

# La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department

2021-2025

## 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**

    Springbrook Park.....24

    Copeland Park Walk of Fame ..... 24

    Badger Hickey Park ..... 25

    Powell Park..... 25

    Riverside Park Bandstand ..... 26

    Lueth Park..... 26

    Bluffview Park ..... 27

    Cameroon Garden..... 28

    Veterans Memorial Pool ..... 29

    Weigent Park Playground ..... 30

    La Crosse Municipal Boat Harbor Facility ..... 30

    Hoeschler Fountain ..... 31

    Carroll Park Project ..... 32

    Driving Range at Forest Hills.....33

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

**Chapter 6: Current/Future Projects ..... 39**

---

Trane All Abilities Park .....	40
Riverside Levee .....	41
Erickson Pickleball Courts .....	42
Kids Coulee.....	43
All Abilities Canoe/Kayak Launch.....	43
Veterans Point Marina Expansion.....	44
Houska Dog Park .....	44
Pettibone Park Road .....	45
Green Island .....	46
Burns Park .....	47
River Point District .....	48
Riverside Transient Dock .....	49
Weigent Park Shelter .....	49
Highland Park .....	50
Powell Basketball Court .....	51
Carroll Field Bathroom/Concessions Stand .....	51
Veterans Freedom Park Recreational Center .....	52
Grandad Bluff Trail Project .....	53
<b>Chapter 7: Park Art/ Memorials .....</b>	<b>54-59</b>
<b>Chapter 8: Sustainability .....</b>	<b>60-63</b>
<b>Chapter 9: Parks .....</b>	<b>64-68</b>
<b>Chapter 10: Blufflands .....</b>	<b>69-83</b>
<b>Chapter 11: Marsh.....</b>	<b>84-86</b>
<b>Chapter 12: Forest Hills .....</b>	<b>87-88</b>
<b>Chapter 13: Aquatics .....</b>	<b>89</b>
Erickson Pool.....	90
Veterans Memorial Pool.....	91
North Side Community Pool.....	91

---

---

<b>Chapter 14: Ball Fields</b> .....	92
Bluffview .....	93
Carroll.....	93
Copeland .....	93-94
Erickson.....	94
Goose Green.....	95
Houska.....	95
Weigent.....	95
<b>Chapter 15: Waterways</b> .....	96
Boat Landings .....	97
7 <sup>th</sup> Street.....	97
East Copeland.....	97
Municipal Landing.....	97
Veterans Freedom Park.....	98
Future Landing Projects .....	98
Municipal Harbor .....	99
Veterans Point Marina .....	100
Beaches .....	101
Black River Beach .....	101
Pettibone Beach .....	101
<b>Chapter 16: Facilities</b> .....	102
Black River Beach Neighborhood Center.....	103
Myrick Park Center.....	104
South Side Neighborhood Center .....	104
<b>Chapter 17: Forestry</b> .....	105-107
<b>Chapter 18: Senior Programs/ Special Recreation</b> .....	108-110
<b>Chapter 19: Maintenance Plan</b> .....	111-117

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Thank you to the:

#### **City Council**

Andrea Richmond  
Scott Neumeister  
Barb Janssen  
Larry Sleznikow  
Justice Weaver  
Chris Kahlow  
Gary Padesky  
Jessica Olson  
Phillip Ostrem  
Paul Medinger  
Martin Gaul-President  
Doug Happel  
Roger Christians

#### **Park Board**

Paul Medinger - President  
Roger Christians - Vice President  
Marvin Wanders-Secretary  
Robert Young  
Jim Webb  
Sandra Cleary  
Eileen Kirsch  
Todd Olson

#### **Mayor**

Tim Kabat

#### **Community Groups**

Bandshell Consortium  
County of La Crosse  
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, Bandshell Consortium, 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.

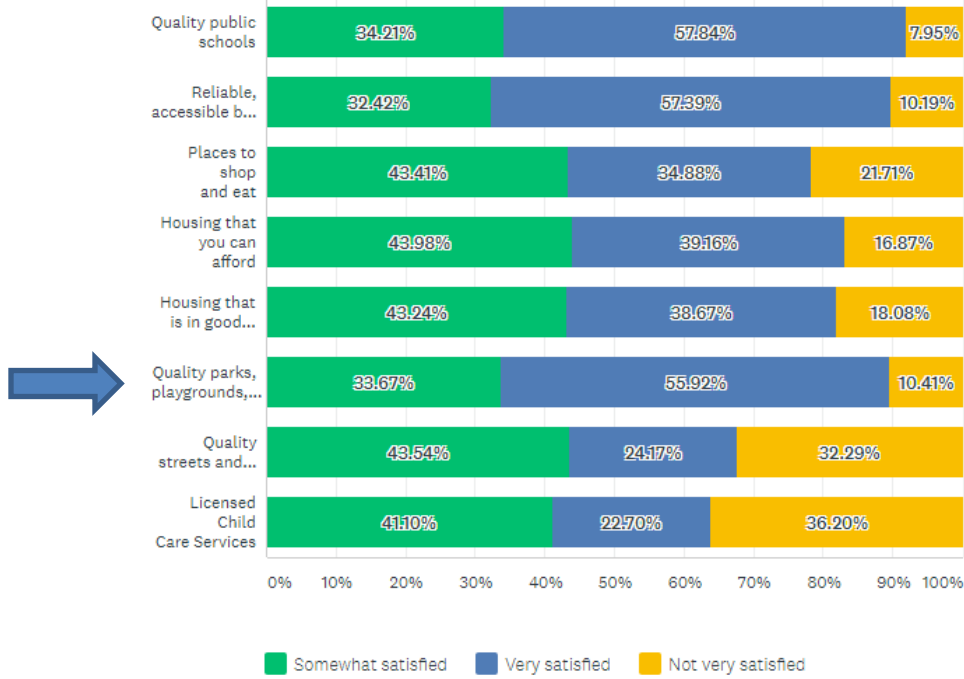
### Findings

- 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

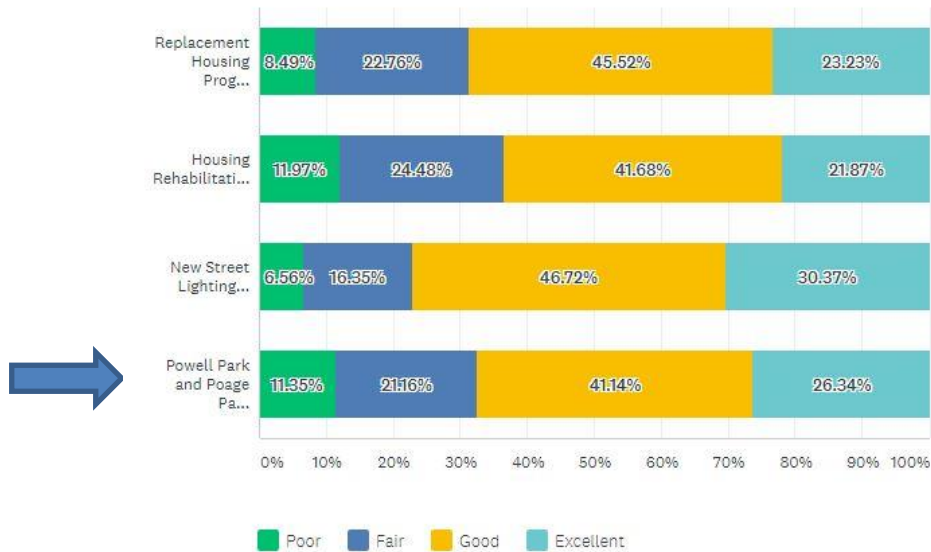
- Survey results showed that 67% of respondents thought the quality and effectiveness of the Powell Park and Poage Park renovations was either good or excellent
  - Some Comments in response to the Powell Park and Poage Park:
    - *“The Sensory Park at Powell is wonderful. Even non-sensory children enjoy this park. I'd love more park s 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.”*



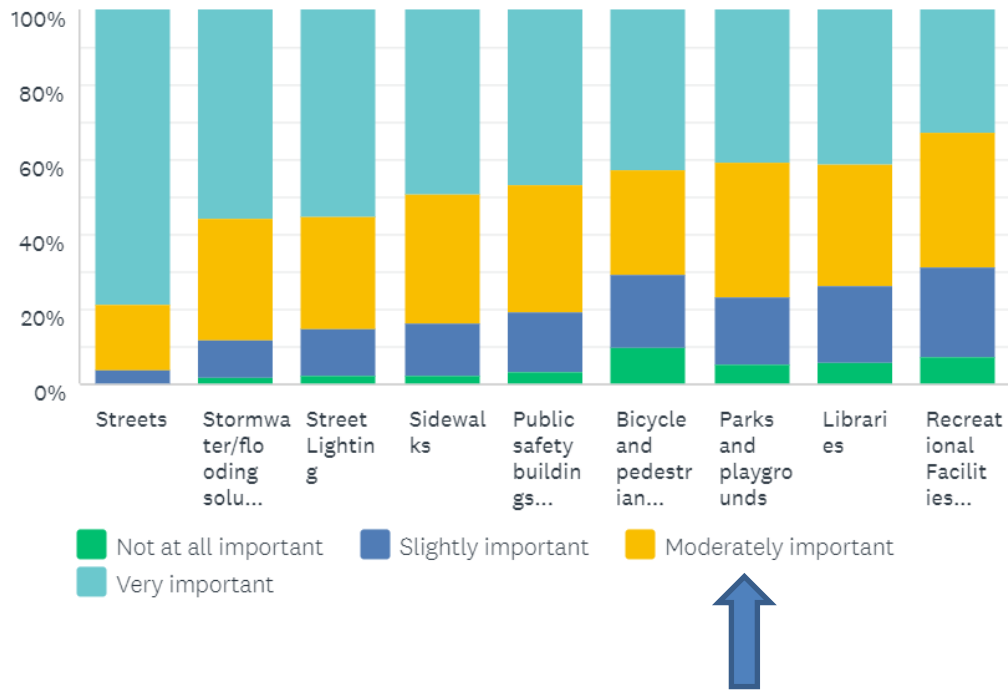
**In your neighborhood, how satisfied are you with your access to the following resources?**



