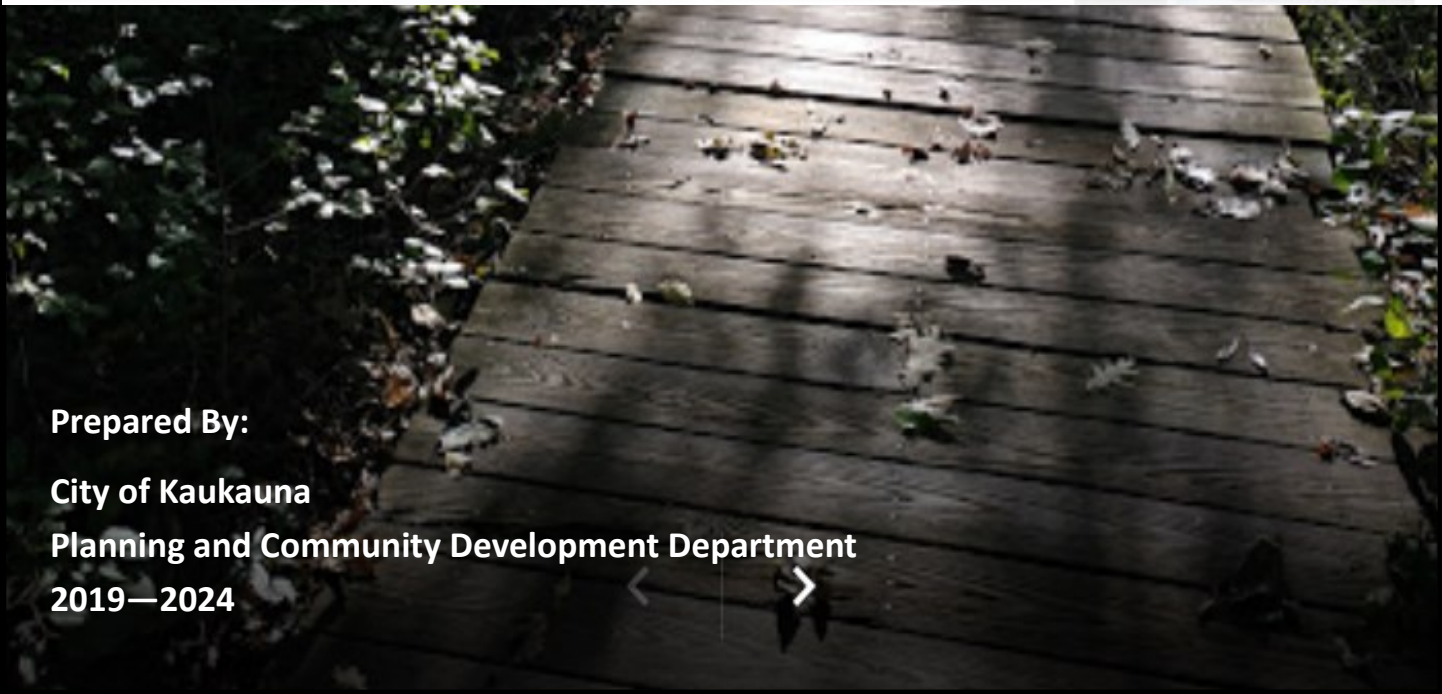




# RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

CITY OF KAUKAUNA, WISCONSIN

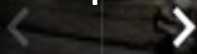


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## Chapter 1. Introduction and Statement of Need

The City of Kaukauna is located in Outagamie County on the Fox River In the northern part of the Appleton-Oshkosh-Neenah Metropolitan Statistical Area. Per the Wisconsin Department of Administration Demographic Services Center, Kaukauna has an estimated population of 16,049 (estimate current as of January 1, 2018).<sup>i</sup> This represents a roughly 4% population increase since the 2010 Census (approximately 600 persons). The City encompasses an area of approximately 4,898 acres, or 7.65 square miles. Kaukauna is the eastern-most city of the eight incorporated municipalities known collectively as the Fox Cities.

Recreational planning is a process that relates the leisure time of people to space. It involves both social science and environmental design in order to develop multiple ways to use time, space, energy and to accommodate recreational needs. Successful urban spaces are guided by several social principles, including, but not limited to:

- Facilitating frequent and regular use by residents.
- Reinforcing a sense of belonging to an identifiable community.
- Encouraging interest and exploration through exposure to cultural and historical events.
- Framing meaningful and memorable experiences.

This open space and recreation plan uses standards provided through the National Recreation and Parks Association as a general guide to determine size and service areas for parks and facilities that should be made available. However, it is important to note that these standards only provide general rules of thumb. The provision of park space alone does not necessarily meet a community's needs. The true standard of a park is the level of community use and engagement.

The responsibility for managing Kaukauna's parks and recreational facilities lies with the four-member Health and Recreation Committee of the Common Council, and the eight-member Board of Public Works. The decisions of these groups are subject to full Common Council approval. During the peak season, a crew of 7 full-time and 3-5 part-time seasonal summer employees manage park maintenance under the direction of the Street Superintendent and the Street Foreman.

Reservations for park areas and pavilions are taken each year beginning the first workday of January. A copy of current fees, charges, rules and regulations is available on the City of Kaukauna's website: [www.cityofkaukauna.com](http://www.cityofkaukauna.com).

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<sup>i</sup> Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2018 Municipal Population Estimates as of 1/1/2018. Accessed online on December 1, 2018.

## Chapter 2. Goals, Strategies and a Community Vision

The following goals and strategies are provided to serve as a guide for the future development of Kaukauna parks and open spaces. The goals are stated as desirable conditions that can be achieved through the actions of government leaders, private organizations and individual citizens.

In the City of Kaukauna Open Space and Recreation Plan, community members have strongly communicated their needs and desires from City park development, improvements and recreational programming. Community member feedback within this process has contributed to several overarching goals for this Open Space and Recreation Plan.

**Goals.** Goals are common, community ideals – big picture ideas or results that are accomplished through a series of actions.

**Strategies.** Strategies are the building blocks that compose goals. Strategies are the incremental steps and actions that lead to the implementation of goals. Strategies are listed in greater detail at the conclusion of this plan.

**Vision.** A vision is how we imagine something to be in the future. In the case of the Open Space and Recreation Plan, the vision of how we hope to see the City of Kaukauna’s parks and open spaces in the future helps us to set goals and implement a strategy to meet those goals and fulfill a future vision.

**The Community Vision for the City of Kaukauna’s overall Open Space and Recreation Plan encompasses these three themes as follows:**

*The City of Kaukauna is a place where residents of all ages and abilities have access to high quality parks and open spaces that provide space for passive or active recreation, that encourage non-digital play, and that help achieve better health outcomes for residents.*

*The City of Kaukauna is a place where residents of all ages and abilities can safely navigate the community on-foot, by bike or by alternative (non-vehicular) forms of transportation to safely access the many amenities of the community.*

*The City of Kaukauna is a place where unique natural features are preserved, protected and made accessible for all residents to enjoy.*

**The specific goals from the City of Kaukauna’s overall Open Space and Recreation Plan are as follows. These are detailed in Chapter 10 of this plan.**

1. Ensure Connectivity by Trail and Sidewalks for all Residents.
2. Implement a Master Planning Process for the Municipal Pool.
3. Allow Dogs in More Municipal Parks and Open Spaces.
4. Maintain and Expand Quality Neighborhood Parks and Natural Open Spaces.
5. Invest in Destination-Worthy Improvements in Regional/Local Parks.
6. Implement a Wayfinding Signage Effort.
7. Strive for Inclusivity in Design.
8. Utilize Community Events to Connect and Cross-Promote Parks and Open Spaces.

## Chapter 3. Park and Recreation Standards

In order to help guide the park planning process, it is important to identify a set of minimum standards for park and recreational facilities that can serve as a benchmark for evaluating the adequacy of the park system. Such standards enable a community to quantitatively measure how well its existing facilities are meeting the needs of residents as compared with other communities, and to plan for future facilities based on projected population growth.

According to the 2018 National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Agency Performance Review<sup>i</sup>, the average density of park development in the United States is 10.1 acres of park property per every 1,000 residents. In communities with populations of 20,000-49,000 residents, these numbers range from a low figure of 5.4 acres of park/1,000 residents and a high figure of 17.5 acres of park/1,000 residents. Data within the NRPA study specific to the Midwest region of the United States showed a slightly higher density of park acreage for residents, with a median of 11.9 acres of park/1,000 residents. National standards like these provide acceptable target guidelines for the provision of parks and open spaces, but a more thorough and accurate evaluation of the City's park system must emphasize the local demand and expectation for recreational resources and the location of such resources in close proximity to the audience(s) it may likely serve.

The City of Kaukauna features 458 acres of municipal park and conservancy land and features an additional 270 acres of semi-public or privately owned (but accessible) open space in the municipality. This exceeds the national average guidelines for acreage per thousand residents, with Kaukauna averaging approximately 45.5 acres/1,000 residents.

- **Acreage Standard.** The most common standard for park and open space in a community is 6-10 acres for each 1,000 residents. This standard does not account for trails, which are often not considered as a part of traditional park acreage and are one of the more highly-demanded and highly-utilized amenities in the City of Kaukauna.
- **Facilities Standard.** This standard pinpoints the number of specific recreation facilities, such as tennis courts, picnic tables, etc. that should be found in a community based on its population. While this standard is useful in discovering major park discrepancies, a more accurate reflection of true community park needs is found in the demands expressed by community residents. Communities such as Kaukauna with full time staff involved with recreational programming typically have excellent perspective on local recreational shortcomings and changing programmatic trends and demands.

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<sup>i</sup> National Recreation and Parks Association, *2018 National Recreation and Parks Association Agency Performance Review*. Accessed online on December 1, 2018.

## Chapter 4. Planning Process

### A. Description of Planning Process.

The City of Kaukauna Planning Process incorporated community input through a number of mechanisms for the Open Space and Recreation Plan:

- A digital/paper survey.
- A public open house hosted at the Municipal Services Building.
- An inventory of park and open space conditions.
- An inventory of wayfinding signage (both vehicular and pedestrian scale) in partnership with East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

**Digital/Paper Survey.** The digital and corresponding paper survey used to gather feedback for the Open Space and Recreation Plan was designed using the online research platform Qualtrics. Paper copies of the survey (a slightly shortened version) were made available at the Municipal Services Building and Kaukauna Public Library. The survey was active for approximately six weeks from the beginning of August 2018 until the middle of September 2018. The survey was promoted on the City of Kaukauna website and social media platforms and in an article in the Times Villager newspaper. 357 participants completed the survey online and three paper copies of the survey were returned to the City of Kaukauna.

**Public Open House.** A public open house was hosted on September 25, 2018 at the Municipal Services Building. The Open House featured interactive stations where participants could share insights on park and recreational requests, areas of the community where there might be a need for future investment in park and recreational facilities and a chance to share feedback and ask questions of staff. The Open House was promoted on the City of Kaukauna website and social media platforms, in an article in the Times Villager newspaper and in print on the cover of the Fall 2018 Kaukauna Recreation Department program guides, which are mailed to residents throughout the City. The Open House was not well-received, only one attendee participated in the event.

**Inventory of Park and Open Space Conditions.** On two separate occasions, once in July 2018 and once in October 2018, City staff visited 35 different parks, open spaces and recreational sites in the City of Kaukauna. The parks were photographed and amenities and conditions were inventoried at this time.

**Inventory of Wayfinding Signage in the City of Kaukauna.** In January and February 2019, the City of Kaukauna worked with East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to execute a wayfinding signage inventory and gap assessment in the City. City staff used tablets to digitally collect data including condition, photos and sign information for signage that points to regional attractions, including parks and trails, and for the first time in the City of Kaukauna tracked these signs in a geographic information system category. East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission worked with the City of Kaukauna to evaluate the data to identify gaps and areas of improvement for particularly signage along trail networks.

As illustrated above, plan research took place from July 2018-February 2019. Plan drafting and development took place in the spring and summer of 2019.

### B. Amending the Plan

Amendments may be made to this plan to reflect a change in prioritization of strategies and goals. Amendments must be submitted to the Health and Recreation Committee, Board of Public Works and Common Council of the City of Kaukauna for consideration and adoption.

## **Chapter 5. Summary of Past Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans**

This plan carries on a long history of planning for outdoor spaces and recreation in the City of Kaukauna. In the early 1970s, the Fox Valley Council of Governments prepared a comprehensive plan for the community which included an analysis of future park needs. The plan was updated by the City in 1992 for the 1992-1997 plan then titled 1992-1997 Open Space and Recreation Plan, in 1998 for 1998-2003 and in 2003 again titled 2003-2008 Open Space and Recreation Plan. The most recent plan update was completed in 2010 titled 2010-2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

This current plan update is the first plan update to incorporate new features, including:

- Online/digital public input by community members
- An emphasis on non-digital play in an era of digitally native youth
- Geographic Information System data capture on pedestrian-scale signage for parks and trails
- A detailed description and amenity information in a visual format for every park and open space in the City of Kaukauna



## Chapter 6. Description of the Social Characteristics of the Planning Region

### *Population*

The City of Kaukauna has a population of just over 16,000 (16,049 estimate as of 2018).<sup>i</sup> Since the time of the last United States Census data collection, the population of the City has grown by approximately 4%. Regionally, the greater Fox Cities continues to be a high growth region of the state. The Fox Cities metropolitan area has an estimated population of just over 300,000 (309,954) and has experienced annual growth at an average rate of 0.6%. Wisconsin's average rate of growth is 0.4%.<sup>ii</sup>

### *Projected Growth and Diversity*

2010 Census data and 2040 projected population data indicate that the Fox Cities region will continue to grow in size, with a projected growth percentage of 21.8% in Outagamie County during that 30 year timeframe.<sup>iii</sup> The Fox Cities metropolitan area and City of Kaukauna are not notably ethnic diverse, nor is diversity increasing on par with national averages (3.9% increase from 2006-2014) but diversity in the area has continued to increase in this time period (2.7% increase from 2006-2014).<sup>iv</sup> The City of Kaukauna is estimated to be approximately 95.4% ethnically white at the time of the 2017 American Community Survey.

Kaukauna residents are percentage-wise represented within the following ethnic groups:<sup>v</sup>

- White (caucasian, includes Hispanic/Latin-X population): 95.4% (*est. 15,499*)
- Two or more races: 2% (*est. 325*)
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 1.3% (*est. 211*)
- Asian: 0.1% (*est. 16*)

### *Population Age*

While the population in the City of Kaukauna has continued to increase, populations across the state of Wisconsin continue to age. The median age in Outagamie County increased by 0.5 years between 2010-2014, and the current median age for Outagamie County as a whole is 37.7 years old.

The United States Census reports the following age cohorts as 2018 estimates. Kaukauna residents are percentage-wise represented within the following age cohorts:

- Persons under 5 years old: 5.8% (*est. 942*)
- Persons under 18 years old: 23.5% (*est. 3,818*)
- Persons over 65 years old: 13.1% (*est. 2,128*)

The Bureau of Labor Statistics presents more rich age cohort data for 2019, breaking down population segments into 5-10 year segments.<sup>vi</sup> Kaukauna's population can be further segmented as follows (displayed visually below):

- Persons age 0-4 years old: 1,120
- Persons age 5-9 years old: 1,064
- Persons age 10-19 years old: 1,930
- Persons age 20-29 years old: 2,208
- Persons age 30-39 years old: 2,241

- Persons age 40-49 years old: 1,827
- Persons age 50-59 years old: 2,220
- Persons age 60-64 years old: 958
- Persons 65 or older: 2,604

### *Kaukauna's Economy*

Kaukauna's economy is inextricably tied to the greater Fox Cities regional economy, due to its close and commutable proximity to the Green Bay and Appleton metropolitan areas. Excellent regional and local infrastructure ensures that labor force participants flow between employment centers in the Fox Cities.

Some basic indicators for the City of Kaukauna's economy:

- Kaukauna consists of 501 business establishments.<sup>vii</sup>
- Kaukauna's labor force consists of 6,964 members. The Bureau of Labor Statistics defines labor force participants as individuals above the age of 16 who worked at least one hour for pay in the last 7 days, or individuals who are temporarily not working due to vacation, health problems, maternity/paternity leave, or spent time actively seeking another job.<sup>viii</sup>
- The majority of Kaukauna's population has a high school diploma, and 37.57% hold a college degree.<sup>ix</sup>

### *The Science of Calculating Unemployment Data*

- In assessing the unemployment levels of a municipality, metropolitan statistical area, county or state, it is important to know that there are different definitions of what it means to be technically unemployed. Terms to know include U3 unemployment, U6 real unemployment, and natural rate of unemployment.
- The unemployment rate for the Appleton metropolitan statistical area at the end of February 2019 was 2.9%.<sup>x</sup> This is the U3 unemployment rate, which is shared nationally by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in monthly jobs reports.
- It is worth noting that U3 unemployment figures do not paint a full portrait of a local economy's health as these figures do not account for individuals who are defined as being underutilized, those who are working part-time but desire to work full-time, and those who have stopped seeking new work opportunities (discouraged workers).<sup>xi</sup>
- The 'real unemployment rate' (as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics) is the U6 figure, which accounts for the populations noted above. This number as most recently available through Q1 of 2019 is available at the state level. In line with local averages, Wisconsin had a 2.9% U3 unemployment rate and a 5.7% U6 real unemployment rate.<sup>xii</sup>
- The Federal Reserve has identified the national, natural rate of unemployment as of the end of Q1 of 2019 as 4.6%.<sup>xiii</sup> Sometimes the natural rate of unemployment is referred to as "full employment", meaning that when unemployment meets that figure or dips below it that the economic system is viewed as fully employed. Fully employed does not mean, to clarify, that there is zero unemployment.
- When an economic system dips below the natural rate of unemployment / full employment for an extended period of time – it can create a challenging system for businesses as they have an

extremely limited pool of talent from which they can hire and the hiring atmosphere becomes competitive.

