
- The use of fire, as well as selective cutting and tree girdling may be used in order to carry out these management objectives, as well as to enhance biodiversity, attempt to restore natural processes to the forest, and reduce potentially hazardous situations.
- The former McBain Property and the old field located along the west side of CTH FA shall be managed for establishment of oak savanna or oak forest or for opportunities to allow natural succession to occur. Additional openings within the forest that consist of non-native vegetation shall be evaluated for opportunities to add to the existing closed canopy.
- The reforestation project located in the central portion of the lower forest shall continue to be evaluated as an effective restoration method.
- Oak trees are most susceptible to oak wilt in the springtime, from bud swelling until 2 to 3 weeks past full leaf development. During the period of April 15 to July 1, do not prune, cut or injure oaks. If an oak is wounded during this time, cover the wound immediately with tree wound paint.

Invasive Species Management

To retain and restore the health of Hixon Forest, the following is recommended.

- Removal of invasive native tree species (such as black locust and aspen) in selected locations such as around remnant prairies.
- The removal of invasive woody shrub species (such as buckthorn, honeysuckle) is a management priority. Efforts should focus on those areas where the invasive species have not yet become dominant in the under-story. Woody shrubs should be treated according to best management practices.
- The use of herbicides shall be allowed for the management of invasive species when fire or mechanical removal methods are ineffective. Herbicides should be biodegradable and used responsibly according to directions.

Inventory of restoration projects

Project locations will be identified with GIS parcel numbers. Use City GIS parcel locator [here](#).
Proposed new projects are identified with an *.

City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Strategic Plan

2022-2026

Parcel Number	Project type	Acres	Maintenance
17-20269-10 17-20268-50	Thompson Prairie	32	Prescribed fire every 3- 5 years
17-10679-200	Mathy Pollinator Prairie	33.5	Prescribed fire every 3-5 years. *Expand restoration westward toward Miller Bluff
17-20267-30 17-20267-10	Hixon Forest Prairies (Lookout, Zoerb & Birch)	11	Annual invasive species removal & prescribed fire every 3- 5 years
17-20267-30	Hixon Forest - Oak Savanna Restoration	5	Annual invasive species removal & prescribed fire every 3- 5 years
17-20268-220 17-20268-210 17-20268-200	Fitzpatrick Pollinator Prairie	7	Prescribed fire every 3-5 years Mowing as needed to control invasive species
17-10287-390 17-10287-200	Miller Bluff Prairie	5.8	Annual invasive species removal & prescribed fire every 3- 5 years
17-20270-50	Dobson Prairie	5	Annual invasive species removal & prescribed fire every 3-5 years
17-20264-110	Grandad Bluff Overlook	1	Annual invasive species removal & prescribed fire every 3-5 years
17-20270-40	Grandad Bluff Prairie*	<1	Invasive species removal followed by annual invasive treatment & prescribed fire every 3-5 years
17-20269-300	Skemp 2 - Oak Regeneration Project	5	Annual tree trimming, mowing and removal of deer cages and invasive species removal
17-20269-50 17-20267-140	McBain - Oak Regeneration Project	3.5	Annual tree trimming and invasive species removal
17-50325-98	Juniper Partners Prairie*	<2	Annual invasive species removal & prescribed fire every 3-5 years
17-20267-70	Log Prairie*	2	Invasive species removal followed by annual invasive treatment & prescribed fire every 3-5 years
17-20267-30	Vista Prairie*	2	Invasive species removal followed by annual invasive treatment & prescribed fire every 3-5 years
17-20267-70	Milson Prairie*	<3	Invasive species removal followed by annual invasive treatment & prescribed fire every 3-5 years

17-50310-300	Hass Pollinator Prairie*	5	Invasive species removal followed by a native planting & prescribed fire every 3-5 years
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Acquisition and Easements

The La Crosse Blufflands are iconic to the La Crosse area because not only their scenic beauty but the critical habitat and recreation resources they provide. The blufflands are highly valuable for building and housing developments, transportation, cell towers, radar facilities, and radio towers. By acquiring bluffland properties, the City can not only preserve and improve their environmental integrity; but also maintain their accessibility to citizens, tourists, and future generations. While property acquisition is preferred, easements are also valued to increase public access, trail connectivity, and reduce unauthorized use.

The recognized public values of the La Crosse Blufflands include: (1) the presence of diverse and environmentally rare natural resources, (2) the great scenic beauty of the area, (3) the rich historical value and contribution to the community's identity, (4) the economic value to local tourism and area businesses, (5) the contribution to residents' high quality of life, and (6) the contribution to the quality of recreational opportunities available to the public.

Property acquisitions are conclusively to property owner’s willingness to sell making a very short list for potential acquisition. Properties are evaluated based on habitat and recreation value, potential for development and accessibility. Recreational easement and/or conservation easement may be utilized as tools to facilitate the negotiation process and fulfill the desires of the landowner and the City.

Conclusion

The management recommendations and guidelines described in this plan should be updated annually to best guide the decision makers, advisory boards and the general public. This Bluffland Plan identifies development of recreation opportunities, acquisition and restoration of natural areas. As La Crosse continues to develop an increasing need for recreational hiking, biking, trailhead parking, neighborhood access trails, signs and maps a more comprehensive plan may be developed.

