

Chapter 2:

Park District Characteristics

Park District Description

Park District History

District Boundaries and Service Area

Jurisdictions

Transportation and Access

Land Uses within the Park District Service Area

Environmental Resources



Chapter 2: Park District Characteristics

Park District Description

The Cary Park District (CPD) includes 46 parks and parcels comprising approximately 862 acres including other entities such as trails and greenways that make up the CPD. Cary Park District encompasses the Village of Cary and Trout Valley, parts of Oakwood Hills, Lake in the Hills, and unincorporated McHenry County, and is located in the southeast corner of McHenry County, 50 miles northwest of Chicago (see Figure 1). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the Cary Park District had a population of 18,519 residents.

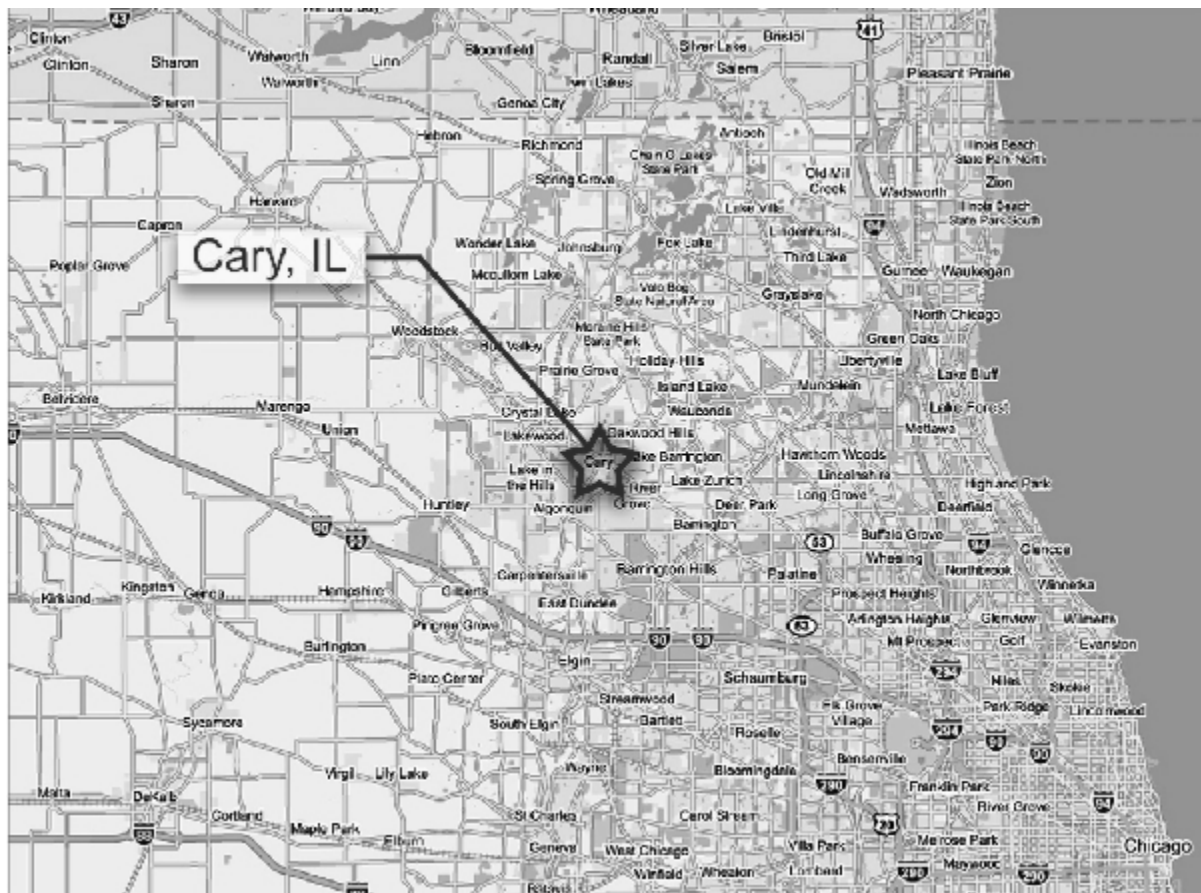


Figure 1 – Regional Map, Cary Park District

Park District History

(The following written history of the Cary Park District, from inception to 2006, is revised from the book titled, Cary Me Back, ©1993 and updated information from Commissioner Phil Stanko.)

The formation of the Cary Park District traces its origins back to 1963 when an interest survey by the Jaycees indicated a strong community desire for a swimming pool. The Jaycees concluded that the only way that a community swimming pool could be developed was with the formation of a park district. In the late 60's, a Pool Feasibility Study by the Cary Village trustees and a Citizens Committee for Recreational Expansion survey had similar results and came to a conclusion for the establishment of a park

In January, 1971, the Mayor of Cary distributed his annual report and the possible role the Village would play in organizing a referendum for the establishment of a park district. Over the next several months, meetings were held to discuss the formation of a park district and its boundaries. On September 14, 1971, a public hearing was held for the referendum, and on October 30 the community voted on the referendum. The vote was 457 for, and 363 against.

