

SECTION 5



FEDDERSEN COMMUNITY CENTER

Located in Cooke Park, the 35,000 Square Foot Feddersen Community Center has served the North Linden community since 1965.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGIES



This section of the report combines the information gathered from the public meetings, Community Interest and Opinion Survey, stakeholder and staff interviews, Level of Service Analysis and Prioritization with observations from focused site visits to parks, facilities and community centers. As part of this assessment, the planning team also reviewed current and future plans and conducted additional on-site interviews. The resulting Strategies and Tactics for Parks, Facilities, Community Centers and Programs are outlined in the following pages.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

The Needs Assessment and Strategies section has two major components. The first catalogs the observations and additional information gathered by the planning team during assessment visits to parks, facilities and community centers. The second combines this assessment with all of the data, input, research and analysis to develop strategies and tactics for improvement the Columbus Department of Recreation and Parks.

Strategy Themes

Building from CRPD's mission statement "To enrich the lives of our citizens," the planning team developed a set of five overarching recommendation themes. These five themes are echoed throughout the recommendations that seek to steadily improve the accessibility, quality, diversity, and financial sustainability of CRPD.

- All developed parks, facilities, programs, and services provided by CRPD should be accessible to all Columbus residents.
- All parks, facilities, programs, and services should be managed for quality through the use of consistent and strategic standards.
- CRPD should provide a broad spectrum of parks, facilities, programs, and services to engage Columbus residents.
- CRPD should develop and offer facilities, programs, and services that generate revenue.
- CRPD should develop partnerships to broaden service opportunities and ensure the long-term care of facilities.

This needs assessment and strategies build on these established themes and address the following major topic areas:

- Parks and Park Facilities
- Community Centers
- Programming
- Marketing and Outreach
- Partnerships

In the following pages each topic area is broken down into more detailed categories to provide a closer look at different park typologies, center size and infrastructure needs system-wide. Following this section, an Implementation and Action Plan is outlined and cataloged to provide a framework for future improvements and policy initiatives.

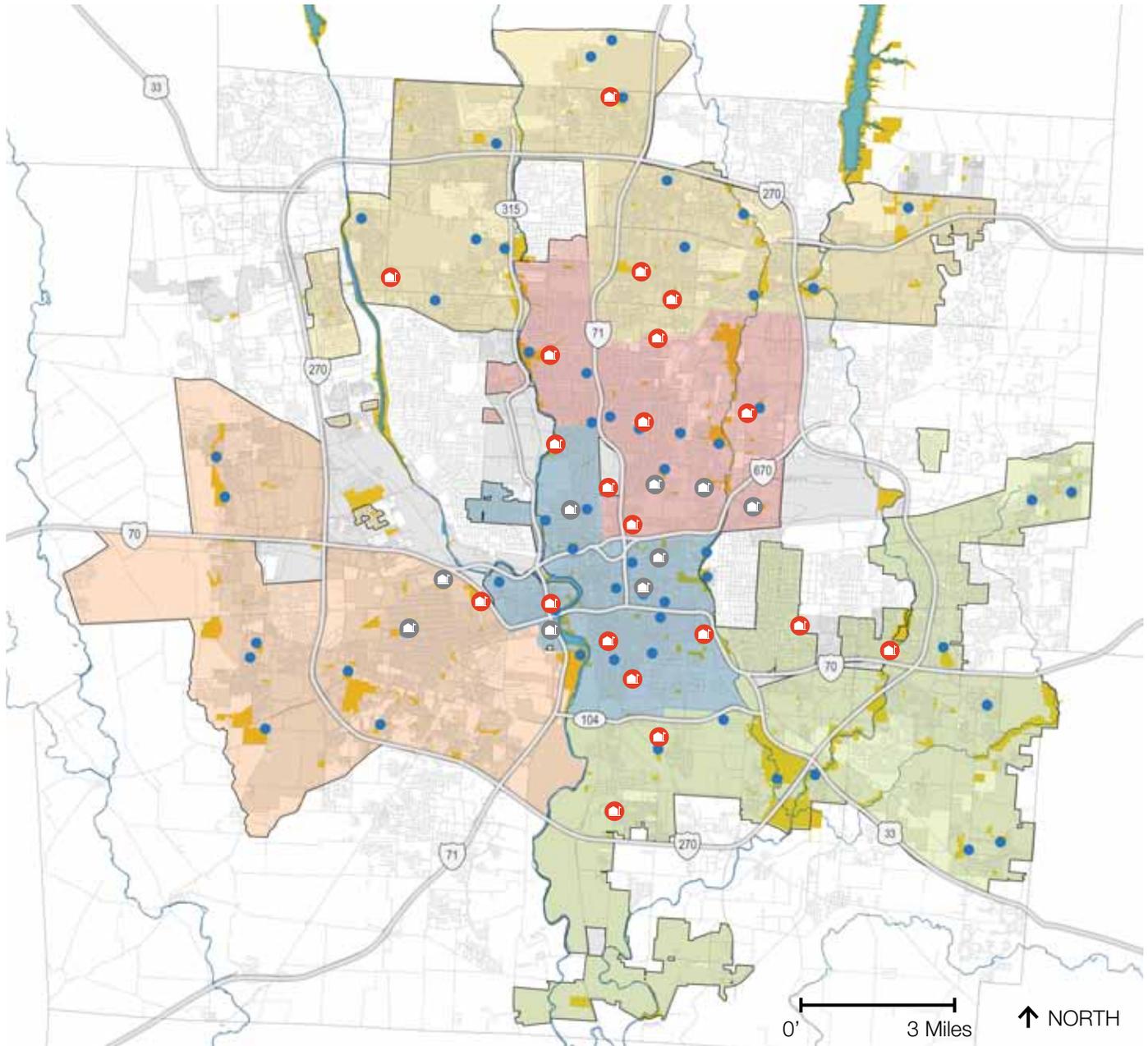


Wolfe Park along Alum Creek on the east side of Columbus. The shelterhouse in the distance was constructed in 1935.



Volleyball at Bill McDonald Community Center

Figure 5.1 Parks and Community Centers Visited by Planning Team



Legend

- In-Town Study Area
- Central Study Area
- North Study Area
- Southeast Study Area
- Southwest Study Area
- Park Visited by Planning Team
- 🏠
 Community Centers Visited by Planning Team
- 🏠
 Community Centers

PARKS AND FACILITIES ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

As part of the Master Planning process, the planning team visited 60 parks as well as portions of the multi-use trail system and blueway access points. This was done to assess current conditions, amenities offered, and determine needs for future improvements. To guide this assessment phase of the process, department staff selected a wide range of parks and facility types located within each of the five Study Areas. The parks visited within each Study Area are shown in Figure 5.2 at right. These parks and facilities covered the geographic reaches of the city and included all park typologies.

The assessment portion of this section is organized by Study Area. For each area, the number of parks, typology of parks and major amenities are cataloged. Calculations of how many residents are served and what percentage of the total city parkland is located in each area are provided. Following current conditions assessment, observations of issues and potential improvements are identified.

After the assessment by Study Area, strategies are outlined to meet the needs for improvements and investment. These strategies combine the assessment observations with information gathered during the demographic and trend analysis, public input, public survey and stakeholder and staff interviews to develop a framework for the Department for future years. These strategies address:

- 1.0 System-wide Strategies
- 1.2 Neighborhood Parks
- 1.3 Community Parks
- 1.4 Regional Parks
- 1.5 Natural Areas
- 1.6 Special Use Parks
- 1.7 Acquisition
- 1.8 Forestry
- 1.9 Maintenance
- 1.10 Multi-Use Trails
- 1.11 Blueways
- 1.12 Aquatics

Parks Visited by Planning Team by Study Area

IN-TOWN

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Blackburn Park | Mayme Moore Park |
| Topiary Garden at Deaf School Park | McKinley Park |
| Dodge Park | Moeller Park |
| English Park | Nelson Park |
| Goodale Park | Schiller Park |
| Harrison West Park | Tuttle Park |
| Karns Park | Weinland Park |
| Linwood Park | Wolfe Park |

CENTRAL

| | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Audubon Park | Linden Park |
| Brevoort Park | Maloney Park |
| Glen Echo Park | Mock Park |
| Harrison Smith Park | Whetstone Park |
| Joan Park | |

NORTH

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Albany Crossing Park | Lazelle Woods Park |
| Antrim Park | Northcrest Park |
| Cherrybottom Park | Northgate Park |
| Cooper Park | Parkridge Park |
| Godown Road Park | Prestwick Commons |
| Granville Park | Riverside Green Park |
| Hard Road Park | Wynstone Park |

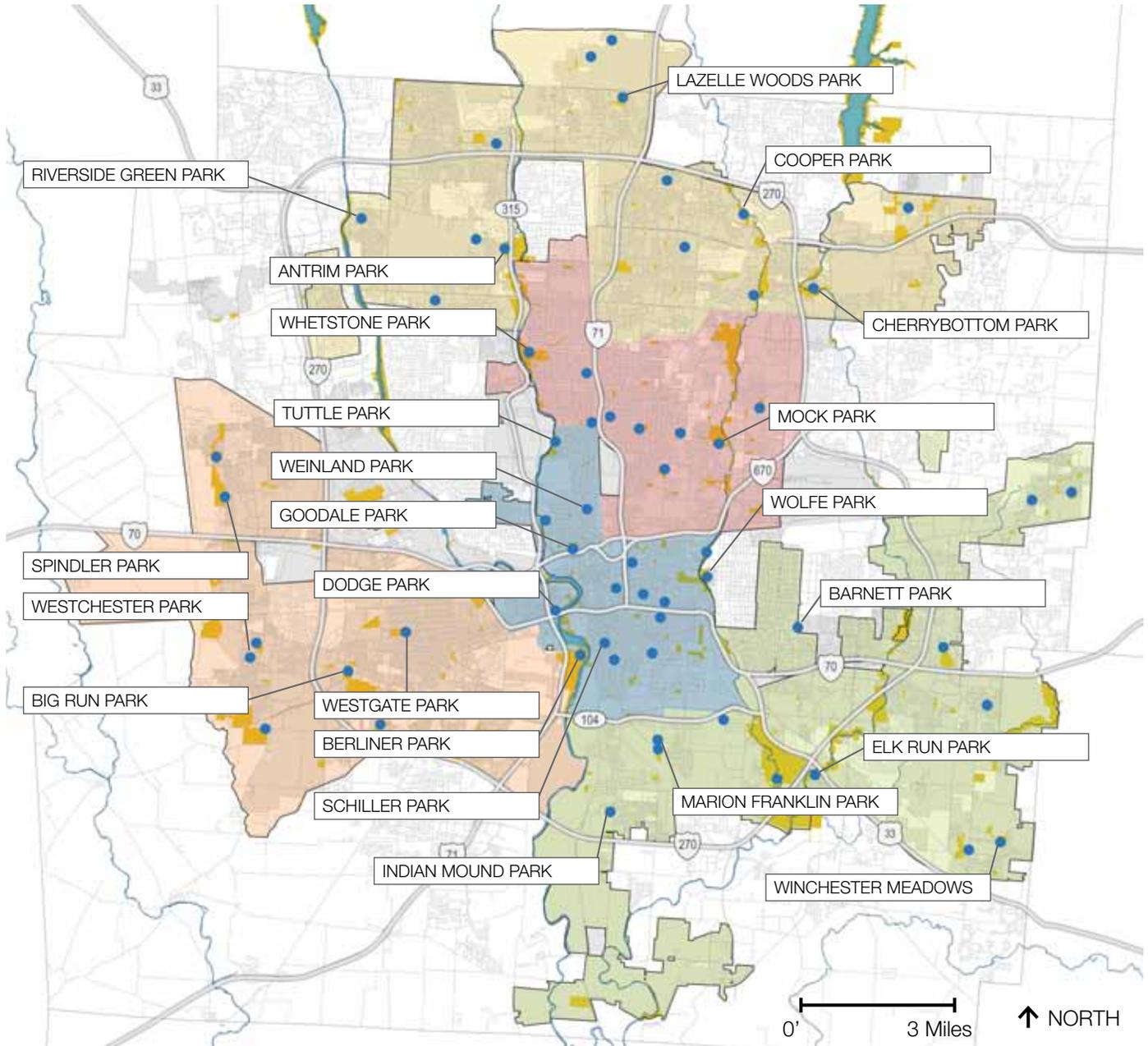
SOUTHEAST

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Alumcrest Park | Marion-Franklin Park |
| Barnett Park | Schirm Farms Parkland |
| Crawford Farms | Sills Park |
| Elk Run Park | Smith Farm Park/Three Creeks Park |
| Independence Village Park | Walnut Hills Park |
| Indian Mound Park | Winchester Meadows Park |
| Jefferson Woods Park | |

SOUTHWEST

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Alkire Lakes Park | Mentel Memorial Golf Course |
| Berliner Park | Spindler Park |
| Big Run Park | Westchester Park |
| Clover Groff Natural Area | Westgate Park |
| Greene Countrie Park | |

Figure 5.2 Parks Visited by Planning Team



Legend

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| City of Columbus Boundary | In-Town Study Area |
| Hydrology | Central Study Area |
| City Of Columbus Park | North Study Area |
| Major Roads | Southeast Study Area |
| Park Visited by Study Team | Southwest Study Area |

PARK CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

IN-TOWN STUDY AREA

The In-Town Study Area has 87 total parks facilities, representing 5.9% of citywide parkland acreage and serving 133,665 residents. This Study Area is within the original neighborhoods of the city, including Franklinton, the Near East Side, German Village, Merion Village, the Near Southside, and Victorian and Italian Villages in addition to Downtown Columbus. While there are few large parks and a low amount of total park acreage due to development constraints, there are the greatest number of special use parks and numerous neighborhood parks. The Downtown area has seen significant upgrades to riverfront parks, beginning with Genoa Park in the late 1990s, North Bank Park in 2005, and Bicentennial Park and the Scioto Mile in 2011. Within the neighborhoods, Schiller Park in German Village, Goodale Park in Victorian Village and Franklin Park on the Near East Side are community anchors. Taken together, these older parks and special use downtown parks hold numerous special events and are some of the most iconic parks within the city. Due to their high visibility, these parks have a higher maintenance standard, which is augmented by “friends of” organizations and corporate partners.

As the oldest area of the city, the In-Town Study Area also has a larger share of community centers (10) and pools (6) than any other part of the park system. While this is an asset overall, it also means that maintenance costs or renovation costs are higher given the age of these facilities. As growth has continued beyond the pre-annexation boundaries (1950) of the City of Columbus, this has become more and more difficult given the need to invest in both new facilities for an expanding city and renovating and maintaining existing facilities. The City has recently invested in renovating pools (Dodge Park), new spraygrounds (Blackburn), and renovating community centers (Dodge Park) that significantly upgraded facilities and made them more valuable to the neighborhoods they serve.

Although this is the oldest and most urbanized area of the city, there are still opportunities to create new parkland. The removal of the Main Street Dam will create 33 acres of new downtown parkland. There are other smaller parks that can be added to the system as part of redevelopment efforts to serve existing and new neighborhoods. For example, the use of Tax Increment Financing and a developer agreement helped to create Harrison Park, which is part of a new residential development on a former factory site. Other tactics, such as taking advantage of vacant lots can help create new pocket parks (such as Linwood Park) within neighborhoods. Other successful strategies include partnering with new community development, such as Mayme Moore Park adjacent to the King Arts Center.

IN-TOWN STUDY AREA SUMMARY



87 Parks in Study Area, including...

- 10  Community Centers
- 6  Pools
- 1  Dog Park
- 1  Skate Park

IN-TOWN Parks at a Glance:

Parks by Category

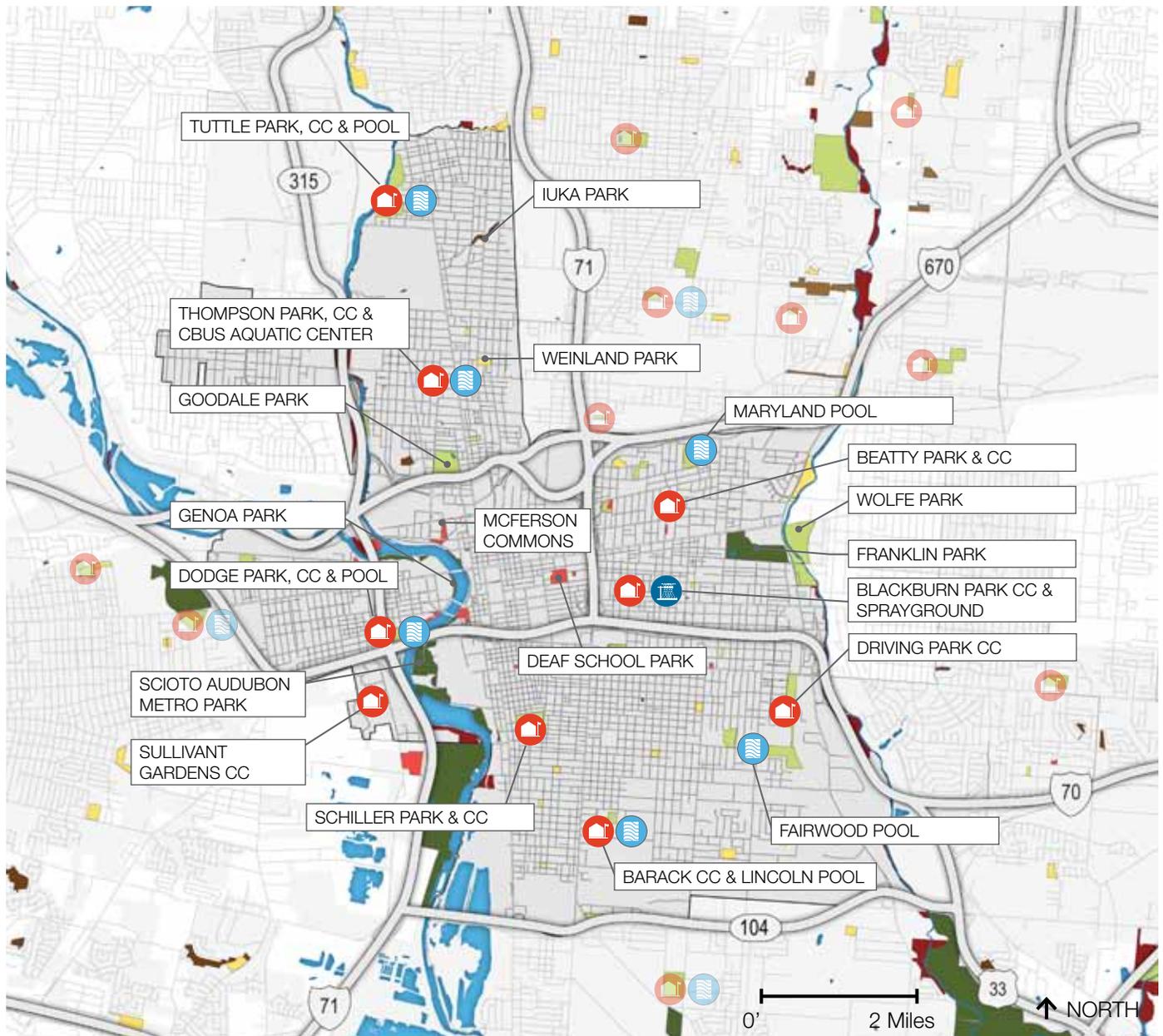
- 20 Community Parks
- 7 Conservation/Natural Areas
- 22 Neighborhood Parks
- 4 Neighborhood Open Spaces
- 2 Parkland Reserves
- 6 Regional Parks
- 22 Special Use Park/Facilities

The IN-TOWN Study Area contains...

133,665
City of Columbus
Residents

5.9%
of citywide
parkland acreage

Figure 5.3 Existing Parks by Type, Community Centers and Pools - In-Town Study Area



Legend

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| City of Columbus Boundary | Neighborhood Park | Community Centers |
| Hydrology | Neighborhood Open Space | |
| Major Roads | Special Use Park or Facility | |
| Regional Park | Golf Course | |
| Community Park | Operations/Non Park Area | |
| Parkland Reserve | Sprayground | |
| Conservation/Natural Area | Pool or Aquatic Facility | |

PARK CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

IN-TOWN STUDY AREA PARK ASSESSMENTS

PARKS WITHIN STUDY AREA

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Academy Park | Maintenance & Warehouse Operations |
| Clowson Field | Martin Park |
| Handford Parkland | Mayme Moore Park |
| Holtzman Parkland | Maynard and Summit Park |
| Battelle Riverfront Park | McFerson Commons |
| Beatty Park | Mckinley Park |
| Bicentennial Park | Millbrook Park |
| Blackburn Park | Moeller Park |
| Cody Park | Moler Street Parkland |
| Deaf School Park | Neff Street Parkland |
| Deshler Park | Nelson Park |
| Dodge Park | Northbank Park |
| Dream Field Park | Ohio Ave Street Park |
| Driving Park | Olentangy Trail - King Ave & Fifth Ave |
| Driving/Fairwood Connector | Palsgrove Park |
| English Park | Portal Park |
| Fairwood Park | Richter Workers Memorial Park |
| Frank Fetch Memorial Park | Franklin Park |
| Franklin Park | Franklinton Cemetery |
| Franklinton Cemetery | Garfield Center |
| Garfield Center | Genoa Park |
| Genoa Park | Goodale Park |
| Goodale Park | Gowdy Maint. Facility |
| Gowdy Maint. Facility | Greenlawn Park |
| Greenlawn Park | Hamilton & Spring Park |
| Hamilton & Spring Park | Hanford Village Park |
| Hanford Village Park | Harrison Park |
| Harrison Park | Harrison West Park |
| Harrison West Park | Harrison/Sullivant Houses |
| Harrison/Sullivant Houses | Igel/Alum Creek Water Dedication |
| Igel/Alum Creek Water Dedication | Indianola Park |
| Indianola Park | Italian Village Park |
| Italian Village Park | Iuka Park |
| Iuka Park | Karns Park |
| Karns Park | Keller Park |
| Keller Park | Kobacker Park |
| Kobacker Park | Lincoln Park |
| Lincoln Park | Linwood Park |
| Linwood Park | Livingston Park |
| Livingston Park | Livingston/I-70 Parkland |
| Livingston/I-70 Parkland | Main-Alum Park |
| Main-Alum Park | |

Parks in **Bold** were visited by the Planning Team

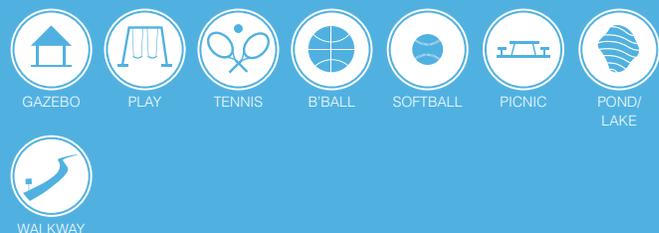
OBSERVATIONS

- Access to parks could be improved, either from existing bike paths or with on-street facilities (bike and pedestrian)
- Pocket parks should be large enough to have an impact and allow for efficient maintenance
- Wayfinding and signage could be improved (especially to parks that are off major thoroughfares)
- Consistent maintenance standards should be applied throughout all In-Town parks, regardless of location as they are some of the most visible in the City
- Mature trees in older parks are an asset that need to be better maintained. New Downtown parks would benefit from a similar commitment to tree planting.

SCHILLER PARK



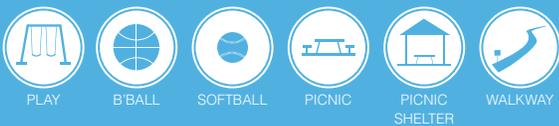
ADDRESS: 1069 Jaeger Street
 TYPE: Community Park & Community Center
 ACRES: 23.45



HARRISON PARK



ADDRESS: 995 Harrison Park Place
 TYPE: Neighborhood Park
 ACRES: 3.90



PLAY

B'BALL

SOFTBALL

PICNIC

PICNIC
SHELTER

WALKWAY

TOPIARY GARDEN AT DEAF SCHOOL PARK



ADDRESS: 480 East Town Street
 TYPE: Special Use
 ACRES: 9.18



PICNIC

POND/
LAKE

WALKWAY

PARK CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

CENTRAL STUDY AREA

The Central Study Area has 58 total parks facilities, representing 8% of citywide parkland acreage and serving 101,362 residents. This area of the city also has some of the most established residential neighborhoods of the city, north of the Ohio State University and east of I-71 inside I-270. Due to focused planning efforts by the Department over the last 40 years, there is a significant concentration of parks and facilities located along the Olentangy River and Alum Creek, where there are also multi-use trails that run north-south. There are numerous conservation/natural area (16) and parkland reserves (9) within this area of the City. Overbrook Ravine Park is one such natural area that helps to protect a unique ravine that feeds into the Olentangy River.

On either side of I-71 are traditionally dense neighborhoods that developed from 1920-1950. These have numerous neighborhood parks and community parks that are woven into the existing neighborhood fabric, although connections and walking path layout is stronger in the neighborhoods east of I-71 than in the neighborhoods west of I-71. East of Cleveland Avenue there is a greater amount of industrial land uses and residential uses become more sporadic. Linden Park in the Linden neighborhood is a community anchor, with a community center, fishing pond and a variety of sports fields and facilities.

The larger community and regional parks are primarily along the river and creek corridors. Whetstone Park is one of the larger parks in the study area with excellent trail access, neighborhood connectivity and sports facilities. It also has a library, community center, and the Park of Roses. Wolfe Park and Mock Park are larger parks along Alum Creek that have a variety of sports facilities. Wolfe Park also has a four season shelterhouse and Mock Park has indoor sports facilities.

