

Village of Plover Redevelopment Plan



Welcome to the
Village
of Plover

**University of Wisconsin
Stevens Point
Conservation and Community
Planning Senior Capstone
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Introduction

We are a group of Conservation and Community Planning students from the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point enrolled in the planning capstone course. This course is aimed at giving us real-life applications of the material we have been learning for the previous three and a half years. For our senior capstone project, we teamed up with the Village of Plover to create potential plans for the following developments: Mixed-Use, Conservation Subdivision, and Little Plover River Park update. We were then tasked as a group to gain input from the community on some potentially new ideas for these developments, along with creating new and unique ways to implement them within the parcels we were given. As a result, we were required to go through the following step to accomplish our final goal: first impressions, recommendations, community input, Precedent research, site analysis and master plan.

On January 25th, 2024, we conducted our first impressions by driving through the village of Plover and establishing grade a grade for what we saw during our drive. Then March 7th, we shared our First impressions and gathered community input. We want to gain a better understanding of what the community would like to have in their own community. We then gathered our precedent research and site analysis to complete our master plan, as we were able to share our master plan on May 7th 2024.

Goals we look to accomplish:

Mixed-Use Development - Enhance Community feel

Conservation Subdivisions - Create sustainable living options

Recreation - Update the Little Plover River Park

- Promoting economic growth and local business
- Creating Diverse recreational areas
- Community centered development and creation of third spaces
- Prioritizing community greenspaces in new subdivisions

Community Input Process:

For this process we were able to gather information for the community by allowing community members to interact with maps of the parcels that we were given. This allowed us to gain a better overview of what members would like to see done, also this allowed us to build a better connection with the community as well.

Precedent Analysis:

Through different case studies and being able to understand the data we were given. We came up with different new and unique ideas that we could bring to the table. This process allowed us to get deeper into how we could also fund these developments as well.

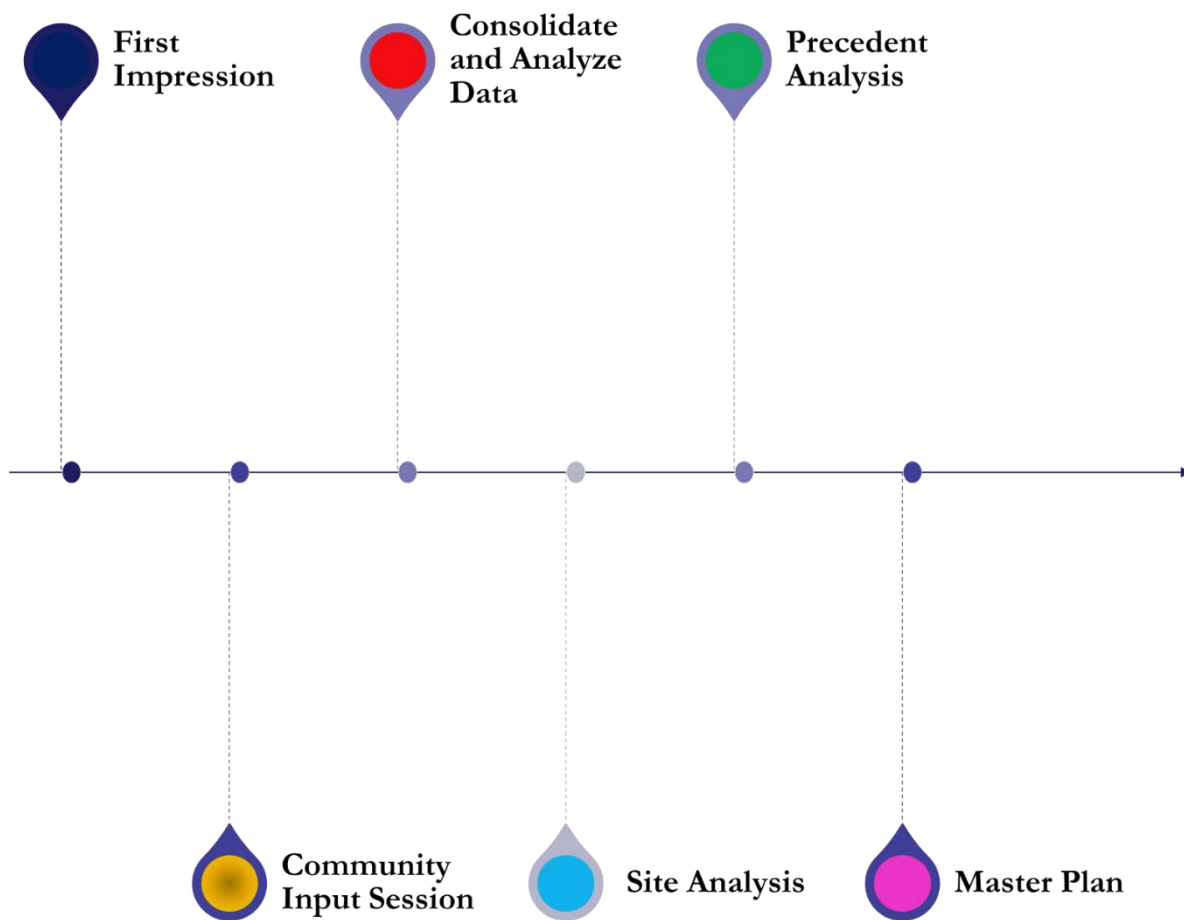
Site Analysis:

Through this process we were able to gain a better understanding of our parcel and the different geographical features that exist on those parcels. Using GIS, we were able to create maps that could ultimately explain what we want to accomplish.

Master Plan:

Our master plans were developed based upon everything we have gathered from beginning to end. We prioritized the community's input and came up with some new and unique ideas that we hope the Village of Plover can incorporate within their plans.

This is a timeline for how we conducted our data as we first presented our first impressions and gathered our community input data. Then we used the data we



gathered to help us create a site analysis and precedent analysis to produce a final master plan to share.

First Impressions

First Impressions Methods:

On January 25th we conducted a "Community First Impressions" analysis provided by the UW Extension system. The First Impressions Survey was conducted via on-site visits throughout the Village of Plover to collect primary source observations from the perspective of "young professionals." We rated various aspects of the community on a scale from A to F, with each letter grade having corresponding weighted scores.

Scores were normalized to obtain total letter scores for each category. Categories are community entrances, downtown, parks, walkability, infrastructure, signage, including recreation, tourism, government & infrastructure, housing and public services. We used these scores to quantify our initial impressions of plover.

Our goal is to gather your input on community development spaces throughout the Village of Plover. We are excited to hear your valuable ideas and opinions about the three spaces that we have been tasked with evaluating and updating. All thoughts and ideas are welcome and will help to lead us into the next steps.

Mixed Use Development

Our Findings

Our main focuses during our drive through were to find the following:

- Community Entrances
- Retail and Local Economy opportunities
- Downtown or Community/Central Business District(s)

Entrances	Grade	Entrance Findings
East Entrance (County Road B, Plover Road, Del Monte Plant)	B	Entrance Sign located near (AmericInn by Wyndham Plover Stevens Point) Retail area
North Entrance (Hoover Ave.)	C	Residential area leading into a retail area No entrance sign
West Entrance (54, Plover Road, Cross Railroad tracks)	C	Some residential areas has a population sign
South Entrance (Post Road)	C	Has a Population sign of Plover Village of Plover has sign in front: it is hard to distinguish where Plover starts and stops if it wasn't for the population sign

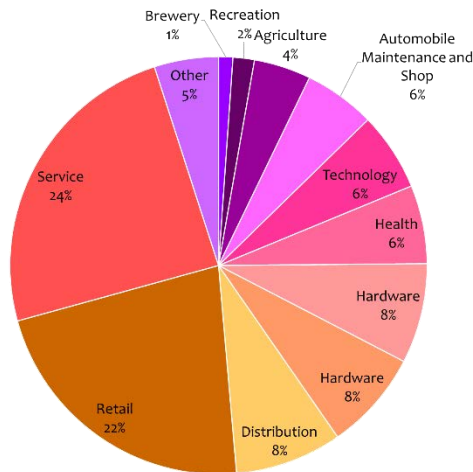
We used the UW System Community first Impressions strategy to grade entrances in the Village of Plover. In this table, the grading scheme is as follows.

- A = What I experienced far exceeded my expectations
- B = What I experienced was better than my expectations
- C = What I experienced met (but did not exceed) my expectations
- D = What I experienced did not meet my expectations
- F = What I experienced was far worse than my expectations

The retail opportunities were predominantly found in larger shopping centers, full of big box stores, chains, and other businesses that do little for the local economy.



Above: a photo of empty big-box retail stores near the Menards in Plover.



Business Demographics in Plover according to the US Census Data 2020



To the left: a photo of many of the large retailers and fast-food chains in the crossroads commons area.

Some outstanding features that we found were:

- Friendly atmosphere
- Many parking opportunities
- Recreation opportunities
- Many bars and breweries
- Many retail opportunities

Recommendations

We would recommend a few things to add in the Village. We noticed:

- Shortage of local retail opportunities
- No pronounced downtown area

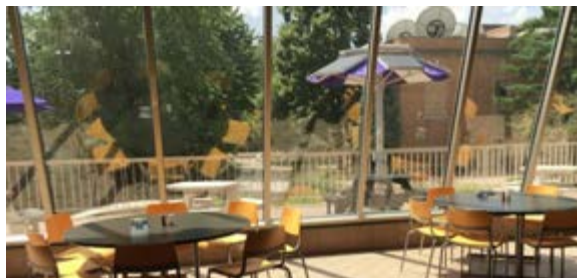
As college students who are getting ready to graduate, we are looking for places we want to live and what makes those places attractive to us. After completing our drive through analysis, we have some recommendations to help improve the sense of place and community through:

- 😊 Third spaces
- 🏢 Downtown
- 💰 Local economy

Community Spaces

A third space is defined as a social setting that is separate from the first space of home and the second space of work.

- Walkable
- Bikeable
- Connected to all parts of the Village of Plover community and beyond
- Presence of small and local shops



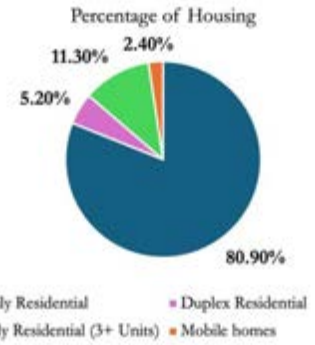
The overall impressions of the village of Plover are heavy reliance on big box stores, car-centric infrastructure, and disconnected subdivisions. The goal of our

recommendations is to create a community space that is both walkable and socially connected. Our vision for a community space or “downtown” area is to provide a third space for residents to improve sense of place.