Voters elected five park commissioners when the Park District was formed. The charter commissioners were T. Larry Phalin, President; Michael D. Collins, Vice President; James F. Hollahan, Secretary; Paul W. Dianis, Treasurer; and Robert M. Skallerup. Jay Adler was the first employee of the Park District serving as a part-time director from the spring of 1972 until September of 1973. The Board hired Thomas E. Connolly as the first full-time employee and director of the Park District. The Park District's first expansion of services came in 1976 when the Northern Illinois Special Recreation Association (NISRA) was created to meet the recreational needs of residents with disabilities. The Park District is a charter member of the association that has provided recreational programs for many residents for about 30 years.

The first Park District office was in a room rented from the Village. The office was on the second floor of the Cary Village Hall on West Main Street that previously housed a school, and now serves as the Kraus Senior Citizen Center. The first annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance was approved on May 9, 1972 for \$67,210. The Park District had to borrow \$10,000 until June of 1973, when the first taxes were received. The anticipated taxes were to be approximately \$52,000. The Village of Cary had a population of 4,500, while the Park District's had expanded to 8,000.

In 1972, the Village of Cary transferred several parks, totaling 54 acres, to the Cary Park District. Lions Park with 39 acres and later expanded to 105 acres; Jamesway Park with three acres; Deveron Circle with 1/4 acre; Val Budd Nature Park with 1/2 acre; Greenfields Park with six acres; and Prairie Bluff Park (renamed Water Tower Prairie Park) with five acres. In 1980, Cary Park with six acres was transferred to the Park District and later rededicated as Cary Veterans Park. Today, the Park District operates over 40 parks, approximately eight miles of bike trails, an 18-hole golf course, and over 900 acres of open space.

Beginning in 1973, the Park District rented the Thunderbird Farm swimming pool at Three Oaks Road and Route 14, for \$6,000 a summer. Bill Meyer, a teacher at Cary Junior High School, was hired to run the swimming pool program, and the pool continued to be used until 1978, when the current Community Center pool opened.

The Park District held a referendum to sell \$760,000 of bonds to build the current Community Center and pool in 1976. The referendum was successful with 845 'yes' votes and 529 'no' votes. With this

referendum, the Park District was able to fulfill one goal of its creation: meeting the need for a swimming pool in Cary. Today, the Park District is developing Cary-Grove Park next to Cary-Grove High School and the site for a future community center.

In January, 1991, the Park District acquired 80 acres called the Sands Main Street Prairie, which included a house, garage, barn, and chicken coop. Sixteen acres were acquired from doctors who were keeping the land as investment property, and the remaining 64 acres were donated by Mr. Sands to the Park District. The 16 acres represented virgin gravel hill prairie identified on a survey done by the State of Illinois to inventory the last of its native landscape still in pre-settlement condition. Two houses built in the 1860's comprise Wallace Farm, the farmhouse on Sands Main Street Prairie. With the construction of East Main Street in 1886, the houses were combined. The back portion of the house was moved south to its present location from its original site where a pole barn now sits on what today is the Swanson property.

Jaycee Park was originally part of the Seebert Farm. Originally a swamp with a creek running through it, a developer in 1980 began excavating the property to drain the land and convert it into a pond for storm water detention. In September, 1981, the developer deeded the property and the pond to the Cary Park District as part of the annexation agreement with the Village. The pavilion at the south end of the park was completed in September, 1990. The Jaycees, sharing expenses with the Park District, installed the original structure. About the time Route 14 was expanded to four lanes, the Park District received a state grant to help it convert the pavilion into a warming shelter and add bathrooms. The completion of the park's improvements, finished in 1999, took longer than expected when Route 14 road construction caused a leak in the pond. The underground storm sewers were re-sealed, which stopped the infiltration of underground water into the storm water system and returned the pond to its normal water levels.

The Village of Cary obtained the original Lions Park of 38 acres in October, 1966, for \$20,300. The money for the park came from a contribution of the Cary Lions Club and a HUD Grant. The parcel started at Three Oaks Road and went north to what is now the entrance road to Lions Park. The Park District began development of the park in 1979 with the construction of a maintenance garage, which was funded through the first developer contribution ordinance passed by the Village in 1978. In January, 1981, the Park District received a grant for \$229,000 from the U.S. Department of Heritage and Conservation Service to acquire land adjacent to Lions Park. With an additional \$40,000 of Park District funds, the District was able to acquire 66 acres. The grant funded the purchase and the development of a new parking lot, bathrooms, softball ball fields and playground equipment.

Throughout the 80s and the 90s the Cary area experienced explosive growth. The Park District along with the villages and unincorporated areas it served also grew. The boundaries of the Park District include the entire Village of Cary and the Village of Trout Valley, which became an incorporated village during the 90s. The Park District also includes parts of the Villages of Lake in the Hills, Oakwood Hills, and areas of unincorporated McHenry County. The population served by the Park District is now over 22,000 people.