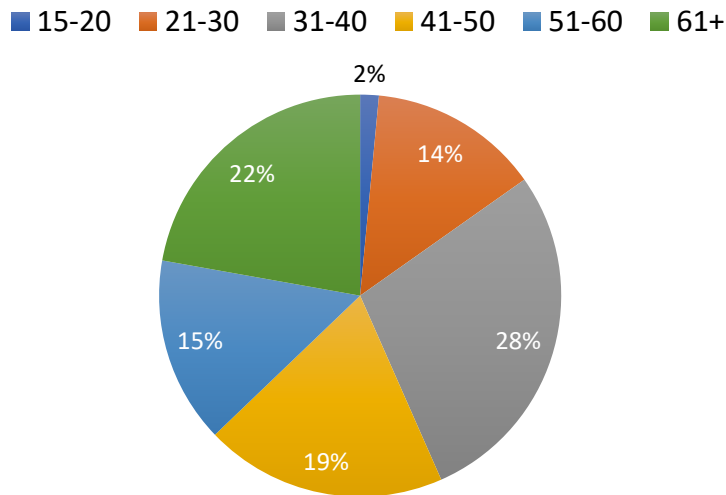
**Rate the quality and effectiveness of the following City of La Crosse programs or projects. Please skip the question or mark "Not familiar with the Program" if you haven't heard of the program or don't know enough about it.**



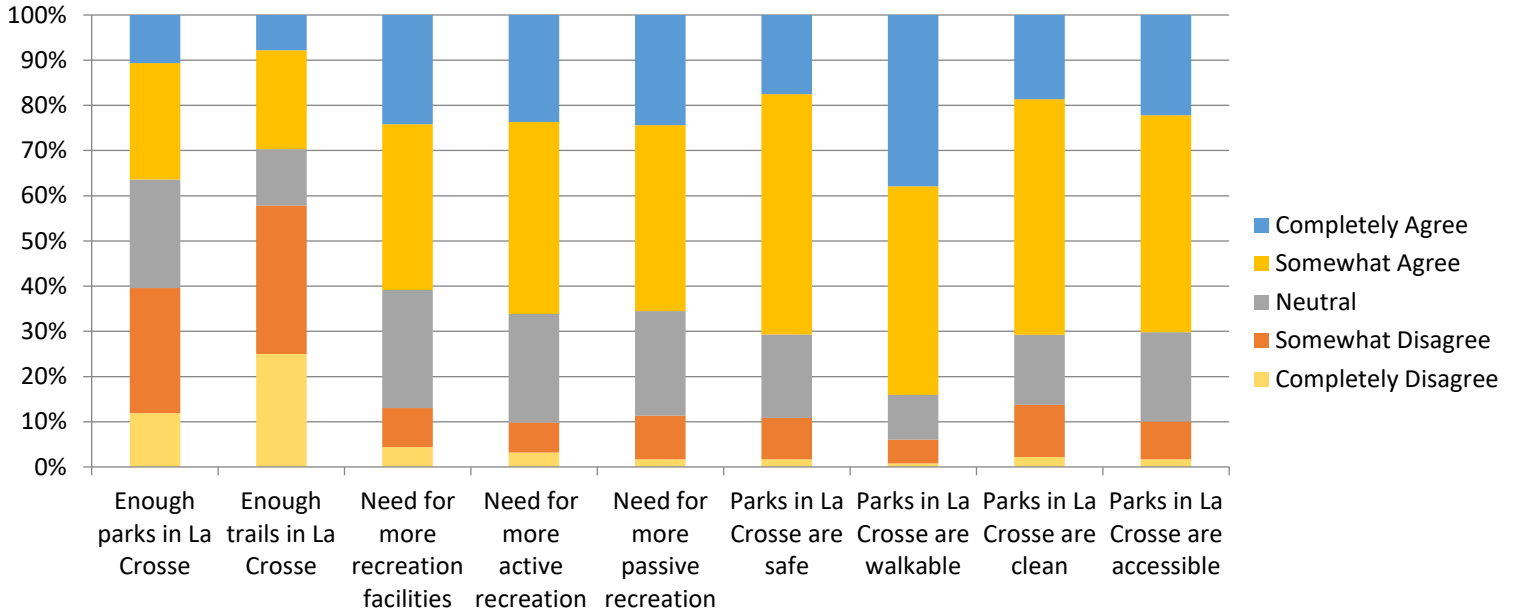
**How important are the following capital improvements?**



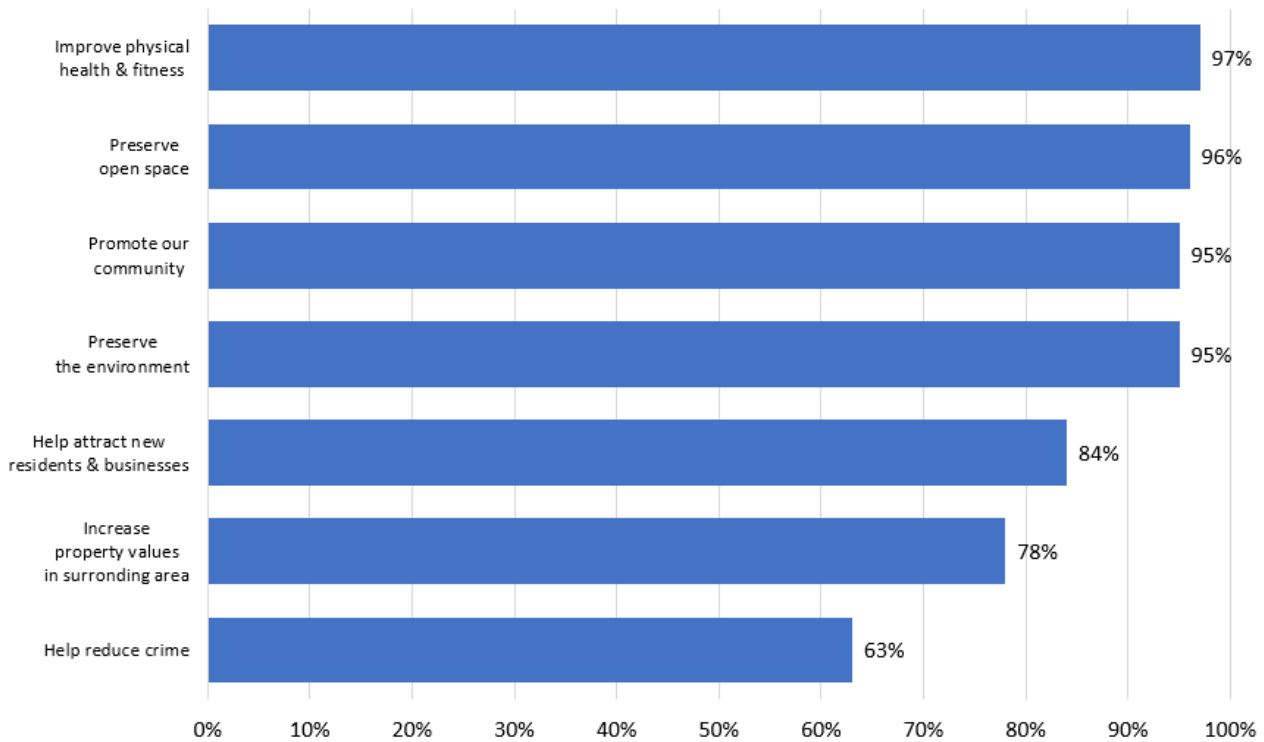
**Age of Respondents**



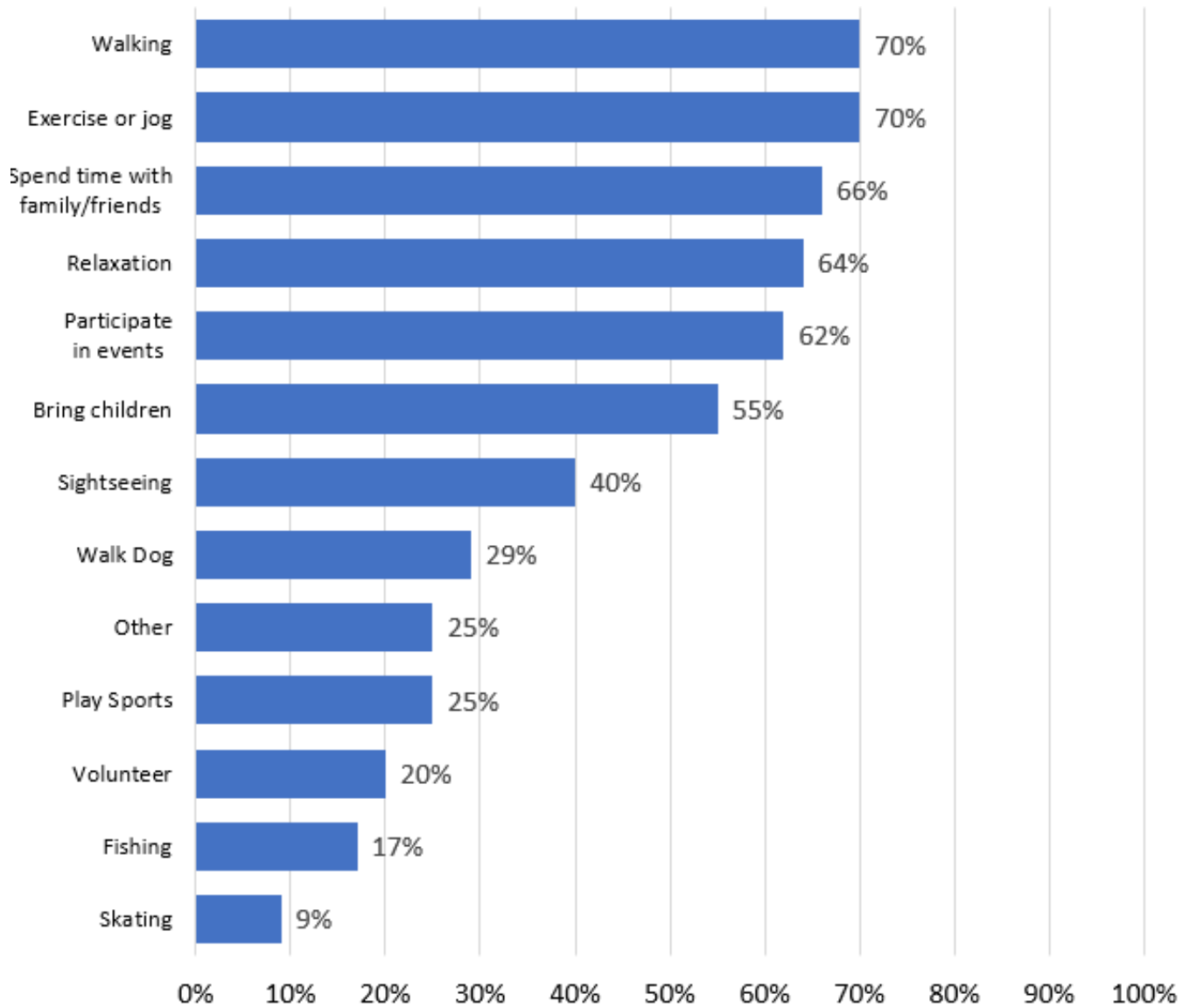
**Indication of agreement with statements about parks, trails, and recreation activities**



**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**



**Springbrook Park  
3519 Springbrook Way**

Partnership: Springbrook Clayton Johnson Neighborhood Association; Lee & Janet Allen

Springbrook Park is located on the south side of La Crosse. This 1.2-acre park has undergone significant upgrades in the last few years, all spearheaded by community members Lee & Janet Allen. In 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 the Allen’s collected donations from area businesses and residents and worked with the Parks and Recreation Department to complete the upgrades to the park.



