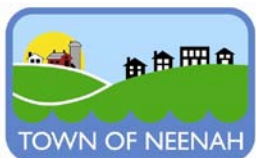




# TOWN OF NEENAH

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION FACILITIES PLAN

2009-2014



October 2009

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Town of Neenah, located in the southwestern portion of the ever-expanding Fox Cities urban area, has a long history of providing recreational opportunities for its residents. In providing a strong basis for future land use planning, the town's comprehensive plan recognizes the importance of maintaining the overall semblance of rural living and the accompanying high quality of life its residents enjoy. As the Town updates its open space and recreation plan, last adopted in 2004, preserving its natural resource base and other important open space areas so that future generations can enjoy its rural flavor is receiving increased emphasis. Accommodations that promote opportunities for safe bicycling and walking, both for recreation and transportation, have also become highly prized quality of life amenities for town residents. A key challenge of the park board, therefore, is to provide town residents with safe and convenient access to a broad range of recreational opportunities, while taking steps to ensure that measures which protect the open space character they value so highly are implemented.

### **GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS**

The Town of Neenah is located in the northeastern portion of Winnebago County adjacent to and generally west and south of the City of Neenah. USH 41 and the adjacent Canadian National Railroad tracks combine with the city to bisect the town. A major feature is the town's four miles of frontage on Lake Winnebago.

The town's terrain is relatively flat to gently rolling. Scattered wooded areas, totaling about 220 acres, are found primarily in the area west of Highway 41. Much of the Lake Winnebago shoreline is also wooded; for the most part, however, these areas have extensive residential development.

Of the town's 5,118 acres, less than 35 percent is developed. The principal uses in the remaining acreage are cropland, with 52 percent of the town's total acreage, and vacant and/or undeveloped land, with 13 percent. The dominant land use in the developed portion of the town is single family residential, with 57 percent of the developed acreage, followed by industrial, with 28 percent. Commercial development and institutional uses such as parks and public facilities each comprise less than 10 percent of the developed land.

### **POPULATION**

Over the past fifty years, the Town of Neenah's population has fluctuated, peaking at 2,942 in 1970 and declining since that date to 2,657 in 2000, and rebounding to 2917 in 2008 (Table 1). Between 2000 and 2008, the Town's population increased by 9.8%, a greater increase than both the City of Neenah (4.3%) and Winnebago County (5.5%).

**Table 1**  
**POPULATION TRENDS**  
**1950 - 2008**

Jurisdiction	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2008	% Change 2000-2008
C. Appleton (pt.)	0	0	0	5	443	812	932	14.8%
C. Menasha (pt.)	12,385	14,647	14,836	14,728	14,638	15,643	15,775	0.8%
C. Neenah	12,437	18,057	22,902	22,432	23,219	24,507	25,560	4.3%
C. Omro	1,470	1,991	2,341	2,763	2,836	3,177	3,421	7.7%
C. Oshkosh	41,084	45,110	53,082	49,620	55,006	62,916	65,920	4.8%
V. Winneconne	1,078	1,273	1,611	1,935	2,059	2,401	2,520	5.0%
T. Algoma	1,647	2,177	3,158	3,249	3,492	5,702	6,423	12.6%
T. Black Wolf	1,143	1,613	2,127	2,318	2,154	2,330	2,485	6.7%
T. Clayton	1,203	1,302	1,771	2,353	2,264	2,974	3,579	20.3%
T. Menasha	3,007	5,480	8,682	12,307	13,975	15,858	17,375	9.6%
<b>T. Neenah</b>	<b>2,045</b>	<b>2,273</b>	<b>2,942</b>	<b>2,864</b>	<b>2,691</b>	<b>2,657</b>	<b>2,917</b>	<b>9.8%</b>
T. Nekimi	986	1,073	1,193	1,516	1,475	1,419	1,457	2.7%
T. Nepeuskun	667	659	743	682	647	689	713	3.5%
T. Omro	1,100	1,221	1,444	1,684	1,616	1,875	2,121	13.1%
T. Oshkosh	4,715	4,321	4,943	4,420	4,655	3,234	2,823	-12.7%
T. Poygan	566	596	734	898	824	1,037	1,211	16.8%
T. Rushford	1,326	1,320	1,415	1,420	1,361	1,471	1,607	9.2%
T. Utica	940	987	1,029	1,038	1,046	1,168	1,224	4.8%
T. Vinland	1,009	1,203	1,472	1,632	1,688	1,849	1,935	4.7%
T. Winchester	887	1,009	1,209	1,261	1,433	1,676	1,803	7.6%
T. Winneconne	731	914	1,408	1,595	1,761	2,145	2,304	7.4%
T. Wolf River	677	702	904	1,052	1,037	1,223	1,253	2.5%
Winnebago Cty	91,103	107,928	129,946	131,772	140,320	156,763	165,358	5.5%
Wisconsin	3,434,575	3,951,777	4,417,821	4,705,642	4,891,769	5,061,451	5,675,156	12.1%

