

CHAPTER 7 – PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Public facilities and services are those places and programs that educate us, provide our utilities, maintain places for us to play, protect us, and help us when we are in need. We use the term “public” rather loosely for this plan because, increasingly, public entities are not necessarily operating the facilities or producing the services that serve the public. Also, some public entities restrict use of taxpayer supported spaces with memberships or fees while some private entities provide services for all. We acknowledge the fact that the Village of Skokie may not be the agency responsible for providing a particular facility or service, but also acknowledge that we need to coordinate with other providers – multiple school districts, the Skokie Park District, Cook County, State of Illinois, the federal government, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, the City of Evanston, the Skokie Public Library, private corporations, and many non-profits and foundations – to work toward a common vision for our future and meet current and future needs.

As a maturely developed community, Skokie already has many high quality schools, parks, buildings, and services in place. However these are not the same mix of buildings and services that were available 20 years ago or 10 years ago. As the needs of the Village change, our public facilities and services need to change, too.

In this chapter, we will look at our:

- Parks and open space

- Educational facilities – public and private grade schools, libraries, daycare centers and preschools, colleges, universities, and technical and trade schools

- Emergency services – police, fire, and disaster services

- Utilities – water, sewer, garbage, communication, natural gas, refuse collection, and electricity


- Social and health services – services for youth, families, the elderly, the disabled, homeless, and near homeless, and medical care

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO OUR DIRECTION

In Chapter 4, we set the direction for public facilities and services. This chapter will examine our current inventory of these uses, and if necessary suggest ways to better meet our needs. As with the other sections of this document, some plans we can implement now and some will have to wait a while. The plans will set the framework to turn those values into reality. The broad concepts directing our planning are at the beginning of each section and are labeled P1, P2, etc. and will be described in greater detail. Let’s review each of those public facilities and services directions one at a time.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

What is parks and open space? For now, let's simply define it as a place, developed or undeveloped, with or without structures or buildings, that is generally outdoors and generally available for use by the public. It can be a place to relax, socialize, or play. Spaces like private parks and golf courses are also included since they provide open settings that can also be enjoyed from the perimeter of the sites.

 P1	Parks and Open Space – Because parks and open space add to the health, welfare, and quality of life of people in Skokie, we will work with the Skokie Park District and those other public and private entities to provide an adequate level of facilities and services and distribute those facilities and services within the Village.
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Understanding Parks & Open Space

1. Although the Village of Skokie does own and maintain some parks and open space, the Village is, by far, not the major provider of this type of use in the Village. Private entities and the Skokie Park District maintain about 81% of the parks and open space in the Village. We will need to work with the Skokie Park District and other private parties to meet our future parks and open space needs.
2. The 2003 Citizen survey revealed that 2 out of every 3 of the respondents felt that Skokie's recreational opportunities were excellent or good but 50% of Skokie households *never* used a Skokie park and another 32% said a Skokie park was used only once or twice over the prior 12 months.
3. As the needs and demands of our residents, employees, and guests change, so must the levels of services provided. This might mean reexamining the amount and type of land and facilities provided and taking a closer look at *where* these places are located and their accessibility. This might also mean reevaluating the types of services provided.

As we look more deeply into this issue of parks and open space, the definition becomes a bit more blurry. Is it land in its natural state ... woodlands and prairies? Is it a place in which the landscape is transformed for ornament or recreation ... gardens or baseball diamonds? Is it a place to play that is outdoors? What if the place to play is indoors, like a field house or a gymnasium? Then there is the question of who owns a park and who is allowed to use it. If a public entity offers a place for certain recreational activities and a private entity offers an identical place, are they both parks? Does it matter if there is a fee to use it, if its use is restricted to only some, or if someone can

