

# **CITY OF MARKESAN**

Created January 2024

## **City Common Council**

Rich Slate, Mayor

David Abendroth

Pat Prill

Clint Lager

Adam Thiem

Dennis Triemstra

Michael Glisch

Betsy Amend, City Clerk/Treasurer

## **Public Property & Health Committee**

Pat Prill, Chair

Michael Glisch

Adam Thiem

Clint Lager

Rich Slate, Mayor

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**CITY OF MARKESAN  
PARK and OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN - 2023**

**INTRODUCTION**

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This report is the Park and Outdoor Recreation Plan for the City of Markesan. This new plan for the City proposes recreation improvements through the year 2045. The purpose of this plan is threefold: To guide the decisions of the City and other providers of open space and recreational lands in the area in order to provide for the increasing demand for recreation facilities; To recommend proposals for recreation development within the City and; To establish City eligibility for recreation grant funds. Updates of this plan should be done every five years to maintain the City's eligibility for recreation grant funds and to update and revise the City's development goals and proposed recreation improvements.

The demand for outdoor recreation resources has been increasing dramatically for some years and will most likely continue to grow based on changing lifestyles that allow for more leisure time, greater mobility and larger incomes to spend on recreational activities. Also, as the resident and tourist population of the area continues to grow, demand for recreational facilities will increase. It is important to keep pace with these trends for all government levels, as their responsibility dictates, to adequately provide parks and recreational facilities for active recreation and/or preserve open space to protect natural habitats and provide renewal for the human spirit.

The State requires an approved recreation plan not more than five years old to maintain eligibility for grant funding. Grant funding is often vital to the undertaking and completion of needed projects.

This plan addresses recommendations for future park development, including the expansion of additional facilities in existing parks. A number of projects are proposed in this plan to improve, update, preserve and further develop park and recreation areas of the City. It is hoped that all providers of recreational facilities will coordinate their recreational developments with other providers in order to compliment resources and prevent the duplication of facilities.

The process of creating the plan began with a detailed inventory of public and private outdoor recreation facilities in the City of Markesan. Policies, Goals and Objectives were then developed on which to base the planning process. The inventory, City Council, and public input was then used in the analysis phase to determine the needs of the City. Recreation needs were analyzed in light of recommended per capita standards for acreage and facility requirements and were analyzed for geographical distribution. Based upon identified needs; proposals were developed for the 22-year period from 2023 to 2045, recommending a plan for development to meet the recreational needs of the people of the City of Markesan.

## TRENDS INFLUENCING THE PLANNING PROCESS

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A number of nationwide trends can affect the park and open space planning process. These environmental, social, economic and demographic trends should be considered in order to efficiently and effectively plan and deliver park and open space services and facilities. National trends adapted from Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines that may be applicable to park and open space planning in Green Lake County and the City of Markesan include the following:

1. **Disappearing Resources** - Significant open spaces and natural habitats, original landscapes, wetlands and natural drainages are being lost to development.
2. **Environmentally Sensitive Lifestyles** - Low impact, non-consumptive use (walking, biking) and increased aesthetic appreciation.
3. **No Growth and “Not in My Backyard” Attitudes** - Resistance to change, growth and development.
4. **Water Quality Concerns** - Natural drainage systems (wetlands and waterways) become more important.
5. **Increasing Concerns for Personal and Family Health, Safety and Well-being**
6. **Increasing Importance of “Wellness” and Health Conscientious Activities**
7. **Increased Inclusiveness** - Laws and public policies addressing accessibility of public facilities and services regardless of race, sex, and physical abilities.
8. **Leisure Services Provided by Multiple Partners and Providers** - Private and public partnerships to address needs with less individual resources.
9. **Growing Importance and Interest in Eco-Tourism and Eco-Travel** - Natural resource based vs. manmade attractions.
10. **Recognition of Economic Value of Parks and Open Spaces with Regard to Community Attractiveness to Residents, Tourists, Businesses and Industries**
11. **Aging of the Population** - by 2030, one-third of population will be senior citizens.
12. **Increased Sprawling Development** - Located primarily along major transportation corridors.
13. **Historic Preservation** - Valuing heritage resources as treasures.

