

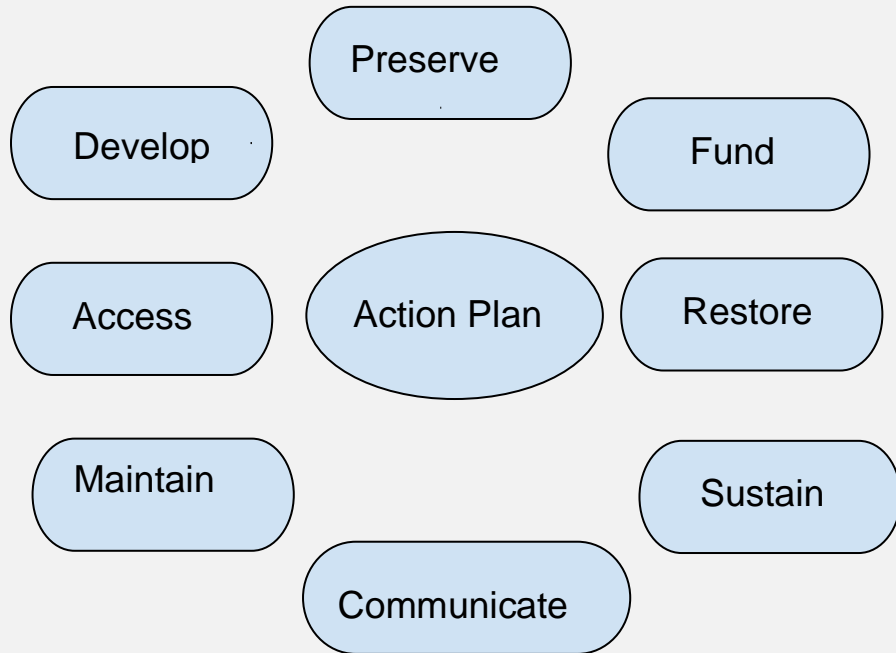
Village of Walworth, WI

Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Outdoor Plan: 2024-2029

Adopted:

Providing a Thriving System of Parks, Recreational Opportunities, and Open Space

To Enrich the Quality of Life for All Residents in the Village of Walworth



I. Acknowledgments

Village Board

Louise Czaja, President
Bob Ball, Trustee
Tom Connelly, Trustee
Merik Fell, Trustee
Lawrence Gums, Trustee
Kristi Reiersen-McWayne, Trustee
Matt Tanner, Trustee

Plan Commission

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Susan Steele, Local Government & Community Outreach

II. Village of Walworth Resolutions

VILLAGE OF WALWORTH
WALWORTH COUNTY, WISCONSIN
PLAN COMMISSION RESOLUTION 2024-2029

RECOMMENDING ADOPTION OF THE VILLAGE OF WALWORTH COMPREHENSIVE
PARKS, RECREATION, AND OUTDOOR PLAN 2024-2029

INSERT

VILLAGE OF WALWORTH
WALWORTH COUNTY, WISCONSIN
RESOLUTION 2024-2029

ADOPTION OF THE VILLAGE OF WALWORTH COMPREHENSIVE PARKS, RECREATION,
AND OUTDOOR PLAN 2024-2029

INSERT

III. Table of Contents

I.	Acknowledgments	2
II.	Village of Walworth Resolutions	3
III.	Table of Contents	5
IV.	Introduction	9
V.	Local and Regional Context	10
VI.	Statement of Needs, Parameters and Purpose	11
A.	Vision Statement	12
B.	Goals and Policies	12
1.	Goal One	12
2.	Goal Two	14
3.	Goal Three	15
4.	Goal Four	16
5.	Goal Five	16
6.	Goal Six	16
VII.	Definitions, Standards and Classifications	17
A.	Terms and Classifications	17
1.	Park/Active Recreation	17
2.	Passive Recreation	17
3.	Environmental Corridor	17
B.	Classifications Relevant to Parks and Open Space	17
1.	Special Use	17
2.	Mini Park	17
3.	Neighborhood Park	17
4.	Community Park	18
5.	Special Use Parks	18
6.	Conservancy	18
VIII.	Planning Process	20
A.	Introduction	20
B.	Objectives Used to Guide the Process	20
C.	Methodology	21
D.	Amending the Plan	21
IX.	Summary of Past Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans	22

A.	Park and Open Space Plan for the Village of Walworth (1986)	22
B.	Park and Open Space Plan for the Village of Walworth (2006)	22
C.	Park and Open Space Plan for Walworth County (2014)	23
D.	Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2011-2016)	24
E.	Summary Walworth Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2018-2023	25
X.	Current Comprehensive Plans Relevant to the Village of Walworth Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan 2024-2029	30
A.	Summary of the Open Space Plan for Walworth County (July 2022)	30
B.	Summary of Vision 2050	31
C.	Summary 2019-2023 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan	32
XI.	Description of the Planning Region	34
A.	Social Characteristics of Village/Planning Region	34
1.	Size	34
2.	Population Trends and Projections	34
3.	Ethnic Background/Language Spoken at Home	34
4.	Housing and Household Characteristics	34
5.	Age	34
6.	Economy	35
7.	Employment/Unemployment	35
8.	Estimated Median Household Income 2021	35
9.	Estimated Per Capita Income 2021	35
10.	Median House/Condo Value 2021	35
11.	Median Gross Rent 2021	35
12.	Cost of Living Index	35
13.	Residents Living In Poverty 2021	35
B.	Physical Characteristics of the Region	36
1.	Topography	36
2.	Water Resources	36
3.	Wetlands	36
4.	Steep Slopes	37
5.	Surface Water	37
6.	Climate	37

7.	Soils	37
XII.	Parks, Recreation and Outdoor Inventory	38
A.	Introduction to Existing Park and Open Space System	38
B.	Village of Walworth Outdoor Recreation Park Facility Inventory	41
1.	Table 1B Village of Walworth: Park/Active Recreation	41
2.	Table 2B Village of Walworth: Passive Recreation Areas	42
3.	Table 3B Village of Walworth: Retention Pond Areas	42
C.	Neighborhoods Not Served by a Designated Park	43
D.	Pedestrian/Bicycle Paths	43
XIII.	Other (Public and Private) Park and Recreation Facilities	45
A.	Village of Walworth	45
1.	Publicly Owned-Open to the Public	45
2.	Publicly Owned-Restricted Access	45
3.	Privately Owned-Not Open to the Public	45
4.	Privately Owned-Open to the Public	46
B.	Neighboring Communities Within the Big Foot Recreational District	46
1.	Publicly Owned-Open to the Public	46
2.	Privately Owned-Open to the Public	47
XIV.	Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment	48
A.	Public Input Assessment	48
1.	Informal discussions with residents	48
2.	Ad Hoc Citizen Committee site visits	48
3.	Public comments from citizens attending public meetings	48
4.	Review of prior Needs Assessment Survey	48
5.	Review of public documents	48
6.	Walworth Plan Commission: Public Hearing January 15, 2024	48
B.	Current Conditions of Existing Village of Walworth Parks	48
XV.	Recommendations for Development and Improvement	50
	2024-2029	50
A.	Assumptions	50
B.	Recommendations for All Parks	50
1.	Immediate Attention Recommendations (0-1 Year)	50
2.	Short Term Recommendations (1-3 years)	51

3.	Long Term Recommendations (3-5+ years)	51
C.	Recommendations for Specific Parks, Conservancies, Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail Systems and Open Space	52
XVI.	Recommendations for Outdoor Recreation Provision	54
A.	Action Program-Capital Improvement Schedule (CIS)	54
B.	Operation and Maintenance	54
1.	Existing Operation and Maintenance Responsibilities	54
2.	Implications of CIS on Operation and Maintenance Capabilities	54
C.	Funding Programs	54
1.	Local Funds	54
2.	Available Grant Funding Programs	55
XVII.	Appendix	56
XVIII.	Photographs	57
A.	Badger Park and Conservancy	57
B.	Devils Lane Park	58
C.	Heyer Park	59
D.	Rotary Park	60
E.	Toynton Park	61

IV. Introduction

This Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan 2024-2019 may be referred to in this document as the “Plan”. It was developed consistent with the [“Guidelines for the Development of Local Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans”](#) published by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and is intended to meet all WDNR park and outdoor recreation plan criteria necessary to attain and maintain grant eligibility.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) requires communities to prepare and adopt a five-year park and outdoor recreation plan to maintain eligibility for certain state and federal grants and loans that can be used for acquisition and development of park land and recreation facilities. Other private grant and funding sources often require a plan to be submitted as well.

This five year Parks, Recreation, and Outdoor Plan 2024-2019 is an update of the Park and Open Space Plan for the Village of Walworth 1986, Park and Open Space Plan for the Village of Walworth 2006, and the Village of Walworth Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2018-2023.

This Plan is more general in its design and intention and is not intended to replace the need for further and more detailed park and open space design plan(s) that would be completed by professional consultants.

This document was prepared by individuals serving on the Village of Walworth’s Parks, Recreation, and Outdoor Space Ad Hoc Committee. It was not prepared by a professional firm or consulting company.

V. Local and Regional Context

The Village of Walworth is located in Walworth County in southeastern Wisconsin. Situated two miles from the Illinois State line, the Village is located 50 miles southwest of Milwaukee, 65 miles southeast of Madison, 65 miles northwest of Chicago, 24 miles from Beloit and 26 miles from Janesville (two of the fastest growing communities and business corridors in southeastern Wisconsin). The Village is near the western shore of Geneva Lake-a major destination for residents and tourists. Walworth is well connected to the region via highways 14, 67 and other county local highways.

The Village of Walworth has experienced a significant amount of population growth since 1900, increasing from 1,614 to 2,759 (2020 census) or 75% from 1900 to 2020 and 20.9% (City Data) between 2010 and 2020. Walworth County is projected as one of the strong-gaining population counties in Wisconsin by 2040 with the Villages seeing the most population increase of 22%.

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VI. Statement of Needs, Parameters and Purpose

It is critical that the Village of Walworth has a vision for the future. It is also imperative that the Village develops strategies to help make that vision a reality. This plan begins to answer the question of “where do we want to go” and provides direction as to “how we can get there” in relation to the parks, recreational amenities, and open space areas within the Village of Walworth.

This Plan a) provides guidance to the Village of Walworth for the funding, acquisition, development, improvement, and preservation of existing and future park, recreation facilities, and open space lands in the Village based on current trends, standards, and desires of the community; b) incorporates and implements various goals, objectives and recommendations set forth in the Village of Walworth Comprehensive Plan; c) positions the Village of Walworth to attain and maintain eligibility for the submittal of funding applications for various state and federal grant programs administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR); and d) provides information pursuant to Section 66.0617 (impact fees) and 236.29 (dedications) Wis. Stats, to form the basis for the required “public facilities need assessment” for park acquisition and impact fees.

