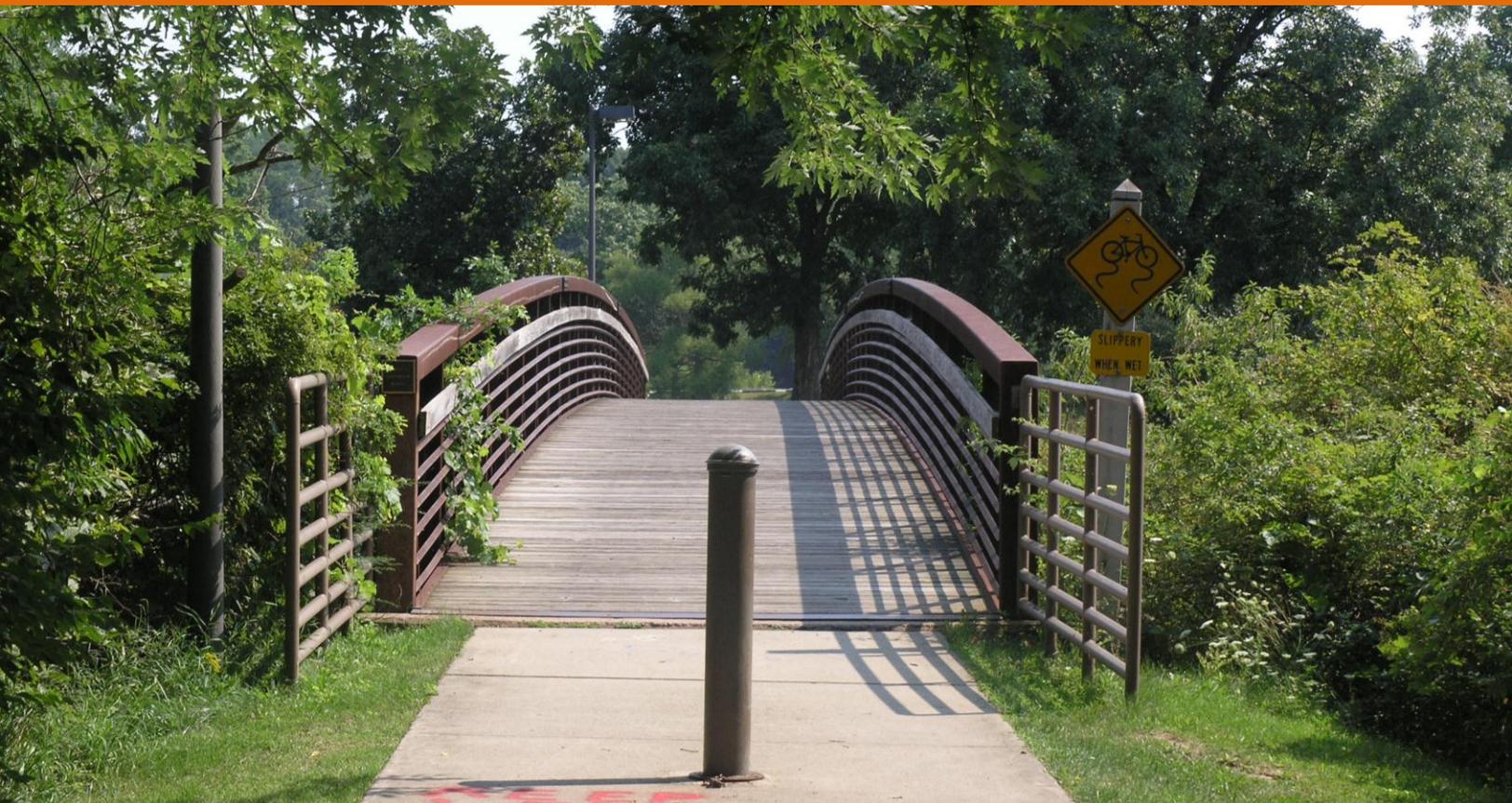


City of Valparaiso

Pathways and Greenways Master Plan Update



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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

In 2005 Lehman and Lehman, Inc. developed the Pathways and Greenways Master Plan for the City of Valparaiso. The plan was approved and adopted in 2005. Much effort has been made by the City of Valparaiso, the Parks and Recreation Department and City Planning to develop portions of the Pathways Plan over the last five years. To date, 2 miles of pathways have been completed. As a part of the new 2010 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department decided he would like to update the Pathways and Greenways Plan to coincide with the new Parks and Recreation Master Plan so the two plans are viewed as one document for coordination and capital improvement purposes.

Most of the Pathways and Greenways Master Plan elements developed in 2005 will stay as a central focus point as written. Through further pathway assessment by PROS and Parks and Recreation Staff, as well as additional community input and analysis completed as part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, some changes to the 2005 document are necessary to carry the Pathways vision forward. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan will include this updated Pathways and Greenways Plan as an appendix with references to the 2005 Pathways and Greenways Master Plan document.



