

CHAPTER 8

PARK AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

The Park District, which serves 6,500 people and covers an area of 36 square miles, has a unique opportunity to be creative and visionary in developing and managing a Park and Open Space system. With over 82% of the Park District in agricultural land use, and because of its location in the region and accessibility to the transportation network, new residential development within the Park District boundaries is expected to grow rapidly over the next 10 to 20 years. Presently, over 5,000 acres of land are either under construction or in the planning stages for residential development. It is projected that the population in ten years will exceed 20,000 people, an increase of over 200%.

With the level of development projected within the Park District boundaries, the District as a

partner with the Village of Hampshire can determine the form, quality, and character of this new development and the entire community. Rather than Park and Open Space being a result or remnant of new development, new development can be the result of a Park and Open Space system. Sufficient size, location, and the number of parks to meet the needs of residents can be established early in the planning process. Open Space can be preserved to protect natural resources and provide a system of Greenways

The Park District is at a critical juncture in determining its future. With this Plan, the Park District can determine its future that accomplishes its Mission.

Park and Open Space Master Plan

The Park and Open Space Master Plan as illustrated in Figure 8-1, provides the Hampshire Township Park District with a framework for growth over the next decade and beyond. The Plan establishes a system of Parks and Open Space that meets the District's mission...*to provide recreational, educational and cultural opportunities that improve the quality of life through a responsive, efficient and creative park and recreation system. The District shall balance quality recreational facilities and programs while protecting parks, natural resources and open spaces for the benefit of present and future generations.*

The Plan is based upon a number of key elements that have been discussed in prior Chapters. These elements that make-up the plan includes the following:

PARK LAND/OPEN SPACE PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS

Open space, in its broadest sense, includes land to serve parks and recreation, conservation and protection, and community shaping functions.

The Plan identifies Open Space according to its function or use. The three primary functions are:

- **Recreation Function** ~ to provide recreation resources
- **Conservation and Protection Function** ~ to preserve natural resources
- **Shaping Function** ~ to structure the form of community development

Recreation Function

The Plan identifies land used for recreation according to the following categories:

Existing Parks:

These include three parks – Seyller Park, Bruce Ream Memorial Park, and Dorothy J. Schmidt Memorial Park, totaling 34.71 acres. All three parks serve neighborhood park functions, while two parks – Seyller Park and Bruce Ream Memorial Park – serve community park functions.

Proposed Parks:

Based on the proposed development plans for four projects, a total of seven parks are to be donated to the Park District, totaling 230.01 acres. Six of these parks - Prairie Ridge, Oakstead, and Tuscany Woods - will function as both neighborhood and community parks. One park in Tamms Farm will function as a neighborhood park.