## SETTING

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### Location

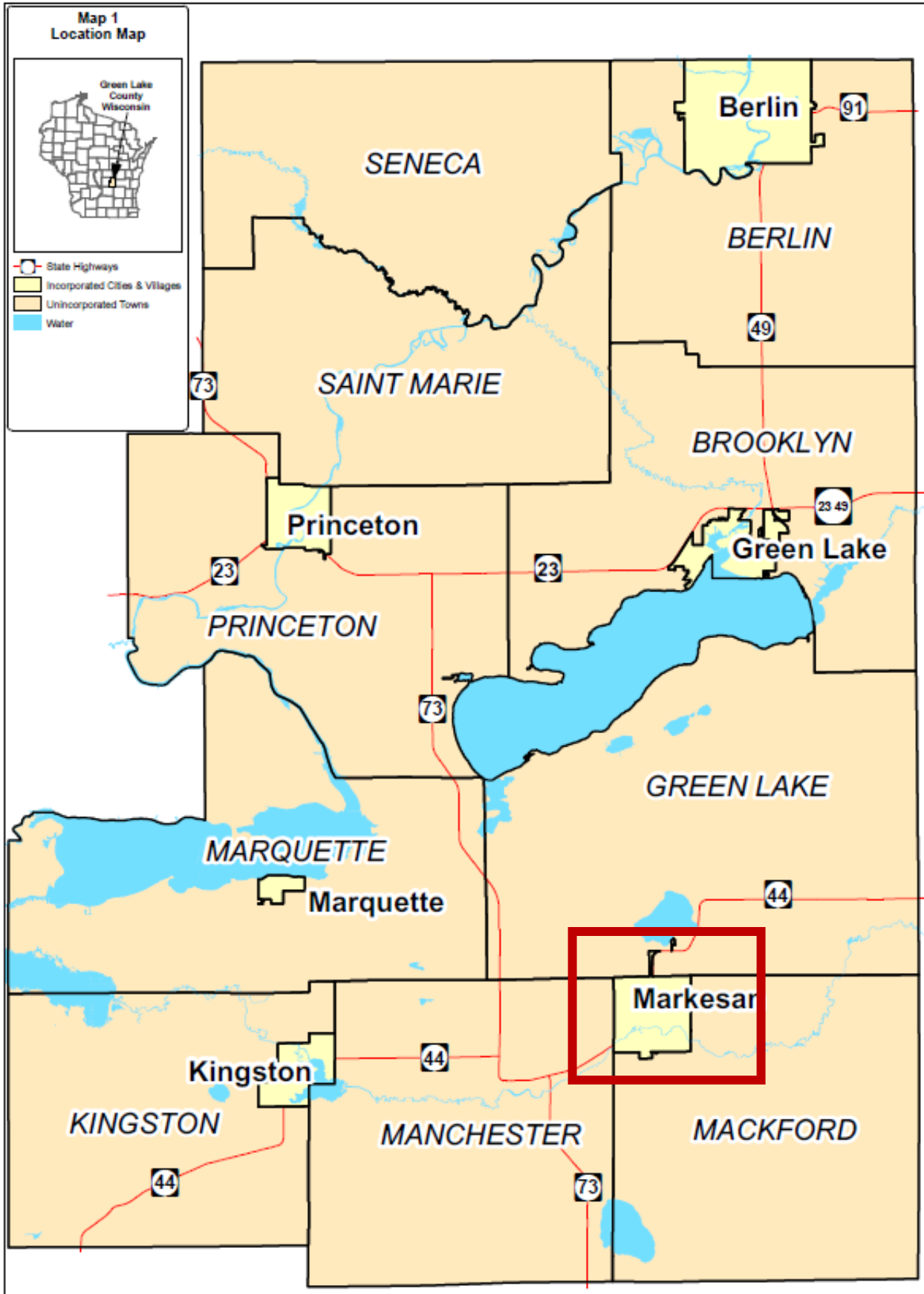
The City of Markesan is located in southern Green Lake County, just south of Little Green Lake. The City and County are shown in Map 1 below. State Highway 44 is the main regional highway that connects the City of Markesan to the City of Ripon, in Fond du Lac County, to the northeast and the Village of Kingston to the west. The City is surrounded by the Towns of Green Lake, Mackford, and Manchester. The City is surrounded by agricultural land uses, despite a large tourist population in the Town of Green Lake. The environment around Markesan is defined by agriculture. The City of Markesan is relatively isolated and not greatly affected by outside forces. The City will likely need to maintain their existing park and green spaces in order to best serve their aging population.

### Physical and Cultural Features

Physical features play a major role in planning, designing, and developing recreation and open space areas. The diverse natural and cultural resources and climate of the area affect the type and amount of recreational and open space facilities that can and should be provided. An abundance of wetlands, surface waters, and unique natural resources in an area tend to require more parks and open space areas to help protect and preserve the resources. In turn, more fishing, boating and nature observation should be expected within these areas. In areas with limited wetland, surface water, or unique resources, timing becomes more critical in order to protect and preserve them before they are lost, damaged, or destroyed due to development. Certain outdoor recreation activities are entirely dependent upon these natural resource amenities, such as nature study areas. Others, such as picnic areas and trails rely on the natural resource amenities to the extent of enhancing and creating quality recreational experiences. Still other types of activities (i.e., ball fields) are somewhat independent of the natural resource base and only require land suitable for development of the desired facilities. Lands with a mix of natural resource amenities and developable areas provide the greatest ability to accommodate the widest array of outdoor recreation facilities.

The greatest natural resource in the City of Markesan is the Grand River. The Grand River eventually connects to the Fox River and is part of a much larger natural resource base. The Grand River flows directly through the City and has the potential to provide recreational and economic opportunities for the City. Additionally, Soldiers and Sailors Park sits on Little Green Lake. While the lake is not within the boundaries of the City, the Park is a municipal island. The beach and park property provides the City and its residents with swimming, fishing, boating, and other water-based outdoor recreation opportunities.

The residents of Markesan have emphasized their desire to preserve and enhance the natural resources and historic nature of the City. The overarching goal for the City is to maintain its small town charm, rural character of the surrounding area, and maintain the historic resources within its limits.



Source: 2016 Green Lake County Comprehensive Plan

## Land Use and Economy

Residential development in the City of Markesan is divided into two areas. The central part of the City was developed first and contains older homes that are more established. The south side of the City is expanding and developing with new residences. The south side of the City is expected to continue to develop into the future.

Industrial development in the City of Markesan is located at the far north end, along State Highway 44, and the far east side on County Highway S. Industrial development in Markesan is sizeable for a City of its size. There are multiple companies in Markesan that have a major economic impact. The major commercial development is located in the center of the City around S. Bridge Street.



## POPULATION

Population trends, projections, distributions, age compositions and other population characteristics are important elements in effective park and open space planning. National standards for park and open space developments are based upon population trends and projections. Population distribution helps determine where facilities should be located; and age Compositions help determine the types of facilities to be developed.

### Trends and Projections

The City of Markesan’s population increased by 92 people (107%) between 1970 and 2020. The population increased between 1970 and 1990 with the population increasing by more than 200 during those two decades. However, between 1990 and 2000, the population dropped to 1,396. This is a decline of 100 people in one ten-year period. The population jumped up again in 2010 to 1,476 and then dropped again in 2020 to the current population of 1,377. The Wisconsin Department of Administration currently estimates the City’s population at 1,352. Table 1 shows the population trends for the City of Markesan.

**TABLE 1**  
**City of Markesan Population Trends, 1970 - 2020**

Year	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	% Change 1970-2020	Total New Persons 1970-2020
Population	1,285	1,446	1,496	1,396	1,476	1,377	107.2	92

Source: US Census of Population and the Department of Administration

In 2013 the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) Demographic Services Center prepared baseline population projections to the year 2040 for the communities and counties of Wisconsin. According to the projection model, the City of Markesan will have a population of 1,370 by 2040. The City of Markesan will lose 7 residents by 2040, which is a 0.1 percent decrease in population from 2020 to 2040. Table 2 displays the population projections for the City of Markesan.

