

Little Rock, Arkansas

# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Prepared By: Lose Design



2018



PHOTO

Courtesy of Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau



# ▶ TABLE OF CONTENTS



Lose Design would like to thank all the elected officials, board members, commissioners, staff and citizens, who participated in the development of this master plan. Through your commitment and dedication to the Parks and Recreation Department, we were able to develop this plan to guide the delivery of recreation services to the citizens of Little Rock.

01	INTRODUCTION	1.1 - 1.2
02	COMMUNITY PROFILE	2.1 - 2.8
03	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	3.1 - 3.6
04	STAFFING ASSESSMENT	4.1 - 4.18
05	PROGRAMMING ANALYSIS	5.1 - 5.34
06	PARK CLASSIFICATION and LAND NEEDS ASSESSMENT	6.1 - 6.102
07	BUDGET ASSESSMENT	7.1 - 7.16
08	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES	8.1 - 8.8
09	APPENDIX	A.1 - A.XXX

# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this master plan is to evaluate the current system and submit recommendations in order to achieve a shared vision for meeting City of Little Rock parks and recreation needs over the next ten years. This plan will help guide future parks and recreation improvements in the community from 2019 to 2028.

The lead consulting firm, Lose Design, is a multi-disciplinary firm specializing in park and recreation planning and was responsible for the development of this report. The process included public engagement activities; demographic research; and facility, program, and staffing assessments. This document serves as both a strategic plan and an action plan. It provides the City of Little Rock with guidelines and strategies for future program planning efforts and capital improvement projects.

The City of Little Rock aspires to be “A City in a Park”. With this goal in mind, the City chose to embark on a master plan process, which will guide the development of recreation and cultural facilities and services into the future.



THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK.

# COMMUNITY PROFILE

The state capitol, Little Rock, situated along the Arkansas River in central Pulaski County, is the largest city in Arkansas. As the largest city in the state, it is crucial to develop well-planned and enjoyable parks and recreation facilities for the citizens of Little Rock to experience both currently and in the future. Comprehensive parks and recreation planning for a community is highly dependent on the needs of the residents and what they prefer. The preferences and lifestyles of individuals often depend on their age, education, social status, economic status, gender, and differ between every community. The profile of the community must be analyzed to better understand these needs and preferences. The planning team began researching and gathering information from past U.S. Census Bureau surveys, which included a variety of data sets relating to demographic aspects that make up a community. The data collected will be compared to that of the State of Arkansas and other similar cities around the country. This information will provide benchmarks to measure the city against to assist in judging what growth or trends may affect this community in the future, which will help determine the types and level of service the community requires in the next ten years. Deciding the appropriate approach for the future allows problems to be solved before they occur.

The Demographic factors in this section include:

## POPULATION TRENDS



## POPULATION BY AGE



## POPULATION BY GENDER



## POPULATION BY RACE & ETHNICITY



## ECONOMIC TRENDS



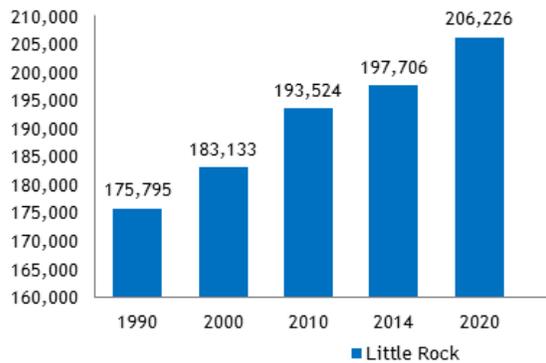
## HEALTH TRENDS





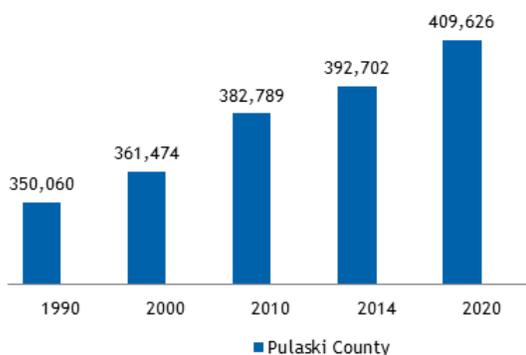
## Population Trends

Figure 1.1 Population Trends – Little Rock

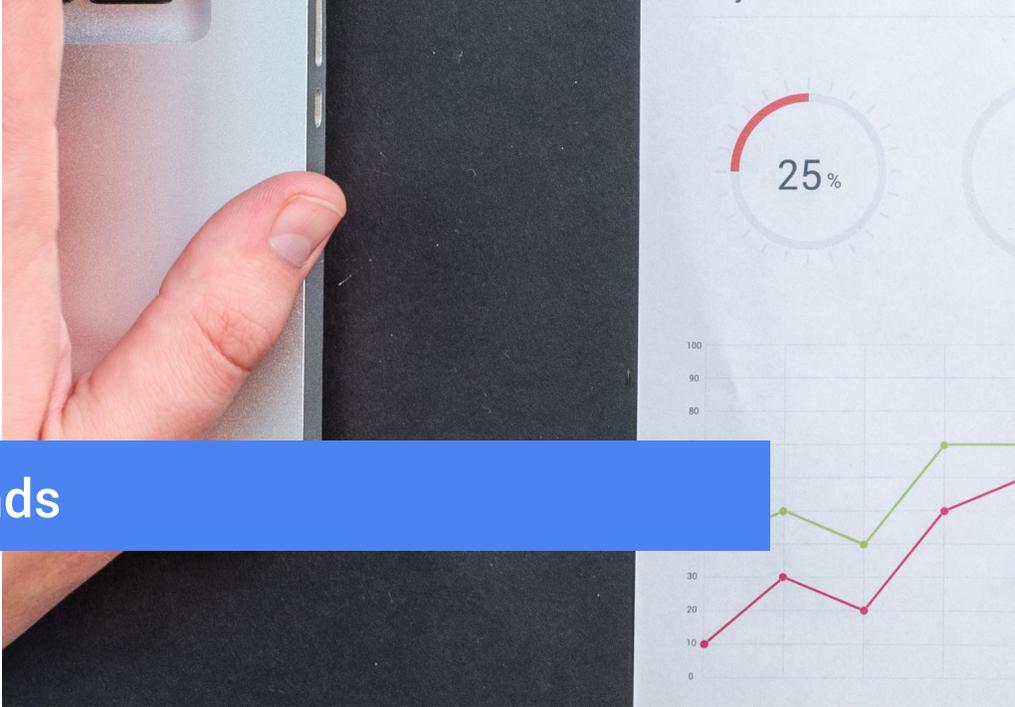


(The 2020 Little Rock population projection is percentage based off the 2020 Pulaski County projection.)

Figure 1.2 Population Trends – Pulaski County

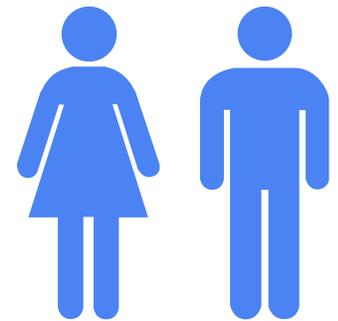


SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



# 206,226

City of Little Rock projected 2020 population



The analysis of the data collected from the U.S. Census Bureau presented information necessary to understand population trends in the City of Little Rock. The city has seen significant growth in the last 25 years and continues to grow at a steady rate. Between 1990 and the 2010 census, the city saw a growth of around 10%. Compared to other counties in Arkansas, Pulaski County has a much higher population density and therefore will require more park space for its residents, most of which live in the City of Little Rock. The parks and recreation services in Little Rock serve a much larger number of individuals than the census may indicate as people from all around Pulaski County frequent the city as well as tourists from across the country. This growth information allows the planning team to anticipate the level of demand for each park and recreation facility in the coming years. This information can be helpful in decisions focused around expansions, additions, and future programming changes to the city parks and recreation facilities.



BETWEEN 1990 AND 2010, THE CITY SAW A GROWTH AROUND **10%**

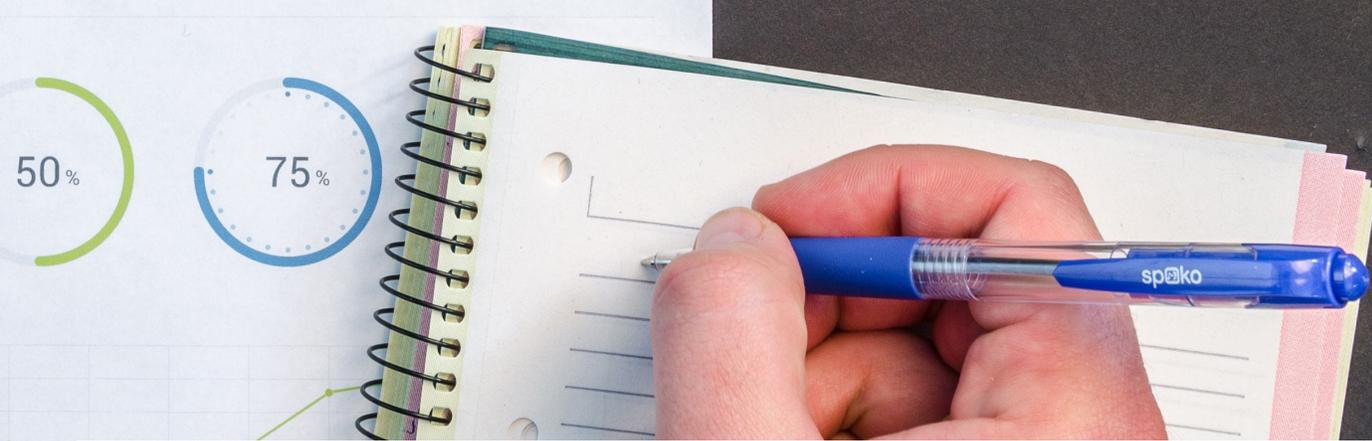
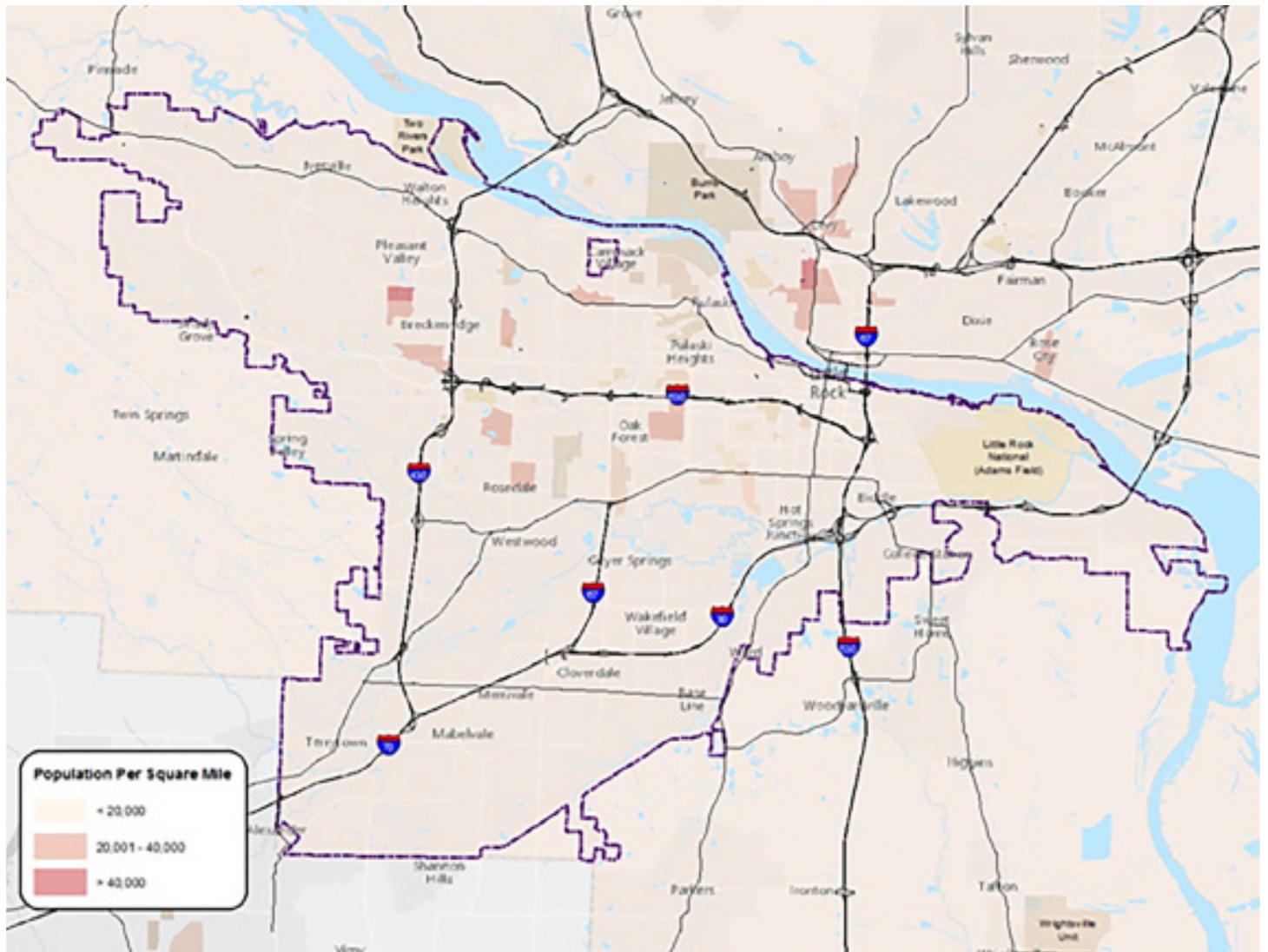


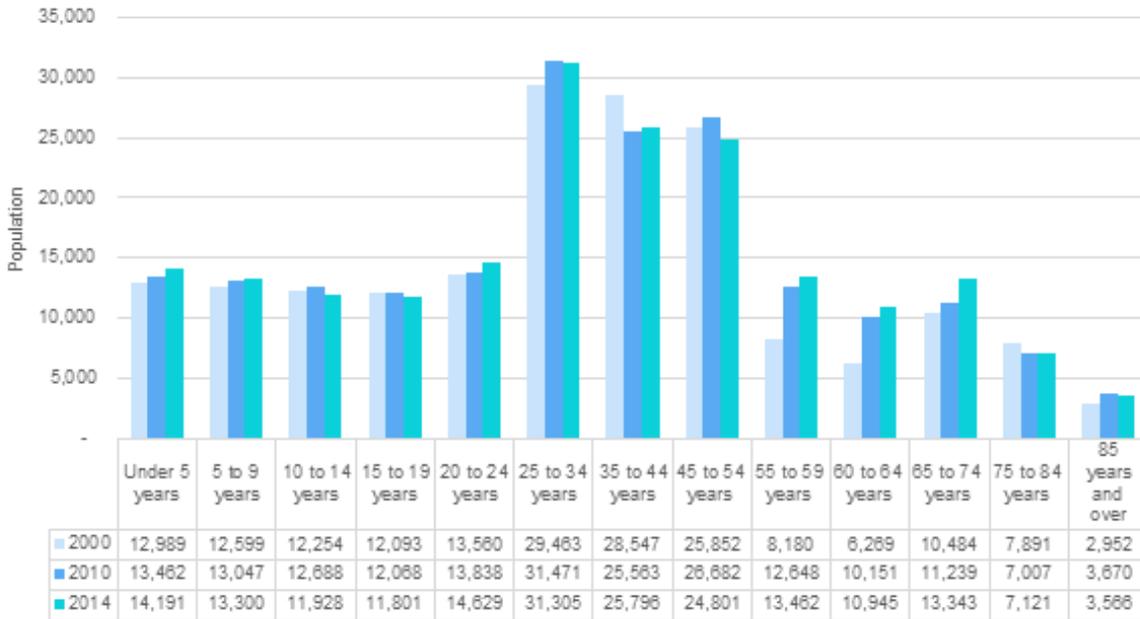
Figure 1.3 Population Density



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

The map shown below displays the population density as acquired from the 2010 census. Areas that are a deep red are the most populated. The legend provides more detailed categories based on the number of people per square mile.

**Figure 1.4** Population Growth by Age



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

## Population by Age

By understanding the age of the population being served, you can provide the proper types and quantities of recreational experiences to best meet the needs of the community. The highest population of Little Rock is adults between the ages of 25-34 years old and that number has increased along with most other age groups since the year 2000 (see figure 1.4). The top three largest age groups are all consecutive (middle age individuals between 24-54). Five age groups, 10-14, 15-19, 35-44, 45-54 and 75-84 years old, slightly decreased since 2000.



Population by Age



Population by Gender



Population by Race and Ethnicity



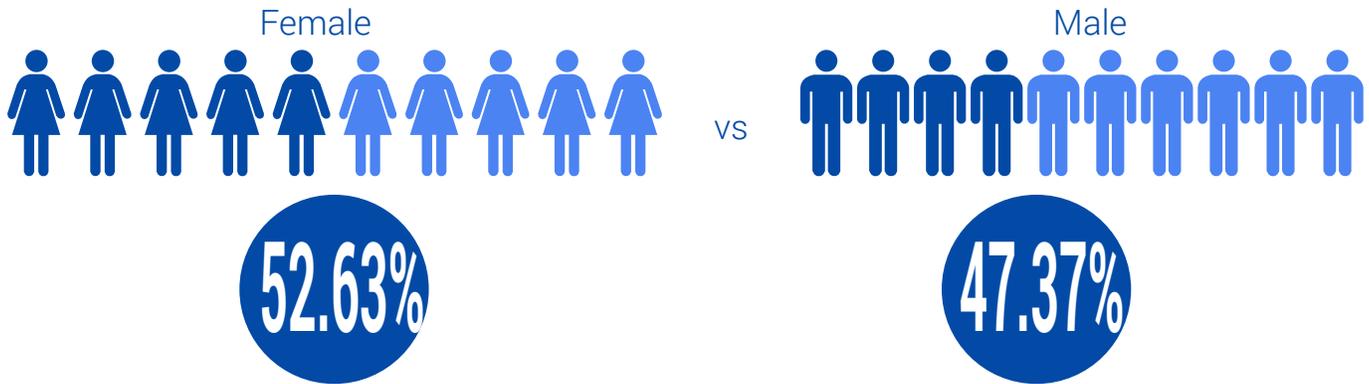
The highest population of Little Rock is adults between the ages of 25-34 years old.



**Figure 1.5 Gender**

City of Little Rock

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



### Population by Gender

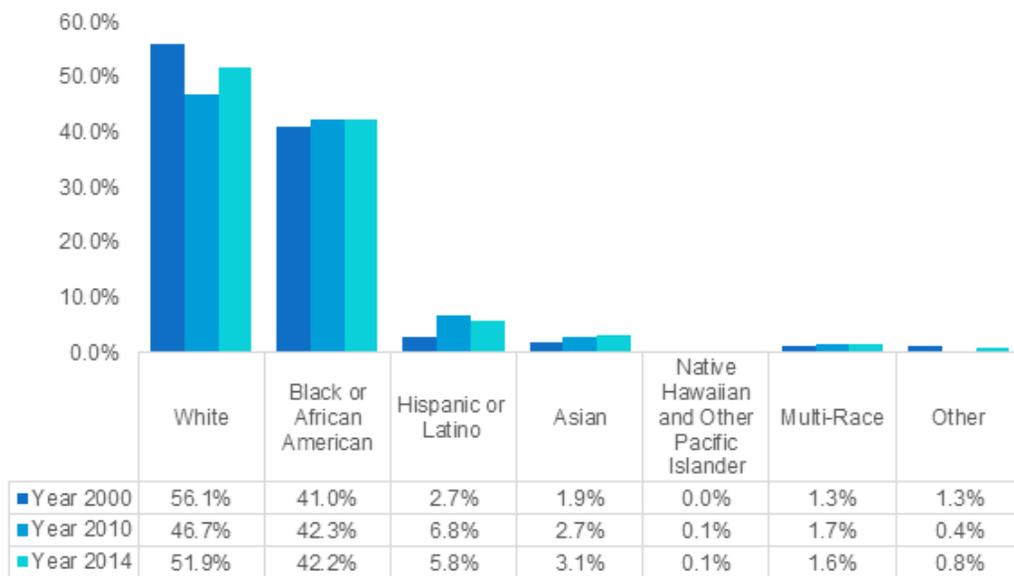
The gender information for the City of Little Rock was gathered next by the researchers. It shows that there is a higher percentage of women than men. Based on the 2014 estimates, there are approximately 5.3% more women than men in the City of Little Rock. These statistics are similar to the gender statistics for the entire country, where women still account for over half of the total population.



### Population by Race and Ethnicity

The U.S. Census Bureau provides statistics on race and ethnicity in communities. These statistics show that since the year 2000, the ethnic makeup of Little Rock has remained consistent. There has been about a 4% decrease in the Caucasian population and the Hispanic or Latino community has seen the most growth of around 3%. The City of Little Rock is already diverse, and trends point to even greater diversity in the future as African American, Asian, Hispanic, and Multi-Race populations continue to grow.

**Figure 1.6 Race and Ethnicity** SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



## Economic Trends



Information gathered by the research team regarding the economic profile of the community included the homeownership rate, poverty rate, and median household income. The economic standing of a community has an impact on parks and recreation development because of the available funding in the area and the potential benefits that new development can provide.

The median household income and the per capita income in Little Rock are thousands of dollars higher than the average for the state of Arkansas. However, as a state, Arkansas trails the national average by \$14,000 per household. The poverty rate in Little Rock should be considered a serious issue. The city has a poverty rate of 16.6% which tops the national average of 15.5%. The planning of parks and recreation facilities should keep the goal of reducing poverty and improving the lives of the impoverished individuals in mind. The average homeownership rate in Little Rock is 57% which is significantly lower than both the county and state averages. Housing units are more expensive on average in this city when compared to the county and state median values which may contribute to the lower homeownership rates.

**Figure 1.7** Income and Poverty

	City of Little Rock	Pulaski County	Arkansas
Per capita income in past 12 months (2017 dollars) 2013-2017	\$32,719	\$29,855	\$24,426
Mean household income (2017 dollars) 2013-2017	\$77,254	\$71,902	\$61,330
Persons below poverty level 2013-2017	17.8%	17.3%	18.1%

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

**Figure 1.8** Home Ownership

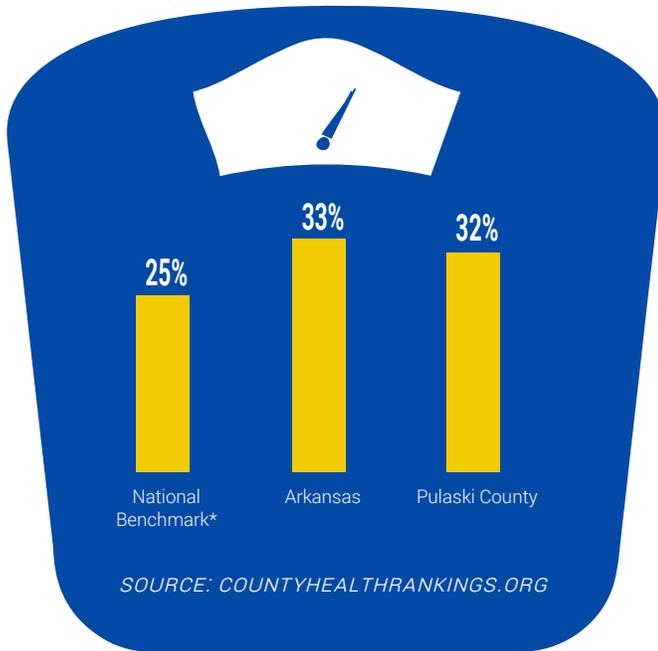
	City of Little Rock	Pulaski County	Arkansas
Housing units, 2013-2017	94,995	182,288	1,353,745
Owner Occupied Units, 2010-2014	45,121	91,503	752,633
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2010-2014	\$118,500	\$148,300	\$159,900

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



## Health Trends

Figure 1.9 Adult Obesity Rates



The health of a community can be both positively and negatively affected by the recreation opportunities present. As a state, Arkansas currently has the highest adult obesity rate in the country. Pulaski County is performing slightly better; however, it is still significantly higher than the national average (see figure 1.9). By expanding the existing recreational opportunities and facilities, and by creating new ones, it is possible that physical activity among residents can be increased and therefore will result in a positive impact on adult obesity. Getting the community to be more active should be a focus of the planning for the City of Little Rock.

## Summary

The City of Little Rock, Arkansas is a place of great diversity, history, and opportunity. Currently, the city is seeing serious issues such as high poverty rates and poor public health which should be addressed in the planning of parks and recreation facilities. There are many existing parks and a total greenway system of over 100 miles which may be improved to better suit the needs of the residents. Previous planning for the city included initiatives such as increasing accessibility to the parks and green spaces by having a park within eight blocks of every home. This vision has not fully been realized yet, but it has been very successful so far. The city has also been designated as a "Step Up to Health...It Starts at Parks" community by the National Recreation and Park Association. This program seeks to encourage residents of communities to participate in recreational activities and visit parks with the goal of improving the overall fitness, health, and happiness of the individuals and to get residents invested in their city's parks. The City of Little Rock seeks to be a "city in a park" by expanding their parks and recreation opportunities. The city takes pride in its vast expanse of green space and recreation areas. Little Rock Parks and Recreation has become the 30<sup>th</sup> accredited Parks and Recreation Agency and has received national attention for its accomplishments and excellence.



THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK.

03

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



## Summary

Community input was gathered using various techniques designed to engage a wide cross-section of the City of Little Rock's population. These methods included an On-line Survey, Steering Committee Workshop, and Pop Up Events, where members of the design team were able to have spontaneous, casual conversations about park and recreation needs with members of the public in a variety of settings throughout the City.

Collectively, over 719 individuals participated in public engagement activities providing responses that help to shape park and recreation needs and preferences across the community. As a result, the following

themes were identified:

- Current facilities and programming are not meeting community needs.
- Waterways should be highlighted and used for canoe trails and blueways.
- Individual outdoor activities, in addition to canoeing and kayaking are desired.
- Demand for golf, adult sports, and tennis are met with current facilities and programming.

## Survey

An online survey was conducted by the City of Little Rock from June 18, 2018 to June 29, 2018. Questions pertained to the quality of and demand for various Parks and Recreation Department programs, activities and facilities. In total, 189 indi-

viduals participated in the survey, providing a wide array of answers related to the Parks and Recreation Department. Questions ranged from demographic information to programmatic and facility needs and preferences.

### Survey Results *The following themes emerged from survey responses.*



*Individual activities are more popular than group activities.*



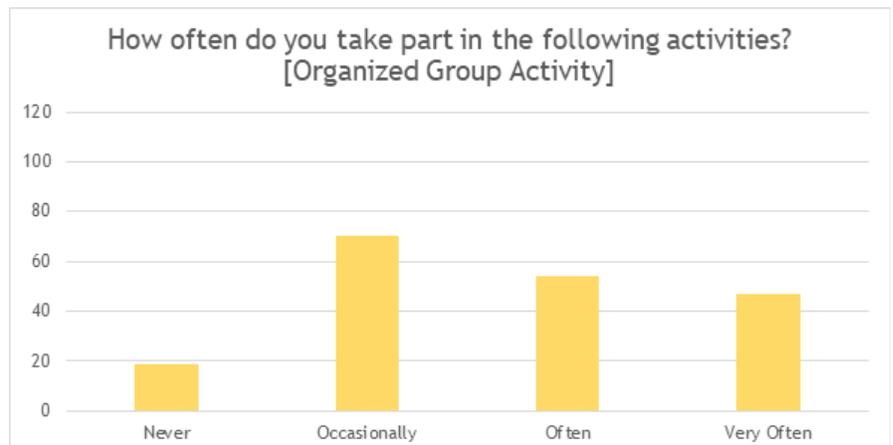
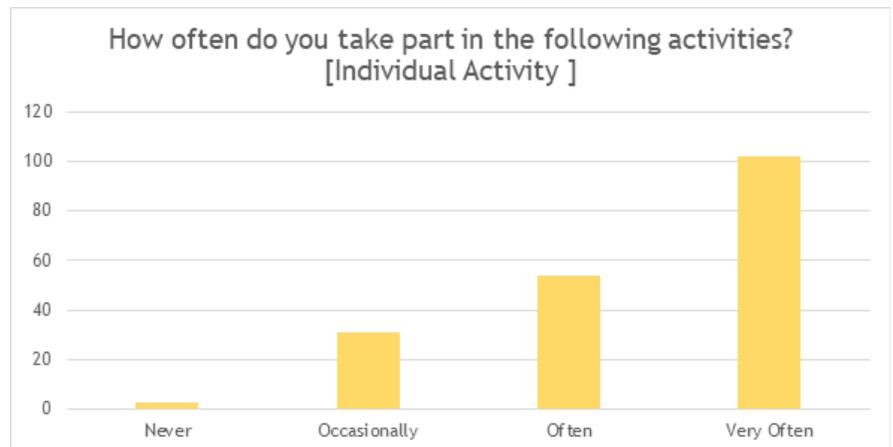
*Outdoor recreation appears to be more popular overall than organized athletics.*



*Most facilities are viewed as inadequately serving the needs of the community, except for a few specific offerings such as equestrian trails; golf courses; tennis centers; and disc golf.*

Input from the online survey reinforces observations made by the design team and insight provided by LRPR staff. While Little Rock Parks and Recreation controls significant numbers of acres and facilities, many of these assets are underutilized, designed inefficiently, or in poor condition which limits use. These factors restrict Little Rock Parks and Recreation's ability to effectively address community needs.

**102**  
 RESPONDENTS SAID THEY TAKE PART IN INDIVIDUAL RECREATION ACTIVITIES **VERY OFTEN**



# “Pop Up” Engagements

In an effort to meet customers where they are, the Parks and Recreation Department organized eight “Pop Up” events where Little Rock citizens were engaged in one-on-one conversations with Parks and Recreation staff or members of the design team. While not statistically valid, these events

produced spontaneous unfiltered responses from active members of the community. Events were located across Little Rock over the span of several weeks to and engaged nearly **530 individuals**.

## Pop Up Results

**TOP 5  
PROGRAM  
INTERESTS**

NATURE PROGRAMS  
SPECIAL EVENTS  
ADULT FITNESS /WELLNESS  
CLASSES  
MOVIES IN THE PARK  
COOKING CLASSES

**203**

RESPONDENTS RANKED  
**CANOE/KAYAK TRAILS**  
AS THE #1 **ACTIVITIES/EXERCISE**  
INTEREST

**#1**

**NATURE PROGRAMS**

RANK HIGHEST IN THE LIST OF  
PROGRAM INTERESTS

**3**

OF THE HIGHEST RATED FUTURE INTERESTS WERE:

- DEVELOP CANOE/KAYAK TRAILS
- DEVELOP URBAN PARKS & NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
- DEVELOP GREENWAYS





Results are discussed in three categories: Programs; Activities/Exercise and Future Development. Programs include Park and Recreation offerings like organized classes or special events. Activities/Exercise include opportunities such as independent sports and interests like bird watching or gardening. The Future Development category asks what physical improvements the residents would like to see constructed related to parks and recreation. This might include aquatics facilities, nature centers, trails, etc.

# Results Results Results

## Programs

The top five programs according to the Pop-Up events were: Nature Programs; Special Events; Adult Fitness/Wellness Classes; Movies in the Park; and Cooking Classes. These top interests were immediately followed by programming addressing the needs of youth such as, teen programs, camps (summer and school breaks), and before and after school programming. Outdoor dining and programs for people with disabilities round out the top ten.

Athletic programming such as marathons, 5ks, adult and youth athletics did not receive as much interest as some of the less competitive, nature based and community-oriented programming options.

## Activities/Exercise

By far, the activity or exercises with the greatest amount of interest was Canoe/Kayak Trails. This is not too surprising given Little Rock's incredible access to water. However, access to these waters could be much improved and interested boaters could benefit from the development of blueways with designated launches and routes.

Other high interest activities were other outdoor activities such as cycling, walking and running. Organized field sports and casual "pick-up" sports also made the top ten in this category.



*Images this page represent the Pop Up Engagements held throughout the community.*



## Future Development

Survey participants were asked how future investment and development of existing and future facilities should be directed. Paddle sport and canoe and kayak trails were the most popular. Smaller pocket parks and neighborhood parks ranked second overall. Greenway and nature trail development also ranked very high, reinforcing the idea of individual outdoor facilities being highly desired by the community.

## Conclusion

In summary, the public input process was designed to engage the Little Rock community through online and spontaneous onsite activities to determine park and recreation needs. Feedback consistently illustrated the communities desire for additional outdoor recreation facilities like canoe and kayak trails and greenways. The team also heard that current facilities and programs are not adequately meeting the needs of the community. This information was advanced in developing recommendations found in this plan.

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK.

# STAFFING ASSESSMENT

## Introduction

Staffing is a significant topic which requires continuous study, discussion, analyzation, and adjustment in order to meet the needs of the public and the staff. An essential note, when adding staff, recruit the best. Recruitment and retainment of the top employees should be the goal for Little Rock Parks and Recreation (LRPR). It is important to check-in with staff periodically for their well-being and to ask for ideas on improving LRPR. A continuous improvement mode needs to be the norm for all staff members. Once hired, supervisors should encourage staff to receive additional certification to keep them involved in the learning process. An educated staff is the best for LRPR's future. Staff recently shared positive ideas for enhancing staff appreciation and recognition. It's important to review all staff comments and develop goals to support their input. Staff input will be invaluable in planning for LRPR's future.

## Analysis Methods

### METHOD 1

Comparable Agencies or Benchmark Agencies - Benchmarking is a process of using similar data points to measure one agency against another. There are national benchmarks for which items such as staffing can be compared to see if an individual agency is fully staffed or understaffed in full-time positions.

### METHOD 2

The primary purpose of reorganizing staff is to improve services and streamline communication among staff members and between LRPR staff and the general public.

### METHOD 3

Current LRPR Organization Charts were analyzed for alignment, balance of job duties, areas of expertise of staff members, and number of direct reports. Reorganizing current staff, recommending vacancy hires or reassignment of funds, and requesting additional staff members are a result of this analysis.

### METHOD 4

In the *City of Little Rock 2018 Annual Operating Budget*, p. 121, there are **158 full-time positions** listed as approved in the 2018 budget for LRPR. In the 2018 LRPR Organization Charts, there are **145 full-time positions** listed. LRPR Organization charts need to be aligned to the City of Little Rock 2018 Operating Budget and reflect approved full-time positions along with those that are currently vacant.

### METHOD 5

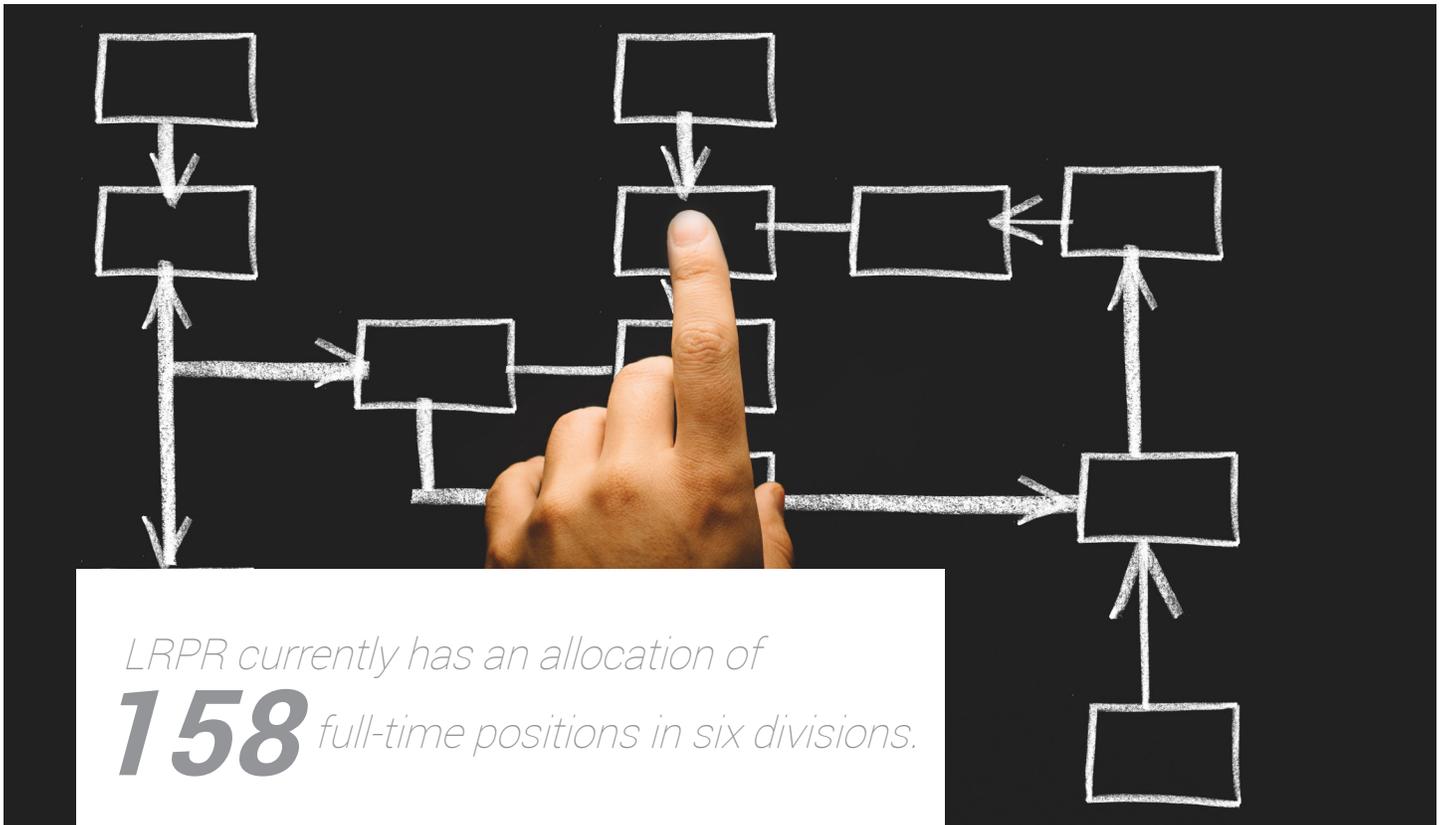
New Organizations Charts have been created with recommended changes.

### METHOD 6

LRPR Leadership staff met on May 23, 2018 for 2.5 hours to participate in a workshop. Staffing items for discussion included critical issues facing the department, challenges with maintenance and the management structure, top five facility needs in the system, discussions on best and least served user groups and partnership status and opportunities.

### METHOD 7

A staff survey, *Envisioning the Future for LRPR – 2018 Staff Survey*, was created, completed, and analyzed. Recommendations from the survey will be included throughout the LRPR Master Plan. Overall, staff comments and suggestions were excellent and helpful in developing recommendations for LRPR.



## Organization Structure and Staffing

The Director of LRPR reports to the City Manager and ultimately, to the Mayor and Board of Directors. Additionally, the Director works closely with the members of the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Parks and Recreation Commission has 11 members, with three-year terms of service. The purpose of each commissioner is: "To review, consult, and advise the City on matters concerning the operation and maintenance of the Parks and Recreation Department and on matters pertaining to the implementation of the Master Parks Plan, and significant issues involving or affecting these matters shall be referred to and considered by the Commission prior to consideration by the Little Rock City Board of Directors."

Source: <https://www.littlerock.gov/city-administration/city-boards-and-commissions/parks-and-recreation-commission/>

The Director has recently been hired to lead LRPR and is working to develop relationships with and between the Management Team leaders, as well as community leaders. Little Rock Parks and Recreation currently has an allocation of 158 full-time positions in six divisions with all Division Leaders reporting to the Director, as well as three additional direct reports:

- Administration Division
- Operations Division
- Recreation Programming Division
- Golf & Tennis Division
- Parks Design Division
- Marathon Division

(Source: City of Little Rock 2018 Annual Operating Budget)

Additionally, there are three other direct reports to the Director:

- Marketing & Communication (Vacant)
- Volunteers
- Administrative Assistant

Source: 2018 LRPR Organization Charts

The Management Team meets regularly to plan, problem solve, coordinate, budget, and lead LRPR. The Marketing and Communications Coordinator position is currently vacant and needs to be a top priority for filling. The Volunteer Coordinator's position and the Administrative Assistant are filled as full-time positions.

The Director has a high level of responsibility, not only to staff, but to the City Manager, Mayor, the Parks and Recreation Commission, plus the general public. Recommendations will follow to streamline all divisions within LRPR for a tightly aligned system. Balancing the job responsibilities within each division, moving several positions to different divisions that seem more appropriate for the assigned job duties, and prioritizing the stated needs of LRPR will also be included in the recommendations. From the perspective of the LRPR staff, maintenance issues have become the number one priority for additional staffing in the area of *Parks and Facility Maintenance*. The number two priority for additional staffing is in the area of *Recreation Programs and Facility Management*.

To summarize, the Director currently has nine direct reports, who each have a wide variety of responsibilities in each division. For the purposes of reporting, each Division leader will be counted in their Division. Therefore, the Director (1 position), Parks Volunteer Coordinator (1 position), Parks Marketing and Communication Coordinator (1 vacant position) and the Administrative Assistant (1 position) will be collectively counted as a group:

*Source: Envisioning the Future for LRPR – 2018 Staff Survey*

## Administration/Resources Division

The Administration/Resources Division is responsible for creating and maintaining the budget. Additionally, this division is in charge of Human Resources and the CAPRA Accreditation (Source: 2018 LRPR Resources Organization Chart). Positions include: Deputy Director of Parks, Special Programs Coordinator, Revenue Compliance Analyst, Administrative Assistant I, and Resource Specialist for a total of 5 positions, including the Deputy Director. The location of their offices is in the main part of the building, which is centrally located for easy access to the public.

*Source: 2018 LRPR Organization Charts*

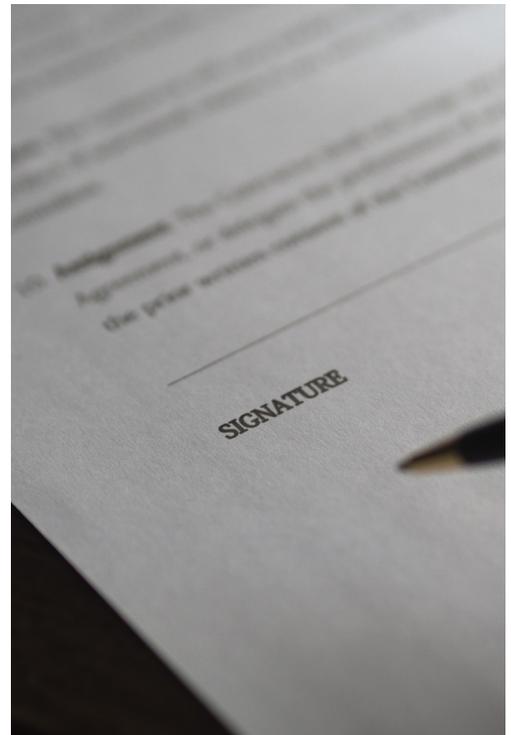
## Operations Division

The Operations Division provides administrative, advisory, organizational, coordinating, maintenance, management of consultants and assessment tasks for Little Rock Parks and Recreation

*Source: 2018 LRPR Operations Division Organization Chart*

The Deputy Director of Operations (1 position) has responsibility for the following positions:

- Maintenance and Construction Manager (1 position): Performs preventative maintenance, building maintenance, and developmental services for LRPR. 3 full-time positions listed below report to this manager and include:
  - Construction and Development Coordinator – 1 (Coordinator) position for a total of 1 position
  - Maintenance Support Supervisor – 1 (Supervisor) + 2 posi-



## Administration / Resources Division

Total Full-Time Positions = 9  
Total Full-Time Vacant Positions = 1  
Summary Total of F-T Positions = 9

## Operations Division

Total Full-Time Positions = 72  
Total Full-Time Vacant Positions = 8  
Summary Total of F-T Positions = 80



## Recreation Division

Total Full-Time Positions = 40

Total Full-Time Vacant Positions = 4

Summary Total of F-T Positions = 44

tions + 2 vacant positions, for a total of 5 positions.

- Construction and Development Supervisor – 1 (Supervisor) + 12 positions, for a total of 13 positions.
- Maintenance Manager (1 position): Maintains the landscaping, litter. Full-time positions listed below report to this manager:
  - Park Horticulturist – 1 position + Supervisor I reports to Park Horticulturist 1 position, for a total of 2 positions.
  - Reports to Supervisor 1 and maintains Riverfront Park, Bill Clark Wetlands, and Downtown Public Areas; 4 full-time positions + 4 vacant positions, for a total of 8 positions.
  - Parks Maintenance Superintendent (Vacant) (Mows and string trims 23 premier parks; maintains and installs the LRPR irrigation system and flowerbeds) – 11 positions and 2 vacant positions, for a total of 13 positions.
  - Urban Forester – 6 positions total.
  - Sports Field Supervisor II – 4 positions total.
  - Supervisor I East Maintenance – 3 positions total.
  - Supervisor I North Maintenance – 1 position total.
  - Supervisor I West Maintenance – 1 position total.

Source: 2018 LRPR Organization Charts

## Programming Recreation Division

The Recreation Division maintains and operates programming at LRPR's Community Centers and Sports Complexes.

Source: 2018 LRPR Recreation Division Organization Chart

The Recreation Program Manager (1 position) supervises the following positions:

- MacArthur Museum Supervisor – 2 positions total.
- Therapeutic Recreation Supervisor – 3 positions total.
- Recreation Supervisor Senior Programs – 1 position total.
- Recreation Program Coordinator – 22 positions and 4 vacancies, for a total of 26 positions.
- Recreation Athletic and Playground Supervisor – 4 positions total.
- Jim Dailey Fitness and Aquatic Center – 7 positions total.

Source: 2018 LRPR Organization Charts

## Golf and Tennis Division

The Golf and Tennis Division operates and maintains Rebsamen Golf Course, a 27-hole golf facility with pro shop, full-service concession and driving range; War Memorial Golf Course, an 18-hole course with pro shop; Hindman Golf Course, an 18-hole course with pro shop and driving range; and Rebsamen Tennis Center, a facility with 17 outdoor lighted courts (Source: 2018 LRPR Golf and Tennis Division Organization Chart). The Parks Golf and Tennis Manager (1 position) is responsible for the following positions:

- Facility Supervisor Rebsamen Golf – 8 positions + 1 vacant position, for a total of 9 positions.
- Facility Supervisor War Memorial Golf – 5 positions total.
- Facility Supervisor Hindman Golf – 6 positions total.
- Rebsamen Tennis Facility Supervisor – 2 positions + 1 vacant position, for a total of 3 positions.

Source: 2018 LRPR Organization Charts

## Capital Development (Design)

The Design Division plans and directs the activities of the Design Division relative to the development of master plans and construction plans for park improvement projects and to ensure the design and construction of parks facilities are environmentally, aesthetically, and economically feasible (Source: 2018 LRPR Design Division Organization Chart). The Division leader is the Parks Design Manager (1 position) and supervises the following positions:

- Parks Planner II – 1 position total.
- Safety Coordinator – 1 position total.
- Construction Project Scheduler – 1 position total.

Source: 2018 LRPR Organization Charts

## Other/Marathon Division

The Marathon Events Division operates and produces the Little Rock Marathon, Half Marathon, 10K, and 5K runs. Positions include: Little Rock Marathon Coordinators (2 positions), Marathon Assistant (1 position), and Marathon Security and Operations Assistant (1 position) for a total of 4 positions.

