

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

Columbus boasts a wide variety of public programs, parks, and facilities that offer opportunities for recreation, leisure, and education to citizens of the city and the surrounding area.

The CRPD offers numerous and diverse public programs and events throughout the year. CRPD programs serve the city's urban and suburban areas as well as the contiguous communities. It is estimated that CRPD programs reach thousands of youths, adults, and families.

Parks in the CRPD system are home to many important recreational and cultural events. For example, Columbus is known as the Softball Capital of the World:

- More than 15,000 league games are played annually.
- More players participate in leagues in Columbus per capita than anywhere else in the United States.
- Biennially, the CRPD hosts the National Softball Association (NSA) Girls Fastpitch Tournament.
- In 2000, the last time the NSA tournament was held in Columbus, 687 teams competed. The tournament is held in Berliner Park because the park encompasses more than 200 acres and has 31 fields and support facilities, making it the largest municipally owned softball complex in the United States.

The CRPD also is recognized for a variety of facilities, from senior and recreation centers, to aquatic centers, to performing arts centers. For example, the Columbus Cultural Arts Center, located in the heart of downtown Columbus, hosts programs that let users explore artistic activities.

Following is a description and assessment of CRPD programs, parks, and facilities. The chapter concludes with a comparison and assessment of other national, regional, and local providers of parks and recreation programs, parks, and facilities.

PROGRAMS

The CRPD offers **programs** in its 28 recreation centers, 10 outdoor swimming pools, one indoor swimming pool, various ball diamonds, playgrounds, art facilities, and golf courses. The CRPD offers **special events** in multiple locations, highlighting the holidays, culture, and the arts for all residents and neighboring communities to enjoy.

Types of programs include:

- Aquatics;
- Day camps;
- Youth and adult sports leagues;
- Dance;
- Arts and crafts;
- Fine arts;
- Performing arts;
- Boating;
- Therapeutic recreation;
- Golf lessons;
- Environmental education;
- Outdoor recreation; and
- Senior and teen-related programming.

The CRPD also operates a multi-generational Adult Program (MAP). MAP activities are located in facilities that provide programs targeted specifically for senior citizens. CRPD may or may not own the facility.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMS

The strategic planning process included a review and assessment of programs the CRPD provides. For assessment purposes, CRPD staff selected **10 program categories** that together serve all ages within the Columbus market. These program areas included:

- Adult sports;
- Aquatics and recreational swimming;
- Golf;
- "Music in the Air;"
- Outdoor education;
- Senior programming and fine arts;
- Senior recreation (fitness and athletics);
- Special events;
- Therapeutic recreation; and
- Youth sports.

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

During the **first phase of program assessment**, each of the 10 program managers were asked to complete a **program analysis form** covering all aspects of programming structure and operations. Completed forms were reviewed to identify patterns and common issues in the majority of program offerings.

Recreation **staff were interviewed** during the **second phase of program assessment**, conducted in the first quarter of 2001. The interview process allowed for candid dialogue with staff about the current status, future expectations, and visions for CRPD programs.

Six Core Areas of Concern

The staff interviews revealed **six core areas of concern**:

1. There is a perception that **staff members tend to work less as a team** and more on their own. This is because there is a lack of trust and respect for employees in other areas of the CRPD organization.
2. Staff feels that **technology and access to computers** can be improved.
3. The programming staff recognizes that **more sponsorship opportunities** are available in the community. Thus, there is a desire to discuss how development staff can assist programming staff in this area.
4. There is a perception that **organizational marketing is poor**. This is based on the limited capabilities of the CRPD Catalog and Web site and the lack of standards for promotion and advertisements.
5. The staff is frustrated by the inability to replace budgeted personnel because of **city-mandated attrition** policies.
6. Many staff members understand the impacts of the department's continuous budget cuts. The staff is concerned that the **lack of funding to improve services** has compromised programs.

These areas of concern prevent the CRPD from maximizing staff productivity when community activities are being programmed. These areas of concern also reduce staff's ability to provide quality customer service.

Typically, staff members in organizations with insufficient resources administer quality customer service by smiling, being courteous with the customer, and hoping the customer is satisfied. Essentially, staff members in such organizations try to intensify positive behavior to make up for the lack of resources such as up-to-date facilities, effective communication tools, well-maintained parks, and funding.

Unfortunately, the staff is left with little recourse after the first line of service is rendered. Customers still expect to receive a quality product, but it is difficult to deliver a quality product without these much needed core resources.

Ultimately, these actions can translate into poor customer-service delivery by staff who are trying to provide quality customer service to the community. Thus, the lack of care to internal customers—employees—can undermine employees' abilities to be efficient in their areas of responsibility.

Assessment Summary

After the program analysis forms were reviewed and interviews conducted, the program assessment produced the following key issues:

■ Pricing of Services

- There is potential for revenue generation, but the CRPD is **not postured to pursue revenues** in several areas of activity.
- **Many CRPD classes and programs are free.** Thus, a philosophical issue needs to be addressed: Do the department's values include gaining revenue and having an effective pricing method? Or do the department's values include being a community service supported by tax dollars?
- **Prices for classes** do not include both direct and indirect costs.
- **Pricing formulas are not consistent** in each program category.
- Programs are not promoted and priced based on benefits received. There seems to be a more **broad-brush approach to creating pricing** and implementing fee increases.

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

- The CRPD **does not receive revenue or recognition** for special events conducted in the parks; however, the department has given technical advice on event planning to other organizations without charging a fee.
 - Rental facilities and other assets are **under-priced**.
 - There is **no mechanism to encourage staff members to be entrepreneurial** when identifying new ways to generate revenues.
 - Golf operations is a quasi-revenue center. However, bureaucratic limitations place too many **restrictions on this section's ability** to be entrepreneurial.
- **Programming**
- Program participation is **declining** in a number of areas such as adult athletics and golf.
 - The outdoor recreation program area has **potential for expansion** (i.e., the audience could include all of Columbus).
 - Equitable quality for programs cannot be ensured because **program standards do not seem to exist**.
 - **Adventure programming** could improve leadership skills for at-risk youth and should be considered.
 - There is **little effort to program activities**—other than athletics—for people between the ages of 18 and 50.
 - Because resources have been lost, program **creativity has suffered**.
 - There is heavy use of contract instructors who work on the 80/20 plan (services are **priced based on the 20 percent who can't pay**, not the 80 percent who can pay).
- **Administration and Support**
- To foster cross programming, there needs to be **greater cooperation** between CRPD divisions, and support within departments.
 - CRPD **recreation centers lack consistent standards of service** throughout the community. The director at each center seems to determine activities being offered at a center; thus, equity and consistency cannot be provided to all consumers.
- Some functional computers in the department are not used because the **staff has not been thoroughly trained**.
 - Staff would like to see **greater advocacy for their work** from people who report to the CRPD director.
 - Department staff members say the CRPD has **lost its competitive edge**. Other recreation service organizations have become the region's leaders, even though CRPD is the largest such organization.
 - The staff reports that barriers in the system prohibit creativity. **Controls exist that prevent positive actions**; methods are needed to help release creative energy.
 - **Seemingly insignificant issues are overemphasized** by assistant director-level staff. The real issues facing CRPD need to be emphasized.
 - The **Police Department does not support** CRPD issues related to safety and enforcement.
 - The CRPD and the local Convention and Visitors Bureau have a strained relationship because of **power struggles** related to revenue-producing activities.
 - The city permits system **needs consistency and equity**.
 - The staff believes that **few appreciate the work** done in the programming area.
- **Facilities**
- **Space for staff and storage is lacking** in several areas of operation.
 - All pools are designed as lap/competitive pools. The community would **welcome some aquatic centers** through additions or renovations of existing pools.
 - **Few facilities** exist outside the I-270 beltway.

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

■ Maintenance

- **Field maintenance and upkeep** are challenging for programming staff.
- **Mowing schedules** for parks are inadequate—a 21-day cycle is too long—to benefit programmers.

■ Marketing

- Publication standards for marketing activities are **inconsistent**.
- The CRPD Catalog has **insufficient detail** to inform consumers about activities. Interested participants must take time to call other sources to get complete information.
- The CRPD Catalog contains only **brief descriptions** of programs. Program features and benefits cannot be included in the space allotted.
- Some information distributed to the public **does not thoroughly describe** the activity (e.g., aquatic lessons).
- The CRPD Catalog features **little variety from one season to another** and does not stimulate the reader's interest.
- Specialty fliers and brochures should be **standardized**. The quality of some is very poor while the quality of others is excellent and highly professional.
- The CRPD could boost the quality and amount of information in the CRPD Catalog by **selling advertising**.
- **Marketing that is directed more to the target audience** would increase awareness in recreation activity areas. For example, if the cover design of a CRPD Catalog implies that programs are for children only, adults looking for adult-oriented programs would not be inclined to read it.
- All **Web sites** of the CRPD and its partners need to be linked.

- The CRPD does not seem to promote its significant **contribution to and economic impact on tourism**.

■ Development

- The CRPD could expand its number of **partnerships**.
- **Sponsorships** in various program areas present significant opportunities for **generating funds**.
- The Development Section and programming staff need to discuss and design more **new funding alternatives** that can support the programs.
- Programmers need to revisit and discuss the concept and practices of **volunteerism** to determine how volunteers can be more effective in various areas. (In some cases, volunteers are paid—a practice that does not coincide with volunteerism.)

PARKS

The CRPD park system is based on a hierarchy of park sizes. Typically:

- Smaller parks are neighborhood parks;
- Mid-size parks are community parks; and
- The largest parks are regional parks.

Outside this typical park hierarchy are **multi-use trails** and other types of **open space** for easements or natural resource protection.

Located throughout the city are many smaller **neighborhood parks**, which give the greatest number of residents easy access to a park. These parks are designed for family use and relaxation for nearby residents. Although pedestrian access to neighborhood parks is very important, a barrier precludes pedestrian access to some parks. (A highway used to be a barrier to pedestrian access at Antrim Park. Now there is a walkway under S.R. 315 and access via the Olentangy Multi-Use Trail.)

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

Columbus also has parks with large areas of **natural open space, reservoirs** that offer boating and fishing, and **community parks** with programs for all ages. Community parks generally serve a larger area (i.e., several neighborhoods) and require parking for automobiles. Although many community parks contain community centers, they also include other family-oriented facilities such as playgrounds, swimming pools, and picnic shelters.

Regional parks are typically the largest parks in the CRPD system. Visitors to regional parks may come from counties beyond Franklin County to access golf courses, boating, and baseball/softball complexes. Columbus' newest regional park, Three Creeks, continues to evolve. A joint effort between the CRPD and Metro Parks, Three Creeks encompasses more than 1,400 acres and when completed will include:

- Multi-use trails along Alum Creek, Blacklick Creek, and Big Walnut Creek for a total of 21 miles;
- Picnic areas;
- Playgrounds;
- Athletic fields;
- Nature center;
- Demonstration farm; and
- Special-event facilities.

Although there is a hierarchy of park sizes, size does not always dictate a park's uses. Regional parks can act as community parks and neighborhood parks; community parks also can act as neighborhood parks. These factors are based on access to the park and park facilities.

This section provides an overview of the CRPD park system and the hierarchy of park sizes and functions.

Neighborhood Park (NGH)

Neighborhood parks form the **vast majority** of parks operated and maintained by the CRPD.

While these parks typically **serve a population of up to 5,000**, in many cases more people are served. To accommodate a population this size, a neighborhood park should be **5 to 15 acres**; however, some neighborhood parks in the CRPD inventory are determined by use and facilities offered, not by size alone.

Often used by **families**, neighborhood parks contain elements such as playground equipment, basketball courts, picnic tables, walking paths, and field-game areas. Neighborhood parks require separate areas for **passive activities** and **active play**.

The service radius for a neighborhood park is one-half mile. Neighborhood parks should have **safe pedestrian access** for surrounding residents; parking may or may not be included. **Figure 3-1** shows the location of CRPD neighborhood parks and each service radius. Examples of CRPD neighborhood parks include Scioto Woods Park, Pontiac Village Park, and Brevoort Park.