**TABLE 2**  
**City of Markesan Population Projections, 2025-2040**

2020 Population	2025	2030	2035	2040	% Change 2020-2040	Total New Persons 2020-2040
1,377	1,450	1,440	1,410	1,370	0.1	-7

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographics Services Center, Preliminary Population Projections for Wisconsin Municipalities: 2010-2040

### Age Composition

A review and analysis of the age compositions for the City is helpful in understanding who lives in the City and, thus what types of recreational facilities will be most in demand. Generally, older populations require more passive facilities such as picnic areas, trails, and natural areas. A greater emphasis is needed on active recreation facilities such as ball fields and playgrounds for high youth populations. Table 3 identifies the age composition in 2021.

**TABLE 3**  
**Age Composition: City of Markesan and Green Lake County - 2021**

	Age 0-4	Age 5-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-44	Age 45-64	Age 65+
Markesan	62 (5%)	271 (22%)	87 (7%)	170 (14%)	222 (18%)	439 (35%)
Green Lake County	1,055 (6%)	4,553 (24%)	17,89 (9%)	2,070 (11%)	3,630 (19%)	5,893 (31%)

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

The City of Markesan and Green Lake County have similar percentages of citizens in every age category. The most populous category for both is people in the 65 and over category, with the City's percent slightly higher than the County's. The second largest category for both the City and the County is for people ages 5 – 24. Ages 0 – 4 and 25 – 34 are low in both the City and the County. Finally, ages 35 – 44 and 45 – 64 are both middle level percents in both the City and the County.

Other Population Characteristics

The median household income in the City of Markesan in 2021 was \$57,688, according to the 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimate. Comparatively, the median household income for Green Lake County in 2021 was \$60,597, according to the same ACS estimate. Markesan's estimated 2021 median household income is lower than the median household income for Green Lake County (includes cities, towns, and villages). The City of Markesan's income level is slightly higher than most of the other cities and villages in Green Lake County. The City's median household income is over \$10,000 less than the average for the Towns in Green Lake County.

## **PARK AND OPEN SPACE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM**

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Definitions used in this plan are modifications of definitions used by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). They are used to classify the existing recreation system and to guide plans for its future. They begin with the smallest and most intensely developed and used, and proceed to the largest and least developed. Neighborhood and community facilities are normally provided by municipalities. Larger recreation areas are normally provided by larger units of government or private developers.

### Neighborhood Playgrounds

A neighborhood playground mainly serves the active recreational needs of children from 5 to 15 years of age, and it may offer passive recreation opportunities to adults. Neighborhood Playgrounds are typically developed for intensive recreational activities and usually offer play apparatus; open areas for games; fields for baseball or football, courts for basketball or volleyball; and toilet and shelter facilities. Buffered play areas are desirable. If size permits, an area for more constrained activities, such as quiet games or handicrafts, is advisable. Neighborhood Playgrounds are usually associated with or are located in close proximity to elementary school sites. Population density is important for determining the space needs and service area of a neighborhood playground. Walking distance of about one-half mile should be the maximum service area. A one-quarter mile service area is desirable, particularly for younger children and the elderly with mobility limitations.

### Neighborhood Parks

A neighborhood park provides open space for the passive recreation of all age groups in a neighborhood and enhances the overall neighborhood environment. An attractive natural setting such as a lake, stream or woods is a desirable location for a neighborhood park. Facilities may include trees, lawn, benches and tables, open areas for sitting and sunning, walks, paths, shelters, drinking fountains, lighting and toilet facilities. Population density is important in determining the space needs and service area of a neighborhood park. It should be within easy walking distance of intended users, not to exceed one-half mile. Neighborhood playgrounds may be included within neighborhood parks.

### Community Playfields

The community playfield provides for the active recreational needs of several neighborhoods. It provides more facilities than a neighborhood playground. Such facilities may include tennis complex, swimming pool, multi-purpose courts, community center, fields for sporting competition, ice-skating area, sanitary facilities, a playground and landscaping to buffer the playfields from surrounding properties. A community playfield might adjoin a public junior or senior high school. Population size and density are important for determining the space needs of a community playfield. It should serve an area with a radius of up to two miles. Neighborhood facilities might be included in a community playfield.

### Community Parks

The community park is intended to serve the passive recreational needs of a number of neighborhoods or a medium sized municipality. It may include wooded areas, varied topography and water features, undisturbed natural areas, scenic lookouts, picnic areas, hiking or riding trails, boating and swimming areas, and some area for active recreation on a less formal scale than the community playfield. The park may also be utilized for winter activities. The area served by a community park should have a radius of about two miles. Community park size should be determined by size and density of population. Community parks also serve as neighborhood facilities for the surrounding neighborhood.

### County and Regional Parks

The county or regional park fills the gap between intensively developed urban facilities and resource protection-oriented state parks and resource areas. County parks should offer a variety of active and passive recreational experiences and be designed for day-long or overnight use by the entire family. Proximity to significant population centers and scenic areas, accessibility from highways, location in relation to existing recreation areas and a maximum travel time of one-half hour must be weighed when considering locations for county parks. In general, a location for a county park should emphasize interesting topography and be characterized by scenic views, wooded areas, lakes or rivers. Generally 100 - 200 acres is a desirable size range.

### Special Purpose Parks

Special purpose parks may be created by a municipality or by a larger unit of government. These areas are located to take advantage of natural or unusual features of the landscape or to preserve areas of historic value and provide a variety of outdoor recreation activities. Special purpose parks might be created to provide access to lakes and rivers or to protect ledges and areas with steep slopes. Sites of cultural, archaeological or historical importance and certain recreation facilities such as golf courses, boat launching ramps and marinas might be considered special purpose parks. Waysides and historical markers are special purpose parks designed to serve motorists. They are important to a tourist industry as a means of providing rest and information. They may include restrooms, picnic areas, shelters and other facilities needed by motorists. The size and location of special purpose parks depends upon natural features and the functions they are intended to serve. If oriented to motorists, traffic volumes must be considered. Size requirements, specific functions and service radius are difficult to assign to special purpose parks because of their variety and uniqueness.

### Reservations, Preserves and Greenbelts

Reservations and preserves are usually located outside urban concentrations and include large tracts of land, which are undeveloped or have limited development potential. Such areas have the primary function of resource protection. Reservations and preserves may be established to conserve forest lands, marshlands, floodplains, wildlife habitats and other areas having cultural, scenic or natural values. Normally, reservations and preserves include several hundred acres of undeveloped land, although some improvements may be provided which are incidental to the enjoyment of the natural scenery. Improvements are usually located in one section on the reservation or preserve so that the area remains largely undeveloped. Improvements may include parking areas, interpretive centers and scenic waysides. Hunting may be a primary recreational activity in such areas. Other recreational uses might include backpacking, camping, trail use, picnicking, swimming, boating, fishing, and water sports.