**Springbrook Park Features Completed:**

- Open air shelter
- Horseshoe pits
- Landscaping
- Splash pad
- Playground with pour in place surfacing

**Copeland Park Walk of Fame  
1130 Copeland Park Dr**

Partnership: La Crosse Area Baseball Hall of Fame

The purpose of the La Crosse Area Baseball Hall of Fame is to recognize the significant impact that baseball has made on the La Crosse, Wisconsin area. We seek to commemorate the individuals most closely associated with baseball, its promotion, success, and positive impact on the economy, history, and quality of life in the La Crosse area. Each inductee is honored with an engraved granite plaque in the shape of home plate, which will be embedded into the sidewalk.



2021-2025

**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 replace the existing playground with a new playground for all ages. Potential equipment such as zip line, merry go round, and basketball court may be added in 2020.



**Badger Hickey Park Features Completed:**

- Playground with pour in place surfacing
- Landscaping alterations
- Improved lighting

**Powell Park  
1002 West Avenue South**

Partnership: Powell Poage Hamilton Neighborhood Association

Powell Park was established in 1909 and is located at the intersection of West Avenue and Jackson Street. The park underwent significant renovation that included removing the ball field, stadium lighting, and existing playground.



**Powell Park Features Completed:**

- New walking trail
- Playground with pour in place surfacing
- Landscaping
- Updated lighting

**Riverside Park Bandstand  
100 State Street**

Partnership: Bandshell Consortium

The Riverside Wendall B. Anderson Bandstand received a fourth renovation to its 1930 design in 2019. The bandstand was previously renovated in 1962, 1978, and most recently, 1986. The plans for the bandstand were designed to keep much of the existing look while still implementing a new stage, new benches for an audience, as well as making it accessible. It also features a shell covering the bandstand. The acoustic design of the shell reflects sound to audiences and to performers on stage. It also shelters performers from most weather and provides ambient lighting.



**Lueth Park  
1200 La Crosse Street**

Partnership: Outdoor Recreation Alliance, UW-La Crosse

Lueth Park was transformed into the region’s first skate park in 1999. While the park continued to be a resource for adventure recreation users, an upgrade was noticed as a priority by the Goosetown Neighborhood Association. Funding was allocated to the project from money the Neighborhood Association received in 2016. The project focused on expanding the bike and skate board amenities and eliminating an underutilized ball field. This project encompassed multiple partners and utilized a conglomerate of private funds. The new trail, skate park, and pump track opened in October 2018.



**Lueth Park Features Completed:**

- Skate park renovation
- Pump track construction
- Bike features & skill trail completed
- Community art wall



2021-2025

**Bluffview Park**  
**2800 Jackson Street**

Partnership: Bluffside Neighborhood Association

Bluffview Park was established in 1978 in a land swap deal with Logan High School for Swanson Field. In 1979, the tennis courts were constructed. In 1981, the La Crosse Youth Baseball Independent League paid for and constructed two baseball diamonds. Planning started in January 2018 with the Bluffside Neighborhood Association for much needed park updates. Future planning will address improvements to the south ball field and existing basketball court. Tennis court lighting was completed in 2017 with a donation from a neighbor, along with resurfacing of the tennis courts.

**Bluffview Park Features Completed:**

- Playground
- Pour in place playground surface
- Walkways
- Removal of north ball field
- Open air shelter
- Shelter lighting
- Walkway lighting
- Site restoration
- Ball field site restoration



### Cameroon Garden E Veterans Memorial Drive

Partnership: Riverside International Friendship Garden Committee

Years ago, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration developed a relationship with the Republic of Cameroon. Cameroon is a coastal country in West Central Africa. Over the years, the relationship has grown into an officially recognized “Sister City” with the city of Kumbo, Cameroon. The new Cameroon Garden is located on the west side of the Convention and Visitors’ Bureau in Riverside Park and features a variety of works of art created specifically for the garden.



**Fon Sculpture:** The FON is the traditional leader of the NSO tribe. The story of the Ngonso and the ongoing narrative that ‘the Fon never dies’ exemplifies the strong role of folklore and oral tradition of the culture. This is the original FON and also the FON of our sister city.

**Mami Wata (Mermaid):** Mami Wata is a mythical being that is common to all of Cameroon. She is a mermaid of the sea and the river and is a big part of their culture for good and bad.

**Turtle and Lizard and Soccer Ball:** Sculptural turtles and lizards are included throughout the pool area and climbing up on the walking stones. Having a turtle, lizard, and a soccer ball puts elements similar to what one would see in Cameroon into our garden in La Crosse.

**Sculptural Fireside with an Adult and Two Children:** After dinner it is common for mothers to share stories with children while sitting around the fire. They always keep three large rocks in their fire just in case they wish to cook something.

**Sculptures of Children Dancing around a Drum:** Dancing is a part of the daily culture in Cameroon. In fact, each day, the TV stations play specific dance music for an hour so children can enjoy dance time! In addition, people dance frequently to drum music.

**Entryway:** There is a stylized entryway between the Irish garden and the Cameroon garden. In Cameroon, these entryways are common structures found when entering a new space and are often made with square decorative blocks featuring symbolic animals.

**Sculpture of Sense Pass King:** Sense Pass King is a Cameroon story: A little girl is born, and she grows to have more wisdom and skill than even the king possesses by the time she is two years old – so they call her Sense Pass King. The king plots to destroy her, but she saves the king by balancing on her tiptoe on the edge of a ship and shooting an arrow at a sea monster.

**Veterans Memorial Pool  
1901 Campbell Road**

Partnership: Veterans Memorial Pool Committee

In 1938, the original Municipal Pool was built as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project. This pool was closed in early 2016 after significant repairs were required in order to reopen for the 2016 season. The pool remained closed until a new plan was developed for reconstruction. The goal of the Grandview Emerson Neighborhood Association is to fundraise \$500,000 for this project. Several original pieces of the facility were salvaged to use as memorials to honor the veterans and community members who made this project possible.

**Veterans Memorial Pool Features Completed:**

- Diving board
- Slide
- ADA ramp
- Lap lanes
- Veterans' dedication area



**Weigent Park Playground  
1500 Cass Street**

Partnership: Weigent Hogan Neighborhood Association

Weigent Park opened in 1977 on the south side of La Crosse where the old Central High resided. The Parks & Recreation Department purchased the playground directly from Gerber Leisure – Landscape Structure to avoid increasing costs of steel in 2019.



**Weigent Park Playground Features Completed:**

- New playground
- Pour in place surface

**La Crosse Municipal Boat Harbor Facility  
1502 Marco Dr**

The La Crosse Parks, Recreation, & Forestry Department has completed a bathroom/shower facility at the La Crosse Municipal Harbor.

**La Crosse Municipal Boat Harbor Facility Features Completed:**

- Four restrooms with showers
- Lobby with coin operated washer & dryer
- Landscaping
- Parking lot enhancements



**Hoeschler Fountain**  
**100 State Street, Riverside Park**

Partnership: Hoeschler Family

The first fountain was donated to the City of La Crosse by Jake Hoeschler in 1981. In 2003, the fountain was redesigned by Kurt Schroeder of HSR and the Hoeschler family decided to depict the three rivers that converge in La Crosse and, at the same time, seven rivers in the region, Jay Hoeschler said. The design included three big geysers, which rise 15 to 18 feet, representing the Mississippi, La Crosse and Black Rivers, and the smaller geysers on the perimeter represented four other regional rivers, said Hoeschler, a local real estate developer. Brass lettering in the sidewalks radiating from the fountain tells the names of the rivers. In 2016, the Hoeschler Fountain was shut down due to significant weather-related deterioration. Funding to replace the fountain became available in 2019. The fountain was completed in the summer of 2019.





**Carroll Park Project  
1601 Marco Drive**

Carroll Park was established in 1976 as a field for high school baseball, youth baseball, and adult softball. The park was named after Robert “Kootch” Carroll, who was instrumental in establishing the Stars of Tomorrow Youth Baseball Tournaments along with many years of dedicated service with the Parks Department. In 2017, the south field at Carroll Park was established, and in 2018, the north field was established. The 2019 scheduled improvements include field lights on the north and south fields, paving of all parking areas, and installation of scoreboards on the north and south fields. Ball fields with a 300’ radius meets standards for national, state, and local tournaments. Completion of this project will make the City of La Crosse more attractive to outside tournaments, bringing people into town. Clustering of fields also reduces parks maintenance and staff programming supervision.

**Carroll Park Phase 2 Features Completed:**

- Infield/outfield placement
- Fence posts
- Irrigation system
- Sod outfield
- Fence fabric
- Dugouts
- Spectator area
- Site restoration

**Carroll Park Phase 3 Features Completed:**

- Park field lighting
- Asphalt parking lots
- Scoreboards



2021-2025

**Driving Range  
Forest Hills**

Partnership: Kemper Sports Management

This is a partnership project between the City of La Crosse and Kemper Sports. Kemper Sports is the management company contracted by the city to operate Forest Hills Golf Course. The \$160,000 project is fully funded by Kemper Sports and is a requirement of the 20-year management contract recently approved by the City Council. The driving range will be an added revenue stream for the golf operations.



