



**CITY OF COVINGTON
PARKS, RECREATION
& OPEN SPACE
INVENTORY ASSESSMENT**

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Forward

The City of Covington's Park and Recreation System is an important asset to the present and future viability of the city as a thriving economic center within the Greater Cincinnati region. Parks do much more than improve the quality of life of local residents. A healthy, thriving park system strengthens communities and enriches the economy of a city by making its neighborhoods more vibrant and attractive places to live and work. In doing so, parks play a vital role in promoting new private investment, increasing property values, city revenues, and also attracting new businesses and residents. ***Bottom line, parks are a good financial investment for the city!***

Background

The city of Covington has a robust park system featuring a wide variety of recreation opportunities and amenities. As of April 11, 2016, The City of Covington had approximately 990 acres of parkland and open space distributed into 40 facilities dispersed throughout the city. These parks range in scale from small playgrounds to Devou Park, a regional attraction located on over 700 acres overlooking the downtown areas of Covington, Cincinnati, and Newport.

The City of Covington is responsible for the operation and maintenance of 30 facilities containing a total area of nearly 200 acres. Ten of the parks, accounting for 794 acres of parkland and open space, are owned or operated by public or private organizations as well as nonprofit entities or schools. While this assessment does not make specific recommendations for facilities that are not operated or maintained by the City, it does take them into account. This report examines the recreation amenities provided at these facilities as contributing recreational amenities in the city.

Purpose

This assessment is intended to guide and prioritize improvements and investments into facilities owned and maintained by the City of Covington. This assessment is designed to help City staff make important future decisions regarding parks and recreation. This document contains recommendations that can be applied to the complete park and recreation system within the City as well as specific recommendations intended for an individual facility.

Assessment Development Process

This document is the result of multiple efforts to create an assessment that incorporates input from the public and city staff to combine local knowledge and institutional history for the betterment of Covington. The research and associated final report has been prepared by Planning and Development Services (PDS) staff in conjunction with City Staff. The involvement of PDS in the development of the assessment is part of an effort to implement the recommendations of *Direction 2030, Your Voice, Your Choice*, Kenton County's newly adopted Comprehensive Plan.

A comprehensive effort was made to obtain information to serve as the basis for this document. The assessment process included an inventory of all park assets and facilities within the city, a digital survey for public input, a demographic analysis of specific park facilities, extensive research on best management practices and a comparative analysis utilizing National Park and Recreation Association software to benchmark Covington park facilities against those in similar cities. During the assessment process a website, rivercityparks.org was created to host the public input survey as well as to display information about the location and amenities provided at each park

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facility within the city. More detailed information about the development of this assessment is provided in the following pages. The specific findings of each data inventory and analysis component associated with this assessment process can be found in the Technical Information report of this assessment. An overview of each component is provided in the following sections.

Park, Recreation, and Open Space Facilities Inventory

An inventory of all 40 park facilities located within the city was conducted in the spring of 2015 during the months of April and May. Project staff visited each site to evaluate the condition of the existing park equipment, the types of recreation amenities provided, and the overall layout, design, and aesthetic qualities of each facility. The data collected was also displayed within a dynamic map at rivercityparks.org, an online platform used during the assessment process to seek public input. During the inventory, project staff also consulted with the Covington Police Department to collect and analyze 911 phone calls and response data to determine which parks experience high levels of crime and other unwanted behaviors. More detailed information about the findings of the survey can be found in the Technical Information section of this report.

Public Survey & Website

The *Help Plan Your Parks Survey* was conducted in the summer of 2015 between July and September. The survey was created and administered using SurveyMonkey® digital software. The purpose of the survey was to evaluate satisfaction with recreation facilities, frequency of use, satisfaction of visits, and the importance of facilities.

Extensive public awareness efforts were made by project staff to promote the digital survey and the assessment process. Articles were publicized in the *River City News* as well as the on the front page of the *Northern Kentucky Enquirer* in July, 2015. Signage was placed in each park and in prominent areas throughout the city promoting the survey. Over 5,000 flyers were also distributed to 10 schools, businesses, and larger residential complexes located in the City. A link to the survey was also posted on the landing page of www.rivercityparks.org. In total, there were 324 respondents to the survey. More detailed information about the findings of the survey can be found in the Technical Information section of this report.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Park Analysis

Planning Development Services (PDS) conducted a demographic analysis of specific parks using digital mapping data provided by LINK GIS and analytical software provided by ESRI. The analysis was conducted to better understand the demographics of the residents located within the specific service area of a park in order to better deliver future improvements, programs, and services. In total, the project team selected eight parks for analysis. Parks were selected based upon higher frequency of use, size, and potential for development or redevelopment. More detailed information about the findings can be found in the Technical Information section of this report.

PRORAGIS

The Parks and Recreation Operating Ratio and GIS (PRORAGIS) system is a tool used to collect and analyze data about parks and recreation agencies across the country. The online software allows users to compare themselves to other jurisdictions that they identify as similar to themselves –

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whether similar in geography, climate, size, or number of total employees. Users complete a survey that captures data about their agency and its responsibilities, and are then able to analyze their data and compare themselves to individual agencies or aggregated groups of agencies. The tool was designed by National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) to assist park and recreation professionals in the effective management and assessment of their resources and facilities.

PRORAGIS is a powerful tool that provides infinite ways to run reports and data to analyze. The project team used the software to benchmark the overall park, recreation, and open space system as well as specific aspects of the system with 31 similar jurisdictions in the PRORAGIS database. Each jurisdiction that was selected for comparison was a city with a population between 35,000 to 55,000 residents. More detailed information about the findings can be found in the Technical Information section of this report.

Research

Throughout the assessment process, research was conducted on current best practices and trends, individual park histories, and park assessment created and being implemented by other jurisdictions. Staff also conducted several phone calls with representatives of NRPA to discuss the development of the assessment as well as the utilization of the PRORAGIS tool. More detailed information about the findings can be found in the Bibliography located in the Technical Information section of this report.

Park Classifications

Park Classifications & Existing System Coverage

The National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines provides definitions for park classifications at a general level. While serving as a wide-ranging guide, the NRPA acknowledges each community is unique in terms of geographical, cultural, and socioeconomic make-up. As such, the NRPA advocates that a community or park agency should develop their own standards for recreation, parks, and open space using their definitions and recommendations as a guide.

The parks and facilities classifications within this document are based upon research on current best practices as well as NRPA guidelines: however, they have been further refined to address the specific needs of the City of Covington and its residents. The City of Covington classifications are as follows:

- Local Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Regional Park
- Resource Based Parks
- Trails and Walkways
- Median Parks
- Urban Plazas

The criteria used to define each of the park categories is as follows.

Local Parks

Local Parks are facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population area. They are small parks, frequently transformed from vacant, underutilized, or undevelopable urban land acquired by the city or groups like neighborhood associations. Examples of typical amenities that can be found in Local Parks include benches, picnic tables, gazebos,

playground equipment, landscape features and trash receptacles, among others.

Some local parks are memorials, specifically oriented toward commemorating the life or achievements of an individual or many people. These parks do not have any active recreation equipment and typically contain features such as dedication plaques, monuments, and sculptures.

Service Area

Local Parks have amenities that typically serve an area within a ¼ mile radius when located within traditional, built-up urban neighborhoods. However, there are certain local parks within the city that may draw people from a much greater area due to the specific location of the park or the type of features that the park offers. Examples include parks located along or near a river, parks with views, and parks featuring specific historical or cultural amenities. These parks that draw from outside the ¼ mile area have been designated with an asterisk (*) in the list of local parks.

Park Size

Due to the specialized nature of these parks, they range in size from only 8,500 square feet up to one-half of an acre.

City of Covington Local Parks

There are 12 parks in the City of Covington that are classified as Local Parks. They are as follows:

City Owned Parks

- Clayton Meyer Memorial Park ≈ 0.2 acres
- Father Hanses Park ≈ 0.3 acres
- George Rogers Clark Memorial Park and Gardens* ≈ 0.6 acres
- Lance Corporal Justin Sims Memorial Park ≈ 0.2
- Oakland Turnaround Park ≈ 0.6 acres

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- Peasleburg Little People’s Park ≈ 0.2 acres
- 19th Street Park ≈ 2.3 acres
- 35th and Carlisle Park ≈ 0.5 acres

Parks Owned or Maintained by External Organizations

- Garden of Hope* ≈ 1.2 acres
- John G. Carlisle Elementary School Playground ≈ 2.4 acres
- Latonia Cardinals Community Park ≈ 1.5 acres
- 6th District Elementary School Playground ≈ 0.7 acres

Park hours for local parks associated with schools as noted above, are subject to restrictions while school is in session.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks are the basic unit of a park system and serve as the recreational and social focus of neighborhood. These parks typically contain informal active and passive recreation amenities designed to serve neighborhood recreation needs. Typical park amenities include basic facilities found in local parks with the addition of sports fields/courts, open space areas, picnic shelters, pools, and public art.

Service Area

Neighborhood parks serve an area within ¼ to ½ mile radius uninterrupted by major roads or other barriers.

Park Size

The current size of Neighborhood Parks in the City of Covington range from very dense, smaller parks located on 0.4 acre parcels up to larger, more complex facilities located on sites containing 15.7 acres.

City of Covington Neighborhood Parks

There are 12 parks in the City of Covington that are classified as Neighborhood Parks. They are as follows:

City Owned Parks

- Annie Hargraves Park / Basil Lewis Park ≈ 0.4 acres
- Austinburg Park ≈ 1.9 acres
- Barb Cook Park ≈ 0.9 acres
- Eva Farris Sports Complex ≈ 15.7 acres
- Goebel Park / Kenny Shields Park / Sergeant Jason Bishop Lee Park* ≈ 13.3 acres
- Hands Pike Park ≈ 2.3 acres
- Randolph Park ≈ 3.2 acres
- Senator Gus Sheehan Park ≈ 10.4 acres
- 30th and Decoursey Park ≈ 2.2 acres

Parks Owned or Maintained by External Organizations

- Boys and Girls Club Park ≈ 2.5 acres
- Glenn O’Swing Park and Field ≈ 4.8 acres
- Meinken Park ≈ 6.7 acres

Some of the parks above denoted with an asterisk (*) would not be classified as a neighborhood park when evaluated on an individual basis. However, when examined on a larger scale with adjacent parks or those they directly abut, the combined area, proximity to one another, number and types of amenities provided are consistent with the description of a neighborhood park. For these reasons, some of the parks above have grouped together as one component, or complex, and have been reviewed within this assessment as a combined entity.

Park Classifications

Community Parks

Community Parks provide for the recreational needs of multiple neighborhoods. While community parks may include neighborhood park amenities and act as neighborhood parks, the focus of a community park is on meeting community-based recreation, athletics and open space needs. These parks may contain significant athletic complexes, walking paths and trail, splash parks, large open spaces, picnic areas, or various other active/passive amenities depending upon site suitability.

Service Area

Community Parks typically serve multiple neighborhoods. In some instances they provide special amenities, which serve the residents of the entire park system. A Community Park, is typically designated to serve an area within a ½ mile to over a 3 mile radius.

Park Size

The NRPA prefers community parks be 25 acres or more. In the City of Covington, Community Parks range in size from 46.4 acres to 54.8 acres.

City of Covington Community Parks

Two parks in the City of Covington are classified as Community Parks. They are as follows:

City Owned Parks

- Bill Cappel Sports Complex ≈ 54.8 acres

Parks Owned or Maintained by External Organizations

- Pioneer Park (Paw Park) ≈ 46.4 acres

Regional Parks

Regional Parks supplement a park system by serving broader citywide recreation needs. These parks contain a wide range of passive and active recreational amenities and can accommodate a large numbers of people. These parks often have large natural areas of undeveloped land and feature amenities with historical and cultural significance. Regional Parks tend to be destinations, generate tourism, and also have views or water access.

Service Area

Regional Parks have a broad service area ranging from immediate neighborhoods located within a ¼ mile up to communities located within a 5 mile radius or greater.

Park Size

There is one regional park in the City of Covington containing approximately 707 acres dedicated for recreation and open space.

City of Covington Regional Parks

Devou Park is currently classified as a Regional Parks. The Devou Park Advisory Committee (DPAC) was established by Board of Commissioners Order/Resolution No. O/R-18-96. It provides oversight for future park improvements as well as the maintenance of the physical structures of within the park.

Resource Based Parks

Resource based parks are oriented towards the preservation or protection of open spaces as well as the interpretation and promotion of natural and cultural resources. These types of parks play an important role in the park system as they provide numerous social, economic, and quality of life

Park Classifications

benefits to residents and visitors. There are currently three types of resource based parks in the City of Covington. Additional information about each of these parks is provided below.

Licking River Greenway & Trails

The Licking River Greenway and Trails is a multi-jurisdictional project that, when fully implemented, will connect the cities of Covington, Taylor Mill, Wilder, and Newport. This connection will be accomplished through a network of paved and unpaved trails located along both sides of the Licking River. When completed, the trail system will span 12-14 miles. The master assessment calls for the preservation of open space and natural lands within the project area. Assessments for the Licking River Greenway include connections to Riverfront Commons, a planned multi-purpose trail along the Ohio River. More detailed information about the project can be found at www.lickingrivertrail.org

Riverfront Commons

Riverfront Commons is a planned 11.5 mile paved walking / biking path. The trail will run along the Ohio River connecting the cities of Fort Thomas, Dayton, Bellevue, Newport, Covington, and Ludlow. Throughout the trail system there will be key areas, or nodes, which provide connections into adjacent communities. The Riverfront Commons master plan also identifies connections to the Licking River Greenway (see above). More detailed information about the project can be found at www.southbankpartners.com

Greenspace Parks

Greenspace Parks are undeveloped natural areas that are open to the public. These parks feature land areas that partly or completely covered with grass, trees, shrubs, or other natural vegetation

and features. If any amenities are provided they are typically minimal and consist of trash cans and benches. The 47th and Decoursey Park is currently the only greenspace park in the park system. It is owned and maintained by the city.