The greenbelt has basically the same characteristics and function as the reservation or preserve. However, a greenbelt may be used to shape urban development. It may be a buffer between an urban area and surrounding rural areas and may connect parks within an urban area.

### Linear Parks

Linear parks are areas developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel such as hiking, biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, cross country skiing, canoeing and pleasure driving. Typically linear parks are built on or follow existing natural or man-made corridors. Examples of these include railroad or utility rights-of-way, bluff lines, rivers and streams, roads and other systems that link facilities or components of a recreational system. Linear parks can be located within communities to link schools, parks, downtown areas, and other community facilities or they can be located within rural areas to link other communities, park systems or significant facilities or sites. There are no particular size standards for linear parks, but they do need to have sufficient width to protect the resource or provide a buffer between adjacent uses. Additionally, the types of uses allowed, the expected amount of use and future use potential all should help determine the desired width. Linear park development has been the most significant growth sector in recreation facilities over the past 10 to 20 years and all indications are that this will continue. Rail-Trails (trails built on abandoned railroad beds) and even Rails-With-Trails (trails built alongside active railroad beds) are increasing in

popularity and quantity. Linear parks can also serve as important transportation links for alternative modes of transportation.

## RECREATION AND RESOURCE INVENTORY SUMMARY

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The City of Markesan's system of parks and playgrounds is comprised of City-owned, school-owned and privately-owned properties. The park system provides ample opportunity for citizens to enjoy a wide variety of passive and active recreational opportunities. The following are brief descriptions of each of Markesan's recreation sites. The inventory of existing recreation facilities is shown in Tables 4 and 5.

1. **Kiwanis Park** is a 4.84-acre park in the central portion of the City. The park is located directly south of City Hall. The Grand River forms the western and southern boundaries of the park. The park is accessible from a frontage road off S. Bridge Street at City. There are active and passive facilities at this park including a large, closed building, a small open shelter, restrooms, picnic tables, shuffleboard, a sand pit previously used for sand volleyball, and a portable ice skating rink. Kiwanis Park serves residents of the City as a community park due to its central natural, size, and adjacency to the Grand River.
2. **Soldiers and Sailors Park** is a 4.83-acre park which makes up the northern municipal island of the City. The park is located off State Highway 44 on Little Green Lake. The park's amenities include a large shelter with a serving area, a medium closed building, restrooms, picnic tables, small grills, a large fire pit for bulk grilling, an open shelter with more picnic tables, a storage garage, a volleyball court, and a beach. Soldiers and Sailors Park serves as an active community park for residents of the City as well as the surrounding region.
3. **Zanto Park** is a 1.79-acre neighborhood park. The park is located at the western end of the City, on W. John Street. The site has a large section of wooded land and serves as the community garden.
4. **Hein Park** is a 1.35-acre neighborhood playground. The park is located in the center of the City between S. Main Street and S. Bridge Street. It is bordered on the north side by the Grand River. This park contains an open shelter with picnic tables, a restroom, and playground equipment. The playground equipment includes swings, climbing equipment, and a slide.
5. **High School/Middle School** complex has a large, 36.15-acre community playfield adjoining it. Located at the north side of the City, this space offers a wide variety of active recreational activities. There are tennis/pickleball courts, frisbee golf course, track, football fields with bleacher seating, two baseball diamonds, one with dugouts, two softball diamonds, one basketball court a concession stand with restrooms, a batting cage, and storage shed. This area serves as the main location for sports-related activities in the City.
6. **Elementary School** is located on the south side of the City. Adjoining the Elementary School is a four-acre neighborhood playground. The playground has two baseball diamonds, three basketball goals, and a large playground area. The playground has a wide variety of equipment, including slides, swings, climbing equipment, a merry-go-round, and much more. During the school year, this space is used as the recess and physical education area for the school. After school and during the summer, it is used by neighborhood families as well as those from throughout the City.
7. **Library Mini-Park** is a small 0.09-acre green space adjacent to the City Public Library. It is a small, open space with benches located on the corner of W. Charles Street and N. Bridge Street.
8. **Dog Park**

**TABLE 4**  
**Inventory of Existing Recreational Facilities (Part 1), City of Markesan – 2023**

	KIWANIS PARK	SOLDIERS AND SAILORS PARK	ZANTO PARK	HEIN PARK
<b>CLASSIFICATION</b>	COMMUNITY PARK	COMMUNITY PARK	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYGROUND
<b>ACREAGE</b>	4.84	4.83	1.79	1.35
<b>ACTIVE RECREATION FACILITIES</b>	Soccer Field			
	Softball Field			
	Baseball Field			
	Tennis Court			
	Basketball Goal			
	Volleyball Court	Sand Pit	1	
	Open Playfield	X	X	X
	Ice Skating Area	1 – Portable for seasonal use		
	Football Field			
	Paved Play Area			X
	Horseshoe Pits	X		
	Misc.	Shuffleboard	Beach	
<b>PASSIVE RECREATION FACILITIES</b>	Picnic Acres		3	1
	Picnic Tables	6	35+	6
	Cooking Grills		2	
	Shelter Building	2 = 1 Closed, 1 Open	3 = 1 Open, 1 Closed, 1 Combination	1 Open
	Benches	2		4
	Shore Fishing		X	X
	Misc.		Large Fire Pit for Bulk Grilling	Community Garden
<b>PLAYGROUND FACILITIES</b>	Play System		1	1
	Swings - Senior/Tots		0/4	0/1
	Teeter Totter		1	
	Slide		1	
	Sandbox		1	1
	Climbing Equipment		1	1
	Merry-Go-Round		1	
	Balance Beam			
	Tire Swing			
	Misc. Equipment			
<b>RECREATION SUPPORT FACILITIES</b>	Parking Spaces	20	50	Off-Street
	Restrooms	1	1	1
	Press Box			
	Playfield Lighting			
	Playfield Fencing			
	Concession Building			
	Drinking Fountain			
	Backstop			
	Bleachers			
	Scoreboard			
	Identification Sign	1	1	1
	Team Benches			
	Bike Racks	1		
	Storage Building		2	
	Historic Marker		1	
Baseball Field Lighting				