Hunting

The City of La Crosse has designated hunting areas for bow only, as well as gun and bow hunting, all possible through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant program.

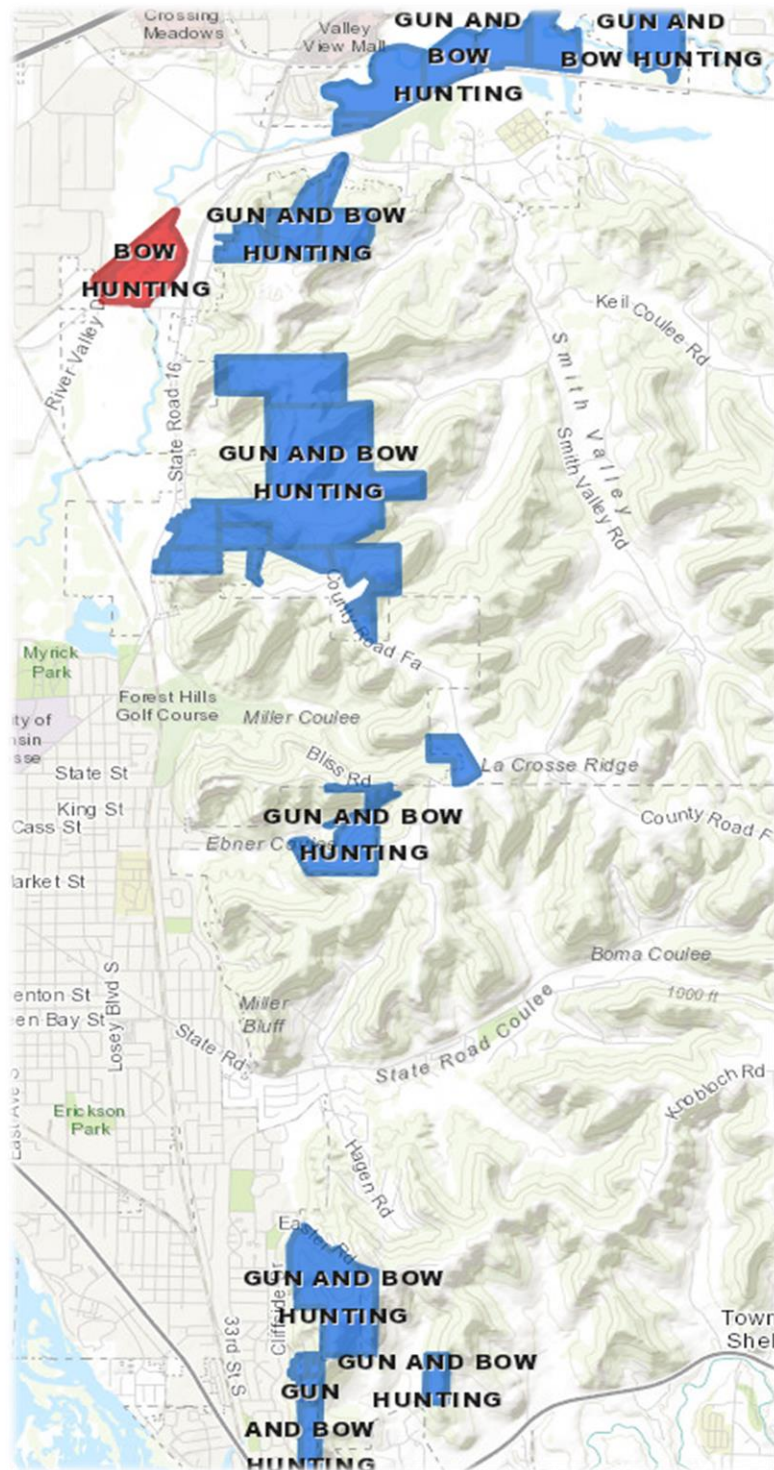
Knowles Nelson Stewardship History

Named after two former Wisconsin governors--Warren Knowles, a Republican, and Gaylord Nelson, a Democrat--the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program honors Wisconsin's historic commitment to land and water protection.

Since its inception in 1989, Republicans and Democrats across the state have championed the program because our land, water, and wildlife don't have political affiliations.

Knowles-Nelson provides funds for cities, counties, non-profit groups, and the state to purchase land, to build trails, to maintain parks and boating facilities, and to take care of our shorelines and wildlife habitats. It funds essential upkeep and maintenance of our waterways, parks, forests, and trail systems.

Hunting Map



Chapter 11

Marsh

Introduction

The La Crosse River Marsh is a 1,200-acre urban riparian wetland situated between the north and south sides of La Crosse, Wisconsin. The marsh and was home to four railroad companies, which altered the once multi-channeled La Crosse River and forcibly shaped the La Crosse River Marsh into what it is today. The La Crosse River Marsh has consistently been the target of conflicting uses because of its past history. It is the intent of the La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department to maintain the marsh for its hydraulic, ecological and recreation values. The marsh presently offers many opportunities for birding, fishing, and recreation.

The City of La Crosse through its Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department, and SmithGroup, Inc. have launched a multi-year restoration project to address hydrology, habitat, and recreational infrastructure in the marsh, assisted by the *Friends of the La Crosse River Marsh* and other stakeholders. SmithGroup will provide professional environmental services to evaluate historic and current conditions, propose design changes, prepare work plans and estimates, and manage construction.

