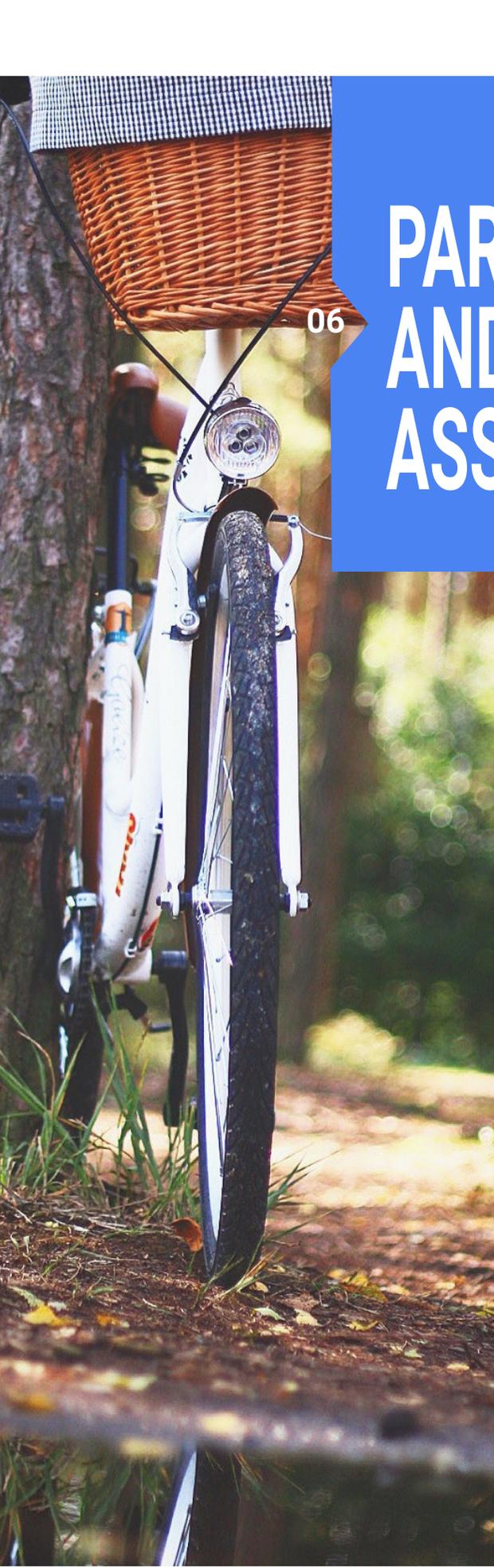


PARK CLASSIFICATIONS AND LAND NEEDS ASSESSMENT



In 1995, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) published *Park, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines* by James D. Mertes, Ph.D., CLP, and James R. Hall, CLP. The book outlined a template for typical park classifications, numbers of acres a system should have, and recommended service levels based on population. Strictly intended as a guideline, the book does not consider the unique character of a community. Local trends and popularity of some activities often dictate a greater need for particular facilities. The guidelines outlined in *Park, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines* serve as a good baseline for determining a minimum standard. These guidelines, along with the community needs assessment, community input and comparisons to similar communities were used to develop service standards for Little Rock. For public park providers, the guidelines suggest, “A park system, at a minimum, should be composed of a core system of park lands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population” (Mertes, 1995).

Critical to the service delivery system of any department is the provision of the four basic park categories: mini parks, neighborhood parks, community parks and regional parks. Beyond these four basic park types are special-use parks, natural areas/preserves, greenways, school parks and private parks/recreation facilities. Each is classified differently based upon the types of amenities, size, service area and how access is gained to the facility.

Park Classification

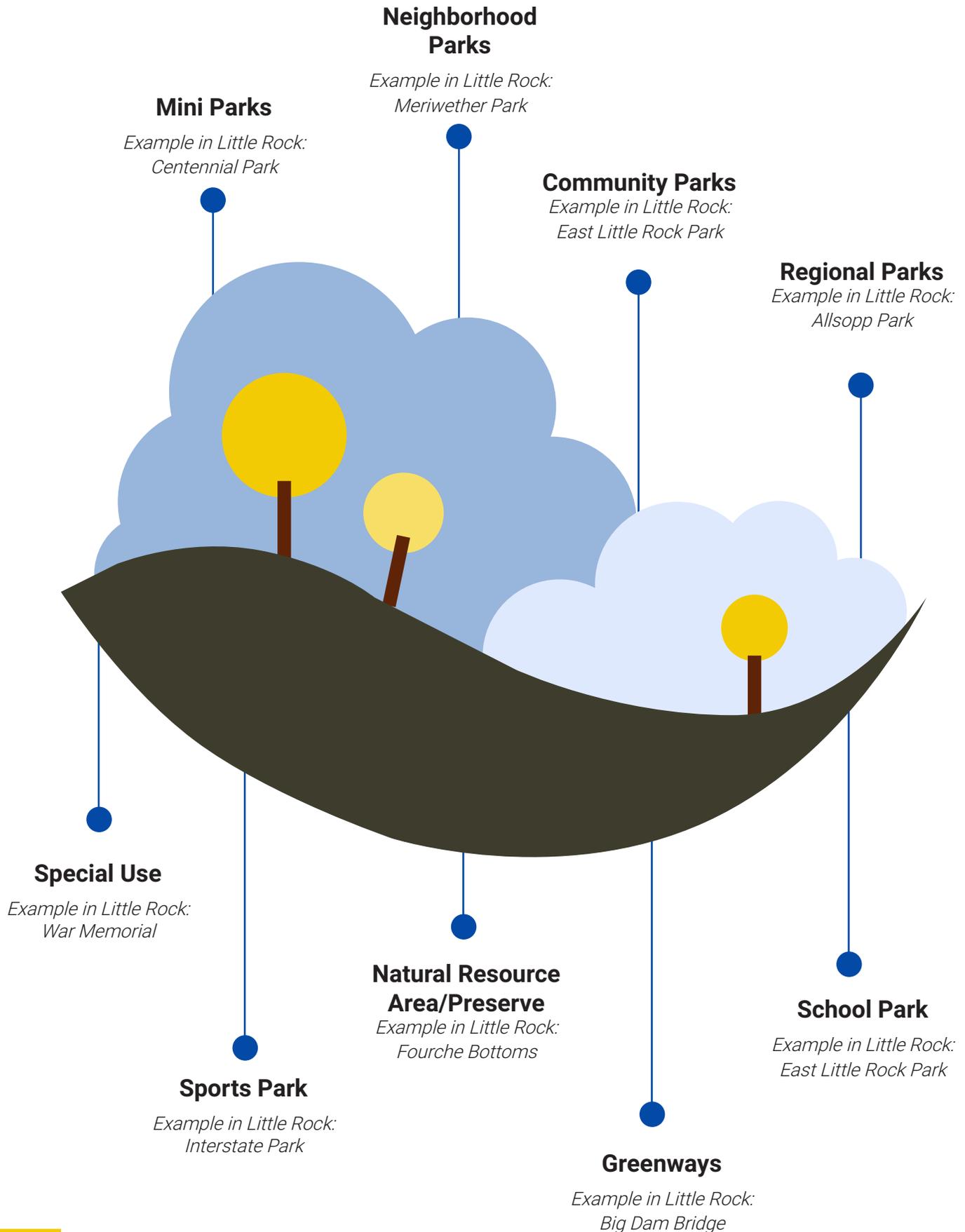


Table 6.1 provides a definition of each classification along with information on size and service criteria.

