

# La Crosse Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department Strategic Plan 2021- 2025 Overview



## Overview of the Park, Recreation & Forestry Department



As one of the largest municipal park systems in the state, the La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department oversees a 1,500 acre park system including: 47 parks, 20,000 trees, 18 shelters, 12 athletic fields, over 70 miles of paved and natural trails, 2,400 acres of marsh and blufflands, 2 beaches, 3 neighborhood facilities, 3 aquatic centers, 5 boat landings and 3 harbors. Many of these would not be possible without our partnerships and collaborations with our community groups.

## Overview Continued



Our programs have excellent attendance with 15,000 youth participants, 500 Special Olympics athletes, 300 tennis participants, in addition to over 340 adult sport teams.

## **This plan:**

- Serves as a guide
- Will be updated yearly
- Outlines the goals and objectives
- Provides an inventory of existing conditions and recommendations for future parks, recreation facilities and programs.

La Crosse Parks, Recreation  
and Forestry Department  
2021-2025  
Strategic Plan



City of La Crosse  
Parks, Recreation & Forestry

The Strategic Plan is our guide to the future and will be changing as we change. Projects, maintenance, and Capital Improvement Funding will be updated yearly with adjustments being made as new needs arise.

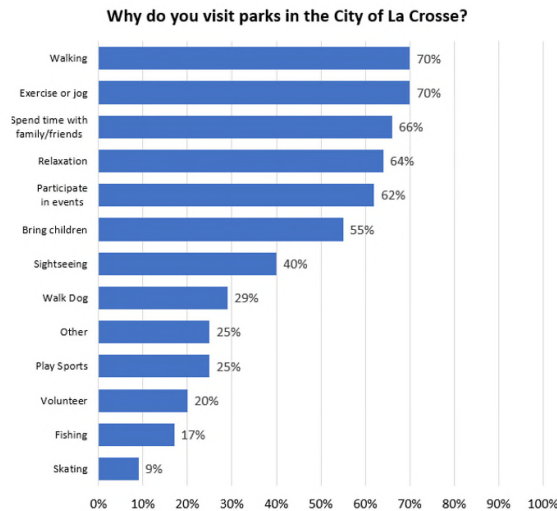
## **Community Groups**

Bandshell Consortium  
County of La Crosse  
Downtown Main Street  
Friends of the Blufflands  
Friends of the Marsh  
International Friendship Gardens  
La Crosse School District  
Mississippi Valley Conservancy  
Neighborhood Associations  
Outdoor Recreation Alliance  
University of Wisconsin - La Crosse  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Wisconsin Conservation Corps  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

We work closely with a wide range of community groups from neighborhood associations to those environmentally focused, all of which help us achieve the status of parks, playgrounds and trails we aspire to provide for the community. They are instrumental in providing feedback and assisting in the funding of projects.

## Community Input/ Feedback

-2,307 responses were collected between a Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department and a City of La Crosse Planning Department survey



Public input is essential in order to ensure department projects and programs align with what the users would like to see offered and available. In early 2019 the department surveyed community members on various topics regarding parks and recreation. In 2019 the Planning Department did a survey with many questions related to parks. In the fall of 2019, the Parks & Recreation Department hosted a public input session, where community members had an opportunity to learn more about projects and speak with and ask questions to staff. This past winter, we hosted a public input session for seniors regarding programs and needs for a center as well as conducted an interest survey. The department's goal is to host public input sessions twice a year beginning in 2021 – with a survey available this fall to allow for public feedback.

## 14 Recently Completed Projects

### Forest Hills Driving Range



Forest Hills Recently opened their 270 yard driving range with 15 new hitting mats allowing players ample space to practice a variety of shots. This was done through a Partnership with Kemper Sports Management.

## Springbrook Park



Springbrook Park has several new features added since 2016, including: an open air shelter, horse shoe pits, landscaping, splashpad and the most recent addition, a new playground with pour-in-place surfacing. Our partnership with the Springbrook Clayton Johnson Neighborhood Association, in addition to Lee and Janet Allen, has made this possible.

