

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) set state recreation guidelines for local governments to follow during park and recreation planning. Cities are urged to provide at least 10 acres of usable park space per 1,000 people. Illinois recreation surveys taken in 1998 showed a statewide average of 9.81 acres of park space per 1,000 people. Usable park space is defined as land that can be utilized for the purposes of active or passive recreation. The following standards are broken into four categories: park site analysis, safety and accessibility, playground and sports facilities design, and trail design.

### **Park Site Analysis**

The purpose of site analysis is to “find a place for a particular use or find a use for a particular place.” Many resources should be used to properly determine the ability develop parkland. These include topographic maps, aerial photos, and a land use and utility map showing existing boundaries, easements, roads, buildings, and other man-made objects. Besides trying to build around existing buildings, environmental conditions are the primary construction obstacle. Though possible flood-prone areas are often ideal candidates as park sites instead of brick and mortar construction, a few natural elements should be considered:

**Soils and Geology** – The proper drainage is reliant on the soil type. Playgrounds, ballfields, or courts should be constructed on well-drained soils. Installation on heavy clay, peat, or bedrock is discouraged. Soil surveys should be done to determine any compacted or eroded areas. These can be obtained from the local Agricultural Extension or Soil and Water Conservation District office.

**Drainage** – Water should always drain away from the playground. If it drains toward the playground, land grading or underground drainage lines may be necessary. Federal Emergency Management Agency floodplain maps will determine if a park is within a floodplain and possibly indicate any drainage hazards.

**Topography** – Depending on the type of park, topography is an influencing factor. Changes in slope can be more beneficial for parks that emphasize passive recreation or that do not have athletic fields. However, slight changes in slope between 1-4% (1 foot of fall for every 25 linear feet) are often necessary to properly drain any water. Slopes of less than 1% may result in drainage problems and slopes of greater than 4% may require site modifications. Changes in topography often add to the visual interest in the park than level land. Grading should be kept to a minimum depending on the drainage and erosion control.

**Vegetation** – Shade is a desired component of many parks. Trees should be located on the south and west sides to create shade during the afternoons of hot summer days. A minimum of 10 years is often necessary to generate enough differential shade. Trees should be located away from fields, where they could interfere with games, and away from playgrounds, where overhanging limbs can cause safety problems. Common trees found in the Midwest, such as oaks, elms, or evergreens, would offer the desired amount of shade.

Man-made elements must be categorized as well. A park should not be located over or under utility lines that could pose safety hazards during inclement weather. However, locating near some utility lines, such as water or electrical lines if drinking fountains or electricity are desired, may be beneficial and cost-effective. Utility easements grant the company the right to do any necessary repairs and could disrupt the operation of the park. Utility lines that are exposed to park users must be buried. If possible, utility lines should also be buried if they are near the park property.

A land use inventory should be taken of all nearby structures and a transportation analysis would determine transit patterns. The land use inventory would help indicate how many people may be expected to frequent the park. Certain land uses could have a detrimental effect on the park due to factors such as noise, odors, traffic, or aesthetics. A transportation analysis would include a study where parking would be located and access to the site.

Fencing or landscaped berms are necessary for sites near hazardous sites, including busy roads, railroads, ponds, or drainage ditches. If a park is aimed at both active and passive recreation users, there should be as little conflict as possible. Picnic tables should not interfere with players on a playing field. Ballfields or courts should be proportionally scaled according to the amount of space available. For example, a soccer field requiring a minimum of 50,000 ft<sup>2</sup> should not be built on a lot that has a total of 50,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of open space available.

## **Safety and Accessibility**

Parks must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) requirements. The Americans with Disabilities Act was enacted in 1992, making access to recreation and play settings a guaranteed civil right for all Americans. Parks should be designed through a process known as universal design, or planning for the use by all people. Spring Valley's zoning regulations should currently comply with ADA in order to make the process as easy as possible. Many components must be considered to comply with ADA. These include:

- Parking must be accessible by all users. The Illinois Accessibility Code requires one handicap accessible stall for every 25 stalls and two more handicap spaces for every additional 50 spaces.
- Any paths to the parks must meet ADA requirements. They must be a minimum of 5' wide, cannot slope more than 5%, and cannot have a cross slope greater than 2%. The surfacing must be firm, stable, and slip resistant to allow for unimpeded travel during wet and dry travel.
- Conveniences and use areas must be accessible. These include water fountains, restrooms, and concession areas.
- Signing must be appropriate. This could include the use of Braille signs in areas with hearing impaired people.
- Use areas must be designed to ensure proper interaction by people with and without disabilities.



- If there is seating, there must be a minimum clear width of 3' for passing in order to prevent obstructing the path of handicapped people.

Other components are needed to have a safe park complex. These range from having plastic tubing on the top of chain link fences to installing the padding around lightposts. Regular maintenance also helps to ensure a safe park system. Fields and playground equipment can deteriorate without a commitment to an inspection process. Many manufacturers have a recommended inspection program for equipment they sell. A city can be liable for any potential injuries without frequent maintenance of the parks.

## **Playground Design**

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM) issue guidelines for playground safety standards that must be followed with the construction of new parks. Proper playground design can provide a much safer environment for children. According to the CPSC, an estimated 148,000 children are injured from public playground equipment-related injuries. Most occur when kids fall off swings, monkey bars, climbers, or slides. In general, the playground use zone extends to a minimum of 6' from the outside of a piece of equipment.

**Protective Surfacing** – About 60% of all injuries are caused by falls to the ground. Many materials are acceptable, including double shredded bark mulch, wood chips, fine sand, and fine gravel. These provide the needed cushion for any fall. They vary in terms of function, cost, appearance, installation difficulty, containment, cleanliness, and needed maintenance. Some of the materials, such as wood chips, are cheaper but are easily displaced and require continuous maintenance. Others, such as chopped rubber, are well-cushioned and have lower maintenance costs but could be a potential fire hazard and have initial costs four times that of loose materials. The material should be between 6-12" in uncompressed depth for fall heights of between 5-12'. The fall height is the vertical distance between the top of the play object and the surfacing beneath. The equipment height should not exceed the maximum fall height depending on the surfacing. The topography of the site may have an effect on which surface are the most appropriate. Asphalt and concrete should be avoided. They do not protect against injury due to falls in the use zone. The fall zone should extend a minimum of a six-foot radius from the outer edge of the support structure on each side.

**Swing Spacing** – No more than two swing seats should be suspended from the same section of a support structure. As a rule, the horizontal distance between adjacent swing seats or from a structural component should be at least 30 inches. Any swing should not be attached to other equipment. The fall zone should extend a minimum distance of twice the height of the pivot point and not interfere with other equipment. Tire swings can be safety hazards unless the swinging clearance is at least 36 inches from any other structure.

**Playground Materials** – Wood must be naturally rot and insect resistant. Splinters or decaying wood can cause the structure to deteriorate. Steel should be galvanized and contain a rust inhibitor. Steel also tends to be affected by the heat from the sun. “S” hooks should be closed as tightly as possible on playground equipment to eliminate any risk of entanglement. Potential pinch or shearing points from moving points should be inspected. Aluminum is rust resistant and rather lightweight. Many playground materials have been used from recycled materials. Aluminum can be somewhat more costly, but takes less maintenance. Plastic is a general material that can be used for a wide variety of uses. Some communities have recycled plastics in order to provide for playground equipment. Plastics do have a tendency to sag or bend over time. UV inhibitors added to the plastic can extend the life expectancy and color.

