

Background

Challenge

Hitchcock Design Group was charged with developing a Park Facility Study and Acquisition Plan that will serve as a guide for the next 5 years. The Village has experienced tremendous population growth in recent years and this development has applied substantial pressure on the existing village parks, trails, open space, and natural resource areas. The goal is to enhance the quality of life by utilizing resources wisely, identifying acquisition opportunities, and redeveloping existing facilities.

Introduction to the Village of Shorewood

The Village of Shorewood is a rapidly growing community in the southwest suburbs of Chicago located along the western edge of Will County. Shorewood has Joliet to the north and east, Minooka to the southwest and the intersection of I-55 and I-80 to the southeast. Significant geographic elements include the DuPage River to the east, Aux Sable Creek to the west, and the I & M Canal and Trail to the south. The Village has an existing population of 13,800 and is forecasted to exceed 18,500 within 3 to 5 years. The Village has an average of 3.3 persons to the acre and will increase to 4.3 persons per acre with the population increase over the next 3 to 5 years. Village corporate boundary currently encompasses +/- 6 sq. miles (4,300 acres), and has a comprehensive boundary that will grow an additional +/- 15 sq. miles (9600 acres). The population projections should be considered very modest when considering that the village is such a prime location and has so much land undeveloped. Village leadership has requested this study to understand how to provide appropriate open space and parks for its residents as the village grows.

1996 Flood

The Village of Shorewood, along with many other communities, suffered a significant loss in July of 1996, testament to the event is this memorial located in Little Coyote Park. Through adversity comes triumph; it is from this unfortunate event that will emerge the Village's great opportunity to capitalize from the DuPage River by way of a Riverwalk and Trail System. Redevelopment strategies, planning, and orientations could create a great amenity and community connection along to the DuPage River Corridor. The opportunity to develop such an amenity along an aesthetic and pristine river is truly a unique situation. The Village currently owns all but a few parcels along the river.



Process

A three - pronged approach was used to inventory, analyze, and recommend actions for Acquisitions, Individual Park Facilities, and the Trail System. Hitchcock Design Group worked with a task force consisting of key members of all facets of the Parks and Recreation Department throughout the process to help identify and evaluate the opportunities within the Village. Once goals and objectives had been formulated, the Parks and Recreation Committee was consulted for feedback, brainstorming and planning. Those comments guided the plan and help ground the ideas in the community vision.

Utilizing aerial and site photography, municipal boundary maps, flood way and floodplain maps, regional planning information, census data, user surveys, and GIS data, Hitchcock Design Group (HDG) took inventory and evaluated existing park amenities. In particular, HDG applied the standards of the National Park & Recreation Association and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to the park amenities, their service areas, and the population base. These standards are the primary measures that Illinois state grant funding programs utilize in their evaluation of projects worthy of funding.

Facilities Study (design summary)

The findings of this study clearly indicate the Village of Shorewood has benefited from strong leadership, vision, and passion throughout the community. The existing parks provide a general diversity of activities, located appropriately throughout the community, and are of an appropriate size to serve the existing population. Based on experience, national standards, and project goals, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis was prepared for the park system. The emerald necklace of the park system, to the credit of Village leadership, is the acquisition, maintenance and preservation of natural areas along the flood way and floodplain of the DuPage River. The community is poised for success by focusing efforts along the DuPage River for an open space corridor.

Trail System

The trail system (see pages 62 and 63) currently +/- 10.85 miles in length is well conceived, and with a few additional connections, can provide realistic alternative transportation for residents as well as recreational use. The trail system recommendations call for systematic and consistent acquisition, easement agreements, and development along natural corridors and transportation corridors linking key community elements. The trail system plan is intended to act as a guide that will help secure funding from state agencies and promote development consideration of key links within the community.

