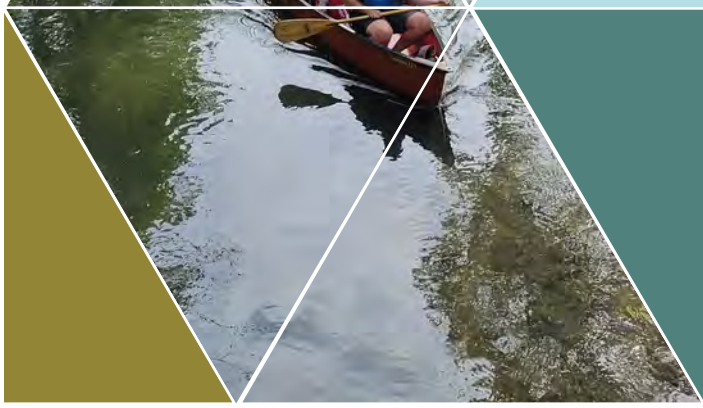
2024 Village of DeForest **Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan** (CORP)

Adopted: December 3, 2024



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Parkland Overview

- **Village Popuation:** 11,674 (2024)
- **Projected Population Growth:** 13,938 (2034) and 15,996 (2044)
- **Total Parkland:** 389 acres across 22 parks
- **Mini, Neighborhood, and Community Parks**: 14 parks totaling 115 acres

Park Service Levels and Distribution

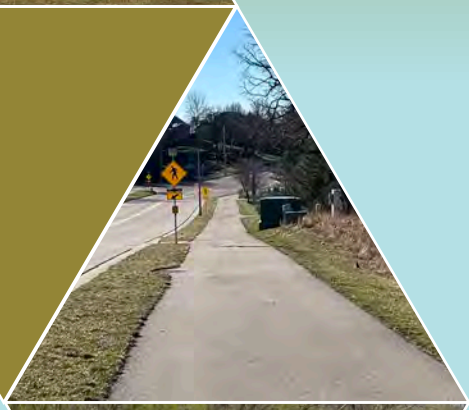
- **Current Standard:** 33 total park acres and 10 active park acres per 1,000 residents
- **Park Service Comparison:** Parks per resident and total acres per 1,000 residents meet or exceed regional and national averages
- **Plan Established Standard:** 11 active park acres per 1,000 residents
- **Future Needs:** 39 new acres by 2034 and 62 by 2044 (Village owns 39 acres planned for parks as of 2024)
- **Distribution:** Park locations are well distributed in reflection of the Village's population

Public Participation and Feedback

- **Online Survey:** 900+ responses
- **Public Workshop:** 20+ attendees
- **Public Service Committee:** 3 total meetings
- **Public Draft Review:** 119 online contributions via Engage DeForest and 75 participants during the DeForest Public Safety Family Fun Night
- **Public Hearing:** Joint Public Service Committee, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Village Board meeting

Park Facility Planning

- **Proposed Improvements:** Existing park and trail recommended improvements can be found in Chapter 5
- **New Opportunities:** Potential new recreational amenities, parks, and trails can be found in Chapter 5 and on Map 6
- **Costs:** Proposed improvement and new recreational opportunity costs are identified in Chapter 6
- **What's Next?:** Implementation action items can be found in Chapter 7



CHAPTER 1:
Introduction and Existing Conditions

1 INTRODUCTION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

INTRODUCTION

Communities throughout the world recognize that park land, recreation trails, and natural areas are key components of high-quality living environments. Open spaces and outdoor recreation provide a community with many benefits and serve a multitude of functions, including opportunities for recreation, promoting and accommodating a healthy lifestyle, enhancing community aesthetics, increasing property values, attracting visitors and tourists, shaping development patterns, and protecting the natural environment. The park and open space system of every community should be planned and designed to meet the diverse needs of its population. Proper recreation-based planning requires a focus on both the types of facilities needed to meet the needs of the community as well as the geographic distribution of those facilities relative to those who will use them.

Outdoor Recreation In Wisconsin

According to the Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation, Wisconsin is home to over 15,000 inland lakes, 84,000 miles of rivers and streams, the 1,200-mile Ice Age National Scenic Trail, 7.5 million acres of public land, over 25,000 miles of groomed snowmobile trails, the third most ski resorts in the country, and 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations. In 2022, Wisconsin's outdoor recreation industry contributed a record-setting $9.8 billion to the state's gross domestic product and the outdoor economy grew by over 6.8%. Additionally, the industry supports over 94,000 jobs across various sectors in the state. Overall, outdoor recreation throughout Wisconsin provides a high quality of life for residents, economic opportunity, public health benefits, community identity by highlighting cultural and historic resources, and natural resource preservation and enhancement. *(Source: Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation, 2022)*

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

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

This CORP has been prepared in accordance with guidelines that will make it certifiable by the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) and qualify the Village of DeForest for matching grant funds through the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the Federal Recreation Trails Act (RTA), and the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Local Assistance Grant Programs (State of Wisconsin). The CORP must be updated every five years to

ensure that it reflects the current needs of the community and retains its WisDNR certification. The plan has also been prepared in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes 61.35, 236.29 and 66.0617. Furthermore, it will be considered a component of the Village's Comprehensive Plan under Wisconsin Statutes 66.1001.

This plan is intended to incorporate and refine the previous analysis and recommendations presented in the Village's 2020 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and the 2023 Village of DeForest Comprehensive Plan. DeForest's public parks and open spaces are operated and maintained by the Public Services Department. This CORP was prepared under the direction of Village staff, the Public Service Committee, Plan Commission, and Village Board. The purpose of the plan is threefold:

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

Intended Outcomes of This Plan

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

- Utilizing public feedback to guide the development of plan recommendations.
- Providing both overarching and facility-specific recommendations for improving the Village's park system.
- Expanding regional outdoor recreation connections and networks between the Village and neighboring communities.
- Improving the resident's quality of life by providing equitable access to a variety of recreational programs and facilities.
- Harnessing the power of a well-planned park and recreational system to create better health outcomes for residents, increase opportunities for social interaction and community culture building, and capitalize on recreational resources as activity generators to draw people to the Village.

GENERAL REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Village of DeForest is in northern Dane County, between U.S. Highway 51 and Interstate 39/90/94. The southern extent of the Village is located two miles north of Madison, three miles west of Sun Prairie, and five miles east of Waunakee. The Village of Windsor abuts DeForest on three sides and the Town of Vienna, Westport, and Burke are also directly adjacent to the Village of DeForest.

DeForest is a steadily growing community, conveniently located on the north side of the Madison metro area. Historically, the community has developed around the railroad and its agricultural economy. However, with Interstate 90 immediately adjacent to the Village on its west side, many residents take advantage of the location's ease of access to nearby employment concentrations, while also benefiting from DeForest's small-town character, convenience, and natural amenities.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Examining key demographic, development, and housing indicators and trends provides a baseline understanding of the Village's existing conditions and provides valuable context for park and recreation system planning. Data compiled and analyzed as part of this planning process, including future population and household projections, was used to inform opportunities for the improvement of the park and recreation system. Predicting how the community's population might grow in the future provides important information about the amount of new parkland and recreational facilities that will be needed to serve the community. A complete set of all of the data collected for DeForest, its neighboring communities, Dane County, and the State can be found in the Appendix. The following is a summary highlighting several key trends and takeaways from this analysis:

- DeForest is currently home to 11,674 residents. The Village experienced significant population growth between 1990 and 2010 (the population grew by 22 percent during this period), a trend that continued and even increased over the following decade. Between 2010 and 2023, the population grew by 30 percent. This sustained level of population growth is consistent with that experienced by Dane County over the same period.
- The future population of the Village is projected to reach approximately 14,350 by 2035, an increase of 23 percent. It should be noted that DeForest's actual future population will depend on social and economic trends, market conditions, attitudes toward growth, and development regulations. These forecasts provide the basis for determining future need for parks and open spaces.
- The median age of DeForest's population is increasing, mirroring national trends. Among comparable communities, however, the Village has the lowest median age (37), one of the highest average household sizes (2.59), and a significantly higher percentage of its population under the age of 18 (27 percent) compared to Dane County and State percentages (20 percent and 22 percent, respectively). This is a result of rapid growth experienced over the past several decades and the influx of younger families to the community.
- The Village's population is predominantly white, but has become more diverse over the past two decades. In 2022, 8 percent of the population identified as Hispanic or Latino, 12 percent identified as two or more races, 3 percent identified as Asian, and 2 percent identified as African American. It will be important to ensure that these minority groups are provided with equitable access to the community's park and recreation facilities, both now and in the future.
- The percentage of owner-occupied housing units has increased slightly by 4 percent in DeForest since 2000 and remains the predominant housing type in the community, making up 59 percent of the total housing stock.
- Utilizing the population projections and methodology noted above, the projected number of households were also calculated. This forecast yielded a projected total of 5,487 households in 2035 or an increase of 875 households over the next decade. This projection methodology utilized a customized average household size projection based on the change in averages experienced in DeForest between 2000-2020. This customized approach factors in the Village's sustained growth in population over the past several decades including younger families, coupled with an increasingly aging population and general trends indicating stagnant household size change or mild household size decreases throughout the state.
- Dane County ranks within the top ten healthiest counties in the state. However, there are still public health areas that can be improved, including the percentage of adults with obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. This information is important for assessing how healthy the Village is today, while identifying areas of focus for improvement in the future.

A complete inventory, analysis, and review of DeForest's natural resource components, data trends, and existing plans can be found in the Appendix.

CHAPTER 2:
Public Participation

2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT

To provide sound public policy guidance, the planning process incorporated several inclusive public participation opportunities to ensure that the recommendations of the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan reflect a broadly supported vision and address the community's desires and needs. The following public engagement opportunities were conducted as part of this planning process. The feedback obtained as the result of each event was analyzed and used to inform the core recommendations of this plan. For a complete compilation of public feedback gathered, see the Appendix.

Event	Date	Summary
Public Service Committee Kickoff Meeting	March 18, 2024	A project kickoff meeting was held to provide an overview of the planning process and gather direction and insight on key issues and opportunities facing the Village.
Online Public Survey	April 1 – April 22, 2024	The Village conducted an online survey to gather input from residents on existing and future needs, new park spaces, user patterns, and programming. The survey closed with 912 people providing feedback. This feedback was analyzed and used to inform the core recommendations of this plan.
Public Workshop	April 17, 2024	A public workshop was held to gather input on the core questions associated with the online survey. Discussion and input were generated using display and comment boards that allowed residents to provide feedback on their favorite park system features, areas for improvement to existing facilities, and future opportunities and priorities. A total of approximately 20 people attended the in-person event. This feedback also informed the recommendations of this plan.
Public Service Committee Draft Review Meeting	August 19, 2024	A draft review meeting was held to provide Committee members with an opportunity to discuss key components of the plan document, ask questions, and provide feedback on revisions needed. This feedback was used to guide the development of the draft that was provided to the public as part of the public open house event.
Draft Plan Online Review	Throughout Project (Draft Plan Posted August 19-September 11, 2024)	Over the course of the project, the Village provided an online feedback comment opportunity on the Engage DeForest website. For approximately a month (August-September), the Draft Plan was posted to the website to gather more targeted feedback on the draft documents. In total, the website had 2,046 visits and 119 contributions.
Draft Plan Public Review Event	September 10, 2024	During the DeForest Public Safety Family Fun Night, a booth was set up to gather feedback and comments from attendees on the Draft Plan materials. Approximately, 75 people came to the booth during the event.
P&Z Commission Review Meeting	November 11, 2024	A Final Draft review meeting was held where the Commission instructed staff to pursue adoption of the plan.
Public Service Committee Review Meeting	November 18, 2024	A Final Draft review meeting was held where the Committee instructed staff to pursue adoption of the plan.
Adoption Meeting	December 3, 2024	A public hearing and joint meeting of the P&Z Commission, Public Service Committee, and Village Board was held to adopt the plan.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC FEEDBACK OBTAINED

Important trends and feedback results related to park system usage, perceptions, needs, and desires obtained throughout the public input process can be found below.

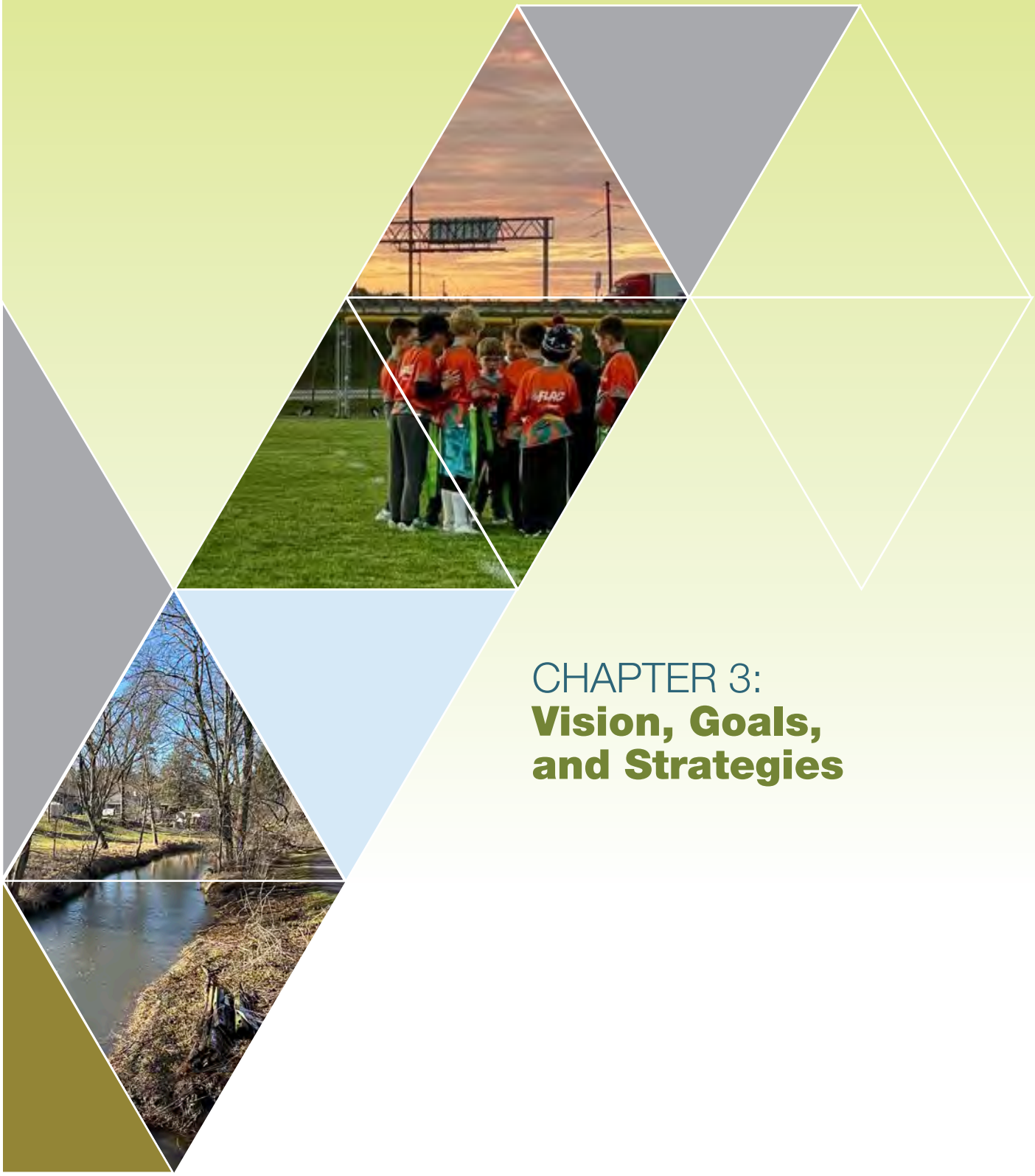
83% of public survey respondents indicated they frequent a Village park at least one time a month or more.

The most visited parks by public survey respondents include Fireman's Park, Upper Yahara River Trail, Conservancy Commons, and Western Green Park.

- Respondents strongly appreciate the Village park system's preserved natural areas and wildlife, its paved trail system, community festivals, musical performances, and events, the Yahara River and trailway, and the community's recreational programming.
- Survey results illustrate a high level of park system use within the community, with over 83% of respondents indicating that they use the Village's park system at least once per month and over 60% indicating they frequent parks even more frequently.
- Fireman's Park, Conservancy Commons Park, the Upper Yahara River Corridor and Trail, and Western Green Park are the Village's most frequented park facilities.
- Nearly 90% of survey respondents indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the level of maintenance and the appearance of the Village's park system.
- Approximately 53% of survey respondents reported that they participate in DeForest recreational programs and most commonly participate in programming related to youth sports and outdoor activities.
- Of those survey respondents that said they don't participate in recreational programming, "other responsibilities/no time" was the most common reason why they do not. Other common responses were "Don't know what programs are offered" and "No interest in programs offered."
- Regarding improvements to existing facilities and programming, most community feedback indicated the desire to see existing parks maintained, as well as the desire to ensure that biking takes place only in designated areas and does not occur on unpaved trails in natural areas unless explicitly permitted.
- Nearly 50% of survey respondents identified the creation of more paved multi-use trails as the highest priority investment the Village should make among active transportation improvements to the community.

- Public feedback indicated a strong community desire for more of the following types of recreational facilities in the Village:
    - A community pool/aquatic facility
    - Natural gardens
    - Pickleball courts
    - Fishing access
    - Off-path dirt walking trails
    - Park restroom facilities
    - Disc golf
- Respondents would like DeForest to offer more family activity programming (expanded community events, educational programs, group classes), lifetime sports (pickleball, tennis, golf, etc.), and outdoor active recreational programming and amenities (camping, fishing access, canoeing, etc.).
- Feedback indicated a need for the development of more disc golf and mountain biking facilities while balancing their impact on natural areas, wildlife, and the safety of the park system's trails for all types of users. Additionally, there was an identified need for more restrooms (permanent or portable) provided in Village parks and strategically located along existing trailways.
- There is an issue with parking availability in some parks (especially Fireman's Park and Conservancy Commons).
- Respondents indicated strong desires for the Village to prioritize the improvement of existing natural areas and their expansion along with the interconnected multi-use trail system as the community continues to grow and expand.
- 9% of survey participants said that a member of their household has a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The most popular accommodations these respondents would like to see in Village parks are adaptive equipment, wheelchair access, and additional staff.

- Conflicting opinions on future potential mountain bike trails in DeForest as there is strong support for some kind of local location and facility that includes mountain bike trails, but a continued desire from others to protect natural areas for these uses.
- People expressed very strong support for the Village's park system and residents believe it is well maintained. In particular, people find great value in the trail system and bicycle/pedestrian facilities in the community and believe that this directly results in people's desire to move to DeForest.
- Natural areas and, more generally, environmental area preservation and protection is another attribute residents like about DeForest and would like to see continued into the future.
- Resident desire to see additional pickleball courts, shade structures (especially over play structures and splashpads), activities for older children and teenagers, gaga ball pits, and new recreational amenities such as a skatepark, mountain bike trails, and generally more trail connections throughout the community.



CHAPTER 3:
Vision, Goals, and Strategies

3 VISION, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES

In order to conduct a thorough and accurate planning process, it is important to establish an overarching vision and set of goals and strategies that will serve as the basis for the recommendations in this plan.

Vision Statement sets the stage for what the community would like to see the parks and recreational system look, feel, and function like in the future.

Goals are broad statements that express general priorities. Goals are formulated based on the identification of key issues, opportunities, and priorities that affect the park system. Goals are attainable through the implementation of key recommendations and strategies.

Strategies are courses of action used to foster plan implementation. Strategies reflect key recommendations and can accomplish several goals, sometimes simultaneously.

The following vision, goals, and strategies are based on the information that has been presented in the previous chapters of this plan, including public, Village staff, and Public Service Committee input.

2023 Village of DeForest Strategic Plan

The Village recently completed a Strategic Plan process to help determine the vision, goals, and strategies for the next 5 years. This plan and the Strategic Plan aim to align on common goals related to parks, recreation, and open space planning for the future. These include giving DeForest the opportunity to remain a great community by being:

- A destination for recreation with greenspaces, paved trails, more parks, more conservancy lands, disc golf, recreational capital, pool, and expanded trail system.
- A destination for businesses with revitalized downtown, retail growth, a variety of food options, hotels, more businesses and services, and fully built-out industrial parks.
- A preferred community in which to live and work with employers of choice, energy efficiency, vibrancy, innovation, and inclusiveness, more community events and opportunities for in-person interactive, and a connected, unique, and responsive community.

It also includes, despite changes that may occur over the next 5 years, DeForest will build upon the following strengths:

- Greenspace makes us great through preservation of environmental corridors, better and more use of parks and facilities, expanded and interconnected trail system, community pool, pump track and skate park, and enhancing Firemen's Park.
- A strong social fabric makes us great through a vibrant community, diverse opportunities, taste of DeForest, and more community events.
- A destination for businesses through expanded infrastructure and more options at the interstate.
- A thriving downtown by making DeForest a destination, downtown redevelopment opportunities, new grocery options, free wi-fi downtown, diverse-ownership in local businesses, and expanded opportunities for local businesses.

VISION STATEMENT

The Village of DeForest's parks, outdoor recreation, and trails system provides a high quality of life for all residents and visitors through the offering of diverse opportunities for active and passive recreation, the protection and enhancement of natural resources, the promotion of both physical and mental public health, and the practice of long-term fiscal sustainability.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL NO. 1 ***Ensure the provision and protection of sufficient parks, recreation facilities, and open space areas that meet the needs of and are accessible to all community members, promote public health, and provide diverse recreational opportunities now and in the future.***

Strategies

- Provide diverse and equitably situated recreational opportunities so that residents of all ages have an equal opportunity to enjoy the park and open space system.
- Neighborhood and Mini Parks should be sited and designed to enhance neighborhood cohesion and provide a common neighborhood-gathering place. All parks should have multiple access points from surrounding neighborhoods. Ensure that at least one park and recreational facility is within safe and comfortable walking distance of all Village residents, generally 1/3-mile service areas.
- The creation of master plans should be considered for all future parkland development. These plans should indicate the future use of the facilities, equipment, and park grounds.
- Coordinate the public use of indoor and outdoor private facilities and school recreation facilities with the DeForest Area School District and consider combining Village park and recreational facilities with school facilities, where appropriate and feasible.
- Continue to provide an adequate supply of large sports fields and other athletic facilities to meet the growing needs of league sports teams and other organized recreational users.
- Continue to provide recreation facilities that are designed for the safety and convenience of the age groups that use them.
- Continue to market the park system's facilities and programs to the community using diverse tools such as the Village's website, social media, email lists, recreational guides, signage, and printed publications.
- Coordinate with DeForest-Windsor Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Commission to distribute materials in an effort to broaden awareness and generate tourism.
- Consider the creation of park-specific or overarching "Friends of DeForest Parks" groups to assist with maintenance and fundraising for future projects
- Develop a local grant program to support the creation of community events within Village parks as an important component of the Village's tourism and economic development inititatives.
- Continue to leverage public and private funds such as grants, sponsorships, development dedications, volunteers, and capital improvement planning to support park and trail upgrades and expansions.
- Evaluate park facility user fees on a reoccurring basis to ensure consistency with the cost of service provision.
- Expand winter recreational activities throughout the community including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and ice skating.
- Integrate public art features with new park development and existing park upgrade projects to highlight the community's culture, character, and identity.
- Develop an ADA facilities inventory and assessment to identify upgrades needed to existing park facilities to comply with ADA design guidelines. Future parks should be designed so that they are barrier-free and accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Pursue becoming a designated Wisconsin Healthy Community. For more information, see below.
- Pursue becoming a designated Bicycle Friendly Community (League of American Bicyclists). For more information, see below.
- Begin tracking park data to develop a database of park trends that can be evaluated over time. This can include visitor counts, investments, program participation, volunteer hours, etc. that will assist in quantifying the impact of the park system.