Trails & Walkways

The City of Covington contains several existing trails and walkways, aside from those associated with Riverfront Commons and the Licking River Greenway. These amenities provide for passive and active recreation opportunities and can include unpaved trails and surfaced trails. The location and length of each type of trail is listed below.

Unpaved Trails

There are three maintained unpaved trail systems located in the city of Covington. All of them are located in the Devou Park. These trails are as follows:

- The Backcountry Trails are currently an 11.5 mile, multi-trail system located along both sides of Sleepy Hollow Road. The trails are used for passive and active recreation activities including mountain biking, running, walking, and nature observation.
- The Benny Vastine Nature Trail is a 0.60 mile trail located off of Montague Road.
- The John Velz Nature Trail is a 0.5 mile trail located on the hillside near the overlook and pavilion area.

Surfaced Trails / Paved Walkways

There are a handful of parks that currently feature paved walkways. They are as follows:

- Devou Park contains a 2.3 mile surfaced trail that extends throughout the robust park connecting the many different areas within.

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- Pioneer Park contains a 1.8 mile surfaced trail that meanders throughout the linear park traversing the many natural features present along the way.
- Bill Cappel Sports Complex has a 0.9 mile surfaced trail located along the eastern periphery of the complex.
- Goebel Park has a 0.4 mile surfaced trail that connects it to George Steiner d
- 30th and Decoursey Park contains a 0.21 mile surface trail encircling the periphery of the park.
- Pride Park contains a 0.9 mile surface trail that meanders around the open space and amenities provided in the park. The trail is located in both the City of Covington and the City of Taylor Mill. Access to the park is provided from KY 16 in Taylor Mill.

Median Parks

Median parks are linear parks located in the median area of a street. They typically have amenities such as paved walkways, benches, trash receptacles, memorials, and landscape features. The size of a median park can range from small spaces for rest and contemplation to larger, wider medians used for social interaction and public gatherings. There are currently five median parks located in the city. They are as follows:

- BF Howard Memorial Commons ≈ 0.33 acres
- Clifford Street Islands ≈ 7,745 square feet
- George Steinfeld Park ≈ 0.9 acres
- Summit Street Island ≈ 0.3 acres
- 31st Street Island ≈ 0.3 acres

Urban Plazas

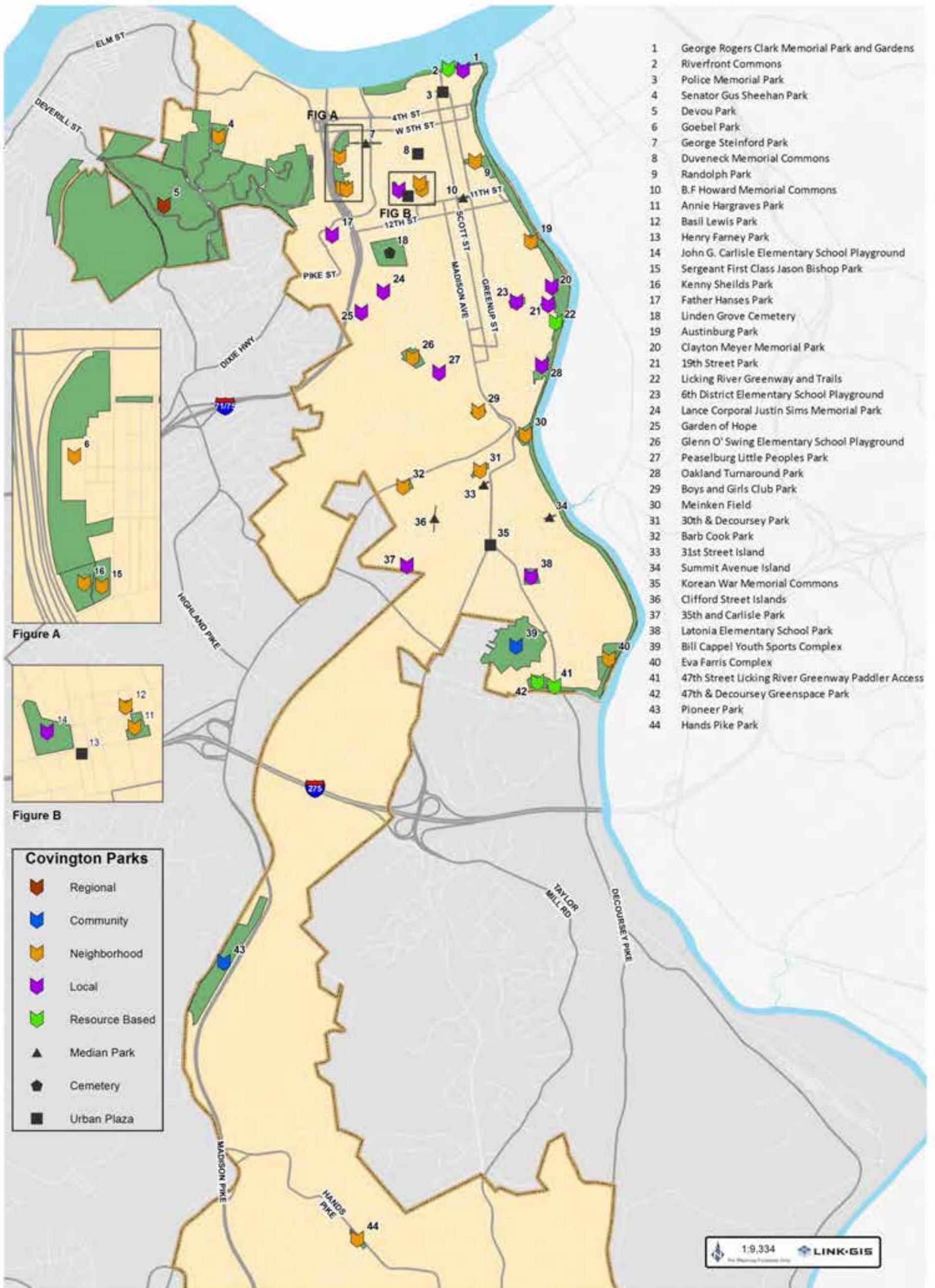
Urban Plazas are public areas within the city which serve as the focal point of a specific place or neighborhood. Typical amenities include monuments and dedication plaques, space for social interaction or events, landscape features, benches, and trash receptacles. There are currently two urban plazas located in the city. They are as follows:

- Duveneck Memorial Commons ≈ 1,755 square feet
- Henry Farney Memorial Commons ≈ 1,530 square feet
- Korean War Memorial ≈ 2,820 square feet
- Police Memorial ≈ 0.5 acres

Linden Grove Cemetery

The Linden Grove Cemetery, in operation since 1843, is located along the south side of West 13th Street in the Westside neighborhood of the city. Situated on 22.3 acres, the cemetery is the largest parcel of open space in the center city area of the city north of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The land is privately owned and provides passive recreation opportunities to visitors during limited hours.

Existing Facilities Map



Park System Recommendations

The recommendations within this section have been developed to address a number of aspects of the City of Covington Park and Recreation system. The recommendations were formed using data located in the Technical Information Section of this assessment. Many of these recommendations are written to promote ongoing activities that are important to the City of Covington while others are ideas that will help improve the park system on a variety of fronts. Each recommendation has been organized into one of the following:

- **Physical Park Planning**
- **Connectivity**
- **Programming**
- **Health**
- **Safety**
- **Maintenance**
- **Funding**

Some recommendations are expressed as action items while others a philosophical direction. The recommendations vary from general to very specific, as many are presented to provide guidance while others seek to address needs that are very specific.

Recommendations for improvements to specific parks and recreation facilities are found in later sections of this assessment.

Physical Park Planning

The primary function of the City of Covington Park System is to preserve and enhance the quality of life for residents through provision of parks, recreation programs, recreational facilities, trails, and open spaces. Ensuring the provision of passive and active recreation opportunities that meet the needs of residents is critical to a successful park system. In doing so, the City should look to provide high quality community recreation facilities that

are responsive to current trends and the city's specific recreation needs. A healthy park system should have facilities that provide year round recreation opportunities for city residents.

- Locate parks convenient to all residents of Covington. Residents in the urban areas of the city should have a park or connection to a trail system within a short distance of where they reside.
- Provide equitable park opportunities throughout the city by continuing to upgrade existing parks. These upgrades should meet new standards and provide opportunities for different age groups and abilities.
- Concentrate new investment into specific parks and equipment that will provide the most impact and benefit to residents. This approach will be more effective versus dispersing funding throughout the system creating a nominal impact at any specific park location.
- Continue to look for methods to supplement the park system with additional special use parks, open space, and trails. The City should also look to provide new types new equipment and facilities that correspond to the specific purpose of each park.
- Seek out opportunities and partnerships to provide funding for indoor facilities that offer a diverse range of activities and amenities to meet the passive and active recreation needs of residents throughout the year.
- Offer parks and facilities that are responsive to diverse age groups, recreation interests, and abilities. This recommendation can be accomplished by diversifying the types of

Park System Recommendations

amenities currently available in the park system to accommodate a variety of passive and active recreation functions.

- Embark on a program of district-wide improvements that utilize standardized furnishings, quality materials, enhanced landscaping, improved safety, wayfinding, athletic field improvements, and ADA compliance.
- Utilize green building products and technologies in building, and site development projects where applicable and feasible. This recommendation includes partnering with Sanitation District NO. 1, the Northern Kentucky Water District, or other organizations to identify and implement best management practice solutions to address stormwater management in parks.
- Track recreation trends, demographic changes, and changes in local interests to determine redevelopment needs of parks and facilities. This should be done through community events, social media, surveys, and the city website.
- Continue to cultivate and maintain avenues for input and feedback from those people or groups that are particularly interested in park and recreation issues and encourage their continued interest. In doing so, the City should evaluate the creation of an active committee or task force to assist in the assessment process for new park improvements.
- Create a “one-stop” website for residents dedicated to the City of Covington Park System featuring informative content such as park locations, facilities, amenities, programming

activities, and events.

Connectivity

Pedestrian and bicycle mobility is an important component to a thriving urban area. Providing well-defined corridors for pedestrians and bicyclists that connect them to major activity centers throughout the city is critical. Such corridors should provide an inviting and pleasant experience for pedestrian and bicyclists where accommodations for vehicular traffic should be secondary to the human experience. These connections are critical to maintaining and increasing the viability of new development and revitalization throughout the city. Additionally, connectivity is essential to ensuring that recreation needs of all residents are being adequately served by existing and proposed facilities within this assessment.

- Provide a convenient, safe, and pleasant pedestrian and bicyclist network that links schools, parks, activity centers, natural open space areas, greenways, and trail systems throughout the City. The location of this specialized corridors should take into consideration recommendations made within the Center City Action Plan published in 2013.
- Evaluate the location of existing and proposed parks as well as the amenities they provide to ensure that residents located within the residential areas of the city are located within a half mile walking distance to a park facility.

Programming

Program offerings by park and recreation agencies maintain user interest over time. These programs

Park System Recommendations

should be flexible as interest change with shifts in demographics and societal trends. Continuing long-term programs that have been successful is essential to meeting the needs of residents.

However, it is also important to seek out ways to provide programs that can appeal to a greater cross-section of the public while also recognizing and embracing trends that affect participation and interest.

- Continue to offer programs that cater to the demographics of city residents.
- Conduct surveys and hold community forums to evaluate existing programs and identify recreation trends in the community to monitor the viability of existing programs.
- Provide greater flexibility with program scheduling, allowing all residents to participate. Programs that have historically been scheduled at the same time for multiple years may not be conducive to all potential participants. Examples include evening and weekend programming that can attract working adults.
- Evaluate programs to determine which are the most popular long-term and provide additional sessions of popular programs to meet community demand.
- Expand popular programs by offering additional performance or skill levels to encourage on-going learning and park use.
- Coordinate program offerings with local schools and recreation providers to broaden recreation, education, athletic, and fitness opportunities.
- Broaden the utilization of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to

inform residents of program news and events.

Health

Healthy active living is one of the most popular and responsible trends nationwide in park and recreation planning. Simultaneously child obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and many other diseases continue to be major health concerns in Northern Kentucky. The provision of outdoor exercise and recreation facilities is a major component in the overall health and well-being of the community. Investing in park improvements and programming that caters to active lifestyles and healthy living trends will only continue to grow in importance.

- Focus on programming and events which promote community health and wellness. The City should seek out opportunities to collaborate with local healthcare providers and Live Well NKY to create programs that focus on specific community-based health topics.
- Seek out opportunities to install fitness stations and courses at targeted park locations along major pedestrian and bicycle corridors with the future goal of creating a city-wide fitness trail. Equipment should be designed for all age groups.

Safety

Establishing a safe environment for park visitors is critical to maintaining the health and viability of a park system. Unsafe parks can become a liability rather than an asset to the community. Keeping park and recreation facilities safe is key to community wellness and has a direct relationship to their usage rate.