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A. Vision Statement

The following vision statement was developed by a citizen ad hoc committee appointed to create a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan for the Village of Walworth (also referred to as the "Village" in this document). The vision statement serves to 1) communicate the purpose of the comprehensive planning process, 2) identify key issues and opportunities, and 3) articulate the priorities identified by the citizen ad hoc committee as essential to a thriving park, recreational, and open space system in the Village.

Vision Statement: Providing a thriving system of parks, recreational opportunities, and open space to enrich the quality of life for all residents in the Village of Walworth.

The citizen ad hoc committee also identified seven (7) areas of focus as necessary components for manifesting the vision.

1. Preservation and documentation of the Village parks' history and memorials as well as preservation of environmental corridors and open space.
2. Maintenance of parks, paths, and open space, scheduling of routine maintenance, use of contracted services, and response time to safety and aesthetic concerns.
3. Development of new parks, recreational spaces, bike, and pedestrian paths as well as the re-purposing of play and recreational areas.
4. Restoration of memorials, landscaping, sidewalks, playground equipment, parking areas, recreational areas, and other park amenities.
5. Access to parks, paths, open space, and recreation areas for all people, all neighborhoods, and of all ages.
6. Communication through a website page dedicated to the Village of Walworth's parks, recreation, and open space amenities and improved community participation and partnerships.
7. Funding of parks, paths, open space, and recreational areas through grants, partnerships, donations, and Village budgeting.

B. Goals and Policies

An important step in the park and open space planning process is to establish goals and policies that serve as the basis for all subsequent planning efforts. Goals are broad statements while policies are more action orientated and provide specific details to how the goals will be met.

The following goals and policies are based on 1) the seven areas of focus described above, 2) Village of Walworth's policies and goals from the previous 2018-2023 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 3) basic planning principles, and 4) input from the citizen's ad hoc committee, Village of Walworth Plan Commission.

1. Goal One

Goal One Objective: To appoint and sustain a Park Committee and amend Sec. 2-4-4 a), b), and c) of the Code of Ordinances and add f) Primary Responsibilities.

Amendments as follows:

Creation. *The Village of Walworth Park Committee is hereby created and shall be known as the Village Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Committee (PROS).*

Composition. *The Park Committee shall consist of no less than three (3) and no more than five (5) citizen members; one (1) Village Trustee member; and one (1) member of the Big Foot Recreation District.*

Appointments. *The following appointments to the Committee are to be made:*

Trustee Member: The Trustee Member of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Committee shall be appointed by the Village President annually for a term of one (1) year and subject to confirmation by the Village Board of Trustees at its first regular Board meeting in May. It is recommended that the Trustee Member serving on the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Committee also serve on the Public Works Committee for continuity purposes especially with regard to maintenance and upkeep of Village parks, recreational, and open space areas.

Citizen Members: Two (2) citizen members, one of whom shall be named as Chairperson of the Committee, shall be appointed by the Village President subject to confirmation by the Village Board of Trustees for a term of two (2) years beginning on May 1st. One to Three (1-3) citizen members shall be appointed by the Village President subject to confirmation of the Village Board of Trustees for a term of one (1) year beginning on May 1st.

A member of the Big Foot Area Recreation District will be considered an “advisory member” of the PROS Committee and be appointed by the Village President subject to confirmation by the Village Board of Trustees for a term of two (2) years beginning on May 1st.

The Village PROS Committee shall oversee the goals and policies put forth in this Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan; assist and provide recommendations and other considerations to the Village Board of Trustees with regard to budget development, supervision, and maintenance of all Parks and Recreational Facilities; and shall work with other interested committees and organizations of the Village, as well as the Big Foot Recreation District, to help develop and encourage the use of the parks and recreation areas.

The Village PROS Committee will hold a minimum of one meeting annually with the Public Works Committee to set goals and recommendations and to review progress on previous goals and recommendations regarding development, improvements, maintenance, and beautification of the Village’s parks, recreation, and open space areas.

The Village PROS Committee shall seek input from community members about parks, recreation, and open space improvements and developments as well as prepare reports for the Village Board as directed by the Board.

Primary Responsibilities of the Village PROS Committee will correspond with the Policies set forth in the Village's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan adopted by the Village Board of Trustees.

Goal One Policies:

1a The Village PROS Committee shall establish regular meeting schedules. The committee meetings will abide by the Open Meetings Act guidelines including timely posting of meetings and minutes.

1b The Village PROS Committee shall make recommendations to the Village Board on the following: park usage guidelines; park reservation procedures; park maintenance; park security guidelines; park budget allocations; park compliance with ADA guidelines.

1c The Village PROS Committee shall participate in efforts to secure outside funding sources (grants, gifts, etc.) that will benefit the parks and open space areas of the Village.

1d The Village PROS Committee shall be encouraged to create community activities that promote and utilize the parks and outdoor spaces and build community with the Village's motto in mind: The Friendly Village on the Square.

1e The Village PROS Committee shall conduct, on a regular basis, a survey of the Village of Walworth residents to gather information on the usage of the parks, recreational, and open space areas as well as information related to development and improvements that are needed. The Committee shall establish a schedule for the survey to be conducted.

2. Goal Two

Goal Two Objective: To provide permanent parks and other open space areas throughout the Village for active and passive outdoor recreation.

Goal Two Policies

2a Require new development to dedicate land and/or pay for park land acquisition and improvement impact fees sufficient to meet the anticipated needs generated by such development consistent with the type, amount, and location.

2b Provide and properly maintain a range of park types in an adequate number, size, and location for active and passive recreation facilities that are easily and safely accessible by children and adults within or near all developed residential neighborhoods.

- 2c Provide special use parks and open spaces within commercial and industrial areas that provide aesthetic enhancements in otherwise developed environments.
- 2d Provide parks, conservancies, paths, and other recreational facilities for residents of all ages and abilities.
- 2e Collaborate with other user groups, and youth organizations to define mutually compatible recreational facility needs and mechanisms for the maintenance, improvement, and development of these recreational facilities.
- 2f Explore opportunities for year-round recreational facilities and programs.
- 2g Evaluate the need to develop new parks, conservancies, paths, and recreational facilities with the need to maintain and improve existing parks, conservancies, paths, and recreational facilities.
- 2h Continuously promote resident awareness of Walworth's parks, conservancies, paths, and recreation facilities.
- 2i Maintain a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan with respect to maintenance and operation costs of all current parks, recreation, and open space amenities. Future improvement and development expenditures for Walworth's parks, conservancies, paths, and recreational facilities should also be included.

3. *Goal Three*

Goal Three Objective: To provide each neighborhood within the Village access to both neighborhood and community park facilities.

Goal Three Policies

- 3a Encourage cooperation and shared facilities and activities with other public entities within the Village.
- 3b Coordinate park and open space planning and improvements with the Village of Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake and the Town of Walworth. This would include the development and maintenance of a bicycle and pedestrian trail system.
- 3c Ensure that parks and conservancies have adequate access points from surrounding neighborhoods and public rights of way by multi-purpose paths or sidewalks.
- 3d Ensure that all parks and conservancies are designed with public right-of-way along one side of the park or conservancy for adequate visual access.

3e Design park facilities whenever practical to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

4. *Goal Four*

Goal Four Objective: To provide safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle access between residential neighborhoods, parks, and other recreational sites.

Goal Four Policies

4a Require new development to dedicate land and/or pay the cost of developing pedestrian and bicycle trails (new segments and/or connections to existing segments).

4b Encourage the construction of bicycle lanes or multi-purpose paths as part of roadway improvement projects.

4c Establish path signage that enables way finding by users.

5. *Goal Five*

Goal Five Objective: To preserve open space areas and demonstrate good stewardship of the lands.

Goal Five Policies

5a Utilize drainage ways and greenways as part of a permanent open space system suitable for passive recreation use, including nature walking, wildlife habitat preservation, and trail development.

5b Incorporate environmentally significant features into the Village's open space areas.

6. *Goal Six*

Goal Six Objective: Promote and assist Walworth County in pursuing the goal of acquiring a new major park site in the southwestern or west central portion of the County as indicated in the Park and Open Space Plan for Walworth County page 86.

Goal Six Policies

6a Stay informed with regards to any development with this County goal.

VII. Definitions, Standards and Classifications

A. Terms and Classifications

1. *Park/Active Recreation*

Park and open space facilities are generally devoted to playgrounds, play fields, play courts and related recreation activities. This also includes recreational, camp, and seasonal home sites.

2. *Passive Recreation*

Open space facilities that are generally devoted to trails, picnic areas, gardens, and related recreation activities.

3. *Environmental Corridor*

Environmental areas including surface waters, floodplains, wetlands, and woodlands.

B. Classifications Relevant to Parks and Open Space

1. *Special Use*

Uses are not easily categorized based on unique functions, historic character, or impacts on the surrounding neighborhood or community.

2. *Mini Park*

Sometimes also called a “tot-lot” or “pocket park”, a mini park is a play lot or playground that provides space for parental supervised recreation of toddlers and young children within a neighborhood, or as part of a larger neighborhood or community park. These parks are usually located in protected areas with separation from street traffic and high visibility.

- Preferred park size: 1/4 to 2 acres
- Max service area: 0.25-mile radius (uninterrupted by major roads/physical barriers)
- Min acreage per 1,000 residents: 1 acre

The Village of Walworth does not have any stand-alone mini parks at this time, but “mini park” playground elements are contained within larger parks.

3. *Neighborhood Park*

Neighborhood parks are intended to serve the immediate residential neighborhood. Typically, a neighborhood park includes active recreational facilities such as playground equipment, playfields, and courts that are compatible with the immediate neighborhood, restrooms, picnic areas, open multi-purpose areas and small parking lots.

- Preferred park size: 3 to 5 acres
- Max service area: 0,5-mile radius
- Min acreage per 1,000 residents: 5 acres

Devils Lane Park, Badger Park, and Toynton Park are considered examples of neighborhood parks.

4. *Community Park*

Community parks are intended to serve a much larger population than neighborhood parks. Typically, they include all the same or similar active and passive recreational facilities found in a neighborhood park plus athletic fields designed for organized, competitive athletic events, and larger parking areas and facilities. Community parks also often include conservancy areas for use as passive recreations. These parks should be located adjacent to a collector street providing community-wide vehicular access, thereby reducing neighborhood traffic impacts.

- Preferred park size: 5 to 20+ acres
- Max service area: 1.0-mile radius
- Min acreage per 1,000 residents: 10 acres

Toynton Park, Devils Lane Park, Rotary Park, and Badger Park have the potential to become community parks.

5. *Special Use Parks*

Special Use parks are park or other Village-owned recreational facilities and open space areas that are designed to serve a specific active or passive recreational purpose, e.g., a public plaza or gazebo, memorial, public garden or gathering area, a community swimming pool or other specialized recreational use. Special use parks can also be open space areas located in otherwise fully developed commercial or industrial districts or linear parks such as bicycle and pedestrian trails. There is no minimum size area for a special use park.

- Preferred park size: No requirement
- Max service area: No requirement
- Min acreage per 1,000 residents: No requirement

Heyer Park is an example of a special use park. Rotary Park could also be considered a special use park since it is specifically designed for the community to play hockey and/or engage in skating and sledding activities.