GOAL NO. 2 ***Preserve and maintain the Village's natural resources, park facilities, and recreational amenities for the benefit of current and future residents.***

Strategies

- Continue to fund the replacement of old and deteriorating recreation equipment in all Village parks.
- Integrate park, recreation, and natural resource preservation in land use planning policies and administration.
- Consider holding neighborhood meetings or gathering feedback at stations within specific parks as they are up for improvement projects to obtain community feedback before implementation.
- Develop a park condition scoring matrix and use its criteria to rate each park facility on an annual basis to prioritize investments. Optionally, neighboring residents and frequent users of specific parks could also take the scoring exercise to see how it differs from staff's impressions and provide further insight to help drive decision making.
- Collaborate with other units of government, including Dane County, WisDNR, and the DeForest School District on park and recreation system planning.
- Leverage public-private partnerships, local associations and foundations, and other creative funding sources to help improve and meet the long-term park and recreational needs of the community.
- Consistently evaluate land dedication and park improvement fee requirements within existing ordinances and Needs Assessments. Land requiring protection from development based on environmental constraints should be protected via development codes and should not be used to satisfy park dedication requirements.
- Preservation of environmental corridors in their natural state should receive special attention to ensure the maintenance and integrity of wildlife and fish habitats, natural drainage areas, areas for passive recreation and outdoor recreation, steep slopes, woodlands, and reservoirs for sediment, where appropriate.
- Investigate all regulatory and acquisition tools available to preserve natural areas or other open space. Natural areas that can be adequately and appropriately protected without public expenditure should be preserved. Consider using public funds to acquire natural areas that cannot be protected through other means, or where public access is a high priority.
- Utilize management practices that protect and enhance the natural features of all of its parks. This includes efforts to establish and maintain buffers for sensitive environmental areas, minimize fertilizer and pesticide use, and implement native species plantings and landscape initiative, to the extent possible.
- Update the park system regulations in the Village Code of Ordinances to define active recreation facilities, passive recreation facilities, natural areas, and permanently protected areas. Update park hours and general regulations for all parks, as well as specific rules for special use facilities where applicable.
- Pursue the development of revenue-generating recreational facilities and activities, which can aid in the development of new facilities and/or the maintenance of existing facilities.
- Continue and expand park donation programs (memorial benches, etc.) to enable park system investment through philanthropy.
- Continue efforts to improve vegetation, streambank, and water quality in the Yahara River and its watershed.

GOAL NO. 3

Establish a safe, accessible, and interconnected multimodal transportation network to connect the Village's park and recreation system to areas of activity and community neighborhoods.

Strategies

- Plan and implement a comprehensive network of sidewalks, pedestrian paths, and bicycle routes in the Village that serve and connect neighborhoods, schools, parks, playgrounds, and activity and employment centers.
- Establish wayfinding signage along active transportation routes to allow residents and visitors to effectively travel throughout the Village without the use of a motor vehicle. Regularly update all bicycle and park system maps as new facilities are developed.
- Continue to standardize on-site park signage for all Village parks (including identification, rules, etc.)
- Update applicable components within the Village's Subdivision Ordinances to ensure that all new park development requires a minimum right-of-way frontage and access to facilitate multi-modal transportation accessibility to all users.
- Provide on-street linkages (such as bike lanes, sharrows, etc.) between trail segments and park facilities during future right-of-way planning and investments.
- Work with neighboring jurisdictions, Dane County, and the state to coordinate interconnected bicycle and pedestrian transportation corridors and promote active transportation modes.
- Prioritize the provision of safe and convenient bike connections between park and open space facilities as part of ongoing Village planning and acquisition efforts following State and ASSHTO standards.
- Adopt a Complete Streets Policy that requires multi-modal elements as part of every roadway infrastructure project. For more information, see below.
- Develop, host, or partner with the DeForest Area School District, Police Department, or other local organizations bicycle and pedestrian education programs and other training to increase safety and utilization of trails, paths, sidewalks, and streets.
- Utilize the Village's 5-year Capital Improvements Plan to pursue and implement the recommendations of this plan.

GOAL NO. 4

Acquire land for the development of new neighborhood and community parks to serve new areas of residential development as the Village continues to grow.

Strategies

- Acquire additional lands for active and passive recreational use to meet future population demand and to protect environmentally sensitive areas. Coordinate land acquisition with state, county, regional, and local agencies to ensure an interconnected system of outdoor recreational facilities.
- As opportunities become available, the Village should consider purchasing properties adjacent to existing park properties to allow for the expansion of existing parks. The Village will need to evaluate each opportunity to determine which properties will sufficiently meet the future needs of the park system.
- Require parkland dedication or fee-in-lieu standards for all new residential subdivisions and require park improvement fees. Ensure that all departments responsible for providing or maintaining adequate park facilities are involved in subdivision review
- Continually pursue state and federal funding programs, which can aid in the purchase and/or development of desired park system improvements.
- Participate in future updates to the Dane County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.
- Update the Village's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan every five years to maintain grant eligibility.

Wisconsin Healthy Communities

The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute has started recognizing communities throughout the state on their pursuit of improved public health through the designation of Wisconsin Healthy Communities. The purpose of the designation is to recognize and encourage local efforts that improve the overall community's health and well-being. It also aims to promote collaboration centered around health improvement. Communities are recognized as Gold, Silver, or Bronze depending on how well they are pursuing public health improvement efforts.

Municipalities that have formally been recognized in the DeForest area include the City of Stoughton, City of Portage, City of Lodi, and City of Watertown.

Recommendations in this plan can serve as the foundation for various initiatives that will support the continued creation of a healthier community in DeForest, including increased multimodal transportation options, green space and park connectivity, and community programming to support physical and social activity.

The local and regional park and trail systems play significant role in the promotion and sustainability of improving public health. Many of the overarching goals of the Wisconsin Healthy Community Designation program are reflective of the overarching goals in this plan.

Source: Wisconsin Healthy Communities Designation, 2024

Complete Streets

A Complete Streets Policy requires multi-modal elements be designed and integrated as part of every roadway infrastructure project. This is an effective way to provide transportation options for all users of the system including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, children, older individuals, individuals with disabilities, motorists, and freight vehicles as appropriate.

This type of policy should be based on guidelines, best practices, and performance measures of the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, National Association of City Transportation Officials, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Source: Smart Growth America, 2024

League of American Bicyclists – Bicycle Friendly Community

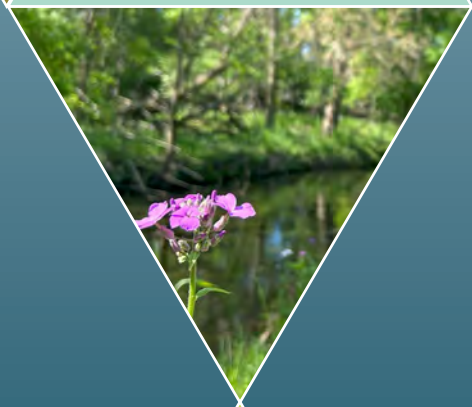
The League of American Bicyclists annually awards communities throughout the U.S. as diamond, platinum, gold, silver, or bronze Bicycle Friendly Community. This is a program designed to recognize and award municipalities that have taken steps to actively support, encourage, and accommodate bicycling for transportation and recreation.

It is recommended that DeForest strive to become a more bicycle-friendly community through an official designation. The League of American Bicyclists applies local-level criteria and metrics through its designation process in which the Village can apply in its future infrastructure projects and provide insight on gaps in the services it currently offers.

Source: League of American Bicyclists, 2024

CHAPTER 4:

Park and Open Space Standards & Existing Park System Analysis



4 PARK AND OPEN SPACE STANDARDS & EXISTING PARK SYSTEM ANALYSIS

PARK AND OPEN SPACE CLASSIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

This section provides classifications and definitions for the different types of park and recreational facilities within the Village. Parks are inventoried and classified based on standards established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), discussion with Village Staff, site visits conducted at each facility, and a review of past planning documents. Complete park descriptions, inventories, and recommendations for improvements for all park and recreation facilities can be found in Chapter 5.

For a full description of each park type in the Village, including details related to typical facilities associated with each park category, facility design specifications and standards, and example site plans, see the Appendix.

What's the Difference Between Recreation Types?

- Active Recreation facilities include playgrounds, sports courts, playfields, mountain biking, skateparks, pump tracks, and traditional park sports.
- Passive Recreation facilities include fishing, picnicking, biking, walking, and hiking trails, bird watching, and nature viewing.
- Natural Area facilities include areas designed to protect natural and environmentally-sensitive areas with passive recreation uses as a secondary objective.

Some parks described below offer multiple types of recreation on the same site such as Western Green, which has active, passive, and natural area facilities within it. Other parks offer a single type of recreation. An example of this is DeForest Athletic Complex, where its primary function is the active recreational uses.

Mini Parks

General Description:

Mini parks include specialized facilities that serve a concentrated population within their immediate geographic vicinity, oftentimes with amenities that are geared towards a specific demographic within the population, such as tot lot playgrounds for children or passive open space areas for the enjoyment of adults.

Mini Parks within DeForest:

- Dahl Park
- Dale Jenkins Park
- Hank's Hollow Park
- O'Donnell Park
- Star Gazer Park
- Sunnybrook Park
- Tierney Park
- Village Square Park

Future Mini Parks: Rivers Turn Development (Phase 3), Adjacent to Ziggy Baseball Park, Buhler Park, Beer Garden at Savannah Brooks, and Alternative Conceptual Locations Located on Map 6

Neighborhood Parks

General Description:

These parks are designed specifically to accommodate residents living within the service area. They are often characterized by active recreational facilities such as a playground or baseball and soccer fields but can also incorporate passive recreational areas for picnicking and nature study.

Neighborhood Parks within DeForest:

- Conservancy Commons Park
- Liberty Land Park
- Veterans Memorial Park
- Western Green Park
- Yahara Park

Future Neighborhood Parks: Iver Munson Park (not built yet), The Knolls, Ballweg Area (north of Fleet Farm), River Bend (FRED River Road Development), Northern Interstate/Morrisonville Road Corridor, and Alternative Conceptual Locations Located on Map 6

Community Parks

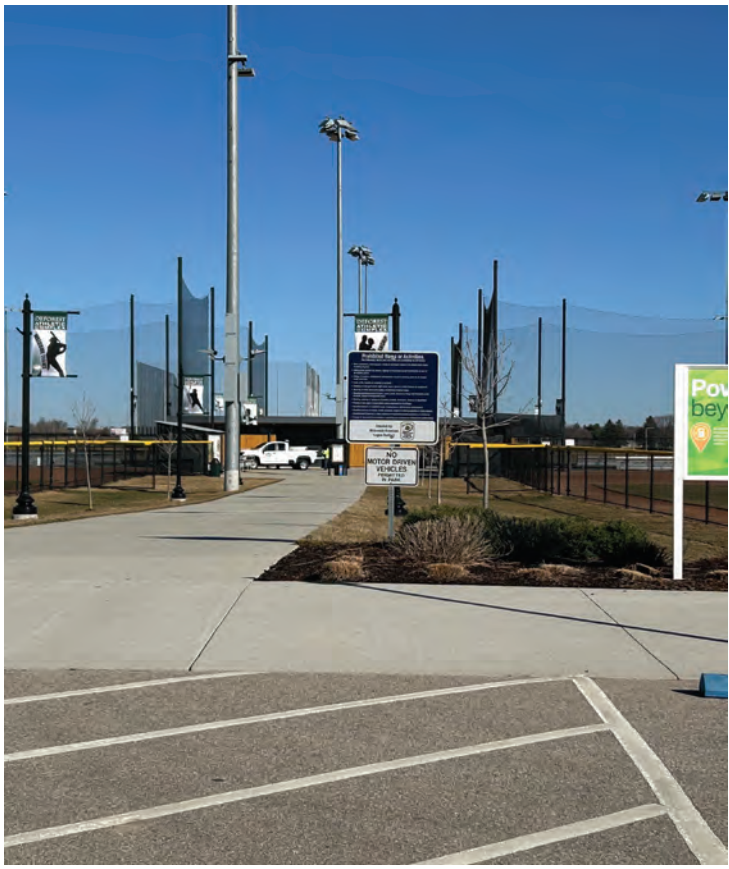
General Description:

Community parks are larger in size and are able to accommodate visitors from the surrounding community and multiple neighborhoods. These sites focus on both the developed aspects of the park, such as playfields and tennis courts, as well as the natural resource amenities.

Community Parks within DeForest:

- Fireman's Park

Future Community Parks: Alternative Conceptual Locations Located on Map 6



Special Use Parks and Facilities

General Description:

Areas of open space that cannot be measured by a quantifiable standard because of their unique and diverse contributions to the community. Special Use Parks and Facilities enhance an overall park and open space system by maintaining and improving the community's natural resource base, accommodating special activities that aren't included in other parks, and providing interconnections between isolated parks and recreation areas.

Examples of Special Use Parks and Facilities are varied but can include those lands that accommodate passive or special recreational activities, such as golf courses, dog parks, athletic complexes, arboreta, and outdoor amphitheaters, as well as lands that have been protected for their environmental significance or sensitivity and provide limited opportunity for recreational use. Examples of the latter may include water bodies, floodplains, wetlands, shorelands and shoreland setback areas, drainageways, stormwater management basins, conveyance routes, environmental corridors, wildlife habitats, areas of rare or endangered plant or animal species, prairie remnants, and restoration areas.

Special Use Parks within DeForest:

- DeForest Athletic Complex
- Marvin and Marie Schweers Dog Park
- Rivers Turn Park

Future Special Use Parks: Windsor Road Special Use Park, Nelson Court Special Use Park, Sunfish Pond (within Upper Yahara River Corridor), North Industrial Special Use Park, and Alternative Conceptual Locations Located on Map 6.

Natural Areas

General Description:

Permanently protected areas of environmental significance or sensitivity, generally with limited opportunities for passive recreational use and are not intended for intensive active recreation use. These lands often include water bodies, floodplains, wetlands, shorelines and shoreland setback areas, drainageways, stormwater management basins, environmental corridors, wildlife habitat, areas of endangered plant or animal species, prairie remnants or restoration areas, scenic vistas, or environmentally constrained lands or open spaces as recommended in other adopted components of the Village's Comprehensive Plan. These sites are often appropriate areas for walking trails, fishing, picnicking, and scenic viewing areas.

Definition of Natural Areas

As defined by the Wisconsin State Statutes Chapter 23, natural area means an area of land or water which has educational or scientific value or is important as a reservoir of the state's genetic or biologic diversity and includes any buffer area necessary to protect the area's natural values. Frequently, "natural areas" are important as a reserve for native biotic communities. Frequently, "natural areas" provide habitat for endangered, threatened or critical species or for species of special concern to scientists. In some cases, "natural areas" include areas with highly significant geological or archaeological features. Generally, "natural areas" are areas which largely escaped unnatural environmental disturbance, or which exhibit little evidence of recent environmental disturbance so that recovery of natural conditions has occurred.

Natural Areas within DeForest:

- Bakke Conservancy
- Chapel Green Park
- Marvin and Marie Schweers Natural Area
- Upper Yahara River Corridor (to include Diamond Drive)
- Reigstad Park

Future Natural Areas: Alternative Conceptual Locations Located on Map 6

School Park and Recreational Facilities

General Description:

School parks and recreational facilities have many of the same characteristics as neighborhood or community parks, depending on their size. As such, school parks primarily serve as locations for active recreational facilities associated with school functions; however, these sites can and do benefit the surrounding community during off-school hours. These are typically owned and maintained by the school district but are open to all neighborhood residents when school is not in session. This plan will not offer recommendations for improvements in these parks, but they should be considered when analyzing facilities available to the community.

School Park and Recreational Facilities within DeForest:

- Eagle Point Elementary School
- Yahara Elementary School
- DeForest Area Middle School
- DeForest Area High School

Recreation Trails

General Description:

Recreation trails accommodate various outdoor activities, such as biking, hiking, walking, jogging, horseback riding, nature study, and cross-country skiing. A well-designed park system provides connections between parks and open space areas and effectively integrates urban and suburban areas with the surrounding natural environment by linking off-street trail segments with on-street bike routes. There are three primary types of off-street recreation trails: paved multi-use paths, unpaved paths, and water trials.

- Paved multi-use paths are designed to accommodate bicyclists, walkers, runners, and in-line skaters. Such facilities are often located along railroad and street rights-of-way, rivers and lakeshores, and through parks.
- Unpaved trails provide connections between urbanized areas, and access within certain sensitive park and open space areas. Walkways may be restricted to pedestrian use only because of environmental conditions. In certain locations, they may also be suitable for equestrian and/or bicycle use. Unpaved trails are often sited along creeks, streams, rivers, forests, field boundaries, and other natural areas.
- Water trails exist along non-intermittent rivers, lakes, streams, and creeks. They provide connectivity throughout an area by non-motorized recreational boat travel (ex. paddling sports). Often, this facility type includes various access points along an established water corridor that provides water-based travel from one point to another. Strategically placed water access points provide opportunities to connect communities, parks, and other destinations together and serve as recreation-based options for residents and tourists.

Several trail corridors exist within the Village and additional trails are proposed as land development continues. The Village trail system is planned to connect with adjacent communities and eventually the City of Madison, City of Sun Prairie, Village of Waunakee, and Goose Pond in Columbia County. The Village also maintains the Yahara River Water Trail providing residents paddle sports opportunities when water levels are high. See Map 1 for existing trail locations within the Village.

Recreational Trails within DeForest:

- DeForest to Token Creek Park Trail (Shonkoo Way to Token Creek Park via the Eastside Trail Connection and Highway 19)
- Delkamp Trail (North Stevenson Street)
- Mayapple Trail (Mayapple Circle)
- Western Green Trail (Western Green Park)
- Upper Yahara River Trail (Windsor Road to South Street)
- River Road Trail (Windsor Road to West North Street)

Future Trails within DeForest: Alternative Conceptual Locations Located on Map 6

On-Street Bicycle Facilities

General Description:

There are a wide variety of on-street bicycle facilities including bike routes, bike lanes, cycle tracks, sharrows, bike boxes, and paved shoulders. Bicycle routes, bike boulevards, and sharrows are the pre-identified and preferred streets for bicycle travel within an urban area. Many times, they are marked by signage on or along the road. Bicycle lanes are areas of the road striped off for exclusive use by bicyclists. They are the preferred bicycle facility for urban arterial and higher volume collector streets (generally more than 2,000 vehicles per day). Striping bicycle lanes establishes a designated traffic channel that promotes an orderly flow for both bicyclists and motorists. Typically, bicycle lanes are established on roadways that are 32 feet or wider. Depending on the size of the roadway and traffic volumes, bike lanes are typically buffered with striping, bollards, or on-street vehicle parking. An even greater level of separation is in the form of an on-street bike facility that is commonly referred to as a cycle track. These facilities are often used for one-way streets in areas that are the most heavily traveled by bicyclists, such as a downtown setting. Additionally, bike boxes are commonly used in conjunction with other on-street facilities. These are dedicated painted areas for bicyclists to stop ahead of vehicles at potentially dangerous or heavily traveled intersections.

Paved shoulders are not a bicycle facility per se, but rather a roadway condition that improves bicycle travel and bicyclist safety. They function much like a bicycle lane by separating the motor vehicle travel from bikes. Paved shoulders are ideal for higher volume streets or highways (more than 1,000 vehicles per day) with rural cross sections (i.e., no curb and gutter).

On-Street Bicycle Facilities within DeForest:

- For a complete inventory of on-street bicycle facilities in the Village, see Map 1.

Trailheads

Trailheads can provide visible access points to major off-street paths in the community's system and help connect off-street and on-street facilities. They generally provide a parking area, locational and directional maps, wayfinding signage, or other information about the trail system. Some might contain restroom facilities, picnic tables, or benches for snacks or breaks. Such facilities should be sited with easy and direct access to the trail system.

Trailheads within DeForest:

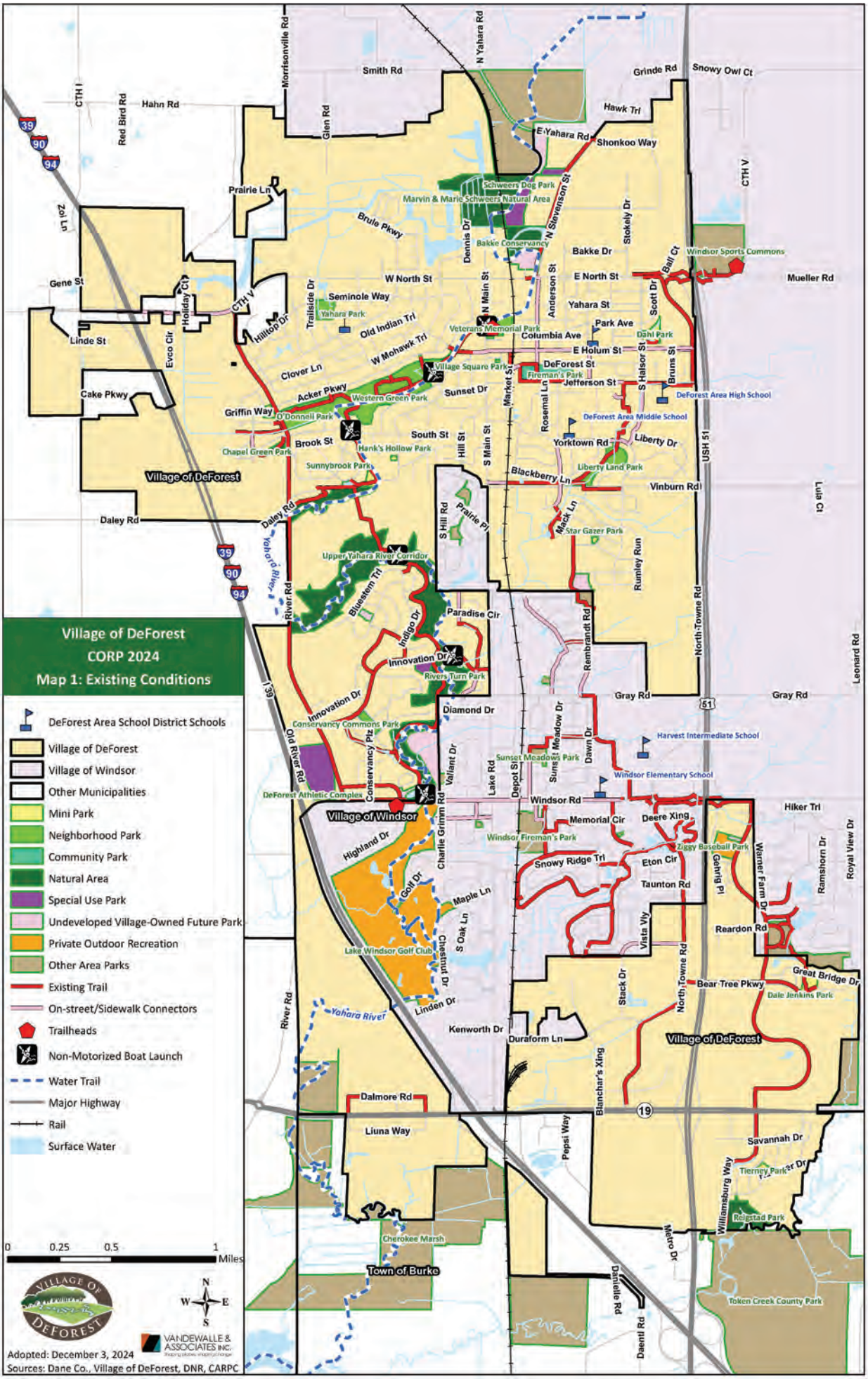
- For a complete inventory of trailheads in the Village, see Map 1.

Water Trails

Typically defined as non-intermittent rivers, lakes, streams, and creeks, Water Trails provide connectivity throughout an area by non-motorized recreational boat travel (i.e., paddling sports). Often, this facility type includes various access points along an established water corridor that provides water-based travel from one point to another. Strategically placed water access points provide opportunities to connect parks, communities, and other destinations together and serve as recreation-based options for residents and tourist. There are no defined standard sizes for Water Trails as they are dependent on the location of natural resources and geography.