Acquisition

As discussed earlier the existing population is being served adequately based on national standards, however the projected growth pattern to the west will jeopardize the balance and dispersal of the parks and open space throughout the community. For this reason, as well as to connect many separated parcels along the river, acquisitions should be considered and anticipated as development pressures continue westward. The proposed acquisitions will create a geographically balanced park system and contiguous land holdings along the river.

Recommendations

The recommendations made within this document are intended to provide the Village of Shorewood Parks and Recreation with a general direction and understanding of how to redevelop effectively and grow responsibly. Our recommendations identify land parcels, park acreage, time lines, and funding options, as well as park redevelopment with time lines, and trail connections. The projection time lines are a tool and function as a strategy framework. Economics, technology, communication, legislature and capitalism all have a tremendous role and influence on how and when these opportunities can be realized. Diligence, passion, generosity, vision, and community leadership will prevail to ensure great park and recreational amenities that will be the Village of Shorewood's triumph.

Facility Matrix

	List Ac.	Actual Ac.	Handi-Cap Acc.	Trails	Pavillion	Picnic Tables	Play Unit	Swings	Grill	Drinking Fountain	Rest Rooms	Tennis	Basketball	Baseball	Soccer	Frisbe Golf	Horseshoes	Lighted	Bike Rack	Parking	
Mini-Parks																					
Diana Park	0.3	0.28	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓										✓	✓		
Fawn Park	1.5	0.8				✓	✓	✓												✓	
Huntington Village Park	1	0.77	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓										✓	
Kits Korner Park	0.8	0.53	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓									✓	✓	
River Oaks Park	0.8	0.83	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			1						✓	✓	
Whitetail Park	4	1.44	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			1/2							✓	
Towne Center Park		3.1		✓																	✓
Heartland Park		4.21																			

Mini Park Total Acreage 8.4 11.96

Neighborhood Parks

Ca-Crest Park	0.8	6.01	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			1/2						✓	✓	
Country West Park	4	5.13	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓									✓	✓	✓
Gabrielson/ Oakwood Park		9.22																			
Heritage Mill Park		6.12																			
Heritage Mill Park		5.25																			
Lake Forrest Park	6	4.47																			
Little Coyote Park	8	5.07	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓											✓	✓	
River Crossing Park		18.04																			
Seil Road Park	3	4.37	✓			✓	✓	✓													✓
Shorewood Park	14	17.65	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓		✓		✓	
West Shore Park	3.1	7.76	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			1/2						✓	✓	✓

Neighborhood Park Total Acreage 38.9 89.09

Community Parks

Four Seasons Park	45	59.86	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	4	2	3	✓					✓	✓
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Community Park Total Acreage 45 59.86

Total Park Acreage 92.3 160.91

INVENTORY

The Village of Shorewood Facility Matrix shown above is a current inventory of the existing village park land, classification, use, area, and amenities for each individual park. This information is based on individual site visits, maintenance records, and staff input. It is notable that the park system total area significantly increased from previously reported area based on this thorough discovery process.

ANALYSIS

One of the ways that park systems are measured by funding agencies is the application of National and Illinois averages for facility types. The Facility Comparison Matrix (above right) puts the Village of Shorewood amenities alongside the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standard as well as the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Standard. A quick comparison highlighted in red indicates the number of facilities required to comply with the National and State standards. Deficiencies are present, but not overwhelming. Each of these deficiencies should be considered for new park development or redevelopment.

Facility Comparison Matrix

Shorewood Population est. (18,500)

