

#### CITY OF TWO RIVERS PARK & OPEN SPACE PLAN 2022

PARK AND OPEN SPACE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF TWO RIVERS

ADVISORY RECREATION BOARD

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THIS PARK AND OPEN SPACES PLAN WAS APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION TO THE TWO RIVERS CITY COUNCIL BY THE TWO RIVERS ADVISORY RECREATION BOARD ON FEBRUARY 8, 2022.

THIS PARK AND OPEN SPACES PLAN WAS ADOPTED BY THE TWO RIVERS CITY ON FEBRUARY 21, 2022.

#### History

The natural resources of the Two Rivers area have continually attracted inhabitants wishing to take advantage of them. The early inhabitants, primarily the Menominee, but also the Ottawa, Chippewa, Winnebago, and Potawatomi tribes, were drawn by the plentiful virgin forests, waterways, and tillable soil; for hunting, fishing, and the cultivation of crops. The first white men to come to the area were fur traders, pioneers, and French-Canadian fishermen who were attracted by such things as the close proximity of the harbor to the fishing banks.

In 1837, Mr. Clark and Mr. Edwards started a commercial fishery utilizing French-Canadian Fisherman. They were able to ship 2,000 barrels of fish to Detroit at a price of \$12.00 a barrel, for total revenue of \$24,000.00.

Also in 1837 a log house and sawmill were erected along the river and lumbering became Two Rivers' primary industry. Tanning, based on the abundant Hemlock resource prospered from 1850 until almost 1900 when the Hemlock was depleted. As the timber resources dwindled and were not replaced, the local people turned to shipbuilding, and furniture-making, using raw materials imported from elsewhere. Two Rivers has always had a strong processing and manufacturing economy. Lumbering, fishing, ship-building, furniture-making, tanning, brick and tile manufacturing, net making, and various other industries have prospered in the city at some time or another.

Two Rivers was incorporated as a village on March 31, 1858, with a city charter being granted on March 18, 1878. In 1925, the city adopted the council-city manager form of government, which it still utilizes, and is one of the oldest cities in the United States with this form of government.

#### **Physiographic Features**

The area's topography was greatly determined by past glacial actions. The great ice sheets scoured out the Lake Michigan basin and left the Two Rivers area as a flat, sandy peninsula. The average elevation of the city is only 17 feet higher than the elevation of Lake Michigan. Topographic relief is provided by the valleys which were cut by the East and West Twin Rivers. These rivers are the principal interior landscape features of the city, and it should be noted that they dissect Two Rivers into three distinct segments. The rivers provide excellent open space corridors through the city, but they are also natural barriers which tend to limit access from one segment of the community to another. Though serious flooding does not occur in the city, large areas to the west and north are swampy, poor soil areas, which are a result of poor drainage.

Another interesting topographic feature is the shoreline of Lake Michigan which extending northward are a series of low sand ridges and shallow valleys paralleling the shoreline formed by the wave action of Lake Michigan at its former higher levels. When the Lake receded due to geologic changes, these formations remained. Point Beach State Forest, immediately north of the city, and Neshotah Park in Two Rivers, preserve these ridges in their natural condition. Similar topographic characteristics are found southwest of the city and this area is being preserved by a non-profit group as a nature study area.

# **Population Characteristics**

The City of Two Rivers has had a varying growth rate since 1900. From 1900 to 1930 the city experienced a sizable expansion from 3,784 persons, in 1900 to 10,183 persons in 1930. The depression and Second World War decades, however, stifled population growth completely and the city gained only 219 people from 1930 to 1940 and actually lost 59 people between 1940 and 1950. The population in 1950 was 10,243 persons. A steady, moderate growth rate characterized Two Rivers in the 1950's decades as it grew to 12,393 persons by 1960. Growth continued in the 1960's but at a slower rate, with the city having a 1970 Census population of 13,553. The city again experienced a loss in population at the 1980 Census with a population of 13,354 persons and a 1990 Census with a population of 13,030. The 2010 Census shows the city of Two Rivers with of population of 11,525. The decline in manufacturing has contributed to this decline. In 2021, the population of the City of Two Rivers showed a slight decline to 11,154.