**Age Guidelines** – It is important to note what type of park is built and which age group it is aimed. A park directed at preschool age kids would not be an ideal site for a football field. Also, certain playground equipment is more conducive for certain age groups. Older children would not be as likely to frequent a park if sand diggers or a 48” slide were available. The CPSC and ASTM recommend separate play areas for children age 2-5 and 6-12.

**Potentially Unsafe Equipment** – A number of pieces of equipment are not recommended due to safety hazards. The equipment includes:

- Spinning equipment without speed governors
- Seesaws that do not meet current safety standards
- Heavy swings (metal, wood, animal-type)
- Ropes/cables that are not attached at both ends
- Swinging exercise rings and trapeze bars
- Multiple occupancy swings
- Trampolines
- Homemade equipment
- Swinging gates

Each piece of equipment should be evaluated on a yearly basis to ensure that it complies with ASTM standards. Any purchased equipment should contain Product Liability Insurance. This insurance coverage is carried by the manufacturers against accidents due to the design of the equipment. However, a regular maintenance program must be fulfilled. The insurance is not covered if an accident is caused by a lack of maintenance or unauthorized modifications of equipment.



## **Sports Facilities Design**

**Baseball/Softball Fields** – Baseball fields typically contain 2-2.5 acres for each field, while a softball field is about 1.7 acres for each field. Different age groups require different sized fields. Little League baseball fields for 9-12 year olds use a 46' pitching distance, 60' baselines, and a 200' outfield distance. League for kids 13 and up use a 60.6' pitching distance, 90' baselines, and 265-315' outfield distances. Most fields have temporary plastic fencing for safety and to increase the usefulness of the fields for other sports. Chain link fences around the field should be 6' high; the backstop fencing should be at least 20' high. Smaller gauge galvanized steel fencing is appropriate behind home plate for greater durability. All fields should be oriented with home plate facing north-northeast. Baseball fields have a grass outfield with dirt cutouts in the infield. Softball fields have grass outfields and dirt infields. Each field should have a warning track 8-10' in front of the outfield fence and all fences surrounding the field. The material should differ from the infield dirt so as to provide a caution for oncoming fielders that the fence is approaching. Materials, such as crushed limestone, are appropriate.

The infield dirt is usually composed of a mixture of sand (30-40%) and clay (60-70%). The fields should have surface gradients between 1-2%. Many fields have a gentle slope directly behind the infield to allow for water runoff. Fields with tiling beneath the field help further facilitate water filtration, though a solid drainage system can be expensive. Vitrified and/or calcined clay particles can be added to enhance water absorption. Regular maintenance is necessary, including frequent watering, mowing, and raking. Some fields require lighting for higher classification leagues. Lights should be on 70' poles in order to properly light the entire field and avoid large shadow areas. Ten to fifteen parking spaces should be provided per acre. Seating should be provided for a minimum of 50-100 spectators

**Soccer Fields** – According to the United States Youth Soccer Association, soccer fields can range from 0.66 acres for girls fields to 1.9 acres for men's fields. Thirty feet of unobstructed space is necessary around the field perimeter. If additional space is allowed the field can be moved around to reduce the wear patterns that result near the goal areas and at the center circle. Goal sizes range from 5' x 10' to 8' x 24' depending on the desired age group. Assuming the fields would be used during all seasons, the field should be oriented on a north-south axis. The grass field can be either Kentucky Bluegrass or Perennial Ryegrass.

Drainage is made easier with a slight crown down the center of the field. The slope on either side should be no more than 1-2%. Tiling can further increase drainage. Drainage is generally easier on soccer fields than baseball/softball fields due to the crown and an entirely grass field. Light posts should not be placed behind either of the goals because of the blindness they can cause to the goalkeeper. The posts do not need to be as high as with the baseball/softball fields (minimum 50') since the ball is bigger and on the ground most of the time. Ten to twenty parking spaces are sufficient per field.

**Football Fields** – Football fields can range from 120' x 300' to 150' x 360'. It is recommended that one acre of unobstructed space be available. Football fields can be used in combination with soccer or baseball fields if there is little overlap in the seasons of use. Goal posts must have padding around the poles. The posts can be permanently fixed or be temporarily set to increase the field flexibility. If the fields are primarily used during the fall, the field should be oriented on a northwest-southeast axis. The grass field can be either Kentucky Bluegrass or Perennial Ryegrass.

As with soccer fields, drainage is made easier with a slight crown down the center of the field. Light posts should have an illumination of 30 horizontal footcandles (HFC) or higher and have at least four poles at least 50' in height. Less than standard lighting can lead to safety problems. At least 15 parking spaces should be provided per field.

The need for fewer fields can be accomplished through shared lighting, irrigation, parking, and washroom facilities. Schedules must be arranged on an annual basis to ensure enough time for each sport. More maintenance is required with shared fields. Frequent turf replacement or slit seeding is often necessary.

**Basketball Courts** – Basketball court dimensions are typically 84' x 50'. A minimum of 5,000 ft<sup>2</sup> including a 3' radius of unobstructed space is required. Full courts require 7,280 ft<sup>2</sup> and a 10' radius of unobstructed space. The court should be built on a north-south axis in order to keep the baskets away from the sun as much as possible. Asphalt or concrete surfaces are appropriate. Asphalt is highly resilient and can be used for many purposes. It has a high cost compared with concrete and can soften in very hot weather. Concrete can be used year-round and is a good surface for most play areas when laid properly. It can be rough and abrasive and has a lack of resiliency. Many courts use a colored (green), resilient surface over the asphalt. The court should be cleared of any sand or debris that may cause slipping. There should be a minimal slope of .8-1.2% from end to end. The rim must be exactly 10' from the ground for all courts. The basket standard should be at least 2' behind the baseline. The backboard must be exactly 4' in front of the baseline. The backboards should be white or clear and can be either fiberglass or metal. Fiberglass produces less noise than metal.

If lights are desired, they only need to measure 20 HFC. Five to ten parking spaces per court is sufficient. The court should be connected to the parking lot via a 36" wide firm path. Landscaped berms around the court provide a better visual impression and help keep balls inside the court area. It can also provide seating for any spectators. Fencing is generally not necessary. Little maintenance is required for basketball courts besides changing the nets occasionally and repaving the court when cracking occurs.

**Volleyball Courts** – At least 5,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of square footage is necessary for sand and hard volleyball courts. The court dimensions are 80' x 50' with a minimum of 10' of unobstructed area. Outdoor sand courts should be oriented on a north-south axis. The net height varies from 7'4" for women and high school players to 8' for men or recreational



leagues. The nets should be constructed from a durable cable or rope. The net should be secured with metal eyebolts at the top and bottom of the net. Sand courts have a depth of 12"-20" of high quality, clean sand. Washed mason sand is generally the best sand, though others may be used depending on the topography. It should neither be too coarse or too fine. Hard courts may use asphalt or concrete surfacing.

The boundaries should be marked using a material that will not hurt the players. Rope, webbing, or thick tape are appropriate markers. They can be tied to anchors in each corner and buried in the sand. Depending on the existing topography and soils, a drainage system may not need to be installed for sand courts. Plastic perforated tile encased in non-compacting aggregate stone can be used for further irrigation. Hard courts should have a minimum slope of 1% from side to side. Little maintenance is needed besides occasional raking of the sand and removal of small rocks and pebbles.

