

# Elgin Parks and Recreation Master Plan

january 2011



City of Elgin · Parks and Recreation Department



# Table of Contents

<b>Mission Statement</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
• Overview	3
• Project Objectives	3
• Organization	3
• The Benefits of Parks	5
• Understanding Elgin	7
<b>Process</b> .....	<b>11</b>
• Approach	11
• Methodology	11
• Focus Groups	12
• Public Input	13
<b>Analysis</b> .....	<b>15</b>
• Recreation Program Offerings	15
• Recreation Facilities	16
• Sustainable Master Plan	19
• Public Tree Management Plan	19
• Park Maintenance	20
• Level of Service	21
• Observations and Rationale	23
• Findings and Recommended Standards	25
<b>Recommendations</b> .....	<b>28</b>
• Guiding Principles	28
• Property Assemblage	29
• Opportunities by Park Types	31
• Linkages	33
• Sub-Area Plans	34
• Action Plan Matrix	35
• Recommendations by Districts	37
• Potential Funding Strategies	47
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>50</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	

# Mission Statement

The mission of the City of Elgin Parks and Recreation Department is to:

*Enhance the quality of life for residents of every Elgin neighborhood by*

- *Protecting the unique natural resources,*
- *Enhancing the cultural treasures, and*
- *Protecting the historical identity of the City.*

*Provide access to an integrated community and regional system of parks and recreation facilities, services and programs with an eye on the future while preserving the past.*

# Vision Statement

*We create community through people, parks and programs.*



# Introduction

## Overview

Elgin is a community that has experienced significant growth in the ten years since the 2000 Parks and Recreation Master Plan was developed and has benefitted from the planning and associated measures put in place ahead of this growth. Elgin's population has grown by 12.7% from 2000 to 2008 and what was once the far western border in Randall Road is now the geographic center. From acreage goals to minimum standards for neighborhood parks, the 2000 plan, as well as other parallel City planning efforts, enabled the City to implement recommendations and serve existing and new residents in a proactive manner during this important time of change. The result is a community that is greener and better served by parks and recreational offerings than it was in 2000 and the proactive planning by City leaders allowed Elgin to capitalize on an economic wave from casino revenues and housing upstarts. As a result, Elgin has been able to implement over 75% of the 2000 master plan through a variety of funding mechanisms that minimize the burden on public tax dollars and extending these limited dollars. New parks and trails have been added, the Fox River continues its rebirth and the Centre of Elgin has become a crucial reality to serve the diverse, year-round needs of the entire community.

Despite these positives, there are still opportunities for improvement and unmet needs in Elgin that have been discussed and documented in this study. Some areas underserved by neighborhood park amenities, a significant issue in 2000, remain underserved. Unfinished residential growth in other areas has created service area and connectivity gaps when the economic downturn occurred and limited the matching development-based resources for these improvements. Because of the economic downturn, new and innovative concepts for funding and implementation are needed, including a greater commitment to partnerships. As Elgin looks ahead to the next ten years, this plan will be an important tool to maintain and enhance a critical piece of the City's quality of life and prepare an already great park and recreation system to meet and exceed the challenges that lie ahead.

## Project Objectives

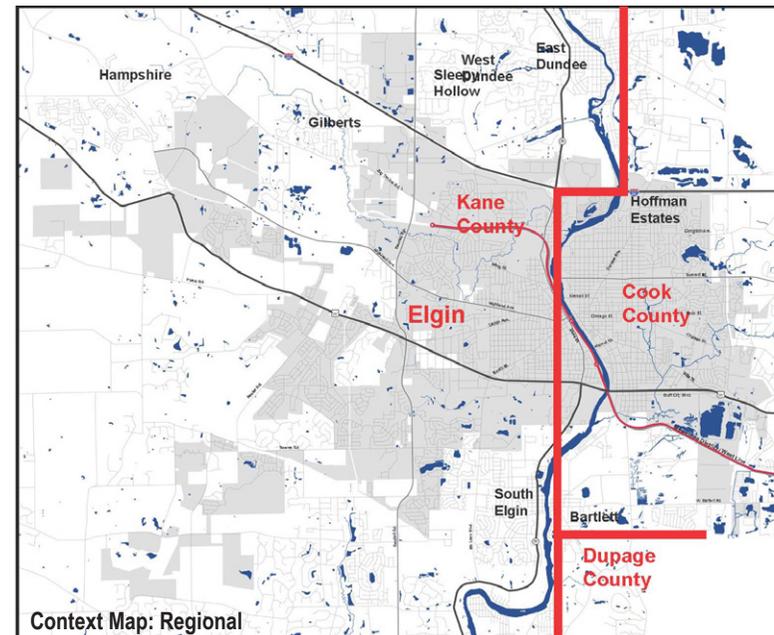
Create a current planning document that can assist in making short-term, mid-term, and long-term decisions related to park and recreation facility development and land acquisition.

Create a current planning document that can be used as a support document when applying for local, state, and federal grants.

Establish priorities and recommendations for existing and future park and facility developments for the next ten years.

Identify the potential costs related to park and recreation facility development and land acquisitions.

Identify potential resources and create a funding plan to finance the costs related to park and recreation facility development and land acquisitions for the next ten years.



## Organization

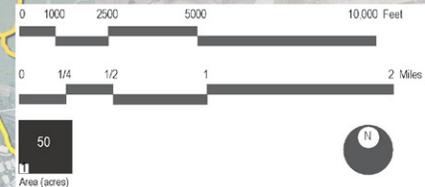
For the purposes of this planning study, Elgin was divided into five multi-neighborhood geographic planning districts with analysis and public input conducted in each district. The master plan document is set up in order to give the reader an overall view of the system as well as park specific summaries of improvements, grouped by planning districts.

The document is divided into the following sections:

- Mission Statement
- Introduction
- Process
- Analysis
- Recommendations
  - Guiding Principles
  - Property Assemblage
  - Opportunities by Park Types
  - Linkages
  - Sub Area Plans
  - Action Plan Matrix
  - Recommendations by Districts
  - Potential Funding Strategies
- Acknowledgement
- Appendix
  - Focus Group Input
  - Public Meeting Input
  - Tree Management Plan Executive Summary

PARK NAME	Map #	Area (Acres)	PARK NAME	Map #	Area (Acres)
Abbott Park	1	1.24	Nesler Road Park	41	20.00
Advocate Park	2	0.09	Newsome Park	42	0.45
Barclay Park	3	0.27	Observatory Park	43	2.51
Bluff Spring Fen	4	97.00	Powder River Park	44	2.10
Bowes Creek Country Club	68	249.00	Prairie Park	8	8.00
Burnidge Woods Park	5	22.04	Princeton West Park	45	3.00
Campus Park	6	7.56	Randall Ridge Park	46	3.06
Carleton Rogers Park	7	0.45	Ryerson Park	47	1.10
Central Park	9	3.45	St. Francis Park	48	2.42
Century Oaks Park	10	3.96	Settlers Park	49	3.00
Channing Park	11	6.00	Shadow Hill Park	62	3.64
Clara Howard Park	12	0.49	Slade Avenue Park	50	4.29
Clifford/Owasco Park	13	4.56	Summerhill Park	51	4.39
College Green Park	14	2.97	The Highlands	52	260.00
College Park	15	60.81	Trinity Terrace Park	53	3.05
Copper Springs Park	63	4.10	Trout Park	54	44.10
Corley Drive Park	16	3.05	Unity Park	69	1.00
Cornerstone Park	60	1.15	Veteran's Memorial Park	66	0.30
Douglas Ave. Park	17	0.23	Walton Island Park	55	4.50
Drake Field Park	18	7.01	Waterford Entry Park	64	3.34
Eagle Heights Park	19	6.19	Willow Bay Park	56	0.67
Eagle/Burnidge Park	20	56.00	Wing Park	57	65.50
Elgin Regional Park	21	224.00	Wing Park Golf Course	65	56.50
Elgin Shores	22	20.80	Wing Street Park	58	0.31
Elgin Sports Complex	23	107.00	Wright Avenue Park	59	6.35
Esmeralda Park	24	0.46	Future Park	70-99	
Festival Park	25	5.50			
Foundry Park	26	7.50			
Frazier Park	27	0.52			
G.A.R. Park	28	0.14			
George Van deVoerde Park	29	0.41			
Gifford Park	30	7.88			
Grant School Park	31	1.80			
Grailch Park	32	7.62			
Hawthorne Hill Park	33	65.82			
Kirk & Kramer Park	34	0.80			
Kiwanis Park	35	2.75			
Lords Park	36	106.12			
Mable Avenue Park	37	5.76			
Memorial Park	38	0.30			
Meier Park	61	12.89			
Millenium Park	39	1.28			
Mulberry Grove Park	40	5.10			

Context Map: Local



# Introduction

## The Benefits of Parks

Many studies have shown strong evidence that the availability of parks and open spaces, and their appropriate use result in overall quality of life enhancement for the communities they serve. According to *Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space* (by Paul M. Sherer), 2003 *The Trust for Public Land*, “parks and open space improve our physical and psychological health, strengthen our communities, and make our cities and neighborhoods more attractive places to live and work”.

This study also highlights the public health benefits of city parks and open space. The following are benefits found in this study.

### Physical Activity Makes People Healthier

A comprehensive 1996 report by the U.S. Surgeon General found that people who engage in regular physical activity benefit from reduced risk of premature death; reduced risk of coronary heart disease, hypertension, colon cancer, and non-insulin-dependent diabetes etc. Generally it was found that health benefits appear to be proportional to the amount of activity; thus, every increase in activity adds some benefit.

### Access to Parks Increases Frequency of Exercise

Strong evidence shows that when people have access to parks, they exercise more. In a study published by the CDC, creation of or enhanced access to places for physical activity led to a 25.6 percent increase in the percentage of people exercising on three or more days per week. Generally it is observed that when people have nowhere to walk, they gain weight. Obesity is more likely in unwalkable neighborhoods, but goes down when measures of walkability go up.

### Exposure to Nature and Greenery Makes People Healthier

A growing body of research also shows that contact with nature improves physical and psychological health; that in a greener environment people report fewer health complaints, more often rate themselves as being in good health, and have better mental health.

### Increased Property Values

The real estate market trends consistently demonstrate that many people are willing to pay a larger amount for a property located close to parks and open space areas than for a home that does not offer this amenity. The higher value of these homes result in higher property taxes that offer more revenue to the City to help pay for the development and maintenance of parks and open spaces. Research has consistently shown that these increased property values are true in low-income urban areas, commercial property values and also when the natural resources are preserved in a new community.

### Economic Revitalization: Attracting and Retaining Businesses and Residents

Quality of life is a determining factor in real estate values and economic vitality. Research has consistently shown that businesses relate the city’s quality of life with recreation opportunities, its downtown, and urban life. Also, if people want to live in a place, companies, stores, hotels, and apartments will follow.

### Tourism Benefits

Parks and recreation areas often become one of a city’s signature attractions, a prime marketing tool to attract tourists, conventions, and businesses. Parks offer spaces for organized events - arts festivals, athletic events, food festivals, musical and theatrical events that bring substantial positive economic impacts to their communities, filling hotel rooms and restaurants and bringing customers to local stores.

### Pollution Abatement and Cooling

Research has consistently shown that green space in urban areas provides substantial environmental benefits. The U.S. Forest Service calculated that over a 50-year lifetime one tree generates \$31,250 worth of oxygen, provides \$62,000 worth of air pollution control, recycles \$37,500 worth of water, and controls \$31,250 worth of soil erosion. Trees and the soil under them also act as natural filters for water pollution. Trees also act as natural air conditioners and reduce urban heat island. The evaporation from a single large tree can produce the cooling effect of ten room-size air conditioners operating 24 hours a day.

### Controlling Stormwater Runoff

Trees more effectively and less expensively manage the flow of stormwater runoff than do concrete sewers and drainage ditches. Runoff problems occur because cities are covered with impervious surfaces and trees intercept rainfall, and unpaved areas absorb water, slowing the rate at which it reaches stormwater facilities. “By incorporating trees into a city’s infrastructure, managers can build a smaller, less expensive stormwater management system,” according to American Forests Urban Resource Center.

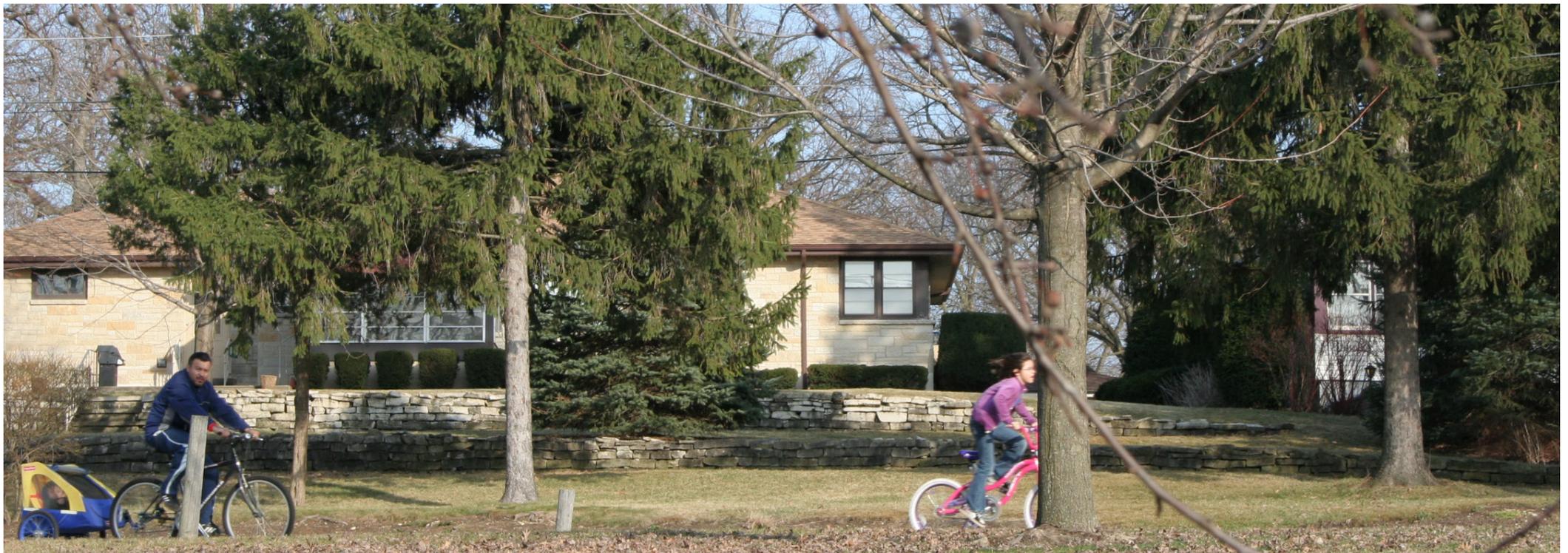
## Reducing Crime

Strong evidence shows that access to public parks and recreational facilities has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and in particular to reduced juvenile delinquency. Recreational facilities keep at-risk youth off the streets, give them a safe environment to interact with their peers, and fill up time within which they could otherwise get into trouble.

Research supports the widely held belief that community engagement in neighborhood parks is correlated with lower levels of crime.

## Recreation Opportunities: The Importance of Play

For small children, playing is learning. Research has shown that play helps kids develop muscle strength and coordination, language, cognitive thinking, and reasoning abilities. "Research on the brain demonstrates that play is a scaffold for development, a vehicle for increasing neural structures, and a means by which all children practice skills they will need in later life," according to the Association for Childhood Education International. Play also teaches children how to interact and cooperate with others, laying foundations for success in school and the working world. Exercise has been shown to increase the brain's capacity for learning.



# Introduction

## Understanding Elgin

### History

Elgin has a rich history of park and recreation amenities that in many cases define neighborhoods and the qualities within them. Parks like Lords with its historic gardens and lagoons, zoo, bandstands and pavilions have changed over time, but provide an historical snapshot of turn of the century Elgin. Parks like Wing with its golf course, sports fields and pool map historic American park trends such as the advent of more actively programmed parks. Trout Park is a virtual cross section of Elgin's development and evolution, reaching the river as the Fox regained its focus as a passive amenity rather than industry and amusement parks and evolving as rails became trails and natural areas become public rather than private. Similar stories exist throughout the Elgin park system, contributing to Elgin's richness and character and setting it apart from its peers.

While Elgin's parks have a rich history, so too does its planning with many focusing on parks and open spaces as integral components in Elgin's development and growth. From the 1917 Plan of Elgin by E.W. Bennett to more contemporary river and community plans, parks have been at the forefront in defining Elgin's sense of place and personality. Three park and recreation master plans have been developed over the past thirty-three years, most recently the 2000 master plan that forms the basis for this update. While many of the recommendations in this plan have been contemplated for decades, this plan comes on the heels of unprecedented park expansion and advancement during Elgin's rapid growth over the past ten years that achieved a number of long-sought goals such as greater Fox River and trail connectivity. It was critical that this decade of change was guided by an adopted master plan just as it will be over the next decade with this update.

### Decade of growth

The master plan acknowledges that Elgin:

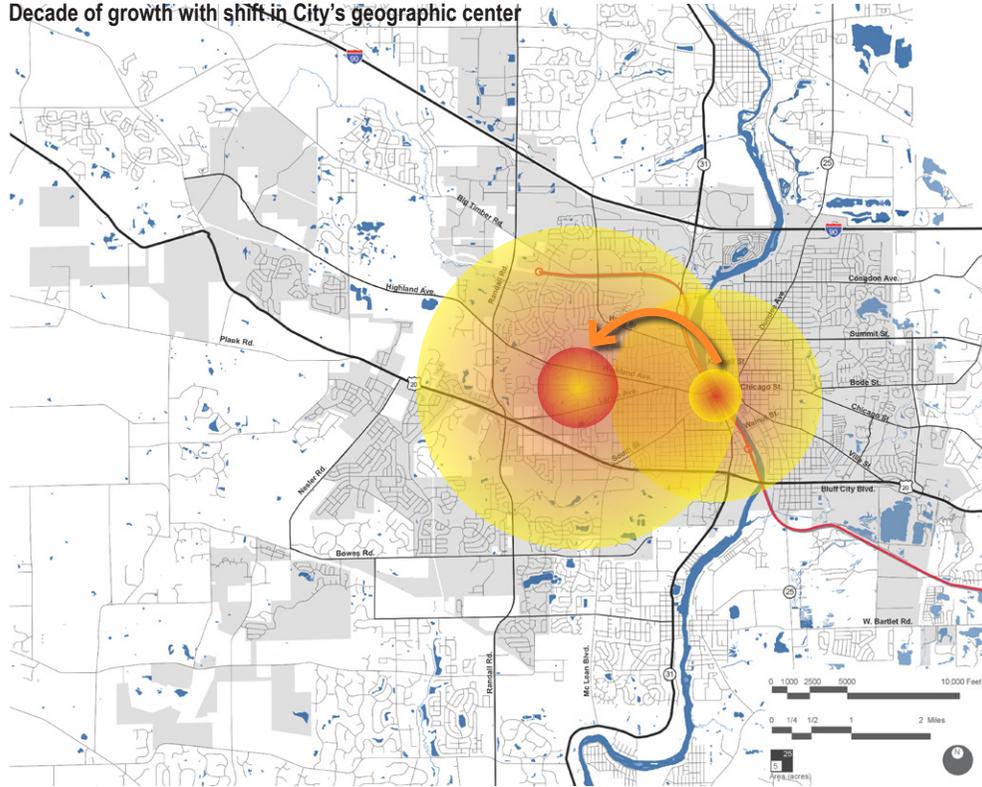
- Has grown in size and population since 2000. The City area in 2000 was 25.4 sq. miles in comparison to 37.4 sq. miles in 2010. The City's population was 94,487 in 2000 and has grown to approximately 106,000 in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey -2008).
- Is projected to add more people in the future where projected population in 2020 is approximately 138,000 (Northeast Illinois Planning Commission) and approximately 167,375 in 2030 (Northeast Illinois Planning Commission).
- Is divided into five planning districts, each with its own character, needs and priorities.
- Is a growing City with expanding boundaries where the geographic center has shifted towards the west over the last decade.
- Is a City that straddles the boundary of Kane and Cook Counties with its southern boundary adjacent to DuPage County's northern border.

### Demographics Trends (2000 to 2008)

The master plan acknowledges that Elgin:

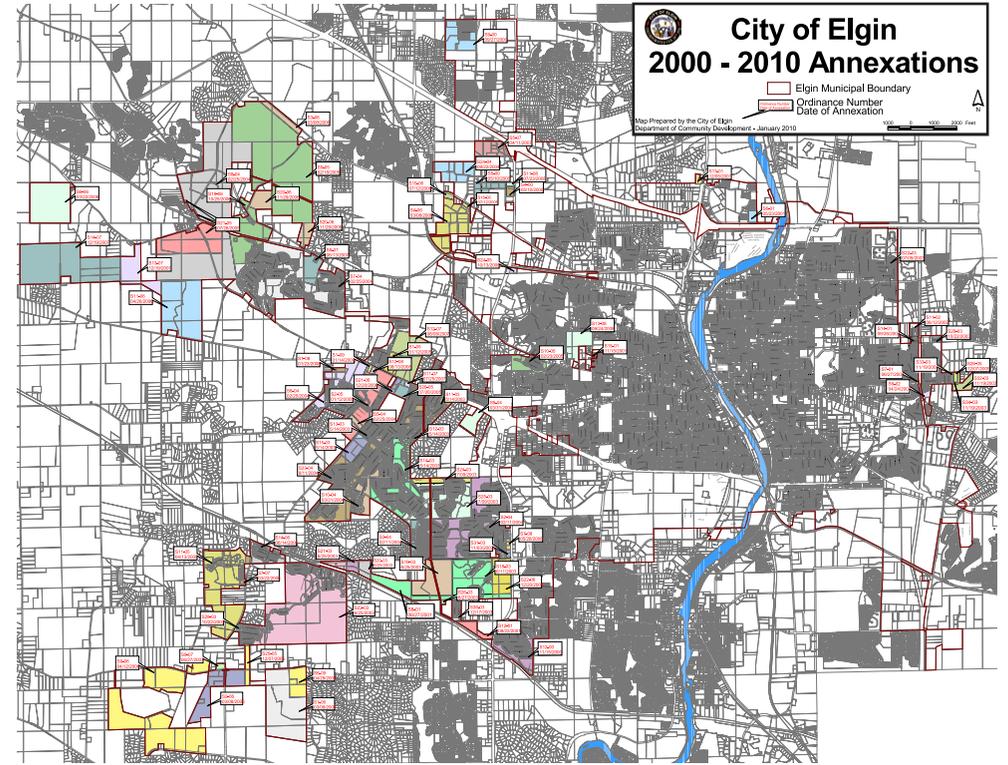
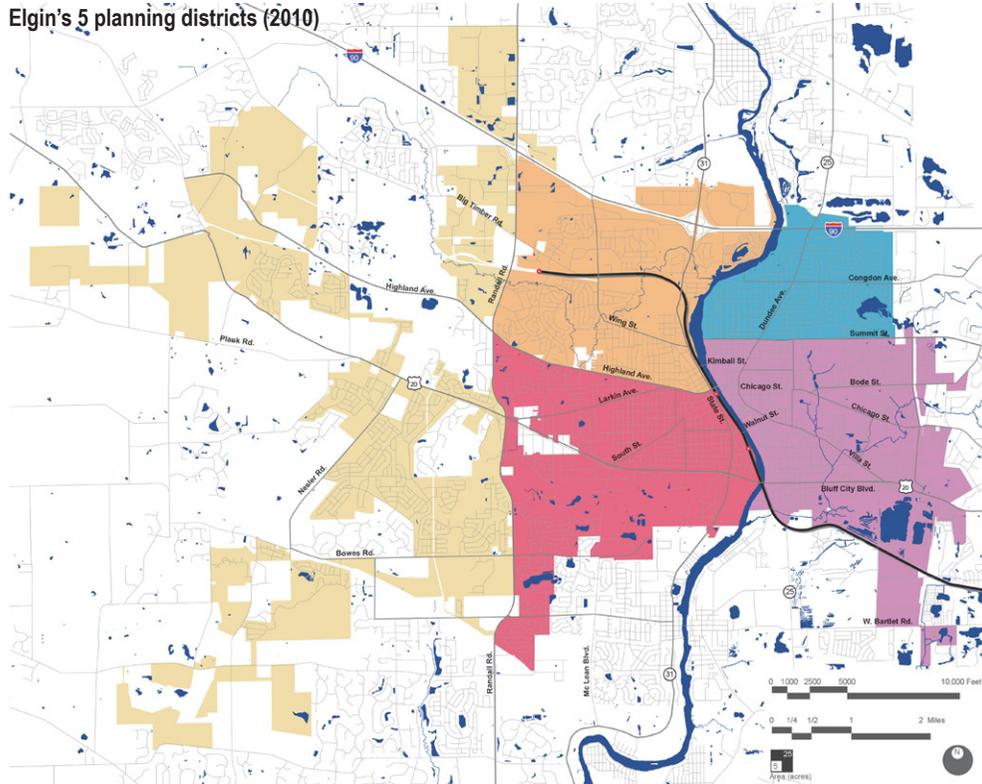
- Is a City illustrating growth in the park and recreation system with the growing population. A population increase of 12.7% from 2000 to 2008 in Elgin (nationally there has been an increase of  $\pm 8.04\%$ ).
- Has a general decline of nine and under age group from 17.6% (2000) of the population to 14.9% (2008) of the population (nationally there has been an increase of  $\pm 2.6\%$ )
- Has grown in population of tweens and teens (ages 10-19) with percentage increase from 14.2% to 16% (nationally there has been an increase of  $\pm 3.7\%$ )
- Has grown in population of the 55-59 age group, or active adults percentage. The population almost doubled from 3.8% of the population to 6.8% (nationally there has been an increase of  $\pm 36.9\%$ )
- Has a general decline of the 65+ age groups; declined from 8.7% of the population to 7.5% of the population, which is unusual as most communities have growing senior populations (nationally there has been an increase of  $\pm 10.9\%$ )
- Has grown in hispanic population from 34.3% to 41.8% of total population (nationally there has been an increase of  $\pm 33\%$ )
- Has retained the median age at 30.9 (national median age increased from 35.3 in 2000 to 36.9 in 2008)

Decade of growth with shift in City's geographic center

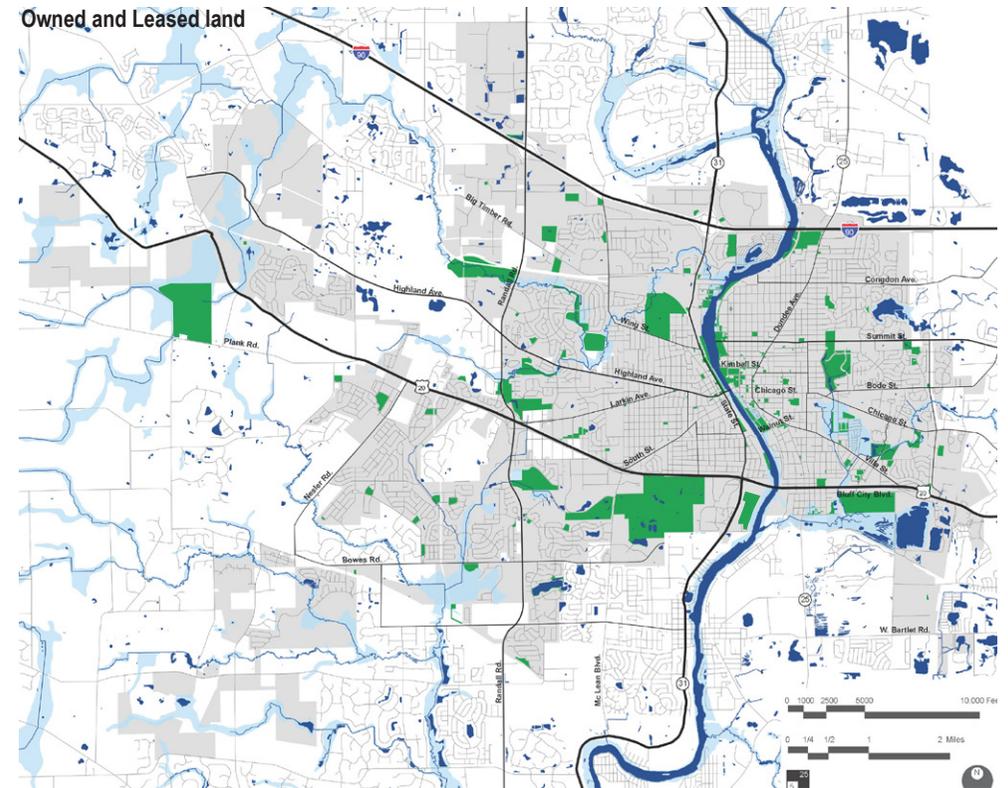


Source: City of Elgin GIS Data base

Elgin's 5 planning districts (2010)



Owned and Leased land



# Introduction

## Understanding Elgin

### City with diverse neighborhoods

The master plan acknowledges that Elgin:

- Contains a diverse population with equally diverse recreational needs.
- Is a classically developed city, with a dense urban core in its downtown and inner neighborhoods and lower intensity development along its outer limits, especially to the west. The dense urban core challenges the creation of new parks while avoiding major land acquisition and displacements. The expanding outer limits offer the opportunity to use new parks and open spaces as tools to promote sustainable development and improve quality of life for future communities. The city has already taken actions to dedicate parks/open space land in future development areas.

