



2021 FRANKFORT PARKS, RECREATION, AND HISTORIC SITES MASTER PLAN

Frankfort, Kentucky

July, 2021



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KENTUCKY DISTILLED



DRAFT



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

2021 Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Master Plan Frankfort, Kentucky

Mayor and Commission

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Commissioner Leesa Unger

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Robin Antenucci (Frankfort/Franklin Co. Tourist & Convention Commission)
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David Cammack (Parks Advisory Board Member)
Chea Coleman (Community Member)
Suzanne Fernandez Gray (Arts & Culture Representative)
Johnny Keene (Kings Center)
Louis McClain (Community Citizen)
Bill May (Former Mayor)
Jim Parrish (Former Director)
Joe Peach (Frankfort City Schools Athletic Director)
Shawn Pickens (Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Director)
Bobby Stone (Tree Board)
Ann French Thomas (Parks Advisory Board Member)
Kyle Thompson (City Commissioner)
Leesa Unger (City Commissioner)
Melanie VanHouten (Director, Josephine Sculpture Park)
Eric Whisman (Former City Commissioner)

Parks, Recreation, and Historic Staff Members (in alphabetical order)

Brandon Caudle (Golf Course Assistant Superintendent)
Alex Cunningham (Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Special Projects/Forestry Manager)
Adam Curry (Golf Course Superintendent)
Grant Grider (Park Supervisor)
Jonathan Hockensmith (Park Supervisor)
Michael Hockensmith (Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Deputy Director)
David Newnam (Park Supervisor)
Shawn Pickens (Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Director)
Kirk Schooley (Golf Pro)
Christian Wilkins (Park Supervisor)

Consultant Team



2360 Chauvin Drive
Lexington, Kentucky 40517
(859) 268-1933 VOICE
(859) 268-3341 FAX
Project No. 20068
July, 2021

Patrick D. Hoagland, ASLA, Principal-in-Charge
Keith E. Rodenhauser, AICP, GISP, SITES AP,
Project Manager
Hannah Crepps, AICP, MUP, Planner
Tom O'Rourke, Recreation Consultant
Darrell Douglas, RLA, LEED AP, Park Designer
Tyler Strader, Park Designer
Lynda Gates, Administrative Assistant



ETC (Survey Consultant)

Jason Morado

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE NEED FOR A PLAN

As Kentucky's state capital, Frankfort is uniquely positioned to showcase remarkable natural landscapes, uphold a rich historic legacy, and champion local culture. The Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Department has a vital role to play in uplifting the capital city and already brings incredible resources to the community. Known regionally for signature sites like Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill and Cove Spring Nature Preserve, the park system offers residents a wide range of recreation possibilities.

This *2021 Frankfort Parks, Recreation, & Historic Sites Master Plan* will be critical to the city's future. It clarifies the department's own responsibilities and needs, as well as what partnerships can be leveraged to best deliver parks, facilities, and recreational choices to the citizens of Frankfort. Meant to instill focus, establish priorities, and inspire action over the next 10 years, this Master Plan was produced with guidance from an active steering committee appointed by the city. It is supported by robust data collection, including hours of in-person engagement, and affirms the special potential Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites has to be the community's primary provider of recreation facilities and experiences.

Deferred maintenance, changing community needs, development goals, and operational feasibility are all reasons enough for producing a future-forward plan. But even as the department looked head-on towards addressing these, the year 2020 ushered in an added and unprecedented layer of change and challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic that began in the U.S. in early March of 2020 has impacted communications, procedures, and everyday routine across all sectors of the economy. Besides dramatically altering daily life, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic are shaping the future of communities in ways as yet impossible to fully understand. Even

before the pandemic began in the U.S., clear reporting existed on the value of parks and recreation. As civic spaces, parks act as operational hubs for addressing chronic issues like physical inactivity and poor health. Having even a simple connection to nature can relieve stress, improve mental health, and provide opportunities for interpersonal interaction.¹ Parks are part of hyper-local civic infrastructure (so-called "third-spaces"²) needed now more than ever, where citizens practice the "art of association" and do the work of knitting communities together.³



During the coronavirus lockdown, Frankfort's parks became some of the only spaces available where residents could find solace and connection; the city's outdoor resources, like Cove Spring, experienced some of the highest visitation levels ever. As the Frankfort community enters pandemic recovery and post-lockdown life, the city will have to choose how to protect and amplify its precious park resources.

And Frankfort is not alone. What has emerged out of the COVID-19 pandemic is the undeniably vital role parks and recreation played – and will continue to play – in the nation's wellbeing and recovery. Six months into the pandemic, the National Recreation and Park Association published an extensive discussion of the myriad ways parks and recreation

¹ National Recreation and Park Association, "Health and Wellness," <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/health-wellness/>, (December, 10 2019).

² Redefining Infrastructure & Public Space. Reimagining the Civic Commons. 2021. <https://medium.com/reimagining-the-civic-commons/redefining-infrastructure-and-public-space-2e311edfde68>

³ American Academy of Arts and Sciences, *Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2020)

is both effected by and affecting the outcome of the pandemic.⁴ Agencies are adapting and finding creative funding solutions,⁵ boldly stepping into the critical work of bridging inequity, safeguarding physical and mental health, and ensuring access. This type of flexibility exemplifies the substance of the recommendations in this Master Plan. While it is impossible to decipher a single “correct” path into the post-pandemic future, this plan underscores the need for responsive action, elevated experiences, and reinforced civic infrastructure. As long-term economic impacts of COVID-19 manifest, there will be temptations and appeals to recover costs or cut spending. This Master Plan maps the beginning of multi-dimensional recovery where the Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Department is not only important but essential for building a strong, vibrant community in Frankfort.⁶

EXISTING CONDITIONS OF PARKS AND RECREATION IN FRANKFORT

For many residents, parks are primary entry points for interacting with the natural environment, and yet, as is the case with Frankfort’s Dolly Graham Park, city’s do not always invest equitably. As COVID-19 has made abundantly clear, equity fissures of social and economic magnitude persist but can be remedied in part through fair, inclusive access to public parks, nature, recreation opportunities, and quality facilities. For all residents, whatever their background, parks help provide a variety of passive and active outdoor recreational opportunities. Proximity to these valuable resources invariably improves community health and wellness, not to mention creates more adaptable, robust local economies.⁷ As mentioned previously, Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites services are already a critical thread in the city’s civic fabric and will continue to be crucial to Frankfort’s pandemic recovery.

In Frankfort, the city maintains over 740 acres of parkland and 10 parks, including four Neighborhood Parks and three Community Parks. The department also oversees five Special Use sites, like the Capital City Museum and St. Clair Mall downtown. In addition to these city properties, residents have access to a number of parks and open spaces managed by

other entities (e.g., Frankfort Independent Schools, Franklin County Schools, and the YMCA) either within or near Frankfort.



Demographic and Benchmarking Analysis

A strong, proactive approach to department operations requires knowledge and understanding of community demographics. The findings of this Master Plan show 1) the population has remained stable and will likely see limited growth; 2) the community is diversifying somewhat racially with the White population growing slowest and the Asian, Hispanic, and multiracial populations growing at higher rates; and 3) the senior population (65+) will outpace children (under 18) in the city by 2025. Though there is no certain way to prepare for changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, understanding past trends and projected changes will help identify present demand for parks and recreation and be useful for anticipating future need.

The analysis of existing conditions includes a benchmark comparison to 55 similar agencies using the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics database. The benchmarking shows the department is paying about the same as benchmarks for twice as many staff, while managing more acres of parkland overall on top of providing services not just to the city but to the rest of Franklin County as well. Given the pandemic – both the effects already

⁴ Dolesh, Richard J. How Parks and Recreation Will Change Forever. NRPA. (July 2020). <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2020/august/how-parks-and-recreation-will-change-forever/>

⁵ McCormick, Kathleen. Room to Roam: The Pandemic Has Underscored the Need for More Urban Parks; So What Comes Next? Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. <https://www.lincolnst.edu/publications/articles/2020-10-room-roam-pandemic-urban-parks-what-comes-next>. (October 7, 2020). Accessed November 2020.

⁶ Marquis, Bridget. Infrastructure That Does More: Investing in Public Spaces for a Resilient America. Strong Towns. https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2020/11/23/infrastructure-that-does-more-investing-in-public-spaces-for-a-resilient-america?fbclid=IwAR2Aa8OXGjUpGNv3ibIDHC-W40ic9L9QjnXvix_kgFSocTdoi5vihqJ0bDg (November 24, 2020). Accessed December 4, 2020

⁷ Berg, Nate. Great Parks Don’t Just Have Rec. Space: They Create Jobs. 2021. Fast Company. https://www.fastcompany.com/90624316/great-parks-dont-just-have-rec-space-they-create-jobs?mc_cid=105f89bd93&mc_eid=6c9b6b28d4

felt, and the likely greater impacts still to come – this dynamic will need to be reevaluated and likely changed in order to ensure the department’s longevity.

The requested budget for 2020-2021 capital improvements is less than half the benchmark median. Additionally, the city has a significant backlog of deferred maintenance which needs to be addressed in order to sustain desired service levels. These improvements will be especially critical as post-pandemic shifts in demand for parks and open space add to present stresses on existing resources.

Service Area Analysis (Gaps)

Maps of service areas for various parks and facilities were used to identify “Service Gaps” or underserved areas within Frankfort. The planning consultant also created maps to illustrate levels of access to various park categories and facilities. The analysis indicated that just over a quarter of Frankfort residents (26%) are within walking distance of some kind of park, with an additional 12% within walking distance of a school with recreation features. Nearly all Frankfort households live within a short drive to a larger park.

Lastly, a composite service areas map (see next page) shows the overall level of service for parks (4 types) and facilities (18 types), in turn revealing spaces of need and opportunity. Dark shades of blue indicate high service levels while red areas show the areas with the lowest level of service to parks and facilities. Thirty-four percent (34%) of Frankfort residents live in the highest two categories, however just over half (55%) live within the medium service level; only 11% live in areas of medium-low to low service.

Much of Frankfort’s more densely populated neighborhoods are within medium to medium-high service, with the eastern half of the community having the greatest amount of high-level service. The western and southern parts of the city – even where population is denser and more closely developed – have some of the lowest service of anywhere in the Frankfort. Downtown is notably limited in service with only scattered spots of high-level service. The table below shows the percentage of the population by service level.

Service Level (Rank)	Population	Cumulative Population
High (80%-100%)	8%	8%
Medium-High (60%-80%)	25%	34%
Medium (40%-60%)	55%	89%
Medium-Low (20%-40%)	11%	100%
Low (0%-20%)	0%	100%

A CITIZEN DRIVEN PLAN

To make informed decisions moving forward, Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites needs meaningful public input in addition to robust statistical and performance analysis. Including resident participation in the planning process gives actual park users a means to share their individual needs, perceptions, concerns, and desires for the park system they themselves use. This Master Plan process used several methods to connect with the community. As the department begins to implement this plan, sustained efforts will be necessary to continuously solicit public feedback about development projects; allowing direct participation whenever possible will ensure the community feels heard and has pride in their parks. As the community finds new balance amid the coronavirus recovery, engagement efforts should be flexible and creative, utilizing tools like on-site feedback (e.g., semi-permanent chalk or bulletin boards) and interactive online platforms (e.g., Mentimeter).

The summary below indicates the various ways the public was involved throughout this Master Plan process. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many normally in-person interactions were conducted via virtual conferencing.

Engagement Summary

- In-Park Intercept Interviews
 - Stakeholder Discussions
 - Statistically Valid Parks and Recreation Survey (by ETC Institute)
 - Web-Based survey
 - Online Engagement (powered by MindMixer)
1. Thirteen scheduled in-park listening sessions at 6 of the parks allowed for nearly 150 people to share their desires, needs, and insights related to Frankfort’s parks and recreation services.
 2. Meetings with stakeholder groups (September – December 2020) representing:
 - Commission
 - Staff
 - City Staff
 - Parks, Rec., Historic Sites Board
 - Tree Board
 - Frankfort/Franklin County Schools
 - Frankfort/Franklin County Tourist & Convention Commission
 - Kentucky Capital Development Corporation

Composite Service Areas

Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Master Plan

Frankfort, Kentucky

Service Level (Rank)	Population	Cumulative Population
High (80%-100%)	8%	8%
Medium-High (60%-80%)	25%	34%
Medium (40%-60%)	55%	89%
Medium-Low (20%-40%)	11%	100%
Low (0%-20%)	0%	100%

Legend

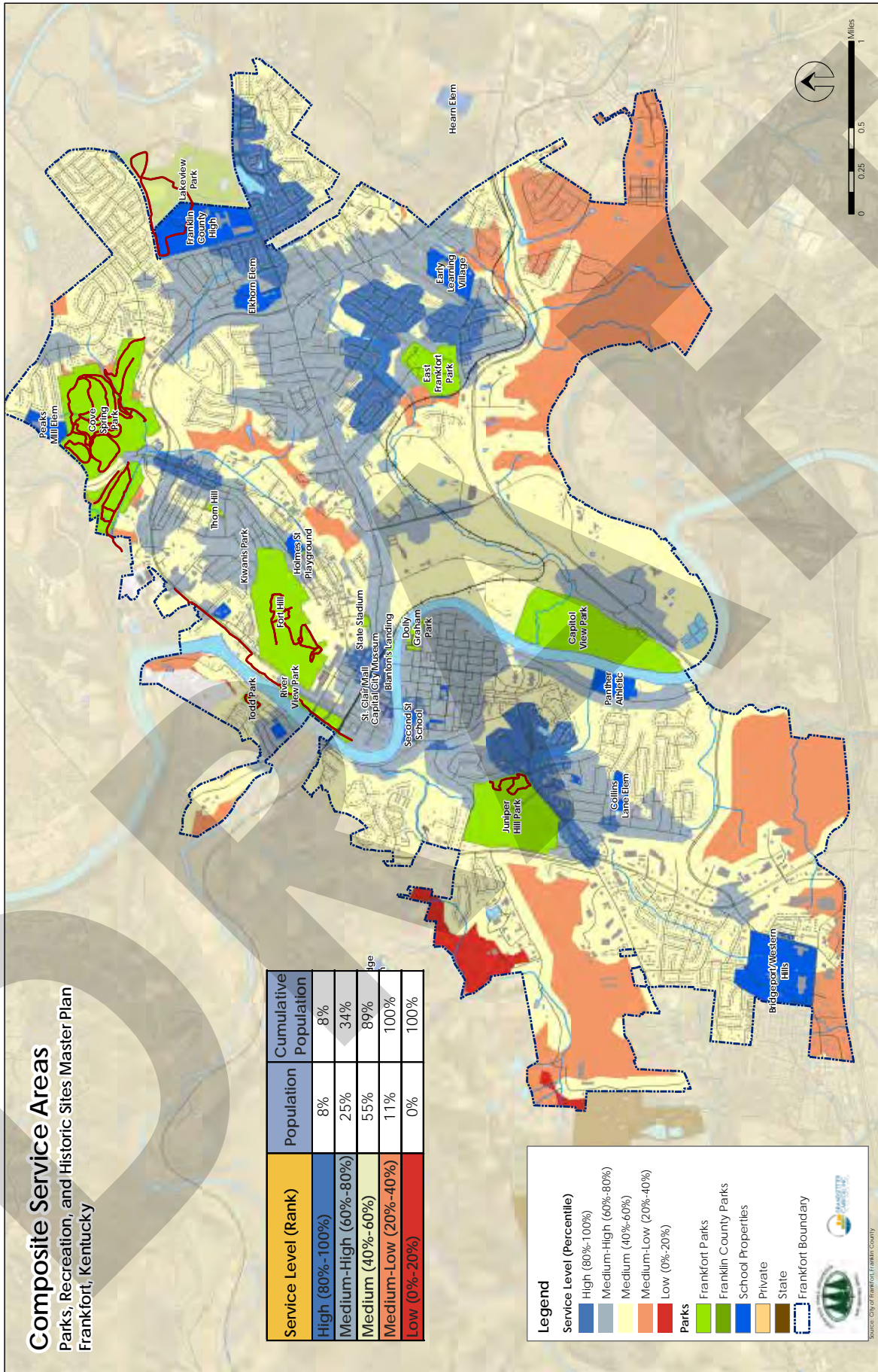
Service Level (Percentile)

- High (80%-100%)
- Medium-High (60%-80%)
- Medium (40%-60%)
- Medium-Low (20%-40%)
- Low (0%-20%)

Parks

- Frankfort Parks
- Franklin County Parks
- School Properties
- Private
- State

Frankfort Boundary



Source: City of Frankfort, Franklin County

- Frankfort Area Chamber of Commerce
 - Downtown Frankfort, Inc.
 - Kentucky State University
 - Farmers Market
 - Josephine Sculpture Park
 - Canoe Kentucky/Kentucky River Tours
 - Sunshine Center
 - Otrero Arts, Inc., & Roaming Studios
 - South Frankfort Neighborhood Association
 - Yes Arts
 - Additional Arts Community Members
 - Audubon Society
 - KYMBA & Walk Bike Frankfort
 - Capital City Activity Center
 - Rotary Club
 - YMCA
 - Buffalo Trace
 - Kings Center
 - South Frankfort Community Center
3. A statistically valid needs assessment survey conducted by the ETC Institute – 444 total surveys received from Frankfort households
 4. A web-based survey – available on the Parks and Recreation webpage and shared on social media platforms – completed by 479 respondents (58% residents of Frankfort, 31% of Franklin County.)

WHAT FRANKFORT RESIDENTS SAID

Information gathered from these public input methods was used to identify the needs of Frankfort residents. A brief summary of the findings is provided below.

Stakeholder Groups

Discussions spanned a wide variety of issues:

1. Connectivity & Wayfinding
2. Upgraded Facilities
3. Expanded Programs
4. Indoor Programming & Recreation Space
5. Highlighting Parks
6. Improved Strategic Marketing
7. Strong Downtown Connections
8. Partnerships & Collaboration
9. Funding & Revenue Sources
10. Operations

11. Trail System Expansion
12. Kentucky River as an Asset

Statistically Valid Mail Survey

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of residents visited a park in Frankfort at some point in the past year; 63% of these residents visited parks more than 10 times in that year. Juniper Hill Park, Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve, and Lakeview Park (a county park partially maintained by the city) were the top three most visited sites according to the statistically valid Mail Survey; Cove Spring, Capitol View, and Juniper Hill Parks were the top three most-visited parks according to the Web Survey responses (See Chapter 4).

The **top reasons** (above 30% of either/both survey responses) for not using parks more often:

- **Do Not Know What is Offered** (42% Mail Survey, 38% Web Survey)
- **Poor Condition of Facilities** (21% Mail Survey, 34% Web Survey)

These responses suggest that stronger communication efforts, intentional outreach, and meaningful improvements systemwide would help increase visitation and resident satisfaction.

Some improvements households would most like to see in existing parks include:

- **Restrooms** (59% Mail Survey, 63% Web Survey)
- **Walking/hiking trails** (44% Mail Survey, 63% Web Survey)
- **Security Cameras/Lighting** (35% Mail Survey, 33% Web Survey)

These preferences point first to the need for on-site amenities and improved comfort at the parks, as well as a popular desire for walkable connectivity across the community and improved safety systemwide.

The **most important parks and recreation facilities** for households were (sum of top 4 choices):

- **Walking & hiking trails** (42%)
- **Natural areas/nature parks** (22%)
- **Swimming pools (indoor)** (16%)
- **Playgrounds** (15%)

The results for the most important facilities were combined with the reported unmet needs to determine high (top 6) **priorities for investment**:

1. Walking & Hiking Trails
2. Swimming Pools (indoor)
3. Natural Areas/Nature Parks
4. Small Neighborhood Parks
5. Picnic Shelters/Picnic Areas
6. Dog Parks (off-leash)

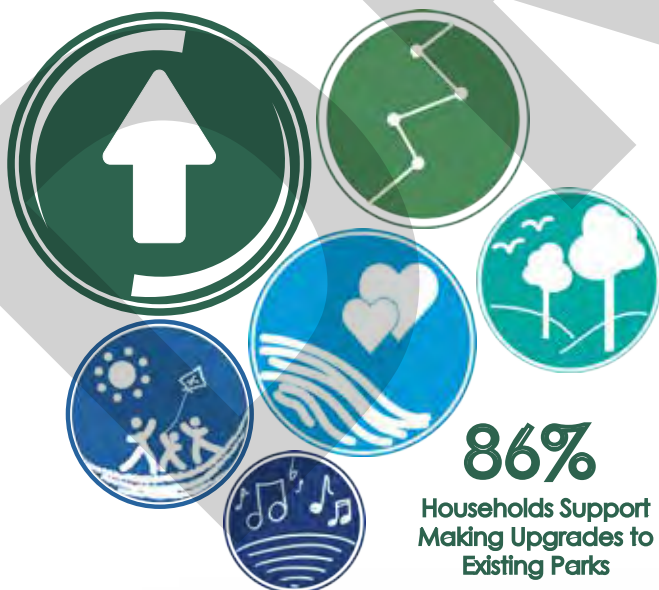
The most important parks and recreation programs for households were (sum of top 3 choices):

- Concerts/Art Performances (29%)
- Fitness & Wellness Programs (Adult) (20%)
- Programs for Persons Age 55 and Older (16%)
- Movies (Outdoor) (15%)

The results for the most important programs were combined with the reported unmet needs to determine the high (top 8) priorities for investment:

1. Concerts/art performances
2. Fitness & Wellness Programs (adult)
3. Movies (outdoor)
4. Programs for 55+
5. Nature Programs
6. Special Events
7. Water Fitness Programs
8. History Programs & Education

And finally, respondents shared their level of support for the range of improvements and potential development covered in the survey. **Eighty-six percent (86%) of households were supportive of upgrading existing parks and facilities.**



Engagement Key Findings

Results indicate that generally the Frankfort community desires:

- Improvements to existing parks
- Acquisition & preservation of natural areas & open space
- Increased connectivity with trails & added walking paths to/through parks
- More opportunities to engage with the Kentucky River
- Expanded programming & events
- Concerts & live performances
- Fitness & wellness classes
- Outdoor movies
- Active Adult (55+) programs
- Activation of downtown area
- Upgraded playgrounds with unique equipment & accessible, adaptive equipment
- Support amenities (e.g., lighting, drinking fountains with bottle fillers, restrooms, shade, seating)
- Year-round recreation opportunities
- New indoor aquatic facility
- Focus on conservation, environmental best practices, & responsible development
- Partnerships with neighboring communities & local organizations
- Strategic & collaborative marketing & outreach
- Formation of a Park Foundation

VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES FOR PARKS AND RECREATION IN FRANKFORT

The Master Plan Steering Committee, with support from the planning team, worked to craft a strategic plan. This facet of the document solidifies the daily purpose of the agency, its guiding values, and the long view of success.

Vision

A connected community where exceptional parks & programs enrich quality of life for all

Mission

Improving lives through unique experiences & beautiful spaces

Values

Community Connection

Bridging our social and physical divides

Natural Resources

Utilizing & safeguarding the Kentucky River & our unique biodiversity

Exceptional Spaces

Providing remarkable sites that instill pride in our city

Healthy Living

Offering meaningful resources that inspire & promote our overall wellness

Operational Excellence

Delivering the highest quality of service to our community

Cultural Stewardship

Enriching our city's historical legacy & creative energy

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives will guide the operations, improvements, and services in parks and recreation in Frankfort over the next five to ten years.

Goal 1: Connect Frankfort

Eliminate social & physical barriers through accessible spaces, welcoming events, & vibrant neighborhoods

Trails & Wayfinding: Provide trails that clearly link destinations

Built Environment: Responsibly provide facilities to engage & connect the community

Events: Collaborate to provide possibilities for interaction, fun, & learning

Neighborhood Vibrancy: Utilize parks & programs to uplift & cherish local neighborhoods

Goal 2: Support Healthy Lifestyles

Provide facilities & programs that encourage physical health & mental wellbeing

Athletics: Provide regionally attractive sports events & facilitate locally-focused opportunities

Active Lifestyles: Encourage exploration & growth through diverse physical activities

Wellness: Foster social cohesion, educational opportunities, & personal health through creative, locally-sourced resources

Goal 3: Champion Frankfort's Natural & Cultural Resources

Uphold the city's abundant natural & cultural treasures as central to our city

The Kentucky River: Enhance community connection to the water through responsible, conscientious development

Stewardship: Set the standard for species protection, land management, & wildlife conservation

History, Arts, & Culture: Help to create community vibrancy & celebrate Frankfort's uniqueness

Goal 4: Legacy of Excellence

Cultivate pride in the Capital City by delivering signature parks, creative programs, & collaborative relationships that enhance life for all

Staff Development & Retention: Nurture an energized workforce through access to adequate resources, training, & other opportunities

Operations & Maintenance: Improve efficiency & fiscal sustainability by establishing clear standards of performance & recurring assessments

Marketing & Promotion: Utilize innovative & inclusive outreach methods

Partnerships: Prioritize relationship-building & information-sharing to effectively tackle collective goals across the community

SYSTEMWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

Public input (Chapter 4) and a comprehensive needs assessment (Chapter 5) together informed the recommendations for improvements outlined in Chapters 7 and 8. The following items are a summary of the top priorities determined by the Master Plan process along with regular consultation with the steering committee.

1. Establish a Frankfort Parks Foundation (501c3) to enhance fundraising & outreach
2. Utilize the Kentucky River as the valuable, unique resource that it is – add water access, improve viewsheds, & partner for river-oriented programs

3. Complete in-progress Phase I of Dolly Graham Park redevelopment; sustain neighborhood communication throughout this & any future improvement of the site Standardize partnership agreements & establish quarterly check-in meeting including all partners to ensure transparent, effective collaboration
4. Prepare park Master Plans, starting with East Frankfort Park, before development to ensure that improvements meet the needs of residents while respecting the character of the property
5. Assess viability of Juniper Hill Golf Course; evaluate fee structure & alternative revenue sources (e.g., FootGolf)
6. Formalize & adhere to Maintenance Management Plan
7. Develop cost recovery plan for programs & rentals
8. Initiate park ambassadors program & formalize volunteer program (e.g., one-stop online registration, e-blast opportunity updates, etc.)
9. Implement consistent, quality signage systemwide – including wayfinding, interpretive, & informational – ensuring alignment with existing city brand
10. Replace, improve, & add picnic shelters systemwide to provide ample community gathering & possible programming space
11. Improve and protect natural areas, especially Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve and Leslie Morris Park, to continue to connect users to nature
12. Streamline programming information on department webpage; create recreation calendar & one-click registration for all offerings
13. Develop Thorn Hill & Holmes Street properties as Neighborhood Parks
14. Update feasibility study for an indoor gym/field/program space to make a more cost-effective multiuse facility
15. Complete systemwide ADA Accessibility Audit
16. Add enhanced site amenities throughout all park spaces, including Wi-Fi access, security cameras, lighting (security & pedestrian-scale), restrooms, & seating
17. Update playgrounds systemwide to ensure fully accessible features & diverse experiences; install features like shade, seating, & trash/recycling receptacles to ensure comfortable user experience
18. Reopen closed entrance to Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill as primary access following engagement with 5 adjacent property owners
19. Continue to evaluate the potential for sports tourism at Capitol View Park; ensure coordination with Franklin County
20. Address flood repairs & mitigation, especially at recurring flood sites like River View Park and Todd Park in Bellepoint

This Master Plan provides capital improvement recommendations for each park in Frankfort. These recommendations – together with cost estimates – can be found in Chapter 8.

ACTION PLAN

The *2021 Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Master Plan* concludes with an Action Plan of 184 strategies and recommendations. These action items, which can be found in Chapter 9, detail specific actions for Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites to make, along with the city, in implementing this long-range master plan.



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DRAFT



INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE NEED FOR A PLAN

As the state capital, Frankfort, Kentucky is uniquely positioned to showcase remarkable natural landscapes, uphold a rich historic legacy, and champion local culture. The Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Department has a vital role to play in uplifting the capital city and already brings incredible resources to the community. Known regionally for signature sites like Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill and Cove Spring Nature Preserve, the park system offers residents a wide range of recreation possibilities. This 2021 *Frankfort Parks, Recreation, & Historic Sites Master Plan* will be critical to the city's future as it clarifies the department's own responsibilities and needs, as well as what partnerships can be leveraged to best deliver parks, facilities, and recreational choices to the citizens of Frankfort. Meant to instill focus, establish priorities, and inspire action over the next 10 years, this Master Plan was produced with guidance from an active steering committee appointed by the city. It is supported by robust data collection, including hours of in-person engagement, and affirms the special potential Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites has to be the community's primary provider of recreation facilities and experiences.

Deferred maintenance, changing community needs, development goals, and operational feasibility are all reasons enough for producing a future-forward plan. But even as the department looked head-on towards addressing these issues, the year 2020 ushered in an added and unprecedented layer of change and challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic that began in the U.S. in early March of 2020 has impacted communications, procedures, and everyday routine across all sectors of the economy. Besides dramatically altering daily life, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic are shaping the future of communities in ways as yet impossible to fully understand. Even before the pandemic began in the U.S., clear reporting existed on the value of parks and recreation. As civic spaces, parks act as operational hubs for addressing chronic issues like physical inactivity and poor health. Having even a simple connection to nature can relieve stress, improve mental health, and provide opportunities for interpersonal interaction.¹ Parks are part of hyper-local civic infrastructure (so-called "third-spaces"²) needed now more than ever, where citizens practice the "art of association" and do the work of knitting communities together.³

During the coronavirus lockdown, Frankfort's parks became some of the only spaces available where residents could find solace and connection; the city's outdoor resources, notably Cove Spring Park Nature preserve,

¹ National Recreation and Park Association, "Health and Wellness," <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/health-wellness/>, (December, 10 2019).

² Redefining Infrastructure & Public Space. Reimagining the Civic Commons. 2021. <https://medium.com/reimagining-the-civic-commons/redefining-infrastructure-and-public-space-2e311edfde68>

³ American Academy of Arts and Sciences, *Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2020)

experienced some of the highest visitation levels ever. As the Frankfort community enters pandemic recovery and post-lockdown life, the city will have to choose how to protect and amplify its precious park resources.

And Frankfort's not alone. What has emerged out of the COVID-19 pandemic is the undeniably vital role parks and recreation played – and will continue to play – in the nation's wellbeing and recovery. Six months into the pandemic, the National Recreation and Park Association published an extensive discussion of the myriad ways parks and recreation is both effected by and affecting the outcome of the pandemic.⁴ Agencies are adapting and finding creative funding solutions,⁵ boldly stepping into the critical work of bridging inequity, safeguarding physical and mental health, and ensuring access. This type of flexibility exemplifies the substance of the recommendations in this Master Plan. While it is impossible to decipher a single "correct" path into the post-pandemic future, this plan underscores the need for responsive action, elevated experiences, and reinforced civic infrastructure. As long-term economic impacts of COVID-19 manifest, there will be temptations and appeals to recover costs or cut spending. This Master Plan maps the beginning of multi-dimensional recovery where Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites is not only important but essential for building a strong, vibrant community in Frankfort.⁶

1.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF PARKS

Beyond providing relief during a global pandemic, parks deliver numerous benefits and services to communities. Local agencies have the responsibility to provide parks and recreation resources that champion the health, safety, and welfare of the community. This Master Plan is a key tool agencies can use to direct the management and provision of their resources. For many residents, parks are the only place where they can access the natural environment or enjoy opportunities for social interaction. Parks have the potential to provide a variety of social, active, and outdoor recreational opportunities to everyone, all of which can improve quality of life and make viable, thriving communities. Equitable access to parks and facilities ensures the health and wellness benefits from these resources is felt by the entire community.

In terms of driving economic impact, parks and recreation holds incredible potential. A major study conducted on behalf of the Trust for Public Land by John L. Crompton, *The Economic Benefits of Land Conservation*, investigates the impact of parks and open space on property taxes. Findings indicate property values were higher for parcels located near quality parks and open spaces than for similar properties located elsewhere. Additionally, recent surveys of home buyers by the National Association of Home Builders indicate that trails, parks, and playgrounds were three of the top five amenities that home buyers desire when considering a new home purchase. Furthermore, the findings of a recent study, *The Economic Significance of Local and Regional Park Systems' Spending on the United States Economy* (conducted by the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University (GMU) for the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)) found that local and regional parks created \$140 billion in economic activity per year and supported nearly one million jobs in the United States.

In assessing overall quality of life, a community's parks and recreation system is considered a primary indicator; higher quality programming and spaces correspond to higher quality of life. To begin with, parks can play a critical role in a strategy for promoting health and tackling challenges like poor nutrition, hunger, obesity, and physical inactivity. Whether through programming or excellent amenities, park spaces can encourage physical and social activity. And proximity matters – even living near a small neighborhood park like Dolly Graham can encourage higher activity levels – because both teens and young adults with access to a variety of recreation facilities are less likely to be overweight and more likely to be in better health. But beyond impacting physical health, studies also illuminate the powerful connection between nature and improved mental wellbeing. Spending time in passive parks and natural open spaces like Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill and Cove Spring Park Nature Preserve can help relieve stress, nurture longtime respect for the environment, stimulate imagination, and restore mental balance. Parks can make tangible contributions to residents too – community gardens,

⁴ Dolesh, Richard J. How Parks and Recreation Will Change Forever. NRPA. (July 2020). <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2020/august/how-parks-and-recreation-will-change-forever/>

⁵ McCormick, Kathleen. Room to Roam: The Pandemic Has Underscored the Need for More Urban Parks; So What Comes Next? Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. <https://www.lincolninstitute.edu/publications/articles/2020-10-room-roam-pandemic-urban-parks-what-comes-next>. (October 7, 2020). Accessed November 2020.

⁶ Marquis, Bridget. Infrastructure That Does More: Investing in Public Spaces for a Resilient America. Strong Towns. https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2020/11/23/infrastructure-that-does-more-investing-in-public-spaces-for-a-resilient-america?fbclid=IwAR2Aa8OXGjUpGNv3ibiDHC-W40ic9L9QjnXvix_kgFSoCtEoi5vihqJ0bDg (November 24, 2020). Accessed December 4, 2020

for instance, often provided in partnership with or by parks agencies themselves, can afford residents direct access to fresh food.⁷

In addition to all of these incredible individual benefits, parks can make an invaluable contribution to collective wellbeing. As gathering places for the community and hubs of connection, parks are where multiple interests and passions can play out at once – on game courts and fields, along trails and on playgrounds, and at shelters and picnic tables – helping to cultivate community ties. While less tangible, these collective benefits increase the livability and desirability of our communities and help begin to address the sociopolitical divisions that challenge every municipality.⁸

Residents in Frankfort clearly place a high value on parks and recreation. According to the Frankfort Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey, 86% of residents support making upgrades to existing parks and facilities while 75% support the acquisition and preservation of open space and natural areas (see Chapter 4 for more information). Clearly, parks and recreation services are important to the city. By implementing this Master Plan and bringing its recommendations to life, Frankfort leadership will ensure all residents can enjoy quality gathering places, excellent recreation opportunities, and overall improved quality of life.

1.3 MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

The master planning process for this document consisted of four phases and ongoing dialogue between representatives from Frankfort and the consultant team. Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites staff appointed the plan Steering Committee – members of which included staff members, community leaders, and other stakeholders – to collaborate with and guide the consultant through the plan process. As each phase concluded documentation was submitted along with a presentation of findings. The following sections provide a summary of each phase in the process: Evaluate → Engage → Envision → Plan.

1.4 EVALUATE

The planning process launched with evaluation. This phase included gathering of information on city demographics, a review of existing data, site visits and analysis, and the first steering committee meeting.

1.4.1 Demographic Analysis

Using information provided by the city and other sources, the consultant team analyzed demographic and population characteristics of Frankfort. Information included:

- Population trends and 5-year population projections
- Demographic characteristics (quantity, ages, race, etc.)
- Household size and composition
- Median household income and educational attainment
- Population diversity

1.4.2 Benchmarking Analysis

Using information provided by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics program, Frankfort Parks and Recreation was compared to 55 agencies located in Kentucky, Virginia, Indiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, Virginia, West Virginia, and Ohio (serving populations between 15,000 and 50,000) who participated in the Park Metrics program. Comparisons between park systems covered several criteria such as parkland inventory, department functions, staffing, budgets, facilities offered, and more (See Chapter 2.)

⁷ National Recreation and Park Association, “Health and Wellness,” <http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Impacting-Communities/Health-and-Wellness/>, (December, 10 2019).

⁸ National Recreation and Park Association, “Social Equity,” <http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Impacting-Communities/Social-Equity/>, (December, 10 2019).

1.4.3 Inventory of Parks, Facilities, and Programs

The purpose of the parks, facilities, and programs inventory (Chapter 2) is to obtain an accurate, comprehensive assessment of the system's current state. Comparing the findings of this inventory to the desires of Frankfort residents is a critical step in evaluating needs later in the process.

Park Classification

As a first step, parks and related sites in Frankfort were catalogued to better evaluate the overall recreation opportunities available to the public. In this updated inventory, sites are classified as Neighborhood Parks, Community and Regional Parks, Nature Parks/Open Space, or Special Use Parks.

Parks, Open Space, and Facilities Inventory

The consultant team took stock of all existing parks and open space properties available in the city of Frankfort. Site visits enabled the team to identify existing conditions and assess opportunities for improvements. As part of this analysis each property was assigned an updated park classification. A comprehensive table provides a summary of the amenities offered at each. Maps prepared using GIS software serve to highlight the location of all the city-owned parks and facilities.

The facility inventory included passive and active use amenities as well as resources provided by other entities in the community (e.g., the schools, Franklin County, and other agencies and non-profits).

Programs Inventory

The programs inventory described activities based on the Core Program Components (Appendix C):

- Broad Appeal
- Administrative Feasibility
- Coordination
- Settings and Times
- Constructive Nature
- Range of Activities

1.4.4 Needs Assessment and Identification

Level of Service Guidelines

The consultant synthesized public input, benchmarking comparisons, and existing standards to develop new guidelines for level of service provided by Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites. These level of service guidelines were defined for each park classification, different recreation facilities, and for total acreage of both parkland and open space.

Geographic Distribution – Service Gap Analysis

Identifying service gaps was a critical step in the process, determined by mapping locations and range of access for each of the system's existing facilities. The maps define service areas around specific facility types and park classifications, illuminating locations within Frankfort that lack sufficient quality access. In addition to park service maps (Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, and Nature Parks), other maps show service for specific recreation facilities. Finally, the Composite Service Areas map shows the combined level of service for parks and facilities across all of Frankfort.

1.4.5 Trends

Extending the scope of analysis further, national trends in parks and recreation services were reviewed for relevancy and potential application in Frankfort. This exploration helped point to new possibilities, underscore existing performance, and compare at a wider scale. The analysis included changes in demand, new programming efforts, emerging technology, and user experience advancements.

1.5 ENGAGE

The public input process employed a variety of methods intended to reach not only current park users but also non-users (i.e., potential users) to determine community needs, desires, and views on the future of parks and recreation in Frankfort.

1.5.1 In-Park Intercept Interviews

Instead of hosting one or two public workshops where residents could provide input, the planning team took the COVID-19 health crisis as an opportunity to rethink the engagement approach and determined an alternative for listening to the community. While public meetings in larger community venues are a more traditional space for engagement, the planning team chose to conduct intercept interviews within the parks to better reach park users in real time.

As a result, nearly 150 individuals were engaged across 13 different scheduled opportunities.

1.5.2 Frankfort Parks and Recreation Survey

A statistically valid mail survey of Frankfort households (Mail Survey) was conducted by ETC Institute producing a total of 444 returned surveys. This portion of the public input was initiated early in the process (summer/fall 2020). The survey was used to identify:

- Current satisfaction levels with programs and facilities
- Participation and satisfaction with current programs and events
- Parks currently used
- Needs for various facilities and programs
- Most needed facilities
- Primary actions that should be taken by Frankfort relating to parks, recreation, open space, trails, programs, and facilities

1.5.3 Stakeholder Groups

Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites provided coordination support and collaboration to convene conversations with about 30 special interest groups, as well as meetings with various levels of department staff. These discussions helped illuminate priorities from various perspectives. Facilitation questions were prepared in advance and approved by the steering committee.

1.5.4 Web-Based Survey

The planning consultant team prepared an additional survey, using the Survey Monkey online platform. All residents and program users were invited to complete the survey. In all, 479 individuals participated in the survey, 58% of whom identified as residents of Frankfort with another 31% in Franklin County. Results are presented and examined extensively in Chapter 4.

1.6 ENVISION

Parks and Recreation Mission and Strategic Plan with Goals and Objectives

Following the phases outlined above – Evaluate and Engage – Steering Committee members and staff convened to discuss the public input and overall findings. The planning consultant team facilitated a focused two part envisioning session to help formulate a strategic plan.

Through this open discussion and visioning, an agreed-upon vision emerged for the future of parks and recreation services in Frankfort. This finalized Strategic Plan consists of core values, an updated mission statement, and a new vision statement, along with a series of goals and objectives for the system moving forward.

1.7 PLAN

In this final phase, a detailed action plan – informed by public and stakeholder input, data collected, service mapping, and steering committee guidance – was developed to direct the Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites in their efforts moving forward.

1.7.1 Recommendations

Systemwide improvements for facilities, programs, and operations (Chapter 7) were provided to direct parks and recreation over the next 10 years and beyond. Priorities were provided for improvements that apply to the entire system and Frankfort as a whole, such as operations, programs, budgets, development practices, and priorities for upgrades. Long-term needs for park development and land acquisition were also included in these recommendations. Recommendations for individual parks were also prepared and are included in Chapter 8.

1.7.2 Action Plan

This portion of the process consisted of the creation of a detailed Action Plan with specific strategies for the implementation of this master plan.

The Action Plan provided specific strategies for:

- Existing Park Improvements
- Trails and Connectivity
- New Park and Facility Development
- Outdoor Athletic Fields and Courts
- Natural Areas, Open Space, and Nature Education
- Programming
- Operations, Maintenance, and Promotion
- Budget and Funding
- Partnerships and Sponsorships

The strategies in this Action Plan were categorized under the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan developed during this planning process. The action steps for the implementation of the plan were categorized as short-term (0-2 years), mid-term (3-5 years), or long-term (6-10 years) strategies. Additionally, the plan identified the responsible party and potential funding source for each strategy.

Draft Master Plan

A draft of the *2021 Frankfort Parks and Recreation Master Plan* was presented to Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites in early May 2021 and the steering committee in June 2021. On July 20, 2021 the Park Board approved the draft Master Plan document to be reviewed by Frankfort's City Commission. Master Plan findings and recommendations will be presented to the City Commission at a later date.



2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Planning Context chapter provides a summary of factors and trends that may influence the future delivery of parks and recreation services throughout the city of Frankfort. This chapter begins with a summary of population and demographic trends in Frankfort and concludes with a benchmarking analysis comparing parks and recreation in the city of Frankfort with other cities throughout the United States.

2.2 POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

An overall understanding of population trends in Frankfort is necessary to identify current conditions and to anticipate future needs for parks and recreation services and facilities. Needs vary between demographic groups, and these needs also change over time. Each of the following demographic categories examines specific elements of the population.

2.2.1 Population Change

Figure 2.1 illustrates the population change in Frankfort from 1980 to 2025. This table uses U.S. Census Bureau data (1980-2010) and figures provided by Esri forecasts (2020-2025). These numbers indicate the population of Frankfort has increased only slightly in the last 40 years. By 2025, the city's population will be just over 29,600.

2.2.2 Household Size

Table 2.1 shows both the number of households (in 2020) and the average household size between 2000 and 2025 for Frankfort, Franklin County, Kentucky, and the USA. The table indicates that household size in Frankfort has grown in the 20 years since 2000; all other comparison geographies show stable or decreased household size. Projections for 2025 show Frankfort's average household size will be 2.19 (it was 2.15 in 2000) but even with this trend, Franklin County, Kentucky, and the USA have a larger average household size than the capital city.

Figure 2.1: City of Frankfort Population Change

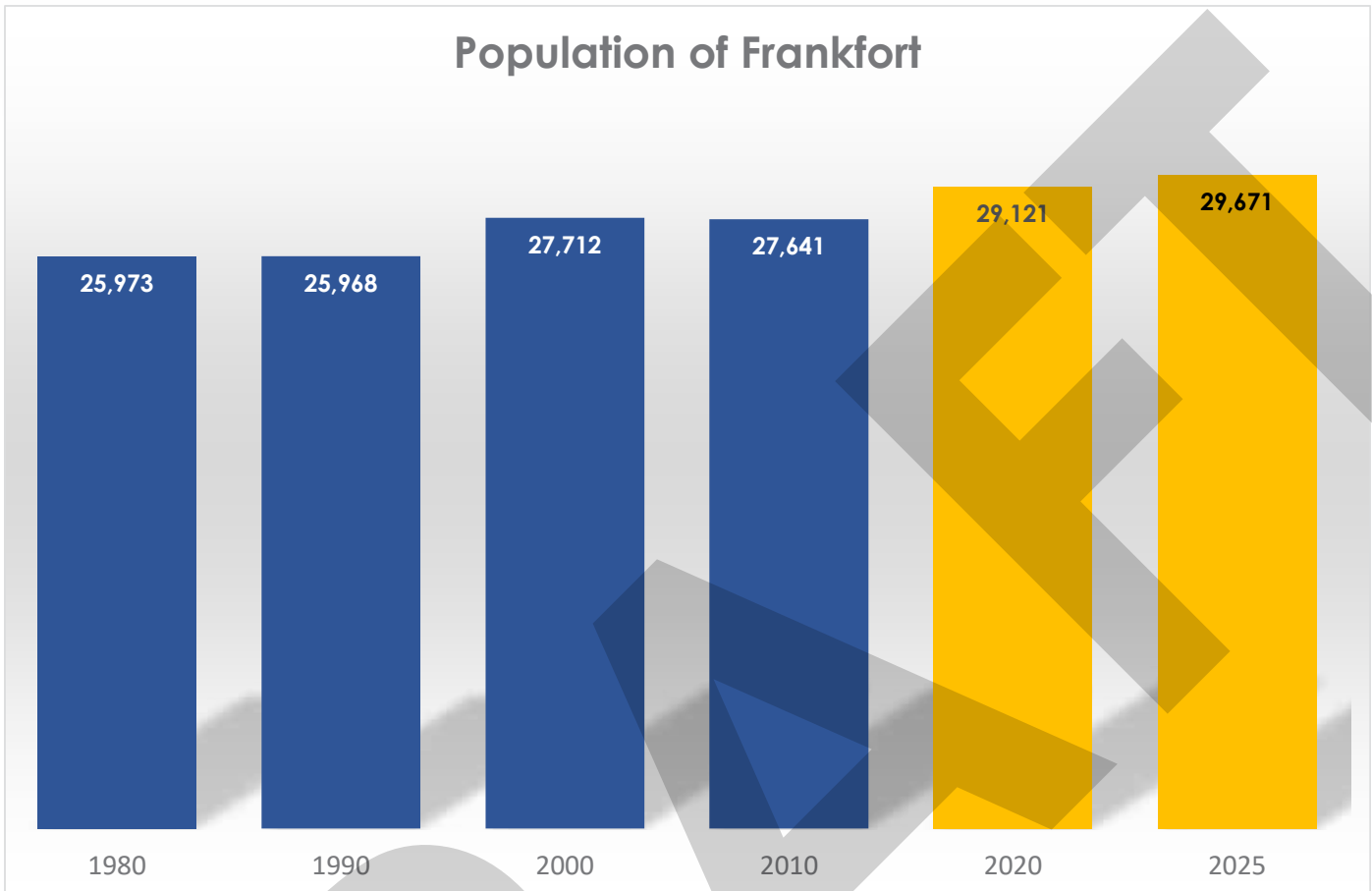


Table 2.1: Average Household Size (2000 to 2025)

	Households	Average Household Size			
		2000	2010	2020	2025
USA	126,083,849	2.59	2.58	2.58	2.59
Kentucky	1,819,399	2.47	2.45	2.45	2.46
Franklin County	21,484	2.30	2.29	2.30	2.31
Frankfort	12,675	2.15	2.15	2.18	2.19

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

2.2.3 Median Age

Table 2.2 shows the median age for Frankfort, Franklin County, Kentucky, and the USA from 2000 through 2025. The median age in Frankfort has increased since 2010 (from 36.8 to 39.3 in 2020). All geographic levels have risen since 2000 and 2010, but Kentucky and Franklin County both have higher median ages. As with the other geographies, the average age in Frankfort is projected to continue increasing into 2025.

Understanding the age makeup of Frankfort is critical for ensuring that this Master Plan addresses future development and opportunity in a way that best serves the community.

2.2.4 Senior Population

Table 2.3 displays the population age 65 and over from 2000 to 2025 and shows that this age group has considerably increased over the last 10 years, with projected sustained increase (representing 20.5% of Frankfort’s population by 2025). While a similar trend of growth is evident at all other geographic levels, the city of Frankfort shows a higher percentage of residents over 65, with only Franklin County outpacing

Frankfort in growth of this demographic. As evident in Table 2.4 below, by 2025 the percentage of seniors will surpass the percentage of the city’s population under age 18. This increase Frankfort is experiencing – and will continue experiencing – is evident in all comparison geographies and most communities throughout the nation. This change emphasizes the need for facilities and services for the 65+ population and should guide consideration of future development and opportunities.

Table 2.2: Median Age (2000-2025)

	2000	2010	2020	2025
USA	35.3	37.1	38.5	39.3
Kentucky	35.9	37.9	39.8	40.9
Franklin County	37.0	39.7	41.9	42.5
Frankfort	36.2	36.8	39.3	40.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

Table 2.3: Population Age 65 and over (2000-2025)

	2000	2010	2020	2025
USA	12.4%	13.0%	16.6%	18.7%
Kentucky	12.5%	13.3%	17.2%	19.8%
Franklin County	12.3%	14.0%	18.9%	21.2%
Frankfort	14.0%	14.0%	18.5%	20.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

2.2.5 Children

Table 2.4 presents the population under age 18 from 2000 to 2025. The table indicates that in Frankfort the percentage of children decreased from 21.0% in 2010 to 19.9% in 2020; the percentage of the population within this age group is expected to be even lower (19.6%) by 2025. This trend is evident at the state, regional, and national levels, and, while Frankfort and Franklin County both show a slower rate of decrease, they have smaller percentages of youth compared to the state and national levels. As mentioned previously, Frankfort (and Franklin County) will have more seniors (age 65+) than children by 2025. Even so, children will continue to represent a valuable and significant percentage of the Frankfort community and should be accommodated accordingly.

Table 2.4: Population under Age 18 (2000-2025)

	2000	2010	2020	2025
USA	25.7%	24.0%	22.0%	21.7%
Kentucky	24.6%	23.6%	21.5%	21.4%
Franklin County	22.6%	21.6%	20.0%	19.8%
Frankfort	21.6%	21.0%	19.9%	19.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

2.2.6 Poverty

Table 2.5 shows the percentage of the population living below the poverty line at each of the geographic levels. The table shows that the poverty level in Frankfort (15.8%) is greater than all the comparison geographies except Kentucky (17.9%). From a different angle however, the percentage of the population under the poverty fell more between 2010 and 2018 in Frankfort than in the USA, Kentucky, or Franklin County.

More concerning is the rate of youth poverty in Frankfort. Table 2.6 shows that while there was a decrease from 30.5% in 2010 to 27.2% in 2018, the percentage of children living under poverty in Frankfort is much greater than in Franklin County, Kentucky, or the USA. Even in 2018, the percentage of children in poverty in Frankfort was almost 3% greater than in the state as a whole. While the trend shows decrease, the stark contrast between Frankfort and the comparison geographies must bear considerable weight in the development of

this plan.

While parks and recreation can play a role in driving economic growth through athletic tourism and special events, the department will want to consider the financial burden of programming and services on the poorest of the community (and develop creative ways to disperse these costs).

Table 2.5: Population Under the Poverty Line (2010-2018)

	2010	2018
USA	13.8%	14.1%
Kentucky	17.7%	17.9%
Franklin County	13.9%	12.3%
Frankfort	18.5%	15.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2.6: Children Under the Poverty Line (2010-2018)

	2010	2018
USA	19.2%	19.5%
Kentucky	24.3%	24.4%
Franklin County	20.9%	18.5%
Frankfort	30.5%	27.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates

2.2.7 Income and Educational Attainment

The median household income in Frankfort (\$52,131 as of 2020) has risen considerably since 2010 (compared to the adjusted 2010 income of \$46,219). While Frankfort has experienced the greatest increase in median household income in the last 10 years, the city falls below both Franklin County and USA and is just about \$2,000 more than Kentucky’s median household income. Looking at the individual level, per capita income in Frankfort (\$29,016) is again lower than Franklin County and the USA, while just about \$1,000 higher than Kentucky. Table 2.7 indicates modest growth between 2020 and 2025 for both median household and per capita income levels, but the capital city will still fall short of the surrounding Franklin County and the nation at large. Understanding per capita income levels in Frankfort will be useful for creating cost-effective solutions and accessible opportunities for all populations in the community.

Table 2.7: Household Income (2010-2025)

	2010	2010 Adjusted	2020	2025
Median Household Income				
USA	\$51,914	\$60,305	\$62,203	\$67,325
Kentucky	\$41,576	\$49,497	\$50,617	\$53,525
Franklin County	\$47,976	\$57,117	\$57,719	\$60,892
Frankfort	\$38,822	\$46,219	\$52,131	\$53,840
Per Capita Income				
USA	\$27,334	\$31,752	\$34,136	\$37,691
Kentucky	\$22,515	\$26,805	\$27,976	\$30,786
Franklin County	\$26,857	\$31,974	\$30,962	\$33,864
Frankfort	\$22,916	\$27,282	\$29,016	\$31,175

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 ACS 5-year Estimates, Esri forecasts, BLS

Table 2.8 shows the rate of change in educational attainment in Frankfort since 2010. As of 2020, 21.5% of residents age 25 and older have a bachelor’s degree, and 10.9% of residents in Frankfort age 25 or over have a master’s degree or above. The percentage of Frankfort’s population with higher education is greater than or comparable to Franklin County, Kentucky, and the USA. Overall, the city of Frankfort has seen a decrease

in the percentage of residents over 25 with no high school diploma, indicating that a greater number of people over 25 in the community with higher levels of education.

Table 2.8: Educational Attainment Age 25 and Over (2010-2020)

Educational Attainment (Highest Level)	Frankfort		Franklin County		Kentucky		USA	
	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020
No High School Diploma	15.9%	10.3%	14.7%	9.5%	19.0%	12.7%	14.9%	11.6%
High School/GED	33.2%	27.9%	33.4%	29.6%	34.4%	32.4%	29.0%	27.0%
Some College, No Degree	21.6%	23.2%	20.4%	21.8%	19.6%	20.6%	20.6%	20.1%
Associates Degree	3.3%	6.2%	4.4%	7.0%	6.6%	8.9%	7.5%	8.7%
Bachelors Degree	17.4%	21.5%	17.5%	20.2%	12.1%	14.9%	17.6%	20.2%
Graduate/Professional/Doctorate Degree	8.6%	10.9%	9.7%	12.0%	8.2%	10.5%	10.3%	12.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts, ACS 5-year estimates

2.2.8 Growth of Population by Race or Ethnicity

In Frankfort, as of 2020, the Asian population has grown the most (82.6% change). Hispanic and multi-racial populations also increased in the 10-year period (40.5%, 40.5%, and 27.2% respectively). This contrasts with a minimal increase in the White population in Frankfort (only 2.6%). These changes in the community's population may correspond with different recreation preferences, especially compared to when the parks were originally constructed. While the White population still represents the largest percentage (75.5% in 2020) the Black population makes up the second-highest percentage (15.6%) of the total population, and other minority populations are projected to continue growing (even as they are often undercounted). Engagement that reflects this diversifying population will be essential for the city's parks and recreation to successfully meet the needs of the entire city's population.

Table 2.9: Population Counts and Percentages by Race or Ethnicity (2010-2020)

Year	Total Population	White Alone		Black Alone		Asian Alone		Other Race Alone		Two or More Races		Hispanic	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2010	27,641	21,422	77.5%	4,423	16.0%	415	1.5%	498	1.8%	802	2.9%	1,078	3.9%
2020	29,121	21,986	75.5%	4,543	15.6%	757	2.6%	699	2.4%	1,019	3.5%	1,514	5.2%
# Change	1,480	565		120		343		201		218		436	
% Change	5.4%	2.6%		2.7%		82.6%		40.5%		27.2%		40.5%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

2.2.9 Conclusion

These demographic trends indicate aging of the population and diversification of the population of Frankfort. These trends are already working to shape the future of Frankfort. The direction Frankfort chooses for its parks and recreation will determine the availability of opportunities for residents and will help enrich the overall quality of life in the community for years to come.

2.3 BENCHMARKING COMPARISONS

One method for evaluating parks and recreation services offered in a community is to use benchmark comparisons to other communities. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics program provides a variety of data for use in benchmarking. The following analysis uses data from 55 agencies located in Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, South Carolina, North Carolina, Missouri, West Virginia, Virginia, and Arkansas (serving populations between 15,000 and 50,000) that participated in the Park Metrics



program (Table 2.10). Tennessee agencies were sought out, but none both qualified for the comparison and participated in the NRPA program. Additionally, NRPA provides an annual report¹ which includes national performance benchmarks; these figures are also used in this evaluation process.

Table 2.10: Benchmark Agencies

Agency	State	Year	Population	Budget
Aiken (City of) PRT	SC	2018	30,721	\$3,931,220
Albemarle Parks & Recreation	NC	2019	16,000	\$1,800,000
Athens Community Arts, Parks, & Rec	OH	2018	25,214	\$2,115,020
Blacksburg Parks and Recreation	VA	2018	44,000	\$2,515,000
Brownsburg Parks	IN	2019	27,743	\$2,015,624
Carrboro (Town of) Recreation and Parks Dept.	NC	2019	22,000	N/A
Charlottesville (City of)	VA	2018	46,912	\$10,126,900
City of Texarkana AR Parks and Recreation Department	AR	2019	30,283	N/A
Clayton Parks & Recreation Department	MO	2018	15,935	\$6,021,882
Collinsville (City of) Parks and Recreation Department	IL	2019	25,579	\$2,536,672
Cornelius Parks, Arts, Recreation & Culture (PARC) Department	NC	2018	29,500	\$2,025,750
Covington (City of)	KY	2018	40,000	\$466,837
Danville Parks and Recreation	VA	2019	44,947	N/A
Delaware (City of), Parks and Natural Resources	OH	2018	40,000	\$2,200,000
Dublin Parks & Recreation Department	OH	2019	48,647	\$34,150,738
Fairfield Parks and Recreation	OH	2019	44,000	\$4,502,250
Farmington Parks and Recreation	MO	2018	18,425	\$2,466,700
Fort Mill Parks & Recreation Department	SC	2019	17,000	\$1,500,000
Fuquay-Varina (Town of) Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources	NC	2019	28,987	\$2,880,302
Galesburg (City of)	IL	2019	32,193	\$23,717,000
Garner (Town of)	NC	2019	32,639	\$2,253,710
Green (City of) Division of Parks and Recreation	OH	2019	26,000	\$2,105,721
Grove City (City of)	OH	2019	42,400	\$2,500,000
Henderson Parks and Recreation	KY	2019	28,890	\$2,144,960
Herndon (Town of) Parks and Recreation Dept	VA	2019	24,545	\$4,675,180
Highland Parks & Recreation	IN	2019	23,727	\$2,359,333
Hilton Head Island Recreation Association	SC	2019	40,000	N/A
Holly Springs Parks and Recreation	NC	2019	38,757	\$5,792,736
Hopkinsville (City of) Community and Development Services, Inc.	KY	2018	34,000	\$1,500,000
Kannapolis (City of) Parks and Recreation	NC	2018	48,806	\$1,990,345
Kirkville Parks and Recreation	MO	2018	17,536	\$762,129
Kirkwood Parks and Recreation	MO	2018	27,540	\$3,591,000
Lake in the Hills (Village of) Parks & Recreation	IL	2018	29,228	\$1,385,409
Liberty Parks and Recreation	MO	2019	31,779	\$4,342,000
Lumberton Parks and Recreation	NC	2018	21,040	\$1,551,140
Matthews (Town of) Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resource Dept.	NC	2019	32,117	\$1,513,000
Mentor (City of) Parks, Recreation & Public Lands	OH	2018	47,000	\$14,500,000
Morgantown Board of Park & Recreation Commissioners (BOPARC)	WV	2018	31,000	\$2,891,392
Morrisville (Town of)	NC	2018	26,461	\$5,411,836
New Bern Parks and Recreation	NC	2019	30,113	\$3,991,085
Nixa Parks and Recreation	MO	2018	24,000	N/A
North Augusta (City of) parks, Recreation & Leisure Services	SC	2019	21,435	\$2,788,214
O'Fallon (City of) Parks & Recreation Dept	IL	2019	42,000	\$3,250,558
Park Forest (Village of) Recreation & Parks Department	IL	2019	22,200	\$3,774,003
Raymore (City of)	MO	2019	22,000	\$1,410,350
Richmond Parks & Recreation	KY	2019	35,894	\$2,457,603
Rock Island Parks and Recreation	IL	2018	39,116	\$6,000,000
Rolla Parks and Recreation	MO	2018	20,293	\$1,522,792
Shelby Parks & Recreation Dept	NC	2019	20,018	\$2,873,645
Siloam Springs Parks & Recreation	AR	2019	15,039	\$2,087,797
Tallmadge (City of) Parks & Recreation Department	OH	2019	17,537	\$2,000,000
Vienna (Town of) Department of Parks & Recreation	VA	2019	16,485	\$3,618,540
Wentzville (City of) Parks and Recreation	MO	2019	39,660	\$7,042,619
Westerville Parks and Recreation	OH	2019	39,737	\$10,622,843
Wilson (City of) Parks and Recreation	NC	2018	49,348	\$5,771,740

¹ National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), "2020 NRPA Agency Performance Review Park And Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks," <https://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/nrpa-agency-performance-review.pdf> (accessed December 30, 2020).

Frankfort is not a participant in the NRPA Park Metrics program; figures were calculated based on information provided by the city. Because the data for other park systems was limited to parks and facilities managed by those agencies, only parks and facilities managed by the city of Frankfort are included in this analysis (other agencies, schools, and private facilities were not included). The figures used in this analysis for Frankfort were for fiscal year 2019, and the figures for the comparison municipalities were those entered for 2018 and 2019.

The comparisons are organized into the following categories: parkland information, trail information, department functions, staffing, operating budget, capital budget, programs, and facilities. The following text details the findings of the benchmark analysis. The values presented in these comparisons are based on information reported to Park Metrics by the municipalities and may vary from actual budgets and measurements.

2.3.1 Parkland Information

Table 2.11 shows aspects of parks coverage managed by the city of Frankfort. For instance, the city provides 25.5 acres of parkland per thousand population, more than twice the benchmark (9.7) and the national median (9.9). As a percentage of the entire jurisdiction, which controls for the different land area of the comparison agencies, 7.7% of land in Frankfort is city-operated parkland: more than double the benchmark median (3%). Taken together, these values indicate Frankfort has an exceptional amount of parkland given its population and total land area.

Table 2.11: Parkland Information

PARKLAND INFORMATION	Frankfort	Benchmark	National
Acreage of Parkland			
Lower Quartile		156.0	
Median/Agency Value	741.5	300.0	N/A
Upper Quartile		459.0	
Acreage of Parkland per 1,000 Population			
Lower Quartile		7.5	2.1
Median/Agency Value	25.5	9.7	9.9
Upper Quartile		13.3	17.1
Population per Park			
Lower Quartile		1,512	1,316
Median/Agency Value	2,647	2,010	2,281
Upper Quartile		2,674	4,140
Parkland as a Percentage of Jurisdiction			
Lower Quartile		2%	
Median/Agency Value	7.7%	3%	N/A
Upper Quartile		5%	
Percent of Acreage Developed			
Lower Quartile		56%	
Median/Agency Value	36%	82%	N/A
Upper Quartile		100%	

While the city of Frankfort has more parkland than the benchmarks, only 36% of that parkland is developed, compared to the benchmark median of 82%. The population served per park (2,647) is a little below the benchmark (2,010), but the numbers indicate that Frankfort's parks are larger than those in other communities. With the lower percentage of developed parkland, there is significant potential for improving existing parks through thoughtful development to expand service and availability.

2.3.2 Trail Information

The comparison of total miles of trails managed by the city of Frankfort (Table 2.12) shows 19.7 miles of trails, compared to the benchmark median of 8.6 miles. Total trail miles per jurisdiction square mile is a measurement that controls for differences in the physical size of comparative municipalities. Frankfort has 1.3 miles of trails per square mile of the city, double the benchmark median of 0.6 mile. The trail miles per ten thousand population measurement, which controls for the population difference between the benchmark communities, shows a value of 6.8 for Frankfort, more than twice the benchmark median (3.1). However, most of the trails in Frankfort are located in two parks: Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve and Capitol View Park.

Table 2.12: Trail Information

TRAILS	Frankfort	Benchmark
Total Trail Miles Managed or Maintained		
Lower Quartile		4.0
Median/Agency Value	19.7	8.6
Upper Quartile		15.5
Total Trail Miles per Jurisdiction Sq. Mi.		
Lower Quartile		0.3
Median/Agency Value	1.3	0.6
Upper Quartile		1.2
Total Trail Miles per 10,000 Population		
Lower Quartile		1.6
Median/Agency Value	6.8	3.1
Upper Quartile		5.1

With connectivity an ever-growing demand in communities all over the country, including Frankfort, it will be important for the department to build on its already robust trail system. This work includes strengthening connections between existing trails and parks, adding trails that link to destinations, and developing even more trails within the city’s parks and across the community.

2.3.3 Department Functions

The list of department functions in Table 2.13 shows two data points: 1) percentage of benchmark and national departments that conduct each service and 2) whether Frankfort currently conducts the service. The city of Frankfort provides most of the services listed. The most notable function absent in Frankfort is *operate and maintain indoor facilities*, something provided by over 90% of benchmark communities. Under 30% benchmark agencies *operate, maintain, or contract indoor swim facility*, so most of these communities have indoor spaces without pools.

Table 2.13 shows that the city of Frankfort does provide services that are only offered by fewer than half of the benchmark comparisons: *administer or manage tournament/event quality outdoor sports complexes; administer community gardens; manage large performance outdoor amphitheater; operate, maintain, or contract tourism attractions; administer or manage farmer’s market; operate, maintain, or contract golf course*. Development of indoor facilities to raise service to the benchmark level will require additional responsibilities. Capital improvement and detailed operational measures will need to be in place to ensure sustainability and quality of service.

Table 2.13: Department Functions

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES	Frankfort	Benchmark	National
The agency...			
Provide recreation programming and services	✓	98%	93%
Operate and maintain park sites	✓	94%	96%
Operate and maintain indoor facilities		92%	88%
Conduct major jurisdiction wide special events	✓	88%	77%
Operate, maintain, or manage trails, greenways, and/or blueways (TGB)	✓	76%	77%
Have budgetary responsibility for its administrative staff	✓	74%	83%
Operate and maintain non-park sites	✓	74%	65%
Operate, maintain, or contract outdoor swim facilities/water parks	✓	74%	65%
Operate, maintain, or manage special purpose parks and open spaces	✓	72%	72%
Include in its operating budget funding for planning and development	✓	62%	67%
Operate, maintain, or contract tennis center facilities		50%	52%
Administer or manage tournament/event quality outdoor sports complexes	✓	46%	56%
Administer community gardens	✓	46%	41%
Manage large performance outdoor amphitheaters	✓	36%	33%

Table 2.13: Department Functions (Continued)

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES	Frankfort	Benchmark	National
The agency...			
Operate, maintain, or contract tourism attractions	✓	30%	34%
Operate, maintain, or contract indoor swim facility		28%	31%
Maintain, manage or lease indoor performing arts center		26%	17%
Administer or manage farmer's markets	✓	26%	19%
Operate, maintain, or contract golf courses	✓	20%	33%
Administer or manage tournament/event quality indoor sports complexes		20%	18%
Administer or manage professional or college-type stadium/arena/racetrack	✓	10%	9%
Manage or maintain fairgrounds		2%	5%
Operate, maintain, or contract campgrounds		0%	18%

2.3.4 Staffing

Staffing metrics for Frankfort as compared to benchmark communities are outlined in Table 2.14. Frankfort employs 10 full-time employees (plus one open position), below the benchmark median (16). Additionally, Frankfort has about 22.8 full-time employees for every 10,000 residents, much higher than the benchmark (11.4). From a different perspective, acres of parkland per full-time employee, Frankfort has a lower ratio than the benchmark (11.1 acres per FTE vs. 17.6 per FTE). Taken together, the two metrics indicate that Frankfort has more staff than the benchmarks; however, most of these staff are part-time or seasonal and are needed to maintain features, such as a large aquatic center, a golf course, and an outdoor sports complex, that are not available in other communities. Additionally, Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites provides many services for Franklin County residents who are not included in the population numbers.

Table 2.14: Staff

STAFFING	Frankfort	Benchmark	National
Full-Time Employees			
Lower Quartile		12	
Median/Agency Value	10	16	N/A
Upper Quartile		24	
Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Employees*			
Lower Quartile		17.3	
Median/Agency Value	66.5	31.6	N/A
Upper Quartile		54.1	
FTE per 10,000 Population			
Lower Quartile		7.2	4.5
Median/Agency Value	22.8	11.4	8.1
Upper Quartile		18.1	14.9
Acres of Parkland per FTE			
Lower Quartile		10.9	
Median/Agency Value	11.1	17.6	N/A
Upper Quartile		27.4	

In general, Frankfort has a relatively reasonable level of staff but a lower ratio of employees to acreage. There is a sizable amount of acreage (in both Community and Nature Park types) currently undeveloped; when pursuing the potential for development of these acres, the city of Frankfort will need to reassess staffing levels accordingly.

2.3.5 Operating Budget

In 2019, the total operating budget (Table 2.15) for parks and recreation in Frankfort was \$3.4 million, just about \$1 million more than the benchmark median (\$2.5 million). The per capita operating expenditure for the city of Frankfort was \$117, slightly above the \$99 median of benchmark municipalities.

Frankfort's total operating expenditure per acre of parkland was \$4,594. This number is less than half the benchmark median of \$9,959. This reflects the large amount of parkland in Frankfort including much that is undeveloped. In other words, Frankfort spends considerably less than benchmark per acre because the city has more overall acres.

The \$839,000 in earned revenue is roughly equal the benchmark median (\$869,600). This revenue represents 25% of the Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites budget, which is roughly equivalent the median revenue brought in by benchmark communities. Also similar, Frankfort generated \$29 non-tax revenue per capita (2019) versus the benchmark (\$31) and national (\$21) medians.

The previous table (2.14) indicated that Frankfort had about twice the number of FTE employees per 10,000 population. This table shows that the department is paying those employees about half of what the benchmarks pay each FTE. **Essentially, Frankfort is paying about the same for twice as many staff, while managing more acres of parkland and providing services to the rest of Franklin County.**

Table 2.15: Operating Budget

OPERATING BUDGET	Frankfort	Benchmark	National
Agency's TOTAL Operating Expenditures for the Fiscal Year			
Lower Quartile		\$2,000,000	
Median/Agency Value	\$3,406,068	\$2,515,000	N/A
Upper Quartile		\$4,502,250	
Agency's TOTAL Non-Tax Revenue for the Fiscal Year			
Lower Quartile		\$325,073	
Median/Agency Value	\$839,000	\$869,600	N/A
Upper Quartile		\$1,832,000	
Percentage of Total Operating Expenditures within the Following Categories*			
Personnel Services	58%	55%	54%
Operating Expenses	38%	37%	38%
Capital Expense not in CIP	5%	6%	5%
Other	0%	2%	3%
Revenue as a Percentage of Total Operating Expenditures			
Lower Quartile		15%	
Median/Agency Value	25%	29%	26%
Upper Quartile		55%	
Operating Expenditures per Capita			
Lower Quartile		\$69	\$46
Median/Agency Value	\$117	\$99	\$81
Upper Quartile		\$149	\$150
Operating Expenditures per Acre of Parkland			
Lower Quartile		\$6,582	
Median/Agency Value	\$4,594	\$9,959	N/A
Upper Quartile		\$16,039	
Operating Expenditures per FTE			
Lower Quartile		\$64,069	\$70,329
Median/Agency Value	\$51,219	\$92,784	\$97,093
Upper Quartile		\$122,137	\$134,175
Non-Tax Revenue per Capita			
Lower Quartile		\$13	\$6
Median/Agency Value	\$29	\$31	\$21
Upper Quartile		\$55	\$50

*Average values used

2.3.6 Capital Budget

Table 2.16 shows capital budget comparisons for the benchmark communities. The requested capital improvements for 2020-2021 amount to \$180,500; this is less than half the benchmark median capital budget (\$390,900). Because this master plan is intended to provide direction for capital improvements for Parks and Recreation specifically, the 5-year capital budget has not yet been determined. The median of the benchmark communities is \$4 million. Another discrepancy is the capital costs per capita incurred by Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites — \$6 compared to the benchmark \$15 — much lower than the comparisons.

These numbers reflect a growing trend in supporting the costs of high-quality parks and recreation. Frankfort has an opportunity to rise to the benchmark level of funding and develop an even higher-quality park system.

2.3.7 Programs

The list of program categories in Table 2.17 includes the percentage of benchmark departments that offer each type of program listed and whether or not Frankfort Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites offers them. The data in Table 2.17 is separated into two types of programs: “Activities,” which cover programs intended for all users, and “Out-of-School-Time Activities,” which include programs targeted for specific user groups (children, seniors, etc.).

Table 2.17: Programs

PROGRAMS	Frankfort	Benchmark	National
Activities			
Social recreation events	✓	93%	87%
Themed special events	✓	91%	88%
Team sports	✓	89%	87%
Fitness enhancement classes		83%	82%
Individual sports	✓	80%	74%
Health and wellness education		78%	81%
Aquatics	✓	74%	71%
Racquet sports	✓	70%	67%
Safety training	✓	67%	72%
Visual arts		65%	59%
Performing arts		63%	64%
Trips and tours		61%	63%
Cultural crafts		61%	61%
Natural and cultural history activities	✓	61%	59%
Martial arts		61%	60%
Golf	✓	30%	47%
Out-of-School Time (OST) Activities			
Summer camp	✓	85%	83%
Specific senior programs		78%	78%

Table 2.16: Capital Budget

CAPITAL BUDGET	Frankfort	Benchmark
Total Capital Park Budget for Next 5-Years		
Lower Quartile		\$1,703,878
Median/Agency Value	TBD	\$4,000,000
Upper Quartile		\$11,046,250
Total Capital Budget this Fiscal Year*		
Lower Quartile		\$196,000
Median/Agency Value	\$180,500	\$390,900
Upper Quartile		\$1,500,000
Total Capital Costs per Capita this Fiscal Year		
Lower Quartile		\$6
Median/Agency Value	\$6	\$15
Upper Quartile		\$58

*Requested Capital Improvements for FY 2020-2021

Table 2.17: Programs (Continued)

PROGRAMS	Frankfort	Benchmark	National
Specific teen programs		57%	65%
Programs for people with disabilities		54%	62%
After school programs		37%	57%
Preschool		30%	36%
Before school programs		13%	20%
Full daycare		7%	8%

The department offers programming in several of the categories, though a majority of benchmark agencies offer more. Athletic activities, including individual, team, and racquet sports, are well represented; the department has also hosted themed and social events. However, over 50% of benchmark comparisons provide a range of programming like performing arts, fitness classes, and more.

