
chapter one: existing conditions

project setting

Little Rock, the capitol city of Arkansas, is situated along the Arkansas River in the center of the state. At the junction of five major physiographic regions, Little Rock boasts a variety of landscape characteristics. From rolling hills in the west as the Ouachitas begin their ascent, to the Mississippi River delta and Arkansas River valley in the east and north, the city possesses a distinctive character. Although Little Rock's population is a modest 183,000, it serves a metropolitan area of over half of a million people. The city offers a diverse range of parks with an abundance of recreational opportunities. Nearby state parks include Pinnacle Mountain State Park, the Toltec Mounds State Park, and the Plantation Agricultural Museum, all within twenty miles of downtown Little Rock.

The existing parks system in Little Rock encompasses nearly 5,800 acres of land, half of which has been developed for active and passive recreation uses. The remainder includes sizeable holdings of undeveloped areas, such as the Fourche Creek Bottoms, Gillam Park, and Two Rivers Park.

existing parks and recreation system

Although located amid a beautiful wooded topography, Little Rock's pattern of open space is largely defined by its extensive system of floodplains, steep slopes, and undeveloped land. The majority of publicly accessible open space is located within the city's parks; many of which are sited along or within these floodplains and steep slopes.

The City of Little Rock's park system is diverse in the recreation types it provides and the setting in which its parks are located, see Figure 1.1. Older sections of the city have a more traditional parks system containing primarily smaller neighborhood parks within the lot and block pattern of the city. These parks are distributed in a somewhat even pattern. Larger parks emerge predominately in the early suburban areas of the city. Generally located greater distances apart, these parks often provide both neighborhood and community park services. The outer-most areas of the city severely lack public park facilities. These areas have experienced explosive growth over the last two decades, and public parks have not kept up with the outward expansion. Additionally, parks and facilities in older neighborhoods are generally in worse condition than parks and facilities in newer areas of the city.



Arkansas State Capitol Building



Playground at War Memorial Park



Rebsamen Tennis Center at University Park



MacArthur Park was the city's first park.



Allsopp Park was established in 1927.



Boyle Park was deeded to the City in 1929.

Due to Little Rock's topography and well-defined drainage system, the city has many opportunities for park and open space lands. Open space is either publicly or privately owned, and generally provides informal recreational services, such as hiking and biking. Such open space opportunities are explored as a part of this plan.

Public open space generally serves five different functions:

- Parks and recreational uses
- Conservation of natural resources (not necessarily for public use)
- Public health and safety (protection of steep slopes, floodways, etc.)
- Growth management and aesthetics to balance urban sprawl and prevent cost of extensive infrastructure
- Farmland and forestry

History of the Little Rock Parks System

Lands for public use have existed in Little Rock since the 1840s. Small beer gardens started by the German settlers were first established, followed by larger, more elaborate parks designated by the business community. Over time these "publicly-owned" parks would be closed and subdivided, particularly as the City grew and land became more valuable.

Little Rock's first publicly-owned park was City Park, now known as MacArthur Park. Initially, this was the City's Fort (since 1840) and was deeded to the City by the Federal Government in exchange for 1,000 acres that today comprises Fort Roots (north of the City). The second true park was Fair Park, now known as War Memorial Park, which initially housed the State Fair Grounds and was established as a city park in 1925.

In 1913, the prominent landscape architect John Nolen prepared the city's first park system master plan. His ambitious and farsighted plan guided the early development of the park system. His vision is apparent in the site location and creation of Allsopp, Boyle, Rebsamen, East Little Rock, Gillam, Fourche Creek, and Riverfront parks.

Allsopp Park was established in the Pulaski Heights section of the city in 1927 when Frederick Allsopp offered the land and commissioned a park master plan. John Nolen, creator of the 1913 master plan, was hired to design the park. This was followed by the donation of Boyle Park, which was deeded to the City by John F. Boyle in 1929, shortly after the crash of the stock market.

The great depression and subsequent establishment of the National Recovery System (NRS) brought about tremendous improvements to the municipal park system. By 1939, Little Rock had

a functioning zoo, its first municipal golf course, picnic shelters, miles of trails and numerous other improvements. Most of the work was completed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Even with this system, parks were still operated by the Public Works Department, until the Department of Parks and Recreation was formed in 1944.

Little Rock has experienced rapid growth from the 1960s to today. Parks were built in many early suburban neighborhoods, however developments which occurred since the 1970s and 80s have few parks owned and maintained by the city. Today the organization holds nearly 5800 acres of park lands in 64 park parcels (53 of which are developed) throughout the city.

Periodic preparation of park plans were compiled in 1963, 1967, 1971, and 1983. Not all of these plans were embraced by the citizens of Little Rock, resulting in low levels of public awareness and support, as well as inadequate implementation.



Unorganized play and passive recreation



Team sports and active recreation



Open space for passive recreation, conservation, and education

Summary of Existing Parks

The Little Rock parks system includes several parks and recreational types, which this plan addresses:

- **Land** for informal play and passive recreation
- **Facilities** for team sports and active recreation
- **Open space** for passive recreation, education, and conservation
- Linear space for **trail networks**
- Recreational and cultural **programs**
- **Implementation** strategies

The current parks system consists of approximately 5800 acres of land. Of that, roughly 2000 acres are currently undeveloped, while 3200 acres are within developed parks, see Figure 1.1, Table 1.2, and Table 1.3.

The parks system contains regional, community, neighborhood, and mini parks. Regional parks are greater than fifty acres in size and serve recreational needs of the entire city and other nearby populations. Community parks are smaller (twenty to fifty acres in size) and may include sports fields, open play areas, and specialty facilities. Neighborhood parks are often less than 20 acres in size and serve a smaller area, typically adjacent neighborhoods. These parks contain playgrounds, practice fields, and smaller play areas and courts. Mini

parks are less than five acres in size, and are often limited to playgrounds and courts. Little Rock's system of developed parks contains approximately 2350 acres of regional parks, 370 acres of community parks, 150 acres of neighborhood parks, and 25 acres of mini parks. Current special facilities (War Memorial, Riverfront and the River Market, Terry Mansion, and Stephens Community Center) comprise approximately 275 acres.

Little Rock's undeveloped park land is largely comprised of the Fourche Creek bottoms, 1700 acres of swamps and wetlands surrounded by the city. Additional undeveloped park land can be found in west Little Rock, primarily located on unbuildable slopes, as well as in portions of Hindman and Gillam.

