

# Comprehensive Plan for Parks, Trails and Open Space Chatham, Illinois

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## INTRODUCTION

Parks and recreational facilities are in great demand in the Village of Chatham. The community has a high percentage of families with school-age children, a demographic that is continuing to increase. The existing parks in Chatham are heavily used for community-wide events, for numerous sports programs for local youth, as well as for general recreation. The demand for recreational space, however, exceeds that which is currently available. The shortfall will become greater as the population continues to grow.

This Comprehensive Plan first analyzes the recreational facilities currently available to the Chatham residents and discusses the community's recreational needs. The plan then outlines potential improvements of existing parks and open space, and identifies new facilities that are needed to meet both current and anticipated future needs.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OVERVIEW

The Village of Chatham is located three miles south of Springfield, Illinois' capital city. Chatham's population was 8,583 in 2000. Today (2019) the population is estimated to be 12,674, a near-50% increase in the last 19 years. The population is expected to continue growing at a similar rate during the next ten years, although statewide declining population trends may influence this rate.

Many factors have contributed to the growth. As Chatham grows, more business and job opportunities are being created in town. Additionally, Chatham is near Springfield where job opportunities and amenities are relatively plentiful and diverse. Major highways connect Chatham and Springfield. Connections to the south are also good for opportunities to tap into job markets in the Illinois Metro-east Area and St. Louis. Chatham is well recognized as having an outstanding public-school system that has led to a community population heavily weighted with families of school-age children.

Although many young families make up the population, all age groups are represented in the community. Certain groups, particularly pre-school children and older residents, have few facilities suited to their interests or abilities.

Four creeks flow through Chatham, Polecat Creek, Orchard Creek, Panther Creek and Sugar Creek. The creeks carry storm water drainage from the developed areas of town and from the surrounding agricultural land. These creeks and their adjacent areas are subject to periodic flooding and need to be protected and managed in order to preserve clean and healthy conditions. The creeks meander through town and empty into Lake Springfield, the drinking water source and recreational feature for the region.

Finally, Chatham should consider improvements in the public open space along village streets. A coordinated program to provide shade trees along the streets in town can help moderate the environmental effects of urbanization and contribute to an attractive community.

This Comprehensive Plan for Parks, Trails and Open Space in Chatham, Illinois first documents the factors taken into consideration and then sets-out a course for implementation. The document follows this outline.

1. An inventory and analysis of current parks, trails, and open space in Chatham is provided, including their location, size, facilities, and uses.
2. A description of community recreational needs is based on extensive local input. The Chatham Public Properties and Recreation Commission and village staff were involved through the duration of plan development. The public participated during a public meeting on June 5, 2019.
3. Five Goals for Chatham's parks, trails, and open space were established based on Chatham's expressed needs and recreation opportunities within the community.
4. Concept Plans for existing and possible future parks, trails, and open space are provided. Plans illustrate improvements and expansions of some existing sites, several new recreational areas, and opportunities to lease land and share facilities.
5. Priorities for executing the proposed improvements are outlined in a sequence consistent with expected growth of the community.

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## **CHAPTER I EXISTING PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE**

The Village of Chatham owns four park sites and the downtown square that are developed with a variety of recreational facilities. The Village also owns a local segment of the Interurban Trail and two undeveloped park sites. The school district has six schools that each have outdoor sports and recreation facilities. Outside the municipal boundaries are additional recreational sites managed by other local units of government and private businesses.

## CHATHAM VILLAGE FACILITIES

Recreational facilities are currently provided by Chatham at five locations: Community Park-South, Westside Park, Jaycee Park, Covered Bridge Park and the downtown Veterans Memorial Square. Together, these sites total 112.75 acres. Two additional sites totaling approximately 32 acres are undeveloped and reserved for future park development.

A description of each park and recreational facility follows.

### 1. Community Park-South

The largest village park is Community Park-South located 1/2 mile south of the downtown area. The



original 72-acre site was acquired and developed during the 1990s. Facilities here include a complex of baseball diamonds, soccer and football fields, tennis/pickle ball courts, a band shell, several parking areas, and other improvements. An additional parcel that includes a segment of Orchard Creek was later added to the park, increasing its area to 77.27 acres.

Use of the park for large community events is beginning to compete with use of the park for sports and other activities. Heavy use of the grounds is causing soil compaction and damage to the turf. Little open space is available for casual activities, family events, and nature enjoyment.



### 2. Westside Park

The original 14.5-acre Westside Park is located on the near west side of town along Polecat Creek. Much of the park is within the flood plain. Trees growing along the meandering creek contribute to the natural character of the site. The park has a well-developed picnic area with a shelter, playground facilities, and three youth baseball fields that are currently being reworked.

Downing Drive runs along the east side of the park. Several properties on the east side of Downing Drive were purchased and houses were removed as part of a federal buy-out program for flood-prone sites. Now part of the park, this area has been maintained as mowed turf with a few scattered shade trees. No improvements have yet been made. With this additional land the total park is now approximately 20 acres in area.

### 3. Jaycee Park



This 4-acre park is located along Walnut Street east of the downtown, near the community's water tower. It provides a well-lighted and fenced baseball field, two basketball courts, a concession/restroom facility, a small shelter, and a playground. This park is intensively used for youth league baseball practices and games throughout the season. The park is adjacent to the private YNOT Camp to the east and a senior housing center to the west. A neighborhood detention basin creates an open area north of the park.

### 4. Covered Bridge Park



This park is a 9.28-acre site is three miles south of the town. Its primary feature is a historic covered bridge over Sugar Creek near the location of Sangamon County's first pioneer settlement in the early 1800s.

The bridge was preserved, and associated improvements were constructed by the Illinois Department of Transportation before the site was transferred to Chatham.

### 5. Veterans Memorial Square



The historic Chatham village square, or village green, is the site of community events taking place since the settlement was platted in the 1800s. The park is one square block in area and is in the center of historic downtown. The site is bordered on all four sides by streets and parking. The 2.2-acre open lawn is dotted with shade trees. A memorial to honor local veterans is centered in the park and a gazebo and picnic shelter share the space.

Many community events take place in this park, many honoring veterans, celebrating civic holidays, and recognizing the town's history. Chatham Homecoming activities take place here generally in June, sponsored by the Chatham American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

## 6. Prairie Vista Park

This 7.2-acre park site on Chatham's northwest side was acquired and has been given the temporary name of Prairie Vista Park since it is at the end of Prairie Vista Drive. Preliminary plans have been developed to make this area a neighborhood park, but no development has occurred to date.

## 7. The Headwaters

Chatham owns a 30-acre site off South Main Street near the Community Park-South. The site was acquired as a place to consolidate municipal maintenance equipment and material. A pond and surrounding vegetation has been proposed for 20 acres of the site that was cultivated until this year. The pond would serve as a stormwater collection basin at the headwater of Orchard Creek and would collect surface runoff and drainage from field tiles in the area. Lacking a formal given name, the site is now being called The Headwaters.

## 8. Trails

The Interurban Trail, built on an abandoned railroad line, extends 1.5 miles through Chatham. It continues north 4 miles to connect with Springfield's trail system. Chatham is developing a system of local trails that connect with the Interurban Trail. Some local sections are stand alone trails, some are bicycle lanes along the edge of streets, and others are wide sidewalks along streets that accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians.



TRAIL AT COVERED BRIDGE PARK



TRAIL AT COMMUNITY PARK-SOUTH

## Ball-Chatham School District Facilities

### 1. Glenwood High School

The high school building and grounds were constructed in 2001 on the northeast edge of town. The school has extensive outdoor physical education and sports facilities. There are 8 tennis courts, a football field, 2 baseball diamonds, 2 softball diamonds, a soccer field, and a track. All are lighted. Open areas also exist for sport practices and general student activities.

### 2. Glenwood Intermediate and Middle schools

The two schools share a site on the east side of town between Lake Springfield and Interstate 55. Physical education and sports facilities include a playground, a lighted football field, 2 lighted baseball diamonds, softball diamonds, and a soccer field. Several practice fields are located north of the schools.

### 3. Chatham Elementary School

The elementary school is located just south of downtown Chatham. The site has a playground, 2 basketball areas, and an open play field with 2 baseball fields.

### 4. Ball Elementary School

This elementary facility is located east of I-55. The large site has a playground, a basketball area, and large open lawn areas.

### 5. Glenwood Elementary School

This is the newest school building in the system and is located directly west of the High School. It has a large playground and a separate smaller playground. The school is surrounded by open play lawns that include a couple youth soccer fields.

## Commercial Facilities within Chatham

### 1. Subdivision Open Spaces

Several open areas have been established within residential subdivision developments. These are generally drainage and storm water detention areas. Some have walkways and tree plantings that serve as amenities for the neighborhood.

## 2. Spartan Sports Park

This softball, volleyball, and baseball complex is located north of the High School on the east side of Gordon Drive. It is privately owned and serves primarily adult sports leagues.

## Public Facilities outside Chatham

### 1. Public Colleges and Universities

Lincoln Land Community College and the University of Illinois at Springfield both have sports fields and other recreational facilities which are available at times to organized groups.

### 2. City, Water, Light and Power (CWLP) Lake Lands

Located along Lake Springfield just outside the municipal boundary of Chatham are a public marina, boat launch, wildlife sanctuary, parks, and other open space. The sites are managed by CWLP, an agency of the City of Springfield.

### 3. Springfield Park District and the City of Springfield

Outside Chatham are Springfield Park District and other City of Springfield facilities. The facilities are generally around Lake Springfield and north into the city. They include regionally used picnic and fishing areas, swimming pools, sports facilities, golf courses, an ice rink, zoo, and botanical garden.

### 4. Sangamon Valley Trail in Sangamon County

Long range plans have been developed for a Sangamon Valley Trail which will interconnect municipalities, public facilities, and high-quality natural areas. The 39-mile segment of the abandoned Chicago & Northwestern Railroad right-of-way runs generally north/south through western Sangamon County. It was acquired by the IL Department of Natural Resources and is being transferred to the Sangamon County Highway Department as sections are being developed. When the southern segment of this trail is developed it will be less than two miles west of the Village and should offer opportunities for a trail connection.

## 5. The Interurban Trail

This trail now runs through Chatham and connects to the Springfield trail system to the north. The abandoned railroad corridor continues south offering the potential for extension of the trail to the communities south of Chatham.

## 6. Route 66 Trail

A national trail is planned near I-55 just east of Chatham. The old highway is legendary having been an early cross-county highway that connected Chicago to Santa Monica, California. Each year events, highway restoration projects, and travel programs attract visitors from around the world.

## Commercial Facilities outside Chatham

### 1. Golf Courses

Several privately-owned golf courses are in the Chatham vicinity.

- Panther Creek Golf Course, an 18-hole golf course, is located north of Chatham in Springfield. It is affiliated with its surrounding residential development.
- Piper Glen Golf Course is also an 18 hole golf course located north of Chatham and is open to the public.
- Edgewood Golf Course is located in Auburn, south of Chatham, and is open to the public.

### 2. Knight's Action Park

This private park on the south side of Springfield has a driving range, miniature golf, water slides, a wave pool, and baseball fields.



## **CHAPTER II COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND NEEDS**

The Village of Chatham is a fast-growing community just south of Springfield. A large percentage of Chatham's population is families with school-age children, although people of all ages reside in the community. To meet the needs of the population, many facilities are provided within Chatham's parks. A broad range of recreational and sports programs is offered by the Village, many civic organizations and countless volunteers.

## Population and Demographics

The Village of Chatham has grown at remarkable rates during the last decades. There was a 66% growth rate during the 1970s although it was followed in the 1980s during the recession of a 5% growth rate. By 2000 the population of Chatham was 8,583, and by 2010 it was 11,647. The estimate today in 2019 is 12,674. The amenities of Chatham including its small-town atmosphere continue to be attractive to many people.

Chatham's extended period of growth can also be attributed to several other factors as well. The community is located three miles south of Springfield along an interstate and a state highway. Jobs and business opportunities are more readily available in the capital city. Also, Chatham is positioned just beyond the fast-growing southwest side of Springfield, where the City's residential and commercial growth has burgeoned. During this time, Chatham and Springfield have competed to annex property as unincorporated areas were targeted for development.

Another factor in Chatham's growth has been the high-quality schools in the Ball-Chatham Community School District Unit #5. The district has had an excellent reputation for high scholastic standards and extensive extra-curricular opportunities.

Chatham has a large percentage of families with primary and secondary school-age children. One resident summed it up by saying, "We get families moving-in before their kids start school, then moving-out when the kids graduate. They sell their homes to the next young family." Today in 2019 it is estimated 30% of the population is under the age of 18. The adult population between ages 18 and 65 years is estimated to be about 60% of the total population.

Citizens 65 and older represent about 10% of the population. These statistics have not varied much in recent decades indicating that Chatham will continue to be the family-oriented community.

The community is predominantly middle-income level which, combined with the preponderance of families having school-age children, indicates a great need for parks and recreational facilities.

## Ball-Chatham School District #5

The Ball-Chatham Community School District #5 encompasses the Village of Chatham, some areas within the City of Springfield, and a large unincorporated area of southern Sangamon County.

The student population has been steadily increasing, as the populations of both Chatham and other areas in the district grow. The current student population of the District #5 is 4,850 (est. in 2019).

The District has a high school facility in the northeast section of town on Plummer Blvd. The intermediate and middle schools are between I-55 and the Lake Springfield along Chatham Road. District #5 has three elementary schools. They are the Chatham Elementary School south of the downtown, Ball Elementary School east of Interstate 55, and Glenwood Elementary School directly west of the High School on Plummer Blvd.

The District has outdoor recreational facilities at all its school sites as listed in Chapter 2. Some of these facilities are available for community use when not being used for school-sponsored activities. The greatest use is by organized sports leagues, particularly the Chatham Baseball and Softball Inc. (CBSI).

Individuals and small groups also use the facilities, particularly the playground equipment, open lawns for sports practice areas.

## Civic Organizations and Programs

Many local organizations contribute in various ways to parks and recreation in Chatham, including these.

- American Legion
- BACH Soccer
- Boy and Girl Scouts
- Chatham Baseball and Softball Inc. (CBSI)
- Chatham Jaycees
- Chatham Chamber of Commerce
- Chatham Community Football League
- Chatham Soccer Association (CSA)
- Friends of the Park
- Friends of Chatham Pickle Ball
- Rotary Club
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
- Youth Basketball Association (YBA)

## **CHAPTER III GOALS FOR PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE**

Five goals have been developed to help direct Chatham's future development of parks, trails and open space.

**GOAL 1  
PROVIDE PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**

**GOAL 2  
DEVELOP TRAILS AND GREENWAYS**

**GOAL 3  
CONSERVE OPEN SPACE AND ENHANCE NATURAL  
ENVIRONMENTS**

**GOAL 4  
COORDINATE FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS**

**GOAL 5  
ENCOURAGE COMMERCIAL RECREATION**

## GOALS FOR VILLAGE OF CHATHAM: PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE

### GOAL 1

#### PROVIDE PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Provide public parks and recreational facilities that meet the outdoor activity needs of all segments of the population and are accessible to all ages and abilities.