Of the OST activities, the department is currently not providing any programming except for a few summer camp programs. Considering that 78% benchmark agencies offer senior programs and over 50% offer teen-specific programming and activities for people with disabilities, Frankfort should look to grow programs in these categories of out-of-school time offerings.

There are a number of other agencies and organizations throughout Frankfort that offer the kinds of events, activities, and programming that the department currently does not provide. Collaborative and formalized partnerships will be essential if the department seeks to develop a fresh, effective programming strategy.

2.3.8 Facilities

Table 2.18 continues the benchmark comparison, now examining how Frankfort’s facility offerings compare to benchmark communities. Types of facilities are differentiated by outdoor and indoor areas. Frankfort offers all outdoor facilities provided by 50% or more of the benchmark communities. Thirty-five percent (35%) of benchmark communities offer a skate park; Frankfort currently does not, though public input and stakeholder conversations suggest the potential for such a facility to be well-used. Franklin County does offer a skate park at Lakeview Park.



Of indoor facilities, Frankfort currently offers none of the different types of facilities, though roughly 60% and 70% of benchmark communities provide recreation and community centers, respectively. While Table 2.18 highlights how well Frankfort compares to benchmark communities in terms of facilities provided, Tables 2.19 and 2.20 provide a comparison of population per facility to evaluate the existing supply. In other words, looking at population served per facility can help identify new facilities that the city may want to add in the future.

Tables 2.19 and 2.20 show the numeric values for a range of facilities – outdoor and indoor, respectively – plus upper and lower quartile values. A lower value indicates a higher level of service. Figure 2.2.² shows active use/athletic facilities per 10,000 population (converted from the numbers in Table 2.19) for playgrounds, tennis courts (outdoor), basketball courts (outdoor), ballfields (youth baseball, youth softball, and adult softball diamonds), and rectangular fields.

In terms of benchmark comparisons, Frankfort has lower service ratios (facility per 10,000 population) for more than half of outdoor facilities. *Playgrounds, tennis courts, diamond fields, swimming pools, dog parks, and community gardens* are all outdoor facilities that are operating at strained service levels with more of the population using each facility as compared to benchmark communities; some of these facilities are serving roughly the same or more than even the upper quartile of service comparisons (*playgrounds, swimming pools, and community gardens*).

² The analysis was limited to these facilities due to availability of data for comparison departments.

Though Frankfort has no indoor facilities with which to compare service levels, Table 2.20 is helpful for illustrating the target service level the city could strive for, should any of the indoor facility types be developed. Based on these numbers, Frankfort has adequate population to potentially support a recreation/community center, a gymnasium, and an indoor pool at similar levels of service to the benchmarks.

Figure 2.2 underscores some of the same findings in Table 2.19, showing how Frankfort compares in providing adequate facilities per population. Playgrounds, tennis courts, and diamond fields have poorer service levels than benchmark comparisons.

Table 2.18: Facilities

FACILITIES	Frankfort	Benchmark	National
Outdoor Activity Areas			
Playgrounds	✓	100%	94%
Basketball courts	✓	98%	87%
Diamond fields: baseball - youth	✓	96%	78%
Tennis courts (outdoor only)	✓	96%	81%
Diamond fields: softball fields - adult	✓	83%	65%
Diamond fields: softball fields - youth	✓	65%	59%
Rectangular fields: multi-purpose	✓	65%	65%
Dog park	✓	65%	63%
Community gardens	✓	57%	47%
Rectangular fields: soccer field - adult	✓	57%	41%
Diamond fields: baseball - adult	✓	57%	53%
Swimming pools (outdoor only)	✓	57%	51%
Rectangular fields: soccer field - youth	✓	48%	47%
Aquatics centers	✓	37%	N/A
Skate park		35%	38%
Rectangular fields: football field	✓	28%	37%
Ice rink (outdoor only)		11%	17%
Rectangular fields: lacrosse field		11%	11%
Multipurpose synthetic field		11%	19%
Golf Course (Regulation 18-Holes)	✓	9%	N/A
Driving Range	✓	9%	N/A
Indoor Activity Areas			
Community centers		72%	60%
Recreation centers		61%	61%
Performance amphitheater		41%	35%
Indoor competitive swimming pool		30%	N/A
Senior centers		28%	41%
Gyms		20%	N/A
Indoor pool designated exclusively for leisure		17%	N/A
Nature centers		15%	29%
Fitness center		15%	N/A
Ice rink		11%	15%
Teen centers		9%	14%
Indoor track		7%	N/A

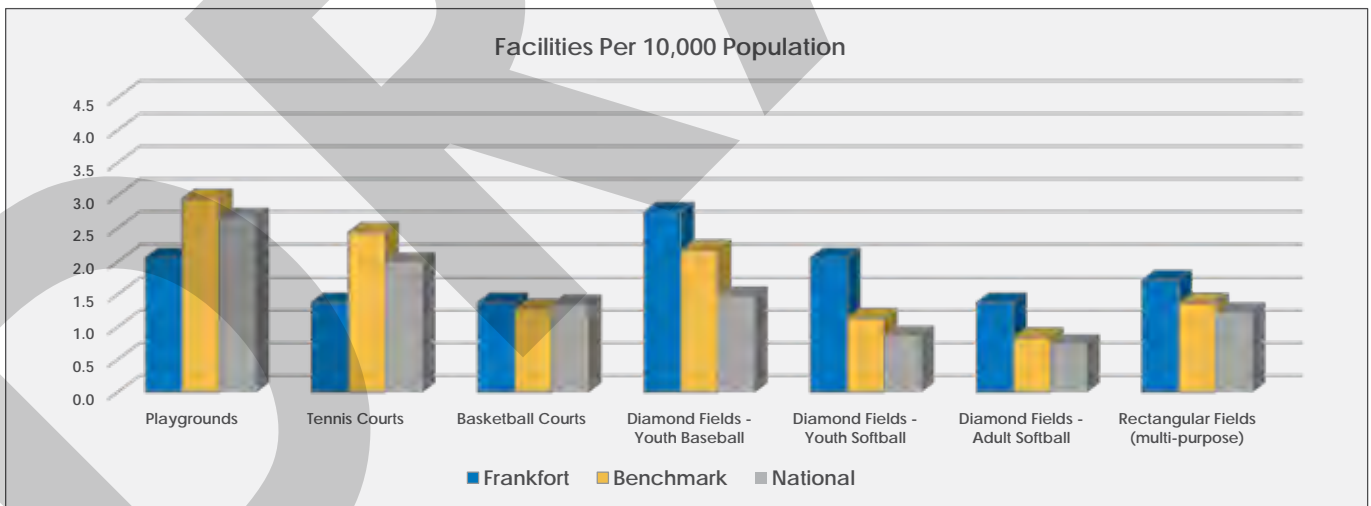
Table 2.19: Population Per Facility (Outdoor)

POPULATION PER FACILITY (OUTDOOR)	Frankfort	Benchmark	National
Playgrounds			
Lower Quartile		2,582	
Median/Agency Value	4,854	3,392	3,750
Upper Quartile		4,719	
Tennis Courts			
Lower Quartile		3,045	
Median/Agency Value	7,280	4,107	5,004
Upper Quartile		6,968	
Basketball Courts			
Lower Quartile		4,400	
Median/Agency Value	7,280	7,833	7,400
Upper Quartile		17,949	
Diamond Fields - Youth Baseball			
Lower Quartile		2,787	
Median/Agency Value	3,640	4,608	6,779
Upper Quartile		9,085	
Diamond Fields - Youth Softball			
Lower Quartile		3,082	
Median/Agency Value	4,854	8,807	11,511
Upper Quartile		20,169	
Diamond Fields - Adult Softball			
Lower Quartile		5,214	
Median/Agency Value	7,280	11,976	13,510
Upper Quartile		17,740	
Rectangular Fields (multi-purpose)			
Lower Quartile		4,533	
Median/Agency Value	5,824	7,333	8,150
Upper Quartile		17,134	
Multipurpose Synthetic Field			
Lower Quartile		9,888	
Median/Agency Value	N/A	17,290	49,493
Upper Quartile		30,137	
Swimming Pools			
Lower Quartile		9,754	
Median/Agency Value	29,121	21,875	35,837
Upper Quartile		32,808	
Skate Parks			
Lower Quartile		18,892	
Median/Agency Value	N/A	24,471	49,500
Upper Quartile		41,500	
Dog Parks			
Lower Quartile		17,232	
Median/Agency Value	29,121	27,235	45,899
Upper Quartile		39,803	
Community Gardens			
Lower Quartile		12,455	
Median/Agency Value	29,121	23,731	29,273
Upper Quartile		31,195	

Table 2.20: Population Per Facility (Indoor)

POPULATION PER FACILITY (INDOOR)	Frankfort	Benchmark	National
Recreation Centers			
Lower Quartile		15,951	
Median/Agency Value	N/A	22,100	31,141
Upper Quartile		37,228	
Community Centers			
Lower Quartile		17,269	
Median/Agency Value	N/A	25,579	28,939
Upper Quartile		39,247	
Senior Centers			
Lower Quartile		25,647	
Median/Agency Value	N/A	39,660	60,513
Upper Quartile		43,674	
Gymnasiums			
Lower Quartile		18,475	
Median/Agency Value	N/A	24,545	N/A
Upper Quartile		35,720	
Competitive Swimming Pools			
Lower Quartile		17,402	
Median/Agency Value	N/A	21,737	N/A
Upper Quartile		33,613	
Nature Centers			
Lower Quartile		18,425	
Median/Agency Value	N/A	32,639	109,796
Upper Quartile		42,000	

Figure 2.2: Facilities Per 10,000 Population



DRAFT



INVENTORY OF PARKS, FACILITIES, AND PROGRAMS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Master Plan identifies existing conditions of parks and recreation facilities in Frankfort. It begins with a description of park classifications to provide an understanding of their functions. What follows is an inventory of Frankfort's parks and recreation facilities including park locations, facilities offered, and other observations. The chapter concludes with an inventory of programs offered by Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites.

3.2 PARKLAND AND RECREATION AREA CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

A park classification system helps to evaluate the overall recreation opportunities that are available to the public. In some cases, communities may "meet the standard" in terms of acreage, but a single park may cover the provision in terms of acreage without actually providing for the entire community. A park system should be evaluated as a composite of recreation areas with each meeting a particular public need; the system should provide a combination of smaller Neighborhood Parks, larger Community Parks, Special Use Parks, and Natural Areas.

The facilities inventory in this chapter identifies each park by its classification and lists the specific facilities it provides. Table 3.1 defines each park category by its typical size and service area, population served, typical features and facilities, and desirable characteristics. The categories and descriptions were adapted from "Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines," published by the National Recreation and Park Association in 1987 and 1995.

Table 3.1: Park Classifications

PARK CLASSIFICATION	TYPICAL SIZE and SERVICE AREA	DEVELOPED ACRES/1,000 POPULATION	TYPICAL FEATURES/ FACILITIES	DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS
Local Space				
Mini Park (MP)	Size: Less than 2 acres of developed parkland; less than 3 total acres 1/2 mile service area 10-minute walk	Combined with Neighborhood Park	Typical facilities may include playgrounds, small multi-use court area, and benches.	Often provided in association with school facilities. Some developed as part of residential developments. May also provide open space as needed to serve high density neighborhoods where households have limited yard space.
Neighborhood Park (NHP)	Size: 2-10 acres of developed parkland; 3-15 total acres ½-1.0 mile service area 10-minute walk To serve a population up to 5,000	0.6 Acre/1,000	Typical facilities include athletic fields, game courts, playgrounds, drinking fountains, picnic areas/shelters, and walking trails. Suited for intense development	Easily accessible to neighborhood population (safe walking and bike distance). May be developed as park/school facility or in conjunction with service agency facility. May not be needed in areas served locally by larger parks.
Community Park (CP)	10-30+ acres of developed parkland; 20 or more total acres 1.0-2.0 mile service radius 5-minute drive To serve several neighborhoods with populations up to 15,000	5.0 Acres/1,000	Typical facilities include all those listed for Neighborhood Parks plus; major swimming pool, field or game court complex, major recreation or community center, etc. May include an area of natural quality for picnicking, walking, etc. May have an active or passive recreation focus or a balance of both - parks with passive focus will have a higher percentage of undeveloped land	Capable of providing a range of intensive recreational activities; or, provides one or two activities that attract users from multi-neighborhood areas. Park should ideally be located near schools. May meet Neighborhood Park needs for users within a 10-minute walk.
Special Use (SU)	Serves community-wide area	N/A (but may contribute to total open space requirement)	Area for specialized or single purpose recreational activities such as plazas, major pools, riverfront park areas, golf courses, athletic complexes, indoor facilities, etc.	Area should be located to meet the specific needs of the intended use.
Open Space (OS)	N/A	N/A (but contributes to total open space requirement)	Special use areas of low or limited development. Includes undeveloped areas, urban greenspaces, and small designated natural areas. May include urban greenspaces (mowed and landscaped areas) of any size. These areas are considered developed but have predominantly passive uses, few structures, and limited impervious areas. Typical facilities include walking/hiking trails, picnic areas, gardens, and open grass areas.	Includes undeveloped properties that may be developed in the future. May also function as small Nature Parks. Educational opportunities desirable in developed or undeveloped areas.

Table 3.1: Park Classifications (Continued)

PARK CLASSIFICATION	TYPICAL SIZE and SERVICE AREA	DEVELOPED ACRES/1,000 POPULATION	TYPICAL FEATURES/ FACILITIES	DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS
Regional Space				
Regional Park (RP)	Size: 50+ acres of developed parkland; 100 or more total acres		Large properties that contain some active recreation facilities and a large percentage of natural or geographical features. Should include both active and passive features.	Capable of providing a range of specific recreational facilities May include unique natural areas of ecological interest.
	3-5 mile service radius	2.5 Acres/1,000 (Developed)	Target size of 100 or more acres with up to 50% developed for recreation. Should be located near major roads.	May meet smaller park needs for users within those service areas.
	10-minute drive	10.0 Acres/1000 (Total)	Destination-oriented parks. May contain picnic areas, any of the active elements found in local space, regional aquatic facilities, and regional indoor facilities. Should connect to linear park and trail system.	May be located in rural areas but should be readily accessible to most of the city and county population. Serve multiple jurisdictions. May serve population outside of the county as well.
	Travel time within 10 minutes (potentially longer depending on amenities)			
To serve most of the city but located regionally				
Nature Parks or Preserves (NP)	Size as needed to protect the resource	N/A (but contributes to total open space requirement)	Majority of park to remain in its natural state (less than 20% developed) Facilities should focus on education by use of "nature activities" and should reinforce that philosophy by offering habitat enhancement, trails, nature centers, and interpretive signage. Should also include parking and restrooms.	The park should be of sufficient size to protect the natural resource and provide a buffer from offsite conditions. Should include unique natural areas with ecological interest. Typical size should be over 50 acres for management efficiency and to promote ecosystem services.
State Parks (SP)	Size as needed to protect natural resources of State or regional significance	N/A	Majority of park to remain in its natural state. The park should be of sufficient size to protect the natural resource and provide a buffer from offsite conditions.	Should include unique natural areas with ecological interest, lakes, or other features of state or regional interest. Serve state-wide area or beyond. Size will vary based on the area required to protect the resource.

3.3 INVENTORY OF FRANKFORT PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

Residents of Frankfort are offered a variety of parks, recreation facilities, and programs. The Parks and Recreation Resources Inventory (Table 3.2) provides a summary of all the offerings in Frankfort as well as the classification for each property.

The table indicates the location of the property by park type category as defined in Chapter 2. The Existing Parks and Trails map (Figure 3.1) shows the location of each of the parks and recreation areas offered by the city of Frankfort. The following text provides a detailed narrative summary of these facilities. Aerial photos of each park can be found in Appendix B.

3.4 NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

A Neighborhood Park is a small but highly developed park located within a short (10-minute) walking or biking distance of residents with facilities such as game courts, playgrounds, picnic areas/shelters, athletic fields, and walking trails. A Mini Park is a small Neighborhood Park, typically located in more densely populated areas where availability of land is limited. Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites offers three Mini Parks and one Neighborhood Park.

3.4.1 Dolly Graham Park (6.0 acres) – Neighborhood Park

Park Location

Dolly Graham Park is the city's one park space that can be classified as a Neighborhood Park. At the eastern end of 2nd Street, this park is tucked in a residential area. It abuts the Kentucky River, but while the water is visible from a few locations in the park, there is no direct access or connection. The site was part of FEMA-sponsored redevelopment in response to the severe flood event of 1978. This Neighborhood Park is part of South Frankfort, a few blocks north of the Kentucky State Capitol.



Existing Features & Amenities

- Basketball court
- Playground with swings
- Large picnic shelter with restrooms
- Medium-sized picnic shelter
- Labyrinth
- Fantasy Forest & Rye's Community Garden



Park Issues & Opportunities

- Phase 1 of renovations in progress – new playground, splash pad, and basketball court
- Wayfinding and entrance signage needed; park hidden from main street
- Playground degraded and outdated beyond useful life; needs to be replaced
- Both shelters in poor condition
- Restrooms in poor condition and often closed
- Accessibility issues sitewide
- No designated parking area
- Community garden and wooded area not connected to main park area, alleyway potential connection
- Former volleyball court is deteriorated with no net
- Basketball court paving is warped and cracked
- Entire park within the 100-year floodplain
- Riverbank is overgrown, no direct access or viewshed



3.4.2 Holmes St. Playground/Leathers Field (0.4 acres) – Mini Park

Park Location

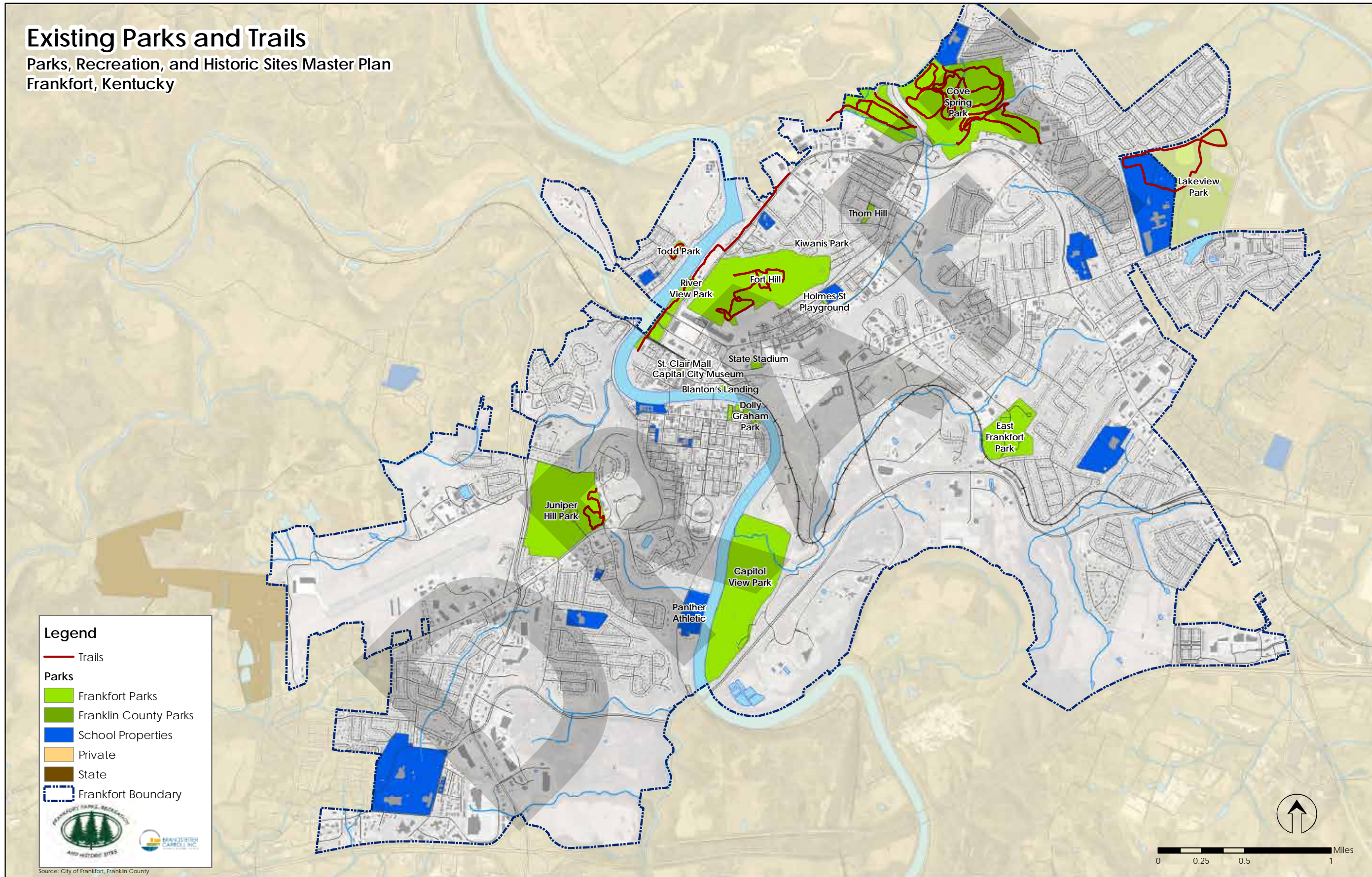
Holmes Street is one of the primary corridors leading into Downtown Frankfort. The Holmes Street Playground at the former Leathers Field sits north of Holmes Street at the base of Fort Hill along Meagher Avenue.



Table 3.2: Parks and Recreation Resources Inventory

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	Acreage		Athletic Fields				Game Courts				Outdoor Facilities					Trails (Mi)		Natural Areas			Passive Recreation							Support		Special Feature/Notes				
		Total	Developed	Small Diamond	Large Diamond	Playfield/T-Ball (Backstop)	Large Rectangular	Basketball Courts	Pickleball Courts	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts	Playgrounds	Fitness Equipment	Splash Pad	Aquatic Center	Disc Golf (Holes)	Golf (Holes)	Paved	Unpaved	Multipurpose/Mountain Bike	Fishing Access	Lake/Pond/Stream	Natural/Wooded Area	Dog Parks	Archery Range	Boat Dock/Ramp	Community Gardens	Stage or Amphitheater	Large Shelters	Medium Shelters		Gazebos/Small Shelters	Restroom Buildings	Concessions Buildings	Parking (Off-Street)
Frankfort Parks																																			
Neighborhood Parks																																			
Dolly Graham Park	Neighborhood	6.0	4.3					1			1		1								x	x				1		1	1			1		0	Includes facilities in progress
Holmes St. Playground (Leathers Field)	Mini	0.4	0.4							1																							0		
Thorn Hill Playground	Mini	2.2	1.9							1																							20		
Todd Park	Mini	3.0	3.0													0.3																	8		
Subtotal - Neighborhood Parks		11.6	9.6	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	28		
Community and Regional Parks																																			
Capitol View Park	Regional	150.0	51.6	1	5		5	2										9.6	x	x	x						1		1	2	1	426			
East Frankfort Park	Community	47.5	31.5	2		2			3		2				18						x	1					2			2		127			
Juniper Hill Park	Community	124.0	124.0							4	2	1	1		1	18	0.7									1	1	1	1			385			
Subtotal - Community Parks		321.5	207.1	3	5	2	5	2	3	4	2	3	1	0	1	18	0.7	0.0	9.6	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	4	1	2	5	1	938			
Nature Parks/Open Space																																			
Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve	Nature Park	240.0	16.6													0.8	6.2			x	x		1				2	2		1		25			
Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill	Nature Park	136.4	8.7													0.6	1.0				x						1					9	Historic site and wilderness area		
River View Park	Open Space	19.3	15.8													0.5				x	x	x			1		1			1		67	Historic site, Boat rental, Farmers Market		
Subtotal - Nature Parks/Natural Areas		395.8	41.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.0	7.2	0.0	1	2	3	0	1	1	0	1	2	3	1	1	0	101			
Special Use Parks/Facilities																																			
Blanton's Landing	Special Use	2.1	2.1																		x												N/A		
Capital City Museum	Special Use	0.2	0.2																														N/A		
Lakeview Park (City Maintained Only)	Athletic Complex	7.8	7.8	4																									1	1		N/A			
Paul Weddle Field at State Stadium	Special Use	2.2	2.2	1																													N/A		
St. Clair Mall	Special Use	0.5	0.5																														N/A		
Subtotal - Special Use Parks		12.6	12.6	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0		
Total - Parks		741.5	270.5	8	5	2	5	3	3	4	2	6	1	1	1	18	18	2.9	7.2	9.6	2	5	6	1	1	1	1	7	6	3	8	2	1,067		

Figure 3.1: Existing Parks and Trails



Existing Features & Amenities

- Playground
- Large grassy field

Site Issues and Opportunities

- Not officially part of the park system
- Lack of features
- Plenty of space to accommodate additional development
- Playground is outdated and degraded beyond its useful life; needs to be replaced
- Play area surfacing and edging needs to be replaced
- Perimeter fencing along Meagher Avenue is overgrown with vegetation
- Security issues and safety concerns due to site's location and poor visibility
- No designated parking, minimal space
- No signage



3.4.3 Thorn Hill Playground (2.2 acres) – Mini Park

Park Location

This site is adjacent to the Thorn Hill Learning Center, an adult education and training facility located at the intersection of Clements Avenue and Leslie Avenue near Henry Street. The surrounding area is primarily residential, though there is commercial development along Holmes Street just a few blocks southeast of the park.

Existing Features & Amenities

- Playground
- Half basketball court

Park Issues & Opportunities

- Not officially part of the park system
- Lack of features
- Potential to serve as a Neighborhood Park for surrounding residential area
- Playground needs to be replaced, including edging and surfacing
- Basketball court pavement in poor condition with weeds growing in cracks; no goal on backboard
- Lack of signage
- Picnic table in poor condition
- Entire site not ADA accessible
- Incomplete and informal pathways could be converted to permanent walking trails
- Excessive pavement on site in poor condition with weeds growing in cracks



3.4.4 Todd Park (3.0 acres) – Mini Park

Park Location

Todd Park is in the Bellepoint Neighborhood across the Kentucky River and west of Downtown Frankfort. Like the parks listed previously, Todd Park is surrounded by residential blocks. Land owned by Frankfort Wastewater Treatment Plant abuts the northeast border of this Mini Park. While the Kentucky River is not accessible or visible from Todd Park, it runs just a block to the east. The park has experienced occasional but severe flooding.

Existing Features & Amenities

- 0.3-mile paved trail
- Picnic shelter – medium size

Park Issues & Opportunities

- Lack of features
- Parking area needs restriping, lacks ADA accessible spots
- Shelter in fair condition and has inadequate seating
- Tree limbs obstruct parts of walking path
- Some drainage issues along path
- Nearly entire park within the 100-year floodplain
- Park sign and name on city website not consistent



3.5 COMMUNITY & REGIONAL PARKS

Community Parks are larger parks that serve multiple neighborhoods and offer a wider variety of facilities. Community Parks should be conveniently located (within approximately five-minutes' drive) and easily accessible with facilities intended to occupy visitors for extended periods of time (field or game court complex, disc golf, etc.). Regional Parks are often larger with much of the acreage left undeveloped, and they generally draw users from a wider geographical area. Typically, regional parks will provide features and facilities appropriate for both active and passive recreation. Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites offers one Regional Park and two Community Parks.

3.5.1 Capitol View Park (150.0 acres) – Regional Park

Park Location

This Regional Park extends along the eastern bank of the Kentucky River in the south of the city. The East-West Connector (Route 676) forms the southeastern boundary of the park. While there are residential neighborhoods nearby, due in large part to topography much of the immediate area is low-density development or in its natural state. Only about a third of the park (51.6 acres) is developed. The city of Frankfort currently does not own the property but leases the land from the state.

Existing Features & Amenities

- 6 diamond fields
 - 1 small diamond field (220' fences – lighted)



- 5 large diamond fields (300'-320' fences – 4 lighted, Fannin Field not lighted)
- 5 clay, 1 grass infield
- 5 large rectangular fields
 - 2 lighted
- 2 basketball courts
- 9.6 miles of multipurpose/ mountain bike (MTB) trails
- River views and access
- Natural wooded area
- Large picnic shelter
- Small shelter
- 2 restroom buildings
- Concessions building



Park Issues & Opportunities

- Athletic fields are not ADA accessible
- Insufficient signage – entrance, trail, wayfinding (sitewide)
- No curbs or striping in either parking lot
- Restroom building at Pewitt Field in poor condition and not accessible
- Restroom/concessions/press box building at Legend and Williams Fields in fair condition but not accessible
- Parking areas sitewide not marked and inconsistently lighted
- Natural picnic area not marked
- River access obstructed
- Condition of parking lots
- Dugouts being updated, in need of accessibility improvements
- Much of park within 100-year floodplain, including two diamond fields
- Damage at riverbank from recent flooding

3.5.2 East Frankfort Park (47.5 acres) – Community Park

Site Location

East Frankfort is a Community Park in the east-central part of the city. It is north of the East-West Connector, east of Frankfort Cemetery, and about a half-mile south of Spaghetti Junction. While much of the adjacent area is residential, the Frankfort Plant Board and a few other industrial operations are located near the main entrance.

Existing Features & Amenities

- 2 small diamond fields
- 2 T-ball fields/practice infields
- 3 pickleball courts



- 2 playgrounds
- 18-hole disc golf course
- Natural wooded area
- Dog park
- 2 large picnic shelters w/ restrooms
- Gazebo (next to pickleball courts)
- Former pool house and pool deck

Park Issues & Opportunities

- Signage and wayfinding lacking throughout site
- Limited and inconsistent accessibility sitewide (e.g., at picnic shelters, playgrounds, restroom buildings, etc.)
- Larger parking lot needs resurfacing and restriping
- Power outlets in picnic shelters are inaccessible (elevated 10 ft)
- Unused gravel area at former tennis courts
- Minimal paved (i.e., accessible) trails, poor connectivity between existing paths
- Age and condition of playgrounds
- Dog park has only one area, no separate areas for large and small dogs
- Dugouts in fair condition, bleachers inaccessible
- No seating or spectator areas at smaller fields
- Inoperable lighting poles need maintenance or replacement
- Insufficient trash receptacles
- Limited pet waste stations
- Minimal drinking fountains sitewide



3.5.3 Juniper Hill Park (124.0 acres) – Community Park

Park Location

Juniper Hill Park is located on the west side Frankfort, near the Capital City Airport. It can be accessed via Louisville Road (Hwy 60) by car and by foot from the adjacent residential neighborhood off Leawood Drive.

Existing Features & Amenities

- 4 tennis courts
- 2 sand volleyball courts
- Playground
- Outdoor fitness equipment
- Outdoor aquatic center
- 18-hole golf course
- 0.7-mile paved trail



- 1 large and 1 medium picnic shelter
- Gazebo near tennis courts
- Restrooms at maintenance building
- Memorial with flagpole
- Small arboretum area along paved trail

Park Issues & Opportunities

- Existing restroom facility not adequate for park usage; poorly located
- Some accessibility issues sitewide, particularly at smaller shelter, picnic areas, and gazebo
- Gazebo roof in poor condition
- Tennis court surface usable but significantly degraded
- Inconsistent lighting at tennis courts; some poles have fallen or do not work
- Volleyball courts/seating not ADA accessible
- Lack of designated ADA parking near fitness equipment
- Insufficient wayfinding/signage sitewide; neighborhood entrance unmarked
- Limited amenities (drinking fountains, bike racks, pet waste stations w/ signage, etc.)



3.6 NATURE PARKS & OPEN AREAS

These sites are oriented around preserved and passive recreation in nature. They can range significantly in size and draw visitors from varying distances depending on the scale and purpose of the site. Residents of Frankfort have access to two primarily natural parks – a Nature Preserve and an historic site – as well as one open space park all provided by Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites.

3.6.1 Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve (240.0 acres) – Nature Park/Preserve

Park Location

Cove Spring Park and Nature Preserve is owned and managed by the city of Frankfort with lower area under a Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Easement. The 240 acres are divided into three distinct areas: Upper, Lower, and Wetland. Lower and Wetland Cove Spring are both accessible from Owenton Road (Hwy 127), near where it intersects Wilkinson Boulevard and becomes Holmes Street. Upper Cove Spring has vehicular access from Peaks Mill Road off Owenton Road and is accessible via hiking trails from the Lower area. There are also informal – and potentially unsafe – trail connections to Lower Cove Spring from the residential development that exists along the elevated rim of the Lower area.



Aside from the suburban residential development to the north and east of the park, much the Nature Preserve is surrounded by natural landscape and open land. Topographical challenges limit accessibility between the Wetland and Lower areas. Of the 240 acres, only

about 17 are developed. The conservation requirements of the Lower portion of the property necessitate specific procedures and priorities for future improvements; any decisions should be communicated with the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet.

Existing Features & Amenities

- 0.8 miles of paved trail
 - 0.6-mile loop (Sky Trail/Upper)
 - 0.2-mile path (Lower)
- 6.2 miles of unpaved trails
- Archery range and 3-D archery course
- 4 picnic shelters
 - Large shelter at archery range
 - Medium shelter along Sky Trail
 - 2 shelters at Lower (large and medium)
- Wetland overlook structure
- Restroom building (Lower)
- Historical features (Lower)
- Children’s Memorial (Lower)
- Storage building (Upper)



Park Issues & Opportunities

Lower

- Heavily used area, could facilitate engagement opportunities
- Restroom building not adequate due to park usage
- No path between ADA parking and park features
- Limited signage in poor condition
- Insufficient wayfinding and informational signage (e.g., trail lengths not indicated)
- Many bridges, stairs, and wooden railings need repair/replacement
- Lower parking lot has significant damage at apron
- Parking overflow needs attractive, permanent communication signage
- Waterfall overlook encourages unsafe behavior; needs formal overlook platform or barrier & replaced railing at bottom
- Children’s Memorial site not ADA accessible
- Shelters in fair condition but need accessible connections
- Informal access points lead to habitat damage
- Invasive species & unlawful plant removal both degrade natural habitat
- Litter along trails a constant problem
- Lack of sewer access at the site

Upper

- Archery range not accessible
- Shelters are not ADA accessible
- Potential for additional trails across meadow
- Interpretive and wayfinding signage needed
- Existing signage is degraded
- No permanent restroom facility
- Parking lot needs restriping/ADA spaces
- Limited trash receptacles
- Electrical hook ups at shelters; capacity for lighting during rental use of shelters

Wetland

- Unique character offers stream views and access to wildflowers and other plant species
- Visitor shelter in fair condition overall but roof is poor, not accessible
- One ADA spot poorly marked and far from shelter, not accessible to either trailhead
- Areas of boardwalk and unpaved trails need maintenance or regrading
- Conservation signage needed
- Wetland overlook shelter in poor condition
- Parking lot needs restriping
- Confusing one-directional entrance signage, poor visibility from road
- Wayfinding and interpretive signage additions and upgrades needed site-wide
- Limited trash receptacles



3.6.2 Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill (135.4 acres) – Nature Park

Park Location

This historic site and wilderness area is uniquely positioned near the heart of downtown Frankfort. The park's elevation provides signature views of the surrounding land. The park can be accessed via a network of narrow residential streets, off Holmes Street via Hillcrest and Clifton Avenues. There is a secondary entrance at the northeast of the park via the Blanton Acres neighborhood; it is currently gated and accessible only by pedestrians.

Existing Features & Amenities

- 1-mile unpaved trail
- 0.6-mile paved trail
- Natural, wooded landscape
- Sullivan House interpretive center
- Historic features (e.g., Civil War-era cemetery and the remains of two Civil War forts)



- Overlook area
- Medium picnic shelter
- Tours provided through the Capital City Museum
- Restrooms in Sullivan House basement

Site Issues & Opportunities

- Restrooms not ADA accessible
- Shelter not ADA accessible, roof poor and no flooring
- Paved trail in poor condition in places
- Signage – entrance, wayfinding, and interpretive – need replacements, upgrades, and additions
- Self-guided tour needs upgrades; boardwalks and overlooks in poor condition and have limited ADA accessibility
- No wayfinding to indicate connection to River View Park via Wilkinson Boulevard
- Controversy over multipurpose/mountain bike trails constructed by KYMBA (Kentucky Mountain Bike Association)
- Limited site access; current neighborhood entrance is narrow and lacks visibility



3.6.3 River View Park (19.3 acres) – Open Space

Park Location

River View Park is situated along the Kentucky River and the west side of downtown. The W Frankfort Connector crosses the site at Clinton Street and Mero Street. Vehicular access to the park is available at the two major entrances: the Farmers Market (Broadway Street and Wilkinson Boulevard) and the Boat Dock (across from Urban Woods Condos). Pedestrian access to the park is available at these and several additional points, including W Main Street near the Ward Oates Amphitheater.

The southern end of the park abuts the Liberty Hall Historic Site. The River View Trail extends to the north past the park boundary to Fair Oaks Lane. The park has been heavily damaged due to a recent flood and is currently closed. Many of the existing features will need improvement or replacement.

There is a secondary area (“The Valley”) included in the River View Park property, but it is located across the Kentucky River. The Valley has very poor access and few amenities. A paved path connects a bridge at Curator Court to the Bellepoint Neighborhood. No parking is available, and no signage indicates this area as a public park.

Existing Features & Amenities

- 0.5-mile paved trail within park (part of 1 mile connecting to Buffalo Trace entrance)
- Kayak/canoe launch



- Boat dock/ramp
- Fishing access
- Natural, wooded area
- Outdoor amphitheater
- Gazebo
- 2 pavilions – large (hosts weekly Farmers Market) and medium size
- Sculpture Walk & flood wall mural

Park Issues & Opportunities

Primary

- Lack of signage and wayfinding sitewide
- Pedestrian and vehicle access points poorly marked
- Visibility obstructed by levee and floodwall – needs creative solution like added signage or landscape feature
- No permanent restrooms
- Boat dock size insufficient to meet demand and not usable all year – damaged in recent flood
- Access ramp to boat dock has ADA accessibility issues but dock itself accessible
- Paved trail has limited ADA access
- Picnic tables and seating along trail not ADA accessible
- Parking lot striping faded, no ADA spots at the north entrance
- Lampposts along trail spaced too far apart and not pedestrian scale
- Flood prone – most of park within 100-year floodplain
- Repair from recent storm and resilience to flooding needed

“The Valley”

- Lack of features
- No parking
- Graffiti under bridge
- Tire scars in grassy area
- Damaged light post
- Drainage issues along walkway
- Walkway pavement in poor condition
- Flooding issues
- “No Parking” signage at bridge access point discourages visitation
- Gas line suspended walking bridge poses potential safety and health hazard



3.7 SPECIAL USE PARKS

Special Use Parks are designed for specialized or single purpose recreational activities, and can include places such as plazas, golf courses, sports complexes, and indoor spaces.

3.7.1 Blanton's Landing (2.1 acres) – Special Use

Site Location

Blanton's Landing is an area along the Kentucky River below East Main Street and Capital Avenue. This section of the riverbank is undergoing a separate effort to determine the feasibility of improved connection and future development. Currently the site suffers poor visibility and is challenging to access via car. The site is largely paved and includes a flood wall that separates an upper area from a grassy, wooded stretch of the shore.



Park Issues & Opportunities

- Access and visibility
- Designated parking
- Excessive pavement
- Insufficient lighting
- Views of the water, but inadequate direct access to river
- Feasibility Study for riverfront access and features recently completed (more details in Chapter 7)



3.7.2 Capital City Museum (0.2 acres) – Special Use

Site Location

The Capital City Museum facility is just a few blocks northwest of Blanton's Landing, in Downtown Frankfort. It can be accessed via Ann Street between Main Street and W Broadway Street. The facility is currently undergoing extensive renovations, as well as a Strategic Plan process. There is significant potential to utilize the museum for promotion and communication of the entire Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites system.

3.7.3 Lakeview Park (7.8 acres) – Athletic Complex

Site Location

This Athletic Complex is part of Lakeview Park, a Franklin County Park. However, four diamond ballfields are maintained by Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites. The park, (and the nearly 8 acres maintained by the city), is in the easternmost part of Frankfort, with most of the property, including the four ballfields, outside the city boundary. Franklin County High School is adjacent the park and the nearby area is primarily single family residential neighborhoods.



Park Issues & Opportunities

- ADA access

- Neighborhood connectivity opportunities
- Potential partnerships with Franklin County for facilities and programs
- City/county agreement specifies a 50/50 cost share on some elements of the ballfield complex

3.7.4 Paul Weddle Field at State Stadium (2.2 acres) – Special Use

Site Location

This stadium is located just east of downtown, north of the Kentucky River. It is accessible via Regan Street between E Main Street and Holmes Street. The surrounding area is largely industrial, though there are residential blocks within walking distance, and Downtown Frankfort is also nearby. Kentucky State University and Franklin Independent Schools High School partners with the city for use of the stadium for their women’s softball teams.

Park Issues & Opportunities

- ADA deficiencies
- Lighting and sound need improvements
- Backstop and dugouts need replacement
- Potential for adding artificial turf infield to improve play and decrease rainouts

3.7.5 St. Clair Mall (0.5 acres) – Special Use

Site Location

This unique site is within the heart of Downtown Frankfort, leading up to the grounds of the Old State Capitol. It is a pedestrian-friendly block between W Main Street and W Broadway Street, lined with commercial development and pedestrian-scale amenities like public seating and lamp lighting. The landscape beds and tree plantings are under the maintenance of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites.

3.8 FACILITY SUMMARY

The table (Table 3.3) below provides a summary of the recreation facilities offered by the Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Department.

Table 3.3: Recreation Facility Summary

Athletic Fields	#	Natural Areas	#
Small Diamond	8	Fishing Access	2
Large Diamond	5	River Views or Access	5
T-ball/Playfield (Backstop)	2	Natural/Wooded Area	6
Large Rectangular Fields	5	Passive Recreation	#
Game Courts	#	Dog Park	1
Basketball	3	Archery Range	1
Pickleball	3	Boat Dock/Ramp	1
Tennis Court	4	Community Garden	1
Volleyball (Sand)	2	Stage or Amphitheater	1
Outdoor Facilities	#	Large Shelters	7
Playgrounds	6	Medium Shelters	5
Fitness Equipment	1	Gazebos/Small Shelters	3
Splash Pad	1*	Support Facilities	#
Aquatic Center	1	Restroom Buildings	8
Golf (Holes)	18	Concessions Buildings	2
Disc Golf (Holes)	18	Parking Spaces	1,067

Trails (Miles)	#
Paved	2.9
Unpaved/Hiking	7.2
Multipurpose/Mountain Bike	9.6

Cultural/Historical Facilities	#
Museum/Interpretive Center	2
Historic Sites	4

*Part of Dolly Graham redevelopment

3.9 OTHER PARKS

Table 3.4 shows a total of 16 parks and recreation areas that may be available to residents of Frankfort but are neither owned nor maintained by Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites. These parks are located within the city of Frankfort or within Franklin County (see Table 3.1 and maps in Chapter 5). These parks are owned and maintained either by the school system, a nonprofit, a state or local organization, or a private entity. Each of these spaces contributes to the full spectrum of recreational opportunities available to residents of Frankfort.

This section is intended to create a full inventory of all recreation amenities available to residents by documenting the amenities currently provided in these parks. If major improvements are made in any of these parks the city and the owners of these spaces should coordinate their efforts to best address the community's needs and to avoid potentially costly and inefficient duplication of services and amenities.

Table 3.4: Parks by Others

Facility Name	Agency	Playgrounds	Basketball Courts	Volleyball Courts	Tennis Courts	Pickleball Courts	Splash Pad	Diamond Fields	Multipurpose Fields	Picnic Shelters	Dog Park	Skate Park	Disc Golf (Holes)	Golf (Holes)	Trails (Miles)
School Parks															
Bridgeport Elementary School	Franklin County Schools	1													
Collins Lane Elementary School	Franklin County Schools	1	1												
Early Learning Village	Franklin County Schools	1	0.5												
Elkhorn Elementary School	Franklin County Schools	1													
Franklin County High Tennis Courts	Franklin County Schools				6										
Hearn Elementary School	Franklin County Schools	1													
Panther Athletic Complex	Frankfort Independent Schools				4				1	1					
Peaks Mill Elementary School	Franklin County Schools	1	1												
Second Street School	Frankfort Independent Schools	1	1												
Western Hills High Tennis Courts	Franklin County Schools				6										
Westridge Elementary School	Franklin County Schools	1	1												
Subtotal - School Parks		8	4.5	0	16	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0.0
Parks by Others In Frankfort															
Frankfort YMCA	YMCA														
Kiwanis Park	Salvation Army	1													
Lakeview Park (County Maintained)	Franklin County Parks	1		2		2	1	4*	7	1	1	1	18	9	1.7
Subtotal - Parks by Others In Frankfort		2	0	2	0	2	1	0	7	1	1	1	18	9	1.7
Parks by Others Near Frankfort															
Prevention YMCA	YMCA							2							
Salato Wildlife Center	Kentucky Fish and Wildlife														5.1
West Sixth Farm	Private														4.0
Subtotal - Parks by Others Near Frankfort		0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	9.1
Total - Other Parks		10	5	2	16	2	1	2	8	2	1	1	18	9	10.8

*Maintained by Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites and counted in Table 3.2

3.10 PROGRAMS INVENTORY

Quality recreational programming is an important aspect of a vibrant and healthy community. Programs can be useful for meeting the specific needs of different groups in the community – like active adults, young children, families, or teenagers – in a way that is more creatively tailored. In fact, programs can be an essential access-point for users; offerings like fitness class, sports leagues, cultural crafts, and camps give residents unique ways to meaningfully interact with parks in their community. When properly managed and intentionally promoted, programs are an invaluable tool for strengthening social connectivity and enhancing the livability of a community.

As the Frankfort community enters life after the COVID-19 pandemic, programming will need to be flexible in terms of format and scheduling. Virtual classes, self-guided tours, and individual-based challenges will help provide residents with expanded options to engage in recreation whatever their schedule, personal health situation, or abilities.

3.10.1 Core Program Guidelines

The core program concept provides direction in the planning, scheduling, and coordination of community-based recreational activities. Involvement of community representatives, parents, participants, and advisory groups in the planning and development of program opportunities is critical for success.

The Core Program Guidelines include components used as benchmarks for determining the quality of specific activities conducted at each program location. The level of Core Program offering may vary in activity type, intensity, and scope depending on such factors as size of the facility, equipment availability, and the number of staff required. The discussion below provides a description of the core program components as well as a summary of if and how well Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites is, as of 2020, targeting these components.

Appendix C provides an expanded description of each broad program category (component 6). It includes possible program formats, identifies the primary values served by the activity, and lists specific program examples. The list can be a helpful resource for determining and developing programs in the city of Frankfort.

Core Program Components

The summary below uses the following abbreviations after each bullet point to describe whether Frankfort is meeting the core program components:

- Y = Yes offered by Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites
- L = Limited offerings by Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites
- O = Offered by partner organizations in Frankfort
- N = No, not offered in Frankfort

This analysis is based on the cumulative offerings and participation rates over the last five years.

1. Broad Appeal

Parks and community centers should have broad appeal by conducting activities and special events for people young and old and of varying needs and skill levels. Target groups for programs include:

- Preschool – (L)
- Elementary School Age – (Y)
- Teens – (N)
- Adults – (Y)
- Seniors – (N)
- Intergenerational – (N)
- Multiple Ages – (L)
- Special Needs – (N)

2. Administrative Feasibility

Activities should be administratively feasible, and the following factors should be considered as part of any program development process:

- Facility and Equipment Requirements – (Y)
- Safety – (Y)
- Cost vs. Benefits – (N)
- Specialized Instruction Requirements – (Y)

Frankfort has not yet completed a detailed analysis of the costs of programs. This type of analysis can determine the cost of each program per participant in terms of dollars and staff time and compare those numbers to program outcomes and revenues. This type of an analysis can be especially useful for evaluating partnerships with partner organizations.

3. Coordination

Program and service offerings should be of a coordinated nature within the community, thus serving to complement rather than duplicate activities already provided elsewhere by other organizations or agencies.

Frankfort coordinates with partner organizations to expand recreational services; partner relationships range from regularly scheduled programming to one-time collaborations or providing space. Given input from extensive stakeholder discussions, there is considerable interest to grow and strengthen agency partnerships to build more recreation programs for the community. The following entities are either current or past partners with Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites in providing programs and activities to the community:

- Franklin County Parks and Recreation
- YMCA of Central Kentucky
- Canoe Kentucky
- Kentucky River Tours
- Walkbike Frankfort
- Frankfort Disc Golf Association
- Kentucky Mountain Bike Association (KYMBA) – Bluegrass Chapter
- Franklin County Farmers Market
- Capital City Activity Center
- Frankfort Kiwanis Club
- Josephine Sculpture Park
- Audubon Society

4. Settings and Times

Activities should be conducted in a variety of settings and formats, formal and informal. Programs should also be offered at a variety of times to meet the competing schedules of residents. For example, working adults may not be able to participate in programs until the evening or on weekends. Additionally, parents with children may benefit from availability of childcare or children's programs running concurrent to their chosen activity.

Settings and formats include:

- Instructional Classes (L)
- Progressive Skill Levels (N)
- Drop-In (Y)
- Special Events (L)
- Special Interest Clubs (N)
- Leagues and/or Tournaments (Y)
- Outings and Field Trips (N)
- After School Programs (N)
- Camps (L)

While some of the department's programs and activities are regularly scheduled through leagues or independent organizations, there is not a consistent lineup of recreational choices available to residents. While certain offerings like the Farmers Market and Volleyball League are reliably organized, other opportunities like Enviro Adventures and amphitheater performances are less regular.

5. Constructive Nature

Programs should be constructive in nature and satisfy the creative, cultural, physical, and social desires of the participants.

6. Diverse Range of Activities

A diverse range of activities should be offered and should include a balanced mix of the following broad program categories:

- Athletics (Y & O) – Offered by Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites, and partners
- Community Events (L)
- Creative Arts (N)
- Cultural Performances (L)
- Education, Life Skills, and Fun (N)
- Games (N)
- Green Living/Environmental Education (L)
- Health, Fitness, and Wellness Activities (N)
- Health and Wellness Education (N)
- Heritage and History (Y)
- Nature/Outdoor Programs (Y)
- Performing Arts (N)
- Volunteer Training & Opportunities (N)

3.10.2 Frankfort Parks and Recreation Program Participation

Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites has a significant opportunity to provide consistent and diverse programming to the community. Through public engagement and stakeholder discussions, it is clear that a number of events, camps, and classes have been well-received and utilized (e.g., various sports tournaments, Enviro Adventures, and performances at the amphitheater). Mountain biking, pickleball, and archery tournaments each attract over a thousand participants. Though attendance counts for events like the Farmers Market and concerts at the amphitheater are unclear, public input suggests many in the community have taken advantage of these offerings. The Sullivan House at Leslie Morris Park and the Capital City Museum are both unique elements of Frankfort's parks system.

To build and sustain participation, Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites will want to connect with other groups in the city. There are several possible partner organizations as well as a range of location types throughout the park system. When the department itself does not have the internal capacity to organize, facilitate, and manage a program, it should explore ways to increase support and collaboration with local groups. The overarching target should be to ensure consistency in existing program options and scheduling. In addition to providing a regular suite of annual programs, the department can take steps to expand and diversify the recreational lineup.

Program Participation

While some programs have been consistent yearly offerings, others have been less regular though not unsuccessful. Looking at 2018-2019 participation levels, sports leagues provide the largest registration numbers:

- Youth Baseball – 650 annual registrants (spring/fall)
- Youth Softball – 375 annual registrants (spring/fall)
- Adult Softball – 20+ registered teams
- Volleyball – 150 annual participants
- Soccer – 108 annual participants, 4 tournaments annually
- Youth Football – 120 participants, 2 tournaments annually

While these athletic leagues have provided reliable numbers, revenue generated is not always directed towards Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites (e.g., youth soccer) despite use of the department's facilities. Additionally, other physically active programs are rising in popularity and gaining traction in community participation:

- Pickleball – 1,100 annual participants
- Disc Golf – 250 registered players, 7 tournaments annually
- Archery – 1,500+ tournament participants
- MTB Trails – 30,000 annual riders (estimated), 6 ride events annually

Considering these numbers, athletic program participation in Frankfort is clearly robust, but alternative sports like mountain-biking, archery, and disc golf are bringing in thousands of new park users. Frankfort has potential to grow participation and overall involvement through continued emphasis on athletics and health & fitness activities (e.g., pickleball, disc golf, etc.). Additionally, the department has hosted a number of well-received community events (e.g., concert series at the Ward Oates Amphitheater, weekly Farmers Market at River View Park, Enviro Adventures youth summer camp, and others), but participation tracking is a challenge. However, public input described later in this report (Chapter 4) underscores the community's need for more of these kinds of programs. Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites is in a position to attract more users of all ages by adding additional, consistent opportunities for passive community gathering.



PUBLIC INPUT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the processes used and the public input gathered throughout the planning process and summarizes the following elements:

1. In-Park Intercept Interviews
2. Stakeholder Conversations
3. Statistically Valid Survey (by ETC Institute)
4. Web Survey
5. Online Engagement (powered by MindMixer)

The public engagement process is essential for identifying the needs and preferences of Frankfort residents. The findings of the public input process are, therefore, integral to the Needs Assessment and Identification (Chapter 5) and serve as the foundation of the recommendations of this Master Plan.

4.2 IN-PARK INTERCEPT INTERVIEWS

The global COVID-19 pandemic necessitated significant innovation for reaching the community in Frankfort and collecting input for the *2021 Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Master Plan*. Instead of hosting one or two public workshops where residents could provide input, the planning team took the health crisis as an opportunity to rethink the engagement approach and determined an alternative for listening to the community. While public meetings in larger community venues are a more traditional space for engagement, the planning team chose to conduct intercept interviews within the parks to better reach parks users in real time.

4.2.1 Process of Intercept Interview

While maintaining safety protocols (as defined by the Centers for Disease Control for the prevention of coronavirus), BCI staff spent five days across August and September visiting the main parks in Frankfort. In total, **146 individuals were engaged** through 13 scheduled opportunities:

- August 18 in Cove Spring Park (Lower), River View Park (Farmers Market), Dolly Graham Park, and Capitol View Park
 - 41 people engaged

- August 27, 29, and 31 in Cove Spring Park (Lower), River View Park (Farmers Market), East Frankfort Park, Todd Park at Bellepoint, and Juniper Hill Park
 - 75 people engaged
- September 24 at Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill Park and Dolly Graham Park
 - 30 people engaged

Interviewees were approached and asked permission before engaging in a short series of pre-determined questions, including the following:

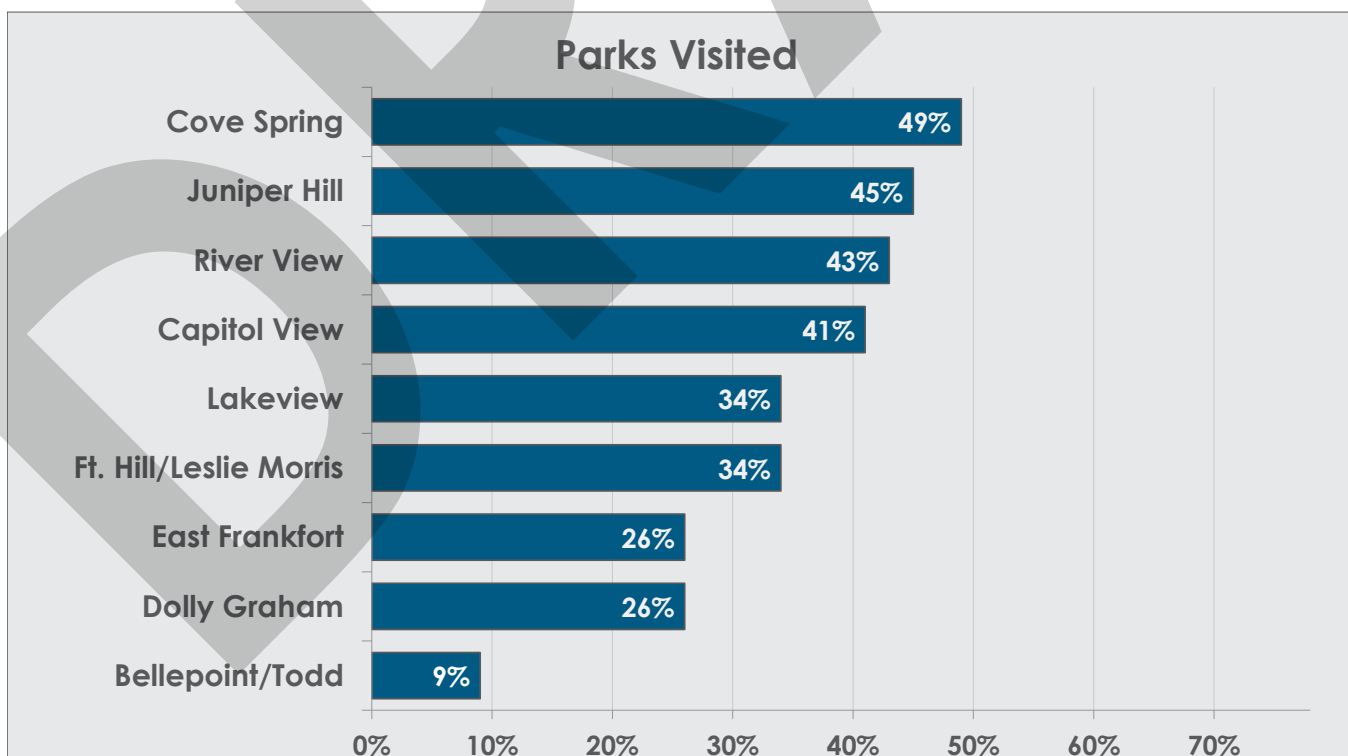
- “What Is your favorite park? Why?”
- “Have you participated in any programs provided by the city of Frankfort?”
- “What improvements would you like to see?”

These interviews often blended into informal conversations, giving the planning team invaluable qualitative data and clearer entry to understanding community perception of the Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites in Frankfort.

4.2.2 Visitation

These in-person interviews corresponded to the survey findings (Section 4.4); **Cove Spring, River View, and Juniper Hill were the top three most visited parks (49%, 43%, and 45%, respectively)**. Over 30% of interviewees also cite Leslie Morris and Lakeview as the parks they most frequently visited. Each of these parks is quite different in character, each attracting visitors for likely different reasons. Cove Spring Park is almost entirely oriented around passive recreation, with archery facilities in the Upper section of the park being the most active recreation available. On the other hand, Capitol View Park is primarily athletic facilities with extensive multipurpose/mountain biking trails. Depending on their preferences and involvement, parks users are likely to visit one park over another. That said, the majority of respondents when asked which of all parks they visit in the system, Cove Spring and River View were consistently mentioned. Because Dolly Graham and Todd Park are Neighborhood Parks, and the majority of the visitors are concentrated in the nearby blocks, they were less likely to be mentioned across the full range of interviews.

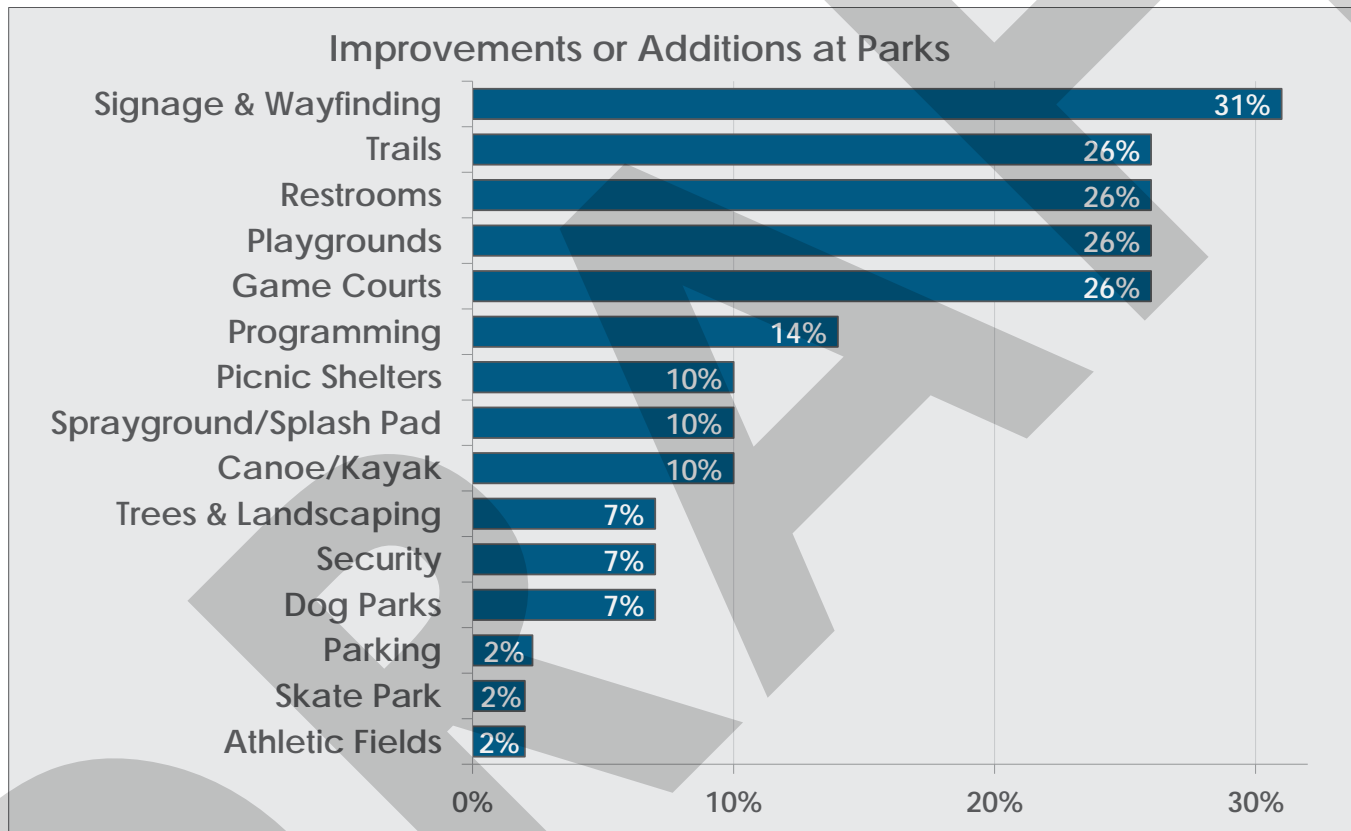
Figure 4.1: Parks Visitation Based on Intercept Interviews



4.2.3 Requests for Improvements

Over half of those interviewed said the parks are in “good” condition with almost 20% identifying the parks in “excellent” condition; just over 10% commented that the parks are in “poor” condition. When asked what improvements they wanted to see in the parks, a few common themes emerged (see Appendix D for full comments). Over 25% of interviewees wanted to see additional game courts, permanent restrooms, upgraded playgrounds, and more trails. **The most common response – just over 30% of all interviewees – wanted to see improved signage, including effective, signature wayfinding across the parks system.** Programming, site amenities (e.g., trash receptacles, lighting, and restrooms), and more effective marketing were also mentioned multiple times. At Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve and Leslie Morris Park, interviewees expressed a desire to see the special character of each site better communicated and protected through the use of signage and features.

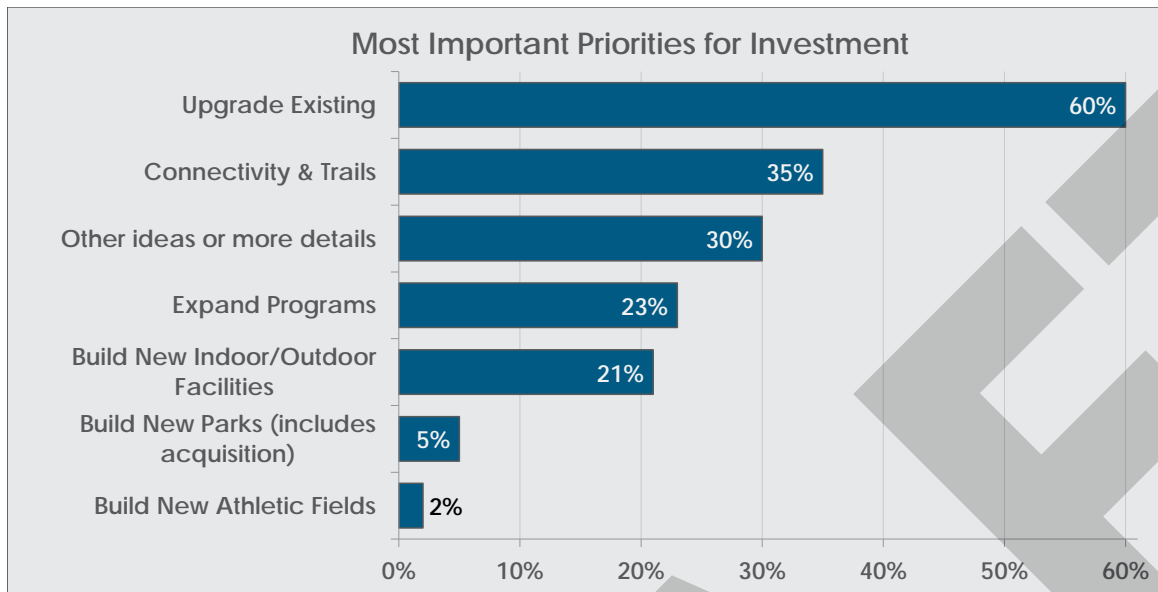
Figure 4.2: Requests for Improvements or Additions to Parks



4.2.4 Investment Priorities Based on Intercept Interview Responses

As indicated in Figure 4.3, interviewees were far more likely to indicate *upgrade quality of existing or connectivity and trails as their top priority for investment by Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites over the next 5-10 years.* Expanding program offerings and building a new indoor facility were other frequently chosen investment priorities. Of those who offered “other” suggestions, many provided more specific requests – like extending trails through downtown or adding particular play equipment (e.g., monkey bars) – but several mentioned the need for a departmental investment in equitable practices, inclusive development, and commitment to accessibility.

Figure 4.3: Most Important Priority for Investment



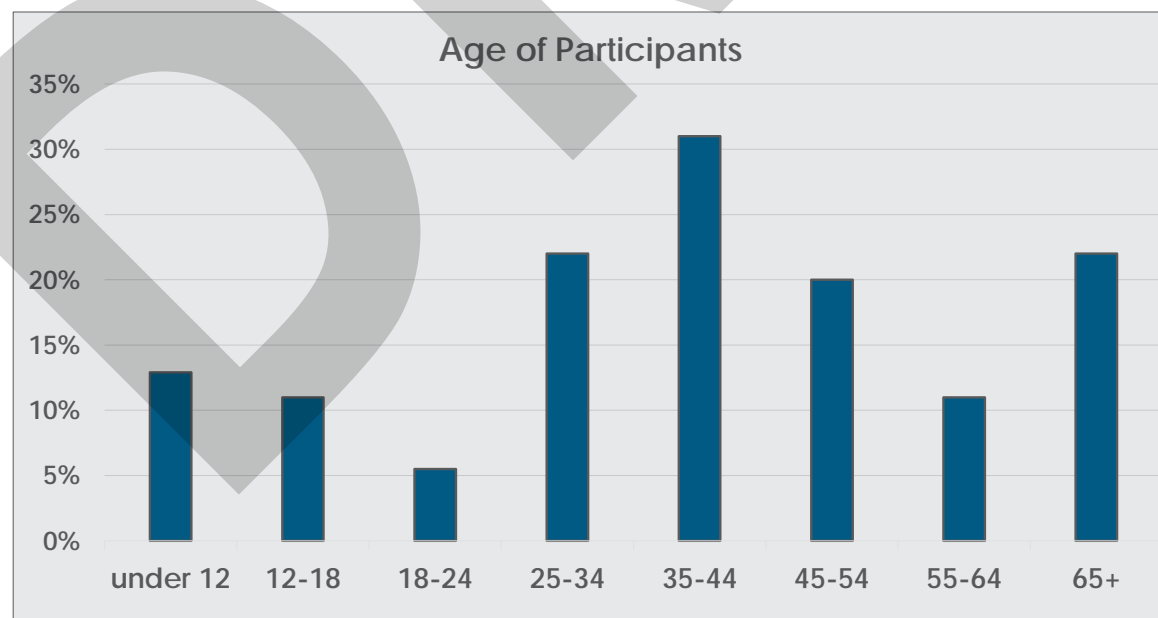
4.2.5. Program Experience of Intercept Interviewees

Sixty-four percent (64%) of interview respondents have not participated in a program offered by the city, leaving 36% who have. A number of interviewees had visited the farmers market and/or a concert at River View Park, but were not aware of the connection to Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites. The amphitheater and sports activities were the two most commonly attended offerings. Most participants needed more information about programs offered and/or had no requests for additional programs. The **most common suggestions for future and additional programming included nature programming (e.g., group hikes & species identification) and more community cultural events (e.g., concerts, outdoor movies, history-showcases).**

4.2.5 Age of Intercept Interview Participants

The **larger percentage of interviews occurred with people age 35-44** (see Figure 4.4) though the entire collection somewhat evenly spans the spectrum of age groups; those individuals between 18-24 accounting for just over 5%. Most survey participants said they visit the parks between 2-3 times a month to 2-3 times a week.

Figure 4.4: Age Distribution of Intercept Interviews



4.3 STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Between September and December 2020, the consultant team met with a series of stakeholders to establish their priorities for Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites in Frankfort. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, these conversations were conducted outdoors or via virtual conferencing (Zoom). Around 30 stakeholder groups participated in these discussions, contributing their respective visions to this Master Plan. At these meetings, stakeholders were asked a series of questions about Frankfort parks, recreation facilities, and programs, beginning first with a discussion of strengths before moving on to a discussion of future opportunities. Summaries of the meetings with complete comments can be found in Appendix D.

4.3.1 Groups Engaged

The following stakeholder group meetings were held as part of this Master Plan:

- City Commission
- City Staff (Department Heads)
- Parks and Recreation Staff
- Parks, Recreation & Historic Sites Board
- Tree Board
- Frankfort/Franklin County Tourist & Convention Commission
- Kentucky Capital Development Corporation (KCDC)
- Frankfort Area Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Frankfort, Inc. (DFI)
- Franklin County Schools
- Frankfort Independent Schools
- Kentucky State University
- Farmers Market
- Josephine Sculpture Park
- Canoe KY/KY River Tours
- Sunshine Center
- Otrero Arts, Inc. & Roaming Studios
- South Frankfort NA
- Yes Arts
- Additional Arts Community Members
- Audubon Society
- KYMBA & Walk Bike Frankfort
- Capital City Activity Center
- Rotary Club
- YMCA
- Buffalo Trace
- Kings Center
- South Frankfort Community Center

4.3.2 Stakeholders Broad Recommendations

- Connectivity & Wayfinding
 - Upgraded, ample signage systemwide
 - Interpretive signage throughout city & parks
- Upgraded facilities
 - Improve existing parks & facilities
 - Add site amenities like seating & lighting
 - Permanent restroom facilities
 - Accessible spaces & features
- Expanded Programming
 - Arts-based
 - Nature-oriented
 - Community gatherings
 - Healthy living (e.g., meditation or yoga classes)
 - Youth (especially teen) focused activities

-
- Sustain legacy events like Longest Day of Play & Reforest Frankfort
 - Expand newer programs like Arts in the Parks & Enviro-Adventures
 - Indoor Space
 - Could be performance center, rec. center, senior/community center
 - Multi-use
 - Highlight Parks as Incredible Resources
 - Need to regard parks as assets contributing to overall quality of life & Frankfort's attractiveness as a place to live, work, & play
 - Celebrate the uniqueness of each park site
 - Pursue more strategic & improved marketing
 - Inform residents about behind-the-scenes of parks
 - Communicate early & often about development
 - Strengthen connections to downtown & tourism
 - Partnerships & Collaboration
 - Consistent, clear communication from the department
 - Open to regularly scheduled information-sharing sessions
 - Funding & Revenue Opportunities
 - Develop a 501c3 (i.e., Parks Foundation)
 - Operations
 - Clear open communication, internal & external
 - Capital Improvement Plan
 - Staff development & retention
 - Consistent systemwide maintenance
 - Facilities & existing spaces should be fully utilized before developing new
 - More Trails & Linked Pathways
 - Promote the Kentucky River as an asset
 - Better access (e.g., ramps and docks)
 - More opportunities to view & interact with the water
 - More partnerships to expand programming on & near the river

4.4 PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS

The following pages summarize the findings of the statistically valid survey (Mail Survey) and the online survey (Web Survey). Because the Mail Survey results were collected using a statistically valid random sample, they are intended to represent the residents of Frankfort as a whole, both users and non-users. On the other hand, the Web Survey results reflect the views of the respondents, not necessarily Frankfort residents as a whole; Web Survey respondents are often already engaged in some way with the city's parks and programs. The figures in this section display side-by-side the results from both surveys. Of the figures that follow, some show only the top results for a survey question; however, full results can be found in Appendices E and F.

4.4.1 Statistically Valid Survey – Overview and Methodology

ETC Institute conducted a Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Needs Assessment Survey (Mail Survey) during the summer and fall months of 2020 to help establish priorities for the future development of parks, trails, programs, and open space in Frankfort. This Mail Survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the city.

The Brandstetter Carroll Inc. project team worked with Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites staff, and the project steering committee, on the development of the survey questionnaire. Through this collaborative effort a survey was created and tailored to issues of strategic local importance, providing a critical tool for effective planning of the future of the parks, recreation, trails, and open space in Frankfort. The 5-page survey was mailed to a random sample of households throughout Frankfort. (As an alternative, households were also provided with a web address for completing the survey online).

ETC Institute had a goal of 400 survey responses to ensure statistically valid results. ETC Institute exceeded this goal with a total of 444 surveys. Based on this random sample of households, the overall results have a precision of at least +/- 4.61% at the 95% level of confidence.

4.4.2 National Benchmarking

Since 1998, ETC Institute has conducted household surveys for needs assessments, feasibility studies, customer satisfaction, fees and charges comparisons, and other Parks and Recreation issues in more than 700 communities across all 50 states.

The results of these surveys have provided an unparalleled database of information against which to compare responses from households in client communities. This unique tool enables clients to see their results compared to national averages, assisting them in better decision making. This National Benchmarking summary is included in Appendix E with the full survey report. Select information from the benchmarking is described below.