### City with a river

The master plan acknowledges that Elgin:

- Is a City with a major river (Fox River) that is both a barrier and a unifying, defining feature of the City and a connection to surrounding communities. Is a City that contains a number of creeks (Tyler, Poplar, Willow, Otter, Sandy, Bowes, Jelkes, Fitchie, Stony) and riparian corridors that permeate many of Elgin's neighborhoods. The river and other waterways offer opportunities for greenways that provide corridors for the movement of area residents and wildlife. Greenway corridors often follow waterways or land features such as steep slopes and ravines and may connect natural areas, parks and other community resources and cultural institutions.
- Is a City with four watersheds, wetlands and floodplains that are the water related environmental assets within the planning area. Water quality and ecological improvements require cooperation with adjacent communities as well as county and state agencies.

### Streets and transit

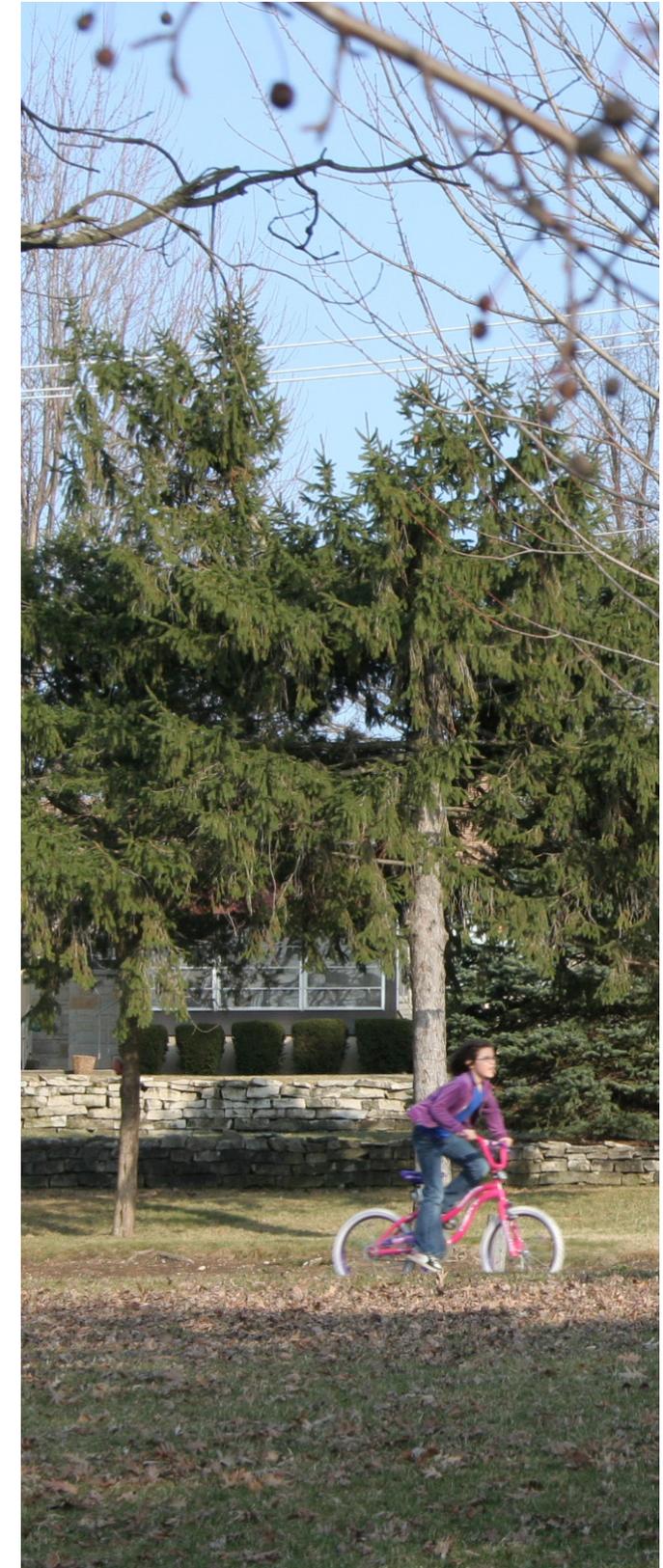
The master plan acknowledges that Elgin:

- Is a City that is well connected via it's network of streets. Within City limits local/fine grained street network connects various neighborhoods. Major streets define the planning districts boundary and connect the City with surrounding communities. These include I-90 to north, U.S. Highway 20 to south, S.R. 31 running through the middle, Randall running north-south to the west, Highland and Summit running east-west on either side of the Fox River, and S.R. 25 running north-south.
- Is a City that is well connected to the region via Metra commuter trains and PACE public bus transportation system. There are three Metra stations within the City. PACE serves both within Elgin's boundaries with routes that reach most of Elgin's neighborhoods, and surrounding communities. While major streets and transit offer linkages, they also function as physical barriers.

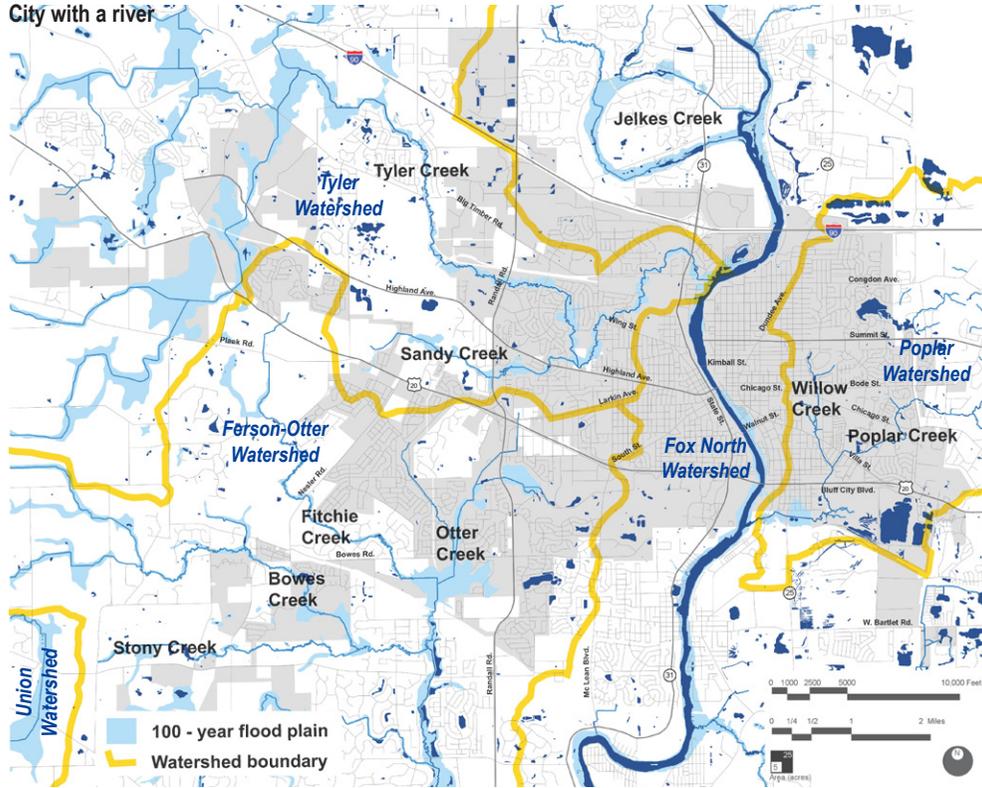
### City with trail network

The master plan acknowledges that Elgin:

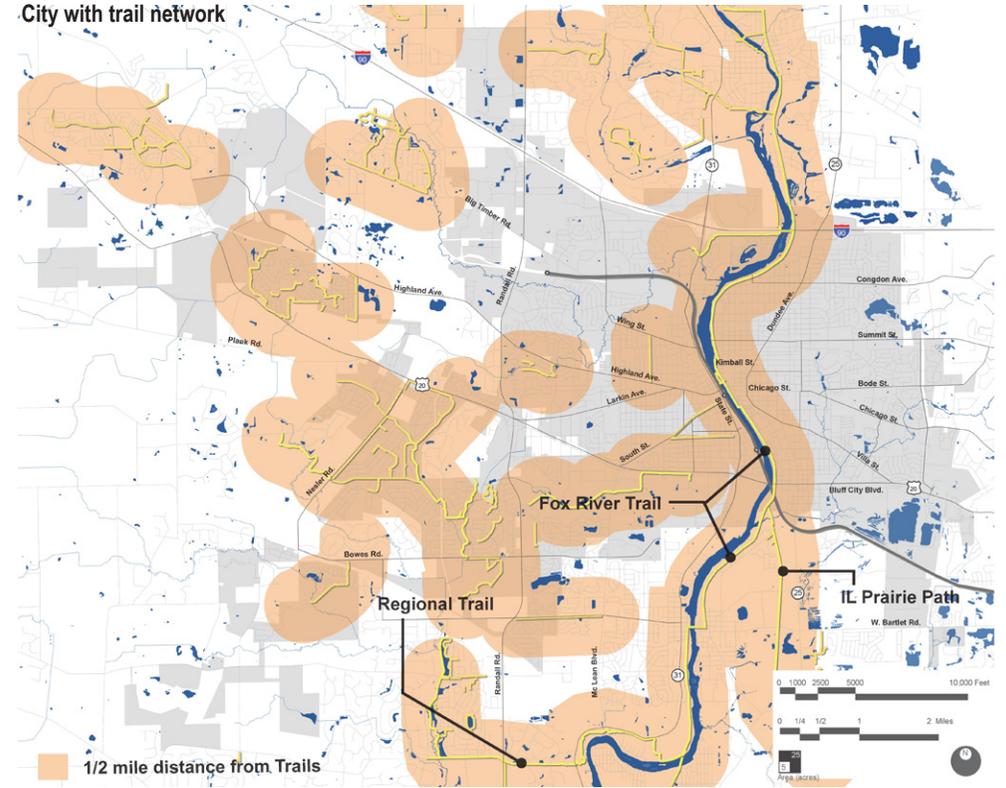
- Is a City with an extensive network of existing and proposed bikeways and trails. Fox River Trail is a regional trail (approximately 38 miles) running north-south within City limits (approximately 4.6 miles). Illinois Prairie Path Elgin branch (approximately 3.2 miles) links to Fox Trail and covers approximately 1.6 miles within City limits.
- Has a Bikeway Master Plan (2008) that identifies routes within City limits and connects to outside routes. Offers opportunity to tap into existing trails and proposed routes.
- Has the unique opportunity to provide each neighborhood resident with access to a neighborhood park and facilities located within 1/2 mile walking distance from the trail (typical trail service area - 1/2 mile).



City with a river

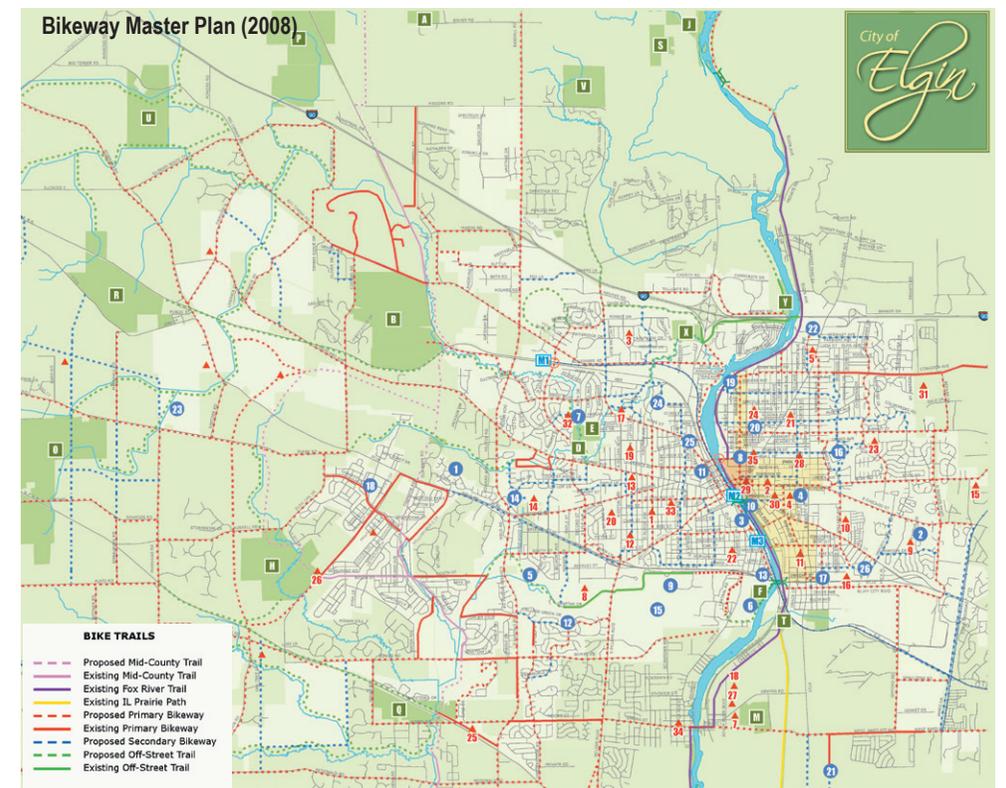
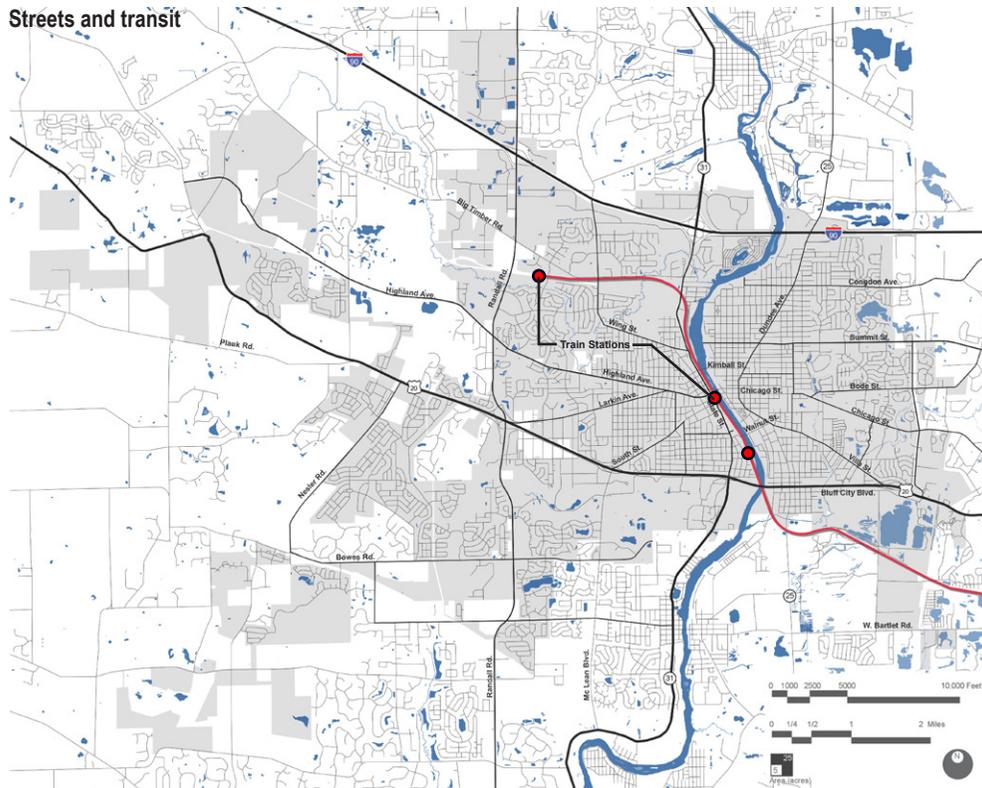


City with trail network



Source: City of Elgin GIS Data base, City of Elgin Bikeway Master Plan (2008), Kane County Bikeway and Pedestrian Plan (2002), Kane County Forest Preserve District Trail System Map (2007)

Streets and transit



# Process

## Approach

This updated master plan reflects a similar approach as the 2000 document but has been tailored to reflect the change that has occurred in Elgin over the past ten years. This study acknowledges the neighborhood make-up of Elgin as a critical, defining feature, while reflecting the significant geographic growth that has changed how the City is now organized. As a result, Elgin was divided into five multi-neighborhood geographic planning districts with analysis and public input conducted in each district. Like the 2000 plan, this plan is grounded by the following considerations:

- Reflect and respect the physical character, community context and history of each new and improved park development.
- Maintain a unique identity in each park that evokes the pride and involvement of the surrounding community.
- Determine the needs and uses of each park and facility in accordance with the community's requirements and desires.
- Design parks and facilities to be sustainable and adaptable to new ideas, trends and technologies as well as changing demographics or community needs.
- Consider equally the initial capital cost as well as ongoing operation, maintenance and durability in new park developments and renovations.
- Explore innovative implementation and funding models with an increased emphasis on creative partnerships.

## Methodology

The planning process for this project has been a collaboration between City of Elgin residents, Elgin Parks and Recreation Staff, Park and Recreation Advisory Board members, the City's Planning and GIS Department and the consulting team including JJR, LLC and PROS Consulting.

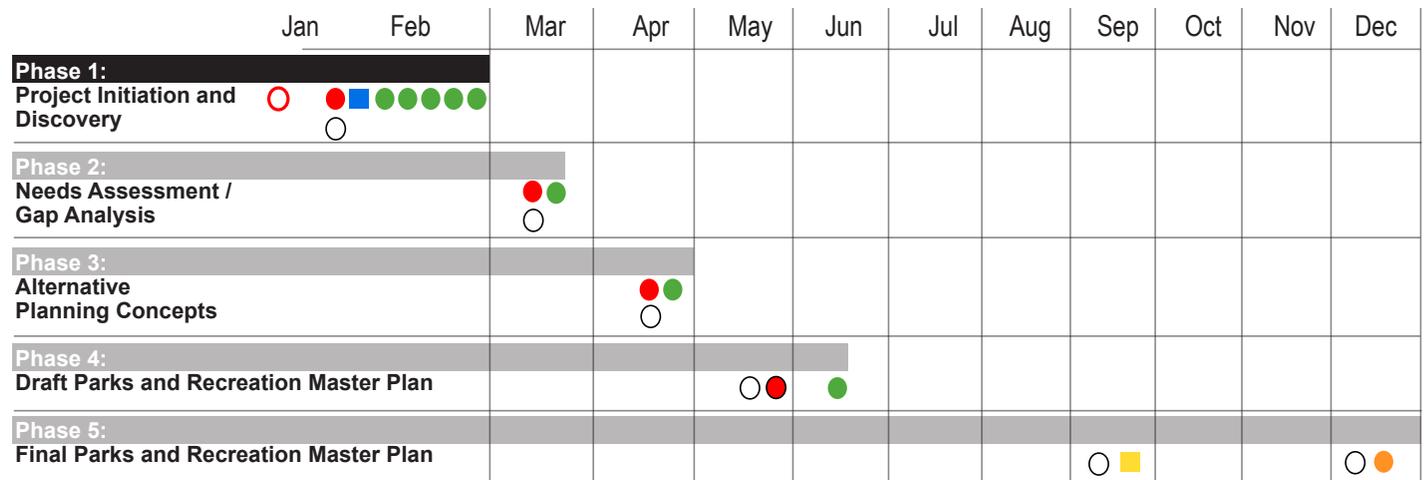
The planning process included site reconnaissance, focus group interviews, public meetings, and meetings with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee.

A sub-committee of the Master Plan Steering Committee conducted an extensive site reconnaissance for each of the parks and facilities in the City. This data was used to identify preliminary issues and opportunities that exist in the city.

There was extensive public participation that included public meetings during each phase of the project. Various planning tools and techniques such as visual preferencing, break-out groups and one-on-one dialogue were employed during a process that included 8 public meetings, 17 focus group meetings, and 8 master plan steering committee meetings over a period of 8 months (see project timeline).

The project review and update meetings with the Master Plan Steering Committee were conducted on monthly basis prior to public meetings.

The following pages summarizes the process utilized to conduct the focus groups and public input meetings. A detailed summary of each meetings is attached in the appendix A and B.



- Project Kick-off meeting
- Steering Committee Meetings
- Focus Groups Meetings
- Public Meetings
- Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting
- City Council Meetings
- Master Plan Website Development

## Focus Groups

The purpose of the focus group meetings was to hear from the wide-range of stakeholders and groups regarding the current parks and recreation offerings, as well as what they would like to see offered in the future. Where new parks should be located, what parks should be improved, what new programs should be offered, what new play elements would they like to see in their neighborhood parks. Each focus group was asked a series of questions and their responses were recorded. The questions include the following:

- *What do you believe are the strengths and weaknesses of Elgin's park and recreation system (parks, facilities, programs, services)?*
- *Do you have any suggestions for parks or recreation facilities that should be renovated?*
- *Do you feel the City needs to add more parks and/or recreation facilities (pools, rec centers, ball fields) or recreation programs? If so, in what geographic area of our community?*
- *What community challenges are you aware of that could be addressed by additional parks, recreation facilities, or programs?*
- *Can you suggest any park or facility additions or improvements that would help the economic development of Elgin?*

- *What park and recreation offerings have you seen in other communities that you think should be offered in Elgin?*
- *What can the Parks and Recreation Department do to better communicate with you regarding its parks, recreation facilities and programs?*
- *Do you have any suggestions for future improvements that we have not yet touched upon?*

The following questions were for those focus groups that represent organizations within the community that do, or could have, a partnership with EPRD (education, natural resources, churches, youth sports groups)

- *If your organization currently has an affiliation or partnership with the Parks and Recreation Department, how would you describe that relationship? What could be done to enhance it?*
- *What new partnerships do you think the Parks and Recreation Department could establish to strengthen its offering of parks and recreation services?*
- *Does your organization currently provide recreation space (playgrounds, playing fields, etc.) on your property that is available for the surrounding neighborhood to use?*

**The various focus group included representatives from:**

- Churches
- Education
- Youth Sports Groups
- Elgin Community Network / Neighborhoods
- Business Community
- City Staff
- Sustainability Group
- Latino Community
- Natural Resources
- Elected Officials
- Not-for-Profit Organizations
- Teen Representatives
- Police Department
- Miscellaneous

*A summary of all focus group input is included in Appendix A*



# Process

## Public Input

During the master planning process a total of eight public meetings were conducted during each of the five phases of the project.

### Phase 1: Discovery

The purpose of the first five public meetings was to hear from the residents regarding the current parks and recreation offerings, as well as what they would like to see offered in the future. Where new parks should be located, what parks should be improved, what new programs should be offered, and what new play elements they would like to see in their neighborhood parks.

With the intent of listening from all residents throughout the City, the planning team with the help of City of Elgin Parks and Recreation Department, organized 5 public meetings, one in each of the five planning districts.

Each public meeting included the following:

- Project Objectives
- Project Timeline and Schedule
- Mission Statement and Guiding Principles
- Focus Group Summary
- Understanding Elgin where existing conditions, growth trends from year 2000, and existing park and recreation system at city-wide level and for each of the five planning districts were presented.
- General/visual observations of existing parks system

Listening Session where the participants were asked specific questions and their responses were recorded. The following questions were asked:

- *What do you believe are the strengths of Elgin's park and recreation system (parks, facilities, programs, services)?*
- *What do you believe are the weaknesses of Elgin's parks and recreation system (parks, facilities, programs, services)?*
- *Do you have any suggestions for parks or recreation facilities that should be renovated?*

- *Do you feel there are physical barriers, and if so, where in our community?*
- *Do you feel the City needs to add more parks, and if so, in what geographic area of our community?*
- *Do you feel the City needs to add more recreation facilities (pools, rec centers, ball fields) or recreation programs? If so, in what geographic area of our community?*

### Phase 2: Gap Analysis

The purpose of the sixth public meeting was to share the findings from the previous input meetings (meetings 1 to 5), along with an associated needs and gap analysis. Following this presentation it was discussed where future efforts should be focused to address the issues that have been identified.

The public meeting included the following:

- Project Objectives
- Project Timeline and Schedule
- Public Input Summary (by districts)
- Demographic Trends Analysis
- Preliminary Gap Analysis / Need Assessment
- Listening Session - where the residents participated in validating the findings and shared new ideas.