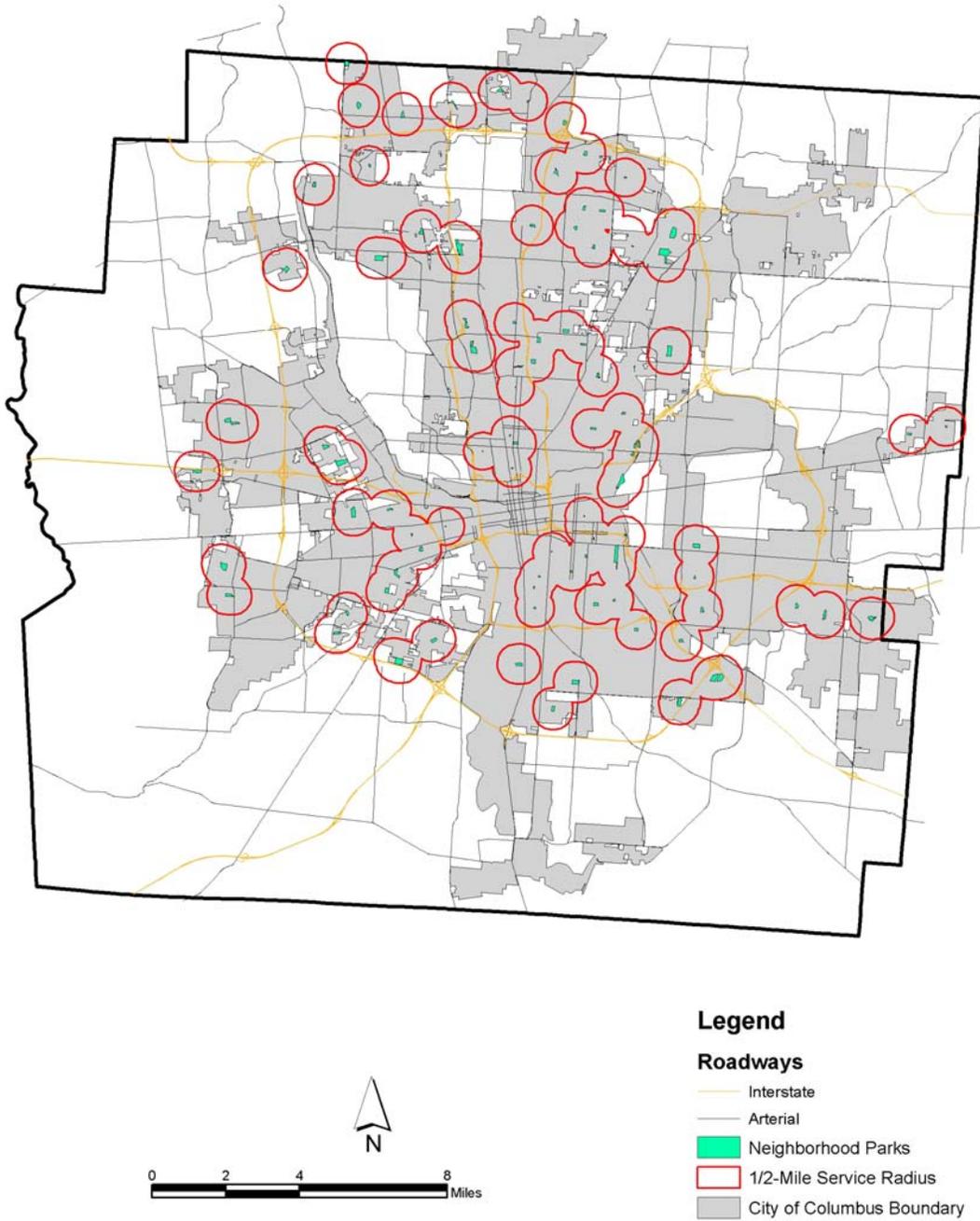
It is important to note that **many neighborhood parks in Columbus are cut off from nearby residential areas** because pedestrian access is lacking. This often occurs when the neighborhood park is located adjacent to an interstate highway or river/stream corridor. These conditions effectively form **pedestrian barriers**. **Photo 3-1** shows a pedestrian barrier along the eastern boundary of Hayden Park as it meets the I-670 right-of-way. Only the residential areas west of Hayden Park can effectively access the park. See **Figure 3-2** for the CRPD neighborhood parks with service areas affected by adjacent barriers.



Photo 3-1. View within Hayden Park looking east to the adjacent I-670 boundary.

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

Figure 3-1
Columbus Neighborhood Parks



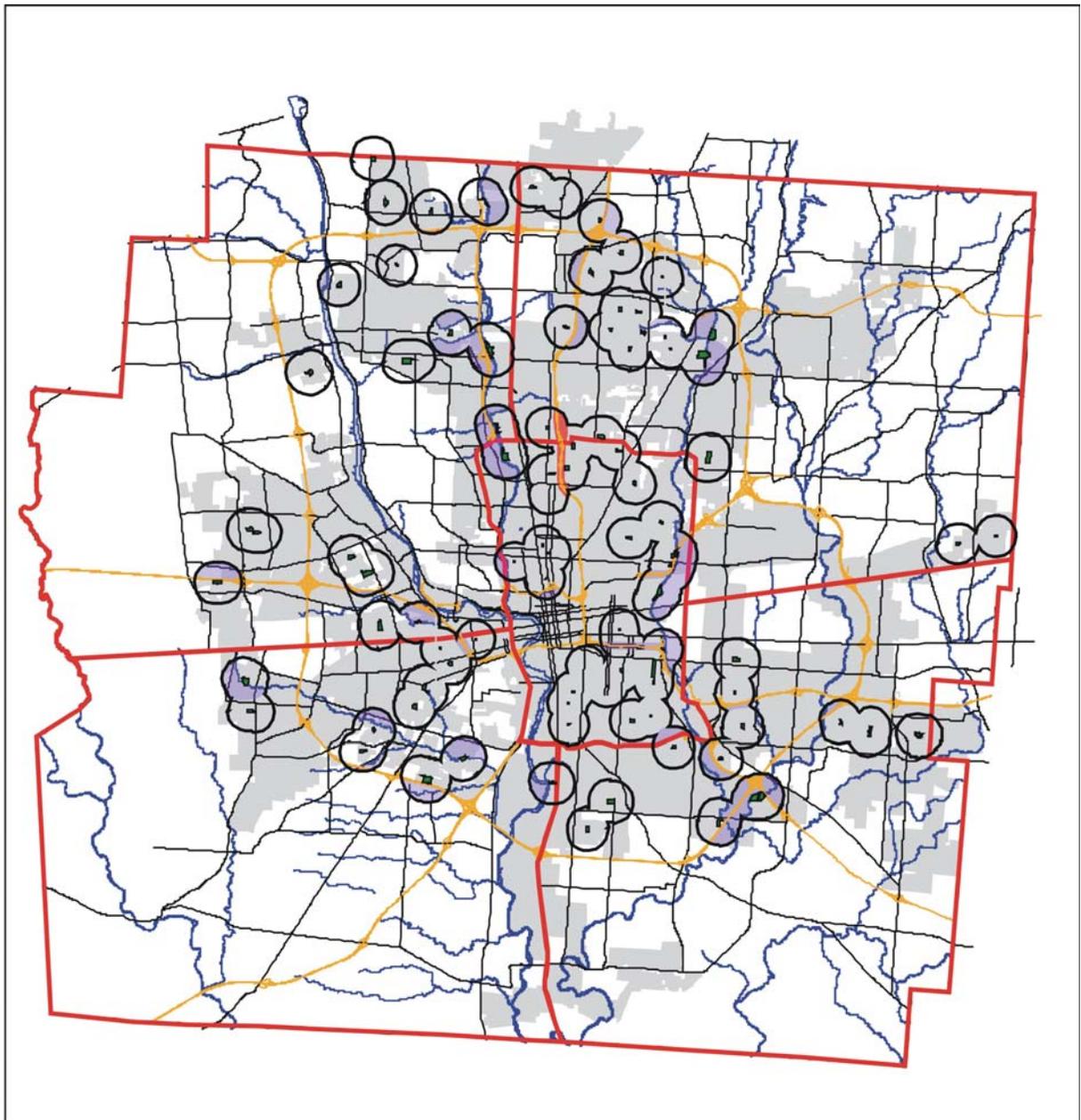


Figure 3-2
**Neighborhood Parks Affected
 By Barriers**
 Recreation and Parks Master Plan
 City of Columbus, Ohio



- Neighborhood Parks
- Half Mile Radius.shp
- Quadrants1.shp
- Roadways
- Interstate
- Arterial
- Water
- Colscorp.shp
- County Boundary



CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

Several neighborhood parks such as Cooper Park **do not have sidewalk connections** to local residential areas. (See *Photo 3-2.*) As a result, users must drive or use public streets for walking or bicycling to these parks.



Photo 3-2. There is no sidewalk access to the entrance of Cooper Park.

In some cases, **park entrances are not located on a public street** and may be set back some distance from the road. Kenney Park, for example, is located behind a shopping area, which requires users to travel through a parking lot and truck-service area to get to the park. (See *Photo 3-3.*) These conditions also discourage pedestrian and bicycle access.



Photo 3-3. The backside of a shopping center and parking lot creates the entrance to Kenney Park.

The most successful neighborhood parks are:

- Located on an arterial or collector street;
- Connected with sidewalks; and
- Open to road frontage for passive supervision.

Community Park (COM)

Community parks are intended to be **accessible to multiple neighborhoods**. When possible, the park may be developed adjacent to a school. Community parks, which provide recreational opportunities for the **entire family**, often contain facilities for **specific recreational purposes**: a recreation center, athletic fields, swimming pool, tennis courts, and jogging trails as well as picnic areas, shelters, and a playground. (See *Photo 3-4.*) **Passive outdoor recreation activities** such as birdwatching also take place at community parks.



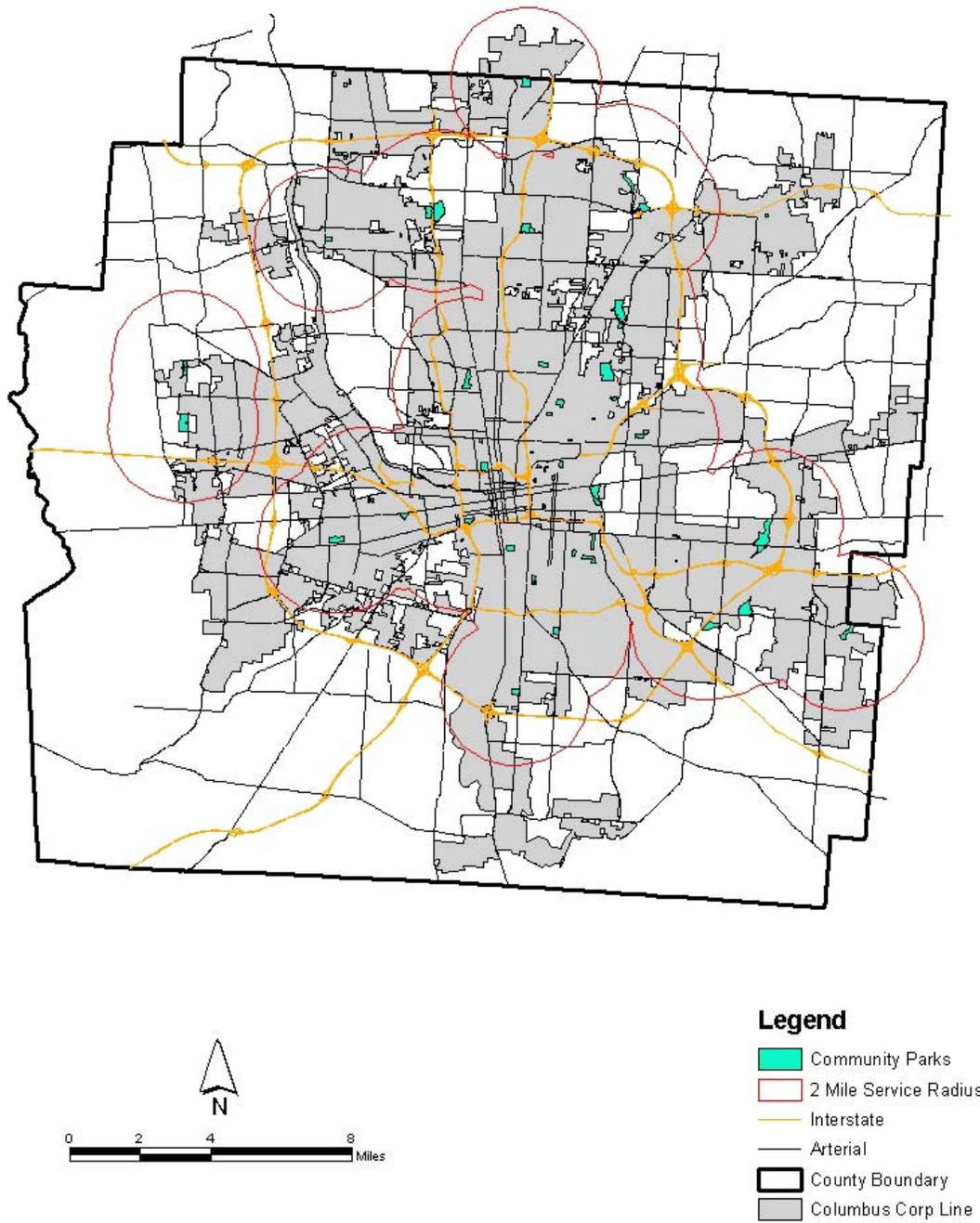
Photo 3-4. The lake in Antrim Park and its perimeter-walking path are popular with local residents.