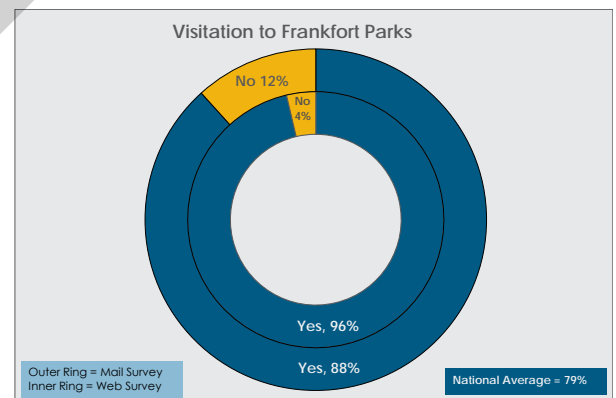
4.4.3 Web Survey – Overview and Methodology

In addition to the input-gathering conducted by ETC Institute, a Web Survey was administered by BCI during the summer and fall of 2020. This Web Survey was similar to the Mail Survey; however, the overall length was reduced (2 pages instead of 5) for ease and improved likelihood of completion. This version was powered by Survey Monkey with a total of 479 surveys completed. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of those who responded said they live within the city of Frankfort, 38% live in Franklin County (but outside of the city), and 11% live outside of the county. The full survey report can be found in Appendix F.

4.4.4 Results – Visitation of Parks Offered in Frankfort

Respondents to the survey were asked about their visitation to parks in Frankfort over the last year. Figure 4.5 shows the proportion of those who reported at least one member of their household had visited a city park in the last year. According to the statistically valid Mail Survey (outer ring), an impressive **88% of households visited parks** in Frankfort. Comparably, of those who responded in the Web Survey, 96% had visited a park. In contrast, the national average for park visitation is 79%, according to ETC Institute benchmarking. Thus, residents in Frankfort are considerably more likely than residents of other communities to visit parks.

Figure 4.5: Visitation

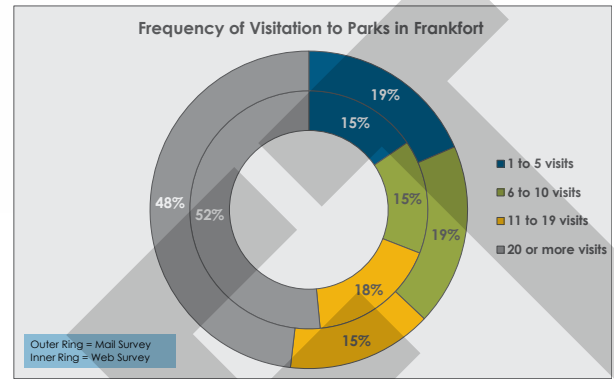


4.4.5 Results – Frequency of Visits to Parks & Recreation Facilities in Frankfort

As a follow-up, respondent households that visited Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites facilities during the last year were asked how often they have visited those facilities over that time. The results are presented in Figure 4.6.

According to the statistically valid Mail Survey, households who visited the city’s Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites facilities in the last year likely visited many times. **Forty-eight percent (48%) reported visiting 20 or more times.** Other results were: 19% visited 1-5 times, 19% visited 6-10 times, and 15% visited 11-19 times. Looking at the responses cumulatively, 62% of households visited parks 11 or more times, and 81% visited parks six or more times. It is worth noting that both sets of participants (Web and Mail Survey) responded similarly, emphasizing the high rate the parks are visited in Frankfort; **Web Survey respondents had even higher rates of visitation with 52% of households visiting 20 or more times** in the last year.

Figure 4.6: Frequency of Visitation

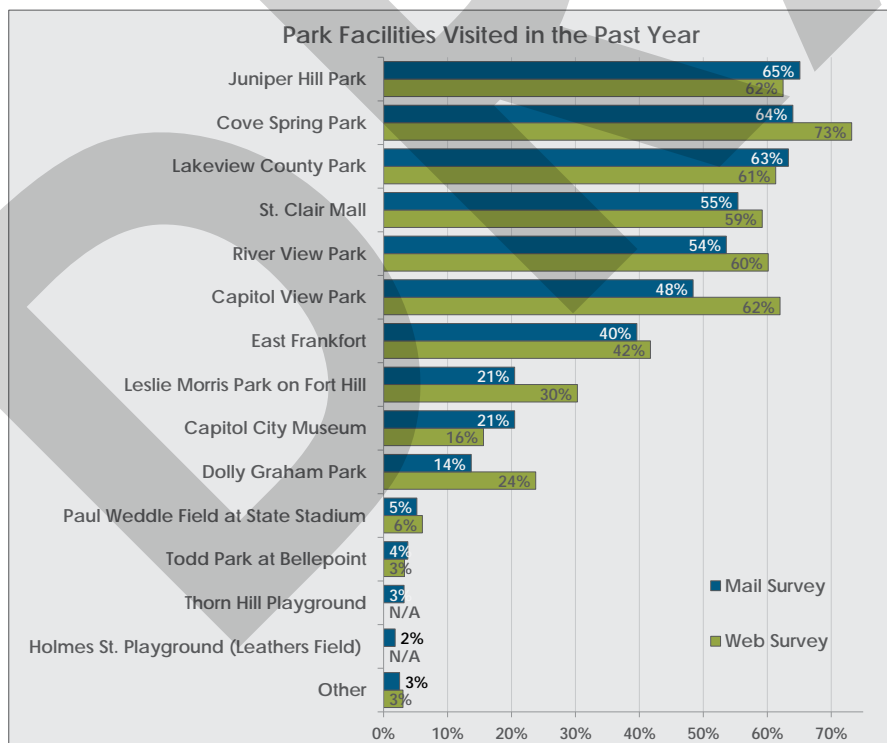


4.4.6 Results – Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Facilities Visited Over the Past Year

Survey respondents were asked to indicate which of the parks offered by Frankfort their household visited over the past year. Figure 4.7 shows what percentage of respondents have used each park or facility in the past year.

According to the statistically valid Mail Survey, **65% of households visited Juniper Hill Park** in the past year; 62% of the Web Survey respondents said they have visited this park. At 64% of Mail Survey households, Cove Spring Park was a close second; however, a full **73% of Web Survey respondents visited Cove Spring Park** in the past 12 months, making it the most visited park according to Web Survey results. Lakeview County Park, St. Clair Mall, and River View Park each were listed by more than 50% of respondents to either survey, with Capitol View Park visited by 48% of Mail Survey households.

Figure 4.7: Parks Visited

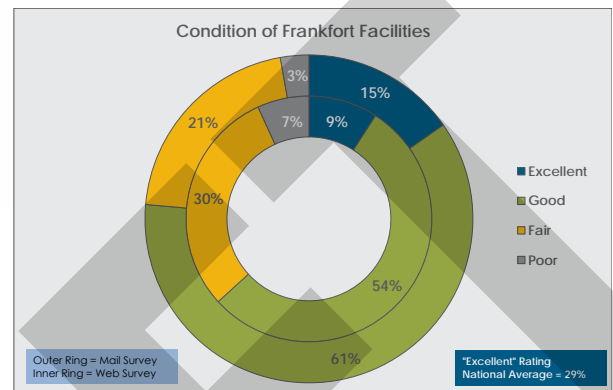


4.4.7 Results – Physical Condition of Facilities Offered by Frankfort

Respondent households were asked to rate the physical condition of facilities they visited. Figure 4.8 shows respondents' ratings of the condition of facilities in Frankfort.

According to the Mail Survey, 61% of households who visited these facilities over the past year rated the condition of those facilities as *good*, **15% rated the condition of the facilities as excellent** with 21% rating the condition as *fair* and 3% as *poor*. The *excellent* rating provided by Mail Survey respondents falls short of the national average (according to the ETC Institute) of 29%. Web Survey responses were similar, but respondents were more likely to rate conditions as poor or fair, and less likely to identify conditions as excellent. Taken altogether, **76% of Mail Survey households see the condition of Frankfort's facilities as either excellent or good**, in contrast to about 60% of Web Survey respondents.

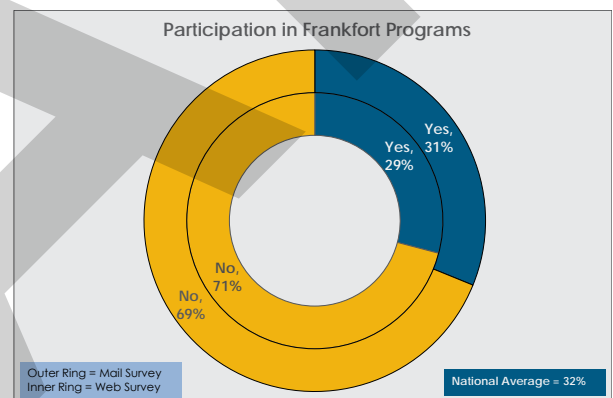
Figure 4.8: Condition of Facilities



4.4.8 Results – Participation in Programs Offered by Frankfort

Respondents were asked if any members of their household participated in programs offered by Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites over the past year. These results are shown in Figure 4.9. According to the Mail Survey, **69% of Frankfort households have not participated in programs offered**, while 31% have participated. This rate of participation corresponds with the National Average of 32%. Web Survey responses very nearly matched Mail Survey results.

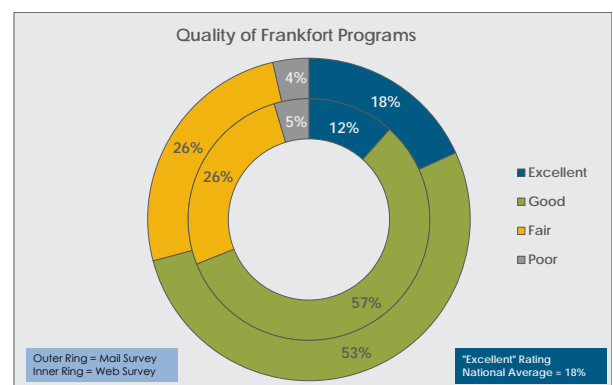
Figure 4.9: Program Participation



4.4.9 Results – Quality of Programming

Respondents who participated in programs offered by Frankfort were asked to rate the quality of those programs; Figure 4.10 shows the results. Of those who have participated in program(s) offered by the department, **71% of households (Mail Survey) rated programs as excellent or good** (the National Benchmark average for excellent is 18%). Web Survey respondents were more likely to rate programs as good rather than excellent, but by and large, responses between surveys were favorable; 26% of respondents to either survey format listed program quality as just *fair*.

Figure 4.10: Quality of Programming

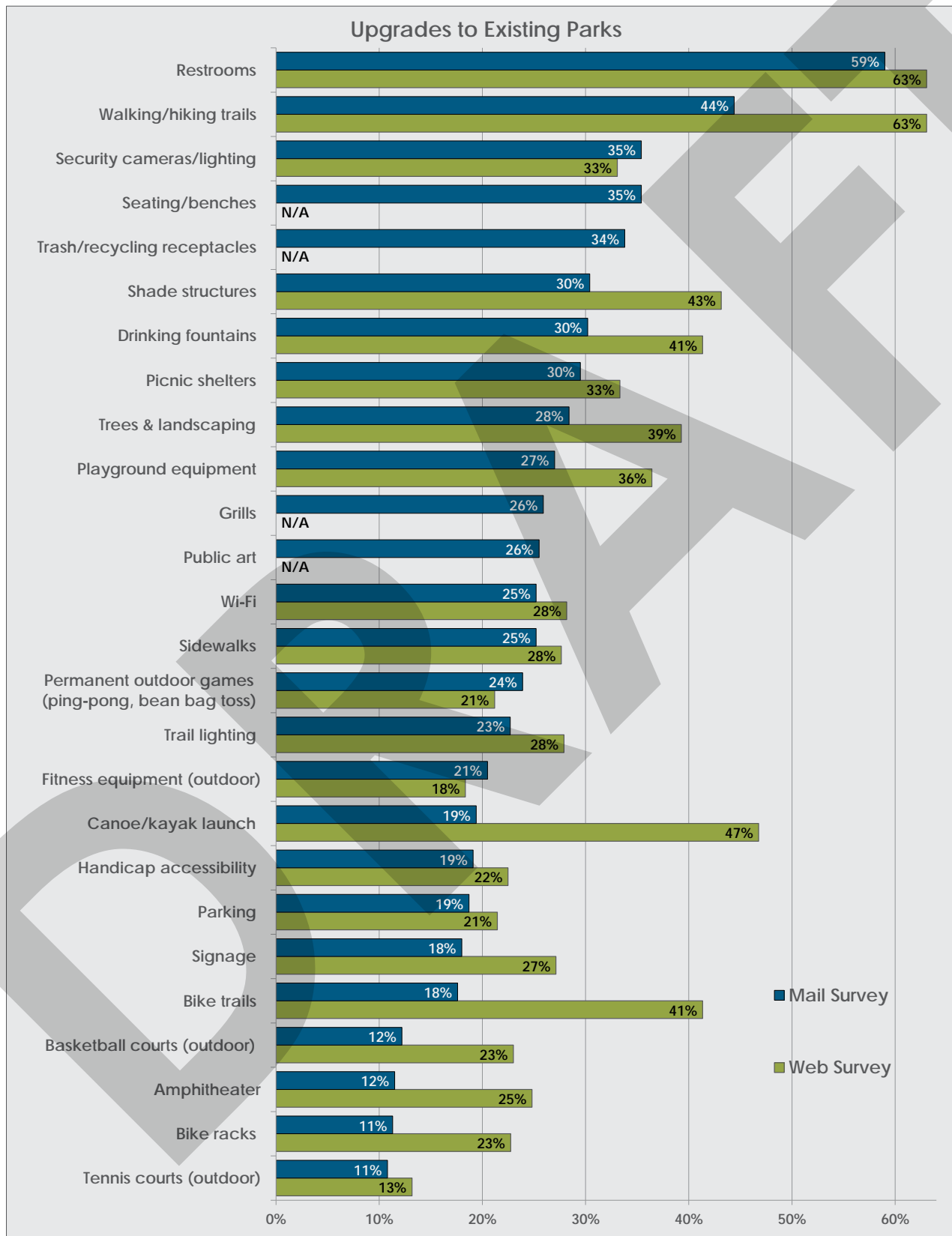


4.4.10 Results – Upgrades to Existing Parks

Respondents were asked to identify upgrades their household would like to see to existing parks, Figure 4.11 shows responses. The **top two responses in the Mail Survey were restrooms (59%) and walking/hiking trails (44%)**. The next priority ranked items in Mail Survey responses (with more than 30%) were *security cameras and lighting* (35%), *seating/benches* (35%), and *trash/recycling receptacles* (34%). Seven of the top ten features ranked higher in the Web Survey. *Shade structures, drinking fountains, trees & landscaping, basketball courts (outdoor), amphitheater, and bike racks* were each selected by 10% more Web Survey respondents than for the Mail Survey. **Walking/hiking trails, canoe/kayak launch, and bike trails had the greatest discrepancy with almost 20% more Web Surveys listing each as a desired facility upgrade**. These differences commonly occur usually because Web Survey respondents have higher use of the city's parks and programs than the public as a whole and will offer input corresponding to their specific

experience in the parks. In general, the top prioritized items are reflected in both survey groups. In this case, many of these facilities are amenities that would add to the user experience and enjoyment at any of the parks across Frankfort.

Figure 4.11: Upgrades to Existing Parks



4.4.11 Results – Household Needs for Parks and Recreation

Respondents of the Mail Survey were asked to identify (from a list of 30 different types of parks and recreation facilities) if any members of their household have need for any particular facility (i.e., do they make use of a certain facility, or would they if it were available). Figure 4.12 shows the results.

According to the survey, **the highest percentage of Frankfort households (66%) have a need for walking/hiking trails** (i.e., they either do use or would like to use trails). *Natural areas/nature parks* ranked at a close second (63%). *Picnic shelters/picnic areas* (56%) ranked as the third most-needed facility, selected by more than half of Mail Survey households.

In addition to outlining their general need, households were also asked how well these needs are currently being met by facilities provided by Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites. Out of these responses, the percentage of households for which needs were met at 50% or less was combined with the total number of households in Frankfort. Figure 4.13 shows the estimated number of households with needs met at 50% or less for the listed facilities.

The order of the items in Figure 4.13 varies from the results shown in Figure 4.12. **The top ranked unmet need was swimming pools (indoor) at roughly 5,500 households.** Forty-six percent (46%) of households (fifth) responded that this was there most needed facility. The close second unmet need was *small neighborhood parks*, listed by over 5,100 households; this facility ranked sixth in Figure 4.12 by 44% of respondents. The most needed facility from Figure 4.12, *walking & hiking trails*, ranked third for unmet needs (about 4,300 households). *Community/recreation centers* ranked sixth for unmet needs (about 4,000 households) despite ranking ninth for needed facilities in Figure 4.12, underscoring how demand for this facility surpasses the supply. Aside from the *community/recreation centers* ranking higher in the list of unmet facility needs, the two rankings correspond relatively closely. This similarity suggests that the community needs are largely not being met by existing facilities and more features or improvements to existing features are needed.

Another component of the surveys pertaining to facilities gave participants an opportunity to indicate which are most important to them. Figure 4.14 presents the most important facilities overall (by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top three choices). These items closely reflect the ranking results in Figure 4.12 with **walking & hiking trails as the most important facility by far for Frankfort households** (42% of households selected it as one of their top three most important facilities). **Natural areas/nature parks and swimming pools (indoor) come in at second and third** with 22% and 18% of households, respectively, ranking them in their top three. *Playgrounds* and *picnic shelters/picnic areas* fourth and fifth most important facilities with 15% of households identifying them in their top three most important facilities. *Community/recreation centers* ranked as much less important compared to the level of unmet need identified in Figure 4.13 (sixth most important facility but 16th facility for unmet need).

The survey results provided by ETC Institute include a Priority Investment Ranking for each of the facilities that combine the level of unmet needs and the importance of facilities (see Appendix E for methodology). The results for the high and medium priority facilities can be seen in Figure 4.15.

Based on these results, **the top six priorities for facility investment** in Frankfort are:

1. **Walking & hiking trails**
2. **Swimming pools (indoor)**
3. **Natural areas/nature park**
4. **Small neighborhood parks**
5. **Picnic shelters/picnic areas**
6. **Dog parks (off-leash)**

Figure 4.12: Need for Facilities

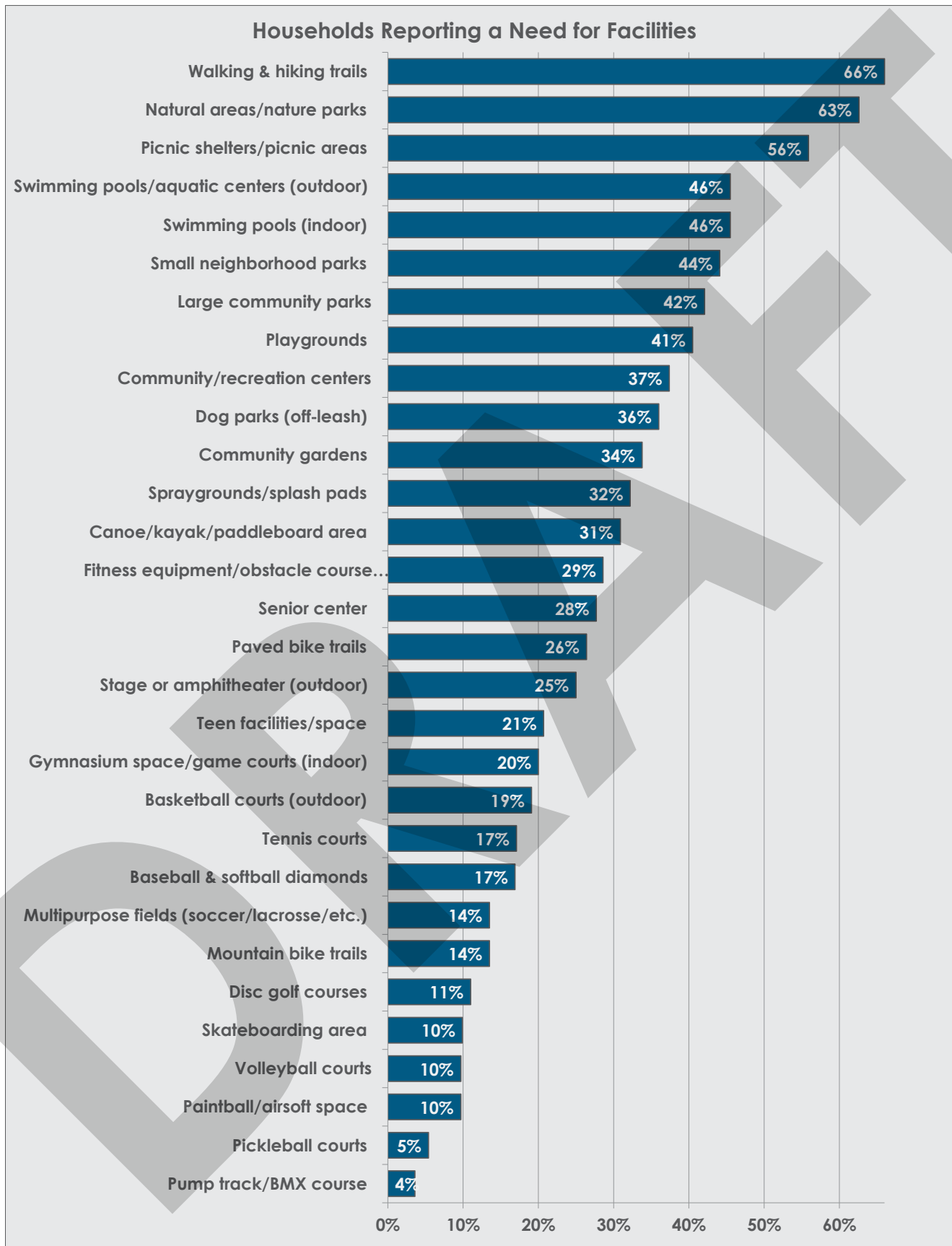


Figure 4.13: Estimated Number of Households with Unmet Facility Needs

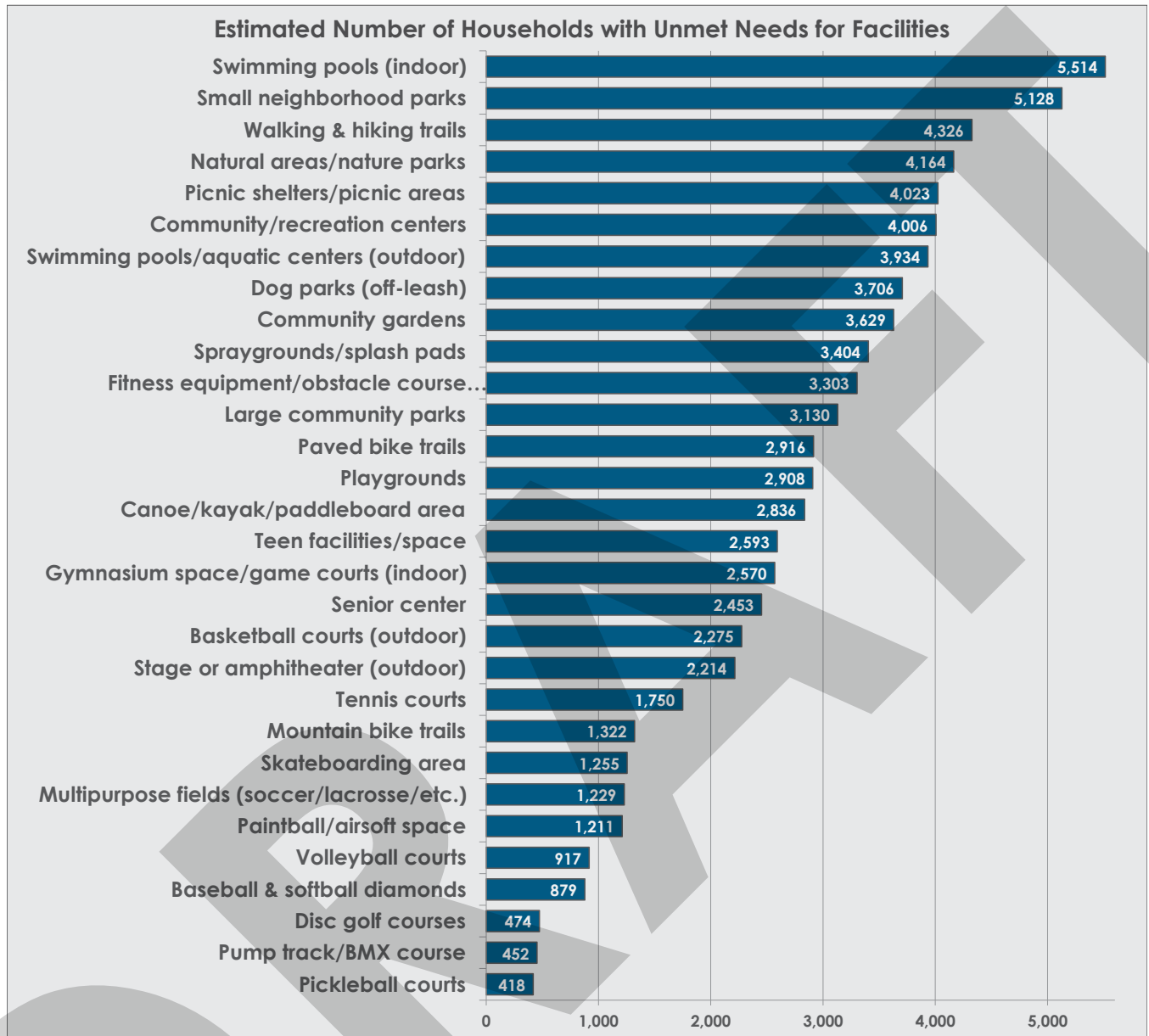


Figure 4.14: Most Important Facilities

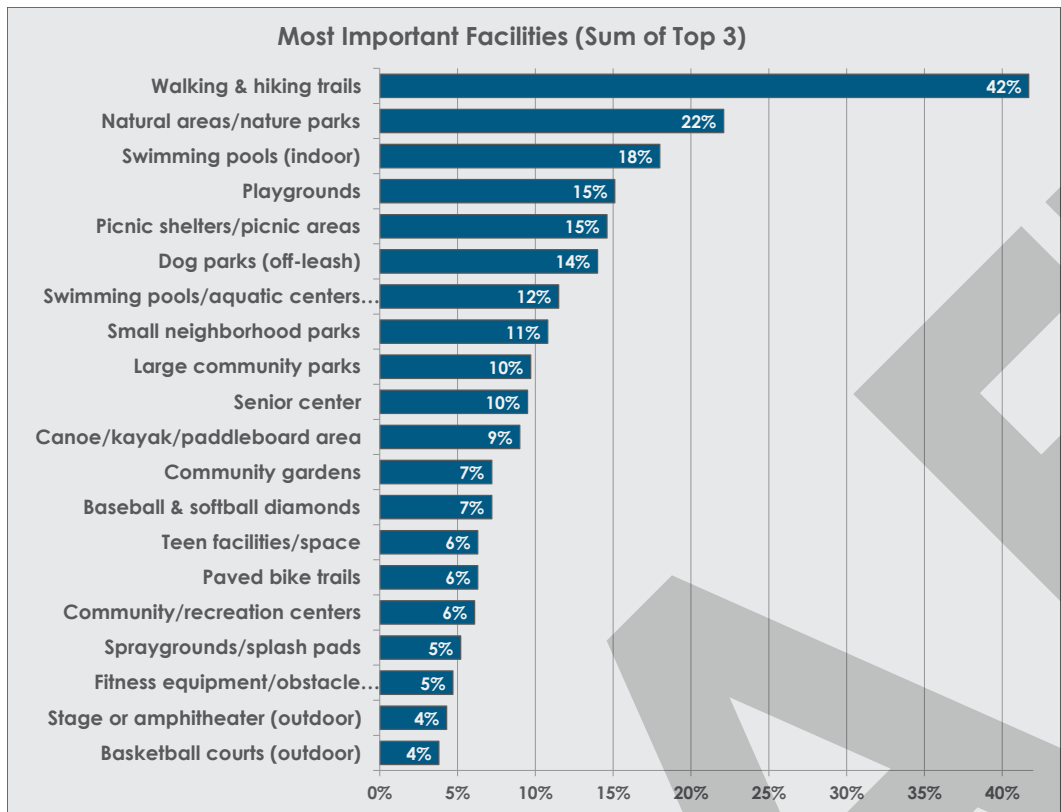
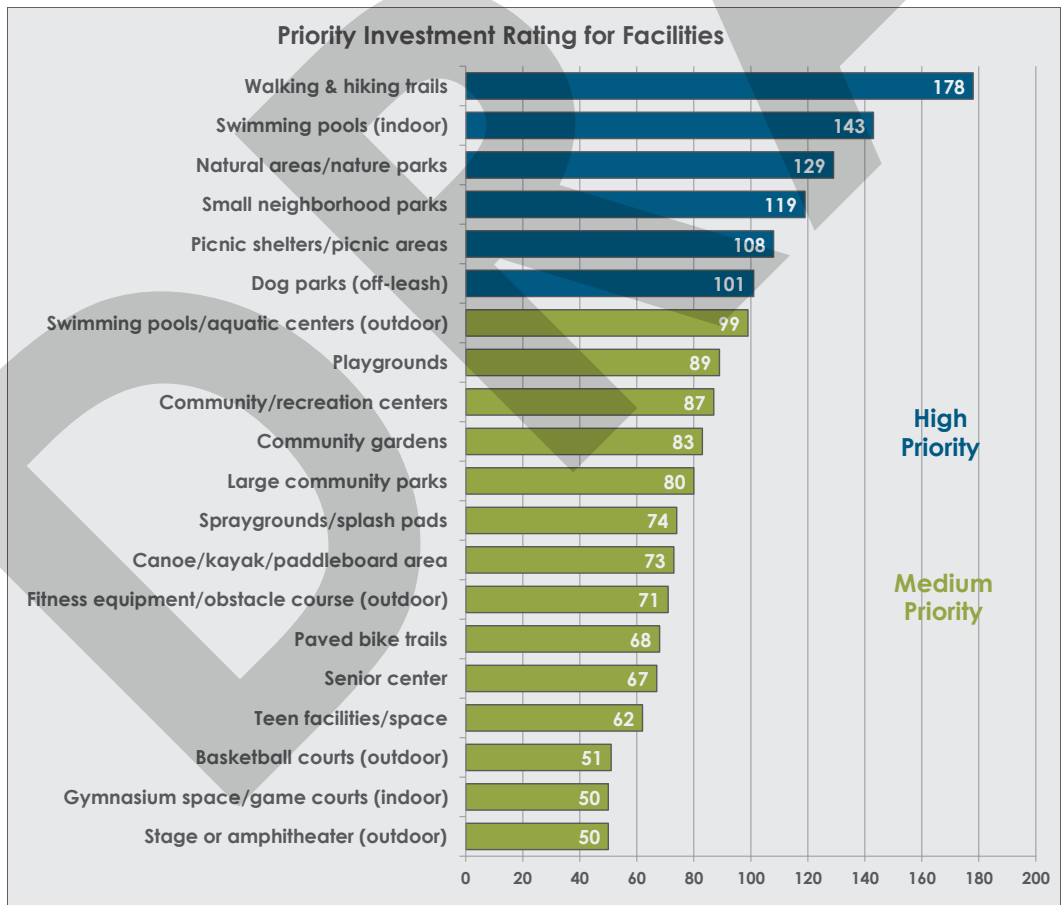


Figure 4.15: Facility Priorities for Investment

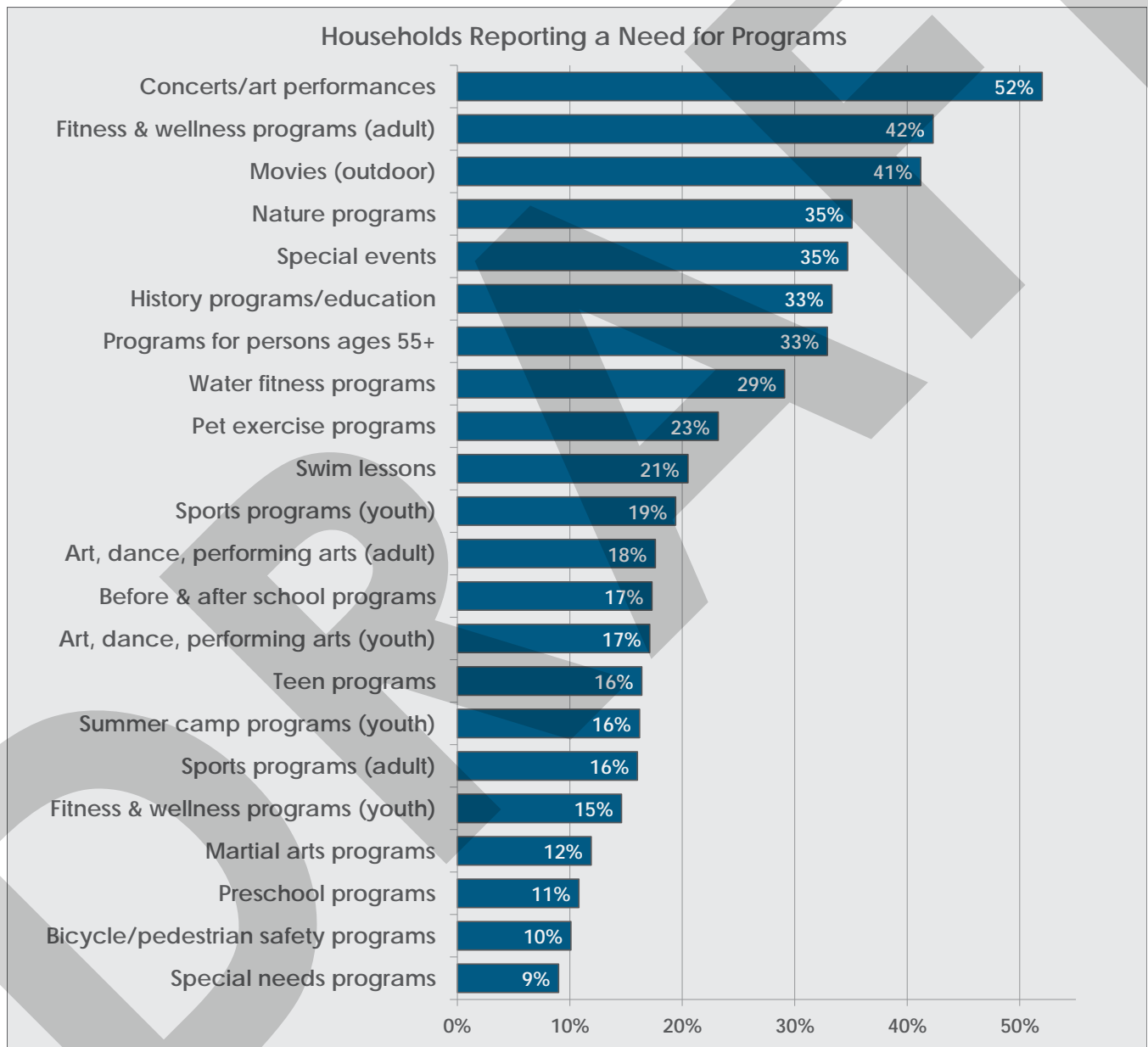


4.4.12 Results – Household Need for Programs

Mail Survey respondents engaged with similar questions focusing on programs in Frankfort. First, respondents were asked to choose (from a list of 22 recreation program categories) which programs their households need (i.e., programs they participate in, or would if available). Figure 4.16 shows the results.

According to the survey, **concerts/art performances ranked at 52% as the most needed recreation program category** for households in Frankfort. *Fitness & wellness programs (adult)* and *movies (outdoor)* ranked second (42%) and third (41%) with *nature programs* and *special events* tied for fourth most needed program, then *history programs/education* and *programs for persons age 55+* tied for sixth.

Figure 4.16: Need for Programs



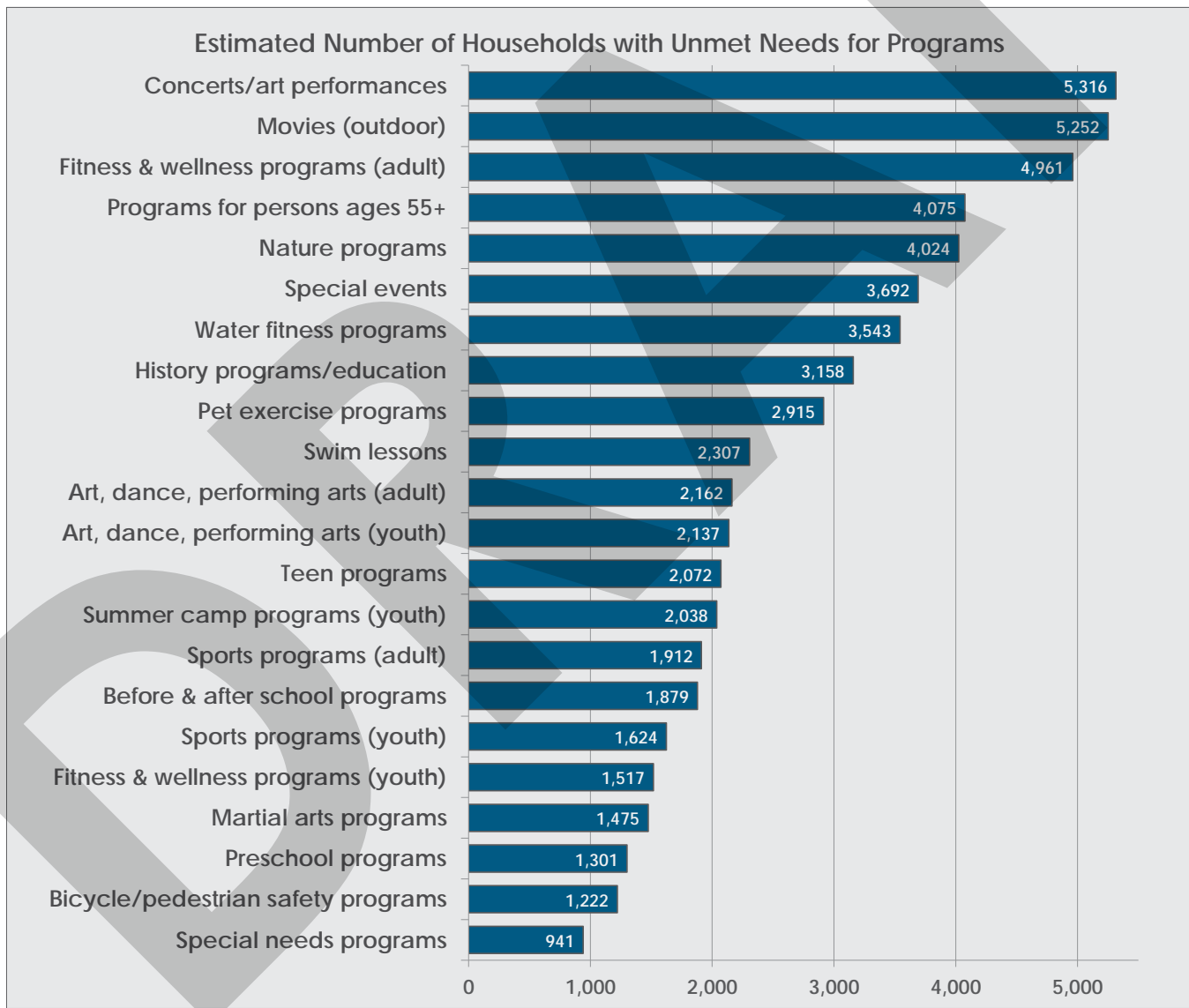
To determine the level of unmet need experienced by residents, the survey asked respondents to define how well their needs are currently met by the recreation programs provided in Frankfort, then estimated the number of households for which need is met at 50% or less. Figure 4.17 shows the estimated number of households with unmet need for various programs.

The order of the items in Figure 4.17 is similar to the list of needed programs in Figure 4.16 with the top five items appearing in both rankings, indicating a need for the addition or expansion of these types of programs. **Concerts/art performances ranked highest with over 5,300 households indicating unmet needs.** *Movies (outdoor)* and *fitness & wellness programs (adult)* came up as second and third with about 5,000 households. *Programs for age 55+* and *nature programs* both had just over 4,000 households expressing an unmet need.

Figure 4.18 shows the results the most important programs identified by households. The top five program categories almost directly reflect the list of unmet needs for programs with *movies (outdoor)* being outranked by *fitness & wellness programs (adult)* and *programs for persons age 55+* as more needed important types of programming.

With so much the same categories of programming appearing at the top of the results in each of these results, Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites has a significant twofold opportunity to expand on what relevant programming there already is and to explore ways to add offerings within these categories. Altogether, these results suggest a demand for greater sense of community, access to quality creative arts, healthy activities, and opportunities for older age groups.

Figure 4.17: Estimated Number of Households with Unmet Program Needs



As with the facilities, the survey results from the ETC Institute also include a Priority Investment Ranking for programs, combining the unmet needs ranking and most important programs ranking (Figure 4.18). Figure 4.19 shows the high and medium priority facilities.

Based on these results, the **top eight high priorities for program investment** in Frankfort are:

1. **Concerts/art performances**
2. **Fitness & wellness programs (adult)**
3. **Movies (outdoor)**
4. **Programs for persons ages 50+**
5. **Nature programs**
6. **Special events**
7. **Water fitness programs**
8. **History programs/education**

Figure 4.18: Most Important Programs

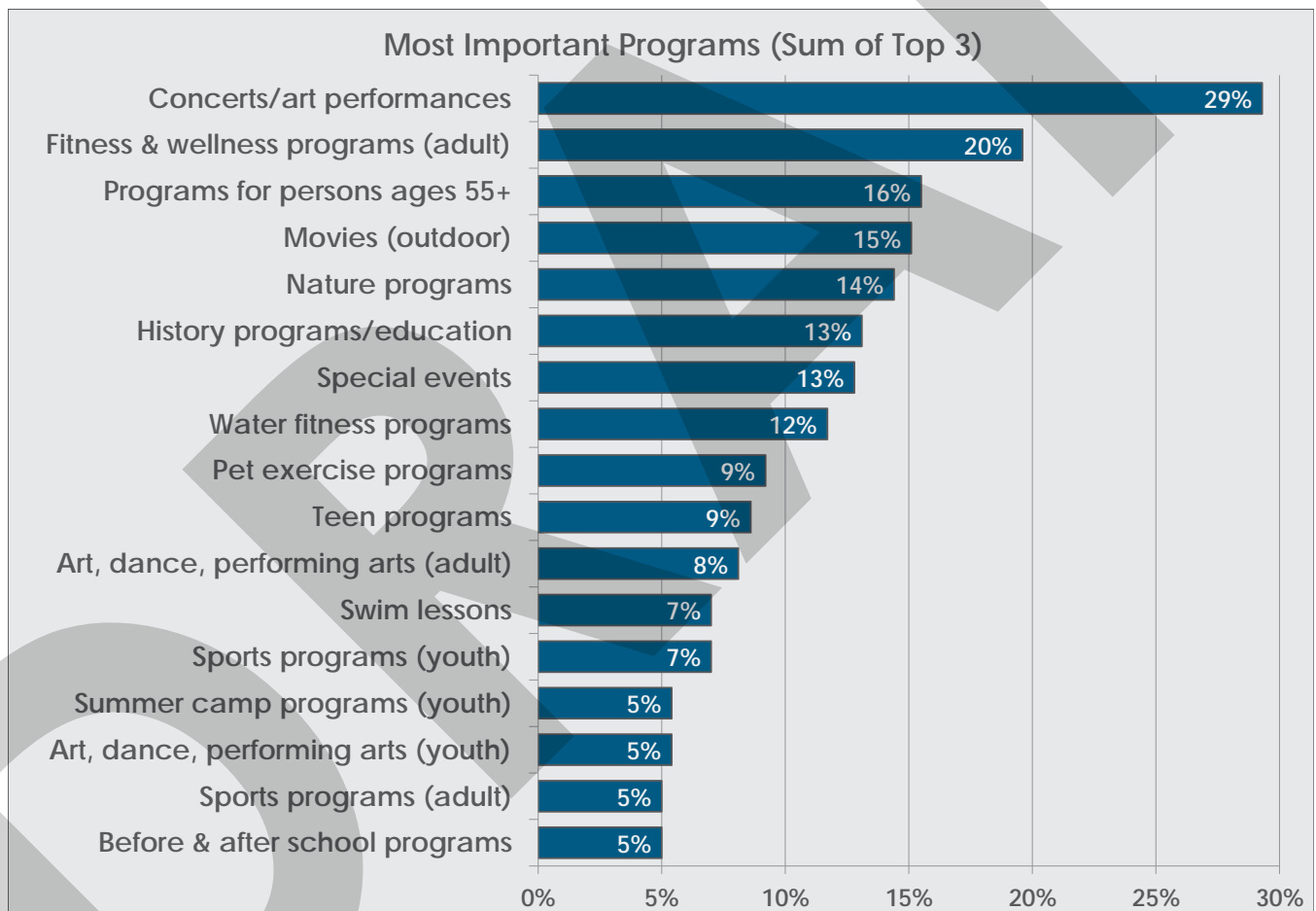
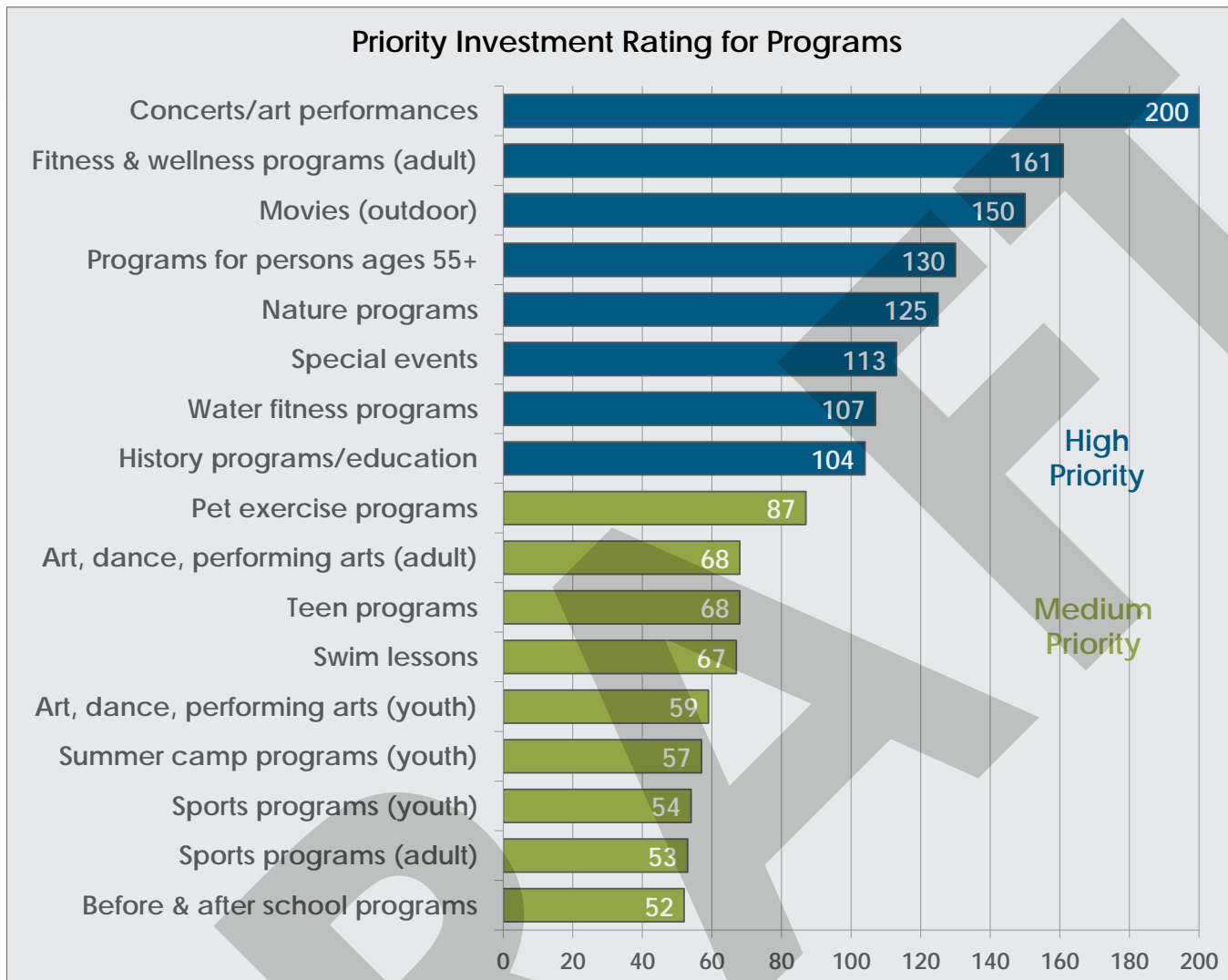


Figure 4.19: Program Priorities for Investment

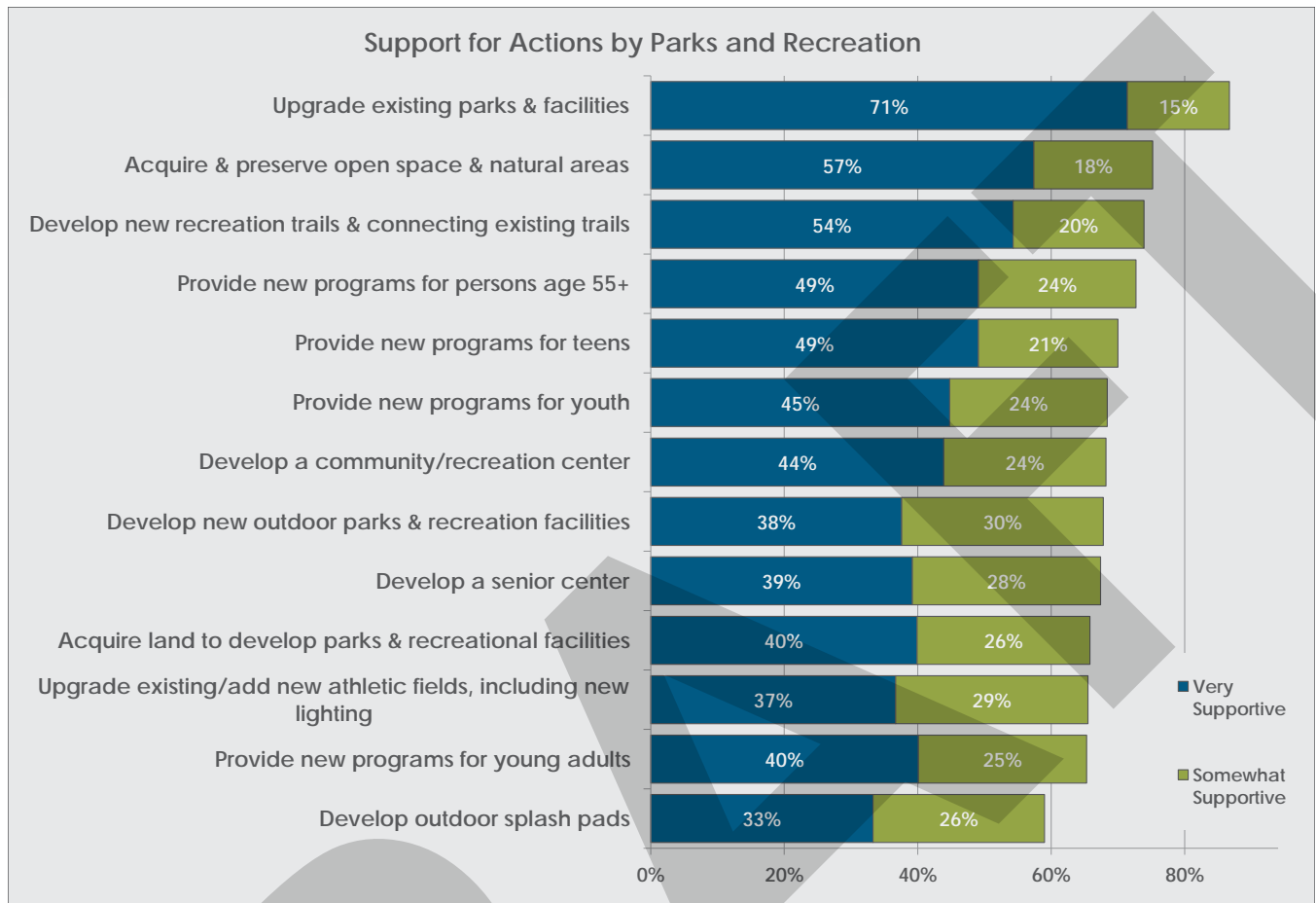


4.4.13 Results – Support for Park Improvements

Participants in the Mail Survey were asked to indicate whether they were *very supportive*, *somewhat supportive*, *not supportive*, or *not sure* of 13 different actions Frankfort could take to improve their Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites services. The results, displayed in Figure 4.20, show the combined total of *very supportive* and *somewhat supportive* responses.

Upgrade existing parks & facilities received the highest level of support with 86% of respondents supporting this action (71% very supportive). *Acquire & preserve open space & natural areas* ranked second with 75% of respondents supporting this action (57% very supportive). *Develop new recreation trails & connecting existing trails* ranked third with 74% of respondents supporting this action (54% very supportive). More than 50% of respondents were supportive all 13 actions, with *upgrade existing* having nearly universal support as the top action. This level of support for these different actions indicates overall positivity from residents about improvements to Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites in Frankfort.

Figure 4.20: Support for Actions to Improve Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites



4.4.14 Results – Most Import Action to Take (Sum of Top 3)

After indicating their general support for various possible actions, survey participants were then asked to identify the most important actions for Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites to take to improve the quality of the system. Figure 4.21 shows the results of this question, revealing *upgrade existing parks & facilities* as the most popular choice for most important action by a sizeable margin. **Fifty-one percent (51%) of households identified upgrades to existing parks & facilities** as one of their top three actions. In second was *acquire & preserve open space and natural areas* (27%), followed by *develop new recreation trails & connect existing trails* in third (24%). This input illuminates clear priorities for Frankfort households: elevated and updated parks facilities, access to and preservation of nature, and connectivity within the parks and across the community.

4.4.15 Results – Organizations Used for Parks & Recreation Activities

Building on the assessment of Frankfort’s Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites programming, both the Web and Mail Surveys asked respondents to identify which organizations they use to access recreational programs and activities. Figure 4.22 shows the results of these survey responses. **Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites and Franklin County Parks are the top two organizations residents use for accessing activities.** Web Survey respondents – again, often submitting feedback specifically because they already engage with the department – returned higher percentages of involvement with *private youth sports leagues* (16% vs. 9% of Mail Survey respondents). *Kentucky State Parks & Historic Sites, schools, and churches* are each utilized by 30% or more of respondents to either survey.

Figure 4.21: Most Important Actions for Improving Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites in Frankfort

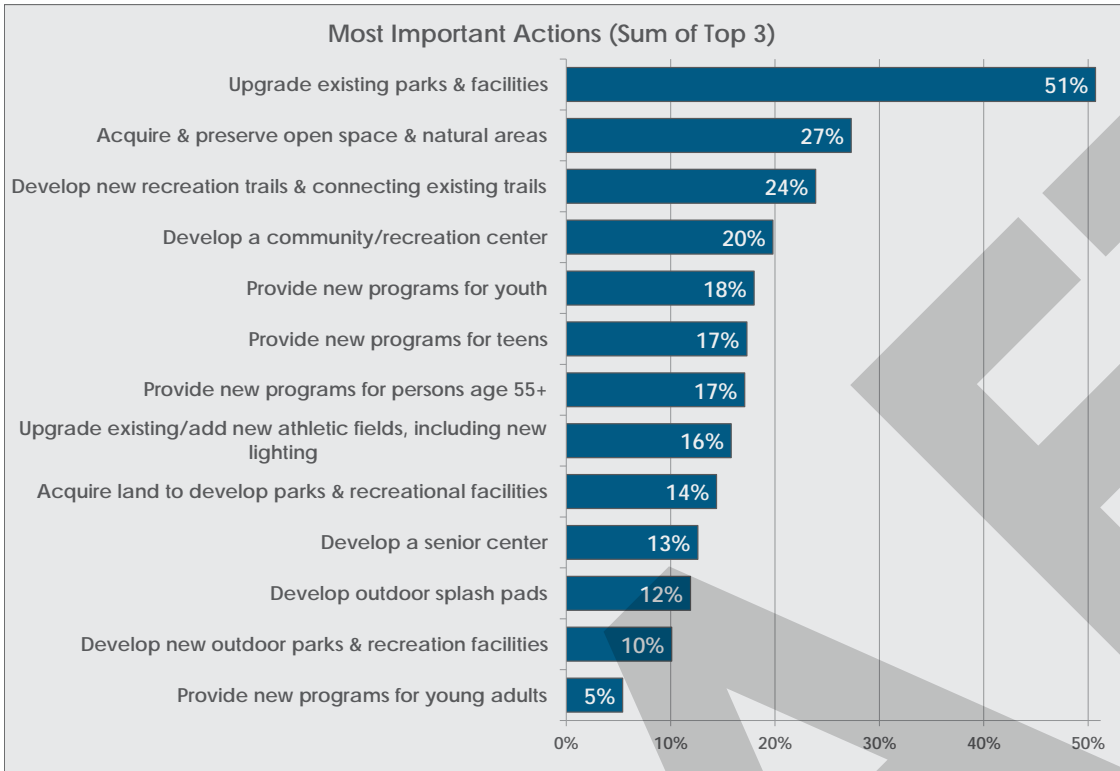
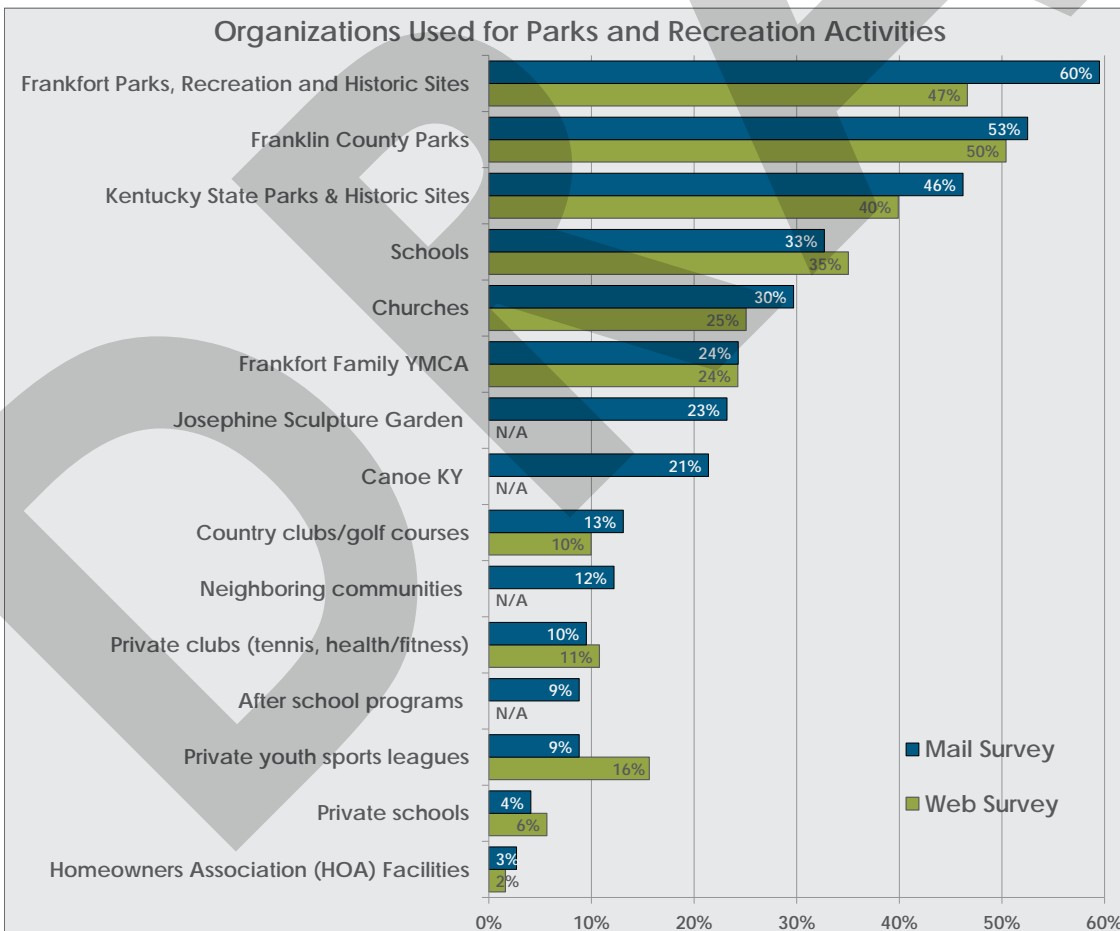


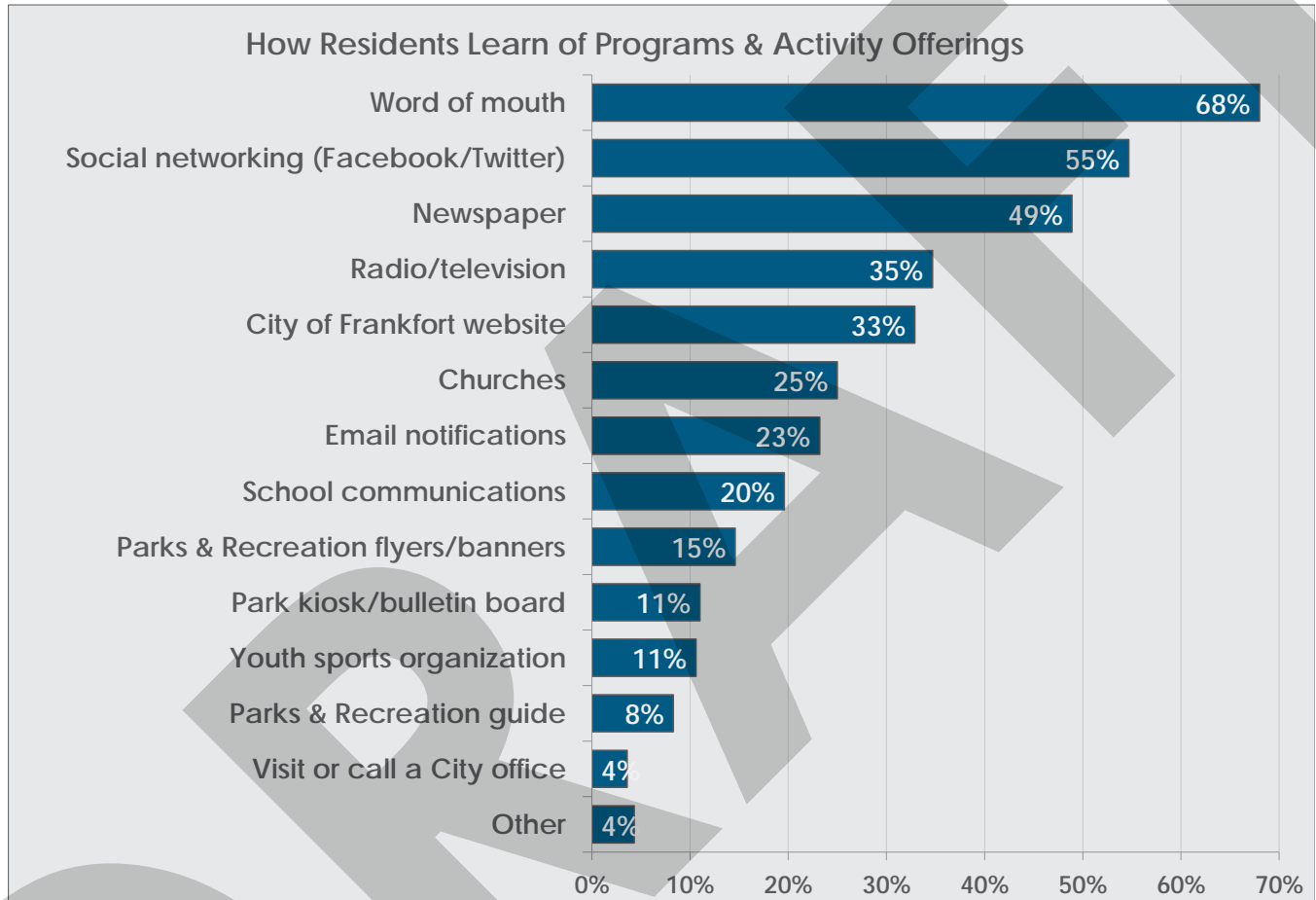
Figure 4.22: Organizations Used for Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Activities



4.4.16 Results – Learning about Recreation or Activities in Frankfort

Respondents were asked to identify the ways that they learn about Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites programs and activities (Figure 4.23). Given the survey responses, **word of mouth is the most common way households learn about the city's offerings** with over two-thirds of households (68%) identifying this method of learning of offerings. **Social networking** (55% of respondents) and the **newspaper** (49%) were the next most common methods of staying informed. Only a third of respondents use the department **website** to stay informed (33%), about the same as **radio/television**.

Figure 4.23: Ways Households Learn about Recreation and Activities



To glean insight into how Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites might best communicate with the community moving forward, participants were then asked how they would prefer to be notified about programs and activities (Figure 4.24). While **word of mouth** is the main channel by which residents currently learn about offerings, it is far from their preferred choice. **Social networking (Facebook/Twitter) is the largely preferred choice for staying informed (44%)**, followed by the **newspaper (31%)**. Figure 4.24 highlights the department's opportunity to grow and improve their social media presence to better connect and more effectively communicate with residents.

4.4.17 Allocation of \$100 Between Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Improvements

Survey respondents were asked how they would allocate \$100 between six different Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites improvements in Frankfort plus an "other" option. Of the options provided (Figure 4.25), **residents would allocate the largest amount to upgrade existing parks (\$17) followed by develop new indoor recreation facilities as a close second (\$16)**. **Build new walking and biking trails** was the third highest allocation of the choices (\$14) were third and fourth. **Other** received the largest allocation at \$23 with safety improvements, dog parks, and indoor facilities the most common requests.

Figure 4.24: Ways Households Would Like to Learn about Recreation and Activities

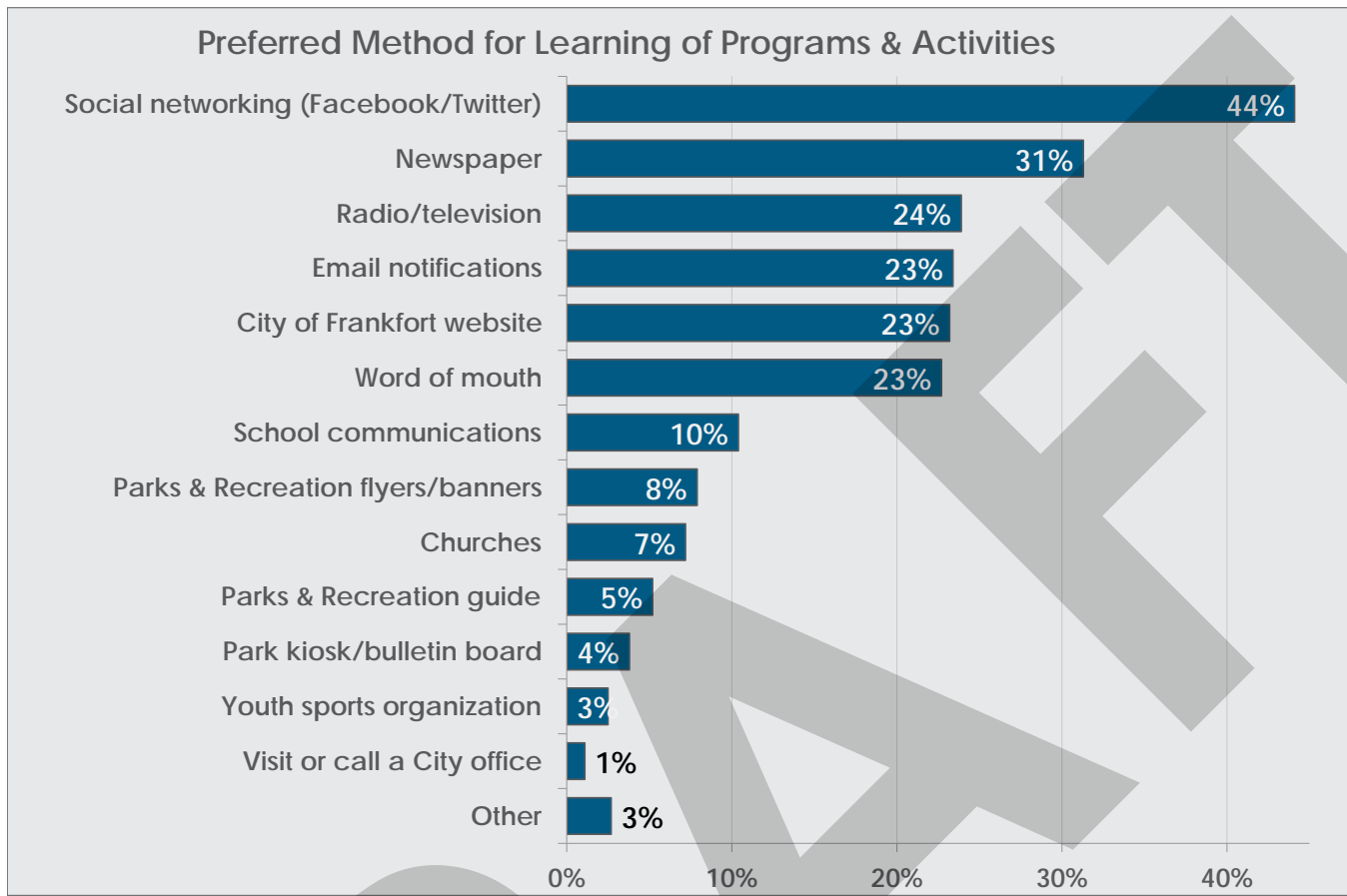
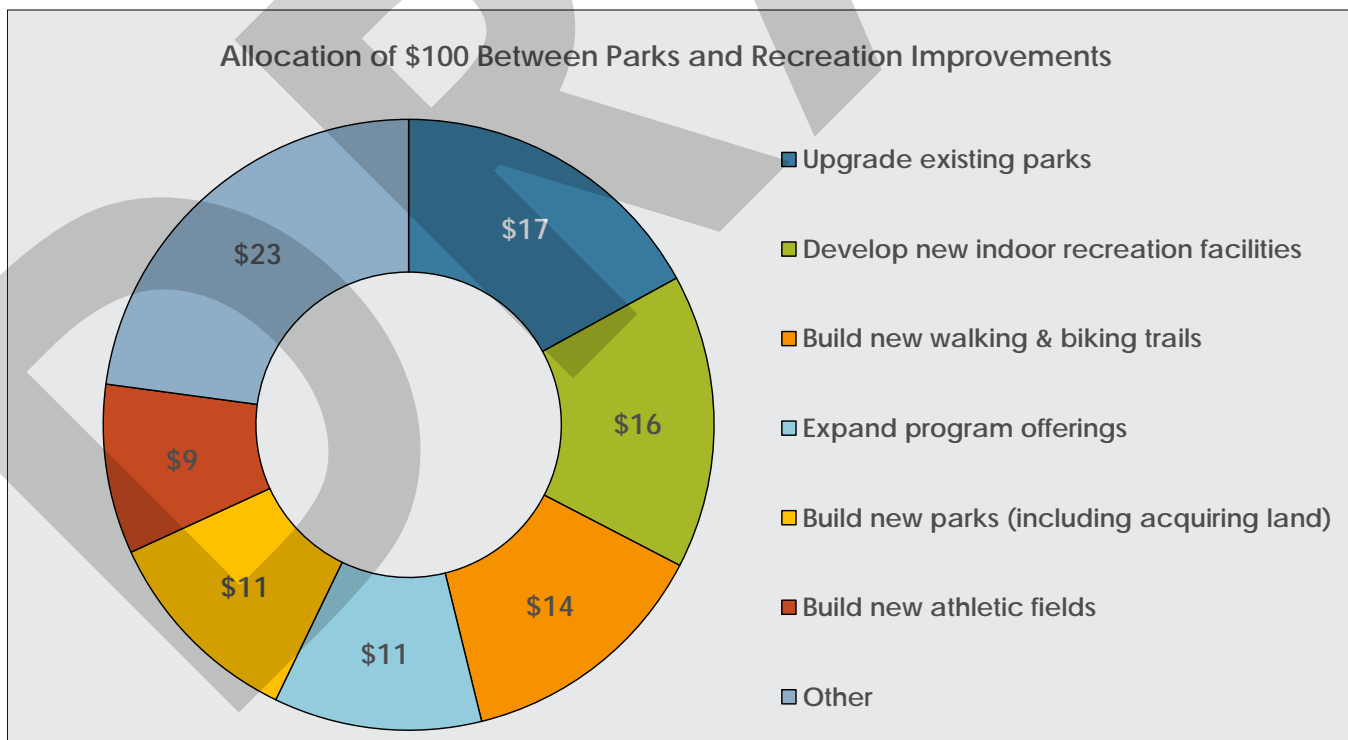


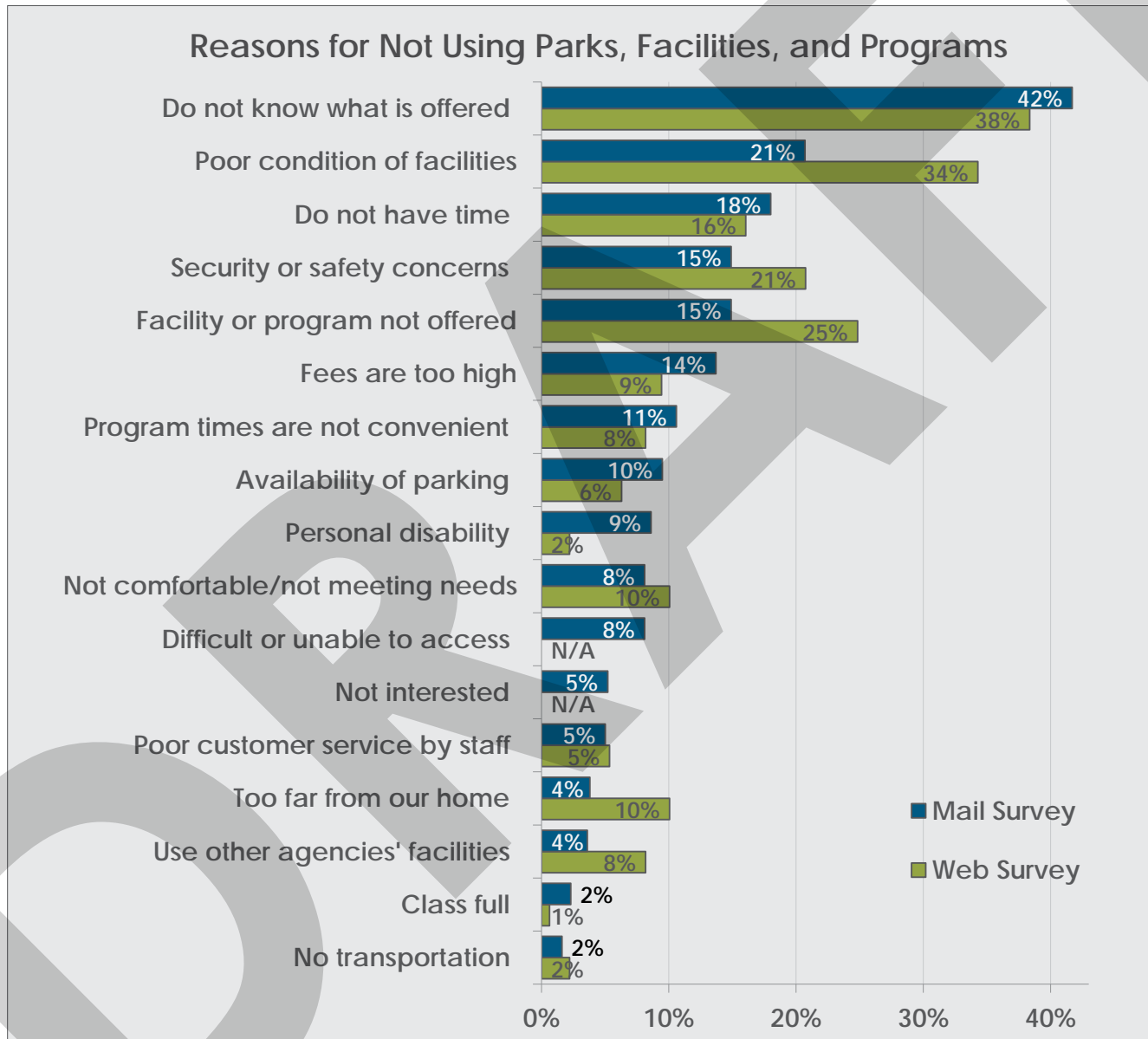
Figure 4.25: \$100 Allocation for Park Improvements



4.4.18 Results – Reasons for Not Using Parks, Facilities, & Programs

To determine avenues of opportunity for how the department should best realign and move forward, survey participants were asked to share their reasons for not utilizing the offerings provided by Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites (Figure 4.26). **About 40% of respondents to surveys selected *do not know what is offered* as a reason for not using the city's parks, facilities, and programs, outpacing the other reasons.** However, *poor condition of facilities* is the second highest reason with a third of Web Survey and 21% of Mail Survey households citing this reason. Of the Web Survey responses, **25% do not use services because the program or facility is not offered**; 21% reported they have *security or safety concerns*.