**Tennis Courts** – At least 7,200 ft<sup>2</sup> is required per court. The court dimensions are a standard 78' x 36'. It should be oriented on a north-south axis. Surfaces can be asphalt, concrete, har-tru, clay, or grass. Har-tru, clay, and grass are used infrequently because of the high cost and maintenance required. An acrylic surface should be painted green or red to define the court boundaries. Additional surfacing can add cushioning to the surface. The netting should be a highly durable rope with cable at the top. It rises 3'6" from the top of the iron cap on both sides and 3' at the center line. There should be 12' between the side boundary lines if more than one court is constructed.

The court should ideally have a slope of about 1% side-to-side or end-to-end. Additional drainage systems are not needed. Lighting should be between 30-40 HFC and be 30' above the court. Fencing surrounding the court should be 12' in height. The fence behind the service lines can be reinforced to prevent distortion over time. Fences should be angled in the corners to reduce the number of balls that would collect. Wind screens to protect from wind and sun should at least be located behind both service lines and ideally on all four sides. They should be tied down to prevent wind movement and vandalism. Two parking spaces are sufficient per court. Some regular maintenance is needed. All courts eventually suffer some cracks in the pavement over time and need resurfacing. Paint may also be removed with frequent use or weatherizing of the court.

**Hockey Rinks** – In-line skating or in-line hockey rinks should have 28,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of play area, including 5,000 ft<sup>2</sup> for area including benches and penalty boxes. Dimensions range from 100' x 50' for junior hockey to 180' x 90' for full size rinks, with slightly larger surfaces for ice hockey rinks. A north-south axis is the ideal orientation. Asphalt or concrete can be played on but acrylic surfacing should also be added. Ice hockey rinks are often used on underutilized parkland during the winter months by flooding and freezing a pond. The dasher boards should have a recommended height of 42". The boards should not be much lower to prevent tripping into them. They can be portable or permanent.

Clear plexiglass is needed above the dasher boards, though steel fencing or other screening can be used as an alternative. A minimal slope of .8-1.2% is required to allow for drainage of the rink. A small cut-out is needed on the low-end to permit liquid to flow out for in-line rinks. Two cooling systems are used for permanent ice rinks: brine solution and ethylene glycol. Brine solution is highly corrosive and uses less horsepower than ethylene glycol, which has a higher solution cost. Many hockey rinks are used during night hours. Therefore, lighting may be essential. Illumination should measure 20-30 HFC. The number of required parking spaces varies from 15-30 spaces per rink. Considerable maintenance is mandatory for ice hockey rinks. Ice grooming equipment must be used at regular intervals to ensure a clean, level ice surface. A tarpaulin would help prevent melting by the sun.

**Skate Parks** – Skate parks are among the fastest growing park amenities. About 10,000 ft<sup>2</sup> is sufficient. The park may be built on a concrete base or built over a plywood structure. The cost can vary depending on the type of desired objects. Elements can include a rounded bowl, grinding rail, or a fun box. It is recommended that a minimum of 4-5 runs/routes be incorporated in the skate park design. Areas designated for beginners and experts should be kept separate. Room must be given to allow for inevitable falls off the objects. Local skaters should be utilized during the design process.

Lighting is not required, though minimal illumination of 10-20 HFC may be desired. The skate park should be fenced from other park users. Five to ten parking spaces is adequate, though it should be as a shared lot. Frequent maintenance is necessary. Regular inspection of the equipment may require eventual replacements. Signage must clearly state the rules of the skate park upon entrance. The signs should be placed at locations where the park users must view them. The requirement of safety equipment such as helmets, elbow, and knee pads is strongly recommended. The town must analyze insurance options before opening any publicly available skate park.

## **Trail Design**

Prior to the design and construction of a trail, the purpose and vision must first be understood. Trails are built to serve many ideals. They can promote an area's natural history, cultural resources, conservation features, wildlife, or provide general physical activity and access to other features. The purpose of the trail will have an impact on which type of surface is the best choice. In addition, the type of trail might mean the need to follow ADA guidelines and specifications. As with parkland used for active recreation, the site conditions and natural features demand if, how, and where the trail can meander. Aerial photos and topographic maps should be consulted to identify any natural openings, changes in elevation, vegetation types, and waterways. A new map should be designed using the different sources available, pointing out any objects that may be utilized or those that could be harmful.

Any possible trails should be walked prior to the commencement of any construction or movement of land to ensure the stability of the land. The actual trail corridor consists of



three components: the actual walking surface; the right-of-way, which includes any land cleared for the walking surface; and the buffer zone, the area beyond the right-of-way that shields the trail from outside influences. In general, many areas favor trail placement. These include: well-drained soils; scenic vistas; vegetation conducive to easy travel; access to and view of waterways; natural drainage; natural contours; safe crossings of roads, railroads, and waterways; easy access from parking areas; and minimal conflict with bordering land uses. Greenways that are not straight and contain many visually attractive landscapes tend to be preferred and are more likely to be utilized. They should appear as natural as possible by blending it in with the surroundings. A large percentage of people frequent trails to escape from the nearby built environment and its noise. A number of areas to avoid include: wet, flat, and frequently flooded depressions; unstable or fragile soils; steep slopes; areas with heavy vegetation requiring costly clearing and maintenance; areas where endangered species might be affected; fragile cultural or archeological sites; road and rail crossings; and crossings over streams needing bridges.

Various materials are utilized depending on the trail location. Native materials are preferred for trails through natural areas to help it blend in with the surroundings as much as possible. Materials such as sawdust, shavings, wood chips, and mulch can be applied for trails whose main use is walking or hiking. These are only recommended for shorter trails, since the cost can be a prohibitive factor because of the need to spread them or do mulching on site. Trail width for natural trails should be a minimum of 2-4'. The greater the width, the greater the ability to accommodate multiple uses. Gravel and rock can be used in poorly drained or slippery areas. Larger rocks also can be used as steps where short elevation changes occur. Irregularly shaped rocks can also be used as ballast for trail subsurfaces. Trails primarily used for bicycling, in-line skating, or snowmobiling should have a harder surface. Suitable materials include asphalt, concrete, and crushed limestone. Bicycle trails must have a minimum width of 4-6'. Snowmobiling may only be allowed for trails that are not plowed during the winter months. It is important to note that trails that allow for bicyclists/pedestrians and other travel modes of greater speeds are incompatible on the same path. There should be separate corridors for each mode if conflicts of interest may result.

Most trails are short in the initial stages of construction. Land acquisition can often be difficult to create a long trail at one time. Therefore, unless the trail is an extension of another trail system the desirable length is between ½ and 2 miles. Looping allows users to return via untraveled right-of-ways and allows handicapped people the ability to utilize the trail.

A trail is much more than merely a linear path. It should contain places for resting and relaxation. While these could be in the form of benches or picnic tables, they could also be exercise areas or open areas away from the path. Signage is important for any trail. Informative signs are vital for self-guided nature and interpretive trails. Some trails develop decorative boxes containing brochures regarding nearby sites, vegetation, and wildlife. Mileage markers can be located on longer bicycle trails, such as the I&M Canal Trail. Maps are recommended to help people become acclimated with the routes available and point out

any interesting facts that may be encountered. Wayfinding signs make visitors feel more welcome. Wayfinding is a method of directing people into and around the community through the use of readable and easily identifiable sign graphics. They offer a repetitive element by utilizing common graphics, shapes, and colors to communicate the message to be portrayed.