Based on the Park District's Comprehensive Plan, the District discovered that it had growing areas within the District that lacked parks and open space. The Park District began the acquisition of Cary-Grove Park in the mid 90s by attempting to purchase it from a developer who wanted to build a 200 home subdivision on the property. The 80 acres, formally known as Reiber Farm, was acquired after a long contested purchase for \$3.3 million in September, 2000. Cary-Grove Park is contiguous with Cary-Grove High School, for which it is named, with the Foxford Hills Golf Course, and with the new Cary Junior High School. Cary-Grove Park is also centrally located within the Park District and an area where

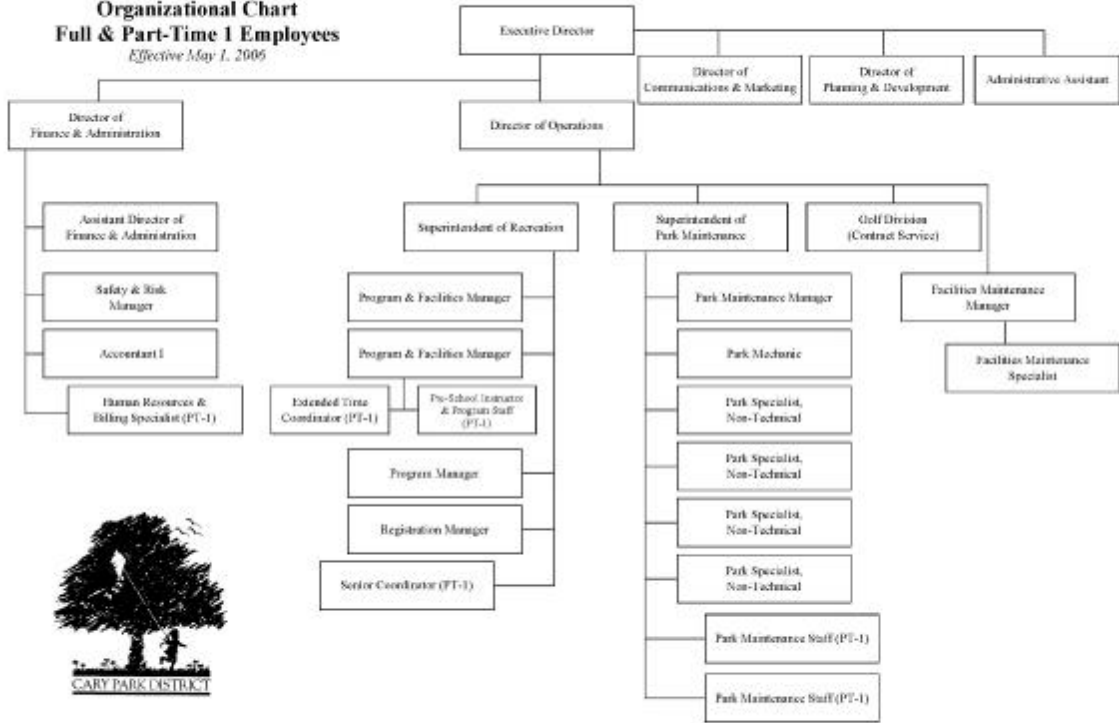
open space was needed. The park offers many benefits. First Street has been extended to permit access to both the high school and the park. New soccer fields, multipurpose trails, playground and parking lot have been created with the first phase of development. Future plans include additional athletic fields, a site for a new community center and other amenities.

One of the most unique park acquisitions was the purchase of Hoffman Park for \$11.5 million dollars in December, 1999. The property had been planned for development in the Village of Cary for many years. Unable to reach an agreement with the Village of Cary, the developer decided to annex the property into Lake in the Hills and seek a development agreement with that village. The Village of Lake in the Hills considered a plan that included a large area for gravel mining that would be surrounded by residences. At this point, a group of concerned Cary citizens formed and approached the Park District to consider the purchase of the property. Since the Park District's comprehensive plan indicated a need for land in the area and with the strong backing of citizens to acquire the land, the Park District went to referendum to increase the Corporate Tax rate to provide funding to purchase the land. With the successful referendum and an agreement reached with the developer for purchase, the land was acquired and named after the parents of the developer as part of the purchase agreement. In 2000, a consent agreement was reached with the Village of Lake in the Hills to determine development, annexation and other land use disputes regarding Hoffman Park. In 2001, the Board approved a site concept plan for Hoffman Park. With valuable Route 31 frontage, the Park District envisions the use of public-private partnerships to develop Hoffman Park into a commercial recreational park with activities that would draw people from the both local and surrounding areas to the park. The Park District used a \$400,000 grant to develop the first segments of the internal trail system planned for the park.