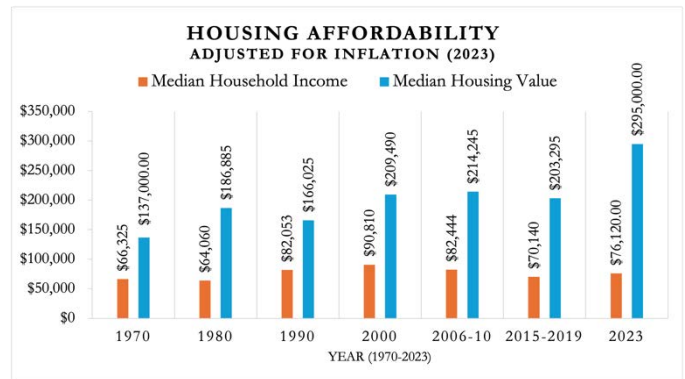
Conservation Subdivision

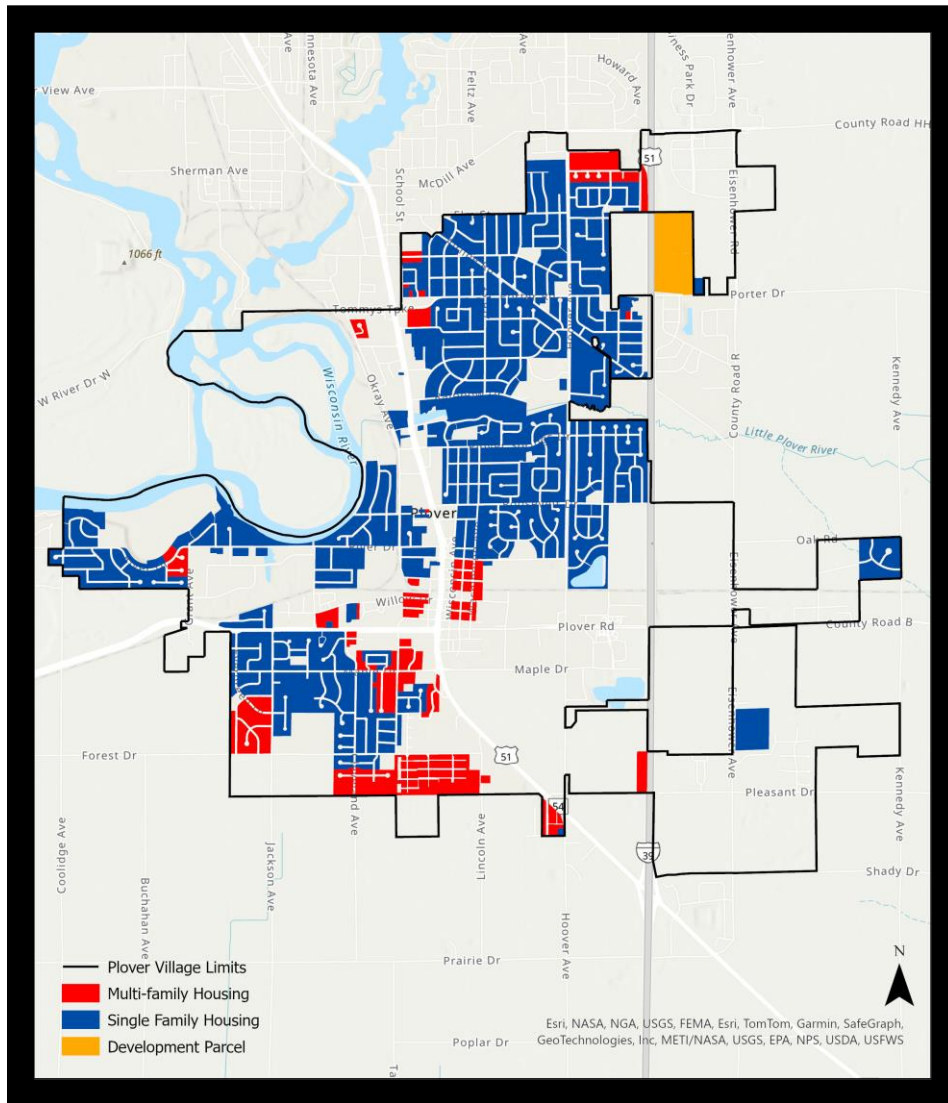
Our Findings

The Village of Plover has been growing in population since 2000, Residential population has increased by 25% to 13,519 residents living in Plover as of 2020. with around 35% of their total acreage being used for housing. Housing in the Village is primarily single-family, taking over 80% of properties zoned for housing. Most of the homes are on large lots, but the Village does not use a large amount of their total acreage for public green spaces. Housing Affordability is also a topic of concern. The median housing value has increased by 71% since 2000, while the median household income has only decreased when adjusted for inflation.



Below: Example of a Conservation Subdivision










Above: A map depicting the housing types in the Village of Plover

Recommendations

Housing in the Village of Plover is not diverse and has only become less affordable in since the 2000's, we propose these recommendations to ensure that Plover continues to expand more sustainably.

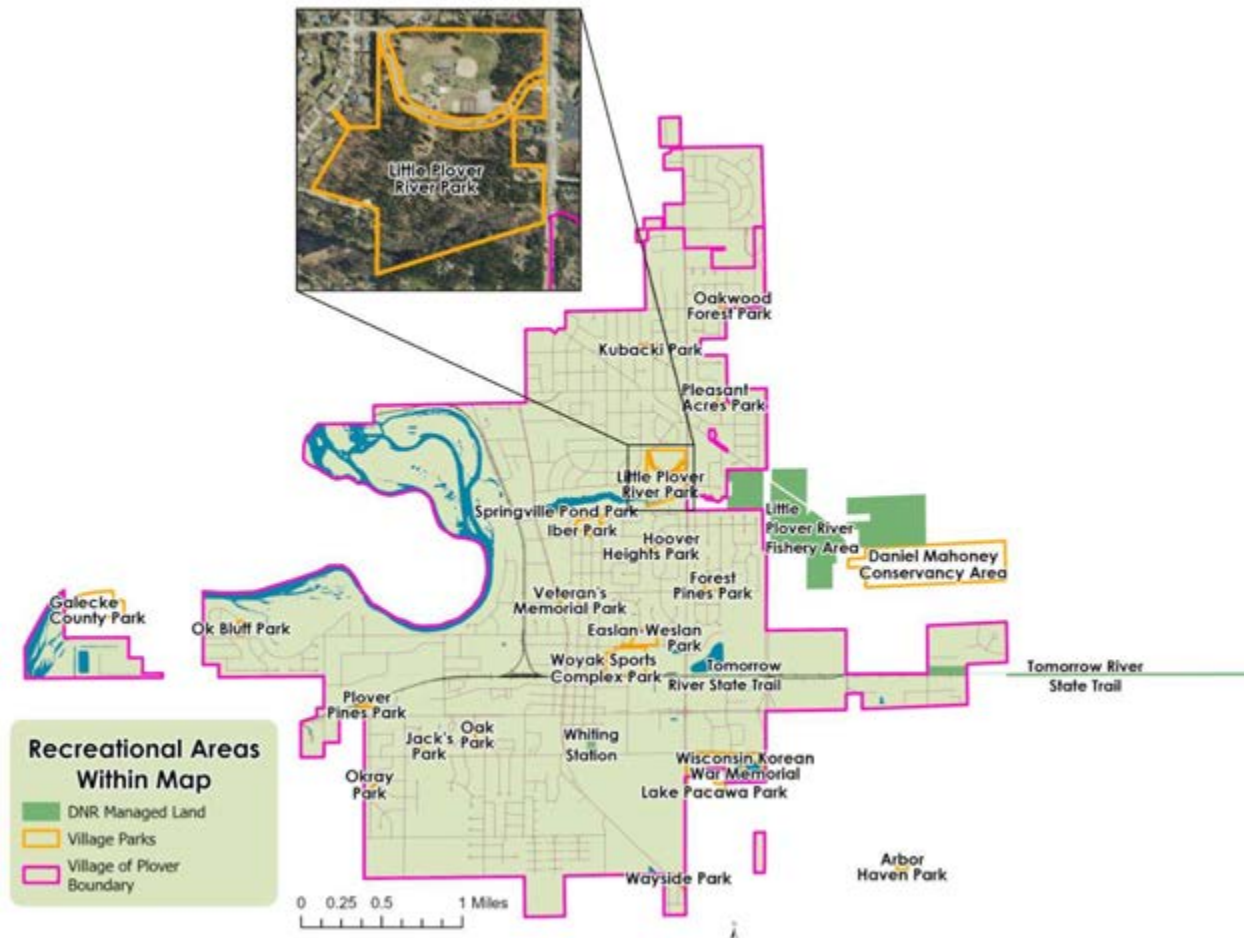
-  Expand Diverse Housing
-  Create more affordable options
-  Conserve Greenspace
-  Decrease Lot Sizes
-  Include Multi-Use Functions

Adding our proposed recommendations would ensure long term housing sustainability if there is more diverse housing, as well as more thought put into affordability with factors like zoning that allows decreased lot sizes, smaller, multi-family homes and access to multi-use areas.

Little Plover River Park

Our Findings

Data from the Village of Plover's Comprehensive Plan highlights the diversity of recreational amenities in the area. However, with expected population growth, there's a push for redevelopment of the residential parks within the Village of Plover. The Village of Plover's Comprehensive Plan emphasizes creating or enhancing facilities with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessibility, ensuring inclusivity for all.



