



PARKS MASTER PLAN

VILLAGE OF HAMEL, ILLINOIS

JUNE 2024



VILLAGE OF
HAMEL
ILLINOIS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The 2024 Hamel Parks Master Plan was funded in part by the Metro East Park and Recreation District.



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June 13, 2024
Job No. E241101

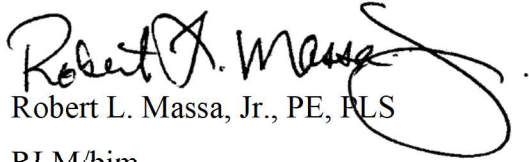
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Village of Hamel
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Mayor and Board of Trustees:

As a representative of the firm that provides professional civil engineering services to the Village of Hamel in relation to its infrastructure needs, I hereby certify that I, Robert L. Massa, Jr., a qualified and licensed engineer with Juneau Associates, Inc., P.C., have reviewed and certify this Village of Hamel 2024 Parks Master Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

JUNEAU ASSOCIATES, INC., P.C.


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RESOLUTION ADOPTING A MASTER PARK PLAN FOR THE VILLAGE OF HAMEL

WHEREAS, the Village of Hamel, in cooperation with the Metro East Parks and Recreation District, engaged Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, to prepare a Master Park Plan for the Village of Hamel; and

WHEREAS, the intent of said Master Park Plan is to create a comprehensive open space and recreational plan to assist with short and long-range planning, detailing continued improvements to existing facilities, visioning the development of new facilities, and seeking the connection of local parks throughout the Village to MCT Trails, multi-use paths and other means of access; and

WHEREAS, the Parks Master Plan used contemporary processes and practices to obtain community input, review pertinent trends and data on public recreation facilities, and identify appropriate park and recreational amenities that found in similarly sized communities throughout Illinois and the Midwest; and

WHEREAS, a community-wide public input process occurred from November 2023 to May 2024 that included in-person citizen engagement events, community-wide electronic surveys, invitations to design each of the Hamel's parks using scale amenity models and maps, opportunities to select and rank more than 30 park amenity ideas, and a special event to engage Hamel Elementary School children in identifying their most-preferred park amenities; and

WHEREAS, CMT has assisted with the development of Hamel's park improvements, and the Village has generated a Master Park Plan, setting forth the proposed improvements within the Village to facilitate orderly and effective development of its park infrastructure serving the greater Hamel community. A true and accurate copy of the finalized Hamel Master Park Plan is attached hereto as Exhibit A, incorporated by reference.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF HAMEL THAT:

1. The Village Board of Trustees approves the Hamel Master Park Plan attached hereto as Exhibit A and adopts same as the official Master Park Plan for the Village, and further authorizes its use and submission in connection with any and all grant or funding opportunities associated with the promotion and fulfillment of the spirit and intent of the plan.
2. This Resolution shall be deemed effective immediately upon its adoption.

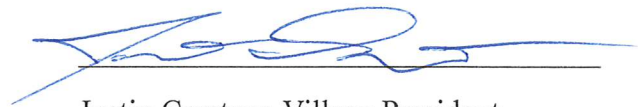
RESOLUTION 24-19

PASSED this 9th day of July, 2024.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

NAME	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT	CONFLICT
Goebel	X				
Gorzny	X				
Otrembiak				X	
Isringhausen	X				
Recer				X	
Withers				X	
Gerstner	X				

APPROVED this 9th day of July, 2024.

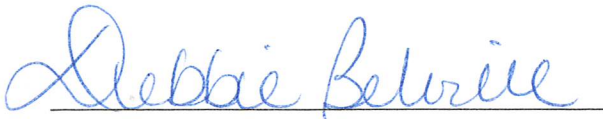


Justin Gerstner, Village President

ATTESTED, Filed in my office,

And published in pamphlet form

This 9th day of July, 2024.



Debbie Belville, Village Clerk

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1: Introduction..... 1

2: Demographics and Trends 4

3: Community Engagement.....10

4: Park Inventory and Existing Conditions Overview 26

5: Visioning New Parkland in Hamel: Hamel Heroes Park..... 33

6: Perspectives on Hamel Parks From Other Adopted Plans44

7: Operations and Maintenance.....50

8: Implementation Plan 52

9: Funding Sources.....69

10: Exceptions to the Parks Master Plan..... 73

11: Appendices 74

 Appendix A: Public Input Fliers and Outreach 74

 Appendix B: Survey Monkey Results.....75

 Appendix C: Key Maps and Illustrations80

 Appendix D: Heroes Park Concept Plans 81

LIST OF EXHIBITS

Exhibit 2-1: Hamel Demographics	4
Exhibit 2-2: Weekday Walking Trips in Hamel.....	5
Exhibit 2-3: NRPA “Peer Community” Median Results in Illinois and Surrounding States (10,000 Population or Less) ..	6
Exhibit 2-4: Population Thresholds for Provision of Park Amenity, By Type.....	7
Exhibit 2-5: Park Classifications	9
Exhibit 3-1: General Amenities for All of Hamel’s Parks.....	11
Exhibit 3-2: Larger Scale Amenity Ideas for All of Hamel’s Parks.....	11
Exhibit 3-3: Local History or Ecology Ideas for Hamel Parks.....	12
Exhibit 3-4: Park Centerpiece Amenities	12
Exhibit 3-5: Park Branding for Play and Exercise Equipment.....	13
Exhibit 3-6: Most Popular Physical Fitness Equipment	13
Exhibit 3-7: Amenities for the Dog Park.....	14
Exhibit 3-8: Survey Result 1.....	16
Exhibit 3-9: Survey Result 2.....	17
Exhibit 3-10: Survey Result 3.....	18
Exhibit 3-11: Survey Result 4	19
Exhibit 3-12: Survey Result 5	20
Exhibit 3-13: Survey Result 6	21
Exhibit 3-14: Favorite and Least Favorite Community Park Aspects.....	21
Exhibit 3-15: Survey Result 7.....	22
Exhibit 3-16: Survey Result 8	23
Exhibit 3-17: Most Desired Dog Park Amenities.....	24
Exhibit 4-1: Hamel Park Map	26
Exhibit 5-1: Results of Hamel Elementary School Vote on 2/6/24.....	37
Exhibit 5-2: Results of Hamel Elementary School Vote for Kindergarteners.....	37
Exhibit 5-3: Results of Hamel Elementary School Vote for First Graders.....	37
Exhibit 5-4: Results of Hamel Elementary School Vote for Second Graders	37
Exhibit 5-5: Community-Wide Electronic Survey Question 11.....	38
Exhibit 5-6: Community-Wide Electronic Survey Question 12.....	39
Exhibit 5-7: Most Desirable Amenities by Type at Hamel Heroes Park	41
Exhibit 5-8: Most Desirable Amenities by Votes at Hamel Heroes Park	42
Exhibit 5-9: Hamel Heroes Park Conceptual Plan	43

LIST OF EXHIBITS (CONTINUED)

Exhibit 6-1: Historic Core Along the IL 140 Corridor.....	45
Exhibit 6-2: Concept Idea from 2021 Comprehensive Plan Linking Hamel Elementary to Community Park.....	45
Exhibit 6-3: 2021 Comprehensive Plan Exhibit Showing Existing Sidewalks Along IL 140	46
Exhibit 6-4: Map Location of Then-Future Dog Park from the 2021 Comprehensive Plan	46
Exhibit 6-5: IL 140/Park Avenue Transportation Improvement Project Overview	48
Exhibit 6-6: Main Destinations Residents Walk or Bike to Within Hamel.....	49
Exhibit 6-7: Non-Motorized Access Throughout Hamel.....	49
Exhibit 7-1: Village of Hamel Annual Financial Report.....	50
Exhibit 8-1: Hamel Parks Master Plan Recommendations	53
Exhibit 8-2: Concept Locations of Slow Streets in and Around Community Park and Hamel Heroes Park	61
Exhibit A-1: Public Meeting #1 Flyer	74
Exhibit A-2: Public Meeting #2 Flyer	74
Exhibit C-1: Non-Motorized Access Throughout Hamel.....	80
Exhibit C-2: IL 140/Park Avenue Transportation Improvement Project Overview	80
Exhibit D-1: Park Layout Ideas by Hamel Planning Commission (January 2023)	81
Exhibit D-2: Hamel Heroes Park Amenities Boards from Public Meeting #2	85

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

PLAN PURPOSE

The Village of Hamel's parks and recreation facilities are important community amenities that contribute significantly to the quality of life of its residents. Hamel's parks provide safe and healthy places for recreation while beautifying and protecting the natural environment. The community is fortunate to have a development pattern that allows most residents to live within a short walk to recreational greenspace. These local parks, along with Madison County Transit-owned (MCT) trails that allow residents and visitors to easily reach them, contribute greatly to the Village's character.

The purpose of this Parks Master Plan is to provide a 2024 "snapshot" of existing park amenities and conditions coupled with a long-range plan detailing the continued improvement and future expansion of these facilities. The plan envisions a connected system of parks throughout the Village that are accessed either via the MCT Quercus Grove trail, locally-maintained sidewalks, multi-use paths and trails, and on-road bike lanes maintained by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Madison County, or Hamel.

The plan is also intended to be a support document that parallels the Village's 2021 Comprehensive Plan, as well as local and State initiatives that promote outdoor recreation. This Parks Master Plan, along with the Village's other long-range plans such as the 2018 I-55 Sub-Area plan and development-related ordinances, will be used to implement and promote the community's parks and recreation program.

Specifically, the plan provides:

- **Information regarding demographic trends, including results from the 2020 Census.**
- An inventory of existing park and recreation facilities.
- An analysis of parkland and recreation needs and demands using national best practice standards.
- General policy direction regarding park, recreation, open spaces, bicycle, and pedestrian facility planning and maintenance.
- Recommendations for new and improving existing park, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.
- An action plan to assist in implementation strategies.

While this plan identifies conceptual locations and recommendations for Hamel's parks, natural areas, and recreation facilities, it is a guide to recommended future action. As plan elements move closer to reality, more detailed planning, engineering, budgeting, and discussions will be necessary.



PLANNING PROCESS

Parks and Recreation planning is an essential component of overall long-range community planning in Hamel. For this Parks Master Plan, the Village worked closely with CMT Engineers and Consultants to complete this plan. While a separate document from the 2021 Comprehensive Plan also completed by CMT, the Parks Master Plan is intended to function as a supporting document that, while focused on different aspects of the Hamel community, work in conjunction in pursuit of similar community objectives.

Much like the 2021 Comprehensive Plan, the Parks Master Plan prominently features a vigorous public engagement strategy meant to achieve an inclusive, creative, varied, flexible plan with clear goals and objectives. During the planning process, the Village facilitated an online community survey to gather citizen feedback on desired public park and recreation facilities. Two public input meetings were also held, the first to gather needs and ideas for existing and future parks, and the second held to further refine input from the first meeting in order to prioritize these ideas and needs. Hamel also met with a unique “stakeholder group” during the input process: Kindergarten through second grade school children at Hamel Elementary School. Their input, coupled with stakeholder input from the Hamel Public Works Department director on maintenance and improvement needs for Hamel’s parks, resulted in two important perspectives on the needs and use of current facilities and the future planning of new recreation spaces. As a result of this input, the plan content and format has been tailored to fit the needs of the Village.

ROLE OF PARKS AND RECREATION

The benefits of parks go beyond being just open spaces where people can be active and recharge. Parks contribute to the physical and mental health of individuals and provide environmental, economic, and social equity benefits to communities.

Public parks are also unique in that they are accessible to anyone in the community, regardless of age, gender, ability, socioeconomic status, race, or ethnicity. In this way, Hamel’s Parks Master Plan is being completed at a time when many communities across the U.S. are rethinking how to engage and provide benefits to residents who do not currently have access to parks or have unique or distinct needs they wish to experience in public parks, such as exercise equipment that can be used by older adults or ADA accessible play equipment that allows those with physical or mental disabilities to also experience the joy of the outdoors. When parks are more inclusive, they better function as a place where residents can co-gather for social events and recreation activities, increase social interaction, and create an overall sense of community.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

In recent years, the importance of parkland in a community has evolved in unexpected ways due to the challenges posed by COVID-19. During this time, the role of parks came to the forefront of public health discussions as more people sought ways to get out of their homes and into the outdoors. With appropriate precautions, parks became a place where individuals could safely socialize with friends, family and colleagues while experiencing the world outside the confines of their homes. This unique time has subsequently served to highlight how parks have a key role in providing a safe recreational environment. These hard-learned lessons during COVID-19 have also illustrated how, when individuals have access to community green spaces, they have the opportunity to address personal health issues, improve overall heart performance and cholesterol levels, and reduce stress while lowering potential incidences of depression.

ECOLOGICAL HEALTH

Parks and greenspace provide opportunities to contribute to the greater ecological health of the Village. When planned in advance, parkland can address the dual need of providing greenspace while protecting environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, floodplains, or wooded areas. Natural areas near the Hamel Dog Park, for example, provide an important path for rainwater in the community as well as shelter for wildlife. As the topography of Hamel is exceptionally flat, locations for stormwater to flow is critical during specified times or heavy rain events. When these are not occurring, however, these drainage basins can function as natural areas or open fields to support a game of catch or a day flying a kite.

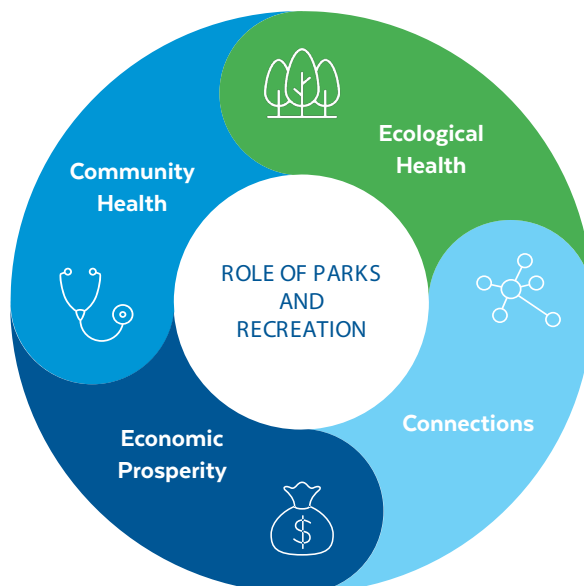
ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Leisure time is an important component of everyone's life. In keeping with Quality of Life decisions in relation to where individuals and families choose to live, communities are increasingly learning that people choose to live in locations that offer unique recreational amenities that appeal to all age ranges and abilities. A community's ability to retain or attract new residents is often directly related to these amenities and, in turn, lead to economic benefits that accrue to the Village. For this reason, having great park amenities, especially when coupled and linked with the MCT Quercus Grove Trail, contributes directly to economic development in Hamel.

Not to be overlooked are the benefits that tourism can offer to local businesses. While Hamel's Community Park, Dog Park and future Heroes Park uses are firmly oriented toward use by local residents, Chapter 4 of this Plan details the unique features of Hamel's smallest park: the Route 66-themed wayside park at Village Hall. This wayside park draws national and international visitors, providing information about Hamel's connection to "The Mother Road" while encouraging a stop by local businesses for fuel or a bite to eat to further experience this unique cultural amenity.

CONNECTIONS

Inter-connecting Hamel's park facilities to each other and the MCT Quercus Grove Trail is important to encourage safe, non-motorized modes of travel in the community. Especially in light of the new Hamel Heroes Park site and the MCT trail-adjacent Dog Park, finding a way to establish non-motorized linkages between parks can provide an important alternate means of travel for those who may want to walk or bike and is an important consideration for this Parks Master Plan. Incidentally, a separate effort to plan MCT trail connections with local trail and sidewalk routes was underway prior to the start of this Parks plan. Details about the community-wide "Hamel Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan" are discussed in Chapter 6.

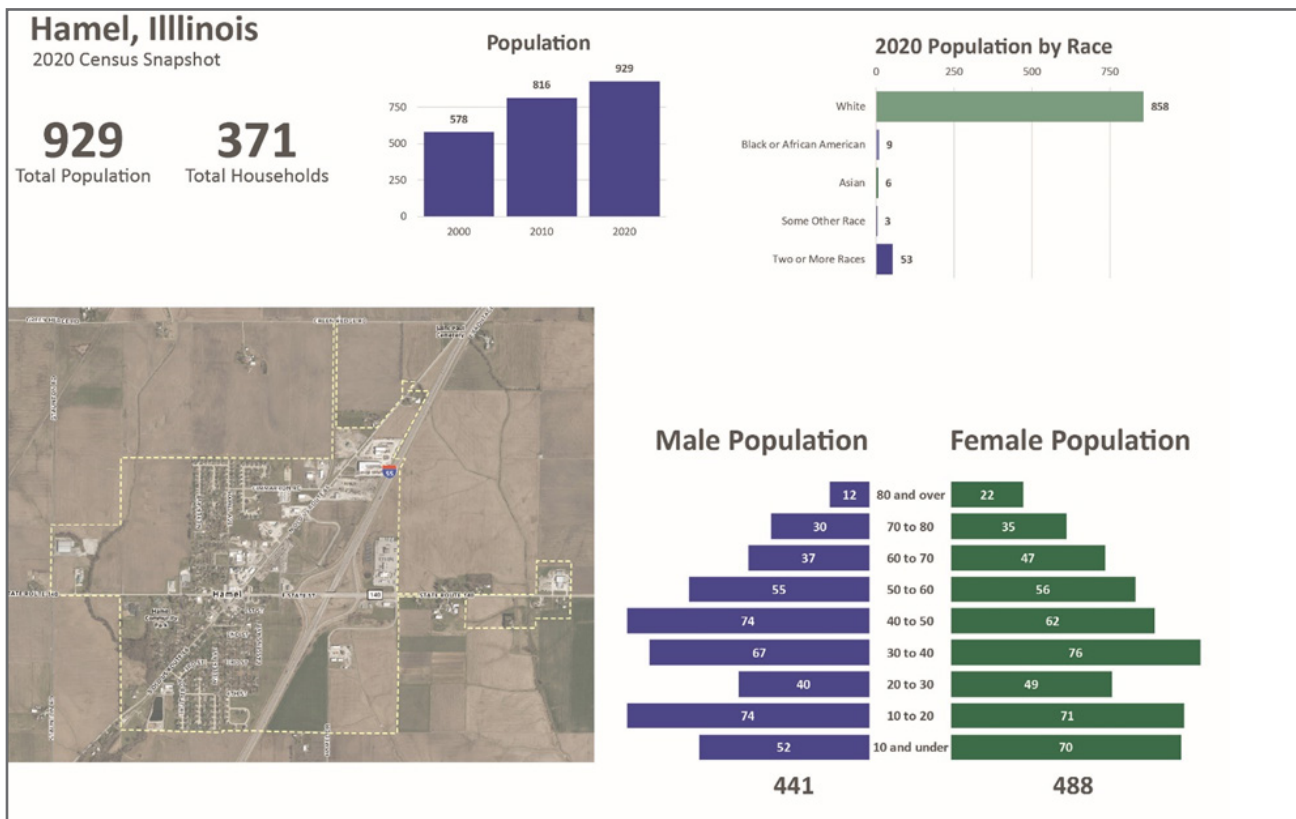


CHAPTER 2: DEMOGRAPHICS AND TRENDS

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Understanding the demographic profile of a community is important in planning for parks and recreation facilities. Park equipment that focuses too much or only on one age group, recreational preference, or physical activity will result in recreational space that draws park users only at specified times and, potentially, only during a set timeframe in one's life span. Conversely, parks that have imaginative and multi-functional spaces that offer a wide range of passive, active, social, and individual activities tend to be vibrant areas that are visited regularly by all segments of the community. Knowing this demographic profile can assist in the formulation of recommendations and future improvements to programs, amenities, and services. See Exhibit 2-1 for Hamel demographics.

EXHIBIT 2-1: Hamel Demographics



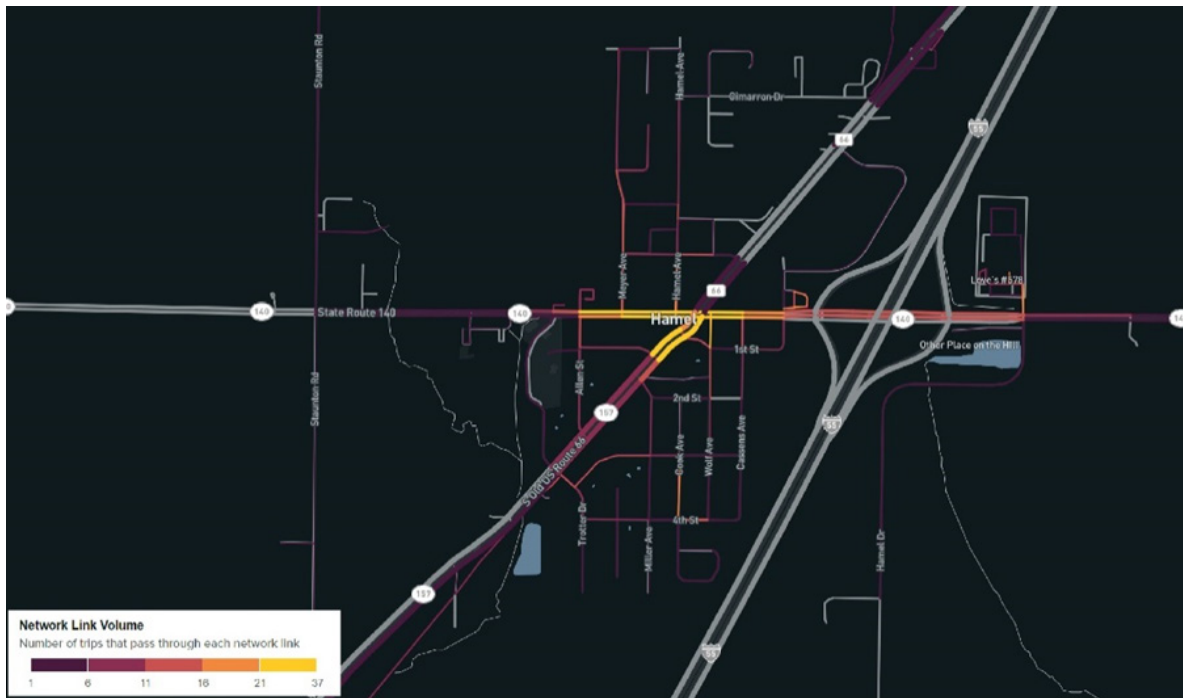
Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census Data

WALKING TRIPS IN HAMEL AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO PARKS

Exhibit 2-2 shows estimated walking activity on a typical weekday in Hamel as provided by Replica, a company that provides information about the built environment based on anonymous cell phone data. From this information, they model actual walking trip origins and destinations based on the shortest path. In reality (and diverging from the best information available from Replica), pedestrians often take detours to avoid stressful or dangerous transportation environments. As a result, the map in Exhibit 2-2 is best interpreted as “walking trip desire lines” rather than actual walking pathways.

Note that Replica does not include looping trips, like taking the dog for a walk, but includes only trips taken to a destination, like going to the store. This may explain why the map in Exhibit 2-2 shows less activity entering Hamel Community Park than might otherwise be expected.

EXHIBIT 2-2: Weekday Walking Trips in Hamel



Source: Replica

Overall however, the Replica data shows the peak of walk demand is at the very center of Hamel. The greatest demand for walking transportation occurs along State Street between Allen Street and Suhre Avenue, and on IL Route 157 from State Street to Broadway. Hamel Ave, Meyer Ave, Allen Street and Wolf Avenue near State Street also have high demand for walking, a positive sign for the future Hamel Heroes Park site.

These results have significant implications for parks access in Hamel. First, quality pedestrian infrastructure along 157 and State Street and safe and comfortable crossings of these major roadways are critical for pedestrian access to the Hamel Community Park and the future Hamel Heroes Park. Pedestrians want to cross State Street at Meyer Avenue, Hamel Avenue, and IL 157, and they want to cross IL 157 at State Street. Additionally, Hamel Avenue moving north from IL 140 is likely to become a critical pathway for access to Hamel Heros Park, and proactively considering pedestrian accommodation along this corridor (which the Village is diligently working on with the Illinois Department of Transportation) is important to ensure a successful opening.

In relation to recreational bicycling activities within Hamel, it would be expected that similar desire lines would occur within Village limits for short trips to local destinations.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE STANDARDS

Thanks to organizations like the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), communities of all sizes are not alone in their efforts to provide diverse, multi-generational, and enjoyable recreation space regardless of the type of leisure activity one might seek. While NRPA has moved away since 2019 from a “one-standard-fits-all” approach for parks and recreation facilities, the organization provides information on its website to help communities identify “peer communities” by state and jurisdiction type (village, city school district, recreation district, etc.) for the purpose of obtaining insights into what amenities these similar communities provide to residents.

In reviewing this NRPA peer community data for Hamel, the following criteria was used:

- The “peer community” would have 10,000 residents or less. While Hamel has 929 residents as of the 2020 Census, a higher population threshold was needed in order to obtain valid comparison results.
- The peer community should be located in Illinois or one of 5 adjacent states (Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, or Wisconsin)

This NRPA search resulted in 13 communities that matched the above criteria.