Community parks generally range **from 25 acres to 40 acres**. Community parks serve a larger area—a radius of **1 to 3 miles**—and contain more facilities than a neighborhood park. **Figure 3-3** illustrates the service radius for CRPD community parks. Examples of CRPD community parks include Casto Park, Saunders Park, and Big Walnut Park.

At Antrim Park, a highway used to be a barrier to pedestrian access; now there is a walkway under S.R. 315 and access via the Olentangy Multi-Use Trail. These connections have boosted attendance; one count showed 2,600 visitors to Antrim Park in three weeks.

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

Figure 3-3
Columbus Community Parks



CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

Regional Park (REG)

A regional park serves a **large area of several communities, residents within a county, or residents across multiple counties.**

Depending on activities within a regional park, users may travel as many as **60 miles** for a visit. Regional parks include recreational opportunities such as golf, boating, baseball/softball, camping, conservation-wildlife viewing, and fishing. (See **Photo 3-5.**)



Photo 3-5. Ball field being used at Berliner Park.

Although regional parks usually have a combination of passive areas and active facilities, they are likely to be predominantly **natural resource-based parks.** A common size for regional parks is **up to 1,000 acres.**

Examples of CRPD regional parks include Berliner Park, Anheuser-Busch Sports Park, Three Creeks Park, Hoover Reservoir Nature Preserves, and Big Run Park. While Anheuser-Busch Sports Park is only 53 acres, users from a large region visit this park.

Community Recreation Center (CRC)

A community recreation center provides programs, activities, and facilities for people of **all ages** within a **2- to 3-mile radius.** CRPD examples include Marion-Franklin Community Center and Whetstone Community Center. Public transit stops are strongly encouraged to

be located at or near community recreation centers. **Photo 3-6** shows a transit stop located nearby a recreation center.



Photo 3-6. COTA transit stop at Carriage Place Community Center.

Special-use Park or Facility (SPU)

A special-use park or facility provides a **unique or special attraction,** usually without traditional park structures and facilities. CRPD examples include the Park of Roses, Battelle Park, Bicentennial Park, Topiary Park in Deaf School Park, Davis Youth Complexes, and the Cultural Arts Center.

Senior centers benefit from transit stops adjacent to the facility. **Photo 3-7** shows a transit stop in front of the Martin Janis Senior Center.



Photo 3-7. Transit stop at the Martin Janis Senior Center.

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

Multi-use Trails (MUT)

Multi-use trails are **corridors of land** recognized for their ability to **connect people and places**. In Columbus, these ribbons of open space are located primarily along the five major rivers flowing through the city. (See **Figure 3-4**.) More than 60 parks are scattered along these waterways. Linking neighborhoods, parks, recreation facilities, and streams with a multi-use trail achieves two goals simultaneously: protecting natural areas along river corridors, and providing people with a way to access and enjoy them. Multi-use trails also offer a safe, alternative form of transportation; substantial health benefits; habitat enhancements for plants and wildlife; and unique opportunities for outdoor education and cultural interpretation.

The CRPD currently has **25 miles of multi-use trails** along the Olentangy and Scioto rivers and Alum Creek. The Olentangy Trail, nearly 12 miles long, is one of the oldest and most popular developed greenways in Ohio. The Scioto Trail, which travels through the dense, urban core of downtown, is used heavily by joggers, rollerbladers, and commuter cyclists. The Alum Creek Trail is being constructed in phases from Westerville to Three Creeks Park.

In addition to the **greenway trails** along Columbus waterways, numerous **loop trails** exist in city parks. **Table 3-1** summarizes these loop trails.

Conservation/Natural Area (CON)

A conservation/natural area is CRPD parkland that has been acquired to **protect and preserve significant natural areas, wetlands, and ravines**. No development is planned for these areas, which are usually along waterways and have limited public access.

Easement Property (EAS)

CRPD easements, located throughout the city, include **scenic easements, conservation easements, or bikeway easements**.

Table 3-1
Walking and Biking Trails

Park/Facility	Distance (Miles)	Description
Alum Crest Park	0.3	Signed Asphalt Loop
Antrim Park	1.2	Asphalt Loop around Lake
Battelle Park	0.5	Bikeway to Spring Street
Big Walnut Park	0.8	Bikeway/Roadway
Carriage Place Park	0.4	Asphalt Loop
Deaf School Park	0.3	Asphalt Loop
Dexter Falls Park	0.33	8-foot Asphalt Loop
Driving Park-Fairwood Park	0.45	8-foot Asphalt Parks Connector
Elk Run Park	0.6	Asphalt Loop
Fairwood Park	0.4	Asphalt Loop
Flint Park*	0.33	Asphalt Loop
Franklin Park	1.1	Roadway Loop
Goodale Park	0.8	Sidewalk Perimeter
Greene Countrie Park	0.3	Asphalt Loop
Griggs Reservoir	7.25	Roadway/Walkway
Freedom Park	0.3	Asphalt Loop
Herr Park	0.25	Asphalt Loop
I-670 Bikeway	3.4	Parallels I-670; 8 feet wide
Independence Village Park	0.2	Asphalt Loop
Innis Park	0.5	Loop Bikeway/Roadway
Kenlawn Park	0.25	Asphalt Loop
Krumm Park	0.45	8-foot Asphalt Loop
Lazelle Woods Park	1.0	8-foot Asphalt Loop (1/2 Mile; Small)
Madison Mills Park	0.2	Asphalt Loop
Maloney Park	0.7	Asphalt Loop
Marion-Franklin Park	0.4	Asphalt Loop
Mock Park	0.4/0.6	Asphalt Loops
Moeller Park	0.2	Asphalt/Sidewalk Loop
Nafzger Park	0.75	10-foot Asphalt/Parking Lot Loop
Nelson Park	0.55	Asphalt Loop/Bikeway
Olentangy Trail	9.25	8-foot Asphalt
Olentangy Trail	1.6	OSU South
Olentangy Parkland		Mulched Nature Trail
Rhodes Park*	0.25	Track
Roosevelt Park	0.2	Asphalt Loop
Schiller Park	0.8	Perimeter Sidewalk
Scioto Woods Park	0.2	Loop Walk
Southern Pines Park	0.33	Asphalt Loop
Stoneridge Park	0.25	Loop through Woods
Strawberry Farms Park	0.35	Asphalt Loop
Summitview Park	0.3	Asphalt Loop
Three Creeks	2.3	12-foot Path
Sycamore Fields	0.78	Asphalt Loop (Soccer Fields)
Tuttle Park	0.6	Asphalt Loop
Westbank Walkway	0.3	Asphalt Parallel River
Westgate Park	1.2	Perimeter
Whetstone Park	1.6	Bikeway
Willow Creek Park	0.43	Walkway
Wolfe Park	0.5	Bikeway (Alum Creek)
Woodward Park	0.8	Asphalt Loop

* = leased park

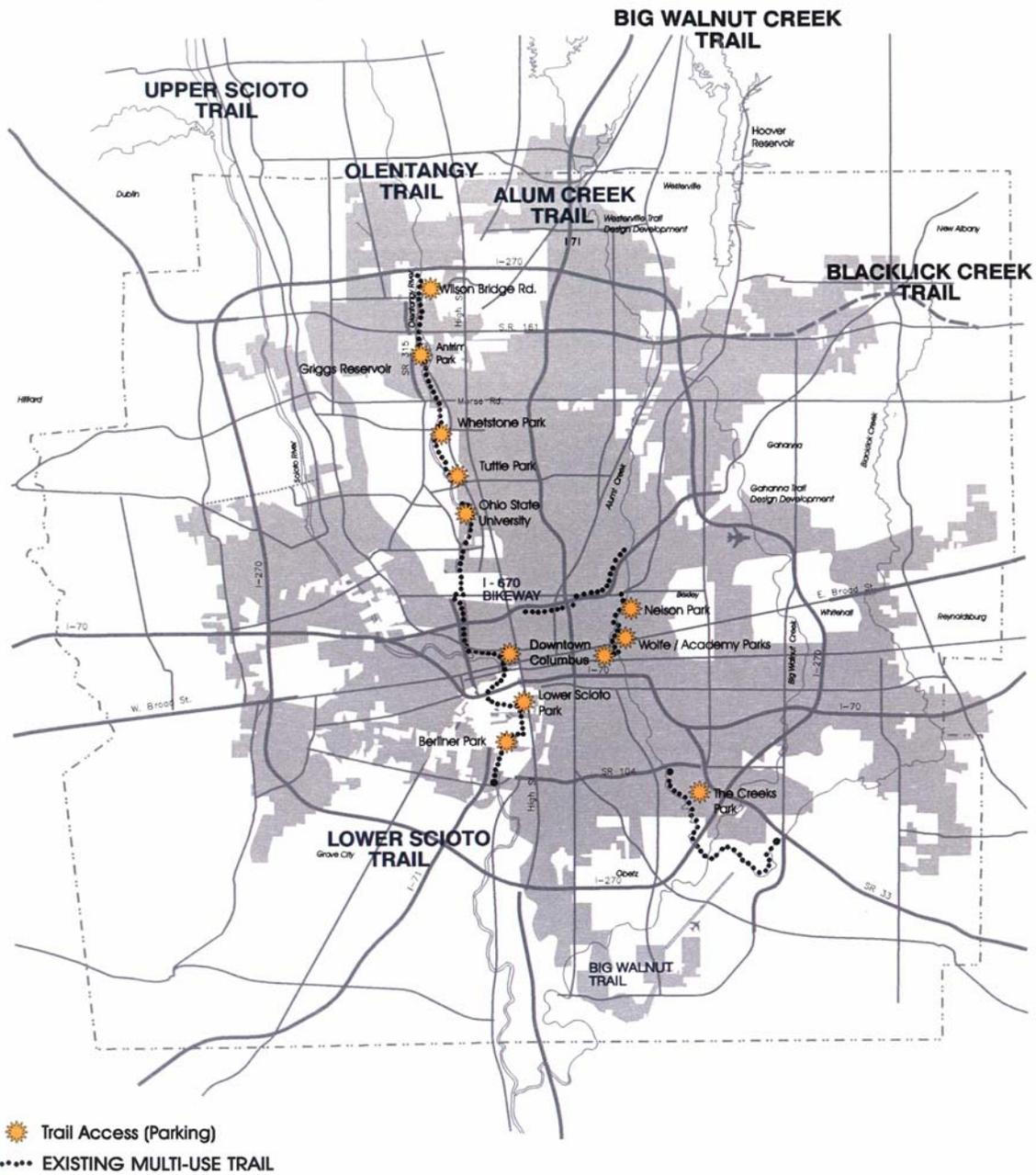


Figure 3-4
Existing Trails
Recreation and Parks Master Plan
City of Columbus, Ohio

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

Neighborhood Open Space (NOS)

A neighborhood open space is a CRPD park area **without playgrounds or other facilities**. However, this area is mowed regularly. Sometimes neighborhood open space will have picnic tables and benches.