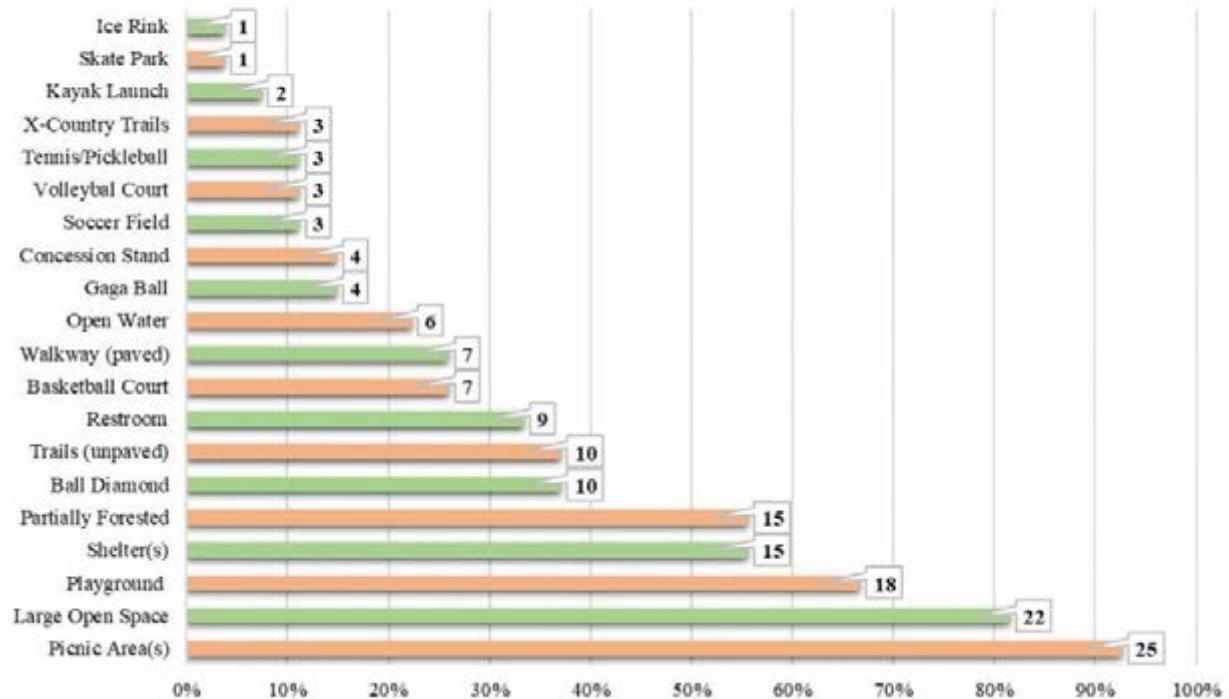
Strengths

- Accessible information for the village via web
- Wide variety of recreational opportunities/activities
- Numerous opportunities for recreational involvement for all ages
- Beautiful natural landscapes (lots of trees & vegetation)
- Residential orientated parks

Areas of Improvement

- Lack of ADA accessibility across parks
- Outdated infrastructure
- No central park of Plover
- No residentially found community gathering/event space
- Lack of environmental interpretation and education in natural areas
- No hub for events in Plover
- Lack of adequate GIS data to support development

Percentage of Amenities Across 27 Parks



Adding these recommendations to the park will enhance its appeal, accessibility, and community participation. These improvements will enable individuals with disabilities to safely enjoy recreational activities. The addition of a Miracle League baseball diamond with enhanced facilities will support Special Olympics programs and the disabled community. Installation of lighting around the playground and paved trails. The creation of more ADA friendly facilities, paths, amenities and recreational opportunities. Installation of crumb rubber/astro turf ADA playground and Universal baseball field. Additional picnics, tables, onsite grills, trash receptacles, and dog waste bins. Addition of riverbank erosion control buffer in the park. Improve the signage on the trail systems.

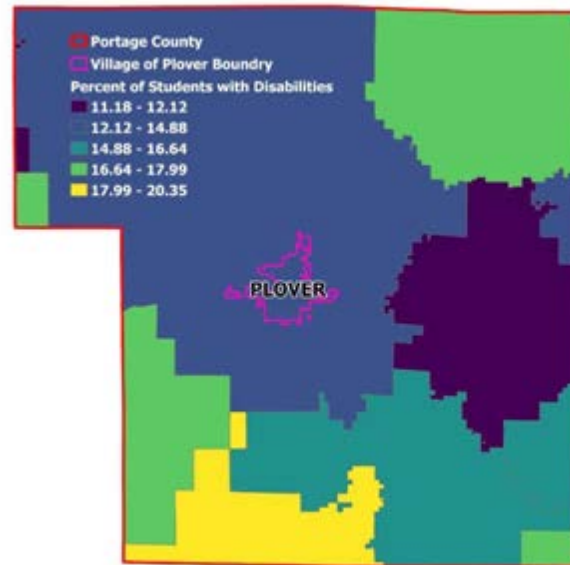


Figure 1: Map showing percent of students with disabilities in Portage County according to the 2021 census.

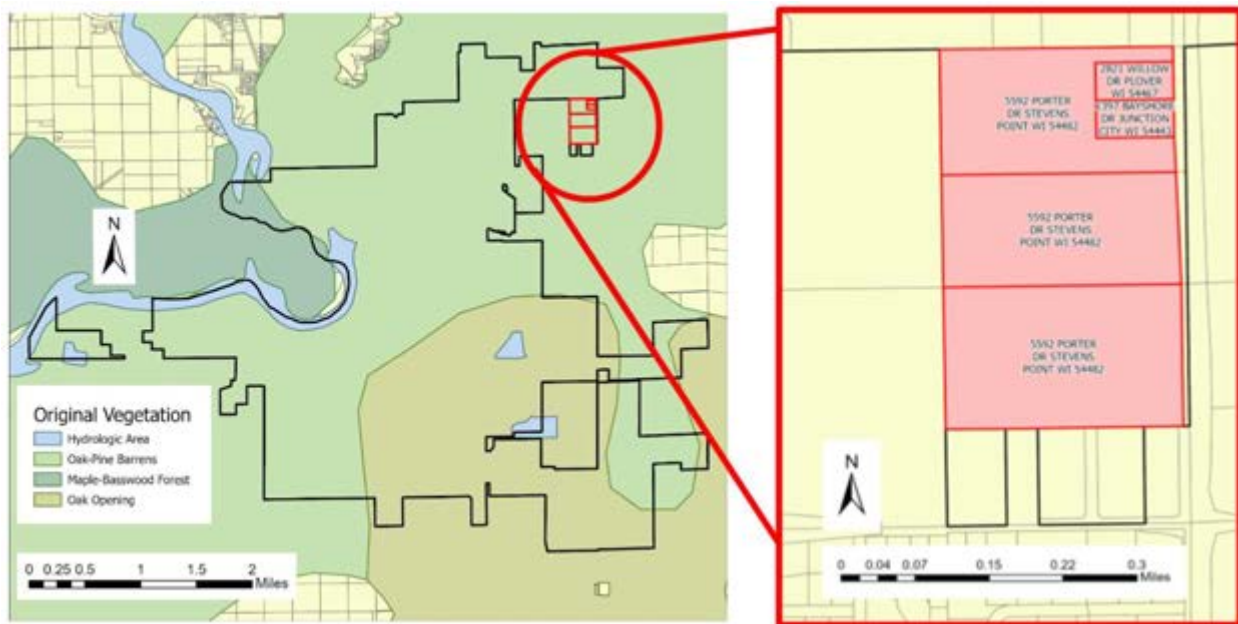
Site Analysis

Mixed Use Development

We are interested in land restoration on our mixed-use site, because, as shown below, historically this land has been made up of oak-pine barrens.

Pre-development, most of the Village of Plover has been oak-pine barrens, with some oak opening habitats in the south-east. This suggests that the soil can support low density forests and prairie plants. Oak-pine barrens typically include bur, black, and white oak trees, jack pine, and quaking aspen.

Currently, however, this site is an abandoned farm field. Oak-pine barrens would be more aesthetically pleasing; our hope would be that if it is a beautiful, native grassland with some trees, more people would have a pleasant walking and shopping experience. Since this site is meant to host a pleasant pedestrian experience and create community gathering spaces, land restoration is necessary to create this welcoming and beautiful atmosphere: these historical species will be the focus. This type of planting would attract more people to this future community development.



There are 5 parcels on this plot of land, designated for mixed-use development and community spaces. Below are the sizes and addresses of these parcels. While these parcels are not zoned yet, they have been marked for development.

5592 Porter Dr	18.1 acres
1397 Bayshore Dr	2 acres
2821 Willow Dr	2 acres
5592 Porter Dr	23.09 acres
5592 Porter Dr	18.46 acres

Indoor Recreation Opportunities For Families in Central Wisconsin

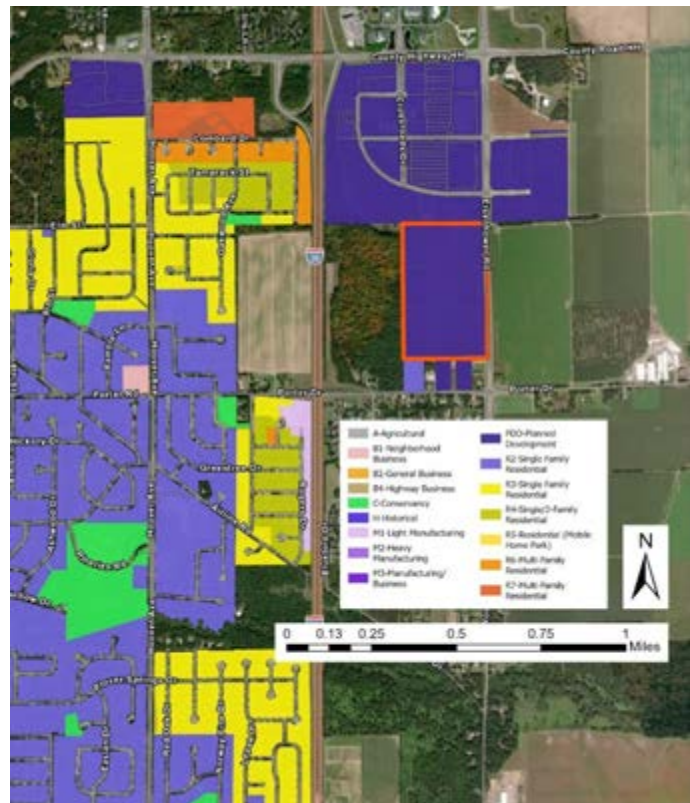


During our charette process, the community showed interest in indoor recreation opportunities.

The Stevens Point – Plover area has limited options for indoor recreational opportunities. If you are looking for an indoor track to walk in the winter or an outdoor gym in the summer, you will not be able to find such things in or near the Village of Plover without a high cost. With a growing community of young families in the Village of Plover, our parcel is a great fit for the implementation of a community center, foot truck lot, and green space with trails.

