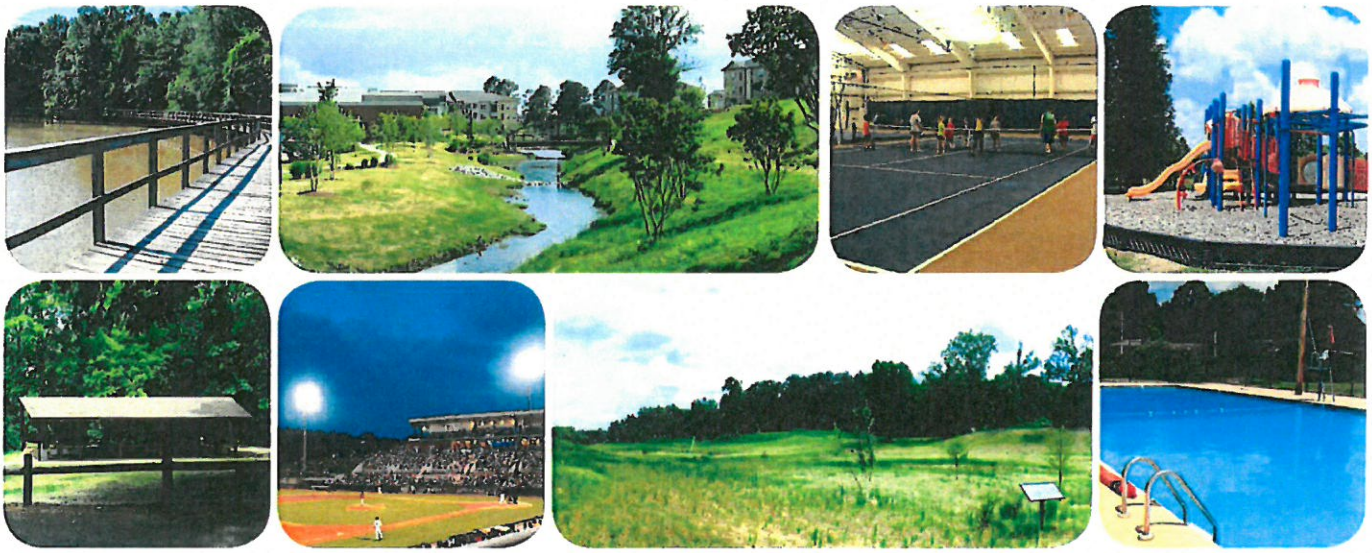
CITY OF JACKSON

ONE JACKSON
RECREATION & PARKS MASTER PLAN



April 2018

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Residents of the Jackson Community
A special thank you to everyone who participated in the planning process for the City of Jackson Recreation & Parks Master Plan. This Plan was made possible by the contributions and insights of the residents, and representatives from various groups and organizations.

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CONTENTS

Introduction **2**
- Planning Process 2
- Plan Organization 3
- One Jackson Civic Master Plan 3

Community Outreach **4**
- Needs Assessment Survey 6

Existing Conditions Analysis **8**
- Demographics Analysis & Trends 8
- Recreation & Parks System Inventory 13
- Analysis Summary 17

Parks & Open Space Plan **18**
- Goals & Objectives 18
- Parks System 24

Recreation & Facilities Plan **30**
- Goals & Objectives 30
- Programmed Athletics 33
- Facilities 40

Trails Plan **48**
- Goals & Objectives 48
- Trails System 51
- Regional Trail Projects 53
- Trail Considerations 54

INTRODUCTION

Jackson is served by a robust recreation and parks system, consisting of more than 750 acres of parkland and facilities, ranging from neighborhood parks and recreation centers to major regional destinations for sports and activities. However, many of these assets are 'hand-me-downs' from Jackson's rich history and require careful management for future improvement and continued maintenance.

In 2016, the City of Jackson initiated a planning process to develop a new Master Plan that addresses recreation and park services, prompted by the recent annexation of new land in the City's northwest. The resulting plan acts as a guide for the Jackson Recreation & Parks Department, offering direction for parks and open space, recreation and facilities, and trails within the community. The planning process included extensive public engagement, field reconnaissance, research, and analysis of the existing recreation and parks system, all intended to ensure the Master Plan is responsive to the needs and wants of the community it will serve.

PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process to develop the Jackson Recreation and Parks Master Plan included the following four steps:

- **Step 1: Project Initiation & Community Outreach**
  Included project kick-off with department staff and community outreach through both in-person workshops and online outreach tools.
- **Step 2: Inventory of Existing Parks and Recreation**
  Included review of past plans, analysis of demographics, inventory of existing facilities and programs, and a needs assessment, culminating in a presentation to the Recreation Board.
- **Step 3: Goals, Objectives, Service Areas, and Standards**
  Included benchmarking; review of service areas and population standards; and development of goals, objectives, and recommendations.
- **Step 4: Draft Plans & Recommendations**
  Included development of the draft Master Plan followed by staff review, a public open house, and presentation to the Recreation Board.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

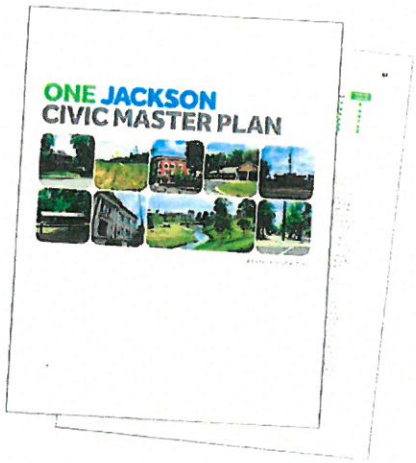
To address all elements of the recreation and parks system within Jackson, the Master Plan includes the following sections:

- ***Community Outreach***
  Provides a review of outreach and public engagement conducted to help guide the planning process.
- ***Existing Conditions Analysis***
  Reviews information that was collected and analyzed to establish an understanding of recreation and parks within Jackson and guides the specific recommendations and policies of the Master Plan.
- ***Parks & Open Space Plan***
  Provides recommendations for parkland and open space categorized by park classification.
- ***Recreation & Facilities Plan***
  Provides recommendations for sports programming and the various facilities operated and maintained by the Recreation & Parks Department.
- ***Trails Plan***
  Provides recommendations for trails, pathways, bike routes, and other non-motorized connections that benefit accessibility and offer recreational opportunities.

ONE JACKSON CIVIC MASTER PLAN

Adopted in 2015, the One Jackson Civic Master Plan was developed to establish a vision for Jackson's future to guide development and growth over a 20-year period. Comprehensive in both scope and scale, the Plan addresses a wide range of issues regarding land use, growth and development, transportation and circulation, community facilities, and the environment.

One of the key recommendations of the One Jackson Civic Master Plan was to develop new parks and recreation master plan. Citing the considerable age of past plans in use by the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Civic Master Plan recommended that a new document be developed to establish direction for parks, recreation, and open space within Jackson. The Jackson Recreation & Parks Master Plan is a result of that recommendation, and represents a continuation of the Civic Master Plan in implmentation of the community's long-range vision.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Master Plan is supported by a comprehensive outreach process designed to gather input and feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders. This included events designed to facilitate face-to-face discussion, online outreach tools, and a mailed needs assessment survey, all aimed at collecting issues, opportunities, key projects, and existing strengths and assets.

Public engagement helped to guide the planning process by ensuring that the specific goals, objectives, and recommendations were founded in a complete understanding of what community members hope to receive from their Recreation and Parks system. Over 450 residents participated in the outreach efforts. Public engagement included the following:

In-Person Events

- Steering Committee Workshop
- Park Board Workshop
- Recreation and Park Department Staff Workshop
- Key Stakeholder Interviews

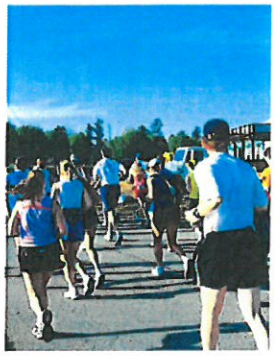
Online Tools

- Project Website
- Online Resident Questionnaire
- sMap: online issues mapping application

Outreach Summary

The following is a summary of issues, actions, and community assets from the community outreach effort. These issues, actions, and strengths were strongly emphasized by outreach participants and were consistently discussed by stakeholders. However, these lists are not exhaustive and numerous additional comments were received through public engagement, all of which have helped to guide plan recommendations and policy.

Note: It should be noted that the following summary does not represent City policy or plan recommendations and were collected as feedback from individuals with knowledge of the community.



Issues

- Need for a centralized senior center
- Insufficient quantity and location of parks to serve all of Jackson
- Insufficient quantity and quality of trails, sidewalks, and bike routes
- Focused on short-term repairs and not long-term solutions
- Outdated and Inadequate Equipment
- Inadequate planned maintenance schedule for both repair and replacement of equipment
- Insufficient programming for seniors and teenagers
- Insufficient quantity of playgrounds
- Need for new and modern amenities, such as skate parks or rock climbing walls
- Insufficient capital funding
- Parks funding is not distributed consistently

Actions

- Develop a Senior Center Accessible to the entire community
- Create new parks in underserved areas
- Develop a centralized recreation center
- Renovate outdated community centers
- Add sidewalks and trail for improved connectivity
- Add new amenities such as dog parks, skate parks, an ice rink, indoor tennis courts, a water park or a community zoo
- Replace or renovate outdated facilities and parks
- Improve advertising for the Department and services
- Increase operational budget
- Hire staff to assist with marketing, programing, and maintenance

Assets

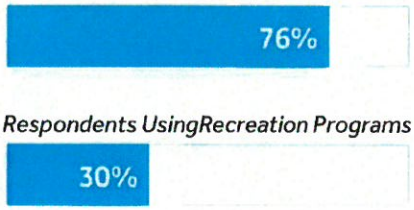
- Variety of Parks and Facilities
- Malesus Civic Park
- Western Tennessee Healthcare Sportsplex
- Farmer's Market
- Cypress Grove Nature Park
- North Park
- T.R. White Sportsplex
- Jackson Tennis Complex
- Quality and Variety of recreational programming
- Summer camps
- City leadership
- Recreation and Park Department staff
- Public/private partnerships

NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

To supplement the face-to-face outreach process, a needs assessment survey was completed by Ron Vine and Associates to provide scientifically valid assessment of recreation and parks services. During Spring of 2017, surveys were mailed to 5,000 households, allowing residents to complete either print or online versions. Survey questions were designed to address a full range of issues impacting recreation and parks within Jackson. 406 residents completed surveys, yielding the following key findings:

Utilization & Participation

Who's Using What?



76% of respondents had utilized park amenities and 30% had participated in recreational programming in the past year

Barrier to Jackson's Recreation & Parks

Not Being Aware of What is Being Offered

The two largest barriers to a resident utilizing parks or participating in recreational programs are being unaware of what is offered and not feeling safe within parks. Overall, the most cost-effective means to increasing participation is greater marketing of programs and facilities.

Quality & Satisfaction

Program Quality

According to Ron Vine and Associates, best practicing communities often have an *'excellent' rating of around 40%.*

Program Satisfaction

According to Ron Vine and Associates, best practicing communities often have an *'very satisfied' rating of around 20%.*

Improvements
Needed Over 2 Years

Priority for Improvements

51% said *'high'* priority

22% said *'very high'* priority

Top 5 Parks

- Farmers Market
- Muse Park
- North Park
- T. R. White Sportsplex
- Cypress Grove

Top 5 Active Recreations

- Outdoor Swimming
- Basketball Courts
- Baseball Fields
- Softball Fields
- Soccer Fields

Top 4 Indoor Recreation

- Indoor Walking Track
- Senior Center
- Cardiovascular Equipment
- Cultural Arts

Top 4 Passive Recreations

- Small Neighborhood Parks
- Playgrounds
- Walking Trails
- Natural Areas

Fund Projects Using Taxpayer Dollars

- **SIDEWALKS**
- **WALKING & BIKING TRAILS**
- **TRAIL CONNECTIONS**
- **NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS**

EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

The Jackson Recreation & Parks Master Plan is supported by a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions within the City of Jackson. This includes demographic analysis and trends, a complete inventory of the recreation and parks system, analysis of service areas, and benchmarking through comparisons to peer communities. These analysis act as a foundation upon which goals and objectives are constructed, ensuring that the recommendations and policy of the Plan are feasible, obtainable, and based in reality.

DEMOGRAPHICS ANALYSIS & TRENDS

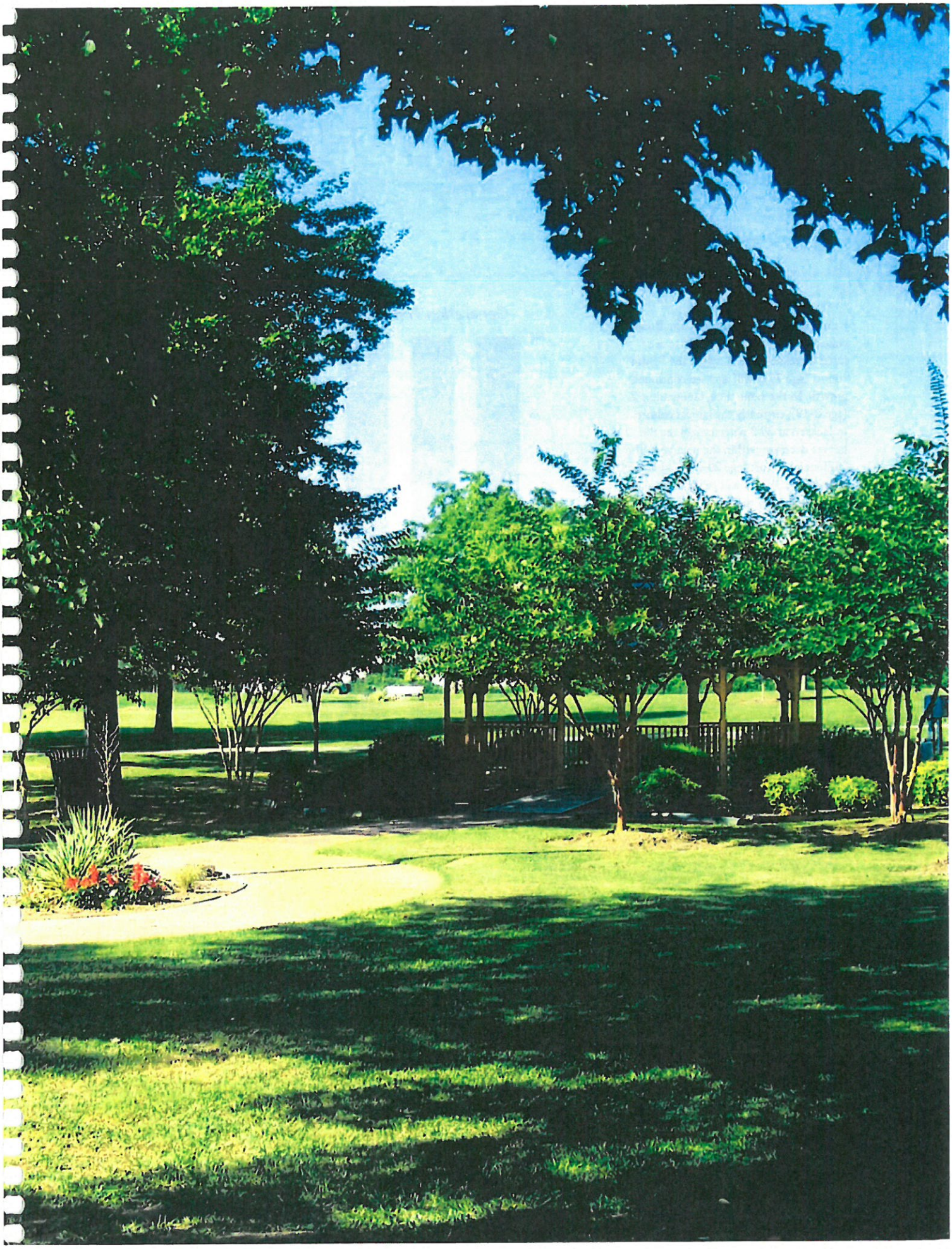
To support the planning process, a complete analysis of demographics and related trends was completed, taking into account population, age, race and ethnicity, and income. This data provided a foundation for recommendations and policy within the Plan and ensured that the established vision is reflective of demographic trends and shift that may impact Jackson, now and in the future.