Table 6.1 Park Classifications with Service Criteria

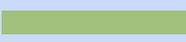
CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	DESIRABLE SIZE	LOCATION CRITERIA
Mini-Park	Small parks with limited activity that should provide seating, landscape and possibly a playground, community garden or other passive recreation activities	5 acres or less 	¼ mile radius
Neighborhood Park	Area for more intense recreational activities, such as playing field, larger playgrounds, shelters, trails, swimming pools, restrooms, etc.	5-20 acres 	½ mile radius
Community Park	All-inclusive facility for recreation users that provides a mix of active and passive activities and attracts users of all ages, from sports fields to a community center	20-75 acres 	1-3 mile radius
Regional Park	Unique outdoor recreation area with various amenities, which may include boating, fishing, swimming, camping, but may also be a water park, etc.	50-250 acres 	Varies
Special-Use Park	Special-use parks are designed to meet the needs of a specific user group, such as an aquatic center, golf course, zoo or a museum.	Varies	Varies
Sports Park	Sports parks are parks that are dominated by athletic facilities.	Varies	Varies
Natural Resource Area/ Preserve	Land with natural resources, historic landscapes, visual beauty, bio-diversity, etc.	Varies	Varies
Greenways	Linear corridors that loop and/or link to other amenities	 50 ft. wide	½ mile radius along path
School Park	Typically, found at middle and high schools with youth athletic fields that support team sports	Varies	Varies

Table adapted from Mertes, J.D. and J.R. Hall. *Park, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines*. Alexandria, VA: National Recreation and Park Associations, 1995.

Level of Service

Evaluating the level of service helps determine whether a recreational delivery system is meeting the needs of the population it serves. The analysis begins with a review of the existing facilities and level of service offered by a community. Table 6.2: Facility Matrix summarizes the inventory of critical facilities operated by the Little Rock Parks and Recreation Department. The facilities inventory reveals that the department owns 75 separate park properties with a total acreage of approximately 6,140 acres.

Once the existing facilities inventory was completed, the planning team compared the overall number and types of facilities to standards based on NRPA and other guidelines. The NRPA standards are taken from the 2018 NRPA Park Metrics publication. These guidelines enable the planning team to detect where Little Rock has a surplus or deficiency in a particular type of facility or service. While these standards provide guidance on the quantity of facilities, they should not be used indiscriminately and without understanding facility quality, location and other factors.

To reveal the surpluses and deficits of each facility, the planning team compared the existing facilities in Little Rock to the recommended level of service. The planning team performed this analysis for 2015 census estimates. The following table summarizes levels of service by facility type as compared to NRPA Park Metrics averages for all reporting communities.

2015: Little Rock has a deficit in several types of facilities:

- Playgrounds
- Baseball: youth
- Softball:
- Rectangular: Multi-purpose
- Dog Park
- Swimming Pools (Outdoor)
- Community Gardens
- Soccer field: Adult
- Tee-ball
- Multiuse Courts: Basketball, Volleyball
- Football Field
- Multipurpose Synthetic Field
- Lacrosse Field
- Field Hockey
- Gym
- Senior Center
- Fitness Center
- Performance Amphitheater
- Nature Center
- Stadium
- Indoor Track
- Teen Center
- Arena

2015: Little Rock has a surplus in four types of facilities:

- Acreage
- Greenway Trails
- Tennis
- Basketball Courts
- Baseball: Adult

While standards are good for planning, in order to determine demand, actual scheduling of facilities should be used as well. For example, if current sports fields are programmed at full capacity and there is a deficiency based on the desired level of service, that is a strong indicator that additional sports fields are needed. In our recommendations, we also use the community needs assessment and public input to determine what facilities should be included in a long-range capital plan and considering facility maintenance requirements.

Table 6.2 LRPR Facility Levels of Service

PARK FACILITIES	POPULATION PER FACILITY (ALL AGENCIES)		FACILITY NEEDS BASED ON POPULATION (198,606)	LITTLE ROCK, AR (POP 198,606)	
				2019 INVENTORY	2019 SURPLUS/DEFICIT
Acreage	10.1 per	1,000	2,006	6,140	4,134
Greenway Trails*	1 per	3,000	66	104	38
Playgrounds	1 per	3,600	55	43	(10)
Tennis**	1 per	4,375	45	41	(4)
Basketball Courts	1 per	7,122	28	33	5
Baseball: youth	1 per	6,519	30	23	(7)
Softball: Adult	1 per	12,000	17	7	(10)
Rectangular: Multi-purpose	1 per	8,055	25	-	(25)
Softball: Youth	1 per	9,900	20	7	(13)
Baseball: Adult	1 per	18,880	11	20	9
Dog Park	1 per	41,500	5	3	(2)
Swimming Pools (Outdoor)	1 per	31,709	6	3	(3)
Community Gardens	1 per	27,587	7	4	(3)
Soccer field (Regulation)	1 per	11,383	17	13	(4)
Tee-ball	1 per	14,511	14	3	(11)
Multiuse Courts: Basketball, Volleyball	1 per	14,650	14	17	3
Football Field	1 per	24,742	8	5	(3)
Multipurpose Synthetic Field	1 per	41,719	5	-	(5)
Lacrosse Field	1 per	24,060	8	2	(6)
Field Hockey	1 per	20,893	10	-	(10)
Recreation Center	1 per	27,375	7	5	(2)
Community Center	1 per	27,486	7	5	(2)
Gym	1 per	27,334	7	6	(1)
Senior Center	1 per	45,436	4	1	(3)
Fitness Center	1 per	40,602	5	1	(4)
Performance Amphitheater	1 per	47,442	4	1	(3)
Nature Center	1 per	99,783	2	2	0
Stadium	1 per	64,500	3	1	(2)
Indoor Track	1 per	49,000	4	-	(4)
Teen Center	1 per	53,490	4	-	(4)
Arena	1 per	56,119	4	-	(4)

*Greenway Trail ratio is estimated to be 1 mile of paved multi-use trail per 3,000 in population. This is not calculation by Park Metrics and is based on extensive Lose Design experience.

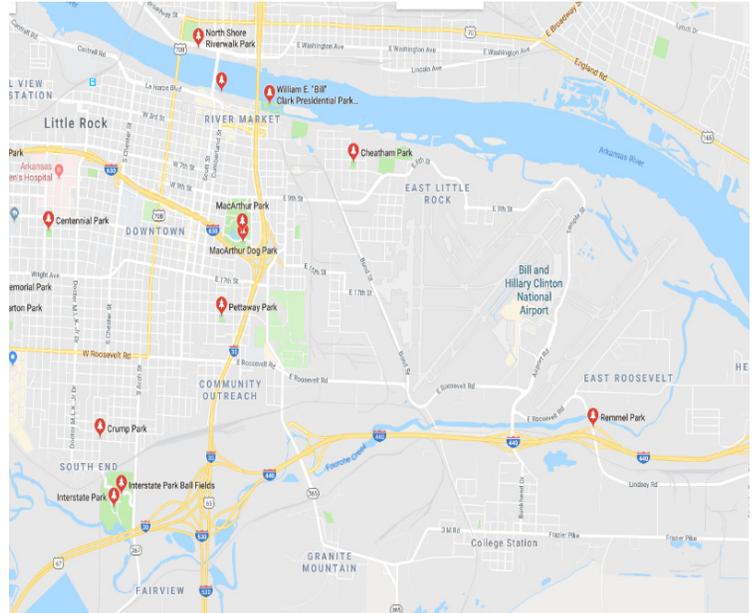
** Tennis court ratio is not calculation by Park Metrics and is based on extensive Lose Design experience.

Park Locations and Gap Analysis

Existing Park Locations

Development patterns in Little Rock reflect a strong traditional grid pattern that evolves into a more curvilinear pattern to the west. The majority of new residential development has occurred in the western sections of the city. Figure 6.1 shows the existing park locations within Little Rock and population density obtained from the US Census Bureau.