### **Additional Amenities**

Following is a list of other amenities that can complement the parksite:

- An automatic irrigation system is useful for larger parks with multiple fields. While the system has a high upfront cost, it lessens the need for continual maintenance. Pop-up heads are built into the ground and can be timed to water the fields at certain times.
- Drinking fountains should be located in a central use area. The fountain can contain spigots to fill jugs.
- Washroom facilities are often necessary for community parks, or parks designated as destinations. One toilet stall shall be equipped for handicapped in both genders' washrooms.
- Benches should be placed near trees or buildings to provide shade. However, they should not be hidden where they do not allow for supervision. As with the water fountains, they should be on a handicapped accessible path.
- As stated earlier, vegetation helps beautify the park and make it a more primary destination. Unusual annual and perennial flowers can offer an arboretum feel, particularly to passive recreation spaces.
- Bicycle racks should be provided whenever possible. They should particularly be found at parks with playgrounds or ballfields.
- Trash and recycling cans should be found at all parks to discourage littering. Lids discourage animals and vandalism. Regular pickups should be done to keep garbage from piling up and creating pungent odors.
- Minimum lighting should be provided. Low-intensity lighting will provide for a safer nighttime environment while also discouraging evening users.
- Signs can add to the interaction with park participants. They are particularly desirable along trails and greenways or where important historical or cultural events have taken place. Each park should have a simple sign at the most visible entrances. Safety warnings should be placed near the corresponding equipment.



## General Parks Development Goal

In order to properly respond to residents' recreation concerns, certain ongoing principles must be met. Spring Valley residents value their leisure time and mobility. A challenge is to ensure that the recreational facilities are appropriate for a changing demographic system. This encourages a continual updating of the overall parks plan. An inclusive framework must be in place to guide future parks management and development.

**Objective:** Provide sufficient facilities and programs for every age, gender, and socioeconomic group that lives in or visits Spring Valley and identify public input and support of the parks system.

- Policy 1:* Develop a vision statement for the Parks Board to guide current and future parks actions.
- Policy 2:* Review and formulate updates to the plan as needed, at least every five years.
- Policy 3:* Make sure that facilities are developed for all residents of Spring Valley including seniors, kids, minorities, and the disabled.
- Policy 4:* Preserve and protect the existing greenspace within the City.
- Policy 5:* Preserve and protect Spring Valley's existing natural and historic resources and provide opportunities for integration into parks facility development.
- Policy 6:* Provide at least 10.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents as a guide for future planning.
- Policy 7:* Require adequate insurance for all parks and programs to respond to any potential litigation practices.
- Policy 8:* Identify the potential need for a parks and recreation district through multiple means of public participation.
- Policy 9:* Analyze the possibility of hiring a part- or full-time parks coordinator to develop yearly parks priorities and guide the Parks Board in decision-making.
- Policy 10:* Maintain and stick to an annual budget that meets the most important needs of the residents.
- Policy 11:* Encourage cooperation and consensus among residents and the Parks Board by actively promoting residential and citizen group input through parks planning sessions and user surveys.

- Policy 12:* Encourage greater City Council support of parks enhancements and improved communication by anointing a Parks Board member(s) to serve as a liaison to report on any potential Parks Board actions.
- Policy 13:* Establish a means whereby activities of the Parks Board are reported on by the local news media.
- Policy 14:* Develop an annual maintenance plan for all public and private parks in Spring Valley with safety issues taking top priority.
- Policy 15:* Ensure that each part of the community has access to a neighborhood park within 0.25 miles and to a community park within 0.5 miles.
- Policy 16:* Utilize the City of Spring Valley homepage to advertise meetings, programs, and community events.
- Policy 17:* Develop a yearly Community Awareness Plan that would identify any possible parks user groups, annual Parks Board actions, and planned future improvements.
- Policy 18:* Review Parks Board actions on an annual basis to provide an overview of current and future trends.
- Policy 19:* Existing and new developments should be suited to pedestrians and bicyclists by containing sidewalks. Benches and bicycle racks should be located at all necessary points of interest in the downtown area to encourage usage of additional means of transportation.
- Policy 20:* Place a copy of the Parks and Recreation Plan for Spring Valley on file with the library and City Hall and make copies available for purchase at a low cost.



## Parks Programs Goal

One misconception of a parks department is that it is only available to create sports programs. This is only a portion of its mission. Arts and after-school programs are necessary for many portions of the City's population. The City must continually evaluate and refine the programs it offers to a dynamic and continually changing demographic base.

**Objective:**     **Develop an overall program that meets the needs of all residents during each season and be within the existing manpower and fiscal constraints.**

*Policy 1:*       Meet with nearby towns to establish athletic programs that are not feasible due to many reasons in Spring Valley but would be beneficial and more efficient if costs are shared with other municipalities.

*Policy 2:*       Establish longer swimming pool hours through the summer months, particularly when groups utilize the pool during public swim sessions.

*Policy 3:*       Identify additional senior citizen activities by utilizing surveys for this growing demographic group. Such activities could include card games or dancing.

*Policy 4:*       Coordinate with the Spring Valley schools to utilize any facilities that could be used for unique programs. Improvement in this area will help reduce future costs.

*Policy 5:*       Investigate the possibility of adding aquatic components such as water toys or slides.

*Policy 6:*       Divide the pool operating hours into lap swimming times, swim lessons, and open pool times.

*Policy 7:*       Coordinate sports programs by season to encourage a wider user group and ensure that residents have the opportunity to participate in any activity.

*Policy 8:*       Develop an easy reading seasonal parks bulletin with a calendar of events that outlines the costs, location, dates, and procedures for registration of all community activities and identifies the parks in Spring Valley.

*Policy 9:*       Develop public/private/non-profit partnerships to create new programs that meet the desires of the residents.

- Policy 10:* Utilize resident experts in non-sports activities to meet the wishes of those looking for alternative programs to meet the demand for cultural programs such as music or arts and crafts.
- Policy 11:* The Parks Board shall institute a yearly evaluation process of existing programs to ensure that they are properly managed and meet the needs and expectations of those involved.
- Policy 12:* Analyze changing demographics, including population characteristics, lifestyles, and incomes every five years to plan for future recreation needs.



## Funding Goal

A well-managed and maintained parks system must have a steady flow of income to supply a minimum level of facilities and programs. The funding can come from a variety of sources to lessen the burden to the taxpayers. The utilization of partnerships and grants helps make it easier to acquire and develop land for future parkland. A limited budget does not have to be a hindrance for implementing resident desired policies. As the population continues to grow, the necessary fiscal resources must be provided to ensure the high quality of life standard that the residents enjoy.

**Objective:**    **Ensure that the Parks Board can rely on a standard minimum or steadily increasing operating budget to maintain and improve upon the level of the Spring Valley parks.**

*Policy 1:*      Study the issue of increasing the current property tax levy, sales taxes, or bonding to be used to further maintain and enhance the existing parks.

*Policy 2:*      Invest any money that is not used on a year-to-year basis. It can be put into moderate interest generating accounts to help the city maintain a firm financial standing.

*Policy 3:*      Develop partnerships with private and non-profit firms to take advantage of possible underutilized programs that organizations have that aim to help with community functions. This blending of services is more common as fiscal and physical resources become limited. Both sides should address liability issues and the equitable sharing of costs.

*Policy 4:*      Require land donations for the development of park space by private organizations and developers building new housing. This can be used in lieu of the City's portion for obtaining grants such as the Illinois Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development program.

*Policy 5:*      Organize fundraising efforts with community residents to generate parks maintenance income.

*Policy 6:*      Utilize state and federal grant programs for the acquisition and development of parks and trails.

*Policy 7:*      Stage more revenue-producing events, particularly during the summer months. Such events are likely to be held at Kirby Park or along the riverfront and contain small entry fees.