This plan is intended for the use of decision makers, advisory boards and the general public.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1- Improve hydraulic connectivity throughout the river/marsh system and increase flood water storage.

Objectives:

- Improve connectivity of flow between the river and marsh and between different cells of the marsh.
- Provide additional flood water storage by reconnecting floodwaters with areas isolated by berms, levees, streets, and trails.
- Identify and pursue property acquisition.
- Improve water level control structures to allow periodic summer drawdowns to enhance and restore emergent vegetation.

Goal 2- Maintain a safe and high quality recreational and commuting trail system.

Objectives:

- Determine long-term viability of trails frequent to flooding or seasonal trails.
- Determine maintenance or reconstruction of trails that are frequently washed out.
- Evaluate and improve trail signage.
- Evaluate alternative trail surfacing material.

Goal 3- Improve biodiversity and native vegetation with habitat as the primary objective.

Objectives:

- Evaluate solutions to the floodplain forest.
- Address the disappearing submerged vegetation.
- Improve trail and marsh edge environments.

- Remove invasive species.

Goal 4 - Cooperate and coordinate with friend groups, neighboring cities, villages, towns, counties, and property owners to provide recreational activities, education, and preservation of natural, historic, and cultural resources for the enjoyment and benefit of all citizens.

Objectives:

- Provide assistance with park and recreation planning services to local municipalities.
- Utilize, when practical, a multi-jurisdictional approach to acquiring and developing outdoor recreation facilities and land.
- Pursue grant funding and partnerships to accomplish projects.

Trails Inventory

Trail maps available on City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department website.

Trail Name	Location	Permitted Users	Trail Width	Difficulty	Distance in Miles
Cottonwood	Marsh	Hike/Bike	10'	Easy	.55
Grand Crossing	Marsh	Hike/Bike	10'	Easy	1.0
Jim Asfoor	Marsh	Hike/Bike	10'	Easy	1.3
Vietnam Veterans	Marsh	Hike/Bike	10'	Easy	.7
Willow	Marsh	Hike/Bike	10'	Easy	.6
Wood Duck	Marsh/Hixon	Hike/Bike	6'	Easy	.8
Mitchel Red Cloud	Marsh (seasonal trail)	Hike/Bike	12"-24"	Easy	.22

Chapter 12

Forest Hills

Forest Hills Golf Course

History

Forest Hills Golf Course was established in 1900 and was originally called the Schaghticoke Country Club. In 1906, it was changed to La Crosse Country Club, where it remained through 1994. Through a referendum in 1995, the golf course became a municipal facility leased to several operators until 2009, where management was turned over to Kemper Sports. Forest Hills Golf Course is currently under the management of Kemper Sports on the behalf of the City of La Crosse.



Over the years, many changes were made to the golf course in design and layout. Most recently, the reopening of the driving range in 2020, which had been closed since 2014 due to railroad construction. The new range features 15 hitting mats, which offer the newest technology on the market with more than two inches of cushion, and is 270 yards deep, allowing players ample space to practice a variety of shots and clubs. In addition to the state-of-the-art hitting mats, the driving range allows players to hit from natural grass conditions that simulate the on-course experience.

Today, the golf course remains a valuable part of the city's outdoor recreation community as part of Hixon Forest. Forest Hills recreation is year-round as part of Hixon Forest. In the summer months, trails line the golf course, whereas in winter it becomes a popular cross-country ski location. It also provides high schools and colleges a scenic location for their cross country meets.

Upcoming Projects

- Irrigation systems replacement 2022-2025
- Rebuild of four West tennis courts
- Potential event gazebo located on the former club house site
- Drainage additions to cure problematic wet areas on the course
- Refurbishing of club house exterior
- Additional forward tee boxes to accommodate junior, senior and women golfers

Chapter 13

Aquatics

Overview

The aquatic facilities provide opportunities for youth and adult water recreation activities. The City of La Crosse owns Erickson Pool, Northside Community Pool, and Veterans Memorial Pool. Each of these pools has their own unique characteristics. From zero-depth entry to splash pads, they each offer something for the family to enjoy. Swimming pools allow for social interaction, relaxation, and stress relief, while providing an opportunity to increase safety in the community. Overall, pools are both fun and enjoyable for all.

Erickson Pool

History

Erickson Park began with the purchase of the land in 1920. This land was used for the city's first airport, Salzer Field, and was previously leased. In 1932, La Crosse decided to abandon Salzer Field for a site on French Island.

Future Projects

- Replace diving board
- Renovate bathhouse



Veterans Memorial Pool



History

Work progress administrative project built the pool in 1934. On August 1st, 1938 the pool opened to the public. The pool was closed in 2016 due to damage, the neighborhood association fundraised and the pool was rebuilt and reopened in 2019.

Future Projects

- Install security cameras on pool deck

North Side Community Pool

History

North Side Community Pool is located at 816 Sill Street on the Northside of La Crosse. This pool features a large waterslide, diving boards, and water fountains. This pool was created to be accessible with zero- depth entry.

Future Projects

- Assess the need for an additional diving board or drop slide in deep end.
- Replacement of current slide that was installed in 1999



Chapter 14

Ball Fields

Ball Fields

Ball fields provide ample space for community baseball and softball games. The fields are used daily throughout the summer months hosting the city's baseball and softball programs, as well as tournaments. The ball fields benefit multiple organizations who gather to play sports at these facilities. Features include multiple fields, restrooms, storage sheds, bleachers, concession stands, water and power.