EXHIBIT 2-3: NRPA “Peer Community” Median Results in Illinois and Surrounding States (10,000 Population or Less)

Metric	Hamel (including the 3.25-acre Heroes Park site and the 0.5 acre Dog Park - fenced area only)	Median for NRPA “Peer Communities” with Population under 15,000 in IL and Surrounding States
Acres of parks per 1,000 residents	10.86 acres	12.9 acres
Square mileage of incorporated jurisdiction	1.20 sq. mi.	13.5 sq. mi.
Jurisdiction Population	929 (2020 Census)	6,476

While the 13 “peer communities” were all significantly larger than Hamel (median population of 6,476 people), the results in Exhibit 2-3 suggest that Hamel is generally comparable to its peers in the provision of parkland.

The current statewide average for the supply of local open space and parkland acreage according to the Illinois Recreation Facilities Inventory (IRFI) is approximately 11.35 ac/1,000 population for overall community. Hamel is also very close to this number.

Exhibit 2-4 identifies the park amenities these 13 peer communities provide on a “per capita” ratio. Outdoor Ice Rinks are provided at a per capita ratio of 1 rink per 8,650 people, a ratio much higher than Hamel’s population. As a result, Outdoor Ice Rinks and other park amenities that are provided at a rate well above Hamel’s population are excluded from Exhibit 2-4. However, if the per capita ratio was within 50% of Hamel’s 2020 Census population of 929, or 1,400 people, it is included in Exhibit 2-4.

Note that Exhibit 2-4 shows only what Hamel’s 13 “peer communities” in Illinois and five surrounding states provide in terms of park amenities according to NRPA annual survey data. As demand for types of amenities can vary by community, if there is local demand in Hamel for recreational uses like pickleball courts or walking loops that fall outside the “per capita” ranges above, this does not mean that the Village should eliminate this amenity as a potential park feature. Instead, investments in these recreational uses should be considered on a case-by-case basis, supplemented by local survey data and further assessed on the ability to construct and maintain these recreational uses. The local survey data is provided from three separate public input opportunities are detailed later in this Parks Master Plan.

While Exhibit 2-4 is helpful as a general comparison to peer communities, Hamel’s size and smaller population numbers suggest that it would also be prudent to review the NRPA’s approach to identify recreation amenities in guiding plans for the future. Exhibit 2-5 provides information on the smallest and most intensely used park sites and then proceeds to the largest and least intensely used sites.

EXHIBIT 2-4: Population Thresholds for Provision of Park Amenity, By Type

Facility	25% Percentile	Median	75% Percentile	Range low-point within 50% of Hamel's 2020 Population?
Permanent and semi-permanent restrooms	1,442	3,238	5,148	No
Playgrounds or play structures	943	1,321	1,699	Yes
Playgrounds primarily for kids 5-12 years	1,675	1,886	2,300	No
Tot lots for kids 2-5 years	1,725	3,665	5,079	No
Playground with inclusive play structures	1,334	1,497	1,985	Yes
Outdoor tennis courts	1,024	1,829	3,164	Yes
Pickleball (outdoor)	2,169	3,446	2,547	No
Tennis/Pickleball multi-use court (outdoor)	1,536	1,572	1,588	No
Outdoor multi-use courts) basketball, volleyball, etc.)	2,033	4,193	5,800	No
Outdoor volleyball courts	3,737	5,058	6,858	No
Diamond fields (softball, baseball, tee ball, etc.)	1,394	2,159	2,672	Yes
Rectangular fields (soccer, football, etc.)	1,465	2,572	3,114	No
Walking loops (outdoor)	3,573	4,520	5,036	No
Exercise stations (outdoor)	3,826	5,295	6,764	No

COMMUNITY PARK

Intended to serve the entire community, these parks are typically larger than neighborhood parks. As small as three acres but as big as 20, community parks provide a wide range of recreational facilities to the whole community. Community parks often include a special attractions that draw people from throughout the municipality. Service area radius of about one to three miles. Existing Hamel Community Park with its Community Center building would be classified as a community park.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

A park about two to five acres in size that includes recreation space intended to serve those within a quarter- to half-mile with recreational and social facilities. Provides both active and passive recreational activities like picnic areas, playgrounds, ball fields, multi-use open space, shelters, and walking paths. The Heroes Community Park will be a Neighborhood Park.

SPECIAL PURPOSE PARK

A park that serves specialized activities, usually a cultural need or a single use such as sports complexes. For Hamel, the “fenced area” of the 0.5-acre Dog Park on IL 157 would be a Special Purpose Park.

RESERVATION AND PRESERVES

Usually located in areas with limited development, Reservations and Preserves are usually either small areas within existing parks or “stand-alone” parklands. Their overall size varies depending on function. Portions of the property where the Dog Park is located have the potential to serve as a small “preserve” where one can observe wildlife. The Village could take the additional step of enhancing these wildlife attractions by planting milkweed for Monarch butterflies or creating a hummingbird “stopover” area, for example.

GREENBELTS

Greenbelts are similar to a reservation or preserve but are often used to shape urban development. The separately owned and maintained MCT Quercus Grove Trail through Hamel includes many characteristics of a greenbelt and there is future potential for Hamel or Home Owners Association-owned parcels to serve as greenbelt connections to the Quercus Grove Trail. See discussion on the “Hamel Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan” in Chapter 6.

WAYSIDES, WELCOME CENTERS, AND HISTORIC MARKERS

These special purpose parks are usually designed to serve motorists. They are important to a tourist industry, particularly in Hamel in relation to Old Route 66. While the Village Hall property is not parkland, the Route 66 interactive kiosk, Route 66 freestanding sign, and the nearby Route 66 mural are tourist attractions that serve as a wayside park and historic marker.

In Chapter 4 of this plan, the NPRA park archetypes will be applied specifically to Hamel’s existing and future inventory of parkland to gain a better understanding of each of them and what general standards can be applied.

EXHIBIT 2-5: Park Classifications


- Serves many neighborhoods
- Woods, water features, trails, and picnic areas
- 3-7 acres in size
- Service Area: 1 to 3 miles

COMMUNITY PARKS


- Active and passive recreation
- 2-5 acres in size
- Service Area: 1/4 to 1/2 mile

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS


- Serves specialized activities
- Common examples include Dog Parks, Splash Parks, and Skate Parks
- Vary in size and service areas based on function

SPECIAL PURPOSE PARKS


- Limited development
- Size varies depending on function
- Often have trails but are otherwise passive park areas

RESERVATIONS AND PRESERVES


- Often used to shape urban development
- Frequently associated with bike trails
- Often placed in floodplains

GREENBELTS


- Special purpose parks designed to serve motorists
- Pull-off areas or parking areas usually provided
- Feature amenities for travelers

WELCOME CENTERS AND HISTORIC MARKERS

CHAPTER 3: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Input on the future of Hamel's parks from residents was critical in the preparation of this Parks Master Plan. To obtain this input, between November 2023 and March 1, 2024, the Village of Hamel had 394 interactions with the community in unique, diverse, and inclusive ways that proved instrumental in development of plan recommendations found in Chapter 8. The ways in which the public participated, and the number of participants at each event were as follows:

- Public Input Meeting #1 (November 16 and 17, 2023): 45 participants
- Public Meeting #2 (February 22, 2024): 47 participants
- Electronic survey respondents: 174 individual responses
- Special input event at Hamel Elementary School 2/6/24: 128 students

INPUT OPPORTUNITIES

The goals and objectives of the Action Plan found in Chapter 8 of this Parks Master Plan are key components to planning the future of Hamel parks, recreation, and greenspace amenities. The goals and objectives in Chapter 8 are based on information detailed in this chapter.

This chapter provides an overview of the following:

- Summary of input from community members at two public input events (November 16, 2023 and February 22, 2024)
- Review of community-wide electronic survey results
- Review of input from a February 6, 2024 event at Hamel Elementary School (specifically for children in Kindergarten to 2nd grade)

PUBLIC MEETING #1

On Thursday, November 16, 2023, the Village of Hamel held public input meeting #1 to formally kick off the Hamel Parks Master Plan process. The event was held at the Community Center building from 5:30 pm until 8:30 pm with all members of the community being invited via social media posts (Facebook) and a paper flier delivered to all Hamel post office mailboxes. Children and families were invited to attend as well, with a park sketch plan exercise envisioned to be a fun and engaging exercise for all ages.

Those unable to attend the night of November 16 were invited to an identical input opportunity on Friday, November 17, 2023 from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm.

For those whose first language was not English, a Spanish-speaking person was available for both meetings.

While not all participants at the 11/16 and 11/17 meetings signed-in, overall attendance was estimated at 45 individuals of all ages.

Input on all of Hamel's existing park facilities was sought at this meeting. As shown in the display board pictures from the event below, participants were asked to review the ideas for potential



Post on Facebook promoting Public Meeting #1

park amenities and write a comment or additional ideas on a sticky note. While the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Village's planning consultant did extensive information gathering in advance to identify ideas that were both workable and inspiring, attendees mostly reacted to the photos provided and attached notes to the seven display boards.

EXHIBIT 3-1: General Amenities for All of Hamel's Parks

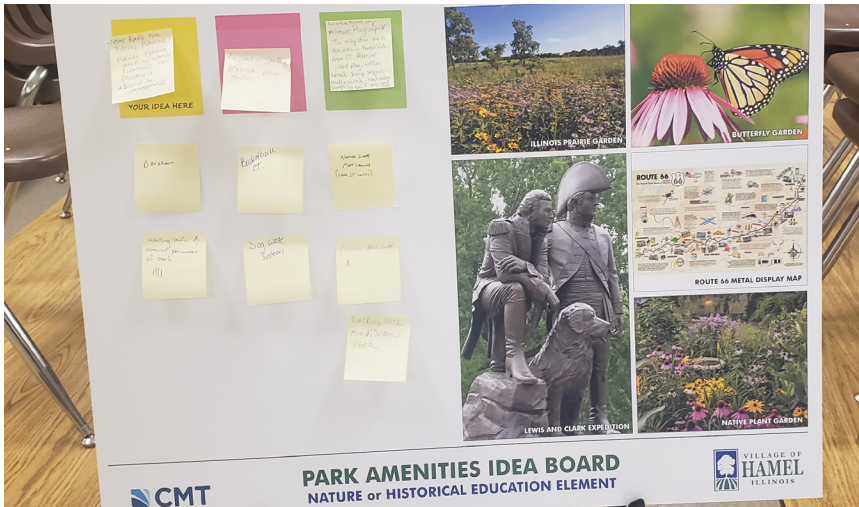


For this board, several park “must have” amenities were shown to understand what might be missing or needed in all of Hamel’s parks. This insight also helped to identify what amenities are most important for future development of Hamel Heroes Park. Pictured were benches, tables pavilions, community message boards, bike racks and a drinking fountain. New ideas included a dog waste station, adequate shaded areas, a water bottle filler, and an open field play area, all of which were appropriate at Community Park and Heroes Park.

EXHIBIT 3-2: Larger Scale Amenity Ideas for All of Hamel's Parks



Similar to the first board, but presenting more substantial or demographic-specific amenity ideas, this display sought responses on what active recreation amenities were most desired at either Community Park or the new Hamel Heroes Park. Examples included a Wiffleball field, a Yoga in the Park area, a perimeter walk/jog path, swings, and chess tables. Pickleball courts was an additional idea that emerged on this board.

EXHIBIT 3-3: Local History or Ecology Ideas for Hamel Parks

While the “wayside park” at Village Hall has a strong Route 66 character, the rest of Hamel’s parks do not have an overarching education or history element. However, the planned Hamel Heroes Park presents an opportunity to include such a unique element. While there were numerous ideas, the intent would be to feature an educational element within the park related to these topics. Ideas presented included Lewis & Clark, an Illinois prairie garden, a butterfly stop point or garden, or an area that details local native plants. Another idea was a meditation garden and a smaller version of the Nature Playscape concept that that been very popular in St. Louis’ Forest Park.

EXHIBIT 3-4: Park Centerpiece Amenities

With Hamel Heroes Park on the horizon, a Public Meeting #1 display board asked attendees what “centerpiece” amenities would make Hamel’s parks unique, something that is not often found in other community parks. Ideas presented included an obstacle course, a melody garden, a small performance stage, a series of gaga ball pits, and a thematic playground. In addition to these, ideas from participants also included Frisbee golf and an outdoor “mud kitchen.”

EXHIBIT 3-5: Park Branding for Play and Exercise Equipment

This display board presented ideas relating to “park branding,” mostly through a lens that was broad enough to evolve over time, but specific enough that visitors could identify the brand and remember that it was uniquely located in Hamel. Ideas included Lewis and Clark, Route 66, a theme related to Hamel’s rural location and economy, nature-inspired themes, or emergency first responders’ theme (since Hamel is home to the Hamel Volunteer Fire Department). While new ideas beyond these did not emerge, participants did one better in suggesting that a “local heroes” theme could meet an objective to highlight a variety of occupations. This idea resonated so well that, following the Public Meeting #1, the Village Board officially named the 3.25 acre park north of IL Route 140 “Hamel Heroes Park.”

EXHIBIT 3-6: Most Popular Physical Fitness Equipment

This display board focused on what types of physical fitness equipment should be considered for Hamel Parks. This equipment could hypothetically be placed in Community Park, the Dog Park, and Hamel Heroes Park. As the Village’s annual park budget is small, however, this equipment also needed to be low maintenance, tamper resistant, and allow for age-diverse exercise. Interestingly, while initially envisioned as an exercise equipment all in one location, public meeting input suggested that the equipment be placed in various locations along a quarter-mile perimeter path at Heroes Park or along a path surrounding the fenced area of the Dog Park. Community Park also has sufficient room for this amenity, so this concept was further reviewed at Public Meeting #2 and in the electronic survey.

EXHIBIT 3-7: Amenities for the Dog Park



For this display board, participants were asked what potential amenities were desired for inclusion at the Hamel Dog Park. A drinking fountain for both humans and canines, and an obstacle course/play equipment for dogs was shown and positively responded to. In addition, respondents noted that the park lacked an area to protect visitors from rain and sun. This idea was included in subsequent public input meetings and the electronic survey for further input.

From these display boards, other ideas gathered include:

- Community garden area
- Nature playscapes (like at St. Louis' Forest Park)
- Removal of "shredded tire" mulch at Community Park
- Dog obstacle course at Dog Park
- Wiffleball field
- Dog waste disposal kiosk
- Restroom facility
- Shade at Dog Park
- Gazebo/Pavilions
- Shaded areas at all parks
- Perimeter walking path
- Water fountain for pets at Dog Park
- Physical fitness circuit along walking path
- Meldoy Garden
- Pickleball courts
- Outdoor gym area

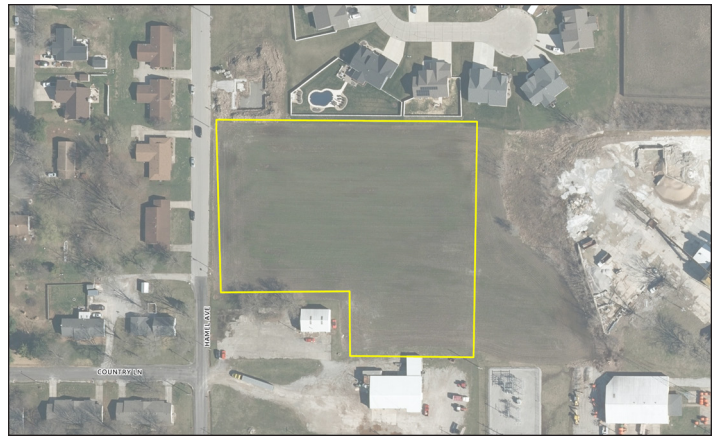
While input on ALL parks was gathered from comments on the display boards, the Hamel community that evening was also offered the unique opportunity to engage in a hands-on “sketch plan” exercise for the new “Hamel Heroes Park.” For this “Design Our Park” exercise, model train-sized trees, shrubs, wood building blocks, scale-model felt shapes, and miniature 3-D printed to-scale park equipment like benches, play equipment, gazebos, a rock-climbing structure, and miniature automobiles to assist with parking lot placement were provided. Participants were encouraged to model their park plan ideas at three available kiosks placed throughout the Community Center. Attendees were invited to lay out their “ideal” park plan for this property using their imaginations, placing ideas on a green cloth-covered aerial photo of the parcel and surrounding neighborhood. Children were invited to attend and were especially drawn to this hands-on exercise.

SPECIAL INPUT MEETING EVENT AT HAMEL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - FEBRUARY 6, 2024

Following a short time to review and assess results from the November 16 Public Input Meeting, a series of additional, more detailed public input opportunities to further refine and understand what Hamel residents hoped to see at their local parks.

The first of these came about from input from one of Hamel’s biggest park demographics: Children. To accomplish this, the Mayor of Hamel reached out to the principal of Hamel Elementary School to set up a special parks input meeting for children under the age of 10 in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade.

This event occurred on February 6, 2024, and included two classrooms at each grade level with a total of approximately 130 children. The event represented an excellent opportunity to get input on what amenities were most sought at either Community Park or Heroes Park while offering a unique civics lesson on how effective public input can lead to positive community outcomes. As most of the potential amenities the children voted for are likely to be placed in Hamel Heroes Park, the details about this event are found in Chapter 3.



Photos from Public Meeting #1

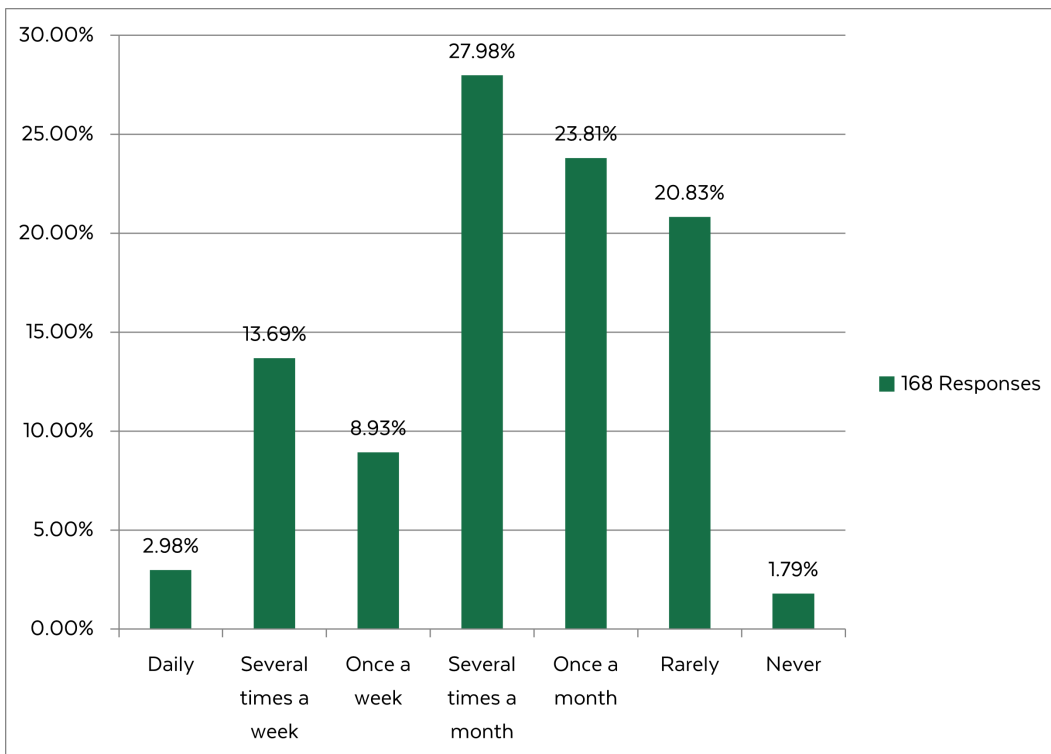
COMMUNITY-WIDE ELECTRONIC SURVEY

Input from the full Hamel community was solicited through an electronic survey that was open from January 29, 2024 to March 1, 2024. The survey link was provided on the Village of Hamel Facebook page and a QR code was placed in the Hamel Elementary School weekly newsletter. The QR code was placed on a postcard that was sent by U.S. Mail to all Hamel households to announce Public Meeting #2. (See Exhibit A-2 in Appendix A).

The electronic survey was an opportunity to get more detailed responses from residents following their input at Public Meeting #1. In total, the survey had 170 respondents. Assuming all who responded were Hamel residents (929 persons as of 2020 Census), the response rate was 18.2%. A response rate above 15% is generally considered very good and the target mark for most surveys.

HAMEL COMMUNITY PARK SURVEY RESULTS

EXHIBIT 3-8: Survey Result 1 - *How often do you visit Hamel Community Park?*

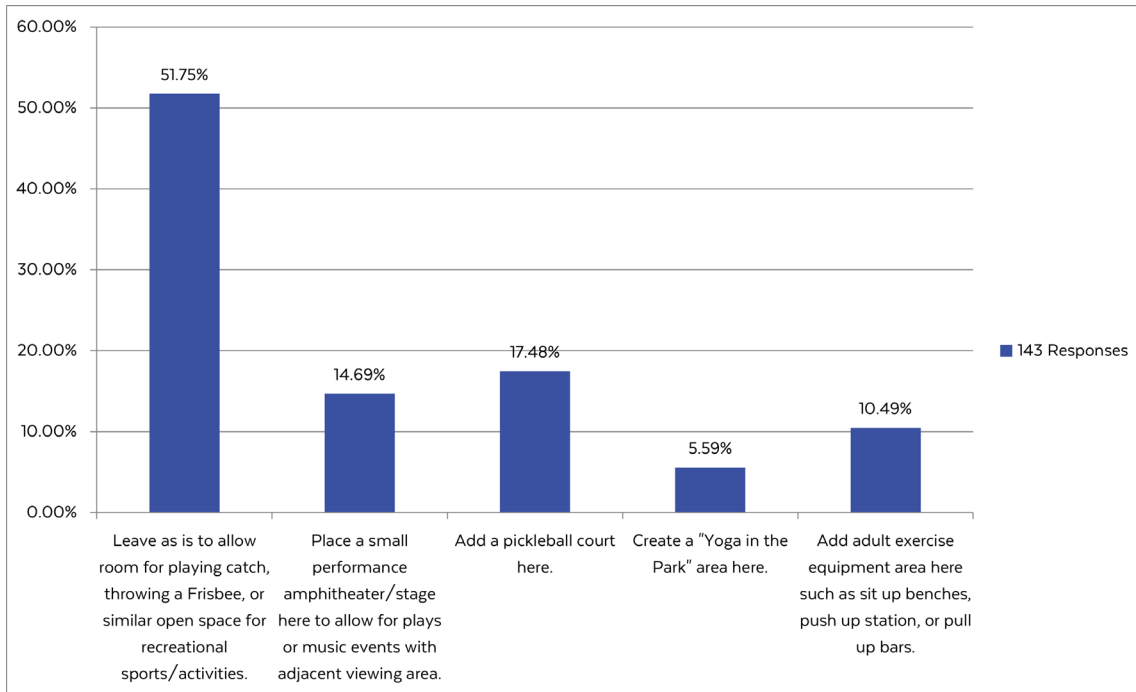


In terms of park use, 26% of respondents noted that they visit Community Park at least weekly, while those who visited “rarely” or “never” was 23%. Those whose visit frequency was “several times a month” or more amounted to 54%, a result that shows that Community Park is well-used, an important quality of life amenity for the community, and offers adequate flexibility to users in terms of a space they can go to enjoy recreational activities.

From the open-ended responses, comments from those who rarely or never used Community Park included its more remote location from much of the residential areas in Hamel. In addition, one comment succinctly summarized prevailing opinions about the playground equipment at the park: “The park is geared more towards families with younger children which I do not have.” Frequent users said the park is a great place to walk. The tennis court was also a strong draw for frequent park users.

Community Park has some areas not already allocated to a specific activity. The electronic survey sought to get input as to whether this space should remain “as is” or be allocated to an amenity such as a pickleball court, an informal gathering space with a small performance stage, or an improved area for activities like Yoga in the Park or outdoor exercise equipment. 52% of respondents preferred to leave the open space at Community Park as is, to continue to allow for general open play and recreation. The remaining 48% were split on whether to add a pickleball court, amphitheater, or exercise area in this open space. From the open response section, other ideas included a walking path, Frisbee golf baskets, expansion of the existing playground area, a community garden, and a Wiffleball field.

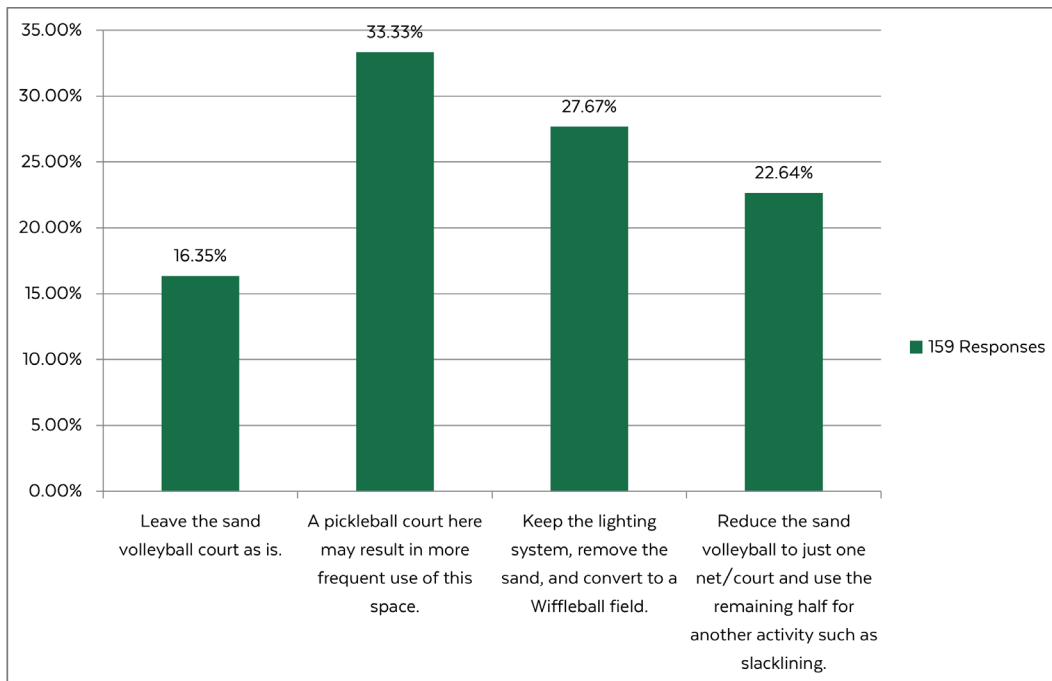
EXHIBIT 3-9: Survey Result 2 - In Hamel Community Park, there is some open space south of the play equipment area/sand volleyball court that could allow for additional amenities. How should this space be utilized?



