

Element Three: Environmental Quality & Natural Resource Protection

Environmental quality and the wise use of natural resources are increasingly important to Northbrook residents and businesses. Preserving Northbrook's natural features and areas will help to maintain Northbrook's identity and desirability as a place to work and live.

Likewise, the protection of natural resources is necessary to preserve a healthy, sustainable environment. As the community grows the natural landscape will be preserved for the health, safety and welfare of its citizens. Natural resources also provide aesthetic beauty. Their protection benefits property values and increases the livability of the Village. Northbrook has significant amounts of public open space that has been preserved through the efforts of the Village, the Northbrook Park District and the Cook County Forest Preserve District. There are also areas devoted to both public and private recreational facilities, particularly golf courses that provide open space. Finally, through development regulation, other private open space areas have been preserved for the use and enjoyment of individual property owners or associations. These areas not only provide visual relief, but are essential parts of our local ecosystem and storm drainage system. The major open space and recreation areas in the vicinity of Northbrook are shown on the map on the following page.

The Environmental Quality & Natural Resource Protection Element contains the policies and actions that will allow for the Village of Northbrook to continue meeting ongoing challenges as well as improving the long-term health of local residents and regional ecological systems.

Environmental Quality & Natural Resource Protection Goals and Strategies

EP 1. *Improve and maintain the Village's stormwater system to protect Village property owners from unnecessary property damage.*

- a. Update and implement the Village's existing Stormwater Management (SWM) Plan as to ensure that properties in the Village are properly protected from flooding. *(Note: THE SWM is referenced, but is not a formal component of the Comprehensive Plan. Modifications to the SWM do not require an amendment to the Northbrook Comprehensive Plan)*
- b. Promote the planning and implementation of new and enhanced regional stormwater management facilities that benefit Northbrook and surrounding communities.
- c. Continue to monitor and update as necessary the Village's requirements for addressing stormwater impacts associated with new development.
- d. Promote the reduction of amount of impervious materials as new development occurs.
- e. Encourage the use of emerging methods to reduce runoff volumes and assist in the removal of damaging pollutants from runoff water.

EP 2. *Integrate sustainable storm water management solutions into the community's infrastructure.*

- a. Strive to reduce impervious cover and promote best practices of stormwater management.
- b. Continue to allow the use of permeable surfaces for driveways and parking areas as an alternative to traditional paved surfaces, in appropriate circumstances.