**FIGURE 8-1: PARK AND OPEN
SPACE MASTER PLAN**

Park/Schools	Functions			Acreages			
	Neighborhood Park	Community Park	Conservancy Park	Neighborhood Park	Community Park	Conservancy Park	Total Acreage
EXISTING DISTRICT PARKS							
Bruce Ream Park	●	●		4.00 ac.	9.97 ac.		13.97 ac.
Seyller Park	●	●		5.00 ac.	12.59 ac.		17.59 ac.
Dorothy Schmidt Park	●			3.15 ac.			3.15 ac.
TOTAL EXISTING DISTRICT PARKS				12.15 ac.	22.56 ac.		34.71 ac.
PROPOSED DISTRICT PARKS							
PRAIRIE RIDGE							
Community Park 12	●	●		4.00 ac.	8.25 ac.		12.25 ac.
Community Park 14	●	●		10.00 ac.	29.40 ac.		39.40 ac.
Community Park 16	●	●		8.00 ac.	19.75 ac.		27.75 ac.
Community Park 17	●	●		8.00 ac.	20.89 ac.		28.89 ac.
OAKSTEAD							
Community Park 24	●	●	●	10.00 ac.	51.70 ac.	30.00 ac.	91.70 ac.
Tuscany Woods Park	●	●		7.00 ac.	21.40 ac.		28.40 ac.
Tamms Farm Park	●			1.62 ac.			1.62 ac.
Ream Park Addition		●			15.13 ac.		15.13 ac.
TOTAL PROPOSED DISTRICT PARKS				48.62 ac.	166.52 ac.	30.00 ac.	245.14 ac.
ADDITIONAL PROPOSED DISTRICT PARKS							
PRAIRIE RIDGE							
Park 8	●			3.95 ac.			3.95 ac.
OAKSTEAD							
Park 1	●			6.36 ac.			6.36 ac.
Park 7	●			2.06 ac.			2.06 ac.
Brier Hill Crossings Park	●	●		5.00 ac.	12.00 ac.		17.00 ac.
TOTAL ADDITIONAL PROPOSED DISTRICT PARKS				17.37 ac.	12.00 ac.		29.37 ac.
TOTAL EXISTING/PROPOSED/ADDITIONAL PROPOSED PARKS				78.14 ac.	201.08 ac.	30.00 ac.	309.22 ac.
FUTURE DISTRICT PARKS							
Future Park 1	●			6.00 ac.			6.00 ac.
Future Park 2	●	●		5.00 ac.	26.00 ac.		31.00 ac.
Future Park 3	●			6.00 ac.			6.00 ac.
Future Park 4	●	●		5.00 ac.	26.00 ac.		31.00 ac.
TOTAL FUTURE DISTRICT PARKS				22.00 ac.	52.00 ac.		74.00 ac.
TOTAL EXISTING/PROPOSED/ADDITIONAL PROPOSED/FUTURE PARKS				100.14 ac.	253.08 ac.	30.00 ac.	383.22 ac.
EXISTING SCHOOLS SITES							
Hampshire Elementary School	●			3.72 ac.			3.72 ac.
Hampshire Middle/High School		●			26.55 ac.		26.55 ac.
PROPOSED SCHOOL SITES							
Elementary School	●			19.00 ac.			19.00 ac.
High School		●			100.00 ac.		100.00 ac.
TOTAL EXISTING AND PROPOSED SCHOOL SITES				22.72 ac.	126.55 ac.		149.27 ac.

Table 8-1: Summary of Existing/Proposed/Additional Proposed/Future Parks and School Sites

There is also 15.13 acres adjacent to Bruce Ream Memorial Park that may be donated to enlarge the Park. The total Proposed Parks will represent 245.14 acres.

Additional Proposed Parks:

In addition to the above proposed parks, it is recommended that the Park District acquire (through developer donation) four neighborhood parks. Three of these parks are designated as Private Parks, and include Park 8 (3.952 acres) in Prairie Ridge, and Park 1 (6.36 acres) and Park 7 (2.06 acres) in Oakstead. The fourth proposed neighborhood park site is a 5.0 acre site in Brier Hill Crossings. These four proposed neighborhood parks total 17.37 acres, and would satisfy neighborhood park needs in the four locations lacking neighborhood park service areas. It is also recommended that the Park District acquire (through developer donation) an additional community park of 12 acres in Brier Hill Crossings. Altogether, these Additional Proposed Parks represent 29.37 acres.

Future Parks:

In the service area analyses in Chapter 4, the need for four neighborhood parks and two community parks were identified based on the potential of 12 developments in the pre-application process. Altogether, the four future neighborhood parks would total 22.00 acres and the two community parks would total 52.00 acres, equally approximately 74.00 acres of future parks.

Existing School Sites:

Two school sites exist – Hampshire Elementary School and Hampshire Middle/High School, totaling 30 acres. Although not identified specifically as serving

neighborhood and/or community park functions, they do provide recreation facilities that supplement the Park District needs and facilities.

Proposed School Sites:

Two school sites are proposed – an Elementary School site of 19 acres and a High School site of 100 acres.

Table 8-1 identifies the categories of park and school land existing, proposed, additional proposed, and future. Altogether, the Park District will eventually own and maintain slightly more than 383 acres, including 30 acres of Conservancy Parks. Based on a projected population of 25,700 (generated by the proposed and future developments plus existing), the ratio of park land (not including the conservancy parks) to population will equal 14.90 acres per 1,000 population.