CENTRAL STUDY AREA SUMMARY



58 Parks in Study Area, including...

- 8  Community Centers
- 1  Pools
- 2  Multi-Use Trails
- 1  Athletic Complex

CENTRAL Parks at a Glance:

Parks by Category

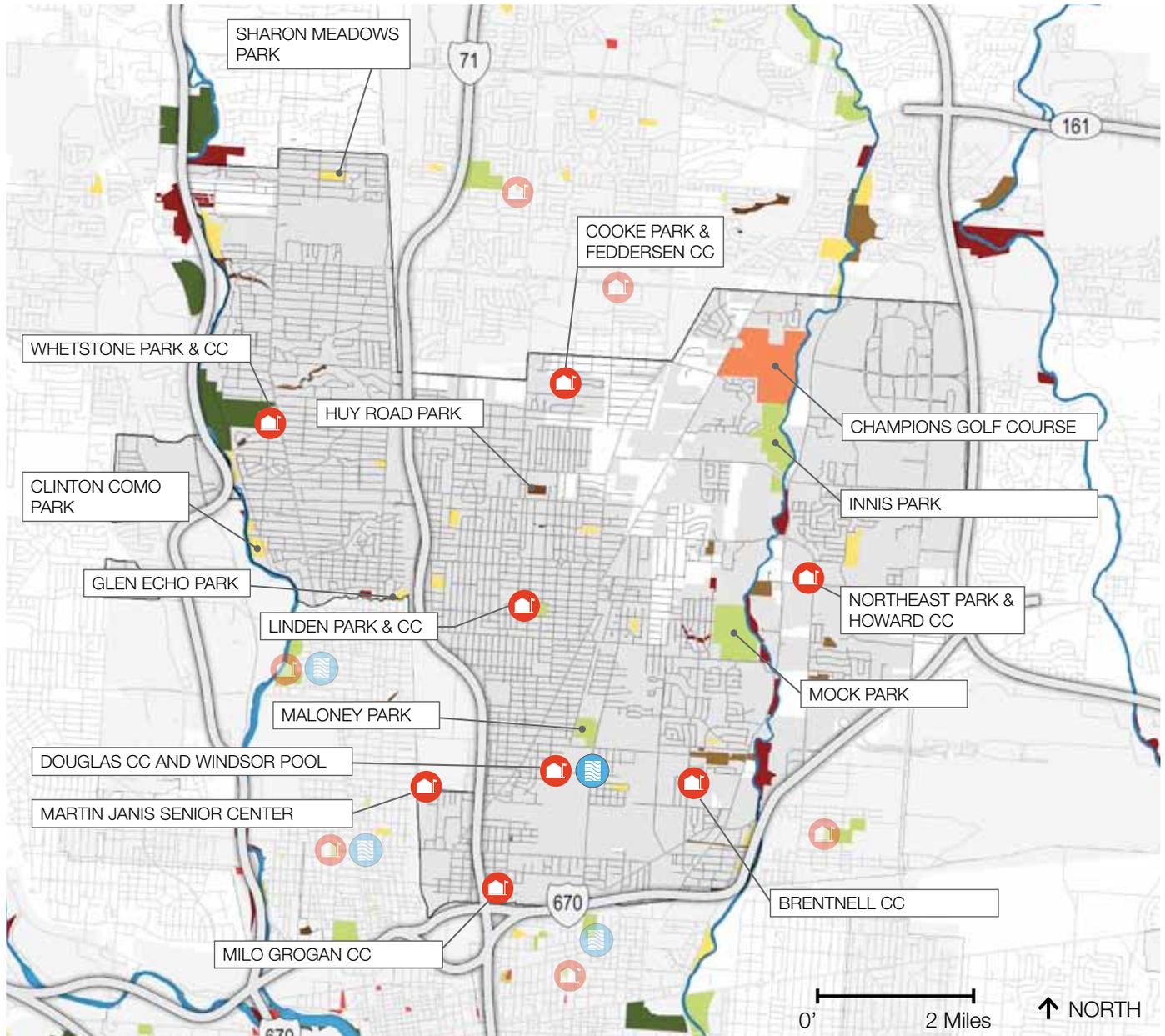
- 9 Community Parks
- 16 Conservation/Natural Areas
- 16 Neighborhood Parks
- 5 Neighborhood Open Spaces
- 9 Parkland Reserves
- 1 Regional Parks
- 1 Special Use Park/Facilities

The CENTRAL Study Area contains...

102,362
City of Columbus
Residents

8%
of citywide
parkland acreage

Figure 5.4 Existing Parks by Type, Community Centers and Pools - Central Study Area



Legend

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| City of Columbus Boundary | Neighborhood Park | Community Centers |
| Hydrology | Neighborhood Open Space | |
| Major Roads | Special Use Park or Facility | |
| Regional Park | Golf Course | |
| Community Park | Operations/Non Park Area | |
| Parkland Reserve | Sprayground | |
| Conservation/Natural Area | Pool or Aquatic Facility | |

PARK CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

CENTRAL STUDY AREA PARK ASSESSMENTS

PARKS WITHIN STUDY AREA



| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Alum Creek Parkland COH | Kenlawn Park |
| Alum Creek/Agler Parkland | Kenney Park |
| Alum Creek/Koch Parkland | Krumm Park |
| Alum Creek/Miller Parkland | Linden Park |
| American Addition Park | Majestic Paint Parkland |
| Amvet Park | Makris Parkland |
| Audubon Park | Maloney Park |
| Avalon Park | Mifflin Parkland |
| Beechwood Park | Milo-Grogan Park |
| Brentnell Ave Parkland | Mock Park Extension |
| Brentnell Park | Mock Park |
| Brevoort Park | New Beginnings Park |
| Cassady Park | North East Park |
| Champions Golf Course | Northmoor Park |
| City Gate Park | Olentangy River Canoe |
| Clinton-Como Park | Portage Parkland |
| Cooke Park | Olentangy-Broadmeadows |
| Cremeans Park | Trail |
| Cumberland Woods Park | Overbrook Ravine Park |
| Eagle Grading Parkland | Parkview Parkland COH |
| Eastern Glen Parkland | Portal Park |
| Glen Echo Park | Pride Park |
| Harrison Smith Park | Pumphrey Park |
| Hayden Park | Rosemont Parkland |
| Holt Avenue Parkland | Sharon Meadows Park |
| Huy Road Park | Shepard Park |
| Innis Park | Stonecliff Parkland |
| Island View | Webster Park |
| Islandview Parkland | Weiler Parkland |
| Joan Park | Whetstone Park |
| | Windsor Park |

Parks in **Bold** were visited by the Planning Team

OBSERVATIONS

- Park quality differs greatly throughout the study area, especially in regard to neighborhood parks
- Neighborhood parks are more successful when park facilities and amenities are located on the visible edges of parks where there are more “eyes” on the park
- Parks close to the multi-use trail network should be connected
- Parks on the eastern edge of the study area need better connections both in terms of bike facilities and sidewalks
- Portions of all parks could be converted to natural areas to reduce maintenance and mowing costs

WHETSTONE PARK



ADDRESS: 3923 North High Street
 TYPE: Community Park & Community Center
 ACRES: 136.28



AUDUBON PARK



ADDRESS: 2770 Audubon Road
TYPE: Neighborhood Park
ACRES: 8.74



PLAY



B'BALL



SOFTBALL



FOOTBALL/
SOCCER



PICNIC



PICNIC
SHELTER

GLEN ECHO PARK



ADDRESS: 510 Cliffside Drive
TYPE: Neighborhood Park
ACRES: 6.8



PLAY



B'BALL



PICNIC



WALKWAY



WOODS/
WILDLIFE



RIVER/
CREEK

PARK CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

NORTH STUDY AREA

The North Study Area has 69 total parks facilities, representing 10% of citywide parkland acreage and serving 207,439 residents. There are multiple development characteristics throughout this study area, although the areas served by park facilities in this part of the city are generally post war suburban development inside I-270 and recent (1990s and 2000s) suburban development outside I-270. This study area is also somewhat disjointed geographically due to annexation patterns and is interspersed by several suburban jurisdictions. The majority of parkland is concentrated along the Olentangy River and Alum Creek corridors, which are well served by respective multi-use trails. Better connectivity and access to these parks and trails is needed as this part of the city is typified by higher-speed arterials that do not have suitable pedestrian or bike facilities. There is no pool or sprayground located in this study area.

West of 315 in Northwest Columbus and east of I-71 in Northeast Columbus are the more established suburban development. Antrim Park on the Olentangy River offers multiple sports facilities and trail access on the west side of the study area. Cooper Park on Alum Creek also has trail access and has a large complex of soccer fields. Neighborhood parks are for the most part well-integrated into the surrounding suburban development. Riverside Green Park is one of the most thoughtfully done, with a prominent sign, landscaping, mature tree stands and multiple points of neighborhood access.

North and east of I-270 features more recent suburban development. Lazelle Woods Community Center and Park on the eastern side of the study area is the largest facility in this part of the city, with a new community center and multiple sports fields. While the indoor and outdoor portions of the complex are served by different vehicular access points and connections between the two are difficult, this is an impressive facility. Hard Road Park on the western side of the study area has been identified for a potential community center as part of that facility to serve this area of the city.

Just like other suburban development patterns of this era in other portion of the city, park spaces in new communities are often on ground that is close to retaining ponds, wetlands or other natural features that could not be constructed upon. As a result, these park spaces can have challenged access and limited usability for outdoor activities when compared to other neighborhood parks in older parts of the city. Albany Crossing, a converted agricultural field, is one exception where the park space has been designed as integral to the neighborhood and facilities located to the visible edges of the site. While lacking in tree canopy and other amenities that would make the park more usable, it is at least accessible to the surrounding community.

CRPD has also worked with other jurisdictions to provide

needed park facilities. Godown Road Dog Park is one example, with CRPD providing the capital and the City of Worthington maintaining the facility. Cherrybottom Park is a conservation area just east of I-270 that protects a large area along Big Walnut Creek. While there is no formal access provided, it is close to Blendon Woods Metro Park. This unique natural area and proximity to a Metro Park provides a potential for a more usable amenity for this part of the City.

NORTH STUDY AREA SUMMARY

69 Parks in Study Area, including...

| | | |
|---|--|-------------------|
| 3 |  | Community Centers |
| 1 |  | Dog Park |
| 2 |  | Multi-Use Trails |
| 1 |  | Athletic Complex |

NORTH Parks at a Glance:

Parks by Category

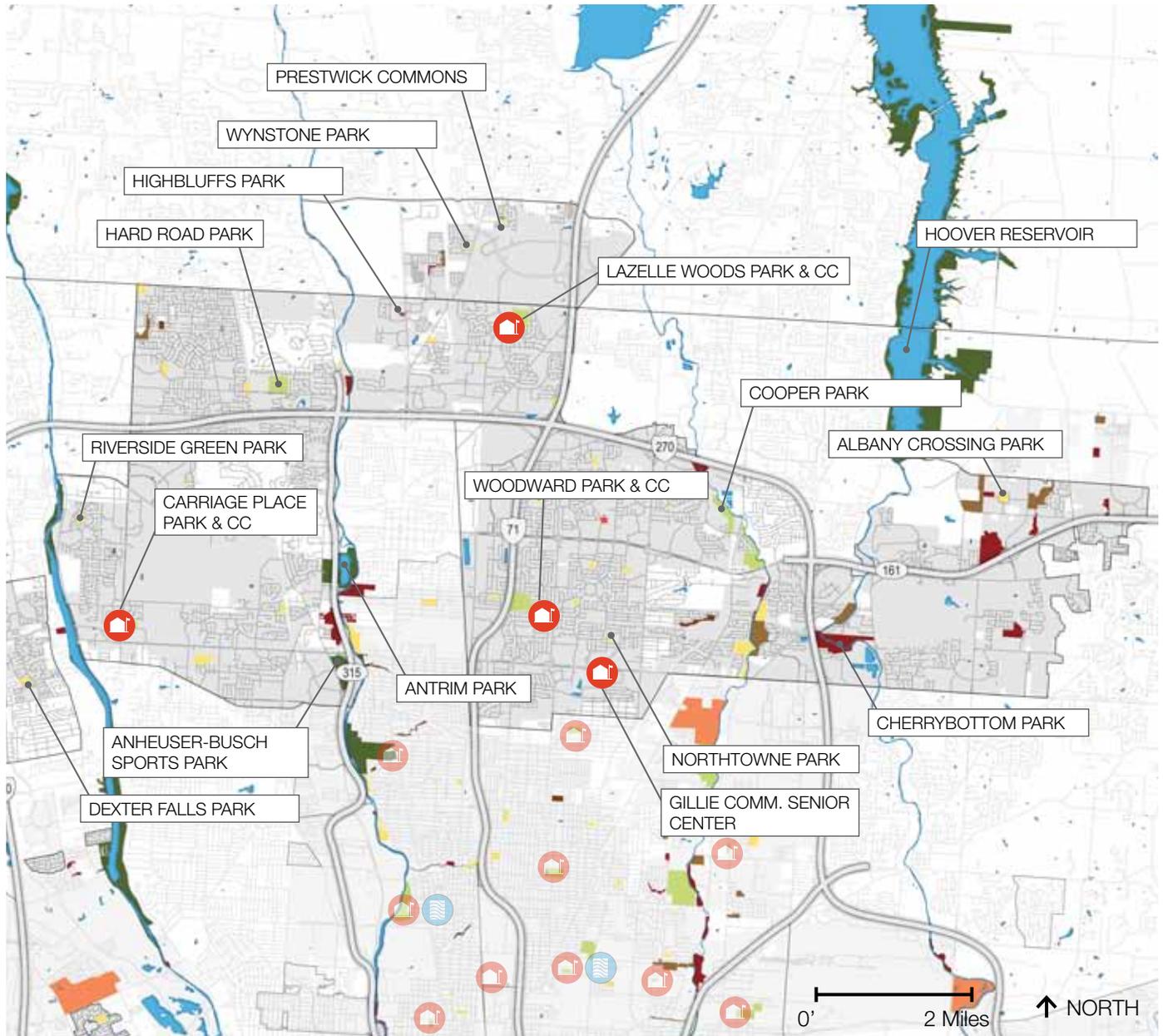
| | |
|----|-----------------------------|
| 8 | Community Parks |
| 20 | Conservation/Natural Areas |
| 27 | Neighborhood Parks |
| 3 | Neighborhood Open Spaces |
| 8 | Parkland Reserves |
| 1 | Regional Parks |
| 2 | Special Use Park/Facilities |

The NORTH Study Area contains...

207,439
City of Columbus
Residents

10%
of citywide
parkland acreage

Figure 5.5 Existing Parks by Type, Community Centers and Pools - North Study Area



Legend

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| City of Columbus Boundary | Neighborhood Park | Community Centers |
| Hydrology | Neighborhood Open Space | |
| Major Roads | Special Use Park or Facility | |
| Regional Park | Golf Course | |
| Community Park | Operations/Non Park Area | |
| Parkland Reserve | Sprayground | |
| Conservation/Natural Area | Pool or Aquatic Facility | |

PARK CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

NORTH STUDY AREA PARK ASSESSMENTS

PARKS WITHIN STUDY AREA



| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Albany Crossing Park | Olde Sawmill Park |
| Albany Crossing Wetland | Olenbrook Parkland |
| Alum Creek/Cooper Rd Parkland COH | Olentangy Meadows Parkland |
| Anheuser-Busch Sports Park | Olentangy Parkland |
| Antrim Park | Olentangy Parkland - Far North |
| Beechcroft Park | Parkridge Park |
| Brandywine Parkland | Pingue Park |
| Brookside Woods Park | Preserve East Parkland |
| Cannongate Alum Creek Parkland | Prestwick Commons |
| Carriage Place Park | Riverside Green Park |
| Casto Park | Riverside Green South Park |
| Chaseland Park | Rocky Fork Creek Parkland |
| Cherrybottom Park | Rocky Fork/Warner Road Parkland |
| Cooper Park | Sancus Park |
| Creek Ridge Parkland | Sawmill Road Parkland |
| Devonshire Park | Scioto Woods Park |
| Dexter Falls Park | Strawberry Farms Park |
| Flint Park | Sugar Run Parkland |
| Forest Park East Park | Summitview Park |
| Gelpi Parkland | Sycamore Hills Park |
| Godown Road Park | Tanager Woods |
| Gould Park | Teaford Parkland |
| Granville Park | Walden Park |
| Hamilton Road Wetland Nature Preserve | Waltham Woods Park |
| Hard Road Park | Wango Parkland |
| Hickory Woods Park | Westerford Village Parkland |
| Highbluffs Park | Westerville Woods Parkland |
| Kilbourne Run Parkland | Woodbridge Green Park |
| Lazelle Woods Park | Woodstream Park |
| Northcrest Park | Woodstream Parkland |
| Northern Woods Park | Woodward Park |
| Northgate Park | Worthington Hills Park |
| Northtowne Park | Wynstone Park |

Parks in **Bold** were visited by the Planning Team

OBSERVATIONS

- Better connections for pedestrians and bicyclists are needed to park facilities
- Neighborhood parks in new suburban areas need better wayfinding and signage
- New neighborhood parks need to be better integrated into overall community design
- There is a lack of pool and community center facilities
- Cooperation with suburban municipalities has proven successful and other opportunities should be explored

ANTRIM PARK



ADDRESS: 5800 Olentangy River Road

TYPE: Regional Park

ACRES: 119.78



PLAY



TENNIS



B'BALL



SOFTBALL



FOOTBALL/
SOCCER



PICNIC



POND/
LAKE



BIKEWAY



WALKWAY



WOODS/
WILDLIFE



RIVER/CREEK
FRONTAGE

LAZELLE WOODS PARK



ADDRESS: 575 Lazelle Road/8140 Sancus Boulevard
TYPE: Community Park and Community Center
ACRES: 41.15



PLAY

B'BALL

SOFTBALL

FOOTBALL/
SOCCER

PICNIC

PICNIC
SHELTER

WALKWAY

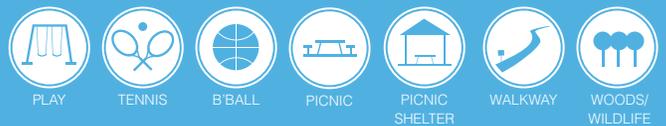


WOODS/
WILDLIFE

RIVERSIDE GREEN PARK



ADDRESS: 6650 Canaan Circle
TYPE: Neighborhood Park
ACRES: 5.62



PLAY

TENNIS

B'BALL

PICNIC

PICNIC
SHELTER

WALKWAY

WOODS/
WILDLIFE

PARK CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

SOUTHEAST STUDY AREA

The Southeast Study Area has 83 total parks facilities, representing 23.4% of citywide parkland acreage and serving 158,974 residents. The Southeast has by far the greatest amount of acreage of any of the other four study areas, due to the 1,100 acre Three Creeks Metro Park at I-270 and SR 33, which is co-managed with Metro Parks. Three Creeks is located along and at the confluence of three creeks (Alum, Blacklick and Big Walnut) and has numerous different entry points and experiences from fishing, canoe access, bike trails, etc. Protecting these stream corridors and wetland areas has been a priority for CRPD, and it has 27 conservation and natural areas and 12 parkland reserves in this study area, primarily located along the three creeks and in areas to the eastern edge of the study area.

Another large land holding is Walnut Hills Golf Course. Located south of Livingston Avenue, north of I-70 and east of I-270 the course, which has been closed, is slated to be redeveloped into new parkland. This unique piece of property features varied topography and terrain, offering unique views and character not typically seen in Central Ohio. Surrounded by suburban commercial and residential development, this large piece of ground has a great degree of potential.

Similar to the Southwest area, the Southeast runs the spectrum from natural and rural areas to urban neighborhoods. While the strong urban grid of neighborhoods begins to transition to more commercial, vacant and industrial land uses south of SR 104, there are a few neighborhood parks and community centers that serve these residents. Marion-Franklin Community Center on Lockbourne Road has a newly-renovated Olympic-size pool, a recently updated community center and a community center with a full kitchen that serves the senior community and the Capital Kids after-school program. Similarly on the east side of the study area along Livingston Avenue, there are older, more established neighborhoods. Barnett Park and Community Center serves this community, and though an older center has some new facilities such as a sprayground. Indian Mound Park and Community Center on Parsons Avenue also has a recently opened sprayground. Marion-Franklin has the only pool in the Southeast Study Area.

The Southeast Study Area is also typified by new suburban development. These areas are served by numerous neighborhood parks that have been built as part of new subdivisions. Most seem to have good quality playground equipment, walking trails and a mix of hard-court sports facilities and sports fields. While these parks are sometimes challenged by access and visibility, they all seem well-utilized. Elk Run Park has recently been renovated, with solar-powered light fixtures, bio swales in the parking lot, and a natural area with a compacted aggregate trail. This

natural area has replaced acres of turfgrass that once had to be mowed and provided a new amenity to the neighborhood. This is a practice to potentially extend to other parks. In the case of newer suburban development, parks are often tucked into less desirable pieces of ground, often along wetlands or retention ponds. This can be difficult ground to work with in terms of providing park space, but in places like Schirm Farms Parkland on Gender Road, CRPD has built walking trails and provided access and connections that are beneficial to the neighborhoods they serve.

SOUTHEAST STUDY AREA SUMMARY

83 Parks in Study Area, including...

- 3  Community Centers
- 2  Dog Park
- 1  Pool
- 2  Spraygrounds

SOUTHEAST Parks at a Glance:

Parks by Category

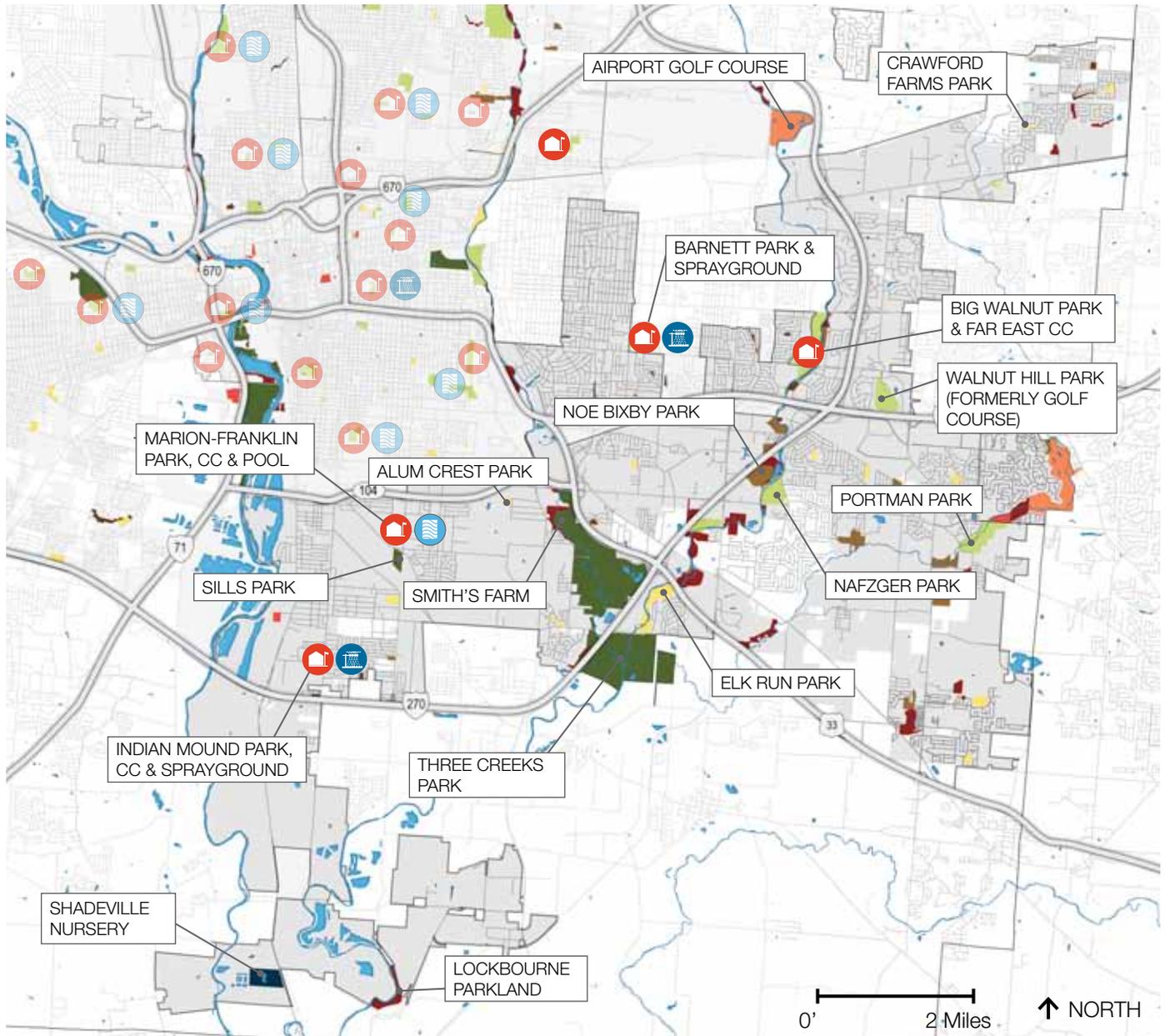
- 9 Community Parks
- 27 Conservation/Natural Areas
- 14 Neighborhood Parks
- 14 Neighborhood Open Spaces
- 12 Parkland Reserves
- 2 Regional Parks
- 3 Special Use Park/Facilities
- 2 Golf Courses

The SOUTHEAST Study Area contains...