**TABLE 5**  
**Inventory of Existing Recreational Facilities (Part 2), City of Markesan – 2023**

	HIGH SCHOOL / MIDDLE SCHOOL	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	LIBRARY MINI-PARK
<b>CLASSIFICATION</b>	COMMUNITY PLAYFIELD	NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYGROUND	Mini-Park
<b>ACREAGE</b>	36.15	7.44	0.09
<b>ACTIVE RECREATION FACILITIES</b>	Soccer Field		
	Softball Field	2	
	Baseball Field	2	2
	Tennis & Pickleball Court	3	
	Basketball Goal	2	3
	Volleyball Court		
	Open Playfield	X	X
	Ice Skating Area		
	Football Field	2	
	Paved Play Area		1
	Horseshoe Pits		
	Misc.	Batting Cage, Frisbee Golf Course	
<b>PASSIVE RECREATION FACILITIES</b>	Picnic Acres		
	Picnic Tables		
	Cooking Grills		
	Shelter Building		
	Benches		2
	Shore Fishing		
	Misc.		500 Yd dirt walking trail
<b>PLAYGROUND FACILITIES</b>	Play System		1
	Swings - Senior/Tots	0/4	0/6
	Teeter Totter		1
	Slide		3
	Sandbox		1
	Climbing Equipment		1
	Merry-Go-Round		
	Balance Beam		1
	Tire Swing		
	Misc. Equipment		
	<b>RECREATION SUPPORT FACILITIES</b>	Parking Spaces	150
Restrooms		1 – Locked	
Press Box		1	
Playfield Lighting		1	
Playfield Fencing		2	1
Concession Building		1	
Drinking Fountain		1	
Backstop		4	2
Bleachers		8	
Scoreboard		4	
Identification Sign		1	
Team Benches		6	
Bike Racks		1	1
Storage Building		3	
Historic Marker			
Baseball Field Lighting			



## POLICIES FOR PARK AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING

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Before any park and recreation standards are applied and recommendations developed, basic policies should be considered. Listed below are the standard policies that are paramount in obtaining a balanced allocation of land to meet a community's social, physical and economic needs. Most of these policies have been adapted from the National Recreation and Park Association.

- The park and recreation system should provide opportunities for all persons regardless of race, creed, age, sex or economic status.
- Advanced land acquisition based upon this park and open space system plan should begin immediately in order to prevent the loss of high quality sites to other developments.
- Park facilities should be centrally located within the area they are intended to serve and must have safe and adequate access for maximum convenience to persons being served.
- Land acquired for use as parks or recreation areas should be suitable for the specific intended use, and when possible, for multiple uses.
- Land adjacent to recreation or open space areas should be used in ways which will not interfere with the purposes for which the recreation or open space land was intended, and in addition, recreation and open space areas should be compatible with surrounding land uses. Recreation and open space land should be protected in perpetuity against encroachment by other uses that will inhibit the recreation or open space nature of the land.
- The design of individual park and recreation sites should be as flexible as possible to reflect changing patterns of recreation needs in a given service area.
- Special efforts should be made to provide easy access and use of all facilities by the elderly, ill and handicapped, very young and other less mobile groups.
- Park and recreation areas should be used to separate incompatible land use and guide future development.
- Citizen involvement in the recreation and open space decision-making process should be encouraged and expanded.
- Facility development must be done with safety in mind, adhering to accepted installation and maintenance standards.
- Annual or on-going funding should be allocated for acquisition of high priority open space areas.
- Designated open space should form the spine on which other recreational lands and activities are located.
- Need for recreation land and facilities are based upon generally accepted standards. However, modifications to those standards may be necessary to accommodate specific local characteristics, such as significant variations in age distribution, trends and other characteristics which influence needs and demand.
- Minimum recreation area size guidelines are applied to determine needs within individual communities. Where a single municipality's population is insufficient to justify a minimum sized recreation site, combined recreational development with an adjoining municipality is encouraged.

- Where and when possible, park facilities should be linked to other facilities by open space environmental areas, trails or other means which provide non-vehicular access.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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Goals and objectives establish an end to be achieved and means to achieve the desired end. The outdoor recreation and open space goals and objectives that provide the basis for this plan and represent its purpose are:

1. Provide a city-wide system of parks, outdoor recreation, and open spaces that provide safe and accessible recreational opportunities to meet the needs and demands of the citizens of Markesan and its visitors.
  - A. Acquire park and recreation areas and develop facilities that will meet or exceed the recommended standards and needs of the City of Markesan and the surrounding area.
  - B. Upgrade existing recreational facilities to ensure Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and accessibility to all residents and visitors regardless of mobility, ability, or age.
  - C. Provide recreational lands and facilities for all City residents that are with a readily accessible location and distance.
  - D. Strive to obtain open space recreation corridors to link developed areas with recreational facilities.
  - E. Provide a variety of recreational opportunities so that residents of all ages have an equal opportunity to enjoy the parks and open spaces within the City.
  - F. Continue to monitor and maintain existing park equipment and facilities to ensure its longevity and safety.
2. Increase participation opportunities in outdoor experiences in the City of Markesan.
  - A. Provide a variety of multi-seasonal and multi-use recreational opportunities.
  - B. Broaden the social and economic role that parks and open spaces provide for the City.
  - C. Provide a recreational area that will connect the community to the municipal island at the north end of the City limits.
3. Provide recreational and open space areas that will preserve significant natural, cultural, and historic resources in the City of Markesan.
  - A. Preserve, manage, and promote appropriate use of park lands, the Grand River corridor, Little Green Lake, and other environmental resources in and near the City.
  - B. Create park and recreational facilities with the natural environment in mind by considering project impacts to the environment.
  - C. Acquire environmentally sensitive and unique lands for open space recreation to preserve them from damaging development.
4. Develop parks and open spaces that will be used as a means to guide future urban development and growth.
  - A. Strive to acquire lands for recreational and open space use in areas where development is likely to occur; especially lands not well suited for development such as wooded areas, steep slopes, and wetlands.
5. Ensure the City's park system is developed, improved, and operated in a cost effective manner.
  - A. Make use of, to the extent possible, state and federal resources and grant programs to offset local expenditures to develop and maintain needed and quality facilities.
  - B. Make use of, to the extent possible, local resources, such as volunteer groups, organizations, and individuals willing to donate time, labor, money, land, and other resources to develop and maintain needed and quality facilities.