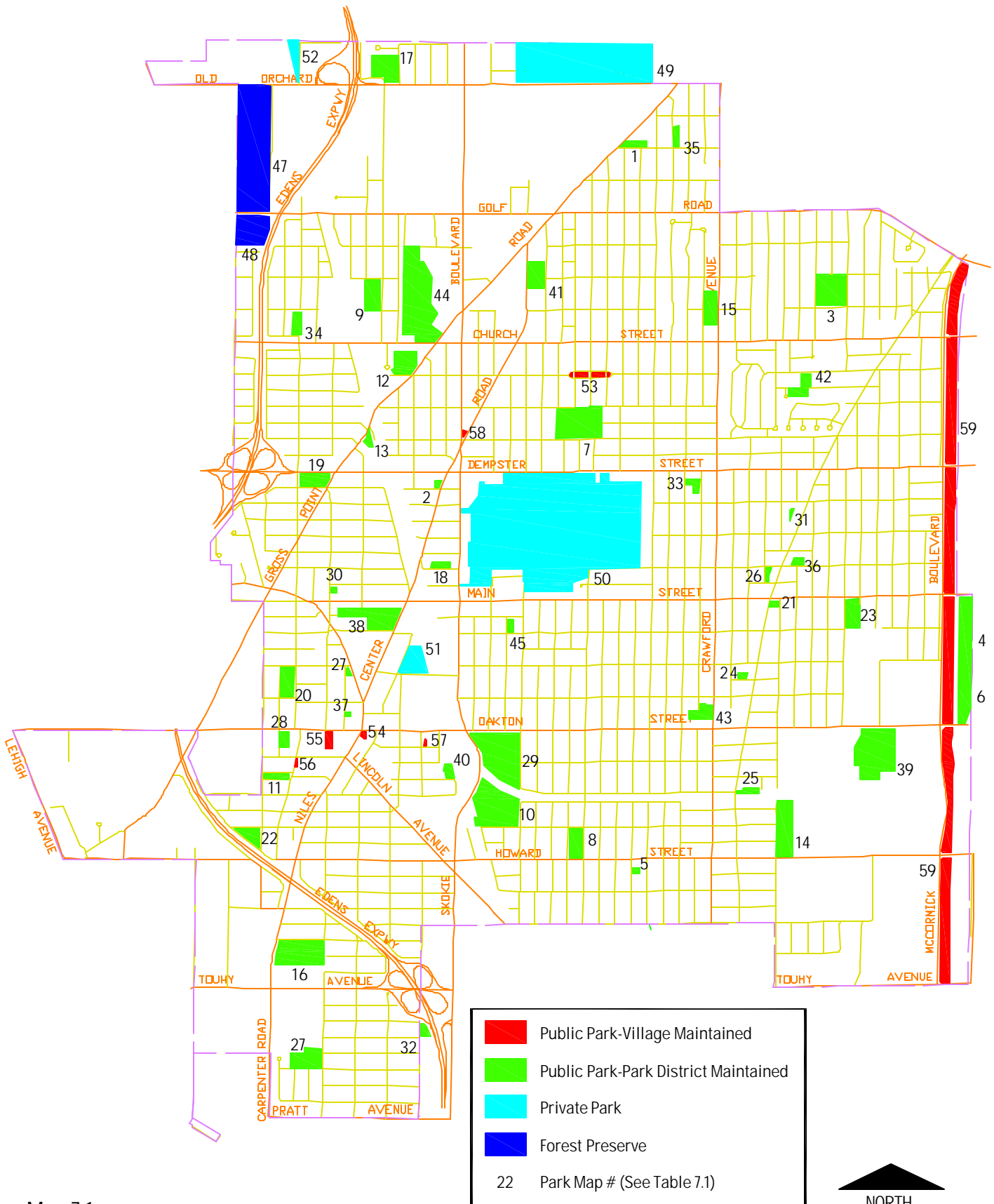
be prohibited from using it? The fact of the matter is that there are public and private places that might be considered parks, recreation, and open space uses that meet each of these criteria in Skokie. The idea of "park" has evolved from the 19th and early 20th century ideal of a natural place of beauty to stroll and escape urban life to include more active places, too, with facilities and structures to play basketball, swim, lift weights, and even putt a round of miniature golf.