It also appears that some portions of Little Rock are cut off from nearby parks by infrastructure (ex. Interstates or railroads) and facilities like the airport. While these are invaluable pieces of infrastructure, they can pose barriers for local access to parks by individuals without access to a car. This appears to be the case in eastern Little Rock where several interstates, the airport and industrial development have isolated older residential areas. This could be mitigated with adequate bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.



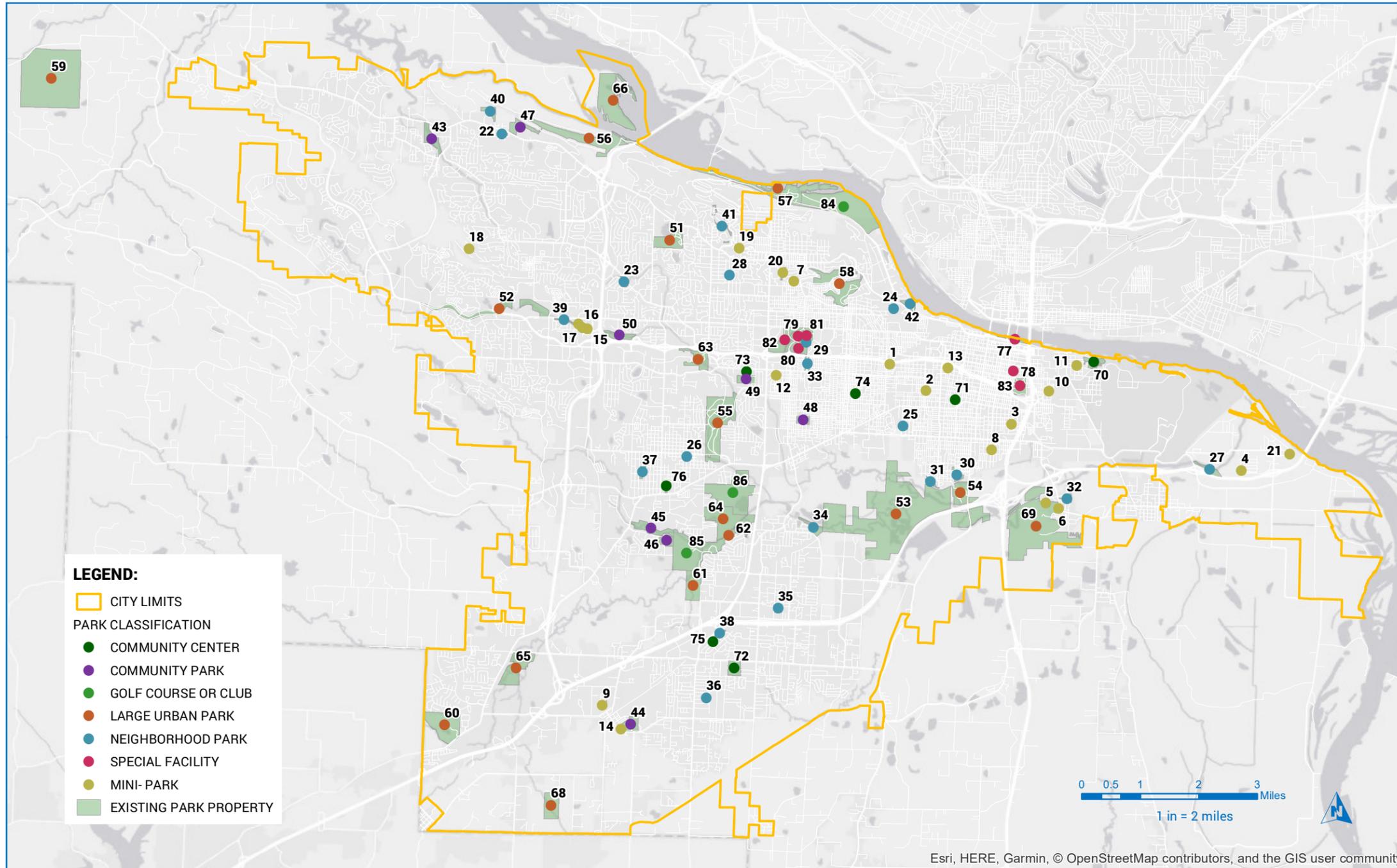
INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES MAY POSE BARRIERS FOR ACCESS



Gap Analysis - Parks

A gap analysis is an assessment of the service areas related to parks and its facilities to determine if there are areas of a community that are under served. It identifies gaps in the overall service standard for each park category. The service area analysis begins by classifying existing parks using the NRPA park classifications (See Table 6.1: Park Classifications with Service Criteria). All existing parks were classified based on use patterns as well as size and NRPA standards. Service areas for each category are provided on Figure 6.2: Gap Analysis.