Figure 4.26: Reasons for Not Using Parks, Facilities, & Programs



Taking into consideration how the community learns about programming, what amenities they use, event attendance, and how residents would like to connect with Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites in Frankfort, there is overall opportunity for increased and more effective outreach. At the least, this means increasing and elevating the department's online presence as well as addressing the extent of capital improvements and upgrades needed to improve the quality of the system. Since 25% or more of Web Survey respondents feel there are not enough options provided, the department should consider how to broaden the variety of its programs.

4.4.19 Demographics of Survey Households

The distribution of age groups of respondent households was compared to the most recent population estimates¹ to verify the degree to which the demographic representation of the surveys correspond with the population of Frankfort. Figure 4.27 shows the representation by age of survey respondent household members and the estimated 2019 Frankfort population of each age cohort (the most recent available for these age demographics).

Figure 4.27: Household Age Demographics of Mail Survey Participants

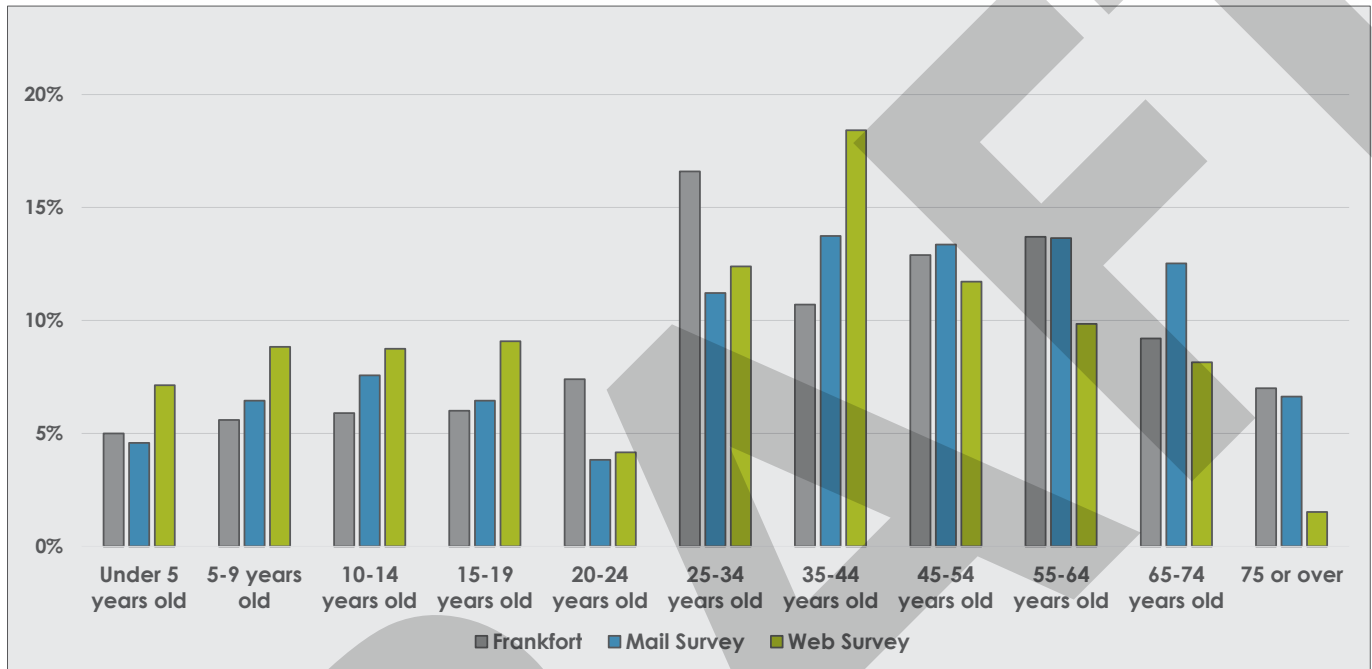
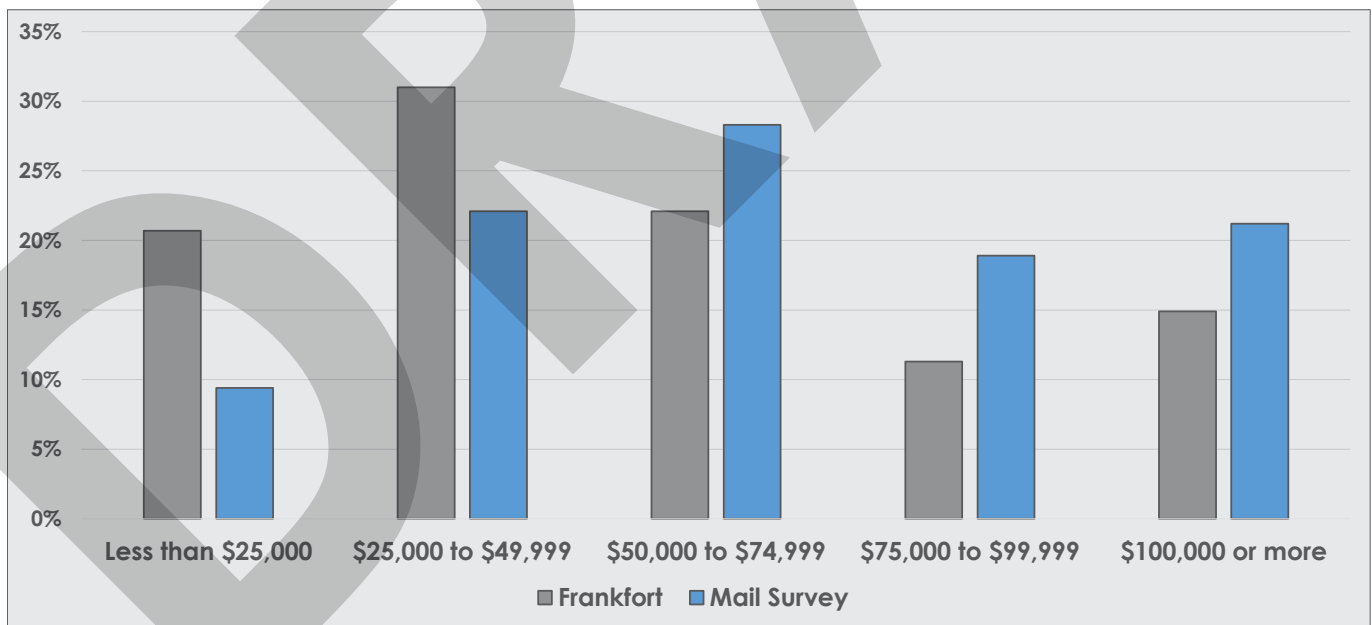


Figure 4.28: Household Income of Mail Survey Participants



As shown in Figure 4.27, Mail Survey participants for the most part closely aligned with the age demographics of Frankfort ensuring an accurate representation was achieved. While most age groups, both surveys – especially the Mail Survey – successfully garnered responses reflective of the population, those residents

¹ 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

between the age of 20 and 34 were underrepresented by about 2.5% to 5%. Given the higher response levels, the Web Survey was likely utilized by families, with those in the 35-44 and under 19 age brackets having the greatest percentage of responses.

Because the typical Web Survey respondent is already engaging with the park system, the results in Figure 4.27 provide information about the which age groups are the heavier users of Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites offerings. As evident from other elements in this report's assessment, families with children are a major demographic for the city to continue engaging and supporting.

The household income levels of Mail Survey participants are indicated in Figure 4.28. These number indicate that higher income households were more likely to complete the survey. The two lowest income levels were underrepresented, while the three higher levels were slightly overrepresented. The representation was within about 5% for all ranges except the lowest income households. These lower income residents are typically harder to engage, but the other methods of public input (in-park engagement and stakeholder groups) helped to engage these residents.

4.4.20 Distribution of Returned Surveys

The ETC Institute provides data for the location of returned surveys (to the nearest block), the results of which are in Figure 4.29. This figure illustrates a relatively balanced distribution of responses throughout Frankfort, largely corresponding to residential areas across the city.

4.5 ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the plan's engagement phase the city of Frankfort incorporated an online civic engagement tool, MindMixer, as a way to give residents additional opportunities for providing input. Because MindMixer is web-based, individuals can access and interact at any time on any given day. The online platform focused exclusively on the Master Plan and created a space for residents to submit their ideas, provide input on priorities, engage in conversation with department leaders and others, as well as stay up to date on the plan's progress.

The MindMixer website was managed and updated by the planning consultants. Questions or "Topics" posted on the platform were meant to be dynamic, and intentionally reflected public dialogue occurring in other facets of the engagement process; doing so helped ensure relevancy and inclusivity. On the open-ended topics, participants could assign points (up to 5) based on whether they agreed with the comments of other users.

Two different types of interactions were used on the website: instant polls and open-ended questions. Over the course of the engagement period, the web-based MindMixer platform experienced a total of 552 interactions made by 62 participants with a total of 118 ideas generated. The following subsections provide a summary of the results.

4.5.1 Favorite Park Activities in Frankfort

Visitors were asked to select their favorite activities at parks from a list (up to 3). The most popular activities can be seen in Figure 4.30, based on 46 participants. The top two selections by a wide margin were *walking/jogging* (78%) and *enjoying nature* (61%), both of which are passive recreational activities that are easily enjoyed by park users of all ages and backgrounds.

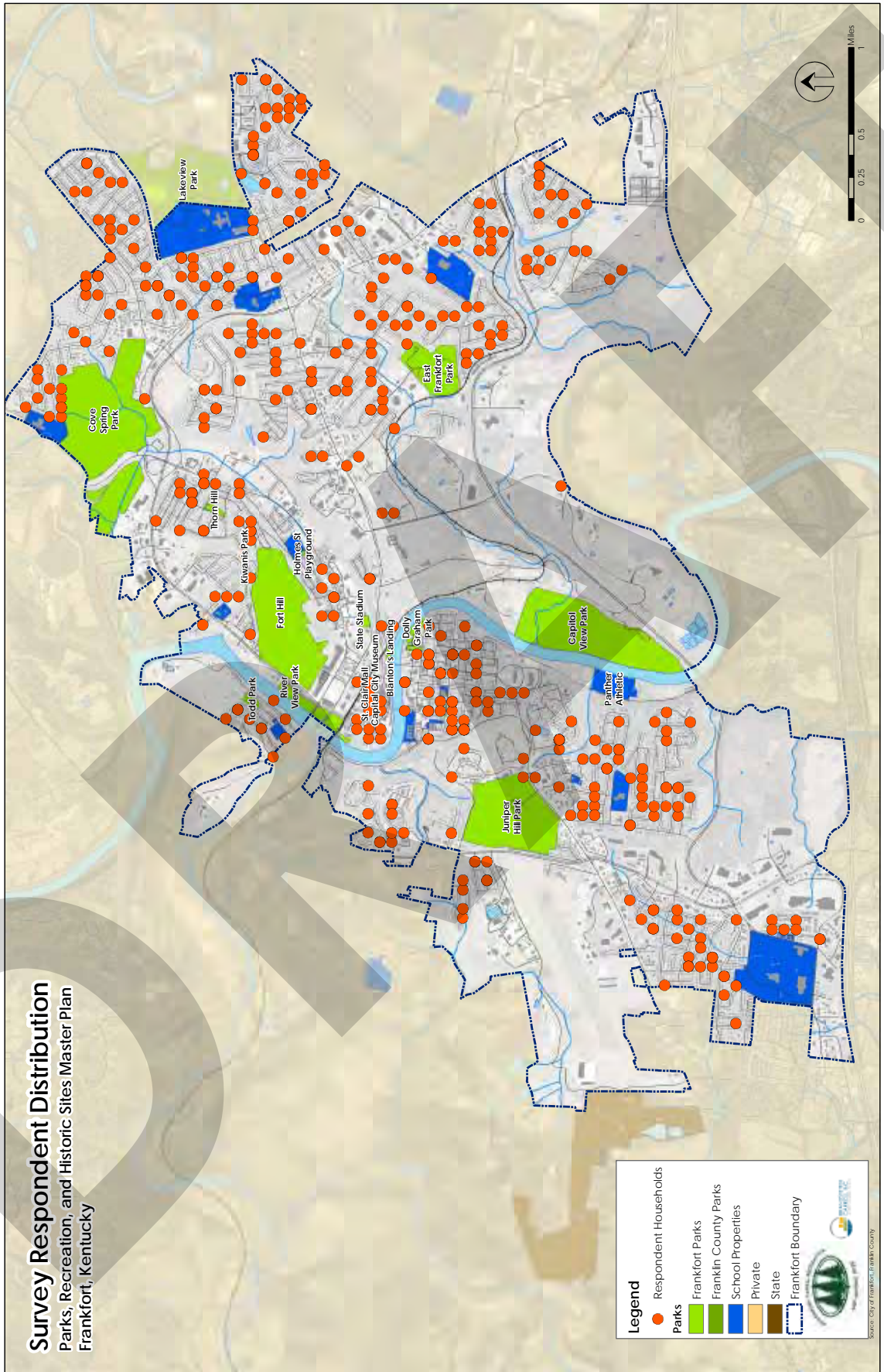
4.5.2 Improvements to Parks

A range of open-ended discussion prompts allowed visitors to engage over topics like how to expand opportunities for engaging with the parks system and what improvements should be made. More specifically, participants were encouraged to share their ideas for the future of Frankfort's Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites.

The open-ended prompts were:

- During this COVID-19 pandemic, what do you miss most about your Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites?

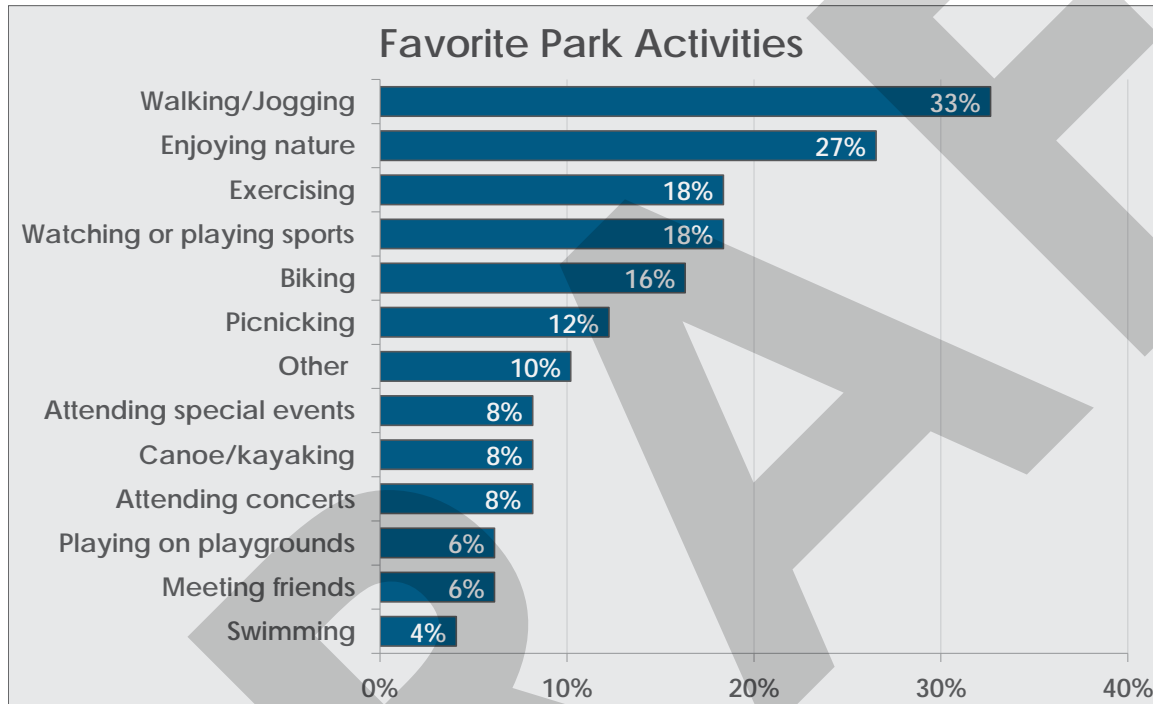
Figure 4.29: Survey Respondent Locations



- If you had a magic wand, what one change would you make to improve Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites opportunities in Frankfort?
- How can the city of Frankfort improve parks and facilities?
- How can the city of Frankfort improve its trails and natural areas?
- How can the city of Frankfort improve opportunities for programs and events?

Thirty-seven (37) different ideas were offered – many inspiring further comments from other visitors to the MindMixer platform – and 134 total interactions. Figure 4.31 displays what topics were most frequently discussed, with *trails/paths (walkability)* and *maintenance/upgrades* both being issues raised by the majority of participants. Full results of the MindMixer engagement can be found in Appendix D.

Figure 4.30: Favorite activities at Frankfort Parks



4.5.3 Draft Strategic Plan Input and Improvement Ranking

Later in the planning process, Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites shared an additional opportunity for the community to provide perspective and preferences on draft elements of the Master Plan. Participants were invited to share their thoughts on a draft version of the strategic plan (including new vision and mission statements, and a set of goals with defined objectives).

There were a total of 30 interactions on this particular question, with comments ranging from specific requests (e.g., creating a disc-golf tournament course and prioritizing improvements to Dolly Graham Park) to general feedback (e.g., “a little change to the vision,” and “goals are great, right on point”).

Participants were also given a list of recommended improvements and were asked to rank the items according to importance. Figure 4.31 and 4.32 show how the priorities for improvements reinforce the findings from other input gathering methods. Trails and walkable paths, site amenities, and improved access to the river as the most needed improvements the city can make.



Figure 4.31: MindMixer Results – Improvements Needed (Most “Discussed” Topics)

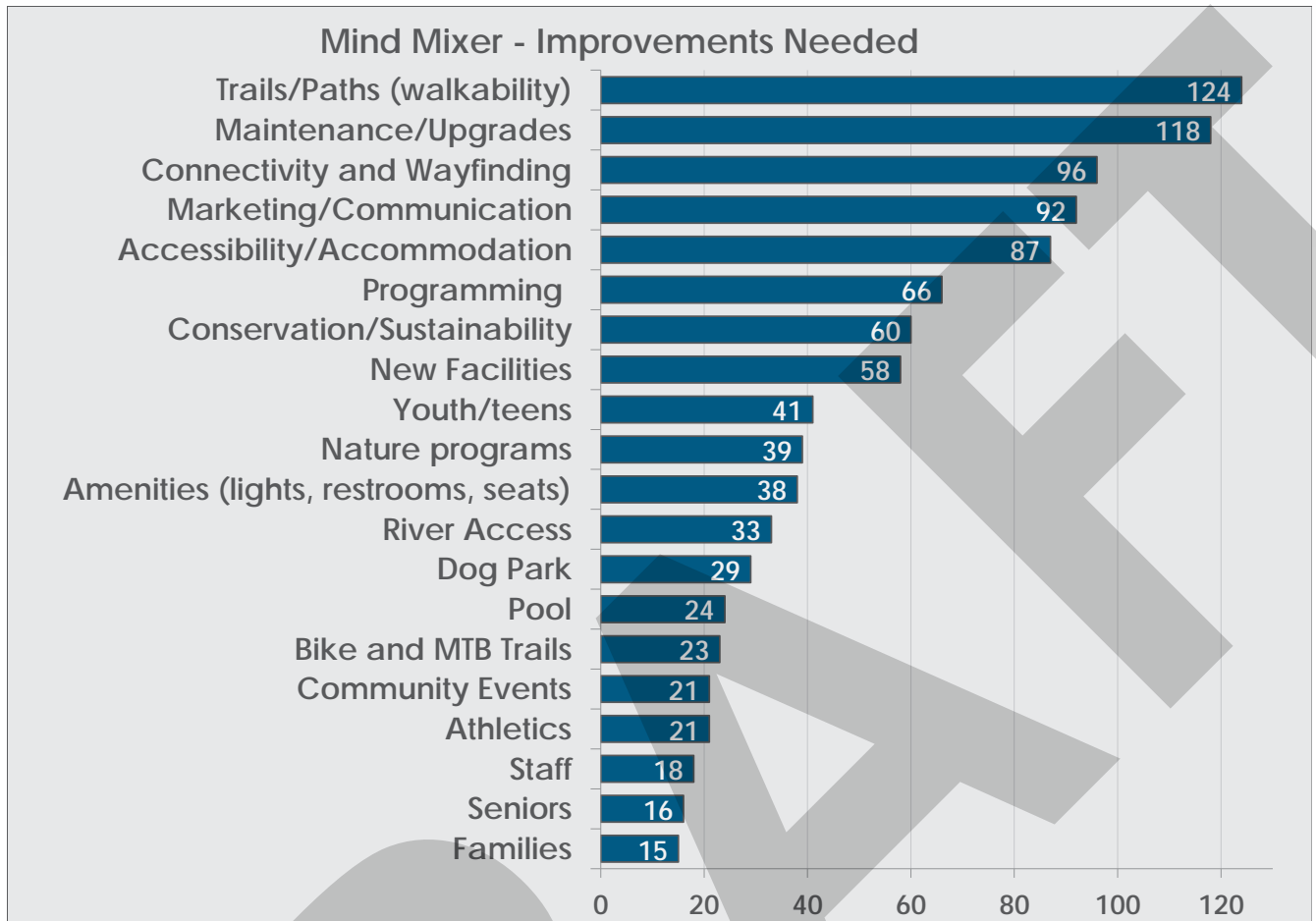
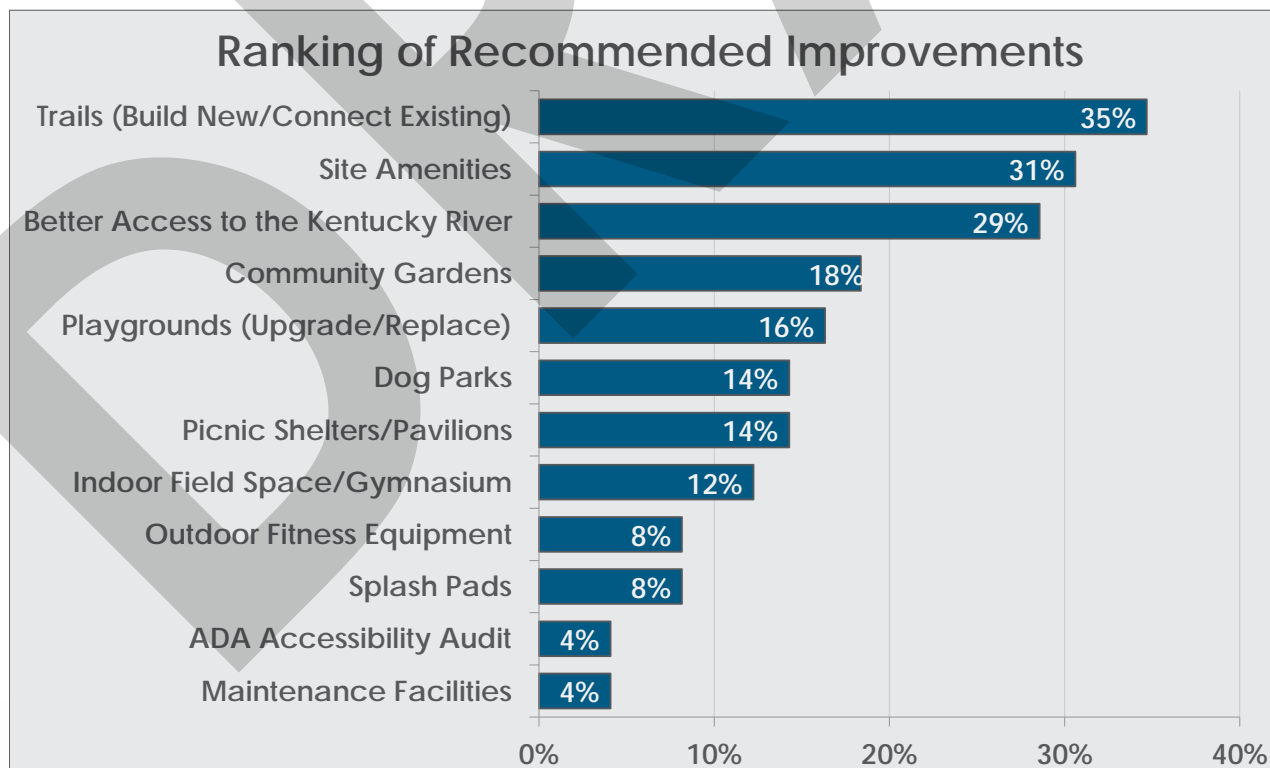


Figure 4.32: Mindmixer Ranking of Recommended Improvements



4.6 CONCLUSION

On the whole, the public engagement process provided an abundance of information about the needs and desires of Frankfort residents. While a variety of methods were used to collect data, some trends do emerge:

- Upgrades and improvements to existing parks
- Preservation of and access to natural areas
- Connectivity and trails, including
 - New trails
 - Added sidewalks and walking paths
 - Perimeter trails in existing parks
 - Paved walking and bike paths
 - Mountain bike trails
 - Trail lighting
 - Full accessibility across the system
- More opportunities to engage with the Kentucky River
- Expanded programming and events
 - Concerts & live performances
 - Fitness & wellness classes
 - Nature classes & activities
 - Active adult (age 50+) Activities
 - Outdoor movies
 - Continue and expand existing: Art the Parks, Enviro-Adventures, ReForest Frankfort, Farmers Market
- Upgraded playgrounds
 - Accessible, adaptive equipment
- Support Amenities
 - Restrooms
 - Improve wayfinding
 - Consistent, high-quality signage
 - Site lighting
 - More shade
 - More seating
- Year-round recreation & programming
 - Indoor program space
 - Multi-use and sports complex
- New indoor aquatic facility
- Strategic and collaborative marketing and promotion
- Formation of a Park Foundation



The word cloud image in, Figure 4.33 uses font size to show how frequently a word appears in the public comments (collected from stakeholder conversations, in-park intercept survey results, and Web Survey results). While value is not applied to any one word – for example, whether or not residents spoke positively about facilities – the graphic is valuable because it illustrates the elements of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites in Frankfort that are most important, for better or worse, to the community. This image is provided in conclusion to reinforce the myriad comments, suggestions, and requests heard during the multifaceted public engagement phase.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND IDENTIFICATION



5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Master Plan identifies and presents an assessment of needs for parks and recreation in Frankfort. It consists of the following elements:

1. Needs analysis, plus level of service standards and guidelines for parkland and recreation areas
2. Needs analysis, plus level of service standards for facilities
3. Geographic analysis of the distribution of parks and recreation facilities
4. Examination of recent – and relevant – trends in parks and recreation

An analysis of the level of service for parks and recreation in Frankfort requires various perspectives in order to tell a complete story. By one method of measurement, a particular service level might be described as adequate, but by a different method it is deficient. For example, acreage standards (i.e., measurement based on the total number of acres) are useful for determining the level at which the city is providing parkland. However, total acreage alone does not account for where park acres are located, and, therefore, who actually has access. Accordingly, it is critical to consider the location of the city's parkland in determining the level of service.

The following information, together with the public input collected (Chapter 4), make up the foundation for recommendations in this plan (Chapter 7). Additionally, analysis throughout this chapter makes significant use of the demographic and benchmarking data from Chapter 2.

5.2 NEEDS, STANDARDS, AND GUIDELINES FOR PARKLAND AND RECREATION AREAS IN FRANKFORT

The Service Level Standards provided here are meant to describe achievable targets (e.g., specific acreage totals and service goals) that can realistically be met over the implementation timeline of this plan. Guidelines are offered to cover more general goals of improvement, acquisition, and maintenance. These standards and guidelines are meant for both developed parkland and total open space in the system. Tailored specifically for Frankfort, they are intended to be obtainable but also ambitious enough to inspire Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites in its continuing work of improving the quality of life for residents.

Parkland is generally either developed or undeveloped. Developed acres include features such as athletic fields and courts, picnic shelters, playgrounds, and any mowed areas, while undeveloped acres are those

in their natural state – including woodlands, prairies, and wetlands – without developed features. When acquired and maintained at a beneficial ratio (specific to the locality) both types of land usage can have a tremendous positive impact on the human population and the environment.

5.2.1 Level of Service Standards for Developed Acres

Chapter 3 describes the different classifications of parks and recreational areas (in general, these are consistent with the National Recreation and Park Association criteria but do include some modifications to match local circumstances) and provides an overview of facilities in Frankfort. That inventory – combined with an examination of existing conditions and a thorough analysis of public input – assists with accurately defining the Level of Service Standards (acres per thousand population) for each park classification located in Frankfort.

The chart that follows, Service Level Standards by Park Classification (Table 5.1), offers a breakdown of the needs (or target acres) for each type of park in Frankfort. This table includes only properties offered by Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites. Also, these standards refer to developed acres only. Because these acres represent the improved land with amenities, they are the best basis for drawing a comparison between available features.

Table 5.1: Service Level Standards for Developed Acreage by Park Classification

Park Classification	Existing Developed Acres	Existing Developed Acres per 1000 Population	Target Acres per 1000 Population	2020 Developed Acres Target	2020 Surplus (+) Deficit (-)	2025 Developed Acres Target	2025 Surplus (+) Deficit (-)
Neighborhood	9.6	0.3	0.6	17.5	-7.9	17.8	-8.2
Community/Regional	207.1	7.1	7.5	218.4	-11.3	222.5	-15.4
Nature Parks/Open Space	41.1	1.4	1.5	43.7	-2.6	43.7	-2.6
Special Use Parks	12.6	0.4	0.4	11.6	1.0	11.9	0.8
Total	270.5	9.3	10.0	291.2	-20.8	295.9	-25.4

1. See Chapter 2 for population estimates

2. Does not include parks by others or school grounds

Table 5.1 identifies the current developed park acreage for Frankfort (see Chapter 2). While the population count is projected to stay at about the same level, there is an ongoing trend of diversification (see Chapter 2) which will likely continue as other racial and ethnic groups grow both in Frankfort and surrounding communities. Existing acreage per 1,000 population (Table 5.1) shows the greatest deficits as of 2020 are for Neighborhood (-7.9) and Community/Regional Parks (-11.3). Looking ahead to 2025 and calculating with the same target per population quantities, these deficits remain the highest; Community/Regional Parks acreage remains the most deficient. Fortunately, these deficits can largely be met through the development of existing parkland, although limited acquisition in specific areas of the city may be desired. The Special Use Parks, small, unique spaces managed by the department (e.g., St. Clair Mall) are not expected to become more or less developed. Some existing sites (e.g., Holmes Street property) have the potential to be developed in a way that could help address need for Neighborhood Park space.

Taken together, this data indicates that Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites would most benefit from focusing on development of existing parkland and upgrades to existing spaces, along with program development.

5.2.2 Guidelines for Open Space

Park systems provide invaluable benefits to public health,¹ economies,² local environment and ecology,³ community social fabric, and overall quality of life.⁴ Beyond the developed park acreage, any given park system includes additional undeveloped open space and natural areas. These acres, while easily overlooked,

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Parks, Trails, and Health Resources. cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/parks_resources.htm

² WeConservePA. (2012). The Economic Benefits of Land Conservation: A Guide. Pennsylvania Land Trust Association.

³ John L. Crompton (2008). Empirical Evidence of the Contributions of Park and Conservation Lands to Environmental Sustainability: The Key to repositioning the Parks Field. World Leisure Journal, 50(3), 154-172

⁴ John L. Crompton (2008). Empirical Evidence of the Contributions of Leisure Services to Alleviating Social Problems: A Key to Repositioning the Leisure Services Field. World Leisure Journal, 50(4), 243-258.

have tremendous potential to benefit the community. Undeveloped open space, or even acres that are lightly developed as parks, can positively impact an entire community through improvements to air and water quality, increased biodiversity, wildlife habitat protection, noise absorption, reduction of erosion, and protection of water resources.⁵



Setting acreage targets – aiming for a certain number of parkland acres overall – is one way of achieving a desired level of open space. Target acreage can be a useful way for evaluating the progress of open space acquisition, but effective conservation requires more intentional acquisitions based on a specific resource and where it is found. In other words, looking at open space acquisitions through a conservation lens, the amount of land preserved depends on aspects of that particular resource not just on the number of acres. Land preservation in general has many benefits, such as increased quality of life for residents and elevated property values. In order for these benefits to be shared equitably – benefits typically are higher the closer the proximity – open space should be looked at from a holistic perspective taking into additional consideration natural resources and distribution. What follows is an examination of the current state of open space in Frankfort.

Methods of Measurement

There are two common metrics for measuring the level of service of open space: acres per population and percentage of total area. Both are provided below to serve as guidelines for evaluating and measuring open space available in Frankfort. Table 5.2 identifies total acres of parks and open space, both developed and undeveloped, in Frankfort. The table shows inventory targets based on 26 acres per 1,000 population and 8% of the total acreage in the city. The 26 acres per 1,000 is only a slight increase to the current value for Frankfort (25.5), as is the 8% of total area number (up 0.3% from the current 7.7%).

These values were chosen because Frankfort is already well above the per 1,000 population median and more than twice the median for the overall percentage of the jurisdiction (see benchmarking in Chapter 2). However, public input indicates residents of Frankfort desire land preservation (especially of natural areas), and the service area mapping provided later in this chapter (Sections 5.4 and 5.5) shows some areas where service could be improved. Land owned by Franklin County and the two local school districts (i.e., Franklin County Schools and Frankfort Independent Schools) is shown in the table for reference only. This land is not included in the recommendations because the city has no control over it, and parks by others were not included in the benchmark comparisons.

Acres per Population

Using the target of 26 acres per 1,000 population, Frankfort has (as of 2020) an open space deficit of 15.6 acres. Keeping proportional target acreage would mean that by 2025 the city would have about twice the acreage deficit (about 30 acres).

Percentage of Total City Area

The percentage of total area is not tied to population which means it can potentially represent a longer-term, more flexible objective. Frankfort parks currently represent 7.7% of the land in the city, with the school districts together comprising 2.8%. As noted above, Table 5.2 includes targets for the city based on an 8% of total area goal. This target would require the acquisition of roughly 29 additional acres.

⁵ F.D.B. (2007). The economic benefits of land conservation. San Francisco, CA: The Trust for Public Land.

Table 5.2: Open Space Guidelines

Open Space Category	Existing Acres	Existing Acres Per 1000	26 Acres per 1000 Population				Existing % Preserved	8% of Area	
			2020 Target Acres	2020 Surplus/Deficit	2025 Target Acres	2025 Surplus/Deficit		Target Acres	Surplus/Deficit
Frankfort Parks	741.5	25.5	757.1	-15.6	771.4	-29.9	7.7%	770.1	-28.6
Parks by Others									
Franklin County Parks ²	105.8	3.6	N/A	N/A	105.8	0.0	1.1%	N/A	N/A
School Properties ³	161.9	5.6	N/A	N/A	161.9	0.0	1.7%	N/A	N/A
Frankfort Total	1,009.1	34.7	757.1	-15.6	1,039.1	-29.9	10.5%	770.1	-28.6

1. See Chapter 2 for population estimates

2. Located just outside of the city boundary; not including city maintained portion

3. Assumes half of school acreage as open space

5.3 FACILITIES NEEDS ANALYSIS AND LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

Like the recommendations for parkland described previously level of service standards for individual park facilities are useful for determining the quantity of recreation facilities needed in the community, both at present and in the future. These standards emerge through examination of the benchmarking (Chapter 2) and the public input findings (Chapter 4); common industry standards and guidelines are also taken into consideration. Table 5.3 details the facilities by type and compares the available supply with the amount needed to meet the targets identified in the table.

5.3.1 Facility Level of Service Rationale

The following text provides the basis for the per population targets for each of the facilities in Table 5.3. Each category breaks down individual elements by describing how the per population target compares to the existing per population supply and makes justifications for any recommended change. As with previous elements in this chapter, the following analysis combines benchmarking data (Chapter 2) with public input (Chapter 4).

Outdoor Recreation Areas

- Playgrounds – Set at benchmark, above current, due to demand and current distribution
- Picnic Pavilions/Shelters – Set at increase due to demand and current distribution
- Trails (miles) – Set at increase due to demand, trends, and current distribution
- Skate Parks – Set at benchmark, none currently
- Amphitheatres – Set at increase due to demand
- Dog Parks – Set at increase due to demand, trends, and current distribution
- Community Gardens – Set at increase due to demand, trends, and current distribution
- Swimming Pools – Set at current, just below benchmark
- Splash Pads – Set at increase due to demand and trends

Outdoor Fields & Courts

- Youth Baseball Fields – Set at current, well above benchmark
- Youth Softball Fields – Set at current, well above benchmark
- Multipurpose Fields – Set at current, well above benchmark
- Basketball Courts – Set at benchmark, slight increase
- Tennis Courts – Set at decrease; school facilities meeting needs
- Pickleball Courts – Set at increase due to trends and growing demand

Indoor Areas

- Recreation Centers – Set at benchmark, none currently
- Community Centers – Set at benchmark, none currently

- Gymsnasiums – Set above benchmark due to demand
- Senior Centers – Set at benchmark, none currently
- Nature Centers – Set at benchmark, none currently

5.3.2 Facility Level of Service Standards

The values in Table 5.3 illustrate potential need for various facilities. The largest current facility deficits (as of 2020) are for picnic shelters/pavilions (-4.6), trail miles (-4.6), pickleball courts (-2.8), and playgrounds (-2.6); other facilities with deficits are skate parks, amphitheaters, dog parks, splash pads, and indoor spaces like gymnasiums, recreation centers, senior centers, community centers, and nature centers. Athletic fields and facilities of various types have either negligible deficits or even surplus quantities.

Table 5.3: Facility Level of Service Standards

Facility	Per Population Target	Existing per Population	Existing Total Supply	2020 Target	2020 Surplus / Deficit	2025 Target	2025 Surplus / Deficit
Outdoor Recreation Areas							
Playgrounds	3,400	4,854	6	8.6	-2.6	8.7	-2.7
Picnic Pavilions/Shelters	1,750	2,427	12	16.6	-4.6	17.0	-5.0
Trails (miles)	1,200	1,478	19.7	24.3	-4.6	24.7	-5.0
Skate Parks	25,000	N/A	0	1.2	-1.2	1.2	-1.2
Amphitheaters	10,000	29,121	1	2.9	-1.9	3.0	-2.0
Dog Parks	10,000	29,121	1	2.9	-1.9	3.0	-2.0
Community Gardens	20,000	29,121	1	1.5	-0.5	1.5	-0.5
Swimming Pools	30,000	29,121	1	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
Splash Pads	10,000	29,121	1	2.9	-1.9	3.0	-2.0
Outdoor Fields & Courts							
Youth Baseball Fields	2,200	2,240	13	13.2	-0.2	13.5	-0.5
Youth Softball Fields	3,600	3,640	8	8.1	-0.1	8.2	-0.2
Multipurpose Fields	6,000	5,824	5	4.9	0.1	4.9	0.1
Basketball Courts	7,800	9,707	3	3.7	-0.7	3.8	-0.8
Tennis Courts	15,000	7,280	4	1.9	2.1	2.0	2.0
Pickleball Courts	5,000	9,707	3	5.8	-2.8	5.9	-2.9
Indoor Areas							
Recreation Centers	22,000	N/A	0	1.3	-1.3	1.3	-1.3
Community Centers	26,000	N/A	0	1.1	-1.1	1.1	-1.1
Gymnasiums	15,000	N/A	0	1.9	-1.9	2.0	-2.0
Senior Centers	40,000	N/A	0	0.7	-0.7	0.7	-0.7
Nature Centers	33,000	N/A	0	0.9	-0.9	0.9	-0.9

1. See Chapter 2 for population estimates and benchmarking

While values in Table 5.3 highlight what additional facilities are needed to adequately meet the demand, they do not indicate where in Frankfort these new facilities should be located. The next sections (5.4 and 5.5) help illuminate gaps in service and, therefore, potential locations for new facilities.

5.4 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

The spatial distribution of parks throughout Frankfort is important to consider; residents are better able and more willing to utilize facilities that are close to their homes. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 show Frankfort’s existing parks with service areas described for different park classifications. The methodology for this analysis (and the facility analysis in Section 5.5) can be found in Appendix A. Of note, these service areas are not necessarily representative of all users of the city’s parks; after all, some users may be more willing to travel greater distances than those defined in the figures below. However, the most frequent users generally do live within the areas indicated and usage rates do tend to decline sharply in relation to travel times.

A 10-minute walking distance represents about a half mile range and is a commonly used measurement for the walkability of an area; most residents can easily travel this distance without using a car. The Trust for Public Land, NRPA, and the Urban Land Institute have all joined forces to develop the “10-minute Walk Campaign” which strives for healthy, walkable communities and easy access to greenspace for everyone in the country. As part of their multi-pronged campaign, cities all over the U.S. are committed to ensuring that by 2050 all residents will have access to a park within a 10-minute walk of their home. Mayors throughout the country have already taken the pledge, and more continue to do so. Several mayors in Kentucky have committed to the cause, including in Paducah, Hopkinsville, and Winchester.⁶

Across the whole city, about a quarter (26%) of residents are within a 10-minute walk to a park, while another 12% are within a 10-minute walk to a school with a playground. The existing degree of walkable access is understandable, considering the Frankfort park system contains primarily larger parks. But, given the resounding community desire for more trails and connectivity, there is good reason to bridge these distances with pedestrian and bike paths. While providing walkable access to all residents everywhere in the city is challenging, Frankfort has many opportunities to link between existing sites and facilities, thereby increasing the overall percentage of residents within a 10-minute walk to a park and its amenities.

Figure 5.1 shows the areas in Frankfort where residents are within a 10-minute walk to a Neighborhood Park, School Park, or Nature Park/Open Space. This map illustrates the locations of walkable access distributed across the city. Walking access to Frankfort’s parks is concentrated largely in the areas of development along the Kentucky River, and the eastern half of the city, with sizeable gaps between walkable nodes in the far east (e.g., around East Frankfort Park) and south-central Frankfort near the river (e.g., Capitol View) as well as the westernmost part of the city. Since much of the land around the Vaughn Branch tributary is topographically challenging, there is little existing development and a sparse population. A sizeable chunk of the city’s western edge is taken up by the Capital City Airport, but there is residential and commercial development bounded by Louisville Road and Interstate-64 that is lacking walkable access to parks.

Figure 5.2 shows how much more accessible by motor vehicle parks are across Frankfort. Drivetime areas (5-minutes) to Community Parks (bright green) plus Nature Parks/Open Space (light beige) are indicated. At least one gap is created by the airport property, while the southeastern gap south of Leestown Pike is less developed and more rural. Overall, nearly all of the population lives within these 5-minute drive areas to a larger park.

Together these maps help to identify service gaps where neighborhoods and residents have low access to parks. Limited to offerings by Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites about 26% of residents can reach a park on foot, but most are within a 5-minute drive. Most of the community is within a 10-minute drive from any individual park (not shown).

5.5 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF FACILITIES

This portion of the needs analysis focuses on the distribution of facilities provided by Frankfort for use by residents. Service areas for these key facilities within Frankfort are illustrated in Figures 5.3 through 5.12. As with the geographic distribution of parks, both drive and walk times are used for defining service areas (dark green indicates areas within 10-minute walking distance, bright green shows 5-minute driving distance.)

Larger and unique facilities are intended to serve greater populations; typically, residents are willing to travel longer distances to access these amenities. In contrast, smaller and more common facilities usually serve more localized (smaller) populations and are more often within walking distance. The following text outlines the overall need for facilities in Frankfort; though portions of the city are highlighted that are located outside of facility service areas, a new facility is not necessarily recommended for these areas.

5.5.1 Playgrounds

Figure 5.3 shows the service areas (10-minute walk to city and school parks, plus 5-minute drive to city parks only) for playgrounds in Frankfort. The city offers six playgrounds at six different parks; residents also have access to 10 additional playgrounds provided by others within the city, including school playgrounds that have limited availability. Walkable access is available in many of the most populated areas with the 5-minute drive areas extending to cover most residential areas. School park playground access often overlaps with city playground access.

⁶ <https://10minutewalk.org/>

Figure 5.1: Neighborhood Park Service Areas

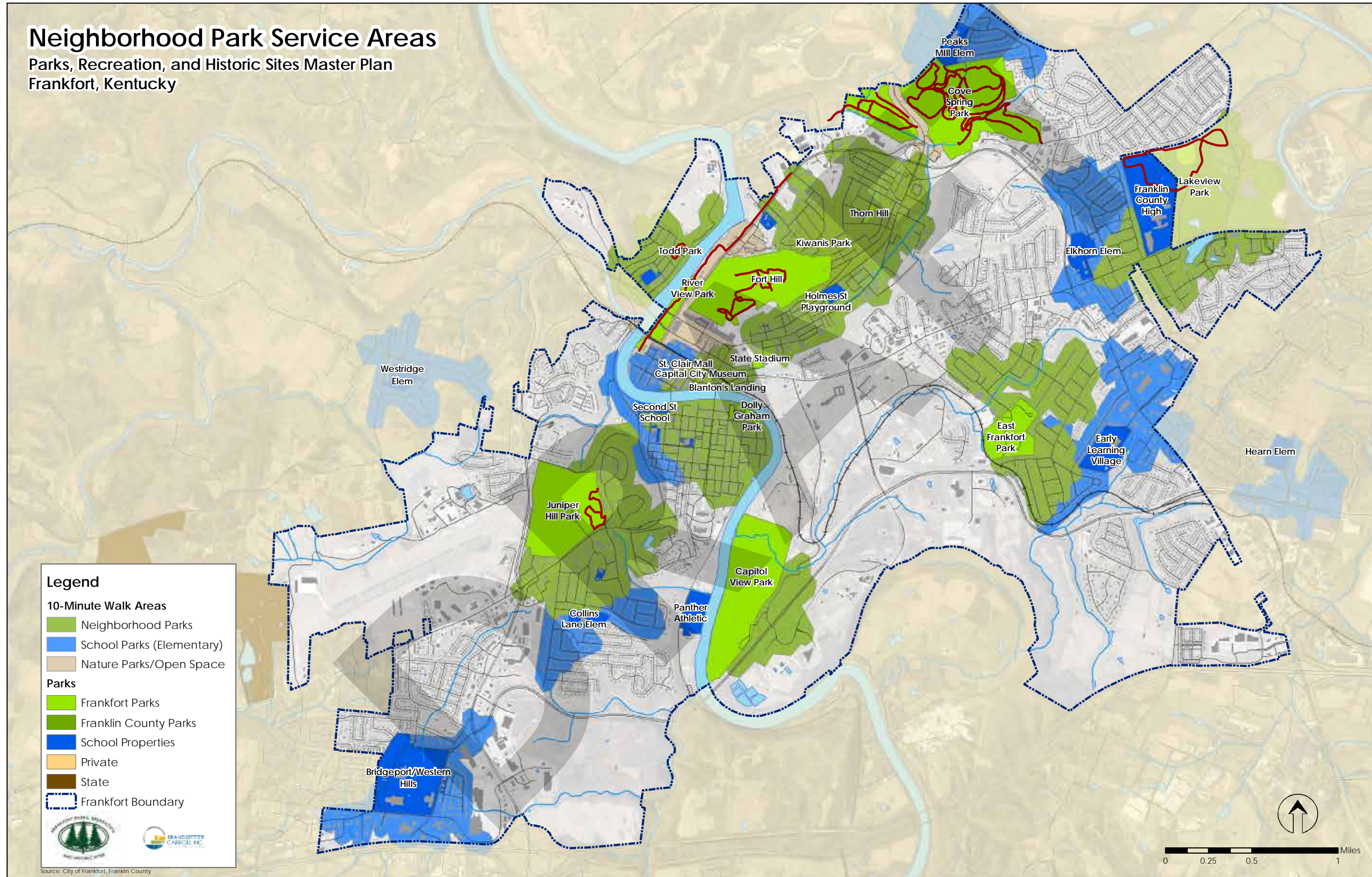
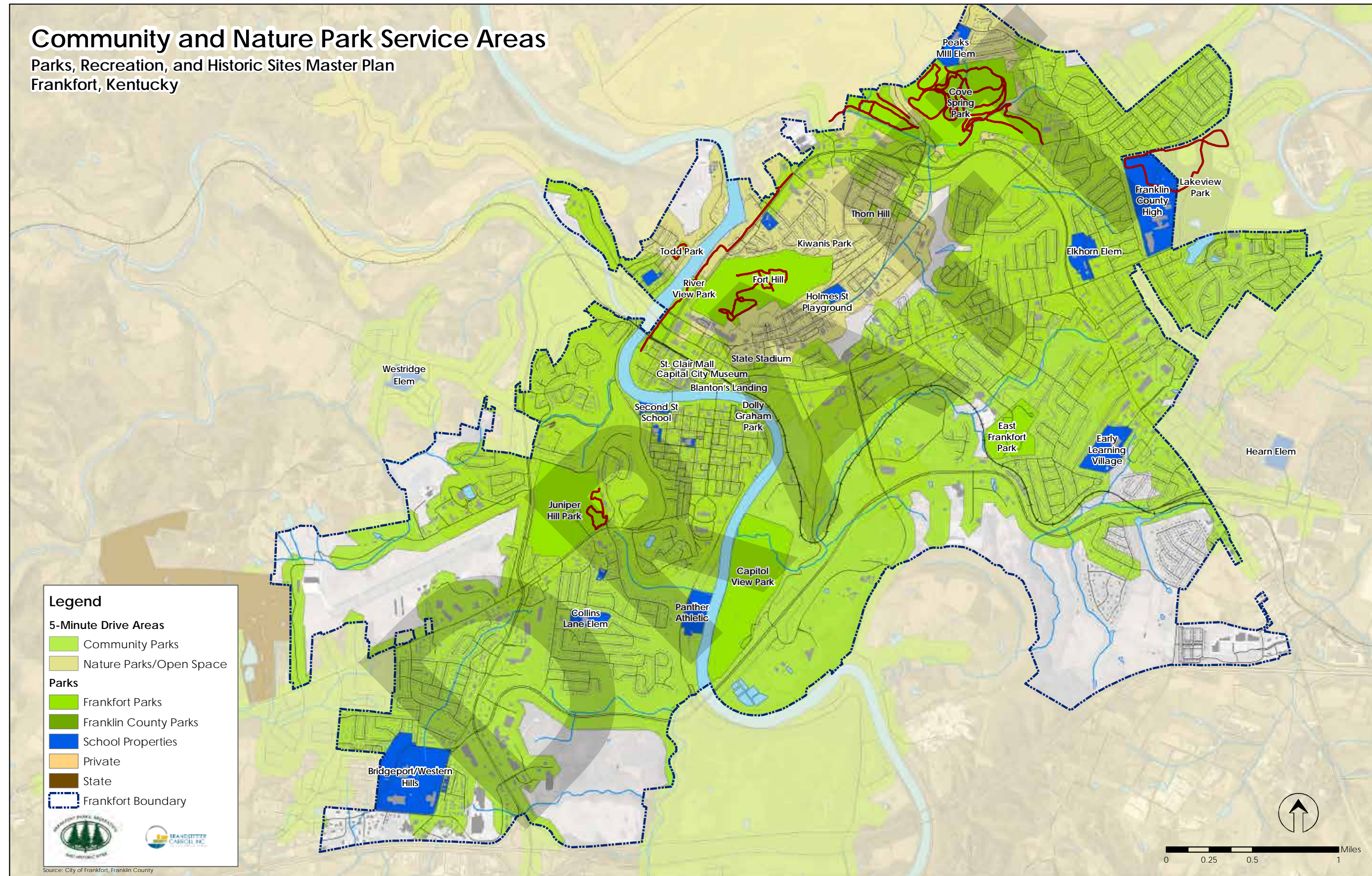


Figure 5.2: Community and Regional Park Service Areas



5.5.2 Basketball Courts (Outdoor)

Figure 5.4 displays service areas for outdoor basketball courts calculated by the same access measures as playgrounds (10-minute walk and 5-minute drive). Frankfort offers three basketball courts in three different parks; there are five courts offered by other entities in or near Frankfort's city limits (one half court, four full courts). The map shows existing areas of access to basketball courts are similar to the playground access in Figure 5.3, except for significantly less area within a 10-minute walk. Unlike playground access, school basketball courts provide decent walkable access where it is largely missing in the far east of the city.

5.5.3 Diamond Fields

Frankfort's diamond ballfield service areas are illustrated in Figure 5.5 with distances defined by 10-minute walk, 5-minute drive, and 10-minute drive access (high school fields not included). Much of the city is within a 5-minute drive of a diamond field, but 10-minute walking access is limited to small areas around Capital View Park, East Frankfort Park, and Lakeview Park. The entire city is within a 10-minute drive to these fields.

5.5.4 Multipurpose Fields

Figure 5.6 displays the service areas for multipurpose rectangular fields in Frankfort. There are five rectangular fields in the city parks system, all of which are located at Capitol View Park; Lakeview Park (7) and the Panther Athletic Complex (1) offer Frankfort residents a total of eight additional multipurpose rectangular fields. High school fields are not included due to restricted access. Capitol View Park also has periodic use limitations for turf management.

Considering 10-minute drive access alone, service areas are comparable to those for diamond fields, with almost the entire community being a 10-minute car ride away. However, 5-minute drive and walkable access is even more restricted, showing notable gaps in walkability near Leslie Morris Park and north of Juniper Hill Park in the city's north-central region.

5.5.5 Aquatic Facilities

Figure 5.7 shows the service area for the city's pool, located at Juniper Hill Park. Walking and driving access is also mapped for Franklin County's splash pad facility at Lakeview, as it is just on the other side of the city's limits. Walkable access is understandably concentrated around Lakeview Park and Juniper Hill Park, each covering some of the more densely populated parts of Frankfort. The area close to the city center, near Dolly Graham Park, is within driving distance of both the city pool and the county splash pad (5-minutes) but are not within walkable access to either. This area will be within walking distance to the splash pad at Dolly Graham Park, once constructed. Between the two facilities, the entire city is within a 10-minute drive of one or the other aquatic facility.

5.5.6 Tennis Courts

Figure 5.8 shows that service areas for tennis courts are much less comprehensive than the previously discussed facilities. Aside from a pocket of walkability around Juniper Hill Park, what 10-minute walk access there is in the community is limited to school properties, including Franklin County High, Western Hills High, and the Panther Athletic Complex. While limited portions of the city are within a walkable range of tennis courts, most residents are within a 5-minute drive to these facilities. Some limited areas are beyond a 5-minute drive – the southeast corner of the city and a sizeable area in the north (between Leslie Morris Park and Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve).

5.5.7 Disc Golf

Areas within a 10-minute walk or 5- and 10-minute drive from the city's 18-hole disc golf course at East Frankfort Park and the county's course at Lakeview Park are illustrated in Figure 5.9. While the eastern third of Frankfort is largely within at least a 5-minute drive, almost all of the area west of the Kentucky River is beyond even a 10-minute drive. In other words, the city's most densely populated central core (including downtown, the Holmes Street Corridor, South Frankfort, and southwestern third of the city) are beyond easy access to a disc golf course.

5.5.8 Picnic Shelters

Picnic shelter access is fairly comprehensive. Figure 5.10 depicts the service areas (10-minute walk and 5-minute drive) for 13 picnic shelters provided by the city, and two shelters provided by others at the Panther Athletic Complex and Lakeview Park. Seven of the city's shelters are large sized, while five are medium sized. The city also offers three small shelters or gazebos that are not included in the mapping.

5.5.9 Trails

Figure 5.11 shows a range of service areas across the city for trails: 10-minute walk to a trail at least ¼-mile in length, 5-minute drive to at least a ½-mile trail, and 10-minute drive to a 1-mile trail or longer. Walkable access to trails is most limited around East Frankfort Park, downtown, and South Frankfort. In all, Frankfort provides roughly 20 miles of trails, many of which are at Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill and Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve. There is significant opportunity to develop linkages between the different trail nodes, which would increase walkable access to trails.

5.5.10 Dog Park

As evident in Figure 5.12, quick access to the city's one dog park and the county's dog park at Lakeview Park is restricted to the eastern half of the community (5-minute drive indicated in light green, 10-minute drive in light yellow). The neighborhoods around East Frankfort Park and LakeView Park are within a 15-minute drive, but nearly all of the area of the city west of the Kentucky River is beyond even a 10-minute drive to a dog park facility.

5.6 COMPOSITE GEOGRAPHIC PARK SERVICE AREAS

While the preceding text outlined the level of access to parks and facilities by geographic distribution and type, a composite analysis provides a more robust depiction of the level of service residents experience across the city. Service areas for park classifications (4) and facilities (18 – some not mapped in Section 5.5.) were assigned scores based on distance from the amenity (e.g., 5-minute drive vs. 10-minute walk), then GIS software (ArcGIS) was used to produce an overlay map with a combined score for all areas of Frankfort. Figure 5.13 shows the composite service areas for the city based on this multi-layered level of access analysis. A more detailed description of the methodology can be found in Appendix A.

In the figure, blue indicates a higher level of service for parks and facilities per location (the deeper the shade, the better) while red areas have the lowest level of service (similarly, the deeper the red, the lower the service level). For example, a resident living within one of the dark blue areas would more likely be within a short walk to park and/or many of the facilities previously described (e.g., ballfields and picnic shelters).

As shown in Figure 5.13, compact areas with the highest composite level of service are anchored to Juniper Hill Park, East Frankfort Park, and Franklin County's Lakeview Park. Looking at population distribution, just 8% of the community enjoy a high level of service, while more than half (55%) of residents live in areas currently limited to medium level service. Just over 10% of the community lives where there is only medium-low service (though there is zero percent of the population living within the lowest service level). Looking at how the medium service level is dispersed in the city, there is a sizeable area of opportunity between downtown, Capitol View Park, and East Frankfort Park. The topography of this area, bisected by railroad lines, makes it challenging but also uniquely ideal for improvements like trail connectivity.

Table 5.4 explores the service levels and population demographics in greater detail. Just over 50% of the city's population lives at a medium level of service, with more than two-thirds (80%) at this level or above. The areas with medium and medium-high level of service also have the lowest median household income (\$51,834 and \$50,167, respectively), making these residents more likely to benefit the most from improvements to public amenities. With the best access concentrated in small areas scattered across the city, the distances of medium and low service between hold significant potential.