Population

Jackson's population is seeing consistent growth. Between 2010 and 2016, Jackson population grew at a steady rate of 0.5 percent per year, adding 2,825 residents and 273 new families. The population is projected to continue growing at this rate adding approximately 1,846 new residents and 239 new families by 2021. While not drastic, steady population growth should yield a steady increase in demand for recreation and park services within Jackson.

POPULATION

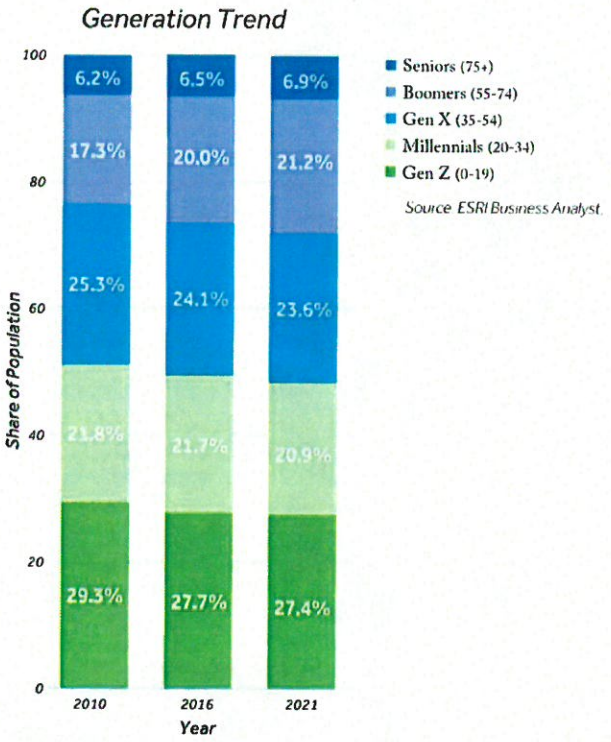
	2010	2016	2021	CHANGE	ANNUAL GROTH RATE
Population	67,072	69,897	71,743	1,846	0.52%
Households	25,827	26,618	27,181	563	0.42%
Families	16,525	16,798	17,037	239	0.28%
Average Household Size	2.43	2.46	2.48	0.02	0.16%
Median Age	34.1	35.5	36.4	0.9	0.50%
Density	1,607	1,685	1,750	66	0.77%

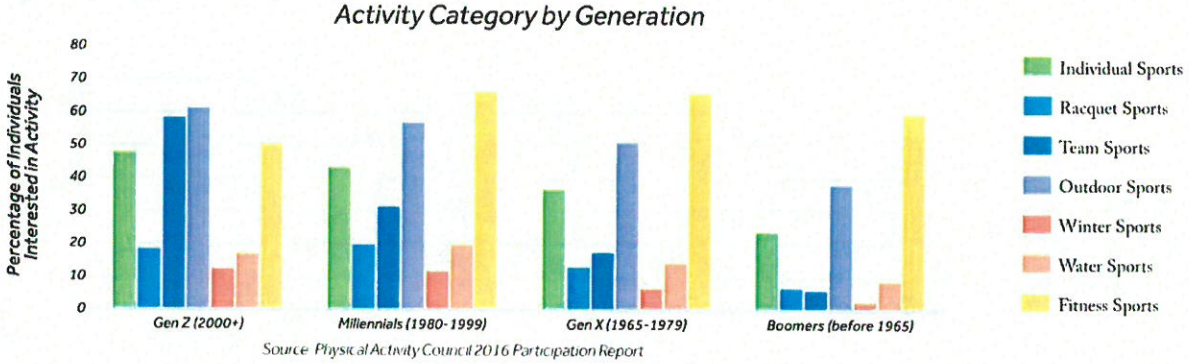


Age

Jackson's population is aging. The Boomer cohort (age 55-74) is expected to see rapid increase by 2021, while the Senior cohort (age 75+) will also see continued growth. In the same time, Generation Z (age 0-19), currently the largest cohort in Jackson at 29.3 percent, will see the largest decrease within the next year. The Millennial cohort (age 20-34) and Gen X cohort (age 35-54) will generally remain steady with only modest decreases in percentage of the population.

This aging trend will place a greater emphasis on services aimed at older residents. Based on the 2016 report from the Physical Activity Council, an organization that tracks fitness trends, the growth in the boomer and senior cohorts will likely mean an increased demand for outdoor sports and fitness activities.

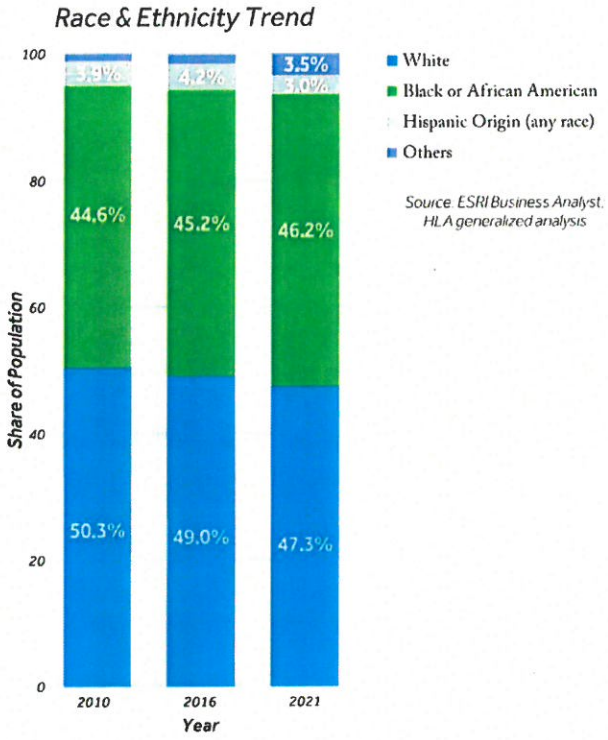




Race and Ethnicity

Jackson is becoming slightly more diverse. The black and white population groups are the largest in the City, making up 45.2 percent and 49.0 percent of the population respectively. The black population is expected to see a steady increase in percentage of the population, while the white population will continue to see a steady decrease. All other races, which account for 1.5 percent of the population, will see an increase of over two percent, and the Hispanic population will see a decrease of over one percent. These changes are minimal, and while minority populations may see some growth, it is unlikely to result in a significant change to service needs for the recreation and parks system.

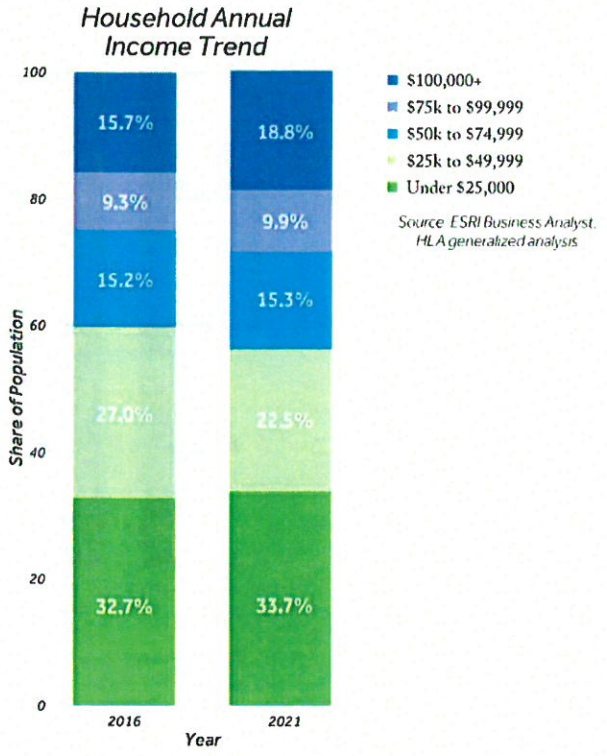
Note: For purposes of clarification, the U.S. Census considers Hispanic an ethnicity and not mutually exclusive with racial categories. For example, a resident may identify as both Black AND Hispanic.



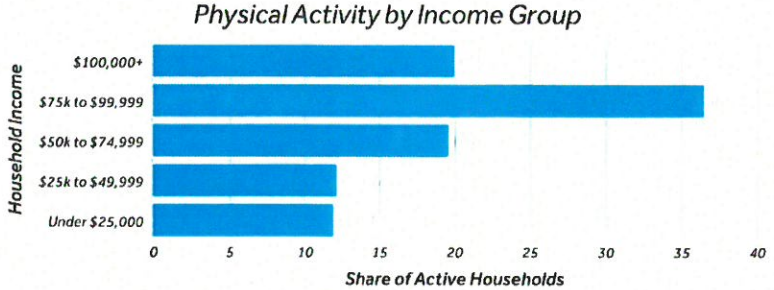
Income

Over 55 percent of households in Jackson earn less than $50,000 a year. Household income is included because it indicates a family's ability to participate in fee-based activities like recreational sports. In 2016, 32.7% of the population earned less than $25,000 a year and 27% earned between $25,000 and $49,999 a year. The under $25,000 and over $100,000 cohorts are anticipated to see the largest growth, while the percent earning between $25,000 and $49,999 a year will decrease.

Household income levels were also compared against activity levels for the United States to analyze demand for active recreation. Rates of activity are highest among households earning an annual income between $75,000 and $100,000 while rates of activity are lowest among households earning less than $50,000. Within Jackson, 55% of the population fall within the least active households based on national trends. As such, the Recreation & Parks Department will need to identify methods to foster involvement for lower-earning populations and create programming which is accessible to those households.



Source: ESRI Business Analyst, HLA generalized analysis



Source: Physical Activity Council 2016 Participation Report, ESRI Business Analyst

POPULATION-BASED ANALYSIS

PARK CLASSIFICATION	JACKSON PARKS SYSTEM		NRPA RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES		
	Area (Acres)	Level of Service (acres/1,000 residents)	Desired Area per NRPA (Acres)	Recommended Min. Level of Service (acres/1,000 residents)	SURPLUS/ DEFICIENCY
Mini Parks	2.14	0.03	17.47	0.25	-15.33
Neighborhood Parks	42.99	0.62	69.90	1.00	-26.91
Community Parks	508.66	7.28	349.49	5.00	159.18
Total Acres	**553.79**	**7.92**	**436.86**	**6.25**	

*Based upon a 2016 population of 69,897

RECREATION & PARKS SYSTEM INVENTORY

An inventory of the entire Jackson Recreation & Parks system was completed to analyze existing parks and facilities and identify the number of available amenities throughout the community. The system includes 27 parks and facilities comprising 762.87 acres of park land. Parks and facilities are categorized into 6 classifications, as show in the accompanying table.

Population-Based Analysis

Based upon the established parks classifications, a population-based analysis uses standards set by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) to measure the amount of parkland considered necessary to provide adequate service to a community. Natural resource areas and special use facilities are not included within this analysis given the specific nature of their use.

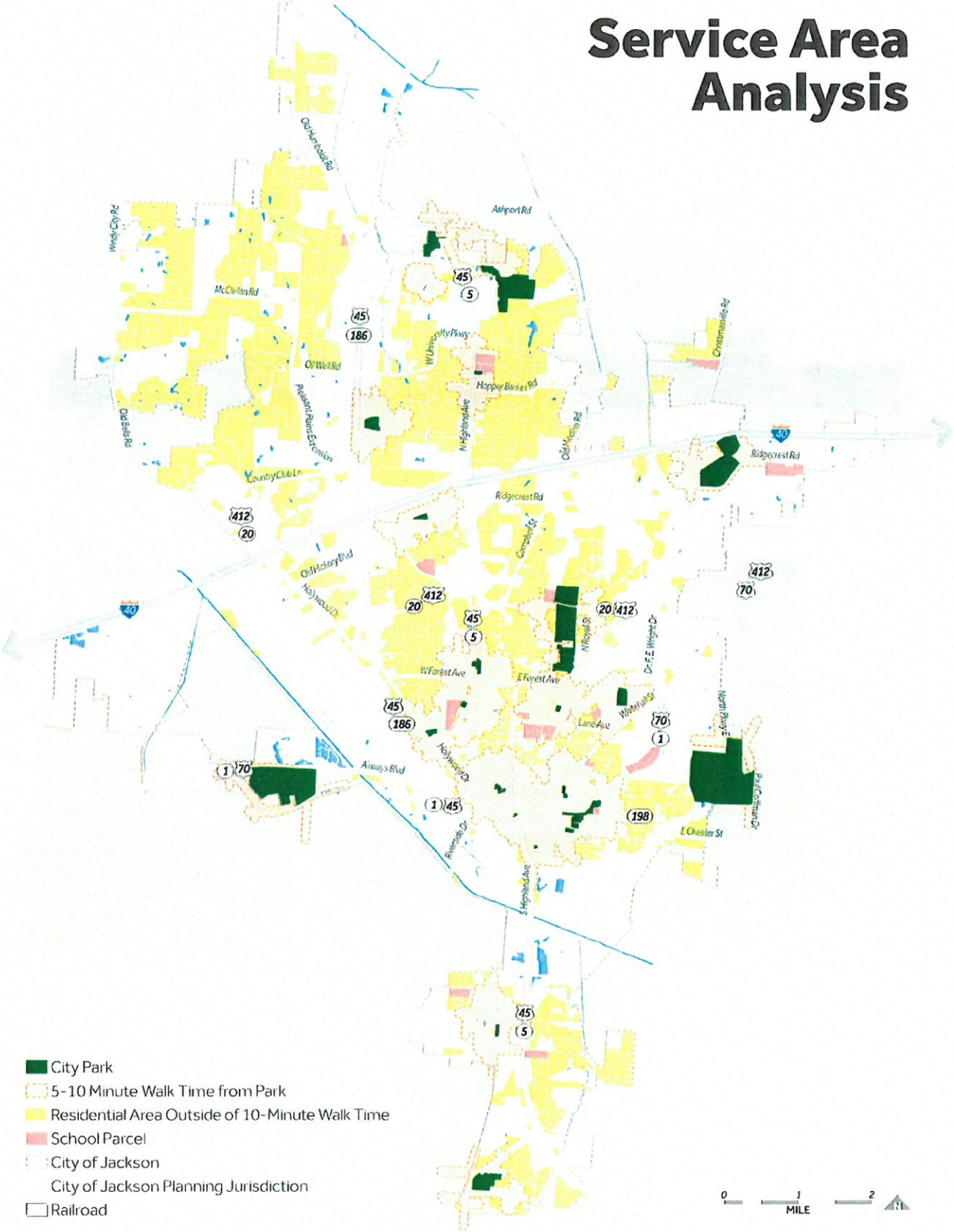
The NRPA standard suggests a minimum of 6.25 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents, not including special use parks. Jackson exceeds this standard minimum with 7.92 acres of mini, neighborhood, and community parks for every 1,000 residents. However, the City does not meet specific standards set for individual classifications, with deficiencies of both mini and neighborhood parkland. This suggests that Jackson may be well served by a surplus of community parkland, but requires additional neighborhood and mini parks.