We were curious to learn that according to the 2003 citizen survey, 66% of Skokie residents thought that recreation opportunities were good or excellent, while 50% of Skokie residents reported that no one in their household ever used a Skokie park and another 32% said a Skokie park was used only once or twice over the prior 12 months. Why are people who seem to be satisfied with Skokie's park system not using it? Is it that the facilities offered are not what those users want? Is it difficult to get to those places? The citizen survey also indicated that 82% of respondents felt somewhat or very safe in Skokie parks during the day, but only 45% felt somewhat or very safe after dark. Only 4% said they felt somewhat or very unsafe in Skokie parks during the day, but 20% felt somewhat or very unsafe after dark. Is this a contributing factor? Much has been published recently about drastic decreases in exercise and increase in obesity of Americans in general. Could it be that people are just less active?

Existing Sites

Map 7.1 shows the current inventory of parks and open space, with details about each site in Table 7.1. Surprisingly, private entities hold about 42% of parks and open space and the Skokie Park District maintains about 39%. The Village only maintains about 10% and the Cook County Forest Preserve District maintains the remaining 9% of parks and open space. This means that cooperation with private developers, corporations, and the Skokie Park District is needed as well as input from future users of these facilities to planning how to meet our future parks and open space needs.

Existing Parks and Open Space



Map7.1



Table 7.1 Existing Parks and Open Space

Map #	Park Name	Park Type	Acres	Map #	Park Name	Park Type	Acres
1	Allan A. Weissburg	Park District	1.2	31	Playtime	Park District	0.3
2	Carol	Park District	0.3	32	Pohatan	Park District	0.8
3	Central	Park District	8.4	33	Seneca	Park District	1.1
4	Channelside/Pooch	Park District	11.1	34	Sequoia	Park District	2
5	Chippewa	Park District	0.3	35	Shabonee	Park District	1.1
6	Dammerich Rowing Center	Park District	3.8	36	Shawnee	Park District	0.7
7	Devonshire	Park District	13.1	37	Skokie Historical Museum	Park District	0.2
8	Donald W. Lyon	Park District	3.5	38	Skokie Park Tennis Center	Park District	7.9
9	Emerson	Park District	4.3	39	Skokie Sports Park	Park District	17.1
10	Emily Oaks Nature Center	Park District	14.9	40	Techumseh	Park District	1.2
11	George St. Parkway	Park District	1.3	41	Terminal	Park District	4.4
12	Gross Point	Park District	4.9	42	Timber Ridge	Park District	2.8
13	Gross Point & Terminal Property	Park District	0.8	43	Walter J. Lauth	Park District	2.7
14	Hamlin	Park District	8.5	44	Weber	Park District	24.2
15	Henry O. Gleiss	Park District	10.9	45	Winnebago	Park District	0.7
16	Laramie	Park District	2.7	46	Lincoln & Cleveland Property	Park District	0.3
17	Lawler	Park District	5.9	47	Forest Preserve Property North of Golf	Forest Preserve	38.9
18	Lee-Wright	Park District	1.1	48	Forest Preserve Property South of Golf	Forest Preserve	8.8
19	Lockwood	Park District	3.4	49	Westmoreland Country Club	Private	50.3
20	Lorel	Park District	3.7	50	Evanston Golf Club	Private	162.8
21	Main/Hamlin Tennis Complex	Park District	0.7	51	Searle	Private	5.4
22	Martin F. Peccia	Park District	2.5	52	Old Orchard & Lockwood Property	Private	2.5
23	McNally	Park District	3.9	53	Davis Street Parkway (Combined)	Village of Skokie	1.3
24	Menominee	Park District	0.4	54	Veterans' Memorial at Krier Plaza	Village of Skokie	0.2
25	Mulford	Park District	1.1	55	Village Green	Village of Skokie	1
26	Navajo	Park District	0.5	56	Park & Galitz Property	Village of Skokie	0.2
27	Norman Schack	Park District	5.1	57	Lamon & Louise Property	Village of Skokie	0.2
28	Oakton & Lorel Property	Park District	1.4	58	Skokie & Niles Center Property	Village of Skokie	0.2
29	Oakton/Pool	Park District	17.3	59	North Shore Sculpture Park & Multi-Use Path	Village of Skokie	49.7
30	Pawnee	Park District	0.2				
				Total			526.2

Future Sites

Planning for future parks and open space might seem to be a daunting task. Population densities and locations of existing and future housing and employment need to be analyzed. However, breaking it up into smaller parts will make reaching this goal easier to accomplish, so the development of future parks and open space sites will occur with each sector plan. We have already begun the process of identifying future sites with the development of *Downtown 2020*, the plan for Sector A, which is currently nearing completion and is in the final review process. With the completion of this plan in spring 2005, we will update this section with the potential locations for future parks and open space.