Currently, the site is zoned as "Planned Development." To the right you can see our parcel and the surrounding areas. As you can see, much of the surrounding land is zoned as residential. Between the families that live close by and traffic for crossroads commons, this site is ideal for community development.

When it comes to the physical factors, our parcel has minimal flood hazard and no history of wetlands. The soils are appropriate for development.



Conservation Subdivision

Summary

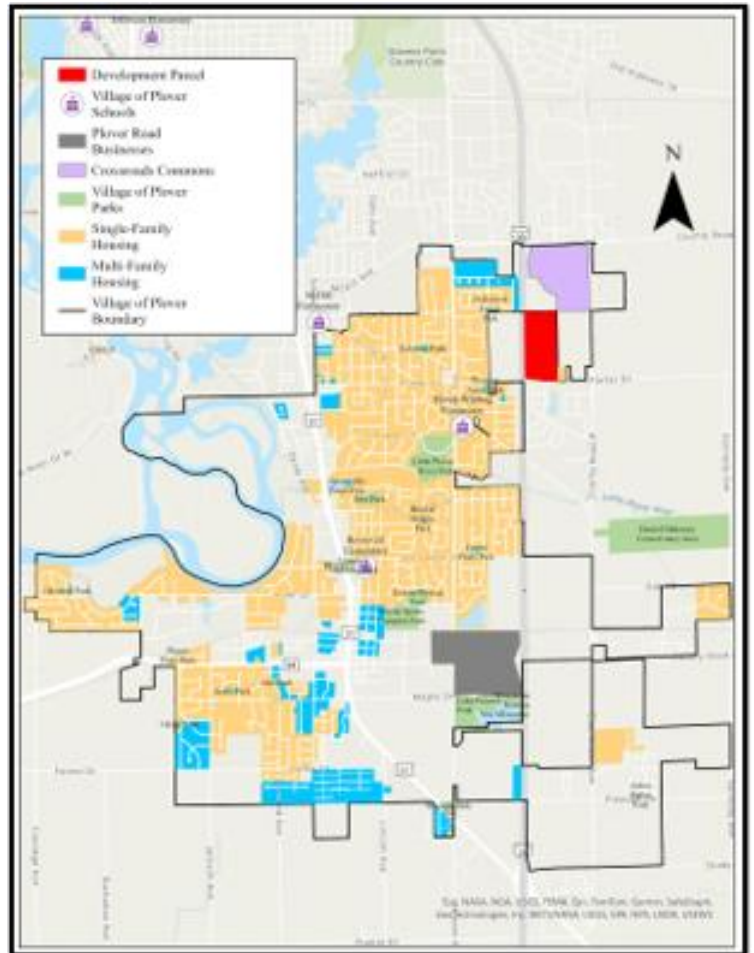
Our parcel, located on the north-eastern section of the Village of Plover is heavily wooded with a handful of buildings close to Porter Road.

The Village of Plover has seen a rapid growth in population since 2000. Additionally with the rapid rise in housing prices, consideration is going to be needed to create affordable and diverse housing options. The proposed parcel outlined in red in the Northeast of Plover is currently not incorporated in the Village, so it is yet to have a zoning classification. It is in the Town of Plover and is classified as Medium Density Residential for the future land use. If annexed into the Village of Plover, there is surrounding infrastructure for water and sewage connections.

The proposed development parcel is located on the eastern boundary of the Village of Plover near the Crossroads Commons area which includes Walmart, Lowes, and multiple restaurants. The development parcel is located close to many schools but would fall into the Plover-Whiting School Boundary in the Stevens Point School District and is under a mile (0.9) away. This parcel is also surrounded by many public parks managed by the Village of Plover as well as some areas managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Affordability

Housing prices in the Village of Plover has steadily increased since it was re-incorporated in 1971. As the median housing value has increased by close to 71%, the median income (adjusted for inflation) has stayed relatively flat in the Village of Plover. In our proposed parcel, we would like to create affordable housing opportunities, including townhomes, multi-family homes, and possibly single-family living spaces.

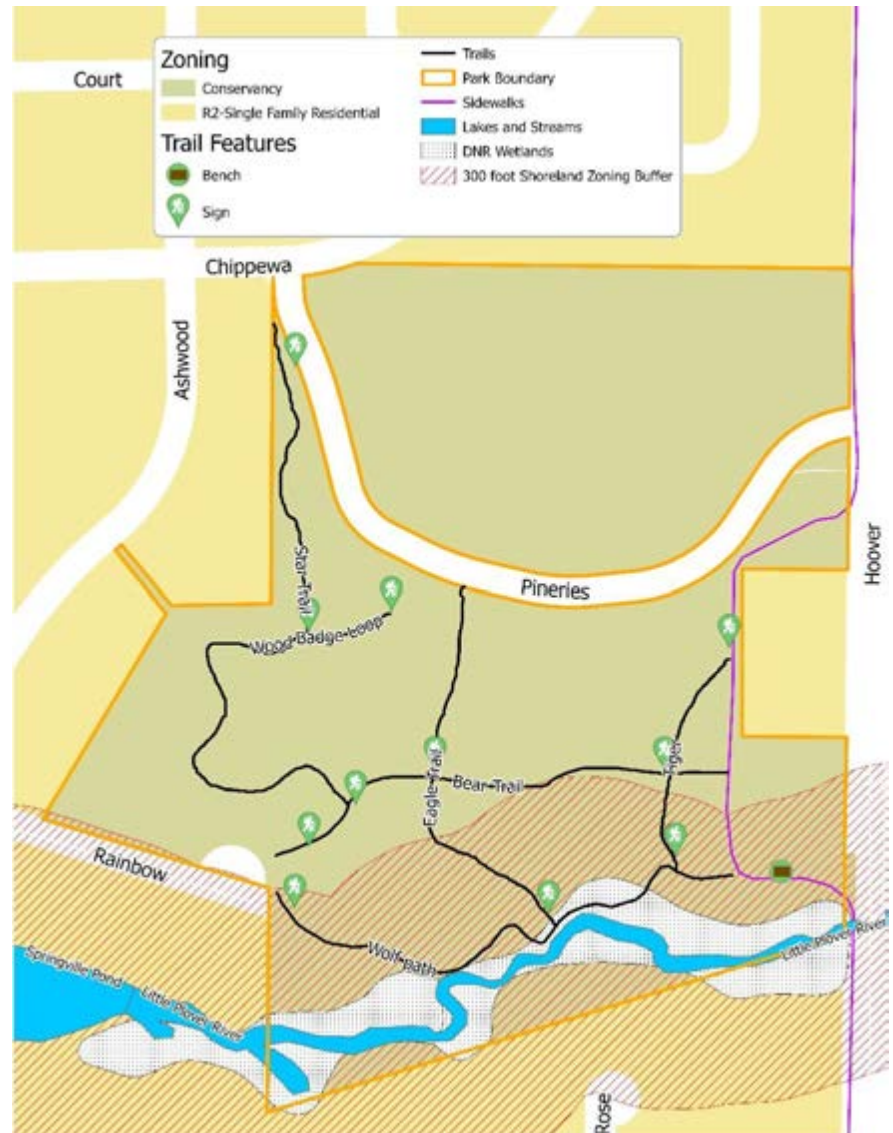


Little Plover River Park

Summary

This analysis will cover the uses and limitations to development of Little Plover park in the Village of Plover, WI. The park is comprised of two parcels, both zoned conservancy and surrounded by single family residential neighborhoods.

- Little Plover River park is separated by Pineries Road. The upper portion is approximately 15 acres and the bottom, wooded section is approximately 31 acres. The wooded section of the park is a mixed, un-even aged stand of deciduous and coniferous trees.
- The park is located centrally within Plover and is only 0.3 miles driving distance from Plover-Whiting Elementary School and across the road from Brookridge Church. Both of these establishments create opportunities for community gatherings and use within the park.
- The Little Plover River runs through the southern edge of the park creating a 300-foot shoreland alteration buffer around it. With this in mind, any modifications to trails, such as the installation of impervious surface would warrant a shoreland alteration permit per WI NR 115.
- A section of the Green Circle Trail runs through the eastern edge of the park (noted in pink as a sidewalk in map to the right).
- We noticed a lack of GIS data for the location of trails and the benefits available by having such data.



Baseball and Miracle Leagues

The Village of Plover gathers around baseball. With greater than 35% of parks having baseball diamonds, the sport is a popular pass time within recreation areas. However, there lacks the opportunity to include individuals with differing abilities in America's favorite pastime. Wisconsin has approximately 8 miracle leagues, mostly located in the eastern portion of the State. With the Village of Plover being centrally located and already attracting a sports crowd to tournaments at the Woyak Community Sports Complex, Little Plover Park would be an excellent location for a universally Accessible baseball field. Additionally, according to recent census data, 12-14% of students within Plover live with some type of disability. A Miracle League field creates an opportunity to include all demographics of people and will expand upon the already popular sport of Baseball within the Village of Plover.

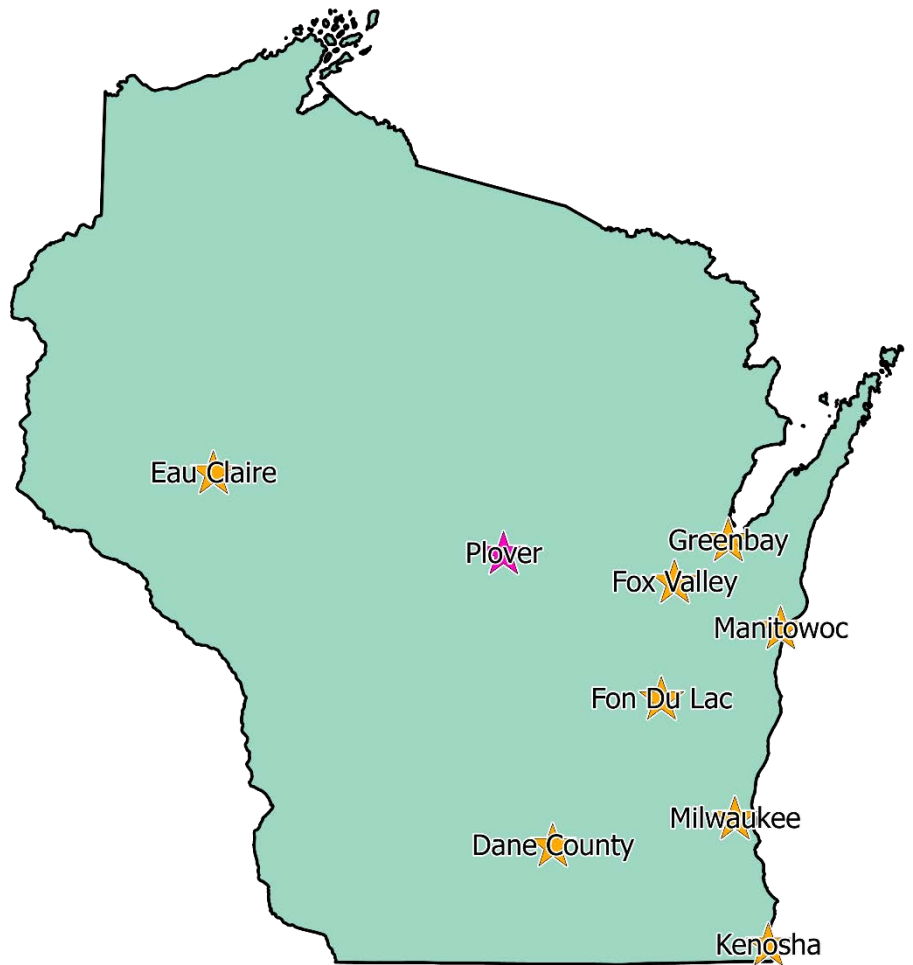


Figure 2: Map showing Miracle League locations in Wisconsin, including a star noting the location of Plover for proximity comparison.