Table 1.2: Inventory of Developed Parks

	Playground	Basketball Pad	Volleyball	Tennis Court	Soccer Field	Practice/Active Rec	Football Field	Lighted Softball	Practice Softball	Lighted Baseball	Practice Baseball	Community Center	Pool	Restrooms	Pavilion	Fishing/Boat Launch	Picnic	Path/Trail (miles)	Golf Course (# holes)	Community Garden	Parking	Location	Acreage	Total Acres (by category)	Total Parks
Large Urban Parks (50 acres+)																									
Allsopp	1			2						1				1	1		6	2				Cantrell & Cedar Hill	150.0		
Boyle ¹	2	2			1									1	3		48	2				36th & Boyle Park Rd.	243.0		
Gillam	1	1		1									1		1							Gillam Park Rd.	350.0		
Hindman Golf																				18	Y	Brookview Dr./end of 65th St.	190.0		
Interstate		2			2		2	6						2	1		6	0.8				Arch near I-30	71.0		
Jack Stephens Youth Golf Academy																				18		6620 Falls Blvd.	250.0		
Murray ²	2		6		2									3	8	1	34	2				Rebsamen Park Rd.	166.0		
Otter Creek	1				4	1									1	1	3					Stagecoach Rd.	147.0		
Rebsamen Golf																			2	27	Y	3400 Rebsamen Park Rd.	380.0		
Reservoir	1	1		2						1				1	1		9					Hwy. 10 & Jackson Reservoir	58.0		
Two Rivers ³						2													2		1	County Farm Rd.	340.0	2345.0	11
Community Parks (20-50 acres)																									
Benny Craig	1			2						1				1			8					Gum Springs & Rosemoore	22.0		
Brodie Creek ⁴	1	1															2	0.5				Tall Timber Blvd.	44.0		
Curran Conway ⁵	1					1				1				1							1	24th & Monroe	25.0		
East Little Rock	3	2		3						2		1	1	1			10					6th & Townsend	30.0		
Hindman Community	1	1		1						1					1	1	4					Brookview Dr./end of 65th St.	20.0		
Kanis ⁶	2	2	2	2						1					1	1	19	0.8				Rodney Parham & Mississippi	46.0		
Knoop ⁷																	2	0.8				Ozark Point	45.0		
Morehart	1	2		2						1				1	1		6	0.5				Mabelvale Cut-off Rd. & 4th St.	43.0		
Rommel	1				1		1								1	1						I-440 & Lindsey Rd.	27.0		
Southwest Complex					1							1	1									6401 Baseline, Suite A	38.0		
University ⁸	1			17													12					12th & Leisure Lane	27.0	367.0	11
Neighborhood Parks (5-20 acres)																									
Barton										1				1								Roosevelt Rd. & Dennison St.	5.0		
Butler	1			1							1			1			6					Rodney Parham & Old Forge	7.0		
Dunbar ⁹	1			2						1	1						1				1	16th & Chester	6.0		
Granite Heights	1			1							1			1			2					38th & Confederate Blvd.	10.0		
Kiwanis	1	2													1	1	4	0.3				Foster & 42nd St.	12.0		
Meriwether	1			2						1				1			1	0.5				"M" & Florida	10.0		
Ottenheimer	1	1		1							1	1					4					Dahlia & Azalea	11.0		
Pankey	1	1															3					Russ & Piggee Sts.	5.0		
Pinedale Cove	1																1						5.0		

Table 1.2, continued

	Playground	Basketball Pad	Volleyball	Tennis Court	Soccer Field	Practice/Active Rec	Football Field	Lighted Softball	Practice Softball	Lighted Baseball	Practice Baseball	Community Center	Pool	Restrooms	Pavilion	Fishing/Boat Launch	Picnic	Path/Trail (miles)	Golf Course (# holes)	Community Garden	Parking	Location	Acreage	Total Acres (by category)	Total Parks	
Neighborhood Parks (5-20 acres)	(continued)																									
Rebsamen Parkway ¹⁰																		3				Rebsamen Parkway	30.0			
Richland	1																					Richland Dr.	5.0			
Southside	1	1				1								1				3				Whitmore Cir.	13.0			
Swaggerty		2																				33rd & Fulton	6.0			
Thom	1					1												2	0.3			Eva Lane	7.0			
Wakefield	1	1		1						1				1			1	0.3				Fisher & Woodson	10.0			
West End	1	1								1				1	1		7					36th & Potter	10.0			
																									152.0	16
Mini-Parks (under 5 acres)																										
Birchwood	1	1																				Birchwood & Creek Cir.	3.0			
Centennial	1	2		1										1			1					15th & Wolfe	2.0			
Cheatem	1	2				1											3					6th & Kimball	2.0			
Fletcher	1	1				1											2					I-630 & Woodrow	2.0			
Granite Mountain		2										1										#1 Granite Mountain Cir.	2.0			
Hanger Hill	2	2		1													6					12th & Hanger	2.0			
Ninth Street	1	2																				9th & Pulaski	3.0			
Oak Forest	1																					14th & Pierce	1.0			
Pettaway	1	1															2					21st & Commerce	1.0			
Prospect Terrace	1	1															3					"L" & Tyler	4.0			
South Little Rock	1			2							1											2701 S. Main	2.0			
																									24.0	11
Special Facilities																										
MacArthur ¹¹	1			2										1	1			0.5			Y	9th & McMath	39.0			
Riverfront ¹²	1													1	2		9	1			Y	LaHarpe Blvd. & Markham	33.0			
Terry Mansion ¹³																						7th & Rock Sts.	2.0			
War Memorial ¹⁴	1			6						1			1	1	1		29	1.3	18		Y	Markham & Fair Park	202.0			
Stephens Community Center ¹⁵											1												0.0			
																									276.0	5
Totals	47	37	8	52	11	7	4	6	0	15	3	7	4	25	26	4	259	20.6	81	3	0		3164.0	3164.0	54	

¹ Historic Register Site
² Leased from Corps of Engineers
³ County (600 acres) and City shared park
⁴ Open Space Preserve
⁵ Ballfield and restroom leased to UALR

⁶ Skateboard Park
⁷ Leased from Water Department
⁸ Adult Leisure Center and Tennis Pro Shop
⁹ Community garden property leased from LRSD
¹⁰ Includes Jimerson Creek area

¹¹ Museum, Art Center
¹² Amphitheatre, History Pavilion and River Market
¹³ Decorative Arts Museum
¹⁴ Zoo, Fitness Center and Golf Course
¹⁵ 12,850 s.f. facility with gym, classrooms, office space

Major features within the parks system of Little Rock

Boyle Park

Boyle Park was donated to the City in 1929 for the creation of a municipal park. It is suspected that US Senator Joe T. Robinson requested assistance from the National Park Service and the State of Arkansas to design and develop the park. Boyle Park features structures built by the CCC and WPA. This 240-acre park boasts a unique natural setting, ideal for hiking and mountain biking on the numerous wooded trails that loop throughout. The park is surrounded by middle income housing and apartments just minutes away from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Allsopp Park

This historic park was conceptually designed by prominent Cambridge landscape architect and planner John Nolen, who recommended that the land be used as a park in his 1913 Parks Plan for Little Rock. In 1931 Nolen created a general design plan for Allsopp Park based on his ideas from the 1913 plan and the wishes of Frederick Allsopp – the English poet and author who sold the property to the City for \$10,000 in 1927. The 150-acre park offers an oasis within the city, offering both undeveloped land for passive recreation and unorganized play, as well as a range of park amenities within the developed areas of the park. The Arkansas Chapter or the American

Society of Landscape Architects awarded the national status of Medallion Park upon Allsopp at a ceremony on the Promenade in 1999.