### GOAL 2

#### DEVELOP TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

Develop trails and greenways to provide opportunities for recreational activity and as an alternative to motor vehicle transportation. Trails within Chatham should interconnect residential areas, parks, schools, community facilities, and commercial districts. Connections should also be made to nearby regional trails and greenways as they are built.

### GOAL 3

#### CONSERVE OPEN SPACE AND ENHANCE NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

Conserve and enhance natural environments by protecting environmentally sensitive areas, enhancing areas which have potential resource value and, in general, improving the natural environment of the community.

### GOAL 4

#### COORDINATE FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

Promote cooperation with other public entities, civic organizations, private landowners and real estate developers to assure the best recreational opportunities can be achieved. Strive to coordinate the various programs and facilities for the greater public benefit.

### GOAL 5

#### ENCOURAGE COMMERCIAL RECREATION

Encourage development of commercial recreation facilities and programs that supplement those provided by the village and school district to aid in fulfilling the community's recreational needs.

### GOAL 1:

#### PROVIDE PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

*Provide public parks and recreational facilities that meet the outdoor activity needs of all segments of the population.*

Chatham currently has five developed parks encompassing 112.75 acres. Community Park-South with 77 acres is the Village's largest park and serves needs of the entire community. Here, facilities are provided for league play baseball, soccer, and football. Tennis/pickleball courts, a playground, and a bandstand are also available. Intermittently, community festivals occupy large areas of the park.

Westside Park is a neighborhood park that provides basic recreational facilities of picnic, playground, and open play areas. Families in the west side of town can walk to the park. Plenty of parking is provided for those driving from other parts of town.

Jaycee Park located near the water tower on Walnut Street is predominantly a baseball field with support facilities comprised of a restroom and concession building, a picnic shelter, a playground, and basketball courts.

Veterans Memorial Square, with its war memorial, gazebo, and plantings is the focal center of the historic downtown. It is used for summer youth activities and group gatherings. The picnic shelter is available for large group gatherings such as family reunions and community events.

Covered Bridge Park was transferred to the Village after preservation of the historic covered bridge. The remote site is located on Sugar Creek over 2 miles from the center of Chatham. It is a picturesque location with a shelter and trails.

#### ADDITIONAL FACILITIES NEEDED

Local input was offered that aided in identifying recreational needs within the community. This local input combined with accepted recreational guidelines and observations of the authors of this plan, resulted in the following list of community needs and desirable improvements. These are not ordered by need or priority, a subject discussed in Chapter VI.

## Additional Community Park

Community Park-South is the only community type park in town. It is used intensively. Individuals and organized groups often compete for use of the facilities and sometimes parking is inadequate. For many in Chatham its location is somewhat remote.

While expansion of the park and development of smaller neighborhood parks can help relieve conditions at the community park, a second community recreation complex will likely be justified in the future. Ideally a new community park would be located on the north side of Chatham where it would have good access from a principal roadway and the community trail system.

## Additional Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are defined as being within walking distance of residents and having facilities such as small picnic shelters, picnic tables, playgrounds, basketball courts, open space for informal activities and casual sports. These parks are accessible to residents by walking or running which is considered part of their recreational value.

A generally accepted standard in community planning is to provide a neighborhood park within 1/4 mile (walking distance) for all residents.

The following areas of town are currently served by park facilities.

- The Southwest area of town is well served by Westside Park and Veterans Memorial Square.
- The East-Central area of town is served by Jaycee Park and CWLP areas adjacent to Lake Springfield.
- The Southeast area of town is served by the Community Park-South and Covered Bridge Park.

These areas are not currently served by neighborhood parks.

- The Northwest area of town.
- The Northeast area of town.
- The Far-East area of town, east of Sugar Creek.

## Additional Sports Facilities

More recreational facilities are needed particularly for young children, families and small groups, pet owners, and senior citizens. Additional facilities for baseball, soccer, football and other emerging sports such as disc golf and pickleball are in high demand and could be used currently. Locations for team practices are currently needed. As the community continues to grow and sports activities expand, more facilities will be needed.

The Community Park-South is now the center of Chatham's sports facilities. Here, there is some apparent interference among existing uses. The large community events are infringing on the sports facilities. Parking is inadequate for some sports areas, especially when other facilities within the park are being used. The park needs to be expanded and rearranged to better organize the existing sports programs.

A new sports facility in the northern part of the community could supplement the existing venues and improve the distribution of facilities. A new sports facility could benefit by being close to major streets and trails for access without impacting residential areas. Many sports facilities could also benefit by having businesses nearby that provide products and services for participants and spectators.

Additional sports fields are needed in the community for team practices and for hosting large tournaments. More fields especially for very young players are needed. Fields that can be used for lacrosse were suggested by some people in the community.

Basketball courts are also in limited supply according to public comments.

Disc golf is a rather new sport that is not now offered in Chatham and has been suggested at one of the public meetings. Facilities are available in Springfield at a couple parks and at the campus of University of Illinois at Springfield. Participation in this sport can be by an individual, small groups/teams, and even organized tournaments.

## Facilities for Underserved Groups

Young children ages 2 to 5 years need facilities scaled to their size and development including playgrounds, open areas for running and playing, and landscaped areas for exploration and nature enjoyment. They are typically supervised by adults who like to have seating available close to the children's facilities and protection from the sun and wind.

Families and small groups use picnic areas with shelters, picnic tables, grills, and water. They like adjoining playgrounds and open areas for informal games of Frisbee, bag softball, touch football, etc. Paths or trails are frequently used in connection with such family/group activities.

Dog owners enjoy fenced dog parks where their pets can run off-leash. Comfortable sitting areas can be provided for owners who often enjoy socializing while there. Dispensers for pet waste collection at dog parks and along trails encourages good stewardship.

Many people, including senior citizens, enjoy walking and running in attractive environments. Trails through woodlands and prairies provide for the enjoyment of nature. Walkways through neighborhoods, parks and/or downtown areas where let people socialize and watch activities underway. More trails for walking were mentioned several times in the public meeting with a preference for having the trails lighted for safer evening use.

Many people including senior citizens enjoy court and lawn games such as tennis and pickleball, disc golf, and horseshoes. Table games, bird watching, and fishing are activities often enjoyed by older people or those with limited mobility.

## Additional Community Facilities

Golf is currently provided at several nearby courses. However, the idea of a putting green and driving range was presented as a place where people could learn the sport and practice.

The schools, the village library, and the community center adjacent to the Veterans Memorial Square provide indoor activity space within the community.

The YNOT youth camp and several churches provide spaces too. Private fitness clubs, gyms, dance studios and other venues add to the recreational matrix of Chatham.

Needs expressed at the various meetings include:

1. A covered and protected place for markets, fairs, exhibitions, and large gatherings could be a good location for many community functions. Expansion of the shelter in the Veterans Memorial Square and a larger pavilion at Community Park-South were mentioned as desirable improvements.
2. An indoor year-round swimming pool has been discussed by several people for many years as a place for exercise, sport, and play. An outdoor spray fountain for children to play was presented as a venue found in other communities. A fountain plaza can also serve as an attractive place for gathering and relaxing.
3. Also suggested was a community hall, exhibition space, or large gathering location that can be reserved for big events, meetings, and various activities. Indoor sports for various age groups can also utilize a large space that allows flexibility in arranging for various activities.
4. Attractive places for small gatherings and ceremonies was expressed as desirable for taking family and group photographs. Enhancing the gazebo in the Veterans Memorial Square and establishing locations at the Covered Bridge Park are two sites mentioned.
5. Places for exercise and activities that can be used by people of various abilities and ages was recommended. Attention to health and fitness should be encouraged with trail markers, exercise stations and play apparatus.
6. Various new aquatic activities were proposed at the public meeting which attracted favorable responses from people. Even with Lake Springfield being nearby, the idea of a fishing pond was received well. Some concern was expressed with the high maintenance of a pond and concerns with user safety.
7. A canoe and kayak launch area on Sugar Creek received favorable comments as an activity that would be attractive for some community residents. Most of the lands that border the creek are in private ownership that might require establishing easements for protection and recreational use of the creek.
8. Lake Springfield, managed by CWLP, is a resource that is being tapped only minimally by Chatham residents. The lake can offer new opportunities for a variety of water-based activities, such as fishing, boating, nature study, and possibly camping.

## **GOAL 2**

### **DEVELOP TRAILS AND GREENWAYS**

*Develop trails and greenways to provide opportunities for recreational activity and an alternative to motor vehicle transportation. Trails within Chatham should interconnect residential areas, parks, schools, community facilities, and commercial districts. Connections should also be made to nearby regional trails and greenways as they are built.*

#### **Existing Trails**

Chatham has been developing trails in the community for many years. The Community Park-South, developed in the early 1990s, included a 1/2-mile long paved trail. Since the park trail was built a 1.5-mile Interurban Trail segment has been added. Several trail segments within the village now interconnect sidewalk segments to the Interurban Trail and Community Park-South.

#### **Recreational Trails**

Trails have paved surfaces which allow uses such as walking, running, and non-motorized vehicles (bicycles, tricycles, scooters, skake boards, in-line skates, etc.). Typically, trails are located through open areas such as greenways and parks, on abandoned railroad rights-of-way, along utility corridors, or adjacent to roads and highways. Trails also could be located along edges of natural areas where wildlife habitat disruption can be minimal.

In existing urbanized areas, sidewalks are often incorporated in a community's trail network. Typically, sidewalks provide pedestrian connections with wider multi-use trails. In certain locations existing sidewalks can be adapted to become multi-use for walking, bicycling, skating, etc. Often conversion may require adaptations such as widening the pavement, ramping, adjusting curves, and installing signs for the safety of both trail users and motorists.

Where off-road alignments are not possible, trails sometimes share roadways with motorists. In this case, a separate, outside lane must be designated

for trail use. Traffic signs and pavement striping must provide clear directions to both trail users and motorists.

In areas not yet developed, Chatham can require developers to either build trails along designated routes or donate rights-of-way to the municipality for that purpose. Ordinances requiring such development and/or donation are typically popular for developers, buyers, and the community. The developer can market and sell units with the added value of a safe trail to community parks, schools, etc. Buyers are attracted to the amenity. The entire community benefits as new areas are brought into the trail system.

#### **Paths**

Paths can provide exercise, relaxation, and nature study. Paths are not typically paved. Instead, their surfaces are mowed turf, wood chips, crushed stone, or soil. They are often aligned through forests and prairies, along rivers and creeks, through greenways and park land.

Some paths may allow running and mountain bike riding. These more intensive uses should not occur where nature study or quiet walking is primarily intended, as they would obviously be disruptive. In sensitive environments, these uses should not be allowed as they could seriously damage the environment.

Paths have much less impact on the environment than trails. They provide a more natural experience for users and are less visible in the landscape. They also require less construction and are less expensive to develop than paved trails. Management and maintenance of paths, however, may be more difficult as paths are less defined and are often located in more remote areas.

#### **Parkways and Community Entrances**

Highways and streets within the community can be enhanced to create attractive parkways that link together parks and other public facilities. Parkway with trees and other plantings, wayfinding signs, attractive light fixtures, etc. also help to establish an attractive and unifying image of the community.

Typically, rights-of-way of roads or streets are improved to form the parkways. In some instances, land adjacent to the rights-of-way is acquired to broaden portions of the parkways. Sometimes owners of private property visible from parkways are asked to participate in creating attractive and well-kept parkways.

Parkways can be enhanced with shade trees, other plantings, streetlights, community signs, sculpture, and other features. Parkways sometimes include trails or other recreational facilities. Distracting or unattractive areas along a parkway - parking lots, gaudy commercial signs and billboards, and unkept areas of town - should be screened from view. Parkways should be developed with consideration of motorists' viewpoint, using large elements and/or masses of elements so that they can be appreciated from moving vehicles.

For an attractive parkway, both the parkway itself and adjacent land need to be considered. Streets and sidewalks need to be kept clean and well maintained. Turf needs to be kept mowed, and plant material must be pruned and maintained.

Signs for community facilities are important elements along parkways and within communities. A system of well-designed signs can effectively guide people to facilities and serve as a unifying element within a community. Coordinated signs can be used at community entrances, parks, cemeteries, government centers, and libraries. Additionally, owners of businesses and subdivisions could be encouraged to adopt the municipal style for further image development within the community.

### GOAL 3

#### CONSERVE OPEN AREAS AND ENHANCE NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

*Conserve and enhance natural environments by protecting environmentally sensitive areas, enhancing areas that have potential resource value and, in general, improving the natural environment of the community.*

### Drainageways

The Village of Chatham is situated along four drainageways that flow into Lake Springfield. Polecat Creek enters Chatham on the west side of town,

flows northeast through town and empties into an upper arm of the lake. Orchard Creek, an intermittent stream, enters Chatham on the southwest side of town, flows east-northeast through the Community Park-South and empties into another arm of Lake Springfield. Sugar Creek is the major waterway, flowing south. Sugar Creek was dammed to form Lake Springfield in the 1930s. Panther Creek flows into Sugar Creek on the south side of Chatham.

The flood plains along these waterways are essentially the only natural areas remaining in Chatham. The areas support native grasses, forbs, and (a limited amount of) woodlands native to the area. Above the flood plains, the native mesic forests were cleared long ago to allow for grazing and crop production. Higher still on the flat land, the native tall grass prairie was removed to make fields for agricultural crops. Much of the flatter area has been replaced now with housing and other urban development.

These waterways should be protected. They collect an enormous volume of surface water running off the crop land and urban areas comprising their watersheds. This run-off inevitability contains soil sediment, farm and home chemicals, fertilizers, petroleum products from motor vehicles, human and animal wastes, plant and weed seeds, and debris of all sorts. Protected and well-established waterways can slow the flow rate of water along the route to minimize additional erosion and allow sediments to drop out before they reach the lake. Natural areas within the flood plain filter-out debris and buffer harmful chemicals. Flood plains offer habitat for a variety of wildlife species.

Flood plains should be considered a valuable component of a recreational system. As natural environments, they provide areas for students of all ages to enjoy, observe, and learn about the environment. Paths and trails can be provided along the edges for access and recreation. Other recreational facilities such as picnic shelters, playgrounds, and open areas for informal recreation can be provided within the areas.

Waterways can serve as greenway corridors which interconnect parks and open space within a community. In Chatham, waterways could provide access beyond the Village boundaries to facilities along Lake Springfield and elsewhere.

## Urban Forestry and Planting

Urban forestry has an increasingly recognized value. Integrating trees and other vegetation within urban development provides many benefits to a community.

First, trees moderate the extreme climatic conditions which urbanization often creates. Vegetation processes carbon dioxide created by motor vehicles and creates oxygen needed by humans and other animal species. Trees block solar radiation from streets, roofs, parking lots, and other paved areas which otherwise absorb and re-radiate heat. They shade pedestrians from sun and radiation. Vegetation filters particulate matter in the air, absorbs urban noise, and blocks winds which are often exaggerated in urban areas by tunneling between structures. Trees screen unsightly views and improve the appearance of areas by providing visual unity and natural quality to otherwise built environments.

To promote such benefits within Chatham, the following can be done. A tree ordinance could be adopted and an urban forestry program initiated. A tree commission could be formed for the purpose of developing guidelines and recommendations to the village. The commission could develop a list of appropriate urban tolerant tree and shrub species, prepare maintenance and management guidelines, and review planting plans for new developments and public projects.