6. *Conservancy*

A conservancy is a publicly owned area that is managed primarily for its natural resource qualities, such as wetlands, wildlife habitats, or unique vegetation. Generally, trails and other passive recreational facilities are located within and/or connect to conservancy parks.

Conservancy parks are not suitable nor designed for active recreational facilities such as playfields or athletic recreation facilities.

Badger Conservancy is an example of a conservancy within the Village.

- Preferred park size: No requirement

- Max service area: No requirement
- Min acreage per 1,000 residents: No requirement

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VIII. Planning Process

A. Introduction

This planning process was an effort by the Village of Walworth Plan Commission and Village of Walworth Board of Trustees to 1) better meet the park and recreational needs of the residents of the Village of Walworth, 2) maintain eligibility status for application of certain grants and other funding sources requiring a comprehensive plan for parks, recreational amenities, and open space areas.

The planning process included the following:

1. The development of a citizen ad hoc committee to review and revise the 2018-2023 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. The committee consisted of a member of the Village Board, a member of the Plan Commission, and three (3) community members. The Village President served on the committee as an Ex officio member.
2. The ad hoc committee met from January 2023 through December 2023. All meetings, agendas and minutes were posted in accordance with public posting requirements and on the Village website.
3. Meetings followed Robert's Rules of Order and had an item on the agenda to receive open comments from the public.
4. The ad hoc committee referenced the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2018-2023 which was prepared by Forth Infrastructure and Environment LLC and followed guidelines provided by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Bureau of Community Assistance in preparing this document.
5. Several on-site visits were made by the ad hoc committee to the Village parks, open spaces, and recreational areas during the review.
6. Consultation from Susan Steele, a Local Government Outreach Specialist, provided insight and recommendations to the Ad Hoc Committee to improve the Plan.
7. The ad hoc committee presented a draft of the Plan to the Village Plan Commission in November 2023 prior to preparing a final draft. The purpose of that presentation was to gather feedback, suggestions, and recommendations from the Plan Commission members. The Plan Commission approved a Public Hearing on the Plan for January 15, 2024.
8. A final draft was provided to the Plan Commission prior to the January 15, 2024 meeting as well as providing a draft to the Village Clerk.

B. Objectives Used to Guide the Process

The following objectives were used to guide the process of developing this Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. These objectives are consistent with the objectives listed in the Village of Walworth's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2018-2023

1. Provide guidance to the Village of Walworth for the funding, acquisition, development, improvement, and preservation of existing and future parks,

- recreation facilities and open space lands in the Village based on current trends, standards, needs and desires of the community.
2. Incorporate and implement various goals, objectives, and recommendations set forth in the Village of Walworth Comprehensive Plan.
 3. Attains and maintains eligibility for the submittal of funding applications for various state and federal grant programs administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)
 4. Provide information pursuant to Section 66.0617 and 236.29, Wis. Stats., to form the basis for the required “public facilities need assessment for park acquisition and improvement impact fees.
 5. Serve as a supplement to the Village’s Comprehensive Plan and, along with the Village’s other development related regulations and ordinances, be used to implement the Village’s overall park and open space program.

C. Methodology

The following steps were taken to complete this Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2024-2029

1. Review of Current Plan
The ad hoc committee engaged in a critical analysis of each section of the 2018-2023 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.
2. Inventory and Analysis of Current Parks, Recreation, and Open Space
Village park lands were visited, documenting existing conditions and facilities.
3. Plan Development
The committee developed recommendations for existing park improvements as well as recommendations for park planning and further development.
4. Draft Plan Distribution and Review Process
Several rounds of draft documents were distributed and reviewed in-depth by the ad hoc committee members. Each draft review resulted in a revised version of the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. The ad hoc committee engaged in five separate draft reviews with each review resulting in a more in-depth and accurate plan and plan document.

D. Amending the Plan

This Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan is intended to be a “living” document for the future and as situations change and decisions made which may alter the Plan, the Plan must be amended. Amendments to the Plan would include 1) review of the proposed amendment by the Village Plan Commission; 2) a scheduled Public Hearing with a 30 day notice; 3) an approval of the amended Plan by the Plan Commission; 4) Resolution approved by the Village Board of Trustees.

As always, implementation of the plan will depend upon adequate financial resources being made available through taxation, user fees, grant monies, private donations, and other as-yet unknown sources

IX. Summary of Past Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans

Previous park and open space planning efforts for the Village of Walworth, County of Walworth, and Wisconsin State Plans that include the Village of Walworth are documented in the following:

- Park and Open Space Plan for the Village of Walworth (adopted 1986)
- Park and Open Space Plan for the Village of Walworth (adopted 2006)
- Park and Open Space Plan for the Village of Walworth (adopted 2018)
- Park and Open Space Plan for Walworth County (adopted 2014)
- Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2011-2016)

A. Park and Open Space Plan for the Village of Walworth (1986)

The “original” Park and Open Space Plan for the Village of Walworth was prepared by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) and adopted by the Village in 1986. The original 1986 plan was developed to provide overall guidance and specific recommendations to the Village Park Commission, Plan Commission, and Village Board concerning the acquisition, development, improvement, and preservation of existing and future park, recreation facilities and open space lands in the Village.

The following primary recommendations were adopted in the 1986 plan adopted by the Village:

- Acquire and develop a new Village park in the southwestern portion of the Village (what is now 7.3-acre Toynton Park located on west Beloit Street);
- Acquire and develop a new Village park in the northern portion of the Village (what is now 1.5 acre Badger Park; currently undeveloped);
- Develop additional facilities at Devils Lane Park;
- Maintain facilities in Heyer Park.

B. Park and Open Space Plan for the Village of Walworth (2006)

This document was an update to Village’s 1986 plan. The following primary recommendations were adopted in the 2006 plan adopted the Village:

- Toynton Park priority improvements: Acquire additional land to the west for additional expansion, improve/provide open space for picnicking, add a concert pavilion or large shelter, and add off-street parking into the area nearest to the existing park.
- Devils Lane Park priority improvements: Replace existing shelter with new concession building and restrooms and add and/or replace baseball field bleachers.
- Fox Lane Park & Badger Conservancy priority improvements: Develop bicycle/pedestrian connection trails to Fox Lane and through the Badger Conservancy, install playground equipment, install a paved off-street parking facility, construct an open shelter w/ concrete slab, install a permanent bathroom facility, develop a 1-acre open space play field (grade and seed), install a

landscape berm, evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs, install bicycle rack, picnic tables, benches, and waste receptacles; This has largely been completed to date, except the permanent bathroom facility. Portable toilets are provided during the warmer seasons.

- Rotary Park priority improvements: Install timer for existing skating rink lights; This has been completed.

- Fox Lane Conservancy: Install benches and landscaping and add bicycle/pedestrian trail connection; The trail connection has been completed, but the benches and landscaping have not been installed to date.

- Heyer Park priority improvements: Add game tables and additional benches and install pavilion (to be privately funded); This has not been completed to date.

- Develop an outdoor skateboard facility at a park yet to be determined; This has not been completed.

- Identification of eight (8) future neighborhood parks intended to serve areas that are along the Village boundary or beyond but within the proposed urban service area. These parks should be approximately 3 to 5 acres in size and serve an area within a ¼ mile radius. Acquisition and development of these neighborhood parks should be made part of any proposed residential subdivision developments through land dedication, land acquisition fees-in-lieu-of-dedication, and/or park impact fees. One of these parks is being designated as part of the Pines of Big Foot Subdivision south of School Road currently in the plating process. The space will be used for passive recreation and open space and will include a trail system.

- Priority segments for the bicycle/pedestrian trail system: 5th Avenue Railroad Crossing Connector (1,500' segment to connect to the paved path from the end of Badger Street through the Whitetail Ridge residential subdivision to the north and down to 5th Ave to the south), High School-STH 14 Loop (2,400' segment to connect Big Foot High School to STH 14), and the Rotary Park-High School Connector (2,250' segment to connect Devils Lane south along Summer Drive to the existing Village boundary and then west to Brennan Drive and connecting into the High School-STH 14 Loop). The 5th Avenue Railroad Crossing Connector was completed, but only a portion of the High School-STH 15 Loop and the Rotary Park-High School Connector was completed.

C. Park and Open Space Plan for Walworth County (2014)

Similar to the Village's original 1986 plan, a Park and Open Space Plan was prepared for all of Walworth County by SEWRPC in 2000. That plan was updated in 2004 and most recently in 2014. Recommendation of the plan consisted of two elements: open space preservation and outdoor recreation.

Open space preservation recommendations:

- 79,964 acres (about 22 percent of the County) of open land should be protected through a combination of public or nonprofit conservation organization ownership, or through the application of protective zoning. These 79,964 acres include planned primary and secondary environmental corridors, planned isolated natural resource areas, areas outside corridors but within Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources project boundaries, and existing and

proposed County park and open space lands. Virtually all natural areas and critical species habitat sites recommended to be preserved are contained within the planned primary or secondary environmental corridors or the planned isolated natural resource areas; and

- County and local units of government should protect existing prime agricultural lands. Specifically, it is recommended that all prime agricultural lands identified in the updated farmland preservation plan for Walworth County be preserved for agricultural use.

Outdoor recreation recommendations:

- Six major parks should be provided within the County. Of the six major parks, five are existing parks and one would be a new park to be acquired and developed by Walworth County. The five existing major parks are: Big Foot Beach State Park and Whitewater Lake Recreation Area, owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR); and Price Conservancy, White River County Park, and Natureland Park, owned by Walworth County. The WDNR would maintain Whitewater Lake Recreation Area and would continue to acquire lands at Big Foot Beach State Park. Walworth County would acquire additional lands and develop additional facilities at Price Conservancy and Natureland Park; develop facilities at the new White River County Park; and acquire and develop one new major County park in the western portion of the County along Turtle Creek;
 - A 125-mile system of trails should be provided as a countywide trail system to enable participation in such activities as bicycling, hiking, nature study, and ski touring. A total of 95 miles would be provided by Walworth County—consisting of both on-street and off-street routes. This would be accomplished through a cooperative effort with other concerned units of government.
 - A public boat access site should be acquired and developed by the Department of Natural Resources on Army Lake, Benedict Lake, Lake LaGrange, Lake Lorraine, Middle Lake, North Lake, Peters Lake, Silver Lake, Turtle Lake, and Lake Wandawega. Walworth County should pursue opportunities to provide access to inland lakes for beach swimming, shore fishing, and passive recreational activities, as such opportunities arise. Walworth County should also consider the development of a water trail system that would be located on the White River, Honey Creek, Sugar Creek, and Turtle Creek; and
 - The County and local units of government should support efforts relating to the preservation of historic sites and districts in Walworth County.
- There are no specific recommendations for open space areas to be preserved nor existing or future park sites that affect the Village of Walworth.

D. Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2011-2016)

The Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan demonstrated how preserving and improving recreation opportunities in Wisconsin fits within a broader national initiative of conservation and recreation. It also describes and quantifies some of the most important benefits of recreation and establishes goals to improve outdoor recreation across the state. The plan also targeted assessments on key

relationships that include public health and wellness, urban access to outdoor recreation, and public and private partnerships.

Primary actions for 2018-2022 plan included:

- Collect data on Wisconsinites' participation in outdoor recreation.
- Conduct initial research on the efficacy and costs of different techniques to gather data on visitors (e.g., numbers, activities pursued, visitation patterns and satisfaction) to public lands.
- Update data on the supply of outdoor recreation opportunities, with a focus on properties open to the public for nature-based outdoor recreation; and
 - Develop priorities for future recreation funding.

E. Summary Walworth Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2018-2023

In February 2018, the Village of Walworth retained the services of the consulting firm of Foth Infrastructure & Environment to update the previous plan also prepared by Foth. The complete Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2018-2023 can be found on the [Village of Walworth's website](#).

The Village of Walworth Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan: 2018-2023 was an update to the Village's Park and Open Space Plan 2006. The 2018-2023 Plan was adopted by the Plan Commission on November 19, 2018, and later adopted by the Village Board on December 10, 2018.

The objectives for the 2018-2023 Plan were to:

- Provide guidance to the Village of Walworth for the funding, acquisition, development, improvement, and preservation of existing and future park, recreation facilities and open space lands in the Village based on current trends, standards, and desires of the community;
- Incorporate and implement various goals, objectives, and recommendations set forth in the Village of Walworth Comprehensive Plan (updated in 2017), including (but not limited to) the development of a bicycle and pedestrian trail system throughout the Village;
- Position the Village of Walworth to attain and maintain eligibility for the submittal of funding applications for various state and federal grant programs administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) for a five-year period from 2018 to 2022; and
- Provide information pursuant to Section 66.0617 and 236.29, Wis. Stats., to form the basis for the required "public facilities need assessment" for park acquisition and improvement impact fees.

Public input and participation were completed as part of the updating of the Plan. These activities included:

- Five (5) meetings of the Plan Commission were noticed, posted, and conducted as public meetings to discuss the Plan. All meetings of the Plan Commission included opportunities for public information, comment, and input;

- A public hearing was held with the Plan Commission on November 19, 2018, prior to preparing a final draft of the plan in order to provide information to the general public and gather formal feedback on the various goals, objectives, recommendations another plan components.
- An online opinion survey was administered to Village residents and stakeholders which was available through a link on the Village website with notice included in a standard village-wide mailing.

The following Goals and Policies were established that served the basis for all subsequent planning efforts.

Goal 1 To provide permanent parks and other open space areas throughout the Village for active and passive outdoor recreation in an amount equal to a minimum of sixteen (16) acres of park land per 1,000 population (equivalent to about one (1) acre per 25 dwelling units).

Policy 1 Provide a range of park types in an adequate number, size and location in order to provide both active and passive recreational facilities that are easily and safely accessible by children and adults within or near all developed residential neighborhoods.

Policy 2 Require new development to dedicate land and/or pay park land acquisition and improvement impact fees sufficient to meet the anticipated needs generated by such development consistent with the type, amount and location of park land shown on this plan and based on the facility standards adopted in this plan for providing recreational facilities.

Policy 3 Provide “special use” parks and open spaces within commercial and industrial areas that provide aesthetic enhancements in otherwise developed environments.

Policy 4 Provide parks, conservancy, path, and recreational facility opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.

Policy 5 Collaborate with user groups and youth organizations to define mutually compatible recreational facility needs and mechanisms for the maintenance, improvement, and development these recreational facilities

Policy 6 Explore opportunities for year-round recreational facilities and programs.

Policy 7 Evaluate the need to develop new parks, conservancies, paths, and recreational facilities with the need to maintain and improve existing parks, conservancies, paths, and recreational facilities.

Policy 8 Promote resident awareness of Walworth’s parks, conservancies, paths, and recreational facilities.

Policy 9 Maintain a Capital Improvement Plan with respect to annual maintenance and operation costs and future improvement and development expenditures for Walworth's parks, conservancies, paths, and recreation facilities.

Goal 2 To provide each neighborhood within the Village access to both neighborhood and community park facilities.

Policy 1 Encourage shared use of recreation facilities with the Walworth School District.

Policy 2 Coordinate Village park and open space planning and improvements with the Village of Fontana and the Town of Walworth, including the development and maintenance of a bicycle and pedestrian trail system that serves the Villages of Walworth and Fontana and the town.

Policy 3 Ensure that parks and all conservancies have multiple access points from surrounding neighborhoods and public rights-of-way by multi-purpose paths or sidewalks.

Policy 4 Ensure that all parks and conservancies are designed with a public right-of-way along at least one side of the park or conservancy for adequate visual access.

Policy 5 Design park facilities whenever practical to meet the requirements of the American's With Disabilities Act (ADA).

Goal 3 To provide safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle access between residential neighborhoods, schools, parks, and other recreational sites.

Policy 1 Require new development to dedicate land and/or pay the cost of developing pedestrian and bicycle trails (new segments and/or connections to existing segments) consistent with the type and location of such trails as shown on this plan and based on the development standards adopted in this plan for trails.

Policy 2 Encourage the construction of bicycle lanes or multi-purpose paths as part of roadway improvement projects.

Policy 3 Establish path signage that enables way finding by users.

Goal 4 To preserve environmental corridors as permanent open space areas.

Policy 1 Utilize drainage ways, greenways, and environmental corridors as part of a permanent open space system suitable for passive recreation use, including nature walking, wildlife habitat preservation, and trail development.

Policy 2 Because the outfall from Lake Petite flows directly to and through the southern portion of the Village, Lake Petite and its associated drainage ways, wetlands, and other environmentally significant features should be incorporated into the Village's open space areas through an integrated system of environmental corridors, storm water control features and facilities, and potential recreational facilities, e.g. bicycle/pedestrian trails, prior to or concurrent with future land divisions and/or development.

Policy 3 Develop criteria and evaluate priorities for acquiring land for conservation. Include recommendations to guide the restoration, maintenance, and monitoring of the conservancy.

The 2018-2023 Plan included a complete inventory of the Village of Walworth parks and recreation sites and amenities. The Plan also included park needs projected to the year 2040. The projections were based on a population of 3, 720 residents in the Village by the year 2040. The Village, according to the Plan, was projected to have a deficiency of 27.79 acres of park land by 2040. More specifically, the deficiency would be as follows:

- 3.72 acre deficiency for mini parks
- 11.08 acre deficiency for neighborhood parks
- 12.99 acre deficiency for community parks.

A community survey was provided as part of the planning process. The online survey was available through a link on the Village website with notice included in a standard village-wide mailing. Paper copies of the survey were also made available at the Village Hall. 214 respondents including 17 paper copies were completed.

The main recommendation from the 2018-2023 Plan is that the Village add a minimum of approximately 28 acres of park land by the year 2040. Other recommendations include neighborhood and community park improvements, increasing the existing bicycle/pedestrian trail system and to further develop additional bicycle/pedestrian trails.

In addition to the recommendations mentioned above, the 2018-2023 Plan also called for other actions and activities to adequately implement the goals and policies set forth in the Plan.

Survey results, park land additions, bicycle/pedestrian recommendations, implementation recommendations and recommendations for park land acquisition and funding sources are included in the original document and can be accessed through the Village of Walworth website under the heading Residents>Documents and Reports>Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan>[2018-2023 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan](#).

Existing Park Needs	Page(s) 32-34
Community Survey Results	Page(s) 34-37
Additional Survey Results Begins	Page 53
Park Improvements	Page(s) 38-41
Park Land Additions	Page(s)

Bicycle/Pedestrian Recommendations	Page(s) 41-43
Implementation Recommendations Page(s)	Page(s) 43
Park Land Acquisition and Funding Sources	Page(s) 44-45

Much of the information, goals and policies, and recommendations from the 2018-2023 Plan have been incorporated into the 2024-2029 Plan with the hope of continuing to address the priorities listed and to implement the recommendations that were set forth in that Plan.

DRAFT

X. Current Comprehensive Plans Relevant to the Village of Walworth Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan 2024-2029

Below is a summary of the current park and open space planning efforts relevant to the Village of Walworth. These documents include the following:

[Open Space Plan for Walworth County \(July 2022\)](#)

Prepared by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

[Vision 2050 \(2016\)](#)

Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's initiative to develop a year 2050 regional land use and transportation plan.

[Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\) 2019-2023](#)

States are required to complete SCORPs to be eligible for participation in the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State Assistance Program. The document describes the supply and demand for outdoor recreation in the state as well as describing the criteria and system to distribute LWCF funds. The SCORP is updated every five years.

A. Summary of the Open Space Plan for Walworth County (July 2022)

This document includes background information about the County and how the plan was developed, provides the implementation status of the recommendations from the previous County park and open space plan, and identifies the objectives, principles, and standards used to guide the updated plan. It also includes an updated park, outdoor recreation facility, trail and opens space recommendations for County-owned sites and facilities. The updated plan was developed under the guidance of the County Park Committee. It was approved by the County Park Committee on June 20, 2022, and was adopted by the Walworth County Board of Supervisors on July 12, 2022.

The breakdown of park and outdoor recreation sites in 2020 included the following:

- Walworth County owned four park sites encompassing 419 acres.
- The State of Wisconsin owned 45 parks and open space sites, encompassing 15,603 acres.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife service own an 86 acre site.
- Sites owned by local units of government, school districts, or other public entities within the County used for outdoor recreation or natural resource preservation purposes included 202 sites encompassing 2, 831 acres.
- Private resource-oriented outdoor recreational uses included 173 sites encompassing 10, 898 acres.
- Private conservation organizations owned 19 sites encompassing 1,964 acres for resource protection purposes.
- Lands protected under conservation easements encompass 1,935 acres.

- Existing trails include the White River State Trail, the Ice Age Trail, the Geneva Lake Shore Path, the Duch Lake Nature Trail, a portion of the Pelishek-Tiffany Trail, and numerous trails within WDNR and County lands and on-an-off street local trails. There were 27 miles of existing off-street bicycle-pedestrian trails and 35 miles of pedestrian only trails in 2020.

The Open Space Plan for Walworth County 2022 recommendations include:

- Acquiring nearly 11,000 acres for natural resource protection, open space preservation purposes, or public park or trail use by various public agencies or nonprofit conservation organizations.
- Placing nearly 43,600 acres within protective zoning districts to prevent incompatible development and resource protection.
- Providing six major parks, five existing parks (two owned by the WDNR and three owned by the County) a new park proposed to be acquired and developed by Walworth County.
- The County acquiring additional lands and developing additional facilities at Price Park Conservancy and Natureland Park and developing additional facilities at White River County Park.
- Providing a 156 -mile Countywide trail system, including 101 miles to be provided by Walworth County to enable participation in such activities as bicycling, hiking, nature study, and ski touring.
- Acquiring and developing public boat access sites on Benedict Lake, Lake LaGrange, Lake Lorraine, Middle Lake, North Lake, Peters Lake, Silver Lake, Turtle Lake, and Lake Wandawega by the WDNR to meet WDNR standards for boat access sites on major lakes.
- Developing a water trail system with canoe/kayak access sites on the White River, Honey Creek, Sugar Creek, and Turtle Creek.
- Pursuing opportunities to provide additional access to inland lakes for beach swimming, shore fishing and passive recreational activities.