## Copeland Park Walk of Fame



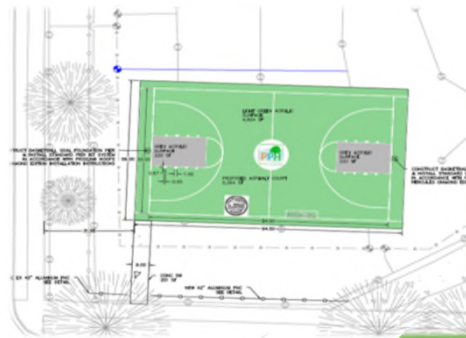
The Walk of Fame recognizes and honors those individuals most closely associated with baseball in the community. Home plates with those individuals names are embedded in the sidewalk. Thanks to our partnership with the La Crosse Area Baseball Hall of Fame for their help in completing this project.

## Badger-Hickey Playground



We partnered with the Logan Northside Neighborhood Association to give Badger-Hickey some new features including a new playground, landscaping alterations and improved lighting. A few more additions to this makeover include a zip line, half basketball court and a merry-go-round which are currently out to bid.

## Powell Park



Our partnership with Powell Poage Hamilton Neighborhood Association helped transform Powell Park by removing the old ball field and adding a new walking trail, playground, landscaping and updated lighting. Also being added to Powell is a new basketball court. This need was determined by a survey that was sent out to those who live within the neighborhood association in the spring of 2019. This court will replace the one that was lost on 7<sup>th</sup> and Farnam Street.

## Riverside Park Bandstand



We partnered with the Bandshell Consortium to give our bandstand a facelift. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, Moon Tunes and the final touches of the bandstand have been delayed. We look forward to welcoming Moon Tunes and other events to test out the acoustics of the new shell covering in 2021.

## Lueth Park



Lueth Park has many new features added over the past few years including skate park renovations and a pump track. Also new are the community art walls that display the work of local artists. Thanks to our partners: Outdoor Recreation Alliance and UW-La Crosse for their efforts.

## Bluffview Park



We worked closely with the Bluffside Neighborhood Association to give Bluffview Park a new look. New features include a playground, walkways, removal of the north ball field, open air shelter, lighting and ball field restoration. In advance of the project, the city resurfaced the 2 existing tennis courts while making the courts available for pickleball play.

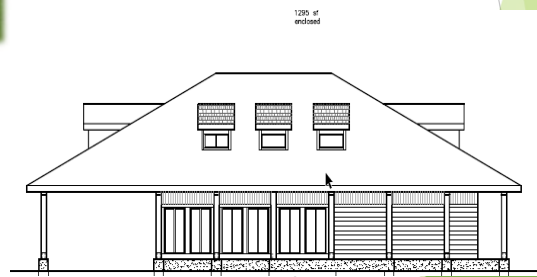


## Veterans Memorial Pool



Veterans Memorial Pool opened late last summer and was sadly unable to be used this summer due to COVID-19, but we look forward to the 2021 pool season. Our partnership with the Veterans Memorial Pool Committee, who worked really hard to fundraise, is what made this project possible.

## Weigent Park Playground



We worked with the Weigent Hogan Neighborhood Association to get a new playground with pour-in-place surfacing at Weigent Park. This upgrade is a wonderful addition for our playground program that welcomes 100 children every day in the summer months. Also being added to Weigent Park is a new shelter. The Parks Department has worked closely with the neighborhood association to ensure the needs and proper upgrades are met with this shelter design to make it more user friendly.

## La Crosse Municipal Boat Harbor Facility



The La Crosse Municipal Boat Harbor Facility, exclusive to slip owners, features: four restrooms with showers and a lobby with coin operated laundry. It was a long overdue addition that slip owners had been asking for. A DNR grant of \$30,000 helped complete the funding for this project.

## Hoeschler Fountain



The Hoeschler Fountain was originally donated in 1981 and shut down in 2016 due to weather related deterioration. This fountain, which represents the seven rivers in the region, is back up and running thanks to our partnership with the Hoeschler Family.