Water Trails within DeForest:

- For a complete inventory of water trails and access points in the Village, see Map 1.


Village of DeForest
CORP 2024
Map 1: Existing Conditions
DeForest Area School District Schools
Village of DeForest
Village of Windsor
Other Municipalities
Mini Park
Neighborhood Park
Community Park
Natural Area
Special Use Park
Undeveloped Village-Owned Future Park
Private Outdoor Recreation
Other Area Parks
Existing Trail
On-street/Sidewalk Connectors
Trailheads
Non-Motorized Boat Launch
Water Trail
Major Highway
Rail
Surface Water
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
Adopted: December 3, 2024
Sources: Dane Co., Village of DeForest, DNR, CARPC
VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC.
Village of DeForest
Village of Windsor
Town of Burke
Smith Rd
Hahn Rd
Red Bird Rd
Morrisonville Rd
Glen Rd
N Yahara Rd
Grinde Rd
Snowy Owl Ct
Hawk Trl
E Yahara Rd
Shonkoo Way
Prairie Ln
Zol Ln
Brule Pkwy
Schweers Dog Park
Marvin & Marie Schweers Natural Area
N Stevenson St
Dennis Dr
Bakke Conservancy
Stokely Dr
Bakke Dr
Windsor Sports Commons
Ball Ct
Mueller Rd
Gene St
Holiday Ct
CTH V
Trailside Dr
Seminole Way
W North St
N Main St
Anderson St
E North St
Yahara St
Scott Dr
Yahara Park
Old Indian Trl
Hilltop Dr
Linde St
Evco Cir
W Mohawk Trl
Veterans Memorial Park
Columbia Ave
Park Ave
Dahl Park
E Holum St
Clover Ln
Village Square Park
DeForest St
Fireman's Park
Jefferson St
S Halsor St
Bruns St
Cake Pkwy
Acker Pkwy
Western Green Park
Sunset Dr
Market St
Rosemal Ln
DeForest Area High School
Griffin Way
O'Donnell Park
DeForest Area Middle School
South St
Hill St
S Main St
Yorktown Rd
Liberty Dr
Brook St
Chapel Green Park
Hank's Hollow Park
Sunnybrook Park
Liberty Land Park
Blackberry Ln
Vinburn Rd
USH 51
Lula Ct
Daley Rd
S Hill Rd
Prairie Pl
Mack Ln
Star Gazer Park
Yahara River
Upper Yahara River Corridor
Rumley Run
River Rd
Bluestem Trl
Paradise Cir
Indigo Dr
Rembrandt Rd
North Towne Rd
Innovation Dr
Rivers Turn Park
Leonard Rd
I 39
Gray Rd
Diamond Dr
Conservancy Commons Park
Old River Rd
Conservancy Plz
Harvest Intermediate School
Sunset Meadows Park
Dawn Dr
Sunset Meadow Dr
Valiant Dr
Lake Rd
Depot St
Windsor Elementary School
DeForest Athletic Complex
Charlie Grimm Rd
Windsor Rd
Hiker Trl
Memorial Cir
Deere Xing
Highland Dr
Windsor Fireman's Park
Ziggy Baseball Park
Snowy Ridge Trl
Eton Cir
Gehrig Pl
Warner Farm Dr
Ramshorn Dr
Royal View Dr
Golf Dr
Maple Ln
Taunton Rd
S Oak Ln
Vista Vly
Reardon Rd
Lake Windsor Golf Club
Chestnut Dr
Stack Dr
Great Bridge Dr
Bear Tree Pkwy
Dale Jenkins Park
Linden Dr
Kenworth Dr
Duraform Ln
Blanchar's Xing
Dalmore Rd
Liuna Way
Pepsi Way
Savannah Dr
Tierney Park
Williamsburg Way
Reigstad Park
Cherokee Marsh
Metro Dr
Danielle Rd
Daentl Rd
Token Creek County Park

DETERMINING PARK AND OPEN SPACE STANDARDS

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

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

National Standards and Comparable Community's Standards

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

- **National Parks** are scattered throughout the United States with massive tracts of land that serve as vacation destinations or wilderness areas. They are run by the Department of Interior of the United States government. There are no National Parks in Dane County.
- **State Parks** exist as conservation areas, scenic drives, or as weekend getaways, typically away from population centers. State Parks are often designed to encourage tourism, but their primary purpose is to serve residents of their respective states. Nearby State Park and Natural Areas include Governor Nelson State Park and Lake Kegonsa State Park.
- **County Parks** function to fill in the gaps that municipal and state governments do not serve. The gaps can include serving a municipal function in portions of a county with municipalities too small to have enough resources to provide parks, conserving large areas of open space that municipalities cannot, or as a tourist venue for people from outside the county. Schumacher Farm, Token Creek Park, and the Yahara Heights County Park/Cherokee Marsh Natural Resource Site in Dane County are examples of Dane County Parks located in the region.
- **Municipal parks** exist to serve residents of municipalities, sometimes on an hourly basis, as hosts for active or passive recreation. The three most common types of municipal parks are Mini, Neighborhood, and Community. Mini Parks are typically small (2 acres or less) and serve a very immediate area directly surrounding them (1/4 mile). Neighborhood Parks are usually 3-10 acres in size and have a 1/3-mile service radius. Community Parks are larger (10+ acres) and typically serve larger portions of the community with a 1/2-mile service radius or more.

On an annual basis, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) compiles data from around the U.S. on park and recreational departments and services provided. In 2023, the NRPA released its latest version of the Park and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks. It is important to compare the services that DeForest provides to the national averages as a benchmark for analysis. A few of the most applicable metrics include:

- On average, 10.8 acres of park land is provided per 1,000 residents in a jurisdiction.
- On a per park basis, there are an average of 2,287 residents per park.
- Per 10,000 residents, an equivalent of 8.9 full-time employees on average are employed in each park and recreation department.

FIGURE 4.1. NATIONAL AVERAGE COMPARISON

	Residents Per Park		Total Parkland Acres Per 1,000 Residents	
	All Agencies	Agencies Less Than 20,000 Residents	All Agencies	Agencies Less Than 20,000 Residents
Median	2,323	1,233	10.4	12.9
Lower Quartile	1,301	761	5.1	5.2
Upper Quartile	4,566	1,924	18.2	21.7
Village of DeForest	**531**		**33.3**	

Source: National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), 2023

Another method in evaluating the existing DeForest Parks System is comparing it to other similar sized municipalities. In Figure 4.2, four other communities were selected that ranged in size between 9,000 – 16,000 in total population. Generally, DeForest has a very comparable number of municipally-owned parks, residents, per park, total acres, and acres per 1,000 residents compared to neighboring and similar sized communities in Dane County.

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

FIGURE 4.2. COMPARABLE COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

Municipality	2023 Population	Number of Municipal Owned Parks	Residents Per Park	Total Acres*	Acres Per 1,000 People
Village of DeForest	**11,674**	**22**	**531**	**390**	**33.3**
Village of Windsor	9,758	36	271	542	55.5
Village of Waunakee	16,165	35	462	397	24.6
Village of McFarland	9,625	19	507	133	13.8
Village of Cottage Grove	9,218	11	838	131	14.2
Village of Oregon	11,940	28	426	347	29.1
Average of Comparable Communities	11,341	26	501	310	27
NPRA Standards (2023)	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**National Average: 10.8**

**Some communities listed in this analysis have a significant number of constrained acres that make up the total parkland acres documented in their respective Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Not all communities listed distinguish constrained from unconstrained acres, so both were considered in this analysis to provide a consistent data point for all communities.*
Source: V&A and Village of DeForest, Village of Windsor, Village of Waunakee, Village of McFarland, Village of Cottage Grove, Village of Oregon, and the National Park and Recreation Association.

While it is important to evaluate DeForest based on both national averages and neighboring Wisconsin municipalities, it is difficult to do a one-to-one comparison between parks departments. This is because of the variability in department structure, amenities, distribution of county and state parks, and the number of natural resources in the area. Since there are so many variables, this plan will use customized local standards established for this Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans to determine its existing service gaps and future needs.

DeForest Mini, Neighborhood, and Community Park Standards

The Village intends to provide a standard of 11 mini, neighborhood, and community park acres per 1,000 residents and currently provides approximately 10 park acres per 1,000 residents. Because of the projected future increase in the population over the next 10-20 years, the acres per resident standard is expected to decrease over the planning period. If the Village wishes to maintain or increase the standard, additional park land will need to be acquired. Below, in Figure 4.3, is the breakdown of the mini, neighborhood, and community park acres per 1,000 resident's standards using DeForest's 2023 total population. Currently, the Village does not meet its desired parkland standards developed through this plan.

FIGURE 4.3 FUTURE VILLAGE OF DEFOREST PARK STANDARDS

	2024 Total Active Park Acres	2024 Total Acres Per 1,000 Residents	2024 Standard Park Acreage Per 1,000 Residents	2024 Total Acres Needed to Meet Standard	2024 Additional Acres Needed to Meet Standard
Mini, Neighborhood, and Community Parks	115	10	11	128	14

Note: Active acres are defined as the total land area within all existing Mini, Neighborhood, and Community Parks. All figures used in this table are rounded.
Source: V&A and Village of DeForest

There may be opportunities to acquire key pieces of land to augment the park system as the community grows and develops. Some of these future opportunities should be a key focus of the Village as it continues to expand, and opportunities could arise for additional natural resource protection, public greenspace to support downtown and neighborhood functions, areas to serve future residential development, expansion opportunities for existing facilities, and trails to connect existing or future parks and wildlife habitats.

As of the writing of this plan, the Village owns 7 properties totaling 39 acres that are planned to be developed into new parks of various types. These areas, in addition to others described further below, are anticipated to help the Village meet its parkland standard per 1,000 residents over the planning period.

FIGURE 4.4 FUTURE PARKS – VILLAGE OWNED

Undeveloped Parks	Future Park Type	Property Size
Rivers Turn Development (Phase 3)	Mini Park	1.6
Adjacent to Ziggy Baseball Park	Mini Park	0.8
Iver Munson Park	Neighborhood Park	4.2
Nelson Court Special Use Park	Special Use Park	5.4
Sunfish Pond	Special Use Park	4.5
Windsor Road Special Use Park	Special Use Park	16.7
North Industrial Special Use Park	Special Use Park	6.3
	Total	39.4

Note: All figures used in this table are rounded.
Source: V&A and Village of DeForest

ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING PARK AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

This section presents an analysis of how well DeForest's existing park and recreational facilities meet community needs, evaluating the following components:

- An application of established local and national park and recreational facility service standards to reliable population projections for the Village (described earlier in this chapter).
- A qualitative analysis of the Village's park system based on both an understanding of the Village's goals and strategies and an evaluation of the local demand for parkland and recreational facilities.
- The Village's specific park and recreation needs identified during the planning process.
- An analysis of the geographic distribution and accessibility of each park location.
- A consideration of public input regarding the future of the Village park and open space system.
- A review of the Wisconsin State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

The results of this analysis will serve as the basis for the recommendations presented in Chapter 5.

Quantitative Analysis

Existing Facilities

The information in this section was gathered from site visits conducted by consultants, discussion with Village Staff, and review of past planning documents. A facilities matrix for the park system containing existing amenities at each park is located in Chapter 5.

As described earlier, DeForest's existing park acres do not meet the established local standard for a total of 11 active acres of municipal parkland per 1,000 residents (Figure 4.3). In calculating and analyzing the future park acres needed to accommodate the Village's growing population, the active parks areas of all Mini, Neighborhood, and Community Parks were determined. The Village also contains several significant Natural and Special Use Areas that greatly contribute to its park system. These facilities are often serving singular purposes or are environmental constrained and often feature WisDNR wetlands and floodplains, steep slopes (greater than 12%), drainageways (75' buffer around perennial streams or 50' buffer around intermittent channels), and woodlands (combined 80% cover area). While it is important to include them in a cohesive analysis of the park system, these areas are not included in determining the community's level of service according to established national standards.

FIGURE 4.5: TOTAL PARKLAND BY TYPE

Park Type	2024 Total Acres	2024 Total Acres Per 1,000 Residents
Mini	16	1.5
Neighborhood	87	7.5
Community	12	1.0
Subtotal	115	10
Natural Areas	236	20
Special Use	39	3
Subtotal	275	23
Total	**390**	**33**

Note: All figures used in this table are rounded.
The Village of DeForest's 2023 population was used to calculate the above (11,674).
Source: V&A and Village of DeForest

Future Park System Needs

The future recreation needs of the Village are determined by applying the recommended minimum acreage standards to a reasonable population projection for the Village in future years. This type of needs assessment is a critical component of this plan. It is included in part to satisfy Wisconsin Statutes 66.0617 and 236.29 regarding the collection of fees, and also to assist the Village with planning and budgeting for the development of future parks.

For the purposes of this plan, DeForest will utilize the standard of 11 acres per 1,000 residents. Based upon the analyses provided in this Chapter, the Village chose to pursue this standard because it most accurately represents its existing provision of active parkland per 1,000 residents and its need to continue to supply a sufficient amount of park space to match its current and predicted future population growth. Figures 4.6 and 4.7 show the minimum additional Mini, Neighborhood, and Community park acreage that will be needed to accommodate the Village's projected population in 2034 and 2044.

Figure 4.6 presents the 2034 park acreage needs projection, which is a ten-year timeframe for collection and expenditure of impact fees. The 2034 projection will be used to estimate future costs in Chapter 6, and to determine parkland acquisition and improvement recommendations based on what the Village can reasonably expect to accomplish in the ten-year timeframe. Based upon the analysis presented below, DeForest will need an approximate total of 39 additional acres of parkland by 2034 to accommodate the future population and increase the intended level of service.

FIGURE 4.6: PARK ACREAGE NEEDS, 2034

2024 Total Active Acres	2024 Acres Per 1,000 Residents	DeForest Park Acreage Standard Per 1,000 Residents	2034 Total Acres Needed to Meet Projected Population Standards*	2034 Additional Acres Needed to Meet Standards*
114	10	11	153	39

Note: Active acres are defined as the total land area within all existing Mini, Neighborhood, and Community Parks. All figures used in this table are rounded.

Source: V&A

**Population projection in 2034: 13,938*

Figure 4.7 shows that, based on the population projections in the Appendix and local standards, DeForest will need to add approximately 62 acres of mini, neighborhood, and community parkland to the current park system by 2044.

FIGURE 4.7: PARK ACREAGE NEEDS, 2044

2024 Total Active Acres	2024 Acres Per 1,000 Residents	DeForest Park Acreage Standard Per 1,000 Residents	2044 Total Acres Needed to Meet Projected Population Standards*	2044 Additional Acres Needed to Meet Standards*
114	10	11	176	62

Note: Active acres are defined as the total land area within all existing Mini, Neighborhood, and Community Parks. All figures used in this table are rounded.

Source: V&A

**Population Projection in 2044: 15,996*

Qualitative Analysis

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

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

The analysis presented in this plan does not include outdoor school recreational facilities because the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources does not consider these areas in the calculation of total parkland within a community. Additionally, they are prioritized for school district-based activities and can be closed to the public on occasion. While they do offer additional recreational facilities in many neighborhoods throughout the community and accommodate some of the local demand, they are not considered in the calculations and analysis of this Plan.

While there are no county or state outdoor recreational facilities within DeForest, nearby amenities offered by state, county, or other municipalities also contribute to the area's overall parks, recreation, and open space system. Each helps serve DeForest residents, although most are only accessible by vehicle or bicycle.

Village residents have access to many recreational facilities, however, the survey and public workshop results (see Appendix) indicated there is interest in some additional facilities and amenities such as:

- Community pool/aquatic facility
- Community gardens
- Fishing piers
- New Community Park
- Passive recreational space and unpaved trails in natural areas
- Mountain biking trails
- Playfields, pickleball courts, and disc golf facilities
- Multi-use paths and trails
- Outdoor ice skating

Geographic Analysis of Service Areas

The location and distribution of the park and open space facilities in relation to a community's residents is also an important indicator of how well existing facilities meet the needs of the community. Map 2 depicts the service areas of Mini, Neighborhood, and Community Parks based on their location within the community. This analysis is utilized to determine the existing service coverage of the Village Park System, in addition to forming the basis of the recommended new park locations as discussed in Chapter 5.

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

- Mini Parks: 1/4 Mile Service Area
- Neighborhood Parks: 1/2 Mile Service Area
- Community Parks: 1 Mile Service Area

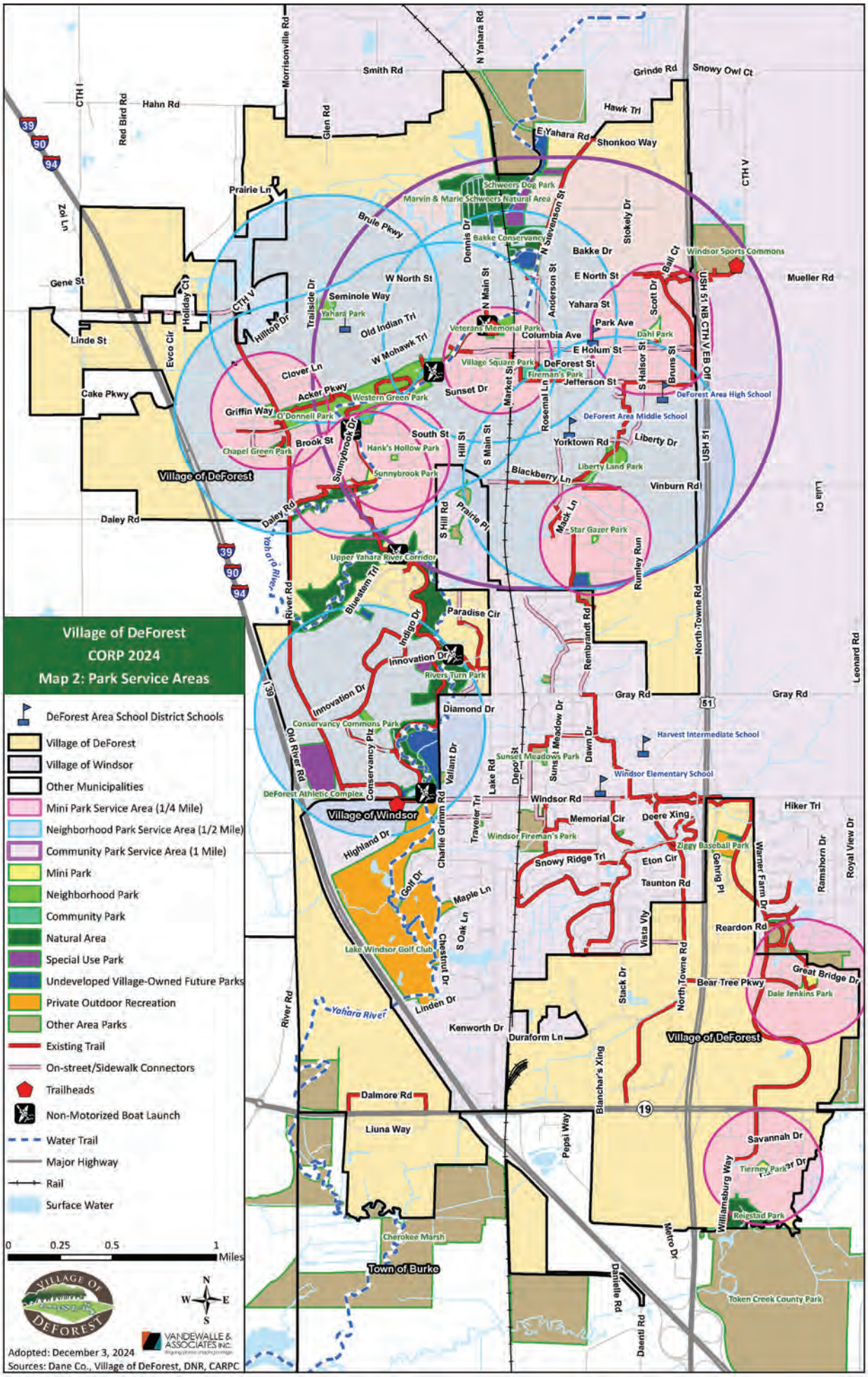
In most municipalities, service areas range between 1/4 – 1/2 mile because of the need to accommodate all modes of transportation access, especially people who may not own or be able to operate a vehicle (children, individuals with disabilities, the elderly, etc.). 1/4 – 1/2 mile is seen as representative distance of mobility or how far most individuals can walk comfortably depending on age, health, and other factors. An additional consideration in the service areas provided by each park are access barriers (large roadways, natural features, bridges, etc.) and general development density. Displaying park service areas based on these factors suggests locations where additional park facilities might be necessary to serve residents. Existing barriers within DeForest's parks services areas include I-90, USH 51, portion of County Road V, and portions of CTH CV. Additionally, due to the configuration of the Village's borders in relationship to the Village of Windsor, there are several stretches of rural cross section roads that exist in different parts of the community that cause additional barriers to non-vehicle access modes of travel.

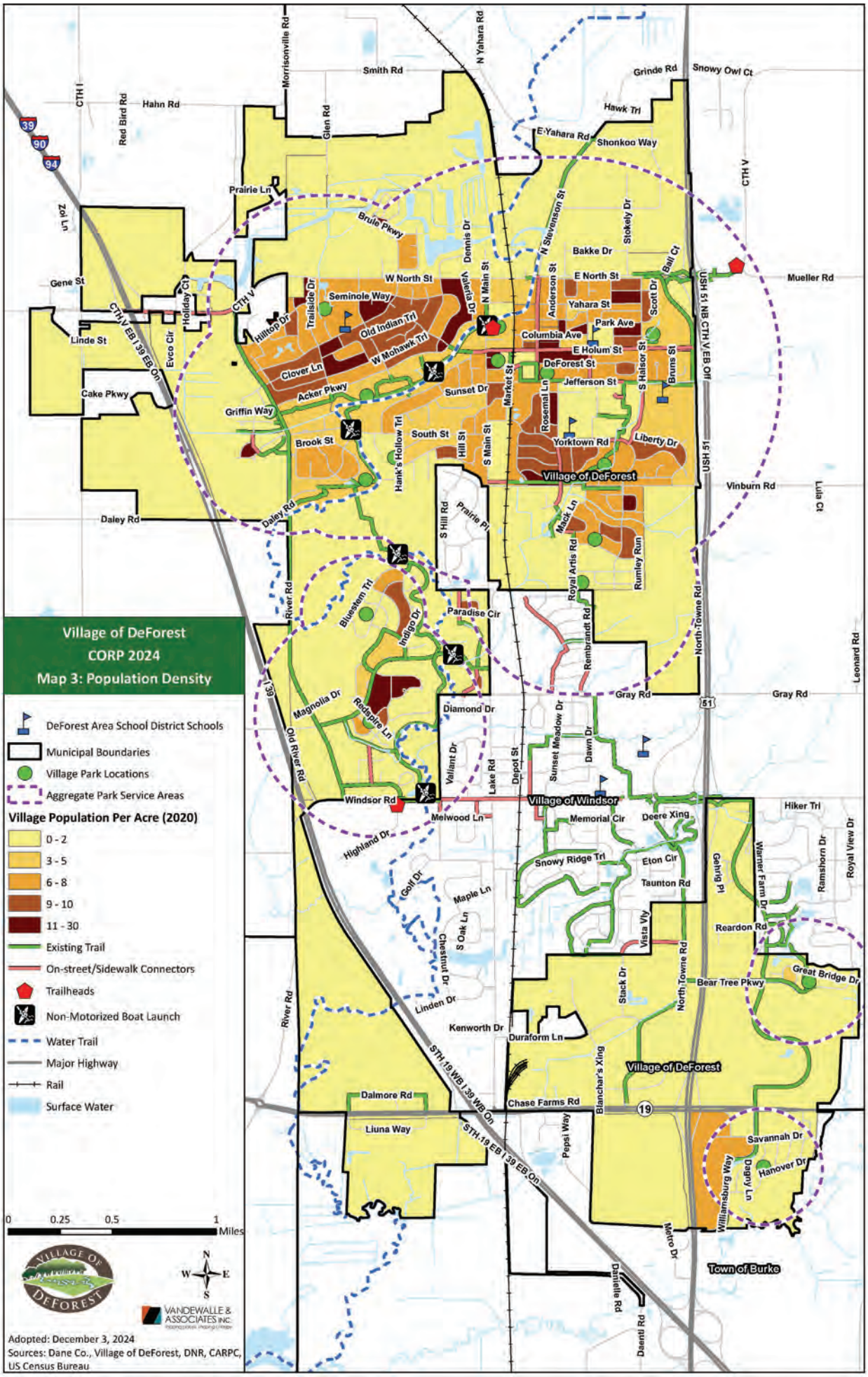
In further exploring the service areas of park facilities in DeForest, a population per square mile analysis was conducted in Map 3. This analysis utilizes U.S. Census data to show where population is concentrated within the Village.