- The very small pool of employees seeking new work creates a serious challenge for businesses in the Fox Cities region and has been identified by state and national leaders as an economic challenge of serious significance.<sup>xiv</sup>

#### *Industry Clusters and Major Employers*

- The top professions for Kaukauna's populations are Production Workers (14.76%), Office and Administrative Support (13.6%) and Construction and Extraction (11.14%). 51% of all employees are in what can be considered blue collar industries.
- The industry sector that employs the most individuals in Kaukauna is the manufacturing cluster, which employs approximately 1/3 of Kaukauna's labor force (2,414 employees).
- The largest employer in the City of Kaukauna is Ahlstrom-Munksjo, which had been known by former organizational names Expera Specialty Solutions and Thilmany. The current ownership structure is based in Finland, but has its primary Wisconsin presence in Kaukauna. Ahlstrom-Munksjo employs 1,200, or roughly 17.23% of the City's labor force. Other large employment categories include construction (employs 757), metals fabrication (employs 753), and elementary and secondary schools (employs 450).
- Kaukauna has a strong small business presence – 56.49% of all businesses in Kaukauna have between 1-4 employees.<sup>xv</sup>

#### *Income and Consumer Trends*

- Households in Kaukauna have a median income that is slightly higher than state (+4%) and national (+3%) averages, but slightly lower than in other Outagamie County municipalities (-3%). The median household income for Kaukauna households was \$65,779.
- Households in Kaukauna average total expenditures of \$59,062 (89.7% expenditure to income ratio).
- Percentage of income spent on shelter is often used as an economic signifier for economic security. Kaukauna households average \$12,429 on shelter (rent, mortgage) in a yearly timeframe – which equates to approximately 19% of household income. 30% is used as a threshold figure of affordability, households who – by choice or by inventory and accessibility constraints – dedicate more than 30% of their income toward shelter expenses are identified as living in housing that is not affordable.
- While new housing stock has continued to expand year over year in the Fox Cities, including in Kaukauna – the region has an identified housing shortage.<sup>xvi</sup> There is a particular gap in affordable or starter home categories – homes that offer mortgages that do not exceed the 30% of monthly income figure. The housing stock has created a hyper-competitive environment for homebuyers.

#### *Economic Goals*

- The economic goals from a municipal perspective are centralized within a few key themes:
  - Strengthen and expand infrastructure network.
  - Continue to expand new industrial and professional growth along I-41 corridor.
  - Revitalize downtown commercial area.

- Continue to expand housing in community to meet area need.
- The City of Kaukauna continues to upgrade municipal infrastructure, including sidewalks, City streets, bridges, and addressing stormwater utilities to meet the ever-shifting weather patterns associated with climate change.<sup>xvii</sup>
- Kaukauna’s industrial park network has been and continues to be a high value density development corridor along Interstate 41. The City announced in 2018 the development of a major Aurora BayCare clinic and ambulatory surgical center, as an anchor tenant in the professional business park.<sup>xviii</sup>
- Kaukauna’s historic downtown district has seen major municipal investment in sidewalks and street reconstruction, but shifting consumer demands and the increasing presence of e-commerce have posed a challenge for attracting a strong retail base to the downtown area. This problem is not localized to Kaukauna, and is occurring nationwide.
- In an area that could potentially empower downtown redevelopment, the City of Kaukauna’s Community Development Block Grant-funded Revolving Loan Fund was de-federalized in early 2019 through state action. This de-federalization lifts strict lending criteria opens up new possibilities for the Redevelopment Authority to explore new lending opportunities and to potentially acquire and redevelop buildings. The Redevelopment Authority is currently working with a professional consultant to assess the needs of the local business community and reconfigure the loan program to meet those needs and the goals of downtown revitalization.
- Lastly, and as iterated before, housing development and addressing the housing stock shortage is a key need in the greater Fox Cities corridor. Kaukauna is working simultaneously on new greenfield residential development on the northern and southern edges of the municipality. Additionally, the City of Kaukauna partnered with The Donory, LLC for a creative infill development project on the former St. Aloysius school and church site. The demolition of an abandoned and blighted property will create new residential growth in an established neighborhood in a mix of single family and two-family homes.

In summary, the City of Kaukauna is experiencing many of the same challenges that communities across the state of Wisconsin and country are facing. The City and its businesses are reconciling with challenges such as meeting worker needs for businesses, providing affordable housing for residents and targeting reinvestments in downtown commercial corridors.

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<sup>i</sup> Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2018 Municipal Population Estimates as of 1/1/2018. Accessed online on December 1, 2018.

<sup>ii</sup> Source: Fox Cities Regional Partnership data.

<sup>iii</sup> Source: Fox Cities LIFE Study data.

<sup>iv</sup> Source: Fox Cities LIFE Study data.

<sup>v</sup> Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, via The New North.

<sup>vi</sup> Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, via The New North.

<sup>vii</sup> Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, via The New North.

<sup>viii</sup> Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Glossary.

<sup>ix</sup> Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, via The New North.

<sup>x</sup> Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, *Labor force and employment estimates*, March 2019.

<sup>xi</sup> Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Alternative measures of labor utilization in Wisconsin*, March 2018.

<sup>xii</sup> Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Alternative measures of labor utilization for states, second quarter of 2018 through first quarter of 2019 averages*, April 26, 2019.

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<sup>xiii</sup> Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Economic Research, *Natural rate of unemployment (long-term)*

<sup>xiv</sup> Source: Post Crescent, *Inability to fill jobs a key economic challenge in Fox Cities, says U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher, State Rep. Amanda Stuck*, May 29, 2018.

<sup>xv</sup> Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, via The New North.

<sup>xvi</sup> Source: Post Crescent, *First-time home buyers struggle in tight housing market*, September 21, 2018.

<sup>xvii</sup> Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency, *What climate change means for Wisconsin*, August 2016.

<sup>xviii</sup> Source: Aurora BayCare press release, *Aurora BayCare announces new clinic, ambulatory surgery center, and urgent care near Interstate 41 in Kaukauna*, December 4, 2018.

## **Chapter 7. Description of the Physical Characteristics of the Planning Region**

### *Waterways*

Kaukauna is situated within the Lower Fox River Basin which is part of the Lake Michigan drainage area. This large basin area includes portions of Brown, Calumet, Outagamie and Winnebago Counties. The Fox River and its adjoining tributaries serve as the major natural drainage way in southeastern Outagamie County. Approximately three and one-half miles of the Fox River are within the Kaukauna municipal boundaries. Riverfront and canal front property has been developed for residential, commercial, industrial and recreational uses. Some undeveloped land and publicly owned open space still remain along the riverfront in Kaukauna.

The City limits are located wholly within two federally recognized HUC (Hydrologic Unit Classification) 10 watershed areas. The entire southern portion of the City and much of the northern portion of the City (boundaries skirting just south of Interstate 41) is located in the Plum Creek – Fox River watershed. The northern portion of the City (mostly located north of Interstate 41) is in the Fox River – Frontal Green Bay watershed<sup>i</sup>.

Konkapot Creek provides a natural drainage system for the City's south side. The creek originates south of the City and drains into the Fox River at the western edge of the 1000 Islands Conservancy Area. After a moderate to heavy rain the creek carries significant amounts of sediments from the agricultural lands south of Kaukauna. The southwest side of Kaukauna is drained by an intermittent stream with portions of this stream adjoining residential areas having been channeled underground through storm sewer pipes before joining Konkapot Creek at Horseshoe Valley Park. Several small intermittent streams exist within the City limits and eventually discharge into the Fox River.

There are several intermittent streams in the 1000 Islands Conservancy Area. These provide surface drainage for the extreme southeast portion of the City. Both streams flow in a northerly direction and discharge into the Fox River.

North of the Fox River, there is limited surface drainage that flows towards the river. There is an intermittent stream in the vicinity of Grignon Park that flows adjacent to the Fox River Valley Railroad spur line. This stream drains a portion of the northeast area of Kaukauna and discharges into the canal near the Ahlstrom-Münksjo Paper Mill.

Some north side channels flow first to the Apple Creek watershed before entering the Fox River. Apple Creek flows to the northeast away from the City. The Industrial Park network for the City of Kaukauna all drains to this watershed. The NEW Prosperity Center and the Commerce Crossing development both have streams which flow to this watershed, special care was taken to ensure these streams were protected during the construction of the developments.

The entire Lower Fox River basin is a highly urbanizing area and is consequently facing water quality issues from industrial runoff as well as concentrated agricultural runoff in diminishing acreage committed to agricultural enterprise<sup>ii</sup>. State and national attention has been given to this particular water system as the runoff challenges have been directly tied to declining water quality and poor aquatic habitat. This has the potential to negatively impact water recreation, such as boating and fishing in Northeast Wisconsin. Neither the Fox River-Frontal Green Bay nor the Plum Creek-Fox River have



been identified as priority watershed areas for remediation at this time, but the Plum Creek-Fox River was rated as a high consideration watershed for future remediation efforts<sup>iii</sup>.

### *History and Use of Waterways in Kaukauna*

Throughout history, the Fox River has had a major historical impact on Kaukauna. The river served as the primary transportation route for indigenous people as well as for early European immigrants. Indigenous peoples who were pushed out of their traditional lands by European immigrants in the Eastern United States resettled in the Fox River basin as refugees, creating at one time, a highly diverse and highly organized indigenous refugee community of displaced First Nations peoples. Many of these indigenous groups would later be displaced to small reservations in remote areas of the state of Wisconsin as European and American expansion pushed westward.

The series of rapids known as the Grand Kakalin Falls required the early (mid-17<sup>th</sup> century) river travelers to portage their canoes. Due to this fact, Kaukauna became a central point for rest and trade along the Fox River and a trading post was established by the Ducharme and Grignon families in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>iv</sup>.

The river is now used for recreational boating, fishing, industrial manufacturing and power generation. The series of rapids necessitated the construction of a lock system in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The river provides an excellent area for water-oriented recreational activities. From the dam area to the eastern edge of the 1000 Islands Conservancy Area (approximately one and one-half miles) the river drops 51 feet in elevation; a significant drop considering over the next 24 miles, it drops only 22 feet before discharging into Green Bay.

In 1884, to compensate for the change in elevation and to provide access to the upper and lower reaches of the Fox River, twenty-six hand operated locks were constructed. One hundred years later, the lock system was placed in “caretaker” status by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers due to the high maintenance and operating costs. In 1985, the Fox River Management Commission began operating several of the Fox Locks in Green Bay and Neenah to provide recreational boaters with opportunities to utilize the Fox River. The locks in the City of Kaukauna have remained closed and in “caretaker” status. On September 17, 2004, the Fox River Locks system was transferred from Federal ownership to State ownership and thereafter the Fox River Navigational System Authority assumed responsibility for the repair, rehabilitation, maintenance and operation of the system. After years of planning, the lock system did begin to reopen. The presence of invasive species and the threat these species pose to the recreational fishing economy have slowed the process of reopening greatly.

At the time of the writing of this plan (2019), a number of the locks within the system are open seasonally for recreational boater use – however, the mid-section of the Fox River (Kaukauna Locks #1-5 and the Rapid Croche Lock) are restored, but are not open, nor is the Menasha lock connecting the Fox River to Lake Winnebago<sup>v</sup>. The Menasha lock and Rapid Croche lock are closed to prohibit spread of invasive species spread between Lake Winnebago and Lake Michigan. At this time of writing this plan, the Rapid Croche lock may be permanently closed and operate in the future with a boat lift system. The Kaukauna locks have been restored but are not open for use, although the Fox River Navigational System Authority assures the City that the system will be fully operational in the year 2021.

The City of Kaukauna has entered into a long-term lease agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the placement of certain recreational features. These include trail improvements along the North bank of the Fox River and will likely include future improvements to Central Park behind the former Carnegie Library.

The Fox River has become increasingly important as a recreational resource. Water quality has improved dramatically due to increased environmental regulations. The riverfront is a source of both active and passive recreation and will continue to develop as water quality continues to improve.

### *Topography of Kaukauna*

The terrain in Kaukauna ranges from flat to areas that are fairly steep and rolling. Elevations range from 610 to 730 feet above sea level. Ravines and sloped areas along the Fox River provide interesting terrain for the City's park system. Examples of this include Riverside Park, La Follette Park, Horseshoe Valley Park and Grignon Park, as well as the unique terrain at the 1000 Islands Environmental Center and within the 1000 Islands Conservancy Area.

### *Woodlands*

The establishment of the 200 acre 1000 Islands Conservancy Area preserved the most extensive wooded area in the City is an example of Kaukauna's commitment to open recreation areas. The Conservancy Area lies in a unique vegetation belt described by botanists as the tension zone. Wisconsin's Tension zone runs across the state of Wisconsin from Polk County in Northwest Wisconsin to Racine County in Southeast Wisconsin and is the area where Wisconsin's boreal region meets the prairie region<sup>vi</sup>. This unique zone includes plant features of both vegetative areas. This transitional area features specific vegetation such as red and white pine, paper birch traditionally seen in the Northern boreal region and oak trees more traditionally located in the Southern prairie region.

The wooded area along Konkapot Creek consists of a series of ravines which become more expansive at Horseshoe Valley Park. Over 70 percent of the park site is wooded. Most of the northern shoreline along the Fox River is also wooded. In addition, several City parks have wooded areas. Impressive stands of old growth trees are located in La Follette and Riverside Parks, White City, Horseshoe and Grignon Parks are also home to stands of mature hardwoods.

### *Land Use*

The predominant land use in the City of Kaukauna is single-family residential. Almost the entire western half of the City's south side has been developed residentially and residential growth continues to expand south and east in Kaukauna, as well as pushing north toward Interstate 41 on the northern side of the City.

Commercial areas are located in the central business district as well as along major arterials connecting County roads CE, OO and KK, as well as connections to Interstate 41. The City of Kaukauna originally developed as two separate communities on the north and south sides of the Fox River, each with its own business district, referred to colloquially as Uptown (Wisconsin Avenue area) and Downtown (Second and Third Street area). Strip commercial development also exists along Crooks Avenue and

Lawe Street (State Highway 55), Hyland Avenue (County Highway OO) and Delanglade Street (State Highway 55).

Industrial Development is concentrated in three areas. The Ahlstrom-Munksjo Paper Mill is the largest employer in the City of Kaukauna and is located on the large island area along the Fox River. The City's highly successful industrial park network centers around the Interstate 41 corridor and features three distinctive industrial parks and one professional business park.

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<sup>i</sup> Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Online surface water data viewer tool

<sup>ii</sup> Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Lower Fox River Basin description

<sup>iii</sup> Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Lower Fox River Basin description

<sup>iv</sup> Source: Kaukauna Public Library website, History of Kaukauna page, excerpted from 1985 publication Voyageurs Magazine.

<sup>v</sup> Source: Fox River Navigational System Authority website information, [www.foxlocks.org](http://www.foxlocks.org)

<sup>vi</sup> Source: Wisconsin Woodlands Magazine, Wisconsin's Tension Zone Explained, 2013

## Chapter 8. Outdoor Recreation Supply Inventory

### *Outdoor Recreation Facility Inventory*

#### Number of Sites

The City of Kaukauna features 35 City-owned parks and open spaces, which have been classified as one of three types of parks, or one of two types of open spaces. There are a number of privately owned and operated open spaces, as well as school-owned parks that contribute an additional 270 acres of parks and open spaces. These are referenced in lesser detail in this plan as they are not open to the public year-round and/or without fee, as the majority of municipal parks and open spaces are (exceptions being the Municipal Pool and the Grignon Mansion. These open spaces are noted on a map as an addendum to this plan.

These 35 open spaces make up 458 acres of dedicated park and open space in the City limits and feature a wide range of setting, amenities and natural environments. The public input process utilized for the writing of this plan exposed to the Planning and Community Development Department that there is a disconnect between many park users and the large number of our parks. With that in mind, this chapter of the Open Space and Recreation Plan seeks to thoroughly shed light on the unique features of the City's many parks and open spaces. This is done in both a tabular and visual format, and the visual components of this chapter will find a permanent home on the City's website.