Source: U.S. Census: 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000 and Wisconsin DOA 2008.

## Population Projections

Projections indicate that the population of the Town of Neenah will continue increasing through the year 2030 (Table 2). Table 2 provides two projections: the official projections maintained by the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC), and the modified projections per the Town's 2009 "Smart Growth" Comprehensive Plan. ECWRPC estimates indicate that the Town will reach a population of 2,955 by 2030 (an increase of 11.2%), while the Town estimates a future population of 3,714 (an increase of 39.8%).

As ECWRPC's projections are based on past trends, including population losses due to annexations, current population estimates<sup>1</sup> indicate ECWRPC's projection may underestimate the Town's future growth. For this reason, the Town chose to create a "modified" set of population projections that assume a higher rate of growth. The future validity of both sets of population projections will be partially dependent on whether or not the Town can avoid future annexations.

<sup>1</sup> As provided by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2008

Currently, the Border Agreement with the City of Neenah has lessened these annexations considerably and will for the duration of the Agreement. The Town has infinite growth areas that limit the need for planning of parks and recreation facilities beyond the boundary limits. In the next 20 years, the Town's population is expected to increase by about 500 people. Using an average of 2.8 people per dwelling unit, it is estimated that 178 households/dwelling units will constitute 3% of the new total. This 3% figure should be used as the basis for allocating future costs of parkland acquisition and capital costs to build, expand, or improve recreation facilities like tennis courts, trails, soccer fields, and ball diamond upgrades.

**Table 2  
POPULATION PROJECTIONS  
2000 - 2030**

Year	Town of Neenah		Winnebago Co
	ECWRPC	Revised*	
2000(actual)	2,657	2,657	156,763
2005	2,770	2,929	163,846
2010	2,802	3,222	168,538
2015	2,832	3,357	173,241
2020	2,869	3,483	178,543
2025	2,917	3,603	184,763
2030	2,955	3,714	190,504
% Change 2000-2030	11.21%	39.78%	21.52%

Source: ECWRPC 2004 and Wisconsin DOA, \*Town of Neenah Comprehensive Plan, 2009.

### **Population by Age Group**

The Town of Neenah continues to have a slightly older population than either Winnebago County or the State of Wisconsin (Table 3). In 2000 the median age for town residents was 40.6, as compared to 35.4 for the county and 36.0 for the state. Consistent with the aging of America, the median age for all three increased by about three years during the 1990s. Although the town has a smaller percentage of elderly residents than either the county or state, a much higher percentage of its residents are between 35 and 65, indicating a high proportion of well-established families and residents nearing retirement age.

**Table 3  
POPULATION BY AGE GROUP  
2000**

Age Category	Town of Neenah		Winnebago County		Wisconsin	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5 Years	124	4.67%	9,364	5.97%	342,340	6.38%
5 - 19 Years	645	24.28%	33,590	21.43%	1,189,753	22.18%
20 - 64 Years	1,598	60.14%	94,146	60.06%	3,129,029	58.34%
65+ Years	290	10.91%	19,663	12.54%	702,553	13.10%
Total	2,657	100.00%	156,763	100.00%	5,363,675	100.00%
Median Age	40.6		35.4		36.0	

Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The Town of Neenah Park Board has identified the following goals and objectives, which are intended to serve as a guide for the type of park and recreation system residents of the town would enjoy. The goals are stated as desirable conditions to strive for in the future. They are common ideals that can be achieved through the actions of government leaders, private organizations, and individual citizens. Objectives specify in greater detail how these desired goals can be achieved. Together, the goals and objectives provide a basis for establishing Town policy regarding the planning, acquisition and future development of park and recreation facilities.