Figure 5.3: Playground Service Areas

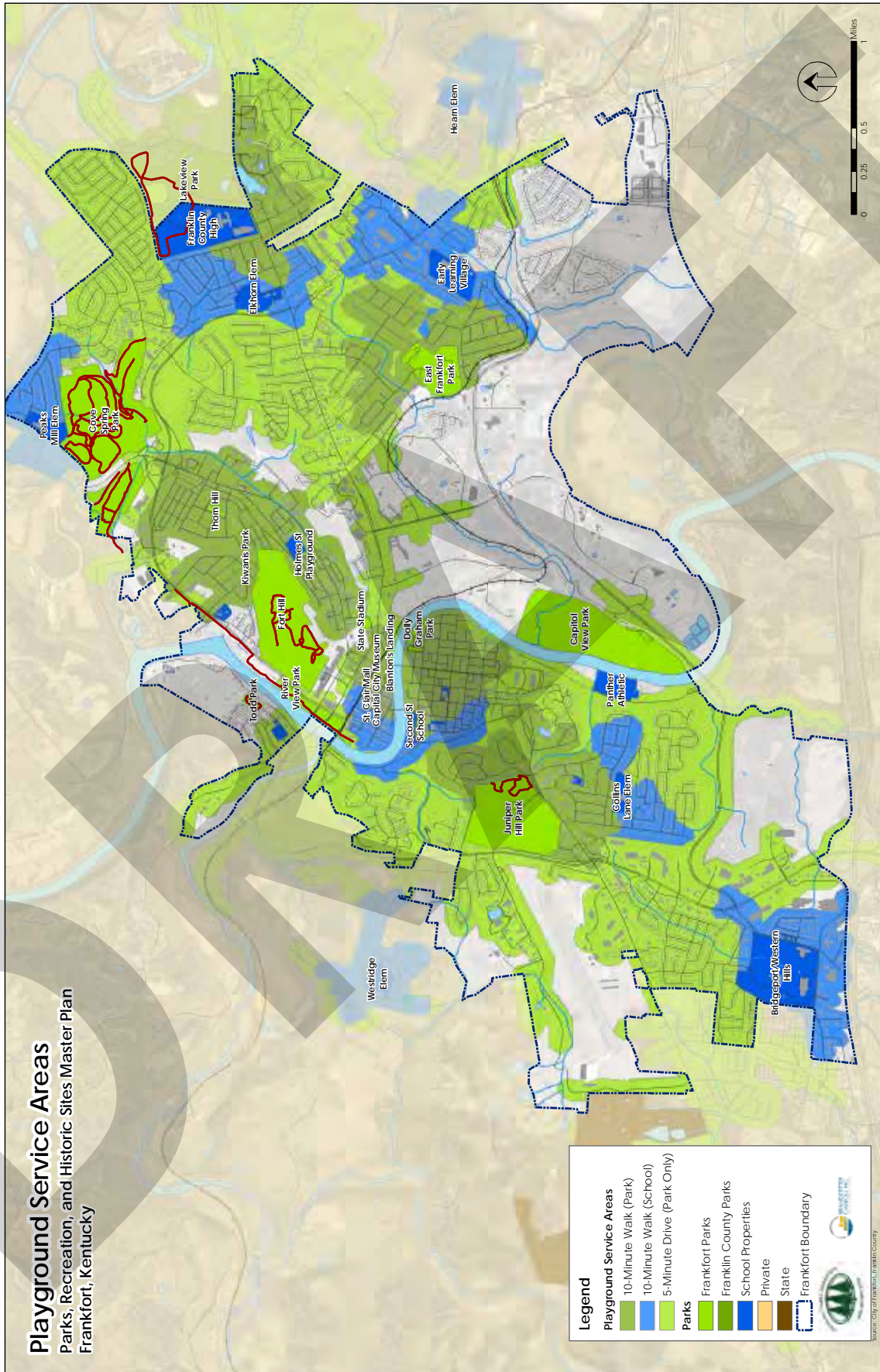


Figure 5.4: Outdoor Basketball Court Service Areas

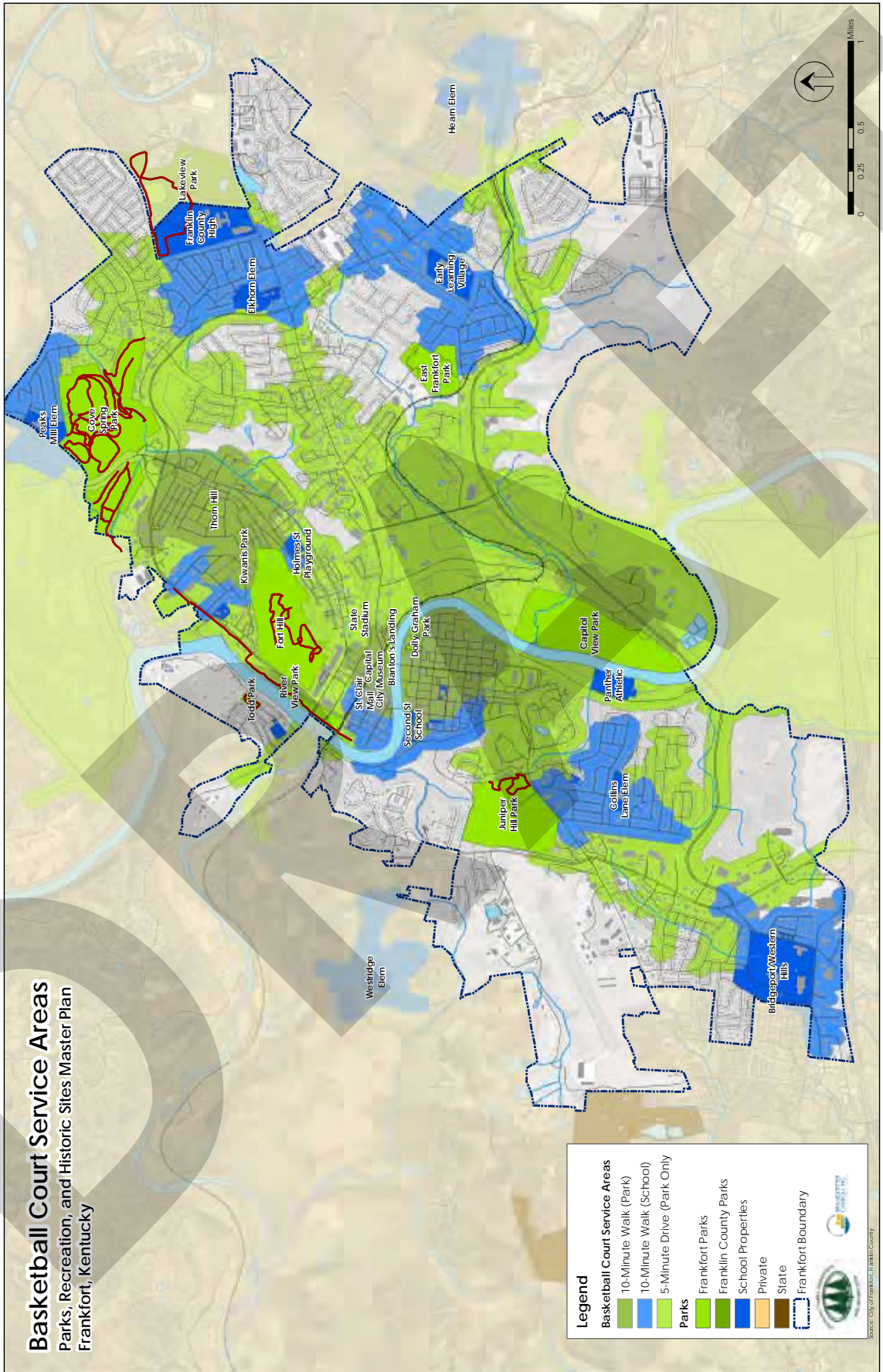


Figure 5.5: Diamond Field Service Areas

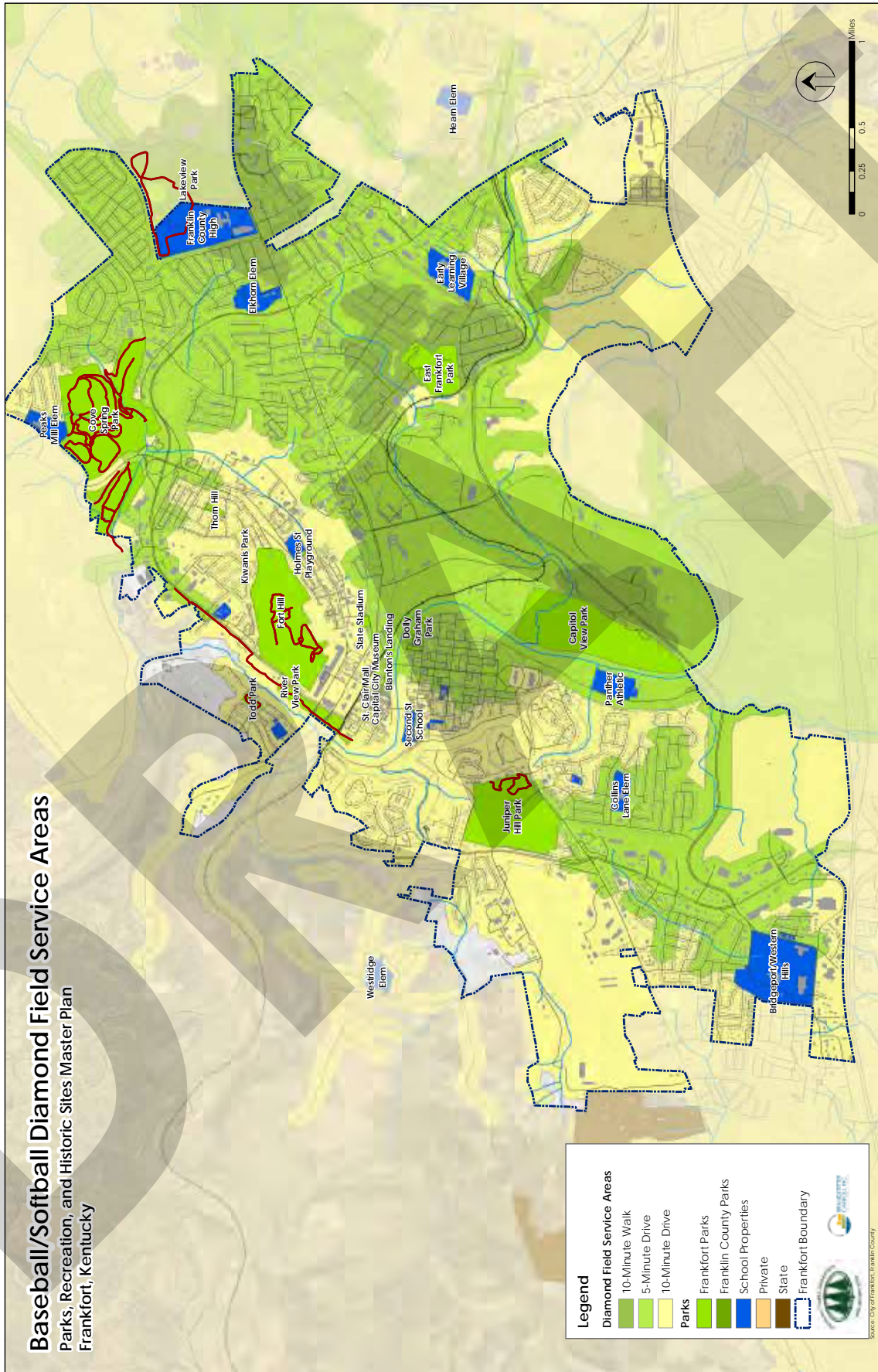


Figure 5.6: Multipurpose Field Service Areas

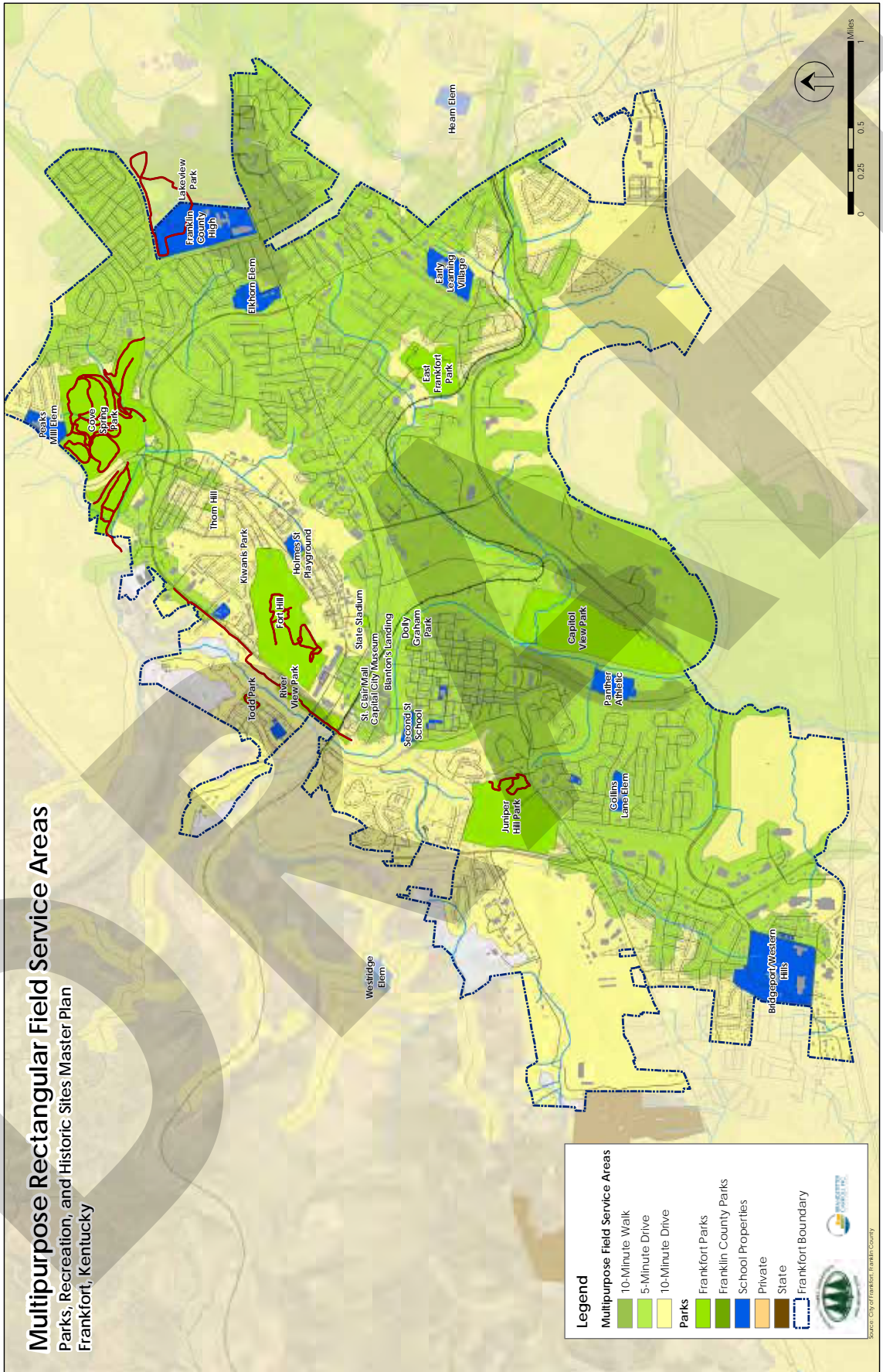


Figure 5.8: Tennis Service Area

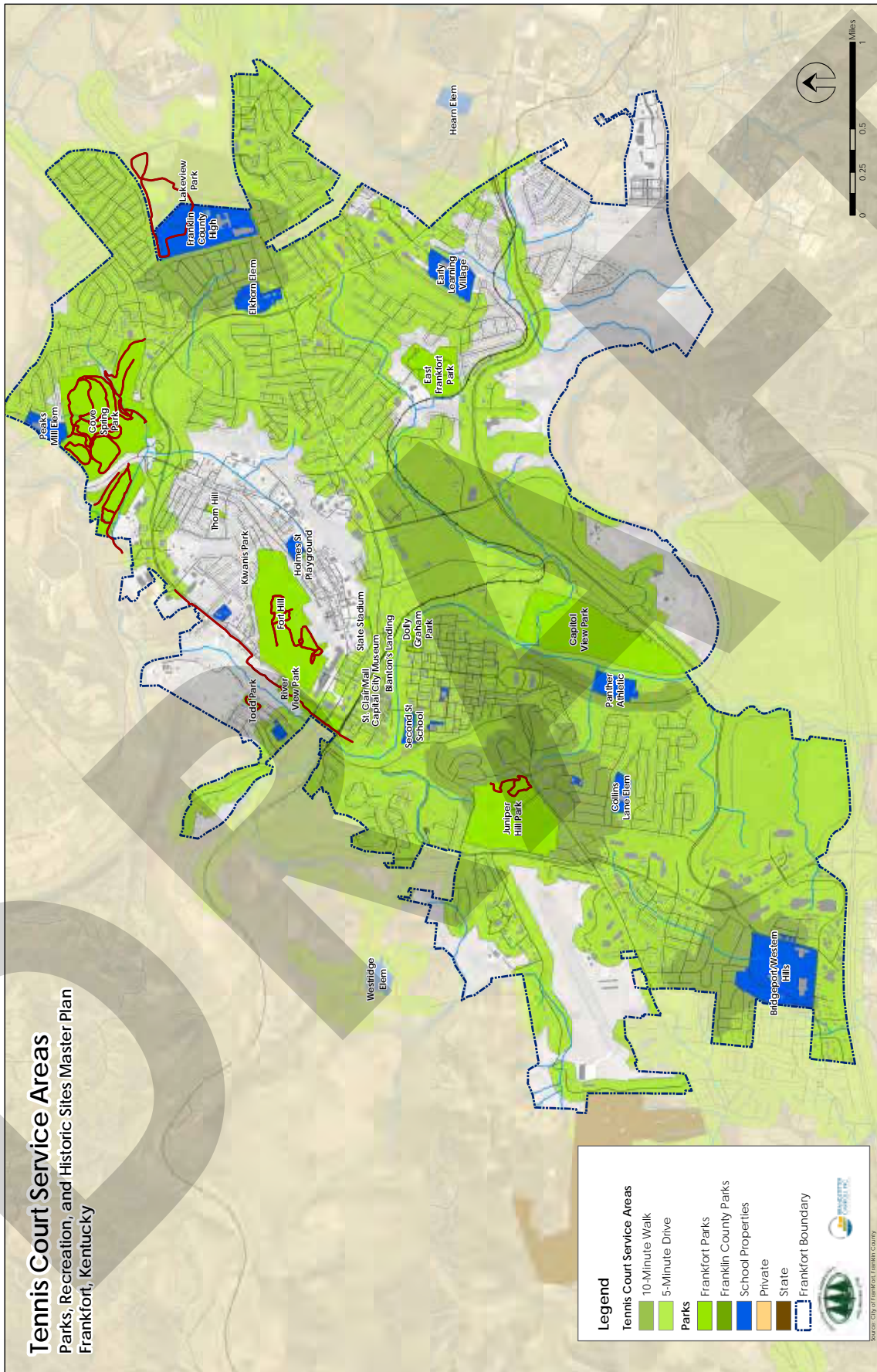


Figure 5.9: Disc Golf Service Areas

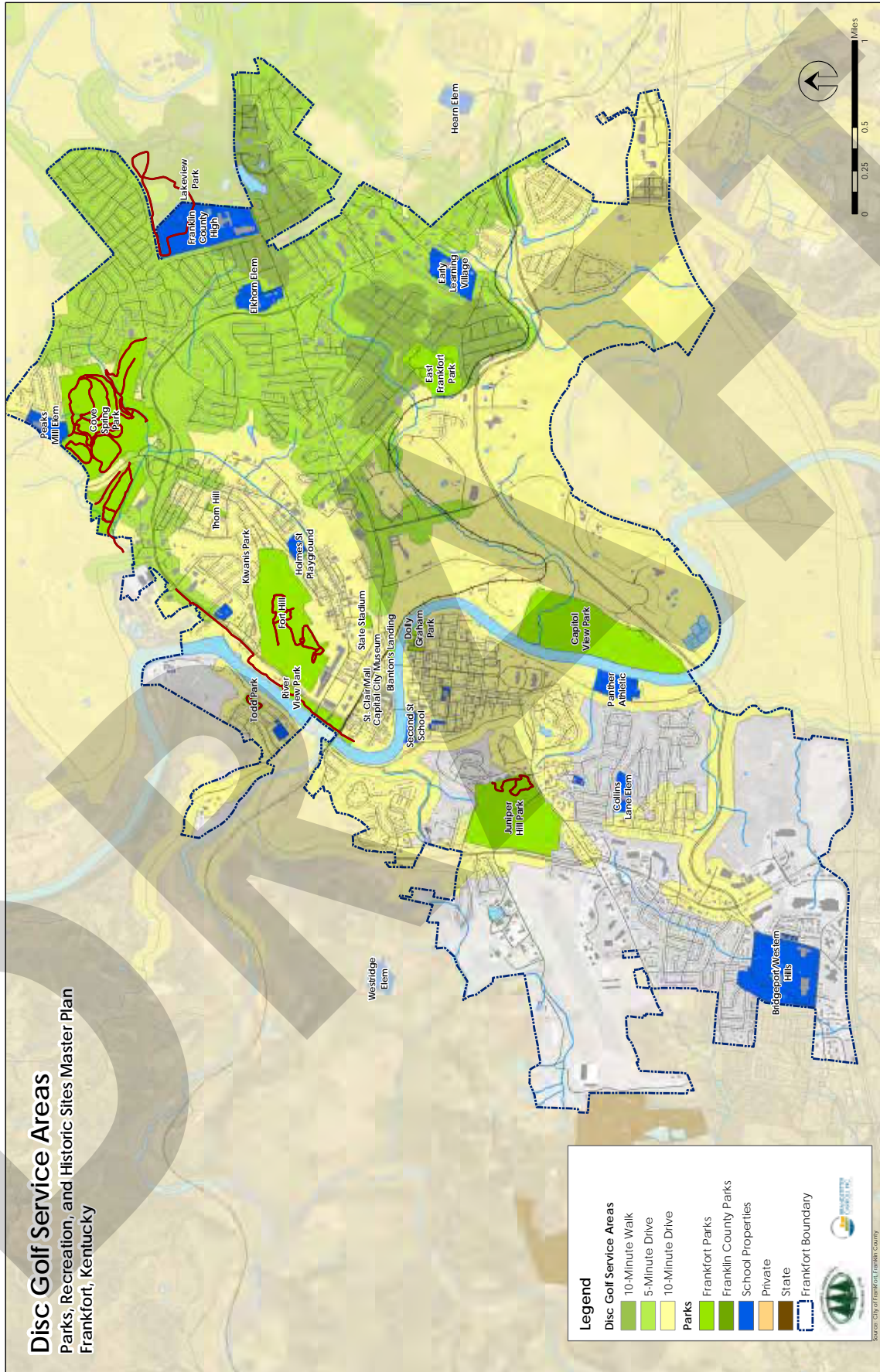


Figure 5.10: Picnic Shelter Service Areas

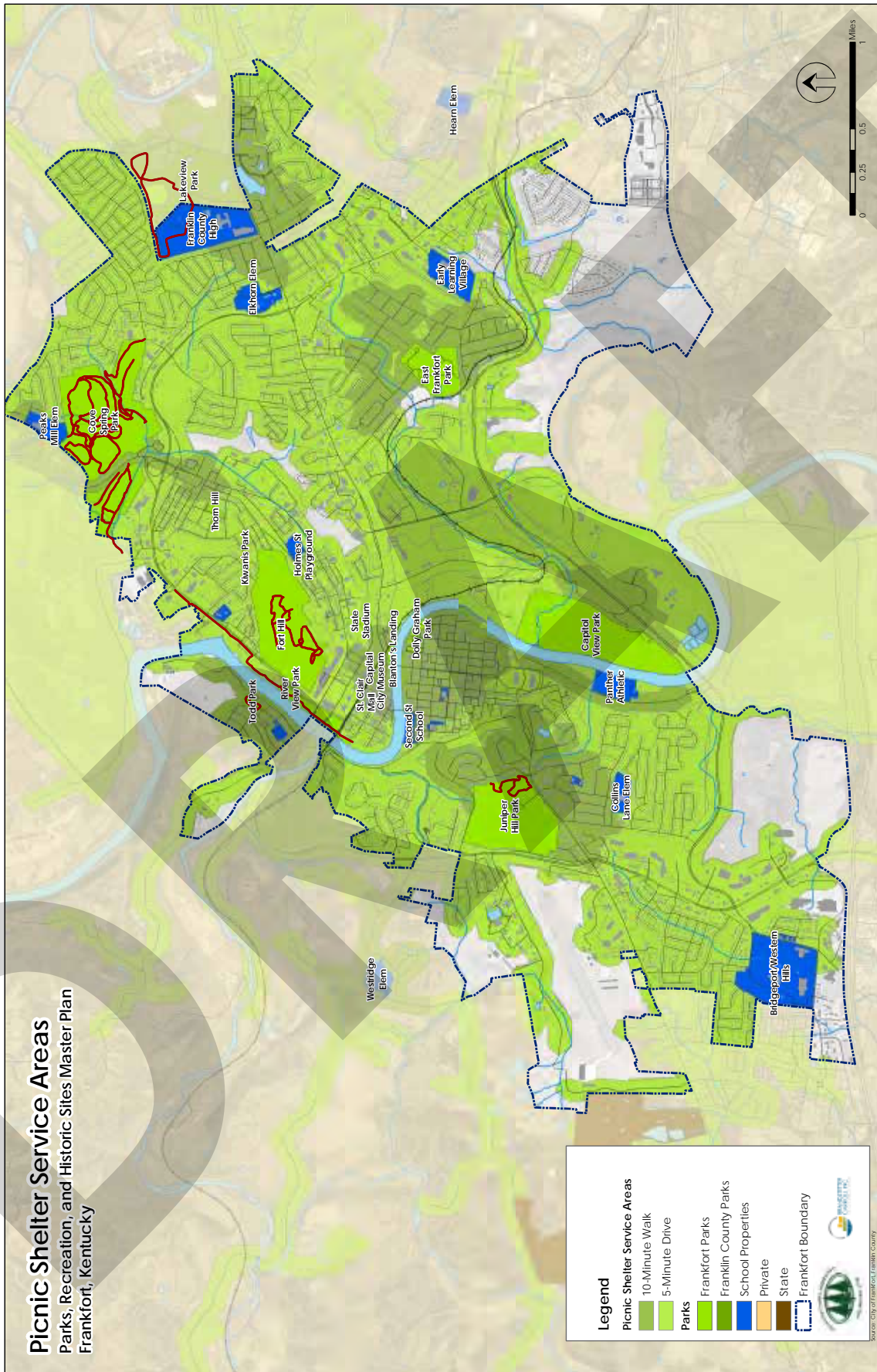


Figure 5.11: Trail Service Areas

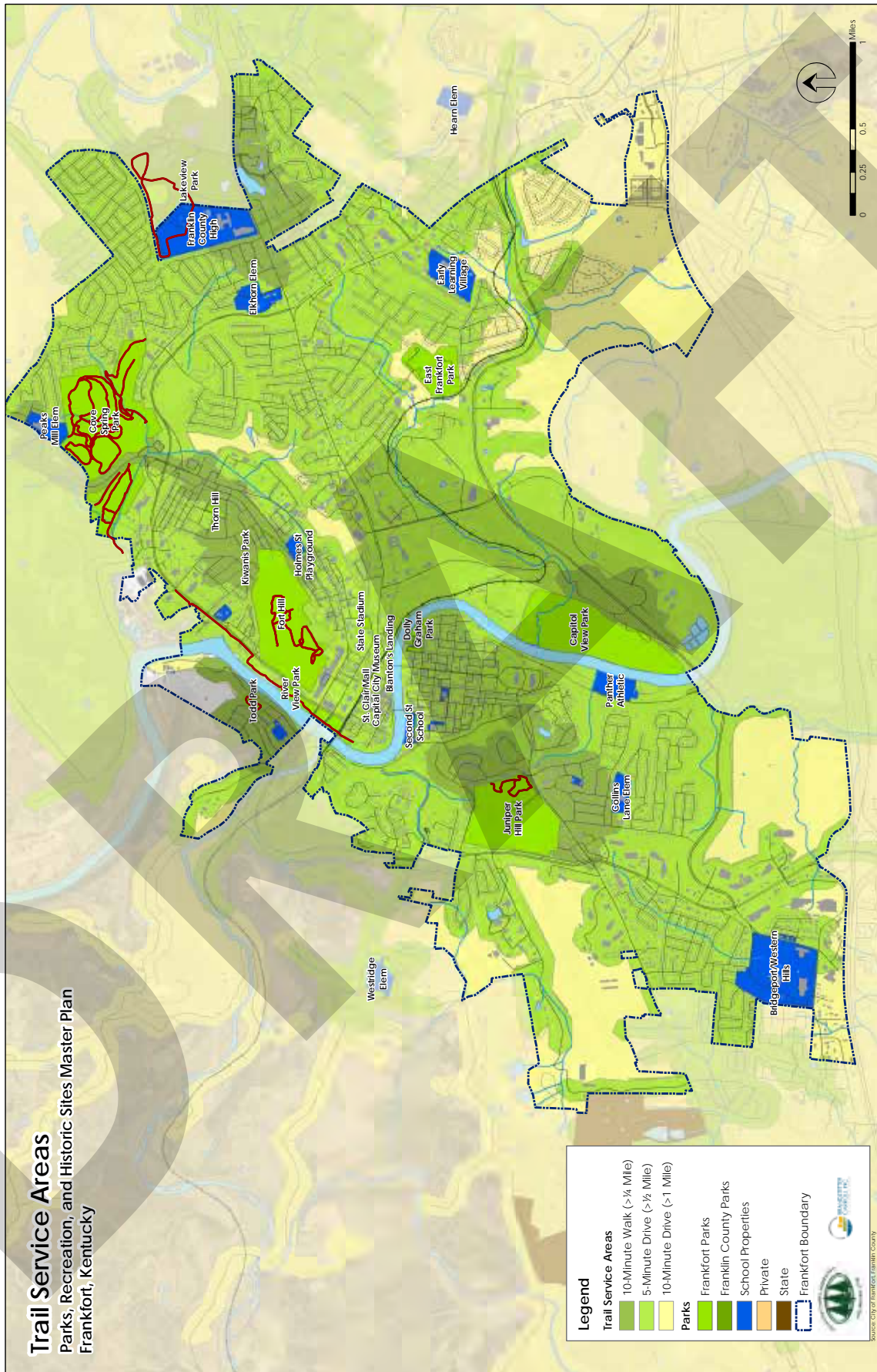


Figure 5.12: Dog Park Service Area

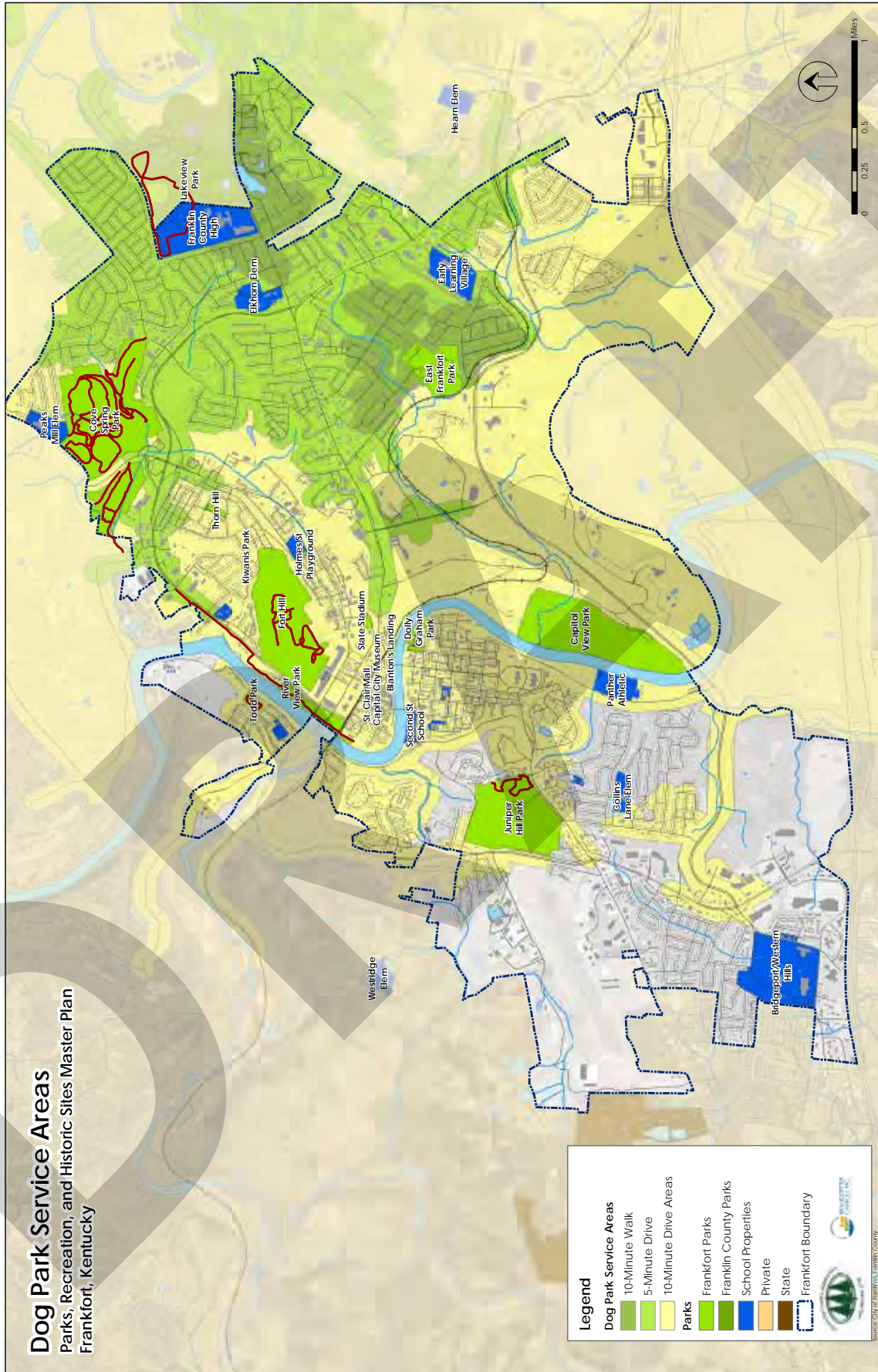


Figure 5.13: Composite Park Service Areas

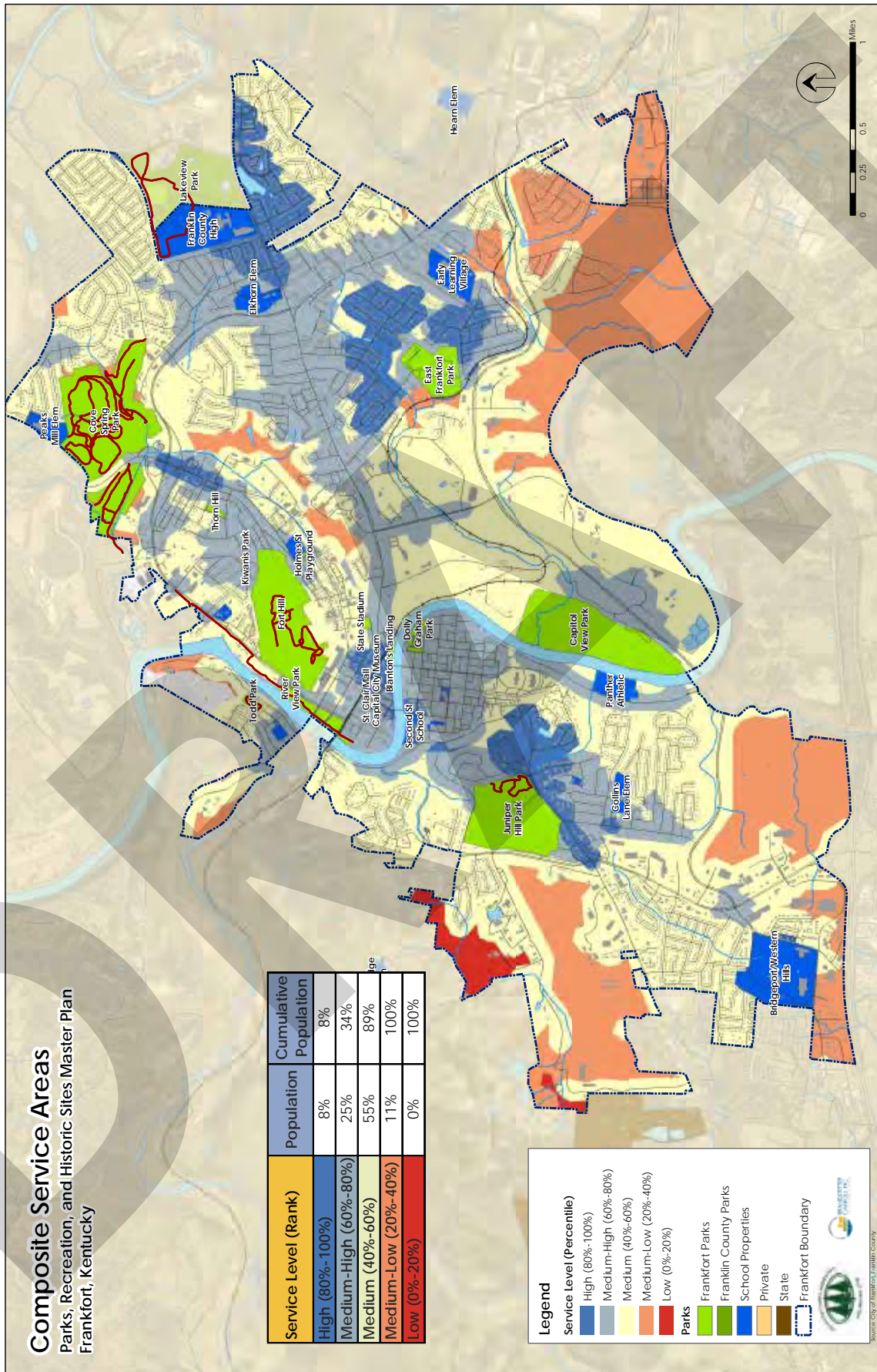


Table 5.4: Population by Composite Service Area

Service Level (Rank)	Proportion at Composite Service Level				Median Household Income	Diversity Index	Median Age
	Population	Cumulative Population	Area	Cumulative Area			
High (80%-100%)	8%	8%	7%	7%	\$52,629	45.4	38.4
Medium-High (60%-80%)	25%	34%	23%	30%	\$50,167	39.8	41.0
Medium (40%-60%)	55%	89%	50%	80%	\$51,834	50.9	37.8
Medium-Low (20%-40%)	11%	100%	19%	99%	\$59,494	38.0	43.0
Low (0%-20%)	0%	100%	1%	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A

5.7 TRENDS IN PARKS AND RECREATION

The following text analyzes national trends in recreation, including types of activities and their associated facilities. First, a look at participation rates for various activities – using data from the Sport and Fitness Industry Association – then a deeper dive into the latest trends (relevant to Frankfort) occurring in programming and facilities across the nation.

There will be different emphasis and considerations particular to Frankfort, but also an exploration of overall patterns. Looking through a broader lens can provide insight into the origin and trajectory of more localized preferences. Understanding how trends in fitness, recreation, athletics, and cultural resources reflect in the parks and recreation industry illuminates present conditions and future possibilities in Frankfort. Equipped with industry context the Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Department can better sustain, expand, and realign its existing offerings.

5.7.1 COVID-19 – Impacts for Parks and Recreation

Though the first impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were felt in the U.S. in early 2020, the nation continues to bear the tide of change, uncertainty, and strain. While every lasting effect is impossible to predict, two things are already clear: 1) parks and recreation agencies throughout the country have been hit by myriad measures to slow the spread of infection, and 2) agencies around the country are playing – and will continue to play – a vital role in the recovery.

Already, agencies across the country are pressed with financial strain as a result of the coronavirus⁷ and people everywhere are living out the effects of having (or not having) access to open space and parks.⁸ As the coronavirus pandemic blazed an uncharted trail through our communities in 2020, public parks and open space are providing respite, solace, and connection. Parks have helped people cope – and they will help communities recover.⁹

When in the early stages of the pandemic agencies around the country were asked to cancel in-person programs, close facilities, and limit services, agencies were faced with many hard choices. In the months since, many agencies have blended creativity, technology, and flexible staff power to provide a new kind of service to their communities. Tactics include abundant use of signage to communicate physical-distancing guidelines and tips for safely enjoying amenities, spray-painting or otherwise demarcating 6-feet of separation in gathering areas, partially closing vehicle pathways to create more space for pedestrians and bicyclists, and other measures.

This same creative adaptability is much-needed moving forward into a post-pandemic future. Agencies should utilize



CDC-physically distancing in parks

⁷ Roth, Kevin. How COVID-19 Impacts Parks and Recreation Funding. NRPA. <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2020/may/how-covid-19-impacts-park-and-recreation-funding/>. Accessed November 2020.

⁸ McCormick, Kathleen. Room to Roam: The Pandemic Has Underscored the Need for More Urban Parks; So What Comes Next? Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. <https://www.lincolinst.edu/publications/articles/2020-10-room-roam-pandemic-urban-parks-what-comes-next>. Accessed November 2020.

⁹ A Trust for Public Land Special Report: Parks and the Pandemic. <https://www.tpl.org/sites/default/files/Parks%20and%20Pandemic%20-%20TPL%20special%20report.pdf>

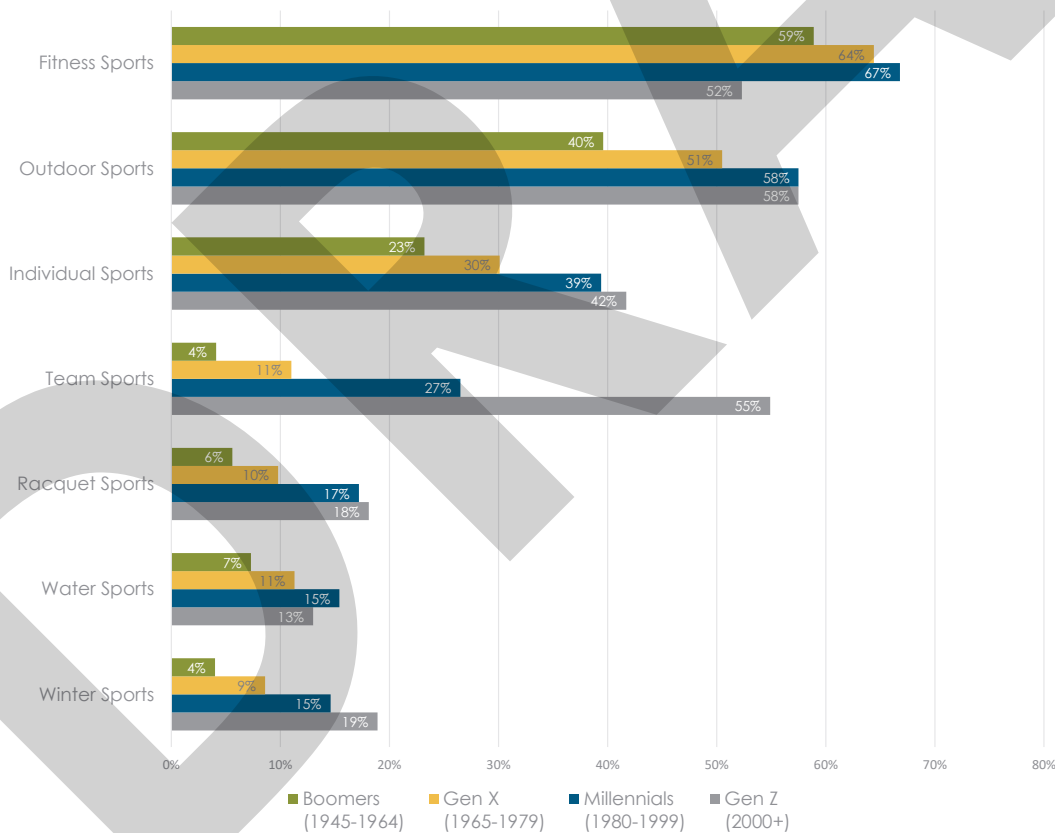
online social platforms, virtual classes and activities, scheduled nature visits where necessary, physically-distanced programming, and other strategies to ensure access to quality services. Families, seniors, youth, and everyone in between will continue to seek social connection, desire healthy habits, and crave the benefits of time in nature – parks and recreation has been given an opportunity out of the COVID-19 crisis to explore, evaluate, and realign to better meet these needs. While the economic impact of COVID-19 continues to unfold, there will be temptations to recover costs and cut spending. Parks and Recreation is a critical player in a multi-dimensional recovery¹⁰ and must be centered as an invaluable resource to the community.

5.7.2 Trends in Recreation Participation

On an annual basis, the Sport and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) conducts a survey¹¹ of individuals and households throughout the United States to determine participation in a variety of sports and fitness activities. By using a weighting technique, the survey produces results reflective of the total U.S. population age 6 and older; the 2018 sample consisted of 20,069 online interviews of households. The following text examines the findings of this SFIA report and connects relevant data to generate insights about Frankfort.

Figure 5.14 shows the difference in participation rates between generations for seven types of sports. The youngest generation (Gen Z) had the highest participation rates for Individual Sports (e.g., archery, skateboarding, golfing, etc.), Team Sports (e.g., baseball, ultimate frisbee, soccer, etc.), and Outdoor Sports (e.g., hiking, trail running, bicycling, etc.). With each generation, participation rates dropped as age increased. While the other three generational groups had the highest participation rates in Fitness Sports (e.g., barre, weight-training, kettlebells, etc.) Gen Z had the lowest participation. The remaining three types of sports (Racquet, Winter, and Water Sports) have similar trends, Millennials and Gen Z representing the highest levels of participation.

Figure 5.14: Participation Rates by Generation



¹⁰ Marquis, Bridget. Infrastructure That Does More: Investing in Public Spaces for a Resilient America. Strong Towns. https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2020/11/23/infrastructure-that-does-more-investing-in-public-spaces-for-a-resilient-america?fbclid=IwAR2Aa8OXGjUpGNv3ibIDHC-W40ic9L9QjnXvix_kgFSocTcEoi5v1hqJ0bDg (November 24, 2020). Accessed December 4, 2020.

¹¹ The 2019 Topline Report for the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) is produced through the partnership of the Physical Activity Council (PAC), a collaboration of eight of the major trade associations in U.S. sports, fitness, and leisure industries.

With high percentages of Frankfort residents in the older two generations — and these numbers only increasing — demand for fitness sports programming is likely to simultaneously increase into the future. Even though participation diminishes with age, outdoor sports remain popular with all age groups (40% of Boomers take advantage of outdoor fitness activities). Team sports are far more popular with the youngest generation (55% Gen Z and only 4% Boomers).

Table 5.5 displays the 5-year participation rates for 55 different sports and fitness activities. This table also shows the 5-year annual growth rate and highlights which activities show either significant growth or decline in participation rates. The fastest growing sports are highlighted in blue; *stand up paddling*, *cardio tennis*, *bicycling (BMX)*, *pickleball*, and *trail running* show the fastest rate of growth over the 5-year period.

Walking for fitness, *treadmill*, *free weights* (hand weights), *running/jogging*, *hiking* (day-hikes) have the largest number of participants. *Walking for fitness* has by far the greatest number of participants (over 100 million participants nationally) and *hiking* is growing nearly 7% annually even with already high participation (nearly 50 million). Three of the top five activities are oriented around trails (*bicycling too*, ranked six). It is no surprise these facilities are in such high demand; Frankfort residents are not unusual in expressing their strong interest in trail-based activities.

Table 5.5: Nationwide 5-Year History of Selected Sports Participation (2013-2018)

Sport/Fitness Activity	Category	Participants (In Thousands)						5-Year Average Annual Growth
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Adventure Racing	Individual Sports	2,095	2,368	2,864	2,999	2,529	2,215	2.1%
Aquatic Exercise	Aerobic Activities	8,483	9,122	8,226	10,575	10,459	10,518	4.6%
Archery	Individual Sports	7,647	8,435	8,378	7,903	7,769	7,654	0.2%
Badminton	Racquet Sports	7,150	7,176	7,198	7,354	6,430	6,337	-2.2%
Baseball	Team Sports	13,284	13,152	13,711	14,760	15,642	15,877	3.7%
Basketball	Team Sports	23,669	23,067	23,410	22,343	23,401	24,225	0.5%
Bicycling (BMX)	Outdoor Activities	2,168	2,350	2,690	3,104	3,413	3,439	9.8%
Bicycling (Mountain/Non-Paved Surface)	Outdoor Activities	8,542	8,044	8,316	8,615	8,609	8,690	0.4%
Bicycling (Road/Paved Surface)	Outdoor Activities	40,888	39,725	38,280	38,365	38,866	39,041	-0.9%
Birdwatching (>¼ Mile from Home)	Outdoor Activities	14,152	13,179	13,093	11,589	12,296	12,344	-2.5%
Cardio Tennis	Racquet Sports	1,539	1,617	1,821	2,125	2,223	2,499	10.3%
Cheerleading	Team Sports	3,235	3,456	3,608	4,029	3,816	3,841	3.7%
Elliptical Motion Trainer	Aerobic Activities	30,410	31,826	32,321	32,218	32,283	33,238	1.8%
Fishing (Fly)	Outdoor Activities	5,878	5,842	6,089	6,456	6,791	6,939	3.4%
Fishing (Freshwater)	Outdoor Activities	37,796	37,821	37,682	38,121	38,346	38,998	-0.4%
Football (Flag)	Team Sports	5,610	5,508	5,829	6,173	6,551	6,572	3.3%
Football (Tackle)	Team Sports	6,165	5,978	6,222	5,481	5,224	5,157	-3.1%
Free Weights (Hand Weights)	Strength	58,267	56,124	54,716	51,513	5,217	51,291	-2.5%
Gymnastics	Team Sports	4,972	4,621	4,679	5,381	4,805	4,770	2.5%
High Impact/Intensity & Training	Aerobic Activities	17,323	19,746	20,464	21,390	21,476	21,611	4.6%
Hiking (Day)	Outdoor Activities	34,378	36,222	37,232	42,128	44,900	47,860	6.9%
Ice Hockey	Team Sports	2,393	2,421	2,546	2,697	2,544	2,447	4.9%
Ice Skating	Individual Sports	10,679	10,649	10,485	10,315	9,998	9,721	-1.9%
Kayaking (Recreational)	Water Sports	8,716	8,855	9,499	10,017	10,533	11,017	4.8%
Kayaking (White Water)	Water Sports	2,146	2,351	2,518	2,552	2,500	2,562	3.7%
Lacrosse	Team Sports	1,813	2,011	2,094	2,090	2,171	2,098	3.1%
Martial Arts	Individual Sports	5,314	5,364	5,507	5,745	5,838	5,821	1.8%
Mixed Martial Arts for Fitness	Individual Sports	2,255	2,455	2,612	2,446	2,376	2,365	1.1%
Pickleball	Racquet Sports	N/A	2,462	2,506	2,815	3,132	3,301	9.7%*
Pilates Training	Conditioning	8,069	8,504	8,594	8,893	9,047	9,084	2.4%
Racquetball	Racquet Sports	3,824	3,594	3,883	3,579	3,526	3,480	-1.7%
Roller Hockey	Team Sports	1,298	1,736	1,907	1,929	1,834	1,734	6.9%
Rugby	Team Sports	1,183	1,276	1,349	1,550	1,621	1,560	5.9%
Running/Jogging	Aerobic Activities	54,188	51,127	48,496	47,384	50,770	49,459	-1.7%
Scuba Diving	Water Sports	3,174	3,145	3,274	3,111	2,874	2,849	-2.1%
Skateboarding	Individual Sports	6,350	6,582	6,436	6,442	6,382	6,500	0.5%

Table 5.5: Nationwide 5-Year History of Selected Sports Participation (2013-2018) (Continued)

Sport/Fitness Activity	Category	Participants (In Thousands)						5-Year Average Annual Growth
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Soccer (Outdoor)	Team Sports	12,726	12,592	12,646	11,932	11,924	11,405	-2.1%
Softball (Fast Pitch)	Team Sports	2,498	2,424	2,460	2,467	2,309	2,303	-1.6%
Softball (Slow-Pitch)	Team Sports	6,868	7,077	7,114	7,690	7,283	7,386	1.6%
Stand Up Paddling	Water Sports	1,993	2,751	3,020	3,220	3,325	3,453	12.3%
Stationary Cycling	Aerobic Activities	35,293	35,693	35,553	36,118	36,035	36,668	0.8%
Swimming for Fitness	Aerobic Activities	26,354	25,304	26,319	26,601	27,135	27,575	0.9%
Swimming on a Team	Team Sports	2,638	2,710	2,892	3,369	3,007	3,045	3.3%
Table Tennis	Racquet Sports	17,079	16,385	16,565	16,568	16,041	15,592	-1.8%
Tai Chi	Conditioning	3,469	3,446	3,651	3,706	3,787	3,761	1.7%
Tennis	Racquet Sports	17,678	17,904	17,963	18,079	17,683	17,841	0.2%
Trail Running	Individual Sports	6,792	7,531	8,139	8,582	9,149	10,010	8.1%
Treadmill	Aerobic Activities	48,166	50,241	50,398	51,872	52,966	53,737	2.2%
Triathlon (Traditional/Road)	Individual Sports	2,262	2,203	2,498	2,374	2,162	2,168	-0.6%
Ultimate Frisbee	Team Sports	5,077	4,530	4,409	3,673	3,126	2,710	-11.7%
Volleyball (Beach/Sand)	Team Sports	4,769	4,651	4,785	5,489	4,947	4,770	0.3%
Volleyball (Court)	Team Sports	6,433	6,304	6,423	6,216	6,317	6,317	-0.3%
Walking for Fitness	Aerobic Activities	117,351	112,583	109,829	107,895	110,805	111,001	-1.1%
Weight/Resistance Machines	Strength	36,267	35,841	35,310	35,768	36,291	36,372	0.1%
Yoga	Conditioning	24,310	25,262	25,289	26,268	27,354	28,745	3.4%

*Based on reduced time period. SFIA has not yet collected five years of participation for Pickleball.

Legend

	>3% Increase
	1-3% Increase
	Minimal Change
	1-3% Decrease
	>3% Decrease

5.7.3 Aging Communities

Throughout the United States and in Frankfort, the median age of the population is increasing (currently 39.3 in Frankfort and 38.5 in the USA). The number of persons in the age group 65 and over is growing rapidly. Census data indicates that the percentage of the Frankfort population age 65 and older was just under 14% in 2000 but is expected to increase to reach over 20% by 2025 (see Chapter 2).

The relative health of these individuals is better than ever before, and they desire more active recreation than their predecessors. Senior centers are shifting from a focus on activities like card games to more active programming such as fitness activities and outdoor activities like hiking, biking, and nature programs.

While the aging population should inspire parks and recreation agencies to invest more in activities, programs, and facilities for older users such as walking trails, fishing areas, community gardens, and cultural and nature education programs, many of these more involved and nature-oriented activities are appealing to all generations.

The big picture data is certainly mirrored at the local level in Frankfort. The surveys and other forms of public engagement (see Chapter 4) show strong community support for expanding programs and facilities to accommodate residents age 55+ and older.



Photo credit: The Conversation (2017)

“Why Communities Should Be Designing Parks for Older Adults”

5.7.4 Universal Access

Many park systems are developing unique facilities that are designed to go well beyond the minimum requirement for the Americans with Disabilities Act. Park system administrators are uniquely positioned to set the best example for inclusivity – by creating an environment that is totally accessible to persons of all ages and abilities, parks and recreation agencies are changing the landscape not just physically but also culturally and in terms of mental health.

Some simple examples of physical treatments that go beyond the basic ADA requirements: textured edging on trails help to make the facilities more accessible for the visually impaired; fragrant plants and sensory gardens, as well as interactive displays provide a more hands-on approach to education and engagement; including therapeutic textures, ground-level features, and mobility-enhancing elements like ramps or bridges in playground equipment ensures all children – including those who are disabled – have space to play.

Universal access extends beyond the physical to include interpretive signage, buildings, and all programs. Providing barrier-free parks is an essential part of the process for any park improvement. A number of equipment providers are available for exploring options; grant funding is potentially available.¹²

As a number of the existing playgrounds in Frankfort are in need of improvement and replacement, the city has a real opportunity to prioritize accessibility and universal access for the benefit of the community. While Juniper Hill Park provides higher access to its playground, the play equipment itself is not up to the universal access standard for fully engaging and participatory experience.

5.7.5 Fitness and Wellness

Both state and federal level agencies have placed strong emphasis on improving the health and fitness of individuals throughout the United States. Many local-level parks and recreation departments are building on this message.

Fitness facilities no longer have to be confined to indoor spaces; modern equipment exists that can be installed outdoors. Including outdoor fitness equipment in Neighborhood and Community Parks can serve as an alternative with added benefits of being outdoors. Frankfort has outdoor fitness equipment at Juniper Hill Park that more closely resemble what would be found at an indoor fitness center. This easy-to-use equipment could be installed at parks throughout the city at a fairly modest cost.

Additionally, partnerships are key; many agencies collaborate with community health providers to offer fitness facilities and programs. The health benefits that can be provided by parks extend to mental health benefits as studies indicate that a connection to nature can relieve stress, improve interpersonal relationships, and improves mental health.¹³



Ann Arbor's Universal Access Park



Parks and Recreation Wellness Station, Kennesaw, GA

¹² For example: <https://www.playandpark.com/funding/grant-opportunities> via PlayCore

¹³ National Recreation and Park Association, "Health and Wellness," <http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Impacting-Communities/Health-and-Wellness/>, (April 8, 2019)

5.7.6 Technology

The use of technology is becoming increasingly common in parks and recreation. Many park users want to remain connected while visiting parks and expect instant access to information about facilities and programs at those parks. They also want to be able to register for the events and programs they discover on their mobile device. While there may sometimes be concerns about distraction, especially in nature-oriented spaces, technology – when applied intentionally – can be a tool to enhance park experience. Considering the extent to which technology is part of many user experiences across sectors, it is likely going to be an element necessary to keep people – especially youth – engaged.



Smart Trail Signage, Denison, IA

The use of technology in parks has many advantages. Wi-Fi access in parks enables users to stay connected via social media or other online activities, register for programming, and even interact more directly with staff (e.g., reporting a maintenance issue or asking a question about scheduling). Installing device-charging benches gives people a place to keep those devices powered-up. Developing park-specific apps can inform visitors of opportunities at individual sites or system-wide. QR codes are yet another technological tool that visitors can use for quick access to information (e.g., tree and other plant identification, trail maps, park history and cultural context, park hours, etc.).

Employing technology in parks can supply helpful information for internal agency operations as well. For example, Wi-Fi hotspots record the number of connections or searches to create a picture of visitation trends.¹⁴ Or, beacon counters can detect cellphone signals to help determine the number of users in an area.¹⁵ Sensors along paths can distinguish between walkers, runners, and cyclists, as well as numbers for visitation frequency. Collectively, this type of data can describe information about popular visitation times, success of new features, and other descriptors.

Finally, social media is a means for interaction between parks users, parks staff, and the park itself. When visitors post to social web platforms, they assist with park promotion and help to encourage future use. Park agencies and staff have employed social media as a “crowd-sourced, data-gathering tool” for things like monitoring wildlife or vegetation, reporting invasive species, and identifying condition of trails.

The department currently maintains an active Facebook presence. Keeping this social media platform relevant with varied posts (e.g., video content, informational flyers, community polls, etc.) will be helpful for attracting followers and expanding impact. These posts would, in turn, provide the department with additional means of gathering information on park condition, plant health, visitation levels, and more. Additionally, the city could extend its effort to provide public Wi-Fi (e.g., the Old Capitol hotspot) into at least some of the parks.

5.7.7 Geocaching

Geocaching is a technology-based activity that has been growing in popularity since the early 2000s, when GPS technology improved significantly. Participants travel to local parks and open spaces to hunt for objects previously hidden by others using a set of coordinates and a digital GPS device (typically on a smart phone). Once found, participants generally exchange the now-discovered item for a new item, guaranteeing future use of the same geocache. The search can have varying levels of complexity – one cache leads to another or a puzzle must be completed.¹⁶

¹⁴ National Recreation and Park Association, “Parks Using Technology to Engage and Inspire,” <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2017/may/parks-using-technology-to-engage-and-inspire/>. (May 1, 2017)

¹⁵ Dolesh, R. J. (2019, January). Top Trends in Parks and Recreation for 2019. Parks & Recreation.

¹⁶ National Recreation and Park Association, “How to Leverage Geocaching to Promote Park and Recreation Events,” <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2017/october/how-to-leverage-geocaching-to-promote-park-and-recreation-events/>. (October 5, 2017)

Geocaches are already be present at various locations in Frankfort, including in some of the city parks. The department has not yet provided guidelines for geocachers; Kentucky State Parks' permitting protocol and activity information serves as a great locally relevant example for how best to participate in geocaching. Opportunities may also exist for the department to promote and encourage this activity by creating their own caches or organizing community geocaching events.

5.7.8 Environmental Education

There is a need for expanded environmental education and parks and recreation agencies have a considerable role to play. Environmental education centers throughout the country are having great success as communities are seeking out better access to engage with and learn from their natural environment. Potential subjects include natural processes, resource management, and wildlife habitats.

Environmental education cultivates understanding of the benefits of natural habitats and open spaces (including those in Frankfort). Many park departments develop outreach strategies to bring environmental curriculum into schools. Not only does this outreach promote and encourage greater use and appreciation of local parks in the community, it creates opportunity for collaboration between organizations, institutions, and advocacy groups and it helps instill a lasting connection to the natural world.

Nature education is something that engage all ages and abilities; nature-oriented programs are an effective way to create space for intergenerational encounters. Creating environmental education opportunities that appeal to the community involves considering formats like guided hikes, camps, community events, field trips, or special-interest classes and topics such as habitat restoration, wildlife identification, or invasive species removal.

Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites offers several natural areas, special and unique to the area, including Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve and Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill. These sites could potentially host remarkable nature education programs. The department has intermittently offered nature programming, but with inconsistent staffing. The lack of an indoor program facility makes offering educational programs more challenging, but programs can potentially be held at some of the picnic shelters.

5.7.9 Birdwatching (or Birding)

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service nearly 50 million (2011) or about 20% of the population. The most common form of birding is watching birds near one's home; however, 38% of birders, or 18 million people, participate in birding away from the home. Participants in birdwatching tend to be older and more highly educated than the general population.



Photo credit: NRPA

Geocaching



Photo Credit: Environmental Education Center at Lord Stirling Park, Basking Ridge, NJ

Environmental Education Signage, Basking Ridge, NJ



Photo Credit: National Park Service

Environmental Education at Mammoth Cave, KY



Photo credit: USFWS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report also includes an analysis of the economic impact of birdwatching activities. Birdwatchers direct substantial amounts of dollars into the economy because of trip-related (\$15 million) and equipment expenditures (\$26 million). The report finds that the birding industry, including indirect effects resulting from the multiplier effect, generates over \$100 billion annually throughout the United States and supports 666,000 jobs. These expenditures lead to an additional \$6 million in state tax revenues and \$7 million in federal tax revenues.¹⁷

In Frankfort, there is already an energetic engaged Audubon Society local affiliation (included in stakeholder discussions, see Appendix D). This group invests their time and resources into data collection, event organization, site cleanups, tree plantings, and more. In the engagement for this Master Plan, a recurring need emerged for additional opportunities to connect and interact with nature. Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites should establish a more formal relationship with the local Audubon Society members, and others, for collaborating to provide expanded birding opportunities.

5.7.10 Environmental Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Many communities utilize parks as examples of best management practices (BMPs) to serve as models for minimizing environmental impacts and maximizing the sustainability of both park sites and operations. Parks and recreation departments are positioned to lead in the implementation of these practices because they are typically among the largest landowners (if not the largest) in their jurisdictions. To assist in the implementation of these practices, some park departments establish manuals detailing their BMPs which are generally divided into categories.¹⁸ Some potential categories include (with examples):

- Site Selection (which properties to acquire and protect)
- Design (strategies for management of stormwater, water quality, riparian/wetland buffers; use of vegetation; choice of building materials)
- Construction (controlling of pollutants, soil restoration, recycling of construction materials)
- Operation and Maintenance (practices for water conservation, use of organics, weed control, composting, energy use, etc.)
- Programs and Special Events (consider carrying capacity of facility, provide recycling receptacles)

Frankfort's Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve is one example of how the city's unique parks system needs clearly-established guidelines and standards for maintenance, preservation, and environmental protection. While Cove Spring (Lower) is under a Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Easement, which comes with its own regulations, the department can establish high-quality, sustainable long term land management by proactively setting and adhering to its own best practices.

5.7.11 Trails and Connectivity

Demand for trails, trail linkages, and pathways that connect parks, open spaces, and other destination sites (like downtown districts) has been growing all over the U.S., including in Frankfort. Where surveys have been conducted there is a high level of demand for connectivity. Communities with existing and extensive trail systems express pride and continued desire to build trails between neighborhoods and develop pathways to schools, shopping areas, other community attractions, and neighborhoods. Livable communities where residents report a high quality of life generally have robust trail systems and reliable connectivity that support active, engaged lifestyles.

The expressed need for trails – both for recreational use and for transportation – was conveyed clearly through the public



Photo credit: Jeff Carson, Dandy Horseman Magazine

Don Valley Bike Trails

¹⁷ Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis, Addendum to the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2013.

¹⁸ Environmental Best Management Practices Manual. City of Fort Collins Parks and Recreation. 2011.

input process. Frankfort already has a variety of paved and unpaved trails throughout the park system, as well as considerable community involvement and support for trail connectivity. While additional trails and walkways are needed within many of the parks, Section 5.5.9 (above) also points to the opportunity to connect between all the city's unique parks. WalkBike Frankfort is one of the most active and resourceful local organizations pursuing improved connectivity and walkable access. The city should sustain a healthy, supportive relationship with this group in order to realize the shared vision for comprehensive, connected access.

5.7.12 Nature Play Areas

Many parks and recreation agencies are placing increased emphasis on the availability of nature play areas and programming for children. The Natural Learning Initiative (NLI) and the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) recently released a document titled *Nature Play & Learning Places*, which provides a series of national guidelines for the creation of places for children to interact with nature. The guidelines are meant to support communities in providing opportunities for children to learn about their natural environment and to develop healthy active habits. The guidelines also encourage incorporating natural materials like plants, stones, water, fallen trees, etc. to augment sensory experience and facilitate tactile play. According to the guidelines, a nature play or learning place is:



Silver Falls State Park, Oregon

“A designated, managed area in an existing or modified outdoor environment where children of all ages and abilities play and learn by engaging with and manipulating diverse natural elements, materials, organisms, and habitats, through sensory, fine motor and gross motor experiences.”¹⁹

The following are examples of nature play features.

Natural Play Structures

Permanent play structures can be constructed from natural materials such as logs and rocks. The guidelines recommend engaging local children to generate ideas. It is best to use indigenous (native) materials in the design to ensure longevity.

Multipurpose Lawns

Multipurpose lawns, depending on size, can support a wide variety of activities and events. These lawns can be utilized for programmed and unprogrammed play for both large and small groups.

Meadows and Woodlands

Meadows or fields of native grasses, flowers, and non-woody plants provide ecosystems where children – and even their caretakers – can explore and observe wildlife, especially insects and birds. These landscapes stimulate curiosity and offer dynamic learning moments in ways that a carefully managed lawn cannot.

Woodlands also offer diverse ecosystems similarly prime for creating quality educational and play experiences. Visitors can witness natural processes like seasonal change, photosynthesis, and animal behavior.

¹⁹ Moore, R. (2014). *Nature Play & Learning Places*. Creating and managing places where children engage with nature. Raleigh, NC: Natural Learning Initiative and Reston, VA: National Wildlife Federation. Version 1.6. (pages vii, 5, 7-8, 51, 65, 71-83).

Vegetable Gardens

Hands-on garden beds give visitors opportunities to participate in the growth of vegetables, herbs, and other edible plants, not to mention the benefit of tasting fresh produce. Children can discover different kinds of fresh food, learn more about what it takes to grow from seed, and better understand the source of the food they eat.

Aquatics

Existing natural streams, ponds, wetlands, and marshes give children and others a chance to witness the dynamic cycles of water, weather, and the geology of a place. If not present naturally, these elements can be constructed to replicate these phenomena. Children can have multi-sensory interactions and even encounter new types of living creatures.

Gathering and Performance Structures

It is a vital role of parks to give community space to gather. These structures — decks, patios, or gazebos — encourage social interaction and can be utilized for programming. To accommodate performances, these spaces can include things like stages, campfire circles, and amphitheater seating. These settings are also useful for team-building and group presentations.²⁰

Opportunities in Frankfort

Frankfort has many natural areas but has not invested much in these types of amenities. Some of the more natural parks could also offer some of these amenities allowing additional play opportunities in parks while remaining consistent with the character of the parks.

5.7.13 Mountain Bike and BMX Facilities

Off-road bicycling activities are growing in popularity, although they still represent a relatively small percentage of all bicycling activities. Modern mountain biking (MTB) originated in the 1970s in California with a group of enthusiasts who modified existing bikes for off-road use. These cyclists organized first downhill races which they called “Repack.” This name referred to the need to “repack” the brakes with fresh grease after each race due to the excessive heat from braking during the descent.²¹

During the early years of mountain biking, enthusiasts used single-track trails intended for hiking as bikes were not specifically forbidden from using these trails. However, as the sport gained in popularity, bikes have been banned from most hiking trails, and single-track trails designed specifically for mountain bikes have been established.²² More recently, a new style of trail called a “flow trail” has appeared which provides more predictable surfaces, banked turns, and a lack of obstacles. These trails require little peddling and minimal braking that appeal to



Charleston Parks Conservancy Community Garden



Hawn State Park Amphitheater



Flow Trail

²⁰ Moore, R. (2014). *Nature Play & Learning Places. Creating and managing places where children engage with nature.* Raleigh, NC: Natural Learning Initiative and Reston, VA: National Wildlife Federation. Version 1.6. (pages vii, 5, 7-8, 51, 65, 71-83).

²¹ Marin Museum of Bicycling, “Mountain Biking History,” <http://mmbhof.org/mtn-bike-hall-of-fame/history/>, (April 8, 2019).

²² Singletracks, “Visiting the Birthplace of Mountain Biking: Marin County, California,” <http://www.singletracks.com/blog/mtb-trails/visiting-the-birthplace-of-mountain-biking-marin-county-california/>, (April 8, 2019).

a wider variety of users, including families. These trails can be designed to allow beginners to bypass any more technical trails.²³

Another trend in off-road bicycle facilities is the pump track. These tracks, which began to appear in the 2000s, are looping tracks that can be ridden continuously without the need to pedal. A user's speed is dependent on "pumping" the terrain transitions of the track. A pump track requires approximately 50' by 50' of space (minimum) and generally feature a series of rollers and steeply bermed corners.²⁴ Unlike many of the other off-road facilities, pump tracks are usable by both mountain bike and BMX riders.



Photo credit: Jason Myers/IPL

Pump Track

Frankfort is ahead of this trend with an extensive MTB trail at Capitol View Park. An additional trail has been proposed and partially constructed by Kentucky Mountain Bike Association (KYMBA) at Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill. In the face of concerns from local historic preservation advocates and newly identified historic areas on the property, the city should likely keep the proposed trails as hiking only. An additional biking opportunity presents itself at the Holmes Street site (currently underutilized). A BMX track here would formalize existing construction efforts by the nearby community while creating a new type of opportunity for residents to explore.

5.7.14 Splash Pads or Spraygrounds

Splash pads or spraygrounds are a growing trend in aquatics. Many agencies are replacing wading pools with these more accessible water attractions; however, they can also be built as new standalone wet playgrounds. When compared to pools, spraygrounds have several benefits: no standing water means lifeguards are not needed, reducing operating costs significantly; in most instances, spraygrounds recirculate water; when built conscientiously, spraygrounds and splash pads achieve significantly better universal accessibility.

The city of Frankfort currently does not offer any splash pads itself – Franklin County's Lakeview Park has one – but ongoing development at Dolly Graham Park includes plans for a neighborhood splash pad. Looking further into the future, East Frankfort Park is an ideal location for a second city-managed splash pad. While survey results and public input do not point to overwhelming demand, there is considerable desire for water-based recreation. Developing splash pad facilities would help the city address this demand.



5.7.15 Dog Parks

Dog parks are in ever-increasing demand throughout the country. These spaces help to improve the interaction skills of dogs, while also providing social opportunities for dog owners. Quality dog parks require careful planning and a fairly extensive operating budget to ensure adequate maintenance and upkeep.

²³ IMBA, "Flow Trails," <https://www.imba.com/model-trails/flow-trails>, (April 15, 2016).

²⁴ Adventure Sports Journal, "Pumpin': An Introduction to the World of Pump Tracks," <http://adventuresportsjournal.com/pumpin-an-introduction-to-the-world-of-pump-tracks/>, (April 8, 2019).

Optimally, a dog park is at least three acres in size and includes three separate areas: for large dogs, for small dogs, and a rotating unused area to allow for regeneration of turf. Some dog parks include an additional area for agility and training. Many dog parks are larger, reaching well over 10 acres in size. Typical quality amenities include shade, seating, water (for both human and animal), and restrooms.

Frankfort currently offers only one dog park at East Frankfort Park. This site has the potential to be expanded to include two separate areas to better serve the varied needs of dogs based on size. According to the public input collected, there is a need for at least one additional dog park facility. Dolly Graham Park is slated to have a small dog park space allotted, but additional sites will be needed to provide the desired access.



Dog Park, Northbrook, IL

5.7.16 Creative Placemaking

The Trust for Public Land – a nonprofit organization with a mission to bring high-quality parks within a 10-minute walk of every person in the U.S. – is a leading champion of creative placemaking as a strategy for affecting change. Creative placemaking is a collaborative, community-based process that captures the power of art, vibrancy of local heritage, and potential of place to build memorable spaces rooted in culture and local identity. Parks and recreation agencies around the nation offer community connection in physical and social forms; creative-placemaking is just another tool for ensuring successful parks that equitably reflect the people who use them.²⁵ Many agencies partner with local entities (like other government departments, nonprofits, schools, places of worship, art institutions, and other groups) to put in place opportunities for resident-led installations, programs, and events.

Creative-placemaking can take countless forms. It may look like an outdoor sculpture walk at the center of the neighborhood park featuring resident and local artists' work. It might be an annual arts performance downtown that showcases immigrant and refugee cultures in the community. It can also be as low-profile as a pollinator garden including interpretive signage about the plants chosen and why. Whatever it may look like, it is essential that the community be inclusively integrated into every phase: ideation, selection (of artist(s), piece(s), feature(s), etc.), installation, activation, and long-term care.

When parks and recreation agencies prioritize local traditions, cultural identities, and native resources, making sure these are reflected in program and facility offerings, users will be more likely to participate and do their part to sustain the system. A reciprocal relationship forms, where community engages with parks and recreation to the extent that parks and recreation seeks to provide place-based resources.



Creative Placemaking in the Madisonville Neighborhood of Cincinnati (2015)

Frankfort could include creative placemaking into any future park improvement by incorporating it into the planning process. It provides an opportunity to make every park unique and to build and connect community around these parks. The arts community in Frankfort and the surrounding area is vibrant and growing. Groups

²⁵ Trust for Public Land, Creative Placemaking, <https://www.tpl.org/our-work/creative-placemaking>

like the Frank Arts Committee; Otrero Arts, Inc. & Roaming Studio; Yes Arts; Arts Downtown Initiative; and more are all excellent potential partners (some collaborations have already been successful, such as the popular sculpture walk in River View Park). With clear expectations, fair compensation, and meaningful engagement, the arts community in Frankfort has the power to enliven the city's parks and community spaces.

5.7.17 Golf Courses

Since 2003, there has been a consistent annual decline in the number of golf players across the nation.²⁶ Additionally, according to research conducted by the National Golf Foundation, there has been a corresponding 11% contraction in course supply (i.e., more and more golf courses are closing). And even as participation and number of courses decline, youth and young adults represent one of the sport's largest consumer segments, and the percentages of golfers who are women or people of color (either junior participants, beginners, or off-course players) have increased.²⁷ The golf industry is experiencing changes that have been in motion since the 1990s, and while the pandemic year of 2020 brought a renewed surge in participation, municipalities have significant reason to reimagine their golf course.

In light of these shifts in the golf industry, of which there are myriad explanations and causes, many communities are flexing their creativity by finding ways to adapt. For example, some communities are bringing new types of recreation into their golf courses: installing FootGolf holes,²⁸ organizing 5k runs (like the PGA Golf Club in Port St. Lucie, FL and in Romeoville, IL),²⁹ and even programming the course with activities like group birdwatching (like in Seabrook Island, SC)³⁰ and community movie nights.³¹ Any of these opportunities can be scheduled outside peak operation hours and during off-season months (e.g., fall and winter) to ensure there is no interference. Other ideas departments can pursue include hosting temporary disc golf tournaments or nature tours. By creating more reasons for people to be at the golf course, a parks and recreation department can better expand the consumer base served by the site, both increase and diversify its audience, and potentially explore additional pathways of revenue generation.

Increasingly, communities are choosing to explore another option: converting their courses altogether.³² For instance, they might retain a 9-hole course but convert the remaining portions of the property into park space. It can also be possible even to develop a revenue-generating facility on a segment of the site, while reserving the remaining acreage for trails and other passive uses. Or, the entire golf course can be converted to natural resource preservation, with facilities and site amenities like hiking, horse riding, or biking trails; cross-country skiing; and dog parks.³³

To continue providing service, the golf course at Juniper Hill Park needs some degree of intervention. Adding FootGolf holes, being careful not to interfere with the existing course, is a fiscally imaginative and perhaps even necessary step the department could take to ensure the longevity of the course. These added FootGolf holes should be programmed around peak golfing hours to avoid conflict.

5.7.18 Drones

Since the late 2000s, the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) has increased tremendously. Used for both military and civilian purposes, these devices are having a considerable impact on parks and recreation agencies nationwide. A contentious activity, tensions exist around safety, privacy, and environmental impact, as well as applications (professional and recreational) like habitat and wildlife monitoring, photography, and map-making.

Popularity of drones is only growing, but regulations at the federal, state, and local levels have been slow to prevent, mitigate, or manage negative impacts. Many cities have enacted no-fly zones and other restrictions

²⁶ Crompton, John L. NRPA. Implications of the Rise and Decline of Golf. June 25, 2020. <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2020/july/implications-of-the-rise-and-decline-of-golf/>

²⁷ National Golf Foundation. 2020 Golf Industry Facts. 2021. <https://www.ngf.org/golf-industry-research/>

²⁸ <https://www.footgolfusa.org/courses> and <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/footgolf-at-picadome>

²⁹ <https://mistwoodgc.com/taco-trot> and <https://www.morningread.com/industry/release/2018-11-14/pga-golf-club-to-host-5k-run-walk>

³⁰ Audubon International. <https://www.golfandenvironment.org/birdwatchopenindex.htm>; Tidelines. Seabrook Island, SC. 2020. <https://tidelinesblog.com/2020/06/24/birding-is-back-on-the-golf-course/>

³¹ Fairway Flicks at Lakeside in Lexington, KY. <https://www.facebook.com/lexkyparks/posts/2752061244823114/>

³² Cederberg, Kelly. Taking Golf Out of Golf Courses: Trajectories to Convert Facilities To Parks and Open Space Preserves. University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ. Landscape Research Record No. 7

³³ Green, Jared. Ace Idea: Transforming Defunct Golf Courses into Parks. The Dirt. June 2019. <https://dirt.asla.org/2019/06/04/ace-idea-transforming-golf-courses-into-public-parks/>

which means UAV-users – licensed or not – have limited available spaces. This then has led drone pilots to look to parks and public open space for flying opportunities.

Requiring permits (day or seasonal) and designating fly areas with set times for flying are some of the tactics agencies are using. These measures help legitimize UAV use and maintain safe park spaces; permitting is also a potential revenue opportunity. Since drone use is only increasing, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) offers useful insight into the future of drone-use in parks:

“[P]ark agencies will face increasing public pressure to look at allowing hobbyist flights and commercial-use drones in parks... By creating stronger guidelines and policies about how to fly drones in parks instead of adopting blanket restrictions, parks can give people an outlet and place to fly recreationally. New programming and events can be planned around drones, bringing in visitors and related businesses that benefit the parks...[K]eep it focused on safety and respect for all parties. [A]cceptance will protect the public and park resources and enable an exciting new form of recreation to take place.”³⁴



Drone in Parks

Frankfort does not have a designated location for launching drones and lacks an official policy for flying them in the parks. As their popularity continues to increase, the city will likely need to designate such an area, as well as formulate and post a policy for (or against) use of drones within the park system.

5.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an assessment of needs for parks and recreation services in Frankfort. The analysis indicates a variety of parks and facilities are located throughout Frankfort; however, not all amenities are evenly distributed.

The level of service standards outlined at the start of this chapter – and developed with public input from residents of Frankfort – provide a foundational guideline for the number of parks, open space, and recreation facilities needed in Frankfort. Overall, there is demand for more trails (paved and natural), upgraded and maintained on-site amenities, additional programming, and community events. In terms of indoor facilities specifically: senior, community/performing arts, nature, and recreation centers all surfaced repeatedly through public input. In terms of benchmarking too, Frankfort has an opportunity to bring better recreation services through developing an indoor space of some kind.

The geographic analysis of service areas identifies specific areas to target for investment in additional parks and recreation facilities. The mapping analysis shows higher levels of service in the eastern half of the city, generally, with less quality service in South Frankfort and the western part of the community. **The findings described above, combined with public input requesting additional services and improved spaces, underscore the need for improvements to existing facilities and measured development of existing parkland; these pursuits should be the highest priorities for the department moving forward.**

The analyses from this chapter and the preceding chapters provide the foundation for the specific recommendations presented later in this document. Responsive improvements, upgrades, and sustainable maintenance must be the focus, even as some proactive development is explored, to ensure comprehensive quality of life improvements for residents of and visitors to the Capital City. Frankfort is in a good position to confront many of the trends discussed in this chapter that have not yet been addressed. The aging and somewhat diversifying population of Frankfort presents an additional incentive for the city to address many of these trends, including fitness programming, community events, universal access, nature education, and expansion of trails.

³⁴ Wootton, Courtney; Bradley, Michael J.; Ray Neal NRPA. Drones in Parks: It's All About Perspective. <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2018/december/drones-in-parks-its-all-about-perspective/>

DRAFT



6.1 INTRODUCTION

The *2021 Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Master Plan* represents a collective imagination of the future. While the action plan component (Chapter 9) is a detailed account of all the recommendations developed – both operational and capital – to guide investment priorities, the strategic plan component in this chapter is intended to provide the department with a clearly defined purpose and underlying motivation for tackling those action items.

Developed out of all the input gathered during the engage phase, and with full support of the steering committee, this strategic plan articulates a freshly inspired vision, mission, and set of defining values. These strategic elements will help pilot implementation of actions identified in this Master Plan, and thereby shape the future of parks and recreation in Frankfort. Also included at the end of this chapter are goals and objectives. These are incorporated later in the master plan in order to categorize and better define the wide range of recommendations in the action plan.

These strategic plan elements – vision, mission, goals, and subsequent objectives – will be instrumental for bringing the department’s new vision and mission to life.

6.2 VISION

6.2.1 Purpose of a Vision

A vision describes a unique horizon, an intended outcome. It defines a clear standard of accomplishment and in so doing, helps unify effort. A vision should:

1. Provide clear direction
2. Focus effort
3. Guide long-term action
4. Illustrate the department’s purpose
5. Inspire and motivate
6. Visualize an ideal

6.2.2 Proposed Vision for Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites

Fully informed by the values and visioning input generated by the steering committee, and with their support and approval, the following vision statement was crafted for Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites:

A connected community where exceptional parks and programs enrich quality of life for all

6.3 MISSION

6.3.1 Purpose of a Mission

A mission defines the daily work and an enduring purpose. More specifically, a mission should answer questions like what the department does, how, and why it does this. The mission is an action-oriented statement that informs day-to-day action.

Like the vision statement, the mission should be easy to remember and to share with others. It should be the foundation of all departmental decision-making.

6.3.2 Proposed Mission for Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites

Building from the foundational visioning exercise conducted with the Master Plan Steering Committee – and in consideration of the factors described above – the following is the proposed mission statement for Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites moving forward:

Improving lives through unique experiences and beautiful spaces

6.4 VALUES FOR FRANKFORT PARKS, RECREATION, AND HISTORIC SITES

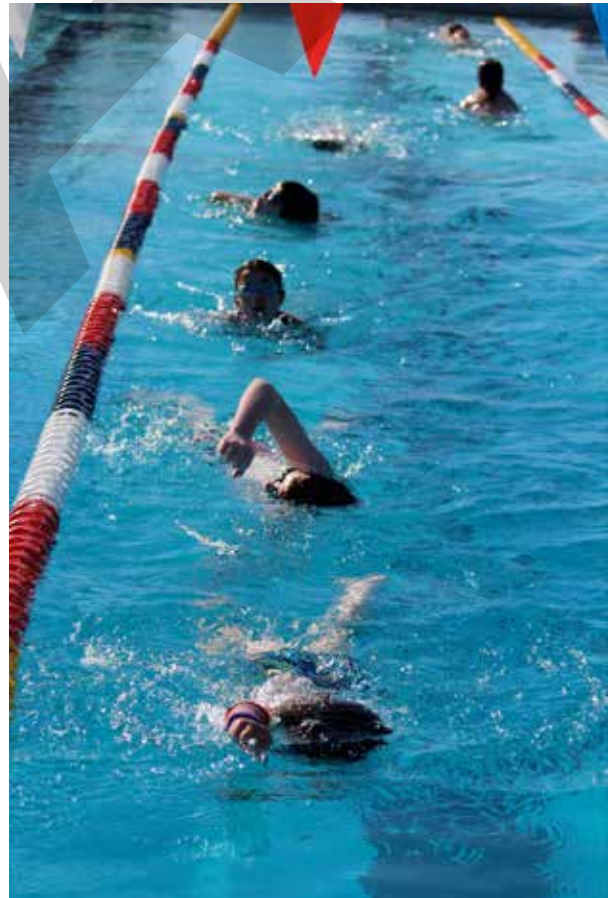
6.4.1 Purpose of Values

An organization's values serve as a "lighthouse" of guiding principles, informed by personal and organizational beliefs. Values are straightforward phrases or words that should:

1. Direct staff conduct
2. Express department ideals
3. Reflect department personality
4. Complement community's aspirations
5. Communicate what is important
6. Ensure quality staff experience
7. Instill positive focus system-wide

6.4.2 Core Values

Core values should be unique to the department and indicative of the attitudes, ambitions, and focus shared by the department and the community. Using insights from the steering committee discussions, and feedback generated through public engagement, the following are offered as foundational values for guiding the future work of the department:



Community Connection – Bridging our social and physical divides

Natural Resources – Utilizing & safeguarding the Kentucky River & our unique biodiversity

Exceptional Spaces – Providing remarkable sites that instill pride in our city

Healthy Living – Offering meaningful resources that inspire & promote our overall wellness

Operational Excellence – Delivering the highest quality of service to our community

Cultural Stewardship – Enriching our city’s historical legacy & creative energy

6.5 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

6.5.1 Function of Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives identify areas of strategic priority and provide the broad, overarching organization for departmental actions. Together, goals and objectives:

1. Provide focus for actions and aspirations
2. Shape a designated timeframe for improvements
3. Create direction for investments of time, skills, and resources
4. Clarify what the department will and will not do

Generally, goals describe elements of the vision, defining what is achievable through the daily execution of the mission. Objectives – and therefore specific strategies or recommendations – fit within the scope of each goal.

Goals:

1. Overarching areas of strategic priority
2. Broad descriptions of intent
3. Rooted in outcome, rather than specific activity
4. Longest timeframe (i.e., as long as it takes to accomplish the vision)

Objectives:

1. Frame individual actions
2. More detailed description of what needs to be done
3. Measurable metrics (e.g., “increase,” “reduce,” “consolidate,” “improve,” “distribute,” etc.)
4. Variable timeframes (0-2, 3-5, 6-10 years)

6.5.2 Proposed Goals and Objectives for Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites

The following goals and objectives are intended to help guide improvements, operations, and services in parks and recreation in Frankfort over the next 10 years.