In the interest of making the most of Community Park’s available acreage, the survey also explored the existing sand volleyball courts and their usage levels.



EXHIBIT 3-10: Survey Result 3 - Hamel Community Park features a lighted sand volleyball court. While a unique park amenity, some have observed that it is infrequently used. What is your preference for the sand volleyball court?

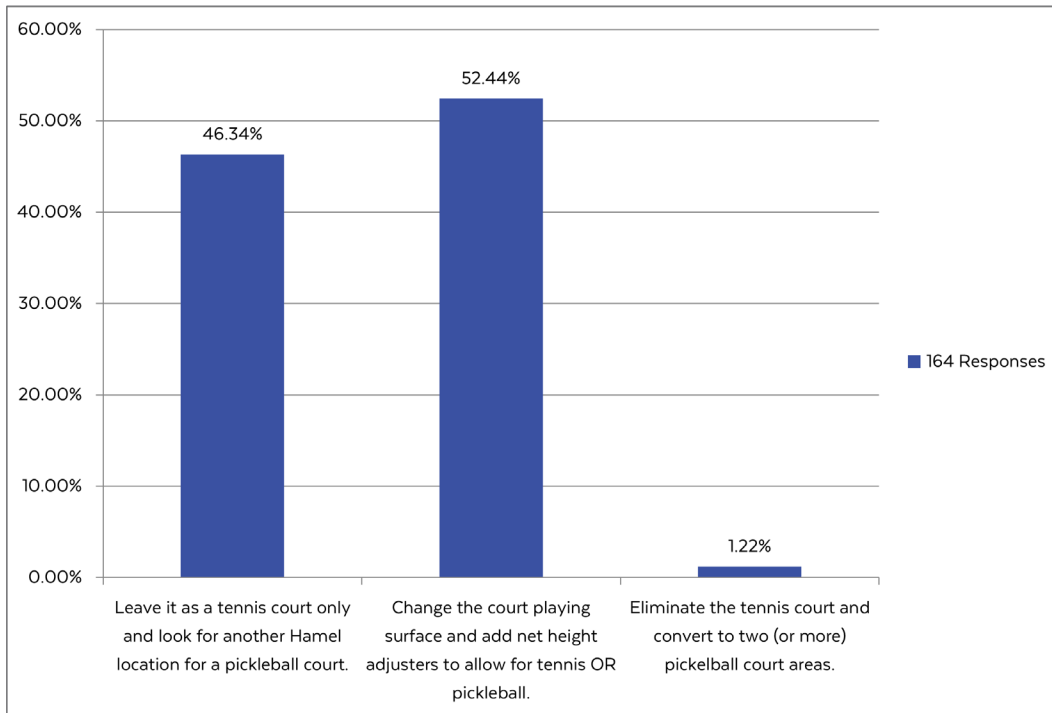


Children slacklining

As Exhibit 3-10 shows, there was a preference to change the sand volleyball court to a different use. Respondents were roughly split between replacing it with a pickleball court or a Wiffleball field. Another idea was potentially reducing the number of courts from 2 to 1 and using the adjacent sand area for an activity like slacklining. Only 16% wanted to leave the sand volleyball court unchanged. The open-ended responses included a suggestion that the existing lighting system be retained to provide on-demand illumination for whatever use that space changes to in the future. There were also observations that the sand volleyball courts are entirely “unused” at this time.

For the tennis court, a different story emerged.

EXHIBIT 3-11: Survey Result 4 - The existing tennis court in Hamel Community Park is observed to be used regularly, has on-demand court lighting, and was re-surfaced/improved in 2017. The recent emergence of “pickleball” has led to suggestions that the playing surface of the tennis court be replaced to accommodate this sport. What are your views on the tennis court in Hamel Community Park?



As Exhibit 3-11 shows, the results were near evenly split between a “hybrid pickleball/tennis court” (with additional court lines drawn and an adjustable net installed) (52% or 86 respondents) and keeping the tennis court “as is.” (46% or 76 respondents). Only 1% (2 respondents) wanted to eliminate the tennis court entirely and convert it to two or more pickleball courts.

The electronic survey also explored community sentiment for existing and potential future Americans with Disabilities (ADA) play equipment in Community Park.

EXHIBIT 3-12 : Survey Result 5 - Hamel Community Park features recreational areas and equipment for all ages and abilities, including ADA-compliant play surfaces and a wheelchair platform swing. What other improvements would contribute to an inclusive and accessible play environment at this park? (Check all that apply).

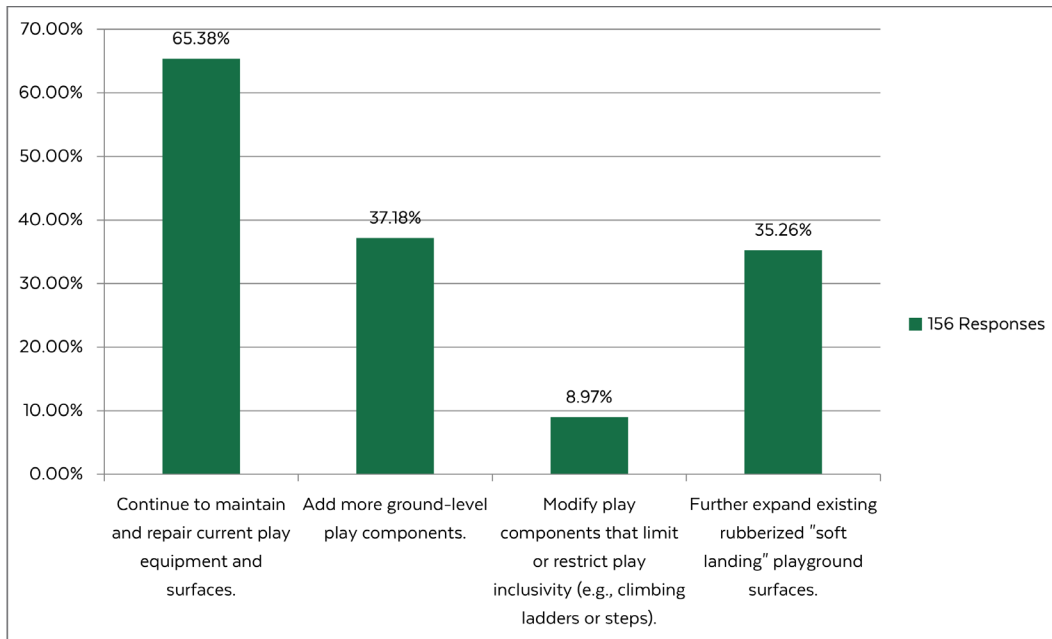
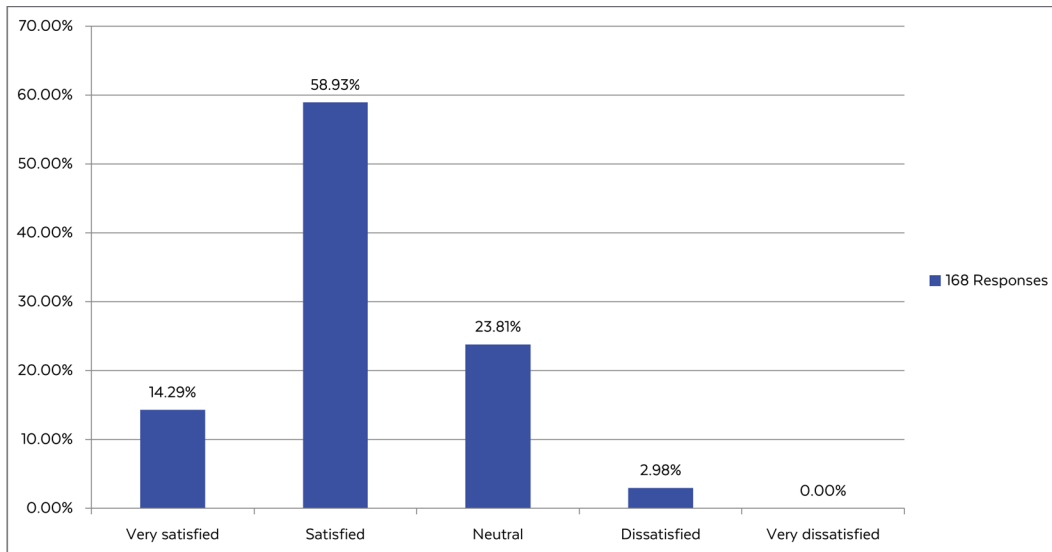


Exhibit 3-12 shows strong support for “Continue to maintain and repair current play equipment and surfaces” at 65%. As discussed in Section 2 of this plan, Hamel peer communities in Illinois and surrounding states generally are unable to provide ADA-related equipment beyond the required existing levels that Hamel has achieved. That being said, over 1/3rd of respondents were supportive of “Adding more ground-level play components” and “Further expand existing rubberized ‘soft landing’ playground surfaces.” The rubberized play surfaces referred to in this question are further addressed in Chapter 7. In short, this surface was installed circa 2008 and is showing signs of weatherization and the need for significant repair or replacement in the medium-term.

There was less than 10% support for modifying existing play equipment. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, a meeting with Hamel Public Works staff similarly suggests that existing play equipment is aging, out of compliance with contemporary safety standards, and would be difficult to retrofit.

EXHIBIT 3-13: Survey Result 6 - What is your satisfaction level with Hamel Community Park facilities and maintenance of the park grounds/equipment?



As Exhibits 3-13 shows, 73% of respondents said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with Community Park facilities and maintenance levels. Only 3% were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, an exceptional rating and acknowledgment that Village staff have been able to accomplish a lot with modest park budget levels.

Exhibits 3-14 and 3-15 include selected results from the open-ended survey questions relating to most liked, least liked and most sought improvements for Community Park.

EXHIBIT 3-14: Favorite and Least Favorite Community Park Aspects

FAVORITE	LEAST FAVORITE
Plenty of pavilions, seating areas	Minimal amenities for adults
Walkable convenience	Sidewalks in need of repair
Restrooms	Aging play equipment
Rubberized play surface	Crossing IL 140 to get there
Clean/Well-maintained	Dog waste issue
Open areas	No shade over play area
Community Center building	Mulched area
Basketball court	Lack of Movies in the Park events
Tall swings	Older play equipment is a safety concern
Safe	Desire for more benches and trees
Play equipment for toddlers and older children	No water fountain
Uncrowded	Misuse of the wheel chair accessible swing
Well-maintained pavilions	Lack of use of volleyball courts
Trees	Wished it connected to MCT trail
Tiny library kiosk	Parking lot need repaving
Community events held at park	More play equipment needed

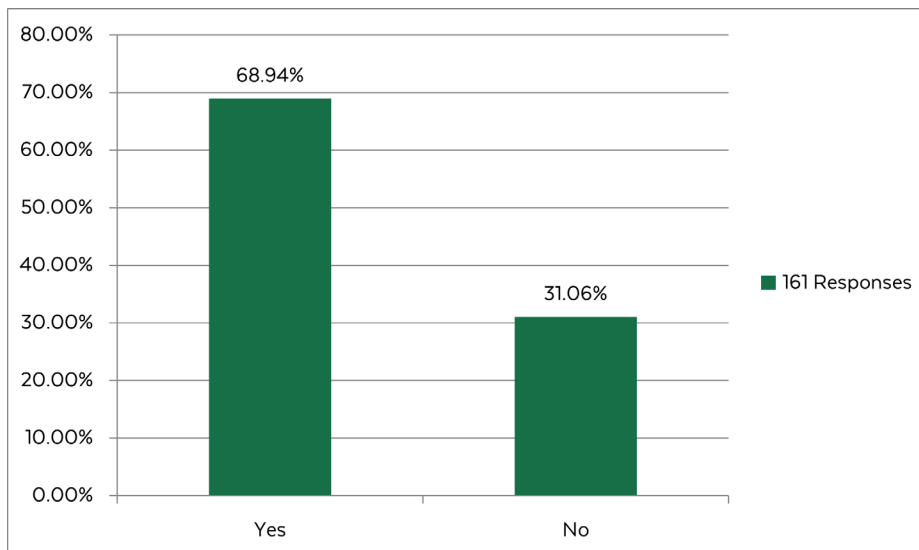
The most desirable amenities (those not mentioned in survey) included the following:

- Swings for younger children located closer to swings for older children
- Yoga on Saturdays
- Paved areas for roller skating
- Bigger/More playground equipment
- Water splash pad feature
- Interior updates to Community Center interior
- Melody Garden/outdoor music
- Stage for music and entertainment
- Climbing features
- Community garden area
- Cornhole
- Outer perimeter walking area
- Zip line feature
- Dog waste station
- Outdoor ice rink

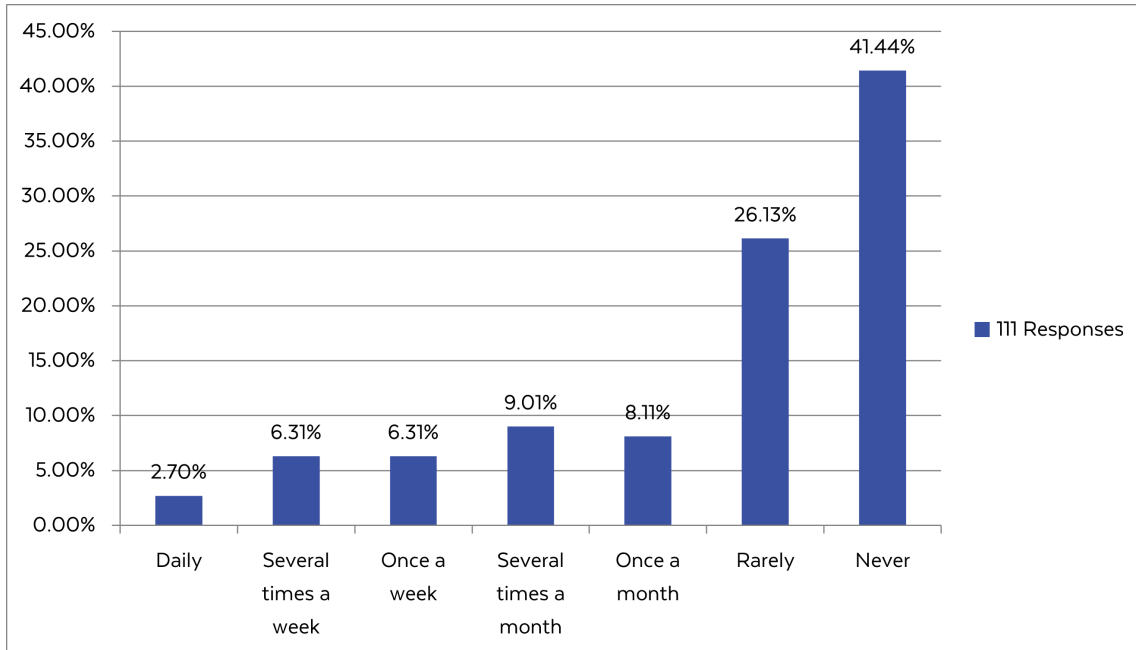
HAMEL DOG PARK SURVEY RESULTS

Turning to survey results relating to the Hamel Dog Park, Exhibit 3-21 revealed that about 69% of survey respondents were dog owners.

EXHIBIT 3-15: Survey Result 7 - Are you a dog owner? If “no,” feel free to scroll down to the end of this survey.



For dog owners, 3 survey questions were asked in order to provide additional insight into Dog Park visit frequency and the potential uses for the undeveloped agricultural field adjacent to the Dog Park and owned by the Village. As Exhibit 3-16 shows, about 41% of Hamel dog owners never use the dog park and 26% use it rarely. About 15% use the facility anywhere from daily to at least once per week. Of the 167 respondents to this question, that translates to 42 visitors who use the Dog Park at least weekly.

EXHIBIT 3-16: Survey Result 8 - As a dog owner, how often do you visit Hamel Dog Park with your pet?

From these results, it is worth noting that National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) data from Hamel's 13 peer communities suggests that "Dog Parks" are typically provided when population numbers are closer to 8,000 to 9,000 people. In the survey responses, Hamel residents reported that they don't frequent the park due to their homes already having fenced yards. Also, a concern was the lack of shade, lack of amenities such as dog agility courses, the lack of water or a dog water fountain, and its relatively remote location on the south side of the Village limits. Overall, the Dog Park is a good use of otherwise vacant Village-owned land with a consistent core of regular users for a relatively low installation cost.

EXHIBIT 3-17: Most Desired Dog Park Amenities

Amenity	Very or Somewhat Important	Neutral, “Not Very Important” or “Not a Priority”	Weighted Average
Hydration station (with separate water service for pets and humans in same use)	79.6%	20.4%	4.09
Shaded areas	78.7%	21.3%	4.12
Seating areas/facilities	68.3%	31.5%	3.82
Mud/Dust-free (rain water impervious) play surface area(s)	57.0%	43.0%	3.49
Dog agility equipment (ramps, hoops, tunnels, etc.)	55.6%	44.4%	3.42



Photos from Hamel Dog Park

Exhibit 3-17 shows most and least desired Dog Park amenities by survey takers. It provides insight into ways to further improve this park to encourage canine visits and social interaction between dog owners. One key result is the nearly equal support for 1) A combined hydration station for dogs and humans; and 2) a shaded area for Dog Park users. As former pastureland, the Dog Park is unshaded and does not presently have access to fresh drinking water. While humans may lean more toward a preference for shade, dogs cool their bodies, in part, through panting. Access to water can be the difference between an active visit and lethargy due to thirst.

While dog agility equipment was frequently cited in the open-ended portion of the survey responses and still had support from over 55% of respondents, it was the least-sought of the 5 potential new amenities at the Dog Park.

As for survey feedback as to what to do with Village-owned property outside the fenced Dog Park, the community-wide survey asked “The remainder of the Village-owned property where the Dog Park is located contains approximately 1.25 acres of useable vacant land outside the fenced dog run area. What are your ideas (including those not related to pets) on how to utilize this area?” This open-ended question yielded the ideas below.

Ideas for unused, village-owned land outside of the fenced Dog Park included:

- Skate park
- Leave as green space
- Workout equipment area
- Parking for bike path users
- Native grasses, shrubs, and perennials for bees, butterflies, and birds
- Something similar to Gardens at Glik park in Highland
- Bike repair station
- Soccer field
- Small RV park
- Small playground so kids can play while dogs play
- Small, covered pavilion
- Pit stop for MCT trail users
- Walking path around perimeter of fenced area
- Nature walk or natural play area

Overall, from the diversity of the responses above, the proximity to the MCT Quercus Grove Trail, and the quiet, natural setting of this area, future use of this acreage represents an opportunity for Hamel to provide a unique park for local residents, such as a small “preserve” area or a recreational use with a specialized function.

CHAPTER 4: PARK INVENTORY AND EXISTING CONDITIONS OVERVIEW

This Chapter focuses on conditions at each of Hamel’s existing parks. These conditions, plus the information presented in Chapter 3 on community input will provide the basis for Park Master Plan Goals and Objectives found in Chapter 8 relating to future park improvements.

In assessing each site, each park was visited in November 2023 and February 2024, photo-documented, and inventoried to identify amenities and observe how each park is used. This review helped to identify where changes could be potentially made to better serve the Hamel community and frame questions/ideas to present at two public hearings, a community-wide electronic survey, and a visit to Hamel Elementary School.

EXHIBIT 4-1: Hamel Park Map



HAMEL COMMUNITY PARK



Hamel Community Park Amenity Snapshot

Location: 10 Park Ave, Hamel, IL

Park Type: Community Park

Size: 8.33 acres

Description: Hamel Community Park features a diverse range of recreational activities for all ages, including play equipment for those as young as 2 to 5 years, basketball and tennis courts, and quiet reading and social interaction pavilions of various sizes. On demand lighting is available for the pavilions and tennis court and community members can rent the Community Center building for meetings, family gatherings and community events.

Current Inventory of Amenities:

- Pavilion with tables – 2 (1,600 square feet each)
- Covered Picnic Gazebos with tables – 3
- Full Sized Basketball Court
- Lighted Tennis Court
- Restroom facility
- Play equipment (Slides, climbing structures, and swings for ages 2 to 11).
- ADA accessible / inclusive play equipment
- Benches – 7
- Community Center building (5,500 square feet)
- Open Field Recreation Area (1.5 acres)
- Lighted Sand Volleyball Court – 2

HAMEL COMMUNITY PARK - AMENITIES AT A GLANCE



Tennis Court (with lights)



Open Field/Play Area



Restroom



Playground Equipment



Picnic Pavilion (with lights)



Basketball Court

HAMEL DOG PARK



Hamel Dog Park Amenity Snapshot

Location: 6190 N State Route, Edwardsville, IL

Park Type: Specialty Park

Size: 13.83 acres total (Parcel 1 is 9.03 acres, Parcel 2 is 4.80 acres)

Description: The Hamel Dog Park is a 0.5 acre fenced area located within a larger 9 acre lot owned by the Village. There are separate areas for large and small dogs, as well as a paved entry area, benches, and dog waste stations. Much of the nine acre lot is allocated to Hamel's wastewater treatment plant facility, a cell tower, and a parking lot for Dog Park visitors. To the south of the nine acre lot is an additional 4.80 acres, also owned by the Village, that is undeveloped pastureland. The west portion of this 4.80 acre lot (west of the creek) contains approximately 1.65 acres. At present, there have been no previous plans for the utilization of the 4.80 acre area. However, the western 1.65 acres are highly accessible, relatively flat, and well-suited to function as a "land reserve" where residents can observe wildlife. Other ideas may include enhancements such as the provision of wildlife habitat for Monarch butterflies or as a hummingbird "stopover" area.

At present, there have been no previous plans for the utilization of this land. However, it is well-suited to function as a "land reserve" park where one can observe wildlife or provide wildlife attractions such as milkweed for Monarch butterflies or a hummingbird "stopover" area.

Current Inventory of Amenities:

- ADA accessible access from nearby parking lot
- Dog waste station
- Benches - 2
- Waste baskets
- Paved entry area
- Two-stage entrance
- Open Dog Run Area (0.25 acre for large dogs and 0.20 acre for small dogs)

HAMEL DOG PARK - AMENITIES AT A GLANCE



Dog Waste Station



Benches



ADA Access from Parking Lot



Separate Entries for Large Dogs and Small Dogs



Separate Entries for Large Dogs and Small Dogs

ROUTE 66 AT VILLAGE HALL



Route 66 at Village Hall Amenity Snapshot

Location: 111 South Old Route 66, Hamel, IL

Park Type: Wayside Park

Size: 0.06 acre (2,500 square feet)

In 2011, the Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway offered communities along Historic Route 66 the opportunity to cost share in the purchase and installation of an interactive information “Experience Hub” which provides local historic context to what John Steinbeck once called “The Mother Road.” Along with nearby communities such as Litchfield and Edwardsville, Hamel was one of the recipients of one of these kiosks, thereby becoming a tourist nexus for visitors as far away as Japan and Europe as they travel through Illinois on their way to California or Chicago, Illinois.

Building on the cultural and economic success of the Route 66 wayside exhibit, in 2022 an eye-catching 12-foot Route 66 shield was installed right next to the Experience Hub in Hamel on Village Hall property, joining similar impressive displays in Collinsville, Edwardsville, Staunton and Litchfield. This improvement further established this area as the symbolic center of Hamel’s connection to Old Route 66. With ample parking at Village Hall and numerous original Route 66-era restaurants and commercial buildings in the immediate viewshed of the Route 66 shield, this site meets all the NRPA criteria to be considered a “wayside park.”



Photo from riversandroutes.com



In further supporting this small wayside park and the economic benefits it helps to generate, Hamel should continue to explore ways to encourage Route 66 visitors to stop in Hamel, take pictures, grab a bite to eat, and purchase fuel or souvenirs. Hamel might also consider placing a themed display or message board where Mother Road travelers can leave a small note or sticker to commemorate their time in Hamel. Hamel should also continue to engage with organizations such as riversandroutes.com and illinoisroute66.org to further explore ways to add to the unique features of this small park that delivers positive impacts well above its diminutive size.

HAMEL HEROES PARK



Looking NE from Hamel Avenue



Looking north from Klueter Drive

Hamel Heroes Park Amenity Snapshot

Location: 210 Hamel Ave, Hamel, IL

Park Type: Neighborhood Park

Size: 3.25 acres

Description: Hamel Heroes Park is a planned 3.25 acre park on the north side IL 140. The Village acquired the property in 2022 to provide a neighborhood park on the north side of Hamel that is convenient to residents of subdivisions like Saddlewood Meadows and Country Estates.