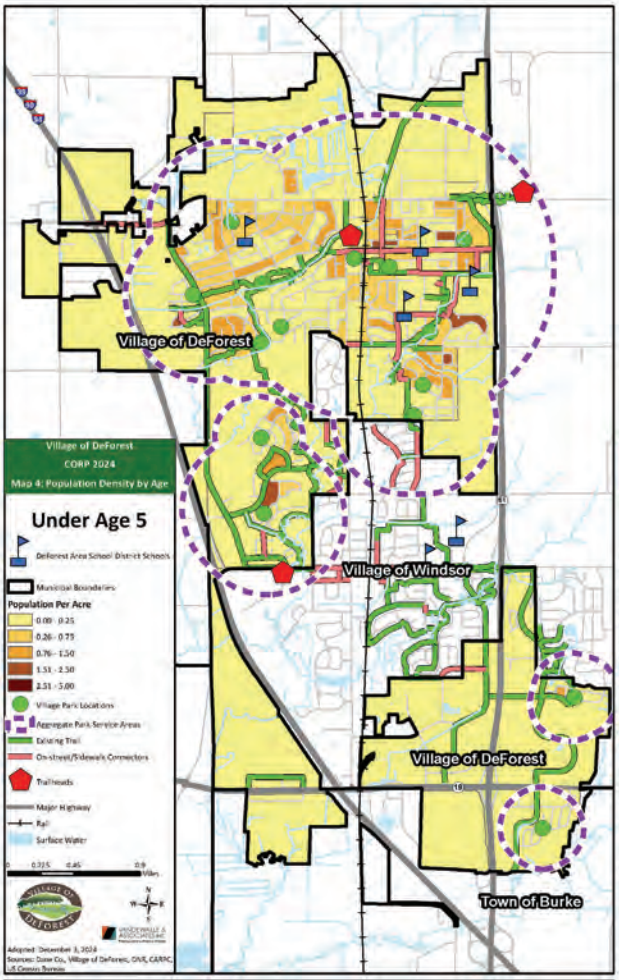
The population density analysis was broken down by age cohort as shown within Map 4. This includes residents under the age of 5, age 5-9, age 10-17, and age 55 or over. These age ranges were chosen because these groups are the most likely to not have personal vehicle access to a given park location. Similar to Map 3, the majority of the concentrations of population within each age cohort are located within an existing park service area.

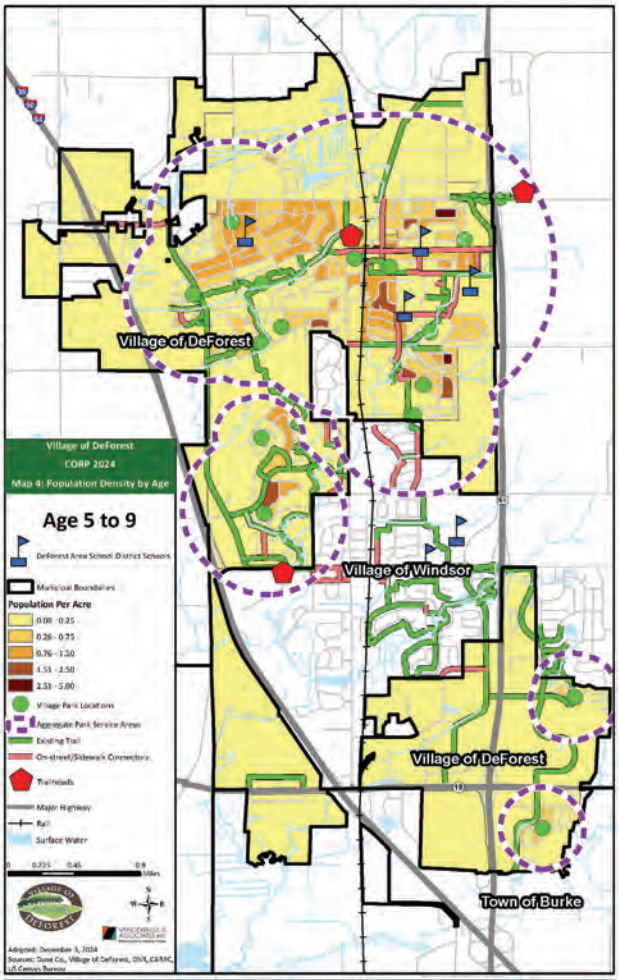
To note, due to the pace of planned and ongoing development within DeForest, it is likely that the 2020 U.S. Census data used in this analysis is somewhat already out of date as of the writing of this plan.

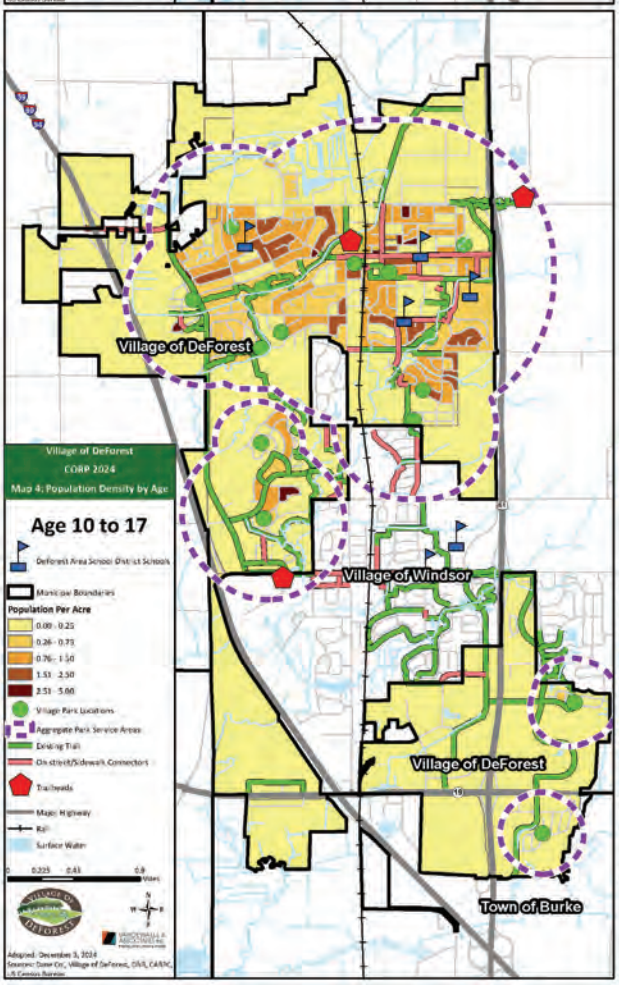
Overall, Maps 2, 3, and 4 show that many of the residentially developed portions of DeForest are well served by some combination of a Mini, Neighborhood, or Community Park. Additionally, as shown on Map 1, the Village of Windsor provides a number of active parks near residential developments within the Village of DeForest. However, it is important to recognize that as the Village grows, there may be new service gaps that develop over the planning period, particularly in the southern and western part of the Village. Specific areas of focus should include the neighborhoods surrounding the Highway 19/51 interchange, east of River Road south of the River, and north of Highway V west of the River. As new housing development occurs in these areas, the Village parkland dedication ordinance intends that these developments provide park land for future residents. Over the planning period, it will be necessary to acquire additional parklands so future residential areas have equitable access to all types of parklands, open space, and recreational opportunities.

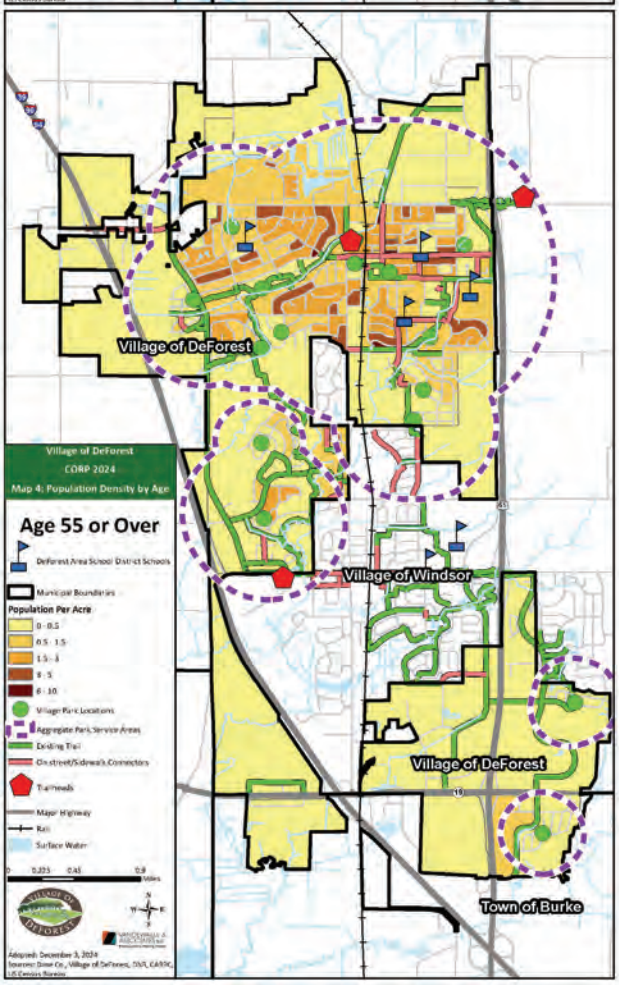

Village of DeForest
CORP 2024
Map 2: Park Service Areas
DeForest Area School District Schools
Village of DeForest
Village of Windsor
Other Municipalities
Mini Park Service Area (1/4 Mile)
Neighborhood Park Service Area (1/2 Mile)
Community Park Service Area (1 Mile)
Mini Park
Neighborhood Park
Community Park
Natural Area
Special Use Park
Undeveloped Village-Owned Future Parks
Private Outdoor Recreation
Other Area Parks
Existing Trail
On-street/Sidewalk Connectors
Trailheads
Non-Motorized Boat Launch
Water Trail
Major Highway
Rail
Surface Water
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
N
W E
S
Adopted: December 3, 2024
Sources: Dane Co., Village of DeForest, DNR, CARPC
VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC.
Smith Rd
Morrisonville Rd
N Yahara Rd
Grinde Rd
Snowy Owl Ct
Hahn Rd
CTH I
Red Bird Rd
Glen Rd
Hawk Trl
E Yahara Rd
Shonkoo Way
CTH V
Prairie Ln
Zol Ln
Schweers Dog Park
Marvin & Marie Schweers Natural Area
Brule Pkwy
Dennis Dr
N Stevenson St
Stokely Dr
Bakke Conservancy
Bakke Dr
Windsor Sports Commons
Mueller Rd
Gene St
Holiday Ct
W North St
E North St
Ball Ct
Scott Dr
USH 51 NB CTH V EB Off
Trailside Dr
Seminole Way
Yahara Park
Anderson St
Yahara St
Hilltop Dr
Old Indian Trl
N Main St
Veterans Memorial Park
Columbia Ave
Park Ave
Dahl Park
Linde St
Evco Cir
W Mohawk Trl
E Holum St
S Halsor St
Bruns St
Village Square Park
DeForest St
Clover Ln
Fireman's Park
Jefferson St
Cake Pkwy
Acker Pkwy
Western Green Park
Sunset Dr
Market St
DeForest Area High School
Griffin Way
O'Donnell Park
Rosemal Ln
DeForest Area Middle School
South St
Brook St
Hank's Hollow Park
Hill St
S Main St
Yorktown Rd
Liberty Dr
Chapel Green Park
Sunnybrook Dr
Sunnybrook Park
Liberty Land Park
Village of DeForest
Blackberry Ln
Vinburn Rd
USH 51
Lilac Ct
Daley Rd
S Hill Rd
Prairie Pl
Mack Ln
Star Gazer Park
Yahara River
Upper Yahara River Corridor
Rumley Run
River Rd
Bluestem Trl
Paradise Cir
North Towne Rd
Indigo Dr
Rembrandt Rd
Innovation Dr
Rivers Turn Park
Leonard Rd
I-39
Gray Rd
Diamond Dr
Conservancy Commons Park
Harvest Intermediate School
Old River Rd
Conservancy Plz
Valiant Dr
Sunset Meadows Park
Dawn Dr
Windsor Elementary School
Lake Rd
Depot St
Sunset Meadows Dr
DeForest Athletic Complex
Windsor Rd
Hiker Trl
Village of Windsor
Traveler Trl
Memorial Cir
Deere Xing
Charlie Grimm Rd
Windsor Fireman's Park
Ziggy Baseball Park
Highland Dr
Snowy Ridge Trl
Eton Cir
Gehrig Pl
Warner Farm Dr
Ramshorn Dr
Royal View Dr
Taunton Rd
Golf Dr
Maple Ln
S Oak Ln
Vista Vly
Reardon Rd
Lake Windsor Golf Club
Chestnut Dr
Stack Dr
Great Bridge Dr
Bear Tree Pkwy
Dale Jenkins Park
Linden Dr
Yahara River
Kenworth Dr
Duraform Ln
Village of DeForest
Blanchar's Xing
Dalmore Rd
19
Liuna Way
Pepsi Way
Savannah Dr
Tierney Parker Dr
Williamsburg Way
Reigstad Park
Metro Dr
Cherokee Marsh
Town of Burke
Danielle Rd
Token Creek County Park
Daenl Rd

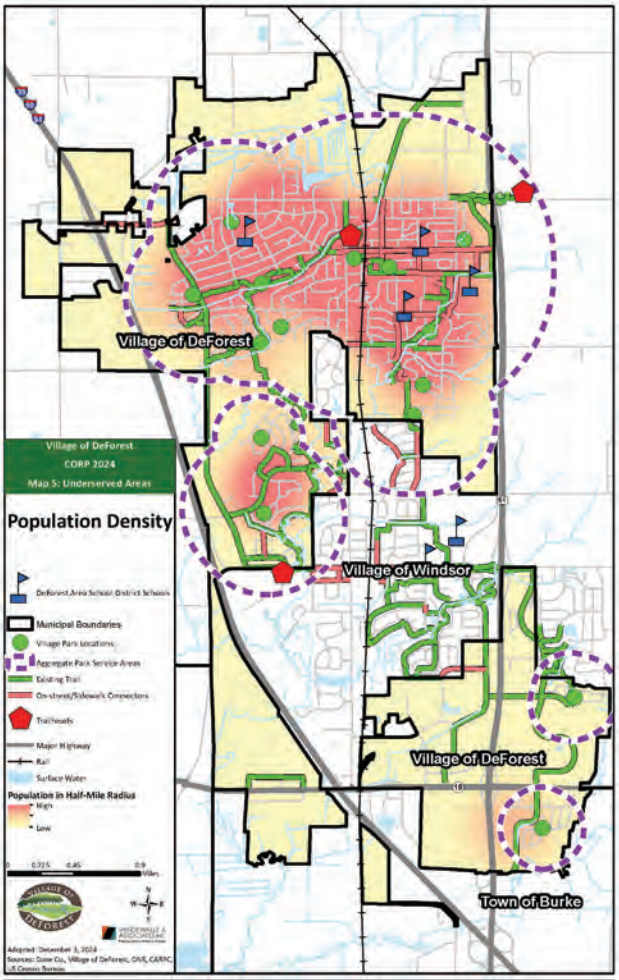

Village of DeForest
CORP 2024
Map 3: Population Density
DeForest Area School District Schools
Municipal Boundaries
Village Park Locations
Aggregate Park Service Areas
Village Population Per Acre (2020)
0 - 2
3 - 5
6 - 8
9 - 10
11 - 30
Existing Trail
On-street/Sidewalk Connectors
Trailheads
Non-Motorized Boat Launch
Water Trail
Major Highway
Rail
Surface Water
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
Adopted: December 3, 2024
Sources: Dane Co., Village of DeForest, DNR, CARPC, US Census Bureau
Village of DeForest
Village of Windsor
Town of Burke
Smith Rd
Hahn Rd
Morrisonville Rd
N Yahara Rd
Grinde Rd
Snowy Owl Ct
Hawk Trl
E Yahara Rd
Shonkoo Way
Glen Rd
Red Bird Rd
CTH I
CTH V
Prairie Ln
Zoi Ln
Brule Pkwy
Dennis Dr
N Stevenson St
Stokely Dr
Bakke Dr
Bail Ct
Mueller Rd
Gene St
W North St
Valeria Dr
N Main St
Anderson St
E North St
Yahara St
Scott Dr
Seminole Way
Trailside Dr
Holiday Ct
Hilltop Dr
Old Indian Trl
W Mohawk Trl
Park Ave
Columbia Ave
E Holum St
DeForest St
Linde St
Evco Cir
CTH V EB I 39 EB On
Clover Ln
Acker Pkwy
Sunset Dr
Market St
Jefferson St
S Halsor St
Bruns St
USH 51 NB CTH V EB Off
Cake Pkwy
Griffin Way
Rosemal Ln
Brook St
South St
Hill St
S Main St
Yorktown Rd
Liberty Dr
Hank's Hollow Trl
Vinburn Rd
Lula Ct
Daley Rd
S Hill Rd
Prairie Pl
Mack Ln
Royal Artis Rd
Rumley Run
River Rd
Bluestem Trl
Indigo Dr
Paradise Cir
Rembrandt Rd
North Towne Rd
Leonard Rd
Magnolia Dr
Redspire Ln
Diamond Dr
Gray Rd
Old River Rd
Valiant Dr
Lake Rd
Depot St
Sunset Meadow Dr
Dawn Dr
Windsor Rd
Melwood Ln
Memorial Cir
Deere Xing
Hiker Trl
Highland Dr
Snowy Ridge Trl
Eton Cir
Taunton Rd
Gehrig Pl
Warner Farm Dr
Ramshorn Dr
Royal View Dr
Golf Dr
Maple Ln
S Oak Ln
Chestnut Dr
Vista Vly
Reardon Rd
Stack Dr
Bear Tree Pkwy
Great Bridge Dr
Linden Dr
Kenworth Dr
Duraform Ln
STH 19 WB I 39 WB On
Blanchar's Xing
Dalmore Rd
Chase Farms Rd
Liuna Way
STH 19 EB I 39 EB On
Pepsi Way
Savannah Dr
Hanover Dr
Dagny Ln
Williamsburg Way
Metro Dr
Danielle Rd
Daenti Rd
I 39
51
19
39
90
94

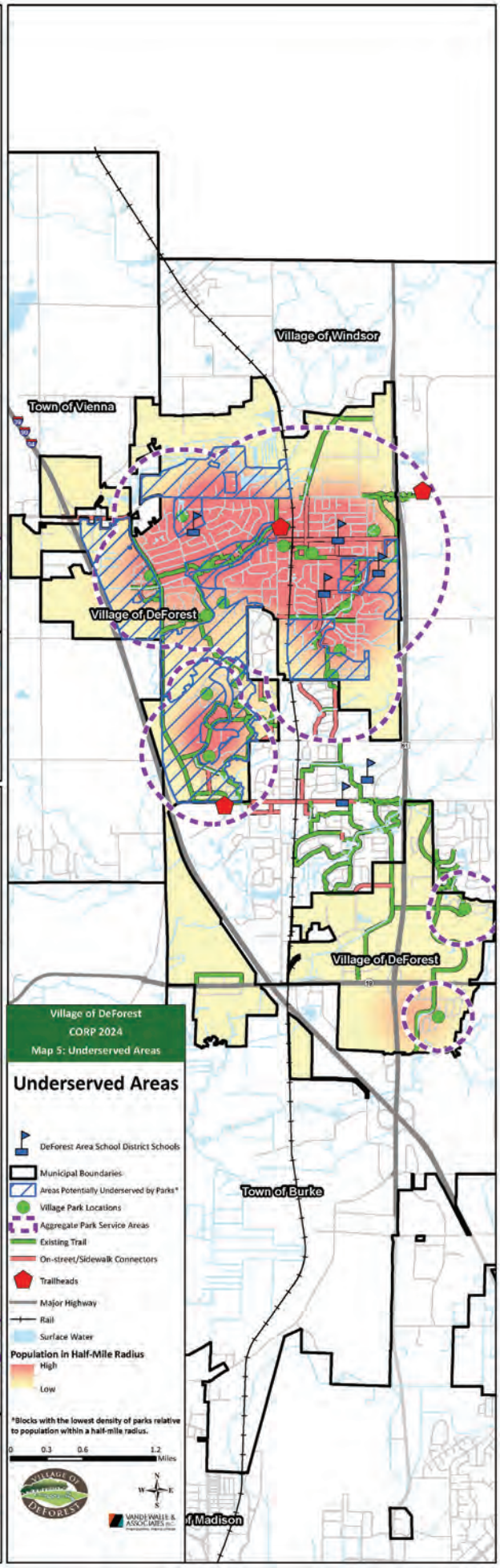

Village of DeForest
CORP 2024
Map 4: Population Density by Age
Under Age 5
DeForest Area School District Schools
Municipal Boundaries
Population Per Acre
0.00 - 0.25
0.26 - 0.75
0.76 - 1.50
1.51 - 2.50
2.51 - 5.00
Village Park Locations
Aggregate Park Service Areas
Existing Trail
On-street/Sidewalk Connectors
Trailheads
Major Highway
Rail
Surface Water
Village of DeForest
Village of Windsor
Village of DeForest
Town of Burke

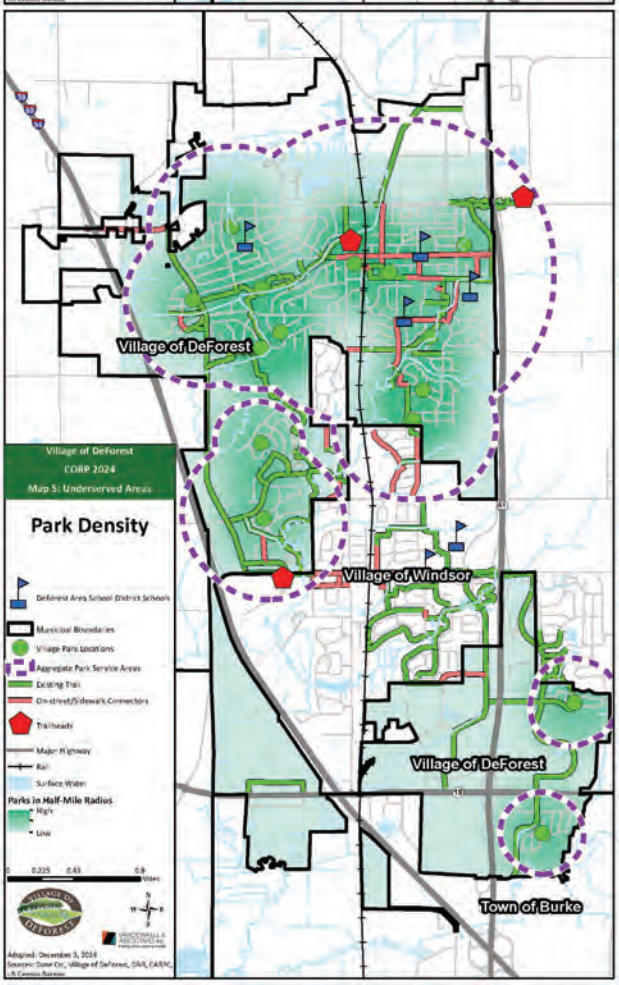

Village of DeForest
CORP 2024
Map 4: Population Density by Age
Age 5 to 9
DeForest Area School District Schools
Municipal Boundaries
Population Per Acre
0.00 - 0.25
0.26 - 0.75
0.76 - 1.50
1.51 - 2.50
2.51 - 5.00
Village Park Locations
Aggregate Park Service Areas
Existing Trail
On-street/Sidewalk Connectors
Trailheads
Major Highway
Rail
Surface Water
Village of DeForest
Village of Windsor
Village of DeForest
Town of Burke