Conservation and Protection Function

Conservation open space protects and maintains natural resources. The Park and Open Space Master Plan identifies Open Space as providing for the conservation and protection of natural resources.

Those resources comprising this function include:

- water bodies and water courses
- groundwater recharge areas
- woodlands/forests
- floodplains (100 year and 500 year)
- natural areas
- wetlands
- storm-water management facilities (detention and retention ponds)

Besides conserving and protecting natural resources, Open Space for conservation provides a wide range of opportunities, including:

- Providing education and interpretation programs of natural areas and resources
- Protecting wild life habitats
- Protecting native flora

In addition to Open Space providing a conservancy and protection function, the Open Space serves a dual function as Greenways and accomplishes the following objectives:

- Linking parks together to form a cohesive park, recreation, and open space system;
- Emphasizing harmony with the natural environment;
- Allowing for uninterrupted and safe pedestrian movement between residential areas, parks, schools, forest preserves, and downtown/commercial areas, throughout the Park District; and
- Providing residents with a resource based outdoor recreation opportunity and experience, including:
 - hiking
 - walking
 - bicycling
 - jogging
 - cross-country skiing
 - horseback riding
 - fishing
 - bird-watching

Greenways should be a minimum of 200 to 250 feet wide so they accommodate trails without endangering the resources to be protected.

Creating and maintaining Open Space also provides economic benefits by enhancing the value of individual properties.

Another element of the Open Space system identified in the Master Plan is the utilization of pipeline easements for Greenways. There are over 25 miles (four pipeline corridors) crossing the District from east to west and north to south. The easements are 100 feet in width and provide the opportunity to link numerous areas and facilities within the Park District.

Over 100 acres of Open Space presently exists, with an additional 650 acres designated in the proposed developments, thereby totaling more than 750 acres. The Master Plan proposes over 6,000 acres of Open Space, which represents over 25% of the land within the Park District's boundaries.

Shaping Function

The Park and Open Space Master Plan utilizes Open Space to shape the pattern of suburban development. It is based on the following objectives:

- Open Space promotes the formation of distinct cohesive neighborhoods, which can be served effectively by municipal services and facilities, thus promoting suburban growth into efficient corridors of development and helping to prevent suburban sprawl.
- Open Space defines the boundaries of neighborhoods, districts, or entire communities to maintain distinctive characteristics, thus giving a sense of community identity.
- Open space provides relief from extensive sub-urbanization by preserving elements of the natural environment near developed areas, thus breaking visual monotony by its own contact with development.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail System

Bicycling for transportation and recreation has increased in popularity in recent years. Bicycles are considered an integral part of the transportation system and can be used in place of the automobile. Using non-motorized transportation forms can help reduce traffic congestion, pollution and various other environmental factors. In particular, bicycles offer one of the best opportunities as an alternative transportation mode for shorter trips. Bicycle facilities also provide recreational opportunities, which improve the overall quality of life within a community.

Likewise, walking and jogging are extremely popular activities. All three activities are associated with various health benefits. Trails providing these activities as part of the Open Space/Greenways System can provide linkages between residential areas and a variety of community facilities.

GOALS FOR PLANNING AND PROMOTION OF PEDESTRIAN/BIKE TRAIL SYSTEM

Goals for the planning and design of the Pedestrian/Bike Trail System should consider the following:

- Promote and provide safe, efficient, and coordinated movement within the Park District.
- The system should be coordinated with the County's regional bikeway system.
- Pedestrian and bikeway system should be coordinated with adjacent townships and nearby municipal trail systems.

- Link residential areas of the Park District with employment centers, Village downtown business district, schools, parks, and forest preserves.
- Examine zoning and subdivision development regulations to encourage pedestrian and bicycle trail planning and trail amenities.
- Insure that future right-of-way improvements incorporate bicycle facilities.

