

# CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

As the city continues its transition over the next ten years, Little Rock officials will have to provide new facilities, maintain existing facilities and operate a growing parks and recreation department. Review of the public engagement process identified the desire for more individual based activities associated with paddle sports and biking. Assessments of existing facilities revealed deficiencies in athletic fields when compared to national benchmarks and existing sports complexes that are dated and lack opportunity for expansion or improvement. Golf operations are not reaching their full potential and are requiring significant subsidies to maintain operations.

As described in Section 6 – Park Facility and Land Needs Assessment, recommendations include the renovation and realignment of existing golf facilities, the development of an expanded greenway network, the development of new athletic complexes and the renovation and improved maintenance of existing parks. A proposed indoor multi-court athletic facility is also being proposed as a new city initiative aimed at economic development not under the parks and recreation department.

A ten-year CIP (shown in Figure 8.1) has been developed to include approximately \$11.5 to \$16.5 million in spending annually, with \$3 million allocated to existing park renovations. Another \$1.5 million has been allocated annually for the continued development of the greenway network. Approximately \$20 million is allocated for the replacement of Junior Deputy and Interstate Parks with the development of a new softball complex at Nat Hill Park and a new baseball complex at a location to be determined. The West Central Sports Complex is also recommended for a complete renovation. The expansion of the Otter Creek Soccer Complex and a potential new soccer complex at Rebsamen Golf Course will greatly improve accessibility to soccer fields and is estimated at a cost of \$22 million. General sport facility improvements including sport courts and practice fields have been budgeted at \$500,000 per year and should be prioritized based on condition and level of current use. The golf course renovations described in Section 6 include \$7 million in improvements while the remaining \$30 million of the CIP recommendations is allocated for new park development for West Little Rock and current under served areas of the city. This may involve the acquisition of strategic developable properties in areas of the city that do not currently have available park land.

**Figure 8.1** Ten Year Capital Improvement Program

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
<b>Existing Park Renovations</b>										
Buildings, Pavilions, Playgrounds, Parking, ADA	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
<b>General Sport Facility Improvements</b>										
Jim Daily, Tennis Center, Multi-Purpose Fields	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
<b>Greenways/Blueways</b>										
	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000
<b>New Athletic Facility Redevelopment</b>										
War Memorial Master Plan and Phase I Development			\$5,000,000							
Otter Creek Soccer Complex	\$6,500,000	\$6,500,000								
West Central Sports Complex	\$4,000,000									
Nat Hill Softball Complex				\$6,000,000						
New Baseball Sports Complex					\$7,000,000	\$7,000,000				
<b>Golf Course Conversions/Updates</b>										
Hindmen/Western Hills							\$3,500,000			
Rebsamen Golf Course Renovation and Soccer Complex		\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000					\$3,500,000		
<b>New Park Development</b>										
West Little Rock /Underserved areas of the City			\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$7,000,000	\$7,000,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$15,500,000</b>	<b>\$16,000,000</b>	<b>\$16,500,000</b>	<b>\$13,000,000</b>	<b>\$14,000,000</b>	<b>\$15,000,000</b>	<b>\$11,500,000</b>	<b>\$12,500,000</b>	<b>\$12,000,000</b>	<b>\$12,000,000</b>

**\$3M**

**ANNUAL ALLOCATION  
 FOR PARK AMENITIES  
 AND UPGRADES**

Existing park facility evaluations and recommendations have been provided along with general recommendations. Figure 8.2 provides general cost guidelines for replacement facilities to be used for budgeting purposes. It is anticipated that the annual \$3 million allocation would be used for park amenity replacements and upgrades, erosion and drainage repairs, new buildings and structures, signage and repaving.

**Figure 8.2** General Renovation Cost

FACILITY	APPROXIMATE COST
<b>BUILDINGS</b>	
SMALL PAVILION	\$90,000 - \$110,000
LARGE PAVILION	\$150,000 - \$250,000
SMALL RESTROOM	\$300,000 - \$400,000
LARGE RESTROOM	\$500,000 - \$750,000
RESTROOM/ PAVILION	\$375,000 - \$750,000
SCORER STAND	\$30,000 - \$50,000
GRANDSTAND (1,500 Capacity)	\$250,000 - \$350,000
CONCESSION/RESTROOM BUILDING	\$650,000 - \$800,000
<b>ATHLETICS</b>	
DOUBLE TENNIS COURT	\$75,000 - \$100,000
DOUBLE TENNIS COURT WITH LIGHTS	\$150,000 - \$175,000
BASEBALL FIELD	\$500,000 - \$700,000
BASEBALL FIELD WITH LIGHTS	\$700,000 - \$1,000,000
BASKETBALL COURT	\$75,000 - \$100,000
BASKETBALL COURT WITH LIGHTS	\$150,000 - \$175,000
MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD	\$400,000 - \$500,000
MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD WITH LIGHTS	\$700,000 - \$800,000
DISC GOLF COURSE 9-HOLE	\$30,000 - \$60,000
DISC GOLF COURSE 18-HOLE	\$70,000 - \$120,000
VOLLEYBALL COURT (SAND)	\$50,000 - \$100,000
RUNNING TRACK 400M WITH LIGHTS	\$950,000 - 1,250,000
<b>OTHER PARK AMENITIES</b>	
SMALL SPLASH PAD	\$300,000 - \$500,000
LARGE SPLASH PAD	\$500,000 - \$1,000,000
SMALL PLAYGROUND W/ RUBBER SURFACE	\$125,000 - \$250,000
LARGE PLAYGROUND W/ RUBBER SURFACE	\$750,000 - \$2,000,000
GREENWAY (1 MILE)	\$750,000 - \$1,000,000
DOG PARK	\$100,000 - \$300,000
SMALL SKATE PARK	\$450,000 - \$750,000
LARGE SKATE PARK	\$750,000 - \$2,000,000