Goal 1: Connect Frankfort

Eliminate social and physical barriers through accessible spaces, welcoming events, and vibrant neighborhoods

Objective 1.1 – **Trails & Wayfinding**: Provide trails that clearly link destinations



Objective 1.2 – **Built Environment:** Responsibly provide facilities to engage and connect the community

Objective 1.3 – **Events:** Collaborate to provide possibilities for interaction, fun, & learning

Objective 1.4 – **Neighborhood Vibrancy:** Utilize parks and programs to uplift and cherish local neighborhoods

Goal 2: Support Healthy Lifestyles

Provide facilities & programs that encourage physical health & mental wellbeing

Objective 2.1 – **Athletics:** Provide regionally attractive sports events & facilitate locally-focused opportunities

Objective 2.2 – **Active Lifestyles:** Encourage exploration & growth through diverse physical activities

Objective 2.3 – **Wellness:** Foster social cohesion, educational opportunities, and personal health through creative, locally-sourced resources

Goal 3: Champion Frankfort’s Natural and Cultural Resources

Uphold the city’s abundant natural & cultural treasures as central to our city

Objective 3.1 – **The Kentucky River:** Enhance community connection to the water through responsible, conscientious development

Objective 3.2 – **Stewardship:** Set the standard for species protection, land management, and wildlife conservation

Objective 3.3 – **History, Arts, & Culture:** Help to create community vibrancy & celebrate Frankfort’s uniqueness

Goal 4: Legacy of Excellence

Cultivate pride in the Capital City by delivering signature parks, creative programs, and collaborative relationships that enhance life for all

Objective 4.1 – **Staff Development & Retention:** Nurture an energized workforce through access to adequate resources, training, & other opportunities

Objective 4.2 – **Operations & Maintenance:** Improve efficiency & fiscal sustainability by establishing clear standards of performance and recurring assessments

Objective 4.3 – **Marketing & Promotion:** Utilize innovative and inclusive outreach methods

Objective 4.4 – **Partnerships:** Prioritize relationship-building and information-sharing to effectively tackle collective goals across the community

6.6 STRATEGIES

As already mentioned, specific strategies are provided for each of the objectives listed above later in this report. These strategies will be discussed in Chapter 7 (organized by category, like “programming” and “facility improvements”) as well as listed in the Action Plan (Chapter 9), which also identifies a timeframe, responsible party, and potential funding source.



SYSTEMWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic will impact government budgets for years to come. Already, agencies across the country are facing fiscal pressures or receiving requests to cut their spending.¹ The pandemic impacted how and if many users were able to experience the parks. In this time of public health inequity, social rupture, and economic disruption, people everywhere are living out the effects of having (or not having) access to open space and parks.² As the coronavirus pandemic blazed an uncharted trail through communities in 2020, public parks and open space provided respite, solace, and connection. Parks have helped people cope – and they will help communities recover.³

It is vital that local governments resist the temptation to cut services especially as they begin to recover from the pandemic. The revelations emerging in this time of crisis will be no less true in the future. Families, seniors, youth, and everyone in between will always need ample opportunity to connect socially, to practice healthy habits, and to enjoy all the benefits of time in nature. Parks and recreation agencies across the nation have a critical role to play in a brighter, more equitable future.

Bearing all of this in mind, the recommendations in this chapter are intended to guide the city of Frankfort through a post-pandemic future. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be felt for many years, even if not financially. The pandemic has changed how, and in some cases whether, people use parks. The following recommendations are presented with the vitality and durability of Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites at the core.

This chapter presents observations and findings gained through the first three phases of this Master Planning process – Evaluate, Engage, and Envision. These systemwide recommendations are divided into the following categories:

- Existing Park Improvements
- Outdoor Athletic Fields and Courts
- Trails and Connectivity

¹ Roth, Kevin. How COVID-19 Impacts Parks and Recreation Funding. NRPA. <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2020/may/how-covid-19-impacts-park-and-recreation-funding/>. Accessed November 2020.

² McCormick, Kathleen. Room to Roam: The Pandemic Has Underscored the Need for More Urban Parks; So What Comes Next? Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. <https://www.lincolinst.edu/publications/articles/2020-10-room-roam-pandemic-urban-parks-what-comes-next>. Accessed November 2020.

³ A Trust for Public Land Special Report: Parks and the Pandemic. <https://www.tpl.org/sites/default/files/Parks%20and%20Pandemic%20-%20TPL%20special%20report.pdf>

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- New Park and Facility Development
 - Natural Areas, Open Space, and Nature Education
 - Programming
 - Operations, Maintenance, and Promotion
 - Budget and Funding
 - Continuity with Other Planning Documents and Efforts
 - Partnerships and Sponsorships

Recommendations by park are provided in Chapter 8, along with detailed cost estimates for the proposed improvements.

7.2 EXISTING PARK IMPROVEMENTS

7.2.1 Observations and Analysis

Through the public input process, Frankfort residents voiced a strong desire for improvements to existing parks. According to the Mail Survey, 86% of households support upgrades to existing parks – the most support for any action – and upgrades to existing parks were also by far the most important action. When asked, the majority of households would allocate the largest amount of funds to upgrade existing parks. Sixty-one percent (61%) of households who visited parks over the past year rated park conditions as good, but only 15% rated them excellent and 21% rated them fair. These numbers are far below the National Benchmarking by ETC Institute, which shows an average of 29% for excellent. Combine these numbers with the resounding support for improvements and it is clear the Frankfort community desires better quality parks and improved opportunities for recreation.

As far as specific upgrades to existing parks, the top response in both Mail and Web Survey results was restrooms. Security cameras and lighting ranked third for preferred improvements to existing parks – a substantial percentage of households indicated security or safety concerns as a reason for not using parks and facilities (15% Mail Survey, 21% Web Survey). Other support features such as seating/benches, shade structures, trash/recycling receptacles, drinking fountains, trees & landscaping, and grills were also requested by many households. While some Frankfort parks already have these amenities, many are in need of replacement, and residents tend to notice the areas where they are missing. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic has put pressure to accelerate transitioning from standard drinking fountains to bottle filler stations. Additionally, accessibility deficiencies were noted throughout the park system – by planning staff during park assessments but also by the public during engagement efforts – with many issues stemming from lack of passable sidewalks.

In the Mail Survey, playground equipment ranked in the top 10 for improvements to existing parks, a need reflected in the site assessment results which identified an overall need for upgraded and improved play equipment. The playgrounds in the city generally lack variation (e.g., themes and features), and nearly all are reaching the end of their useful life. Poor condition of facilities was identified by both surveys as the second most common reason for not using the city's parks.

In terms of support features, most elements throughout the system are aging and in need of replacement. In several parks, structures – like decking, bridges, and fencing – are in such poor condition that they may become hazardous if not replaced in the near future; the majority of these amenities are located in Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve and Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill. However, beyond the aged items, several structures and features at River View Park were either severely damaged or destroyed by flooding that occurred early in 2021. Replacing these features will not only address safety concerns and attractiveness but will also reduce the amount of maintenance staff time currently required in responding to repair requests.

The need for improved and consistent signage throughout the park system was apparent early on in the planning process. Many parks lack entrance signage, especially at sites with multiple entrances. Wayfinding signage that exists within parks is limited and inconsistent in appearance, whereas wayfinding between parks and across the city is also lacking. Numerous stakeholder groups discussed needs for various types of signage: entrance, wayfinding, interpretive (e.g., educational, historical, etc.), and informative (e.g., bulletins, program

opportunities, and development updates). Looking forward, the Downtown Frankfort Inc. (DFI) and Frankfort/Franklin County Tourist & Convention Commission (Visit Frankfort) have already begun to implement citywide wayfinding using established signage standards and branding guidelines. Any signage including historic content should be developed in partnership with the city's newly appointed Historic Preservation Officer and other historic preservation entities (e.g., Franklin County Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation Kentucky, and others).

Any plan produced during or after the 2020 pandemic year will necessarily be different from those completed pre-pandemic. Among its numerous impacts, not least is how the pandemic revealed an incredible demand for outdoor gathering spaces. With many gatherings and activities moved outside, more people are realizing the pleasure of being in the open air, and there will likely be continued demand for this experience. Frankfort offers picnic shelters or pavilions in seven parks (Dolly Graham, Todd, Capitol View, East Frankfort, Juniper Hill, Cove Spring, and Fort Hill), all of which have been highly trafficked during the pandemic (with capacity restrictions). Yet, even before the heavy use during COVID-19, many of these structures needed improvements or replacement. And while other parks accommodate outdoor experiences, public input indicated more spaces are needed. Bearing this community need in mind, any future picnic areas should be designed for both rental and potential program use. Culinary cooking classes are an emerging program trend; an outdoor kitchen built into a new shelter could not only provide an opportunity to host things like healthy cooking demonstrations but could also justify a higher rental rate.

About a third (34%) of the population lives in areas with "High" or "Medium-High" service levels, and only 11% live in areas with "Low" or "Medium-Low" service levels (see Composite Service Areas map, Figure 5.13 in Chapter 5). This relatively high level of service explains the support for improvements to existing parks over the demand for the development of new facilities. Residents are generally happy with the city's parks; however, they want to see the spaces updated and improved. What need there is for new parks is limited to some smaller Neighborhood Parks strategically located in underserved areas, as well as thoughtful land acquisition to help accommodate facilities not currently available (see Section 7.7).

Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites has not yet implemented many technology-related improvements at parks. As noted in Chapter 5, security cameras can measure activity levels in the parks in addition to providing security and preventing vandalism. Frankfort still has room to better utilize technology in the parks, such as park apps and mobile device charging stations. In recent history, the city discussed developing an app that could provide information about parks, programs, events, and history for both residents and visitors. This would not only be a great opportunity to partner with local organizations, it would also enhance user experience of the parks. Few Frankfort parks offer Wi-Fi hotspots, though many households indicated a need; the city should continue its existing effort to expand public Wi-Fi access (e.g., Old Capitol hotspot) and add hotspots at the parks, including signage.

Any individual park undergoing significant development should have a master plan finalized prior to new development or redevelopment. This will help ensure facilities are accessible, complementary features are located appropriately, and, most importantly, desired features fit on the site. Planning is a critical tool for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of maintenance, making it easier to be proactive, instead of reactive, in the face of challenges and changing circumstances.

7.2.2 Recommendations

1. Add support features throughout the park system such as seating/benches, shade structures, trash/recycling receptacles, drinking fountains, trees & landscaping, and grills
 - Include bottle fillers at all new drinking fountains and whenever existing features are replaced
2. Replace aging decking, bridges, fencing, and other elements throughout the parks, most notably at Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve and Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill
3. Develop a plan to restore River View Park and increase resilience to future flood events
4. Add or improve restrooms throughout the parks
5. Add and upgrade signage – entrance, wayfinding, interpretive, and informative – throughout the park system
 - Incorporate current city branding into a new signage package

-
6. Replace dated playgrounds, including separate age 2-5 equipment, or add where unavailable
 - Consider themed playground equipment, such as climbing rocks, sensory features, etc., potentially providing for marketing and resident/visitor photo opportunities
 7. Incorporate nature play elements as part of playground development and replacement, especially in more passive park areas
 8. Add and upgrade picnic shelters at parks to increase overall access to these facilities, as well as make them more inviting, and to facilitate opportunities for outdoor community gatherings
 9. Add Wi-Fi access to parks; promote park hotspots to ensure awareness
 10. Upgrade and utilize technology in parks for the benefit of both patrons and staff (see Chapter 5, Technology, Subsection 5.7.5)
 11. Pursue and implement an ADA Accessibility Audit of all facilities, programs, and communications
 12. Improve ADA access throughout the park system, ensuring accessible walkways to all facilities and seating areas
 13. Prepare Park Master Plans for existing parks and any future parks prior to development of facilities to ensure that added features are complementary, desired, and fully accessible
 14. Acquire land contiguous to existing parks, if it becomes available, to allow for additional features and increase the total amount of parkland available to residents with minimal impact to system maintenance and operations

7.3 OUTDOOR ATHLETIC FIELDS AND COURTS

7.3.1 Observations and Analyses

Compared to the benchmarks, Frankfort provides a much higher level of service for youth softball fields and youth baseball fields. The city also has a higher service level for multipurpose rectangular fields. Despite this level of service, the department has more requests for fields than they can fill, likely because they serve county residents as well who are not included in the population totals for the benchmarking. The site assessments (see Chapter 3) indicate that many of the fields need improvements, and 66% of households (according to the Mail Survey) support upgrading youth athletic fields, including adding lighting.

The three basketball courts offer a similar if slightly higher level of service as the benchmarks (one per 7,300 compared to a median of one per 7,800). The four tennis courts also provide a lower level of service than the benchmarks (7,300 vs. 4,000). However, the 16 courts provided by the school system are available for public use and more than make up for any deficit. The city has recently added pickleball courts – a fast-growing sport – at East Frankfort Park but the demand is expected to keep growing. Finally, though the sand volleyball courts at Juniper Hill Park are heavily used, they appear to be meeting community needs.

As the makeup of the population of Frankfort changes, especially as diversification trends continue, needs will shift. When parks are improved, there will likely be opportunities to meet these changing needs. Optimizing multipurpose space at fields and courts will be a useful tool for the city to use in the face of limited space for expansion.

7.3.2 Athletic Fields

Frankfort has diamond fields at Capitol View Park and East Frankfort Park, with the largest number of fields (6) at Capitol View. The city is also responsible for maintaining four diamond fields at Lakeview Park (Franklin County) as well as Paul Weddle Field at State Stadium. These fields provide a higher level of service than the benchmarks, although the city facilities are also providing service to county residents. Current needs are largely met by the existing quantity, but all fields need improvement.

The city has five full-sized multipurpose rectangular fields at Capitol View Park; these fields also provide a higher level of service than the benchmark communities. Unlike for diamond fields, Franklin County does offer an additional seven fields that are not maintained by Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites. The fields

in Capitol View Park need various improvements; lighting has recently been upgraded at two of the Sower soccer fields, but the remaining fields are in serious need of repair and lighting.

Because national trends indicate faster growth of sports that use multipurpose rectangular fields than those using diamond fields, the need for multipurpose fields will likely continue to grow. Several stakeholders indicated a desire for artificial turf fields. This type of field can better withstand heavy use, limiting turf damage and reducing the number of rainouts due caused by poor drainage. Adding two artificial turf fields at Capitol View Park would help meet expanding need, improving and extending turf durability, while also potentially accommodating tournaments and decreasing the maintenance load. As the makeup of the population of Frankfort changes and the population continues diversifying, needs will also shift. Optimizing multipurpose space can be an important tool for the city to use in facing limited space and funding for expansion.

7.3.3 Game Courts

The limited availability of parkland and the costs required to maintain facilities make multiuse spaces even more important. As noted previously, pickleball is a rising trend in parks and recreation across the country, due in part to its popularity with older residents. Frankfort has responded to this trend with the courts at East Frankfort Park. However, the tennis courts at Juniper Hill Park provide additional opportunities for making multiuse courts by adding pickleball lines. While sharing court space with tennis is a good opportunity to provide multiple uses of space, it is recommended that the courts be lined not to share nets due to the different net heights between the two sports. If the nets are shared, any pickleball game would fall short of the national guidelines for competition.



Futsal Court

Futsal is another growing sport in parks and recreation due in part to limited field space. Often futsal courts can be developed on old tennis courts or on whatever underused paved area there might be in a park. Futsal courts give users a chance to play soccer where space is otherwise limited and provide for a faster paced game. Potential locations for futsal courts would be Juniper Hill Park (convert two tennis courts), the former tennis court area at East Frankfort Park, and Dolly Graham Park. None of these parks offer multipurpose rectangular fields, nor do they have the space needed for their development. All could provide pickleball lining.

7.3.4 Recommendations

1. Consider adding basketball courts in areas of the city where none are available
2. Expand and maintain field capacity at Frankfort parks without adding new fields
 - Consider adding artificial turf at two multipurpose rectangular fields at Capitol View Park
 - Replace lighting at East Frankfort Park, Capitol View Park, and Paul Weddle Field at State Stadium; ensure all new lighting is energy efficient and calibrated to reduce light pollution
 - Upgrade conditions at all fields to ensure longevity and potentially attract tournaments (see Section 7.4 and Chapter 8 for more details)
3. Add pickleball lining to the tennis courts at Juniper Hill Park, to provide more multiuse facilities and to meet growing demand



Pickleball at East Frankfort Park

4. Consider converting two tennis courts at Juniper Hill Park into a futsal court, potentially with additional lines for pickleball (or another in-demand sport)
 - Consider adding a futsal courts where there is underutilized paved (or previously paved) surface to best meet increasing demand – former tennis area at East Frankfort Park and former volleyball court at Dolly Graham Park are potential locations
5. Ensure ADA accessibility to all athletic fields and in every spectator area, including connecting pathways
6. Consider future field needs during renovations and improvements to parks and athletic fields – make multiuse spaces wherever possible

7.4 CAPITOL VIEW PARK SPORTS COMPLEX ANALYSIS

The city of Frankfort requested that the Master Plan include a component to analyze the potential for the Capitol View Park to serve as an attractor for sports tourism. To begin this analysis, the Consultants performed case studies of other complexes that attract tournaments. Three complexes are analyzed in detail and then a list is included which identifies other sports complexes in the Commonwealth. This list is not all inclusive as there are other complexes.

Table 7.1 illustrates key information from the complexes in Kentucky (Elizabethtown, Danville, and Muhlenberg County) and one in West Virginia (Bridgeport). A key factor to consider is that the Elizabethtown Sports Complex and Bridgeport were designed primarily as Sports Tourism generators and funded through tourism funds with economic impact on the community as the key intention. In contrast, Muhlenberg County Park, Millennium Park complex, and others listed below are designed for local use (primary) and for tournaments (secondary).

Table 7.1: Sports Complex Case Studies

	Bridgeport Recreation Complex (WV)	Millennium Park (Danville)	Muhlenberg County Park	Elizabethtown Sports Park ^{5,6}	Capitol View Park
Facilities	4 Diamond Fields 3 Rectangular Fields 1 Shelter 1 Basketball Court Walking Trail	8 Diamond Fields 5 Rectangular Fields 2 Basketball Courts 1 Skatepark 2 Shelters Walking Trail	5 Diamond Fields 5 Tennis Courts 2 Basketball Courts 2 Sand Volleyball Walking Trail	12 Diamond Fields 12 Rectangular Fields 1 Miracle Field 2 Artificial Turf Fields Walking Trail	6 Diamond Fields 5 Rectangular Fields 2 Basketball Courts Multipurpose Trails
Cost (Year Opened)	\$8,000,000 (2012)	\$4,400,000 (2000)	\$7,300,000 (2015)	\$29,000,000 (2012)	TBD
1 Hour Population	404,471	774,131	331,418	1,252,480	1,825,261
2 Hour Population	2,740,939	3,023,708	2,811,981	3,822,889	4,857,712
Visitors/Year	25,000	20,000	20,000	85,000	TBD
Number of Tournaments	12-15 ¹	12-14 ¹	15-16 ¹	70 ⁷	24 ⁷
Teams/Tournament	15-90	25-65	20-40	30-40	20-40 (Estimate)
Maintenance Budget	\$200,000	\$158,000	\$50,000 (4)	\$1,700,000	TBD
Rental/Field/Day	\$200 1 st field / \$175 additional field	\$125	\$60	\$200 Rectangular \$175 Diamonds	TBD
Cost Lights/Field/Hour	\$20	No additional charge	No additional charge	\$30/\$40 Artificial Turf	TBD
Annual Rental Income	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$6,000	\$1,000,000	TBD
Concession Revenue	\$0 ²	\$20,000 (net)	\$40,000 (net)	\$200,000 (net)	TBD
Staff	Full Time: 2 Part Time: 5 ³	Full Time: 2 Part Time: 3	Full Time: 2 Part Time: 1	Full Time: 10 ⁸	TBD

1. Baseball/Softball only
 2. Little League operates concessions
 3. 2 during tournaments; 2 Apr- Oct; 1 Landscape
 4. Schools pay utilities; assist with maintenance cost
 5. Financed by hotel/restaurant tax
 6. Local use is 45%
 7. Diamonds & Rectangle Fields
 8. Operations Mgr., Turf Mgr., 5 turf staff, Concession Mgr.

Table 7.1 shows how Frankfort would sustain a larger population living between a 1 - or 2 - hour drive of the park. It also has diverse potential by providing both diamond fields and rectangular fields; this variety could support a wide range of tournaments. It is important to note that both Elizabethtown in Kentucky and Bridgeport in West Virginia have full support from their local convention and visitor bureau staff, and they actively coordinate to attract tournaments years in advance.

In the region, there are several examples of complexes that already compete to attract tournaments. Owensboro recently completed a full redevelopment of its Jack C. Fisher Complex including all artificial turf infields, new irrigation in the outfields, fresh spectator amenities, and more. That facility has successfully hosted several regional and state tournaments, including KHSAA Softball Championships. In terms of competitive site features, many of these regional complexes are pursuing family-oriented amenities that attract a wider variety of users during tournaments but can also bring in visitors beyond tournament events. For example, the Horse Fork Soccer Complex in Daviess County has added a splash pad facility in the park, offering an additional experience for families and visitors to enjoy besides sports-related attractions.

As it is currently designed, Capitol View Park is team sports-oriented with the addition of mountain bike trails for individual recreation. To make Capitol View a successful regionally-competitive complex, Frankfort will need to invest in developing quality non-sports and family-oriented amenities in the park in order to stand out among the region's existing sports complexes. Significant preliminary investment is necessary before the city can market the site as a tournament-ready sports complex.

7.4.1 Other Kentucky Communities with Sports Complexes

The following facilities represent the current competitive market for sports complexes in the state. Frankfort will need to develop and improve Capitol View in a way that is unique among these competitors in order to attract tournaments.

Bowling Green

Lovers Lane Soccer Complex

- 15 rectangular fields

Warren County

Ephram White Park

- 4 diamond fields

Michael Buchanan Park

- 8 diamond fields
- 2 rectangular fields (soccer, football)

Mt. Washington

Mt. Washington Sports Complex & WesBanco Amphitheater

- 4 diamond fields
- 2 rectangular fields (soccer/football)

Hopkinsville

Tie Breaker Park

- 5 diamond fields (softball)

Harrodsburg

Anderson Dean Park

- 8 diamond fields
- 6 rectangular fields (soccer)

Carter County

Sports Complex opening in 2021

- 4 diamond fields
- 5 rectangular fields (soccer/football)

Owensboro/Daviess County

Jack C. Fisher Sports Complex

- 5 diamond fields (artificial turf)

Horse Fork Creek Soccer Complex

- 9 rectangular fields

Panther Creek Park

- 9 diamond fields

Yellow Creek Park

- 5 diamond fields

Marshall County

Mike Miller Park

- 7 rectangular fields (soccer)
- 5 diamond fields

Lexington

Cardinal Run Park

- 8 diamond fields

Masterson Station Park

- 14-18 rectangular fields (soccer)

Paducah

McCracken County Sports Complex

Under Design as of 2021- \$40 million estimate

- 8 diamond fields
- 6 rectangular fields

7.4.2 Potential for Sports Tourism

Note that many of these venues offer more fields than Capitol View Park. In addition, Franklin County is beginning the process to consider developing tourism-attracting facilities at Lakeview Park. A prudent course of action would be for the county and city to partner to attract and schedule tournaments, thus offering a larger number of facilities and attracting larger tournaments, which would provide greater benefit to the local economy.

As an estimate, the city could potentially host approximately 24 tournaments per year with an average of 20-40 teams per tournament. These tournaments would require use of both the upgraded diamond fields and rectangular fields. To achieve this quantity of annual tournaments, Frankfort would need to pursue tournaments for at least softball, baseball, soccer, lacrosse, football, and Ultimate Frisbee. This number of tournaments could attract about 36,000 visitors to the park. Plus, by driving up tournament use, the city could potentially see a dramatic increase in the number of families return to the park for general use. Economic impacts will vary depending on the length of stay and distance traveled by tournament attendees.

The city must also consider the impact of using the park for tournaments on weekends. Local teams will no longer have access to these fields for games or practices on the weekends. A balance and coordinated schedule will be required to keep all parties satisfied.

7.4.3 Pro-Forma Information

Table 7.2 estimates the potential attendance and direct spending in the community for the scenario of hosting 24 tournaments per year. In this scenario, the tournaments would attract nearly 62,000 visitor days, fill 2,800 hotel nights, and result in over \$2 million in direct spending in the community annually.

Table 7.3 identifies the potential income and expenses for the complex if it is upgraded to attract tournaments and can host 14 tournaments on the diamond fields and 10 on the rectangular fields each year. This table indicates the possibility to basically break even on the operations of the facility. Therefore, the primary benefits are the economic impact to the community by attracting visitors to Frankfort and promoting community pride by being able to host tournaments in a quality facility.

Table 7.2: Estimated Attendance and Spending for Capitol View Park Tournament Complex

Attendance		Estimate	Notes
a	Events per Year (Average)	24	
b	Number of Teams (Average)	30	
c	Players/Coaches per team	16	
d	Total participants	12,000	a x b x c
e	Days of Tournament	2	
f	Multiplier for additional family members	2.6	2.6 for youth - 1.7 for adults
g	Total Attendees	31,000	d x f
h	Total Attendee Days	62,000	e x g
i	Percent Local Attendees	50%	
j	Percent Non-Local Attendees	50%	
k	# Non-Local Attendees	16,000	g x j
Spending		Estimate	Notes
l	Hotel Nights per Tourney	2	
m	Persons per Room	2.9	
n	Hotel Rooms	2,800	j x k
o	Hotel Cost per Night	96	GSA Rate
p	Total Hotel Income	\$270,000	n x o
q	Local Hotel Tax (3%)	\$8,100	p x 3%
r	Food and Beverage (F&B)	\$41.25	GSA Rate Per day/Person = \$55 for full day & \$41.25 half day/travel day
s	Total F&B	\$1,280,000	h x r x 50% for leakage
y	Miscellaneous Spending	14	per person
u	Total Misc. Spending	\$434,000	h x j x t
v	Total Direct Spending	\$1,980,000	Spending in the Community

Table 7.3: Estimated Revenue and Expenses for Capitol View Park Tournament Complex

REVENUE	Estimate
Parking	
Total Attendees	62,000
People per Vehicle	3
Total Number of Vehicles	20,667
Deduct for Coach's & Player's Vehicles	50%
Adjusted Number of Vehicles	10,333
Charge per Vehicle	\$5.00
Total Parking Income	\$52,000
Tournament Fees	
% Tournaments Hosted by City	25%
% Hosted by Others - Fields Rented	75%
Total Teams in City Hosted Tournaments	180
Entry Fee per Team	\$200
Income from Teams	\$36,000
Field Usage/Rentals	
Rectangular Fields	
Rectangular Field Rental per Tourney	2
Rectangular Field Days per Tourney	2
Rectangular Field Rental Total	30
Rectangular Field Fee per Day	\$100
Rectangular Field Rental Total	\$12,000
Diamond Fields	
Diamond Field Rental per Tourney	4
Diamond Field Days per Tourney	2
Diamond Field Rental Total	84

Table 7.3: Estimated Revenue and Expenses for Capitol View Park Tournament Complex (Continued)

REVENUE	Estimate
Diamond Field Fee per Day	\$100
Diamond Field Rental Total	\$8,400
Concessions	
Total Attendees	31,000
Spending per Day	\$7
Total Concession Income	\$217,000
Sponsorships (Annual)	
Sponsor Fee with Sign	\$800
Number of Sponsors	20
Sponsor Fees	\$16,000
TOTAL ANNUAL INCOME	\$340,000
EXPENSES	
Park Maintenance - Annual	\$200,000
Rectangular Tournament Days	20
Diamond Field Tournament Days	28
Total Tournament Days	48
Tourney Staff Per Day (12 Hours @\$15)	\$8,640
Concession Staff (2 @\$12 x 12 hours)	\$13,824
Utilities (Annual-Estimated)	\$100,000
TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENSES	\$320,000
COST RECOVERY (Revenue/Expenses)	106%

7.4.4 Recommendations if a Complex for Sports Tourism is Pursued

To enter the sports tourism market in the state, the city of Frankfort will need to invest in significant improvements to Capitol View Park. It is important to note that the state is the current owner of the park property; the city leases the site. Before any substantial investment is made, Frankfort should pursue either transfer of ownership or an extended lease term of the property. Beyond the potential for developing the park as a sports complex, general site improvements and recommendations are defined more specifically in Chapter 8.

1. Pursue either transfer of ownership or an extended lease term of the property prior to committing to improvements to attract tournaments
2. Upgrade all athletic fields with improved turf, irrigation, lighting, dugouts, restrooms, concessions, and spectator amenities (specific tournament needs by field in Chapter 8)
3. Convert at least two Sower Soccer Fields to artificial turf; expand seating to meet KHSAA requirements
4. Add lighting at Harrod Field (football) and install artificial turf to better accommodate demands for practice space
5. Upgrade parking at Figg and Fannin Fields; ensure ADA compliant access
6. Improve quality of all restrooms and concessions (utilize recently added sewer lines)
7. Construct paved walking trail around perimeter of the park
8. Add large all-access playground/splash pad combination facility to attract families
9. Convert former caretaker area into group picnic area including shelters, small playground, grills, etc.
10. Upgrade access between Pewitt and Sullivan Fields to the riverfront beach area including access for canoes/kayaks and a parking lot (pending flood repairs and mitigation)
11. Extend existing park trails to connect to riverfront, providing increased access and improved viewsheds
12. Consider converting infield at diamond fields to artificial turf to reduce rainout events and long-term maintenance costs (long-term if tournament complex is successful)

7.5 TRAILS AND CONNECTIVITY

7.5.1 Observations and Analyses

Throughout the country, trails consistently emerge at the top for desired improvements, even in jurisdictions that have an extensive network of trails. In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic has only emphasized the demand for trails as park usage rates skyrocketed, and trails were a top provider of outdoor, physically-distanced activities. Frankfort is no different; residents have clearly communicated their preference for more trail connectivity, through stakeholder discussions, in-park engagement, and survey responses. Notably, Cove Spring Park experienced an unmistakable increase in usage, drawing many more visitors even from outside of Frankfort. According to the benchmarking in Chapter 2, Frankfort has 6.7 miles of trail per 10,000 population, well above the median of the benchmark communities (3.1 miles). However, most of the 19.5 miles of trails are located in Capitol View Park (9.6 miles) and Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve (7 miles). Franklin County offers another 1.7 miles of trails at Lakeview Park, while other entities like the Salato Wildlife Center and West Sixth Farm also offer trails near Frankfort.

In the survey results, trails were the second ranked improvements at existing parks (after restrooms). The highest percentage of Frankfort households (66%) expressed a need for walking & hiking trails, which then ranked third for unmet needs (over 4,300 households). Most households (74%) were supportive of developing new and connecting existing trails in Frankfort. Additionally, walking & hiking trails ranked first in the Priority Investment Rankings (by ETC) for new facilities. Walking & hiking trails also ranked as the most important facility in general to Frankfort households with 42% ranking trails as one of the three most important facilities (in fact, trails outranked the second most important facility by 20%).

About 26% of the population lives within a 10-minute walk from a Neighborhood Park; another 12% can walk to a school property with recreation amenities. Many households indicated the desire for better connectivity, despite only 4% of households indicating they do not use parks because they are too far from their home. One way Frankfort can improve 10-minute walk access is by expanding connections to existing parks. Potential linkages exist between East Frankfort Park, Cove Spring Park, Lakeview Park, and other sites, any of which would increase access without the city having to build new parks.

Need for mountain bike trails in the area is mostly met between the trails at Capitol View Park and the trails offered by West Sixth Farm to the north of Frankfort. Through public input, many residents indicated they would like to see the proposed advanced mountain bike trails at Leslie Morris Park. These trails were planned and partially constructed by Kentucky Mountain Bike Association (KYMBA). This advanced course would provide another attractive trail opportunity in Frankfort while simultaneously utilizing an unused portion of the park and providing more opportunities for the public to engage with this unique park. However, recent discoveries in the park indicate that historic elements are more widespread than previously believed. Accordingly these trails should likely be limited to pedestrian used to limit potential impact. The city must facilitate open communication with the Franklin County Trust for Historic Preservation and other stakeholders before the trails are officially opened to ensure adherence to any relevant historic preservation process guidelines (see Appendix D for details).

Frankfort's *Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan* was last updated in 2016. The plan was first conducted by local nonprofit WalkBike Frankfort, and the organization continues to actively promote the plan and advocate for better connectivity throughout Frankfort. The plan provides recommendations for a citywide trail system that would connect with Franklin County destinations. The document should be updated to identify potential corridors and linkages between the city's parks. Also, the update should include formalized standards for design, signage, and maintenance (including staffing requirements) to ensure trail experiences are consistent throughout Frankfort. Updating and implementing Frankfort's *Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan* will help in responding to demands for citywide trails and connectivity; it would also be reinforced by the needs identified in this *2021 Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Master Plan*.

The effort to establish a trail system coincides with the "10-Minute Walk Campaign" led by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), Trust for Public Land (TPL), and Urban Land Institute – a national movement supported by hundreds of communities across the country to ensure everyone has walkable access to parks and trails.⁴ Trail and connectivity improvements in Frankfort will establish safe routes, create

⁴ NRPA, TFPL, and ULI's 10-Minute Walk campaign: <https://10minutewalk.org/>

alternate means of transportation, increase access to parks and destinations throughout the city, as well as contribute to an overall improved sense of community cohesion.

7.5.2 Recommendations

1. Update Frankfort's *Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan* to include identified park linkages along with standards for design, signage, and maintenance
2. Add paved trail loops within existing parks that lack but can accommodate this facility (e.g., East Frankfort and Capitol View); include paved trails in any future parks
3. Consider adding trail lighting to the trail in River View Park to enable extended use during fall and winter months
4. Improve existing trail surfaces to enhance longevity and ensure proper accessibility
5. Finalize and permit the proposed advanced trails in Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill following open communication with the county's Preservation Trust and University of Kentucky Department of Archeology to ensure guidelines are followed and construction avoids historic areas in the park
6. Improve connectivity between parks, adjacent neighborhoods, and other destinations (eg., Downtown) by adding connecting paths where possible
7. Consider signing on to the 10-Minute Walk Mission by the TPL and NRPA to show the city's commitment to connectivity and access to parks

7.6 NEW PARK AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

7.6.1 Observations and Analyses

Trends indicate a slowly growing population in Frankfort from 1980 to 2010 that has stabilized at about 29,000. Limited growth is expected in the near future. While the total population is not expected to grow substantially, the composition continues to change. The city has done fairly well at keeping pace with trends but has not met all of the changing needs of residents which is a reason for which this Master Plan was authorized.

The median age in Frankfort (40.1) has increased substantially since 2000 (36.2), similar to Kentucky and the USA. The population age 65 and over has increased as a percentage since 2000 and is expected to exceed 20% by 2025. At the same time, the percentage of children (under age 18) is expected to continue to decline to under 20%, and the city will have more seniors than children. While facilities for children will remain important, demand for senior activities will continue to increase.

Like most communities in the USA, educational attainment has increased in Frankfort since 2000 with about a third (32%) of the population attaining a bachelor's degree or above. Income has also increased over the same over this period but is lower than the comparisons and has not matched inflation. In contrast, income in the comparison geographies has kept pace with inflation. The city, although still largely white, has become slightly more diverse since 2010 with the largest growth in the Hispanic population. These demographic changes will likely continue and often lead to changing recreation needs. The needs of specific demographic groups should be addressed during the individual park master planning process.

According to the benchmarking presented in Chapter 2, Frankfort provides far more acres of parkland per thousand population (25.5) than the benchmark median (9.7), but a much lower amount of the land is developed at 36%, compared to 82%. These numbers indicate that Frankfort has more parkland than other communities, but the parks contain more natural areas and fewer developed facilities. These numbers also indicate that more of the existing parkland could be developed while maintaining a higher level of natural space than other communities. While most of the city is well served by parks, according to the service area analysis (Chapter 5), some areas would benefit from additional Neighborhood Parks.

7.6.2 New and Upgraded Parks

New parks would increase access in lower service level areas in Frankfort, but development at existing parkland in underserved areas could meet many of these needs. The Thorn Hill Playground property is already owned by the city but is not officially part of the Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites inventory. The park is in

poor condition and receives minimal maintenance. It does, however, have the potential to serve as a small Neighborhood Park or Mini Park in this underserved part of Frankfort. The park should be officially brought into the park system to provide a variety of amenities for residents nearby.

The Holmes Street Playground (former Leathers Field) is another existing property with the potential to become an official city park. Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites currently maintains the small playground on the property, but the remainder of the 7-acre property is largely unused at present. The playground is reaching the end of its useful life, and visibility into the park is currently poor. These deficiencies can be addressed, and the site has space to offer amenities that cannot be accommodated by other existing properties. Additionally, this property is along the Holmes Street corridor, identified by the city as an area for investment. The property is still owned by the Frankfort Independent School District, so a partnership or acquisition would be required before the property could be improved.

While adding facilities at existing parks or properties will improve service levels in many portions of the city, new parkland would be required to raise the level of service in several areas that lack easy access to parks. Two notable areas with limited access to parks are north of E Main Street and southwest of Wilkinson Boulevard in the northeastern portion of Frankfort and south of the East-West Connector near the southeastern city boundary. Frankfort should consider land for new parks in these areas or others with lower service levels if suitable properties become available, especially if the land is needed to accommodate high demand facilities or if new residential development is expected. Small Neighborhood Parks were the second ranked unmet need in the Mail Survey, and, while some of these unmet needs may be related to the condition of existing parks, new parks will likely be needed to fully address this deficit.

7.6.3 Aquatics

Juniper Hill Aquatic Center – although closed due to COVID-19 for the 2020 season – is one of the most popular facilities in Frankfort. It draws visitors from Frankfort, Franklin County, and beyond. However, despite the presence of this facility, outdoor swimming pools/aquatic centers ranked seventh in unmet needs in the city (approximately 4,000 households), according to the Mail Survey. They ranked as a medium priority in the Priority Investment Ratings for facilities. The survey does not provide specific reasons that household needs are not being met; however, the facility may be too far from their homes, or it does not offer specific amenities that households desire. Another possibility is that they are unable to use Juniper Hill Aquatic Center because it is too crowded and is at capacity when they arrive. Several park users identified this reason during the in-park engagement. Because the city is unlikely to invest in building another large aquatic center, addressing aquatic needs through improvements both at the existing aquatic center and by adding splash pads at the parks will be paramount.



Juniper Hill Aquatic Center

Splash pads, like the ones at Lakeview Park and under construction at Dolly Graham Park, are an emerging trend in aquatics across the country; they either replace wading pools at aquatic facilities, or they can be developed as standalone features in other park areas. They can come in any size and may be limited to jets and sprays to preserve an open plaza space when not in use, or they can include vertical interactive play features. Because splash pads do not require lifeguards or attendants, they have much lower operating costs than swimming pools. The most obvious location for a new splash pad is at East Frankfort Park in or near the site of the former pool. This location would provide access to aquatic facilities on the eastern side of Frankfort. Another potential location is at Capitol View Park to provide a support amenity for the athletic complex and make the park more attractive as a tournament destination.

7.6.4 Indoor Facilities

The city of Frankfort has limited access to indoor recreation and program spaces. The department has previously had limited access to school gymnasiums but no space of its own to host year-round programming. The city similarly lacks any indoor field space. These indoor spaces are in high demand and limited availability

constrains potential program offerings by Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites.

Stakeholder groups indicated a high demand for indoor spaces that is not met by existing facilities. While the Mail Survey indicated that community/recreation centers were a medium priority for investment (according to ETC Institute), over 4,000 households indicated unmet needs for these facilities and 2,500 for gymnasium space. The third ranked unmet program need, fitness and wellness programs (5,000 households), would utilize an indoor facility, and so would age 55+ programs, the fourth ranked unmet program need (4,000 households).

The need for indoor program space in Frankfort is not new. An indoor recreation center was a recommendation in the previous *city of Frankfort Parks and Recreation Master Plan* from 2003 to meet multigenerational program needs. The city and Franklin County previously conducted a feasibility study for a large indoor facility in 2015 (*Capitol Sports & Recreation Center Feasibility Study*). The proposed facility included gyms, a fitness center, field space, an archery range, a tennis center, and an indoor aquatic center in a building of about 200,000 square feet. The proposed building had a high capital cost and would operate at a substantial deficit due to the large amount of space to operate. The study considered partnerships between the city and county as well as with the YMCA and Kentucky State University to fund and operate the facility, but the project has not yet come to fruition.

Due to the high costs associated with the development of an indoor facility, it has become apparent that multipurpose spaces will be required to meet the needs of the community while keeping the building footprint and costs in check. Figure 7.1 shows a potential floorplan for a facility with multipurpose spaces that could accommodate most of the activities desired by the community. The facility with meeting rooms, gym space, and indoor field space has about 50,000 square feet and would require about 3-5 acres of land to develop.

The potential facility in Figure 7.1 lacks an indoor pool and a fitness center both previously included in the *Capitol Sports & Recreation Center Feasibility Study*. These facilities would be best met by others including the YMCA with the city as a partner. The city does not currently have an obvious location to construct the facility and should still consider partnership opportunities for development and construction. Franklin County is currently considering improvements at Lakeview Park and may include an indoor sports facility or field house like the one discussed here. The city and county will need to coordinate to ensure fiscally sustainable development, and that the community's needs are met without developing duplicate facilities. Prior to the development of an indoor facility, the previous study should be updated to consider more multipurpose space as presented in Figure 7.1. The updated study should include analysis of potential revenue, operating costs, and attendance as well as potential partnerships. Partnerships could include naming rights, shared use of space, and more.

7.6.5 Other New Facilities

Outdoor Fitness

Facilities popular with seniors were requested throughout the public input. Facilities for active adults are a trend for parks and recreation agencies throughout the country. These facilities include outdoor fitness equipment, pickleball courts (see Section 7.3), and trails (see Section 7.5). Outdoor fitness equipment has become a popular addition to parks for users of all ages (in addition to active adults/seniors). Some of this equipment is available at Juniper Hill Park where it is frequently used, although some users requested the addition of shade over the equipment. The equipment could be added at relatively low cost at several parks in Frankfort. Small amounts of this equipment can easily be incorporated into playground development as well. Larger groups of equipment – like the one at Juniper Hill – provide a potential gathering space and a venue for programming (e.g., “Frankfort Active Adults”).

Disc Golf

Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites currently offers a disc golf course at East Frankfort Park, and Franklin County offers another course at Lakeview Park. As noted in Chapter 5, disc golf is a growing sport throughout the country. During the COVID-19 pandemic, disc golf has increased in popularity due to the outdoor and socially distant nature of the sport. While disc golf was not identified as a high priority in the surveys, stakeholder groups and the MindMixer online engagement feedback indicate the desire for an additional course. Members of the Frankfort Disc Golf Association expressed interest in the development of championship level disc golf course in Frankfort, potentially at Capitol View Park using space that does not

conflict with multiuse/mountain bike trails. Such a course would allow the city to host tournaments at various skill levels, enhancing the city and county as destinations for disc golf enthusiasts. The costs for this new course are modest and the association has indicated desire to assist in the design and construction of the course.

Outdoor Stages/Amphitheatres

Outdoor stages and amphitheatres can host all types of concerts and events that were repeatedly requested by the community through the various methods of public input. Frankfort has one amphitheater (the Ward Oates Amphitheater) at River View Park that has hosted some of these in the past. Many in the public are unaware that the facility exists. During the in-park interviews, many park users indicated the desire for concerts and performances but were unaware that the city already has an amphitheater.

Figure 7.1: Potential Indoor Sports Facility Floorplan



According to the Mail Survey, 2,200 households have unmet needs for outdoor stages or amphitheaters, fairly low in the list of needed facilities. In contrast, however, over 5,000 households have unmet needs for concerts or art performances and outdoor movies, the top two unmet needs according to the survey and two of the top three program priorities for investment. Both types of programs could be held at outdoor amphitheaters. Other programs such as fitness programs (second program priority for investment) could also be hosted at these facilities.

To best serve the community's desire for concerts, performances, and movies Frankfort should have venues geographically distributed throughout the community to allow for easy access and neighborhood focused events. The Ward Oates Amphitheater is centrally located in Frankfort, just northwest of downtown. A potential amphitheater at East Frankfort Park would provide access for the eastern side of the city. Smaller stages at other parks, such as the Thorn Hill property could provide for smaller neighborhood focused events. The *Blanton's Landing Feasibility Study* proposes an event space that would provide an additional opportunity for community events as well as those that might draw visitors from outside of Frankfort.

Dog Parks and Amenities

As noted in Chapter 5, dog parks are a growing trend in parks and recreation in communities all around Kentucky and the USA. Frankfort has a dog park at East Frankfort Park, and Franklin County offers a dog park at Lakeview Park. However, both parks are on the eastern side of Frankfort, leaving the rest of the city more than a 5-minute drive from a dog park and part of the city more than 10-minutes away.

According to the Mail Survey, nearly 4,000 households have unmet needs for dog parks, and they ranked as the sixth most important facility. Dog parks were also a high priority for investment according to the ETC institute. Some of the unmet needs for dog parks could be met by expanding the existing dog park at East Frankfort Park. It is small and only has one area. A second area is needed to allow for separation of large and small dogs and to improve turf conditions.

Many residents requested a dog park on the western side of the city, but no existing parks have the amount of open land required for a large dog park. The Holmes Street property is not on the western side of the city, but it is northwest of East Frankfort Park and has a large amount of underutilized acreage that could house a dog park. Compact dog parks (e.g. "dog lots") could be developed in other smaller parks, such as Dolly Graham Park and River View Park, to meet local neighborhood needs.

Community Gardens

The survey results indicted a potential need for community gardens in Frankfort. Though in previous years there was a network of gardens and advocates, the city now only has the Fantasy Forest (Rye's Community Garden) at Dolly Graham Park where residents can grow their own food or learn about gardening. According to the Mail Survey, over 3,600 city households have unmet needs for community gardens. Although most residents in Frankfort have access to yards that could be used for private gardens, community gardens offer prepared plots and opportunities for socialization. Educational programs are also common at community garden areas. East Frankfort Park may be able accommodate some community garden plots using some underutilized space.

Drone Launch Area

As noted in Chapter 5, Frankfort lacks a designated location for launching drones and has no official policy for flying them in the parks. The city should formulate and post a policy for (or against) use of drone within the park system. If the department, chooses to permit drones in some locations, areas away from population centers make the most sense, possibly at Capitol View Park (when not in use by sports groups). A location out in the county may be more appropriate, if one can be identified either by Frankfort or Franklin County. Signage should remind users to comply with FAA regulations.

7.6.6 Recommendations

1. Utilize existing parkland to meet unmet facility needs and to improve access to park features
2. Add outdoor fitness equipment at select parks to expand opportunities for improved community health

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3. Develop the Thorn Hill property as a Neighborhood Park and officially bring it into the Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites system to meet a variety of needs and improve access to parks
 4. Investigate opportunities with Frankfort Independent School District for use or acquisition of the Holmes Street property (formerly Leathers Field) to provide additional park amenities and to help improve the Holmes Street corridor
 5. Develop additional dog parks to meet the growing needs of Frankfort households
 6. Provide outdoor stages or amphitheaters throughout Frankfort to host community events, such as concerts and movies, highly desired by residents
 - Repairing minor flood damage at the Ward Oates Amphitheater, upgrade appearance, and improve capacity to support events
 - Add an amphitheater at East Frankfort Park to provide venue for community events in eastern Frankfort
 - Consider other opportunities to develop community event venues throughout Frankfort, including smaller venues at Neighborhood Parks and a large venue at Blanton's Landing
 7. Complete the construction of the in-progress splash pad at Dolly Graham Park
 8. Consider developing a second splash pad at East Frankfort Park to expand access to aquatic facilities in the city
 9. Consider charging non-residents, or at least those outside of Franklin County, a higher rate for admission to the Juniper Hill Aquatic Center to increase revenue and potentially free up capacity for residents
 - Consider setting aside a percentage of total capacity at the aquatic center for season pass holders so they are not turned away
 10. Explore the development of a championship level disc golf course in Frankfort in partnership with the local disc golf association, potentially at Capitol View Park
 11. Consider developing an indoor sports complex with gymnasium space, field space, program/meeting rooms, and more, following the update of the feasibility study
 12. Seek opportunities for new parkland to meet the demand for new facilities and to improve service levels for existing and future residents
 13. Evaluate the demand for community gardens and find a location for the plots if persistent demand exists
 14. Formulate and post a policy for (or against) use of drone within the park system and implement signage to designate whether (and where) drones are permitted
 15. Continue partnership with the YMCA in order to offer Frankfort households access to an indoor pool

7.7 NATURAL AREAS, OPEN SPACE, AND NATURE EDUCATION

7.7.1 Observations and Analyses

Park and recreation agencies are increasingly focusing on preservation and restoration of natural resources. Natural areas provide numerous benefits to the health and wellness of a community, including opportunities for all residents. Studies indicate that a connection to nature can relieve stress, improve interpersonal relationships, and improve mental health.⁵ Because they are typically one of the largest landowners in their jurisdictions, park and recreation departments have the opportunity to lead in the implementation of sustainability or best management practices (BMPs), efforts that can double as engagement and educational opportunities.

Residents indicated desire for more access to natural areas and nature programs in Frankfort. Nature programs were a high priority in the Priority Investment Ratings by ETC. According to the Mail Survey, 35% have a need for nature programs (they were the fourth ranked program type), and most survey respondents indicated these needs were unmet (representing nearly 4,000 households). Natural areas/nature parks were ranked as the second most important facility and as a high priority for investment (third). Natural areas/nature parks were the fourth ranked unmet need in the Mail Survey with over 4,000 households indicating an unmet need.

⁵ National Recreation and Park Association, "Health and Wellness," <http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Impacting-Communities/Health-and-Wellness/>, (April 17, 2020)

The high level of unmet need in Frankfort is somewhat surprising due to the large amount of natural acreage in the city’s Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites inventory. Most of the land at Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve and Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill is natural, as is a large amount of the land at Capitol View Park. The two primary natural areas (Cove Spring and Fort Hill) in Frankfort both have accessibility issues. Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve is often overcrowded, and Leslie Morris Park at Fort Hill is hidden and difficult to access. Both parks have limited parking, especially near the most popular areas.

The heaviest use of Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve is in the portion of the property that is a State Nature Preserve (AKA Lower Cove Spring) and is under a Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation easement. Intensified visitation in this area may not be desirable. Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve is already the second most used park in the city with nearly two-thirds (64%) of households visiting over the past year. Current use has caused damage to the sensitive ecosystems in the preserve, especially when visitors stray from the formal trails. Signage could address some of these concerns by informing visitors about potential damage to the environment and to stay on marked trails. Also, signage to advise visitors of opportunities at the less crowded and less environmentally sensitive Upper and Wetland portions of Cove Spring could potentially improve perceptions of access to nature while reducing stress on the State Nature Preserve portion of the property.

Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill is very underutilized, ranking as the eighth most used park in Frankfort, far below all of the other large parks in the city. The park is difficult to access, and wayfinding signage to the park is minimal. The entrance on Clifton Avenue is a single lane road accessed by winding through small neighborhood streets that are both narrow and in poor condition. The hidden and uninviting nature of this entrance provides significant barriers — both physical and mental — to use. The more logical, accessible, and inviting entrance should be opened-up on Pleasant Hill Drive in the Blanton Acres neighborhood. This entrance would be easily accessible from Wilkinson Boulevard.

The city should open a dialogue with the residents of the five homes on the portion of Pleasant Hill Drive that currently dead-ends at the park to address their concerns while continuing to make this unique, historic park more accessible to all residents of Frankfort. Residents near the current entrance on Clifton Avenue should also be engaged before changes are made to that entrance.



Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill

As noted in the trends section of Chapter 5, environmental education cultivates understanding of the benefits of natural habitats and open spaces. Nature education provides opportunities to engage all ages and abilities and creates great potential for intergenerational programming. The school districts and nonprofit groups — some of which indicated interest in partnering with the city during stakeholder group discussions — are ideal partners for environmental programs, including nature classes and activities (see Section 7.12). Programs could include community events, field trips, or classes covering habitat restoration, wildlife identification (e.g., bird watching), invasive species removal, and more.

Access to the Kentucky River was a top request during the stakeholder conversations, in-park interviews, and in the MindMixer online engagement. Residents want more water access points for canoes and kayak, more fishing opportunities, and an overall improved connection to the river. Connections could mean better visibility of the river (enhanced seating areas) or more programs and events (e.g., triathlon) that utilize the river.

7.7.2 Recommendations

1. Explore expanded partnerships with outside groups or private vendors to add nature programming at Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve, Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill, and Capitol View Park
2. Consider utilizing picnic shelters as outdoor classrooms for nature education programs

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3. Develop interpretive and informational signage throughout the park system (will require signage plans) to help visitors understand the natural features and history of Frankfort parks while improving awareness of sensitive ecosystems and rare species
 4. Implement conservation policies and sustainable practice guidelines for future development and management of park properties
 5. Explore opportunities for restoring natural areas within parks in ways that improve access to nature and reduce maintenance requirements
 6. Elevate parks by setting examples for Best Management Practices (BMP) like stormwater detention, recycling, etc.
 7. Promote conservation and sustainability efforts as they are implemented to encourage reduced levels of consumption and waste generation
 8. Consider acquisition of any private parks or open space in Frankfort that become available for sale to ensure that residents continue to have access to these amenities, especially in environmentally sensitive areas
 9. Explore and establish partnerships to produce nature education programs within Frankfort parks (see also Section 7.12)

7.8 PROGRAMMING

7.8.1 Observations and Analyses

Concerts & art-based performances were the most needed recreation program category in Frankfort according to Mail Survey results (52% of households); fitness & wellness programs for adults ranked second (42%), and outdoor movies ranked third (41%). Each of these program types appeared as top unmet needs in the Mail Survey results with 5,000 households with unmet needs for these program categories. Programs for those age 55+ and nature programs were each identified by about 4,000 households.

Community/Family-Oriented Programming & Events

Overall, Frankfort residents have expressed a desire for the kind of programs that bring community together and can be enjoyed by all ages, especially youth and seniors. There are several possible locations for hosting a range of event types, though some will need development and repairs beforehand. River View Park (pending flood repairs and permanent mitigation efforts), particularly the Ward Oates Amphitheater, is centrally located within the city and is already used for the Farmers Market. Improving the Thorn Hill property, including adding a small amphitheater, could bring community gathering and activities to a currently underserved area of the city. East Frankfort Park is another ideal location, where ample space and parking would allow for the development of an additional amphitheater-type venue space. There could also be programs oriented around new and existing picnic shelters and gazebos (e.g., craft demonstrations) in most any of the other Frankfort parks. Considering a long-view timeline, the potential development of Blanton's Landing (feasibility study completed in early 2021, see Appendix G) would create more than a mile of linear open space which could be used for passive use and community gathering, as well as planned events and programs.

While there is currently a Special Projects Coordinator staff position, the role's responsibilities also cover administrative and business-related tasks. Given staffing and funding limitations, the department should pursue outside partnerships to achieve the events desired by the community. Releasing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for event coordinators in Frankfort would expand capacity for hosting an event series for Frankfort. Upon selection, the department should negotiate with the selected event coordinator to determine what specific types of events, when, and how the revenue should be split between the city and the event coordinator. Branded Frankfort-specific events hosted in partnership with existing groups like Downtown Frankfort, Inc. (DFI), the Tourist & Convention Commission, local restaurants, Chamber of Commerce, and others would create broad appeal and a larger audience base. These events should be contractually owned by the city, and incentivized. If the event is successful and growing, the contract can continue. The city will need to consider fresh approaches – like alcohol sales, charging fees, and shared responsibility. For the Event Coordinator to make enough to sustain the position, there will most likely need to be at least six events per year, or one every other month.

Based on the strong desire for community events, it is important for the city to maintain, enhance, and fully fund any previously successful events, such as marathons and concert series. These programs provide an opportunity for the people of Frankfort to find common ground with their neighbors, feel pride in their community, and enjoy a higher quality of life. The regularly held Farmers Market at River View Park is widely attended and was cited by many (through surveys and in-park engagement) as their primary program involvement through the city parks. Additionally, broad-interest programming can create possibilities for gathering and interaction between different groups, even those that might not otherwise meet. Reforest Day at Capitol View Park and Enviro Adventures summer camp held in 2019 are examples of successful group programming that should certainly be developed further and sustained.

Senior Programs

As noted in Section 7.6, Frankfort, like most of the country, has an aging population and a large percentage of residents over age 65. Given this aging population, it is unsurprising that many survey respondents requested more senior programs. Frankfort households were more supportive of new programs for ages 55+ than new youth programs.

It is important to note that many citizens who qualify as “seniors” based on age (an arbitrary delineation) do not self-identify as seniors; they will sometimes elect not to participate in senior-targeted programs because of stigma or perception of aged people. Wherever communities advertise programs for “seniors” alone there will often be this problem. Because some of the most active people in fitness and recreation are over the age of 55, it is important to separately brand and market programs geared towards active seniors (e.g., “Frankfort Active Adults”).

Any programs that fit into this kind of category are more likely to succeed when grouped together and marketed specifically to more active, physically sound seniors. Proposed new features and even existing facilities, such as outdoor fitness equipment and pickleball courts, can provide opportunities for programming oriented towards older residents. The department should coordinate with the Capital City Activity Center, the YMCA, and any other local institutions (e.g., churches) to create effective, appealing offerings that do not duplicate existing services. Additionally, health care facilities, health insurance providers, and grocery store chains can all be potential funding and resource sponsors for expanded programs and activities.

Water Based Programming

The city of Frankfort is unique in that the Kentucky River runs right through the heart of downtown. Currently, there are four developed access points to the river; however, these paddling access points are rarely or insufficiently advertised. Once improved and effectively marketed, the river and these existing access points can provide real opportunities for programming. Organized programs oriented around water access have the potential to attract visitors from even beyond the Frankfort area.

The river’s 2-mile segment that cuts through town is a distance most people are capable of navigating. An annual event similar to Louisville’s Hike, Bike, & Paddle is a great way to draw the community together around the Kentucky River. While there is currently considerable use of the river, access is not organized or “sold” as an asset to everyone in Frankfort. Canoe Kentucky, a private business, operates a canoe and kayak delivery service; there is already a working relationship between this organization and the department. The city should expand this service and promote it through the regular recreation marketing services. New programs could include themed family kayak trips or even overnight activities (e.g., paddle & camp events). Many users and families – not just within the city – will pay for such a unique experience. Broader coordination with Canoe Kentucky could look much like the coordination with an event coordinator proposed above. Any program development should be accompanied by an appropriate split of revenue with funds channeled directly into the department.



Canoe Tour by Canoe Kentucky

Other Programming Needs

Based on feedback from the public, Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites should establish a consistent, effective marketing and outreach strategy to convey all that the department has to offer. According to the public engagement (Mail & Web Surveys and in-park interviews), not knowing what is offered was the primary reason – expressed by nearly half (42%) of respondents – for not participating in programs and other services. While the department is the top organization used for parks and recreation activities (60% of Mail Survey households), the poor condition of facilities is the second most-commonly cited reason for not utilizing programs (21% in Mail Survey). While not knowing what is available will likely always be a top reason keeping people out of parks and programs, the department could make a significant shift in awareness with steps as simple as streamlining registration or permitting, regularly updating and sharing an event calendar, and connecting with local institutions to extend outreach. By first establishing guidelines for things like promotion, registration, and social media engagement pertaining to any existing events, programs, and camps, the department can build a stronger foundation of community awareness and involvement, a critical foundation for the success of any future programming the city develops.



Photo credit: Josephine Sculpture Park

Art in Nature Camp

Currently, Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites provides a somewhat limited and inconsistent lineup of programs and events. While there has been successful program collaboration in the past (e.g., Art in Nature kids camp in partnership with Josephine Sculpture Park), COVID-19 absolutely impacted available resources and staffing. Looking forward post-pandemic, the department will need reliable resources not just to return previously successful programs at the needed levels but also to develop new opportunities reflective of public need determined through this planning process. This could include adding staffing, formalizing mutually beneficial partnerships and more.

7.8.2 Annual Implementation Plan for Business Operations

The diagram Figure 7.2 illustrates the ongoing evolution of a typical parks and recreation agency's working operations. These steps are intended to guide the department in defining the purpose of its programming and the direction the agency would like to take moving forward. Each cycle begins with an annual plan and ends with evaluation. Creating an annual plan allows the department to establish goals for both internal operations and external performance (i.e., programming). An annual operations plan is helpful for establishing pricing and costs, as well as for defining more specifically the ways which the agency will benefit the community; a yearly evaluation is critically important to ensure efficiency, appropriateness, and vitality. Hosting a year-end retreat for the department staff is a helpful way to collectively evaluate performance and to identify goals and objectives for the coming year.

Most of the funding for the department's budget comes from General Fund Appropriations. Some programs have fees attached, but fees and charges are inconsistent. While the programs currently or recently offered are generally popular and well-attended, there is a real opportunity to strengthen and refresh programming; doing so would benefit not only the community, but department staff as well. Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites must consider overall operations in their entirety then determine what operations the department should "Stop, Start, or Continue." This is a practical strategy for proactively addressing need and challenges, and it can meaningfully realign services. Considering the condition of facilities, the success of both existing and former program offerings and how extended the current staff is, Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites will benefit from assessing strengths and opportunities to build stronger programs and more sustainable operations.

Figure 7.2: Ongoing Annual Operation Plan Diagram



Program Review

Review every program in the department to determine answers to the following:

- What is the purpose of the program or activity?
- What does the program attempt to accomplish?

Using the answers to these questions, set specific goals for each program.

Budgeting

Use budget information to review actual direct costs from the previous year.

- Review part time wages, supplies, instructors' costs, etc.
- Separate the indirect costs of the full-time wages, maintenance costs, or utilities

Participation

Estimate participation based on historic data from previous years.

- Determine minimum number of participants
- Determine maximum number of participants

Determine Market Rate

Use each program's total direct cost to the annual budget, set the market rate price.

Assess Direct Costs

Prior to determining pricing, the department should assess direct costs. Establish a cost-recovery percentage by calculating all direct costs for each program.

Pricing

Based on the calculations of direct costs and cost recovery percentages, set price amounts for each program. Establish a market rate, but also calculate a resident discount.

Evaluate

- Reflect on and assess the purpose of each program
- Establish a goal for participation
- Establish a goal for cost recovery

7.8.3 Recommendations

1. Be a mission driven agency; pay very close attention to the new mission of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites (Chapter 6)
 - Ensure every action and decision always connects back to the department's mission
2. Establish an annual assessment process to determine if Frankfort should stop offering a program, continue offering a program, or start a new program (Annual Implementation Plan for Business Operations – Subsection 7.8.2.)
 - Consider an annual staff retreat as part of this assessment
3. Regularly evaluate program times to ensure programs are offered when community members can actually participate
4. Maintain, enhance, and fully fund existing community programs
5. Regularly identify needs of underserved populations
6. Expand existing concert, movie, and live performance program offerings to address unmet community needs
 - Utilize the proposed amphitheaters at East Frankfort Park, Thorn Hill, and Blanton's Landing (if redeveloped) as well as the existing facility at River View Park, for additional and enhanced program opportunities
7. Release a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for an event coordinator to develop and produce a consistent line-up of branded Frankfort community events
 - Establish split revenue percentages with funding channeled directly to Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites
8. Maintain existing and successful partnerships with other Frankfort-based organizations
9. Explore new partnership opportunities to grow line-up of adult fitness and wellness programs, as well as nature programs
10. Continue and expand collaboration with local health organizations – like Franklin County Environmental Health Services – with the Mayor's Wellness Campaign to ensure programing efforts reach the widest audience and align with overall promotion of healthy living in the city
11. Make full use of new facilities – amphitheaters, outdoor fitness equipment, picnic shelters, etc. – by programming and offering activities anchored around these sites
12. Develop more age 55+ programming in light of the rapid growth of this demographic
 - Partner with local entities like the Capital City Activity Center to ensure offerings align with local needs
 - Brand and market active senior programs together under a unique category (e.g., "Frankfort Active Adults") – many can be offered outdoors
 - Strategically market these programs with support from partners and related service-providers
13. Monitor nationwide and regional recreation trends regularly, especially concerning growing population groups (55+ and BIPOC communities in Frankfort) to best serve the needs of the whole community

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14. Explore partnerships with nearby environmental and nature organizations (e.g., Audubon Society, Josephine Sculpture Park, the Kentucky Resources Council etc.) to create nature-based group outings, participatory activities, and community events
 15. Utilize the Core Program Guidelines in Appendix C as a source for potential program offerings
 16. Organize events and community-engaged activities around trails and bike paths
 17. Develop an online program calendar, including the ability to sync directly to personal calendars
 18. Ensure easy program registration – and increased participation – by providing a streamlined online portal for sign-ups and information
 19. Develop more water-based recreation and events through expanded partnerships and improved marketing of river access points

7.9 OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE, AND PROMOTION

7.9.1 Observations and Analyses

On a per population basis, Frankfort employs more full-time equivalent (FTE) staff than the benchmark median. However, they are spending about a half of the benchmark expenditures per employee (\$51,000 vs. \$92,000). Most of these staff members are part-time seasonal and summer staff for the Juniper Hill Aquatic Center and athletic programs, both of which generate much of the department's revenue. Frankfort's revenue per capita is just below the benchmark and about two-thirds of the national level (\$29, compared to \$31 and \$21 respectively). The department's cost recovery of 25% is also just below the benchmark (29%). The recommendations that follow could help solidify greater success for the department. Finally, the departments capital expenditures per capita are far below the benchmark at \$6, compared to \$15.

7.9.2 Structure

The city of Frankfort is faced with challenges not unlike most American communities. Systemic issues – racial inequalities and historically discriminatory practices, struggles to create equitable opportunities for health and wellness, social divisions, and socioeconomic barriers – play out in everyday life in ways that entities like parks and recreation agencies have the power to directly address through seemingly insignificant but truly effective practices. Looking ahead into a new decade – and especially post-pandemic – how can park departments enter into the work of creating positive social change? Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites is staffed by people who are capable of responding to these challenges. Systemic challenges can be met, among many ways, through activities such as community events and programs (as described above). But in addition to these more external efforts, focused training can help staff learn ways to tackle these large issues through seemingly small but effective acts.

Thorny issues aside, staff and the department itself will benefit from continued training for leadership and cultivated growth within their respective fields. For example, the existing team can pursue appropriate certifications for overseeing Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites operations, including Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP), Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) and Aquatic Facility Operator Certification (AFO) – certificates are offered for splash pad operations. As needs arise, staff may pursue other relevant certifications. To accommodate staff seeking these credentials, Frankfort must identify and allocate funding for professional development opportunities (e.g., conferences, training, memberships, etc.) with consideration to the licensure and requirements for certifications.

As there are no specified “program” staff, the department currently has an inconsistent and reactive mentality with regard to programming. This strategy has worked for the department to some extent, but many program needs are left unaddressed. Existing staff are overworked and unable to respond to the public's requests for new programs. To address the growing program an event needs, the department will need to consider adding a staff position with dedicated hours for overseeing programming in the city and managing any outside contracts. The outside contracts will generate revenue to offset a substantial a portion of this person's salary.

Because it is difficult to expand staffing without generating additional funds, any opportunities for contracting with an outside vendor or community partner to produce department programming should be considered.

Collaborating externally enables existing staff to oversee more programs ideally within a smooth, streamlined process. The city needs the partnership of outside vendors and contractors to effectively expand programs and events. That said, not all programs can or should be transferred to contractors. Any contracts pursued must remain consistent and formally structured in writing with clear parameters ensuring benefits for the city and contractor both.

7.9.3 Deferred Maintenance

Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites has a significant backlog of deferred maintenance throughout the park system. While the department has begun to address some of this maintenance, a capital maintenance and replacement plan needs to be developed. This process will require additional dedicated funding in the capital budget. Of utmost consideration is the high cost of reactive maintenance, rather than proactive action; when maintenance is deferred for too long, the cost increases exponentially each year of delay. It is important that the city prioritize improvements to existing parks and facilities before investing heavily in new development.

As the department currently operates, there is typically not enough funding to replace facilities beyond their useful life. Whatever amount is added to the budget is usually spent replacing smaller capital items, leaving larger capital items unaddressed. All deferred maintenance should be identified and prioritized over a multi-year period. Projects should be replaced based on need. If there is not enough funding to replace items of higher value, there should be funding allocated specifically for larger capital projects. Leasing equipment is another option to consider; leasing helps the department incur an annual cost smaller than the cost (or hassle) of purchasing.

Spending on smaller less prioritized capital projects simply because enough funding is available should be avoided. Projects of highest priority should be funded first. Where appropriate, larger projects can be bundled and issued a bond to better tackle as many as possible altogether. Additionally, creating a comprehensive preventive maintenance plan for equipment safeguards against costly repairs that might otherwise have been avoided. Whenever items are purchased, plans for their eventual replacement must be put in place.

7.9.4 Pricing Philosophy

Direct & Indirect Costs

The majority of funding for the Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites budget comes from General Fund Appropriations. Some programs do have fees attached, but the process for determining these amounts is inconsistent. To move forward most efficiently and sustainably, the department needs a complete understanding of the direct and indirect costs. First, the department should conduct an analysis of the expenditures in the annual budget. Once these costs are determined, they should be separated:

- Direct Costs: any expenditures related to the operation of a specific park, program, or facility rental (e.g., instructor fees, materials, staff time directly related to the specific service, etc.)
- Indirect Costs: any expenditures that remain after removing direct costs; usually more general and systemwide (e.g., administrative tasks, facility maintenance, utilities, etc.)

Once the costs are understood and separated into direct and indirect costs, the city should decide how much of each program's cost should be recovered which will vary. Some programs or services could have 100% recovery where all associated costs are recuperated, other services may not have any recovered costs and the service would be free. This process of calculation can be kept reasonably simple by establishing set categories of recovery (i.e., 100%, 75%, 50%, and 0%).

Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites will need a defined "pricing philosophy" to guide all of these efforts. While it requires substantial effort at first, proactive action will prevent long-term inefficiencies and shortfalls. Remaining flexible throughout the transition – currently there is no system of cost recovery in place – will be essential for the department's success. It will require small changes and incremental action for the department, and the public, to adjust.

The following are pricing strategies used in other communities. These are presented as possible avenues to pursue or inspiration for a Frankfort-specific system.

- Indirect costs are covered by the city, while direct costs are covered by the user at a specified cost recovery rate.
- Classifications are created based on whether the program or service benefits the community, the individual who is taking the program, or a combination of the two.
- Prices are based on the 80% of the public who can pay rather than the 20% of the community who cannot pay; alternate funding sources are used to supplement the costs for the 20%.
- An alternate funding source is established and relied upon for providing opportunities to underserved members of the community.

Field Usage & Athletic User Groups

Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites already accommodates a large array of users, but the system is expansive and user groups are not only growing; they are also changing. In light of these changes and the leadership shifts that can occur in these groups, the department must establish consistent field usage agreement for all users. Treating all user groups fairly and with clearly communicated, consistent standards of agreement will benefit not only the users, but the department staff and city finances as well.

To determine field use charges, the department should use a calculated maintenance costs for fields, plus the hourly cost for staff to maintain. Based on current fees and use agreements, completing these calculations will likely result in a much higher fee by comparison. However, this calculated rate can be reached gradually, with incremental increases over time. Even though 100% recovery may never be achieved, by using these calculations to establish a fair hourly usage fee, the department can clearly communicate to all user groups how their money is being used; additionally, all user groups should have an understanding of how the city's resources are used to provide them with service.

7.9.5 Grounds Management Plan

Moving forward over the next 10 years, Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites will need to adopt a strategy of sustainability – not simply environmental, but economic as well. Qualities like consistency, fairness, and flexibility will be crucial to the long-term durability of the department and the services it provides to the entire Frankfort community. To operate a system as diverse and extensive as Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites, an appropriate amount of funds for staffing, equipment, and grounds management must be in place. With a clear plan in place, maintenance funds need not be spent in only a few parks at the expense of others.

The primary purpose of a successful maintenance management plan is to identify the proper amount of funding each year to administer the park system while implementing this Master Plan. It is essential that the department understands the long-term costs and works closely with the city's budget administrators to alleviate any concerns and prevent budget surprises.

Maintenance Requirements

First, maintenance requirements should be measurable. Each element of park maintenance needs a standard. For example:

- Level 1,2,3,4 or 5 turf – standards set by the department
- Restroom cleaning (e.g., daily, twice daily, etc.) – standards set by the department
- Painting schedule (e.g., number of years between re-painting, per item) – standards set by the department; painted items should be included on a multi-year list for funding
- Maintenance equipment replacement (e.g., lawn mowers, trucks, irrigation systems, etc.) – standards set by the department in collaboration with the city
- Capital replacement (e.g., roofs, HVAC systems, etc.) requires items to be placed on a list with an "expiration date" based on the general length of time an item lasts in good condition. Costs should be determined and provided to the city's budgetary administration years in advance to ensure the

city is prepared for necessary appropriations.

Park, Recreation, and Historic Sites should decide the level of maintenance service to provide at each park or portion of a park. This decision should be a proactive exercise where funding is put in place in accordance with what level of maintenance service is desired.

Turf Maintenance Levels

1. State of the Art Maintenance

- Park/Land Categories
 - High quality diverse landscapes
 - Urban plazas
 - High visitation parks
 - Athletic game fields
 - Manicured grounds
- Maintenance Standards
 - Mow every 5 days
 - Irrigate
 - Fertilize
 - Aerate
 - <1% weeds
 - Daily inspection

2. High Level Maintenance

- Park/Land Categories
 - Well-developed park areas
 - Reasonably high visitation
 - Athletic game fields
- Maintenance Standards
 - Mow every week
 - Fertilize, aerate regularly
 - <5% weeds
 - Daily inspection

3. High Level Maintenance

- Park/Land Categories
 - Moderate to low level of development and visitation
 - Non-playing field areas in developed parks

■ Maintenance Standards

- Mow every 10 days
- Fertilize if needed
- No irrigation
- Weekly inspection

4. Moderately Low-Level Maintenance

■ Park/Land Categories

- Low level of development
- Low visitation
- Undeveloped parks
- Remote parks
- Turf areas at Nature Parks and Natural Areas

■ Maintenance Standards

- Low frequency mowing
- No fertilizer or irrigation
- Monthly inspection

5. High Visitation Natural Areas

■ Park/Land Categories

- Natural areas of high visitation
- Nature Parks

■ Maintenance Standards

- No mowing / cleaning on complaint
- Annual bush hogging, monthly inspection (prairie/meadow areas)

6. Minimum Maintenance Level

■ Park/Land Categories

- Low visitation natural areas
- Undeveloped parks

■ Maintenance Standards

- No mowing
- Occasional bush hogging, monthly inspection

Staffing Needs

The success of any future development hinges equally on funding and staffing capacity. The department currently employs 10 full-time staff members, only four of whom are maintenance (not including two assigned to Juniper Hill Golf Course). While the department on the whole employs about twice the FTE staff than the benchmark median, the city spends half as much as the benchmark comparisons (Chapter 2), and most staff are part-time employees. With the availability of part-time jobs in the area paying anywhere from \$2 to \$4 more (sometimes higher) than the starting-wage provided by the department, Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites struggles to retain the quality staffing levels necessary to maintain the current system.