	Shorewood		Illinois Facility Average		NRPA Standards	
	Existing # of Facilities	Existing # of Facilities per 1000 population	IL Average # of Facilities per 1000 population	Total # of Facilities needed to meet IL Average	NRPA # of Facilities per 1000 population	Total # of Facilities needed to meet NRPA Standards
WATER BASED FACILITIES						
Fishing Pier/ Docks		0.00	0.16	3.0		
Boat Launch Ramps		0.00	0.12	2.2		
Marina Slips		0.00	2.73	50.5		
Swimming Pools		0.00	0.09	1.7	0.05	0.9
Swimming Beaches (linear ft.)		0.00	16.94	313.4		
HUNTING FACILITIES						
Public Hunting Allowed (acres)		0.00	54.18	1002.3		
Water Fowl Blinds		0.00	0.23	4.3		
OVERNIGHT FACILITIES						
Developed Campsites (full/partial)		0.00	5.32	98.4		
Primitive Campsites		0.00	0.94	17.4		
Equestrian Campsites		0.00	0.15	2.8		
Cabins		0.00	0.31	5.7		
Lodges		0.00	0.06	1.1		
TRAILS						
Multi-Use Trails (Miles)	10.5	0.57	0.93	17.2		
Hiking Trails		0.00	0.46	8.5		
Bicycle Trails		0.00	0.25	4.6		
Horseback Trails		0.00	0.19	3.5		
Physical Fitness Trails (Stations)		0.00	0.22	4.1		
Nature/Interpretive Trails (Miles)		0.00	0.20	3.7		
Off-road Vehicle Trails		0.00	0.01	0.2		
Cross-Country Trails		0.00	0.40	7.4		
Snowmobile Trails		0.00	0.11	2.0		
DAY USE FACILITIES						
Picnic Shelters	13	0.70	0.76	14.1		
Picnic Tables	35	1.89	12.12	224.2		
Playgrounds	11	0.59	0.72	13.3		
Interpretive Centers		0.00	0.01	0.2		
SPORT COURTS & FIELDS						
Tennis Courts	4	0.22	0.49	9.1	0.50	9.3
Basketball Courts	4.5	0.24	0.35	6.5	0.20	3.7
Volleyball Courts	2	0.11	0.17	3.1	0.20	3.7
Baseball Fields		0.00	0.32	5.9	0.20	3.7
Softball Fields	3	0.16	0.36	6.7	0.20	3.7
Football Fields		0.00	0.10	1.9	0.05	0.9
Soccer Fields	5	0.27	0.25	4.6	0.10	1.9
Disc Golf	1	0.00	0.00	0.0	0.00	0.0
Golf Courses (Holes)		0.00	0.90	16.7	0.36	6.7
Archery Ranges		0.00	0.02	0.4	0.02	0.4
Rifle Pistol Ranges		0.00	0.01	0.2		
Running Tracks		0.00	0.05	0.9	0.05	0.9
Ice Rinks		0.00	0.04	0.7		
Badminton		0.00			0.20	3.7
Handball		0.00			0.05	0.9
Combo Skeet/Trap Field 8 stations		0.00			0.02	0.4
Field Hockey		0.00			0.05	0.9
Golf Driving Range		0.00			0.02	0.4

Village of Shorewood Needs & Deficiencies according to NRPA & IRPA Standards

SWOT: (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)

- Equipment is generally new and will not need to be replaced within this plan cycle.
- Site furniture including shelter, picnic tables, trash receptacles, benches, bike racks, and drinking fountains generally present in all sites.
- Safety concerns are minimal and generally lie with proper maintenance.
- Playgrounds are generally accessible and do not appear to have any ADA compliance issues.
- Multiple access points to the DuPage River are present.
- Mature vegetation and natural amenities are present on many sites.
- Most parks have access to utilities including security lighting, water, and storm sewer.
- Most parks have rules signs, hours of operation, and park identifier signs present.
- Land ownership along the DuPage River makes a north-south trail / greenway corridor system likely & feasible.
- Com Ed / Pipeline utility corridors along the west edge of the system makes a north-south trail / greenway / pocket park system likely & feasible.
- Passive use amenities are available to all residents.
- Corporate limits are rich with natural resources including land along the DuPage River, Hammel Woods Forest Preserve, and future land along the Aux Sable Creek.

