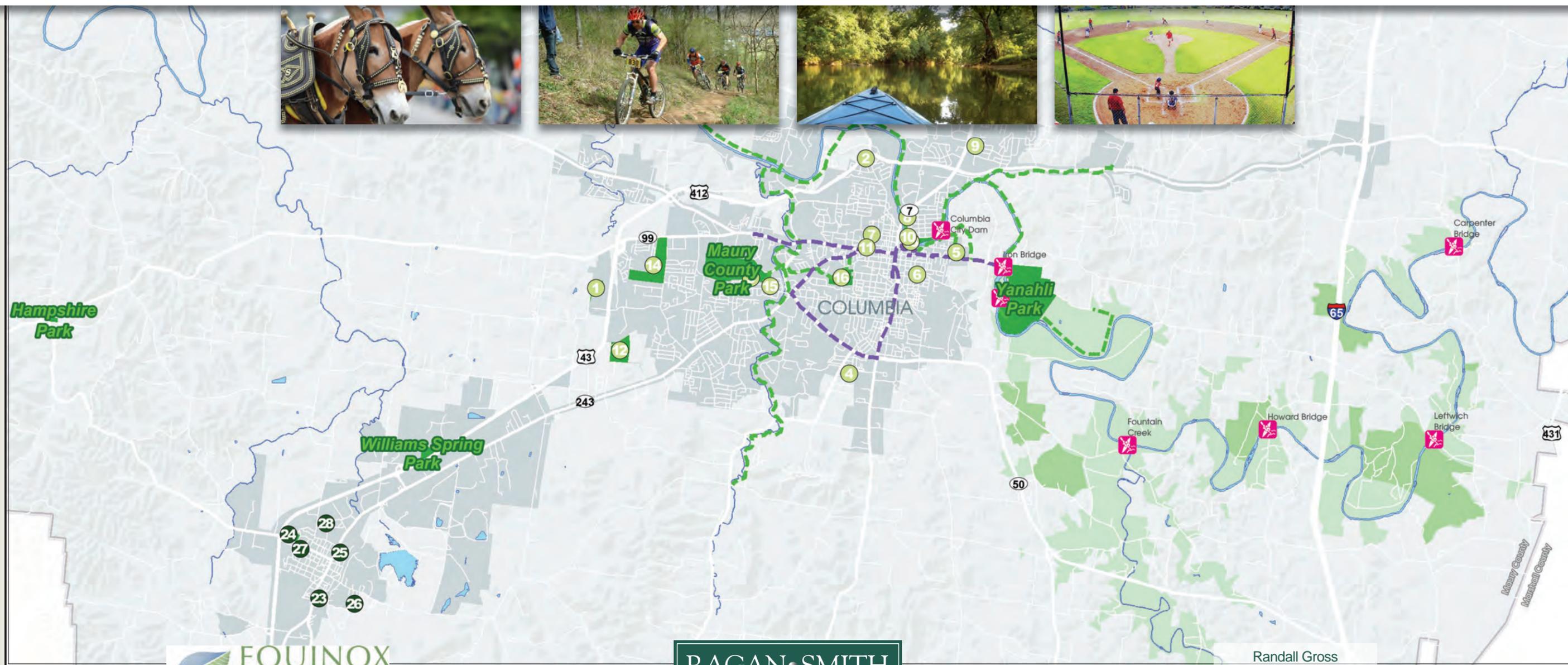


MAURY COUNTY

PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

NOVEMBER 21ST, 2019



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Development Economics

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



In developing the Maury County Parks & Recreation Master Plan, the Ragan-Smith, Equinox, and Randall Gross Development Economics team worked closely with Maury County Officials and members of the Maury County Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee. This plan could not have been possible without the time and efforts put forth by the advisory committee and many stakeholders who contributed to shaping the vision of this plan.

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Introduction:

The existing park facilities in Maury County are of a high quality and the county's recreational programs serve a wide range of residents and visitors alike. In keeping with the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) three pillars of **Conservation, Health and Wellness and Social Equity**, Maury County has developed a master plan that will continue to protect green space and environmental assets and to provide opportunities for healthy and fun activities for all its residents. This master plan provides a vision and road map to maintain and enhance existing facilities and programs while anticipating the future needs of a county that is expected to see tremendous growth over the next 20 years. Well-functioning parks, open space and greenways will be instrumental in maintaining the County's health and economic vitality.

Project Vision Statement:

To provide a full range of recreational opportunities that connect people to the rich cultural, environmental and athletic facilities and programs in Maury County as well as to make lifelong play and learning opportunities available for all its residents.

Maury County Parks & Recreation Mission Statement:

Maury County Parks and Recreation (MCPR) strives to provide recreational and educational opportunities, services and programs to expand our community involvement, create a higher standard of living and to enrich and enhance the lives of our citizens.

Conservation: Maury County parks encompass over 1,000 acres and the county is connected to vast areas of state managed recreational property that included more than 14,000 acres. The Duck River corridor runs through the heart of the county and serves as a beautiful and ecologically diverse asset. The Maury County Parks and Recreation plan has estimated a guiding principle that includes partnerships with local and state agencies to leverage and connect to recreational and environmental educational experiences beyond the formal county park boundaries.

Health & Wellness: According to the National Census and Health records the State of Tennessee and Maury County residents are at relatively high risk for diabetes, heart disease and obesity. The parks and recreation master plan has suggested an important guiding principle that includes active outdoor recreation and the need for more connections, such as greenways, blueways and multi-modal routes to promote walking, hiking, biking, and connections between park's and neighborhoods that surround them.

Social Equity: The Maury County Parks & Recreation plan includes a guiding principle to provide recreation programs for residents and visitors of all ages and all social, economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds and to make facilities and programs inclusive in nature.

Parks, recreation and cultural resources touch every aspect our quality of life. Planning for future capitol improvements and operating and maintenance budgets is very important in shaping out the vision for Maury County.

Parks and Recreation Equates to Quality of Life:

Responding to the public on-line survey; **91% of Maury County residents said that Parks and Recreation are important to very important.** This puts emphasis on how much our park and recreational programs connect with maintaining a high quality of life for Maury County residents.

Valued Amenity to Attract Young Professionals:

According to the Urban Land Institute; **68% of U.S. millennials (ages 18-34) cite proximity to parks as an important community characteristic.** This is a vital consideration for Maury County as it relates to encouraging young professionals to remain in Maury County as part of the county's growing community after graduation from high school and college. It also speaks to the important role that **parks and recreation play in drawing and maintaining a young and skilled work force in Maury County.**

Valued Amenity for Retirement:

According to a study by the American Planning Association on "How Cities Use Parks for Economic Development"; A survey reviewed the importance of **14 features used to evaluate a retiree's decision to move to a community. The first two in rank order were scenic beauty and recreational opportunities.**

NRPA Park Value Calculator:

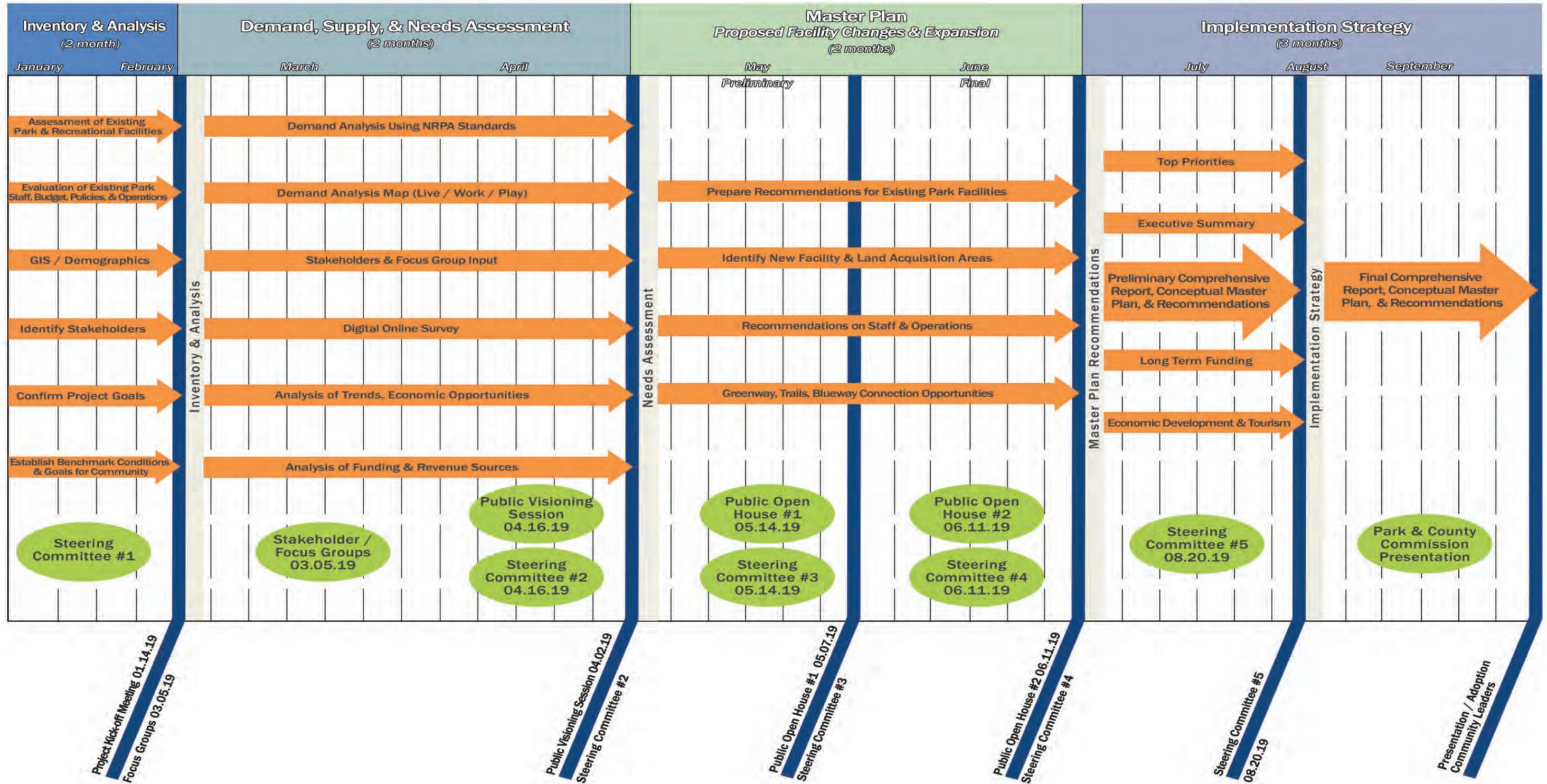
A general calculator used by the National Recreation and Parks Association puts the following values to parks and environmental resources:

Air Quality Benefits: \$0.54 per tree per year equating to \$143.88 per acre of trees per year

Water Quality Benefits: \$156.12 per tree per year equating to \$790.63 per acre of trees per year

Health Benefits: Moderately active park users under 65 save \$427 annually in health care costs; Moderately active park users over 65 save \$854 annually in health care costs. **Children that have easy access to a playground are 5 times more likely to have a healthy weight than children that do not have access to playgrounds.**

Property Value: Property values increase as much as 20 percent when adjacent to a park or greenway. A study in Active Living Research estimated that the average household living half a mile from open space would be willing to pay \$4,104 more for a home to live a ¼ mile closer to the open space.



The process used to establish Maury County's Park and Recreational Master Plan was both qualitative and quantitative. Information was gathered from on-site reconnaissance, GIS mapping and demographics, existing planning studies and direct input from stakeholders in both large public input meetings and one-on-one interviews. This information was analyzed and communicated back to County staff and steering committee for the project, to shape out a preliminary master plan. Further review and public input of this preliminary plan created the recommendations for a final master plan and the direct implementation and policy tools to bring it to fruition. The stages of the planning process can be summarized as follows:

Phase 1: Inventory & Existing Conditions Analysis

Phase 2: Demand & Needs Assessment

Phase 3: Master Plan Recommendations

Phase 4: Implementation & Policy Recommendations

Large Natural Areas

The significance of large natural areas and the importance of the scenic duck river are of particular importance for Maury County and are strong considerations to include in the planning process.

Connections

The Master Plan also focused on ways to better connect people with parks with the understanding that making parks accessible and linking parks and recreational opportunities together greatly multiplies their impact and flexibility. The physical connections of greenways and multi-modal routes must be combined with strong communication and multi-media tools to achieve the best utilization possible.

Partnerships

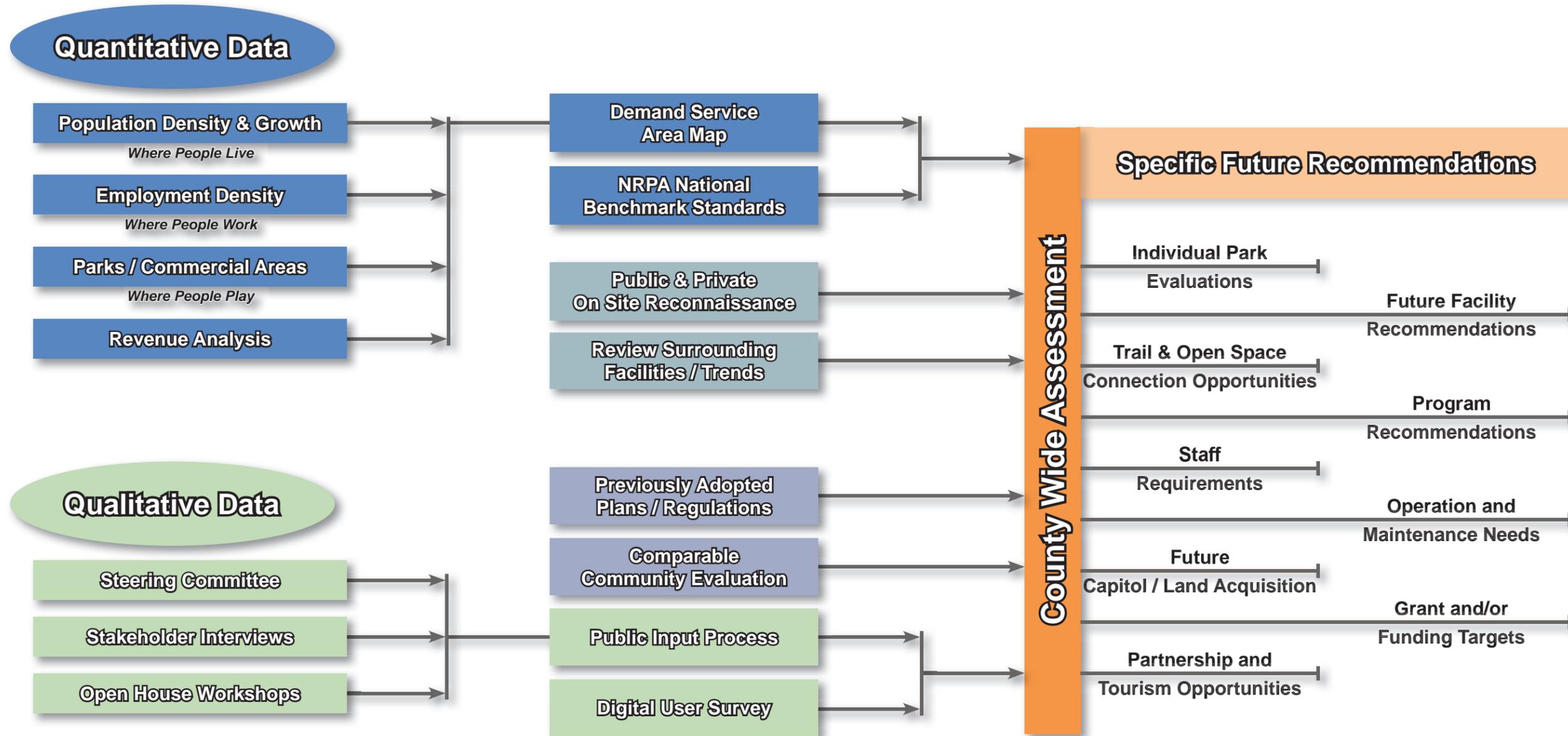
Partnership opportunities are an important component of the master plan with the understanding that they will play a meaningful role in meeting the increased demands placed on parks and green space as development and growth occur. Parks facilities and partnerships were evaluated with a creative approach that expands beyond the traditional defined regional, community or neighborhood park system.

Long Term Funding

The master plan focused on specific needs to fund parks and recreation beyond the general fund. In addition to new facilities and programs there is the need to consider the rising cost of operations and maintenance for existing facilities.

Parks, Recreation, and Trails Assessment Tools:

This flow chart is a graphic depiction of the project approach for the Maury County Parks and Recreation Master Plan Process.



Study Limits:

Legend

River Access Points

Columbia Parks

- Babe Ruth Complex
- Betty Lee Park
- Cook Soccer Park
- Eva Gilbert Park
- Fairview Park & Community Center
- Frierson Johnson Park
- Macedonia Community Center
- Old Armory Recreation Center
- Old Hickory Park
- Pillow Park
- Pop Greer Monument
- Ridley Park
- River Walk Park
- Rutherford Lane
- West Haven Park
- Woodland Park

Spring Hill Parks

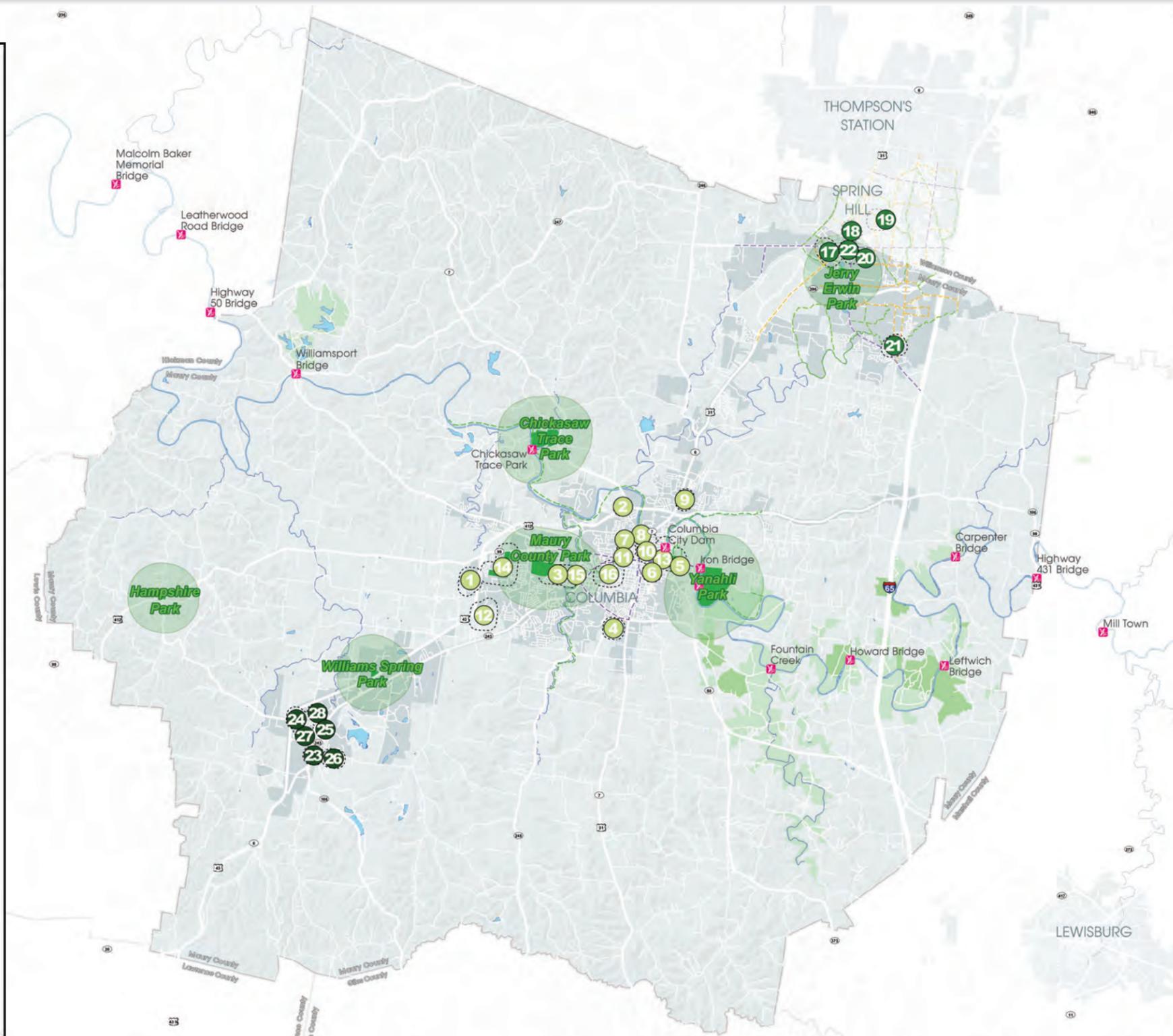
- Evans Park
- Harvey Park
- Longview Recreation Center
- McLemore Park
- Port Royal Road
- Walnut Street Skate Park

Mt. Pleasant Parks

- Arrow Mines Park
- Barker / Brewer Fields
- Clarke Street Park
- Gardenia Clarke Park
- Howard Field
- Mt. Pleasant Community Center

Proposed Facilities

- Potential Bike Lane
- Potential Greenway
- Potential Shared-Use Path



Project Overview:

Maury County is an area rich in natural resources and environmental beauty. Within its boundaries are several large natural recreation areas that encompass thousands of acres. It is also host to several places of historical interest including the beautiful Maury County courthouse and square and President James K. Polk Home & Museum. It is notable that several of the park facilities and programs within the county are supported by a strong spirit of volunteer contribution and community pride.