MacArthur Park

The first municipal park in Little Rock, MacArthur Park, is recovering from a devastating tornado that destroyed nearly half of its mature trees and damaged the historic Arsenal building, which houses the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History. It is also home to the Contemplation Garden, Cenotaph Playground, the Annex, and Arkansas Arts Center.

Gillam Park

Gillam Park contains a rare igneous geology (nepheline syenite granite) which supports a unique system of interspersed glades, woodlands, and forests, as well as wildlife. As a result, the park has been designated as an “ecologically imperiled” site by the Nature Conservancy. The surrounding neighborhood consists primarily of low income and subsidized housing residences. The pool, which is used heavily in the summer months, and the active recreation area occupy a small area of the overall park.



Spring house at Boyle Park



Promenade at Allsopp Park



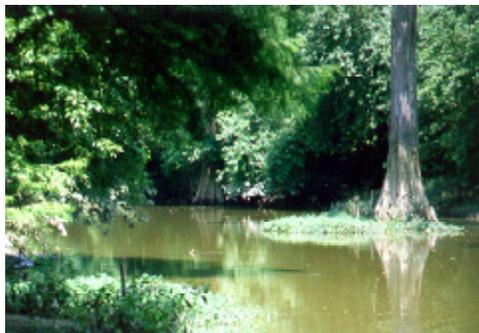
MacArthur Park



Playground at Gillam Park



Hindman Golf Course



Fourche Creek

Hindman Park & Golf Course

Hindman Park and Golf Course are situated in a unique ecologically setting of low wetland areas teeming with wildlife and riparian vegetation adjacent to hilly terrain that challenges even the most experienced golfers. The 103-acre, 18 hole golf course has been designated as an “Audubon Certified Wildlife Sanctuary.” The park, adjacent to the golf course, features a pavilion, ball field, and restrooms, and abuts a middle class neighborhood built in the 1950s and 1960s.

Fourche Creek

Fourche Creek is the largest urban wetland in America within a city limit and encompasses 1700 acres of swamps, low lands, and open space in south Little Rock. Fourche Creek flows from the west, within a 170 square-mile watershed, eventually joining the Arkansas River near the Little Rock Airport. The wetland areas, bordered on the north side by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and the Central High neighborhood, currently have limited access and are undeveloped. Fourche Creek, in addition to its important wetlands benefit, holds future potential as a natural area with educational and recreational-oriented uses and offers recreational opportunities for large urban open space, interpretive trails, and passive recreation.

The Arkansas River

The Arkansas River forms the northern and eastern boundaries of Little Rock. Several parks are located to take advantage of the views and recreational opportunities along the river, and are among the highest-used parks in the city.

The river provides the framework for continuous park types in a linear pattern for fifteen miles, and offers great opportunities for linkages, trails, and bike paths throughout in order to connect downtown Little Rock to residential areas and other attractive destinations.

Riverfront Park and the River Market

Julius Breckling Riverfront Park overlooks the Arkansas River and features promenades, an entertainment-industry amphitheater, and an interpretive pavilion about the history of Little Rock. Located adjacent to the popular Little Rock River Market, a notable Parks and Recreation facility, it is the site of the annual Riverfest, held each May. Riverfest has grown in popularity and size with more than five stages for performances, vendor tents, and food booths. The River Market is home to a daily market as well as special events.

Rebsamen Golf Course

Rebsamen Golf Course was recently upgraded to “Audubon Certified Wildlife Sanctuary” status. All 27 holes of this riverfront golf course boast impressive river vistas beneath huge cottonwood trees dotting the fairway edges. Its recent \$2 million renovation has elevated it to the most popular public facility and daily-fee course in central Arkansas. Linking Rebsamen Golf Course to Murray Park is Rebsamen Parkway, which currently features 2 ½ miles of walking and jogging trails.

Murray Park

Murray Park features many recreational opportunities, including a handicapped-accessible playground. The park also houses soccer fields, grass volleyball courts, boating access to the Arkansas River, picnic shelters, lookouts, and paved walking paths that connect apartments in the east end of the river valley with the golf course and park to the neighborhood to the south of Murray Lock & Dam.



The River Market



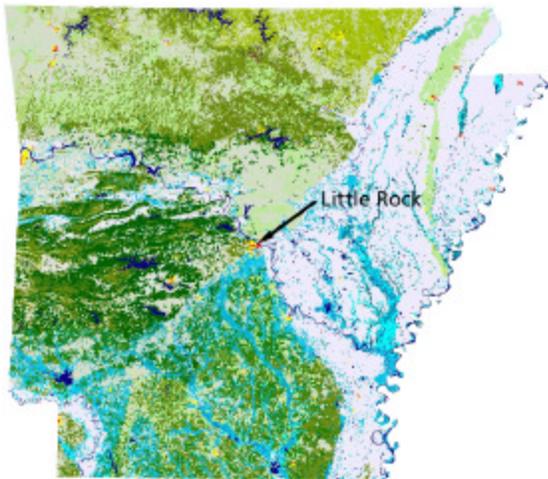
Rebsamen Golf Course



Soccer field at Murray Park



Physiographic Regions of Arkansas
 Source: U.S. Geological Survey



Arkansas GAP Analysis: Land Cover Map
 Source: Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies,
 University of Arkansas

the natural setting

Understanding the natural setting of Little Rock is essential in developing a parks plan for the city. Topography, hydrology, land cover, and soils are all indicators of appropriate lands to develop and appropriate areas to preserve for conservation or enhance for recreational purposes.

Little Rock is essentially located at the convergence of five major physiographic regions of Arkansas: the Ozark Mountains, the Arkansas Valley, the Ouachita Mountains, the Mississippi Embayment, and the Gulf Coastal Plain, see figure top left. Vegetative cover also reflects the various regions, see figure bottom left and Figure 1.5.

The **Ouachita Mountain, Mississippi Embayment, and Arkansas Valley** regions are those which are most apparent within the city of Little Rock. The western portion of the city is within the Ouachita Mountain region and is apparent by its steep slopes, while the eastern and northwestern portions demonstrate more characteristics of the Mississippi Embayment and Arkansas Valley regions, which are much flatter with alluvial soils and water-loving vegetation. The Gulf Coastal Plain is the fourth region, apparent in the southeastern areas of the city.