Operations/Non-Park Area (OPR)

Examples of an operations/non-park area include a CRPD **maintenance area**, offices, a nursery, or parking lot.

Parkland Reserve (PLR)

Parkland reserve is CRPD property acquired through donation or purchase that will most likely **be developed into a park**. Development will occur when the need and/or funds are available.

Golf Course (GLF)

This is CRPD property used exclusively to play golf. The property includes the **course, clubhouse, parking, and on-site maintenance** facilities.

Reservoir Park and Facilities (RES)

This includes **land and water** associated with the three Columbus reservoirs: Griggs, Hoover, and O'Shaughnessy. Currently, the CRPD and Watershed Management of the Division of Water jointly manage the reservoir parks. The Waterways Taskforce conducted an extensive public process to define best management practices related to reservoirs and completed its report in 1995.

Park Classification Summary

Table 3-2 is a summary of the **acreage** contained within the majority of CRPD park classifications.

Table 3-2
CRPD Property Summary Sheet

Classification	Designation	Acreage
Community	COM	1,422
Conservation/Natural Area	CON	282
Neighborhood Park	NGH	659
Neighborhood Open Space	NOS	259
Operations/Non-Park Area	OPR	77
Parkland Reserve	PLR	1,134
Regional or District	REG	3,266
Special-Use Park or Facility	SPU	99
Total		7,198
Golf Course	GLF	1,017
Multi-Use Trails	MUT	27 Miles
Reservoirs		Land = 1,404 Water = 5,035
Source: CRPD		

Park Standards

Recreation and park industry **guidelines** must be compared to community needs to determine the **most desirable quantity and distribution of recreation land and facilities** within a community or for a specific user group.

Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines, published by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and edited by R.A. Lancaster, defines community recreation and park standards in this manner:

“Community recreation and park standards are the means by which an agency can express recreation and park goals and objectives in quantitative terms, which in turn, can be translated into spatial requirements for land and water resources. Through the budget, municipal ordinances, cooperative or joint public-private efforts, these standards are translated into a system for acquisition, development and management of recreation and park resources.”

This publication further describes the role of community standards in establishing a baseline or minimum for the amount of land required for various types of recreation and park facilities. Standards, which correlate recreational needs into spatial requirements, justify recreational needs and expenditures. Based on NRPA guidelines, the master planning team's experience, and conditions and needs in Columbus, the following standards are suggested:

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

■ Neighborhood Parks

- 1 acre/1,000 population
- Service-area radius: ½ mile
- Size: Approximately 5 acres to 15 acres

■ Community Parks

- 4 acres/1,000 population
- Service-area radius: 2 miles
- Size: Approximately 20 acres to 40 acres

■ Regional Parks

- 10 acres/1,000 population
- Size: Approximately 200 acres and larger

The suggested standards above should be compared to the following existing conditions for parks within the CRPD system:

■ Neighborhood Parks

- CRPD has 659 acres per 711,470 people, which equals 0.927 acre/1,000 population.
- CRPD uses a service-area radius of ½ mile.
- CRPD neighborhood parks range from 0.04 acre to 36.62 acres.

■ Community Parks

- CRPD has 1,422 acres per 711,470 people, which equals 2 acres/1,000 population.
- CRPD uses a 2-mile service-area radius.
- CRPD community parks range from 0.73 acre to 137.84 acres.

■ Regional Parks

- CRPD has 3,266 acres per 711,470 people, which equals 4.59 acres/1,000 population.
- CRPD regional parks range from 1.18 acres to 963.45 acres.

Table 3-3 compares various-size cities and the percentage of total acreage each city dedicates to **park and open space**. Total park and open space includes land owned by city, county, regional, state, and federal park agencies located within city boundaries.

Parkland Dedication Ordinance

Columbus City Council adopted the *Columbus Comprehensive Plan* on December 6, 1993. This plan—which stated that Columbus required a method to keep pace with the need for additional parkland—recommended that an ordinance for parkland dedication be drafted. City Council passed the **Parkland Dedication Ordinance** (PDO) on July 20, 1998.

The PDO states that meeting the public interest, health, welfare, and safety requires that **a minimum of 5.5 acres of land per 1,000 people residing within the city must be devoted to park, recreational, and open-space purposes**. This ordinance set the minimum standard for parkland within the City of Columbus.

According to the ordinance, when an application for rezoning of land in excess of 1 acre is submitted, the Recreation and Parks Commission (or its designee) and the applicant determine whether a land or monetary donation shall be required. If a land donation is required, then land to be dedicated for public parkland/open space shall be identified on a preliminary survey or site plan and deeded to the city at the time of final zoning clearance approval, or plat approval.

(Note: A citywide **Advisory Group**—established at the beginning of the planning process—served as a conduit for information to Columbus residents. A special committee of the Advisory Group recommended that the PDO should be redefined. The committee’s specific recommendations are detailed on page 4-2.)

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

**Table 3-3
Parks/Open Space Comparison by City**

Population Density Level	City	Area of City (in Acres)	Total Park/ Open Space Acreage within the City	Park Acreage as a Percent of City Acreage
High	New York	197,696	52,938	26.8%
	San Francisco	29,888	7,594	25.4%
	Boston	30,976	4,865	15.7%
	Philadelphia	86,464	10,685	12.4%
	Los Angeles	300,352	30,121	10.0%
	Baltimore	51,712	5,091	9.8%
	Chicago	145,408	11,629	8.0%
	Miami	22,784	1,329	5.8%
Average, this Density Level				14.2%
Intermediate	Minneapolis	35,156	5,694	16.2%
	Portland	79,808	12,591	15.8%
	Cincinnati	49,408	7,391	15.0%
	Seattle	53,696	6,194	11.5%
	St. Louis	39,616	3,385	8.5%
	Pittsburgh	35,584	2,735	7.7%
	Detroit	88,768	5,890	6.6%
	Columbus	140,800	9,184	6.5%
	Cleveland	49,280	2,887	5.9%
	Average, this Density Level			
Low	San Diego	207,360	36,108	17.4%
	Phoenix	268,736	36,501	13.6%
	Dallas	218,880	21,828	10.0%
	Kansas City	199,360	13,329	6.7%
	Houston	345,536	21,790	6.3%
	Denver	98,112	5,643	5.8%
	Indianapolis	231,488	13,239	5.7%
	Tampa	69,568	3,090	4.4%
	Atlanta	84,352	3,147	3.7%
	Average, this Density Level			
Source: Urban Land Institute, The Trust for Public Land, 2000.				

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

FACILITIES

Facilities operated by the CRPD serve the community's diverse needs. Buildings currently used vary in size, materials, programmed activities, and age. For example, the Cultural Arts Center (see *Photo 3-8*) was built in the 1860s while the Northeast



Photo 3-8. View of the Cultural Arts Center, constructed in 1861.

Recreation Center and the Carriage Place Recreation Center were constructed in the 1990s. The Indoor Adventure Center in Franklin Park, one of the newest CRPD facilities, contains a state-of-the-art indoor high-ropes course.

Recreation/community centers are the most common type of facility that CRPD provides for public use. There are 28 recreation centers in the CRPD inventory. These centers are important because they serve a wide variety of age groups from youths through senior citizens and often offer outdoor activities such as basketball courts, tennis courts, playgrounds, and soccer and baseball fields.

The CRPD recreation/community centers are essentially neighborhood centers because of their size. (See Table 3-4.) Square footages range from the 7,500-square-foot Brittany Hills Recreation Center, to the 40,000-square-foot Schiller Center. *Photo 3-9* shows the area in front of the 35,500-square-foot Thompson Community Center.

**Table 3-4
Community Centers and Sizes**

Community Center Name	Size	Built
Barack Recreation Center	26,470 SF	1964
Barnett Recreation Center	32,093 SF	1965
Beatty Recreation Center	24,820 SF	1951
Blackburn Recreation Center	39,301 SF	1967
Brentnell Recreation Center	8,230 SF	1975
Brittany Hills Recreation Center*	7,510 SF	1975
Carriage Place Recreation Center**	20,167 SF	1990
Feddersen Recreation Center	31,580 SF	1965
Dodge Recreation Center	22,228 SF	1933
Driving Park Recreation Center**	10,440 SF	1980
Glenwood Recreation Center	15,063 SF	1915
Holton Recreation Center	10,130 SF	1975
Indian Mound Recreation Center	10,170 SF	1975
Krumm Recreation Center	10,630 SF	1975
Linden Recreation Center	19,180 SF	1953
Lula Pearl Douglas Recreation Center**	24,423 SF	1993
Woodward Recreation Center	15,403 SF	1976
Marion-Franklin Community Center	35,555 SF	1972
Milo Grogan Recreation Center	8,535 SF	1973
North East Recreation Center**	20,167 SF	1990
Sawyer Recreation Center	36,700 SF	1972
Schiller Recreation Center	40,424 SF	1892
Sullivant Gardens Recreation Center	11,130 SF	1976
Thompson Recreation Center	35,500 SF	1959
Tuttle Recreation Center	11,257 SF	1975
Westgate Recreation Center	26,580 SF	1963
Whetstone Recreation Center	26,580 SF	1956
Far East Recreation Center	17,200 SF	1971

Source: CRPD.

* = leased
** = constructed within the last 25 years



Photo 3-9. Thompson Community Center.

CRPD also operates and maintains seven senior centers, 10 outdoor swimming pools, one indoor pool, three amphitheatres, and 10 shelter houses. Shelter houses, which can be reserved and rented by the public, provide CRPD with additional income.

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

Most facilities in the CRPD inventory contain parking areas and most are serviced by public transit provided by COTA.

ASSESSMENT OF PARKS AND FACILITIES

Background

CRPD selected 19 parks and facilities for assessment. (A comprehensive, facility-by-facility audit would have been prohibitively expensive and time consuming. This list of 19 parks and facilities is a sufficiently large statistical sample that provided meaningful results and allowed physical conditions to be extrapolated over the entire system.)

The parks and facilities have been categorized into five groups. Each group contains at least one site considered to be the best, one that needs the most improvement, and one considered in the middle of the range.

The master planning team visited all 19 parks and facilities and assessed the overall condition at each site using a standardized facility/building inventory form, developed in collaboration with the CRPD. The assessment involved **on-site observations** of the following:

- Recreation program use;
- Visual quality;
- Natural features;
- Street access and parking;
- Compatible use;
- ADA issues;
- Overall condition;
- Level of use; and
- Walk-in access.

The assessments were conducted between November 2000 and March 2001. (See the **Appendix** for individual assessments.)

Assessments were reviewed and used to create capital improvement plan budgets for each location. (See the **Appendix** for budgets for each location.) These budgets were used to generate a system-wide budget for capital improvements.

Note that the forms and budgets for an individual site are not intended to pinpoint specific items that might require attention. **Instead, the findings from all 19 parks and facilities are intended to represent a range of conditions that can be found within CRPD parks and facilities.** The critical task was to build a baseline representing the entire CRPD system. Costs are based on conditions found during the site visits. Some recommendations may have been completed by the time this master plan is issued, while other issues may have emerged.

