



# Open Space, Parks & Recreation

## Introduction and Overview

Whether you want to bike miles through the forest preserve, kayak on Lake Sedgewick, hike the expansive grasslands, sip a latte at Crescent Park or just romp at the neighborhood playground, you will not run short of ways to enjoy the Orland Park open space and park system.

Cook County Forest Preserves, Open Lands properties, parks, pathways and trails, waterways, ponds and detention areas, civic spaces, street parkways and medians, school grounds, golf courses, and cemeteries work together to contribute to the character of Orland Park. Many of these areas include preserved remnants of the wetlands, creeks, grasslands, prairies and mature forests that once dominated the regional landscape. Others provide diverse recreational opportunities like baseball, swimming, indoor exercise and even Frisbee golf. Some spaces are private and some are public, some spaces are active and some are passive; but all combine to form the infrastructure of the Orland Park open space system.

The open space system is a key defining feature of Orland Park and provides substantial value and pride to the community. Over the past twenty years, the Village has made significant progress in expanding and improving the open space system through Open Lands acquisitions, park expansion and sensitive stormwater facility design. Moving forward, the Village will continue to expand the open space system, connect existing assets, provide easier access and unify the identity Orland Park's open spaces.

*The Village will capitalize on, its natural heritage to create a beautiful, sustainable and healthy place by connecting open spaces, preserving sensitive natural resources, providing active and passive recreation opportunities, and educating the public.*

*(Community Visioning Session)*

### **2030 Vision**

In 2030, Orland Park will have a unified, connected and accessible open space infrastructure system that includes a range of experiences from active to passive at a range of scales. The Village will capitalize on, its natural heritage to create a beautiful, sustainable and healthy place by connecting open spaces, preserving sensitive natural resources, providing active and passive recreation opportunities, and educating the public.

### **Key Concept**

A key concept behind this chapter is the view of “open space as infrastructure”. Like other infrastructure, such as roads, water, utilities, storm water and sewer; adequate open space is essential to the functioning of a community. Also, like other infrastructure, open space must be considered, planned, funded and maintained. This chapter provides the framework for ‘Open Space as Infrastructure’ and includes strategies for the identification, protection, and improvement of Orland Park’s open space system now and into the future.

### **Open Space Parks & Recreation Principles**

- Consider place-appropriate open space in all development and redevelopment.
- Establish and maintain a functioning open space system including spaces of different scales connected via trails, sidewalks and natural corridors.
- Preserve natural areas to protect native plant and wildlife habitat corridors.
- Increase the use of green infrastructure techniques.



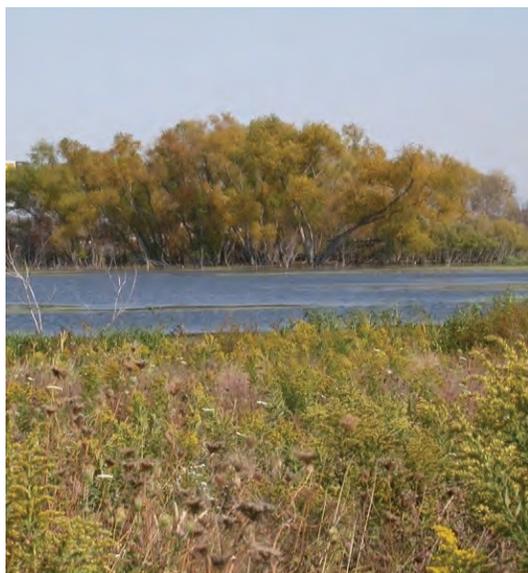
*Lake Sedgewick, Orland Park. (Webmeier, 2013)*



*Liberty Run 2012, Orland Park*

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## Open Space, Parks & Recreation Components



Grasslands Forest Preserve, Chorus Frog Pond. (OGV, 2011)

### GO TO 2040

Orland Park's Open Space, Parks, and Recreation Chapter aligns closely with the Livable Communities Chapter of the CMAP GO TO 2040 Plan recommendations to expand and improve parks and open space.

CMAP Recommendations:

- Preserve the regions most important natural areas based on a green infrastructure network that follows waterway corridors, expands existing preserves, and creates new preserves in the region.
- Add more Parks to meet the open space and recreational needs of as many residents as possible. Provide additional parks in the areas least served by them.
- Provide greenway connections between parks and preserves. Double the number of greenway trail mileage by 2040.

The components that follow are summarized and intended to provide only a broad overview of the multi-faceted elements that contribute to the Open Space, Parks & Recreation of Orland Park.

### Regional Plans

Open space planning is regional by nature. It is important to recognize stakeholders that will play a key role in the future of Orland Park's open space system. Below is a partial list of regional planning efforts that have already or will shape the open space system in Orland Park.

#### Cal-Sag Trail

A major regional recreation amenity that provides a trail between Lake Michigan and the I & M Canal. Connection to the trail from Orland Park can be made via Harlem Avenue or Southwest Highway. (FCST, 2013)

#### Chicago Wilderness

The Chicago Wilderness Consortium Green Infrastructure Vision assesses the open space system of our region at four scales, regional, community, neighborhood and site. (Chicago Wilderness, 2012)

#### Forest Preserve Acquisition and Trails

Increase and enhance the existing system of forest preserve trails to create wildlife habitat, reduce flooding and increase property value. (FPDCC, 2013b)

#### Hickory Creek Watershed Update, 2011 Update

The Hickory Creek Watershed Plan includes the following recommendations for Orland Park:

1. Conservation development in the Spring Creek area near 159th Street
2. Natural area restoration in the Grassland's area.
3. Conservation easements in the Lake Sedgewick/Good Shepherd Cemetery/Calvary Church area.
4. Proposed restoration project of Marley Creek at 179th Street

(Geosyntec, CGL and Dietz, 2011)

#### Northeast Illinois Regional Greenway and Trails Plan, 2009 Update

"Originally completed in 1992 and updated in 1997 and in 2009, the Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways and Trails Plan sets out a vision for an interconnected network of stream and land-based green corridors and 2,700 miles of multi-use trails throughout the seven-county region. The plan envisions a network of continuous greenway and trail corridors, linked across jurisdictions, providing scenic beauty, natural habitat, and recreational and transportation opportunities for our communities" (CMAP, 2009).

## Bobolinks from Argentina fly 6,000 miles to start their families in Cook County.

Every summer, several species of songbirds arrive in our largest open grasslands to nest. With a tendency to stay out in the open and make themselves heard, bobolinks are a very noticeable example. In June, bobolinks arrive in North American grasslands, having flown some 6,000 miles from the pampas grasslands of Argentina, one of the longest bird migrations in the New World. The males, their plumage resembling a handsome tuxedo, arrive about a week before the duller females.