*3/8 cent sales tax is anticipated to generate **17.284 million** in Capital Parks and Recreation Development over the 10-year period of 2012 to 2021.*

## Current Funding

As discussed in the Budget Assessment, Little Rock funds capital projects through a 3/8 cent sales tax which is anticipated to generate 17.284 million in Capital Parks and Recreation Development over the 10-year period of 2012 to 2021. The typical sources of capital funding for parks and recreation agencies include:

- General Obligation Bond
- Program User Fees
- Local Option Sales Tax (LOS)
- Impact or Other Development Fees
- General Fund Tax Dollars
- State and Federal Grants

A combination of these sources may be necessary to realize the recommended annual CIP funding for improvements over the next 10 years with the most likely source being a bond program to fund the larger capital expenditures associated with new athletic complex construction. Other funding sources are listed in the following sections.

# Alternative Funding Sources

## Matching Grant

This program is a 50/50 matching program funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Grant and Trust Fund. The Grantee is expected to finance 100% of the project and then may choose to be paid in installments as the project is developed or at the end of the project in one lump sum. This grant is for outdoor recreation facilities only. Closed facilities are allowed only if they support the outdoor facility such as a concession stand or a restroom building.

*Website: [www.outdoorgrants.com/park%20Grants/](http://www.outdoorgrants.com/park%20Grants/)*

## Trails for Life Grant

The Trails for Life grant is funded by the Arkansas Department of Health. It is not to be used for recreational trails as these types of trails have other grants available. This grant is only to be used for trails specifically designed to provide fitness and health benefits. The goal of this grant is to encourage active and healthy lifestyles for all residents of a community.

*Website: [www.outdoorgrants.com/park%20Grants/](http://www.outdoorgrants.com/park%20Grants/)*

## Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

This program was initiated through the TEA-21 legislation. Funds are awarded for the construction of trails and support facilities. Emphasis is on the construction of multi-use trails, such as biking, hiking, equestrian, motorized, etc. In Arkansas, administration of this program is handled by staff of the Arkansas State Transportation and Highway Department.

Like the Transportation Enhancements program, the RTP is a matching grant with 80 percent federal funding and 20 percent local funding. Funds may be used for:

- Maintenance and restoration of existing trails
- Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages
- Purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment
- Construction of new trails (with restrictions for new trails on Federal lands)
- Acquisition of easements or property for trails
- Assessment of trail conditions for accessibility and maintenance
- Development and dissemination of publications and operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection, (as those objectives relate to one or more of the use of recreational trails, supporting non-law enforcement trail safety and trail use monitoring patrol programs, and providing trail-related training), (limited to 5 percent of a State's funds)
- State administrative costs for the RTP (limited to 7 percent of a State's funds)

*Website: [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational\\_trails/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/)*

*<http://www.arkansashighways.com/>*

## Community Development Block Grants

Although this program funds housing, public facilities, economic development and community projects, recreation could be a minor component of the project. For example, a mini park could be constructed on land purchased through the housing project that services primarily low- to moderate-income individuals. The program is administered through the Arkansas Economic Development Commission.

Website: <https://www.arkansasedc.com/community-resources/community-development-block-grant>

## Environmental Education Grants

This program is sponsored by the EPA's Environmental Education Division (EED), Office of Children's Health Protection and

Environmental Education. It supports environmental education projects that enhance the public's awareness, knowledge, and skills to help people make informed decisions that affect environmental quality. The EPA awards grants each year based on funding appropriated by Congress. Annual funding for the program ranges between \$2 and \$3 million. Most grants will be in the \$15,000 to \$25,000 range.

## Land and Water Conservation Fund

For many years since the mid-1960s, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program provided funds for outdoor recreation acquisition and development; however, over the last few years, the funding has been extremely limited. In Arkansas, LWCF has invested more than \$171 million over the past five decades.

Website: [www.lwcfcoalition.org/](http://www.lwcfcoalition.org/)





## Funding Recommendations Summary

Survey responses (91%) indicated their support for annual dedicated funding for capital projects. Of those, 84% and 75% respectively support borrowing money to improve and develop parks through general obligation and revenue bonds paid back over a longer period of time. It is clear that additional funding will be needed if the goal of improving park facilities quickly is to be achieved. The most viable means of completing the redevelopment of park facilities and construction of new facilities is a general obligation bond. At the current rate of funding of less than \$2,000,000 per year, the city will never achieve its goal of improving existing facilities and building new to meet demand. Furthermore, annual capital expenditures of this level in a system the size of Little Rock primarily go unnoticed to the community at large and only specific user groups who benefit from a specific capital project may notice that dollars were actually spent. To determine the best course of action, city staff should explore the recommendations contained in this master plan and develop several alternative funding programs that can be reviewed by City Board of Directors to determine which funding method works best for the city.