The development of *Downtown 2020* included interviews with area agencies, private companies, Village Staff, and elected officials. The preliminary plan was also presented at a community meeting attended by over 55 people, which allowed for feedback and suggestions on future open space needs. There was a strong

emphasis on the need for additional parks and open space Downtown, including paths to connect Oakton Community College with a future train station at Oakton Street and preservation of some amount of open space in the area of Searle Park, which is private land.

EDUCATION

Skokie has a reputation for having high quality schools providing education to an increasingly ethnically, racially, and economically diverse population. The way we look at and provide education has changed a lot over the years. Learning is now lifelong and having a network of schools, preschool and daycare facilities, museums and cultural facilities, and places for adult education that provide opportunities to our residents, are an asset to our employers, and connect people to ideas.

 P2	Education – Since educational facilities must accommodate lifelong learning to provide a qualified workforce for the 21 st century, we will strive to provide a network of educational opportunities in Skokie from early childhood development through adulthood that is high quality, accessible to those wanting to use it, and meets the needs of an increasingly diverse population.
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Understanding Education

1. Education begins early. Although we cannot regulate whether or not parents choose to enroll their children in preschool programs, we should be certain that those programs are available and affordable for those who need it.
2. After school and daycare programs also need to be examined. With many families having working parents, are there adequate and affordable programs to accommodate children in a safe and nurturing environment if no adult is available to otherwise supervise them?
3. School capacity was something Skokians did not need to worry about in the 1980s and 1990s, but with the increase in the population of children, capacity issues need to be reexamined. We also need to look beyond the public schools to include private schools, too.
4. The Skokie Public Library is also part of the education network, not just as a place to learn from books, but also a place that provides other community, cultural, and educational services.
5. Museums, cultural centers, and other educational centers provide specialized forms of education, and sometimes research resources, to broad parts of the

public as a whole. They add to the fabric of the community by exposing us to new ideas and helping us learn in a non-academic environment.

6. Technical schools, trade schools, colleges and universities add to the formal education of adults, produce a quality workforce, and allow for the personal educational enrichment of our residents.

Existing Sites

Map 7.2 shows the current inventory of public and private schools in Skokie. Details about each site, including existing enrollment and capacity as of fall 2004, are in Table 7.2. The review of this basic data reveals a wide variety of school types and that different levels of education sometimes overlap. The data also show grade school capacities running between 45% and 112%. Of particular concern are all 3 schools in District 73.5, which are at or above capacity, and the large differences in available capacities for each of the public school districts, ranging from 61% (District 73) to 105% (District 73.5).

The Skokie Public Library (SPL) completed a large addition and extensive renovation of their building at 5215 Oakton Street. The building is now about 135,000 square feet and as of April 30, 2004, had 485,437 items in their collection, including books, audio books, periodicals, DVDs and videos, music CDs and cassettes, and software on CD-ROM. SPL also provides basic computer skills classes, exhibits, films, lectures, literary events, performance and cultural events. Carolyn Anthony, its Director since 1985 was chosen the Illinois Librarian of the Year in 2003. SPL also operates a bookmobile that provides books and audio-visual material all over Skokie, including schools, retirement centers, and neighborhoods. Despite SPL's excellent reputation and large collection, 70% of Skokie residents reported that they or anyone in their household *never* used SPL or its services in the prior 12 months, and another 25% said SPL was used only once or twice.