B. Summary of Vision 2050

[Vision 2050](#) is the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's initiative to develop a year 2050 regional land use and transportation plan. The plan is intended to help guide land use and transportation system development in a seven-county area in Southeastern Wisconsin (Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha Counties). It was adopted by the Regional Planning Commission on July 28, 2016. Vision 2050 set forth recommendations to guide development in Walworth County.

The VISION 2050 Guiding Statements that are relevant to development and improvement of parks, recreation, and open space include the following:

- Develop and expansive, well-connected bicycle and pedestrian network;
- Preserve Natural Resources and Open Spaces;
- Be environmentally responsible.

C. Summary 2019-2023 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

The objectives of the 2019-2023 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan are:

- Provide an analysis of outdoor recreation supply and demand.
- Provide information and context that is useful to counties, local units of government, organizations, Native American Nations, and others as they develop plans and policies for recreation opportunities in their communities.
- Ensure Wisconsin's continued eligibility for National Park Service LWCF state-side grants.
- Establish priorities for LWCF (Land and Water Conservation Fund) federal grants and guidance for other applicable state and federal funds.

2019-2023 lays out five overarching goals for outdoor recreation:

- Boost participation in outdoor recreation.
- Grow partnerships.
- Provide high-quality experiences.
- Improve data to enhance visitor experiences and benefits.
- Enhance funding and financial stability.

In addition to the above five goals for outdoor recreation, the five priorities for grant funded projects are:

- Meet the needs of urban areas.
- Provide recreation opportunities that serve diverse populations.
- Develop facilities in areas with limited outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Provide multi-use facilities.
- Meet outdoor recreation needs identified by local communities.

A statewide survey of Wisconsin residents was conducted to gather information on Wisconsin residents' outdoor recreation participation and frequency, as well as their opinions about future needs. The survey revealed that an estimated 95% of Wisconsin adults participated in some type of outdoor recreation. Most of those activities ended up being activities that require little preparation or travel time such as hiking, walking on trails, fishing, bicycling, dog walking, and bird/wildlife watching.

Shifting demographics, the quality of habitats, and the impact from invasive species and changing climate conditions were cited as factors that will have an effect on meeting future recreation needs. The document also cited other factors that will influence participation in outdoor recreation including a) demographics, especially age; b) access to opportunities; and c) people's health.

The document listed other nature-based activities that Wisconsin residents engage in including camping, canoeing/kayaking, skiing, hunting, nature photography, watercraft riding, picnicking, riding ATV's/UTV's, visiting a beach/beach walking.

Walworth County is part of the Southern Gateways region of the State and is known for its variety of environments including rolling hills in the south and large marshes in the east. Twenty-

three (23) LWCF Grants were received by Walworth County between 1965 and 2017 totaling \$1,185,262.

The document cited other trends that may effect local planning of parks, recreation, and outdoor space include:

- Residents' growing commitment to health and wellness.
- Importance of experiences over material goods.
- Increased participation in active outdoor pursuits.
- More rental than ownership housing trends.
- Use of social media.
- Having pets.

The following gaps and needs were identified with regard to Statewide recreation needs:

- Increased Outdoor Recreation Areas Near High Population Centers;
- Trails;
- Water and Shoreline Access
- Camping Opportunities
- Dog Parks and Exercise Areas
- Target Shooting Range

The following goals were identified for Wisconsin's Outdoor Recreation:

- Boost participation in outdoor recreation.
- Grow partnerships.
- Provide high quality experiences.
- Improve data to enhance visitor experiences and benefits.
- Enhance funding and financial stability.

Towns, villages, cities, counties, tribal governments, and school districts are eligible to apply for LWCF Grants. The following list identifies eligible projects:

- Land acquisition or development projects that will provide opportunities for public outdoor recreation.
- Property with frontage on rivers, streams, lakes, estuaries, and reservoirs that will provide water -based outdoor recreation.
- Property that provides special recreation opportunities, such as floodplains, wetlands, and areas adjacent to scenic highways.'
- Natural areas and outstanding scenic areas.
- Land or development within urban areas for day use picnic areas.
- Land or development of nature-based recreation trails.
- Development of basic outdoor recreation facilities.
- Renovation of existing outdoor recreation facilities which are in danger of being lost for public use.

Funding Priorities include those projects that:

- Meet the needs of urban areas
- Provide recreation opportunities that serve diverse populations.
- Develop facilities in areas with limited outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Provide multi-use facilities.
- Meet outdoor recreation needs identified by local communities.

XI. Description of the Planning Region

A. Social Characteristics of Village/Planning Region

1. Size

The Village of Walworth has a total area of 1.54 square miles, all of it land.

2. Population Trends and Projections

The Village of Walworth has experienced a significant amount of population growth since 1900; increasing from 1,614 to 2,832 persons or 75 percent from 1990 to 2017 and is projected to increase another 31 percent by 2040. In an effort to plan for this growth, the Village of Walworth adopted a comprehensive plan in 2001 (updated in 2017) intended to guide growth and development through the year 2040.

Population Forecast

	2022	2025	2030	2035	2040
Village of Walworth	2,785	3,340	3,560	3,660	3,720
Town of Walworth	1,575	1,820	1,875	1,865	1,840
Fontana	1,888	1,715	1,730	1,690	1,630
City of Lake Geneva	8,544	8,505	8,860	8,915	8,870
Walworth County	105,380	116,105	121,835	123,470	123,680
State of Wisconsin	5,892,539	6,203,850	6,375,910	6,476,270	6,491,635

Source: Wisconsin DOA 2023; United States Census Bureau 2022 Decennial Census

These population forecasts are a guide and may be significantly higher or lower than actual conditions over the time period.

3. Ethnic Background/Language Spoken at Home

The following chart shows the percentage of Village of Walworth families' primary language that is spoken at home.

English Only	Spanish Only	Indo-European	Asian/Islander	Other
73.5%	26%	0.6%	0%	0%

4. Housing and Household Characteristics

There are 1,093 housing units in the Village of Walworth with 70% of those units being single units and 30% being multi-units. There is a 92% occupancy rate with 55% ownership of occupied units.

5. Age

The table below highlights median age and percentage of the population within specific age groups for the Village of Walworth. This information is important as it helps to guide the type of recreational activities that would be needed by our residents.

The Village of Walworth's median age is 36.9

Age Range	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+
Percentage	13%	19%	11%	9%	15%	12%	10%	6%	4%

6. *Economy*

Walworth County enjoys a healthy and diversified economy. Walworth County's strong economy is attributable to its location near major markets, transportation access via Interstate 43 and state trunk highways, an educated labor force, good schools, affordable housing, and a vibrant state and national economy. Prominent employment sectors in the county include services (e.g., tourism, health, and education), manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade, and agriculture, forestry, and fisheries.

The Village's economy is driven by industrial and retail uses. These include an Industrial Park on the Village's north side and prominent industries like U.S.G. Interiors, Onvoy Division of Badger Plug, and Kikkoman Foods (located just outside the Village). The Village's main commercial area is located on the east side of the Village. Other commercial areas include South Main Street on the Village's south, and the Village's historic downtown square. The downtown, which surrounds Heyer Park, contains an assortment of specialty retail, offices, and institutional uses.

7. *Employment/Unemployment*

As of August 2023, Walworth County reports 3.6% unemployment rate

8. *Estimated Median Household Income 2021*

\$55,943

9. *Estimated Per Capita Income 2021*

\$28,236

10. *Median House/Condo Value 2021*

\$215,379

11. *Median Gross Rent 2021*

\$947

12. *Cost of Living Index*

As of March 2022, 81.1 (low, US average reported as 100)

13. *Residents Living In Poverty 2021*

9.1% Total

6.3% White Non-Hispanic Residents

7.7% Black Residents

5.2% Hispanic or Latino Residents

4.4% Other Races

44.2% Two or More Races Residents

Resource [Census Reporter Profile page for Walworth village, Walworth County, WI](http://censusreporter.org/profiles/06000US5512783250-walworth-village-walworth-county-wi/)
<<http://censusreporter.org/profiles/06000US5512783250-walworth-village-walworth-county-wi/>>

[U.S. Census Bureau \(2021\). American Community Survey 5-year estimates.](#)

[City-data for Walworth, WI](#)

B. Physical Characteristics of the Region

An inventory of the natural resources and features within and adjacent to the Village of Walworth provides the framework for analyzing possible locations within the Village for certain land uses including parks and open spaces. The natural resource base, especially environmentally sensitive areas with respect to soils, environmental corridors, wetlands, and floodplains are critical factors in planning for open space conservation and preservation, park site acquisition and development, as well as future residential and commercial development. Maintenance of sensitive natural features is important for both the aesthetics of the community, and the preservation of the natural resources and environment.

Much of the Village is flat or gently rolling. Somewhat steeper slopes and wooded areas are in the northern portions of the Village. No large rivers or streams pass through the area. The soils in the area are of glacial origin and have developed in a silt blanket underlain by stratified sands and gravels. Most of the Village is situated in a nearly level outwash plain.

1. Topography

Generally, the Village and surrounding area is characterized by gently rolling hills or flat areas. Steep slopes, defined as exceeding a grade of 12 percent, occur infrequently and only for very short runs. There are some steep slopes in the northern portions of the area outside of the Village of Walworth (along Brick Church Road).

2. Water Resources

Groundwater

Groundwater resources are plentiful and of high quality throughout the Village at both shallow and deep levels. The Village is served by four wells with one located on Read Street in the southeast portion of the Village of Walworth (80' depth), one on North Main Street on the north side of the Village of Walworth (80' depth), and two located together on property located south of Big Foot High School (90' and 185' depth).

3. Wetlands

There are small pockets of wetlands scattered around the Village. These areas are important for aquifer recharge, groundwater and surface water quality improvement, flood storage, and wildlife habitat. They also provide areas for hunting, trapping, bird watching and other forms of recreation. Generally, development is restricted or prohibited in these areas by Wisconsin State-mandated zoning restrictions.

4. *Steep Slopes*

Generally, the Village and surrounding area are characterized by gently rolling hills or flat areas. Steep slopes, defined as exceeding a grade of 12 percent, occur infrequently and only for very short runs. There are some steep slopes in the northern portions of the area outside of the Village along Brick Church Road.

5. *Surface Water*

There are few areas of surface water within the Village. Geneva Lake is less than two miles northeast of the Village and has a significant impact on the character of the community. Lake Petite, located less than one mile southeast of the Village of Walworth, also has a significant impact on the community. The outfall from Lake Petite flows directly to and through the southern portions of the Village of Walworth. It is extremely important that Lake Petite and its outfall drainage ways be considered for inclusion into the Village's system of parks and Village of Walworth open spaces in terms of potential park sites, bicycle/pedestrian trails, and environmental corridors.