Service Area Analysis

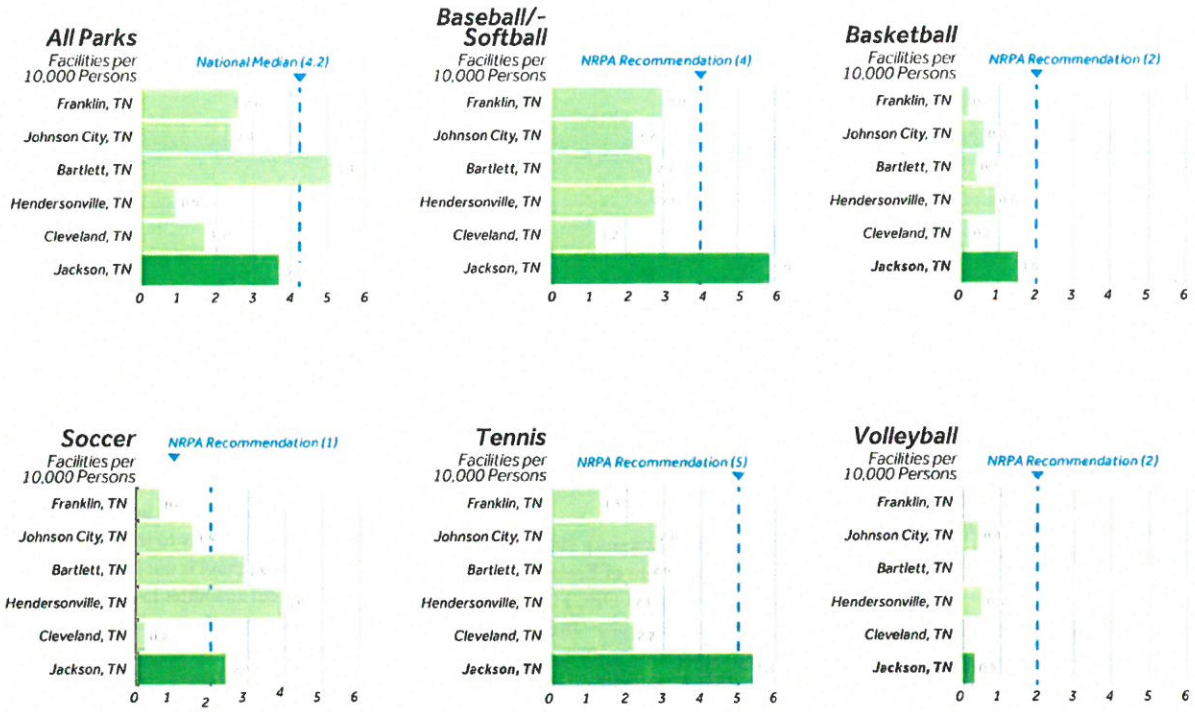
A park's "service area" provide an additional layer of analysis for a park system, taking into account the geographic area a specific park can serve. The NRPA establishes standards for service areas based upon distance from the park; for example, a Mini Park has a service area of 0.25 miles, and a Neighborhood Park has a service area of 0.5 miles. However, these service areas do not take into account physical barriers and other factors that may limit access to a park, such as a railroad or high traffic roadway. As such, service areas were converted into walk times of 5 minutes and 10 minutes to provide a more clear understanding of the area individual parks are able to serve.

Based upon this service area analysis, the northern, north-western and eastern portions of the City generally lack access to parkland. The highest degree of coverage, including all classifications of parkland, is in central Jackson and near the Downtown. The underserved areas should be a primary focus for long-term parkland development and improved access.

Service Area Analysis



Prepared by Houseal Lavigne Associates



Source: HLA Analysis

BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS

A benchmarking analysis was completed to better understand how Jackson's Recreation and Parks system compares with similar municipalities. The analysis considered parks and athletics facilities within Jackson, evaluating them against similarly sized communities in the State of Tennessee and against the nation as a whole.

Park Facilities

Communities were measured to determine the number of parks they have per 10,000 residents. Jackson has 3.7 parks per 10,000 residents, which is lower than the national median of 4.2. However, Jackson has more parks per 10,000 than the majority of peer communities, with the exception of Bartlett which is above the national median at 5.1 parks per 10,000 residents.

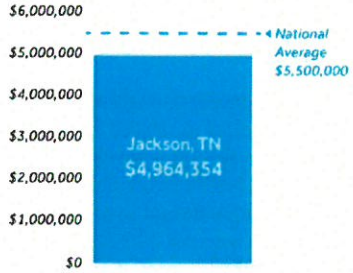
When comparing acreage of total parkland per 1,000 residents, Jackson has 12.8 acres, which is above the national median of 9.1 but behind peer communities of Johnson City, with 15.9 acres, and Bartlett, with 17.7 acres.

Additionally, outdoor athletic facilities were measured per 10,000 residents to provide an analysis of recreational amenities, using NRPA standards as a baseline. Jackson outperformed all peer communities and exceeded NPRA standards for baseball/softball, soccer, and tennis. For basketball, Jackson outperformed peer companies, but did not meet NRPA standards. Jackson did not meet recommended standards for volleyball, but was consistent with peer communities, while Cleveland and Bartlett have no volleyball facilities.

Annual Operating Budget and Revenue

The annual operating budget national average for municipalities with a population between 50,000 and 90,000 is $5.5 million. The Jackson Recreation and Parks annual operating budget falls below that average by more than $500,000.

Annual Operating Budget by Population Group (50,000 - 99,999)



Source: Jackson Recreation and Parks, 2017 NRPA Agency Performance Benchmarks

TENNESSEE 2020 VISION FOR PARKS, PEOPLE, AND LANDSCAPES

Every five years since 1965, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) has prepared a state recreation plan. The Tennessee 2020 Plan establishes a 10-year perspective to help integrate multi-level strategies that address the critical issues that face parks, recreation, and conservation regionally and throughout the state.

Tennessee 2020 was reviewed and incorporated into the Jackson Recreation and Parks Master Plan to help guide recommendations and ensure local policy is best aligned with the state-wide vision for recreation, parks, and open space. This includes, among others, considerations for creating interconnected networks of greenways, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks, as well as the conservation of open space for future recreation needs.

A key policy included within Tennessee 2020 is the direction to incorporate outdoor recreation amenities at schools as part of local parks systems. The 2020 Plan recommends that communities coordinate with school districts to create partnerships and agreements that activate school playgrounds, recreation amenities, and open spaces as parks to serve residential areas when school is not in session. As such, school amenities have been included to provide an understanding of additional service coverage which school properties could provide. Where appropriate, recommendations to support this state-level direction have been included.

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The following are key implications identified through public engagement and existing conditions analysis. They represent the key issues which were explored and address through the planning process, and have helped to guide goals, objectives, and specific recommendations found throughout the Plan.

- Jackson's population is aging, which will result in a greater need for amenities and services which appeal to older age cohorts. This was echoed within public engagement, where residents consistently discussed the need for a senior center or facility offering programs for older residents.
- North Jackson, particularly the northwest portion of the City, is underserved by parkland facilities and lacks immediate access to parks and recreational amenities.
- Many of Jackson's parks, facilities, and amenities are aging or outdated, and were 'hand-me-downs' to the Department that need to be updated
- Only 30% of residents surveyed utilize Jackson parks and participate in recreational programs, citing a lack of awareness and access to park services and programs as barriers to use.
- 55% of the Jackson population live in households that earn less than $50,000, a cohort which, according to national trends, has the lowest percentage of participation in recreation and parks services. The Jackson parks system exceeds NRPA standards for total park acreage per 1,000 residents, but is deficient in mini and neighborhood parkland.
- While Jackson has fewer parks per 10,000 residents than the national median, the system exceeds the national median in total park acreage per 1,000 residents, indicating that Jackson has fewer parks but with larger sizes that the average community in the country.
- Jackson exceeds NRPA standards for baseball/softball, soccer, and tennis, but is deficient in basketball and volleyball facilities and programming.

PARKS & OPEN SPACE PLAN

The Parks & Open Space Plan defines goals, objectives, and specific recommendations for the Jackson Parks system. Together, these components provide the Recreation & Parks Department with the necessary direction to improve parkland facilities within Jackson and support quality of life through access to well-maintained parks. The Plan includes both overarching goals for parks and open space as well as more direct recommendations for each classification within the parks system.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The following goals provide high-level direction for Parks and Open Space within the Jackson community, based upon a comprehensive analysis of the parks system through extensive public engagement, field reconnaissance, research, and benchmarking. Each goal is supported by detailed objectives which offer more specific actions that should be undertaken to advance toward achieving that goal.

Goal 1

Maintain and improve amenities and equipment in Jackson parks to offer high quality active and passive recreational opportunities.

Objectives

- Replace outdated or dilapidated equipment in parks as resources become available.
- Install curbs or necessary edging along internal roadways and parking lots to reduce the effects of erosion, gravel runoff, and long-term damage to road infrastructure.
- Seek development of new walking trails within Jackson parks and repave dilapidated trails and sidewalks where necessary.
- Explore opportunities for programming that appeals to teenagers and young adults, such as skate parks, mountain biking trails, rock climbing walls, or pump tracks.

Goal 2

Provide all residents with equitable access to parkland that supports active recreation.

Objectives

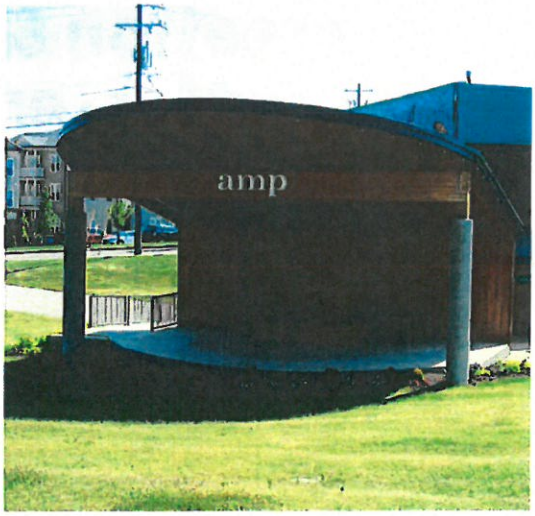
- Seek development of new parkland within the northwest portion of Jackson, north of Interstate 40 and west of the Route 45 bypass.
- Explore opportunities to develop new neighborhood parks within the northwest portion of Jackson that offers greater access to premier recreation opportunities
- Seek development of new parkland that provides parkland access to underserved areas outside the City's core neighborhoods.
- Improve pedestrian connections to support greater access between residential areas and parks as well as reduce the impact of physical barriers, such as high traffic roadways.
- Explore the feasibility of offering a shuttle that provides routes between major parkland destinations, such as community parks and recreation centers.
- Incorporate trail connections and sidewalks within Jackson parks that ensure ADA compliant accessibility to park amenities for all residents.
- Provide adequate parking to support automobile access to Jackson parks, particularly community and neighborhood parks.
- Take advantage of opportunities to protect and conserve open space which could be utilized as parkland to meet future needs.
- Coordinate with local school districts and education providers to set up agreements that allow activation of outdoor amenities on school properties as parkland that is accessible to the public when classes are not in session.

Goal 3

Foster a greater sense of safety and security within Jackson parks.

Objectives

- Introduce safety lighting to improve visibility during dusk hours and in dark areas of parks where necessary.
- Coordinate with the Jackson Police Department to establish regular patrols of parks and related facilities.
- Consider sight lines and overall visibility in park design and placement of amenities and equipment.
- Develop a quick response program to rapidly address vandalism and damage to park equipment and facilities, limiting the potential for negative perceptions related to vandalism.
- Establish a 'Keep Our Parks Clean' program to reduce littering and vandalism, partnering with residents and community organizations to maintain parks.



Goal 4

Facilitate greater utilization of Jackson parks by creating better awareness of their location and available amenities.

Objectives

- Update all online resources to provide comprehensive information about all parks, including their location, hours of operation, programming, and other amenities. This should include the Recreation & Parks Department website as well as cooperation with outside providers, particularly Google Maps, which are important resources for residents and visitors.
- Improve or install park signage as necessary to clearly indicate the location and entry into specific parks.
- Install wayfinding signage for all parks to clearly mark their locations along higher traffic roadways.
- Incorporate or renovate the visual elements of park amenities, such as entryway features, fences, or landscaped areas, to create a welcoming and inviting atmosphere.
- Develop a Jackson Recreation & Parks brochure, similar to the existing Activity Guide, that provides similar information with a focus on parks and parkland in Jackson. This could be offered to new and existing residents to inform them of nearby parks within their neighborhood.
- Host additional programs or events, like the existing Movies in the Park, that highlight specific park facilities and invite residents to spend time and learn about parks within their community.

Recreation & Parks Master Plan

Prepared by Houseal Lavigne Associates

JACKSON RECREATION & PARKS CLASSIFICATION

Mini Parks
1. Paradise Park
2. Unity Park

Neighborhood Parks
3. Arlington Ballfields
4. Bennett Park
5. Centennial Park
7. Stella Duncan Park of Bemis
8. Wallace Road Park

Community Parks
6. Conger Park
9. Forest Hills Park
10. Kate Campbell Robertson Memorial Park
11. Liberty Garden Park & Arboretum
12. Malesus Civic Park & Community Center
13. Muse Park
14. North Park
17. Shirlene Mercer Walking Trail Park
15. Tobe Bailey Park

Natural Resource Areas
16. Cypress Grove Nature Park & Center

Special Use
18. Ampitheater
19. Bemis Recreation Center
20. Downtown Dog Park
21. Jackson Tennis Complex
22. N.C. & St. L Depot & R.R. Museum
23. Northside Lions Community Center
24. T.R. White Sportsplex
25. West Tennessee Farmers' Market
26. Westwood Recreation and Tennis Center

PARK CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS

CLASSIFICATION	USE	SERVICE AREA	LEVEL OF SERVICE
Mini Park	A pocket park is a small park, usually less than 1 acre, developed with passive elements such as sidewalks, fountains, gazebos, benches, and landscaping.	0.25 mile / 5-minute walk	0.25-0.50 acres per 1,000 residents
Neighborhood Park	Provides recreational opportunities within a neighborhood, intended for all ages. Neighborhood parks should be stand-alone facilities; however, they may be located adjacent to elementary schools or linear parks.	1/2 mile radius, free of major barriers such as highways or waterways / 10-minute walk	2-5 acres per 1,000 residents
Community Park	Provides recreational facilities for the entire community. Facilities should be provided for people of all ages. Should be located on arterial streets and accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists	1/2 to 3 miles; some uses community-wide / 10-minute drive	5-8 acres per 1,000 residents
Natural Resource Areas	Natural areas, wildlife habitats, and environmentally sensitive areas maintained by the City for preservation and passive recreation	N/A	
Special Use	Parks or recreational facilities oriented towards single-purpose use.	N/A	

PARKS SYSTEM

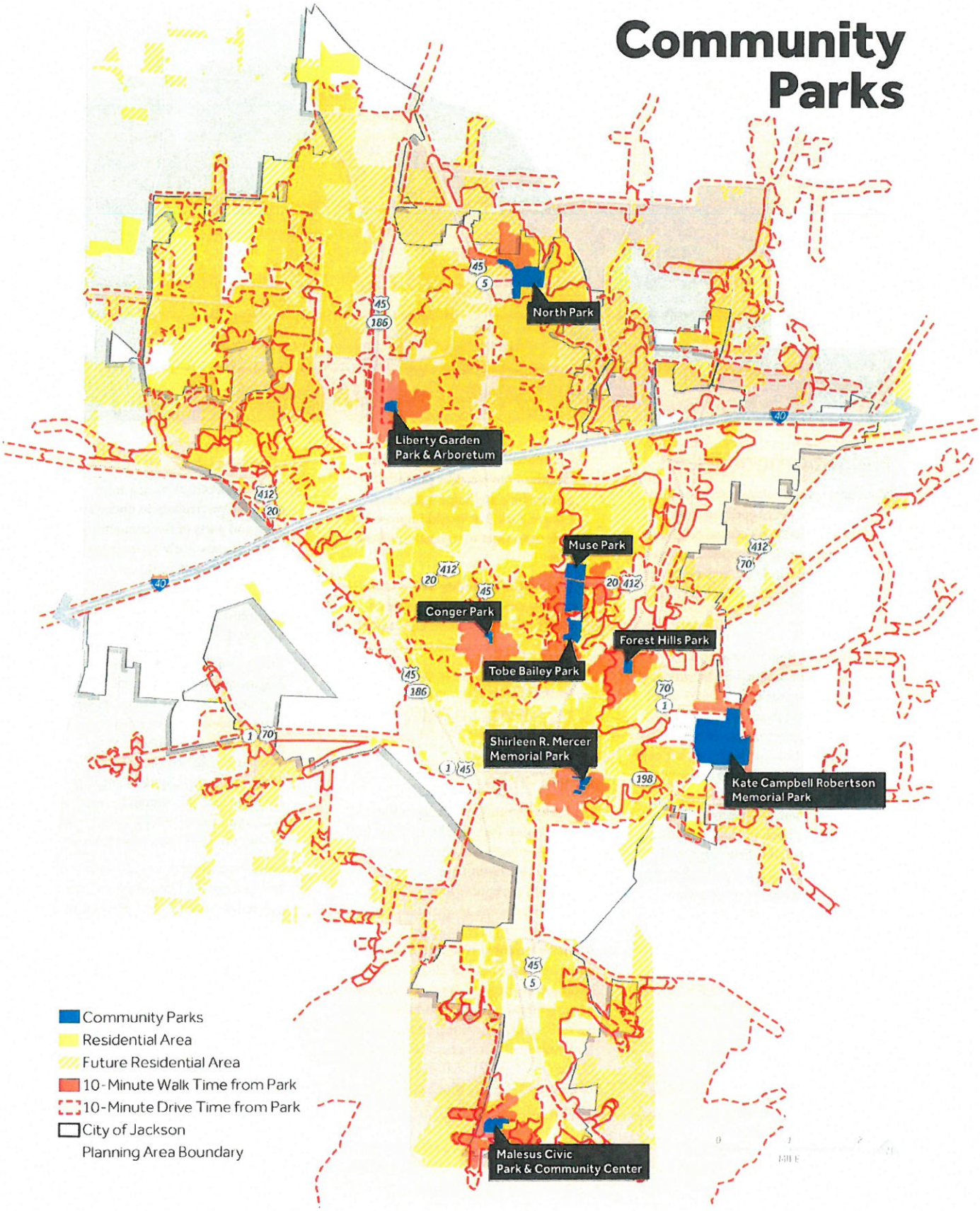
In addition to overall goals and objectives, specific recommendations have been identified for each classification within the parks system. This includes improvements to existing parkland and specific locations within the system, as well as potential new parks and policies to guide park maintenance and investment in the future.