While the public input indicated their desire for a higher level of maintenance at the parks, additional staff will be needed to maintain park properties as more land is developed and features are added. Table 7.4 shows the acreage maintained and the current number of full-time staff that maintain that land now and what would be required to maintain additional land at the same level – meaning the numbers do not include improved levels of maintenance desired by the community.

Based only on the additional land recommended to be developed at existing parks (those included in Table 3.2, Chapter 3), the department would need to add one full-time employee to provide the same level of maintenance as provided currently. **These numbers indicate that the maintenance staffing requirements at Frankfort parks will increase by 25%, just to implement and maintain the proposed improvements at existing parks at the current maintenance level.** The table also includes the number of staff needed per acre and by park category when new land is added to the system. To actually to *improve* upon existing maintenance, staffing numbers will need to increase by even more than 25%.

Table 7.4: Full-Time Staff Needs for Sustained Maintenance at the Current Level

Acreage and Existing Staff	
Total Developed Acreage	270.5
Maintained Acreage*	155.1
Full-Time Staff	4.0
Maintained Acres per Full-Time Staff	38.8
Acreage and Future Staff Needed to Maintain at Current Level	
Proposed Maintained Acreage (at Existing Properties Only)	188.1
Needed Full-Time Staff	4.9
Full-Time Staff Needed Per New Acre	0.03
Full-Time Staff Needed per New Neighborhood Park	0.3
Full-Time Staff Needed per New Community Park	0.8

*Golf course and unmaintained area not included

7.9.6 Engagement and Promotion

The Frankfort community has indicated a strong desire for continuous, ongoing engagement with Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites to make sure public needs are heard and addressed (Chapter 4). Some of the specific park improvements recommended in this plan will require local resident engagement to ascertain whether needs are effectively being met or if adjustments should be made. In the upcoming years of implementing this Master Plan, any larger improvement project – whether capital or operational – should incorporate authentic outreach and engagement, as well as follow consistent standards of communication, to ensure transparent accessibility. The following are methods for putting engagement at the forefront, even with changes to department staff.

Already, Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites collaborates with other agencies and organizations to provide services to the community. These relationships are the foundation for improving awareness and marketing. An initial step the department can pursue – ideally with support from these groups – is to create and promote a common calendar for activities and events in Frankfort. This can include opportunities for recreation, education, and tourism, and it is something the department can accomplish with the Chamber of Commerce, DFI, the Frankfort Tourism Commission, and others. Because Frankfort is Kentucky’s capital, the city and parks necessarily serve tourists and people from around the state. A consolidated calendar, including program registration access, would enable the city and Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites to serve everyone either living in or visiting Frankfort. This calendar can be prominently featured on both the city and department webpages, putting opportunities right at the community’s fingertips. Additionally, the Capital City Museum and other entities have broached the subject of creating a searchable, interactive mobile app that would provide users with a map and extensive information on sites, services, and special events happening in the city.

Social media platforms are useful for staying connected but can be a challenge to sustain between staff changes and to keep updated with engaging, interactive content. Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites already uses Facebook regularly, posting images and updates and more. According to survey results (Chapter

4), residents would prefer to learn about recreation opportunities and events through online social media. Updating the department's webpage with more prominent, easily accessible navigation to Facebook would help drive online traffic the department's social media page. Additionally, the department could explore adding more varied content (e.g., how-to videos or virtual challenges) to see what impact this can have on likes and shares.

The survey results (Chapter 4) also revealed a unique preference: more than a quarter of households would prefer to look in the local newspaper for any parks and recreation related content. Firming up existing connections to The State Journal is a great place to start improving outreach. And there are myriad other non-web-based methods of outreach. For instance, a conveniently located community bulletin board for the promotion of events and programs creates physical real-world space for program and event awareness. Smaller informational kiosks can be installed at each park allowing visitors to see updates on development or dates for upcoming programming. Adding interactive murals or feedback chalkboards can provide the public with a sense of more direct connection to the staff and people behind the parks. While this kind of engagement tactic could require more regular oversight, it can also improve relations in the long run, building the pride and attachment to parks and recreation necessary for keeping the service strong in the city.

To ensure the longevity of a successful marketing strategy, the department should create simple, branded templates. Not only do templates give staff a better starting point for promoting programs easily and effectively, but they also make any outgoing messaging instantly recognizable by members of the community.

Figure 7.3 outlines three necessary elements that should be considered to conduct a successful marketing campaign. The top section, the first element, defines the department's identity. The middle section – the second element, containing the visual identity and messaging platform – describes what brochures, ads, flyers, and media will look like. The third element, at the bottom, lists a range of mediums for how the messaging can be shared.

Figure 7.3: Essential Marketing Communication Elements

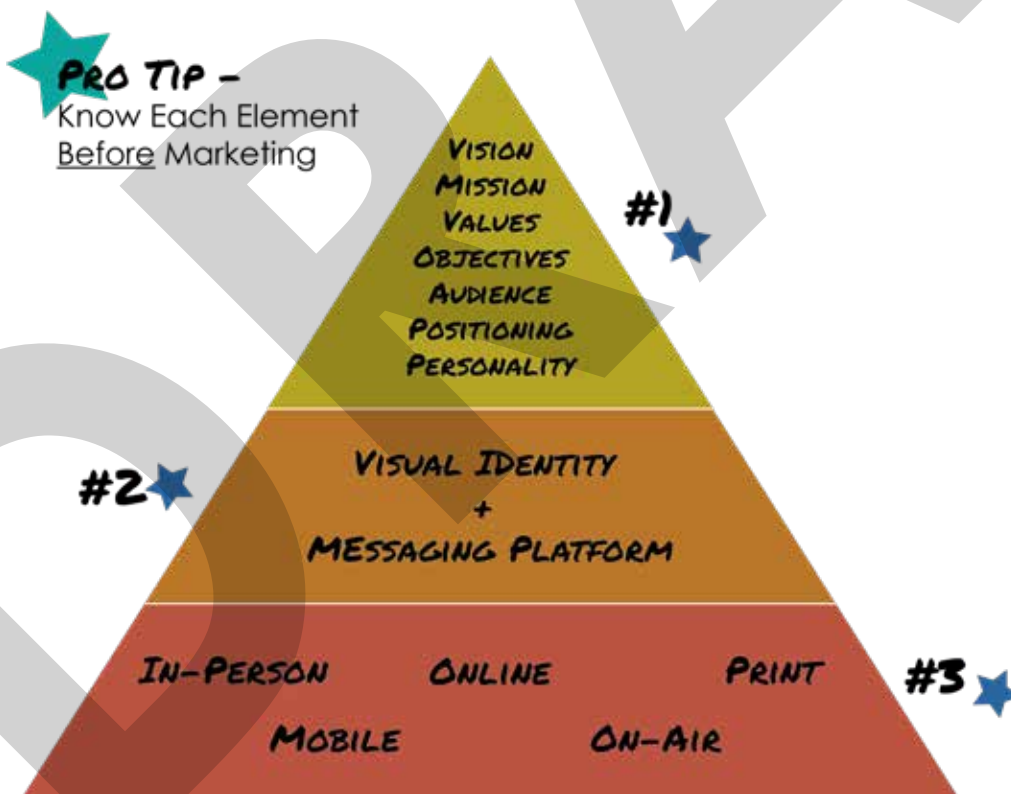


Figure 7.3 is intended as a big-picture guide for crafting a marketing strategy. The strategic plan in Chapter 6 defines most of the top section for Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites, but the middle section is left to the discretion of the agency in terms of visual identity and messaging platform. Frankfort Tourism Commission and DFI, with city support, have begun implementing a new citywide brand (includes wayfinding

signage, see section 7.2.2). Any marketing materials Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites creates should look to this branding for inspiration on color, style, and more.

The most important takeaway is that marketing can, and should be, easily implemented once it is standardized but still flexible for modifications. Figure 7.4 offers an example of a simple format that would be easily recognizable as messaging from the department. The title and images of a standard flyer or brochure can easily be changed to reflect what the agency wants to communicate or promote.

The standard event flyer format should include:

- Pictures (at the top and middle)
- Event name (in the front banner)
- Time and location (across the middle)
- Sponsors (at the bottom)
- Brand, logo, website and social media information

Any other materials, like the brochure in Figure 7.5, should incorporate similar visual identity and messaging structure. The same visual identity should also be used for online marketing, including social media and email notifications. Standardized, expanded marketing has the potential to attract additional users to the events, spaces, and programs offered by Frankfort.

7.9.7 Recommendations

Structure

1. Adopt this Master Plan at the level of City Commission; ensure commitment of legislative officials and city leaders
2. Set priorities annually through a combined Recreation Commission/Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Senior Management Retreat to articulate tasks and measure progress
3. Prepare an Operations Plan which defines Maintenance Standards (Subsection 7.9.5)
4. Improve maintenance at parks, pending adoption of maintenance standards and adequate staffing levels – will require additional staff
5. Articulate a capital maintenance and replacement program (may require an increase in the Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites capital budget comparable to other communities)
6. Increase maintenance budget in order to sustain current levels as new facilities and programs are developed
 - Consider the need for additional maintenance staff as maintained acreage and features are added to the system
7. Calculate maintenance impact of replacement to verify that replacing reduces, rather than increases, maintenance requirements and costs
8. Consider lease options when replacing equipment to help avoid costly capital expenditures
9. Establish consistent permit process for field use (whenever facilities are not in use by athletic leagues) to ensure equitable access and to protect against damage
10. Train staff
 - Create and implement professional and career development strategies for management and supervisory staff
 - Identify and allocate funding for critical staff development opportunities (including conferences, training, memberships, etc.) with consideration to licensure and certification requirements
 - Encourage continued staff training for leadership and continued growth within respective fields
 - Incentivize management level staff to attend professional development programs offered by state, regional, and national training organizations

Figure 7.4: Sample Event Flyer



Figure 7.5: Sample Brochure



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- Incentivize and support staff members to pursue Certified Park & Recreation Professional (CPRP), Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) and Aquatic Facility Operator (AFO) certifications
11. Add a staff position with dedicated hours for overseeing programming in the city and managing any outside contracts
 12. Explore and solidify contracted partnerships with outside vendors and organizations to produce more programming
 - Broaden programming without necessarily hiring additional staff
 - Address emerging requests from the public through contracts with private vendors

Engagement and Promotion

1. Utilize this Master Plan to guide decision making – regularly monitor progress
2. Create a Master Plan Implementation Committee (e.g., can include members of plan steering committee) to facilitate, market, and guide implementation of the Action Plan (Chapter 9)
3. Maintain continuous public engagement throughout the implementation of this plan
4. Establish a consistent messaging strategy for the department
5. Determine standard formatting for all marketing and promotional materials (consider samples provided above) based on the medium (e.g., social media, newspaper, etc.)
6. Create an eye-catching brand, including color, style, logo placement, and flyer layout
 - Ensure that park signage is consistent with this branding
7. Expand marketing of programs and facilities through existing and future collaborative relationships to increase community awareness and participation
8. Engage neighborhood residents during park improvement processes using bulletin boards, monitored social media posts, and other methods
9. Maintain existing social media presence, but improve access on department webpage
10. Utilize video content whenever possible to meet increasing need for highly visual engagement
11. Establish an opt-in email blast for community members to stay informed and connected; can be part of program or event registration
12. Create and promote a common calendar for activities and events, including a portal for easy registration
13. Collaborate with partners and other service-providers in the city to cross-promote and share information about services
14. Explore development of a searchable mobile app to communicate site locations, services, and special events to the public

Contracts

1. Develop working agreements with every partner (all outside groups using Frankfort facilities) including measurable outcomes; review every two years (at minimum)
2. Understand all agency costs, both indirect and direct, before entering into agreements; understand how much investment a partner will commit to collaboration
3. Never permit private or not-for-profit groups to benefit financially from Frankfort facilities without the city receiving a share of gross revenue
4. Ensure all future contracts benefit the city of Frankfort and its residents, in addition to the relevant partnering vendor or contractor
5. Require city-owned properties remain available to Frankfort residents when not in use by lessee

7.10 BUDGET AND FUNDING

The total operating budget (see Table 2.15) for Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites in Frankfort for FY 2019-2020 is just under \$3.5 million. The table also shows a per capita operating expenditure of \$117, just above the benchmark median of \$99. Proposed facility development, especially an indoor sports center, would have a large impact on the overall budget of the department. It is also important to note that the city provides services to county residents, but that population is not included in these numbers.

Generated revenue represents 25% of the Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites budget, slightly below the benchmark of 29%, and the per capita revenue in Frankfort is \$29, compared to \$31 for the benchmarks. These numbers indicate that the cost recovery numbers may not tell the whole story. An increase to 35% cost recovery may be an attainable goal with 10 years as new programs are added and other cost recovery strategies are implemented. Even higher cost recovery should be attained if an indoor sports center is developed.

It will be difficult for Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites to sustain the growth identified in this plan without some changes to business operations. Applying these business management principals to operations, programs, and services will better prepare the department to tackle the financial challenges facing it in the future.

7.10.1 Management and Budget

Budget and financial performance analysis is needed for a department of this size, but it is not currently being completed. It is important for the department to have a firm grip on the costs associated with operating any given program or facility. Simply generating more revenue will not be beneficial if costs are not simultaneously controlled. If costs are not known, it is not possible to correctly calculate cost recovery. Instituting a cost recovery and pricing plan for all offerings (see next subsection) will help the department more efficiently tackle its budgeting.

Consistent Pricing for Programming

Programming fees should reflect the indirect costs of putting on the program. As department costs increase, these costs need to be explained and then distributed to the contractors conducting the programming.

Creating Revenue from Events

The city of Frankfort and its family friendly reputation lends itself to a series of community-wide events that can generate substantial revenue through entrance fees, operations, and sponsors.

Gaining Control and an Understanding of Maintenance Costs

The department should know the exact cost to maintain outdoor parks. A maintenance standard by season should be set along with the number of people required to maintain one acre of parkland. If additional parkland is developed, the maintenance costs should be a part of planning and development discussions; having standards in place significantly helps with deliberation.

Vendors

In order to provide for the growing demands of programs and events identified through this planning process, the city must consider using outside vendors and partners to perform some of the necessary tasks of program coordination. The city will need to ensure these vendors are accomplishing objectives identified through this Master Plan. The vendor should provide their service for a split of revenues. Outside vendors and contractors can be obtained through an RFQ (Request for Qualifications), allowing the city to choose the best people based on qualifications and previous experience. An example RFQ for programming is provided in Appendix H.

Rentals

The city reserves picnic shelters on a daily basis, though most events last only two hours or less. A fee to reserve picnic shelters for half days (with an hour between reservations) would allow expanded use of existing facilities. Changing the reservation structure in this way may require emptying trash receptacles and other tasks between rental sessions to maintain expected service levels. If city staff are unavailable, this service may be outsourced with the cost included in the rental fee. The city should also add new shelters to the rental inventory as they are developed and consider developing an online reservation platform including a calendar of availability.

7.10.2 Potential Funding Sources

There are numerous sources that will show ways to fund Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites projects. Unfortunately, many of these strategies can be very hard to implement and may take years to see any results. Examples of some of these ideas include maintenance endowment funds, conservation districts, license tags, transient occupancy taxes, income taxes, lease backs, real-estate transfer fees, land dedication and/or park impact fees, and park authorities. Although all of these can be explained and should be considered, the strategies below could have an immediate impact on the operations and capital improvements of Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites.

Forming a Parks Foundation

Establishing a Frankfort Parks Foundation, which would operate separately as a 501c3 organization, is an opportunity Frankfort should pursue. A foundation enables the city, its programs, and its facilities to receive philanthropic funds. There are philanthropists in Frankfort that want to donate to programs and services that add parks and recreation value to the city. A foundation must be promoted and actively utilized to fund park improvements. There must be a Foundation Board to guide efforts, and the members of this board should be intentionally recruited. Funds generated can create opportunities for capital projects, but also for programming. Funding can also be used to support volunteer recruitment and organization, enabling the city to introduce park ambassadors and other engaged members as part of the Frankfort's parks and recreation service.

As noted previously, Frankfort residents generally believe that program costs are fair. For those in the community who are unable to pay, the department is flexible in allowing them to participate in programs. But there is currently no system for tracking these informal agreements and no set guidelines for determining who is qualified for assistance. However, the pricing for programs may still not be affordable for everyone in the community. A Parks Foundation can solicit donations for any participant that may not be able to pay for offerings, including covering program and user fees. Appendix H includes a document with more information about how to form a foundation.

Volunteer Power

Park ambassadors provide directions, offer assistance, or remind visitors of park policies. They may also assist with maintenance activities, like litter pickup. The presence of ambassadors often helps visitors feel more comfortable in park spaces, and they can monitor sites to make sure people feel welcome and have good access to features of the park.

Adopt-A-Trail or Adopt-A-Park programs are an additional, more formalized way for volunteers to assist with park maintenance in Frankfort. These programs encourage residents and interested groups to become involved in keeping parks clean for their community. These programs give new possibilities for involvement to those residents who have the interest but need a structured opportunity. Louisville Metro has an established Adopt-A-Park program; this could serve as a regionally relevant example Frankfort can look to for inspiration. Again, partnerships with local entities can be a great way to explore and initiate volunteer interest in the city. And target areas can be as small as a landscaped median on St. Clair Mall downtown, or as large as an entire park like Todd Park in Bellepoint.

Creating a Scholarship Fund

Around the country, parks and recreation agencies are exploring ways to utilize the patronage of those already paying for recreation services. Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites can explore a couple of options for building a robust scholarship fund:

- Apply an additional \$2.00 charge to the registration fee for all those who pay for programs. Funnel the funds generated into a scholarship fund that can be accessed for those patrons unable to pay
- Add an option to the registration process where those signing up can opt to donate (e.g., \$2.00 or \$5.00) to help those in their community who are unable to pay to participate

American Rescue Plan

The American Rescue Plan Act was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Biden on March 12, 2021. The bill provides direct aid to local governments that can be used for a wide variety of city needs, including potentially parks and recreation improvements. The city of Frankfort is to receive an estimated \$7.7 million, according to the National League of Cities,⁶ although the numbers are not yet finalized. If a portion of these funds were designated to parks and recreation, they would allow for a powerful start to the implementation of this Master Plan.

Grants and Application for Funding

Not all grants are beneficial; most are positive, but some require more work from staff than the grant's potential benefits. Frankfort has previously taken advantage of Community Development Block Grants, and Land and Water Conservation Fund are currently funding improvements at Dolly Graham Park. The city may qualify for a Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant from FEMA to repair damage and improve resilience to future storm damage at River View Park after the recent flood caused heavy damage.

The city of Frankfort should continue to be on the lookout for grants that will enhance the park system. Applying to established foundations is often easier and has a higher acceptance rate. There are sometimes local foundations that are more amenable to giving locally. In all, grants can come from the federal government, state sources, and sometimes local entities. Indianapolis, for example, has received over \$100 million in foundation grants from the Lilly Endowment over the past 20 years for park related improvements in the city.

Example Grant Sources:

- National Recreation Trails Program
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program
- Conservation Reserve Fund
- Community Forest and Open Space Program (Federal)
- Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Grant (FEMA)
- Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Grants (USDA)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (Federal)
- AARP Community Challenge

Scholarship General Funding Sources for Parks, Recreation, and Sports Facility Operation

Below is a general list of ideas that communities have used to supplement costs of operations. Some of these may be more effective in Frankfort than others.

- Official drink for Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites
- Tournament fees – if an outside vendor makes money, the city should as well
- Scoreboard sponsors

⁶ National League of Cities, "Estimated Local Allocations in the American Rescue Plan," <https://www.nlc.org/resource/estimated-local-allocations-in-the-american-rescue-plan/>, (April 29, 2021)

-
- Parking fees at events
 - Field permits when outside groups are not using the fields
 - Advertising sales
 - Wi-Fi revenue through sponsorship, if a vendor provides the Wi-Fi
 - Cell tower leases
 - Privatization of various park and recreation programs and services
 - Sports booster clubs
 - Corporate sponsorship in exchange for advertising

7.10.3 Recommendations

Management and Budget

1. Know the value of assets (excluding land values); know where those assets are in their life cycle
2. Determine maintenance standards that include how many employees are required to maintain one acre of parkland; consider these standards when adding parkland to the system
3. Know the true costs to deliver services (direct and indirect costs)
4. Establish and adjust fees for programs according to direct and indirect costs
5. Classify the agency's services according to how they align with the agency's mission
6. Inform users, partners, and citizens of the true costs of services
7. Know the demographics of the citizens served
8. Track population trends
9. Control labor costs
10. Consider using outside vendors and partners, selected through an RFQ process, with a revenue split to perform some of the staffing tasks of a programmer
11. Maintain the Trust Fund and expand the account with any percentage splits coming to Frankfort through vendors and contractors

Cost Recovery

1. Increase cost recovery to (35%) or better as new features are developed, and new programs are added
2. Institute an easy-to-understand Cost Recovery and Pricing Plan for everything that is offered
3. Price services furthest away from the mission at full cost recovery levels
4. Analyze potential costs versus revenue before adding new features
5. Establish a fee to reserve picnic shelters for half days (with an hour between reservations) to allow increased use of existing facilities
6. Add new shelters to the rental inventory as they are developed
7. Consider online reservations for all rental facilities with a calendar to view availability
8. Identify potential revenue sources at community events, including sponsorships and entry fees
9. Develop a program for recruiting and scheduling volunteer park ambassadors to promote wellbeing and provide assistance at parks
10. Utilize volunteers to assist with park maintenance through efforts such as the adoption of park sections or trails in Frankfort

Funding Sources

1. Find dedicated funding sources for Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites that can be depended upon annually
2. Seek philanthropists in the community to support the agency's causes

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3. Create a Frankfort Parks Foundation to raise funds, recruit and organize volunteers, and promote the parks
 4. Continue seeking grants and apply to foundations for project funding that enhances the park system; be sure this is consistent with the mission of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites while also considering associated costs to the city
 5. Create a Scholarship Fund, potentially by requesting an optional additional \$2.00 charge during registration
 6. Consider utilizing a portion of the American Rescue Plan funds allocated to the city of Frankfort for parks and recreation improvements

7.11 CONTINUITY WITH OTHER PLANNING EFFORTS

As Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites moves forward working toward improvements and development that can make a difference in the lives of the community, they will benefit from aligning efforts with any existing plans wherever possible. A number of plan documents and studies exist, including plans pursued by other city entities besides Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites. Appendix G includes a summary of those plans considered especially relevant to the work of the agency. The following are a few key highlights and subsequent recommendations.

7.11.1 Primarily Relevant Plan Documents

Blanton's Landing Feasibility Study (2021)

Completed as part of the city's initial exploration into the potential of the Blanton's Landing site, this document presents a high-level case for how Frankfort might tap into the urban waterfront revitalization movement. This feasibility study shares the potential of Frankfort's riverfront along the south edge of downtown. It depicts the potential social, environmental, and economic impacts of providing a destination along the river's edge, and the unique opportunity Frankfort has to provide residents and visitors access to the Kentucky River for recreation, entertainment, and reconnection with the environment.

Capital Museum Strategic Plan (2020)

Completed in the spring of 2021, this strategic plan document outlines the current state and future potential of the city's signature historical institution. As part of the Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites inventory, the Capitol City Museum is a wonderful resource for expanding programming impact. The strategic plan defines a set of values – cultural and business – and presents a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis. Perhaps most critically, the plan outlines 20 initiatives within four categories, including: creating a compelling product, ensuring audience development, establishing a distinctive image, and maintaining durable service through long-term planning.

Frankfort Arts Master Plan (2021)

The most recent plan effort conducted by the city, this public arts plan document was completed in 2021. The Frankfort Arts Master Plan document establishes context for investment, aspirations for future development, and a prioritized action plan. The plan covers both "cultural development" and "public art." The plan outlines a number of opportunities for intersecting art, the nature environment, and programming with parks and open spaces.

Holmes Street Master Plan (2006)

While this document was completed nearly 20 years ago, and focuses primarily on transportation or economic development issues, it concerns the area immediately adjacent the proposed Holmes Street Park (see Section 7.6.2). This plan is relevant to Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites now because it underscores the city's decades-long awareness of unmet needs and underserved population along the corridor.

WalkBike Frankfort's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (2016)

Last updated in 2016, this Master Plan was first conducted by local nonprofit WalkBike Frankfort and adopted by Frankfort City Commission and Franklin County Fiscal Court in 2007. The document provides preliminary priority actions for trail placement and improvements, but design guidelines are not specified. As Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites pursues implementation of the various connectivity recommendations (Section 7.5), close collaboration with WalkBike Frankfort and other mobility advocates in the community will help to bolster public support and even to organize energy around specific actions.

Frankfort Downtown Master Plan (2018)

Completed in 2018, this document was funded and supported by the city of Frankfort and Franklin County Fiscal Court. As with the Comprehensive Plan (below), the scope includes both county and city. Through community engagement efforts, research, and analysis, the plan presents an assessment of Downtown Frankfort's strengths and weaknesses and includes a list of guiding principles. Redevelopment of the former Capital Plaza represents a significant portion of the plan, many recommendations of which pertain to River View Park. The document concludes with broad recommendations for steps to take to highlight downtown as a resource for the community.

Franklin County/Frankfort Comprehensive Plan (2016)

The latest updated iteration of the 2001 and 2010 comprehensive plans, this document refers generally to broad parks and open space issues. Defining new development standards and creating guidelines for neighborhood connections to parks are two objectives identified in the plan. Connectivity and access to open space are clear priorities in the plan's language. Further planning efforts are needed to establish more specific, achievable recommendations. The document also recommends that the city provide "services that enhance community quality and character," an objective closely connected to the improvement of parks explored in this Master Plan.

7.11.2 Recommendations for Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites

1. Collaborate to form an implementation committee to oversee the development of trails (pedestrian and bike) in accordance with the WalkBike Frankfort Master Plan
2. Provide support to local groups advocating connectivity throughout Frankfort
3. Install "share the road" signage in the parks and at park entrances
4. Support development of city staff position dedicated to overseeing bike and pedestrian mobility projects across the city
5. Improve engagement with riverfront; develop additional opportunities to access the water
6. Clear additional viewsheds of the river, trimming only non-stabilizing vegetation
7. Pursue enhancements to South Riverfront, including improved viewsheds and potential additional access points
8. Extend existing boardwalk at River View Park east, with possible connection to potential development of Blanton's Landing (pending flood repairs and mitigation)
9. Consider constructing, in partnership, a pedestrian path along the Kentucky River (e.g., between Library and KSU facility)
10. Create more usable, inviting public spaces by improving amenities at existing sites and establishing multiuse areas where possible
11. Pursue unique, locally sourced and created installations where possible to reinforce a sense of place and "Frankfort identity"
12. Continue collaborating with the city's efforts to redevelop the former Capital Plaza site (Parcels B and C)

7.12 PARTNERSHIPS AND SPONSORSHIPS

7.12.1 Observations and Analyses

Collaborative partnerships and sponsorships should play a critical role in the future of parks and recreation in Frankfort. Through strategic transparent partnerships, the department can both reduce costs and generate additional revenue. In each stakeholder conversation, the need for partnership and collaboration emerged over and over. Frankfort already has a number of formal partnerships – including with sports, environmental, and business groups – as well as a widely held positive and responsive reputation in the community. But of the nearly 30 stakeholders, the majority voiced interest and excitement about forming new collaborative relationships. Looking forward along the 10-year timeline of this Master Plan, many actions will require at least some amount of support from additional groups in order to be truly successful. In fact, some recommended new facilities will likely only be possible through partnerships with other organizations in order to adequately cover both capital and operating costs.

Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites currently has positive relationships with Frankfort Independent Schools and Franklin County Schools. However, the public stands to benefit the most from an improved and expanded partnership. Together, the department and school systems should articulate an official agreement for use of school properties as parks, particularly after school hours. As part of this agreement, Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites can provide routine maintenance in exchange for expanded service to the community and fair compensation for staff time. Staff have greater expertise and can ensure with more efficiency than the schools likely can that all facilities are in compliance with safety regulations.

The Frankfort Tourism Commission, Downtown Frankfort, Inc., the Chamber of Commerce, and others are key partner possibilities in achieving many of the marketing and outreach objectives described above (Section 7.9). These entities have broad audiences and existing connections which can be leveraged for time-consuming but necessary marketing. By formalizing agreements to place regularly updated parks and recreation content in Frankfort marketing materials (e.g., relocation packages and conference packets), city advocates can help spread awareness of Frankfort's remarkably diverse parks system. This in turn helps attract visitors – potential new residents – to the city, boosting economic development and bolstering community identity.

Canoe Kentucky, Kentucky River Tours, the Farmers Market, Capital City Activity Center, and others (e.g., healthcare providers and fitness-related businesses) could be highly effective partners for bringing health & wellness activities to residents of Frankfort. Many of these groups already have a positive relationship with Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites, and their interest in expanding collaboration was expressed in stakeholder conversations. By utilizing all the park spaces, facilities, and maintenance knowledge the department has to offer, these other health and outdoor recreation entities can extend their offerings beyond a single brick-and-mortar location to better reach neighborhood communities all around the city. In turn, Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites can gain programming capacity, more effectively fulfill their mission, and ensure their presence in the community is recognized as essential for the wellbeing of Frankfort residents.

Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites can better utilize the spectacular natural spaces included in the city's park system by solidifying strong, recurring collaborations with local environmental advocacy and nature-based groups, such as the Audubon Society. The Enviro Adventures youth summer camp held in 2019 brought nature-based fun to a host of Frankfort youth and is a great example of future nature based programming the city can offer.

The Frankfort arts community is thriving, diverse, and growing. Organizations like Yes Arts, Josephine Sculpture Park, Broadway Clay, and many other dedicated energetic advocates are ensuring the Frankfort community has continually emerging opportunities to engage in creativity. Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites is in a unique position to connect with local sources for signature in-park elements (e.g., murals, seating, signage, lighting, etc.). One initial step is to form a coalition of these different creative energies to regularly discuss potential intersections between their ongoing work and the city's parks and recreation. By establishing a respectful line of communication between the department and those in Frankfort's arts community, the city can reorient towards arts-based solutions to directly funnel resources back into the local economy, champion community character, and equitably address needed improvements and challenges.

Any partnership the department pursues must be mutually beneficial, and terms clearly stated for both parties.

7.12.2 Recommendations

1. Treat all vendors, contractors, and partners in a professional, consistent manner with a legal, signed contract containing the following:
 - Name, entity, and address
 - Obligations of each party
 - Terms of the contract
 - Price (if any, and who pays for what)
 - Representations and warranties – (insurance, who owns what)
 - Termination of the contract – when and by whom
 - Signed, witnessed, and reviewed periodically
2. Host quarterly or semiannual check-ins with all community partners; host roundtable discussion where all parties share program progress and emerging needs
3. Seek opportunities to expand partnerships with local organizations to improve access to recreation facilities and programs
4. Articulate an official agreement Frankfort Independent Schools and Franklin County Schools for use of school properties as parks, particularly after school hours
5. Require a maintenance plan that identifies ongoing funding needs for partnership projects
6. Establish policies for accepting sponsorships and selling naming rights
7. Partner with Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Service, the Audubon Society, and others for nature education programs throughout parks in Frankfort
8. Continue partnership with Downtown Frankfort, Inc., Frankfort Tourism Commission, and others in the business community to generate a variety of downtown events, promote the parks system, and enhance community identity
9. Sustain existing and develop new partnerships with local health care providers (e.g., Franklin County Environmental Health Services) to promote and financially underwrite healthy lifestyles through Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites
10. Establish consistent communication and collaboration with Paul Sawyer Public Library for educational programs (e.g., craft demonstrations) and cross-promotion of program offerings
11. Solicit expertise from Frankfort arts and culture community (e.g., Yes Arts, Otrero Arts & Roaming Studio, and others) to find arts-based solutions for facility improvements
12. Coordinate with the city's Historic Preservation Officer, Franklin County Preservation Trust, and other historic preservation representatives prior to any future planning or development process (especially concerning Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve and Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill) to ensure relevant guidelines are met and areas of historical significance are properly preserved
13. Seek opportunities to develop cultural programming in collaboration with the creative, arts-advocacy entities in Frankfort
14. Collaborate with outdoor recreation and wellness-based groups like Canoe Kentucky and the Farmers Market to bring consistent, quality opportunities for enhancing the health of the Frankfort community
15. Conduct repair of historic dry stack stone wall at Leslie Morris Park on Ft. Hill, in partnership with local historic preservation experts
16. Support Franklin County Preservation Trust and others in adding additional archaeological elements at Leslie Morris Park on Ft. Hill to National Register of Historic Places
17. Seek out and compensate local arts community and history advocates to collaborate on promoting historic features throughout parks system (e.g., Leslie Morris Park, Cove Spring, Green Hill, etc.)
18. Continue to seek out collaborative possibilities – in general – with neighbors surrounding parks



INDIVIDUAL PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes recommendations for individual park improvements including proposed new facilities and upgrades to existing parks. Each section reviews the findings explored in the park inventory (Chapter 3) and offers steps forward. These recommendations are presented as a starting point for future discussions with users, neighbors, partners, and the community at large. Before pursuing development, each park site will need a deeper investigation into capacity and precise details like placement, materials used, and maintenance considerations.

This chapter also includes a suggested level of priority for each improvement recommendation; priority is based on public engagement, steering committee input, and the condition of facilities. Priorities should always be confirmed before implementation through community engagement which will be especially important as the city recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to the following recommendations for each park across the system, six parks were selected for a more detailed design analysis. Opportunity, needs, community input, and departmental goals all informed the selection of these specific sites. The six concept plans offered are intended to support any funding or development pursuits and to guide the improvement process. Parks are listed according to the park classification following the proposed improvements.

8.2 NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

8.2.1 Dolly Graham Park

Background

Dolly Graham Park is located along the Kentucky River in the South Frankfort neighborhood. The history of the surrounding area is marred by disinvestment (including the park itself) and resident displacement. The area now designated as a park was once a series of residential blocks: severe repeat flooding caused relocation and redevelopment of the site. After decades without significant improvements or investment, Dolly Graham Park is slated for federally funded redevelopment which will begin to address neglect and disrepair. Nearby institutions, like Kings Center and South Frankfort Community Center, utilize Dolly Graham Park for their beloved and critically-needed youth programming. Local residents organize annual gatherings that draw hundreds of people back to the park. While the community has made the most of the existing space, there is overwhelming potential to improve service and establish Dolly Graham Park as a cultural hub for South Frankfort.

Looking forward, Frankfort and Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites will need to prioritize transparency and healing by practicing consistent, open outreach with the local community. The information below outlines present conditions followed by the critical next steps needed to ensure this long-neglected park becomes a quality space that effectively serves the community.

The following park issues and opportunities were identified through site assessments and public input:

- Phase 1 of renovations in progress – new playground, splash pad, basketball court, and restroom upgrades
- Wayfinding and entrance signage needed; park hidden from main street
- Playground degraded and outdated beyond useful life; needs to be replaced
- Both shelters in poor condition
- Restrooms in poor condition and often closed
- Accessibility issues sitewide
- No designated parking area
- Community garden and wooded area not connected to main park area, alleyway potential connection
- Former volleyball court deteriorated with no net
- Basketball court paving warped and cracked
- Entire park within the 100-year floodplain
- Riverbank overgrown, no direct access or viewshed on site

Improvement Recommendations

1. Resurface and restripe the basketball court and replace goals (in progress); consider adding futsal lining
2. Replace playground with fully accessible, high-quality equipment (in progress)
3. Upgrade restroom building to meet local need and provide quality experience (in progress)
 - Develop a replacement shelter and restroom building with a family restroom to meet increasing park visitation
4. Replace fencing around playground and splash pad
5. Install splash pad facility to provide water-based play and more diverse recreation to South Frankfort community (in progress)
6. Add ADA walkways to connect site features and ensure sitewide accessibility
7. Install informational kiosk and community bulletin to enhance communication and to serve as a tool for future engagement
8. Add energy-efficient lighting (pedestrian scale) for visibility, improved security, and multi-seasonal use of site
9. Resurface and restripe the parking lot w/ADA Spaces
10. Add picnic areas with an accessible slab and tables
11. Install security cameras for enhanced safety and improved surveillance
12. Replace the existing shelter – due to poor condition – to add a quality community gathering place, meet local need, and provide potentially programmable (and revenue-generating) space
13. Add branded signage to both main and secondary entrances to improve navigability and effectively advertise site
14. Develop a small dog park (i.e., “dog lot”) to address local demand and improve citywide service



Pump Track in Bentonville, AR

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15. Develop a small skate park (i.e., “skate spot”)
 16. Install Wi-Fi hotspots for enhanced community access and potential future programming
 17. Seek opportunities to improve viewsheds and engage the Kentucky River
 18. Add a trailhead with a connection to the existing trail leading to the Capitol Avenue Bridge
 19. Install outdoor fitness equipment and potentially an obstacle course for ages 13+ to meet demand for health & wellness activities (Chapter 4), provide opportunities for all ages, and to create potentially programmable space
 20. Construct a neighborhood program building to meet community need and elevate site potential
 21. Develop a neighborhood-specific feature (e.g., futsal/pickleball/youth tennis court) based on preferences of nearby residents as determined through authentic neighborhood outreach; pursue local partnerships wherever possible
 22. Add site furnishings (e.g., benches, trash/recycling receptacles, bike rack, pet waste station), trees, landscaping, and a drinking fountain with bottle filler

Concept

Dolly Graham Park has potential to be a high-quality space for the neighborhood and city to use, a hub of community and wellbeing. Nearby nonprofits and neighbors already utilize the site in its current condition for summer youth programs and annual social events, but thorough engagement determined that the site is far from what the public needs. After decades of little to no investment, the city is taking steps to address much-needed improvements and new development within the park. Items under construction include a new playground to replace the existing 20+ years-old equipment, basketball court upgrades (possibly with futsal lining), a splash pad near the Fantasy Forest, and upgraded site amenities (e.g., renovated restrooms, drinking fountain, and dedicated picnic area). Additional items identified in the attached concept are intended to illustrate potential future amenities that would complement and enhance the changes already underway. Local residents and neighborhood advocates need to be approached and genuinely engaged in dialogue before any decisions are made about future changes. This conceptual drawing should be used to demonstrate where different site features and amenities could fit within the unique space, and how the site can be more effectively utilized for the benefit of the public.

As is evident in the concept, the site does not have contiguous city ownership. Two parcels – a recycling center and former American Legion Hall – keep it from being a fully connected site. Continued partnership between property owners and the city will be needed to ensure optimal experiences for residents and the best service from the park.

The concept shows a renovated basketball court and new picnic shelter in the eastern portion of the site. An additional dedicated picnic area (i.e., concrete slab, seating, trash/recycling, etc.) helps show where the city has more opportunity to address public need for more social gathering and passive enjoyment of nature. An obstacle course for ages 13+ is outlined as well, between the picnic area and shelter. The area south of St. John Court shows a dog park and skate park. Both of these potential facilities would need to be small and appropriately designed. However, as the concept shows, there is space in the park for incorporating additional uses, thereby improving overall service. The concept shows a new shade structure within the dog park for improved visitor experience and additional gathering space. Between the recycling center and the old American Legion Hall, an existing slab of degraded pavement could be removed and replaced with a combination futsal/pickleball/youth tennis court to accommodate growing demand for both activities and make the most use out of the small space. There is also outdoor fitness equipment shown in various locations on site; this is to show how there is room for this facility, a requested resource in public input.

Finally, in the segment of the park north of the pending playground and splash pad development, some existing items are shown rearranged. As the new improvements and added amenities will likely draw higher visitation, the city will need to address an increased demand for parking. The concept shows new parking along the street. There is another picnic area with accessible walkways connecting it to the parking and the labyrinth. Refurbishing the labyrinth provides an opportunity to improve the pavement, add descriptive signage explaining more about the feature, and upgrade the paint to help it withstand heavy use.

8.2.2 Holmes Street Playground (Leathers Field)

Background

Located along the Holmes Street corridor, this site is about a mile east of downtown Frankfort. Currently, the department provides limited maintenance of the playground equipment and surrounding grassy area. An open field comprises the majority of the site and is crisscrossed by several informally constructed bike paths. The neighborhood has undergone previous plan efforts to address transportation improvements and economic development of the Holmes Street area emerged in stakeholder discussions. The city has a significant opportunity to enhance quality of life for families in the neighborhood by developing this site as a formal neighborhood park.

The following park issues and opportunities were identified through site assessments and public input:

- Not officially part of the park system
- Lack of features
- Plenty of space to accommodate additional development
- Playground is outdated and degraded beyond its useful life; needs to be replaced
- Play area surfacing and edging needs to be replaced
- Perimeter fencing along Meagher Avenue is overgrown with vegetation
- Security issues and safety concerns due to site's location and poor visibility
- No designated parking, minimal space
- No signage

Improvement Recommendations

1. Develop Park Master Plan (in partnership with Frankfort Independent School District) with thorough local community engagement; ensure development coincides with long-term needs
2. Add energy-efficient lighting (pedestrian scale) for visibility, improved security, and multi-seasonal use of site
3. Replace playground with fully accessible, engaging equipment
4. Replace fencing around playground
5. Add branded signage to main entrance, including wayfinding from Holmes Street, to improve navigability and effectively advertise site
6. Remove overgrowth vegetation along Meagher Ave to improve site visibility, enhance security, and deter vandalism
7. Add ADA walkways to connect between site features and ensure sitewide accessibility
8. Develop dog park to address community demand and improve service citywide
9. Construct new parking lot to ensure accessibility and formalize site as neighborhood park
10. Construct pump track (BMX/MTB) to accommodate local need and meet growing demand
11. Install security cameras for enhanced safety and improved surveillance (2)
12. Construct medium-sized picnic shelter to add a quality gathering place, meet local need, and provide potentially programmable (and revenue-generating) space
13. Add paved loop trail around park perimeter to improve connectivity and meet community demand for more walking paths
14. Install Wi-Fi hotspots for enhanced community access
15. Consider adding a restroom building once park visitation increases
16. Develop neighborhood-specific feature based on preferences of nearby residents as determined through authentic neighborhood outreach; pursue local partnerships wherever possible
17. Add site furnishings (e.g., benches, trash/recycling receptacles, bike rack, pet waste station), trees, landscaping, and a drinking fountain with bottle filler

Figure 8.1: Dolly Graham Park Concept



Figure 8.2: Thorn Hill Playground Concept



8.2.3 Thorn Hill Playground

Background

This site is located in the north central part of the city and sits adjacent to the Thorn Hill Learning Center. The surrounding area is almost entirely residential. While there is currently playground equipment, a picnic table, and a half basketball court (minus the hoop), these features are in derelict condition. Until now, the department has maintained the grass on site in the event of a neighborhood request, but in light of public input (Chapter 4) and the needs assessment (Chapter 5), the planning process for this Master Plan has determined the need for the city to formally include the Thorn Hill site as a Neighborhood Park. Doing so would help address demand for increased access to small neighborhood public spaces, playgrounds, and community events. And by enhancing this space with recreational variety, the city will elevate service to a currently underserved part of Frankfort.

The following park issues and opportunities were identified through site assessments and public input:

- Not officially part of the park system
- Lack of features
- Potential to serve as a Neighborhood Park for surrounding residential area
- Playground needs to be replaced, including edging and surfacing
- Basketball court pavement in poor condition with weeds growing in cracks; no goal on backboard
- Lack of signage
- Picnic table in poor condition
- Entire site not ADA accessible
- Incomplete and informal pathways could be converted to permanent walking trails
- Excessive pavement on site in poor condition with weeds growing in cracks

Improvement Recommendations

1. Develop a Park Master Plan with concept plan (Figure 8.2) as foundation for conducting thorough local community engagement; ensure development coincides with long-term need
2. Replace the half basketball court
3. Install energy-efficient lighting (including pedestrian scale) for visibility, improved security, and multi-seasonal use of site
4. Construct a new parking lot to address increased usage and ensure accessibility
5. Replace the playground with fully accessible, engaging equipment for ages 2-12
6. Install security cameras for enhanced safety and improved surveillance
7. Add ADA walkways to connect site features and ensure sitewide accessibility
8. Construct a picnic shelter to add a quality gathering place, meet local need, and provide potentially programmable (and revenue-generating) space
9. Add branded signage to both main and secondary entrances to improve navigability and effectively advertise site
10. Add a paved loop trail around the park perimeter to utilize site more fully, provide connectivity, and meet community demand for more walking paths
11. Construct a small amphitheater/picnic shelter to create more programmable gathering space for the community and provide a venue for additional concerts/art performances per public input (Chapter 4)
12. Develop neighborhood-specific feature based on preferences of nearby residents as determined through authentic neighborhood outreach; pursue local partnerships wherever possible
13. Add site furnishings (e.g., benches, trash/recycling receptacles, bike rack, pet waste station), trees, landscaping, and a drinking fountain with bottle filler

Concept

In order to more fully utilize the existing space, the department will need to pursue a number of strategic improvements. Not only do the existing amenities on the site need repairs or replacements, but there are also several opportunities to expand service to the currently underserved community around the park. The concept drawing shown here (Figure 8.2) is intended as inspiration for what is possible in the space. In order to realize Thorn Hill as a Neighborhood Park, discussions with the surrounding residents will be needed to explore local need and ensure development is supported by those directly impacted.

In the attached conceptual drawing, an expanded playground and half basketball court are shown in the southwest corner of the site (there is already a playground and the slab for a basketball court; these will need to be replaced). A small shelter is shown next to these facilities; this space would provide potential rest or a small gathering space for visitors to the park and these new features.

The concept indicates in the center of the park, a nearly 30-space parking lot including ADA spaces. Improving and formalizing the existing lot will ensure adequate service for increased use. Positioning the parking in the center of the park ensure easy access to either end of the site while also alleviating the demand for on-street parking (which could impact surrounding residents) where there is currently a large section of concrete and asphalt in disrepair.

In the northern end of the park, there is a proposed outdoor amphitheater bounded by a quarter-mile paved loop trail. An additional shelter/restroom building situated immediately adjacent the parking lot ensures this needed amenity would be within easy access for users all over the park. Constructing an amphitheater in this neighborhood park would establish the space for public gathering and community-building programs.

The improvements shown in this conceptual drawing illustrate what Thorn Hill could look like with public input brought to life – a vibrant, multi-functional neighborhood space and venue for concerts, art performances, and more.

8.2.4 Todd Park in Bellepoint

Background

Located west of downtown across the Kentucky River, Todd Park in the Bellepoint Neighborhood currently experiences regular flooding and is minimally developed. Public engagement indicated the importance of neighborhood parks to the Frankfort community; Todd Park has a strong base of local visitors which makes it prime for strategic improvements. Enhancing this space by adding recreational variety will elevate service to a currently underserved neighborhood. Any recommended improvements will need to consider the flood-prone conditions of the site and mitigate potential damage.

The following park issues were identified through site assessments and public input:

- Lack of features
- Parking area needs restriping, lacks ADA accessible spots
- Shelter in fair condition and has inadequate seating
- Tree limbs obstruct parts of walking path
- Some drainage issues along path
- Most of park within the 100-year floodplain

Improvement Recommendations

1. Develop a Park Master Plan through thorough local engagement (especially of Bellepoint Neighborhood); consider flood-prone conditions and ensure development coincides with long-term needs
2. Add a fully-accessible playground to improve service levels in this neighborhood
3. Add ADA walkways to connect between site features and ensure sitewide accessibility
4. Resurface the paved trail to improve accessibility
5. Repaint picnic shelter and replace tables to address degradation and ensure durability

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6. Install outdoor fitness equipment, including shade where necessary, to meet demand for health & wellness activities (Chapter 4) and to create potentially programmable space
 7. Add a half basketball court to expand citywide service and add opportunities in this park
 8. Install energy-efficient lighting (including pedestrian scale) for visibility, improved security, and multi-seasonal use of site
 9. Resurface and restripe parking lot, including ADA spaces to improve accessibility
 10. Add branded signage to both main and secondary entrances to improve navigability and effectively advertise site – ensure park signs and department website use consistent park name
 11. Develop a neighborhood-specific feature based on preferences of nearby residents as determined through authentic neighborhood outreach; pursue local partnerships wherever possible
 12. Add site furnishings (e.g., benches, trash/recycling receptacles, bike rack, pet waste station), trees, landscaping, and a drinking fountain with bottle filler

8.3 COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PARKS

8.3.1 Capitol View Park

Background

The largest active-use park (second largest overall, after Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve) in the city's park system, Capitol View draws both regional and local visitation. This expansive site includes sports-oriented and passive-use facilities. Centrally located with an iconic view of the Kentucky Capitol Building, this park needs considerable investment and improvements to meet the quality level needed by Frankfort residents and desired by local advocates for economic development.

Section 7.4 in Chapter 7 examines the potential to upgrade Capitol View Park to a high-quality sports complex. The city has an interest in developing tournament level facilities to attract sports tourism to the site. Any future planning or development must be coordinated with Franklin County to avoid duplication of service and competing economic impact. If both the city and the county seek to attract tournaments, they will need to work in concert.

The following park issues were identified through site assessments and public input:

- Athletic fields are not ADA accessible
- Insufficient signage – entrance, trail, wayfinding (sitewide)
- No curbs or striping in either parking lot
- Restroom building at Pewitt Field in poor condition and not accessible
- Restroom/concessions/press box building at Legend and Williams Fields in fair condition but not accessible
- Parking areas sitewide not marked and inconsistently lighted
- Natural picnic area not marked
- River access obstructed
- Condition of parking lots
- Dugouts being updated, in need of accessibility improvements
- Much of park within 100-year floodplain, including two diamond fields
- Damage at riverbank from recent flooding

Improvement Recommendations

1. Utilize the pro-forma (Chapter 7) and concept (Figure 8.3) as guides for developing the improvements needed and potential economic impact of a tournament level sports complex at the park
2. Evaluate options to improve and rework entrance roads for better access and traffic flow

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3. Replace and upgrade field lighting with energy-efficient LED fixtures (soccer fields in progress)
 4. Conduct beach area plan, addressing flood-prone conditions, repairing damage, and expanding site usability
 5. Replace existing restroom buildings with energy-efficient, upgraded facilities for durable quality and improved service
 6. Add ADA walkways to connect between site features and ensure sitewide accessibility
 7. Reseal and repaint the basketball courts
 8. Add batting cages to deliver expanded service and enhance team experiences
 9. Demolish caretaker house and maintenance building to allow for more effective development of the space
 - Consider a group picnic area with a playground and shelters in the space provided by the removal of the house
 10. Renovate and expanded maintenance complex to provide more indoor storage for equipment, conditioning supplies, and materials
 11. Construct a community building to support tournament organization, host meetings, and provide programming space
 12. Address needed field improvements at all six diamond fields (items below would help attract tournament use)
 - Legends and Williams Fields – Concrete at backstops and bleachers, backstops, dugouts, infield mix, lighting, irrigation, outfield fence (6" with safety cap), side fence (10')
 - Pewitt and Sullivan Fields – Concrete at backstops and bleachers, backstops, lighting, infield mix, irrigation, outfield fence (6" with safety cap), side fence (10')
 - Fannin Field – Concrete at backstops and bleachers, backstops, lighting, infield mix, irrigation, outfield fence (6" with safety cap), side fence (10')
 - Figg Field – Concrete at backstops and bleachers, backstops, lighting, infield mix, irrigation, outfield fence (6" with safety cap), side fence (10')
 13. Address needed field improvements at all five rectangular fields (items below would help attract tournament use)
 - Sower Fields – Concrete at bleachers, artificial turf to two rectangular fields if the city decides to pursue tournaments
 - Third Soccer and Harrod Football Fields – Concrete at bleachers, new lighting, new press box (Harrod)
 - Back Soccer Field – Concrete at bleachers, sinkhole repair
 14. Install energy-efficient lighting (including pedestrian scale) for visibility, improved security, and multi-seasonal use of site
 15. Improve and expand parking areas sitewide to ensure adequate accessibility
 16. Consider including an RC remote control car/truck course to provide a feature not currently available in Frankfort
 17. Install a large, all-access playground with unique features, shade elements, seating, and trash/recycling receptacles
 18. Install security cameras for enhanced safety and improved surveillance
 19. Add branded signage sitewide – both main and secondary entrances, as well as wayfinding along trails and roadways – to improve navigability and effectively advertise site

Figure 8.3: Capitol View Park Concept



Figure 8.4: East Frankfort Park Concept



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20. Add paved loop trail around park perimeter to improve connectivity and meet community demand for more walking paths
 21. Install Wi-Fi hotspots for enhanced community access
 22. Consider adding a splash pad to expand on-site attractions and provide more diverse opportunities for recreation
 23. Consider developing a championship level disc golf course in partnership with the Frankfort Disc Golf Association if conflict with trails can be mitigated
 24. Add site furnishings (e.g., benches, trash/recycling receptacles, bike racks, pet waste stations), trees, landscaping, and a drinking fountain with bottle filler

Concept

The conceptual drawing for Capitol View Park illustrates possibilities for enhancing service to the community. A number of improvements are needed at Capitol View Park, regardless of whether or not the city chooses to pursue sports tourism. According to survey responses (Chapter 4), Capitol View is the sixth most visited park in the city. Many of the features and amenities identified in the concept address public input gathered for this Master Plan and adding just some of these proposed facilities will elevate the city's second largest park to be a truly signature, well-visited Regional Park.

Capitol View Park is already well-known for its incredible mountain bike trails. Any development outlined in the concept is intended to integrate well with this existing use. An additional paved loop trail – nearly 2 miles in circumference – is shown around the more developed, active use areas of the park.

Additionally, the concept shows activation in a currently undeveloped part of the park, right at the entrance. A large all-access playground – which could potentially feature nature-based elements and materials – and a splash pad would add to the available recreation in the park, serving the wider needs of visitors. Two added shelters and a restroom building would ensure quality experience in the space in addition to providing the potential for revenue generation through rentals. On the west side of the new parking lot is a designated group picnic area. Again, this space is currently underutilized (except for a former caretaker residence building) but, as the concept shows, it could easily accommodate social gatherings and outdoor passive recreation. The north active area includes five rectangular fields in total: two artificial turf, two multipurpose, and one lined for football. While fields currently exist in this same area, converting to artificial turf would improve maintenance efficiency and durability while allowing for additional use. Combination restroom/concessions buildings are situated near the fields and parking to provide much-needed service to this active use portion of the park. The concept also identifies several areas for parking around these fields, including a new lot near the entrance (≈160 spaces); many of the existing parking lots need significant accessibility improvements, and some are only informal gravel lots. The city will need to proactively plan for more parking - as well as improve and rework the entrance - because improvements will likely increase visitation and add to demand, putting strain on the park's existing movement system.

The central ballfield area features four ballfields of various sizes that all need improvements, including accessible walkways to the field and seating areas, backstops, dugouts, infield mix, lighting, irrigation, outfield fences, and side fences. The new parking lot would also provide better access to this area of the park, while new restrooms would support extended visits. The community building would support tournament organization, host team meetings, and could even provide space for various programs. The rectangular fields at the north end of the park show where new lighting is needed.

In the south end of the park, there are currently two diamond ballfields. These are both in need of some improvements to alleviate existing strains on maintenance and allow for reliable use (and in turn, possible revenue generation through permit fees) by the community. While there is currently a path between the ballfields leading to the river, the concept shows a more permanent, paved trail accessing the beach and water. Adding a kayak/canoe launch and allowing fishing access in this location would address public input requesting more opportunities to engage with the river. It also adds to the park's existing resources for passive recreation, making the site a well-rounded and diverse attraction. This area also houses the maintenance complex for the property, which needs expansion to accommodate additional indoor storage. All of these improvements would help to expand Capitol View Park's viability, taking advantage of existing space and responding to public input.

Finally, a disc golf course and an RC car/truck course are indicated in the northmost portion of the site that is currently largely inaccessible. These facilities need careful planning and public input before construction to verify the need and ability for the park to accommodate the additional features. This underutilized portion of the park has some steep topography and would need a pedestrian bridge (or 2) for the disc golf course to continue into or connect to the rest of the park.

8.3.2 East Frankfort Park

Background

At nearly 50 acres, East Frankfort Park is the only park within easy access from the southeastern parts of the city. Without Holmes Street and Thorn Hill as future Neighborhood Parks, it would continue to provide the closest city playground for residents as far north as Highway 421, all the way south to Interstate 64. Like Capitol View Park, East Frankfort Park provides a range of recreational opportunities to the community, including athletic fields, the city's only dog park, and a regionally attractive disc golf course. By adding walkable connectivity to surrounding residential streets and within the park itself, upgraded playgrounds and picnic shelters, and expanded facilities, East Frankfort Park can become a more fully-functional Community Park.

The following park issues were identified through site assessments and public input:

- Signage and wayfinding lacking throughout site
- Limited and inconsistent accessibility sitewide (e.g., at picnic shelters, playgrounds, restroom buildings, etc.)
- Parking lots need resurfacing and restriping
- Power outlets in picnic shelters are inaccessible (elevated 10 ft)
- Unused gravel area at former tennis courts
- Minimal paved (i.e., accessible) trails, poor connectivity between existing paths
- Age and condition of playgrounds
- Only one area in dog park; no separate areas for large and small dogs
- Dugouts in fair condition, bleachers inaccessible
- No seating or spectator areas at smaller fields
- Inoperable lighting poles need maintenance or replacement
- Insufficient trash receptacles
- Limited pet waste stations
- Minimal drinking fountains sitewide

Improvement Recommendations

1. Develop a Park Master Plan, using concept plan (Figure 8.4) as foundation for conducting thorough local community engagement; ensure development coincides with long-term needs of the public
2. Demolish former pool house and existing residence building to expand functionality of site and allow for needed facility development
3. Replace existing play equipment with a large playground to address community need and ensure durable service
4. Improve roadways sitewide, including repaving and curb amendments
5. Upgrade sewer system on site to improve capacity and support desired features



Sample Splashpad

6. Add branded signage sitewide – both main and secondary entrances, as well as wayfinding along trails and roadways – to improve navigability and effectively advertise site
7. Add ADA walkways to connect between site features and ensure sitewide accessibility
8. Replace the small playground with fully-accessible, engaging equipment
9. Add a splash pad to address community need and increase citywide service for water-based recreation
10. Construct a community amphitheater for expanded programming space and improved citywide opportunities for concerts/art performances
11. Add batting cages to deliver expanded service and enhance team experiences
12. Add bocce courts in former tennis area to provide greater variety of recreation opportunities for all ages
13. Consider adding a plaza with a variety of outdoor games to expand opportunities for all ages
14. Construct combination concessions/restroom facility near the field area to improve service and on-site amenities
15. Add a multiuse court to meet growing demand and provide greater variety of recreation opportunities, including futsal, basketball, and more
16. Expand the dog park to allow for separated areas based on dog size
17. Upgrade and replace field lighting with energy-efficient LED fixtures to enhance usability of facilities
18. Install additional lighting sitewide (including pedestrian-scale) for improved visibility and enhanced security
19. Improve existing maintenance facilities to extend departmental capacity and support more efficient park maintenance
20. Install outdoor fitness equipment, including shade where necessary, to meet demand for health & wellness activities (Chapter 4) and to create potentially programmable space
21. Resurface and restripe all parking lots, including ADA Spaces, to improve accessibility
22. Add parking near the proposed splash pad
23. Install additional security cameras for enhanced safety and improved surveillance
24. Replace picnic shelters with upgraded amenities, including some with restrooms, to meet demand and improve service
 - Add shelters to provide more quality gathering places, meet local need, and support potentially programmable (and revenue-generating) space
25. Add branded signage sitewide – both main and secondary entrances, as well as wayfinding along trails and roadways – to improve navigability and effectively advertise site
26. Add a paved loop trail around park perimeter, including neighborhood connections, to increase connectivity and meet public demand (Chapter 4)
27. Improve connections to surrounding neighborhood and consider reopening vehicular gate on Bonnycastle Drive
28. Install Wi-Fi hotspots for enhanced community access
29. Consider community garden plots to meet growing demand and expand site functionality
30. Add site furnishings (e.g., benches, trash/recycling receptacles, bike racks, pet waste stations), trees, landscaping, and drinking fountains with bottle fillers



Multiuse Court by Kompan

Concept

Due to its location within the city and residential surroundings, East Frankfort Park is well-positioned for improvements that could dramatically increase service and satisfaction levels for Frankfort residents. While

signage and navigability from outside the park are needed to improve visibility of this neighborhood resource, Figure 8.4 shows a host of improvements the city could pursue to enhance the quality, accessibility, and viability of this park. Each of the suggested features shown would complement or increase the functionality of existing site features.

Pieces of paved paths currently exist scattered across the site. The concept shows how linking each of these pieces would create a complete mile of paved walking trails around the site. The proposed trail loop would be easily accessible from all parking lots (each of which needs paving or repaving), and new facilities are shown as being linked to this trail to ensure optimal accessibility for visitors.



Sample Amphitheater

In the north portion of the park, the concept shows an expanded maintenance complex, which is needed by the department to improve maintenance efficiency and capacity up to the standard desired by residents. A replacement shelter is shown across from these maintenance facilities, and a community garden is illustrated as utilizing the northernmost corner of the park. This makes tidy use of the space while addressing community demand for more community gardens. There is also an improved neighborhood connection identified, showing how more convenient access to the park for surrounding residents is possible.

Near the primary entrance to the park, north of the park's center, the existing pickleball courts and gazebo are shown along the parking lot. This area currently has an excess of paved surface riddled with cracks and weeds. To really enhance the park's character and to show Frankfort residents responsive action from the city, this area needs to be developed with a variety of active use facilities. A multipurpose court and a bocce court, a zone for fitness equipment (at the former basketball court), new shelter and plaza area, and a variety of permanent outdoor games (e.g., checkers, chess, and cornhole) would provide ample resources for activities that can be enjoyed by Frankfort residents no matter their age. Including multi-use space allows for more efficient and productive use of the available area.

At the southwestern corner of the park, there are four diamond ballfields (two for t-ball) and two pairs of batting cages. This field spaces and the nearby parking lot need significant upgrades to adequately serve users.

The heart of East Frankfort Park affords additional opportunity for elevated experiences. The existing dog park has considerable room to expand; the concept shows what this could look like, illustrating how the city can address the public demand. In the area of the former swimming pool and the soon-to-be-demolished residence, there is potential for a splash pad, a large all-access playground, shelters, and restrooms. A new parking lot adds needed spaces to accommodate increased visitation to this area. Across the parking lot from the proposed splash pad is a community amphitheater. This facility was a top request in public engagement and adding one at East Frankfort Park would enable the city to program the concerts and arts performances the residents crave. This facility would also take advantage of the underused parking lot near the eastern edge of the park.

8.3.3 Juniper Hill Park

Background

Aside from Todd Park, Juniper Hill Park is the only city park west of the Kentucky River. With an existing walkable neighborhood connection and easy driving access, this park plays a crucial role in serving the community living in southwest Frankfort. Juniper Hill Park includes the city's family aquatic center – attracting users from several nearby counties – plus the department's administrative offices and maintenance facilities. Including the golf course, Juniper Hill is the fourth largest park in the city's system and is perceived to have benefited from comparatively more investment over the last decade than other parks across the city. Still, the park offers considerable opportunities for enhancing departmental efficiency and generating increased revenue, both of which could help benefit all parks in the system in the long run.

The following park issues were identified through site assessments and public input:

- Existing restroom facility poorly located and not adequate for park usage
- Some accessibility issues sitewide, particularly at the smaller shelter, picnic areas, and gazebo
- Gazebo roof in poor condition
- Tennis court surface usable but significantly degraded
- Inconsistent lighting at tennis courts; some poles have fallen or do not work
- Volleyball courts/seating not ADA accessible
- Lack of designated ADA parking near fitness equipment
- Insufficient wayfinding and signage sitewide and neighborhood entrance unmarked
- Limited amenities (e.g., drinking fountains, bike racks, pet waste stations w/ signage, etc.)

Improvement Recommendations

1. Add branded signage sitewide – both main and secondary entrances, as well as wayfinding along trails and roadways – to improve navigability and effectively advertise site
2. Add ADA walkways to connect between site features and amenities, ensuring sitewide accessibility
3. Replace age 2-5 equipment at playground to increase access and add shade over equipment to ensure quality, comfortable experiences
4. Resurface playground area with poured-in-place to improve durability and safety of facility
5. Convert two tennis courts to a futsal court with lining for pickleball to expand the variety of offerings at the park and attract additional user groups
 - Resurface and reline remaining tennis courts for pickleball to address demand and maintain operation
6. Replace existing gazebo to maintain usability of feature
7. Replace all game court lighting for enhanced visibility, improved security, and multi-seasonal use of facility
8. Install additional lighting sitewide (including pedestrian-scale) for improved visibility, enhanced security, and multi-seasonal use of park
9. Resurface and restripe all parking lots, including ADA Spaces, to improve accessibility
10. Construct restroom building to meet demand and improve service
11. Install additional security cameras for enhanced safety and improved surveillance
12. Add shade structures over existing outdoor fitness equipment
13. Add ADA compliant connectivity to small shelter to improve accessibility
14. Install Wi-Fi hotspots for enhanced community access
15. Renovate golf clubhouse to improve service and increase revenue-generating opportunities
16. Install FootGolf tees and holes at the golf course to increase potential revenue and address growing demand for expanded recreation opportunities
17. Expand and potentially replace golf course maintenance facility to improve effectiveness and address staff needs, following further evaluation by a professional
18. Resurface parking lot and replace curbs to ensure longevity
19. Add suite of permanent outdoor games (e.g., cornhole, foosball) at Jack Williams Pavilion
20. Add site furnishings (e.g., additional benches, trash/recycling receptacles, bike racks, pet waste stations etc.), trees, landscaping, and drinking fountains with bottle fillers

8.4 NATURE PARKS & OPEN AREAS

8.4.1 Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve

Background

Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve is the largest park in Frankfort's system. Three distinct areas form a total of 240 acres, most of which is undeveloped or designated for passive use. Partially under a Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation easement, Cove Spring provides Frankfort and the surrounding region with an incredible ecosystem (at least one protected plant species exists only on wooded slopes in the Lower area of Cove Springs) and artifacts from nearly three centuries of local history (former Public Water Works overflow tower and grist mill). Located at the northernmost edge of the city, bisected by Highway 127 and steep topography, Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve is the most visited site in the system according to Mail Survey results (Chapter 4). When tackled altogether, a combination of improved and identified connectivity, comprehensive signage, strategic partnerships, and intentional development will help safeguard Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve as a lasting gem in the Frankfort park system.

The following park issues were identified through site assessments and public input:

Lower

- Heavily used area, could facilitate engagement opportunities
- Restroom building not adequate due to park usage
- No path between ADA parking and park features
- Limited signage in poor condition
- Insufficient wayfinding and informational signage (e.g., trail lengths not indicated)
- Many bridges, stairs, and wooden railings need repair/replacement
- Lower parking lot has significant damage at apron
- Parking overflow needs attractive, permanent communication signage
- Waterfall overlook encourages unsafe behavior; needs formal overlook platform or barrier & replaced railing at bottom
- Children's Memorial site not ADA accessible
- Shelters in fair condition but need accessible connections
- Informal access points lead to habitat damage
- Invasive species & unlawful plant removal both degrade natural habitat
- Litter along trails a constant problem

Upper

- Archery range not ADA accessible
- Shelters are not ADA accessible
- Potential for additional trails across meadow
- Interpretive and wayfinding signage needed
- Existing signage is degraded
- No permanent restroom facility
- Parking lot needs restriping/ADA spaces
- Limited trash receptacles
- Electrical hook ups at shelters; capacity for lighting during rental use of shelters

Wetland

- Unique character offers stream views and access to wildflowers and other plant species

- Visitor shelter in fair condition overall but roof is poor, not accessible
- One ADA spot poorly marked and far from shelter, not accessible to either trailhead
- Areas of boardwalk and unpaved trails need maintenance or regrading
- Conservation signage needed
- Wetland overlook shelter in poor condition
- Parking lot needs restriping
- Confusing one-directional entrance signage, poor visibility from road
- Wayfinding and interpretive signage additions and upgrades needed sitewide
- Limited trash receptacles

Improvement Recommendations

1. Conduct rehabilitation of historic Public Water Works overflow tower and former dam structure to ensure durability of site's historical significance (in progress)
2. Complete sitewide signage plan
 - Conduct comprehensive signage campaign sitewide (roads, trails, site features, parking lots, etc.) – including preservation rules, natural environment information, wayfinding, and more – to effectively communicate regulations, mitigate site damage, improve navigability, and advertise site's uniqueness
3. Pave the parking lot aprons (entry/exit points) and add ADA spaces at the Lower area to ensure accessibility to the site
4. Demolish caretaker house once vacated and use the space for needed parking expansion
5. Construct durable railing at waterfall overlook (Lower area) to allow safe access to natural features and reduce off-trail exploration
6. Upgrade sewer access to both the Upper and Lower areas to support restrooms and programs
7. Construct a new restroom building (Upper) to address demand, ensure quality experiences, and to accommodate tournament and rental use
8. Replace and expand restroom building (Lower) to address demand and improve facility efficiency
9. Replace shelter at overlook (Wetland) to address safety and accessibility concerns and to ensure durable enjoyment of natural features
10. Add branded signage sitewide – both main and secondary entrances, as well as wayfinding along trails and roadways – to improve navigability and effectively advertise site
11. Add ADA walkways to connect between site features and amenities, ensuring sitewide accessibility
12. Add lighting (especially in parking areas) for improved visibility, enhanced security, and multi-seasonal use of park
13. Add nature play area (Upper) utilizing nature-based materials
14. Install security cameras for enhanced safety and improve
15. Repair roof and add ADA connections at Patrick Kennedy Pavilion (Upper) to improve accessibility and facility functionality
16. Complete a paved loop trail (Lower) for enhanced use and accessibility
17. Establish wildflower meadow walking path (Upper) to meet demand for walking trails (Chapter 4) and enhance beautification
18. Replace boardwalks, stairs, and railings along all trails (Lower and Wetland)



Natural Log Climbing Features - Jacobson Park, Lexington

-
19. Reseal and restripe parking lot (Upper), including ADA spaces, for improved accessibility
 20. Replace both shelters in Lower area
 - Replace roofs if buildings are not replaced in the near future
 21. Add site furnishings (e.g., benches, trash/recycling receptacles, bike rack, etc.), trees, landscaping, and drinking fountains with bottle fillers (at restrooms) to each area appropriately

8.4.2 Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill

Background

Situated just north of downtown Frankfort, almost nestled in a bend of the Kentucky River, Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill is the city's signature park for historical and geological attractions. The site features the Sullivan House (a recreated Civil War era roadside inn), caves, Civil War era redoubts, a spectacular overlook of the capital city, and archeological features (e.g., remnants of dry stack stone walls). The former entrance off the Blanton Acres neighborhood has been closed off for several years, forcing visitors to access the site via Clifton Avenue through narrow, steeply inclined residential streets. Navigation to and within the park is a critical element to the restoration of Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill. In recent years, some controversy has occurred around the construction of a multi-use advanced hiking trail (planned as a mountain bike trail) as a potential threat to existing archeological areas on the property. In light of this, the Kentucky Heritage Council, Franklin County Trust for Historic Preservation, and the city's Historic Preservation Officer will all be key partners for the department as it addresses needed improvements to enhance the site and improve visitor experience.