6. *Climate*

South central Wisconsin is characterized by warm and wet summers and freezing, snowy, and windy winters. Over the course of the year the temperature varies from 13°F to 82°F and is rarely below -7 °F or above 90°F.

Precipitation varies widely from year to year with most precipitation falling during the warmer half of the year.

Severe thunderstorms and high winds can pose a threat particularly during the spring and summer months.

7. *Soils*

In general, the soil in this area is well drained and suitable for agriculture.

Source for the above information: Village of Walworth Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan: 2018-2023; Wisconsin State Climatology Office; NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information

XII. Parks, Recreation and Outdoor Inventory

A. Introduction to Existing Park and Open Space System

The existing park and open space system in the Village of Walworth includes neighborhood parks, special use areas, and conservancy areas. The Village of Walworth's existing park and open space system consists of a total of 88.3 acres of active, passive, and undeveloped park land and special use areas. Of this total, 31.2 acres are owned and maintained by the Village of Walworth, 33.1 acres owned and maintained by the Walworth Joint School District and Big Foot Union High School, and the remaining 24.0 acres under private ownership.

There are no federal owned, state owned, or county owned park or open space sites in the Village of Walworth. There are no privately owned resource protection sites in the Village.

The Village of Walworth has no natural areas of statewide, countywide, or local significance. Nor is there any indication that the Village serves as critical species habitat sites. The Village of Walworth is not part of any environmental corridor which usually lies along major streams and lakes (riparian ribbons) or on hard surfaces as in a hedgerow or road verge and are based upon the presence of one or more of the following important elements of the natural resource base: wetlands, woodlands, prairies, wildlife habitat areas, poorly drained and organic soils, rugged terrain, and high relief topography.

The area around the Village's retention ponds, however, have potential to be developed into passive recreational areas which would provide sites for passive recreation and help to support wildlife habitats and native plant species.

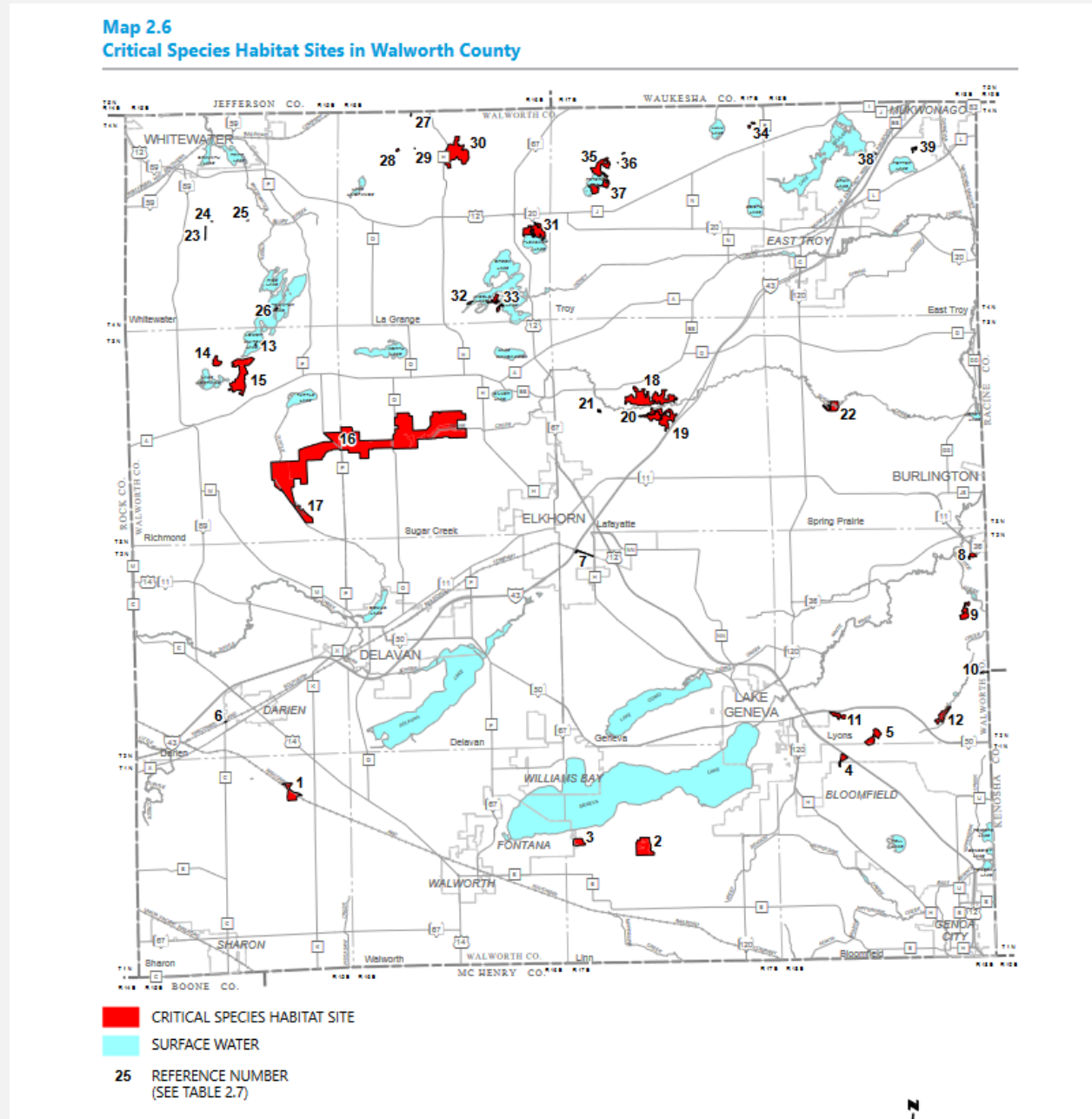
Resource:

[Walworth County Land and Water Resource Management Plan](#)

[SWERPC Parks and Open Spaces](#)

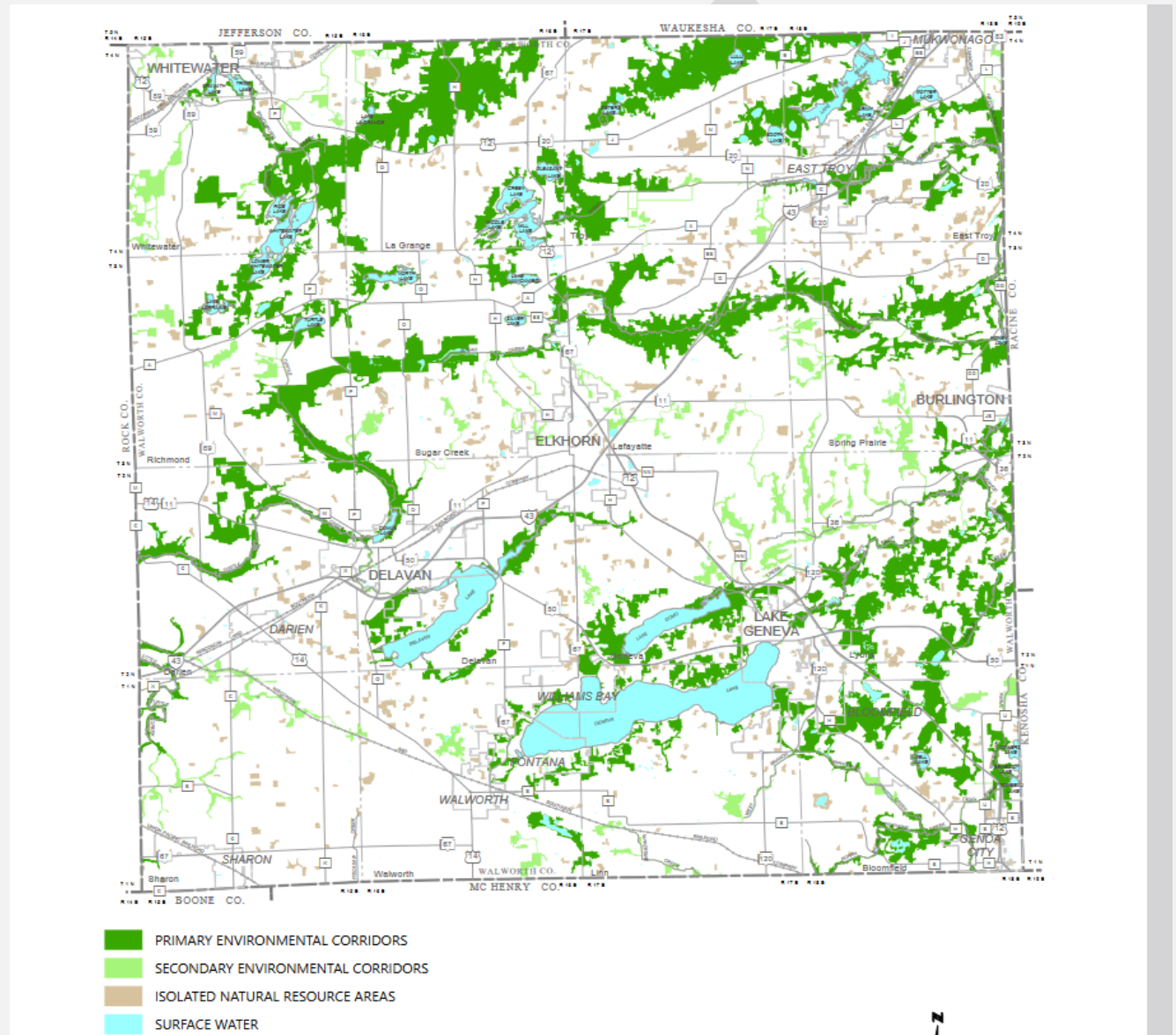
[Walworth County Park and Open Space Plan 2022](#)

Critical Species Habitat Sites Walworth County



Map Below
Reference: Walworth County Park and Open Space Plan 2022
Page 36

Environmental Corridors Walworth County



B. Village of Walworth Outdoor Recreation Park Facility Inventory

1. *Table 1B Village of Walworth: Park/Active Recreation*

Site Name	Site Location	Size	Type	Parcel #	Facilities	Memorials/ Recognitions	Landscaping	Access
Badger Park and Badger Conservancy	150 Badger Street	17.72 acres	Neighborhood	VWP00097D	Pavilion/Shelter Picnic Tables Playground Equipment PortaPotty in Summer			Off Street Parking Bike Trail
Devils Lane	425 Read Street Across the street from Big Foot High School	4.00 acres	Neighborhood	VES200010	Pavilion/Shelter Picnic Tables Playground Equipment Bathrooms Open Space			
Heyer Park	100 Park Ave Village Square at the intersection of Beloit and Main Streets	1.00 acre	Special Park		Community Information Sign Picnic Tables Flagpole	Yes		
Rotary Park	611 Casey Lane	2.50 acres	Special Park/Neighborhood	VA225300004	Shelter Skating Rink Bathrooms	Yes		
Toynton Park	601 Beloit Street	4.00 acres	Neighborhood	VWP00064 VWP00066 VWA 00074	Pavilion/Shelter Picnic Tables Softball field Volleyball Courts (2) Playground Equipment Bathrooms Flagpole	Yes		