## **General Land Use Patterns**

The City of Two Rivers is dissected into three segments by the East and West Twin Rivers. These segments have distinctive land use patterns which are noteworthy in considering park and open space needs.

The City is focused principally around the Central Business District (CBD) which is along the major highways going through the city. The CBD still functions as the governmental and commercial center of Two Rivers. The primary employment and industrial centers of Two Rivers were located between the rivers adjacent to the CBD area but have begun to move west along Columbus Street, out along STH 310 and North along STH 42. To the north-northwest of the CBD between the two rivers lies a majority of the City's residential development. The significant continuing trend to locate residences in the area between the rivers is due to such factors as: the availability of developable land, the ease of access to the center of the city, and the desire to locate somewhat away from Lake Michigan and its micro-climatic effects of fog and cooler temperatures. Residential subdivisions west of Forest Avenue and in the vicinity of 45<sup>th</sup> Street have been the locations where most of the new single-family construction have

occurred. The segment of Two Rivers east of the East Twin River contained about one-fifth of the City's residents in 1990 according to the U.S. Census counts. As in the other areas, growth began in the south near the commercial-industrial center and proceeded to the north in subsequent years. With the exception of commercial development on 22<sup>nd</sup> and Lincoln Streets, this segment is mainly residential in character. Neshotah Park, Van Der Brohe Arboretum, Walsh Field, Vietnam Veterans Park and the adjacent State Forest make this part of the city well supplied with open space and recreational land. There is some suitable land available to the north, so it can be assumed that some additional residential growth will occur east of the East Twin River.

The third segment is the area south and west of the West Twin River and harbor area. The area contains industrial and residential development. About one-fourth of the City's 1980 population resided in the area generally bounded by Columbus Street on the west, Madison Street on the east, and Roosevelt Avenue on the south. The area east of Madison Street is primarily industrial and considered part of the CBD-industrial complex on the city. The newer industrial development in the city has occurred along and near Columbus Street. There is little available land for additional residential or industrial development in this segment of the city.



**Inventory of Existing Recreational Facilities** 

With the guiding policies and recreation standards established and the general character of the city described, the next step in the process of developing a Two Rivers Park and Open Space Plan is to study the existing facilities. An urban parks system consists of both neighborhood level parks and playgrounds and community level parks and playfields. The facilities found in the City of Two Rivers have been classified by park types and are described below accordingly. Some of the general characteristics of the park sites are described, followed by a detailed listing of the facilities and special characteristics of each site.

#### **Community Parks**

There are three parks in Two Rivers which have been classified as community parks: Neshotah Park, Washington Park and Zander Park.

Neshotah Park is the principal facility in the City's Park system because of its large size and numerous facilities. The park is located on the east side of Two Rivers adjacent to Lake Michigan. It has an excellent sandy beach nearly three-quarters of a mile long and 200

feet deep at some points. The park site consists of 50 acres, purchased in the early 1920's for about \$12,000.00 and offers a variety of passive and active recreation facilities. Neshotah Park is bordered on the west and north by residential development that consists primarily of single-family structures.





Washington Park is a 7.93 acre park in the center section of Two Rivers. This park was built on the existing football field / track and practice field of the Washington High School location, in 2000. This site consists of half-court basketball, one tennis court, four pickleball courts, and shelter with small concession area, bathrooms, play equipment and a walking trail. Washington Park is bordered by single family housing, condominiums, and apartments

Zander Park is a 22.55 acre park site in the southwest section of Two Rivers. The site is flat and wooded with some wet areas and at present a majority of the site is developed with picnic facilities, basketball court and a dog park. Some active recreation facilities are available with the remainder of the site being a natural area with hiking trails, etc.