Park System Recommendations

- Design or retrofit of the features and layout of new and existing parks should incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and techniques. CPTED is a program that utilizes design and use of the built environment to reduce the potential for crime and other unwanted behaviors. Priority for implementation should focus on parks that consistently demonstrate high levels of crime, vandalism, and other nuisance behaviors.
- Ensure that all facilities and equipment are in good condition, structurally sound, and free of blemishes such as graffiti or peeling paint.
- Cultivate community awareness and engagement by holding activities and events which strengthens the connection between the residents of a community to the parks they visit to establishes a sense of pride between a park and the surrounding community it serves. Examples include community picnics, public input and park planning meetings, sporting events and tournaments, performance arts, and movie nights in the park.
- Continue to update the Existing Conditions and Amenities Inventory on a regular basis to ensure that all park facilities are well maintained and in good structural
- Evaluate the removal, replacement, or repair of equipment or accessory park features that are not structurally sound, functionally obsolete, or located in areas with high instances of vandalism or misuse. In doing so, the city staff should consult the Existing Conditions and Amenities Inventory conducted in the late spring of 2015.
- Collaborate with law enforcement and day to day maintenance staff to monitor parks and document instances of unwanted behavior or illegal activity. Such documentation should be used to evaluate the removal of specific equipment or facilities that are located in areas which promote nuisance behaviors and illegal activities.
- Actively engage and seek out collaborative agreements with partners to maintain specific parks or park areas. Identify stakeholders and organizations that can assist with maintenance or park enhancements such as utility providers, public agencies, volunteer groups, neighborhood associations, private business, and landowners.
- Implement designs and best management practices that reduce long-term maintenance costs. Examples include developing more prairie style landscape areas on park sites and purchasing durable equipment and accessory features. These approaches require low maintenance and upkeep, which will extend replacement schedules.

Maintenance

Well maintained parks reinforce positive perceptions of safety and instill a sense of pride within communities. Alternatively, the presence of broken equipment, signs of vandalism, and other deteriorating park conditions can contribute to negative safety perceptions leading to a decline in park use. Maintenance costs also represent a substantial portion of park and recreation budgets - funds that could otherwise be invested in new park improvements and upgrades.

Park System Recommendations

Funding

Tax revenues, grants, and program fees continue to provide a substantial portion of park and recreation agency funding. Today, however, developing alternative funding sources through corporate partnerships is a trend that provides a means of increasing the quality of programs and facilities for the benefit of the community. It is important to balance the use of funding in an equitable manner that provides the necessary resources for daily operations and capital improvements while balancing affordability and access to residents.

- Seek to utilize alternative, non-tax funding sources to fund new initiatives including sponsorships, grants, and establishing a foundation to oversee improvements of maintenance and specific parks.
- Pursue sponsorships for use on the park website and at specific park locations. This includes designing new and creative opportunities for sponsorship of parks, programs, events, and facilities.
- Utilize civic organizations to assist in developing corporate partnership and sponsorships that will benefit the park system.
- Perform annual assessments of the facility and program user to determine if fees are appropriate. The assessment should also include the perceived value or quality of facilities or programs.
- Charge fees and recover costs for use of public areas by using variable permit fee schedules based on the type and location of events, as well as the level of disruption. Adjust fees to

cover all direct costs for staff, utilities, trash collection, removing or relocating park furniture, and repairing damage.

Park Recommendations

Introduction

The recommendations within this section of the report have been developed to address a number of aspects specific to each facility owned or maintained by the city of Covington. The following sections of this assessment provide information about the location of each park facility, a catalog of the amenities provided, a description of the character and use, along with recommendations for future improvements.

The City of Covington is responsible for the operation and maintenance of 30 facilities containing a total area of nearly 200 acres. This section of the assessment provides recommendations for each of these city maintained facilities. The purpose of these recommendations made within this section of the assessment is to guide and prioritize new improvements and future investment for the City.

Ten of the parks, accounting for 794 acres of parkland and open space, are owned or operated by public and private organizations as well as nonprofit entities and schools. While this section of the assessment does not make specific recommendations for facilities that are not operated or maintained by the City, it does take them into account.

The recommendations contained within this section of the assessment were formed using data located in the Technical Information Section of this assessment. Some of the recommendations are expressed as action items while others offer general guidance. The recommendations vary from broad to very specific. Parks are reviewed by their specific classification as listed in the Park Classification section of this assessment.

There are some parks within this section of the assessment that are designated as a high priority for reinvestment and revitalization while others are

identified as possible facilities that the city should evaluate removing. In both instances, this assessment recommends conducting a public process that facilitates community input prior to new investment or removal of parks facilities and equipment.

The parks listed as a high priority for investment and revitalization are listed below:

- Austinburg Park
- Barb Cook Park
- Father Hanses Park
- Goebel Park Complex
- Hands Pike Park
- Licking River Greenway & Trails
- Randolph Park

The parks that listed as potential facilities for removal are listed below:

- Peaselburg Little People's Playground
- 19th Street Park
- 30th and Decoursey Park
- 47th and Decoursey Greenspace Park

Park Recommendations – Local Parks

There are 12 parks in the City of Covington that are classified as Neighborhood Parks. They are as follows:

City Owned Parks

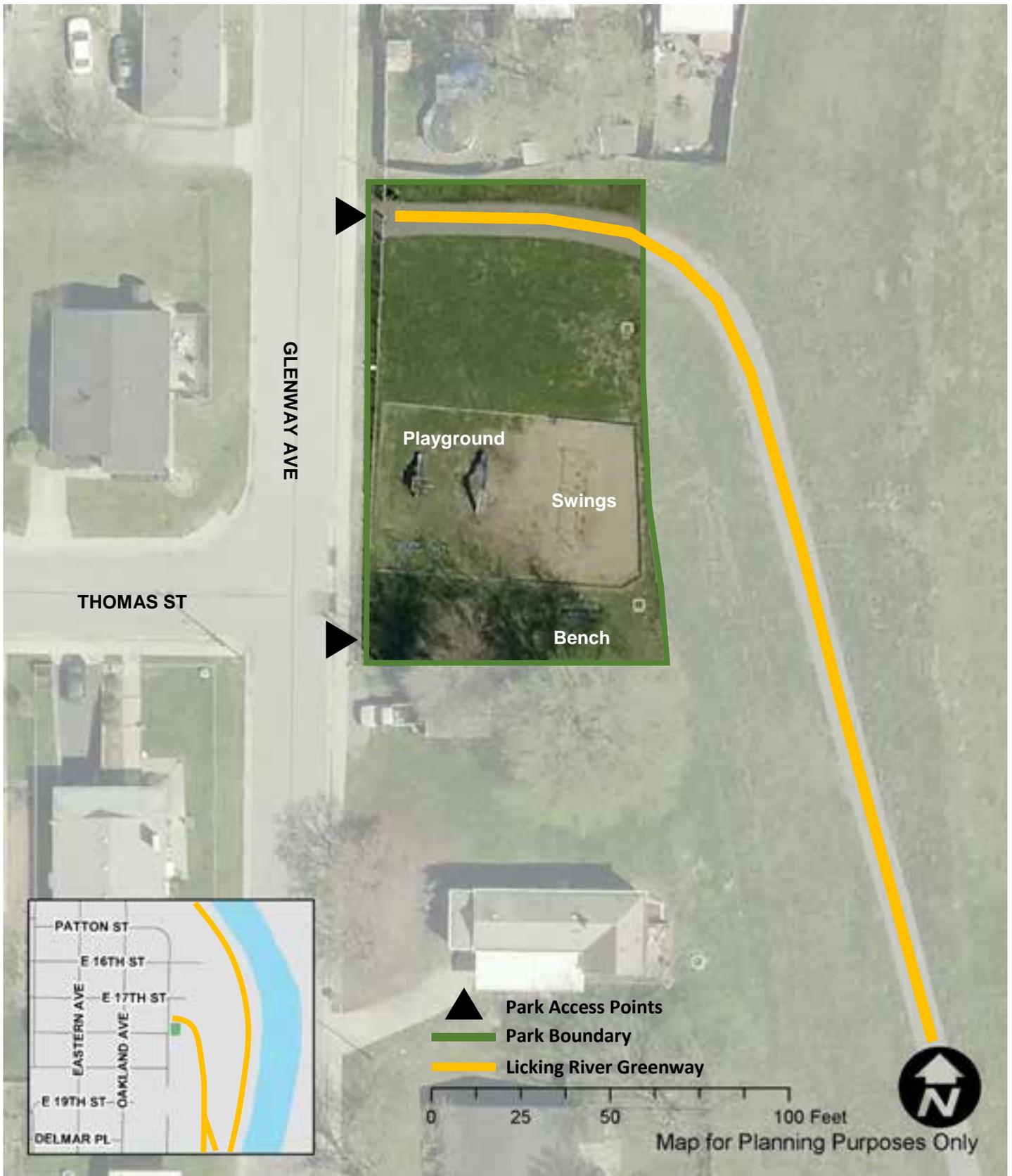
- Annie Hargraves Park / Basil Lewis Park ≈ 0.4 acres
- Austinburg Park ≈ 1.9 acres
- Barb Cook Park ≈ 0.9 acres
- Eva Farris Sports Complex ≈ 15.7 acres
- Goebel Park / Kenny Shields Park / Sergeant Jason Bishop Lee Park* ≈ 13.3 acres
- Hands Pike Park ≈ 2.3 acres
- Randolph Park ≈ 3.2 acres
- Senator Gus Sheehan Park ≈ 10.4 acres
- 30th and Decoursey Park ≈ 2.2 acres

Parks Owned or Maintained by External Organizations

- Boys and Girls Club Park ≈ 2.5 acres
- Glenn O'Swing Park and Field ≈ 4.8 acres
- Meinken Park ≈ 6.7 acres

Some of the parks above denoted with an asterisk (*) would not be classified as a neighborhood park when evaluated on an individual basis. However, when examined on a larger scale with adjacent parks or those they directly abut, the combined area, proximity to one another, number and types of amenities provided are consistent with the description of a neighborhood park. For these reasons, some of the parks above have grouped together as one component, or complex, and have been reviewed within this assessment as a combined entity.

Clayton Meyer Memorial Park



Clayton Meyer Memorial Park

Park Location & Access

Clayton Meyer Memorial Park is located along the east side of the intersection of Glenway Avenue, and Thomas Street in the city's Austinburg neighborhood.

The park has two access points, two along Glenway Avenue and one from the Licking River Greenway. The southern entrance along Glenway Avenue is restricted to pedestrians. The northern entrance along Glenway Avenue is a multi-modal path that serves as a trailhead to the Licking River Greenway.

Features & Amenities

- Playground
- Swings
- Bench
- Licking River Greenway Trailhead
- Monument and Dedication Plaque
- Waste Receptacle

Park Character

Clayton Meyer Memorial Park is a small local park situated on approximately 0.27 acres. Located next to the Licking River levee, the park has a natural character with open views of surrounding areas.



The amenities provided at the park are programmed toward recreation opportunities for younger children and toddlers in the surrounding area. A portion of the park is fenced to provide a safe enclosure for children to play. The park also

serves as a trailhead to a paved segment of the Licking River Greenway



Recommendation

- *Continue to maintain the park and ensure that park equipment and facilities are safe and well kept.*

Providing safe and maintained park facilities is critical to the viability of the facilities themselves as well surrounding neighborhood the park serves.

- *Seek out ways to reduce maintenance costs associated with upkeep of the park.*

Reducing maintenance costs is consistent with the overall recommendations of this assessment which identify these costs as one of the most significant expenditures overall park system budget.

The city should seek out partnerships with an organization or group to assume some or all of the maintenance associated with the park.

Father Hanses Park



Father Hanses Park

Park Location & Access

Father Hanses Park is a local park located at the intersection of West 11th Street and Hermes Avenue in the Lewisburg neighborhood of the city. The park currently has six pedestrian access points.

Features & Amenities

- Open Space
- Trash Receptacle

Park Character

Father Hanses Park is a small green space situated in the middle of a crowded urban area. The park has a significant amount of dense mature tree canopy along the perimeter of the park providing well shaded areas for visitors.



In 2010 and 2011 the facility suffered significant vandalism and arson, which deteriorated the playground equipment to an unsafe level. In addition, the small shelter on the site was located in an area with poor visibility, creating an environment for undesirable behavior.

After numerous complaints about the safety of the park equipment and illegal activities occurring on the premises, the city removed the deteriorated playground equipment and shelter. Currently nothing has been reconstructed, leaving an open space and concrete pad connected by paved walkways.



In 2013 the Northern Kentucky Health Department conducted an assessment of the benefits that would be provided if the park were to be improved and programmed with new amenities and equipment. The assessment found that redevelopment of the park could positively impact the health of residents, reduce crime, increase social cohesion and, with a rain garden or similar effort, improve flood issues. The analysis also found potential barriers to redevelopment, which include a possible increase in vandalism and serving as a refuge unwanted behavior. The assessment went on to state that these barriers should be address in the design of the park to mitigate any undesirable behavior.

Father Hanses Park

Recommendation

Father Hanses Park is designated within this assessment as a high priority for targeted reinvestment and revitalization for the following reasons:

- Father Hanses Park is the only park located in the Lewisburg neighborhood. Revitalization of the park will provide much needed recreation opportunities for the surrounding community.
- Interstate 71 / 75 effectively isolates the Lewisburg neighborhood from the rest of the city and the recreation amenities provided at other park locations.
- The park is centrally located in the neighborhood and has the potential to serve the recreation needs of the over 1,000 residents who live in Lewisburg.
- The aesthetics of the current condition of the park contribute to the negative stigma for the surrounding neighborhood that the area is unsafe.
- Improving the park will help foster community identity, providing a much needed area for residents to gather and socialize.