1.1 WHAT ARE PATHWAYS AND GREENWAYS

Pathways and greenways are corridors of protected open space managed for conservation, recreation and alternative transportation purposes. Greenways often follow natural land or water features, and link nature areas, parks, schools, cultural features, destination places and historic sites with each other and with populated areas in the City. Greenways can be

publicly or privately owned and some are developed as a result of public/private partnerships.

Pathways in Valparaiso are used for walking, bicycling, and running primarily. Currently, many of the pathways do not connect to parks, schools, downtown, neighborhoods, Valparaiso University and destination attractions in a continuous system which is the key focus of the Updated Pathways and Greenways Plan.

The goal of the updated Pathways and Greenways Master Plan is to positively improve the impact that Pathways can provide to citizens in Valparaiso for health and wellness purposes, connectivity, ease of transportation from one site to another and for economic development purposes.

The benefits of Pathways and Greenways include:

- Making communities better places to live by preserving and creating open spaces;
- Encouraging physical fitness and healthy lifestyles;
- Creating new opportunities for outdoor recreation and non-motorized transportation access to key destinations in the City;
- Strengthening the local economy;
- Connecting the community to schools, attractions and parks;
- Protecting the environment; and
- Preserving culturally and historically valuable areas in the City.

1.2 DEFINITIONS USED IN THE UPDATED PATHWAYS AND GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN

- **Greenway:** A linear open space that connects park components to form a cohesive park, recreation and open space area
- **Connected Pathways System:** A pathway trail system utilizing new sidewalks and trails to serve as connections to destinations such as schools, Downtown, neighborhoods and parks
- **Conservation Corridor:** A greenway corridor, generally along a water course, that has been identified as environmentally significant that can be protected through acquisition, conservation easements and public education
- **Trail** is designated as a 10' wide asphalt or concrete amenity surface
- **Pathways** are designated along streets primarily that are a 8' wide concrete off-street amenity surface with key trail heads to access the trail and appropriate signage
- **Sidewalk** is a 5' wide concrete amenity alongside a street
- **Off-street trail** is an asphalt paved or impervious surface amenity that is typically 8' wide
- **On- street** trail is a 5' designated space on an existing street

- **Loop Trail** is a 8' wide concrete or asphalt amenity surface that loops around a park or school to promote wellness and fitness primarily for neighborhood users
- **Active Recreation:** Recreational activities that require intense physical exercise such as bicycling and jogging
- **Passive Recreation:** Recreational activities that do not require intense physical exercise such as walking, bird watching and fishing
- **Infrastructure:** The underlying foundation of basic framework of a city, including streets, parks bridges, sewers, streetlights, sidewalks and other utilities



CHAPTER TWO - OVERVIEW OF THE UPDATED PATHWAYS AND GREENWAYS MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

2.1 SITE ANALYSIS

PROS staff along with members of the Pathways Committee, Park and Recreation Department staff and Planning Department staff toured all the existing pathways in the system and future opportunities for pathways. The focus was to evaluate pathway access, standards, use, amenities, signage, connectivity and maintenance. The existing pathways assessment was made and is as follows:

- The pathways that are intact and in place are well designed at 8' width and are well used for walking and running primarily based on observations while touring the system
- Some bicycling by youth was occurring along the existing pathways in place when observed as part of the Pathways tour
- Currently there is limited way-finding signage in place that designates to users that they are on a designated pathway as well as there is limited safety signage along the pathways
- The pathways maintenance appeared to be maintained at a high level of care
- No graffiti was present along the pathways observed
- Trail head signage was lacking even though there are two trail head access points established along the trail with limited amenities
- Restrooms were available along the pathway at two parks in the system
- Limited pathway furniture such as park benches and water fountains were observed on the site tour along the pathways
- Security lighting was not in place at trail head locations nor safety response phones available
- Many of the pathways observed with the exception of Campbell Street are not connected to many destinations currently. The Campbell Street corridor is connected to four parks, two schools, and the Boys and Girls Club
- The Lincolnway Pathway is almost completed that ties the University of Valparaiso to Downtown and will open in September of 2010 which is well designed and lighted
- The other pathways observed that are in place were more connected to neighborhoods than to a major street corridor but was designed well and note signed as a pathway

The elements of the pathways system that appear from the on-site pathway assessment that are designated as part of a linked system include the link on the north to south portions of the City from Rogers-Lakewood Park to Ogden Gardens as well as east and west portions of the city from Valparaiso University to Downtown on East Lincolnway street that are

connected as part of the existing Pathways Master Plan. The pathways tour team evaluated options that could be developed in a “spine system” to tie a system of linear corridors together by driving each potential spine corridor to determine how or if it could be connected, how much right-a-way the City owned and potential partners that could be involved in helping that particular pathway system to be further developed.

The potential “spine corridors” reviewed included Vale Park Road (east to west), Glendale Blvd (east to west), Silhavy Road (north to south), East and West Lincolnway (east to west), Evans Ave (east to west), Roosevelt Road (north to south), County Road 150 E (north and south), South Washington Road (north to south), Calumet Ave (north to south), and Bullseye Lake Road (east to west).