The county currently has approximately 1,000 acres of parkland that requires programming, operations and management. The county's parks have a diversity in size, ranging from 7 acres to over 500 acres. The park facilities range from beautiful woodland trails, to athletic fields and equestrian facilities. Inventory of park facilities and programs from the communities of Spring Hill, Columbia, and Mt. Pleasant were considered as part of the context for the study.

Maury County Parks

- Chickasaw Trace
- Hampshire Park
- Jerry Erwin Park
- Maury County Park
- Williams Spring Park
- Yanahli Park

Maury County has numerous existing parks, greenways and trails. These facilities range in size from Regional and Special Use Parks to Linear Greenways and Local Neighborhood Parks. Although not under the jurisdiction of Maury County, it is important to also recognize City of Columbia, Spring Hill & Mt. Pleasant Parks as well. To balance the different recreational needs of its residents, Maury County will need to continue to provide a variety of park and trail facilities that range in size and function. As the area grows it will be important to recognize not only the need for bigger parks but also the need for smaller parks, opportunities to connect parks and an increased diversity of recreational programs. The following is a description of how parks are typically classified by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), tailored to the County's current park facilities and programs.

Regional / District Parks or Special Use Facilities:

Regional Parks or Special Use Facilities serve the needs of multiple communities and are typically 50 to 200 acres in size. Examples of Regional Parks include, but are not limited to: state parks, county parks, and protected natural areas. Examples of Special Use Facilities include golf courses, botanical gardens, museums, outdoor entertainment venues and unique sporting event facilities. Regional Parks and Special Use Facilities should also provide additional support services such as restrooms, concessions, and adequate parking. Typical activities for Regional Parks and/or Special Use Facilities include picnicking, boating, observing wildlife and walking greenway trails, and in some cases camping.

Park Size: Ranges from 50 to 200 acres plus. (Serving all the Maury County area plus Regional Events)

Service Area: 50 miles plus (Typically within a 2 to 3 hour drive maximum)

Service areas for Community: District Parks with specialized facilities may extend much further.



Maury County Park is an example of both a special use and regional park because of its draw during special community events such as Mule Day.

Community Park:

Community Parks serve multiple neighborhoods in the surrounding community with both active and passive recreational activities and will typically include park programs that provide extended hours of both day and night-time operation. Large areas of a community park may be programed for athletic facilities designed for league play. Large areas of a community park may also be designated for conservation, passive recreational use and nature trails if natural resource assessments warrant it. They will connect to surrounding neighborhoods within walking distance and will also draw users who will drive to gain access to the park. Greenway connections, bike routes and street and sidewalk networks should provide access to Community Parks. Fitness centers, community centers and athletic sports facilities may be integrated into community level parks if adequate park area, good access and parking accommodations are available. Restroom facilities, concessions and off-street parking areas are important park elements to accommodate a large number of visitors who will spend significant time at the park. Some Community Parks will have specialized facilities that will serve the larger district and or regional area.

Park Size: Typically, 20 - 75+ acres serving an entire community (15,000+ residents)

Service Area: Typically, 1.0 to 2.0 miles in urban and suburban areas and 2.0 to 3.0 miles in rural areas.

Service areas for Community: District Parks with specialized facilities may extend much further.



Chickasaw Trace Park is an example of a community park because of its size and mixture of active and passive recreation.

Neighborhood Park:

Neighborhood parks concentrate several recreational activities into a smaller area. They are designed to serve the active and passive recreational needs of the surrounding neighborhood. They typically have sports fields, playgrounds, picnic areas, open space and walking trails for unorganized play or local sports organizations. Neighborhood parks should promote partnerships with surrounding neighborhoods and homeowners' associations to help facilitate park activities and maintenance when possible. They will primarily connect to surrounding neighborhoods within walking distance and easy bicycle or driving distance. Bike routes, sidewalks and local street networks should provide access to Neighborhood Parks. If greenway routes extend through a neighborhood they should also connect to Neighborhood Parks. Community centers, picnic shelters, restroom facilities and off-street parking areas are park elements that may fit in the Neighborhood Park plan.

Park Size: Typically 1 - 25+ acres serving 1,000 to 20,000 residents.

Service Area: Typically ¼ to ½ mile in suburban and urban areas and 1.0 to 2.0 miles in rural areas.

Hampshire Park serves as an example of a neighborhood park based on its smaller size and facilities focused on unorganized play and social gathering space and its connection with a local school.



Mini-Park:

Mini-Parks are characterized by their small size and their connections to immediate surroundings. Because Mini-Parks are so closely connected to their surrounding context they will be designed to accommodate specific local needs. Size limitations will typically generate a mixture of passive, visual and small scaled active recreational use. Mini-Parks should promote partnerships with surrounding neighborhoods and businesses to help facilitate park activities and maintenance when possible. Mini-Parks will primarily connect to surrounding neighborhoods or land use through pedestrian and bicycle access. They can be incorporated into a high intensity land use serving as a focal point for the community. In this case, access may be planned as part of adjoining parking and regional transportation accommodations. Spaces for social interaction, rest and relaxation are typically planned into Mini-Park space. Small scaled playgrounds or interactive games can provide opportunities for activity. Strong visual elements and public art elements can fit well into this scale of space.

Park Size: Typically 1/3 acre - 1 acre, serving 300 to 1,000 residents, surrounding homes or businesses. If a Mini-Park is designed to function in a high intensity area it may serve a much higher number of people with the intent of moving people quickly through the park.

Service Area: Typically ¼ mile to 3 or 4 city blocks.

Maury County Parks System is not focused on urban areas that typically provide a framework for mini parks. Municipalities within the County have opportunities to fill the specific opportunities related to mini parks.

Greenways:

Greenways function as linear parks. They can be very narrow or several hundred feet wide. Greenways provide transportation links, waterway access, environmental enhancement, ecosystem protection and recreational opportunities. By connecting park areas and points of interest greenways greatly increase the value of parks, historical and cultural assets. Frequently trailhead areas can be designed with facilities that provide recreational opportunities like a neighborhood park.



Park Size: Varies. Minimum width should be no less than 50 feet

Service Area: In addition to linking other facilities greenways function as neighborhood and community level parks to residents within ½ to 2 miles away.

Blueways:

Blueways are water-based networks designed for paddlers. They function much like greenways in that they provide a different mode of recreational travel. They can also provide a unique view and experience of the environmental and cultural assets of Maury County for residents and visitors using them.



Park Size: Varies based on size of waterway

Service Area: In addition to linking other facilities blueway boat launches and waterway access points can function as neighborhood and community level parks to residents within ½ to 2 miles away

Park Connectors:

There are several methods of incorporating pedestrian, bicycle and paddle connections into the transportation and recreation system. The following trail and connector options can be integrated into parks, greenways, blueways and public right of way for streets and roads.



Multi-use / shared-use paths: Typically 10' to 12' wide with a concrete, asphalt or boardwalk hard surface. The pathway should be physically separated from roadways with a landscape buffer. These pathways are the most comfortable for the largest percentage of users and they fit well into greenways and street or roads with wide right of way. They are designed for pedestrians, bicycles, skaters and scooters and usually meet ADA design standards. Well designed and strategically placed multi use pathways become economic assets to surrounding commercial and residential land use by increasing commerce and land value.

Designated Bicycle Lanes: Bike lanes are typically a minimum of 4' to 5' wide and can be separate and protected from streets or they can be integrated into roadway surfaces. They are designed specifically for bicycle travel with the intent of minimizing automobile and pedestrian interaction or conflicts. Pavement markings, specialized surfaces and signage are utilized to establish clear bike routes.



Pedestrian Sidewalks: Sidewalks should be designed to have a minimum width of 5'. Areas with high pedestrian traffic require greater width. Sidewalks provide people with space to travel within the public right-of-way that is separate from vehicles. Bicycles are allowed on sidewalks, but not encouraged. They must yield to pedestrians.

Natural Surface Trails: Typically 3' to 6' wide, natural surface trails are designed for areas that see lighter pedestrian traffic or recreational hiking. These trails can be made of several different types of materials that are compacted into a more solid surface. Due to surface materials and slope, most trails cannot be easily traveled by anything other than pedestrians or bikes specifically designed for rough terrain. Some natural surface trails can be designed to meet ADA design standards due to slope and surface conditions.



Access to blueways: Watercraft launch points should consider the following design features; Easy access to parking and pull off areas from the nearby road network, a hard level landing and loading zone at the water's edge with an area of 60'x 60', a dock ramp or rail system for stabilization of the watercraft while people transfer in and out of the water and erosion control and bank protection for exposed stream or lakeside slopes next to the launch. There should be multiple access points to the water on a blueway at intervals ranging from three to six miles apart. Maps designating the blueway routes and estimated travel times for paddling between access points should be displayed.

The existing park and recreation facilities in Maury County have been inventoried to capture a true understanding of the park size, type, and acreage. Facilities have also been evaluated to understand the unique qualities they hold and the types of users that are being served by them. The following categories identify park space based on user experiences and opportunities. This is an important evaluation to make relative to serving all ages of the community and providing a full range of recreational options. There can be multiple types of experiences for people using a park space, that go beyond the classic definitions of “active” and “passive”.

Active Use Park Space:



This includes park space that offer facilities for organized athletics, active play areas and large scale programmed events. Active use parks typically have community buildings or shelters, bathrooms and parking areas to handle large amounts of automobile traffic. Athletic facilities can include soccer, baseball, softball, football, tennis, volleyball, swimming pools, disc golf, skateboarding, lacrosse and many other active playing fields. Active use parks can also be programmed for large community events that do not involve athletics.

Passive Use & Conservation Park Space:

Passive parks include large areas of open space for unprogrammed play, enhanced natural areas and protected environmental features and wildlife observation. Environmental and cultural education programs are often a part of passive use park space. Passive parks are typically designed to minimize the impacts of buildings, roads and large-scale facilities on the natural environment.



Cultural & Educational Park Space:

Culture parks have landscapes, locations or buildings that represent important historical events, activities, people, or cultural themes. A parks cultural theme can be relative to the heritage, sacred beliefs, customs, art or music of a particular group of people. A parks historic significance can be represented by a designed space or building, a pattern of development, a monument or a something that represents a particular period of time or event.



Outdoor Experience - Health Park Space:

Outdoor experience parks focus on opportunities to engage in physical activity in the outdoor environment. The space is frequently unprogrammed and connects to the natural environment. This can include walking, hiking, biking, camping, watercraft, climbing, horseback riding and fitness training facilities. These uses can fit within park space defined as passive or active. Nature centers and facilities for outdoor equipment training and distribution can be part of the programmed space for larger scale facilities. Health parks provide equipment of facilities that connect the outdoor experience.



Play Centered Park Space:



There is a positive trend in park design to “break the bubble” of static design approaches to play and playgrounds. Play centered space is designed to integrate fun, health, learning and social interaction. In addition to controlled, age-appropriate playgrounds it is important to connect play space to the larger context of a parks surroundings. The idea is to encourage inclusiveness, interaction and exploration in a space designed for play. Play elements are connected to encourage movement, imagination and choice. In a play centered park space: Access, movement, art, view sheds, environmental features, learning and health can all be integrated into the play experience.

Interactive Pet Park Space:

Parks that allow for interaction with pets has become a very popular. Dog parks or “bark parks” have become very popular. They are specifically designed to provide places where dogs can run free, off-leash and socialize with other dogs. It also provides an opportunity for pet owners to socialize with each other. It is important to design dog parks with safety and comfort in mind, including specific park rules on dog and dog owner etiquette.



Social Entertainment Park Space:



Parks are great places to socialize and entertain. Some park space should allow for spontaneous, non-programmed activities and social interaction. Mini parks and greenways can often function as prime opportunities for social interaction. Large green spaces that are designed to accommodate community events can be designed in a flexible manner to accommodate music, art, cultural events, group exercise, specialized clubs or hobbies. Social and entertaining spaces in a park are prime candidates for partnerships with entities beyond the park and recreation department and staff.

Utility Field - Flex Open Space:

Athletic clubs and major athletic tournaments create a high demand for active sports facilities. This can sometimes create limitations for local programs and spontaneous “pick-up” sports activities. Utility field space and general all-purpose open space provides opportunities for spontaneous play and practice space for a wide variety of local athletic programs. Flex open space does not require a heavy investment in formal infrastructure or buildings.



Existing Park System Overview / Organization

The Maury County Parks & Recreation Department manages 6 different park facilities which have a combined acreage of roughly 1,000 acres. The County's parks serve the community with recreational amenities and features such as passive green space, single and multi-use walking and biking trails, rugged hiking trails, playgrounds, pick-up sport courts, sport fields, and open space for unstructured activities. Yanahli and Chickasaw Trace support hiking, native habitat, and a numerous opportunities for open space activities. Maury County Park is a fixture in the community recreation and socialization that includes multiple sports fields, walking trails, equestrian facilities, and home to the Mid-South Live Steamers. The table on the following page lists Maury County's assessed parks and provides a summary matrix for each park's physical amenities, and the recreation facilities they provide.

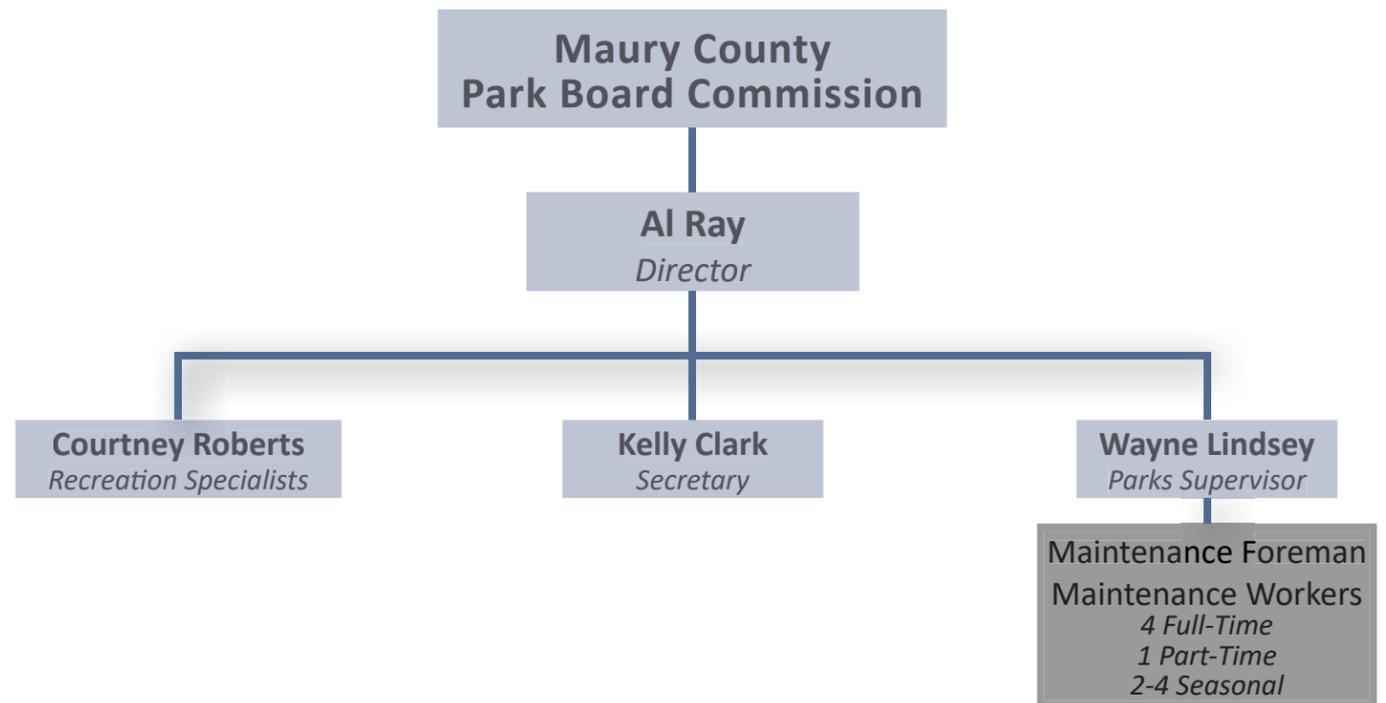
Purpose & Process:

An inventory and assessment of Maury County's park and recreation system was conducted by the Consultant team, with the assistance from County staff, to understand how each park asset currently serves the community and as a baseline for future considerations for the Parks & Recreation Masterplan. Four primary items were evaluated for each park and open space: condition, function, capacity, and accessibility. Each park will later be assessed for potential site improvement and recreation opportunities. Over several site visits, each County Park was assessed with the following information collected at each park, or open space, site:

- Size: Park acreage
- Use Aspects
- On-site Presence of Park Staff
- General description of the site and uses Facilities and Amenities
- Facilities and amenities provided Recreation Provided
- Capacity for various recreation activities Constraints
- Observed features that limit the site's recreation potential Opportunities
- Initial ideas to expand the site's recreation capacity and better meet user needs
- Observed maintenance issues and current practices estimated repair or replacement:

The information collected in the existing facility inventory and assessment assists in the complete evaluation of the County's existing park system and is part of the baseline for the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan.