#### Types of Parks and Open Spaces

The City's 35 parks and open spaces have been categorized into one of five designations, which are defined below. In the past, parks were categorized more on their acreage than on their use, this new approach takes into account who is most likely to utilize parks, what volume of visitors a park can support and what type of recreational use does take place or is projected to take place in that park.

1. **Regional Parks:** Regional Parks are among the City's largest parks and have unique features that serve as a draw beyond the residents of Kaukauna, but for the greater region. These parks feature on-site parking lots, almost all include year-round accessible indoor restrooms, and are large enough in size to support events in the community. Several of these regional parks feature onsite educational and cultural programming and are utilized in partnership with local educational institutions. *The City's Regional Parks include: 1000 Islands Environmental Center, Dog Park, Doty Bayorgeon Recreation Area, Grignon Mansion, Horseshoe Valley Park, Hydro Park and the Municipal Pool and Archery Range.*
2. **Local Parks:** Local Parks are smaller than the City's regional parks, and serve as a destination primarily for local residents. These parks often feature on-site parking lots, some include year-round accessible indoor restrooms, and many feature rentable park shelters/pavilions for small events. Some of these parks feature unique amenities only available in one park, such as the City's disc golf course, youth rock climbing wall, soccer fields, or skateboard park features. *The City's Local Parks include: Glenview Park, Grignon Park (Upper and Lower), Jonen Park, La Follette Park, Riverside Park and Skate Park.*

3. **Neighborhood Parks:** Neighborhood Parks are the City’s smallest designated parks, and serve primarily as destinations for neighborhood residents. These parks often feature on-street parking, but none of them have designated parking lots. The majority of targeted users of these parks are able to walk to them. These parks feature limited amenities that are non-specialized, such as playground equipment, and in some cases grills and ball diamonds. Several of these parks have small shelter areas for picnics or small gatherings but are not available to be reserved and are available for use on a first come, first serve basis. *The City’s Neighborhood Parks include: Anderson Park, Fieldcrest Park, Little Tykes Tot Lot, Strassburg Park, Thelen Park and White City Park. Future Neighborhood Parks include Haas Road Park.*
  
4. **Urban Open Spaces:** Urban open spaces is a new classification for the City of Kaukauna and describes a type of designated open space that has been largely emerging as an amenity of a revitalized downtown. Urban open spaces include plazas, parks that might have been referred to in the past as ‘pocket parks’ or memorials. In Kaukauna, these spaces are entirely in the central business district or near downtown vicinity and are intended primarily to be accessed on foot. These spaces often feature scenic views, public art installations and memorials of significance within the community. These spaces do not include traditional park infrastructure like shelters or playground equipment, but rather invite users to take in natural views, interpret public art or to experience a meaningful memorial. *The City’s Urban Open Spaces include: Eagle Plaza, Family and Friends Sculpture Garden and Trail, Fassbender Park, Gathering of the Pike Plaza, Interactive Learning Garden at the Kaukauna Public Library, Vaudette Plaza and the Veteran’s Memorial / Ring of Honor.*
  
5. **Natural Open Spaces:** Natural open spaces is another new classification for the City of Kaukauna and describes a type of designated natural space that is largely unprogrammed and undeveloped. These spaces may feature natural recreation, such as wildlife viewing, fishing, non-motorized boating, or unimproved trails for walking/running. *The City’s Natural Open Spaces include: Central Park, Kelso Park and Pond, Konkapot Preserve and Trail, Nature View Park, Quarry Point Park, Thilwerth Park, Trestle Park (Whitewater Kayak Launch), and Van Eperen Park and Pond. Future Natural Open Spaces include the Fox River Boardwalk and the Rapid Croche Picnic Area (presently not in the City limits).*

Private or semi-public open spaces that also serve a recreational need in the City of Kaukauna include area schools and their respective playgrounds, Eagle Links Golf Course (private) and the Girl Scout camp. The Girl Scout Camp features wooded trails which connect to and are accessible from the 1000 Islands Environmental Center trails. A City-owned open space that is privately leased is the Kaukauna Sportsmen’s Club (shooting range) on the eastern edge of the City limits, adjacent to the 1000 Island Environmental Center. A City-owned open space that is not within the City limits is the Rapid Croche Public Picnic Grounds, located in the Town of Buchanan. This open space is included on the municipal inventory, but is not reflected on the maps of open spaces in the plan addendum.

### Facilities Available at Sites

A full inventory of all facilities and amenities at each of the City's 35 parks and open spaces is featured at the close of this chapter. At the time of writing, three of the City's Urban Open Spaces are undergoing renovations or are under construction and amenities listed are subject to change during that process.

In addition to the tabulated inventory of facilities and amenities at each park and open space, a new feature in this plan is the addition of a visual park guide in this chapter. This section of the plan includes a 'park ID card' of sorts with photos of park amenities, a description of the park and a list of facilities and amenities on-site. These visual cards will be additionally added to the City of Kaukauna website, also including links for directions to the park and information about rentals.

### Current Condition of Park/Recreation Areas and Facilities on Site

The public input process generated a great deal of feedback on public perception of parks that need to be a priority for improvements. These comments are shared in detail in Chapter 9 of this plan. This section touches on City-noted areas for improvement within City parks, specific to infrastructure and equipment.

Three visits were made by City staff to all City parks and open spaces in 2018, during different times of day and weather conditions. Notes were made about amenities at each park that would necessitate future improvements. Those notes are tabulated below:

City Parks and Open Spaces needing parking lot improvements:

- Thilwerth Park
- Dog Park

City Parks and Open Spaces with traditional (older) style playground equipment – candidates for future replacement<sup>1</sup>:

- La Follette Park
- Horseshoe Valley Park
- Thelen Park
- Glenview Park
- Fieldcrest Park
- Strassburg Park
- White City Park
- Grignon Park

City Parks and Open Spaces with contemporary (modern plastic, but not recent) style playground equipment – candidates for future replacement with the next park and open space plan in 2025:

- La Follette Park
- Horseshoe Valley Park
- Fieldcrest Park

City Parks and Open Spaces needing new signage (signs are currently not present):

- Eagle Plaza



- Vaudette Plaza
- Friends and Family Sculpture Garden and Trail
- Veteran’s Memorial / Ring of Honor
- Thilwerth Park
- Quarry Point Park
- Anderson Park
- Konkapot Trail
- Trestle Park (Whitewater Kayak Launch)

### Wayfinding and Park/Open Space Connectivity

The issue of park wayfinding is addressed in a report commissioned by the City and executed by East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in 2019. This report touches on how parks are organized in a hierarchy as destinations (biggest destinations having the most directional signage) and where there are gaps in wayfinding signage.

A very small number of parks and open spaces – located entirely in our industrial and agricultural park network – are not connected to the City sidewalk or trail network. These include: Van Eperen Park and Pond, Kelso Park and Pond and Nature View Park.

Despite the exceptional connectivity of parks and open spaces within the City of Kaukauna, signage does not clearly communicate where many parks are located within the City and all municipally-placed signage is designed for automotive legibility (large size, on-road, directs via street network). The City of Kaukauna should take advantage of coming expansions of the City’s trail network to add more pedestrian and bicycle-scaled signage that promotes walking and biking routes between parks and open spaces.

### *Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities*

The City of Kaukauna’s parks and open spaces meet specific Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements by law, but there is still great room to be more inclusive in park design and amenities. As highlighted in Chapter 9 of this plan, trends in park development include more inclusive design and amenities with features such as wheelchair accessible playground equipment, rubber matting instead of woodchips or gravel surfaces, and interactive play stations that do not require a full range of mobility. Experiential learning through toys featuring music, developing cognitive skills and learning through nature play are also inclusive of individuals who may prefer more individualized play. Many of the parks referenced in the public input process in the Fox Valley include amenities such as this. Kaukauna should look toward amenity improvements that are inclusive by design and accommodate in full spirit, instead of just to the letter, the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the current trend toward inclusive play spaces.

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<sup>i</sup> Note on playground equipment: Some of these parks feature traditional playground equipment and more modern equipment. Despite the fact that programs may have more than one playground set, older equipment should be phased out over time and replaced with safer, more accessible and in-demand equipment.



**Regional Park**

**Rentable Pavillion**

## 1000 Islands Environmental Center

This regional destination features natural education and wildlife viewing. The Nature Center features educational programs and exhibits and the conservancy includes miles of trails for walking and hiking and a kayak launch.

### Amenities

- Shade Trees
- Walking/Hiking Trails
- Playground Equipment
- Parking Lot
- Sitting Area
- Educational Programs
- Rentable Pavillion
- Kayak Launch
- Fishing Access

 1000 Beaulieu Court, Kaukauna



**Regional Park**

 **Dogs Welcome**

## Kaukauna Dog Park

This regional park caters to dogs large and small with a variety of play areas and a water feature.

### Amenities

- Shade Trees
- Sitting Area

 366 Farmland Court, Kaukauna



**Regional Park**

## Doty Bayorgeon Recreation Area

A regional park featuring softball diamonds, a football field, running track, and a concession stand with restrooms, this area is a key destination for middle school football and regional softball events.

### Amenities

- Pavilion/Shelter
- Restrooms
- Football Field
- Parking Lot
- Ball Diamonds
- Running Track

 700 Dodge Street, Kaukauna



## Grignon Mansion

A 19th century historic house museum which hosts educational and cultural programs on-site. Tours of the Mansion are held seasonally and the grounds open year-round.

### Amenities

- Historic Markers
- Picnic Area
- Educational Programs
- Guided Tours
- Community Events

**Regional Park**

**1313 Augustine Street, Kaukauna**



## Horseshoe Valley Park

Home to Gerow Field, this popular regional park includes baseball diamonds, concession stand, pavilion with indoor restrooms, playground equipment, a seasonal ice skating rink, and a connection to the Konkapot Trail.

### Amenities

- Baseball Diamonds
- Concession Stand
- Rental Pavillion
- Indoor Restrooms
- Playground Equipment
- Seasonal Ice Skating Rink
- Trail Connection

**Regional Park**

**Rentable Pavillion**

**220 E. 12th Street, Kaukauna**



## Hydro Park

One of the City's most popular parks and home to the LIVE! from Hydro Park summer concert series. Featuring a pavilion with restrooms and interactive educational kiosks, this regional park offers a unique natural space in the heart of the City.

### Amenities

- Biking/Walking Trails
- Picnic Area
- Pavilion/Shelter
- Parking Lot
- Restrooms
- Educational Kiosks

**Regional Park**

**100 Crooks Avenue, Kaukauna**

# Municipal Pool and Archery Range

Cool off at this zero-depth entry pool with high-drive and water slide. Available for private events of groups of 50+. Volleyball and playground equipment also available on-site.



## Amenities

- Restrooms
- Parking Lot
- Playground Equipment
- Concessions
- Picnic Area
- Swimming Pool

**Regional Park**

 607 Dodge Street, Kaukauna



Amenity Inventory	Regional Parks						
	1000 Islands Environmental Center	Dog Park	Doty Bayorgeon Recreation Area	Grignon Mansion	Horseshoe Valley Park	Hydro Park	Municipal Pool and Archery Range
Sitting Area	X	X			X	X	X
Shade Trees	X	X		X	X		X
Traditional Playground Equipment					X		
Contemporary Playground Equipment	X				X		X
New Playground Equipment	X						
Grills	X						
Ball Diamond			X		X		
Volleyball Court							X
Football Field			X				
Track			X				
Parking Lot	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
On-Street Parking				X	X		
Rentable Shelter	X				X	X	
Indoor Restrooms	X		X	X	X	X	X
Seasonal Restrooms (Portapotties)		X					
Crushed Gravel Trail					X		
Asphalt Trail						X	
Grass/Natural Trail	X						
Sledding Hill					X		
Ice Skating					X		
Concession Stand			X		X		X
Fishing	X						
Swimming (Pond/River)	X						
Swimming (Pool)							X
Historic Markers/Educational Kiosks	X			X		X	
Dogs Permitted		X					



### Local Park

## Glenview Park

Playground equipment and a sitting area with shade trees are featured in this local park.

### Amenities

- Playground Equipment
- Picnic Area
- Shade Trees

 130 W. 17th Street, Kaukauna



### Local Park

## Grignon Park (Upper and Lower)

The City's largest sledding hill is located in this local park which also features a disc golf course, a pavilion with concession stand and indoor restrooms and the municipal soccer fields.

### Amenities

- Disc Golf Course
- Pavillion
- Restrooms
- Concession Stand
- Soccer Fields
- Sledding Hill
- Playground Equipment
- Picnic Area

 233 Plank Road, Kaukauna (Upper)



### Local Park

## Jonen Park

A local park featuring a baseball diamond, basketball court, playground equipment, and a sledding hill perfect for younger children.

### Amenities

- Baseball Diamond
- Playground Equipment
- Basketball Court
- Parking Lot
- Sledding Hill
- Seasonal Restrooms

 3149 Fieldcrest Drive, Kaukauna





**Local Park**

**Rentable Pavillion**

## La Follette Park

A local park with playground equipment, basketball court, a rental pavilion with indoor restrooms and grills, all with a beautiful view of the Fox River.

### Amenities

- Rental Pavilion
- Parking Lot
- Basketball Court
- Picnic Area with Grills
- Restrooms

 220 Park Street, Kaukauna



**Local Park**

**Rentable Pavillion**

## Riverside Park

One of the City's most popular, this park is home to Lambie Field baseball facility with concessions, a rental pavilion with restrooms, a fishing pier and boat launch, and a children's rock climbing wall all under a canopy of old growth shade trees.

### Amenities

- Pavilion/Shelter
- Picnic Area
- Boat Launch
- Playground Equipment
- Restrooms
- Parking Lot
- Fishing Pier
- Baseball Field

 1029 Riverside Drive, Kaukauna



**Local Park**

## Skate Park

Located in the center of downtown, this local park features equipment for skateboarders of all levels along with a sitting area to view the action.

### Amenities

- Skateboard Features
- Sitting Area

 147 W. 2nd Street, Kaukauna

Amenity Inventory	Local Parks						
	Glenview Park	Grignon Park (Upper and Lower)	Jonen Park	La Follette Park	Riverside Park	Skate Park	
Sitting Area	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Shade Trees	X	X		X	X		
Traditional Playground Equipment	X	X		X			
Contemporary Playground Equipment				X			
New Playground Equipment	X		X		X		
Grills		X		X	X		
Ball Diamond					X		
Basketball Court				X			
Soccer Field		X					
Parking Lot		X	X	X	X		
On-Street Parking	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Rentable Shelter		X		X	X		
Indoor Restrooms		X		X	X		
Seasonal Restrooms (Portapotties)			X				
Sledding Hill		X	X				
Motorized Boat Launch					X		
Non-Motorized Boat Launch					X		
Skateboarding Facilities						X	
Disc Golf		X					
Concession Stand		X			X		
Fishing					X		
Historic Markers/Educational Kiosks		X					



**Neighborhood Park**

## Anderson Park

One of the City’s newest, this neighborhood park features playground equipment, a sitting area, and open space.

### Amenities

Playground Equipment    Picnic Area  
Open Space

 1900 Peters Road, Kaukauna



**Neighborhood Park**

## Fieldcrest Park

A neighborhood park with playground equipment, a sitting area and a small shelter.

### Amenities

Playground Equipment    Picnic Area  
Shade Trees

 100 Frances Street, Kaukauna



**Neighborhood Park**

## Haas Road Park

This future neighborhood park will include playground equipment, a sitting area and a small shelter.

### Amenities

Playground Equipment    Sitting Area

 County Rd. CE, Kaukauna



## Little Tykes Tot Lot

A neighborhood park geared towards the City's youngest residents featuring playground equipment and a sitting area.

### Amenities

Playground Equipment    Sitting Area

 1826 Travis Lane, Kaukauna



**Neighborhood Park**

## Strassburg Park

Small children will enjoy the playground equipment at this neighborhood park along with the picnic area, grass space and baseball diamond.

### Amenities

Picnic Area with Grills    Playground Equipment  
Baseball Diamond    Open Space

 1700 Green Bay Road, Kaukauna



**Neighborhood Park**

## Thelen Park

This neighborhood park features playground equipment, baseball diamond, a shaded sitting area with grills and Revolutionary War historical marker.

### Amenities

Playground Equipment    Picnic Area  
Baseball Diamond    Shade Trees  
Historical Marker

 1401 Thelen Avenue, Kaukauna



**Neighborhood Park**

# White City Park

Named after the predominate color of area homes constructed in the late 1800's to house employees of Thilmany Pulp and Paper, this neighborhood park is known for its old growth shade trees and small sledding hill.

## Amenities

Playground Equipment    Shade Trees  
Open Space                      Sledding Hill

 210 Ducharme Street, Kaukauna



**Neighborhood Park**

<b>Amenity Inventory</b>	<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>							
	Anderson Park	Fieldcrest Park	Haas Road Park	Little Tykes Tot Lot	Strassburg Park	Thelen Park	White City Park	
Sitting Area	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Shade Trees		X		X	X	X	X	
Traditional Playground Equipment		X			X	X	X	
Contemporary Playground Equipment		X		X				
New Playground Equipment	X		X	X		X	X	
Grills					X	X		
Ball Diamond					X	X	X	
Basketball Court					X	X		
On-Street Parking	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Parking Lot			X					
Sledding Hill							X	
Historic Markers/Educational Kiosks						X		



## Central Park

In close proximity to downtown and the future trail network, this open space features old growth trees and spectacular views of both the Fox River and the Badger Power Canal.

