

recreation within the state, while also protecting Wisconsin's beautiful natural environment for the enjoyment of residents and visitors for generations to come."

#### Town of Somers Neighborhood Plans

Each of the Town's 17 adopted neighborhood plans provides general recommendations for the preservation of environmentally significant land and the provision of sufficient parkland in conjunction with future development. Some of the recommendations identified in the Plans include the following:

- Provide recreational trails that follow utility easements and natural areas associated with the Pike River and Pike Creek
- Include open space or parkland with future development to provide recreational opportunities for future residents
- Provide Conservancy zoning to preserve significant wetlands
- Protect environmental corridors and isolated natural resource areas, wetlands, wetland buffers, and floodplains from development to preserve their environmental benefits

It is recommended that a priority be placed on developing access to parkland, especially neighborhood parks, in the most densely populated neighborhoods that currently do not have access to recreational opportunities. This priority would include the following neighborhoods: North Lakeshore, Parkside East, Parkside North, Somers West, Fairfield, and Pike River West.

The 18<sup>th</sup> and final neighborhood plan has yet to be adopted by the Town. This plan addresses land use in the North Lakeshore neighborhood. It is critically important that the provision of future parkland be a component of the final adopted version of this plan, because the North Lakeshore neighborhood is the only neighborhood in Somers with shoreline property along Lake Michigan. The Town currently does not provide any public access to this exceptional water resource, and future land use patterns should be designed in such a manner so as to provide this access.

#### **IV. PLANNING PROCESS**

Ruekert/Mielke was retained by the Town of Somers to complete a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan update in March of 2009. On April 13, 2009 a kickoff meeting was held with the Park Commission. On June 15, 2009 the public was invited to attend the Park Commission meeting at the Town Hall to provide input on the existing condition of individual parks as well as any desired improvements that would benefit the park system. A third meeting was held on August 17, 2009 with the Park Commission to review drafts of the proposed park concept plans. Following the meeting the concept plans were revised and a draft of the CORP was compiled. A public open house was held at the Town Hall on September 21, 2009 to display the drafts of the existing and proposed Town park concept plans and to solicit feedback from residents. A final meeting with the Park Commission was held immediately following the September 21 open house to discuss the open house results, finalize the conceptual design for each park, discuss the CORP draft, and to

prioritize recommended improvements to the park system over the next five years. In the ten days following the September 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, the park concept plans were finalized and the draft of the CORP was revised to create a final CORP document. Hard copies of the final document were forwarded for review to Park Commission, Plan Commission, and Town Board members two weeks in advance of a combined meeting of the Park Commission and Plan Commission on October 12, 2009. Both the Park Commission and the Plan Commission recommended approval of the CORP at this meeting, and it was then formally adopted at a Town Board meeting on October 13, 2009. Throughout the planning process, the Ruekert/Mielke project team communicated with Town staff and the Park Commission via email as well as a special intranet website site that was set up by Ruekert/Mielke as a data sharing tool for the project.