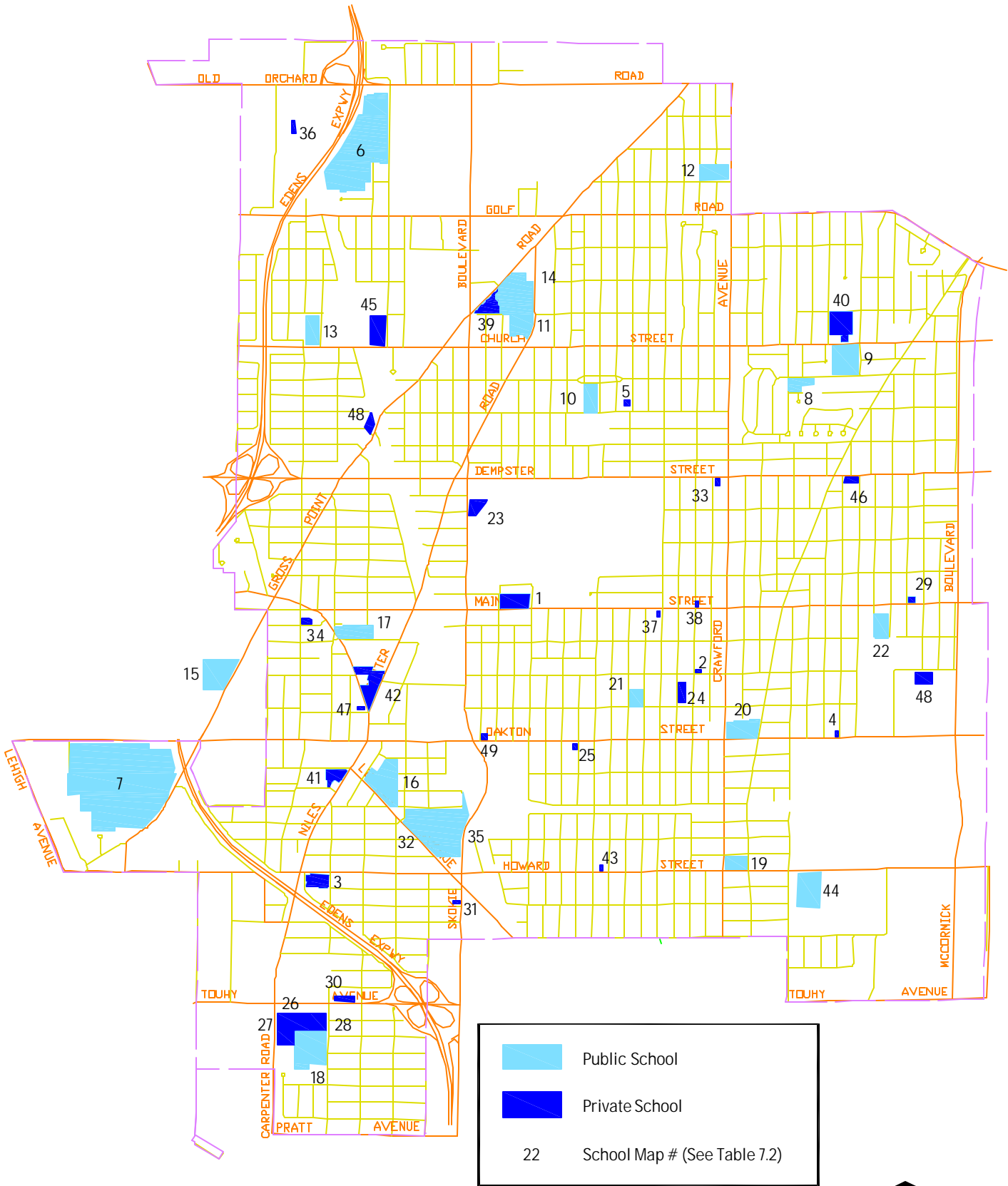
Future Actions

An analysis of demographic trends and school capacity needs to be completed in conjunction with interviews and further data collection from each school or school district. This will allow us to identify current and future needs for schools within the Village.

The long range plans for the Skokie Public Library should be obtained and incorporated into this plan.

An inventory that includes daycare homes (in private residences) and museums, cultural centers, and other educational centers will be compiled during the next update of this chapter.