### Amenities

- Open Space
- Parking Lot

**Natural Open Space**



**Leashed Dogs Welcome**



103 Main Avenue, Kaukauna



## Kelso Park and Pond

Walking trails surround the pond in this natural open space. Fish from shore or non-motorized watercraft or enjoy the view from sitting areas near the water.

### Amenities

- Grass Trails
- Picnic Tables
- Pond
- Sitting Area
- Fishing Pier
- Wildlife Viewing

**Natural Open Space**



**Leashed Dogs Welcome**



2801 Progress Way, Kaukauna



## Konkapot Trail/Preserve

Featuring gravel trails through calm nature spaces along the Konkapot Creek and connecting downtown parks with the “CE” Trail —dogs are welcome on-leash.

### Amenities

- Biking/Walking Trails
- Shelter
- Parking Lot (Dodge Street)
- Dog-Friendly

**Natural Open Space**



**Leashed Dogs Welcome**



Trailhead (with parking) located at corner of Dodge Street and Island Street





## Nature View Park

A natural open space, this park features grassy trails and opportunities for wildlife viewing.

### Amenities

Grass Trails

**Natural Open Space**



**Leashed Dogs Welcome**



401 E. Farmland Drive, Kaukauna



## Quarry Point Park

A natural open space, this park features an open area for fishing, picnicking and wildlife viewing.

### Amenities

Open Space

Sitting Area

Water Views

Fishing

**Natural Open Space**



**Leashed Dogs Welcome**



401 Elm Street, Kaukauna



## Rapid Croche Picnic Area

A natural open space, this picnic area features an open area for fishing, wooded trails and a pavilion with grills for gatherings.

### Amenities

Open Space

Sitting Area

Water Views

Fishing

Grass Trails

Pavilion / Picnic Area

Grills

Seasonal Restrooms

**Natural Open Space**



**Leashed Dogs Welcome**



W 214 County Rd. ZZ, Buchanan





**Natural Open Space**



**Leashed Dogs Welcome**



**301 Catherine Street, Kaukauna**

## Thilwerth Park

Historic kiosks are featured in this natural open space along with fishing, a sitting area, and an asphalt trail connection.

### Amenities

- Open Space
- Water Views
- Trail Connection
- Educational Kiosks
- Sitting Area
- Wildlife Viewing
- Fishing
- Parking lot



**Natural Open Space**



**Leashed Dogs Welcome**



**Launch accessible from parking under Lawe Street Bridge, next to River View Middle School (101 Oak Street)**

## Trestle Park

This natural open space features limited access for experienced kayakers to take on the rapids section of the Fox River. Contact Kaukauna Utilities for release dates and directions on accessing the launch.

### Amenities

- Kayak Launch
- Water Views



**Natural Open Space**



**Leashed Dogs Welcome**



**3650 Electric City Blvd, Kaukauna**

## Van Eperen Park and Pond

Home to the City's first trial pollinator program, this natural open space includes an active honey bee hive on site. Walking trails surround the pond perfect for fishing from shore or non-motorized watercraft.

### Amenities

- Grass Trail
- Parking Lot
- Wildlife Viewing
- Pond
- Fishing

Amenity Inventory	Natural Open Spaces									
	Central Park	Kelso Park and Pond	Konkapot Preserve and Trail	Nature View Park	Quarry Point Park	Rapid Croche Picnic Area	Thilwerth Park	Trestle Park (Kayak Launch)	Van Eperen Park and Pond	
Sitting Area	X	X	X		X	X	X			
Shade Trees			X			X				
Parking Lot	X		X			X		X	X	
On-Street Parking		X	X	X	X				X	
Crushed Gravel Trail			X							
Grass / Natural Trail		X		X		X			X	
Non-Motorized Boat Launch		X						X	X	
Fishing		X			X	X	X		X	
Swimming (Pond/River)		X							X	
Educational / Historic Kiosks							X			
Wildlife Viewing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Leashed Dogs Permitted	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	



## Eagle Plaza

An urban open space featuring an eagle sculpture pays homage to Kaukauna’s eagle habitat. Eagle Plaza connects to the Main Avenue pedestrian bridge, the farmers market site, Central Park and the future Power Canal Trail.

### Amenities

Sitting Area  
Public Art

Trail Connection

Urban Open Space

📍 Main Ave at Power Canal, Kaukauna



## Friends and Family Sculpture Garden and Heritage Parkway Trail

Unique interactive sculptures are featured in this urban open space along with sitting areas with scenic views of the Fox River—all adjoining an asphalt trail.

### Amenities

Biking/Walking Trails  
Water Views

Sitting Area

Urban Open Space

🐾 Leashed Dogs Welcome

📍 157 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Kaukauna



## Fassbender Park

An urban open space with sitting area and shade trees. This park is currently under renovation through the efforts of the Kaukauna High School Civic Engagement Class.

### Amenities

Sitting Area

Shade Trees

Urban Open Space

📍 320 Crooks Avenue, Kaukauna





## Fox River Boardwalk

This new trail will connect the downtown Kaukauna trail network with the Village of Little Chute park and trail network. The trail will connect via a pedestrian bridge spanning the Fox River. Anticipated opening in 2021.

### Amenities

Bike/Walking Trails      Water Views  
Fishing

Trail accessible from Eagle Plaza

📍 (Kaukauna) or Heesakker Park in Village of Little Chute

Urban Open Space

 Leashed Dogs Welcome



## Gathering of the Pike Plaza

Located outside the public library, this urban open space will feature access to a future trail network, beautiful river views and opportunities for wildlife and public art viewing. (Opening in 2020)

### Amenities

Trail Connection      Sitting Area  
Water Views      Wildlife Viewing  
Public Art

📍 207 Thilmany Road, Kaukauna (along Fox River)

Urban Open Space



## Interactive Learning Garden at the Kaukauna Public Library

This truly unique learning space for all ages features outdoor classrooms on art, archeology, biology, history, music and literature, along with an amphitheater for outdoor performances and educational programs. Opening in 2019.

### Amenities

Sitting Area      Public Art  
Educational Programming

📍 207 Thilmany Road, Kaukauna

Urban Open Space



**Urban Open Space**

# Vaudette Plaza

An urban open space, this park includes a sitting area to take in the activity of downtown Kaukauna.

## Amenities

Sitting Area

Trail Connection



**Corner of Crooks Avenue and 2nd St,  
Kaukauna**



**Urban Open Space**

# Veteran's Memorial Ring of Honor

The Veteran's Memorial Ring of Honor recognizes Kaukauna veterans who have served their country. The space is open year round for individuals to make a remembrance and features a seating area.

## Amenities

Sitting Area

Parking Lot

Historic Marker



**420 Lawe Street, Kaukauna**

<b>Amenity Inventory</b>	<b>Urban Open Spaces</b>								
	Eagle Plaza	Family and Friends Sculpture Garden and Trail	Fassbender Park	Gathering of the Pike Plaza	Interactive Learning Garden at the Kaukauna Public Library	Vaudette Plaza	Veterans Memorial / Ring of Honor	Fox River Boardwalk	
Sitting Area	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Shade Trees		X	X					X	
Parking Lot	X	X		X	X		X		
On-Street Parking	X	X	X			X			
Indoor Restrooms					X				
Asphalt Trail	X	X		X				X	
Historic Markers/Educational Kiosks							X	X	
Dogs Permitted	X	X		X		X		X	
Public Art Installation	X	X		X	X		X		

## Chapter 9. Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment

### A. Public Input Assessment

The 2018 Parks and Outdoor Recreation Plan for the City of Kaukauna engaged members of the public through a written survey and an open house event. The written survey was available for six weeks in the summer of 2018 in both a paper format and a digital (online) format. More than 350 respondents participated in the survey, the vast majority doing so online.

The open house was hosted on September 25, 2018 at the City of Kaukauna. One community member attended the open house, negative weather conditions likely contributed to low attendance. The open house sought to gather information above and beyond what was captured in the online survey, but plan authors were still able to use the information that was captured in the generation of this plan.

#### *Other Notes on the Public Input Process*

In addition gauging park trends, needs and observations, the survey included a number of questions related to walkability and bikeability in the City of Kaukauna. These questions relate specifically to linkages, neighborhood connectivity and perceptions of safety.

### B. Survey Findings

#### *Respondent Demographics*

- 357 respondents participated in the survey online, 2 respondents returned paper surveys.
- 274 respondents (76.3%) indicated that they lived in the City of Kaukauna. Residency was not required to participate in the survey, as input from park users (regardless of where they live) was considered valid and important to the integrity of this research.
- 43 respondents (11.9%) indicated that they live in a municipality that shares a border with the City of Kaukauna (Village of Combined Locks, Village of Little Chute, Village of Harrison, Town of Kaukauna, Town of Buchanan, or Town of Vandebroek).
- The majority of other respondents live in other Outagamie County, Calumet County or Brown County municipalities. A small number of outliers (8 respondents) include non-residents or former residents who indicated that they are fully or partially retired out of state.
- The largest age demographic represented in the responses was 25-39 years old with 40.9% (146) respondents self-identifying as belonging to that age cohort. This was followed by the 40-54 year old age cohort (26.9%, or 96 respondents).

#### *Tenure of Residency*

Respondents represented both a mix of residents newer to the Fox Cities as well as long-established community members, but the majority were long-established Fox Cities area residents. 295 participants, or 82.6% of the survey sample, indicated that they had lived in the Fox Cities area for more than 15 years.

#### *Frequency of Park Users*

Over 75% (276) of survey respondents indicated that they utilize parks and open spaces more than once a month – and 42.9% (153) of survey respondents (represented in the 75%+ figure) utilize parks and

open spaces more than once weekly. This high level of use translated to very specific feedback on what amenities are desired and improvements are needed, as well as the ability to specifically reference parks and public spaces that they would like to see Kaukauna replicate from other communities.

#### *How Park Users Access Parks*

The top means by which park users access parks are by car (222 or 62.2% of respondents) or by foot (107 or 30% of respondents). Less used means of accessing parks are by bicycle/skates (27 or 7.6%) or by public transportation (1 or 0.3%).

Knowing that the majority of park users access parks by foot or by car may tell us several things:

- Individuals may be more likely to access parks by foot when they feel safe walking to that location (perceived safety, safety from walking on a protected trail or sidewalk versus on a street).
- Individuals may be influenced by availability or ease of parking at a location if they tend to visit by car.
- Individuals who do not have access to a vehicle and rely on public transportation may not have easy access to a number of City parks<sup>1</sup>. A map of City parks and Valley Transit stops is included in the addendum of this plan.

#### *Perceptions of Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety in the City*

64% (224) of survey participants indicated they utilize pedestrian or bicycle amenities more than once per month. 38.9% (or 136) participants, represented in the 64% figure, reported using pedestrian or bicycle amenities more than once per week. Users who reported using pedestrian or bicycle amenities at least once per month (269 participants) were identified as high users<sup>2</sup> and were invited to answer additional questions about biking and walking in Kaukauna.

Of the High User participant group, 35% (90) of participants reported feeling “Very Safe” walking and biking in the City, and 37% (95) of participants reported feeling “safe” walking and biking in the City.

#### *Gaps in Bicycle and Pedestrian Networks*

Participants were asked to share areas of the City where they felt there were clear gaps in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure connectivity in an open-ended format. 86 responses were provided, with the top answers as follows:

- CE Trail connection to subdivisions in the southeastern area of the City, particularly east of Haas Road. This was a recurring theme in open-ended questions. (37 responses)
- State Highway 55 and Lawe Street were reported as areas where even with bicycle infrastructure individuals felt unsafe due to high speeds and truck traffic. (9 responses)

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<sup>1</sup> A map is included in the Appendix to this plan which notes Valley Transit bus stop locations and all City parks locations.

<sup>2</sup> Logic analysis such as this in survey generation is sometimes used to identify participants who might offer greater insights on a specific topic. Survey development is a fine balance of asking enough questions to gather good data, while not asking so many questions as to tire or burnout participants. By identifying high users of pedestrian and bicycle amenities, we were able to ask follow-up questions specific to that group without adding to the full survey experience for all users.



- County CE and roundabout located at Crooks Avenue was reported as an area where people felt unsafe navigating on foot or by bicycle. (8 responses)
- Lawe Street Bridge was specifically mentioned as an area without bicycle lanes, and that there is a need for a safer North-South connecting route between the two sides of the Fox River. (7 responses)
- Crooks Avenue was identified as an area where the speed and volume of traffic discourages on-street bicycle use. The lighted crosswalk was praised. (6 responses)
- The Hyland Avenue and Gertrude Street intersection and surrounding area was mentioned as a challenging disconnect between residential neighborhoods and Haen Elementary School. (3 responses)
- Highway 96 from Little Chute (on-street bicycle lanes cease at the City of Kaukauna municipal boundary) was referenced as a gap in the bicycle network. (3 responses)
- A desire to extend the CE Trail, possibly as far as Brown County was mentioned. This appeared to be more for a recreational use than for functional transportation. (3 responses)

Comments in open-ended areas of the survey such as the following were received on the subject of bike and pedestrian gaps:

“Walking along Highway 55 on Lawe Street is scary. Garbage day makes it even worse.”

“Highway 96 coming from Little Chute into Kaukauna. Make a bike lane and parking only on one side of 96 or Draper Street. Reroute semi trucks to Northland Avenue to make safe travels on a bike.”

“The bottom of the bridge on Lawe Street should have a crossing light similar to the crossing light by Family Video.”

“I HATE having my kids bike over the bridge. Once my daughter fell into traffic on the bridge and almost got ran over by a car.”

“The intersection of Crooks Avenue and Ann Street – trying to get to Piggly Wiggly and Walgreens is risky... maybe blinking lights?”

“We need to extend the CE Trail past the High School. I would use the CE Trail more frequently if I didn’t have to walk/bike with my kids on the side of the road of CE. It is extremely dangerous.”

“Need to focus on park connections to each other via trails. Green Bay has been doing very nice work connecting trails to one another which creates a nice network.”

#### *Why Respondents Utilize Parks, Trails and Open Spaces*

Participants were asked to sort in rank order five reasons why they personally utilize parks, trails and open spaces. Individuals top two responses were aggregated to identify the prevailing reasons for park use. The following findings were made (in rank order of most identified reason to least identified reason):

1. **To be with friends and family in a scenic outdoor setting.** 64.5% of respondents (162) indicated this use as their #1 or #2 reason to utilize parks.

2. **To enjoy a wide range of outdoor activities (both active and passive recreation).** 59% of respondents (148) indicated this use as their #1 or #2 reason to utilize parks.
3. **To escape the crowds and enjoy solitude.** 36% of respondents (91) indicated this use as their #1 or #2 reason to utilize parks.
4. **To meet my exercise or fitness goals.** 30% of respondents (75) indicated this use as their #1 or #2 reason to utilize parks.
5. **To learn about history, nature or culture.** 10% of respondents (26) indicated this use as their #1 or #2 reason to utilize parks.

#### *Most Important Features of Parks, Trails and Open Spaces*

Users were asked to place in rank order eight features of parks, trails and open spaces and their importance to them personally. Individuals top two responses were aggregated to identify the prevailing features of importance for park users. The following findings were made (in rank order of most important feature to least important feature).

1. **Accessibility for all visitors (inclusive of all abilities).** 39.9% of respondents (99) indicated this feature as their #1 or #2 feature of importance in parks, trails and open spaces.
2. **Bathroom availability and cleanliness.** 35.5% of respondents (88) indicated this feature as their #1 or #2 feature of importance in parks, trails and open spaces.
3. **Contemporary and interactive equipment.** 31.9% of respondents (79) indicated this feature as their #1 or #2 feature of importance in parks, trails and open spaces.
4. **Bicycle and pedestrian accessibility.** 30.6% of respondents (76) indicated this feature as their #1 or #2 feature of importance in parks, trails and open spaces.
5. **Distance from where I live.** 22.2% of respondents (55) indicated this feature as their #1 or #2 feature of importance in parks, trails and open spaces.
6. **Landscaping and appearance.** 16.5% of respondents (41) indicated this feature as their #1 or #2 feature of importance in parks, trails and open spaces.
7. **Amenities for dogs.** 14.9% of respondents (37) indicated this feature as their #1 or #2 feature of importance in parks, trails and open spaces.
8. **Availability of parking.** 8.5% of respondents (21) indicated this feature as their #1 or #2 feature of importance in parks, trails and open spaces.

#### *Dogs in Kaukauna Parks, Trails and Open Spaces*

Dogs are currently only permitted off-leash at the Kaukauna Dog Park. Dogs are permitted on-leash at Thelen Park, Central Park, Kelso Park and Pond, Van Eperen Park and Pond, Grignon Park and Nature View Park. The following parks are not clearly signed as to whether or not dogs are permitted: Anderson Park, Quarry Point Park, Konkapot Trail, Hydro Park, Sculpture Garden and Trail. Signage does not indicate at any park whether or not dogs must be on-leash, although this is likely presumed.