Community Parks

The Parks system contains six community parks that provide larger scale recreational opportunities to the entire Jackson community. In addition to offering the largest service areas within the parks system, community parks are also the best dispersed within Jackson, including facilities in North, Central, and South Jackson. Further, community parks are the only classification to surpass NRPA standards, with a surplus of 159.18 acres. Given that the City has adequate community parkland, efforts moving forward should be primarily focused on improving amenities, recreational opportunities, and access to existing community parks.

- Review parking lots at all community parks to determine the need for additional parking and identify maintenance requirements. In particular, repaving should be considered for parking lots at Kate Campbell Robertson Memorial Park, Malesus Civic Park, and Tobe Bailey Park.
- Incorporate landscaped areas, flower beds, and native plants within community parks, particularly in areas that are unprogrammable but could contribute to the character of individual facilities, such as near park entrances or where topography and hydrology impact maintenance.
- Regularly review facilities and programming at all community parks to consider necessary improvement and maintenance projects as well as potential new amenities.
- Analyze streambanks within Shirlene Mercer Walking Trail Park for the Anderson Branch waterway to address the potential of bank erosion over time.
- Establish a vision for the future of Shirlene Mercer Walking Trail Park. Given its location and topography, the Department should consider conversion to a neighborhood park with programming and basic amenities. This would help activate the area and provide additional community park, as well as establish a small greenway connecting to Centennial Park.
- Create prominent park entry signage for all community parks, including wayfinding signage to mark their entrances and locations from higher traffic roadways. In particular, a prominent gateway feature should be installed at the entrance to North Park from Highland Avenue.
- Consider renovations of the skate park at Muse Park to improve the quality of pavement, ensure safety for users, and provide a more cohesive facility.
- Conduct an evaluation and re-design of pedestrian pathways and infrastructure at Muse Park to ensure pedestrian access and safety. In particular, existing gravel medians should not be used for internal mobility, as these place pedestrians between the wooden fences and automobile right-of-way.
- Explore opportunities for new programming at Muse Park that takes advantage of the natural open space and wildlife, such as hiking trails and paths.
- Renovate pavement and parking facilities at Muse Park to incorporate curbs and permeable edging to reduce runoff of gravel and ensure proper stormwater management to mitigate long-term erosion.
- Review and make improvements to pedestrian access throughout Muse Park and to all park amenities to ensure ADA compliant accessibility for all users.

Community Parks



Prepared by Houseal Lavigne Associates

Neighborhood Parks

The Parks system contains seven neighborhood parks, the majority of which are located in Jackson's central neighborhoods. Only one neighborhood park is located in South Jackson, Stella Duncan Park, and no parks are located north of Interstate 40.

The City has a significant need for additional neighborhood parks, with a deficiency of approximately 26.91 acres of neighborhood parkland from NRPA standards for a community of Jackson's size. Neighborhood parks should act as a foundational element of the parks system, providing healthy space for active and passive recreation that can support an entire neighborhood or residential area. Moving forward, the development of additional neighborhood parks should be a key focus of parkland investment.

Recommendations

- Develop new neighborhood parkland to provide recreational opportunities to underserved areas north of Interstate 40.
- Review usage and activity of onsite parking at all neighborhood parks to determine the potential of parking expansion or shrinkage and the need for new parking lots.
- Collaborate with West Tennessee Healthcare to consider potential partnerships and improvements to Conger Park that would improve the park as an asset to adjacent medical uses.
- Explore the feasibility and related costs in renovating the pedestrian bridge over Route 70 at Centennial Park to improve access to the park.
- Remove or replace the chain-link fence at Stella Duncan Park to create a more inviting and friendly park character.

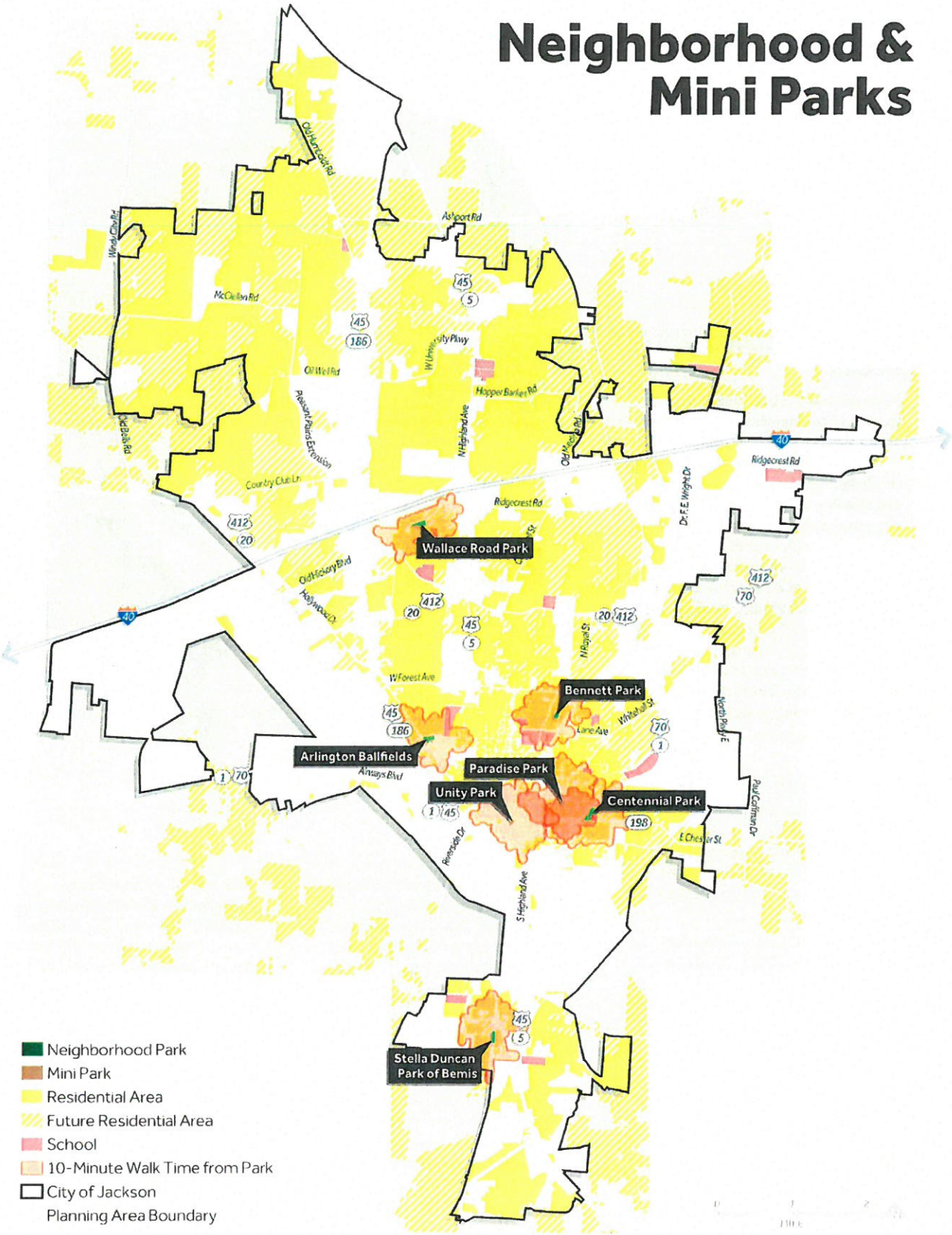
Mini Parks

The Parks system contains two mini parks, Paradise Park and Unity Park, both of which are located within Downtown Jackson. These facilities provide outdoor spaces to support activity within the Downtown, but are generally not intended for active recreation. The City is deficient approximately 15.3 acres of mini parkland from NRPA standards for a community of Jackson's size, emphasizing a significant need for additional mini parks. Requiring the smallest total acreage for development, mini parks should also be seen as a foundational element of the Jackson park system, which can help address underserved areas.

Recommendations

- Seek development of new mini parkland, particularly in underserved areas and parts of the community which are less likely to see larger scale parkland development.
- Create a designated pedestrian connection between Paradise Park and the T.R. White Sportsplex
- Work with the Jackson Engineering Department to consider removing the portion of Lafayette Street between Hays Avenue and Days Street. This would allow consolidation of the two parcels that constitute Paradise Park into a single, unified property. If completed, this should be matched with appropriate redesign of the park to best utilize the reconfigured space.
- Install screening or a landscaped barrier between Unity Park and the gas station directly west of the park.

Neighborhood & Mini Parks



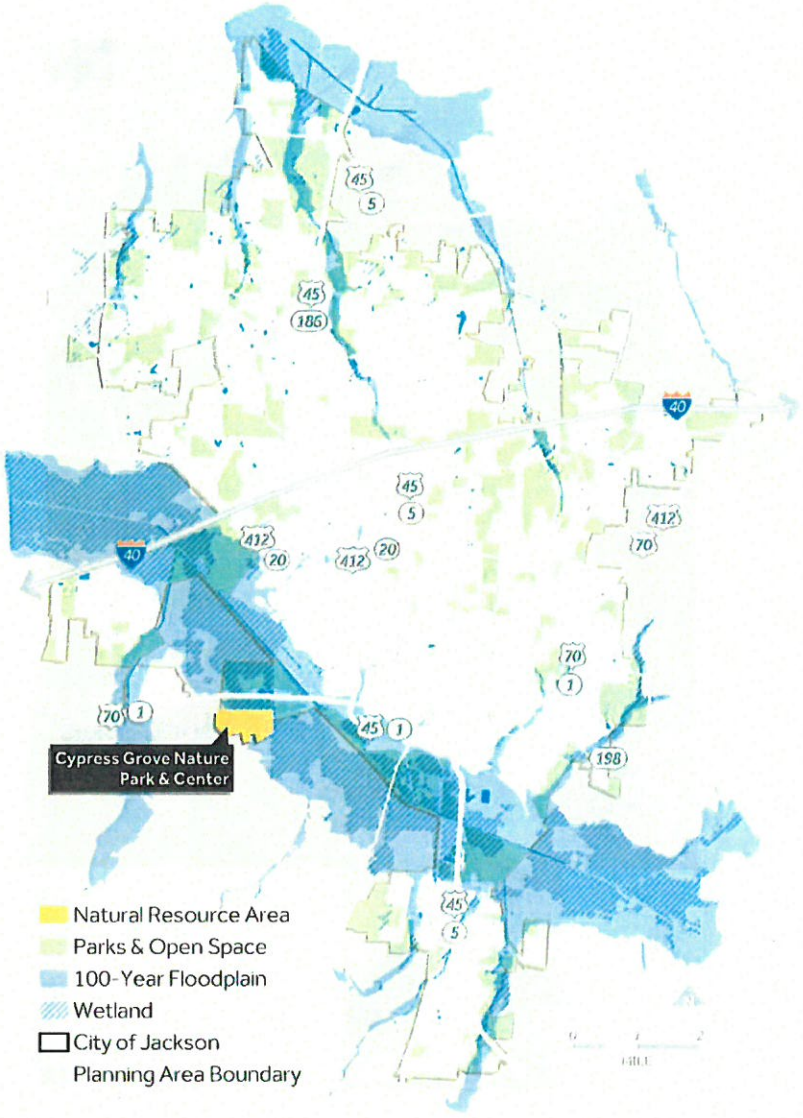
Prepared by Housel Lavigne Associates

Natural Resource Areas

Natural Resource Areas consist of open spaces and environmental features which are set aside for passive recreation and conservation. Cypress Grove Nature Park, the designated Natural Resource Area, includes elevated boardwalks for hiking, a nature center, and the Raptor Center, a sanctuary for bird wildlife. Given their primary function and role within the parks system, NRPA does not set standards for benchmark acreage of natural resources areas. While obtaining a specific acreage of natural resource areas is not necessary, the City should take advantage of opportunities to create new natural resources areas and protect open space within the community.

Recommendations

- Conduct a complete review and analysis of the boardwalks at Cypress Grove Nature Park to prepare and determine resource needs for their long-term maintenance and renovation.
- Conduct a complete review and analysis of the Raptor Center at Cypress Grove Nature Park to ensure the facilities are properly maintained and can adequately care for the wildlife.



- Explore the feasibility of additional programming within the Cypress Grove Nature Center that can further activate the space without disturbing the natural environment.
- Consider improvements to better promote Cypress Grove Nature Center and the Raptor Center as valuable and unique assets for the community. This should include both new media and materials to promote these facilities, as well as physical improvements that will create greater awareness of their location.
- Work with other departments, particularly the Planning Department, to identify environmentally sensitive areas and natural resources which the City should seek to preserve in the future.
- Utilize the establishment of new natural resources areas to set aside open space which could be converted to parkland to meet future park needs within the community.

Special Use Facilities

Special Use Facilities are comprised of both buildings and parkland operated by the Recreation & Parks Department and utilized for specific recreation or programing. Within Jackson, this includes 4 outdoor spaces and 5 buildings dedicated to specific uses. Given the unique nature of programming within these facilities, national standards have not been set for acreage of special use facilities. Instead, this classification should be seen as necessary to address a specific need or provide a unique and exciting recreational opportunity to residents. For example, while no standards are set for dog parks, these assets are highly valued and could greatly improve quality of life if provided across a community.

Special use facilities will be addressed within the Facilities section of the Recreation & Facilities Plan.

West Tennessee Healthcare Sportsplex

The West Tennessee Healthcare Sportsplex was opened in 2006 and features 17 state-of-the-art lighted baseball fields. The Sportsplex is directly adjacent to The Ballpark, home of the Jackson Generals minor league baseball team. The facility is a major community assets and draws a significant amount of regional activity, supporting travel baseball and regular tournaments.

While operated by the City of Jackson, the Recreation & Parks Department is not responsible for operations and maintenance of the facility. Through outreach, stakeholders voiced some concern over access to the Sportsplex, particularly given that fields are limited to games only. This significantly reduces spaces for baseball practice within the community and places a higher demand on fields within Jackson Parks, which are operated by the Recreation & Parks Department.

Recommendations

- Coordinate with Sportsplex management to identify potential partnerships and opportunities for cooperative programming.
- Coordinate with Sportsplex management to consider the feasibility of opening fields for practice sessions, given schedule availability and impact upon facility maintenance.
- Explore potential pedestrian connections and trail access points which would improve bikeability and walkability to the Sportsplex.
- Review parking usage and capacity to identify potential deficiencies in available parking, particularly during weekends and tournaments.
- Incorporate the Sportsplex within branding and promotional materials for both the City of Jackson as well as the Recreation & Parks Department as a significant recreational opportunity within Jackson.
- Explore the potential for off-season activities at the Sportsplex, such as events that utilize and activate the parking lots during the winter.