Improvement Considerations

Investment in Father Hanses Park should be done through a public process that facilitates community input in future park improvements. In doing so, the following should be considered:

- *Install community features and program the park for events that bring people together to help shape the identity of the community.*

Father Hanses Park is centrally located in the neighborhood it serves. Investment should focus on transforming the park in a way that creates a

sense of identity and buy-in from the surrounding community by fostering social gathering and interaction.

Examples of major park improvements could include the construction of a shelter or area for community gathering. These improvements may include ancillary features such as an area for performing arts and music. Minor improvements could include the provision of interactive opportunities in the park such as the installation of art works or sculptures, games, or a community garden. The park could also be programmed for group activities.

- *Provide recreation amenities for visitors of all ages.*

While Father Hanses Park is a small park with little room for large scale recreation amenities, new park improvements should have amenities that cater to visitors of all ages. At the same time, it is essential that all future improvements to the park should focus on providing good site lines throughout the facility to mitigate unwanted behaviors.

- *Design or retrofit of the features and layout of new and existing park features to incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and techniques.*

CPTED is a program that utilizes design and use of the built environment to reduce the potential for crime and other unwanted behaviors. Priority for implementation in Father Hanses Park should focus on increasing visibility and site lines into the park from Hermes Avenue and West 11th Street.

- *Seek out ways to reduce maintenance costs associated with upkeep of the park.*

Reducing maintenance costs is consistent with the overall recommendations of this assessment, which

Father Hanses Park

identifies these costs as one of the most significant expenditures of the overall park system budget.

The city should seek out partnerships with an organization or group to assume some or all of the maintenance associated with the park. Possible partners may include the local neighborhood association, a local resident group, or Prince of Peace Church.

George Rogers Clark Memorial Park



George Rogers Clark Memorial Park

Park Location & Access

George Rogers Clark Memorial Park is located along the southern side of Riverside Drive in the Historic Licking Riverside neighborhood of the city.

The park has formal pedestrian access from Garrard Street and Riverside Drive. There is also informal access to the facility from the alleys abutting the east and south boundaries of the park.

Features & Amenities

- Statues
- Monuments and Dedication Plaques
- Benches
- Trash Cans
- Open Space

Park Character

Situated along the Ohio River, this scenic park offers views of downtown Cincinnati and the Roebling Bridge and is a hot spot for photographers and sight-seers. The dense natural tree canopy provides a shaded area to read a book, eat lunch on a bench, or watch boats travel down the Ohio River.



George Rogers Clark Park is also the venue for the annual Duveneck Art Festival hosted by Baker Hunt Art & Cultural Center. The park can accommodate small weddings of 20-30 people.

Two of seven Riverwalk Statues (life-like bronze statues of historical figures located along Riverside Drive) can be found in the park: Simon Kenton, an early explorer, and Captain Mary B. Greene, one of the few women to become a licensed river pilot and boat master.



Recommendation

- *Continue to compliment Riverfront Commons as a small node for passive recreation.*

George Rogers Clark Memorial Park is located directly adjacent to Riverfront Commons, a planned multi-purpose trail connecting the city to other river cities and urban areas in Northern Kentucky. Improvements to the park should compliment the progress of Riverfront Commons while maintaining the existing character of the surrounding areas, which feature large historic residential dwelling.

George Rogers Clark Memorial Park

- *Continue to maintain the park and ensure that park equipment and facilities are safe and well kept.*

George Rogers Clark Memorial Park is highly visible and visited park in the City of Covington for residents and visitors. Providing safe and maintained equipment, along with proper upkeep of the facility, is critical to the identity of the city and the neighborhood surrounding the park.

The park facilities and equipment inventory conducted in 2015 found four of nine benches located in the park, along with one planter, to be in poor structural condition.



The city should evaluate whether to repair, replace, or remove these components by evaluating the existing amenities provided on the site and along Riverfront Commons while also taking into consideration the maintenance costs associated with the upkeep the park.

- *Seek out ways to reduce maintenance costs associated with upkeep of the park.*

Reducing maintenance costs is consistent with the overall recommendations of this assessment, which identifies these costs as one of the most significant expenditures of the overall park system budget.

The city should seek out partnerships with an organization or group to assume some or all of the

maintenance associated with the park. Examples may include a local neighborhood association or citizens group.

Lance Corporal Justin Sims Memorial Playground



Lance Corporal Justin Sims Memorial Playground

Park Location & Access

Lance Corporal Justin Sims Memorial Park is located at the northern corner West 16th Street and Euclid Avenue. The park lies in the northern portion of the city's Peasleburg neighborhood where it borders the Westside neighborhood.

The park has pedestrian access from Euclid Avenue and at the intersection of West 16th Street and Euclid Avenue. The intersection entrance leads to a short paved path and picnic table.

Features & Amenities

- Playground
- Swings
- Picnic Table
- Monument and Dedication Plaque
- Waste Receptacle

Park Character

Lance Corporal Justin Sims Memorial Park is a local park situated on approximately 0.16 acres. The amenities provided at the park are programmed toward recreation opportunities for younger children and toddlers in the surrounding area.



The perimeter of the park, aside from the access points, is fenced to provide a safe enclosure for children to play.



Recommendation

- *Continue to maintain the park and ensure that park equipment and facilities are safe and well kept.*

Providing safe and maintained park facilities is critical to the viability of the facilities themselves as well surrounding neighborhood the park serves.

- *Seek out ways to provide shaded areas for park visitors.*

There are currently no shaded areas located in the park. Examples of improvement strategies may include the construction of a shade shelter, the planting of trees and landscape, or a combination of both hardscape and softscape features.

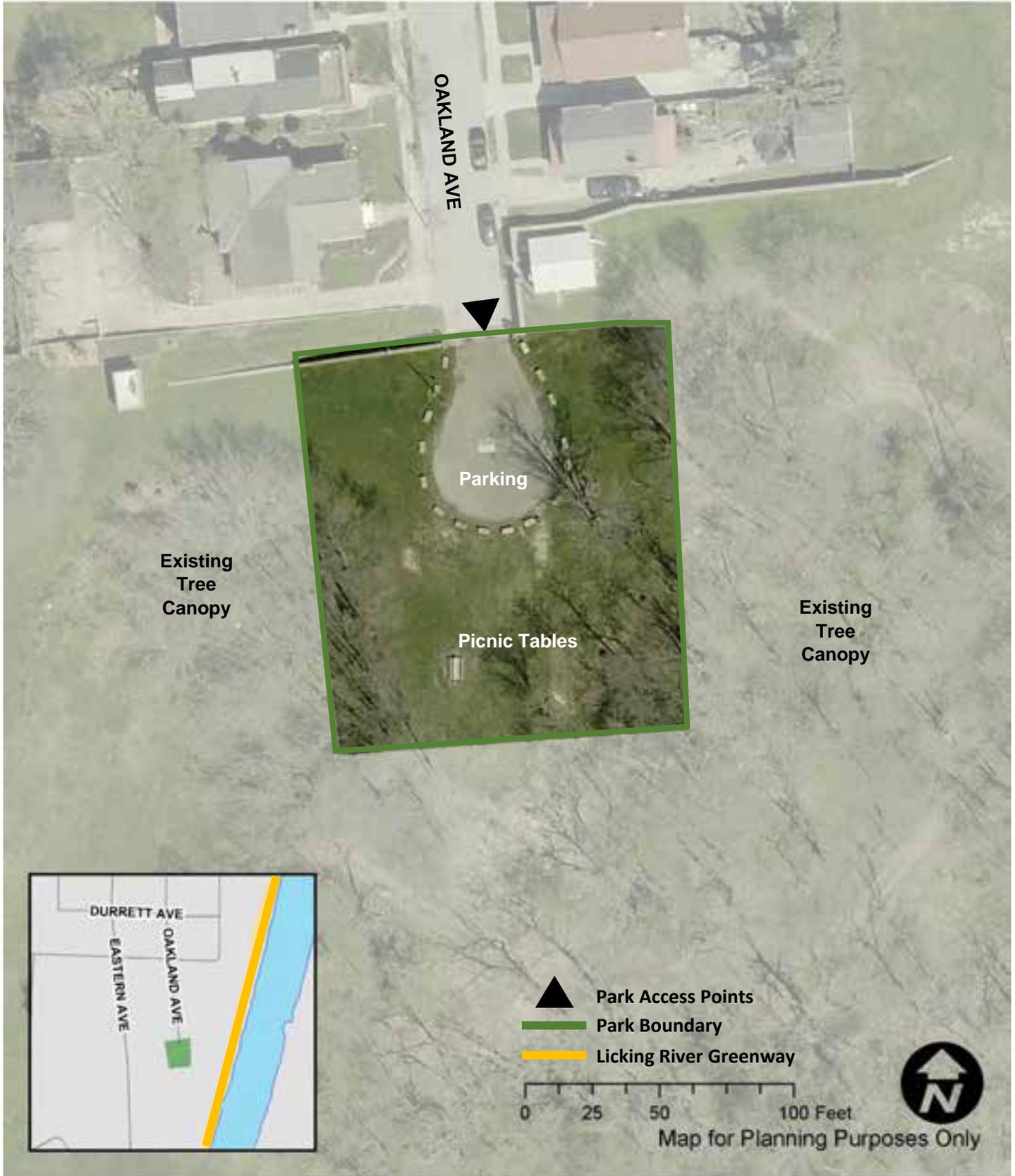
Lance Corporal Justin Sims Memorial Playground

- *Seek out ways to reduce maintenance costs associated with upkeep of the park.*

Reducing maintenance costs is consistent with the overall recommendations of this assessment which identify these costs as one of the most significant expenditures of the overall park system budget.

The city should seek out partnerships with an organization or group to assume some or all of the maintenance associated with the park.

Oakland Turnaround



Oakland Turnaround

Park Location & Access

The Oakland Turnaround is located at the terminus of Oakland Avenue in the city's Wallace Woods neighborhood.

The small local park currently has pedestrian and vehicular access from Oakland Avenue. There is also informal access to the Licking River Greenway via unpaved trails.



Features & Amenities

- Open Space
- Picnic Tables
- Benches
- Off-Street Parking (informal)

Park Character

The Oakland Turnaround is a quaint park located on a smaller parcel of land with an approximate area of 0.45 acres. The facility features a natural character with fully developed tree canopy surrounding an open space area.



Benches and picnic tables are tucked under the tree canopy along the periphery of the open space located at near Oakland Avenue. There are also several art installations throughout the park.



Recommendations

- *Continue to preserve the park as a natural and open space area for passive recreation.*

The ambiance of the built-up tree canopy make the Oakland Turnaround a unique venue for passive recreation activities. Future improvements should be primarily cosmetic and focus on fostering interaction with the natural elements of the park. Such improvements could include planting native species that attract butterflies or hummingbirds as well as the installation of bird houses.

There is currently a trailhead to the Licking River Greenway located at the intersection of Eastern Avenue with Levassor Place, approximately 0.15 miles from the park. As such, the Oakland Turnaround should be complimentary to the greenway and any improvements should not increase the amount of vehicular traffic along Oakland Avenue.

Oakland Turnaround

- *Seek out ways to reduce maintenance costs associated with upkeep of the park.*

The surrounding neighborhood currently contributes to the maintenance of the park. The city should look for ways to collaborate with the neighborhood to continue upkeep and assist with future improvements to the park. Such improvements may include the planting of native plant species to reduce the amount of open space area requiring upkeep.

Sanitation District No. 1 also currently owns a portion of the land upon which the park is located. The city should also seek out ways to partner with them to reduce costs associated with park maintenance and upkeep.

Peaselburg Little People's Playground



Peaselburg Little People’s Playground

Park Location & Access

Peaselburg Little People’s Playground is located along the northwest side of Howell Street in the city’s Peaselburg Neighborhood.

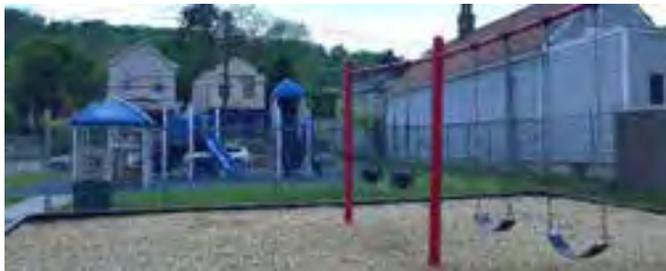
The smaller local park has access from Howell Street and an alley abutting the rear of the park. Parking is provided at the rear of the park along the alley.

Features & Amenities

- Playground
- Swings
- Benches
- Trash Cans
- Off-street Parking

Park Character

Peaselburg Little Peoples Playground is located on a smaller parcel of land which sits on approximately 0.2 acres. The entire park, aside from the off-street parking, is surrounded by a fence running along the perimeter of the lot.



The amenities provided at the park are programmed toward recreation opportunities for younger children and toddlers in the surrounding area.

Recommendation

- *Continue to maintain the park and ensure that park equipment and facilities are safe and well kept.*

Providing safe and maintained park facilities is critical to the viability of the facilities themselves as well surrounding neighborhood the park serves.

- *Look for ways to reduce maintenance costs associated with upkeep of the park.*

Reducing maintenance costs is consistent with the overall recommendations of this assessment which identify these costs as one of the most significant expenditures overall park system budget.