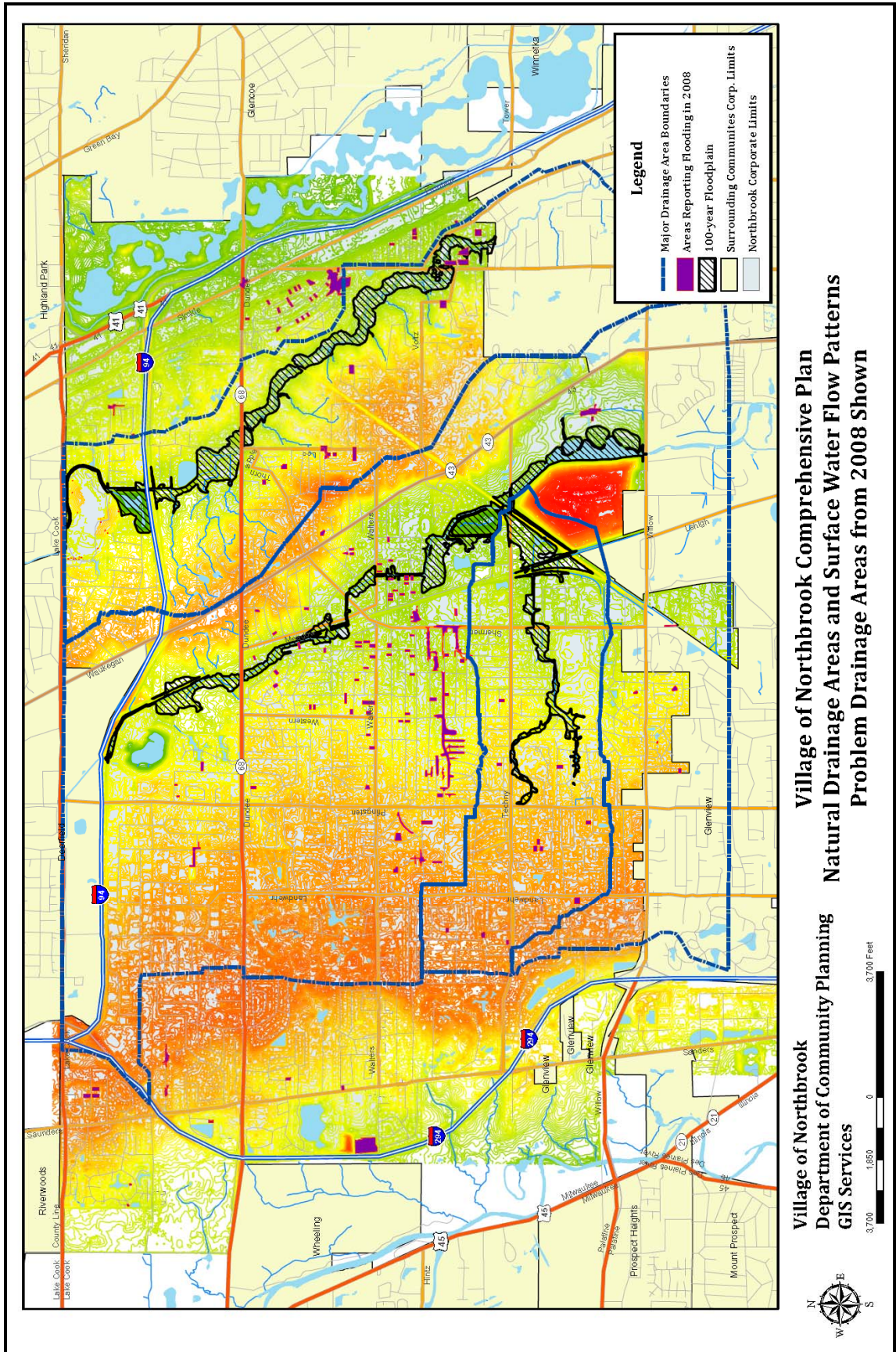


Figure 3-A: Existing Topography, 100-Year Flood Plain and Problem Drainage Areas

Northbrook Comprehensive Plan

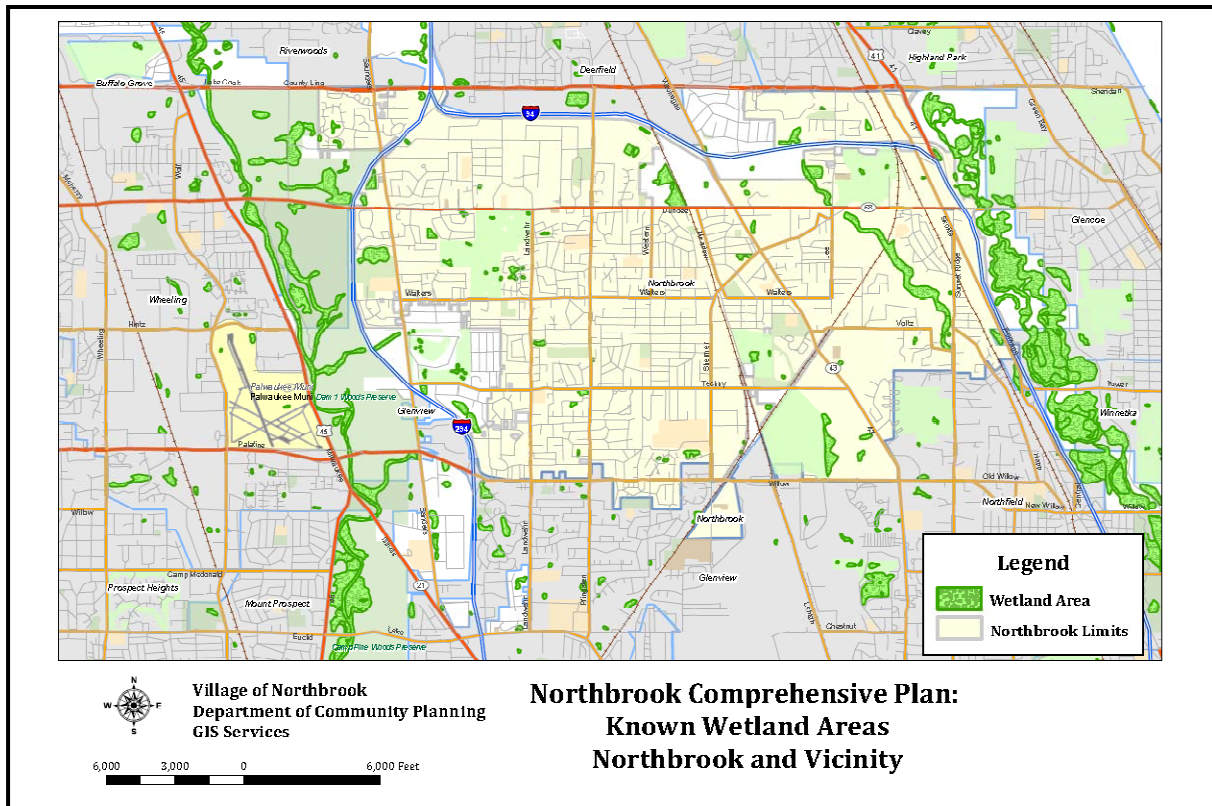


Figure 3-B; Existing Wetland Areas

EP 3. *Preserve the capacity of the floodplains, wetlands and natural watercourses.*

- a. Recognize, protect, and restore critical watershed assets, including wetlands.
- b. Protect natural drainage basins and drainageways against any development that will adversely affect their functions.
- c. Enforce on-site stormwater detention requirements for new development activities to prevent flooding.
- d. Oversee the environmentally-sensitive maintenance and protection of stream channels.

EP 4. *Enhance the quality of life in Northbrook by safeguarding the natural environment.*

- a. Preserve the unique and significant features of Northbrook's natural environment.
- b. Continue to enforce and refine the Village's regulations that require new development to protect noteworthy natural features to the extent practical.
- c. Protect significant features of Northbrook's natural environment such as mature trees, natural wetlands, prairies, river systems and wildlife habitats.

EP 5. *Preserve and protect our local tree resources.*

- a. Monitor the effectiveness of our local tree protection standards and amend them as needed.
- b. Continue to promote the planting of a variety of trees that are appropriate for Northbrook's climate and development conditions.
- c. Promote the protection and preservation of open space and mature trees and encourage new tree plantings on public and private property.
- d. Continue the practice of using planned developments to protect noteworthy natural features.