CHAPTER THREE - COMMUNITY INPUT

3.1 CITIZEN SURVEY PRIORITIES

The Master Plan for the Parks and Recreation Department included developing a random household citizen survey. The citizen survey indicated that Pathways and Greenway development was the number one amenity that the community desired.

3.1.1 NEED FOR PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The parks and recreation facilities that the highest percentage of households have a need for are: connected walking and biking trails (63%), nature center and trails (61%), greenspace and natural areas (51%), indoor fitness and exercise facilities (47%), small neighborhood parks (47%), and indoor swimming pools/leisure pool (46%) (Figure 1).

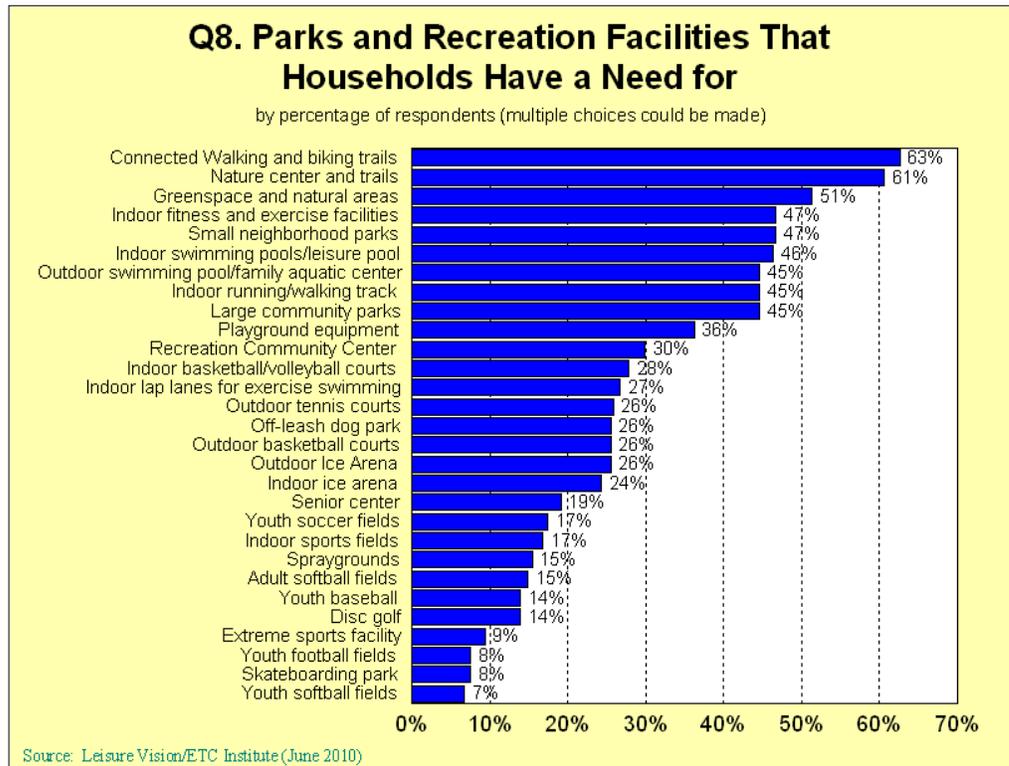


Figure 1 - Need for Parks and Recreation Facilities

3.1.2 NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS THAT HAVE A NEED FOR PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

From a list of 29 parks and recreation facilities, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ones for which members of their household have a need. **Figure 2** shows the estimated number of households in the City of Valparaiso that have a need for various parks and recreation facilities, based on 12,605 households in the City.

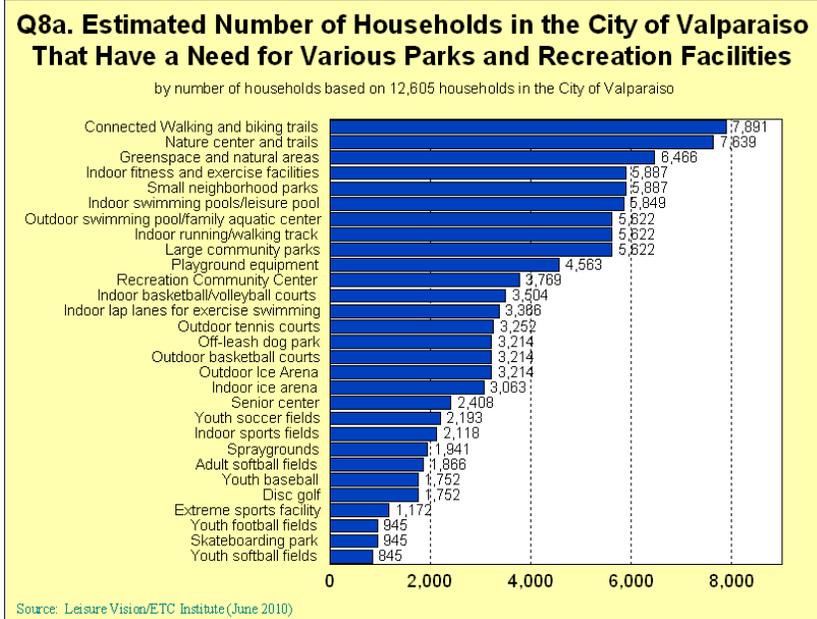


Figure 2 - Number of Households that Have a Need for Parks and Recreation Facilities