While recreation, exercise, and opportunities to engage in and with nature are priorities at this new park location, Hamel Heroes Park also offers the opportunity to provide park amenities that are complimentary but distinct from Hamel Community Park. To find out more about what the community wants at this location, the public input process for the Parks Master Plan offered multiple, unique ways to provide input. See Chapter 5 of this plan which provides specific details about Hamel Heroes Park.

CHAPTER 5: VISIONING NEW PARKLAND IN HAMEL: HAMEL HEROES PARK

While planned improvements to Hamel Heroes Park are still on the horizon in the months to come, the Village of Hamel has acquired this property for the purpose of providing a new Neighborhood Park. In addition, the Parks Master Plan process has generated additional enthusiasm in the community about Hamel parks in general and Hamel Heroes Park in particular. As this site and the planning process around it is so unique, this chapter will focus on the public input efforts for this 3.26 acre property.

In preparing for the public input events held between November 2023 and March 2024, Hamel officials were keen to ensure that the public knew that a goal in the development of this park was to provide new dimension to recreation in Hamel. Specifically, the following objectives were prioritized:

- Promote conservation and education opportunities through resource conservation elements and native landscaping.
- Create an accessible and accommodating facility that welcomes pedestrians, bicyclists, and those arriving by automobile.
- Ensure that there is sufficient vehicle parking while exploring options to minimize the impact on recreation areas.
- Demonstrate design creativity, age and ability diversity, and make efficient, user-friendly use of space.
- Work to not repeat park amenities already present at Hamel Community Park and the Dog Park.

With these objectives in mind, Hamel embarked to find out what the community wanted for Hamel Heroes Park at each of the public input events.

HAMEL HEROES PARK – REVIEW OF PUBLIC INPUT FROM MEETING #1

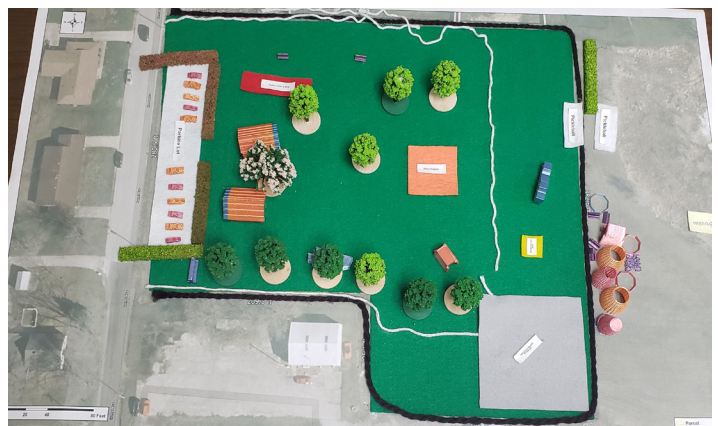
As described in Chapter 3, the first of these occurred on November 16 and the afternoon of November 17. The following were key take-aways specific to Hamel Heroes Park that evening. This feedback, which was prompted through “idea inspiring” display board photos for the new park, led to more detailed and specific questions at follow-up meetings and electronic questionnaires held in early 2024.

Residents at Public Meeting #1 responded very positively to the following:

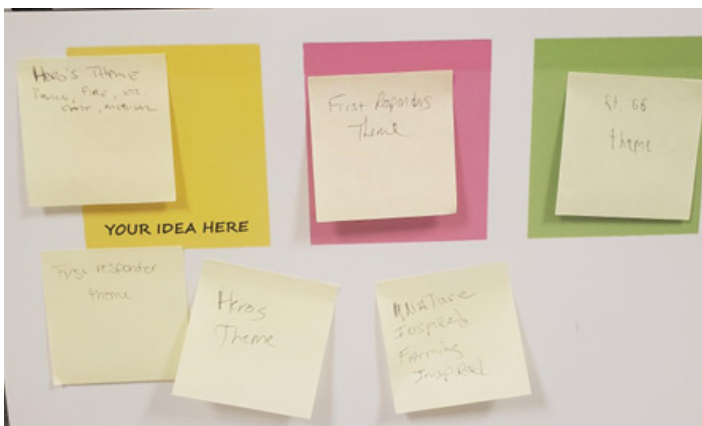
- Paved perimeter walking path around the park with workout stations along the way
- A 1/3 acre Wiffleball field and possible locations for a Pickleball court
- Shaded areas, gazebos, and pavilions for picnics and family gatherings
- A Nature Playscape, smaller in size but similar in concept to one located at Forest Park in St. Louis
- Open field play areas
- An obstacle course
- A thematic playground area potentially focused local culture (Route 66 or Lewis and Clark) or emergency first responders (police and fire)

Attendees also had an opportunity to sketch out the design of this park. The themes that emerged included the following:

- Participants were asked to identify the location of parking at Hamel Heroes Park and to select either a longer parking area option that ran parallel to Hamel Avenue, or a more compact area that encroached more into the park site itself. Both options were provided as “scaled models” of on-site parking areas to place anywhere on the park site. Most participants selected the layout that featured the parking lot as one long drive aisle accessing a single row of parking spaces.
- Most participants placed at least two picnic pavilion locations on the sketch plan.
- Great enthusiasm was expressed in placing a 1/3 acre Wiffleball field, play equipment locations for features like gaga ball, swing sets, slides, and climbing walls.
- There was also high levels of support for an obstacle course or a multi-functional open play area near the center of the park.
- A perimeter walking/jog path was a “given” by all participants.
- Residents adjacent to the north of Hamel Heroes Park were interested in how their properties could be visually screened from park amenities to protect privacy.
- Noticeably, Hamel residents inherently placed more “active” uses that might produce noise or may include exterior lighting away from residential uses. For example, the Wiffleball field, play equipment, and the obstacle course was usually placed in the southern half of the property while picnic pavilions, trees and landscape hedges and the open play field area tended to be placed along the north property line near adjacent residential uses.



Photos from Public Meeting #1



HAMEL HEROES PARK – REVIEW OF PUBLIC INPUT FROM HAMEL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN MEETING

Based on general input and responses at the November 2023 meeting, Village officials and the Planning and Zoning Commission began planning for three additional public input opportunities scheduled for February 2024.

While the portions of input meetings that related to Community Park and the Dog Park are detailed in Chapter 3, a special meeting was held on February 6, 2024 meeting at Hamel Elementary School with 128 children in Kindergarten through second grade to get their input on amenities that are mostly likely to be located in Hamel Heroes Park.

For this meeting, children participating were provided with 3 pom poms to vote for any of 7 potential park amenities:

- A Wiffleball field
- Gaga ball pit
- Fire station-themed playground
- Open play field
- A “ninja” obstacle course
- A small stage suitable for plays or mini concerts, and
- A nature playscape area.

Pictures of these seven amenities were glued to large Mason jars into which the votes were cast. Results of the school-wide voting are shown in Exhibit 5-1, with additional results by grade shown in Exhibits 5-2 through 5-4.

While the results in Exhibit 5-1 show the overall results, including resounding support for an Obstacle Course and excellent support for a Fire Department-themed playground, the grade-by-grade level results in Exhibits 5-2 through 5-4 revealed the following insights:

- Gaga ball pits didn’t resonate strongly with elementary school children. It was speculated that an older age group of children may like gaga ball. In addition, Hamel Elementary has an existing gaga ball game on its property, so children may have wanted different playground amenities that were not already at school. Incidentally, gaga ball pits did reasonably well as an amenity on the community electronic survey and at Public Input Meeting #2 where it was selected by 22 participants. See Exhibit 5-7.



Photos from meeting with Hamel Elementary School students



Photos from meeting with Hamel Elementary School students

- The stage/mini amphitheater amenity also had generally low but steady support among school children at Hamel Elementary. This amenity was selected last by first and second graders but fared better with kindergarteners. This amenity had a last place showing at Public Input meeting #2 as well.
- The nature playscape area was appealing to all grade levels at Hamel Elementary, with either a 2nd or 3rd place showing within all 3 grades. For an idea that will need more thinking as to how to safely operationalize for the Hamel community, it captured Hamel Elementary kids' imaginations as well as participants at Public Input meeting #2 (where it was a Top 10 priority).
- The "open playfield" idea strengthened in support as it progressed from K to 2nd grade. It is believed that, as children get older and become more familiar with games/sports that can be played on open fields (e.g. "pick-up games" like catch or soccer), open playfields become more important. Later in February 2024, this "125 x 125 foot open play area" was a desired amenity by over half of the Public Input Meeting #2 attendees. See Exhibit 5-7.
- The Fire Dept-themed playground did well with K and 1st grade students but showed signs of fading with the 2nd graders. It was postulated that somewhat older children were starting to outgrow this type of amenity by 7 or 8 years of age. This being said, as site location and layout occur for this planned amenity, strategic placement of the adult exercise equipment near a themed playground could enable adults to enjoy a workout while being able to keep a watchful eye on children aged 6 and under as they play on the themed playground.
- The Wiffleball field was #4 on the list of 15 potential amenities at Public Meeting #2. However, elementary school children appeared less enthusiastic about the idea, coming in #5 of 7 ideas presented to them. Similar to above, a wiffleball field near a themed playground equipment for K-2nd graders may be an amenity combination to consider.

EXHIBIT 5-1: Results of Hamel Elementary School Vote on 2/6/24 - Kindergarten through Second Grade

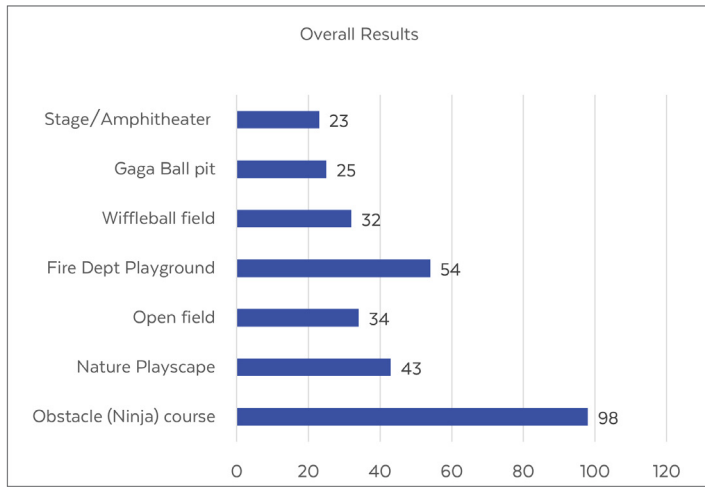


EXHIBIT 5-2: Results of Hamel Elementary School Vote for Kindergarteners

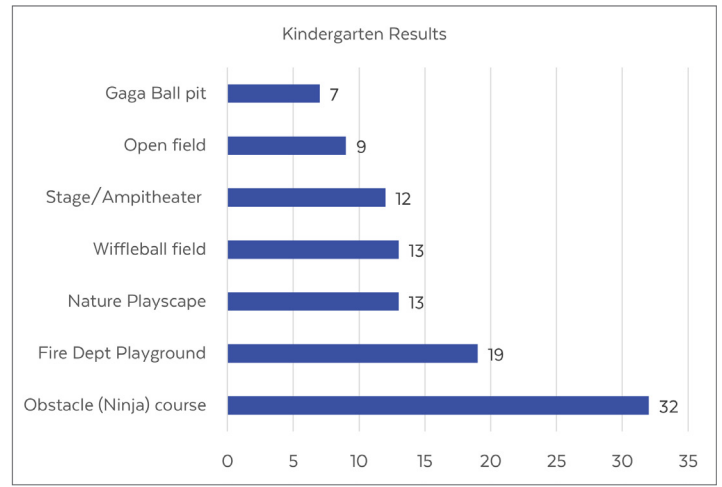


EXHIBIT 5-3: Results of Hamel Elementary School Vote for First Graders

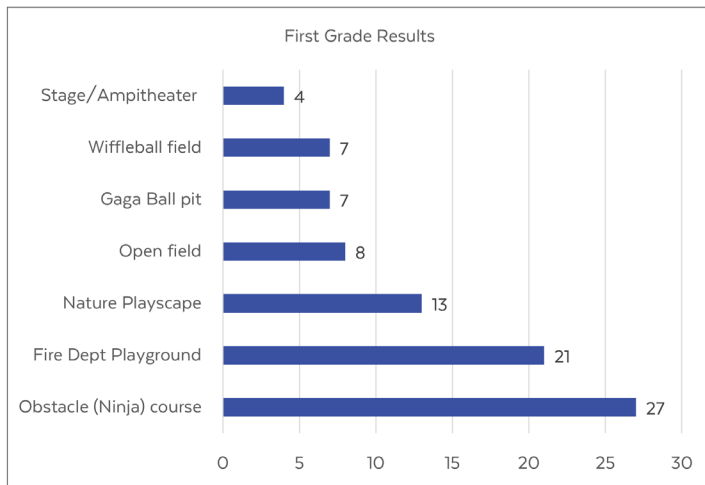
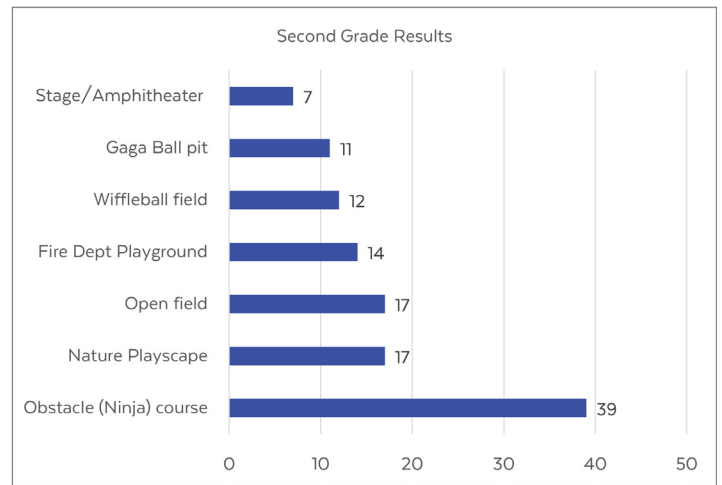


EXHIBIT 5-4: Results of Hamel Elementary School Vote for Second Graders

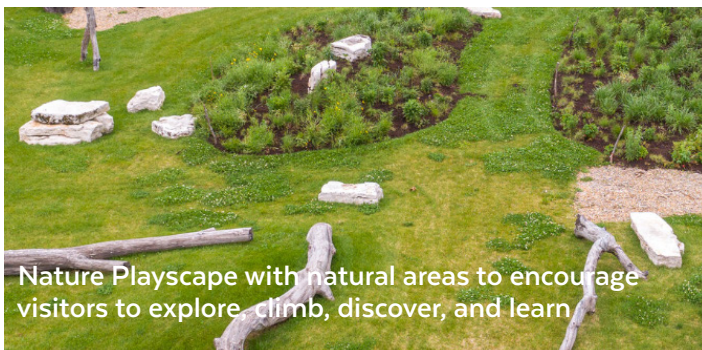
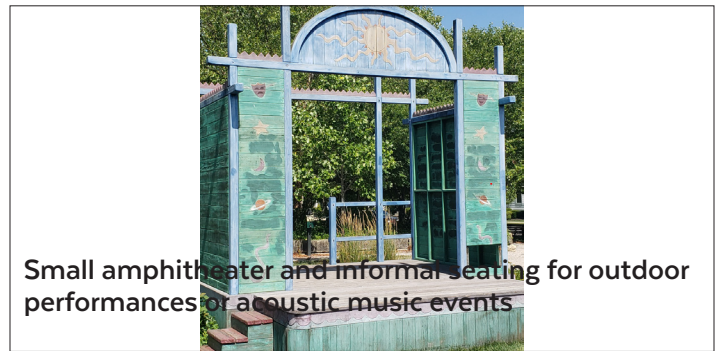
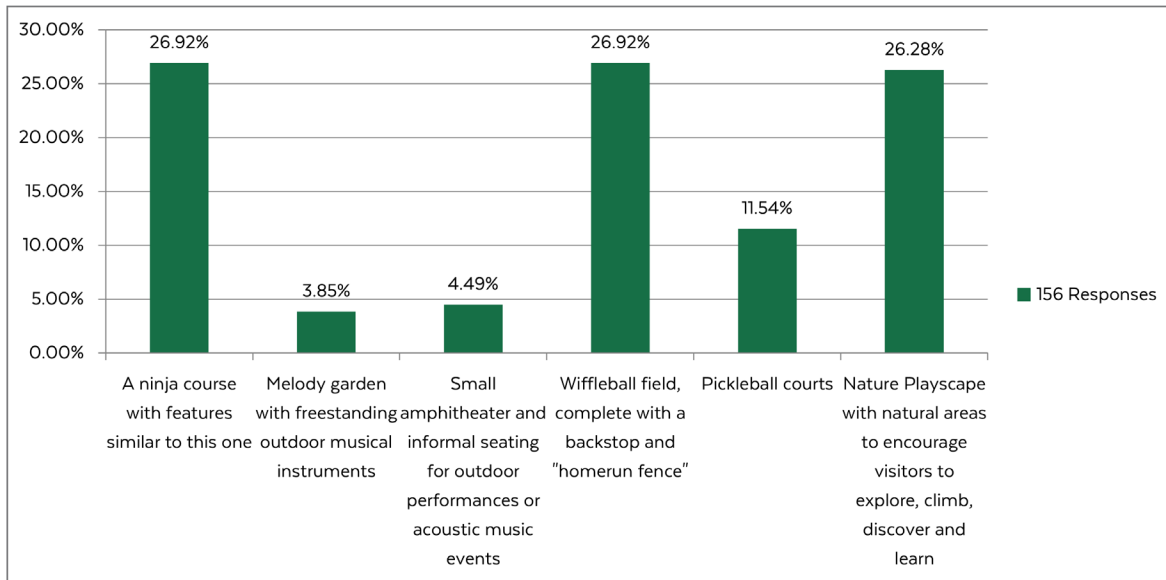


HAMEL HEROES PARK – REVIEW OF PUBLIC INPUT FROM COMMUNITY-WIDE ELECTRONIC SURVEY

As the Hamel Elementary School students were providing their input in early February, a community-wide electronic survey through SurveyMonkey was made available to all Hamel residents from January 29, 2024 to March 1, 2024.

Most-desired amenities by the Hamel community to be built at Hamel Heroes Park are highlighted in Exhibit 5-5.

EXHIBIT 5-5: Community-Wide Electronic Survey Question 11 - Hamel Heroes Park will be a new 2.25 acre park just north of Klueter Drive on the east side of Hamel Avenue. A priority for this park is to feature amenities not found in Hamel Community Park. Which of these are best for Hamel Heroes Park?

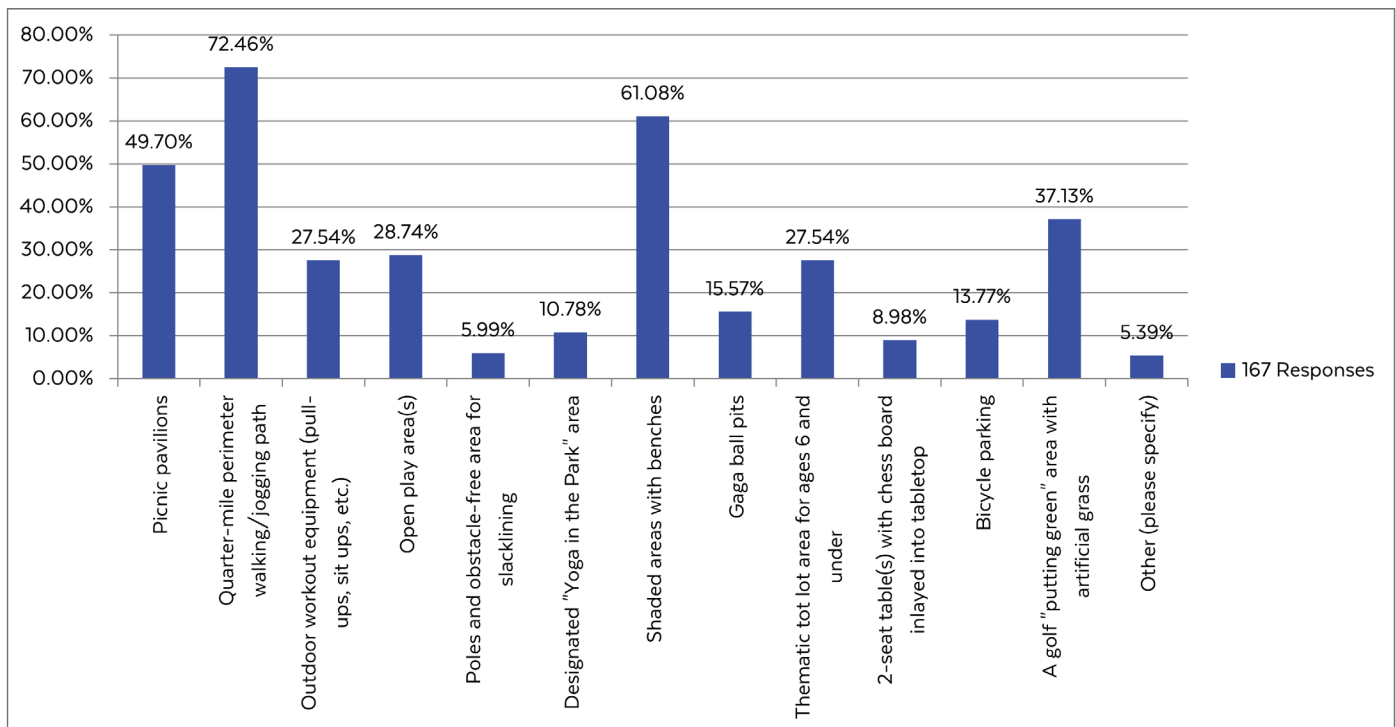


Similar to Hamel Elementary School students, a “ninja” obstacle course was well-received by electronic survey participants (27%). Tied with an obstacle course as a potential defining feature of Hamel Heroes Park was a Wiffleball field, also at 27%. A “Nature Playscape” area that was described as a “natural area to encourage visitors to explore, climb, discover and learn” was also popular with 26% of respondents. (The Nature Playscape concept was one that originally arose out of the first Public Input meeting held on November 16 & 17 2023). In the middle of these six options was steady support (12%) for a Pickleball court at Hamel Heroes Park.

Meanwhile, a small amphitheater and melody garden were selected by less than 5% of survey respondents. The performance stage idea had consistently low numbers throughout the public input process, getting low votes from elementary school children, the lowest vote total on the electronic survey and the lowest total at Public Input Meeting #2 as discussed below. The melody garden idea fared better at Public Meeting #2 but still was in the middle of the preference range. (See Exhibits 5-6 and 5-7).

In addition to recreational amenities that could be viewed as defining features of Hamel Heroes Park, the electronic survey also sought resident input on other park features that the park could accommodate. These results are listed in Exhibit 5-8.

EXHIBIT 5-6: Community-Wide Electronic Survey Question 12 - *Functional and active amenities in Hamel Heroes Park will be important. From the choices below, which amenities would you most like to see in this park? To help us to better understand community priorities, please limit your picks to four (4) or less.*



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Quarter-mile perimeter walking/jogging path	72.46%	121
Shaded areas with benches	61.08%	102
Picnic pavilions	49.70%	83
A golf "putting green" area with artificial grass	37.13%	62
Open play area(s)	28.74%	48
Outdoor workout equipment (pull-ups, sit ups, etc.)	27.54%	46
Thematic tot lot area for ages 6 and under	27.54%	46
Gaga ball pits	15.57%	26
Bicycle parking	13.77%	23
Designated "Yoga in the Park" area	10.78%	18
2-seat table(s) with chess board inlaid into tabletop	8.98%	15
Poles and obstacle-free area for slacklining	5.99%	10
Other (please specify)	5.39%	9
Total Respondents: 167		

Similar to sentiments expressed at the November 16, 2023 public input meeting, residents resoundingly supported the ¼ mile perimeter walking/jogging path around Hamel Heroes Park (72% support) in the electronic survey. Strong support was also expressed for shaded areas with park benches (61% support) and picnic pavilions (50% support). Also emerging as popular on the electronic survey (receiving greater than 25% support from respondents) was a golf putting green, open play areas, outdoor workout equipment, and a "thematic tot lot area for ages 6 and under". Less preferred amenities included poles and obstacle-free areas for slacklining, two-person tables with inlaid chess boards, and Yoga in the Park areas.