In January, 2004, the Park District purchased Foxford Hills Golf Club for \$4.5 million. Nestled among the rolling hills of the old mink farm and the houses of the Foxford Hills subdivision, the golf course is one of the area's premier courses. The Nugent-designed course is a championship 18-hole golf course, laid out on 195 beautiful acres. The golf course includes a full service golf club that meets the needs of its patrons as well as anyone interested in a quick lunch, a cold beverage or an interest in purchasing golf merchandise. Foxford Hills is intended to be a regional, upscale, premier public golf course with a par 72 lay-out totaling about 7,000 yards. The five sets of tees offer the perfect challenge for the full spectrum of golfers from novice to experienced. The Park District is thrilled to offer this public facility as a recreational opportunity to residents and golf patrons of the surrounding area.

The Park District is very proud of its history, its parks, its stewardship of natural heritage, and its recreational programs. Its continuing mission is to serve the communities through providing exceptional recreation, parks, and open space opportunities.

Cary Park District
Organizational Chart
Full & Part-Time 1 Employees
Effective May 1, 2005



05-May-05, 10:05, Org Chart.pdf

Policy 2-002, Attachment A
 Executive Director Authorization: _____

Table 1: Cary Park District Commissioners

1971-1976	Bob Skallerup	1985-1986	Richard Baker
1971-1979	Paul Dianis	1987-Present	Phil Stanko
1971-1979	Jim Hollahan	1989-2001	Sandy Krenz
1971-1983	Mike Collins	1991-1997	Sandy Bury
1971-1991	Larry Phalin	1991-1997	Jim Alwill
1976-1979	Dennis Krenz	1995-Present	Mike Renner
1979-1991	Dave Turskey	1997-2003	Ed Graafsma
1979-1985	Cliff Steuer	1997-2003	Dave Gervais
1979-1985	James Daniel	2001-2002	Ann Remlinger
1981-1983	Paul Gusinde	2002-Present	David Williams
1981-1989	Tom Prather	2003-Present	Bill Krueger
1983-1995	Tim Eagan	2003-Present	Bill Harvey

Table 2: Cary Park District Executive Directors

1973-1976	Thomas Connolly
1976-1980	William Meyer
1980-1983	Walter Johnson
1983-1998	Eric Burns
1998-Present	Steve Cherveney

Table 3: Linear History of Important Dates, Park Acquisitions, Grant Receipts and Milestones

1971

October 30

Cary Park District created by referendum, 457 yes, 363 no.

1974

March

Property acquired by agreement with the Village of Cary:

- > *Water Tower Prairie Park* (5.70 acres)
- > *Jamesway Park* (3.10 acres)
- > *Deveron Circle* (0.20 acres)
- > *Val Budd Park* (0.70 acre)

July

Lions Park (39 acres) acquired by agreement with the Village of Cary.

1976

August

Bond (\$760,000) Referendum to build a community pool and center passes by vote of 845 yes to 529 no.

1977

February

Greenfields Park (6.10 acres) acquired by agreement with the Village of Cary.

May

Community Center Building Parcels acquired by agreement with the Village of Cary.

1978

June

Community Center and Pool opened to the public.

1980

July

Candlewood Park (4.90 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

December

Cary Veterans Park (6.20 acres) acquired by agreement with the Village of Cary by Warranty Deed.

1981

October

Montana Open Space/Detention (0.53 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

1982

July

Jaycee Park (15.49 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

Lions Park (66.36 acres) acquired by purchase for \$290,000; Federal HCRS Grant in amount of \$229,030 received for acquisition.

1985

March

Federal LWCF Grant received in amount of \$110,000 for field development and playground equipment at *Lions Park*.

1986

August

Hillhurst Open Space/Detention Area (3.35 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

1988

February

Hillside Prairie Park (7.65 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

November

Three Oaks Park (2.2 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

1989

May

Sands Main Street Prairie (16 acres) acquired by condemnation and final judgment order in the amount of \$220,000.

June

Hampton Park (1.73 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

1990

October

Patriot Meadows Subdivision Outlots A/B (.31 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

November

Knotty Pines Park (1.1 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

December

Sands Main Street Prairie (64.227 acres) acquired by purchase for \$570,000. Grant from The Nature Conservancy received in amount of \$500,000.

1991

July

Community Center Park parcels (3.5 acres) acquired by purchase for \$310,000.00.

1992

January

Kaper Park (15.5 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

Cimarron Open Space/Detention Area (3.4 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

1994

March

Fox Trails Park (11 acres) Lease Agreement with SD26 established (terminated in November, 2003).

August

Comprehensive Master Plan adopted.

September

Brittany Park (2.3 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

Kiwanis Park & Outlots (3.6 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

Cary-Grove Park (4.9 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

1995

January

Bristol Park (0.5 acres) and *Lyons Ridge Greenway Trail Outlots A/B* (0.67 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

1996

September

Timbertown community-built playground development completed at *Kaper Park*.

1997

January

Community Center renovation completed, adding a conference room, multi-purpose room, dance room and fitness component, plus office space.

State of Illinois OSLAD Grant (\$165,700) awarded for Jaycees Park renovation project.

1999

April

Corporate Rate Increase (0.25/\$100EAV) Referendum passes by vote of 1,838 yes to 1,378 no.

July

Cary Oaks Park (4.3 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

September

Jaycee Park renovation completed.