## Golf and Tennis Division

Total Full-Time Positions = 6

Total Full-Time Vacant positions = 2

Summary Total of F-T Positions = 8

## Capital Development

Total Full-Time Positions = 4

Total Vacant Full-Time Positions = 0

Summary Total of F-T Positions = 4

## Other (Marathon Division)

Total Full-Time Positions = 4

Total Vacant Full-Time Positions = 0

Summary Total of F-T Positions = 4



The total staff positions as shown in the 2018 LRPR operating budget are shown below in Table 4.1

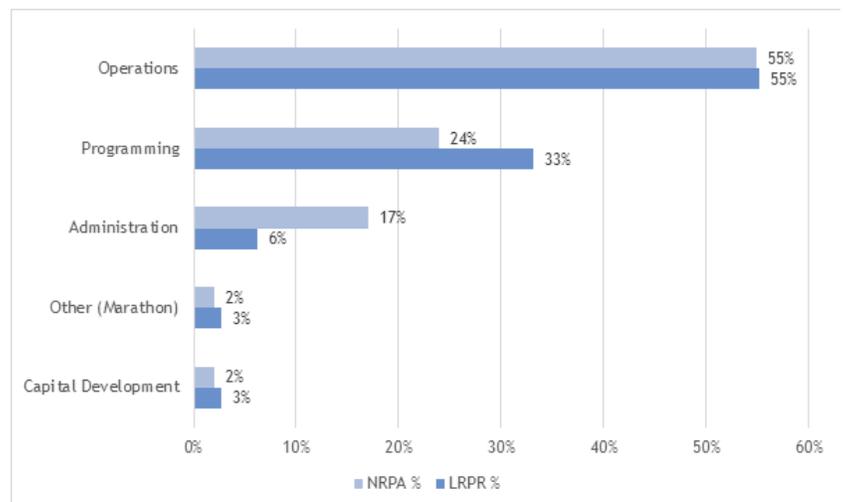
**Table 4.1** 2018 LRPR Organization Charts - Full-Time/Vacant Positions

DIVISIONS	F-T POSITIONS	F-T VACANT POSITIONS	TOTAL F-T POSITIONS
Director's Division (Division leaders will be counted in each Division)	3	1	4
Resources/Administration Division	5	0	5
Operations Division	52	8	60
Recreation Division (Includes JD Fitness & Aquatics – 7 F-T)	40	4	44
Golf & Tennis Division (Golf)	22	2	24
Design Division	4	0	4
Marathon Division	4	0	4
Total F-T for LRPR	130	15	145

Source: 2018 LRPR Organization Charts

Staffing by division is detailed in the table below. When compared to NRPA national averages (Figure 4.1), LRPR is comparable with the exception of Programming and Administration Divisions. Programming exceeds national expectations in terms of staffing at 33% of the total Department. Conversely, the Administration Division is less than half of reported NRPA averages at 6%.

**Figure 4.1** Staffing Comparison to NRPA Benchmarks



Source: 2018 LRPR Organization Charts & 2018 NRPA Park Metrics



# LRPR Staffing of Full-Time Positions

Table 4.2 explains the number of full-time positions that have been adopted in the **City of Little Rock Annual Operating Budget**. The gains that were made in staffing increases in 2017 were lost in 2018.

**Table 4.2** City of Little Rock Annual Operating Budget FT Positions

A comparison with other departments (Figure 4.2) within the *City of Little Rock 2018 Allocation of Full-Time Personnel* shows LRPR is 7.3% of the total allocation for Little Rock, equating to 5<sup>th</sup> in the ranking of all departments.

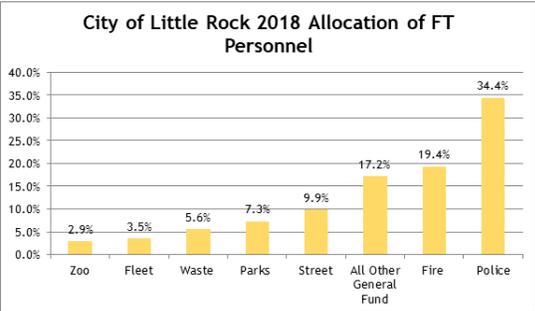
GENERAL FUND	2016 ADOPTED BUDGET	2017 ADOPTED BUDGET	2018 ADOPTED BUDGET
Parks & Recreation	127	130	128
Golf	22	22	21
Jim Dailey Fitness Center	9	9	9
Total FT Positions	158	161	158

Source: City of Little Rock 2018 Annual Operating Budget, p. 121

## Staffing Vacancies

Staffing for LRPR has remained flat or decreased for the past three years. Currently, there are **15 (based on Org charts)** vacant positions that are unfilled shown in Table 4.3 (Source: *2018 LRPR Organization Charts*). Although the budget for the vacancies is included in the *City of Little Rock 2018 Annual Operating Budget*, the positions remain unfilled and the budget remains with the City's Operating Funds. There are several key positions that are vacant that need to be filled with expediency. Specifically, The Parks Marketing and Communications Coordinator position, which is highly supported by the staff per the *Envisioning the Future for LRPR – 2018 Staff Survey*, ranking number one on their list of "Most Important Positions that Need to be Added to LRPR".

**Figure 4.2** City of Little Rock FT Staff Allocation



Source: City of Little Rock 2018 Annual Operating Budget, p. 120

The current vacancies listed in the 2018 LRPR Organization Charts are across the following divisions:

**Table 4.3** Existing Unfilled FT Parks Positions

DIVISION	SPECIFIC NAMES OF VACANT POSITIONS	NUMBER OF VACANCIES
Management Team Division	Parks Marketing and Communications Coordinator	1
Operations, Improvement & Development	Parks Maintenance Worker Senior	2
Maintenance, Landscape & Urban Division	Parks Maintenance Worker Senior	1
Maintenance, Landscape & Urban Division	Parks Maintenance Worker	1
Maintenance, Landscape & Urban Division	River Market Downtown Service Maintenance Worker	1
Maintenance, Landscape & Urban Division	Parks Maintenance Worker Main Street	1
Maintenance, Landscape & Urban Division	Maintenance Mows/Trims Supervisor	1
Maintenance, Landscape & Urban Division	Parks Mowing Crew and Parks Landscape Crew	1
Recreation Division	Recreation Programmer	3
Recreation Division	Maintenance/Custodian	1
Golf & Tennis Division	Tennis-Cash Register Operator	1
Golf & Tennis Division	Parks Maintenance Worker	1
<b>Total # of Full-Time Vacancies for LRPR</b>		<b>15</b>

Source: LRPR 2018 Staffing Analysis

## Staffing Effectively for Programs

Surveying the public on a regular basis about *Future Development of Parks and Facilities* and *Programming Needs* for LRPR is important for current functioning and future visioning. The public should be viewed and involved as a partner in the improvement process. Input is sought, gained, compiled, analyzed, and included in future planning for LRPR. When the public was surveyed at various times and locations in 2018 about *Future Development of Parks and Facilities*, the top ideas included:

- Develop Canoe/Kayak Water Trails
- Develop Urban Pocket Parks and Neighborhood Parks
- Develop Mountain Bike and Nature Trails
- Develop Greenways
- Develop Nature Centers
- Develop Health and Wellness Community Centers
- Provide Modern Aquatic Facilities
- Develop Modern Sports Field/Tournament Complexes
- Renovate/Improve Existing Facilities

Source: Little Rock Parks and Recreation – 2018 Pop-Up Surveys on Future Development and Facilities Compilation

The public was also surveyed about their interest in programming that will meet their interests and needs. The public rated their top choices for program offerings when they were surveyed at various times and locations in 2018 as follows:

- Nature programs
- Community special events (concerts, green markets, etc.)
- Adult fitness/wellness
- Movies in the park
- Teen programs
- Cooking classes
- Camps (summer/school break)
- Before and after school programs
- Outdoor dining
- Programs for people with disabilities
- Youth fitness/wellness
- Adult learn to swim
- Youth learn to swim
- GED/continuing education (degree, trade)



Source: Little Rock Parks and Recreation – Pop-up Surveys on Programming Compilation



For every new program that is added, additional staffing needs to be considered, unless a current program is being removed. All current programs need to be analyzed for attendance/participation rates and revenue generating ability. Following the completion of a recommendation to write consistent standards for creating new programs in LRPR, all programs should be analyzed for effectiveness. If programs do not meet the requirements of the newly written guidelines for programs, then staffing can be shifted to create new programs that fit within the parameters. Any future development of facilities, parks, or programming comes with additional staffing needs. “In order to attract and retain the most qualified people to serve their communities, park and recreation agencies must offer competitive compensation-not just base salaries, but also the possibility of bonuses. In addition, potential

employees also consider other benefits when choosing an employer, including healthcare, retirement plans and paid time off (vacation and sick days).”

Little Rock currently is the frontrunner in population growth for Arkansas, which is approximately 2%. “The area’s fastest-growing sector is retail, and the city is developing an entrepreneurial culture that is expected to bring in more young college graduates.” The median age in Little Rock is 35.9, with 52.13% being female and 47.87% being male. LRPR needs to study the current demographics of the public and plan new facilities and programs to meet those requested needs. Newly hired staff should be able to work well with the public and be trained and well-versed in technology to ensure that LRPR is current, progressive, and moving forward.

Source: [www.worldpopulationreview.com](http://www.worldpopulationreview.com)

## Staff Benchmarking

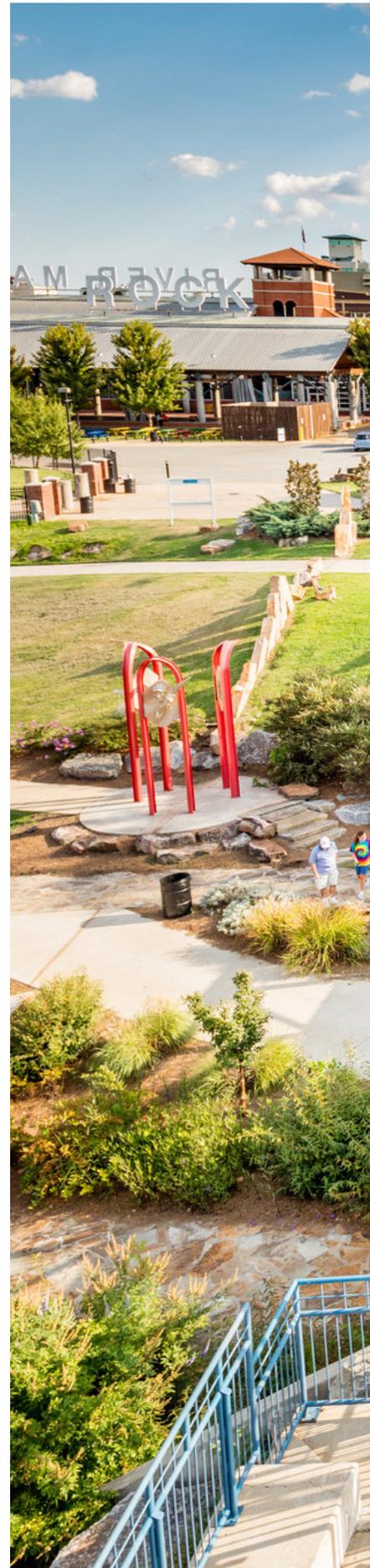
The number of employees per 10,000 residents is a standard benchmark comparison. NRPA Park Metrics national benchmarking database indicates that the median FTE employees for parks and recreation departments nationwide is 7.3 as shown in Table 4.3. For local governments with population of 100,000 to 250,000 or more the median is 7.2 and the benchmark for the top 25% of agencies serving populations of 100,000 to 250,000 is 12.8 employees. Little Rock Parks and Recreation accounts for 7.26 employees per 10,000 residents based on the current filled positions. While Little Rock right at the median benchmark nationally, it is well behind the top 25% agencies and the comparison benchmark communities of Springfield-Greene County, MO and Grand Prairie, TX. Mobile is slightly above the Little Rock benchmark while Knoxville is considerably lower. The Knoxville staffing numbers do not represent the golf course maintenance workers as the city has a contract with a private vendor to operate golf course operations. If golf staff was included, Knoxville would likely be more in line with the Little Rock benchmark.

**Table 4.4** Staffing Comparison to Benchmark Communities

DEPARTMENT	TOTAL FT EMPLOYEES	POPULATION	Employees/10k Persons
<b>Little Rock, AR</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>199,500</b>	<b>7.92</b> (includes vacancies) <b>7.26</b> (minus the 13 vacancies)
Springfield-Greene County, MO	209	251,478	12.49
Grand Prairie, TX	246	193,837	12.69
Mobile, AL	152	191,926	7.9
Knoxville, TN	73	188,325	3.88
Overall National Benchmark			7.3
100k to 250k Agency Benchmark Median			7.2
100k to 250k Agency Benchmark Top 25%			12.8

Source: [www.worldpopulationreview.com](http://www.worldpopulationreview.com), for Little Rock, AR; Springfield-Greene County, MO; Grand Prairie, TX; Mobile, AL; and Knoxville, TN

Going forward, the department will need additional staff to keep pace with new facility development. The department should also look at staffing recommendations in this plan and where positions are eliminated, use these budgeted funds to expand programming and maintenance operations with the department.





## Riverfront Park

With the continued development of Riverfront Park, water programs are being requested as a high priority from the public. Kayaking/canoeing is currently provided by a private vendor located in the River Market Building. Their focus is currently on Arkansas River, but the belief is that they might consider expanding to Fourche Creek, too, as a venue. Riverfront operations currently is responsible for not only 33 acres (two acres of planting beds and twenty acres of lawn and impervious surfaces making up the balance) in Riverfront Park, but also Bill Clark Wetland (nine acres wetland, boardwalk and two pavilions); Clinton Island (a little more of ten acres sandbar and soft trail); Main Street (rain gardens and bioswales); and surrounding River Market District that need mowing and trimmed for aesthetics (six acres). Current operations structure is eight full-time and four part-time staff. Consider outsourcing mowing for at least one third of the current mowing schedule for LRPR. Then, those staff members could be transferred to higher priority maintenance needs across LRPR.

Develop a procedure that defines and sets expectations for identifying, reporting and responding to emergency, quick response and safety repairs, general repairs and routine maintenance concerns. The procedure should include the communication protocol for identifying, reporting and follow-up and defines the roles and expectations.

## Funding Concerns Affecting Staffing

At a time when LRPR maintenance issues are mounting, per the *Envisioning the Future for LRPR – 2018 Staff Survey*, and the funding from the City of Little Rock is flat, it appears that LRPR continues to struggle with meeting the needs of the public and staff with decaying facilities, increasing maintenance problems, flight to other cities for athletic competitions, and an overall sense of frustration from the public and staff:

- 2018 Adopted Budget for Parks and Recreation is \$10,637,313 (increase of 3.87%),
- Golf is \$2,321,299 (decrease of 6.9%),
- Jim Dailey Fitness and Aquatic Center is

\$908,180 (decrease of .84%), and

- RiverMarket is \$1,276,715 (increase of 9.88%)

All LRPR staff need to become more focused on programs that are revenue generating, along with considering the input of the public. Surveying the staff and the public on a regular basis assists in keeping LRPR on the trajectory of meeting the goals and objectives of the department. A few key vacancies need to be filled, and the funding for other vacancies could be shifted to the Operating Budget to fund the highest priority items deemed important by LRPR.

Source: *City of Little Rock 2018 Annual Operating Budget*, pages: 97, 113, 229

Source: *Envisioning the Future for LRPR – 2018 Staff Survey*



## Leadership Succession Planning

LRPR has several long-term employees throughout the organization, including some in key management positions. As these employees reach retirement over the next several years, there will be an increasing drain of institutional knowledge. The department needs to capture the knowledge of the long-term employees in management plans and the development of policies

and create a leadership plan. The plan includes the identification of staff with potential for promotion and the provision of additional targeted training to develop new leaders. Opportunities should be provided for staff to see professional certifications and attend relevant conferences.



## Key Observations and Summary Recommendations

- Director** - Recommend quarterly reviews by the Director and selected staff from the Management Team of all priority maintenance issues to ensure appropriate budgets and staff time are properly allocated.
- Director** - Vacant positions need to be reviewed, posted, or reassigned to a different division. There are numerous vacancies that either need to be filled or take the budget allotted for those positions and move it to where the highest priority costs are located (examples include - maintenance, upgrading facilities, resurfacing parking lots, and many other areas).
- Director** - Organization (Org) Charts should be readable and used for alignment to the agency's mission, vision, and goals. Org Charts should be layered and should connect, from one page to the next. For LRPR, the recommendation is to make the Org Charts easier to follow and read. Having to use a magnifying glass to determine all positions that are filled and vacant, makes this Org Chart not user friendly. An additional recommendation is to include contact information for each division leader.
- Director** - There are several options for contracting/hiring a grant writer: 1) Hire a grant writer on a restricted contract that requires the person to fund their salary through acquired grants, 2) Hire a grant writer as a consultant with a suggested hourly wage of between \$25-\$100, depending on their experience, or 3) Hire a full-time grant writer (through the shifting of F-T vacant positions), at an average base salary of \$61,108 to \$76,604, plus benefits. It is recommended if you decide on the F-T grant writer, that they receive a yearly contract, based on the grant funding they can generate.
- Director** - For all divisions, the Director should study past evaluations of all Management Team Members, then, meet individually with each one to review their submitted, measureable goals and objectives for their division. Recommend having Management Team leaders tie the submission of all division goals and objectives to the budgeting process. All budget requests should be based on goals and objectives for that division and should not be approved for moving forward in the budget, unless they are aligned to results.
- Director** - Following the analysis of each administrative position for alignment, fill the Parks Marketing and Communications Coordinator. This position is pivotal to the success of LRPR. In the Envisioning the Future for LRPR

– 2018 Staff Survey, there is strong support for filling this position. There are many responsibilities that are not being addressed due to the absence of a person in that position. The website needs immediate attention and social media needs to be utilized to promote current events, and to tell the positive story about LRPR.

- **Director and Administration**

- Each Management Team member should analyze all job descriptions for people under their leadership. Revise any outdated or unclear job descriptions throughout LRPR and City of Little Rock Human Resources.

- **Administration** - City of LR 2018 Annual Operating Budget (p. 247) - LRPR needs an employee recognition program. Consider reviewing the success of the Fire Department's 2018 Department Goal-"Annual Employee Recognition Program". Review the 103 suggestions from staff on "Question #9 – Offer two suggestions for enhancing staff appreciation/recognition" from the Envisioning the Future for LRPR – 2018 Staff Survey. Create a cross section group of staff members to hone the suggestions into an action plan for how LRPR can offer recognition and support for all staff members.

- **Administration** - Organization Charts for LRPR need to be revised, summarized, and publicized. Citizens need to un-

derstand how the organization functions and who to contact with questions and/or concerns.

- **Administration** - Seek a meeting with a local technical school, whereby LRPR can recruit students to train for mowing and with the approval of the college, they can use their experience for class credit. LRPR would cover the students for insurance and liability.

- **Administration** - Analyze each administrative position for job responsibilities, aligning each position to the goals and objectives of LRPR. Level and number of responsibilities for each position should be balanced.

- **Administration** - Align the following LRPR documents: 1) Parks Personnel Allocation to Programs-Percentages, 2) LRPR Organization Charts, and 3) City of Little Rock 2018 Annual Operating Budget, p. 12; and staffing numbers vary as presented as 146 or 158.

- **Administration** – (Volunteer Coordinator reassigned to Administration) - With so many current employees being, "Home Grown", a "Mentorship Program" should be established with younger, full-time staff members. Encourage college/university students to continue working for LRPR by assigning an experienced mentor to guide and encourage them.

- **Operations and Administration**

- A high priority is to analyze the positions of the maintenance staff, how they receive work orders and closure rates, the lines of communication, and who they report to on a regular basis. Reorganizing maintenance staff and streamlining the work completion process should assist in clearing the backlog of maintenance requests. Work with local tech schools and the University of Arkansas-Little Rock to have interns work with experienced maintenance workers on simpler projects (in the beginning). Then, as the interns gain experience and confidence, hire them into the LRPR summer intern positions. Have the Senior Maintenance Leaders create teams, set goals for decreasing the backlog of requests and reward their efforts with something they select from a newly created list of suggestions from staff on recognition/rewards.

- **Operations** - In the City of Little Rock 2018 Annual Operating Budget Book, p. 227, Percentage of Active Projects Managed Monthly is low from 44% in 2016 to 56% in 2018 and Total Projects Completed Annually has improved from 18 in 2016 to 55 in 2018. The positions associated with Maintenance (Worker, Worker-Senior, Superintendent, Supervisor, Leader, Manager) appear to be spread across 10/14 Divisional Organization



Charts. An analysis of the time it takes for a work order to be completed, from entry to completion, needs to be conducted. The chain of communication between and by maintenance staff, between the numerous divisions involved, needs to be mapped out with the ultimate goal of being a well-organized and effective team.

- **Operations** - Continue to monitor the progress of the revised mowing plan that has been implemented in the last year. Consider outsourcing 1/3 of the mowing and add a weather clause to the contract, in case of excessive or lack of rain that would significantly minimize the number of mow cycles a contractor would be required to complete.
- **Operations** - Maintenance workers were transferred to the Riverfront 10 years ago to help with the project. Now that the project appears to be running effectively, reassign the maintenance workers to complete the large backlog of maintenance and preventative maintenance across LRPR.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position)** - A thorough analysis of the Recreation staffing needs to be reviewed with the comparable agencies. An example is to review the number of programs offered in relation to the number of staff

serving in recreation. Recreation Staff are typically the frontline staff for working with the public and can be LRPR's most positive advocates.

- **Recreation and Special Events (new position)** - Consider rate of pay and percentage of fees for class instructors. SGCPB offers 25%/75% and Benton offers 40%/60%. At John Dailey Fitness and Aquatic Center, instructors are paid \$16.29, with a competitor paying \$25 per hour.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position)** - Need to fill the Aquatic Director's position immediately. An Aquatics Director should be highly knowledgeable about pool safety and maintenance issues.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position)** - Pool safety is the most important factor in working with children, families, and water. Aquatics safety issues need to be addressed; adequate staffing needs to occur to administer swimming tests for all swimmers, and drain covers need to meet code standards. Safety is always a critical factor when making budgeting decisions.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position)** - Use a successful model for training future lifeguards. (SGCPB Boot Camp Training for Lifeguards

flyer will be included in the References Book). Help newly hired lifeguards that there is a progressive future for them in Aquatics: Lifeguard, Head Lifeguard, Assistant Pool Manager, Pool Manager, Assistant Aquatics Director, and Aquatics Director.

- **Recreation and Special Events (new position)** - Allow lifeguards at each pool facility to assist in covering duties at all pools. There is a shortage in trained lifeguards, which is a safety issue. LRPR should set a maximum number of hours for a lifeguard to work, but allow them to help pools that do not have adequate coverage.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position)** - Continue to recruit for lifeguards and other P-T employee positions through the Summer Intern Program. Also, continue recruiting from swim teams. During the monthly/quarterly meeting between the appointed LRPR school-park liaison and the LRSD liaison, discuss the plan for recruiting high school students to be hired by LRPR. These students would be trained by the Red Cross, be employed by LRPR as lifeguards, and receive Summer School class credit if approved by LRSD. Seek a partnership to help fund competitive salaries for life guards.

## Reorganization Recommendations for Staffing

**Purpose:** *To reorganize LRPR staff to improve services and streamline communication among staff members and between LRPR staff and the community.*

### Director John Eckart will have Five Direct Reports:

- Deputy Director of Administration (Richele Irby-Harris);
- Deputy Director of Operations (will be renamed to Deputy Director of General Operations and Planning) (Mark Webre);
- Deputy Director of Recreation and Special Events (NEW position TBD);
- Parks Marketing and Communication Coordinator (currently vacant; needs to be filled immediately); and
- Administrative Assistant (Rena Allmond).

### Other Positions Previously on the Director's Management Team will be Reassigned to Different Division Leaders:

- Move Recreation Program Manager (Gill Standridge) under the NEW Deputy Director of Recreation and Special Events (TBD);
- Move Parks Golf and Tennis Manager (Rick Warfield) under the NEW Deputy Director of Recreation and Special Events (TBD);
- Move Parks Design Manager position (Leland Couch) under the newly renamed Deputy Director of General Operations and Planning (Mark Webre);
- Move Parks Volunteer Coordinator (Karen Sykes) under the Deputy Director of Administration (Richelene Irby-Harris); and
- Move Marathon Coordinators (Geneva Lamm and Gina Marchese Pharris) under the NEW Deputy Director of Recreation and Special Events (TBD).

## Other Position Changes:

- Move Safety Coordinator (Courtney Perry) under the Deputy Director of Administration (Richelene Irby-Harris);
- Move the position of Construction Project Scheduler (Matt Gardner) from the planning area under the management of Parks Construction & Development Coordinator (Bill Craig, who is under the Deputy Director of General Operations and Planning) (Mark Webre);
- Move (3) Parks Maintenance Worker positions (Stacy Davis, Matthew Kamphuis, and (1) vacant position) from the Riverfront Park area to the management area under the Parks Maintenance Manager (Jon Light). This move will add 120 hours of full-time maintenance to the area of Maintenance, Landscape, and Urban Division;
- Move (3) Parks Maintenance Worker positions (Gordon Brown, Brian Stewart, Caleb Clason) from the Parks mowing crew to management under Maintenance Supervisor I (Richard Hawkins). Important Note: When moving the (3) positions, contract out their mowing duties to outside vendors. This move will add 120 hours of full-time maintenance to the area of Operations, Improvement, and Development Division; and
- Move the position of Parks Planner II (Ron Ross) with Parks Design Manager (Leland Couch), who is under the supervision of the Deputy Director of General Operations and Planning (Mark Webre).

## NEW Positions to be Added:

- Create a NEW position of "Aquatics Coordinator" to manage indoor and outdoor aquatic programs and facilities. The NEW Aquatics Coordinator will manage the current positions of Supervisor of Aquatics (Dewayne Graves) and Assistant Supervisor of Aquatics (Harrison Cush);
- Add (3) NEW PGA teaching professionals to all city operated golf courses; and
- Add (2) NEW PTR and PTA teaching professionals for the Rebsamen Tennis Center.

## Options for Consideration:

- Consider moving (4) positions of Maintenance/Custodial Support in the Community Centers to areas of park maintenance. The Community Center custodial Service could be outsourced contractually to a private vendor.
- Part-time and seasonal positions will fluctuate, depending on the number and size of programs offered on an annual basis. These positions will be hosted in recreation, maintenance and with various special event assignments.
- Add (NEW) full-time positions as NEW park facilities are developed. Part-time and seasonal positions will also need to be added, depending on additional NEW facility operation hours and program offerings at the newly created facilities.

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK.



05

# PROGRAM ANALYSIS

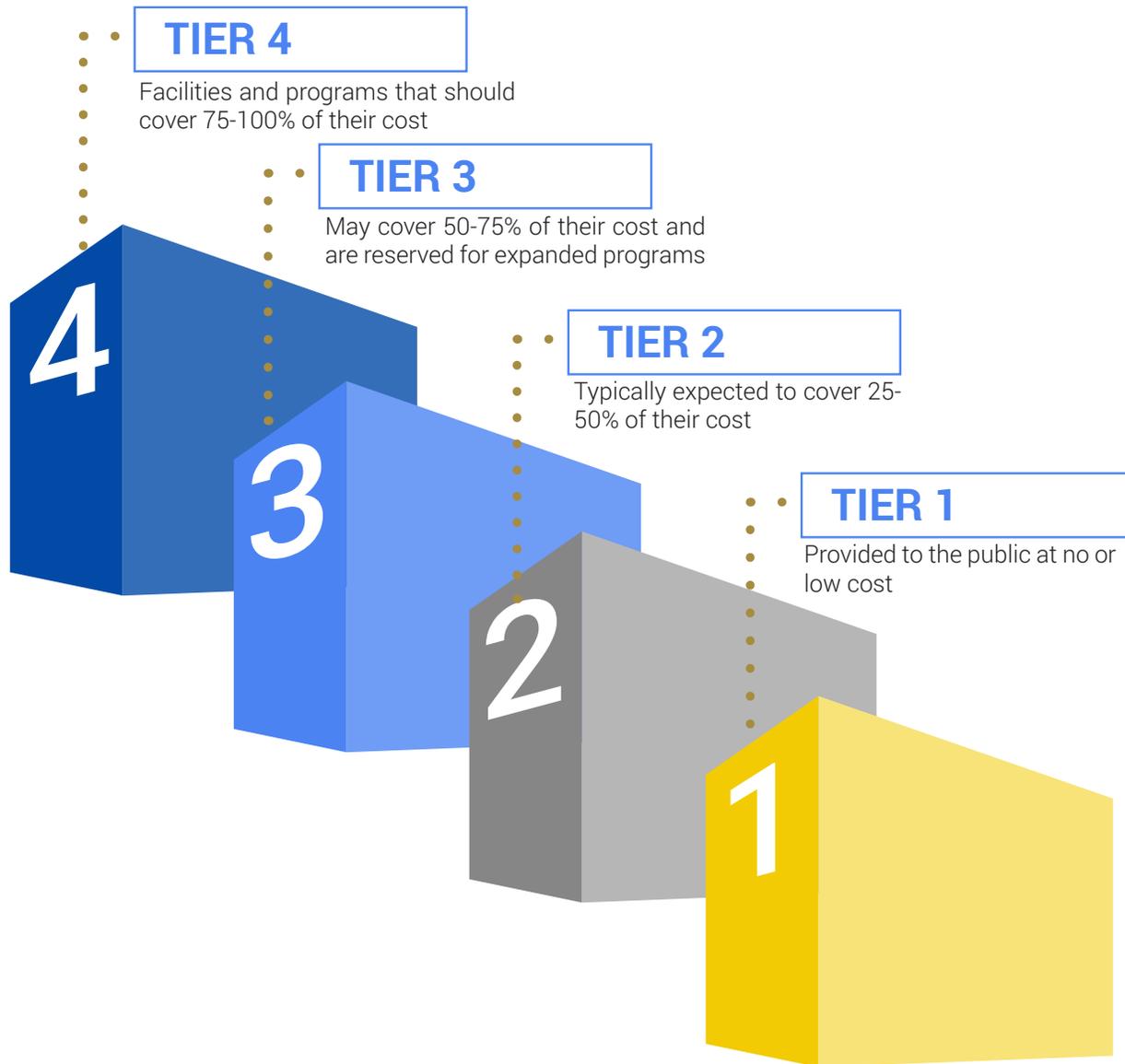
## Introduction

Recreation Programming should be at the core of every parks and recreation agency. Programming is about promoting and providing outdoor adventures, leisure experiences, engagement, active lifestyle choices, exercise, cultural exposure, socialization, and so much more. Providing outstanding programming choices for the well-being and overall quality of life for the citizens of Little Rock is of the greatest importance. Unfortunately, the importance of programming is sometimes underestimated in agencies across the country and minimized when developing future facilities and parks. This is a shortsighted approach that needs to be avoided.

*Source: NRPA Thinking Strategically About Your Agency's Recreation Programming by M. Mulvaney, W. Clevenger, R. Buhr, and J. Gower, December 6, 2017*

Programming for adults, children, and families with specific goals, measurable objectives, and a continuous evaluation component built-in for review and improvement needs to be a top priority for every recreation department across the country. There should be a data-driven approach that analyzes participation numbers, strengths, areas for improvement, and revenue generation numbers.





Consider a tiered approach to programming with recovery costs and types of classes/events/programs offered for each tier:

1. Tier-one programs would be provided to the public at no or low cost and would not require revenue to cover the full cost of the basic services. Examples of this type of programming include open gyms, outdoor events, and summer concerts, which typically cover 0%-25% of their cost.
2. Tier-two programs would typically cover 25%-50% of their cost and examples could include senior classes, special holiday programs, and family programs.
3. Tier-three programs would require a more detailed organization and a higher skill set from staff. Usually, 50%-75% of their costs would be covered and include camps, senior wellness programs, and swim programs.
4. Tier-four programs would cover 75%-100% of the costs. These programs are revenue generators and examples consist of field, pool, and shelter rentals, fitness training, and all adult sports programs.

Sources: *Thinking Strategically About Your Agency's Recreation Programming* by M. Mulvaney, W. Clevenger, R. Buhr, and J. Gower, December 6, 2017 (NRPA) and *Program and Services Management* by C. Edginton and J. O'Neill in *Management of Park and Recreation Agencies*

## Benefits of Community Recreation

Effective and responsive parks and recreation departments offer quality, diverse, and beneficial opportunities and experiences. Understanding the importance of growth and development for the citizens of Little Rock will assist Little Rock Parks and Recreation (LRPR) in designing, revising, and establishing programs that are high quality offerings. It is important to make programming decisions based on public and staff input, participation levels, current research, data analysis, and revenue generation.

National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) has created Three Pillars, or goal areas, that define the critical role of parks and recreation in our communities. The Three Pillars are:



The Three Pillars are supported by a body of research that confirms the importance of parks and recreation in addressing societal issues, improving the well-being of individuals, and creating positive economic impacts for communities.

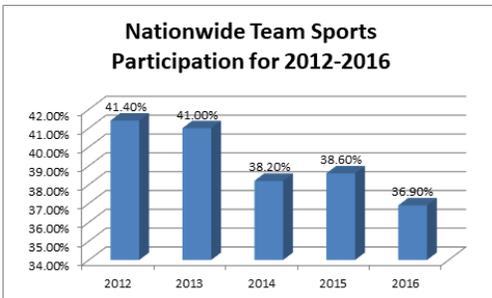
*Source: NRPA – Agency Performance Report, 2018*

Programming should exist for health benefits and enjoyment of the community. There should be a variety of options for all ages by creating fun, healthy, and interesting activities for the value of all who participate. To combat the alarming increase in rates of childhood obesity, diabetes, and mental health issues, appropriate programming needs to exist. Specifically, a focus on nurturing children is essential in developing successful, well-rounded adults. Children need to spend time outdoors each day with unstructured play. Health benefits include reducing obesity, gang/crime prevention, and reconnecting children with the outdoors, according to the Trust for Public Land. Richard Louv, renowned expert in the impact of nature on children, strongly asserts that nature is essential for healthy child development and causes children to become less stressed, have increased levels of concentration, and have increased self-esteem.

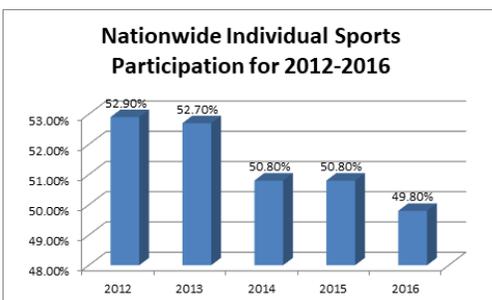
*Sources: The Health Benefits of Parks by the Trust for Public Land and Last Child in the Woods by R. Louv, Originally published April 25, 2005*



**Figure 5.1** Nationwide Team Sports Participation for 2012-2016



**Figure 5.2** Nationwide Individual Sports Participation for 2012-2016



Sources: Sports & Fitness Industry Association, Aspen Institute by J. Bogage, Washington Post and 2018 Outdoor Participation Report, Outdoor Industry Association, July 17, 2018

## Trends and Emphasis on Health and Wellness

Health and Wellness is a current topic and issue for communities across the country. With the rapid rise of diabetes, obesity, and chronic health problems, parks and recreation agencies are offering assistance on a variety of levels. Parks and recreation staff are leaders who are trained to assist individuals and communities by offering effective programs and facilities for fitness, weight loss, athletic training, and health classes. They are leaders in being responsive listeners to the public and by staying current with the variety of health issues that are affecting the community.

Working towards growing a healthier community should be a major goal for any park agency. Collaborating with multiple community partners to review current research as to which communities are making positive progress in assisting their community member's lead healthy lifestyles, then trying to replicate what is successful in their own community needs, to be a continual goal. An especially concerning area is the rapid growth of major chronic health concerns in children, which needs to be at the forefront of every community effort.

Source: NRPA's Role of Parks and Recreation on Health and Wellness

## Participation in Sports, Physical Activities and Recreation Programs

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association and the Aspen Institute recently published a report about an alarming issue with youth athletics in this country. Over the past 10 years, participation has taken a steady decline or remained the same in most areas of the country. Especially troublesome is the lack of access to athletics for youth who come from poor households versus the participation level for youth whose household income is over \$100,000. Youth with less financial resources have their chance of participating cut in half, compared to their counterparts.

Participation fees, sports gear, and equipment can be expensive and cost prohibitive for less affluent youth and their families. Some of the less expensive sports to participate in include basketball, track, swimming, and soccer. Examples of the most expensive sports include hockey, horseback riding, football, and skiing. For local parks and recreation agencies, before/after school care and summer school opportunities for students living in low income situations can provide equal access opportunities for all youth. An additional option for addressing the lack of access would be providing scholarships for youth in need.

Source: Youth Sports Study: Declining Participation, Rising Costs and Unqualified Coaches by J. Bogage, September 6, 2017

YOUTH WITH LESS FINANCIAL RESOURCES HAVE THEIR CHANCE OF PARTICIPATING CUT IN HALF, COMPARED TO THEIR COUNTERPARTS.

Outdoor recreation continues on a slight upward increase from 2014-2017, with 1.7 million additional participants in 2017. Specifically, interest in backpacking, day hiking, camping, and fishing across all age levels is on the rise. An additional high interest area is swimming for fitness and paddling activities; these water-based activities saw the highest increases in outdoor participation with stand-up paddling at the top of the growth list at 20%. Increased socialization is becoming more important on trails and pathways as well. Being outdoors, making friendships, and enjoying exercise combine to help communities get healthier.

The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation conducted a survey and reported that almost half of all Americans (48.4%) participated in at least one outdoor activity in 2015. The data also showed that walking for fitness continued to be the most popular activity with half of all outdoor participants indicating that they also walked. The study also asked the survey respondents which activities they “aspire” to participate, rather than the activities that they had participated. Camping, swimming, and bicycling ranked in the top three among all age groups. Basketball, ranked 10th by the 44+ age group, was the only traditional team sport that appeared in the top 10 aspirational activities. The following represents the top 10 Activity Aspirations by age group.

The Physical Activity Council's annual study tracks participation in **123** different sports and activities. Findings include:

- Trends continue toward less frequency in most activity levels
- Majority of activity is with fitness sports
- Senior population is less active than in 2012
- Increased interest in outdoor recreation

**Table 5.1** Top 10 Activity Aspirations by Age Group

Ages 6-12	Ages 13-17	Ages 18-24	Ages 25-34	Ages 35-44	Ages 44+
Camping	Camping	Camping	Swimming for Fitness	Camping	Camping
Swimming for Fitness	Swimming for Fitness	Bicycling	Camping	Swimming for Fitness	Swimming for Fitness
Bicycling	Bicycling	Swimming for Fitness	Bicycling	Bicycling	Bicycling
Basketball	Working Out with Machines	Hiking	Hiking	Hiking	Working Out with Machines
Running/ Jogging	Running/ Jogging	Backpacking	Running/ Jogging	Working Out with Weights	Hiking
Soccer	Hiking	Working Out with Weights	Canoeing	Working Out with Machines	Fishing
Fishing	Fishing	Running/ Jogging	Backpacking	Running/ Jogging	Working Out with Weights
Football	Working Out with Weights	Martial Arts	Working Out with Machines	Fishing	Birdwatching/Wildlife Viewing
Swimming on a Team	Shooting	Working Out with Machines	Working Out with Weights	Canoeing	Running/ Jogging
Hiking	Martial Arts	Climbing	Kayaking	Backpacking	Basketball

Sources: 2016 Participation Report - The Physical Activity Council's Annual Study Tracking Sports, Fitness, and Recreation Participation in the US and 2018 Outdoor Participation Report from the Outdoor Industry Association, July 17, 2018

In a study entitled 2018 NRPA Agency Performance Review – Park and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks, the percent of agencies that offer specific types of programming was identified as follows:

**Table 5.2** Percent of Agencies Offering Specific Programs

<i>Programming Offered</i>	<i>Percent of Agencies</i>
<i>Team Sports</i>	86%
<i>Themed Special Events</i>	84%
<i>Social Recreation Events</i>	81%
<i>Health and Wellness Education</i>	78%
<i>Fitness Enhancement Classes</i>	78%
<i>Safety Training</i>	71%
<i>Aquatics</i>	69%
<i>Individual Sports</i>	68%
<i>Trips and Tours</i>	64%
<i>Racquet Sports</i>	62%
<i>Performing Arts</i>	62%
<i>Martial Arts</i>	61%
<i>Cultural Crafts</i>	58%
<i>Visual Arts</i>	56%
<i>Natural and Cultural History Activities</i>	53%
<i>Golf</i>	47%

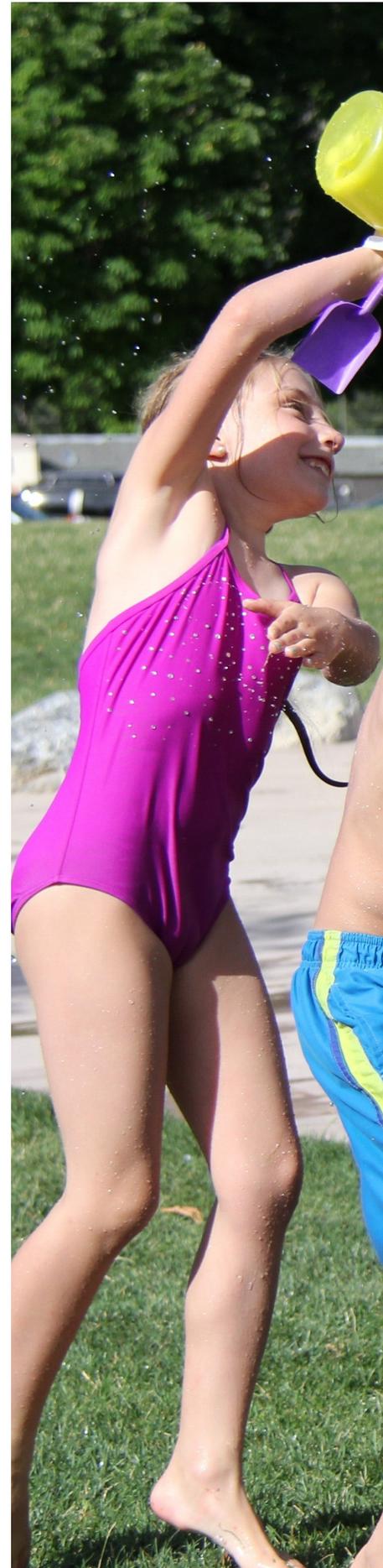
Source: 2018 NRPA Agency Performance Review – Park and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks, p. 12

## Camps and Programs for Individuals with Disabilities

Summer camps are a favorite childhood memory for many adults and they want to replicate that experience for their own children. Parks and recreation staff are leaders in this area. Many departments provide day and overnight camps for specified periods of time, primarily in the summer. With an emphasis on providing experiences for ALL children, many creative camps have come to the forefront, sometimes specific to one’s disability, medical condition, or age. Frequent obstacles to running successful camps can include space, properly trained staff, or sufficient funding.

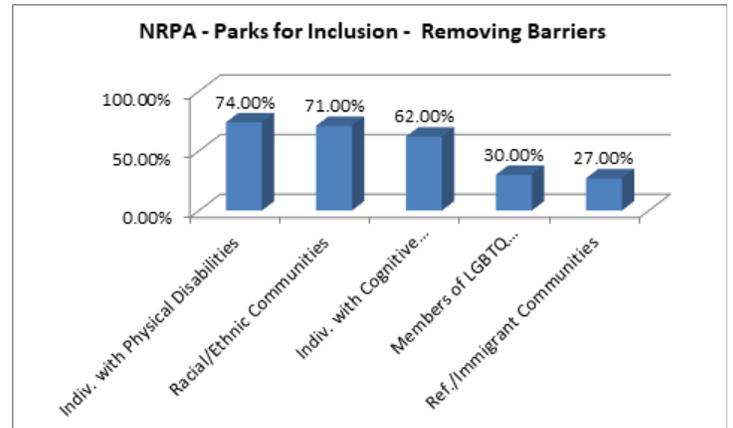
NRPA’s Social Equity Pillar focuses on ensuring all people have safe access to quality park and recreation facilities. The very philosophy of public parks and

recreation is that all people—regardless of race, ethnicity, age, income level, physical ability, sexual orientation, gender or religion—are able to take advantage of quality programs, facilities, places and spaces that make their lives and communities great.





**Figure 5.3** NRPA Parks for Inclusion - Removing Barriers



Source: NRPA – 2018 Park and Recreation Inclusion Report

Ensuring inclusive play for all is a challenge, but should be included in the top priorities for parks and recreation agencies. Both a physical and social event, inclusive play is not solely about physically accessing an environment, but what happens once an individual gets there. A truly inclusive and embracing play experience addresses the developmental needs of the whole child by intentionally providing opportunities for physical, cognitive, communicative, social/emotional, and sensory development.

Source: *7 Principles of Inclusive Playground Design*, <https://www.playcore.com/programs/me2>

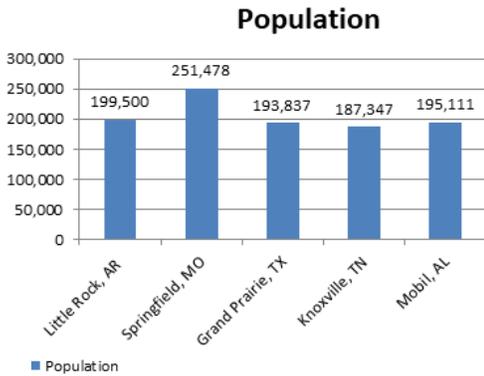
Summer camps are a staple of parks and recreation departments. The results for agencies targeting programs for children, seniors and individuals with disabilities is provided below and includes the percent of agencies serving 100,000 to 250,000 people that provide various types of programs.

**Table 5.3** Percent of Agencies Targeting Programs for Children

<b>Targeted Programs for Children, Seniors and People With Disabilities</b>	<b>% of Agencies</b>
Summer Camp	85%
Specific Senior Programs	80%
Specific Teen Programs	73%
Programs for People with Disabilities	69%
After-School Programs	62%
Preschool	31%
Before-School Programs	35%
Full Daycare	12%

Source: NRPA - 2016 Park Metrics Field Report

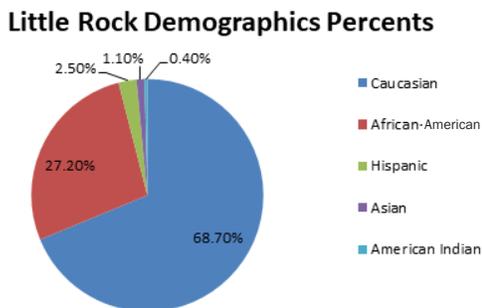
**Figure 5.4** Population Comparison



Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2018 Population Estimate

Source: An Overview of the Demographics of Little Rock by A. Galiano, August 5, 2017

**Figure 5.5** Little Rock Demographics Percents



## Demographics of Little Rock

The City of Little Rock is a growing community with an identified 2018 population count of 199,500. Little Rock is currently the fastest growing city in Arkansas, with a projected growth rate of 2% per year. Future projections are for a continual, steady growth, with an increase of younger people moving into the city. The following table shows population size comparisons with other Midwest cities in the region.