Chicago-region grasslands, particularly those larger than 250 acres, are critically important for bobolinks, which require treeless, grassy expanses to breed.  
(FPDCC, 2013)



Bobolinks. (FPDCC, 2013)

## Cook County Forest Preserves

Orland Park is adjacent to over 15,000 acres of County Forest Preserves. The forest preserves are owned and operated by the Cook County Forest Preserve District and Will County Forest Preserve District and provide public access to expansive natural spaces.

## Open Lands

One indication of the value Orland Park residents place on open space as infrastructure was the successful Open Lands Referendum Initiative approved by Orland Park voters in 2000. During a time of rapid development that threatened many natural areas, the voters approved a \$20 million bond to purchase and maintain land for open space. Since 1995, when the Village Board created the Open Lands Commission and the non profit Open Lands Corporation, 17 areas totaling approximately 280 acres have been acquired and numerous conservation easements secured with Open Land funds, grants and donations. The Open Lands Commission operates under the following objectives:

- Preserve critical and sensitive environmental areas
- Provide comprehensive linkage between open spaces
- Add to existing holdings for specific advantages
- Provide wildlife habitat
- Provide additional open space in already developed areas
- Improve aesthetic benefits
- Preserve landscape vistas

## Pathways & Trails

The Village owns and maintains 25 miles of dedicated off-street multi-use paths and actively pursues new paths via grants and as part of the capital improvement budget. The Village trail system connects to over 13 miles of bike path in the Tinley Creek Forest Preserve system, where 33 miles are planned. Neighboring communities including Palos Heights, also plan to increase their path systems, providing opportunities for an interconnected network.

## Conservation Easements, Yards & Bufferyards

Although private and not usually accessible by the general public, conservation easements, yards and landscape buffer yards provide visual open space that contributes to the character of Orland Park. Conservation easements or tree preservation easements are often required as part of a development in order to preserve a unique natural feature or mature tree stand. Although privately owned, these easements limit the ability to alter the natural area. These types of easements are in place in some of Orland Park's subdivisions including but not limited to, Windhaven West, Bunratty Estates, and Tall Woods Estates. Residential yards define the scale and feel of an area and buffer yards provide landscaped areas around all new developments.

## Churches & Cemeteries

The Catholic Church owns approximately 400 acres that includes the Good Shepherd Cemetery at the southeast corner of 159th Street and 104th Avenue. The cemetery was consecrated in 2005 and serves local Catholic cemetery needs.



*Stellwagen Farm, Orland Park. (Wehmier, 2013)*



## Recreation & Parks

The Village of Orland Park owns and manages 60 public parks on over 561 acres. The parks range in size from small neighborhood tot lots to large parks such as the 192 acre Centennial Park. In addition to passive open space opportunities, available activities and facilities include picnic areas, sports fields, a water park, fitness centers, playgrounds, hiking and biking trails, ice rinks, and fishing lakes. In addition, the Village’s Recreation Department manages a full slate of programs and activities. These options enhance the quality of life for people living and working in the Village. The outstanding quality of programs and facilities, such as the Centennial Pool, serve as a regional draw to Orland Park. In fact, 84% of residents rate the community recreational offerings as good or excellent, much higher than the national average. (NCR, 2012)



Rock Wall at Sportsplex, Orland Park

### Live, Laugh, Play

#### Orland Park Recreation and Parks Department

The Orland Park Recreation and Parks Department is a cornerstone of the Village that provides programming and special events in parks and other public facilities and maintains and constructs many of the Village’s open spaces. This department significantly contributes to the sense of community and culture of the Village. The National Citizen Survey noted that more residents use Orland Park recreational facilities than comparison jurisdictions. In fact, among residents, 66% use the recreation centers, 49% participate in programs or activities and 82% frequent neighborhood or community parks!

The Recreation Department is committed to pursuing the lifelong recreational needs of the residents of Orland Park. They strive to enhance the quality of life for all participants and to create memorable experiences by offering progressive, enriching, recreation, and leisure opportunities while preserving natural resources for present and future generations. The Recreation Departments core values include:

**Safety** - Provide a safe and secure environment within a fun and educational atmosphere.

**Excellence** - Make every effort to meet and exceed the needs and expectations of our community in a consistently welcoming environment.

**Recreate** - Offer fulfilling experiences that create moments of enjoyment.

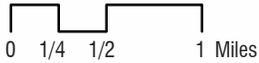
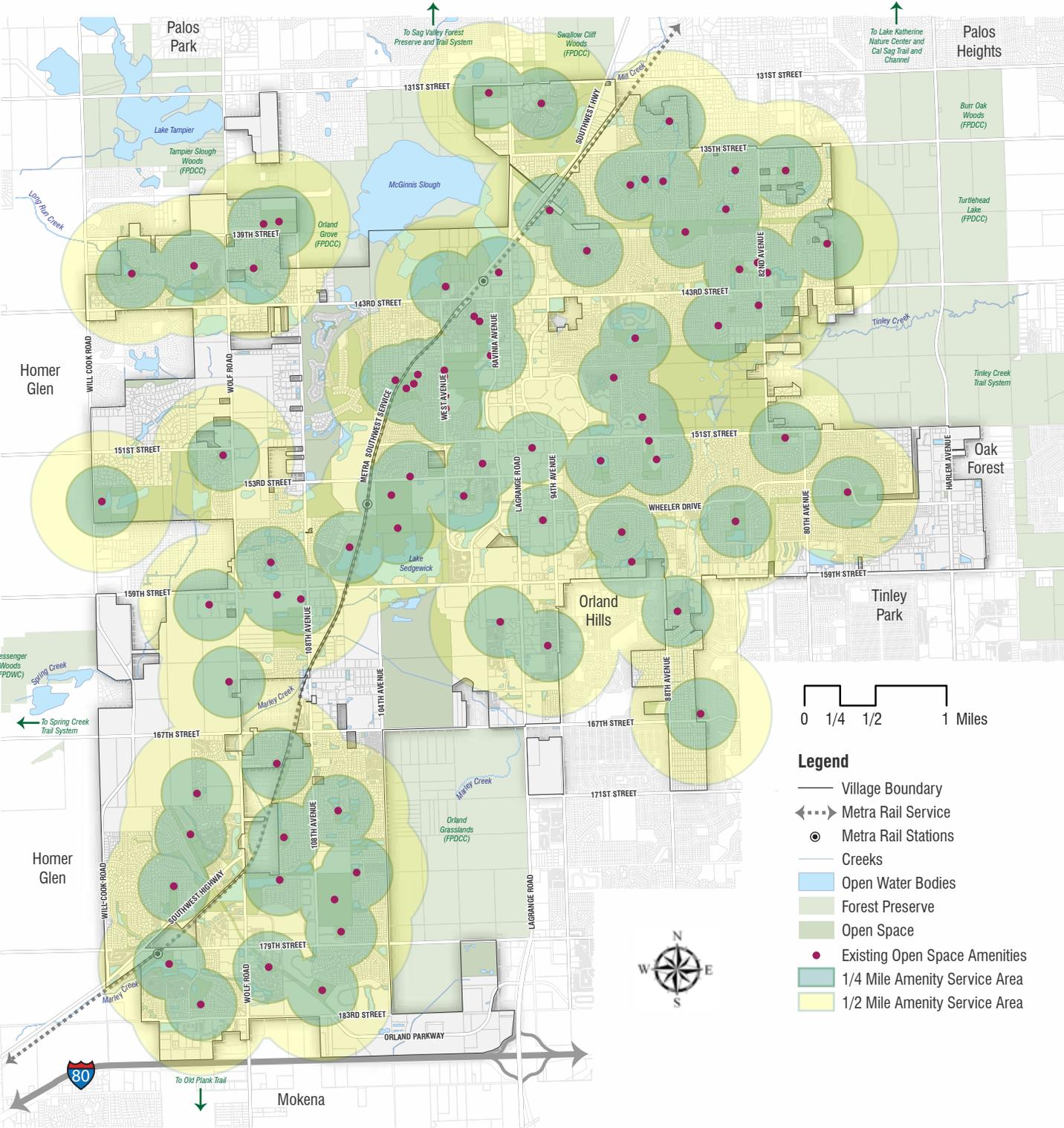
**Value** – Commit to challenge ourselves to deliver the highest quality programs, parks, and services to our community.