Of 254 survey participants, it was a roughly even split on whether dogs should be allowed in more parks on-leash versus being allowed in all parks on-leash. Findings were:

- 37.8% (96) of respondents indicated that they would support dogs being allowed (on-leash) in all City parks.

- 36.2% (92) of respondents indicated that they would support dogs being allowed (on-leash) in more, but not all, City parks.
- 20.9% (50) of respondents indicated that they would not support dogs being allowed (on-leash) in any City parks.



Signage could stand to be significantly improved and could be presented in a tone that is more friendly and inclusive. All parks that prohibit dogs clearly state this, but parks that (apparently) permit dogs might say “Dogs welcome” on signage<sup>3</sup>. This is clearer for users and is inclusive. An excellent example of clear guidelines for dogs in parks is present in signage in the Village of Little Chute, as pictured to the left.

Additionally, it would make sense to open up the newly classified ‘Natural Open Spaces’ to leashed dogs. These natural open spaces are intended for passive recreation and do not feature playground equipment. Interactions between children and dogs are less likely in these natural open spaces than they are in Regional, Neighborhood or Local Parks. These open spaces are listed in the preceding chapter with “Leashed Dogs Welcome” as a proposed change of amenities.

Only positive comments in open-ended areas of the survey such as the following were received on this

subject, including the following:

“As a new resident, it was difficult to find much info on parks and trails in the area and what they offered. We were also disappointed in the fact that few public areas allowed dogs.”

“We just moved from a place where dogs were allowed in all parks. No dog policy in Kaukauna has been a hardship and not all dogs/owners like a dog park.”

“Other than not allowing dogs in parks, I think Kaukauna does a fine job. The Kaukauna Dog Park is amazing and I wish my new town of Dubuque, Iowa had a dog park like Kaukauna’s!”

<sup>3</sup> The City of Kaukauna Municipal Code is sorely unclear on the subject of permitting leashed dogs in public places. Chapter 9.15, Section 6 states: “Prohibited Areas for Animals. Any person owning, keeping, or in charge of any animal shall not permit such animal to be in any public park in the City at any time, except as authorized by the park department, on any public school grounds, or on any playgrounds except for school-sponsored and authorized purposes. The provisions of this section shall not be applicable in cases in which a person is being assisted by a seeing-eye dog or in cases where a leashed animal is being walked upon a designated trail area through the park”. This would suggest that parks without trails, even if not signed to say “Dogs prohibited”, would not allow dogs. Some clarity would be beneficial for staff to better understand code and to better inform the public.

“Allow dogs on leashes at all parks. We have an emotional support service dog and we technically can only go to the dog park to enjoy.”<sup>4</sup>

#### *Park Leakage and Regional Park Insights*

An effort of the public outreach process was to determine what other parks were being utilized by Kaukauna and greater Fox Valley area residents. If it can be determined what specific assets and amenities parks that are a large regional draw in our area offer, we can look specifically at where improvements might benefit our park inventory.

Survey participants were not only asked which parks they utilize in Kaukauna’s parks system, but also to share what parks outside of Kaukauna they utilize. Participants were encouraged to share specific amenities that they enjoy utilizing and go out of their way to utilize. This data has been aggregated for consideration.

#### *Kaukauna Parks and Open Spaces Specific Feedback*

Some feedback received was specific to certain parks in Kaukauna. Those comments have been broken out by park for consideration. Comments related specifically to City of Kaukauna parks are incorporated here.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Dog Park**

- “The dog park needs some desperate attention.”
- “Dog wash available at dog park. Man-made lakes/ponds for dogs to swim.”
- “Fix the bridge at the dog park. It was on the 2017 Public Works project list and has not yet been fixed/replaced.”
- “I would love to see running water at the Dog Park, even if there was a fee assessed to use the park.”

#### **Hydro Park**

- “A splash pad would be great by Hydro Park. Middle of the City, accessible for each side of the river.”
- “Have a DJ at Hydro Park on Fridays or Saturday nights for teens to hang out.”
- “Nice landscaping at Hydro Park should be replicated at other City parks.”
- “Add a few water features/towers at Hydro Park.”
- “We would love to see more family activities held at Hydro Park. Kudos to the City for hosting the Live! Music series.”

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<sup>4</sup> Technically, this is not correct. Per City ordinance, service animals are allowed in City Parks. However, it matters little if this is how the public interprets the ordinance. This demonstrates a need to better explain to residents where dogs are and are not allowed and where service animals are welcome, as well.

<sup>5</sup> The CE Trail is an Outagamie County park that has some local maintenance jurisdiction. It is worth noting that despite the fact that this is not a municipal park, that the extension of the CE Trail to southeastern subdivisions in the City of Kaukauna was one of the most highly noted topics in the survey data. The CE Trail was selected as one of the top three most visited parks by 133 respondents and was overall the #2 most utilized park. The desire for extension of the CE Trail to southeastern subdivisions and improve safety for residents in that areas was mentioned specifically 37 times in open-ended comments.

- “A band stage or amphitheatre would be nice.”
- “More art/music/markets at Hydro Park.”
- “There is an area next to Hydro Park and Kaukauna Utilities offices that looks like an island. It has a bridge connecting it to Hydro Park however the bridge appears to be over a sea of wild weeds. In general it looks really second rate. Was it intended to be a pond of some sort to highlight Hydro Park and our connection to water power? If so , why is there not a push to get this finished. The Hydro Park is gaining some exposure with the Wednesday night concerts and the Electric City Experience and it brings new people to our area but the view from the park is a field of weeds and bugs. It could be so much more!”

### **Konkapot Trail / Konkapot Prairie Preserve**

- “ “Keep dogs on a leash” signs are ignored (and not visible) on the Konkapot Trail. Put dog waste bag dispensers on either end of Konkapot Trail with a garbage can, and possibly on the Oakridge Avenue entrance to Prairie Preserve.”
- “Pave the Konkapot Trail and Horseshoe Trail going to Horseshoe Park, or use a material that packs better. There is some very coarse gravel and loose gravel for biking and walking.”
- “The Prairie Preserve Trail has some areas of poor drainage resulting in puddles to cross. Please fill in or ditch better.”
- “Control the poison ivy along the Konkapot Trail.”
- “Control teasel (dipsacus) in many areas, such as Konkapot Trail, Prairie Preserve grassland.”
- “Place benches along Konkapot Trail.”
- “I would like to see more signs posted for people to put dogs on leashes and pick up after their dogs... It would also be nice to have a garbage can on trails so people don’t throw their garbage on the ground. There are many uneven surfaces on that trail making it difficult for strollers, bikes and older walkers. It would be nice to see it paved or at least seal coated.”
- “I am not a fan of walking or biking on gravel or wood chips.”
- “We need garbage facilities along the trails.”
- “I don’t feel safe taking my kids on the Konkapot Trail, I will only go if my husband is able to be with us.”
- “I would love to see the Konkapot Trail paved. I would also like to see more/better signage of bike trails.”
- “Paved trails would be much nicer, specifically, Konkapot.”
- “Pave the portion of the Konkapot Trail where it meets the CE Trail and there is a slight incline.”
- “More lighting on the Konkapot Trail for evening use.”
- “Add security cameras on Konkapot Trail.”

### **Friends and Family Sculpture Park**

- “The downtown statutes area and small park between businesses should be refurbished. They are an eye sore and reflect poorly on downtown Kaukauna.”

### **Riverside Park**

- “Please update equipment.”

### **La Follette Park**

- “Please update equipment.”
- “Turn La Follette Park into into a really great dog park with lots of obstacles and separate areas for big vs. little dogs.”
- “La Follette needs attention... graffiti on trees and slides, both water fountains don’t work. A weedy area of sand that used to be a volleyball court (I’d rather see it removed than in disrepair).”
- “I live near La Follette and it’s not the nicest looking park, but it has a lot of potential.”

### **City Swimming Pool**

- “The Kaukauna swimming pool needs to update their hours. Extend weekends into September and have open swim on weekend nights when not booked.”
- “Add a splash pad where sand volleyball court is now inside the pool.”
- “Please consider a wellness lot “Cross Fit” area above the swimming pool with basketball courts, sand volleyball courts.”
- “I was very disappointed to see the park equipment taken out of the sand area outside of the pool area near the parking lot. That was always a nice pit stop area for my son on our way home after we walk the Konkapot Trail.”

### **Central Park**

- “Build an amphitheatre at Central Park for using during the Electric City Experience and other outdoor events.”
- “Find more use for Central Park. Live at Hydro could be there instead with the stage up the hill a little, on the concrete pad and much more room for people to spread out. More of a permanent stage area could be built instead of setting up and tearing down a stage ever week.”
- “Amphitheatre behind the Carnegie Library building.”
- “We would like to see a park with stationery outdoor workout machines. It would be great for Central Park.”

### **Bayorgeon Fields**

- “Revamp Bayorgeon Field for events. So much money was put into the high school fields that Bayorgeon Field could easily be turned into an event location.”
- “I think Bayorgeon Field needs to be turned into something more usable and attractive to outsiders. We have a \$10 million dollar sports complex at the high school, we don’t need two football fields. A splash pad or larger pool would be a huge draw.”
- “The softball fields by the pool cause injuries from rock filled dirt. You really need to scrape the infield and put down better dirt.”

### **Fassbender Park**

- “Fassbender is more of a greenspace park, but it seems neglected and should have some money thrown at it to doll it up.”

### **Anderson Park**

- “Add a soccer field area in Anderson Park.”

### **Strassburg Park**

- “I live near Strassburg Park and it is very underutilized. Baseball is played maybe two times a year and the playground equipment could be updated. Maybe this park could use a remodel? Even a shelter would be a nice touch.”
- “Strassburg Park should be weeded and feeded.”

### **Horseshoe Park**

- “A disc golf course at Horseshoe Park.”
- “Horseshoe Park equipment is awful and so out of date.”

### **Grignon Mansion/Grignon Park**

- “It would be so nice if the Grignon Mansion was open more frequently.”

### **Thilwerth Park**

- “Clean up the goose droppings along side of the river on the trail near the Library.”
- “Across from the Library on the trail there are always dead fish and animal waste on the trail.”

### **Glenview Park**

- “I never see anybody at that park because of the lack of activities and places for parents to relax.”

### **General/All Parks**

- “Some sort of guide about parks and park options in the City of Kaukauna. This could involve a listing of parks and park locations in the City along with a map of locations and trails, and a list of what amenities are in each park. This guide should be easily found at the City website and could also be in a pamphlet format available at some parks or throughout the City where visitors might be.”
- “When I looked for the parks on the City website, I couldn’t find them. I’d love to see a list and maybe some sort of scavenger hunt to visit all the parks?”
- “Have bathrooms unlocked for public use even in “off season” or evenings.”

### *General Park Feedback or Requests*

General feedback that was provided in open-ended questions (but was not park-specific) is aggregated here. The number in parenthesis following each feedback line indicates how many times this specific feedback was shared.

- Modernize/update park equipment in Kaukauna parks (15)
- Add a splash pad in Kaukauna parks system (10)
- Parks are described as “outdated” (7)
- Southeastern subdivision areas (Meadowview/Haas Road) lack park spaces for families (5)

- Clean up landscaping and ensure grass clippings not rotting on sidewalks (4)
- Add outdoor exercise equipment, especially for adults (4)
- Allow dogs in more parks (3)
- Add obstacle course or agility equipment (3)
- Enhance dog amenities in parks (3)
- Market parks more effectively to promote the large number and wide amenities (3)
- Add bathrooms to parks that do not have them, ensure that quality and accessibility are high (2)
- Improve maintenance of volleyball courts (2)
- Add security cameras in parks/on trails (2)
- Invest in upkeep of existing park network before adding new parks (2)
- Add cooking facilities in park pavilions (2)
- Add rubber matting in parks to replace woodchips (1)
- Add more toddler-age amenities (1)
- Add more benches along trails (1)
- Add more garbage cans along trails (1)
- Increase police presence in parks (1)
- Increase canoe/kayak access points (1)
- Limit use of herbicides/pesticides in landscape management (1)
- Program more free, family-friendly activities (1)
- Bring back park leader program for summer, as well as activity sheds (1)
- Diversify tree varieties in parks to replace Ash tree population (1)
- Add double toddler swings to parks so parents can swing more than one child simultaneously (1)
- Maintain nostalgic park equipment to enhance youth gross motor skills (1)
- Add Gaga pit to parks (1)

#### *Park Leakage to other Municipalities*

Park respondents were asked to list (by name and location) all parks that they utilized in the past twelve months in Northeast Wisconsin that were located outside of the City of Kaukauna. Northeast Wisconsin is a generous geographic area in our summary here – stretching from Door County south to Sheboygan County and west to Winnebago County. More than 100 parks or park systems located outside of the City of Kaukauna municipal park inventory were shared. The goal in asking this question was to see if there were high volume destination parks in a proximate driving distance to Kaukauna that residents were opting to use in addition to or instead of City of Kaukauna parks. With that data in-hand, we could assess what amenities those destination parks have and if they have been more recently updated than City of Kaukauna parks.

Of the 100+ parks indicated:

- 183 mentions of parks located in the City of Appleton were noted
- 79 mentions of Wisconsin state parks were noted (predominantly High Cliff State Park)
- 54 mentions of parks located in Little Chute were noted
- 53 mentions of splash pads in other municipalities were noted



- 45 mentions of parks located in Menasha were noted
- 35 mentions of parks located in Neenah were noted

Of the 100+ parks indicated, the most cited (by name) parks included:

- High Cliff State Park, Sherwood (61)
- Memorial Park, Appleton (51)
- Heesakker Park and Trail, Little Chute (27)
- Wanick Choute Community Park and Splash Pad (21)
- Derks Park, Appleton (20)
- Plamann Park, Appleton (19)
- Telulah Park, Appleton (18)
- Doyle Park, Little Chute (17)
- Riverside Park, Neenah (16)
- Heckrodt Preserve, Menasha (15)

**High Cliff State Park** is a bit difficult to compare or extrapolate desires from in terms of what the Kaukauna municipal park system might add/modify as it is a state park. State parks more traditionally offer extensive rustic hiking trails, camping sites and open spaces which are not typically available at the same scale in municipal parks. High Cliff State Park is noted for its water access to Lake Winnebago.

**Appleton’s Memorial Park** is a park of a scale which the City of Kaukauna park system does not offer. This all-inclusive 143 acre park is home to the community ice rink, multiple ball diamonds and pavilions. The modernized playground equipment is distributed between three separate playground areas. The Universal Playground is inclusive and accessible to users of all abilities. The Universal Playground features a rubber mat surface that is wheelchair accessible and cushions falls. There are a variety of types of climbing activities, ranging from rock walls to jungle gyms, etc. that offer different motor skill development through play.



*(Appleton Memorial Park photo courtesy of Go Valley Kids)*

A Milwaukee Journal Sentinel article from March 2019<sup>6</sup> featured Appleton Memorial Park’s Universal Playground and noted features in accessible playgrounds around the state, including:

- Bird nest swings (allow more than one child to swing at one time)
- Liberty swings (allow children in wheelchairs to swing)

<sup>6</sup> Schwabe, Amy. 2019. ‘Inclusive parks are for everyone: Some accessible playgrounds to visit in Wisconsin.’ *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. March 15, 2019. Accessed online at: <https://www.jsonline.com/story/travel/wisconsin/weekend-getaway/2019/03/15/accessible-inclusive-playgrounds-wisconsin/3049874002/>

- Braille and sign language alphabets printed on equipment
- Metal slides (prevent electrostatic buildup, which can interfere with cochlear implants).
- Poured-in-place rubber surfaces that are navigable for wheelchairs.
- Ramps that allow wheelchair users to access the highest points in play structures.
- Wheelchair-accessible merry-go-rounds

The article points out that ADA requirements do not often go far enough to ensure that children of all abilities can enjoy playground equipment to the same extent as differently abled peers.

**Heesakker Park** in Little Chute offers a mix of trails (paved and non-paved), water access and playground equipment. Heesakker Park will be connected to the City of Kaukauna by the Fox River Boardwalk as soon as 2020, bridging the two park systems for non-vehicular access.



**Wanick Choute Park** in Sherwood features one of the closest splash pads for City of Kaukauna residents. Splash pads do not require lifeguards as they do not feature little to any standing water and pose a lesser risk of drowning. The park beyond the splash pad features a contemporary playground boasting a climbing web and rubber mulching.

*(Wanick Choute Park photos courtesy of Go Valley Kids)*

**Derks Park** in Appleton also features a rubber surfaced playground, as well as park pavilion and a walking trail / sidewalks around the perimeter of the park. Located off of Highway KK in the southeastern part of Appleton, this park is proximate for many residents in Kaukauna, particularly those living on the southern side of the community.