PROPOSED PLAN FOR PEDESTRIAN/BIKE TRAIL SYSTEM

The Village of Hampshire's *2004 Comprehensive Land Use Plan* identified potential bicycle routes. The Village's Plan states that these routes are conceptual, and are based on routes proposed by the County along Harmony and French Roads and Brier Hill Crossings and Hennig Roads. The plan emphasizes that these routes provide a framework for trails that can be integrated into a more comprehensive plan developed by the Village.

The Park District needs to play a strong role in the planning and development of the pedestrian/bicycle trail system. As the provider of recreation facilities and programs in the community, the Park District has the responsibility to meet the recreation needs of the residents as provided by the pedestrian/bicycle trail system.

The Park and Open Space Master Plan illustrates a suggested concept for the Pedestrian Bicycle Trail System. It builds upon the Village's framework plan and expands the system to include a continuous network of trails throughout the community as part of the Greenways. The trails provide linkages to all the parks, schools, and the forest preserve. Besides utilizing the Greenways, the trail system

also uses pipeline easements, railroad corridor, and roadway corridors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Park District should take the following actions to promote the Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail System:

- The Park District should coordinate the planning and development of the Trail System with the Village, county, neighboring governmental units, state, and other agencies.
- A Trail System Plan should be adopted as part of the comprehensive plans for both the Park District and the Village.
- Pursue grants for the implementation of the Trail System.
- Incorporate bicycle needs into long range planning efforts and capital development programs.
- Adopt and improve bicycle and pedestrian requirements contained in Village development regulations.
- Establish a process, which provides for routine review of plans for bicycle accommodations.
- Review the adequacy, and improve if necessary, signage and other public information made available to promote safe usage of future facilities.
- Perform a bicycle and pedestrian needs assessment as part of the initial engineering on all local road improvement projects, including new construction, upgrading, and maintenance.
- Work with state and regional transportation agencies as they implement improvement projects in the community.
- Develop effective education programs for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Management of Open Space

A number of techniques are available to the Park District and Village of Hampshire to provide for the continuous preservation and management of open space, whether such open space is part of a residential subdivision, or along an environmentally-sensitive resource. The application of these techniques varies, depending upon the size, purpose of the open space, and entity responsible for maintenance of the land that is preserved. These techniques include:

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

This is probably the most common form of open space management. In the case of Hampshire, there are four public agencies, including the Hampshire Township Park District, the Village of Hampshire, Hampshire Township, and Kane County Forest Preserve District.

In many of the new and planned developments, the Village of Hampshire has presently assumed this role. However, as more open space is dedicated, the Village may want to transfer the open space to other entities.

Although the Park District has not elected to receive such land because of its financial restraints, the District should review its policy if financial resources improve in the future. The Park District would be the most logical public agency to own and manage at least part of the Open Space System

SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICT

A Special Service District is a special, geographically-defined taxing district, where the property owners are taxed at a higher rate to receive a special benefit. The Special Service District would be administered by the Village of Hampshire or the Township. The Special Service District collects an additional tax commensurate with the unique maintenance costs and responsibilities of maintaining and managing the open space. The Village or Township could either contract for or conduct ongoing maintenance of open space areas. This may be the preferred technique for maintaining open space and common areas in many of the Village's new developments.

LAND TRUSTS

A land trust is a private, non-profit organization formed to protect natural resources. Land trusts purchase and accept donations of conservation easements and fee simple land as well as manage their landholdings. The Nature Conservancy, the nation's largest land trust, owns and manages thousands of acres of land in almost every state in the union. A similar organization exists in the Village of Lake Forest, where the Lake Forest Open Lands Association owns and manages over 500 acres of natural areas.

HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATIONS

Homeowners' Associations are non-profit organizations operating under recorded land agreements through which each owner automatically is a member and is subject to a proportionate share of the expenses, such as the management of open space and common areas. Homeowners Associations commonly

maintain entry features, medians, private parks, ponds and wetlands.