# **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)

**2020**

Park/Site	Project Description	Amount	SOF
Burns Park	Playground, lighting upgrade, landscape improvements, sidewalk repair	\$450,000	NBI, CBDG
Myrick Park	Architecture and engineering site plan	\$50,000	NBI
Badger/Hickey Park	Playground equipment additions and basketball court	\$100,000	NBI
Pettibone Park	Relocation of Pettibone Drive to the West and replacement of old parking lot	\$250,000	TIF, OTHER
Trails/Bluffland	Ongoing trail maintenance and development	\$200,000	NBI
Weigent Park	Design of new shelter	\$100,000	NBI
Red Cloud Park	Continue lighting upgrades	\$80,000	TIF
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,430,000</b>	

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

2021-2025

**2021**

Park/Site	Project Description	Amount	SOF
Green Island	Collaborative tennis court facility	\$300,000	TIF
Myrick Park	Fixing up of 20-year-old Kids Coulee	\$500,000	NBI
Riverside Park	Levee Phase 3-construction of docking facilities for transient boats	\$3,250,000	TIF, NBI
Copeland Park	Complete Walk of Fame and sidewalk connecting ball park to splash pad	\$350,000	TIF
Carroll Park	Paving of parking lots and final utility work	\$350,000	TIF
Trails/Bluffland	Continued development and maintenance of City Trail System	\$200,000	NBI
Weigent Park	Replacement of existing shelter	\$300,000	NBI
Riverside Park	Fish hatchery building rehab	\$500,000	NBI
Pettibone Park	Raising of S Pettibone Drive out of flood plain	\$300,000	TIF
Marsh	Hydrological reconstruction site plan	\$100,000	NBI
River Point District	Comprehensive front side park site plan	\$100,000	NBI
Crowley	Replace playground surface	\$100,000	NBI
Burns Park	Replace sidewalk around the perimeter of Burns Park	\$24,000	TIF
6 <sup>th</sup> Street	Install trees along 6 <sup>th</sup> St. from Badger St. to Cass St. and on Cass St. from 9 <sup>th</sup> St. to Front St.	\$55,000	TIF
Municipal Harbor	Add asphalt and curb to parking lot	\$70,000	TIF
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$6,459,000</b>	

**2022**

Park/Site	Project Description	Amount	SOF
Myrick Park	Fixing up of 20-year-old Kid's Coulee	\$500,00	NBI
Riverside Park	Levee Phase 3-Construction of docking facilities for transient boats	\$3,250,000	NBI
Carroll Park	Bathroom construction and project completion	\$350,000	NBI
Trails/Bluffland	Continued development and maintenance of City Trail System	\$200,000	NBI
Riverside Park	Fish hatchery building rehab	\$500,000	NBI
Erickson Park	Expansion of four more pickleball courts	\$150,000	TIF

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

2021-2025

Riverside Park	Assess current electrical grid	\$100,000	NBI
Forest Hills	Replace irrigation system	\$300,000	NBI
Marsh	Hydrological reconstruction site plan	\$100,000	NBI
Riverside Park	Replace south bathrooms	\$250,000	NBI
Glendale Park	Update to park	\$100,000	NBI
Municipal Harbor	Add asphalt and curb to parking lot	\$730,000	TIF
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$6,580,000</b>	

**2023**

Park/Side	Project Design	Amount	SOF
Trails/Bluffland	Continued development and maintenance of City Trail System	\$200,000	NBI
Forest Hills	Rebuild of four west tennis courts	\$300,000	NBI
Erickson Park	Parking lot for pool and pickleball users	\$150,000	TIF
East Copeland	Parking lot replacement	\$400,000	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
Seminary Park	Update to Seminary Park	\$100,000	NBI
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,850,000</b>	

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

2021-2025

**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
Merry Meadows Park	Update to Merry Meadow Park	\$100,000	NBI
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,800,000</b>	

**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
Hass Park	Update to Hass Park	\$100,000	NBI
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,200,000</b>	

# **Chapter 6**

# **Current/Future**

# **Projects**



**Trane All Abilities 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 will transform the existing park into a common space where children and adults can play together, regardless of their cognitive, sensory, or physical needs.

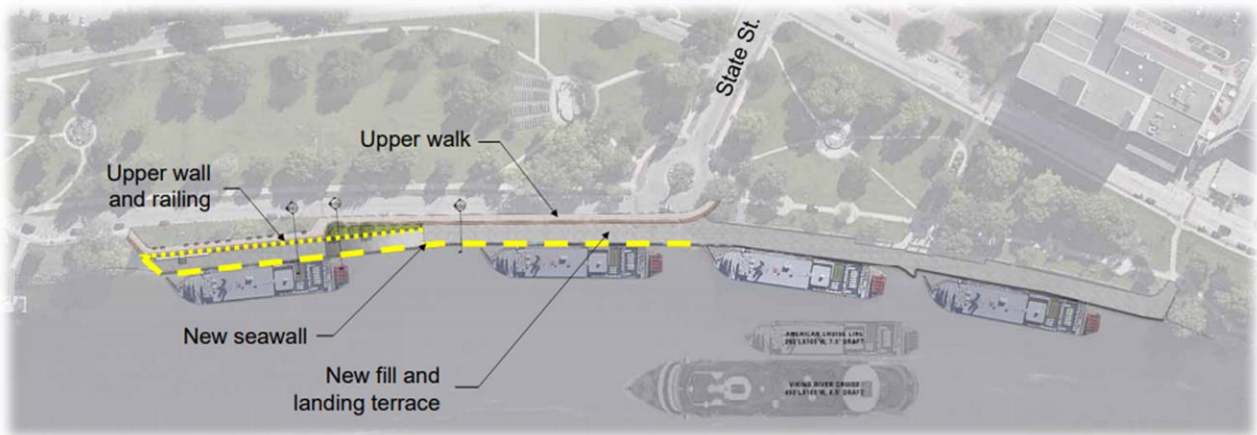
For an individual with a physical challenge, finding a park or playground that can be at least partially accommodating has become easier in recent years. However, for an individual with cognitive, sensory or other physical challenges, there remains no park in the state of Wisconsin designed to meet their specific needs. This population is not insignificant - an estimated 12,190 people over the age of five have a disability in La Crosse County. That is 12% of the population. Children and adults with special needs benefit from an enclosed play environment where they can safely explore and play with others of varied abilities. The All Abilities Trane Park Project will be designed to be fun and accessible; a community within a community that can bring together individuals of all ages – from toddlers to seniors – and all abilities to experience the simple, everyday joy of outside play. Born out of a need in the community, the park will provide an environment for those with cognitive, sensory, or physical challenges that encourages growth and socialization through play. It will not only benefit

La Crosse County, but create a valued destination for the entire region. With the All Abilities Trane Park Project, we are sending a clear message to current residents and anyone considering a move to the area – we provide an environment for those with special needs that cannot be found in any other Midwest community. In fact, with this park project, La Crosse can provide its residents with the kind of park that only exists in a handful of communities throughout the nation.



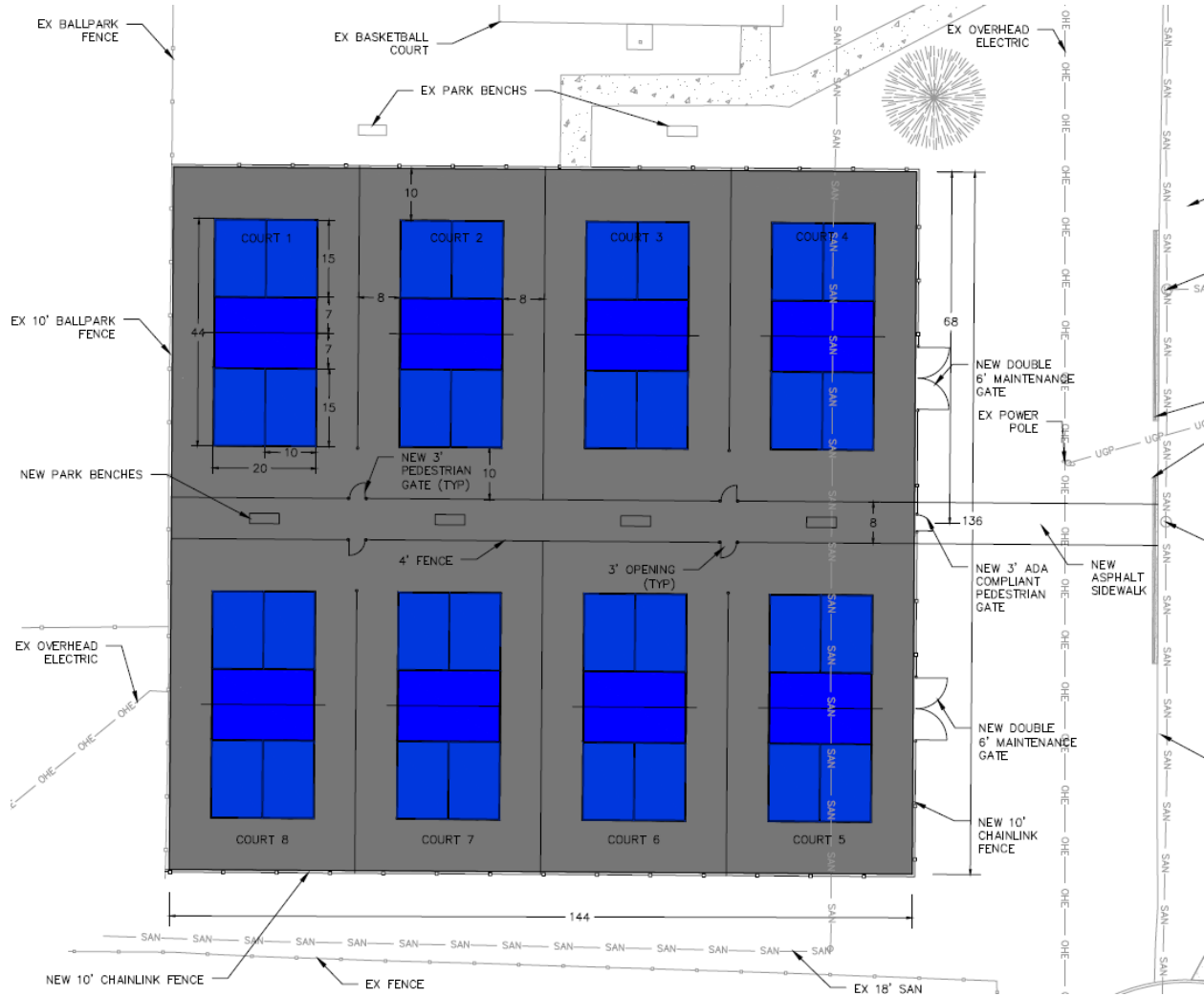
**Riverside Levee  
100 Block State St**

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 levee 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.