December

Hoffman Park (258 acres) acquired by purchase for \$11,586,960; Illinois First Funds grant received in amount of \$400,000 for development purposes of the site.

2000

February

Consent agreement reached with Lake in the Hills to end condemnation dispute over *Hoffman Park* parcel. Up to 20-year agreement is put in place regarding disconnection, annexation, property uses and fees, land exchange and security.

March

Decker Park & Trails (8.85 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

May

Saddle Oaks Park (1 acre) acquired by subdivision development ordinance

September

Cary-Grove Park (additional 78 acres) acquired by condemnation and subsequent court order for \$3,304,626.

October

Sale of .68 acres of *Candlewood Park* to School District #26.

November

Illinois Distinguished Park & Recreation Agency Award presented to Cary Park District, the first designated agency in McHenry County.

2001

February

Hoffman Park (additional 8 acres) acquired by agreement with Lake in the Hills (2/2000).

April

The Park Foundation of Southeast McHenry County officially created to provide financial assistance to the Cary Park District.

2002

January

White Oaks Park (0.52 acres) & *White Oaks Subdivision Outlot B* (0.40 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

September

Chalet Hills Park (0.67 acre) acquired by purchase for \$117,500.

2003

July

Jamesway Park (additional 0.5 acres) acquired by purchase for \$50,000.

November

Foxford Hills Park (0.62 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

Wentworth Park (0.40 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

Trail connection between *Cary-Grove Park* and *Sterling Ridge Linear Park* completed on School District 26 property by easement agreement.

2004

January

Foxford Hills Golf Club (194.87 acres) acquired by purchase for \$4,500,000.

April

Fox Trails Park (1 acre) acquired by purchase for \$72,000.

Cary-Grove Park (0.2074 acres) additional property acquired by purchase for \$22,000.

June

Sterling Ridge Linear Park/Trailway (1.63 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

July

Cambria Park (1.527 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

Cambria Park OSD (8.828 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

Hoffman Park (7.274 acres) adjacent land acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

New Haven Park & OSD (5.48 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

Cary Woods Park (0.50 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

2005

February

Cary-Grove Park (1.83 acres) property dedicated to the Village of Cary as roadway and intersection at First Street and Three Oaks Road.

2006

February

Decker Park (0.10 acres) adjacent land acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

Pending or Under Contract

West Lake Park (1.62 acres) acquired by subdivision development ordinance.

Lyons Ridge Phase IV Trail Extension (.16 acres) acquired by agreement with Village of Cary and developer.

District Boundaries and Service Area Jurisdictions

Boundaries (see Figure 2)

The Cary Park District is separated from Oakwood Hills and Prairie Grove on the north by unincorporated lands, though portions of the Park District border the Oakwood Hills city limits along Hilltop Road. Incorporated lands also separate the Park District from Crystal Lake on the west. To the southwest, Cary Park District boundaries reach both the Algonquin and Lake in the Hills city limits. The Fox River largely defines the Park District's southern border, directly across which lies the Village of Fox River Grove. Fox River Grove city limits at Hickory Nut Grove Road and the Fox River also define the Park District's boundary to the east.

Service Area Jurisdictions (see Figures 3 & 4)

The Cary Park District shares the land within its boundaries with a wide variety of other independent political entities, each with their own powers and taxing authority. Any general policy or decision made by the Park District has the potential to have an impact on many other jurisdictions, while similar policies and decisions by other jurisdictions may have impacts on the Park District.

Because of this, there is a need for inter-governmental cooperation to coordinate policies that promote consistency and harmony with Park District boundaries and surrounding areas.

Counties: The Cary Park District is located entirely in McHenry County. A portion of land in Lake County exists east of the McHenry-Lake County border to the bend in the Fox River that is typically associated with Cary and uses Cary Park District resources for their park and recreation needs. The Lake County area is not currently within the Cary Park District boundary.

McHenry County's Planning Division is one of four divisions that comprise the Planning and Development Department. The Division provides staff support and professional planning services to the citizens of McHenry County with regard to the County Comprehensive Planning effort (Long Range) and the current planning effort with respect to land use.

The draft McHenry County *2020 Unified Plan* is the county's first plan that fully combines land use and transportation planning into a single document. Previously, the 2010 Land Use Plan was adopted in 1993 and the 2010 Transportation Plan was adopted in 1995. The Unified Plan focuses on the integration of land-use and transportation planning as the key to managing the significant growth which has been forecast for the county. The planning process involved the development of multiple land-use scenarios and transportation models that were measured against several factors including impact on natural resources, quality of life, and the transportation network.

This analysis led to the promotion of a nodal concept of development, similar to past McHenry County plans. The nodal concept advocates for compact development, efficient use of infrastructure, and preservation of farmland and natural resources. The plan also talks about the importance of the nodal concept for the development of efficient and effective transportation choices.

Townships

The Park District is located primarily within Algonquin Township. A portion of the northeastern boundary lies in Nunda Township, primarily within the Chalet Hills Subdivision and MCCD property along the Fox River. The Village of Oakwood Hills, partially located within the Park District boundary, is located in Nunda Township.