**Integrity** – Achieve a high level of ethical standards by ensuring that all community members are treated equally in respect to programs, facilities, and services.

**Cultural** – Promote and support cultural and fine arts programming and events within the community.

**Environment** – Preserve, maintain, and enhance green space and outdoor recreational areas by encouraging and promoting responsible community use. (NCR, 2012, VOP, 2013 and Recreation Department Mission)

**ORLAND PARK OPEN SPACE AMENITY AREAS**



**Legend**

- Village Boundary
- > Metra Rail Service
- ⊙ Metra Rail Stations
- Creeks
- Open Water Bodies
- Forest Preserve
- Open Space
- Existing Open Space Amenities
- 1/4 Mile Amenity Service Area
- 1/2 Mile Amenity Service Area





*Youth Baseball Game, Orland Park. (Wehmeier, 2013)*



*Golf Course, Orland Park. (Wehmeier, 2013)*



*Lake Sedgewick, Orland Park. (Wehmeier, 2013)*

## Schools

Area school facilities provide space for many popular indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities for students and spectators including sports fields. The schools are discussed in more detail in the Community & Culture Chapter. In Orland Park, fields are in particularly high demand to serve the recreational needs of families.

## Civic Commercial Plazas, Gateways & Features

As a regional commercial destination, Orland Park has a substantial amount of retail development. Many new developments like Southmoor Commons and Orland Park Crossing incorporated plazas gateways and other features into their overall design. The finished product provides a pleasant and attractive environment for shoppers and residents while providing open space areas where traditional parks are out of context. Gateways provide visual cues and alerts as visitors and residents enter Orland Park. Gateways can be found at a number of locations like 131st and LaGrange, Harlem and 143rd and Will-Cook and 143rd.

## Golf Courses

Although Orland Park water towers boast ‘World’s Golf Center’, there are only a few remaining, but popular golf courses within municipal boundaries. Silver Lake is the largest course by land area at over 300 acres, is publicly accessible and has been in operation since 1927. Crystal Tree Country Club, a private course, and Palos Country Club, a 9-hole public course, are both integrated into planned residential developments. Finally, White Mountain Golf offers a nine-hole executive course and driving range at the south end of Orland Park .

## Lakes, Ponds, Wetlands & Waterways

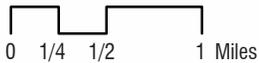
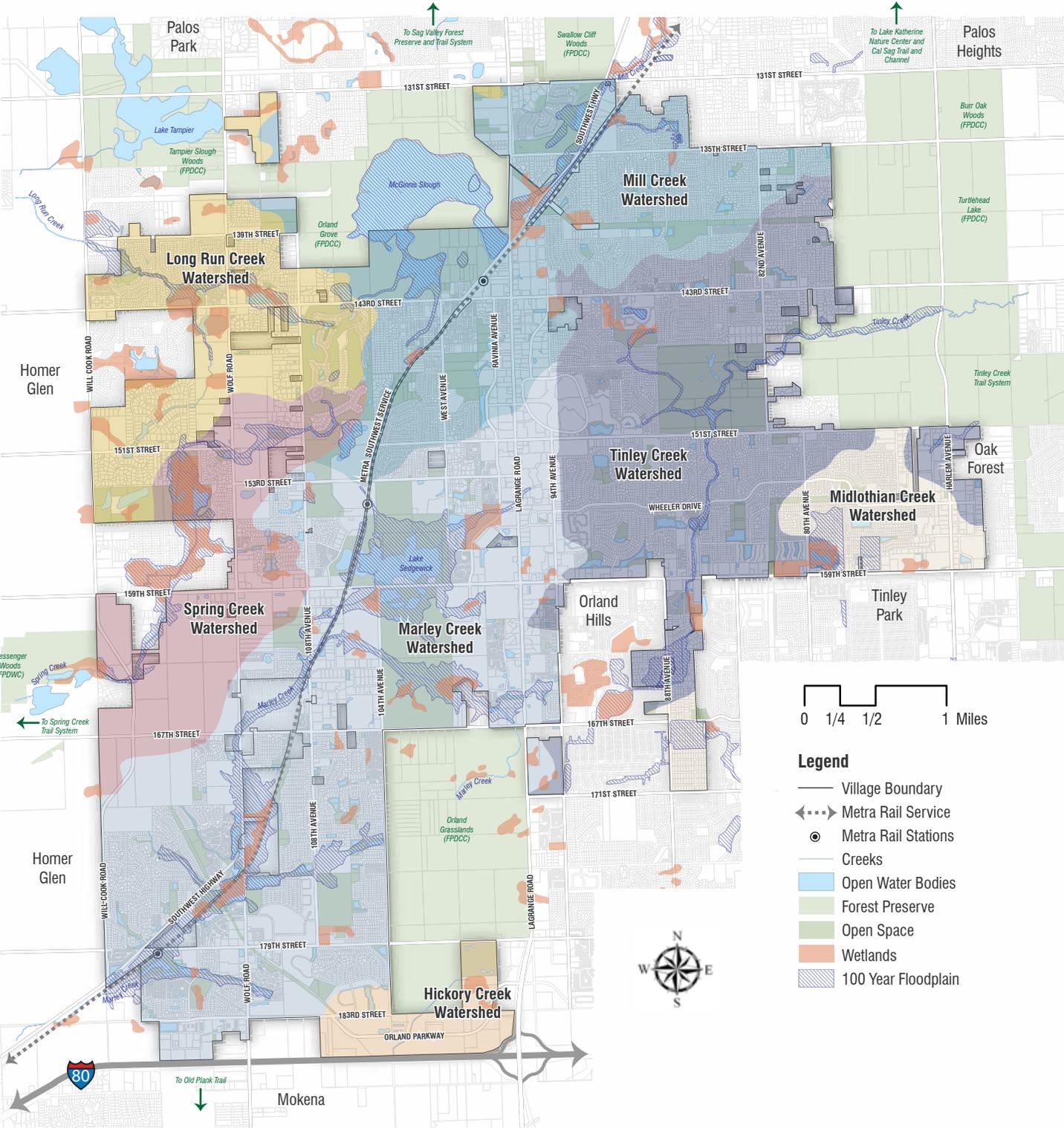
Most lakes and ponds in Orland Park are man-made and designed for stormwater management as part of development projects. Lake Sedgewick, Orland Park’s largest pond, was purchased by the Village in 1989 as part of Centennial Park. Between 1998 and 2000, extensive renovations restored vegetation and opened up critical waterways. In addition to Lake Sedgewick, the Village includes 326 acres of publically owned areas of creeks, ponds and detention areas. Detention ponds collect stormwater to control flooding, but also provide habitat opportunities for fish and other wildlife. Residents also enjoy the banks for fishing and hiking. The Village is home to approximately 185 acres of private ponds. New ponds are designed with natural edges and best management practices, but many of the Village’s older ponds should be renovated in a more sustainable manner.