- C. Maintain a park and open space system that is sustainable with respect to annual maintenance and operation costs and servicing capabilities of the City.
- D. Invest funds for the development of facilities that will maximize existing park and recreational areas, with the intent of increasing park use.

## ANALYSIS OF NEEDS AND DEMANDS

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### Standards

Basic minimum standards to help communities assess their local recreational system have been established by the National Recreation and Park Association and are generally accepted across Wisconsin and the nation. These standards primarily based upon a community's population, offer guidelines for the minimum size and number of recreation areas and facilities that would be necessary to provide an adequate level of recreational opportunity for the people of a community. They also establish desirable service areas for recreational sites. Park standards are for guidance only and provide a scale against which the outdoor recreation system can be measured and future directions set. Many communities strive to exceed recommended standards, while others find it impossible to meet the recommended minimums. However, the standards provide a target toward which most communities strive for.

### Space Standards and Needs

Space standards are the most commonly used measure of a recreation system's adequacy. Recreational space needs are expressed as a ratio of land acreage per 1,000 population. Based on a compilation of standards taken from recommendations from the National Recreation and Park Association a "core" system of park and recreational land should be based on about 10.5 acres per 1,000 population. The "core" system covers active and passive activities for all ages and would typically be found in neighborhood and community park facilities. A well-rounded recreation system goes beyond the "core" system and includes special purpose parks, linear parks, and reservations and preserves.

An analysis of existing recreational areas is provided to determine if the recreational needs of the residents are being met. This analysis includes an evaluation of the space devoted to recreational use, the existing recreational facilities and the service areas. The 2020 estimated population of 1,377 will be used in determining current recreational needs. The projected population of 1,370 for the year 2040 will be used in determining future recreational needs. Table 6 shows the amount of land devoted to community and neighborhood recreation facilities and evaluates whether or not the current and future population of Markesan can be adequately served.

**TABLE 6**  
**Space (Acreage) Needs: City of Markesan 2023 - 2045**

Type of Park	Existing Acreage	Standard	Minimum Required		Surplus or Deficiency	
			2023	2045	2023	2045
<b>Neighborhood:</b>						
Playgrounds	8.79	2.5/1000 People	2.0	2.5	3.35	2.85
Parks	1.79	2.5/1000 People	2.0	2.5	(0.21)	(0.71)
Subtotal:	9.58	5.0/1000 People	4.0	5.0	3.14	2.14
<b>Community:</b>						
Playfield	36.15	3.0/1000 People	7.0	7.0	23	23
Parks	9.67	5.0/1000 People	5.0	5.0	4.67	4.67
Subtotal:	45.82	8.0/1000 People	12.0	12.0	27.67	27.67
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>55.40</b>	<b>13.0/1000 People</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>39.40</b>	<b>38.40</b>

Source: National Recreation and Park Association, Department of Natural Resources, and Green Lake County CORP.

Based on the standards and population figures, a minimum of 16.0 acres and 17.0 acres are recommended for the years 2023 and 2040, respectively. The table indicates that the amount of parkland available within the City is above the 2023 and 2040 standards. The City is currently 30 acres above the minimum standard space needs and is projected to still be 29 acres above the standard by the year 2040.

Facility Standards and Needs

Standards for recreational facilities are also expressed as a ratio of facilities to population. They estimate the number of people necessary to justify developing one facility. Too few facilities per recommended population standard could result in facility overcrowding. Facility analysis is necessary in addition to space analysis since an adequate amount of space without an adequate number and range of facilities will fail to meet most recreational needs. However, some facilities should be present in order to satisfy the demand for them regardless of the size of the community. Baseball and softball diamonds, basketball courts, tennis courts, picnic areas, and picnic tables are primary facilities because of the general popularity of the activities associated with them. Towns, villages, and cities are encouraged to cooperate to jointly fund, operate, and provide these facilities for their residents, particularly when the municipalities are unable to fund a complete needed facility on their own.

Table 7 lists some of the more popular recreational facilities and those that might be considered for facilities in Markesan and evaluates whether or not the population can be adequately served by these facilities. This analysis is again based on the 2023 estimated population and the 2040 projected population in relation to the standards for the number of facilities.

**TABLE 7**  
**Facility Needs: City of Markesan 2023 - 2045**

Facility	# of Existing	Minimum Ratio To Population	Minimum Recommended		Above/Below (-) Minimum	
			2023	2045	2023	2045
Picnic Tables	47	1/100	13	13	34	34
Picnic Acres	4	1/500	2.6	2.6	1.4	1.4
Shelter Buildings	6	1/1000	1	1	5	5
Playgrounds	3	1/1000	1	1	2	2
Basketball Goals	5	1/5000	0.26	0.26	4.74	4.74
Tennis Courts	3	1/2000	0.65	0.65	2.35	2.35
Ice Skating Rinks	1	1/2500	0.52	0.52	0.48	0.48
Softball Fields	2	1/5000	0.26	0.26	1.74	1.74
Volleyball Courts	1	1/5000	0.26	0.26	0.74	0.74
Football Field	2	1/20000	0.07	0.07	1.93	1.93
Baseball Fields	4	1/6000	0.22	0.22	3.78	3.78
¼-mile Running Track	1	1/20000	0.07	0.07	0.93	0.93
Trails: Multi-Use (miles)	0.28	1/6000	0.22	0.22	0.04	0.04
Horseshoe Pits	1	1/7500	0.17	0.17	0.83	0.83
Soccer Fields	---	1/8000	0.16	0.16	(1)	(1)

Source: National Recreation and Park Association, Department of Natural Resources, and Green Lake County CORP.

The table indicates that the basic facilities provided in the City meet the minimum standards for the population. The City's lack of soccer fields is not uncommon in a community of its size. The City may want to consider increasing the number of playgrounds prior to 2045.