- Policy 8:* Review the current user fee structure, which is currently only applicable to the swimming pool. Any new fee structure should be sensitive to the philosophies of the Parks Board, City Council, and residents.
- Policy 9:* Charge minimal fees for the use of park components such as shelters or fields for all groups that do not operate as not-for-profits.
- Policy 10:* Establish a non-resident fee for participation in any activities coordinated through the Spring Valley parks.



## Spatial Distribution and Park Development Goal

Each resident should have access to recreational opportunities. The parks should be safe and provide the components necessary for the enjoyment of the target user groups. New developments or redevelopments should not lessen the number of recreational opportunities. The high standards of quality of life that Spring Valley residents enjoy should not be compromised.

**Objective:** Enhance the current recreational qualities and aim to complement the existing facilities with additional services and park space.

- Policy 1:* Create more space for baseball/softball and soccer fields. Recent participatory trends in Spring Valley have shown a need for these in order to properly maximize the amount of game times.
- Policy 2:* Develop the south and west portions of Kirby Park. Plans are currently being considered for new park space west of the existing park.
- Policy 3:* Increase the sensitivity to the surrounding neighborhood at Kirby Park by containing any activity within its perimeters. Time limits must be enacted on park usage depending on the day and time of year.
- Policy 4:* As new development extends the Spring Valley corporate limits, require neighborhood parks be within 0.25 miles of each household.
- Policy 5:* Acquire enough land to meet and eventually surpass Illinois Department of Natural Resources standards of 10.5 acres of usable parkland per 1,000 residents.
- Policy 6:* Mandate that a percentage of land or money from any new development be devoted to either new parkland within the development or for improvements to existing nearby parks.
- Policy 7:* Require new residential developments to include sidewalks within its boundaries and bordering the periphery.
- Policy 8:* Neighborhood level parks must not be built on arterial roads or roads that experience high traffic levels in order to provide safe access for all users.
- Policy 9:* Attempt to develop a greenway system for Spring Valley by interconnecting large public open spaces and trails with smaller private open/green spaces.

- Policy 10:* Work with nearby towns in LaSalle, Peru, and DePue to create the Kaskaskia Alliance Trail as part of the Grand Illinois Trail that would connect with the I&M Canal and Hennepin Canal Trails. The ideal location would be along Spring Valley-Marquette Highway and the CSX Railroad tracks just north of the Illinois River.
- Policy 11:* Develop the Mine #1 property as a source for passive recreation enjoyment. The property could be used as spin-off trails from the Grand Illinois Trail and lead people into the downtown area.
- Policy 12:* Consider a regional partnership with surrounding towns as the overall populations increase to develop a shared athletic field complex with open space to be used for community parks programs or school athletics. Potential sites should be identified in advance of any planning.
- Policy 13:* Develop smaller lots of one-half acre or less into parks for activities such as bocce ball, croquet, or horseshoes.
- Policy 14:* Cleanup vacant or underutilized lots and create greenspace as small pocket parks within the surrounding built environment.
- Policy 15:* Encourage further development along the riverfront to take advantage of the available recreational opportunities and the vistas it offers. Visitors from throughout the Illinois Valley region are drawn to it and the economic development possibilities can be heightened.
- Policy 16:* Require sufficient parking be designed as part of any new parks. If the space allows, off-street lots are most desired, though on-street parking is allowed if it does not create safety problems for pedestrians. Studies should be fulfilled whenever possible to better understand any future traffic flow changes or lot designs.
- Policy 17:* Make all parks compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The primary obligation is to make each park and trail handicapped accessible. An inventory of all parks components that do not meet this mandate should be prioritized to update any equipment as it becomes necessary.
- Policy 18:* Extremely limit the amount of floodplain development. The portions of Spring Valley within a floodplain are ideal candidates for future park and open space creation. Discourage the rezoning of natural areas requiring protection from disturbance and development.
- Policy 19:* Improve the visual access to the Illinois River by removing any nearby ground clutter.



- Policy 20:* Conserve and utilize the community's natural resources by allowing access through greenways and by restricting the level of adjacent development.
- Policy 21:* Require a portion of each park to include benches and landscaping to offer a more visually-pleasing experience. Shade should be offered near any resting areas in the form of maturing trees.

## Maintenance and Safety Goal

The safety of existing parks must never be compromised at the expense of adding new parks equipment. The general maintenance of each park operated by the City of Spring Valley takes priority over any other requests. Each park visitor user should feel a sense of security. Spring Valley should be pleased that there is little perception of crime but continue to work towards maintaining that distinction.

**Objective: Provide a safe park environment for all users.**

- Policy 1:* The City must provide adequate routine maintenance through sufficient funds in its operating budget.
- Policy 2:* Any improvements must comply with the city's building codes regulating safety and construction.
- Policy 3:* An annual maintenance program should be instituted to bring improvements to the highest priority items based on age and wear.
- Policy 4:* Update the equipment at Savitch and Webster Parks by attempting to install new devices that are not currently found in Spring Valley and removing any unsafe components.
- Policy 5:* Eliminate any possible natural conflicts that would be safety hazards such as low hanging branches or large areas of standing water.
- Policy 6:* Repair the swimming pool on an annual basis.
- Policy 7:* Install a uniform signage system at each park to clearly identify the name and any rules and regulations for usage.
- Policy 8:* Eliminate any potential for violence or vandalism by coordinating with the Police Department to develop policies to monitor high crime areas near parks.
- Policy 9:* Lighting shall be sufficient in all areas of the parks during nighttime hours.
- Policy 10:* Regular maintenance should be done on items such as benches, water fountains, picnic tables, grills, and walkways.



## **Implementation Guidelines**

The City of Spring Valley's Parks and Recreation Plan is a comprehensive community policy statement comprised of a variety of both graphic and narrative policies intended to provide basic guidelines for making parks development decisions. The Plan is intended to be used by City officials, persons making private sector investments, and by all citizens interested in the future development of Spring Valley and the surrounding 1½-mile planning area. The completion of the plan is only one part of the community planning process. The implementation of the objectives and policies of the plan can only be attained over a period of time and only through the collective efforts of the public and private sectors. The implementation step is the most critical in the planning process, and determines the success of this plan. It is the hope of the Parks Board that this document will be used to guide development within the City over the next 20 years.

The development of a parks plan in itself is an important implementation tool. It can influence public and private decisions by providing a readily available source of information and ideas. The plan document is essentially a coordinated set of advisory proposals. The degree to which this influences decisions depends upon the soundness of the plan, its relevance to the actual situation, and its availability to developers and the public. A plan that is not available to the public and is not used can hardly be influential.

The Parks Board will present its official actions to goals, objectives, and policies in the plan. If the Planning Commission and City Council neglect the parks plan, others will follow suit. On the other hand, if the Planning Commission and other City agencies use the plan to guide and substantiate decisions, private decision makers are likely to do so as well. Therefore, printing and disseminating the plan is an important step toward its implementation. This document must be made available to the public for purchase at the City Hall and/or other specific locations. The City should also consider making the plan available on the City of Spring Valley website.

### **City Council**

The Spring Valley City Council is the final authority on policy formulation for the community. It adopts the budget, passes local ordinances, and develops planning policy under direction of the Mayor. City Council member support is essential for effective functioning of the planning process. The Mayor and Council appoint the Parks Board and adopt any comprehensive or parks plans. The City Council should examine creative ways to implement the Parks and Recreation plan. Different funding sources should be looked at for all projects and traditional and nontraditional professional and labor resources should be analyzed.