#### I. Neshotah Park

(1) 50 acres

(2) Lighted softball diamond

(3) Beach house with concession stand

(4) Tennis Courts

(5) Rotary Pavilion

(6) Horseshoe courts

(7) Play apparatus

(8) Picnic sites

(9) Basketball area

(10) Off-street parking / On-street parking

(11) Three fourths (3/4) miles of sandy beach

(12) 4 shelter buildings

(13) Bike lane

(14) Walking trails

(15) Beach Walking Trail

(16) Boat/Jet Ski Launch

II. Washington Park

- (1) 7.93 acres
- (2) Basketball area

(3) Toilets

(4) Shelter building with small concession area

(5) Play apparatus

(6) Walking Trail

(7) Observation pier

(8) One Tennis Court

(9) Four Pickle Ball Courts

(10) Picnic Sites

(11) Off street parking (paved)

III. Zander Park

(1) 22.55 acres with walking trail

(2) Shelter with toilets

(3) Off-street parking (paved)

(4) Picnic sites

(5) Basketball court

(7) Dog Park





# **Community Playfields**

The City of Two Rivers has one recreation area which has been classified as performing the community playfield function: Walsh Field/Neshotah Park. Walsh Field and the northern portion of Neshotah Park form the playfield in Two Rivers. This site consists of approximately 17.5 acres. Walsh Field is a formal baseball diamond with lighting, and is also used for touch football, flag football and semi pro football in the fall. The northern portion of Neshotah Park offers a lighted softball diamond, tennis courts, a variety of play equipment, and toilet facilities.

I. Walsh Field/Neshotah Park

(1) A combination of Walsh Field and that part of Neshotah Park that is used for play field activities contains approximately 17.5 acres

(2) Lighted baseball diamond with bleachers, press box, and off-street parking are available at Walsh Field.

- (3) Shelter
- (4) Restrooms

(5) Lighted softball diamond, open play field, tennis courts, horseshoe pits, play equipment, toilets, and off-street parking are available at Neshotah Park.

## **Neighborhood Playgrounds**

There are ten sites designated as neighborhood playgrounds spread throughout Two Rivers. With a total acreage of 72.39 acres, the sites average 7.2 acres each; however, some of the acreages include the area devoted to school buildings. Though each site has its own individual characteristics, most sites are relatively flat and treeless and provide the basic facilities of play apparatus for school-aged children, an open space area for free play, and an area for some type of field sports. Four of the ten neighborhood playgrounds are located adjoining elementary or middle schools, which maximizes their usefulness. Two other playgrounds, Neshotah Park and Washington, serve dual purposes since both are part of area community level recreation facilities.

I. Koenig School

(1) 2.88 acres
 (2) Play apparatus
 (3) Off-street parking
 (4) Sidewalk around play area
 (5) Basketball Courts

#### II. Magee School

(1) 6.15 acres

- (2) Off-street parking
- (3) Open play area
- (4) Basketball area
- (5) Play apparatus
- (6) Football / Soccer field
- (7) Storage Shed
- (8) Baseball practice field

III. Riverside Park

- (1) 9.0 acres
- (2) Play apparatus
- (3) Open Play area
- (4) Basketball area (lighted)
- (6) Rest benches
- (7) Off-street parking
- (8) Skate Park
- (9) Walking Path through park
- (10) Bathrooms
- (11) Open Air Shelter



## IV. L.B. Clarke School

- (1) 14.0 acres
- (2) Two ball practice fields
- (3) Football and soccer field
- (4) Off-street parking
- (5) Play apparatus
- (6) Basketball court

IV. Vet's Park

- (1) 4.77 acres
- (2) Off-street parking
- (3) Boat launch with trailer and vehicle parking
- (4) Fish cleaning station
- (5) Toilet building
- (6) Shelter building
- (7) Play apparatus
- (8) River walkway

#### VI. Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park

- (1) 26.16 acres
- (2) Two ball diamonds with fencing, lighting, scoreboards, dugouts, and score booths (Red & White)
- (3) Shelter with concession stand and restrooms
- (4) Off-street parking
- (5) Landscaping and trees planted
- (6) Open Space area for sport programming
- (7) Practice ball diamond
- (8) Play apparatus
- (9) Off-street parking
- (10) Ball diamond with scoreboard and score booth (Purple)
- (11) Youth ball diamond (Gold & Blue)
- (12) Basketball area

VII. Taylor Park

- (1) 0.33 acres
- (2) Shelter with benches
- (3) Play apparatus

#### IX. Neshotah Park

A portion of Neshotah Park (about 6.9 acres) functions as a neighborhood playground. The play facilities are listed under Community Parks-Neshotah Park.