Orland Park has 6 tributary creek headwaters which include Long Run Creek, Marley Creek, Midlothian Creek, Mill Creek, Spring Creek, and Tinley Creek and touches seven watersheds. High quality wetlands are important natural features and can be found throughout Orland Park. Orland Park includes a diverse mix of wetlands, woodlands, savannahs, streams, prairies, streams, and lakes. “Orland Park sits on a true continental divide with Mill, Tinley, & Midlothian Creeks flowing into Lake Michigan while Marley, Long Run, and Spring Creeks flow into the DesPlaines River” (Mule, 2002).

## Road Rights of Way

Although often overlooked, road rights of way play a critical role in an open space infrastructure system. The sidewalks and parkways provide important physical and visual connections to other open spaces. Although Orland Park has a wide array of open spaces in the form of parks, natural areas and forest preserves, the road rights of way, especially on the west side of town, do not consistently provide pedestrian or bicycle friendly access.

**ORLAND PARK NATURAL RESOURCES**



**Legend**

- Village Boundary
- ◄---► Metra Rail Service
- Metra Rail Stations
- Creeks
- Open Water Bodies
- Forest Preserve
- Open Space
- Wetlands
- 100 Year Floodplain



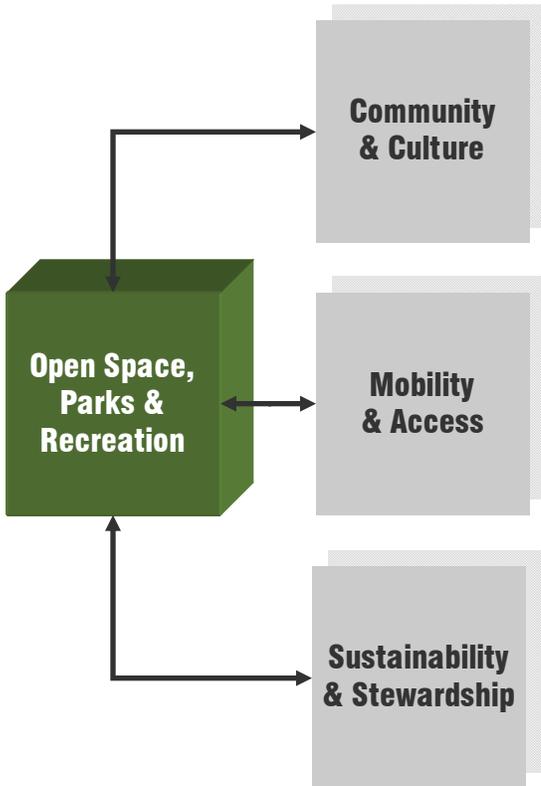
**Watersheds**

- Hickory Creek Watershed
- Long Run Creek Watershed
- Marley Creek Watershed
- Midlothian Creek Watershed
- Mill Creek Watershed
- Spring Creek Watershed
- Tinley Creek Watershed

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## Recommendations

The recommendations in this chapter provide guidance on establishing an open space network that is a piece of critical Village infrastructure. Orland Park will have a unified, connected and accessible open space infrastructure system that includes active and passive experiences at a range of scales. The Open Space Chapter is closely related to the Community & Culture, Mobility & Access, and Sustainability & Stewardship Chapters.



### Needs & Issues

1. Through the recommendations made by the Open Lands Commission, the Village has acquired and preserved over 267 acres of open space, but limited access means that many residents do not even know they are available for public enjoyment.
2. The existing open space system, although it contains a wide variety of different spaces, is disjointed in its identity. Many users do not understand the open space system. Users often do not understand the purpose of specific open spaces, especially as related to natural areas. Prairie restoration zones are often misinterpreted as 'weeds'.
3. Lack of pedestrian friendly sidewalks and path, especially along major road corridors prevents connectivity to many of Orland Park's open spaces.
4. The parks system is aging and should be regularly analyzed and monitored to ensure that it provides resources and amenities desired by the community. Improvements must be planned to ensure proper maintenance is provided.
5. A wide variety of recreational programs serve Orland Park residents, but the Village must continue to adjust to changing demographics and trends to keep up with the needs of residents



Outdoor Seating Area, Orland Park



*Humphrey Woods Trail, Orland Park*

## **GOAL 1.0 CONNECT**

Connect open green space. Interconnected systems should include both natural and man-made features that link together both local and regional systems.

### **Objective 1.1**

All Orland Park residents will be able to access the open space system within 1/4 mile of their home.

#### **Action Items**

- Maintain the Open Space Framework plan as a tool to plan and monitor the open space system.
- Complete critical connections to the Orland Park Open Space System. Priority connections include Evergreen Park, Cachey Park, Discovery Park, Breckenridge Park, Schussler Park.
- Consider other open spaces that, with permission, may offer opportunities to link greenways including rights of way, medians, parkways, utility corridors, stormwater detention facilities, school property, golf courses, parkways and cemeteries.
- Identify and develop greenway opportunities on a site-by-site basis as land is developed.
- Emphasize the development of sensitively designed paths and path connections within and to all open spaces including Open Lands.
- Acquire land for open space preservation that connects critical natural areas.

### **Objective 1.2**

The open space infrastructure system will provide access to neighboring and regional open space networks including the open spaces in other municipalities and the County Forest Preserve Districts.