Precedent Research

Mixed Use Development

Goal: Enhance Economic Growth and sense of community

The goal is to bring Plover several different options that can establish both a sense of community as well as grow Plover economically in a sustainable manner. To set Plover aside from different areas within Portage County would be an area that would be comprised of: A lot that has different food trucks and a Pavilion for people to enjoy their meal and an Outdoor Business Incubator.

- This would capitalize on space and how it is used within a parcel
- It would diversify different retail experience in the area
- It would establish an area where people would want to gather in Plover
- Attract tourist from all over Wisconsin and other states

Example #1: Food Truck Lot- (The Lot), (Bend, OR)



Established in 2013, the lot has 11 different food trucks in 3 different pods.

Example #2: Platteville Business INC., (Platteville, WI) Business Incubator



Platteville Business INC., is a business incubator that has 42 active businesses, and currently employs 382 people. It is 26,000 sq ft.

Example #3: Geneva Commons, (Geneva, IL) Outdoor shopping mall



Geneva Commons is an outdoor shopping mall, with 66 businesses within the mall and has an outdoor area where events can be hosted, and the community can gather. The mall is 418,000 sq ft. And incorporates many different varieties of shopping experience that an person can enjoy.

Example #4: Varsity Donuts, (Manhattan, KS) Donut truck



Varsity Donuts is a donut shop by day, and at night turns into an outdoor food truck for people spending time together downtown Manhattan, Kansas. The hidden food truck (located in an alley) attracts tourists, local and college students to enjoy specialty menu items at this food truck. It incorporates many different aesthetic features, that sets this food truck apart from others as it is an area that becomes a gathering area for many people.

Goal: Establish a Year-Round Recreational Space for Community Gathering

currently, there is nowhere in Plover where community members of all ages can come to recreate all year long. Attendees of our Charrette Process have expressed a need for this type of facility in the Village of Plover. A community recreation center will:

- Bring community members together year-round
- Provide an inclusive recreational space for all ages
- Support local retailers and artists

Example: Arlington Hills Recreation Center – St Paul, MN

The Arlington Hills Recreation Center located in St. Paul, MN, is an example of a recreational community center. Amenities include: a gym, library, kitchen, meeting rooms, walking track, and outdoor soccer fields and a playground. They also offer activities such as adult pickleball groups, cooking classes, teen open gym, and tie-dye. Free meals are provided for those under 18 and rooms and fields are available to rent. Memberships are \$30 for the whole year, or \$3 for the day. The center was funded primarily through city bonds and grants.



Above: Arlington Hills Recreation Center, St Paul MN



Above: Basketball court with an indoor track above

Goal: Improving Community Aesthetics and Access to Green Space



Example: Drexel Town Square – Oak Creek, WI

This Milwaukee suburb lacked a downtown area and residents were looking for a community gathering space. A way to create an inviting space is to prioritize green areas

and access to natural resources. This 2013 project, Drexel Town Square, became a new entrance for Oak Creek, and provides a walkable plot of land that connects the library, city hall, apartments, and local businesses.



Goals:

- Habitat restoration
- Green medians
- Pleasant walking experience

If people like to be somewhere, they will hang out there. By improving the community aesthetics and access to green space, we hope that our plot becomes a pleasurable hang out space in the Village of Plover.

Conservation Subdivision

Our group had three main goals we focused on. The first goal was maintaining an open/forested greenspace. The second goal was creating diverse housing options and finally the third goal was creating the foundation for prolonged affordable housing.

All three of our goals encompassed the feedback we were given during the public input session. Many people liked the idea of having a natural space to get outdoors and bringing nature to the subdivision. We also got feedback on creating a subdivision that offers a wide range of housing with varying home values. Most importantly the topic of affordability was a large amount of our feedback, so we also were able to include a couple strategies at combating rising housing values.

Goal 1: Maintain an open/forested greenspace

Example 1: Decatur, Georgia

The subdivision in this town was developed in a way to offer a multitude of housing options to cater to multiple income ranges. They incorporated ideas of future residents into the accommodations within the subdivision. With the input of future residents, they were able to preserve 11 out of 22 acres as undeveloped with a 6-acre garden. This example from Georgia would fit greatly into the parcel in Plover as it offers plenty of housing options, but it does so in a way that can preserve a majority of the greenspace, something that isn't commonly done with development in the area.



Goal 2: Create diverse housing options.

Example 2: Fort Atkinson, WI - Baker Road Subdivision



Fort Atkinson is a city between Madison and Milwaukee, with most residents commuting to work. To create more diverse housing options, they created the Banker Road subdivision plan. The Banker Road plan has a variety of housing units including duplexes, townhomes, and single and multi-family housing. Fort Atkinson is utilizing the Jefferson County Live Local Development Fund, which allocates funds to create housing for current and prospective residents. The unique thing about this plan is that Fort Atkinson is sending the message out to developers. They have a vision and are willing to give bonuses and security to developers that want it. (City of Fort Atkinson 2024)

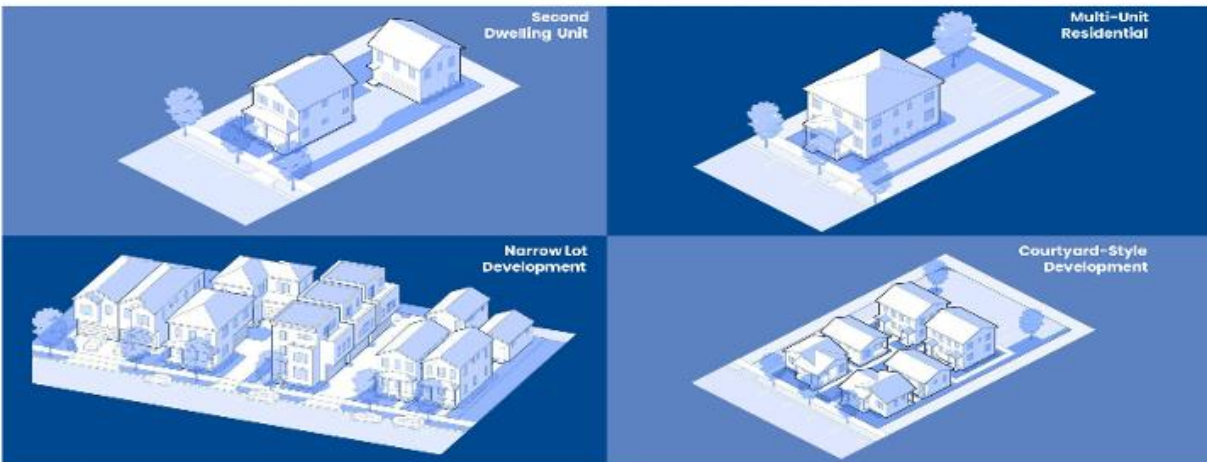


Goal 3: Create the foundation for prolonged affordable housing

Example 3: Houston, TX - Modifying the zoning code

In 1998, Houston reduced their minimum lot requirements for single-family housing from 5,000sq ft to 1,400sq ft. In 2013 they expanded this requirement to all housing types. Although there is no direct evidence that these infill units always create affordable housing, there is evidence that this doesn't increase housing value, and still adds more units to the market. The way to encourage development is to reduce the restrictions on the developer. By doing this, Houston has seen an uptick in developments which will help the growing population (City of Houston 2020). Perhaps by lowering restrictions, Plover can enact more projects to increase the supply of housing.

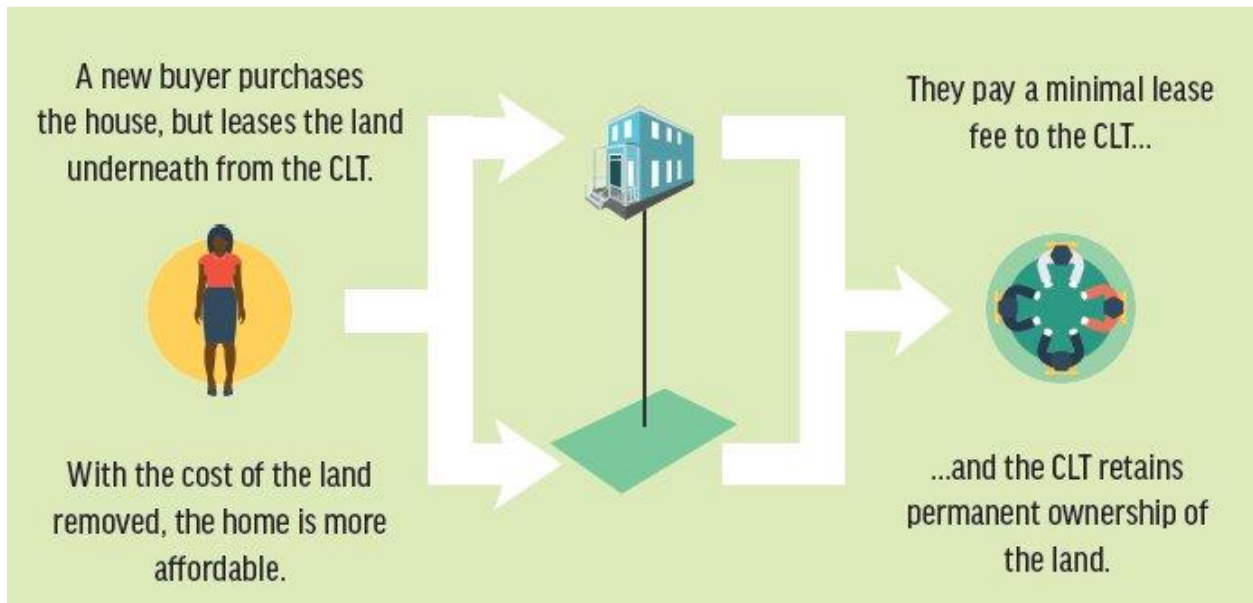
Livable Places Encourages these Housing Types



Livable Places Houston Visit lets.talk.houston.org/livable-places for more info.