3.1.3 HOW WELL PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES MEET NEEDS

For all 29 parks/facilities, less than 55% of households with a need for parks/facilities feel that their needs are being completely met (**Figure 3**).

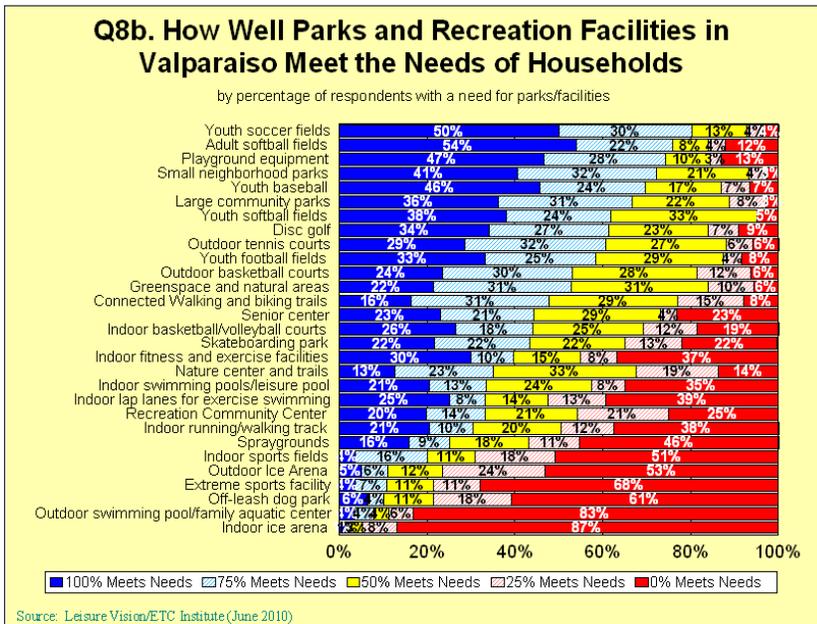


Figure 3 - How Well Parks and Recreation Facilities Meet Needs

3.1.4 VALPARAISO HOUSEHOLDS WITH THEIR FACILITY NEEDS BEING 50% MET OR LESS

From a list of 29 parks and recreation facilities, households that have a need for parks/facilities were asked to indicate how well these types of parks/facilities in the City of Valparaiso meet their needs. **Figure 4** shows the estimated number of households in the City of Valparaiso whose needs for parks/facilities are only being 50% met or less, based on 12,605 households in the City.

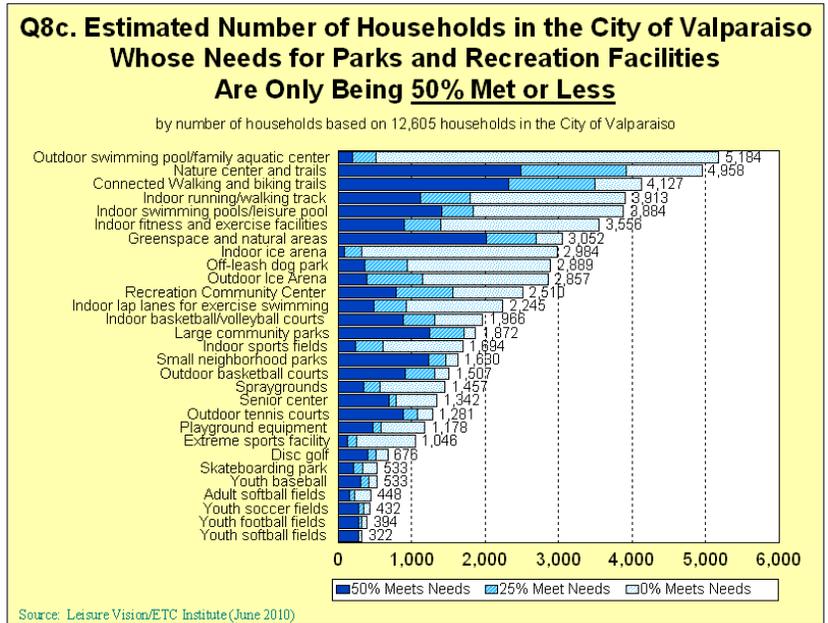


Figure 4 - Households with Their Facility Needs Being 50% Met or Less

3.1.5 MOST IMPORTANT PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Based on the sum of their top four choices, the parks and recreation facilities that are most important to households are: connected walking and biking trails (43%), outdoor swimming pool/family aquatic center (30%), nature center and trails (27%), small neighborhood parks (20%), and indoor fitness and exercise facilities (18%). It should also be noted that connected walking and biking trails had the highest percentage of households select it as their first choice as the most important park/facility (**Figure 5**).