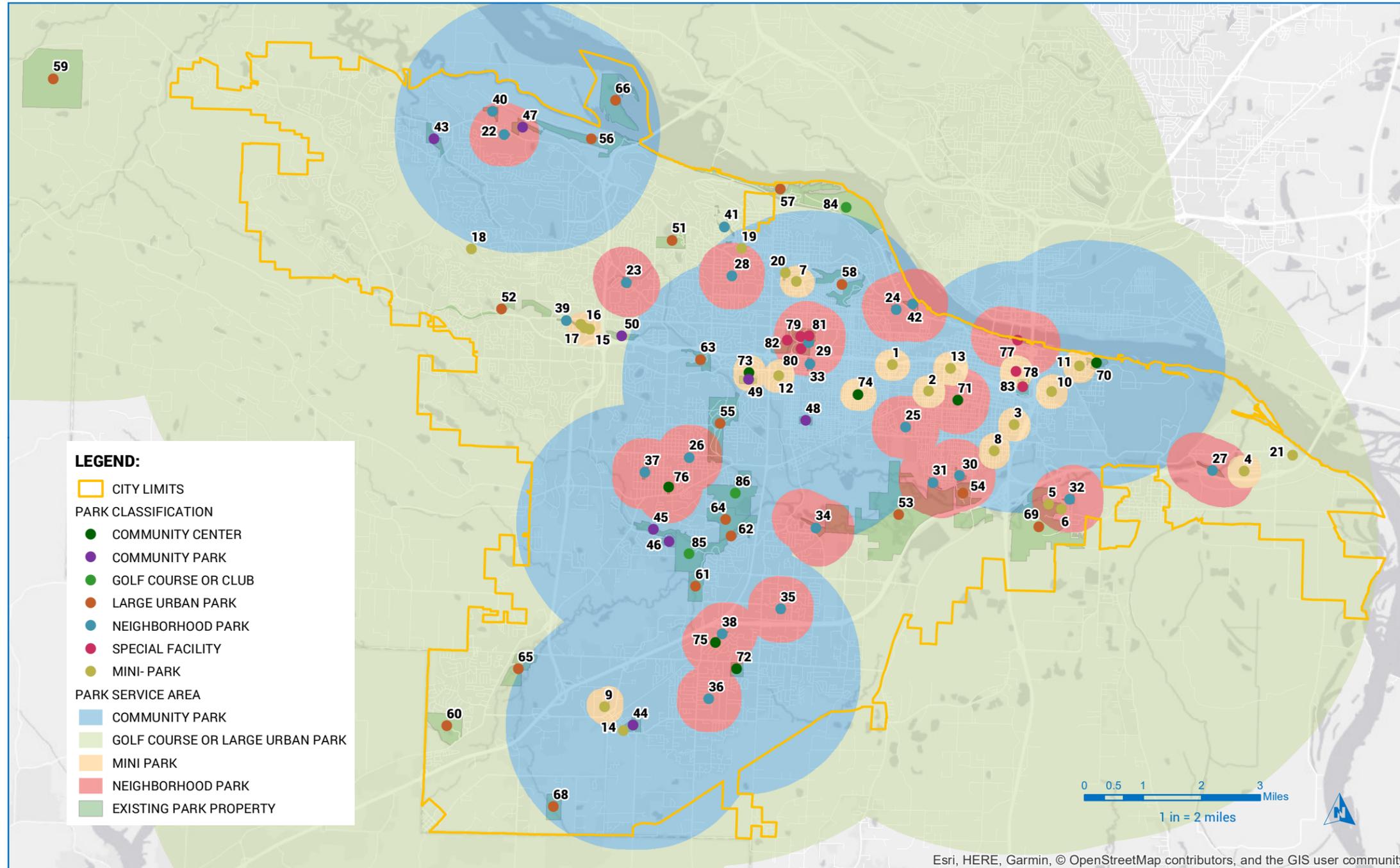
FIGURE 6.1 Existing Parks



- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Mini-Park | Large Urban Park |
| 1 Fletcher | 51 Reservoir |
| 2 Centennial | 52 Rock Creek |
| 3 Pettaway | 53 Fourche Bottoms |
| 4 Richland | 54 Interstate |
| 5 Booker Homes | 55 Boyle |
| 6 Granite Mountain | 56 River Mountain |
| 7 Prospect Terrace | 57 Murray |
| 8 South Little Rock | 58 Allsopp |
| 9 Pinedale Cove | 59 Section 13 |
| 10 Hanger Hill | 60 Otter Creek |
| 11 Cheatem | 61 Hindman South |
| 12 Oak Forest | 62 Hindman Community |
| 13 Ninth Street | 63 Kanis |
| 14 Morehart South | 64 Western Hills |
| 15 Unnamed | 65 Terry Park |
| 16 Unnamed | 66 Two Rivers |
| 17 Birchwood | 67 Natural Steps |
| 18 Bell Pointe | 68 Alexander |
| 19 Kingwood | 69 Gillam |
| 20 Hillside | Community Center |
| 21 Fletcher-Baldwin | 70 East Little Rock |
| Neighborhood Park | 71 Dunbar |
| 22 Pankey | 72 Southwest |
| 23 Butler | 73 The Centre at UAP |
| 24 Knoop | 74 Stephens Community Center |
| 25 Barton | 75 Ottenheimer Center |
| 26 Union | 76 West Central Sports Comp |
| 27 Rimmel | Special Facility |
| 28 Meriwether | 77 Riverfront |
| 29 Jim Dailey Fitness Center | 78 Terry Mansion |
| 30 Crump | 79 War Memorial Park |
| 31 Southside | 80 Zoo |
| 32 Granite Heights | 81 War Memorial Stadium |
| 33 Jonesboro Island | 82 War Memorial Golf Course |
| 34 Benny Craig | 83 Macarthur |
| 35 Wakefield | Golf Course or Club |
| 36 Thom | 84 Rebsamen Golf Course |
| 37 Kiwanis | 85 Hindman Golf |
| 38 Ottenheimer Park | 86 First Tee Golf |
| 39 Unnamed | |
| 40 Candlewood Park | |
| 41 Unnamed | |
| 42 Junior Deputy | |
| Community Park | |
| 43 Taylor Loop | |
| 44 Morehart | |
| 45 Brodie Creek | |
| 46 North West Hindman | |
| 47 Conner | |
| 48 Curran Conway | |
| 49 Rebsamen Tennis Center | |
| 50 Weedman Park | |

Esri, HERE, Garmin, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community

FIGURE 6.2 Gap Analysis



- Mini-Park**
 - 1 Fletcher
 - 2 Centennial
 - 3 Pettaway
 - 4 Richland
 - 5 Booker Homes
 - 6 Granite Mountain
 - 7 Prospect Terrace
 - 8 South Little Rock
 - 9 Pinedale Cove
 - 10 Hanger Hill
 - 11 Cheatem
 - 12 Oak Forest
 - 13 Ninth Street
 - 14 Morehart South
 - 15 Unnamed
 - 16 Unnamed
 - 17 Birchwood
 - 18 Bell Pointe
 - 19 Kingwood
 - 20 Hillside
- Neighborhood Park**
 - 21 Fletcher-Baldwin
 - 22 Pankey
 - 23 Butler
 - 24 Knoop
 - 25 Barton
 - 26 Union
 - 27 Rimmel
 - 28 Meriwether
 - 29 Jim Dailey Fitness Center
 - 30 Crump
 - 31 Southside
 - 32 Granite Heights
 - 33 Jonesboro Island
 - 34 Benny Craig
 - 35 Wakefield
 - 36 Thom
 - 37 Kiwanis
 - 38 Ottenheimer Park
 - 39 Unnamed
 - 40 Candlewood Park
 - 41 Unnamed
 - 42 Junior Deputy
 - 43 Taylor Loop
 - 44 Morehart
 - 45 Brodie Creek
 - 46 North West Hindman
 - 47 Conner
 - 48 Curran Conway
 - 49 Rebsamen Tennis Center
 - 50 Weedman Park
- Large Urban Park**
 - 51 Reservoir
 - 52 Rock Creek
 - 53 Fourche Bottoms
 - 54 Interstate
 - 55 Boyle
 - 56 River Mountain
 - 57 Murray
 - 58 Allsopp
 - 59 Section 13
 - 60 Otter Creek
 - 61 Hindman South
 - 62 Hindman Community
 - 63 Kanis
 - 64 Western Hills
 - 65 Terry Park
 - 66 Two Rivers
 - 67 Natural Steps
 - 68 Alexander
 - 69 Gillam
- Community Center**
 - 70 East Little Rock
 - 71 Dunbar
 - 72 Southwest
 - 73 The Centre at UAP
 - 74 Stephens Community Center
 - 75 Ottenheimer Center
 - 76 West Central Sports Comp
- Special Facility**
 - 77 Riverfront
 - 78 Terry Mansion
 - 79 War Memorial Park
 - 80 Zoo
 - 81 War Memorial Stadium
 - 82 War Memorial Golf Course
 - 83 Macarthur
- Golf Course or Club**
 - 84 Rebsamen Golf Course
 - 85 Hindman Golf
 - 86 First Tee Golf



Little Rock is served by a wide variety of parks and park facilities, ranging from small neighborhood parks to War Memorial Park, which is a major park that includes a variety of regional attractions. The age of the parks varies widely as many of the parks have been developed over time as the city has grown. The highest concentration of parks is located in and around the historic downtown and to the north central section of the city. In this section of the city, there is overlapping service of both community and neighborhood parks. The next best served area is south central Little Rock where a number of neighborhood and community parks provide overlapping service areas.