The following sites per group were visited:

- **Group 1: Neighborhood Parks:** Brevoort Park, Karns Park, Greene Countrie Park, and Walnut View Park;
- **Group 2: Community Parks:** Whetstone Park, Antrim Park, Lincoln Park, and Schiller Park;
- **Group 3: Recreation Centers:** Woodward, Carriage Place, Marion-Franklin, and Blackburn;
- **Group 4: Regional Facilities:** Berliner Park, Raymond Park, Cultural Arts Center, and Hoover Marina;
- **Group 5: Miscellaneous Facilities:** Davis Discovery Center, 1100 East Broad Street, and Columbus Swim Center.

Assessment Summary

The assessment results demonstrate an across-the-board need for capital improvement funding for every type of park and facility within the CRPD system.

Types of expenditures vary from site to site and building to building. (See the **Appendix** for descriptions of these improvements and their associated costs.) Recommended improvements span a broad range, from fire protection to roof replacement to over seeding. However, some issues were observed at **multiple locations**. These issues include:

- Sidewalk improvements;
- Security lighting;
- Resurfacing of existing basketball and tennis courts;

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

- Landscaping improvements;
- Improvement or replacement of drainage systems at football/soccer fields; and
- Additional site furniture.

Both site-specific and age-related needs were identified for facilities reviewed. The site visits also revealed the need to perform more improvements at older facilities.

The capital cost summaries derived from the park and facility assessments are included below. These summaries are organized by group and demonstrate a significant range of costs—from less than \$17,000 (Marion-Franklin Recreation Center) to more than \$2.5 million (Hoover Marina). Costs are averaged within their respective group to create **an average cost per park/facility for CRPD budgeting through 2010.**

The recommended improvements consider **upgrading and updating existing conditions only** and do not consider improvements needed for new programming that might occur.

■ Group 1: Neighborhood Parks

Park/Facility	Estimated Cost	Group Average
Brevoort Park	\$160,500	
Karns Park	\$219,900	
Green Countrie Park	\$54,900	
Walnut View Park	\$112,200	
Total	\$547,500	\$136,875

See the **Appendix** for specific issues at each neighborhood park visited. The following is an assessment summary for neighborhood parks:

- **Services** offered in the neighborhood parks are appropriate.
- The **sidewalk system** needs to be repaired, replaced, and expanded in multiple locations.
- **Site lighting**, security lighting, and facilities lighting (e.g., courts) need to be **upgraded** in multiple locations.
- **Game-court lighting** in neighborhood settings is a sensitive issue. These situations should be studied on a case-by-case basis, with public involvement, before any implementation.

- Multiple sites need **landscaping improvements** such as landscaped beds and more trees.
- Some of the **park-specific improvements** include resurfacing courts to reduce ponding, and replacing or even removing recreation equipment such as basketball goals, tennis court nets, tetherball poles, and funnelball standards.
- CRPD’s efforts to provide **barrier-free access to playground equipment** is evident at many parks, if not all. Maintaining accessibility standards will require continued vigilance and ongoing improvements as accessibility issues evolve and change.
- Maintenance requirements could be reduced at some locations if **containment edging** at fall zones is added.
- **Open fields**, which are not designed for league use, are often used by local teams for practices. These fields (e.g., Karns Park) should be **restored and over seeded** to keep them in usable condition.
- **Refurbishing natural resource areas**, such as the wetland at Walnut View, is included in the recommended improvements for neighborhood parks.
- Of the three **shelter houses** in the four neighborhood parks, only one needed replacement. The cost for renovating or removing the restroom facility at Brevoort was not considered in this study.
- All recommended improvements for **neighborhood parks** were prioritized based on safety, comfort, and aesthetics.

The average cost for improvements to the four neighborhood parks visited is approximately \$137,000 per park. However, because a number of the neighborhood parks are smaller than 5 acres, the average cost for improvements across all neighborhood parks is anticipated to be slightly less. **For planning purposes, the CRPD should budget approximately \$130,000 per neighborhood park for upgrades and rehabilitation.**

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

■ Group 2: Community Parks

Park/Facility	Estimated Cost	Group Average
Whetstone Park	\$654,000	
Antrim Park	\$608,760	
Lincoln Park	\$237,000	
Schiller Park	\$346,500	
Total	\$1,846,260	\$461,565

See the *Appendix* for specific issues at each community park visited. The following is an assessment summary for community parks:

- **Services** offered in the community parks are appropriate, if not ambitious.
- **Many issues observed in the neighborhood parks were observed in the community parks as well.** For example, the sidewalk system needs to be repaired, replaced, and expanded in multiple locations. Additional needs include improved landscaping as well as security, site, and game-court lighting at several community parks. For example, the estimated costs include security lighting beneath S.R. 315 at Antrim Park.
- In part because of their size, community parks have significantly **higher improvement costs** than neighborhood parks.

Issues **unique** to community parks include:

- Improvements to **parking and roads**;
- Improvements, upgrades, or repairs to **water features**; and
- Improvements aimed at refurbishing or establishing **natural and built resource areas** (e.g., Antrim Park, where adding bank protection for the lake and over seeding the meadow areas was recommended). Improvements to the casting pond at Whetstone Park also fall into this category.

The **buildings** within community parks also have **higher upgrade costs**. Some issues include:

- A new **fire alarm** system, doors, and hardware at Whetstone Park;
- **HVAC upgrades** to the recreation center at Schiller Park; and

- **Stucco repairs** to the bathhouse at Lincoln Park.

The average cost for improvements to the four community parks visited is approximately \$460,000 per park. The four community parks selected should represent the size and scope of issues that could be expected in the remaining community parks. **For planning purposes, the CRPD should budget an average of \$460,000 per community park for upgrades and rehabilitation.**

■ Group 3: Recreation Centers

Park/Facility	Estimated Cost	Group Average
Woodward	\$519,600	
Carriage Place	\$252,000	
Marion-Franklin	\$16,200	
Blackburn	\$541,200	
Total	\$1,329,000	\$332,250

See the *Appendix* for specific issues at each recreation center. The following is an assessment summary for recreation centers:

- **Services** offered at recreation centers are appropriate.
- The **cost** of the recommended improvements to recreation centers **varies significantly**, in part because only minimal upgrades are recommended for the Marion-Franklin Recreation Center.

The improvements recommended consist primarily of **upgrades and improvements** to existing conditions. Some recommended upgrades include:

- New fire **sprinkler systems** at Blackburn and Berliner;
- New **security systems** at Blackburn, Berliner, and Woodward;
- Upgrades and improvements to **exterior courts and fields** at Blackburn, Berliner, and Woodward;
- **Security lighting** at Blackburn to reduce loitering; and
- Replacement of the **existing pool** at Blackburn with a new zero-depth, water park-style facility.

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

The average cost for improvements to the four recreation centers visited is approximately \$332,000 per center. Because the majority of CRPD's centers are more than 10 years old, the average cost for improvements to recreation centers across the entire CRPD system is anticipated to be more. **For planning purposes, the CRPD should budget an average of \$350,000 per recreation center for upgrades and rehabilitation.**

■ Group 4: Regional Facilities

Park/Facility	Estimated Cost	Group Average
Berliner Park	\$1,800,900	
Raymond	\$1,035,000	
Hoover Marina	\$2,630,400	
Cultural Arts Center	\$172,800	
Total	\$5,639,100	\$1,409,775

See the **Appendix** for specific issues at each regional facility. The following is an assessment summary for regional facilities:

- Again, **services** offered at regional facilities are appropriate.
- Because regional facilities are predominantly very large venues, **improvement costs are much higher** than costs for smaller CRPD facilities.
- The sites visited—a golf course, marina, ball fields, and a cultural arts center—feature a wide range of uses. Thus, a more **site-specific set of recommendations** has been developed for each.

Some recommendations include:

- A new indoor **soccer facility** and reinforced grass **overflow parking** at Berliner;
- Tee box, greens, and fairway **restoration** at Raymond;
- A 15-mile **hike/bike trail** at Hoover;
- Signage, hardscaping, lighting, and furniture **upgrades** at the Cultural Arts Center;
- **ADA upgrades** at Raymond and the Cultural Arts Center; and
- **Security-system upgrades** at Berliner and the Cultural Arts Center.

The average cost for improvements to the four regional facilities is slightly more than \$1.4 million per facility. Compared to any of the other groups, the costs for regional facilities feature a greater range between high and low; this reflects the diverse nature of regional facilities. **For planning purposes, the CRPD should budget an average of \$1.5 million per regional facility for upgrades and rehabilitation.**

■ Group 5: Miscellaneous Facilities

Park/Facility	Estimated Cost	Group Average
Davis Discovery Center	\$1,048,200	
1100 East Broad Street	\$99,000	
Columbus Swim Center	\$171,600	
Total	\$1,318,800	\$439,600

See the **Appendix** for specific issues at each miscellaneous facility. The following is an assessment summary for miscellaneous facilities:

- Again, **services** offered at miscellaneous facilities are appropriate.
- Despite the wide range of facilities within this category, a significant number of the **recommendations apply to more than one facility.**

Recommended improvements include:

- New **security lighting** at Davis and 1100 East Broad Street;
- New/updated **signage** at all three facilities;
- **Sidewalk** repairs and improvements at all three facilities;
- **HVAC upgrades** at Davis and 1100 East Broad Street; and
- New **security systems** at 1100 East Broad Street and the Columbus Swim Center.

The average cost for improvements to the three miscellaneous facilities visited is approximately \$440,000 per facility. **For planning purposes, the CRPD should budget an average of \$440,000 per miscellaneous facility for upgrades and rehabilitation.**

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

OTHER RECREATION SERVICE PROVIDERS

Franklin County, Ohio, encompasses Columbus and several other political jurisdictions including county agencies, townships, cities, towns, and villages. Many of these governmental groups provide leisure services to their residents through parks, open space, and facilities. **Figure 3-5** shows the location of **neighborhood parks** outside the limits of Columbus, while **Figure 3-6** shows the location of **community parks** outside the limits of Columbus offered by other recreation providers and partners.

Other entities besides Columbus also provide **regional parks**. For example, Metro Parks manages and operates 14 regional parks throughout seven counties in central Ohio. These 14 parks encompass approximately 20,000 acres of unique natural resources.

Most of Metro Parks' property within Franklin County is outside the I-270 beltway. The exception is the partnership with CRPD at Three Creeks, where the northern 1,000 acres are within the I-270 beltway. A list of **Metro Parks' properties** located within or partially within Franklin County includes:

- Prairie Oaks;
- Highbanks;
- Sharon Woods;
- Inniswood;
- Blendon Woods;
- Blacklick Woods;
- Pickerington Ponds;
- Three Creeks; and
- Battelle-Darby Creek.

The Metro Parks and the multi-use trail systems also may be considered regional facilities accessible to Columbus residents. When the acreage of Metro Parks' properties and multi-use trails is added to the city's acreage for regional parks, the total acreage more than meets suggested standards for Columbus' regional parks.

Partnerships with Schools

There are 17 school districts within Franklin County. A number of these operate within both Franklin County and the City of Columbus. The city already has some agreements in place with

the Board of Education, and lease agreements with Worthington and Bexley, which allow schools to use city parks. The city also leases a park from Worthington for CRPD use.