158,974
City of Columbus
Residents

23.4%
of citywide
parkland acreage

Figure 5.6 Existing Parks by Type, Community Centers and Pools - Southeast Study Area



Legend

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| City of Columbus Boundary | Neighborhood Park | Community Centers |
| Hydrology | Neighborhood Open Space | |
| Major Roads | Special Use Park or Facility | |
| Regional Park | Golf Course | |
| Community Park | Operations/Non Park Area | |
| Parkland Reserve | Sprayground | |
| Conservation/Natural Area | Pool or Aquatic Facility | |

PARK CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

SOUTHEAST STUDY AREA PARK ASSESSMENTS

PARKS WITHIN STUDY AREA

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Abbie Trails Park | Long Road Wetland |
| Alum Creek-Smith Farms | Longwood Wetland Park |
| Alumcrest Park | Mackenbach Parkland |
| Amberfield Parkland | Marion-Franklin Park |
| Argus Park | Mason Run Parkland COH |
| Barnett Park | Maybury Park |
| Berwick Park | M-Five Parkland |
| Big Walnut Corridor COH | Nafzger Park |
| Big Walnut Park | Nafzger Park Expansion |
| Bre-Kro Parkland COH | Noe Bixby Parkland |
| Brownlee Circle Park | Oak Creek Parkland |
| Canini Park | Portman Park |
| Catalpa Parkland | Portman Park Addition |
| Cedar Run Park | Refugee Road Parkland |
| Certified Oil Parkland | Retreat At Turnberry |
| Chatterton Park | Reynolds Crossing Park |
| Crawford Farms Park | Schirm Farms Parkland |
| Creekstone Parkland | Scioto Canal Parkland |
| Deems Parkland | Shadeville Nursery |
| Deer Lake Parkland | Shady Lane Park |
| Dysart Run Parkland | Shelbourne Parkland |
| Dysart Run Parkland COH | Sills Park |
| Easthaven Park | Sol Shenk Parkland |
| Echelon Parkland | Southgate Park |
| Edgewater Parkland COH | Stockbridge Park |
| Elk Run Addition | Three Creeks - Connor Park |
| Elk Run Park | Three Creeks - Madison Mills |
| Gender Road Parkland | Three Creeks - Smith Farm |
| Hale Parkland | Three Creeks Park |
| Hamilton Heights Parkland | Turnberry Golf Course |
| Heer Park | Turnberry Parkland |
| Helsel Park | Waggoner Chase Parkland |
| Independence Village Park | Walnut Hill Park |
| Indian Mound Park | Walnut View Park |
| Jefferson Woods Park | White Ash Parkland |
| Jefferson Woods Ravine | Williams Creek Park |
| Kelley Park | Williams Rd Parkland COH |
| Klingbeil Parkland | Willis Park |
| Kraner Park | Winchester Bend Parkland |
| Lehman Estates Parkland | Winchester Meadows Park |
| Liv-Moor Park | Winding Creek Park |
| Lockbourne Parkland COH | Yorkshire Parkland |

Parks in **Bold** were visited by the Planning Team

OBSERVATIONS

- Community Centers are all located in the older urban and suburban parts of the study area
- There is only one pool in the entire study area and it is located in a part of the city that is difficult to access and with a low-degree of connectivity and walkability
- Neighborhood parks would all benefit from more consistent signage and wayfinding and greater neighborhood access
- Newer neighborhood parks in suburban developments often challenged by site constraints and natural area protection

MARION FRANKLIN PARK



ADDRESS: 2801 Lockbourne Road
 TYPE: Community Park
 ACRES: 24



ELK RUN PARK



ADDRESS: 3600 Hendron Road
 TYPE: Neighborhood Park
 ACRES: 30.69



PLAY



B'BALL



FOOTBALL/
 SOCCER



PICNIC



PICNIC
 SHELTER



WALKWAY



WOODS/
 WILDLIFE



RIVER/CREEK
 FRONTAGE

WINCHESTER MEADOWS



ADDRESS: 7200 Oliver Winchester Road
 TYPE: Parkland Reserve
 ACRES: 16.72



PLAY



PICNIC



POND/
 LAKE



WALKWAY

PARK CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

SOUTHWEST STUDY AREA

The Southwest Study Area has 51 total parks facilities, representing 14% of citywide parkland acreage and serving 141,475 residents. The area includes some older neighborhoods directly west of I-70, but closer to I-270 and farther west features many newer, lower density subdivisions. This is generally an area of the city that is typified by environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands and poor draining soils. It is no surprise then, that this area of the city has seven conservation and natural areas and six parkland reserves.

The development pattern in the more suburban and undeveloped portion of the city is more disjointed and disconnected, leading to many parks (especially community and regional parks) that are not easily accessible without an automobile. Neighborhood parks in these new neighborhoods often built along the edge of natural areas. While the conservation and natural areas are important buffers and provide significant habitat, there may be opportunities to add more walking paths and educational facilities. Conversely, in developed parks, there are opportunities to return maintained areas to a more natural state, increasing habitat while decreasing mowing and other expenses. Additionally, the City of Columbus has been active in preserving land along the Darby Watershed, in collaboration with partners such as Metro Parks.

In the more developed and older parts of this study area, a traditional grid pattern of residential development exists, and a more standard neighborhood park format was observed with mature trees and more typical park amenities. Westgate Park is a great example of how a community park can truly be a neighborhood anchor. It is well-connected to the surrounding community, is well-served by on-street bike facilities, and has a wide variety of sports fields and facilities. The three-season shelter and well-maintained grounds (aided by a neighborhood garden club) and pond, make this an attractive asset to the neighborhood.

From a sports facility perspective, the Southwest Study Area has a wide variety of assets from the recently updated Mentel Memorial Golf Course to Lou Berliner Park that hosts regional and national softball tournaments. Spindler Park caters specifically to soccer users and has more than a dozen fields. Glenwood Pool is the only outdoor pool in this study area.

SOUTHWEST STUDY AREA SUMMARY



51 Parks in Study Area, including...

- 3  Community Centers
- 1  Golf Course
- 1  Pool
- 2  Athletic Complexes

SOUTHWEST Parks at a Glance:

Parks by Category

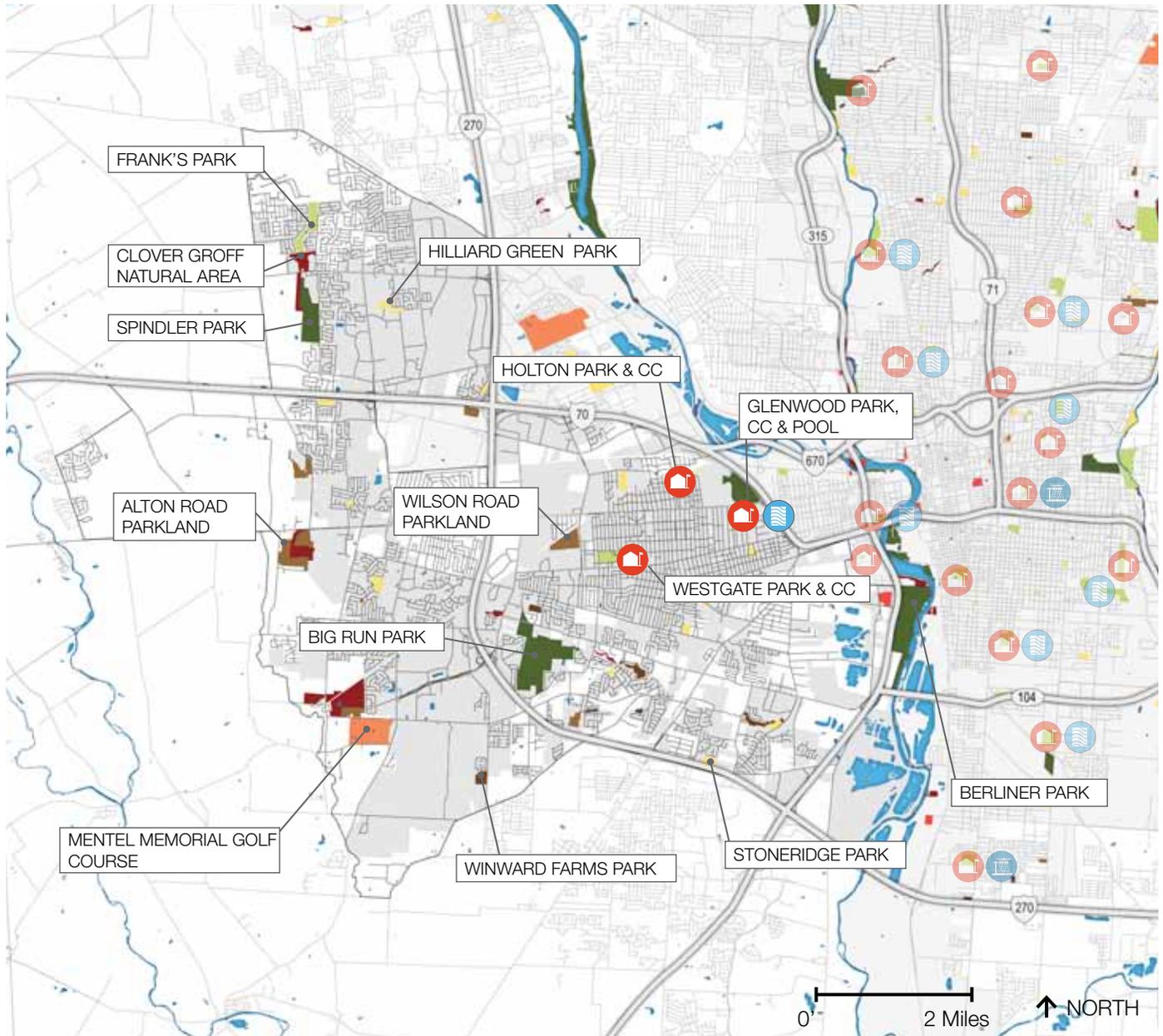
- 7 Community Parks
- 7 Conservation/Natural Areas
- 15 Neighborhood Parks
- 11 Neighborhood Open Spaces
- 6 Parkland Reserves
- 3 Regional Parks
- 1 Special Use Park/Facilities
- 1 Golf Courses

The SOUTHWEST Study Area contains...

141,475
City of Columbus
Residents

14%
of citywide
parkland acreage

Figure 5.7 Existing Parks by Type, Community Centers and Pools - Southwest Study Area



Legend

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| City of Columbus Boundary | Neighborhood Park | Community Centers |
| Hydrology | Neighborhood Open Space | |
| Major Roads | Special Use Park or Facility | |
| Regional Park | Golf Course | |
| Community Park | Operations/Non Park Area | |
| Parkland Reserve | Sprayground | |
| Conservation/Natural Area | Pool or Aquatic Facility | |

PARK CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

SOUTHWEST STUDY AREA PARK ASSESSMENTS

PARKS WITHIN STUDY AREA



- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Alkire Lakes Park | Kings Creek Parkland |
| Alkire Woods Park | Kingsbury Parkland |
| Alton Road Parkland | Lindbergh Park |
| Berliner Sports Park | McCoy Park |
| Big Run Park | Mentel Memorial Golf Course |
| Broad Street Parkland | Prairie Parkland |
| Clean Ohio Alton Parkland | Rhodes Park |
| Clover Groff Natural Area | Riverbend Park |
| Clover Parkland | Rocky Creek Parkland |
| Clover-Kenney Park | Scioto-Darby Detention |
| Creekview Parkland | Spindler Addition |
| Forest Creek Park | Spindler Road Park |
| Frank's Park | Stephens Drive Park |
| Freedom Park | Stoneridge Park |
| Galloway Ridge Park | Trabue Woods Park |
| Galloway Road Clean Ohio Parkland | Westchester Parkland |
| Georgesville Green Parkland | Westgate Park |
| Georgian Heights Park | Westmoor Park |
| Glenview Park | Wexford Green Park |
| Glenwood Park | Willow Creek Addition |
| Greene Countrie Park | Willow Creek Park |
| Hauntz Park | Wilson Road Parkland |
| Hilliard Green Park | Winward Farms Park |
| Hilltonia Park | Wrexham Park |
| Holton Park | |

Parks in **Bold** were visited by the Planning Team

OBSERVATIONS

- Neighborhood parks could use more consistent signage and wayfinding
- Neighborhood parks could use more consistent maintenance (mowing, equipment condition, graffiti removal, etc.)
- Sports-specific parks could better serve other users in addition to sports users (facilities such as walking paths, playgrounds, etc.)
- Investments in field turf infield at Berliner Park are impressive and important to keep these facilities competitive

BERLINER PARK



ADDRESS: 325 Green Lawn Avenue

TYPE: Regional Park

ACRES: 209.7



WESTGATE PARK



ADDRESS: 455 South Westgate Avenue
 TYPE: Community Park & Community Center
 ACRES: 46.3



CLOVER GROFF NATURAL AREA



ADDRESS: East Roberts Road
 TYPE: Parkland Reserve
 ACRES: 4.28



PARK AND FACILITY STRATEGIES

1.1 SYSTEM-WIDE STRATEGIES

Looking at the park system as a whole, there are four distinct areas that should be addressed.

1. Acquisition of additional parkland
2. Continued engagement of neighborhood groups
3. Improved access to city parks and facilities
4. Creation of a checklist for minimum park and facility standards

Acquisition

Based on the Level of Service analysis and national standards for parkland per 1,000 residents, there are clear areas for improvement. Addressing these current acreage deficits for certain park classifications are all the more critical when the city's projected growth is considered. CRPD will need to continue to acquire additional land, convert or reevaluate current land holdings and park uses, and develop strategic partnerships to meet recommended standards for most classifications of parkland. The goals for specific parkland categories will be discussed in the following pages.

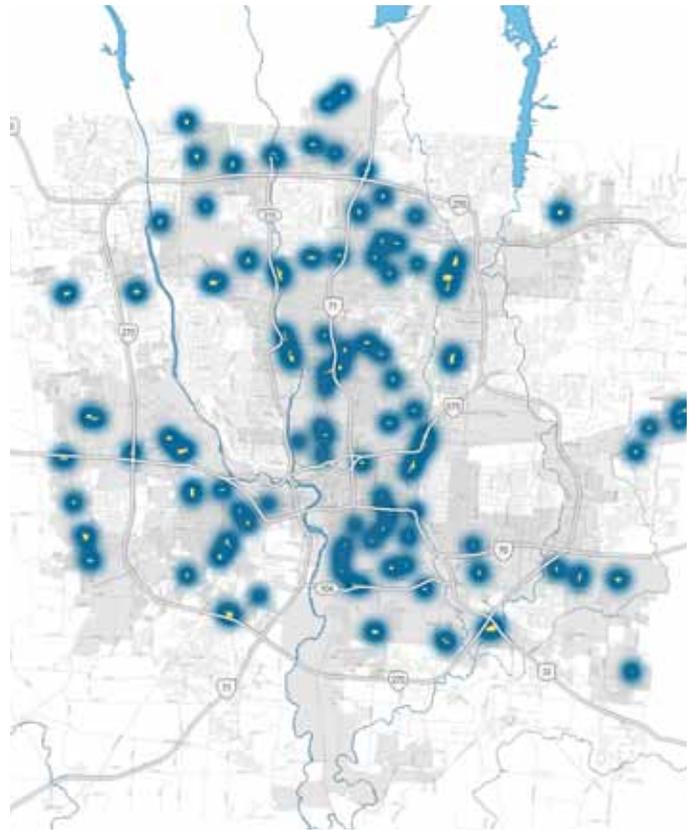
Engagement

Beyond expanding the park system to better serve existing and future residents, CRPD should continue its practice of working with neighborhood groups and other organizations to improve and maintain parks. As new services, facilities and parks are planned, community input should be sought through multiple platforms, both in person and online. Building on these strong relationships and fostering new ones will enable greater community buy-in and support and create a stronger park system.

Access

CRPD is already doing an exemplary job connecting residents to parks, trails and facilities. However, there are numerous neighborhoods that have yet to gain adequate access. Identifying these gaps and anticipating new ones will be critical to increasing both the usability of the park system, but also the health of city residents. This will also require coordination with other city departments, Metro Parks, Franklin County and other surrounding jurisdictions to implement new on-street and off-street infrastructure (Multi-Use Trails are discussed in greater detail on page 152). Within existing parks pedestrian access should also be prioritized, making it easy to walk to various features and amenities. Expanding and connecting sidewalks and pathways from the exterior of parks to interior amenities is a critical step in increasing usability and accessibility.

Figure 5.8 Neighborhood Parks



Standards

Acknowledging that parks throughout the city require differing levels of maintenance due to location, usage and facilities, there remains a need to apply a consistent level of service across the entire park system. Developing a checklist for minimum park and facility standards that apply to each park typology would raise the profile of existing assets and guide the design and development of new projects. Combined with increasing the level of maintenance (see page 148) system wide, this approach to consistent quality and service will improve parks and facilities, encourage greater use and lead to greater user satisfaction.

Figure 5.9 Community Parks

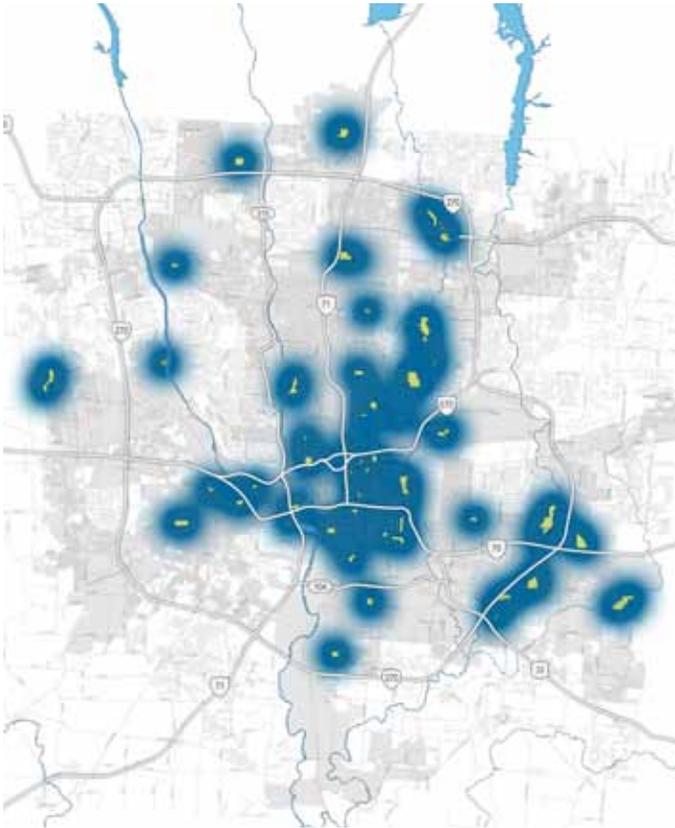


Figure 5.10 Regional Parks

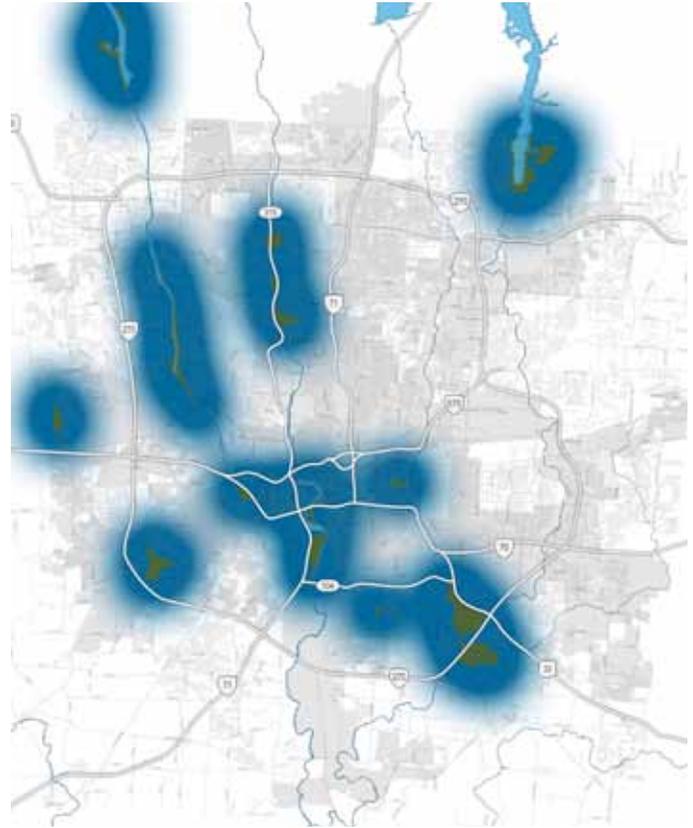


Table 5.1 System-wide Strategies

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|---|--|
| 1.1.1 | Acquire enough land to meet recommended standards for all classifications of parkland | Develop strategic partnerships |
| | | Work with other city departments to fold parks into aligning initiatives |
| | | Reevaluate existing properties and facilities to determine if each meets the needs of CRPD |
| 1.1.2 | Continue to work with neighborhood groups to improve and maintain parks | Establish a stewardship plan for each park and determine which parks should have a “friends of” organization |
| | | Institute a memorandum of understanding with such groups to ensure a continual commitment |
| | | Continue to work with Area Commissions, Civic Associations and citizen groups to get feedback and gain input on park improvements and needs |
| | | Use the city’s Web site to let the public view project designs and provide input |
| 1.1.3 | Remove access and circulation barriers to city parks | Continue developing multi-use trails throughout the city |
| | | Coordinate with the Columbus Planning Division, and the Transportation and Public Service departments, to enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections |
| | | Make facilities within a park accessible to pedestrians |
| 1.1.4 | Develop a checklist for minimum park and facility standards | Develop an updated and consistent signage and wayfinding system |
| | | Taking under account Master Plan recommendations, engage department staff in development of standards |

PARK AND FACILITY STRATEGIES

1.2 NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

According to the Community Interest and Opinion Survey, 75% of Columbus residents currently have a need for small neighborhood parks. This is among the top three needs identified by the survey. Neighborhood Parks are classified by the National Recreation and Park Association (NPRA) as parks that range between 5 to 15 acres and serve a quarter-mile to half-mile service area. From a citywide perspective, the NPRA recommends 1 to 2 acres of Neighborhood Parks per 1,000 residents. Neighborhood parks typically include open space and facilities such as playing fields, playgrounds, and picnic tables.

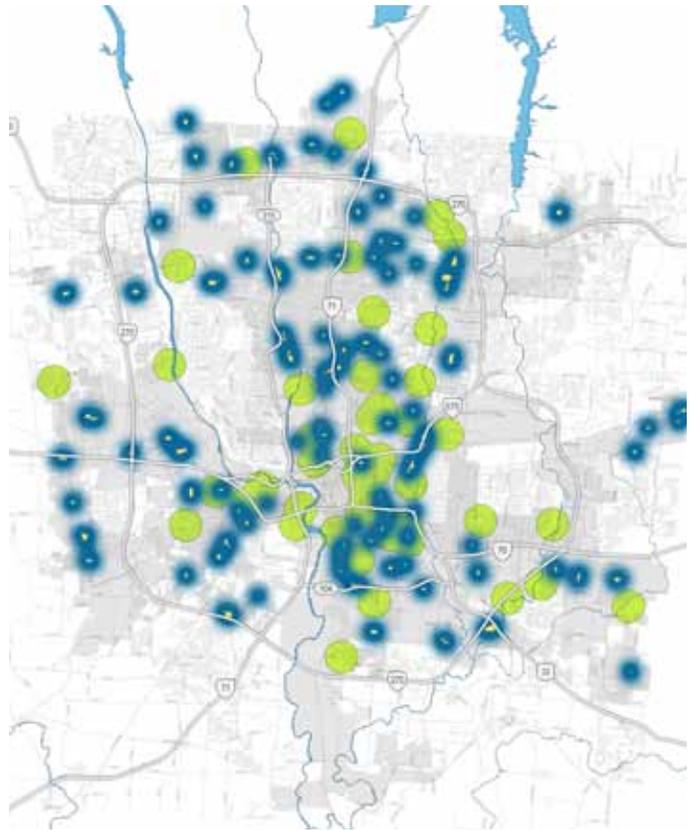
It is recommended that Neighborhood Parks in the City of Columbus meet minimum acreage standards, meet their community and surrounding area's needs, and meet minimum level of service/maintenance standards.

Prioritization Areas and Acquisition Strategies

Currently there are .95 acres per 1,000 residents of Neighborhood Parks in the City of Columbus. To meet the needs of current and future residents, CRPD should aim to increase this to 2 acres per 1,000 residents over the next 10 years. While need exists city-wide, acquiring land for Neighborhood Parks should be prioritized in areas where the most need has been identified. The public process and survey indicated needs in the Southeast, Southwest and North Study Areas. These areas are also at the top of the list when considering the MORPC growth projections and where population will likely be growing the fastest. The Level of Service analysis provides some additional information, identifying needs in every study area, with the greatest acreage needs in the North, Central and Southeast portions of the city. The Level of Service for the Southwest Study Area shows a current and projected short-term need for Neighborhood Parks of between two and eight acres. However, residents in the Southwest area were vocal in the public meetings and survey responses, the department should look into the issue and determine what issues (park maintenance, location, access, or others) may be leading to their expressed need for additional Neighborhood Parks.

Outside of these geographic priorities and neighborhood needs, CPRD should strive to meet the benchmark of locating Neighborhood Parks within one-half mile of all neighborhoods. Given that some of these locations are in built-out, urban portions of the city and that land acquisition is not always achievable from a cost standpoint, strategies should be explored to make use of existing city-owned properties and initiatives that could increase the total acreage and distribution of Neighborhood Parks. Potential strategies include identifying city existing land holdings (Parkland Reserve property or City Land Bank properties for example) that could be converted into neighborhood parks in areas of need. As the City's Blueprint Columbus

Figure 5.11 Neighborhood Parks and Community Parks



Neighborhood Parks are distributed throughout the entire city. The map above shows park locations with a quarter to half mile service radius overlaid with community park one-mile service radii.

green infrastructure program works to convert vacant lots to stormwater facilities, it may also be possible to collaborate on how these projects could incorporate a park use that serves neighborhood residents.

Maintenance and Safety

Another key area of demonstrated need from this planning process is the desire of the public to improve the overall maintenance standards, safety and design of existing Neighborhood Parks. Improving the quality of existing parks will make them more usable and help to contribute to the success of the neighborhood that they serve. In some cases, the condition of neighborhood parks in the City of Columbus mimic the condition of the neighborhoods that surround them. To increase the livability of these neighborhoods, the parks that serve them should be held to a greater standard in order to become an asset that can be built upon. To ease the maintenance burden and focus efforts on the most used amenities of these parks, portions of neighborhood parks could be returned to a more natural state after careful consideration of safety issues.

Safety is another consistent resident concern. While some Neighborhood Parks are better at this than others, increasing the “eyes on the park,” or passive supervision is a simple design change that would improve safety. For the design of future parks and renovation of existing parks, improving the visibility of parks, park activity centers and amenities from the street edge, walking paths and surrounding houses should be prioritized.

Design

In addition to continuing to build Neighborhood Parks in areas of the City where there is an identified need, five Neighborhood Parks should be updated annually. Renovations should focus on a user experience of less than one hour and provide at least five experiences (for example: loop walkways, basketball or tennis court, playground equipment, shelter, ball field). Park improvements that address community and health and wellness (exercise stations, walking trails, etc.) should also be prioritized. The city’s Urban Infrastructure Recovery Fund and other alternative funding sources should be considered as a potential funding source to implement these annual park improvements.