## Carroll Park Project



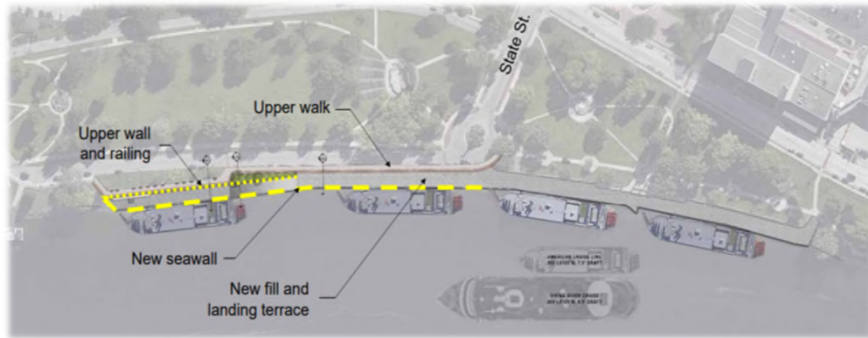
Originally established in 1976 as a field for youth, high school, and adult softball, Carroll Park has grown with the addition of 2 more fields designed with the ability to host national and state tournaments. The layout of the of fields reduces park maintenance and staff programing supervision. Also being added to Carroll Park are new bathrooms and a concession stand to aid in additional capacity that the 2 new fields will bring.

## 18 Current/Future Projects All Abilities Trane Park



The All Abilities Trane Park Project is designed to be fun and accessible; a community within a community that can bring together individuals of all ages – from toddlers to seniors – and all abilities to experience the simple, everyday joy of outside play. Born out of a need in the community, the park will provide an environment for those with cognitive, sensory, or physical challenges that encourages growth and socialization through play. It will not only benefit the City of La Crosse, but create a valued destination for the entire region. Construction is underway and some pieces of equipment have already been installed.

## Riverside Levee



The expansion of the Riverside Levee will accommodate an additional two to three cruise vessels docking at the levee simultaneously during the boating season. This levee will not only be a great addition to Riverside Park, but will also bring additional passengers and tourists into La Crosse's crown jewel on the river and into downtown La Crosse.

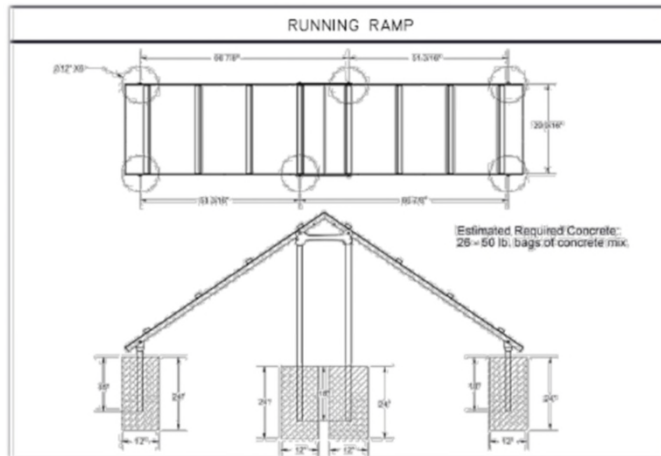


## Myrick Park's Kids Coulee



Myrick Park's Kids Coulee has been a staple playground in the community since 1994 when 3,700 community volunteers helped build and fundraise this dream playground. It is, however in need of repairs and new equipment. \$50,000 was funded in the 2020 Capital Improvement Project to develop a conceptual design and specifications towards renovation. We are hoping to transform this playground and make it a hot spot for families to gather for another 30 years.

## Houska Dog Park



The Houska Dog Park has an estimated project cost of \$100,000. This will include additional lighting to the dog park along with soil remediation to the north side of the area. Other features include a running ramp, combined waste stations, combined hydration station, and weaving posts. Construction is underway and on track with an estimated opening date at the end of August.