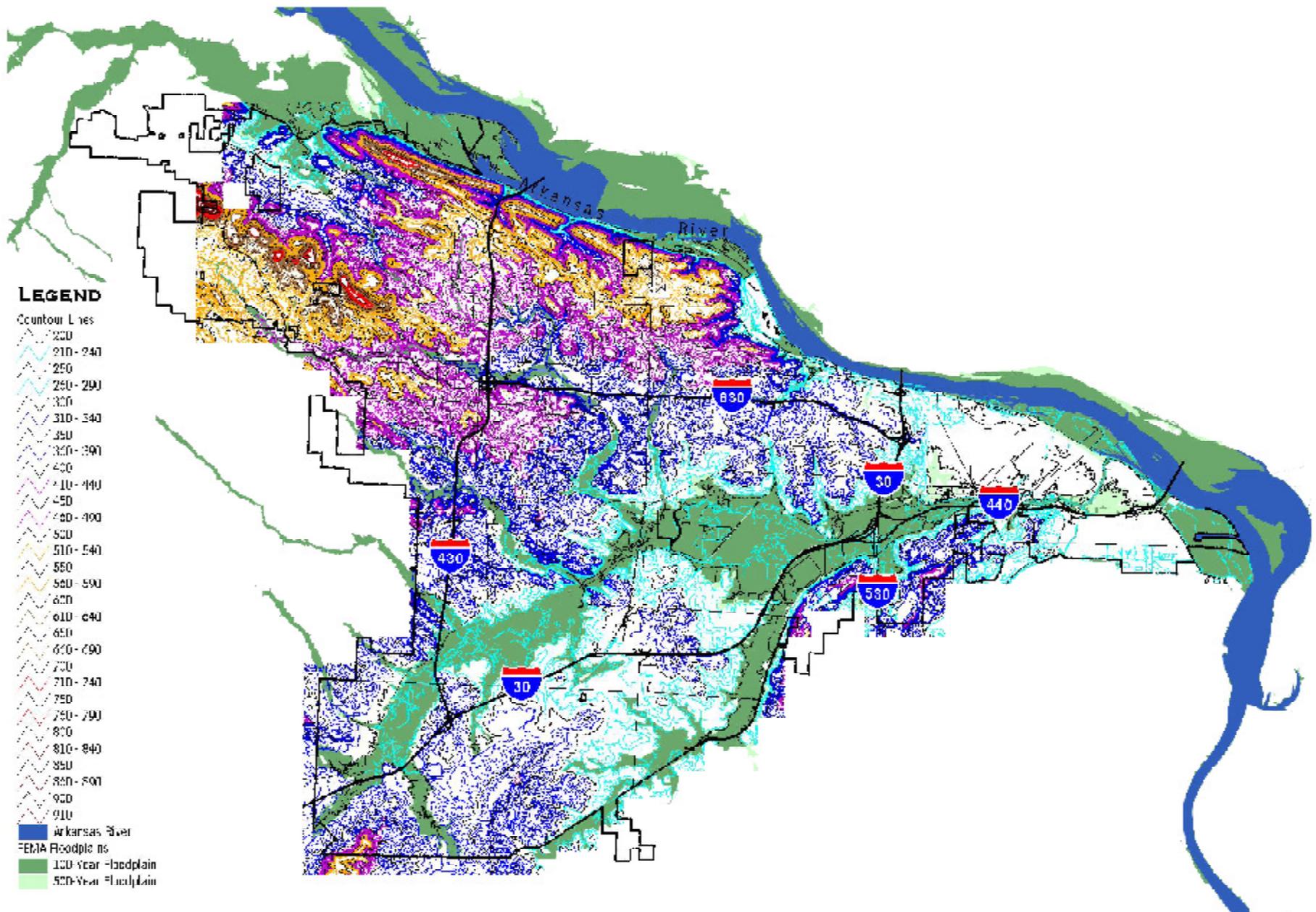
Topography and Hydrology

Understanding the topography of the city is crucial when determining suitable locations of various recreational lands and facilities, since various types lend themselves specifically to either steep or gentle slopes.

Topography within Little Rock varies considerably from the east to the west. In east Little Rock, elevations are generally between 200 and 300 feet above sea level. By contrast, areas of west Little Rock are typically between 400 and 800 feet, with some areas reaching nearly 900 feet. Steeper slopes are present in the west, while land is less steep in the east, see Figure 1.4.

All areas of the city ultimately drain into the Arkansas River. Most areas drain into Fourche Creek via smaller drainage ways and floodplains, which then flow into the Arkansas River. Areas of the city adjacent to the Arkansas River drain directly into it. The Fourche Creek flood plain, with its associated smaller drainage areas, contains the largest contiguous open spaces in the city.

Figure 1.4: Topography and Hydrology





Residential land uses



Open space

Arkansas Gap Analysis Land Cover

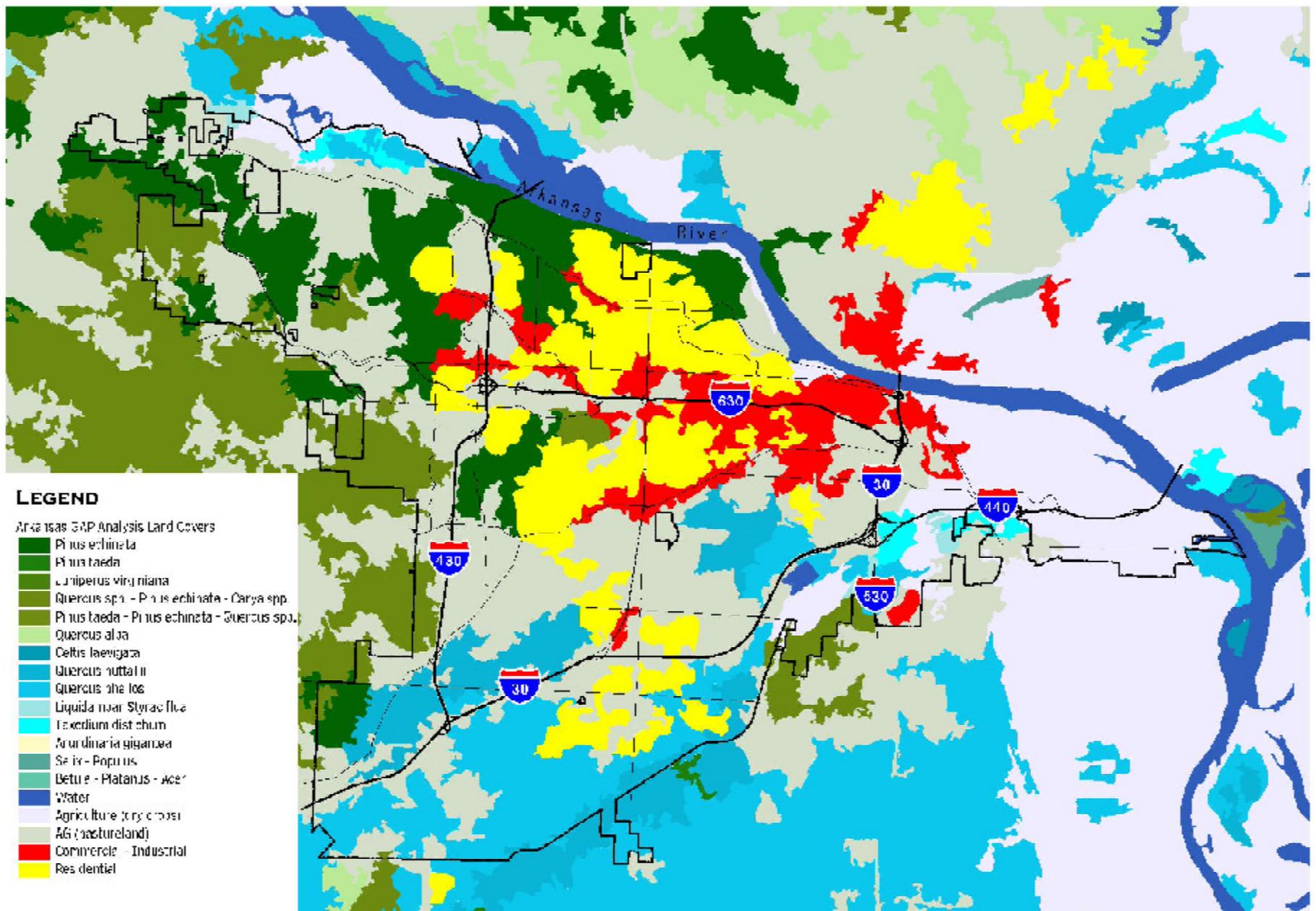
Little Rock houses a wide variety of vegetation types, as demonstrated below by the National Gap Analysis Program (GAP). The GAP analysis provides an overview of the distribution and conservation status of several components of biodiversity and results in the creation of biodiversity inventories, including existing land cover, see Figure 1.5.