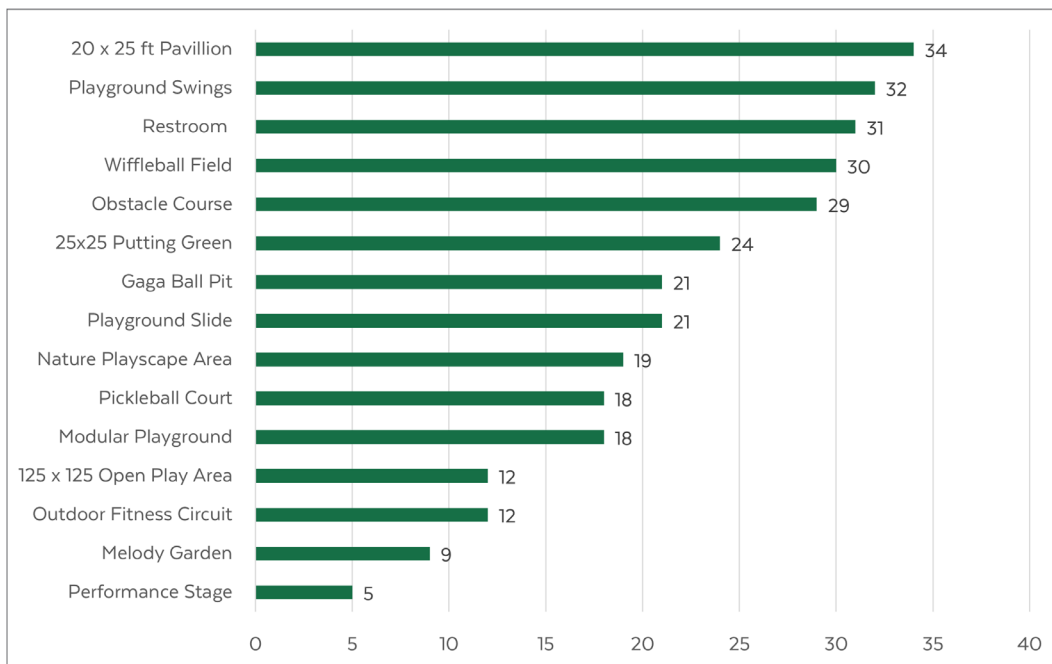
HAMEL HEROES PARK – REVIEW OF PUBLIC INPUT FROM PUBLIC MEETING #2

With results from the electronic survey still coming in (the electronic survey closed on 3/1/24), a second Public Input meeting was held at the Hamel Community Park Community Center on February 22, 2024 from 6pm until 9pm.

This second public input meeting was very important as it provided more nuanced details about how Hamel residents wanted to allocate limited resources toward a wide array of amenities. This differed from the electronic survey where respondents were asked to choose one top priority for a “featured amenity” at Heroes Park.

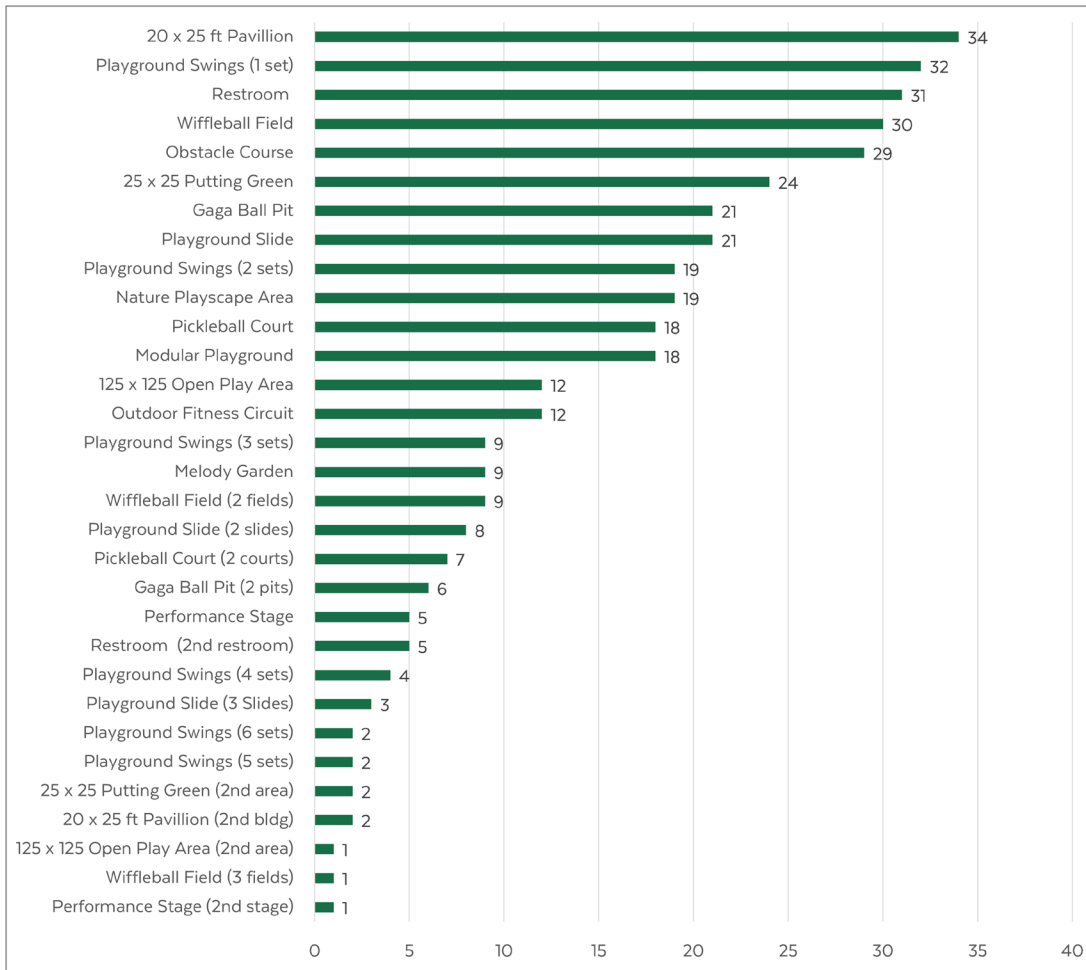
At Meeting #2, residents were provided with only 600 points to allocate toward nearly 1,400 points of park amenities (15 total options based on initial input from Meeting #1) for Hamel Heroes Park (and potentially other Hamel parks if the amenity was better-suited at these locations). The results are presented in Exhibit 5-7.

EXHIBIT 5-7: Most Desirable Amenities by Type at Hamel Heroes Park



In reviewing the results in Exhibit 5-7, attendees had 15 potential amenities they could allocate points toward. The results above show that, of these choices, most wanted a 20x25 pavilion (34 participants), playground swings (32 participants), a restroom (31 participants), a Wiffleball Field (30 participants), and an Obstacle Course (29 participants). Middle tier amenities included a 25x25 putting green, a gaga ball pit, and a playground slide.

Exhibit 5-8 shows the relative popularity of each amenity. Specifically, it shows the results of when each respondent had the option to allocate points toward the same amenity as many times as they wished. For example, if a person wanted 2 sets of swings instead of just 1 set, they could use a portion of their 600 points toward the necessary 10 points for that expanded option. Likewise, if they wanted more than 1 pickleball court, they could allocate an additional 150 points toward that second court, knowing that this would mean that 50% of their 600 points were going toward two pickleball courts.

EXHIBIT 5-8: Most Desirable Amenities by Votes at Hamel Heroes Park


Per Exhibit 5-8, the results reveal that “Two Sets of Swings” was the 9th most-preferred amenity (with “3 sets of swings” being the 15th most-preferred amenity) out of 31 potential amenity variations that participants provided on February 22, 2024. Also popular were two Wiffleball fields (sought by 9 participants), two playground slides (8 participants), and 2 pickleball courts (7 individuals).

In sum, all Hamel residents had an opportunity to express their amenity preferences at 3 different times:

- Public meeting #1 on November 16 and 17, 2023
- A community-wide electronic survey that drew 169 responses during the month of February 2024.
- Public Meeting #2 on February 22, 2024.

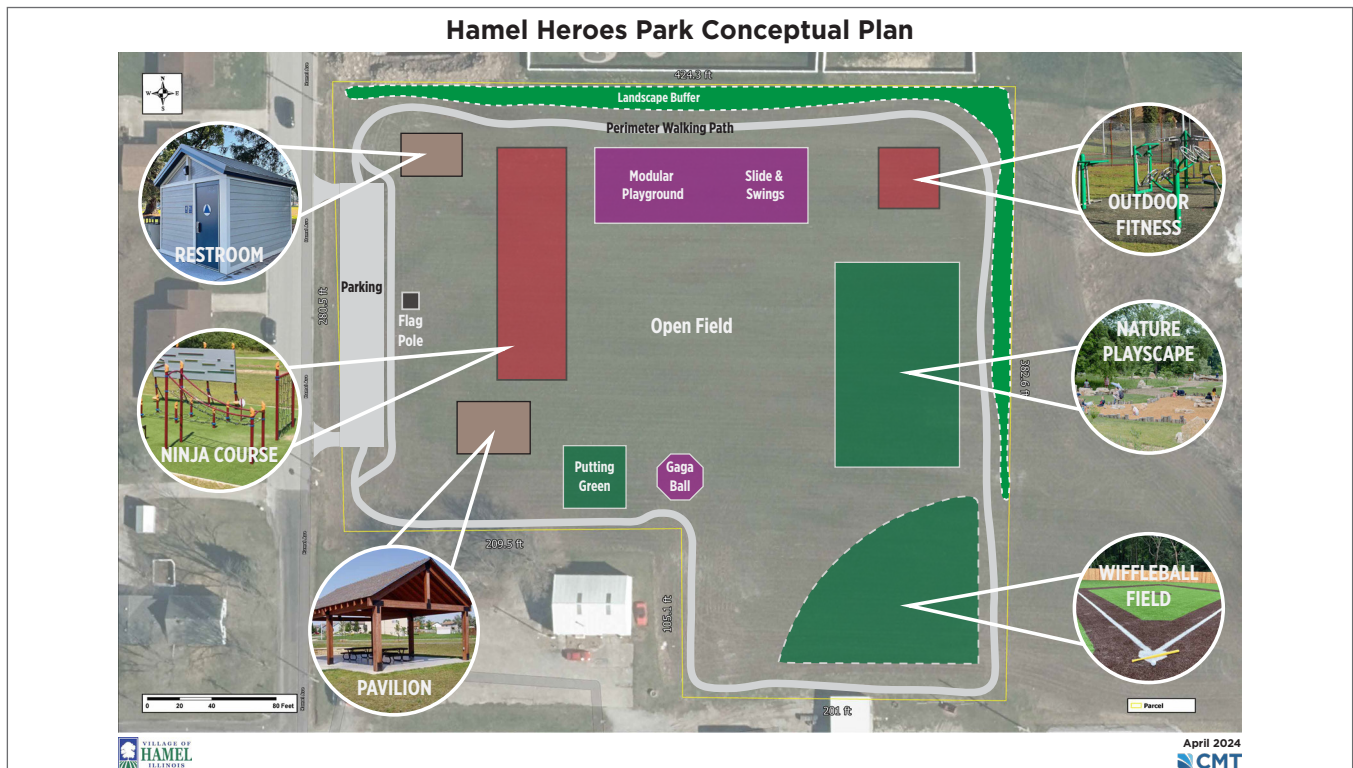
In addition, a special input event was held for the 128 children at Hamel Elementary School on February 6, 2024. With these results, Hamel’s park planning consultant was able to prepare a conceptual plan for the layout of Hamel Heroes Park, which can be found in Chapter 8 (Implementation Plan) of this Parks Master Plan.


Photos from Public Meeting #2

GENERAL GUIDELINES REGARDING AMENITY PLACEMENT AT HAMEL HEROES PARK

- One of the top new attractions in Hamel Heroes Park, the Ninja Obstacle Course, was placed near Hamel Avenue so it is the first things visitors see when they arrive.
- The Modular Playground and Slide/Swing area was placed in close proximity to the Outdoor Fitness area to allow for nearby supervision while adults enjoyed a workout and children enjoyed park adventures.
- For similar reasons, the Outdoor Fitness area is close to the Nature Playscape area.
- Gaga ball and the Putting Green are likely to attract older children and adults. They are conveniently located near the Pavilion.
- The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has conducted significant research, which concludes that a restroom is an essential amenity in a community park of this size. A restroom has been located close to Hamel Avenue for effective monitoring.
- The Wiffleball Field will be a beloved park amenity for many. Anticipated to have a homerun fence, it has been placed in an area of the park that will have good sightlines, be pedestrian accessible from Schroeder Avenue, and be safe for those using the walking path, all consistent with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
- The Pavilion location is proximal to the off-street parking lot for the convenience of those using this facility.
- The Perimeter Walking Path is approximately 0.25 mile.
- The off-street Parking area is sized to accommodate 20 cars. While other parking lot layouts may be more efficient in use of space, this design was one preferred by the community at public input meetings.
- A sizable Open Field area has been provided for open play as requested by residents. Adjacent remaining open areas will allow for the addition of new amenities as determined appropriate by the community.
- A Landscape Buffer will provide privacy for residential uses to the north and screen the park from commercial uses to the east.
- Amenity sites are flexible in size and location. Shapes are intended to be a location envelope within which the amenity can be moved/sized as needed.

EXHIBIT 5-9: Hamel Heroes Park Conceptual Plan



CHAPTER 6: PERSPECTIVES ON HAMEL PARKS FROM OTHER ADOPTED PLANS

INTRODUCTION

While the Parks Master Plan is a separate plan from long-range plans that the Village has adopted in recent years, this chapter provides details about the 2021 Hamel Comprehensive Plan and the 2023 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Both of these plans provide details about public opinion via surveys and open house meetings that occurred at the time, as well as Goals and Objectives that support the goals and objectives found in this 2024 Hamel Parks Master Plan.

2021 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Work began on the 2021 Hamel Comprehensive Plan in late 2019 by the community planning team with CMT Engineers and Consultants. By the time public input sessions were scheduled to begin in Spring 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was underway, delaying in-person public input opportunities efforts and necessitating creative new ways to obtain the perspectives of Hamel residents. Fortunately, conditions improved in time for the plan to be adopted in December 2021.

At the time the Hamel community was considering a new Comprehensive Plan, a decision was made to not include a Parks and Recreation element. This was largely because Hamel only had 1 official park at the time: Community Park. Since early 2022 however, the Hamel Dog Park site, which was an objective in the 2021 Plan has been developed as a unique special park in the community.

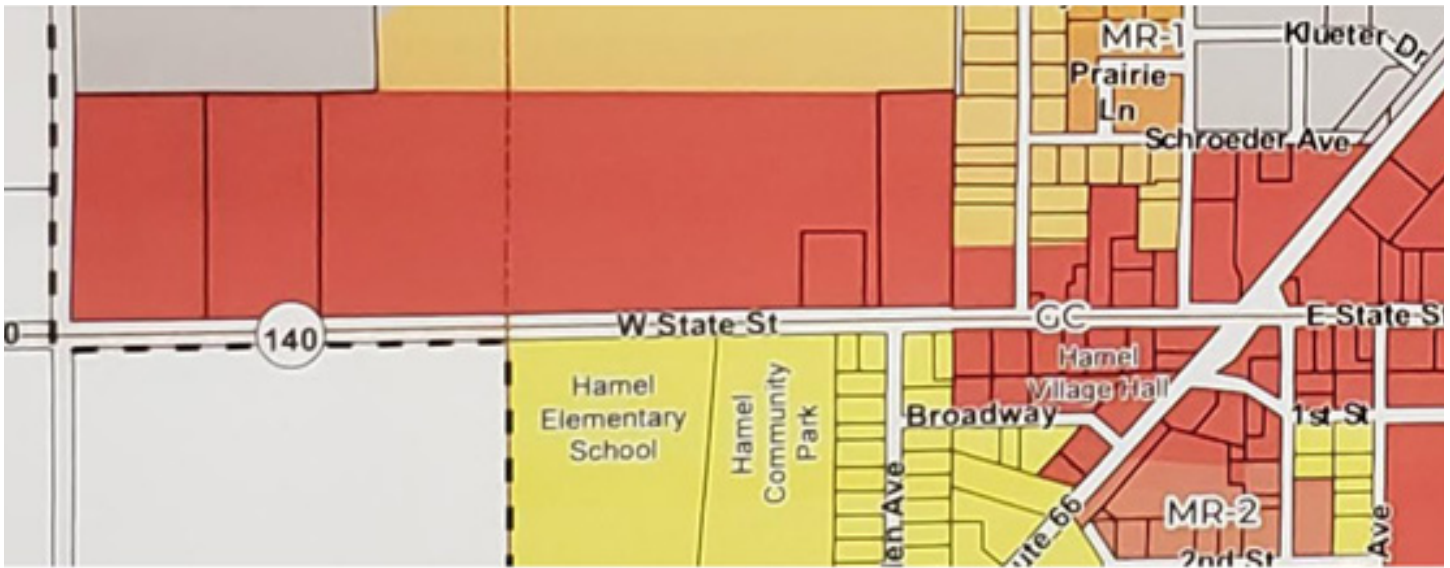
In addition, the improvements at Village Hall relating to Route 66 amenities for tourists were in a more nascent stage, having only been outfitted with an interactive kiosk at the time of Comp Plan adoption. Since then, a Route 66 “shield” sign has been installed at this location, significantly increasing the visibility of this site in drawing Route 66 tourists for photo opportunities, a brief history lesson, and an overview of the Route 66 “viewshed” which features Weezey’s, the Creamery, Hamel Grain Co-Op, and other iconic buildings that were part of the Mother Road landscape 100 years ago.

While Heroes Park on Hamel Avenue was but a dream in 2021, the Comp Plan set important goals and objectives relating to the following, all of which remain pertinent in the 2024 Parks Master Plan

The first of these is the Goal to “Enhance outdoor life in Hamel by adopting policies and budgeting for improvements that contribute to a safe, connected walking environment.” (2021 Comprehensive Plan, page 49). While the Comp Plan describes specific projects, such as connecting the north and south legs of the Quercus Grove MCT trail and the installation of continuous sidewalks along IL 140, another key action item was “Connect(ing) in-town neighborhoods, downtown, neighborhood parks, and recreation areas with the MCT trail.” This action item is further expanded upon in the 2022 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan detailed below.

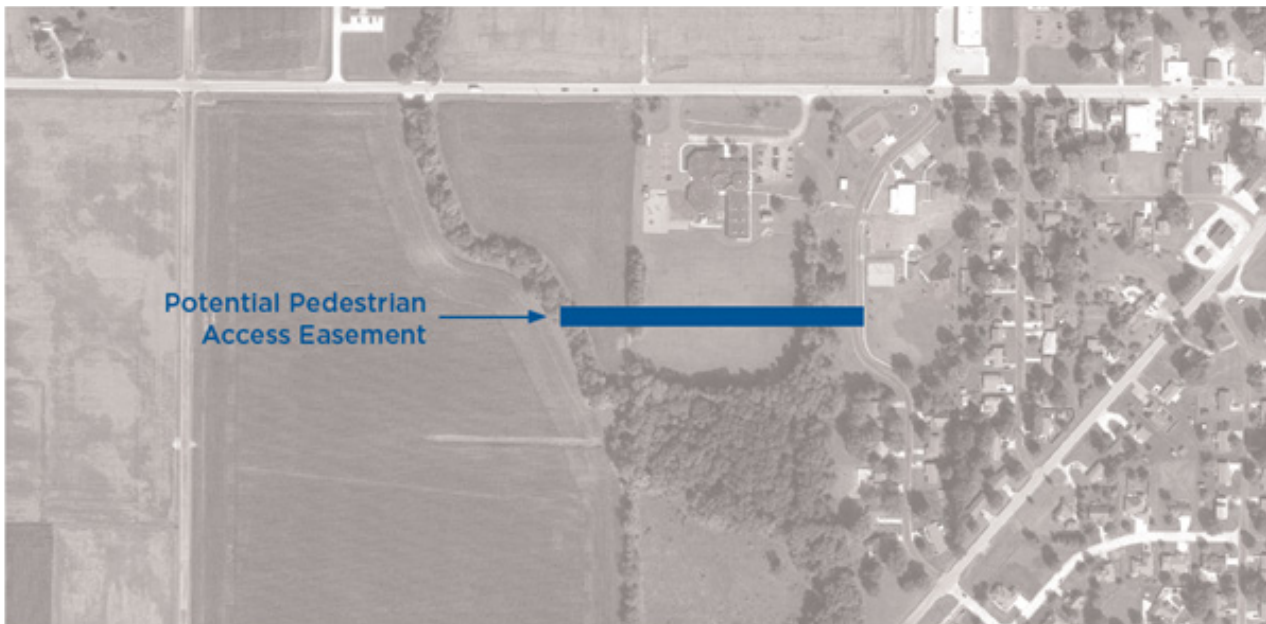
In Chapter 6, devoted to the character preservation and development of the Historic Core along the IL Route 140 corridor, west of I-55 (see Exhibit 6-1), discussion on how to better connect pedestrians, bicyclists, and golf carts to Community Park was featured.

EXHIBIT 6-1: Historic Core Along the IL 140 Corridor



In Exhibit 6-2 is a snapshot of a potential pedestrian connection from Hamel Elementary School to Community Park. While this connection is still under consideration, this forward-thinking concept lends support to the idea that one of Hamel's key park demographics is children. Therefore, seeking ways to get children safely to Community Park and then providing fun and creative play equipment and recreation space once they are there is another example of how the 2021 Comprehensive Plan and the Parks Master Plan are co-related policy documents. It is this inter-dependency that led to the unique input opportunity held at Hamel Elementary School on February 6, 2024 (See Chapter 3).

EXHIBIT 6-2: Concept Idea from 2021 Comprehensive Plan Linking Hamel Elementary to Community Park



Similarly, Exhibit 6-3 below shows how the 2021 Comprehensive Plan envisions improved pedestrian facilities along IL Route 140. Since the adoption of the Comp Plan, Hamel has engaged with IDOT to determine a location and installation date for a pedestrian crossing along this corridor. As discussed in Chapters 3 (Community Engagement) and 8 (Implementation Plan), the future development of Heroes Park and the need to safely link Community Park and Heroes Park lends further importance to the 2021 Comp Plan goal.

EXHIBIT 6-3: 2021 Comprehensive Plan Exhibit Showing Existing Sidewalks Along IL 140



Exhibit 6-4 shows the then-future location of the Hamel Dog Park, prior to the construction of the accessory park, the concrete pedestrian path, and the co-location of the MCT trail uses to access the Dog Park.

EXHIBIT 6-4: Map Location of Then-Future Dog Park from the 2021 Comprehensive Plan



As the 2021 Comp Plan states (Page 91), “This facility promises to be an excellent social and recreational opportunity for Hamel dog lovers and their pets.”

The desire for future parkland on the north side of IL 140 was merely a “wish list” action item in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan: “Planning for future parkland on the north side of IL Route 140 represents both an opportunity and a challenge for Hamel. While it is beyond the scope of this document to analyze and recommend what type of park is needed on the north side of IL Route 140, how this future recreational space will function and who it will serve can be informed by three key design principles:

1. Adaptability in terms of the ability of the recreational space to change in the short (e.g. changing field configurations during the seasons of the year or transitioning to accommodate special village events) and long term (e.g., changing as opportunities arise to redefine how the space is used).
2. Functionality in terms of the recreational space being flexible to respond to the needs and wants of Hamel residents (e.g., farmers market space on Saturdays transitioning to an athletic practice field during the week).
3. Accessibility in terms of being proximal (a half mile or less) to existing residences, especially those within the Saddlewood Meadows subdivision, as well as the physical design of the space that allows for equal use by a wide demographic, from the very young to elderly or disabled individuals.”

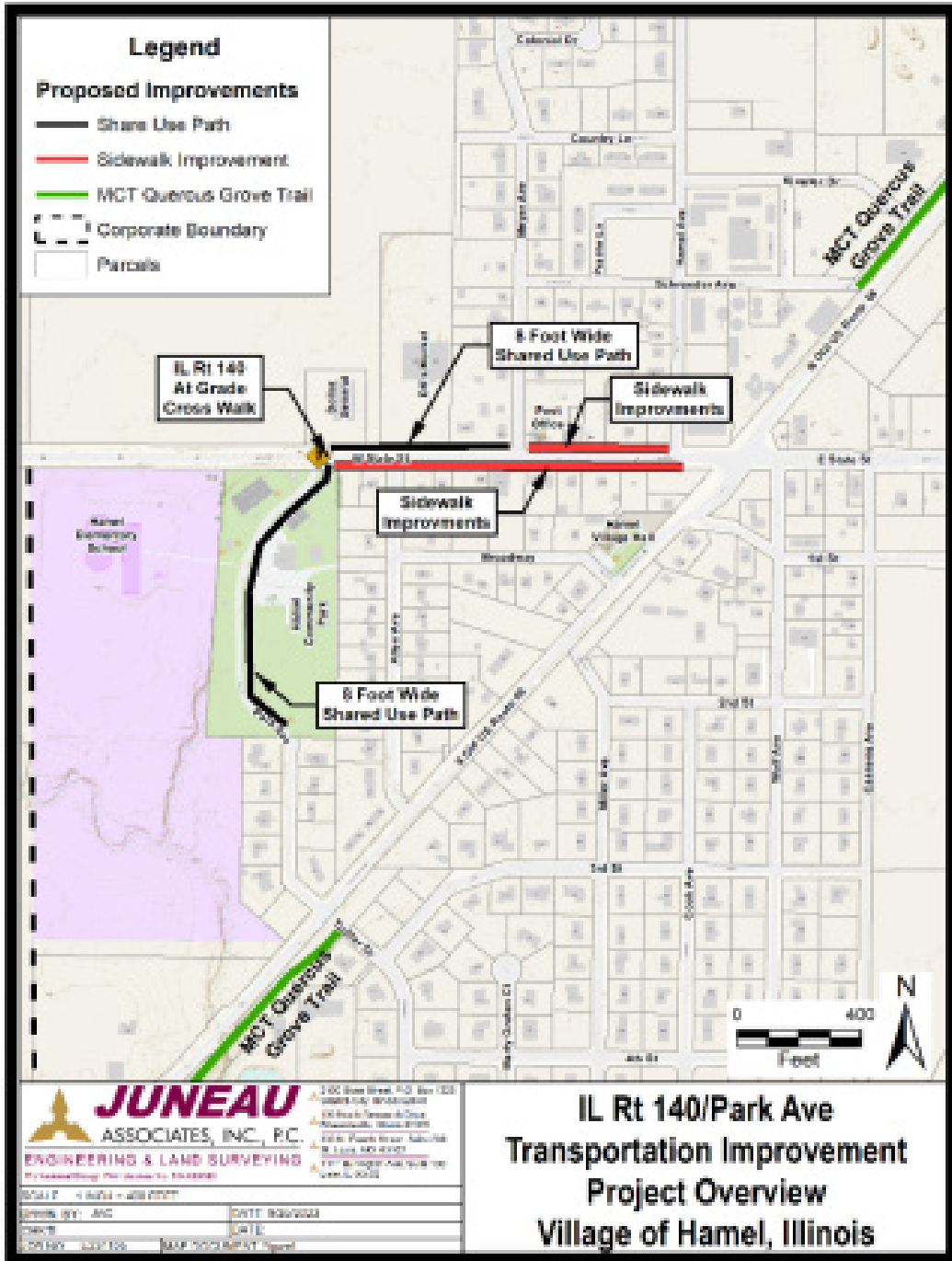
While the details in Chapter 3 and 5 of this Parks Master Plan have advanced the idea of “future parkland on the north side of IL 140” from idea to the cusp of reality, the 2021 Comp Plan also notes that the “cost of acquiring and maintaining parkland and supporting infrastructure should be considered, along with the need for staff and public safety if organized events or leagues are planned...(In doing so) Hamel residents should collectively determine what type of parkland is needed. For example, the (Comprehensive Plan) survey results indicate that soccer fields and picnic areas are a low priority, while areas for hiking/walking and softball/baseball fields are more generally desirable.”