Figure 3-C: Restored Banks of the West Fork of the North Branch of the Chicago River

EP 6. *Integrate recreational facilities into the natural environment.*

- a. Work in concert with the Cook County Forest Preserve District, Northbrook Park District, Illinois Department of Transportation, Cook County Highway Department and surrounding communities and other agencies to develop a comprehensive system of walking/hiking trails and bikeways that take advantage of the existing river and open space system in and around the Village.
- b. Encourage and support a system of pedestrian and bicycle trails that link the Village's major open space areas.
- c. Amend the Village's Bicycle Master Plan as necessary to integrate any new trail designs into the community's bicycle network.
- d. Provide access to open spaces and natural areas and encourage trail connections as appropriate to the intended use of the land as new development occurs.

EP 7. *Evaluate opportunities for utilizing sustainable building and development practices.*

- a. Monitor the effectiveness of the Village's 2008 Green Building Initiative that promotes the use of energy saving and environmentally-friendly construction activities.
- b. Consider the merit of using "green" [e.g. LEED-certified] building and operational standards in municipal buildings and construction projects.
- c. Monitor the effectiveness of the Village's Building Material recycling program and adjust the standards as needed.
- d. Continue to regularly audit local zoning, building and engineering standards to ensure that Village regulations offer opportunities for appropriate sustainable development techniques.