Strengths:

Playground in Four Seasons Park



Soccer Fields in Four Seasons Park



- Multiple access points to the DuPage River are present that could provide the backbone of the park system.
- Linear shaped properties will allow for trail system connections.
- Use of native prairie planting in multiple areas can reduce maintenance requirements with minimal efforts.
- Tributary feeding the DuPage River may allow east-west trail / greenway connection between the Com Ed Corridor and the DuPage River Corridor.
- Many sites can increase value by adding naturalist programming.
- Development driven land / cash donations can provide strategic acquisition locations.

Opportunities:

Weaknesses:

- Mini-parks and neighborhood parks lack character building elements and detail that makes them memorable.
- Landscape layering is limited to primarily trees.
- Parking opportunities are mainly on-street.
- Property lines seem to wander and are disjointed, non-contiguous land parcels.
- Active use sports facilities are limited.
- Significant amount of un-programmed land is present.

Threats:













- Large percentage of floodplain properties will make active use development difficult and will require an extensive permit process.
- Comprehensive planning boundaries will more than double the current land area stretching resources thin.
- Development pressures are immediate

Goal & Shelter at Ca-Crest Park



Drainage basin in Country West Park



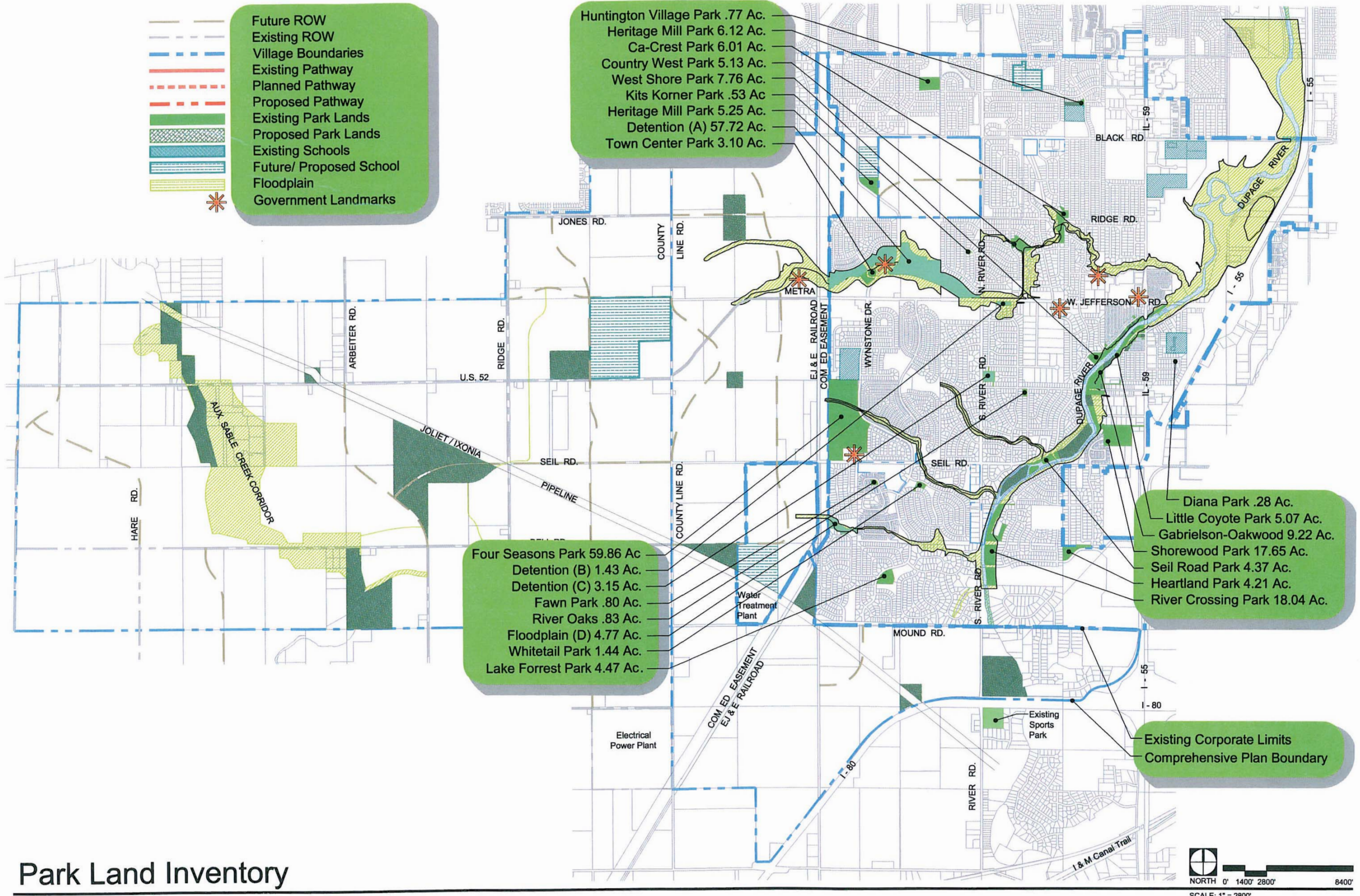
-  Future ROW
-  Existing ROW
-  Village Boundaries
-  Existing Pathway
-  Planned Pathway
-  Proposed Pathway
-  Existing Park Lands
-  Proposed Park Lands
-  Existing Schools
-  Future/ Proposed School
-  Floodplain
-  Government Landmarks