Finally, Pages 91-92 of the Comp Plan notes “Hamel officials should also consider whether available land on the north side of IL 140 is able to meet the needs of residents. Flat farmland with few trees would be ideal for new ballfields but are not especially suitable for hiking or natural areas. Additionally, while playground areas are sufficient in Hamel Community Park, there may be a need for a smaller facility for residents north of IL 140.”

Turning to the more recent 2023 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan completed by Juneau Associates, Inc, Exhibit 6-5 from Page 9 of that plan shows a more advanced and detailed concept of improved sidewalks and shared use paths along IL Route 140 as well as a proposed 8-foot wide shared use path along Park Avenue through Community Park. Similar to the Exhibit 6-3, this rendering highlights the opportunity to provide safe linkages for pedestrians and cyclists between Community and Heroes Park

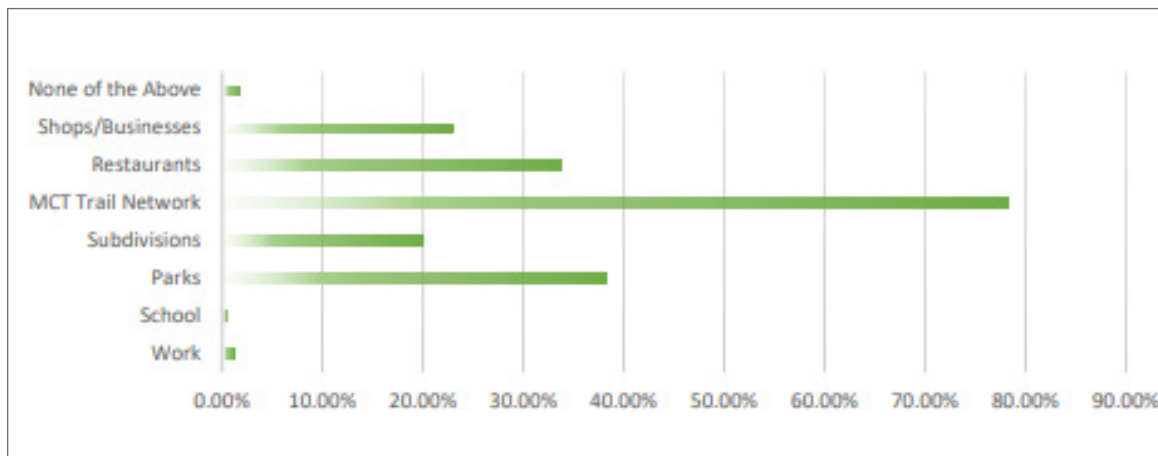


EXHIBIT 6-5: IL 140/Park Avenue Transportation Improvement Project Overview



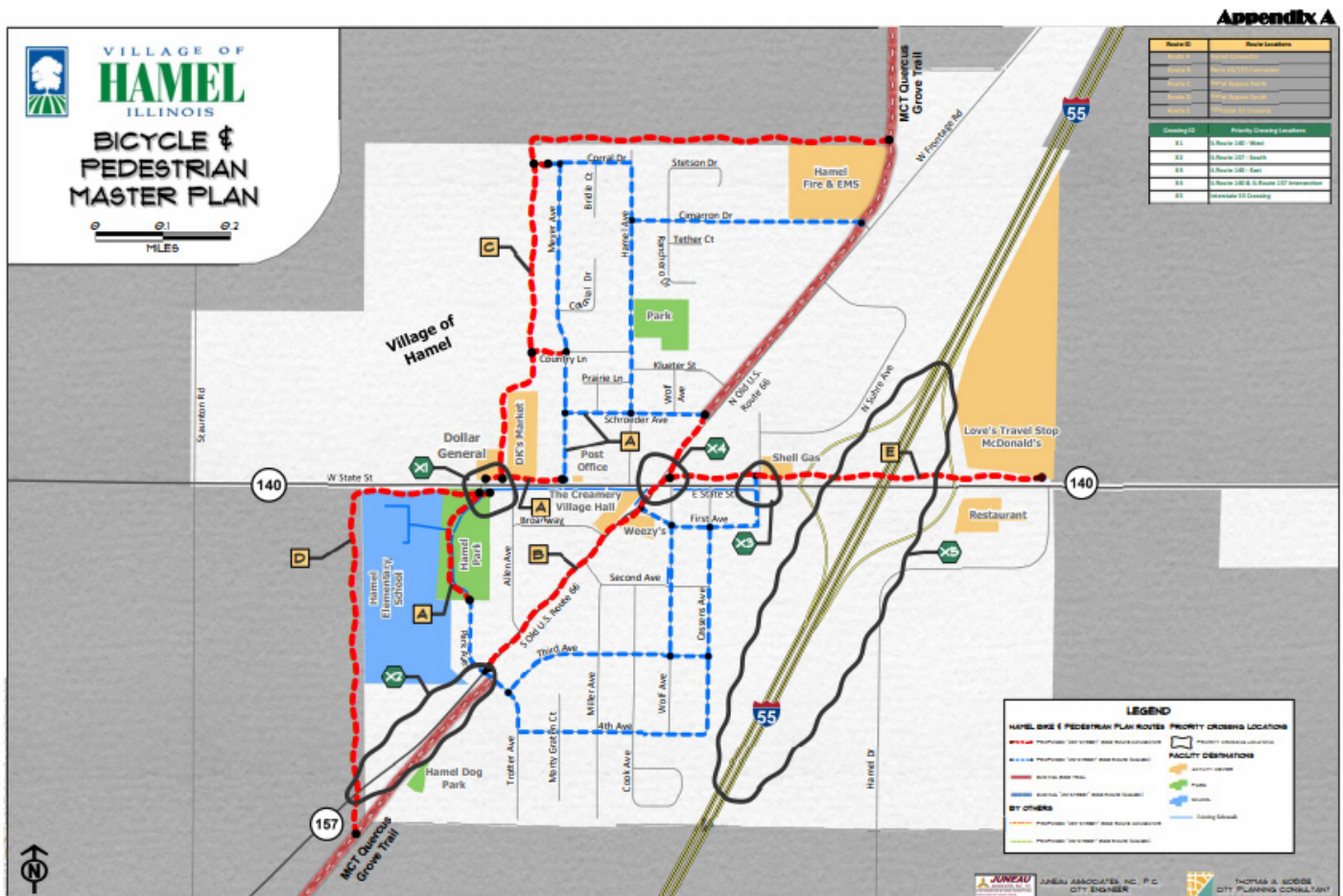
Improvements to IL 140 are important for non-motorized connectivity community-wide, particularly in relation to making connections to local parks as Bike and Ped Plan survey results reveal: “Parks” are the second most common destination cited by survey respondents to the Bike and Ped Plan.

EXHIBIT 6-6: Main Destinations Residents Walk or Bike to Within Hamel (Page 22, Hamel Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan)



Consistent with this feedback, the 2023 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan includes a map that details how non-motorized access throughout the Hamel community will be achieved (Exhibit 6-7). A close look at this map shows that linkages between Heroes Park, Community Park, and Hamel Dog Park are not only on designated routes but are anticipated to be further improved in the years ahead.

EXHIBIT 6-7: Non-Motorized Access Throughout Hamel



CHAPTER 7: OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

The Village of Hamel owns and operates the park facilities detailed in this Plan in a very cost-efficient manner. For the fiscal year ending April 30, 2022, Hamel's Annual Financial Report stated that expenditures allocated to Parks amounted to \$214,361. About 23% of this amount or \$48,491 was for maintenance-related costs.

EXHIBIT 7-1: Village of Hamel Annual Financial Report (Page 30)

VILLAGE OF HAMEL, ILLINOIS			
General Fund			
Schedule of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance			
Modified Cash Basis			
Budget and Actual			
Year Ended April 30, 2022			
(Continued)			
	Original and Final Budget	Actual	Variance with Final Budget Positive (Negative)
Expenditures continued:			
Street Department:			
Salaries	\$ 20,000	\$ 16,252	\$ 3,748
Payroll taxes	1,600	1,273	327
Engineering	13,000	-	13,000
Maintenance	71,000	12,200	58,800
Total street department	105,600	29,725	75,875
Police Department:			
Salaries	25,000	135,578	(110,578)
Supplies and maintenance	25,000	23,770	1,230
Total police department	50,000	159,348	(109,348)
Park Department:			
Salaries	20,000	15,073	4,927
Payroll taxes	1,500	1,166	334
Insurance	6,000	4,450	1,550
Maintenance	55,000	48,491	6,509
Utilities	5,000	5,733	(733)
Capital outlay	78,000	123,071	(45,071)
Debt service:			
Principal	-	14,127	(14,127)
Interest	-	2,250	(2,250)
Total park department	165,500	214,361	(48,861)
Total expenditures	1,156,400	879,435	276,965
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenditures	(13,400)	145,021	158,421
Other financing sources (uses):			
From borrowing	-	75,000	75,000
Total other financing sources (uses)	-	75,000	75,000
Net change in fund balance	\$ (13,400)	220,021	\$ 233,421
Fund balance, beginning		748,816	
Fund balance, ending		\$ 968,837	

30

From these relatively modest funds, Hamel has been able to accomplish significant efficiencies in maintaining and preserving its park amenities. For this effort, the 2024 electronic survey reported a 73% satisfaction level from Hamel residents with regard to their local parks (based on combined "Satisfied" and "Very Satisfied" replies).

Hamel's parks require regular maintenance in ways that may go unnoticed by the average observer. Day to day efforts to cut grass, repair play equipment, administer renting of park facilities, maintain and secure the Community Center, provide clean and secure outdoor restroom facilities, ensure quality playing surfaces for the basketball, volleyball, and tennis courts, maintain off-street parking lots, empty trash, and create pleasant gathering spaces at well-maintained park gazebos and pavilions are just a few of the efforts that Hamel staff accomplish.

In addition to day-to-day maintenance efforts, short to long term planning, budgeting, and grant preparation efforts must occur to ensure that local recreational facilities continue to look their best and continue to get high marks from the community. Below is a snapshot of anticipated park improvement and capital improvement needs on the list for the coming years. These items are subject to change due to prioritization discussions by the Village Board, but are provided here for short to medium-range planning purposes in the Parks Master Plan.

1. **Community Park**

- a. Building repairs to Community Center building
 - i. Exterior roof/gutter/paint repair and interior paint- \$40,000
 - ii. Kitchen Updates/Upgrades - \$6,000
 - iii. Replace flooring - \$38,000
- b. Outdoor Pavilions (2 large one)
 - i. Support post repairs due to wood rot at North pavilion - \$8,000
 - ii. Install lighting under North pavilion - \$4,500
- c. Playground
 - i. Rubberized play surface - 2024 represents the 15th year since this play surface was installed in phases circa 2008/2009. Existing conditions indicate cracking, wash out underneath existing surfaces, and surfaces that are experiencing weatherization - \$100,000 replacement cost estimate.
 - ii. Playground equipment maintenance - \$30,000
 - iii. Existing swing-set closest to Community Center parking lot is non-compliant (grandfathered) with contemporary safety standards - This swing set likely dates to the 1960's. While "grandfathered" and can continue to be used, it cannot be moved or expanded.
 - iv. The slide with stainless metal slide surface poses a potential safety issue as children reach the top of the slide. In addition, the metal surface often gets very hot. While "grandfathered" and can continue to be used, it cannot be moved or expanded.
 - v. Per this Parks Master Plan, the future of the sand volleyball courts may be changing or transitioning to a new use.
 - vi. Per this Parks Master Plan, there is a community desire to add additional play equipment with expanded age diversity options while meeting ADA requirements.
 - vii. Per this Parks Master Plan, there is discussion regarding making changes at the tennis court to accommodate pickleball. While further review is needed, a court that accommodates pickleball and tennis will need to have playing court lines adjusted and have a manually adjustable net height to change between tennis and pickleball.
 - viii. The existing horseshoe pits could potentially be moved to a new location.
 - ix. Tree plantings in Community Park - Up to 40 new trees may be needed as older trees on the park periphery reach age limits and begin to die, drop old limbs, or become susceptible to disease.

2. **Dog Park** - As a newer facility constructed in 2020, only routine maintenance of existing facilities is anticipated in the short to medium term.
 - a. Parking lot maintenance
 - i. \$3,000 every 3 years - Gravel improvements and maintenance of concrete parking area and concrete walking path.
3. **Heroes Park** - A decision on whether restrooms will be provided at Hamel Heroes Park remains under discussion. However, such facilities may be ideally located on the north side of the park due to the proximity of sanitary sewer lines along the north property line of this parcel; Water could be extended via a 2-inch water service line for approximately \$4,000.

CHAPTER 8: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

In an effort to build a more vibrant and inclusive Hamel, the Implementation Chapter sets goals and objectives to ensure that everyone, regardless of age and ability, can easily and safely access Hamel parks. As Parks are vital for physical, mental, and social well-being, the first goal relates to removing barriers that might prevent people from reaching parks safely. This chapter outlines six goals to ensure that parks are accessible, safe and enjoyable for everyone in Hamel.

This section explores potential funding opportunities, discusses the value of establishing priorities, and suggests recommended monitoring methods. This plan also strives to get public partners and Hamel residents involved in the implementation process by providing oversight to the process. Residents, local government officials, the school district, law enforcement, local businesses, and developers, among others, will need to work together with the Village's vision for its parks system to be successful.

Hamel should begin by approaching improvement recommendations for priority parks. As these recommendations were determined at a master plan level, each project will require additional study, planning, and design. Some of these projects will be within the capabilities of Village staff, both in the design and implementation stages. However, more complex projects may require involvement from outside consultants.

Hamel is encouraged to start planning recommendations into the capital improvement budget. Selecting lower cost projects for immediate implementation will illustrate the Village's willingness to put this master plan into action. It will demonstrate commitment to its objectives for implementing this plan and will set a positive course for fulfilling the goals defined by the community.

After park improvement projects are prioritized in the capital improvement planning process, it is recommended as a first step to complete a more detailed feasibility and conceptual design study for each park and amenity, beginning with the highest priority items. This work would include more in-depth landscape architecture work, park amenities, and equipment design, and a more detailed look at engineering aspects such as grading, drainage, sewer capacity, and pavement types. Initial estimates of the additional required maintenance resources will also need to be developed. This will allow for more detailed costs to be developed and evaluate the feasibility of the initial concepts created in this Master Plan.

EXHIBIT 8-1: Hamel Parks Master Plan Recommendations

Objectives/ Action Items	Priority	Timeframe	Performance Measure	Cost Magnitude
GOAL 1: INCREASE SAFE ACCESS FOR ALL TO HAMEL PARKS				
1: Provide good access to and between Community Park and Heroes Park.	HIGH	SHORT*	Install signage or use other way-finding techniques along designated connection paths to these two parks by 2027. Similar approach will be used along designated roads to connect from Hamel neighborhoods to these parks by 2030.	\$\$\$
2: Connect Community Park and Heroes Park to MCT Trail.	HIGH	MEDIUM*	Using the Hamel Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan Map, install way-finding signage along existing local streets to direct residents to the MCT Trail by 2028.	\$\$\$\$
3: Identify partnerships with IDOT, local landowners, and businesses to pursue grants to implement park inter-connecting routes per the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Map.	MEDIUM	ONGOING	Every 3 years, identify and apply for funding for a project that contributes to the interconnectivity of the Hamel community as detailed in this Parks Master Plan and in the Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan.	\$\$\$
4: Explore the “Slow Streets” concept.	MEDIUM	LONG*	Conduct a pilot “Slow Streets” project at a designated location near Heroes Park in 2027.	\$\$ to \$\$\$
5: Promote golf cart connections and parking at Community and Heroes Park.	LOW	LONG	Designate a golf cart parking area at Community Park and Heroes Park by 2027. Add a golf cart logo to the wayfinding signage to Hamel’s parks as part of and on the same timeline as Objective 1 above.	\$\$\$
Potential Funding Sources** for GOAL 1: TAP, CMAQ, SS4A, IDOT planning and research grants, IDOT ITEP				

* Short = 1-3 years Medium = 4-7 years Long = 8 years or more

** See Chapter 9 for funding source explanations

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EXHIBIT 8-1: Hamel Parks Master Plan Recommendations (Continued)

Objectives/ Action Items	Priority	Timeframe	Performance Measure	Cost Magnitude
GOAL 2: ADDRESS CAPITAL NEEDS THROUGHOUT THE HAMEL PARKS SYSTEM				
1: Replace aging play equipment at Community Park.	HIGH	MEDIUM	Remove and replace the “grandfathered” slide and swings at Community Park by end of 2026. Every 5 years, replace one piece of playground equipment at Community Park.	\$\$ to \$\$\$
2: Replace aging rubberized play surfaces at Community Park.	HIGH	MEDIUM	By 2029, remove and replace the rubberized play surface at Community Park.	\$\$ to \$\$\$
3: Repair the North Pavilion east of the Community Center.	HIGH	SHORT	By end of calendar year 2025, repair the North Pavilion.	\$ to \$\$

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EXHIBIT 8-1: Hamel Parks Master Plan Recommendations (Continued)

Objectives/ Action Items	Priority	Timeframe	Performance Measure	Cost Magnitude
GOAL 3: PROVIDE NEW PARK AMENITIES				
OBJECTIVE 1: AT COMMUNITY PARK				
1a: Install most desired recreation amenities.	MEDIUM	MEDIUM		\$\$ to \$\$\$
1b: As existing playground equipment at Community Park is gradually replaced, plan to install play amenities that appeal to a wider set of age demographics.	LOW	MEDIUM	Per equipment provider specifications as to targeted age demographics, one third of funds for any new play equipment at Community Park will appeal to children aged 5 to 12 years.	\$\$ to \$\$\$
1c: Retain the open field area south of the playground area.	HIGH	ONGOING	No new park amenity that uses more than 10% of its existing area will be added to the open field area at Community Park through 2035.	\$
1d: Remove at least one sand volleyball court and transition to a new use.	LOW	MEDIUM	Utilize Parks Master Plan survey results to identify a new amenity for at least 50% of the existing sand volleyball court area by 2028.	\$\$ to \$\$\$
1e: Avoid repeating similar amenities between Community Park and Heroes Park.	HIGH	ONGOING	Through the 10-year duration of the Parks Master Plan, Village officials will prioritize play and recreation equipment at either Community Park and Heroes Park that, if not unique, is demonstrably different than equipment at the other park.	
OBJECTIVE 2: AT HAMEL DOG PARK				
2a: Install most desired amenities for dog owners and canines.	HIGH	SHORT	Using results from the Community Survey in this Parks Master Plan, install at least 1 new amenity at the Dog Park by 2027.	\$\$
2b: Outside the fenced areas, determine which preferences from Chapter 3 are most compatible.	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Using results from the Parks Master Plan, prepare a concept plan by 2028 and develop the area outside the Dog Park fenced area by 2030.	\$\$ to \$\$\$
OBJECTIVE 3: AT ROUTE 66 AT VILLAGE HALL WAYSIDE PARK				
3a: Identify amenities that complement Hamel's connection to Route 66.	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Work with Route 66 advocacy organizations in Illinois to identify and install an appropriate amenity by 2028.	\$ to \$\$
OBJECTIVE 4: AT HEROES PARK				
4: Install the most desired park amenities that are multi-dimensional, imaginative, and engaging for diverse age groups consistent with Exhibits 5-7 and 5-8.	HIGH	SHORT	Install amenities that meet these criteria during Phase 1 of park development by end of 2026, Phase 2 by end of 2029, and Phase 3 by end of 2032.	\$\$ to \$\$\$\$

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EXHIBIT 8-1: Hamel Parks Master Plan Recommendations (Continued)

Objectives/ Action Items	Priority	Timeframe	Performance Measure	Cost Magnitude
GOAL 4: DEVELOP, MAINTAIN, AND PROVIDE INNOVATIVE RECREATION SPACES				
1: Install play equipment that is multi-dimensional, imaginative, and engaging for diverse age groups.	HIGH	SHORT	Using equipment manufacturer recommendations, individual play or recreation equipment for both the 2-5 AND the 6-12 age demographics will meet this objective (e.g., swings with both child safety seats and standard seats). If an individual apparatus cannot meet both age demographics, equipment that engages these demographics separately will satisfy this objective (e.g., tot lot equipment for under 5 and gaga ball pit for those over 5 years).	\$\$ to \$\$\$\$
2: Plan for play and exercise areas to be placed closer together to allow children and adults to enjoy separate, simultaneous recreation.	HIGH	ONGOING	Recreation amenities for children will be located within 100 feet (or less) of amenities for adults when land space is feasible.	Not Applicable
3: Plan for steady improvements relating to ADA-accessibility at all of Hamel's parks.	HIGH	ONGOING	Hamel will develop criteria list for selecting future park amenities by December 2025. Amenities that demonstrate higher levels of ADA inclusiveness will be a factor on this list.	\$\$ to \$\$\$

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EXHIBIT 8-1: Hamel Parks Master Plan Recommendations (Continued)

Objectives/ Action Items	Priority	Timeframe	Performance Measure	Cost Magnitude
GOAL 5: CONTINUE TO INVEST IN HAMEL'S PARKS				
1: Pursue park donations and matching funds from the private sector and community groups.	HIGH	SHORT	A document detailing how other communities request donations and matching funds accompanied by a "wish-list" of park amenities will be developed by the Village by the end of 2024.	Not Applicable
2: Continually identify grants and matching fund opportunities to enhance Hamel's parks.	HIGH	ONGOING	Each January, the Village Board Parks and Recreation subcommittee will identify potential grant and matching fund opportunities as offered by the State of Illinois, Madison County, and other public and semi-public agencies.	Not Applicable
3: Adopt a local "Plant-a-Tree" program.	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Village staff will inventory locations where new trees are needed by August 2025. Opportunities to support this program will be posted to the Village website by Fall 2025.	\$

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EXHIBIT 8-1: Hamel Parks Master Plan Recommendations (Continued)

Objectives/ Action Items	Priority	Timeframe	Performance Measure	Cost Magnitude
GOAL 6: IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN THE HAMEL COMMUNITY				
GENERAL OBJECTIVES				
1: Continuously obtain community feedback on new park equipment and redevelopment efforts in existing parks.	HIGH	ONGOING	Every January, the Village Board Parks and Recreation subcommittee will survey the community to achieve this objective.	Not Applicable
2: Determine if the Parkland Dedication provisions in the Zoning Regulations should be updated based on goals in the Parks Master Plan.	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	The Planning Commission will complete this review by June 2025 and report its recommendations to the Village Board.	Not Applicable
3: When appropriate, implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in Hamel's parks.	HIGH	ONGOING	A CPTED review will be conducted in conjunction with each of the three phases of the Heroes Park development through 2030 and any future development at any Hamel park thereafter.	Not Applicable
Objective 4: Continuously seek opportunities for residents to experience and interact with native flora and fauna in Hamel parks.	MEDIUM	ONGOING	Every January, the Village Board Parks and Recreation subcommittee will identify a project that enhances opportunities associated with this objective.	Not Applicable
5: Identify waterways and wildlife habitats within existing and future parks where conservation practices can be implemented.	LOW	MEDIUM	The Village will work with Heartland Conservancy or similar entity to complete an assessment by 2026. When complete, the Village Board Parks and Recreation subcommittee will identify where these practices can be implemented each January.	Not Applicable
6: Remain poised for opportunities to add additional parkland as the need arises, especially east of I-55.	LOW	LONG	Any residential development with more than 50 dwelling units east of I-55 will serve as cause for the Village Board Parks and Recreation subcommittee to identify parkland to serve these residential uses.	\$\$\$ to \$\$\$\$

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EXHIBIT 8-1: Hamel Parks Master Plan Recommendations (Continued)

Objectives/ Action Items	Priority	Timeframe	Performance Measure	Cost Magnitude
GOAL 6: IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN THE HAMEL COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)				
HAMEL DOG PARK				
7: Once Hamel Heroes Park development is well-underway, review community input ideas in Chapter 3 to identify viable and unique opportunities on the Village-owned vacant areas at the Dog Park.	LOW	MEDIUM	This objective will begin after 3-phase improvements to Hamel Heroes Park through 2030. In 2031, this objective will focus on the Hamel Dog park outside the fenced area.	\$ to \$\$
HEROES PARK				
8: Provide at least one park amenity that makes a visit to this park unique in the region, delighting residents and creating a memorable experience for visitors.	HIGH	SHORT	This objective will focus on the planned 3-phase improvements to Hamel Heroes Park through 2030. In 2032, this objective will focus on any other Hamel parks.	\$ to \$\$\$
ROUTE 66 BYWAY AT VILLAGE HALL				
9: Incorporate public art, eye-catching designs, and amenities that promote local character in new and redeveloped spaces.	MEDIUM	SHORT	Plan for “5% for Art” as part of budgeted improvements to all Hamel Parks beginning in FY 2026.	\$ to \$\$\$
COMMUNITY PARK				
10: Identify a location for a community gathering space to support outdoor events such as farmers markets, movies in the park, or Route 66 events.	HIGH	ONGOING	Allocate 5% of the annual Hamel park budget to provide seed money toward this objective beginning in FY 2026.	\$\$ to \$\$\$

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GOAL 1: INCREASE SAFE ACCESS FOR ALL TO HAMEL PARKS

Providing safe access to and between Hamel Parks was a priority in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan. While steady progress has been made, input at public meetings and from the community-wide electronic survey brought to light a new level of importance for this goal since local park visitors may be travelling between Community Park and Hamel Heroes Park. The objectives below will significantly contribute to achieving this goal.