### Erickson Pickleball Courts

The new pickleball courts at Erickson Park will meet a great need in our community. The placement of the new eight courts will increase the amount of activity in Erickson Park. Also, development of the pickleball courts over the top of the existing tennis courts will help reduce costs with the project. Erickson Park meets all the needs of the pickleball community and will be a great resource for years to come.



2021-2025

**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. \$500,000 has been requested for construction in both 2021 and 2022.

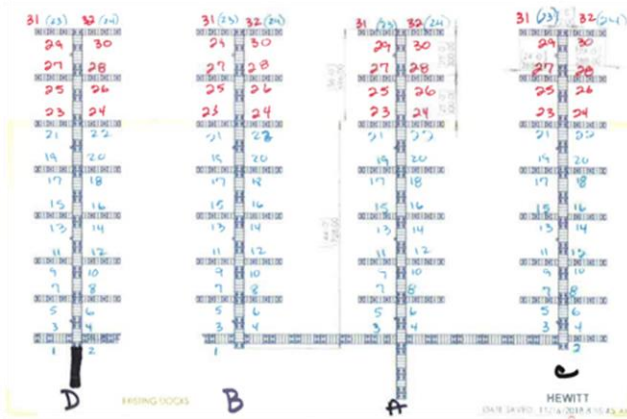


**All Abilities Canoe/Kayak Launch  
1000 Boathouse Dr**

The installation of an all abilities canoe/kayak launch at Veterans Freedom Park would include refurbishing the transient dock that the launch will be attached to with an ADA compliant walkway/gangway.



**Veterans Point Marina Expansion  
120 Clinton St**



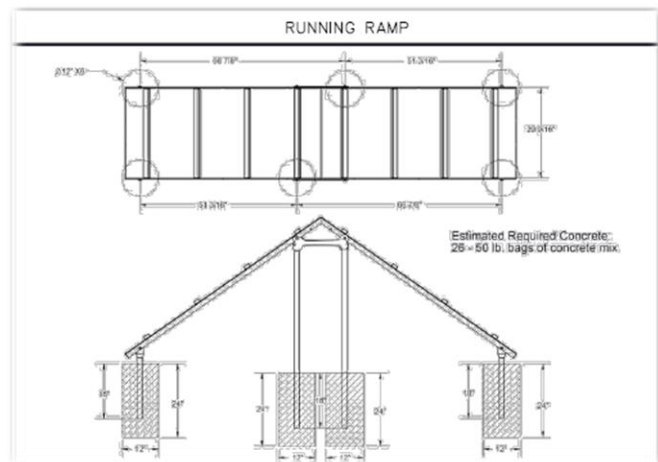
This expansion would add thirty-two 12.5' x 24' slips to the existing ninety-two slip facility. Construction and completion goal is funding dependent.

**Houska Dog Park  
700 Houska Park Dr**

Houska Dog Park has an estimated project cost of \$100,000. This would include additional lighting to the dog park along with soil remediation to the north side of the dog park. Construction is anticipated to start Spring/Summer of 2020, and the park should be open to the public in the Fall of 2020 after the new soil and grass have had time to germinate.

**Houska Dog Park Features Include:**

- Combined waste stations
- Combined hydration station
- Weaving posts
- Running ramp



**Pettibone Park Road  
301 Pettibone Drive South**

Partnership: Pettibone Association

Pettibone Park is one of La Crosse’s oldest parks. All the land on Barron Island was acquired by A.W. Pettibone for \$62,000 in 1901. In July of the same year, Mr. Pettibone deeded Barron Island to the Pettibone Park commission for \$1.00 to oversee that this land would be used as a public park. When the bath house was first constructed in 1976, it had a small parking lot to accommodate the citizens using the beach. Over time, the beach, boat club and marina users of the park have grown and the existing parking lot and road path ways no longer can meet the capacity of the users of the park. We will be moving the existing parking lot up to the entrance of the beach house and moving the road way to the west end of the existing parking lot. This will allow for increased safety of beach-goers and will also allow for larger vehicle traffic to access the southern end of Barron Island.

**Pettibone Park Features to Be Completed:**

- Relocate Pettibone Drive
- Redesign parking lot
- Connect water & sewer facilities
- Raise the road out of the flood plain



**Green Island  
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. The first location that was explored was the site at Forest Hills. After attending many neighborhood meetings, it was determined that an alternate site needed to be established. Green Island affords the community a centralized location for all things athletics. The new design of the site includes an addition to the east side of the ice arena that would house the indoor tennis courts. The placement of the outdoor courts will be on what is now the softball field and directly to the west of that will be pickleball courts. The removal of the softball field is in conjunction with the addition of the third ball field at Carroll Park. Park lighting will be included to the outdoor tennis courts as well as both the north and south parking lots to afford more security.

**Green Island Park Features to Include:**

**Phase 1:**

- 13 outdoor tennis courts

**Phase 2:**

- Lighting of seven outdoor courts

**Phase 3:**

- Six indoor courts & enclosure



**Burns Park**  
**702 Main Street**

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

Burns Park was donated by B. Farnam and Peter Burns. Before being named Burns Park it was known as Seventh Street Park, Main Street Park, and High School Park. In 1903, the City Council named Burns Park in honor of Timothy Burns, who originally owned the land. Burns was known as “the second founder of La Crosse”, as he was chairman of the first town board, chairman of the first La Crosse County Board, and the first La Crosse County judge. He was elected the third Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin in 1851 and died in office in 1853. In 1938, a flagpole was placed in the park with a marker bearing the following inscription: “To perpetuate the record of the gift of Burns Park to La Crosse by the Honorable Timothy Burns, Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin, 1851-1853.” This tablet was erected by his grandchildren in 1938. The “Lyra” Sculpture was added in the center of the park. Today the park is 1.145 acres and is a quaint open space in historic downtown La Crosse.

The surrounding neighborhood and the Downtown Neighborhood Association have shown interest in revitalizing the park, and we have made it our goal to maximize the available park space. The upgrades to this park are an essential piece of the vision of the downtown plan.





### 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. More than 800 housing units will offer all people comfortable, accessible homes. River Point District will also help strengthen the local economy with dedicated locations for offices, shops and restaurants.



**Riverside Transient Dock  
100 Block State St**

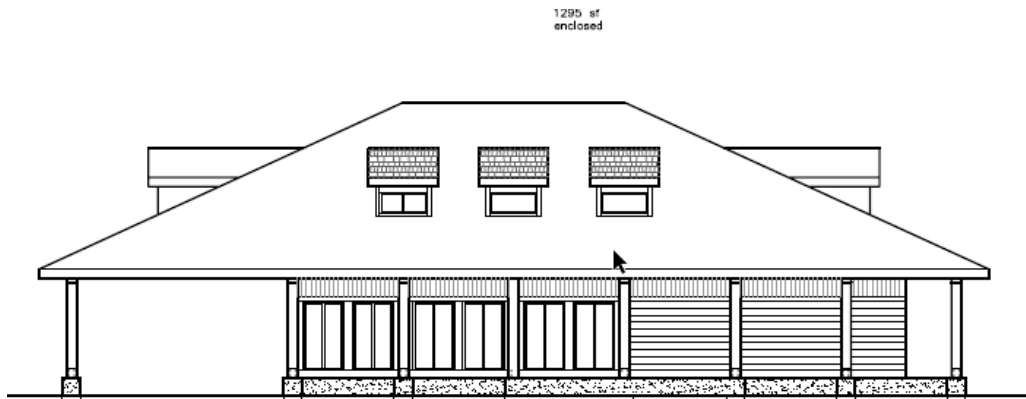
A transient pier system would be installed along the Riverside Park sea wall. Positive aspects of such a project include: transient mooring for concerts or other events in the park, transient mooring for folks visiting downtown La Crosse shops and restaurants, transient mooring site for the “Big Boats” that visit La Crosse.



**Weigent Park Shelter  
1500 Cass St**

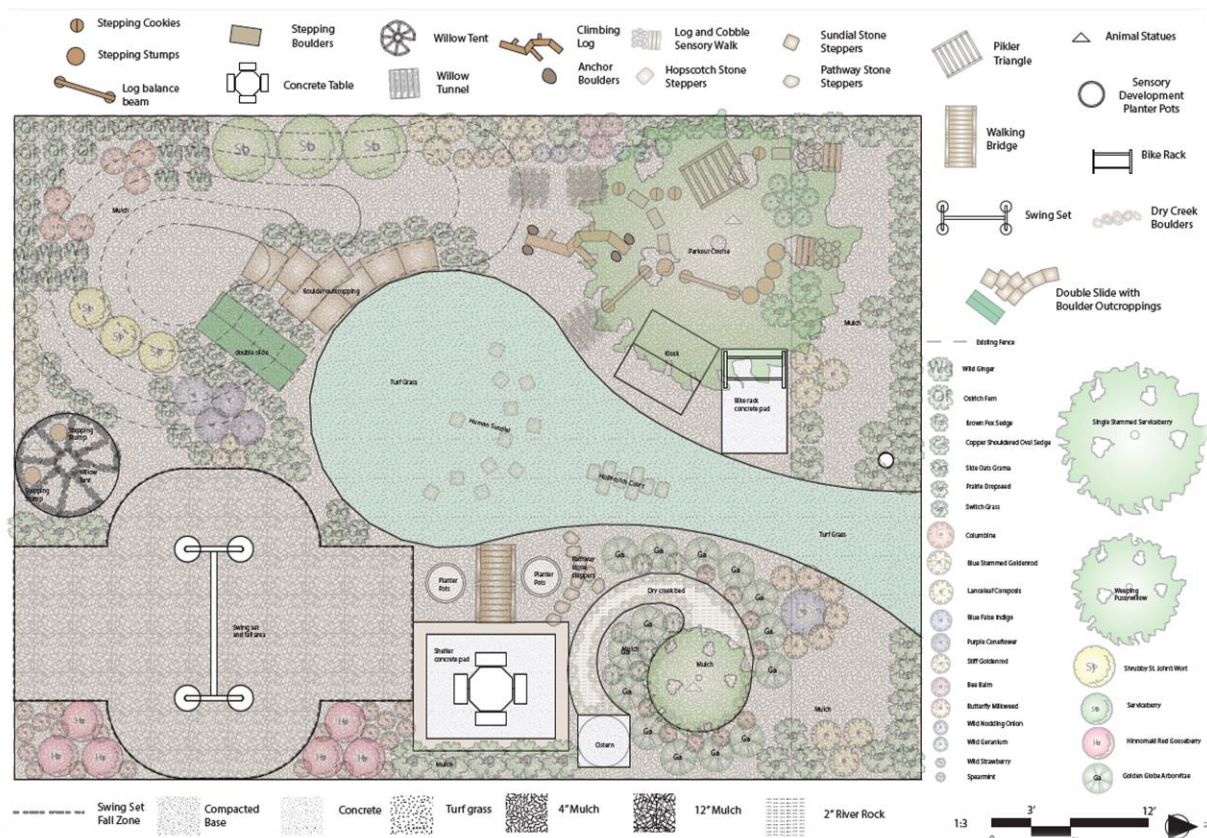
Partnership: Weigent- Hogan Neighborhood Association

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.