#### **Action Items**

- Work with neighboring communities to include regional connections to tie into neighboring open space systems.
- Work with Forest Preserve Districts to enhance existing and develop additional access points to the forest preserves near Orland Park. Priority Areas include North of 131st to Sag Valley Forest Preserve System, and west off of Will Cook Road to tie into Messenger Woods.
- Preserve system and other regional systems as shown on the Northeast Illinois Greenways and Trails Plan 2007.
- Consider multi-jurisdictional grant efforts to secure funding for open space connections.

## Why are connected greenways important?

Wildlife benefits from connected natural areas. The Blanding's Turtle is a good example. This Great Lakes Region centered reptile is on the endangered species list due largely to habitat fragmentation and destruction. The Blanding's Turtle lives quietly in marshes, ponds, streams, and shallow bays, but during the nesting season, a female Blanding's turtle may be found more than a kilometer from where it hibernated while seeking good nesting grounds! Unfortunately, many are killed on roadways and through other hazards as they migrate. The Blanding's Turtle chances of survival are improved through continuous connected natural areas, rather than isolated ponds.

*(DEC, 2013 and Enchelmeyer, 2009)*



*Blanding's Turtle. (Enchelmeyer, 2009)*

## GOAL 2.0 PRESERVE

Preserve and enhance natural resources in order to aid in flood control, improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, restore wildlife and vegetation, present recreational and educational opportunities, and contribute to the overall aesthetics and appeal of the community.

### Objective 2.1

Orland Park will preserve existing high quality water systems, protect floodplains, improve existing natural and manmade systems and use best management practices for new manmade infrastructure systems.

#### Action Items

- Utilize streams and water bodies, especially the Spring Creek and Mill Creek corridors, as the primary framework for the greenway system.
- Encourage preservation of natural overland flow routes and 'day-lighting' or restoration of stream beds buried in prior developments.
- Maximize and protect streambed buffers to protect natural resources and provide for wildlife corridors. Priority Corridors include the Spring Creek and Mill Creek.
- Utilize storm water best management practices for optimal flood control and to naturalize appearance of existing and proposed detention facilities.
- Recognize watersheds as whole systems that function as unified areas that benefit both natural habitat and human development.
- Cooperate with regional initiatives to protect regional resources such as watershed plans.
- Preserve existing and develop new natural vegetative buffers adjacent to water bodies and wetlands.
- Preserve existing natural connections and amenities like wetlands and floodplains to foster wildlife and native plant habitat.



*Threatened Savannah Blazing Star, Orland Park. (Mule, 2013)*

## How can you help preserve open space?

1. Make a tax-deductible financial contribution to the Open Lands of Orland Park Fund.
2. If you own property and wish to continue ownership, consider a nature preserve dedication, long-term lease, conservation easements, or covenants. These also may result in reduced property taxes.
3. If you own property and wish to transfer the deed, consider an outright donation, life estate, bargain sale, or installment sale.
4. Contact the Cook County Forest Preserve Board of Commissioners and tell them that you want land acquisition to be made a top priority as their predecessor:  
 536 North Harlem Avenue  
 River Forest, IL 60305  
<http://fpdcc.com/contact>
1. You can improve the natural quality of your own property by planting native prairie plants and trees.



*Humphrey Woods Native Buffer, Orland Park*

### Objective 2.2

The vegetative heritage of Orland Park will be highlighted by incorporating native and natural prairie plantings in public spaces, requiring native plants in new developments and preserving existing mature stands of forest.

#### Action Items

- Incorporate native planting areas into playgrounds and other public spaces.
- Support the restoration of landscapes native to the area and encourage the use of native plants in all landscaped areas.
- Preserve existing trees where feasible. Identify and seek ways to protect significant stands of mature forests.
- Maintain current tree programs such as the Tree City USA status and Tree Mitigation Account.
- Utilize the Tree Mitigation Account to plant trees on public properties including rights of way, parks and detention areas.
- Establish and maintain a nursery of native plants and hardy perennials for use in public areas.
- Improve the condition of current Village owned natural areas by removing invasive and aggressive exotics and introduction native vegetation.
- Restore soil health, cover and fertility through agricultural, forestry and development regulations that prevent erosion, loss of nutrients and the export of rich local soil.

### Objective 2.3

Orland Park will provide connected ecosystems to foster habitat for plants and wildlife by preserving natural open space and promoting preservation of sensitive environmental features.

#### Action Items

- Consider preservation and ecosystem restoration opportunities as part of every development or redevelopment review. Areas with steep slopes (10%+), high quality water systems and/or mature vegetation warrant special attention.
- Establish maintenance and monitoring programs for both Village owned and privately owned natural areas to protect and restore stream channels, wetlands, prairies, and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- Periodically review land use regulations and update as needed to safeguard environmentally sensitive areas. For example, restrict placement of structures on steep slopes (10%+).
- Identify and promote mechanisms to protect additional public and private open space including fee simple purchase, dedicated trusts, conservation easements, tax incentives.
- Preserve and enhance scenic views and vistas.
- Support Orland Park Open Lands Commission in the acquisition of additional public land for preservation purposes
- Consider guidelines for bird friendly architecture to protect flying birds.

**GOAL 3.0 RECREATE**

Protect and enrich active parks and recreation opportunities in order to improve the physical and mental health of citizens of all ages, strengthen local economies, attract new business, contribute to the local tax base, increase property values, protect the environment, and preserve wildlife habitat.

**Objective 3.1**

Orland Park will provide a park system that accommodates the recreational needs of all demographics.

**Action Items**

- Locate future park sites and other community facilities to meet community needs, protect natural resources, provide public gathering spaces, and link into greenways.
- Expand access to existing Open Lands for passive recreation opportunities through the use of trails and other amenities, with care to protect sensitive natural features.
- Expand and complete Orland Park’s Recommended Bikeway System to provide convenient access to the park system.
- Conduct regular needs assessments to inventory existing parks, facilities and programs. Identify the recreational needs and priorities of residents.
- Maintain Recreation and Parks levels of service per NRPA (National Recreation & Parks Association) standards.
- Use programming to celebrate neighborhoods. Consider neighborhood block parties—gathering pavilions in select park spaces to facilitate events.
- Encourage residents to take ownership of their neighborhood park.

**Objective 3.2**

Parks in Orland Park will align with the goals of each zoning district and will be compatible with adjacent land uses.