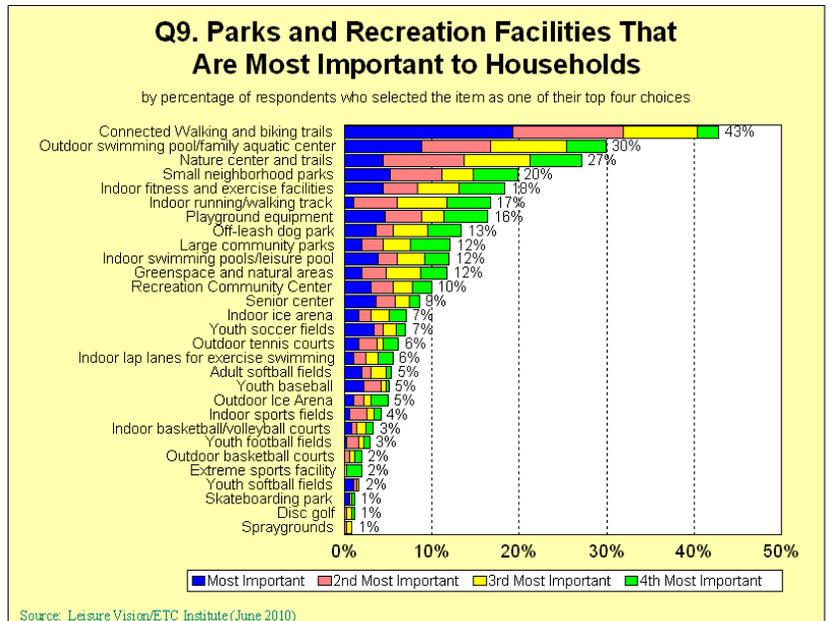


Figure 5 - Most Important Parks and Recreation Facilities

3.2 PRIORITIZED FACILITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The purpose of the Facility Needs Assessment is to provide a prioritized list of facility/amenity needs for the residents of the City of Valparaiso. The Needs Assessment evaluates both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data includes the statistically valid Community Survey, which asked 358 households located in the Valparaiso area to list unmet needs and rank their importance. Qualitative data includes resident feedback obtained in Focus Group meetings and Key Leader Interviews.

A weighted scoring system was used to determine the priorities for parks and recreation facilities/amenities. For instance, as noted below, a weighted value of 3 for the unmet desires means that out of a total of 100%, a value of 30% would be attributed to unmet desires or support identified in the survey. This scoring system considers the following:

- Community Survey
 - Unmet desires for facilities– This is used as a factor from the total number of households mentioning whether they have a need for a facility and the extent to which their desires for facilities have been met. Survey participants were asked to identify their desire for or support of 29 different facilities. Weighted value of 3.
 - Importance ranking for facilities– This is used as a factor of the importance allocated to a facility by the community. Each respondent was asked to identify the top four most important facilities. Weighted value of 3.
- Consultant Evaluation
 - Factor derived from the consultant evaluation of facility priority based on survey results, demographics, trends and overall community input. Weighted value of 4.

These weighted scores were then summed to provide an overall score and priority ranking for the system as a whole. The results of the priority ranking were tabulated into three categories: High Priority (1), Medium Priority (2), and Low Priority (3).

The combined total of the weighted scores for Community Unmet Needs, Community Importance and Consultant Evaluation is the total score based on which the Facility/Amenity and is determined.

Since this is a community-wide survey, it is obvious that amenities that benefit the widest demographic cross-sections of the community would tend to be ranked higher than those that serve a niche market. It is, therefore, typical in such assessments nationwide that broad categories, such as trails or neighborhood parks, tend to rank higher than individual facilities.

Figure 6 shows that connected walking and biking trails, Outdoor Swimming Pool/Aquatic Center and Nature Center and Trails were the top three facilities/amenities.

Valparaiso	
Facility/Amenity Priority Rankings	
	Overall Ranking
Connected Walking and Biking Trails	1
Outdoor Swimming Pool/ Aquatic Center	2
Nature Center and Trails	3
Indoor Fitness and Exercise Facility	4
Indoor Running/ Walking Track	5
Small Neighborhood Parks	6
Off-Leash Dog Park	7
Recreation Community Center	8
Indoor Swimming Pools/ Leisure Pool	9
Greenspace and Natural Areas	10
Playground Equipment	11
Large Community Parks	12
Indoor Lap Lanes for Exercise Swim	13
Indoor Ice Arena	14
Youth Soccer Fields	15
Outdoor Ice Arena	16
Youth Baseball	17
Senior Center	18
Spraygrounds	19
Outdoor Tennis Courts	20
Indoor Basketball/ Volleyball Courts	21
Indoor Sports Fields	22
Adult Softball Fields	23
Outdoor Basketball Courts	24
Extreme Sports Facility	25
Youth Football Fields	26
Disc Golf	27
Youth Softball Fields	28
Skateboarding Park	29

Figure 6 - Facility/Amenity Priority Rankings

The Valparaiso community and key leaders recognize that pathways are a priority as well and they recognize that developing this linear park amenity would benefit a wide number of users from all age groups for safety and wellness purposes.