The following land cover groups were identified: loblolly pine, shortleaf pine, eastern red cedar, pecan, white oak, willow oak, Nuttall oak, sugar hackberry, sweetgum, bald cypress, giant rivercane, willow, poplar, birch, sycamore, maple, agriculture – dry crops, agriculture – pasture, commercial – industrial, and residential.

Agriculture (dry crops) is primarily found in the eastern areas of Little Rock, within the Mississippi Embayment physiography. Willow and nuttall oaks, as well as bald cypress and sugar hackberry associations are predominate in the southeastern areas of the city, within the Gulf Coast and Mississippi Embayment regions. West Little Rock is principally composed of oaks, pine, and red cedar associations. Commercial-industrial and residential land covers dominate central Little Rock.

These land covers reinforce the various physiographic regions of the city. The GAP analysis aids in understanding the interrelationships of the area's ecosystems, as well as identifying what is valuable, unique, or of interest within the city. In addition, it assists in recognizing opportunities for creating a parks system which showcases each of the city's distinct natural landscapes.

Figure 1.5: Land Use and Land Cover





New home construction



Homes built on steep slopes

Soils – General

Like topography, hydrology, and land cover, soils reflect the various physiographic regions found in Little Rock, see Figure 1.6. The east side of the city is mainly composed of Perry, Mountainburg, Kio, and Rilla associations which are predominately silty loams on flat slopes. Carnasaw-Mountainburg and Sallisaw associations are prevalent in the west, on moderate to steep slopes. Central Little Rock consists of Carnasaw-Urban and Leadvale-Urban associations, while south and southwest Little Rock contain mainly Leadvale, Amy, and Smithdale associations.

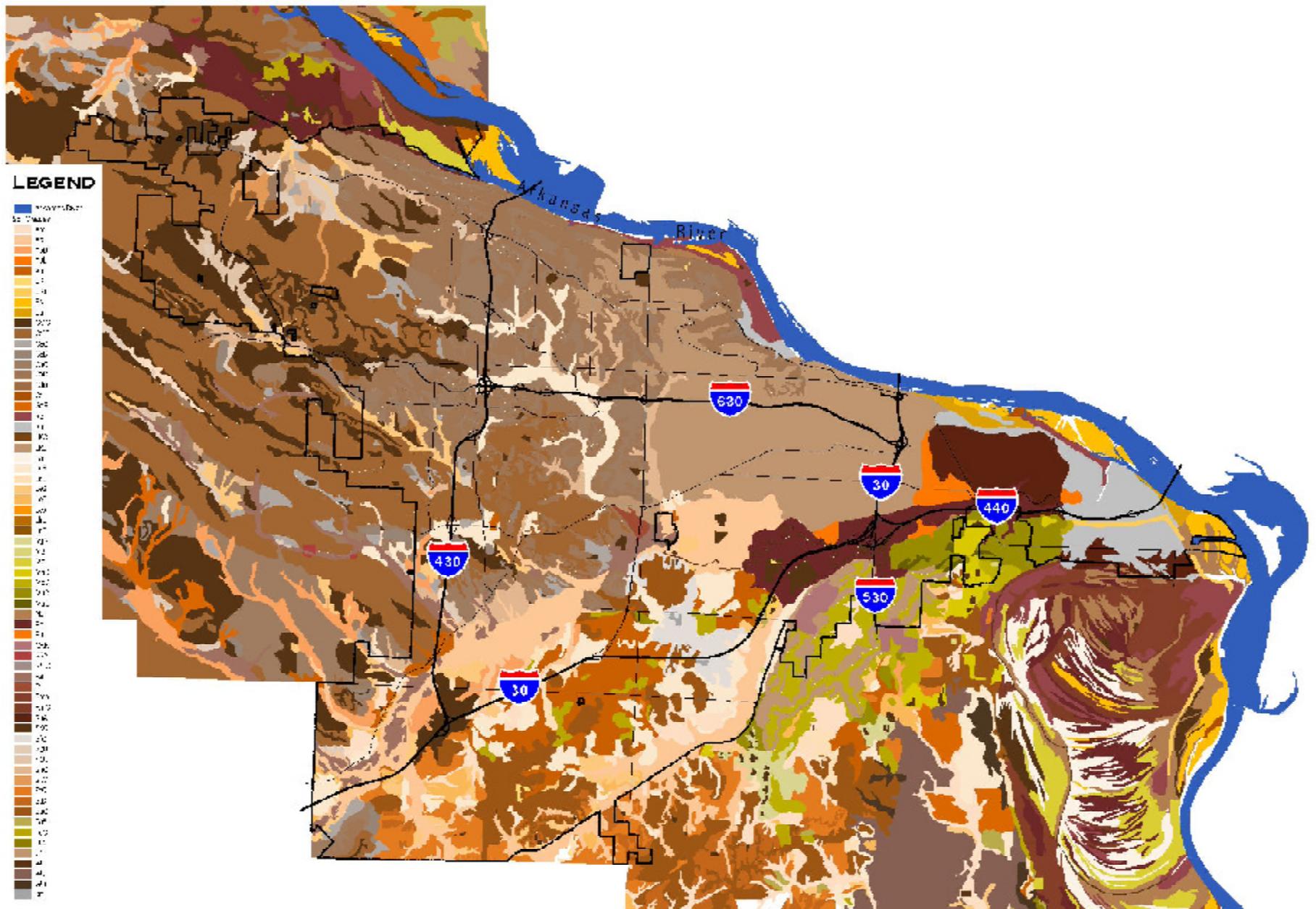
Each association is categorized by various soil conditions, including suitability for different uses. Certain soil associations are more suitable for construction than are others. In addition, some soils have better characteristics for recreational purposes/facilities than others do. For a complete listing of soils within each association and the characteristics of each, see the Pulaski County Soil Survey, compiled by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service.