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Example 4: Madison Community Land Trust - Troy Gardens



A community land trust is a tactic that could not only make our project a reality but also make it affordable in the long term. Community land trusts (CLTs) are non-profit entities managed by residents and community members alike who own the land underneath a subdivision. The CLT will then lease the land under a house to a homeowner while the homeowner gets to own their house. This accomplishes two things: one, the cost of the land is removed from the purchasing price making it affordable, and two, allows the homeowner to still build equity. The leasing fee is normally very small (generally \$60-\$80 per month), what makes these places permanently affordable is that the selling price of the houses is usually restricted, but still enough for the owner to make a bit of money (ICCLT 2022). This is a solution that allows people from all walks of life to enter the housing market at a reasonable price, gain ownership history, and live in a community.



An example close to home comes from Madison with the Madison Area Community Land Trust. This organization manages multiple neighborhoods in the area, most notably Anniversary Court and Troy Gardens. Anniversary Court shows how a model

like this can be affordable. In 1998, the initial sale price of these homes was \$91,500. They resold a few times but most recently in 2020, a house sold for \$119,500 which is well below the average house price in Plover. Troy Gardens is an example of how a CLT can create its own integrated community. The project combined a restored prairie, an organic community-supported agriculture farm, community gardens, and mixed-income housing. Their housing method was essentially to allocate housing to people in different income brackets (MACLT 2022). This example shows how fluid and dynamic these models can be, and something to consider for the central Wisconsin area.

Little Plover River Park

Precedent Research

When doing our precedent research, we had two goals in mind.

Goal 1: develop environmental interpretation resources along the trails at Little Plover River Park.

Goal 2: Create a Universal Baseball Field & ADA Amenities

Feedback we received from our community input session identified Little Plover River Park as a well-loved natural area amidst a highly residential landscape. With the park being highly visited for events such as baseball and by the nearby school, we believe adding a crushed gravel trail in the place of **Bear trail** with a storybook walk would be a great way to involve people of all ages in learning more about their natural surroundings.

Example: Lussier Family Heritage Center, Dane County, WI

The Story book walk is located throughout the trails surrounding the Lussier Family Heritage Center and offers outdoor exploration and literacy Through posted signs. The Trail is maintained for an All-Terrain Wheelchair available for check out.

Shared Characteristics

- The Park is located within residential and commercial areas.
- Both spaces offer universal accessibility accommodations.
- Both spaces host a range of activities for all ages and ability levels regarding environmental interoperation programs.



Example: Pulpit Rock Trail, Mirror Lake State Park, Reedsburg, WI

The Pulpit Rock Trail has signs that tell the human story of the once thriving cottage community of Fern Dell on land that has now been reverted to nature as part of the park.



Shared Characteristics

- Both areas are heavily trafficked
- Both trail systems are wooded and are protected as conservation areas.

When doing our first impressions we found that Portage County has an affinity for baseball and softball. Our precedent research and talks with community members led us to believe that Plover and its surrounding communities would benefit from having a Miracle League Field installed.



Example: Memorial Park, Appleton, WI

The City of Appleton alongside Goodwill have partnered up to create and fund a Miracle League field. This field serves Fox Valley and is vital to athletes who have developmental and mobility issues.



Shared Characteristics

- Both parks are in residential areas
- Shared baseball lot sizes
- Easy access for residents via foot, bike, and car travel



Example: Phoebe Bakken Memorial Park, Cottage Grove, WI

The Village of Cottage Grove, located in Dane County created a universal baseball diamond using community fundraising and the village donating the land for the field.

Shared Characteristics

- Both parks service a large population
- Both projects were financed with donations and municipality cooperation
- Both Parks are centered around baseball



References

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Master Plan

Mixed Use Development

Introduction

After our first impressions, public input session, site analyses, and additional research – we present our final ideas for community development in the Village of Plover. Our goals in this design were to help improve the local economic sustainability, create a community space for year-round recreation, and improving community aesthetics and access to green space.

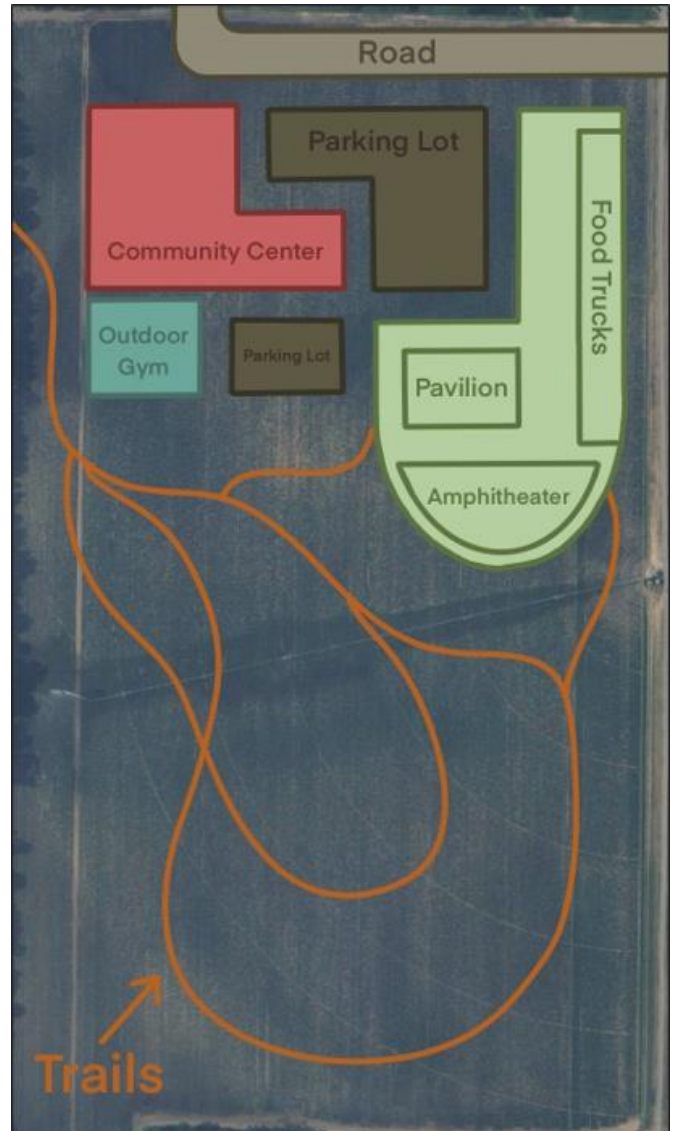
Goal #1 – Recreation and Community Space



In the early stages of the development of this project, we found that there was significant interest in having a place for indoor recreation. The implementation of a recreational community center in the Village of Plover not only fulfills the need for

indoor recreational opportunities, but it also provides various programs and resources. For those who may not enjoy the traditional "gym" atmosphere, have unconventional schedules, or cannot pay for a gym membership – we have a free outdoor option. No where in Stevens Point or the immediate surrounding areas have this type of facility, making the Village of Plover a prime spot. (Pictured above is an outdoor gym in Addenbrooke, CO).

Goal #2 – Green Space and Aesthetics



The majority of this 63-acre parcel will remain as green space. Restoring the current Agricultural land to prairies and forest is a priority. Within the restored landscape will be walking trails that connect to the neighboring conservation subdivision. In the parking lot, there will be green spaces, bioswales, and medians. Not only will this look more attractive to visitors, but it will provide habitat for birds and influence drivers to slow down.



Goal #3 – Support Local Economy

In addition to creating a welcoming community space, supporting the local economy was a big focus. Food trucks are a fast-growing trend,



however, Central Wisconsin lacks a proper venue for these vendors. There is a possibility for trucks to rent out spaces long-term, or just for certain events. Being located next to Crossroads Commons, as well as surrounding neighborhoods, there is plenty of traffic to drive customers to this area. After a nice workout or a fun program, you can stop by and grab a burger or smoothie and support a local business.

Located close to the food truck lot, is an amphitheater and a pavilion. These can be rented out for weddings, birthday parties, or larger events like concerts. The pavilion can be weatherized to allow use all year long. This space provides an opportunity for local musicians and artists to share their work in a safe and inclusive environment.



Conservation Subdivision

Summary

Creating a conservation subdivision requires that natural green space is preserved to the greatest extent. Our unit, just south of the Crossroad Commons, is fully forested and community input showed that people did not want the woods to be touched. To accomplish this, housing was condensed to better utilize the space, and impervious surfaces were minimized. Additionally, amenities were implemented to add character to the subdivision and make it an appealing place to live for first-time homeowners. The goal of this example subdivision is to create a place that combines conservation, community, and affordability.



The Plan

Goal 1: Conservation

The first priority of the design was to minimize the impact on the natural landscape to the greatest extent possible. The final design has 35% of the 73-acre unit being developed, leaving lots of trees standing.

Having this open forest leaves an empty canvas and what our team decided to do was to create a trail network that connected the residents to Crossroad Commons and people from the surrounding neighborhoods. This allows residents to enjoy the natural world close to their homes.

The design also tries to limit impervious surfaces as much as possible by only creating a single road in and out. Additional parking was added near the community garden for access to community members.

Lastly, our team wanted to harbor the idea of conservation by adding native prairie plants to the otherwise open areas. Not only would this beautify the subdivision, but also provide important ecosystem services.

Goal 2: Community

Our team had the vision to create an environment that would let residents play, converse, and relax. We wanted to break the mold of modern subdivision design and create a place where people could meet their neighbors in a casual and organic way. The amenities are all aimed to facilitate this.