- Huntington Village Park .77 Ac.
- Heritage Mill Park 6.12 Ac.
- Ca-Crest Park 6.01 Ac.
- Country West Park 5.13 Ac.
- West Shore Park 7.76 Ac.
- Kits Korner Park .53 Ac.
- Heritage Mill Park 5.25 Ac.
- Detention (A) 57.72 Ac.
- Town Center Park 3.10 Ac.

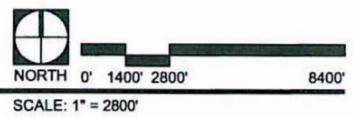
- Four Seasons Park 59.86 Ac.
- Detention (B) 1.43 Ac.
- Detention (C) 3.15 Ac.
- Fawn Park .80 Ac.
- River Oaks .83 Ac.
- Floodplain (D) 4.77 Ac.
- Whitetail Park 1.44 Ac.
- Lake Forrest Park 4.47 Ac.

- Diana Park .28 Ac.
- Little Coyote Park 5.07 Ac.
- Gabrielson-Oakwood 9.22 Ac.
- Shorewood Park 17.65 Ac.
- Seil Road Park 4.37 Ac.
- Heartland Park 4.21 Ac.
- River Crossing Park 18.04 Ac.

- Existing Corporate Limits
- Comprehensive Plan Boundary



Park Land Inventory



Level of Service Criteria

The Level of Service (LOS) guideline is a ratio expressed as acres/ 1000 population which represents the minimum amount of open space and park land needed to meet the recreation demands of the community. The LOS is an integral part of determining a community's open space and park land acquisition needs.

According to NRPA, the LOS should:

1. Be practicable and achievable. Aspirational targets must always be tempered with a dose of reality.
2. Provide for an equitable allocation of park and recreation resources throughout a community. There must be equal opportunity access for all citizens.
3. Reflect the real-time demand of the citizens for park and recreation opportunities.

The population ratio method was used to determine the LOS for Shorewood. This method is used most often for determining park and recreation space standards. The direct relationship between recreation and people is emphasized when using the population ratio method. This method is easy to calculate and update as the community grows.

As previously indicated, the population of Shorewood is projected to be 18,500 within 3 to 5 years. The Village owns approximately 160.9 acres of park land. Of the 160.9 acres +/- 44 acres of park land is within the 100 yr. floodplain. According to NRPA, park land and natural resource areas which land within floodplain and detention should not be included in the total acreage when determining the Level of Service. These areas are not to be counted due to their limited capability for recreational use beyond passive recreation. To determine the LOS we used the total acreage in this study as a baseline, however our recommendations account for this shortage of active recreational facilities that occur both with neighborhood and community parks.