Soils – Suitability

Several factors determine a soil type's suitability for construction and recreational uses, including its drainage, permeability, and its stability on slopes. Many areas of Little Rock have soils which

are severely constrained. Bruno, Linker, and Rilla associations, found predominately along the river and floodplains are most suitable for recreational uses; however, all soil types within the city are less severe for recreational uses than constructed (built) uses. The Smithdale, Norwood, and Saffell associations are more suitable for construction than the Amy, Carnasaw, Mountainburg, Perry, and Rexor associations, which have severe construction limitations. See Appendix B for listing of soil classes and suitability.

Figure 1.6: Soils





cultural & historical resources

Cultural and historical resources play an important role in the parks system. Parks and cultural resources can emphasize and highlight one another to create a well-rounded parks and recreation system. Establishing linkages and integrating the two systems promotes a diversified range of recreational opportunities.

Arts and Culture

The Cultural Affairs Division of Little Rock Parks and Recreation offers arts and cultural programs, supports local cultural facilities and institutions, and collaborates with other cultural groups to promote cultural life in Little Rock. The Cultural Affairs Division offers the following amenities:

- ArtsLine: a 24-hour telephone number offering a recorded message of cultural events in Little Rock
- AHAs!: the Arts and Humanities Awards which annually recognize outstanding support of culture in Little Rock
- MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History: opening May 2001, this museum will be housed in the old Arsenal Tower building in MacArthur Park.

Other arts and cultural institutions within Little Rock include the following:

- Aerospace Education Center / IMAX
- Arkansas Arts Center
- Arkansas Repertory Theatre
- Arkansas Symphony Orchestra
- Ballet Arkansas
- Central High Museum and Visitors Center
- Children's Museum of Arkansas
- EMOBA, the Museum of Black Arkansans
- Historic Arkansas Museum
- Museum of Discovery (formerly the Museum of Science and History)
- Old State House
- University of Arkansas at Little Rock
- Wildwood Park for the Performing Arts

National Register Historic Districts

Like parks, historic districts can be destinations that reflect the distinct characteristics of the city. Several National Register Historic Districts are found in Little Rock, including the Central High School Neighborhood Historic District, the Governor's Mansion Historic District, Hillcrest Historic District, MacArthur Park Historic District, Marshall Square Historic District, Philander Smith College Historic District, the Railroad Call Historic District, the South Main Street Apartments Historic District, the South Scott Street Historic District, and Boyle Park, see Figure 1.7. Each district contains cultural and historical significance that may be integrated via linkages into the city's park system.



Central High School Neighborhood Historic District

Central High School is a National Historic Landmark located at Daisy L. Gatson Bates and Park streets in Little Rock. Built in 1927, this high school was the focus of national attention in the 1957 desegregation crisis. The Central High School National Historic Site was designated a unit of the National Park Service in 1998. The Central High School Neighborhood Historic District encompasses the surrounding neighborhoods. See photo, top right.

Governor's Mansion Historic District

The Governor's Mansion was built between 1947 and 1950 in the Colonial Revival style and is the southern terminus of Center Street, opposite the Old State House, located at Center Street's northern terminus. Homes in the Governor's Mansion Historic District generally date from about 1880 to 1920, and they comprise an outstanding collection of Queen Anne, Colonial Revival and Craftsman architecture. See photo, second down, right.

Hillcrest Historic District

The Hillcrest neighborhood west of downtown was designated a National Historic District in 1990. Included in the district are houses, commercial structures, and institutional buildings dating from 1890 to 1940. Hillcrest was one of the early residential suburbs, accessible to downtown via streetcar. See photo, third down, right.

MacArthur Park Historic District

Located in Downtown Little Rock, the MacArthur Park Historic District houses some of the city's oldest buildings and the city's first municipal park, as well as the U.S. Arsenal Building (built from 1840-1842), which is now home to the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History. Also located in the district are the Decorative Arts Museum (housed in the Terry Mansion), the Arkansas Arts Center, Trapnall Hall, and the Villa Marre. See photo, bottom right.

Marshall Square Historic District

This block of downtown Little Rock features a solid block of vernacular 1918 rental houses. It was designated as the Marshall Square Historic District in 1979. See photo, top left, following page.

Philander Smith College Historic District

Philander Smith College Historic District, located in central Little Rock, has a notable and lengthy history as a privately-supported, historically black, four-year liberal arts college, related to the Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church. Philander's origins stem from the 1877 establishment of Walden Seminary housed in the Wesley Chapel Methodist Church. The Seminary was designated as the official educational institution of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and served as a preparatory school for negro youth. See photo, following page, second down, left.





Railroad Call Historic District

A collection of three Colonial Revival-style homes representative of several blocks of houses which were constructed around the Missouri Pacific Depot in the early twentieth century. The name was derived from the railroad company sending messengers to “call” crew members living in the area for work. This district is located one block from the Little Rock Missouri Pacific Railroad Station and three blocks from the State Capitol grounds.



South Main Street Apartments Historic District

Located near the expanding central business district in the early twentieth century, the collection of apartments along South Main Street reflect the period of rapid urbanization of Little Rock. Prior to the 1920s, few apartments existed within the city. Between 1920 and 1930, over one hundred apartment buildings were constructed to accommodate growth. The buildings within this district represent many architectural styles, including Colonial Revival, Craftsman, English Revival, Spanish Revival, and Mediterranean.