Public and Private Schools



Map7.2



Table 7.2 Existing Public and Private Schools

Map #	School Name	Age/Grade	Address	Enrollment	Capacity
1	Arie Crown Hebrew Day School	Pre-K – 8 th	4600 Main	560	790
2	British Infant School	Infant – 5 years	8201 Karlov	20	20
3	Cheder Lubavitch Hebrew Day School	Newborn – 8 th	5201 Howard	200	320
4	Chicago School of Violin Making	College	3636 Oakton	18	30
5	Cradles, Cribs, & Crayons	6 weeks – 5 years	9000 Kildare	68	68
6	District 219 - Niles North	9 th – 12 th	9800 Lawler	2243	2700
7	District 219 - Niles West	9 th – 12 th	5701 Oakton	2502	2700
8	District 65 - Timber Ridge	K – 8 th	3701 Davis	354	360
9	District 65 - Walker	K – 5 th	3601 Church	340	436
10	District 68 - Devonshire	K – 5 th	9040 Kostner	322	500
11	District 68 - Early Childhood Center	3 - 4 years	9300 Kenton	54	80
12	District 68 - Highland	K – 5 th	9700 Crawford	350	500
13	District 68 - Jane Stenson	K – 5 th	9201 Lockwood	320	500
14	District 68 - Old Orchard	6 th – 8 th	9310 Kenton	657	1000
15	District 69 - Thomas A. Edison	3 rd – 5 th	8200 Gross Point	488	600
16	District 69 - Lincoln	6 th – 8 th	7839 Lincoln	486	600
17	District 69 - Madison	K 2 nd	5100 Madison	465	600
18	District 72 - Fairview South	K – 8 th	7040 Laramie	618	720
19	District 73 - East Prairie	K – 8 th	3907 Dobson	460	750
20	District 73.5 - Oliver McCracken	6 th – 8 th	8000 East Prairie	366	327
21	District 73.5 - Elizabeth Meyer	Pre-K - K	8100 Tripp	156	139
22	District 73.5 - John Middleton	1 st – 5 th	8300 St. Louis	568	569
23	European Healing & Massage Therapy School	Adult	8707 Skokie	50	60
24	Great Oaks Waldorf School	Newborn – 8 th	8141 Kedvale	26	32
25	Hebrew Seminary of the Deaf	Adult	4435 Oakton	9	9
26	Hebrew Theological College	College	7135 Carpenter	170	240
27	Hebrew Theological College High School	9 th – 12 th	7135 Carpenter	70	100
28	Hillel Torah North Suburban Day School	Pre-K – 8 th	7120 Laramie	600	600
29	Knowledge Systems Institute	College	3420 Main	72	100
30	Learning Lane Preschool	2 – 4 years	5130 Touhy	19	30
31	Little People's Montessori School	2½ - 6 years	7500 Skokie	43	50
32	Alliance for Lifelong Learning Program	Adult	7701 Lincoln	4903	unknown
33	Mosaic Early Childhood Center	15 months - 12 years	4023 Dempster	80	100
34	Niles Township Community Child Care Center	3 – 5 years	5255 Main	20	20
35	Oakton Community College	College	7701 Lincoln	2279	unknown
36	Olympia College	College	9811 Woods	440	1200
37	Shining Star Learning Center	Infant – 5 years	4201 Main	19	19
38	Skokie Montessori School	2 – 6 years	8401 Karlov	31	100
39	Solomon Schechter Day School	K – 5 th	9301 Gross Point	335	450
40	St. Joan of Arc Catholic School	Pre-K – 8 th	9248 Lawndale	243	255
41	St. Paul Lutheran Academy	K – 8 th	5201 Galitz	102	225
42	St. Peter's Catholic School	Pre-K – 8 th	8140 Niles Center	301	450
43	Tiny Tot Preschool & Kindergarten	15 months – K	4346 Howard	61	67
44	Tot Learning Center	Infant – 5 years	3701 Howard	76	100
45	Mayer Kaplan JCC	2 – 5 years	5050 Church	151	150
46	Temple Beth Israel	Pre-K – 12 th	3601 Dempster	200	unknown
47	Swift Day Care Center	2 – 12 years	8064 Lincoln	85	92
48	Computer Systems Institute	Adult	8930 Gross Point	80	400
49	Goal Training Inc.	Adult	4728 Oakton	400	unknown

OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Emergency services, utilities, and social and health services will be discussed after the adoption of the 2005-2009 Consolidated Plan for the Community Development Block Grant.