## Pettibone Park Road



Pettibone Park is one of La Crosse's oldest parks. Over time, the beach, boat club and marina users of the park have grown and the existing parking lot and road path ways no longer can meet the capacity of the users of the park. We will be moving the existing parking lot up to the entrance of the beach house and moving the road way to the west end of the existing parking lot. This will allow for increased safety of beach-goers and will also allow for larger vehicle traffic to access the southern end. Construction began in July with the sidewalk portion already complete, the road portion is scheduled to begin in mid-August. We have partnered with the Pettibone Association for their assistance with this project.

## Green Island Tennis



Thanks to our generous partners, UW-La Crosse, Coulee Region Tennis Association and Aquinas High School, the dream tennis facility will become a reality. This extensive project will include 13 outdoor courts, lighting of seven outdoor courts and six indoor courts and an enclosure. This project is currently underway with the 13 outdoor courts estimated to be completed in the fall 2020. The next step will be fencing and the court surfacing. This project will help provide space to the ever growing tennis community.

## Burns Park



We have partnered with the Downtown Neighborhood Association, Downtown Mainstreet Inc, Washburn on the Park Apartments, and Ho-Chunk Three Rivers House to transform Burns Park into a welcoming atmosphere for park goers. Construction for this project started in May and has made great progress as the playground pieces have already been assembled with an estimated completion date at the end of September.

## River Point District



River Point District is a forward-thinking vision for a vibrant, contemporary, mixed-use waterfront neighborhood where abundant natural surroundings create opportunities for unique community amenities and inspiring development. Located in the heart of La Crosse at the confluence of the Mississippi, Black and La Crosse Rivers, River Point District will establish a dynamic, sustainable neighborhood within the area's overall urban fabric and seamlessly connect the community to the rivers and downtown. More than 800 housing units will offer all people comfortable, accessible homes. River Point District will also help strengthen the local economy with dedicated locations for offices, shops and restaurants.

## Riverside Transient Dock



A transient pier system will be installed along the Riverside Park sea wall. This project will have a positive impact to the downtown area for many reasons, such as transient mooring for concerts or other events in the park, transient mooring for folks visiting downtown La Crosse shops and restaurants, and transient mooring site for the “Big Boats” that visit La Crosse. This project is estimated to be completed this fall.

## Highland Park



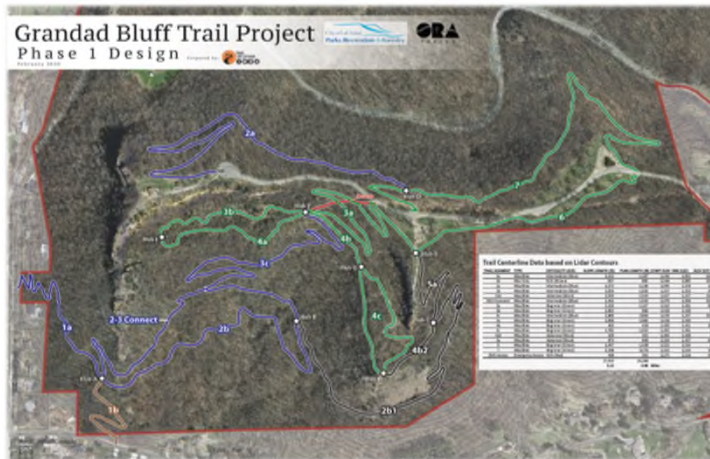
Our partners at the Hintgen Neighborhood Association dedicated over \$100,000 in neighborhood funding toward the renovation of Highland Park. Per a neighborhood vote, Highland Park will now become the City's very first park to host a natural playground design. A natural playground is a play environment that consists of elements and textures from the earth such as tree logs, tree stumps, boulders, plants, drainage paths, among others instead of a traditional steel playground structure that includes slides and climbers. This project is estimated to be completed at the end of August.