Objective 1: Provide good access to and between Community Park and Heroes Park.

As both parks will be uniquely appealing to different ages, it is anticipated that trips between them will be commonplace. As the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan details, this objective will be significantly advanced when a crosswalk at IL 140 and a continuous sidewalk or shared use path is fully completed.

Access to its parks can be improved following a review of the condition and functionality of bike and ped assets and their connectivity to the rest of the transportation network. As the Bike and Pedestrian Plan identifies ways to reach Community Park, the Dog Park and Hamel Heroes Park, the Village can set about ensuring that street lighting, level sidewalks, and wayfinding signage is placed on the most common pedestrian paths to and from each park. Street lighting in particular is important in keeping residents safe as they visit each park during dawn or twilight hours and is a potential way to uniquely “brand” these parks to tie into the local community character.

Objective 2: Connect Community Park and Heroes Park to MCT trail.

Residents responding to a survey relating to the 2023 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan have already stated that the MCT trail is one of Hamel’s best recreational amenities. In addition, the Quercus Grove Trail is also a critical regional asset for health, recreation, economic opportunities, and transportation that connects Hamel to the rest of Madison County.

Hamel Dog Park is already a conveniently located park right off the Quercus Grove Trail. The objective now is to work to further extend the reach of its parks by intentionally linking the Quercus Trail to Community Park and Heroes Park.

For starters, at the southern terminus of the CMT Trail, wayfinding signs to and from the trailhead along Trotter/Park Ave across to the Hamel Community Park can establish that connection. Similarly, wayfinding signs should be an early priority to and from Hamel Heroes Park to the north terminus of Quercus Trail, along both Schroder Avenue and Cimarron Drive.

Objective 3: Identify partnerships with IDOT, local landowners, and businesses to pursue grants to implement park inter-connecting routes as per the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Map.

Hamel has already made excellent progress in preparing plans and working with IDOT for a pedestrian crosswalk at IL 140 to allow residents from the north side of this corridor to more safely access Community Park. A safe means of crossing IL 157 at the south terminus of Quercus Grove Trail in order to connect to the North Terminus at Schroeder and N. Old Route 66 will require more study, coordination, and intergovernmental cooperation.

Objective 4: Explore the “Slow Streets” concept.

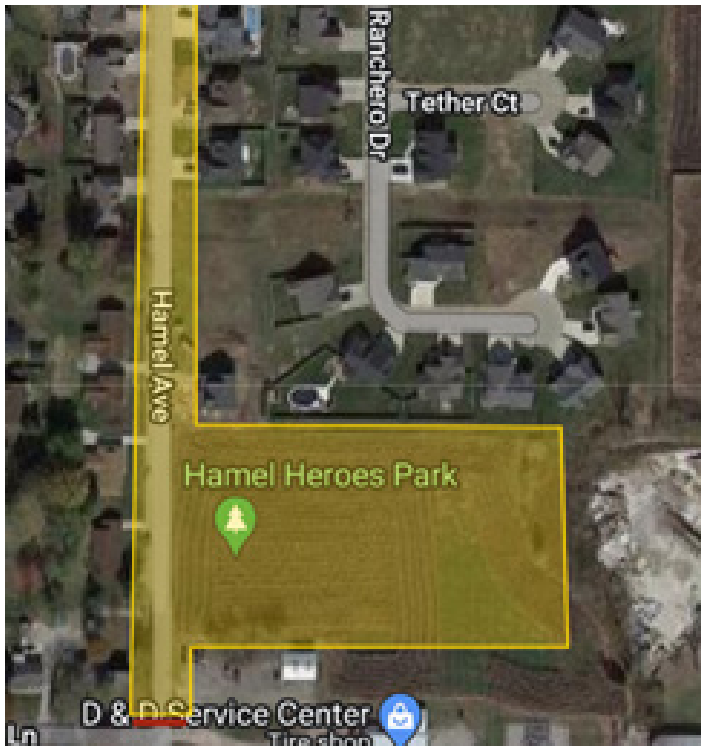
It is possible that the best way to connect the existing points of north and south Quercus Grove Trail is via a circuitous route using local streets 4th Avenue, Park Avenue, Meyer Avenue, and Schroeder Avenue as shown on the 2023 Bike and Pedestrian Plan Map. On residential streets near parks where sidewalks are scarce, this objective suggests that designating certain corridors as “Slow Streets” may be a viable option. This COVID pandemic inspired street concept has grown in popularity in cities where there is an intentional mix of diverse street users. Slow Streets require vehicle speeds to be significantly reduced. Slow Street zones are further designated through signage, design, and awareness that all users have a right to the street right-of-way space.

Slow Streets are bounded by visual barricades that can be removed or adjusted with ease when there is an emergency or after park hours. Alternatively, Slow Streets Gateways can be installed so that motor vehicles enter a new space cautiously and with awareness. Access to destinations along Slow Street zones is preserved, but through movements are discouraged. (<https://nacto.org/publication/streets-for-pandemic-response-recovery/emerging-street-strategies/slow-streets/>).

Exhibit 8-2 suggests where the Slow Street Zones might be (yellow) with their boundaries defined by Slow Streets Gateways (red).

A website dedicated to the Slow Streets concept can be found here: <https://www.sfmta.com/projects/slow-streets-program>

EXHIBIT 8-2: Concept Locations of Slow Streets In and Around Community Park and Hamel Heroes Park



Objective 5: Promote golf cart connections and parking at Community and Heroes Park.

Hamel is a designated golf cart community, an idea that first emerged out of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan and was subsequently implemented to the delight of many local residents. With this designation in place, the Village now has the opportunity to integrate golf carts into its approach to parks access and design features.

Many golf cart communities, like Peachtree City, GA, maintain a multi-use path master plan to accommodate this aspect of community life. These plans aim to ensure access to parks and commercial uses by golf carts and other non-car modes of transportation. Hamel should consider safe, easy golf cart access to the Community Park and Heroes Park as its transportation network develops (separate multi-use paths are not required as a golf cart community).

Additionally, installing golf cart parking areas within or near park entrances encourages residents to utilize their carts for park visits, reducing congestion and promoting eco-friendly transportation options. These assets can be paired with key amenities like charging stations to ensure that residents can easily complete their visit. Lastly, Hamel should review its policies on golf carts within park pathways and provide clear signage and educational materials about park access regulations and safety guidelines for golf cart users.



Peachtree City, Georgia

GOAL 2: ADDRESS CAPITAL NEEDS THROUGHOUT THE HAMEL PARKS SYSTEM

While day to day repairs and seasonal maintenance of park accessories and structures is necessary to keep Hamel parks in top condition, more advanced planning is associated with the replacement of park facilities and amenities. This is due to the time needed to apply for local, state, and federal grants that help to off-set improvement costs. In addition, as the safety of park users is always the top priority of the Village of Hamel, some improvements require adherence to specified user safety installation standards. For example, climbing walls, swing sets, and workout equipment are usually required to be firmly affixed to concrete slabs. These are then overlayed with rubberized or similarly cushioned surfaces to minimize the potential for injury.

Following are Park Improvement objectives that emerged from public input associated with the Parks Master Plan process as well as an evaluation of existing conditions by Hamel Public Works staff.

Objective 1: Replace aging play equipment at Community Park.

Comments from Public Meeting #2 and via the electronic survey noted that some play apparatus at Community Park is aging, pose potential safety concerns, and/or has simply outlived its function after years of routine use. For example, the existing free-standing slide and swing set pictured on the next page are considered “grandfathered” structures that cannot be moved elsewhere or altered to address potential safety concerns.

Similarly, judging from lack of evidence of use around them, a horseshoe pit near the playground may pose a fall hazard. Other examples include the “space shuttle” toy is showing signs of wear after years of launches by aspiring astronauts. Underneath this apparatus is evidence of wear to the rubberized play surface.

Objective 2: Replace aging rubberized play surfaces at Community Park.

In the near future, the rubberized play surface will need to be replaced due to weatherization and subsurface settling. This surface has been in place since 2008/2009.

Objective 3: Repair the North Pavilion east of the Community Center.

This pavilion is in need of on-demand lighting similar to the South Pavilion. In addition, while the overall structure is in good shape, the support poles are experiencing wood rot and need to be replaced.



Aging play equipment at Community Park

GOAL 3: PROVIDE NEW PARK AMENITIES

While they have been well-cared for in light of heavy use, existing park amenities at Community Park are showing signs that they need to be replaced in the years ahead, not just due to use, but in order to continue to provide quality recreational experiences for youngsters. Likewise, community input suggests the play apparatus lack age diversity and offer little for adults to enjoy while children are busy playing. The objectives below, itemized by park location, are intended to address this goal.

Objective 1: At Community Park

- a. Based on Parks Master Plan community input detailed in Exhibit 3-19 in Chapter 3, the Village should plan to gradually install for the most desirable recreation amenities. These include numerous suggestions that will diversify age and physical ability opportunities at this park.
- b. Plan for playground equipment updates that are appealing to a wider set of age demographics. Playgrounds at Community Park are somewhat one-dimensional and/or prescriptive. For future park planning, the Village should install equipment that more readily allows children to create their own stories. To achieve this objective, the installation of equipment that is multi-functional, inspires the imagination, and allows for play adventures to naturally unfold should be prioritized. This objective is best achieved through a balance between free-play areas (e.g. nature playscape areas) and more prescriptive play equipment and amenities (e.g. thematic playgrounds).
- c. Based on community input, continue to retain the open field area south of the playground area/South Pavilion.
- d. Remove at least one sand volleyball court and transition to a new one. Community input during the Parks Master Plan process revealed low levels of support for the two existing sand volley nets. Residents liked the idea that at least one of the two sand volleyball areas be removed, potentially transitioning to a use that could be benefited by the existing sand and the on-demand lighting system. A slacklining course or a zip-line apparatus could be an inexpensive option that meets this objective.
- e. Exhibits 5-7 and 5-8 in Chapter 5 include the full list of amenities explored for Hamel Heroes Park. As it is quite comprehensive and since Hamel Heroes Park may not be able to accommodate some of them, the list of amenities in these exhibits could alternatively find a home in Community Park. For example, a pickleball court had steady, middle-tier support in general at public meetings and the electronic survey with a contingency of residents expressing a strong desire for pickleball in Hamel. Rather than placing pickleball at Hamel Heroes Park and attempting to mitigate potential noise, an alternative may be to re-stripe the tennis court with pickleball lines and install an adjustable net at Community Park. As plans for Hamel Heroes Park come into focus, there may be other park amenities that could be readily moved to Community Park, to the satisfaction of all.

Objective 2: At the Dog Park

- a. Use community input from Exhibit 3-23 in Chapter 3 to plan for the most desired recreation amenities for dog owners and canines.
- b. Outside the canine fenced areas, see Exhibit 3-24 in Chapter 3 to determine which community suggested ideas are most compatible. Amenities may include those that support existing recreational uses (e.g. Bike repair facilities to support cyclists along MCT Quercus Grove Trail) or offer unique recreational uses that other Hamel parks do not or cannot offer (small nature preserve area).

Objective 3: At the emerging “Route 66 Byway” at Village Hall

- a. Work with Route 66 Association of Illinois, Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway and other partner agencies to identify wayside park amenities that add interest and historical context to Hamel’s connection to Route 66.

Objective 4: At Heroes Park

- a. Install the most desired park amenities that are multi-dimensional, imaginative, and engaging for diverse age groups consistent with Exhibits 5-7 and 5-8.
- b. Identify a location where Route 66 visitors can leave a memento of their visit such as a personalized sticker or short message to fellow travelers.

GOAL 4: DEVELOP, MAINTAIN, AND PROVIDE INNOVATIVE RECREATION SPACES

Based citizen feedback in the survey and public meetings conducted for this plan, Hamel Community Park and the Dog Park are highly valued recreation spaces in the Village. Going forward, however, respondents provided a list of desired amenities as well as constructive criticism for overall park improvements. The implementation of the objectives below will contribute to local parks that are innovative and deliver excellence that the community has come to enjoy.

Objective 1: Install play equipment that is multi-dimensional, imaginative, and engaging for diverse age groups.

This objective can be achieved in two ways:

1. Plan to retain (at Community Park) or create (at Heroes Park) a sufficient open field area (approximately 0.25 acre minimum) that can accommodate a game of catch, a weekly Yoga in the Park session, a pick-up game of soccer, and then catching fireflies at dusk. This kind of space flexibility is not as readily achieved on sports fields/court such as basketball courts or baseball fields when lines are painted or drawn.
2. For playground areas, provide equipment that allows for unstructured play like “just running around” and lets different ages find their own “level” of activity which suits them best. Equipment that takes up so much space that there is insufficient room for children to create and manipulate their own environment should be avoided.

While there seems to be as many play equipment options as there are ways to imagine them, the following are some best practices to utilize:

- Equitable Use
- Flexibility in Use
- Simple and Intuitive Use
- Perceptible Information
- Tolerance for Error
- Low Physical Effort
- Size and Space for Use

If these practices are implemented, research suggests that the play equipment tends to have lower incidences of repairs, stand the test of time, and create a play environment that children look forward to visiting each time they get a chance.



Photo of a playground with inclusive design features from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) website

Objective 2: Plan for play and exercise areas to be placed closer together to allow children and adults to enjoy separate, simultaneous recreation.

Feedback from the community about Community Park suggests that, once a child moves beyond the intended age bracket for existing play equipment, park visits fall significantly for both children and adults. Some even reported that they looked forward to becoming grandparents so that they could have a reason to return to the facilities there.

To achieve this objective, equipment that allows for unstructured play as discussed in Objective 1B above should be coupled with placing equipment for children over the age of 10 and adults close to amenities intended for children under 9 (or 5) years of age. For example, at Hamel Heroes Park, the placement of adult exercise equipment such as pull-up bars or sit-up benches near playground equipment will allow both adults and children to partake in recreation, while adults can remain nearby if needed.

Similarly, a Wiffleball field at either Community Park or Hamel Heroes Park that preserves parental sight lines on nearby play equipment ensures that children who might not enjoy or are too young for Wiffleball to still have fun at the nature playscape area. This type of park planning forethought allows every park visitor at least a short time to enjoy their preferred type of recreation.

Objective 3: Plan for steady improvements relating to ADA-accessibility at all of Hamel's parks.

Public input from the community supports continued maintenance, repair, and replacement of existing ADA-inclusive equipment at current service levels. Most park equipment vendors offer ADA-compliant equipment, so opportunities to provide upgraded play apparatus would generally occur as old equipment is swapped out.

GOAL 5: CONTINUE TO INVEST IN HAMEL'S PARKS

With the pending emergence of Hamel Heroes Park, community feedback in Chapters 3 and 5, and the information in this chapter suggesting that it is time to plan for improvements, the Village will face challenges in the years ahead to make sure that today's positive park ratings remain that way for years to come. This goal is not achieved in a single budget year or through one grant but requires steady long-term dedication from Hamel staff and volunteers. The objectives below are provided as ways this goal can be implemented.

Objective 1: Pursue park donations and matching funds from the private sector and community groups.

Businesses and community organizations of all sizes often have budgets that have been set aside to assist partner communities. When the need or opportunity arises, communities should plan to reach out to these entities to request the donation of goods, services, or monetary funds.

This is particularly the case for park-related donations where matching funds can be the difference between "standard" equipment and upgraded elements, such as shade structures over playgrounds, thematic playgrounds and tot lots, and park improvements related to land preservation and the environment. It is recommended that the Village Board routinely assess what donations or matching funds for improvements are needed so that economic development interests are consistently applied.

Objective 2: Continually identify grants and matching fund opportunities to enhance Hamel’s parks.

Illinois and Madison County have several parks or greenspace-oriented grant and matching fund opportunities that Hamel is recommended to routinely pursue. See Chapter 9 for additional details.

Objective 3: Adopt a local “Plant-a-Tree” program.

Trees in Community Park are aging, experiencing disease, and prone to the loss of large branches. These trees need to be replaced when the time is appropriate. However, even before their eventual removal, there may be locations where new trees can be planted and established before older trees come out.

In addition, it is recommended that, in selecting replacement trees, a diversity of species be considered. This helps to stave off diseases and pests such as the Emerald Ash Borer that have significantly impacted the Ash tree populations in Illinois in recent years. While Section 40-2-3 of the Hamel Zoning Code includes a list of Approved Street Trees that might be appropriate in Hamel parks, some trees such as the Callery Pear have been de-listed by arborists and state agencies due to their “invasive” species status. A recommended resource to determine the best trees for Hamel parks is available via the University of Illinois extension tree select inventory found here: <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/treeselect/index.cfm>



Logo from Edwardsville, IL tree planting program

A Plant-a-Tree program can be an effective way to have trees and the cost to plant to them donated to the community. Frequently, a small plaque to memorialize the tree is also included.

GOAL 6: IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN THE HAMEL COMMUNITY

This goal focuses on the principal of supporting and improving the health and wellness of the Hamel community. Objectives below are both general and park specific to support this goal.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Continuously obtain community feedback on new park equipment and redevelopment efforts in existing parks.

The primary purpose of this Hamel Parks Master Plan is helping the community to identify what they want from the Village’s parks in the future while building added buy-in in support of these efforts. This effort does not stop with the adoption of the Parks Master Plan. Plans will need to adjust as a result of changing costs, engineering, safety requirements and overall park space and apparatus size, to name a few.

Objective 2: Determine if the Parkland Dedication provisions in the Zoning Regulations should be updated based on goals in the Parks Master Plan.

Objective 3: When appropriate, implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in Hamel's parks.

Objective 4: Continuously seek opportunities for residents to experience and interact with native flora and fauna in Hamel parks.

Objective 5: Identify waterways and wildlife habitats within existing and future parks where conservation practices can be implemented.

Objective 6: Remain poised for opportunities to add additional parkland as the need arises, especially east of I-55.

HAMEL DOG PARK

Objective 7: Once Heroes Park development is well-underway, review community input ideas in Chapter 3 to identify viable and unique opportunities on the Village-owned vacant areas at the Dog Park.

HEROES PARK

Objective 8: Provide at least one park amenity that makes a visit to this park unique in the region, delighting residents and creating a memorable experience for visitors.

ROUTE 66 BYWAY AT VILLAGE PARK

Objective 9: Incorporate public art, eye-catching designs, and amenities that promote local character in new and redeveloped spaces.

COMMUNITY PARK

Objective 10: Identify a location for a community gathering space to support outdoor events such as farmers markets, movies in the park, or Route 66 events.

CHAPTER 9: FUNDING SOURCES

INTRODUCTION

This section explores potential funding opportunities through public and private partners and opportunities that the Village could explore in engaging Hamel residents with volunteer opportunities within its parks. Residents, local government officials, the school district, law enforcement, local businesses, developers, and other interested parties are encouraged to work together to implement the Village's vision for the long-term success of its parks system.

There are four broad funding sources available to help fund the projects listed in this Plan, as described below.

General Municipal Funding – It is assumed that some general municipal funds will be required to assist with the completion of projects or as a matching source for state or federal grants.

Private Donations – Some of the projects could be partially or fully funded through private donations or public fundraising.

County, Regional, State, and Federal Grants – There are many different state or federal grants that may be able to offset the costs of some of the identified projects. Only those programs most likely to award funding to the Village are listed.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) – Tax increment financing (TIF) is a program where the additional taxes generated from development in a TIF district would go towards specified public improvements in a community. This program helps waylay the impacts of new development on a community while improving the attractiveness of the Village. As the Village of Hamel does not have a local property tax however, TIF district funding is not an option at this time.

STATE AND COUNTY FUNDING SOURCES

OSLAD AND LWCF GRANTS

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is an important potential funding resource for a wide variety of local park improvement initiatives.

The Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Program is a state-financed grant program that provides funding assistance to local government agencies for acquisition and/or development of land for public parks and open space.

The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program (known as both LWCF and LAWCON) is a program with similar objectives. Both are managed in IDNR with concurrent application due dates, equal grant maximums, and similar general rules.

Qualifying projects vary from small neighborhood parks or tot lots to large community parks and nature areas. The state program is financed by a percentage of the state's Real Estate Transfer Tax. The federal program is financed nationally by revenue from offshore oil and gas leases.

Under both programs, funding assistance for Hamel up to 50% of approved project costs can be obtained. Grant awards up to \$1,725,000.00 are available for acquisition projects, while development/renovation projects are limited to a \$600,000 grant maximum.

Both OSLAD/LWCF grants are available to units of local government that are authorized by Illinois law to expend public funds for the acquisition and development of land for public outdoor park, recreation, or conservation purposes. There are now five grantee pre-award requirements statewide per Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) as outlined in State Statute 30 ILCS 708/1.

Eligible Projects include land acquisition for new park sites or park expansion, nature study, and natural resource preservation. (LWCF and OSLAD). In addition, OSLAD grants can assist with development or renovation of picnic and playground facilities, outdoor nature interpretive facilities, sports courts and play fields, swimming pools, campgrounds, winter sports facilities, park roads, paths, parking, utilities and restrooms, and architectural/engineering (A/E) services necessary for proper design and construction of approved project components.

PARC GRANTS

The Park and Recreational Facility Construction Act (PARC) provides grants to eligible local governments for park and recreation unit construction projects and land acquisition. These grants are available to units of local government that are authorized by Illinois law to expend public funds for the acquisition and development of land for public indoor/outdoor park, recreation, or conservation purposes are eligible to apply for funding assistance. Similar to OSLAD grants, there are five grantee pre-award requirements as outlined in State Statute 30 ILCS 708/1.

Eligible PARC grant projects must be used for “bondable” or “brick and mortar” projects including demolition in preparation for recreational development, site preparation and improvements for indoor/outdoor recreation purposes, utility work for indoor/outdoor recreation purposes, reconstruction or improvement of existing buildings or facilities for indoor/outdoor recreation purposes, expansion of buildings/facilities for indoor/outdoor recreation purposes, and new construction of buildings/structures.

Land acquisition projects for public park recreation and conservation purposes include acquisition of land for the following to construct new public indoor/outdoor recreation buildings and facilities, to expand existing recreation buildings/facilities, general park purposes such as community parks and playfields, open space/conservation to protect floodplains, natural areas, wildlife habitat, and unique geologic and biologic features, and additions to these areas.

IDNR notes that the priority of the PARC program is the renovation or construction of indoor recreation facilities since they are not eligible under other IDNR grant programs. PARC Grant covers 75% of capital project cost for most applicants.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL FUNDING SOURCES

METRO EAST PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT (MEPRD) PARK AND TRAIL GRANT PROGRAM

Municipalities having statutory authority to acquire and develop lands for public parks, public trails, and/or public recreation purposes within Madison and/or St. Clair Counties, IL may apply for MEPRD grant funding. Such agencies include:

Eligible types of acquisition, development, or improvement projects must be open to the public and can include, but are not limited to:

- Parks (active/passive)
- Public Greenways, Greenspace, Wildlife Areas, Nature Preserves, and Wetlands (active/passive)
- Recreation Centers
- Shared-use Paths & Bike Lanes meeting AASHTO standards (shared-use paths must be ≥ 10' in width)
- Trail Corridors (e.g., abandoned railways or utility corridors)
- Trails/Paths (for walking, jogging, biking, equestrian, mountain biking, BMX, and paddling)
- Trailheads (for eligible trail types)

MADISON COUNTY PARK ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (PEP)

The Madison County Park and Recreation Program is designed to assist municipalities and park and recreation districts within Madison County to develop, enhance or expand park operations and facilities. The grant program, administered by Madison County Community Development is designed to supplement community funding for park operations.

The maximum grant amount is determined by the population of the respective municipality. The maximum grant amount is five dollars/per person based upon 2020 census data. However, for smaller communities like Hamel, the minimum grant is \$15,000 since the five dollar per person total is less than \$15,000.

Eligible equipment expenditures include but are not limited to the following:

- Pool Equipment (No chemicals)
- Playground equipment
- Fencing
- Recreation equipment
- Land acquisition
- Esthetic improvements
- Facility improvements
- Multiple projects

GRANTS RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION AND PARK ACCESS

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM FUNDING (TAP)

Administered through the East/West Gateway Council of Governments (EWGCOG), this is a federal funding source included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). It is intended to promote projects that enhance active transportation connections.