RECREATION & FACILITIES PLAN

The Recreation & Facilities Plan defines goals, objectives, and specific recommendations for the Jackson Recreation & Parks system. This includes the programs and facilities which provide recreational opportunities for residents to get active, become involved in sports and community-building activities, and supplement traditional parks with unique and entertaining amenities. The Plan includes both overarching goals for recreation and facilities as well as more detailed recommendations for programmed sports and specific facilities within the Jackson community.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The following goals provide high-level direction for Recreation and Facilities within the Jackson community, based upon a complete study of recreational amenities, programs, and facilities in Jackson supported by extensive public engagement, site visits, and research. Each goal is supported by detailed objectives which offer more specific actions that should be undertaken to advance toward achieving that goal.

Goal 1

Improve and maintain existing facilities to ensure the continued quality of recreational amenities across the Jackson community.

Objectives

- Identify and complete improvement projects and renovations within Jackson recreation centers as necessary to maintain quality recreation opportunities, particularly T.R. White Sportsplex.
- Ensure recreational facilities are supported by necessary pedestrian connections to enable access from adjacent residential areas for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Make improvements to signage and wayfinding elements to ensure recreational facilities and amenities are clearly marked and easy to find.
- Incorporate new sports facilities and amenities within existing parks to address programming deficiencies and changes in demand, with careful consideration for park design and layout.
- Replace temporary or semi-permeant edging and surfacing with permanent infrastructure where applicable, to reduce erosion and runoff of mulch.
- Develop and regularly update a maintenance and replacement cost schedule to assist with improvement projects.

Goal 2

Continue to provide high quality programing for team and individual sports that offer residents of all ages access to structured recreational amenities.

Objectives

- Review amenities and facilities for programmed sports on a regular basis to identify necessary improvements, upgrades, and renovations to ensure the continued quality of sports recreation in Jackson.
- Develop additional facilities, such as playgrounds and basketball courts, to address deficiencies in specific programmed sports and provide all Jackson residents with access to recreation and organized sport.
- Maintain close coordination with partner and community organizations that offer sports programming to ensure the quality of facilities and amenities and address issues as they arise.
- Regularly review existing sports programs to identify those which can be eliminated, combined, or reorganized to improve efficiency, as well as potential new programs that are in demand or could benefit Jackson.
- Launch a promotional campaign aimed at creating greater awareness of existing sports programming and amenities and boost participation within the community.
- Coordinate with local school districts and education providers to set up agreements for activation of recreational amenities on school properties for community use.
- Continue to support the Senior Olympic Games and senior sports within Jackson by coordinating with related groups to identify long-term needs and make necessary improvements to enable quality senior recreation.
- Continue to support the Special Olympics mission to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for all children and adults with intellectual disabilities.
- Modify and adapt recreation programming to provide participation opportunitities for residents of special needs

Goal 3

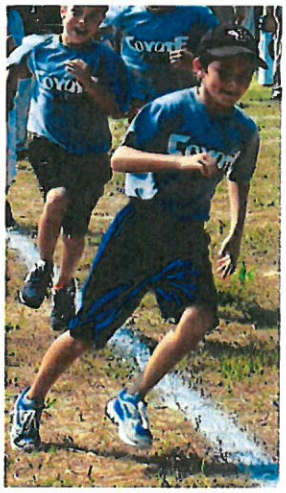
Seek development of new facilities that support the recreational and cultural needs of a diverse community

Objectives

- Develop a senior center that is centrally located, accessible to all senior residents, and provides a range of programs, services, and amenities necessary to support quality of life for older demographics.
- Explore opportunities to develop a centrally located recreation center that provides all residents with access to programs, amenities, and services for physical activity.
- Explore opportunities to develop a youth center that appeals and offers recreation and programming for teens and young adults within Jackson.
- Seek development of additional pools and aquatic facilities to better serve all areas of the community.
- Seek development of additional dog parks to provide dog-based recreation to residential areas within North and South Jackson, as well as northern neighborhoods within Central Jackson.
- Develop new, unique programming that will help diversify recreational offerings and provide activities for youth and young adults, such as rock climbing walls or additional skate parks.
- Incorporate recreational amenities and facilities, as appropriate, within new parks in the northwest portion of Jackson to provide access to recreation within those areas.

PROGRAMMED ATHLETICS

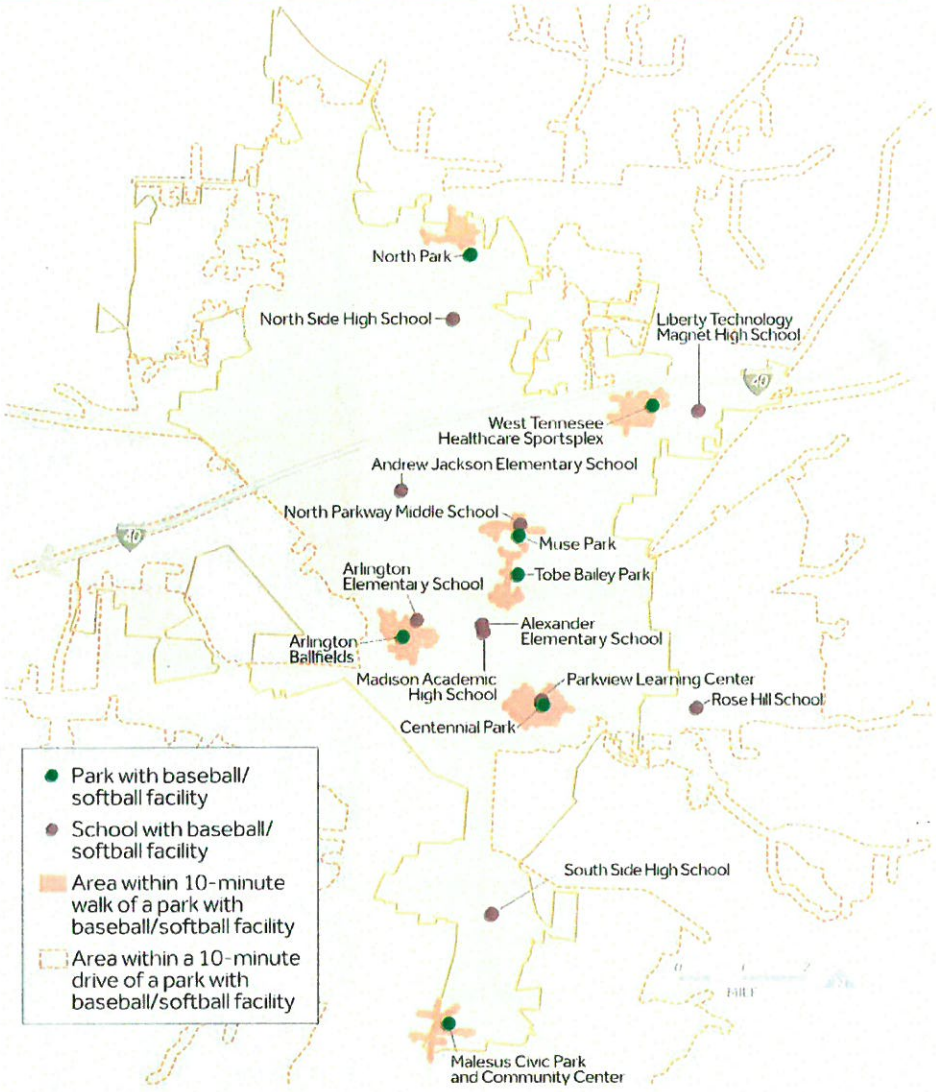
The Jackson Recreation and Parks Department is responsible for providing programming and amenities to support recreational sports. This includes both organization and operation of certain sports programs, as well as providing facilities and amenities to support those which are operated by outside groups or utilized for casual recreation. The following analysis reviews existing and desired sports programs and amenities which the Department should address within the future, identifying recommendations that will assure quality recreational opportunities are available to residents throughout the Jackson community.



Baseball & Softball

Baseball is the most significant programmed sport within the Jackson community, which hosts 41 baseball/softball fields. This is almost double all peer communities and well above NRPA standards, with a surplus of 11 baseball/softball fields.

Seventeen fields are located at the West Tennessee Healthcare Sportsplex, a significant investment and premier destination for baseball within the state. Additional fields and amenities are spread across 6 parks, including facilities in North, Central, and South Jackson. Programming for baseball and softball are offered by the Department as well as private organizations and traveling teams that utilize Jackson facilities for practice and play. While new fields may be desired to further diversify baseball and softball programming, the high quantity of fields serves the community well. As such, resources should be focused on maintaining and improving these facilities in the future.



Recommendations

- Review all baseball amenities, particularly those operated by partner organizations, to identify improvements and renovations that could elevate the quality of baseball fields and facilities.
- Explore opportunities to develop larger and full-size baseball fields that can support gameplay for older kids.
- Coordinate with the men's softball league to make field 6 at Malesus Civic Park available for use by other leagues and organizations when not utilized by the softball league.
- Work with the senior softball league to support potential expansion to a third division for age 70 and above, and identify future needs and maintenance requirements to ensure the league can be maintained and improved in the future.
- Coordinate with Sportsplex management to consider the feasibility of opening fields for practice sessions, given schedule availability and impact upon facility maintenance.
- Work with partner organizations to consider development of more league and intramural options for older kids, teens, and young adults.
- Coordinate with the Gilliam League to explore opportunities to develop new facilities that could better meet the needs of the league, particularly practice fields and a t-ball field. Given space limitations at Centennial Park, this could include considerations for developing baseball/softball facilities at the adjacent Shirlene Mercer Walking Trail Park.

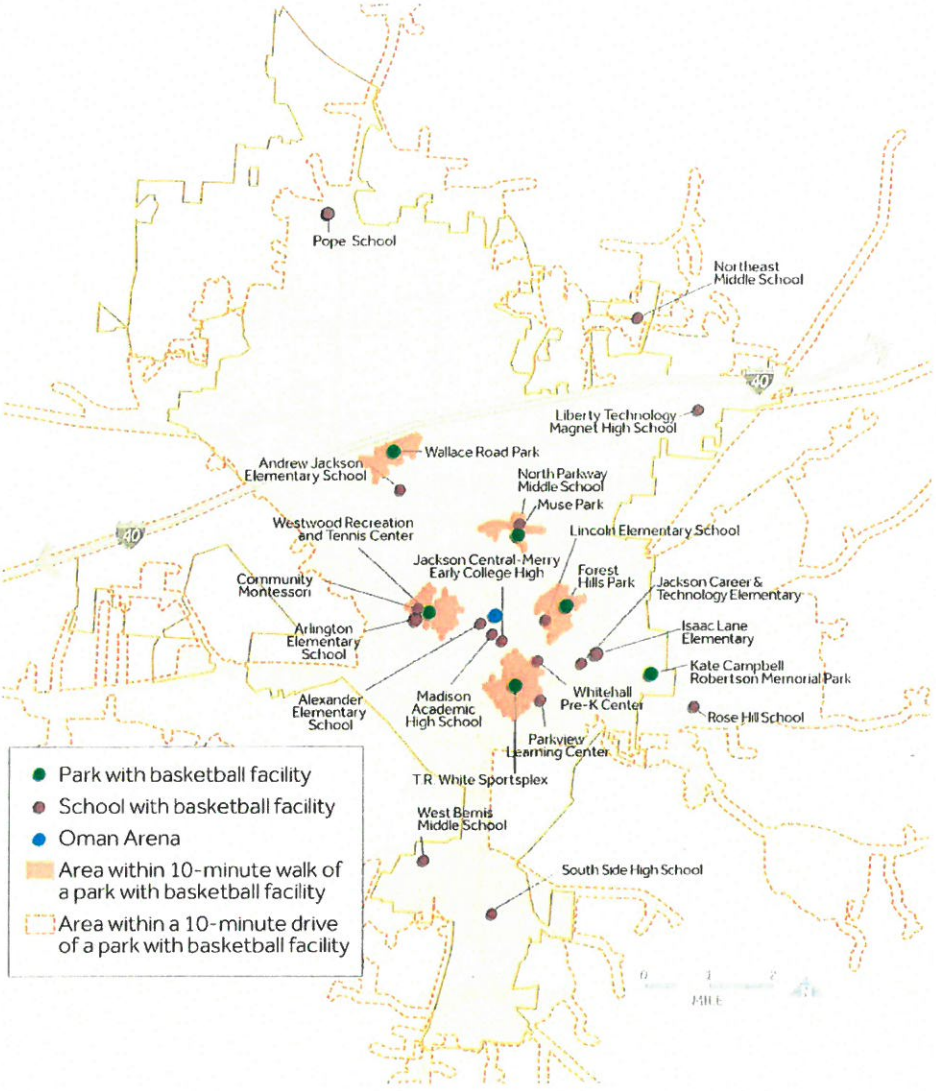
Basketball

The Jackson parks system contains 8 basketball facilities, including 6 outdoor basketball courts and 2 gyms that have amenities for basketball, located at the T.R. White Sportsplex and the Westwood Recreation and Tennis Center. In addition, Jackson Madison County School System has gymnasium and basketball courts in every schools. While Jackson outperforms peer communities within the state, the City is slightly behind national standards, with a deficit of 4 basketball courts.

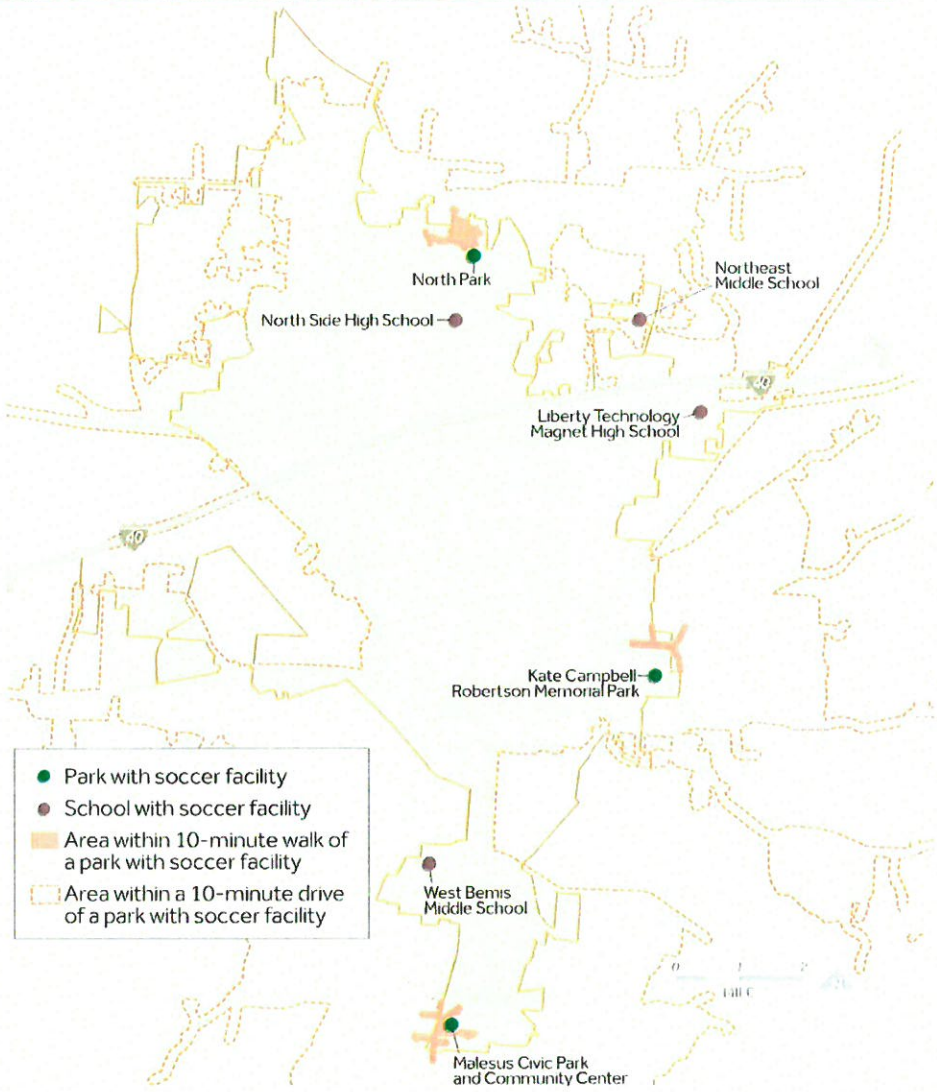
Given the popularity of basketball both nationally and within Jackson, demonstrated by high participation during open hours at recreation centers, the City should pursue the development of additional basketball facilities.