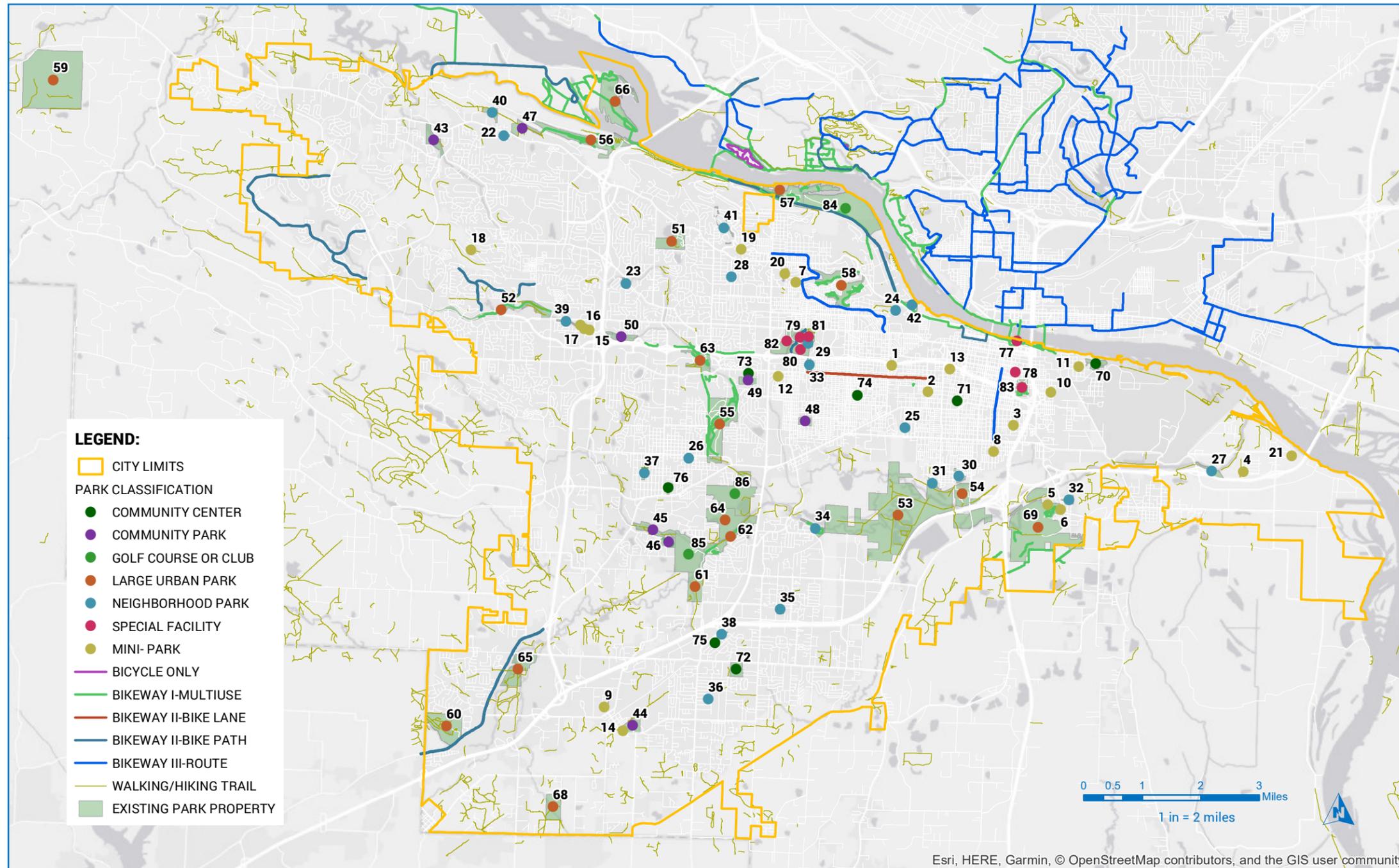
Areas to the east along the interstate are some of the least served sections of the city. This is most notable east of I-30 and north of I-440. While there are a number of parks, the residential areas are fragmented by railroads, the airport and interstate highways which can be barriers for residents that depend on walking or biking as primary forms of transportation. It appears the area around the airport is transitioning away from residential land uses. If this is true, Cheatham and East Little Rock Parks may need to be evaluated for how effective these facilities serve the area.

Western portions of Little Rock appear to have adequate access to large urban parks. However, Community and Neighborhood Park service is somewhat limited, meaning that residents must travel further than desired to access these types of parks.

Gap Analysis - Greenways

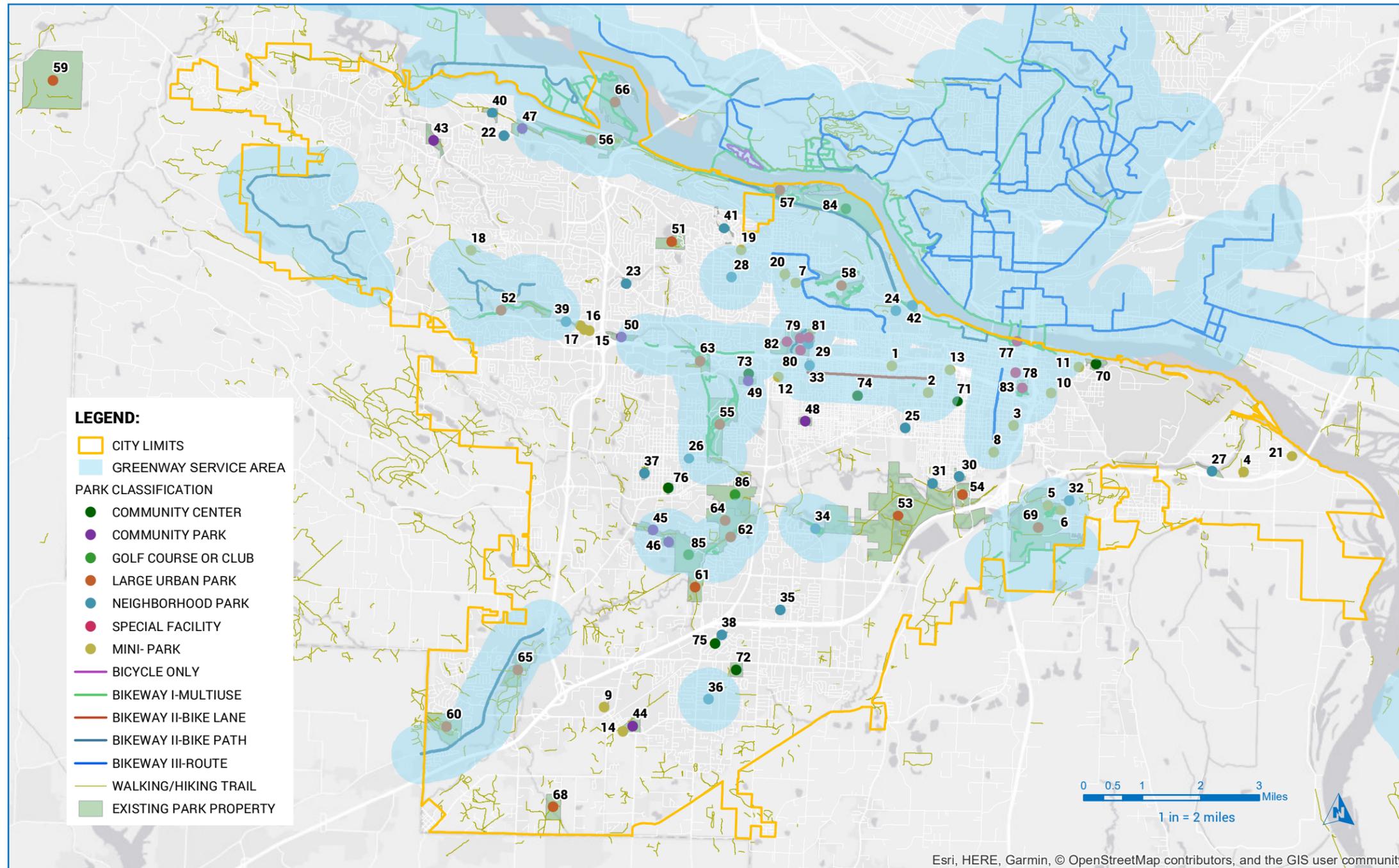
The network of trails is extensive and includes a variety of trail types that accommodate walkers and runners, as well as, cyclists of all abilities. While extensive, the system is disconnected. Figures 6.3 and 6.4 illustrate the current trail network and 0.25-mile service areas. Throughout the community engagement process, citizens have voiced a strong desire for additional green-way development. Existing greenways were observed to be very popular attractions for recreational walkers and cyclists, as well as, serious runners and cyclists. Existing greenway facilities provide strong service along the Arkansas River and downtown. Other segments of greenway are provided in the western portions of the community.