The city should seek out partnerships with an organization or group to assume some or all of the maintenance associated with the park. Possible partners may include the Covington Firefighters Association, which is located adjacent to the park, or the Peaselburg Neighborhood Association.

If partnerships are not available, the city should evaluate the viability of the park through a public input process. This process will help determine whether the park should be removed and land transferred in order to save on overall park system maintenance costs. There are currently two larger recreation facilities, Glenn O’ Swing Elementary School and the Boys and Girls which are located 0.28 miles and 0.51 miles, respectively, from this park. While both facilities do have restricted hours, they are both larger sites and provide the same recreation amenities located at this facility.

19TH Street Park



19TH Street Park

Park Location & Access

19th Street Park is located along Oakland Avenue and Glenway Avenue in the southeast corner of the Austinburg neighborhood of the city. The park has pedestrian access from both streets and is not currently ADA accessible. The park is located adjacent to the Licking River Greenway and has informal pedestrian access over the levee.

Features & Amenities

- Basketball Court
- Open Space
- Trash Receptacle

Park Character

The 19th Street Park features a natural character with a large open space. The facility is located in a recessed land area owned by the city and used by Sanitation District No. 1 for stormwater runoff. Sanitation District No. 1 and has a pumping station located in the middle of the park. These issues make the site unsuitable for additional recreation amenities requiring pervious surface.



Recommendations

- *Continue to maintain the park and ensure that park equipment and facilities are safe and well kept.*

Providing safe and maintained park facilities is critical to the viability of the facilities themselves as well surrounding neighborhood the park serves.

- *Connect the Park, and surrounding residential neighborhoods to the Licking River Greenway & Trails.*

Investing in infrastructure improvements that establish a connection to the greenway from the surrounding neighborhoods will provide visitors with greater access to the amenities along the greenway and other parts of the city.

- *Look for ways to reduce maintenance costs associated with upkeep of the park.*

Reducing maintenance costs is consistent with the overall recommendations of this assessment, which identifies these costs as one of the most significant expenditures overall park system budget.

The city should seek out partnerships with an organization or group to assume some or all of the maintenance associated with the park. Possible partners may include the Austinburg Neighborhood Association or Sanitation District No. 1.

If partnerships are not available, the city should evaluate the viability of the park through a public input process. This process will help determine whether the park should be removed and land transferred in order to save on overall park system maintenance costs. There are currently four facilities located within a half mile of the park, which provide the same, or more, recreation amenities. The four facilities are Austinburg Park, Clayton Meyer Memorial Park, 6th District Elementary School, and the Holmes High School Greenspace Park. In doing so, the city should to retain a portion of the park to provide access to the Licking River Greenway & Trails.

35th and Carlisle Park



35th and Carlisle Park

Park Location & Access

The 35th and Carlisle is located at the northern corner West 35th Street and Carlisle Avenue. The park lies in the West Latonia neighborhood of the city. This small local park has informal pedestrian access along Carlisle Avenue. There is no access along West 35th Street.

Features & Amenities

- Basketball Court
- Playground
- Open Space
- Picnic table
- Trash Cans

Park Character

The 35th and Carlisle Park has a variety of active and passive recreation opportunities.



The amenities provided at this facility are programmed toward recreation opportunities for both children and adults.



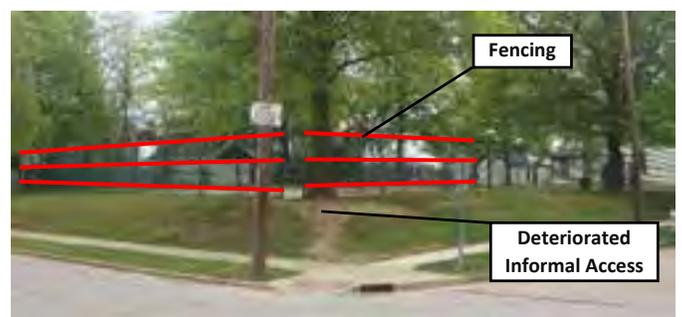
The park is currently enclosed by a large fence on three sides, shown in red below, which limits access to the cul-de-sac portion of Carlisle Avenue.



Recommendations

- *Improve access to the park in a way that makes the park more inviting.*

The overuse of fencing along the perimeter, in addition to the topography of the park above both streets, creates physical and visual barriers which restrict access to the park and make the area feel uninviting. The lack of designated, hardscaped access points into the park has also led to visible deterioration of the ground along the informal access paths used by park visitors (see below).



Future park improvements should address access issues by providing designated, hardscape pathways into the park. At least one of the access points should be ADA accessible. Additionally, the softscape features should be planted at street level to improve aesthetic and direct patrons to the designated park accesses. The fencing associated

35th and Carlisle Park

with the basketball court should be redesigned with hardscape and softscape material to provide greater access for park visitors as well as to improve the aesthetics of the park.

- *Evaluate the viability of the basketball court*

The basketball court and associated fencing, occupy a substantial portion of the site. The basketball goals and court are past their usable life and show signs of significant deterioration including rust, lack of nets, and substantial cracking in the court pavement. One of the goals is tilting at its base posing a safety hazard for park visitors.



The city should evaluate the viability of the basketball court through a public input process. In doing so, they should consider if other recreation amenities provided at this location such as volleyball, tennis, multi-purpose court may better serve the needs of the community. This process will help determine whether the basketball court should be removed and the park transferred to passive recreation space. There are currently two basketball courts located at Barb Cook Park which is an approximate 0.56 mile walk from this facility.

- *Ensure that park facilities and equipment are safe and maintained in good working condition.*

Providing safe and maintained park facilities is critical to the viability of the facilities themselves as well surrounding neighborhood the park serves.

The basketball court

- *Seek out ways to reduce maintenance costs associated with upkeep of the park.*

Reducing maintenance costs is consistent with the overall recommendations of this assessment which identify these costs as one of the most significant expenditures overall park system budget.

The city should seek out partnerships with an organization or group to assume some or all of the maintenance associated with the park.

Garden of Hope



Garden of Hope

This park is not owned or maintained by the City of Covington. As such, this does not make recommendations for future improvements to this facility. The does document currently provided at this facility in encompassing of all the recreation amenities provided within the city. In major improvements are made within city and the owner(s) of the facility coordinate to provide amenities that best the recreation needs of the community and the duplication of amenities.

Park Location & Access

The Garden of Hope is located along Edgecliff Street in the city's Peasleburg neighborhood. There are currently two pedestrian access points and one vehicular access point located along Edgecliff Street.

Features & Amenities

- Benches
- Chapel
- Monuments and Dedication Plaques
- Overlook
- Open Space
- Off-Street Parking (Gravel)
- Picnic Table
- Statue
- Waste Receptacle

Park Character & Use

The Garden of Hope sits on approximately 1.2 acres. This park was the dream of the Reverend Morris H. Coers, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Covington. Inspired by a visit to the Holy Land in 1938, Coers constructed a replica of Jesus' tomb on a secluded lot in a corner of the city for the people of Northern Kentucky to experience.



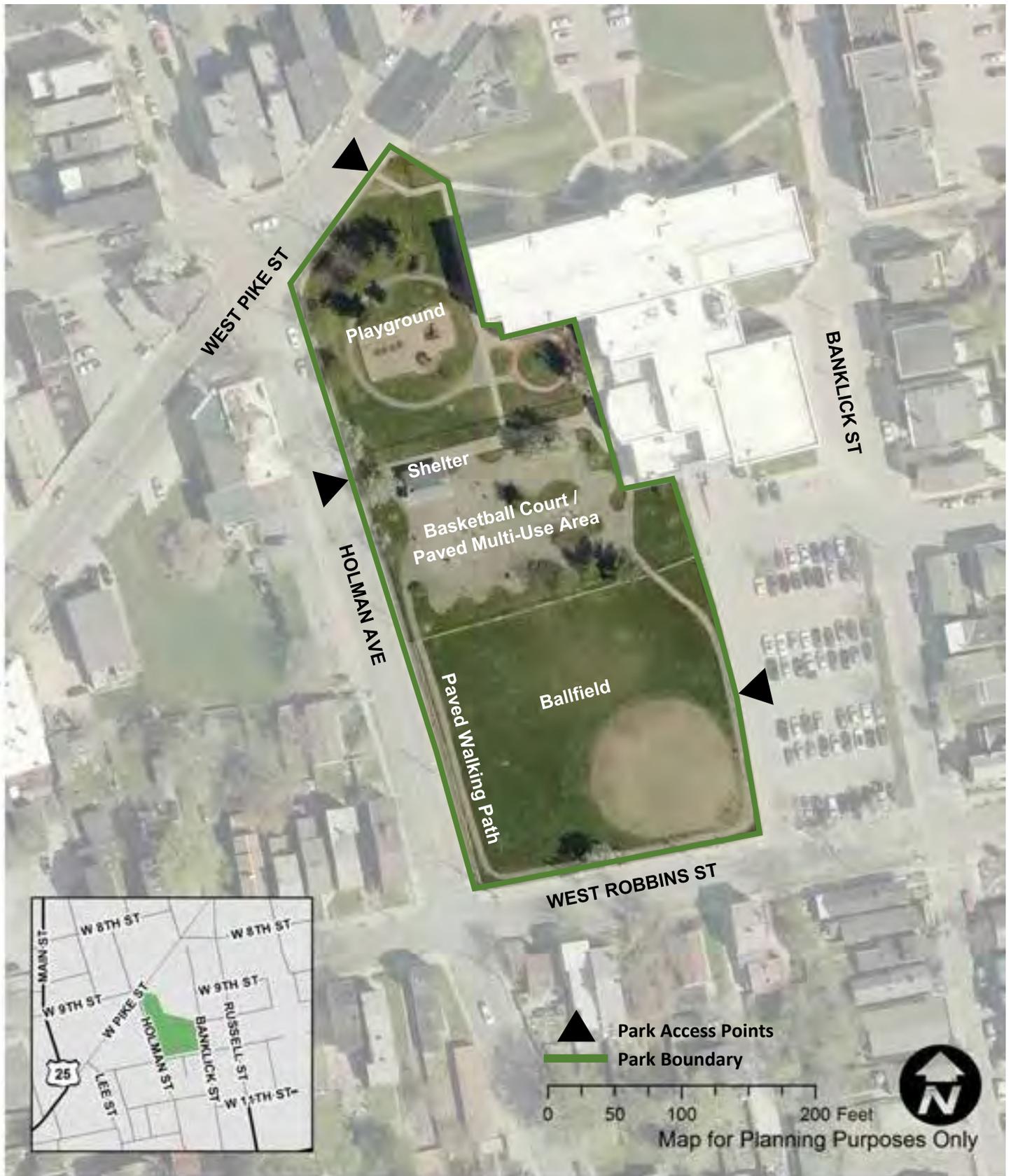
Located on a hill high above the city, the park was intended to offer a place for reflection set to the backdrop of spectacular downtown views of Covington and Cincinnati.



The Garden of Hope opened on Palm Sunday in 1958. The facility went on to include an outbuilding, chapel, a statue, several monuments, and dedication plaques.



John G. Carlisle Elementary School Playground



John G. Carlisle Elementary School Playground

This park is not owned or maintained by the City of Covington. As such, this does not make recommendations for future improvements to this facility. The does document the amenities currently provided at this facility in order to be encompassing of all the recreation facilities and amenities provided within the city. In the event that major improvements are made within this park, the city and the owner(s) of the facility should coordinate to provide amenities that best address the recreation needs of the community and prevent the duplication of amenities.

Park Location & Access

The John G. Carlisle Elementary School Park is located along the east side of Holman Avenue between West Pike Street and West Robbins Street. The facility is located in both the Westside neighborhood and the East Seminary Square neighborhoods of the city. There are three pedestrian entrances to the park. They are located along West Pike Street, Holman Avenue, and from the off-street parking area near the intersection of Banklick Street and West Robbins Avenue.

Features & Amenities

- Ballfield
- Basketball Court
- Picnic Tables
- Playground
- Shelter
- Walking Path (Paved)

Park Character and Use

John G. Carlisle Elementary School Park sits on 2.7 acres and features a variety of passive and active recreation amenities. A paved walkway connects the activity centers of the park.



The perimeter of the facility is fenced with locking gates at each of the three access points. Park hours are restricted while school is in session.

Latonia Cardinals Community Park



Latonia Cardinals Community Park

This park is not owned or maintained by the City of Covington. As such, this document does not make recommendations for future improvements to this facility. The document does document the amenities currently provided at this facility in order to encompassing of all the recreation facilities amenities provided within the city. In the event major improvements are made within this park, the city and the owner(s) of the facility should coordinate to provide amenities that best address the recreation needs of the community and prevent the duplication of amenities.

Park Location & Access

This park is part of the Latonia Elementary School campus and is located along the east side of Park Avenue between East 39th and East 40th Streets. The facility is located in the Ritte’s East Latonia neighborhood of the city. There are five pedestrian entrances to the facility. They are located along East 39th Street, Huntington Avenue, and Park Avenue.

Features & Amenities

- Basketball Courts (2)
- Multi-Purpose Area
- Playground

Park Character and Use

The Latonia Elementary School sits on 2.7 acres and has a variety of passive and active recreation amenities. The park was recommended for upgrades in the Latonia Small Area Study adopted by the city in 2010. After extensive community involvement the playground area of the park was redeveloped in



2014 using funding provided by the Center for Great Neighborhoods. The new playground has intergenerational equipment for infants 6 months to 23 months, toddlers 2-5 years, elementary school age 5-12 years and an adult fitness area with machines usually found in gyms

A paved multi-purpose recreation area striped for different athletic games is located adjacent to the playground area. The multi-purpose area features basketball courts.