Village of DeForest
CORP 2024
Map 4: Population Density by Age
Age 10 to 17
DeForest Area School District Schools
Municipal Boundaries
Population Per Acre
0.00 - 0.25
0.26 - 0.75
0.76 - 1.50
1.51 - 2.50
2.51 - 5.00
Village Park Locations
Aggregate Park Service Areas
Existing Trail
On-street/Sidewalk Connectors
Trailheads
Major Highway
Rail
Surface Water
Village of DeForest
Village of Windsor
Village of DeForest
Town of Burke


Village of DeForest
CORP 2024
Map 4: Population Density by Age
Age 55 or Over
DeForest Area School District Schools
Municipal Boundaries
Population Per Acre
0 - 0.5
0.5 - 1.5
1.5 - 3
3 - 5
6 - 10
Village Park Locations
Aggregate Park Service Areas
Existing Trail
On-street/Sidewalk Connectors
Trailheads
Major Highway
Rail
Surface Water
Village of DeForest
Village of Windsor
Village of DeForest
Town of Burke


Village of DeForest
CORP 2024
Map 5: Underserved Areas
Population Density
DeForest Area School District Schools
Municipal Boundaries
Village Park Locations
Aggregate Park Service Areas
Existing Trail
On-street/Sidewalk Connectors
Trailheads
Major Highway
Rail
Surface Water
Population in Half-Mile Radius
High
Low
Village of DeForest
Village of Windsor
Village of DeForest
Town of Burke


Village of Windsor
Town of Vienna
Village of DeForest
Village of DeForest
Town of Burke
Village of DeForest
CORP 2024
Map 5: Underserved Areas
Underserved Areas
DeForest Area School District Schools
Municipal Boundaries
Areas Potentially Underserved by Parks*
Village Park Locations
Aggregate Park Service Areas
Existing Trail
On-street/Sidewalk Connectors
Trailheads
Major Highway
Rail
Surface Water
Population in Half-Mile Radius
High
Low
*Blocks with the lowest density of parks relative to population within a half-mile radius.
0 0.3 0.6 1.2 Miles
N
W E
S
VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC.
of Madison


Village of DeForest
Village of DeForest
CORP 2024
Map 5: Underserved Areas
Park Density
DeForest Area School District Schools
Municipal Boundaries
Village Park Locations
Aggregate Park Service Areas
Existing Trail
On-street/Sidewalk Connectors
Trailheads
Major Highway
Rail
Surface Water
Parks in Half-Mile Radius
High
Low
Village of Windsor
Village of DeForest
Town of Burke

Programming and Staffing

The Village of Deforest has an established Recreation and Community Enrichment Department that offers many types of recreational programming for residents of all ages. The Village offers a robust series of program offerings in the spring and summer and fall and winter. Available programs range from youth sports leagues, several fitness classes including yoga, and Zumba, workout bootcamps, and adult sports classes to bird watching, knitting, various craft projects, art classes, camps, coding classes, and chess classes. The Department also hosts several special events throughout the year, including a Community Cleanup Day for Earth Day, Friday Flicks events with food carts, concessions, Fourth of July, Dragon Arts Fair, and a movie at dusk, Fri-YAY Eve music concert series, Brew & Bites, Make Music Day, Yahara Riverfest, a Holiday Tree Lighting, and a Candlelight Hike. Residents can also rent specific park shelters through the Department. Village staff also coordinate with other local organizations to provide recreational activities in various parks throughout the year. Additional recreational programming is provided by the School District and local sports groups and leagues.

The parks are staffed by 10 full-time equivalent staff persons, which includes 6 maintenance seasonal employees and 22 concession standard seasonal employees. In order to provide the high level of service that the Village desires, it is recommended that at a minimum the existing ratio of full-time to part-time staff, in addition to the ratio of programming to maintenance staff remain the same over the next five years. However, if new or expanded programming, facilities, or land acquisition takes place, additional staff should be considered, and is recommended to maintain the existing level of service. According to the National Recreation and Park Association's 2023 Park and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks Field Report, the national average of full-time park employees per 10,000 people in a jurisdiction is 8.9. This translates to the need for approximately 10.4 total parks and recreation staff needed to meet the national benchmark based on DeForest's existing population.

Review of the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2019-2023 (SCORP)

The last component of this needs assessment involves a review of the State of Wisconsin's 2019-2023 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Some of the key issues, concerns, and factors influencing the future of outdoor recreation include:

- Demographic shifts in age, urbanization, and diversification
- The declining overall maintenance of infrastructure, especially recreational facilities
- Technology advances effecting the way we travel, use parks, and distribute information
- Equitable distribution of public lands
- Declining habitat quality and invasive species maintenance
- Increasing extreme weather events and weather pattern shifts
- Funding opportunities and increasing cost

CHAPTER 5:

Existing Park and Open Space Facilities and Recommendations

5 EXISTING PARK AND OPEN SPACE FACILITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Village provides various opportunities for residents to enjoy the outdoors. As provided below, DeForest's park, recreation, and open space system consists of a range of facilities including natural areas, passive parks, playgrounds, and athletic fields. Other publicly owned outdoor recreation sites in the Village include those owned by the DeForest Area School District. In total, the Village owns and operates a total of 389 acres of parkland in 22 parks.

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

The Village's system includes a robust collection of Mini Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Natural Areas, and Special Use Facilities located throughout the community. DeForest has a good supply of well-established parks in the existing developed portions of the community and will need to successfully acquire new park areas within planned residential growth areas. A brief description of each of the community's existing park and open space sites is included below.

This chapter also provides a variety of detailed recommendations to expand and improve DeForest's existing park and open space system based on current deficiencies and opportunities identified in the preceding chapters of this plan, and new park and facilities needs as indicated by future population growth. These recommendations are also guided by the vision, goals, and strategies outlined earlier in this plan and are designed to address the needs of the community over the next five years. The recommendations incorporate local resident input and have been developed as a result of extensive analysis and participation by Village officials, Village staff, residents, and local organizations.

Based on the Village's projected population in 2034 (13,938 residents) and 2044 (15,996 residents), and its local standard of 11 active acres per 1,000 residents, DeForest will need to provide approximately 39 additional acres of active parkland by 2034, and 62 new acres of parkland by 2044. It is also recommended that various improvements to existing parks also be made. In addition to active recreation areas, it was also prioritized through this plan's public participation events, that more passive, "nature-based," and trail recreation opportunities were also desired. This plan recommends that additional acreage in passive, nature-oriented parks is developed in addition to active park development acreage. This recommendation assumes that DeForest will continue to grow at a steady rate, and that park and open space planning will be oriented toward serving a steadily growing population. The timing of park acquisitions and development should coincide with the actual demand for recreational facilities in the Village's developed and newly developed areas.

Map 5 shows the approximate locations for future recreational facilities in the Village. More precise park boundaries will be determined during formulation of specific neighborhood plans, during the preliminary stages of detailed site development plans, or when lands are acquired or platted. Proactive identification of lands suitable for active parks or natural areas worthy of conservation is recommended early in the development process.

Finally, an evaluation tool was created to help score and compare proposed parkland when it is presented to the Village during the plat review process. The tool utilizes nine different criteria to evaluate proposed parkland and can be used to evaluate a proposed subdivision plat to determine if there is proposed to be enough parkland, the proposed parkland is the right type of land, and if there is other land that may be better suited for park and open space in the area. It is recommended that the evaluation criteria be used in all future discussions and reviews of subdivision plats and potential parkland acquisition.

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING PARKS

Recommended park improvements were developed through feedback from the Public Service Committee, Village staff, and the public, reflection of the vision, goals, and strategies of this plan, a review of other relevant plans (see the Appendix), and the inventory and analysis of existing park and recreation system conditions within DeForest. This comprehensive analysis led to the following list of existing park recommendations.

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

FIGURE 5.1 RECOMMENDED SITE IMPROVEMENTS TO ALL MINI, NEIGHBORHOOD, AND COMMUNITY PARKS

Existing Mini, Neighborhood, and Community Parks	
Recommended Site Improvements	• Improve wayfinding signage and trail connections between parks • Security upgrades, including establishing electricity and lighting at all park facilities • Establish uniform shelter rental options including signage for noticing when shelters are rented • Add bicycle racks and dog waste receptacles in parks where none exist • Add benches, shade trees, and native plantings • Implement ADA accessibility features when making improvements and upgrades to each park • Establish paved connections between park facilities (particularly playgrounds) and the adjoining rights-of-way or paved paths within each park • Consider integrating rain gardens and bio-retention facilities, rain barrels, and other stormwater best management practices into existing facilities and proposed improvements. • When replacing and/or installing new lighting in Village parks, use fixtures that utilize solar regeneration and LED illumination to reduce long-term maintenance costs and minimize non-renewable energy use • Perform systematic routine maintenance of the existing facilities in each park • Consider adopting a “grow not mow” policy in Village parks to limit how often (and what portions of) parks are mowed. Adding a day or more to the mowing cycle and preserving natural grasslands and other features in parks can reduce costs, reduce the amount of fossil fuels consumed in Village operations, increase natural buffers around shoreland and reduce soil erosion.

Mini Parks

FIGURE 5.2 RECOMMENDED MINI PARK SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Existing Mini Parks						
Dahl Park						
Existing Conditions	• Dahl Park is a 4-acre park on North Halsor Street between Scott Drive and East Holum Street. Facilities onsite include a playground, asphalt pathway, open space, play structure (5 to 12 year old), swings, park sign, regulatory signage, trash receptacle, and stormwater management ponds.					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive	☑	Natural Area	☑
Recommended Site Improvements	• Install an open-air shelter structure with bathrooms if lands develop to the east of the park • Install picnic tables for seating adjacent to playground • Develop a walking trail loop with disc golf around the park to connect to lands that may develop to the east of the park • Continue the sponsored bench program					
Maintenance Program	• Mowing weekly • Stormwater pond maintenance • Winter snow removal on sidewalk					

Dale Jenkins Park						
Existing Conditions	• This 3.4-acre park formerly known as Fox Hill Estates Park is located at 4100 Bear Tree Parkway and features open space, play equipment, a paved pathway, soccer fields, and pedestrian and multiuse trails.					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive	☑	Natural Area	
Recommended Site Improvements	• Install an open-air shelter structure with bathroom • Install bicycle rack and bench		• Add bocce ball court • Install gaga ball pit			
Hank's Hollow Park						
Existing Conditions	• This 0.4-acre park on Hank's Hollow Trail between Wild Plum Drive and Woodvale Drive features a play structure (5 to 12 year old), merry-go-round, monkey bars, picnic table, swing set, park sign, little free library, trash receptacle					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive	☑	Natural Area	
Recommended Site Improvements	• Add edging materials to playground surfacing • Install curb cut and pathway from street to playground area • Install ADA transfer mat at play structure					
Maintenance Program	• Mowing weekly • Trash collection weekly		• Fall protection • Playground inspection			
O'Donnell Park						
Existing Conditions	• O'Donnell Park is a 1.8-acre mini park located on the west side of the Village near the intersection of Acker Parkway and River Road. Park facilities include an ADA curb ramp on Griffin Way, play structure (2- to 12-year-old), swings, bike rack, bench, trash receptacle, and ADA accessible picnic tables.					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive	☑	Natural Area	
Recommended Site Improvements	• Develop a multi-use court for tennis/basketball/pickleball • Install an open-air shelter structure					
Maintenance Program	• Mowing weekly • Trash collection weekly					
Star Gazer Park						
Existing Conditions	• Star Gazer Park is a ½-acre mini park located at the intersection of Star Gazer Drive and Lavender Way. Park facilities include play structures (5 – 12 year old and 2 – 5 year old), small park shelter, swings, open space, bike rack, ADA accessible picnic tables, benches, trash receptacle, and concrete path.					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive	☑	Natural Area	
Recommended Site Improvements	• No recommended improvements					
Maintenance Program	• Mowing weekly • Trash collection weekly					
Sunnybrook Park						
Existing Conditions	• This 4.3-acre park is located north of the Yahara River Conservancy on Riverside Drive at the junction of the Upper Yahara River Trail. The park features a gazebo, asphalt path, boardwalk, open space, play equipment (5 – 12 year old), trail wayfinding kiosk/map, park signs (2), regulatory signage, pond, pet waste station, trash receptacle, and picnic tables.					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive	☑	Natural Area	☑
Recommended Site Improvements	• Install bicycle rack on hard surface • Plant additional shade trees					

	• Install bicycle repair station and water fountain near trailhead • Establish new water access point with fishing and non-motorized boat launch
Maintenance Plan	• Mowing weekly • Trash collection weekly • Shelter cleaning • Stormwater pond maintenance • Winter snow removal on trail
Tierney Park	
Existing Conditions	• Tierney Park is a 1.3-acre mini park on Hanover Drive between Dagney Lane and John F. Kennedy Drive. Due to its size, it qualifies as a mini park, however due to the number of facilities in the park, it could easily qualify as a neighborhood park. Facilities at this location include a shelter/restroom/concessions building, climbing structure, swing set, tire swing, zip line, ring spinner, teeter spring rider, sandbox with sand diggers, play structure (2 – 12 years old), tot riders (3), sky runner, two ½ basketball courts, tennis/pickleball court, two parking lots, two park signs, picnic tables (1 ADA accessible), benches, drinking fountain, water bottle filler, asphalt pathway, and trash receptacles.
Recreation Type	Active ☑ Passive ☑ Natural Area
Recommended Site Improvements	• No recommended improvements
Maintenance Program	• Mowing weekly • Trash collection weekly • Shelter cleaning before rentals • Winterization of shelter and restrooms
Village Square Park	
Existing Conditions	• Village Square Park is a 0.2-acre mini park at the corner of Ethun Place and Library Street. Future development of this site is dependent on downtown economics and continued growth in the area. At this time, it features open green space, permanent electrical outlets, shade trees, and park signage.
Recreation Type	Active Passive ☑ Natural Area
Recommended Site Improvements	• Install electric utility service to park
Maintenance Program	• Mowing weekly • Installation of temporary electrical outlet for library concerts
Rivers Turn Development (Phase 3) – *Undeveloped*	
Existing Conditions	• This is a dedicated but unimproved mini park in the Rivers Turn subdivision of Conservancy Place. It is 1.56 acres in size and abuts a 0.97-acre site that will be used mainly for stormwater management.
Recreation Type	Active ☑ Passive ☑ Natural Area
Recommended Site Improvements	• Install an open-air shelter and restroom structure • Develop a multi-use court for pickleball/tennis/basketball • Install an ADA accessible playground structure • Consider the development of a sand volleyball court
Adjacent to Ziggy Baseball Park – *Undeveloped*	
Existing Conditions	• A 0.8-acre property was dedicated to the Village as part of the recently developed Ziggy Baseball Park and Bear Tree Farms development. This land is currently unimproved.
Recreation Type	Active ☑ Passive ☑ Natural Area
Recommended Site Improvements	• Avoid duplication of facilities and amenities provided within Ziggy Baseball Park, but actively monitor how the use of that new facility evolves over time to identify complementary facilities and uses such as playground equipment that could support young families attending games.

Neighborhood Parks

FIGURE 5.3 RECOMMENDED NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Existing Neighborhood Parks						
Conservancy Commons Park						
Existing Conditions	• This is a 3-acre neighborhood park located in the Village of DeForest at the corner of Innovation Drive and Yellowood Lane. Park facilities include a large shelter, splash pad, play structure (2 – 5 year old), climbing play structure, swings, talk tubes, teeter totter, tot spinners, athletic field, concrete paths, open space, sledding hill, picnic tables, benches, restrooms, drinking fountain, amphitheater area, bicycle racks (3), park sign, trash receptacles, ADA accessible picnic tables (3), and regulatory signage.					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive	☑	Natural Area	
Recommended Site Improvements	• Repair sunken concrete by door stoops • Install ADA approved drinking fountain			• Repair retaining wall • Update and upgrade splash pad components		
Maintenance Plan	• Mowing weekly • Trash collection daily during busy season, weekly as season slows • Daily bathroom cleaning • Shelter cleaning before rentals • Open and winterize bathrooms, water fountain, and splash pad • Winter snow removal on sidewalks					
Liberty Land Park						
Existing Conditions	• This is an 11.7-acre neighborhood park bounded by Yorktown Road, Vinburn Lane, Southbound Drive, and Constitution Lane. Facilities onsite include two play structures with safety surfacing (one 5 – 12-year-old and one 2 – 5-year-old), benches, bicycle rack, swings, gazebo, ADA accessible picnic table, open space, multi-use trail, youth soccer field, utility building, orchard, community garden, community garden sign, garden shed, parking lot, interpretive signage, kiosk, pet waste bag dispenser, trash receptacles, and park sign.					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive	☑	Natural Area	☑
Recommended Site Improvements	• Install an ADA transfer mats at the new playground location • Install ADA approved drinking fountain • Install additional benches along the existing park trail • Explore the feasibility of a trail loop along the east side of the park • Replace the community information sign within the community gardens area					

Maintenance Plan	• Mowing weekly
	• Fall protection
	• Playground inspection
	• Trash collection weekly
	• Winter snow removal on trail and parking lot
	• Shelter cleaning before rentals
	• Community Garden
	  o Spring plot preparation – tilling, staking
	  o Open and winterize water
	  o Compost bin emptied as needed					

Veterans Memorial Park						
Existing Conditions	• Veterans Memorial Park is a 5.4-acre neighborhood park adjacent to North Main Street and the Yahara River. Facilities onsite include a gazebo, monuments, interpretive signage, concrete paths, natural surface path, flagpoles, parking lot, trail wayfinding kiosk/map, picnic tables (one ADA accessible), ADA accessible drinking fountain, open space, park sign, lighting, benches, trash receptacles, kiosk, trailhead signage, canoe launch, and donor pavers. Decorative planters are also maintained with seasonal annual flowers.					

Recreation Type	Active		Passive	☑	Natural Area	☑
Recommended Site Improvements	• Construct small restroom building • Replace one picnic table at the gazebo with an ADA approved model • Expand the veteran's exhibit walking trail into a loop within the park					
Maintenance Plan	• Mowing weekly • Trash collection weekly • Gazebo cleaning before rentals • Winter snow removal on parking lot, sidewalk, and trails • Local veteran's group and park neighbors maintain planting beds • Prairie maintenance/burn					
Western Green Park						
Existing Conditions	• This is a 61.4-acre neighborhood park located between Acker Parkway and the Yahara River. Facilities onsite include asphalt trails, a paved trail from Old Indian Trail to Main Street, a new bridge at Old Indian Trail, trail wayfinding kiosk/map, open space, restroom/storage building, drinking fountain, shelter, basketball court, sandlot backstop, picnic tables, sand volleyball, benches, play structure (5 – 12 year old and 2 – 5 year old) with ADA transfer mats, swing set, parking lot, canoe/kayak launch, trailhead signage, pet waste bag dispenser, park sign, lighting, natural areas, pond, bridges, kiosk, bulletin/rules signage, interpretive signage, trash receptacles, and athletic field.					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive	☑	Natural Area	☑
Recommended Site Improvements	• Install dumpster enclosure • Install a bike rack on hardscape surface • Replace all electrical outlet covers at the shelter with lockable covers					
Maintenance Plan	• Mowing weekly • Fall protection • Playground inspection • Trash collection weekly • Daily bathroom cleaning • Shelter cleaning before rentals • Open and winterize bathrooms and water fountain • Stormwater pond maintenance • Winter snow removal in parking lot and paved trails • Line athletic field during season • Prairie maintenance/burns • Prepare baseball fields during season					
Yahara Park						
Existing Conditions	• This 7.9-acre neighborhood park is adjacent to Yahara Elementary School on Trailside Drive. Existing facilities include two softball/youth baseball fields with bleachers, scoreboard, shelter with restrooms and concessions, four ADA accessible picnic tables, play structure (2 – 5 year old), teeter totter, spring rider, spin seat, swings (2 bucket), bench, park signs (2), regulatory signage, gravel trail, pedestrian bridge, drinking fountain, parking lot, and trash receptacles.					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive	☑	Natural Area	☑
Recommended Site Improvements	• Restripe parking lot as needed • Replace ballfield team benches with aluminum benches • Evaluate if bridge is sinking and make repairs if necessary • Install lockable electric outlet covers • Pave limestone trails in Park • Explore the feasibility of a trail loop around park • Install a new sidewalk connection on the east side of the park (connection to school) • Install a new sidewalk connection to the playground area from Seminole Way					

Maintenance Program	• Mowing weekly (diamond outfields twice a week during peak season) • Fall protection • Playground inspection • Trash collection weekly • Daily bathroom cleaning	• Shelter cleaning before rentals • Open and winterize bathrooms and water fountain • Ball diamond maintenance and field lining for games • Winter snow removal in parking lot and sidewalk
Iver Munson Park – *Undeveloped*		
Existing Conditions	Iver Munson Park is a dedicated but unimproved 4.24-acre neighborhood park located at the south end of the Heritage Gardens neighborhood. It is adjacent to and directly north of Cradle Hill Park in Windsor, which is 3.4 acres and includes a range of recreational improvements including a splash pad and playground. The two villages have collaborated on a conceptual plan for the development of these adjacent parks.	
Recreation Type	Active ☑ Passive ☑ Natural Area	
Recommended Site Improvements	• Develop the facilities and amenities included in the Iver Munson Park conceptual plan and avoid redundant equipment and facilities located within adjacent Cradle Hill Park: o Parking area on the park's west side o Internal paved pathway system around the park perimeter o A baseball field	

Community Parks

FIGURE 5.4 RECOMMENDED COMMUNITY PARK SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Existing Community Parks		
Fireman's Park		
Existing Conditions	• Fireman's Park is an 11.5-acre park located between DeForest Street and Jefferson Street. Improvements to the park include two youth baseball/softball fields with bleachers/lights, scoreboards (2), large shelter with restrooms, concessions, and a four-season community room, small shelter, stage, asphalt and concrete paths, parking lot, entry archway, play structure (5 - 12 year old and 2 – 5 year old), swings, Rockin' Robin, sky runner, arch swing, whirlwind seat, musical play features, interactive playground, tennis/pickleball court, splash pad, benches, ice skating rink, open space, basketball courts (2), ADA accessible drinking fountains, bike rack, park lighting, park signs, centennial planter, four ADA accessible picnic tables, and trash receptacles.	
Recreation Type	Active ☑ Passive ☑ Natural Area	
Recommended Site Improvements	• Complete unfinished improvements in the Fireman's Park Conceptual Plan • Install additional shade structures at the splash pad area • Install additional shade structures on mounds between the bandshell and park shelter • Install window shades within the community room	
Maintenance Program	• Mowing weekly (diamond outfields twice a week during peak season) • Fall protection • Playground inspection • Trash collection weekly • Daily bathroom cleaning • Shelter cleaning before rentals	• Open and winterize bathrooms and water fountain • Line football field during season • Ball diamond maintenance and field lining for games • Winter snow removal on parking lot, trail, and sidewalk • Winter skating rink preparation and maintenance

Natural Areas

DeForest residents prioritized more natural areas in the Village Comprehensive Plan process and once again in 2024 during the creation of this plan. The Village should consider accepting any quality land donations for natural and open space uses; however, these lands will not count toward the land dedication requirements in Chapter 6.