NRPA Park Service Area Criteria

NRPA suggests that a park system should total 6.25 acres to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population. Currently, Shorewood's LOS is 8.7 acres/ 1000 population. The recommended LOS standard for Shorewood is 10.0 acres/ 1000 population, which is based on the review of the existing conditions, similar sized communities in the area and NRPA guidelines. The recommended Level of Service is compared to the existing Level of Service for each park classification.

Level of Service - Results from Existing Conditions

Baseline		Population 18500	
Classification	Area (AC)	Recommended Level of Service (acres / 1000 population)	% of Area
Mini Park	0	0.00	0.0%
Neighborhood Park	37.0	2.00	20.0%
Community Park	148.0	8.00	80.0%
Total Parks	185.0	10.00	100.0%

Existing			
Classification	Existing Area (AC)	Existing Level of Service (acres / 1000 population)	% of Area
Mini Park	11.96	0.65	7.4%
Neighborhood Park	89.1	4.82	55.4%
Community Park	59.9	3.24	37.2%
Total Parks	160.9	8.70	100.0%

Park Classification Criteria

<p>Mini Parks</p> <p>Diana Park Fawn Park Huntington Village Park Kits Korner Park River Oaks Park Whitetail Park Towne Center Park Heartland Park</p>	<p>The purpose of the Mini Park Recreation Service Area Study is to determine which residential areas are under served by the village’s existing Mini Park land holdings. Shorewood’s Mini Parks are typically less than one acre in size and feature a small play environment.</p> <p>The Mini Park Recreation Service Map on page 18 illustrates a one-quarter mile service radii around each Mini Park parcel. The National Park and Recreation Association’s (NPRA) Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines recommend that Mini Parks with active recreation amenities be centrally located within its service area, which encompasses a 1/4 mile distance.</p> <p>According to the Level of Service, the LOS for Mini Parks is 0.5 acres/ 1000 population. At the current population the village has a surplus of 2.71 acres devoted to the Mini Park class.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Park size 2,500 sq. ft. up to 5 acres * Does not require parking * Limited lighting for security and safety * Positive drainage * Typically not for program purposes * Play structures & courts scaled appropriate to park acreage * Passive activities * Aesthetics, preserve natural elements or unique features * Locations ideally create a waypoints or nodes with trail system
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<p>Neighborhood Parks</p> <p>Ca-Crest Park Country West Park Gabrielson/ Oakwood Park Heritage Mill Park (1) Heritage Mill Park (2) Lake Forrest Park Little Coyote Park River Crossing Park Seil Road Park</p>	<p>The purpose of the Neighborhood Park Recreation Service Area Study is to determine which residential areas are under served by the Village’s existing Neighborhood Park land holdings. Shorewood’s Neighborhood Parks are typically 5-10 acres in size and feature a play environment, parking, picnicking, shelters and open space for informal play.</p> <p>The Neighborhood Park Recreation Service Map on page 28 illustrates a one-quarter mile to one-half mile service radii around each Neighborhood Park parcel. The National Park and Recreation Association’s (NPRA) Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines recommend that Neighborhood Parks with active recreation amenities be centrally located within its service area, which encompasses a one-quarter mile to one-half mile distance.</p> <p>According to the Level of Service, the LOS for Neighborhood Parks is 2.0 acres/ 1000 population. At the current population the village has a surplus by 52.1 acres in Neighborhood Park class. However, 44.0 acres of this 89.1 acres is in the DuPage River floodway and floodplain and stormwater detention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Park should be no less than 5 acres, 7-10 acres is preferred * Provides 7-10 parking spaces * Level topography with suitable soils and positive drainage * Limited lighting for security and tennis courts only * Court games and fields should not be programmed due to these high impacts are typically not self-sustaining and creates undesirable noise and congestion that is not suitable for dense residential areas * Play structures should facilitate multiple age groups * Active play areas should use no more than 50% of park space * Preserve aesthetics, should preserve natural elements or unique features * Locations should be associated with natural areas and create way points or nodes with trail system
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<p>Community Parks</p> <p>Four Seasons Park</p>	<p>The purpose of the Community Park Recreation Service Area Study is to determine which residential areas are under served by the Village’s existing community park land holdings. Shorewood’s community park is 59.9 acres in size and provides a great play environment with sports fields, parking, picnicking, shelters and open space for informal play.</p> <p>The Community Park Recreation Service Map on page 42 illustrates a one mile service radii around each Community Park parcel. The National Park and Recreation Association’s (NPRA) Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines recommend that Community Parks with active recreation amenities be centrally located within its service area, which encompasses a one-half to three mile distance.</p> <p>According to the Level of Service, the LOS for Community Parks is 7.5 acres/ 1000 population. At the current population the Village is deficient 78.8 acres that should be devoted to the Community Park class.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Park size should be 20 to 50 acres * Large play structures and attractions * Informal courts and play fields * Light to medium programming * Suitable soils, positive drainage and varying topography * Unique landscape and ornamental gardens * Extensive internal trail system that connects to community trail system * Picnic sites * Ideally located with natural systems such as rivers, lakes, and large natural ecosystems such as prairie and forest preserves * Cultural elements such as concerts and community
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NRPA Classification Service Areas