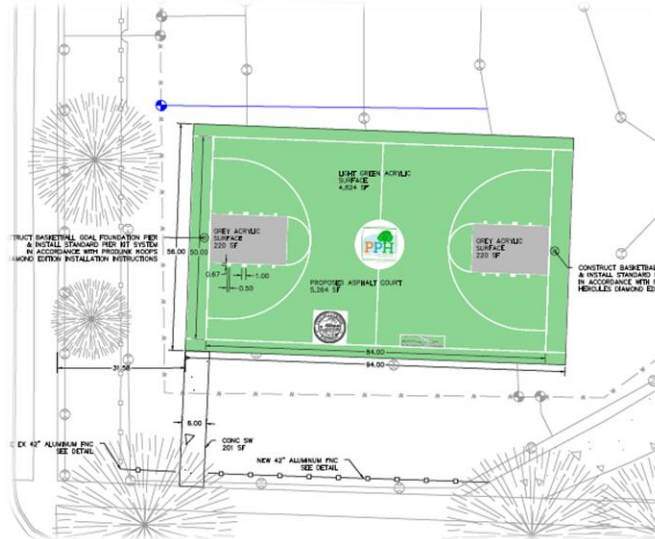
## Highland Park 2500 Highland St

Highland Park is located on the southside of La Crosse on Highland Street and 25<sup>th</sup> Street South. This small neighborhood park is located within the current boundaries of the Hintgen Neighborhood Association. 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 will now 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 such as tree logs, tree stumps, boulders, plants, drainage paths, among others instead of a traditional steel playground structure that includes slides and climbers. The construction is scheduled to be completed in 2020.



**Powell Basketball Court**  
**1002 West Ave S**

Powell Park is scheduled to have a new full court basketball court placed 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 7<sup>th</sup> and Farnam Street.



**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.

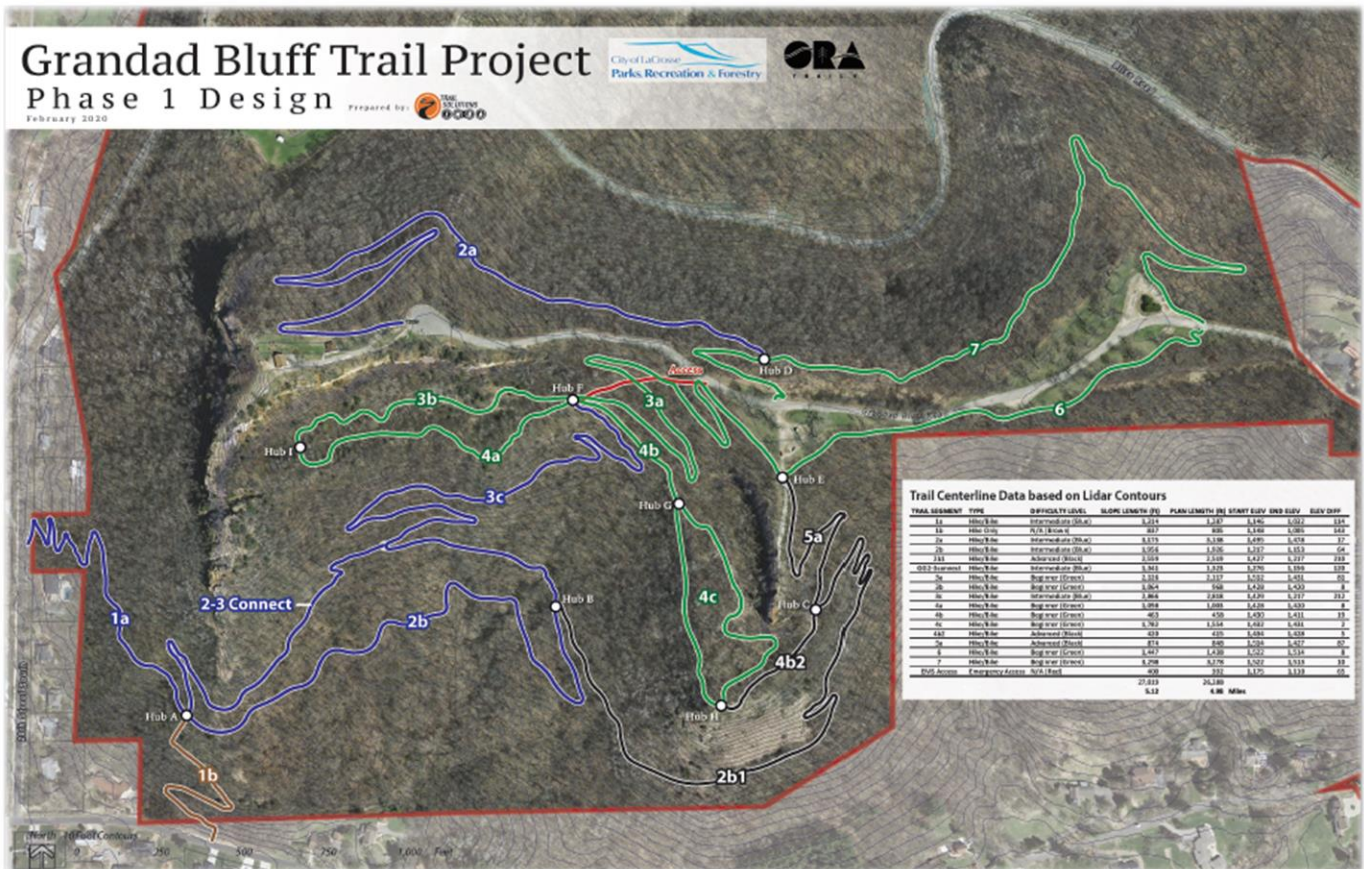
This building will primarily be used for curling. Curling is a sport for everyone regardless of age, economic situation, gender or physical condition. Dedicated curling ice will allow La Crosse Curling Club to offer high quality curling to our community in order to continue the expansion and growth of 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.



**Granddad Bluff Trail Project**

Partnership: Outdoor Recreation Alliance of the 7 Rivers Region

Granddad Bluff Trail Project is located on Granddad Bluff Park property. The area being 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 will 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. When complete, this area will provide an excellent family friendly experience. The project’s estimated scope of work includes construction of approximately 5.5 miles of shared use trail.



# **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: (2<sup>nd</sup> and Main St) Riverside Park



Locomotive: (400 Clinton St) Copeland Park





La Crosse Players: (500 2<sup>nd</sup> 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



Hiawatha: North Riverside Park



A Simpler Time: Riverside Park



Workers Monument: (2312 7<sup>th</sup> St S)  
Green Island Park



Eagle Watch Area: US HWY 53

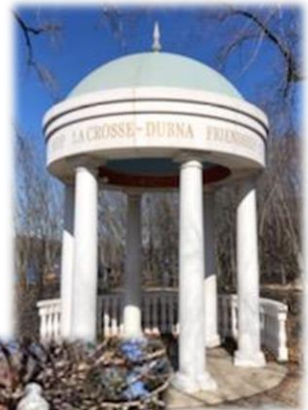


Grandad Bluff Plaque: (3020 Grandad Bluff Rd) Grandad Park



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 15<sup>th</sup>, 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
  - Field (See recently completed projects)
  - Paving of parking lots
  - Final utility work and bathrooms
- Chad Erickson Park & Vietnam Veterans Pond 3601 PARK LANE DR
- Copeland Park 1130 ROSE ST
  - Walk of Fame (See recently completed projects)
  - Shelter rehab
  - Complete Walk of Fame and sidewalk connecting ball park to splash pad
- Erickson Park 2423 21ST PL S
  - Pickleball courts (See upcoming projects)
  - Parking lot
- Grandad Bluff 3020 GRANDAD BLUFF RD
  - Improve security
  - Multi-use trails
- Green Island Park 2312 7 ST S
  - Tennis courts/facility (See upcoming projects)
  - Discussion of a partnership with River City Youth Hockey to operate the Ice Arena fall/winter 2020. This would be a 6-month lease allowing for a hockey season.
- Houska Park 700 HOUSKA PARK DR
  - Dog park (See upcoming projects)
  - Lighting
- Lueth Park 1200 LA CROSSE ST
  - Pump tracks (See recently completed projects)
  - 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
  - Road (See upcoming projects)
- Poage Park 500 HOOD ST
- Riverside Park 100 BLOCK STATE ST
  - Fountain (See recently completed projects)
  - Levee (See upcoming projects)
  - Transient docks (See upcoming projects)



2021-2025

- Bandshell (See recently completed projects)
- Replace South bathrooms
- Springbrook Park 3519 SPRINGBROOK WAY
  - New playground (See recently completed projects)
- Trane Park 1500 CHASE ST
  - New all abilities playground (See upcoming projects)
- Weigent Park 1500 CASS ST
  - New playground (See recently completed projects)
  - New shelter (See upcoming projects)

### **Neighborhood Parks**

- Badger/Hickey Park 1007 PALACE ST
    - New playground (See recently completed projects)
  - Bluffview Park 2800 JACKSON ST
    - New shelter/playground (See recently completed projects)
  - Burns Park 702 MAIN ST
    - Playground (See upcoming 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
  - Crowley Park 2100 CAMPBELL RD
    - Resurface playground
  - Diagonal Park 2935 23RD ST S
  - Glendale Park 2600 29TH ST S
    - Update in 2022
  - 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 2025
  - Highland Park 2500 HIGHLAND ST
    - New natural playground (See upcoming projects)
  - International Friendship Gardens 405 E VETERANS MEMORIAL DR
    - Cameroon Gardens (See recently completed projects)
  - Merry Meadows Park 4200 MEADOWLARK LN
    - Update in 2024
  - Powell Park 1002 WEST AVE S
    - New playground (See recently completed projects)
    - Basketball court (See upcoming projects)
-

2021-2025

- 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
- 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 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 the natural communities while coexisting with nature-based 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 diverse array of user groups. Sustainable land management is a top priority that satisfies the needs of diverse habitat types as well as ensuring that the recreational potential for user groups is all 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 could better identify the desires of the community. This plan will serve as a guide until a comprehensive plan can 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 City of La Crosse residents to solicit public 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

- Annually review park ordinances and policies for parks, trails, facilities, and natural areas.