## Quality of Urban Sites

Chatham should consider adopting a policy of identifying any areas which might become visually blighted by land disturbed, trash, etc. These areas could be cleaned and reclaimed to a safe and attractive condition. If municipal ordinances are not effective in this effort, the village could acquire the offending property and improve it for open space or for sale for appropriate development.

## GOAL 4

### PROMOTE COOPERATION

*Promote cooperation with other public entities, civic organizations, private landowners, and real estate developers to ensure that the best recreational opportunities can be achieved. Strive to coordinate the various programs and facilities for the greater public benefit.*

Chatham is in an enviable situation of having many active public and civic organizations in the area. While developing this plan, opportunities were explored to share lands and facilities to maximize public use and avoid duplication.

Many civic organizations have historically supported recreational activities and improvements. These groups should continue to receive the gratitude and encouragement from the village for their work in providing facilities and recreational opportunities within the community.

The school district has completed an extensive construction program which included development of many new physical education and sports facilities. As in the past, the village and the school district can work together to assure that the recreational facilities of both entities are being maximized.

Springfield's City, Water, Light and Power (CWLP) manages Lake Springfield and much of the lake's watershed for conservation and recreation purposes. Several parcels of land are located along Chatham's north boundary and within the east areas of Chatham. The village could discuss with CWLP the possibility of utilizing some of these sites for conservation and recreational use.

## GOAL 5

### ENCOURAGE COMMERCIAL RECREATION

*Encourage development of commercial recreation facilities and programs that supplement those provided by the village and school district in fulfilling the community's recreational needs.*

Private businesses can offer recreational facilities which supplement those provided by a community. Those facilities may be those that, 1) require a great capital investment, 2) are labor intensive to operate, or 3) serve a limited interest group. Examples of private recreational facilities common in central Illinois are gymnasiums, golf courses, water parks, ball parks, indoor tennis and related activities, bike shops, bait shops, boat rentals, snack shops, and sports stores.

With the expanding need for recreational facilities and the corresponding high development and maintenance costs, communities should welcome such businesses. They can absorb some of the recreational demand and relieve the village of providing additional facilities. In some cases, it may be desirable to promote, recruit, or even provide incentives for private business to develop recreational facilities.

Commercial recreational facilities can be located near municipal parks or other recreational areas. In this way, the public and private facilities become symbiotic. Together, private and public facilities provide more opportunities for recreational users and, therefore, more users are attracted to the area. Municipal zoning should provide for various recreational uses near existing and proposed parks lands and trails.

## **CHAPTER IV COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

This plan addresses all five of the Chatham's goals for parks and open space. It looks at how each goal can be met by working with Chatham's situations and opportunities.

## DESCRIPTION OF PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan describes a system of parks, open spaces, and trails to serve the Chatham residents. A graphic plan of the Chatham area shows existing and proposed sites and interconnections. For each site, a description of the existing and proposed uses is provided.

This plan is comprehensive. It addresses all five of Chatham's goals for parks and open space. It looks at how each goal can be met by working with Chatham's situations and opportunities.

The plan is also long-range. It outlines improvements to existing parks. It recommends acquisition and development of new areas. The plan is intended to be a guideline over a period of years to identify projects and funds required to implement and manage.

Finally, the plan is futuristic. It projects the future growth of the community and its associated needs. This plan, however, cannot anticipate all the changes that will affect Chatham's needs. From time to time, future trends need to be evaluated and goals adjusted to suit those conditions.

## GRAPHIC PLAN AND KEY

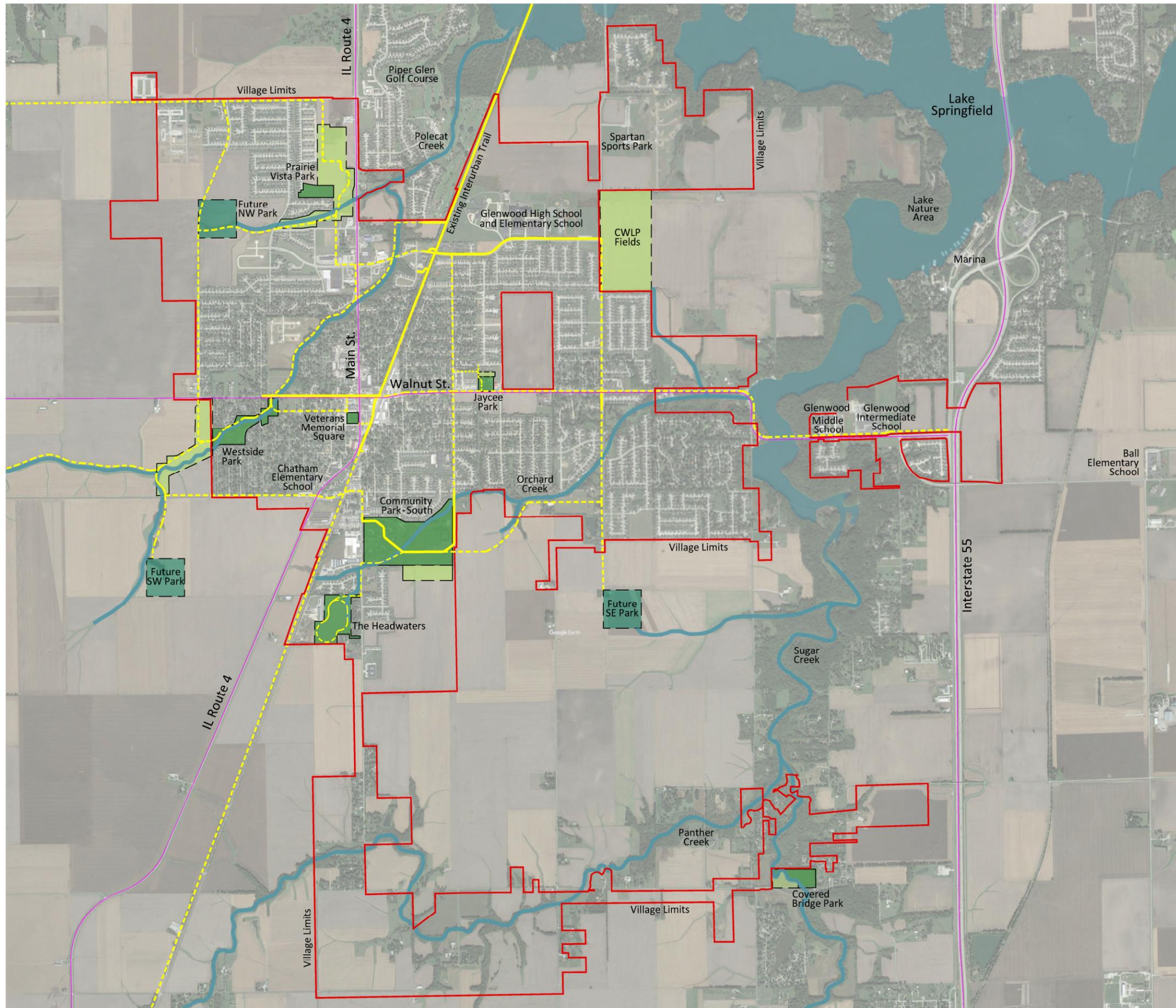
The following graphic plans shows both the existing and proposed recreation lands and open spaces. The plan is keyed by color to indicate the type of facility involved. Taken together, these elements comprise a comprehensive approach to recreation and open space planning.

Green areas are existing neighborhood or community parks where individual and family-oriented facilities are available within walking distance of most homes.

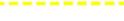
Blue areas are greenways where waterways and floodplain areas are protected and passive recreational uses are provided.

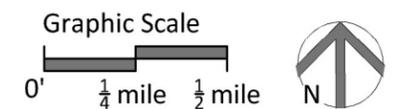
Solid and dashed lines show paths, trails, and parkways that interconnect recreational sites and other areas within the community.

# Comprehensive Plan for Parks, Trails and Open Space Chatham, IL



## Legend

-  Village Limits
-  Primary Roadway
-  Drainageway/Greenway
-  Existing Trail
-  Proposed Trail
-  Existing Park/Greenspace
-  Proposed Park Expansion
-  Future Park



## COMMUNITY PARKS

Community Park-South is the only site that can now be truly classified as a community park facility in Chatham. This park is the center for competitive sports and other recreational activities. It has a four-diamond baseball complex, six soccer fields, two football fields, and three tennis courts adjacent to eight pickleball courts.

The park has a large destination playground area, a small picnic shelter, and an open lawn with a large bandstand used for community events. Also sharing the site are two buildings with restrooms and concessions and a park maintenance facility.

Numerous parking areas serve these facilities. The parking areas are primarily accessed from the main park road. The park road and a multi-purpose trail connect the two sides of the park crossing the Orchard Creek drainageway.

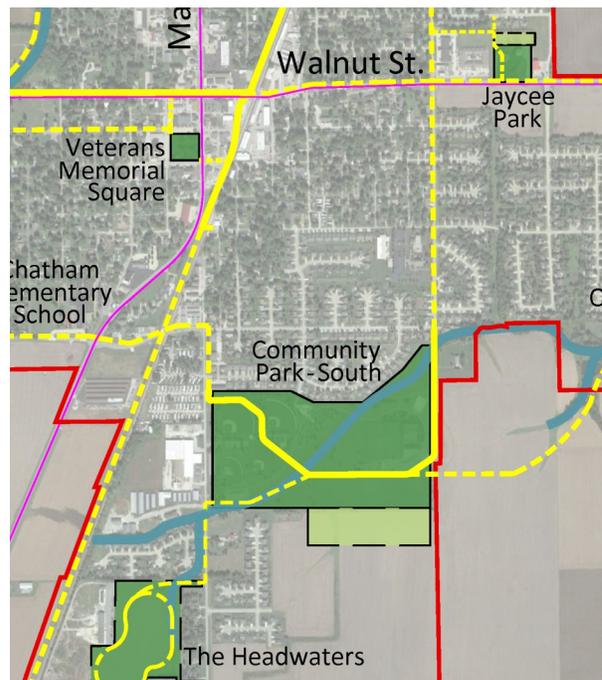
These facilities are densely developed on the site. Conflicts between uses which share space have already developed. Several of the sports programs need additional playing fields, storage spaces, and parking areas. This park is currently over-crowded and at times congested.

Part of the congestion can be addressed by rearrangement and expansion of parking areas so that the park is better accessed from South Main Street and Park Street with less traffic needing to enter and traverse the park.

To better relieve overcrowding of the park, two options are recommended.

### Option 1: Expand and Reorganize Community Park-South

The park could be expanded by acquisition of adjacent lands to the south and east where land has not yet been developed. The concept plan (page 40) illustrates approximately 14 acres south of the soccer fields to add two baseball diamonds that would replace two that are being displaced elsewhere.

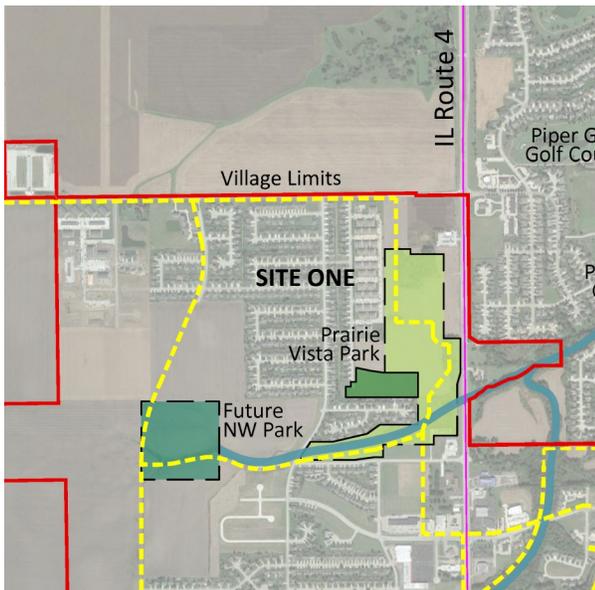


Access and parking needs for the park was an often-expressed concern. Relocating one ball diamond from the west side to the east and converting the space to parking will improve the situation. Having two points of access to the parking will also improve circulation. On the east side, extending the park and Park Avenue to the south will improve parking and access for all the existing and proposed sports fields on that side of the park. Encouraging the public to use Park Avenue and South Main for the respective activities on each side of the park should decrease the need for traffic through the park and keep most of the parking on the perimeter.

## Option 2: A New Community Park and Sports Fields

In the near future, another community facility is needed to provide and distribute community sports and recreation. This need will increase as the community grows. The north side of town is the optimum location for a new community park because

- 1) There are few facilities on this side of town and
- 2) The area is quickly developing.



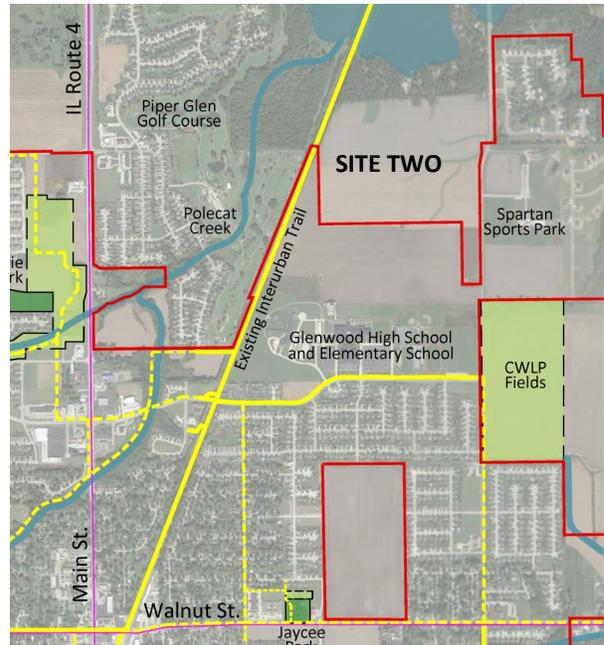
Site One—Potential Community Park

One site that was explored in concept as a community park is in the vicinity of the undeveloped Prairie Vista Park (page 50). If this park area were expanded to include the drainageway of Polecat Creek and the nearby forest areas, it could be an attractive park.

The concept plan for this park indicates a meandering area of 54 acres that could serve several community and neighborhood needs. A large recreational park in the northern part of the community could serve to:

- 1) Help buffer the proposed commercial areas along the highway from the high-density housing areas to the west.

- 2) Provide a trail system for fitness, connectivity, and enjoyment along the drainageways and woodlots.
- 3) Offer sports and community facilities with direct access to Main Street and to existing and future commercial facilities that might complement the park uses by providing various services, food and drink, and retail opportunities.



Site Two—Potential Community Park

Another site that could meet some of the demands for open sports fields is just east of Glenwood High School on land owned and managed by the Springfield City, Water, Light and Power (CWLP) (page 54). The area has been used in the past as a disposal site for lake dredged soils. It is now cultivated for crops. A portion of the site adjacent to Gordon Drive and Chatham has the potential to be recreation sports fields with very minimal improvements. Development of structures and pavements would likely be limited due to soil conditions. The City of Springfield and the Village of Chatham could consider entering into an intergovernmental agreement or a long-term lease for the management and care of the lands for public use as an open site.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Each of Chatham's existing five parks and downtown square serve neighborhood park functions. As a neighborhood park, each provides some basic individual and family-oriented recreational facilities and can be accessed by walking or bicycling from surrounding residential areas. Three areas of Chatham - the south-west, far south-east and south-central -- are served by these existing developed parks. Other areas of town - the north-west, the north-east and the far-east areas - do not have parks in their vicinity. As the outlying areas are developed, additional neighborhood parks will be needed in these areas as well.