Municipalities

Nearly all of the Village of Cary (with exception of two parcels west of Route 31) and all of the Village of Trout Valley are located within the Park District boundary. Of the Park District's 867 total acres, 425.49 fall within the Village of Cary's city limits.

A portion of Lake in the Hills (Hoffman Park) and Oakwood Hills (Chalet Hills) are also located in the Park District boundary. The remainder consists of unincorporated McHenry County. Other municipalities that border the Park District are Fox River Grove, Port Barrington, Algonquin, Lake in the Hills, the remainder of Oakwood Hills, Crystal Lake and Prairie Grove.

Elementary Schools

Cary Park District resident students attend Maplewood, Briargate, Three Oaks, Deer Path, Prairie Hill and Cary Jr. High Schools in Cary Consolidated School District 26. Students in Prairie Grove School District 46 attend Prairie Grove Elementary, and in Crystal Lake School District 47 they attend Canterbury and Hannah Beardsley Schools. In D300, Cary Park District students attend Eastview School and Algonquin Middle School. Private elementary schools include SS. Peter and Paul and Trinity Oaks Christian Academy (currently leasing SD 26's Oak Knoll School facility) are also located within the Park District boundary.

High Schools

Students attend Cary-Grove and Prairie Ridge High Schools in School District 155, and Jacobs High School in School District 300. There are no private high schools within the CPD boundary.

Community College District

The McHenry County College is a community college serving Park District residents.

Library

The Cary Area Library District serves a majority of the Park District residents, while the Algonquin Library District provides services to several subdivisions on the west region.

Fire Protection

The Cary Fire Protection District services the entire Cary Park District boundary.

Municipal Parks & Recreation

The Village of Oakwood Hills is partially within the Park District and provides parks and recreation services to their respective residents. The Villages of Lake in the Hills, Algonquin and Fox River Grove are adjacent to the Park District and provide parks and recreation services to their respective residents.

Other Park Districts

The Crystal Lake Park District is the only other Park District that shares a border with the Cary Park District. Dundee Township Park District borders the Park District's southern service area.

Conservation District

The McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD) owns or manages over 20,000 acres of open land with young and old trees, prairies, wetlands, ponds, creeks, and rivers. Their 20 open conservation areas include trails, picnic facilities, shelters, camp sites, fishing sites, rare plant and animal examples and other recreational and educational facilities.

A conservation district is a special district with specific purposes established under Illinois statutes following a favorable public referendum. Its purpose includes the acquisition of land by purchase, lease, gift or easement; the preservation and maintenance of wild land, other open land, scenic roadways and pathways; and the holding of such real property, with or without public access for the education, pleasure and recreation of the public or for other open space values. To date, there are five counties in Illinois that have created such districts: Boone, Macon, McHenry, Putnam and Vermilion. (*excerpt from MCCD website*)

MCCD's *Strategic Land Acquisition Plan 2002* describes the District's goal of saving and protecting five percent or 19,534 acres of McHenry County land by the year 2005 through purchase and ownership. In order to maintain their standard of 51 acres of open space for each 1,000 people in the county, the District will have to acquire and save 38,250 acres by the year 2020. In order to do so, approximately 25,000 more acres will need to be purchased. Additional information on MCCD's facilities is discussed in chapter 5, the Parks and Open Space Planning section of this comprehensive plan.

Forest Preserve District

The Lake County Forest Preserve District is adjacent to the Park District and provides services on the Lake County side of the Fox River.

Private Land Holdings for Public or Quasi-public Use

There are several large, privately held parcels of land that provide open space or recreation services within or adjacent to the Park District boundary.

Parcels within the Park District boundary include:

- > Chalet Hills Golf Club in Oakwood Hills
- > Cary Country Club in unincorporated Cary
- > Trout Valley Homeowners Association-several parcels in Trout Valley

Parcels adjacent to or within the Park District's service area include:

- > Illinois Turner Camp in unincorporated Fox River Grove/Barrington Hills
- > Norge Ski Club in Fox River Grove

Other State and Regional Planning Agencies

Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) IDOT has responsibility for planning, construction and maintenance of Illinois' extensive transportation network, which encompasses, highways and bridges, airports, public transit, rail freight and rail passenger systems.

Northeast Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission is the official comprehensive planning agency for six counties – Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will -- that form the greater Chicago metropolitan area. NIPC works with local governments and others to promote sensible growth. NIPC also operates under an important Interagency Agreement signed in 2000 with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Regional Transit Authority (RTA), and the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS), stipulating that NIPC plans and data are the basis for Regional Transportation Plan that guides critical decisions and investments.

Through its Common Ground project, NIPC has developed the *2040 Regional Framework Plan* to guide the region's future land use and development by coordinating local land use plans and regional level decisions in response to projected population and employment growth between today and 2040.