Many cities throughout the country are working with and planning for an aging population boom. In Little Rock, this is not the case. The median age in Little Rock is 34.5, which is 5% lower than the average in the state of Arkansas. Of the population, 14.3% live below the poverty line, with only 9% of those below the poverty line being 65 years and older. However, Senior Programs remain very important and LRPR programming should include input by this specific population.

Source: Wikipedia, Little Rock, Arkansas

When planning occurs, attention should be paid to the location of all parks and facilities. There are sections/neighborhoods that are showing growth and others that are remaining the same or declining. Updated and/or new facilities, combined with responsive programming, need to be located where the population is growing in order to meet their needs. With Little Rock’s location in the middle of Arkansas, it is the perfect place to upgrade athletic fields and facilities in order to attract state and national championships. Long term planning and collaboration with partners, such as the Little Rock Convention and Visitors Center, will assist LRPR into becoming more competitive for tourism dollars. Facilities should be considered for areas of the city that are easily accessible from interstates and that offer opportunity for future growth. A feasibility study and market analysis should be conducted to determine the focus of the type and number of sports fields that would create the greatest impact for the community.

Sources: LRPR Recreation Division Programming Plan – Updated October 2018 and LRCVB Staff, Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau <https://www.littlerock.com/about/LRCVBstaff>

Growth Rate

**2%**

PER YEAR

**LITTLE ROCK IS CURRENTLY THE FASTEST GROWING CITY IN ARKANSAS.**

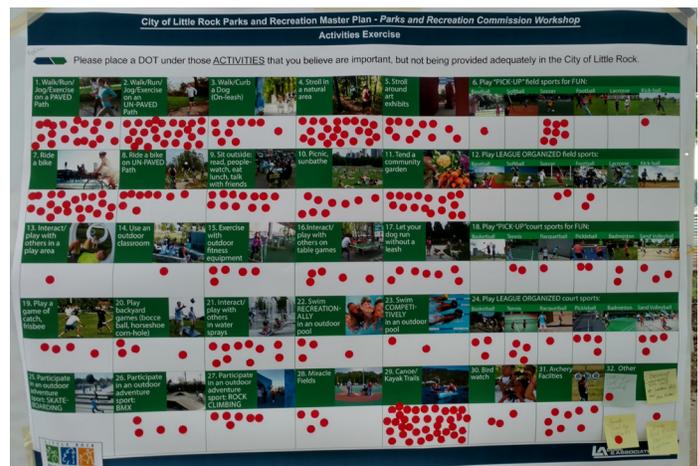
The Little Rock School District's enrollment declined 405 students during the past year from 23,164 in 2016-2017 to 22,759 in 2017-2018. This has a direct impact on the financial operations of the district. Because the district is funded on a per pupil basis, the loss of 405 students will cause a reduction of approximately \$5.5 million dollars. Staffing costs are the majority of funds expended for all districts; therefore, this reduction will include position reductions of the following: 30 teachers, 20 paraprofessionals, 18 building-level administrators, central office jobs, and other support staff positions. An interesting note is the increase in enrollment at two primary charter schools in Little Rock. It is important for LRPR to work collaboratively with public, private, charter, and home-school entities to assist with serving students in a variety of before/after school opportunities, youth athletics, summer programs, and sharing of facilities for these activities.

Sources: *School District in Little Rock No Longer Biggest in State*, Arkansas Democrat Gazette, September 8, 2018 <https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2018/sep/03/school-district-in-lr-no-longer-biggest/> and *The Shrinking Little Rock District*, Arkansas Times, April 27, 2018 <https://www.arktimes.com/ArkansasBlog/archives/2018/04/27/the-shrinking-little-rock-school-district>

## LRPR Programming and Citizen Input

Little Rock Parks and Recreation strives to offer a variety of programs for varying populations of the community. Ensuring access to quality parks, facilities, and programming is a focus of importance for LRPR. Accessibility and engagement in activities allows people to connect to each other and nature. According to National Recreation and Parks Association's article, *Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services*, there are *three values that make parks essential: 1) Economic value, 2) Health and Environmental benefits, and 3) Social importance*. Several studies about the effect of the location of parks and open spaces, relative to property values, by one of the most respected researchers and authors, John Crompton, still holds importance over time. For 20 out of 25 investigations, the property value did, in fact, increase because of the proximity of parks and open spaces.

Sources: *NRPA Parks and Recreation Inclusion Report - Social Equity*, NRPA *Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services*, January, 2010, and *The Proximate Principle: Impact of Parks on Property Value* by J. Crompton and S. Nicholls, October 2005



As part of creating the Master Plan for LRPR, citizen participation was encouraged and documented throughout the process. All comments and/or suggestions were recorded and thoroughly reviewed. Citizens of Little Rock have offered suggestions for programming that will highlight their interests and needs by participating in "Pop-Up" surveys across the city in several different locations. The citizens ranked their top choices as follows:

- Nature programs
- Community special events (concerts, green markets, etc.)
- Adult fitness/wellness
- Movies in the park
- Teen programs
- Cooking classes
- Camps (summer/school break)
- Before and after school programs
- Outdoor dining
- Programs for people with disabilities
- Youth fitness/wellness
- Adult learn to swim
- Youth learn to swim
- GED/continuing education (degree, trade)

Sources: *Little Rock Parks and Recreation – Pop-up Surveys on Programming Compilation 2018*

## LRPR's Fees and Charges

An important fact for Little Rock Parks and Recreation (LRPR) to consider is that registration fees for programming are the largest source of non-tax revenue for most agencies. Currently, LRPR's Fee Schedule includes recommendations for fee increases for instructional classes, memberships, and athletic programs. Fee increases are based on a number of factors: 1) Review of neighboring program fees, 2) Increase based on successful program analysis, 3) Program and marketing costs, 4) Review of pricing from other agencies, and 5) cost of doing business and running the program.

*Sources: 2018 NRPA Agency Performance Review and LRPR Recreation Division Programming Plan – Updated October 2018*

LRPR's fees and charges for programming are well below the national average and need revamping with an organized, tiered level approach for manageable increases. In order for the City of Little Rock's citizens to have appropriate and innovative programming, as they have clearly stated as a need in the parks and recreation surveys that have been conducted, LRPR must make an adjustment to the fee structure to be at least the same as competing agencies. Without an increase in the fee schedule, the citizens of Little Rock will not gain the quality programming and services they deserve. *Public parks and recreation are the gateway to a healthier America.*

*Source: NRPA Role of Parks and Recreation on Health and Wellness*



## LRPR Department Program Offerings

Little Rock Parks and Recreation was initially accredited by the Commission for Accredited Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) on October 11, 2006. Recently reaccredited in 2016, no additional evaluation visits are required until Spring 2021. This recognition is an earned honor and validates that the LRPR staff is continually striving for excellence by meeting the high benchmarks established by CAPRA. These national standards include 10 areas that are evaluated, including Chapter 6 – Programs and Services Management. Programming decisions should only be made after carefully analyzing all of the benefits/outcomes for any additions or changes. LRPR has created a *Program Procedure Policy* that includes:

## Program Establishment

- Determine program name
- Determine program audience
- Determine program revenue goal
- Establish program objective
- Establish program goals – must be specific
- Establish program budget
- Establish program staff and volunteers
- Establish list of supplies and equipment needed for program
- Establish program rules and regulations
- Determine marketing/promotion strategies for program
- Establish a calendar of events for program
- Complete program report

## Program Execution

- Plan meetings for customer (coaches, player, and parent meeting)
- Execute planned events for program (awards program, field trip, practices, games)

## Program Completion

- Complete survey distribution, pick-up, and totals
- Complete final program report

Source: LRPR Program Procedure Policy

Following this established procedure, it is essential that all programs be evaluated on a regular basis to determine if participation is adequate and the citizens are satisfied with the offerings. Participants are asked to participate in a survey at the completion of each program and the results are analyzed for possible revisions to continuously improve.

Little Rock Park and Recreation Department is home to 63 developed and 12 undeveloped parks throughout the city. Programming exists for the developed parks under the following categories:

**Table 5.4** Current Park Programming

PROGRAMMING	LARGE URBAN PARKS (50 ACRES+)	COMMUNITY PARKS (20-50 ACRES)	NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS (5-20 ACRES)	MINI-PARKS (UNDER 5 ACRES)	SPECIAL FACILITIES
<i>Playground</i>	8	9	14	12	3
<i>Basketball</i>	7	8	10	13	0
<i>Volleyball</i>	6	2	0	0	0
<i>Tennis Courts</i>	5	27	8	4	4
<i>Soccer Fields</i>	7	5	0	0	0
<i>Football Fields</i>	2	1	2	0	0
<i>Softball Fields</i>	6	0	0	0	0
<i>Baseball Fields</i>	2	7	15	0	1
<i>Community Center</i>	0	2	2	2	1
<i>Pools and/or Splashpad</i>	0	2	0	0	1
<i>Pavilions</i>	22	4	3	1	4
<i>Fishing</i>	4	1	4	0	2
<i>Picnic Tables</i>	106	63	45	17	38
<i>Path/Trail Miles</i>	28.4	6.3	2.5	0.3	3.3
<i>Mountain Bike Trails</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Equestrian Trails</i>	6	0	0	0	0

## LRPR Programs

Little Rock Parks and Recreation Division offers programs, activities, and events throughout the year. The Recreation Division publishes a general overview for offerings annually. Full-time and part-time employees work at the following facilities to provide quality programs, responding to community needs and requests:

- Centre at University Park
- West Central Community Center
- Nat Hill Community Center
- Dunbar Community Center
- Jim Dailey Fitness & Aquatics Center
- Hindman Golf Course
- MacArthur Military Museum
- Rebsamen Golf Course
- Rebsamen Tennis Center
- Southwest Community Center
- Stephens Community Center
- War Memorial Golf Course





The Recreation Division has recently established specific Recreation Action Steps to align the 2018 LRPR Strategic Plan with the most recent LRPR Master Plan (2001). The subsequent Action Steps maintain an overarching influence from the goals and objectives.

1. Provide a diverse range of programs of after-school, summer, teen and senior programs that offer the opportunity to participate in meaningful life skills, recreational, and educational activities that contribute to growth and achievement.
2. Examine all programs to ensure they emphasize health and wellness which encourage healthy bodies and minds.
3. Develop and provide opportunities and programs that allow all ages with disabilities and developmental delays the ability to participate in activities within a stimulating and non-threatening environment that promote both motor and socialization skills.
4. Through daily inspections, ensure community centers, facilities, ball fields and playgrounds meet specified safety standards and report all damages, hazards and repairs to designated staff for corrective measures.
5. Advocate for the construction of trails and walking paths to promote healthy exercise and implement programs to educate the public about nature, history, culture, the environment and conservation.
6. Provide opportunity for cultural and historical significance by integrating a variety of programs and visits to local historical institutions and exhibits.
7. Examine developing revenue streams to supplement general funds.

Source: LRPR Recreation Division Programming Plan – Updated October 2018

## Current Programming

LRPR provides a wide variety of program offerings for adults, seniors, and youth in the Little Rock community. These specific types of programs and events are delineated in the following sections.

### Adult Athletics Programs

Adult Athletic Programs are provided for adult athletes (ages 18-55). These recreational athletic programs are for people who enjoy fun competition and exercise through the promotion of recreation and sportsmanship. There are a variety of leagues offered for men and women. Included below are some examples of Adult Athletic Programs for LRPR:

- Fall Basketball Leagues
- Men's Summer Basketball League
- Men's 30 & Over and 40 & Over Basketball League
- Softball Leagues
- Volleyball League

*Source: Community Centers Directory 2016*

### Adult Instructional Programs

Adult Instruction Programs provide active adults recreational instruction classes as a means of enjoyment, health benefits, social engagement, exercise, and fun for ages 18-55. Participants are surveyed at the completion of each class. The surveys are read and analyzed for program improvements. Participant numbers are also tabulated to see which classes will continue and which classes will be discontinued.

Listed to the right are several class options:

- Aerobic Classes
- Aqua Zumba
- Badminton
- Body Blitz
- Body Conditioning
- Body Sculpt
- Cardio Sculpt
- Dance
- Get Fit
- Healthy Habits
- Karate
- Kettle Burn Blast
- Line Dance
- Piano
- Pickleball
- Spanish
- Step/Weights
- Swimming
- Table Tennis
- Total Fit
- Yoga
- Zumba

*Source: Community Centers Directory 2016*

## Aging and Active Programs

Aging and Active (Senior) Programming is a rapidly growing area in most parks and recreation departments across the nation. Currently, programs are being held in 70% of the parks and recreation agencies and they are serving several millions of seniors annually. In Little Rock, the median age is 34.5 and is 5% lower than the Arkansas median age. However, Aging and Active Programming has strong participation and examples of specific programs are listed below:



- Arts and Crafts
- Black History Program
- Bridge Club
- Cardio Fusion
- Ceramics
- Christmas in July
- Computer Tech Class
- Exercise Programs

- Field Trips
- Games – Checkers, Chess, Bingo
- Health Fairs
- Line Dance
- Low Impact Aerobics
- Mardi Gras Celebration
- Seniorcise Aerobics
- Seniorcise Stretch/Tone
- Seniorcise Weights
- Sistahs of Color Reading Group
- 60 Swingers Square Dance Club



- T.O.P.S (Take Off Pounds Sensibly)
- Senior Tacky Day
- Yoga

*Sources: NRPA Park Programming and Better Health, 2018; Wikipedia, Little Rock, AR; LRPR Recreation Division Programming Plan – Updated October 2018; and Community Centers Directory 2016*

## Aquatics Programs

From a beginning swimmer to competitive swim teams, swimming is a great way to exercise. Aquatics Programs need to include everyone, especially those at a young age. However, a recent study coming from the 2018 USA Swimming Trends Report, discussed the challenges for diverse children learning to swim: **64 percent of African-American children, 45 percent of Hispanic children and 40 percent of Caucasian children have no/low swimming ability, putting them at risk for drowning. A concerning finding was that 87 percent of swimmers with no or low ability plan to go to a swimming facility this summer at least once and 34 percent plan to swim 10 or more times this summer.** An important note to consider is: **Children who swim with their family are 2.7 times more likely to be good swimmers.** Parks and recreation agencies are well suited for encouraging family swims and early swimming by children.

Sources: 2018 USA Swimming Trends Report and 2018 Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report



Within LRPR, opportunities to swim include instructional classes, training, fitness, health and wellness. A twenty-five yard swimming pool, diving board, full locker room, shower facilities, kid's pool, and a whirlpool are available for daily use. Illustrations of Aquatics Programs are included below:

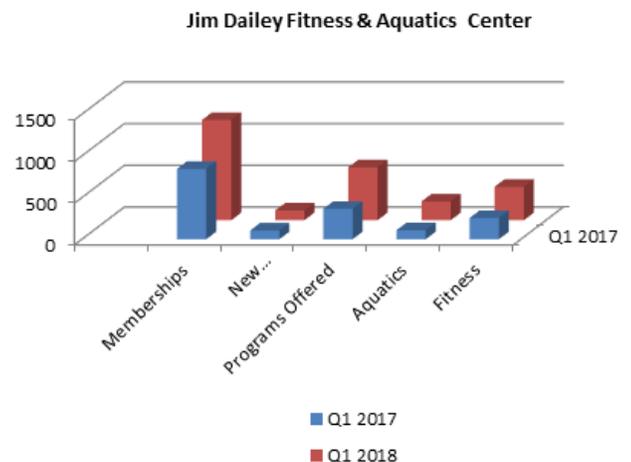
- Aqua Abdominal – 30 minutes of isolated exercises for the abdominal muscles
- Aqua-Fit – 30 minutes of medium intensity aerobic activity
- Aqua Power – Calisthenics combined with jogging for a high intensity workout
- Arthritis Foundation – 30-45 minutes of gentle body movements aided by water.
- Lane Swimming
- Learn to Swim
- Lifeguard Training
- Open Recreational Swimming
- Swim Exercise Classes
- Swimming Lessons

Source: Community Centers Directory 2016

Examples of classes/activities that exist at the Jim Dailey Fitness & Aquatic Center include: Indoor jogging/walking track, Cybex Weight machines, aerobic equipment, gymnasium, multi-purpose indoor court area, multipurpose activity room, swimming pool, whirlpool, and tennis courts are available for use. Professional staff is accessible for Health and Fitness Counseling and Monitoring Fit-4-All Fitness Evaluations, massage therapy, and children's activities.

Attendance at the Aquatics Center in the first quarter of 2018 is up when compared to the previous year. This increase is depicted in the following figure.

**Figure 5.6** Attendance for Jim Dailey Fitness & Aquatics Center



Source: 2018 LRStat by Quarter Recreation

## Community Centers

LRPR has a number of community and recreation centers including Dunbar CC, Nat Hill CC, Southwest CC, and Stephens CC. Each center has a rich heritage and is strategically located to residents of all ages in Little Rock. It is the fastest growing city in Arkansas, especially in west Little Rock. This area is the push of new development and outward expansion of the city with no community centers or programming. Citizens from west Little Rock have requested facilities and programming for their area of the city, and combined with the growth rate, LRPR should consider these factors in their long-range planning.

Numerous benefits for participants at the community centers include:

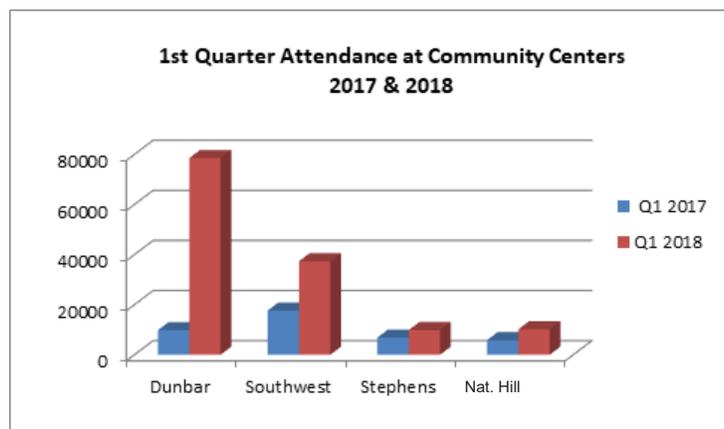
- Taking care of Latch Key children – educate
- Control weight, look better, build strong bodies
- Lower chance of disease – decrease insurance premiums – live longer
- Build self-esteem
- Reduce Stress – relax
- Promote sensitivity to cultural diversity
- Increase community pride – strengthen neighborhood involvement
- Reduce crime, diminish gang violence, provide safe places to play
- Meet friends-create memories
- Lower health care costs
- Enhance relationship skills – teach vital life skills

Sources: *Community Centers Directory 2016*; *Jim Dailey Fitness & Aquatics Center Flyer*; and *LRPR Recreation Division Programming Plan – Updated October 2018*



Attendance at Community Centers in the first quarter of 2018 is up when compared to the previous year, particularly at the Dunbar and Southwest Centers. This increase is depicted in the following figure.

**Figure 5.7** 1st Quarter Attendance at Community Centers 2017-2018



Source: 2018 LRStat by Quarter Recreation for Community Centers

## Cultural Programs

Cultural Programs are offered throughout the year in Little Rock. As shared in the Recreation Programming Plan 2018, the purpose of presenting cultural programs is to inform a variety of audiences about local Little Rock history and to build well-rounded, educated citizens who understand cultural diversity. From tours that are given at the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History for youth and adults to scavenger hunts and movies, learning about history and understanding diversity are skills that LRPR staff collaborates with partners to continue to foster in participants.

The following Cultural Programs are offered:

- Youth Museum Tour
- Adult Museum Tour
- Diversity Month Programs
- Special Outreach Programs
- MacArthur Park Fishing Derby Expo
- MacArthur Park Scavenger Hunt
- History Detective Reading Program
- History on the Run Annual Race
- Movies at MacArthur

*Source: Community Centers Directory 2016*





## Golf Programs

Golf Programs are offered to provide quality golfing experience for citizens and visitors of Little Rock. The following information is for the three golf courses owned and operated by LRPR:

**Hindman Golf Course** - Identified as the most challenging of Little Rock's municipal golf courses, this 103-acre, and eighteen (18) hole course offers Champion Dwarf Bermuda grass greens, rolling terrain and narrow tree-lined fairways. With its natural setting, Hindman has been certified as an "Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary", featuring a variety of wildlife.

**Rebsamen Golf Course** - Nestled comfortably in a bend of the Arkansas River, this eighteen (18) hole championship course was designed to accommodate golfers of all levels. Rebsamen's open fairways and Champion Dwarf Bermuda grass green help frame some of the most breathtaking views found on any Arkansas golf course. A nine (9)-hole executive course provides golfers a shorter playtime and offers Champion Dwarf Bermuda grass greens.

**War Memorial Golf Course** - With its location within the heart of Little Rock, this ninety (90) acre, eighteen (18) hole urban executive course offers any golfer an opportunity to sharpen their skills. With its unique par sixty-four (64) layout and Champion Dwarf Bermuda grass greens, War Memorial offers quality golfing that is convenient because of its location and playtime.

Source: LRPR Little Rock Golf Courses <https://www.littlerock.gov/for-residents/parks-and-recreation/golf-courses/>

In addition to the three golf courses mentioned above, LRPR also provides some financial resources to The Jack Stephens Youth Golf Academy – home of The First Tee of Central Arkansas, which features a nine (9) hole regulation course (Champion's Course) with three sets of tees.

Source: The First Tee of Central Arkansas <https://www.thefirstteecentralarkansas.org/about/our-course/>

Programming at the golf courses includes lessons, tournaments, and open play. The following examples of activities that are offered are listed below:

- Junior Golf Tournaments
- Adult Golf Tournaments
- Metro Junior Golf Program –for ages 8-18 for inner-city participants
- Beginner Golf Lessons

Source: Community Centers Directory 2016

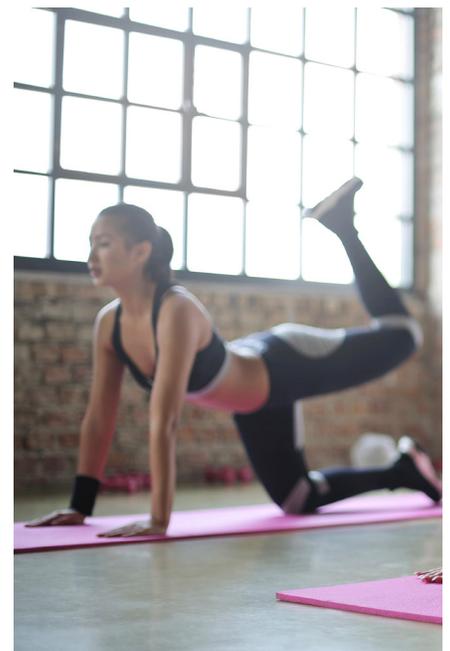


## Health, Wellness and Fitness Programs

Health, Wellness, and Fitness Programs are designed to promote health benefits to the participants. Programs are designed to help people develop healthy lifestyles through education and exercise. Let's Walk and Get in the Gym are two programs that work on balance, increasing muscle tone, alleviating body pain, and strengthening bones. Participants have input into additional classes that are created. The Health, Wellness and Fitness offerings are included below:

- Aerobics
- Beginner Body Sculpt
- Body Clinic
- Body Conditioning
- Body Sculpt
- Boot Camp
- Cardio Resistance Training
- Extreme Turbo
- Hardcore Abs
- Hip-Hop Combo
- Hooping & Step/Combo-Hooping!
- Intermediate Yoga
- Pilates Fusion
- Pickleball
- Seniorcise Aerobics
- Seniorcise Weights
- Seniorcise Stretch/Tone
- Step Aerobics
- Step & Weight/Combo
- Total Fit
- Turbo Kick
- Yoga
- Zumba

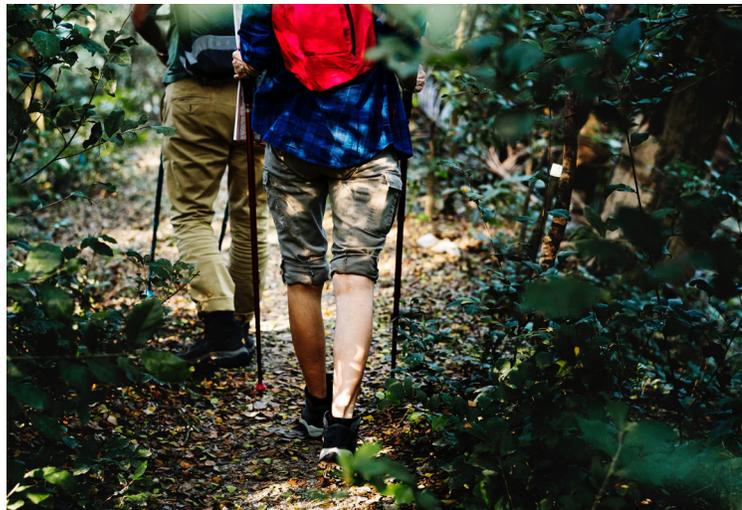
*Source: Community Centers Directory 2016*





## Outdoor Programs

Nationally, Outdoor Programming is seeing participation increases across all age spans. The largest increases were seen in backpacking and hiking, with a small decrease seen in canoeing. Activity examples include fishing, biking, camping, and swimming for fitness. For LRPR, which is located in Pulaski County, this is an exciting time for outdoor programming with the expansion of water sports centered around Riverfront Park.



Together, the City of Little Rock and Pulaski County own Two Rivers Park, which consists of 1000 acres including the Arkansas and Little Maumelle Rivers. Together, in 1992, these two entities created a joint Master Plan. This plan included a vision for outdoor recreational use for individuals and families. Currently, Riverfront Park has eleven blocks located on the south side of the Arkansas River. This beautiful, picturesque park, located in downtown Little Rock, boasts of 33 acres for outdoor recreation and events, and programming for enjoyment.



LRPR sent out a request for proposal in February 2017 for a vendor who could provide a paddle sports complex to house a rowing program and staff for training participants to row, along the Little Maumelle and Arkansas Rivers. The goal of hiring an experienced company was to expand and grow rowing and water activities in Little Rock. A private vendor is managing water activities on the Arkansas River with kayaking and canoeing. Possible additions could occur in the future by accessing Fourche Creek.

Sources: 2018 Participation Report from the Physical Activity Council <https://pulaskicounty.net/two-rivers-par>, and <https://www.littlerock.com/little-rock-destinations/riverfront-park>

## Special Events, Festivals, Concerts and Tournaments

Special Events in the Parks Procedural Guidelines have been written and include an application form for outside organizations to complete when planning a particular event. This Approval Form, with proof of insurance, must be completed, submitted, signed off by the Little Rock Fire and Police Departments, and approved by the Director.

Special Events in the parks occur at a variety of locations throughout each year in Little Rock. Some examples are listed below:

- Art Festival
- Breakfast with Santa
- Spring Break Blast Week
- Latchkey Graduations
- End of the School Year Parties
- Lights On Afterschool Showcase
- Summer Bash Week
- Halloween Bash
- Fall Festival
- State Parks Field Trips
- Commit to Health Festival
- Valentine's Sweetheart Party

*Source: Community Centers Directory 2016*

## Specialized Programs

Specialized Programs are created to provide opportunities for youth outside of regular school time with a variety of activities that promote health and wellness, socialization, and active learning. These types of programs are listed to the right:

- Fishing Derby
- Summer Life Skills Program
- Dunbar Garden Project Program

*Source: Community Centers Directory 2016*



## Summer Playground Program

As reported through several resources, the Summer Playground Program continues to thrive at enrollment capacity. The playground program offers a wide-range of on-site and off-site activities. On-site activities include passive games like checkers and cards, as well as more active games like softball, kickball, soccer, and football. Off-site examples include: Wild River Country, swimming, skating, fishing, museums, parks, and nature centers. Currently, there are programs at several elementary schools, as well as one TEEN Camp at a middle school. Hours of operation are Monday-Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for ages 6-15, for eight weeks. Online registration is available.

*Sources: Summer Playground Program Brochure 2016; Parks and Recreation Division Reports-May 2016; and Community Centers Directory 2016*



## Tennis Programs

Tennis Programs are created to provide a unique opportunity for a quality tennis experience for citizens. Programming includes lessons, tournaments, open play, and examples are included below:

- Inner-City Tennis
- Pee Wee Group Tennis Lessons
- Junior Beginning Group Tennis Lessons
- Advanced Youth Group Tennis Lessons
- Junior Tennis Tournaments
- Adult Beginner Tennis Group Lessons
- Adult Tennis League
- Adult Team Tennis
- Adult Tennis Tournaments

*Source: Community Centers Directory 2016*

## Therapeutic Recreation Programs

The Therapeutic Program Division has created a strong presence on the LRPR website, providing current programming information to prospective participants. There are a variety of offerings that provide youth and adults with *opportunities to participate in community outings, healthy and active programs, volunteer service opportunities, skills classes, special events and social activities*. There is an annual Therapeutic Recreation Arts Festival that occurs in May and usually attracts over 1,000 people each year. Craft and activity booths are run by a variety of agencies and organizations.

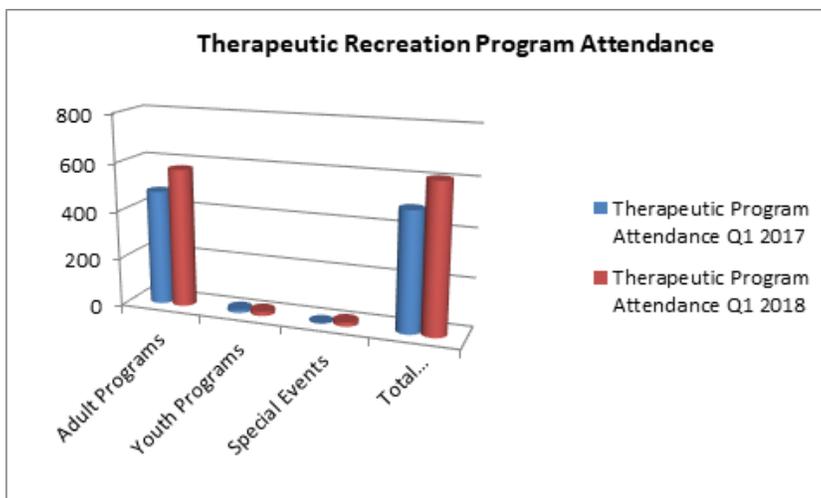
Listed below are several programming examples:

- Adventure Club
- Basketball
- Branch Out Program
- Community Outings
- Cooking Classes
- DeGray Lake State Park Annual Field Trip
- Little Rockers TR Marathon
- Summer Day Camp for Youth and Adults
- Therapeutic Arts Festival
- Weekend Warriors/Kids Night Out

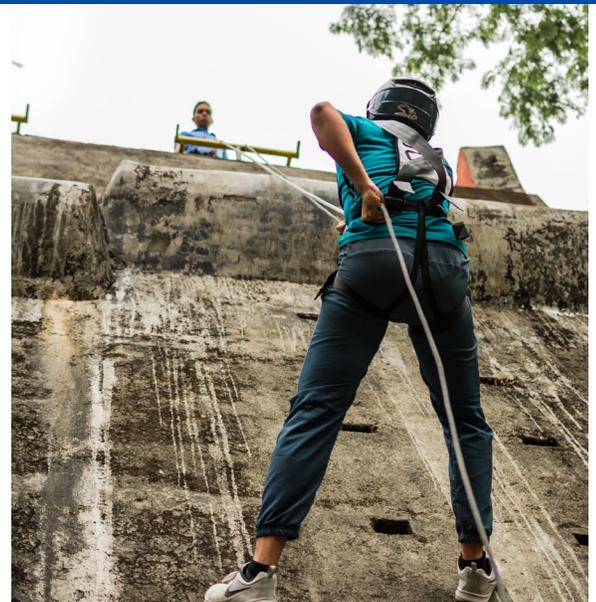
Sources: LRPR Division Reports – May 2016 and Community Centers Directory 2016

Attendance in Therapeutic Recreation activities has increased in 2018 over the previous year, which is shown in the figure below.

Figure 5.8 Therapeutic Recreation Program Attendance



Source: 2018 LRStat by Quarter Recreation



## Trails and Pathways

Socialization on and around trails has increased dramatically over the past several years, especially for women. Creating walkable and bikeable pathways by providing connectivity throughout a community is a high priority as identified by the citizens of Little Rock. A somewhat newer concept is to create “pocket parks” that include “play pockets” and playgrounds along the trails/pathways. There is a continually rising increase of socialization during trail use and this phenomenon will need further study. Understanding the increased interest in socialization will assist planners in creating future trails and pathways.

**CURRENT PERCEPTION:** Trails = (physical activity + health) = socializing

**RECENT FINDINGS:** Trails = (physical activity + socializing) = health

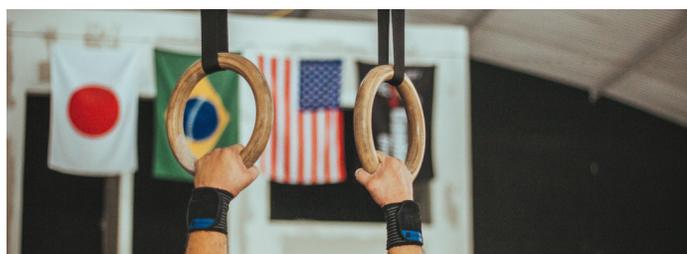


Sources: *The Health Benefits of a Bicycle-Pedestrian Trail*, December 1, 2016, by L. Gezon, E. McKendry-Smith, and A. Hunter and *Pathways for Play – Best Practice Guidelines by PlayCore*, 2018 (Partnered with the Natural Learning Initiative, College of Design, North Carolina State University)

## Youth Afterschool Programs

Providing a safe haven for children before and after school and during the summer months is a community effort for which most parks and recreation agencies share responsibility. A combination of recreation, education, and enrichment activities should be well-blended into the overall program. Inclusion of children from diversified backgrounds and abilities will be important in order to serve the community well. For many children, it will be a unique opportunity for exposure to nature and outdoor activities that will contribute to their overall health. Providing healthy and nutritious snacks and meals will assist many children who are experiencing food insecurity issues. One key finding in this study stated that one out of every six children come to their programs hungry. Parks and recreation staff can help alleviate this concern by adding a food component of snacks and meals, especially in high areas of poverty.

Sources: *NRPA Out-of-School Time Report, 2018 and Me2 – 7 Principles of Inclusive Playground Design*, PlayCore with K. Christensen of Utah State University's Center for Persons with Disabilities (CPD), 2018



LRPR Afterschool Programs are in session during the school year, from August to June. The *Latch Key Program* provides parents an affordable program with structured activities, staff supervision, homework time, athletics, recreational activities, and meal and snack times daily and on days when school is not in session. Other Afterschool Programs include:

- Gymnastics
- Cooking Class
- Karate
- Hip-Hop Dance
- Lights on Afterschool Program during the school year
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant
- Kids Night Out
- Community Outings?
- Adventure Club
- Little Rockers Kids Marathon

Source: *Community Centers Directory 2016*

## Youth Athletics Programs

The goal of Youth Athletics Programs is to provide youth age 3-17 recreational activities and participation in team sports. These opportunities help to develop participants, create opportunities and provide a positive and fun experience for youth in Little Rock.

- Baseball League
- Basketball League
- Cheerleading
- Football League
- Soccer League
- Softball League
- T-Ball League
- Track and Field
- Volleyball League
- Baseball Camp
- Basketball Camp
- Football Camp

*Source: Community Centers Directory 2016*



## Youth Recreational and Instructional Programs

Youth Recreational and Instructional Programs are providing youth, ages 3-15, exciting and challenging activities across Little Rock. A wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities are scheduled to encourage engagement and socialization in a relaxed setting. Programs are also created for afterschool and summer care for Latchkey children. Examples of activities are listed below:

- Latchkey Program
- Kid's Marathon
- Gymnastics
- Drama
- Cheerleading
- Badminton
- Running Club
- Fun & Games
- Skills & Drills

*Source: Community Centers Directory 2016*



## Program Assessment

Within the LRPR's Recreation Division, there is a standardized program assessment. At a minimum, staff meets annually to review currently offered programs based on goals and objectives, program/class participant surveys, trends in the field of recreation, and requests made by the public for future programs/classes.



*The Recreation Division evaluates the quality of its program and services based on participant feedback provided during the program and through completed surveys. Participant Evaluations are distributed at the end of each program. Completed evaluations are submitted to the Program Manager responsible who then compiles the results and submits a tally report of all evaluations submitted for review.*

*Sources: LRPR Recreation Division Programming Plan, Updated October 2018 and LRPR Recreation Division Programming Plan, 2016*

## Program Staffing

For every new program that is added, additional staffing needs to be considered unless a current program is being removed. When making changes, all current programs need to be analyzed for attendance/participation rates and revenue generating ability. Following the completion of a recommendation to write consistent standards for creating new programs in LRPR, all offerings should be analyzed for effectiveness. If programs do not meet the requirements of the newly written guidelines, then staffing can be shifted to fit within the revised parameters. Any future development of facilities, parks, or programming comes with additional staffing needs.



# LRPR Programming Recommendations

A series of recommendations for improvement have been written focusing specifically on the areas of Golf, Tennis and Pickleball as well as a series of overall Key Recommendations. These recommendations are delineated in the following sections.

## Golf Recommendations

- Immediately request a study to review all LRPR golf courses and facilities from USGA standards: Hindman Park Golf Course, Rebsamen Park Golf Course, and War Memorial Park Golf Course. Include in the USGA study appropriate space needed for Clubhouses.
- The Director requested a “Punch List” of all items that need repairing at the three golf courses. After USGA reviews LRPR’s golf courses, compare with the current “Punch List”, and then incorporate all information into the Budget Priorities.
- Request a visit by the PGA National/Regional Teaching Professional Officials to access advice on (new) programming to be added to all golf courses and hire PGA certified professionals to teach these new programs.
- Programming needs to begin immediately. Creation of Ladies Leagues, Jr. Golf development opportunities, Men’s Leagues, Senior Leagues (a.m.), and Couples’ Leagues should bring immediate revenue for LRPR.
- Following the PGA visit, review the analysis of the LRPR golf courses. Convene a broader Facility Review Committee to study each facility, gather community input, review experts’ analyses, and make facility recommendations, both short-term and long-term, that are directly tied to LRPR budget and future tax issues.
- Once recommendations are made, programs are added, and a phased-in approach for budgeting is included, an immediate increase in revenue should occur. This budget needs to include achievable goals and objectives. Revenue should offset expenditures within three years of revamped courses and new programming.
- After the USGA visit, an insignia banner will be received, which should be displayed proudly. Include the event on LRPR’s website.
- Review all contracts and/or MOU’s related to all three golf courses with the City of Little Rock’s Legal Department to ensure fairness for both parties.
- Collaborate with instructors and students from the Dale Bumpers College of Agriculture, Food, and Life Sciences to study the latest research pertaining to golf course grasses, watering plans, and low maintenance beautification projects that are ongoing. Also, encourage collegiate students to intern with LRPR. Using current research on top rated golf courses combined with USGA recommendations, design an integrated approach to improving and maintaining LRPR’s golf courses.
- Consider converting the greens to Bermuda grass.
- Seek advice on how to lower maintenance costs through using alternative watering plans. Seek advice from the USGA officials when a visit occurs, as well as from the University of Arkansas-Little Rock instructors who would understand watering systems and ecofriendly procedures that produce professional results for golf courses.
- LRPR had a nationally certified Audubon sanctuary golf course at Hindman Park Golf Course, in the recent past. Connect with the National Audubon Society and Master Gardener’s group and ask for assistance to bring it back to the former status. Consider hiring the retired Superintendent part-time to work with volunteers, students from local universities, and the Master Gardeners. Ask students to develop a phased in approach to bringing the Audubon Sanctuary back to its former beauty. Work through the school-park liaison to have middle and high school students compete to draw the future vision of the Audubon Sanctuary. Consider this beautification process at all courses.
- Hire a PGA Pro for each course to build revenue with private and group lessons. This position should support more league and tournament play as they are well-trained professionals and understand how to increase revenue. The Pro could offer



suggestions on course improvement and maintenance based on PGA guidelines.

- Goal should be to host a USGA National Championship, once improvements are made to the golf courses. The hired PGA professionals could run these championship events.
- Seek donors for Clubhouse Renovations, Golf Leagues, and Tournaments.
- Create a Jr. Golf Course featuring synthetic grass (complete with a Junior development training system) and have it totally funded by a private donor.
- Seek information on inclusion of LRPR's golf courses on the Four State Golf Card. Arkansas courses such as Stonebridge Meadow Golf Club have appeared on this special player's card. Golfers fees pay for the carts and current participating agencies are seeing an average of 2-3 return trips. The cost of the card averages \$38-\$45 on a yearly basis. This could be a great marketing tool for LRPR golf courses.
- Consider asking the City of Little Rock for a loan to complete the first tier of maintenance, operations, or course and clubhouse upgrades with a payback plan in place based on increased revenue.

## Tennis Recommendations

- Contact the Southern Region, the largest region of USTA, for their assistance with facility and program review to optimize tennis in Little Rock.
- Ask for a site visit to determine how the Southern Region of USTA can help and how LRPR can "grow" tennis in Little Rock. With revenue from the US Open, USTA can provide free equipment, tablets, tech support, and promotion examples to use with the public.
- Once USTA has visited, reviewed the facility and the programming options, LRPR will be awarded a banner (A USTA Member Organization). Display the banner to build confidence with the citizens.
- Make sure that LRPR's USTA organizational membership is current.
- Focus on USTA's Net Generation information for all tennis centers. The Tennis Director (and instructors) must be registered as a provider in order to receive all of the Net Generation benefits from USTA. Through USTA Net Generation programming, apply for teaching and equipment grants.
- Use "Try, Learn, Play, and Compete" developed by a top marketing group in the world for USTA. This is a great way to communicate and market tennis and other sports programs. (An example is included in the Reference Book.)
- City of LR 2018 Annual Operating Budget Book (p. 233). Develop future goals for community tennis programs. Review the LRPR Tennis Budget and focus on revenue generating ideas to create a successful budget plan.
- After reviewing the current Tennis Professional Lesson Fees from the three comparable agencies, interview and add additional PTR and PTA teaching professionals who can give lessons on a regular basis for a fee. Develop a fee structure based on the certification level of the teaching professionals.
- USTA can provide free background checks for all teaching staff, which is a great double check system for LRPR's tennis staff.
- Enclose the current tennis complex with fencing to increase controlled court usage and needed security. Consider adding another court location to be able to teach more lessons. Also, LRPR needs indoor tennis facilities.
- Cover eight existing tennis courts at Rebsamen Tennis Center with a bubble. This will add the opportunity for year-round programming, annual membership sales, paid permanent court time rentals, and special events.

## Pickleball Recommendations

- Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the country and is a high revenue generator. Read all documents that have been submitted to LRPR about Pickleball from Brio2 Solutions. Purchase rackets and other necessary Pickleball equipment to initiate lessons out in the community.
- The Professional Tennis Registry and the USA Pickleball Association have combined to provide certified Pickleball professional instructors. Consider having selected tennis staff members become certified as USA Pickleball coaches.
- Develop a long-range plan on how to stripe Pickleball Courts, indoor and outdoor, as soon as possible.
- Review all current programs and consider adding new programs based on the LRPR *Establishing Program Policy criteria*. Add the strongest revenue generators first and continue to promote USTA League Teams. Create a tiered leveling of positions for tennis based on experience and certification with one of the certified tennis professionals becoming an assistant of Tennis and Pickleball.



## Key Recommendations

- **Director:** With further development of the Mayor's Youth Master Plan and Workforce Development, representatives from the Park Board need to be included on these very important committees. Seek a position in order to participate in these discussions. Continue to offer positions at LRPR directly tied to the Workforce Development component.
- **Director:** Team up with LRSD and the University of AR-Little Rock for fishing, canoeing, and kayaking teams at the high school level leading to scholarships at the collegiate level.
- **Director and Administration:** Using LRPR's Recreation Program Development Policy as the guiding standard, all current programs/offers need to be reviewed for revenue generation and attendance numbers. Each program should have goals and measurable objectives and should not receive funding without the appropriate analysis and documentation.
- **Director and Administration:** When conducting surveys, include basic demographic information, such as range of ages, gender, and ethnicity. Explore the comparable agencies for successful Cultural Diversity programs. Springfield Sister Cities Association is a SGCPB program that reaches to Isesaki, Japan and Tlaquepaque, Mexico. (Information on this effort is included in the References Book).
- **Director and Administration:** Contact the Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission, which falls under the auspices of the City of Little Rock, in order to gain knowledge about their goals for equity and start building a collaborative effort for the future. Contact information: Ericka Benedicto, Diversity Program Manager, [ebenedicto@littlerock.gov](mailto:ebenedicto@littlerock.gov) or 501-244-5483. Study the *City Connections-Connecting the Church and the City Action Plan: Economic Development Program for the Latino Community*, Arkansas 2016-2017.
- **Director and Administration:** Consider partnering with the local Arts Council for a variety of programs for children and adults throughout the community.
- **Director, Administration, and Operations:** Following a review of facility locations in Little Rock, consider building a new Family Center in the area of the city that has the few-



est facilities. Create programming based on community input and ability to generate revenue. Review the phased-in approach to the Dan Kinney Family Center in Springfield, Missouri. (This information is included in the References Book. Phase I was 40,000 square feet at a cost of \$9 million, with Phase II plans of adding a second gym and an Aquatics Center in the future.)

- **Administration:** Review *City of LR 2018 Annual Operating Budget* (p. 201)-*Human Resources 2018 Department Goals*: 1) Develop a Wellness Program that will assist in driving down health-care cost and keep employees engaged. LRPR selected staff should offer to assist and bring examples, such as the Springfield Public Schools Wellness Program that allows staff to be 100% reimbursed for working out in approved centers if they attend a minimum of 12 times per month or 50% reimbursement if they attend at least eight times. This program is greatly appreciated by staff and helps generate extra funds in approved centers across Springfield. (Information on this program is included in the Resources Book.)
- **Administration:** Review the Silver Sneakers contract provided by SGCPB (Located in the References Book). This is a highly successful program in many agencies across the country.

If adopted by the City of Little Rock, it should help generate new revenue for LRPR.

- **Administration:** Use partnership opportunities, sponsorship support, and citizen requests for creating special events by LRPR.
- **Administrator and Volunteer Coordinator** -Assign the Volunteer Coordinator the responsibility of building a relationship with the Master Gardeners. This organization is pivotal in helping create the beautification of Little Rock parks. Master Gardeners possess in-depth knowledge of what/where to plant, have expertise in plant information, grasses, shrubs, and trees and understand planting schedules. The Master Gardeners in Springfield, Missouri are the nucleus at the Botanical Center and are responsible for a large number of gardens. They care for the gardens, have periodic plant sales, and membership drives to fund the planting activities at the Botanical Center. Leaders or experts within the organization teach classes to community members on how to plant and maintain personal gardens. It will be very important for LRPR to build a positive relationship with these garden experts.
- **Marathon Coordinators:** Review creative programs at the comparable agencies, such as the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Turkey Trot with SGCPB (Included in the References

Book). "It is Springfield's largest timed 5K run/walk of the year and the largest Thanksgiving Day 5K in Missouri, attracting more than 7,000 participants a year. Proceeds from the event benefit the SGCPB Scholarship Fund and the Developmental Center of the Ozarks. The Park Board Youth Recreation Scholarship Fund offers scholarships for youth to participate in sports, summer camps and other programs designed to build skills and confidence while maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Turkey Trot also serves as one of the largest one-day food drives of the year for Ozarks Food Harvest, with more than 6,500 meals donated at the event last year." The cost to participate in the race is: \$30/adults and \$25/kids 12 and younger. Early bird registration is \$20/adults and \$15/kids 12 and younger. Turkey Trot began in 1995 with 142 participants and had over 7,500 in 2018. Because it is for the scholarship fund, most organizations that assist with the race, donate goods/services. Organizations or private donors also pay for the police officers' salaries that assist in the logistics for the race. Sponsors match dollars raised which assists in the overall revenue generation.