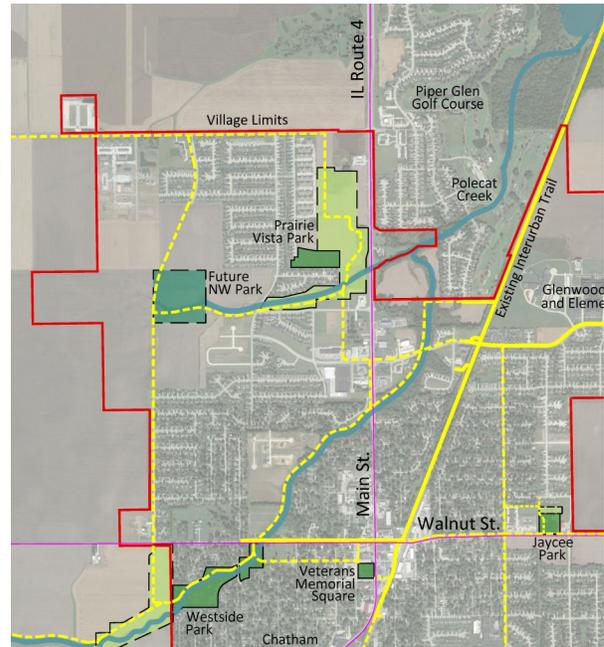
The Comprehensive Plan shows existing parks, proposed expansions of parks, and proposed new parks. In the central areas of town, the standard ¼-mile radius is used as a guideline for locating neighborhood parks. In outlying areas, a ½-mile radius is used because, 1) these areas are not yet fully developed and 2) proposed trails and greenways can provide safe and convenient connections from neighborhoods to parks. More closely spaced parks may become desirable in the future as the outlying areas are fully developed and populated.

Neighborhood parks are typically small in area and located within residential areas. For these reasons, municipalities often find it effective to request that developers donate park land and/or park development funds in order that neighborhood park development can keep-up with residential expansion.

### North-West Quadrant of Chatham

The north-west quadrant currently has no neighborhood parks or other recreational facilities. A site for a park, Prairie Vista Park (page 50), was acquired but has not been developed. Plans have been proposed for the 7.2-acre site to be a neighborhood park, but it remains a mowed field at the terminus of Prairie Vista Drive. Future residential and commercial development is also anticipated nearby.

This plan recommends adding acreage to this site and making it a neighborhood/community park that would serve the north half of Chatham in a capacity like Community Park-South.



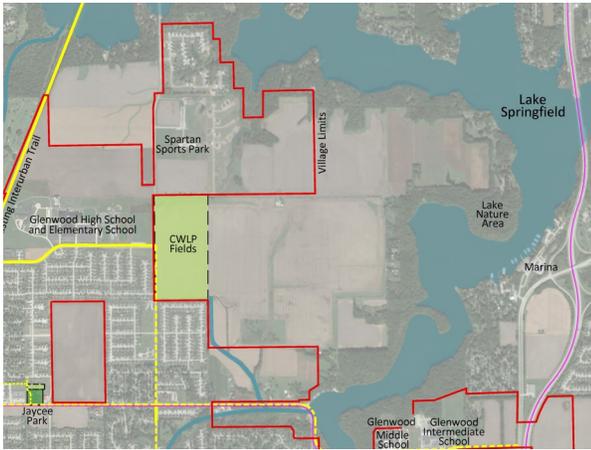
However, as more new residential development occurs farther west in the area, additional neighborhood parks will also be needed. A site for a Far North-West Neighborhood Park could incorporate the upper reaches of Polecat Creek to benefit drainage control. The Village could request donation of land and/or park development funds as a condition for future platting and annexation of this area into Chatham.

### North-East Quadrant of Chatham

Jaycee Park (page 42) is the only public park located within this area. Although the park now is primarily a community baseball field, it provides some neighborhood park facilities including a playground, picnic shelter, and basketball court. As a neighborhood park, however, it is effective in serving only a small population in this quadrant.

The proposed plan recommends a modest increase in size of this park and better connections to the neighborhood.

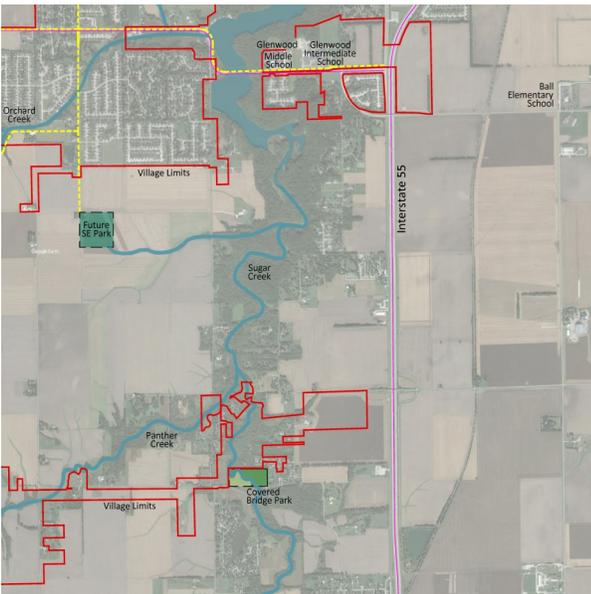
The school district has developed the Chatham High School and Glenwood Elementary in this quadrant with numerous outdoor facilities. However, there could be additional fields added to the east on CWLP lands just outside the village boundaries.



The need for more neighborhood parks in this side of town may not be urgent due to growth in this direction being limited by Lake Springfield and Springfield’s southern boundary. However, protection of the lower part of Polecat Creek and connections to the Interurban Trail could provide opportunities for additional public land and development in this quadrant.

### South-East Quadrant of Chatham

This area of town is now only partially developed, however, it has the potential for several additional residential neighborhoods in the future. Community Park-South is the major recreational facility that serves the area. Modest expansion of this park and the addition of The Headwaters (page 52) nearby can add new recreational opportunities to help serve the expected population increase.



Additional attention to protecting the lower section of Orchard Creek could add public lands and trails in this quadrant. Trails here could connect Community Park-South to CWLP managed lands near Lake Springfield.

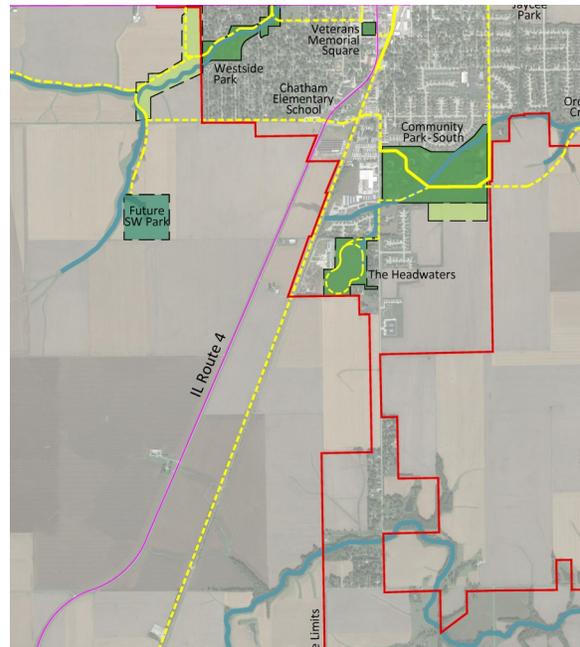
Covered Bridge Park (page 48) is located at the far southern edge in this quadrant. While the site is primarily an historic site, the location on Sugar Creek does present the opportunity for a canoe launch on the creek for a short trip to Lake Springfield and the various facilities along its shoreline managed by CWLP.

As the population of this quadrant increases, another neighborhood park will be needed. The ideal location could be along a drainageway flowing to Sugar Creek.

### South-West Quadrant of Chatham

Westside Park (page 44) is primarily a neighborhood park in this quadrant. It has a picnic shelter, playground, open space and sand volleyball court. Its baseball diamonds are used for youth leagues primarily. The park has a peaceful, established character. Polecat Creek is lined with big old trees as it meanders through the park.

This park can easily be expanded to the west along Polecat Creek to protect more floodplain and provide additional open recreational space and allow for trail expansion.



Also, within this quadrant is Veterans Memorial Square (page 46) which has historically provided some neighborhood park facilities.

As residential development occurs to the south of Polecat Road another neighborhood park should be considered.

No new neighborhood parks are needed at this time. In the future when development expands farther south and west there will be need for a Far South-West Neighborhood Park to serve that expected population.

## TRAILS

Shown on the map is a proposed system of trails based largely on the trail plan previously adopted by the Village. The backbone of the system is the Interurban Trail. It runs northeast-southwest on the abandoned railroad right-of-way adjacent to the active railroad line. It passes through the center of Chatham and currently ends at Goldenrod Drive on the south. It extends north to Springfield.

Ribs of the trail extend from the Interurban Trail in both directions linking together existing and proposed parks, the public schools, neighborhoods, businesses, etc. By interconnecting areas of Chatham, people will be able to walk or bicycle to visit neighbors, attend events, or even commute to work along safe routes. Some segments of this system currently exist.

Besides its transportation function, these trails will provide recreational opportunities for people of all ages and interests. People can safely walk, run, skate, push strollers, walk dogs, etc.

The main north-south trail corridors proposed through the community are the following.

1. Savannah Drive eventually from Mansion Drive to Polecat Road
2. Main Street/Prairie Vista Park between Mansion Road and Independence Drive.
3. Park Avenue between Glenwood Schools/Plummer Blvd. and Community Park-South
4. Gordon Drive between Plummer Blvd. and the Orchard Creek Greenway

The main east-west trail corridors proposed through the community include the following.

1. Mansion Road from the proposed Sangamon Valley Trail to Main Street
2. Independence Drive eventually between Savannah Drive and Main Street/Prairie Vista Park
3. Plummer Blvd. eventually from Savannah Drive to Gordon Drive
4. Walnut Street eventually from I-55/Lake Springfield to Savannah Drive
5. Polecat Creek Greenway from Westside Park to the Sangamon Valley Trail
6. Orchard Creek Greenway from Lake Springfield to Community Park-South/The Headwaters/Interurban Trail

Many of the proposed trails follow creeks and lowlands which the Village might acquire or utilize with trail easements. These routes can be scenic and rich with natural areas. They can also provide access for maintaining the streams and their riparian border areas.

Trail users can access facilities at the public parks. They can also reach business locations where useful products and services may be offered such as water, rest rooms, recreational facilities, snacks and meals, parts and repairs, stores, camping, other entertainment.

The trail system eventually might extend west to connect with the proposed Sangamon Valley Trail less than two miles west of Chatham. Two possibilities for connecting Chatham are along Mansion Road and Polecat Creek Greenway. The Sangamon Valley Trail corridor has been acquired by the State of Illinois but only the northern segments have been developed. Eventually it will be a regional trail passing through three counties.

Finally, the Chatham Trail System might also extend eastward toward Interstate 55 to connect with the Historic Route 66 Trail which will eventually become a national trail extending from Chicago to Los Angeles.

## OPEN SPACE GREENWAYS

City, Water, Light and Power (CWLP) now manages sites along the lake's shoreline. The sites on the east side of Chatham serve now as a community open space. As mentioned earlier, a governmental agreement or long-term lease could be used to offer more community services with shared responsibilities between Chatham and Springfield.

Chatham could improve the area to provide better trail and boat access, shoreline fishing, and access to nature areas. The site would be developed and managed to assure watershed and shoreline protection.

Expanding on the water-based open space, several of Chatham's creeks that flow into Lake Springfield are ideal as linear open spaces or greenways. Some of the creeks and drainageways are already preserved. Other segments of these waterways offer opportunities for new stormwater controls, wildlife habitats and recreational trails. To acquire these areas, Chatham can encourage developers to donate the drainageway and its riparian edge that floods to the Village. These areas typically cannot be developed and so have minimal value to the land use. Easements and leases are other means for transferring management of the waterways and adjacent lands for public management and specific uses

## POTENTIAL GREENWAYS

Good locations for greenways in Chatham are these:

1. Along the North Branch of Polecat Creek in north-central area of Chatham. This drainageway was previously identified as a site for a new community/ neighborhood park and trail. This could extend to the drainageway east of Main Street/Route 4.
2. Along Polecat Creek from the Interurban trail near Plummer Blvd. west to Westside Park. The concept plan for Westside Park includes extension of the greenway west to enhance an area that will likely be developed in the future.

3. Along Lake Springfield on Chatham's northeast side. This location has been discussed as a water-based natural area. Other natural areas including woodlands and prairie could be developed here, too.

4. Along Orchard Creek starting at the proposed Headwaters and running through Community Park-South and several subdivisions and farms. At the mouth of the creek where it flows into Lake Springfield, a natural lowland area already exists visible from Walnut Street.

5. Along Sugar Creek, the main tributary to Lake Springfield. Some areas along Sugar Creek are currently managed by CWLP as natural areas. Chatham could acquire adjacent lands or easements to form larger and more diverse areas along the creek and to provide canoeing and fishing opportunities. Covered Bridge Park provides an ideal location for interpretation and creek access.

6. Along Panther Creek, south of town where residential growth has occurred. No comprehensive watershed preservation is apparent along this creek. This could offer the opportunity for implementation of a rural watershed management program that improves the water quality of Sugar Creek and Lake Springfield.

To assure good management of these areas, several options are available:

Acquisition of properties. This can be optimum in areas where public facilities (parks, nature areas, trails, etc.) are planned.

Acquisition of conservation easements. This can be useful in areas where public use would either, 1) not be allowed except for natural resource management purposes, or 2) would be minimal such as a greenway where only public paths or trails are provided.

Municipal ordinance. Ordinances can be used to assure areas are appropriately managed. An ordinance can address what would be allowed and disallowed within certain boundaries along a drainageway with respect to: land disturbance, excavation or filling, protective vegetative cover, tree removal and replacement, disposal and storage of materials, and review/approval of proposed plans affecting the area.

## URBAN FORESTRY AND PLANTING

An urban forestry program can apply to the entire municipal area, including areas which are both currently developed and those proposed for development.

Components of the plan could include the following:

The major entrances to town and other highly visible locations can be enhanced with planting of trees, shrubs, and flowers. Plants should be selected and located to, 1) integrate one area of town with another and 2) develop a distinctive, tasteful character for the town.

A street tree program can be established to provide planting and maintenance of trees within the Village. Many municipalities encourage requests from homeowners and plant trees at a subsidized cost within the adjacent public rights-of-way.

A tree requirement ordinance can be adopted to require tree planting in new subdivisions and commercial sites. The number of trees or other plants, their species, size, maintenance, etc. can be defined in order that 1) street trees are part of the development and 2) other planting provides the plant-values and aesthetics desired within the community. Visual screening, shading of pavements, and blockage of winds can be achieved by a planting program..