Recreation Area

The yellow box in the northwest corner of the map represents the recreation area. This two-acre space would house pickleball courts, basketball courts, a playground, and anything else that residents would desire. This would be an ideal place for kids to run around in and was an addition that was suggested by community members.



Figure 1: Example recreation area with pickleball, basketball, and a playground.

Dog Park

Right below the recreation area would house the one-acre dog park. The dog park would be surrounded by the native prairie suggested in the previous section. The dog park was another suggestion brought forth by community members. It is important to note that Plover currently does not have a dog park so further consideration would be needed if this were to be public or private.



Figure 3: Image representing the native prairie corridor with a dog park adjacent.

Subdivision Park

This four-acre park nestled in the middle of the subdivision would act as a gathering place for residents and community members alike. This space would be valuable as a place to relax after a long day or to picnic outside with friends. The park would be manicured to be aesthetically pleasing with unique features like a gazebo to make it unique.



Figure 3: An example subdivision park with a gazebo for added character.

Community Garden

Located below the dog park is the three-acre garden. Having Access to fresh food would be invaluable to the residents. A community garden would facilitate something like this, giving space to those who want to practice their gardening skills. Additionally, this allows for hosting workshops and getting the residents involved, meeting their neighbors.



Figure 4: An image showing an example community garden.

Goal 3: Affordability

One of our main points from the start of this project was to make this housing affordable. We believe that through a combination of tactics and cooperation, a subdivision like this could be affordable.

Diverse and Condensed Housing

The first key would be to condense the housing, having less of the ownership burden on the homeowner. This would be accomplished through zero-lot-line development. By adopting a development strategy like this, multi-family residential buildings could be created. However, it doesn't have to all be multifamily units. The size of certain units and even building types could be varied. As shown on our project map, we have a section to the east dedicated to single-family housing. By diversifying the housing like this, it creates a wide array of affordability, attracting different buyers. For this to be successful, units would need to be income targeted with certain ones reserved for below median income, some for median income, and the rest at market rate. This makes it so the subdivision isn't completely reliant on subsidized funds or market pricing so that a wide array of people can live in the subdivision.

Ownership of the Land

Numerous market-based options can help a subdivision like this be initially affordable, but how can long-term affordability be achieved? One of the more convincing models we encountered was the community land trust. A model like this takes the market out of the question and allows for creativity with the housing types and amenities offered. This is a better model than renting because the resident would still be able to own the home and build equity from it. This model invests in the people who reside in the subdivision, contrary to the benefit of the homeowner's association. Additionally, a land trust can partner with other non-profits like North Central Conservancy Trust to help manage the forested area by making it a conservation easement. Many different models exist and can be adapted to the needs of the area.

Little Plover River Park

Introduction

Feedback we received from our community input session identified Little Plover River park as a well-loved natural area amidst a highly residential landscape. With the park being highly visited for events such as baseball and by the nearby school, we believe adding a crushed gravel trail in the place of Bear trail with a storybook walk would be a great way to involve people of all ages in learning more about their natural surroundings. Additionally our precedent research and talks with community members led us to believe that Plover and its surrounding communities would benefit from having a Miracle League Field installed.

Our goals for the development of Little Plover River Park are as follows:

Goal 1: develop environmental interpretation resources along the trails at Little Plover River Park

Goal 2: Create a Universal Baseball Field & ADA Amenities

Goal 3: Create spatial data by mapping trails in Little Plover River Park

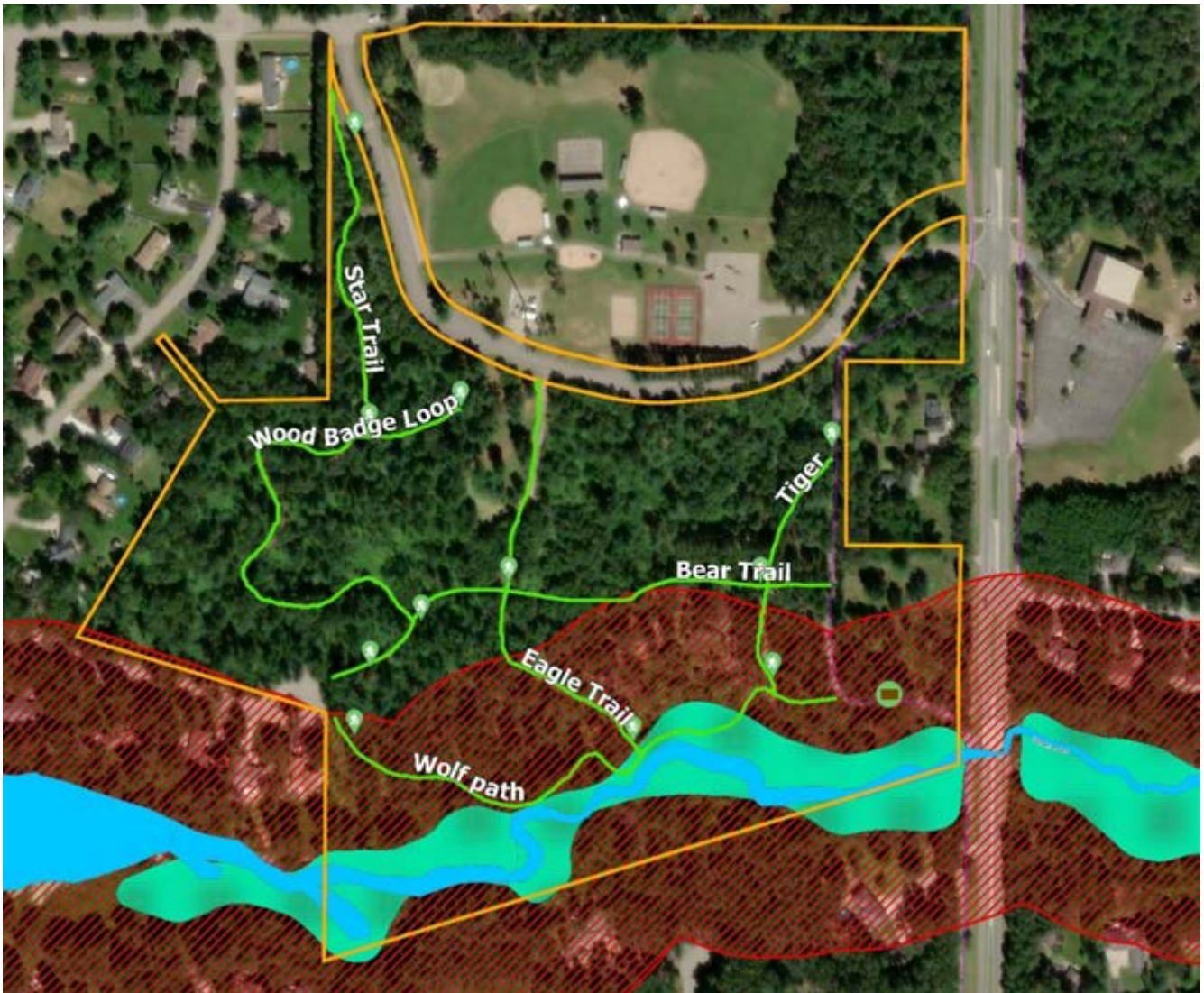


Figure 1: Map showing amenities and trails in Little Plover River Park.

Story Book Walk & Universal Accessibility

Bear trail is relatively flat and acts as a connector trail between the sidewalks on Hoover Ave and residential areas. This offers an opportunity to create an interactive and universally accessible amenity to Little Plover River Park. A story book walk can educate school-aged children on the surrounding nature, and a crushed gravel trail allows for strollers, wheelchairs and other mobility vehicles to travel with ease through nature.

Funding: Natural Resource Foundation of Wisconsin's Teachers' Outdoor Environmental Education Fund

<https://www.wisconservation.org/grants/teachers-outdoor-environmental-education-fund/>



Figure 2: Examples of what a gravel trail looks like with signage.

Shoreland Restoration and Erosion Buffer

This area of the trail is slowly eroding away due to this thalweg of the Little Plover River. As this section of river has been the subject of previous restoration efforts, there is opportunity to continue stewardship of these waters through an erosion control buffer and/or shoreland restoration, to stabilize the trail. This can look like the addition of wetland vegetation, coconut bio logs (pictured) or rocks to slow down erosion. This location of trail is also optimal for river viewing and fishing. The addition of erosion control can add aesthetic value. In addition, a bench or viewing area would be an enjoyable amenity here.

Funding: Funding for restoration could be available through a grant from Healthy Lakes and Rivers Wisconsin
<https://healthylakeswi.com/grants/>

Portage County Miracle League

The creation of the Portage County Miracle League would be a transformative enhancement to our local park through the integration of a Universal Baseball field, also recognized as a Miracle League field. With

Figure 3: Coconut bio logs are a sustainable option for preventing erosion.



Figure 4: Image showing erosion in Little Plover Park along the Little Plover River.

only around 8 such fields existing in Wisconsin and roughly 350 nationwide, the introduction of this facility promises significant benefits for Portage County and its residents. By providing a platform for individuals with differing abilities to actively engage in America's beloved pastime, we are fostering inclusivity and promoting the spirit of community. In conjunction with the Miracle League field, our proposal entails the installation of new ADA-compliant amenities, including restrooms and dugouts, ensuring that everyone can fully enjoy the park experience. Moreover, the establishment of paved trails will facilitate seamless access to the field, further enhancing its accessibility. Operating as a 501(3)(C) nonprofit organization, the league is equipped with comprehensive plans encompassing field design and necessary materials. The integration of the Miracle League field into our park infrastructure not only expands recreational opportunities but also serves as a testament to our commitment to inclusivity and accessibility.



Figure 5: Example of what a miracle league field looks like
<https://www.miracleleague.com/shortcodes/videos/>

Playground and Pavilion

We envision larger-scale projects that would significantly enhance the park's appeal and functionality. Introducing a new ADA-compliant playground and Pavilion would serve as invaluable assets to the community, catering to the diverse needs of park visitors of all ages and abilities. These substantial additions enrich the recreational landscape and underscore our commitment to creating an inclusive and accessible public space for all community members to enjoy.



Figure 6: Computer rendering of what a new pavilion could look like for the Little Plover River Park.



Figure 7: Example of an accessible playground.

