

# COMMUNITY PROFILE

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

The Demographic factors in this section include:

## POPULATION TRENDS



## POPULATION BY AGE



## POPULATION BY GENDER



## POPULATION BY RACE & ETHNICITY



## ECONOMIC TRENDS



## HEALTH TRENDS

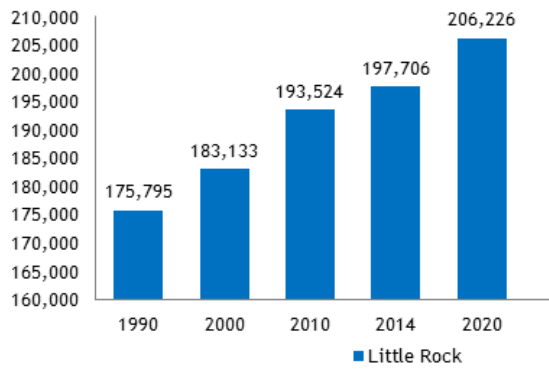






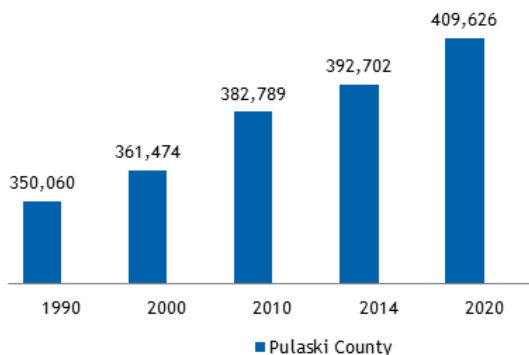
## Population Trends

Figure 1.1 Population Trends – Little Rock

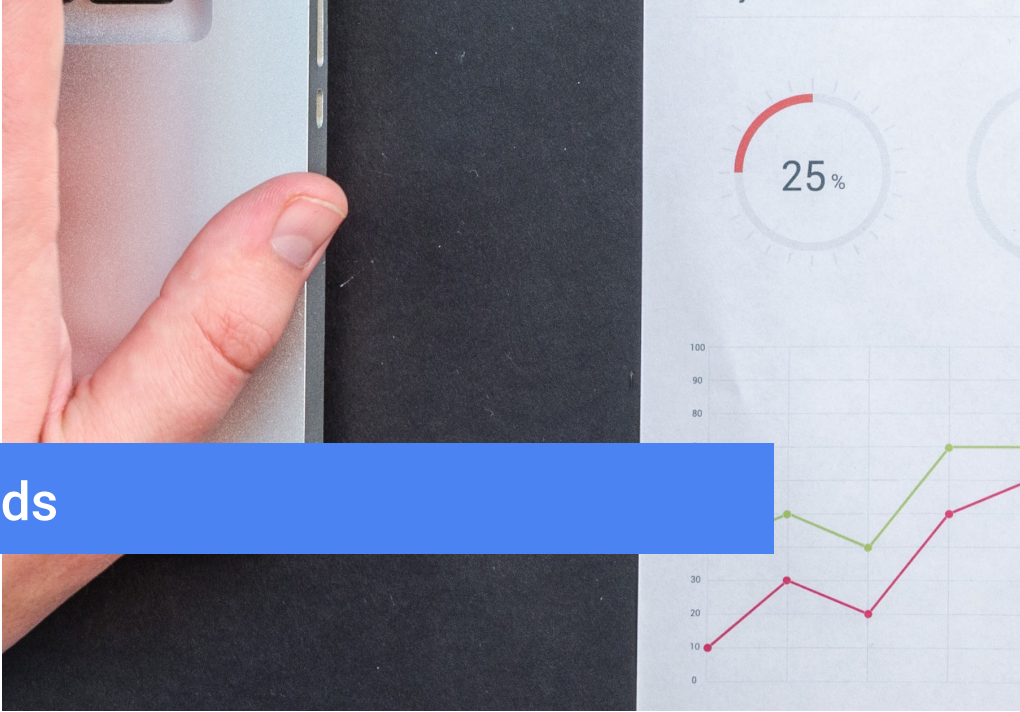


(The 2020 Little Rock population projection is percentage based off the 2020 Pulaski County projection.)