**Action Items**

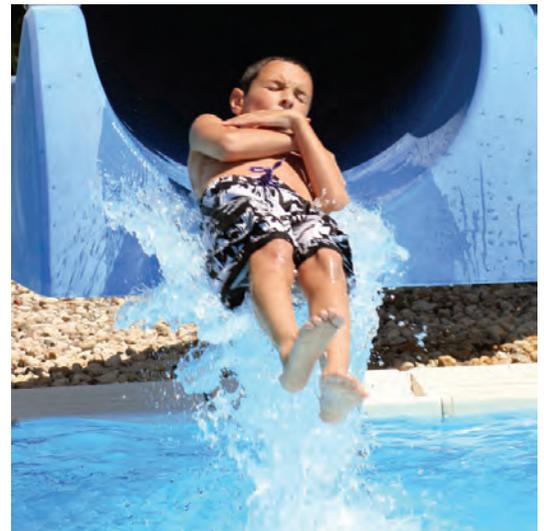
- Design parks and open spaces to align with the public realm goals of each zoning district. For example:
  - Develop downtown spaces in an urban form, such as town square and boulevards.
  - Develop residential district spaces as parks with active recreation and access to natural amenities
  - Develop commercial open spaces to focus on the needs of shoppers and employees, such as seating and outdoor cafes.
- Require context sensitive social gathering places in all new development or redevelopment.
- Develop regional facilities for sports requiring considerable open space, such as baseball, soccer, football that will contribute to open space inventory.
- Where public open space is not feasible, maximize potential of right of way by including parkways, sidewalks and landscaping.
- Prioritize recreation needs for the next 20 years that may include a regional sports field area, a sportsplex pool, lacrosse fields and/or lighted fields.
- Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions, private organizations, and public private partnerships to manage, restore and expand the region’s open spaces.



*Ice Skating, Orland Park*



*Lake Sedgewick Kayaking, Orland Park*



*Centennial Park Aquatic Center, Orland Park*



*Recreational Programs, Orland Park*



*Orland Bikeway Signage, Orland Park*



*Recreational Programs, Orland Park*

**GOAL 4.0 EDUCATE AND BRAND**

Educate and inform the public about the Orland Park open space infrastructure system.

**Objective 4.1**

Orland Park residents will be informed and educated on open space issues like sustainability, preservation, natural systems and recreational activities.

**Action Items**

- Engage civic groups as a resource to sustain long term care of open space through volunteer stewardship programs.
- Support local groups such as Orland Grassland Volunteers, and foster similar programs for other natural areas.
- Further develop partnerships with local schools and universities to develop educational programs for students and residents.
- Provide access to open spaces for educational field work, scientific research and other preservation activities.
- Continue to prioritize user friendly access to parks and recreation information on the Village’s web site.
- Develop strategies to inform the public of opportunities to conserve property for open space protection.
- Integrate ecological literacy in educational and vocational curricula through the future Orland Park Nature Center.

**Objective 4.2**

The Orland Park open space infrastructure will have a unique identity and brand that unifies the network of spaces and places.

**Action Items**

- Develop a “brand” for Orland Park’s open space system with distinctive coordinated signage, site furniture, lighting, etc.
- Sponsor a naming contest for the trail system, similar to the “Centennial Trail” or “Old Plank Trail” in other jurisdictions.
- Incorporate Public Art into the Open Space greenway network. Expand the Village’s “Art in the Parks” program to include the trail system.
- Select uniform site furnishings and distinctive signage to be utilized for trail system.
- Establish comprehensive and uniform signage programs to name, describe, and advertise open space elements including ponds, hiking and bike paths, creek crossings, and wetlands.
- Locate, and identify with signage, the continental divide that traverses Orland Park.





*Sportsplex, Orland Park. (Webmeier, 2013)*



*Open Lands Acquisition, Orland Park*

## Open Space Framework Master Plan

The purpose of the Open Space Framework Master Plan is to provide a visual roadmap for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan recommendations. This plan provides an overview of Orland Park's open space system and is primarily based on the community's environmental features, such as open water, forest preserve, public and private parks, civic spaces and other open spaces. The greenways, streams and trails connect the infrastructure, tying all of the open spaces into a unified whole. The following features are shown:

- Proposed primary trail system. This includes both existing and proposed portions of the trail system.
- Greenways that connect open spaces. Protection and expansion of buffers adjacent to these greenways increase the value of these corridors to vegetation, wildlife, and the public .
- "Opportunity Sites" identify future land possibilities particularly valued for future preservation as open space.
- "Exceptional View icons" identify views to be protected and enhanced.
- Regional trail links to neighboring communities.

### Opportunity Sites

Included on the Framework Map are "Opportunity Sites", or sites particularly valued for future preservation as open space. Some of these areas may be available now for purchase, subject to funding, while some may not be available for many years. Some may be protected through donation, easement, or through private development initiatives. Numerous factors are important in determining the suitability of land for future open space, including:

1. **Preservation** of unique or fragile natural resources. This may include wetlands, floodplain, mature woods, and wildlife, as well as buffer to protect the integrity of these natural features. Open Lands has identified a list of areas that should be targeted for preservation, many of those areas are included in this listing.
2. **Connectivity** links green spaces together, which is important in developing a balanced ecosystem of plants and animals, as well as resident access to nature. Recreational value can be maximized in linked spaces that provide a series of experiences.
3. **Adjacency** of parks/open space to other parks/open space is more valuable because additional park services can often be delivered more efficiently.
4. **Parks and recreation service needs** may be met with the acquisition of the right amount and type of land in the needed location. Examples of service needs might include sports fields or tot lots.
5. **Even distribution** of open space facilities helps to assure that all Orland Park residents are provided adequate services within a convenient distance.
6. At the same time, **underserved areas** that serve the most people, or are more densely populated areas, can be more cost efficient in the delivery of services to more people.
7. Highly **accessible** and visible sites may offer more 'bang for the buck' in providing open space access to the public.

The following pages include an initial listing of the opportunity sites, with the primary justification for protection.

**1. ALDER RIDGE (Connectivity & Adjacency)**

This 13.4 acre parcel is surrounded on three sides by preserved land: Schumack Farms Open Lands to the south, and Forest land to the north and east. It was approved several years ago for a small subdivision. Much of the land has been farmed, but includes mature tree buffers and a small low quality wetland. The parcel would serve as an extension of Open Land’s Schumack Farm.

**2. NORTH OF FUTURE NATURE CENTER (Preservation & Connectivity)**

This 23 acre parcel is a part of Open Lands “Mill Creek Green Triangle” that has been targeted for acquisition by the Open Lands Commission. It consists mostly of wetland and floodplain, but also ten acres of upland that could accommodate a public access point. It is adjacent to the recently acquired Open Lands “O’Malley parcels”.

**3. NORTH OF DOOGAN PARK (Adjacency & Service Need)**

This area consists of two parcels totaling three acres. A proposed residential development, “Highland Estates” was approved by the Village Board in 2005 to develop five single family homes in this location. There is some varying topography & mature trees primarily on the eastern portion of the site, as well as a flat open area near the railroad tracks. The area is adjacent to the Robert Davidson Center and tennis courts in Doogan Park, and could potentially serve as a continuation and expansion of these park facilities.