**Plamann Park** in Appleton is a part of the Outagamie County Parks system. This large (257 acre) park features a wide variety of family-friendly amenities including a sand swimming area, children’s farm area with animals, family-friendly walking trails, disc golf, court sports and ball diamonds. Plamann Park is currently fundraising toward a goal of adding a \$200,000 challenge obstacle course for adults and children feature similar to the one pictured below.



(Challenge obstacle course photo courtesy of Outagamie County Parks Department).

**Telulah Park** in Appleton features a rentable park pavilion, disc golf course, a skate park connection to the Newberry Trail, court sports, ball diamond, soccer field and an ADA accessible playground with a mulch surface. Future expansion plans include an ADA accessible kayak launch.

**Doyle Park** in Little Chute features the local pool and waterslide, contemporary playground equipment, court sports, ball diamonds and fishing access.

**Riverside Park** in Neenah is often called “Rocket Park” due to its large rocket ship-shaped playground equipment. The park has trails and a lovely waterfront location as well as a water feature reminiscent of the fountain in City Park in Appleton. A number of community events occur in Riverside Park including a popular live music series. The park may also be rented for private events like weddings.

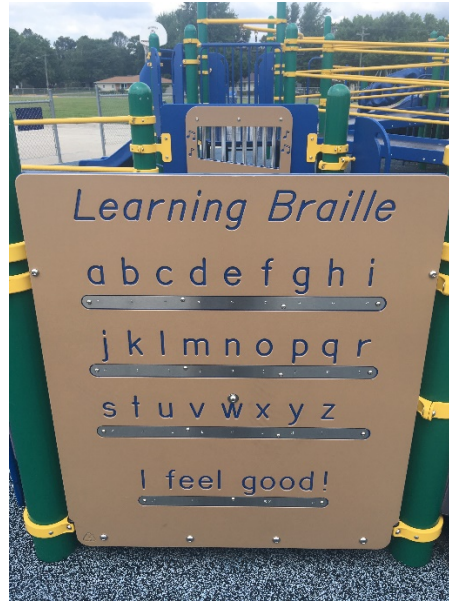
**Heckrodt Wetland Reserve** in Menasha features several miles of nature trails, a nature education center and outdoor play learning areas and learning stations. Heckrodt hosts a number of community natural educational programs as well as youth-focused programs with Scouts groups, preschools, etc. Heckrodt is operated as its own non-profit organization independent of the City of Menasha.

Extrapolating the features of these popular destination parks in Northeast Wisconsin with what City of Kaukauna parks offer leaves us with a few key takeaways:

- Community members desire parks that offer a diverse range of activities and spaces – a park with more offerings – even if it is not within walking distance – makes for a travel-worthy destination.
- Community members desire contemporary playground equipment. Thematically respondents to the survey noted that the Kaukauna playground equipment was “out of date”, and noted parks with updated equipment as destinations. A number of respondents also noted that they enjoy using the Kaukauna Area School District playgrounds in summer or on weekends as the equipment is more contemporary.
- Community members desire inclusive playground equipment that welcomes and includes individuals of all abilities.

*(Pictured below: an ADA Safe Swing that an individual in a wheelchair can safely use located at H.B. Tanner Elementary School and a braille play learning activity at Electa Quinney Elementary School)*





### *Other Insights on Gaps and Opportunities*

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) publishes annually a list of emerging trends and issues in parks and open spaces. The 2019 list<sup>7</sup> included emerging issues such as the opioid epidemic, technology and data-gathering, animals and yoga among other trends viewed nationally. Some of the top takeaways from this report that might apply now or in the future to Kaukauna municipal parks:

- Responding to the opioid crisis through park design. Safety concerns in parks (some related to opioid abuse and the dangers of abandoned drug paraphernalia) offer an opportunity for community policing, health partnerships and opportunities to educate the public on safe sharps disposal. NRPA encourages installation of safety lighting, large volume sharps disposal containers and training for City / parks staff on Narcan (overdose reversal treatment) application.
- Technology can be used to gather useful data for municipal leadership. Parks in San Diego, California use beacon counters and geofencing to detect the number of times unique mobile devices 'ping' in a certain location. These effectively provide counters on the exact number of users of parks coming and going on a daily basis as well as timeframes for use. Data like this would be labor intensive to gather through headcounts or spot checks and the near ubiquitous use of internet-connected devices offers an opportunity for data gathering.
- Yoga for all ages and yoga with animals is a continuing trend, with a wide range of types of animals – ranging from goats to pigs to dogs and cats. A large number of municipal recreation programs, including Kaukauna, offer outdoor yoga classes at no or a nominal fee. Yoga studios

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<sup>7</sup> Dolesh, Richard. 2019. 'Top Trends in Parks and Recreation for 2019.' *National Recreation and Parks Association*. January 7, 2019. Accessed online at: <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2019/january/top-trends-in-parks-and-recreation-for-2019/>

and humane societies in the area have offered animal yoga classes for a fun and unique experience.

- Dog parks (and parks that allow dogs) are one of the largest growing types of parks across the United States. Culturally, dogs are viewed as an extension of the family and may be likely to accompany the family on recreational outings, if spaces are inclusive to both human guests and pets.
- Connectivity between government services and parks. By connecting government services through walkable corridors and providing outreach for government services outside of City Hall, parks can become a functional delivery location for government services. The Kaukauna Library's groundbreaking on the Interactive Learning Garden demonstrates a desire to combat nature deficit disorder by creating interactive, outdoor spaces for play learning – reinventing the traditional concept of library programming and merging it with what we traditionally think of as park amenities into a joint venture.
- Non-binary gender identification in park amenities. Inclusive policies that engage members of the LGBTQ+ community have led to infrastructure changes nationally to move away from binary gender identification on park restrooms, changing rooms, etc. to create gender neutral facilities or individual changing areas that are not gender-specific.

The continuing trend toward an aging population in this region of the country and in this part of Wisconsin opens up the need and programming opportunity for additional senior programming. As referenced in Chapter 3 of this plan, our demographics continue to shift toward older residents. Currently the City of Kaukauna offers numerous programs geared toward senior audiences in an indoor setting, but there is a greater opportunity to expand programming for seniors in municipal parks and open spaces.

Other gaps identified through the inventory and public input process include urban camping (improved) for recreational vehicles. Such an improvement would require significant infrastructure and additional staff support in a formal campground setting, but it would likely bring additional economic impact to the region. Water-accessible camping along the Fox River Navigational System has been discussed in the past and may offer a less cost-intensive way to meet a gap in the City's recreational offerings. Rustic, water-accessible campsites would need little more than a grassy area for a tent and a safe place to store a canoe or kayak for the night.

Another opportunity to maximize community usage of parks and open spaces would be to encourage the use of newly developed plazas for programming and events. Currently the Eagle Plaza is utilized for live music performances during the Saturday Farmer's Market, and future plazas like Gathering of the Pike Plaza may offer similar opportunities for similar programming.

## Chapter 10. Recommendations for Outdoor Recreation Provision

Plan proposals are designed to provide adequate recreational facilities to meet current needs and to accommodate projected growth, while at the same time preserving and enhancing Kaukauna's unique natural resources and features. The following plan proposals are designed to attain Kaukauna's goals or its City park and open space network. Some of the proposals are longer in range and may be beyond the City's short term capabilities. Others, however, may be implemented within the next several years and are the foundation of a five-year action plan. The plan proposals should be reviewed annually by the City's Health and Recreation Committee and the general public to accommodate the changing needs of the community.

### *Priorities for Park and Open Space Improvements*

In assessing the public input feedback and after staff discussion, seven key goals and strategies have emerged for park and open space improvements. The goals are numbered below with specific strategies listed under each goal.

1. GOAL: Ensure Connectivity by Trail and Sidewalks for all Residents – the City of Kaukauna should continue to work with Outagamie County to ensure that the areas of the City most rapidly developing with single-family residential development are connected to the City's sidewalk and greater trail network. The most affected areas at the time of writing are the southernly most residential subdivisions which are not yet connected by the CE Trail.

#### STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- Continue to work with Outagamie County for extension of CE Trail and/or safe sidewalk infrastructure to connect southernly residential subdivisions to trail network and provide safe walking/biking access to schools.
  - As residential development continues to the southeastern portion of the City, have discussions on feasibility of trail extension at the time of platting.
2. GOAL: Implement a Master Planning Process for the Municipal Pool – while the City of Kaukauna's pool was very contemporary at the time of its most recent design in the early 1990s, trends in water recreation have changed substantially since this time. One of the most high demand amenities requested in the public input process for this plan was a splash pad water feature in the community. Municipal pools in neighboring communities have upgraded in recent years and are now competing locations for water recreation for families. A professional assessment of the amenities within the Municipal Pool complex as well as projected revenue generation may open the door to potential redesign to include family and age-inclusive features like a splash pad or a miniature golf course, for example.

Another potential consideration for the Municipal Pool would include assessing if major improvements and site maximization is optimal at the present location. If land use at the Doty Bayorgeon Recreation Area were ever to change in the future, this might present an opportunity for a new pool location that could provide more parking and increased access to 1000 Islands Environmental Center.

#### STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- Rely heavily on expertise of City Recreation staff in terms of space needs, functionality and present revenue generation and future revenue forecasting.
  - Identify areas for modernization in municipal pool complex and improvement of underutilized areas (hillside, playground).
  - Ensure that changing rooms, restrooms, and space for employees (locker/changing areas) are designed to be non-binary and inclusive.
3. GOAL: Allow Dogs in More Municipal Parks and Open Spaces – The Kaukauna Dog Park has been and continues to be a large destination for the Fox Valley and southern Brown County residents. Knowing this, continued improvements to the Dog Park such as additional shaded areas, running water, restrooms and a resurfaced parking lot would make this a greater regional destination. At this time, staff does not feel that opening access in municipal parks to dogs (on-leash) is a direction that they are comfortable going in. That being said, there is the opportunity to explore whether the new classification of Natural Open Spaces might be an appropriate fit for dogs. Natural Open Spaces include trails and parks that are not programmed (ie, no playground equipment) and are used more for non-permanent equipment activities such as fishing, wildlife viewing, or enjoying a quiet space in nature.

#### STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- Continue to invest in improvements for the Kaukauna Dog Park, such as running water, restrooms, resurfaced parking lot.
  - Consider increased access for dogs in the newly classified City “natural open spaces” – parks that invite more passive recreation and do not feature playground equipment.
  - Clarify signage in all City parks to be specific as to whether or not dogs are permitted. Presently signage in Thelen Park, the Municipal Pool, Central Park, Van Eperen Park and Pond, Kelso Park and Pond, Nature View Park and Grignon Park do not explicitly state whether dogs are permitted or not. An allowance for dogs in ‘natural open spaces’ would promote parks such as Central Park, Van Eperen Park and Pond, Kelso Park and Pond, Quarry Point Park and Nature View Park as dog-friendly destinations.
4. GOAL: Maintain and Expand Quality Neighborhood Parks and Natural Open Spaces – The City of Kaukauna has a large number of parks and open spaces for its population, and as such, it can be a serious undertaking to replace aging equipment in the 15 parks that feature playground equipment. That being said, it should be a priority for the City to phase out traditional playground equipment that can be unsafe and is less accessible for users of all abilities. Parks that still feature this equipment should be a priority for funding in the next capital improvement plan. New park land should be set aside in developing subdivisions and should feature a mix of natural open spaces and neighborhood classified parks. While some open spaces in the City limits are not municipally-owned, the land use goal for the City of Kaukauna should emphasize maintaining open space acreage (where possible) in the community.

#### STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- Continue to set aside or acquire acreage for future neighborhood parks and natural open spaces in new subdivisions. Neighborhood parks are to provide a similar type of amenity that they do in existing subdivisions (playground equipment, sitting area, possibly a small pavilion – not available for rent).
  - Natural open spaces provide dog-friendly spots for walking, running, wildlife viewing and can also be used, if needed, for wetland remediation in development plans.
5. GOAL: Invest in Destination-Worthy Improvements in Regional/Local Parks – In assessing the public input feedback generated in the writing of this plan, park users desire parks with high quality, modern playground equipment and a wide range of amenities and travel up to half an hour to use parks that feature these amenities. Some of the model park destinations are assessed more thoroughly in Chapter 9 of this plan. Furthermore, participants in the public input process overwhelmingly indicated that while it is important to still have neighborhood parks within walking distance from where they live, they will travel to a park with enhanced amenities (ie, a regional park).

Obviously it is unsustainable to incorporate highly expensive playground in every single neighborhood park in Kaukauna, but there are two parks in particular that were frequently mentioned as ‘hidden gems’, underutilized and beautiful parks that could stand to see some upgrades. The two parks that staff highlighted as potential parks to shift from Local to Regional Parks were specifically La Follette Park and Riverside Park. Both of these parks are centrally located in the City, feature ample parking and ancillary amenities such as indoor restrooms, rentable pavilions and picnic areas. These long-established parks are still draws for residents, but do not presently offer significant amenities that might draw a visitor to the community. These parks also serve long-established residential neighborhoods. A downside of subdivision growth and urban sprawl is that near downtown neighborhoods and public spaces can sometimes see neglect or disinvestment. Making these two parks priorities for high quality playground equipment and destination style amenities makes sense from a location standpoint, a financial standpoint and from a volume and capacity standpoint.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- Identify trends in playground equipment that are inclusive and present in destination parks in the greater Fox Cities area. Some of these parks are highlighted in Chapter 9.
  - Phase in new equipment over capital projects budgets in coming years to improve the recreational offerings at these large and centrally-located parks.
  - Maximize the expertise of the City’s new public relations coordinator and of the City Recreation director to effectively promote the amenities at all City of Kaukauna parks, especially destination/regional parks.
6. GOAL: Implement a Wayfinding Signage Effort – The City of Kaukauna needs to address the fact that a large number of parks within the City are undersigned for vehicular traffic and are not signed at all for bike and pedestrian traffic. With the City’s investment in major park



improvements and trail extensions, it can be presumed that more visitors will be coming to the City and efforts should be in place to ensure that visitors easily find their destination. This is particularly important as the City moves forward with the Fox River Boardwalk and connecting Power Canal Trail – serving as a direct pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Village of Little Chute’s park system and the City of Kaukauna’s park system.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- Partner with East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to conduct a wayfinding signage inventory and gap analysis study (Completed in 2019)
- Make decisions as a staff on the hierarchy of recreational amenities and the distances at which they should be signed
- Work to design signage that is highly visible, functional for vehicles and pedestrians and fits a future brand for the City of Kaukauna in color and design.

7. GOAL: Strive for Inclusivity in Design – The City of Kaukauna has a limited number of accessible playground items and this is not in keeping with park and recreation trends nationally and in neighboring municipalities. An engagement process, perhaps in tandem with the Kaukauna Area School District, should seek to identify neighborhoods where youth with disabilities are present and invest thereby in neighborhood park level improvements to be more inclusive. Furthermore, local and regional parks in the community should all have some accessible playground equipment, with regional parks being held to the expectation of the greatest inclusivity. Inclusion design should not only take place in neighborhoods where individuals with disabilities live, but should be a priority across the City of Kaukauna parks and open space network and should seek to create a space for play and recreation that is inviting to all.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- Inventory existing inclusive playground equipment in City parks and engage with local school district to discuss functionality and popularity of inclusive equipment in more modernized school playground equipment.
- Strive to include inclusive playground equipment and features, even minimally, in every Local and Neighborhood Park.
- Invest heavily in inclusive designed playground equipment at Regional/Destination parks with playground equipment.

8. GOAL: Utilize Community Events to Connect and Cross-Promote Parks and Open Spaces – The Kaukauna Farmer’s Market is administered by the City’s Community Enrichment Coordinator and is currently held during the summer months within a downtown municipal parking lot. The market has the opportunity to cross-promote the City’s parks and open space network by creating a vibrant public-gathering place for social interaction and integrating health-focused activities as a part of the Farmer’s Market. There is also the future opportunity to relocate the Farmer’s Market into a public park location (versus in a parking lot), such as Central Park or Hydro Park.

## STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- Maintain location with access to the recreational trail system and continue to provide bicycle parking.
- Incorporate active youth recreation into the Farmer's Market.
- Connect other downtown public spaces concurrently such as plazas and Central Park during the Farmer's Market.
- Cross-promote Recreation Department programs with the Farmer's Market such as the Yoga in the Park series.

### *Further Protecting Undeveloped Lands*

There are a number of methods currently available for protecting remaining undeveloped lands that possess open space and recreation potential. Methods available to local governments fall into three categories: regulation, acquisition and funding programs. Effective implementation requires a combination of these tools.

Fee simple acquisition is the most effective means of implementation. It provides complete control of recreational land and facilities. However, public or private agencies have limited funds for the acquisition of desired recreational lands. When acquisition is not possible, other alternatives are available for provision of recreational activities.

### Regulatory Techniques

The importance of regulatory techniques in implementing open space objectives is underscored by the fact that most potential park lands and scenic areas are privately owned. There are, however, opportunities to incorporate open space objectives in land use and development regulations. Restrictions imposed on a land owner must relate closely to the interest of public health, safety, and welfare. Restrictions must be designed to reduce the adverse or negative impact of development.