Top: Brevoort Park
Bottom: Prestwick Commons

Table 5.2 Strategies for Neighborhood Parks

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|--|---|
| 1.2.1 | Make acquiring land for neighborhood parks a high priority | Locate neighborhood parks within one-half mile of all neighborhoods |
| | | Assess the amount of land needed for the next ten years, and determine where it is most in need |
| | | Prioritize new parks in the Southwest, Central and Southeast Study Areas |
| | | Identify existing City land holdings (for example: Parkland Reserve property or City Land Bank property) that could be converted into Neighborhood Parks in areas of need. Also consider working together with other City departments to identify other programs and initiatives (such as Blueprint Columbus) where Neighborhood Parks could be included. |
| 1.2.2 | Improve overall maintenance standards, safety and design | Require a consistent maintenance standard that is equal to or greater than the surrounding neighborhood |
| | | Increase visibility of parks and park activity centers from the street edge |
| | | Preserve a dedicated percentage of park area in a natural state to increase wildlife habitat and reduce maintenance costs |
| 1.2.3 | Update 5 neighborhood parks per year | Focus on park improvements that address community Health and Wellness |
| | | Plan for a length of user experience of less than one hour |
| | | Update design standards to provide at least 5 experiences |
| | | Consider use of UIRF and other funding sources to update parks |

PARK AND FACILITY STRATEGIES

1.3 COMMUNITY PARKS

Another area of need indicated by the Community Interest and Opinion Survey is Community Parks. Seventy-two percent of respondents cite a need for Large Community Parks. Community Parks are classified by the National Recreation and Park Association (NPRA) as having over 25 acres and serving a one to two-mile service area. From a citywide perspective, the NRPA recommends 5 to 8 acres of Community Parks per 1,000 residents. According to the NPRA, Community Parks typically include facilities for intense recreation, such as swimming pools, and serve nearby neighborhoods. Examples of Community Parks include Goodale Park, Marion Franklin Park and Big Walnut Park.

It is recommended that Neighborhood Parks in the City of Columbus meet minimum acreage standards, meet their community and surrounding area's needs, and meet minimum level of service/maintenance standards.

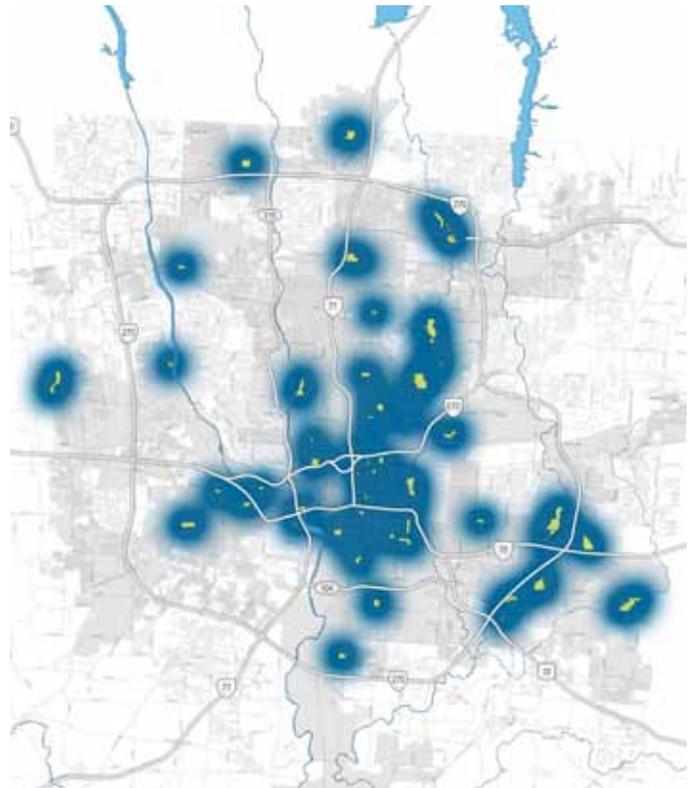
Currently there are 1.72 acres of Community Parks per 1,000 residents. It is recommended that CRPD work to increase this ratio to 4 acres per 1,000 residents over the next 10 years. Areas of need identified by public input and the Community Interest and Opinion Survey include the Southwest and North Study Areas. This need was verified by the Level of Service Analysis. Acquiring necessary land to accomplish this necessary addition of parkland will require pursuing various techniques and partnerships.

As part of this process, CRPD should perform an overall assessment of productivity of current Community Park space and amenities. Revenue-producing amenities should be improved and expanded. This could potentially include concessions, upgrades to existing shelters and the addition of more reservable shelters, and bike or other rental activities. The competitive elements (fields, courts, pools, etc.) of all Community Parks should also be upgraded to maximize unrealized revenue streams.

Similar to the strategy in place to update one Community Center per year, one Community Park should be renovated annually. Design standards should be created to provide a three-hour user experience and to promote year-round use. To that end, 15 experiences should be provided in each park (a variety of sports facilities, shelters, playgrounds, etc.) to engage and attract residents and park users. Improvements should also focus on health and wellness, connections to the community and support special events. Each Community Park should aim to hold at least three special events annually to engage and involve surrounding residents and neighborhoods in their park.

Where a community center is co-located with a park, a stronger connection should be made between center programming and park programming to allow for these two uses to function as and be perceived by the community as one space. Community center and park staff should

Figure 5.12 Community Parks



Community Parks are distributed throughout the entire city. The map above shows park locations with a 1-2 mile service radius.

collaborate to create true Community Centers that serve their respective neighborhoods.

Upgrades should also be made to needed infrastructure (such as lighting, restrooms, trail systems, Wi-Fi) that make these parks safer, more usable, and accessible. As parks are improved, parking areas, access points and park amenities should be located in such a way that allows users to walk to the park or if they drive to be able to park once and access multiple activity centers.



Goodale Park Fountain



Marion Park tennis and basketball courts



Schiller Park entry



Westgate Park shelter

Table 5.3 Strategies for Community Parks

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|--|--|
| 1.3.1 | Make acquiring land for Community Parks a high priority | Assess the amount of land needed for the next ten years, and determine where it is most in need |
| | | Prioritize new parks in the Southwest and North Study Areas |
| 1.3.2 | Perform an overall assessment of productivity of space and amenities to guide improvements | |
| 1.3.3 | Expand revenue-producing amenities | Upgrade competitive elements of all parks (fields, courts, pools, etc.) to maximize unrealized revenue streams |
| | | Upgrade and add more reservable shelters |
| 1.3.4 | Update 1 community park per year | Provide needed infrastructure (such as lighting, restrooms, trail systems) |
| | | Adopt "Park Once" strategy to allow for park amenities to be access from a central point |
| | | Wi-Fi in all community parks |
| | | Provide and plan for a 3 hour user experience |
| | | Promote year round use |
| | | 15 experiences in each park |
| 1.3.5 | Plan for programming that allows for Community Parks and their respective Community Centers to function as one space | Focus on health and wellness, community connectivity, special events and community pride |
| | | Special event spaces |
| | | Host a minimum of 3 events per year |

PARK AND FACILITY STRATEGIES

1.4 REGIONAL PARKS

Regional Parks are classified by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) as having over 200 acres and serving several communities. From a citywide perspective, the NRPA recommends 5 to 10 acres of Regional Parks per 1000 residents. Regional Parks typically include facilities related to athletics, though others are focused on natural areas. Examples of Regional Parks include Berliner Park and Big Run Park. It is recommended that Regional Parks in the City of Columbus meet minimum acreage standards, meet their community and surrounding area's needs, and meet minimum level of service/maintenance standards.

Currently the City of Columbus has 4.03 acres of Regional Parks per 1,000 residents. Five acres per 1,000 residents is a standard that should be achieved over the next 10 years. Acquiring necessary land to accomplish this necessary addition of parkland will require pursuing various techniques and partnerships.

In addition to increasing acreage, the quality of existing Regional Parks should be improved. There are 13 Regional Parks in the city and generally fit into the following categories:

- Sports parks
- Parks associated with reservoirs and natural areas
- Non-specialized (have multiple standard and unique features that appeal to a large cross sections of users)

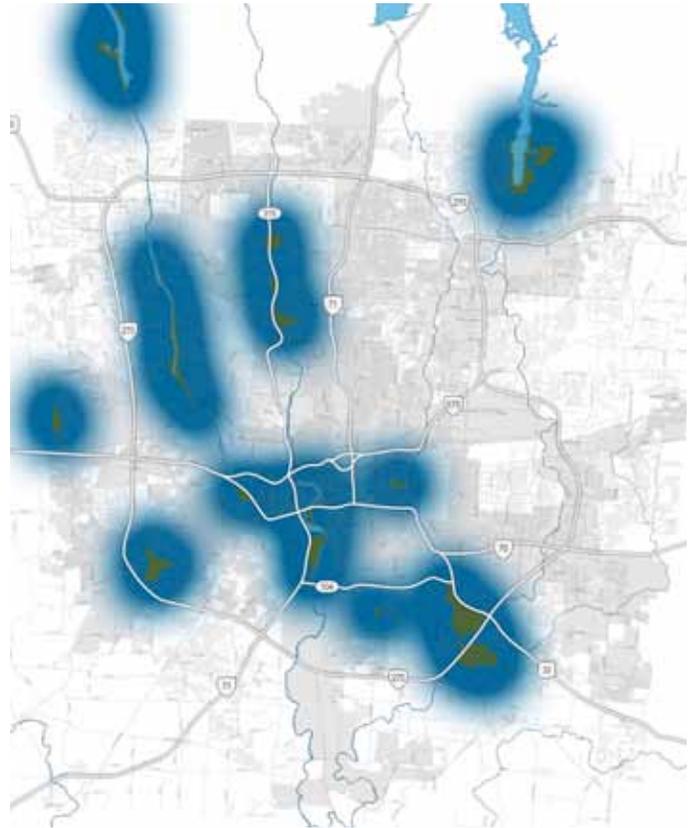
As such, improvements should be tailored to the needs of each audience that is served by each category of Regional Parks.

Sports-related parks should continue to be updated to keep them in line with the revenue they bring in. For example, investments in all-weather fields like the ones at Berliner Park should continue. Enhancements and expansions should also be made to retail operations and concessions to improve the user experience and increase revenue generation potential.

Parks along natural areas should focus on adding nature centers, education opportunities and expanded trail systems. Access should be improved to reservoirs and ponds to allow for greater ease of use.

However, the non-specialized parks that appeal to multiple user groups also represent a model that the more specialized parks should strive to achieve. Regional Parks should offer multiple different offerings and amenities and strive to provide an all-day experience. This will enable these parks to appeal to a more diversified audience. Whetstone Park is a good example. It features a Community Center, Columbus Metropolitan Library, multiple sports fields and courts, two playgrounds, a casting pond, prairie, regional trails and the Park of Roses and shelterhouse. It offers users multiple experiences and amenities. Expanding the

Figure 5.13 Regional Parks



Map showing Regional Park locations, with a two to four mile service radius

range of experiences even at the more specialized Regional Parks would be beneficial. For example, not everyone visiting Berliner Park is a softball player in a tournament. Playgrounds, trails, and other amenities should be offered that appeal to those who either live nearby or who may accompany a sports-user to a park such as Berliner. Doing so will broaden the appeal of these parks spaces and make them more beneficial to the community. Given the size of Regional Parks, there is also an opportunity to explore the inclusion of additional amenities that are needed system wide, such as large, reservable shelters, adventure parks, etc.

Upgrades should also be made to needed infrastructure (such as lighting, restrooms, trail systems, Wi-Fi) that make these parks safer, more usable, and accessible. As parks are improved, parking areas, access points and park amenities should be located in such a way that allows users to walk to the park or if they drive to be able to park once and access multiple activity centers.



Top: Berliner Sports Complex
Bottom: Bill McDonald Sports Complex at Anheuser Busch Sports Park

Top: Whetstone Park
Bottom: Big Run Park

Table 5.4 Strategies for Regional Parks

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|---|---|--|
| 1.4.1 | Update sports-related parks to keep them in line with the revenue they bring in | Continue investment in all-weather fields |
| | | Enhance and expand retail operations/concessions |
| 1.4.2 | Expand offerings and amenities to appeal to a more diversified audience and user groups | Provide and plan for an all-day experience |
| | | Provide nature center / outdoor education |
| | | Provide trails/open space |
| | | Explore additional amenities (big shelters, ponds for fishing, adventure park, etc) |
| | | Provide needed infrastructure (such as lighting, restrooms, trail systems) |
| | | Adopt "Park Once" strategy to allow for park amenities to be accessed from a central point |
| | | Wi-Fi in all community parks |
| Provide and plan for a 3 hour user experience | | |

PARK AND FACILITY STRATEGIES

1.5 NATURAL AREAS

The City of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department classifies natural areas into three general categories: Conservation/Natural Areas, Neighborhood Open Space, and Parkland Reserve. A Conservation/Natural Area is land acquired for preservation purposes that has limited public access. Neighborhood Open Spaces are parklands that are mowed and maintained, but contain basic amenities, such as benches or picnic tables. A Parkland Reserve is a property donated or acquired by the department that will likely be developed into a park in the future, as funds become available.

There are currently 2.99 acres of Natural Areas per 1,000 residents. Going forward, CRPD should aim to meet a standard of 3.5 acres per 1,000 residents. CRPD should continue to hold and acquire open spaces and preserves for multiple reasons.

Environmental

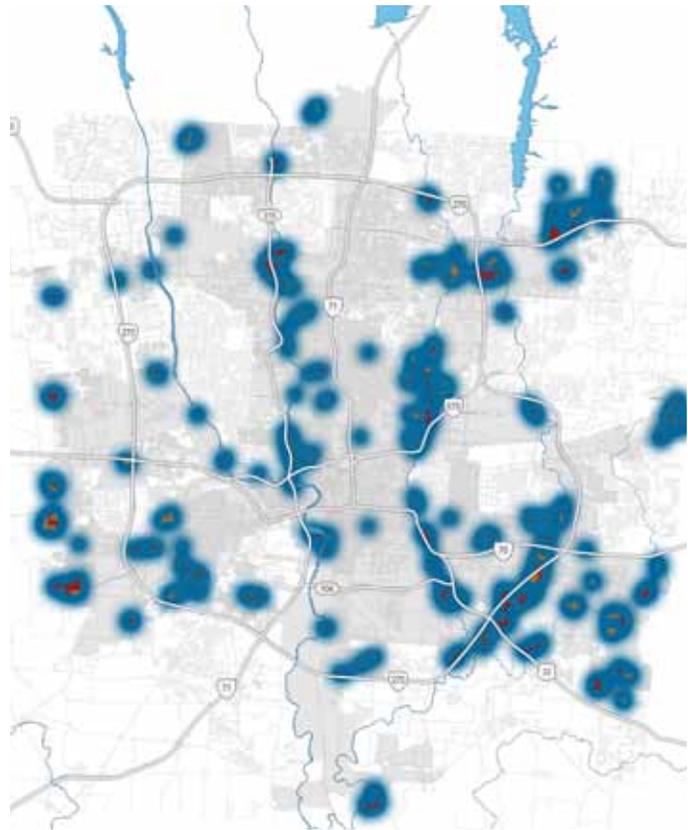
Natural Areas in CRPD system protect environmentally sensitive land along stream corridors, wetlands and other habitats. The department should continue to prioritize the preservation of property that buffer stream corridors, provide wildlife habitat, and protect the city's tree canopy. Existing land holdings should be assessed to identify the value and preservation quality they are intended to provide and standards should be created for their ongoing management. Likewise, protocols should be established for the future acquisition of environmentally sensitive properties.

CRPD should work collaboratively with other City of Columbus departments to ensure that these essential natural areas are preserved and expanded city-wide to meet the level of service goals. As the City of Columbus looks for creative solutions to solve stormwater issues, CRPD will need to be proactive to ensure that city-wide stormwater goals do not infringe on one of the department's core missions of protecting natural areas.

Access and Education

The department has an extensive program devoted to access and education at Natural Areas throughout the city. The Nature Preserve Program was established by City Council in 2004 to preserve and protect unique landscapes that have high plant and animal diversity. Hoover Nature Preserve is over 925 acres and provides a 1,500-foot boardwalk access at Hoover Reservoir. As a migratory stop-over for more than 33 species of shorebirds, this is an important natural asset for the community. Forest areas are also being protected, the 33-acre Woodward Park Nature Preserve contains a high-quality oak-hickory and birch-maple forest that contributes to the city's tree canopy and offers residents an opportunity to experience a mature

Figure 5.14 Natural Areas



Natural Areas shown in map with a quarter to half mile radius

forest with vernal pools. At O'Shaughnessy Nature Preserve, located in the Twin Lakes area, provides residents with a diverse habitat and wildlife experience from stream corridors to upland and bottomland forests, while also preserving important resident and migratory bird habitat. Hayden Falls at Griggs Nature Preserve allow residents to access a unique ravine/gorge environment and 35-foot waterfall while preserving a unique natural area. Taken together, these and other preserves throughout the city provide a necessary educational and habitat protection function.

While Natural Areas are primarily passive recreation spaces that are meant for preservation and therefore ideal for lower-footprint uses, there is still an opportunity for access to these land areas for passive and educational uses. There is a continued need and desire within the City of Columbus to have more nature programs and educational programs particularly in the Central and In-Town Study Areas. These conservation and natural areas have the potential to serve these needs if the location, and the land in question could support such uses and access.



Woodward Park Nature Trail



Hayden Falls

Table 5.5 Strategies for Natural Areas

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|--|---|
| 1.5.1 | Continue to hold and acquire open space and preserves | Perform assessment of existing land inventory to identify value and preservation quality to ensure that park development follows standards |
| | | Continue to prioritize preservation of property that buffer stream corridors, provide wildlife habitat, and protect to the city's tree canopy |
| | | Work collaboratively and proactively with other city departments ensure that these essential natural areas are preserved and expanded city-wide |
| 1.5.2 | Consider potential of partial development to provide access for passive and educational uses | Prioritize areas of the city where nature programs and availability of appropriate properties and infrastructure align |
| 1.5.3 | Provide educational programs associated with natural areas | Prioritize areas of the city where there are program needs and the availability of appropriate properties and infrastructure align |

PARK AND FACILITY STRATEGIES

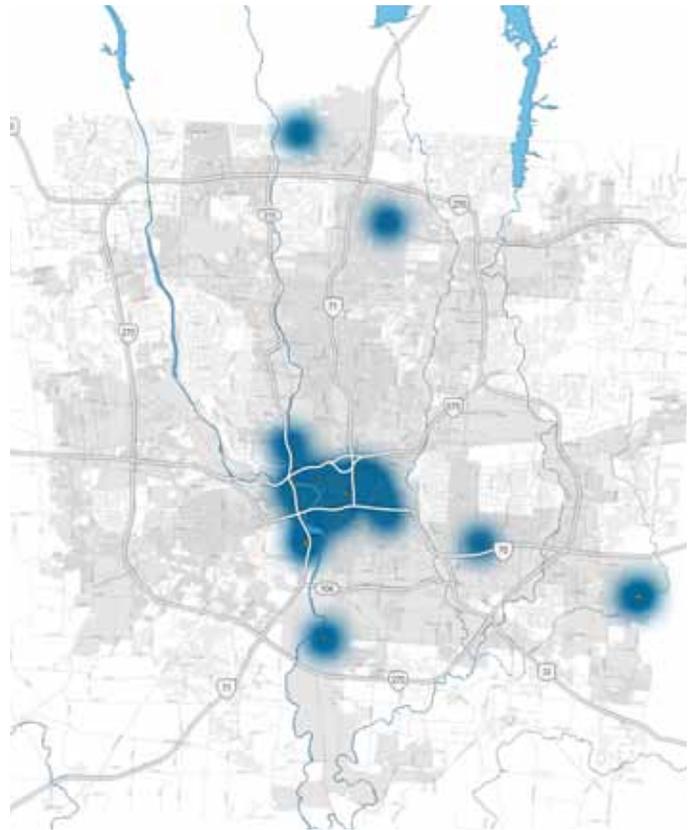
1.6 SPECIAL USE PARKS

Special Use Parks provide highly specialized and unique experiences for residents and visitors. From the Topiary Garden at Deaf School Park and Bicentennial Park in Downtown Columbus, to Frank Fetch Park in German Village, these park spaces offer a wide range of activities and opportunities. Currently there are 1.35 acres per 1,000 residents in the City of Columbus, going forward CRPD should aim to meet a standard of 2 acres per 1,000 residents.

While not a survey question in the Community Interest and Opinion Survey, there is certainly a great degree of concentration of this park type in and around Downtown Columbus. There are portions of certain parks outside the city center (such as the Whetsone Park of Roses) that function as Special Use parks, but CRPD should look for opportunities to distribute this park typology to other parts of the city as support from neighborhood groups, “friends-of” organizations and volunteers allows.

In addition to quantity and geographic distribution of Special Use parks, attention should continue to be paid to maintenance standards. The department should continue to be proactive in fostering and strengthening relationships with “friends of” organizations of these parks in addition to working with corporate sponsors and other adjacent municipalities to continue to offer unique park experiences. To continue to provide a high level of upkeep, options to increase revenue generating uses (rentals, concessions, events, etc.) in these parks should be considered.

Figure 5.15 Special Use Parks



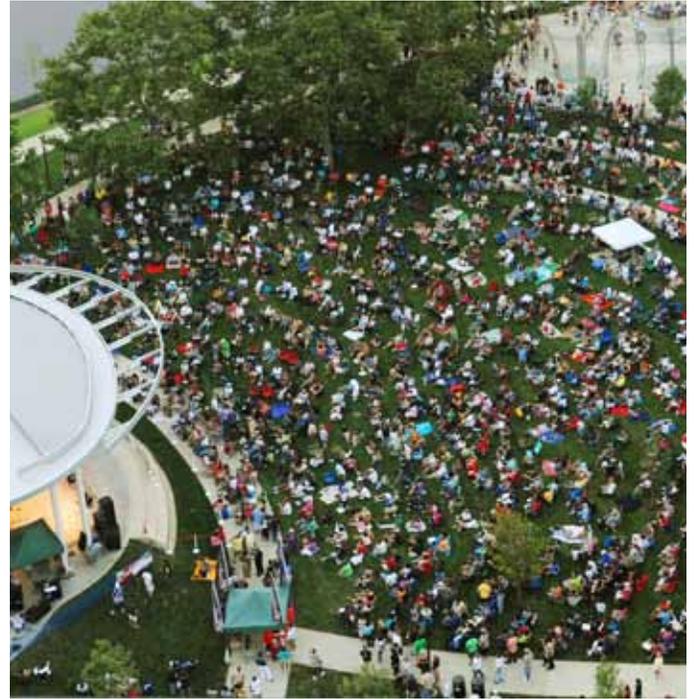
Special Use Parks are generally concentrated in the In-Town Study Area



Topiary Garden at Deaf School Park east of Downtown mimics George Seurat's painting, *A Sunday Afternoon on the Isle of La Grande Jatte*.



Frank Fetch Park in German Village attracts strong neighborhood involvement



Bicentennial Park on the Scioto Mile Downtown draws large crowds in the summertime

Table 5.6 Strategies for Special Use Parks

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|--|--|
| 1.6.1 | Continue existing maintenance standards | Partner with “friends of” organizations and corporate sponsors |
| | | Develop revenue generating uses (rentals, concessions events) |
| 1.6.2 | Increase the geographic spread of Special Use Parks system-wide, as volunteer support allows | Convert existing parks or portions of parks to Special Use |

PARK AND FACILITY STRATEGIES

1.7 ACQUISITION

In order to meet increasing facility and programmatic demands, CRPD will need to be proactive in acquiring land and strategic at identifying potential partnerships with other City of Columbus departments and the private sector. Different approaches will be required for existing urban neighborhoods and growth areas of the city.

Urban Neighborhoods

In existing built-out parts of the City, there are certainly challenges in both acquiring land and aggregating enough properties to develop a park. While the department may need to become more flexible in terms of developing smaller neighborhood parks, there are at least two approaches that should be investigated.

- Working with the Land Bank, community groups and other City departments to identify vacant properties that could be aggregated to create park space. While these will likely be smaller Neighborhood Parks, it could be an effective way to acquire space in built-out parts of the city.
- Work with other City of Columbus initiatives such as Blueprint Columbus to jointly develop new ground in parts of the City that have been identified as having a stormwater infrastructure need. As part of the “green” approach to solving this localized problems, a park space could be integrated into the design of these facilities. These are also likely to be smaller scale parks, but this strategy could be beneficial for built-out areas of the city.

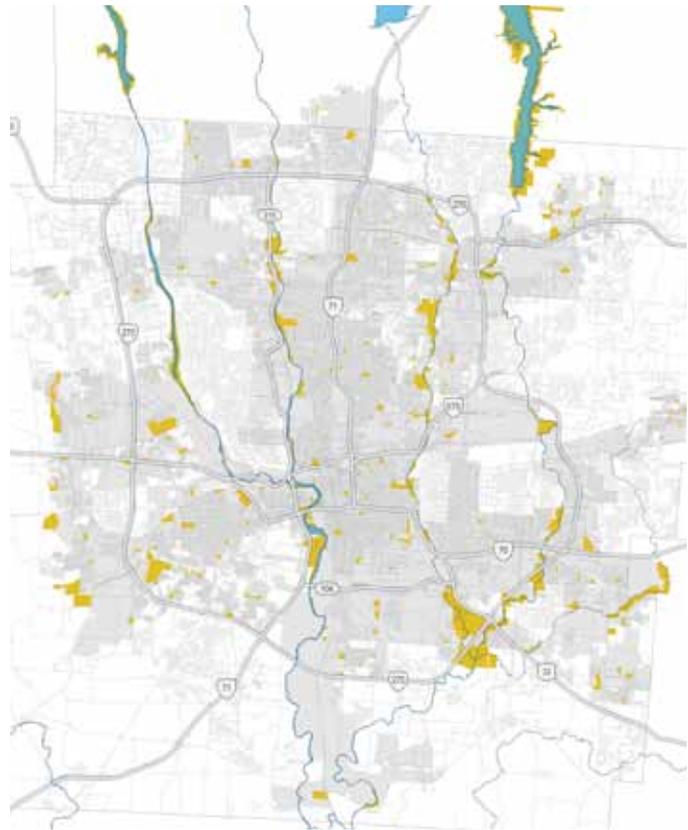
Both approaches could help develop parks across the city’s urban neighborhoods, fulfilling the need for additional parkland and helping to spark reinvestment that revitalizes these core neighborhoods. There are likely many more opportunities beyond the two mentioned above. CRPD should work together with other city departments to identify parkland acquisition and development opportunities that may exist within other planned neighborhood investment, plans and initiatives.

Growth Areas

In the growth areas of the City of Columbus, the department should continue to work with the Department of Development and the Planning Division to identify future growth and demand areas in order to stay ahead of the growth curve and avoid overpaying for property. The department should continue to use tools such as TIFs, developer contributions and park infrastructure associated with new roadway projects to fund new parks and multi-use trails in growth areas of the city.

To better enable the development of park space, a more regional approach to spending parkland dedication funds

Figure 5.16 All Parks



Existing parkland in the City of Columbus.

should be explored. While these funds will still need to be tied to a certain geography, broadening this definition so it can generate more significant funds will allow for more parks to be built. In addition to examining changes to the geography of parkland dedication funds, CRPD and other related city departments should also consider the formula itself to see if additional changes should be made in terms of current calculation criteria and the value of land being dedicated.