**GOAL: TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A COMMUNITYWIDE SYSTEM OF PARKS, TRAILS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION FACILITIES THAT WILL PROVIDE ALL RESIDENTS OF THE TOWN OF NEENAH WITH ADEQUATE FACILITIES.**

**Objectives:**

- Provide park, trail and recreation facilities that are convenient to areas of concentrated residential development.
- Ensure that newly developed residential areas are provided with adequate and accessible park, trail and recreation facilities.
- Provide a wide variety of recreational activities that will serve the residents of Town of Neenah on a year-round basis.
- Improve existing park, trail and recreation facilities to meet community standards and needs.
- To the extent possible, provide safe and adequate access to all community park, trail and recreation areas.

**GOAL: TO CONSERVE, PROTECT AND BEAUTIFY OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE TOWN AND SURROUNDING ENVIRONS.**

**Objectives:**

- Ensure that environmental and aesthetic qualities of the area are considered when planning for park and recreation development.
- Preserve and maintain natural drainageways and other natural resource areas in and around the town and, where possible, utilize these areas for appropriate recreational development.
- Maintain and improve the quality of water resources in the town.

**GOAL: TO ENSURE THAT OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES ARE DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS, INCLUDING THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF ELDERLY AND HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS.**

**Objectives:**

- Encourage involvement by individual citizens as well as special interest groups in developing the open space and recreation plan.
- Encourage participation by all residents, particularly those who are elderly and handicapped, at Park Board meetings.
- Design accessible active and passive recreational areas and park facilities which can be utilized by elderly and handicapped citizens.

**GOAL: TO ENCOURAGE COOPERATION WITH ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES, THE NEENAH SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND LOCAL GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO MAXIMIZE THE COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF PROVIDING OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.**

**Objectives:**

- Work jointly to avoid unnecessary duplication of facilities and seek equitable ways of sharing the burden for acquiring, developing, and maintaining parks and other recreational facilities.
- Encourage cooperative community/school projects to improve and expand indoor and outdoor recreational facilities at existing and future school sites.
- Solicit the support of community groups and service organizations as a way of funding improvements benefiting residents of the town.

## **RECREATIONAL RESOURCES**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES**

The natural resource base is a major determinant of potential physical and economic uses of the land. The preservation and management of these resources is important in sustaining economic uses of the land as well as maintaining the quality of life enjoyed by the town residents. Ignoring the role environmental characteristics play in determining the suitability of lands to support various types of development can also result in cost inefficiencies not only for the individual landowner but also to the local unit of government in providing services. Among the most important environmental resources in the Town of Neenah are topography and bedrock, soils, floodplains, and wetlands. Although development in wetlands and floodplains is strictly regulated, it is also advantageous to discourage development of woodland areas, steep slopes, areas of high bedrock and poor soils, and other sensitive areas, which provide important environmental benefits to the community and are more costly to develop. The conversion of farmland to other uses also has long-term environmental effects as well as economic implications.

#### **Topography and Bedrock**

The town's location within the Eastern Ridges and Lowlands geomorphic subdivision results in a topography that is generally flat with some fluctuations in the bedrock surface. Landforms of the town are remnants of the last glacial event which ended about 11,000 years ago and, although glacial deposits in some areas are between 40 and 80 feet deep, bedrock outcroppings are present in the town. In areas where bedrock exists within 60 inches of the surface, over 538 acres in the town, construction of buildings and installation of utilities generally requires costly and extensive construction techniques to be implemented. Although these areas often offer no particular attractiveness for park development, they can be well suited for parkland compared to other types of land use because most recreational facilities require little or no bedrock excavation.

#### **Soils**

Soils support the physical base for development within the town. Those exhibiting characteristics such as slumping, compaction, erosion, and/or high water tables place certain limits on development. Severe soil limitations do not necessarily indicate areas that cannot be developed but, like bedrock, indicate more extensive construction measures may have to be taken to prevent damage to the land or structures. These construction measures generally increase the costs of utilities and developments. About 75 percent of the town's area is underlain by soils with severe limitations for many types of development, including those areas where a high water table restricts the use of conventional on-site waste disposal facilities.