### Phase 3: Alternatives

The purpose of the seventh public meeting (alternatives) was to share the findings from the previous input meetings (meeting 6); along with an associated needs and gap analysis; preliminary city-wide system standards; and preliminary alternatives. Following this presentation it was discussed where future efforts should be focused to address the issues that have been identified and validation of preliminary recommendations.

The public meeting included the following:

- Project Timeline and Schedule
- Analysis and findings (by districts)

- Gap Analysis / Needs Assessment (City-wide and by districts)
- Preliminary Alternatives and recommendations (City-wide and by districts)
- Listening Session - where the residents participated in validating the findings and shared new ideas.

### Phase 4: Draft plan

The purpose of the eighth public meeting was to share the findings from the previous input meetings (meeting 7); along with the draft plan and draft City-wide system standards. This meeting was held as an open house where the participants were asked to prioritize projects. They were asked to pick their first five preferred projects and this information was used to develop the preliminary list of priority projects.

*A summary of the public input process is included in Appendix B.*



Discovery Phase Public Meetings: Presentation

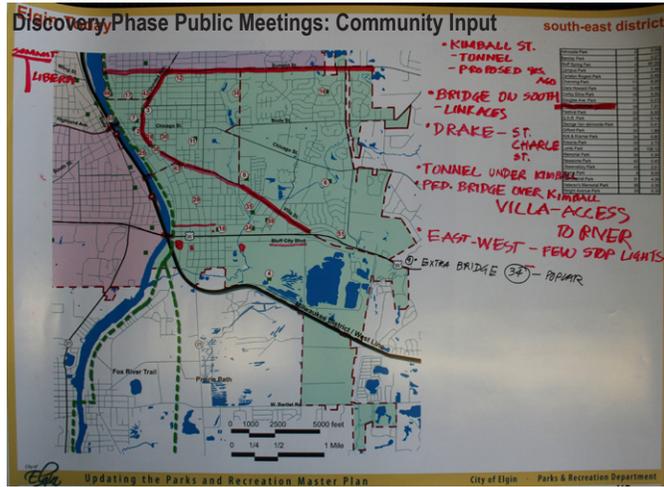
Discovery Phase Public Meetings: Break-out session



Gap Analysis Phase Public Meetings: Presentation



Draft Plan Phase Public Meetings: Community Input



Alternatives Phase Public Meetings: Break-out session



Draft Plan Phase Public Meetings: Community Input



Discovery Phase Public Meetings: Community Input

Alternatives Phase Public Meetings: Presentation



Draft Plan Phase Public Meetings: Community Input

# Analysis

## Recreation Program Offerings

The Elgin Parks and Recreation Department offers a comprehensive range of recreation programs and services to its residents. Annually the Department offers over one thousand individual programs in the following categories – preschool, youth, teen, adult, senior, family, and parent/ tot. Four times a year the department produces a program brochure that is made available to residents at City-owned facilities, as well as online. Marketing of the department’s programs is done primarily through the program brochure and through the City’s website.

Responders of the survey that was conducted in 2008 overwhelmingly praised the quality, variety, educational value and creativity of the Park and Recreation Department programs that they participated in. They especially enjoyed kid’s activities saying that they provided social interaction, entertainment, learning opportunities, and fun, in a safe, healthy environment. The preschool program specifically elicited many positive comments. The master plan focus group participants expressed a high regard for the recreation programs being offered by the Department. There were suggestions that more teen programs and senior programs be offered.

Concerns expressed by the responders of the 2008 survey revolved around cost, schedules, program location, and registration procedures. It should be noted that since that survey was conducted the Department has implemented on-line registration and currently 22% of program registration is coming via the internet. The biggest concern cited was that more programs need to be offered in facilities other than The Centre. Not everyone considers The Centre a convenient location and a great many of the responders requested that programs be offered in locations west of Randall Road. Staff members should continue to look for facilities to meet this demand for more programs west of Randall Road and at the same time look for additional facilities in more established neighborhoods.

Indoor recreation programs are currently offered in The Centre, the Eastside Recreation Center, Lords Park Pavilion, Hawthorne Hill Nature Center, and various schools throughout the City. Staff should look to find more locations in different neighborhoods in which to offer programs that will be more convenient for residents to attend. Cooperative efforts with the school districts, colleges, churches, private businesses and other non-profit organizations should be considered. Outdoor recreation programs are offered primarily at the Sports Complex, Hawthorne Hill Nature Center, Lords Park, and Wing Park. These locations seem to be sufficient to meet the current demand for outdoor programs, with the exception of soccer fields and winter sports activities.

With a median household income of slightly more than \$56,000 a year, there is a significant segment of the Elgin residents who cannot afford to pay for the recreation programs that the Department offers. Of the survey respondents that answered the question asking for the reason that they did not participate in programs, the most frequent answer, 22%, was due to high fees. Given this, staff should continue to look for ways to offer lower cost programs, possibly by partnering with other City departments, other agencies or seeking grants that could help to cover the costs of the programs. An attempt should also be made to offer programs that are appropriately priced for the residents of the neighborhood in which they are being offered. In some instances this may require a program to be modified, or instructed by volunteer. These are both strategies that could provide lower priced programs.

Even with the lowering of some program fees there will still be some families who cannot afford to participate in programs due to their lack of financial resources. The Recreation Youth Scholarship Fund was created to assist those families and allow their children to participate in recreation programs. However, in recent years the Youth Scholarship Fund frequently runs short of funding. A concerted effort should be made to find additional funding sources for the Youth Scholarship Fund and to restructure the program so that the funds that are available can be spread to more participants.



# Recreation Facilities

## Golf Courses

The City of Elgin currently owns and operates three different golf courses. They are Wing Park Golf Course, the Highlands of Elgin, and Bowes Creek Country Club. These three courses give the residents of Elgin a wide continuum of golf experiences and price ranges to choose from.

Wing Park Golf Course is a nine-hole golf course that serves the golfing needs of beginner and intermediate golfers. Opened in 1909, it is the oldest public golf course in Illinois. Wing Park Golf Course is located within historic Wing Park, one of the City's busiest parks. Recent improvements to the golf course include stabilization of the pond's shoreline and the planting of wild flowers, which have been very well received by both golfers and the general public. The golf course still experiences significant flooding during heavy rains. The flooding costs the City lost revenues and additional expenses as the flooded areas have to be reseeded or sodded. The City should consider hiring a consultant to do a water study to determine how to best deal with the flooding, which at times can impact three different golf holes. The clubhouse should also be evaluated to determine if it should be replaced, and if so when. This issue should be considered

as part of the Wing Park sub-plan that is being recommended as a part of this master plan. If a new clubhouse were to be built it should be constructed in such a way to support other activities within the park such as cross country skiing, walkers, casual visitors, and picnickers. A concession stand that would serve all of these markets could do quite well.

The Highlands of Elgin was a phased project that eventually replaced the City's 18-hole Spartan Meadows Golf Course. The construction of the Highlands of Elgin Golf Course was started in 2001 and all holes were finally finished and open to the public on July 20, 2010. The 18-hole links style golf course with its big grade changes and prairie style clubhouse have been very well received by both the golfing community and the general public. The Highlands also includes a golf learning center, which is open to the general public. The clubhouse also contains a golf simulator, which provides year round golfing opportunities to the public. Private and public golf lessons are offered by the golf staff. The golf course is home to many golf outings and golf leagues. The clubhouse also hosts many social events that are unrelated to golf. The food and beverage operations in the Hickory Stick Bar and Grill are leased out, while all other areas of operations are handled by City staff. The Highlands of Elgin is located

adjacent to the City's Sports Complex, east of McLean Avenue and south of IL Route 20.

In the fall of 2009 the City of Elgin opened Bowes Creek Country Club, an 18-hole golf course located in a 616-acre residential housing development. The development of the golf course was a joint project between the City of Elgin and Toll Brothers. The course is now owned and operated by the City of Elgin, which provides golfers with the opportunity to be a "member for the day" and experience what it is like to be a member of a private country club. The course was designed by Rick Jacobson, the 2008 golf course architect of the year in America. The course features wooded and wetland areas, a lake, mature tees, rolling farmland, and bluff slopes. The golf course also includes an elevated driving range, target greens, and practice putting and chipping areas. The food and beverage operations in Porter's Pub are leased out, while all other areas of operations are handled by City staff.



# Analysis

## Sports Complex

The Sports Complex was developed on property that was originally part of the Elgin Mental Health Center. In 1981 the land was acquired and designated for a sports park. A portion of the land was leased for a gravel and limestone mining operation, much of which was recently developed into the Highlands of Elgin Golf Course. The Sports Complex's ten lighted softball fields were opened in 1986. Over time ten soccer fields, four of them lighted, a BMX track, two concession stands, and two sand volleyball courts were added. The Sports Complex is heavily used both for regular programs such as softball and soccer leagues, as well as a site for local and regional tournaments. Throughout the master planning input process many comments were received regarding the need to renovate the existing sports fields, as well as the need to increase the number of them. The City Council has expressed a desire to increase the number of regional and national tournaments hosted at the Sports Complex, as a strategy to position Elgin as a premiere sports destination. To accomplish this the City should pursue the acquisition of the remaining available Elgin Mental Health property and look to develop it with additional athletic fields, including a site to accommodate the Elgin Youth Football League, which has outgrown its Drake Field location. The City should also renovate the existing sports fields and integrate them with the newly developed fields into one comprehensive sports field development.

## The Hemmens Cultural Center

Since its opening in 1969 The Hemmens Cultural Center has continued to provide the community with a stellar line-up of performers each season. This intimate 1,200 seat theatre is a favorite venue for seeing stars up close. In the past few years, audiences have been treated to such names as B. B. King, Bob Newhart, Phil Vassar, Garrison Keillor, The Ides of March, Blue Oyster Cult and many more. Over the years the City has commissioned a number of studies regarding

potential improvements to the Hemmens. These studies have addressed acoustics; the feasibility of expanding the stage house and adding an exterior box office; expanding the south lobby and adding main floor restrooms; and most recently, the advantages of a new performing arts center versus a major renovation/expansion of the existing building. The result of the latest study was that renovating the existing building would cost nearly 75% of what it would cost to build new.

Changes in the economy have placed thoughts of a new building on hold. However, there are several projects that need to be considered to maintain the viability of the current venue and improve the experience of patrons and performers. Projects such as replacement of the lobby window walls and much needed upgrades to the HVAC systems will increase the comfort of the patrons, performers and staff while reducing operating costs. A south lobby addition would provide restrooms on the main floor and additional lobby space for functions. HVAC, lack of restrooms on the main floor, and lack of sufficient reception space are three of the most common complaints the Hemmens receives, particularly from the Elgin Symphony Orchestra, which is the facility's largest renter.

An energy audit of the existing equipment and conditions is necessary to determine where improvements can be made and establish priorities. Funding opportunities such as grants are available for projects that increase energy efficiency. These and other funding options could be explored to help reduce the City's cost of these projects.

## Eastside Recreation Center

In January 2008, the City purchased the building that the God's Gym operation was housed in and in March of 2008 the City took over the entire operation of this facility. The current operation, The Eastside Recreation Center, is a City owned and operated facility consisting of a large fitness center, a boxing ring, small indoor soccer field, two batting tunnels, a

computer lab, and a multi-purpose room. The fitness center and programs are priced low to accommodate the residents that live in close proximity to the ERC.

The building itself is a 40,000 square foot two story building that was originally built as a boat sales showroom in the 1970s. The most recent use of the facility, prior to being used as a recreation facility, was as a light industrial operation. In the fall of 2009, structural reinforcement was completed on the building, repairs on the window frames were completed, and a new roof was put on. The City's 2008 community survey and the master plan public input process identified the need for further improvements to the ERC. The facility is significantly below the standards set by other City facilities. Many of the needed improvements would help to make the facility more comfortable to the patrons and also reduce the building's utility costs. The list of still needed improvements includes central air conditioning (most of the facility is not air conditioned), a new heating system, renovation of restrooms, new flooring, window coverings, folding partitions to divide program rooms, new electrical, new plumbing, and interior painting. The estimated cost of these improvements is \$2,100,100.

## The Centre of Elgin

The award winning Centre of Elgin, an 185,000 square foot community recreation center, opened in November 2002. Designed with the community context in mind to blend into the historic center of downtown Elgin, The Centre has been called one of the catalysts of the revitalization of the area. The Centre houses a wide variety of amenities and is divided into three levels. The first level houses a 300 seat banquet facility with full bar and catering service, numerous meeting and multipurpose rooms, an auxiliary gymnasium, a five room preschool wing, a babysitting room and a three story, seven route climbing wall. The ground floor contains an award winning indoor aquatic center, Adventure Island, with water slides, a 25 yard lap pool, a zero-depth leisure pool,

and various spray play features. The Elgin Cyclones swim team, three time conference championship winners, train and hold meets throughout the year in the facility, which is also equipped with a 200 seat viewing deck, touchpad system, and 8 lane score board. Rounding out the ground floor are two racquetball courts, a three-court gymnasium and general use locker room and family changing rooms. The Centre has hosted international and national premiere tournaments drawing thousands of spectators, players and coaches to the City of Elgin. The upper floor holds a four lane running/walking track, which is free to all Elgin residents. Along with the track, there are three multipurpose dance and group fitness studios and Centrecise, a women's only workout area. A 9,600 sq. ft. fitness center with upscale locker rooms complete the upper floor. The fitness center holds 75 pieces of cardio, free weight and selectrized equipment. The Centre has around 4,000 memberships, however, no membership is required to participate in any programs, activities or even to work out as daily fees are an option for the community. The Parks and Recreation Department administration offices and a 9,300 sq. ft. Sherman Health Wellness Center are also located within The Centre.

In its eighth year of operation, The Centre has built a

reputation in the community for providing quality programs and cost effective memberships. On average approximately one million visitors step through the doors every year and enjoy the facility and all of its amenities. Although The Centre is a relatively new facility, numerous capital projects will be needed in the upcoming years, such as, roof repairs, flooring, and mechanical replacements. A contingency fund should be established and maintained to address the needs within The Centre in the next ten to fifteen years of operations.

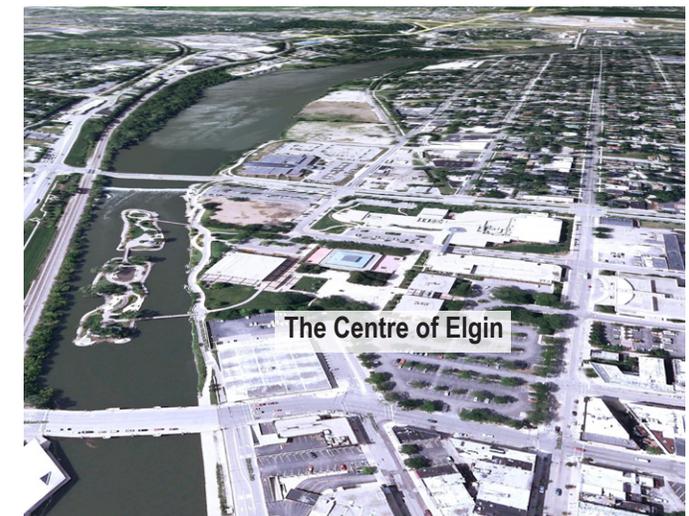
### Outdoor Aquatic Centers

The City of Elgin currently owns and operates two different outdoor aquatic centers. They are Wing Park Family Aquatic Center and Lords Park Family Aquatic Center. These two outdoor aquatic centers give the residents of Elgin two different locations and experiences with two different price ranges to choose from.

As the City's first public outdoor swimming pool, Wing Park Pool was constructed in 1908 by damming up Tyler Creek and spreading sand for a beach. Although the location has seen various facilities, the current facility was opened in 2000 and features two flume slides, a one-meter diving board, a three-

meter diving board, boat slide, tumble buckets, an interactive play feature, lap swimming lanes, diving well, drop slide, concession stand, sand play area, and sand volleyball court. The facility offers private swim lessons, swim team, and open swim as part of the operation.

A second public pool, located in Lords Park, was opened in 1960 as an "L" shaped pool. Today it is an aquatic center offering many of the same features as Wing Park but on a smaller scale including a zero-depth entry pool, lap lanes, two flume slides, frog slide, tumble buckets, interactive play feature, concession stand, sand play area, and sand volleyball court. This facility offers open swim and private swim lessons for the users.



# Analysis

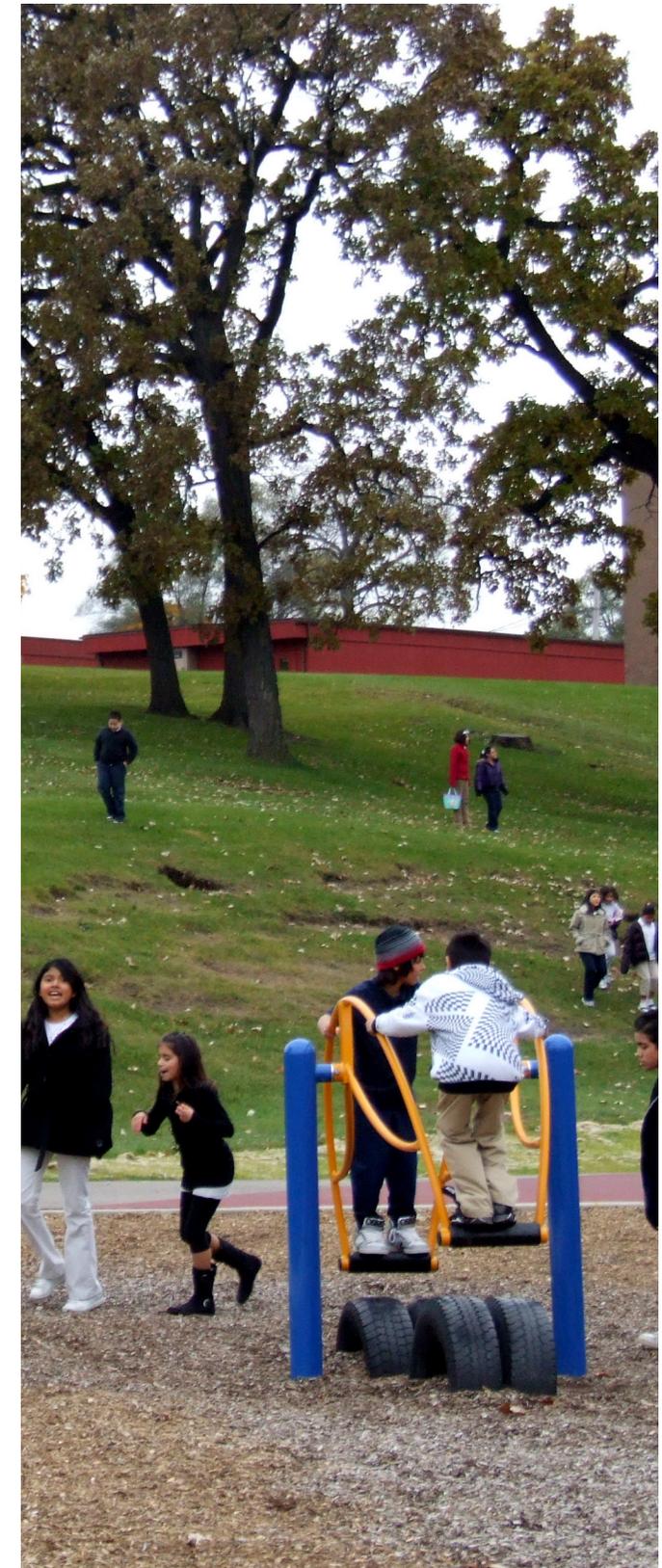
## Sustainability Master Plan

The City of Elgin is committed to becoming a more sustainable community and preserving resources for future generations. The City is creating an environmental master plan and is moving forward with a series of eco-friendly projects. The master plan is being created through the efforts of nine different working groups. The working groups are as follows – Green Infrastructure, Transportation and Mobility, Urban Design, Water, Recycling and Waste Management, Green Building Technologies and Energy Conservation, Alternative Energy, Economic Development, and Outreach/Community Education. The work groups meet on a regular basis, both individually and as a whole. Each one has its own goals and objectives, with the overall goal of the working groups to create a Sustainability Master Plan for the City of Elgin. Each Working Group consists of up to 9 citizens and one member from the Advisory Team. The Working Groups are helping to determine how the Sustainable City Master Plan will affect citizens on a household level. Through collaborative efforts each Working Group discusses strategies that will contribute to the creation and implementation of the Sustainability Master Plan.

At the writing of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan the Sustainability Master Plan is still in the process of being created. Once created, the Sustainability Master Plan will provide recommendations and guidelines that could very well impact the manner in which parks are planned, developed, and maintained. The Sustainability Master Plan is a very important document to the City of Elgin and is therefore a very important document for the Park and Recreation Department. The Master Plan Steering Committee included a member of the Green Infrastructure Work Group, to make certain that both processes were working in concert.

## Public Tree Management Plan

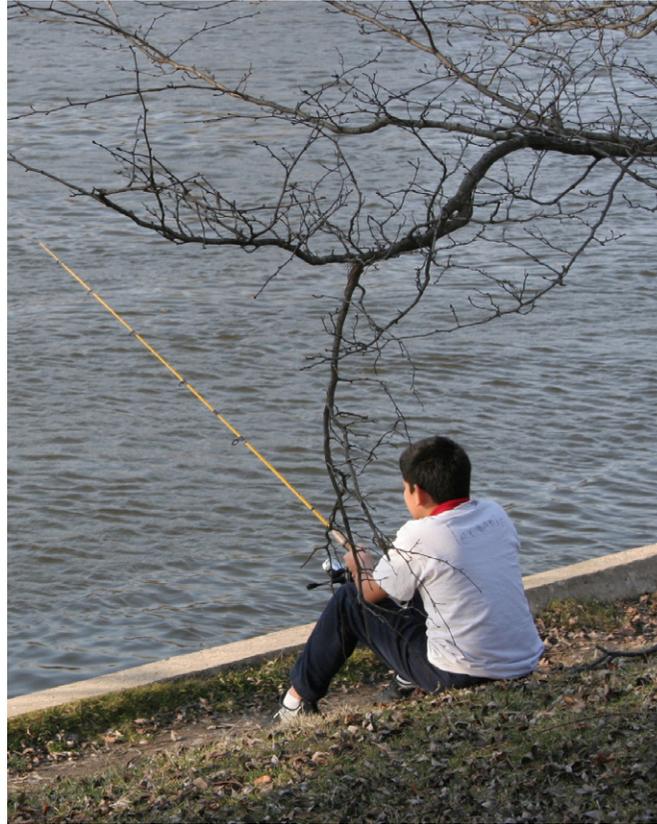
An important element of any park system is the trees that are often found in public parks. Trees are an integral component of the urban environment. Their shade and beauty contribute to the community's quality of life and soften the hard appearance of concrete structures, parking lots, and roadways. Trees help stabilize soils by controlling wind and water erosion and also help reduce noise levels, cleanse pollutants from the air, produce oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide, and provide habitat for wildlife. Unlike other components of the City's infrastructure, the tree population, with proper care, will actually continue to increase in value with each passing year. Managing the trees as the valuable resource that they are is not an easy task and not a task to take for granted. To help manage Elgin's public trees the City commissioned a study of its urban forestry to help establish an effective planning and management program for this valuable resource. The tree management recommendations outlined in this plan should be considered when maintaining existing parks, as well as when designing future parks. *An executive summary of the Tree Management Plan is included in Appendix C.*



## Park Maintenance

Research has consistently shown that living in close proximity to a park can raise property values, in some instances as much as 32% higher. The higher values of homes results in more property taxes being paid, which in turn can bring more revenue to the City to help pay for the development and maintenance of parks. However, research has also shown that parks that are not adequately maintained can to decrease the value of adjacent property values. Given these factors it is important that as more park properties are acquired, and developed, that additional funds be budgeted for the maintenance of the parks. As new parks are planned the ongoing costs of maintenance must be considered and budgeted.

A good estimate of the annual cost to maintain an acre of park land is \$3,000. However, this is an average and the individual park site and its features will determine the actual cost to maintain a particular site. All new park proposals should include an annual estimated cost of maintenance which needs to be budgeted so that funds are in place to maintain the park once it is open.



# Analysis

## Level of Service

A number of lenses were used to understand the level of service today and establish the recommended goal for the future. The planning team assessed the service area coverage for each park type using industry standards such as National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) level of service as well as benchmarking with other comparable communities. While a detailed benchmarking was beyond the scope for this study, a preliminary benchmarking was done to understand where Elgin ranks in comparison to similar sized communities. This preliminary benchmarking included communities with a population range of about 100,000 to 150,000 and size of approximately 20 to 50 square miles. Based on this preliminary comparison with communities such as Waukegan, Rockford, and Peoria, Elgin's parks and recreation offerings rank in the upper-middle category based on the acres/1000 population and number/type of facilities.

Elgin's parks were classified based on "Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines" developed in 1996 by NRPA. The City of Elgin "Park Service Area Standards", as listed in the Comprehensive Plan and Design Guidelines (2005) were also evaluated. In addition, barriers such as major thoroughfares or physical elements such as the Fox River were factored in to understand where gaps might exist.

This understanding, along with input from staff and the general public, provided guidance on how these "gaps" and barriers could be overcome with new parks and/or improved linkages. Finally, once these gaps were identified, potential partnership or otherwise available parcels were assessed to understand how best to fill them in the most cost-effective manner. The following provides an overview of each park classification and the level of service for each in Elgin.

### Regional Parks

- Serves broader purpose than community park and is used when community and neighborhood parks are not adequate to serve the needs of the community.

- Focus is on meeting community-wide recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. May also provide a unique recreation function, which serves the entire community, such as a golf course.
- Service Area - 3 mile to community-wide. Usually a minimum of 75 acres.
- The City of Elgin has 395.62 regional park acres, 224 acres of which are undeveloped.

### Community Parks

- Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. These parks may have a unique or limited recreational function. Focus is on meeting community-wide recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.
- Usually serves two or more neighborhoods.
- Service Area - 1/2 to 3 mile distance. Usually between 15 - 75 acres.
- The City of Elgin has 111.70 community park acres.

### Neighborhood Parks

- The basic unit of the parks system which functions as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation. These typically have a playground.
- Service Area - 1/4 to 1/2 mile distance. Usually between 1 - 15 acres. It is important to note that the City of Elgin has some mini parks that have been included in the neighborhood park land acreage.
- The City of Elgin has 148.14 neighborhood park acres.

### Special Use Areas

- There are no recommended standards for special use areas. Here the special use areas include natural areas and open space.
- It is important to note that the City of Elgin has 992.99 special use acres, which are primarily golf course acres. Special use area park land also includes natural and open space acres and the Sports Complex.