Overall

Outside of various acquisition strategies, the department should also develop objective criteria for evaluating parcels being considered for acquisition. For example, priority should be given to land that would link parks, community centers, local cultural facilities, and schools. The department should also continue to acquire land along streams and ravines, corridors that support trails and blueways. Protection and expansion of natural habitat and urban tree canopy should also be a priority. Maintenance costs should also be considered at the time of acquisition so that the department can understand and plan for the financial obligations that come with the additional parkland.



Schirm Farms Parkland



Albany Crossing Park

Table 5.7 Strategies for Acquisition

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|--|---|
| 1.7.1 | Be proactive in acquiring land | Establish objective criteria for evaluating parcels being considered for acquisition |
| | | Acquire land that would link parks, community centers, local cultural facilities, and schools |
| | | Continue to acquire land along streams, ravines, trails and blueway corridors, and prioritize protection and expansion of natural habitat and urban tree canopy |
| | | Identify maintenance costs at time of acquisition |
| 1.7.2 | Use various techniques for acquiring land | Work with Development Department and Planning Division to target Land Bank and other vacant properties |
| | | Work with other city departments and initiatives such as Project Blueprint to develop parkland |
| 1.7.3 | Consider a regional approach to spending parkland dedication funds to better enable future parks development | Convene city committee to evaluate changes to the current formula |

PARK AND FACILITY STRATEGIES

1.8 FORESTRY

CRPD is responsible for planting, pruning and removing trees on park property and along street right-of-way city-wide. Maintaining these trees through 382 parks and along 2,000 miles of streets, is an important function for not only city parks but also the aesthetics of the city itself. Each year the department plants at least 2,000 trees. However, despite these efforts, the City of Columbus is facing a significant loss of Urban Tree Canopy. While insect and disease introduction, development, lack of protection and attrition are contributing factors to this loss, the largest impact currently is the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestation. The estimated loss due to EAB is close to 200,000 trees city-wide.

According to the most recent city-wide LIDAR data, the Urban Tree Canopy for the City of Columbus is 22%. Within CRPD property, the tree canopy is 38.5%. This increased tree cover underscores the importance of parks to the overall Urban Tree Canopy of the city, with 12.2% of the total Columbus tree canopy within Columbus parks.

Urban Tree Canopy is more than just a statistic, it plays an important role in the environmental, economic and physical health of the City.

- **Air Quality:** Trees buffer air pollutants and generate oxygen.
- **Stormwater:** Trees help to manage stormwater runoff and filter pollutants.
- **Habitat:** A single oak tree, a species commonly found in Columbus, can support up to 500 species, including insects, birds, squirrels, slugs, woodchucks, and more.
- **Property Values:** The USDA Forest Service has found that mature trees add an average of 10% to a property's value.

The Mayor's Green Team is currently formulating an Urban Tree Canopy goal for the City of Columbus. This goal will be informed by an urban tree canopy assessment that will identify current land use, tree canopy trends and patterns, and potential planting areas for canopy expansion. The result will be a set of strategies and policy recommendations to protect existing tree cover and quantify needed tree planting efforts.

Just as CRPD plays a leadership role in the maintenance of existing trees in parks and along streets, the department will play a key role in strengthening the City's Urban Tree Canopy and potentially in addressing other environmental issues. Based on the city's goals, CRPD should set higher goals for city parkland since there will be areas of the city that will fall below the goal due to space and land use restrictions. To do so, management practices will need to shift from being reactive to proactive. Currently the department responds to resident complaints and disease issues such as EAB. Being proactive in terms of both management and planting will require additional internal and external resources to perform the work needed. Needs include a park specific pruning crew and a forestry tech division that maintains tree inventory and coordinates proactive work.

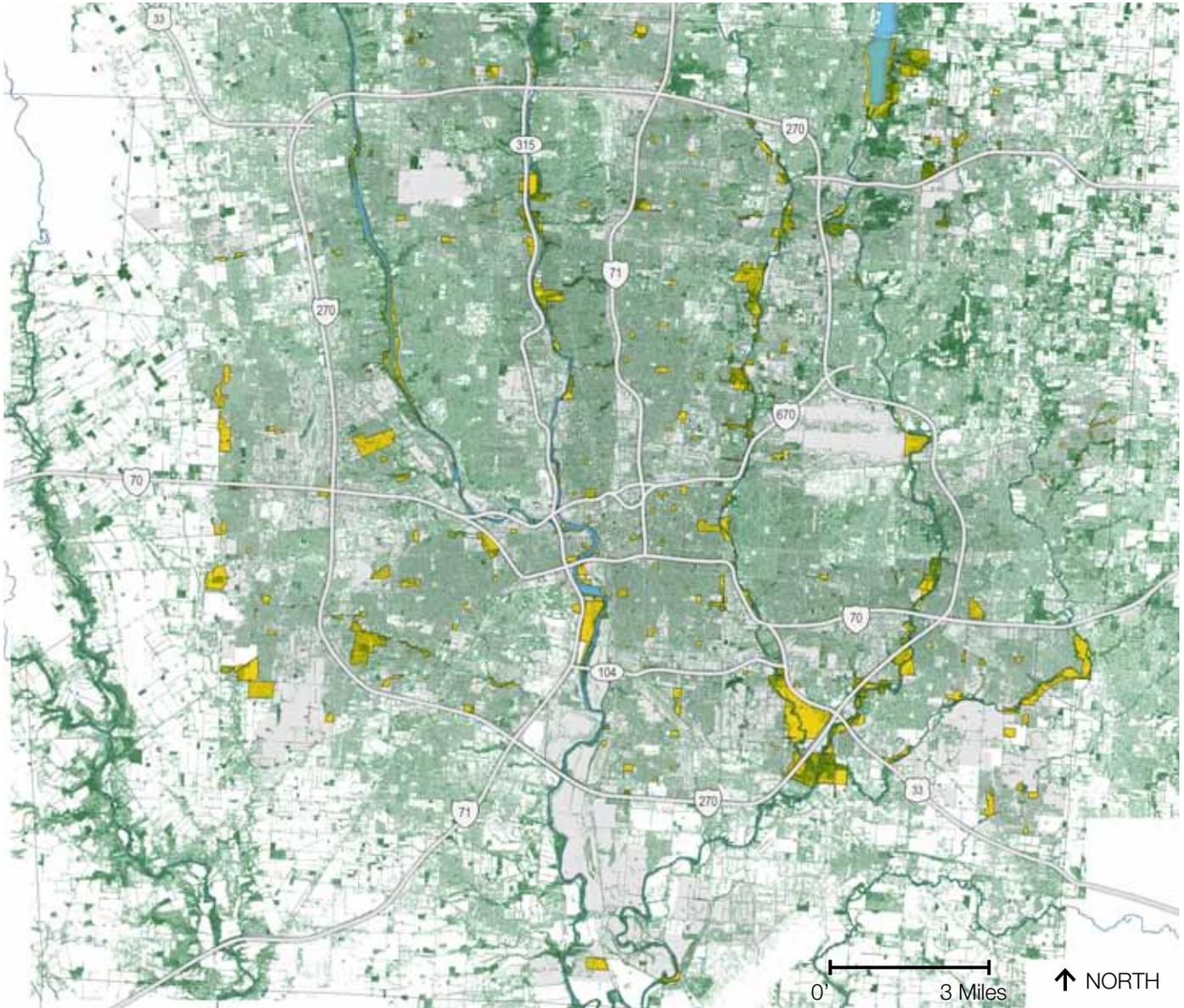
Additional tree nursery capacity will also be needed to meet the city-wide tree canopy goal. CRPD needs to develop a strategic plan to optimize staff effort and define a realistic capacity unit of measurement at current levels for a specific number of trees to be planted per year. Tree nursery capacity, partnership opportunities, logistics capabilities, and infrastructure improvements will need to be addressed.

Table 5.8 Strategies for Forestry

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|---|---|
| 1.8.1 | Take a leadership role in setting a tree canopy goal for the City of Columbus | Collaborate with the Mayor's Green Team and other City departments |
| | | Set higher canopy goals for city parkland to offset expected shortfall in certain areas of the city |
| 1.8.2 | Management should shift from being reactive to proactive | Conduct a comprehensive tree survey/inventory |
| | | Develop a preventative management plan |
| | | Expand staff to include a park specific pruning crew and a forestry tech division that maintains tree inventory and coordinates proactive work |
| 1.8.3 | Establish a canopy replacement program to combat Emerald Ash Borer and achieve tree canopy goal | Develop a strategic plan to optimize staff effort and define a realistic capacity unit of measurement at current levels for a specific number of trees to be planted per year |
| | | Expand tree nursery capacity and logistics capabilities, and make infrastructure improvements |

Figure 5.17 Citywide Tree Canopy

22% City of Columbus Canopy Cover
38.5% Tree Canopy Cover for Columbus Parks



12.2% Percent of the total Columbus Tree Canopy within City of Columbus Parks

Legend

- City of Columbus Boundary
- Hydrology
- City of Columbus Park
- Tree Canopy (LIDAR)
- Major Roads

Table 5.9 Urban Tree Canopies and Canopy Goals for Benchmark Cities

| City | Population | 2013 Canopy | Tree Canopy Goal | Goal Target Date |
|----------------|------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|
| Charlotte | 731,424 | 46% | 50% | 2050 |
| Baltimore | 601,723 | 35% | 40% | 2035 |
| Milwaukee | 594,833 | 21.5% | 40% | - |
| Pittsburgh | 306,211 | 41.7% | 60% | 2032 |
| Portland | 583,776 | 29.9% | 33% | - |
| Washington, DC | 601,723 | 35% | 40% | 2035 |

PARK AND FACILITY STRATEGIES

1.9 MAINTENANCE

Introduction

Maintenance is critical to the overall success of the park system and is a clear priority for residents. Maintaining parks to their full designated standard of care supports higher property values in the community, reduces crime and vandalism, and promotes a higher level of civic pride. As part of the Community Opinion and Interest Survey, one-third of respondents agreed that that maintenance and improvements to existing parks should be a budgetary focus. As part of this Master Plan, a general maintenance assessment was not performed via a on-site review of every park in the system. Reviews came from staff input into issues they deal with on an on-going basis and general observations while evaluating recreation facilities in the fall of 2013. In addition the planning team received comments on maintenance from focus group meetings and stakeholder interviews.

Maintenance Standards

Currently, staff do not operate from established maintenance standards on a consistent basis. Furthermore, the standards themselves need to be improved to increase the level of care system-wide.

One example are the current mowing standards and cleaning standards. Mowing standards are set at a 14 day mow cycle which is a low standard for most urban park cities for maintaining neighborhood and community parks. Ideally most urban park systems strive for a seven day mow cycle for neighborhood and community parks. The exception to this is the downtown parks which are maintained at a higher level which helps to support a strong image and safe environment for the city and for businesses and visitors who work in or visit the city.

For sports fields the standard for mowing is done on a seven day mow cycle which is an acceptable standard for practice and recreational fields. Mowing for competitive fields should be done every three days. To ease the maintenance burden, especially in smaller neighborhood parks, the department has started to create “no-mow zones” or natural areas within parks to reduce the amount of mowing that needs to take place. This strategy should continue to be applied to increase efficiency system-wide and provide additional areas of natural habitat in certain parks.

Another area for improvement are the frequency standards in place for restroom cleaning, trash removal and parking lot or hard surface cleaning. Currently it is done every three days. This is a low standard for urban parks which usually provide this service on a daily basis.

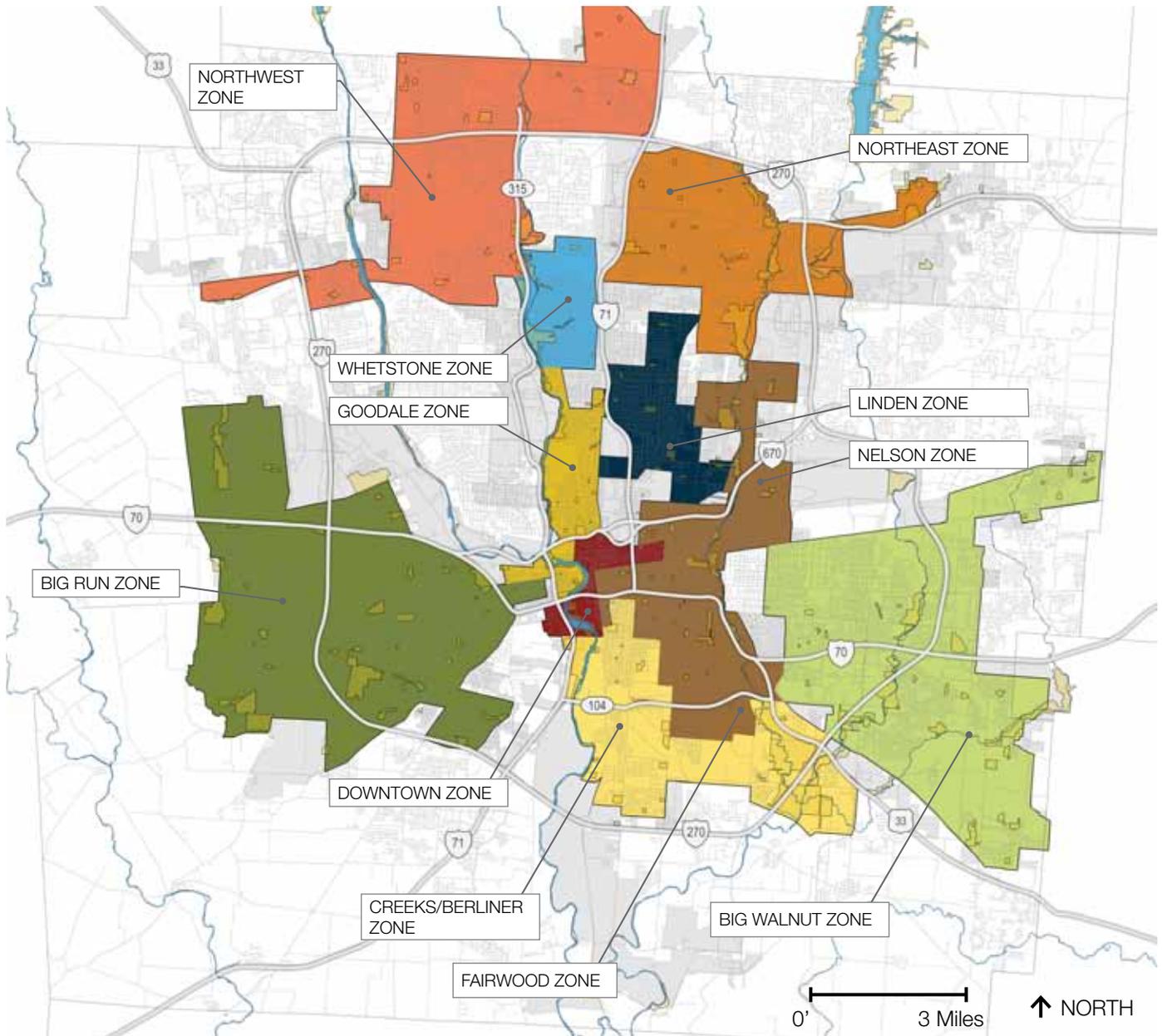
Though the department has created maintenance modes for each park in the city, higher standards of care, particularly in terms of equipment and facility repairs, should be

considered for parks that receive increased levels of use or serve a broader area. This may require the designation of additional maintenance modes for certain parks at certain times. In addition to modifying these modes, the department must ensure that all requirements specified by each maintenance mode are implemented. For example, if mowing and trash removal frequencies are upheld but equipment/facility repairs are not, the maintenance mode is not fulfilled.

Table 5.10 Description of Existing Maintenance Modes

| Mode | Name | Description |
|------|----------------------|--|
| 1 | High Maintenance | Applies to downtown and specialty parks with high levels of development, high profile areas, visitor destination locations or high programmed areas with a regional attraction. Typical mowing frequency weekly, turf management program, typically irrigated, landscaping and floral plantings, daily litter and trash removal. |
| 2 | Normal Maintenance | Applies to parks with moderate to high levels of development, programmed athletic fields and/or programmed facilities, and parks of a regional nature serving moderate to high levels of users both local and regional. Typical mowing frequency 14 days, litter and trash removal twice weekly, equipment/facility repairs as needed. |
| 3 | Moderate Maintenance | Applies to parks with moderate levels of development that are not associated with a programmed facility and are generally of service only to the immediate community. Typical mowing frequency 21 days, litter and trash removal weekly. |
| 4 | Low Maintenance | Applies to low visitation, low development, remote parks, street islands and median strips. Low frequency mowing schedule, four (4) occasions seasonally. Litter control at time of mowing or on complaint basis. |
| 5 | Minimum Maintenance | Applies to undeveloped parkland, natural areas, conservation areas, areas closed to public. No mowing, periodic buffer mowing may occur along roadways/ROW or adjacent developed properties, litter control on complaint basis. |
| 6 | Maintained by Others | Scope and frequency of maintenance vary. Generally applies to street islands, median strips and other properties under contracted maintenance. |

Figure 5.18 Existing Maintenance Zone Boundaries



Legend

- City of Columbus Boundary
- Hydrology
- City Of Columbus Park
- Major Roads

PARK AND FACILITY STRATEGIES

Table 5.11 List of Parks and Facilities by Maintenance Zone

| Big Run | | Big Walnut | | Downtown |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Alkire Lake Park | Lindbergh Park | Abby Trails Park | Nafzger Park | Alexander Park |
| Alkire Woods Park | Redick Park | Argus Park | Napoleon Park | Battelle Park |
| Alton-Darby Park | Rhodes Park | Barnett Park | Noe-Bixby Park | Bicentennial Park |
| Big Run Park | Scioto Woods Park | Big Walnut Park | Pincrest Park | Bicentennial Park Promenade |
| Clover Groff Park | Spindler Park | Chatterton Park | Portman Park | Genoa Park |
| Franks Park | Stephen Drive Park | Crawford Farms | Reynolds Crossing Park | Keller Park |
| Freedom Park | Stoneridge Park | Independence Park | Shady Lane Park | McFerson Commons |
| Galloway Ridge Park | Trabue Woods Park | Jefferson Woods Park | Shellbourne Park | Northbank Park |
| Georgian Heights Park | Westchester Park | Kirkwood Park | Turnberry Retreat | Richter Park |
| Glenwood Park | Westgate Park | Kraner Park | Walnut View Park | Veterans Memorial Park |
| Green Countrie Park | Westmoor Park | Lehman Estates Park | Willis Park | Westbank Park |
| Hauntz Park | Willow Creek Park | Livmoor Pool | Winchester Lakes Park | |
| Hilliard Green Park | Winward Farms Park | Maybury Park | Winchester Meadows | |
| Hilltonia Park | Wrexford Green Park | | | |
| Holton Park | Wrexham Park | | | |
| Fairwood | Goodale | Linden | Nelson | Northeast |
| Blackburn Park | Clinton Como Park | American Addition Park | Academy Park | Beechcroft Park |
| Deshler Park | Clintonville Park | Amvet Village Park | Avalon Park | Brandywine Park |
| Driving Park | Cody Park | Audubon Park | Beatty Park | Casto Park |
| English Park | Dodge Park | Brentnell Park | Cassady Park | Cherrybottom Park |
| Fairwood Park | Glen Echo Park | Cooke Park | Hamilton Park | City Gate Park |
| Hanford Village Park | Goodale Park | Huy Park | Hayden Park | Cooper Park |
| Karns Park | Harrison House | Joan Park | Jefferson Park | Devonshire Park |
| Kings Row Park | Harrison Park | Kenlawn Park | Krumm Park | Forest Park East |
| Kobacker Park | Harrison West Park | Linden Park | Mayme Moore Park | Granville Park |
| Lincoln Park | Indianola Park | Maloney Park | Milo-Grogan Park | Innis Park |
| Linwood Park | Italian Village Park | Mock Park | Near Eastside Park | Mifflin Park |
| Livingston Park | Maynard and Summit Park | Pontiac Park | Nelson Park | New Albany Crossing |
| Millbrook Park | McKinley Park | Pumphrey Park | New Beginnings Park | Northeast Park |
| Roosevelt Park | Side by Side Park | Windsor (Douglas) Park | Ohio Ave. Park | Northern Woods Park |
| Smith Rd. Park | Thompson Park | | Saunders Park | Northgate Park |
| Wagner Park | Tuttle Park | | Shepard Park | Northtowne Park |
| | Weinland Park | | Wolfe Park | Parkridge Park |
| | Wheeler Memorial Park | | | Sommerset Park |
| | | | | Strawberry Farms Park |
| | | | | Walden Park |
| | | | | Waltham Woods Park |
| | | | | Woodward Park |
| Northwest | Three Creeks | | Whetstone | |
| Antrim Park | Pinque Park | Alumcrest Park | Marion Franklin Park | Anheuser-Busch Park |
| Brookside Woods Park | Riverside Green Park | Berliner Park | McCoy Park | Brevort Park |
| Carriage Place Park | Sancus Park | Berwick Park | Moeller Park | Chaseland Park |
| Dexter Falls Park | Sawmill Meadows Park | Clairfield | Schiller Park | Kenney Park |
| Flint Rd. Park | Summitview Park | Easthaven Park | SE Lions Park | Northcrest Park |
| Haydens Crossing Park | Sycamore Hills Park | Elk Run Park | Sills Park | Northmoor Park |
| Hickory Woods Park | Winnstone Park | Frank Fetch Park | Southgate Park | Overbrook Ravine Park |
| Lazelle Park | Woodbridge Green Park | Hamilton Heights Park | Southwood Park | Sharon School |
| Olde Sawmill Park | Worthington Hills Park | Heer Park | Stockbridge Park | Whetstone Park |
| | | Helsel Park | Sulivant Gardens Park | |
| | | Hott Road Park | The Creeks Park | |
| | | Indian Mound Park | Williams Creek Park | |
| | | Madison Mills Park | | |



Grow Zone along the Olentangy Bike Trail



Maintenance at Prestwick Commons in the North Study Area

CPTED Standards

Improving these standards encourages more use and increases overall park safety. To further increase park safety, **Community Policing Through Environmental Design (CPTED)** Standards should be adopted by the department. CPTED helps to prevent crime by integrating standards into the design of parks, facilities, and buildings that address natural surveillance, natural access control, territorial reinforcement, and maintenance. This involves maximizing visibility, improving lighting, defining entries, providing clear connections and, erecting maps and park/facility rules, and wayfinding and directional signage. Maintenance techniques include trimming trees and bushes to keep sight lines open, and providing prompt removal of trash and graffiti. These design standards along with greater maintenance standards will dramatically improve the park system’s ability to contribute to the success of the city and its neighborhoods.

Develop a Maintenance Management Plan

The Maintenance Division feels that they do not have the level of staffing or equipment necessary to have a higher level of standard for increasing the care of neighborhood and community parks. This would require a maintenance

management plan that would outline how many hours it takes to maintain a park based on a set frequency schedule using the right type of worker, with the right skill set, for the right pay to achieve the right outcome. This would require matching people and crews to equipment needed in each of the department’s 10 Maintenance Zones.

The city has the option to contract out maintenance services which would be more cost effective for half of the year or 32 mow cycles but feels that contracting is not something to consider. The Department does have some volunteer support from the community to help maintain some areas of the system from adopt a park type partnerships and “friends of” organizations, but it is fairly limited.

The Maintenance Division does not have a maintenance software system to maintain lifecycle assets nor do they have an asset management plan in place. This would help the department to determine the number of park assets they have in place, the condition of those assets and how to maintain those assets on a consistent basis to achieve maximum useful life. By providing the staff with this type of work order system, it would allow the department to tell their story better to key decision makers on what it takes to maintain an urban park system for the future.

Table 5.12 Strategies for Maintenance

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|---|---|
| 1.9.1 | Adopt maintenance standards that optimize resources by providing higher levels of care in high-visibility and high-use areas. | Enhance level of care for high-use neighborhood and community parks based on frequencies of mowing, cleaning restrooms, cleaning parking areas, maintaining sports fields, and maintaining playgrounds. |
| | | Implement CPTED standards for park design and maintenance in consideration of safety-related issues |
| 1.9.2 | Revise maintenance standards assigned to each zone to increase level of care. | Develop a maintenance management plan |
| | | Institute maintenance software system to track assets |
| | | Revise maintenance standards assigned to each zone to increase level of care. |
| | | Consider using contract maintenance services |

PARK AND FACILITY STRATEGIES

1.10 MULTI-USE TRAILS

Multi-Use Trails were the top-rated need identified by the Community Opinion and Interest Survey, with 77% of respondents expressing a need. Walking and biking trail improvements should focus on the Southwest Study Area first, the North Study Area second, and the Central Study Area third in order to fulfill unmet needs.

CRPD is already addressing this issue with a significant increase in Multi-Use Trails planned or under construction. Today there are 92.45 trail miles, with plans to build 83 more miles. The department has worked closely with Metro Parks, MORPC and other municipalities to expand the city and regional trail system. While much of the trail network is focused along the city's river and stream corridors and along the routes established for the Ohio-to-Erie trail, there are numerous efforts underway to improve neighborhood access to existing trails, link nearby parks to existing trails and improving east-west connectivity. CRPD should continue to improve access to existing trails from surrounding neighborhoods, business districts, parks and natural areas.

Existing Trail Network Investment

CRPD should continue to prioritize and facilitate connections between neighborhoods and the trail network to increase access. Projects such as the Goodale Connector and the Bethel Road Connector provide needed linkages to existing and growing neighborhoods. Extensions of the existing trail network through projects such as filling in the missing trail linkages along the Alum Creek Trail and adding the Camp Chase trail on the Southwest side provide more complete and usable trail systems to support neighborhood revitalization and regional access. There are also numerous parks that are close to Multi-Use Trails but that are not directly connected. Similar to the work planned for Krumm Park to connect to the Alum Creek Trail, these new connections would serve to both energize these existing parks and the trail network itself with more users.

In terms of existing trail maintenance there are currently two levels of care which need to be more consistent between what the city provides in trail maintenance and what Columbus Metro Parks provides in trail maintenance in city owned parks.

Safety and Education

In areas where high use is starting to overcrowd the trail network (the northern portions of the Olentangy Trail for example), trail widening should be pursued to allow for safer use by all trail users. While some public comment has expressed an interest in separate bicycle and walking trails, this would require further analysis due to the larger amount of land required and the cost of additional infrastructure.