## Updating the Plan

The Spring Valley Parks and Recreation Plan, in whole or in part, may be amended from time to time as necessary and as planning and legislative bodies deem appropriate. Because of the timeliness of the information and goals presented in this plan, this document must be reviewed regularly to remain updated, ideally every four to five years. New goals and objectives, along with added or amended maps and information, must be added. The policies should be reviewed on a yearly basis.

## Prioritized Timeline

Following is a list of priority items to be completed in the implementation of the Spring Valley Parks and Recreation Plan. These items are broken into two periods: immediate, 0-5 years and long range, 6-10 years. The immediate priorities are further broken into the most vital physical planning and organizational planning matters. These items are listed in order of importance for that timeframe.

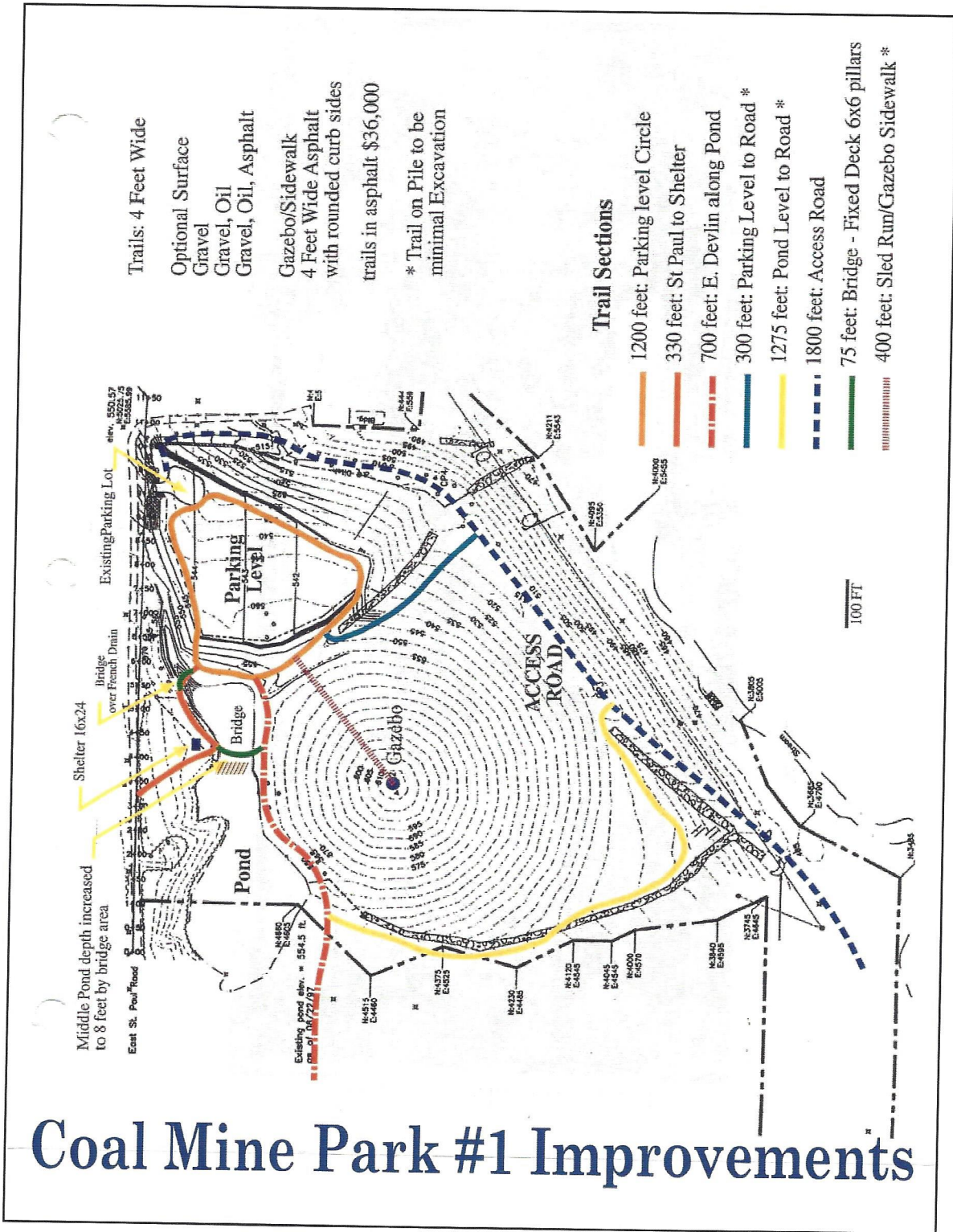
Rate of Priority (Listed in order of importance):

- Immediate Physical and Organizational: 0-5 years (2003-2008)
- Long Range: 6-10 years (2009-2014)

*Immediate Physical (0-5 years; 2003-2008):*

1. Utilize state and federal grant programs for the acquisition and development of parks and trails.
  - The first priority is to use the available grants to develop the property at the Mine #1 site. IDNR Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development grants have been considered in the past for this property. Spring Valley's applications to IDNR for grand funding will receive a higher priority ranking because they have a current parks and recreation plan. Once the plan is adopted, the Parks Board should begin compiling the preliminary information necessary for applying for one of the many grants. Brief summaries of the grants are found following this section. The sooner actual physical work begins on obtaining and developing parkspace, the more attention will be given to future projects the Parks Board attempts to put into action. This will help generate momentum for the implementation of the plan's principles. The City should push for residents to volunteer their time by helping with the project. While donated labor does not minimize the City's portion of any matching grant, it involves residents in community events.