The perimeter of the facility is fenced with the exception of the area adjacent to the off-street parking on Park Avenue. Park hours are restricted while school is in session.

Sixth District Elementary School Playground



Sixth District Elementary School Playground

This park is not owned or maintained by the City of Covington. As such, this does not make recommendations for future improvements to this facility. The does document the currently provided at this facility in order encompassing of all the recreation facilities amenities provided within the city. In the event major improvements are made within this park, city and the owner(s) of the facility should coordinate to provide amenities that best address the recreation needs of the community and prevent the duplication of amenities.

Park Location & Access

This park is part of the Sixth District School campus and is located adjacent to the school between East 18th and East 19th Streets. The facility is located in the Austinburg neighborhood of the city. There are two pedestrian entrances to the facility through a parking lot off East 18th Street and from East 19th Street. Both access points are controlled by a gate.

Features & Amenities

- Playground
- Open Space
- Swings

Park Character and Use

The Sixth District Elementary School Playground sits on 0.7 acres. The facility has a large playground featuring several pieces of equipment including a swingset. The park also has an open space area located in the southwest corner of the site.



The perimeter of the facility is fenced with the exception of the area adjacent to the off-street parking on Park Avenue. Park hours are restricted while school is in session.

Park Recommendations – Neighborhood Parks

There are 12 parks in the City of Covington that are classified as Neighborhood Parks. They are as follows:

City Owned Parks

- Annie Hargraves Park / Basil Lewis Park ≈ 0.4 acres
- Austinburg Park ≈ 1.9 acres
- Barb Cook Park ≈ 0.9 acres
- Eva Farris Sports Complex ≈ 15.7 acres
- Goebel Park / Kenny Shields Park / Sergeant Jason Bishop Lee Park* ≈ 13.3 acres
- Hands Pike Park ≈ 2.3 acres
- Randolph Park ≈ 3.2 acres
- Senator Gus Sheehan Park ≈ 10.4 acres
- 30th and Decoursey Park ≈ 2.2 acres

Parks Owned or Maintained by External Organizations

- Boys and Girls Club Park ≈ 2.5 acres
- Glenn O'Swing Park and Field ≈ 4.8 acres
- Meinken Park ≈ 6.7 acres

Some of the parks above denoted with an asterisk (*) would not be classified as a neighborhood park when evaluated on an individual basis. However, when examined on a larger scale with adjacent parks or those they directly abut, the combined area, proximity to one another, number and types of amenities provided are consistent with the description of a neighborhood park. For these reasons, some of the parks above have grouped together as one component, or complex, and have been reviewed within this assessment as a combined entity.

Annie Hargraves & Basil Lewis Park



Annie Hargraves & Basil Lewis Park

Park Location & Access

The Annie Hargraves and Basil Lewis Park complex is located along both sides of West 10th Street, east of where it intersects with Chesapeake Street in the city's Seminary Square neighborhood. The parks have formal and informal access from West 10th Street, Chesapeake Street, and West Robbins Street.

Features & Amenities

- Basketball Court
- Benches
- Grill
- Horseshoe Pit
- Monument and Dedication Plaque
- Off-street Parking
- Picnic Tables
- Playground
- Trash Receptacles

Park Character

The Annie Hargraves and Basil Lewis Park complex is located on two parcels of the land for a total park area of approximately 0.82 acres. Basil Lewis Park is approximately 0.20 acres and Annie Hargraves is approximately 0.62 acres.

Annie Hargraves Park is named in honor of Annie Hargraves, a teacher at the Lincoln-Grant School, superintendent of the St. James AME Church Sunday School, and director of the park at West Robbins and Chesapeake. She was its director for 35 years, organizing softball and basketball games, checker tournaments and parties for the neighborhood children. The park was named for Mrs. Hargraves in 1981.

Annie Hargraves Park sits next to railroad tracks and features a variety of passive and active recreation amenities. The topography of the park steps down significantly from West Robbins Street

to West 10th Street. Mature trees line the eastern border of the park which abuts railroad tracks.



Basil Lewis Park is primarily comprised of open space and mature trees that are located along the eastern boundary of the park. Benches and picnic tables are dispersed along the periphery of the park. A large grill is also located on the park grounds.



Annie Hargraves & Basil Lewis Park

Recommendation

- *Continue to maintain the park and ensure that park equipment and facilities are safe and well kept.*

Providing safe and maintained park facilities is critical to the viability of the facilities themselves, as well the surrounding neighborhood the park serves.

The basketball goals and court are operational but have become functionally obsolete and show visible signs of deterioration. The horseshoe pit is in poor condition and deteriorating.



While this park complex is not identified within this assessment as a priority for reinvestment, the city should evaluate the viability of these amenities to determine whether they should be removed, replaced, or repaired in the future. In doing so, the city should evaluate the investment and operating costs of the equipment and the usage of the amenities by park visitors. If the basketball courts

are removed, they should be reprogrammed in a way that takes into consideration the city views provided at that location. In the event that the space is reprogrammed, the City should seek to collaborate with Athletic Strength and Power as well as Core Strength which currently use the park for part of their strength training classes.

- *Look for ways to reduce maintenance costs associated with upkeep of the park.*

Reducing maintenance costs is consistent with the overall recommendations of this assessment, which identify these costs as one of the most significant expenditures overall park system budget.

The city should seek out partnerships with an organization or group to assume some or all of the maintenance associated with the park. Possible partners may include the local neighborhood association or Athletic Strength and Power as well as Core Strength which currently use the park for part of their strength training classes.

Austinburg Park



Austinburg Park

Park Location & Access

Austinburg Park is located in the northeast corner of the park's namesake neighborhood, immediately adjacent to the levee along Licking River, south of the railroad bridge.

The neighborhood park sits on approximately 1.9 acres and is currently accessible from East 15th Street, Eastern Avenue, and Oakland Avenue. Each access point leads to an internal pathway which connects the activity centers of the park. The park also provides informal access to the Licking River Greenway via natural open space.

Features & Amenities

- Baseball Field
- Basketball Courts (2)
- Benches
- Open Space
- Picnic Tables
- Playground Equipment
- Shelter
- Trash Receptacles

Park Character & Use

Austinburg Park has a natural feel despite being primarily occupied by active recreation uses. This is largely due to the earthen levee situated in the rear of the park, which combined with views of treetops lining the Licking River, provides a scenic backdrop to the park.



There are also several mature trees located near the shelter and playground area of the park.

Recently, a row of trees has been planted near the basketball courts adding a soft, desirable natural break in the large expanse of open space occupied by the basketball courts and baseball field.



Recommendation

Austinburg Park is designated within this assessment as a high priority for targeted reinvestment and revitalization for the following reasons:

- The location, size, and range of amenities provided at Austinburg Park make it a popular recreation destination for residents in the surrounding neighborhoods, particularly those residing in Austinburg, Hellentown, Eastside, Wallace Woods, and Levassor Park.
- The current layout of the park is uninviting and does not make the best use of the park space. While the park provides a robust offering of active recreation amenities, areas for passive recreation are lacking.
- The existing design and lack of lighting also make the area susceptible to unwanted behavior.
- The existing park facilities, and a majority of equipment are currently obsolete, deteriorating, and in poor condition.

Austinburg Park

- The park is not ADA accessible and provides little amenities for visitors with disabilities. Many of the parks in the city are currently not ADA accessible. The location, popularity, and potential of Austinburg Park make it ideal for providing recreation opportunities that accommodate people with disabilities.
- Access to the park is limited and poorly defined with no designated off-street parking areas for visitors.
- Austinburg Park is identified within the Licking River Greenway Master Plan as a trailhead. Investing in infrastructure improvements which establish a connection to the greenway from the surrounding neighborhoods will provide residents with greater access to the amenities along the greenway and other parts of the city.

Improvements Considerations

Improvement and investment in Austinburg Park should be done through a public process that facilitates community input for future park improvements. In doing so, the following should be considered:

- *Install community features and program the park for events that bring people together to help shape the identity of the community.*

Investment in Austinburg Park should focus on transforming the park in a way that creates a sense of identity for the surrounding community by fostering social gathering and interaction.

Examples of such improvements may include the construction of place for community gathering with ancillary features such as an area for performing arts and music or other outdoor activities. Minor improvements may include the provision of interactive opportunities in the park such as the

installation of art works or sculptures, games, and programming the park for group activities.

- *Remove fencing within the park and along Eastern Avenue.*

The widespread use of fencing, shown in red below, has fragmented the activity centers within the park from one another, discourages park usage, and creates perceptions of an unsafe environment.



Austinburg Park contains a robust offering of active recreation features. However, there is very little open space areas for passive recreation activities. The fencing associated with the baseball field effectively closes off a substantial portion of the park that could be used for open space, passive recreation, and other forms of active recreation. The public input process should evaluate the viability of baseball field to determine if the space could be used for other active or passive recreation opportunities.

The retaining wall and fencing shown along Eastern Avenue, the park's primary entrance, create physical and visual access barriers to the park which restrict access and make the park feel uninviting.



Austinburg Park



Future improvements to the park should focus on reconfiguring this entrance to make the facility more visually appealing by improving site lines and utilizing a design that is draws patrons into the park which creates a sense of place and identity for the community. The new entrance should also be ADA accessible.

Additionally, the fencing surrounding the basketball courts should be removed as it isolates the area from the rest of the park activity centers, making this area of the park uninviting and seem unsafe.

- *Update the basketball court and hoops and remove surrounding fencing*

The basketball facilities located at the park are heavily used despite being obsolete and showing significant signs of wear. The basketball goals have rust on them and the courts are not striped and have significant cracks in the concrete.



- *Design or retrofit of the features and layout of new and existing park features to incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and techniques.*

CPTED is a program that utilizes design and use of the built environment to reduce the potential for crime and other unwanted behaviors.

- *Increase lighting throughout the park.*

New investment in Austinburg Park should be should focus on increased lighting and visibility. Priority should be given to areas of the park that currently have poor visibility during evening hours.

- *Add areas for off-street parking*

The park currently has no off-street parking areas, despite having a high level of active and passive recreation features. The addition of an off-street parking area would allow the park to support larger events, additional programming and also better equip the park to serve as a trailhead for the Licking River Greenway.

- *Seek out ways to reduce maintenance costs associated with upkeep of the park.*

Reducing maintenance costs is consistent with the overall recommendations of this assessment which identify these costs as one of the most significant expenditures overall park system budget.

The city should also look to incorporate softscape elements into the park which feature native plantings in order to reduce the total area requiring maintenance.

Barb Cook Park



Barb Cook Park

Park Location & Access

Barb Cook Park is a neighborhood park located at the intersection of Ashland and Madison Avenues in the West Latonia neighborhood of the city.

The park has continuous access from the sidewalk along both sides of Ashland Avenue and the south side of Madison Avenue. There are two established pedestrian access points which lead to the basketball courts and a large, unimproved concrete pad.

Features & Amenities

- Basketball Courts (2)
- Open Space
- Playground Equipment
- Picnic Tables
- Benches
- Trash Cans

Park Character

Barb Cook Park is located in a higher density residential area of the city. The park is separated into two distinctly different areas and provides amenities suited for visitors of all ages.



The portion of the park located to the east of the Ashland Avenue is dominated by a concrete pad, two basketball courts, and a small area of open space.



The portion of the park located on the west side of Ashland Avenue is primarily occupied by open space, with a playground, benches and picnic tables clustered in the rear portion of the park opposite of Madison Avenue. The open space area of this portion of the park features a variety of plantings.



Barb Cook Park

Recommendation

Barb Cook Park is designated within this assessment as a high priority for targeted reinvestment and revitalization for the following reasons:

- The location, size, and range of amenities provided at the facility make it a popular recreation destination for residents in the surrounding neighborhoods. The park facilities, particularly the basketball courts, get frequent use.
- The park is highly visible and centrally located in the neighborhood it serves. Barb Cook Park is also located within close proximity to the second largest apartment complex operated by the Housing Authority of Covington. Latonia Terrace, which lies directly across Madison Avenue, is home to 235 families.
- The current aesthetic qualities of the park could be improved to make the park seem more inviting to the surrounding neighborhoods as well as pedestrian and vehicular traffic moving along Madison Avenue, a primary thoroughfare in the city.
- A majority of the activity centers in the park are not accessible to visitors with disabilities. The city currently has very few recreation facilities that are ADA accessible. The location, popularity, and potential of Barb Cook Park make it ideal for providing expanded recreation opportunities which accommodate people with disabilities.

Improvement Considerations

Investment in Barb Cook Park should be done through a public process that facilitates community input in future park improvements. In doing so, the following should be considered:

- *Evaluate the viability of the basketball court in its current condition and location within the context of the overall park facility.*

The basketball courts are one of the most visible amenities of the park due to their location along Madison Avenue. The prominent location of the courts combined with the use of fencing along Madison Avenue in addition to the dated look of the equipment, create physical and visual access barriers to the park that not only restrict access but also make the park feel uninviting as well as unsafe.

Future improvements to the park should focus on replacing the existing basketball facilities with new equipment and fencing with materials and equipment styles in addition to softscape features and planting that improve the aesthetic qualities of the park for pedestrians and vehicular traffic moving along Madison Avenue.