The public outreach effort identified safety and education as concerns in using the existing trail system. Additional efforts should be explored to increase on-trail safety. There are some trail rules and etiquette signs posted along the trail network, but additional signage or pavement markings could be installed to better communicate trail rules with all levels of users. Educational sessions or other activities could be created in partnership with bicycle advocacy groups to encourage safer use of the trails within the cycling community.

Improve East-West Connectivity

Similar to the roadway network in the City of Columbus, there is a need for greater east-west connectivity for the Multi-Use Trail network. The I-670 trail is the only significant east-west connection that is part of the overall system, both existing and in the future. The other east-west connections (both existing and planned) are currently on-street facilities. CRPD should work with other city departments to continue to provide on-street bike facilities that lead to park facilities and create additional trail connections between the north-south legs of the trail network.

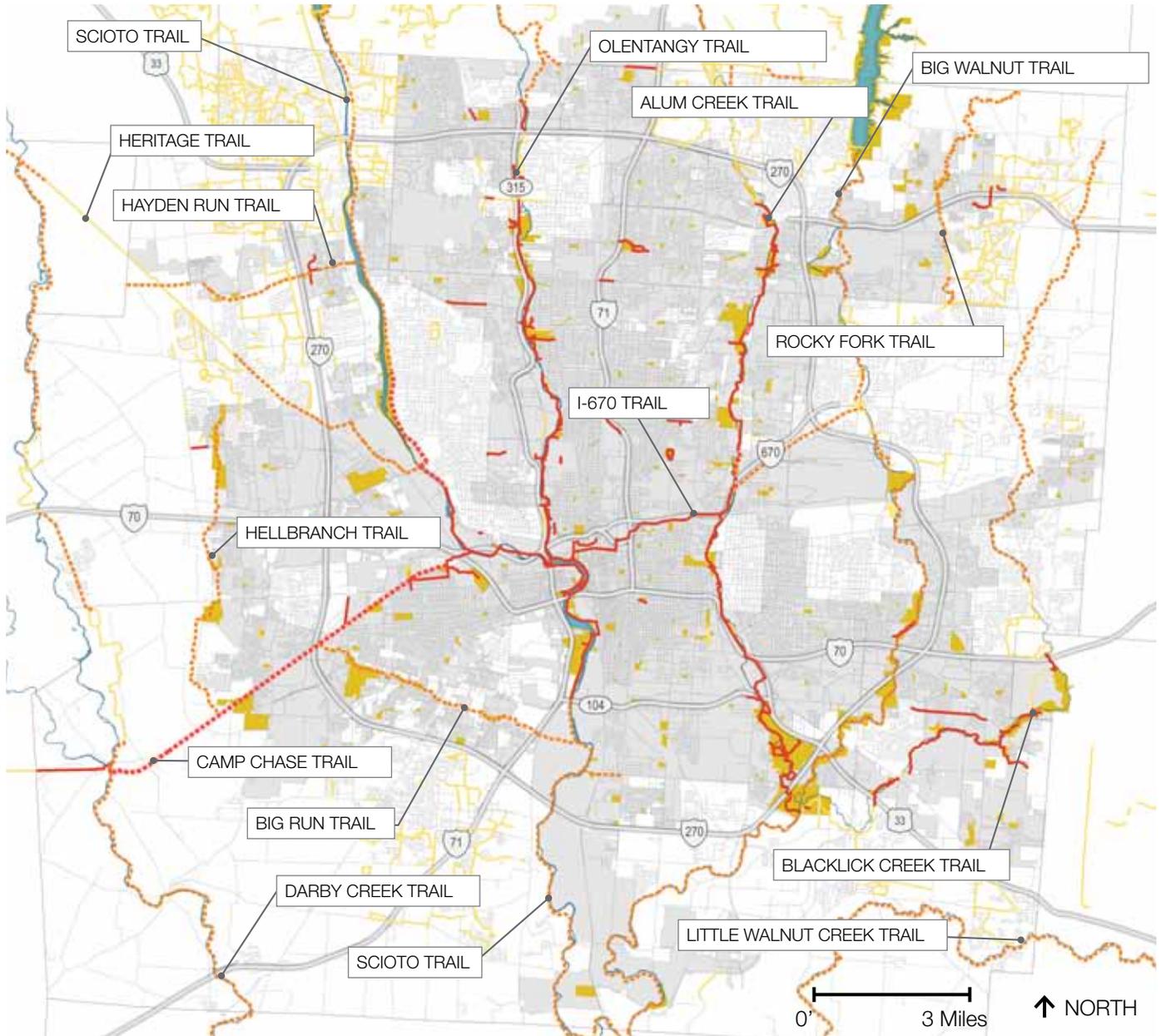
Working with other city departments, Franklin County, MORPC, Metro Parks and surrounding jurisdictions, CRPD should continue to develop strategic relationships and advocate and plan for off-street facilities to make east-west connections and to connect to other adjacent municipalities. These connections could take the form of expanded sidewalks on one side of a roadway that accommodate multiple users. With planning studies ongoing and planned for the city's multi-use trails and multimodal transportation network, now is the time to make these connections a city-wide and regional priority.

Expand Bicycle Infrastructure And Facilities And Accessibility

Over the past few years, there have been dramatic improvements in supportive bicycle infrastructure such as bike-share, bike shelters and parking, bike maintenance facilities, etc. CRPD should continue to work with other city departments to continue to expand COGO bike share and identify other potential bike rental vendors. The department should also work with city departments to provide for bike parking and maintenance facilities in high traffic locations within parks and along the trail system. As ridership increases, this could include a bike hub location with lockers, showers and a bike shop at a downtown or other high traffic location along the trail system.

Key to improving access is making the system more legible. Wayfinding is improving across the system, especially along the Olentangy Trail, but more could be done to develop a

Figure 5.19 Proposed Greenway System - Citywide



Legend

- City of Columbus Boundary
- Hydrology
- Major Roads
- Existing City of Columbus Trail
- Existing Regional Trail
- Funded/Under Construction Trail
- Proposed Future Trail

PARK AND FACILITY STRATEGIES

system-wide graphics package that makes the trail more legible. Better and more plentiful on-trail signage should include mile markings, education and safety information, as well as an indication of where users could access neighborhood commercial areas, services and attractions. Wayfinding to the trails themselves, especially trail heads, should be located off major corridors alongside the trail network.

In addition to expanding trail miles and connections, supportive facilities should be added along the trail. Restrooms, water fountains and shelters should be made accessible to the trail, whether within park locations or at trailheads. Other amenities that could be added along the trail network include pump courses or skills courses that provide another bicycle experience beyond trail riding to the system.

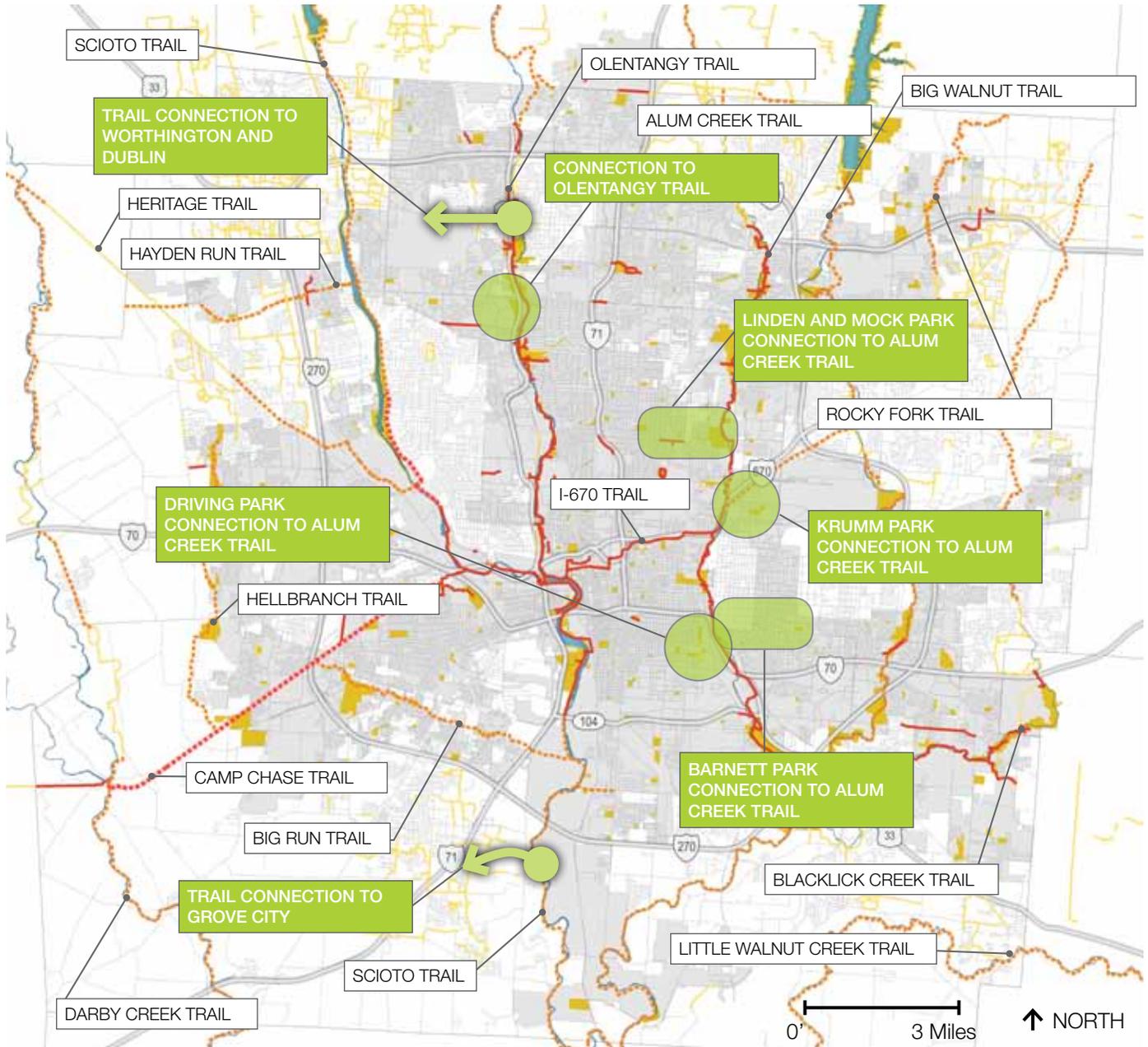


Existing regional and Columbus trail network.

Table 5.13 Strategies for Multi-Use Trails

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|--|---|
| 1.10.1 | Improve access to existing trails from surrounding neighborhoods, business districts and parks | Work with other city departments to continue to provide on-street bike facilities that lead to park facilities |
| | | Prioritize connecting neighborhoods next to existing trail systems |
| | | Prioritize connecting parks closest to existing trail systems |
| | | Prioritize access in the Southwest, North and Central Study Areas |
| | | Develop and install more consistent trail and wayfinding signage (both on and off-trail) |
| 1.10.2 | Improve Multi-Use Trail Safety and Education | Consider trail widening and other methods for enhancing safety and the user experience along trail corridors for all trail users |
| | | Install more educational signage |
| | | Install pavement markings |
| | | Partner with bicycle advocacy groups educate riders on safe trail usage |
| 1.10.3 | Continue to improve east-west connectivity city-wide | Work with other city departments to continue to provide on-street bike facilities that lead to park facilities |
| | | Partner with other City departments, Franklin County, MORPC, Metro Parks, and adjacent jurisdictions to explore off-street facilities |
| | | Prioritize connections in the Southwest, North and Central Study Areas |
| 1.10.4 | Continue to expand bicycle infrastructure, facilities and accessibility | With City support, continue to partner with COGO bike share and identify other potential bike rental vendors |
| | | With City support, provide bike parking, bike maintenance facilities, and shelters at high traffic locations |
| | | With City support, explore a bike hub (lockers, showers, bike shop) at a downtown or other high traffic location along trail system |
| | | Explore opportunities to add pump courses or skills courses adjacent to the trail system |

Figure 5.20 Potential Greenway Expansions and Connections - Citywide



Legend

- City of Columbus Boundary
- Hydrology
- Major Roads
- Existing City of Columbus Trail
- Existing Regional Trail
- Funded/Under Construction Trail
- Proposed Future Trail

PARK AND FACILITY STRATEGIES

1.12 BLUEWAYS

The City of Columbus is well on its way to creating a world-class system of Multi-Use Trails. A similar opportunity exists along the city's rivers, streams, lakes and reservoirs. There is existing infrastructure in place along much of the city's waterways, reservoirs and lakes, but more could be done to legitimize access, improve ease of use and promote blueways city-wide.

Access

Access should be provided for all different types of watercraft, depending on location. Along the lakes and reservoirs, large boat access is needed with ramps, larger parking lots and other facilities. Along the river and stream corridors, some ramps locations are necessary in areas where water levels and currents allow for larger boats, but access should be focused on smaller craft like canoes and kayaks.

With the recent removal of low-head dams along the Olentangy River at the Ohio State University Campus and downtown along the Scioto River, there are now 6.5 miles of unimpeded river. Already an outfitter has begun river trips along the Olentangy and as these two rivers become more usable for paddlers, this type of recreation should be expected to increase. This stretch of river has been designated as a water trail by ODNR, and CRPD has already started to improve infrastructure at put-in locations and install signage both on- and off-river. These efforts should continue along river and stream corridors city-wide, teaming up with neighboring jurisdictions and regional organizations to improve access.

Where possible, CRPD should add access points that take advantage of existing infrastructure. The areas identified on the diagram at right demonstrate where there is a lack of safe

and legitimate access for kayaks and canoes along the Alum Creek and Scioto River corridors. Just as launching access has been provided at places such as Northmoor Park along the Olentangy River where there is a parking lot and other facilities close to the river, the department should look for similar locations along these two waterways. Where Multi-Use Trails and park facilities are adjacent to the Scioto River and Alum Creek, access points should be created. To maximize access, work should be done to identify other locations where infrastructure could be added. In addition to providing river access, these improvements should also serve other river users such as fishermen and wildlife viewers who also need proper access to these waterways.

Information and Education

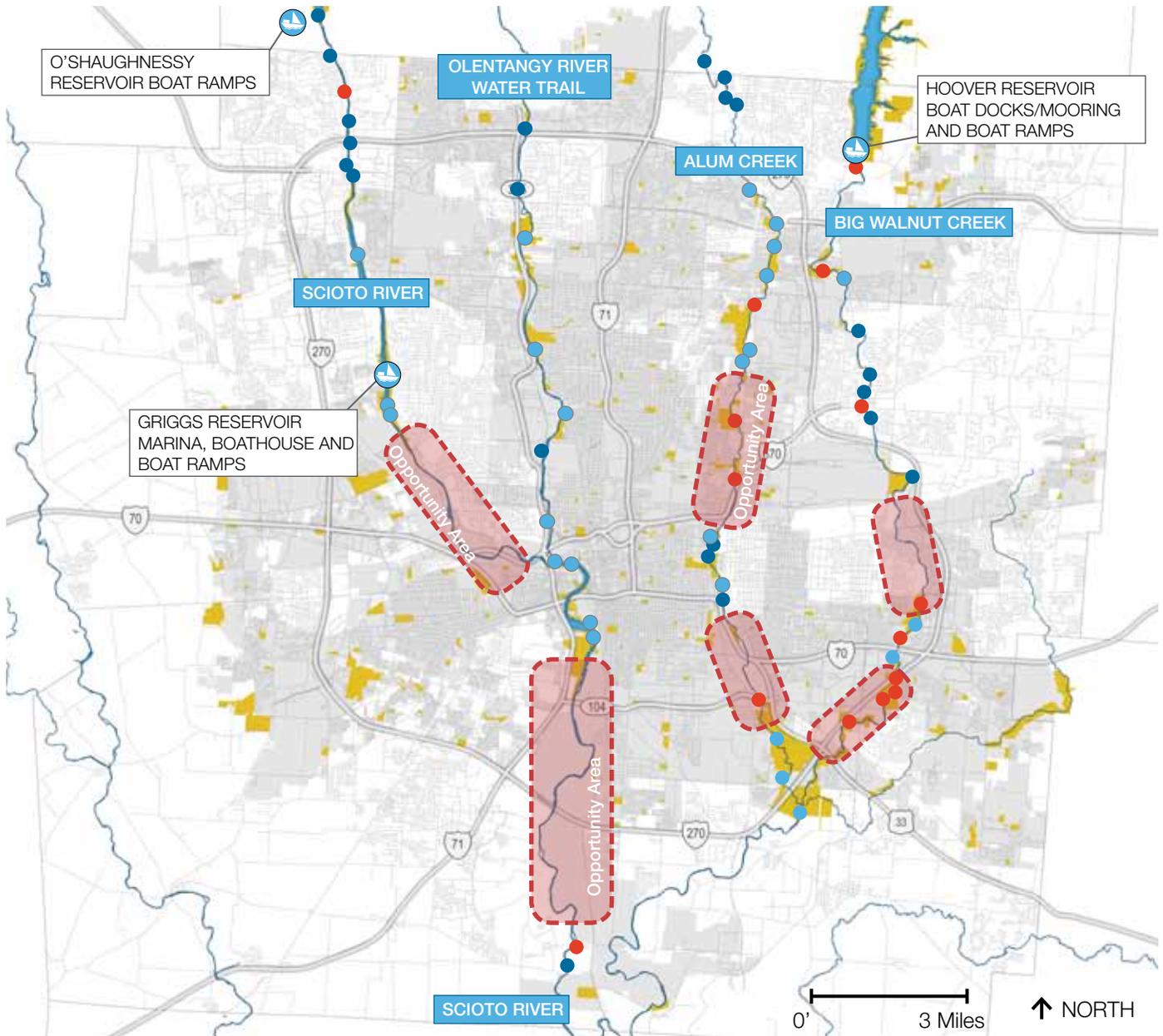
Part of increasing awareness about the city's blueways system will be providing good and timely information and education. Developing a signage system that helps users find river access both on and off river is important, but so is signage that promotes the safety of all users along the blueways themselves. There is also an opportunity for educational signage about local area wildlife and habitat at key locations. This information should also be shared via a web site that provides maps and access information, current river conditions, and safety and education information.

To take advantage of our natural assets and to meet a growing need in the community for outdoor education and nature programming, the department should also prioritize the development of programs that focus on river health, sustainability and the river ecosystem.

Table 5.14 Strategies for Blueways

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|---|---|
| 1.11.1 | Provide access for different types of watercraft, depending on locations | Conduct assessment of existing boat ramps and explore new locations |
| | | Continue to add access points for kayaks and canoes along river and stream corridors |
| | | Prioritize access points in areas where there is existing infrastructure or adjacent park facilities |
| | | Improve access to the lower Scioto River and Alum Creek |
| | | Pro-actively communicate with boating organizations to ensure efficient and effective permitting and access |
| 1.11.2 | Legitimize access, improve ease of use and promote blueways | Improve on river and off river signage and maps |
| | | Provide information on conditions, access and maps online |
| | | Facilitate safe portages around low-head dams |
| | | Promote safety through educational programming and signage |
| 1.11.3 | Develop educational programming related to river health, sustainability and the river ecosystem | |
| 1.11.4 | Provide access for fishing and other wildlife viewing | |

Figure 5.21 Existing Blueway System - Citywide



Legend

- City of Columbus Boundary
- Hydrology
- Major Roads
- Columbus River Access
- Regional River Access
- Potential River Access (Identified by MORPC Staff)
- Columbus Recreation & Parks Boat Ramps/Marinas
- Opportunity Areas

PARK AND FACILITY STRATEGIES

1.13 AQUATICS

CRPD operates 7 outdoor pools, 3 spraygrounds, and 1 indoor pool, all of which are primarily located within the pre-1950 (pre annexation) boundaries of the City of Columbus. While many pools were closed in the last several years due to budget constraints, efforts have been made in recent years to bring pools back online, renovate pools and right size the system. This has included closing Blackburn Pool due to lack of attendance and budgetary constraints and replacing it with a sprayground. Two new spraygrounds were also added at Indian Mound Community Center and Barnett Community Center. The department has also recently renovated many pools. These include Dodge Pool (2012) and Maryland Pool (2014), in addition to Lincoln Pool that has just started renovation and Fairwood Pool which is in preliminary design with a recommended site in Driving Park. The City should continue these efforts to improve and maintain existing aquatic facilities.

Looking at the long-range plan for aquatics that was conducted in 2006, there are several additional recommendations that should be explored in terms of system expansion. The 2006 study identified needs to expand the system in the southeast and northeast parts of the city with the construction of family aquatic centers. Spray grounds were recommended for areas where there were gaps in service in the northeast and northwest parts of the city. The 2006 study analyzed existing pool facilities both within and outside the city, both public and private. A resident survey was not conducted as part of that study. This Master Plan conducted a survey which identified areas of need that overlap with or add to the recommendations in the 2006 Aquatic Master Plan.

City-wide, Columbus residents have a large amount of unmet need, with only 26% of household respondents reporting that their needs are met by the current number and distribution of pools. There are also areas of the city that showed greater need than others. The Central, North and In-town Study Areas have the greatest need for aquatic facilities and should



Top: Marion-Franklin Pool; Below: Dodge Pool

be considered for improvements as well.

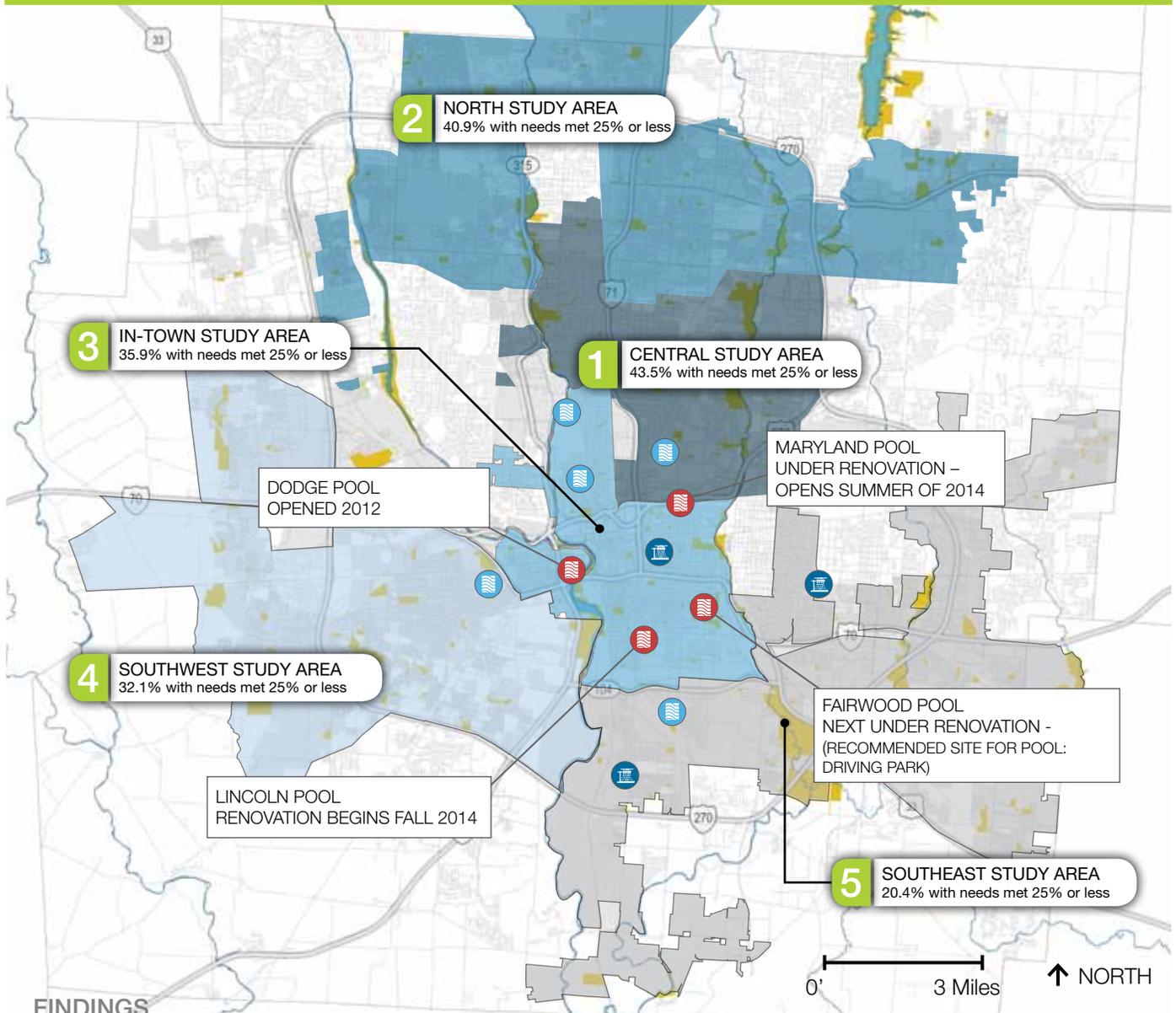
Because budgetary constraints exist and the creation of new facilities will add to ongoing maintenance and operation expenses, the department should pursue partnerships within the community and private sector to begin to implement these aquatic improvements and close service gaps.

Table 5.15 Strategies for Aquatics

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|--|---|
| 1.12.1 | Continue to improve and maintain existing aquatic facilities | Continue to follow plan to renovate existing pools |
| | | Monitor effectiveness of renovations |
| | | Consider additional pool upgrades or expansions at pools with high use |
| 1.12.2 | Implement the long range plan to expand the system | Evaluate previous Master Plan that said to expand the system in the southeast and northeast with the construction of family aquatic centers against the survey results that indicated a priority for the Central, North and In-Town Study Areas |
| | | Pursue public-private partnerships to create new facilities in underserved areas of the city |
| 1.12.3 | Install spraygrounds in areas where there are gaps in service in the northeast and northwest parts of the city | |

Figure 5.22 Prioritization For Aquatic Facilities (Outdoor Pools & Spraygrounds)

42% of Columbus residents have a need for Outdoor Swimming Pools and Spraygrounds



FINDINGS

Outdoor Swimming Pool/Sprayground improvements should focus on the CENTRAL area followed by the NORTH area in order to fulfill unmet needs, although needs exist in every part of the city.

Legend

- City of Columbus Boundary
- Hydrology
- Major Roads
- Sprayground
- Pool or Aquatic Facility
- Pool - Recently Renovated, Under Renovation, and Pending Renovation
- First Priority
- Second Priority
- Third Priority
- Fourth Priority
- Fifth Priority

COMMUNITY CENTER ASSESSMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The planning team visited 20 community centers in December 2013. At each center, consultants conducted interviews with staff, toured the facility, assessed interior and exterior conditions, observed operations, and conducted intercept surveys with users. For the purposes of analysis and reporting results of these assessments, centers were divided into three categories: small (less than 19,000 sq. ft.), medium (19,000-30,000 sq. ft.), and large/multi-generational (greater than 30,000 sq. ft.).