- **Recreation and Special Events (new position):** Consider creating a *Master Plan for Play* throughout the city. Summer Programs should include outside play on playgrounds. Make sure all playgrounds are safe and if they are unsafe or aging include playground replacement in the requested budget priorities and in the new LRPR's *Master Plan for Play*.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position):** Programs should be provided to all community members across Little Rock. Complete a geographical study of the location of programs and use the information to plan future programming and facilities based on need, participation number projections, and revenue generation ability.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position):** Consider programming outside of community centers to include partnership locations and parks.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position):** Analyze program offerings from comparable agencies to see what is generating revenue and is well attended. Prioritize revenue generating programs, from highest to lowest. Develop a seasonal brochure and online registration process for class registration and for renting facilities. Consider updating and adding all programming brochures in English and Spanish.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position):** Review, align, and update (if needed) the following documents: 1) Community Centers Directory 2016, 2) Jim Dailey Fitness & Aquatics Center Facility Hours & Amenities Offered to All Members, 3) Jim Dailey's Aerobic Class Descriptions, 4) Jim Dailey Fitness & Aquatic Center Gymnasium Schedule, 5) Jim Dailey Fitness & Aquatic Center Aerobics Schedule, 6) Jim Dailey Fitness & Aquatic Center Indoor Aquatic Schedule, and 7) Jim Dailey Indoor Lane Schedule.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position):** Review all completed surveys from the Summer School and Afterschool Programs to determine the rate of success for goal completion and if revisions need to be made for the future.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position):** For Afterschool Programs, consider a rotation system for children (Homework Help, Recreation Activities, and Enrichment). If the Afterschool Program is located at a school, ask teachers if they would like to create/teach classes of their choice afterschool and pay them an hourly rate (try to pay slightly above what teachers are paid for afterschool tutoring). Then, teachers can recruit students to fill their classes and a portion of the revenue pays for all necessary supplies. Each class must meet a minimum number of students to at least break even financially or make a profit, which is then reinvested into other programming provided by LRPR.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position):** Staff stated this is the first time they have applied for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program grant. If the grant is received, closely monitor the progress throughout the year and pay close attention to LRPR's write-up of the evaluation (this is a very important piece). Applying for additional grants next year is highly recommended to further serve young people in the community and to help defray some programming costs. Conduct collaborative training with LRSD and LRPR staff with the Read 180 program. LRPR staff can assist with follow-up activities in the afterschool and summer school programs, working collaboratively with school personnel.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position):** Develop a relationship with the Home School Network and develop classes at centers or facilities according to their needs. One example is Springfield-Greene County Park Board which offers sports and classes for Home Schoolers: Horticulture for 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>, and high school; Spring Amateur



Softball Association; and a Community Athletic Schedule.

- **Recreation and Special Events (new position):** Review the MOU between LRPR and LRSD to insure both parties are satisfied with the contract (include the City of LR Legal Department). Assign one LRPR liaison to be the School-Park Liaison, who schedules regular meetings (one time per month or each quarter) with the LRSD appointed person. Revisit items that were promised earlier (resurfacing courts) and establish joint expectations. Items for discussion include: strengthening the partnership through the possible joint equipment purchases (portable bleachers), co-writing grants for before/after school programs, Parent's Night Out, School's Out, Summer School Programs, non-competitive sports, and collaborative plans for athletic facilities that can be shared. A yearly meeting should be held between the point people and the Athletic Director for LRSD to schedule all shared facilities and fields, specifically soccer fields, where there is a great need. If there are none, then begin with one facility or field and schedule it for one year, then add others as the trust grows between the two entities.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position):** Allow participants to use one pass to enter all community centers. LRPR's

customer satisfaction and usage should increase if people are allowed to workout at a center near their home or at a different center near where they work. Being flexible and supportive of community members is appreciated and remembered.

- **Recreation and Special Events (new position):** Increase the operating hours at all community centers to accommodate people's schedules and to be more competitive with private facilities. Open at 5:00 am and close at 11:00 pm. Monitor participation every hour for the year in the changed schedule to see if other modifications might need to be made.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position):** Monitor the times used with the new cardio and strength equipment recently purchased for Jim Dailey Fitness & Aquatic Center. Analyze data on a regular basis to see if additional equipment is justified or if a class to teach how to properly use the equipment is needed, always responding to customer need.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position):** Currently, there are 230 classes held per month at the Jim Dailey Aquatic & Fitness Center. A concern was cited that there are too many classes, many with small participation numbers. Understanding that in 2017, the Jim Dailey Fit-

ness and Aquatics Center faced the largest decrease in participation in the history of the facility (built in 1992) of 1,100 people, revisioning the future for JDAFC needs to be immediately organized with a timeline included for improvements to the facility and to programming. Classes need to produce revenue, so a "break even or profit number" of participants can be established and consistency practiced at all community centers. If the number falls below the "break even or profit number", the class is cancelled.

- **Recreation and Special Events (new position):** Study Little Rock's demographics related to the aging population. Review what is offered for Senior Programming and ask for input from seniors living in Little Rock for programming ideas.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position):** The Programming Division needs to have the attitude of revenue generation for all programs. Programs should also be responsive to citizen interest and request AND meet the minimum participation numbers. Initially, focus on top rated, high interest programs. If a program is unsuccessful, appropriately delete the program and communicate the reason for deletion with all participants. It is better to have fewer, high producing programs than nu-



merous programs that take staff time, have low membership, and are not revenue producing.

- **Recreation and Special Events (new position) and Operations:** Review successful Urban Gardens, Farm Parks, Community Gardens, and Garden to Table Classes in the comparable agencies. Look for successful programs as determined by participation, satisfaction level of participants, and revenue generation.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position) and Operations:** Consider a program for Farm to Table. Community gardens are providing access to healthy food for millions of people across the nation. More than ¼ of parks and recreation agencies lead and/or assist with Farmer's Markets. Additionally, places like Rutledge Wilson Farm Park (SGCPB – Included in References Book), rent growing plots of land for a nominal fee. Classes are offered at the Farm Park to educate and encourage citizens to grow their own food. Source: *NRPA Park Programming and Better Health*, 2018
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position) and Operations:** Analyze the success of Outdoor Initiative Programs at the comparative agencies. Review the information from Columbia, Missouri Parks and Recreation (Included in the References Book),

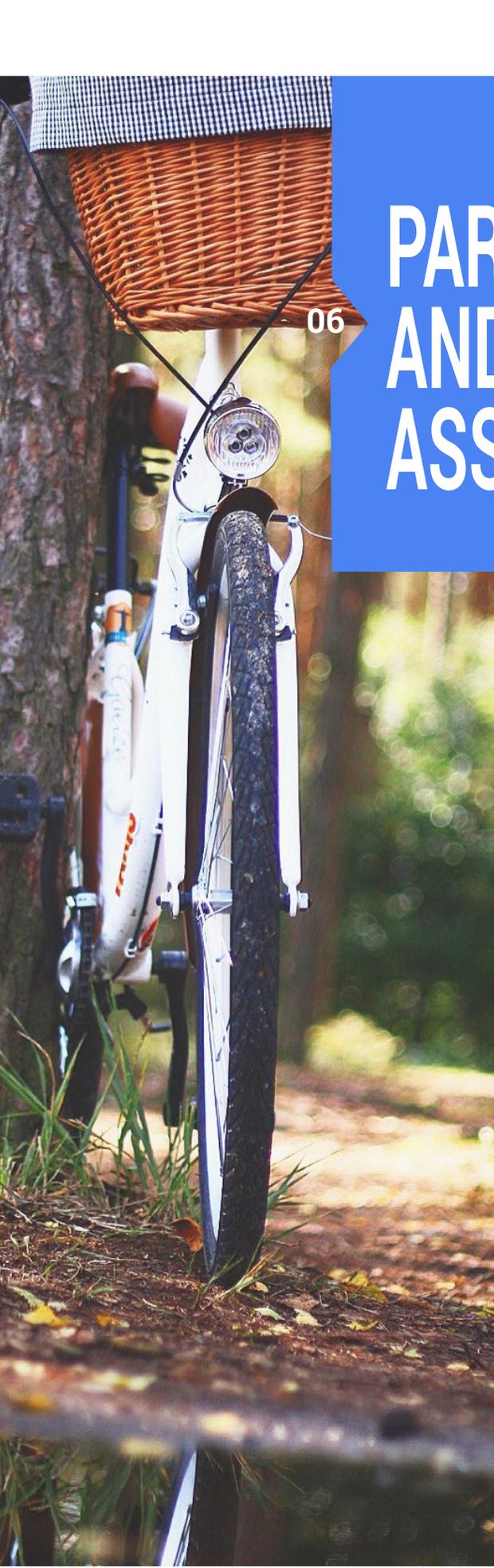
since they are the state leaders in the Outdoor Initiative Area in Missouri and rely 100% on self-revenue. Offer domestic trips to Yellowstone (Included in the References Book) and other areas of interest. This area of programming is really growing and what is especially important is to teach people in the community to protect the natural resources.

- **Recreation and Special Events (new position) and Operations:** Continue to explore all possibilities related to canoeing, kayaking, and fishing teams at the high school level, as well as collegiate scholarship opportunities; consider adding an Olympic Training Center (Five Rivers in Dayton County information is included in the References Book).
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position) and Operations:** Review programs from Five Rivers Metroparks in Dayton, Ohio: Backpacking, Boating, Camping, Conservation & Citizen Science, Cycling, Entertainment, Fishing, Fitness, Flora & Fauna, Food: Earth to Table, Gardening, Geocaching, Hiking, Heritage & History, Horseback Riding, Ice Skating, Mountain Biking, Nature Appreciation, Outdoor Play, Outdoor Skills & Safety, Paddling, Photography & Art, Sustainable Home, Winter Sports, Experiences, Active Outdoors, Adult Nature Exploration, Earth-Friendly

Living, Families, Youth & Teens, Community Groups & Training.

- **Recreation and Special Events (new position) and Operations:** Involve the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and the National Wildlife Federation in LRPR's programming and activities when it is suitable.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position) and Rebsamen Tennis Facility Supervisor:** Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the country. Purchase the basic equipment and send a supervisor and a recreation specialist out into LRPR facilities to model how to play Pickleball. Purchase a supply of rackets and balls to allow citizens to borrow the equipment while they play and make a long-range plan for taping courts during Pickleball play and to promote this sport everywhere.
- **Recreation and Special Events (new position) and Therapeutic Recreation Supervisor:** Therapeutic Recreation has an impressive presence on the LRPR website, raises funds, has developed a number of programs, and appears highly organized and successfully functioning. Have Therapeutic Recreation serve as a model for developing new programs within LRPR. Have the TR Manager present to other staff within LRPR about the process for revenue generating and creating/sustaining programs.

# PARK CLASSIFICATIONS AND LAND NEEDS ASSESSMENT



In 1995, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) published *Park, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines* by James D. Mertes, Ph.D., CLP, and James R. Hall, CLP. The book outlined a template for typical park classifications, numbers of acres a system should have, and recommended service levels based on population. Strictly intended as a guideline, the book does not consider the unique character of a community. Local trends and popularity of some activities often dictate a greater need for particular facilities. The guidelines outlined in *Park, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines* serve as a good baseline for determining a minimum standard. These guidelines, along with the community needs assessment, community input and comparisons to similar communities were used to develop service standards for Little Rock. For public park providers, the guidelines suggest, “A park system, at a minimum, should be composed of a core system of park lands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population” (Mertes, 1995).

Critical to the service delivery system of any department is the provision of the four basic park categories: mini parks, neighborhood parks, community parks and regional parks. Beyond these four basic park types are special-use parks, natural areas/preserves, greenways, school parks and private parks/recreation facilities. Each is classified differently based upon the types of amenities, size, service area and how access is gained to the facility.

# Park Classification

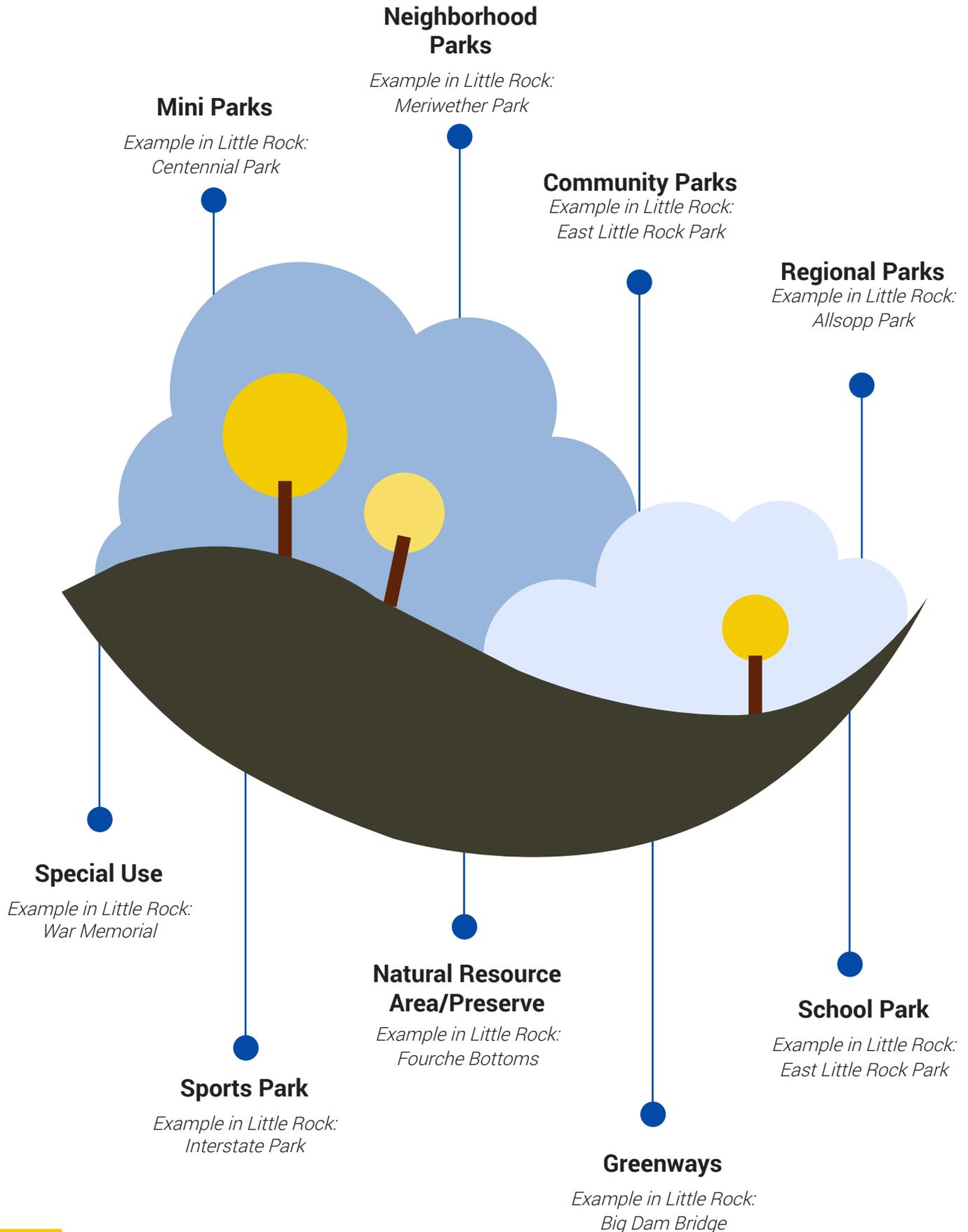


Table 6.1 provides a definition of each classification along with information on size and service criteria.

**Table 6.1** Park Classifications with Service Criteria

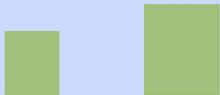
CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	DESIRABLE SIZE	LOCATION CRITERIA
Mini-Park	Small parks with limited activity that should provide seating, landscape and possibly a playground, community garden or other passive recreation activities	5 acres or less 	¼ mile radius
Neighborhood Park	Area for more intense recreational activities, such as playing field, larger playgrounds, shelters, trails, swimming pools, restrooms, etc.	5-20 acres 	½ mile radius
Community Park	All-inclusive facility for recreation users that provides a mix of active and passive activities and attracts users of all ages, from sports fields to a community center	20-75 acres 	1-3 mile radius
Regional Park	Unique outdoor recreation area with various amenities, which may include boating, fishing, swimming, camping, but may also be a water park, etc.	50-250 acres 	Varies
Special-Use Park	Special-use parks are designed to meet the needs of a specific user group, such as an aquatic center, golf course, zoo or a museum.	Varies	Varies
Sports Park	Sports parks are parks that are dominated by athletic facilities.	Varies	Varies
Natural Resource Area/ Preserve	Land with natural resources, historic landscapes, visual beauty, bio-diversity, etc.	Varies	Varies
Greenways	Linear corridors that loop and/or link to other amenities	 50 ft. wide	½ mile radius along path
School Park	Typically, found at middle and high schools with youth athletic fields that support team sports	Varies	Varies

Table adapted from Mertes, J.D. and J.R. Hall. *Park, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines*. Alexandria, VA: National Recreation and Park Associations, 1995.

## Level of Service

Evaluating the level of service helps determine whether a recreational delivery system is meeting the needs of the population it serves. The analysis begins with a review of the existing facilities and level of service offered by a community. Table 6.2: Facility Matrix summarizes the inventory of critical facilities operated by the Little Rock Parks and Recreation Department. The facilities inventory reveals that the department owns 75 separate park properties with a total acreage of approximately 6,140 acres.

Once the existing facilities inventory was completed, the planning team compared the overall number and types of facilities to standards based on NRPA and other guidelines. The NRPA standards are taken from the 2018 NRPA Park Metrics publication. These guidelines enable the planning team to detect where Little Rock has a surplus or deficiency in a particular type of facility or service. While these standards provide guidance on the quantity of facilities, they should not be used indiscriminately and without understanding facility quality, location and other factors.

To reveal the surpluses and deficits of each facility, the planning team compared the existing facilities in Little Rock to the recommended level of service. The planning team performed this analysis for 2015 census estimates. The following table summarizes levels of service by facility type as compared to NRPA Park Metrics averages for all reporting communities.

2015: Little Rock has a deficit in several types of facilities:

- Playgrounds
- Baseball: youth
- Softball:
- Rectangular: Multi-purpose
- Dog Park
- Swimming Pools (Outdoor)
- Community Gardens
- Soccer field: Adult
- Tee-ball
- Multiuse Courts: Basketball, Volleyball
- Football Field
- Multipurpose Synthetic Field
- Lacrosse Field
- Field Hockey
- Gym
- Senior Center
- Fitness Center
- Performance Amphitheater
- Nature Center
- Stadium
- Indoor Track
- Teen Center
- Arena

2015: Little Rock has a surplus in four types of facilities:

- Acreage
- Greenway Trails
- Tennis
- Basketball Courts
- Baseball: Adult

While standards are good for planning, in order to determine demand, actual scheduling of facilities should be used as well. For example, if current sports fields are programmed at full capacity and there is a deficiency based on the desired level of service, that is a strong indicator that additional sports fields are needed. In our recommendations, we also use the community needs assessment and public input to determine what facilities should be included in a long-range capital plan and considering facility maintenance requirements.

**Table 6.2 LRPR Facility Levels of Service**

PARK FACILITIES	POPULATION PER FACILITY (ALL AGENCIES)		FACILITY NEEDS BASED ON POPULATION (198,606)	LITTLE ROCK, AR (POP 198,606)	
				2019 INVENTORY	2019 SURPLUS/DEFICIT
<b>Acreage</b>	10.1 per	1,000	2,006	6,140	4,134
<b>Greenway Trails*</b>	1 per	3,000	66	104	38
<b>Playgrounds</b>	1 per	3,600	55	43	(10)
<b>Tennis**</b>	1 per	4,375	45	41	(4)
<b>Basketball Courts</b>	1 per	7,122	28	33	5
<b>Baseball: youth</b>	1 per	6,519	30	23	(7)
<b>Softball: Adult</b>	1 per	12,000	17	7	(10)
<b>Rectangular: Multi-purpose</b>	1 per	8,055	25	-	(25)
<b>Softball: Youth</b>	1 per	9,900	20	7	(13)
<b>Baseball: Adult</b>	1 per	18,880	11	20	9
<b>Dog Park</b>	1 per	41,500	5	3	(2)
<b>Swimming Pools (Outdoor)</b>	1 per	31,709	6	3	(3)
<b>Community Gardens</b>	1 per	27,587	7	4	(3)
<b>Soccer field (Regulation)</b>	1 per	11,383	17	13	(4)
<b>Tee-ball</b>	1 per	14,511	14	3	(11)
<b>Multiuse Courts: Basketball, Volleyball</b>	1 per	14,650	14	17	3
<b>Football Field</b>	1 per	24,742	8	5	(3)
<b>Multipurpose Synthetic Field</b>	1 per	41,719	5	-	(5)
<b>Lacrosse Field</b>	1 per	24,060	8	2	(6)
<b>Field Hockey</b>	1 per	20,893	10	-	(10)
<b>Recreation Center</b>	1 per	27,375	7	5	(2)
<b>Community Center</b>	1 per	27,486	7	5	(2)
<b>Gym</b>	1 per	27,334	7	6	(1)
<b>Senior Center</b>	1 per	45,436	4	1	(3)
<b>Fitness Center</b>	1 per	40,602	5	1	(4)
<b>Performance Amphitheater</b>	1 per	47,442	4	1	(3)
<b>Nature Center</b>	1 per	99,783	2	2	0
<b>Stadium</b>	1 per	64,500	3	1	(2)
<b>Indoor Track</b>	1 per	49,000	4	-	(4)
<b>Teen Center</b>	1 per	53,490	4	-	(4)
<b>Arena</b>	1 per	56,119	4	-	(4)

\*Greenway Trail ratio is estimated to be 1 mile of paved multi-use trail per 3,000 in population. This is not calculation by Park Metrics and is based on extensive Lose Design experience.

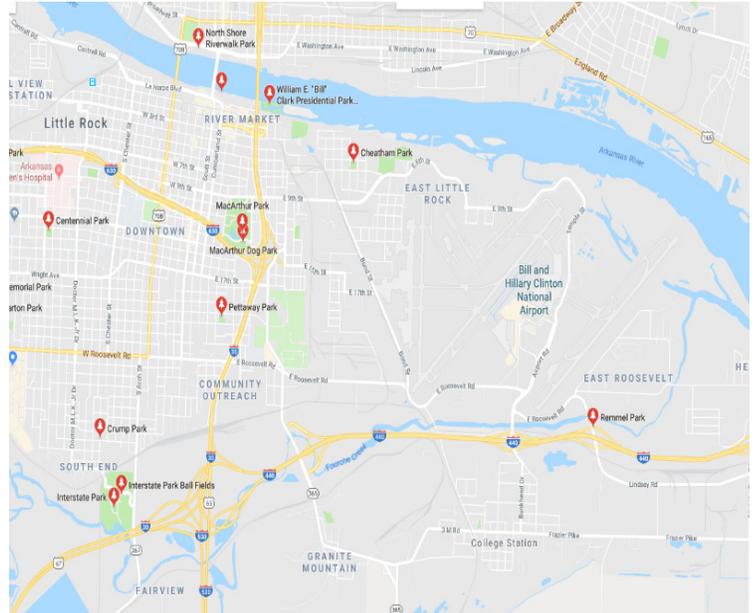
\*\* Tennis court ratio is not calculation by Park Metrics and is based on extensive Lose Design experience.

## Park Locations and Gap Analysis

### Existing Park Locations

Development patterns in Little Rock reflect a strong traditional grid pattern that evolves into a more curvilinear pattern to the west. The majority of new residential development has occurred in the western sections of the city. Figure 6.1 shows the existing park locations within Little Rock and population density obtained from the US Census Bureau.

It also appears that some portions of Little Rock are cut off from nearby parks by infrastructure (ex. Interstates or railroads) and facilities like the airport. While these are invaluable pieces of infrastructure, they can pose barriers for local access to parks by individuals without access to a car. This appears to be the case in eastern Little Rock where several interstates, the airport and industrial development have isolated older residential areas. This could be mitigated with adequate bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.



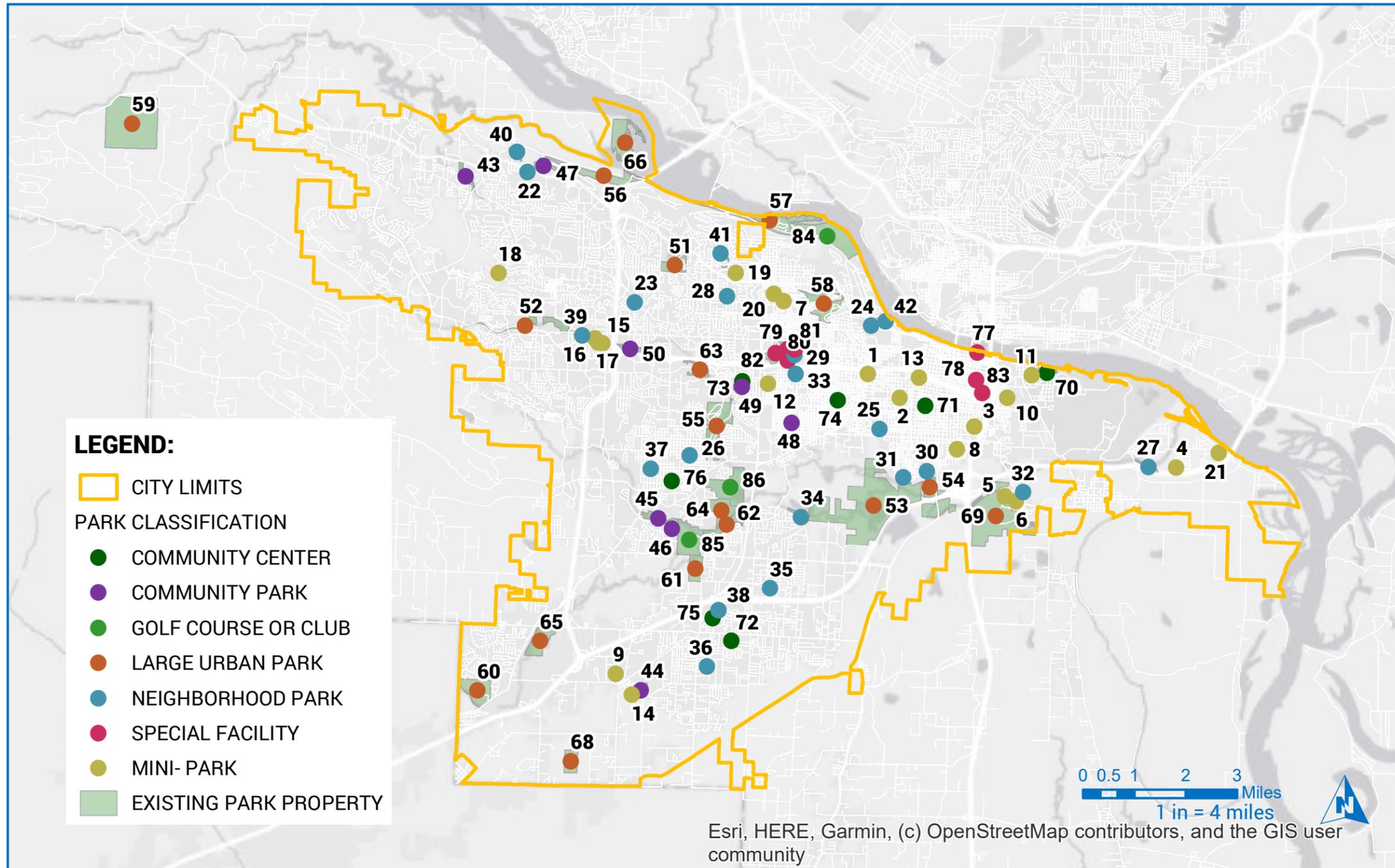
*INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES MAY POSE BARRIERS FOR ACCESS*



### Gap Analysis - Parks

A gap analysis is an assessment of the service areas related to parks and its facilities to determine if there are areas of a community that are underserved. It identifies gaps in the overall service standard for each park category. The service area analysis begins by classifying existing parks using the NRPA park classifications (See Table 6.1: Park Classifications with Service Criteria). All existing parks were classified based on use patterns as well as size and NRPA standards. Service areas for each category are provided on Figure 6.2: Gap Analysis.

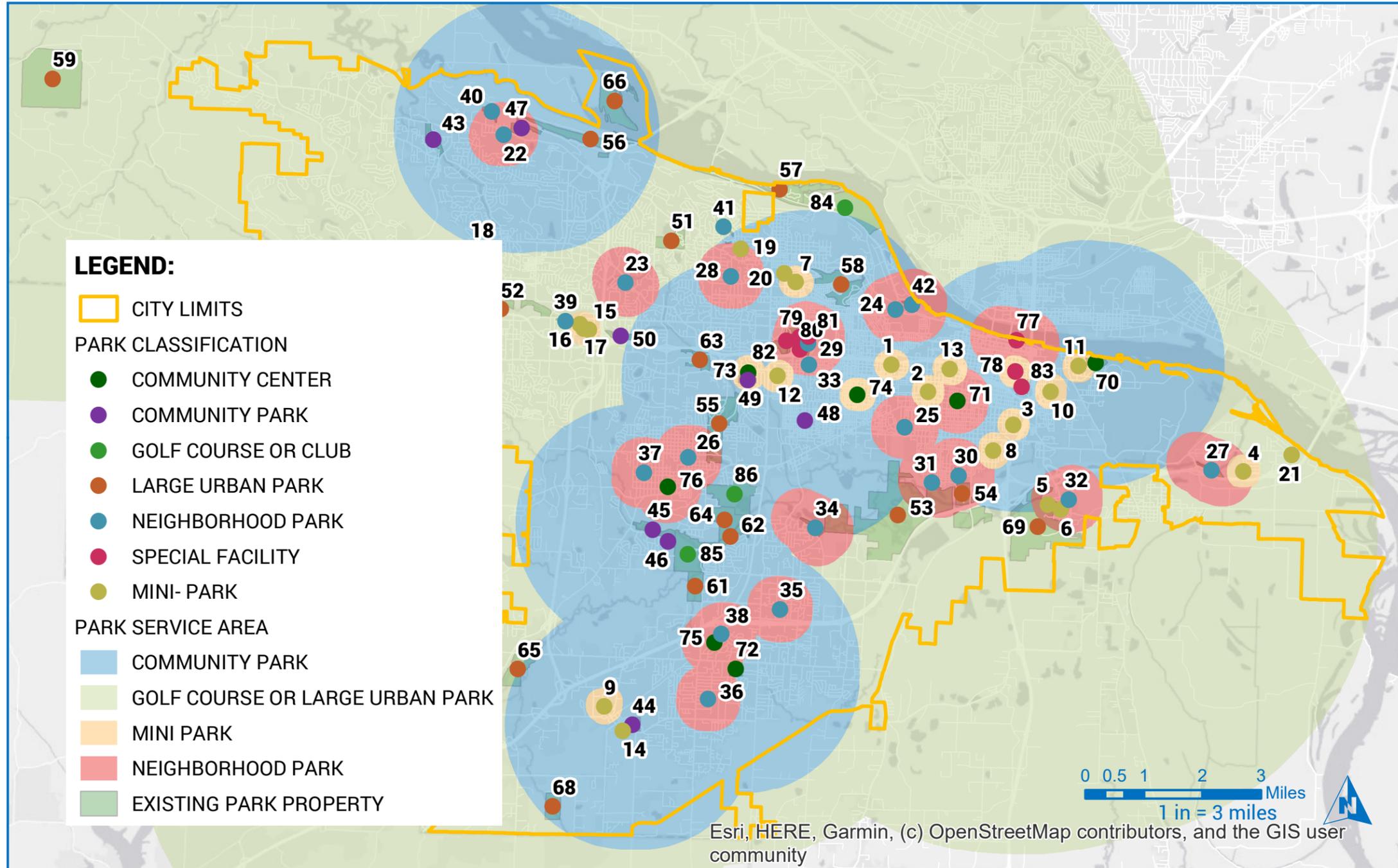
FIGURE 6.1 Existing Parks



- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Mini-Park</b>             | <b>Large Urban Park</b>      |
| 1 Fletcher                   | 51 Reservoir                 |
| 2 Centennial                 | 52 Rock Creek                |
| 3 Pettaway                   | 53 Fourche Bottoms           |
| 4 Richland                   | 54 Interstate                |
| 5 Booker Homes               | 55 Boyle                     |
| 6 Granite Mountain           | 56 River Mountain            |
| 7 Prospect Terrace           | 57 Murray                    |
| 8 South Little Rock          | 58 Allsopp                   |
| 9 Pinedale Cove              | 59 Section 13                |
| 10 Hanger Hill               | 60 Otter Creek               |
| 11 Cheatem                   | 61 Hindman South             |
| 12 Oak Forest                | 62 Hindman Community         |
| 13 Ninth Street              | 63 Kanis                     |
| 14 Morehart South            | 64 Western Hills             |
| 15 Unnamed                   | 65 Terry Park                |
| 16 Unnamed                   | 66 Two Rivers                |
| 17 Birchwood                 | 67 Natural Steps             |
| 18 Bell Pointe               | 68 Alexander                 |
| 19 Kingwood                  | 69 Gillam                    |
| 20 Hillside                  | <b>Community Center</b>      |
| 21 Fletcher-Baldwin          | 70 East Little Rock          |
| <b>Neighborhood Park</b>     | 71 Dunbar                    |
| 22 Pankey                    | 72 Southwest                 |
| 23 Butler                    | 73 The Centre at UAP         |
| 24 Knoop                     | 74 Stephens Community Center |
| 25 Barton                    | 75 Ottenheimer Center        |
| 26 Union                     | 76 West Central Sports Comp  |
| 27 Rimmel                    | <b>Special Facility</b>      |
| 28 Meriwether                | 77 Riverfront                |
| 29 Jim Dailey Fitness Center | 78 Terry Mansion             |
| 30 Crump                     | 79 War Memorial Park         |
| 31 Southside                 | 80 Zoo                       |
| 32 Granite Heights           | 81 War Memorial Stadium      |
| 33 Jonesboro Island          | 82 War Memorial Golf Course  |
| 34 Benny Craig               | 83 Macarthur                 |
| 35 Wakefield                 | <b>Golf Course or Club</b>   |
| 36 Thom                      | 84 Rebsamen Golf Course      |
| 37 Kiwanis                   | 85 Hindman Golf              |
| 38 Ottenheimer Park          | 86 First Tee Golf            |
| 39 Unnamed                   |                              |
| 40 Candlewood Park           |                              |
| 41 Unnamed                   |                              |
| 42 Junior Deputy             |                              |
| <b>Community Park</b>        |                              |
| 43 Taylor Loop               |                              |
| 44 Morehart                  |                              |
| 45 Brodie Creek              |                              |
| 46 North West Hindman        |                              |
| 47 Conner                    |                              |
| 48 Curran Conway             |                              |
| 49 Rebsamen Tennis Center    |                              |
| 50 Weedman Park              |                              |

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK.

FIGURE 6.2 Gap Analysis



- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Mini-Park</b>             | <b>Large Urban Park</b>      |
| 1 Fletcher                   | 51 Reservoir                 |
| 2 Centennial                 | 52 Rock Creek                |
| 3 Pettaway                   | 53 Fourche Bottoms           |
| 4 Richland                   | 54 Interstate                |
| 5 Booker Homes               | 55 Boyle                     |
| 6 Granite Mountain           | 56 River Mountain            |
| 7 Prospect Terrace           | 57 Murray                    |
| 8 South Little Rock          | 58 Allsopp                   |
| 9 Pinedale Cove              | 59 Section 13                |
| 10 Hanger Hill               | 60 Otter Creek               |
| 11 Cheatem                   | 61 Hindman South             |
| 12 Oak Forest                | 62 Hindman Community         |
| 13 Ninth Street              | 63 Kanis                     |
| 14 Morehart South            | 64 Western Hills             |
| 15 Unnamed                   | 65 Terry Park                |
| 16 Unnamed                   | 66 Two Rivers                |
| 17 Birchwood                 | 67 Natural Steps             |
| 18 Bell Pointe               | 68 Alexander                 |
| 19 Kingwood                  | 69 Gillam                    |
| 20 Hillside                  | <b>Community Center</b>      |
| 21 Fletcher-Baldwin          | 70 East Little Rock          |
| <b>Neighborhood Park</b>     | 71 Dunbar                    |
| 22 Pankey                    | 72 Southwest                 |
| 23 Butler                    | 73 The Centre at UAP         |
| 24 Knoop                     | 74 Stephens Community Center |
| 25 Barton                    | 75 Ottenheimer Center        |
| 26 Union                     | 76 West Central Sports Comp  |
| 27 Rimmel                    | <b>Special Facility</b>      |
| 28 Meriwether                | 77 Riverfront                |
| 29 Jim Dailey Fitness Center | 78 Terry Mansion             |
| 30 Crump                     | 79 War Memorial Park         |
| 31 Southside                 | 80 Zoo                       |
| 32 Granite Heights           | 81 War Memorial Stadium      |
| 33 Jonesboro Island          | 82 War Memorial Golf Course  |
| 34 Benny Craig               | 83 Macarthur                 |
| 35 Wakefield                 | <b>Golf Course or Club</b>   |
| 36 Thom                      | 84 Rebsamen Golf Course      |
| 37 Kiwanis                   | 85 Hindman Golf              |
| 38 Ottenheimer Park          | 86 First Tee Golf            |
| 39 Unnamed                   |                              |
| 40 Candlewood Park           |                              |
| 41 Unnamed                   |                              |
| 42 Junior Deputy             |                              |
| <b>Community Park</b>        |                              |
| 43 Taylor Loop               |                              |
| 44 Morehart                  |                              |
| 45 Brodie Creek              |                              |
| 46 North West Hindman        |                              |
| 47 Conner                    |                              |
| 48 Curran Conway             |                              |
| 49 Rebsamen Tennis Center    |                              |
| 50 Weedman Park              |                              |

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK.



Little Rock is served by a wide variety of parks and park facilities, ranging from small neighborhood parks to War Memorial Park, which is a major park that includes a variety of regional attractions. The age of the parks varies widely as many of the parks have been developed over time as the city has grown. The highest concentration of parks is located in and around the historic downtown and to the north central section of the city. In this section of the city, there is overlapping service of both community and neighborhood parks. The next best served area is south central Little Rock where a number of neighborhood and community parks provide overlapping service areas.

Areas to the east along the interstate are some of the least served sections of the city. This is most notable east of I-30 and north of I-440. While there are a number of parks, the residential areas are fragmented by railroads, the airport and interstate highways which can be barriers for residents that depend on walking or biking as primary forms of transportation. It appears the area around the airport is transitioning away from residential land uses. If this is true, Cheatham and East Little Rock Parks may need to be evaluated for how effective these facilities serve the area.

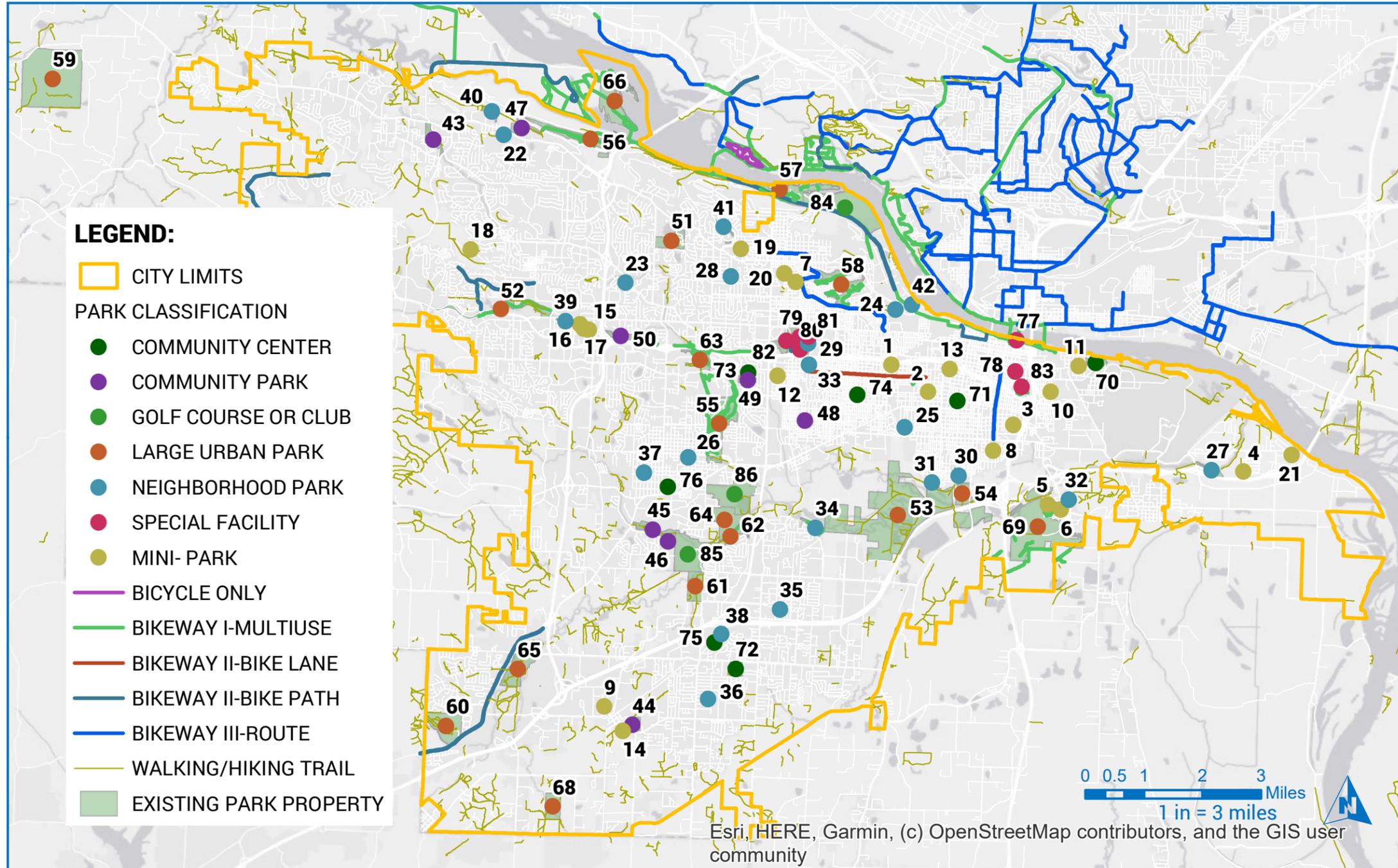
Western portions of Little Rock appear to have adequate access to large urban parks. However, Community and Neighborhood Park service is somewhat limited, meaning that residents must travel further than desired to access these types of parks.

## Gap Analysis - Greenways

The network of trails is extensive and includes a variety of trail types that accommodate walkers and runners, as well as, cyclist of all abilities. While extensive, the system is disconnected. Figures 6.3 and 6.4 illustrate the current trail network and 0.25-mile service areas. Throughout the community engagement process, citizens have voiced a strong desire for additional greenway development. Existing greenways were observed to be very popular attractions for recreational walkers and cyclist, as well as, serious runners and cyclist. Existing greenway facilities provide strong service along the Arkansas River and downtown. Other segments of greenway are provided in the western portions of the community.

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK.

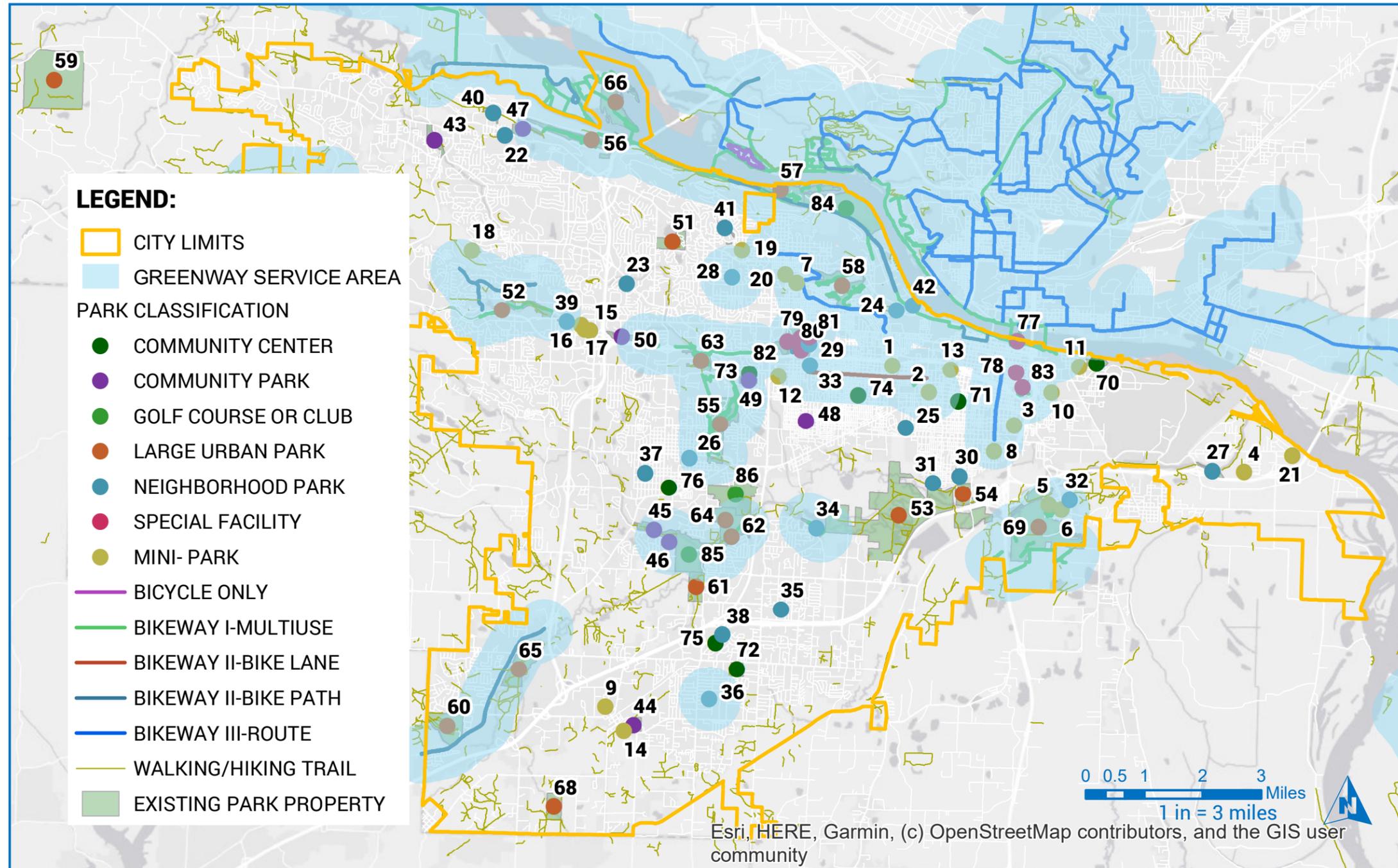
FIGURE 6.3 Existing Trails and Greenways



- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Mini-Park</b>             | <b>Large Urban Park</b>      |
| 1 Fletcher                   | 51 Reservoir                 |
| 2 Centennial                 | 52 Rock Creek                |
| 3 Pettaway                   | 53 Fourche Bottoms           |
| 4 Richland                   | 54 Interstate                |
| 5 Booker Homes               | 55 Boyle                     |
| 6 Granite Mountain           | 56 River Mountain            |
| 7 Prospect Terrace           | 57 Murray                    |
| 8 South Little Rock          | 58 Allsopp                   |
| 9 Pinedale Cove              | 59 Section 13                |
| 10 Hanger Hill               | 60 Otter Creek               |
| 11 Cheatem                   | 61 Hindman South             |
| 12 Oak Forest                | 62 Hindman Community         |
| 13 Ninth Street              | 63 Kanis                     |
| 14 Morehart South            | 64 Western Hills             |
| 15 Unnamed                   | 65 Terry Park                |
| 16 Unnamed                   | 66 Two Rivers                |
| 17 Birchwood                 | 67 Natural Steps             |
| 18 Bell Pointe               | 68 Alexander                 |
| 19 Kingwood                  | 69 Gillam                    |
| 20 Hillside                  | <b>Community Center</b>      |
| 21 Fletcher-Baldwin          | 70 East Little Rock          |
| <b>Neighborhood Park</b>     | 71 Dunbar                    |
| 22 Pankey                    | 72 Southwest                 |
| 23 Butler                    | 73 The Centre at UAP         |
| 24 Knoop                     | 74 Stephens Community Center |
| 25 Barton                    | 75 Ottenheimer Center        |
| 26 Union                     | 76 West Central Sports Comp  |
| 27 Rimmel                    | <b>Special Facility</b>      |
| 28 Meriwether                | 77 Riverfront                |
| 29 Jim Dailey Fitness Center | 78 Terry Mansion             |
| 30 Crump                     | 79 War Memorial Park         |
| 31 Southside                 | 80 Zoo                       |
| 32 Granite Heights           | 81 War Memorial Stadium      |
| 33 Jonesboro Island          | 82 War Memorial Golf Course  |
| 34 Benny Craig               | 83 Macarthur                 |
| 35 Wakefield                 | <b>Golf Course or Club</b>   |
| 36 Thom                      | 84 Rebsamen Golf Course      |
| 37 Kiwanis                   | 85 Hindman Golf              |
| 38 Ottenheimer Park          | 86 First Tee Golf            |
| 39 Unnamed                   |                              |
| 40 Candlewood Park           |                              |
| 41 Unnamed                   |                              |
| 42 Junior Deputy             |                              |
| <b>Community Park</b>        |                              |
| 43 Taylor Loop               |                              |
| 44 Morehart                  |                              |
| 45 Brodie Creek              |                              |
| 46 North West Hindman        |                              |
| 47 Conner                    |                              |
| 48 Curran Conway             |                              |
| 49 Rebsamen Tennis Center    |                              |
| 50 Weedman Park              |                              |

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK.