- *Zoning*  
Zoning's primary function is to separate incompatible land uses. This includes the protection of environmentally sensitive areas. For example, because flooding poses a threat to public health and safety, legal authority has been granted to restrict development in these areas. Thus, floodplain or shoreline zoning offers an opportunity to deter development and retain land adjacent to rivers, and streams as open space.

Zoning restrictions are also possible for other environmentally sensitive areas. Development on steep slopes can cause run-off resulting in erosion or mud slides. Therefore, restrictive regulations are designed to discourage or limit development. The possible destruction of wetlands through development also represents an opportunity for tighter restriction on development. In general, many of the environmentally unique and sensitive areas that are suited for open space and recreational use are not suited for development.

Zoning regulations through sign control, increased setbacks, landscaping requirements, and restrictions on outside storage can assist in preserving scenic areas. Cluster zoning

and planned unit developments also offer an opportunity to preserve open space for recreational use.

- *Subdivision Regulations*

Subdivision regulations ensure that subdivisions are properly designed including sidewalks and have adequate improvements, including open space. Residential land development in excess of actual or projected population growth represents a premature and unnecessary loss of open space areas. By requiring adequate improvements, the occurrence of speculative subdivision can be reduced. Subdivision regulations also require developers to dedicate or reserve a portion of the subdivision for recreational purposes or to pay an optional payment in lieu of dedication.

- *Official Mapping*

Although official mapping is commonly associated with future acquisition of road right-of-ways, it can also be used to identify future parklands. With this technique, future park areas are identified on a map, duly recorded, and approved by the governing body. The area will be referenced as a future park site in the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Kaukauna. These areas are then prohibited from being developed, offering the community time to purchase the site.

### Acquisition Techniques

Several avenues are open to government in the acquisition of land for open space purposes and are described as follows:

- *Fee Simple Acquisition*

The landowner is given a sum of money for all rights to a specific piece of land or property. In Wisconsin, fee simple acquisition is the most common way of acquiring public lands for recreational uses. A land contract may also be used as a form of fee simple acquisition.

- *Purchase of Tax Delinquent Property*

This technique can only be used when back taxes on land have not been paid. Where such lands are needed for outdoor recreation and open space purposes, the purchaser pays the back taxes. The fair market value minus the cost of the back taxes is paid to the former owner. When property becomes delinquent due to soil contamination or similar fate, a program known as 'brownfield redevelopment' can assist in the development of this land.

- *Advance Purchase*

This method of implementation requires a purchase agreement to acquire outdoor recreation lands prior to the actual purchase. The agreement fixes the price of future acquisition and may relieve the landowner of up to 100 percent of the property tax burden.

- *Lease or Easement*

This technique provides for the recreational use of land for a designated period of time but without fee simple acquisition. An easement or lease can be written to allow or restrict public access and use of private land. Restricting access can encourage the preservation and creation of scenic views. Easements can also be used to provide limited trail access for recreation purposes. Because of their versatility, easements are a valuable implementation tool.

- *Purchase of Development Rights*

This technique allows an entity to acquire the rights to develop a tract of land or prevent the development of land for a contractual amount. The ownership of land the present use remains with the present owner. However, the land could not be developed without the consent of the entity that owns the developmental rights.

- *Eminent Domain*

Eminent domain is the power of a governmental body to condemn private land for public purposes upon payment of just compensation. The ability for government to use eminent domain for the creation of recreational trails or bike paths was curtailed by Assembly Bill 64 during the 2017-2018 Legislature. The recently proposed 2019-2021 biennial budget restores the ability of the Department of Transportation and the Department of Natural Resources to again exercise eminent domain for the purposes of creating recreational trails and bike paths.

- *Land Banking*

The land bank, which can be set up as a part of local government or a self governing entity, can purchase land and then sell it for development subject to the requirement that adequate and suitable areas are set aside for recreational purposes. Proceeds from the sale of land could be used for subsequent purchases. Initial financing could be provided through grants or by the issuance of bonds.

- *Conversion of Landfills, Quarries or Large Ugly Land Uses*

Former non-compatible land uses can often be used for recreational purposes. Activities such as fishing, ball fields, picnic areas, open space and play areas can be supported by the conversion of land uses donated by or acquired from companies who no longer have an economic use for the property. This is typically accomplished through brownfield rehabilitation.

- *Trust for Public Lands*

Private groups or organizations such as the Trust for Public Land or the Nature Conservancy can purchase outdoor recreation lands and hold them until a public agency can acquire them.

- *Donation*

This technique encourages and seeks the purchase of private lands for outdoor recreation and outdoor space in the least expensive means possible while still allowing

private owners to realize gains. Tax-deductible contributions can be in the form of a lease, easement, or outright title.

### Funding Programs

State and federal funding programs are available to local communities to acquire, develop, or preserve open space areas. Due to limited funds and increasing competition for the available funds, local governments should prepare grant applications carefully, viewing these funds as supplements to local funding rather than as the mainstay of an outdoor recreation program.

- *Land and Water Conservation Fund / Aid for the Development of Local Parks*  
LWCF and ADLP provide financial assistance for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. In Wisconsin, LWCF and ADLP are administered by the Department of Natural Resources. An approved Recreation and Open Space Plan is required for the receipt of LWCF or ADLP funds.
- *Community Foundation Funds*  
The Fox Cities Community Foundation and its various family funds have been exceptional supporters of trail expansions in the City of Kaukauna and the greater Fox Cities region. They have also supported specific recreational improvements in the community like the Kaukauna Public Library Interactive Learning Garden.
- *Special Tax*  
A special tax levy, usually included in the property tax, which allows local units of government to collect revenue to support outdoor recreation projects.
- *General Obligation Bond*  
Funds are made available for recreational acquisition or development when a referendum or legislative act has authorized sale of such bonds. The recreational use debt is repaid by the levy of a property tax and secured by the local unit of government.
- *Revenue Bond*  
Bonds are issued by a public agency and paid back by means of revenue derived from the operation of the resulting recreational projects, such as golf courses, swimming pools and community centers.
- *User Charge*  
Money charged for use of certain recreational facilities helps offset the cost of acquisition, development, and maintenance of some outdoor recreation facilities.

### Public Participation and Coordination

The most important part of any recreation plan is to get input from the people who will be using the recreation activity or what the people who ultimately fund the project would like to see. Recreation and park planning can involve the public through various methods. Public hearings are an effective way to hear (and have elected officials) hear directly the feedback from residents. However, public hearings can

often attract negative feedback and attendees are less likely to spend a portion of their time attending a meeting in support. The 2019 Recreation and Open Space Plan was the first to utilize an online survey component and the feedback, as highlighted in Chapter 9, was quite broad and constructive. The online survey, as a convenient, non-time restrictive means of sharing feedback increased participation overall, especially among younger park users.

The City of Kaukauna is not the only community working to improve its park and recreation system. At the State and County levels there are plans for park system improvements and expansions. East Central Regional Plan Commission also has heavy involvement in the park planning process. Neighboring communities (cities, villages and some urbanized towns) at the local level also do park and recreation planning. It is important to consider the plans of neighboring communities, one to not duplicate services, and two to make sure trails and other multi-jurisdictional features are compatible with each other when they meet at corporate limits. One tool which can be used to make plans compatible with neighboring communities are the comprehensive plans for each community. Comprehensive planning by its nature, involves not just the community it was prepared for, but the entire region a community is located within.

## **Chapter 11. Appendix and Supporting Materials**

1. Online Survey used for Public Input process
2. Map of City of Kaukauna Existing and Future Parks and Key
3. Map of City of Kaukauna Open Spaces and Key
4. Map of City of Kaukauna Trail Network (Existing and In-Development)
5. Map of 1000 Islands Environmental Center Trails
6. Map of all Public Transportation access points and City of Kaukauna Parks

## City of Kaukauna Recreation and Open Space Plan Update

### *Online Survey Questions*

1. Where do you live?
  - a. City of Kaukauna
  - b. Village of Combined Locks
  - c. Village of Little Chute
  - d. Village of Harrison
  - e. Town of Kaukauna
  - f. Town of Buchanan
  - g. Town of Vandebroek
  - h. Other (Please specify)
  
2. Please select your age range:
  - a. Under 18
  - b. 18-24 years old
  - c. 25-39 years old
  - d. 40-54 years old
  - e. 55-69 years old
  - f. 70+ years old
  
3. How do you travel to parks and open spaces most frequently?
  - a. On-foot (walking or running)
  - b. On non-motorized wheels (bicycling, in-line skating, skateboarding)
  - c. By personal vehicle
  - d. By public transportation
  
4. How long have you lived in the Fox Cities area?
  - a. Less than 1 year
  - b. More than 1 year, less than 5 years
  - c. More than 5 years, less than 10 years
  - d. More than 10 years, less than 15 years
  - e. 15+ years or longer
  
5. How often do you use public parks or public outdoor spaces in the Fox Cities area? (Public parks are city, town, village, county or state-owned and operated – ie, not privately owned).
  - a. More than once per week
  - b. More than once per month
  - c. Once a month
  - d. Once every few months
  - e. Rarely or never



6. (Question only displays if rarely or never selected above) You indicated that you rarely or never use public parks or public outdoor spaces. Could you tell us more about why you do not utilize these spaces?
7. How often do you utilize bicycle and pedestrian amenities in the City of Kaukauna (like sidewalks, the CE trail, bike lanes) for travel or for recreation?
  - a. More than once per week
  - b. More than once per month
  - c. Once a month
  - d. Once every few months
  - e. Rarely or never
8. (Question only displays if more than once per week or more than once per month selected above) Would you be interested in answering two additional questions about bicycle and pedestrian amenities in the City of Kaukauna?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
9. (Question only displays if YES selected on question #8) Overall, how safe do you feel walking and/or bicycling throughout the City of Kaukauna?
  - a. Very safe
  - b. Somewhat safe
  - c. Moderately safe
  - d. Unsafe
  - e. Very unsafe
  - f. I don't walk or bicycle
10. (Question only displays if YES selected on question #8) Do you feel that there are gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian network in the City of Kaukauna? If yes, what are some locations that you would like to see improved?
11. Please select all of the parks and trails in the City of Kaukauna limits that you have visited or used in the last 12 months:
  - a. 1000 Islands Environmental Center and Conservancy
  - b. Anderson Park
  - c. Central Park
  - d. C.E. Trail
  - e. City of Kaukauna Swimming Pool / Archery Range
  - f. Dog Exercise Park
  - g. Doty Bayorgeon Fields
  - h. Eagle Plaza
  - i. Fassbender Park
  - j. Fieldcrest Park
  - k. "Friends and Family" Sculpture Garden

- l. Glenview Park
- m. Grignon Mansion
- n. Grignon Park
- o. Horseshoe Park
- p. Hydro Park
- q. Jonen Park
- r. Kaukauna Sportsmen's Club
- s. Kelso Park
- t. Konkapot Preserve and Trail
- u. Lafollette Park
- v. Little Tykes Tot Lot
- w. Nature View Park
- x. Quarry Point Park
- y. Riverside Park
- z. Skateboard Park
- aa. Strassburg Park
- bb. Thelen Park
- cc. Thilwerth Park
- dd. Trestle Trail Park (Whitewater kayak launch)
- ee. Van Epern Park and Pond
- ff. Vaudette Plaza
- gg. Veterans Park
- hh. White City Park

12. Please select up to three parks, trails or open spaces in the City of Kaukauna that you use most frequently: (Full list of parks again)

13. Please share the names and locations of other parks you have used or visited in Northeast Wisconsin in the last year that are not in the City of Kaukauna. (Example: Doyle Park, Little Chute)

14. Please select the types of activities you like to engage in when utilizing parks and open spaces in the City of Kaukauna:

- a. Attending a Community Event (like a farmers market, food truck rally, car show)
- b. Attending an Organized Fitness Event (like an organized run or bicycling event)
- c. Attending an Outdoor Concert
- d. Attending an Outdoor Sporting Event
- e. Field sports (football, baseball, softball, soccer)
- f. Court sports (basketball, tennis, volleyball)
- g. Snow/ice sports (ice skating, sledding, snowshoeing)
- h. Paved trail sports (bicycling, running, jogging, skateboarding, inline skating, walking for pleasure)

- i. Open water sports (swimming in a river/pond, waterskiing, motorized boating, kayaking, canoeing, stand up paddleboarding)
  - j. Pool sports (swimming, scuba, snorkeling)
  - k. Birdwatching or Bird Photography
  - l. Golf/Disc Golf
  - m. Dog Walking or Dog Exercise
  - n. Family or Friends Gathering (picnicking, park shelter rentals)
  - o. Fishing/Ice Fishing
  - p. Riflery, archery or shooting sports
  - q. Hiking, Viewing Nature/Scenery
  - r. Visiting historic sites or monuments
  - s. Yard games (bean bags, horseshoes, ladder golf)
  - t. Yoga
  - u. Other (Please specify)
  - v. Other (Please specify)
  - w. Other (Please specify)
15. Out of all the options you selected above, please select the top 3 activities you engage in most frequently when utilizing parks and open spaces in the City of Kaukauna:
16. What activities or features do you engage in or utilize at least once per year at outside parks and open spaces that are not currently offered at City of Kaukauna parks?
- a. Accessible playground equipment
  - b. ATV/UTV trails
  - c. Bikeshares or short-term bicycle rentals
  - d. Camping (with water/electrical hookup)
  - e. Camping (rustic – no electric/water)
  - f. Community beer garden or food-centric events
  - g. Community gardens
  - h. Downhill skiing or tubing
  - i. Evening events like candle light hikes
  - j. Flying drones
  - k. Foot golf
  - l. Group bike rides
  - m. Group runs
  - n. Horseback riding on trails
  - o. Interactive/educational play activities for children
  - p. Kickball
  - q. Lacrosse
  - r. Obstacle course equipment
  - s. Outdoor movie screenings
  - t. Outdoor theatre performances
  - u. Pickleball
  - v. Rock climbing

- w. Rowing
- x. Snowmobiling
- y. Splash pads
- z. SUP (Stand up paddleboard) classes
- aa. Ticketed outdoor music events
- bb. Ziplining or ropes courses
- cc. Other (Please specify)
- dd. Other (Please specify)
- ee. Other (Please specify)

17. Of these five reasons, which best describes why you use parks and open spaces? You may select up to two.

- a. To be with friends and family in a scenic outdoor setting
- b. To enjoy a wide range of outdoor activities
- c. To learn about history, nature or culture
- d. To escape the crowds and enjoy solitude
- e. To meet my exercise and fitness goals

18. Please rank the order of importance of these qualities to you when thinking about local parks and open spaces (#1 being the most important to you, #8 being the least important to you):

- a. Accessibility for all visitors (inclusive of all abilities)
- b. Availability of parking
- c. Bathroom cleanliness
- d. Bicycle and pedestrian accessibility
- e. Contemporary and interactive play equipment
- f. Distance from where I live
- g. Dog amenities (ie, dog park features, dog runs, dog waste bags)
- h. General landscaping/appearance

19. Please select the statement below that best describes your feelings about dogs in parks:

- a. Dogs should be allowed (on-leash) in all City parks and open spaces
- b. Dogs should be allowed (on-leash) in some but not all, City parks and open spaces
- c. Dogs should not be allowed (on-leash) in any City parks and open spaces
- d. Not sure