Organizational Chart



The seven-member Maury County Park Board Commission was created by the Private Acts of 1957. Section 5 of that document states the number of members, member terms and meeting rules. Section 6 vests the Board with "full, absolute, and complete authority and responsibility for the operation, maintenance, management, conduct, and control of the business and affairs..." Section 7 vests the board with the authority to appoint the management of the department.

The Director answers directly to the Park Board and manages eight full-time employees, one part-time employee and various seasonal employees as needed.

Inventory of Existing Athletic Facilities

Table 1 - Existing Facilities Inventory

Name	Park Type	Acreage	Basketball	Baseball	Softball	Soccer	Volleyball	Racquetball	Tennis	Pavilions / Picnic Tables	Bathrooms	Trails	Playgrounds	Golf Course	Disc Golf	Dog Park	Arboretum	Historic Structure / Site	Gym / Fitness Area	Theater	Meeting Rooms	Pool	Track	Game Room	Multi-Purpose Room
Chickasaw Trace	Community	240.5								X	X	X	X					X							
Hampshire Park	Neighborhood	6.9	X	X	X					X			X												
Jerry Erwin Park	Community	35.8								X	X	X						X							
Maury County Park	Special Use	242		X	X	X				X	X	X	X								X				X
Williams Spring Park	Community	24.3								X	X	X	X												
Yanahli Park	Regional	474.0								X	X	X													
Totals:		1,023.5 Acres																							

Existing Facilities - Chickasaw Trace Park

Chickasaw Trace Park

Park Type: Community

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 240.5 Acres

Park Summary:

Initiated in 1992, Chickasaw Trace Park is a large park dedicated to outdoor recreation for Maury County just north west of the City of Columbia. The park has a log cabin, two open-air shelters, and a playground available for gatherings. It is a perfect place for mountain-bikers of any level, for those wanting to see a scenic view of the Duck River or its tributary Knob Creek, or getting to practice with radio controlled airplanes and cars on a designated flying field and track.

On-site presence of park staff: No

Partnerships:

- The Columbia Cycling Club assists the County with the maintenance of mountain bike trails and the coordination of race events.
 - The Columbia Cycling Club hosts annual events that include :
 - Triathlon that involves a 3.5 mile canoe route on the Duck River and an 8 mile mountain bike and 2.5 mile run through Chickasaw Trace Park.
 - A 15K trail run along the Duck River through Chickasaw Trace Park.
 - Tennessee Interscholastic Cycling League event with 500 participants from all across the state of Tennessee
- Radio controlled cars, trucks, and planes track and field are maintained and coordinated with the assistance of local clubs and enthusiasts.

Condition & Maintenance Needs:

- The old cabin on site is in need of continued restoration.
- The shelters and playgrounds are in relatively good condition.
- Parking and access to the river will require on-going maintenance to keep the parking lot and access point clear of debris and wash out from cyclical river flooding.
- The road network requires ongoing maintenance and repair.

Functionality & Potential Improvements:

The land fill on-site will require full remediation and restoration to bring it back to a natural state. The importance of this park related to outdoor recreation and tourism cannot be understated.

Accessibility:

The park has good access off Santa Fe Pike (New Hwy 7) and it provides key watercraft access to the Duck River.



Existing Facilities - Hampshire Park



Hampshire Park

Park Type: Neighborhood

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 6.9 Acres

Park Summary:

Hampshire Park is a small community park where families can enjoy a leisure day with a park, pavilion, with large green space to play. It has one baseball field, a walking/running track, a playground and basketball court to accommodate active recreation. The park is associated with the Hampshire Unit School.

On-site presence of park staff: No

Condition & Maintenance Needs:

- The existing outdated facilities on site could benefit from upgrading.
- The park is partially maintained and coordinated in collaboration with the adjoining school.

Functionality & Potential Improvements:

The park will continue to function well as a neighborhood park for the community of Hampshire as local residents are located at a fair distance from other park facilities in the county

Additional shade trees could be planted to improve environmental and aesthetic conditions.

Jerry Erwin Park

Park Type: Community

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 35.8 Acres

Park Summary:

Jerry Erwin Park (adjacent to Spring Hill Battlefield) is a sizable park that has historical significance related to the Civil War and the Battle of Spring Hill. The events that took place during this battle were instrumental in turning the war towards the favor of the Union Army in Tennessee. There are historical markers in the parking lot and at the trail head that communicate the history of the park. The park serves to provide passive recreational opportunities with a 0.86 mile paved trail and access points to McCormick Creek and its tributary drainage-ways.

On-site presence of park staff: No

Condition & Maintenance Needs:

The walking trail is an easy route and it provides good accessibility to people of all walking and hiking levels and people with disabilities.

The historic signs on site have become weathered and faded.

Parking and trail paving need continued maintenance.

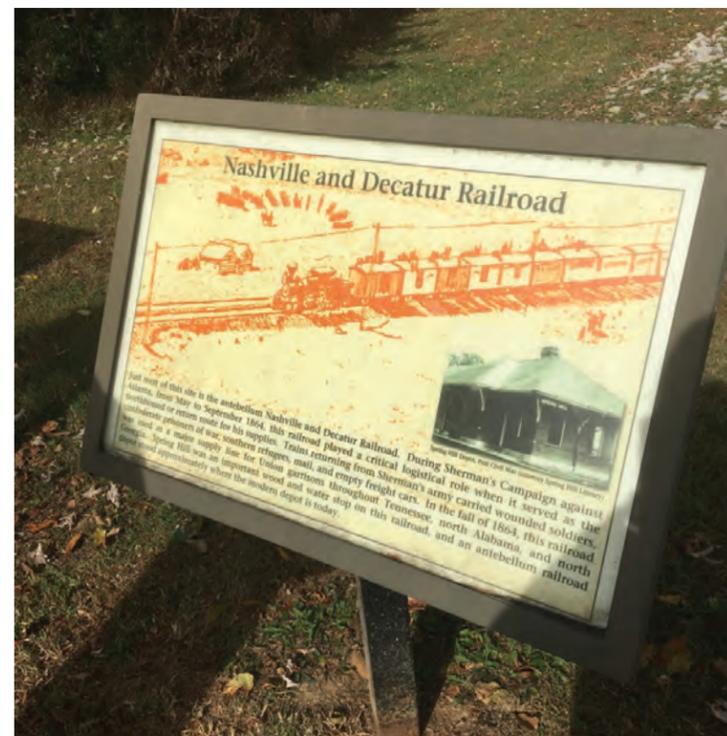
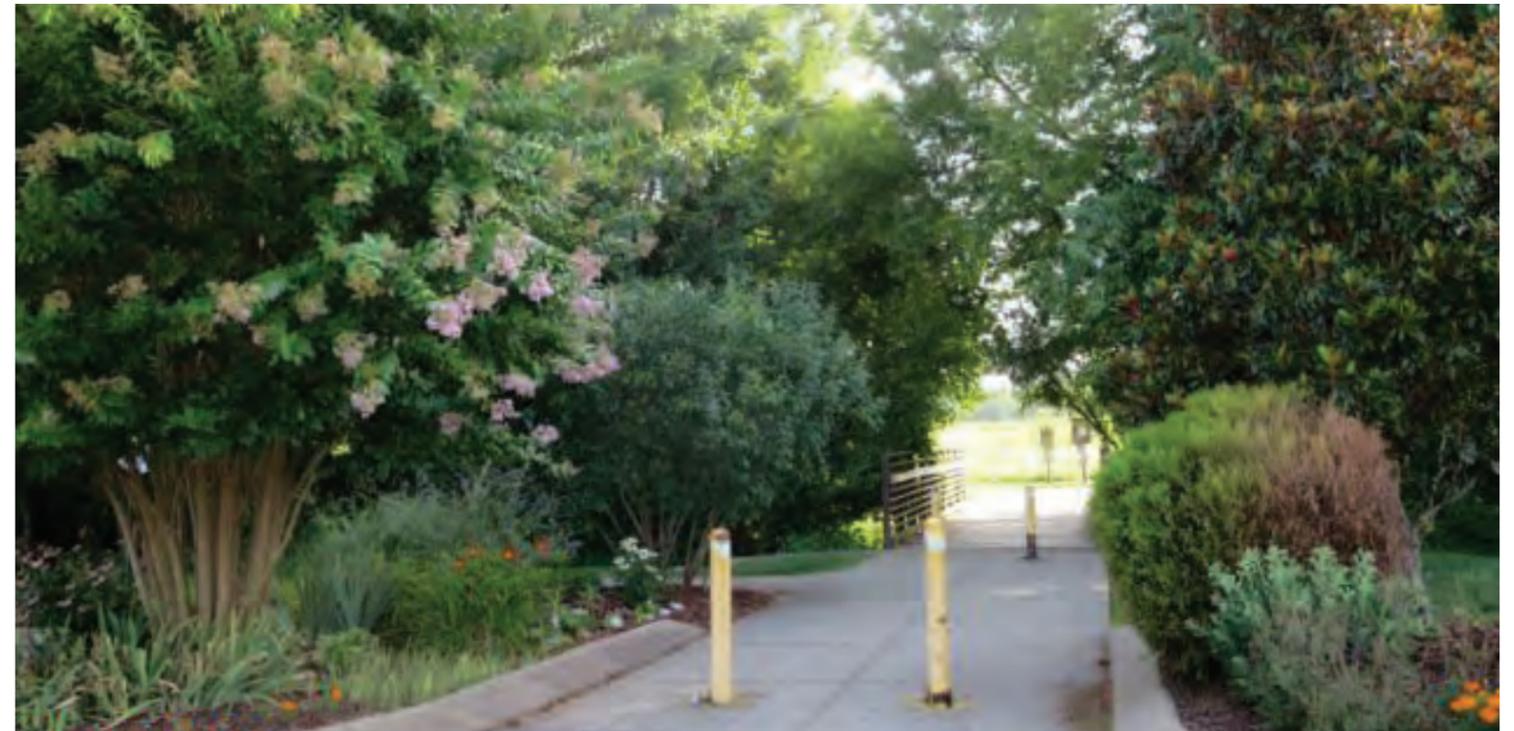
Functionality & Potential Improvements:

The park functions as a passive space with historic, environmental, and health benefits. These elements of the park should continue to be enhanced and the historic signage and monuments deserve to be updated.

Creek access points need continued maintenance and protection from erosion. Large flat stones could be strategically placed for creek side access.

Accessibility:

The trail is very accessible and should continue to be maintained at a high level to prevent any damage from erosion or wash-outs.



Existing Facilities - Maury County Park



Maury County Park

Park Type: Special Use

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 242 Acres

Park Summary:

Maury County Park has a multitude of amenities to serve the surrounding population, as well as space to hold annual festivals like Mule Day. It has a natural and paved trail, playgrounds, restrooms, multiple pavilions, and hosts the Lindsey Nelson Football Stadium and the Columbia American Little League. It also is home to miniature trains of Mid-South Live Steamers and the Maury County Senior Center.

On-site presence of park staff: Yes

Partnerships:

Maury County Park has benefited from some strong partnerships with organizations that provide a mix of recreational opportunities. Continued collaboration to strengthen these partnerships will be important. Some of these organizations currently include:

- [Columbia American Little League](#)
- [Maury County Bridle and Saddle Club](#)
- [Maury County Fair and Expo](#)
- [Mid-South Live Steamers](#)
- [Maury County Senior Citizens](#)

Condition & Maintenance Needs:

The arena and Exhibit Conference Center have recently undergone much needed updates and improvements.

The Kids Kingdom playground also shows recent investment and improvement.

Functionality & Potential Improvements:

Maury County Park is the flagship park for the Parks and Recreation Department and its strengths lies in the mixture of active and passive recreational opportunities and experiences. The park has great potential for the addition of a disc golf course. The longevity and ongoing use and maintenance of the Babe Ruth Sports Field needs to be evaluated relative to future programming for the park.

Accessibility:

The park has good greenway access and circulation although part of the access road loop through the west side of the park has been washed out and undermined, requiring a partial closure of the road.



Existing Facilities - Williams Spring Park

Williams Spring Park

Park Type: Community

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 24.3 Acres

Park Summary:

Williams Spring Park sits just between Columbia and Mt. Pleasant next to Williams Spring Road. It has a playground, two pavilions, and a looped 1/2 mile paved trail for walkers and runners. This park is at an important location to serve the south west corridor of growth in Maury County including residents in the Mount Pleasant area.

On-site presence of park staff: No

Condition & Maintenance Needs:

The park is in relatively good condition with the new playground equipment and well maintained shelters, restrooms and parking areas.

Functionality & Potential Improvements:

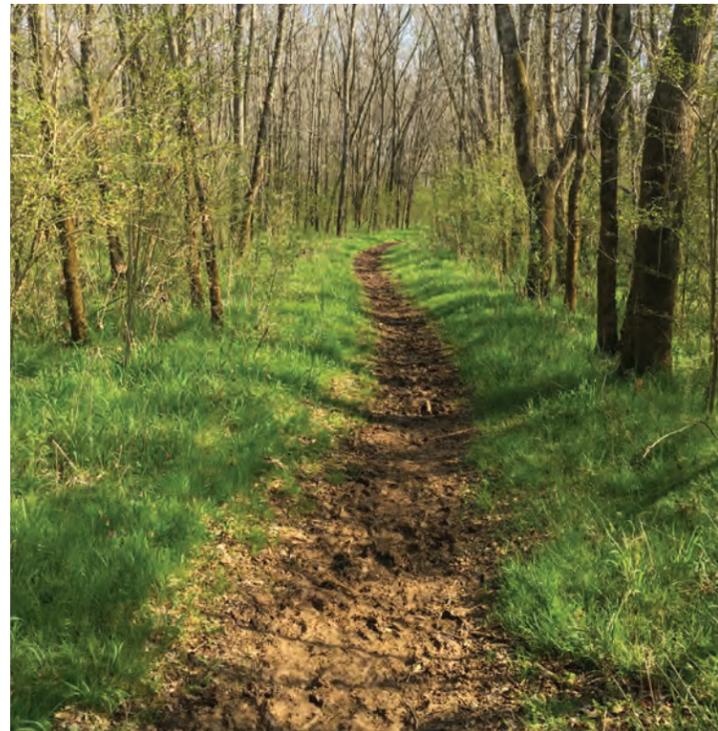
Williams Spring Park functions well as a passive active park for play, picnicking and social leisure events. The paved trail is good for promoting active health and social interaction and large unprogrammed open space is good for unorganized free play. The park has the capacity for additional programming that could include activities like disc golf, a dog park and athletic pick up or practice areas.

Accessibility:

The park has good accessibility.



Existing Facilities - Yanahli Park



Yanahli Park

Park Type: Regional

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 474.0 Acres

Park Summary:

Yanahli Park is Maury County's largest park with 474 acres. As highlighted in the adopted master plan "The Yanahli Park Balances Conservation & Sustainable Development as a Hub & Gateway to the Nationally Important Duck River with an Emphasis on Outdoor Recreation & Environmental Education"

On-site presence of park staff: No

Condition & Maintenance Needs:

Yanahli is a new park. Existing improvements are in excellent condition and there are plans to expand more in the near future.

Functionality & Potential Improvements:

Existing facilities at Yanahli include a new access road, parking, restrooms, trailhead development, hiking trails and undeveloped access to the Duck River. Continued development of blueway access, trails, camping, picnic areas and opportunities for environmental education and nature based play should be a priority.

Accessibility:

The park currently has good access to the trailhead and restrooms continued development of access to the Duck River should be a priority.



The Yanahli Park is a 474-acre site with the following proposed features:

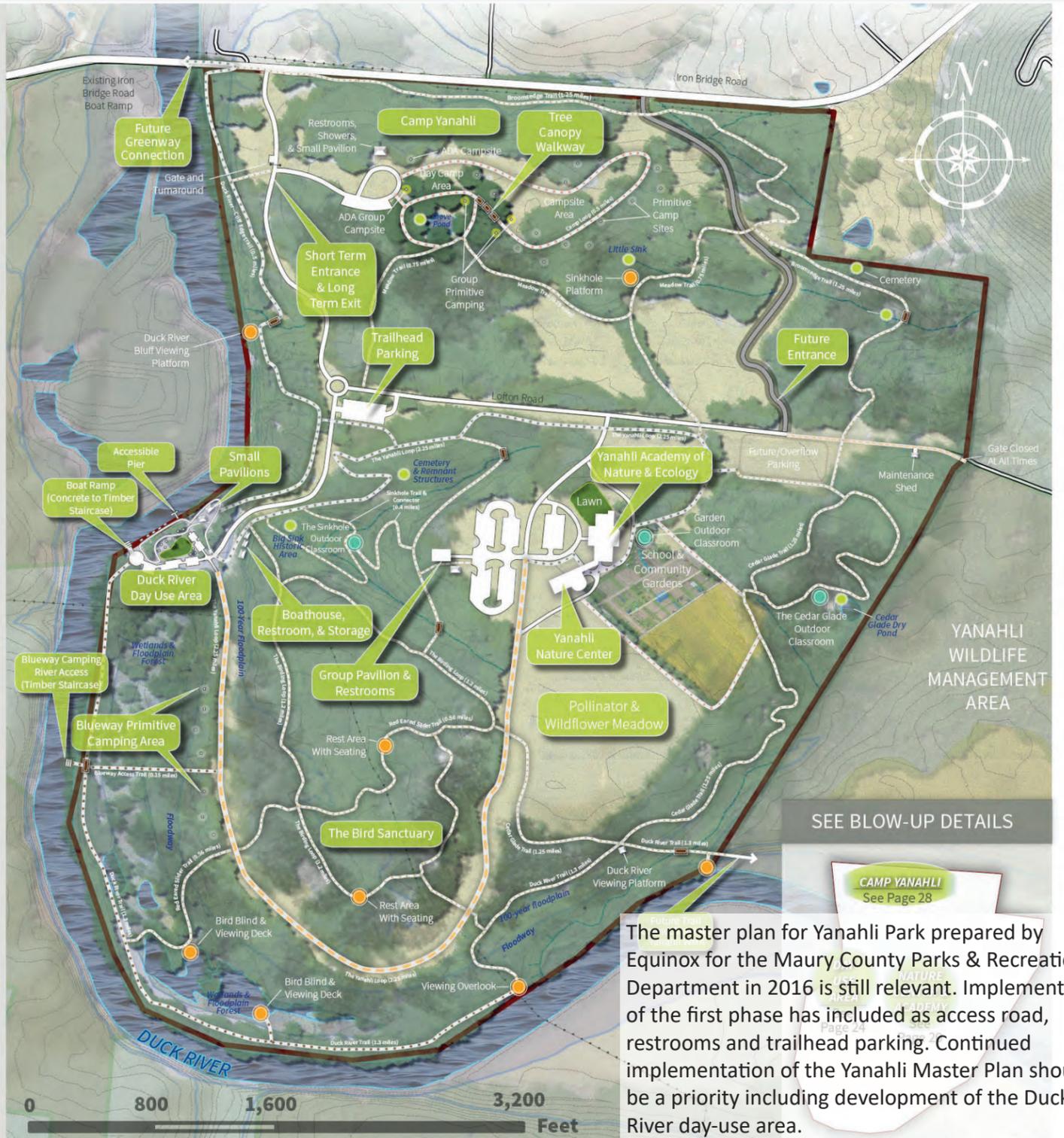
Capacity of Feature
The Yanahli Academy of Nature & Ecology , a public school for grades 4-8, focused on outdoor experiential learning.
500 Students
Camp Yanahli , a camp with 20 primitive camping sites, including 1 ADA site, and 5 groups sites, including 2 ADA sites.
120 Campers
The Duck River Day Use Area , including 15 picnic sites, a river access, and a fishing pier.
320 Users
Duck River Blueway Primitive Camping Sites.
30 Campers
15-miles of trail , including natural surface, ADA asphalt, boardwalks, and crushed stone trails.
100's of Hikers & Bicyclists

The Vision

The Yanahli Park balances conservation and sustainable development, as a hub and gateway to the nationally important Duck River, with an emphasis on outdoor recreation and environmental education.