# Coal Mine Park #1 Improvements

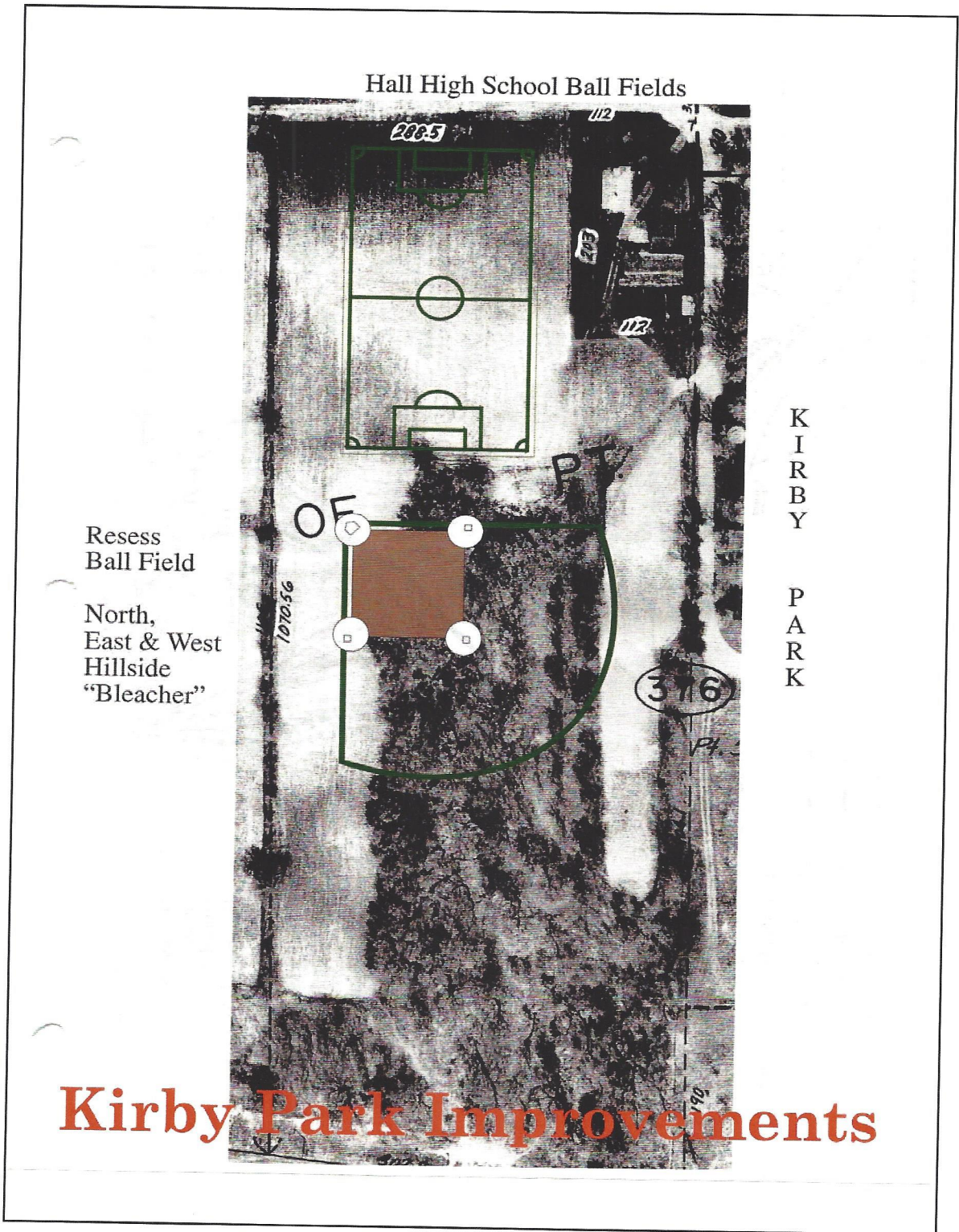
The proposed improvements to the Mine #1 site are detailed on the map on the following page. The park is used year-round primarily as a passive recreation site. The former coal mine rises about 100 feet above Gallagher Street on the site's eastern edge and is utilized for tobogganing during the snowy season. A pond on the northwest quarter of the site is stocked for fishing. Besides acting as a local recreational attraction for Spring Valley residents, the park will help to link the city with the Kaskaskia Alliance Trail. It will also provide better access to the Illinois River. Six four-foot wide trail sections ranging from 330 to 1,275 feet are planned. In addition, a 75-foot long bridge will be built over the pond to connect the trail with East St. Paul Street. A shelter/gazebo will be placed atop the hill, providing scenic views of the valley. An access road is planned along Gallagher Street that would be open for pedestrians and an occasional City vehicle. The existing parking lot may also be expanded.

2. Create more space for baseball/softball and soccer fields.
  - Consideration has been given to developing land west of Kirby Park into a baseball field and soccer field. The proposed map is found on page 6-5. The nine-acre site would help meet the necessity for youth sports. Currently, Foley Field is used for both soccer and football and creates a high demand for space. This area plan will make a connection between Kirby Park and the Little League fields. Parking must be sufficient for the number of participants and spectators and not negatively affect the surrounding residential area. Again, the city should consider applying for grants to assist with the parks improvements. The amount of space available for all activities must be continually evaluated depending on the number of participants involved. This should include meeting with surrounding towns to encourage joint participation and the development of programs that are not feasible due to the size of Spring Valley.

*Immediate Organizational (0-5 years; 2003-2008):*

1. Develop a vision statement for the Parks Board to guide current and future parks actions.
  - A vision statement will establish what the Parks Board hopes to accomplish through the implementation of each policy. The vision must be something that can be attainable and shows forethought for the future. It should be a broad paragraph that does not conflict with what the City of Spring Valley envisions with regards to providing services to its residents.





2. Maintain and stick to an annual budget as much as possible that meets the most important needs of the residents.
  - The Parks Board should identify a number of items it deems as important on a yearly basis that are needed to help sustain and improve the quality of life and are within the budget set by the City. Keeping to the budget will ensure that future projects can be properly financed. The City Council must provide adequate funding to guarantee a safe environment for all users.
3. Develop an annual maintenance plan for all public and private parks in Spring Valley with safety issues taking top priority.
  - Prior to any new construction of parks or equipment, the existing facilities must be safe. The maintenance plan would prioritize the items that need to be repaired and identify the amount of financing needed. Particular attention should be paid to equipment at Savitch and Webster Parks that are heavily utilized by young children. Any maintenance should be done to make the parks compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
4. Encourage cooperation and consensus among residents and the Parks Board by actively promoting residential and citizen group input through parks planning sessions and user surveys.
  - A parks user survey should be issued to Spring Valley householders shortly after the adoption of this plan. The purpose is to gain additional input and information on what can be done to improve the parks services. The survey can be used as a means to support new services and facilities that may not have been otherwise considered. It would also determine whether residents would be in favor of establishing a park district, hiring a parks coordinator, or developing new senior activities.
5. Coordinate sports programs by season to encourage a wider user group and ensure that residents have the opportunity to participate in any activity.
  - An overarching goal should be to allow as many people to be involved in as many activities as possible. As such, the leaders of each sports program should congregate at the same time each year to coordinate the schedules in a manner that will allow the highest participation rates and ensure that the facilities can be equally utilized. The parks bulletins must be easy to read and contain all of the necessary information. In addition, the Parks Board shall yearly evaluate the public programs offered to city residents.



6. Require a portion of each park to include benches and landscaping to offer a more visually-pleasing experience.
  - Each Spring Valley park should stimulate the senses of the user. The use of sidewalks, benches, and trees enhances the appeal to a wider population by encouraging greater usage. These persuade people to utilize the park to relax and enjoy the surroundings. In addition, a uniform signage system should be in place that clearly identifies each park and any operating rules.

*Long Range (6-10 years; 2009-2014):*

1. Analyze the entire plan five years after implementation.
  - The primary changes could occur with the city's demographics and any developments that have changed the land area distribution. Any good plan depends on continual reexamination to fit the evolution of the city.
2. Develop partnerships with private and non-profit firms to take advantage of possible underutilized programs that organizations have that aim to help with community functions.
  - Partnerships act as a win-win situation for both the city and the private or not-for-profit company that becomes involved with the project. The city is always looking for a way to extend their resources to generate innovative programs that may not otherwise be feasible. The Spring Valley-based companies can use the partnership as a means to offer community service projects to their employees. The businesses also benefit from the public relations and marketing possibilities. Projects can range from annual landscaping to donating land or money for parks improvements. While this is categorized as a long range priority, contacts should be established as soon as possible to create a better working relationship amongst the many companies and organizations that would be suitable partners.
3. Work with nearby towns in LaSalle, Peru, and DePue as well as IDNR to create the Kaskaskia Alliance Trail as part of the Grand Illinois Trail that would connect with the I&M Canal and Hennepin Canal Trails.
  - This section of the trail is the only link missing between Joliet and Rock Island. The trail would increase the visibility of Spring Valley. Spinoff trails could eventually lead bicyclists and walkers into the city. IDNR Bicycle Path Grants can be utilized to acquire and develop land north of the Illinois River.