Recommendations

- Seek development of additional basketball courts within Jackson parks, which can include both full courts and half courts as determined appropriate by site design.
- Consider the development of a basketball court within Shirlene Mercer Walking Trail Park, preferably near the northeastern extent of the park which could compliment existing amenities within Centennial Park.



- Explore the feasibility of constructing a basketball court or half court within Bennett Park.
- Dependent on the recommended reconfiguration of Paradise Park, incorporate a basketball court to compliment the indoor facilities at the T.R. White Sportsplex.
- Explore the feasibility of constructing a basketball court or half court at the Arlington Ball Park.
- Consider partnering wth Jackson-Madison County School System to service basketball facility to neighborhoods that lack such facility.



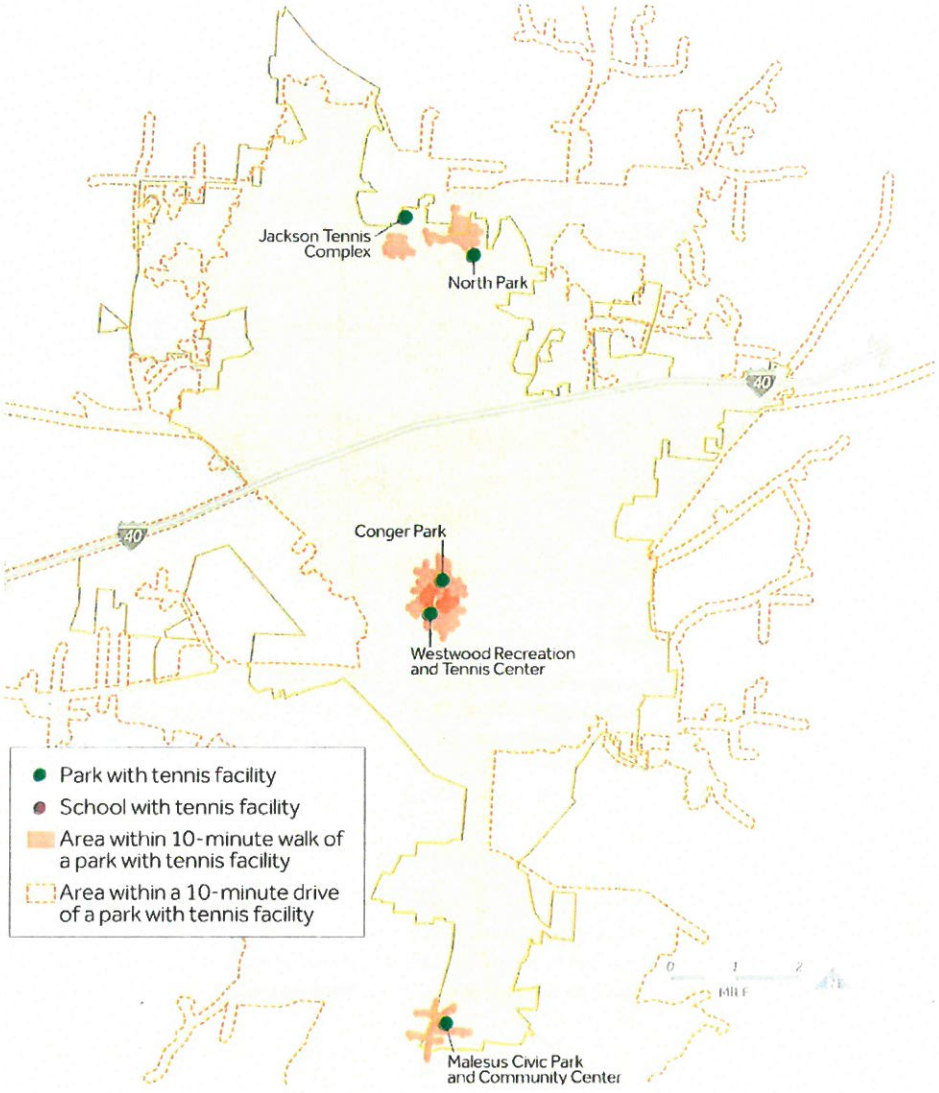
Soccer

The Jackson parks system contains approximately 17 soccer fields; however, variation in sizes for different age groups means that this number can change depending on how spaces are configured. About half of these fields are located at North Park. Overall, the Department provides 2.4 soccer fields per 10,000 residents, which is above NRPA standards by a surplus of roughly 10 soccer fields.

Two organizations provide soccer programming utilizing City soccer fields: Jackson Area Wide Soccer (JAWS) and the Jackson Futbol Club (JFC). While Jackson provides a surplus of well-maintained soccer facilities, growth of the sport within the state of Tennessee may yield a greater demand for soccer amenities in the future.

Recommendations

- Develop additional soccer fields in South and Central Jackson to improve access to soccer programming and reduce overreliance on North Park, which can be a long drive for many residents.
- Explore the feasibility of developing an indoor soccer facility, potentially as part of a new, centrally located recreation center.
- Regularly review existing soccer facilities, with an emphasis on North Park, to consider necessary improvements to reduce flooding, ensure fields are properly let, and continue provide quality soccer amenities.
- Review parking at North Park to consider additional parking needs during peak hours, particularly during tournaments.
- Coordinate with local soccer organizations regarding when fields will be closed, criteria for keeping fields open, and overall length of the season to ensure programs can provide the greatest amount of practice and play time each year.



Tennis

Jackson contains 30 public tennis courts, providing 4.3 courts per 10,000 residents, which is above the national average and more than double tennis facilities in any peer communities. This includes 2 indoor tennis courts at the Westwood Recreation and Tennis Center, as well as 10 courts at the Jackson Tennis Complex in northern Jackson.

Opened in 2015, the Tennis Complex is a state of the art facility that positions Jackson as a key destination for tennis in the state of Tennessee. With phase one complete, additional phases are being considered and could include 9 additional hard courts, 8 indoor courts, and 6 clay courts, as well as youth courts, a stadium court, a proshop, and a pavilion.

Given the significance of this investment, the Department should continue to pursue improvements and expansion of the Jackson Tennis Complex, while complimenting these with enhancements to tennis amenities elsewhere in the community.

Recommendations

- Continue to pursue development of additional phases of the Jackson Tennis Complex.
- Review and consider alterations to the entrance driveway to the Jackson Tennis Complex that will better enable access and mobility for drivers. In particular, considerations should be given for traffic circulation at peak times as the tennis complex grows as a regional destination.
- Review tennis courts at Jackson parks to identify necessary improvements and maintenance to ensure the continued quality of access to tennis amenities.
- Make improvements to ensure the Jackson Tennis Complex is visible and clearly marked within the community, including prominent signage along Highland Avenue and incorporation within wayfinding signage. In particular, work with TDOT to install signage for the Tennis Complex along Interstate 40.
- Ensure tennis court nets are properly installed and maintained, and allow for flexibility in their seasonal removal and setup to maximize their use and availability.
- Market and promote the Jackson Tennis Complex to attract national and international tournaments and related events.

Volleyball

The Parks Department includes two volleyball courts, both located at North Park. Overall, the City is well below national standards for volleyball, with only 0.3 courts per 10,000 residents compared to a national average of 2 per 10,000 residents. This equates to a deficiency of 12 courts from the national trend. Given this deficiency, the Department should seek the development of additional volleyball courts, both at existing parks and facilities as well as appropriately within future development projects.

Recommendations

- Seek development of additional volleyball courts, particularly within community parks which have greater available land for increased programming.
- Consider improvements at applicable recreation centers that could enable conversion of gym spaces to support volleyball programming and gameplay.

Disc Golf

Disc golf is a sport where players throw a disc, similar to a frisbee, at a specific target, usually a basket. The sport plays similar to golf, set up in courses with specific 'holes' or targets. The Park Department maintains one disc golf course located within Muse Park. In recent years, disc golf has seen a huge increase in popularity. The cost of setup and maintenance for disc gold courses are minimal, and they allow for activation of natural areas or open spaces.

Recommendations

- Seek opportunities for additional disc golf courses within the Jackson parks system. While full courses are preferred, abbreviated facilities could act as 'starter' courses for those interested in the sport at smaller parks.
- Explore possibility of developing disc golf facilities in the available area adjacent to the Jackson Tennis Complex.

Inline Hockey

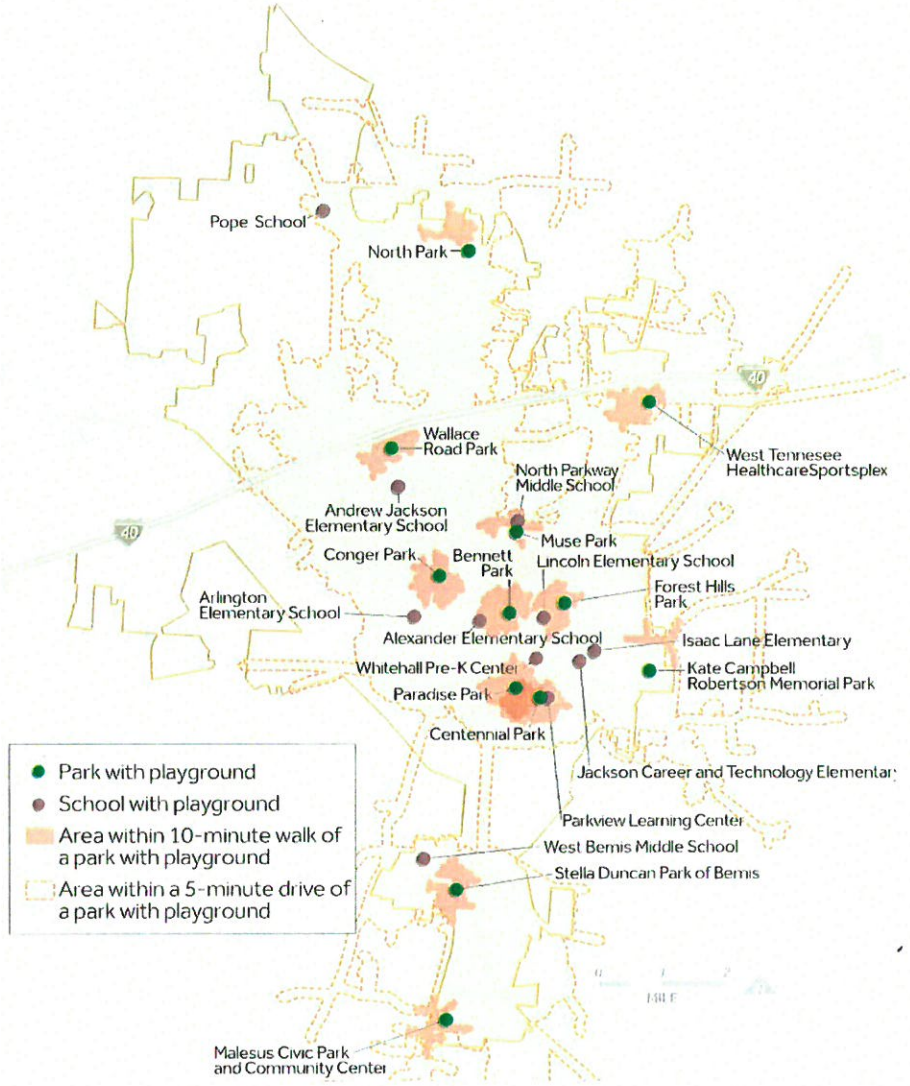
The Department maintains two inline hockey rinks at North Park which support a youth hockey league in Jackson. The league operates for 6 weeks in the spring and 6 weeks in the summer; however, weather conditions in the winter and summer prohibit play in those seasons. Overall, the hockey league has seen a decrease in participation; however, professional ice hockey is growing in popularity nationally and could help support greater interest locally. While new hockey rinks are not in demand at this time, maintenance and increased exposure should help to support and grow the league as a unique and valuable recreational asset within Jackson.

Recommendations

- Include inline hockey amenities and the youth hockey league within the Departments Activity Guide and other promotional and branding materials.
- Work with the youth inline hockey league to identify and make necessary improvements to the facilities at North Park, specifically repairs to fences around the rink and a more secure shed for storage.
- Add lighting amenities to the inline hockey facilities at North park to enable nighttime play.
- Review existing recreation centers to identify facilities that could support indoor hockey, and incorporate amenities to enable indoor hockey within any future recreation center developments.
- Explore methods to reduce the surface heat of inline hockey rinks in North Park which would enable hockey play within the summer months, such as resurfacing or structures that shade the rinks.

FACILITIES

In addition to programmed sports, The Department is also responsible for providing various recreational and cultural programs to residents, accomplished through a variety of facilities. To support this role, an analysis of both existing facilities and those most desired by Jackson residents has been completed. This includes recommendations to assist in meeting the recreational needs of the Jackson community and ensure continued quality of programs and amenities.



Playgrounds

The Recreation & Parks Department maintains 14 playgrounds within Jackson parks spread across the community. These provide recreation for young residents and range greatly in scale, age, and style of development. Many of these amenities utilize woodchips and semi-permanent edging around the playground itself, resulting in run-off and erosion over time. In addition, an additional 22 playgrounds are provided by schools within Jackson. Incorporation and activation of these facilities within the parks system could ensure greater access to playground amenities for the Jackson community.

Recommendations

- Renovate playgrounds within Jackson and develop new playgrounds where necessary within the recreation and parks system.
- Replace temporary or semi-permeant edging and surfacing with permanent infrastructure where applicable, to reduce erosion and runoff of mulch
- Ensure playgrounds are fully accessible to all users via internal pathways and connections.
- Coordinate with local schools and education providers to seek agreements that allow residents to utilize playgrounds on school properties when classes are not in session.

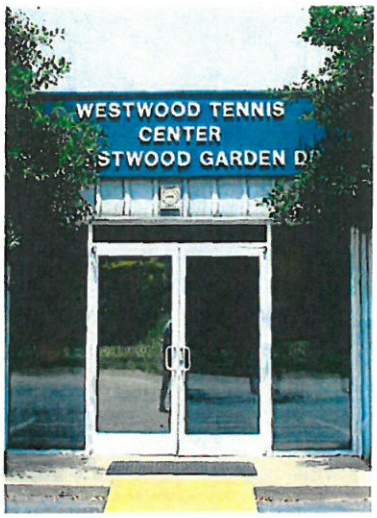
Senior Center

In 2015, Jackson residents advocated for the development of a senior center that would promote the physical and mental health of retired residents above the age of 50. In response to this advocacy, the City conducted a feasibility study for a senior center in 2016. Led by a local steering committee, the feasibility study considered desired programming and services, related operational costs, and potential sites. Overall, the portion of Jackson between Old Hickory Mall and Downtown was considered the best area for a centralized facility. However, while sites were identified, the steering committee was unable to tour and analyze the specific properties. Further, the committee noted these sites as temporary and called for the long-term development of a dedicated facility after at most five years.

Given the importance of this study, as well as continued emphasis through public engagement, the Department should seek long-term development of a dedicated Senior Center. This will require coordination with the Steering Committee to identify a site and ensure necessary programs and services are incorporated within the facility. Further, this may require cooperation with other City departments given the impact of such an undertaking with regards to site requirements and funding.

Recommendations

- Work with the Steering Committee to conduct a more detailed analysis of recommended sites to support a short-term Senior Center. Ultimately, the Department should aim to identify a specific property for the project moving forward.
- Work with the Steering Committee to identify potential locations for a dedicated facility, taking into account building requirements and necessary amenities. This analysis may be best conducted following establishment of a short-term facility, to account for unexpected operating requirements and changes in service needs over time.
- Review existing senior-oriented programming offered by the department to avoid the duplication of services and identify programs that could be consolidated or moved to a future Senior Center.