## LAND ACQUISITION GUIDELINES

A guideline often used to determine recreational land needed for a population is to provide 10 acres for every 1,000 population. (Areas such as the drainageways, flood plains, nature areas ,and passive open space are typically not included in these guidelines.)

Using this formula, Chatham's current population of 12,674 (est. 2019) would warrant 127 acres for recreational use. The total amount of public park lands is very close to the acreage currently held when the two undeveloped sites and the Interurban Trail are added to the numbers.

However, several characteristics specific to Chatham need to be considered:

1. An estimated 25% of the existing parkland managed by the Village is subject to flooding by the streams and drainageways that run through the parks.
2. A high percentage of the Village population (21%) is in 5 to 18 age group. This is the age group with the most recreational needs.
3. The Village recreational programs serve a broader 'school district' population which includes several subdivisions and rural areas not within the Village boundaries. The School District posts 4,850 total students currently. If 21% of Chatham's total 12,674 population is of school age that would translate to 2,662 students or 55% of the total school district enrollment. Using the district's student population, approximately 50% Chatham residents and 50% nonresidents, one could assume a user population as being twice the number of its residents or 25,348. Obviously, many within the school district are also within Springfield and/or the Springfield Park District.
4. Several recreational and open space needs are provided just outside the community boundaries.
5. The community remains one of the fastest growing suburban communities in Sangamon County.

If the population continues to grow at about the same rate as the past two decades (8,583 in 2000, 11,647 in 2010, and 12,674 in 2019), Chatham's population could easily reach 15,000 by 2040 and the population in school district would increase as well. To adequately serve Chatham's population in the next twenty years, a doubling of public open space acreage is recommended.

*Note: Population projections are only projections of the future. Many factors can impact the growth of a community and its recreational land needs.*

This expansion of recreational land falls into three categories:

- 1) More protection of the drainageways to help manage flooding and water pollution. These linear areas along streams also can allow for trail development and neighborhood interconnections.
- 2) Expansion of existing parks to provide needed recreational components with the understanding that fewer, larger park areas are generally easier to manage than a greater number of smaller park areas.
- 3) Creation of another community/neighborhood park in the northern section of the Village that is experiencing the population growth.

**CURRENT LAND TO POPULATION - 2019**

Village Population: 12,674 est.  
25% School Dist. Population: 6,337  
Total User Population: 19,011

Park Land per user Guidelines: 190 acres  
Existing Park Land: 127.5 acres  
Acreage deficit: (62.5 acres)

**PROJECTED LAND TO POPULATION – 2040**

Village Population: 15,830  
25% School District Population: 7,920  
Total User Population: 23,750

Park Lands per Guidelines: 237.5 acres  
Current Acreage = 127.5 acres  
Acreage deficit: (110 acres)

## **CHAPTER V PRIORITIES**

The acquisition and development set-out in this plan are classified into one of three priorities, A, B or C. Priority A has the most immediate need, Priority B is needed but can be phased in, and Priority C will be needed in the future.

## “A” HIGH PRIORITY

The following components have been identified as High Priority because they either are the greatest need of the community, or they are opportunities which are timely. Much of the priority tasks deal with identifying and acquiring lands adjacent to existing sites to allow for future expansion prior to the land being developed for other purposes.

### Park Acquisitions

#### Community Park-South

Acquire adjacent lands and extend Park Avenue in order to rearrange parking and provide better access to the east area of the park. This is a high priority because demands for additional facilities already exceed the land available within the park. Lands adjacent to the park will not remain available indefinitely and need to be reserved for the expansion. Begin a tree planting and land management program based on long-range development concepts.

#### Prairie Vista Park

Acquire adjacent land (or options on land) to the east and south of the existing acreage to reserve for future park and trail development. Begin a tree planting and site management program based on long-range development concepts.

#### Westside Park

Acquire adjacent land to the west along Polecat Creek to preserve the waterway.

#### Jaycee Park

Assume management of the detention area to the north of the park and negotiate an easement for a connecting path to Deerfield Road.

#### Covered Bridge Park

Purchase an option or an easement for some of the land west on the opposite side of Sugar Creek.

#### CWLP Fields

Inquire about the possibility of developing an inter-governmental agreement for the use of some portion of the lands by Gordon Drive for recreation fields. Initial site improvement could be much less than the full concept plan allows.

## Park Development

#### The Headwaters

Apply for funding to assist with creating the pond and associated facilities proposed to create a fishing pond that will improve the stormwater drainage concerns at the beginning of Orchard Creek. The development of this area can be phased. The grading for the pond and the stormwater structures followed by the seeding and planting of the site should be first phase. Development of the shelter, parking, pathways, and safety fencing can be the second phase after the pond and site are stabilized.

#### Westside Park

Rework the baseball fields to realign and improve drainage. Relocate the playground closer to the shelter and better define the parking area. Add a small fenced area as a dog park. Add trees and other plantings to enhance the park and creek.

#### Community Park-South

Apply for funding to assist with restoring Orchard Creek stream and installing stormwater management basins to help reduce downstream flooding. Begin a planting program to reforest the floodplain and add wetlands and prairies to create a more natural corridor through the middle of the park.

## Trail Development

#### Community Connections

Continue widening sidewalks to create multi-use trails along designated corridors. Make connections to the Interurban Trail where possible to increase access points. Stripe designated wider streets with bicycle lanes to encourage connections to parks and schools.

#### WestsidePark

Develop a trail through the park that uses the existing pedestrian bridge and adds a new pedestrian bridge east of Downing Drive. The trail can then connect the main facilities of the park to Walnut Street and the Cemetery Road for better access to community sidewalks that connect to Veterans Memorial Square and Main Street.

## Open Space Acquisition and Initiatives

### Sugar Creek

Initiate a voluntary easement program along the creek to be able to encourage canoeing on the stream from Covered Bridge Park to Lake Springfield.

### Polecat Creek

Initiate a voluntary easement program along Pole Creek from West Park to the Village limits just north of Plummer Blvd. Polecat Creek is the only continuously flowing creek in Chatham and therefore has the greatest need for drainage management.

## Urban Forestry and Parkway Development

Establish a task force with a mission to enhance the overall community environment. Initial concentration should be on community entrances, major thoroughfares, and new residential and commercial developments.

## Zoning and Economic Incentives

With the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan for Parks, Trails and Open Spaces, lands identified for future parks and open space should be identified on the village land use plan. Along with that, land adjacent to current and future park lands should be zoned as commercial recreational land. This will 1) focus future commercial recreational interest into these areas and 2) set-aside these areas so that they are not utilized by other development.

Economic incentives can be offered to recreational business developers. This might be on a project-by-project basis as determined appropriate. If a specific facility is greatly desired, Chatham might establish an incentive package to encourage interest by private business.

## “B” BASE PRIORITY

Base Priority items are identified projects in the community to create a solid recreation and open space program that meets the current population’s needs at this point and for the near future. These projects most likely can be phased-in as land and funding becomes available. A goal is within the next ten years.

## Park and Recreation Facilities

### Community Park-South

Relocate the SW ballfield and the Jaycee Park ballfield to the acquired land south of the soccer fields. Develop this new sports area with a concession/restroom structure, trails and parking accessed from Park Avenue. Complete the other changes recommended within Community Park-South park to enhance the sports areas, provide more trail options and create a better festival area in the center.

### Jaycee Park

Relocate the ballfield to Community Park–South and convert the park into a destination playground and neighborhood recreation center. Convert the detention area into a small plant and wildlife area for viewing enjoyment and educational purpose.

### Westside Park

Acquire land between Polecat Creek Road and Walnut Street to be able to create a connecting parkway between the roads that crosses creek. Develop additional youth sports fields and a trail in the area creating an attractive park accessible from several existing and future neighborhoods.

### Veterans Memorial Square

Implement the various projects proposed to make the area more usable and attractive for various community events. The highly visible park in the downtown adjacent to the main highway is an ideal location for various civic groups to assist with projects. Creating a market space can be a community asset and an attraction for business growth.

### Covered Bridge Park

Make minor improvements to this historic site to make the park a nice asset for the community as a visitor attraction and a place to demonstrate community pride. The remoteness of the site from the Village may require neighbor involvement and use of technology.

### The Headwaters

Complete the development of this pond and surrounding land as a family-oriented place to fish and enjoy nature. The stormwater management measures should help to eliminate drainage issues in the neighborhoods immediately downstream.

### Prairie Vista Park

Begin development of a new community park as a buffer between residential and commercial land uses. The park should contain park facilities that complement Community Park-South. A community center can be the hub for sports fields, trails and a community playground. Preserving and enhancing the North Branch of Polecat Creek and two existing wooded areas can make the park an attractive area for exercise and the enjoyment of nature in proximity to intense land uses. Extending Newcombe Lane through the park, also provides great accessibility to the site from Main Street and the neighborhoods to the west.

### CWLP Fields

The area on Gordon Drive might be expanded to the east with additional open sports fields if the demand warrants. Developments should remain minimal.

## Trails

### NW Trails at Prairie Vista Park

Develop the trail system within the proposed park and make several extensions of the park trails along nearby streets. Trails can go through the park connecting to Mansion Road on the north to Plummer Blvd. on the south.

### SW Trails at Westside Park

Expand the trail system through the park and extend north to Savannah Drive and south to Polecat Road providing better access to the park from nearby neighborhoods.

## Open Spaces

### Orchard Creek, Polecat Creek and Sugar Creek Greenways

Continue land and/or conservation easement acquisitions.

### Panther Creek

Begin acquisitions along this intermittent stream on the south edge of the community that which offers future opportunities to control drainage, develop recreational lands, and interconnect other recreational facilities.

## Urban Forestry and Community Enhancement

Expand to include neighborhood streets and other public lands.

### “C” LOW PRIORITY

Elements in this priority category may not be needed in the community presently but likely will be in the future as the population continues to grow and the community continues to expand. Chatham needs to begin planning now for future improvements. The Village can 1) have ordinances in place requiring developers to provide land and/or park development fees for new developments, 2) acquire parcels of land when available, rather than waiting as more development drives up land values, 3) explore the possibility of acquiring sites in partnership with agencies which may also need new sites in the future. Those may include the public-school district, fire protection district, and others.

## Parks and Recreation Facilities

### New Neighborhood Parks

New residential development justifies creation of new neighborhood recreational ideally within ¼ mile distance from all homes. These parks will likely be needed in each quadrant of the village except possibly for the NE Quadrant where the City of Springfield abuts Chatham now. These new parks need to be positioned in relationship to the residential development projected in the community’s comprehensive plan.

### New Community Park-East

As the community grows towards Interstate -55, a portion of the village’s population will be somewhat separated from the other parks by Lake Springfield and Sugar Creek. This alone could merit another community-size park even with the lake area sites managed by CWLP. With easy access to the interstate highway, a regional sports complex may even be a possibility.

## Trails

Completion of all internal trails.

Continue the trail network within the community to make connections to new neighborhood parks and schools. Continue bike lane striping on all major arterial streets.

Connections to the regional trails

Extend certain community trails to connect with the Sangamon Valley Trail to the west and Historic Route 66 Trail to the east when their development is certain.

## Open Space

Sugar Creek and Panther Creek

Continue land and/or easement acquisitions of these creeks and drainageways currently east and south of the village. If, or when, any parts of these creeks are annexed to the village, they should be acquired for drainage control and natural area values. Even if not annexed, the Village should exercise what control is possible and support other entities (county, soil and water conservation district, and not-for-profit) which might seek to provide these benefits.

Lick Creek

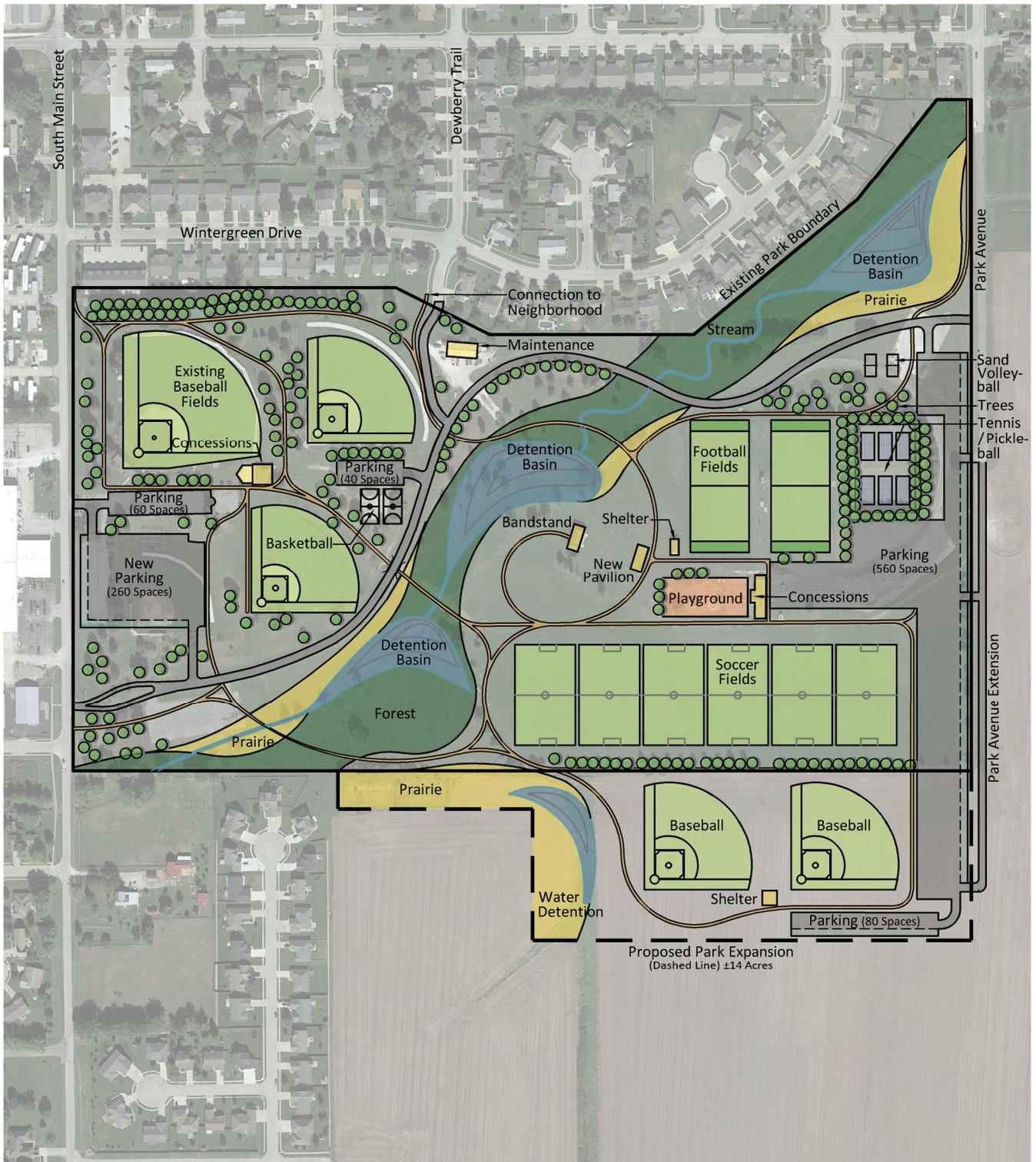
Start land and/or easement acquisition of the drainageways entering this creek. Part of its watershed is west of Illinois Route 4 and north of Mansion Road not yet within the village limits. Lick Creek is another major creek feeding Lake Springfield.