Figure 1.2 Population Trends – Pulaski County

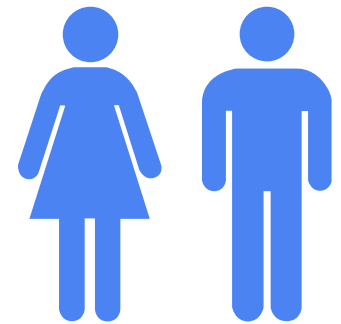


SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



# 206,226

City of Little Rock projected 2020 population



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



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

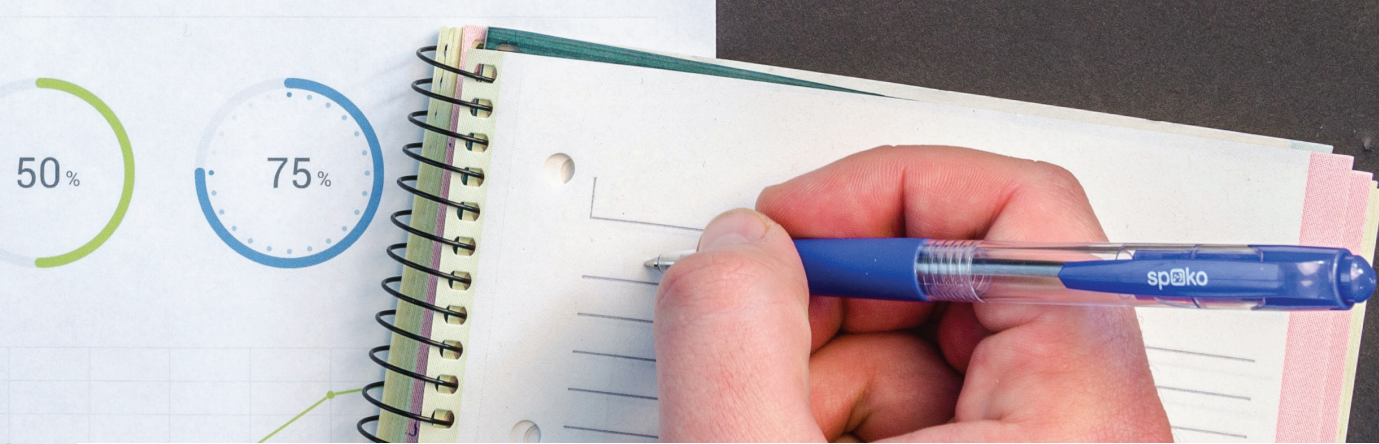
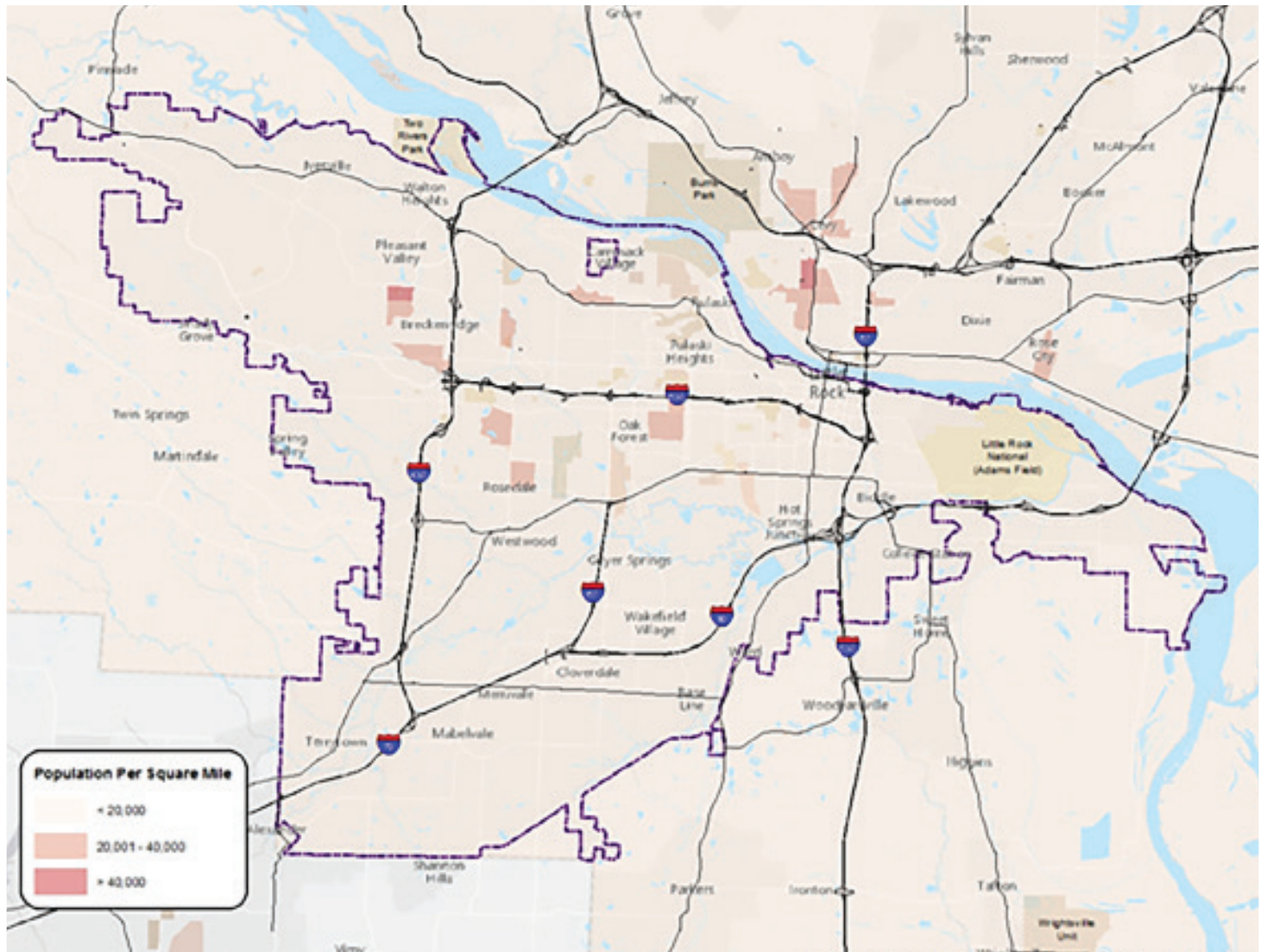