FIGURE 6.3 Existing Trails and Greenways



- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Mini-Park | Large Urban Park |
| 1 Fletcher | 51 Reservoir |
| 2 Centennial | 52 Rock Creek |
| 3 Pettaway | 53 Fourche Bottoms |
| 4 Richland | 54 Interstate |
| 5 Booker Homes | 55 Boyle |
| 6 Granite Mountain | 56 River Mountain |
| 7 Prospect Terrace | 57 Murray |
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| Community Park | |
| 43 Taylor Loop | |
| 44 Morehart | |
| 45 Brodie Creek | |
| 46 North West Hindman | |
| 47 Conner | |
| 48 Curran Conway | |
| 49 Rebsamen Tennis Center | |
| 50 Weedman Park | |

FIGURE 6.4 Proposed Parks and Greenways Service Area



- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Mini-Park | Large Urban Park |
| 1 Fletcher | 51 Reservoir |
| 2 Centennial | 52 Rock Creek |
| 3 Pettaway | 53 Fourche Bottoms |
| 4 Richland | 54 Interstate |
| 5 Booker Homes | 55 Boyle |
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| 46 North West Hindman | |
| 47 Conner | |
| 48 Curran Conway | |
| 49 Rebsamen Tennis Center | |
| 50 Weedman Park | |



LRPR is ahead of national averages in acres of park land and basketball courts.

General Park Condition, Assessments and Recommendations

In Table 6.2 on page 6.9, a comparison of LRPR facilities to national averages is provided. For some facilities such as youth and adult softball fields, it is hard to draw direct comparisons with other communities because there is no reference as to how many facilities in each community host both adult and youth activities on the same fields. Another area that is hard to make comparison is indoor recreation facilities because communities give them different names. As an example, Jim Daily Fitness and Aquatic Center is listed in the inventory as a Fitness Center. In other communities, it could be called a community or recreation center since it has multiple activities at one location. What is clear from a review of the national averages when compared to LRPR is there is a shortage of

athletic fields of all types in the system. Currently, there are no synthetic turf multi-purpose fields and the average for a city the size of Little Rock is 5. Many communities across the country are moving to synthetic fields to increase access to fields and to reduce maintenance that comes with synthetic fields. In terms of soccer and baseball/softball fields, LRPR lags well behind the national averages. Gym space is another area where the city falls short of national averages.

Other non-sports areas where LRPR are deficient on facilities includes dog parks, outdoor pools and outdoor performance venues. When nature trails are separated from paved greenway trails, the city is behind in paved trails. In the area of growing sports like lacrosse, field

hockey and cricket, LRPR currently has few fields for these activities. Conversely LRPR is ahead of national averages in acres of park land and basketball courts. LRPR is right on the average for community centers.

In addition to being behind national averages, many of LRPR facilities are old and in poor condition reflective of twenty plus years of little to no preventative maintenance operating funds. Other facilities are not designed to meet current design trends that lend themselves to supporting tournament activities and minimization of staff required to operate facilities. These factors are discussed more in the following topic specific assessments.



Golf

Hindman and War Memorial Golf Courses

Hindman and War Memorial Golf Courses were closed in 2019 to address the surplus number of golf facilities in the LRPR system.

The Hindman Clubhouse could be re-purposed as a center for outdoor recreation. Cart paths could be converted to walking trails and lakes used for fishing and other activities.

War Memorial Golf Course served many generations of golfers. Now a new vision is needed to define how this property should now serve the community. A feasibility study should be conducted for the War Memorial property to determine best future uses.

The evolution of these previously treasured special use golf properties to new and innovative community and region-wide attractions may provide for increased visitation and revenue generating opportunities when designed to meet current recreation and leisure needs.

Rebsamen Golf Course

The primary issues at Rebsamen Golf Course are the age of the clubhouse and support facilities. Working with a golf course architect, a master plan should be developed to replace the clubhouse and support-

ing training facilities to maximize revenue generation at the course. Considerations for the clubhouse should include **a quality kitchen and dining area for hosting events**. The master plan should explore the possibility of developing **twelve soccer fields and associated parking and support facilities utilizing a section of the short nine golf holes**.

First Tee of Central Arkansas at the Jack Stephens Youth Golf Academy

LRPR took operational control of this facility in 2019. It is recommended the First Tee course become the home for golf operations for these three properties. The consolidation of golf staff to one facility will allow for more robust golf programming opportunities with fewer overall staff members. Maintenance staff numbers for golf will also be reduced and staff can be reassigned to other overall park maintenance duties

It is further recommended that the par 3 course remain in its current configuration along with the training area. Using the balance of the site and the other two sites, a new 18-hole regulation course should be developed. The goal of the re-development would be to construct a modern course that maximizes the use of high ground to reduce the

days of play lost to flooding. The reconstruction would present the city with the opportunity to increase flood storage in areas that are no longer used for golf. It would also open the property not used for golf for other neighborhood and community recreation opportunities.



Athletic Facilities

Baseball/Softball Facility

LRPR currently has 3 multi-field baseball/softball complexes. They are located at Interstate Park, Junior Deputy and West Central

Athletic Complex. At each of these complexes, the facilities are in poor condition and have numerous ADA access issues. With the exception of Interstate Park, the layout of fields makes using them as tournament sites difficult and increases required maintenance. There are also circulation conflicts and parking concerns. For additional detailed reviews see individual park reviews. While there are some field turf issues at each complex, the turf is probably the best aspect of each field in terms of overall condition. Total replacement of these facilities is recommended with Junior Deputy and Interstate Park being recommended for relocation to accommodate use and programming of Fourche Creek Park with proposed Trails and Canoe Trails.

The balance of baseball/softball fields are primarily individual fields that are not programmed as game fields. Many of these fields are used for practice and open play areas in smaller parks. These fields have similar condition and access issues. Parks programming staff should work with parks planning

staff to prioritize the renovation of these fields. The ones that get the most use should receive upgrades first and those that receive little programmed use should be converted to open space or other uses. Primary upgrades should address safety and ADA access issues.

Uniform design standards should be developed as part of the redevelopment process. By utilizing design standards, maintenance operations can be streamlined, irrigation and other equipment attic stock can be reduced, and operation of field lighting equipment standardized. Irrigation and sports lighting systems should have centralized control systems that allow staff to monitor systems from their computer or smart phone.

Soccer/Multi-use Rectangular Fields

LRPR has soccer/ multi-use fields at Interstate, Otter Creek, Murray, and Natural Steps parks. As with the baseball/softball fields, there are a series of serious condition issues at each of these facilities. Turf on the fields is in poor condition from over-use and lack of adequate preventative maintenance on the fields. Even Otter Creek, which is the newest facility, has serious turf wear issues. There are access issues getting from parking areas to fields and in

many cases, the supporting parking and site improvements are in disrepair.

The fields at Interstate park should be redeveloped at a new location. The other smaller complexes should be completely redeveloped. Fields need to be reconditioned by deep tine aeration, regraded and top-dressed with a minimum of 2" of sand and new turf installed. All fields should have fully functioning irrigation systems and modern sports lighting to maximize play. Parking and sidewalks need to be repaired or replaced to create required access routes to each field.

A redevelopment plan should be developed for Otter Creek to take advantage of the available land. A redevelopment concept has been provided on page 6.22 of this section.