Bluffview Ball Fields

History

In 1981, the La Crosse Youth Baseball Independent League paid for and constructed two baseball diamonds currently located in Bluffview Park at 2800 Jackson Street. In 2015, La Crosse Youth Baseball asked for and was granted permission to install batting cages in the park.



Carroll Ball Field

History

In 1969, the land was already owned by the city. Fifty bids went out for construction of the Park Department's third lighted field. In 1970, the work was completed on the field – 240' outfield fence, backstop, bleachers, parking lot and lights. This was the first ball diamond to benefit from users' fees. In 1979, 1,100 cubic yards of fill was added and the field was re-sodded with cement poured under the bleachers. In 1984, restrooms and a water fountain were added to the facility. Carroll Field is located at 1717 Marco Drive.

Copeland Softball Field

History

Copeland Softball Field is located just North of the Copeland Baseball Field within the confines of Copeland Park at the intersection of St. Cloud and Rose Streets. The field is utilized primarily by the Boys and Girls Club of La Crosse for their youth baseball and softball programs.

Copeland Baseball Field

History

Copeland Baseball Field is the city's premier baseball facility. Located within the confines of Copeland Park at 800 Copeland Park Drive on La Crosse's Northside, this facility is the home of the La Crosse Loggers Baseball Club, the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse Baseball Team, and Western Technical College Baseball Team, with additional use by area high school teams. The facility features grandstand seating with a capacity of 3,000, an artificial turf infield, and multiple concessions and beverage stands.



Erickson Ball Fields

History

The Erickson Ball Fields are the two ball fields located within Erickson Park at 2324 21st Place. These fields feature natural surfaces, lights, and limited bleacher seating. The park also features two full size batting cages, an open-air shelter, a concession stand, restrooms, and a storage area.



These fields are used daily throughout the summer months hosting the city's baseball and softball programs. This location is also the primary site for weekend tournament use because of the number of fields available at the location. The NAFA Men's Fast Pitch Softball Tournament has been held at Erickson Park for the last two years.

The long-term goal for these two fields is to mimic Copeland Baseball Field on a smaller scale, with grandstand style seating and turf infields.

Goose Green Ball Field

History

Goose Green Ball Field is located at the intersection of St. Andrew and Kane streets on the Northside of La Crosse. The ball field is used by La Crosse Boys and Girls Club for youth sports. In the summer months, the field is used for adult co-rec softball games.

Houska Ball Field

History

Houska Ball Field is located slightly south of downtown La Crosse alongside the Mississippi River. The land for Houska Park was gifted to the City of La Crosse by John Paul Lumber Company and C.L. Colman Lumber Company in December of 1909. The field features natural surfaces, lights, and limited bleacher seating. The field is home to La Crosse Parks, Recreation & Forestry youth baseball games and is also utilized for weekend youth baseball tournaments. Adult softball is played on the field throughout the spring and summer months on weeknight evenings.

Weigent Ball Field

History

Weigent Ball Field is located at the intersection of 15th and Chase Street just south of historic Cass Street.

Chapter 15

Waterways

Boat Landings

The Parks, Recreation, Forestry Department is responsible for and maintains five public boat landings/launches. Funding for maintenance and future upgrades comes from launch fees charged at electronic pay stations located at each landing. Launch fees are kept in a “boat landing” account specific to the needs of the landings. With the Mississippi and Black Rivers providing excellent recreation and fishing opportunities, the parking lots at all five facilities are full on the weekends. Several professional fishing groups hold tournaments in La Crosse and use the West Copeland Boat Landing to facilitate their events.

7th Street Landing

2300 S 7th St.

History

7th Street Boat Landing is located on the south side of the City of La Crosse at 2300 South 7th Street and is situated just off the main channel of the Mississippi River. The landing has a two-lane ramp and has 50 total parking spaces, with 20 additional gravel parking spaces. 7th Street Boat Landing has hosted multiple fishing tournaments and is a great location for smaller events. There is also a canoe/kayak sand beach launch south of the landing and a boat spray station for aquatic invasive species prevention.

East Copeland Landing

421 Clinton St.

History

East Copeland Landing is located at the intersection of Clinton and Rose Street on the Northside of La Crosse. The landing has a two-lane ramp on the south end and a four-lane ramp on the north part of the parking lot. Both landings are located on the Northside of La Crosse and are situated on the Black River. East Copeland Landings have a total of 60 parking stalls. Users have convenient access to Powerhouse Marine, specializing in marine service and sales, Kwik Trip, and local restaurants. The East Copeland Boat Landings receive ample use but are suited more as an overflow for the West Copeland Landing.

Municipal Landing

1500 Marco Dr.

History

Municipal Boat Landing is located on Isle la Plume off of Marco Drive and is situated on the main channel of the Mississippi River. The landing is a two lane boat ramp and has 35 total parking spaces. Municipal boat landing is used for Municipal Harbor boat launching and is mostly used by locals of the La Crosse area.