Cary is classified as a “Community Center” one of five types in the Chicago metropolitan area identified in the plan. Community Centers are characterized as: “... moderately sized hubs similar to Metropolitan Centers, but are smaller and not as intensively developed. They are destinations with services primarily for people in the general vicinity as well as surrounding towns and hamlets. Community Centers affect traffic and land use patterns at the local and sub-regional level. They contain a range of uses and a degree of walkability. Community Centers primarily serve the consumer and recreational needs of local residents...”

Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) The RTA is the financial oversight and regional planning body for the three public transit operators in northeastern Illinois: the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra commuter rail, and Pace suburban bus.

Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) CATS is charged with planning and developing a safe, efficient and affordable transportation system for the region. The CATS Policy Committee is designated by state and local officials as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the northeastern Illinois region. The MPO is responsible, in cooperation with the state, for carrying out the urban transportation planning process in the region.

The *McHenry County Historic Preservation Commission* maintains a list of county landmarks. The approximately half-dozen sites listed for Cary include homes, a barn and Cary Cemetery.

Transportation and Access

Roadways (see Figure 1)

The Northwest Tollway (Interstate 90) is 15 miles south of Cary, with ingress and egress ramps located between Dundee and Elgin. U.S. Route 14 (Northwest Highway) bisects the Park District on northwest/southeast axis. McHenry County Route V36 (Cary -Algonquin/Silver Lake Road) is the principle north/south route through the Park District. Illinois Route 31 forms a portion of the Park District's western boundary at Hoffman Park. West Main Street, Three Oaks Road, Crystal Lake Road and Rawson Bridge Road are other major roadways that link Park District facilities.

In its assessment of existing conditions, the *McHenry County Transit Plan* notes the county is a fast growing area in terms of population and employment but has relatively low densities, that transportation and land use planning are beginning to be looked at in tandem as evidenced by the County's *2020 Unified Plan* and that growth is concentrating in emerging corridors, a pattern that is expected to continue.

While there are no major state or county roadway improvements planned for the Park District Service Area, three that may help improve regional access to Park District facilities include the Rakow Road widening in Crystal Lake, the Wallace Road bridge construction north of Fox River Grove and the West Algonquin Illinois Route 31 bypass.

Public Transportation

There is limited public transportation within the Cary Park District. Bus service is provided by the Cary Senior Bus Service and Pace Suburban Bus Service Dial-A-Ride. The Union Pacific line operates 22 Metra commuter trains daily from Harvard to Chicago, including a stop at Cary's train station located at U.S. Route 14 (Northwest Highway) and West Main Street.

Multi-Purpose Trails (see Figure 5)

The Cary Park District, the Village of Cary, the McHenry County Conservation District and other entities operate over a dozen multi-purpose trails within the Park District. Planned trail extensions will create an interconnected system that links Park District facilities. Other trail planning initiatives that might have had or will potentially have an impact on the Park District Service Area include:

McHenry County 2010 Transportation Plan (1995)

Includes recommendations for bicycle trail networks, including a rail-trail parallel to the Chicago Northwestern Railroad and along Crystal Lake Road.

McHenry County Bicycle Plan (1996)

Prepared by the Chicago Area Transportation Study for the purpose of increasing the use of bicycles as a transportation method.

Algonquin Township US 14 Corridor Pedestrian and Bicycle Study (2001)

Focuses on bicycle and pedestrian access to and movement along U.S. Route 14 from Illinois Route 22 in Fox River Grove to the Prairie Trail in Crystal Lake.

Algonquin Township Plan Commission Report of the 1999 Trail Survey

Among the key findings from the survey was that trails would be more frequently utilized if they were conveniently located and connected to other trails. In addition, trails connected to destinations such as parks, retail districts, schools, and commercial areas would also increase their use.

Crystal Lake Comprehensive Land Use Plan (1988)

Includes a Bikeway Plan that links parks and schools to residential areas, plus additional off-road trails that link to the Prairie Trail and residential areas to the west.

Crystal Lake Park District Needs Survey (2001)

This needs assessment survey found that walking, bicycle and nature trails were among the highest ranked needs identified by residents.

Fox River Grove 1996 Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Updated 2001)

One public land use goal is to expand opportunities for recreational bicycle and pedestrian trails.

Fox River Grove Park and Trail Map (2000)

Inventory and proposed development list of Village sidewalks and trails, most of which follow existing roadways.

Land Uses within the Park District Service Area

Land Use Classifications

With the amount of land available for development and redevelopment within the service area steadily decreasing, understanding what parcels may be available for parks and recreational uses and where they are located becomes increasingly important. The Village of Cary recognizes 16 separate land use categories. Each category appears at least once within the Park District service area.

There are approximately 7,976 acres, or 12 square miles, of land within the boundaries of the Cary Park District. The table at right sets forth the distribution of land uses by acreage and percentage and Figure 6 illustrates the land uses within the Park District boundaries.