For each center, manager/staff observations, consultant observations, key recommendations, and a facility assessment / customer service assessment score has been reported. Intercept survey results are reported for each of the three categories of community center, as well as overall results. A comprehensive facility assessment and customer service scorecard is also included in this report (see Table 5.17 on page 162).

Overall, the greatest strength of the community centers are the highly-dedicated and talented staff. The most prevalent shortcomings involve facility hygiene and maintenance, inefficient operating hours, the lack of effectiveness in coordinating and scheduling programs and services, and organizational impediments to marketing and communication. A strategic and standards-based approach is needed to address the facility management issues affecting the system. This approach must avoid looking at each center in isolation, but should consider the overall portfolio of facilities including areas of potential growth or areas that are underserved in order to create a plan that updates facilities to balance the level of service provided to the city. The department, through the Master Plan, also needs to plan for the total lifecycle cost of facility operation at a system level and communicate its corresponding action plan to center staff and stakeholders. In conjunction with this planning, center should take steps to have closer coordination and cooperation to fill programmatic gaps, share staff, and complement each other's hours of operations. Achieving this level of coordination will require empowering center managers to make adjustments to their operations, but also holding them accountable for providing an enhanced level of service.

METHODOLOGY

The consultant team completed a guided walk-through of each center, thoroughly examining the condition of the facility, activity levels, and the interaction between users, the center, and its staff. In an effort to acquire valuable information for recommendation purposes, center managers and key staff were interviewed to understand each center's perspective from the front lines. In addition to staff interviews, 200 intercept surveys were answered by users present at the various facilities in order to capture the



Community Centers provide a place for residents to gather and take part in social events.

opinions of active users of the community centers.

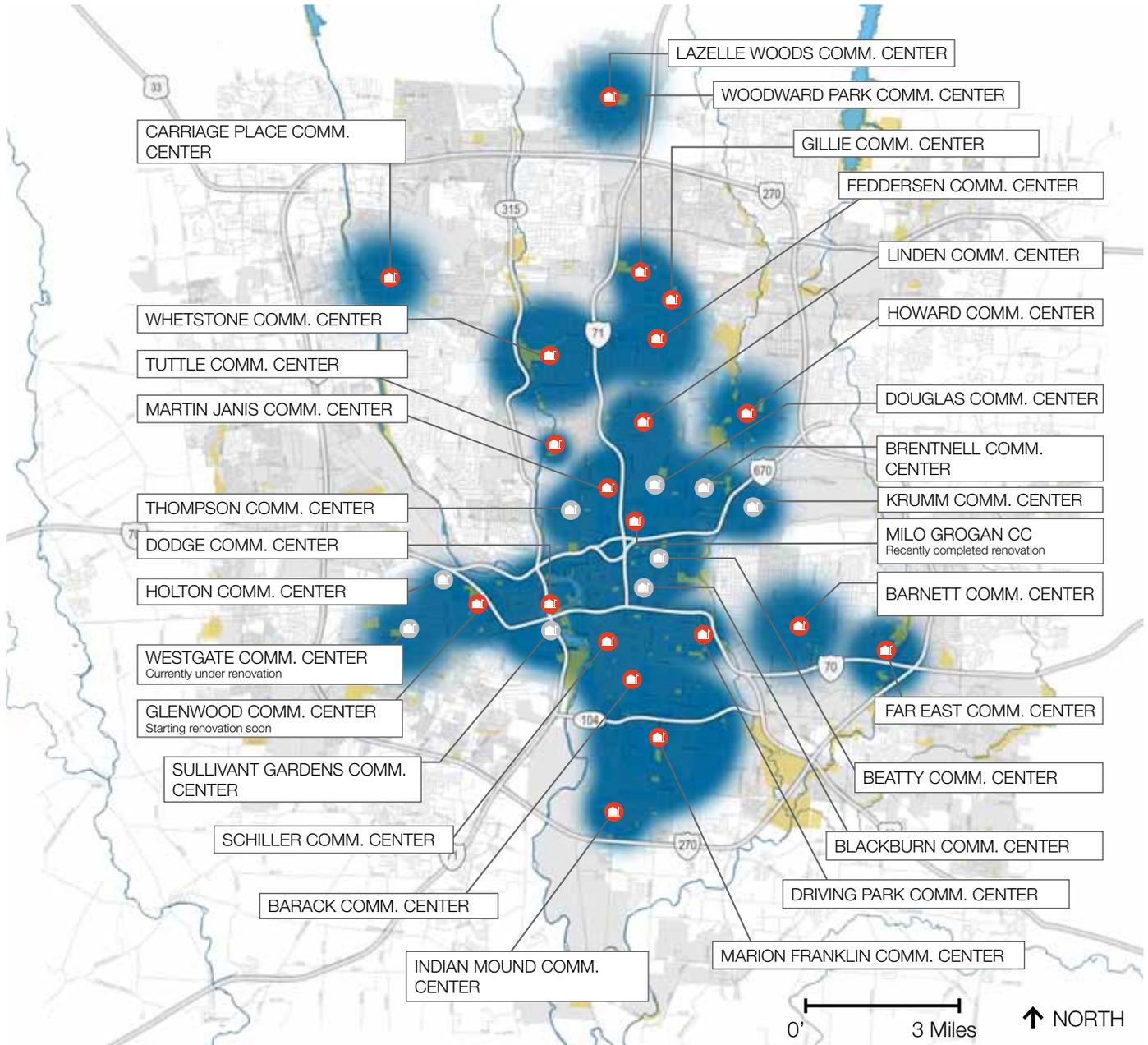
In order to effectively analyze the compilation of data, the community centers were categorized as small, medium, and large/multi-generational. Center classifications were based on square footage figures, and divided the facilities evenly into three groups to improve organization of the report, identify commonalities, and allow for some generalized analysis. The following ranges were used:

| Center Size | Square Footage |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Small | Less than 19,000 SF |
| Medium | 19,000 to 30,000 SF |
| Large/Multi-Generational | Over 30,000 SF |

Each individual community center assessment reveals the key findings of consultant visits, and expresses the opinions of staff, users, and the consulting team for each site. The components of each critique are as follows:

- **Manager/Staff Observations** - This section is derived from interviews with center managers and key staff, as well as interaction during facility tours. It shares the

Figure 5.23 Community Centers Visited by Planning Team



Legend

-  City of Columbus Boundary
-  Hydrology
-  Major Roads
-  Community Centers Visited by Planning Team
-  Community Centers
-  Community Center Service Radius

COMMUNITY CENTER ASSESSMENTS

strengths, values, opportunities, and concerns from a center-level perspective.

- Planning Team Observations - This provides a look through the planning team’s lens at the overall experience during each center visit. It highlights the key themes of the center based on interaction with users and staff, as well as general observations of the facility and its environment.
- Key Recommendations - This expands on the consultant observations and develops specific actions for improving each center moving forward. These recommendations are a result of the consulting team’s interpretation of the variety of input from each visit.
- Facility Assessment/Customer Service Scorecard- This portion scores each center on a variety of criteria based on consultant evaluations of the facility. Assigning a score of A, B, C, or D allows for parallel comparison of each of the 20 sites visited. It is important to note that scores were determined based upon the unique context and circumstances of one visit by the consulting team. They are not necessarily an assessment of the performance of the center staff.

Intercept surveys were utilized to capture a unique perspective by quickly polling participants during their use of each center. Survey responses give valuable insight into the needs, preferences, and tendencies of various users of the center. Respondents provided data on the following:

- Frequency of Visits
- Walk vs. Drive
- Average Drive Time
- Best Part of Experience
- Marketing Method

Although this method of surveying is very helpful in engaging active users of the centers and retrieving useful feedback, it is not scientific in nature. The data obtained was subject to timing, in that some centers had an abundance of responses, while others had no users present during the visit.

COMMUNITY CENTER ANALYSIS

The methodology for developing the service area maps:

Calculate Service Population: Each community center has a usable total square footage. It is assumed that the level of service provided to each user would be at best practice levels of 1.5 square feet per person. Dividing the total square footage of each center by 1.5 provided the theoretical ideal number of users that make up the service area for that center.

The maximum number of users was found using a buffer, or “ring.” After dividing the square footage of each center by 1.5, the ring was expanded or contracted in order to contain within it a population that was equivalent to the calculated maximum number of users.

FACILITY ASSESSMENT / CUSTOMER SERVICE EVALUATIONS

This portion scores each center on a variety of criteria based on consultant evaluations of the facility. The following scorecard illustrates the assessment scores for each facility highlighted in the report, and provides side by side comparison of all 20 community centers visited by the consultant team:

| Center | Indoor Condition | Outdoor Condition | Staff/Volunteers | Programs/Rentals | Overall |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|---------|
| Milo Grogan | A | N/A | A | A | A |
| Dodge | A | A | B | A | A |
| Whetstone | A | A | A | A | A |
| Lazelle Woods | B | B | B | A | B |
| Far East | B | D | A | B | B |
| Linden | C | N/A | B | B | B |
| Martin Janis | B | C | A | A | B |
| Woodward | B | D | A | A | B |
| Barnett | C | D | A | A | C |
| Gillie | B | D | A | A | C |
| Feddersen | D | D | A | A | C |
| Indian Mound | D | C | A | A | C |
| Driving Park | D | D | A | A | C |
| Carriage Place | C | D | C | C | C |
| Howard | D | D | B | D | C |
| Marion Franklin | D | D | A | A | C |
| Schiller | D | D | C | C | D |
| Tuttle | D | D | A | C | D |
| Barack | D | N/A | D | D | D |
| Glenwood | D | D | D | D | D |

Facility Assessment/Customer Service Scorecard

Assigning a score of **A**, **B**, **C**, or **D** allows for parallel comparison of each of the 20 sites visited. It is important to note that scores were determined based upon the unique context and circumstances of one visit by the consulting team. **They are not necessarily an assessment of the performance of the center staff.** See Tables 5.17 and 5.18 for a description of scores and the assessment parameters.

Table 5.18 Facility Assessment/Customer Service Scorecard

| Score | General Description |
|-----------------------------|--|
| A (Excellent) | Facilities/amenities are in excellent condition and feature little or no maintenance problems noted. Facilities do not feature any major design issues that contribute to diminished use or maintenance. Turf, lawns, and landscapes are healthy and maintained to a high level. Staff and volunteers exhibit the highest levels of customer service and operational knowledge. Programs are of the highest quality and exceed performance objectives. |
| B (Above Average) | Facilities/amenities are in good condition and feature only minor maintenance problems . Generally, most maintenance issues with these facilities appear to be the result of age and/or heavy use. Facilities may only feature minor design issues that contribute to diminished use or maintenance (i.e. drainage, structural, utilities, etc.). Turf and landscaping is in generally good condition. Staff and volunteers perform at a high level. Programs show quality and meet performance objectives. |
| C (Average) | Facilities/amenities are in fair condition and indicate ongoing maintenance problems . Generally, most maintenance issues with these facilities appear to be the result of age and heavy use. Some maintenance issues may be compounding over time due to being deferred because of budget and/or resource limitations. Facilities may only feature minor design issues that contribute to diminished use or maintenance (i.e. drainage, structural, utilities, etc.). Turf and landscapes are acceptable but could use improvement. Staff and volunteers are capable but may have areas for improvement in terms of customer service and knowledge. Programs are of adequate quality and meet most performance objectives. |
| D (Below Average) | Facilities/amenities are in poor condition and clearly show ongoing maintenance problems that ultimately may result in suspended use for repair/replacement. Maintenance issues with these facilities are the result of age and heavy use, and generally are compounding over time due to being deferred because of budget and/or resource limitations. Facilities may feature major design issues that contribute to diminished use or maintenance (i.e. drainage, structural, utilities, etc.). Turf and landscaping is bare or in need of complete replacement. Most programs do not align with user needs or meet performance objectives. |

Table 5.19 Facility Assessment/Customer Service Parameters

| Facility Conditions - Indoors |
|--|
| Floors clean and free of debris |
| Windows clean and free of handprints |
| Bathrooms clean and well-stocked |
| Water fountains clean and free of debris |
| Flyer Racks neat and full |
| Front Counters clean and neat |
| Lobby areas clean and clutter free |
| Interior Walls and ceilings clean, free of cobwebs |
| Lights working in all rooms |
| Equipment stowed properly |
| Walk areas clear of equipment |
| Storage areas organized, easy to walk through |
| Tables & chairs clean and properly stored when not in use |
| Kitchen – fridge, stove, counters, etc |
| Equipment working in good order |
| Facility Conditions - Outdoors |
| Covered Walkway around perimeter clean and cobweb free |
| Lights (exterior) working |
| Walkways and sidewalks clean and debris free |
| Trash cans & ashtrays empty and clean on outside |
| Planter areas clean and attractive |
| Patio area clean and attractive |
| Staff and Volunteers |
| Dressed appropriately and name tags on |
| Customers (internal & external) treated with dignity & respect |
| Are friendly, helpful, knowledgeable |
| Address you when you came into the center |
| Programs and Rentals |
| People appear to be happy and engaged |
| Needs and interests are being met |
| Safety and supervision is apparent |
| Activities appropriate for population |

COMMUNITY CENTER ASSESSMENTS

2.1 OVERALL STRATEGIES

CRPD system includes a wide variety of community centers that vary in terms of size, age, condition, upkeep, location, population served, hours of operation, programs offered, and integration with the community. With very few exceptions, the staff that manage and operate these centers are passionate, talented individuals that care deeply about their work and impact on the residents of Columbus. The center employees are perhaps the greatest asset provided to the community by the system of community centers and are at the core of the success of the department. They do an admirable job given the financial and organizational resource limitations facing the City of Columbus.

However, these limitations on resources manifest themselves dramatically in terms of the upkeep and maintenance of most centers. Facility management is the most significant issue facing community centers. Nearly all centers visited by the consulting team had notable deficiencies, even those centers that had undergone recent improvements. Major issues such as leaking roofs, uneven floors, stained walls, failing masonry, and other structural problems were common among many of the centers.

Beyond those major issues, however, were shortcomings in day-to-day facility hygiene and upkeep that affected virtually every center visited. Problems regarding sub-standard cleanliness, equipment storage, and/or general organization were observed by the consulting team. In some instances, center staff were already working as hard as they could to keep up with these issues. In other circumstances, problems could be more easily corrected. Regardless, this overall issue points to a need for a more strategic and coordinated approach by the department to establish standards for facility management and maintenance, as well as a strategic and coordinated approach to supporting the implementation and enforcement of those standards.

A more strategic and operationally-grounded approach to managing the system of centers is needed, as well. According to staff interviews, center managers are significantly limited in their ability to set operating hours, schedule staff, coordinate with other centers, and communicate with their users or surrounding community. Many of these operational functions appear to be centralized in the department, resulting in an inability for centers to respond to their unique environments and circumstances. As a result, opportunities are missed and inefficiencies are unable to be avoided. Conversely, center managers are left responsible for functions that would otherwise be performed at the department-level in other agencies. Perhaps the best example of this is in regards to marketing and communication materials: best practices are for department-level marketing staff to provide center staff with tools, templates, and guidance for creating and distributing promotional and informational materials. Center managers



CRPD renovates approximately one Community Community Center per year.

should have considerable input towards (or full control of) messages and target audiences. Within CRPD, it appears the reverse is often true – center managers have little say into programmatic messages, but must themselves produce materials. This result not only in inconsistent styles and branding, but content that is lacking or inaccurate.

Center-level autonomy and coordination is also important to the management of community centers from an overall system-wide perspective. Ideally, the entire system of community centers could be managed such that there were no gaps in service area coverage and no redundancy in programs or amenities offered within those service areas. In reality, however, gaps and redundancy do exist.

The department should consider adopting a “regional” approach to center coordination wherein center managers carefully monitor the programs and services offered by other community centers (or partner organizations) and are empowered to adjust their own offerings to fill gaps or eliminate duplication. This also involves granting permission for center managers to share staff as necessary to provide adequate coverage or implement a specific program. A regional approach would also allow center managers



Entrance to Thompson Community Center



Top: Westgate Community Center Renovation
Bottom: Indian Mound Community Center

to more carefully track the changing demographics of their neighborhood or region and cooperate with their counterparts to adjust programming to follow trends. In the previous plans larger regional centers were outlined to be developed but because of the recession was eliminated. With the city in a recovery mode it would be good to reconsider that option again but consider bringing outside partners to help develop and manage these centers for the future.

Overall strategies and tactics related to the issues referenced in the section above, plus the other issues addressed throughout the assessment that follows are summarized in the table below.

| Table 5.20 Overall Strategies | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Strategy | Tactic | |
| 2.1.1 | Strategically prioritize center improvements | Continue to update 1 community center per year |
| | | Develop a cost benefit program for improvements made to community centers for the future |
| 2.1.2 | Develop and implement facility hygiene, safety, and cleanliness operational standards | Enhance supply chain and inventory control processes |
| | | Improve security features to deter crime |
| | | Require consistency in staff clothing and appearance |
| 2.1.3 | Develop pricing guidelines and standards | Create additional opportunities for earned income, particularly at larger centers |
| | | Develop mini business plans for centers generating significant revenues to identify income/expense targets, track actuals, and outline marketing strategies |

COMMUNITY CENTER ASSESSMENTS

2.2 SMALL COMMUNITY CENTERS

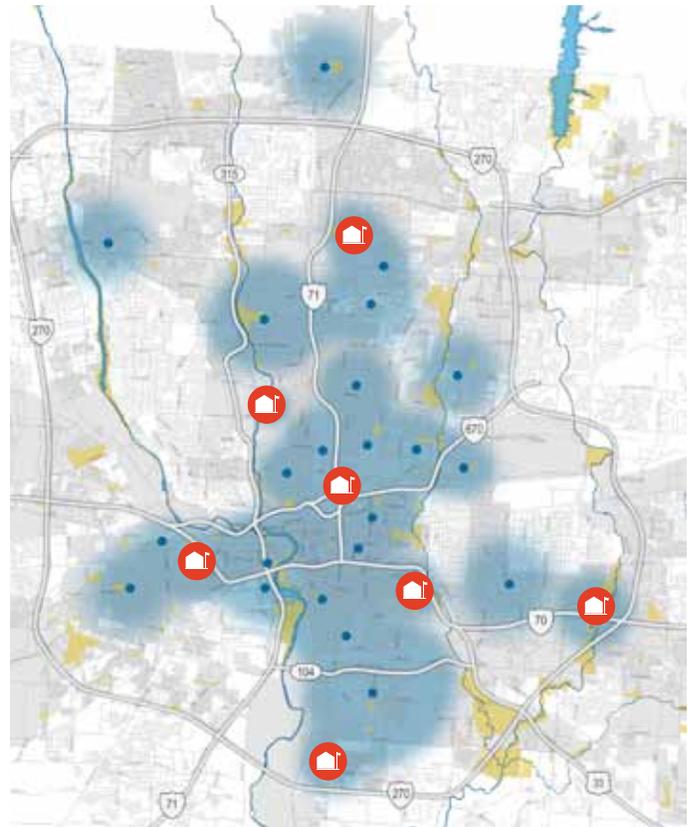
This chart introduces the seven small centers visited by the planning team:

| Center | Zip | Built | SqFt |
|--------------|-------|-------|--------|
| Indian Mound | 43207 | 1975 | 10,170 |
| Tuttle | 43201 | 1975 | 11,257 |
| Driving Park | 43206 | 1980 | 11,853 |
| Glenwood | 43223 | 1916 | 15,063 |
| Woodward | 43229 | 1976 | 15,403 |
| Milo Grogan | 43201 | 1973 | 16,267 |
| Far East | 43227 | 1971 | 17,200 |

The planning team visited seven out of the eleven small community centers under 19,000 square feet. The majority of these centers were built in the 1970's, with the exception of Glenwood (1916) and Driving Park (1980). In general, the small centers only attract users from surrounding neighborhoods and they play an integral part in the lives of residents within each service area. These centers provide a safe haven for its users and a heightened sense of community by bringing together various walks of life from the local neighborhoods they service. Common themes of the small centers visited are that they are outdated, overcrowded, and undersized. Most of these centers are showing their age, and the high levels of usage have left facilities and amenities that are in subpar condition. The size of the small centers is severely limiting their potential, and leaving a large portion of the local population underserved. Programming space is at a premium, forcing community centers to focus primarily on serving the youth population and ignoring the unmet demand and growing trends for adult programs and activities. Many of the small centers serve communities that have a history of crime, so there is a vital need for enhanced security features that will ensure the safety of users in the future.

Based on evaluation scores and intercept survey results, the small centers visited by the consulting team have substantial room for improvement. As a whole, the small centers received low scores for indoor and outdoor condition of the facility. On the other hand, most centers scored significantly higher on staff/volunteers and programs/rentals. Milo Grogan was perceived as the darling of the small group, while the Glenwood Community Center's low marks gives reassurance to its eventual reconstruction. The intercept surveys pointed to some unique characteristics of the users of the small centers. Of the three size classifications, users at the small centers are participating most frequently, with 68% of survey responses indicating they use the facility on a daily basis. Users also walk to their facility of choice much more than the medium and large/multi-generational center users, as there is an even 50% split of those who walk and

Figure 5.24 Small Centers Visited by Planning Team



The Planning Team visited seven small centers, including Indian Mound, Tuttle, and Milo Grogan.

drive to the small centers. Of those who drive, over half (54%) have a drivetime of less than five minutes. Nearly half (49%) of those surveyed cite programs as the best part of the user experience at the small centers. There is a clear lack of marketing efforts by the department, with the majority of small center users being introduced to offerings through word of mouth (28%) and other methods (62%, primarily users stumbling upon the center because they live in the area). Perhaps the most significant takeaway from a marketing standpoint is the fact that not one user mentioned the departmental website, e-mail blasts, or social media as a way they learned about the center.



Top: Milo Grogran Community Center Exercise Room, prior to dedication
 Bottom: Milo Grogran Community Center Exterior

Top: Tennis Courts at Driving Park adjacent to Community Center
 Bottom: Driving Park Community Center Exterior

Table 5.22 Strategies for Small Community Centers

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|--|---|
| 2.2.1 | Enhance safety and security at centers with ongoing crime issues | Enhance security features to minimize crime |
| 2.2.2 | Empower center managers to optimize potential and improve service delivery | Continually track neighborhood demographics and trends |
| | | Allow autonomy to adjust hours and staffing at center level |
| 2.2.3 | Improve consistency and quality of center offerings | Develop regional approach for better coordination and communication between centers |
| | | Review/improve supply chain and inventory control procedures |

COMMUNITY CENTER ASSESSMENTS

2.3 MEDIUM COMMUNITY CENTERS

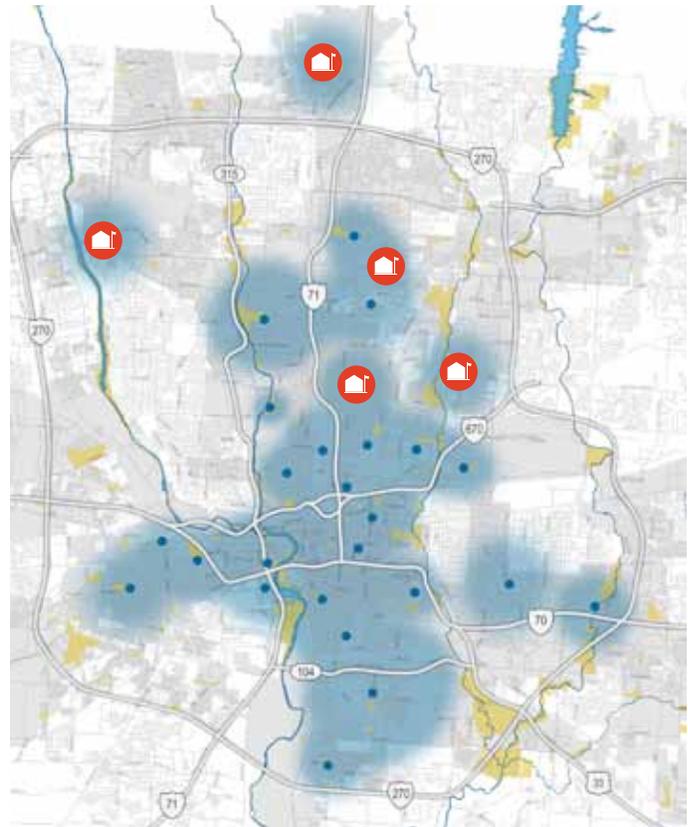
The following lists the five medium centers visited:

| Center | Zip | Built | SqFt |
|----------------|-------|-------|--------|
| Gillie | 43229 | 2001 | 19,900 |
| Carriage Place | 43235 | 1990 | 20,167 |
| Howard | 43219 | 1990 | 20,157 |
| Linden | 43211 | 1951 | 23,343 |
| Lazelle Woods | 43081 | 2005 | 27,453 |

The assessment of the medium centers included visits by the planning team to five of the eight centers with square footages between 19,000 and 30,000. Of the centers visited, the medium grouping consists of some of the newest additions to the system, with the Linden Community Center standing alone as the only facility built before 1990. Although these centers are much larger and newer than those from the small category, they still face many of the same challenges. The medium centers, with the exception of the Gillie Senior Center, are heavily centered on serving the youth population. Limitations on program space and hours of operation are hindering these centers' abilities to serve a broader range of users to include the severely underserved adult and senior populations. Although the senior center provides an outlet for satisfying the older demographic, it highlights an underlying issue in programming that stems from the diversification of the neighborhoods served by the system. Many races and ethnicities are rapidly growing in Columbus, and the community centers need to develop programs and activities tying in the cultural shift that has emerged. The state of the medium-sized centers are an improvement from the deficiencies in the small centers, but the lack of timely updates and routine maintenance has left many of these facilities in dire need of enhancements to infrastructure and amenities. Many of the medium centers need more flexibility and center-level autonomy to adjust hours and staffing levels to optimize their potential. Safety is a primary concern at most centers within the city, and the department needs to implement a comprehensive plan to enhance security features and provide a safer environment for users at all centers.