- *Install community features and program the park for events that bring people together to help shape the identity of the community.*

Barb Cook Park is located in the heart of the neighborhood it serves. Investment should focus on transforming the park in a way that creates a sense of identity and buy-in from the surrounding community by fostering social gathering and interaction.

Examples of major park improvements could include the construction of a shelter or area for community gathering. These improvements may include ancillary features such as an area for performing arts and music, games, a spray pad for summertime use, a community garden, and outdoor cooking amenities. Minor improvements could include the provision of interactive

Barb Cook Park

opportunities in the park such as the installation of art works or sculptures, games, and programming the park for group activities.

- *Seek out ways to reduce maintenance costs associated with upkeep of the park.*

Reducing maintenance costs is consistent with the overall recommendations of this assessment, which identify these costs as one of the most significant expenditures of the overall park system budget.

The city should also seek out ways to incorporate softscape elements into the park that feature native plants to reduce the total area requiring maintenance.

- *Design or retrofit of the features and layout of new and existing park features to incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and techniques.*

CPTED is a program that utilizes design and use of the built environment to reduce the potential for crime and other unwanted behaviors. Priority for implementation in Barb Cook Park should focus on increasing visibility throughout the park from along Madison Avenue to make the park feel more inviting to visitors and traffic moving past the park.

- *Increase mobility and connectivity*

Internal movement throughout the park is limited. Constructing a paved path that is ADA accessible and connects the key activity centers in the park would significantly improve access mobility for all residents throughout the facility.

Eva G. Farris Sports Complex



Eva G. Farris Sports Complex

Park Location & Access

The Eva G. Farris Sports Complex is located south of East 45th Street and east of Virginia Avenue in the Latonia / Rosedale neighborhood of the city. It has vehicular and pedestrian access along Virginia Avenue.

Features & Amenities

- Football Field
- Gazebo
- Open Space
- Off-Street Parking
- Running Track
- Restroom Facilities
- Soccer Field

Park Character

The Eva G. Farris Sports Complex is an expansive park located along the banks of the Licking River. The park sits on approximately 15.7 acres and features a wide range of active and passive recreation amenities.



A majority of the complex is located within a floodplain area or an area identified by the *Direction 2030: Your Voice. Your Choice.*, as a Developmentally Sensitive Area (DSA). DSAs are areas which may contain moderate or steep slopes, sensitive geology, or a combination of these characteristics, as well as soils that are subject to occasional or frequent flooding. Any improvements constructed within a DSA require a geotechnical evaluation to ensure proper construction of improvements made within them.



Eva G. Farris Sports Complex

The entire park, with the exception of the small playground area located along Virginia Avenue, is currently maintained by Holy Cross High School through an agreement with city. The school programs the facility for a variety of athletic functions throughout the year.

Recommendation

- *Continue to maintain the park and ensure that park equipment and facilities are safe and well kept.*

Providing safe and maintained park facilities is critical to the viability of the facilities themselves as well surrounding neighborhood the park serves.

- *Look for ways to reduce maintenance costs associated with upkeep of the park.*

Reducing maintenance costs is consistent with the overall recommendations of this assessment, which identify these costs as one of the most significant expenditures overall park system budget.

Due to the isolated location of the park, the city should seek out partnerships with an organization or group to assume maintenance of the playground located along Virginia Avenue. Possible partners may include partnering with the Latonia Business Association, the local neighborhood association, or Holy Cross who currently maintains all other areas of the park.

If partnerships are not available, the city should evaluate the viability of the small playground area through a public input process. This process will help determine whether the playground should be removed and land transferred in order to save on overall park system maintenance costs. The Bill Cappel Sports Complex is located 0.39 miles from this facility and contains similar recreation amenities to what is currently provided at this complex.

Goebel Park Complex



Goebel Park Complex

Park Location & Access

The Goebel Park Complex is located on the east side of Interstate 71 / 75 between West 5th Street and West 9th Street in the city's Mainstrasse neighborhood. The northern portion of the park is located adjacent to George Steinfeld Park.

The large neighborhood park has several pedestrian access points located along West 5th Street, Philadelphia Avenue, Dalton Street, West 8th Street, and West 9th Street. There are currently two off-street parking areas located along West 9th Street and Dalton Avenue

Features & Amenities

- Basketball Courts (2)
- Benches
- Bike Racks
- Carroll Chimes Clock Tower
- Gazebo
- Goebel Goats (Used for Ground Maintenance)
- Grill
- Monuments and Dedication Plaques
- Open Space
- Playground Equipment
- Shelters
- Swimming Pool
- Trash Receptacles
- Walking Path (Paved)

Park Character & Use

The Goebel Park Complex is comprised of three parks which abut one another: Goebel Park, Kenny Shields Park, and Sergeant First Class Jason Bishop Memorial Park. There are four major activity centers located in the park. The two located in Goebel Park include the swimming pool area and that portion of the park located along the east side of Philadelphia Street, immediately west of West 6th Street and the Mainstrasse Village. The latter of

the two features a wide variety of recreation amenities and is used to host events and gathering throughout the year.

The other two activity centers are located in Kenny Shields Park and Sergeant First Class Jason Bishop Memorial Park. Kenny Shields Park features basketball courts and a shelter as well as off-street parking. Sergeant First Class Jason Bishop Memorial Park features a playground area with benches for seating located throughout the park.

A paved walking path meanders throughout the park complex connecting each of the activity centers to one another.



The Goebel Park Complex and the amenities provided at each activity center attracts visitors from the nearby neighborhoods as well as from areas outside of the city. The most popular amenities at the park are the basketball courts, clock tower, playgrounds, and the swimming pool. The "Goebel Goats," used to control invasive plant species in the wooded area of the park, are also a big attraction drawing visitors from all over the region.

Goebel Park Complex

The Carroll Chimes Clock Tower, one of the most iconic features of the park, is centrally located in the northern activity center of the park across from West 6th Street.



The clock tower displays a mechanical puppet show of the Pied Piper on the hour, April through December. The clock tower also boasts a working carillon, which plays every hour as well. Architect Addison Clipson was commissioned to design the tower and worked with partner Bill Batson. Completed in 1979, the tower was named in honor of then Governor of Kentucky, Julian Carroll.

There are two basketball courts located in Kenny Shields Park in the southwestern corner of the park near the off-street parking area off of West 9th Street.



There are currently two playgrounds located within the complex. The first is a larger playground located in the northern portion of the park. This playground was recently updated in 2015.



The second playground is located in the southern portion of the site near the intersection of Philadelphia Avenue with West 9th Street.



The swimming pool is located adjacent to an off-street parking area on Dalton Avenue and west 8th Street. The pool facilities are operational, however they are functionally obsolete and deteriorating. The costs associated with the operation, upkeep and repair of the pool is significantly higher than most of the amenities within the city park system.



Goebel Park Complex

A majority of the open space areas along the interstate is significantly below the grade of the surrounding park activity centers. These areas are used by Sanitation District No. 1 for stormwater runoff which makes them unsuitable for the construction of major recreation amenities. A significant portion of the retaining wall running along the west side of the open space areas contains graffiti. The retaining wall holds up the Interstate 71 / 75 interchange at West 5th Street.



Recommendation

The Goebel Park Complex is designated within this assessment as a high priority for targeted reinvestment and revitalization for the following reasons:

- The Goebel Park Complex has the potential to be a great asset for the city. It is one of the first impressions that vehicular passengers and pedestrians have when entering the city from the interstate off-ramp located on West 5th Street, making it a critical gateway into the city. The



It is important that this area reflect the unique identity of the city and the Mainstrasse Village while promoting both as a viable place to live, work and play for residents, visitors and businesses.

- The location, size, and range of amenities provided at the Goebel Park Complex make it a popular recreation destination for residents in the surrounding neighborhoods, particularly those residing in Lewisburg where there are no larger recreation facilities within walking distance.
- The existing design and lack of lighting make the area susceptible to unwanted behavior. All three parks that make up the Goebel Park Complex have a much higher proportion of police reported incidences than many of the other facilities in the park system.
- Goebel Park is the only neighborhood park within the Center City Area that is located within a reasonable walking distance to residents of the Lewisburg neighborhood of the City.

Improvement Considerations

Investment in Goebel Park should be done through a public process that facilitates community input in future park improvements. In doing so, the following should be considered:

- *Install community features and program the park complex with equipment and events that bring people together to help shape the identity of the community.*

The Goebel Park Complex anchors the Mainstrasse neighborhood and serves as a critical gateway into the city. Investment should focus on transforming the park in a way that adds to the identity of the

Goebel Park Complex

area by fostering social gathering and interaction as well as community buy-in.

Examples of major park improvements could include the revitalization of the existing shelters located in Goebel Park or the construction of areas for performing arts and music. Minor improvements could include the provision of interactive opportunities in the park such as the installation of art works or sculptures, games, or programming the park for group activities.

- *Increase mobility and connectivity throughout the park complex.*

The activity centers of the park complex are currently connected by a single path leading to the park entrances and exits. Future park improvements should evaluate the viability of adding additional hard surface paths in the open space areas of the park to create an internal loop. The new paved path would provide a self-contained recreation amenity for visitors and residences in the surrounding neighborhoods. In doing so, the city should collaborate with Sanitation District No. 1 who currently uses the area to control stormwater runoff.

- *Repair or replace the stairs located in Kenny Shield Park.*

The stairway in Kenny Shields Park currently lacks handrails and is showing significant signs of deterioration, creating an unsafe and uninviting experience for park users. Future park improvements should seek to the repair or replace the steps.



- *Evaluate the viability of the pool facilities.*

The pool facilities are aging and showing visible signs of deterioration and obsolescence. Ongoing maintenance cost associated with operation, continual maintenance and upkeep are significantly higher than other recreation facilities and amenities. The City should explore the possibility of replacing the pool with a splash pad to reduce these costs.



- *Evaluate the removal or repair of the retaining wall and billboard located along West 9th Street and Philadelphia Avenue in the southeast corner of the complex.*

The retaining wall along Philadelphia Avenue creates physical and visual access barriers to the park, which restrict access and make the park feel uninviting.



Future improvements to the complex should evaluate the removal of the retaining wall to make the facility more visually appealing by improving

Goebel Park Complex

site lines and utilizing a design that draws patrons into the park rather than keep them out.

- *Pave the off-street parking area accessed from West 9th Street.*

The off-street parking area along West 9th Street is significantly deteriorated. Additionally, the path used to access the nearby tower is gravel. The unkempt condition of both area contributes to a perception that the park is run down and unsafe making the facility a less than desirable place for visitors.

- *Consider the replacement of the basketball facilities and accessory fencing.*

The basketball courts are a highly used amenity by visitors, especially those from areas immediately surrounding the park complex. Future improvements to the facility should take into account the aging condition of the structure and the surrounding areas, which include fencing and an ancillary area with seating just north of the courts. Improvements should seek to reduce or eliminate the fencing associated with the basketball courts to improve site lines into the park. The city should also evaluate the cost versus the benefit of updating the equipment.

- *Seek to create wayfinding signage leading to the activity centers of the park complex.*

There are currently no wayfinding signage detailing the location of the many different activity centers in the park complex. Future improvements should include signage elements effectively linking park users with the different areas of the complex. In addition, Philadelphia Avenue should be incorporated for mobility and signage purposes.

- *Invest in improvements that build up the gateway identified along the West 5th Street interchange.*

The area of the complex abutting the 5th Street interchange is one of the first impressions that vehicular passengers and pedestrians have when entering the city. The city should create a gateway along this corridor that is well kept and inviting.

- *Seek out ways to reduce maintenance costs associated with upkeep of the park.*

Reducing maintenance costs is consistent with the overall recommendations of this assessment, which identifies these costs as one of the most significant expenditures overall park system budget.

The city should seek out partnerships with an organization or group to assume some or all of the maintenance associated with the park. Possible partners may include the Mainstrasse Village Association, Make Goebel Great or another local resident group or association.

The city should also seek out ways to incorporate softscape elements into the park that feature native plants in order to reduce the total area requiring maintenance.

The existing graffiti on the retaining wall spanning the western boundary of the park currently detracts from aesthetics and overall appeal. The city should look to embrace this artist expression and evaluate a “graffiti festival.” The event could bring in local artists to create artworks or murals which cover the existing graffiti. The content of the works should include elements which focus on promoting the identity and buy in from the surrounding community.

Implement best management practices solutions to mitigate water runoff issues within the park.

A considerable portion of the park is currently unusable for active recreation due to issues with storm water management. The city should seek to partner with organizations, particularly Sanitation

Goebel Park Complex

District No. 1, to identify best management practices to mitigate current stormwater issues as well as to seek ways to convert unused park space to allow for additional passive recreation activities.

Hands Pike Park



Hands Pike Park

Park Location & Access

Hands Pike Park is located along Hand's Pike in the heart of the city's South Covington neighborhood.

The park has access from Hands Pike and Tripoli Lane. Hands Pike allows for vehicular access through a shared driveway with Covington Engine Company Number 5, a firehouse operated by the city. Tripoli Lane allows for pedestrian and vehicular access. Both access points lead to a paved off-street parking area. The off-street parking accessed from Hand's Pike is shared within the city's Fire Department.

Features & Amenities

- Playground Equipment (fenced)
- Open Space
- Internal Pathway (unpaved)
- Benches
- Trash Cans
- Off-street Parking

Park Character & Use

Hand Pike Park is a linear park located on approximately 1.8 acres. The amenities provided at the park are programmed toward recreation opportunities for younger children.