Images from Yanahli Park Master Plan

- Yanahli Property
- Existing Features
 - 10-Foot Contours
 - Floodway/Floodplain
 - Streams (Verified by Equinox)
 - Open Waters
 - Potential Wetland Areas
 - Open Fields
 - Features of Interest
- Transportation and Trails
 - Paved Roads (Proposed)
 - Future Road
 - Asphalt Path
 - Crushed Gravel Trail
 - Boardwalk/Trail Combination
 - Road Conversion
 - Natural Surface Trail
 - Bridges
- Amenities
 - Primitive Campsites
 - Day Picnic Sites
 - Trail Amenities
 - Outdoor Classroom
 - Structures
 - Pier/River Access



SEE BLOW-UP DETAILS

CAMP YANAHLI
See Page 28

The master plan for Yanahli Park prepared by Equinox for the Maury County Parks & Recreation Department in 2016 is still relevant. Implementation of the first phase has included access road, restrooms and trailhead parking. Continued implementation of the Yanahli Master Plan should be a priority including development of the Duck River day-use area.

Existing Park Experiences & Recreational Matrix

Table 2 - Existing Facilities & Recreation Experiences Opportunities *(This inventory is based on current conditions, some parks have capacity to expand their recreational experiences)*

Facility	Park Type	Active Use	Conservation / Passive Use	Educational / Cultural Park	Outdoor Experience / Health	Play Centered Park	Interactive Pet Park	Social / Entertainment	Utility Field / Flex Space
Chickasaw Trace Park	Community	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Hampshire Park	Neighborhood	X		X		X		X	
Jerry Erwin Park	Community		X	X	X				X
Maury County Park	Special Use	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams Spring Park	Community		X		X	X		X	X
Yanahli Park	Regional		X	X	X				

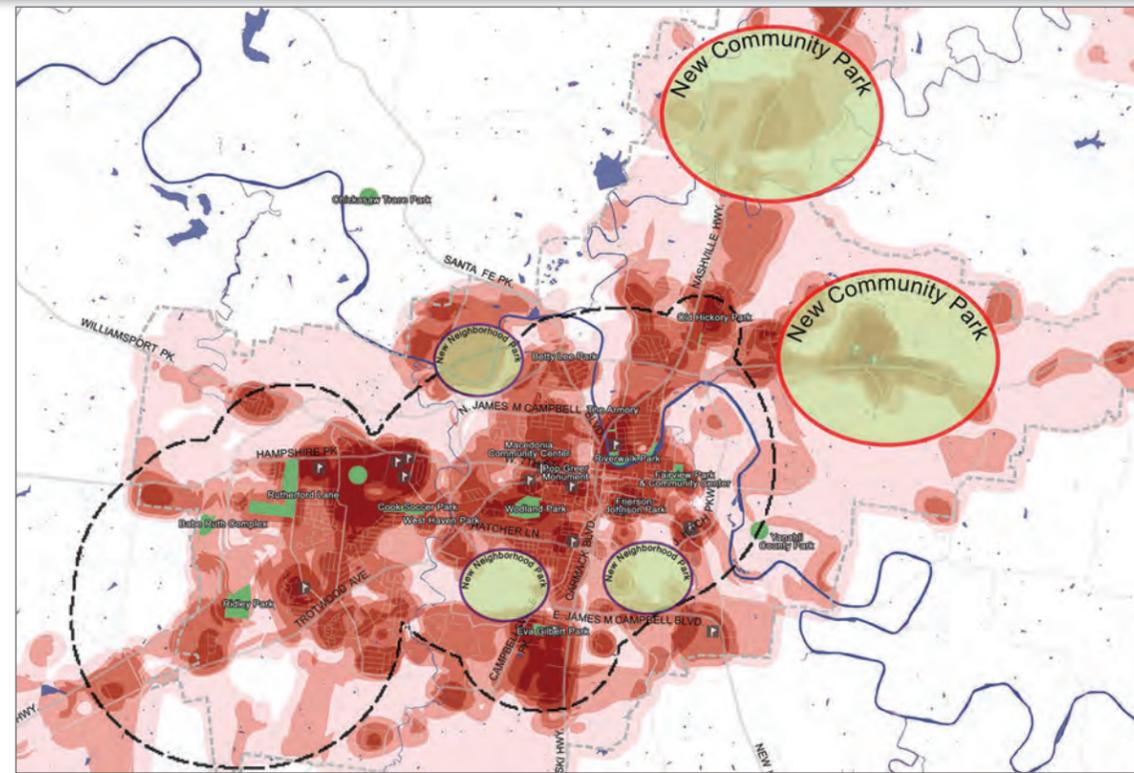
**Indicates parks that capture 5 different types of recreational experiences*

Impact from Columbia, Spring Hill, & Mt. Pleasant

Recreational Experiences - A Broader Look

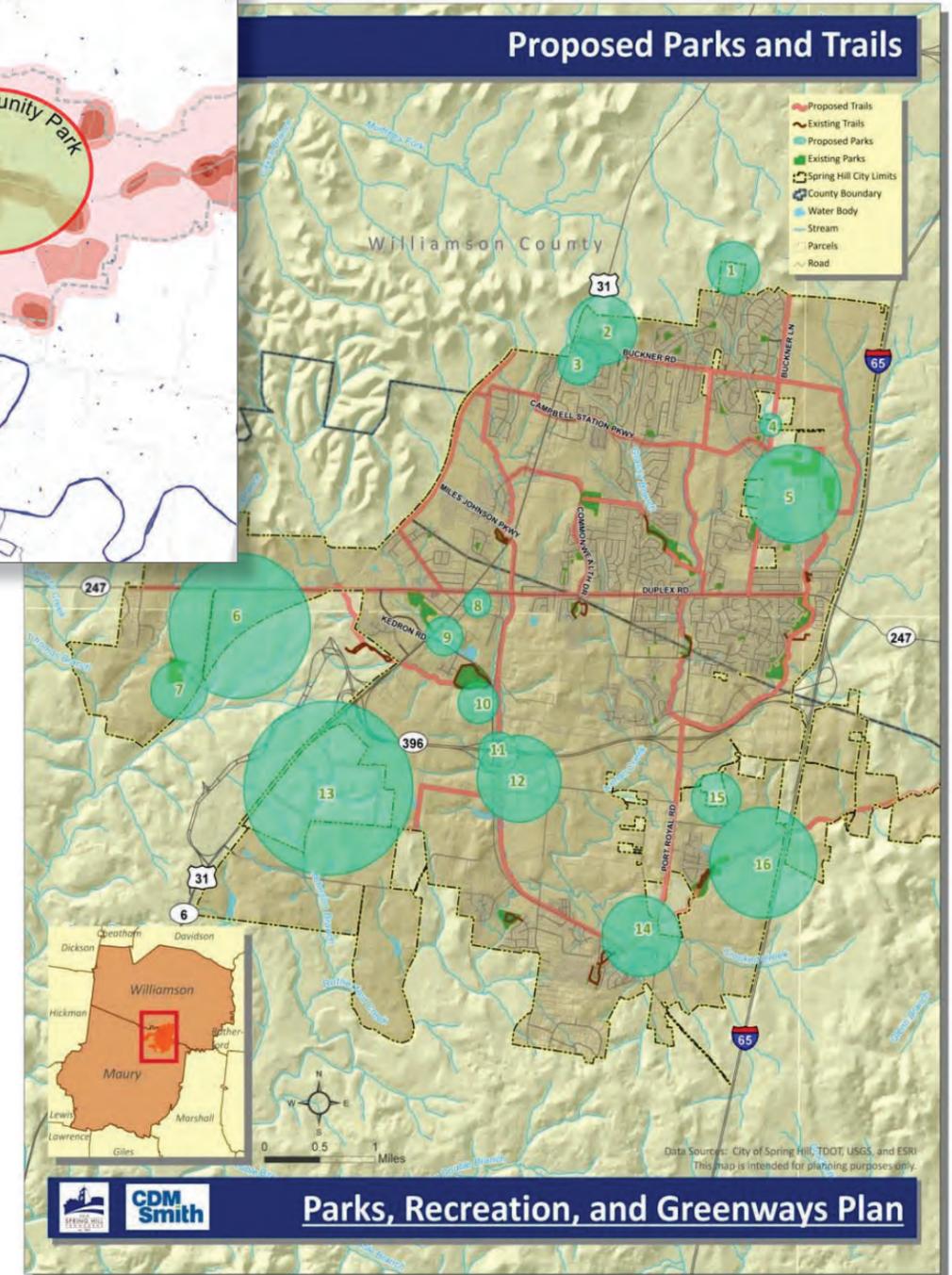
In addition to the inventory of existing park facilities within the County's programming and management parameters, it is valuable to consider additional recreational experiences that are available for Maury County residents and visitors. This is especially important in evaluating potential recreational tourism and branding opportunities. Several recreational facilities offer experiences beyond properties owned and operated by Maury County. Some of these facilities include:

- **City of Columbia Parks & Recreation** has prioritized new park facilities on Bear Creek Pike (SR 412) and Nashville Highway (US Hwy 31). The city has also recently upgraded Ridley Park on the south west side of the city, a major athletic facility for softball, baseball, soccer, and football events. The City of Columbia has also identified a potential greenway / blueway loop from the Iron Bridge Rd access point on the Duck River to the downtown / River Front Park area.
- **City of Spring Hill Parks & Recreation** has recently completed Port Royal Park on the south east side of the city. This facility includes a high end splash pad, playground area, football / soccer fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, walking and biking trails as well as picnic areas. The city has targeted new facilities along US Highway 31 on the south west side of town and is currently in the process of updating their parks, recreation and greenways master plan.
- **City of Mt. Pleasant Parks & Recreation** has recently added staff to help achieve the vision, implementation and management of the park programs in the city. The community center has recently been upgraded to include more activities and programs for its residents. The city's five year strategic plan includes plans for a splash pad, dog park and more walking / biking trails.
- **State Owned Public Land.** Maury County residents have access to over 14,000 acres of public state owned land for outdoor recreation, such as hunting and hiking.

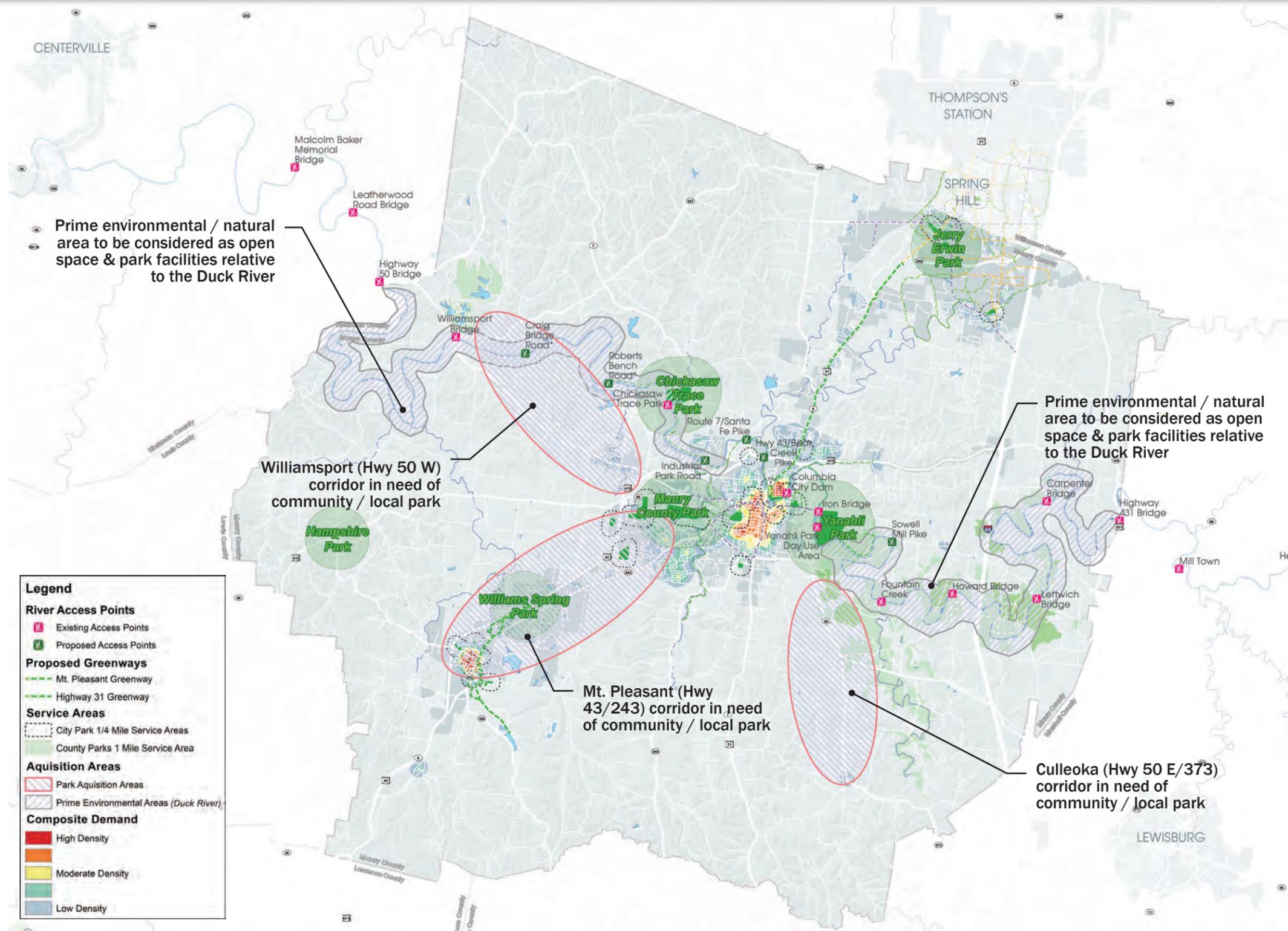


Map from City of Columbia Comprehensive Plan

Map from City of Spring Hill Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Plan



Composite Demand & Service Analysis



Composite Demand & Service Analysis Overview:

This composite demand analysis map combines the densities of where people live, work, and play to identify the areas of greatest demand for parks and recreation facilities. This is an important analysis because it shows where people are spending most of their time. Most park users originate from their homes, places of work or where they go for entertainment or social interaction. The analysis shows a strong composite demand in Downtown Columbia. As well as growth corridors on major arterials for the City. Service areas provided from existing parks are projected over the demand analysis. By looking at both demand and service area together, the gaps in recreational facilities and programs are identified.

- As the City of Columbia and the City of Spring Hill have focused attention and resources to meeting recreational needs along the U.S. Hwy 31 and U.S. Hwy 412, it is suggested that Maury County focus resources on other areas of service demand.
- There is a need to provide more community and local parks along the rural corridors extending to the communities of Culleoka, Williamsport, and Mount Pleasant. As these communities continue to expand relative to the growth in Columbia and Spring Hill, they will need access to local recreational experiences.
- Additional park land in these corridors will also serve as open space preservation to protect the natural assets in the county and insure a high quality of life for existing and future residents.

NRPA Comparisons (2016 Data)

	Typical NRPA National Average	Current Amount	Current Comparison (87,606 Population) County Agency	2040 Comparison (124,663 Population)	2040 Difference to Meet National Average
Park Acreage	8.4 Acres per 1,000 people <i>(Communities 50k to 100k)</i>	998 Acres	736 Acres	1,047 Acres	Need Additional 49 Acres
Operating Expense by Agency Size	\$5,878,000 <i>(Median for communities 50k to 100k)</i>	\$853,985 <i>(2018 Budget)</i>	\$4,000,000 For county agency	\$11,637,000 <i>(Median for Communities 100k to 250k)</i>	\$10,783,015
Operating Expense Per Capita	\$24.99 Per Capita <i>(County Agencies)</i>	\$9.75 per capita	\$2,189,274 <i>(assuming \$24.99 per capita)</i>	\$3,115,328 <i>(assuming \$24.99 per capita)</i>	Increase by \$15.24 Per Capita
Staff <i>(Full Time Equivalents)</i>	Average Range of 30.1 to 122.7 FTE <i>(Communities 50k to 100k)</i>	12 FTE	Average county agency 61.0 FTE	Average range of 53.3 to 197.4 FTE	Increase by 4.13 FTE to meet low end of range
Operating Expense Per Number of Parks	Less than 10 parks \$1,300,000	\$853,985 <i>(2018 Budget)</i>	5 parks \$1,300,000	Assuming 8 parks \$1,300,000	Assuming 8 parks \$446,015

Comparison of Facilities

A general comparison of how Maury County measures with national averages can be achieved by looking at NRPA typical levels of service for communities of the same population size. It is important to note that these measurements are broad and general in nature. Maury County has specific attributes that do not exactly equate to national averages. The NRPA measurements provide a snapshot of strengths and weaknesses to consider when shaping long range plans for the County. These NRPA service levels should not be interpreted as a direct recommendation for capital improvement dollars, required facility improvements, or budget commitments. Maury County will have unique needs and conditions that are not directly reflected in these national averages.

Using NRPA standards as a general evaluation to identify strengths and weaknesses, the following need assessments should be considered:

- Maury County has a good inventory of existing parks relative to size and overall acreage. This is especially true when the additional park acreage of city parks and state-owned natural areas are considered.
- Additional acreage should be considered along the transportation/ growth corridors to Mt. Pleasant, Culleoka, and Williamsport, specifically to accommodate potential community parks that would include a balance of passive and active use to serve rural areas that do not have close or easy access to facilities closer to Columbia or Spring Hill.
- Consider increasing parks and recreation staff, especially related to the need to manage more programs and coordinate more partnerships with the Parks and Recreation Department. Consideration should be given to add staff specific to Yanahli Park as its facilities and programs grow.
- Additional budget and staff will be needed to meet the maintenance demands of park facilities and programs. This suggests establishing a permanent funding source specific to this need that is identified and maintained for this purpose.

Recreational Trends

Demographics

Supply & Demand: Projected Population 124,663 people by 2040

Increase Parkland & Facilities
(49+ acres of additional parkland for Maury County by 2040)

(National Recreation & Park Association standard)

Health & Wellness: Tennessee Adults have the 3rd highest incidence of obesity in the U.S.

Wellness Education & Outreach

- Fitness stations with exercise instructions
- Obstacle course playgrounds (all ages)
- Health and wellness outreach at park facilities
- Teaching healthy cooking and eating habits

Funding & Cooperative Management



Joint Use Agreements: Take advantage of combining resources, funding and uses

Cooperative Use Trends

- PARTAs or Park and School Agreements
- Land Trusts and public access to conserved lands
- Local farms and agricultural connections / gathering
- Other public open space
- Consolidating services (social and community services)



Beyond Ballfields

What are other Communities Doing/ Outside the Box?

- The public score trails and blueways at the top for desired recreation amenities both in Tennessee and nationally
- Parks departments are increasingly working with other land managers (State, Federal, and land trusts) to provide natural parks where trails and nature is the focus

Activity and Use Trends

- Nature playgrounds
- Natural area micro-habitat enhancement
- Blueways and greenways
- Natural surface trails as community connectors
- Large dog parks
- Indoor recreational centers offering multiple uses
- Group outdoor and specialty yoga

Regional Precedents & Application



Stringers Ridge Park (Chattanooga, TN)-Natural surface trails provide large benefits at reduced costs compared to paved trails.