**Playground Surfacing**

Surface materials used in playgrounds are critical to the safety of a playground, and its accessibility to the disabled. Surfacing under and around playground equipment is a factor in determining the extent of potential injuries from a fall. Some injuries due to falls cannot be prevented. However, the harder the surface, the greater the injury potential. Asphalt, concrete, and other hard surface materials are not acceptable under or around playground equipment. Natural soils, hard packed dirt and grass are not recommended, as their ability to absorb shock can vary with moisture, temperature, wear, and other climatic and natural conditions. Acceptable playground surfacing materials consist of "unitary" and "loose-fill" materials.

Unitary materials include rubber or rubber-like mats. The shock absorbency of these materials varies between products and manufacturers, so test data from the manufacturer should be reviewed to determine a product's adequacy for a particular site. Unitary materials are typically more expensive than loose-fill materials; however, they afford the best access for the disabled.

Loose-fill materials consist of sand, gravel, wood chips, shredded tires, and similar materials. Table 8 identifies the maximum critical fall heights at which various compressed and uncompressed materials and depths may be expected to prevent life-threatening head injuries. The table provides only a general guideline. The highest accessible part of a piece of playground equipment should not exceed

the critical height of the surfacing material. For example, a slide installed over six inches of uncompressed fine sand should not exceed five feet in height. All surfacing and playground equipment should be installed according to manufacturer directions and the applicable standards and guidelines set forth by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). Loose-fill materials are generally not suitable for handicapped access. However, wood chips and wood fibers provide the best accessible surfacing of the loose fill material.

**TABLE 9**  
**Critical Heights (in feet) of Tested Materials**

Material	Uncompressed Depth			Compressed Depth
	6-inch	9-inch	12-inch	9-inch
Wood Chips	7	10	11	10
Double Shredded Bark Mulch	6	10	11	7
Engineered Wood Fibers	6	7	>12	6
Fine Sand	5	5	9	5
Coarse Sand	5	5	6	4
Fine Gravel	6	7	10	6
Medium Gravel	5	5	6	5
Shredded Tires	10-12	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Handbook for Public Playground Safety, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, 1997.

**Service Areas**

Service radius reflects normal maximum walking or driving distances to serve intended resident users. Persons living outside the service radius of recreation facilities may seldom use them. Service areas determine the adequacy of the location of recreation sites to serve the intended population. In urban areas, such as Markesan, the maximum distance standard from a residence to a neighborhood park or playground is one-quarter to one-half mile according to the National Recreation and Park Association. A maximum service radius of two miles is the standard for community recreation facilities. The service radius for community recreation facilities is adequate in the City of Markesan.

In determining the adequacy of neighborhood recreation facility locations, barriers to access must be considered within the service radius. Barriers to access may exist where children or families normally walk or bike to recreation areas. Major roadways, railroads, and waterways can restrict access. The central portion of the City of Markesan is divided almost in half by State Highway 44. This north/south highway is the major transportation corridor for this part of Green Lake County and creates a barrier for the westernmost neighborhoods to access the City’s recreational facilities. Another major barrier to easy access in the City is a lack of sidewalks and bike trails. While the southern residential development is newer and is only blocked by STH 44 when accessing the elementary school, the lack of sidewalks and designated bike paths makes pedestrian and bicycle traffic more hazardous. The final barrier facing the City’s recreational areas is the location of Soldiers and Sailors Park. Soldiers and Sailors Park is located north of the City in a municipal island. The park is located over a mile and a half from the northern residential area of the City. The only road to get to the park is STH 44, which, as previously stated, is a busy state highway.

Neighborhood recreation areas in Markesan are distributed fairly well. Two of the three parks with play systems are located south of W. John Street, which separates the northern half of the City from the southern. The only other park with a play system is Soldiers and Sailors Park, which, as noted above, is

over a mile and a half from the City center. The residential area north of John Street does have closer access to the recreation facilities at the High School/Middle School. The residential area in the western portion of Markesan is also segmented from the existing parks. It doesn't appear that this residential area will grow, yet the City should plan for a neighborhood recreation facility to serve this area. Soldiers and Sailors Park is completely separated from the rest of the community. The City should plan for a pedestrian/bike trail to access this park outside of State Highway 44.

The residential neighborhoods that are not adequately served are located:

1. West of N. Margaret Street (State Highway 44) to the City limits.

Map 2 identifies the service areas of existing neighborhood recreational facilities and the barriers to access.



## Map 2 – Recreation Facility Service Area

Needs to be created.

## PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations contained in this plan are intended to maintain and upgrade the recreation system in the City of Markesan by providing and distributing a diversity of recreational facilities equitably throughout the City. Map 3 shows the location of existing recreation facilities, floodplain and wetland natural areas, and the general location of proposed new recreation sites.

The Plan recommendations are divided into General Recommendations, Specific Site Recommendations and New Acquisition and Development Recommendations. General Recommendations primarily reflect administrative functions in carrying out the policies established in this plan. Specific Site Recommendations and New Acquisition and Development Recommendations address both administrative and facility development functions in order to upgrade or enhance existing facilities and develop new facilities according to the Goals and Objectives of the plan.

### General Recommendations

1. Maintain and replace existing facilities and equipment, as necessary.
2. Maintain the landscaping in good condition at existing parks.
3. Provide sufficient resources to support recreational programs.
4. Maintain a safe and accessible environment at all City parks.

### Specific Site Recommendations

#### ***Kiwanis Park***

1. Provide additional benches and tables.
2. Control weeds along the riverbank.
3. Repair the shuffleboard courts.
4. Repair or replace the ice skating warming shed to allow for multi-season use.
5. Repair the roof of the open shelter and paint or install siding to the exterior.
6. Repair the roof of the restrooms and paint or install siding to the exterior.
7. Build or install a pickleball court.
8. Install cement platform for the portable ice skating rink.
9. Provide a location for outdoor music celebrations.
10. Improve playground equipment.
11. Survey neighborhood residents for other park improvements needed.