#### **Neighborhood Parks**

A neighborhood park is intended to provide an attractive open space setting for passive recreation for all age groups. There are seven sites designated as such in the city at present. They include Central Park, Lakeshore Park, Harbor View Park, Coast Guard Park, River Walkway, and parts of Zander and Neshotah Parks. These sites are concentrated in the southern part of the city. The five-acre figures for Neshotah and Zander Parks were included in the total neighborhood park acreages, because these parks serve a passive recreation function for their immediate neighborhoods in addition to their community functions. Central, Lakeshore, and Harbor Parks, however, serves primarily as neighborhood parks only.

Central Park serves the few residents of the CB area with an open space island in the urban core. It takes its form from the old village squares so often found in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century villages. The park has benches, fountains, shade trees and flower beds. Also, a band shell for several special events, Summer Concert Series, Cool City Classic Car Show, Bryan Lee Day and the home of the Farmers Market, walks, benches, flower plants, water fountains, and a bandstand. The Park is located on each side of Washington Street with the community center adjacent to the eastern portion. This parcel of land is site of a renovation to include a Seasonal Splash Pad and Ice-Skating Rink.

I. Central Park

- (1) 1.24 acres
  (2) Bandstand
  (3) Benches
  (4) Walkways
  (5) Shade Trees
  (6) Flowers
  (7) Community Christmas tree
- II. Lakeshore Park
  - (1) 6.86 acres
     (2) Play apparatus
     (3) Off-street parking
     (4) Bike and walking path



- III. Coast Guard Park
  - (1) 0.4 acres(2) Benches

IV. Harbor View

- (1) 0.4 acres (2) Benches
- (3) Off-street parking
- (4) Shelter building
- (5) Storage shed
- (6) Scenic walkway

V. River Walkway

- (1) 800 foot long walkway along West Twin River
- (2) Benches
- (3) Staircase

VI. Neshotah Park and Zander Park

A portion of these parks function as a neighborhood park for residents within reasonable walking distance of each park. Their facilities are listed under Community Parks.

## **Other Outdoor Recreation Facilities**

A few facilities in or adjacent to Two Rivers do not fit into the four preceding public park types, but they do meet certain demands for outdoor recreation activities. They are, for the most part, either privately owned or owned by quasi-public groups and are open to the general public. There are five marina facilities, four on the West Twin River (Seagull Marina, Beacon Marine, Stop and Dock) and two on the East Twin River (Rogers Street Fishing Village and Stan's Marina) which offers services to boating and fishing enthusiasts.

The Two Rivers Family Swim Center offers the use of three pools with dressing and toilet facilities, on a membership basis. Woodland Dunes, which is located within and west of the southwestern portion of Two Rivers, is a nature study area which is being acquired by a non-profit group, whose purpose is to preserve the large, wooded area in its natural state. Woodland Dunes offer hiking trails, cross country ski trails, nature center, and a viewing tower. The Van Der Brohe Arboretum is on the Northeast side of Two Rivers. It offers nature walks, art spots and is a bird sanctuary. Picnic Hill is a large recreation/open space area owned by the city which is located just north of Walsh Field. The area is primarily undeveloped woodland, containing walking trails, disc golf course, and picnic area.

Mariners Trail is placed between the West Coast of Lake Michigan and SHT 42. 4.4 miles of paved trail connects the city of Manitowoc to the city of Two Rivers and on to Point Beach State Park. The Ice age trail enters Two Rivers on the Southern side of Columbus and 12 Street, and continues through the city to Point Beach State Forest (include map of ice age trail and Mariner's trail)



A Community Garden was added to the Forest View / Holy Cross Cemetery land in the 2014.

## **Deficiencies and Recommended Plan**

There are three major considerations in measuring the adequacy of existing neighborhood and community-level recreation facilities which form an urban park system. These considerations include: park location, park size, and the number and type of facilities offered in a park. This section will analyze the existing facilities in each park type in relation to the standards presented earlier. General recommendations on park locations and improvements are also included which consider and are compatible with the resource base and development pattern of the community.

# **Community Parks**

## ZANDER

The facilities provided at the existing community parks in Two Rivers seem basically adequate. Neshotah Park and Washington Park have a variety of modern facilities and needs only minor improvements and replacement of facilities and equipment as they may become damaged or obsolete. Neshotah Park users could benefit from additional shelter facility and overall park beautification. Land acquisition should be considered prior to the development of the entire area.