FIGURE 6.4 Proposed Parks and Greenways Service Area



- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Mini-Park</b>             | <b>Large Urban Park</b>      |
| 1 Fletcher                   | 51 Reservoir                 |
| 2 Centennial                 | 52 Rock Creek                |
| 3 Pettaway                   | 53 Fourche Bottoms           |
| 4 Richland                   | 54 Interstate                |
| 5 Booker Homes               | 55 Boyle                     |
| 6 Granite Mountain           | 56 River Mountain            |
| 7 Prospect Terrace           | 57 Murray                    |
| 8 South Little Rock          | 58 Allsopp                   |
| 9 Pinedale Cove              | 59 Section 13                |
| 10 Hanger Hill               | 60 Otter Creek               |
| 11 Cheatem                   | 61 Hindman South             |
| 12 Oak Forest                | 62 Hindman Community         |
| 13 Ninth Street              | 63 Kanis                     |
| 14 Morehart South            | 64 Western Hills             |
| 15 Unnamed                   | 65 Terry Park                |
| 16 Unnamed                   | 66 Two Rivers                |
| 17 Birchwood                 | 67 Natural Steps             |
| 18 Bell Pointe               | 68 Alexander                 |
| 19 Kingwood                  | 69 Gillam                    |
| 20 Hillside                  |                              |
| 21 Fletcher-Baldwin          | <b>Community Center</b>      |
|                              | 70 East Little Rock          |
| <b>Neighborhood Park</b>     | 71 Dunbar                    |
| 22 Pankey                    | 72 Southwest                 |
| 23 Butler                    | 73 The Centre at UAP         |
| 24 Knoop                     | 74 Stephens Community Center |
| 25 Barton                    | 75 Ottenheimer Center        |
| 26 Union                     | 76 West Central Sports Comp  |
| 27 Rimmel                    | <b>Special Facility</b>      |
| 28 Meriwether                | 77 Riverfront                |
| 29 Jim Dailey Fitness Center | 78 Terry Mansion             |
| 30 Crump                     | 79 War Memorial Park         |
| 31 Southside                 | 80 Zoo                       |
| 32 Granite Heights           | 81 War Memorial Stadium      |
| 33 Jonesboro Island          | 82 War Memorial Golf Course  |
| 34 Benny Craig               | 83 Macarthur                 |
| 35 Wakefield                 | <b>Golf Course or Club</b>   |
| 36 Thom                      | 84 Rebsamen Golf Course      |
| 37 Kiwanis                   | 85 Hindman Golf              |
| 38 Ottenheimer Park          | 86 First Tee Golf            |
| 39 Unnamed                   |                              |
| 40 Candlewood Park           |                              |
| 41 Unnamed                   |                              |
| 42 Junior Deputy             |                              |
| <b>Community Park</b>        |                              |
| 43 Taylor Loop               |                              |
| 44 Morehart                  |                              |
| 45 Brodie Creek              |                              |
| 46 North West Hindman        |                              |
| 47 Conner                    |                              |
| 48 Curran Conway             |                              |
| 49 Rebsamen Tennis Center    |                              |
| 50 Weedman Park              |                              |

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK.



*LRPR is ahead of national averages in acres of park land and basketball courts.*

## General Park Condition, Assessments and Recommendations

In Table 6.2 on page 6.9, a comparison of LRPR facilities to national averages is provided. For some facilities such as youth and adult softball fields, it is hard to draw direct comparisons with other communities because there is no reference as to how many facilities in each community host both adult and youth activities on the same fields. Another area that is hard to make comparison is indoor recreation facilities because communities give them different names. As an example, Jim Daily Fitness and Aquatic Center is listed in the inventory as a Fitness Center. In other communities, it could be called a community or recreation center since it has multiple activities at one location. What is clear from a review of the national averages when compared to LRPR is there is a shortage of

athletic fields of all types in the system. Currently, there are no synthetic turf multi-purpose fields and the average for a city the size of Little Rock is 5. Many communities across the country are moving to synthetic fields to increase access to fields and to reduce maintenance that comes with synthetic fields. In terms of soccer and baseball/softball fields, LRPR lags well behind the national averages. Gym space is another area where the city falls short of national averages.

Other non-sports areas where LRPR are deficient on facilities includes dog parks, outdoor pools and outdoor performance venues. When nature trails are separated from paved greenway trails, the city is behind in paved trails. In the area of growing sports like lacrosse, field

hockey and cricket, LRPR currently has few fields for these activities. Conversely LRPR is ahead of national averages in acres of park land and basketball courts. LRPR is right on the average for community centers.

In addition to being behind national averages, many of LRPR facilities are old and in poor condition reflective of twenty plus years of little to no preventative maintenance operating funds. Other facilities are not designed to meet current design trends that lend themselves to supporting tournament activities and minimization of staff required to operate facilities. These factors are discussed more in the following topic specific assessments.



## Golf

### 1st Tee, Western Hills and Hindman Golf Courses

As noted in previous analysis of the golf operations at LRPR, the planning team feels that there is a surplus of golf within the system and budget subsidies for golf need to be reduced. It is also the opinion of the planning team that there is a good potential to generate a higher percentage of the cost to offer golf programs through LRPR and partnering groups.

A review of the golf facilities at the 1<sup>st</sup> Tee and Hindman as well as what use to be a golf course at Western Hills reveals several opportunities to meet the goals outlined in the previous paragraph. First, it is recommended the 1st Tee course become the home for golf operations for these three properties. It is further recommended that the par 3 course remain in its current configuration along with the training area. Using the balance of the site and the other two sites, a new 18-hole regulation course should be developed. The goal of the re-development would be to construct a modern course that maximizes the use of high ground to reduce the days of play lost to flooding. The reconstruction would present the city with the opportunity to increase flood storage in areas that are no longer used for golf. It would also open the property

not used for golf for other neighborhood and community recreation opportunities.

The Hindman Clubhouse could be re-purposed as a center for outdoor recreation. Cart paths could be converted to walking trails and lakes used for fishing and other activities. The consolidation of golf staff to one facility will allow for more robust golf programming opportunities with fewer overall staff members. Maintenance staff numbers for golf will also be reduced and staff can be reassigned to other overall park maintenance duties.

It is recommended that a golf course architect be hired to develop an initial master plan to consolidate the golf courses into one golf course with a minimum of 9 par three holes and 18 regulation holes. The master plan should also reflect clubhouse and maintenance facility needs that will maximize golf operations for the new layout.

### Rebsamen Golf Course

The primary issues at Rebsamen Golf Course are the age of the clubhouse and support facilities. Working with a golf course architect, a master plan should be developed to replace the clubhouse and supporting training facilities to maximize revenue generation at the course. Considerations for the clubhouse

should include a **quality kitchen and dining area for hosting events**. The master plan should explore the possibility of developing **twelve soccer fields and associated parking and support facilities utilizing a section of the short nine golf holes**.

### War Memorial Golf Course

While War Memorial Golf Course has served many generations of golfers, the need for additional park land for other activities outweighs the number of golfers who are served by the course each year. It is recommended that golf operations at War Memorial be discontinued with the anticipated redevelopment of the other system courses previously outlined. A feasibility study should be conducted for the War Memorial property to determine best future uses.



## Athletic Facilities

### Baseball/Softball Facility

LRPR currently has 3 multi-field baseball/softball complexes. They are located at Interstate Park, Junior Deputy and West Central

Athletic Complex. At each of these complexes, the facilities are in poor condition and have numerous ADA access issues. With the exception of Interstate Park, the layout of fields makes using them as tournament sites difficult and increases required maintenance. There are also circulation conflicts and parking concerns. For additional detailed reviews see individual park reviews. While there are some field turf issues at each complex, the turf is probably the best aspect of each field in terms of overall condition. Total replacement of these facilities is recommended with Junior Deputy and Interstate Park being recommended for relocation to accommodate use and programming of Fourche Creek Park with proposed Trails and Canoe Trails.

The balance of baseball/soft ball fields are primarily individual fields that are not programmed as game fields. Many of these fields are used for practice and open play areas in smaller parks. These fields have similar condition and access issues. Parks programming staff should work with parks planning

staff to prioritize the renovation of these fields. The ones that get the most use should receive upgrades first and those that receive little programmed use should be converted to open space or other uses. Primary upgrades should address safety and ADA access issues.

Uniform design standards should be developed as part of the redevelopment process. By utilizing design standards, maintenance operations can be streamlined, irrigation and other equipment attic stock can be reduced, and operation of field lighting equipment standardized. Irrigation and sports lighting systems should have centralized control systems that allow staff to monitor systems from their computer or smart phone.

### Soccer/Multi-use Rectangular Fields

LRPR has soccer/ multi-use fields at Interstate, Otter Creek, Murray, and Natural Steps parks. As with the baseball/softball fields, there are a series of serious condition issues at each of these facilities. Turf on the fields is in poor condition from over-use and lack of adequate preventative maintenance on the fields. Even Otter Creek, which is the newest facility, has serious turf wear issues. There are access issues getting from parking areas to fields and in

many cases, the supporting parking and site improvements are in disrepair.

The fields at Interstate park should be redeveloped at a new location. The other smaller complexes should be completely redeveloped. Fields need to be reconditioned by deep tine aeration, regraded and top-dressed with a minimum of 2" of sand and new turf installed. All fields should have fully functioning irrigation systems and modern sports lighting to maximize play. Parking and sidewalks need to be repaired or replaced to create required access routes to each field.

A redevelopment plan should be developed for Otter Creek to take advantage of the available land. A redevelopment concept has been provided on page 6.22 of this section.



## Tennis Courts, Playgrounds, Sidewalks and Parking Areas

Throughout the park system, there are properties that feature tennis and basketball courts, playgrounds, sidewalks and trail networks and parking lots that are in poor condition. With the exception of Rebsamen Tennis Center, the tennis courts in most parks are unplayable. Basketball courts are in equally poor condition. While there are some newer playgrounds in some parks, many of the playgrounds need to be replaced along with the playground safety surface. Many of the parking lots are in poor condition and some have been closed. Parking lots also need hard surface access paths that connect to park features to comply with ADA standards.

LRPR needs to develop a plan to address all the deferred maintenance issues with these items. Parks receiving the highest use should be given the highest priority for repairs. Park planning staff should develop a five-year capital plan for deferred maintenance items and to address compliance and safety issues for each facility. Planning staff should also identify facilities that have become obsolete based on changing use patterns of the parks and determine which facilities should not be repaired and rather removed from the system.

The Rebsamen Tennis Complex should be developed to include indoor courts. It is suggested that 6 courts be enclosed with a bubble or a new indoor complex should be built to include support facilities and a concessions area for patrons. Parking should be expanded to accommodate the anticipated increase in users.



## Park Buildings

Most park buildings are somewhat dated and many appeared to require significant maintenance. This is especially true of picnic shelters and restroom buildings in neighborhood and community parks. Restrooms buildings in particular are of a unique octagonal design that may be problematic for individuals in wheelchairs.

## Greenways and Trail Expansion

Throughout the community engagement process, citizens have voiced a strong desire for additional greenway development. Existing greenways were observed to be very popular attractions for recreational walkers and cyclist, as well as, serious runners and cyclists. Existing greenway facilities provide strong service along the Arkansas River and downtown. Other segments of greenway are provided in the western portions of the community. These segments should be connected. By doing so, the connected greenway will act as a stand-alone recreational facility while providing improved access to Community and Neighborhood Parks for western Little Rock residents.

A quick assessment of these stream corridors reveals that many of the existing parks can be connected by utilizing these otherwise difficult to develop areas. To provide improved access to parks, new greenways should be developed to connect Alexander to Terry Park; Terry Park to Hindman South; Hindman South to Benny Craig through Western Hills. This route would primarily serve the southwest portion of the community.

A second area of greenway development should be from the existing trails on Chenal Parkway through Kanis Park to Boyle Park. From Boyle Park, the greenway would follow Rock Creek and then Fourche Creek to Benny Craig Park where it could intersect the previously discussed route and continue on to Fourche Bottoms and additional residential areas like the South End neighborhood near Interstate or Crump Park.

**A connected greenway will act as a stand-alone recreational facility while providing improved access to Community and Neighborhood Parks.**



## New Facility Development

A master plan to redevelop Otter Creek into a more complete Sports and Community Park was developed. The plan calls for additional soccer fields, an additional fishing lake, expanded parking and community park facilities.

## Nat Hill Athletic Complex

The Nat Hill area is experiencing a rebirth with many new projects online for development. Interstate Park has been recommended for replacement and this area lends itself to meet that future use. An adult softball complex with support facilities should be constructed in this park to accommodate future users. The Southeast Trail should be extended through the park to the Lock and Dam number 6.

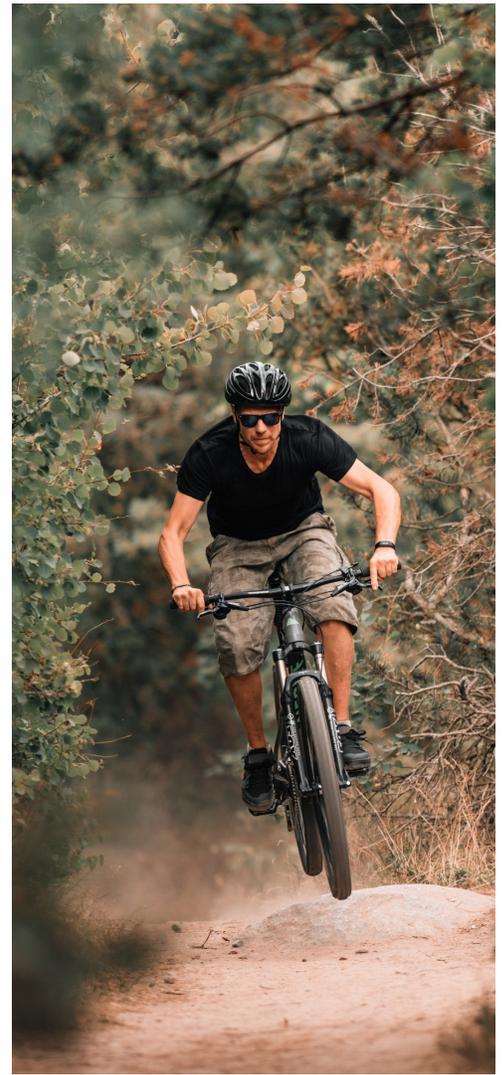
## Green Infrastructure

It is well documented that the impact of a good trail system on quality of life and marketability of a community to perspective new businesses is a critical factor when making relocation decisions. Growth brought on by new business helps sustain existing private enterprises and creates new job opportunities, too. Outside of developing a strong population base, trails also attract visitors from all over the region which enhances businesses such as hotels, restaurants and businesses that cater to the biking/walking industries. Another aspect of trails that is growing strong is downhill mountain biking. Little Rock possesses many attractive and challenging terrains that can rival other downhill mountain biking trails across the country.

In addition, it has been demonstrated in Neighborhood Plans developed by neighborhood associations across Little Rock that trails are highly desired. In the survey process, trails and the development of water trails were very favorable by respondents.

A latent opportunity waiting to be realized with trails is the idea to acquire enough acreage for green infrastructure to not only accommodate trails, but to also address the unfortunate waste, sediment and hydrocarbons that reach our streams. With all the impervious surfaces that come from building cities, there are a lot of toxins and floatable trash carried by an increase in water volume that enters our streams and affects their health, and as a consequence, citizens' health. A harsh fact to know is that the first hour of an urban stormwater runoff has a pollution index much higher than that of raw sewage.

It is recommended that staff from Public Works and Planning join up with Parks and Recreation to see what strategies can be implemented to begin to address runoff problems.



## Regenerative Agriculture

In light of numerous signals affecting supply/delivery of healthy foods to targeted audiences and at reasonable costs and in light of the agricultural industry's impact on the nation's lands and waterways, there is an opportunity to coalesce the central parts of Arkansas' food industry into an holistic system that is less dependent on outside resources and become more sustainable, reliable and resilient to market forces and climate changes. The program must include all facets of the food system from seed to fork.

Anticipated outcomes will be connecting community supported agriculture to consumers, minimizing food insecurity, improving delivery of healthy foods to food deserts, increasing education platforms, reducing impact on ecosystems with job creation and a more robust local economy. Developing relationships and partnerships with institutions and individuals knowledgeable in regenerative agriculture can assist in defining challenges/opportunities. These relationships cooperating at multiple scales can deliver downstream jobs with living wages and fair working hours, sustainable food production management practices and a healthier community and environment.

A planning committee of central Arkansas representation from all sectors that enable the delivery of food from seed to fork can build the community's program capacity. After some growth in the program, it may even be of value to consider a food policy council to formalize the working relationships and maintain goals of regenerative agriculture, seed banking, food production and processing, distribution, access, marketing, education, job creation, community development and waste recycling and management.

## New Multi-Gym Facility

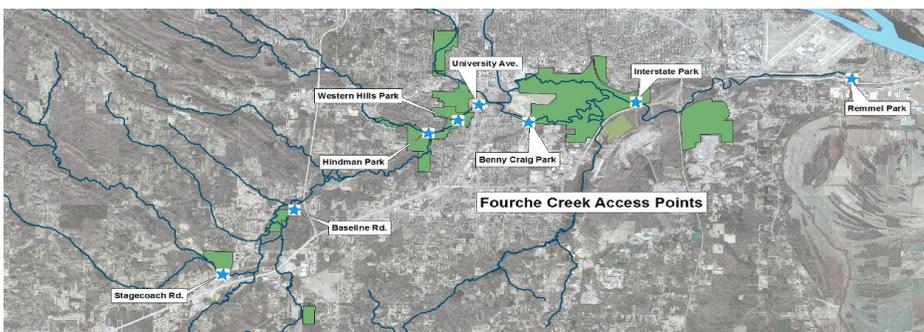
An indoor multi-sport tournament facility has been recommended as an economic development driver for the City of Little Rock. The general scope of the recommended new indoor multi-sport facility includes:

- 8 to 10 tournament quality basketball courts (or 16 to 20 volleyball courts) that provide a critical mass of competitive floor space that can accommodate a wide variety of sports activities
- Flexible design that is divisible and can adequately accommodate multiple, simultaneous events, including court dividers
- Spectator seating should be offered and, ideally, a minimum of 2,500 seats up to a maximum of 4,000 retractable seats (which can be augmented by portable, temporary bleachers) for a championship court setting
- Consistent lighting for all courts which should implement energy conservation measures
- Adequate, convenient on-site parking and appropriate parking management to accommodate heavy tournament traffic flow
- Restrooms, concessions stands, and Wi-Fi service
- Merchandise/pro shop area
- Registration area
- Locker rooms/lounges for teams and officials
- On-site storage space for the facility and equipment
- Administrative space for facility management
- Flex space that can be used for meeting/breakout rooms, hospitality/VIP areas, media/interview room, banquet space
- Open space used for team gathering areas and warm-ups
- Charging stations and/or electrical outlets throughout facility
- Scoreboards with timing systems on each court
- Backboards, net systems, and support equipment for major event uses
- PA System

This facility would be a significant addition to competitive and recreational athletic offerings in Little Rock

## Blueways

The abundance of waterways in Little Rock provides great opportunities for blueway development. Fourche Creek and its tributaries are important ecological and recreational amenities which should be further developed. Public input conducted as part of this study identified canoeing and kayaking as the most desired recreational activity. While access to these creeks exists in some locations, a blueway masterplan should be developed to identify access points and wayfinding devices in order to increase utilization of this one of a kind recreation opportunity.



Fourche Creek Access

## Splash pads

Aquatics offerings in Little Rock are very limited. Splash pads offer access to water based recreation at a lower construction and maintenance cost than a full aquatic center. These should be located in Community Parks with adequate parking when possible. The splash pad at War Memorial Park is an exemplary facility to replicate elsewhere.



Splash Pad at Riverfront Park



*At least one member of the park staff should maintain a playground safety certification (Certified Playground Safety Inspector, CPSI) to monitor playground conditions.*

### Playground Surfacing

Playground surfaces appear to vary across the park system and include mulch, pea gravel and rubberized surfaces. As playgrounds are added to the system and older equipment is updated, researchers recommend using poured-in-place rubber surfacing. While it has a high initial cost, it has a lower maintenance cost and eliminates the need for annual material costs required with a wood chip surface.

### Playground Equipment

Playground equipment throughout the park system ranges from new equipment to equipment that is over 20 years old. Most of the older playground equipment was in poor condition and in need of replacement. Strong consideration should be given to consolidating play equipment into large groupings of equipment with a proper edging system and poured-in-place rubber surfacing that meets playground safety standards.

### Playground Edging

Playground edging varied from park to park. Many edging systems have been compromised by erosion over time and in need of repair or replacement. This issue should improve as playgrounds transition to poured in place rubber surfacing.

---

### Sport Field Chain-Link Fencing

Throughout the parks and particularly at the older parks, there is old chain-link fencing around sports fields that are no longer used as game facilities. All this fencing is in poor condition and should be removed from the parks as the fencing is creating safety hazards and is unsightly.

Fencing at ball fields, which is still in use, is also in disrepair. Common fencing issues include the following:

- Line poles that are separated from the end cap where they are joined to post
- Damaged backstops
- Missing bottom rails
- Fencing that is curling up at the ground
- Gates with no latches

### Sports Field Lighting

Most of the light poles for sports lighting in the parks are wooden poles. Many of these poles are old and in need of replacement. At some of the older sports fields that are used for practice, the poles are creating safety hazards due to their condition. Strong consideration should be given as to which practice fields will be lit and at those locations new steel poles with dark sky lighting should be installed. At older fields that will not be lit, the poles should be removed along with the electrical service to the poles.

## TURF MAINTENANCE

The level of turf maintenance varies widely throughout the park system. Most of the sports fields used for games have high quality turf. Outside of the game fields, the turf ranges from fair to poor quality. Many areas with heavy shade have no grass at all. A better turf management program should be developed and implemented throughout the park system. A study should be conducted to identify areas that need to be open, but not for general access. These areas should go into a native plant program that will not only enhance the aesthetic experience of park users, but it will also enhance both soil and woodland understory and the species that live in them.

## COURT SURFACING

Overall, court surfacing was a consistent issue throughout the system. Basketball and tennis facilities are unplayable at many parks due to these conditions. These issues will require significant repairs the next time the courts are resurfaced.

## Site Improvements and Facility Standards

Many site improvements elements in the parks, such as site furnishings, sidewalks and signage, are in disrepair and in need of replacement. A common element in the parks is the presence of older picnic tables and benches that need to be removed from the parks. Other parks have concrete stairs and sidewalks that need to be replaced. Many of the pavilions need repairs. Many bleacher seats are not properly secured and are missing end caps.

When designing improvements and developing future parks, Little Rock parks and recreation facilities would benefit from an overall unified look that can be achieved through the use of standard signage, site furnishings, and architectural materials. A standard signage and site furnishings palette would create a consistent look and ease maintenance coordination. A unified site furnishings package, including commercial-grade trash receptacles, tables and benches, standardized fencing materials, water fountains, street and security light fixtures, internal park signage and other common site equipment, should be established. The basis for creating a strong park facility image is the utilization of design guidelines and standards that allow a visitor to identify a park immediately by the elements that are present there. Development of a set of facility design standards is highly recommended.





## Signage

A signage program is needed throughout the park system. This program will help to identify different facilities within the parks, direct users within larger parks and provide other valuable information in a consistent style. Regulatory signs, rules signs, etc. have been placed over many years as the parks have developed. A signage program should evaluate the existing signs, placement and resolve any potentially conflicting information.

Directional signage, entry/identification signage and signs within parks are critical elements. Directional signs locating parks should be placed along major thoroughfares to alert potential users to the presence of a park in the vicinity. Park sign programs can be implemented into an existing community-wide wayfinding programs or as an independent program.

The larger parks should have wayfinding maps and directional signs near parking areas to guide users to individual park facilities. Consistency in signage styles and materials should also be applied to the parks' internal signage. This helps reinforce a park's identity as a Prattville facility, and reduces maintenance costs by standardizing the equipment and materials used to install and maintain the signs.

## Drainage and Erosion Control

Many of the parks have drainage and erosion control issues, which are creating maintenance issues and are distracting from the visual appearance of the parks. In some locations, ditches lack headwalls and there is erosion occurring at the entrance and exit of the pipes. Other problem areas are sloping embankments in the parks and damage to turf where maintenance crews and/or others are driving in the parks.

## Fencing Standard

From visiting the parks and discussing with city staff, researchers know there is an issue with unauthorized vehicles driving throughout the parks. While there are various solutions, such as boulders, rounded wood bollards, etc., the planning team recommends establishing a standard method that is relatively inexpensive but effective. Future maintenance should be considered as well. A simple black post and chain application is one method that can easily be incorporated into most parks regardless of size. LRPR should develop a standard appropriate system-wide.



## Park Assessments



### Allsopp

**Location:** 3700 Cedar Hill Road, 72205

**Size:** 150.0 Acres

**Classification:** Large Urban Park

#### Review:

This park is located along a valley in an older suburban area with plenty of tree overgrowth and topography characteristics. Properties surrounding this park are made up of single-family residential homes.

The amenities of the park include a baseball field, picnic pavilion, playground, restrooms, two (2) tennis courts with basketball hoop, and an extensive trail system.

The 150-acre park is designated for preservation as a linear park or greenway. The trail at Allsopp Park is used for walking, jogging and biking. Visitors are able to relax and enjoy the sights and sounds of nature with mature trees, while they stroll along a creek. The natural beauty of the area could potentially make Allsopp Park one of the most popular walking attractions in Little Rock.

The park has 8.6 miles of trails and over 400 feet in elevation change. The trail connects with the City's sidewalks, allowing residents easy access to the park. However, some of the entrances to the trails aren't clearly marked to advertise usage and wayfinding. In some instances, the trail is overrun with tree branches and debris making it difficult to use. The trail needs to have a maintenance plan that includes trimming and clearing of branches and debris. While the density of the tree canopy is nice for trail users it is also causing maintenance and erosion problems. This trail should be expanded to serve other neighborhoods. Routes should be explored for additional off-road trails and sidewalk connectors to make this a primary route for walkers, joggers and bicyclists throughout the city. Asphalt paths are in need of repair and erosion control issues need to be addressed so they do not wash out the path.

Along the trail there are dirt paths for nature walks and mountain biking. These trails are assembled and maintained by a mountain biking club.

The parking areas are paved. There are three different parking areas that provide access to this park and all have limited ADA access.

Throughout the park there seems to be numerous drainage problems, as well as along the trails and playground. Much of the park lacks established turf. This leads to more erosion and an unkept aesthetic. Seeding and or laying sod in some of these areas would help reduce some of the erosion issues and help establish an aesthetically pleasing park. Debris and mud appear from

recent and past storms and have collected over time. Where the private drive crosses the creek there is a low water bridge that is eroding heavily and creating quite a safety hazard if it is not addressed soon.

The baseball/softball field includes bleachers with wooden bench seats and dugouts, and lights. It's a smaller baseball field at about 175' making it a spot for little league play only. The turf on the field needs to be regraded to drain properly and the infield aggregate needs to be redefined. The field can be accessed from the parking lot by a paved trail. The bleachers are ten rows high but do not include an enclosure around the back or sides to prevent accidental falls. The dugouts consist of a concrete floor with benches but no roof. The field is partially enclosed by fencing. Vegetation is accumulating on portions of the backstop and outfield fencing and needs to be removed before the fencing is further compromised. Lighting is mounted on wooden poles. The poles appear to be in good condition and parks staff was not aware of any issues with the poles at the time of the site visit.

---

## Recommendations:

Make the trail a top priority. Connect the trails to the abutting neighborhoods to improve attendance. Establish a maintenance plan to clean, trim and clear debris and branches from the trail. Provide a trailhead with map and a wayfinding system to allow users to navigate the trail with ease.

Poor drainage needs to be addressed and the bridge over the creek needs to be replaced. Erosion is undermining the bridge structure near the access to the pavilion parking lot.



The bathroom building in this area is located adjacent to the baseball/softball fields. The bathrooms appear to meet ADA requirements. The bathrooms were in good condition but needed to be cleaned.

The park also includes two tennis courts located near the entrance of the park. Fencing is located around the courts. Vegetation is growing on the fences and through the paved court surface. No lighting is provided for the tennis courts. The pavement is cracked and will need to be refinished in the near future.

The pavilion is large and can hold a good number of people. Some nests from animals have started to form that need to be removed and the lighting does not appear to be functioning.

The pavilion in the park is a custom wood construction design. This pavilion is slowly diminishing and needs to be better preserved or replaced with a more sustainable steel structure.

The playground surface is difficult for those with mobility issues to navigate. This could range from children in wheelchairs to grandparents who are unsteady on their feet at times. A poured rubber surface would provide superior safety and stability while requiring less maintenance than the gravel surface. The playground equipment needs minor repairs.

The bleachers at the baseball/softball field need to be replaced immediately. The seating is damaged, and the structure would not meet current safety requirements. It may be beneficial to replace the single bleacher structure with two lower bleacher sets. Vegetation around the field fencing should be removed and the fences should be repaired as needed. Additionally, completing the fence around the entire field would be beneficial and allow for improved play. Field lighting should be evaluated for effectiveness. When the existing wood poles are replaced, concrete poles and current light fixtures should be used instead.

If the tennis courts are to remain, the courts should be resurfaced, fencing replaced along with nets, posts and cranks.

The parking lots should be striped and ADA parking spaces should be labeled and signed appropriately. Additional lighting may improve safety and limit unwanted loitering.



## Barton

**Location:** 2300 Roosevelt Road, 72202

**Size:** 5.0 Acres

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park



## Benny Craig

**Location:** 4610 Gum Springs Road, 72209

**Size:** 5.11 Acres

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

### Review:

This park is located between Roosevelt street and just north of the Arkansas State Fairgrounds along Roosevelt Street. This park has a baseball practice field and a basketball court.

This park serves as an overflow area for events held at the fairgrounds primarily serving as an RV parking area for vendors at the fair.

Existing amenities are in poor condition and appear to get very little use by the adjoining neighborhood.

### Recommendations:

Barton Park should be redeveloped to better serve the various year-round user groups who utilize the park. If it is going to serve as an overflow facility for the fairgrounds, a master plan should be completed that designates areas for RV parking and maintains a small neighborhood park with amenities to serve the residents in the adjoining neighborhoods. A master plan with community input and stakeholder meetings with the fairgrounds should be held to possibly identify a partnership opportunity to help fund improvements.

### Review:

Benny Craig Park is located on low land adjacent to Fourche Creek, north of Gum Springs Road. Properties to the west of the park are primarily residential. A railroad track is located along the eastern edge of the park. The entrance to the park does not include signage or the columns that are present at many other parks across the community.

Amenities in the park include a playground, bathrooms, a lighted baseball/softball field, paved trail, basketball goals, tennis courts and a canoe launch. Parking is provided at multiple locations throughout the park. However, these parking areas do not appear to be well lighted and are not striped. Additionally, ADA parking spaces are not properly striped or posted.

The playground area is large and mostly shaded by mature trees. The equipment appears to accommodate ages 5-12. The play surface is pea gravel which is retained by wooden cross ties. These cross ties showed signs of deterioration and metal steaks used to join the cross ties were exposed creating a safety hazard. The playground equipment appears to be in mostly good condition except for one swing which needs to be repaired.

The baseball/softball field includes bleachers with wooden bench seats and dugouts, and lights. The field can be accessed from the parking lot by a paved trail. The bleachers are ten rows high but do not include an enclosure around the back or sides to prevent accidental falls. The dugouts consist of a concrete floor, a back wall and roof supported by wooden posts. The field is partially enclosed by fencing. Vegetation is accumulating on portions of the backstop and outfield fencing and needs to be removed before the fencing is further compromised. Lighting is mounted on wooden poles. The poles appear to be in good condition and parks staff was not aware of any issues with the poles at the time of the site visit.

The paved trail runs along the eastern and northern perimeter of the park. Debris and mud from recent storms covered portions of the trail. However, the trail was in good condition. The trail in an out-and-back route that does not appear to extend beyond the park property exists.

---

## Recommendations:

The pea gravel playground surface is difficult for those with mobility issues to navigate. This could range from children in wheelchairs to grandparents who are unsteady on their feet at times. A poured rubber surface would provide superior safety and stability while requiring less maintenance than the gravel surface. The wooden cross tie retention system needs to be replaced with a more durable product that requires less maintenance. The playground equipment needs minor repairs. Benches near the playground are not usable and need to be replaced with a consistent low-maintenance product.

The bleachers at the baseball/softball field need to be replaced immediately. The seating is damaged, and the structure would not meet current safety requirements. It may be beneficial to replace the single bleacher structure with two lower bleacher sets. Vegetation around the field fencing should be removed and the fences should be repaired as needed. Additionally, completing the fence around the entire field would be beneficial and allow for improved play. Field lighting should be evaluated for effectiveness. When the existing wood poles are replaced, concrete poles and current light fixtures should be used instead.

The basketball court should be fenced/striped to clarify that it is separate from the parking lot.

The basketball goals are in a parking area. Water was observed covering a portion of the court. The backboards and nets need repair.

The two tennis courts are located furthest from the entrance. Fencing is located at the ends of the courts but not the sides. Vegetation is growing on the fences and through the paved court surface. A practice wall constructed of concrete block contains graffiti and is in need of repair. No lighting is provided for the tennis courts. The nets are damaged and need to be replaced.

The park also includes a canoe launch that can be accessed from the paved trail. The launch consists of a concrete ramp that is approximately 5-foot wide. The launch could be improved to incorporate more common designs for canoe/kayak launches that allow for easier entry and exit from the water.

If the tennis courts are to remain, the courts should be resurfaced, fencing replaced along with nets, posts and cranks. Fencing should completely surround the court. Graffiti should be removed, and the practice wall needs to be repaired.

The canoe launch could be improved by rebuilding the amenity using more current designs. The sloped concrete is less than ideal and could be hazardous under slippery conditions. Signage could also be used to highlight this amenity. Improving the access to Fourche Creek would aid groups seeking to care for the watershed by performing creek cleanup events. There may be an opportunity to partner with these groups to improve access along the creek.

The bathroom facility is in need of repair to the wooden fascia boards. While the bathrooms themselves appear to meet ADA requirements, the approach to the facility is not. A handicap ramp should be installed and the sidewalk leading to the bathroom building should be reviewed closely for compliance with slope limitations.

The parking lots should be striped and ADA parking spaces should be labeled and signed appropriately. Additional lighting may improve safety and limit unwanted loitering.



## Birchwood

**Location:** 5 Creek Circle, 72211

**Size:** 3.0 Acres

**Classification:** Mini Park

### OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

#### INCLUDE:

- The playground safety surface needs immediate attention.
- Upgrade the drinking fountain to an ADA accessible fixture.
- Add additional lighting throughout the park in an effort to increase safety and visibility during low light times of day.
- Highlight the creek as a park amenity.
- Construct a consistent fence around the portion of the park perimeter that separates adjacent residential properties.

### Review:

This park is located between Springwood Drive and Rock Creek in an established single-family residential neighborhood. The entrance to the park from Springwood Drive is consistent with the majority of other parks in the community. Numerous mature trees provide shade throughout the park. Downed tree limbs from recent storms were present during the site visit.

Park amenities include a playground, basketball pad, gazebo, picnic tables, an open field and a paved trail loop. The paved loop is approximately 0.22-mile long. A pole mounted street light illuminates a portion of the park after dark.

The playground equipment is in need of reconditioning. Areas of metal have become exposed over time and are rusting. The play surface is primarily pea gravel which provides an unstable walking surface and does not appear to meet ADA standards. A handicap accessible ramp is provided to the playground. A limited portion of the playground surface is poured rubber and connects the accessible ramp to the play structure. As with all parks, a safety audit is needed of the playground surface as well as the fall zones. Seating is available in nearby shaded areas. However, the approach to these seating areas and picnic tables may be difficult to navigate for some users.

The basketball pad includes two goals. One is standard height while the other is a few feet shorter for younger players. The court is not regulation length and is not striped. Night play is discouraged by a lack of lights, which may be to the benefit of nearby residences.

### Recommendations:

The park provides a number of amenities to the adjacent and nearby residences. However, approaches to two out of three picnic tables, the gazebo, and benches can be difficult for individuals with mobility issues or those who may be pushing strollers. A network of walkways that connect each park feature could greatly expand the range of users this park could serve. Wooden benches are in need of maintenance and should be replaced with more durable products. Picnic tables are not accessible to those in wheelchairs. Provisions for wheelchair users should be included throughout the park.

## Review:

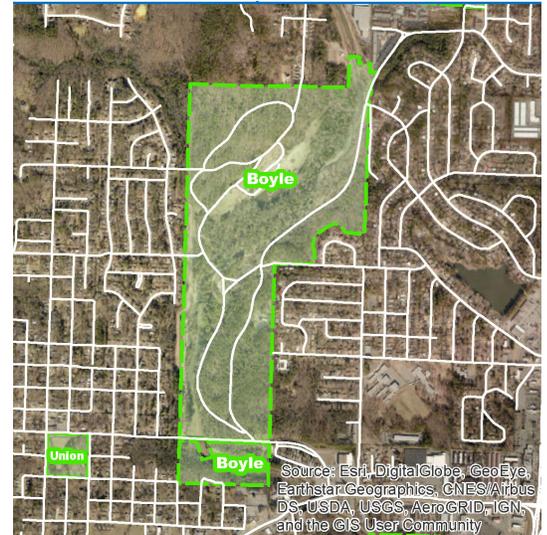
Boyle Park is a large, mostly wooded park that happens to be one of Little Rock's oldest park facilities. The park includes several picnic shelters and other structures that were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s. These structures have a distinct architectural style and add historic and cultural context to Boyle Park. These buildings are centrally located near the intersection of Boyle Park Road and Leander Drive. The park also includes more modern amenities like the playground and basketball courts located along Leander Drive. The park includes paved trails and unpaved trails that are used for mountain biking, horseback riding and hiking.

Several individuals were observed to be sleeping in Shelter 1. It is unclear how long the individuals had been staying there but, it appeared they were prepared to stay for an extended period of time. Neither Shelter 2 nor the Spring House, which are located in the same area, were being used in this way. These structures consist of heavy stone and timber construction and are in good repair and include lights that are controlled by an unsecured breaker box. Wood burning fireplaces are located at one end of the structure. Access to these shelters is problematic for those with mobility issues. Playground equipment in this portion of the park is outdated and needs to be replaced with current equivalents. The equipment consists of metal slides, swings and other fixtures sitting on a grass/dirt surface. A paved trail runs along Rock Creek through this section of the park. High water from the recent storms covered the low water bridge which is the only direct vehicular connection between the north and south portions of park.

The northern portion of the park, as accessed from the Leander Drive entrance, includes more modern amenities. This portion of the park includes a large playground, bathrooms, a steel picnic shelter, basketball courts, fishing pier and additional paved trails. The play surface of the playground consists of pea gravel which is retained by a molded plastic containment system. The play structures include some metal fixtures which should be replaced. Other pieces of play equipment appeared to be missing components or not functional.

The picnic shelter in this portion of the park is unlike the CCC structures located off Boyle Park Road. This structure is a painted steel structure with a concrete foundation. There is a fireplace in the center and ceiling-mounted lights.

The bathroom building in this area was similar to the CCC style structures elsewhere in the park. The bathrooms appear to meet ADA requirements. The bathrooms were in good condition but needed to be cleaned.



## Boyle

**Location:** 2000 Boyle Park Road, 72204

**Size:** 250 Acres

**Classification:** Large Urban Park

The basketball courts are painted and striped. Paint is wearing from the court surface, but goals are in good repair and in general good condition. The courts do not have lights for night use. A parking lot adjacent to the basketball courts is striped and lighted with one street light.

### Recommendations:

The age of the park and its structures provide an opportunity to highlight the contribution of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Little Rock. At the same time, approaches to these structures should be improved for visitors with mobility issues. The playground equipment and surfaces need to be brought up to current standards. The basketball court needs to be resurfaced. The amenity areas throughout the park could use additional lighting. This may discourage unwanted activities. A bathroom facility is needed near Shelters 1 and 2. The existing portable toilet is only a sufficient temporary solution.

## Review:

Brodie Creek park includes a playground, paved trail, basketball pad and parking lot. A sign is located at the entrance to the parking lot identifying the park. The playground is in very good condition. The equipment appears to be new and the play surface is poured rubber which allows for an even transition from the paved trail and sidewalk. The trail appears to be in good condition and loops the western portion of the park property. The park is bordered to the north and west by Brodie Creek and to the south and east by residential properties. Much of the park is left as open space. The basketball pad is in good condition. Picnic tables and benches are located in shaded areas within view of the playground and basketball court.

## Recommendations:

Overall this park is in very good condition. Recommendations to improve the park include:

- Stripe the parking lot and add ADA parking spaces near the accessible sidewalk ramp.
- Extend trail to the east in order to provide fishing access below the low head dam.
- Add ADA accessible picnic tables with extended table tops that can accommodate wheelchairs.
- Extend the paved trail so that each park feature can be accessed by individuals with mobility issues or those using strollers.
- Develop a plan for the eastern portion of the park that is currently underutilized.



## Brodie Creek

**Location:** 9120 Tall Timber Blvd., 72204

**Size:** 47 Acres

**Classification:** Community Park



## Butler

**Location:** 9800 North Rodney Parham Road, 72205

**Size:** 6.7 Acres

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

### Review:

Butler park amenities include a playground, tennis court/basketball pad, a backstop for softball or baseball practice, a paved trail, bathrooms, and a parking lot.

The paved trail appears to be in good condition and connects to the adjacent neighborhood at Warwick Drive. The trail provides for safe non-motorized access to the park for visitors from this neighborhood.

The playground equipment is in good condition and appears to comply with current standards. However, the surface in the playground area is pea gravel and provides poor footing and is difficult to maintain. A large quantity of pea gravel has migrated beyond the retention barrier system. In this instance, a large amount of pea gravel has been placed in a large slide making it unusable until it is cleared. The playground includes benches that are located in nearby shaded areas. However, you must leave the paved trail to access these benches.

The tennis court/basketball pad is located just past the playground. It can be accessed by a paved walkway. The fence is in good condition but, is missing a gate on one side. During the site visit, standing water was present on the court due to recent rain events. Grass is high around the edges of the court.

The bathrooms were locked during the site visit. Park staff explained that homeless individuals have been staying there which forced the department to lock the bathrooms. The motion detector for the automatic lights has been pulled from the ceiling but, otherwise the bathrooms appear to be in good condition and meet ADA requirements.

The practice softball field is located in the open field at the southwest corner of the park. It includes a chain-link backstop. Some vegetation needs to be cleared from the backstop.

### Recommendations:

- The playground surface should be replaced with an application that provides a more consistent surface and requires less maintenance than the pea gravel that is currently used.
- The need to lock the bathrooms may indicate the need for additional security patrols at this location.
- The parking area needs to be striped.
- Approaches to picnic tables and benches should be made accessible to individuals with mobility issues.

## Review:

This Centre at University Park is located along West 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Leisure Place. The Centre was rebuilt in 2013 and houses 15,000 Square feet.

The Centre is an event and learning space that houses several multi-purpose rooms. According to the city website these rooms include a computer room, arts and crafts room, ceramics/kiln area, game room, classrooms, conference room and an aerobics and dance room with hardwood floor. The Centre also has office space, a kitchenette (Catering supported) and a banquet hall with audio/visual teleconferencing technology.

## Recommendations:

Overall, this is a quality facility for the parks department. Little rock needs more facilities like this. After visiting this facility there didn't seem to be anything out of place except for some of the landscaping is getting over taken with turf. Would recommend pulling the turf that is overtaking the landscaping.



# The Centre at University Park

**Location:** 1501 Leisure Place, 72204

**Size:** 27.0 Acres

**Classification:** Community Center



## Centennial

**Location:** 1501 South Battery Street,  
72202

**Size:** 2.0 Acres

**Classification:** Mini Park



### Review:

This park is located in the Central High Historic District along South battery Street and West 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Centennial was once a school but eventually torn down and made into a mini park for the neighborhood.

Park amenities include a playground, tennis court, and a basketball pad. This park has a nice historical brick structure that was retained when the school was removed.

The playground seems to be fairly new and in good shape with an approved surface, however the play surface underneath the swing set portion is wood mulch which provides a stable walking surface but does not seem to be properly maintained. Also, there is not an available path to the playground for people to access.