The following park issues were identified through site assessments and public input:

- Restrooms are not ADA accessible
- Shelter is not ADA accessible, roof poor and no flooring
- Paved trail in poor condition in places
- Signage – entrance, wayfinding, and interpretive – need replacements, upgrades, and additions
- Self-guided tour needs upgrades; boardwalks and overlooks in poor condition and have limited ADA accessibility
- No wayfinding to indicate connection to River View Park via Wilkinson Boulevard
- Controversy over multipurpose/mountain bike trails constructed by KYMBA (Kentucky Mountain Bike Association)

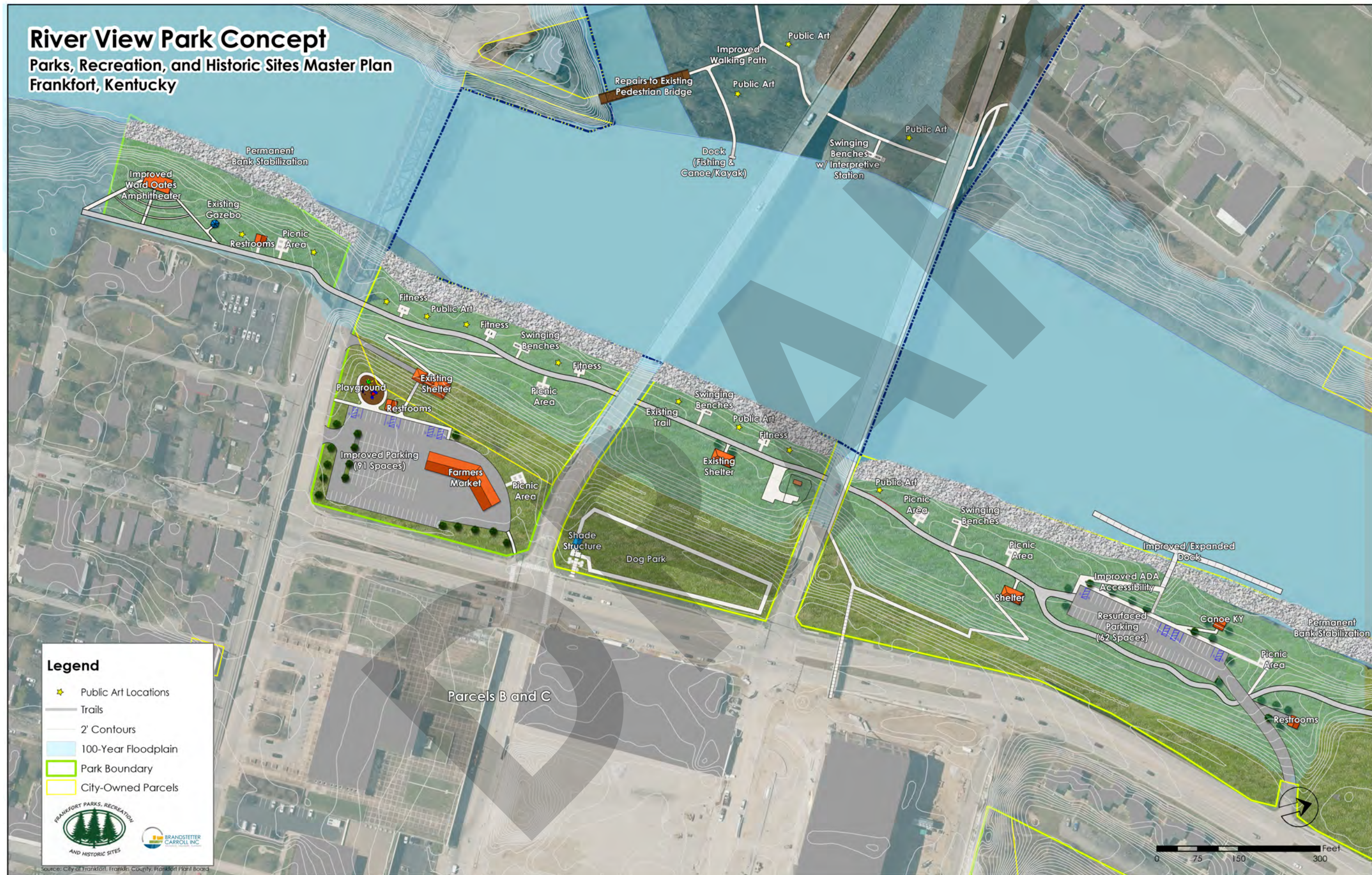
Improvement Recommendations

1. Develop a Park Master Plan, using concept plan (Figure 8.5) as foundation for conducting thorough local community engagement; ensure development coincides with long-term needs of the public
2. Collaborate with city's Historic Preservation Officer, Franklin County Trust for Historic Preservation, Kentucky Heritage Council, and others to ensure improvements and future development align with preservation guidelines and the department's strategic plan (see Chapter 6, Goal 3, Object 3.3)
3. Reopen the main entrance at Pleasant Hill Drive in Blanton Acres to increase community access to the park, improving navigability while also reducing structural impacts along existing entryway
4. Add ADA walkways to connect between site features and amenities, ensuring sitewide accessibility
5. Improve visibility, accessibility, and promotion of trail connection along the Military Road trail connecting the park to and River View Park across Wilkinson Boulevard
6. Improve, formally open, and advertise advance hiking trails in the northern portion of the property
7. Develop a nature play area (see Subsection 5.7.12, Chapter 5) including historically accurate materials and features to highlight legacy of Fort Hill and to provide opportunities for connecting with the past
8. Improve and redesign the city overlook (e.g., cut back vegetation, add signage, improve seating, etc.) to create an attractive amenity that showcases Frankfort's uniqueness

Figure 8.5: Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill Concept



Figure 8.6: River View Park Concept



9. Oversee completion of cabin repair project in coordination with Boy Scouts
10. Upgrade restroom facility, ensuring ADA accessibility
 - Consider adding additional restroom building when caretaker home is removed
11. Add upgraded, branded signage – including at proposed main entry, existing entry, and also along trails and roadways – for improved wayfinding to and within the park, and more effective advertising
12. Conduct comprehensive signage campaign sitewide – including preservation rules, historical context, natural environment information, and more – to effectively communicate regulations, mitigate site damage, improve navigability, and advertise site's uniqueness
13. Erect additional signage articulating history and significance of the Sullivan House
14. Replace boardwalks and stairs throughout site, utilize more durable materials for longevity of features
15. Support historic stone wall repair; support efforts to register wall remnants (as cohesive historic feature) with National Register of Historic Places
16. Add lighting (especially in parking areas) for improved visibility, enhanced security, and multi-seasonal use of park
17. Construct maintenance facility in park's east corner (near cell tower) to increase maintenance capacity and improve efficiency
18. Resurface and expand the main parking lot, including ADA spaces, to improve accessibility
19. Install security cameras for enhanced safety and improved surveillance
20. Replace the picnic shelter to ensure long term use and provide accessibility
21. Add appropriate site furnishings (e.g., benches, trash/recycling receptacles, bike rack, etc.), landscaping, and a drinking fountain with bottle filler (near Sullivan House and parking lot)



Interpretive Signage

Concept

Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill is a singular site rich in history and local significance, shaped by geological forces into a striking elevated natural space. And yet, Leslie Morris Park is the eighth most visited site according to survey results (Chapter 4) with just 21% of respondent households identifying it as a visited site, half the percentage of those who visited the seventh most visited site (East Frankfort Park). The park is at the center of community disagreement (namely, preservation advocates who want to limit access and development, and others who want more active use on the site) and is an archeologically sensitive area (forthcoming analysis from the Franklin County Preservation Trust); the improvements outlined above and the concept that follows illustrate practical steps the city can take to responsibly elevate the park. Because public input gathered

in myriad ways revealed the community's desire for trails, walkable connectivity, and more resources for passive enjoyment of the city's parks, this desire is intentionally reflected in the concept and recommended improvements.

The site currently has accessibility and parking issues. Figure 8.5 shows improved navigability and better site utilization with a reopened Blanton Acres neighborhood entrance. The existing entrance via Clifton Avenue is identified as a pedestrian and maintenance entry point. These changes would help make the park more visible and inviting for community use. By improving access to the park, the city would be better positioned to advertise the park and its unique history, boosting local identity and potentially impacting tourism to Frankfort. In conjunction with the new entrance, Figure 8.5 shows expanded parking in the northeast (next to the African American Civil War soldier cemetery) and a new parking lot just west of the Sullivan House which complement the existing spaces to improve service and accommodate increased visitation. Both updated parking lots show ADA accessible spaces.

Along with these accessibility improvements, the concept shows a restored connection between the existing paved walking trail, ideally connecting to River View Park and downtown. The historic Military Road trail has the potential to link with this restored connection at the southwest corner of the site. The current paved loop trail creates access to an existing overlook space, but this area is identified as “enhanced” in the concept as it needs significant improvements (e.g., overgrowth removal, quality seating, interpretive signage, and more). Blue stars in the concept mark potential locations for upgraded and new interpretive historical signage. Light brown squares indicate where existing overlook boardwalk/observation decks are in need of renovation.

An additional natural surface loop trail (≈1.3 miles) is shown where the Kentucky Mountain Bike Association began construction on an advanced multiuse trail near the northern boundary of the park. Due to the recent discovery of more historically significant areas in this portion of the site, it would be best to restrict trail use to limited impact hiking. The concept shows how this trail could connect to the existing natural surface trail, the Blanton Acres neighborhood entrance, and the expanded parking lot adjacent the historic cemetery, which would function as a trailhead. This added trail is a response to public demand and would help ensure more areas of the park are incorporated and appropriately utilized.

Besides increased connectivity and walkable facilities, Figure 8.5 illustrates a few additional site features. A nature play area between the new parking lot and the Civil War era redoubt site would maintain the passive character of the park while still providing space for play. This added feature would breathe life into Leslie Morris Park as both a natural and historic treasure.

Each of these conceptual improvements would preserve the unique character of the site but still encourage interaction and exposure to everything special the park has to offer. Without at least some of these recommended improvements, Leslie Morris Park will continue to be hidden from visitors – both resident and tourist alike – and may eventually face further neglect.

8.4.3 River View Park

Background

River View Park is situated at the intersection of two major thoroughfares into downtown Frankfort: Wilkinson Boulevard (Highway 421) and the W Frankfort Connector. With unparalleled access to the Kentucky River, this park offers residents and visitors alike a signature experience. Separated by a FEMA-funded flood wall, certain areas of the park have low visibility (e.g., public input revealed that many are unaware of the Ward Oates Amphitheater at the south end of the park), and though downtown Frankfort and Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill are both in close proximity, well-advertised accessible connections are lacking.

A sculpture walk (in partnership with the Josephine Sculpture Park in Franklin County), gazebo, and semi-permanent boat dock (recently damaged by flood) help make this site stand apart from others in the city. The park is already regularly used to host a Farmers Market, which draws visitors from the county and surrounding region. Across the Kentucky River is an area referred to as “the valley,” distinct from the rest of River View Park. This small area serves as an informal river access point. Pending flood damage repairs and lasting mitigation, along with the improvements identified below, River View Park could be an even brighter highlight of a trip to downtown Frankfort.

The following park issues were identified through site assessments and public input:

Main

- Lack of signage and wayfinding sitewide
- Pedestrian and vehicle access points poorly marked
- Visibility obstructed by levee and floodwall – needs creative solution like added signage or landscape feature
- No permanent restrooms
- Boat dock size insufficient to meet demand and not usable all year – damaged in recent flood
- Access ramp to boat dock has ADA accessibility issues but dock itself accessible
- Paved trail has limited ADA access
- Picnic tables and seating along trail not ADA accessible
- Parking lot striping is faded, no ADA spots at the north entrance

-
- Lampposts along trail spaced too far apart and not pedestrian scale
 - Flood prone – most of park in 100-year floodplain
 - Repair from recent storm and resilience to flooding needed

“The Valley”

- Lack of features
- No parking
- Graffiti under bridge
- Tire scars in grassy area
- Damaged light post
- Drainage issues along walkway
- Walkway pavement in poor condition
- Flooding issues
- “No Parking” at bridge access point discourages visitation
- Gas line suspended walking bridge poses potential safety and health hazard

Improvement Recommendations

1. Develop a Park Master Plan, using concept plan (Figure 8.5) as foundation for conducting thorough local community engagement; ensure development coincides with long-term needs of the public
2. Add upgraded, branded signage – including at main and secondary entrances, and along pathways – for improved wayfinding to and within the park, and more effective advertising of the site and improved awareness of features
3. Add ADA walkways to connect between site features and amenities, ensuring sitewide accessibility
4. Conduct permanent bank stabilization for long term usability of site
5. Replace the damaged boat dock with permanent docking facility to improve service and provide for year-round use
6. Construct anchored, ADA accessible picnic areas (e.g., table with concrete pad) for durable, improved service to address community need
7. Address Ward Oates Amphitheater improvements (e.g., repair minor flood damage, upgrade appearance, etc.) to ensure long term, quality use and to meet community demand for performances and gathering space
8. Resurface, restripe, and reconfigure (south side) parking lots, including ADA spaces, to ensure accessibility, improved service, and efficient use of space
9. Install playground to meet demand and improve service
10. Construct restroom building at south end near Farmers Market pavilion to address public need and improve service
11. Construct flood resistant restroom buildings at north end near boat dock and new Ward Oates Amphitheater in coordination with FEMA to meet public demand and improve service
12. Install security cameras for enhanced safety and improved surveillance
13. Add medium-sized picnic shelters (2 at north end, 1 at south) to address growing demand and improve service
14. Conduct interpretive signage campaign sitewide – including environmental context, cultural information, and more – to showcase uniqueness of site and enhance user experience
15. Add swinging benches along the trail to provide additional opportunities to view and engage with the river
 - Trim overgrowth along bank to improve viewsheds of the river (ensure no tree or vegetation removal to avoid bank destabilization)

16. Renovate and repair Benson Creek Pedestrian Bridge to ensure continued safety and access
17. Improve trail conditions in “the valley” portion (west side of Kentucky River) to improve service and meet demand for walkable facilities
18. Install Wi-Fi hotspots for enhanced community access
19. Formalize fishing and, possibly canoe/kayak access, at Benson Creek to meet demand for more connections to the river
20. Consider converting the underutilized area between the W Frankfort connector bridge into a dog park to serve Downtown residents, including those at the proposed Parcels B and C development
21. Install outdoor fitness equipment facing the river, including shade where necessary, to meet demand for health & wellness activities (Chapter 4) and to create potentially programmable space
22. Add solar-powered pedestrian-scale lighting along trail for improved visibility, enhanced security, and multi-seasonal use of park
23. Add site furnishings (e.g., benches, trash/recycling receptacles, bike rack, pet waste station), trees, landscaping, and a drinking fountain with bottle filler



Bench Swing



Fishing Dock

Concept

Just west of downtown, River View Park is one of the more visible parks in the city's system, except that a large portion of it is tucked behind the flood wall out of clear view. The attached concept (Figure 8.6) illustrates a number of improvements needed to transform this site into the tourist attraction and community hub it should be. In addition to the suggested developments in the conceptual drawing, a coordinated signage campaign is needed to draw attention to the site from other parts of the city and to improve navigability within the park itself.

Near the southern end of the park is currently one of the more visible areas and is regularly utilized by the Franklin County Farmers Market. The concept shows an improved, expanded parking lot to accommodate high and potentially increasing use, and to address input gathered from stakeholders. There is also a designated picnic area which corresponds to existing use but allows for permanent facilities like shade, seating, and trash/recycling receptacles. Permanent restrooms are shown at the western edge of the parking lot, as well as a new playground to accommodate the families that regularly visit the park but currently have no substantial resources for play. Between the two bridges of the W Frankfort Connector, some underutilized space in the park could be repurposed as a dog park (because of its small size, and space for only one area, the city could market it as a “dog lot”). The concept includes a shade structure to indicate how the space could be made even more comfortable for visitors.

At the northern end of the park, a few improvements are shown which would alleviate current issues of insufficient access and lack of amenities. As this area is on the river side of the levee, any developments here will need to be designed to sustain high water and flood events. An additional restroom building is shown near the entrance to accommodate visitors, trails users, and the boat dock, including Canoe Kentucky programs. An enlarged, permanent boat dock is also illustrated. An added shelter and designated picnic areas (concrete pads and anchored tables/seating) help create a space for enjoying the river and the park's natural beauty. Public input repeatedly pointed to the community's desire for passive recreation, which these suggested improvements certainly address.

The concept also shows fitness equipment and swinging benches along the existing paved trail running the length of the park and near the riverbank. Like all features on the riverside of the levee/floodwall, these

elements must be flood resistance and easily cleaned of mud and debris. These facilities provide space for unscheduled, unstructured enjoyment of the park, but the fitness equipment can also be programmed with health and wellness activities. There is an existing public art sculptural path along the trail, made possible through a partnership with Josephine Sculpture Park. These pieces are installed in harmony with the immediate ecosystem and provide much-needed access to creative expressions of the importance of the natural environment. There is opportunity to expand the number of art installations, and some may need repair or replacement after the flood in late winter of 2021. The riverbank all along the park's western boundary is identified as "permanent bank stabilization," the exact details of which will need to be determined through further study. Given the site's vulnerability to stormwater, this intervention will be needed to ensure the park can remain a functioning, fully accessible public space.

Aside from the Ward Oates Amphitheater and the existing gazebo, the southernmost tip of the park shows an added picnic area and a restroom building. This part of the park is easily programmable and has had successful events in the past. As public input indicated general unawareness of the amphitheater, the city will want to ensure improved signage and wayfinding to this part of River View Park.

The concept also highlights the small portion of River View Park across the river, showing additional public art installations, a formalized fishing/canoe/kayak dock, and swinging benches with interpretive signage. This area has limited access currently and is difficult to keep under surveillance. Adding these amenities strategically could potentially transform the small area into a more inviting space, and help to discourage any unwanted activity.

8.5 SPECIAL USE PARKS

8.5.1 Blanton's Landing

Background

Tucked below a steep rock cliff, beneath a mix of residential and commercial buildings, Blanton's Landing is currently easy to overlook and difficult to access. The city recognizes its potential as a quality boating dock and public space. A feasibility study was recently completed (Appendix G) as a first step towards transforming Blanton's Landing.

The following park issues were identified through site assessments and public input:

- Access and visibility
- Designated parking
- Excessive pavement
- Insufficient lighting
- Views of the water, but inadequate direct access to river
- Feasibility Study for riverfront access and features recently completed (more details in Chapter 7)

Improvement Recommendations

1. Begin implementation of recommendations of the 2021 *Blanton's Landing Feasibility Study* to improve public access to the Kentucky River and provide quality recreation opportunities

8.5.2 Capital City Museum

Background

Located on Ann Street in downtown Frankfort, the Capital City Museum is an entry point to the city for many visitors. It offers a rich assortment of historic exhibits and demonstrations and is undergoing a considerable renovation – both physically and operationally.

Improvement Recommendations

1. Implement Museum Strategic Plan to align with public and stakeholder support for elevated historical and cultural resources

8.5.3 Paul Weddle Field at State Stadium

Background

Just east of downtown, Paul Weddle Field at State Stadium has hosted athletic events as well as community movie nights. Having already undergone limited renovations, the planning process for this Master Plan identified some select improvements that could help anchor this site as a recreation amenity and conveniently located, accessible community space.

The following park issues were identified through site assessments and public input:

- ADA deficiencies
- Lighting and sound need improvements
- Backstop and dugouts need replacement

Improvement Recommendations

1. Continue partnering with Kentucky State University for improvements to ensure efficient, effective development
2. Conduct ADA upgrades to ensure accessibility and improve service
3. Replace backstop to improve field conditions and appearance
4. Add new and renovate existing dugouts to improve user experiences
5. Install artificial turf at in-field for improved durability and to reduce rainouts
6. Install upgraded LED field lighting and sound package to enhance site potential and diversify program experiences

8.5.4 St. Clair Mall

Background

Prominently located in the heart of downtown Frankfort, the St. Clair Mall connects to Broadway and the Old State Capitol Grounds. Many local shops and businesses line the street and adjacent blocks, attracting residents and visitors alike, making St. Clair Mall an ideal location for showcasing the city's diverse and extensive parks system. Improved landscaping, branded signage, and a collaborative informational kiosk would amplify this space and creatively utilize it for the benefit of the community.

Improvement Recommendations

1. Partner with arts community to install site-specific, branded signage and information kiosk to improve wayfinding and more effectively advertise systemwide offerings

8.6 PARK IMPROVEMENT COSTS

The cost estimates for park improvements are presented in Table 8.1. These cost estimates include new park development and follow-up planning studies. The total cost for all improvements will depend on which of the recommendations are ultimately implemented. However, the total cost for the projects described in this chapter comes to about \$30 million with over a third of potential expenditures at Capitol View Park. Land acquisition for new facilities or to expand existing parks is not included in these estimates.

Construction items include a 10% contingency and 12% for design, survey, and bidding. Grant opportunities exist and should be explored for many of these improvements, particularly trail system development, helping to reduce the required contributions by the city of Frankfort. Additionally, partnerships, including fundraising, should be considered as part of any improvement, particularly those with substantial capital costs.

Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects

Park Name	Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
	Term	Cost	Cost	Cost	Cost
Neighborhood Parks					
Dolly Graham Park - See Concept					
1	Basketball Court Resurfacing/Restriping/New Goals/Futsal Lining	In Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	Playground Replacement	In Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	Restroom Upgrades	In Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	Splash Pad	In Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A
5	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Short	\$9,000	\$0	\$9,000
6	Fencing - Replace at Playground and Splash Pad	Short	\$22,000	\$0	\$22,000
7	Kiosk - Information	Short	\$4,000	\$0	\$4,000
8	Lighting - Site/Security	Short	\$18,000	\$0	\$18,000
9	Parking Lot Resurfacing/Restriping w/ADA Spaces	Short	\$23,000	\$0	\$23,000
10	Picnic Areas (Tables/Slab)	Short	\$18,000	\$0	\$18,000
11	Security Cameras (2)	Short	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000
12	Shelter Replacement	Short	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000
13	Signage - Entrance (Main)	Short	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
14	Signage - Entrance (Secondary)	Short	\$4,000	\$0	\$4,000
15	Site Furnishings (Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Short	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
16	Bottle Filler/Drinking Fountain	Medium	\$0	\$7,000	\$7,000
17	Dog Park (Small)	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
18	Shelter/Restrooms w/ Family Restrooms	Long	\$0	\$0	\$308,000
19	Skate Spot (Small Skate Park)	Medium	\$0	\$123,000	\$123,000
20	Trees and Landscaping	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$12,000
21	Wi-Fi Hotspots	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$12,000
22	Futsal/Pickleball/Youth Tennis Court (at Volleyball Court Area)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$92,000
23	Neighborhood Determined Feature	Long	\$0	\$0	\$49,000
24	Neighborhood Program Building	Long	TBD	TBD	TBD
Project Total			\$214,000	\$216,000	\$449,000
Holmes St. Playground (Leathers Field)					
1	Park Master Plan	Short	\$30,000	\$0	\$30,000
2	Lighting - Site/Security	Short	\$18,000	\$0	\$18,000
3	Playground Replacement	Short	\$185,000	\$0	\$185,000
4	Signage - Entrance (Main)	Short	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
5	Site Furnishings (Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Short	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
6	Vegetation Removal (Along Meagher Ave)	Short	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000
7	Fencing Replacement at Playground	Short	\$18,000	\$0	\$18,000
8	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Medium	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000
9	Bottle Filler/Drinking Fountains	Medium	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000
10	Dog Park	Medium	\$0	\$185,000	\$185,000
11	Parking Lot - New	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
12	Pump Track (BMX/MTB)	Medium	\$0	\$123,000	\$123,000
13	Security Cameras (2)	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$37,000
14	Shelter (Medium)	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
15	Signage - Entrance (Secondary)	Medium	\$0	\$4,000	\$4,000
16	Trail - Perimeter Loop (Paved)	Medium	\$0	\$148,000	\$148,000
17	Trees and Landscaping	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$12,000
18	Wi-Fi Hotspots	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$12,000
19	Restroom Building	Long	\$0	\$0	\$246,000
20	Neighborhood Determined Feature	Long	\$0	\$0	\$49,000
Project Total			\$270,000	\$675,000	\$295,000
Thorn Hill Playground - See Concept					
1	Park Master Plan	Short	\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000
2	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Medium	\$0	\$32,000	\$32,000
3	Basketball Half Court Resurfacing/Restriping/New Goals	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$37,000
4	Bottle Filler/Drinking Fountain	Medium	\$0	\$7,000	\$7,000
5	Gazebo (Small)	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$37,000

Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects (Continued)

Park Name	Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
	Term	Cost	Cost	Cost	Cost
6 Lighting - Site/Security	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
7 Parking Lot - New/Resurface	Medium	\$0	\$49,000	\$0	\$49,000
8 Playground Replacement	Medium	\$0	\$185,000	\$0	\$185,000
9 Security Cameras (2)	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000
10 Signage - Entrance (Main)	Medium	\$0	\$4,000	\$0	\$4,000
11 Signage - Entrance (Secondary)	Medium	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
12 Site Furnishings (Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium	\$0	\$18,000	\$0	\$18,000
13 Trail - Perimeter Loop (Paved)	Medium	\$0	\$138,000	\$0	\$138,000
14 Trees and Landscaping	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
15 Amphitheater (Small)/Shelter	Long	\$0	\$0	\$123,000	\$123,000
16 Neighborhood Determined Feature	Long	\$0	\$0	\$49,000	\$49,000
17 Shelter/Restroom (Medium)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$308,000	\$308,000
Project Total		\$25,000	\$573,000	\$480,000	\$1,078,000
Todd Park					
1 Park Master Plan (Consider Flood Prone Conditions)	Short	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
2 ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Medium	\$0	\$6,000	\$0	\$6,000
3 Basketball Half Court	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000
4 Bottle Filler/Drinking Fountain	Medium	\$0	\$7,000	\$0	\$7,000
5 Landscaping	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
6 Lighting - Site/Security	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
7 Outdoor Fitness Equipment	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000
8 Parking Lot Resurfacing/Restriping w/ADA Spaces	Medium	\$0	\$17,000	\$0	\$17,000
9 Playground	Medium	\$0	\$185,000	\$0	\$185,000
10 Shelter Improvements (Repaint/Replace Tables)	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
11 Signage - Entrance (Main)	Medium	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
12 Signage - Entrance (Secondary)	Medium	\$0	\$4,000	\$0	\$4,000
13 Site Furnishings (Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
14 Trail Resurfacing	Medium	\$0	\$70,000	\$0	\$70,000
15 Neighborhood Determined Feature	Long	\$0	\$0	\$49,000	\$49,000
Project Total		\$25,000	\$441,000	\$49,000	\$515,000
Community and Regional Parks					
Capitol View Park - See Concept					
1 Lighting - Field LED Upgrades/Replacement	In Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2 Beach Area Plan	Short	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$20,000
3 Restroom Building Replacements (3)	Short	\$924,000	\$0	\$0	\$924,000
4 ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Medium	\$0	\$296,000	\$0	\$296,000
5 Basketball Courts - Reseal/Repaint	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000
6 Batting Cages (Covered)	Medium	\$0	\$49,000	\$0	\$49,000
7 Bottle Filler/Drinking Fountain (4)	Medium	\$0	\$30,000	\$0	\$30,000
8 Building Demolition (Maintenance Garage and Home)	Medium	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000
9 Lighting - Site/Security	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000
10 Parking Improvements Throughout (Upgrades and Additional)	Medium	\$0	\$918,000	\$0	\$918,000
11 Playground (Large)	Medium	\$0	\$308,000	\$0	\$308,000
12 Press Box (Harrod Field)	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000
13 Security Cameras (5)	Medium	\$0	\$92,000	\$0	\$92,000
14 Signage - Entrance (Main)	Medium	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
15 Signage - Entrance (Secondary)	Medium	\$0	\$7,000	\$0	\$7,000
16 Signage - Wayfinding/Along Trails/Roads	Medium	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000
17 Site Furnishings (Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
18 Trail - Perimeter Loop (Paved)	Medium	\$0	\$784,000	\$0	\$784,000
19 Wi-Fi Hotspots	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000
20 Artificial Turf Fields (2)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$1,971,000	\$1,971,000
21 Community Building (Tournament Organizing/Meetings/Programs)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$739,000	\$739,000
22 Disc Golf Course - Championship Level/Adjustable (18 Holes)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$123,000	\$123,000
23 Field Improvements - All 6 Diamond Fields	Long	\$0	\$0	\$3,203,000	\$3,203,000

Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects (Continued)

Park Name	Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
	Term	Cost	Cost	Cost	Cost
24 Field Lighting - All 6 Diamond Fields	Long	\$0	\$0	\$2,057,000	\$2,057,000
25 Group Picnic Area (Playground/2 Shelters/Restrooms/Gazebo)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$591,000	\$591,000
26 RC Remote Control Car/Truck Course	Long	\$0	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
27 Restroom Buildings (Splash Pad/Football/Softball)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$924,000	\$924,000
28 Splash Pad	Long	\$0	\$0	\$616,000	\$616,000
Project Total		\$944,000	\$2,749,000	\$10,286,000	\$13,979,000
East Frankfort Park - See Concept					
1 Park Master Plan	Short	\$40,000	\$0	\$0	\$40,000
2 Building Demolition (Pool house and Home)	Short	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
3 Parking Lot - New at Splash Pad	Short	\$65,000	\$0	\$0	\$65,000
4 Playground Replacement (Large)	Short	\$308,000	\$0	\$0	\$308,000
5 Sewer Upgrades	Short	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
6 Signage - Entrance (Main)	Short	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
7 Signage - Entrance (Secondary)	Short	\$7,000	\$0	\$0	\$7,000
8 ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Short/Medium	\$123,000	\$123,000	\$0	\$246,000
9 Road Improvements	Short/Medium	\$159,000	\$159,000	\$0	\$318,000
10 Amphitheater	Medium	\$0	\$185,000	\$0	\$185,000
11 Batting Cages	Medium	\$0	\$59,000	\$0	\$59,000
12 Bocce Courts	Medium	\$0	\$49,000	\$0	\$49,000
13 Bottle Filler/Drinking Fountain	Medium	\$0	\$22,000	\$0	\$22,000
14 Disc Golf Improvements (First Tee/Relocate for New Park Features/E	Medium	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
15 Chess/Checkers Plaza	Medium	\$0	\$24,000	\$0	\$24,000
16 Concessions/Restrooms Facility (Large)	Medium	\$0	\$370,000	\$0	\$370,000
17 Cornhole (Permanent)	Medium	\$0	\$22,000	\$0	\$22,000
18 Dog Park Expansion	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000
19 Field Improvements - Softball (Dugouts/Paved Access/Backstops/Fencing)	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000
20 Field Improvements - T-Ball (Benches/Paved Access/Backstops)	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000
21 Lighting - Field LED Upgrades/Replacement	Medium	\$0	\$739,000	\$0	\$739,000
22 Lighting - Site/Security	Medium	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000
23 Maintenance Facility Replacement/Expansion	Medium	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
24 Multipurpose Court (Futsal/Pickleball/Basketball/Etc.)	Medium	\$0	\$123,000	\$0	\$123,000
25 Outdoor Fitness Equipment	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000
26 Plaza w/ Sculpture	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000
27 Restrooms/Concessions Building	Medium	\$0	\$370,000	\$0	\$370,000
28 Security Cameras (2)	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000
29 Shelters (Large) w/ Restrooms (2)	Medium	\$0	\$739,000	\$0	\$739,000
30 Shelters (Medium) - 2	Medium	\$0	\$99,000	\$0	\$99,000
31 Signage - Wayfinding	Medium	\$0	\$15,000	\$0	\$15,000
32 Site Furnishings (Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
33 Trail - Perimeter Loop (Paved) w/ Neighborhood Connections	Medium	\$0	\$407,000	\$0	\$407,000
34 Trees and Landscaping	Medium	\$0	\$31,000	\$0	\$31,000
35 Wi-Fi Hotspots	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
36 Parking Lot Resurfacing/Restriping w/ADA Spaces - All Lots	Medium/Long	\$0	\$156,000	\$156,000	\$312,000
37 Community Gardens	Long	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000
38 Playground Replacement (Small)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$123,000	\$123,000
39 Shelter Replacement (Medium) w/ Restrooms	Long	\$0	\$0	\$308,000	\$308,000
40 Splash Pad	Long	\$0	\$0	\$616,000	\$616,000
Project Total		\$732,000	\$4,038,000	\$1,228,000	\$5,998,000
Juniper Hill Park					
1 Signage - Entrance (Secondary)	Short	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,000
2 Futsal Court (Convert 2 Tennis Courts/Line for Pickleball)	Short	\$62,000	\$0	\$0	\$62,000
3 Tennis Court Resurfacing/Line for Pickleball	Short	\$62,000	\$0	\$0	\$62,000
4 ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Medium	\$0	\$15,000	\$0	\$15,000
5 Bottle Filler/Drinking Fountain	Medium	\$0	\$7,000	\$0	\$7,000

Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects (Continued)

Park Name		Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
		Term	Cost	Cost	Cost	Cost
6	FootGolf Tees and Holes at Golf Course	Medium	\$0	\$6,000	\$0	\$6,000
7	Gazebo Replacement	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000
8	Lighting - Replacement at All Game Courts	Medium	\$0	\$74,000	\$0	\$74,000
9	Lighting - Site/Security	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
10	Restroom Building	Medium	\$0	\$308,000	\$0	\$308,000
11	Security Cameras (2)	Medium	\$0	\$55,000	\$0	\$55,000
12	Shade Structures at Fitness Equipment	Medium	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000
13	Shelter Improvements (ADA Access) - Small Shelter	Medium	\$0	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000
14	Signage - Wayfinding	Medium	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000
15	Site Furnishings (Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
16	Trees and Landscaping	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
17	Wi-Fi Hotspots	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
18	Clubhouse Renovation	Long	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
19	Maintenance Facility (Golf) - Expansion/Replacement	Long	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
20	Parking Lot Resurfacing/Replace Curbs	Long	\$0	\$0	\$246,000	\$246,000
21	Permanent Outdoor Games at Jack Williams Pavilion	Long	\$0	\$0	\$37,000	\$37,000
22	Playground (Replace Age 2-5 Equipment) add Shade	Long	\$0	\$0	\$123,000	\$123,000
23	Playground Resurfacing - Poured-in-Place	Long	\$0	\$0	\$155,000	\$155,000
Project Total			\$128,000	\$587,000	\$561,000	\$1,276,000
Nature Parks/Open Space						
Cove Spring Park						
1	Water Tower/Dam Rehabilitation	In Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	Parking Lot Pave Apron/ADA Spaces (Lower)	Short	\$18,000	\$0	\$0	\$18,000
3	Railing at Top of Waterfall	Short	\$12,000	\$0	\$0	\$12,000
4	Sewer Upgrades (Sewer/Water Access to Upper and Lower)	Short	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
5	Shelter Replacement - Overlook (Wetland)	Short	\$62,000	\$0	\$0	\$62,000
6	Signage - Entrance (Secondary)	Short	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,000
7	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Medium	\$0	\$15,000	\$0	\$15,000
8	Lighting - Site/Security	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
9	Nature Play Area (Upper)	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000
10	Restroom Building - New (Upper)	Medium	\$0	\$308,000	\$0	\$308,000
11	Restroom Building Replacement/Expansion (Lower)	Medium	\$0	\$308,000	\$0	\$308,000
12	Security Cameras (Upper)	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000
13	Shelter Improvements (Roof/ADA Access) - Upper/Patrick Kennedy Pavilion	Medium	\$0	\$22,000	\$0	\$22,000
14	Signage - Rules/Warning/Nature Preserve Information	Medium	\$0	\$4,000	\$0	\$4,000
15	Signage - Wayfinding/Along Trails/Roads	Medium	\$0	\$15,000	\$0	\$15,000
16	Site Furnishings (Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
17	Trail - Complete Paved Loop (Lower)	Medium	\$0	\$44,000	\$0	\$44,000
18	Parking Lot - New (Lower) - After Residence is Removed	Medium	\$0	\$111,000	\$0	\$111,000
19	Trees and Landscaping (Upper)	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
20	Boardwalk/Stairs/Railings Replacement Throughout Lower	Long	\$0	\$0	\$123,000	\$123,000
21	Parking Lot Reseal/Reline (Upper)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$7,000	\$7,000
22	Shelter Replacement - Large (Lower)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$99,000	\$99,000
23	Shelter Replacement - Medium (Lower)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$74,000	\$74,000
24	Signage - Interpretive (w/ Signage Plan)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000
Project Total			\$96,000	\$962,000	\$328,000	\$1,386,000
Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill - See Concept						
1	Park Master Plan	Short	\$40,000	\$0	\$0	\$40,000
2	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Short	\$18,000	\$0	\$0	\$18,000
3	Cabin Repair (Boy Scout Project)	Short	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	Entrance - Add at Blanton Acres w/ Sign	Short	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
5	Restroom Upgrades (ADA Access)	Short	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
6	Signage - Entrance (Secondary)	Short	\$7,000	\$0	\$0	\$7,000
7	Signage - Rules/Warning/Historic Site Information	Short	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,000

Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects (Continued)

Park Name	Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
	Term	Cost	Cost	Cost	Cost
8 Signage - Sullivan House	Short	\$12,000	\$0	\$0	\$12,000
9 Signage - Wayfinding/Along Trails	Short	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
10 Trails - Advanced Hiking (Away from Historical Portions of Site)	Short	\$44,000	\$0	\$0	\$44,000
11 Boardwalk/Stairs Replacement Throughout Park	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000
12 Historic Stone Wall Repair	Medium	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
13 Lighting - Site/Security	Medium	\$0	\$18,000	\$0	\$18,000
14 Maintenance Facility (Cell Tower Area)	Medium	\$0	\$370,000	\$0	\$370,000
15 Nature Play Area	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000
16 Overlook Improvements - Larger Platform/Signage/Clearing of Vegetation	Medium	\$0	\$49,000	\$0	\$49,000
17 Parking Lot Resurfacing/Expansion	Medium	\$0	\$42,000	\$0	\$42,000
18 Security Cameras	Medium	\$0	\$55,000	\$0	\$55,000
19 Shelter Replacement	Medium	\$0	\$74,000	\$0	\$74,000
20 Signage - Interpretive/Historic (w/ Signage Plan)	Medium	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000
21 Site Furnishings (Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
22 Trail Connection to River View Park (Improve)	Medium	\$0	\$222,000	\$0	\$222,000
23 Restroom Building (Caretaker House Area - when House is Removed)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$246,000	\$246,000
23 Trail Improvements - Existing Paved Trail (Resurface/Improve Connection)	Medium	\$0	\$77,000	\$0	\$77,000
Project Total		\$180,000	\$1,068,000	\$246,000	\$1,494,000
River View Park - See Concept					
1 Park Master Plan	Short	\$40,000	\$0	\$0	\$40,000
2 ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Short	\$83,000	\$0	\$0	\$83,000
3 Amphitheater Improvements (Repair flood damage, upgrade app)	Short	\$18,000	\$0	\$0	\$18,000
4 Bank Stabilization	Short	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
5 Benson Creek Pedestrian Bridge Repairs	Short	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
6 Boat Dock (Permanent Replacement)	Short	\$678,000	\$0	\$0	\$678,000
7 Dog Park (Small)	Short	\$123,000	\$0	\$0	\$123,000
8 Picnic Areas (Table/Slab) - Anchored for Flooding	Short	\$37,000	\$0	\$0	\$37,000
9 Signage - Entrance (Main)	Short	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$10,000
10 Signage - Entrance (Secondary)	Short	\$11,000	\$0	\$0	\$11,000
11 Signage - Wayfinding/Along Trails	Short	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$10,000
12 Lighting - Site/Security	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
13 Parking Lot Resurfacing/ADA Spaces - North Area	Medium	\$0	\$51,000	\$0	\$51,000
14 Parking Lot Resurfacing/ADA Spaces/Reconfigure - South Area	Medium	\$0	\$156,000	\$0	\$156,000
15 Playground	Medium	\$0	\$185,000	\$0	\$185,000
16 Restroom Building (Near Farmers Market)	Medium	\$0	\$308,000	\$0	\$308,000
17 Security Cameras	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000
18 Shelter (Medium) - North Area	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000
19 Shelter Replacement (Medium) - South Area	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000
20 Signage - Interpretive (w/ Signage Plan)	Medium	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000
21 Site Furnishings (Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
22 Swinging Benches Along Trail	Medium	\$0	\$55,000	\$0	\$55,000
23 Trail Improvements (West of River)	Medium	\$0	\$68,000	\$0	\$68,000
24 Trim Undergrowth to Allow View of River (No Tree or Vegetation Removal)	Medium	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
25 Wi-Fi Hotspots	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000
26 Fishing/Boat Access at Benson Creek	Long	\$0	\$0	\$31,000	\$31,000
27 Outdoor Fitness Equipment (Overlooking River) w/ Pad	Long	\$0	\$0	\$49,000	\$49,000
28 Restroom Building (Main/Dock Area) - Will require FEMA coordination/permitting and flood resistance	Long	\$0	\$0	\$370,000	\$370,000
29 Restroom Building (Ward Oates Area) - Flood Resistant	Long	\$0	\$0	\$246,000	\$246,000
30 Trail Lighting (Solar)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$129,000	\$129,000
Project Total		\$1,010,000	\$1,070,000	\$825,000	\$2,905,000

Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects (Continued)

Park Name	Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
	Term	Cost	Cost	Cost	Cost
Special Use Parks					
Blanton's Landing					
1	Implement Recommendations of Feasibility Study	Ongoing	TBD	TBD	TBD
	Project Total		\$0	\$0	\$0
Capital City Museum					
1	Implement Museum Plan	Ongoing	TBD	TBD	TBD
	Project Total		\$0	\$0	\$0
Paul Weddle Field at State Stadium					
1	Continue to Partner w/ Kentucky State University for Improvements	Ongoing	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	ADA Upgrades	Short	\$18,000	\$0	\$18,000
3	Backstop Replacement	Medium	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000
4	Dugouts (New/Renovated)	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$37,000
5	Artificial Turf (In-Field)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$154,000
6	Lighting - Field LED w/ Sound Package	Long	\$0	\$0	\$308,000
	Project Total		\$18,000	\$52,000	\$462,000
St. Clair Mall					
1	Signage - Wayfinding/Information Kiosk	Short	\$6,000	\$0	\$6,000
	Project Total		\$6,000	\$0	\$6,000
Systemwide					
1	ADA Accessibility Assessment	Short	\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000
2	Wayfinding Citywide/Downtown	Short	By Others	By Others	By Others
3	Dog Park (Central/Western)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$185,000
4	Indoor Gymnasium/Field Space Feasibility Study Update	Medium	\$0	\$31,000	\$31,000
	Systemwide Total		\$25,000	\$31,000	\$185,000
TOTAL PARKS			\$3,673,000	\$12,462,000	\$15,394,000

*Values include 10% contingency and 12% for design, engineering, bidding, construction administration, etc. (except non-construction items)



INDIVIDUAL PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The Action Plan table on the following pages (Table 9.1) provides a detailed list of recommendations for the 2021 Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Master Plan. These strategies represent specific actions for Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites in the city of Frankfort to take to implement this plan.

9.2 ACTION PLAN STRATEGIES

These strategies are listed under the four goals and 14 objectives from the Strategic Plan (Chapter 6). The legend at the top of the table identifies the abbreviations used throughout the table. Checkmarks indicate the timeframe for the completion of each strategy within the time periods of 0-2 years, 3-5 years, or 6-10 years. Some strategies are indicated as “Ongoing” as they apply to all timeframes or represent more general actions that should always be considered. A total count of strategies by timeframe is located at the end of the table in the corresponding columns.

The other columns provide information regarding the implementation of each strategy. “Category” describes the type of action within the following four options: capital (capital improvements); policy (guidelines for the City Commission and the Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Department, possibly including legislation); planning (long-term parks outlook, which includes conduction of studies); or operations. The column for “Agency” indicates who is expected to implement the strategy, usually Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites or another city department. “Funding Source” indicates how the strategy should be funded or the type of funds used (operating or capital funds).

9.3 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITY RATING

The steering committee reviewed potential solutions and participated in an exercise to help verify capital improvement priorities for the Action Plan. Committee members were asked to rate each of the potential improvement projects through the engagement software Mentimeter on a scale of 0-5 with the Highest Priority (5) and Not Needed (0).

The priority ranking was used to help rank the importance of improvements but not necessarily the order in which they should be developed. Figure 9.1, located after the Action Plan, identifies the capital improvement rating based on the average of the ranking for each item. These rankings were used as part of the process for recommending priorities along with public input and analyses completed throughout this master planning process.

Table 9.1: Action Plan

ACTION PLAN - 2021 Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Master Plan						
Legend of Abbreviations/Organizations						
Parks = Frankfort Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites						
City = City Commission, Other City Departments						
Partners = Other Organizations (foundations, businesses, schools, civic associations, state/federal grants, etc.)						
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Category	Agency	Funding Source	Timeframe (Years)		
				0-2	3-5	6-10
OP = Parks Operating Budget CIP = Capital Improvement Budget Revenue = Items that Generate Additional Revenue						
Goal 1: Connect Frankfort						
Eliminate social and physical barriers through accessible spaces, welcoming events, and vibrant neighborhoods						
Objective 1.1 – Trails & Wayfinding: Provide trails that clearly link destinations						
Strategy 1.1.1: Add and upgrade signage – entrance, wayfinding, interpretive, and informative – throughout the park system; incorporate current (as of 2021) city branding into new signage package	Capital	Parks	CIP	✓		
Strategy 1.1.2: Finalize and permit the advanced hiking trail in Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill following open communication with the county's Preservation Trust to ensure guidelines are followed and construction avoids historic areas in the park	Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP	✓		
Strategy 1.1.3: Update the WalkBike Frankfort Master Plan to include identified park linkages along with standards for design, signage, and maintenance	Operations/Planning	Parks/City	OP	✓		
Strategy 1.1.4: Collaborate to form an implementation committee to oversee the development of trails (pedestrian and bike) in accordance with the WalkBike Frankfort Master Plan	Operations/Planning	Parks/Partners	OP	✓		
Strategy 1.1.5: Consider signing on to the 10-Minute Walk Mission by the TPL and NIRPA to show the city's commitment to connectivity and access to parks	Operations	Parks/City	N/A	✓		
Strategy 1.1.6: Install "share the road" signage in the parks and at park entrances	Capital	Parks	CIP	✓		
Strategy 1.1.7: Improve connectivity between parks and adjacent neighborhoods by adding connecting paths where possible	Capital	Parks	CIP		Ongoing	
Strategy 1.1.8: Improve existing trail surfaces to enhance longevity and ensure proper accessibility	Capital	Parks	CIP	✓	✓	
Strategy 1.1.9: Add paved trail loops within existing parks that lack but can accommodate this facility (e.g., East Frankfort and Capitol View); include paved trails in any future parks	Capital	Parks	CIP	✓	✓	
Strategy 1.1.10: Consider constructing, in partnership, a pedestrian path along the Kentucky River (e.g., between Library and KSU facility)	Capital/Planning	Parks/Partners	CIP	✓	✓	
Objective 1.2 – Built Environment: Responsibly provide facilities to engage and connect the community						
Strategy 1.2.1: Use this Master Plan and the list of capital improvements (Table 8.1 of Chapter 8) as a guide for park development over the next 10 years	Capital/Planning	Parks/City	CIP/Partners		Ongoing	
Strategy 1.2.2: Add support features throughout the park system such as seating/benches, shade structures, trash/recycling receptacles, drinking fountains, trees & landscaping, and grills	Capital	Parks	CIP	✓	✓	
Strategy 1.2.3: Improve ADA access throughout the park system, ensuring accessible walkways to all facilities and seating areas	Capital	Parks	CIP	✓	✓	
Strategy 1.2.4: Ensure ADA accessibility to all athletic fields and in every spectator area, including connecting pathways	Capital	Parks	CIP	✓	✓	
Strategy 1.2.5: Replace dated playgrounds, including separate age 2-5 equipment, or add where unavailable	Capital	Parks	CIP		Ongoing	
Strategy 1.2.6: Resurface and restripe parking lots, including ADA spaces, to ensure accessibility and quality service (e.g., Dolly Graham, East Frankfort Park, etc.)	Capital	Parks	CIP	✓	✓	
Strategy 1.2.7: Replace aging decking, bridges, fencing, and other elements throughout the parks, most notably at Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve and Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill	Capital	Parks	CIP	✓	✓	
Strategy 1.2.8: Add or improve restrooms throughout the parks; ensure flood resilient construction where pertinent	Capital	Parks	CIP		Ongoing	

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source
	0-2	3-5	6-10			
Strategy 1.2.9: Develop additional dog parks to meet the growing needs of Frankfort households	✓	✓		Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 1.2.10: Complete the construction of in-progress splash pad at Dolly Graham Park	✓			Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 1.2.11: Consider themed playground equipment, such as climbing rocks, sensory features, etc., potentially providing for marketing and resident/visitor photo opportunities			Ongoing	Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 1.2.12: Incorporate nature play elements as part of playground development and replacement, especially in more passive park areas			Ongoing	Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 1.2.13: Add and upgrade picnic shelters at parks to increase overall access to these facilities, as well as make them more inviting, and to facilitate opportunities for outdoor, community gatherings			Ongoing	Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 1.2.14: Add Wi-Fi access to parks; promote park hotspots to ensure awareness	✓	✓		Capital	Parks/ Partners	CIP
Strategy 1.2.15: Improve quality of all restrooms and concessions at Capitol View Park (utilize recently added sewer lines)	✓	✓		Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 1.2.16: Add large all-access playground and splash pad at Capitol View Park to attract families		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 1.2.17: Convert former caretaker area at Capitol View Park into group picnic area including shelters, small playground, grills, etc.		✓		Capital	Parks/City	CIP
Strategy 1.2.18: Upgrade parking at Figg and Fannin Fields; ensure ADA compliant access		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 1.2.19: Demolish former residences on park properties (e.g., Capitol View Park and East Frankfort) to create more space for public use and needed improvements		✓		Capital	Parks/City	CIP
Strategy 1.2.20: Consider adding trail lighting to the trail in River View Park to enable extended use during fall and winter months			✓	Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 1.2.21: Consider developing a second splash pad in the East Frankfort park to expand access to aquatic facilities			✓	Capital	Parks	CIP
Objective 1.3 – Events: Collaborate to provide possibilities for interaction, fun, & learning						
Strategy 1.3.1: Expand existing concert, movie, and live performance program offerings to address unmet community needs			Ongoing	Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/Revenue
Strategy 1.3.2: Consider other opportunities to host community event venues throughout Frankfort, including smaller venues at Neighborhood Parks and a large venue at Blanton's Landing			Ongoing	Operations/ Planning	Parks/ Partners	OP/Revenue
Strategy 1.3.3: Consider utilizing picnic shelters as outdoor classrooms for nature education programs			Ongoing	Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/Revenue
Strategy 1.3.4: Release a Request for Qualifications (RFO) for an event coordinator to develop and produce a consistent line-up of branded Frankfort community events	✓	✓		Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/Revenue
Strategy 1.3.5: Utilize the proposed amphitheaters at East Frankfort Park, Thorn Hill, and Blanton's Landing (if developed) as well as the existing facility at River View Park, for additional and enhanced program opportunities			Ongoing	Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/Revenue
Strategy 1.3.6: Make full use of new facilities – outdoor fitness equipment, picnic shelters, etc. – through programming and offering activities anchored around these sites			Ongoing	Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/Revenue
Objective 1.4 – Neighborhood Vibrancy: Utilize parks and programs to uplift and cherish local neighborhoods						
Strategy 1.4.1: Develop the Thorn Hill property as a Neighborhood Park and officially bring it into the Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites system to meet a variety of needs and improve access to parks	✓	✓		Capital/ Planning	Parks	CIP
Strategy 1.4.2: Continue to seek out collaborative possibilities – in general – with neighbors surrounding parks			Ongoing	Operations	Parks/ Partners	N/A
Strategy 1.4.3: Investigate opportunities with Frankfort Independent School District for use or acquisition of the Holmes Street property (formerly Leathers Field) to provide additional park amenities and to help improve the Holmes Street	✓	✓		Capital	Parks/ Partners	CIP

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source
	0-2	3-5	6-10			
Strategy 1.4.4: Add a neighborhood determined feature at each park, ensuring development aligns with need and encouraging a sense of local investment in parks by allowing residents to influence decision-making and change		✓	✓	Capital/ Planning	Parks/ Partners	CIP
Strategy 1.4.5: Install permanent outdoor game equipment (e.g., cornhole, foosball, ping pong, etc.) at Jack Williams Pavilion in Juniper Hill Park to help activate space and encourage community play; consider adding in other parks too		✓	✓	Capital	Parks	CIP
Goal 2: Support Healthy Lifestyles						
Provide facilities & programs that encourage physical health & mental wellbeing						
Objective 2.1 – Athletics: Provide regionally attractive sports events & facilitate locally-focused opportunities						
Strategy 2.1.1: Expand and maintain field capacity at Frankfort parks without adding new fields	Ongoing			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 2.1.2: Upgrade all athletic fields with improved turf, irrigation, lighting, dugouts, restrooms, concessions, and spectator amenities	✓	✓		Operations	Parks	CIP
Strategy 2.1.3: Utilize the pro-forma (Chapter 7) and concept (Figure 8.3) as guides for the improvement needs and potential economic impact of the development of a tournament level sports complex at the park	Ongoing			Capital/ Planning	Parks/City	CIP/Revenue
Strategy 2.1.4: Pursue either transfer of ownership or an extended lease term of the property from the state before any substantial investment is made at Capitol View Park	✓			Capital/ Planning	City/ Partners	OP/CIP
Strategy 2.1.5: Consider developing an indoor sports complex with gymnasium space, field space, program/meeting rooms, and more, following the update of the feasibility study	Ongoing			Capital/ Planning	Parks/City	CIP/Revenue
Strategy 2.1.6: Replace existing lighting at East Frankfort Park, Capitol View Park (except for Sower Fields 1 and 2), and Paul Weddle Field at State Stadium; ensure lighting is energy efficient and calibrated to reduce light pollution	✓	✓	✓	Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 2.1.7: Add lighting at Harrod Field (football) and third soccer field at Capitol View Park to better accommodate demands for field space	✓			Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 2.1.8: Explore the development of a championship level disc golf courses in Frankfort a partnership with the local disc golf association, potentially at Capitol View Park	✓			Capital/ Planning	Parks/ Partners	CIP/Revenue
Strategy 2.1.9: Consider future field needs during renovations and improvements to parks and athletic fields – make multiuse spaces wherever possible	Ongoing			Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 2.1.10: Consider converting at least two Sower Soccer Fields to artificial turf; expand seating to meet KHSAA requirements	✓	✓	✓	Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 2.1.11: Replace or renovate backstops and dugouts at Paul Weddle Field at State Stadium, etc.) to ensure accessible quality service and improved experience	✓	✓		Capital	Parks/ Partners	CIP
Strategy 2.1.12: Convert infields at diamond fields to artificial turf to reduce rainout events and long-term maintenance costs		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 2.1.13: Add FootGolf tees and holes at Juniper Hill Golf Course to increase revenue generation, improve viability of facility, and diversify recreation offerings		✓	✓	Capital	Parks	CIP
Objective 2.2 – Active Lifestyles: Encourage exploration & growth through diverse physical activities						
Strategy 2.2.1.1: Organize events and community-engaged activities around trails and bike paths	Ongoing			Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/Revenue
Strategy 2.2.2: Develop more age 65+ programming in light of the rapid growth of this demographic	✓	✓		Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP
Strategy 2.2.3: Support development of city staff position dedicated to overseeing bike and pedestrian mobility projects across the city	✓			Operations	Parks/City	OP
Strategy 2.2.4: Consider adding basketball courts in areas of the city where none are available	✓	✓		Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 2.2.5: Add pickleball lining to the tennis courts at Juniper Hill Park - after resurfacing courts - to provide more multiuse facilities and to meet growing demand	✓			Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 2.2.6: Add bocce court facility at East Frankfort Park to diversify opportunities for active recreation		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source
	0-2	3-5	6-10			
Strategy 2.2.7: Consider converting two tennis courts at Juniper Hill Park into a futsal court, potentially with additional lines for pickleball (or another in-demand sport)		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 2.2.8: Consider adding a futsal courts where there is underutilized paved (or previously paved) surface to best meet increasing demand – former tennis area at East Frankfort Park is a potential location		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP
Objective 2.3 – Wellness: Foster social cohesion, educational opportunities, and personal health through creative, locally-sourced resources						
Strategy 2.3.1: Explore new partnership opportunities to grow line-up of adult fitness and wellness programs, as well as nature programs	✓			Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP
Strategy 2.3.2: Add outdoor fitness equipment at select parks to expand opportunities for improved community health		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 2.3.3: Evaluate the demand for community gardens and find a location for the plots if demand exists		✓	✓	Capital/ Operations	Parks/ Partners	CIP
Strategy 2.3.4: Create more usable, inviting public spaces by improving amenities at existing sites and establishing multiuse areas where possible				Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 2.3.5: Continue and expand collaboration with local health organizations – like Franklin County Environmental Health Services – to ensure programming reaches widest audience and aligns with overall promotion of healthy living				Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP
Goal 3: Champion Frankfort's Natural and Cultural Resources						
Uphold the city's abundant natural & cultural treasures as central to our city						
Objective 3.1 – The Kentucky River: Enhance community connection to the water through responsible, conscientious development						
Strategy 3.1.1: Connect proposed Capitol View Park paved trail loop to connect to the riverfront, providing increased access and improved views	✓			Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 3.1.2: Improve engagement with riverfront: develop additional opportunities to access the water				Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 3.1.3: Clear additional viewsheds of the river, trimming (not removing) non-stabilizing vegetation; sustain and expand existing partnerships and volunteer base	✓			Capital	Parks/ Partners	CIP
Strategy 3.1.4: Pursue enhancements to South Riverfront, including improved viewsheds and potential additional access points	✓			Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 3.1.5: Replace existing boat dock at River View Park with a permanent docking facility, pending permanent flood repairs and mitigation, to ensure durable and improved service	✓			Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 3.1.6: Upgrade access (beach area plan) between Pewitt and Sullivan Fields in Capitol View Park to the riverfront beach area including access for canoes/kayaks and a parking lot (pending flood repairs and mitigation)		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 3.1.7: Develop more water-based recreation and events through expanded partnerships and improved marketing of river access points				Capital	Parks/ Partners	CIP/OP
Strategy 3.1.8: Add accessible swinging benches along riverfront at River View Park (and potentially Dolly Graham and Capitol View, pending viewshed improvements) to provide passive enjoyment of the Kentucky River		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 3.1.9: Extend existing boardwalk at River View Park east, with possible connection to potential development of Blanton's Landing (pending flood repairs and mitigation)			✓	Capital	Parks	CIP
Objective 3.2 – Stewardship: Set the standard for species protection, land management, and wildlife conservation						
Strategy 3.2.1: Acquire land contiguous to existing parks, if it becomes available, to allow for additional features and increase the total amount of parkland available to residents with minimal impact to system maintenance and operations				Capital	Parks/City	CIP
Strategy 3.2.2: Utilize existing parkland to meet unmet facility needs and to improve access to park features				Capital	Parks/City	CIP
Strategy 3.2.3: Develop interpretive/informational signage throughout park system (will require signage plans) to help visitors understand natural features & history while improving awareness of sensitive ecosystems & rare species	✓			Capital	Parks/ Partners	CIP
Strategy 3.2.4: Implement conservation policies and sustainable-practice guidelines for future development and management of park properties	✓			Operations	Parks	N/A

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source
	0-2	3-5	6-10			
Strategy 3.2.5: Explore opportunities for restoring natural areas within parks in ways that improve access to nature and reduce maintenance requirements		Ongoing		Capital/Operations	Parks/Partners	N/A
Strategy 3.2.6: Elevate parks by setting examples for Best Management Practices (BMP) like stormwater detention, recycling, etc.		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	N/A
Strategy 3.2.7: Promote conservation and sustainability efforts as they are implemented to encourage reduced levels of consumption and waste generation		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 3.2.8: Consider acquisition of any private parks or open space in Frankfort that become available for sale to ensure that residents continue to have access to these amenities, especially in environmentally sensitive areas		Ongoing		Capital	Parks/City	CIP
Strategy 3.2.9: Explore and establish partnerships to produce nature education programs within Frankfort parks (see also Section 7.11)		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP/Revenue
Strategy 3.2.10: Seek opportunities for new parkland to meet the demands of desired facilities and to improve service levels for existing and future residents		Ongoing		Operations/Capital	Parks/City	OP
Objective 3.3 – History, Arts, & Culture: Help to create community vibrancy & celebrate Frankfort's uniqueness						
Strategy 3.3.1: Pursue unique, locally sourced and created art installations where possible to reinforce a sense of place and "Frankfort identity"		Ongoing		Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP
Strategy 3.3.2: Provide outdoor stages or amphitheaters throughout Frankfort to host community events, such as concerts and movies, highly desired by residents		Ongoing		Capital	Parks	CIP/Revenue
Strategy 3.3.3: Address Ward Oates Amphitheater improvements (e.g., repair minor flood damage, upgrade appearance, etc.) to ensure long term, quality use and to meet community demand for performances and gathering space	✓			Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 3.3.4: Support Franklin County Preservation Trust and others in adding additional archeological elements at Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill to National Register of Historic Places	✓			Operations	Parks/Partners	N/A
Strategy 3.3.5: Add an amphitheater in East Frankfort Park to provide venue for community events in eastern Frankfort		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP
Strategy 3.3.6: Conduct repair of historic dry stack stone wall at Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill, in partnership with local historic preservation experts		✓		Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP
Strategy 3.3.7: Seek out and compensate local arts community and history advocates to collaborate on promoting historic features throughout parks system (e.g., Leslie Morris Park, Cove Spring, Green Hill, etc.)		Ongoing		Operations/Capital	Parks/Partners	OP
Goal 4: Legacy of Excellence						
Cultivate pride in the Capital City by delivering signature parks, creative programs, and collaborative relationships that enhance life for all						
Objective 4.1 – Staff Development & Retention: Nurture an energized workforce through access to adequate resources, training, & other opportunities						
Strategy 4.1.1: Determine maintenance standards, including how many employees are required to maintain one acre; consider standards when adding parkland to avoid burnout, protect staff morale, & ensure efficiency	✓			Operations	Parks	N/A
Strategy 4.1.2: Create and implement professional and career development strategies for management and supervisory staff	✓			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.1.3: Set priorities annually through a combined Recreation Commission/Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Senior Management Retreat to articulate tasks and measure progress		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	N/A
Strategy 4.1.4: Identify and allocate funding for critical staff development opportunities (including conferences, training, memberships, etc.) with consideration to licensure and certification requirements	✓	✓		Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.1.5: Add a staff position with dedicated hours for overseeing programming in the city and managing any outside contracts	✓	✓		Operations	Parks/City	OP
Strategy 4.1.6: Encourage continued staff training for leadership and continued growth within respective fields		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.1.7: Incentivize management level staff to attend professional development programs offered by state, regional, and national training organizations		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.1.8: Incentivize and support staff members to pursue Certified Park & Recreation Professional (CPRP), Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) and Aquatic Facility Operator (AFO) certifications		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source
	0-2	3-5	6-10			
Strategy 4.1.9: Develop a program for recruiting and scheduling volunteer park ambassadors to promote wellbeing and provide assistance at parks	✓	✓		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.1.10: Utilize volunteers to assist with park maintenance through efforts such as the adoption of sections of parks or trails in Frankfort			Ongoing	Operations/Capital	Parks/Partners	OP
Objective 4.2 – Operations & Maintenance: Improve efficiency & fiscal sustainability by establishing clear standards of performance and recurring assessments						
Strategy 4.2.1: Be a mission driven agency; pay very close attention to the new strategic plan for Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites (Chapter 6); ensure every action and decision always connects back to the department's mission		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	N/A
Strategy 4.2.2: Adopt this Master Plan at the level of City Commission; ensure commitment of legislative officials and city leaders	✓			Operations	Parks/City	N/A
Strategy 4.2.3: Develop a Master Plan Implementation Committee (e.g., can include members of plan steering committee) to facilitate, market, and guide implementation of the Action Plan (Chapter 9)	✓			Operations	Parks	N/A
Strategy 4.2.4: Develop a plan to restore River View Park and increase resilience to future flood events	✓			Operations/Planning	Parks/City	OP
Strategy 4.2.5: Pursue and implement an ADA Accessibility Audit of all facilities, programs, and communications	✓			Operations/Planning	Parks/City	OP
Strategy 4.2.6: Prepare Park Master Plans for existing parks and any future parks prior to development of facilities to ensure that added features are complementary, desired, and fully accessible		Ongoing		Operations/Planning	Parks/City	OP
OPERATIONS						
Strategy 4.2.7: Prepare an Operations Plan which defines Maintenance Standards (Section 7.8.5)	✓			Operations	Parks	N/A
Strategy 4.2.8: Establish an annual assessment process to determine if Frankfort should stop offering a program, continue offering a program, or start a new program (Annual Implementation Plan for Business Operations – Subsection 7.7.2.)	✓			Operations	Parks	N/A
Strategy 4.2.9: Classify the agency's services according to how they align with the agency's mission		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	N/A
Strategy 4.2.10: Consider an annual staff retreat as part of the program assessment	✓			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.2.11: Regularly evaluate program times to ensure programs are offered when community members can actually participate		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	N/A
Strategy 4.2.12: Formulate and post a policy for (or against) use of drone within the park system and implement signage to designate whether (and where) drones are permitted	✓			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.2.13: Monitor nationwide and regional recreation trends regularly, especially concerning growing population groups (55+ and BIPOC communities in Frankfort) to best serve the needs of the whole community		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	N/A
Strategy 4.2.14: Utilize the Core Program Guidelines in Appendix C as a source for potential program offerings		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	N/A
Strategy 4.2.15: Establish consistent permit process for field use (whenever facilities are not in use by athletic leagues) to ensure equitable access and to protect against damage	✓			Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.2.16: Treat all vendors, contractors, and partners in a professional, consistent manner with a legal, signed contract		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.2.17: Upgrade and utilize technology in parks for the benefit of both patrons and staff (see Chapter 5, Technology, Subsection 5.7.5)	✓	✓		Operations	Parks/City	OP
Strategy 4.2.18: Consider charging non-residents, or at least those outside of Franklin County, a higher rate for admission to the Juniper Hill Aquatic Center and Golf Course to increase revenue and potentially free up capacity for residents	✓			Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.2.19: Consider setting aside a percentage of total capacity at the Juniper Hill aquatic center for season pass holders so they are not turned away	✓			Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.2.20: Understand all agency costs, both indirect and direct, before entering into agreements; understand how much investment a partner will commit to collaboration		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	N/A

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source
	0-2	3-5	6-10			
Strategy 4.2.21: Never permit private or not-for-profit groups to benefit financially from Frankfort facilities without the city receiving a share of gross revenue		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	Revenue
Strategy 4.2.22: Ensure all future contracts have at least some benefit to the city of Frankfort and its residents, in addition to the relevant partnering vendor or contractor		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/City	Revenue
Strategy 4.2.23: Require city-owned properties remain available to Frankfort residents when not in use by lessee		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/City	N/A
Strategy 4.2.24: Know the value of assets (excluding land values) know where those assets are in their life cycle		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	N/A
Strategy 4.2.25: Know the true costs to deliver services (direct and indirect costs)		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	N/A
MAINTENANCE						
Strategy 4.2.26: Improve maintenance at parks, pending adoption of maintenance standards and adequate staffing levels – will require additional staff	✓			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.2.27: Articulate a capital maintenance and replacement program (may require an increase in the Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites capital budget comparable to other communities)	✓			Operations/ Planning	City	OP
Strategy 4.2.28: Increase maintenance budget in order to sustain current levels as new facilities and programs are developed; consider the need for additional maintenance staff as maintained acreage and features are added to the system	✓	✓		Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.2.29: Calculate maintenance impact of replacement to verify that replacing reduces, rather than increases, maintenance requirements and costs		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP
FUNDING						
Strategy 4.2.30: Find dedicated funding sources for Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites that can be depended upon annually		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/City	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.2.31: Create a Frankfort Parks Foundation to raise funds, recruit and organize volunteers, and promote the parks	✓			Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.2.32: Establish split revenue percentages between city and event coordinator with funding channeled directly to Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites	✓	✓		Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.2.33: Seek philanthropists in the community to support the agency's causes		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.2.34: Consider lease options when replacing equipment to help avoid costly capital expenditures		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.2.35: Address emerging requests from the public through contracts with private vendors		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.2.36: Establish and adjust fees for programs according to direct and indirect costs		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.2.37: Increase cost recovery to (35%) or better as new features are developed, and new programs are added		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.2.38: Institute an easy-to-understand Cost Recovery and Pricing Plan for everything that is offered	✓			Operations/ Planning	Parks	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.2.39: Price services furthest away from the mission at full cost recovery levels	✓	✓		Operations	Parks	Revenue
Strategy 4.2.40: Analyze potential costs versus revenue before adding new features		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.2.41: Establish a fee to reserve picnic shelters for half days (with an hour between reservations) to allow additional use of existing facilities; add new shelters to the rental inventory as they are developed	✓			Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.2.42: Identify potential revenue sources at community events, including sponsorships and entry fees		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	Revenue

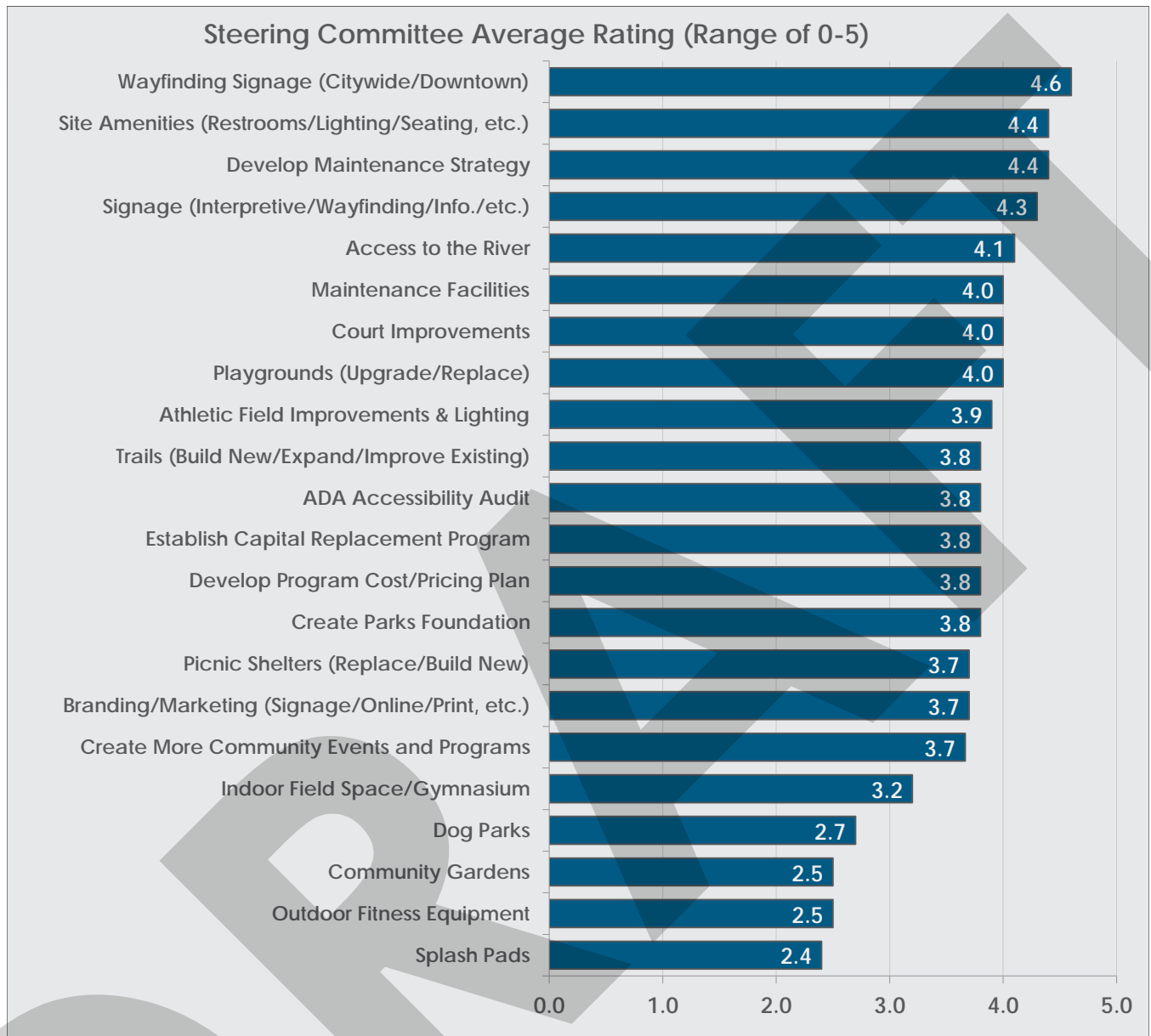
Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source
	0-2	3-5	6-10			
Strategy 4.2.43: Create a Scholarship Fund, potentially by requesting an optional additional \$2.00 charge during registration	✓			Operations	Parks	Revenue
Strategy 4.2.44: Establish policies for accepting sponsorships and selling naming rights	✓			Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.2.45: Consider utilizing a portion of the American Rescue Plan funds allocated to the city of Frankfort for parks and recreation improvements	✓		✓	Operations	Parks	Revenue
Objective 4.3 – Marketing & Promotion: Utilize innovative and inclusive outreach methods						
Strategy 4.3.1: Maintain continuous public engagement throughout the implementation of this plan				Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP
Strategy 4.3.2: Ensure easy program registration – and increased participation – by providing a streamlined online portal for sign-ups and information	✓			Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.3.3: Determine standard formatting for all marketing and promotional materials (consider samples provided above) based on the medium (e.g., social media, newspaper, etc.)	✓			Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.3.4: Create an eye-catching brand, including color, style, logo placement, and flyer layout				Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP
Strategy 4.3.5: Ensure that park signage is consistent with department branding				Operations/ Planning	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.3.6: Expand marketing of programs and facilities through existing and future collaborative relationships to increase community awareness and participation				Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.3.7: Consider online reservations for all rental facilities with a calendar to view availability	✓			Operations	Parks	N/A
Strategy 4.3.8: Develop an online program calendar, including the ability to sync directly to personal calendars	✓		✓	Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.3.9: Brand and market active senior programs together under a unique category (e.g., "Frankfort Active Adults") – many can be offered outdoors	✓			Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP
Strategy 4.3.10: Strategically market "active adults" programs with support from partners and related service-providers	✓		✓	Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP
Strategy 4.3.11: Regularly identify needs of underserved populations				Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.3.12: Establish a consistent messaging strategy for the department				Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.3.13: Maintain existing social media presence but improve access on department webpage				Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.3.14: Utilize video content whenever possible to meet increasing need for highly visual engagement				Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.3.15: Establish an opt-in email blast for community members to stay informed and connected; can be part of program or event registration	✓		✓	Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.3.16: Explore development of a searchable mobile app to communicate site locations, services, and special events to the public				Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.3.17: Inform users, partners, and citizens of the true costs of services				Operations	Parks	OP
Strategy 4.3.18: Know the demographics of the citizens served; track demographic trends				Operations	Parks	N/A
Objective 4.4 – Partnerships: Prioritize relationship-building and information-sharing to effectively tackle collective goals across the community						
Strategy 4.4.1: Maintain existing and successful partnerships with Frankfort-based organizations				Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source
	0-2	3-5	6-10			
Strategy 4.4.2: Collaborate to create and promote a common calendar for activities and events by agencies throughout Frankfort	✓			Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.4.3: Articulate an official agreement Frankfort Independent Schools and Franklin County Schools for use of school properties as parks, particularly after school hours	✓			Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.4: Explore expanding partnerships with outside groups or private vendors to add nature programming at Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve, Leslie Morris Park on Fort Hill, and Capitol View Park		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.5: Continue partnerships with the YMCA to offer an indoor pool to serve Frankfort households		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.6: Partner with local entities like the Capital City Activity Center to ensure "active adult" offerings align with local needs		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.7: Explore partnerships with nearby organizations (e.g., Audubon Society, Josephine Sculpture Park, Kentucky Resources Council etc.) to create nature-based group outings, participatory activities, & community events		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.8: Explore and solidify contracted partnerships with outside vendors and organizations to produce more programming		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.9: Collaborate with partners and other service providers in the city to cross-promote and share information about services		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.10: Develop working agreements with every partner (all outside groups using Frankfort facilities) including measurable outcomes; review every two years, at minimum		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.11: Provide support to local groups advocating connectivity throughout Frankfort		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.12: Continue collaborating with the city's efforts to redevelop the former Capital Plaza site (Parcels B and C)		Ongoing		Operations/ Planning	Parks/City	OP
Strategy 4.4.13: Host quarterly or semiannual check-ins with all community partners; host roundtable discussion where all parties share program progress and emerging needs		Ongoing		Operations/ Planning	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.14: Require a maintenance plan that identifies ongoing funding needs for partnership projects		Ongoing		Operations/ Planning	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.15: Partner with Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Service, the Audubon Society, and others for nature education programs throughout parks in Frankfort		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.16: Continue partnership with Downtown Frankfort, Inc., Frankfort Tourism Commission, and others in business community to generate variety of downtown events, promote the parks system, and enhance community identity		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP/Revenue
Strategy 4.4.17: Sustain existing and develop new partnerships with local health care providers (e.g., Franklin County Environmental Health Services) to promote and financially underwrite healthy lifestyles		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.18: Establish consistent communication and collaboration with Paul Sawyer Public Library for educational programs (e.g., craft demonstrations) and cross-promotion of program offerings		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.19: Solicit expertise from Frankfort arts and culture community (e.g., Yes Arts, Otrero Arts & Roaming Studio, and others) to find arts-based solutions for facility improvements		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.20: Coordinate with Historic Preservation Officer, Preservation Trust, and others prior to future planning or development process to ensure relevant guidelines are met and areas of historical significance are preserved		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.21: Sustain existing collaboration with Woods & Waters Land Trust to grow volunteer base and collectively tackle habitat restoration in parks		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Strategy 4.4.22: Collaborate with outdoor recreation and wellness-based groups like Canoe Kentucky and the Farmers Market to bring consistent, quality opportunities for enhancing the health of the Frankfort community		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP
Totals by Timeframe	67	52	14			
Total Number of Strategies = 184	Ongoing = 91					

Figure 9.1: Capital Improvement Priority Rating



DRAFT