Hands Pike Park features an internal pathway connecting both off-street parking areas with the playground. The internal pathway is not ADA compliant and is constructed using wood and plastic edging filled with mulch as the surface material.



The topography of the entire park has a gradual slope associated with draining water from the surrounding residential areas toward Hands Pike as well as stormwater drains located between the playground area and Tripoli Lane (see below).



Continued drainage along the topography of the site has significantly deteriorated the integrity of the internal walking path. Topography and drainage also pose barriers to programming the open space areas of the park for passive and active recreation activities.

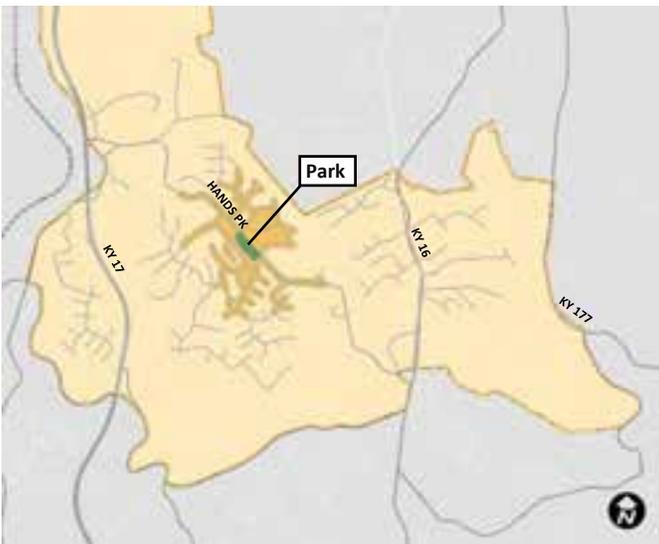


Hands Pike Park

Recommendations

Hands Pike Park is designated within this assessment as a high priority park for targeted reinvestment and revitalization for the following reasons:

- The park is highly visible and centrally located in South Covington, a suburban area of the city. Primarily occupied by detached single-family residential dwellings, many of the cul-de-sac subdivisions in this part of the city are accessed from Hands Pike adjacent to or near the park. The dark orange in the figure below represents those areas within a half mile walk to the park.



- The current layout of the park does not make for best use of the park space. The design features minimal recreation amenities aside from the playground area and lacks the types of components that make a park a place to foster social interaction and promote community identity.
- The demographic analysis of 8 key parks (See Technical Report) found that the ½ mile service area of Hands Pike Park had a higher proportion of children under the age of 18 as well as a larger family household size than other parks in the analysis.

- The park is not ADA accessible and provides no amenities for visitors with disabilities. The city currently has very few recreation facilities that are ADA accessible.

Improvements Considerations

Investment in Hands Pike Park should be done through a public process that facilitates community input in future park improvements. In doing so, the following should be considered:

- *Increase and diversify the recreation amenities provided at the park.*

The current amenities provided at Hands Pike Park cater only to parents with children. Improvements to the park should address the recreation needs of the broader cross-section of the community.

Hands Pike does not currently have sidewalks along either side of the street which creates connectivity problems for passive recreation activities such as walking or jogging. Revitalization of the park should consider replacing the deteriorating, one-way, soft surface path in the park with a hard surface path that features an internal loop within the park. The picture below page is a conceptual illustration of the internal park walkway and how it could connect the park to the surrounding areas.



Hands Pike Park

The new paved path would provide a self-contained recreation amenity located in a central area for residents within the surrounding community. It would also provide a critical pedestrian connection along the west side of Hands Pike connecting the surrounding residential subdivisions to one another through the park. If constructed the paved pathway should be ADA accessible.

- *Install community features and program the park for events that bring people together to help shape the identity of the community.*

Hands Pike Park is located in the heart of the South Covington Neighborhood. Investment should focus on transforming the park in a way that creates a sense of identity for the surrounding community by fostering social gathering and interaction.

Examples of major park improvements could include the construction of a shelter or area for community gathering. These improvements may include ancillary features such as an area for performing arts and music or outdoor cooking amenities. Minor improvements could include the provision of interactive opportunities in the park such as the installation of art works or sculptures, games, fitness equipment, and programming the park for group activities.

- *Implement best management practices to mitigate water runoff issues within the park.*

A considerable portion of the park is currently unusable due to issues with storm water runoff as discussed above. The city should seek to partner with organizations, particularly Sanitation District No. 1, to identify best management practices to mitigate current deterioration issues as well as to seek ways to convert wasted park space to allow for recreation activities.

- *Seek out ways to reduce maintenance costs associated with upkeep of the park.*

Reducing maintenance costs is consistent with the overall recommendations of this assessment which identify these costs as one of the most significant expenditures overall park system budget.

The city should seek out partnerships with an organization or group to assume some or all of the maintenance associated with the park. Possible partners may include the Covington Fire Department, which is located adjacent to the park, or a local neighborhood association.

The city should also seek out ways to incorporate softscape elements into the park which feature native plants in order to reduce the total area requiring maintenance.

Randolph Park



Randolph Park

Park Location & Access

Randolph Park is located adjacent to the Licking River levee, between East 8th Street and East 10th Street, in the Eastside neighborhood of the city.

The robust neighborhood park currently has access from East 8th Street, East 9th Street, Prospect Avenue, and Greenup Street. Currently only the access points along Greenup and East 8th Street. The park also provides informal access to the Licking River Greenway via natural open space.

Features & Amenities

- Baseball Field
- Basketball Courts (2)
- Benches
- Open Space
- Pool
- Playground Equipment
- Trash Receptacles

Park Character

Randolph Park is a large neighborhood park, which lies on approximately 8.2 acres. The facility features a wide variety of passive and active recreation amenities.



The earthen levee and open space areas, combined with views of treetops lining the Licking River and the cluster of mature trees along the Greenup Street and East Eighth Street facilitate a connection with visitors to its natural elements.

Recommendation

Randolph Park is designated within this assessment as a high priority for targeted reinvestment and revitalization for the following reasons:

- The location, size, and range of amenities provided at the facility make it a popular recreation destination for residents in the surrounding neighborhoods. The park is also one of three facilities within the city that offer aquatic recreation amenities during the summer.
- The current layout of the park does not make the best use of the park space. While the park provides a robust offering of active recreation amenities, areas for passive recreation are limited. In addition, the baseball field and

Randolph Park

associated fencing consumes a significant portion of the park, which if reconfigured could be programmed for multiple active and passive recreation activities.

- A majority of the activity centers in the park are not accessible to visitors with disabilities. The city currently has very few recreation facilities that are ADA accessible. The location, popularity, and potential of Randolph Park make it ideal for providing expanded recreation opportunities, which accommodate people with disabilities.
- The facilities and equipment inventory analysis found a significant portion of the park equipment and facilities to past their usable life and deteriorating. Such equipment includes the pool facility, planters, waste receptacles, and benches.



- Randolph Park is located within close proximity to one of the larger, high density residential developments in the city. River's Edge, a 120 unit apartment complex is located adjacent to the park along East Ninth Street.
- Randolph Park is identified within the Licking River Greenway Master Plan as a trailhead. Investing in infrastructure improvements that establish a connection to the greenway from the surrounding neighborhoods will provide

visitors with greater access to the amenities along the greenway and other parts of the city.

Improvement Considerations

In 2012, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) awarded a grant for the creation of an integrated, historically proud, consensus-based, phased implementation plan for Randolph Park.

Following multiple meetings and public workshops held in the fall of 2013 the Friends of Randolph Park was formed. Over the course of the next year and a half the group worked to evaluate the existing park conditions and aesthetics, plan new activities for the park, then prioritize and obtain estimates for future improvements. The plan for the revitalization of Randolph Park was presented to City Commission in April of 2015. Future funding and improvements to the park should be consistent with the recommendations made within this assessment.

Senator Gus Sheehan Jr. Park

Senator Gus Sheehan Memorial Park was completely redeveloped in 2015. Neither PDS staff nor the City of Covington have access to current aerial imagery showing the new improvements made within the park at the time this written. As such this section will not feature imagery of the current configuration of recreation location map for the park is shown below.



Park Location & Access

Senator Gus Sheehan Park is located along the east side of Parkway Avenue in the Kenton Hills neighborhood of the city. The park abuts Devou Park, the largest park in the city park system. The park has pedestrian and vehicular access from along Parkway Drive.

Features & Amenities

- Basketball Court
- Benches
- Climbing Wall
- Off-Street Parking (Paved)
- Playground Equipment
- Shelter

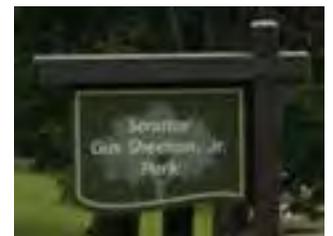
- Trash Receptacles
- Monuments and Dedication Plaques

Park Character

Senator Gus Sheehan Park sits on approximately 10.4 acres and is classified within this assessment as a neighborhood park. The facility features a variety of passive and active recreation amenities suited for visitors of all ages. The park has a natural character with mature tree canopy lining the boundaries of the site.



The park was named for West Covington native Gus Sheehan, Jr. who was longtime lawyer and newspaper publisher. Sheehan served in the



Kentucky legislature as a representative for Kenton County. Sheehan also served as Kenton County Trial commissioner, Kenton County Commonwealth Attorney, Kentucky State Representative, and Kentucky State Senator. During his tenure in elected office, he was instrumental in the creation of Northern Kentucky University, the Transit

Senator Gus Sheehan Jr. Park

Authority of Northern Kentucky, and the Kentucky State Lottery.

In 2015 Gus Sheehan Park received a nearly \$150,000 renovation. The makeover included new playground equipment including a climbing wall, a newly paved parking lot and basketball court, and a new picnic shelter.

Recommendations

- *Continue to maintain the park and ensure that park equipment and facilities are safe and well kept.*

Providing safe and maintained park facilities is critical to the viability of the facilities themselves as well surrounding neighborhood the park serves.

- *Look for ways to reduce maintenance costs associated with upkeep of the park.*

Reducing maintenance costs is consistent with the overall recommendations of this assessment, which identify these costs as one of the most significant expenditures overall park system budget.

The city should seek out partnerships with an organization or group to assume some or all of the maintenance associated with the park. Possible partners may include a collaborative agreement with the Devou Park Advisory Committee.

30th & Decoursey Park



30th & Decoursey Park

Park Location & Access

The 30th and Decoursey Park is located along the west side of Decoursey Avenue in the West Latonia neighborhood of the city. The park has access along Decoursey Avenue and is ADA accessible.

Features & Amenities

- Basketball Court
- Open Space
- Picnic Tables
- Playground Equipment
- Trash Receptacles
- Walking Path (Paved)

Park Character & Use

The 30th & Decoursey Park provides a diverse range of recreation amenities suited for visitors of all ages. The park sits on approximately 2.7 acres and is located at a topography that is significantly below the grade of the surrounding residences along West 28th Street and West 30th Street.

The topography of the site along with overgrown plantings and fencing along Decoursey Avenue create poor visibility and sight lines into the park. These factors have contributed to vandalism and other undesirable behaviors including the removal of several sections of fencing along the perimeter of the facility.



The shelter in the park is showing signs of deterioration and is missing fascia from both sides of the roof structure.



The basketball court and equipment are obsolete yet in good structural condition. The courts are not currently striped.



The trash cans do not currently have lid enclosures increasing the amount of litter throughout the facility which make the park seem uninviting to visitors and create additional maintenance costs.



Recommendations

- *Ensure that park facilities and equipment are safe and maintained.*

Providing safe and maintained park facilities is critical to the viability of the facilities themselves as well surrounding neighborhood the park serves.

Priority should be given to removing some or all of the fencing and plantings located along Decoursey

30th & Decoursey Park

Avenue to increase visibility into the facility and deter undesirable behaviors.

- *Design or retrofit of the features and layout of new and existing park amenities to incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and techniques.*

CPTED is a program that utilizes design and use of the built environment to reduce the potential for crime and other unwanted behaviors. Priority for implementation in 30th & Decoursey Park should focus on increasing visibility throughout the park.

- *Look for ways to reduce maintenance costs associated with upkeep of the park.*

The isolated location of the park, current condition of park equipment, and recurring vandalism and graffiti pose significant maintenance costs.

Reducing these costs is consistent with the overall maintenance recommendations of this assessment, which identifies maintenance costs as one of the most significant expenditures in upkeep of the overall park system.

The city should seek out partnerships with an organization or group to assume some or all of the maintenance associated with the park through a maintenance agreement, lease, or transfer of the property. Possible partners may include the local neighborhood association, a resident group, or the Latonia Business Association.

If partnerships are not available, the city should evaluate the viability of the park through a public input process. This process will help determine whether the park should be removed and land transferred in order to save on overall park system maintenance costs. There are currently two facilities located within a half mile of this park which provide the same or similar recreation

amenities. They are Barb Cook Park and MLB Cincinnati Meinken All-Star Field.

If through this process it is determined that the park is no longer viable to the community, the city should look to transfer the property to an organization associated with conservation of natural area and environments. Such organizations may include the Kenton County Conservancy, Sanitation District No. 1, or the Kenton County Conservation District.

30th & Decoursey Park

Boys & Girls Club Playground

The Boys & Girls Club Playground is occupied by both active and passive recreation amenities. A paved concrete walkway provides access to the activity centers of the park which include a playground and a mutli-purpose field surrounded by a paved track.