4. Require land donations for the development of park space by private organizations and developers building new housing.
  - This helps ensure that the amount of parkspace available to residents keeps pace with the increase in population and land area in the city. The Parks Board should work closely with the City Council to develop an ordinance that is enforced.
5. Consider a regional partnership with surrounding towns as the overall populations increase to develop a shared athletic field complex with open space to be used for community parks programs or school athletics.
  - As the city looks into acquiring and developing more space for baseball/softball or soccer fields, a regional facility could be shared and lessen the cost to each town. Such a complex could eventually hold larger events and increase the economic development prospects for the Illinois Valley region. Early planning can identify potential areas that would contain the minimum amount of land required and be least detrimental to the traffic, environment, and households.
6. Develop smaller lots of one-half acre or less into parks for activities such as bocce ball, croquet, or horseshoes.
  - Vacant lots within a primarily residential or commercial section of the city can be better utilized by returning the land to its original state. The lots do not necessarily have to be developed and could be used as open space. This reuse of the land can increase nearby property values and change the visual impression of an area. When feasible, deteriorated, long unoccupied homes should be bought by the city, demolished, and developed into pocket parks.

## Funding Sources

### IDNR:

- Bicycle Path Grants

These matching grants are provided to eligible local units of government to assist them in the linear corridor land acquisition and/or development of public, nonmotorized bicycle paths. The projects must be locally operated and maintained. Eligible projects can include site clearing and grading, drainage, surfacing, bridging, fencing, and signage. The program can provide up to a 50 percent reimbursement. Assistance for development (construction) projects is limited to \$200,000 per annual request. No maximum limit exists for acquisition projects. Illinois Vehicle Code fees provide funds for the program. Preference is given to projects proposing development of a bicycle trail system, particularly long distance trails, that are identified in state, regional, or local parks and recreation plans. They should also offer a diversity of trail user experiences, amenities, convenient access, and connect to other public lands. The grant should be used on the initial development of a path instead of a trail renovation. The FY 2001 funding budget was \$4,106,800. Bike path applications may be submitted January 1 – March 1 of each year.

- Boat Access Area Development Grants

These grants encourage the acquisition and/or construction/renovation of approved public boat and canoe access areas to improve the recreational use of the state's water resources. The program provides additional public boat launching ramps and canoe access areas and facilities that support the use of the access areas, including courtesy docks, parking, lighting, roads, and walkways. The program can provide up to 100 percent funding for approved project design and development costs and 90 percent funding for approved land acquisition costs. Selection is based on financial cooperation, projected usage, impact on business, site suitability, program suitability, ability to maintain user fees, population served, and regional needs. Maximum development grant assistance for any one project in a given fiscal year is limited to \$200,000 for powerboat access facilities and \$50,000 for non-motorized, canoe, and other car top boat launch facilities. Acquisition projects are limited to \$200,000 per annual request. Funds are derived from the marine motor fuel tax and from boat and canoe registration fees. Preference is given to projects that receive high use and serve many registered boaters. The FY 2001 funding budget was \$725,000. Boat access area applications may be submitted July 1 – September 1 of each year.



- Build Illinois Bond Grants

These grants are available for protection, preservation, restoration, and conservation of natural resources including watershed planning. Funds may also be used by units of local government for capital development and improvements of recreation areas; sewer and water projects; acquisition of open space land and natural heritage lands; and habitat and buffer lands. The FY 2001 funding budget was \$5,000,000.

- Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Recreational Trails Grants

These grants are available to provide financial aid to government agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and others to develop, operate, maintain, and acquire land for parks and trails that are open and accessible to the public in Illinois. They can also be used to restore areas damaged from unauthorized OHV use and to establish education and safety programs. The program can provide up to 100 percent reimbursement assistance to local governments and private organizations for the acquisition and development of lands for public OHV areas and trails. The program is financed from revenues taken from vehicle title fees and public access stickers. Preference is given to projects that propose long distance, integrated, intra- and inter-county trails and for the construction of new trails. There should be a long term, stable management of the trails in place. The grants cannot be used for land acquisition through eminent domain. The FY 2001 funding budget was \$338,400. OHV applications may be submitted January 1 – March 1 of each year.

- Open Land Trust (OLT) Grant Program

This program provides grants to local governments to acquire lands from willing sellers, for public, outdoor, natural resources for recreational purposes. Funding assistance is available for 50 percent of the eligible project costs or 90 percent for agencies qualifying as “economically disadvantaged.” The maximum grant assistance is \$2 million per year. A conservation easement shall be conveyed to IDNR for all property acquired with OLT assistance. The FY 2001 funding budget was \$9,727,800. OLT applications can be sent July 1 – September 1 of each year.

- Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Grants

This largest grant program provides local governments with funding to acquire and/or develop public outdoor recreation areas which serve a wide range of open space and recreation purposes. The grants are used for basic recreational opportunities, including land for parks and facilities like ballfields and playgrounds. Project sizes range from small pocket lots to large community parks. Renovation of existing facilities, such as sports courts, playgrounds, swimming pools, park roads, and architectural/engineering services, can be accomplished as well, since aging infrastructure is a dilemma in many communities. Approved projects are eligible for up to 50 percent reimbursement. Maximum grant



assistance for development/renovation projects is \$400,000 per annual request. Acquisition projects are limited to \$750,000 per annual request. The program is financed through a portion of the state's real estate transfer tax. Preference is given to projects that are located in areas that fall below the statewide average for parks and recreational facilities. The project should be consistent with the adopted local plan and demonstrate site suitability for the proposed use. A local financial contribution and a no-fee public use are also priorities. The FY 2001 funding budget was \$21,310,000. OSLAD applications must be submitted May 1 – July 1 of each year.

- Recreational Trails Program

These federal grants are available to provide up to 80 percent funding for both motorized and non-motorized trail acquisition, development, rehabilitation, enhancement, and maintenance of trails open to the public. The grants can be used to acquire trail corridors from willing sellers through easements or fee simple title. A minimum 20 percent non-federal funding match must be in place. The program was created through the National Recreation Trail Fund Act (NRTFA) as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), which later was reauthorized as the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA 21). TEA 21 is currently being examined for reauthorization. Law dictates that 30 percent of Illinois' RTP funding be used for motorized trail projects, 30 percent for non-motorized projects, and the remaining 40 percent for multi-use motorized or non-motorized trails. Any projects must comply with American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards and Illinois Department of Transportation bike facility policies in order to use federal funds. Preference is given to projects that appeal to a diversity and number of user groups and have maintenance capabilities. Development or enhancement of the American Discovery Trail and Grand Illinois Trail are also priorities. The FY 2001 funding budget was \$837,400. Applications may be submitted January 1 – March 1 of each year.

- Local Government Snowmobile Grants

This grant program provides financial assistance for the acquisition and development/rehabilitation of public snowmobile areas, trails, and facilities. Any local agency with statutory authority to acquire and develop lands for public park and recreation purposes may apply. Reimbursement provides up to 100 percent of development/rehabilitation/equipment costs that solely benefit public snowmobiling, 90 percent of linear trail acquisition costs, and 50 percent of acquisition and development costs that seasonally benefit snowmobiling. Preference is given to projects that are located in areas that have a high number of registered snowmobiles in the project service area and that have documented support from the snowmobiling public. The grants should be used for new construction of trails instead of renovation of existing trails. The program is financed through snowmobile registration fees. The FY 2001 funding budget was \$86,600. Applications may be submitted March 1 – May 1 of each year.

- Snowmobile Trail Establishment Fund

This program is not intended for local governments. It provides 100 percent project financial assistance to incorporated, private snowmobile clubs in Illinois. They may develop and maintain snowmobile trails and related facilities on private land for public snowmobiling. The grants can be obtained for trail development costs, signing, fencing, trail groomers, bridges, and parking facilities. Preference is given to projects that promote trails linking public lands having existing snowmobile trails or facilities. They should have minimal adverse environmental and social impact. The program is funded through snowmobile registration fees. Applications may be submitted March 1 – May 1 of each year.