## APPENDIX

### Park Site Analyses, Concept Plans, and Narrative

Community Park—South  
Jaycee Park  
Westside Park  
Veterans Memorial Square  
Covered Bridge Park  
Prairie Vista Park  
The Headwaters  
CWLP Fields



# Community Park-South Concept Plan



## Community Park - South

### Existing Conditions

Community Park – South is the principal sports and recreation area in Chatham. The park is well-developed with sports fields and associated facilities for baseball, football, soccer, tennis, and pickleball. In addition, it has playgrounds, pavilions, a bandstand, maintenance area, and several parking lots. The park is heavily used. Individuals and organized groups compete for use of the facilities.

### Improvement Concepts

To relieve the heavy use and congestion at the Community Park, two changes are recommended. First, facilities can be developed at some of the other parks in town to reduce the pressure on the Community Park. Second, acquisition of 14 acres on the south side of the park would allow for expansion of facilities.

1. Reconfigure the central drainage swale into a naturalistic stream bed, eliminating dependence on old storm sewers and drainage tiles. Add small detention areas to help control periodic flooding. Along the stream plant lowland forest species, wetlands, and prairies to make the stream bed corridor more attractive and useful for educational purposes.
2. Reduce traffic within the park for less congestion and greater safety by providing parking areas almost entirely along the park perimeter. Eliminate the parking area south of the main park entrance along South Main Street. Realign the east end of the park road for a better intersection with Park Avenue. A new roadway structure over the drainageway within the park may need to be explored.

3. Reconfigure the existing parking areas and provide additional spaces on both the east and west sides of the park. All parking areas should have permanent, paved spaces as well as overflow parking areas that are needed during major community events and sports tournaments. Temporary parking areas could be reinforced turf so that the area continues to look and function as a green lawn.
4. Extend Park Avenue to the south, adding more entrances to the parking lots and park facilities in this area.
5. Convert the paved area that was once batting cages into two basketball courts. During baseball tournaments and other special events, the area can be used for tents and trailers.
6. Add sand volleyball courts and two baseball fields to replace these facilities being eliminated at other park locations.
7. Construct a large pavilion across the grounds from the existing band stand and near the playground and sports fields. The pavilion could be reserved for parties, civic activities, and sports events.
8. Expand the interior trail system and pathways offering more circuits, more connections, and more crossings of the proposed stream.

*The Community Park is now supported by several community groups representing the various sports and community events. An oversight committee could meet periodically to share schedules and coordinate use of facilities for community gatherings and sports events.*



### Existing Site Features

#### Recreational Areas

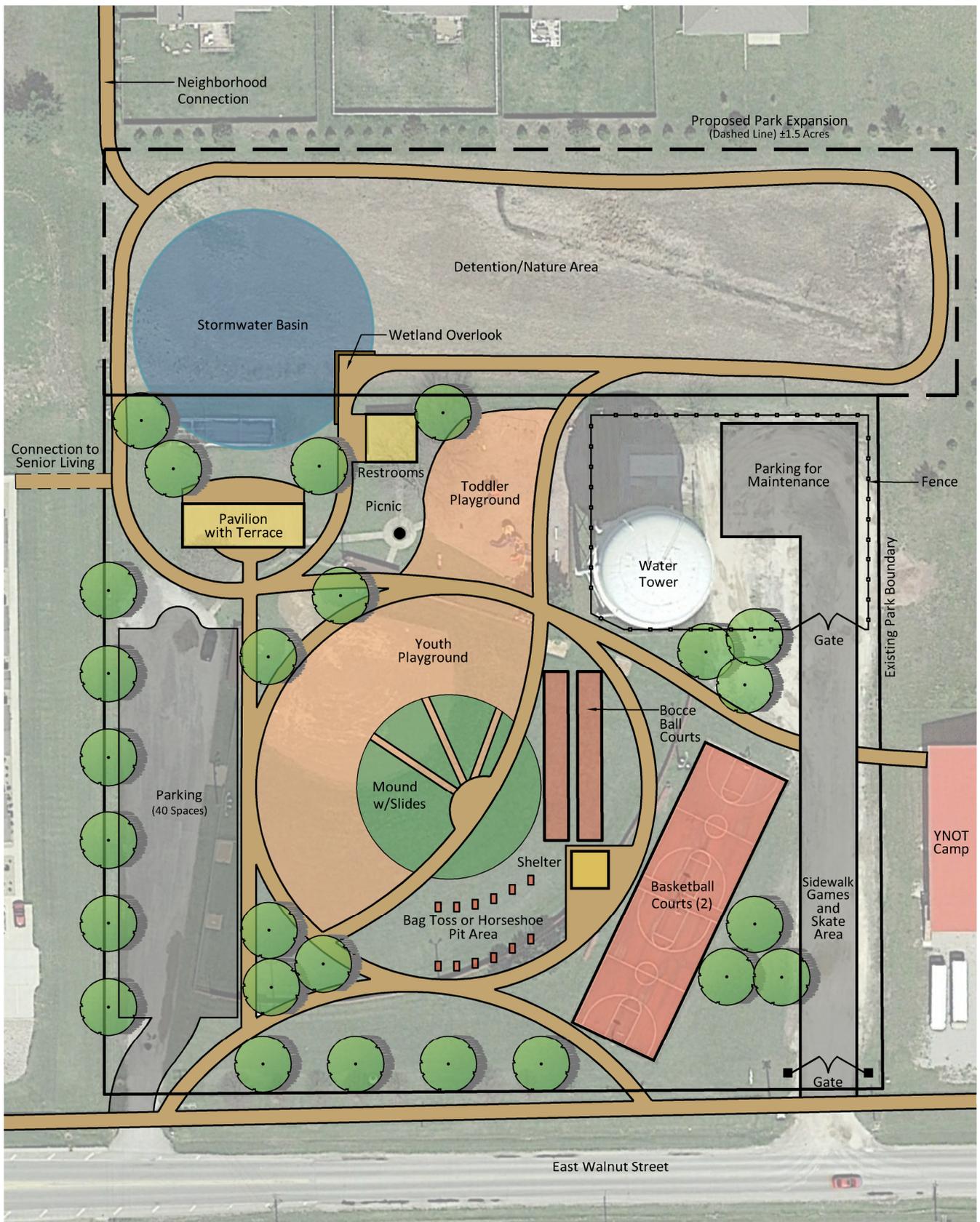
- ① Baseball Field
- ② Playground
- ③ Football Field
- ④ Tennis Courts/Pickleball
- ⑤ Covered Pavilion
- ⑥ Performance Stage
- ⑦ Soccer Field
- ⑧ Batting Cages

#### Support Facilities

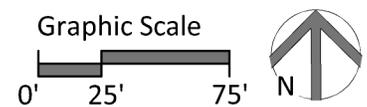
- ⑨ Restrooms/Concessions
- ⑩ Parking
- ⑪ Maintenance

#### Other

- ⑫ Concrete Pad
- ⑬ Drainage Way
- ⑭ Water Detention Area



# Jaycee Park Concept Plan



## Jaycee Park

### Existing Conditions

Jaycee Park is located on East Walnut Street, the main entrance to Chatham from the east. The 4.0-acre park is now dominated by a lighted baseball field and the community water tower.

### Improvement Concept

The concept is to relocate the existing baseball field to another park site and convert the park to an intergenerational recreation area. In this setting, people of all ages including youth, adults, and seniors can enjoy a variety of recreational opportunities.

1. Remove the ballfield and replace with a destination playground. The playground would be constructed with a soil mound at its center. Slides could be built into the mound where children will enjoy running and rolling downhill. Surrounding the mound would be clusters of creative play apparatus suited to various age and skill levels of children.
2. Develop pathways linking activity nodes for bocce ball and other lawn games.
3. Link the intergenerational park to the neighborhood. Extend pathways north to Deerfield Road, west to the adjacent senior living area, and east to the YNOT Camp facility. Widen the sidewalk along Walnut Street to make it a multi-use trail connecting to Park Avenue on the west and eventually to Gordon Drive on the east.

4. Enhance the existing shelter by adding a terrace to accommodate a greater variety of activities and special events.

5. Acquire 1.25-acres along the park's north side that is currently a storm water detention area and enhance the area as a nature area. Expand the existing small detention area by creating a stormwater basin. Improve remaining area as a wetland to provide habitat for pollinators, butterflies, birds, and other wildlife. Provide a wetland overlook and create a nature pathway around the area. Identification signs and interpretative plaques could add to the educational value.

6. Provide parking for users along the west side of the park. Provide safe and convenient access to the park area with a network of sidewalks and mowed pathways.

7. Provide gates to the driveway and fenced utility area along the east side of the park. When gates are closed, the paved driveway can be paved and used for recreational activities such as sidewalk games and roller skating.

*Due to the proximity of the senior housing and youth day camp, it is recommended that a "friends" group be organized to assist the Village with programming activities and with some general maintenance and security needs. The wetland area and nature trail could be adopted by a community environmental*



### Existing Site Features

#### Recreational Areas

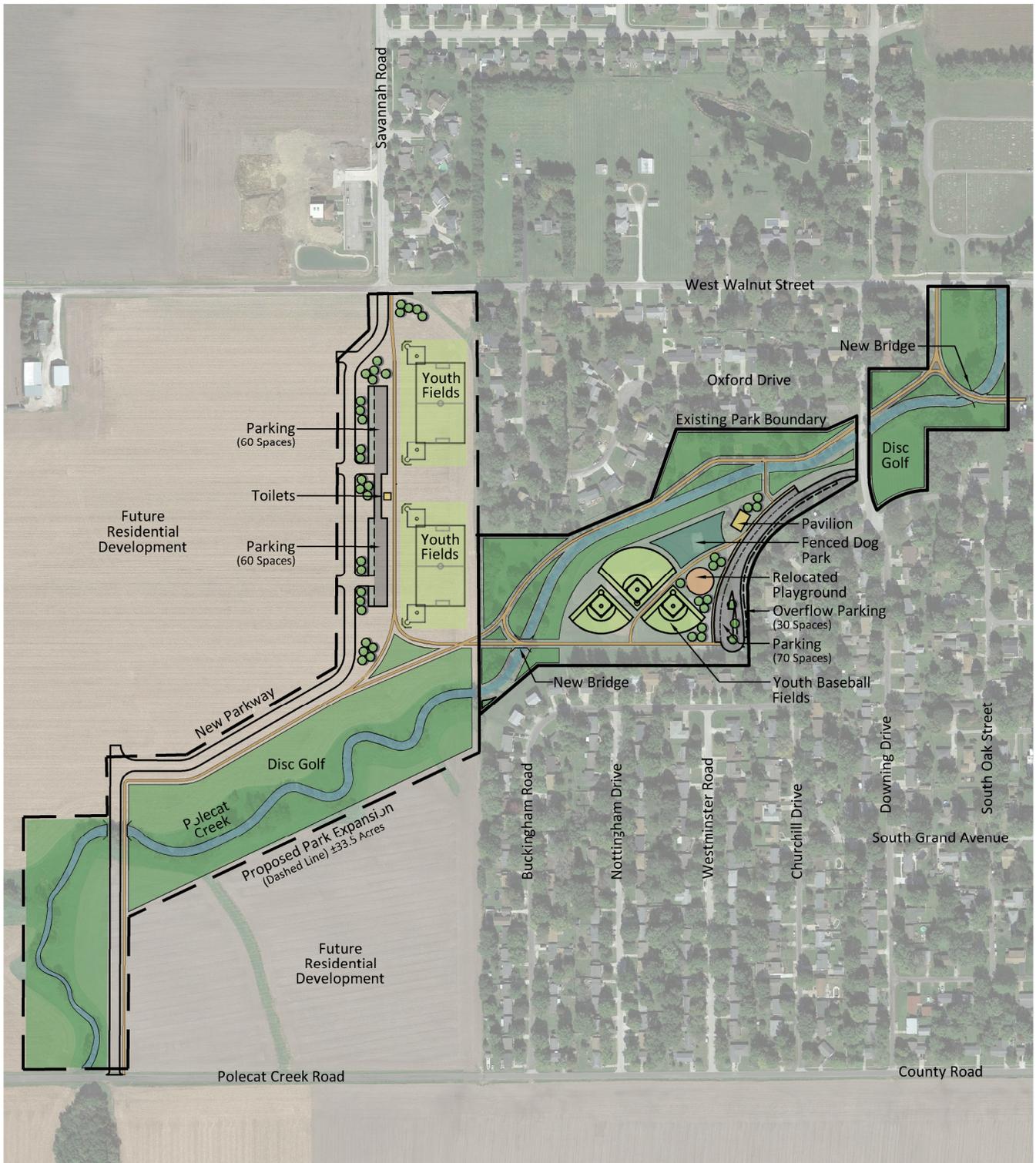
- ① Baseball Field
- ② Basketball Court
- ③ Playground
- ④ Batting Cage

#### Support Facilities

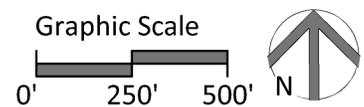
- ⑤ Restrooms/Concessions
- ⑥ Covered Pavilion
- ⑦ Parking

#### Other

- ⑧ Water Tower
- ⑨ Water Detention Area
- ⑩ Senior Living Center
- ⑪ Summer Camp



# Westside Park Concept Plan



## Westside Park

### Existing Conditions

This neighborhood park on the west edge of Chatham borders both sides of Polecat Creek. Most of the park's 20 acres is subject to flooding. Youth baseball fields, a small shelter, and a sand volleyball court are located south of the creek. Connected with a pedestrian bridge is a small playground on the north side.

### Improvement Concepts

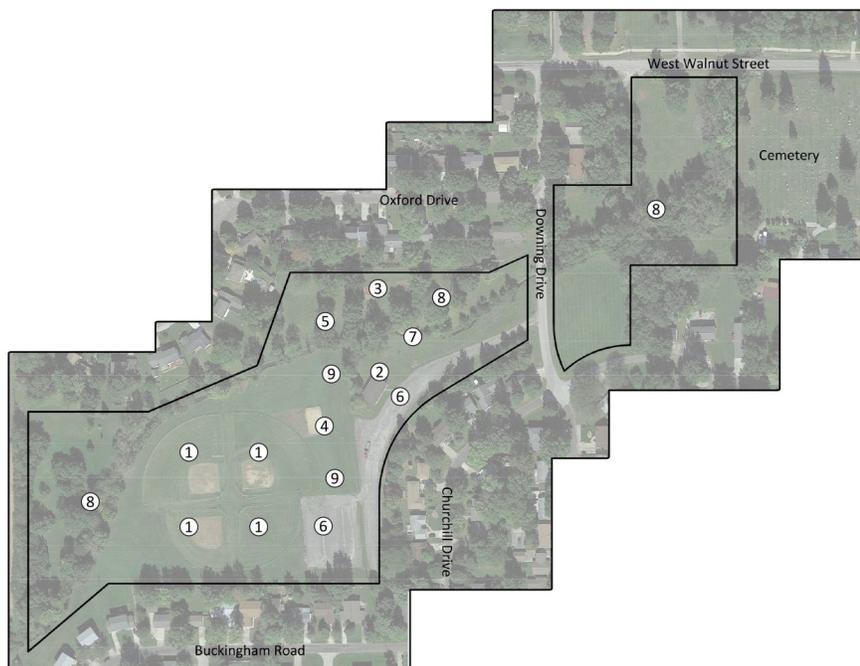
1. Realign and regrade the three youth baseball fields so they drain well and can be used during the season for youth games and practice. Eliminate fencing that collects flood-water debris.
2. Realign and better define the parking area to accommodate more vehicles. Add sidewalks for access to the shelter, playground, and ballfields.
3. Relocate the playground closer to the shelter and other facilities.
4. Provide a fenced dog park for dogs to play off-leash with their owners' supervision. Post rules for use of the area and provide seating and other dog park appurtenances. Install the park fence sections

for convenient removal during flooding when fencing would hinder water flow and collect debris.