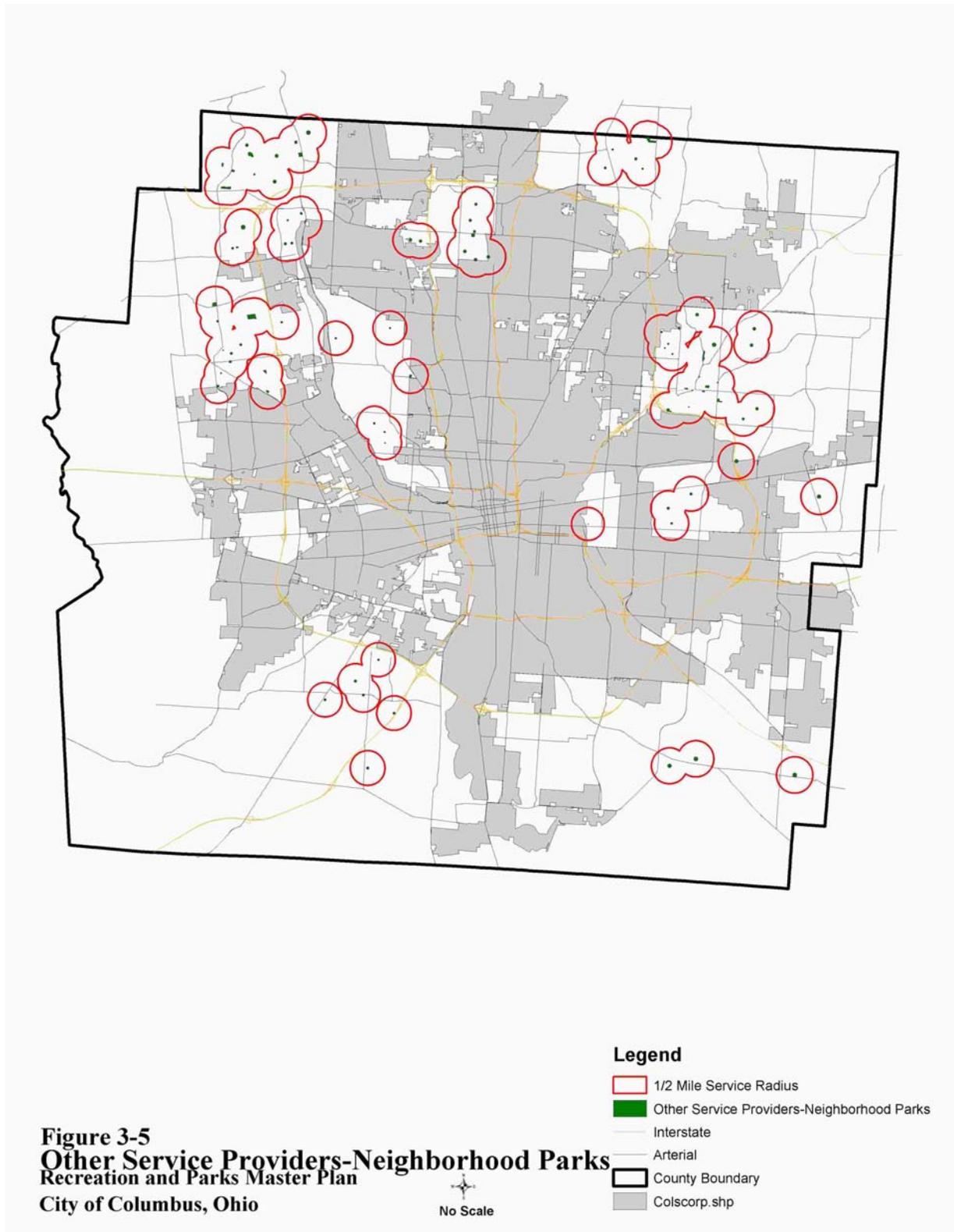
CRPD and Columbus Public Schools (CPS), the largest school system in Columbus, have established and maintained a **mutually beneficial relationship** over the past few decades. This relationship was legislated in the 1950s and evolved through the 1960s as new schools were built next to CRPD parks, and both entities began sharing property lines. (After the 1960s, as new school construction ceased, the relationship between CRPD and Columbus Public Schools lapsed a bit.)

Recently, the CRPD and Columbus Public Schools have reestablished their working relationship. **Table 3-5** lists some examples of successful cooperation between the organizations and reveals the potential for expanding this relationship.

Table 3-5
Examples of Cooperation: CRPD and CPS

Project	Cooperative Action
American Addition	CPS leases 4.67 acres to CRPD for park space.
Smith Road	CPS leases fields to CRPD.
Scioto Trail Elementary School	CPS leases fields to CRPD.
Douglas Elementary	CRPD made playground improvements. During school hours, the school has exclusive use of the playground. At 3:30 p.m. weekdays and on weekends, the playground is open to the community.
Duxberry Park	CRPD made playground improvements.
Burroughs Elementary	CRPD prepared playground improvements.
Southwood Elementary	CRPD prepared playground improvements.
Monroe Middle School	CRPD created the park.
Mifflin Middle School	CRPD and a local semi-pro football team upgraded the stadium.
Sources: DeJong & Associates, Inc. and Columbus Public Schools	

Small and informal agreements also exist between CRPD and CPS. For example, there are grass-mowing agreements: Certain parks are mowed by both agencies, and in other cases, one entity may mow for the other entity. In addition, ball fields are used sometimes by one entity or the other without a formal, written agreement. **Figure 3-7** shows the distribution of CPS facilities across the city.



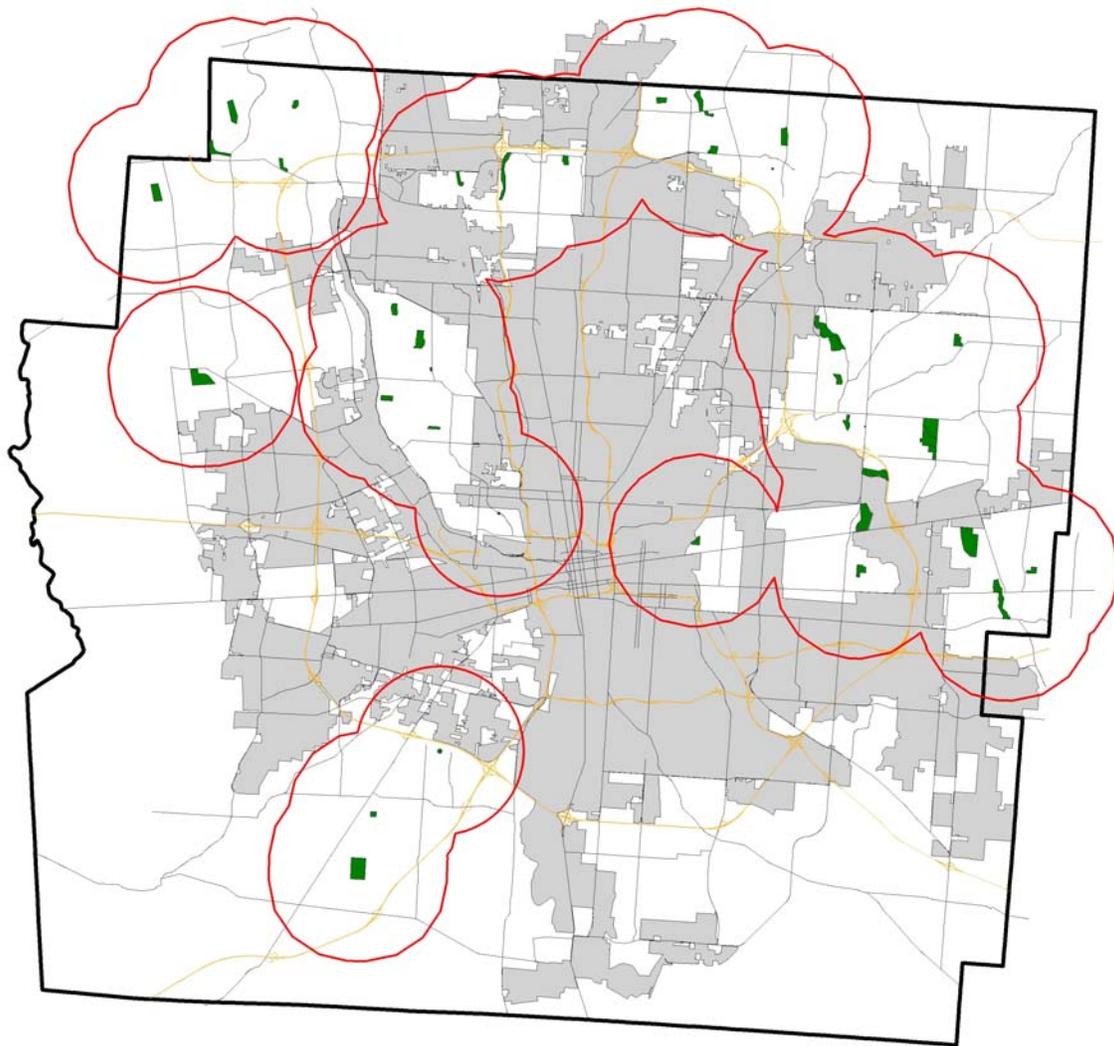


Figure 3-6
Other Service Providers-Community Parks
Recreation and Parks Master Plan
City of Columbus, Ohio

Legend

-  2 Mile Service Radius
-  Other Service Providers-Community Parks
-  Interstate
-  Arterial
-  County Boundary
-  Colscorp.shp

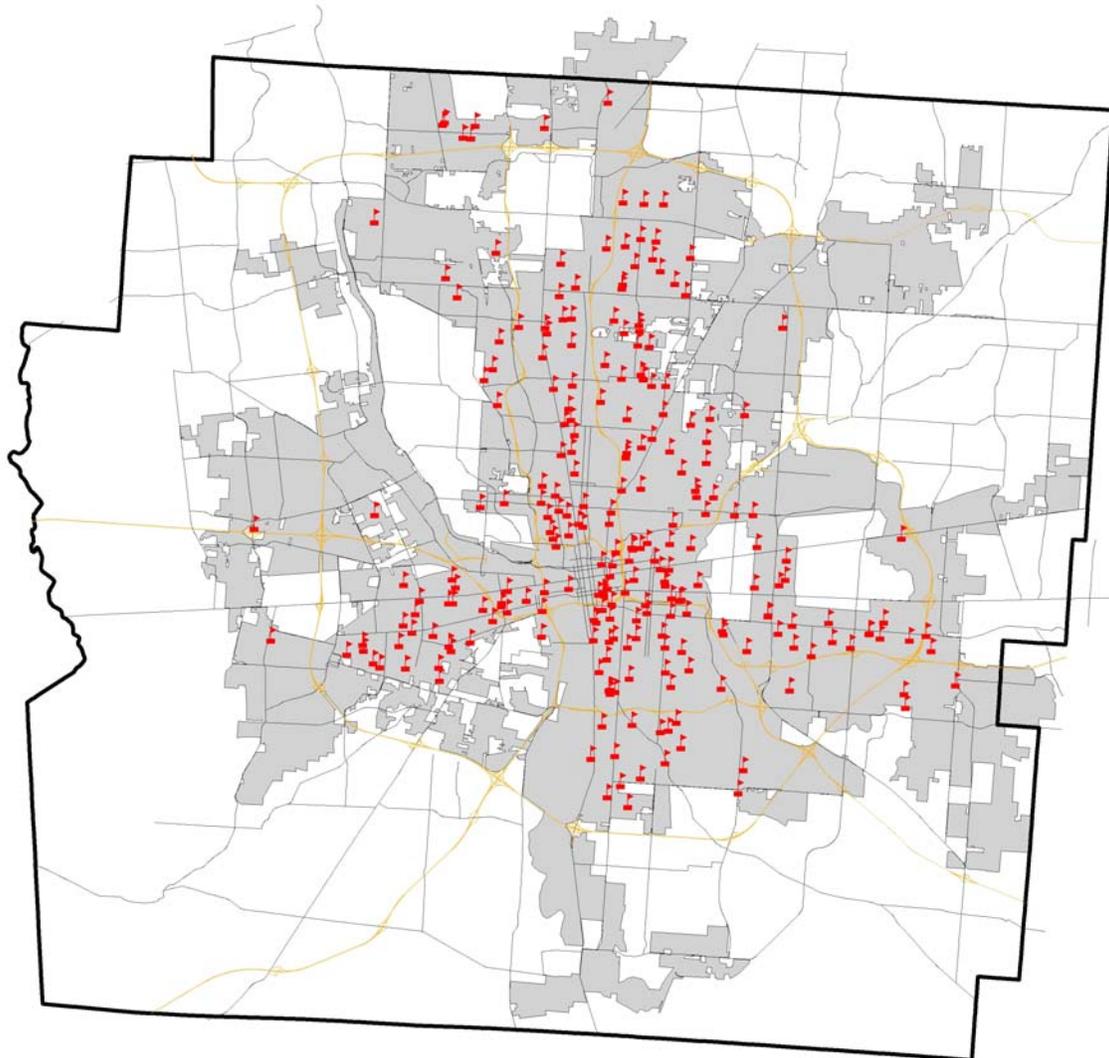


Figure 3-7
Locations of Columbus Schools (Public & Other)
Recreation and Parks Master Plan
City of Columbus, Ohio

No Scale

Legend

-  Public & Other
-  Interstate
-  Arterial
-  County Boundary
-  Colscorp.shp

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

In July 2001, CPS adopted a document entitled, “Guidelines for Planning Twenty-First Century School Buildings.” This document, which contains specific goals for public schools, includes visions for planning and designing school buildings to increase academic achievement. The following excerpt reveals some CPS goals and objectives that may be similar to or affect CRPD goals. These goals and objectives will be important factors in developing future partnership agreements with CPS and will be considered in Chapter 5: Recommendations.