While community parks in Two Rivers would appear to be adequate based on size and number of facilities, the location of the parks in relation to growth areas does present a problem. The growth that has occurred over the years to the north in Two Rivers lies outside of the recommended service area for community parks. The community parks area is outside of the normal service radius of one and one-half miles, and the problem is further accentuated by the barrier-effect the rivers may play for residents in the central segment of the city. The general location of this park should be in the north central or northwest section of the community.

A similar need for a community facility may also emerge in the more distant future for the eastern segment of Two Rivers depending upon residential growth patterns. A potential site along the river would be more desirable. The city should continue to monitor growth trends in this area, as well as the availability of land for another community park.

# **Community Playfield**

Essentially the same situation exists for community playfields in Two Rivers as described previously for community parks. The amount and quality of facilities offered at the sites also seems adequate, especially with the improved lighting and a more efficient use of land at Walsh Field.

The major problem with the community playfields is one of location and the fact that two areas within the city are outside of the service radii of the playfields. The area south of the West Twin River is not within a reasonable distance of a community playfield. This area is, however, served by two facilities classified as neighborhood playgrounds: the Koenig School and Riverside Park sites. Renovation and additional improvements to Riverside Park has helped to meet most of the active recreation needs of this area. The second area outside the service radii of the playfields is the new residential development area of the northern part of the city. This deficiency can be remedied with acquisition and development of the proposed northwest community park-playfield complex.

## **Neighborhood Playground**

## VIETNAM

The abundance of neighborhood playgrounds, both independent and in conjunction with schools is evident in the inventory of existing facilities. This is further substantiated by the fact that the existing acreage (72.39 acres) is over three times the amount required to meet the standard of one and one-half acres per 1000 population.

Neighborhood playgrounds to serve new residential development should be included in the proposed community park-playfield complex. The remaining playground needs centers on improving and expanding the facilities offered at existing sites. Recommendations on specific improvements such as renovation and future construction needs are listed in the following section on the priority listing of projects.

Even though neighborhood playground acreage has been identified as sufficient to meet the need, there may be potential to expand Riverside Playground into a neighborhood park by the acquisition of properties bordered by School Street, 14<sup>th</sup> Street, and the West Twin River (this acquisition would ultimately allow for the extension of the Riverwalk which would ultimately connect the township area with Woodland Dunes).

## **Neighborhood Parks**

The City of Two Rivers has a deficiency in the area of their neighborhood parks. With the development of Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park and that portion of each community park (five acres for each community park), devoted to neighborhood functions the total acreage available (approximately 23 acres), for neighborhood parks is slightly above the recreation standards of one and one-half acres per 1000 population.

However, of great significance is the fact that the entire northwest portion of the city is without neighborhood parks. It is recommended, therefore, that the city establish a neighborhood park in addition to or at least in conjunction with the community park which has also been proposed for the north central or northwest part of the City of Two Rivers. Potential future development site for neighborhood parks in this area are the properties known as Streu property, adjacent to existing City property, and the L.B. Clarke School property.

The long-range need for additional neighborhood parks at the very northern extremes of the city may also emerge depending on residential growth patterns.

## **Summary of Priorities**

Specific priorities for projects consistent with the general recommendations contained in the plan section have been discussed by the Recreation Board and Planning Commission of the City of Two Rivers and are listed below with proposed completion dates. The availability of land, labor, and funding may affect the completion and priority of the proposed projects. Cameras and new self-locking steel doors will be replaced/added at all shelter/restroom buildings throughout the Parks.

## A. Community Parks

#### 1. Neshotah Park

Ongoing	- Landscape, picnic areas, general upkeep of park and facilities
2021	-Phase 1 of 3, playground equipment
2023	-Phase 2 of 3, playground equipment replacement
2024	-Phase 3 of 3, playground equipment replacement

2027	<ul> <li>Construct additional mini-shelter/gazebos facilities at Neshotah Beach. Location TBA.</li> </ul>
2028	<ul> <li>Construct a walkway and boardwalk system that would extend from 22<sup>nd</sup> Street to the northern most breakwaters</li> </ul>
2029	-Develop a Nature trail through the wooded areas
2030-	-Develop Master Plan

#### 2. Zander Park

Ongoing- Landscape, picnic areas, general upkeep of park and facilities

2021	-Playground equipment removed
2026	- Develop the westerly portion into walkway trails that ultimately would make the connection to the Woodland Dunes property for hiking and cross-country skiing
2027	- Update dog park area
2032	- Connect trail with Two Rivers/Manitowoc bike trail

# **B.** Community Playfields

## Ongoing maintenance

# C. Neighborhood Playgrounds

## 1. Riverside Park

Ongoing- Landscape, picnic areas, general upkeep of park and facilities

2020- Major shoreline renovation with accessible fishing piers

2021-Playground equipment updated. Shelter converted into a garage.