#### Regional Parks

PARK NAME	Map #	Area (Acres)
Elgin Regional Park	21	224.00
Lords Park	36	106.12
Wing Park	57	65.50

#### Community Parks

PARK NAME	Map #	Area (Acres)
Prairie Park	8	8.00
Drake Field Park	18	7.01
Elgin Shores	22	20.80
Slade Avenue Park	50	4.29
Trout Park	54	44.10
Walton Island Park	55	4.50

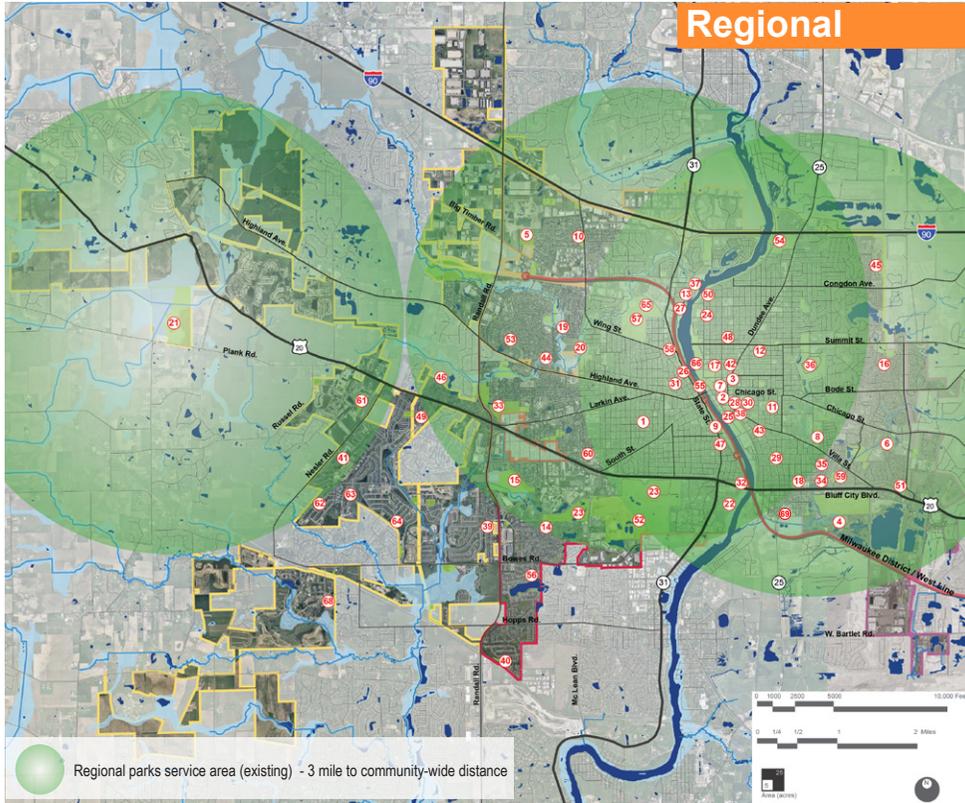
#### Special Use Areas

PARK NAME	Map #	Area (Acres)
Bluff Spring Fen	4	97.00
Bowes Creek Country Club	68	249.00
Burnidge Woods Park	5	22.04
Campus Park	6	7.56
College Park	15	60.81
Eagle/Burnidge Park	20	56.00
Elgin Sports Complex	23	107.00
Festival Park	25	5.50
Hawthorne Hill Park	33	65.82
Mable Avenue Park	37	5.76
The Highlands	52	260.00
Wing Park Golf Course	65	56.50

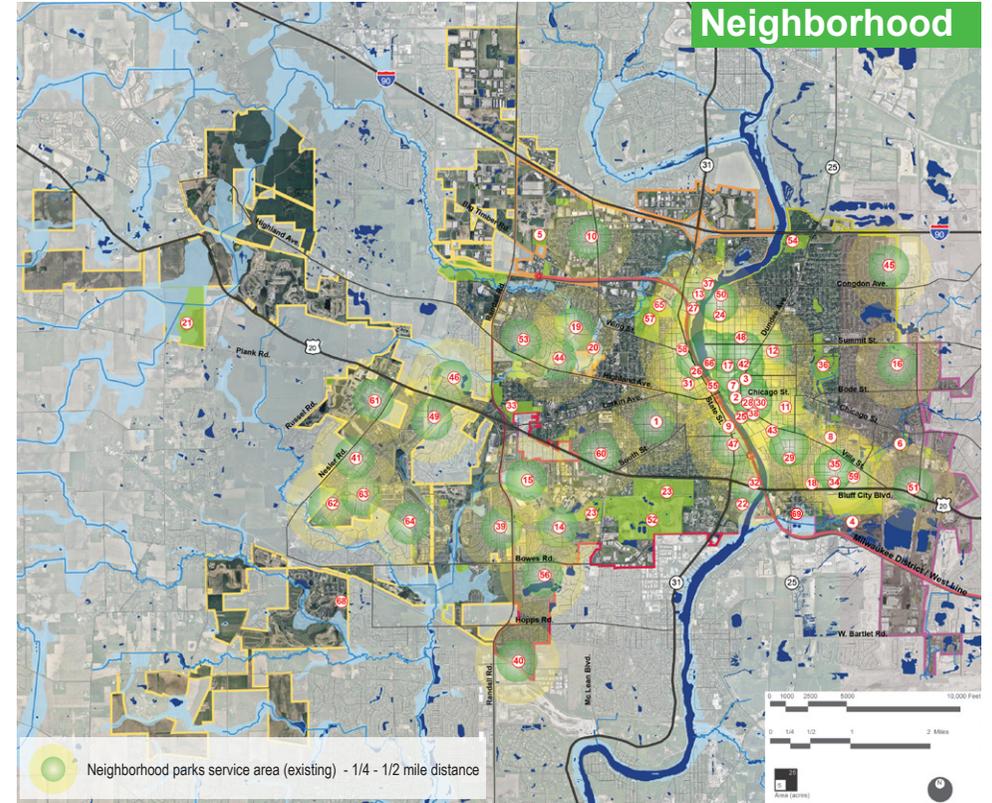
#### Neighborhood Parks

PARK NAME	Map #	Area (Acres)
Abbott Park	1	1.24
Advocate Park	2	0.09
Barclay Park	3	0.27
Carleton Rogers Park	7	0.45
Central Park	9	3.45
Century Oaks Park	10	3.96
Channing Park	11	6.00
Clara Howard Park	12	0.49
Clifford/Owasco Park	13	4.56
College Green Park	14	2.97
Douglas Ave. Park	17	0.23
Eagle Heights Park	19	6.19
Esmeralda Park	24	0.46
Copper Springs Park	63	4.10
Corley Drive Park	16	3.05
Cornestone Park	60	1.15
Foundary Park	26	7.30
Frazier Park	27	0.52
G.A.R. Park	28	0.14
George Van deVoorde Park	29	0.41
Gifford Park	30	7.88
Grant School Park	31	1.80
Grollich Park	32	7.62
Kirk & Kramer Park	34	0.80
Kiwanis Park	35	2.75
Memorial Park	38	0.30
Millenium Park	39	1.28
Mulberry Grove Park	40	5.10
Meier Park	61	12.89
Nesler Road Park	41	20.00
Newsome Park	42	0.45
Observatory Park	43	2.51
Powder River Park	44	2.10
Princeton West Park	45	3.00
Randall Ridge Park	46	3.06
Ryerson Park	47	1.10
St. Francis Park	48	2.42
Settlers Park	49	3.00
Shadow Hill Park	62	3.64
Summerhill Park	51	4.39
Trinity Terrace Park	53	3.05
Unity Park	69	1.00
Waterford Entry Park	64	3.34
Willow Bay Park	56	0.67
Wing Street Park	58	0.31
Wright Avenue Park	59	6.35
Veteran's Memorial Park	66	0.30

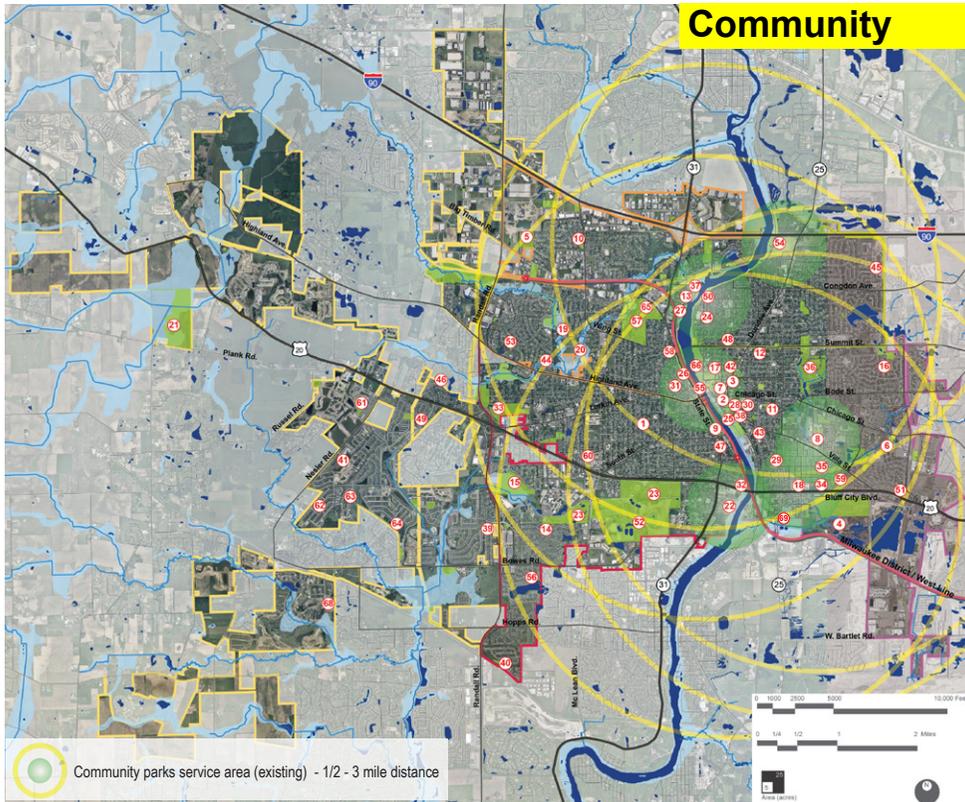
# Regional



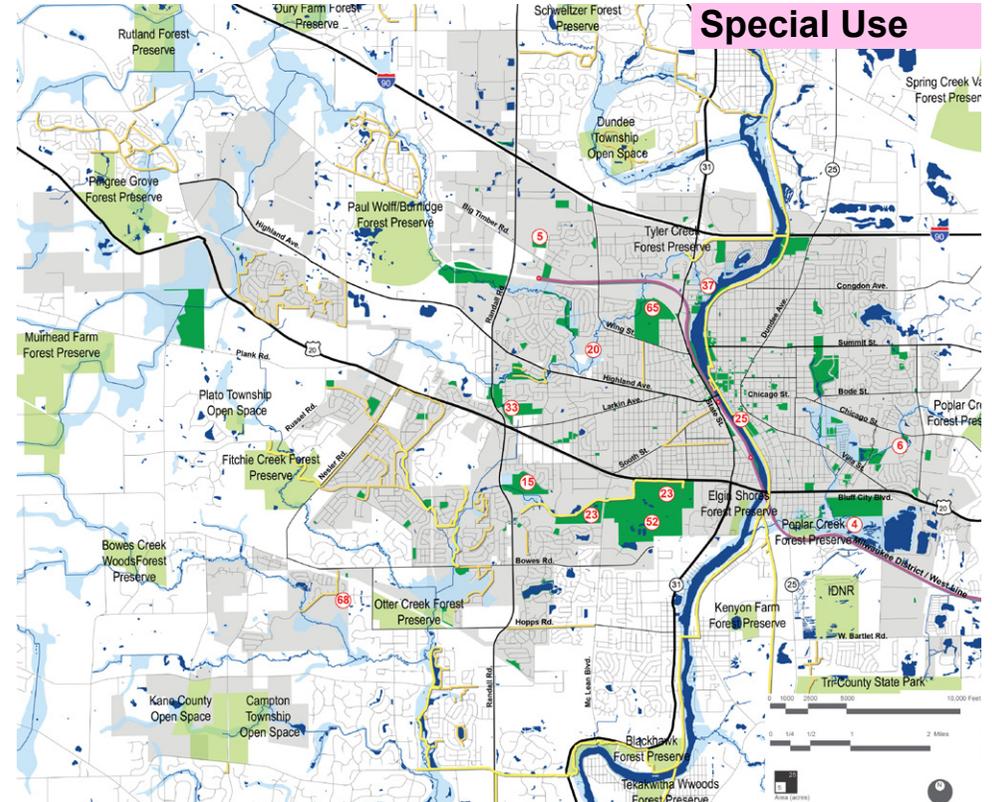
# Neighborhood



# Community



# Special Use

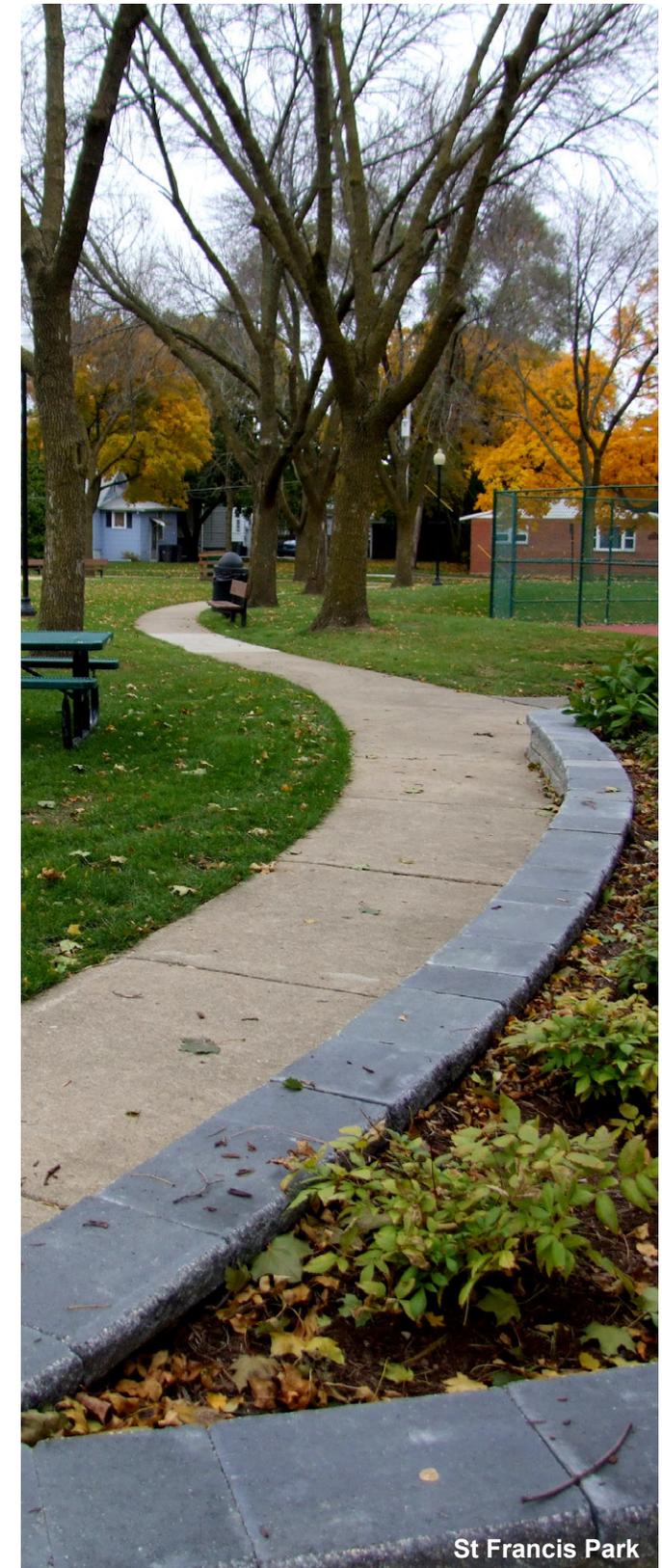


# Analysis

## Observations and Rationale

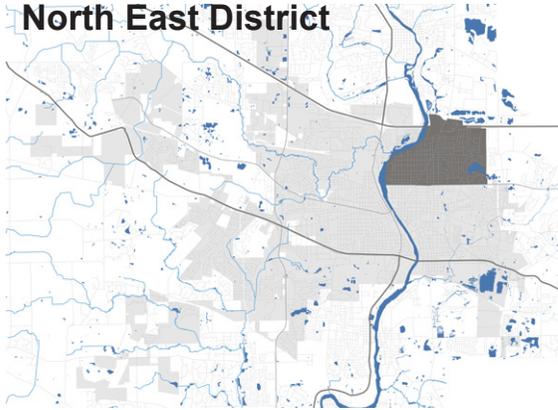
There were a series of observations and overriding strategies that drove many of the recommendations in this master plan update. Many reflect economic realities that require a different approach than the 2000 plan, or even methods used two to three years ago, while others are based on observations from the planning team or stakeholders during this process. These include:

- A general need to augment the amount and quality of practice areas to support the game and tournament facilities that provide more limited field access to those seeking practice or unstructured play.
- A shift in thinking away from “purchase first” when filling neighborhood park or other needs with greater consideration given to creative approaches such as leasing or cooperative agreements.
- Recognition that a number of smaller neighborhood parks are relied on to serve neighborhood demand but are not meeting these needs due to their small size and limited amenities. It should be noted that a number of these parks were previously classified as “mini parks” (small, passive spaces serving primarily beautification functions) are now within the “neighborhood park” classification in this plan. Based on these findings, there is a need to follow the minimum neighborhood park acreage and amenity standards developed in the 2000 master plan and adopted by the City of Elgin to properly serve all neighborhoods. Additional parks serving the mini-park purpose are not recommended.
- Acknowledgement that while overall park acreage appears in line with Elgin’s population, there is currently a significant need for neighborhood parks and strategically-located community parks based on service area coverage that, if met, would require Elgin to exceed their target acreage per thousand standard at the current population unless some parkland is divested.
- An understanding that a significant amount of Elgin’s park acreage is devoted to large special use parks such as Elgin Sports Complex, golf courses and open space, potentially skewing statistics when looking holistically at acres of parkland per thousand residents. These parks provide great recreational and environmental value to Elgin, but this statistic must be considered when considering new parks purely on total acreage to ensure that gaps in other park classifications such as neighborhood parks are met. For this reason this report recommends a standard 15 acres per thousand residents, up from the 10 acres per 1000 adopted in 2000. While this update does not propose any new special use parks, it does include recommendations to enhance and, in some cases, expand them to be more effective.



St Francis Park

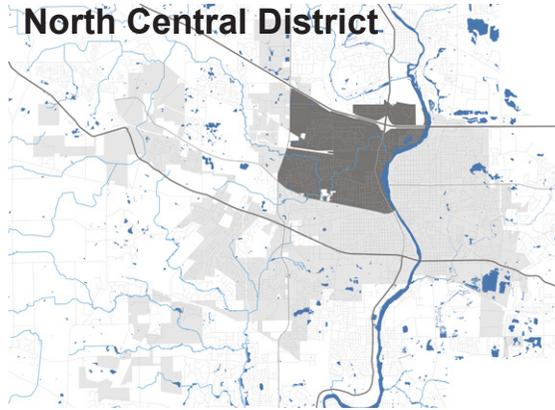
### North East District



	Acres	Average Size
Regional Parks		
Community Parks = 2	48.39	24.20
Neighborhood Parks = 3	5.88	1.96
Special Use		

Total Park Area = 54.27 acres  
 Population Estimate = approx. 22,534

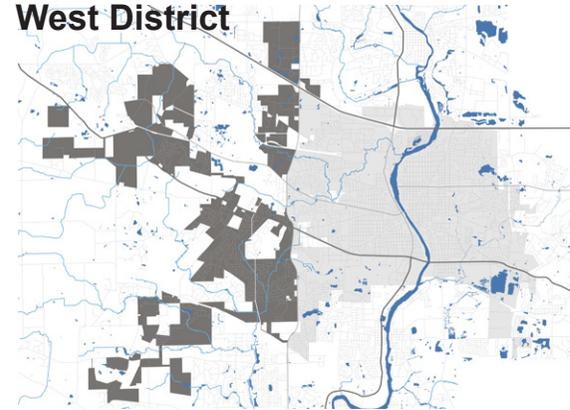
### North Central District



	Acres	Average Size
Regional Parks = 1	65.50	65.50
Community Parks		
Neighborhood Parks = 9	29.79	3.31
Special Use = 4	140.30	14.13

Total Park Area = 235.59 acres  
 Population Estimate = approx. 21,021

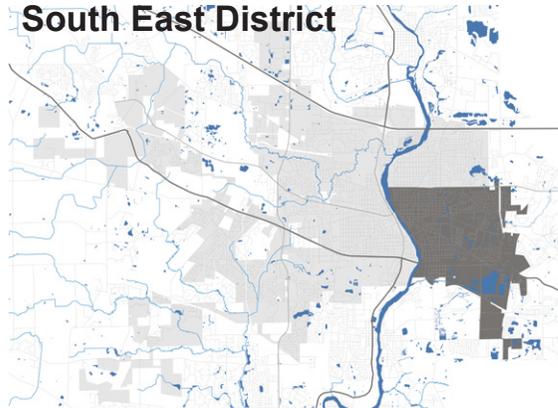
### West District



	Acres	Average Size
Regional Parks = 1	224.0	224.0
Community Parks		
Neighborhood Parks = 8	51.31	6.41
Special Use = 1	249.0	249.0

Total Park Area = 524.31 acres  
 Population Estimate = approx, 12,898

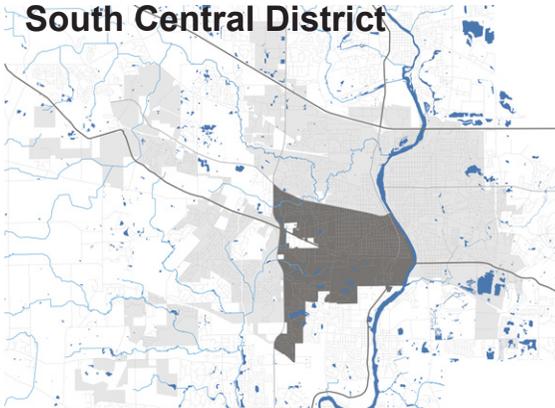
### South East District



	Acres	Average Size
Regional Urban Parks = 1	106.12	106.12
Community Parks = 3	19.51	6.50
Neighborhood Parks = 19	37.86	2.0
Special Use = 3	110.06	

Total Park Area = 272.55 acres  
 Population Estimate = approx. 25,444

### South Central District



	Acres	Average Size
Regional Parks		
Community Parks = 1	20.80	20.80
Neighborhood Parks = 8	23.30	2.91
Special Use = 4	493.63	123.4

Total Park Area = 537.73 acres  
 Population Estimate = approx. 24,577

Planning District Type	South East	North Central	West	South Central	North East	Total Acreage	Percent Acreage
Special Use							
Golf Course	-	56.50	249.00	260.00	-	565.50	34.8%
Sports Complex	-	-	-	107.00	-	107.00	6.6%
Festival	5.50	-	-	-	-	5.50	0.3%
Natural Areas / Open Space	104.56	83.80	-	126.63	-	314.99	19.4%
<b>Total Special Use</b>	<b>110.06</b>	<b>140.30</b>	<b>249.00</b>	<b>493.63</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>992.99</b>	<b>61.1%</b>
Neighborhood	37.86	29.79	51.31	23.30	5.88	148.14	9.1%
Community	19.51	-	-	20.80	48.39	88.70	5.5%
Regional	106.12	65.50	224.00	-	-	395.62	24.3%
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>273.55</b>	<b>235.59</b>	<b>524.31</b>	<b>537.73</b>	<b>54.27</b>	<b>1,625.45</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Percentage Total</b>	<b>16.8%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>	<b>32.3%</b>	<b>33.1%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>-</b>

Existing park classification by planning districts

# Analysis

## Findings and Recommended Standards

Park and facility standards are guidelines that define service areas based on population numbers and support investment decisions related to parks, facilities and amenities. Facility standards can and will change over time as the program lifecycles change and demographics of a community change. In addition, mapping the amenity and park land locations provides a further level of detail in determining gaps in service and possible locations for future park land and amenity development. The standards included in the Plan (see page 25 for standards) include three categories: park land, outdoor amenities, and indoor recreation space. Information about needs relating to the three categories is detailed further in this section.

PROS evaluated park facility standards using a combination of resources. These resources included: National Recreation and Park Association guidelines, Illinois guidelines, the public input process at the start of the Master Plan process, and the Steering Committee consultation. This process resulted in the development of standards specifically for the City of Elgin.

These facility standards should be viewed as a guide. The standards are to be coupled with conventional wisdom and judgment related to the ever changing needs of the community, as well as the ability to fund projects. By applying these facility standards to the population of Elgin, gaps and surpluses in park and facility/amenity types are revealed. In some of the amenities listed, there is a lack of national or state standards. In this case, a best judgment was used to determine a standard appropriate to Elgin.

### Park Land

Based on 1624.45 current acres of park land and a 2008 population estimate of 106,474, the current standard for park acres is 15.26 acres per 1,000 persons. The recommended park land standard is 15 acres per 1,000 persons (see page 26 for standards). It is important to note that the City of Elgin has 992.99 special use acres, the majority of which is golf course acreage. Special use area park land also includes natural and open space acres, and the Sports Complex.

Service levels in terms of total acres are met for 2010 (based on 2008 population estimate). However, there is a lack of balance in the system, which is why Special Use far exceeds the standards, while Community Parks, Regional Parks and Neighborhood Parks are below recommended service levels.

As a result, the classification of park land currently needed includes the following:

- Neighborhood parks, 12 additional acres needed
- Community parks, 231 additional acres needed
- Regional parks, 137 acres needed

At the same time, using recommended park land standard of 15 acres per 1,000 persons, an additional 446 acres of total park land will be needed (based on 2020 population estimate). However, the 2020 service level shows a lack of balance in the system which is why Special Use far exceeds the standards while Community Parks, Regional Parks and Neighborhood Parks are below recommended service levels.

As a result, the classification of park land needed in 2020 includes the following:

- Neighborhood parks, 59 additional acres needed
- Community parks, 325 additional acres needed
- Regional parks, 294 acres needed

### Parkland Needed by Planning Districts

The table on this page illustrates the need assessment for each park type by planning districts (based on population estimates - 2008 ACS data). This data was used as a guide as it is based only on population estimates and does not consider social/cultural, physical barriers and other relevant issues. The consultants used this data in addition to public comments, feedback from the Steering Committee, and site analysis to determine the needs and city-wide standards.