A. Principles to guide our work in support of the district’s goals.

Goal 1—Increase student academic achievement.

- *The school physical environment impacts children’s learning; therefore, safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments will be provided for all students.*

Goal 2—Operate the district more efficiently and effectively.

- *Schools will be designed for energy and operating efficiency, and life-cycle costs will be considered.*
- *School designs will include flexibility to accommodate future changes in curriculum, enrollment, or technology.*
- *The District will coordinate with the city of Columbus and other jurisdictions in planning and scheduling infrastructure improvements near schools.*

Goal 3—Raise hope, trust, and confidence in Columbus Public Schools.

- *Parents, students, community members, and staff, as well as the City of Columbus and the business community, will be included in developing district and individual school plans.*
- *Partnerships with the city, non-profits, and community groups will be sought to cooperatively plan and operate multiple-use facilities to serve the community effectively and leverage scarce resources.*

- *A two-way communications plan will focus on listening to the community and providing program and project information to them.*

B. The vision for school buildings that increase academic achievement.

- *The design must include state-of-the-art systems for voice, video, and data.*
- *The buildings must be accessible to people with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.*
- *Schools should be community centers, accommodating extended daily use, weekend use, and year-round use.*
- *Schools should be air-conditioned to best accommodate year-round use.*

C. Assumptions as the basis for planning.

- *The OSFC guidelines for school site size are impractical in large cities; therefore, in determining if a school site is adequate, the neighborhood context, adequacy of playground and parking space, and traffic safety for pedestrians, school buses, and visitors will be considered.*
- *Some school buildings will not be needed to accommodate projected enrollment.*
- *Some schools will be retained to serve as “swing space” during construction or to provide flexibility to meet future, unforeseeable shifts in enrollment.*
- *Excess schools may be converted to other district uses, such as offices.*
- *Buildings not needed to fill current or projected district needs may be sold, and the proceeds of the sale invested in the capital program.*
- *Changes in building use or sale of property will be coordinated with the community and the city to ensure that actions are compatible with plans.*

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

- *Besides the obvious benefit to the school district, construction and renovation of school facilities on a large scale represents a singular opportunity for the economic development of a neighborhood and community. Such an opportunity occurs via the immediate business generated by such an effort and the ancillary development that takes place as a result of the construction. Therefore, the school district must make every effort to maximize the positive effect of this initiative by leveraging additional development in affected communities and implementing its outreach procurement program.*

COMPARISON AND ASSESSMENT OF OTHER RECREATION SERVICE PROVIDERS

During the data-collection phase of the planning process, **four comparison and assessment reports were generated.** These included a comparison and assessment of:

- **National** municipal recreation service providers;
- Other recreation service providers **in and surrounding Columbus;**
- Other recreation service **providers within the City of Columbus;** and
- Other **parks and recreation departments adjacent** to Columbus.

Each comparison and assessment was conducted to understand **the current position of the CRPD** compared with a variety of other recreation service providers. The following summarizes **key findings** from each comparison and assessment performed.

Comparison and Assessment: National Municipal Recreation Service Providers

The following information is based on the book entitled *Inside City Parks* by Peter Harnik and information gathered from **five benchmark cities** identified by CRPD staff.

Comparison figures extracted from *Inside City Parks* are based on 1990 city acreage and 1996 city population estimates. Data from the CRPD's benchmark cities are extracted from year 2000 information.

Columbus is defined as a low-density city based on its square miles and population figure for 2000 provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. Other low-density cities include San Diego, Denver, Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, Phoenix, Tampa, Indianapolis, and Kansas City (Missouri). The CRPD selected five cities to benchmark:

- Omaha (medium density);
- Minneapolis (medium density);
- Lexington (low density);
- Nashville (low density); and
- Indianapolis (low density).

Based on the information gathered, the following summarizes the areas where Columbus either meets or exceeds or is below the averages for other low-density cities. (See the **Appendix** for the full report.)

Benchmark Area	Columbus Meets or Exceeds	Columbus is Below
Population per square mile	X	
Park area as percent of city	X	
Park acres per 1,000 residents	X	
Expenditures per resident		X
Number of full-time employees per 1,000 residents		X
Number of full-time employees per square mile		X
Number of seasonal employees per 1,000 residents	X	
Number of seasonal employees per square mile	X	
Regional parks per 1,000 residents		X
Regional parks per square mile		X
Neighborhood parks per 1,000 residents	X	
Neighborhood parks per square mile		X
Recreation centers per 1,000 residents	X	
Recreation centers per square mile	X	
Pools per 1,000 residents		X
Pools per square mile		X
Golf courses per 1,000 residents		X
Golf courses per square mile	X	
Tennis courts per 1,000 residents		X
Tennis courts per square mile	X	
Sports fields per 1,000 residents		X
Sports fields per square mile	X	

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

Of these cities, Lexington and Omaha do not have a resident/non-resident pricing differential. Minneapolis, Indianapolis, and Nashville have a non-resident pricing differential, but only for a few specific programs. Programs qualifying for non-resident pricing are community gardens, adult leagues, contractual classes, and swimming and tennis lessons.

Comparison and Assessment: Other Recreation Service Providers in and Surrounding Columbus

The following is a comparison and assessment of the CRPD with agencies within the City of Columbus, and other parks and recreation departments surrounding Columbus. Key findings are below.

- Numerous **recreation options** are available to the Columbus residents.
- The CRPD should approach some of the other recreation service providers about establishing **partnerships**. Such partnerships can expand the community's program opportunities and be positive revenue streams if programs are priced at market rate and go beyond minimum participant levels or the break-even pricing point.
- Communities surrounding Columbus have their own parks and recreation departments that offer **programs similar to CRPD's programs**. These communities are assisting the CRPD by offering services to the suburban areas of Columbus where CRPD facilities and programs are lacking (even though Columbus residents must pay more). The current CRPD budget cannot support providing the same level of service to the suburban areas of Columbus. These Columbus residents benefit by accessing the services in neighboring communities.
- The CRPD provides services to the **highest populated areas** in Franklin County and in the surrounding counties.
- When comparing the CRPD to the surrounding communities based on every 1,000 population served, the **CRPD is not maintaining the same level of service** as other parks and recreation departments. CRPD did not rank first on any comparison

(i.e., on pools, tennis, playgrounds, or sports fields).

- The surrounding communities derive their funding from income taxes and levies; Grove City has a hotel tax and recreation development fee. The **CRPD does not have the same variety of funding** available compared to some of these surrounding communities.
- All but three of the 10 suburban departments had **residency requirements** for using services provided by their cities. Of those that required residency, three had a "restricted non-resident use" policy, and all charged an additional rate for non-residents. The CRPD currently does not charge non-residents for use of its services.
- Eight of the suburban communities have **school-use agreements** for pools and other recreation facilities. The CRPD does have some agreements with schools (e.g., fields and playground improvements). However, the CRPD may want to partner with schools in the city that have pools to extend aquatic programming and meet the same standards as outlying cities.

Comparison and Assessment: Other Recreation Service Providers within the City of Columbus

During data collection, the master planning team asked CRPD staff for examples of local competitors. The team also reviewed local publications such as newspapers and the Columbus telephone book to identify local competitors, which were grouped in one of four categories:

Category 1 includes recreation service providers that offer services similar to CRPD's. These providers potentially may be duplicating CRPD services, but they are more likely helping fulfill demands for recreation services. In fact, some of these providers are delivering higher level programs because of the lack of facilities, amenities, and staffing resources for CRPD programs. Demand for programs will continue to affect all agencies as population in the city and county increases. Thus, these service providers can not only complement and ease the demands being placed on the CRPD but also present opportunities for collaboration and cross promotions.

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

Category 2 includes recreation service providers that appear to foster healthy competition, offer quality community experiences, and encourage improved performance by the CRPD.

Category 3 includes providers offering different recreation services than those offered by the CRPD. These providers may include potential contractual providers or partners that provide services through the CRPD. (Note: These services may be non-core programs. If the CRPD is offering non-core programs, it might consider closing or readjusting these programs to free up resources and meet other market niches.)

Category 4 includes providers that are likely candidates for a CRPD partnership for program delivery.

Below are summaries of the providers and programs in all four categories.

■ Category 1: Providers Offering Services Similar to CRPD’s Services

Name of Organization	Type of Program	Seasons of the Activity	Ages of People Served
1. Private swimming pools	Aquatic programs	Summer	Preschool to middle school children
2. YMCA of Central Ohio	Aquatic programs	All seasons	All ages
3. YMCA of Central Ohio	Basketball	School year	All ages
4. YMCA of Central Ohio	Camp programs	All seasons	All ages
5. Public golf courses	Golf programs and play	Spring, summer, and fall	All ages
6. Private-sector dance and ballet companies	Beginning, intermediate, and advanced dance programs	All seasons	Preschool, elementary, and middle school children
7. Child care facilities	Day care before, during, and after school	All seasons	Preschool and elementary school children
8. Alum Creek State Park Marina	Boat rentals, fuel, slip rentals, and 5 launch ramps	Spring, summer, and fall	All ages; year-round activities depending on the weather
9. Deer Creek State Park Marina	Boat rentals, fuel, 152 slip rentals, and 2 launch ramps	Spring, summer, and fall	All ages; year-round activities depending on the weather
10. Buckeye Lake State Park Marina	Boat rentals, fuel, 40 slip rentals, and 5 launch ramps	Spring, summer, and fall	All ages; year-round activities depending on the weather
11. Metro Parks	Shelter rentals	Year-round depending on location ¹	Adults

¹Size, condition, and indoor or outdoor facilities determine fees. Rental fee is for full day of use.