## Veterans Freedom Park Recreation Center



The Veterans Freedom Park Recreation Center is a building that will primarily be used for curling. The La Crosse Curling Club was given permission to start fundraising for this project in 2019. This building will offer high quality curling to our community with hopes of expanding and growing the sport in the La Crosse area. It will enable the La Crosse Curling Club to offer area youth a wholesome after-school and weekend winter athletic activity on a broad scale. The facility will also be available to Viterbo and UW-L collegiate teams and competitions.

# Grandad Bluff Trail Project



Thanks to our partnership with Outdoor Recreation Alliance of the 7 Rivers Region for their assistance in the Grandad Bluff Trail Project. So far, 1.5 miles of this trail project have been completed and opened for public use. The trails will provide an additional 5 miles in total to the bluffs as hike, bike and shared use trails. An additional aspect of this project will include a family zone/picnic area also located on the floor of the old quarry zone near the green level trails. When complete, this area will provide an excellent family friendly experience.

## **Blufflands**

### **Properties identified for new and improved trail development:**

- Grandad Bluff Park
- Miller Bluff
- Mathy Quarry
- Hass Tract
- Dobson Tract



## **Marsh**

- Improve hydraulic connectivity
- Maintain trail maintenance
- Improve biodiversity and native vegetation
- Continue to work with groups for feedback and collaboration

The Parks Department has a strong focus to improve the recreation and habitat values of the La Crosse River Marsh and Bluffland properties. This plan identifies aggressive goals for improvement and expansion to meet the growing needs of the La Crosse community. Community access to public lands and strategic master planning will be an important focus for the next several years. Additionally, private funding and partnerships will be essential tools to keep the department moving forward with these projects.

### **Municipal Harbor Potential Future Projects**

- Gazebo replacement
- Possibility of:
  - small campground
  - a rentable picnic/event building
  - constructing ADA compliant fishing piers



### **Veterans Point Marina Potential Future Projects**

- Addition of 32 wide slips to the current 94
- Possibility of dry storage area
- Possibility of surfacing the parking lots



### **Boat Landings**

- Parking lot repairs
- Installation of ADA compliant/handicap accessible kayak & canoe launch

The City recently regained management of the Municipal Harbor which houses 185 slips, including transient slips for visitors. The City also manages Veterans Point Marina which houses 94 slips, with plans to expand with 32 additional slips. Both have over 100 people on their waiting lists! The addition at Veterans Point Marina will help ease the demand for slips. Both locations work closely with the slip owners' needs and wants, as well as have open communication in regards to slip fees. New this year were the pay stations at the boat launch facilities for permits which is now per vehicle, not just for those with trailers. The pay stations have been beneficial financially and convenience-wise, especially at this time as customers are now able to purchase a season or daily pass at every landing location. A new addition to the Veterans Freedom Park boat launch facility will be the all abilities kayak and canoe launch. We recently secured a \$25,000 grant from Mayo Clinic to help fund this project.

## Upcoming Forestry Projects

- 788 ash replacements
- \$25,000 Paul Stry Grant awarded in 2020 towards tree planting.
- Continued work with Neighborhood Associations to utilize funding for tree planting.



With overseeing 20,000 trees, the forestry crew has done an amazing job at maintaining and handling the Emerald Ash Borer situation with only having 788 replacements left after removing 6,500 trees since 2012. The Forestry Department will continue to apply for grants such as the Paul Stry Grant to help with the replacement of further removed trees.

## Senior Programs

New programming location: 1407 St Andrews St

-Partnering with La Crosse Library, La Crosse County and Local Seniors

-8,000 square foot location



The Department has taken the lead on planning for the future in regards to senior programming and senior centers. We are collaborating with local seniors, the La Crosse Library, as well as La Crosse County, specifically with the Aging & Disability Resource Center, ADRC for short, and their Nutrition Program. As you know, there were 2 senior centers in La Crosse – the South Side Senior Center, which closed last fall and the Harry J Olson Senior Center, currently operating, but closed at this time due to COVID. The collaboration, department staff, and local seniors are excited about the new opportunity at 1407 St. Andrews Street, formerly known as the Rubber Mills. In fact, the South Side Senior group pledged to donate funds in order to offer more programs for free or reduced prices for ALL seniors! Although the opening was delayed from June until this September due to the pandemic, we are planning to open with limited programming this fall.