Figure 1.3 Population Density

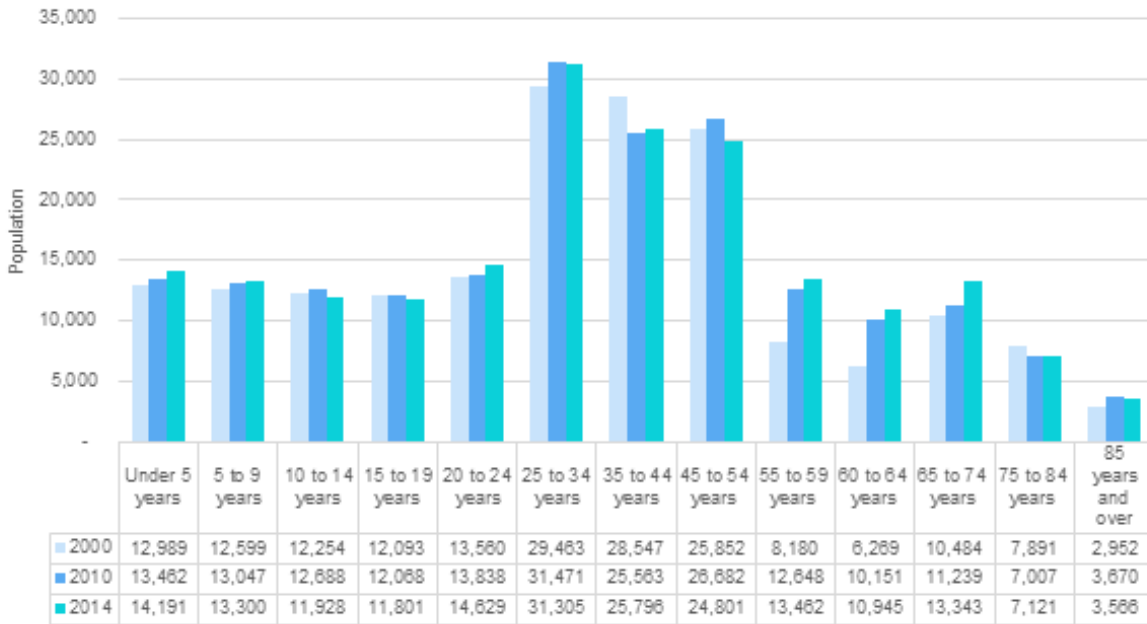


SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

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



**Figure 1.4** Population Growth by Age



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

## Population by Age

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



*Population by Age*



*Population by Gender*



*Population by Race and Ethnicity*



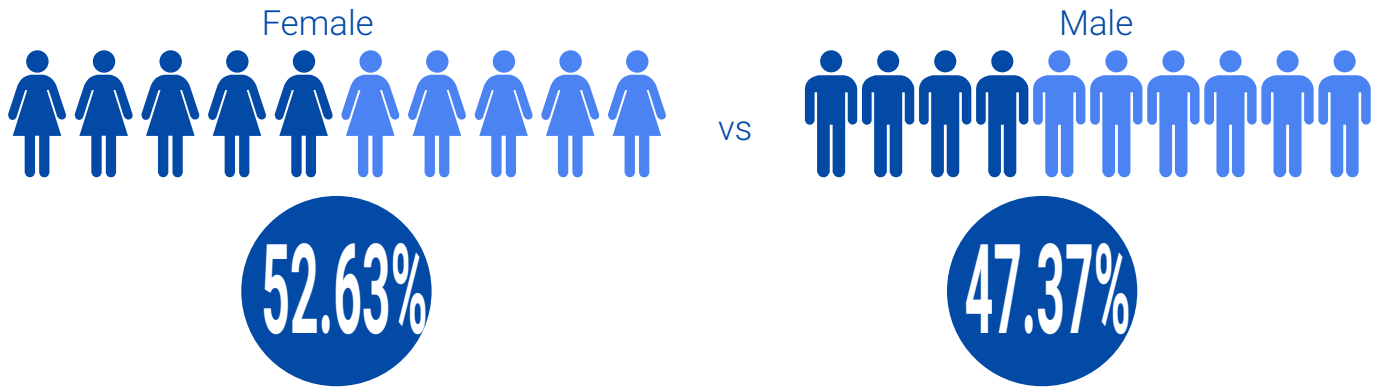
**The highest population of Little Rock is adults between the ages of 25-34 years old.**