	Planning Districts					Total
	South East	North East	North Central	South Central	West	City
<b>Population (2008 estimate)</b>	25,444	22,534	21,021	24,577	12,898	106,474
<b>Existing Parks</b>						
Neighborhood	37.9	5.9	29.8	23.3	51.3	148.2
Community	19.5	48.4		20.8		88.7
Regional	106.1		65.5		224.0	395.6
<b>Needs (based on 2008 population Estimate)</b>						
Neighborhood	0.3	27.9	1.7	13.6	-32.0	12
Community	56.8	19.2	63.1	52.9	38.7	231
Regional	21.1	112.7	39.6	122.9	-159.5	137

Existing park classification and needed parkland (based on 2008 population estimates) by planning districts

# Findings and Recommended Standards

PARKS: Current 2009 Inventory - Developed Facilities									Facility Needs based on 2008 estimated pop.			Facility Needs based on 2020 estimated pop.		
Park Type	Elgin Inventory	Total Inventory	Current Service Level based upon population			Recommended Service Levels; Revised for Local Service Area			Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed		Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed	
Neighborhood Parks	148.14	148.14	1.39	acres per	1,000	1.50	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	12	Acre(s)	Need Exists	59	Acre(s)
Community Parks	88.70	88.70	0.83	acres per	1,000	3.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	231	Acre(s)	Need Exists	325	Acre(s)
Regional Parks	395.62	395.62	3.72	acres per	1,000	5.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	137	Acre(s)	Need Exists	294	Acre(s)
Special Use Areas	992.99	992.99	9.33	acres per	1,000	5.50	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)
<b>Total Park Acres</b>		<b>1,625.45</b>	<b>15.27</b>	<b>acres per</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>15.00</b>	<b>acres per</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Acre(s)</b>	<b>Need Exists</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>Acre(s)</b>

Current 2009 Inventory - Developed Facilities									Facility Needs based on 2008 estimated pop.			Facility Needs based on 2020 estimated pop.		
Playgrounds*	38.00	38.00	1.00	structure per	2,802	1.00	structure per	2,175	Need Exists	11	Structures(s)	Need Exists	25	Structures(s)
Shelter - Small	23.00	23.00	1.00	site per	4,629	1.00	site per	5,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Need Exists	5	Site(s)
Shelter - Large	7.00	7.00	1.00	site per	15,211	1.00	site per	7,500	Need Exists	7	Site(s)	Need Exists	11	Site(s)
Baseball - 200	5.00	5.00	1.00	field per	21,295	1.00	field per	22,000	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)	Need Exists	1	Field(s)
Baseball - 300	12.00	12.00	1.00	field per	8,873	1.00	field per	7,500	Need Exists	2	Field(s)	Need Exists	6	Field(s)
Softball - Youth	8.00	8.00	1.00	field per	13,309	1.00	field per	10,000	Need Exists	3	Field(s)	Need Exists	6	Field(s)
Softball - Adult	2.00	2.00	1.00	field per	53,237	1.00	field per	20,000	Need Exists	3	Field(s)	Need Exists	5	Field(s)
Soccer - Youth	5.00	5.00	1.00	field per	21,295	1.00	field per	10,000	Need Exists	6	Field(s)	Need Exists	9	Field(s)
Soccer - Regulation	7.00	7.00	1.00	field per	15,211	1.00	field per	5,000	Need Exists	14	Field(s)	Need Exists	21	Field(s)
Multi-purpose Fields (Football / Lacrosse / Rugby)	2.00	2.00	1.00	field per	53,237	1.00	field per	30,000	Need Exists	2	Field(s)	Need Exists	3	Field(s)
Practice Fields	21.00	21.00	1.00	field per	5,070	1.00	field per	4,000	Need Exists	6	Field(s)	Need Exists	14	Field(s)
Spray Ground / Splash Pad	1.00	1.00	1.00	site per	n/a	1.00	site per	30,000	Need Exists	3	Spray Ground (s)	Need Exists	4	Spray Ground (s)
Sand Volleyball Courts	5.00	5.00	1.00	court per	n/a	1.00	court per	25,000	Meets Standard	-	Court(s)	Need Exists	1	Court(s)
Basketball Courts	15.50	15.50	1.00	court per	6,869	1.00	court per	4,000	Need Exists	11	Court(s)	Need Exists	19	Court(s)
Tennis Courts	20.00	20.00	1.00	court per	5,324	1.00	court per	3,500	Need Exists	10	Court(s)	Need Exists	19	Court(s)
Trails (all surface)	26.00	26.00	0.24	miles per	1,000	0.50	miles per	1,000	Need Exists	27	Mile(s)	Need Exists	43	Mile(s)
Outdoor Pools	2.00	2.00	1.00	site per	53,237	1.00	site per	40,000	Need Exists	1	Site(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)
Skate Parks	2.00	2.00	1.00	site per	53,237	1.00	site per	40,000	Need Exists	1	Site(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)
Sled Hills	-	-	1.00	site per	n/a	1.00	site per	50,000	Need Exists	2	Site(s)	Need Exists	3	Site(s)
Dog Parks	-	-	1.00	site per	n/a	1.00	site per	22,000	Need Exists	5	Site(s)	Need Exists	6	Site(s)
Outdoor Ice Rink	-	-	1.00	site per	n/a	1.00	site per	50,000	Need Exists	2	Site(s)	Need Exists	3	Site(s)
Disc Golf	-	-	1.00	site per	n/a	1.00	site per	30,000	Need Exists	4	Site(s)	Need Exists	5	Site(s)
Indoor Aquatics	22,500	22,500	0.21	SF per	person	0.50	SF per	person	Need Exists	30,737	Square Feet	Need Exists	46,500	Square Feet
Indoor Recreation/Fitness Center Space (Square Feet)	217,500	217,500	2.04	SF per	person	1.50	SF per	person	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet	Meets Standard	-	Square Feet

Estimated Population - 2008	106,474
Estimated Population - 2020	138,000

Notes:

2 Half Basketball Courts counted as 1 Full Court

Practice fields also include informal use areas for pick-up games and family play

\* A playground within 1/4 to 1/2 mile distance (5-10 minute walking distance)

While there is no recommended standard for Special Use Areas, here the Special Use Areas also include Open Space and thus recommended acreage for Special Use Areas is included as a part of the Total System-wide Park Acreage

# Analysis

## Findings and Recommended Standards

### Outdoor Amenities

Outdoor amenities include 24 various types of outdoor facilities such as playgrounds, picnic shelters, athletic fields, and tennis courts. Of the 24 listed amenities, only three of them meet the designated standard according to the current estimated population. These three amenities include small picnic shelters, youth baseball fields, and sand volleyball courts.

Playgrounds show a need for eleven additional structures, which results in an improvement of the goal to have a playground within one-half mile of all residents. Elgin has developed playgrounds for younger children (primarily toddlers) and older children (preschool and early elementary aged children). There may be some thought to also developing play areas for older youth and teens, ages 6-14, that include more vigorous forms of activity such as rock climbing and fitness centers. A representative number of play areas should be universally accessible.

Seven large picnic areas are needed based on the population standard of one large shelter per 7,500 people. Large shelters are defined as accommodating groups of 100 or more and are particularly popular with the Hispanic population for large family gatherings, reunions, and events. It is helpful to have these structures located within parks that have a variety of amenities, particularly informal practice fields for softball and volleyball, as well as playgrounds for children. They also require ample parking. As mentioned previously, no additional youth baseball fields are needed based on participation trends and demand for fields. However, aside from that one category all classifications of athletic fields are needed.

This includes:

- |                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| • Adult Baseball fields    | 2 additional fields  |
| • Youth Softball fields    | 3 additional fields  |
| • Adult Softball fields    | 3 additional fields  |
| • Youth Soccer fields      | 6 additional fields  |
| • Regulation Soccer fields | 14 additional fields |
| • Multi-purpose fields     | 2 additional fields  |
| • Practice fields          | 6 additional fields  |

Spray grounds, basketball courts, tennis courts, and skate parks are also needed. Currently, one spray grounds exist in Elgin. These are becoming more and more popular in park systems around the country. Three spray grounds are recommended according to the standard of one spray ground per 30,000 population. Again, it is wise to include spray grounds in parks having other amenities and sufficient parking. Spray grounds should not be included in neighborhood parks without adequate parking as this amenity usually attracts users from a non-walking distance from the park. Only one skate park is needed as two of these facilities already exist in the Elgin inventory; whereas, the rest of the amenities have a significant level of need. Eleven additional basketball courts and 10 tennis courts are needed, based on the existing population.

Currently, no dog parks exist in the City of Elgin's inventory, although a Park and Recreation sub-committee has been researching potential locations for such facilities. More and more park systems are including dog parks as a basic level of service for the community. The standard of 1 dog park per 22,000 people results in a need for 5 sites. Generally, dog parks require a minimum of one acre of land. However, if land is available, a minimum two acre parcel is preferable as a result of the heavy use of these parks.

Outdoor ice facilities have no national or state standards to compare to; however, it is recommended to develop two outdoor rinks at a standard of 1/50,000 people. This standard is higher than almost all other amenities. This is a result of the labor intensive nature of outdoor rinks, unless a refrigeration system is installed. Park Districts generally flood parking lots, sand volleyball courts, flat informal field area, or skate board parks for their outdoor rinks.

### Indoor Space

Indoor recreation space exceeds the square footage standard. The standard is 1.5 square foot per person. Elgin currently has 2.04 square feet per person, which is mostly comprised by the Centre of Elgin's square footage of 185,000. On the other hand, indoor aquatics space is showing an additional need of 30,737 square feet. One or two additional indoor aquatics areas will be needed to satisfy the demand, based on the standards.

# Recommendations

## Guiding Principles

- Lead by example as a model of environmental, social, and economic sustainability in line with Elgin's broader greening and health and wellness agendas.
- Create a green image for Elgin, both visually and environmentally, by purchasing and/or rezoning difficult to develop properties and convert to open space.
- Provide each neighborhood resident with access to a trail, neighborhood park and facilities located within 1/2 mile walking distance. Connect Elgin's park system with City-wide bike trail and regional trails.
- Create a connected open space and natural habitat system and provide each neighborhood resident with open space connection to the Fox River.
- Preserve the most beautiful sites in existing and new developments as open space.
- Ensure universal accessibility to accommodate the full spectrum of park users regardless of age, disabilities, fitness levels, or economic status.
- Provide a diverse, community-wide range of indoor and outdoor activities throughout the year.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration, partnerships, leasing instead of buying, and other innovative implementation and operational strategies.
- Ensure flexibility to address future trends and needs for growth and change.
- Ensure public involvement, enhanced communication and outreach.



# Recommendations

## Keeping Residents Healthy

This Parks and Recreation Master Plan is being created during a time of high health concerns for the country and the community of Elgin. The obesity rate in the United States has more than doubled in the past 20 years, with over 60 million adults having a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or higher. The City of Elgin, like many other cities across America, is seeing a dramatic increase in the number of its residents who are classified as overweight or obese. According to a recent 2007 publication of “Trust for America’s Health,” Illinois is the 25th most obese state in the country and the children are the 14th most obese in the country. Even more specific to Elgin, according to recent Driver’s License data, Elgin has been identified as one of the fattest cities in Illinois. Approximately 46% (almost 1 out of every 2 children) of Elgin based District U-46 children are obese or at risk for being obese. A focus of this Master Plan has been to develop a park system that will encourage people to get out and be active. Parks must be in close proximity to all residents so they can walk to them and they must be designed in a way that promotes physical activity. In addition to playgrounds, neighborhood parks need to provide open turf areas that can be used informally and spontaneously, encouraging families to be active on their own. Recreation programs need to be made affordable, especially for low income residents where obesity is more prevalent than in the general population. The City needs to continue to partner with other community organizations to fight the negative impacts of decreased physical activity and poor eating habits, which are causing the obesity epidemic so prevalent in America. Many of the recommendations in this plan are focused on providing active recreation opportunities for all Elgin residents so that they can develop a healthy life style.

## Property Assemblage

This document recommends an increase in park acreage over time and this expectedly will require some new properties to come under the ownership or control of the City to do so.

Many of the properties outlined in this report for new park development are either already city-owned or properly zoned for this conversion while others are held by entities such as school districts where partnership opportunities exist without a change in ownership. It is in general not the intent of this plan to acquire properties from unwilling owners. This plan does highlight selected privately-held properties that have been identified for potential change in ownership in other city planning documents or if analysis has demonstrated a

potential willingness to sell or lease property to the City for parks and recreation purposes. It is recommended that the City consider leasing some parcels, instead of buying them, and create turf areas that can be used for practices or informal play.

The illustration on the following page illustrates a snap shot of recommendations and opportunities envisioned in this master plan, including the following highlights:

### NORTHEAST DISTRICT

-  Trout Park Sub Area / Master Plan
-  Slade Avenue Park improvements
-  Princeton West Park; Neighborhood Park
-  Reuse of Sherman Property for Public Park; Neighborhood Park
-  Slade Avenue Gateway Park
-  Hiawatha Dr. detention area; Neighborhood Park
-  Cobblers crossing; Neighborhood Park along Ripplebrook
-  Partnership with Larsen Middle School

#### New / Improved Connections

-  Bridge link to Judson

### SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

-  Lords Park Sub Area / Master Plan
-  Prairie Park potential expansion
-  Southeast Community Park
-  Corley Drive Park improvements
-  Observatory Park improvements
-  Neighborhood Park (Grandview)
-  Oak Ridge Subdivision Neighborhood Park
-  Neighborhood Park south of Campus Park
-  Neighborhood Park; Linear Park along Wellington
-  Village / Highbury Dr. Neighborhood Park
-  Wright Avenue Park improvements
-  Hemmens Auditorium improvements
-  Douglas Avenue Park improvements
-  Eastside Recreation Center

#### New / Improved Connections

-  Tunnel for Pedestrian/Bike access on Kimball
-  Bike/Pedestrian Bridge over Fox River; Link special use park across river via a greenway system

### NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

-  Wing Park Sub Area / Master Plan
-  Tyler Creek Community Park (Valley Creek Subdivision)
-  Eagle / Burnidge Park Improvements
-  Neighborhood Park along McLean Blvd.
-  Wing Street Park renovations
-  Powder River Park improvements
-  Partnership with Schools
-  Partnership with Judson University

#### New / Improved Connections

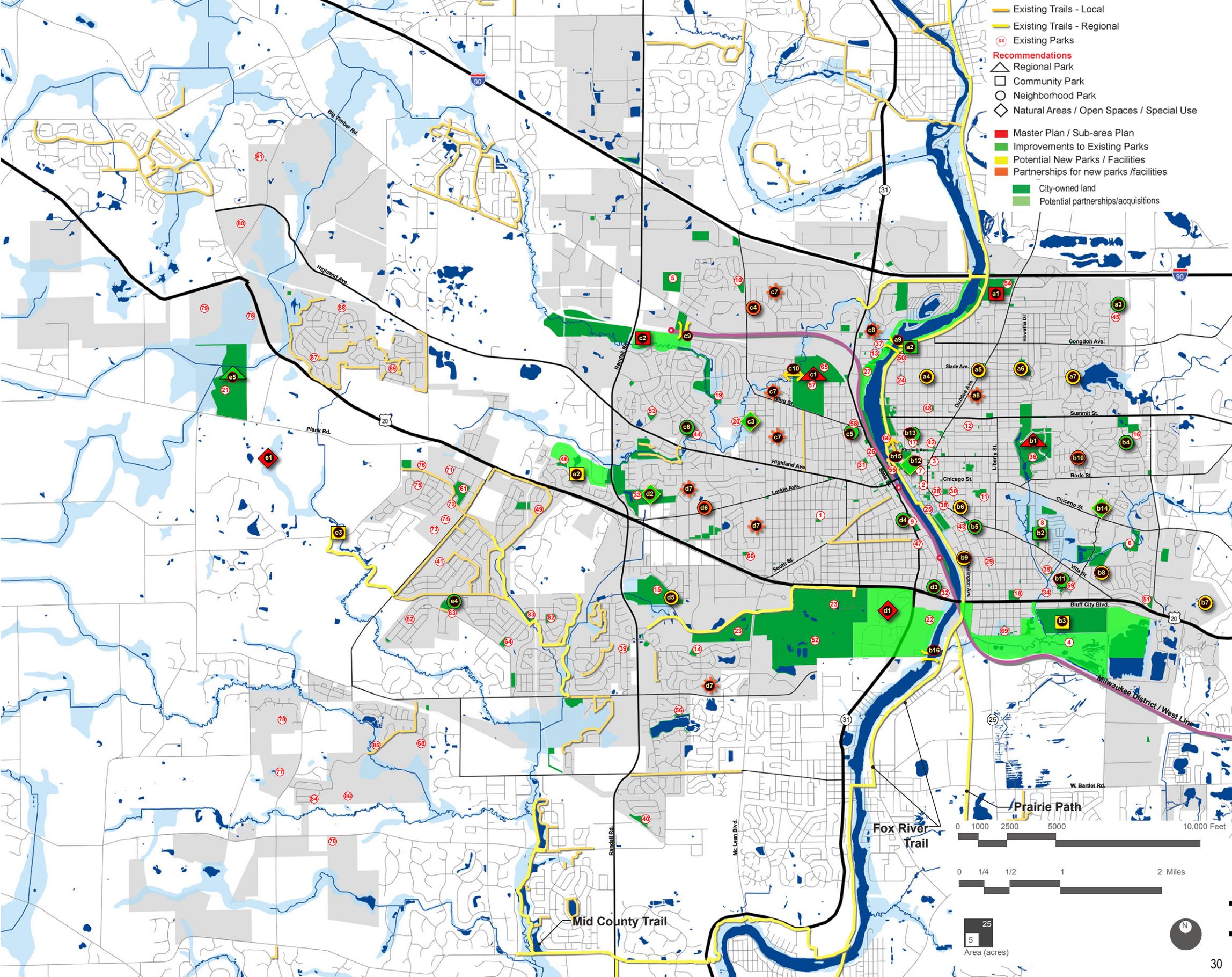
-  Improve access to parks across railroad tracks; Pedestrian access along Lyle across railroad tracks
-  Improve pedestrian access to parks across Tyler Creek

### SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

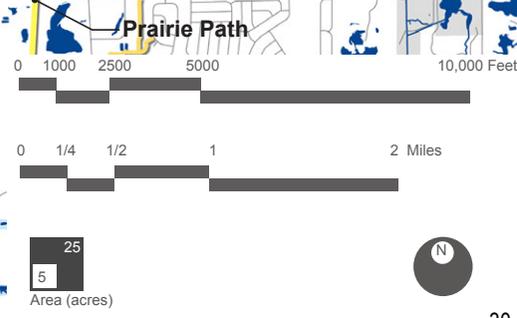
-  Elgin Sports Complex Renovation and Expansion
-  Hawthorne Hill Park enhancements
-  Grolich Park Improvements
-  Central Park Improvements
-  College Park Enhancements
-  Neighborhood Park on Larkin
-  Partnership with Schools and Churches

### WEST DISTRICT

-  New Recreation Center West and Aquatics
-  Community Park at Weld / Marshfield
-  Community Park along Russel Rd.
-  Copper Spring Park Barn reuse
-  Elgin Regional Park West
-  Future parks



- Existing Trails - Local
- Existing Trails - Regional
- x Existing Parks
- Recommendations**
- △ Regional Park
- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Natural Areas / Open Spaces / Special Use
- Master Plan / Sub-area Plan
- Improvements to Existing Parks
- Potential New Parks / Facilities
- Partnerships for new parks / facilities
- City-owned land
- Potential partnerships/acquisitions



**Prairie Path**

**Fox River Trail**

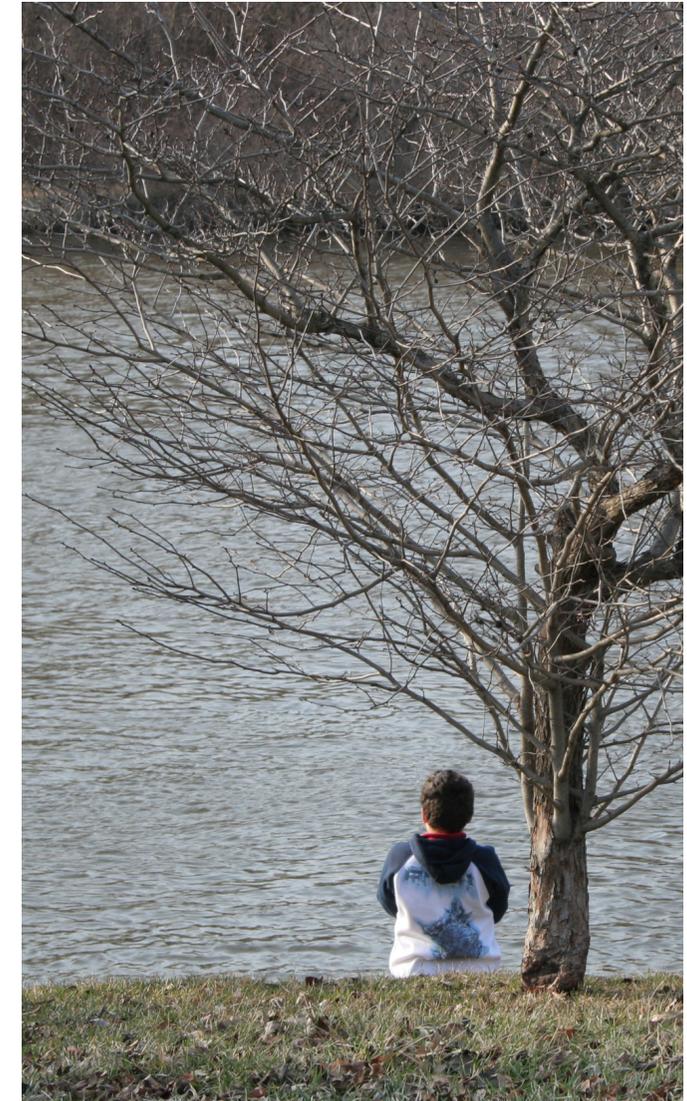
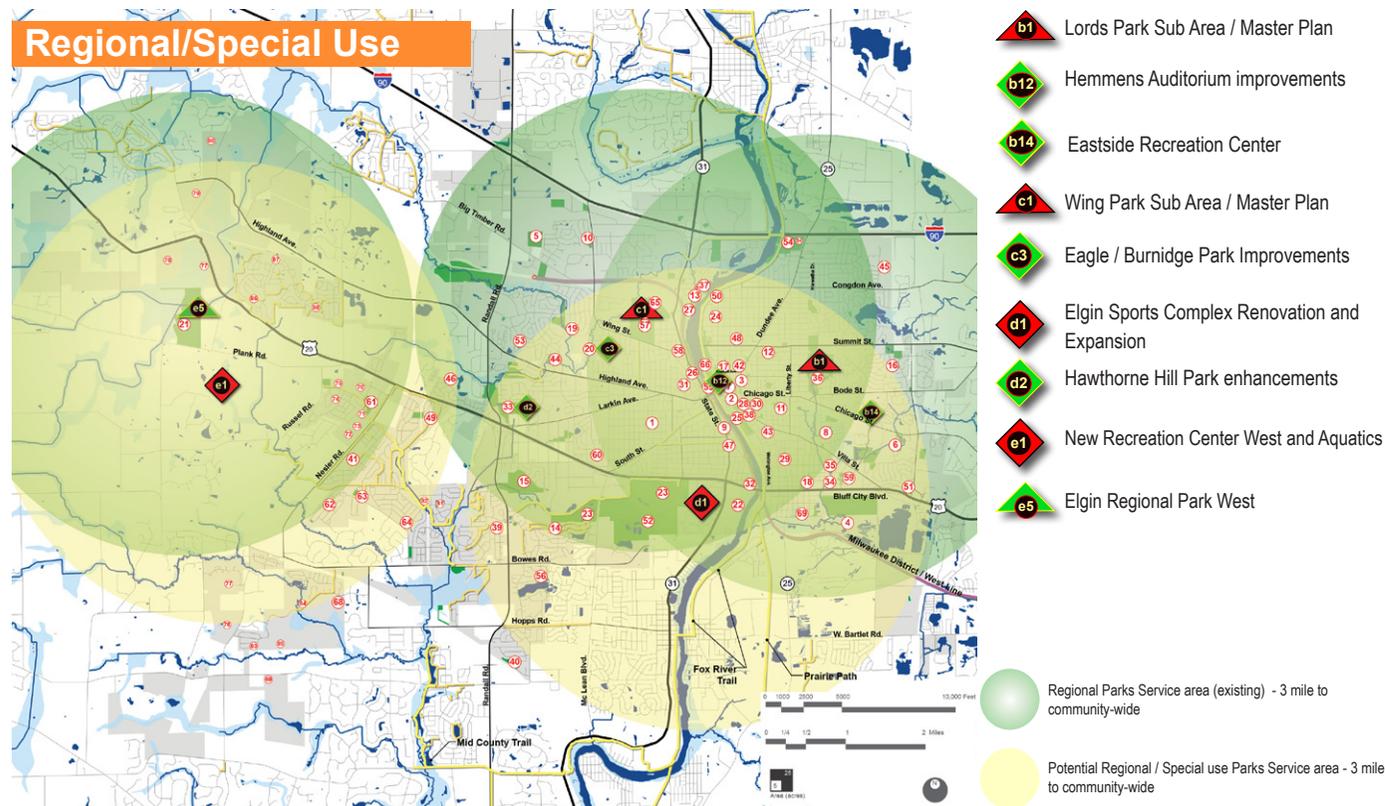
**Mid County Trail**

# Recommendations

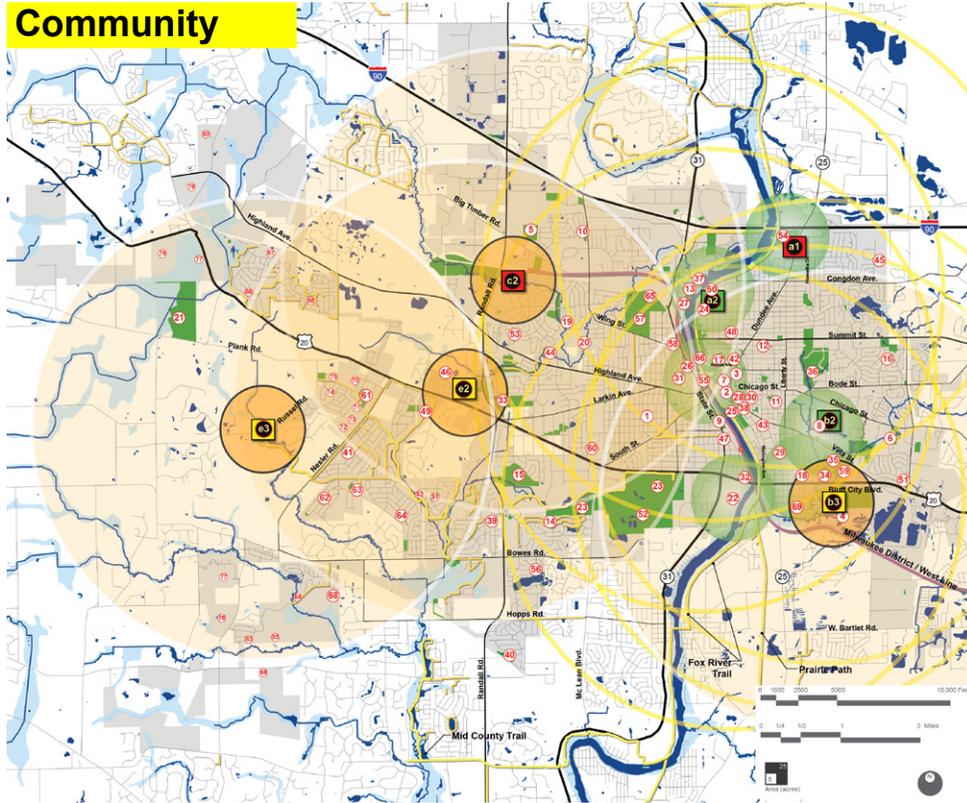
## Opportunities by Park Types

Level of service and service area coverage analysis revealed that gaps exist in each of the park type classifications but each varied by geographic location. For example, the largest shortage of neighborhood park coverage occurs in Elgin's older, denser neighborhoods but these neighborhoods are typically covered by the larger community parks such as Lords, Trout, and Wing. Conversely, the western growth areas often have neighborhood parks built into these new developments but lack the larger community parks or linkages to get between them.