Another factor that needs to be considered in the Town's attempt to preserve its rural character is to identify soils that are highly productive for agricultural purposes. Keeping these areas as viable farming operations is a good way to help ensure that open space remains throughout the town. About 28 percent of the town's land area is considered to be highly productive agricultural land.



## **Floodplains**

About 716 acres of land is designated as floodplain or floodway in the Town of Neenah. Based on the revised Flood Insurance Rate Map for the unincorporated portions of Winnebago County, this acreage includes lands along the Neenah Slough and the shores of Lake Winnebago. Since these areas are susceptible to flooding, they are considered unsuitable for development due to potential health risks and property damage. Further protection of these lands is provided by Winnebago County's floodplain zoning ordinance, Section 17.21, which requires certain land use controls in designated flood hazard areas.

## **Wetlands**

Wetlands occupy large areas of land in the Town of Neenah. Larger areas classified by WDNR as wetlands total 358 acres while 33 additional wetland sites smaller than five acres have also been identified. Wisconsin Wetland Inventory Maps, prepared by WDNR, indicate major wetlands are found along the Lake Winnebago shoreline, the Neenah Slough, and other streams in the town. A large wetland tract also exists in the northern portion of the town north of Larsen Road.

Wetlands are important environmental features that provide many important functions and values to the ecosystem and drainage patterns in the Town of Neenah. They provide valuable wildlife habitat, scenic open spaces, flood water retention, and groundwater discharge areas. Wetlands also act as a natural filter for nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen and provide buffer zones for adjacent shorelines and stream banks. Protection of wetlands is especially critical in the Town of Neenah because the generally flat topography magnifies their importance for storm water management purposes.

Local, state, and federal regulations place limitations on the development and use of wetlands and shorelands. Winnebago County's Shoreland District Zoning Ordinance, Section 17.20, regulates shoreland use and development within 300 feet of the high water mark of navigable streams, rivers or to "the landward side of the floodplain, whichever distance is greater" and shoreland use and development within 1,000 feet of lakes, ponds or flowages. Section 17.22 of the county's zoning ordinance describes permitted uses of wetlands, some of which include development of public and private parks and the cultivation of agricultural crops. WDNR regulates the placement of structures and other alterations below the ordinary high water mark of navigable streams and lakes. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has authority over the placement of fill materials in virtually all wetlands of five acres or greater. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) incorporates wetland preservation criteria into its crop price support programs. Prior to placing fill or altering wetland resources, the appropriate agencies must be contacted for authorization.

Setting aside wetlands and floodplains, which often co-exist, for public open space not only preserves areas with important environmental values for passive recreational opportunities, it also has minimal effect on the town's potential tax base because it is removing from the tax roll land with greatly restricted development potential. In fact, studies have shown that increases in the value of lands adjacent to these protected areas often more than offset the value of the land set aside for open space.

## NATURAL FEATURES

Lake Winnebago is the Town of Neenah's most noted physiographic feature. The Neenah Slough and various other intermittent and perennial streams are scattered throughout the town. As indicated earlier, these drainage corridors and tracts of wetlands provide opportunities for open space planning.

### Lake Winnebago

Lake Winnebago, with over 137,000 acres of water surface, is the largest lake in Wisconsin and one of its most valuable recreational resources. The lake provides nearly unlimited boating opportunities and access to the Upper Pool lakes, the Upper Fox and Wolf Rivers. The fishery resource of Lake Winnebago is quite diverse. Walleye, perch, sauger and white bass are the most popular sport fish present. The annual sturgeon spearing season in February provides a unique experience for anglers from across the state. Lake Winnebago and the other pool lakes are also major waterfowl nesting and resting areas.

The Lake Winnebago shoreline in the Town of Neenah is developed with year-round and seasonal homes. With the exception of a 50' lot on Rainbow Beach Road that includes a drainageway, the Town owns no frontage on the lake and limited potential exists for acquiring any. Fresh Air Park, a small park which provides access to the lake in the town, is owned and maintained by the City of Neenah.

## RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The Town of Neenah maintains three park sites, encompassing 49.2 acres, which are well distributed in the town (Table 4 and Figure 1). A characteristic of these sites is that they are located in or near each of the town's nodes of residential development. About six acres of open play area is also available for recreational use at the 8.5-acre Lakeview School site. In addition to Fresh Air Park, several other park sites maintained by the City of Neenah are convenient to many town residents.

**Table 4**  
**EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION ACREAGE**

Recreation Area	Town Parks	City Parks	School Grounds
Mahler Park	25.8		
Keating Park	6.3		
Franzoi Park	8.1		
Herziger Conservancy	9.0		
Lakeview School			6.0*
Fresh Air Park		1.7	
TOTAL	49.2	1.7	6.0

\* Area available for recreational use

## Mahler Park

Mahler Park, at 25.8 acres the largest park site in the Town of Neenah, is located in the southeastern portion of the town (Figure 2). Access to the park is provided by South Park Avenue. Mahler Park is designed to serve community park needs. Since the town adopted its open space plan, five tournament-quality soccer fields, a new pavilion/restroom building, and two volleyball courts have been constructed. Other facilities include a pair of unlighted tennis courts, a fenced softball/youth baseball field, fenced baseball field, play apparatus, sandbox, and picnic facilities. A man-made sledding hill in the eastern portion of the park provides winter recreational opportunities. A loop drive through the park has been upgraded and expanded to provide parking for nearly 200 vehicles. The area is now defined by large boulders, replacing the deteriorated horizontal power poles that previously had lined the parking area. Other support facilities include a well, a storage building, and several security lights. Future plans call for the expansion and upgrade of play equipment and picnic facilities.



## Keating Park

Located in the southwestern portion of the town, the 6.3-acre Keating Park primarily provides neighborhood recreational opportunities (Figure 3). Vehicular access to the park's new asphalt 23-car parking lot is available from Klompen Court while an asphalt pathway on an easement between the park and Woodside Court provides pedestrian access to residents in the developed area north of the park. The site's southern portion is heavily wooded with several mature hardwood specimens interspersed among the second growth timber. A trail with scattered picnic sites weaves through the wooded area. Other development includes a fenced little league ball diamond, play apparatus, sandbox, volleyball court, well, storage building, security lights, and a port-a-toilet available during summer months.



## **Franzoi Park**

Franzoi Park is an 8.1-acre facility which primarily serves residents in the northwestern portion of the Town of Neenah (Figure 4). The site is located south of Oakridge Road, with direct access from Radcliff Road. Unlike the Town's other two park sites, which are located in areas that are relatively flat, a feature of Franzoi Park is the presence of subtle topographic changes. The park's development is concentrated in the northwestern part of the site. Facilities include a ball field with backstop and sideline fencing, play apparatus, sandbox, volleyball court, shelter with storage, and a well. A mowed trail generally follows the edge of the park and provides access to those portions of the park maintained in their natural condition. Adequate parking is available on the streets adjacent to the park. A port-a-toilet is available during summer months.



## **Lakeview School**

About six acres of land area is available for recreational activity at Lakeview School, an elementary school operated by the Neenah School District. The site, which is near Mahler Park, is located on County Road A in the southeastern portion of the town. Facilities include two soccer fields, a ball diamond with backstop, a variety of swings, slides and climbers, and a paved area for basketball and other schoolyard court games.

## **Fresh Air Park**

Owned and maintained by the City of Neenah, this 1.7-acre site is located on the shore of Lake Winnebago along Maple Lane in the town. The park provides swimming and picnic opportunities and serves as a winter access to the lake.

## Herziger Conservancy Park

This newly developed 9.0 acre site is located on the corner of County Hwy A and South Park Ave. The conservancy was built with a wet detention pond and a future area for prairie grasses, wildflowers, and wetland plantings to the south. The pond will help reduce the urban non-point source of storm water pollution, including Total Suspended Solids (TSS) and Total Phosphorus (TP), prior to discharge into Lake Winnebago. The Town of Neenah Stormwater Utility funded this part of the project. The remaining park property is being developed as part of a Stewardship Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Resources, where a small parking lot and trails are planned as future projects along with the elimination of invasive species and a nature program with the help from nearby Neenah Elementary schools as part of developing the park.