Jonesborough TN-Downtown Farmers Market (indoor and outdoor space) provide year round access to healthy food.



Nature Playground (Knoxville, TN)-Simple play elements like logs and boulders encourage adaptable play.



Heritage Park in Chattanooga, TN provides a dog park with themed events and educational events for dog owners.



The Urban Wilderness (Knoxville, TN) ties multiple parks, three quarry lakes, and over 60-miles of natural surface trails together. The parks department contracts with concessionaires to provide outfitting services.



Hornet's Nest Park (Charlotte, NC)-Challenge and obstacle course provides a range of play and fitness activities for all ages.



Community Gathering Spaces

Growing together as a community:

- Agricultural centers and environmental/nature education centers are increasingly ways parks departments and involving the community.
- Community centers continue to be places for exercise, recreation, and a place to meet members of the community.

Activity and Use Trends

- Agricultural centers
- Nature education
- Eco-centers: Ecological and environmental education
- Community/Event centers
- Community gardens



Memphis TN- Agricenter International, "Discover the Forest" class. The education program focuses on agriculture, forestry, and natural resources.



Memphis TN- Agricenter International, Agricultural Field Day



Activate the Outdoors

Collaborative Outdoor Programming

Work with other public and private partners to provide programming that gets citizens into the outdoors. Guided programmed events encourages the community to try new types of recreation and meet others with whom they can continue to adventure with.

Activity and Use Trends/ Collaborative Outdoor Programming

- Paddling: collaborate with State, non-profits, and local outfitters
- Hiking trips: collaborate with naturalists, storytellers, etc.
- Biking/running: setup group rides/runs, especially for beginners
- Frisbee golf: work with local clubs to develop intro experiences

Joint Promotion

Cities, counties, tourism bureaus, and non-profits, collaborate on a "one stop shop" for outdoor recreation programs and access. This is usually in the form of a website, but can also be through media, and other means.

Activity and Use Trends/ Joint Promotion

- Develop region/county wide outdoor recreation "one-stop shop" website or page for all things outdoor recreation related. The web page is owned by one partner but information input by many others.

Commercial Partnerships/Concessions

Many parks and recreation departments are beginning to allow concessions or leasing of park space for commercial entities that can "activate" or draw users to a park. This could include the likes of food trucks, outfitter rentals (kayaks or bikes), or other commercial ventures that support park users. Races and other events especially support these vendors and activate park space.

Activity and Use Trends/ Commercial Partnerships

- Assess what commercial opportunities complement the mission of parks and recreation. Lease/MOU agreements are typically developed.



Fireside

Fireside is a free, family friendly, outdoor music series hosted by Outdoor Chattanooga and sponsored by Tennessee Valley Federal Credit Union that gathers around a campfire at the City of Chattanooga's Greenway Farm Park.

[Learn More](#)



Outdoor Chattanooga is a division of the City of Chattanooga government. Their goal is to connect citizens and visitors to outdoor recreation. They host a website that has comprehensive outdoor recreation opportunities but really excel in providing lots of programming including cycling 101, archery, bike group rides, hiking series, kayak tours, family days, climbing 101, intro to mountain biking, and more.

The City of Knoxville and their Tourism Development Authority collaborate on a website dedicated to park and programming assets of the Urban Wilderness.



Trails & Natural Area Access:

Interest and awareness in the environment is increasing throughout the region. Therefore there is an increased demand for greenways, walking/hiking trails, and blueways. Many of the parks and recreation departments in the region have supplied dedicated trails for walking, hiking, and recreation purposes. Often, participants are eager to access natural areas and rugged terrain beyond the playing fields and walking paths offered through the typical municipal park system.

There is also increasing interest in blueway access as well as cross-purpose trail systems that include blueways. Maury County is well suited to meet this need with Duck River running throughout the county. Several area parks departments have incorporated blueways into their trail systems. While they would like to supply equipment for rentals (especially as a source of revenue), they are sometimes restricted from doing so. Maury County is also positioned to provide more trails and facilities to meet the following recreational trends:

- Mountain Biking
- BMX
- Climbing
- Cross-Training
- Triathlon
- Hiking



Disc Golf:

Disc Golf is a fast growing sport with high demand in the Mid-South. Disc Golf is played much like golf, instead of a ball and club, players use a disc to complete each hole in the fewest strokes. Disc Golf has already seen success in Maury County at Woodland Park in Columbia and tournaments with temporary baskets in Maury County Park.

Lacrosse:

The sport of Lacrosse has seen a growth in interest and participation in the United States since the early 2000's with a current growth rate of 3% per year in national parks and recreation programs. This was not a sport traditionally played in the south but that has been changing with an increase in casual play as well as the formation of athletic leagues and programs that are catching up with the national trends. The city of Hendersonville is an example of a parks and recreation program that has added Lacrosse facilities. One advantage of Lacrosse is the ability to share flexible field space with other sports like football and soccer.

Sand Volleyball:

Volleyball continues to have strong interest in the mid-south region and this includes a growing interest and participation in the use of sand courts similar to beach volleyball courts. The increased interest includes programs offered through parks and recreation programs as well as private, non-traditional recreational providers and commercial establishments. Sand volleyball appeals to young urban professionals who enjoy the its social as well as recreational assets.

Ice & Field Hockey:

The growth and popularity of hockey in middle Tennessee can be partly associated with the success of the Nashville Predators. The Predators have promoted hockey within the region beyond the professional level with the development of practice and exhibition rinks in communities surrounding Metro Nashville. Recreational hockey leagues create a high demand for ice rink time to meet the demands of practice and tournament play. Park and recreation departments have also reported a national increase in the demand for field hockey. This sport has traditionally been strong in the northern United States and Canada, but it is currently growing in popularity in the southern United States as well.

Rugby:

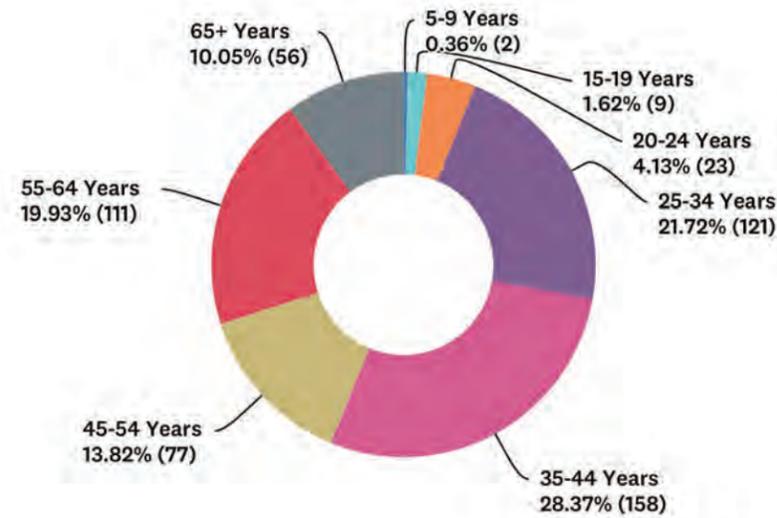
Rugby, like Lacrosse and field hockey has not been a traditional sport in the southern United States. As the Metro Nashville area has seen an influx of transplants from other parts of the country there has been an increased interest in Rugby. Recreational leagues and casual play for rugby are both on the increase but there are currently limited facilities dedicated specifically for this sport in the mid-south. Rugby can usually utilize facilities traditionally designed for football and soccer.

Pickleball:

Pickleball is a paddleball sport using a lightweight perforated polymer ball. It combines elements of tennis, badminton and ping-pong. It is one of the fastest growing sports in the United States because it can be played by all ages. It has become one of the most popular recreational and exercise choices for retirement aged adults. It provides high physical activity but creates limited stress on joints and muscles. It can be played as singles or doubles and can be retro-fitted onto indoor gymnasium court or outdoor tennis courts.

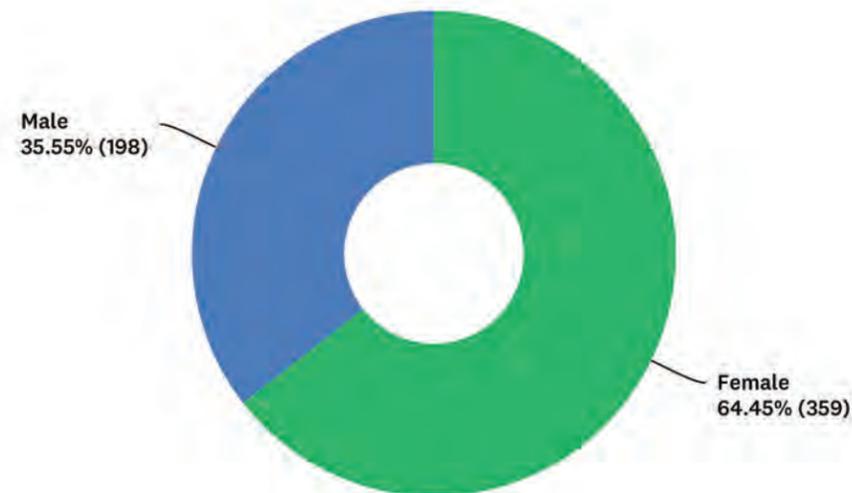
Q1 Indicate your age.

Answered: 557 Skipped: 1



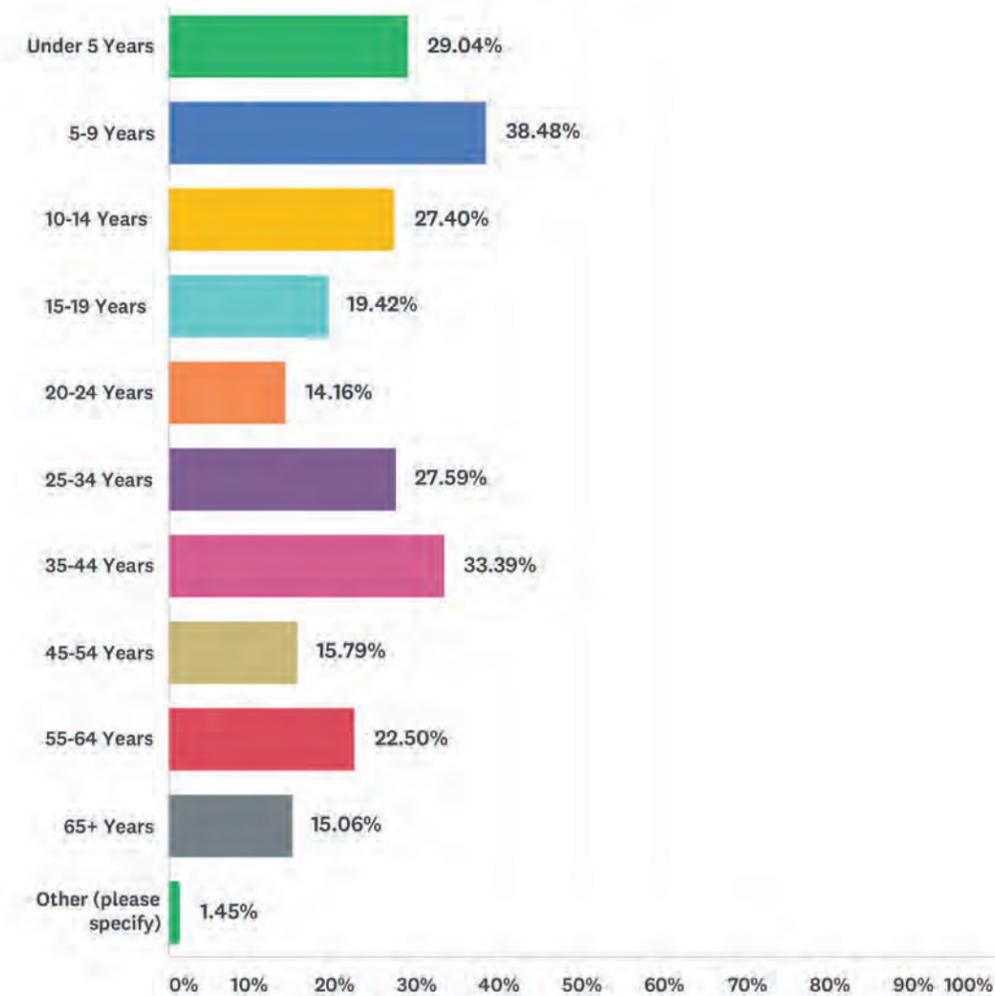
Q3 What is your gender?

Answered: 557 Skipped: 1

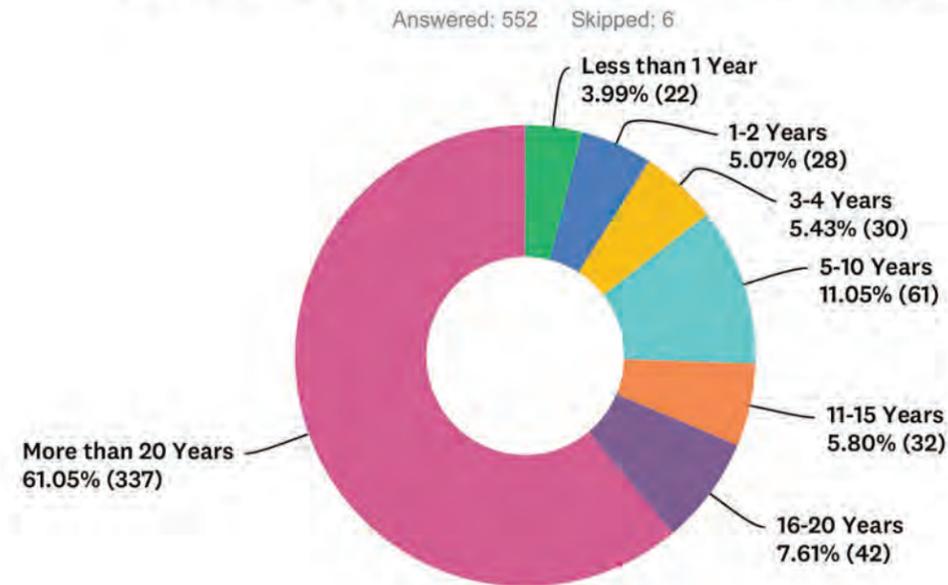


Q2 Indicate the ages of people in your household that use the parks and recreation facilities in Maury County. (Select all that may apply)

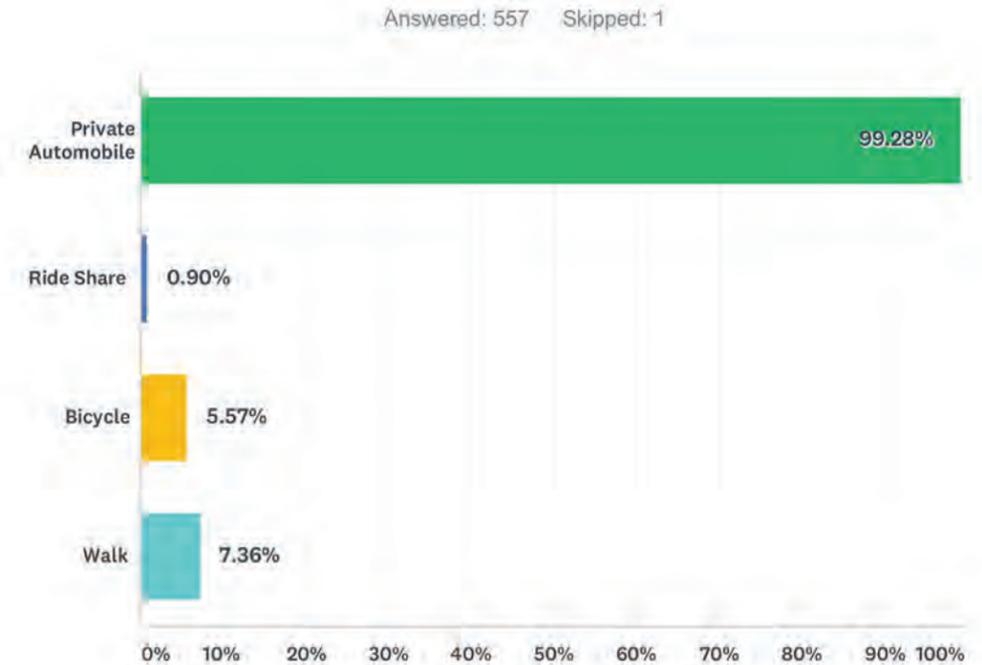
Answered: 551 Skipped: 7



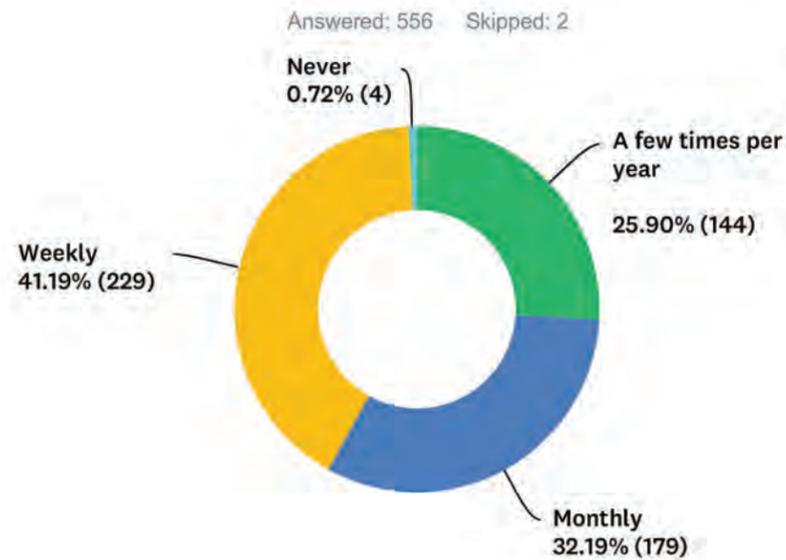
Q4 How long have you lived in Maury County?



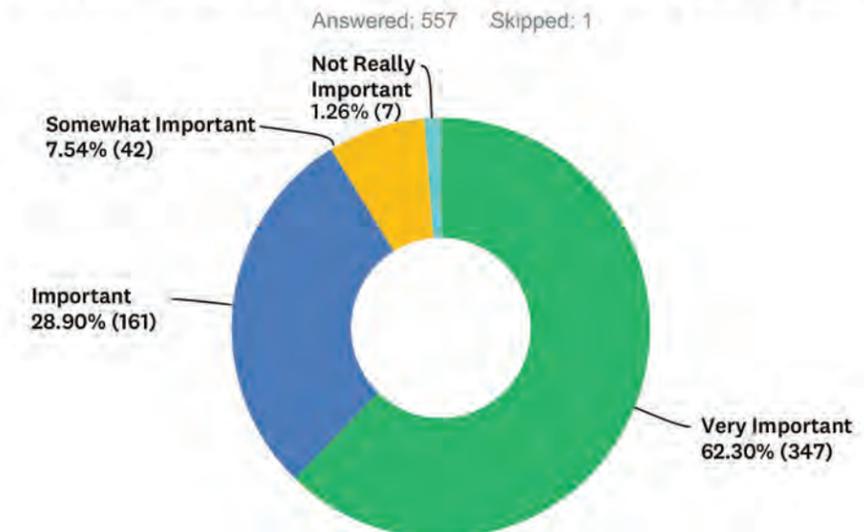
Q5 How do you get to existing parks or facilities? (Select all that may apply)



Q6 How often do you visit the parks or recreation facilities in Maury County?