South Scott Street Historic District

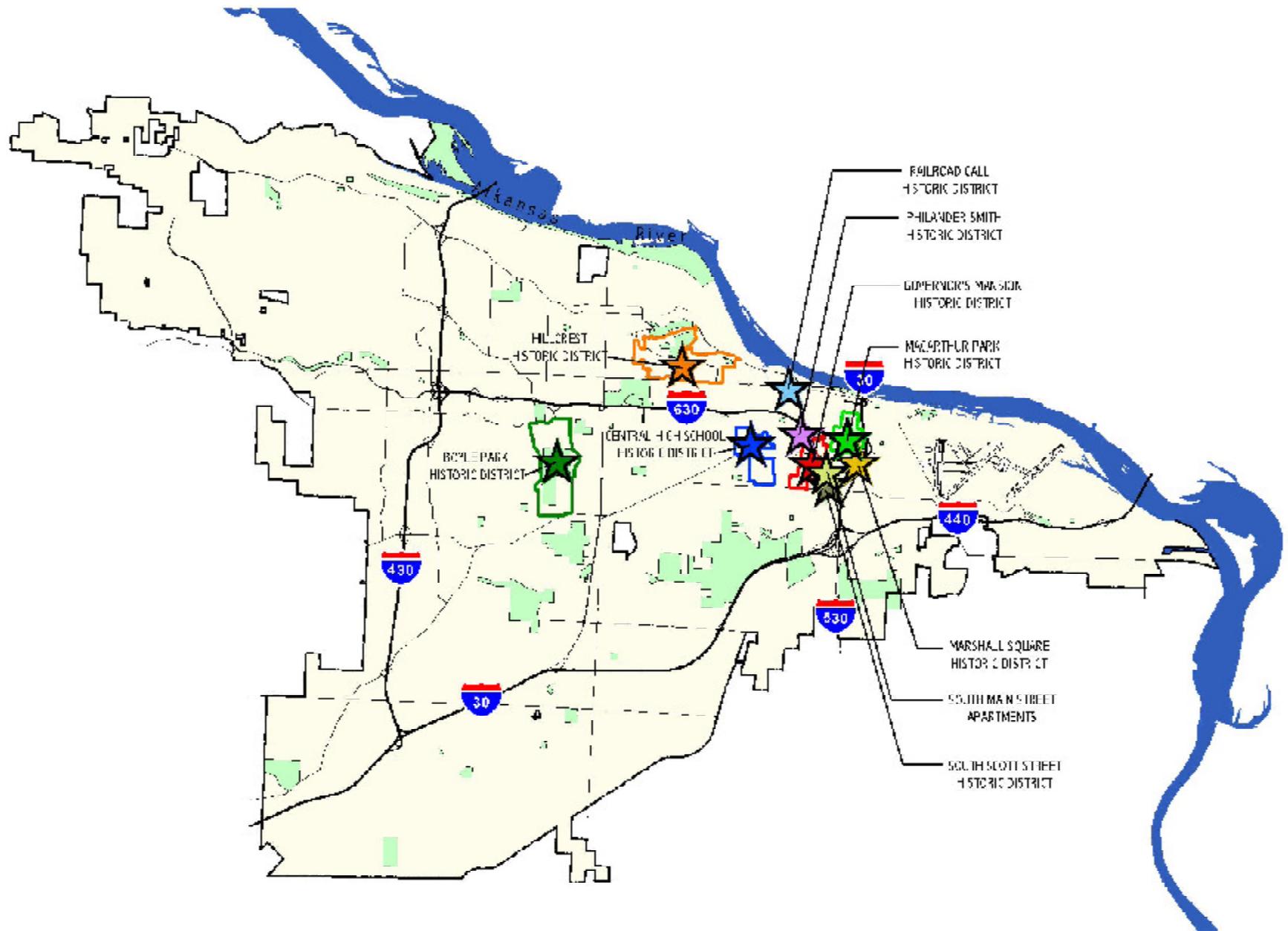
This group of ten properties is the largest and most well-preserved group of modest, working-class residences from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Little Rock. Its assortment of relatively simple house plans, adorned with detailing from the Queen Anne Revival, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman idioms, is

more typical of residential architecture from this period than the larger homes found in the city's other historic districts. The architecture of the South Scott Street Historic District stands as a more representative record of how most people lived in Little Rock during that era. See photo, third down, left.

Boyle Park

Boyle Park was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. It is home to eight facilities constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps from 1933 to 1945. These facilities include two pavilions, a spring house, a caretaker's cabin, and the remains of the water tower/pump house/garage. All were built in the Rustic style popular for CCC construction. Boyle Park contains one of the last ensembles of Rustic architecture remaining in the state that largely retains its original appearance and its organic relationship with the natural landscape. See photo, bottom left.

Figure 1.7: Historic Districts



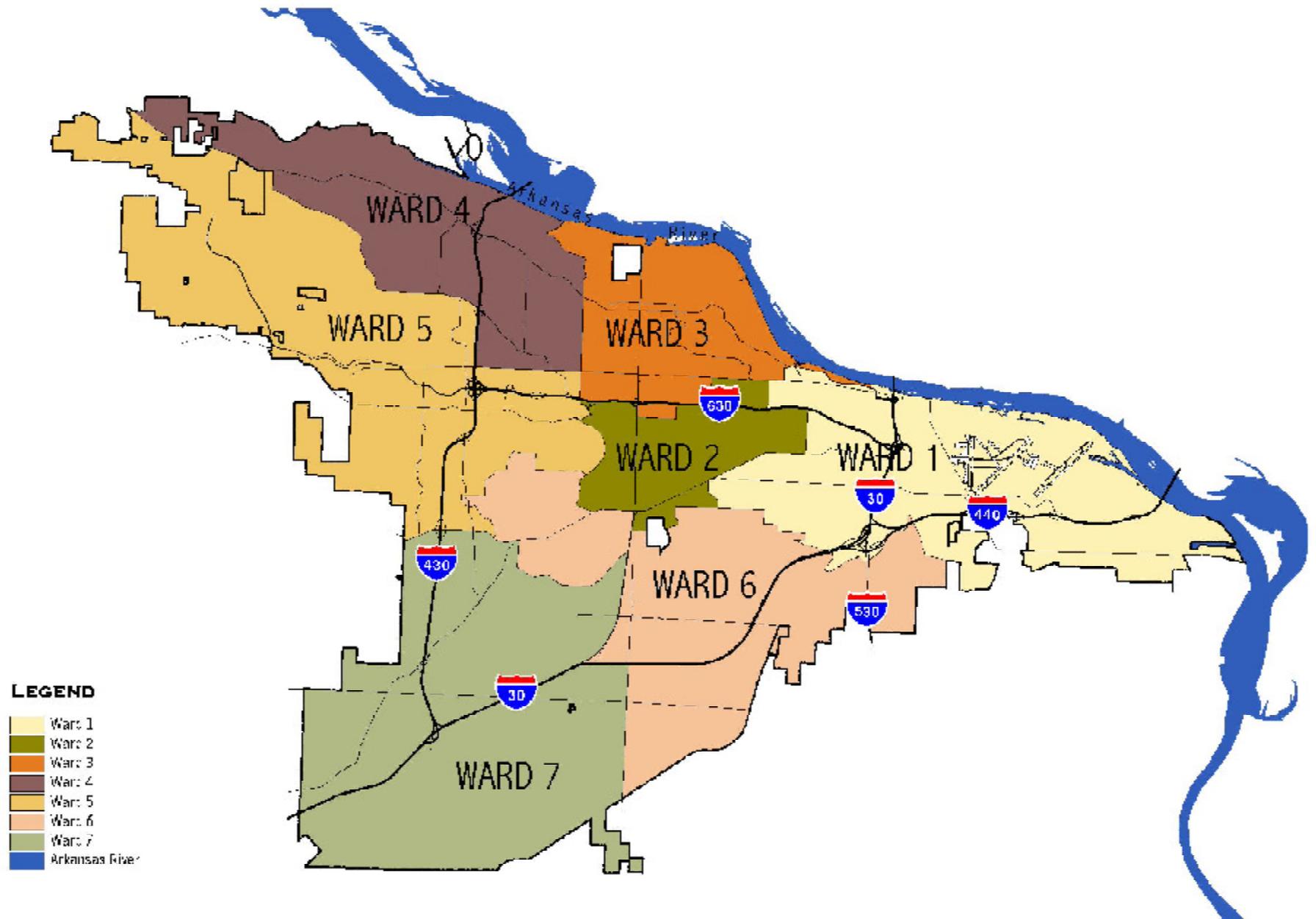
political and planning districts

Little Rock's city government is based on the ward system. The city is divided into districts, or wards, from each of which one member is elected to the Little Rock Board of Directors. Understanding these boundaries is important for several reasons. The breakdown of wards indicates at a basic level the various regions of the city based on larger neighborhood groupings. Additionally, knowledge of the wards' boundaries can explain past political decisions regarding planning and provide foresight to future ones.