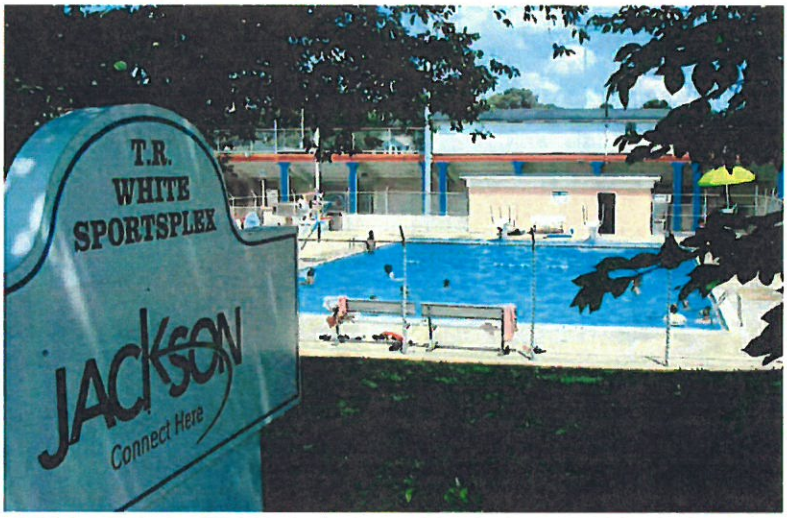


Westwood Recreation and Tennis Center

The Westwood Recreation and Tennis Center provides residents with recreational opportunities and additional amenities, including a gymnasium, exercise room, indoor tennis courts, and outdoor swimming pool as well as meeting and activity rooms, a computer lab, game room, kitchen, and ceramics studio. The Center offers activities for both adults and youth, including gym hours, afterschool and special needs programs, and voice lessons.

Recommendations

- Connect the Westwood Recreation and Tennis Center with the City's sidewalk network to support pedestrian and cycling access to the facility.
- Conduct a regular review of the Westwood Recreation and Tennis Center facilities and amenities to identify necessary improvements, renovations, and maintenance projects to ensure continued quality of service.

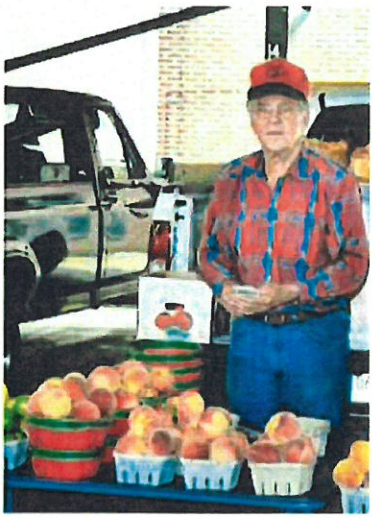


T.R. White Sportsplex

The T.R. White Sportsplex is a multi-use facility that includes a gymnasium, weight room, outdoor pool, and fitness center as well as meeting and classrooms, a computer center, and kitchen spaces. In addition, the facility has an event space that is rentable to the public. The Sportsplex is a valuable recreation opportunity for the surrounding residential neighborhoods, offering exercise classes and well-attended open gym hours, as well as summer youth programs which are in high demand. The age of the facility has been a concern, and may challenge the continued quality of amenities and programming at the Sportsplex. Recently, the Department has made renovations to some elements of the facility.

Recommendations

- Complete a comprehensive study of the Sportsplex to establish a long-term vision which addresses the age of the facility and costs associated with regular maintenance to determine if a new facility should be sought in the future. While the current facility should be maintained, if long-term redevelopment is necessary and preferred, the City should begin the planning process to examine potential sites, costs, and other factors.
- Conduct a regular review of T.R. White Sportsplex facilities and amenities to identify necessary improvements, renovations, and maintenance projects to ensure continued quality of service.
- Explore opportunities to expand summer youth programs or make alterations that would allow the Sportsplex to increase enrollment without affecting quality of service.



West Tennessee Farmers Market

The West Tennessee Farmers Market, opened in 1991, offers Jackson residents access to local vegetables, baked goods, plants, fish, beef, lamb, milk and other products. The market is held in a permanent plaza on the west side of Downtown Jackson and is open year-round on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The Farmers Market is generally well-attended as well as maintained and considered a valuable asset for the Jackson community.

Recommendations

- Consider closing College Street during Farmers Market hours to ensure greater pedestrian safety.
- Continue to maintain the Farmers Market facility and explore on-site improvements that may further improve the pedestrian experience and quality of the event.

Aquatics

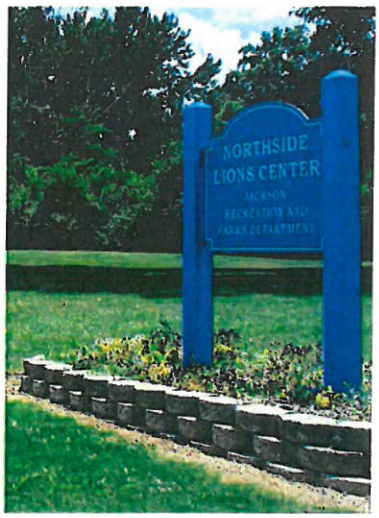
During community outreach and engagement, members of the community expressed that Jackson's aquatics facilities are lacking. The Department operates two outdoor public pools, located at the Westwood Recreation and Tennis Center and the T.R. White Sportsplex.

Because the two public pools are outdoors, they are restricted to seasonal use and dependent upon weather. Additional aquatic amenities are provided by private facilities within the community.

Moving forward, the City should seek the development of additional public pools and amenities to support residents throughout the community with access to aquatic programming. In particular, aquatic amenities should be considered and incorporated within any future recreation or senior center developments, with an emphasis on an indoor pool that could be in use year-round.

Recommendations

- Seek development of public pools in under-served areas of the community, such as North and South Jackson as well as northern neighborhoods within Central Jackson.
- Incorporate public pools or aquatic amenities within any future facility developments, such as a centralized recreation center or senior center.
- Develop splash pads, wading pools, or other low-maintenance aquatic amenities at neighborhood and community parks.
- Explore the feasibility of an indoor pool that can provide year-round aquatic programming and act as a community attraction, particularly for local schools and youth.



Northside Lions Community Center

The Northside Lions Community Center is a single-floor building located adjacent to North Side High School in North Jackson. The Center is unprogrammed and offers no activities, but is available for rent offering a meeting space and kitchen. While well positioned to offer service to North Jackson residents, the size and lack of programming limit the Center's ability to fulfill this role.

Recommendations

- Review amenities at the Northside Lions Community Center to identify potential programming which could be offered at this facility.
- Establish a long-term vision for the Northside Lions Community Center based upon anticipated service needs within North Jackson. If additional programming is desired within the area, redevelopment or expansion of the community center may be necessary to meet this demand.

Bemis Recreation Center

The Bemis Recreation Center contains a ceramic studio and computer lab directly adjacent to the Bemis Mill Village Museum in South Jackson. While well located to serve nearby residents, the size and offered programs at the facility may limit its impact. A review of the facility and establishment of a new vision for its continued use moving forward should be considered.

Recommendations

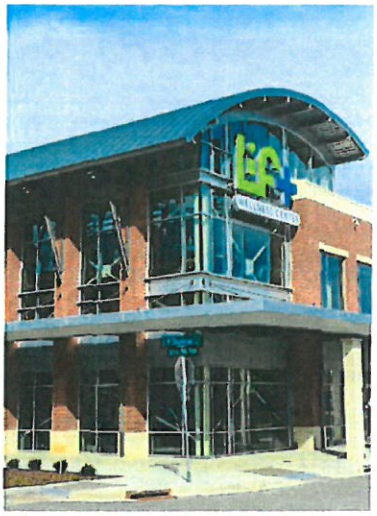
- Analyze usage, hours of operation, and related costs of operating the Bemis Recreation Center, to consider if the facility should be relocated, closed, or re-programmed to best serve the surrounding community.
- If maintained, explore opportunities for expanded service, new programs or amenities, and improved branding that will better mark the center's location within the Bemis area.

N.C. & St. L Depot & Railroad Museum

The Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Depot is a historic structure in Jackson and home to the Railroad Museum, which is operated by the Recreation and Parks Department. The Depot and Railroad Museum, located south of Downtown Jackson, is on the national register of historic places. While well maintained, the Museum is located within an area of Jackson that was greatly affected by the 2003 tornado. As a result, much of the area around the Museum is vacant and sparse.

Recommendations

- Continue to maintain the Railroad Museum, explore on-site improvements to further improve the facility, and identify necessary projects to preserve the historic depot.
- Explore opportunities for annual events or activities that utilize the Railroad Museum and elevate its position within Jackson by drawing residents and visitors to the area.
- Explore opportunities for development of parkland adjacent to the Railroad Museum that could activate vacant land and utilize existing infrastructure. This could help support investment within the area and incorporate railroad elements as a unique branding element.



West Tennessee Healthcare's LiFT Wellness Center

The LiFT Wellness Center was first conceptualized through West Tennessee Healthcare's Living in a Fit Tennessee (LiFT) initiative. The resulting Wellness Center was developed through a partnership with Jackson's Community Redevelopment Authority and Healthy Communities, a development agency that promotes healthy living through lifestyle centers.

The project includes the center, as well as commercial and residential spaces on a site directly northwest of Downtown Jackson. The LiFT is a medical fitness center that offers residents recreational opportunities and operates as an outpatient facility to address wellness, therapy, health, disease management, and weight management.

While not owned or operated by the Department, the LiFT is an extremely valuable resource and amenity for Jackson residents. The Department should continue to support and partner with West Tennessee Healthcare to promote community health and healthy lifestyles within Jackson. This could include opportunities to expand services provided by the LiFT, address underserved areas of the community, and seek improvement projects in Downtown that facilitate a healthy and active urban core.

Downtown Dog Park

The Downtown Dog Park is located on the west side of Downtown Jackson, directly northwest of the West Tennessee Farmers Market and the Amphitheater. The Dog Park provides an enclosed area for owners to take their dogs for recreation and socialization. The Downtown Dog Park is only one of its kind within Jackson, and supports residents within or adjacent to the City's core. However, the lack of public parking limits the service area to those within the immediate vicinity.

Recommendations

- Work with adjacent residential properties to consider opportunities for short-term parking on existing lots that may enable greater access to the Dog Park. In particular, the diagonal parking along Union Avenue may be able to support short-term day parking for dog owners without significantly impacting residences of that property.
- Seek the development of additional dog parks throughout the community to provide dog recreation amenities to all parts of Jackson. This could be achieved through the development of new, dedicated parkland or the incorporation of dog park amenities within existing park sites.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS TABLE

ACTIVITY/ FACILITY	RECOMMENDED SPACE REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMENDED SIZE AND DIMENSIONS	RECOMMENDED ORIENTATION	NO. OF UNITS PER CAPITA	SERVICE RADIUS	LOCATION NOTES
Badminton	1620 sq. ft.t	Singles – 17'x44' Doubles – 20'x44'	Long axis north-south	1 per 5000	¼ -1/2 mile	Usually in school, recreation center or church facility. Safe walking or bike access.
Basketball (youth)	2400-3036 sq. ft.	46-50'x84'	Long axis north-south	1 per 5000	¼ - ½ mile	Same as badminton. Outdoor courts in neighborhood and community parks, plus active recreation areas in other park settings, with 5' unobstructed space on all sides
Basketball (high school)	5040-7280 sq. ft.	50'x84'				
Handball (4-wall)	800 sq. ft.	20'x40' – Minimum of 10' to rear of 3-wall court. Minimum 20' overhead clearance	Long axis north-south.	1 per 20,000	15-30 minute travel time	4-wall usually indoor as part of multi-purpose facility.
Ice Hockey (Indoor)	22,000 sq. ft. including support area	Rink 85'x200' (minimum 85'x185') Additional 5000 sq. ft. support area	Long axis north-south if outdoor	1 per 100,000	½ - 1 hour travel time	
Ice Hockey (Outdoor)				Outdoor – depends on climate		Climate important consideration affecting no. of units. Best as part of multi-purpose facility.
Tennis	7,200 sq. ft. single court (minimum); 2 acres for complex	36'x78'. 12' clearance on both sides; 21' clearance on both ends.	Long axis north –south	1 court per 2000	¼-1/2 mile	Best in batteries of 2-4. Located in neighborhood/community park or adjacent to school
Volleyball	4,000 sq. ft. (minimum)	30'X60'. Minimum 6' clearance on all sides	Long axis north-south	1 per 5000	¼ - ½ mile	Same as other court activities (e.g. badminton)
Baseball (Official)	3.0-3.85 acres (minimum)	Baselines – 90' Pitching distance 60 ½' foul lines – min. 320' Center field – 400'+	Locate home plate to pitcher throwing across sun and batter not facing it. Line from home plate through pitchers mound run east-north-east.	1 per 5000		Part of neighborhood complex. Lighted fields part of community complex.
Baseball (Little League)	1.2 acres (minimum)	Baselines – 60'; Pitching distance – 46' Foul lines – 200' Center field – 200' – 250'	Locate home plate to pitcher throwing across sun and batter not facing it. Line from home plate through pitchers mound run east-north-east.	1/3000; Lighted 1 per 30,000	¼ - ½ mile	

ACTIVITY/ FACILITY	RECOMMENDED SPACE REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMENDED SIZE AND DIMENSIONS	RECOMMENDED ORIENTATION	NO. OF UNITS PER CAPITA	SERVICE RADIUS	LOCATION NOTES
Softball	1.5 to 2.0 acres	"Baselines – 60 ' Pitching distance- 46' min. 40' for women;. Fast pitch field: Radius from Plate – 225'; Between foul Lines. Slow Pitch – 275' (men); 250' (women)"	Same as baseball	1 per 5,000 (if also used for youth baseball)	¼ - ½ mile	Slight differences in dimensions for 16" slow pitch. May also be used for youth baseball.
Soccer	1.7 – 2.1 acres	195' to 225'x330' to 360' with a minimum 10' clearance all sides.	Same as field hockey.	1 per 10,000	1-2 miles	Number of units depends on popularity. Youth soccer on smaller fields adjacent to schools or neighborhood parks.
¼ Mile Running Track	4.3 acres	Overall width – 276' Length – 600.02' Track width for 8 to 4 lanes is 32'.	Long axis in sector from north to south to north-west-south-east with finish line at northerly end.	1 per 20,000	15-30 minutes travel time	Usually part of high school, or in community park complex in combination with football, soccer, etc.
Multiple Recreation Court (basketball, volleyball, tennis)	9, 840 sq. ft.	120' x 80'	Long axis of courts with primary use is north-south	1 per 10,000	1-2 miles.	
Trails	N/A	Well defined head maximum 10' width, maximum average grade is 5% not to exceed 15%. Capacity rural trails – 40 hikers/ day/mile. Urban trails – 90 hikers/day/mile.	N/A	1 system per region	N/A	
Swimming Pools (Teaching)	Varies on size of pool and amenities. Usually ½ to 2 A site.	minimum of 25 yards x 45' even depth of 3 to 4 ft.	None-although care must be taken in siting of lifeguard stations in relation to afternoon sun.	1 per 20,000	15 to 30 minutes travel time	Pools for general community use should be planned for teaching, competitive and recreational purposes with enough depth (3.4m) to accommodate 1m and 3m diving boards. Located in community park or school site.