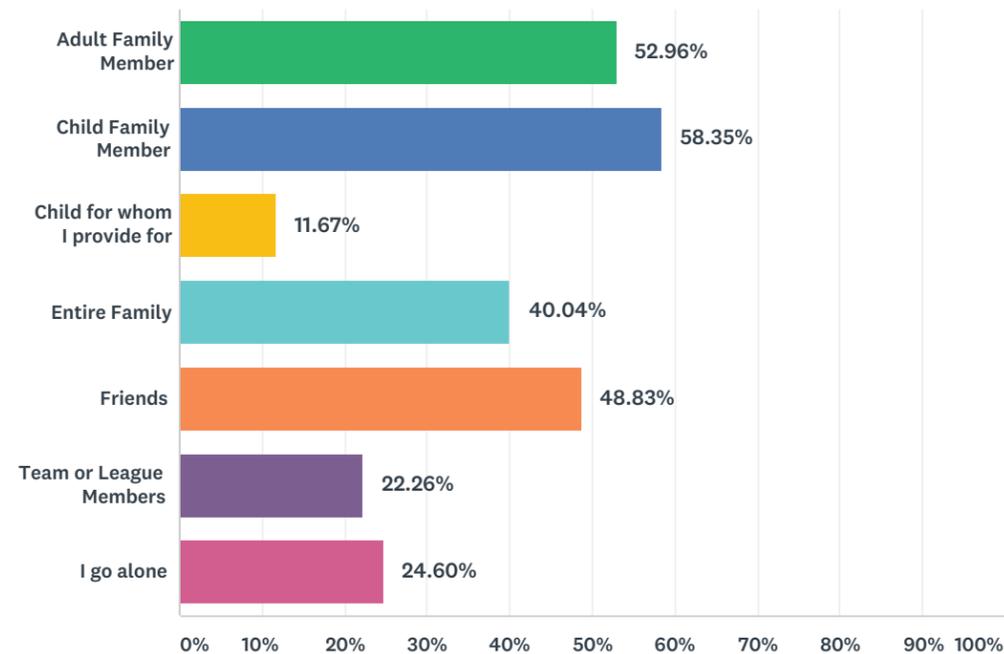


Q7 How important are parks & recreation to your quality of life?



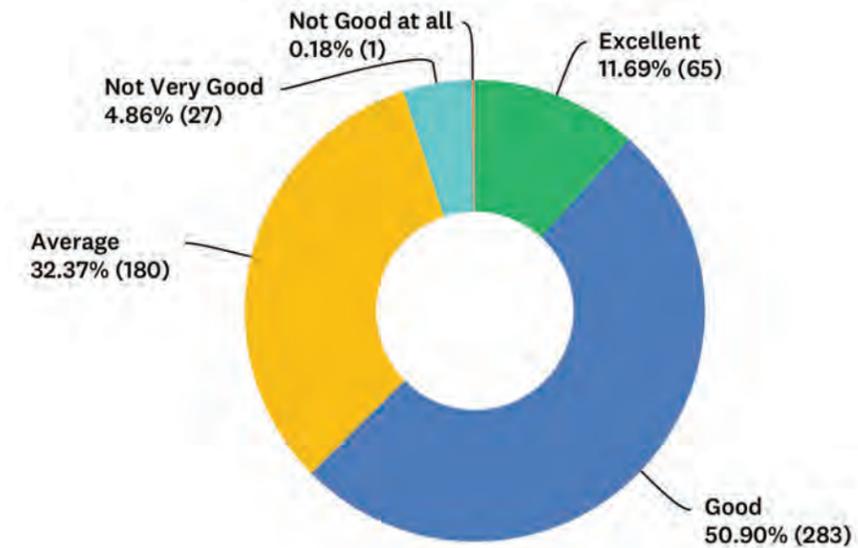
Q8 When you visit one of the parks & recreation facilities, with whom do you usually go? (Select all that may apply)

Answered: 557 Skipped: 1

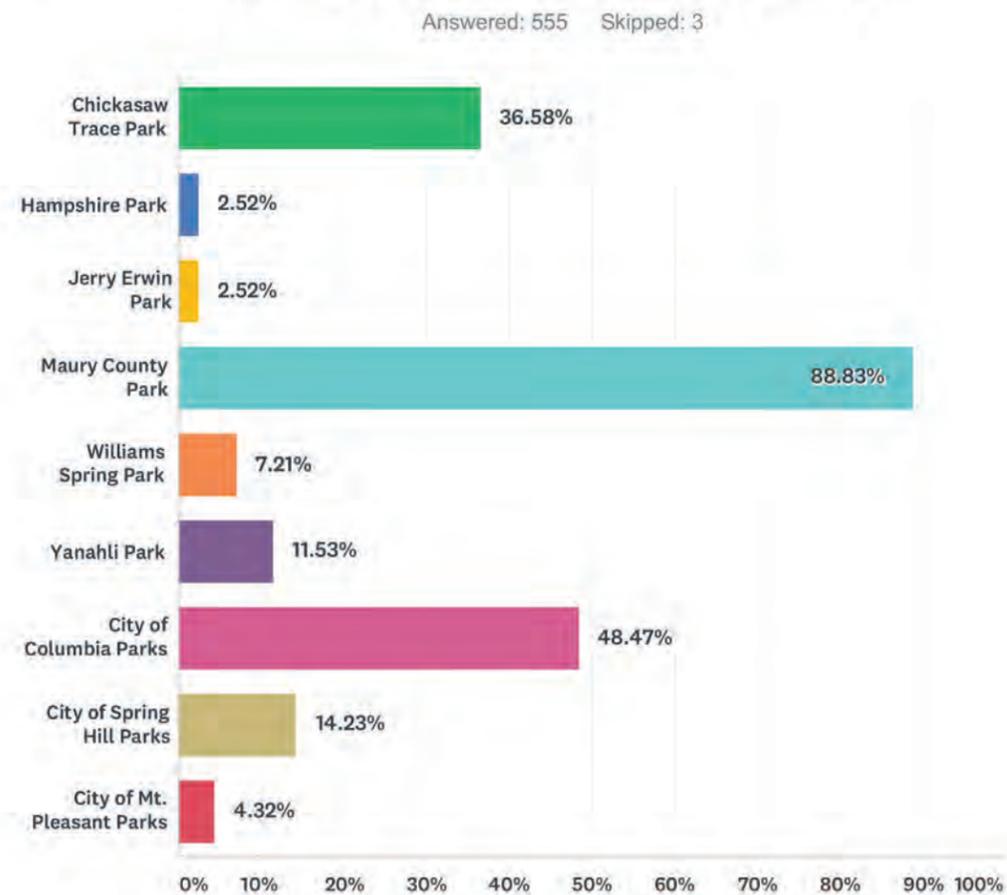


Q9 What are your general impressions of the current parks and recreation system?

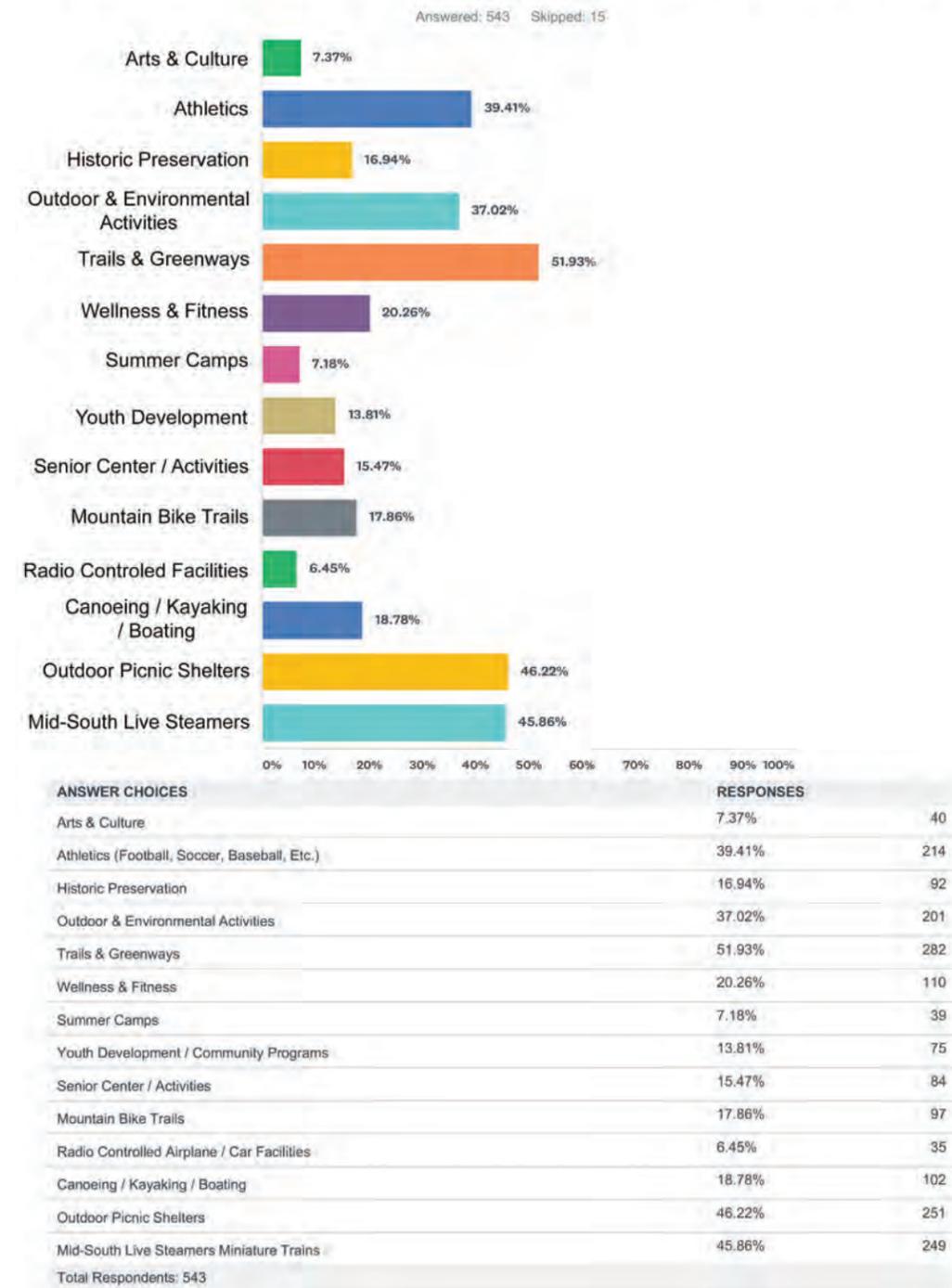
Answered: 556 Skipped: 2



Q10 Which park or recreation facilities do you or your family visit regularly? (Select all that may apply)

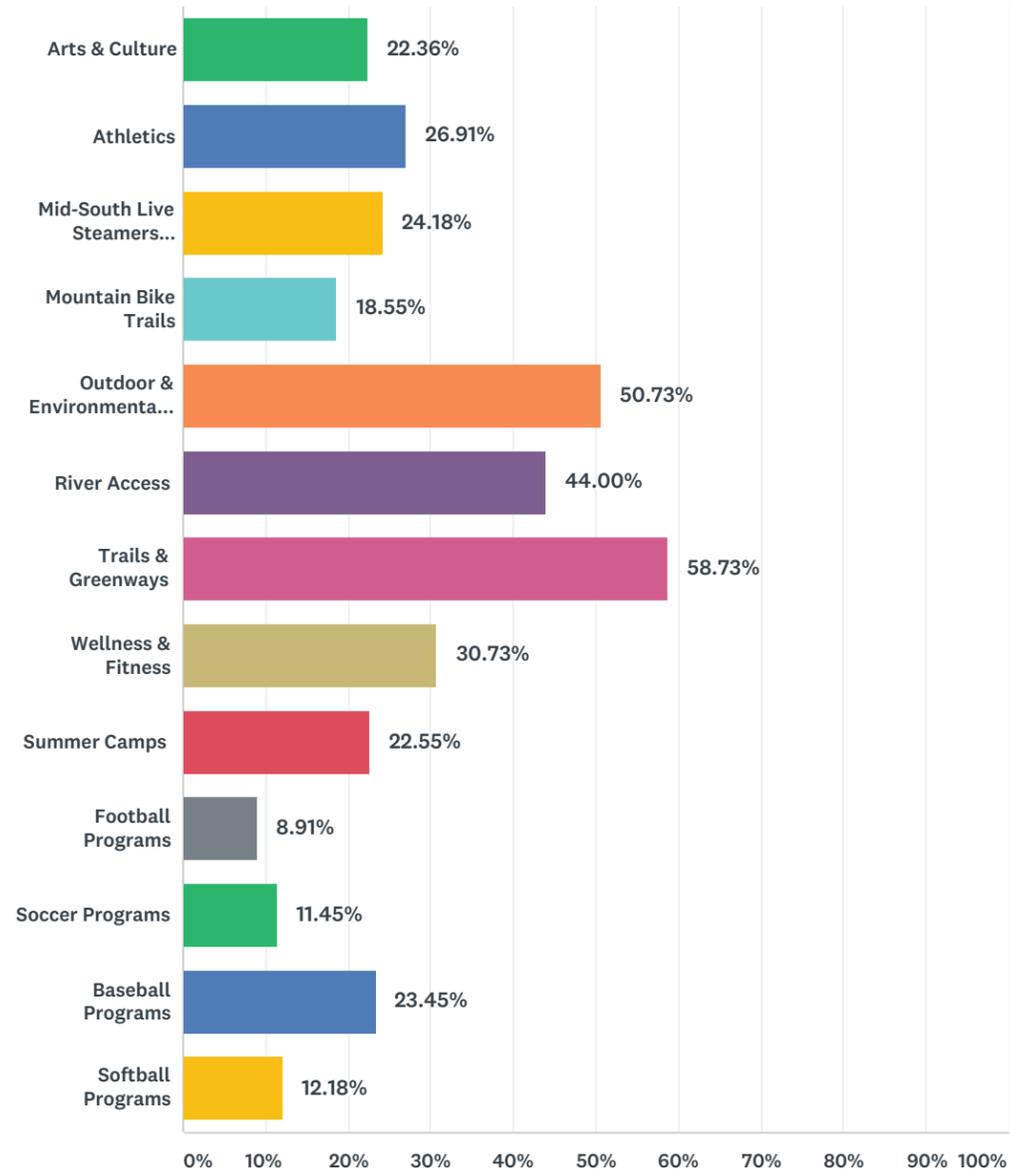


Q11 In your experience, what do you feel is/are the highest quality program offered by the Parks & Recreation Department? (Select all that may apply)



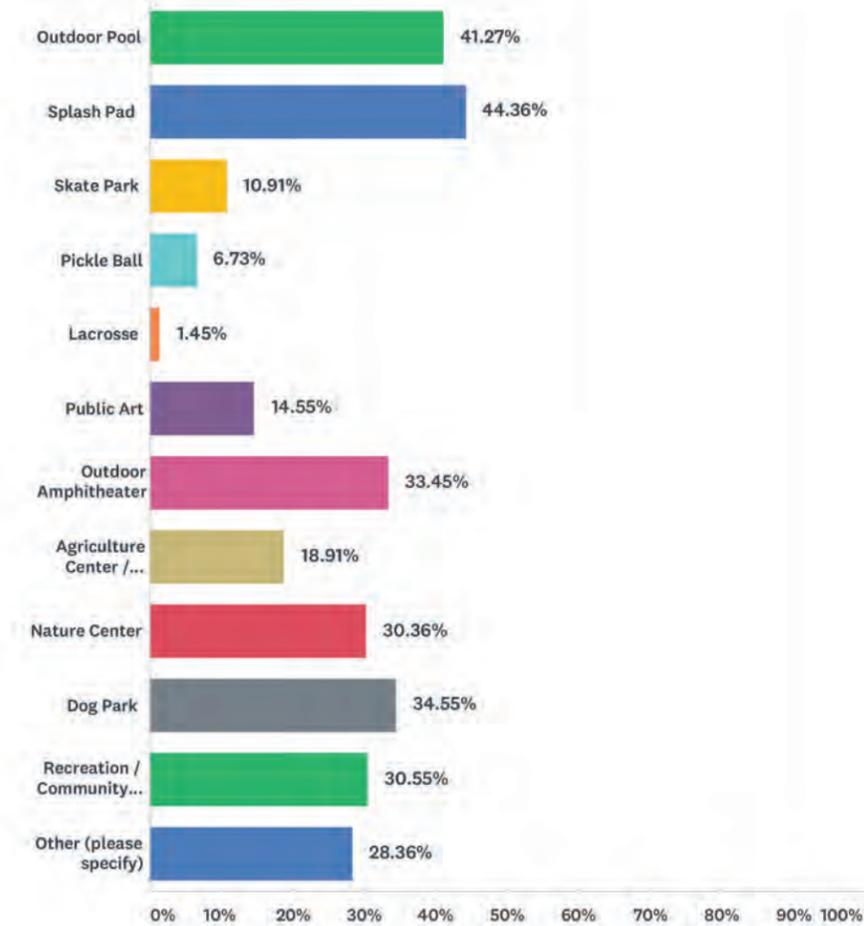
Q12 Which Parks & Recreation Department programs would you like to see grow?