FIGURE 5.5 NATURAL AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

Existing Natural Areas						
All Natural Areas						
Recommended Improvements	• Prioritize preservation, continued restoration and protection of all current natural and sensitive environmental areas including the Upper Yahara River corridor, Western Green Park and restored prairie, wooded areas, oak savannas, sedge meadows and all other current plant and wildlife habitats • Establish passive walking trails and acquire adjacent properties to expand connections to existing parks and to provide an expanded trail network • Remove invasive species, restore native species, establish ongoing maintenance programs • Develop a tree management system • Establish identification signage for each natural area consistent with uniform signage used for the Village's active park locations • Install regulatory signage indicating the protected nature of these areas • Leverage the construction of minimally intrusive boardwalks as key network facilities to connect and activate wetland natural areas to the community's overarching park system and trail network • Evaluate park facilities and circulation routes for ADA compliance as park areas are improved • Where applicable passive recreational assets exist (such as trails), provide trash receptacles, drinking fountains and bicycle racks onsite in a central area • Consider adopting a "grow not mow" policy in Village parks to limit how often (and what portions of) parks are mowed. Adding a day or more to the mowing cycle and preserving natural grasslands and other features in parks can reduce costs, reduce the amount of fossil fuels consumed in Village operations, increase natural buffers around shoreland and reduce soil erosion					
Bakke Conservancy						
Existing Conditions	• This 21.7-acre natural area is located on North Stevenson Street south of Burton Boulevard and features natural surface trails, an asphalt path on Stevenson Street, trail signage, ice skating rink, bench, and park sign.					
Recreation Type	Active		Passive	☑	Natural Area	☑
Recommended Improvements	• Install new park identification and walking path trail signage • Install regulatory signage in areas intended for complete preservation that are not intended for user activity					
Maintenance Program	• Mowing biweekly • Stormwater pond maintenance		• Ice rink maintenance • Snow removal (rink and trail)			
Chapel Green Park						
Existing Conditions	• This 2.9-acre natural area is located near the intersection of South Street and River Road. Existing features include paved trails and mature oak trees.					
Recreation Type	Active		Passive	☑	Natural Area	☑
Recommended Improvements	• Install native prairie grasses and plantings within the mowed grass areas					
Maintenance Program	• Mowing biweekly along path • Remove invasive plant species					

Marvin and Marie Schweers Natural Area						
Existing Conditions	• This 46-acre natural area is adjacent to the north Village limits and Marvin and Marie Schweers Dog Park. The site features mowed trailways.					
Recreation Type	Active		Passive	☑	Natural Area	☑
Recommended Improvements	• Develop access points via Dennis Drive from the south and/or the dog park parking lot from the east. Development could include bridges, signage, and trail improvements • Develop a natural surface trail network and sign for cross country skiing					
Maintenance Programs	• Natural area management contracted • Monitor water levels and adjust control structure as needed					
Upper Yahara River Corridor (includes Sunfish Pond)						
Existing Conditions	• This 149-acre natural area is located in designated areas throughout the Village of DeForest surrounding the Yahara River. Existing facilities along its route include multi-use trails (asphalt/natural surface), trail wayfinding signage, bridges/boardwalks, interpretive signage, natural areas, park signs, regulatory signage, picnic tables, dog waste station, trash receptacles, kiosk, fishing pier at Sunfish Pond, little free library, kiosk at Sunfish Pond, butterfly garden at Sunfish Pond, and canoe/kayak launches.					
Recreation Type	Active		Passive	☑	Natural Area	☑
Recommended Improvements	• Construct restroom building at Sunfish Pond • Construct park shelter at Sunfish Pond • Construct playground at Sunfish Pond • Install second fishing pier • Install signage to enforce usage of established trails for walking and cycling • Explore regular nature/birding walking programming • Install additional trash/dog waste cans along the trailway					
Maintenance Program	• Mowing biweekly • Trash collection weekly • Winter snow removal in parking lot and trail • Winter ice skating rink snow removal on Sunfish Pond • Stain boardwalks and bridges					
Reigstad Park						
Existing Conditions	• This 14-acre natural area is located near the intersection of Hanover Drive and Williamsburg Way. It features passive bicycling and walking areas, a soccer field, softball/youth baseball field, cross country skiing, and pedestrian trails.					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive	☑	Natural Area	☑
Recommended Improvements	• Develop an open-air shelter structure					
Maintenance Program	• None					

Special Use Facilities

FIGURE 5.6 SPECIAL USE FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Existing Special Use Areas						
All Special Use Facilities						
Recommended Improvements	• See recommendations in Figure 5.1.					
DeForest Athletic Complex						
Existing Conditions	• This 24-acre special use park was constructed at the intersection of River Road and Windsor Road. The park contains four softball/youth baseball fields with bleachers and lighting, two football fields, tennis/pickleball courts, two concessions/restroom buildings, playground, and parking lot.					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive		Natural Area	
Recommended Improvements	• Create additional ADA accessible playground • Install tennis/pickleball court • Extend level playing fields			• Install permanent wind screens by long fields • Develop small concessions/restroom building • Consider the installation of an additional tree line to screen the park from the interstate		
Maintenance Program	• Mowing weekly • Ball diamond maintenance and field lining for games			• Trash collection • Winterization of buildings		
Marvin and Marie Schweers Dog Park						
Existing Conditions	• This 12.3-acre park is located off of North Stevenson Street adjacent to the Schweers Natural Area. The active space within the dog exercise area fence is approximately 5.5 acres with the remaining parcel utilizes for parking, the location of a cell tower, and as wetlands. Features onsite include a park shelter, limestone screened trail, and drinking fountain.					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive	☑	Natural Area	
Recommended improvements	• Install additional dog agility features within the dog exercise area					
Maintenance Program	• Mowing monthly • Trash collection weekly					
Rivers Turn Park						
Existing Conditions	• This 3.2-acre park is located on Innovation Drive adjacent to the Upper Yahara River Corridor natural area. Amenities include five exercise stations, open air shelter, asphalt path, ADA approved picnic tables, open space, a sledding hill, bicycle rack, ADA approved drinking fountain, lights, park sign, and trash receptacle.					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive	☑	Natural Area	
Recommended Improvements	• No recommended improvements					
Maintenance Program	• Mowing weekly • Trash collection weekly • Equipment inspection			• Shelter cleaning before rentals • Winter snow removal on sidewalk and trail • Open and winterize water fountain		

Nelson Court Special Park – *Undeveloped*						
Existing Conditions	• The 5.35-acre southern portion of Bakke Conservancy between the railroad and N. Stevenson Street is a mostly wooded area today.					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive	☑	Natural Area	☑
Recommended Improvements	• Sensory-friendly playground equipment • Open air shelter with bathrooms • Walking path connection between multi-use trail and new facilities					
Windsor Road Special Use Park – *Undeveloped*						
Existing Conditions	• A 16.7-acre property east of the Yahara River near Sunfish Pond and the Upper Yahara River Corridor that consists of mostly wooded areas today.					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive	☑	Natural Area	☑
Recommended Improvements	• Mountain bike trails • Permanent bathrooms • Walking path connection to Windsor Road					
North Industrial Special Use Park – *Undeveloped*						
Existing Conditions	• The 6.3-acre property north of the Marvin and Marie Schweers Dog Park along the Yahara River within the Village of DeForest Business Park.					
Recreation Type	Active	☑	Passive	☑	Natural Area	☑
Recommended Improvements	• Permanent skate park and bicycle pump track • Open air shelter • Paved walking path connection to the Dog Park parking lot and access driveway					

Other Existing Facilities

Public School Facilities

The DeForest Area School District encompasses all of the Village of DeForest and also provides recreational and open space areas at Eagle Point Elementary School, Yahara Elementary School, DeForest Area Middle School, and DeForest Area High School. Each campus includes school buildings as well as open space and land dedicated to recreational facilities. The School District's recreational land primarily for the use of students, but which are accessible by the public at certain times.

Private Recreational Facilities

- **Ziggy Baseball Park** was established in 2023 in the Bear Tree Farms development east of USH 51 in the southeast corner of DeForest. It offers a full-size baseball field, grandstands, and batting cages. It is also adjacent to future parkland to be developed by the Village over the planning period.
- **Lake Windsor County Club** is located within the Village of Windsor, but provides private outdoor golf recreational facilities within the area. This 18-hole course also includes portions of the Yahara River Water Trail.

Dane County Parks

The Village of DeForest is located within Dane County. Facilities located near DeForest provide an important part of the recreational infrastructure and opportunities in the area.

- **Schumacher Farm:** This unique facility is located on Highway 19 and is approximately 117 acres in size. Schumacher Farm features an outdoor museum dedicated to the history of local farm life and offers extensive programming for school groups, private organizations, and the public. Public recreation opportunities include cross-country ski trails, picnicking, and hiking.
- **Token Creek Park:** Token Creek County Park is a 427-acre park located immediately south of the DeForest Village limits and is accessed via Highway 51. The park has a 43-unit campground as well as a group camping area with restrooms and shower facilities. The largest disc golf course in the county is located in the park and is a regional draw. Multiple shelters offer extensive picnic and gathering opportunities throughout the park. Additional park amenities include fishing piers, two playgrounds, hiking trails, and more than 270 miles of snowmobile trails. A master plan was recently completed for the park and includes further development recommendations.
- **Yahara Heights County Park/Cherokee Marsh Natural Resource Site:** The Yahara Heights/Cherokee Marsh Natural Resource Site is a 385-acre property containing the largest remaining wetland in Dane County and the major wetland in Lake Mendota's Watershed. Over 3,000 feet of water frontage provide wildlife habitat, fish spawning grounds and a sedimentation area for Lake Mendota. Recreational opportunities include a 20-acre pet exercise area and a canoe and kayak launch. The site can be accessed off of River Road near the intersection of Highways 113 and M.

State of Wisconsin Parks and Trails

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

- **Governor Nelson State Park:** Governor Nelson State Park is a day use park, located on Lake Mendota, which offers a sand beach, boat launch, fishing facilities, picnic areas, playground equipment as well as an extensive trail network and prairie restorations. This park is a major destination for skiing, hiking, swimming, boating, and fishing. Primary access to the park is located on the southeast side of County Highway M, about 2 miles west of State Highway 113 and 8 miles west of Interstate 90/94.
- **Goose Pond Sanctuary:** The Madison Audubon Society owns this 660-acre natural area north of the Village in Columbia County. Goose Pond Sanctuary contains one hundred acres of wetland habitat and 400 acres of tall grass prairie. This restored habitat is the site of over 250 species of birds, seven endangered and threatened plant species and is a waterfowl migration stopover in the spring and fall. The sanctuary has been named one of Wisconsin's Watchable Wildlife Areas and is a designated State Natural Area.

RECOMMENDED NEW RECREATION FACILITY OPPORTUNITIES

Through the planning process, additional unique recreational opportunities were identified based on current recreational trends and public feedback. In the future development and upgrades of existing and new parks, it is recommended that the Village consider the following unique opportunities and partnerships as population and demand increases:

Community Swimming Pool

Public feedback overwhelmingly indicated the desire amongst residents for an outdoor community swimming pool. Survey respondents indicated that the development of a pool was the most prioritized future facility needed in the Village. The development of a pool facility is a very expensive investment. If the Village is considering the development of such a facility, this plan recommends conducting a feasibility study for a new community pool to research the matter more thoroughly, investigate and inventory the significant costs associated with the facility, and to determine whether the creation and ongoing maintenance of a pool is economically feasible. It is recommended that the Village identify and work with a suitable partner, such as the School District, to work together to explore potential options in the future development of a pool facility if joint or alternative funding can be acquired.

Disc Golf

Disc golf has become an increasingly popular hobby and recreational pastime over the course of the last decade. Many communities across the state have enjoyed the benefits of increased recreational tourism due to their established disc golf courses, as enthusiasts often travel outside of their own communities to play on professionally designed courses of varying difficulty. The Village currently has a growing population of residents interested in the sport, and there are several formalized disc golfing groups and associations around Dane County. Community feedback indicates the desire for a professionally designed disc golf course offering, as many local players leave the community to play at facilities in other municipalities or at nearby Token Creek Park, a Dane County facility that features the largest disc golf course in the County. Creating a disc golf course in the Village would likely draw players from around the County to the Village, making it a new destination for disc golf enthusiasts to visit. Developing a full-length disc golf course takes up approximately 10 acres of land, which would best be accommodated within a new community or neighborhood park. If the Village pursues the development of a disc golf course, it should consider locations that do not interfere with passive recreational trail enjoyment or infringe upon any areas intended for environmental preservation. However, disc golf areas may be suited for larger stormwater retention areas, offering a use for land that would otherwise be unusable.

Skate Park/Bicycle Pump Track

Community feedback indicated the desire for a new skate park in the Village. The Village should explore opportunities to thoughtfully design and integrate a new skate park into an existing neighborhood park with paved trailway connectivity to the community's trail network. Alternatively, the Village should plan to incorporate a skate park into the development of a new neighborhood or community park in DeForest's growth area as new neighborhoods continue to develop. A modern skatepark design requires around 10,000-20,000 square feet and is often accompanied by benches, paved paths, lighting, fencing, and potentially off-street parking areas. There are also potential noise concerns that arise from skate parks. As such, buffering may be needed between the facility and neighboring homes.

A similar facility that was also identified through the public feedback was focused on the creation of a bicycle pump track. This type of facility is smaller than a mountain bike trail (described below) and is a closed-circuit course to practice riding skills for bicyclists and skateboarders. The track can be paved or unpaved offering riders with bumps, small ramps, bermed corners, and varying degrees of undulation. The size of these facilities can vary widely from 600-100,000 square feet, depending on the land and funding availability.

River Access Points

The Yahara River runs through the Village. As DeForest continues to expand into its future growth areas, additional opportunities to connect the community to the Yahara River should be explored. Providing additional improved access points to the river would expand the community's recreational options, harnessing the river as another source for both active and natural, passive recreation. Any future facilities at or connections to the Yahara River should be developed so that they are integrated into the community's continuously developing trail network. These should include scenic overlook areas with benches and trash receptacles, fishing areas, and canoe/kayak launches. Recreational opportunities along the river could be enhanced at each access point through interpretive signage, non-motorized boat rentals, fishing spots, bathrooms, picnic areas, or shelters, and improved navigability of the waterways themselves through bank erosion mitigation, tree and brush maintenance, and invasive species removal and replacement with native plantings. While several of these types of improvements may benefit public access to this waterway, the Village must balance increased access with the preservation and restoration the riparian environment.

Mountain Bike Trails

Mountain biking is another recreational trend that has emerged within the Village. These types of trails usually take a large amount of land and upfront investment to create, however the long-term maintenance is much lower. While there are many challenges to developing mountain biking trails within the Village's park and trail network, there may be other lands either within the Village or directly adjacent that lend themselves to the installation and development of this recreational feature.

Public feedback illustrated that the community has polarizing opinions about mountain biking trails. Many individuals indicated a desire to see more dedicated mountain biking trails, while others expressed concern for pedestrian safety and impacts on environmental preservation and wildlife on trails in natural areas. Ultimately, concerns within mountain biking within existing Village parks center on ensuring the preservation of wildlife and safety of other types of passive trail users.

Taking these concerns into account, the Village should explore the identification of new lands appropriate for mountain bike trail facilities. This recreation facility should be designed and constructed to accommodate this type of use, but could also function to provide passive trail users as well.

The Village has recently acquired a 16.7-acre property east of the Yahara River near Conservancy Commons Park that is targeted for a future mountain bike trail area called the East River Mountain Bike Park. See Map 6. As the Village explores developing this type of recreational facility, the following outlines some of the key considerations. First, mountain biking enthusiasts in the Village have expressed the need for a skills learning and training area to practice on. Such an area would ideally feature open green space, a central gathering hub near trailheads, and a progression of several short trails and features that are designed for beginners to help riders build their skills and engage in practice drills.

Second, optimal locations for larger and more robust mountain biking trail networks are areas of 10+ acres of land with varied terrain and topography, which can be used to form hand cut dirt trails with interesting and challenging dirt and

wood features for riders to navigate. Downed trees, rock gardens, dirt features such as rolling, bumpy hills, "skinnies," banked turns, and other features that can be built into trails create the most interesting courses. Flat, low, and wet areas may not be as well suited for mountain bike trail development, as the nature of the sport requires varied topography, and ground that is too soft will result in tires compressing and tearing apart soil, leading to major trail maintenance issues.

In recent years, the City of Madison has worked with consultants to analyze potential facility locations and create partnerships with area recreation groups in a new planning initiative to incorporate mountain biking facilities into the City's park system. The initiative, called the Madison Bicycle Adventure Trail Feasibility & Planning Project, highlights the level of expert design practices and sustainability considerations that go into designing, constructing, and maintaining proper mountain biking trails. Trails are generally narrow, with widths of around 18 inches, and should be designed to blend in with the surrounding environment. Idea locations are areas that contain invasive species, as trail design and maintenance can be focused on improving the area around the trail through invasive species management and the planting of native vegetation. Any facility developed in the DeForest area should be professionally designed using the International Mountain Bicycling Association's Trail Design Guidelines to minimize trail impacts on the natural environment and provide an amenity that generally has significantly less of a development and use impact on nature and wildlife than many other types of park and recreation amenities. Additionally, any future facility should be properly signed with clear, uniform signage identifying trails for their intended use, prohibiting pedestrian use, and warning caution at any trail entrance or intersection with or near other facilities.

Beyond the development of the new East River Mountain Bike Park, there are several additional approaches the Village could take to expand mountain biking facilities in the community:

- The Village can explore collaborative opportunities with Dane County and/or the Village of Windsor on the development of a mountain bike trail park or creating new connections to from the Village to existing Dane County mountain biking locations.
- As new mountain bike trails, facilities, and locations are developed, it would be recommended that the community be engaged throughout the process.
- An alternative to another larger facility is the creation of interconnected smaller courses or more linear trailways, possibly as dedicated mountain bike-only off-shoots of existing multi-use trails. This approach would be similar to the approach the City of Madison has taken in developing mountain bike trails. While the benefits of this approach can be more easily integrating facilities into existing parts of the community, require smaller up-front investments, and provide more varied terrain for trail riders, the primary issues associated with this strategy would be the potential increase for conflict with different recreational trail users and significant challenges in creating interconnected trail segments.

In all future mountain bike facility planning and development, the Village should seek collaboration and potentially creating agreements with mountain biking volunteer groups, organizations, and clubs to support the development of new facilities and provide ongoing maintenance. The Village should also leverage additional local, regional, and state resources in the planning, development, and implementation of future mountain bike trails. Other government entities that have successfully implemented mountain bike trails include the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Dane County, City of Middleton, City of Verona, City of Madison, and Village of Cross Plains.

Other Potential New Recreation Opportunities and Trends

- Beer gardens have become very popular in many communities as a seasonal amenity that can be used to generate new revenue for the community and create a gathering space for residents during warm months. They do not take up a large amount of space and can utilize an existing shelter, parking lot, or open space area. Examples of beer gardens that have been successfully implemented in existing parks include a traveling beer garden throughout Milwaukee County, multiple permanent beer gardens in Milwaukee County Parks within the City of Milwaukee, and the annual beer garden at Olbrich Park in Madison.
- Outdoor ping pong tables can be integrated into existing parks and offer another, new unique outdoor recreational amenity. Today, ping pong tables are offered at Fireman's Park and equipment can be checked out from the Public Library for use. Overall, these facilities take up very little room and are securely fastened to the ground so they cannot be moved. However, this type of facility does require balls, nets, and paddles which are not secured to the structure and have the ability to be damaged, stolen, or destroyed easily. This type of facility may be best suited for another park location near an existing staff office to provide the rental of equipment needed.
- Bocce ball courts offer a smaller park feature that is well suited for an existing park with underutilized space. This recreational opportunity requires a segregated space with sand or crushed stone to roll different sized balls on. Like the outdoor ping pong tables, it too will require rental of equipment, so it is limited to the types of parks where staff are nearby to offer this amenity.
- Futsal courts are another potential recreational facility that is becoming more popular across the U.S. Futsal is a soccer-based game played on a hard-court surface, but is smaller than a full-size soccer field, using a smaller ball than regular soccer. It can be played indoors or outdoors and offers another alternative use on existing basketball, pickleball, tennis, or multipurpose sports courts. The City of Madison recently installed the first outdoor futsal court in Dane County in 2024, which could serve as a model for DeForest in the future.
- Food forests and gardens are a passive recreational amenity that offer edible plants for residents to enjoy. There are several benefits to this type of amenity including very low maintenance once established, flexibility to be incorporated into underutilized and small areas, and the opportunity to provide nature-based education and healthy food options. Food forests offer the ability to be located within any type of existing or future park, along trails, adjacent to community garden space, or within stormwater management areas.

- Pickleball continues to be one of the fastest growing sports. As a popular alternative to tennis, it allows many different age groups the ability to play on a reduced-sized court and is very popular amongst middle age and older recreationalist. Several existing parks within DeForest and throughout the region offer pickleball courts today, but additional facilities may be needed over the planning period to accommodate the growing demand. It is recommended that DeForest continue to increase the number of pickleball facilities offered as new parks are developed and opportunities present themselves to incorporate this feature into existing park locations, where feasible.

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

The Sport and Fitness Industry Association conducted a national survey in 2023 of a random sample of over 20,000 Americans. The findings help to provide large trends related to inactivity, demographics, and participation. A few data points that are important for the Village to consider over the next five years are:

- 21% of the US population is inactive, meaning that they do not participate in any level of calorie burning activities in an average week, which is a decrease since 2013.
- Class-based (yoga, karate, etc.), fitness (cardio, lifting, swimming, etc.), and outdoor activities (hiking, trail running, etc.) have all increased in overall participation since 2013.
- Winter sports, team sports, racquet sports, and water sport participation all grew by over 9% since 2022. Increased participation in team-based sports reflects an overall trend in the U.S. of strong demand for team sports opportunities following the forced isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.
- For the third year in a row, pickleball has stayed he fastest-growing sport, with participation growing 52% from 2022 to 2023 and an overall 224% increase in participation over the past three years.
- The most popular activities by age group:
    - Baby Boomers focus on low-impact activities
    - Gen Xers participate most in team sports
    - Millennials prefer to participate in the most diverse set of activities across many different types
    - Gen Zers focus on high calorie burning/more intensive activities

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the past decade, the Village has developed an extensive multi-use trail network. The network consists of a series of off-road trails and on-road routes intended to link destinations as well as to provide enjoyable recreational opportunities to Village residents. One such segment is the Upper Yahara River Trail which runs from Western Green Park to the north to Sunfish Pond to the south through the Upper Yahara River Corridor. This scenic trail consists of 2.7 miles of a combination of porous asphalt trails and boardwalk. Other notable trail segments include the Deforest-Windsor Trail, the Delkamp Trail, and the Western Green Trail.

Expansion of the trail network should continue as land development continues to progress and DeForest grows. The continued development of the Village trail system has been based upon a long-range trail vision first presented in the 2011 version of this plan. This vision has been updated and expanded upon in Map 6, which shows the existing and proposed future multi-use trail network in the Village of DeForest. Parts of the depicted routes have been developed such as the DeForest-Windsor Trail and the Upper Yahara River Trail. It is recommended that the Village continue to implement trail segments in collaboration with developers, the Village of Windsor, Dane County, and other partner groups.

While this plan will seek to identify opportunities to improve the bicycle and pedestrian network, the DeForest Safe Routes to School Plan provides additional analysis and recommends potential improvements. That plan should also be updated on a 5-10 year basis that coincides with long-range planning initiatives completed or the implementation of new infrastructure by the Village or School District.