3.3 KEY LEADERSHIP INTERVIEWS

During the evaluation and assessment process PROS Consulting met with the Mayor, the Pathways Committee and Department Heads to determine their thoughts and ideas they have for the Updated Pathways and Greenways Plan. These key leaders recognize the need for finishing the pathways plan over the next ten years as part of the overall Parks and Recreation Master Plan. These leaders liked the idea that the City develops a “spine network” first to create a fully integrated system. They understood and agreed with the concept to do infill pathways after the spine components were completed. They also agreed that the Pathway system needs a good way-finding system and brand identification in the City to drive more use and awareness of the pathways that do currently exist. Other thoughts that came from work sessions was to develop and connect the spines to the regional pathway systems that are being planned currently to include the Dunes/Kankakee Trail, Hwy 130 to Hobart Trail and the RT 2 to Westville Trail that is being planned by NIRPC. Other discussions focused on how to cross Highway 30 safely to access south Valparaiso.

3.4 COMMUNITY INPUT MEETING

PROS presented in a public workshop the results of their onsite tour analysis, and their discussions with the Mayor, Pathways Committee, Key City Planning Staff and the Parks and Recreation staff. The community members attending agreed with their assessment and with the concept laid out to develop the “spine corridors” first before more infill pathways would be developed. They agreed that the Pathway system needs to have a strong brand identification and way-finding system along with improved trail amenities. Discussion focused on priorities for each spine including finishing the Campbell Street Spine first to Downtown, finishing the Lincolnway Spine from the University to Downtown and completing the Vale Park Road and Silhavy Spines as the next priorities. Discussion also focused on partners that the City needs to bring into the development of the Pathway system which included utility companies, Nabisco, Sewer District, School District, University, Developers and other not-for-profit agencies and planning agencies like NIRPC. The community felt the current design principles for pathways at 8’ wide was acceptable. They also agreed that multi-purpose pathways were their first priority versus on-street trails.

In the community meeting discussions also centered on having someone champion the Pathway and Greenways Plan. The community felt the Mayor should be the strongest person to champion the plan along with the City Administrator and Planning Department staff.

CHAPTER FOUR - KEY COMPONENTS FROM THE 2005 PATHWAYS AND GREENWAY MASTER PLAN THAT NEED TO CONTINUE

The components from the 2005 Pathways and Greenways Master Plan that need to continue described in the plan are follows:

- Design Guidelines
- Maintenance Guidelines
- Design Standards
- Implementation Strategies for policy development, planning, programming and operational and maintenance

4.1 NEW PATHWAY AND GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN UPDATE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the key Pathway and Greenway Master Plan update recommendations for the City Council, Park and Recreation Board and Pathways and Greenways Committee to consider.

4.2 DEVELOPMENT OF A “SPINE” CONCEPT

PROS Consulting is recommending that the City Council, Park and Recreation Board, and Pathways and Greenways Committee adopt the concept of developing an integrated “spine” system of pathways that connect the following as first priority:

- Campbell Street to Downtown
- West Lincolnway to East Lincolnway through Downtown to the University
- Develop the north spine on Silhavy Road from the University to Vale Park Road
- Connect Vale Park Road to Valparaiso Street