Veterans Freedom Park Landing

1000 Boathouse Dr.

History

Veterans Freedom Park and West Copeland Boat Landing are located on the Northside of the City of La Crosse and are situated on the Black River. The landing has a four lane launch with a total of 100 parking spaces. Veterans Freedom Park hosts over 75 fishing tournaments, including the 2012 and 2013 Bassmaster Elite Series Tournaments. Installation of an ADA compliant/handicap accessible kayak and canoe launch system was installed (see recently completed projects).

Potential Future Projects

1. Seal, coat, and stripe all parking lots.
2. Plan for and fund complete parking lot replacement at West Copeland and East Copeland.

Potential Future Pier Project

Copeland Park Pier Project

Research the possible installation of a pier system on the southwest end of Copeland Park. Positive aspects of such a pier system installation project include a possible agreement with the Logger's for transient boat slips, a permanent home for the Dragon Boat launch piers, the installation of an ADA compliant kayak/canoe launch, and possible installation of personal water craft dive-on floats and/or rental slips.

Riverside Park Transient Dock Project

(See Recently Completed Projects)

Municipal Harbor

Municipal Harbor is located at 1502 Marco Drive on Isle la Plume. This harbor features 185 boat slips and transient slips for traveling patrons.

The harbor provides a slip for the Coast Guard Auxiliary's pontoon boat.

Projects to be completed:

1. Add asphalt and curb to parking lot.

Potential Future Projects

1. Replacement of gazebo on the west side of the property green space.
2. Research the possibility of building a small campground between the dry storage area and south harbor shore line green space.
3. Research the possibility of a rentable picnic/event building on the point next to the river in the west green space.
4. Research the possibility of constructing ADA compliant fishing piers.
5. Installation of personal water craft drive-on floats.



Veterans Point Marina

Veterans Point Marina is located at 120 Clinton Street. This marina features 128 boat slips.

The marina provides a slip for the City's Police Department's runabout.

Potential Future Projects:

1. Research the possibility of dry storage area east of Dock D gangway.
2. Research, approve, and fund the possibility of surfacing the parking lots.



Beaches

Black River Beach

1433 Rose St

History

Black River Beach started as an approval from the council committee to dredge the beach and fill it with 130,000 cubic yards of dredged material in May 1946. The beach opened in June of 1947. A bathhouse was built in 1953 and replaced with the Black River Beach Neighborhood Center in 2010, a \$1.3-million-dollar multi-use facility.



Pettibone Beach

101 Pettibone Dr S

History

Pettibone Park was opened in 1901, originating in Minnesota but later becoming La Crosse property. This park is well known for the beach and view of the Mississippi River.

In 1926, a Spanish colonial style bathhouse designed by Otto Merman opened. The bathhouse was restored in 2001.



*In 2019, due to staffing limitations, the La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry eliminated lifeguards at the beach.

Chapter 16

Facilities

Facilities

Our three neighborhood centers – the South Side Neighborhood Center, Black River Beach Neighborhood Center, and Myrick Park Center – are designed to maximize flexibility and opportunities for community use during non-school hours. These spaces allow for community activities such as programs for older adults during the school year as well as programs for adults and youth at night. Many different programs are also offered at these buildings including enrichment and leisure programs for kids and seniors, family events, concerts and many more.

Black River Beach Neighborhood Center

1433 Rose St

History

The Black River Beach Neighborhood Center is located on La Crosse’s Northside at 1433 Rose Street. The Black River Beach Neighborhood Center is a new facility built in 2010 for \$1.3 million dollars and is managed by the City of La Crosse Parks and Recreation Department. The facility has a number of rooms that can be reserved for parties, gatherings, business meetings or fitness activities.



Myrick Park Center

789 Myrick Park Dr

History

The Myrick Park Center is located in the center of La Crosse at the north end of Myrick Park at 789 Myrick Park Drive. The building overlooks the Marsh and the wildlife living there. The Myrick Park Center was built in 2009 by Myrick Hixon Eco Park, INC. The building reverted back to the city in 2014 and is managed by the La Crosse Parks and Recreation Department. Modified to accommodate many different needs, the Myrick Park Center has three rooms that can be rented out for many occasions. The La Crosse Room is great for meetings, while the Marshview Room is better for larger events. Many educational and recreational programs are offered throughout the year. These range from cooking to fitness classes.



The Myrick Park Center is currently leased by WisCorps. The lease runs from November 1, 2017 to June 30, 2022. WisCorps operates, but has non-exclusive privilege use to the Myrick Park Center.

South Side Neighborhood Center

1300 6th St S

History

The South Side Neighborhood Center started as a plan to revitalize the Powell-Hood-Hamilton park neighborhood, now renamed the Powell-Poage-Hamilton Neighborhood Association. The South Side Neighborhood Center is located across from Poage Park on La Crosse’s south side. The South Side Neighborhood Center is a city building managed by the La Crosse Parks and Recreation Department. Opened in 2002, the facility is used for multiple purposes. The neighborhood center serves as a meeting facility, recreational facility, gathering place, and polling site for the community, in addition to being an important resource for the Powell-Poage-Hamilton Neighborhood Association.



Chapter 17

Forestry

Forestry

La Crosse is dedicated to the care of its urban forest and has been designated a Tree City USA since 1989. The 20,000 trees that line La Crosse's streets help to control storm water, improve air quality, reduce utilities expenses, increase property value, provide habitat for birds and other wildlife, and improve neighborhood aesthetics.