In 2023, the Village of DeForest completed an update to its Comprehensive Plan that identified, analyzed, and prioritized future recreational trail network connections and improvements. This plan recognizes and furthers the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Community-Wide Benefits of Trails

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

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

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

Economic Development: The outdoor recreation economy generates over $887 billion dollars in consumer spending each year across the United States, including over $59 billion in state and local tax revenue. Beyond just tax revenue, other economic benefits include property value increases and creation of jobs. In fact, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects create 8-12 jobs per $1 million of spending. (Garrett-Peltier, 2011)

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

Source: American Trails, 2022

Proposed Paths and Trails

This plan recommends several off-street paths and trail segments within the community's existing boundary and growth area. These trails and paths are essential to linking existing and future neighborhoods to on-street bicycle routes, parks and environmental corridors, existing school sites, community amenities and destinations, and expanding the regional trail network. Map 6 included recommended paths and trails. Priority trail projects include:

- Fully connecting Village recreational facilities along North Stevenson Street and the DeForest Business Park to the rest of the community via a key east-west future trail connection along North Street/County Highway V.
- Provide safe, dedicated on-and-off-street bicycle and pedestrian paths to connect the southern Village residential neighborhoods to the community's schools.
- Connect DeForest to the Cherokee Marsh and other area municipalities by securing additional trail connections between the Upper Yahara River Trail and the DeForest-Windsor Trail. See callout box description below.

Upper Yahara River Corridor Trail

A primary goal of the Village is to implement the recommendations within its Comprehensive Plan and this document, which collectively advocate for the continued development of the Upper Yahara River multi-use trail running north-south along the meandering banks of the Yahara River corridor. Continuing to strengthen the connected trail system along the river through the community has provided a key north-south active transportation corridor within the Village, helping to activate the Yahara River as a recreational resource and key part of DeForest's identity while preserving and protecting the sensitive riparian environment from the encroachment of future development. The establishment of this trail system provides a key network connection through the west and north-central portions of the community, linking many of the Village's established residential neighborhoods with downtown and major employment areas in the DeForest Business Park and Innovation Springs Office Research Park.

It is recommended that the Village continue to expand this trail network to the south past the new DeForest Athletic Complex, continue coordinating with the Village of Windsor on the planned trail connection along Windsor Road, and work with neighboring jurisdictions and the Wisconsin DNR to foster new trail connections to the Cherokee Marsh.

Unpaved natural trails serve to connect facilities within developed parks and can serve as the main recreational element of an undeveloped park or passive recreation area. This type of trail is most appropriate for natural areas such as the Bakke Conservancy, Chapel Green Park, Marvin and Marie Schweers Natural Area, and other similar environmental corridors.

Proposed On-Street Bicycle Routes

This plan also recommends continuing to develop an on-street bike route system along existing and proposed Village streets. Today, there are several existing on-street bicycle routes through DeForest with prominent sections that run along parts of North Stevenson Street, on the east side of the Village on and around Yorktown Road and Southbound Drive, and along the western portion of North Street/County Highway V on the Village's west side. Many of these segments currently connect to one another, particularly on the east side of DeForest. Further additions to solidify connections between existing major routes will provide DeForest with a robust bicycle network. Building on the existing route, it is recommended that additional on-street sharrows, bicycle lanes, and buffered bicycle lanes be added. Proposed on-street bicycle routes are shown on Map 6.

The Benefits of Bike-Friendly Infrastructure & Promoting A Culture of Bicycling

Active transportation, such as bicycling, provides tangible benefits to communities across the county as it promotes physical and mental health, offers inclusive and equitable outdoor recreation opportunities, stimulates economic development, and provides sustainable transportation infrastructure. Together, these benefits increase the local quality of life for all residents and visitors of the community.

Studies show that small and mid-sized municipalities that have dedicated bicycle infrastructure have more bicycle commuters, and that these communities have fewer traffic fatalities than those without such infrastructure. In cities with low cycling rates, pedestrian deaths were 194 percent higher than in counterpart communities with significant on-street bicycle infrastructure and higher levels of bicycle commuting, indicating that higher cycling rates are associated with significantly lower traffic deaths. The addition of dedicated, on-street bicycle infrastructure creates narrower traffic lanes, which studies have found to have a significant effect on reducing erratic driving, excessive speeding, vehicular accidents, and crash rates.

Creating safer roads for all users is more important now than ever. Data from the study *A National Investigation on the Impacts of Lane Width on Traffic Safety* found that pedestrian and bicycle fatalities are rising, with a 44 percent increase in biking fatalities between 2010 and 2020. The year 2020 also saw the highest number of vehicle-related pedestrian deaths in the last four decades. Narrowing road lanes by adding permanent, dedicated bicycle infrastructure has shown to make roadways safer for all road users while having little impact on cars besides reducing speeding. Narrowing lanes can also reduce construction and ongoing maintenance costs of streets.

Source: American Planning Association & Planetizen, 2024

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey conducted among Village residents as part of this planning process confirmed that recreational programming is a valued quality of life component in DeForest and that there is a continued desire to provide additional festivals and more meaningful gathering opportunities. It is recommended that DeForest explore opportunities to expand recreational programming and increase community awareness of the broad variety of programs that the Recreation Department offers. Survey respondents indicated that they would prefer to receive program guides digitally and through direct mail. Ensuring wide distribution of the Village's recreational programming guide via these channels will help increase resident awareness of ongoing programming opportunities. Additional coordination with other area organizations, such as the School District, to disseminate program information will further increase access to and participation in various recreational activities, festivals, and events in the community, while also helping to inform residents and potentially attract tourists. The Village should continue to use newsletters, local media, websites, social media, and email lists to distribute information about events and programming taking place throughout the community.

As DeForest's population continues to grow and the desire for more recreational programming increases, it is also recommended that the Village explore opportunities to develop new programming. This could include educational, skill building, and arts classes, fitness or exercise classes, new local events or festivals, and sports leagues. Public feedback indicated a desire for more outdoor recreation programming, such as camping and canoeing, more lifetime sports courses, and additional family activity offerings. However, in exploring this opportunity it is recommended that the Village consult with various other established community organizations and the School District to avoid any future duplication of programming. Additionally, at some point in time, the demands for recreational programming will exceed the capacity of current staffing levels and may require additional staffing resources.

Efficiently coordinating the community's various sports leagues and recreational programming offerings should be a priority goal within the Village. Ensuring that all recreational organizations are in communication and coordination with the Recreation Department will allow for the most efficient management of all facilities and for the leagues and organizations using them. High levels of coordination would decrease scheduling conflicts, increase coordination and the effective use of facilities, and would allow for better strategic programming of park and recreation facilities that are currently under and overutilized.

Livable Communities Network

After conducting a survey in 2010 that found that most people wanted to age in place, AARP developed the Livable Communities Network of age-friendly states and communities. This initiative, centered on the belief that communities are more livable, vibrant, and better able to support people of all ages when local leaders commit to improving the quality of life for the very young, the very old, and everyone in between.

Communities are open to apply for membership to the network, giving them access to AARP staff and volunteers who provide technical assistance and expertise to villages, cities, counties, and states in pursuit of making communities more livable. There are over 800 communities across the US and 13 communities in Wisconsin that are network members, including Appleton, Greendale, La Crosse, Madison, Oshkosh, Reedsburg, Sheboygan, Shorewood, Stevens Point, Wausau, Wauwatosa, West Allis, and West Bend.

Within network communities, AARP engages with elected officials, partner organizations, and local leaders to guide them through the age-friendly network's assessment, planning, evaluation, and implementation process. People of all ages benefit from the adoption of policies and programs that make neighborhoods walkable, feature transportation options, enable access to key services, provide opportunities to participate in community activities, and support housing that is affordable and adaptable. Well-designed, age-friendly communities foster economic growth and make for happier, healthier residents of all ages.

The network is intended to serve as a resource and cohort of communities working together on making the places they call home more livable. Members are given access to AARP thought leaders, training, advocacy and expert testimony on policy decisions, and bicycle and walking audits, among other benefits and tools.
Source: AARP, 2024

COLLABORATION RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to implement the recommendations of this plan, it will take a collaboartive effort between the Village and its local partners. This includes the DeForest Area School District, neighboring communities, Dane County, state and regional governements, local associations and recreational groups, nonprofits, volunteer groups, and the private sector.

The Village has several opportunities to collaborate with local partners in planning for park and outdoor recreation facilities over the planning period. These opportunities include the following:

- Work with local community members to develop a "Friends of DeForest Parks" volunteer group to help maintain specific park facilities and assist in fundraising and programming efforts.
- Continue to expand local sponsorship and donation opportunities for benches, trees, and other small-scale park facilities.
- Continue to work with local sports leagues, recreational groups, and programming organizations to provide recreational program opportunities in local parks and to assist in fundraising improvements and maintaining facilities.
- Coordinate with Village Staff and local businesses to promote the community's recreational offerings and drive economic development opportunities through tourism.
- Increase coordination with the Public Library and School District on expansion of community programming.
- Work with the WisDNR on coordinating park, open space, and environmental corridor protection and use activities.
- Work with Dane County and neighboring municipalities on any potential park expansion areas or parkland acquisitions within proximity of the Village that could benefit interconnectivity and access to park and recreational opportunities, particularly the Village of Windsor.
- Work with the DeForest Area School District to determine ways to work together to provide needed and innovative park and recreational facilities that encourage community use and environmental education.
- Continue to participate in regional park, open space, multi-use trail, and bike route planning efforts, particularly as Dane County updates its Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans or when regional jurisdictions update their plans.

RECOMMENDED NEW PARKS

Future infill, redevelopment, and new development throughout the Village will likely result in the need for new parks. In response, Map 3 shows potential locations for potential new facilities within community growth areas. Specific park facility boundaries in these general locations will be determined when the lands are platted or acquired. The following is a description of these general park recommendations. Models for new park facilities can be found in the Appendix.

FIGURE 5.7 RECOMMENDED NEW PARKS

Recommended Park	Conceptual Location
MP1: Mini Park	Morrisonville Road area on the far northwest side to serve the Village's future growth area east of Morrisonville Road.
MP2: Mini Park	West of USH 51 and north of Gray Road to serve the Village's future growth area west of North Towne Road.
MP3: Mini Park	West of USH 51 south of the Village of Windsor to serve the Village's future growth area between Windsor and the industrial park to the south.
MP4: Mini Park	Homestead Addition north of Savannah Drive and south of STH 19 on the southeast side of the Village that could become a future beer garden or other unique recreational amenity in this area.
NP1: Neighborhood Park	Far southwest side to provide a connection to the Yahara River on the west side of I-90 within developable lands to accommodate active uses. Also, see NA1 below.
NP2: Neighborhood Park	The Knolls area along the Yahara River Trail between Sunnybrook Park and the Conservancy Commons neighborhood. Also, see NA2 below.
NP3: Neighborhood Park	Far northwest side beyond the Village boundary to serve this future growth area if the lands north of CTH V develop.
NP4: Neighborhood Park	North side of the Village, just north of CTH V to serve future growth areas and connect to the natural resource areas that connect to Marvin and Marie Schweers Natural Area. Also, see NA3 below.
NP5: Neighborhood Park	North side adjacent to the Marvin and Marie Schweers Natural Area that can serve as a connection to this park and serve future growth areas. Also, see NA4 below.
NP6: Neighborhood Park	Rivers Bend (FRED River Road Development) on the far west side to serve the Village future growth area on the west side of River Road.
CP1: Community Park	Like NP4, this area could alternatively be developed into a new Community Park and serve a wide range of amenities to both new developing areas and the north side of DeForest.
CP2: Community Park	Like NP3, this area could alternatively be developed into a new Community Park and serve a wide range of amenities to both new developing areas and the north side of DeForest.
CP3: Community Park	West of O'Donnell Park and Chapel Green Park, the area between River Road and the Interstate presents an opportunity for a new Community Park to serve this growing area of the Village.
CP4: Community Park	West of CTH CV near the railroad tracks to provide a larger park facility in this area of the Village and to serve as a potential connection to the greenway that connects to Liberty Land Park.
NA1: Natural Area	This location may be well-suited for a new natural area connection to the Yahara River and potentially the Cherokee Marsh.
NA2: Natural Area	The Upper Yahara River Corridor could be expanded in this area to serve as an additional connection and natural resource preservation linkage.
NA3: Natural Area	Portions of this area are well-suited for a new natural area connection to expand the Marvin and Marie Schweers Natural Area and future trails.
NA4: Natural Area	Portions of this area are well-suited for a new natural area connection to expand the Marvin and Marie Schweers Natural Area and future trails.
NA5: Natural Area	East of Dahl Park to become a potential extension of this facility if the surrounding lands developed between Dahl Park and North Towne Road.

Steps to Acquisition and Development of a New Community Park

There are several key steps to the establishment of a new Community Park. These include:

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

There are many challenges to acquiring and developing a new Community Park. However, these steps will provide the Village with the best chance in adequately planning for, funding, and developing the facility over the planning period.

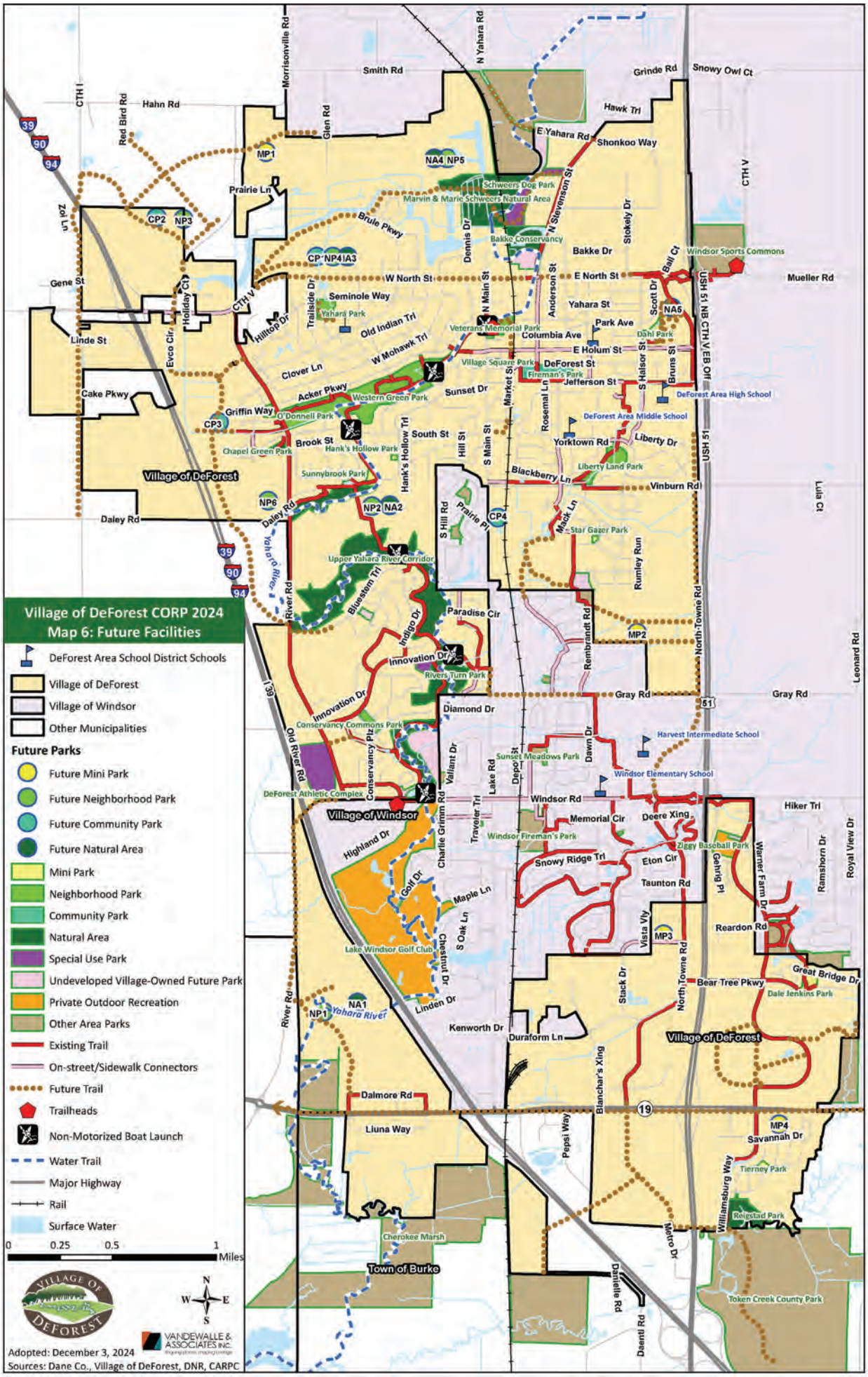

Village of DeForest CORP 2024
Map 6: Future Facilities
DeForest Area School District Schools
Village of DeForest
Village of Windsor
Other Municipalities
Future Parks
Future Mini Park
Future Neighborhood Park
Future Community Park
Future Natural Area
Mini Park
Neighborhood Park
Community Park
Natural Area
Special Use Park
Undeveloped Village-Owned Future Park
Private Outdoor Recreation
Other Area Parks
Existing Trail
On-street/Sidewalk Connectors
Future Trail
Trailheads
Non-Motorized Boat Launch
Water Trail
Major Highway
Rail
Surface Water
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
Adopted: December 3, 2024
Sources: Dane Co., Village of DeForest, DNR, CARPC
Village of DeForest
Village of Windsor
Town of Burke
Smith Rd
Hahn Rd
Morrisonville Rd
N Yahara Rd
Grinde Rd
Snowy Owl Ct
Hawk Trl
E Yahara Rd
Shonkoo Way
Glen Rd
Red Bird Rd
CTH I
Prairie Ln
Zol Ln
Brule Pkwy
Schweers Dog Park
Marvin & Marie Schweers Natural Area
Bakke Conservancy
Dennis Dr
N Stevenson St
Stokely Dr
Bakke Dr
Windsor Sports Commons
Ball Ct
Mueller Rd
Gene St
W North St
E North St
Seminole Way
Yahara Park
Trailside Dr
Old Indian Trl
N Main St
Anderson St
Yahara St
Park Ave
Scott Dr
Dahl Park
Linde St
Hilltop Dr
Evco Cir
Holiday Ct
W Mohawk Trl
Veterans Memorial Park
Columbia Ave
E Holum St
Village Square Park
DeForest St
Fireman's Park
Jefferson St
S Halsor St
Bruns St
Clover Ln
Acker Pkwy
Western Green Park
Sunset Dr
Market St
Rosemal Ln
DeForest Area High School
Cake Pkwy
Griffin Way
O'Donnell Park
DeForest Area Middle School
Brook St
Hank's Hollow Park
South St
Hill St
S Main St
Yorktown Rd
Liberty Dr
Chapel Green Park
Hank's Hollow Trl
Liberty Land Park
Sunnybrook Park
Blackberry Ln
Vinburn Rd
Lula Ct
Daley Rd
Daley Rd
Prairie Pl
S Hill Rd
Mack Ln
Star Gazer Park
Yahara River
Upper Yahara River Corridor
Rumley Run
River Rd
Bluestem Trl
Paradise Cir
Indigo Dr
Rembrandt Rd
North Towne Rd
Innovation Dr
Rivers Turn Park
Leonard Rd
Gray Rd
Gray Rd
Diamond Dr
Conservancy Commons Park
Harvest Intermediate School
Old River Rd
Conservancy Plz
Valiant Dr
Lake Rd
Depot St
Sunset Meadows Park
Dawn Dr
Windsor Elementary School
DeForest Athletic Complex
Windsor Rd
Hiker Trl
Charlie Grimm Rd
Traveler Trl
Memorial Cir
Deere Xing
Highland Dr
Windsor Fireman's Park
Ziggy Baseball Park
Snowy Ridge Trl
Eton Cir
Gehrig Pl
Warner Farm Dr
Ramshorn Dr
Royal View Dr
Golf Dr
Maple Ln
Taunton Rd
Vista Vly
Reardon Rd
S Oak Ln
Lake Windsor Golf Club
Chestnut Dr
Stack Dr
Bear Tree Pkwy
Great Bridge Dr
Dale Jenkins Park
Linden Dr
Kenworth Dr
Duraform Ln
Blanchar's Xing
Dalmore Rd
Liuna Way
Pepsi Way
Savannah Dr
Tierney Park
Williamsburg Way
Reigstad Park
Metro Dr
Cherokee Marsh
Danielle Rd
Daenti Rd
Token Creek County Park
USH 51 NB CTH V EB Off
USH 51
CTH V
CTH V
I 39
39
90
94
51
19
MP1
MP2
MP3
MP4
NA1
NA2
NA4
NA5
NP1
NP2
NP3
NP4
NP5
NP6
CP2
CP3
CP4
NA3

Figure 5.8: Park Facility Matrix

EXISTING FACILITIES MATRIX — Village of DeForest CORP

Designation	Park #	Acreage	Facility Name	PASSIVE AREAS						INFORMAL ACTIVE GAMES						HARD SURFACED COURTS						SEASONAL												TRAILS				SPECIAL EVENT AREAS			SERVICE AND SUPPORT FACILITIES								
				Open Space	Dog Park	Disc golf	Picnic area	Play equipment	Biking/walking	Soccer	Sandlot backstop	Baseball	Softball/Youth baseball	Football	Sand Volleyball	Basketball	Tennis	Pickleball	Horseshoes	Skateboard Area	Exercise Stations	Pool/Splash Pad	Swimming Beach	Golf Course/Driving Ra	Community Gardens	Camping Facilities	Ice Skating/Hockey	Sledding	Fishing Area	Xcountry Skiing	Boat Launch	Canoe/Kayak Launch	Pedestrian	Multi-Use	Mountain Bike/BMX	Snowmobile	Performance Stage	Zoo	Event area	Other building	Restrooms	Park Shelter	Pedestrian Access	Transit Capabilities	Drinking Water	ADA Accessibility	Bicycle Parking	Automobile Parking
MINI PARKS																																																	
	1	4.06	Dahl Park	◆				◆																																	◆			◆		
	2	0.38	Hank's Hollow Park					◆																																							
	3	1.83	O'Donnell Park				◆	◆	◆																								◆								◆			◆	◆	
	4	0.50	Star Gazer Park	◆			◆	◆																																	◆	◆	◆		◆		
	5	4.31	Sunnybrook Park	◆			◆	◆	◆																								◆	◆							◆				◆		
	6	1.31	Tierney Park				◆	◆								◆	◆	◆																						◆	◆	◆	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆
	7	0.16	Village Square Park	◆																																													
	8	3.40	Dale Jenkins Park	◆				◆	◆	◆																							◆	◆														
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS																																																	
	9	3.00	Conservancy Commons Park	◆			◆	◆	◆	◆												◆						◆					◆				◆				◆	◆	◆		◆	◆	◆	
	10	11.71	Liberty Land Park	◆			◆	◆	◆	◆															◆								◆	◆						◆		◆	◆					
	11	5.35	Veterans Memorial Park	◆			◆		◆																							◆	◆						◆			◆	◆			◆		◆
	12	61.41	Western Green Park	◆			◆	◆	◆	◆	◆				◆	◆																◆	◆	◆							◆	◆	◆		◆	◆		◆
	13	5.58	Yahara Park				◆	◆					◆																												◆	◆	◆		◆			◆
COMMUNITY PARKS																																																	
	14	11.48	Fireman's Park	◆			◆	◆					◆			◆		◆				◆															◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆
CONSERVANCY/NATURAL AREAS																																																	
	15	21.73	Bakke Conservancy						◆																								◆									◆						
	16	2.92	Chapel Green Park						◆																								◆	◆								◆						
	17	46.01	Marvin & Marie Schweers Natural Area						◆																								◆															
	18	13.99	Reigstad Park						◆	◆			◆																	◆			◆									◆						
	19	150.80	Upper Yahara River Corridor				◆		◆																◆				◆			◆	◆	◆								◆					◆	
SPECIAL USE PARKS																																																	
	20	23.82	DeForest Athletic Complex				◆	◆		◆		◆	◆	◆			◆	◆																						◆	◆	◆			◆			◆
	21	12.35	Marvin & Marie Schweers Dog Park		◆																																					◆			◆			◆
	22	3.22	Rivers Turn Park	◆			◆														◆							◆														◆			◆		◆	

NEW PARKLAND EVALUATION TOOL

A method is needed to evaluate a subdivision plat to determine if there is proposed to be enough parkland, if the proposed parkland is the right type of land, and if there's other land that may be better suited for park and open space. Staff and policy makers alike need a method of analyzing a site prior to making any formal determinations. Through the review of best practices, in addition to information provided by the Village staff, Public Service Committee, Plan Commission, Village Board, and the public, the following Parkland Evaluation Tool was created. The tool utilizes nine different criteria to score a given site during the subdivision plat review process. It is recommended that this matrix be used in all future park or trail acquisition determinations. It is also recommended that the table be reevaluated and adapted on an annual basis to accurately reflect the needs of the community as they may change over time. Figure 5.9 presents each Evaluation Criteria and the Site Score associated with each attribute of the park or trail being proposed.