Answered: 550 Skipped: 8



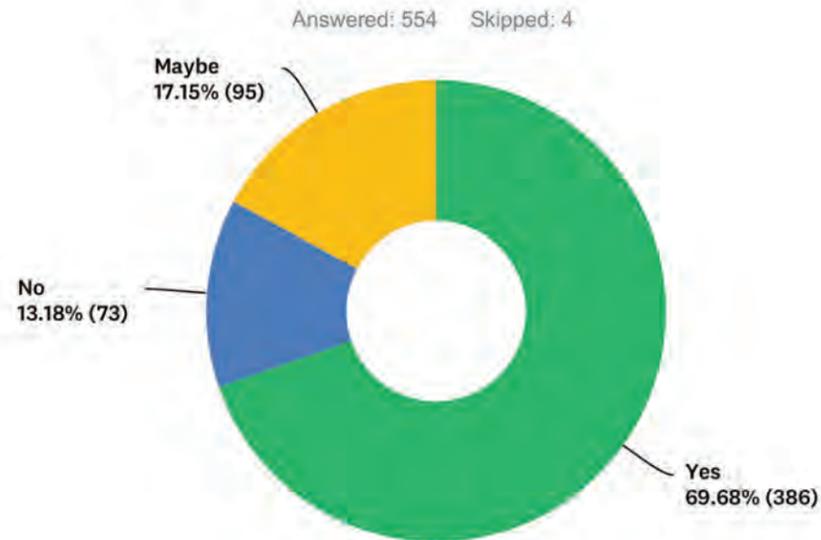
Q13 Is there something you would really like to see added to Maury County Parks & Recreation facilities or programs? (Select all that may apply)

Answered: 550 Skipped: 8

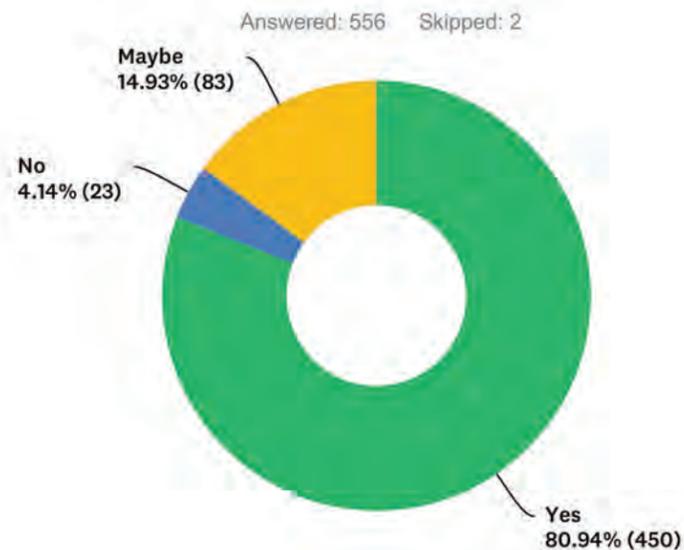


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Outdoor Pool	41.27%	227
Splash Pad	44.36%	244
Skate Park	10.91%	60
Pickle Ball	6.73%	37
Lacrosse	1.45%	8
Public Art	14.55%	80

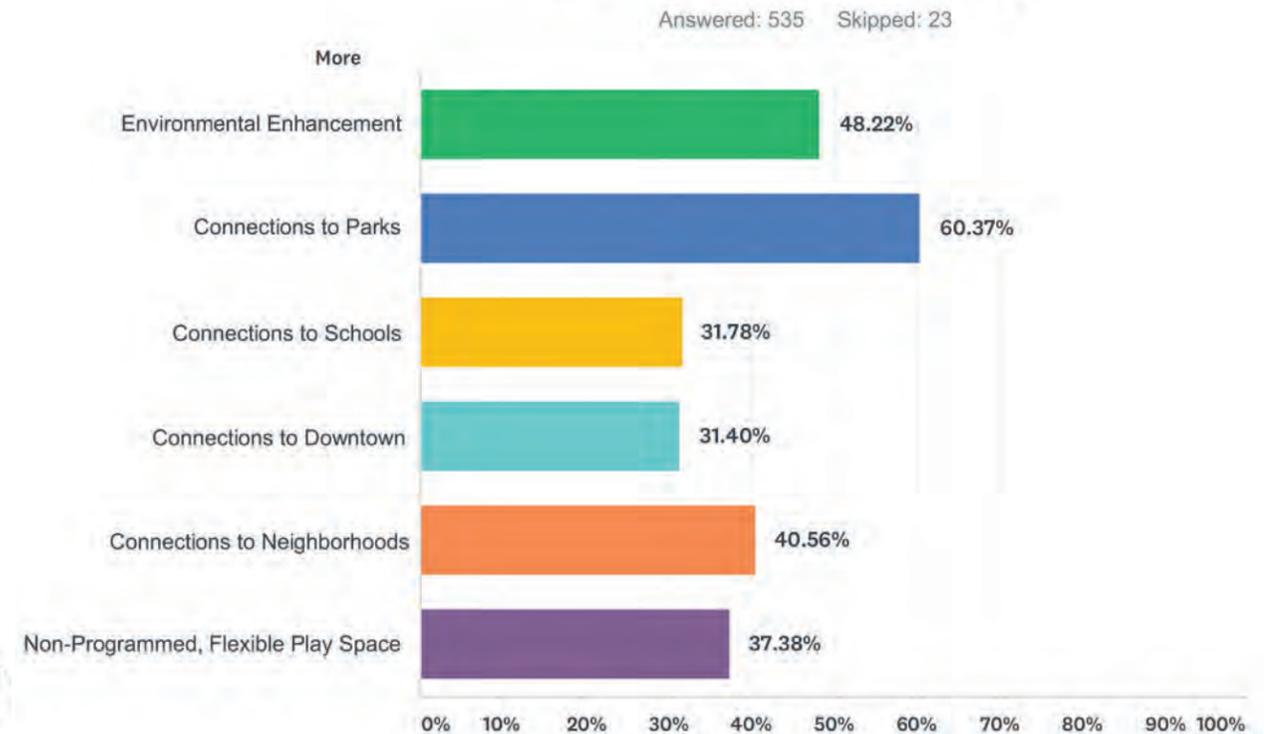
Q14 Would you walk or bike to a park or facility if you could get there in 15 minutes or less?



Q16 In your opinion, are the recreational opportunities in Maury County affordable?



Q15 What opportunities are there for greenways and open space? (Select all that may apply)



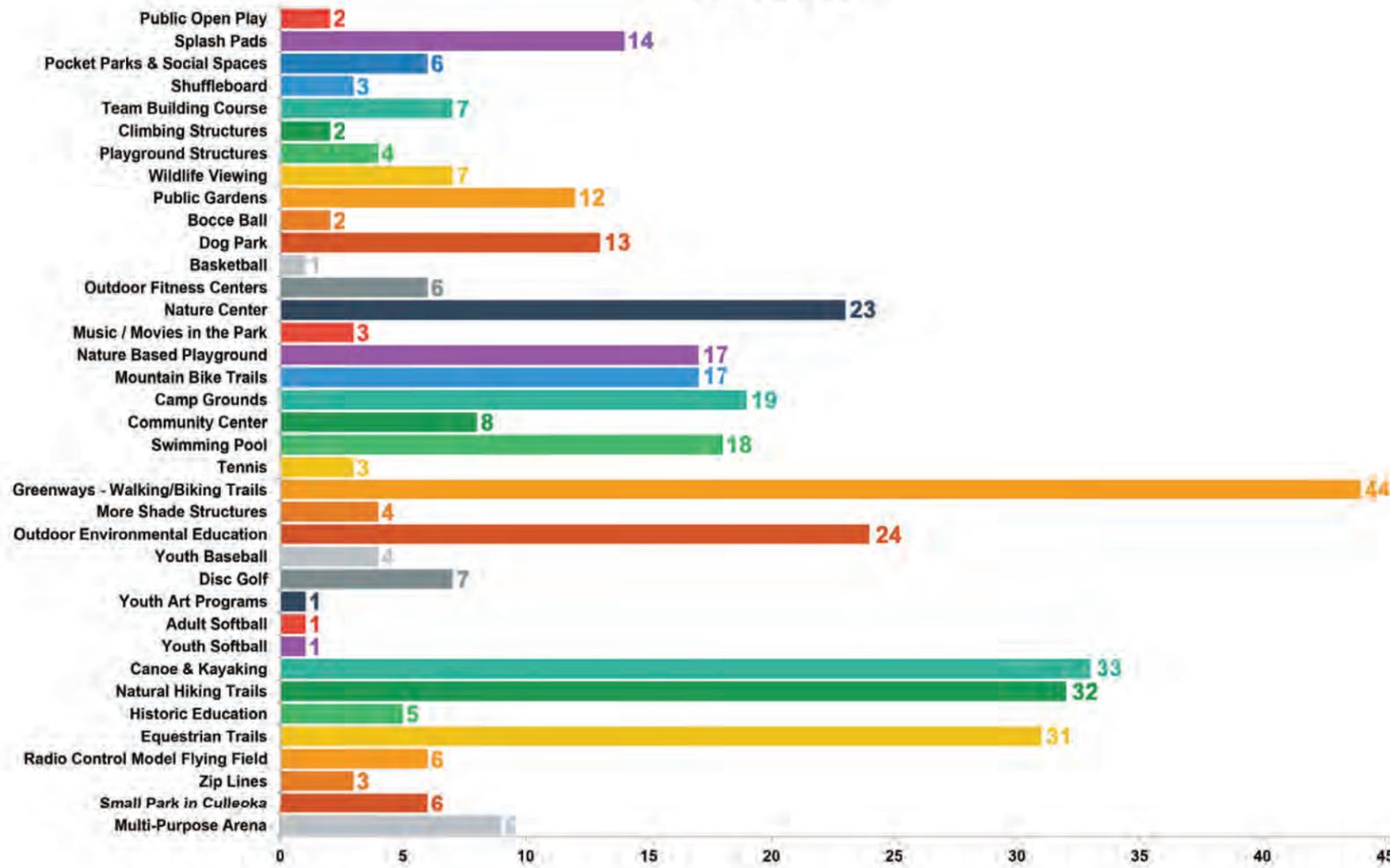
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
More Environmental Enhancement	48.22%	258
More Connections to Parks	60.37%	323
More Connections to Schools	31.78%	170
More Connections to Downtown	31.40%	168
More Connections to Neighborhoods	40.56%	217
More Non-Programmed, Flexible Play Space	37.38%	200
Total Respondents: 535		

Priority Exercise - Choose Your Future Park Activity:

During the master plan visioning session, input was gathered regarding preferred options for future park activities. A variety of activities, both passive and active, were presented on prioritization boards to generate thoughts on a range of activities that might fit into existing or future parks. After evaluating all the options the open house participants were asked to place a 1st, 2nd and 3rd priority stickers by the activities they felt were the most important. The community results were tabulated into a community-wide chart.

Responses in Top 3

Results in Top 3



Choose Your Favorite Park Activities!

What Parks & Recreation facilities and programs do you want to see more of?

- GREEN - 1ST PRIORITY
- BLUE - 2ND PRIORITY
- YELLOW - 3RD PRIORITY

Choose Your Favorite Park Activities!

What Parks & Recreation facilities and programs do you want to see more of?

- GREEN - 1ST PRIORITY
- BLUE - 2ND PRIORITY
- YELLOW - 3RD PRIORITY

6 Big Opportunities & 6 Big Constraints

Based on input from stakeholder interviews, the public visioning meeting and the on-line public survey the following opportunities and constraints have emerged as elements of primary importance.

Opportunities / Benefits:



1 A Blueway System along the Duck River with multiple river access points for recreational paddlers throughout the County. Additional access points are especially needed at the existing dam and west of Columbia (down stream)



2 An Extended Greenway system would provide great opportunities for healthy recreation, interaction with nature and social connections. Greenways are in high demand and there is a great opportunity to create a county wide system.



potential for drawing more tourists to Maury County.

3 Outdoor Adventure is both a regional and local trend. There are great opportunities to experience exercise, socializing and nature as part of the recreational experience. These programs can be stacked into both active and passive space. Outdoor adventure holds high



4 Programs offered at existing community centers and sports complexes are diverse and well run. The park and recreation system is reaching a wide range of age groups with its programs. A nature center that would provide more environmental and nature base programs.



5 Partners & Volunteers are a strong component of the existing park and recreation system. These relationships can be further leveraged and developed. Partnerships exist in every type of passive and active recreation.



6 A Regional Ag Expo Center could leverage the rich cultural history of Maury County related to Americana & Agriculture.

Constraints / Needs:



1 Connections to and between park facilities is a challenge and will require extended vehicular travel time. This will become more of a constraint as traffic and population continue to increase.



2 Maury County Park hosts the beloved Mule Day event. The event could benefit from additional and updated facilities.



community building would greatly extend program options.

3 Aging & Outdated facilities need continued investment and upgrading. This will be an important challenge to face as the population increases and existing facilities face more use and demand. The existing senior center is outdated and needs improvement. An air conditioned



4 Stronger Communication is needed to continue to leverage existing partners and expand future partnership opportunities.



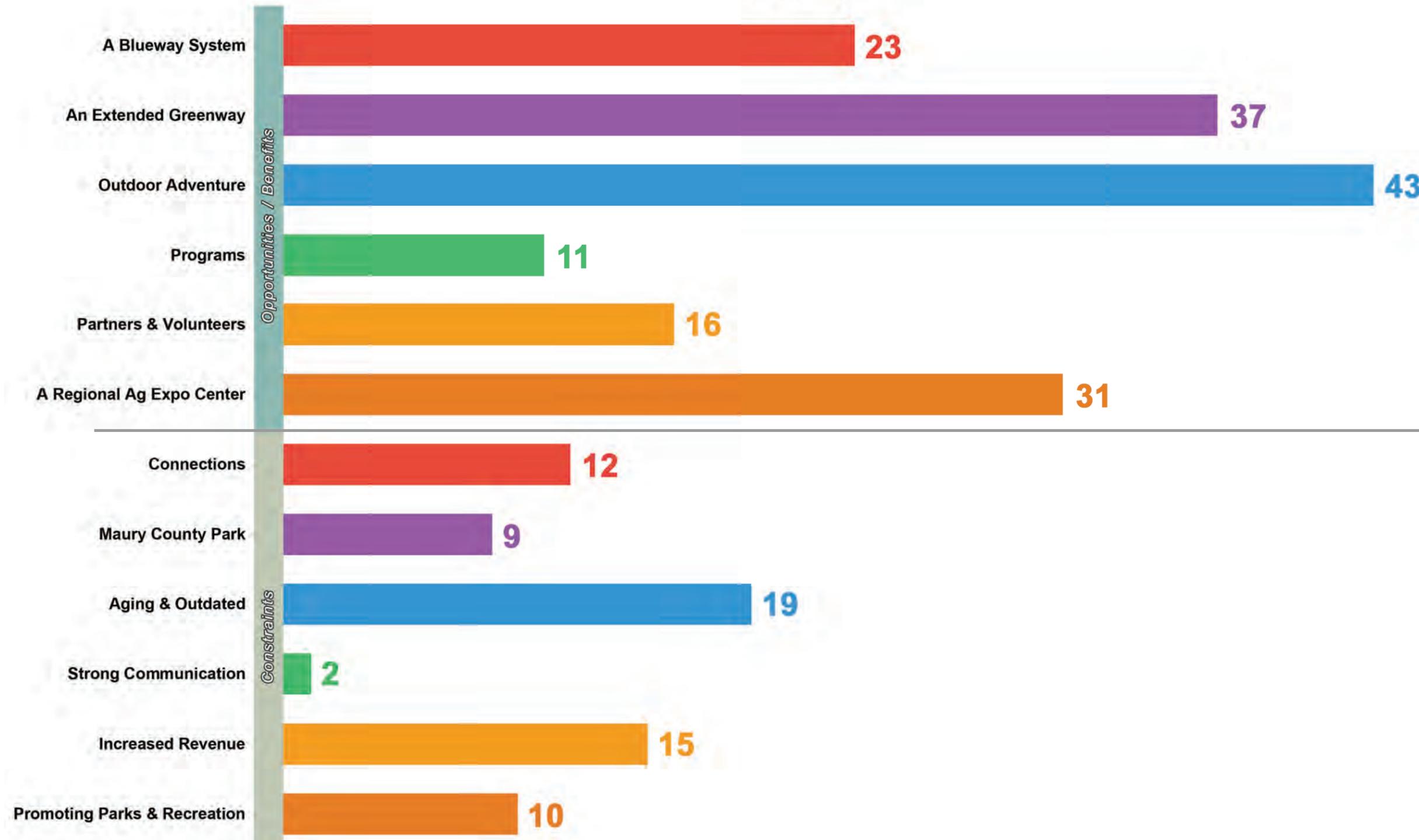
5 Increased Revenue will be needed to support park facility and program expansion. Revenue will need to be derived from multiple sources and require some public / private partnerships to be sustainable.



6 Promoting Parks and Recreation as part of a bigger, proactive economic driver for Maury County is important. Right now parks & recreation has limited promotion within the County. A broader collaboration would strengthen tourism.

Public Input - 6 Big Opportunities & 6 Big Constraints Priority Results

Results in Top 3



What is a Greenway?

A greenway is a multi-modal path designed to link people with their parks, natural resources, places of residence, work, and entertainment.

Tennessee Greenways describes 5 general types of greenway:

- **Urban riverside:** usually a part of redevelopment.
- **Recreational:** usually long and based on natural corridors.
- **Ecologically significant:** along streams and natural features for nature study and hiking.
- **Scenic, Historic, and Connectivity:** along roads to provide pedestrian access and provide an alternative to the car.
- **Comprehensive:** designed to complete a regional green infrastructure.

Existing Greenways

Currently the only existing greenways in Maury County are in the larger cities of Columbia and Spring Hill. In Columbia the Riverwalk Park greenway (1.5 miles) is the only existing greenway and connects the Riverwalk Park Dam to Pillow Park in downtown Columbia. Spring Hill has several smaller trails totaling less than five miles and mostly located within parks as park loops (As seen on map on page 20).

"People are different on a path. On a town sidewalk strangers may make eye contact, but that's all. On a path like this they smile, say hello, and pet one another's dogs. I think every community in American should have a greenway."

- Anne Lusk
 Research Scientist

Planned Greenways

The City of Columbia Parks and Greenways Plan Report proposes a network of greenways mostly along waterways to connect parks and schools within the city. The identified top destinations for greenways are Woodland Park, Fairview Park, Yanahli Park, and the Duck River. The Spring Hill Bicycle and Greenway plan proposes several greenways to run along arterial roads to serve as key pedestrian connectors, linking parks and residents totaling over 35 miles of path (As seen on map on page 21).

Benefits

The benefits of greenways are most commonly shared through 5 themes:



Safety & Mobility. Pedestrians and bicyclists are hard pressed to find safe routes that broadly connect through the County. Connections to public open space, schools, and places of residence and work were highly sought after in public feedback. The existing and proposed Maury County greenway system can vastly improve safety and mobility for those traveling outside of a vehicle.



Health. According to the Maury Regional Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment, November 2016, nearly half of the population of Maury County lack access to exercise opportunities. Walking and bicycling are two of the top activities preferred by the Maury County residents for fitness, and greenways are proven to attract those that would not otherwise want to walk or bike on roads.