Emerald Ash Borer

Emerald ash borer (EAB) was confirmed within the City of La Crosse in 2012. The La Crosse City Council adopted a proactive, environmentally conscious Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan Resolution in December 2012. All untreated ash on public property were ordered to be removed and replaced. [Ordinance 10.04](#) governs all boulevard trees within the City of La Crosse and is in place to keep the public safe.

Highlights from 2020:

- All ash trees have been replaced, this signifies the completion of the EAB project
- Tree Inventory/Assessment project is underway (\$25,000 from WDNR Grant, \$25,000 from Community Development Block Grant)
- \$25,000 from Paul E Stry Grant planted 160 spring trees
- Responded with action to 423 documented tree maintenance requests.

Upcoming Plans and Information:

- \$25,000 Paul Stry Grant awarded in 2021 towards tree planting.
- \$25,000 DNR grant awarded in 2021 for tree assessment/planting
- Continued work with Neighborhood Associations to utilize funding for tree planting.
- CIP request has been submitted of the 2021 cycle to fund tree planting on 6th Street from Badger Street to Cass Street and on Cass Street from 8th Street to Front Street out of TID 11.
- Forestry will continue to provide boulevard tree services to residents in a timely and efficient manner.
- It is a department goal and priority to conduct a boulevard tree inventory and assessment. Staff will work to obtain grant funding to complete such projects and use this to, in turn, develop an overall urban forest management plan.





Chapter 18

Senior Programs/ Special Recreation

Special Olympics



The City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department is proud to offer a variety of leisure, educational and recreational programs for individuals with special needs in our community. Our Special Recreation program offers year-round clubs, monthly events and trips. The Special Recreation programs are for all ages and all abilities.

Special Olympics Wisconsin - La Crosse Area is a non-profit agency that provides individuals with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to participate in sports competition, develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, and experience joy while participating in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendships with their families, Special Olympics athletes, and the community. In order to be eligible for Special Olympics sports, athletes must be 8 years of age or older with an intellectual disability.

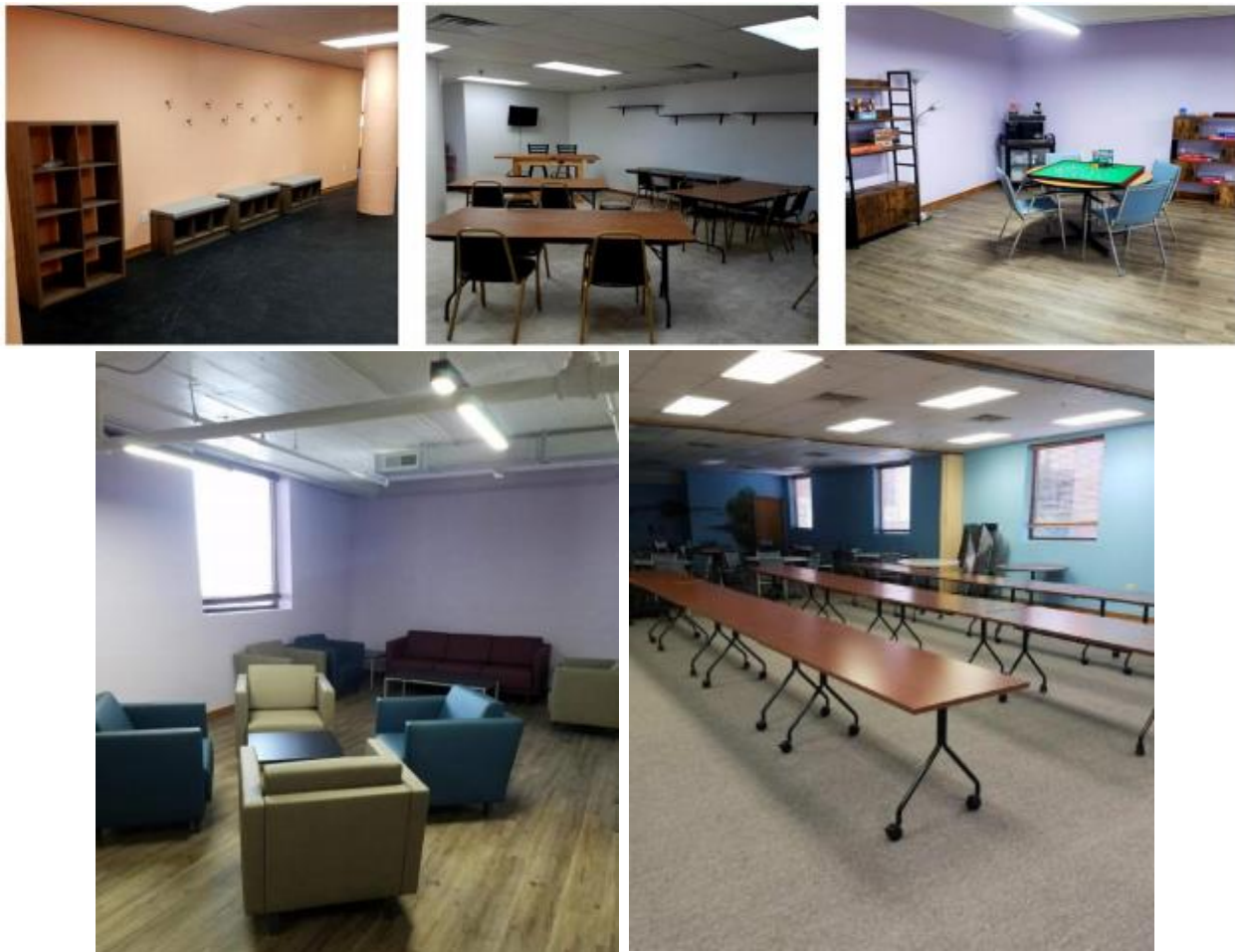
Senior Programs

The City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry is proud to offer a wide variety of senior programs and excursions. Day excursions offer seniors a hassle-free way to enjoy trips to theater shows, museums and other tours by providing transportation. Excursions are always changing to ensure there is something for everyone. While the excursions are remote experiences, the senior programming classes took place in the city at a number of facilities.