**Map 5**  
**EXISTING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**  
**Town of Neenah**

## **RECREATIONAL NEEDS**

Park and recreation needs may include the need for additional parkland to accommodate new facilities, the need for additional parks in areas where new residential growth is occurring, or the need for new or improved park facilities and equipment. While recreation standards can be used to identify these needs, it is generally more appropriate to place emphasis on citizen input in communities the size of the Town of Neenah.

### **LAND NEEDS**

Land demand standards of 10 acres of publicly owned open space for every thousand residents provides a useful barometer for determining whether a community has adequate parkland to meet the recreational needs of its residents. These standards suggest a present need of about 30 acres. With nearly 50 acres of parkland and school grounds available, it appears that the Town of Neenah presently has adequate park and recreational land to meet existing and future needs.

### **LOCATIONAL NEEDS**

Major physical and man-made barriers that restrict safe and convenient pedestrian movement between various areas of the community are the prime consideration in assessing locational needs in smaller communities. For planning purposes, barriers divide communities into neighborhoods, each which ideally should have its own park. In the Town of Neenah the most significant barriers are U.S. 41, County Road JJ and County Road A. Along with the City of Neenah, these barriers divide the town into four neighborhoods, each of which presently has one of the town's four recreational sites. From a planning perspective, these sites do an effective job of meeting locational needs, particularly since each site is in close proximity to its neighborhood's most densely developed residential areas. Additionally, Neenah's Armstrong High School and adjacent Memorial Park are near the geographic center of the town. Thus, unlike many outlying areas, most Town of Neenah residents are within convenient walking distance of a park site.

### **FACILITY NEEDS**

Park sites are not only well distributed in the Town of Neenah but attempts have been made to replicate some types of facility development, particularly those facilities designed to accommodate activities typically associated with neighborhood parks or playgrounds. Those types of facilities found at only one of the three park sites are generally expected to fulfill community park needs. Collectively, a good range of recreational opportunities exists for Town of Neenah residents.

Some recreational opportunities, however, remain unavailable or in limited supply in the town. There is also additional facility development that can be undertaken to more fully take advantage of unique site features, expand existing opportunities, or improve the safety, aesthetics, and maintainability of present parks. Providing safer accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians

wishing to travel to parks and other destinations in the town is another growing need. Acquiring a site high in natural qualities where outdoor education and passive recreational opportunities could be emphasized is another identified need. Improvements needed to expand recreational opportunities and augment present facilities in existing parks are identified as recommendations in the following section. The town will continue to be vigilant in taking care that upgrades to its existing park facilities as well as new facilities and improvements are in compliance with ADA requirements for handicapped-accessibility.

## **PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

The plan recommendations are intended to upgrade the Town of Neenah's recreation system by increasing the diversity of facilities available and by upgrading and expanding existing facilities. Some of the proposals may not be feasible in the near future, but they represent courses of action that should be taken if the opportunity or need arises. Proposals that are feasible for implementation within the next few years are included in the Town's five-year action program while other long-range projects are also identified. Plan proposals should be reviewed annually based on public input to respond to changing needs of the community or take advantage of unforeseen opportunities.

Although the town currently has enough land set aside for recreational use to accommodate its population, some facilities are lacking, in short supply, outdated, or not particularly user-friendly. To establish a community-wide recreation system that provides a wide variety of accessible recreational activities to all segments of the town, the following improvements are recommended for existing and potential sites:

### **Mahler Park**

With the development of a major soccer complex capable of hosting tournaments as well as the construction of a major pavilion with flush restroom facilities where large groups can be accommodated, Mahler Park has become a significant community park. Although paved off-street parking remains at a premium during major events, overflow parking on adjacent mowed areas helps meet the heavy demand. As the park's landscaping matures, the park can be expected to become an increasingly attractive destination for recreationalists. The following recommendations are proposed to upgrade Mahler Park:

- Additional picnic tables, some with shade canopies, and grills should be installed primarily in the area adjacent to the proposed pavilion.
- The existing play equipment should be replaced with new equipment that meets safety standards. New equipment has been added, but some of the old equipment remains. For safety purposes, all of the equipment now has a base area of sand or pea gravel.
- An additional volleyball court has recently been developed. Lighting to facilitate night use of both volleyball courts should be considered.