The material on the following pages illustrates recommendations for each park type to ensure proper coverage for Elgin residents.



# Community



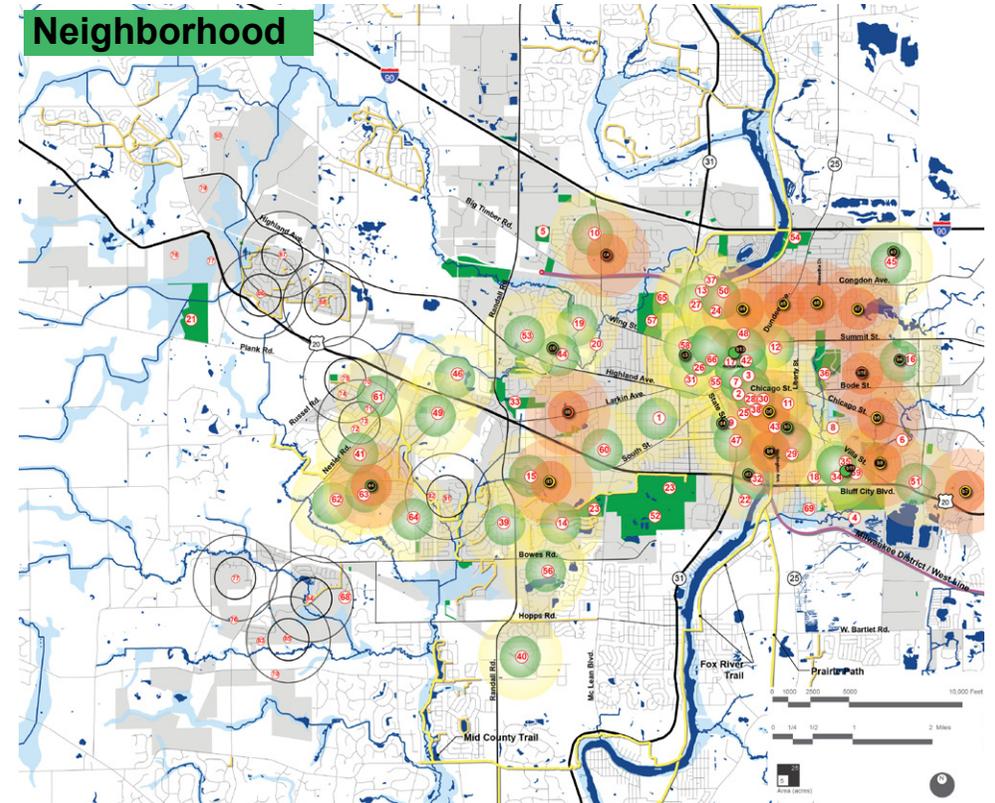
- a1** Trout Park Sub Area / Master Plan
- a2** Slade Avenue Park improvements
- b2** Prairie Park potential expansion
- b3** Southeast Community Park
- c2** Tyler Creek Community Park (Valley Creek Subdivision)
- e2** Community Park at Weld / Marshfield
- e3** Community Park along Russel Rd.

- Existing Community Parks Service area - 1/2 to 3 mile distance
- Potential Community Parks Service area - 1/2 to 3 mile distance

- a3** Princeton West Park; Neighborhood Park
- a4** Reuse of Sherman Property for Public Park; Neighborhood Park
- a5** Slade Avenue Gateway Park
- a6** Hiawatha Dr. detention area; Neighborhood Park
- a7** Cobblers crossing; Neighborhood Park along Ripplebrook
- b4** Corley Drive Park improvements
- b5** Observatory Park improvements
- b6** Neighborhood Park (Grandview)
- b7** Oak Ridge Subdivision Neighborhood Park
- b8** Neighborhood Park south of Campus Park
- b9** Neighborhood Park; Linear Park along Wellington
- b10** Village / Highbury Dr. Neighborhood Park

- b11** Wright Avenue Park improvements
- b13** Douglas Avenue Park improvements
- c4** Neighborhood Park along McLean Blvd.
- c5** Wing Street Park renovations
- c6** Powder River Park improvements
- d3** Grolich Park Improvements
- d4** Central Park Improvements
- d5** College Park Enhancements
- d6** Neighborhood Park on Larkin
- e4** Copper Spring Park Barn reuse
- Existing Neighborhood Parks Service area - 1/4 to 1/2 mile distance (5-10 minute walking distance)
- Potential Neighborhood Parks Service area - 1/4 to 1/2 mile distance (5-10 minute walking distance)

# Neighborhood



# Recommendations

## Linkages

Elgin is unique in that it is located on a series of regional trail and open space corridors, including the Fox River Trail and Illinois Prairie Path, making the City and its parks along these corridors a regional destination itself. Elgin is also unique where community-wide linkages are themselves regional linkages in nature. Finally, Elgin is unique in the quality and quantity of county forest preserve amenities that provide large, regionally-significant passive open space and habitat that complement the City's more recreational offerings.

Elgin's open space corridors and wealth of regional trails provides the framework for a well linked community that allows residents to circulate to and between the diverse offerings in the parks and recreation system as well as the county forest preserves. These linkages included the Fox River corridor, its creek tributaries, and the network of existing and planned trails as illustrated in this section.

The illustration on the following page illustrates the linkage opportunities envisioned in this master plan, including the following highlights:

1. A series of multi-neighborhood greenway loops that capitalize on natural features such as the Fox River and City's many creeks as well as existing or planned trails.
2. A network of habitat-focused "blueways" that protect the valuable creek tributaries for wildlife habitat and city-wide ecological benefits but would not have public use improvements due to their size or location.



### Recommendations - Blueway & Greenway System



Potential Greenway Linkages; Link existing and proposed parks to consolidate linkages; Greenway corridors create loops throughout the city linking existing and proposed trails network.

This system would include existing regional trails, proposed trails, utility corridors to fill the gaps - with a goal to establish District-wide loops linking existing/proposed park spaces



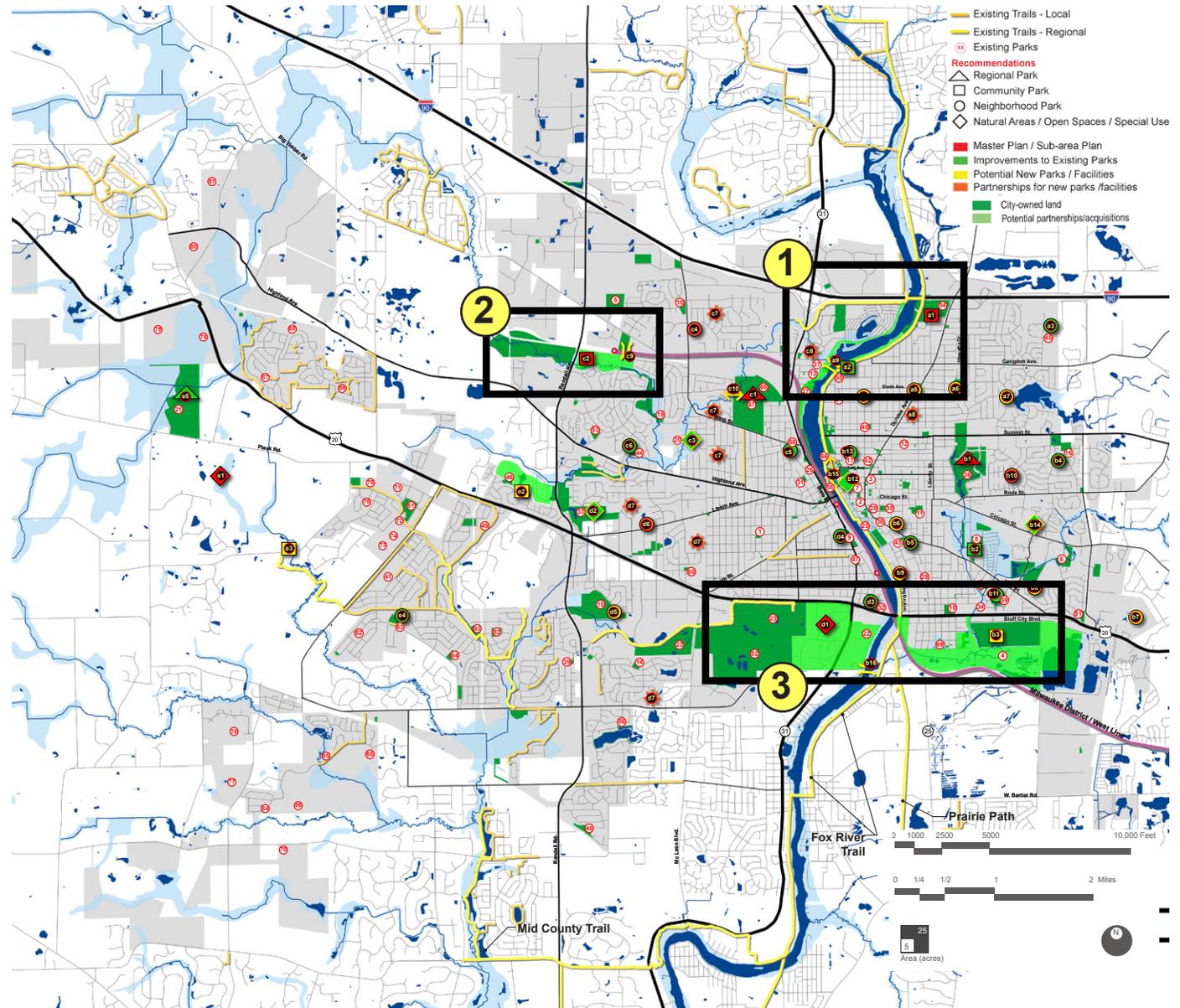
Potential Blueway Linkages; Potential for water-based greenway system that provides new open space links; Potential to provide corridors for humans and area wildlife; opportunities for improved water resource management.

This system would include the Fox River and its tributaries - with a goal to establish District-wide loops linking existing/proposed park spaces & greenway linkages.

# Sub-Area Plans

In addition to the system-wide recommendations for each park-type and regional linkages, there are three sub-areas with a significant number of clustered recommendations within a sub-area as highlighted in this section. These include the following:

1. Recommendations along the Fox River at the northern end of Elgin, including improvements to Trout and Slade Avenue park, opportunity for riverfront green link, potential partnership opportunities with Judson University and a potential new pedestrian bridge that would link resources on both sides of the river into an exciting, multi-faceted northern regional park accessed by both sides of the river and the river itself.
2. A proposed new community park in the Central North District that would utilize large undeveloped land along Tyler Creek to provide much needed amenities for this underserved area with neighborhood and regional linkages to serve surrounding areas.
3. An expanded special use park at the southern edge of Elgin, incorporating the existing Elgin Sports Complex with additional lands made available at the Elgin Mental Health facility and linked to the more passive, natural properties across the Fox River along Poplar Creek with new pedestrian bridge linkages over the Fox. The mental health property can be used to create tournament quality athletic facilities and provide a much needed home for Elgin Youth Football.



# Recommendations

## Action Plan Matrix

One of the key components of the 2000 plan that has been retained in this update is the Action Plan Matrix. This document provides a valuable one-page snapshot or “to do list” of proposed recommendations by neighborhood and park classification. It also identifies potential costs and assigns priorities for implementation and phasing. The salient points of this matrix are supported by the more detailed recommendations found throughout the report.

Item No.	Park / Facility Name	District	Legend										Estimated Improvement Costs	Priority Classification	Comments		
			Existing Classification	Proposed Classification	Neighborhood Park Renovations	Community/Regional Park Renovations	New Neighborhood Parks	New Specialty Park	New Community/Regional Park	Facility Improvement	Acquisitions / Partnership	Master Planning (actual)					
			<b>Legend</b> R = Regional Park C = Community Park N = Neighborhood Park O = Open Space S = Special Use Areas  Recommended Improvements														
			<b>Priority Legend</b> 1A = High Priority / FY 2011 - 2012 1B = High Priority/Short-term, 2-5 years 1C = High Priority/Long-term, 5-10 years 2A = Medium Priority / FY 2011 - 2012 2B = Medium Priority/Short-term, 2-5 years 2C = Medium Priority/Long-term, 5-10 years 3A = Low Priority / FY 2011 - 2012 3B = Low Priority/Short-term, 2-5 years 3C = Low Priority/Long-term, 5-10 years														
<b>Priority 1A Improvements</b>																	
E5	Elgin Regional Park (West)	West	R	R											\$1,000,000.00	1A	Phase 1 needed by 2011
D2	Hawthorne Hill Park Enhancements	South Central	S	S											\$85,000.00	1A	Expansion of parking lot, planting of native species, removal of non-native species
B11	Wright Avenue Park	Southeast	N	N											\$125,000.00	1A	Playground equipment replacement
B14	East Side Recreation Center	Southeast	S	S											\$2,400,000.00	1A	HVAC, renovate washrooms, partitions, plumbing, electrical, indoor soccer, boxing and fitness areas
C2, C9	Tyler Creek Community Park Master Plan	North Central	n/a	C											\$50,000.00	1A	Create master plan for proposed new community park
C3	Eagle / Burnidge Park Phase 1	North Central	S	S											\$130,000.00	1A	Establishment of turf area and native plantings
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST (1A PROJECTS)												\$3,790,000.00					
<b>Priority 2A Improvements</b>																	
B1	Lords Park Sub Area / Master Plan	Southeast	R	R											\$6,000,000.00	2A	Develop a comprehensive site Master Plan to address all areas of the park including playgrounds, circulation, active areas, ponds, and all facilities
A7	Cobblers Crossing Neighborhood Park	Northeast	n/a	N											\$150,000.00	2A	Opportunity for a new neighborhood park on a parcel across Ripplebrook Drive from existing lake. Potential partnership opportunity between the City and homeowners association to develop a neighborhood park with playground and shelter
B6	Neighborhood Park (Grandview)	Southeast	n/a	N											\$100,000.00	2A	Opportunity exists to provide limited amenities such as a gazebo, shelter, trail connection, nature play area to serve neighborhood needs
C4	Neighborhood Park along McLean	North Central	n/a	N											\$400,000.00	2A	Opportunity exists for a neighborhood park on an open space south of Todd Farm Dr. This site offers partnership opportunity between the owner and the city to create a neighborhood park; consider leasing options
D6	Neighborhood Park on Larkin	South Central	n/a	N											\$400,000.00	2A	Potential partnership opportunity (lease agreement with the owner and City) for a neighborhood park, or open turf area
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST (2A PROJECTS)												\$7,050,000.00					
<b>Priority 1B Improvements</b>																	
A2	Slade Avenue Park Improvements - Phase 1	Northeast	C	C											\$200,000.00	1B	Potential to renovate boat launch, reconfigure parking, fishing piers
70	Ash Drive Park Development	Southeast	n/a	N											\$325,000.00	1B	Develop a neighborhood park at Ash Drive site acquired through OSLAD grant
C2, C9	Tyler Creek Community Park Master Plan	North Central	n/a	C											To be determined	1B	Based on the master plan (see above) begin development of the community park
A4	Reuse of Sherman Property	Northeast	n/a	N											\$400,000.00	1B	Opportunity for a neighborhood park by reusing Sherman property parking lots along Center Street, potential partnership opportunity
A6	Hiawatha Dr. Detention Area	Northeast	n/a	N											\$350,000.00	1B	Opportunity for a new neighborhood park by utilizing a portion of this detention area.
B1	Little League Neighborhood Park	Northeast	R	R											\$450,000.00	1B	Potential partnership opportunity for a playground on Little League campus (parcel across Elgin American Little League on Hiawatha/Summit).
B4	Corley Drive Park Improvements	Southeast	N	N											\$400,000.00	1B	Potential opportunity for sports field development and a neighborhood park at existing site adjacent to Corley Drive Park. Elements may include a playground, shelter, and disc golf course
B7	Oak Ridge Subdivision Neighborhood Park	Southeast	n/a	N											\$400,000.00	1B	A 3-acre parcel should be provided by the developer for a neighborhood park
B10	Village/Highbury Dr. Neighborhood Park	Southeast	n/a	N											\$225,000.00	1B	Potential for improvements to existing park that is currently surrounded by residential areas.
C5	Wing Street Park Renovations	North Central	N	N											\$300,000.00	1B	Improvements to existing park
D1	Elgin Sports Complex Renovation & Expansion	South Central	S	S											\$32,000,000.00	1B	Incorporate the property to the east with the existing Elgin Sports Complex to create more tournament quality fields, access to route 31, home for EYFL ; also the need to renovate the existing Sports Complex
D5	College Park Enhancements	South Central	O	S											\$225,000.00	1B	Potential opportunity for a neighborhood park at this location. Potential for pedestrian linkage (board walk) through College Park wetlands to improve access.
C3	Eagle / Burnidge Park Phase 2	North Central	S	S											\$380,000.00	1B	Parking lot, roadway, shelter, paths, interpretive signage, foot bridge
B12	Hemmens Cultural Center	Southeast	S	S											To be determined	1B	Energy audit needed to determine energy efficiency upgrades
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST (1B PROJECTS)												\$35,655,000.00					

Item No.	Park / Facility Name	District	Existing Classification	Proposed Classification	Neighborhood Park Renovations	Community/Regional Park Renovations	New Neighborhood Parks	New Specialty Park	New Community/Regional Park	Facility Improvement	Acquisitions / Partnership	Master Planning (actual)	Estimated Improvement Costs	Priority Classification	Comments
<b>Legend</b> R = Regional Park C = Community Park N = Neighborhood Park O = Open Space S = Special Use Areas  Recommended Improvements															
<b>Priority 2B Improvements</b>															
A1	Trout Park Sub Area / Master Plan	Northeast	C	C									870,000.00	2B	Develop a comprehensive Master Plan for Trout Park that would facilitate in addressing multiple opportunities and issues. Consider partnership opportunities with existing Brethren corporate office property for a neighborhood park
A3	Princeton West Park - Phase 2	Northeast	N	N									65,000.00	2B	Addition of a hard surface court and path
B8	Neighborhood Park South of Campus Park	Southeast	n/a	N									180,000.00	2B	Potential opportunity for a neighborhood park on a parcel south of Campus Park.
C1	Wing Park Sub Area / Master Plan	North Central	R	R									2,228,000.00	2B	Develop a comprehensive Master Plan for Wing Park to address opportunities and issues. Enhancements could include improvements to roads and circulation, bandshell, trail system, baseball fields, playgrounds, shelters, golf clubhouse
B13	Douglas Ave. Park	Southeast	N	N									130,000.00	2B	Improvements to existing park, potential to add benches, play area to increase its use
D3	Grolich Park Improvements	South Central	N	N									\$400,000.00	2B	Potential opportunity to enhance landscape treatments along Rt. 20, potential for a small dog park, improve athletic fields, playground and shelter area.
C6	Powder River Park	North Central	N	N									300,000.00	2B	Improvements to existing park, addition of paths, playground
B5	Observatory Park Improvements	Southeast	N	N									\$300,000.00	2B	Renovate playground and provide active recreation elements.
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST (2B PROJECTS)													4,173,000.00		

Priority 1C Improvements															
B9	Neighborhood Park along Wellington	Southeast	n/a	N									\$400,000.00	1C	Potential opportunity for a linear neighborhood park with open fields, landscape treatments, benches, linear play areas
A2	Slade Avenue Park Phase 2	Northeast	C	C									\$250,000.00	1C	Shelter, small dog park, playground, improvements to wayfinding/ signage, landscape and furnishings upgrade
B3	Southeast Community Park	Southeast	O	C									\$1,104,000.00	1C	Opportunity exists to expand the fen property to the south and west along Poplar Creek providing an open space link to Fox River. Potential for connecting paths from the Forest Preserve District to the west
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST (1C PROJECTS)													\$1,754,000.00		

Priority 2C Improvements															
B2	Prairie Park Potential Expansion	Southeast	C	C									\$200,000.00	2C	Potential expansion by acquisition of adjacent parcel (along Anderson) to accommodate a playground, improvements to access and associated paths/walks for linking the park to the surrounding neighborhood
B12	Hemmens Cultural Center	Southeast	S	S									2,500,000.00	2C	South lobby addition with washrooms, lobby space for functions
D2	Hawthorne Hill Park Enhancements	South Central	S	S									\$490,000.00	2C	Pond improvements, native plant restoration, washroom facility, storage facility, bike path, nature play area, fishing pier
D4	Central Park Improvements	South Central	N	N									\$125,000.00	2C	Open up vistas to Fox River, provide seating areas, paths
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST (2C PROJECTS)													\$3,315,000.00		

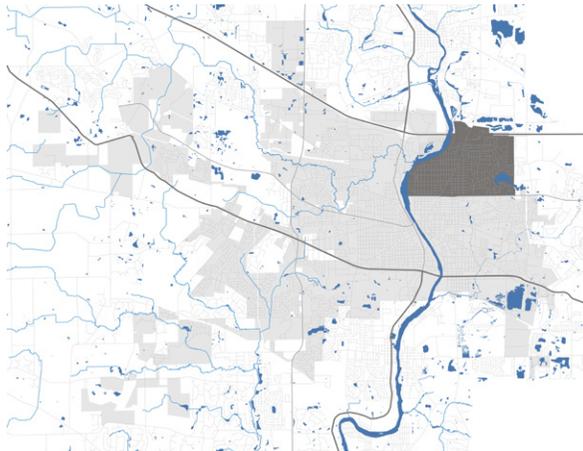
Priority 3C Improvements															
A5	Slade Avenue Gateway Park	Northeast	n/a	N									\$400,000.00	3C	Opportunity for a gateway park on Slade Avenue, along the proposed secondary bike route, gazebo, playground, paths, landscaping
B14	Tunnel under Kimball	Southeast	n/a	n/a									Not funded through park funds	3C	Allow bike riders on Fox River path to stay on path and not cross Kimball at Grove
E1	New Recreation Center West & Aquatics	West	n/a	S									To be determined	3C	Future demand for a recreation center and aquatics facility to serve western portion of the City
E2	Community Park at Weld / Marshfield	West	n/a	C									Work with developer	3C	Opportunity exists to expand Randall Ridge Park to create a community park with sled hill, trails, soccer fields, large picnic shelter, playground
E3	Community Park along Russell Rd.	West	n/a	C									Work with developer	3C	Opportunity exists for a community park in partnership with Plato Township adjacent to their existing park. Improvements could provide link to Fitchie Creek Greenway and existing trail network
E4	Copper Spring Barn Reuse Feasibility Study	West	N	N									\$75,000.00	3C	Opportunity exists for reuse of the barn in future. A study needs to be done to determine an appropriate use and renovation costs
A9	Bridge Link to Judson	Northeast	n/a	n/a									Not funded through park funds	3C	Potential for a new pedestrian bridge that would link resources on both sides of the river into an exciting, multifaceted northern regional park accessed by both sides of the river and the river itself
E5	Phase 2 of Regional Park Development	West	R	R									\$39,000,000.00	3C	Complete the development of the Regional Park as per the Sustainable Master Plan for the park
B15	Ped/Bike Bridge Over Fox River	Southeast	n/a	n/a									Not funded through park funds	3C	Potential for a bike/pedestrian bridge over Fox River. Potential to link special use park across river via a greenway system
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST (3C PROJECTS)													\$39,475,000.00		

### Potential cost estimates by facilities

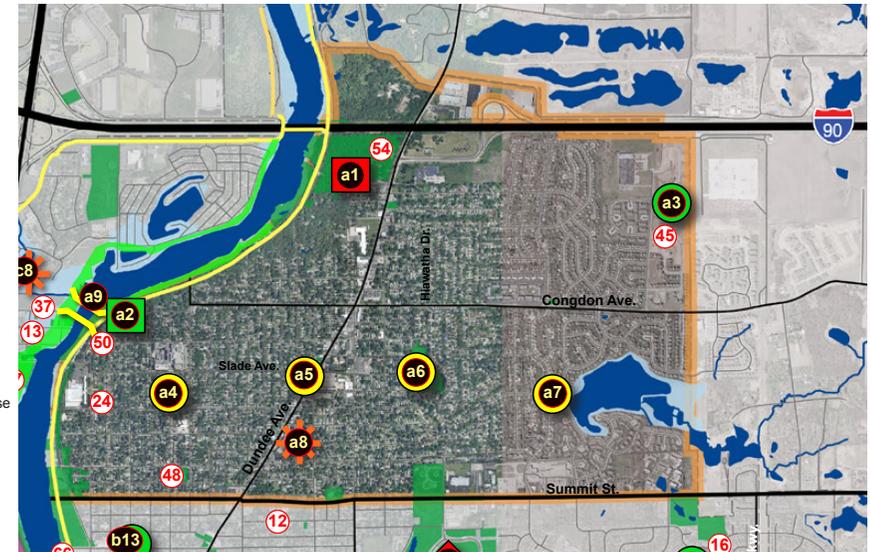
Playgrounds	\$125,000-\$135,000 (4,000-5,000 sq. ft. with \$60K allowance for play equipment)
Sheller - Large	\$100,000 (with electricity, concrete pad)
Baseball - 300	\$270,000 (lights, bleachers, irrigation, laser grading)
Softball - Youth	\$220,000 (lights, bleachers, irrigation, laser grading)
Softball - Adult	\$270,000 (lights, bleachers, irrigation, laser grading)
Soccer - Youth	\$160,000 (lights, irrigation)
Soccer - Regulation	\$200,000 (lights, irrigation, lights)
Multi-purpose Fields (Football / Lacrosse / Rugby)	\$200,000 (no lights)
Practice Fields	\$25,000
Spray Ground / Splash Pad	\$50,000
Sand Volleyball Courts	\$25,000
Basketball Courts	\$60,000 (no lights)
Tennis Courts	per court cost of \$70K, no lights
Trails (all surface)	asphalt, 12 ft wide, \$190K, \$300 K for design, earthwork, asphalt
Outdoor Pools	3-6 million for a community pool complex and 10-12 million for a regional water park
Skate Parks	\$300,000 for 10-15,000 sq.ft.
Sled Hills	\$50,000
Small Dog Parks	\$50,000 fence only for 2 acres
Large Dog Parks	\$67,000 fence only for 4 acres
Outdoor Ice Rink	\$100,000 to \$225,000 without refrigeration
Disc Golf	\$50,000 concrete tee pads, ADA accessibility

# Recommendations

## District 1 - Northeast



- Existing Trails - Local
- Existing Trails - Regional
- Existing Parks
- Recommendations**
- Regional Park
- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Natural Areas / Open Spaces/Special Use
- Master Plan / Sub-area Plan
- Improvements to Existing Parks
- Potential New Parks / Facilities
- Partnerships for new parks /facilities
- City-owned land
- Potential partnerships/acquisitions



### Existing Parks

Park Name	Number on Map	Type	Acreage
Trout Park	54, a1	Community	44.10
Slade Avenue Park	50, a2	Community	4.29
Princeton West Park	45, a3	Neighborhood	3.00
Esmeralda Park	24	Neighborhood	0.46
St. Francis Park	48	Neighborhood	2.42

### Proposed Parks

- a4** Reuse of Sherman Property for Public Park
- a5** Slade Avenue Gateway Park
- a6** Hiawatha Dr. detention area; Neighborhood Park
- a7** Cobblers Crossing; Neighborhood Park along Ripplebrook

### **a1** Trout Park Sub Area / Master Plan

Location: East of Fox River along Dundee, Duncan and Trout Park Blvd.