#### 2. Vets Park

2020- Pay Kiosk installed

2022-New kayak launch install

2025-Improve storm management along the River. Define the area that is owned by Metalware in comparison to the Public Access.

2032 - Resurface parking lot

#### 3. L.B. Clarke School

2022- Gift partial land parcel to Two Rivers School District for proposed School District land expansion.

#### 4. Magee School

Ongoing- Landscape, picnic areas, general upkeep of park and facilities

#### 5. Vietnam Vets Park

2021-Lighting upgrades began

2025- Upgrade and replace playground equipment

2028 – Upgrade lighting at the ball diamonds

2031-Pave parking lot

## 6. Taylor Park

Ongoing- Landscape, picnic areas, general upkeep of park and facilities

## D. Neighborhood Parks

6. Central Park

2022/2023- Complete reconstruction of Central Park West, including: Splash Pad, Ice Rink, Bandshell, Restroom Facilities and landscaping

# 2. Lakeshore Park

Ongoing- Landscape, picnic areas, general upkeep of park and facilities

2030- New playground equipment & Restroom facility

# 7. Coast Guard Park

2015 - Reconstruction of seawall/retaining wall from  $17^{\rm th}$  Street to the Coast Guard Station

2020-Pay Kiosk installed

# 4. Harbor View Park

2015 - Complete demolition of old Hamilton structures and provide for initial grading, adding landscaping of extensive park area

# 5. Paddlers Park

2022-New Kayak Launch Installed

2024- ADA accessible Kayak Launch

2029 - Add restrooms and small picnic pavilion

# E. Continuing Development

1. Development of a community park in the northwest area of the city, which could serve neighborhood playground and neighborhood park needs, as well.

2. Future development to the north or along the east side of the community may warrant additional neighborhood playgrounds or parks.

3. Continuation of the River Walkway system according to the Comprehensive Plan through easements and dedications, acquisition, and existing public right of way.

4. Picnic Hill should continue to be developed for passive recreation. Access Rawley Trail from Picnic Hill on the Sandy Bay lot side. Construct a walkway of sorts.

- 5. Continue to promote parks, beach, waterways and trials to community and event planners.
- 6. Develop land behind Public Works facilities to include green space / trail.
- 7. Include green space in the redevelopment of the Hamilton property. This could be a passive park, a pocket park or play equipment, will depend on the development plan.
- 8. Use the Bike / Ped plan to ensure there are safe places to bike throughout the community
- 9. Repave the parking lot at Zander Park.
- 10. Add small gazebo buildings or change the existing Beach House at Neshotah for large rentals to use as registration for their events. This would then become a facility that we would rent as a building vs. a shelter.
- 11. Create a new large and small dog park on the East/north side of town.
- 12. Continue to work with Woodland Dunes on invasive species, specifically on Memorial Drive.
- 13. Continue to maintain Tree City, Monarch City, and Bird City status.
- 14. Update Vietnam: more ballfields, storage building, paved parking (permeable pavement). Explore land acquisition from Vinton. Add batting cages and continue to work on lighting.
- 15. Evaluate parking payment option for non-resident visitors to the beach. Evaluate current parking/restrooms at Neshotah Beach. Evaluate utilizing a trolly or some other type of circulatory system for transportation from the beach to downtown.
- 16. Create an ice rink at Washington Park.

- 17. Continue to identify possible open space for an additional dog park.
- 18. Discuss Zander Park possibilities with Woodland Dunes.
- 19. Communicate with Ice Aged Trail community on connecting Mariners Trail to Spirit of the Rivers.
- 20. Improve bike and pedestrian connections within the City.