- A small shelter and picnic facilities should be considered for the area directly south of the filled-in quarry pond. This structure could serve as the registration area for soccer tournaments. This is planned as a future project.
- Consideration should be given to lighting the ball diamonds and tennis courts to facilitate evening use. This is planned as a future project.
- Maintenance of the tennis court surface needs to be planned as a future project. As an alternative the Town needs to make a decision on keeping the tennis courts and spending the money to resurface them or converting the area to another use, i.e., basketball courts or additional parking.
- A landscaping program should be initiated. Particular emphasis should be given to establishing additional shade trees in the picnic area. Because of the shallow depth to bedrock found on the site, material from the sledding hill could be used to create strategically placed planting berms. Trees that have a deep tap root, such as most oak species, should be avoided. Recommended shade trees include red maple, red and white ash, and little leaf linden. White and red pine and white spruce are coniferous species that could be expected to do well on the site. Hawthorn and flowering crabapple varieties are smaller ornamental trees which would be suited to the somewhat drier conditions found on the berms. This is planned as a future project.

## **Keating Park**

Keating Park is primarily a neighborhood park that serves the needs of residents of the surrounding area. Unlike Mahler Park, it would be inappropriate to extend use into the dusk hours by lighting facilities such as the ball diamond, which would be detrimental to nearby residences. There are, however, a number of actions that should be taken to improve this park:

- Additional play equipment should be installed to complement the existing swing set and sandbox. This is planned as a future project.
- Selective clearing of understory trees to expose mature specimen trees and create a more inviting picnic area should continue to be undertaken and additional picnic facilities provided.
- Bark chips should be considered for trail development in densely shaded areas. This is planned as a future project.
- A small basketball court with a north-south orientation should be considered in the open area north of the present storage building. This is planned as a future project.
- The existing volleyball court should be improved with a sand base and a permanent net installed. This is planned as a future project.
- The ball diamond fences should be repaired and upgraded.

## **Franzoi Park**

Like Keating Park, Franzoi Park primarily serves the needs of residents of the surrounding area. The following actions should be taken to improve this park:

- Additional play apparatus should be installed in the area near the present play equipment.
- Although the ball diamond is not used for organized play, an outfield fence should be considered to prevent batted balls from being lost in the adjacent ditch and wooded areas. This is planned as a future project.
- A small basketball court should be constructed. This is planned as a future project.
- Measures should continue to be taken to control brush growth in and along the drainage ditch. This is an ongoing project.
- A security light should be installed in the vicinity of the shelter building. This is planned as a future project.
- Consideration should be given to establishing native wildflowers in strategic areas along the perimeter of the park. This is planned as a future project.
- Repairs and maintenance on the shelter/storage building is an ongoing project.

## **Other Recommendations**

In addition to recommendations for specific parks, there are other actions the Town of Neenah should pursue to ensure that the recreational needs of its residents continue to be met in the future and that its natural resources are preserved and protected. These include:

1. The Town will continue to take steps to ensure that convenient recreational facilities are provided in new areas of concentrated residential development. An appropriate measure is the new the town ordinance requiring impact fees for new development specifically for park acquisition and development purposes.
2. The Town should acquire or obtain limited public use easements along selected drainage corridors for storm water management and off-road trail development.
3. The Town should continue to work closely with the City of Neenah and the Neenah School District to mutually maximize available recreational facilities and opportunities.
4. The Town should continue to identify projects that can utilize the potential funding and manpower available from local service groups and organizations.

5. As major town roads are upgraded, paved shoulders should be provided and striped to promote and encourage bicycling. The Town is working with Winnebago County to provide these accommodations along CTH A, a heavily used bicycle commuter route, as well as on other county highways passing through the town.
6. The Town's trail committee should continue its work on developing a comprehensive trail system and trail linkages, specifically with the CB trail expansion (Clayton Ave./Larsen Rd.) in the Town of Clayton, as well as the Fox Cities Paper Trail.
7. The Town should initiate long-term partnerships with adjacent municipalities.

### **ACTION PROGRAM**

Projects the Park Board would like to see the Town of Neenah undertake during the next several years are listed on the following pages. The projects emphasize the provision of additional facilities at existing recreational sites. Many of these projects are eligible to receive matching funds through WDNR's Stewardship Program. Others may qualify for grants through other programs offered by various State agencies. Accompanying cost estimates are based on best available information; more refined estimates should be determined prior to budgeting for specific projects. For certain projects, however, involvement by individuals and support groups and organizations will be critical.