Historically, the City of La Crosse has assisted with the operation and maintenance of buildings on both the south and north side of the city for senior programming. Additionally, the County of La Crosse and several other entities have offered a plethora of programming options in alternate City of La Crosse facilities. As program needs expand with the consistent growth of senior populations and recent closure of the South Side Senior Center, these current facilities had become inadequate in serving the needs of the community. As a result of these growing needs, the City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department focused additional efforts on providing a plan to offer an active future for the seniors of our community at one central location.

The Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department partnered with the La Crosse Library and La Crosse County to better create a strategic plan addressing the future approach to La Crosse senior programming. This partnership eliminated the duplication of services and minimized current staff overlap. With expanded programming comes a needs assessment for both activities and physical space for such activities. Undoubtedly, the City of La Crosse requires additional space for the deserved expansion of these recreational opportunities. What this future facility may include has yet to be determined. It is the strong feeling of the city departments and county programs that a partnership will create a singular coalition best suited to collect input and formulate information for future decisions.

The new location at 1407 Saint Andrews Street opened in the spring of 2021. The approximately 8,000 square foot location allows for current programming, but also creates opportunities for additional senior outreach. With the ability to extend the lease, any necessary future capital campaigns will have time to fully reach funding goals.



Chapter 19

Maintenance

Plan

Introduction

The maintenance and improvement plan is the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Departments' commitment to the City of La Crosse to provide safe and beautiful recreational areas to its residents and visitors. The plan's framework addresses all maintenance labor and improvement projects over a timeframe of ten years. This allows for the department to appropriately address and budget for all labor tasks and improvement projects. The timeframe will be subjected to an amending process every two years throughout the entire ten years to meet the growing changes and demands of the park system.

The plan calls for the park system to undergo an inventory analysis of all its parks. The inventory analysis is a comprehensive study of the park's amenities. The study evaluates the current physical condition of each amenity to determine a life expectancy. The life expectancies are used to categorize improvement projects into high priority, medium priority, and low priority. The plan defines high priority as one to three years, medium priority as three to five years, and low priority as five to ten years. The priority rankings make up our ten-year timeframe for the maintenance/improvement plan.

The maintenance and improvement plan allows the department to project future costs and adequately plan a funding source from local businesses, organizations, associations, foundations, state and federal grants, and the capital improvement projects fund. The diversification of sources will allow the department to meet its funding needs and the overall goals of the plan.

Goals & Objectives

Goal 1

Provide a safe and fun atmosphere within the park system.

Objectives

1. Provide more training opportunities to the park's maintenance department.
2. Increase the frequency of routine maintenance checks of parks.
3. Continue to amend the maintenance plan every two years or as changes/updates occur.

Goal 2

Provide adequate and steady funding for all projects.

Objectives

1. Reestablish funding for park maintenance and modest improvements that meet the needs of the community.
2. Create a timeline for all future maintenance projects with an estimated cost and funding plan.
3. Diversify funding through local community foundations, state and federal grants, neighborhood associations, private businesses, and donations.
4. Strive to use sustainable technology to reduce future operational costs.

Goal 3

Build partnerships throughout the community.

Objectives

1. Continue to recruit volunteers to help maintain cleanliness in the parks and recognize them for their contributions.
2. Continue to enrich and strengthen relationships with local schools, universities, associations, organizations, and businesses to maintain a healthy park system.
3. Enhance access to information and increase communication with the public on routine maintenance tasks.

Goal 4

Strive to use sustainable practices.

Objectives

1. Proactively incorporate green strategies in all projects.
2. Continually manage, preserve, and protect natural resource areas.
3. Aspire to become a sustainable leader within the state.