TRAILS PLAN

The Trails Plan defines goals, objectives, and specific recommendations for the City of Jackson to assist in development of a more complete trail network that offers residents opportunities to get active, greater accessibility to parks and facilities, and alternatives to motorized transportation. The Plan includes both high-level goals for trails and related infrastructure as well as considerations for regional trail projects and trail design and development.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

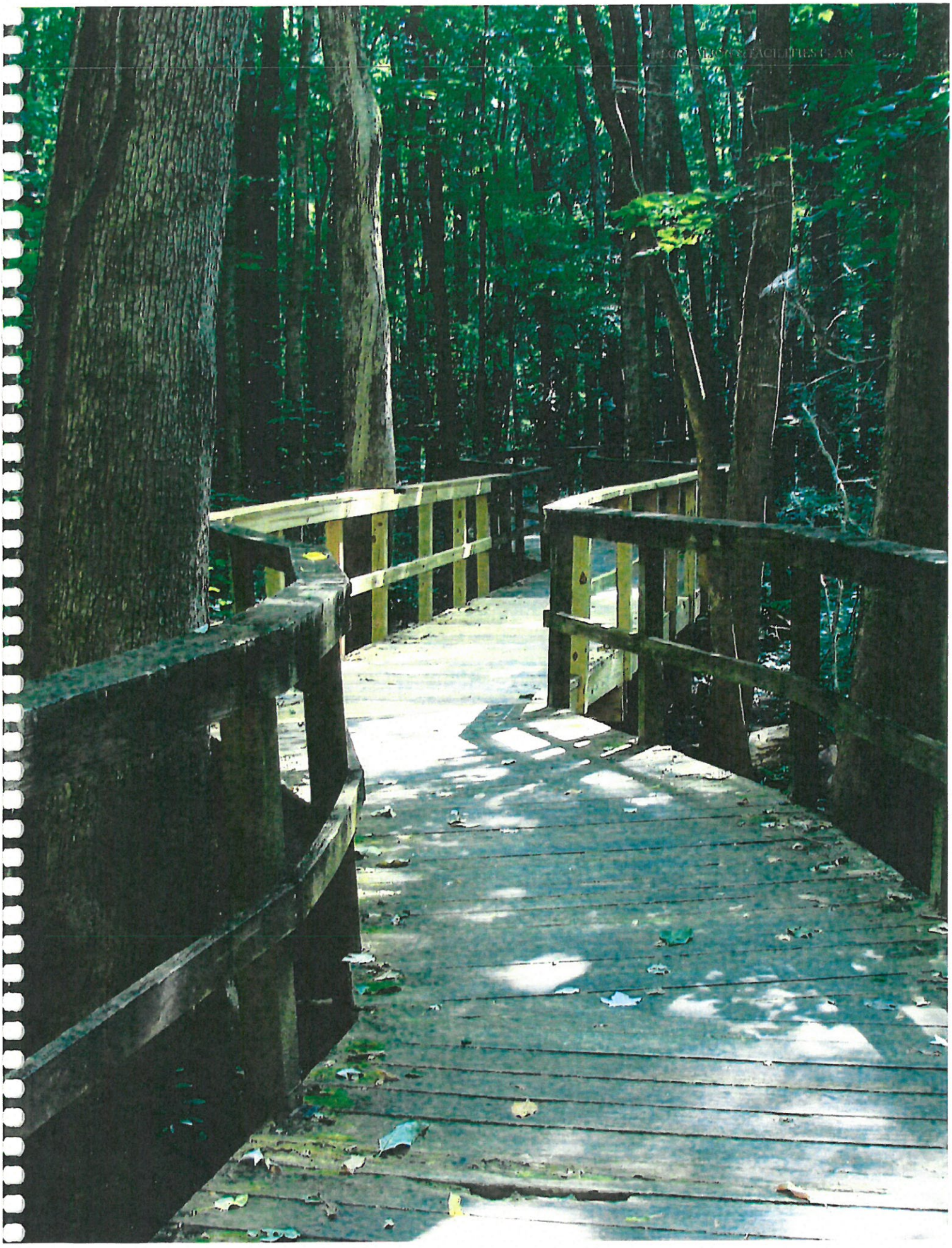
The following goals provide high-level direction for Trails within the Jackson community, based upon a review of existing and proposed trails, bike paths, and related infrastructure both within Jackson parks, the Jackson community, and in adjacent areas. Each goal is supported by detailed objectives which offer more specific actions that should be undertaken to advance toward achieving that goal.

Goal 1

Establish a comprehensive trail system that enables improved access to parks and facilities while offering unique recreational opportunities.

Objectives

- Seek construction of additional trails, pathways, bike lanes, and infrastructure to support pedestrian and bicycle mobility and improved access to recreational opportunities.
- Seek establishment of trails or designated routes that support north-south access.
- Coordinate with necessary City Departments to improve pedestrian and bicycle access across I-40, with considerations for construction of dedicated pedestrian bridges incorporated within trail routes.
- Regularly review proposed and existing trails to identify opportunities to complete the network through extensions, modifications, and new trails.
- Coordinate with necessary City Departments to ensure that bike lanes, sidewalks, and related infrastructure for pedestrian and bicycle mobility are appropriately incorporated within future roadway improvement projects.
- Develop connections between internal trail systems in Jackson's parks to the City's sidewalk network, adjacent residential areas, and important community destinations.
- Partner with State and Regional agencies to connect the Jackson trail system with nearby regional trails, greenways, and routes.



Goal 2

Support a walking and biking culture that utilizes local trails to get active and stay healthy.

Objectives

- Collaborate with bicycle advocacy groups and partner organizations to promote bicycle awareness and inform residents about the bicycle network and benefits of non-motorized transportation.
- Partner with local employers to develop a 'bike to work' program that encourages non-motorized transportation and supports trail investment.
- Activate existing and future trails through the incorporation of trail heads, wayfinding signage, landscaping, and other improvements that will elevate the appearance and visibility of trails and designated routes.
- Explore opportunities for events and activities that utilize the trail network and create greater awareness of trail amenities, such as a half marathon or themed community walk.
- Establish branding for individual trails, circuits, or trail systems that helps to mark their location and path as well as highlights unique natural or environmental features along the routes.
- Partner with local organizations, such as West Tennessee Healthcare, to promote active, healthy lifestyles in Jackson.
- Partner with other City Departments and potentially West Tennessee Healthcare to develop a community health plan or strategy to address health and promote healthy lifestyles within Jackson.

TRAILS SYSTEM

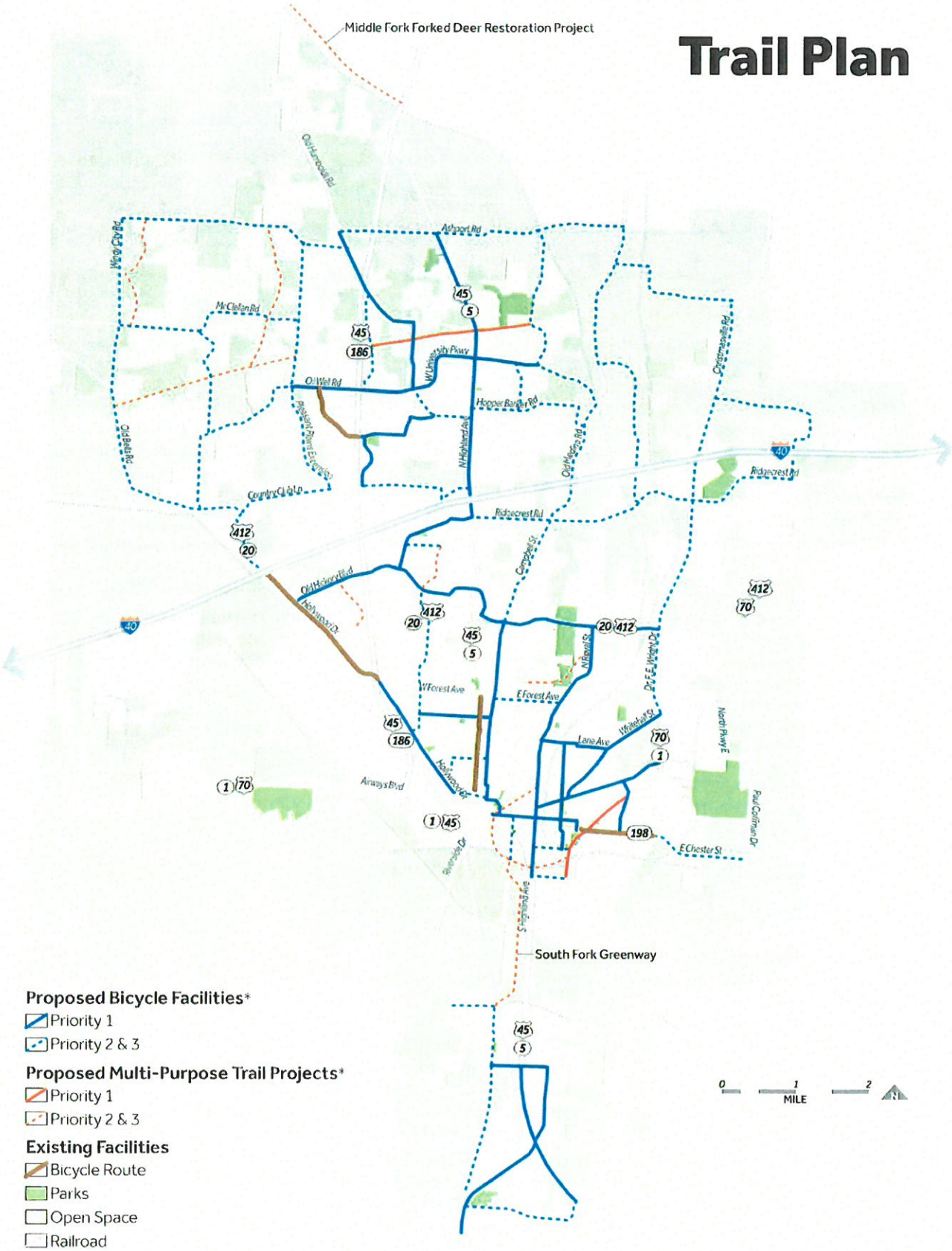
Trails within Jackson are largely limited to walking paths and pedestrian connections located within individual parks, and a small network of bike trails, largely composed of on-street bike lanes. While these support programming and mobility internally, the lack of additional trails limits recreational opportunities and access between residential areas and the specific park facilities. In many cases, particularly for community parks, this results in auto-orientation which requires that individuals drive to access parkland. The Jackson 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan proposes a more complete network of bike trails and multi-purpose trails. However, opportunities for multi-purpose trails are limited, and the majority of the network is comprised of on-street bike lanes which support cycling transportation rather than recreation or pedestrian mobility.

Given the nature of trail infrastructure and development, new routes and pathways can be difficult to create. Often, trails require long-term planning to account for land acquisition, design, and construction. As such, the Department should establish a regular process to review proposed trails and explore opportunities for new trail extensions and projects. This will require coordination within other City departments, officials, residents, and business owners to support and actively seek development of new trails through long-term projects.

Recommendations

- Work with necessary City departments to seek development of proposed bicycle and multi-purpose trails and incorporate trail infrastructure within future public works projects as opportunities arise.
- Review bicycle trails proposed by the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan to examine the potential to incorporate multi-purpose trails or amenities that support pedestrian mobility along these routes.
- Review and make necessary improvements to aging or dilapidated trail systems within Jackson Parks.
- Seek development of the multi-purpose trail proposed along the utility line between Old Bells Road and Cooper Anderson Road. This should include a connection to North Park and coordination with necessary City departments and property owners to bridge the gap between Pleasant Plains Road and North Star Drive.
- Extend the internal trail system at North Park that currently ends near the playgrounds to connect with programming, residential areas, and Highland Avenue to the west.
- Explore opportunities to create a dedicated route between North Park and the Jackson Tennis Center.
- Seek development of the proposed multi-use trail that would connect Muse Park and Tobe Bailey Park.
- Create a designated route or connection between internal trail systems at Centennial Park and Shirlene Mercer Walking Trail Park.
- Develop a former trail using the existing alleyway from Wallace Road Park south to Cambrian Way.
- Explore opportunities to create a designated, multi-purpose route that connects the West Tennessee Healthcare Sportsplex with residential areas of the community.

Trail Plan



Proposed Bicycle Facilities*
- Priority 1
- Priority 2 & 3

Proposed Multi-Purpose Trail Projects*
- Priority 1
- Priority 2 & 3

Existing Facilities
- Bicycle Route
- Parks
- Open Space
- Railroad

**As outlined in the Jackson 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan*

Prepared by Houseal Lavigne Associates

Jackson Walk

One of the most successful existing trails within Jackson is the 1.5 mile fitness trail through Downtown Jackson. The trail is part of Jackson Walk, a lifestyle center developed by West Tennessee Healthcare in partnership with Healthy Communities, a development agency that focuses on promoting healthy living. The trail connects the LiFT Wellness Center with Downtown Jackson as well as the Farmers Market, the dog park, and the Amp. Moving forward, the Department should continue to support the Jackson Walk and consider future improvements that can help promote this valuable amenity. Further, the Department should explore new opportunities to partner with West Tennessee Healthcare and other groups to promote active, healthy lifestyles within Jackson.

REGIONAL TRAIL PROJECTS

The West Tennessee River Basin Authority is currently pursuing two projects that would provide additional trails and open space within the Jackson region. This includes:

- ***Middle Fork Forked Deer Restoration Project***
  The Middle Fork Forked Deer Stream and Floodplain Restoration Project was initiated in 2015 to address flooding within the region. The project will create man-made wetlands to help store overflow stormwater within the area, incorporated with a variety of recreational amenities. This includes hiking and biking trails, boardwalks, wildlife viewing areas, interpretive kiosks, canoe access, fishing piers and restroom facilities. The project has been designed and partially funded and could be completed as early as 2019.
- ***South Fork Greenway***
  The South Fork Greenway is a rails to trails conversion project that would connect Downtown Jackson to the Bemis community in South Jackson. The Greenway would be roughly 3.5 miles long and include a trail for walking, running and biking. Given a number of natural and man-made barriers, the trail project includes considerations for bridges and underpasses, as well as assisting with flood mitigation through the construction of a levee and reconstruction of the Bemis Dam.

Both projects represent significant investments that will benefit the Jackson community; they should be supported and further capitalized upon. Working with the West Tennessee River Basin Authority, the Department should identify potential trailheads and connections that will ensure adjacent neighborhoods, as well as the City as a whole, have access to these amenities. As the City seeks development of additional trails and routes, these and any future regional trails should be considered and incorporated as appropriate.

The Department should work with appropriate City Departments to make improvements and extensions to the sidewalk network that will better improve access to regional trails and amenities. In addition, regional trails should be included within wayfinding signage for City trails and bike routes, as well as in promotional or informational materials developed by the Department.

TRAIL CONSIDERATIONS

The design and construction of trails and pedestrian infrastructure is essential to creating a safe and quality trail experience in Jackson. Careful management of trail design can help encourage residents to utilize these facilities and create greater awareness of their location. Given that the City has few established trails, this provides the opportunity to thoughtfully review trail projects and ensure future investment is high quality and best positioned to contribute to a high quality of life in Jackson. Moving forward, the City should review and apply the following considerations to serve as guidelines for the planning and designing of trails and related facilities.

Road Crossings

Although intersections between trails and roadways should be minimized, road crossings are often necessary, particularly in developed communities like Jackson.

Overall, road crossings should be clearly marked to indicate right-of-way and ensure safety for all users. Crossings should be controlled, either by a traffic control signal, stop signs, or yield signs that emphasize the presence of pedestrians and cyclists and designate right-of-way. Sightlines, visibility, and stopping distances from nearby intersections must be considered, and where appropriate crossings can be incorporated within existing traffic controlled intersections.

For roadways with high vehicular traffic volumes, pedestrian-activated signals and pedestrian refuge medians should be considered to ensure necessary safety. Grade-separated crossings, such as pedestrian bridges or underpasses, may be necessary on roadways with very high vehicular traffic volumes and high traffic speeds.

Trailheads

Trailheads are points that support ease of access to trail amenities, and can be located where a trail begins or along a route to create a 'starting point' for users. These facilities maximize access and awareness of trail systems and can offer amenities to improve the user experience, such as gateway and wayfinding signage, seating, rest areas, restrooms, and water fountains.

Trailheads are best positioned in areas where access is most beneficial, such as near existing parks, residential areas, and commercial centers. Though not necessary, basic parking amenities are recommended to allow a higher degree of access and incorporation within the transportation system.

As trails and pedestrian amenities are developed within Jackson, trailheads should be incorporated as appropriate to ensure improved access, with a focus on connections to residential neighborhoods.

Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding signage is critical to both create awareness of nearby trails and amenities as well as providing direction for those traveling along the trail itself. Further, signage can help educate users about the trail, provide direction on usage and trail safety, and create a distinct brand or character for the trail.

Wayfinding signs should be located to direct individuals to trailheads and mark the trail where intersecting with roadways, sidewalks, or other elements of the transportation system. In addition, wayfinding signage should be located periodically along individual trails to reassure users of their location, provide safety warnings where necessary, and indicate distances and routes to various destinations.

Signage at trailheads should act as a gateway to the trail itself, creating a brand for the trail and providing more detailed information as necessary.