■ Category 2: Providers Offering Healthy Competition with the CRPD

Name of Organization	Type of Program	Seasons of the Activity	Ages of People Served
1. Columbus Light Opera	Summer music productions	Summer	Young to older adults
2. Gallery Youth Center	Hosts gallery youth center performances	Year-round	Young people
3. The Hoops	Athletic programs		
4. Local churches	Adult athletic programs	Year-round	Adult markets
5. Suburban parks and recreation departments	Recreation programs and athletic leagues	Year-round	All participant markets

■ Category 3: Providers Offering Different Services than the CRPD Offers (Could be Existing Partners)

Name of Organization	Type of Program	Seasons of the Activity	Ages of People Served
1. Paintball Precinct	War games	Year-round, 24/7	All ages
2. Movie theaters, cinemplexes, and IMAX theaters	First-run movies	Year-round	All ages
3. Paintball, Field of Fun	Paintball games	Year-round	All ages
4. A variety of health and fitness clubs	Fitness facilities	Year-round	18 and over
5. Medically based fitness centers	Health and wellness	Year-round	18 and over
6. Private-sector batting cages	Baseball/softball improvement	Seasonal	All ages
7. Brewery District	Special events	Seasonal	Adult markets
8. State and county fairgrounds	Special events, agricultural shows	Seasonal	All ages
9. OSU-NYSP Camp	Sport camps for youth	Summer	All ages
10. Olympic Tennis Club	Indoor tennis facilities	Year-round	All ages
11. Westerville Athletic Club	Health and wellness	Year-round	18-over
12. Goodman Guild	A variety of educational and placement services to the community	Year-round	All ages are served through this OSU program
13. MLK Center	Offer a variety of services to students, faculty, and the community at OSU in education, art, literature, and cultural programs	Year-round	All ages
14. Gladden Community House	Building neighborhoods; serving as a facilitator of referral services for the community	Year-round activity	Youth and Adults
15. Polaris Amphitheater	Musical and theatrical productions	Seasonal	All ages

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

■ Category 4: Providers Who Could be Potential Future Partners with the CRPD

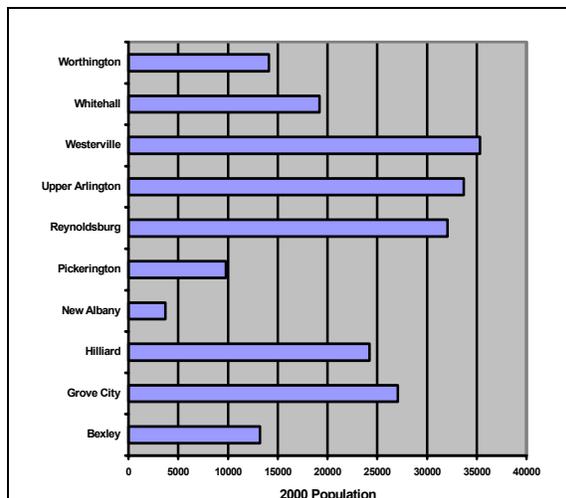
Name of Organization	Type of Program	Seasons of the Activity	Ages of People Served
1. Columbus Polarity Center	Wellness programs	Year-round activity	Age 35 and over
2. Mind Body Spirit Center	Health and wellness programs	Year-round activity	Age 35 and over
3. Travel agencies	Trips and tours for travel	Year-round activity	Older adults and youth
4. Four private-sector skating facilities	Rollerskating	School year	Preschool through high school
5. Sportsite Indoor Sports	Inline skating/roller hockey	School year	Elementary through adult
6. School district facilities	Basketball and volleyball	Year-round	All ages

Comparison and Assessment: Other Parks and Recreation Departments Adjacent to Columbus

CRPD staff identified **parks and recreation departments adjacent to Columbus**. These departments received a form requesting information on their park system and operations. Of the 16 departments that received the form, 10 departments returned complete or partial information to the CRPD. An analysis of this information follows.

■ Populations Served

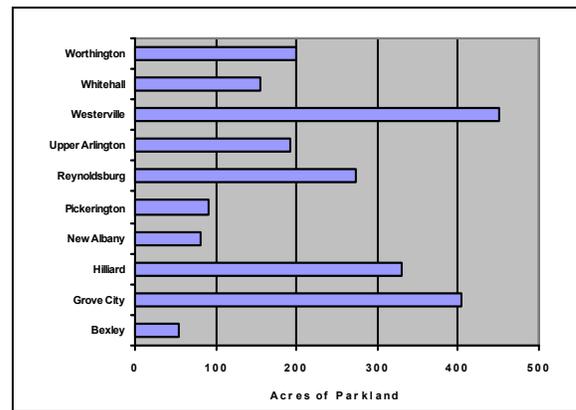
Cities surrounding Columbus serve much smaller populations and have **considerably smaller parks and recreation operations** than the CRPD. For example, according to 2000 census data, the population in Columbus is 711,000; the largest surrounding community is Westerville, with a population of 35,318.



■ Acres of Parkland

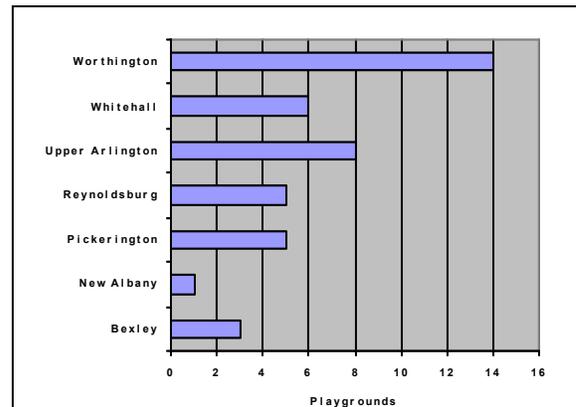
The **parkland managed by the surrounding communities is small** compared to the parkland managed by the CRPD. The surrounding city with the most parkland is Westerville, with 450 acres. Columbus, on the other hand, manages a total of 14,000 acres of combined parkland and water.

As stated in Chapter 1, Columbus ranks near the bottom one-third of the list compared to its surrounding suburbs and communities in acres of developed and undeveloped parkland per 1,000 people. Thus, even though Columbus has a large amount of parkland, it still does not measure up to the higher standard set by the smaller suburbs.



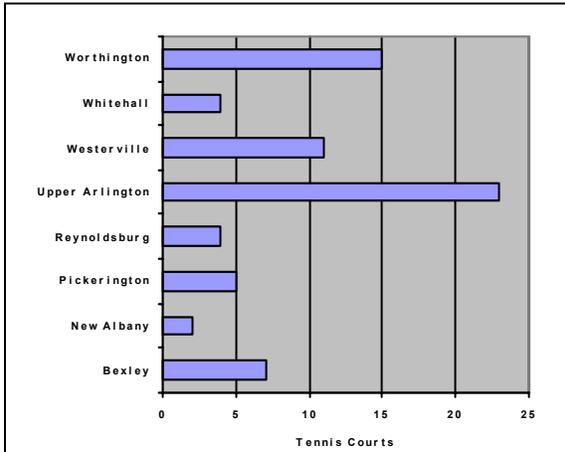
■ Park Assets

Playgrounds: Of the surrounding communities, Worthington has the greatest number of playgrounds, with 14 total. Columbus has 134 playground sites. Worthington has approximately one playground per 1,000 people; Columbus, however, has one playground per 3,500 people.

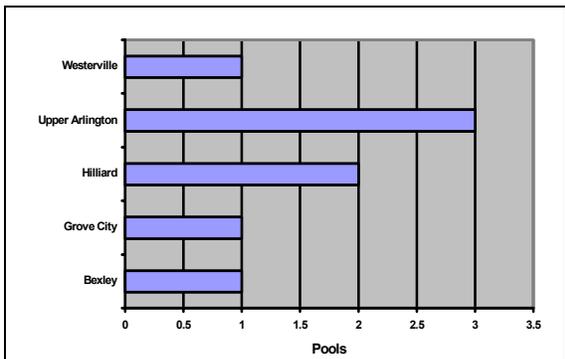


CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

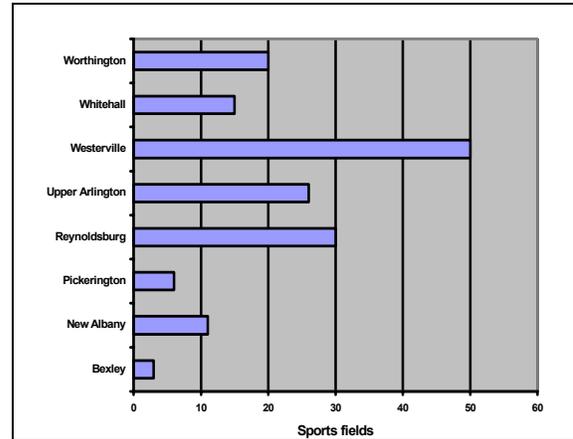
Tennis courts: Of the surrounding communities, Upper Arlington has the greatest number of tennis courts, with 23 total. Columbus has 141 tennis courts. Upper Arlington has approximately 0.68 tennis court per 1,000 people; Columbus, however, has 0.2 tennis court per 1,000 people.



Pools: Of the surrounding communities, Upper Arlington has the greatest number of pools, with three total. Columbus has 10 outdoor pools. Upper Arlington has approximately 0.09 pool per 1,000 people; however, Columbus has 0.01 pool per 1,000 people.



Sports fields: Of the surrounding communities, Westerville has the greatest number of sports fields, with 50 total. Columbus has 225 sports fields. Westerville has 1.42 sports fields per 1,000 people; Columbus, however, has 0.32 sports field per 1,000 people.



■ Funding

Of the 10 parks and recreation departments that responded, **seven receive revenue from income taxes and levies**. Grove City receives revenue from a hotel and motel tax, recreation development fee, and an income tax. The CRPD is funded by city property taxes. Thus, it is apparent that funding strategies for the CRPD are lacking when compared to funding strategies in communities adjacent to Columbus.

■ Partnerships

Of the 10 park and recreation departments that responded, **eight have partnership or use agreements in place** with their local school district. Columbus will need to work toward developing a uniform agreement covering programs, joint use of facilities, and school and parkland sharing.

■ Resident and Non-Resident Use

All but three of the departments responding had **residency requirements** for using services provided by their cities. Of those that required residency, three had a “restricted non-resident use” policy, and all charged an additional rate for non-residents (see **Table 3-6**).

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

**Table 3-6
Comparison of Resident/Non-Resident Use of Parks
and Recreation Facilities in Surrounding Communities**

Community	Residency Requirement	Non-Resident Use	Non-Resident Charges	Residents Served	Non-Residents Served
Bexley	Yes	Yes, restricted	Varies	Not available	10-15%
Dublin	Yes for discount	No	Varies for non-resident (~90%-190% increase) and school district residents (40%-150% increase)	Not available	Not available
Metro Parks	No	Yes	None	Not available	Not available
Grove City	Yes	Yes	20% additional	10,000	8,000
Hilliard	Yes	Yes, restricted	25% additional and other variations	10,000	1,500
New Albany	No	Yes	\$20 for programs and other variations	2,000	200
Pickerington	No	Yes	33% additional for non-residents	50%	50%
Reynoldsburg	Yes	Yes, restricted	Double the fee	Not available	Not available
Upper Arlington	Yes	Yes	\$5 additional	15,597	6,704
Whitehall	No	Yes	30% additional	Not available	Not available
Worthington	Yes	Yes	30% additional	19,943	13,936
Westerville	Yes	Yes	Varies	Not available	Not available

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAMS, PARKS, AND FACILITIES

The CRPD currently does not charge for non-resident use. Department policies do not restrict use by non-residents for programs, facilities, or services. However, many of the surrounding communities have built larger, more updated aquatic centers and recreation centers and have adopted a revenue-generating approach for these facilities to lower subsidies and increase cost recovery. Charging non-residents a higher fee is a standard used consistently throughout the country. The rationale for this standard: Non-resident tax dollars do not support either the capital investment or the ongoing operational costs for newer facilities, so the non-resident rate should be higher.

■ Golf Fees and Charges

CRPD's golf course administrator selected six cities for comparing golf course fees. The report in the **Appendix** reflects a comparison of greens fees and golf cart rates for these six cities. (Note: The cities selected were Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Nashville; however, Minneapolis [Minnesota] and Madison [Wisconsin] were reviewed in place of Pittsburgh, which does not operate any public courses.)

The golf market in Columbus could be nearing market saturation since Franklin County has more than 35 courses and central Ohio has more than 200 courses. The large number of courses available, and the weather, may be why CRPD's golf course revenues are down compared to the past year. Another reason may be the slight overall decline in golfing as a sport, which reached its peak in 1998, according to the National Sporting Goods Association. (See **Figure 3-8.**)

The pricing for CRPD golf courses was on the high end for greens fees compared to other cities. However, for cart fees, pricing was similar compared to other cities. CRPD golf courses have been considered competitively priced within the Columbus market. However, if the pricing differential for 18 holes on weekends and weekdays were reduced, the CRPD's pricing would be in line with the cities compared.

CRPD golf courses are being as competitive as possible given the resources available. Additional ideas included in this master plan for generating funds may assist in increasing revenues for the golf courses as well.

ABOUT THE NEXT CHAPTER

Chapter 3: Programs, Parks, and Facilities provided the findings and conclusions of a comprehensive survey of existing recreation programs, parks, and facilities. **Chapter 4: Needs Assessment** determines what programs, parks, and facilities are lacking.