In almost all the major new development under construction or in the planning stages in the Village they will have Homeowner's Associations. Where private parks are proposed, these associations will own and maintain them. Where open space is proposed for storm-water management, these facilities will most likely be owned and maintained by the associations.

PRIVATE HOMEOWNERS

Owners of some private lots have a legal responsibility to maintain open space. Usually created at the time of subdivision, some platted lots have permanent open space easements, deed restrictions, covenants or conservation areas that cover a portion of their lot. This open space area may include storm-water management facilities, buffers or specially recognized open spaces such as entry areas, wetlands or tree lines. In many zoning ordinances, the area that is not developed is referred to as "natural area open space." It cannot be developed or disturbed other than management necessary to maintain the property in a natural state in perpetuity. While the homeowner has the open space restriction on their land his/her neighbors, a non-profit or public entity may have the power to enforce the open space limitation to assure the ongoing management of the property.

SPECIAL ASSOCIATIONS

Some special interests groups like athletic associations, garden clubs, Friends of the Parks, historic groups etc. take a special interest in a particular property and may assume the maintenance of the open space.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Conservation easements remove the development potential from property in order to protect it. An agreement is prepared whereby private property owners voluntarily restrict their land from specific activities in exchange for money or donation tax credits. Landowners can manage the easement themselves or they may convey management rights to another organization. Land is kept in private ownership and on local tax rolls. Such easements can take many forms including:

Agricultural Conservation Easement

This is a deed restriction that landowners voluntarily place on their property to protect important resources such as productive farmland, groundwater, surface water, wildlife habitat, historic sites or scenic views. They are used by land-owners to authorize a qualified conservation organization or public agency to monitor and enforce the restrictions set forth in the agreement. They are flexible documents, tailored to the specific property, and may cover a portion or portions of a property. Most agricultural easements are permanent. They may be modified or terminated by a court of law if the land or the neighborhood changes, and the objectives of the easement become impossible to achieve. They also may be terminated by eminent domain proceedings.

Natural Resources or Habitat Protection Easements

These easements are essentially the same as other conservation easements, except that their focus is on the preservation of plant and animal communities that are threatened by human activities. The landowner retains ownership and control of the property, subject to limitations on use and conservation including

development restrictions, removal of flora and fauna, and grading or the disruption of soils.

Transfer of Development Rights

The transfer of development rights is the conveyance of development rights to another parcel of land. Usually this involves relocating potential development from areas where proposed land uses or environmental impacts are considered undesirable to areas that can better accommodate development beyond that for which it is zoned. For example, development potential may be transferred out of a wetland to neighboring non-wetland areas under the same ownership without increasing the overall development potential of the entire parcel. This mechanism is often used to protect environmentally sensitive resources or prime agricultural land.

Purchase of Development Rights

This technique includes the purchase of development rights and allows the landowner to continue farming or to use it for recreation. The price of the development rights is the difference between the value of the land in its agricultural land use and that which the owner could realize by selling it to a developer. This purchase costs less than purchasing the land outright and may provide a tax benefit.

Tax Revenues, Bond Measures and Referenda

A municipality or park district can allocate tax revenues for the protection or acquisition of land. They also can raise money with bond measures, in which the governing agency can issue a certificate of debt, guaranteeing payment of the original investment plus interest by a specified future date. Referenda, the submission of a public proposal to a direct popular vote, can be used to pass a tax increase or bond

measure to raise dollars for land acquisition programs.

Grants

There are many funding and acquisition grants available to help municipalities and park districts achieve their objectives with respect to open space preservation. They include:

- Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Program (OSLAD).
- Natural Areas Acquisition and Development Program (NAAF).
- Open Land Trust (OLT).
- SAFETEA (Formerly Tea-21)
- Bicycle Path Grants Program.

In terms of implementation and management of the Open Space System within the Hampshire Township Park District, it is most likely that a combination of the above techniques will be employed. Whatever combination of management techniques evolve, the Hampshire Township Park District should have a key role. Since the Park District covers the greatest land area in which the Open Space will be located, the Park District should assume the role in at least coordinating use, activities, regulations, and management.