The basketball court is in good condition; however, researchers have witnessed an erosion issue where the rain water was collecting sediment and accumulating on the surface. The tennis court seems to be cracking on the surface, and it needs to be resurfaced to make it usable.

### Recommendations:

The park needs signage, so people know it is a public park.

Remove and replace old picnic tables, benches and bench swings that are corroding.

The mulch playground surface is not an approved surface for those with mobility issues to navigate. Extend the playground surface tile to cover where the swing set is to meet ADA standards.

If the basketball court is to remain, it needs to be evaluated to prevent sediment and debris build up on the surface. The park should be regraded to provide positive drainage to stormwater inlets.

If the tennis courts are to remain, the courts should be resurfaced, fencing replaced along with nets, posts and cranks.

Throughout the park there seems to be numerous drainage problems due to the lack of established turf. This leads to more erosion and an unkept aesthetic. Seeding and or laying sod in some of these areas would help reduce some of the erosion issues and help establish an aesthetically pleasing park. Debris and mud appear from recent and past storms and have collected over time along sidewalks and playing surfaces.

Historical brick tower feature needs be cleaned, and graffiti removed from the surfaces. Improved lighting would help eliminate loitering and apparent homeless activity.

An ADA reserved space should be designated near the ramp access to the park. Painted crosswalks and signs should be located along the park to provide safe access to the park for the neighbors.

### Review:

This park is located along East 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Kimball Street next to a Little Rock School District Procurement Department and Supply Center building. It is in close proximity of East Little Rock Park (2 blocks).

Park amenities include a playground, two (2) basketball courts and some picnic tables.

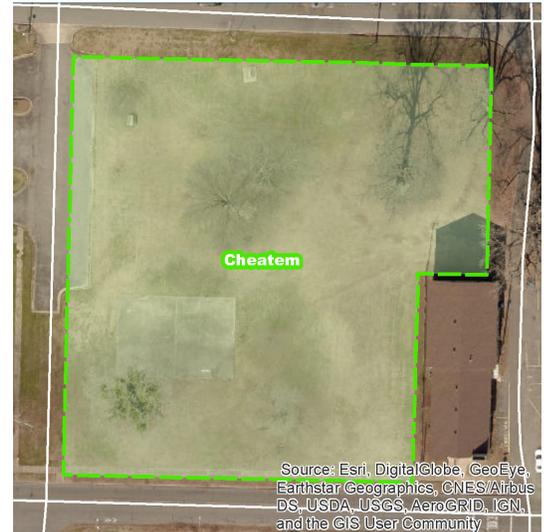
The playground equipment needs replacement. Areas of metal have become exposed over time and are rusting. The play surface is primarily grass/dirt/mud which provides an unstable walking surface and does not appear to meet ADA standards.

A handicap accessible ramp does not seem to be provided to the park. Seating is available in nearby shaded areas. However, the approach to these seating areas and picnic tables may be difficult to navigate for some users.

The basketball courts are in fair condition but need to be engineered to provide surface drainage. Also, the surface needs some new painting and striping of court lines.

### Recommendations:

- The playground equipment should be replaced.
- The park needs signage to identify it as a public park.
- Basketball courts need to be restriped.
- An ADA reserved space should be designated near the entrance to the park and a ramp and sidewalk should provide access to the rest of the park. Painted crosswalks and signs should be located along the park to provide safe access to the park for the neighbors.



## Cheatem

**Location:** 1901 East Capitol Ave, 72202

**Size:** 2.0 Acres

**Classification:** Mini Park



## Conner

**Location:** 13100 Cantrell Road, 72223

**Size:** 29.3 Acres

**Classification:** Community Park

### Review:

Conner Park is located north of Cantrell Road. A park sign is visible from Cantrell Road but differs from most park signs across the city. The park is located near several businesses and may see high levels of visitation during lunch breaks. The primary attractions at the park are the fishing pond and earthen trails. A path circling the pond provides several points of access for fishermen and other visitors.

Other amenities at Conner Park are:

- Paved parking lot
- Picnic tables
- Earthen trails
- Paved trail
- Fishing pier

The paved trail leads from the parking lot to the fishing pier which provides fishing and viewing opportunities for individuals with mobility issues. Trash is visible in the park near benches that lacked trash receptacles in close proximity. This trash included bait containers and fish waste.

Picnic tables at the park appear to be in good condition. Most tables are coated steel construction. One table is accessible from the paved trail. Other wooden tables are located off the earthen trail circling the pond and are not in good condition. No bathrooms are located at this park. Benches around the pond are being undermined by stormwater runoff.

Trails at Conner Park extend up the ridge north of the park into the Walton Heights neighborhood. This was not apparent during the site visit but was visible in aerial photos.

### Recommendations:

- Add trash cans in convenient locations where visitors fish.
- Add a fish cleaning station.
- Include a park map showing the location and length of the various trails.
- Replace wooden picnic tables with more durable products that require less maintenance.
- Consider constructing bathrooms.

## Review:

Crump Park is located near the South End and M.L.K. neighborhoods. Properties surrounding the Park are primarily residential. A railroad track is located along the southern edge of the park. The entrance does include a sign, but it is small and hard to notice.

Amenities for this park include restrooms, playground, picnic pavilion, walking path, practice football field, and practice baseball field.

The picnic pavilion seems to be in great shape structurally. It's a large pavilion that seems to be able to hold large events with new picnic tables and an older brick grill. The lights on this pavilion seem to be out of service. There should be a motion detector and photo eye for lighting events up at night.

Playground appears new and with an approved accessible surface for everyone to enjoy. Playground could use some benches for parents or guardians to sit and view when children are playing.

The paved trail runs along the outer perimeter of the park. Debris and mud from recent storms covered portions of the trail. However, the trail was in good condition. The trail in an out-and-back route that does not appear to extend beyond the park property and multiple drainage issues seem to flood the trail.

## Recommendations:

The park needs volunteers to help clean up trash, tree limbs and debris located throughout the park due to flooding. Let a company volunteer to help clean up the park in return for volunteer sign.

The baseball/softball field at this location needs to be evaluated for need by local neighborhoods. If desired, the park needs some re-engineering to provide adequate drainage. Due to the flooding this park needs to provide proper drainage to secure its safety for playing.



## Crump

**Location:** 3309 S. State Street, 72202

**Size:** 6.0 Acres

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park



## Curran Conway

**Location:** 2501 South Harrison Street,  
72204

**Size:** 24.1 Acres

**Classification:** Community Park

### Review:

Curran Conway park is located northeast of the University of Arkansas Little Rock at the corner of S Harrison Street and West 26<sup>th</sup> Street. The park is primarily wooded, and surrounding land uses are mostly residential. Amenities at the park include a playground, paved trails and a large parking lot. The park is also the location of Gary Hogan Field, a collegiate baseball stadium, which is home to the University of Arkansas Little Rock Trojans baseball program. The field is managed and maintained by the university.

The eastern end of Curran Conway park is sometimes referred to as Oak Forest Park which includes a practice football field and community garden. The garden is extensive and comprised of many plots that are maintained by members of the public. There is a separate parking lot and sign for this area.

The playground is located on the south edge of the park near the baseball stadium. Playground equipment is beginning to show signs of wear but is in generally good condition. The playground surface is pea gravel which is retained by a molded plastic barrier. Grass and weeds are growing through the pea gravel surface. Stakes used to assemble the playground border are protruding in places.

Paved trails and sidewalks through the park provide good connectivity through the park property and to adjacent neighborhood blocks. The trails and sidewalks are in good condition.

The parking lot is expansive and appears to primarily serve the baseball stadium. ADA parking is provided near the stadium entrance and accessible ramps and sidewalks are present.

Visible evidence of erosion due to stormwater runoff is evident throughout the park. Rills and gullies are present in areas where stormwater leaves the parking lot to run over land downhill toward the creeks and ditches that border the southern and eastern edges of the park.

## Recommendations:

Curran Conway provides a large amount of green space within the surrounding neighborhood which is comprised of modest sized lots with limited space for recreation. Therefore, this park is an important asset to area residents. Additionally, the park contains a collegiate baseball stadium which extends the range of visitors. The following recommendations will allow Curran Conway Park to continue to fill this important neighborhood need.

- Add park signage at the Harrison Street entrance.
- Replace the pea gravel surface in the playground with a more durable consistent safety surface that requires less maintenance and provides good access for individuals with mobility issues.
- Repair playground equipment and replace as needed.
- Address stormwater concerns throughout the park in order to avoid additional soil loss. Bioswales and rain gardens may be an effective way to address drainage concerns and improve aesthetics within the park.
- Wooden bridges crossing the large ditch at the southern edge of the park should be replaced, as needed, with more durable products that require less ongoing maintenance.



## Dunbar

**Location:** 1001 West 16th Street, 72202

**Size:** 6.0 Acres

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

### OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE:

The mulch playground surface is not an approved surface for those with mobility issues to navigate. Extend the playground surface tile to cover where the swing set is to meet ADA standards. A poured rubber surface would provide superior safety and stability while requiring less maintenance than the gravel surface.

The parking lot needs improvements to provide ADA parking and access to the park. The dumpster enclosure needs to be renovated as well.

### Review:

This community center was built in 1954 and is located along W 16<sup>th</sup> St and S Chestnut St next to Gibbs Magnet Elementary.

Amenities in the park include a playground, community center, two lighted tennis courts, one lighted soccer field and a community garden.

The playground is located adjacent to the community centers parking lot. Overall, the playground is large and seems to be fairly new. The play surface is half poured in play/ half mulch which is retained by a poured in curb.

The Community center seems to be in fairly good shape from the exterior. However, the community center was closed during our park tour so we couldn't assess the interior.

The parking lot is located in between the community center and the elementary school and seems to be used by both buildings. The parking lot has no handicap parking for the park and no accessible ramp to the park.

Throughout the park there seems to be numerous drainage problems specifically along the parking lot and playground. Much of the park lacks established turf. This leads to more erosion and an unkept aesthetic. Seeding and or laying sod in some of these areas would help reduce some of the erosion issues and help establish an aesthetically pleasing park. Debris and mud appear from recent and past storms and have collected over time.

The two tennis courts are located adjacent to the southern side of the community center. They have asphalt pavement surface with overhead lights and fencing. These courts are some of the nicer ones in the city.

The playground seems to be fairly new and in good shape with an approved surface, however the play surface underneath the swing set and other portions is mulch which provides a stable walking surface but does not seem to be properly maintained.

### Recommendations:

The area underneath the trees, in between the playground and the parking lots needs turf to be established. This area of the park is eroding away and depositing sediment along the parking lot. Lay topsoil in the areas where needed, Seed or sod to repair damaged turf areas. Place mulch around trees to minimize tree roots as a trip hazard.

## Review:

This park is located to the west of the Airport along the Arkansas River. Information provided by the City reports this park was built in the early 1970's. This park looks to be somewhat neglected with its current condition.

The existing facilities at this park include two practice baseball fields (one lighted), three tennis courts, a playground, outdoor pool, garden and additional buildings that house community service agencies.

The playground equipment is in need of being replaced. Areas of metal have become exposed over time and are rusting. The play surface is primarily grass/dirt/mud and some pea gravel which provides an unstable walking surface and does not appear to meet ADA standards.

This park includes three tennis courts that are in poor condition. The courts need resurfacing, new netting, new lighting and new fencing. The electrical boxes are open and accessible to the public and the courts need to be re-engineered to drain properly so they do not flood and collect debris.

The baseball fields are in need of renovation if they are to continue for public use. The wood bleachers are rotting and unsafe, the dugouts need to be maintained, and the field turf is poor.

The basketball court is in fair condition but the park in general does not appear to get frequent use.

A handicap accessible ramp does not seem to be provided to the park. Seating is available in nearby shaded areas. However, the approach to these seating areas and picnic tables may be difficult to navigate for some users.

There is an outdoor pool onsite that is attached to the East Little Rock Community Center. This pool is in disrepair and is no longer operating as a community facility.

## Recommendations:

The city needs to evaluate this park and community center with public input to address the future needs of the community. As the airport expands and other redevelopment occurs around the park, it may warrant the sale of this property for other uses. The close proximity of the park to the downtown riverfront and the William J. Clinton Library and Museum and associated amenities could lend this as a possible future trailhead location for the Arkansas River Greenway and blueway systems.



## East Little Rock

**Location:** 2500 East 6th Street, 72202

**Size:** 30.0 Acres

**Classification:** Community Park



## First Tee/ Jack Stephens Youth Academy Golf Course

**Location:** 1 First Tee Way, 72204

**Size:** 250.0 Acres

**Classification:** Golf Course

### Review:

This golf course is located north of the Meadowcliff / Brookwood neighborhood in the southern part of Little Rock.

Amenities at this golf course include nine-hole regulation golf course, nine-hole par three golf course, driving range, maintenance facility, and a pro shop.

### Recommendations:

- See general recommendations for golf facilities

## Review:

This park is located along interstate 630 and South Woodrow Street in the Capitol Hill neighborhood. Fletcher appears to be recently renovated.

Amenities include a playground, picnic pavilion, basketball pad and a small practice field.

Located adjacent to the interstate, the park is well screened with thick vegetation along the northern boundary. It's close proximity to the interstate also seems to contribute to undesirable activity including someone that was sleeping in their car the day of the park evaluation.

The playground is in good condition; however, the play surface is primarily pea gravel which provides an unstable walking surface and does not appear to meet ADA standards. A handicap accessible ramp is provided to the playground.

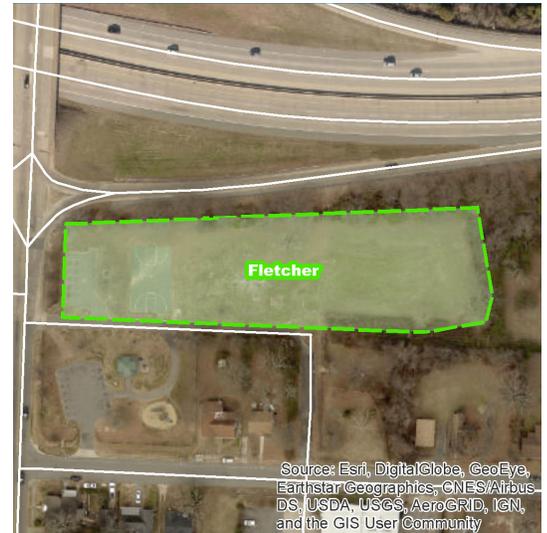
The parking lot needs two designated handicap spaces with pavement makings and signs.

A pavilion located in the park is also in good condition and appears to be newer than others in the system.

The basketball pad includes two goals and seems to be regulation size. There is some minor cracking and puddle spots on the surface.

## Recommendations:

- Replace the playground surface to meet standards.
- Provide proper lighting.
- Fix water fountain.
- For a fresh face lift and updated look, power wash and clean moss and mold off the old brick and stone masonry.



## Fletcher

**Location:** 901 South Woodrow Street,  
72204

**Size:** 2.0 Acres

**Classification:** Mini Park



## Gillam

**Location:** 5300 Gillam Park Road, 72206

**Size:** 350.0 Acres

**Classification:** Large Urban Park

### Review:

This park was mainly forested with a couple of old amenities that have been closed for quite some time. Gillam is located south of downtown Little Rock along Interstate 30 and 440 with an entrance along Gillam Park Road and Springer Boulevard in the Granite Mountain Neighborhood.

Park amenities previously included a basketball and tennis court, pool, picnic shelter and playground. However, none of these amenities are usable and need to be torn down as they represent a potential safety hazard.

This park does not appear to be in active use. The day of the assessment, the park drive was locked, and it did not appear the property is being maintained. This park needs a master plan and public input to be developed in to a park for the residents of Little Rock.

Within the confines of the park is a rare cedar glade that is not found anywhere else in the region.

### Recommendations:

The size of Gilliam park is significant enough to accommodate a variety of passive park amenities. Strong access to major thoroughfares and highways could serve a regional attraction. The unique glade features have to be preserved but small passive nature trails would be a great way to have a use for this park. Located adjacent to property owned by Audubon Arkansas, there is potential to form a partnership with Audubon Arkansas and the Witt Stephens Jr. Central Arkansas Nature Center to make greater use of the Gillam Property and potentially offer greater nature-based programming.

The existing amenities in the park should be removed. Their current condition is an attractive nuisance to visitors in the park and could result in injury. New facilities for the park should complement those programs and facilities that are part of the Little Rock Audubon Center.

## Review:

Granite Heights is located behind Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church Along Springer Blvd in an established residential subdivision on the southern side of the City. Lack of signage makes this park very difficult to find.

The park amenities include a playground, basketball/tennis court, picnic pavilion with picnic tables, practice field backstop, a heavily wooded area on the east side of the property and a small walking trail.

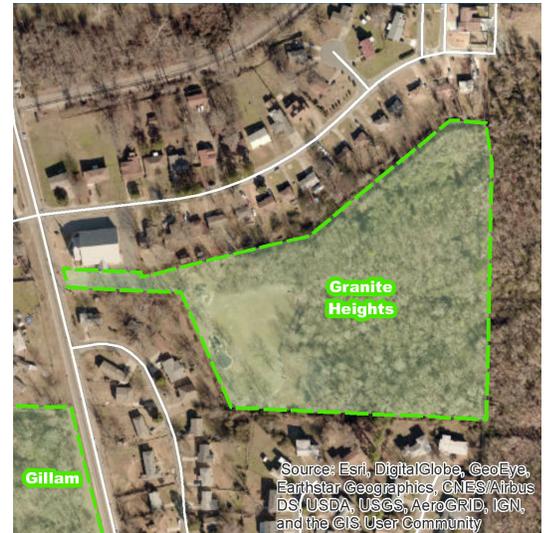
Playground equipment seems to be fairly new with a nice accessible rubberized surface. The pavilion appears to be a recent addition as well with two picnic tables and a nice accessible path. The walking trail encompasses the open grass area of the park and also appears to be recently constructed. Other areas of the park seemed to be overlooked with the basketball/tennis court and the practice field in poor condition. The basketball/tennis courts are in bad need of repair and resurfacing and the practice field, which is located on a hill, does not have a level play surface lending it to practice play only.

The heavily wooded part of the park to the east of this property allows for a good opportunity to expand the existing walking trail.

## Recommendations:

This park provides a good gathering area for the immediate neighborhood. However, Due to the remote location and signage, this park is likely under-utilized by the residents much outside of the surrounding residences.

- New signage – See general recommendations
- ADA – See general recommendations. (Picnic tables and paths to amenities)
- Resurface the Tennis/basketball court and provide new fencing and a net.
- Clear some of the wooded area on the east side of the park and extend the walking path to the rest of the park to utilize its full potential.



## Granite Heights

**Location:** 3811 Springer Boulevard, 72206

**Size:** 10.0 Acres

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park



## Hanger Hill

**Location:** 1201 Hanger Street, 72202

**Size:** 2.0 Acres

**Classification:** Mini Park

### Review:

This park is located along Hanger Street and East 13th Street in the Hanger Hill Neighborhood. It's a smaller park that provides a playground, two basketball courts and a tennis court.

The playground equipment is in need of replacement. Areas of metal have become exposed over time and are rusting. The play surface is primarily grass/dirt/mud which provides an unstable walking surface and does not appear to meet ASTM standards.

ADA at the park entrance should be a top priority. Handicap accessibility in the park is lacking. Seating is available in nearby shaded areas, however, the approach to these seating areas and picnic tables may be difficult to navigate for some users.

The tennis court is in need of a renovation. The surface is cracking, and the net is failing. Court fencing is in fair condition but could be replaced for an updated look along with lighting that would increase available play time.

This park has some major turf and erosion issues. Top soil needs to be laid down to provide proper coverage over roots and seeding or sod needs to be established to prevent erosion issues and existing trip hazards.

### Recommendations:

This park needs a complete renovation to include:

- Resurface the Tennis court and provide a new net
- New signage – See general recommendations
- ADA – See general recommendations
- Update playground equipment to current standards
- Remove old picnic tables and porch swing
- Provide proper lighting, replace light fixtures and cover up electrical boxes that are exposed.
- Provide proper drainage/ reroute drainage to eliminate silting over of the basketball and tennis courts.

## Review:

This golf course is located in the Meadowcliff / Brookwood neighborhood in the southern side of Little Rock.

Amenities at this golf course include eighteen-hole golf course, driving range, maintenance facility, and a pro shop.

Hindman Golf Course Facility was built in 1971 and houses a 4,800 square feet pro shop.

## Recommendations:

See general recommendations for golf facilities on page 6.18.



## Hindman Golf Course

**Location:** 60 Brookview Drive, 72209

**Size:** 190.0 Acres

**Classification:** Golf Course



## Hindman

**Location:** 60 Brookview Drive, 72209

**Size:** 99.3 Acres

**Classification:** Large Urban Park

### Review:

This park is a highly developed park located along Fourche Creek in the Meadowcliff/Brookwood neighborhood. Amenities include:

- Playground
- Basketball Pad
- Volleyball
- Open Space/Field:
- Lighted Softball/Baseball Field
- Restrooms
- Pavilion
- Fishing Stream
- Picnic Tables
- Paved Trails
- Disc Golf
- Parking

The bathroom building is located near the entrance to the park and is accessed by a long ramp that appears to meet ADA requirements. Further review of the building revealed the bathroom stalls do not meet current ADA regulations.

A map of the Disc Golf course at the park is provided near the parking lot and allows visitors to orient themselves to various park amenities. The basketball pad is located on the west end of the park near the restrooms. The pad and goals appear to be in fair condition but should be painted and resurfaced. There is no fencing around the pad.

The tennis court appears to have been converted into a second basketball court. There are no posts, net or tennis markings on the court and two basketball goals have been placed at either end.

The softball/baseball field is partially fenced with a backstop that has sustained damaged during a recent storm and is currently roped off. The field has two benches set on a concrete pad that serve as dugouts and a large section of wooden bleachers. The bleachers are six rows high and do not have fencing or rails along the side or back. The bleachers can be accessed from a concrete walkway. The field has lights mounted on wood poles.

The parking lot surface is in good condition, but parking spaces are not striped and handicap parking spaces are not available. Parking appears adequate for park patrons, but lighting is insufficient.

A picnic shelter is located near the softball/baseball field. It is modern construction but similar in style to the CCC structures

in Boyle Park and is in good condition. Approaches to the shelter appear to be manageable by individuals with mobility issues.

A paved trail leads from the picnic shelter over a small wooden bridge and up a slight rise to the playground. The equipment and surface are in good condition and appear to meet current standards for playground safe-

ty. The playground is located above a rock retaining wall. At certain points the wall creates a significant grade change from the playground area to the grass surface below.

---

## Recommendations:

Most amenities in Hindman Park are in fair condition and require minimal reconditioning or repairs. The following is recommended for consideration:

- Remodel the bathrooms to comply with ADA standards.
- Resurface the basketball courts
- Repair softball/baseball backstop.
- Replace wood light posts with concrete as needed.
- Replace bleachers with modern aluminum. Consider two smaller sets of bleachers instead of one large set.
- Conduct a safety audit in the area around the playground. Pay special attention to the height of the retaining wall. A safety rail may be required.
- Include information at bulletin boards regarding canoe/kayak access points.
- Restripe parking areas and provide handicap accessible parking spaces.



## Interstate

**Location:** 3900 Arch Street, 72206

**Size:** 71.0 Acres

**Classification:** Sports Complex

### Review:

This park is located north of US Highway 67 and west of Arch Street near the South End neighborhood.

Interstate Park amenities include:

- Basketball Pad
- Open Space/Field:
- Football Field (2)
- Lighted Softball (6)
- Practice Softball
- Lighted Baseball
- Practice Baseball
- Pavilion
- Canoe Launch
- Fishing Stream
- Picnic Tables
- Parking (200)

Researchers discovered after their site assessment that Interstate Park is located on a closed landfill. The site exhibits areas of severe slumping and sinking.

The construction of municipal solid waste landfills has been regulated since 1991 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Today an owner/operator must install a 24-inch earthen cover within six months of closure to minimize water infiltration and erosion. The cover usually also has a gas venting layer and a stone or synthetic biotech layer to keep out burrowing animals. The EPA requires groundwater monitoring and leachate collection for thirty years after the landfill is closed.

Technically, the two big challenges to using a former landfill are gas production and ground settlement. Landfill gases, including methane, carbon dioxide, ammonia, and hydrogen sulfide, are created when buried waste decomposes. Methane may be released for thirty or more years after closure, and EPA requires gas collection systems. (In parks built on pre-1991 landfills there were occasional stories of picnickers being stunned to see a column of flame surrounding a barbecue grill.) Happily, methane collected from landfills can be sold by park departments to generate revenue. In Portland, Oregon, St. Johns Landfill, a former disposal site within the 2,000-acre Smith-Bybee Wetlands Natural Area, earns more than \$100,000 a year from methane that is piped 2 miles to heat the lime kiln of a cement company. The revenue helps pay for closure operations as the site transitions from landfill to park.

Settlement is a bit more difficult. Like cereal in a box, municipal landfills gradually slump as much as 20 percent over a two- or three-decade period. That much settlement would cause foundations to break and sink, utility and irrigation pipes to burst, roads and paths to crack and heave, light poles to tilt, and sports fields to crumple. Obviously, if the ultimate reuse of a landfill is as a natural wild land, none of this matters. But most recreational reuses require the construction of at least trails if not fields and buildings of various types. Fortunately, waste sits only in “cells” in certain areas of a landfill, and park facilities can be safely constructed over undisturbed areas, leaving the settling sections to support grass and shrubbery. Therefore, structural foundations can be protected through detailed research and careful planning; the key is to know exactly

where the waste is. At New York’s Fresh Kills only about 45 percent of the land area was actually used for waste disposal.

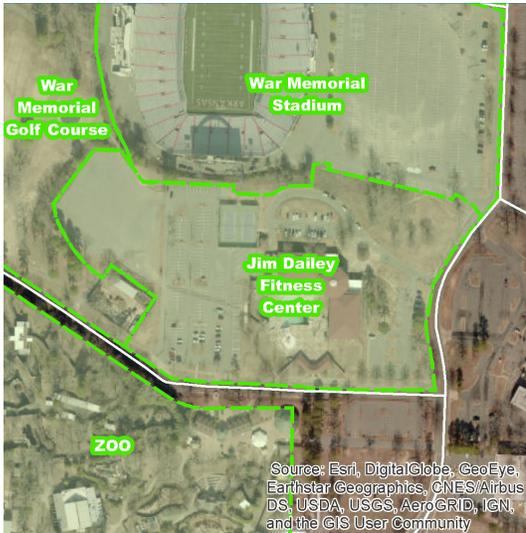
Despite the many successful individual examples, there is not yet a seamless landfills-to-parks movement in the United States. Numerous challenges remain—technological, political, and legal—all of which drive up costs. Back when land was more easily available, the impediments were generally not worth taking on. Now in many cases they are. With a three-pronged effort to design safer waste dumps, to work more closely with community activists, and to ensure protection from legal liabilities, cities will be able to gain much new parkland from abandoned landfills

*Source: <https://cityparksblog.org/2011/10/14/from-dumps-to-destinations-converting-landfills-to-parks/>*

---

## Recommendations:

The fields at Interstate park should be redeveloped at a new location. Interstate Park should be studied to determine the extent of the former landfill and converted to a passive nature area providing access to Fourche Creek and adjacent wetlands.



## Jim Dailey Fitness and Aquatic Center

**Location:** 300 South Monroe, 72205

**Size:** 13.0 Acres

**Classification:** Special Facility

### Review:

This facility is located west to the University of Arkansas Medical Science campus and south of the War Memorial Stadium.

Jim Dailey Fitness and Aquatic Center was built in 1995 and houses 28,500 square feet. The facility includes:

- Indoor Twenty-Five (25)-Yard Swimming Pool and Whirlpool
- Outdoor Twenty-Five (25)-Yard Swimming Pool
- Indoor Jogging/Walking Track (sixteen (16) laps = one (1)-mile)
- Full Complement of Cybex Weight Machines
- Full locker Room/Shower Facilities
- Aerobics Room
- Gymnasium
- Multipurpose Indoor Court Area
- Multipurpose Activity Room
- Tennis Courts (2)

### Recommendations:

Overall, this facility was in excellent condition. A better connection to the city-wide trail would help connect people to this facility.

## Review:

This park stretches eleven (11) blocks on the south bank of the Arkansas River in Downtown Little Rock. Riverfront Park was built in 1996 and provides large areas for outdoor events, leisure activities and a glimpse of the State's history. The Belvedere Pavilion and the Sunken Patio area are available for rental.

### Amenities:

- Playground
- Open Space/Field:
- Splash Pads (2)
- Restrooms
- Pavilion (3)
- Fishing Stream
- Picnic Tables (6)
- Paved Trails
- Parking (141)
- Sculptures (84)
- Broadway Bridge
- Junction Bridge
- Clinton Presidential Bridge
- Margaret Clark Adventure Park
- Peabody Adventure Park

Typical of a downtown destination park, Julius Breckling Riverfront Park is the most highly designed park in the system with a diversity of construction materials, landscaping and amenities. The park is home to many of the community's special events throughout the year and provides a mix of specialized facilities including the First Security Amphitheater, Vogel Schwartz Sculpture Garden, Peabody Splash Park, the Clinton Presidential Center, William E. "Bill" Clark Presidential Wetlands and the Witt Stephens Jr. Central Arkansas Nature Center among other attractions. This park also serves as a link and destination point along the Arkansas River Trail joined by the Junction Bridge to the North side of the Arkansas River.

The park site assessment revealed areas that require a high level of attention and maintenance detail. A dedicated maintenance crew oversees maintenance of the Riverfront Park, Bill Clark Wetlands and other downtown public areas. It appeared during the site assessment that the level of maintenance is not keeping pace with the high use and design details in the park. As is typical of a destination park in a high-profile area of a downtown, the level of attention to park elements such as pavement materials, retaining walls, landscaping, and site amenities requires a more hands on approach to project the overall positive image for the city. As a destination park for residents and visitors to Little Rock, it is critical to insure this maintains a signature park identity.



## Julius Breckling Riverfront

**Location:** 202 E. LaHarpe Boulevard, 72201

**Size:** 39.0 Acres

**Classification:** Large Urban Park

## Recommendations:

- Provide pedestrian access to and from streets on the West side of the park.
- Delineate the primary Arkansas River Trail greenway route through the park with improved wayfinding. Unique surfacing could help users identify the primary trail without the clutter of additional signage.
- Replace metal barrel trash bins with a receptacle that is not only aesthetically pleasing but that matches throughout the park
- Try to establish new turf underneath trees in the park and in areas needed so the ground doesn't erode away. Seed or sod to repair damaged turf areas. Place mulch around trees to minimize tree roots as a trip hazard.
- Put up railing or fencing near/along the water to prevent people from falling.
- Adopt a strategy/policy for future placement of sculpture in the park. The existing sculpture garden has 84 pieces of sculpture and has reached capacity for any additional placement. Sculpture should be incorporated into other public projects, parks and greenways moving forward.
- Make sure all electrical boxes are properly locked.
- Develop security strategies to address the homeless population that stay in this park.
- Put up railings where appropriate.



## Junior Deputy

**Location:** North Cantrell Road, 72202

**Classification:** Sports Complex

## Review:

Junior Deputy Park is a youth baseball complex which is owned by the City of Little Rock but maintained by Junior Deputy Baseball. The complex contains eight fields including a Miracle League field for children and adults with a variety of diagnoses ranging from autism to blindness or mobility limitations. The complex includes a playground which is also maintained by the Junior Deputy Baseball league.

The site visit for this park did not include a full assessment because maintenance is performed by an outside agency. Overall, the facility appears to be in good condition but is beyond capacity for the city's premier youth baseball park.

## Recommendations:

Junior Deputy should be replaced by a facility that is better equipped to serve the local baseball needs but also tournament play that can attract visitors to the city and create additional economic impact. Recommendations have been made to construct a youth complex in War Memorial Park. Fields could be designed to increase capacity and play for a wider age group.

## Review:

This park is located along and under Interstate 630 and South Mississippi Street. Kanis is a good size community park next to a commercial district with a large drainage creek running through the middle of it.

Kanis park includes two basketball courts, a baseball field, playground, two tennis courts, restroom, sand volleyball court, skate park, and picnic pavilion.

Restrooms need to be cleaned. When researchers visited the park there was trash on the floor. Also, the restrooms need some renovating to make them up to ADA standards but overall in good condition.

The baseball field is in need of some maintenance. The wood bleachers are rotting and unsafe, the dugouts need to be maintained, and the field is neglected to the point it doesn't even seem to be used by the public. Water fountain next to the field is loose and needs to be fixed.

Basketball courts are located underneath the overpass of Interstate 630 and seem to be in pretty good condition. However, there is a quite a bit of vandalism in the form of spray paint.

Located across the parking lot from the baseball field are some tennis courts. The tennis courts currently are in need of a renovation. The surface is cracking, and the net is failing to be playable. Fencing is in alright condition but could be replaced and lighting would help this tennis court get utilized at off hours.

This park has some major turf and erosion issues. Top soil needs to be laid down and reengineered to provide proper drainage around amenities and parking lots. Then seeding or sod needs to be established a green and stable turf system to prevent erosion issues. Also, mulch should be placed around trees to help roots and some trees need sediment removed around their base to prevent suffocating the roots.

Parking lot located throughout Kanis park is falling apart. This surface is cracking, sediment is filling it in due to drainage and erosion issues throughout the park and weeds are starting to grow. This parking lot needs to be maintained, stripped and marked to provide full access for all users.

Walking trail runs throughout Kanis park to allow access to amenities. The walking path bridge has some loose boards that need to be replaced near the baseball field. Also, the path itself needs to be refinished the asphalt is cracking in multiple spots and weeds and turf are growing in them.



## Kanis

**Location:** 820 South Rodney Parham Road, 72205

**Size:** 46.0 Acres

**Classification:** Community Park



The skate park has been completed since the initial park assessment. The facility appears to be quite extensive and able to serve that recreation need for the community.

The parking lot is in poor condition as well. There are multiple spots where sediment and pine needles have collected over time and growth has taken over in low spots.

## Recommendations:

- ADA – See general recommendations
- Connect the path to a city-wide trail system for more users to utilize.
- Fix water fountain by baseball field.
- Replace wood bleachers with aluminum bleachers.
- Cover and lock all electrical boxes



## Kiwanis

**Location:** 4100 Holt Street, 72204

**Size:** 12.0 Acres

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

## Review:

Kiwanis Park is located in a residential neighborhood between Foster and Holt streets. A paved parking lot is located at the Foster Street entrance. However, this entrance is closed to vehicular traffic due to security concerns. Pedestrian access to the park is provided from the Foster Street entrance by a paved trail. The park is fenced with a decorative aluminum fence along the Foster Street side. Signage around the perimeter of the park state the park closes at 8:00 PM.

Park amenities include a playground, pavilion, basketball courts, a paved trail, a pond and a fishing pier. The playground includes equipment that appears to be in fair condition requiring limited reconditioning. The play surface is primarily composed of pea gravel. Some rubberized surface is included around the southern edge of the playground. This rubberized material does not appear to provide improved access to the playground equipment. Wood cross ties are used to retain the pea gravel. Some cross ties show signs of deterioration and need to be replaced.

The pavilion is located adjacent to the pond and provides a sheltered area for one picnic table and three anchored benches. The pavilion is in good condition. Lighting controls for the pavilion appear to be located in a nearby electrical box. The electrical box is damaged and needs to be repaired.

The basketball courts are located just off the paved trail south of the pond. The concrete pad is in poor condition and needs to be resurfaced. One of the four basketball goals need to be replaced. Fencing is provided along the east side of the courts and is in good condition. A bench and water fountain are provided nearby. The approach to the basketball courts is paved and in good condition.

The fishing pier includes steel railings, a wooden deck, and a gangway wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs. Loose boards are present in the gangway and need to be replaced. Otherwise the fishing pier is in good condition.

The paved trail is in good condition and does not appear to require any maintenance at this time. Similarly, the parking lot is also in good repair and does not require attention at this time. However, lighting is very limited throughout the park. Well placed pedestrian and security lighting may reduce the instances of illegal activity in the park that has forced the closure of the parking lot.

## Recommendations:

- Replace the pea gravel surface at the playground with an appropriate rubberized surface.
- Repair and secure the electrical control box for the pavilion.
- Resurface the basketball courts and repair damaged goal.
- Repair gangway of the fishing pier.
- Install additional pedestrian and security lighting throughout the park as a deterrent to unwanted and criminal behavior.

## Review:

This park is next to a public works/ water treatment building near the corner of Ozark Street and North Martin Street in the Cedar Hill Terrace neighborhood. This park is a passive park with an amazing lookout.

Amenities at this park include a ½ mile waling paved trail and a viewing picnic area.

This park seems hard to find. There is no signage and or way-finding signage along the path to know where you are going. Some park entrance signs are needed and kiosks to know where you are. Walking path is made of asphalt and seems to be in good condition. There are some minor drainage issues with the path being on somewhat of a hill and pooling up on one side and eroding on the other. Also, a couple of branches and limbs need to be cleaned up along this path to better serve its purpose.

The overlook is surfaced in a stamped concrete with retaining wall. The overlook is in great condition. However, parts of the overlook aren't ADA accessible.

## Recommendations:

Overall, this was a nice piece of property to have an overlook. The overlook is in good condition and seems to serve its use. This park appears to be a hidden gem that only the neighbors know about. The entrances to the park could be more welcoming and have better signage to help advertise to new users of the park. Add kiosk/trailhead to show where path goes as well.

Although it is vertically challenging it would be nice to connect this park to the surrounding neighborhoods or a city-wide trail system to involve more users. A connection to Lee Ave or Berry Street would be beneficial also a connection to the north along Cantrell Rd or Edgerstoune Lane.



## Knoop

**Location:** 20 Ozark Point, 72202

**Size:** 45.0 Acres

**Classification:** Community Park

It may be difficult because this park does not have a parking lot, but it would be nice to have one ADA painted spot on Ozark point for accessible users.

Along the trail some roots are showing underneath the asphalt trail. Repaving with heavier base layer and excavating some of the roots would help prevent some of the cracking.



## MacArthur

**Location:** 601 East 9th Street, 72201

**Size:** 39.0 Acres

**Classification:** Large Urban Park

### Review:

This park is located in the heart of the city and is one of Little Rock's most cherished parks. Being a part of the MacArthur Military History Museum that was built 1887 this park has significant historic relevance.

This park includes a playground, picnic pavilion, bike polo, a memorial, fishing pier, dog park, and community garden.

The playground equipment is on the edge of needing to be replaced. Some of the equipment is becoming out dated and starting to show signs of deteriorating. Also, the surface of the playground area is made out of Sand and needs to be replaced in order to make it an ADA approved surface.

The fishing pond is reportedly very polluted. Trash was observed throughout the park. Bank erosion was also observed.

The park includes a bike polo court. This court seems to be an old tennis court that has been transformed into a bike polo facility. The boards around the rink should be higher to prevent injury when playing the game.

### Recommendations:

- ADA – See general recommendations (replace playground surface)
- Continue to connect the park to a city-wide trail system for more users to utilize.
- Establish turf in areas where needed by laying sod or re-seeding.
- Replace barrel trash bins with a nice cohesive trash bin that match throughout the park.
- Make sure all electrical boxes are properly covered and locked.
- Fix water fountain in the pond so it is level.
- Make sure restrooms are unlocked for the public to use.
- Remove stumps and replant trees that have been cut down throughout the park.
- Hire an experienced washer to power wash monuments that have blackened over time.

## Review:

This park is a great family friendly park in the Meriwether Neighborhood. It is located along Florida Ave and "M" Street. Meriwether Park includes two (2) tennis courts, a practice baseball field, walking path, playground and restrooms.

The playground here has some newer equipment that would meet today's standards. However, there is a large rocket ship slide that is outdated and needs to be removed. The safety surface is pea gravel and does not comply with ADA standards. As with all the parks, a safety audit is needed of the playground surface, as well as the fall zones.

Tennis courts at this park are in poor condition. The surface is cracking, water is pooling, nets are compromised, and lights and electrical boxes are rusting. Some of the nets are being tightened by residents using rocks and sticks.

The restroom here seems to serve its purpose. However, the odd shape of the restrooms makes it hard for anyone in a wheelchair to access. Restrooms need to be updated to meet ADA requirements.

The practice baseball field has some drainage issues. The field has bleachers but no path for accessible users and seating areas for users. Also, the field needs some releveling and engineering to drain standing water. Some turf areas need to be reestablished and reseeded.

The walking trail around the park is a good path and seems to connect to different streets and parts of the neighborhood. There seems to be some washing out along the walking path around the park. Soil stabilization and turf establishment is a definite need in this park.

## Recommendations:

Tennis courts and playgrounds should be renovated along with new restrooms, which would make this park an asset to the neighborhood. Parking upgrades will also be needed to meet ADA requirements, and soil stabilization is a must in this park.

- New signage – See general recommendations
- ADA – See general recommendations. (Picnic tables and paths to amenities)
- Resurface the tennis courts and provide new fencing and nets.
- Provide wheelchair access and playground equipment and playground audit
- Address erosion issues along the trail and throughout the park

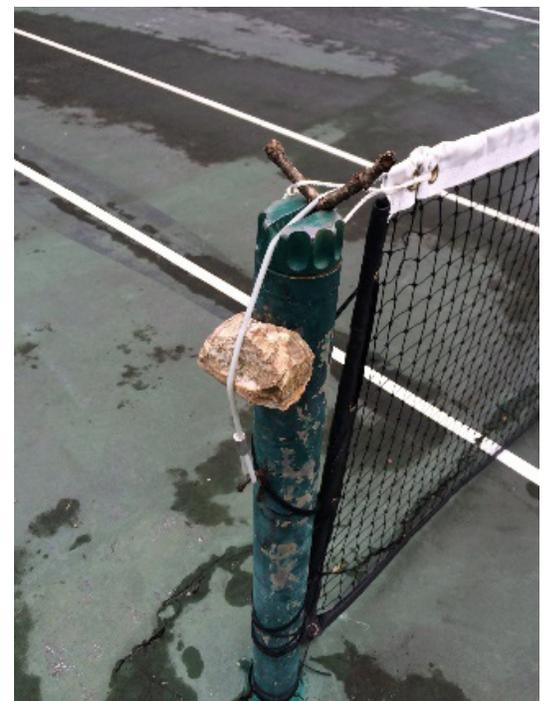


## Meriwether

**Location:** 1401 Florida Street, 72207

**Size:** 10.0 Acres

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park



- Plant additional trees along the trail and near the playground.
- Seed or sod to repair damaged turf areas. Mulch tree to minimize tree roots as a trip hazard.
- Remove the metal standing structure.
- Provide proper lighting, replace light fixtures and

- electrical boxes that are exposed or rusted out.
- Provide proper drainage or reroute drainage throughout the park so the practice baseball field and walking path drains properly without having washouts.
- Provide a Picnic pavilion for the neighborhood and residents to gather.



## Morehart

**Location:** 9300 Marblevale Cut-Off, 72103

**Size:** 43 Acres

**Classification:** Community Park

### Review:

This park is an expansive, heavily wooded park containing the following amenities:

- Disc Golf Course
- Volleyball
- Tennis Courts
- Baseball/Softball Field
- Basketball Courts
- Pavilion
- Restrooms
- Playground

The paved trails throughout the park are in poor condition. It appears the pavement has not been maintained and the trails are cracked and buckled in many areas. Some sections are impassable.

Parking lots are not striped and ADA parking spaces are not provided. Approaches to various amenities in the park are not easily accessible for individuals with mobility issues. This could range from individuals in wheelchairs or grandparents who are unsteady on uneven surfaces.

The sand volleyball court and Disc Golf course are the first amenities you see as you enter the park. There is a partial fence that prevents balls from entering the park road and parking area. The court surface is sand. Grass and weeds are encroaching into the court. The net and posts appear to be in fair condition and adequate for recreational play. The Disc Golf course begins near the park entrance and continues through the park property. An overall map of the course is not provided.

The tennis courts are located slightly downhill from a parking area. The courts are susceptible to nuisance flooding than can carry sediment and other debris onto the courts. Nets are in fair condition. Fencing is in need of general maintenance. Some cross members are no longer connected to vertical posts in places.

The restroom building is located near the tennis courts. An accessible approach is provided to the restrooms. Bathrooms and the water fountain address ADA requirements. The building is in fair condition but requires some reconditioning in the form of paint, mildew removal. The building itself appears to be structurally sound.

The softball/baseball field has lighting fixtures that are mounted on wood poles. The poles appear to be in good condition. There are two aluminum bleachers that are five rows high. They are mounted on concrete pads located on either side of home plate. The field appears to be in good condition. Some standing water was observed due to recent rain events. Fencing at the field requires some general maintenance and reconditioning. Chain-link mesh is buckling in areas and supports are disconnected.

The basketball pad is in good condition. Both courts are striped and goals are in good condition. There are some cracks in the asphalt surface but in generally in

good condition. The courts are easily accessed from the paved trail.

The pavilion is in good condition and is large enough to accommodate six large picnic tables. The structure appears to be well maintained and the lights are functional. There are no signs of rotting wood or damage to the roof. The fireplace appears to be functional. The pavilion has an accessible approach from the paved trail near the playground.

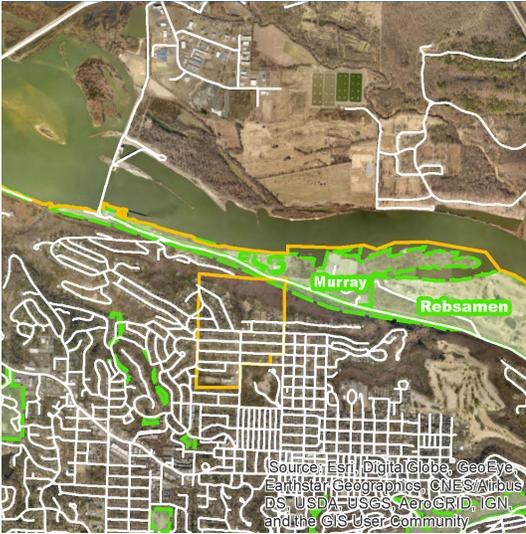
The playground equipment appears to be dated and include metal slides which should be replaced with an updated equivalent. The playground surface is primarily sand and pine needles from nearby trees. Wood cross ties surround the playground but are ineffective at retaining any material.

Picnic tables and benches are located throughout the park. None of the tables provide wheelchair access. Most tables are located on concrete foundations that are not flush with the ground.

---

## Recommendations:

- Provide an overall map and description for the Disc Golf course similar to what is provided at Hindman Park.
- Stripe the parking lot and provide the required number of ADA parking stalls.
- Reestablish the edges of the sand volleyball court.
- Improve drainage around the tennis court and repair fencing.
- Repair paved trails to provide a consistent surface and trail width.
- Clean and repaint the restroom building.
- Replace wooden light poles with concrete posts as needed.
- Provide ADA accessible picnic tables.
- Update the playground equipment and install a rubberized safety surface that provides consistent footing and requires less maintenance than sand or pea gravel.
- Replace the sign at the entrance to the park which may have been removed due to road construction.



## Murray

**Location:** 5900 Rebsamen Park Road,  
72207

**Size:** 166.0 Acres

**Classification:** Large Urban Park

### Review:

This park is located on the North side of town in between the Arkansas River and Rebsamen Park Rd just west of the Rebsamen Golf Course.

Amenities for this park include: boat ramp with dock, trail system, pavilions and picnic areas, six volleyball courts, a playground and two soccer fields.