**4. LAKE SEDGEWICK (Preservation & Connectivity)**

These two parcels are located along 159th Street adjacent to Centennial Park along the Lake Sedgewick shoreline and total approximately 10.6 acres. Two include houses, one that is in serious disrepair. The parcels appear to be in floodplain, and would therefore be difficult to develop. The parcels have been marketed for commercial and residential purposes.

**5. 159TH & 118TH STREET (Preservation)**

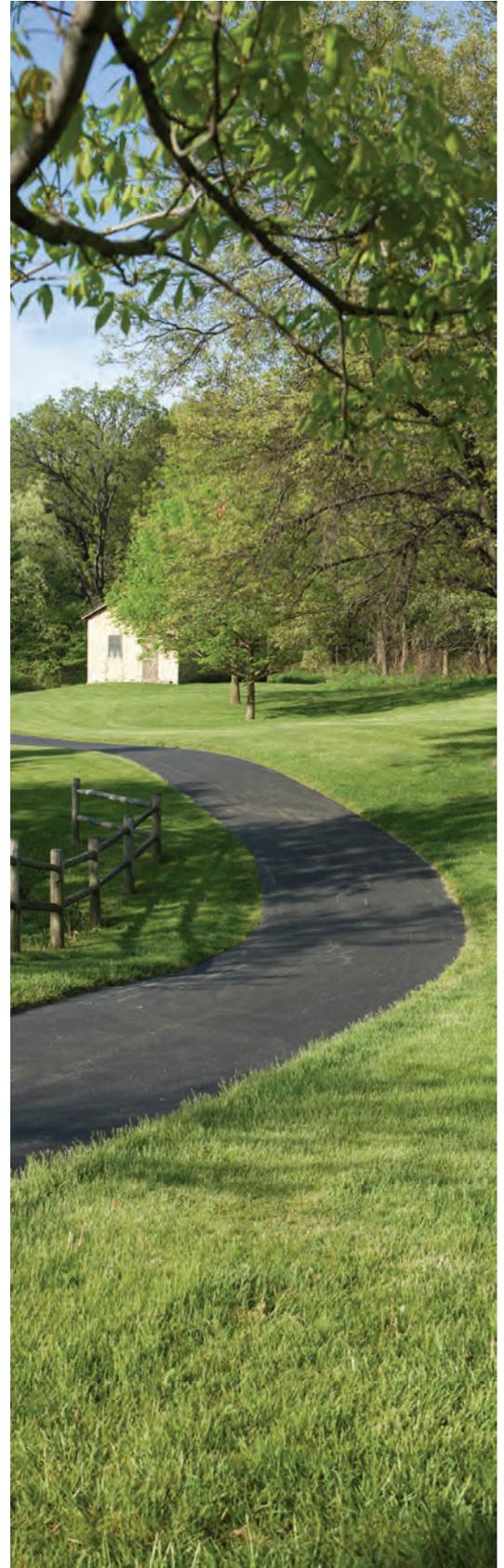
Three areas in this vicinity are exceptional because of mature woods, which are a limited commodity in the Village. Two are currently unincorporated, but within the Village planning area. They also include considerable topography and some wetlands and/or floodplain.

**6. SPRING CREEK PARK (Connectivity & Service Need)**

This area is owned by Gallagher & Henry and is likely to be developed for single family housing at some time in the future. Spring Creek Park is envisioned to serve the future parks and recreational needs of residents of this subdivision as well as the surrounding area. Spring Creek runs through the property, and is an important linkage of the open space along the creek corridor. The area has been largely farmed up to the creek edge; some of it includes floodplain and wetlands.

**7. 143RD & WOLF, ADJACENT TO LONG RUN WETLANDS—(Preservation & Connectivity)**

This area is adjacent to Long Run Creek Wetlands and includes mature oak trees located on a high point with considerable topography, plus wetlands and floodplain. Commercial development abuts to the west. The Yunker Schoolhouse is also located at the corner, a historic building that is eligible for local landmark status.



*Multi-Use Path, Orland Park. (Wehmeier, 2013)*



*Wetland Preservation, Orland Park*

**8. DOCTOR MARSH (Preservation & Connectivity)**

This area is a part of the Spring Creek corridor that is adjacent to Arbor Lake Open Lands to the west and a wetland/floodplain area to the east. Both areas would be connected by this opportunity site. Much of this area is potentially high quality wetlands, and the Village has invested in restoration efforts.

**9. SILVER LAKE COUNTRY CLUB (Populated Area & Even Distribution)**

This area currently serves local recreational needs as a private golf course. A large variety and number of trees have been planted in conjunction with the golf course development. The club is located in a fully developed residential area where large parks are difficult to aggregate, and where large numbers of people can benefit from recreational services. Tinley Creek crosses through this site and through Tinley Creek Forest Preserve, located about ¼ mile to the east.

**10. NW CORNER 167TH STREET & LAGRANGE ROAD—NORTH & WEST OF AMERICAN SALES (Preservation & Connectivity)**

This roughly 20 acre area consists of several parcels, some that are located in Marley Creek's floodplain, which continues southward through the Grasslands. Wetlands may be present. A house exists on one of the parcels. Despite the constraints, regular attempts have been made to develop the area. A town home development, "Tiara Glen" was approved for development in 2003 on a portion of the site.