Tennis Courts, Playgrounds, Sidewalks and Parking Areas

Throughout the park system, there are properties that feature tennis and basketball courts, playgrounds, sidewalks and trail networks and parking lots that are in poor condition. With the exception of Rebsamen Tennis Center, the tennis courts in most parks are unplayable. Basketball courts are in equally poor condition. While there are some newer playgrounds in some parks, many of the playgrounds need to be replaced along with the playground safety surface. Many of the parking lots are in poor condition and some have been closed. Parking lots also need hard surface access paths that connect to park features to comply with ADA standards.

LRPR needs to develop a plan to address all the deferred maintenance issues with these items. Parks receiving the highest use should be given the highest priority for repairs. Park planning staff should develop a five-year capital plan for deferred maintenance items and to address compliance and safety issues for each facility. Planning staff should also identify facilities that have become obsolete based on changing use patterns of the parks and determine which facilities should not be repaired and rather removed from the system.

The Rebsamen Tennis Complex should be developed to include indoor courts. It is suggested that 6 courts be enclosed with a bubble or a new indoor complex should be built to include support facilities and a concessions area for patrons. Parking should be expanded to accommodate the anticipated increase in users.



Park Buildings

Most park buildings are somewhat dated and many appeared to require significant maintenance. This is especially true of picnic shelters and restroom buildings in neighborhood and community parks. Restrooms buildings in particular are of a unique octagonal design that may be problematic for individuals in wheelchairs.

Greenways and Trail Expansion

Throughout the community engagement process, citizens have voiced a strong desire for additional greenway development. Existing greenways were observed to be very popular attractions for recreational walkers and cyclist, as well as, serious runners and cyclists. Existing greenway facilities provide strong service along the Arkansas River and downtown. Other segments of greenway are provided in the western portions of the community. These segments should be connected. By doing so, the connected greenway will act as a stand-alone recreational facility while providing improved access to Community and Neighborhood Parks for western Little Rock residents.

A quick assessment of these stream corridors reveals that many of the existing parks can be connected by utilizing these otherwise difficult to develop areas. To provide improved access to parks, new greenways should be developed to connect Alexander to Terry Park; Terry Park to Hindman South; Hindman South to Benny Craig through Western Hills. This route would primarily serve the southwest portion of the community.

A second area of greenway development should be from the existing trails on Chenal Parkway through Kanis Park to Boyle Park. From Boyle Park, the greenway would follow Rock Creek and then Fourche Creek to Benny Craig Park where it could intersect the previously discussed route and continue on to Fourche Bottoms and additional residential areas like the South End neighborhood near Interstate or Crump Park.

A connected greenway will act as a stand-alone recreational facility while providing improved access to Community and Neighborhood Parks.



New Facility Development

A master plan to redevelop Otter Creek into a more complete Sports and Community Park was developed. The plan calls for additional soccer fields, an additional fishing lake, expanded parking and community park facilities.

Nat Hill Athletic Complex

The Nat Hill area is experiencing a rebirth with many new projects online for development. Interstate Park has been recommended for replacement and this area lends itself to meet that future use. An adult softball complex with support facilities should be constructed in this park to accommodate future users. The Southeast Trail should be extended through the park to the Lock and Dam number 6.

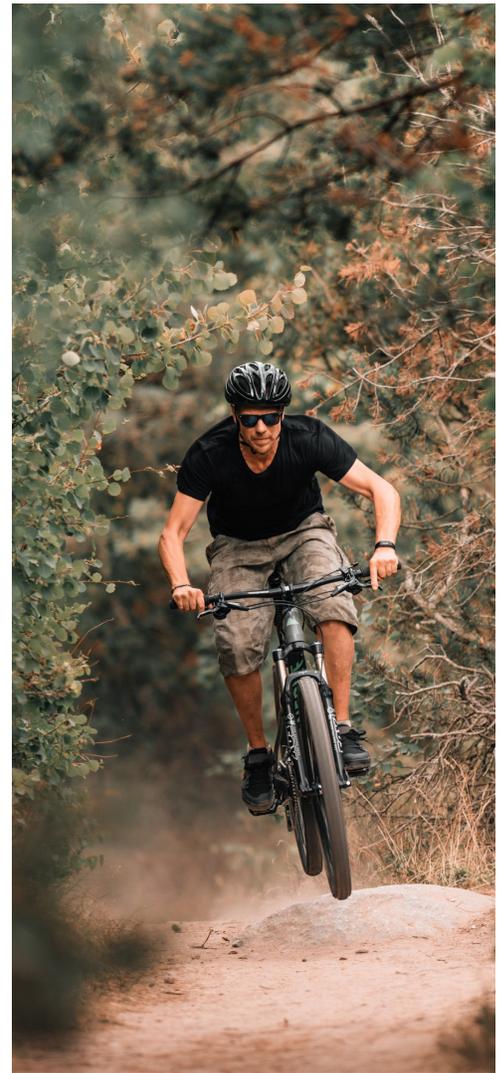
Green Infrastructure

It is well documented that the impact of a good trail system on quality of life and marketability of a community to perspective new businesses is a critical factor when making relocation decisions. Growth brought on by new business helps sustain existing private enterprises and creates new job opportunities, too. Outside of developing a strong population base, trails also attract visitors from all over the region which enhances businesses such as hotels, restaurants and businesses that cater to the biking/walking industries. Another aspect of trails that is growing strong is downhill mountain biking. Little Rock possesses many attractive and challenging terrains that can rival other downhill mountain biking trails across the country.

In addition, it has been demonstrated in Neighborhood Plans developed by neighborhood associations across Little Rock that trails are highly desired. In the survey process, trails and the development of water trails were very favorable by respondents.

A latent opportunity waiting to be realized with trails is the idea to acquire enough acreage for green infrastructure to not only accommodate trails, but to also address the unfortunate waste, sediment and hydrocarbons that reach our streams. With all the impervious surfaces that come from building cities, there are a lot of toxins and floatable trash carried by an increase in water volume that enters our streams and affects their health, and as a consequence, citizens' health. A harsh fact to know is that the first hour of an urban stormwater runoff has a pollution index much higher than that of raw sewage.

It is recommended that staff from Public Works and Planning join up with Parks and Recreation to see what strategies can be implemented to begin to address runoff problems.



Regenerative Agriculture

In light of numerous signals affecting supply/delivery of healthy foods to targeted audiences and at reasonable costs and in light of the agricultural industry's impact on the nation's lands and waterways, there is an opportunity to coalesce the central parts of Arkansas' food industry into an holistic system that is less dependent on outside resources and become more sustainable, reliable and resilient to market forces and climate changes. The program must include all facets of the food system from seed to fork.

Anticipated outcomes will be connecting community supported agriculture to consumers, minimizing food insecurity, improving delivery of healthy foods to food deserts, increasing education platforms, reducing impact on ecosystems with job creation and a more robust local economy. Developing relationships and partnerships with institutions and individuals knowledgeable in regenerative agriculture can assist in defining challenges/opportunities. These relationships cooperating at multiple scales can deliver downstream jobs with living wages and fair working hours, sustainable food production management practices and a healthier community and environment.

A planning committee of Central Arkansas with representation from all sectors that enable the delivery of food from seed to fork, can build the community's program capacity. After some growth in the program, it may even be of value to consider a food policy council to formalize the working relationships and maintain goals of regenerative agriculture, seed banking, food production and processing, distribution, access, marketing, education, job creation, community development, and waste recycling and management.