The park has two double-lane boat ramps with two large parking lots. A walkway to each ramp courtesy dock and fishing pier is provided in the boat ramp area. The trail to the dock needs repair. In addition, the rotted wooden stairway to the open field parking needs to be closed immediately until repairs can be made. New vegetation along the banks is needed along with a defined boardwalk in order to address substantial soil erosion in this area.

The eight pavilions in the park are all custom designed, however, age and regular flooding has caused some maintenance issues. Lights can be controlled with switches but do not appear to be working. Wasp nests were observed in the pavilions. There is not a pedestrian connection to the lower level and there is a lack of connecting sidewalks throughout this area.

The picnic area, referred to as the lower park, includes a picnic area adjacent to one of the pavilions. The area is served by sidewalks, which access some of the tables and the pavilion. Two small pedestrian bridges connect the parking area to the pavilion. Both are in poor condition. This area is heavily forested. The trees provide wonderful shade, but maintenance is needed because they leave sap and debris on the tables and pavilion.

These beach volleyball courts seem to be in good condition and used weekly in leagues. However, there is overgrowth from the turf to the sand that needs to be divided by some kind of edging.

A pathway follows the road towards the boat ramp. More picnic facilities are found along the pathway. The pathway is in poor condition; however, researchers recently learned that the city has obtained funds to improve the trail.

There are two restroom buildings in the park, and both are in poor to fair condition. One is located in the lower area of the park and the other in the upper sections of the park. Wasps were found in both buildings.

There is a small playground that was added between the two existing pavilions. It is well shaded by existing trees. The safety surface is mulch and does not appear to be ADA compliant. As with all of the playgrounds in the system, a complete safety audit is needed.

The dog park has five-foot-high chain link fencing around two acres for large dogs, four-foot-high chain link fencing around a half acre for small dogs, secure area for entering and exiting the park, water troughs and fountains in each area, benches, parking, trash cans and mutt mitts for cleaning up after your dog. Restrooms are located in the nearby playground area.

The dog park is located toward the back of the Cooter's Pond Park on what is referred to as the upper level. The parking area is located across the roadway, which can pose a pedestrian and vehicle conflict. Dog park rules

are posted at the entry to the dog park. Once inside the gates, researchers noticed a hose bib with no cover and a hole on the right side that poses a trip hazard. When discussing the park with a visitor, researchers learned that moveable furniture was provided at the park but most of it had been stolen. This is likely due to the remoteness of the dog park. The fencing is new but lacks a bottom rail and is rolling up in some places. A bottom rail should be required on all future park fencing.

---

## Recommendations:

- Develop a new master plan for this park to unleash the full potential of this facility. The master plan should expand trails and pathways, create improved fishing access points, adding bike trails, expanding floating dock systems or adding a marina, adding camping, adding archery, disc golf and addressing ADA access issues.
- Renovate both restroom buildings and provide screen doors to deter insects. Improve maintenance and cleaning schedules for the restroom buildings.
- Renovate all pavilions and clean on regular basis to keep wasps and other insects out of the pavilions. Consider replacing structures with new pavilions made of materials that can withstand frequent flooding and are easy to clean after flood events.
- Signage – The park needs directional signage and pavilion numbers to improve user experience in the park.
- Renovate the lower picnic area and remove trees to open views to the river and around the pavilions. Clean and replace damaged boards on picnic tables. Install new trash receptacles that match system wide standards.
- Replace the overlook deck and add interpretive signage about the view.
- Provide water fountain at the dog park. Improve pedestrian access.
- Restripe parking areas.
- Add a fish cleaning station
- Maintain rectangular fields for practice use but, relocate competitive play to the Otter Park facility



## Natural Steps

**Location:** 11201 Highway 300, 72135

**Size:** 48.3 Acres

**Classification:** Community Park

### Review:

This park is located in a lightly populated rural setting northwest of Little Rock in Roland, Arkansas. Approximately half of the park is undeveloped but does accommodate three soccer fields and two fields that used for Lacrosse according to park staff. The fields do not have lights, bleachers or scoreboards. The only bathroom facility is a portable toilet that would not accommodate a wheelchair. There are portable containers that house soccer league equipment. The parking lot is gravel and does not have lights.

According to Parks and Recreation staff, Natural Steps is located in an environmentally sensitive area that gives high priority to water quality and the night sky. Further development of this park may need to address environmental concerns in innovative ways.

### Recommendations:

- Provide permanent bathroom facilities.
- Complete the parking lot with permeable concrete or permeable pavement that will allow for increased access to the fields for those with mobility issues.
- Provide ADA accessible walkways to viewing areas for the various fields.
- Develop additional soccer fields and concessions
- Develop trails and fishing piers along Little Maumelle River.

## Review:

This park is located to the East of Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School in the Capitol Hill district. Located to the South of Interstate 630 surrounded by residential to the south. This park is utilized by the existing school and also houses the parking for the school.

First off, researchers had a tough time finding this park because of the address. GPS wanted to take them to North Little Rock or the UAMS parking lot. Also, the signage here needs to be updated to meet the needs of the parks standard and to help find the park.

There is plenty of different playground equipment throughout this park some old and some new. Playground seems to be fairly new and in good shape, however the play surface is primarily pea gravel which provides an unstable walking surface and does not appear to meet ASTM standards. A handicap accessible ramp is provided to the playground.

The older playground equipment is in need of being removed. Some of this older equipment seems to have been put in when the park first opened, and the metal has become exposed over time and is rusting. The play surface is primarily pea gravel which provides an unstable walking surface and does not appear to meet ASTM standards.

A handicap accessible ramp does not seem to be provided to parts of the park. Some seating is available in nearby shaded areas. However, the approach to these seating areas and picnic tables may be difficult to navigate for some users.

Parking lot is in need of a handicap dedicated space with a ramp and path to the playground.

Basketball courts seem to be in good condition. They do however have some drainage issues that need to be addressed.

Overall, this park is in good condition however some of its equipment is out of date and needs to be removed. Play surfaces around the newer playground equipment needs to be updated to provide an approved surface. Some minor drainage issues throughout the park should be drained better into some sort of rain garden.



## Ninth Street

**Location:** 1401 West 9th Street, 72214

**Size:** 3.0 Acres

**Classification:** Mini Park

## Recommendations:

- New signage – See general recommendations
- ADA – See general recommendations
- Update address so it's easier to find.
- Remove any playground equipment that doesn't meet current standards.
- Remove pea gravel along playgrounds and update it to an accessible approved surface.
- Remove old picnic tables and porch swing
- Provide proper lighting, replace light fixtures and cover up electrical boxes that are exposed.



## Oak Forest

**Location:** 2501 S. Monroe Street, 72204

**Size:** 1.0 Acres

**Classification:** Mini Park

## Review:

Oak Forest is a small neighborhood park adjacent to channelized Coleman creek. It has an outdated play area and small basketball court.

## Recommendations:

- Update playground.
- Evaluate access and entrance to the park.

## Review:

Ottenheimer Park is located in a residential area adjacent to an active railroad line. The park includes the following amenities:

- Playground
- Basketball Court
- Tennis Court
- Open Space/Field:
- Community Center
- Restrooms
- Fishing Pond
- Picnic Tables
- Paved Trail
- Parking

The major feature of the park is the Ottenheimer Therapeutic Recreation Center whose mission it is to develop skills and improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. The exterior of the community center appears to be in very good condition. The parking lot is well design and striped. A van accessible ADA parking space is provided near the entrance.

The playground is located in the grass field next to the community center and can be access from the center by a paved trail and sidewalk. The playground surface is pea gravel that is retained by molded plastic barriers. The playground equipment appears to be older and includes metal slides and wooden platforms and ladders. A merry-go-round is located outside of the playground area. This amenity appears to be older. The grass around the merry-go-round is worn and water from recent storms was standing at this location during the site visit.

The paved trail continues from the playground and crosses the fishing pond via a span bridge. The trail is in fair condition but, will need to be resurfaced in coming years. The bridge is in very good condition and does not require attention at this time.

The trail proceeds by the basketball court. The court is striped and has two functional goals. The court is not connected directly to the paved trail.

The tennis court is located near the basketball court. The court surface is striped but, grass is encroaching through many cracks. Vines and other vegetation are growing through the fencing in places. Fencing is in fair condition, but some rust is present on many posts.

Several picnic tables are located along the trail throughout the park. None of the picnic tables would accommodate an individual in a wheelchair. Additionally, the picnic tables are not connected to the paved trail which could make it difficult for individuals with mobility issues to access the tables.



## Ottenheimer

**Location:** 7201 Dahlia Drive, 72209

**Size:** 11.0 Acres

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park & Community Center

## Recommendations:

- Post a sign for the van accessible handicap parking space.
- Replace the pea gravel playground surface with a poured in place rubberized safety surface that provides a more consistent surface than the existing pea gravel with less maintenance.
- Provide an effective accessible approach to the playground area, basketball court, tennis court and some, if not all, picnic tables.
- Resurface tennis court and repair fencing as needed.
- Provide a consistent fence around the perimeter of the park.



## Otter Creek

**Location** 11500 Stagecoach Road, 72210

**Size:** 147.0 Acres

**Classification:** Community Park

### Review:

Otter Creek is a large community park that has several undeveloped acres. This expansive park located in southwest Little Rock includes the following amenities:

- Playground
- Basketball Courts
- Soccer Fields
- Open Space/Field
- Restrooms
- Picnic Shelter
- Fishing Pond
- Picnic Tables
- Parking

The basketball courts are located near the entrance to the right of the park road. A paved path leads from the parking area to the courts. The courts and goals appear to be in good condition.

The parking lot is in need of restriping. A paved trail leads from the parking lot to the picnic shelter that contains two picnic tables. These tables appear to accommodate individuals using wheelchairs. The picnic shelter is in good condition and the lights are functional. The paved trail continues to a third picnic table that is also ADA accessible. The playground is located just beyond the picnic tables. This portion of the park contains mature trees. Branches from the trees obstruct the trail and must be pruned to maintain a clear walkway. The playground contains equipment for children ages 5 to 12 years old. The equipment is in good condition but needs minor repairs such as paint. The equipment is set on a rubberized surface that is also in good condition. Benches are located in shaded areas nearby for parents or guardians who are supervising children at the playground. In this portion of the park but apart from the playground, a stone wall is in need of minor repairs.

From the playground the paved trail connects to a wooden walkway that crosses the tree line into the adjacent soccer fields. The walkway is surrounded by vegetation that is encroaching onto the walkway and handrails. The walkway ends in a grass field. Just beyond this small field and through a wood post

fence are four soccer fields. The fields have lights that are mounted on wooden poles. The grass is tall in this section of park except for the fields themselves which are maintained by a private soccer league. Bleachers are located at each field. The bleachers appear to meet current requirements for fall protection. They are set on grass. Accessible approaches are not provided to any of the bleachers.

West of the soccer field is a bathroom and maintenance building. The restrooms were locked during the site visit, but parks and recreation staff was able to open them. The restrooms appear to meet ADA requirement and are in fair condition but, need and ac-

cessible route to accommodate those with mobility issues. However, trash cans were found to be full and the bathrooms needed to be cleaned. The area outside the restrooms is a gravel parking area. This gravel parking is an extension of the pave parking area and appears to serve the soccer fields. There are no designated areas for parking in this area.

A fishing pond is located on the opposite side of the parking lot from the playground and soccer fields. There is no signage related to the pond or a trail leading to it. The fishing pond could be further developed to broaden the audience this park serves.

---

## Recommendations:

- Extend the paved road and parking area to the soccer fields and restroom building.
- Provide accessible approaches to soccer fields and bleachers and restrooms.
- Replace wood light poles with concrete poles over time as needed.
- Provide a map near the main parking area showing the locations of various amenities.
- Increase maintenance rotations to address issues like the high grass around soccer fields, downed trees and vegetation along the wooden walkway.
- Improve pond to enhance aquatic habitat and fishing experiences.
- See recommended master plan for improved utilization of this significant park property.



## Pankey

**Location:** 4901 Russ Street, 72223

**Size:** 5.0 Acres

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

### Review:

This park is located in a residential area south of Cantrell Road. Amenities include a playground, basketball court, and picnic tables. Approximately half of the park acreage is developed.

The playground is located near the corner of Russ and Piggee Streets on the uphill portion of the park. The playground equipment appears to be a combination of new and old pieces. The equipment is in need of minor repairs and paint. The playground surface is primarily pea gravel which is retained by wooden cross ties. Included in the pea gravel are larger rocks.

The picnic tables are located around the playground. Three picnic tables are joined end to end all together on a concrete pad. These tables appear to accommodate wheelchair users. The other three picnic tables are concrete without extended table tops accommodating wheelchairs. Accessible approaches to the picnic tables are not provided.

The basketball court is downhill from the playground area. During the site visit this area was flooded due to a historic rain event. The court includes two goals and a concrete pad. Benches are provided in the corners of the court. Lights are not provided for the court.

### Recommendations:

- Replace the playground surface with a poured in place rubberized surface or equivalent that provides a consistent surface with less maintenance than the existing pea gravel.
- Repair and replace the playground equipment as needed.
- Provide accessible approaches to all park amenities.

## Review:

This park is the East of the Broadway neighborhood, along the intersection of East 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and Commerce Street. Park includes a playground, basketball court, picnic tables and grills.

The metal playground equipment is out of date and should be replaced. The play surface is pea gravel which provides an unstable walking surface and does not meet ADA standards.

Dedicated accessible parking is not provided at the park.

A picnic pavilion at this park would provide the neighborhood with a place to gather for events like picnics or block parties.

## Recommendations:

- New signage – See general recommendations
- ADA – See general recommendations
- Update address so it's easier to find.
- Update playground equipment to current standards
- Provide proper lighting.
- Repair water fountain.
- Power wash and clean moss and mold off the old brick and stone masonry.



## Pettaway

**Location:** 515 East 21st Street, 72206

**Size:** 1.0 Acres

**Classification:** Mini Park



## Pinedale Cove

**Location:** 79 Pinedale Circle, 72103

**Size:** 5.0 Acres

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

### Review:

Access to Pinedale Cove is provided by a concrete walkway that extends from Pinedale Circle between two single family residences to the 5-acre park. The park is heavily wooded and damage to trees from recent storms was present during the site visit. Park amenities include a playground and picnic tables.

The playground equipment includes a wood and metal merry-go-round and a swing set. The merry-go-round is placed on bare ground in an area bordered by wooden cross ties. No safety surface is provided.

The swings are located in a separate area. Some pea gravel is proved as a surface in the swing area. However, the pea gravel is being overtaken by weeds and debris from nearby trees. The pea gravel is contained by a molded plastic barrier. The barrier appears to be in good conditions requiring minimal maintenance for bolts that are protruding slightly.

Three of the four picnic tables are coated metal. The fourth is a concrete picnic table. All appear to be in good condition. A grill is provided in the park as well. The grill is rusted and may need to be replaced.

Fencing around the park is a combination of wire farm fencing and various fence types from adjacent residences.

### Recommendations:

- Consolidate playground equipment into a single area in an effort to reduce maintenance.
- Replace dated playground equipment with a contemporary equivalent.
- Resurface playground areas with poured in place rubberized surfaces.
- Extend the concrete walk that terminates at the park entrance to the playground and picnic tables.
- Provide a consistent park fence along the adjoining farm property. Consider working with neighboring residences to replace their fencing with a consistent fence as well.

## Review:

This park is located in the Prospect Terrace neighborhood along L Street. Amenities include a small open grass field, picnic shelter and playground.

The playground lacks ADA access. Also, the surface is pea gravel which provides an unstable walking surface and does not meet ADA standards. Some of the play equipment is out dated and should be replaced with modern equivalents.

The park has a concrete path throughout the western part of the park. A similar path could be extended to the eastern portion of the park. There is no accessible route to the north. Some of the steps on this retaining wall have washed out over time and makes for a slippery surface down to the park's main level.

The picnic pavilion has a new concrete surface that makes it accessible for all users. Handicap accessible picnic tables would increase access for individuals in assistance chairs.

Overall this park seems to be in good shape. Some minor details would really allow this park to thrive. Seem like the neighborhood is pretty proud of this park and seems like they also do some landscaping throughout the park as well.

## Recommendations:

- ADA – See general recommendations
- Update playground equipment to current standards
- Provide proper lighting.
- Fix water fountain.
- Replace stairs and provide an accessible path on the old brick and stone masonry retaining wall to the north.



## Prospect Terrace

**Location:** 5420 "L" Street, 72205

**Size:** 4.0 Acres

**Classification:** Mini Park



## Rebsamen Golf Course

**Location:** 3900 Rebsamen Park Road,  
72207

**Size:** 380.0 Acres

**Classification:** Golf Course

### Review:

This golf course is located in the north side of Little Rock in between the Arkansas River and Rebsamen, east of Murray Park.

Amenities at this golf course is composed of an eighteen-hole championship course, nine-hole executive course, driving range, maintenance facility and a pro shop.

Rebsamen Golf Course Facility was built in 1968 and houses 9,880 square feet.

### Recommendations:

- See general recommendations for golf facilities

## Review:

This park is located in what was University Park. The Rebsamen Tennis Center is run by the City of Little Rock Parks and Recreation Department and is one of the south's premier public tennis centers. There are 17 lighted courts and three lighted backboards. Since the doors opened in 1980, the Rebsamen Tennis Center has received numerous awards including the USTA's National Public Facility of the Year Award. Every year Rebsamen offers many Adult and Junior Arkansas tennis tournaments, both sanctioned and non-sanctioned. All of Little Rock School Districts Junior High and High Schools practice and play their matches at Rebsamen Tennis Center with no cost to the schools and juniors 16 and under play for free.

## Recommendations:

- ADA – See general recommendations
- Connect the park to a city-wide trail system for more users to utilize.



## Rebsamen Tennis Center

**Location:** 1501 Leisure Place, 72201

**Size:** 27.0 Acres

**Classification:** Sports Complex



## Rimmel

**Location:** 5301 Lindsey Road, 72206

**Size:** 27.0 Acres

**Classification:** Community Park

### Review:

This park is located along interstate 440 and Lindsey Road near the East Roosevelt neighborhood and south of the airport.

Amenities at this park include a playground, picnic pavilion and a boat ramp. Has room to facilitate a two football or soccer fields but I don't see any nets or pylons.

The picnic pavilion has seen better days. The wood structure is starting to rot and get infested with nests. The lighting located in the structure doesn't seem to be working and all the electrical boxes seem to be exposed.

Playground seems to be in alright condition and has an accessible ramp and path with an approved surface underneath it.

The boat ramp itself is in good condition. However, it does not provide access for all users. There is no loading dock and path down to the water.

### Recommendations:

- Add signage – See general recommendations
- ADA – See general recommendations
- Connect the park to a city-wide trail system for more users to utilize.
- Provide dock at the boat ramp for easier loading and unloading of boats in river.

## Review:

This park is located in west Little Rock and has rolling terrain. The site visit took place during a period of heavy rain which was helpful in highlighting stormwater management issues on the property. Erosion is degrading several amenities across the park. This issue represents a significant cost to the City.

The amenities in the park include:

- Playground
- Basketball Pad
- Tennis Courts
- Open Space/Field
- Lighted Softball/Baseball
- Restrooms
- Pavilion
- Picnic Tables
- Earthen Trails
- Paved Trail
- Disc Golf
- Parking

A parking lot and playground are located to the left as you enter on Reservoir Park Road. The playground equipment is separated into two areas. One area provides equipment appropriate for ages 2-5 and the second area includes equipment for ages 5-12. The play surfaces at both areas are pea gravel which is retained by wooden cross ties. The pea gravel is migrating beyond the play areas and the wooden cross ties are showing signs of deterioration. A large amount of grass is establishing itself in the 5-12-year-old area. Both play areas are accessible from a paved trail that leads from the parking lot.

An earthen trail leads uphill from the 2-5-year-old area crossing a stream via a wooden bridge. The bridge is much higher than the ground on one side of the stream. Several stones are placed below the bridge to act as steps. These stones are loose and are not connected to the bridge in any way. Three picnic tables are located beyond the bridge.

A second wooden bridge is located downhill from the playground area on the paved path that begins at the parking lot. This bridge is in good condition and leads to the restroom building. The paved trail and bridge provide an accessible approach to the restrooms. The restroom building has a men's and women's restroom. The restrooms are in need of general maintenance. Leaves have accumulated in areas beneath skylights. Mold and mildew are present. Light covers need to be cleaned. The building appears to be in fair condition with only minor reconditioning required including paint and a repair to the roof vent.

At this location the paved trail forks and forms a loop around the lighted softball/baseball field. The trails are in need of maintenance in this area. It appears that unmitigated stormwater has eroded the asphalt at multiple locations. The damage to the paved trail is a symptom of a larger problem with stormwater throughout the park. Other sections along the paved trail are



## Reservoir

**Location:** 8321 Cantrell Road, 72227

**Size:** 58.0 Acres

**Classification:** Community Park

buckling and cracking. A paved trail also extends from the softball/baseball field, uphill to a parking lot which is located next to the tennis courts. This trail is in poor condition as well and requires maintenance. An additional paved trail leads from the softball/baseball field to the basketball courts that are located on the opposite end of the parking lot from the tennis courts. This trail is also in need of repairs.

The parking lot on top of the hill is in good condition. It has lights that are mounted on wood poles. The lights and pole appear to be in good condition. The parking lot is not striped.

The tennis courts are located east of the parking lot on top of the hill. Fencing is installed on either end of the courts but not the sides. Several cross bars are disconnected and need to be repaired or replaced. The court is striped and is in good conditions. The nets are also in good shape. Lighting for the courts is mounted on metal poles. Stormwater erosion is undermining the northwest corner of the courts.

The basketball court, located on the west side of the upper parking lot, consists of an unstriped concrete pad and two goals. Wood benches are provided nearby. One net needs to be replaced but, the court is in fair condition overall.

The softball/baseball field is located downhill from the basketball court, parking lot and tennis courts. The

field can be accessed by the paved trail from three separate parking lots. There is one large set of bleachers behind the paved trail along the first base line. The bleachers are wooden on a metal frame. Several wood planks are splintered and need to be replaced. There is railing along the sides and back that offer fall protection above the fifth row. The metal support structure is rusting and should be replaced. This is the only seating provided at the softball/baseball field. Field lights are mounted on wood poles. Fencing appears to be in good condition. Foul poles are provided but need to be repainted. Standing water was present in the infield and around the perimeter of the field during the site visit. Grass was especially tall in this area possibly because it has been too wet to mow for an extended period of time.

The paved trail continues north from the softball/baseball field to another parking lot. From here reservoir park road continues up the hill to the pavilion. The pavilion is a steel structure with a concrete floor and a shingled roof. The pavilion has a wood burning fireplace and overhead lighting. An accessible approach to the pavilion is provided by a concrete sidewalk that leads from the parking lot. ADA accessible picnic tables are not present. The roof is showing signs of deterioration at the eaves.

---

## Recommendations:

- Replace play surface at both playground areas with poured in play rubberized surface.
- Repair/replace playground equipment as needed.
- Construct a safe approach to the bridge located uphill from the playground
- Address stormwater across the park but especially in the areas where erosion is damaging the trails tennis courts and the softball/baseball field.
- Stripe parking spaces for all parking lots and provide ADA parking spaces in locations convenient to paved trails.
- Provide accessible approaches to all park amenities.

## Review:

This park located along Richland drive tucked back in a residential area in eastern Little Rock. It is a mini park that serves the small neighborhood around it. This park has one playground and a picnic table and seems to be a good size for the neighborhood.

Playground appears fairly new and in good shape, however the play surface is pea gravel which provides an unstable walking surface and does not appear to meet ADA standards. Also, there are signs of vandalism throughout the playground.

There is a nice brick sign for this park but there it needs to be updated to new city park signage standards.

This park has plenty of room to the south for additional amenities. The park should be evaluated for what recreation uses would be best for this area.

Overall, this park seems to be in fairly good condition with a few minor access issues. Vandalism should be addressed. This park would have more traffic if it were connected to a city-wide bike and trail system.

## Recommendations:

- New signage – See general recommendations. Also, power wash and clean moss and mold off the old brick and stone masonry.
- ADA – See general recommendations
- Update playground surface.
- Create a concrete pad for picnic tables or provide a small pavilion for families or the neighborhood gatherings.
- Try to seed or establish turf underneath trees along the road where the benches are located.
- Provide a city-wide standard bench and waste receptacle standard for all parks.



## Richland

**Location:** 6307 Heather Lane, 72206

**Size:** 5.0 Acres

**Classification:** Mini Park



## River Mountain

**Location:** 34 River Mountain Road, 72212

**Size:** 152.4 Acres

**Classification:** Regional Park

### Review:

This park includes the following amenities:

- Portable toilets
- Boat launch
- Fishing access
- Picnic Tables
- Paved Trails
- Earthen Trails
- Parking
- Bicycle repair station
- Bike racks

River Mountain Park is located on the south bank of the Little Maumelle River and connects to Two Rivers Park via the Two Rivers Park Bridge trail and Murray Park via the Arkansas River Trail. The east portion of the park is the most developed portion of the park and includes the boat launch, picnic tables, paved trails and parking. The west portion of the park includes a heavily forested and steeply sloped land near the Walton Heights neighborhood. The only amenity in this portion of the park is an earthen hiking trail. This trail, named the River Mountain Trail, connects to an unpaved trail in Conner Park at Southridge Drive.

The parking area at the boat launch is not striped. Travel ways are not delineated. The launch area is lighted with LED street lights on metal poles. The same street lights are used on the Two Rivers Park Bridge and at Two Rivers Park. Portable toilets are provided near the boat launch. The portable toilets are not ADA accessible.

A paved trail leads to the Arkansas River Trail which extends to Two River Park. The trail is in good condition. There is a very sharp turn near in the paved trail near a steep embankment. This sharp turn can be straightened without impacting adjacent parking. The remainder of the trail is in excellent condition and is complemented with landscaping, benches, a kiosk with park information, public art and additional parking.

### Recommendations:

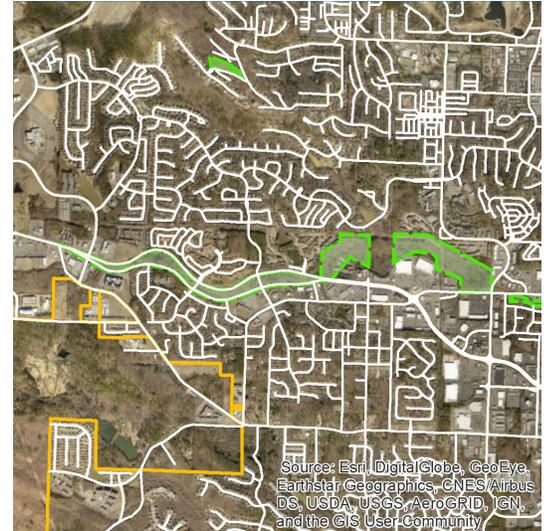
- Eliminate sharp turn in paved trail and add railings as needed to prevent falls.
- Construct permanent bathroom facilities that meet ADA requirements.
- Extend retaining wall across from the park kiosk where exposed soil is subject to erosion.
- Add trail head with map at the downhill terminus of the River Mountain Trail.
- Develop professional downhill mountain bike trails competitive to other similar trails in the nation with training trails in graduating difficulty states. Coordinate with other developments in the area to ensure appropriate access and facilities are realized to accommodate visitors and their experiences.

## Review:

Rock Creek Park is a linear property comprised of a trail that follows Rock Creek and includes a stretch in the median of Chenal Parkway. The trail is a combination of paved and earthen surfaces and is open for foot traffic, mountain bikes and fishing. Crosswalks provide access to the trail and park at Pride Valley Drive and Loyola Drive. The trail transitions from pavement to dirt without advanced warning. Sections of asphalt are cracked, and vegetation is growing in the center and over the edges of the trail. The trail is not lighted and is apparently only intended as a daytime facility.

## Recommendations:

- Choose a consistent trail surface based on the anticipated needs of the users in the area of the park. With the presence of a large retirement and assisted living community, it may be appropriate to provide a paved trail for either the full length or a portion of the trail with a clearly defined beginning and end.
- Clear vegetation from the center and edge of the trail in order to maintain a function width for two-way traffic.



## Rock Creek

**Location:** 12200 West Markham Street,  
72211

**Size:** 96.4 Acres

**Classification:** Community Park



## Section 13

**Location:** 9201 Garrison Road, 72223

**Size:** 620.3 Acres

**Classification:** Community Park

### Review:

This park is located in a rural area west of the city limits and is undeveloped with the exception of a gravel parking lot that is in poor condition and earthen trails that are located in the expansive woods around the open field that is located near the entrance. Playground equipment has been removed and no athletic fields are located in the park. A wood rail fence that is in need of repairs is located along the edge of a large field. A damaged wooden bench is located at the edge of the field.

### Recommendations:

- Create a master plan for this property in order to determine how to best utilize this large property.
- Close and secure the property until the park is developed and ready to be used by the general public.

## Review:

This park is located right across the street from Washington Magnet Elementary School along Main Street and 29<sup>th</sup> Street S.

Action needs to be taken at South Little Rock Park. Nothing at this park is useable besides the parking lot. This park looks to be neglected with the grass overgrown, an old playground that was installed well over 25 years ago, an abandoned building, and a tennis court that is far beyond repair.

Supposedly, there is a pool within the abandoned building that is not maintained in which the City needs to remove or renovate to make it useable for the public. This building could be gutted to provide a small meeting space for the public to use or clubs rent or to gather.

Tennis courts need to be entirely removed or replaced. They need a whole new face lift with new surfaces, nets and fencing. It might be easier just to remove.

The parking lot is the only amenity at this park that is used daily by providing overflow parking for the school. There is some handicap parking, but it needs to be properly identified with signage.

Overall, this park needs some serious help. A greater masterplan should be researched and looked at for this park. It has potential to provide a great amenity for the public and the adjacent school, however, needs to be further evaluated to see what's salvageable.

## Recommendations:

This park needs to be provided with a new masterplan/scope for this park to see what can be salvaged and what can be provided for this parks full potential. Basic recommendations include:

- Resurface the Tennis courts and provide new fencing and nets.
- Remove/renovate the building to fit the needs of the community and the neighborhood.
- Being as there is school playground equipment only a block away, I would suggest removing the outdated equipment entirely and just have an open field.
- New signage – See general recommendations.
- ADA – See general recommendations

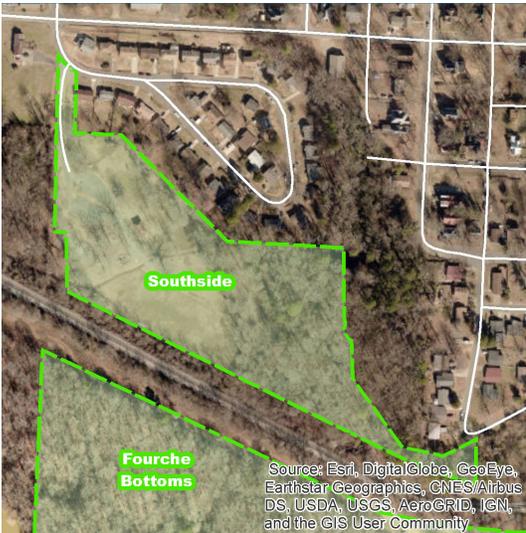


## South Little Rock

**Location:** 2815 Main Street, Little Rock, 72206

**Size:** 2.0 Acres

**Classification:** Mini Park



## Southside

**Location:** 1 Whitmore Circle, 72206

**Size:** 13.0 Acres

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

### Review:

This park is located the railroad tracks of the South End neighborhood, along Whitmore Circle. It's a good size park however parts of it are not utilized due to what seems to be semi flooding issues. This park seems to have seasonal flooding issues and soaked most of the time which leaves this part in neglect.

This park includes a playground, football field, basketball pad, and restrooms.

Some equipment on the playground seems to be newer than others. The newer part has a mulch surface which is an accessible surface, but it does not have a ramp to allow access. The rest of the equipment is out of date and needs to be removed.

Football field seems to be in fairly good condition. Minor drainage issues and turf establishment would make it hard to play on this field. There seems to be a path to the bleachers for ADA access. However, the rotting wood bleachers need to be removed before someone gets seriously injured.

Restrooms seem to be in pretty good condition. However, they seem to be used for storage and not restrooms. Researchers found football helmets on the bathroom floor that were stored in there. Some minor renovation needs to be taken action to make it up to ADA standards.

### Recommendations:

- New signage – See general recommendations
- ADA – See general recommendations. (Picnic tables and paths to amenities)
- Add topsoil and re-engineer drainage so water doesn't stand.
- Try to establish new turf underneath trees of the park. Seed or sod to repair damaged turf areas. Mulch tree to minimize tree roots as a trip hazard.
- Remove any playground equipment that doesn't meet current standards.
- Remove old picnic tables

## Review:

This park is part of a larger complex that includes the Southwest Community Center; a Little Rock Police Department Southwest Division precinct; and the Dee Brown Library.

Amenities at the Southwest Community Center include:

- Playground
- Soccer Field
- Community Center
- Pool
- Spray Pad
- Restrooms
- Paved Trails
- Parking

The soccer field is located to the right of the park entrance. The field is not lighted and does not have bleachers. The turf appears to be in good condition despite the heavy rains. The soccer field shares a parking area with the community center and pool.

The playground is located south of the community center building in an area with mature trees that provide a good amount of shade. An accessible approach to the playground equipment is provided from the parking lot by a concrete sidewalk. The playground equipment is suitable for ages 5-12 and is in good condition. A separate swing set is nearby and is also in good condition with the exception of one toddler swing which is broken. The playground surface appears to be engineered wood fiber which is retained by a molded plastic barrier. The play surface is in good condition and does not show signs of excessive wear.

The paved trail runs from the playground, through the woods on the south end of the park and around to the west side of the community center building. The asphalt trail is in good condition.

The parking lots are in fair condition. Park stall striping is fading and will need to be repainted in the near future. Parking lot lighting is mounted on metal poles. These poles are rusting and will need to be reconditioned or replaced. Trash cans located near the parking lots are standard 55-gallon drums. Some of these trash cans are dented and should be replaced.

The community center and pool will be assessed at another time. Pool equipment and decking appears to be in good condition from outside the gate.

## Recommendations:

- Extend sidewalk from Baseline Road along the park entrance to the sidewalk that end in front of the swimming pool.
- Replace damaged trash cans.
- Recondition or replace light poles throughout the complex.



## Southwest

**Location:** 6401 Baseline Rd, 72209

**Size:** 38.0 Acres

**Classification:** Community Park



## Stephens Community Center

**Location:** 3720 West 18th Street, 72204

**Size:** 1.0 Acres

**Classification:** Mini Park and Community Center

### Review:

This Community Center is located on the corner of South Oak St and 18<sup>th</sup> Street and is attached to the Stephens Elementary School. This community center was built in 1999 and houses 15,600 square feet which includes one gymnasium, two multi-purpose rooms, and a kitchen.

The playground equipment is in fairly good condition however some pieces are in need of reconditioning. Areas of metal have become exposed over time and are rusting. The play surface is primarily mulch which provides an unstable walking surface and does not appear to meet ADA standards. Turf has slowly been taking over the playgrounds surface area. A handicap accessible ramp is provided to the playground. A limited portion of the playground surface is poured rubber and connects the accessible ramp to the play structure. A safety audit is needed of the playground surface as well as the fall zones. Seating is not available nearby.

The play area has on basketball court that seems fairly new and still in good condition.

### Recommendations:

- Provide ADA compliant surfacing.
- Provide public access with signage.
- Provide seating near playground for visitors.

## Review:

This Mansion was built in 1839 and is a historical marker for Little Rock. The mansion is in need of some general maintenance.

This park and mansion are utilized for events such as weddings and parties. Some of the grounds around the mansion need to be updated and maintained to allow this park to reach its full potential.

Proper cleaning, painting, and maintaining landscaping would elevate the status of this facility within the community. Weeds and turf are overgrowing in some areas of the brick pavement.

The north side and other areas of the park need to be re-engineered to provide proper drainage, so water doesn't pool. This area is in need of some topsoil to cover roots that are exposed and establish grass by seeding or laying sod. This top soil should be engineered as to effectively drain the area as well.

Overall, this is a great park with a great historical presence. However, this park needs to be maintained, renovated and preserved to protect its aesthetics and history for years to come.

## Recommendations:

This park seems to be neglected some basic maintenance and cleaning could help this park thrive.

- New signage – See general recommendations
- ADA – See general recommendations. (Picnic tables and paths to amenities)
- Clean landscaping beds, refresh plants that are dead and remove unwanted vines.
- Look into renovation/preservation of Mansion by repainting mansion to protect it from weathering and the environment.
- Patio block should be looked at being re leveled and relayed to provide an even walking surface.
- Add topsoil and re-engineer drainage so water doesn't stand.
- Try to establish new turf underneath trees on the north side of the park by laying sod.



## Terry Mansion

**Location:** 411 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, 72114

**Size:** 2.0 Acres

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park



## Thom

**Location:** 9900 Eva Lane, 72209

**Size:** 7.2 Acres

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

### Review:

This park is located in a residential area of southwest Little Rock. The park entrance and parking lot is located on Eva Lane but, a secondary entrance is located at the end of Vega Drive at the southwest corner of the park. Amenities at Thom Park include:

- Playground
- Open Space/Field:
- Picnic Tables
- Paved Trails
- Parking

The parking lot is in good condition. Parking stalls need to be repainted. The ADA parking space that is provided needs to be posted with an ADA regulatory sign. The parking lot area is bordered by a decorative fence. It appears one fence panel is missing and needs to be replaced.

An asphalt trail leads from the parking lot to the playground area and circles within the park. The trail is in good condition and provides accessible approaches to various park amenities.

The playground equipment is in good conditions and appears to accommodate ages 5-12. A limited portion of the play surface is poured in place rubber. The majority remainder of the play area is bare dirt and is not an acceptable safety surface for the playground equipment used at this park. For example, an adequate fall surface is not provided below the climbing features.

A merry-go-round is located in a separate area from the other playground equipment. This feature is placed on bare ground that shows signs of wear. A plastic border is present that could retain playground surfacing materials.

### Recommendations:

- Replace missing fence panel along Eva Lane.
- Replace drinking fountain with ADA accessible fixture.
- Consolidate playground equipment into a single area in order to decrease maintenance demands.
- Install consistent playground surface across the entire playground area.

## Review:

Maintained in cooperation with Pulaski County, this park is located at the confluence of the Arkansas and Little Maumelle Rivers and includes the following amenities:

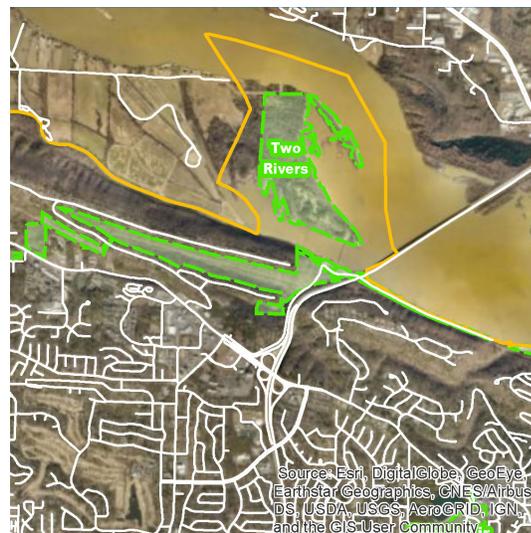
- Open Space/Field:
- Restrooms
- Pavilion
- Fishing Stream
- Picnic Tables
- Paved Trails
- Earthen Trails
- Equestrian Trail
- Community Garden
- Parking

Of the listed amenities, Pulaski County is responsible for maintaining or managing the restrooms, parking, community garden and most of the paved trails. The Little Rocks Parks and Recreation Department maintain the Two Rivers Park trail, pavilion, equestrian trails and picnic area located at the point where the rivers converge.

The Two Rivers Trail serves as a portion of the regionally important Arkansas River Trail. The paved trail connects to River Mountain Park via a bicycle and pedestrian bridge that crosses the Little Maumelle River. The trail continues on to Riverfront Park, North Little Rock, Pinnacle Mountain and other regional destinations. The paved trails are well marked and in good condition. A bike repair station is located near an overall map of the park and restroom building. Solar powered lights are being tested on a portion of the paved trail. The trail passes by wetlands and fields that offer scenic interest and wildlife viewing opportunities.

The pavilion is located along the paved trail. The pavilion is a wooden structure with a metal roof. It is in good condition. While the paved approach does not lead to the pavilion, an accessible ramp is provided at the structure. A standard wooden picnic table is located in the pavilion.

Beyond the pavilion, the trail splits with one branch continuing under the bicycle pedestrian bridge to the area where the picnic tables are located. The tables and benches in this area are off the paved trail. Some are in need of repairs or replacement. Equestrians share this portion of the trail and signs request the trail be kept free of manure. The trail turns back toward the pavilion. At this point the paved trail connects to the bicycle pedestrian bridge. The equestrian trail continues along the Arkansas River bank. Signage for the equestrian trails is not provided.



## Two Rivers

**Location:** 6900 Two Rivers Road, 72223

**Size:** 206.9 Acres

**Classification:** Large Urban Park

## Recommendations:

- Further develop the equestrian trails and provide parking for horse trailers and a trailhead for these users.
- Repair benches and picnic tables as needed.
- Provide accessible approaches to the pavilion.
- Provide accessible approaches to picnic tables that accommodate wheelchair users.
- Consider constructing wildlife viewing and photography blinds around wetlands and fields that are frequented by the resident deer population.



## Union

**Location:** 36th & Walker Streets, 72204

**Size:** 8.9 Acres

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

## Review:

This park contains the following amenities:

- Playground
- Basketball Pad
- Open Space/Field:
- Lighted Softball/Baseball
- Pavilion
- Picnic Tables
- Parking

Union park has two entrances. The first is from Walker Street. This entrance has a large parking lot that serves the softball/baseball field. The second entrance and parking lot is on West 38<sup>th</sup> Street, closer to the pavilion. Both parking lots are in need of reconditioning to include restriping.

The softball/baseball field has a chain-link backstop and outfield fence, wood bleachers, a grass infield. Lights are mounted on wood poles. Wood benches serve as dugouts. The bleachers are built into the hillside and set on a concrete footing. The concrete is being undermined by stormwater erosion. No fall protection is provided at the rear or sides of the bleachers. Fencing around the field is in need of maintenance. Mesh is curling and poles are separating. An exposed pipe is visible near the first base line.

Uphill from the softball/baseball field is the pavilion. The pavilion was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps and is currently closed for renovation. Restrooms are located beneath the pavilion but are locked. A maintenance room is also located beneath the pavilion. This room is unlocked, and it appears that someone may be using this room as a make-shift shelter.

The playground is located near the pavilion. The playground equipment includes a play structure appropriate for ages 5-12, a swing set and an overhead apparatus. The play surface is primarily pea gravel, but a portion of the playground is treated with poured in place rubber. The poured in place surface is damaged along a portion of the edge. The playground can be accessed by a concrete sidewalk from the closest parking lot. Grass is growing invasively through the pea gravel surface.

A basketball court is located downhill from the playground. The court consists of a concrete pad and two goals, with the court being partially fenced. The fence is in fair condition but is in need

of minor repairs to some of the cross posts. Also, the vegetation needs to be removed and the court needs to be restriped. No lighting is provided at the basketball court.

## Recommendations:

- Resurface and restripe the parking lots.
- Repair backstop and side line fencing at the softball/baseball field.
- Repair bleachers as needed.
- Provide accessible approach to bleachers from the parking lot.
- Secure pavilion until renovation is complete.
- Provide a consistent poured in place rubberized surface for the playground area.
- Restripe basketball court and construct a fence around the entire court.

## Review:

This park is located in a residential neighborhood that also includes a number of churches that are located within walking distance to the park. Amenities at Wakefield Park include:

- Playground
- Volleyball
- Tennis Court
- Open Space/Field:
- Lighted Softball/Baseball
- Restrooms
- Picnic Tables
- Paved Trails
- Parking

The parking lot is accessed from Woodson Road. Typical park signage and columns identify the park entrance. Sidewalks and bike sharrows provide access to individuals without automobiles. Bicycle racks are not located at the park. The parking lot is not striped. A designated ADA parking space is not provided.

The paved trail leads from the parking lot and continues past the tennis court. The court appears to be in good condition. However, a tennis net is not provided. The court fencing is in need of repairs. A volleyball court is located next to the tennis court. It appears an old tennis net is being used as a volleyball net. The volleyball court consists of a sand base but, is not well defined.

The playground is located across the paved trail from the tennis and volleyball courts. The play structure appears to accommodate ages 5-12. There are a number of climbing and hanging features. The play surface is pea gravel which is retained by molded plastic border. A plastic ramp has been installed that could ac-



## Wakefield

**Location:** 7401 Woodson Road, 72209

**Size:** 9.4 Acres

**Classification:** Neighborhood Park

commodate wheelchairs or others with mobility issues, however an accessible approach to the playground is not provided from the paved trail. Wooden benches are located just off the trail and picnic tables are also located in the area.

The softball/baseball field has two sets of bleachers and wood benches for each team. The bleachers have fall protection to the rear and sides for rows 6-10. There is a backstop and sideline fencing but no outfield fence. The fence and backstop are in fair condition. Some vegetation needs to be removed from the fence and minor repairs are needed. The field is lighted by fixtures that are mounted on wood poles. Most of these poles appear to be in good condition; however, one pole is leaning. The infield is in poor condition and needs attention.

An accessible approach for individuals with mobility issues is not provided to the softball/baseball field.

The restroom building provides separate men's and women's restrooms in a compact design. The bathrooms appear to be ADA compliant. This concrete block structure is in fair condition overall. The doorways are open and allow rain water to come into the structure. This leaves a musty odor.

The paved trail circles through the park and provides direct access to the bathrooms. The trail is in good condition. An earthen trail leading to the Southwest Community Church property appears to be used quite a bit and may indicate a need to expand the paved trail to the neighboring property.

---

## Recommendations:

- Stripe the parking lot and provide an ADA compliant parking space.
- Replace pea gravel playground surface with a poured in place rubberized alternative.
- Extend paved trail to each park amenity in order to provide an accessible approach for individuals with mobility issues.
- Consider extending paved trail to the adjacent Southwest Community Church property.
- Replace the tennis court net or convert the court to a use that is desired by the surrounding neighborhood.
- Replace volleyball net and reestablish the sand volleyball court.
- Replace softball/baseball field light poles with concrete poles.
- Repair softball/baseball and tennis court fences as needed.
- Provide bike racks at the parking lot.
- Remodel bathrooms for better weatherproofing and access.

## Review:

This park is one of Little Rocks larger parks established in a commercial area. Located next to UAMS and War Memorial Stadium which is home to the University of Arkansas Little Rock Trojans football program. Part of this park is under construction with the Fair Park Boulevard. Amenities at this park include:

- Playground
- Splash pad
- Picnic pavilion
- Fishing pond
- Walking trail

The playground/splash pad is located near the northwest golf course entrance and seems to be relatively new and in good condition. Not your ordinary park, this playground is made up of large rocks that are put together effectively with playground equipment attached to it. The swing portion of the playground is surfaced with wood mulch which represents a maintenance issue.

There seems to be some general drainage issues that need to be addressed as well. Soil is eroding onto paths and pavement. All of the sprinklers are in working condition but, some are missing, possibly due to theft or vandalism.