5) Develop a trail system though the park to connect recreational facilities and the neighborhoods beyond. Use the existing bridges in the park and add a new trail bridge to connect the park on the north to Cemetery Road and Walnut Street.

6. Consider acquiring 33.5 acres along the west side of the park. The additional property would allow for protection of Polecat Creek and use of the creek corridor for an expansive disc golf course and nature trails. On the north end of the additional property, two youth soccer/football fields can be built, as well as four overlapping youth baseball diamonds can be provided. Parking and other amenities could be developed in the area. These new facilities would be above the flood plain whereas the existing park facilities flood regularly.

7. To access the new park area, a road would be built south from Walnut Street to the park and eventually south to Polecat Creek Road. This parkway will also aid in residential development along the route and create an attractive park-like route to Westside Park.



### Existing Site Features

#### Recreational Areas

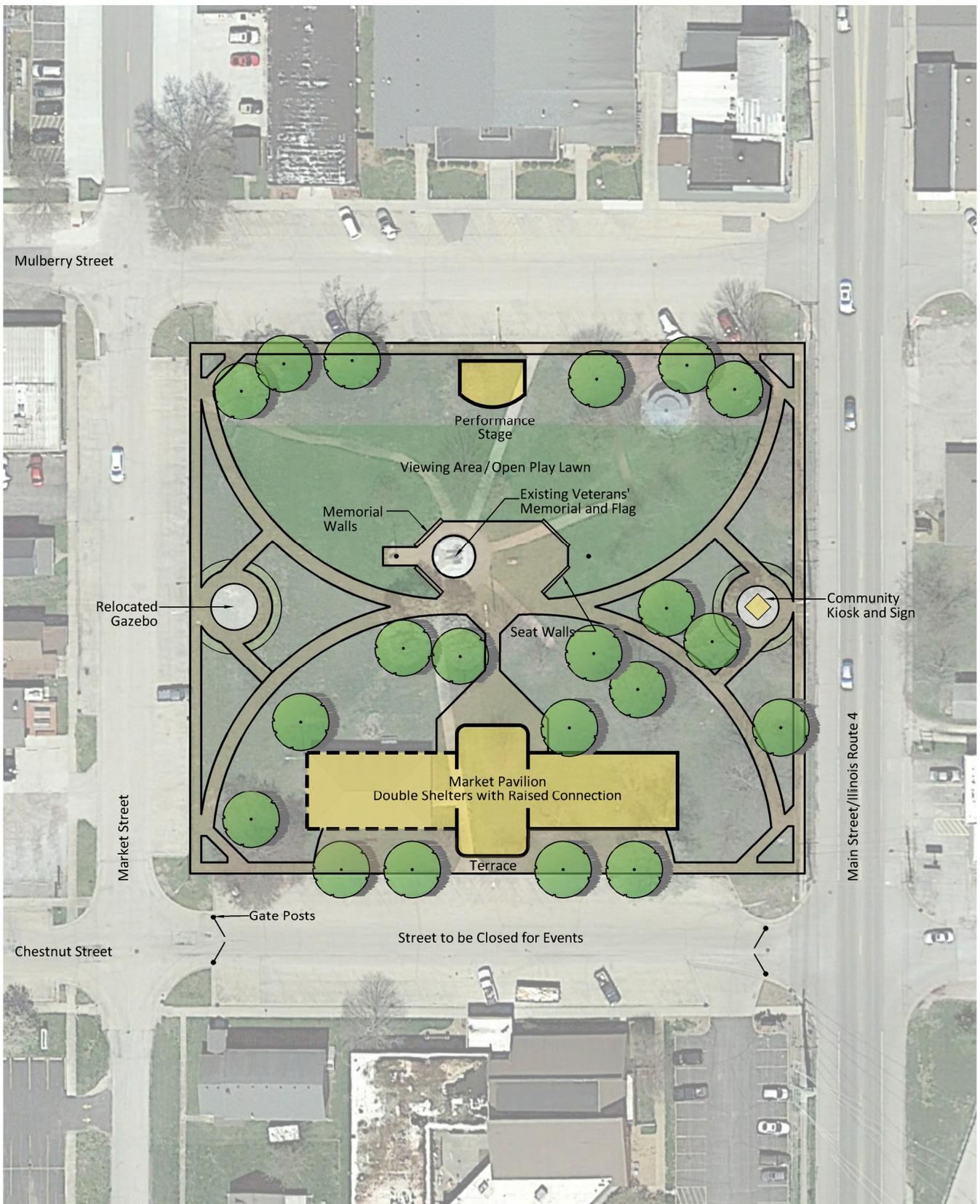
- ① Baseball Field
- ② Covered Pavilion
- ③ Playground
- ④ Sand Volleyball Court

#### Support Facilities

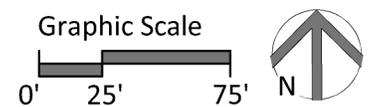
- ⑤ Picnic Tables
- ⑥ Parking
- ⑦ Foot Bridge

#### Other

- ⑧ Polecat Creek
- ⑨ Underground Drainage Pipe



# Veterans Memorial Square Concept Plan



## Veterans Memorial Square

### Existing Conditions

The Veterans Memorial Square is the center block of Chatham's historic downtown. The square block area is dominated by a centrally located war memorial, gazebo and picnic shelter. These facilities are used for a variety of activities, including community events.

### Improvement Concepts

The Village Square can be reorganized to increase its overall usability while still respecting the character and history of the community. With some changes, the site could host many more events of various sizes. By temporarily closing one or more surrounding streets, larger events could be held here. When not in use for events, the Square can also be attractive for viewing, strolling, or gathering with friends. It would be a pleasant green space that encourages visitors and citizens to learn about the community's past and enjoy the open lawns and civic features.

1) Relocate the gazebo to the west side of the Square. The new location can be enhanced with sidewalks and flower borders.

2) Increase the size of the shelter to accommodate larger events such as farmers markets, holiday fairs, and collectors shows. Chestnut Street on the south of the Square can be temporarily closed to vehicles allowing additional area when needed for car shows, exhibitions, street fairs, etc.

3) Add a simple stage or platform on the north side the Square that can serve as a small performance area, a stand for speeches, or the focal center for community events.

4) Maintain a large open lawn that offers the flexibility for audiences and activities of various sizes.

5) Designate locations for power and water needed during community events.

6) Install a community kiosk on the east side of the Square adjacent to Main Street. The kiosk can display information about community events and notices. On the park side of the kiosk information about Chatham and its history can be displayed for visitors and residents to view.

*The Square would also benefit from a friends' group or an association that would help the Village with organizing and managing events.*



### Existing Site Features

#### Recreational Areas

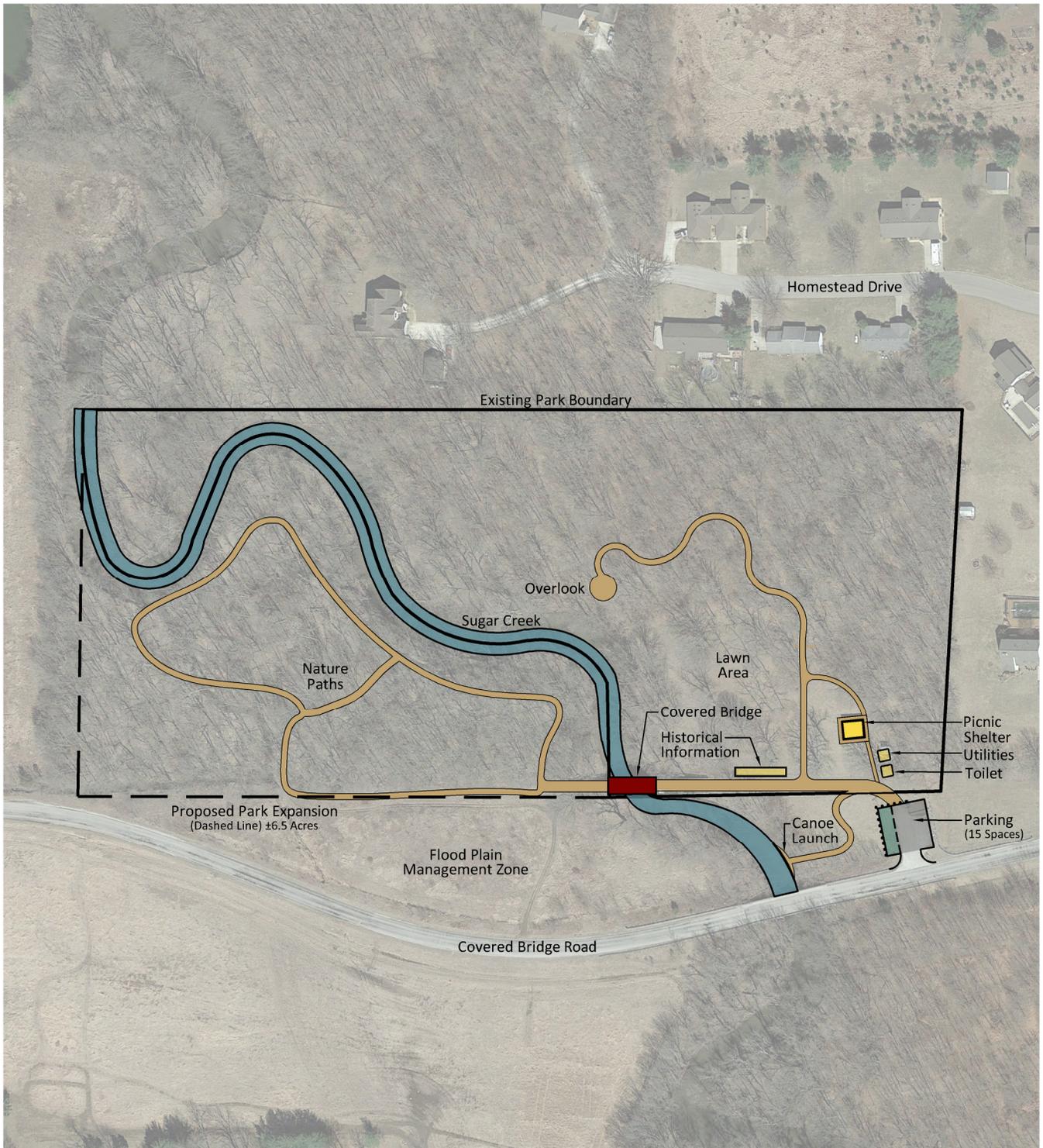
- ① Gazebo
- ② Covered Pavilion
- ③ War Memorial

#### Support Facilities

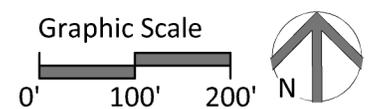
- ④ Electrical Box
- ⑤ Parking

#### Other

- ⑥ Power Sub Station
- ⑦ Church
- ⑧ Commercial
- ⑨ American Legion
- ⑩ Children's Recreation Club
- ⑪ Senior Center



# Covered Bridge Park Concept Plan



## Covered Bridge Park

### Existing Conditions

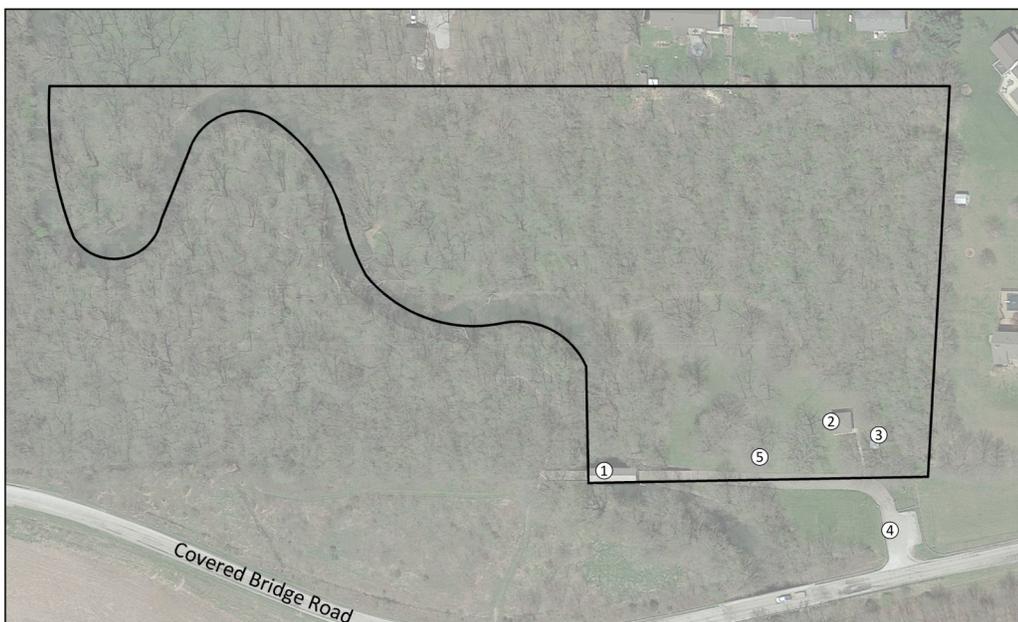
Covered Bridge Park is a picturesque historic site located south of town in a rather remote location along Sugar Creek. Much of the 9.28-acre park is in the Sugar Creek flood plain and regularly floods. There is a picnic shelter and interpretative sign at the site, and a small parking area is located nearby.

### Improvement Concepts

Covered Bridge Park can be further developed as the historic destination and passive nature park that will make the site more attractive to visitors and useable.

1. Acquire 6.5+- acres on the west side of the bridge. The additional area will serve to preserve the flood plain and allow for expansion of the existing nature trail system.
2. Expand the parking area to avoid the necessity of parking along the rural roadway. Add bollards and relocate the gate to control access.
3. Provide a short path from the parking area to Sugar Creek for launching canoes. For safety, install a sign with warnings, rules, and a phone number to register boat outings.
4. Install a new kiosk to display additional information about the history and natural features of the site. The kiosk can also serve as a security station with cameras and contact information.
5. Develop a new accessible path to an observation point on the hill north of the bridge. The destination location is ideal for viewing the bridge and appreciating the creek's woodland environment. The destination point could be enhanced with a low stone wall council ring (like those at Lincoln Memorial Garden). Weddings and small gatherings could reserve the location.
6. Enhance the existing shelter by providing a water fountain and toilet facilities nearby.