**FIVE-YEAR ACTION PROGRAM  
2010-2014**

<b>Mahler Park</b>		<b>Action Year</b>					
	<b>Estimate Cost</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>LR</b>
Install 25 additional picnic tables	\$5,000		X				
Construct shade canopies (2-4)	8,000	X					
Install additional volleyball court	4,000			X			
-volleyball court lighting	6,000						X
Construct small shelter east of parking	40,000			X			
Construct basketball court	18,000		X				
Re-install Eagle Scout project (merry-go-round)	1,000	X					
Light softball/youth baseball diamond	35,000						X
Light baseball diamond	50,000						X
Tennis court resurfacing	15,000						X
Tennis court lighting	10,000						X
Landscaping -Phase I	10,000					X	
-Phase II	10,000						X
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$212,000</b>						

<b>Keating Park</b>		<b>Action Year</b>					
	<b>Estimate Cost</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>LR</b>
Install additional play equipment	\$33,000		X				
Lighting ball diamond	35,000					X	
Selective clearing of understory trees	1,500	X					
Install additional picnic facilities	2,000		X				
Install bark chips on trail	----		X				
Construct small basketball court	8,000						X
Construct volleyball court	4,000				X		
Repair/upgrade ball diamond fencing	8,000	X					
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$91,500</b>						

<b>Franzoi Park</b>		<b>Action Year</b>					
	<b>Estimate Cost</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>LR</b>
Install additional play equipment	\$15,000						X
Install outfield fence	8,000			X			
Construct small basketball court	8,000						X
Install security light near shelter	1,500			X			
Establish native flower areas along trail	2,000			X			
Institute a brush control system in wooded area	----		X				
Establish native wildflowers along trail	5,000		X				
Remedial maintenance of storage bldg	5,000	X					
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$44,500</b>						

<b>Other Recommendations</b>		<b>Action Year</b>					
	<b>Estimate Cost</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>LR</b>
Develop an off-road trail network plan as a component of the open space plan		X					
Phase I implementation	\$50,000				X		
Phase II implementation	50,000						X
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>						

Herziger Conservancy Park		Action Year					
	Estimate Cost	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	LR
Establish prairie field	\$14,000	X					
Install small parking lot	5,000	x					
Develop woodchip trail system	3,000		X				
Develop boardwalk trail system	75,000					X	
Create 2 picnic areas	1,500			X			
Eliminate invasive species	----		X				
Develop nature program with Neenah School District elementary students.	500					X	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$99,000</b>						

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**TOTAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:                   \$547,000**

2010 Projects:                   \$42,500

2011 Projects:                   66,000

2012 Projects:                   57,000

2013 Projects:                   54,000

2014 Projects:                   120,500

**Five-Year Subtotal:                   \$340,000**

**Long Range Projects:                   \$207,000**

**RESOLUTION NUMBER 2010-05**

**ADOPTION OF THE TOWN OF NEENAH OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Town of Neenah has requested that the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission provide assistance in updating its comprehensive open space and recreation plan, and

WHEREAS, the open space and recreation plan is intended to serve as an ancillary component of the Town's community development plan, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Neenah Park Board and East Central Planning have worked closely to encourage active public participation in the preparation of this plan, and

WHEREAS, adoption of the plan is required for the Town of Neenah to become eligible for cost sharing aid programs administered by the State of Wisconsin.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE NEENAH TOWN BOARD THAT:

the *Town of Neenah Open Space and Recreation Plan* be adopted as the approved recreation plan for the Town of Neenah.

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Schmeichel, Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robin Coburn, Clerk

Map 2

**MAHLER PARK**

Scale: 1"=200'

25.8 acres

(Need Map)



Map 3

**KEATING PARK**

Scale: 1"=100'

5.3 acres

Need Map)

Map 4

**FRANZOI PARK**

Scale: 1"=100'

7.1 acres

Need Map)

Map 5

**HERZIGER CONSERVANCY PARK**

Scale: 1"=100'

9 acres

Need Map)