- Develop policies and procedures for the use and care of parks, trails, facilities, and natural areas.
- Inventory and update park signage annually
- Develop a plan and funding mechanism to begin marking property boundaries.
- Develop effective messaging tools to communicate policies and procedures to park users.

**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 park and recreation planning services to local municipalities.
- Utilize, when practical, a multi-jurisdictional approach to acquiring and developing outdoor recreation facilities, and land.

**Goal 4 - Continue to provide and enhance public access to La Crosse's recreational lands and waters.**

Objectives:

- Continue to develop an interactive mapping system showing all public lands and water access points within the city limits.
- Promote awareness of the location 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, bluffslands, rural landscapes and forests through partnerships and incentives.**

Objectives:

- Encourage large-scale land conservation partnership projects.
- Continue to support the Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative for habitat conservation and protection.
- 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.
- Start a dialogue between Outdoor Recreation Alliance, Mississippi Valley Conservancy, and public outdoor recreation providers and local health agencies to identify other (non-traditional) funding sources for recreational facilities and development.

**Goal 7: Establish great urban parks and community green spaces.**



Objectives:

- Create and enhance a new generation of safe, clean, accessible, and connected great urban parks, 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 city natural areas.**

Objectives:

- Work with Mississippi Valley Conservancy 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 more 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, led by Mrs. Gideon Hixon (Ellen), purchased the northwest slope of Grandad Bluff, saving the bluff from destruction. In 1915 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 traverse is still made possible today with pedestrian highway and railroad underpasses.

In more recent times, smaller pieces of land surrounding Hixon Forest and Grandad Bluff Park were acquired through purchase or donation to now encompass 1,312 acres of public land.

From 2002 to 2012 an additional ~ 1,000 was purchased through the La Crosse Bluffland Protection Program, a partnership program with Mississippi Valley Conservancy. Today these lands are all protected with conservation easements from development and will be available for generations of enjoyment.

### **Blufflands Community Input**

Proper consultation of stakeholders is a top priority when considering management practices for bluffland properties. This plan is based off of current management plans including the 10-year Environmental Leadership Forum Plan, La Crosse County Bluffland Coalition, Hixon Forest Vegetation Inventory Plan, and Hixon Forest Management Plan. This plan will be used to guide the department until a comprehensive master plan for city owned bluffland properties can be created. The Parks Department is committed to establishing this plan and envisions community input as a very valuable asset to how the land will be managed into the future.

### **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. The purpose of this section is to focus on natural surfaced bluffland trails.

Hixon Forest is the most highly trafficked natural area in the City of La Crosse and 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 highly erosive and 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 maintenance needs and the ecological impact. This is a multi-use trail that allows users to traverse from La Crosse’s 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 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. Trail users include but are not limited to hikers, walkers, joggers, bikers, snowshoes, skiers, photographers and bird waters. The city also recognizes the diversity

of experiences that trail users seek and discloses it's 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. We 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 has a dedicated working committee of experts and volunteers that are involved in all aspects of trail planning from a variety of different organizations including the 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, certified trail builders and city staff.

**Summer Trail Inventory**

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

<b>Trail Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Permitted Users</b>	<b>Trail Width</b>	<b>Difficulty</b>	<b>Distance in Miles</b>
ABYSS	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	5'+	Difficult	.2
Aspen	Hixon Forest	Hike/Bike	36" - 48"	Difficult	.65
Bicentennial	Hixon Forest	Hike/Bike	6' - 10'	Intermediate/ Difficult	3.4
Birch	Hixon Forest	Hike Only	48"	Intermediate	1.0
BOB	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	18" - 36"	Difficult	.6
Boulder	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	24" 36"	Intermediate	.35
Chicanery	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	18" 36"	Intermediate/ Difficult	1
Hickory	Hixon Forest	Hike Only	48"	Intermediate	2.2
Hill Pig	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	18"	Difficult	.15
Jedi	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	3' - 5'	Difficult	.42

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

2021-2025

Log Loop	Hixon Forest	Hike/Bike	3' - 5'	Intermediate	.55
Miller Bluff	Hixon Forest	Hike Only	36"	Intermediate	1
Moonshine	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	18" - 36"	Intermediate	.24
Mr. Hyde	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	36"	Difficult	.6
Nerfherder	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike (One Directional)	3' - 5'	Difficult	.5
Oak	Hixon Forest	Hike Only	18" - 24"	Intermediate/ Difficult	2.1
OB1	Upper Hixon Forest	Hike/Bike	36" - 48"	Difficult	1
Prairie Loop	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	5'+	Easy	2.0
Quarry	Upper Hixon/Mathy	Hike/Bike	18" - 24"	Intermediate	2.0
Rotary Vista	Hixon Forest	Hike/Bike	48"	Intermediate	1.0
Savanna	Hixon Forest	Hike Only	36"	Intermediate	.3
Still Hill	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	18" - 24"	Intermediate	.4
Stinky's	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	18" - 24"	Intermediate	.75
Twister	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike	18"-3"	Intermediate	2.0
Vader	Upper Hixon	Hike/Bike (One Directional)	3' - 5'	Difficult	.25
Wood Duck	Marsh/ Hixon Forest	Hike/Bike	48"	Beginner	1.1

Winter Trails Inventory

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

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

2021-2025

Trail Name	Location	Permitted Users	Trail Width	Difficulty	Distance in Miles
Skemp	Hixon Forest	Ski/Snowshoe	10'	Beginner/Intermediate	3.54
Bicentennial	Hixon Forest	Ski/Snowshoe	10'	Beginner/Intermediate	1.11
Hickory	Hixon Forest	Ski/Snowshoe	10'	Intermediate	.18
Log Loop	Hixon Forest	Ski/Snowshoe	10'	Intermediate/Difficult	.53
Snow Bike Trail	Hixon Forest	Snow Bike	10'	Beginner	.47

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

Property Name	Location	Permitted Users	Trail Width	Difficulty	Distance in Miles
Skemp Lenox	3998 Co Rd B, La Crosse, WI 54601	Hike Only	6' - 15'	Intermediate	1.5
Mathy	N3084 County Rd FA, La Crosse, WI 54601	Hike Only & Hike/Bike	36" - 10'	Intermediate	2.75
Dobson	5784 Thistledown Dr, La Crosse, WI 54601	Hike Only	18" - 48"	Intermediate	1
Hass	3909 Easter Rd	Hike Only	24" - 48"	Beginner/Intermediate	1.25
Juniper Welch	3638 Crown Boulevard	Hike Only	24" - 48"	Intermediate	1

**Trail Design**

The City of La Crosse is committed to increasing and improving the recreational experiences available to trail users. The current use on existing developed public lands with trails is

increasing and there is a need to expand trails to additional lands to avoid overcrowding and provide positive user experiences. 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.

Bluffland trails are designed with the best management practices described in the following accredited guides. 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. For example, trails crossing steep sites should flow with the landform. Drainage features, such as water bars, should be constructed where appropriate to reduce erosion. Trail slopes should match expected user volumes and types.

**Properties identified for new and improved trail development:**

Grandad Bluff Park - 160 acres - Hike/Bike Trail System

Miller Bluff – 95 acres - Hike Only Trail System

Mathy Quarry (N3084 County Rd FA, La Crosse, WI 54601) – 453 acres - Hike Only and Hike/Bike Trail System

Hass Tract (3909 Easter Rd) 119.74 -140 acres - Hike Only Trail System

Dobson Tract (5784 Thistledown Dr, La Crosse, WI 54601) – 53.53 acres - Hike/Bike Trail System

**Trailhead Improvements and Development**

The city desires to better accommodate the public during their visit to our natural areas. Trailhead improvements include enhancing parking areas, information kiosks, trash and recycling receptacles, restroom facilities, drinking fountains, and bike repair stations and shelters. Each of these enhancements would improve user experiences and accommodate more user groups.

**Desirable trailhead improvement and development locations:**

Hixon Forest - restroom facility and potable water

Upper Hixon - restroom facility and potable water

Mathy Quarry - improved parking capacity, potable water, trash/recycling receptacles

Grandad Bluff Park - improved parking areas, information kiosks, trash/recycling receptacles

Rim of the City Rd - improved parking area

Hass Tract - improved parking area and potable water

Dobson Tract - improved parking area and potable water

**Natural Resource Management and Restoration of La Crosse Natural Areas Overview**

The Parks Department has a long history of preservation and restoration of natural areas. Since the largest gift of Hixon Forest, the city has acquired 862 acres of property that could have been otherwise sold to developers. Some of the properties are more impacted than others from agriculture and rock quarrying, so these lands pose different challenges to restore than more primitive, unimpacted lands.

By increasing the biodiversity of our 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 for soil, space and light, our next generation could see a dramatic shift towards an impenetrable jungle of invasive monocultures. Invasive management doesn't happen overnight or even over ten years. Restoring land to its historic and geographic habitat must be strategic and calculated. Taking on too much at any time could result in the irradiation of habitat for sensitive species. 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, maintenance, prescribed fire, and native plantings. This plan focuses on restorative efforts primarily focused on prairies because of their globally rare sensitive habitat. Through volunteer work and grants, the prairies will be expanded to include restoration of the hardwood timbers and encompass the majority of public lands. Several test timber stand improvement projects are being monitored for effectiveness and feasibility. The Hixon Forest Management Plan addresses the recommended restorative practices to be implemented for the future of the Hixon Forest hardwoods.

*Goal: Foster management of natural resources first, protecting significant natural areas, restoring natural habitats, providing opportunities for education as well as low impact recreation, and promoting the overall health of the forest.*

### **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 to 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. Fragmentation of the interior forest canopy shall be discouraged.

- Those stands noted in the Ecological Assessment of Hixon Forest as being suitable for old growth shall be managed for old growth forest conditions. This includes, but is not limited to Stands 8, 23, and 29.
- The management for intolerant communities (such as oak woodland or savanna) shall be focused upon existing edge and open areas, excluding native prairie remnants. This includes, but is not limited to Stands 12, 15-18, 20-22, and portions of 23, 24, and 29.
- 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.
- Commercial logging of native tree species shall be prohibited except in the case of salvage operations.
- 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 promoted and evaluated.
- Oak trees are most susceptible to overland spread in the springtime, from bud swelling until two to three 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 exotic tree species (such as black locust and aspen).
- 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.
- 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 in the smallest doses possible to still be effective.