Reference for photos:

Jordan. n.d. *Understanding ADA Access On Your Playground....What Is Required??*
<https://playitsafeplaygrounds.com/playground-planning/understanding-ada-access-on-your-playground-what-is-required/#>.

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Future Steps

Mixed Use Development

Short Term

The overall goal, both short term and long, is to provide a safe and inclusive community space for the Village of Plover. This includes supporting the local economy, as well as improving green space. Taking an empty farm field and transforming it into a community gathering space will take a lot of effort and time.

One of the most important things to consider at an early stage is funding. This will look like applying for grants, seeking out donations, and getting loans. Businesses like Sentry Insurance, Lands End, Del Monte, Hershner's, Target, and Goodwill all offer donations throughout the year. Getting funding from some sort of business or organization will be key in pulling our master plan together. It is important to also consider partnerships with the University of Wisconsin Stevens-Point. Almost all factors of this project could be assisted with students in each respective field. As us Planning majors have used this opportunity with the Village of Plover for real life experience, others could as well. This could help with keeping costs lower, and getting the community involved. Seeking out these partnerships early in the process will keep the project rolling.

Involving the community in the design process is crucial. With the whole premise of this project being to support the community and provide a gathering place for people, we want make sure to actually include those who will be affected by this development. Creating information sessions, focus groups, and surveys will engage members of the public and encourage them to share their opinions and suggestions.

Long Term

In the long run we want to create a space where people come to gather every day. Whether it be for the amenities such as an indoor track and gym equipment, the outdoor walking trails, or food trucks and live music, we want people from the Village of Plover to look to the community center as a first option for gathering or recreating.

Accessibility is something to focus on, ensuring that every single member of the Village of Plover and beyond can access the resources located on our lot. This might include getting bus routes changed, adding bike lanes and sidewalks, and following ADA standards. Not only thinking of these things in construction, but also maintaining the facilities is important.

Long term, we hope to support and impact our local economy in a positive way. In our community input session, we heard the need for a local bakery. The community center would be a great spot to put that type of business. Additionally, having various spots where local artists can sell their items will help get new businesses on their feet. Outdoors, we will have a food truck lot, allowing vendors to rent spaces for long periods of time. This will benefit both the vendor and the customer, as the customer always knows where the food trucks are, and the vendors do not have to worry about where to keep their trucks and for how long.

When it comes to the aesthetics of our lot, the goal is to have a good majority of the land restored back to native vegetation. Historically, the land was an Oak Pine Barren. Planting those native trees along with various prairie grasses and flowers, our

space will provide a serene and relaxing environment to walk and recreate in, as well as providing habitat for local wildlife.

Conservation Subdivision

Short Term

Our team has identified several market-based solutions that can help with the affordability and funding of the subdivision. These tactics are mainly based around developers to increase the supply of housing.

The first tactic would be to create density bonuses or incentive housing zones. There are many ways these incentives could be set up, but examples include: giving the developer tax breaks for building denser housing, letting the developer be looser with zoning codes and minimums, or expediting the approval processes. As seen in the Houston precedent research example, minimums make it difficult and expensive for developers to create more housing. Sometimes infill development doesn't work but the issue doesn't lie in the zoning, it lies in the required minimums like parking requirements and building size. These tactics let developers easily create more housing.

Next, following the path that Fort Atkinson is taking could be a quick way to develop. If the Village doesn't want to rely on developers to create a design or come forward with a plan, Plover can do it themselves. This mimics how our team brought forth a desired design. If the village can send out a call to action, this would create an expedited approval time and a low-risk project for both the village and developers.

Lastly, the Village can create a fund to help promote affordable housing or development projects in general. Following the "Live Local Development Fund" model that Fort Atkinson created, the village can create a fund dedicated solely to the creation of affordable housing. This can be a long-term goal as well, but setting the groundwork with this initial step would be key to its success.

Long Term

Creating long-term affordability would be key here as there is no assurance that market-based solutions would keep areas permanently affordable, especially with the increasing population that Plover is seeing.

Forging partnerships with other organizations can be a way to make a project like this a reality. A non-profit like North Central Conservancy Trust can help make the forested area a conservation easement, and aid in the management of the forest. A group like Wild Ones can help with the native landscaping, sponsoring conservation projects like the subdivision is trying to offer. Community funds like the Community Foundation of Central Wisconsin can help with grants and project funding. Lastly, partnering with the UWSP College of Natural Resources can be a way to help manage the forest. Trails can be manicured by on-campus clubs, and the forestry department can be partnered with to perform studies on stand health. There are many options, but great things can be done when working with other organizations.

A community land trust would be key to ensuring that the housing stays affordable. Having a non-profit manage the area would take the market out of the equation and has been a proven way to give access to affordable housing to the people who need it. These land trusts can be a powerful tool and allow planners to be active in the fight for fair housing. There are three community land trusts in Wisconsin located in Madison, Door County, and Milwaukee. Currently, none exist in the central Wisconsin

area, and this could be a huge opportunity for the village. The beauty of CLTs is that they can diversify their portfolio. Once they establish themselves in the subdivision, then they could move into the commercial side, supporting local businesses. From there they can grow to the county level helping provide affordable housing to people who need it in the region. Imagine if all of this started in Plover and how much recognition and praise the village would receive for not sitting back and taking direct action to fix a problem.

Little Plover River Park

Short Term

Upon our initial assessment of the park, it became evident that there is a notable absence of essential amenities, including grills, picnic tables, benches, and adequate lighting. This oversight presents an opportunity to enhance the park experience for both visitors and the neighboring residents. Introducing these small-scale amenities would not only cater to the immediate needs of the community but also contribute to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment. By strategically implementing these amenities within the green space, we can effectively bolster recreational activities and elevate overall enjoyment levels for residents in the vicinity. Access to such facilities encourages outdoor gatherings, picnics, and leisurely strolls, thereby promoting social interaction and community bonding. Furthermore, our proposal extends beyond the installation of basic amenities. We advocate for the establishment of new paved pathways leading to key attractions within the park, including the playground, Miracle League field, and pavilion. These pathways are essential for facilitating easy access for individuals with mobility impairments or those navigating with strollers, ensuring that everyone can fully participate in park activities. The future development of the park with these large and small scale amenities will set the stage for future park renovations and become a fantastic community space.

Long Term

In our long-term vision for the park, we aim to make it a vibrant and inclusive community center, offering a range of amenities and activities to meet the diverse needs of our residents. We recognize the initial assessment highlighting the absence of essential facilities like grills, picnic tables, benches, and lighting, presenting an opportunity to not only address this oversight but also to enhance the park's appeal. Alongside these smaller amenities, the addition of an ADA pavilion, Universal Baseball field/Miracle League, and a crushed rock ADA path along the bear trail are crucial for the park's future. Our overarching goal is to create an inviting atmosphere that fosters a sense of belonging and encourages engagement among visitors and local residents. Central to our plan is the strategic implementation of small-scale amenities, which will form the foundation of our revitalization efforts. By introducing grills, picnic tables, benches, and improved lighting, we aim to meet the community's immediate needs while enhancing the overall atmosphere of the park. These additions will not only facilitate outdoor gatherings and leisurely walks but also promote social interaction and community cohesion, fostering unity among residents. Moreover, we understand the significance of accessibility in ensuring that everyone can fully participate in park

activities. Therefore, we propose establishing new paved pathways leading to key attractions within the park, such as the playground, Miracle League field, and pavilion. These pathways will not only offer easy access for individuals with mobility impairments or those with strollers but also improve the park's overall navigability, encouraging exploration and discovery. Looking forward, our vision extends beyond merely installing basic amenities to encompass the park's future development as a dynamic community space. By laying the groundwork for future renovations and enhancements, we aim to create a lasting legacy that will benefit future generations. Through collaborative efforts and ongoing community engagement, we are confident that our park will become a symbol of inclusivity, recreation, and connectivity, serving as a source of pride for our community and a model for parks everywhere.

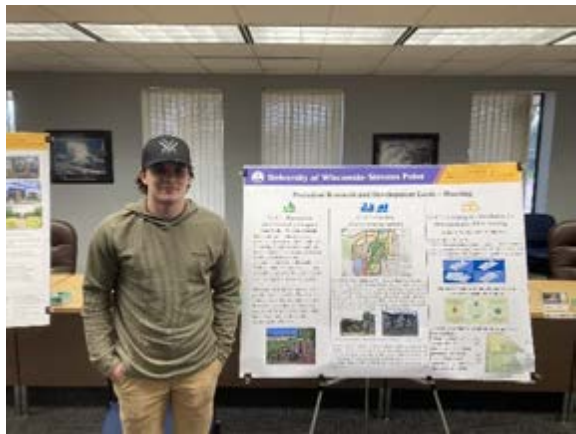
About the Authors



Casey Baye

Natural Resource Management and Planning

My future career path will be in parks and recreation. My goals are to become a park superintendent and to provide outdoor recreation opportunities to my community and the great state of Wisconsin.



Michael Kauffman

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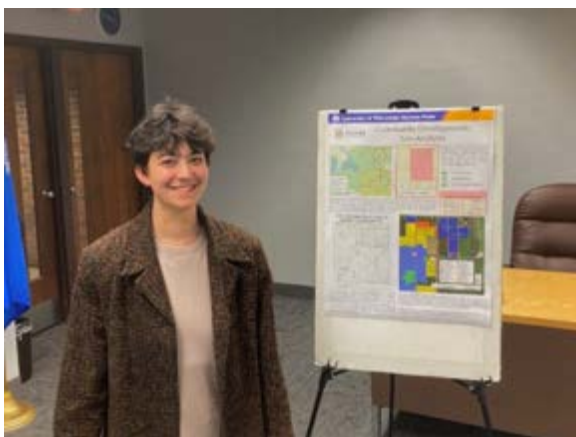
My future career goal is to gain some experience through my current POWTS job and eventually move into the Land and Water Conservation Department.



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Following graduation, I will be working as a GIS Technician for the University of Alaska Fairbanks Geophysical Institute's Soil and Permafrost group.



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After graduation from UWSP, I am applying for law school and plan on being an environmental lawyer.



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After graduation, I will be pursuing a master's degree in urban planning at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. I plan to work in a transportation or conservation based role.



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My future career goals include working in community planning on a large scale. I would like to work in the transportation or hazard planning sector.



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After graduation I will be interning with Columbia County in their Planning and Zoning department.



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I have one more semester left here at UWSP. In the Meantime, I will be working for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation as an Environmental Analysis and Review Specialist Intern.