2. *Table 2B Village of Walworth: Passive Recreation Areas*

Type	Location		
Bike/Walking Trail	Badger Conservancy	Developed	
Bike Trail	Through Town	Developed/ Needing Further Development	
Bike Trail	Through Library Square	Developed	

3. *Table 3B Village of Walworth: Retention Pond Areas*

Type	Location	Development/Undeveloped as Passive Recreation/Open Space	
Retention Pond 1	Oak Knolls Subdivision	Not Developed	
Retention Pond 2	Indian Prairie Subdivision	Not Developed	
Retention Pond 3	Windmill Prairie Subdivision	Not Developed	
Retention Pond 4	Brennan Subdivision	Not Developed	

C. Neighborhoods Not Served by a Designated Park

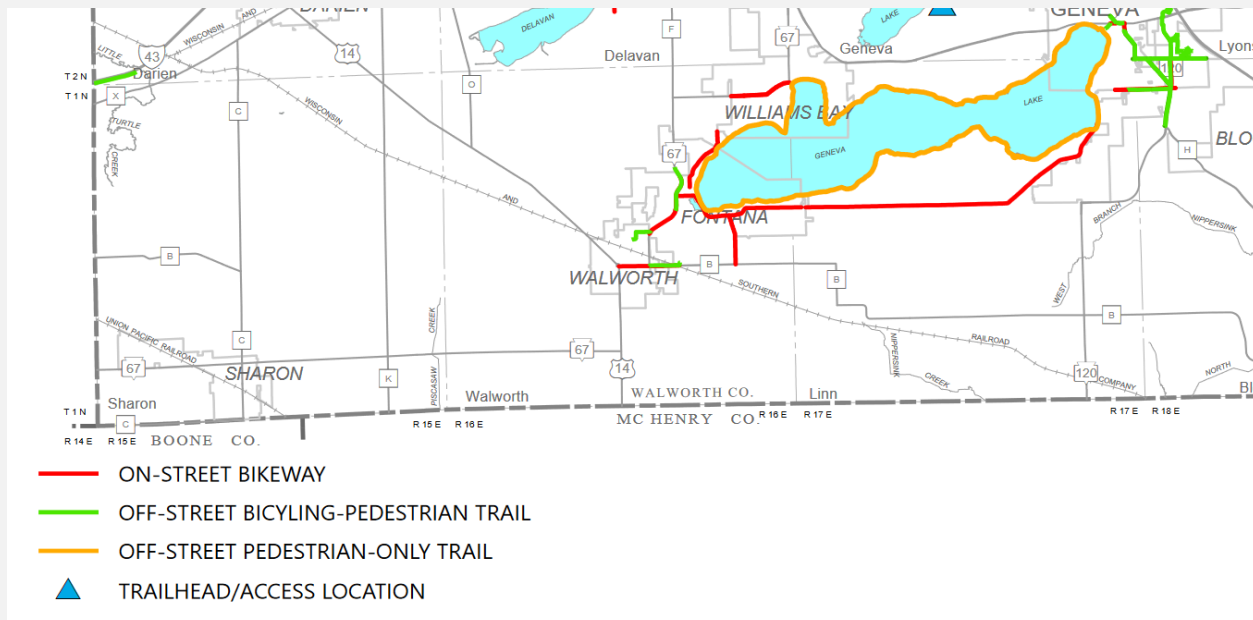
Since 1995 the following subdivisions have been built but are not currently served by a designated neighborhood park area:

1. Oak Knoll Subdivision - (East of Ridge Road and South of Devils Lane)
2. Indian Prairie Subdivision (South on U.S. Hwy 14 and East of the Hwy)
3. Windmill Prairie Subdivision (West of U.S Hwy 14 and South of Beloit Street)
4. Library Square (Devils Lane and Ridge Road)

D. Pedestrian/Bicycle Paths

The Village pedestrian/bicycle paths include an on-street paved area within the right-of-way for Kenosha Street (STH 67) from the downtown square to north STH 67; an off-street paved path along CTH B from just west of Ridge Road to the Country Club Estates Residential subdivision in the Village of Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake; and a paved path system within the Badger Park/Badger Park conservancy extending through the Whitetail Ridge conservation subdivision to the northeast and connecting south to 5th Village adjacent to Immanuel Church, through Big Foot High School property, adjacent to Rotary Park and within the Library Square North subdivision.

Existing Bicycle Ways/Trails in Village of Walworth



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XIII. Other (Public and Private) Park and Recreation Facilities

The following is a list of the parks, open space area, and recreational facilities that are available to the Village of Walworth residents. They include both public and private facilities located in the Village of Walworth or in a nearby community that are accessible through walking, biking, or short vehicle drive.

None of these other facilities, however, are under the jurisdiction of the Village in terms of ensuring the same level of accessibility to Village residents, maintenance, and improvements. For these reasons, the other, non-Village park and recreation facilities are not included in any analysis of existing and future park deficiencies or in the list of maintenance-related or improvement recommendations.

A. Village of Walworth

1. Publicly Owned-Open to the Public

Veterans Memorial

Public Site

Located behind the Walworth Memorial Library.

2. Publicly Owned-Restricted Access

Public School Sites with Playground and/or Athletic Fields

Publicly Owned (may have policies restricting public use of playground and/or athletic fields)

Walworth Jt. School District #1

Walworth

Public Site (restrictions may apply)

This 2.22-acre playground area is located south of the school in the central area of the Village and is accessible from Fremont Street. Facilities include playground equipment, basketball court, a paved play area and a grassy field

Big Foot Union High School

Walworth

Public Site (restrictions may apply)

This 40.60-acre site is in the south-central area of the Village and is accessible to/from Devils Lane. Existing facilities include baseball, softball, soccer, football fields and track & field area, tennis, and basketball courts. Off-street parking is available on the school grounds.

3. Privately Owned-Not Open to the Public

Immanuel United Church of Christ (UCC) Church Playground

Private Site

This 2.83-acre playground is in the central part of the Village and is accessible from

Fremont Street. Existing facilities include a paved playground area with a basketball court and parking. A grassy soccer field with goals is also maintained on the property.

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church
Private Site
Small playground

4. *Privately Owned-Open to the Public*

South Pines Golf Driving Range
Fees Required

This 18.14-acre private golf driving range is located in the northeast part of the Village and is accessible to/from STH 67. A clubhouse is located on the property with driving, chipping and putting practice areas

B. Neighboring Communities Within the Big Foot Recreational District

1. *Publicly Owned-Open to the Public*

Big Foot Recreation District (BFRD)
Serving Walworth Residents

The Big Foot Recreation District, approved by the Big Foot Union High School Board of Education in 2002, provides recreational and enrichment opportunities for residents of the Big Foot Union High School District including the Villages of Walworth, Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake and Sharon, and portions of the Towns of Walworth, Sharon, Delavan and Linn. The Recreation District does not own any park land but utilizes park land and facilities within the Villages the BFRD serves as well as school facilities for its programs.

Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake Public Beach

Village of Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake-on-Geneva-Lake

Located on the western shore of Geneva Lake in the Village of Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake-on-Geneva-Lake. Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake Beach is a large sandy beach with a grassy area and shade trees. It is open from Memorial Day weekend until Labor Day. Season passes are available for Big Foot Union High School District Residents, which includes all the Village of Walworth residents, at a reduced fee rate.

Open to the Public- Fees Required for non-residents.

Fontana Fen

Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake

Ten-acre conservation area and home to the calcareous fen. This rare wetland prairie has an internal ground water system that supports specialized plants. The fen is located off Highway 67 next to St. Benedict Catholic Church and is accessible from Walworth using the bike/walking path.

Open to the Public

Duck Pond Recreation Area

Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake

Located on Wild Duck Road off Highway 67 in Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake-on-Geneva-Lake. The park contains hiking trails, as well as softball, baseball and soccer fields and a Frisbee golf

course. The Duck Pond Pavilion is available to rent for special events. It is accessible to Walworth residents by bike, walking, or vehicle.
Open to the Public

Hildebrandt Nature Conservancy

Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake

Open to the Public

Hildebrandt Nature Conservancy is a nature trail along the Van Slyke Creek from Mill Street in Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake to the Mill House Pavilion on West Main Street. This is a short bike ride or walk from Walworth.

Jackson Brown Park

Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake

352 Lake Street

Pioneer Park

Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake

Lake Street across from Village boat launch site

Pioneer Park offers an unobstructed view of Geneva Lake.

Reid Park and Little Foot Playground

Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake

Reid Park, located off Fontana Boulevard and Third Avenue, features the Little Foot Playground, a small softball diamond, picnic tables and a lakefront gazebo.

Linn Nature Park and Trail

Linn Township

Goodland Memorial Park

Village of Sharon

Church Street

Pavilion, picnic tables, playground equipment

Ray Mar Park

Sharon

161 Seymour Street

2. *Privately Owned-Open to the Public*

County Club Golf Course

Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake

Fees Required

Located in Fontana-on-Geneva-Lake in Country Club Estates, this golf course offers a nine-hole, Par 35, 3011yard golf course. Non-residents of Country Club Estates can purchase membership. Daily rates are available. Junior memberships are available for 13-18 years of age and Juniors 12 and under are free.

XIV. Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment

A. Public Input Assessment

The following methods were used to identify needs and areas for improvements and developments for the Village of Walworth parks, recreational amenities, and open space.

1. *Informal discussions with residents*
2. *Ad Hoc Citizen Committee site visits*
3. *Public comments from citizens attending public meetings*
4. *Review of prior Needs Assessment Survey*
5. *Review of public documents*
6. *Walworth Plan Commission: Public Hearing January 15, 2024*

B. Current Conditions of Existing Village of Walworth Parks

The following information originated from a survey provided to the Village of Walworth residents as part of the 2018-2023 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. The ad hoc committee agreed that the information gleaned from this survey continued to be relevant and informative with regards to the needs of the Village's parks, recreational amenities, and open space areas. There are plans to have the survey updated on a regular basis through the Village's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Committee.

205 residents responded to the survey.

Key themes from the survey suggest the following:

Seasonal Park Usage

- Devils Lane and Toynton Park were used more frequently than other parks during the months of April through October. Rotary Park and Heyer Park were used the least during that same time period.
- Park usage at all the parks during the months of November through March was low with Badger Park and Badger Conservancy being used most often.

Specific Recreational Use during the months of April through October

- Paths and trails, playground equipment, and open play areas were more frequently accessed and used during these months.
- Volleyball Courts, Pavilions, Softball Diamonds, Batting Cages, Picnic Tables/Benches were used and accessed less during these months.