Table 4: Land Use Profile
Cary Park District

Land Use	Count	Acres	%
AG Agriculture	22	488.733	6.1%
HOA Home Owners Assoc.*	36	131.336	1.6%
IND Industrial	132	386.96	4.9%
INST Institutional	65	151.472	1.9%
MING Mining	1	15.46	0.2%
OFF Offices	40	27.97	0.4%
OPEN Open Space and Parks	276	2471.713	31.0%
RMF Residential Multi-Family	734	87.556	1.1%
RSF Residential Single Family	5871	2367.276	29.7%
RSF-V Residential Single Family(Vacant)	283	244.21	3.1%
RTL Retail	118	130.393	1.6%
SCHOOL School (Davenport use Institutional)	11	196.986	2.5%
UTIL Utilities	18	87.065	1.1%
VAC Vacant	14	95.321	1.2%
VOSD Vacant Open Space Storm Water Detention*	10	20.685	0.3%
MISC Miscellaneous	17	170.748	2.1%
TRANS Transportation	1	902.936	11.3%

Residential

There are three residential land use categories-Residential Single Family (RSF), Residential Single Family-Vacant (RSF-VAC) and Residential Multi Family (RMF). RSF constitutes the predominant land use within the Park District, 29.7 percent. Parcels designated RSF-V comprise 3.1 percent of Park District land.

RMF uses comprise a small percentage of land within the Park District. Small RMF developments exist primarily along U.S. Route 14. Bright Oaks is a relatively large development located on the north side of Three Oaks Road and adjacent to Lions Park Silver Lake. Another large RMF development is just west of Cary-Algonquin Road south of U.S. Route 14 and adjacent to Hoffman Park.

Office and Retail

Office and retail land uses comprise 2 percent of the Park District. Retail uses are mainly concentrated either at the Village Central Business District or along U.S. Route 14. Small strip centers are located along Cary-Algonquin Road.

Industrial

Industrial land uses are clustered along Union Pacific Railroad and on the north side of U.S. Route 14. Additional industrial uses are located along East Main Street, on the west side of Silver Lake Road north of Three Oaks Road and north and south of Three Oaks Road west of U.S. Route 14. Landfills located along CPD’s northwest boundary of Sands Road and Illinois Route 14 are no longer in service.

Home Owners Association, Village Open Space Det. and Open/Recreation

These land uses combined comprise 32.9 percent of Park District service area land uses. The Open/Recreation portion is 31 percent of total service area land use. The largest tracts of Open/Recreation lands are located near the peripheries of the northeast, northwest and southwest parts of the service area. Numerous other sites are scattered throughout the Park District within residential neighborhoods.

Mining, Utilities and Transportation

Lands used for mining, utilities and transportation comprise 12.6 percent of the Park District service area. A gravel mining site is located at the western entrance to the Village on the north side of U.S. Route 14. The Union Pacific right-of-way that parallels U.S. Route 14 is the largest single transportation land use, and a ComEd right-of-way west of Cary-Algonquin Road is the largest utility land use.

School and Institution

Schools and institutions, which include churches, cemeteries and Village-owned properties, comprise 4.4 percent of land within the Park District. The largest Schools and Institutions land uses form a north/south corridor between Cary-Algonquin Road and the ComEd utility right-of-way. Another sizable portion lies south of Crystal Lake Road in the east-central portion of the service area.

Agriculture and Vacant

Agricultural land uses comprise 6.1 percent of Park District land. The largest tracts of agricultural lands are located in the western portions of the service area along Illinois Route 31 and U.S. Route 14, along the northern border of the service area south of Lake Killarney and in the northeast corner of the service area along the Fox River. There are other parcels scattered in the southeast portion of the service area along and north of Main Street.

Vacant land is 1.2 percent of the Park District service area. The largest cluster of vacant land is along Three Oaks Road just west of U.S. Route 14. Another sizable parcel is in the southwest portion of the service area adjacent to Fox Trails Park.

Environmental Resources

Environmental resources need to be identified and understood to provide a baseline of information and data for long-term decision-making. The Cary Park District identifies seven categories of environmental resources (see Figure 7)

Rivers (Algonquin and Nunda Townships)

The Fox River extends along a majority of the Park District's southeasterly and northeastern border.

Water Bodies

Wetlands are located predominantly in the north and northeastern regions. Open water consists primarily of gravel-mined lakes and flood retention ponds, but also includes a few stream-fed or spring-fed ponds.

Wetlands

Wetlands are located predominantly in the north and northeastern regions.

Floodplain

Floodplains are located primarily along the Fox River and tributaries that extend into the Park District service area.

Woods-Savanna

Woodlands exist in pockets throughout the boundary, but are principally located in the north and northeastern regions on McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD) lands. A larger woodland area exists on MCCD and Park District properties in the south and southwestern region.

Prairies-Open Fields

Prairies exist primarily through Park District and MCCD efforts on publicly owned lands, although some pockets are held in private ownership. Sands Main Street Prairie is a State of Illinois Nature Preserve adjacent to an additional 34-acre nature preserve that is in private ownership.

Parks

Cary Park District parks, natural areas, open space detention parcels, and greenways/trail corridors.

Conservation Lands

Conservation lands are lands set aside for preservation of natural areas and passive recreational use, much of which is currently owned and managed by the McHenry County Conservation District.