FIGURE 5.9: PROPOSED PARKLAND EVALUATION TOOL

	Evaluation Criteria	Scoring System
1	Identified on Map 6: Future Park Facilities and/or Chapter 5	0 = Parkland is not directly stated or inferred in Chapter 5 or on Map 6. 10 = Parkland is not directly stated, but inferred in Chapter 5 or on Map 6. 20 = Parkland is directly stated in Chapter 5 or on Map 6.
2	Protects a Valuable Natural Resource (environmental corridor as shown on the Comprehensive Plan's Natural Resource Map)	0 = Parkland consists of between 0%-25% lands mapped environmental corridor from the Village Comprehensive Plan. 10 = Parkland consists of between 25%-49% lands mapped environmental corridor from the Village Comprehensive Plan. 20 = Parkland consists of between 50%-100% lands mapped environmental corridor from the Village Comprehensive Plan.
3	Provides a Connection to an Existing State, County, or Municipal Park or Trail	0 = Parkland will not connect to any existing or planned State, County, or Municipal park or trail. 15 = Parkland is an opportunity for a future connection or is directly adjacent to an existing or planned State, County, or Municipal park or trail.
4	Stormwater Retention	0 = Parkland is made up of over 50% lands that will be used for on-site stormwater retention. 5= Parkland is made up of between 1-49% lands that will be used for on-site stormwater retention. 10 = None of the parkland will be made up lands that will be used for on-site stormwater retention.
5	Accommodates Both Active and Passive Recreation Opportunities	0 = Parkland could only function for one type of recreational use in the future. 10 = Parkland could function for both an active and passive recreational use in the future and can accommodate at least one full size playfield.
6	Provides Right-of-Way Frontage	0 = Parkland provides less than 100' of right-of-way frontage. 10 = Parkland provides greater than 100' of right-of-way frontage.
7	Meets a Service Area Gap (Maps 2-5 /Chapter 4)	0 = Parkland already covered by a service area in Map 2-5. 5 = Parkland not covered by any service areas in Map 2-5.
8	Addresses a Goal, Objective, or Policy (Chapter 3)	0 = Parkland or future uses are not directly stated Chapter 3. 5 = Parkland or future uses are directly stated in Chapter 3.
9	Accommodates A Recommended New Recreation Facility Opportunity	0 = Parkland provides the ability to facility none of the recommend new recreational facility opportunities listed above in Chapter 5. 5 = Parkland provides the ability to facility at least one of the recommend new recreational facility opportunities listed above in Chapter 5.

The maximum score for a given site, if all nine of the Evaluation Criteria were entirely satisfied would be 100. While it is highly unlikely any future potential parkland will score a perfect 100, it is recommended that a tiered system to be utilized to categorize site scoring. Figure 5.10 displays the tiers within which a proposed parkland can fall. It is recommended that the following corresponding approach be taken based on the park's evaluation score.

- Any site score of 49 or under should not be pursued at this time because it does not meet enough of the evaluation criteria and needs improvement.
- Any site score between 50-79 should be pursued, however additional evaluation and determination based on the details of the situation may be necessary before accepting the land.
- Any site score of 80 or above should be pursued and meets or exceeds nearly all evaluation criteria.

FIGURE 5.10: PARKLAND EVALUATION SUMMARY

Site Score	Land Acquisition Approach
0-49	Does Not Meet Needs
50-79	Recommend (With Further Evaluation)
80-100	Highly Recommend

It should be noted that each individual situation presents unique circumstances that may fall outside of this evaluation. Figures 5.9 and 5.10 are recommended to be used as supporting information in the determination of any future proposed parkland, not the sole source of determination. A case-by-case approach is the most effective method to factor in all aspects of a particular situation.

CHAPTER 6:
Estimated Cost Projections for Future Facilities

6 ESTIMATED COST PROJECTIONS FOR FUTURE FACILITIES

This chapter contains capital cost estimates for providing the new park and recreational facilities recommended in Chapter 5. It is intended to assist the Village with the budgeting and planning for future parks and to satisfy §66.0617 and 236.29 of the Wisconsin Statutes regarding the opportunities to collect fees, if desired. However, the adoption of this plan does not commit or require the Village of DeForest to collect these fees through an impact fee ordinance.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLANNING

The following projects and cost estimates correspond to those site-specific projects listed in Chapter 5. Each overarching project has a wide variety of variables associated with its implementation in each individual site where it is planned to be completed. To estimate budgeting for each project, it is recommended that more detailed analysis related to the individual park site be completed to determine a cost estimate for that specific project which is most accurate.

To note, the estimated cost ranges are based on project bids collected in 2023-2024 dollars. It is reasonable to expect that an inflation metric of at least 1%-2% or more be applied based on these figures and the year in which the project is being pursued. Building materials, labor, and overall construction costs have been highly variable over the past several years. As such, the inflation metric listed above could increase significantly over the planning period. Overall, these tables have been developed with the intent of providing benchmark estimated costs figures for planning purposes only.

FIGURE 6.1: ESTIMATED FACILITY COSTS

Projects Estimated Between $0 and $100,000	
Proposed Project Type	**Estimated Cost Range**
Park Master Plan	$10,000-$20,000
Playground Equipment (new or replacement)	$70,000-$300,000
Playground Surface (replacement)	$50,000-$150,000 ($5/sf EWF, $22/sf PIP)
Open Air Shelter (new or replacement)	$50,000-$75,000
Outdoor Lighting on Courts	$100,000/4 courts
Paved Trail	$25/lf (assumed 10’ width)
Unpaved Trail (Walking or Mountain Bike)	$15/lf (assumed 10’ width)
Boardwalk Trail	$250/lf (assumed 10’ width)
Bike Rack (Paved Platform)	$1,500/each
Bike Repair Station (Paved Platform)	$3,000/each
Bocce Ball Court	$25-$40/sf
Stormwater or Environmental Restoration Plan	$25,000-$45,000
Upgrades to Baseball/Softball Fields	$50,000-$125,000 (not including lighting)
New Soccer Fields	$25,000-$50,000 (not including lighting or stands)
Disc Golf Course	$5,000/hole equipment and tee box (does not include earthwork and hole clearing)
On-Site Parking (replace or expand)	$1,800/parking stall
Fencing	$55/lf (assumed 6’ tall)
Benches and Picnic Tables	$1,200/each
Wayfinding Signage	$800/each

Source: Vandewalle & Associates and Parkitecture + Planning, 2024

Projects Estimated Between $100,000 and $1,000,000	
Proposed Project Type	**Estimated Cost Range**
Splash Pad	$350,000-$500,000 (flow through) $600,000-$700,000 (recirculation)
New Baseball/Softball Fields	$180,000-$250,000
New Baseball Field Lighting	$150,000-$175,000 (each field)
New Soccer/Football Field Lighting	$150,000-$165,000 (each field)
Bicycle Pump Track	$200,000-$500,000
Permanent Bathrooms (new or replacement)	$250,000-$500,000 ($250/sf)
Permanent Bathrooms and Showers (new or replacement)	$350,000-$700,000 ($280/sf)
Concession Buildings (new or replacement)	$350,000-$700,000 ($280/sf)
Skate Park	$250,000-$400,000 (10,000 sf)
Sport Court, Tennis Court, Pickleball Court, Futsal Court (new or replacement)	$50,000 per court w/ lighting $180,000 (4 courts no lighting) $250,000 (4 courts w/ lighting)
Pedestrian Bridge	$500,000-$1,000,000

Source: Vandewalle & Associates and Parkitecture + Planning, 2024

PROJECTED PARKLAND DEDICATION AND FEE-IN-LIEU

Based on a projected growth of 2,264 residents by the year 2034, applied to the Village's projected need of 39 acres of new parkland, the Village would need to spend a minimum of $1,560,000 in 2024 dollars for park land acquisition. Assuming the addition of 858 households, a fee-in-lieu of land dedication of $1,909 per new household would meet this demand. The alternative dedication of 1,980 square feet per household would satisfy the projected demand if land dedication were preferred. However, any future land dedication must be suitable for the development of a Min, Neighborhood, or Community park. The Village will continue to accept natural areas as donations to the park system; but these lands will not count toward this land dedication calculations. The process for arriving at these calculations is described in detail below.

FIGURE 6.2: PROJECTED PARKLAND DEDICATION AND FEE-IN-LIEU OF LAND DEDICATION

Calculation		Value
A	Projected Population Growth in 2034 (Figure 1.2 in the Appendix)	2,264 residents
B	Projected Household Growth in 2034 (Row A/Projected Average HH size in Figure 1.10 in the Appendix)	858 households
C	Additional Acres Needed in 2034 (Figure 4.6)	39 acres
D	Land Dedication Requirement per HH (Row C/Row B)	0.0455
E	Land Cost Per Acre (assumed average cost per acre for greenfield development)	$40,000
F	Projected Cost of Land Acquisition (Row C + Row G)	$1,560,000
G	Legal, Engineering, and Design Costs (Row F*5%)	$78,000
H	Total Land Acquisition Costs (Row F + Row G)	$1,683,000
I	Fee-in-Lieu of Land Dedication per Household (Row H/Row B)	$1,909
J	Land Dedication per Household in Square Feet (Row D*43,560)	1,980 square feet

PROJECTED PARK IMPROVEMENT FEES

Each new park should have a minimum amount of playground equipment and opportunities available. The cost of certain playground equipment varies with the age range of the intended users and the park type. Equipment in neighborhood parks is intended for younger children and the equipment available in larger parks should accommodate a wider age range of users. However, state law currently restricts the type of park improvements for which a community may collect impact fees. Figure 6.3 outlines the playground costs associated with each future park type in DeForest.

FIGURE 6.3: PROJECTED IMPROVEMENTS BY PARK TYPE

Open Air Shelter	$35,000 (1)
Playground	$150,000 (1)
Seating/Picnic/Rest Area	$5,000 (Small)
Sports Court (Basketball/Pickleball/Tennis without lights)	$100,000 (1)
Full Sized Soccer/Play Field (without lights or nets)	$50,000 (1)
Sidewalks and Bike/Walking Path	$50,000 (1)
Signage	$5,000 (1)
Miscellaneous Landscaping and Lighting	$20,000 (1)
Site Work	$75,000 (5 facilities)
Parking Lot	$24,000 (12 stalls)
Total Cost of Facilities	**$514,000**
Typical Park Size	**10 acres**
Total Playground Costs per Acre	$51,400
Adjacent Road and Utility Improvements Costs Per Acre (Figure 6.4)	$33,000
Average Improvement Cost Per Acre	**$84,400**

FIGURE 6.4: ROAD AND UTILITIES IMPROVEMENTS CALCULATION

Calculation		
A	Typical Park Size (based on NRPA standards) in Acres	10
B	Typical Park Size in Square Feet (Row A * 43,560)	435,600
C	Conceptual Road Frontage on Two Sides in Linear Feet (√Row B*2)	1,320
D	Road and Utilities Improvement Cost per Linear Foot	$500
E	Parkland Portion (Half) of Road and Utilities Improvement Cost per Linear	$250
F	Road and Utilities Improvement Cost for Typical Park (Row E*Row C)	$330,000
G	Road and Utilities Improvement Cost per Acre for Typical Park (Row F/Row	$33,000

Figure 6.3 and 6.4 shows what would be required to cover the costs associated with playground improvements. It should be noted that this figure is approximate and subject to significant change associated with economic fluctuations and the rapidly rising cost of construction materials such as wood, steel, concrete, and asphalt.

FIGURE 6.5: PROJECTED RECREATION FACILITIES FEE

Calculation		Value
A	Projected Additional Population in 2034 (individuals)	2,264
B	Projected Additional Dwelling Units in 2034 (dwelling units)	858
C	Calculated Additional Acres Needed (Figure 4.6)	39
D	Average Park Improvement Cost per Acre Estimate (Figure 6.3)	$84,400
E	Projected Cost of Improvements (Row C*Row D)	$3,291,600
F	Calculated Improvement Cost per Dwelling Unit (Row E/Row B)	$3,836

TOTAL IDENTIFIED IMPACT FEES

The adoption of this plan does not compel the Village to change its existing impact fees. The purpose of this analysis is to provide a methodology for how impact fees could be calculated in the future. It is an exercise in exploring costs related to population changes and new park development if the Village were to solely take on the responsibility of funding new parks and their improvement. Impact fees are not imposed upon existing residents and, if established, are only required for new construction of housing units in the Village.

This calculation shows impact fees imposed on each new household unilaterally. In instances where development has dedicated lands, it will only be necessary to collect the improvement costs, or $3,836 per dwelling unit. However, where land dedication does not take place, the total identified impact fee is $5,745 per dwelling unit. This represents approximately 2.4 percent of the cost of the median existing owner-occupied home in DeForest.

In general, parks should provide both active and passive features in one area. Therefore, where possible, neighborhood parks with intense recreational activity should be located near environmental corridors (which ultimately may carry trail facilities). More care is required in the design of regional and community-wide facilities due to the need for parking lots, lit athletic fields, and courts. For such parks, extensive on-site landscaping and berming may be desired to mitigate adverse traffic, sound, and lighting impacts.

As of 2024, DeForest currently imposes a parkland dedication requirement of 1,921 square feet per dwelling unit or fee-in-lieu of land dedication requirement of $3,308 per dwelling unit for new residential development, as well as impact fees for park development of $1,739 per dwelling unit.

If the Village were to pursue updating these fees under Wisconsin Statute Chapter 66, Section 66.0617 and Chapter 236, Section 236.45, a data analysis must be completed to form the basis of imposing parkland dedication, fee in lieu of parkland dedication, and park impact fees. This plan serves as the starting point for that analysis, but it is recommended that the Village develop a Needs Assessment to dive deeper into the data and analysis prior to changing any imposed fees. Additionally, for helpful regional context, the fees imposed by other similar sized communities has been provided below in Figure 6.7 for comparison purposes.

FIGURE 6.6 TOTAL IDENTIFIED IMPACT FEES

	Traditional Residential Dwelling Unit
Identified Land Dedication	1,980 square feet
Identified Fee in Lieu of Land	$1,909
Identified Improvement Fee	$3,836
Total Identified Impact Fee	**$5,745**

FIGURE 6.7 REGIONAL FEE COMPARISON

	Parkland Dedication	Fee In Lieu	Park Improvement
Village of DeForest	1,921 square feet	$3,308/du	$1,739/du
Village of Windsor	4,356 square feet	$14,035/acre	$1,449.24/du
Village of Waunakee	10% of total area	$475/du	$2,849.85/du
Village of McFarland	2,106 square feet	$3,915.46/du	$1,099.65/du
Village of Cottage Grove	2,919 square feet	$3,331/du	$2,513/du
Village of Oregon	878 square feet	$1,975/du	$2,374/du

Only includes single-family units for comparison purposes. Some communities have different structured fees for unit types (two family and multi-family).
Source: Village of DeForest, Village of Windsor, Village of Waunakee, Village of McFarland, Village of Cottage Grove, and Village of Oregon, 2024

IMPACT ON NEW HOUSING COSTS

Wisconsin Statutes 66.0617(4)(a)(3) requires estimating the effect of imposing park impact fees on housing costs within the municipality. The following assumptions were made in this analysis:

- Costs of the monthly mortgage payment are no more than 30 percent of a household's gross income
- Homeowners borrow no more than 2½ times the Village of DeForest median household income for a home mortgage (which in 2020 was $97,381 according to 2015-2020 American Community Survey data)
- Homeowners would make a minimum down payment of 5 percent of the total home cost

Based on these assumptions, if someone is spending 2½ times the Village population's median household income for a 30-year home mortgage ($243,453), and making a 5 percent down payment, then an affordable house in DeForest costs approximately $255,625 (according to U.S. Census 2020 data, the median value of an owner-occupied housing unit in DeForest is $287,300). This would result in a typical monthly mortgage payment of $1,306.91.

Fees for parkland acquisition and park improvements would impact the cost of new housing construction in DeForest. When adding this plan's identified park impact fee of $5,745, the mortgage amount for a single-family detached home would increase to $249,198 (from $243,453). Assuming the same 30-year mortgage at an interest rate of 5 percent, the monthly mortgage payment would increase to $1,337.75 per month (from $1,306.91). This increase in monthly mortgage payments due to the imposition of the identified park impact fee is $30.84 per month, or a 2.4 percent increase.

Therefore, using the assumptions for a typical single-family home in the Village of DeForest, park impact fees would have some impact on the cost of new housing.

CHAPTER 7:
Implementation Action Plan

7 IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

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

PLAN UPDATES

This plan was prepared in accordance with guidelines that will make it certifiable by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) and will qualify the Village for matching grant funds through the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON) and State of Wisconsin Stewardship Funds. In order to remain eligible, the plan must be updated every five years to ensure that it reflects the current needs of the community and retains its WisDNR certification. Based on this deadline, DeForest will update this Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan in 2029 (i.e., five years after 2024), at the latest. The Village should continue to monitor any changes to state or federal regulations related to grant eligibility over the next five years.

ACTION PLAN MATRIX

Figure 7.1 provides a detailed list and timeline of the major actions that the Village intends to complete in implementing this plan. Often, such actions will require substantial collaboration with other Village Departments, state and local governments, non-profits and volunteer groups, and local organizations and entities throughout the area. This list is not exhaustive, also see Chapter 5. It includes the recommendations that are likely to be actions taken over the next five years. The Village Board may choose to pursue additional actions or prioritize other actions as conditions change.

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

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

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

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

- In Progress means that the Action Item has already started to be addressed at some point and it is still a priority moving forward. These Action Items should be continuously reevaluated to make sure that progress is being made.
- Short means that the Action Item should be pursued over the next 1-2 years, following the adoption date of this plan.
- Medium means that the Action Item should be pursued over the next 3-5 years, following the adoption date of this plan.
- Long means that the Action Item should be pursued 5+ years, following the adoption date of this plan.

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

Figure 7.1 Action Plan Matrix

Action Item	Potential Partners	Timeframe
Participate in any future updates to the Dane County Park Plan and Regional MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.	Dane County, MPO	Ongoing
Work with the DeForest Area School District to implement the Safe Routes to School Plan and participate in future School District planning efforts and updates to the Strategic Plan.	School District	Ongoing
Work with the State and County on any future plans for parks, recreation, and bicycle and pedestrian planning in and around the Village.	WisDNR, WisDOT, County	Ongoing
Utilize the Village Capital Improvements Plan to implement the recommended improvements to each existing facility as detailed in Chapter 5.	Village Board	Ongoing
Annually review the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan at a Public Service Committee meeting to track progress and set priorities for the upcoming year.	Public Service Committee	Ongoing
Establish, update, and maintain the Village's Park and Trail Map.	Village staff	Ongoing
Evaluate any new parkland acquisition using the evaluation matrix in Chapter 5.	Public Service Committee	Ongoing
Actively pursue grant opportunities as they arise that align with the recommendations of this plan.	Village staff	Ongoing
Enforce the Village's land dedication or fee-in-lieu required for all new residential neighborhoods.	Public Service Committee	Ongoing
Conduct a Park Master Plan process as part of the acquisition of new park lands.	Public Service Committee	Ongoing
Implement the general recommended improvements for each type of park in the Village to increase quality of life amenities at each park, accomplish ADA accessibility at facilities, and implement sustainability measures in existing parks (see Chapter 5).	Public Service Committee	Ongoing
Conduct neighborhood meetings or pop-up events at each park to gather input on potential park upgrades, improvements, and new uses prior to implementing those improvements.	Village Staff	Ongoing
Update applicable Village Ordinances to define park types, uses, rules, and hours. Specifically, amend the C1 Zoning District to eliminate future confusion related to activities/uses permitted within that district. Following adoption, post these provisions within applicable parks.	Public Services Committee, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Village Board	Short
Pursue the identification, acquisition, and development of a new Community Park (see Chapter 5).	Public Service Committee and Village Board	Short
Explore the feasibility and investments associated with developing one or more of the recommended new facilities desired by the community as described in Chapter 5.	Public Service Committee and Village Board	Short

Action Item	Potential Partners	Timeframe
Establish a Parks Friends Groups or other volunteer initiative to assist with park fundraising.	Village Staff, local recreational organizations	Short
Develop relationships and information sharing between local economic development and tourism groups to highlight events, programming, and recreational opportunities in DeForest.	Village Staff, Chamber of Commerce, County	Short
Work with the School District and local recreational groups to develop, maintain, and distribute information on a Village of DeForest recreational programming database.	School District, local recreational organizations	Short
Develop a local business sponsorship program to assist in funding park improvements.	Local organizations and employers	Short
Expand and advertise the existing parks donation program where residents can donate money to assist in the future park improvements.	Local organizations and employers	Short
Partner with local employers to connect people looking to volunteer with opportunities to assist in the maintenance of Village parks.	Local organizations and employers	Short
Reevaluate and consider updating the Village's land dedication, fee-in-lieu, and park improvement fees through a Needs Assessment and update of applicable Village Ordinances based on the recommendations in Chapter 6.	Village Board and Plan Commission	Short
Identify and establish a location suitable for mountain biking trail development. See the recommended process outlined in Chapter 5.	Public Service Committee, County	Short
Establish a park visitor count program to monitor park usage, capacity, and inform future decision making.	Public Service Committee	Short
Develop a parks condition scoring matrix that can be used to rate the ongoing conditions of each park's facilities on an annual basis. Use this tracking system to identify long-term projects to be added to the Capital Improvements Plan.	Public Service Committee	Short
Update the Village's Official Map to reflect the recommendations of this plan and the Village Comprehensive Plan.	Plan Commission	Medium
Adopt a Complete Street Policies and pursue becoming a Bicycle Friendly Community (League of American Bicyclists).	Village Board	Medium
Implement the site improvements recommended in the Park Master Plan for Iver Munson Park that correspond to the recommendations of this plan.	Public Service Committee	Medium
Develop a Playground Management Plan and ADA Assessment and Improvement Plan to monitor infrastructure and plan for maintenance and upgrades needed.	Village Staff	Medium
Become a designated Wisconsin Healthy Community.	County, Village Board	Medium
Develop a public art program/initiative to increase public art installations in local parks.	Local arts groups	Medium
Update the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.	Public Service Committee	Medium

RESOLUTION 2024-102
ADOPTION OF THE VILLAGE OF DEFOREST
2024 COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan has been completed and thoroughly reviewed at multiple meetings of the Public Services Committee; and

WHEREAS, the plan will serve as a guide for making future decisions related to the expansion and development of needed parks, trails, and open space areas in the community; and

WHEREAS, on December 3, 2024 the Public Services Committee and the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended to the Village Board approval of the 2024 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan to serve as the Village's plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village of DeForest does hereby adopt the 2024 Village of DeForest Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Village Board does hereby request that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources make the Village of DeForest eligible for participation in the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship, LAWCON, and ORAP programs.

Adopted December 3, 2024.

APPROVED: 6-1 Trustee Simpson voted no

Jane Cahill Wolfgram

Jane Cahill Wolfgram, Village President

Attest:

Callista Lundgren

Callista Lundgren, Village Clerk