New Multi-Gym Facility

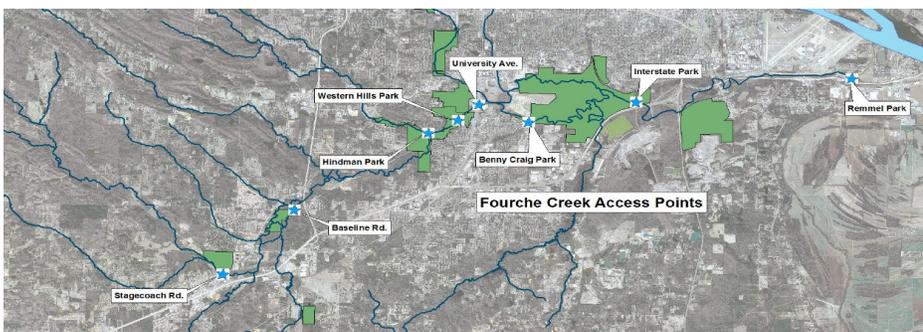
An indoor multi-sport tournament facility has been recommended as an economic development driver for the City of Little Rock. The general scope of the recommended new indoor multi-sport facility includes:

- 8 to 10 tournament quality basketball courts (or 16 to 20 volleyball courts) that provide a critical mass of competitive floor space that can accommodate a wide variety of sports activities
- Flexible design that is divisible and can adequately accommodate multiple, simultaneous events, including court dividers
- Spectator seating should be offered and, ideally, a minimum of 2,500 seats up to a maximum of 4,000 retractable seats (which can be augmented by portable, temporary bleachers) for a championship court setting
- Consistent lighting for all courts which should implement energy conservation measures
- Adequate, convenient on-site parking and appropriate parking management to accommodate heavy tournament traffic flow
- Restrooms, concessions stands, and Wi-Fi service
- Merchandise/pro shop area
- Registration area
- Locker rooms/lounges for teams and officials
- On-site storage space for the facility and equipment
- Administrative space for facility management
- Flex space that can be used for meeting/breakout rooms, hospitality/VIP areas, media/interview room, banquet space
- Open space used for team gathering areas and warm-ups
- Charging stations and/or electrical outlets throughout facility
- Scoreboards with timing systems on each court
- Backboards, net systems, and support equipment for major event uses
- PA System

This facility would be a significant addition to competitive and recreational athletic offerings in Little Rock

Blueways

The abundance of waterways in Little Rock provides great opportunities for blueway development. Fourche Creek and its tributaries are important ecological and recreational amenities which should be further developed. Public input conducted as part of this study identified canoeing and kayaking as the most desired recreational activity. While access to these creeks exists in some locations, a blueway masterplan should be developed to identify access points and wayfinding devices in order to increase utilization of this one of a kind recreation opportunity.



Fourche Creek Access

Splash pads

Aquatics offerings in Little Rock are very limited. Splash pads offer access to water based recreation at a lower construction and maintenance cost than a full aquatic center. These should be located in Community Parks with adequate parking when possible. The splash pad at War Memorial Park is an exemplary facility to replicate elsewhere.



Splash Pad at War Memorial Park



At least one member of the park staff should maintain a playground safety certification (Certified Playground Safety Inspector, CPSI) to monitor playground conditions.

Playground Surfacing

Playground surfaces appear to vary across the park system and include mulch, pea gravel and rubberized surfaces. As playgrounds are added to the system and older equipment is updated, researchers recommend using poured-in-place rubber surfacing. While it has a high initial cost, it has a lower maintenance cost and eliminates the need for annual material costs required with a wood chip surface.

Playground Equipment

Playground equipment throughout the park system ranges from new equipment to equipment that is over 20 years old. Most of the older playground equipment was in poor condition and in need of replacement. Strong consideration should be given to consolidating play equipment into large groupings of equipment with a proper edging system and poured-in-place rubber surfacing that meets playground safety standards.

Playground Edging

Playground edging varied from park to park. Many edging systems have been compromised by erosion over time and in need of repair or replacement. This issue should improve as playgrounds transition to poured in place rubber surfacing.

Sport Field Chain-Link Fencing

Throughout the parks and particularly at the older parks, there is old chain-link fencing around sports fields that are no longer used as game facilities. All this fencing is in poor condition and should be removed from the parks as the fencing is creating safety hazards and is unsightly.

Fencing at ball fields, which is still in use, is also in disrepair. Common fencing issues include the following:

- Line poles that are separated from the end cap where they are joined to post
- Damaged backstops
- Missing bottom rails
- Fencing that is curling up at the ground
- Gates with no latches

Sports Field Lighting

Most of the light poles for sports lighting in the parks are wooden poles. Many of these poles are old and in need of replacement. At some of the older sports fields that are used for practice, the poles are creating safety hazards due to their condition. Strong consideration should be given as to which practice fields will be lit and at those locations new steel poles with dark sky lighting should be installed. At older fields that will not be lit, the poles should be removed along with the electrical service to the poles.

TURF MAINTENANCE

The level of turf maintenance varies widely throughout the park system. Most of the sports fields used for games have high quality turf. Outside of the game fields, the turf ranges from fair to poor quality. Many areas with heavy shade have no grass at all. A better turf management program should be developed and implemented throughout the park system. A study should be conducted to identify areas that need to be open, but not for general access. These areas should go into a native plant program that will not only enhance the aesthetic experience of park users, but it will also enhance both soil and woodland understory and the species that live in them.

COURT SURFACING

Overall, court surfacing was a consistent issue throughout the system. Basketball and tennis facilities are unplayable at many parks due to these conditions. These issues will require significant repairs the next time the courts are resurfaced.

Site Improvements and Facility Standards

Many site improvement elements in the parks, such as site furnishings, sidewalks and signage, are in disrepair and in need of replacement. A common element in the parks is the presence of older picnic tables and benches that need to be removed. Other parks have concrete stairs and sidewalks that need to be replaced. Many of the pavilions need repairs. Many bleacher seats are not properly secured and are missing end caps.

When designing improvements and developing future parks, Little Rock parks and recreation facilities would benefit from an overall unified look that can be achieved through the use of standard signage, site furnishings, and architectural materials. A standard signage and site furnishings palette would create a consistent look and ease maintenance coordination. A unified site furnishings package, including commercial-grade trash receptacles, tables and benches, standardized fencing materials, water fountains, street and security light fixtures, internal park signage and other common site equipment, should be established. The basis for creating a strong park facility image is the utilization of design guidelines and standards that allow a visitor to identify a park immediately by the elements that are present there. Development of a set of facility design standards is highly recommended.





Signage

A signage program is needed throughout the park system. This program will help to identify different facilities within the parks, direct users within larger parks and provide other valuable information in a consistent style. Regulatory signs, rules signs, etc. have been placed over many years as the parks have developed. A signage program should evaluate the existing signs, placement and resolve any potentially conflicting information.

Directional signage, entry/identification signage and signs within parks are critical elements. Directional signs locating parks should be placed along major thoroughfares to alert potential users to the presence of a park in the vicinity. Park sign programs can be implemented into an existing community-wide wayfinding programs or as an independent program.

The larger parks should have wayfinding maps and directional signs near parking areas to guide users to individual park facilities. Consistency in signage styles and materials should also be applied to the parks' internal signage. This helps reinforce a park's identity as a Prattville facility, and reduces maintenance costs by standardizing the equipment and materials used to install and maintain the signs.

Drainage and Erosion Control

Many of the parks have drainage and erosion control issues, which are creating maintenance issues and are distracting from the visual appearance of the parks. In some locations, ditches lack headwalls and there is erosion occurring at the entrance and exit of the pipes. Other problem areas are sloping embankments in the parks and damage to turf where maintenance crews and/or others are driving in the parks.

Fencing Standard

From visiting the parks and discussing with city staff, researchers know there is an issue with unauthorized vehicles driving throughout the parks. While there are various solutions, such as boulders, rounded wood bollards, etc., the planning team recommends establishing a standard method that is relatively inexpensive but effective. Future maintenance should be considered as well. A simple black post and chain application is one method that can easily be incorporated into most parks regardless of size. LRPR should develop a standard appropriate system-wide.