# Maintenance Plan

The plan's framework addresses all maintenance labor and improvement projects over a timeframe of ten years.

High Priority 1-3 Years			
Park	Project	Proposed Action	Reason
Black River Beach	Restroom Doors	Replace	Rusting & Metal corrosion
Burns	Lyra Sculpture	Consult Expert	Color Retention
Carroll	Restroom Foundation	Renovate	Shifting Foundation
Copeland	Oktoberfest	Renovate/Replace	Rusting & Metal Corrosion Uneven Surface
Copeland	Copeland Park	Renovate	Wear & Tear
Copeland	Water Heater	Replace	Wear & Tear
Copeland	Women's Bathroom Door	Replace	Wear & Tear
Crowley	Aluminum Fence	Replace	Requires Constant Maintenance
Crowley	Chain Link Fence	Replace	Concaved Bottom
Crowley	2 Irrigation Zones	Replace	2 Zones No Longer Function
Erickson	Ballfield Lights	Replace	Past Life Expectancy
Erickson	Water Heater	Replace	Wear & Tear
Highland	Playground	Replace	Wear & Tear
Myrick	Kids Coulee	Replace	Requires Constant Maintenance
Pettibone	Bath House	Renovate	Plaster & Cement is Chipping Away
Pettibone	Shower Fixtures	Replace	Wear & Tear
Riverside	South Restroom	Renovate/Replace	Entry Wall is Pulling Away from the Structure
Riverside	Levy Wall	Repair	Starting to Crumble & Break Loose
Riverside	Eagle Statue	Consult Expert	Holes at the Base of the Statue
Riverside	Irrigation (North)	Replace	Wear & Tear
Seminary	Wooden Playset	Replace	Wear & Tear
Seminary	Wooden Benches	Replace	Wear & Tear
Starlite	Drinking Fountain	Replace	Wear & Tear
Starlite	Permanent Table	Replace	Wear & Tear
Weigent	Enclosed Shelter	Renovate/Replace	Wear & Tear
Weigent	Baseball Field Fencing	Replace	Wear & Tear
7 <sup>th</sup> Street Boat Landing	Boat Wash	Replace	Functioning Problems Inconsistent
7 <sup>th</sup> Street Boat Landing	Docks	Replace	Wear & Tear

The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department oversees a large number of physical facilities and locations that they are tasked with maintaining. We receive \$100,000 annually to help with the cost to upkeep those numerous facilities. Our certified staff has conducted a survey looking over what the high, medium and low priority items are and will budget accordingly. The high priority are items that should be fixed or replaced in the next 1-3 years.

Medium Priority 3-5 Years			
Park	Project	Proposed Action	Reason
Badger Hickey	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Burns	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Cameron	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Carroll	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Clayton Johnson	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Copeland	Enclosed Shelter	Replace	Sinking Foundation
Copeland	Baseball Field Fencing	Replace	Wear & Tear
Copeland	Women's Bathroom Door	Replace	Wear & Tear
Copeland (Oktoberfest)	New LED & Power	Replace	Wear & Tear
Crowley	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
East Copeland	Landing Driveway	Replace/patch	Wear & Tear
Erickson	Open Air Shelter	Replace	Wear & Tear
Erickson	Shade	Replace	Wear & Tear
Glendale	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Goose Green	Baseball Fencing	Replace	Wear & Tear
Grandad	Bathroom Railing	Replace	Footings Starting to Rust
Grandad	Flag Pole	Replace	20+ years old
Hass	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Houska	2 Entry Signs	Replace	Wear & Tear
Houska	Drinking Fountain	Replace	Wear & Tear
Houska	Trail Bridge New Decking	Replace	Wear & Tear
Lueth	Shelter Door	Repair	Repair North Barn Door
Merry Meadows	Drinking Fountain	Replace	Wear & Tear
Myrick	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Myrick	Myrick Main Bathrooms	Renovate	Outdated Bathroom Features
Myrick	Tennis Courts	Resurface	Resurface Tennis Courts
Pettibone	Gazebo	Paint/Resurface	Wear & Tear
Pettibone	Wooden Benches	Replace	Wear & Tear
Riverside	Flag Pole	Replace	Wear & Tear
Riverside	Entry Sign	Replace	Discoloration
Riverside	North Bathroom Lights	Replace	Wear & Tear
Riverside	North Bathroom Divider	Replace	Wear & Tear
Riverside	Drinking Fountain	Replace	Wear & Tear
Sherwood	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Starlite	Wooden Playset	Replace	Wear & Tear
Weigent	Baseball Field Fencing	Replace	Wear & Tear
West Copeland	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear

Low Priority 5-10 years			
Park	Project	Proposed Action	Reason
Badger Hickey	Drinking Fountain	Replace	Wear & Tear
Black River Beach	Lifeguard Tower	Replace	Projected to Weather over 10 years
Civic Center	Water Hookup	Replace	Wear & Tear
Civic Center	New Sidewalk	Replace	Wear & Tear
Chad Erickson	Entry Sign	Replace	Projected to Wear over 10 years
Clayton E. Johnson	Basketball Hoops	Replace	Replace the Basketball Hoops
Copeland	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Copeland	Playground	Replace	Wear & Tear
Diagonal	Bench	Replace	Starting to Show Signs of Wear
Diagonal	Table	Replace	Starting to Show Signs of Wear
Erickson Ball Fields	Enclosed shelter	Paint	Wear & Tear
Forest Hills	Buildings	Paint	Wear & Tear
Glendale	Playground	Replace	Starting to Show its Age
Glendale	Basketball	Replace/Resurface	Replace Hoops/Resurface Court
Glendale	Shelter	Repaint	Repaint the Shelter
Goose Green	Entry Sign	Replace	Some Signs of Weathering
Goose Green	Playground	Replace	Wear & Tear
Grandad	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Grandad	Lookout Fencing	Replace	Starting to Rust
Houska	Playground	Replace	Wear & Tear
Lueth	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Lueth	Shelter	Paint	Projected to Fade over 10 yrs
Merry Meadows	Shelter	Renovate/Replace	Wear & Tear
Merry Meadows	Playground	Replace	Wear & Tear
Myrick	Gun Club	Paint	Projected to Fade over 10 yrs
Pettibone	Open Air Shelter	Paint	Wear & Tear
Red Cloud	Playground	Replace	Wear & Tear
Riverside	Repaint	Repaint	La Crosse Queen Area
Riverside	Lighting	Replace	Lighting in Riverside North Women's Bathroom
Roellig	Entry Sign	Replace	Wear & Tear
Roellig	Tables	Replace	Wear & Tear
Roellig	Flag Pole	Replace	Projected to Reach its Life
Sherwood	Playground	Replace	Starting to Show its Age
South Goose Green	Table	Replace	Minor Signs of Weathering
South Goose Green	Playground	Replace	Wear & Tear
South Side Neighborhood Center	Lighting	Replace	Old System
Starlite	Playground	Replace	Wear & Tear
Weigent	Benches	Replace	Starting to Weather
Weigent	Tables	Replace	Starting to Weather
Weigent	Entry Sign	Replace	Minor Signs of Weathering

Medium priority items should be fixed or replaced in the next 3 to 5 years and the low priority items within 5-10 years. As this is a yearly plan, items can shift to a different priority level depending on what has occurred within that year to effect that asset.

Thank you!



As previously stated, we will work on obtaining public feedback from input sessions and surveys annually while adjusting our projects and priorities as needed. Be sure to visit [www.CityofLaCrosse.org/Parks](http://www.CityofLaCrosse.org/Parks) to view the complete 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. Thank you!