Wards

Little Rock is made up of seven wards. Each ward is represented by a member of the Board of Directors. Ward 1 includes most of eastern Little Rock and downtown. South central Little Rock comprises Ward 2, while Wards 3 and 4 cover northwest Little Rock. Ward 5 is located in west Little Rock, and Wards 6 and 7 encompass the southwest portions of the city, see Figure 1.8. The Mayor, along with three additional Board of Directors members, comprise four "at large" positions that represent the entire city.

Figure 1.8: Wards



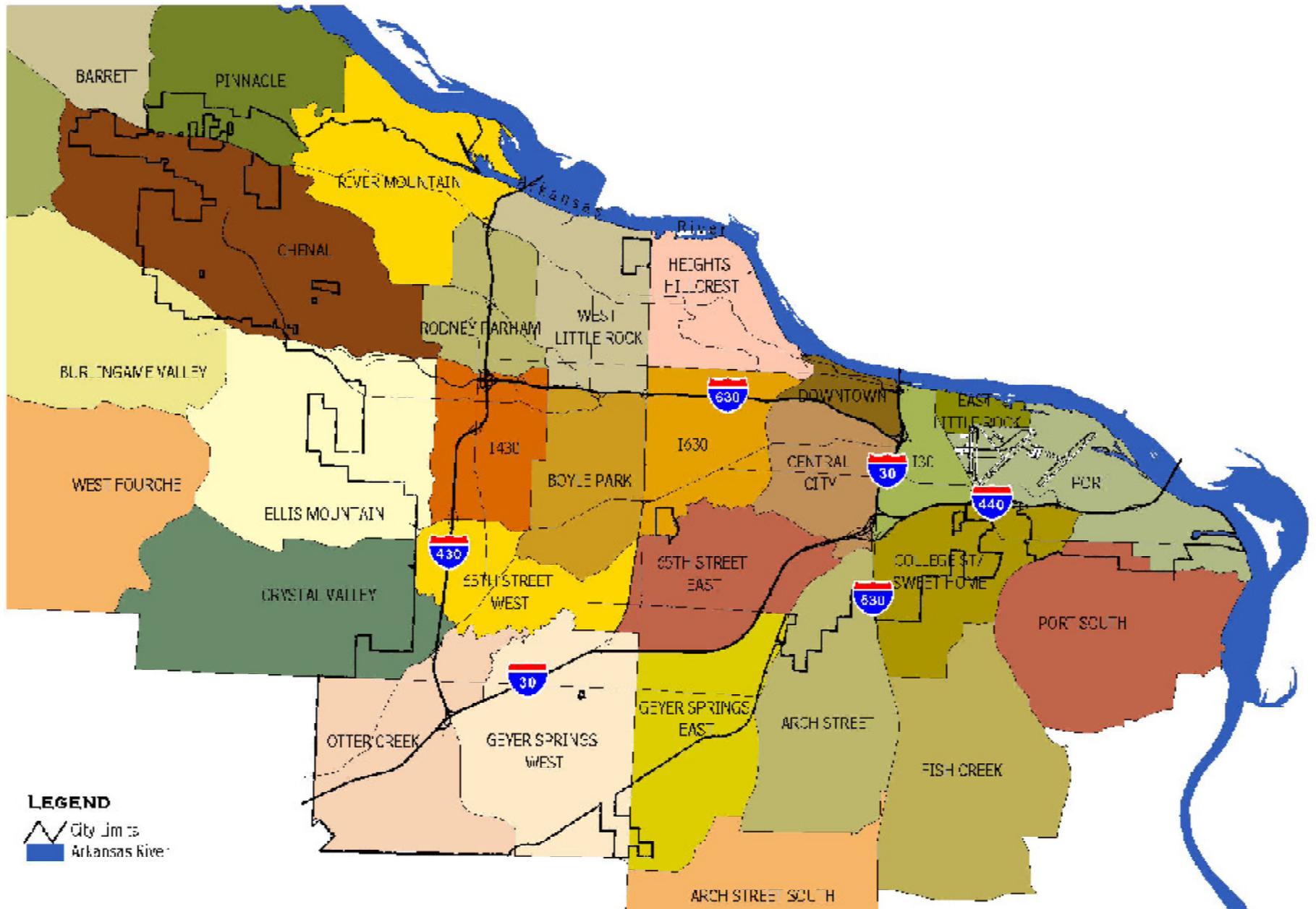
Planning Districts

Planning Districts are often established in order to break the city into smaller workable units for development and comparison, see Figure 1.9. These districts are many times determined by the people's perception of their neighborhood areas, by natural and physical barriers, and by political boundaries. These districts assist planners to better understand the different areas of their city and to aid in decision making which will affect the future of the districts and the city as a whole.

Little Rock has been divided into several planning districts, which extend beyond the city limits in order to plan for future growth and expansion.

In addition, the planning department is working in conjunction with neighborhood associations to complete plans for the various neighborhoods in the city. Neighborhood groups determine the physical boundaries of their neighborhood plans, see Figure 1.9, and address many aspects of planning within their area, including parks. To date, sixteen neighborhood plans have been completed.

Figure 1.9: Planning Districts



Future Land Use

The City of Little Rock adopted the future land use plan in June 1992, and has had numerous amendments to date, see Figure 1.10. Future land use is important to understand in parks planning for two key reasons. First, the projected pattern of land use provides an indication of where future demand for parks and recreation services will occur, most notably in the areas where significant residential growth is anticipated. Second, the future land use plan sets forth a statement about the city's policies for building livable and economically viable communities.

A future land use plan indicates site-specifically where parks are already planned and where open spaces are intended to remain undeveloped. Little Rock's future land use plan reflects large portions of the existing drainage system to be left intact as open space. Additionally, it indicates open lands in the rapidly-growing west side of town; most likely along steep slopes or otherwise undevelopable land. There is currently very little open space or park land designated in the west-central areas of Little Rock beyond the city limits. In the preparation of a future land use plan, parks should be carefully considered as an integral part of the plan to help maximize quality of life opportunities.

Figure 1.10: Future Land Use