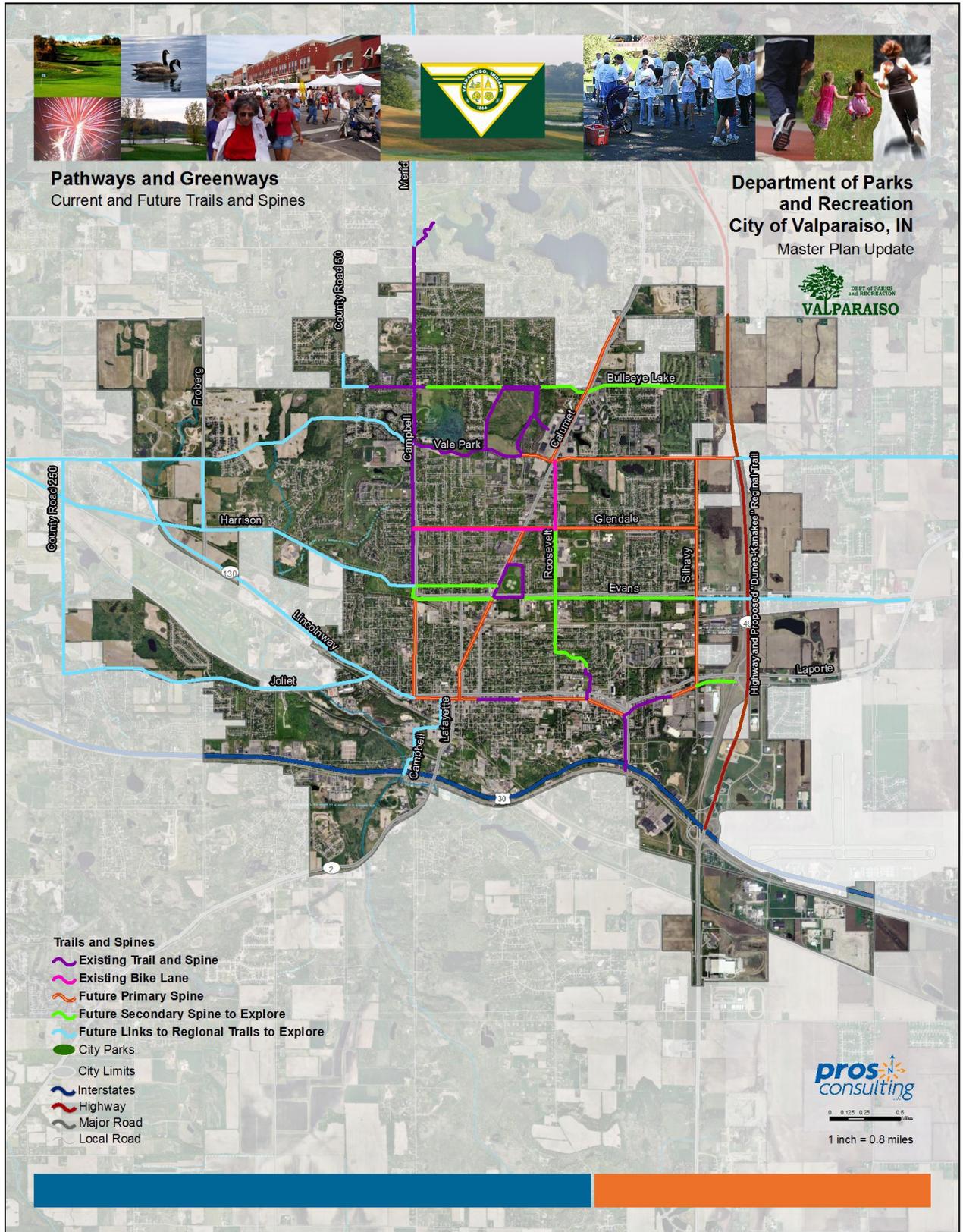
The next priority for the “spine” pathways to be developed will include:

- Developing the Glendale Blvd from Silhavy to Campbell Street
- Roosevelt Road from Glendale Road to Kirchhoff Park
- Continue Evens Ave east past Silhavy
- Bullseye Lake Rd from Campbell St- east to the loop and continue east all the way to the bypass (49)

The third level priority for the “spine” pathways will include:

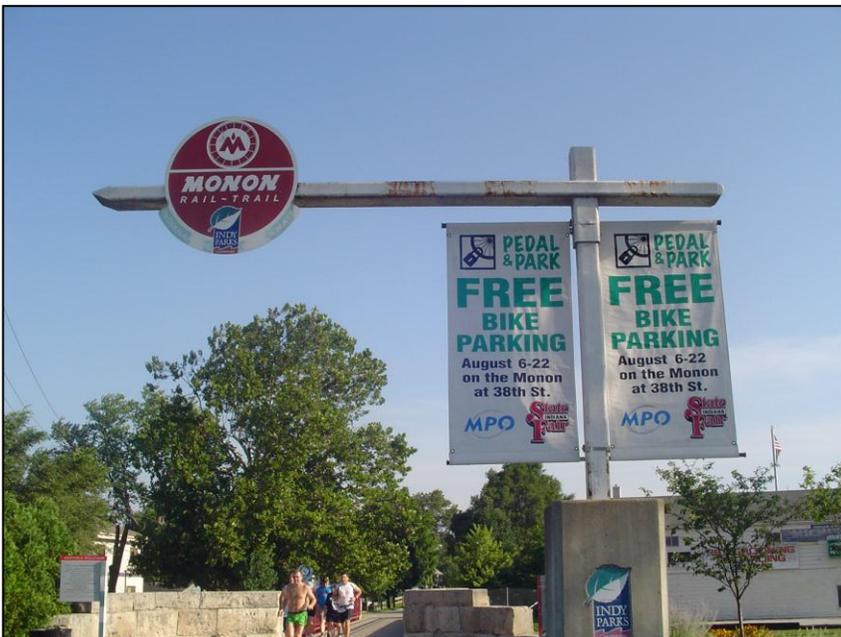
- LinContinue Vale Park west –to SR130
- Joliet from Hayes Leonard west to 250 W
- 250 W from SR130 to Joliet (connecting the two future vision trails listed above)
- Harrison St. heading west to Campbell Street to Forberg Rd (the road where your Vale Park blue line currently ends)
- Froberg Rd from Harrison heading north to Vale Park





4.3 BRANDING AND SIGNAGE FOR THE PATHWAY SYSTEM

PROS Consulting is recommending that the Pathway System have a name, a brand logo, way-finding signage and rules of the pathways as well as a strong color scheme that let users know where they are on the pathway system (see examples). This would allow them to have greater awareness of where they are on the pathway system for them to run, walk or bicycle safely. Suggestion by staff includes calling the Pathway system Fit City Pathways with using the Fit City logo.