### **Inventory of restoration projects**

- Project locations will be identified with GIS parcel numbers. Use the La Crosse County GIS parcel locator.
- New projects are identified with an \*.



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

2021-2025

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	Prescriber fire every 3-5 years. *Expand restoration westward toward Miller Bluff
17-20267-30 & 17-20267-10	Hixon Forest goat 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
17-10287-390 & 17-10287-200	Miller Bluff Prairie	5.8	Prescribed fire every 3 - 5 years
17-20270-50	Dobson Prairie	5	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 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	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

**Acquisition and Easements**

The La Crosse Blufflands are iconic to the La Crosse area not only because of their scenic beauty but also 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, we can not only preserve and improve their environmental integrity, but we can also maintain their accessibility to our 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 conclusive 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 in addition to the criteria listed below. As new properties become available, a discussion will be entertained with the Environmental Leadership Forum prior to the acquisition of new lands. Additionally, 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 are 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 better identify the desires of the community. This plan will serve as a guide until a comprehensive plan can 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 Knowles-Nelson Stewardship.

## **Knowles Nelson Stewardship History**

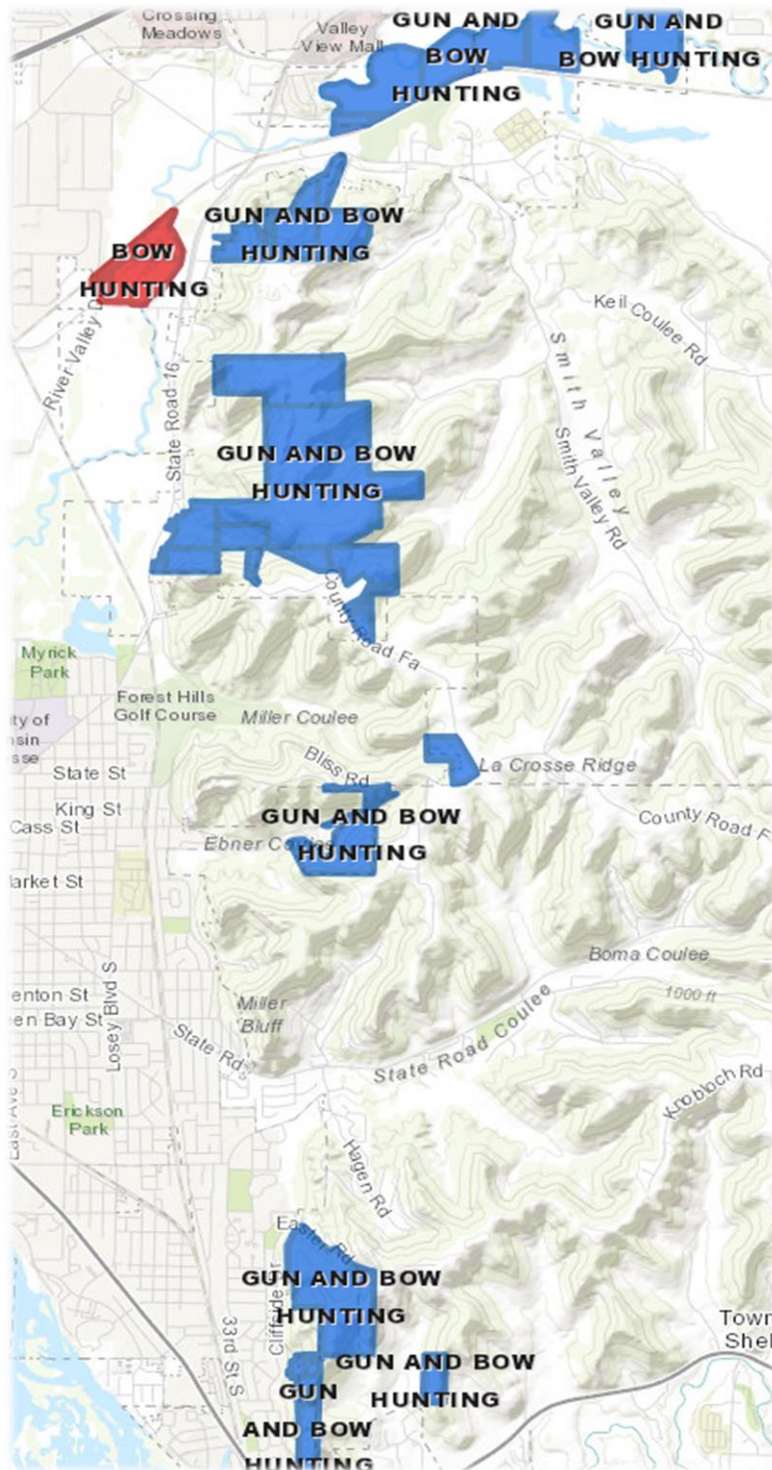
Named after two former Wisconsin governors--Warren Knowles, a Republican, and Gaylord Nelson, a Democrat--the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program honors Wisconsin's historic commitment to land and water protection.

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.

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program is what makes land and water conservation in Wisconsin possible. Knowles-Nelson works behind the scenes to make it possible for Mississippi Valley Conservancy and other conservation organizations and the DNR to purchase land, to build trails, to maintain parks and boating facilities, and to take care of our shorelines and wildlife habitats.

Knowles-Nelson provides funds for cities, counties, non-profit groups, and the state to purchase land for conservation. It funds essential upkeep and maintenance of our waterways, parks, forests, and trail systems. Local governments and citizen conservation organizations also receive funds to purchase land for conservation. Knowles-Nelson has funded projects in every single county in Wisconsin. (<https://www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/Renew-Knowles-Nelson>)

**Hunting Map**



# Chapter 11

# Marsh

### **Introduction**

The La Crosse River Marsh is a 1,077-acre urban riparian wetland situated between the north and south sides of La Crosse, Wisconsin 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 was also once home to a variety of infrastructure including a golf course, race track, music pavilion, and gun club. The 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. In cooperation with the Friends of the Marsh non-profit organization, the Parks Department is exploring funding opportunities to work with a professional environmental consulting firm to explore better management and maintenance practices for the marsh as it relates to hydrology, ecology and recreational opportunities.

This is a 5-year plan supplemental to the department's Strategic Plan. This plan is intended for the use of decision makers, advisory boards and the general public.

### **Goals/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
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

# **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 2016 addition of an underpass to bypass the railroad tracks and a redesign of several golf holes was implemented.

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

- Driving range (see 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 1<sup>st</sup>, 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

- Purchase and install shade structures
- 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.



# **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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 kiosks 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.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Street Landing**

2300 S 7<sup>th</sup> St.

#### **History**

7<sup>th</sup> Street Boat Landing is located on the south side of the City of La Crosse at 2300 South 7<sup>th</sup> 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. 7<sup>th</sup> Street Boat Landing has hosted multiple fishing tournaments and is a great location for smaller events. There is also a canoe/kayak 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 two-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 one 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.

#### **Potential Future Projects**

1. Repair 7<sup>th</sup> Street boat launch apron.
2. Grind and patch potholes at East Copeland parking lot.
3. Re-skin West Copeland mooring dock and install ADA compliant gangway.
4. Seal, coat, and stripe all parking lots.
5. Procure and find a permanent site for the Dragon Boat launch piers.
6. Plan for and fund complete parking lot replacement at West Copeland and East Copeland.
7. Installation of ADA compliant/handicap accessible kayak & canoe launch pier system at the Veterans Freedom Park Landing. (See upcoming projects)

#### **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 upcoming projects)

## **Municipal Harbor**

Municipal Harbor is located at 1502 Marco Drive on Isle la Plume. This harbor features 185 boat slips, a gas pump, restrooms, and convenience store.

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

### **Projects to be completed:**

1. Finish the water system installation.
2. Installation of camera security system.
3. Complete grading of east parking lot.
4. 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 dive-on floats.



### **Veterans Point Marina**

Veterans Point Marina is located at 120 Clinton Street. This marina features 94 boat slips.

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

#### **Potential Future Projects:**

1. Addition of 32 wide slips. Application to the DNR for pier permit was submitted in January 2019.
2. Research the possibility of dry storage area east of Dock D gangway.
3. 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 eliminate 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 2019:

- Removed and stumped all remaining non-treated boulevard ash trees.
- Removed and stumped 116 hazardous ash trees that were no longer being treated or had failed treatments.
- 318 treated boulevard ash trees remain. They will be assessed annually to ensure they have not reached a hazardous level.
- Responded with action to 428 documented tree maintenance requests.
- 544 trees planted through multiple funding sources (Hintgen Neighborhood, GENA Neighborhood, TID 14, Mayor's Operating Budget, EAB Carryover Funds).



### Upcoming Plans and Information:

- 788 ash replacements still to be replanted.
- \$25,000 Paul Stry Grant awarded in 2020 towards tree 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 6<sup>th</sup> Street from Badger Street to Cass Street and on Cass Street from 8<sup>th</sup> 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 take place in the city at a number of facilities. The future of those facilities has changed drastically in the past year.

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 have 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 is focusing additional efforts on providing a plan to offer an active future for the seniors of our community.

The Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department has 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 will eliminate duplication of services and minimize 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 for these senior programs will be held at 1407 Saint Andrews Street. The approximately 8,000 square foot location will not only allow for current programming, but also create opportunities for additional senior outreach. While this partnership matures, other location possibilities will have the necessary time to be thoroughly vetted. 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
Black River Beach	Restroom Doors	Replace	Rusting & Metal corrosion
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
Copeland	Women's Bathroom Door	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
Highland	Playground	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	Eagle Statue	Consult Expert	Holes at the Base of the Statue
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 <sup>th</sup> Street Boat Landing	Boat Wash	Replace	Functioning Problems Inconsistent
7 <sup>th</sup> Street Boat Landing	Docks	Replace	Wear & Tear

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

2021-2025

Medium Priority 3-5 Years			
Park	Project	Proposed Action	Reason
Badger Hickey	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Burns	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Cameron	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Carroll	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Clayton Johnson	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Copeland	Enclosed Shelter	Replace	Sinking Foundation
Copeland	Baseball Field Fencing	Replace	Wear & Tear
Copeland	Women's Bathroom Door	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
Grandad	Flag Pole	Replace	20 + years old
Hass	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Houska	2 Entry Signs	Replace	Wear & Tear
Houska	Drinking Fountain	Replace	Wear & Tear
Houska	Trail Bridge New Decking	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

2021-2025

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