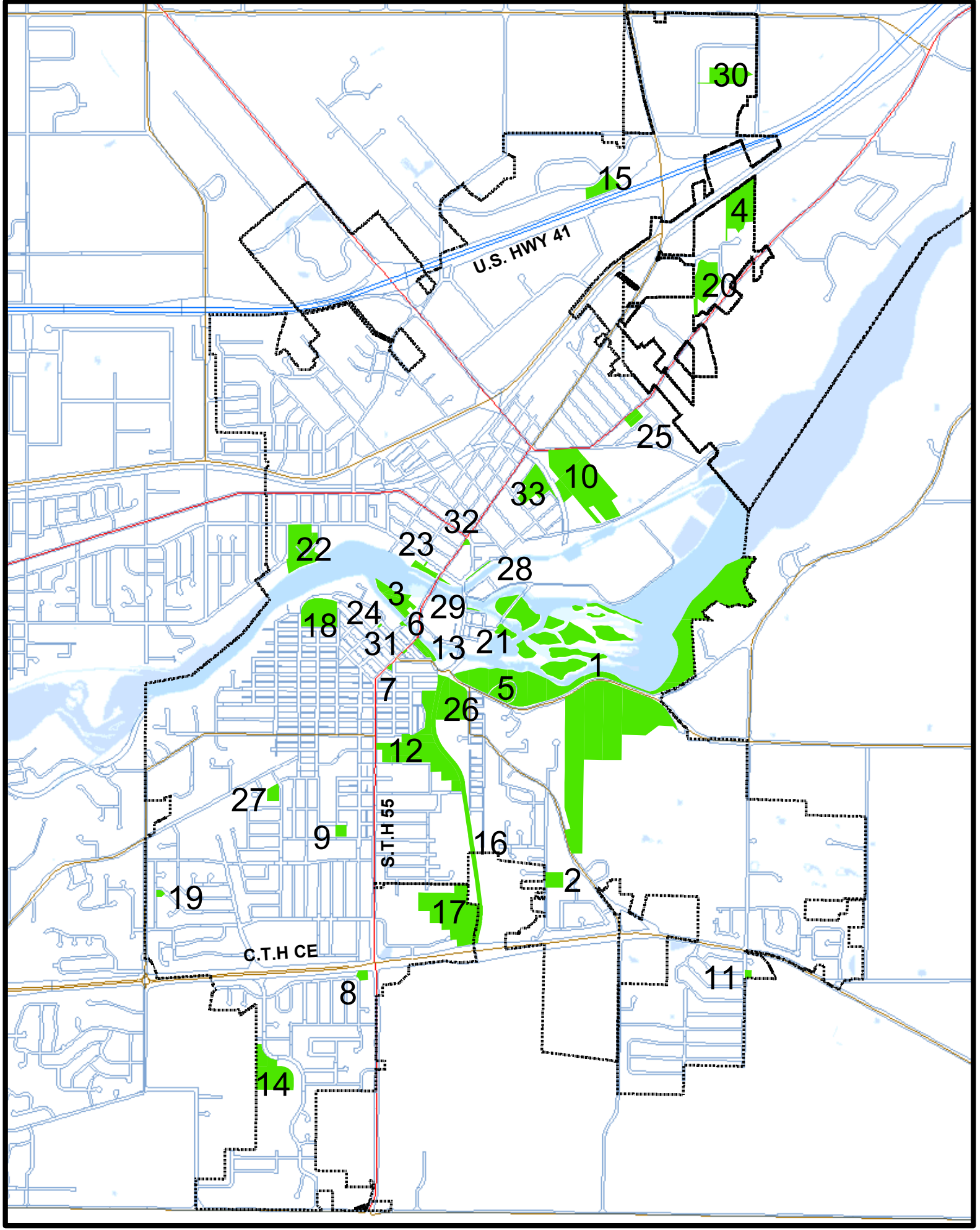
20. A trend observed nationally in parks and open spaces is the specialization of parks. This might mean, for example that a community only has one splash pad, or one disc golf course in their park system – but the community is able to invest more into that one location. This is an alternative to having duplicate, less expensive features across multiple parks throughout the community. Please select the statement that reflects your thoughts on this:

- a. It is important to me that the park in my immediate neighborhood has the recreational features I want to use, even if they are lower quality.
- b. I am willing to travel to a park that is not in my immediate neighborhood to use the recreational features I want to use, especially if they are higher quality.

c. Other (please share your thoughts)

21. What are suggestions you have for how to improve the City of Kaukauna's parks, trails and open spaces?

22. Do you have anything else you would like to share about parks, trails and open spaces?



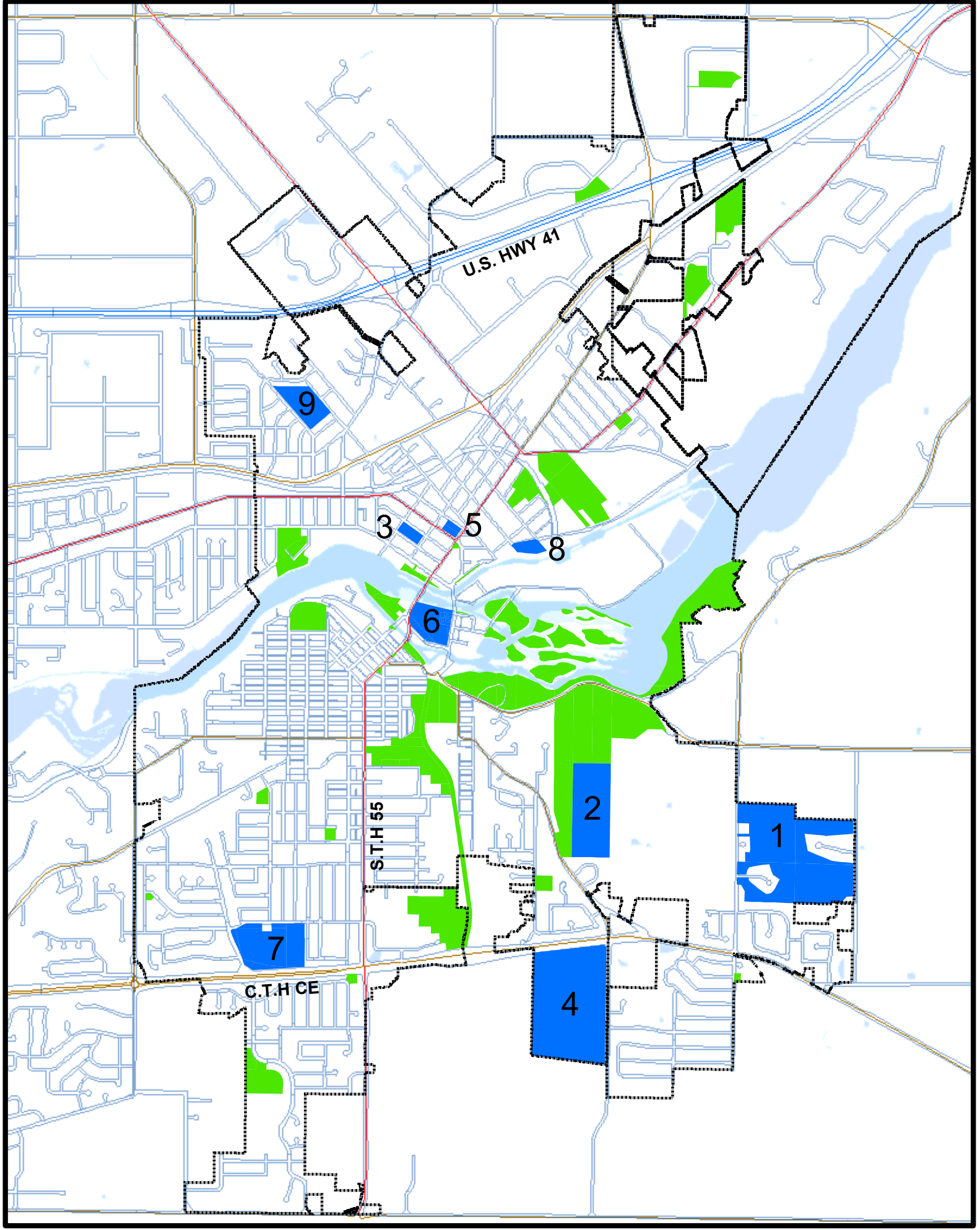
# EXISTING CITY PARKS

1 in ̄ = 2,625 feet  
Date: 7/26/2019

## Key to Existing City Parks Map

1. 1000 Islands Environmental Center
2. Anderson Park
3. Central Park
4. Dog Exercise Park
5. Doty Bayorgeon Recreation Area
6. Eagle Plaza
7. Fassbender Park
8. Fieldcrest Park
9. Glenview Park
10. Grignon (Upper + Lower) Park
11. Haas Road (Future) Park
12. Horseshoe Valley Park
13. Hydro Park
14. Jonen Park
15. Kelso Park and Pond
16. Konkapot Creek Trail
17. Konkapot Preserve
18. La Follette Park
19. Little Tykes Tot Lot
20. Nature View Park
21. Quarry Point Park
22. Riverside Park
23. Friends and Family Sculpture Garden
24. Skateboard Park
25. Strassburg Park
26. Municipal Pool and Archery Range
27. Thelen Park
28. Thilwerth Park
29. Trestle Park
30. Van Eperen Park and Pond
31. Vaudette Plaza
32. Veteran's Memorial Ring of Honor
33. White City Park





U.S. HWY 41

S.T.H 55

C.T.H CE

9

3

5

8

6

2

1

7

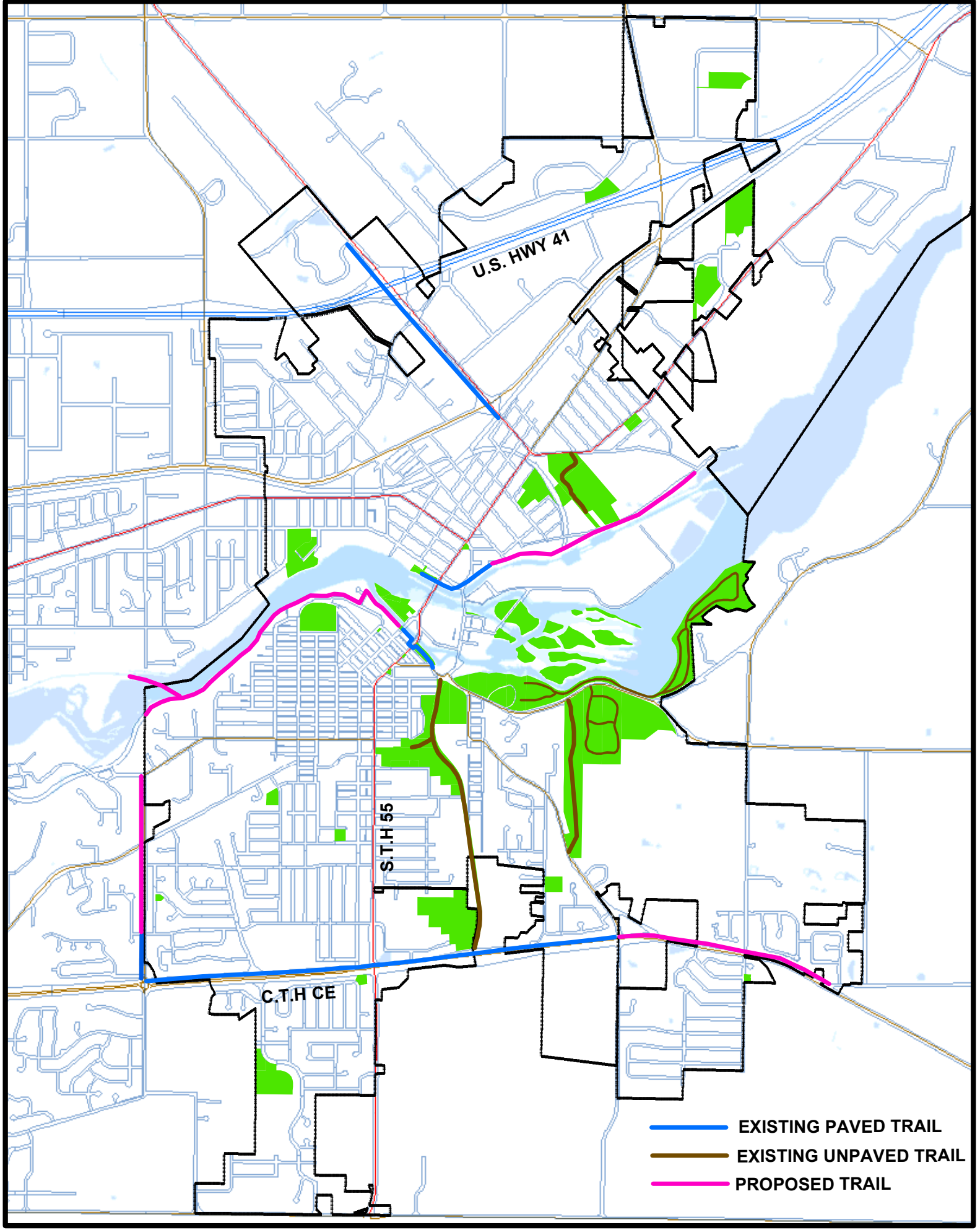
4

# OPEN SPACES

1 inch = 2,625 feet  
Date: 7/29/2019

## **Key to Existing Open Spaces in the City**

1. Eagle Links Golf Course
2. Girl Scouts of America
3. Holy Cross School
4. Kaukauna High School
5. Park School
6. Riverview Middle School
7. Tanner / Electa Quinney School
8. Trinity Lutherna School
9. Victor Haen Elementary School



U.S. HWY 41

S.T.H 55

C.T.H CE

- EXISTING PAVED TRAIL
- EXISTING UNPAVED TRAIL
- PROPOSED TRAIL



# TRAILS MAP

1 inch = 2,625 feet  
Date: 7/29/2019

# 1000 ISLANDS CONSERVANCY ZONE

## KAUKAUNA, WI



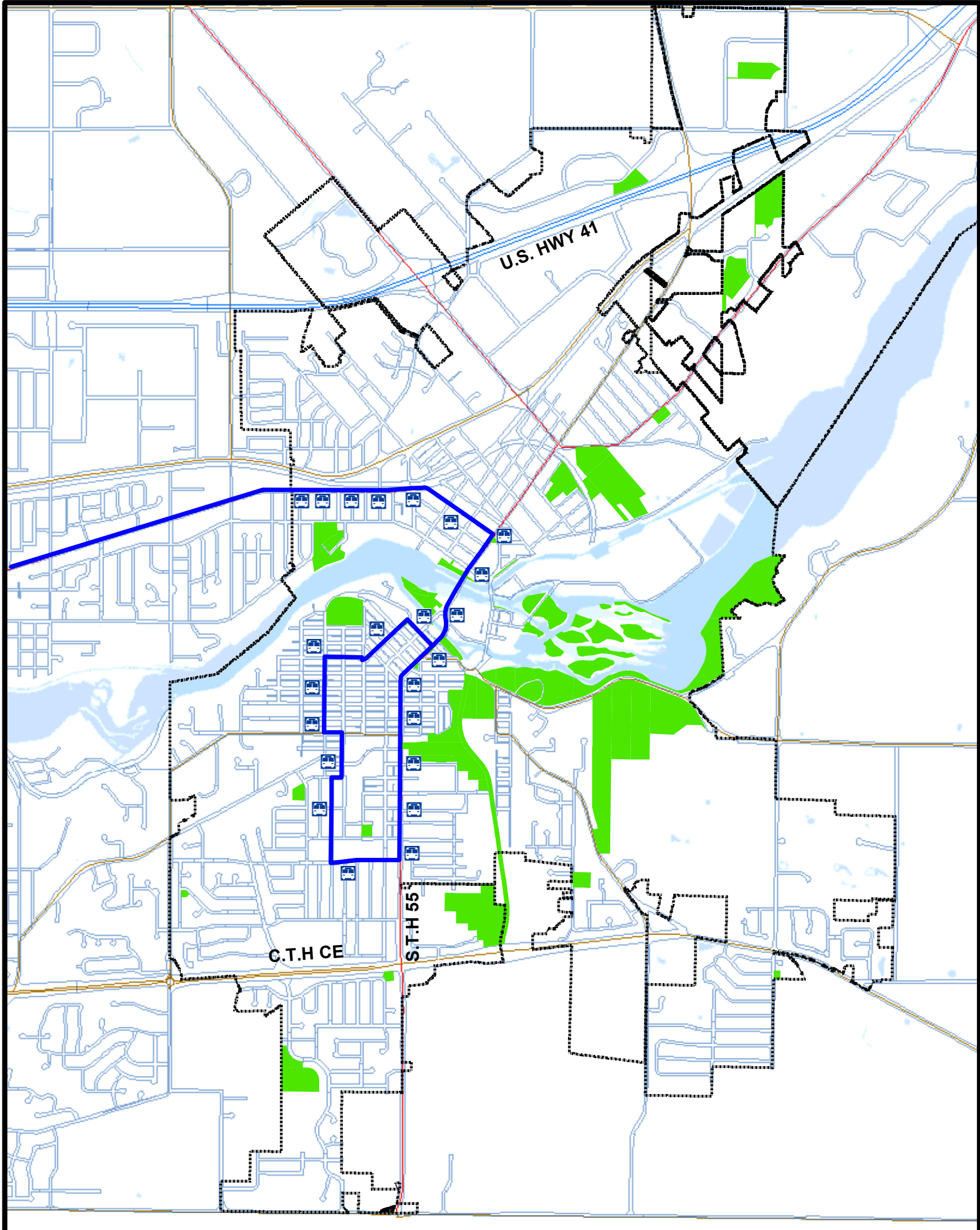
1000 Islands Environmental Center



TRAILS	APPROXIMATE DISTANCE (Round Trip)
	Nature Center to Nelson Overlook . . . . . 3/4 mile
	Nature Center to start of Hoersch Memorial Trail . . . . . 1-1/4 miles
	Nature Center to Historical Marker . . . . . 2 miles
	Nature Center plus Hoersch Memorial Trail Loop . . . . . 2-3/4 miles
	Black Top Loop Trail at Canoe Launch . . . . . 3/4 miles
	Canoe Launch plus Hoersch Memorial Trail Loop . . . . . 1-3/4 miles
	Valley Trail - Cty Hwy Z to Cty Hwy Q . . . 1-3/4 miles
	Upper Woods - Outside Loop . . . . . 2-1/4 miles

- Nature Center
- Sugar Shack
- Trails
- Property Boundry
- Fence Line
- Pier/Observation Deck
- Historical Marker





# HEART OF THE VALLEY BUS STOPS

1 in  $\bar{c}$  = 2,625 feet  
Date: 7/29/2019