#### ***Soldiers and Sailors Park***

1. Provide additional playground equipment.
2. Replace/Install several outdoor grilling units.
3. Replace the large shelter with a three-season shelter to be used for community gatherings, and to include a food service area.
4. Remodel the smaller shelter, including complete rehabilitation of the kitchen, electric fireplace, round tables with chairs, and foam insulation.
5. Install wheelchair accessible fishing dock.
6. Pave walking paths throughout the park to ensure wheelchair accessibility.
7. Improve volleyball court.
8. Install more sand at beach area.
9. Construct canoe/kayak entry point.
10. Improve park signage.
11. Plant additional shade trees.
12. Survey City residents for additional park improvements.

### **Zanto Park**

1. Maintain Community Garden.
2. Install playground equipment for small children.
3. Install benches.

### **Hein Park**

1. Repair restrooms.
2. Plant shade trees.
3. Control weeds on the riverbank.
4. Install deck for riverbank fishing.
5. Install basketball court.
6. Install park signage.

### **High School / Middle School** (owned, maintained, and funded by the Markesan School District)

1. Improve lighting for the baseball fields.
2. Construct an additional restroom on the west end of the athletic field.

### **Elementary School** (owned, maintained, and funded by the Markesan School District)

1. Construct outdoor restrooms.
2. Maintain accessibility of the walking trail.

### **Library Mini-Park**

1. Install pergola-like structure with lights.
2. Install additional benches.
3. Install picnic tables.
4. Plant shrubs and improve landscaping.

### **New Acquisition and Development Recommendations**

1. Construct a pedestrian, bike, walking path to connect all City parks.
2. Enhance land north of Zanto Park.
3. Acquire green space along East Manchester Street.

### Other Acquisitions and Developments

Additional park and recreation facilities should be considered for acquisition and development when it is economically feasible or when the opportunity presents itself and where it is appropriate to serve the needs of the City residents. Special consideration is necessary as new subdivisions are proposed which substantially increase residential densities of a particular area.

### Open Space Recommendations

The City of Markesan enjoys a good supply of natural resources, which enhances the environmental and rural character of the City. These resources should be preserved to the extent possible. Resources that should be protected include surface water, wetlands, floodplains, woodlots, steep slopes, and archaeological sites. Protection of these natural areas through conservation easements, fee simple acquisition, zoning restrictions, or other means is recommended. These areas are generally unsuitable for development and should only be used for open space purposes. Rezoning

and/or development of natural areas should be highly discouraged. Long range cooperative land acquisition and development plans by all public bodies should be encouraged.

## **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Regular maintenance of the park system is necessary to keep the parks in good shape and safe. Inadequate inspections and maintenance can lead to playground injuries and run down facilities making the park system a community liability instead of a community asset. Additionally, a maintenance schedule should be developed to identify all maintenance functions, the person responsible for the function and its timing. At present, the park maintenance and operations functions fall under the City Public Works Director responsibilities. Upon purchase and development of a park facility, it should be expected that part time seasonal worker(s) will need to be hired to mow the grass, clean the facilities, make routine inspections and repairs and to perform other maintenance functions as necessary.

### Map 3 – Existing Recreation Facilities

Needs to be created.

## FUNDING

Funding assistance for acquiring and developing parks and recreation facilities can be obtained through a variety of grants and programs. Additionally, many communities have good success with local fund-raising campaigns for large specific projects and local service organizations can be an excellent source of manpower and funding for smaller projects. Local business and corporate funding and support should also be encouraged. Another potential source of funding to acquire and develop parklands is parkland dedication or impact fees placed upon developers when creating residential lots.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program has several programs to assist with acquisition, development, renovation, and revitalization of park land. The programs available under Knowles-Nelson provide a 50 percent grant to match agreement.

Some of the grant and financial programs administered by the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources that are available to Cities include:

1. Acquisition and Development of Local Parks (ADLP) – State program that provides grants to help communities acquire and develop land for public nature-based outdoor recreation and improve community recreation areas.
2. Acquisition of Development Rights (ADR) – State program that provides grants to protect natural, agricultural, and forest lands that provide nature-based outdoor recreation by purchasing development rights and compensating landowners for limited future development on their land.
3. Urban Greenspace (UGS) – State program that provides grants to acquire land for open natural areas and community gardens within or near urban areas.
4. Urban Rivers (UR) – State program that provides grants for land acquisition on or adjacent to rivers that flow through urban areas, in order to preserve or restore riverfronts for economic revitalization or recreational development.
5. Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) – Federal program to acquire land and develop high-quality outdoor recreation amenities in local communities.
6. Federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) – Federal program to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized uses.

Staff at the Department of Natural Resources - Northeast Region should be contacted for additional information and assistance in preparing applications for projects.

Contact:  
Department of Natural Resources - Northeast Region  
2984 Shawano Avenue  
Green Bay, WI 54313

(920) 461-2680

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING PROCESS**

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Public involvement in the planning process is vital to ensure the development of a plan that serves to meet the needs and demands of its citizens and intended users. Development of this plan involved two basic levels of public involvement or comment.

1. City Meetings:

One Public Property and Health Committee meeting and one City Council meeting open to all interested City residents were held by the City of Markesan to solicit ideas and provide feedback on components of the plan in its development stages. An article was published in the local paper, *Markesan Regional Reporter*, to publicize the plan and the meetings. The initial draft plan was also posted on the City's website for residents to review prior to the City meetings. Email, written, and verbal comments were collected prior to the meetings as well. See Appendix A for comments. Needs and demands, policies, goals and objectives and recommendations for the park, recreation and open space plan and system were reviewed and developed in part at these meetings.

2. Public Hearing:

A public hearing was held prior to adoption of the plan by the City Council to solicit final comments on the draft plan.

The City Council should continue involvement with and maintain communication links to municipal officials and interested citizens and groups to keep up with changing attitudes and priorities. As needs and demands and priorities change the plan will be updated.

## **CHANGES AND AMENDMENT PROCEDURES**

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This plan should be scheduled for a review, update or complete revision at least every five years. However, various circumstances and certain opportunities may warrant changes to the plan prior to the next scheduled update or revision. Changes or amendments to this plan require a petition to or by the City Council. The petition shall specify the change requested and reasons for the change.

The City Council shall hold a public hearing upon publishing a Class I notice. When deemed appropriate by the City Council, written notification of the public hearing may be sent to user groups, organizations, municipalities, or individuals believed to be directly or adversely affected by the proposed change.

After the public hearing, the City Council shall vote on passage of the proposed change or amendment. The change or amendment shall be effective upon passage.