NRPA recommends creating a park classification system to serve as a guide for planning. The Park Classification Criteria on page 15 indicates the criteria for determining the classification for each of Shorewood's parks. Three separate park classes were identified for Shorewood's open space and park system. These classes will serve as the basis for the following studies. Natural Resource Areas were left out of the overall park classification table, because these lands have limited capacity for recreational use. The Park Land Inventory Map identifies all publicly owned open space and park land within the Village boundary by the following categories: mini park, neighborhood park, community park, natural resource area, and school property.

Park Land Accountability

According to the facility needs matrix the Village has a total area that meets recommendations by NRPA, however only 72.5% of the total area (approximately 116.9 acres) is outside the floodplain. While the remaining +/- 44.0 acres is considered a valued asset, it is also a potential liability and its availability is greatly reduced following inclement weather.

Existing Service Area Maps

Service Area Maps on pages 18, 28, 42 are provided at the beginning of each park classification site inventory sections to illustrate the areas that each park services within the village corporate boundary. The Village of Shorewood Park Service Areas Map on page 45 shows the cumulative area that the existing parks system provides to the village residents. The remaining area in red shows the areas of the community not serviced within the criteria of the NRPA standards. This is a graphic tool that is also used in the planning and recommendation of potential acquisitions.

Future Service Area Map

The Future Service Area Map on page 55 indicate levels of service needs that show how parks should be developed by category of mini, neighborhood, and community parks in the future to ensure the community is properly services by its amenities and open space. The map shows this compilation of parks if the recommended acquisitions and trails are developed. The mini park classification is not shown as part of the acquisitions due to the nature and number of mini parks that will occur as a part of new development approval process.

Park Classification Locations

Mini Parks should be located in dense residential land usage typical of R-1 through R-4.

Neighborhood Parks should also located within residential land usage typical of R-1 through R-4 and can occur near or within small business B-1 and B-2 areas.

Community Parks should be located adjacent to Residential and small business and due to land availability is often found as a part or next to light industrial.

Acquisitions are recommended in two major phases. Phase I primarily addresses the need for contiguity of the DuPage River Corridor. Complete ownership along the river is paramount to the implementation of a riverwalk and extension of the DuPage River Trail. The overall open space area would not change significantly with these very small parcel acquisitions since most parcels are within the 100 yr. flood plain.

Fawn Park - Example of a Great Mini-Park