The pavilion is located towards the center of the park and adjacent to the creek that flows through the middle of the park. This pavilion is made of stone pillars and a wood roof and seems to be in fairly good condition. The electricity didn't seem to be working when the researchers where present and the electrical boxes were not locked up. The surface is on a concrete pad and has some drainage issues on one side where it's pooling. There needs to be a trench that is established on this side so the water is redirected around the pavilion. Restrooms are located on the back end of the pavilion and are in good condition however some minor changes need to be made to make it fully accessible for ADA compliance.

The trails and sidewalks are in good condition. Paved trails and sidewalks through the park provide good connectivity through the park property and connect to adjacent neighborhoods. Some portions of the trails have been filled with sediment from poor erosion control and drainage practices which need to be fixed.

Fishing pond includes a dock, bridge, a dam, benches and a kiosk. Again, there are some erosion issues surrounding the pond that need to be addressed to prevent pond from filling in.

The parking lot surface is in good condition, but there are some sink holes that need to be patched and handicap parking spaces

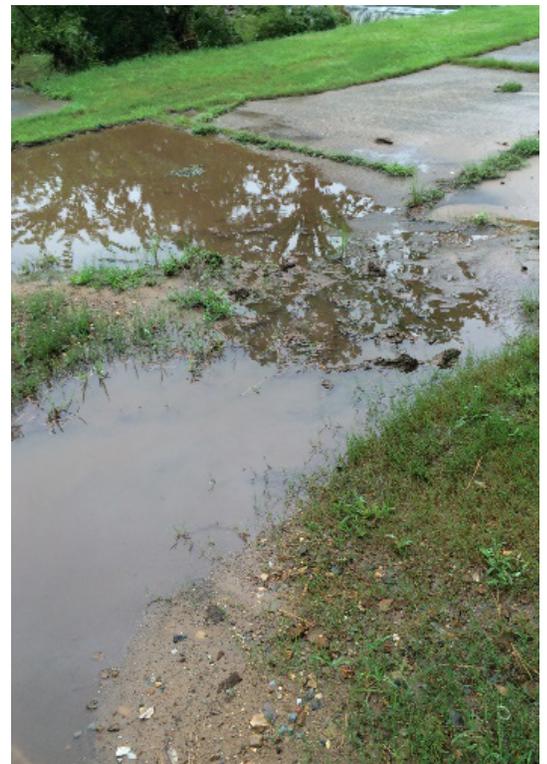


## War Memorial

**Location:** 5511 West Markham Street, 72205

**Size:** 24.0 Acres

**Classification:** Large Urban Park



are marked, but lack signage. It appears that enough parking is available to serve park patrons. Lighting is nonexistent in the parking areas. The parking lot near Fair Park Blvd. has some drainage issues. It appears the drain is filled with sediment and flooded the whole parking lot.

This park has some major turf and erosion issues. Top soil needs to be laid down and reengineered to provide proper drainage around amenities and coverage over roots. Then seeding or sod needs to be established to prevent erosion issues and tripping hazards. Also, mulch should be placed around trees to help roots and some trees need sediment removed around their base to prevent suffocating the roots.



---

## Recommendations:

- See recommended masterplan
- Add signage – See general recommendations
- ADA – See general recommendations and add signs for handicap parking.
- Connect the park to a city-wide trail system for more users to utilize.
- Lock up electrical boxes.
- Replace sprinkler heads that are missing at the splash pad.
- Replace the wood mulch surface in the playground with a more durable consistent safety surface that requires less maintenance and provides good access for individuals with mobility issues.
- Replace trees that have been removed along Fair Park Blvd. and throughout the park.
- Provide proper drainage/ reroute drainage so the amenities and pavement don't get covered in silt. Clean out drains so water can drain properly.
- Reestablish turf by laying sod or reseeding in areas needed so the ground doesn't erode away.
- Try to reestablish the bank of the pond to prevent it from eroding.

## Review:

This golf course is located in the heart of Little Rock next to University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, the Zoo, War Memorial Park and St Vincent Hospital.

Amenities at this golf course are composed of an eighteen-hole course, driving range, maintenance facility and a pro shop.

War Memorial Golf Course Facility was built in 1938 and houses 2,500 square feet.

## Recommendations:

Golf facilities at War Memorial should be relocated and consolidated into other courses in order to make room for athletic facilities and open space shown in the proposed masterplan.



## War Memorial Golf Course

**Location:** 5511 West Markham Street, 72205

**Size:** 93.0 Acres

**Classification:** Golf Course



## West Central Sports Complex

**Location:** 8616 1/2 Colonel Glenn Road, 72204

**Size:** 11.8 Acres

**Classification:** Sports Complex

### Review:

This park is composed of four softball/baseball fields, one of which is converted to a football field in the fall. A t-ball field is also located on the site. Other amenities on the site include restrooms, a concession stand, pavilion and parking. A new community center was recently opened in the park.

The gravel parking lot is accessed from John Barrow Road and while large, likely does not accommodate all the users in this park during large sporting events. Spaces are not indicated by striping or wheel stops. Two light fixtures mounted on wood poles provide lighting for the parking lot.

The restrooms building is a painted block structure. The restroom stalls are not ADA compliant. It appears the restroom building would require significant remodeling to provide ADA accessible stalls. Other buildings in the complex include a concession stand, a picnic pavilion, ticket booth, and maintenance building. Score keeper booths are provided at each field and each field has covered seating. Wide concrete walkways provide accessible approaches to the four softball/baseball fields.

The West Central Sports Complex is one of the larger more heavily used athletic complexes in the system. The field configuration does not maximize use of the property nor does it allow for expansion of additional facilities in the park as desired by the local users. A 5-year master plan titled "West Central Sports Complex Management Plan" was recently prepared for the West Central Sports Complex. It addresses the vision for the complex and lists prioritized improvements for creating a destination location for youth sports in Little Rock.

### Recommendations:

- A master plan should be completed that explores the renovation of the existing baseball fields with accommodations for a future football field.
- Consolidate the concession stand, restrooms and maintenance buildings into a single structure.
- **Develop an outdoor pool with support facilities**

## Review:

This park is a former golf course that has been repurposed as a public park. The park is located across Fourche Creek from Hindman Community Park. The property has the following amenities:

- Open Space/Field
- Fishing Pond
- Fishing Stream
- Picnic Tables
- Paved Trails
- Earthen Trails
- Mountain Bike Trail
- Equestrian Trail
- Community Garden
- Parking

Two parking lots are accessed from Western Hills Avenue. Neither have striped parking spaces or designated ADA parking spaces. The parking lot areas provide a good view of the majority of the park, trails, community garden, and adjacent lake. A fishing pier is located directly downhill from the main parking area. The fishing pier is a concrete dock with no handrails. An accessible approach is not provided to this amenity.

The trails within the park appear to be the remains of the cart path from the previous golf course. The pavement is cracked in many places and narrower than a typical greenway. Earthen trails, horse trails or mountain bike trails were not immediately recognizable. There is no overall map of the park provided for visitors as reference.

The community garden is located at the north end of the park, downhill from the second parking lot. The garden is established in an open field and spatially separated from other improved areas of the park.

Picnic shelters are a mix of styles. A small equipment building and building materials are placed near the parking lot in direct view of visitors.

## Recommendations:

- Develop a master plan for this large urban park that has the potential to serve a wide variety of visitors.
- Provide a paved trail connection to Hindman Community Park.
- Provide an overall park map for visitors near the parking area.
- Improve the fishing pier to include a hand rail and ADA access.



## Western Hills Park

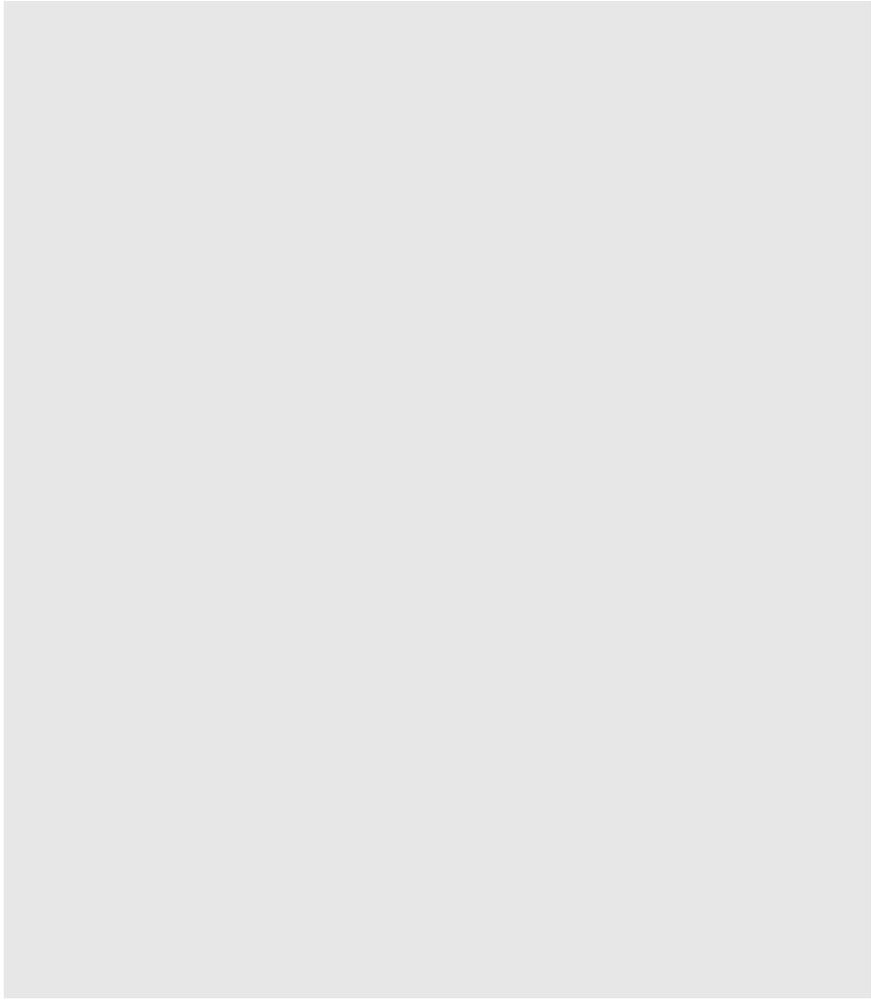
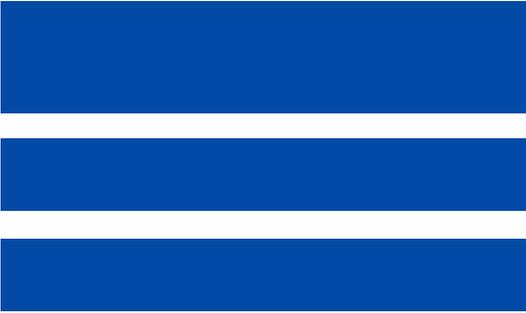
**Location:** 5207 Western Hills Avenue, 72204

**Size:** 135.8 Acres

**Classification:** Large Urban Park



- Consider adding a canoe launch at the lake.



# BUDGET ASSESSMENT



Little Rock Parks and Recreation, Fiscal Year 2018 General Fund operating budget is \$15,143,507 (Includes General Parks, Jim Dailey Fitness and Aquatics Center, Golf and Tennis, and River Market). The largest portion of the revenues comes from the City general fund, totaling \$12,148,327. The department collects \$2,995,180 in charges for services. (Source: City of Little Rock 2018 Annual Operating Budget pp. 74, 97, 117, 130, and 131). Capital expenditures are funded through the City of Little Rock 3/8 cent sales tax (2012-2021). The current 3/8 cent sales tax is anticipated to fund **17.284 million in Capital Parks and Recreation area development/ improvements for a 10-year period.**

To draw a better comparison with national benchmarks and other agency benchmarks, for the purpose of this master plan, the River Market expenditures and revenues have been removed from the budget. The River Market is not a recreation facility and the staff at the River Market operates independently of the LRPR. Adjusted total operating funding is \$13,866,792 and revenue generation is \$2,460,180.

The 2018 NRPA Agency Performance Review, Park and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks provide national data on spending levels as well as funding sources for parks and recreation agencies. On average, parks and recreation agencies receive 59% of their total operation funding from the general fund. In the City of Little Rock, the current level of general fund tax supported funding is 82.25% of the total LRPR operations budget. Balance between supported funding and self-generated revenues are necessary to expand programs and services. Currently LRPR is generating only 17.75% of the overall budget which is well below the national average of 26%. **Figure 7.1** below illustrates the national average of sources of operating expenditures.

Capital LRPR, Zoo, & Tourism  
Area Dev/Improvement

**\$28,284,000**

Subtract Zoo & Tourism  
Dev/Improvements

**— \$11,000,000**

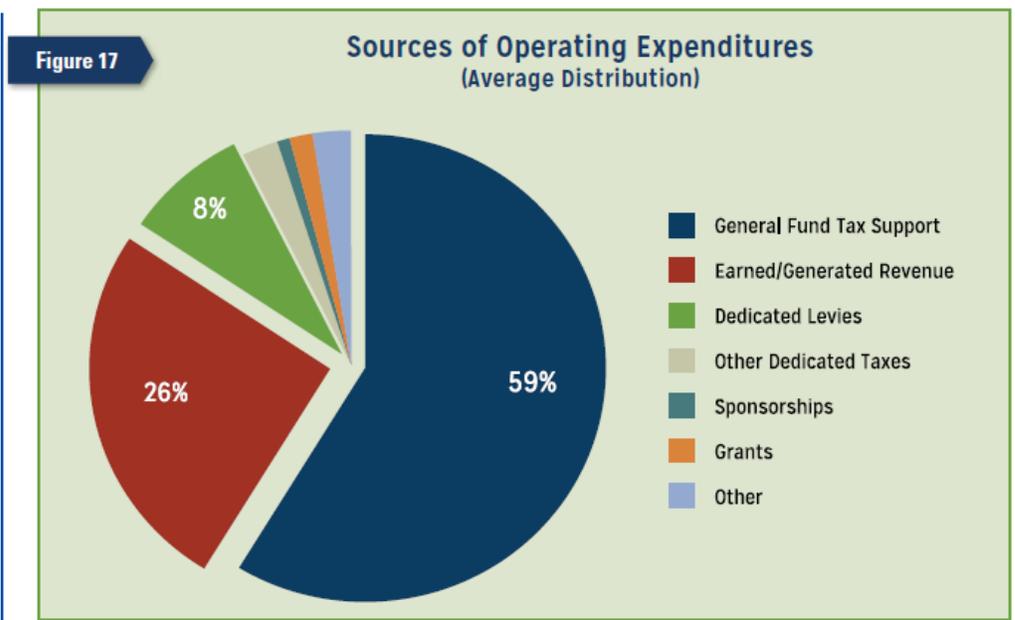
Balance for Capital LRPR  
Area Dev/Improvements

**\$17,284,000**

Source: City of Little Rock 2018 Annual Operating

### Figure 7.1 NRPA Sources of Operating Expenditures for Parks and Recreation Programs

Source: 2018 NRPA Agency Performance Review, p. 22



The average revenue generation of agencies serving a population of 250,000 and greater is \$9.04 per capita. In LRPR, that would total \$4,538,180 on an annual basis. The department is projecting revenues of \$2,460,180 in 2018, or per capita revenue of \$4.90 which is roughly 54% of the national benchmark for self-generated revenues. This indicates the department is highly dependent upon the general fund to a greater degree than other communities and may need to pursue avenues for increased revenue opportunities. A review of methods to generate additional revenues, in addition to the general fund, is strongly recommended.

In the following pages, we will compare several important LRPR budget facts with both national averages as well as benchmark communities. Historical data will also be provided to illustrate how the LRPR Department budget has changed.

### Benchmarking

Benchmarking is a useful tool to examine how other communities are funding their parks and recreation departments. However, because not all departments are responsible for the same programs and maintenance responsibilities, these are not absolute comparisons. Where appropriate, budget numbers for multiple departments were combined in order to most similarly reflect the programming and responsibilities of LRPR.

For example, in the City of Knoxville, the 2018 budget for parks and recreation lists a total of 57 employees. However, there are three work groups; Facility Maintenance, Grounds Maintenance, and Urban Forestry and they are in the Public Service Division budget. These three work groups with a total of 73 employees are tasked with all building, grounds and landscape maintenance for the entire city including all park facilities. Knoxville also contracts the operations of their two public golf courses which impacts the overall budget for parks and recreation as well as staff levels. These variables will impact the direct comparison of one agency to the next.

## Assessment of Per Capita Expenditures

The per capita expense for parks and recreation is a standard benchmark statistic for comparing and analyzing the level of a community's investment in parks and recreation.

Table 7.1, below, compares LRPR per capita spending for parks and recreation to the selected benchmark communities in the south, as well as the median per capita expenditures as reported in *2018 NRPA Park Metrics*. The operating costs, rather than operating plus capital costs, are used as a comparison. Capital expenditures can include park land development and new equipment or equipment replacement. Capital costs often vary widely from year to year based on the funding of construction and acquisition projects, whereas operations costs typically remain relatively constant from year to year. The 2018 LRPR general fund budget does not include funding for capital expenditures.

**Table 7.1** Benchmark County Populations and Per Capita Operating Expenses for Parks and Recreation, Fiscal Year 2018

COMMUNITY	2018 POPULATION	POPULATION DENSITY PER SQUARE MILE	TOTAL BUDGETED PARKS AND RECREATION EXPENDITURES (2018 OPERATING)	PARKS AND RECREATION PER CAPITA EXPENDITURES (2018 OPERATING)
City of Little Rock	199,500	1,665.93	\$13,866,792	\$69.50
Springfield-Greene County Park Board, Missouri	251,478		\$30,233,096	\$120.22
Grand Prairie, Texas Parks and Recreation	193,837		\$25,732,353	\$132.75
Knoxville, Tennessee	187,347		\$15,025,720	\$80.20
Mobile, Alabama	195,111		\$10,795,417	\$55.32
NRPA National Median for All Agencies				\$78.26
NRPA National Median Population Density		1,501 to 2,500		\$79.95
NRPA National Median Total Population	+250,000			\$44.01
Top 25% Agencies		1,501 to 2,500		\$142.58

Source: US Census Bureau – 2016 Population Estimates. Base data from online budget documents, FY2018. 2018 NRPA Agency Performance Review, p. 19, Wikipedia

In its most recent publication, the NRPA reported a median operation expense per capita of \$78.26 for the more than 900 agencies profiled. Operating expenses are impacted by several variables including population densities and the overall population of the service area. The NRPA study finds that per capita spending is higher in communities with 1,501 to 2,500 residents per square mile. The City of Little Rock's density is 1,665.93 residents per square mile. At this population density, per capita spending nationally rises to \$79.95. Overall population also impacts spending with agencies serving 20,000 or fewer residents averaging \$91.27 per capita spending and agencies serving over 250,000 residents averaging \$42.78 in per capita spending.

If we look at the total budgeted operating expenditures of \$69.50 per capita for LRPR from all funding sources and compare per capita spending levels to national levels of spending, LRPR falls below all comparison spending levels, with the exception of the median spending level for Mobile, Alabama and agencies serving over 250,000 residents.

A comparison to benchmark communities in Table 7.2 documents that the City of Little Rock's per capita spending of \$69.50 lies between spending levels of benchmark communities. Mobile is the only community that is spending at a level below Little Rock. All the other benchmark communities are spending at rate higher than LRPD. In fact, both Springfield-Greene County and Grand Prairie are both spending at much higher levels which is indicative of the fact that these two agencies are both NRPA Gold Medal winning departments.

Many factors influence funding and expenditures for a parks and recreation agency. Some communities, such as Springfield-Greene County have dedicated funding outside of the general fund dollars that make up a part of their budget. In addition, Springfield-Greene County is a high revenue producing agency. Knoxville is also spending at a higher level even though Knox County, Tennessee provides a full countywide parks department in addition to the City Parks and Recreation Department. Clearly, the city will have to devote more funding to parks and recreation if the level and quality of facilities and services offered to residents is to improve.



## Percentage of Total City Operating Costs

Budgets establish priorities. The percentage of the city's operating expenses allocated for Parks and Recreation also serves as a measure of commitment to Parks and Recreation. Table 7.2 below provides a comparison of the City of Little Rock with the Benchmark communities, in terms of the percent of the parks budget to the overall city budgets. A comparison of the general fund budget and total budget of all funds is provided, due to variations in how community services are funded from one city to the next.

**Table 7.2** Percentage of City Budgets for Parks and Recreation, Fiscal Year 2018

	<b>CITY OF LITTLE ROCK</b>	<b>SPRING-FIELD-GREENE COUNTY</b>	<b>GRAND PRAIRIE, TEXAS</b>	<b>KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE</b>	<b>MOBILE, ALABAMA</b>
<b>General Fund FY18 Budget</b>	<b>\$208,963,275</b>	<b>\$83,011,220</b>	<b>\$329,995,619</b>	<b>\$236,769,920</b>	<b>\$240,899,482</b>
<b>Parks and Recreation Operating Budget % of General Fund Budget</b>	5.46	0.00	7	3.00	4.5
<b>Overall FY18 Budget</b>	<b>\$265,741,736</b>	<b>\$348,330,000</b>	<b>\$329,967,090</b>	<b>\$479,056,970</b>	<b>\$240,899,482</b>
<b>Parks and Recreation Operating Budget % of Overall City Budget</b>	<b>5.22</b>	8.7	7.7	3.1	4.5

Source: Base data online budget documents, FY2018

When comparing LRPR's general fund budget, we see that parks and recreation accounts for 5.46% of the city's total expenditures, compared to 5.22% of all funds in the City of Little Rock. Compared to benchmark communities, the City of Little Rock's recreation spending lies between other communities when looking at the total budget. While it is higher than Knoxville and Mobile, it is behind Springfield-Greene County and Grand Prairie. As previously noted in this report, Knox County, Tennessee provides a full-service parks and recreation department in addition to the City of Knoxville. The combined spending would clearly exceed the funding level of LRPR as a percentage of the overall funding. (Source: City of Little Rock 2018 Annual Operating Budget p. 88)

## Personnel Budget

Personnel expenditures represent the largest commitment of funding for public parks and recreation agencies across the country. The LRPR 2018 Budget includes a total of \$10,141,250 in salaries, health insurance, contract labor, and professional service accounts. **Table 7.3** shows personal services costs as a total of the benchmark counties' total operating parks and recreation budgets.

*Source: City of Little Rock 2018 Annual Operating Budget p. 117*

The LRPR 2018 personnel budget of 67% is higher than the national average of 55% for department operating cost as specified in the 2018 National NRPA Agency Performance Review. In addition to being higher than

the national average, it is a higher percentage of cost than all the benchmark cities with the exception of Mobile. Both LPRD and Mobile have a large number of community centers which may be driving their personnel cost when compared with communities who have fewer indoor facilities. Another factor that can impact personnel cost is the number of full-time staff used to operate programs rather than using part time staff or contract staff. Many communities are contracting out the operations of major recreation resources to outside vendors in order to reduce the cost of delivering the same or improved services to residents.

**Table 7.3** Personal Services Expenditures as a Percentage of Department Operating Budget, Fiscal Year 2018

COMMUNITY	PARKS AND RECREATION PERSONAL SERVICES EXPENDITURES	PARKS AND RECREATION PERSONAL SERVICES EXPENDITURES AS A % OF DEPARTMENT OPERATING BUDGET
LRPR	\$10,141,250	67%
Springfield-Greene County Parks & Recreation	\$18,662,818	61.72
Grand Prairie, Texas Parks & Recreation	\$8,843,967	34.35
Knoxville, Tennessee	\$4,065,300	44.89
Mobile, Alabama	\$7,971,702	73.84
<b>National Average</b>		<b>55%</b>

*Source: Base data from online budget documents, FY2018*

*2018 NRPA Agency Performance Review, p. 20*

## Revenue Recovery Rate

Revenues generated for parks and recreation services are expressed as a percentage of the operating costs and reported as the Revenue Recovery Rate. The implementation of financial sustainability practices, in the form of revenue and pricing policies, has risen in importance with parks and recreation agencies across the country. Best practice agencies establish a philosophical basis for revenue recovery rates that vary by program type, service level tier and population served with fees based on the cost of service.

While revenues collected by communities for parks and recreation services are not typically applied directly to the parks and recreation budget, they are viewed as an offset to the cost of operating the parks and recreation agency. The 2018 NRPA Park Metrics Agency Performance Review states that the typical agency recovers 28% of its operating expenditures from non-tax revenues. Revenue generation based on population densities for communities with population densities between 1,501 and 2,500 residents per square mile increases to a median rate of 30.6% and for the upper 25% of reporting agencies it increases to 47.1%.

The following **Table 7.4** illustrates the revenue recovery rates for LRPR and the benchmark departments in 2018. LRPR anticipated revenues for FY2018 are \$2,460,180.

**Table 7.4 Recovery Rates for Benchmark Departments Based on 2018 Budgeted Expenses and Revenues**

COMMUNITY	REVENUE RECOVERY RATE AS A % OF OPERATIONS
LRPR	17.75%
Springfield-Greene County Park Board	39.04%
Grand Prairie, Texas Parks and Recreation	36.0%
Knoxville, Tennessee	21.9%
Mobile, Alabama	14.20%
<b>National Average All Agencies</b>	<b>29.1%</b>
<b>National Average Population Density 1,501 to 2,500</b>	<b>31.0%</b>

Source: Base data from online budget documents, FY2018. 2018 NRPA Agency Performance Review

Source: City of Little Rock 2018 Annual Operating Budget pp. 90-91

LRPR's revenue recovery is significantly lower than the national averages and benchmark communities. Only Mobile has a lower revenue recovery rate than LRPR. Springfield-Greene County and Grand Prairie Parks and Recreation are both generating fees at a rate twice as high as LRPR and both are above the national median. This illustrates how higher achieving departments are generating a much higher portion of their overall budget and thus providing the ability to offer expanded programs and activities. LRPR should consider ways to increase revenue production to offset the cost of providing a higher level of service to the community.

Income levels are an indicator of the ability to pay. The median household income levels, as documented in the study's Community Profile and included in **Table 7.5** below, comparing the City of Little Rock to the benchmark communities demonstrates that the City of Little Rock has a higher median household income than all the benchmark communities except Grand Prairie. This would indicate that residents should generally have disposable income to participate in recreation programs at a reasonable charge.

Although average income levels are higher in the city, it is important to note that many individuals do not have the ability to pay for programming. In these instances, it is recommended that LRPR explore the opportunity to work with groups to provide scholarship funds to support recreation programming for lower income or senior populations. For example, Gwinnett County started a scholarship program in 2001, later taken over by the Gwinnett Parks Foundation, to assist children and seniors who are unable to pay for camps and programming. Funding for the program is from corporate and community sponsorships and eligibility is income-based.

**Table 7.5 Median Household Income**

COMMUNITY	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME*
<b>City of Little Rock</b>	<b>\$46,578</b>
Springfield-Greene County, MO	\$33,769
Grand Prairie, TX	\$60,246
Knoxville, TN	\$34,566
Mobile, AL	\$24,499

Source: Google (2016) -U.S. Census Bureau Report

## Historical Perspective

A historical perspective is also important in evaluating a department's position. An examination of the City of Little Rock funding levels from FY08 to the current fiscal year shows the operating budget for each year and percent change from the prior fiscal year. We also examined the per capita spending levels for those same years.

**Table 7.6** City of Little Rock LRPR. Department Operating Budget and Per Capita Expenditures, FY13 to FY17

	OPERATING AND PER CAPITA EXPENDITURES	% CHANGE FROM PRIOR YEAR	PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE
FY08 Actual	\$21,784,343		\$32.06
FY13 Actual	\$19,253,126		\$26.86
FY14 Actual	\$19,892,259	3.32%	\$27.28
FY15 Actual	\$19,897,290	0.03%	\$26.88
FY16 Adopted	\$19,729,931	-0.84%	\$26.37
FY17 Approved	\$20,066,682	1.71%	\$26.82
FY18 Approved	\$15,143,507		

Source: City of Little Rock FY10, FY15, FY16 and FY17 Budget Documents. Includes River Market.

As illustrated in Table 7.6 above, the department is operating at a financial level less than in 2008, although it has acquired additional properties and park facilities since that time, and the number of residents being served has increased. The per capita expenditure comparing 2008 expenditures to current operating expenditures shows a consistent decrease in per capita expenditures, and a current rate that is \$5.24 per capita less than 2008 rates. These numbers are not adjusted for inflation.



## Revenue Policy

Revenue policies define tiered service levels such as basic services, supplemental services, and special facilities with fees set to recover a specified percentage of the cost to deliver the service. Most parks agencies use a three- or four-tier system for program fees. Each tier defines a type of service level expectation that the community desires for specific recreation services. In developing the tier system, staff will need to work together to establish the programs and facilities that should be provided as part of the core program offerings, the programs that should be offered primarily as revenue centers for the agency and all the programs that fall between these two categories.



As an example, tier-one programs are provided to the public at no or low cost and are not required to produce revenue to cover the full cost of their basic services. These are the basic programs that the community feels should be provided. Examples include: community events, open gyms, youth and senior group activities and activities that bring families to the park (e.g. outdoor movies or summer concerts). These programs normally cover 0-25% of their cost.

Tier-two programs are expected to cover 25-50% of their cost. These programs are also part of the core programs and facilities that provide basic services to the community. Programs that some communities place in this category are: group classes geared at seniors and youth, dances, special holiday programs, family programs or special events. While operating these activities involves more staff time, they are not specialized activities that require a higher degree of organization and highly-skilled staff members to execute.

Tier-three programs cover 50-75% of their cost and are reserved for expanded programs, reaching beyond the basic services the department supplies the community. These include: some youth sports programs and camps, classes that require more one-on-one time with the instructor (such as painting and pottery), youth field trips, senior wellness programs, water aerobics, swim teams, adult programs and other special programs that serve specific user groups and demographics in the community.

Tier four is for revenue centers and these are facilities and programs that should cover 75-100% of their cost. Programs that fall into this category include all wellness and fitness training classes for adults; specialized trips and travel programs; all adult sports programs; and all field, pool and shelter rentals. Other programs in this group include: dance classes, music classes of all types, any program with a special permit (or where alcohol is served) and any type of one-on-one sports or fitness training. For example, a rental of the gym would fall into this category, as would the rental of ballfield(s) by a group hosting a tournament.

## Fees and Charges Policy

In order to develop a solid fees and charges policy, LRPR must start by defining the programs in each category. Historical data on program cost recovery is a good place to start. Another recommendation is to collect several other agencies' fees and charges policies to see how they designate programs. Once a basic distribution of programs is established, a cost allocation standard for all facilities and programs will need to be developed. Cost allocation includes a square-foot cost for all buildings or fields that include all utility and maintenance costs. Maintenance costs include all in-house and contract labor for general upkeep, service contracts on mechanical systems, and trash collection and/or janitorial services. Staffing costs involved in marketing the program and facility, staff costs for conducting and organizing the program and any overtime or holiday time paid to staff for working outside normal business hours should also be calculated. All materials and supplies necessary to operate the program must be included. All direct costs—such as the instructor cost—and all indirect cost—such as marketing and administrative costs—must be compiled for every program. Then, fees for programs, rentals and sports leagues can be set. Once a fees and charges policy has been established, it should be updated on an annual basis based upon expense fluctuations. (SGCPB's 2018-2019 Approved Fees and Charges is included in the References Book)

Developing a solid, Fees and Charges Policy and a review of how current programs are being operated should be a top priority for LRPR in the next 12 months.

Expanding program offerings, especially in the area of wellness/fitness and sports programs, will also increase the potential for more revenue generation. Promoting the community centers and establishing a rental fee for pavilions would also be a good starting point for increased revenue generation.



## Other Revenue Opportunities

It is in the department's best interest to explore all funding opportunities and strategies available in order to generate funds. A variety of funding alternatives exist to generate revenue funds. Consideration should be given to not sunset all taxes that might be considered but put forth for a public vote. Any tax initiative of any type must be clearly explained, whether it be for capital development and/or operating purposes.

### Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a public financing method that is used as a subsidy for redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community improvement projects in many countries and the United States. (Source: Wikipedia) The City of Little Rock has used this type of financing for various city projects. It's recommended that LRPR continue to use this type financing tool to support large capital department projects in the coming years.

### Dedicated Parks Sales Tax

Consider a future Parks sales tax designated for both capital development and for ongoing operations and maintenance for the Little Rock Parks and Recreation Department. Example: Springfield-Greene County Park Board has passed (two) 1/4 cent sales taxes over the past two decades; 1/8 for park capital development and 1/8 cent for ongoing operations and maintenance for the perpetuity of the life of the park system. LRPR needs a dedicated Park Sales Tax to improve current parks, fields, and facilities, as well as to build new

sports complexes, sports fields, and other sports facilities. Large capital equipment and fleet vehicles could also be a part of the dedicated sales tax.

### Alcohol Permits and Sales

Alcohol permits and sales-consider continuing to expand the locations and special events that alcohol sales are permitted by the Little Rock Parks and Recreation Department. Along with the alcohol permitting process the Little Rock Parks and Recreation Department should collect a "percentage of sales" for all events held on city park properties. This is an additional way to increase park revenues in the future.

### Special Event Vendor Sales

Many special events sponsored by the city or through the parks and recreation department draw vendors to the event. While it is often viewed as a public service to encourage vendor participation, it is also an opportunity to collect revenue. For example, if a food truck event is held in a park or public space, the vendors are taking advantage of the opportunity to sell a product. The city or PRPR is tasked with all the security, setup, and ongoing maintenance of the space. LRPR should establish a fee policy that is either a flat rate fee or a percentage-based fee to offset the cost to the city for these special events and ongoing maintenance of the special event spaces.

## Parks and Recreation Foundation

Many communities work with parks and recreation foundations to support parks and recreation departments through fundraising, providing awareness of parks and recreation needs, cultivating relationships in the community, and providing monetary support to further develop parks and recreation opportunities for individuals of their community. While this group has not been active for some time, it is recommended that

the LRPR reach out to this group to determine how to re-engage the organization with the Parks and Recreation Department in the City of Little Rock. This group should work with LRPR to identify high priority projects that need private funding to augment city funding. Clear goals for fundraising campaigns should be developed as well as match funding that would be provided should fundraising goals be met.



## Fundraising Opportunities

Local fundraising is a mechanism that works effectively in communities across the country. Although a strong local effort is involved, this mechanism typically generates a vast amount of support and publicity. Local businesses, organizations and private individuals can pledge funding over a specific period of time. For LRPR, developing mutual trust in the community will be important for many reasons. If a community member makes a donation for a specific park, the money needs to go directly for that park to promote a high level of trust and appreciation for all donors. This simple act should encourage other donors across the City of Little Rock to assist LRPR.

The Parks and Recreation Commission has 11 members, with three-year terms of service. The purpose of each commissioner is: "To review, consult, and advise the City on matters concerning the operation and maintenance of the Parks and Recreation department and on matters pertaining to the implementation of the

Master Parks Plan, and significant issues involving or affecting these matters shall be referred to and considered by the Commission prior to consideration by the Little Rock City Board of Directors."

Source: <https://www.littlerock.gov/city-administration/city-boards-and-commissions/parks-and-recreation-commission/>

In most communities, a recreation and parks advisory board or commission plays an active role in fundraising for their department. The LRPR Commission members could be proactive by initiating a variety of fundraising tasks, such as collaborating with current and any future "Friends of Parks" groups to promoting sponsorship of programs, seeking in-kind donations, hosting special events (e.g., golf tournaments, fundraiser dinners, events to honor volunteers, silent auctions and themed socials) and soliciting charitable donations of money and lands. These are excellent examples of fundraising opportunities, as models for future revenue.



*Public naming rights have been growing due to tighter agency budgets.*

## Naming Rights

Naming rights became prominent in the 1990s, when larger sports venues and cultural spaces were named after a company or individual. Many examples of successful ventures are known today, like Dick's Sporting Goods Park in Denver (home of the Colorado Rapids soccer team), or the American Airlines Arena in Miami (home of the Miami Heat NBA team). For Springfield-Greene County Park Board, Mediacom Tennis Stadium, in Springfield, Missouri (home of the Springfield Lasers World Tennis Team, Professional Tennis Team and other state, national, and international events). Mediacom paid \$50,000 per year for stadium naming rights, over a ten-year period. Plus, they added \$150,000 per year for facility naming rights of the Mediacom Ice Park for a total of \$2 million in facility naming rights over a ten-year period.

Public naming rights have been growing due to tighter agency budgets. The attraction of public venues is the varied tiers of naming rights that can be allowed. In a large sports complex for example,

agencies can solicit naming rights for the entire facility for a prescribed amount of money or tailor it towards naming a locker room within the facility for a lesser fee. Other agencies allow companies naming rights to trails or gymnasiums.

Agencies are creative in selling not only spaces but placing products within the department to generate new revenues. In 2002, Los Angeles city lifeguards sported Izod swimsuits as the "official swimwear of the Los Angeles City Beach Lifeguards" and the Skokie (IL) Park District collected \$150,000 annually from Pepsi for it being its "exclusive soft drink provider."

## Exclusive Beverage Rights

Many communities leverage the right to be the sole beverage supplier to a city or to the parks and recreation department by soliciting annual payments for soft drink suppliers. These sole supplier agreements usually cover a five-year period to allow the supplier to make a good return on their investment. Some of these agreements also include advertising rights. Springfield-Greene

County Park Board has had, for several decades, an exclusive beverage rights agreement with Coca-Cola/Dr. Pepper Bottling companies, inclusive of events and advertising rights.

## Corporate Partner Grant Programs

Many corporations around the country offer grants to contribute to parks, recreation and cultural programming. Companies such as LL Bean, Purina, KEEN, Walmart, and PlayCore have a history of such grant programming. Also, consider the numerous grant offerings put forth by National Recreation and Parks Association.

# DREAM

## Key Observations and Summary Recommendations

Based on a review of financial documents, staff interviews, best practices from other top performing agencies and the planning teams' experience, specific recommendations have been made to improve the overall performance of PRPR. These recommendations will require city leadership to restructure current funding practices and operational policies if the department is to move beyond reactionary management strategies and become a proactive agency with a clear mission and a plan to achieve that mission. Many of these recommendations are specific to issues that were observed by the planning team that are not consistent with high performing recreation agencies across the country.

- **Director** - Establish a strong relationship with the Little Rock Parks Foundation. The foundation needs to be a crucial partner in helping the director identify and raise funds for critically needed projects.
- **Director** - City of LR 2018 Annual Operating Budget (p. 159) - [Mayor's 2018 Department Goals](#) associated with LRPR include: 1) Develop a plan for a soccer complex with LRPR Commission, 2) Develop a plan to extend bike trail, 3) Continue work on marketing plan for the city, 4) Finalize the Arkansas River Trail Design, 5) Acquire land for Little Rock Port, 6) Create a LR Brand and social media presence for recruiting efforts, 7) Renovate the toddler play area at Riverfront Park by installing new features, renovate park space and improve playground surfacing, and 8) Continue to operate an eight week Summer Playground Program at eight sites around the City for youth between the ages of six and fifteen LRPR should monitor the progress of the Mayor's 2018 Department Goals and offer assistance if needed.
- **Director** - City of LR 2018 Annual Operating Budget (p. 217) - Housing and Neighborhood Programs 2018 Department Goals: 1) Community Development Block Grant, 2) Update Department brochures in English and Spanish, and 3) Continue the "Love Your Block" recognition programs. LRPR should participate as a collaborative partner with the Housing and Neighborhood Department.
- **Director and Administration** - Deliberate the pros and cons of *Naming Rights*. Review the *Naming Rights* policies from SGCPB and Springfield Public Schools included in the References Book. Project revenue possibilities for LRPR and other factors that might impact this important decision.
- **Director and Administration** - Require the submission of all division goals and objectives for the budgeting process. All budget requests should be based on goals and objectives for that division and should not be approved, unless they are aligned.
- **Director and Administration** - Consider a citywide sales tax, dedicated property tax or other sustainable funding sources for Fleet Management. LRPR has a 20-year average age on their fleet and it is impacting service delivery
- **Director and Administration** - Build a case that dedicated funding is the most responsible way to insure delivery of recreation programs and facilities that will transform the department ability to offer quality programs and facilities.
- **Administration** - Develop a Revenue Policy based on the cost of service with a multi-tiered service level system and a phased approach to move toward a more self-sustaining system.
- **Administration** - Establish a scholarship program to assist individuals who are unable to pay

for camps and programming. Find ways to work with other organizations to help with funding the program.

- **Administration** - Citizens should be able to make online donations and purchase gift cards with ease. This process should be marketed to the public as part of the Outreach Program. Staff members who work the front desks at the community centers should have a sign posted with this information included on it.
- **Administration** - With the assistance of the City of Little Rock's City Attorney, "Continue to review, research and draft contracts for City departments and commissions" (2018 Annual Operating Budget, p. 177). Every MOU and/or agreement needs to be reviewed with the City Attorney for appropriate Fees and Charges. If the MOU's and/or agreements are not within an acceptable range of charges, then they need to be renegotiated. One example is the University of Arkansas at Little Rock rents space for \$1. If the space and the fee are mutually beneficial, then the City Attorney will deem the MOU and/or agreement as satisfactory. If it is deemed unsatisfactory, the City Attorney needs to renegotiate.
- **Administration** - City of LR 2018 Annual Operating Budget (p. 193) -Finance 2017 Finance Department Priorities: 1) include leasing plans for creative financing that

will lessen the strain on the Fleet Budget, 2) Continue the grant training program on grant management and writing for all City Departments, and 3) perform random cash counts.

- **Operations** - Continue the LED light installation program that began in 2018 with any new revenue from *Fees and Charges*.
- **Recreation and Special Events** - It is very important to create and/or expand programming opportunities for fee generation. A specific example of a revenue producing program is Pickleball.
- **Recreation and Special Events** - Take steps to increase programming and rentals at indoor facilities, such as community centers.
- **Recreation and Special Events** - Explore opportunities for alternative funding to decrease dependence on the general fund.
- **Recreation and Special Events** - With the implementation of the new Active.com System, all classes should be available for online registration and payment (see SGCPB Online Registration of Classes Example in the References Book).
- **Recreation and Special Events** - Review the projected revenue budget for the community centers through the Prevention, Intervention and Treatment funding. Historically, with the

budget decreasing yearly, alternative funding should be sought. NOTES: Each community center was receiving \$250,000, then decreased to \$250,000 overall, and this year decreased to \$220,000 overall.

- **Recreation, Special Events and Administration** - Understanding that LRPR's *Fees and Charges* are half of what is charged in surrounding areas due to very limited fee increases in 21 years, review LRPR's fees and charges and create a phased plan for getting closer to the national average for *Fees and Charges*. The phased plan should include how the additional revenue will assist in both expanding recreation opportunities and generating more operating revenue.
- **Recreation, Special Events and Administration** - Study the comparable agencies for their hourly rates for class instructors; currently, LRPR pays \$16.29 per hour and LA Fitness and Planet Fitness pay \$25 per hour. Consider, with approval through the City Finance Department, offering instructors a percentage for their classes above their hourly rate to encourage them to promote their classes. SGCPB splits the fee 25%/75% and Benton pays 40%/60%.
- **Recreation and Special Events** - At each community center, post a sign: "All registrants will be



given a receipt by staff and if not, please ask the staff for a receipt." With the addition of Active.com, LRPR will be able to conduct daily audits and key financial information that should be continuously analyzed.

- **Recreation and Special Events** - Stop deficit maintenance practices. One example is in the Aquatic budget, pool chemicals are never fully funded. However, it is easy to identify how much is spent, each year, on chemicals. Intentional deficit spending is not a good accounting practice. An additional area of concern is the parking lot surfacing issues that exist at many LRPR facilities. The City of Little Rock, in conjunction with the Public Works Department and LRPR, need to identify, prioritize, and make a financial commitment to fix the parking lots and potholes to eliminate safety concerns. One parking lot at the University Park Tennis Center has been neglected so long it had to be closed.
- **Recreation and Special Events** - A recent reduction in fees at the Jim Dailey Fitness & Aquatic Center by \$20 and \$30 was made to be more competitive with the surrounding private clubs. Closely monitor the partici-

pation numbers, with results being analyzed monthly for a year, and then make a conjecture as to whether the reduction in fees was offset by an increase in participation to maintain overall revenue production. If there was not increase in participation, then increase fees to maintain past revenue production.

- **Recreation and Special Events**
  - Consider raising the lowest hourly rate for staff at the community centers to \$10.00-\$10.50 to be more competitive with the private sector and to retain better staff.
- **Recreation and Special Events**
  - Create a tiered salary system for contract tennis professionals based on their skill level and participation numbers. Higher performing contract professionals should receive higher compensation for their efforts.
- **Recreation and Special Events**
  - Lease all golf carts on a three-year rotation with a highly rated golf cart company. Work with the City of Little Rock legal and finance departments to secure the lease at a competitive price. Add a clause to the contract that LRPR has the first right of purchase for the used golf carts.
- **Recreation and Special Events**
  - Increase programming and associated revenue production by

hiring PGA qualified golf pros for each course. Structure the compensation so that the pros have a base salary and receive a percentage of revenues for golf programs and lessons they develop. This is an industry standard practice and should lead to improved performance for golf operations.

- **Recreation and Special Events**
  - Purchase golf equipment such as ball washers, bunker rakes, club washers, and flags that are used and are replaceable.
- **Recreation, Special Events and Administration** - Allow renting of facility spaces online, once a user account is established. Allow the user to view the availability of all rentable spaces, using a calendar format. (SGCPB's format is included in the References Book).

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK.

# 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. Such renovation should be designed with consideration of the recently developed “West Central Sports Complex Management Plan”. 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.*

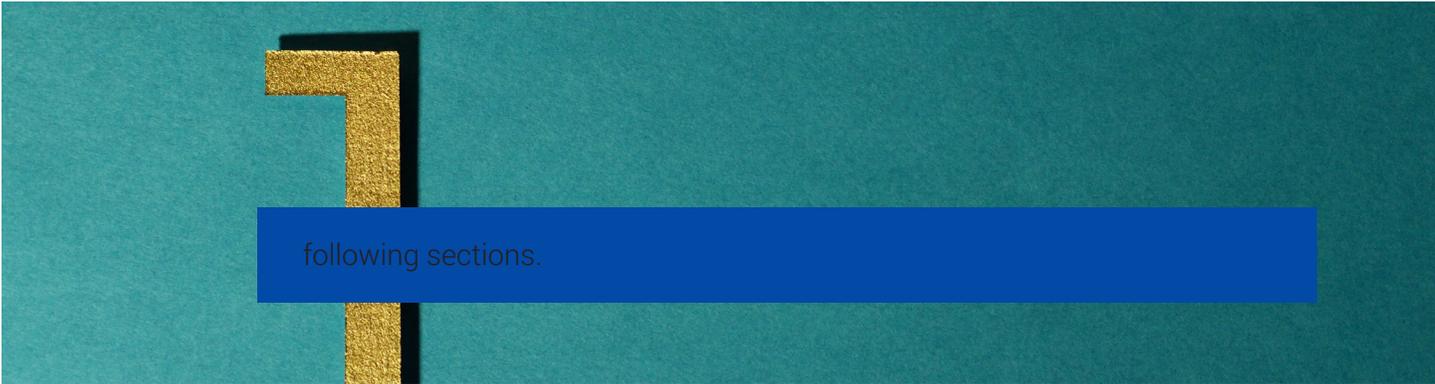
## Current Funding

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.

## 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 expen-

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK.

PREPARED BY

# LOSE DESIGN

SPACES FOR LIFE.



2809 Foster Avenue  
Nashville, Tennessee 37210

[www.Lose.Design](http://www.Lose.Design)