CONGESTION MITIGATION AIR QUALITY (CMAQ)

Also administered through EWGCOG, this is a federal funding source included in the IIJA for non-attainment air quality zones. Projects must demonstrate a meaningful impact to improving air quality. For Hamel, the selected project should focus on mode shift (from automobiles to non-motorized transportation) for people accessing the park.

SAFE STREETS AND ROADS FOR ALL (SS4A)

Administered through USDOT, projects are required to have a safety action plan approved to be eligible for demonstration grant or implementation funding. When EWGCOG completes the regional safety action plan in June 2024, all communities in the planning region (including Hamel) are eligible. Potential demonstration grant projects include the design and installation of enhanced connectivity projects for people on foot or bike, with a clear plan to document impacts to safety of park access before and after project completion.

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (IDOT) PLANNING AND RESEARCH GRANTS

Administered through IDOT, eligible activities include projects that advance the goals and priorities of the state's long range transportation plan. A bike network plan could be an ideal project to connect parks with other Hamel amenities.

IDOT TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM FUNDING (ITEP)

Administered through IDOT, the next funding cycle opens in August 2024. Eligible projects related to this goal include bicycle and pedestrian projects and enhanced streetscape projects.

CHAPTER 10: EXCEPTIONS TO THE PARKS MASTER PLAN

It is important to note that, while it does not have the force of law, the Hamel Parks Master Plan is intended to serve as a guide to current and future park planning initiatives in the Village. These initiatives may be related to the acquisition of new parkland, the development of existing or future park open space, the construction or removal of recreational amenities, and methods recommended in this plan to provide safe access to Hamel parks and recreation facilities from residential and commercial areas, schools, and facilities such as the MCT Trail system.

While anticipated to be used infrequently and the review process may vary depending on the situation, there may be cases where an exception to the Parks Master Plan must be considered. In these instances, the Village will follow the steps outlined below to better assess whether a future project or program contradicts the Hamel Parks Master Plan.

The project or program may be inside the park or may be proposed on public or privately owned property either adjacent to or near the park boundaries. It's important to note that these steps are designed to ensure that any exemptions are carefully considered and align with the broader goals of the Park Master Plan and the community it serves.

1. **Review of any adopted plans by the Village of Hamel:** The first step is to review this Parks Master Plan to understand the intent and nature of the proposed project and the conflicts it may present. The adopted Hamel Comprehensive Plan will also be reviewed as well as any other pertinent plans, such as the Hamel Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, in the interest of further informing and providing guidance to local officials.
2. **Community Input:** All of Hamel's adopted plans are based on extensive community outreach and input. While circumstances may change over time, adopted plans are intended to reflect the community's preferences and general expectations about how a parcel, roadway corridor, or larger area is intended to develop. Should that vision change, it is important to engage with the community to gather feedback on the proposed exemption. This step may involve public meetings or workshops to ensure transparency and public participation.
3. **Environmental and Technical Assessment:** As circumstances may require, the Village reserves the option to conduct an environmental impact assessment or technical review to understand the implications of the requested exemption and how it may impact the park and its ecosystem. By way of example, changes in how stormwater is managed both up and downstream is an instance of how changes outside park boundaries may necessitate an environmental and technical assessment.
4. **Approval from Village Board:** If review of the information from the steps above fails to provide satisfactory guidance OR there are sound reasons to consider a change to the adopted Parks Master Plan, the next step would be to seek approval from the Village Board for the proposed change. Depending on circumstances and relevant language in the Hamel Code of Ordinances, the Planning Commission may need to provide a recommendation to the Village Board as part of this step. While the Parks Master Plan is a guide to development, local officials can reduce exposure to legal implications when making significant changes to or deviating from the plan recommendations. This step allows for a full assessment of the case for the exemption while giving decision makers the opportunity to state findings and reasons to approve the exception based in whole or in part on the previous steps above.
5. **Adoption of Amendments:** If an exemption is approved by the Village Board, the master plan may need to be amended to accommodate the exemption. This formal amendment process can occur immediately or can take place in conjunction with periodic Park Master Plan updates, which commonly happen at set intervals (e.g. every 3 to 5 years) throughout the Plan's relevant timeframe (usually 10-15 years).
6. **Permitting and Implementation:** Once all approvals are in place, the project can move forward with obtaining any necessary permits and implementation steps.

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC INPUT FLIERS AND OUTREACH

EXHIBIT A-1: Public Meeting #1 Flyer

WE NEED YOUR INPUT!
Help us shape the future of our parks & recreation.

VILLAGE OF HAMEL ILLINOIS

Parks & Recreation MASTER PLAN 2024

Imagine Our Parks

THURSDAY 16TH NOVEMBER
Hamel Community Center
6:00-9:00pm

BRING THE FAMILY!

- Future Park Amenity Ideas
- Parkland Sketch Planning
- Park Naming
- And More!

Join us for a **COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE**

The Village of Hamel, community leaders, and residents are **imagining** what our parks could be through a **Parks & Recreation Master Plan**. Join us to learn about the plan, participate in the park planning process, and share **your vision** for the future of parks and recreation in Hamel. Your input will help envision future sports facilities, art, playgrounds, and other parks amenities. We look forward to your input!

Light refreshments will be served.
Parents are encouraged to bring children!

Sent to all mailboxes in Hamel (November 2023)

EXHIBIT A-2: Public Meeting #2 Flyer

VILLAGE OF HAMEL ILLINOIS

2024 PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Imagine our Parks

JOIN US FOR A PARKS MASTER PLAN Open House!

Village of Hamel residents are **IMAGINING** what Hamel parks could be through a Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

Now your help is needed to decide which amenities are **BEST!**

- Outdoor exercise equipment, a ninja course, a wiffleball field, or a melody garden at Hamel Heroes Park?
- Pickleball or a small performance stage at Community Park?
- Canine obstacles or a shade area at the Dog Park?

Your opinions will lead to a Master Plan for **ALL** Hamel parks later in 2024!

Bring the family to help plan the future of parks and recreation in Hamel!

We need your input!
Help us shape the future of Hamel parks and recreation!

Prepare for meeting

Drop by the Open House anytime between 6 pm - 9 pm THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22
Hamel Community Center 10 Park Avenue Hamel, IL

- Select future park amenities
- See the wish list from students at Hamel Elementary!
- Park layout planning
- And more!

Take the Survey

Light refreshments will be served

Placed in all mailboxes in Hamel (February 2024)

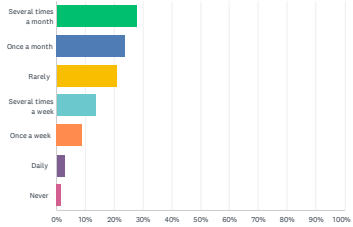
The QR code on the flyer offered a cell phone link directly to a 16-question online community survey hosted at SurveyMonkey.com (see Appendix B).

APPENDIX B: SURVEY MONKEY RESULTS

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

Q1 How often do you visit Hamel Community Park?

Answered: 168 Skipped: 2



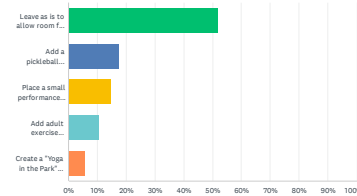
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Several times a month	27.98% 47
Once a month	23.81% 40
Rarely	20.83% 35
Several times a week	13.69% 23
Once a week	8.93% 15
Daily	2.98% 5
Never	1.79% 3
TOTAL	168

1 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

Q2 In Hamel Community Park, there is some open space south of the play equipment area/sand volleyball court that could allow for additional amenities. How should this space be utilized?

Answered: 143 Skipped: 27



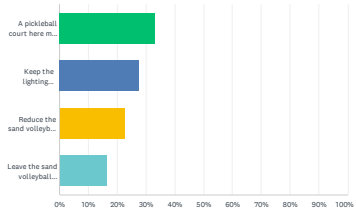
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Leave as is to allow room for playing catch, throwing a Frisbee, or similar open space for recreational sports/activities.	51.75% 74
Add a pickleball court here.	17.48% 25
Place a small performance amphitheater/stage here to allow for plays or music events with adjacent viewing area.	14.69% 21
Add adult exercise equipment area here such as sit up benches, push up station, or pull up bars.	10.49% 15
Create a "Yoga in the Park" area here.	5.59% 8
TOTAL	143

2 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

Q3 Hamel Community Park features a lighted sand volleyball court. While a unique park amenity, some have observed that it is infrequently used. What is your preference for the sand volleyball court?

Answered: 159 Skipped: 11



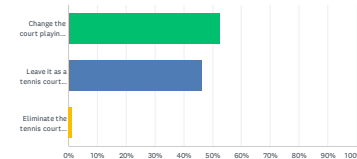
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
A pickleball court here may result in more frequent use of this space.	33.33% 53
Keep the lighting system, remove the sand, and convert to a Wiffleball field	27.67% 44
Reduce the sand volleyball to just one net/court and use the remaining half for another activity such as slacklining.	22.64% 36
Leave the sand volleyball court as is.	16.35% 26
TOTAL	159

3 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

Q4 The existing tennis court in Hamel Community Park is observed to be used regularly, has on-demand court lighting, and was re-surfaced/improved in 2017. The recent emergence of "pickleball" has led to suggestions that the playing surface of the tennis court be replaced to accommodate this sport. What are your views on the tennis court in Hamel Community Park?

Answered: 164 Skipped: 6



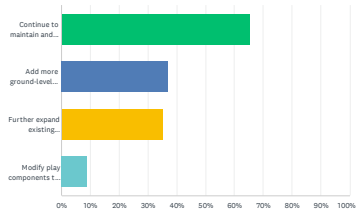
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Change the court playing surface and add net height adjusters to allow for tennis OR pickleball.	52.44% 86
Leave it as a tennis court only and look for another Hamel location for a pickleball court.	46.34% 76
Eliminate the tennis court and convert to two (or more) pickleball court areas.	1.22% 2
TOTAL	164

4 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

Q5 Hamel Community Park features recreational areas and equipment for all ages and abilities, including ADA-compliant play surfaces and a wheelchair platform swing. What other improvements would contribute to an inclusive and accessible play environment at this park? (Check all that apply).

Answered: 156 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Continue to maintain and repair current play equipment and surfaces.	65.38% 102
Add more ground-level play components.	37.18% 58
Further expand existing rubberized "soft landing" playground surfaces.	35.26% 56
Modify play components that limit or restrict play inclusivity (e.g. climbing ladders or steps).	8.97% 14
Total Responders: 156	

5 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

Q6 What additional features or activities would make Hamel Community Park more inclusive and accessible for all community members?

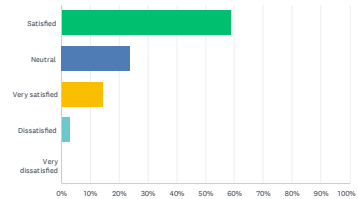
Answered: 51 Skipped: 119

6 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

Q7 What is your satisfaction level with Hamel Community Park facilities and maintenance of the park grounds/equipment?

Answered: 168 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Satisfied	58.93% 99
Neutral	23.81% 40
Very satisfied	14.29% 24
Dissatisfied	2.98% 5
Very dissatisfied	0.00% 0
TOTAL	168

7 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

Q8 What is your favorite aspect of Hamel Community Park?

Answered: 92 Skipped: 78

8 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

Q9 What is your least favorite aspect of Hamel Community Park?

Answered: 83 Skipped: 87

9 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

Q10 What other improvements would you like to see for Hamel Community Park's recreational equipment and amenities?

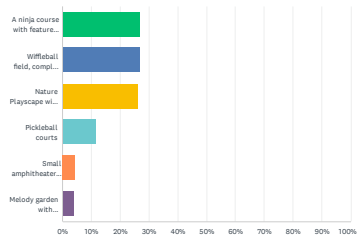
Answered: 53 Skipped: 117

10 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

Q11 Hamel Heroes Park will be a new 2.25 acre park just north of Klueter Drive on the east side of Hamel Avenue. A priority for this park is to feature amenities not found in Hamel Community Park. Which of these are best for Hamel Heroes Park?

Answered: 156 Skipped: 14



11 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

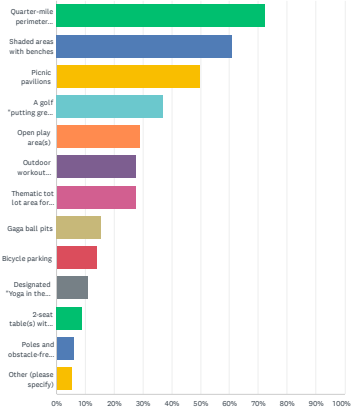
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
A ninja course with features similar to this one	26.92% 42
Wiffball field, complete with a backstop and "homerun fence."	26.92% 42
Nature Playscape with natural areas to encourage visitors to explore, climb, discover and learn.	26.28% 41
Pickleball courts	11.54% 18
Small amphitheater and informal seating for outdoor performances or acoustic music events.	4.49% 7
Melody garden with freestanding outdoor musical instruments	3.85% 6
TOTAL	156

12 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

Q12 Functional and active amenities in Hamel Heroes Park will be important. From the choices below, which amenities would you most like to see in this park? To help us to better understand community priorities, please limit your picks to four (4) or less.

Answered: 167 Skipped: 3



13 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

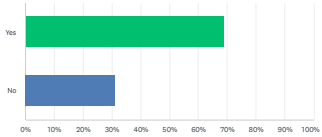
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Quarter-mile perimeter walking/jogging path	72.46% 121
Shaded areas with benches	63.00% 102
Picnic pavilions	49.70% 83
A golf "putting green" area with artificial grass	37.13% 62
Open play area(s)	28.74% 48
Outdoor workout equipment (pull-ups, sit ups, etc.)	27.54% 46
Thematic tot lot area for ages 6 and under	27.54% 46
Gaga ball pits	15.57% 26
Bicycle parking	13.77% 23
Designated "Yoga in the Park" area	10.78% 18
2-seat table(s) with chess board inlaid into tabletop	8.98% 15
Poles and obstacle-free area for slacklining	5.99% 10
Other (please specify)	5.39% 9
Total Responders: 167	

14 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

Q13 Are you a dog owner? If "no," feel free to scroll down to the end of this survey.

Answered: 161 Skipped: 9



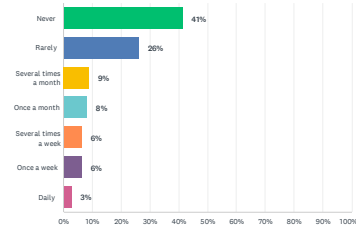
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	68.94% 111
No	31.06% 50
TOTAL	161

15 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

Q14 As a dog owner, how often do you visit Hamel Dog Park with your pet?

Answered: 111 Skipped: 59



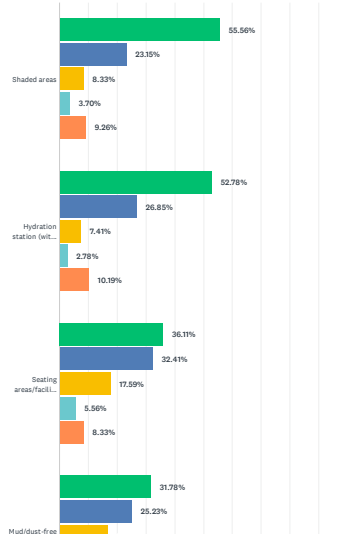
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Never	41% 46
Rarely	26% 29
Several times a month	9% 10
Once a month	8% 9
Several times a week	6% 7
Once a week	6% 7
Daily	3% 3
TOTAL	111

16 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

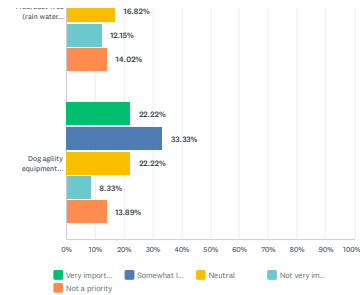
Q15 As a newer park, additional amenities for the Dog Park are still being considered. As a dog owner, please rank those that are most important for you and your pet.

Answered: 110 Skipped: 60



17 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey



	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWAT IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT A PRIORITY	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Shaded areas	55.56% 60	23.15% 25	8.33% 9	3.70% 4	9.26% 10	108	4.12
Hydration station (with separate water service for pets and humans in same use)	52.78% 57	26.85% 29	7.41% 8	2.78% 3	10.19% 11	108	4.09
Seating areas/facilities	36.11% 39	32.41% 35	17.59% 19	5.56% 6	8.33% 9	108	3.82
Mud/dust-free (rain water pervious) play surface area(s)	31.78% 34	25.23% 27	16.82% 18	12.15% 13	14.02% 15	107	3.49
Dog agility equipment (ramps, hoops, tunnels, etc.)	22.22% 24	33.33% 36	22.22% 24	8.33% 9	13.89% 15	108	3.42

18 / 19

Hamel Park Master Plan and Recreational Amenities Survey

Q16 The remainder of the Village-owned property where the Dog Park is located contains approximately 1.25 acres of useable vacant land outside the fenced dog run area. What are your ideas (including those not related to pets) on how to utilize this area?

Answered: 55 Skipped: 115

19 / 19

APPENDIX C: KEY MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

EXHIBIT C-1: Non-Motorized Access Throughout Hamel

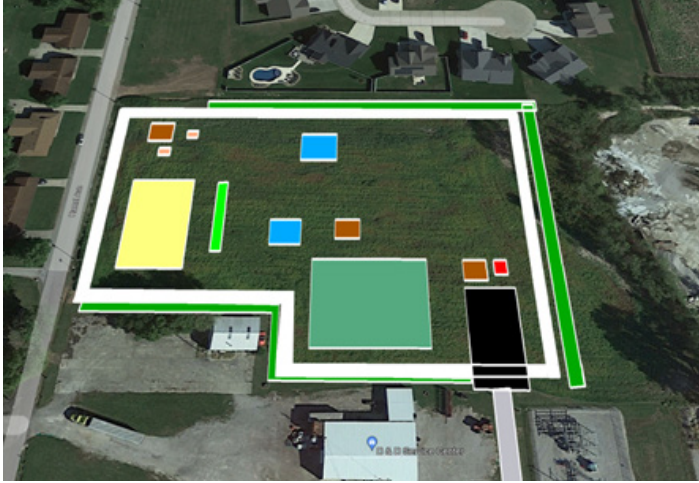


EXHIBIT C-2: IL 140/Park Avenue Transportation Improvement Project Overview



APPENDIX D: HEROES PARK CONCEPT PLANS

EXHIBIT D-1: Park Layout Ideas by Hamel Planning Commission (January 2023)



General Park Design Guidelines

1. Visitors will access the park via Hamel Avenue. All other adjacent land is privately owned.
2. Please plan for an automobile parking area accessed from Hamel Avenue and within the park boundaries.
3. Please think about a place for flag poles, park signs, memorial signs or a monument sign with flag poles.
4. The perimeter distance around the park is approximately 1/3rd mile.
5. The park should include either a nature interpretive area or historical interpretive area.
6. The map scale is one inch = 20 feet

Potential Park Names for the property north of IL 140

(Circle your 2 favorite names and place in the tally box)

1. Hamel Avenue Park
2. Hamel Heros Park
3. Hamel Memorial Park
4. Hamel Northside Park
5. Hamel Veterans Park
6. Saddlewood Neighborhood Park
7. YOUR NAME IDEA HERE _____

Potential Park Names for the property north of IL 140

(Circle your 2 favorite names and place in the tally box)

1. Hamel Avenue Park
2. Hamel Heros Park
3. Hamel Memorial Park
4. Hamel Northside Park
5. Hamel Veterans Park
6. Saddlewood Neighborhood Park
7. YOUR NAME IDEA HERE _____



Memo

To: Mayor Justin Gerstner
Hamel Planning Commission
From: Scott Hanson, AICP – CMT Engineers and Consultants
Re: Public Meeting #1 Summary
Date: December 19, 2023

The following is a summary of our first Parks Master Plan public input meeting held on November 16, 2023 from 5:30pm to 9pm and November 17 from 11am – 1:30pm.

Attendance

Overall attendance for the Thursday, November 16, 2023 event (5:30pm to 9pm) per the sign-in sheet was 16 adults and approximately 5 children under 12 years of age. We had approximately 6 additional adult attendees on Friday, November 17 between 11am and 1:30pm. While flyer announcements were mailed to each Hamel home and there was a social media push on the Hamel Facebook page, attendance was perhaps lighter than expected. However, those that did attend provided insightful and helpful feedback and some very creative parks “sketch plans” were completed. Overall, it appears that we are on the right track in terms of park amenities/ideas as presented on the display boards.

Popular Amenities

The provision of a pickleball court was a popular comment on several of the input boards. One attendee specifically identified adding pickle ball lines to the existing tennis court at Community Park. Perimeter walking paths were also very popular, with outdoor gym equipment (whether adjacent to the walking path or located in a specific place) also being well received.

At the Dog Park, there was strong desire for an “Obstacle Course” (5 comments) followed by the provision of a water station (4 comments), shade (2 comments), (nighttime) lighting, and a request for “play equipment.” For play equipment, it was uncertain whether this was different than the obstacle course or if the respondent had specific play equipment (other than an obstacle course) in mind.

Separately, another participant placed a comment on the Dog Park display board that said they would like to see “Limestone or mulch path around exterior perimeter” of the dog park, possibly for “mushing or sled pulling.” Whether for this purpose or not, an exterior walking path at this location was a unique idea. Visitors could complete their walk regimen while their pets played inside the fenced area.

For the proposed new park north of IL 140, the Table below summarizes the results. Note that some of these ideas could be placed at either Community Park OR the proposed new park. Those that could be readily transferable between either location if space was identified are marked with an asterisk (*).

1 Comment	2 Comments	3 Comments	4 or More Comments - Total in ()
Yoga in the Park*	Ninja course	Gazebo/Pavilion	Perimeter walking path (5)
Water bottle filling station*	Wiffleball	Gaga ball*	(Simple) Circuit Stations/ Outdoor Gym/Outdoor Gym Along Walking Paths/Work- out Equipment (4)
Open field play areas*	Swings	Shaded areas*	Pickleball (4)
Tether ball*	Benches/Seating*		
Performance Amphitheater*			
Thematic play areas			
Melody Garden			
Dog waste disposal kiosk*			

One participant said they preferred a “Limestone/mulch walking path.” This idea would need further evaluation. While less expensive to install, unimproved paths can be a challenge to maintain as grass/weeds grow into the mulched area(s). Also, a path paved with this material may not meet ADA requirements.

One comment was received on the use of “Turf, shredded tire, tar or spongy surfacing.” The individual noted a concern about “heat danger, hormone disruption, heavy metal poisoning” from these materials and therefore would rather see “Engineered wood fibers.” Wood fibers, however, may have similar maintenance issues and ADA compliance challenges like a limestone or mulch walking path.

Public Art and Park “Themes” – This “theme” would most likely be applied to the new park on Hamel Avenue as Community Park already has existing play equipment.

First Responders theme – 2 comments

Hero Theme (Police/Fire/EMT/Medical – 2 comments

Route 66 theme – 1 comment

Nature Inspired – 1 comment

Farming Inspired – 1 comment

Park names ballot results:

Hamel Heroes Park – 10 votes

Hamel Memorial Park – 6 votes

Hamel Veterans Park – 6 votes

Hamel Avenue Park – 5 votes

Hamel Northside Park – 5 votes

Saddlewood Neighborhood Park – 4 votes

Others (no repeats) – 6 total votes

Next Steps

CMT would like to explore additional ways to engage residents to obtain input for all parks in Hamel. However, it would be preferable to complete one of these options before the second public meeting planned for late February or early March so that Public Meeting #2 participants had the full array of initial public input options. Some ideas to consider:

1. Online survey, similar to what we did for the Hamel Comp Plan. Place a link to the survey on the Hamel Facebook page and Village home page.
2. We could plan a “walking tour” of Hamel’s three park locations (Dog park, Community Park, proposed new park) with residents. Promoted as a “community event”, residents could sign up in advance and we put together groups of 5-10 Hamel residents tasked with a “deep dive” into each park location. During this process, the group will brainstorm on new amenities, vetting what works, and what could be improved at each park location.
3. Likely being Hamel park’s biggest fans AND as park users who literally grew up using the play equipment, we could specifically engage with students at Hamel Elementary (if there was a willing teacher) for a “field trip.” We would visit Community Park and then return to Hamel Elementary and do the park sketch plan exercise like we did on November 16th. (We probably would NOT do the Dog Park in association with this exercise).
4. We could set up a “QR code” temporary signs at Community Park and at the Dog Park. Each QR code would be unique to that park site so that we could poll visitors in a more specific manner. Through this process, we could find out more specifically what dog park visitors desire without asking them questions about Community Park. Meanwhile, the QR code sign at Community Park would also have unique questions specific to visitors to that park location.
5. “Pop-up” park event. This may be a tough one to achieve during the impending winter months. However, if there was a fairly nice day, we could set up a table, balloons, and display boards from the November 16th meeting to engage with park visitors and directly obtain their input while they are using the park facility. We’ll want to pick a day where visitors are likely to be at the highest levels (an unusually warm, sunny day in FEB, for example). We’d have to watch the weather forecast closely the days leading up to this event and be ready to spring into action when the temperatures rise into the 50’s (or more).

EXHIBIT D-2: Hamel Heroes Park Amenities Boards from Public Meeting #2



EXHIBIT D-2: Hamel Heroes Park Amenities Boards from Public Meeting #2 (Continued)