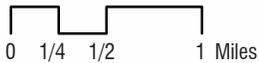
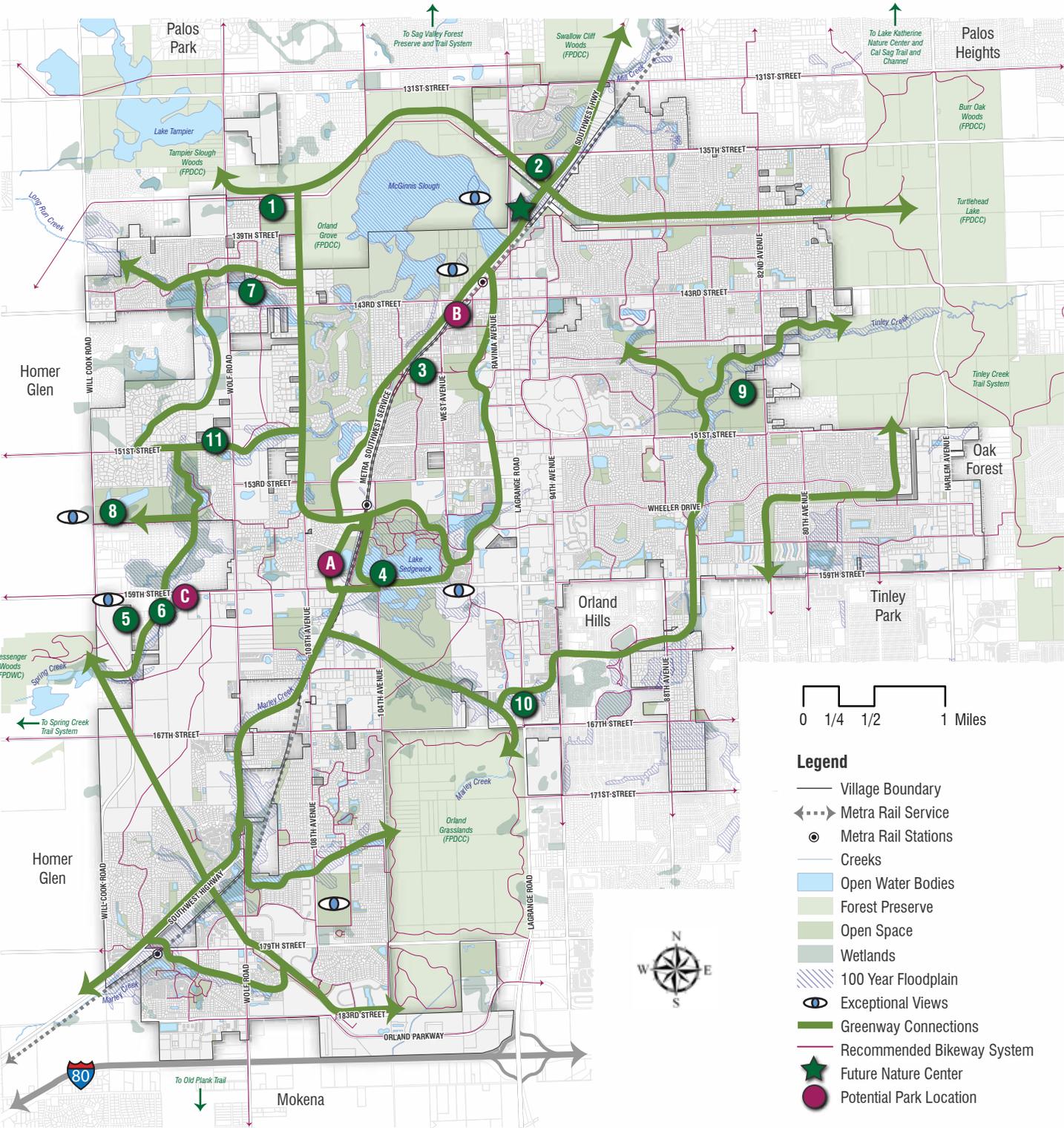
**11. NW CORNER 151ST STREET & WOLF ROAD—SOUTH & WEST OF CHURCH (Preservation & Connectivity)**

This is a heavily wooded area with significant topography. Spring Creek cuts through the southern portion. Most of the area is unincorporated and zoned for residential single family uses.



*Naturalized Detention, Orland Park*

**ORLAND PARK OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK PLAN**



**Legend**

- Village Boundary
- Metra Rail Service
- ⊙ Metra Rail Stations
- Creeks
- Open Water Bodies
- Forest Preserve
- Open Space
- Wetlands
- 100 Year Floodplain
- Exceptional Views
- Greenway Connections
- Recommended Bikeway System
- Future Nature Center
- Potential Park Location

**Opportunity Sites**

- |                        |                                       |                                             |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1 Alder Ridge          | 5 159th & 118th Street                | 9 Silver Lake Country Club                  |
| 2 Giannakis Parcel     | 6 Spring Creek Park                   | 10 NW Corner 167th Street and LaGrange Road |
| 3 North of Doogan Park | 7 Adjacent to Long Run Creek Wetlands | 11 NW Corner 151st Street and Wolf Road     |
| 4 Lake Sedgewick       | 8 Doctor Marsh                        |                                             |

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## Keystone Projects

The following sample projects have incorporated recommendations and principles identified in the Open Space, Parks & Recreation chapter. They are included for reference, to provide local context to the Comprehensive Plan.

### Centennial West

#### Project Description

The vision of this park, which includes rolling topography that provides expansive vistas to the east and west, is to provide an outdoor amphitheater for cultural events. The park is also connected to Centennial Park via an existing pedestrian tunnel.

#### Goals in Action

- Orland Park will provide a park system that accommodates the recreational needs of all demographics
- Locate future park sites and other community facilities to meet the community needs assessments, protect natural resources, provide public gathering spaces, and link into greenways.
- Use programming to celebrate neighborhoods. Consider neighborhood block parties—gathering pavilions in select park spaces to facilitate events. Encourage residents to take ownership of their neighborhood park.
- Preserve and enhance scenic views and vistas



City Lights Concert 2013, Orland Park. (Webmeier, 2013)



Centennial West Conceptual Plan, Orland Park



*Georgetown Park Gazebo, Orland Park*

## Proposed Park at 143rd St and Beacon Avenue

### Project Description

A wide Norfolk Southern/Metra right of way south of 143rd Street provides an opportunity to improve an existing gravel area into a neighborhood asset. The proposed linear park will highlight Orland Park's natural vegetative history while providing a strong pedestrian link between the Old Orland and Main Street areas of Downtown Orland Park. A proposed road will enhance vehicular access and provide public parking to serve Downtown businesses.

### Goals in Action

- The vegetative heritage of Orland Park will be highlighted by incorporating native and natural prairie plantings in public spaces.
- All Orland Park residents will be able to access the open space system within 1/4 mile of their home.
- Locate future park sites and other community facilities to meet the community needs assessments, protect natural resources, provide public gathering spaces, and link into greenways.
- Design parks and open spaces to align with the public realm goals of each zoning district



*Evergreen View Park, Orland Park*



*Beacon Park Conceptual Plan, Orland Park*

## Orland Park Nature Center

### Project Description

The proposed Orland Park Nature Center will serve as a gateway and welcome facility for the community and will provide a hub of information to educate residents on the unique natural, environmental and historical resources that are available on the site and in the surrounding community. The center will provide opportunities to experience, observe and learn about nature in a natural setting and through participatory activities on-site and nearby.

The site is adjacent to regionally important natural areas which include McGinnis Slough, and Mill Creek flowage and backwaters. McGinnis Slough is known regionally for its importance to wildlife habitat for migratory and breeding waterfowl that lies within and adjacent to the site.

### Goals in Action

- Expand access to existing Open Lands for passive recreation opportunities through the use of trails and other amenities, with care to protect sensitive natural features.
- Orland Park residents will be informed and educated on open space issues like sustainability, preservation, natural systems and recreational activities.
- Acquire land for open space preservation that connects critical natural areas.
- Engage civic groups as a resource to sustain long term care of open space through volunteer stewardship programs



*Bolingbrook Hidden Oaks Nature Center, Bolingbrook, IL*



*Willow Springs Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center, Willow Springs, IL*

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