4.4 DEVELOP PATHWAY AMENITIES FOR USERS OF THE SYSTEM

PROS is recommending that the City develop key amenities along the Pathway system to include park benches, water fountains, restrooms, small levels (8 parking spots) for trailhead parking to access the trails, including adding safety phones, safety signs and exercise points along the pathways.



4.5 PROGRAM THE USE OF PATHWAYS TO BUILD AWARENESS

PROS is recommending that the Department create more events to promote the Pathway system when major spines are developed. Events such as competitive running events, charity walks, safe-routes to school walks, wellness and fitness events that promote Fit City and other type of events to get people out to experience the Pathways System.

4.6 DEVELOP IMPROVED MAINTENANCE PRACTICES

The Department needs to incorporate improved maintenance practices along the Pathway system when completed to include daily removal of trash at trail heads, cleaning of the pathways in the fall, winter and spring from snow and debris as well as maintaining signage along the Pathway System. Not all the pathway will need to have snow removal but those connecting schools should have snow removal service.

4.7 DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY

The Department needs to develop partnerships with the School District, Utility Agencies, Developers, businesses along the pathway and other agencies to sponsor and develop their portion of the Pathway through a cooperative agreement with the City. Pathway sponsorship can include development of a portion of the pathway which cost approximately \$230,000 or helping to maintain a mile of pathway which will cost approximately \$12,000 a mile to maintain each year.

4.8 REGIONAL PATHWAYS DIRECTIVES WORKING WITH OTHER PLANNING AGENCIES

Develop a regional approach to Pathways with regional trail plans that are being planned or are underway. This includes the Dunes Kankakee Trail. Develop joint grant opportunities for joint development of the regional system of trails being developed by NIRPC from Federal and SRTC monies.

4.9 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT COSTS

Currently the City is paying approximately \$70 dollars a yard for concrete which equates to \$168,000 a mile for an 8' pathway. When the City adds in the cost of design, engineering, Pathway amenities and signage the cost per mile will be approximately \$275,000 a mile. This cost is similar to what other agencies and departments across Indiana are paying for 8' pathways. The goal is to get another 5 miles of Pathway Trail on the ground in the next five years which will focus on completing the majority of the "Spine" concept that is outlined in this Updated Pathways and Greenways Report. Total costs estimate will be \$1,375,000 dollars.

4.10 FUNDING OPTIONS

Seek dedicated funding from the following sources:

- Safe Routes to Schools Program

- TEA-21 Money (Transportation Equity Act) from the Indiana Department of Transportation
- Developer Impact Fees
- Local Redevelopment and TIF money
- Locally as well as an Adopt-a- Trail Program with other entities such as the schools, University, local businesses, utility agencies and developers to develop local pathways
- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Flood Control dollars from U.S. Corps of Engineers
- CDBG monies



CHAPTER FIVE - CONCLUSION

The Updated Pathways and Greenways Master Plan was developed to gain additional public input on where Pathways and Greenways amenities are held in the order of importance to the citizens of Valparaiso. In addition, what pathways links should be made a priority for the city to develop over the next ten years to complete the pathway system and improve the community's access for safe walking, running and bicycling routes to schools, parks and other destinations in the City. The updated Pathways and Greenways plan describes and demonstrates the community's priority and maps out the routes that are priority to be developed. In 2011 and 2012, an additional 2.5 miles of pathways will be developed that follows the recommendations developed in this Updated Pathways and Greenways Plan.

There is great cooperation between the Planning Department and the Parks and Recreation Department in the City in the development of these pathways as well as strong support from the Mayor and City Council. This cooperation and support to develop and fund these pathways is critical to build the "spine system" which will have strong economic appeal from people who live in the City and will support the Mayor's Fit City initiative.

Future development of Pathways will require improved signage and way-finding efforts to help identify users when they are on the pathway and where the pathway is leading them. Continued efforts to find development money to build the pathways is also critical to the success of this project. The community has indicated that pathways are essential so as the City sets priorities for future development it is important that Pathways stay a priority.

The 2005 Pathways Master Plan is a good document for the staff to continue to follow and use as a guide. The design guidelines and design principles outlined in the plan need to stay intact. Greater programming of the pathways will create more awareness and appreciation for the value of Pathways in the community. The Pathway system, when fully developed, will become a linear park for many people to enjoy for years to come.