Specific Recreational Use during the months of November through March

- Paths and trails were accessed and used more frequently than any other available recreational facility during these months.

- Playground equipment, Open Play Areas, and Outdoor Ice Skating were similarly accessed and used by individuals or families once or twice during the season.

Potential Improvements for Specific Parks (Top 4 Suggestions)

Toynton Park

- Additional Playground Equipment, Splash Pad, Dog Park, and Open Multi-Purpose Play Areas

Devils Lane

- Additional Playground Equipment, Splash Pad, Open Multi-Purpose Space, Dog Park

High Priority Improvements Short Term (All Parks)

- Playground Equipment, Splash Pad, Dog Park, Open Multi-Purpose Space

Low Priority Improvements (All Parks)

- Skate Park, Soccer Fields, Disc Golf, Lacrosse Fields

Trail Usage

- Both paved and unpaved/natural walking areas ranked high usage.
- Somewhat important and very important to obtain private property or the use of private property through easements to link existing paths/trails.

Open Space

- The majority of responders stated that it was Very Important to maintain open space, restore native areas, protect wildlife, and preserve natural areas.

Satisfaction Rate with Village Park System

- Residents were primarily either Satisfied to Neutral with regards to their overall satisfaction with the Village Park System (68.45%)
- Very few indicated that they were Very Satisfied (1.19%)
- Some were Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied (30.35%)

Themes from Comments

- Walking Paths and Bike Trails - Need for more and to have them connect.
- Open Space is important to keep (example Devils Lane Park, Badger Park)
- Conservation of some Prairie Land is important.
- Trash containers on paths would help to maintain the paths.
- Playground equipment is aging and outdated upgraded facilities.
- Provide clean and safe bathrooms.
- Reinstate Park Committee
- Parks can and should be places that invite social interaction.
- Maintain what we have first.
- Splash Pad would be a benefit for children and families.

XV. Recommendations for Development and Improvement

2024-2029

A. Assumptions

The following recommendations are both newly generated and also take into consideration the past recommendations and village residents' input from previous and current feedback.

Recommendations that have been brought forth in this document are based on certain assumptions.

1. First and foremost, the recommendations assume that the Village of Walworth will continue to grow at a moderate to high rate and that park and recreation facilities planning should be oriented toward serving a "growing" population and "ever-changing demographics". The actual timing of park acquisitions and development should coincide with the actual demand for park and recreational facilities in the Village's developed and newly developed areas.
2. Secondly, it is assumed that the Village of Walworth Board of Trustees will have a collective desire to maintain and improve the existing park and open space sites and will make good faith efforts to budget and/or seek other funding sources to do so.
3. Thirdly, it is assumed that the Village of Walworth Board of Trustees will appoint a Committee to oversee the implementation of this Plan and its recommendations to indicate a commitment to a robust parks, open space, and bicycle/pedestrian trail system.
4. Fourthly, it is assumed that the residents' survey results from 2018 continue to be a viable source of information which further supports these recommendations.
5. A survey may be used again as a method to continue receiving feedback from the Village residents.

B. Recommendations for All Parks

1. *Immediate Attention Recommendations (0-1 Year)*

The items listed below are primarily considered Programs, Operations, and Maintenance and will need to be funded by the Village or funded through donation. Some of the work listed below could be completed by volunteers.

- Create a 501 3(c) "Friends of the Village of Walworth Parks, Recreation, Open Space" for the purpose of accepting donations and for advancing the promotion, maintenance, beautification, of the Village's parks, recreation, and open space areas.
- Create Maintenance Schedule / Publish Schedule on Village Website

- Create a Community Calendar to include Park Usage Activities and indicators for when the park(s) are reserved for private events.
- Hire stump removal service and remove all stumps from all parks.
- Clean up the areas where “memorials” are located in each park.
- Create a schedule for safety checks of the playground areas. Train maintenance crew members and members of Village Parks Recreation Community Committee on playground safety.
- Document and publish on the Village of Walworth’s website the history of each park including the memorials that are located in the parks
- Plan and organize community events that highlight the Village parks.
- Include these events an annual spring bike safety day that will highlight the Village’s bike paths.
- Create standards for tree removal including removal of stump and tree replacement plan.
- Publish the notices for the events on the Village website and include in Village published/mailed communications such as inserts to water and sewer invoices.

2. *Short Term Recommendations (1-3 years)*

The following are marked for Short Term Attention and apply to all parks, recreational, and open spaces. The items listed below are primarily considered Programs, Operations, and Maintenance and will need to be funded by the Village or funded through donation. Some of the work listed below could be completed by volunteers. Some items are grant eligible.

- Create ADA parking spots at each park location. (Grant Eligible)
- Remove and replace playground mulch with proper product.
- Refurbish or replace existing picnic tables and benches.
- Create a rotating schedule to continue maintenance/replacement of benches and picnic tables. Add more benches and tables at all the parks.
- Hire an outside landscaping company to “clean up” each park in the spring so that the Village crew only needs to maintain the parks during the summer with basic lawn care and general maintenance (mowing, etc.).
- Upgrade identifying park signs. (Grant Eligible)
- Develop a plan for repurposing park use at Devils Lane Park and Tonton Park. (Planning Grant Eligible)

3. *Long Term Recommendations (3-5+ years)*

The following are marked for Long Term Attention and apply to all parks, recreational, and open spaces. These items would be part of a Plan Design process. Professional support would be required. This phase may be eligible for Planning Grant.

- Create ADA walkways to and within parks. (Grant Eligible)
- Determine and install appropriate improvements/additions to playground equipment including equipment for ADA compliance and multi-sensory experiences. (Grant Eligible)
- Consider new park/open space/trail developments as suggested in the 2018 survey and new input from residents. (Grant Eligible)

C. Recommendations for Specific Parks, Conservancies, Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail Systems and Open Space

1. Badger Park and Conservancy

Immediate (0-1 year)

Short-term (1-3 years)

Long-Term (3-5+ years)

- Install year-round port-a-potty bathroom facility.

2. Devils Lane Park

(Most items listed below are Grant Eligible)

Immediate (0-1 year)

- Begin the process to study and recommend “repurposing” the open space made available by the removal of the ball diamond.

Short-term (1-3 years)

- Add identifying park signage along Devils Lane.
- Replace pavilion roof (asphalt shingles) with metal roof.
- Add sidewalks/paths to the pavilion to improve ADA accessibility.

Long-Term (3-5+ years)

- Add additional sidewalks/paths through and around park to improve ADA accessibility.

3. Heyer Park

Short-term (within 5 years)

- Install lighting improvements to highlight landscape features and to assist visually impaired. (Grant Eligible)
- Add sidewalk/path into the park from the perimeter to improve ADA accessibility. (Grant Eligible)

Long-Term (5+ years)

- Improve/add amenities including picnic tables and benches.
- Install a pavilion for events.

4. Rotary Park:

Short-term (within 5 years)

- Provide marked ADA accessible stall(s) in the parking area.
- Improve general maintenance of buildings and structures including painting of the wood around the rink and the asphalt inside the rink.

Long-Term (5+years)

- Install playground equipment or other amenities for a “mini-park”. (Grant Eligible if equipment is designed specifically for ADA access)
- Improve/add amenities including picnic tables and/or benches.

5. Toynton Park

Immediate (0-1 year)

- Begin the process to study and recommend repurposing the park. (Planning Grant Eligible)

Short-term (1-3 years)

- Add identifying park signage along Beloit St.
- Add sidewalk/path from parking lot to pavilion and softball diamond to improve ADA accessibility. (Grant Eligible)
- Fill the roadside swale along Windmill Lane to provide more usable parking space.
- Acquire additional land to the west (in conjunction with future residential land development) for additional expansion of the park to meet community park space acreage goals. (Land Acquisition Money)
- Prepare volleyball area.

Long-Term (3-5+ years)

- Improve/add off-street parking area along Beloit St including ADA accessible stall(s).
- Improve/add recreational areas (horseshoe/bags, etc.)

6. Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail Systems

Long-term (3- 5+ years)

- Priority should be given to segments that connect to existing routes, major streets, and parks (Grant Eligible)

7. Protection and Utilization of Environmental Corridors

Long-term (3- 5+ years)

- Develop a separate plan that identifies environmental corridors within the Village limits along with suggestions for passive recreation (nature trails for example) to protect the environmental corridors from intrusion and degradation by incompatible land uses. (Planning Grant Eligible)
- Environmental corridors are, in effect, a composite of the most important individual elements of the natural resource base and have immeasurable environmental, ecological, and recreational value and include the following:
 - Wetlands, drainageways, streams, creeks, floodplains, steep slopes
 - (greater than 12%), shoreland buffer strips adjacent to streams, wetlands, drainageways, and woodlands.

XVI. Recommendations for Outdoor Recreation Provision

A. Action Program-Capital Improvement Schedule (CIS)

At the time of the writing of this Plan a Program-Multi-Year Capital Improvement Schedule was not created. This would be a task for the Park Recreation and Outdoor Space (PROS) Committee. If a PROS Committee is not appointed by the Village of Walworth Board of Trustees, then creating a Capital Improvement Schedule would be assigned to the Public Works Committee. Once a Capital Improvement Multi-Year Schedule is created and adopted by the Village of Walworth Board of Trustees, this Plan will be amended.

B. Operation and Maintenance

1. Existing Operation and Maintenance Responsibilities

One function of the Village Public Works Department is to maintain the parks and open space areas. Currently the Public Works Department has a Manager and three staff positions. All are charged with a variety of functions and duties, i.e., streets, water, sewer, buildings & grounds, and parks. Public Works may recommend to the Board of Trustees to hire out contract work and the Board of Trustees would then act on those recommendations.

2. Implications of CIS on Operation and Maintenance Capabilities

A Capital Improvement Schedule (CIS) would include maintenance and improvement costs for parks, open space, trail, and conservancy operations.

C. Funding Programs

1. Local Funds

Local funds include taxes and other fees. The budgeting process begins in November of each year.

2023 Budget for Public Works include:

• Salaries	\$26,000
• Benefits	\$16,000
• Heat	\$550
• Light	\$3500
• Water and Sewer	\$1000
• Maintenance	\$3000
• Gas	\$3500
• Maintenance	\$10,000

- Playground Insurance \$2700
- Total: \$67180.00

2. *Available Grant Funding Programs*

Currently there are no grant monies dedicated to funding parks, recreation, open space, or trails in the Village of Walworth.

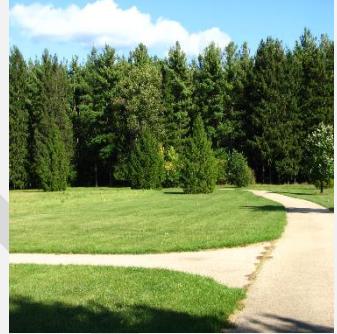
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XVII. Appendix

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XVIII. Photographs

A. Badger Park and Conservancy



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B. Devils Lane Park



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C. Heyer Park



D. Rotary Park



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E. Toynton Park