- Develop a comprehensive Master Plan for Trout Park that would facilitate in addressing multiple opportunities and issues. Opportunity for potential riverfront green link to Slade Avenue Park and castle to the south. Opportunity for increased Fox River trail interpretation, and improvements like future fishing piers, expanded hiking trails, additional interpretive signs, benches and other neighborhood amenities to help fill service gaps. Upgrade athletics for Regional Tournaments and increase general public access to fields.
- Opportunity to make Trout Park River's Edge part of the Illinois Nature Preserves System as an Illinois Land and Water Reserve. Trout Park supports one of two "forested fen" wetlands (14.5 acres) that survive in the entire State. These rare wetlands are characterized by a strong groundwater discharge that is laden with minerals. In addition, forested fens in Illinois are restricted to sites where the landscape (in this case the Fox River and the steep slopes overlooking the river) combines to provide natural firebreaks. Trout Park River's Edge has been included on the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory and qualifies for the protection this designation would afford. The existing uses at this site (bike trail, parking, boat launch, small shelters, fishing, etc.) would continue.

- Consider partnership opportunities with existing Brethren corporate office property for a neighborhood park to fill gap and serve resident needs in this underserved district. This parcel is located south of I-90 and north of Stewart
- Potential for dog park, general active recreation areas/ practice fields, and community gardens.

### **a2** Slade Avenue Park Improvements

Location: Riverfront, Slade Ave. and Fox River Trail

- Small underutilized Park on Fox River.
- Potential to renovate boat launch, reconfigure parking for improved river access and trail circulation; fishing enhancements (piers, support), shelter, small dog park and/or playground. General improvements to wayfinding/ signage, landscape, and furnishings upgrade.
- Potential for a new pedestrian bridge that would link resources on both sides of the river into an exciting, multi-faceted northern regional park accessed by both sides of the river and the river itself.

### Princeton West Park

Location:

- Currently undeveloped.
- Opportunity for a Neighborhood Park for this underserved district.
- Potential for typical neighborhood park amenities including general active recreation areas/soccer field, playground, basketball or tennis court, picnic shelter, benches, trash receptacles and other site amenities.
- Potential partnership with Hoffman Estates Park District.

### Reuse of Sherman Property

Location: Parking lots along Center Street

- Opportunity for a Neighborhood Park by reusing Sherman property parking lots along Center St. for this underserved district.
- Potential partnership opportunity.
- Potential for tennis courts and basketball courts on already paved areas. Opportunity exists to utilize one side of the parking lots for courts and the other side for play areas and other neighborhood park amenities. This site offers a good location for practice field area.
- The community has stated a desire for a neighborhood park in this area to serve the residents.

### Slade Ave. Gateway Park

Location: Slade Ave and Duncan

- Opportunity for a gateway park on Slade Avenue along the proposed secondary bike route (2005 bikeway plan). This park can function as a gateway to the neighborhood.

### Hiawatha Dr. Detention Area

Location: Hiawatha

- Opportunity for a new neighborhood park by utilizing a portion of this detention area.
- Potential for general active recreation areas, picnic shelter, and other site amenities.
- Consideration should be given to the creation of a nature park for the remainder of the property, capitalizing on site's low, wet nature.
- The community has stated a desire for a neighborhood park in this area to serve the residents.

### Cobblers Crossing

Location: Parcel on west side of Ripplebrook Drive

- Opportunity for a new neighborhood park on a parcel across Ripplebrook Drive from existing lake. Potential partnership opportunity between the City and homeowners association.
- Potential for general active recreation areas, playground, small shelter, and other site amenities.
- Opportunity to create access to the lake and open space to the east offering the community access to regional open space.

### Partnership Opportunities

- Consider partnership opportunities with existing school district property (open space, playgrounds, or facility program space) and church property (open space) for new neighborhood parks to fill gaps and serve resident needs.
- Maintain and foster continuing partnerships with school districts and churches to provide for shared recreational opportunities for Elgin communities.
- Partner with Cook County Forest Preserve to manage natural areas.

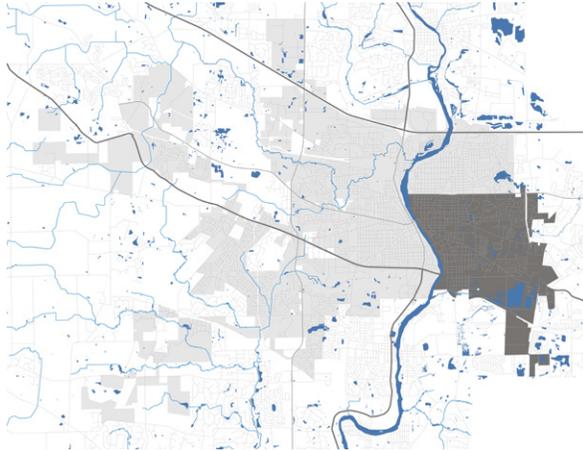
### New / Improved Connections

#### Pedestrian Bridge link to Judson

- Potential for a new pedestrian bridge over Fox River that would link resources on both sides of the river.

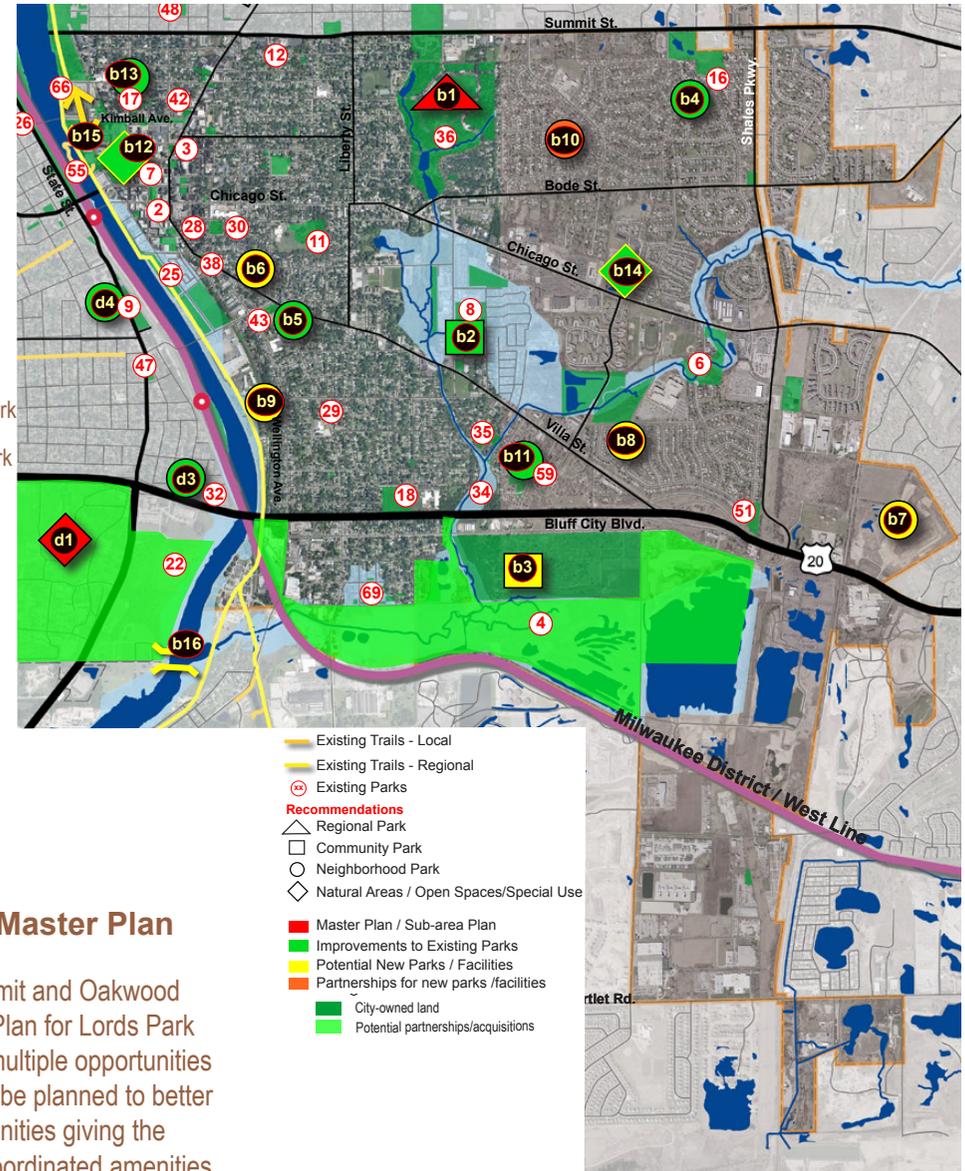
# Recommendations

## District 2 - Southeast



### Proposed Parks

- b3 Southeast Community Park
- b6 Neighborhood Park (Grandview)
- b7 Oak Ridge Subdivision Neighborhood Park
- b8 Neighborhood Park south of Campus Park
- b9 Neighborhood Park, Linear Park along Wellington
- b10 Village/Highbury Neighborhood Park



### Existing Parks

Park Name	Number on Map	Type	Acreage
Drake Field Park	18	Community	7.01
Prairie Park	8, b2	Community	8.00
Walton Island Park	55	Community	4.50
Festival Park	25	Special Use	5.50
Advocate Park	2	Neighborhood	0.09
Barclay Park	3	Neighborhood	0.27
Carleton Rogers Park	7	Neighborhood	0.45
Douglas Ave. Park	17, b13	Neighborhood	0.23
G.A.R. Park	28	Neighborhood	0.14
George Van deVoorde Park	29	Neighborhood	0.41
Kirk & Kramer Park	34	Neighborhood	0.80
Memorial Park	38	Neighborhood	0.30
Newsome Park	42	Neighborhood	0.45
Veteran's Memorial Park	66	Neighborhood	0.30
Bluff Spring Park	4, b3	Special Use	97.00
Campus Park	6	Special Use	7.56
Channing Park	11	Neighborhood	6.00
Clara Howard Park	12	Neighborhood	0.49
Corley Drive Park	16, b4	Neighborhood	3.05
Lords Park	36, b1	Regional	106.12
Wright Avenue Park	59, b11	Neighborhood	6.35
Gifford Park	30	Neighborhood	7.88
Kiwanis Park	35	Neighborhood	2.75
Unity Park	69	Neighborhood	1.00
Observatory Park	43, b5	Neighborhood	2.51
Summerhill Park	51	Neighborhood	4.39

### b1 Lords Park Sub Area / Master Plan

Location: Bode, Grand, Hiawatha, Summit and Oakwood

- Develop a comprehensive Master Plan for Lords Park that would facilitate in addressing multiple opportunities and issues. The entire area should be planned to better utilize space, upgrade existing amenities giving the appearance of a single park with coordinated amenities and programs.
- Improve access and circulation including ADA accessibility to Lords Park, improving pedestrian walkways and addressing safety for kids especially along access roads. Consider restoring the loop drive for improved accessibility.
- Opportunity for improvements to basketball courts, potential for dog park, tennis courts, permanent volleyball court.
- Pursue improving water quality in the lagoons in Lords Park with shoreline stabilization including natural treatments such as native plantings and stone.
- Develop a plan to include upgrading perimeter fencing for the bison, elk, deer farm, and address all other elements that do not meet recognized standards.
- Potential partnership opportunity for a playground on Little League campus (parcel across from Elgin American Little League on Hiawatha/Summit). Potential for tennis courts, basketball, and other neighborhood amenities to fill the gap and serve resident needs.

### **b2** **Prairie Park potential expansion**

Location: Willard, Sadler

- Existing park in a floodplain with limited pedestrian/bike linkage. Opportunity exists for expansion by potential acquisition of adjacent parcel (along Anderson) to accommodate a playground, and other neighborhood amenities to serve resident needs. Consider improvements to access associated paths/walks for linking the park and the surrounding neighborhood.

### **b3** **Southeast Community Park**

Location: Bluff City Blvd.

- Opportunity exists to expand the fen property to the south and west along Poplar Creek providing an open space link to Fox River. In addition, the lakes could provide boating and other passive recreation. These improvements will require the need of additional land acquisition. Potential for connecting paths from the Forest Preserve District to the west.

### **b4** **Corley Drive Park improvements**

Location: Corley and Longford

- Opportunity exists for improvements to this existing neighborhood park by adding more amenities. Potential for council ring, frisbee golf short course, possibly a playground, shelter, and picnic tables.
- Opportunity exists for a neighborhood park adjacent to Corley Drive Park (along Hunter, Summit). This new park in addition to existing park area would create a connection to Summit St. and fill the neighborhood needs. Currently this is a detention area. Amenities could include passive areas, informal active recreation areas, and neighborhood amenities. Potential to utilize some of the dry/flat areas for practice fields.

### **b5** **Observatory Park improvements**

Location: National Street

- Renovate playground and provide active recreation elements.

### **b6** **Neighborhood Park (Grandview)**

Location: Villa, Gifford

- Currently this site is surrounded by residential area with access from Gifford. Opportunity exists to provide limited amenities, such as a gazebo, shelter, trail connection, and nature play area to serve neighborhood needs.

### **b7** **Oak Ridge Subdivision Neighborhood Park**

Location: Oak Ridge Blvd.

- Opportunity for new neighborhood park in eastern most part of the City. Potential for neighborhood amenities to fill gaps and serve neighborhood needs.
- Another three-acre parcel exists to the west of this subdivision that offers future opportunity for a larger neighborhood park. As plans proceed for next residential development phase, include centrally located neighborhood park at least three acres. Development to include playground, hard surface courts, play area, and informal spaces.

### **b8** **Neighborhood Park south of Campus Park**

Location: Maroon Dr., Varsity Dr.

- Opportunity for a neighborhood park on a parcel south of Campus Park. Currently this is surrounded by residential area and offers an opportunity to add neighborhood amenities to fill gaps and serve neighborhood needs, such as a playground.

### **b9** **Neighborhood Park along Wellington**

Location: Wellington, Bent

- Opportunity exists for a linear neighborhood park with open fields along Wellington. Improvements could include landscape treatments to enhance aesthetics, park beautification, benches and other neighborhood amenities to activate this space for resident use. Future potential opportunity to include linkage to the river and trail via a greenway system connecting riverfront to the park. These improvements will require the need of additional land acquisition.

### **b11** **Wright Avenue Park improvements**

Location: Wright / Kramer

- Potential for improvements to existing park that is currently surrounded by residential areas.

### **b12** **Hemmens Auditorium improvements**

Location: Symphony Way

- Energy audit needed to determine energy efficiency upgrades - South lobby additions.

### **b13** **Douglas Avenue Park improvements**

Location: Douglas/Kimball

- Improvements to existing park, potential to add benches and play area to increase its use.

### **b14** **Eastside Recreation Center**

Location: Chicago/Woodview

- HVAC, plumbing and electrical improvements. Renovate washrooms, indoor soccer, boxing and fitness areas.

# Recommendations

## District 2 - Southeast

### Partnership Opportunities

- Consider partnership opportunities with existing school district property (open space, playgrounds, or facility program space) and church property (open space) for new neighborhood parks to fill gaps and serve resident needs.
- Maintain and foster continuing partnerships with school districts and church to provide for shared recreational opportunities for Elgin neighborhoods.

### **b10** Village/Highbury Neighborhood Park

Location: Village, Highbury

- Potential for improvements to existing park that is currently surrounded by residential areas. Opportunity exists for partnership with homeowners association for park improvements to serve resident needs.

### New / Improved Connections

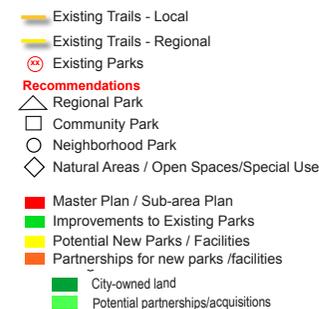
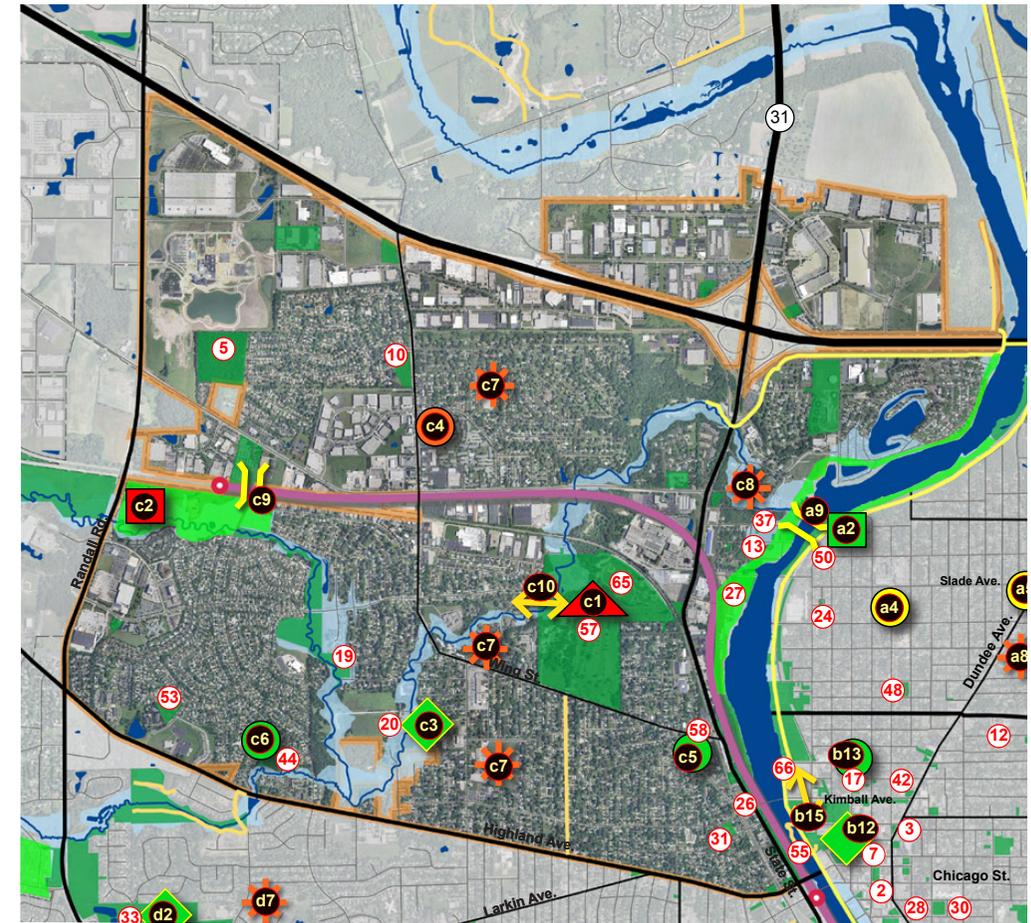
### **b15** Tunnel for Pedestrian/Bike access under Kimball

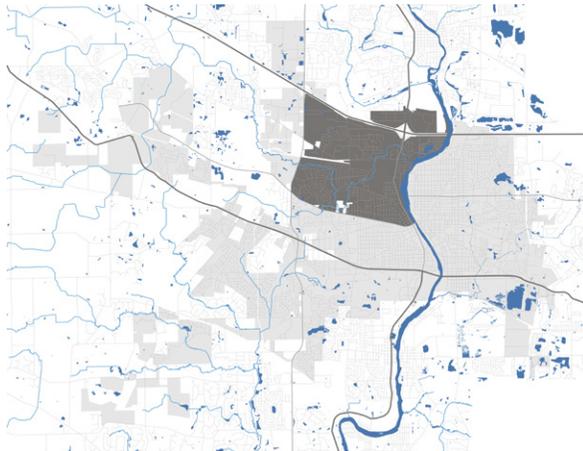
- Consider bike tunnel/underpass at Kimball near public library for ease and safety of bike traffic. The community has stated a desire for such a connection to serve the residents. All plans should be coordinated with the City's ongoing planning efforts.

### **b16** Bike/Pedestrian Bridge over Fox River

- Consider a new pedestrian bridge over Fox River that would connect an expanded special use park at the southern edge of Elgin, incorporating the existing Elgin Sports Complex with additional lands made available at the Elgin Mental Health facility and linked to the more passive, natural properties across the Fox River along Poplar Creek. All plans should be coordinated with the City's ongoing planning efforts. Potential partnership opportunity with Kane County Forest Preserve District and South Elgin.

## District 3 - North Central





### Wing Park Sub Area / Master Plan

Location: Wing St.

- Develop a comprehensive Master Plan for Wing Park that would facilitate addressing multiple opportunities and issues. Enhancements include improvements to roads and circulation, bandshell area, expand existing trail system, and improvements to wayfinding/signage.

### Tyler Creek Community Park

Location: Lyle, Mark Ave., Valley Creek Subdivision

- Opportunity for a new community park that would utilize large undeveloped land along Tyler Creek to provide much needed amenities for this underserved area with neighborhood and regional linkages to serve surrounding areas.
- Potential for large park, dog park, spray park, basketball, tennis, soccer. Preserve natural areas to the west and consider greenway linkage to Wing Park and south to Hawthorne Park.
- Improve access to proposed community park along Tyler Creek by providing access along Lyle across railroad tracks. All plans should be coordinated with the City's ongoing planning efforts and Kane County Forest Preserve District.
- Consider leasing land for initial development of passive uses.

### Eagle / Burnidge Park Improvements

Location: Eagle Road

- Establishment of turf area and native plantings.

### Wing Street Park renovations

Location: Wing Street near State Street

- Consider improvements to existing park.

### Powder River Park improvements

Location: Powder River Path

- Consider improvements to existing park and addition of paths, playground.

### Partnership Opportunities

- Consider partnership opportunities with existing school district property (open space, playgrounds, or facility program space) and church property (open space) for new neighborhood parks to fill gaps and serve resident needs.
- Partner with Kane County Forest Preserve District to manage natural areas.
- Maintain and foster continuing partnerships with school districts and church to provide for shared recreational opportunities for Elgin neighborhoods.

### Neighborhood Park along McLean

Location: Todd Farm Dr, East of McLean

- Opportunity exists for a neighborhood park on an open space south of Todd Farm Dr. This site offers partnership opportunity between the owner and the City to create a neighborhood park with amenities to fill gaps and serve resident needs in this area. Consider leasing the land as a first step.

### New / Improved Connections

#### Improve access to park across Metra tracks

- Improve access to proposed community park along Tyler Creek by providing access along Lyle across railroad tracks. All plans should be coordinated with the City's ongoing bikeway planning efforts.

#### Improve pedestrian access to parks

## Existing Parks

Park Name	Number on Map	Type	Acreage
Wing Park Golf Course	65	Special Use	56.50
Wing Park	57, c1	Regional	65.50
Wing Street Park	58, c5	Neighborhood	0.31
Foundry Park	26	Neighborhood	7.30
Burnidge Woods Park	5	Special Use	22.04
Eagle/Burnidge Park	20, c3	Special Use	56.00
Marble Avenue Park	37	Special Use	5.76
Century Oaks Park	10	Neighborhood	3.96
Eagle Heights Park	19	Neighborhood	6.19
Frazier Park	27	Neighborhood	0.52
Grant School Park	31	Neighborhood	1.80
Powder River Park	44, c6	Neighborhood	2.10
Trinity Terrace Park	53	Neighborhood	3.05
Clifford/Owasco Park	13	Neighborhood	4.56

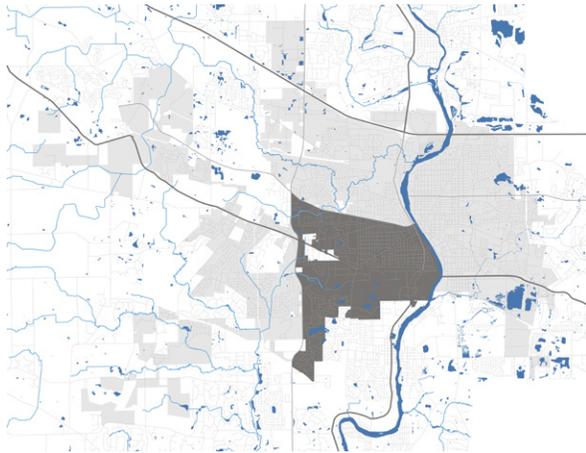
## Proposed Parks

 Tyler Creek Community Park

 Neighborhood Park along McLean Blvd.