Maintenance Overview

High Priority 1-3 Years			
Park	Project	Proposed Action	Reason
Burns	Lyra Sculpture	Consult Expert	Color Retention
Carroll	Restroom Foundation	Renovate	Shifting Foundation
Copeland	Oktoberfest	Renovate/Replace	Rusting & Metal Corrosion Uneven Surface
Copeland	Copeland Park	Renovate	Wear & Tear
Copeland	Water Heater	Replace	Wear & Tear
Crowley	Aluminum Fence	Replace	Requires Constant Maintenance
Crowley	Chain Link Fence	Replace	Concaved Bottom
Crowley	2 Irrigation Zones	Replace	2 Zones No Longer Function
Erickson	Ballfield Lights	Replace	Past Life Expectancy
Erickson	Water Heater	Replace	Wear & Tear
Myrick	Kids Coulee	Replace	Requires Constant Maintenance
Pettibone	Bath House	Renovate	Plaster & Cement is Chipping Away
Pettibone	Shower Fixtures	Replace	Wear & Tear
Riverside	South Restroom	Renovate/Replace	Entry Wall is Pulling Away from the Structure
Riverside	Levy Wall	Repair	Starting to Crumble & Break Loose
Riverside	Irrigation (North)	Replace	Wear & Tear
Seminary	Wooden Playset	Replace	Wear & Tear
Seminary	Wooden Benches	Replace	Wear & Tear
Starlite	Drinking Fountain	Replace	Wear & Tear
Starlite	Permanent Table	Replace	Wear & Tear
Weigent	Enclosed Shelter	Renovate/Replace	Wear & Tear
Weigent	Baseball Field Fencing	Replace	Wear & Tear
7 th Street Boat Landing	Boat Wash	Replace	Functioning Problems Inconsistent
7 th Street Boat Landing	Docks	Replace	Wear & Tear

City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Strategic Plan

2022-2026

Medium Priority 3-5 Years			
Park	Project	Proposed Action	Reason
Carroll	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Copeland	Enclosed Shelter	Replace	Sinking Foundation
Copeland	Baseball Field Fencing	Replace	Wear & Tear
Copeland (Oktoberfest)	New LED & Power	Replace	Wear & Tear
Crowley	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
East Copeland	Landing Driveway	Replace/patch	Wear & Tear
Erickson	Open Air Shelter	Replace	Wear & Tear
Erickson	Shade	Replace	Wear & Tear
Glendale	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Goose Green	Baseball Fencing	Replace	Wear & Tear
Grandad	Bathroom Railing	Replace	Footings Starting to Rust
Houska	2 Entry Signs	Replace	Wear & Tear
Houska	Drinking Fountain	Replace	Wear & Tear
Lueth	Shelter Door	Repair	Repair North Barn Door
Merry Meadows	Drinking Fountain	Replace	Wear & Tear
Myrick	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Myrick	Myrick Main Bathrooms	Renovate	Outdated Bathroom Features
Myrick	Tennis Courts	Resurface	Resurface Tennis Courts
Pettibone	Gazebo	Paint/Resurface	Wear & Tear
Pettibone	Wooden Benches	Replace	Wear & Tear
Riverside	Flag Pole	Replace	Wear & Tear
Riverside	Entry Sign	Replace	Discoloration
Riverside	North Bathroom Lights	Replace	Wear & Tear
Riverside	North Bathroom Divider	Replace	Wear & Tear
Riverside	Drinking Fountain	Replace	Wear & Tear
Sherwood	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Starlite	Wooden Playset	Replace	Wear & Tear
Weigent	Baseball Field Fencing	Replace	Wear & Tear
West Copeland	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear

City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Strategic Plan

2022-2026

Low Priority 5-10 years			
Park	Project	Proposed Action	Reason
Badger Hickey	Drinking Fountain	Replace	Wear & Tear
Black River Beach	Lifeguard Tower	Replace	Projected to Weather over 10 years
Civic Center	Water Hookup	Replace	Wear & Tear
Civic Center	New Sidewalk	Replace	Wear & Tear
Chad Erickson	Entry Sign	Replace	Projected to Wear over 10 years
Clayton E. Johnson	Basketball Hoops	Replace	Replace the Basketball Hoops
Copeland	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Copeland	Playground	Replace	Wear & Tear
Diagonal	Bench	Replace	Starting to Show Signs of Wear
Diagonal	Table	Replace	Starting to Show Signs of Wear
Erickson Ball Fields	Enclosed shelter	Paint	Wear & Tear
Forest Hills	Buildings	Paint	Wear & Tear
Glendale	Playground	Replace	Starting to Show its Age
Glendale	Basketball	Replace/Resurface	Replace Hoops/Resurface Court
Glendale	Shelter	Repaint	Repaint the Shelter
Goose Green	Entry Sign	Replace	Some Signs of Weathering
Goose Green	Playground	Replace	Wear & Tear
Grandad	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Grandad	Lookout Fencing	Replace	Starting to Rust
Houska	Playground	Replace	Wear & Tear
Lueth	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Lueth	Shelter	Paint	Projected to Fade over 10 yrs
Merry Meadows	Shelter	Renovate/Replace	Wear & Tear
Merry Meadows	Playground	Replace	Wear & Tear
Myrick	Gun Club	Paint	Projected to Fade over 10 yrs
Pettibone	Open Air Shelter	Paint	Wear & Tear
Red Cloud	Playground	Replace	Wear & Tear
Riverside	Repaint	Repaint	La Crosse Queen Area
Riverside	Lighting	Replace	Lighting in Riverside North Women's Bathroom
Roellig	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Roellig	Tables	Replace	Wear & Tear
Roellig	Flag Pole	Replace	Projected to Reach its Life
Sherwood	Playground	Replace	Starting to Show its Age
South Goose Green	Table	Replace	Minor Signs of Weathering
South Goose Green	Playground	Replace	Wear & Tear
South Side Neighborhood Center	Lighting	Replace	Old System
Starlite	Playground	Replace	Wear & Tear
Weigent	Benches	Replace	Starting to Weather
Weigent	Tables	Replace	Starting to Weather
Weigent	Entry Sign	Replace	Minor Signs of Weathering