**Figure 1.5 Gender**

City of Little Rock

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



### Population by Gender

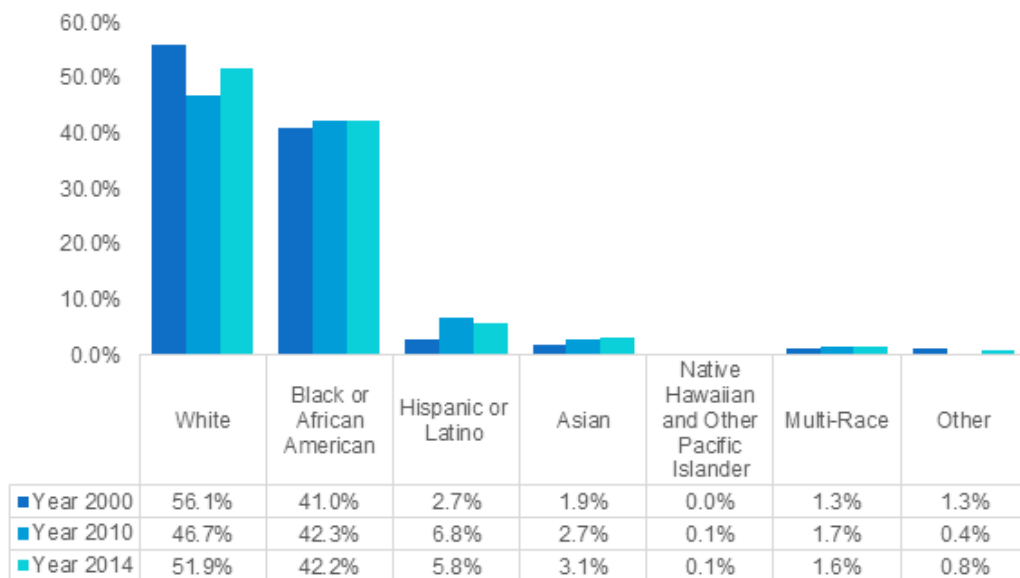
The gender information for the City of Little Rock was gathered next by the researchers. It shows that there is a higher percentage of women than men. Based on the 2014 estimates, there are approximately 5.3% more women than men in the City of Little Rock. These statistics are similar to the gender statistics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



### Population by Race and Ethnicity

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

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





## Economic Trends



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

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

**Figure 1.7** Income and Poverty

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

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

**Figure 1.8** Home Ownership

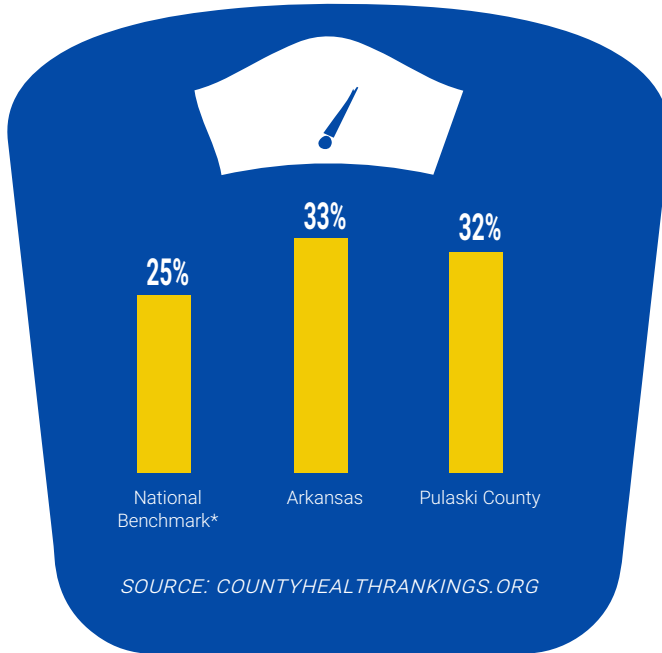
	City of Little Rock	Pulaski County	Arkansas
Housing units, 2013-2017	94,995	182,288	1,353,745
Owner Occupied Units, 2010-2014	45,121	91,503	752,633
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2010-2014	\$118,500	\$148,300	\$159,900

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



## Health Trends

Figure 1.9 Adult Obesity Rates



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

## Summary

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