# Recommendations

## District 4 - South Central

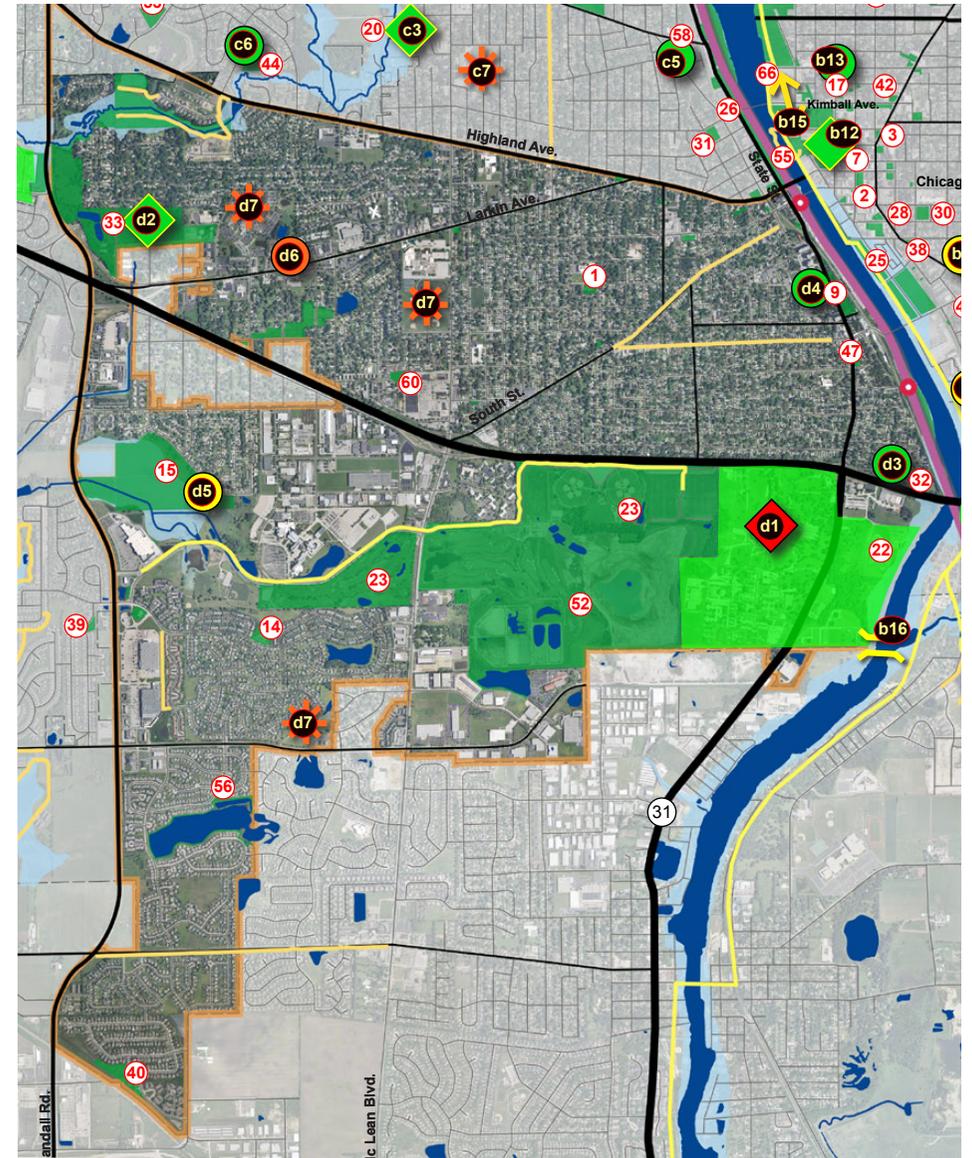


### Existing Parks

Park Name	Number on Map	Type	Acreage
Elgin Shores	22	Community	20.80
The Highlands	52	special Use	260.00
College Park	15, d5	special Use	60.81
Hawthorne Hill Park	33, d2	special Use	65.82
Abbott Park	1	Neighborhood	1.24
Central Park	9, d4	Neighborhood	3.45
Cornerstone Park	60	Neighborhood	1.15
Grolich Park	32, d3	Neighborhood	7.62
Mulberry Grove Park	40	Neighborhood	5.10
Ryerson Park	47	Neighborhood	1.10
Willow Bay Park	56	Neighborhood	0.67
College Green Park	14	Neighborhood	2.97
Elgin Sports Complex	23, d1	special Use	107.00

### Proposed Parks

- Neighborhood Park on Larkin
- College Park enhancements



- Existing Trails - Local
- Existing Trails - Regional
- Existing Parks
- Recommendations**
- Regional Park
- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Natural Areas / Open Spaces/Special Use
- Master Plan / Sub-area Plan
- Improvements to Existing Parks
- Potential New Parks / Facilities
- Partnerships for new parks /facilities
- City-owned land
- Potential partnerships/acquisitions

### **Elgin Sports Complex Renovation and Expansion**

Location: Intersection of Rt. 31 and Rt. 20, east of Elgin Sports Complex

- Opportunity for an expanded special use park at the southern edge of Elgin, incorporating the existing Elgin Sports Complex with additional lands at the Elgin Mental Health facility. This expanded park could offer opportunities for new and expanded facilities for regional tournaments and a new location for Elgin Youth Football.
- Renovate the existing Sports Complex facilities to improve playing surfaces, drainage, parking, traffic patterns, and support facilities.

### **Hawthorne Hill Park Enhancements**

- Implement existing site master plan including parking expansion, pond improvements, removal of invasive species, and re-establishment of native plants.

### **Grolich Park Improvements**

Location: Souster Ave., Rt. 20

- Opportunity exists to enhance landscape treatments along Rt. 20 to improve park aesthetics and reduce visual/sound impacts of traffic along Rt. 20.
- Potential to improve athletic fields, playground, and shelter area. Potential for small dog park.

### **Central Park Improvements**

Location: State/Standish

- Open up vistas to Fox River, provide seating areas, and walking paths.

### **College Park Enhancements**

Location: Gale and Belmont, north of College Park

- Opportunity exists for a neighborhood park at this location to serve the residents to the north with a potential playground and neighborhood amenities to fill the gaps. Potential for pedestrian linkage (board walk) through College Park wetlands to improve access.

### **Partnership Opportunities**

- Consider partnership opportunities with existing school district property (open space, playgrounds, or facility program space) and church property (open space) for new neighborhood parks to fill gaps and serve resident needs.
- Maintain and foster continuing partnerships with school districts and church to provide for shared recreational opportunities for Elgin communities.

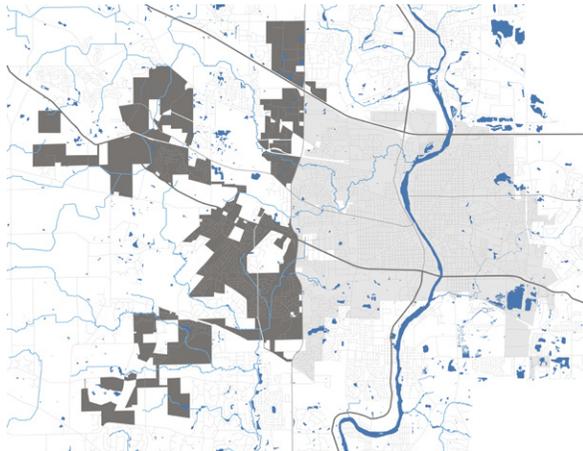
### **Neighborhood Park on Larkin**

Location: North of Larkin, Maple St.

- Potential partnership opportunity (lease agreement with the owner and City) for a neighborhood park on this site that is currently an open space.
- Potential for informal open space, practice field, dog park, and neighborhood amenities to fill gaps and serve resident needs in this underserved area.

# Recommendations

## District 5 - West

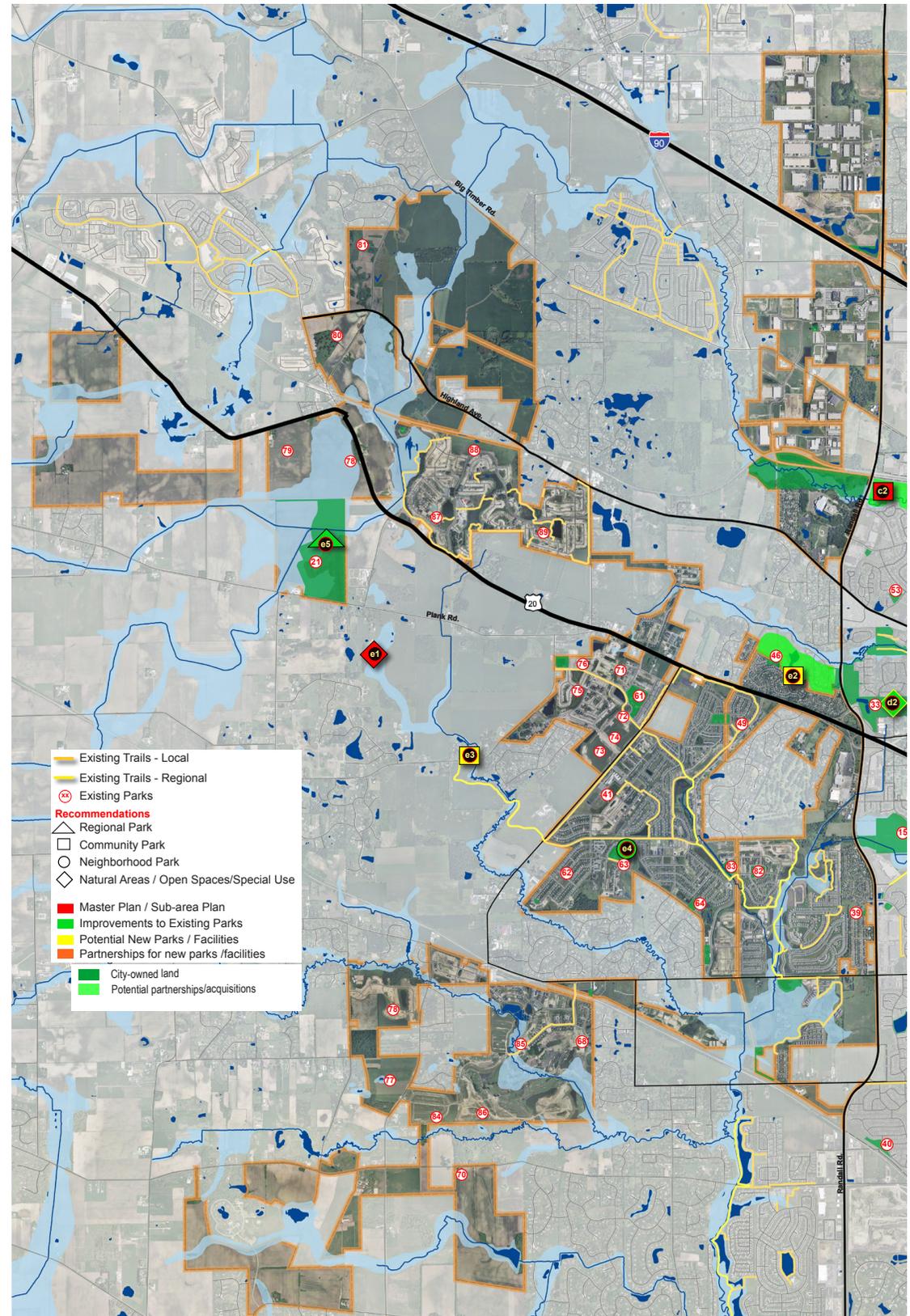


### Existing Parks

Park Name	Number on Map	Type	Acreage
Copper Springs Park	63, e4	Neighborhood	4.10
Meier Park	61	Neighborhood	12.89
Nesler Road Park	41	Neighborhood	20.00
Bowes Creek Country Club	68	Special Use	249.00
Millenium Park	39	Neighborhood	1.28
Randall Ridge Park	46	Neighborhood	3.06
Settlers Park Park	49	Neighborhood	3.00
Shadow Hill Park	62	Neighborhood	3.64
Waterford Entry Park	64	Neighborhood	3.34
Elgin Regional Park West	21, e5	Regional	224.00

### Proposed Parks

-  New Recreation Center West and Aquatics
-  Community Park at Weld / Marshfield
-  Community Park along Russell Rd.
-  Copper Spring Park Barn reuse
-  Future parks





### **New Recreation Center West and Aquatics**

Location: South of Plank Rd., Russell Rd.

- Opportunity exists in the western part of the City (south of Elgin Regional Park) for a recreation center that would serve this rapidly growing part of the City. This facility in addition to the Elgin Regional Park could potentially function as a regional center offering recreation and athletic facilities catering to the existing and future residents who otherwise would have to drive long distances to use such services.



### **Community Park at Weld/Marshfield**

Location: Weld/Marshfield, West of Randall

- Opportunity exists to expand Randall Ridge Park to create a community park.
- Potential for picnic shelters, active recreation areas, play areas/fields, and sled hill. Improvements could provide open space access, link to Sandy Creek Greenway, connection to Kane County Forest Preserve property, a trail linkage to the east connecting to Hawthorne Hill Nature Center, and a trailhead on a parcel just west of Randall.



### **Community Park along Russell Rd.**

Location: Russell Rd., Fitchie Creek

- Opportunity exists for a community park with neighborhood amenities to fill gaps and serve resident needs, in partnership with Plato Township. The area is adjacent to Plato Township's existing park.
- Improvements could provide link to Fitchie Creek Greenway and existing trail network.



### **Copper Spring Park Barn reuse**

Location: Copper Spring Ln, Water Rd.

- Opportunity exists for reuse of the barn in future. Potentially this space can be reused to provide space for the creative community, environmental organizations and education centers, performance and event spaces.
- Consideration should be given to utilize this space in the most sustainable fashion that caters to the resident need.
- This space provides opportunity to locate year round/seasonal farmer's market.
- Consider locating Safety Town Elgin at this site. This program will allow children to explore safety concerns in a familiar environment as they experience them first hand. Safety Town is designed to ensure safety education needs are reflected in the structures and amenities of the town. A miniature community can be designed to reflect the Elgin community with a distinct downtown and residential area.

### **Partnership Opportunities**

- Partner with Kane County Forest Preserve District to manage natural areas and link bike trails.

# Potential Funding Strategies

## 1.1 Funding And Revenue Strategies

This section of the Master Plan includes examples of funding and revenue strategies from parks and recreation departments all over the United States. A recurring theme throughout this Master Plan is the challenge created by diminishing funds to support operations and the desire to create additional funding sources to sustain future growth.

Park and recreation agencies draw on many sources of revenue to help them acquire park land, develop parks and facilities, maintain parks, and offer recreation programs and community facilities from a variety of revenue options. The following are examples of revenue options the City of Elgin can consider to support capital improvement, land acquisition, and operational needs in the future.

### 1.1.1 General Funding Sources

**General Fund:** General funds derived from property taxes and other municipal income sources are a normal way of supporting park and recreation system operations. However, they are limited in their ability to fund significant land acquisition or capital development.

**General Obligation Bond:** A general obligation bond is a municipal bond secured by the taxing and borrowing power of the municipality issuing it. These bonds usually require some level of community voter support and are used to support capital improvements and acquisition of land.

**Governmental Funding Programs:** A variety of funding sources are available from federal and state government for greenspace-related and sustainability projects. For example, the Land and Water Conservation Fund provides funds to state and local governments to acquire, develop, and improve outdoor recreation areas. Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds can be used in part to support greenspace-related improvements. Transportation enhancement funds available through SAFETELU, the current federal transportation bill, can be used for trail and related greenspace development. AmeriCorps grants can be used

to fund support for park maintenance. Federal Housing Grants can be used to develop recreation related facilities to support social needs of housing residents. Also, the federal government oversees the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants, which assist with reducing energy usage.

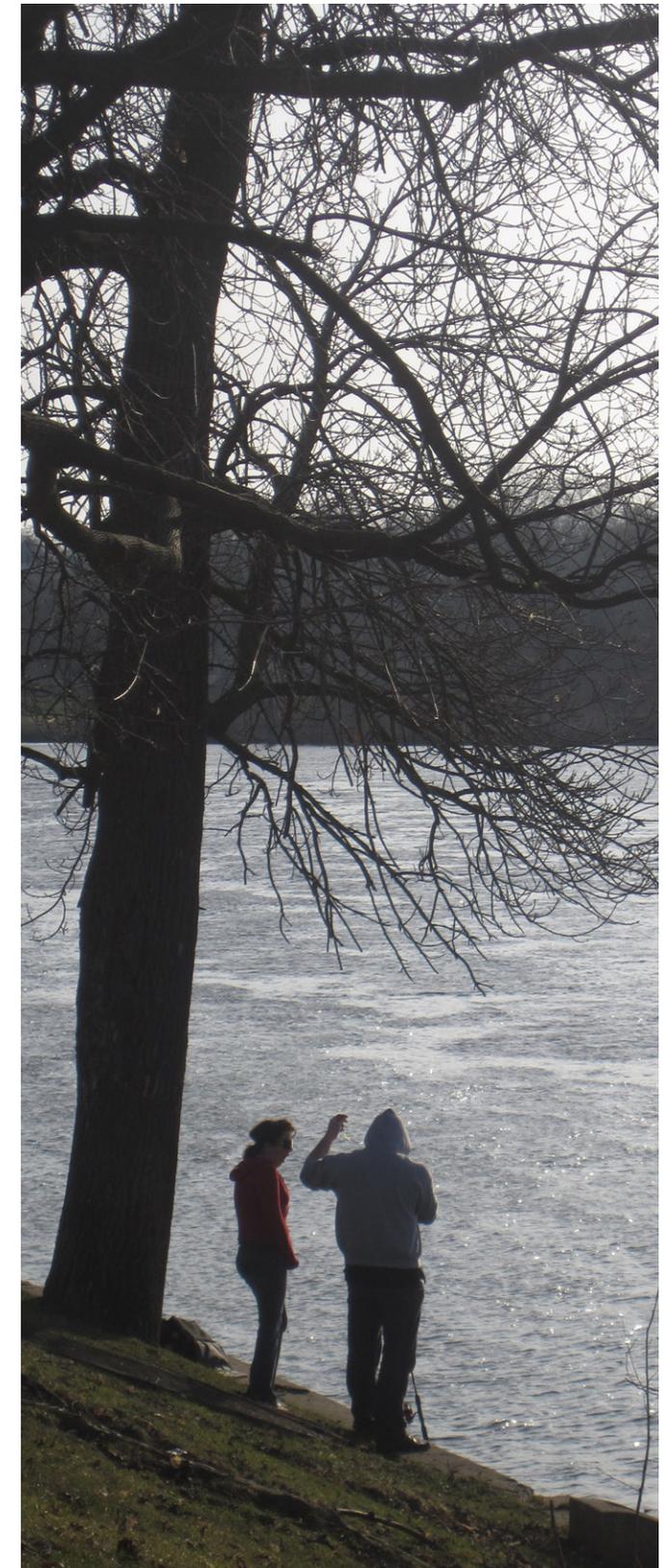
**Bond Referendum:** This funding approach involves submission and voter approval of a bond measure to be used to finance land acquisition, facility and park development, and/or maintenance. According to the Trust for Public Land, voters in 23 states approved 104 ballot measures in November 2006 that will provide \$6.4 billion in funding for park-related land acquisition and development.

### 1.1.2 Dedicated Funding Sources

**Park Impact Fees:** These fees are attached to the cost of new residential development based on the square footage or number of bedrooms per unit to generate funds for park acquisition and development. Impact fees typically range from a low of \$500 dollars per unit to a high of \$9,000 dollars per unit and should be periodically updated to address market rates and land values.

**Tax Allocation District:** Commonly used to finance redevelopment projects in Atlanta, a Tax Allocation District (TAD) involves the issuance of tax-exempt bonds to pay front-end infrastructure and eligible development costs in partnership with private developers. As redevelopment occurs in the district, the “tax increment” resulting from redevelopment projects is used to retire the debt issued to fund the eligible redevelopment costs. The public portion of the redevelopment project funds itself using the additional taxes generated by the project. TADs can be used to fund greenspace acquisition and development as an essential infrastructure cost.

**Boulevard Tax:** This funding source has been used by Kansas City, Mo., to develop and maintain its nationally renowned parkways and boulevard system. Residents who



live along these corridors pay a charge based on a lineal foot that is added to their property tax bill. This approach has proven to be very beneficial to owners when selling their homes because of the added value to their properties.

**Cash-in-Lieu of Open Space Requirement:** Ordinances requiring the dedication of open space within developments to meet the park and recreation needs of the new residents often have provisions allowing cash contribution to substitute for the land requirement. The proceeds can be applied to a park off site, usually within one mile that serves the needs of the development.

**Dedicated Sales Tax:** A dedicated sales tax has been used by many cities as a funding tool for capital improvements. The City of Lawrence, Kansas, passed a one-cent sales tax for parks that has generated over \$50 million in park improvements over the last seven years. The City of Phoenix receives sales tax revenue from car rentals to support capital needs of parks and recreation services.

**Facility Authority:** A Facility Authority is used by park and recreation agencies to improve a specific park or develop a specific improvement such as a stadium, large recreation center, large aquatic center, or sports venue for competitive events. Repayment of bonds to fund the project usually comes from sales taxes. The City of Indianapolis has created several recreational facilities to meet local needs and national competition venues as an economic development tool. The Facility Authority is responsible for managing the sites and operating them in a self-supporting manner.

**Improvement District:** An improvement district allows for special assessments on property owners to support acquisition, development, and/or maintenance costs. There are various types of improvement districts that apply to parks and greenspaces. Landscape and Lighting Districts are used by California communities to fund park development and ongoing maintenance. Park Benefit Districts establish assessments on properties based on the benefits and costs

### 1.1.3 Revenue Capture

**Land Leases/Concessions:** Land leases and concessions are public/private partnerships in which the municipality provides land or space for private commercial operations that enhance the park and recreational experience in exchange for payments to help reduce operating costs. They can range from vending machines to food service operations to golf courses.

**User Fees:** User fees are fees paid by a user of recreational facilities or programs to offset the costs of services provided by the municipality. The fees are set by the municipality based on cost recovery goals and the level of exclusivity the user receives compared to the general taxpayer. This does not necessarily imply the need for increasing fees, but rather having a sophisticated approach to the charging of fees. Too many agencies simply use comparative pricing in the establishment of prices. Smarter agencies have a system wide fee policy linked to cost recovery goals and manage fees according to the psychology of pricing.

**Capital Improvement Fee:** A capital improvement fee can be added to the admission fee of a recreation facility to help pay back the cost of developing the facility. This fee is usually applied to golf courses, aquatic facilities, recreation centers, ice rinks, amphitheaters, and special use facilities such as sports complexes. The funds generated can be used to either pay back the cost of the capital improvement or the revenue bond that was used to develop the facility. Columbia, MO, has successfully used this fee for years. Virtually all of their program and rental fees have a capital improvement fee attached to the cost of the service.

**Corporate Naming Rights:** In this arrangement, corporations invest in the right to name an event, facility, or product within a parks system in exchange for an annual fee, typically over a ten-year period. The cost of the naming right is based on the impression points the facility or event will receive from newspapers, TV, Websites, and visitors or users. Naming

rights for park facilities are typically attached to sports complexes, amphitheaters, recreation centers, aquatic facilities, stadiums, and events. These can be looked into particularly for some of the special use facilities or signature arts facilities.

**Corporate Sponsorships:** Corporations can also underwrite a portion or all of the costs of an event, program, or activity based on their name being associated with the service. Sponsorships typically are title sponsors, presenting sponsors, associate sponsors, product sponsors, or in-kind sponsors. Many cities seek corporate support for these types of activities. On a local basis, park districts that have leveraged good success from the corporate sector include Naperville, Schaumburg, and Rockford Park Districts.

**A Maintenance Endowment Fund** is a fund dedicated exclusively for parks maintenance, funded by a percentage of user fees from programs, events, and rentals.

**Gift Catalog:** This can be a Web based shopping list for individuals to “buy” a gift for the City of Elgin Parks and Recreation department. This consists of having a list of amenities the public can buy to help fund park development.

# Potential Funding Strategies

## 1.1.4 Private Funding Sources

**Business/Citizen Donations:** Individual donations from corporations and citizens can be sought to support parks and greenspaces. As an example, the Naperville Park District has an ongoing program soliciting tax deductible contributions from individuals, community organizations, and businesses to enhance park and recreational services.

**Private Foundation Funds:** Nonprofit community foundations can be strong sources of support for parks and greenspace. The City of Indianapolis has received over \$100 million in grants from the Lilly Endowment for park-related improvements.

**Nonprofit Organizations:** Nonprofit organizations can provide support for greenspace and parks in various ways. Examples include:

- **Conservancy or Friends Organization:** This type of nonprofit is devoted to supporting a specific park. New York City has had great success with conservancies.
- **Land Trust:** Land trusts are nonprofits focused on greenspace preservation. In Atlanta, the Trust for Public Land and Conservation Fund helps to facilitate greenspace acquisition by the City, but it does not own land and easements outright. Project Greenspace proposes establishment of a new land trust dedicated to acquiring and managing greenspace in Atlanta.
- **Conservation District:** Conservation Districts operate like a land trust, but are set up to protect specific property areas with high greenspace value, such as watersheds or sensitive natural areas. The conservation district's role is to provide landowners with tax benefits to allow their properties to be preserved as part of the district.
- **Parks Foundation:** Established to support system-wide parks and recreation needs, park foundations have helped many cities across the nation to acquire land and

develop parks. For example, the Parks Foundation of Houston raises \$5 million annually, on average, for land acquisition and park improvements.

- **Greenway Foundations:** Greenway foundations focus on developing and maintaining trails and green corridors on a citywide basis. The City of Indianapolis Greenway Foundation develops and maintains greenways throughout the City and seeks land leases along the trails as one funding source, in addition to selling miles of trails to community corporations and nonprofits. The development rights along the trails can also be sold to local utilities for water, sewer, fiber optic, and cable lines on a per mile basis to support development and management of these corridors. King County in the Seattle area has done a very good job in accessing this funding source for greenway development.
- **Gifts to Share:** This approach is used in Sacramento, California, in the form of a nonprofit that solicits donations for park improvement projects.

**Homeowner Association Fees:** Homeowner association fees are typically used to maintain dedicated greenspace areas within private residential developments. They could be applied to maintaining privately owned greenspace that is publicly accessible through an agreement between the developer and homeowner associations.

**Lease Back:** Lease backs are a source of capital funding in which a private sector entity such as a development company buys the land and develops a facility such as a park, recreation attraction, recreation center, pool, or sports complex. After the purchase, the development company leases the facility back to the municipality to pay off the capital costs over a 30- to 40-year period. This approach takes advantage of the efficiencies of private sector development, while relieving the burden on the municipality to raise upfront capital funds. Capital source is a private banking company that provides municipalities this option without going to the

voter for approval and/or using municipal bonds to support parks and recreation needs.

## 1.1.5 Volunteer Sources

**Adopt-a-Park:** In this approach, local neighborhood groups or businesses make a volunteer commitment to maintaining a specific park. Adopt-a-Park arrangements are particularly well-suited for smaller parks that are less efficient for a parks department to maintain.

**Neighborhood Park Initiatives:** These are formal or informal initiatives by local groups to address the needs of an individual park. Examples include park watch programs and “clean up/fix up” days.

**Adopt-a-Trail:** This is similar to Adopt-a-Park but involves sponsorship of a segment of a trail (e.g., one mile) for maintenance purposes. The agency uses community volunteers to monitor trails for safety and as a first-response to report problems on the trails.

**Community Service Workers:** Community service workers are assigned by the court to pay off some of their sentence through maintenance activities in parks, such as picking up litter, removing graffiti, and assisting in painting or fix-up activities. Most workers are assigned 30 to 60 hours of work.

# Acknowledgements

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Council Member *F. John Steffen*  
Council Member *Mike Warren*

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*Laurie Faith Gibson* - Aiello - Sustainability Master Plan Work Group  
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*Maria Cumpata* - Staff  
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City of Elgin Community Development Department

## Special Thanks

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