*Due to the remoteness and special character of the site, it is recommended that a "friends" group be organized to assist the Village with programing activities and with providing some general maintenance and security.*



### Existing Site Features

#### Recreational Areas

① Sugar Creek Bridge\*

② Covered Pavilion

#### Support Facilities

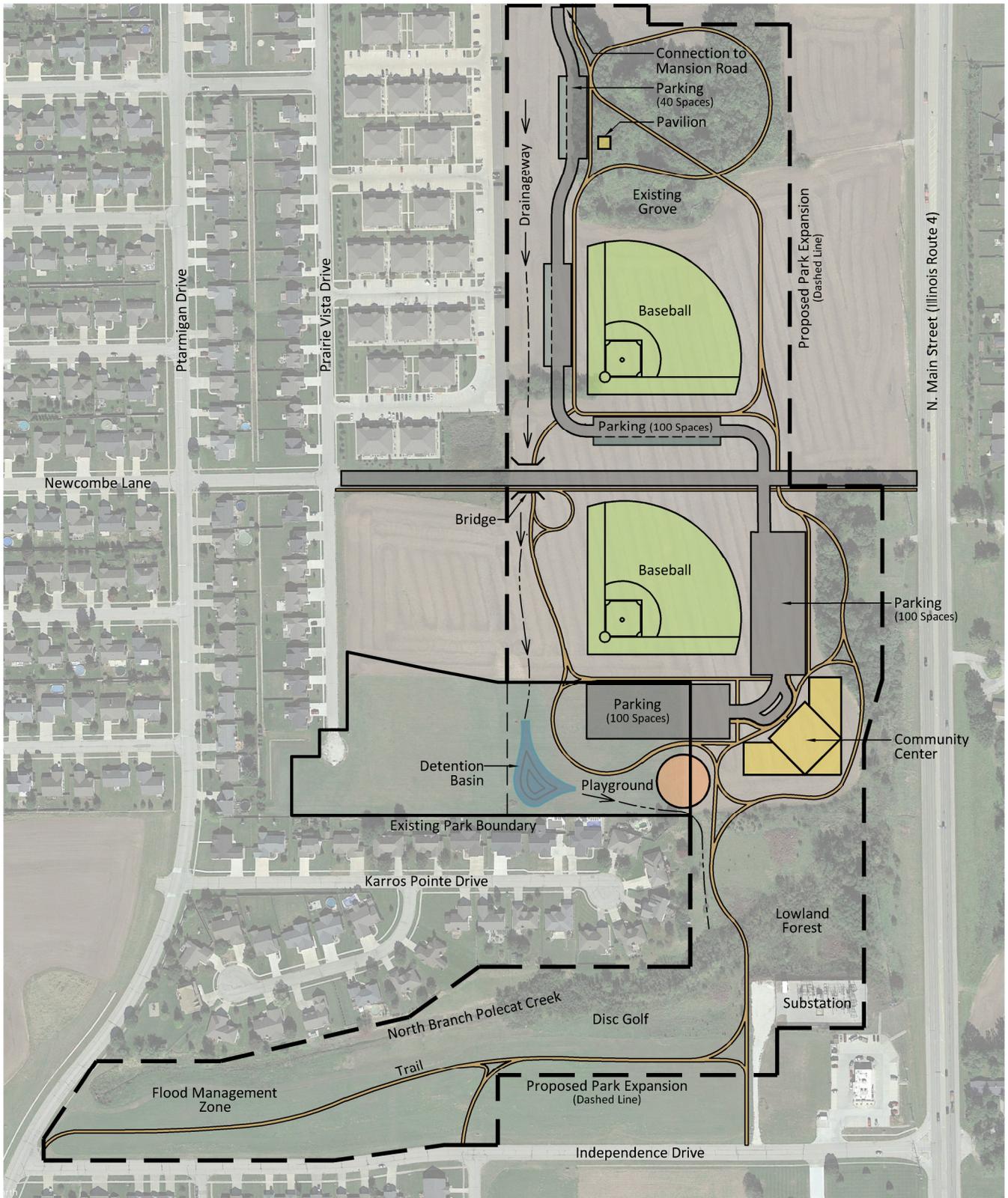
③ Electric Box

④ Parking\*

#### Other

⑤ Informational Sign

\*IDOT Managed



# Prairie Vista Park Concept Plan



## Prairie Vista Park

### Existing Conditions

The 7+ acre Prairie Vista Park is located at the end point of Prairie Vista Drive. The area is mowed and not yet developed as a park. A considerable amount of residential and commercial development, however, is occurring in this area of town. Development of the park is intended to provide recreational facilities in this part of town and to better manage the local watershed of the north branch of Polecat Creek.

### Improvement Concepts for Land Management

1. Acquire flood-prone land east along Main Street and west along Independence Drive. Consider exchanging the west side of the current property, land that is more suitable for development, for the flood prone areas which should be preserved and managed.
2. Consider acquiring and preserving the two nearby woodlots and other adjacent land to form a linear park between Mansion Road on the north and Independence Drive on the south. Taken together, a linear park would serve as a visual buffer and noise barrier between the existing residential development on the west and the anticipated commercial development along the highway.

3. Explore the possibility of acquiring lands along the north branch of Polecat Creek to protect the drainageway. Develop a storm water plan along the north branch that might include reforestation and storm water detention.

### Improvement Concepts for Recreational Use

4. Extend Newcombe Lane to Main Street on the east to provide a convenient access to the new park. Provide an underpass for a drainageway and a trail to connect the areas of the park.
5. Add a recreational trail system along the drainageway continuing throughout the park, connecting facilities and neighborhoods nearby.
6. Develop a Community Center overlooking the north branch of Polecat Creek and visible from North Main Street. The building could house both community meeting rooms, indoor recreational facilities, and support services. Nearby parking areas would serve the center as well as a playground, trails, and two lighted sports field for baseball and/or soccer.
7. Preserve the woodlot on the park's north end and add a pavilion for picnics and social gatherings. The loop trail through the woods could be an attractive amenity for the adjacent businesses and apartments.



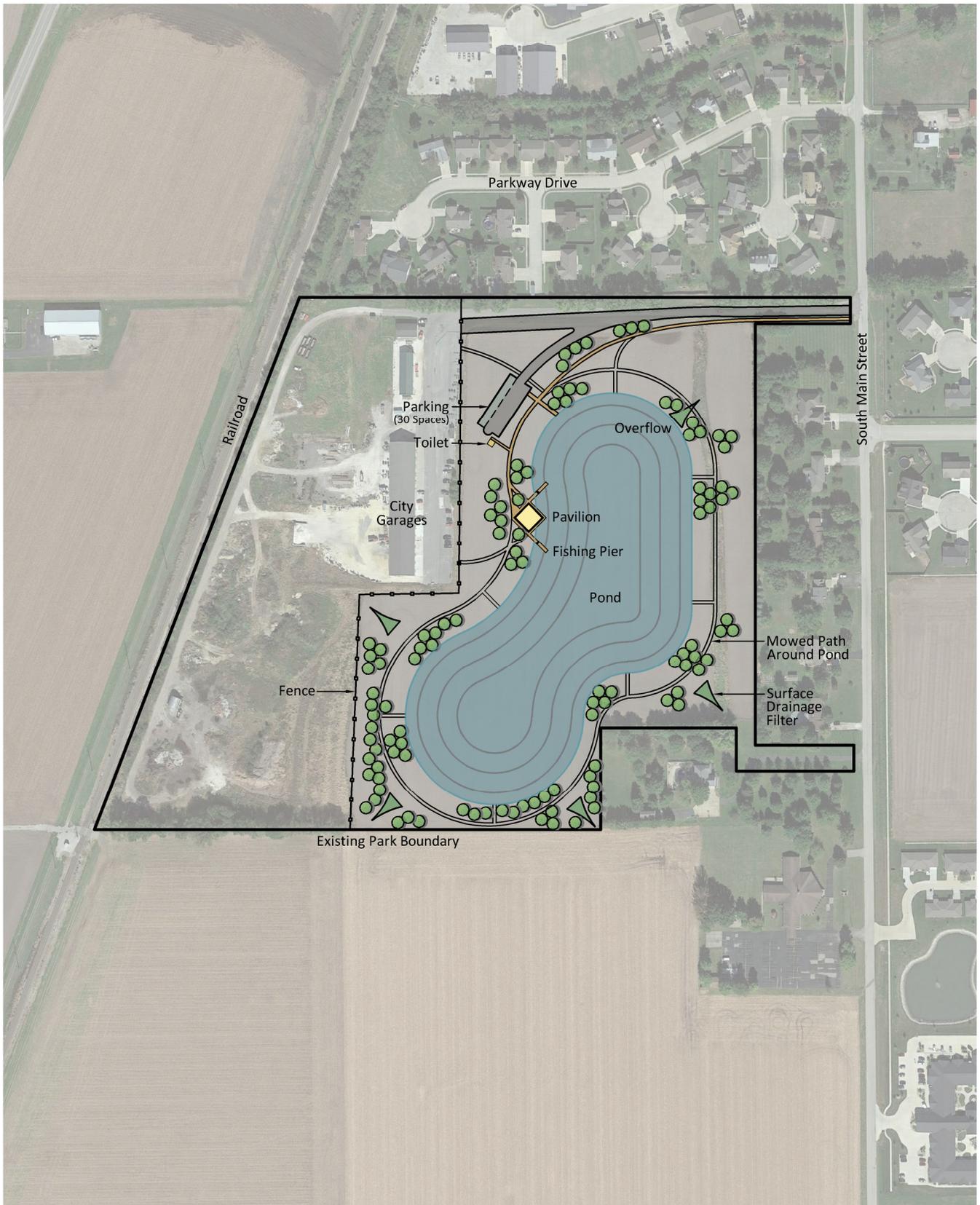
### Existing Site Features

#### Recreational Areas

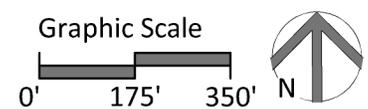
- ① Open Lawn

#### Other

- ② Unfinished street cul-de-sac
- ③ Drain Inlet
- ④ Culvert Inlet



# The Headwaters Concept Plan



## The Headwaters

### Existing Conditions

This 25-acre site is adjacent to the municipal garages and storage yards. The site was farmed through this year, but it is now scheduled to be taken out of cultivation. Its name “The Headwaters” was given for its location near the highest point in town.

Farm tiles draining fields to the south converge in the park. From that point, Orchard Creek is created. The creek flows overland to the east, through the Community Park, and into Lake Springfield.

### Improvement Concepts

The concept for this new park is to construct a large pond as a collection basin for the field tiles and serve as a detention basin to reduce stormwater flooding in adjacent neighborhoods.

1) Use erosion control materials and wetland plant beds to stabilize inflow areas. Construct an overflow structure to control outflow. Add bank reinforcement at the location of normal pool level to avoid wave erosion.

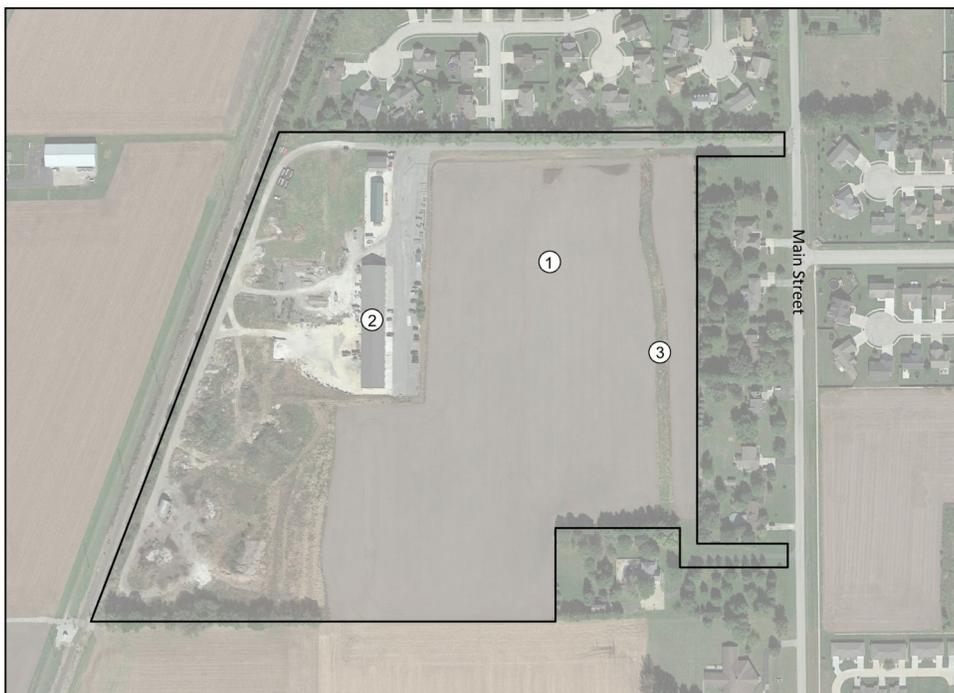
2) Slope the banks of the pond so they may be seeded and mowed periodically. Keep areas near the edge with taller grasses and wetland plants to discourage geese.

3) Install a fence between the park and the Village garages to the west. Use a vehicular gate and pedestrian gates to control access to the garage and service yards.

4) Provide a small parking area for park users and a path down to the pond for launching small craft. Portable toilets can be located nearby for convenience and serviceability.

4) Construct a small pavilion near the pond edge that can be used for casual observation, informal gatherings, and protection during rainfall. Locate one or two floating docks nearby for fishing.

5) Develop a trail around the pond and, in locations down to the water’s edge for bank fishing and aquatic exploration. From South Main Street to the the pavilion, the trail should be paved for ADA accessibility. The remaining path can be mowed turf and/or wood chip surfaced.



### Existing Site Features

#### Recreational Areas

① Open Field

#### Other

② City Maintenance

③ Current Drainage Swale



# CWLP Fields Concept Plan



## CWLP Fields

### Existing Conditions

The land east of Gordon Drive across from the Chatham Glenwood High School was used for depositing the silt dredged from Lake Springfield several years ago. The 80+ acre site is owned by the city of Springfield and is currently cultivated. Due to the deposits, use of the area for development is limited. The site, however, could be used for recreational purposes.

The need for open practice fields for various sports has been voiced often by the community. Most of the existing parks and school grounds have fields that are developed for games and sporting events. These are impacted if used too much with practices. The open space of this site could also be used for kite flying, model airplane or drone use, and other casual activities.

### Improvement Concepts

1. Consider the possibility of a long-term agreement with the city of Springfield for the use and management of the property.
2. Convert the site to sports fields. To utilize the overly friable soil on the site, sport fields should be graded to drain, dense turf should be developed to hold the soil from eroding, and storm water runoff should be collected in shallow swales and detention cells.
3. Provide only a few access points from Gordon Drive to a linear park road with parking along the sides. The roadway could be paved or surfaced with road rock on geotextile fabric. The parking along the sides could be reinforced turf to minimize the visual and functional qualities of the site.
4. A small concession stand or a pad for a food truck could be centered along the park road. Drinking fountains and stations for filling jugs could be positioned along the road. Portable toilets could be provided at times and in locations needed during the year.
5. Trees should be along the west side of the sports fields where they will shade the parking areas, buffer west winds, and enhance the appearance of the Gordon Drive corridor.