Center evaluation scores and intercept survey results reveal many potential improvements and a distinct set of user characteristics unique to the medium centers. Overall evaluation scores for these centers are consistent with their classification in size, as the five centers evaluated have a middling effect. The Lazelle Woods Community Center was the highest rated medium center, while Carriage Place and Howard round out the bottom of the category. The evaluation scores for the medium centers rings true to the system-wide trend that the centers' strengths lie in its customer service and offerings versus overall condition of

Figure 5.25 Medium Centers Visited by Planning Team

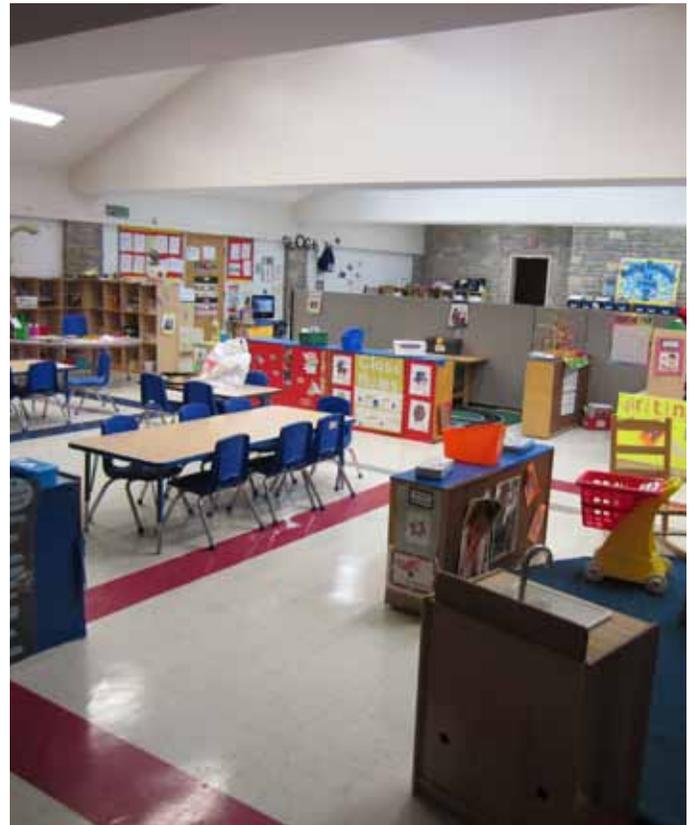


The Planning Team visited five medium centers, including Carriage Place, Lazelle Woods, and Linden

facilities and amenities. Users of the medium centers tend to visit on a weekly basis (68%), which varies from both the small and large centers that most often recognize users on a daily basis. The medium centers also have the largest percentage of users that drive (94%) to the center when compared to the other categories. Of those who drive, the vast majority (92%) travel less than 20 minutes, with a heavy concentration of drivers in the 6-10 minute (31%) and 11-20 minute (34%) ranges. Medium center users most prefer the programming (48%), in lieu of staff (32%) and amenities (20%). Intercept results taken from medium centers further expose the lack of marketing efforts by the department, with 75% of users learning of program offerings through word of mouth and other methods, which consist primarily of chance encounters. Although the medium centers produced the largest percentages of awareness from program guides (12%) and the departmental website (13%), there were no survey responses indicating e-mail blasts or social media are being used as tools to promote the system.



Main lobby of Lazelle Woods Community Center



Classroom space at Linden Community Center

Table 5.24 Strategies for Medium Community Centers

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|--|--|
| 2.3.1 | Empower center managers to optimize potential and improve service delivery | Introduce additional programming to attract the variety of age segments and cultures within each service area |
| | | Improve marketing efforts to effectively promote centers |
| | | Coordinate and communicate between centers to eliminate redundancy of programs and better satisfy needs of users |
| 2.3.2 | Implement strategic facility management plans | |

COMMUNITY CENTER ASSESSMENTS

2.4 LARGE COMMUNITY CENTERS

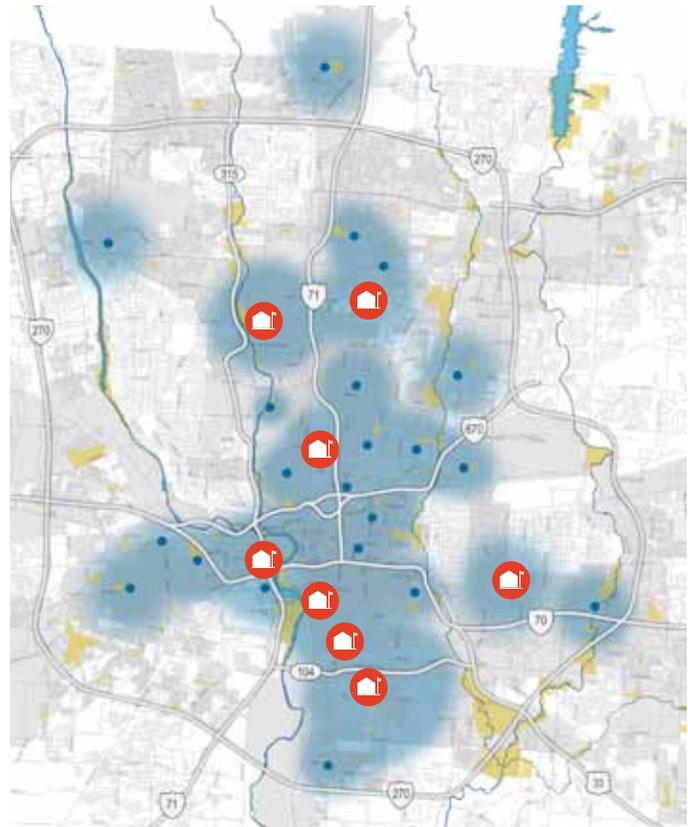
The planning team visited these eight large/multi-generational centers:

| Center | Zip | Built | SqFt |
|-----------------|-------|-------|--------|
| Barack | 43207 | 1964 | 31,742 |
| Dodge | 43215 | 2005 | 31,772 |
| Barnett | 43227 | 1965 | 32,093 |
| Feddersen | 43224 | 1965 | 35,297 |
| Marion-Franklin | 43207 | 1972 | 35,555 |
| Whetstone | 43214 | 1956 | 39,940 |
| Schiller | 43206 | 1917 | 40,424 |
| Martin Janis | 43211 | 1978 | 42,323 |

The planning team frequented the large/multi-generational centers more than the smaller categories, visiting all but three centers over 30,000 square feet. There is an extensive range in the age of facilities that comprise the large/multi-gen grouping, with centers built anywhere from 1917 to 2005. The larger centers share many of the same condition and maintenance issues that are present in the smaller facilities, but the large/multi-gen centers have significantly higher potential because of their distinct size advantage. The main factor limiting the larger facilities is the lack of autonomy at the center level to adjust operating hours, staffing levels, and the programming mix. Many of these centers are not taking full advantage of the excess recreational spaces available, and adjustments to the program curriculum that engage a broader audience at each center would utilize these spaces and improve overall efficiency. A well-planned, comprehensive approach to programming would allow the larger centers to generate higher revenues, and help offset the limited earning potential of the smaller centers. The majority of these centers are in need of extensive updates, as well as a set of maintenance standards to keep them in good working order and to make them more aesthetically pleasing for users. In a few cases, there are critical deficiencies, such as leaking roofs and hazardous floors, which must be addressed immediately to ensure a safe environment for guests and improve the longevity of the facilities within the system.

Planning team evaluations and intercept survey data for the large/multi-generational centers reveal a lack of consistency in overall quality and identify unique characteristics of users of the larger facilities. These facilities adhere to the system-wide trend that the community centers of CRPD rely heavily on their staff and programming to attract users due to the deficiencies in overall condition. This grouping boasts two of the top three centers overall based on evaluation scores, but there were also a few larger centers that ranked very low on the list in the eyes of the planning team, which highlights

Figure 5.26 Large Centers Visited by Planning Team



The planning team visited eight large Community Centers

the inconsistency in overall quality of facilities within the category. Based on intercept survey results, users of the large/multi-generational centers are very active, with 65% of those polled visiting these facilities on a daily basis and another 29% participating weekly. Guests of the larger centers usually drive (85%), and participants travel longer distances, as 50% of those interviewed averaging more than a 10-minute commute, with more than 20% traveling over 20 minutes to use the facilities. Participants at the larger community centers most enjoy the staff (48%) during their visits, followed by programs (33%) and amenities (19%). Marketing efforts for the larger centers are consistent with the overall trend that the department is not effectively promoting its community centers. Over half (56%) of the users surveyed cited “other” as the method of introduction to center offerings, and another 30% learning about center offerings through word of mouth. There were no responses indicating a social media presence, and minimal marketing through the program guide (6%), website (5%), and e-mail blasts (3%).



Lobby at Dodge Community Center



Reading room at Marion-Franklin Multi-Generational Center

Table 5.26 Strategies for Large Community Centers

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|--|---|
| 2.4.1 | Empower center managers to optimize potential and improve service delivery | Capitalize on available spaces to expand programming and bring in more adults and seniors |
| | | Enable center managers to recruit volunteers and adjust staffing levels |
| | | Provide a balance of programs for all ages, interests, and cultures |
| 2.4.2 | Build on revenue-generating capabilities of larger centers to leverage cost recovery for all centers | |
| 2.4.3 | Introduce maintenance standards and prioritize improvements | Enhance supply chain and inventory control processes |
| | | Improve security features to deter crime |
| | | Require consistency in staff clothing and appearance |

RECREATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

As part of the planning process, the planning team performed a Program Assessment of the programs and services offered by the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department. The assessment offers an analysis of program and service offerings and helps identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities regarding programming. The assessment also assists in identifying core programs, program gaps within the community, key system-wide issues, and areas of improvement and in determining future programs and services for residents.

The planning team based these program findings and comments from a review of information provided by the department including program descriptions, website content, and discussions with staff. This report addresses the program offerings from a systems perspective for the entire portfolio of programs.

LIFECYCLE ANALYSIS

A lifecycle analysis involves reviewing every program identified by CRPD staff to determine the stage of growth or decline for each as a way of informing strategic decisions about the overall program portfolio managed by the agency. This analysis is not based on strict quantitative data, but rather is based on staff members' knowledge of their program areas. Table 5.27 shows the percentage distribution of the various lifecycle categories of the department's programs. These percentages were obtained by comparing the number of programs in each individual stage with the total number of programs listed by staff.



CRPD offers numerous therapeutic recreation programs

| Table 5.27 Program Lifecycle Analysis - Current Distribution and Recommendations | | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Lifecycle Stage | Description | Actual Program Distribution | | Recommended Distribution |
| Introduction | New program; modest participation | 8% | 65% Total | 50-60% Total |
| Take-Off | Rapid participation growth | 17% | | |
| Growth | Moderate, but consistent population growth | 40% | | |
| Mature | Slow participation growth | 23% | 23% | 40% |
| Saturation | Minimal to no participation growth; extreme competition | 7% | 12% Total | 0-10% Total |
| Decline | Declining participation | 5% | | |

Overall, the lifecycle analysis results indicate a slightly unbalanced distribution of all programs across the lifecycle. A combined total of 65% of programs fall into the

Introduction, Take-Off, and Growth stages. The planning team recommends that this total be between 50-60%. While it is important to provide new programs to align with trends and help meet the evolving needs of the community, it is also important to have a stable core segment of programs that are in the Mature stage. Currently, CRPD has about 23% of their programs in this category. The planning team recommends this be about 40% so as to provide stability to the overall program portfolio, but without dominating the portfolio with programs that are advancing to the later stages of the lifecycle. Programs in the Mature stage should be tracked for signs they are entering the Saturation or Decline stages. According to staff, there is an on-going process to evaluate program participation and trends to ensure that program offerings continue to meet the community's needs.

According to staff 12% of programs are saturated or declining. The planning team recommends keeping as few programs as possible in these two stages, usually no more than 10% overall, but it is understood that programs eventually evolve into Saturation and Decline. As programs enter into the Decline stage, they must be closely reviewed and evaluated for repositioning or elimination. When this occurs, the department should modify these programs to

begin a new lifecycle with the Introductory stage or to add new programs based upon community needs and trends.

Staff should complete a lifecycle review on an annual basis and ensure that the percentage distribution closely aligns with desired performance. Furthermore, CRPD could include an annual performance measure for each program area to track the percentage of new programs offered as an incentive for additional innovation and alignment with community trends.

COST RECOVERY

Finding ways to sustain cost recovery and improve service pricing strategies are priorities for CRPD. According to information provided to the consulting team, cost recovery performance is currently tracked for some programs areas, but not all. Cost recovery standards exist for several programs, but methodologies for calculating cost recovery do not appear to be consistent. Cost recovery is tracked at the department level, but in addition to this, the consulting team recommends using core programs areas as an additional basis for categorization. Cost recovery targets should be identified for each program area, at least, and for specific programs or events as necessary. The previously identified core programs areas would serve as an effective breakdown for tracking cost recovery metrics, which would theoretically group programs with similar cost recovery and subsidy goals.

Targets should reflect the degree to which the program area provides a public versus private good. Programs providing public benefits should be subsidized more by the department; programs providing private benefits should seek to recover costs and/or generate revenue for other services.

To assist with the planning and implementation of cost recovery policies, the planning team has developed the following definitions presented in Table 5.28 to help classify specific programs within program areas.

| | Essential | Important | Value-Added |
|-----------------------|--|--|---|
| Description | Part of the organizational mission Serves a majority of the community "We must offer this program" | Important to the community Serves large portions of the community "We should offer this program" | Enhanced community offerings Serves niche groups "It is nice to offer this program" |
| Desired Cost Recovery | None to Moderate | Moderate | High to Complete |
| Desired Subsidy | High to Complete | Moderate | Little to None |

Programs in the Essential category are critical to achieving the departmental mission and providing community-wide benefits, and therefore generally receive priority for tax-dollar subsidization. Programs falling into the Important or Value-Added classifications generally represent programs that receive lower priority for subsidization. Important programs contribute to the organizational mission but are not essential to it; therefore, cost recovery for these programs should be high (i.e., at least 80% overall). Value-added programs are not critical to the mission and should be prevented from drawing upon limited public funding, so overall cost recovery for these programs should be near to or in excess of 100%.

To develop specific cost recovery targets, full cost accounting analyses should be conducted on each program that accurately calculates direct (i.e., program-specific) and indirect (i.e., comprehensive, including administrative overhead) costs. Cost recovery goals are established once these numbers are in place, and staff should be trained on this process.

Furthermore, the planning team recommends that mini-business plans (2-3 pages) be created for each core program service area on a yearly basis. These plans should evaluate the program area based on meeting the outcomes desired for participants, cost recovery, percentage of the market and business controls, cost of service, pricing strategy for the next year, and marketing strategies that are to be implemented. If developed regularly and consistently, they can be effective tools for budget construction and justification processes outside of the marketing and communication planning process.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Given the organizational goals of the department, trends in the park and recreation profession, and the level of performance reflected by CRPD staff in the area of programming, the consulting team recommends the following methods and best practices in order to maintain a culture of quality management in program delivery. These overall approaches reflect some of the observations presented previously and also include additional considerations based upon best practices and the organizational goals of the department. Some practices are already undertaken by CRPD in conjunction with other organizational processes and are re-emphasized here due to their criticality. Others represent new practices to be implemented.

- Annual Review Process: Staff present their yearly goals for program areas to senior leadership and/or an advisory board. This would include policy reviews, financial and registration performance, customer issues, and plans for the future. This process helps

RECREATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

to ensure good communication and cooperation for supporting departments, such as parks, administration and technology as well

- Documented Program Development Process: This is required in order to reduce service variation and assist in training new staff. A common approach is to use a process map that provides guidance to staff for consistently developing new programs. It can help to diminish the learning curve for new staff and reinforce program development as a core competency. This is created in a flow chart format showing the steps in the process for program development including writing class descriptions, process steps, hiring staff, using contractual employees, and the list of standards.
- Instructor/Contractor Tool Kit: Kits need to be created by the staff that outline information about the department, including mission, vision, values, goals, organizational structure, roster of users, program guides, program standards, evaluation forms, registration forms, important phone numbers, name tags, thank you cards, and program learning objectives.
- On-going Connections with Part-time and Seasonal Staff: There should be on-going processes and events to connect part-time and seasonal programming staff, as well as some contractors, with full-time personnel through meetings, email, newsletters, staff recognition, and random visits by management. This also assists with determining and managing job satisfaction of these employees.
- Ongoing Identification of Customer Requirements: Staff identify customer requirements for core program areas on an ongoing basis. This is important to emphasize with staff that directly interface with customers. Requirements relate to those service attributes that are most important to a customer, and requirements should be developed with customer input. Each core program area should include a listing of approximately five key customer requirements. For example, in a sports skills program, key requirements could include:

overall safety of the program, instructional quality, convenience and ease of registration, cost of the program, and skill development.

- Ongoing Environmental Scan of Best Practices: Staff identify key competitors or similar providers, both locally and nationally, of core program areas. Every year staff should develop a matrix of information to compare services in areas that have the greatest importance to customers. Benchmarking other nationally renowned agencies also can provide a process to continuously improve programming.



Interior multipurpose athletic room at Whetstone Community Center.

Documented Program Development Process Flow Chart

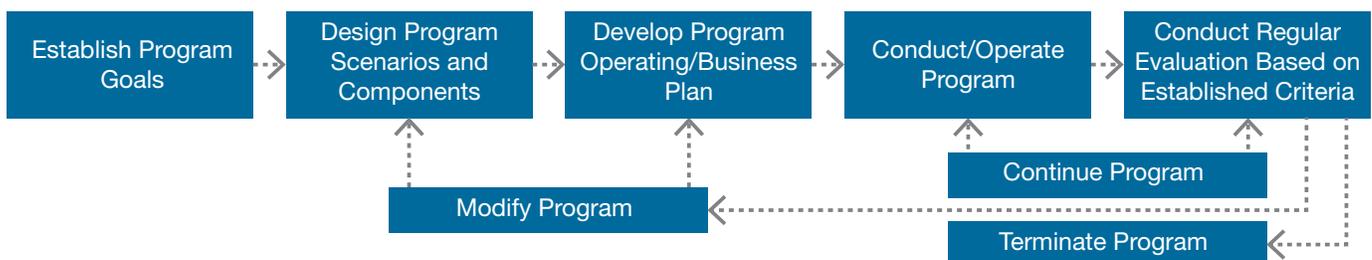


Table 5.29 Strategies for Recreation Programs

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|--|---|
| 3.1.1 | Develop standards to improve consistency in program design, delivery, and evaluation | Track demographic trends and adjust programming or operations to best serve each service area |
| | | Avoid duplication in programming |
| 3.1.3 | Establish regional approach to service delivery to eliminate gaps and overlaps, and allow sharing of resources between various centers | Use a more strategic and coordinated approach to programming non-peak hours |
| | | Enable larger centers to serve as true “community centers.” Expand select smaller centers to include underserved areas |
| 3.1.7 | Maximize the use of existing recreational facilities to enhance programming. | Expand outdoor programming to compensate for lack of indoor space, improve visibility of centers, and deter crime |
| | | Consider theming centers and their programs to include a strong approach to arts, fitness, sports, dance, music, seniors, child care, people with disabilities, gymnastics, and teens |
| 3.1.9 | Use data in strategic decision-making. | Track the results of community surveys by location to determine programming needs of residents |
| | | Track program participation, outcomes, and efficiency on a weekly, monthly and yearly basis |
| | | Develop a true cost of service program that tracks both the direct and indirect costs to provide services |
| 3.1.12 | Adjust the programming mix to increase programs and services for underserved segments of the population. | Develop more programs for young adults. Centers are more geared to youth under 16 and/or seniors. |

Table 5.30 Strategies for Communications

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|---|--------|
| 4.1.1 | Ensure operating hours and center information on CRPD website is up-to-date and accurate | |
| 4.1.2 | Use survey data to inform operational decisions, (e.g., allow for operating hours to include weekends November through April) | |
| 4.1.3 | Improve CRPD brand by distributing templates for marketing, promotional, and informational material | |
| 4.1.4 | Update the brand for community centers. Use upbeat colors, pictures of people having fun in the centers, and customer messages that don’t start with the word “no.” | |
| 4.1.5 | Develop a social media strategy to better communicate with the public and monitor its effectiveness | |
| 4.1.6 | Allow autonomy in communicating with participants to inform them on program changes, facility closings, or other pertinent information | |
| 4.1.7 | Document the level of productivity each center operates and develop a stronger marketing effort in communities where there is excess capacity | |
| 4.1.8 | Post the daily schedule of activities in the building on TV monitors near the front desk or with electronic signage at larger centers in the system | |

4.2 PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT

CRPD has a strong partnership network that shows strong signs of further growth. Current partners include schools, private businesses, civic groups, and nonprofit organizations. A community and organizational goal for CRPD is to further expand and formalize partnerships for the agency. The initial step in developing multiple partnerships in the community that expand upon existing relationships is to have an overall partnership philosophy that is supported by a policy framework for managing these relationships. Many times partnerships are inequitable to the public agency and do not produce reasonable shared benefits between parties. The recommended policies will promote fairness and equity within the existing and future partnerships while helping staff to manage against potential internal and external conflicts. Certain partnership principles must be adopted by the Department for existing and future partnerships to work effectively. These partnership principles are as follows:

- All partnerships require a working agreement with measurable outcomes and will be evaluated on a regular basis. This should include reports to the agency on the performance and outcomes of the partnership.
- All partnerships should track costs associated with the partnership investment to demonstrate the shared level of equity.
- All partnerships should maintain a culture that focuses on collaborative planning on a regular basis, regular communications, and annual reporting on performance and outcomes.

Partnerships can be pursued and developed with other public entities such as neighboring cities, schools, colleges, state or federal agencies; nonprofit organizations; as well as with private, for-profit organizations. There are recommended standard policies and practices that will apply to any partnership, and those that are unique to relationships with private, for-profit entities.

Policy Recommendations for All Partnerships

All partnerships developed and maintained by CRPD should adhere to common policy requirements. These include:

- Each partner will meet with or report to Department staff on a regular basis to plan and share activity-based costs and equity invested.
- Partners will establish measurable outcomes and work through key issues to focus on for the coming year to meet the desired outcomes.
- Each partner will focus on meeting a balance of equity agreed to and track investment costs accordingly.

- Measurable outcomes will be reviewed quarterly and shared with each partner, with adjustments made as needed.
- A working partnership agreement will be developed and monitored together on a quarterly or as-needed basis.
- Each partner will assign a liaison to serve each partnership agency for communication and planning purposes.
- If conflicts arise between partners, the Director, along with the other partner's highest ranking officer assigned to the agreement, will meet to resolve the issue(s) in a timely manner. Any exchange of money or traded resources will be made based on the terms of the partnership agreement.
- Each partner will meet with the other partner's respective board or managing representatives annually, to share updates and outcomes of the partnership agreement.

Policy Recommendations for Public/Private Partnerships

The recommended policies and practices for public/private partnerships that may include businesses, private groups, private associations, or individuals who desire to make a profit from use of CRPD facilities or programs are detailed below. These can also apply to partnerships where a private party wishes to develop a facility on park property, to provide a service on publicly-owned property, or who has a contract with the agency to provide a task or service on the agency's behalf at public facilities. These unique partnership principles are as follows:

- Upon entering into an agreement with a private business, group, association or individual, CRPD staff and political leadership must recognize that they must allow the private entity to meet their financial objectives within reasonable parameters that protect the mission, goals and integrity of the Department.
- As an outcome of the partnership, CRPD must receive a designated fee that may include a percentage of gross revenue dollars less sales tax on a regular basis, as outlined in the contract agreement.
- The working agreement of the partnership must establish a set of measurable outcomes to be achieved, as well as the tracking method of how those outcomes will be monitored by the agency. The outcomes will include standards of quality, financial reports, customer satisfaction, payments to the agency, and overall coordination with the Department for the services rendered.

- Depending on the level of investment made by the private contractor, the partnership agreement can be limited to months, a year or multiple years.
- If applicable, the private contractor will provide a working management plan annually they will follow to ensure the outcomes desired by CRPD. The management plan can and will be negotiated, if necessary. Monitoring of the management plan will be the responsibility of both partners. The agency must allow the contractor to operate freely in their best interest, as long as the outcomes are achieved and the terms of the partnership agreement are adhered to.
- The private contractor cannot lobby agency advisory or governing boards for renewal of a contract. Any such action will be cause for termination. All negotiations must be with the Director or their designee.
- The agency has the right to advertise for private contracted partnership services, or negotiate on an individual basis with a bid process based on the professional level of the service to be provided.
- If conflicts arise between both partners, the highest-ranking officers from both sides will try to resolve the issue before going to each partner's legal counsels. If none can be achieved, the partnership shall be dissolved.

development. The following five areas of focus are recommended:

1. Operational Partners: Other entities and organizations that can support the efforts of CRPD to maintain facilities and assets, promote amenities and park usage, support site needs, provide programs and events, and/or maintain the integrity of natural/ cultural resources through in-kind labor, equipment, or materials.
2. Vendor Partners: Service providers and/or contractors that can gain brand association and notoriety as a preferred vendor or supporter of CRPD in exchange for reduced rates, services, or some other agreed upon benefit.
3. Service Partners: Nonprofit organizations and/or friends groups that support the efforts of the agency to provide programs and events, and/or serve specific constituents in the community collaboratively.
4. Co-branding Partners: Private, for-profit organizations that can gain brand association and notoriety as a supporter of CRPD in exchange for sponsorship or co-branded programs, events, marketing and promotional campaigns, and/or advertising opportunities.
5. Resource Development Partner: A private, nonprofit organization with the primary purpose to leverage private sector resources, grants, other public funding opportunities, and resources from individuals and groups within the community to support the goals and objectives of the agency on mutually agreed strategic initiatives.

Partnership Opportunities

These recommendations are an overview of existing partnership opportunities available to CRPD, as well as a suggested approach to organizing partnership pursuits. This is not an exhaustive list of all potential partnerships that can be developed, but can be used as a tool of reference for the agency to develop its own priorities in partnership

Table 5.31 Partnership Management

| Strategy | | Tactic |
|----------|---|---|
| 4.2.1 | Formalize existing partnerships to demonstrate success and promote growth | Execute a working agreement with measurable outcomes for all partnerships. |
| | | Evaluate performance on measurable outcomes for each partnership annually |
| | | Develop process to track costs and income associated with partnerships |
| 4.2.2 | Develop overall partnership philosophy and standard partnership protocols for the department. | Review and annually update measurable outcomes in conjunction with each partner |
| | | Identify a liaison with each partnership for communication and planning purposes |
| | | Meet with the liaison from each partnership on at least an annual basis to mutually assess progress towards measurable outcomes |