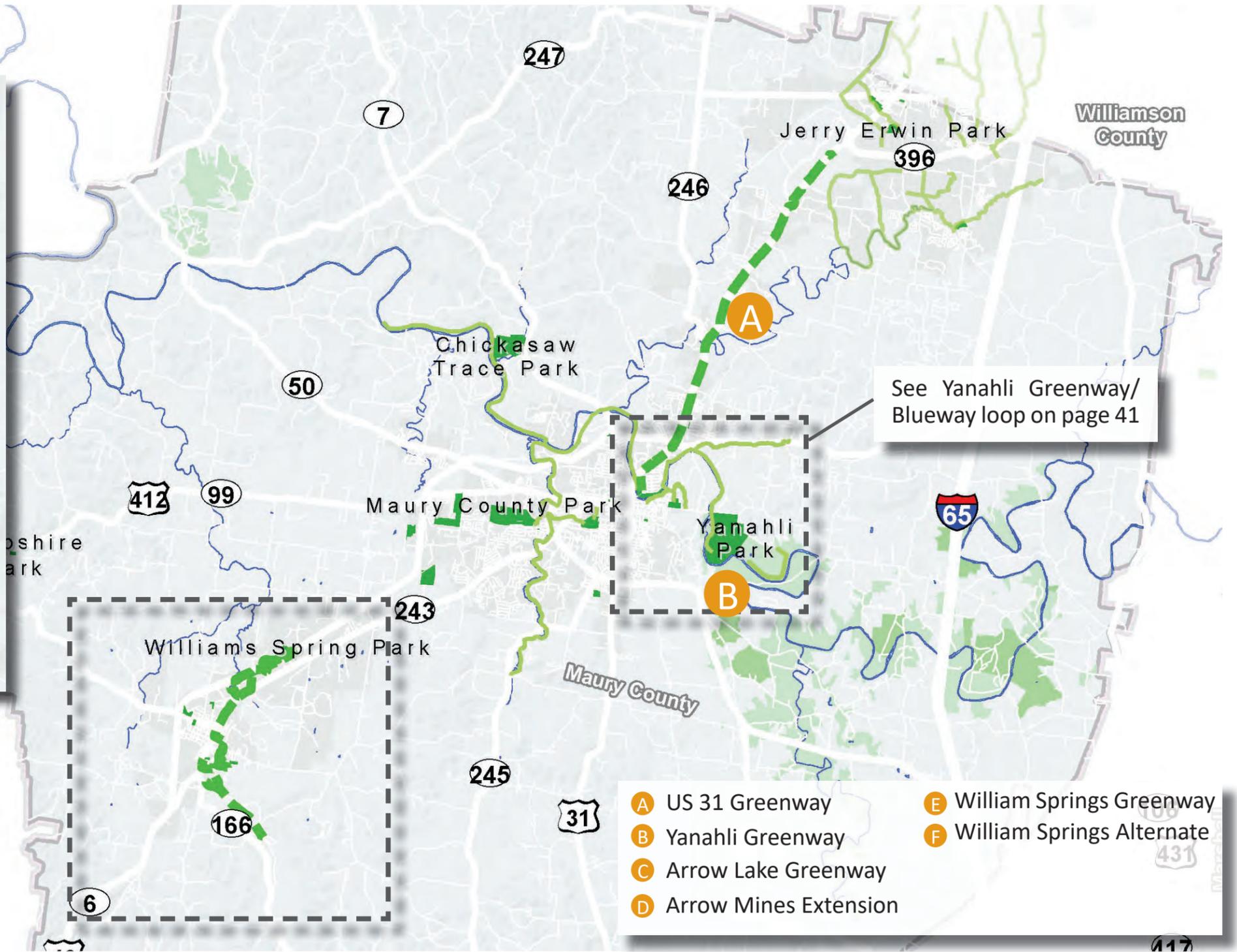
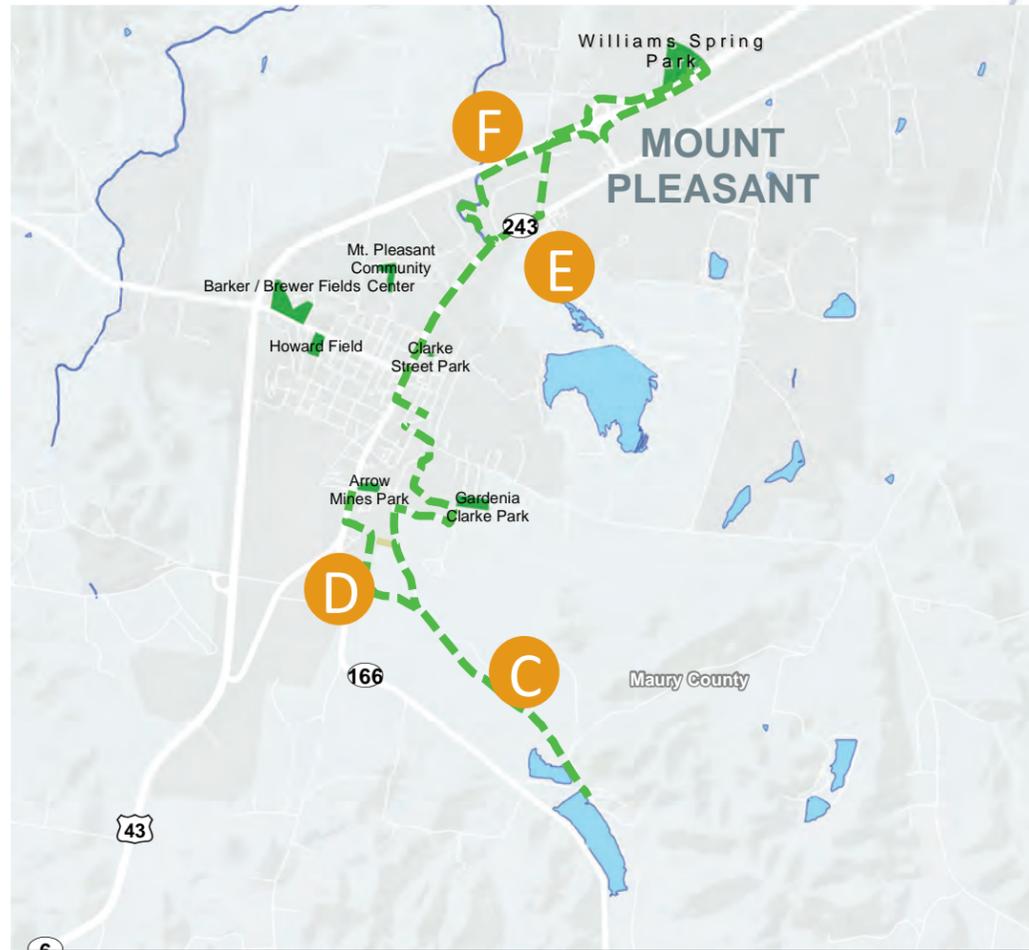


Economy. Study after study shows that greenways improve local economies by attracting businesses, tourism, and increasing property values. A recent Economic Impact Assessment of the Wolf River Greenway in Memphis, including proposed expansions, indicate a total economic benefit of nearly \$3 million per year.



Environment. Maury County greenways can work to preserve and make use of under utilized lands that are rich in recreation opportunities. The greenways will provide additional connections for residents to waterways and public open spaces. Setting aside flood prone land for greenways can aid in flooding protection of adjacent communities.

Greenway Plan:



- Existing Greenways
- - - Planned city Greenways
- - - Proposed county Greenways

- A US 31 Greenway
- B Yanahli Greenway
- C Arrow Lake Greenway
- D Arrow Mines Extension
- E William Springs Greenway
- F William Springs Alternate

Proposed Greenways:

A US 31 Greenway 9.4 miles

Potential partner(s): Spring Hill & Columbia

The corridor from Columbia, North to Spring Hill presents a great opportunity for non-motorized transportation. This greenway would take advantage of utilizing only public (DOT) highway right-of-way. The greenway would run from the river walk in Columbia to the Rippavilla, a historic plantation.

B Yanahli Greenway 3.3 miles

Potential partner(s): Columbia

Columbia to Yanahli will connect Maury county residents to its newest park and provide numerous recreation opportunities. This greenway will be coupled with a blueway to create a diverse natural experience and recreation loop.

C Arrow Lake Greenway 3.4 miles

Potential partner(s): Mount Pleasant

This greenway connects the residents of Mount Pleasant to Arrow Lake. This route provides a great opportunity to connect residents of Mount Pleasant to new recreation opportunities.

D Arrow Mines Extension 1.0 miles

Potential partner(s): Mount Pleasant

This is a greenway connector, between the Arrow Lake Greenway and Arrow Mines Park, that will increase connectivity to recreation and expand access to more residents.

E William Springs Greenway 3.3 miles

Potential partner(s): Mount Pleasant

A continuation of the Arrow Lake Greenway, this extension allows residents a car free experience up to Williams Spring Park.

F William Springs Alternate 2.1 miles

Potential partner(s): Mount Pleasant

This alternate follows a stream for a portion before crossing highway 43 on grade.

Greenway Plan:

The county Greenway Concept Plan is a comprehensive look at the greenway needs beyond the findings of the Columbia and Spring Hill plans. The county plan considers connections to broader recreation features as well as develops a corridor for non-motorized travel.

The selection of greenway locations was based on desires represented by public and stakeholder input and on these key benefits:

- Recreation and social interaction
- Transportation and access for everyone
- Economic development
- Access to natural resources

Role of the County: Maury County could potentially partner in maintenance and other responsibilities of the greenway system with local municipalities. To the right is a summary of such responsibilities:

Programmatic agreements:

Consider programmatic agreements with local municipalities to cooperatively manage and maintain the greenways.

Growing a volunteer base: There exists a great opportunity to grow the volunteer base within the county. Stakeholder and public workshops indicated a strong desire to share in the growth of recreational opportunities within the county.

SPOT / INCIDENT:

Occurs as necessary or warranted.

- Citizen Response
- Major Debris Removal
- Securing Temporary Signage
- Identify Detours
- Information Dissemination
- Events Policies & Permitting
- Lighting Replacement

REGULAR:

Programmed at logical intervals based on features and their needs

- Trail Edge Treatment
- Major Mowing & Trimming
- Trash Disposal
- Stock, Clean Amenities
- Bollards / Bollard Locks
- Sign Replacement
- Volunteer Training
- Accident & Incident Tracking

LONG-TERM:

Requires major planning, budgeting and coordination for anticipated investments

- Fence & Structure Paint / Maintenance
- Way-finding
- Major Amenities
- Procurement & Replacement
- Habitat / Environmental Maintenance & Control
- Secure Funding



Greenway Prioritization & Partnerships

Greenway Prioritization Matrix:

- B** YANAHLI GREENWAY
- E** WILLIAMS SPRING PARK
- F** GREENWAY & ALT.
- A** US 31 GREENWAY
- C** ARROW LAKE GREENWAY &
- D** ARROW MINES EXTENSION

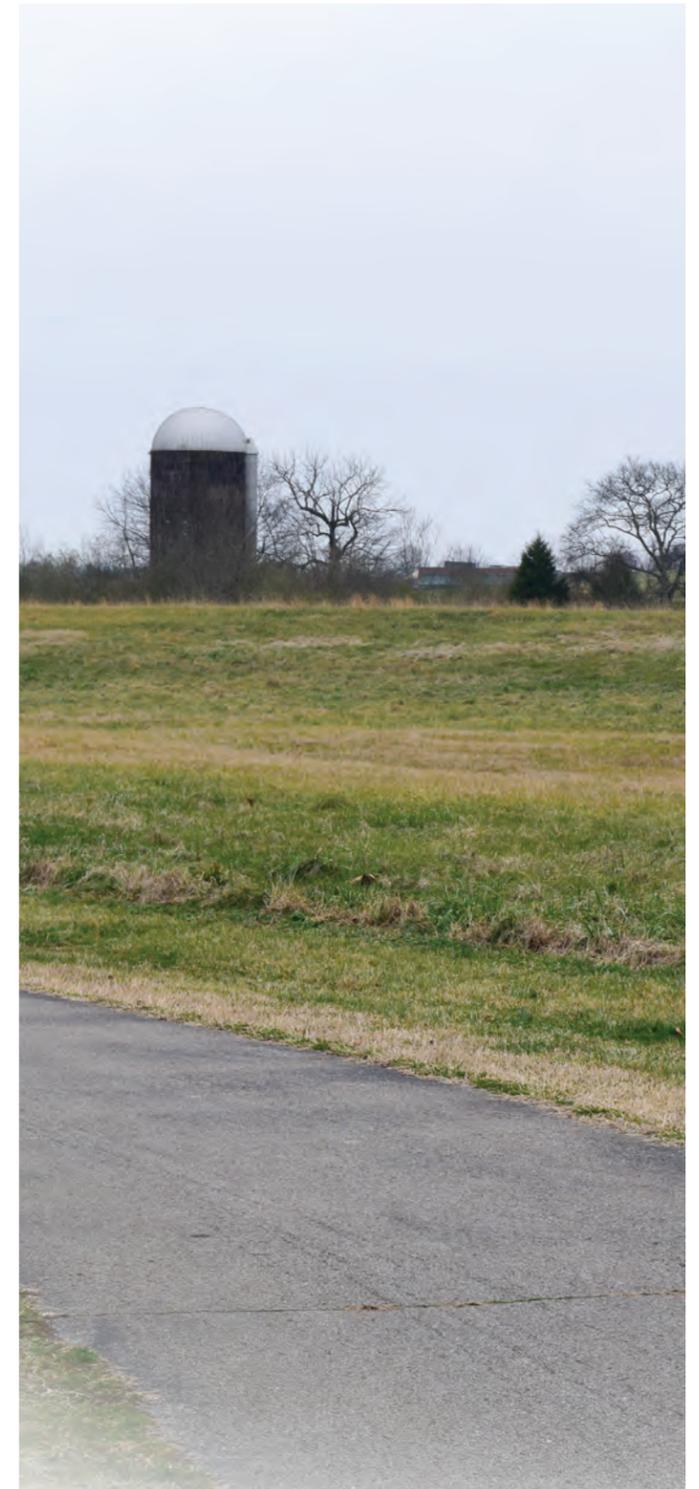
	Recreation & Social Interaction	Transportation	Economic Development	Connecting Ped/Bike Gaps & Improve Safety	Using Public Lands & Right-of-way	Access to natural resources
most benefit ↑	X	X	X	X	X	X
	X	X	X	X	X	
		X	X	X	X	
	X			X	X	X

X Major benefits

X Some benefits

Potential Partnerships:

	County & Local Municipalities	Friends of Maury County Parks	Columbia Cycling Club	Maury Regional Health Care Foundation	Maury County Visitors Bureau	TDOT	Land Trust for Tennessee
FURTHER DESIGN AND PLANNING	X					X	X
LAND ACQUISITION/ LANDOWNER OUTREACH	X						
PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT/ OUTREACH	X	X	X		X		
FUNDING	X		X	X	X	X	X
MAINTENANCE & MANAGEMENT	X	X	X			X	X



The Duck River Blueway

The Duck is one of the most underutilized recreation and natural resources in the state. According to TN H2O 2018, there is tremendous potential for continued growth of water-related outdoor recreation and tourism in Tennessee.

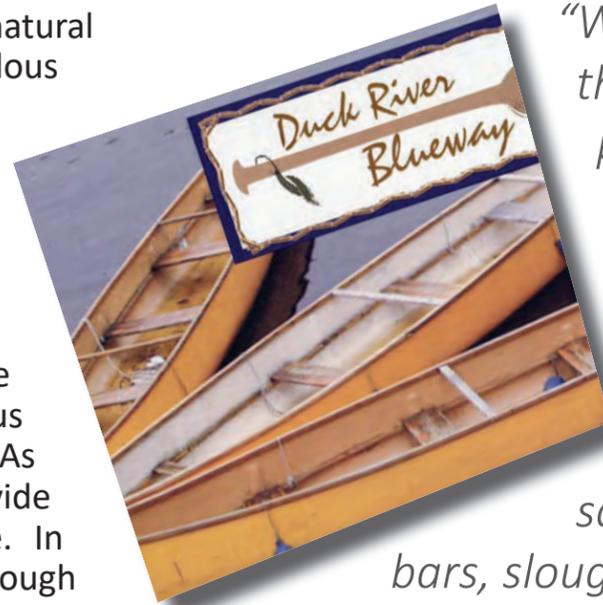
With growing interest in water based recreation such as kayak fishing and paddle boarding in addition to the already very popular rafting, canoeing, and boating, there is practically no limit to the economic opportunity of opening up and promoting the Duck River. Beyond economics, the river provides a tremendous health benefit to the residents of Maury county and its tourists. As a public asset, there is opportunity, through access points, to provide equal access to all residents of the county to swim, and paddle. In addition, the Duck River offers great mental health impacts through its diversity of natural beauty.

Other Tennessee communities are attempting to maximize their river and water-based recreation as part of an economic development strategy. Some examples are “Fish Dayton”, Ocoee as the “kayaker’s playground”, and the “Head of the Hooch.” Maury County has a great untapped opportunity to brand the Duck River and help create a name for water recreation in the area.

Existing Blueway Access

Currently there are eight access points to the Duck River with modest amenities. The largest gap is from Chickasaw Trace to Williamsport at 11.3 miles with an average gap between access points at just over 7 miles.

The typical existing access points are at bridge locations. The two exceptions are the Columbia Dam and Chickasaw Trace Park.



“Welcome to your journey of the Duck River- a beautiful pastoral stream that meanders almost 270 miles through several different cities, amidst a diversity of wildlife and past countless ever-changing scenic bluffs, islands, gravel bars, sloughs and bottomlands.”

Planned Blueway Improvements

Increased access points are vital to create a blueway with ideally 3-4 miles between access points and camping at 8 mile intervals. Bridges and parks are proposed as locations for public access areas because in these locations it is easier to implement the addition of amenities and, in the case of Yanahli Park, they are ideal for recreational opportunity.

Seven new access locations are proposed: Sowell Mill Pike Bridge, Yanahli Park Day Use Area, Bear Creek Pike Bridge, Santa Fe Pike Bridge, Industrial Park Road Bridge, Roberts Bend Road Bridge, and Craig Bridge Road.

In addition to proposed river access, improvements include a range of river access types to spread out user groups and camping opportunities.

Chattanooga riverfront redevelopment brings an annual economic impact of **\$5.5 million**

Public waterways increase equity of access to recreation

Thousands float the Ocoee each year providing more than **600 jobs** to the area

Tennessee’s Roadmap to Securing the Future of Our Water Resources, 2018

Columbia Dam Portage:

The Columbia Dam acts as a barrier to a continuous float on the Duck River through Maury County. Precedent study informs understanding of best practices when considering recreation near and around the dam. Portage around the Columbia dam will increase the vitality of the blueway and all the benefits it provides to the economies of Columbia and Maury County.

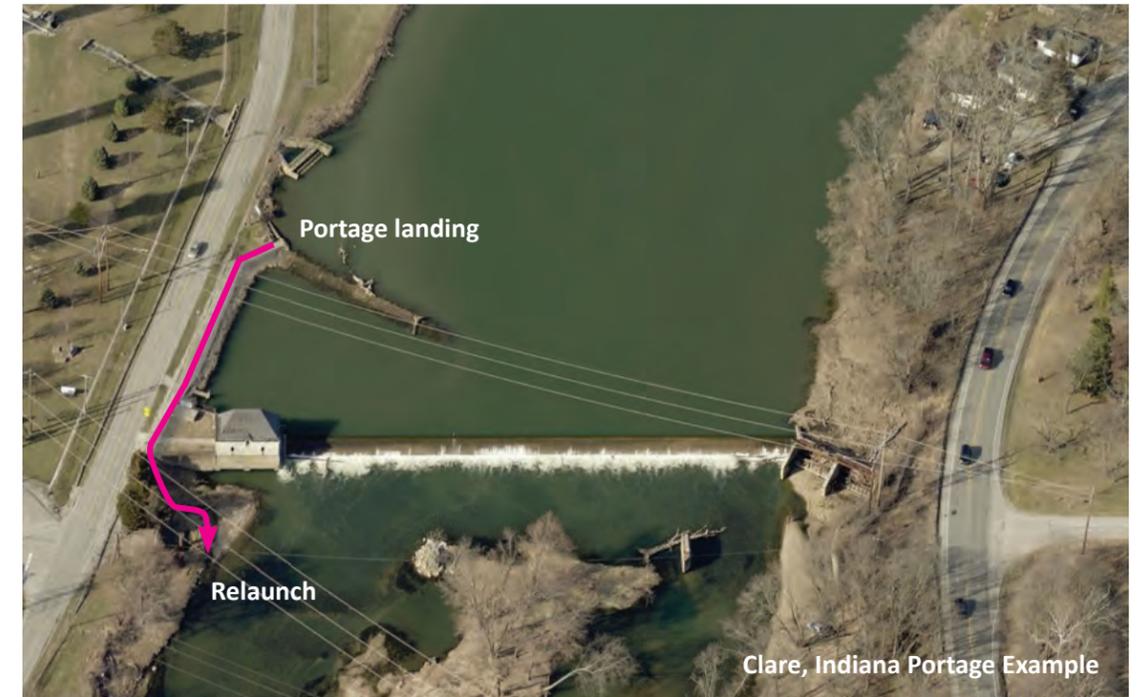
Dam hazards to consider: A low-head dam can be misleading in its potential hazards. Due to the low-head, strong currents are often not visible to the river user. The Association of Dam Safety Officials has noted several safety concerns where there is potential interaction between water recreation users and a dam. Three areas of concern that apply directly to the Columbia Dam are:

- Hydraulic rollover
- Misleading currents
- Visibility

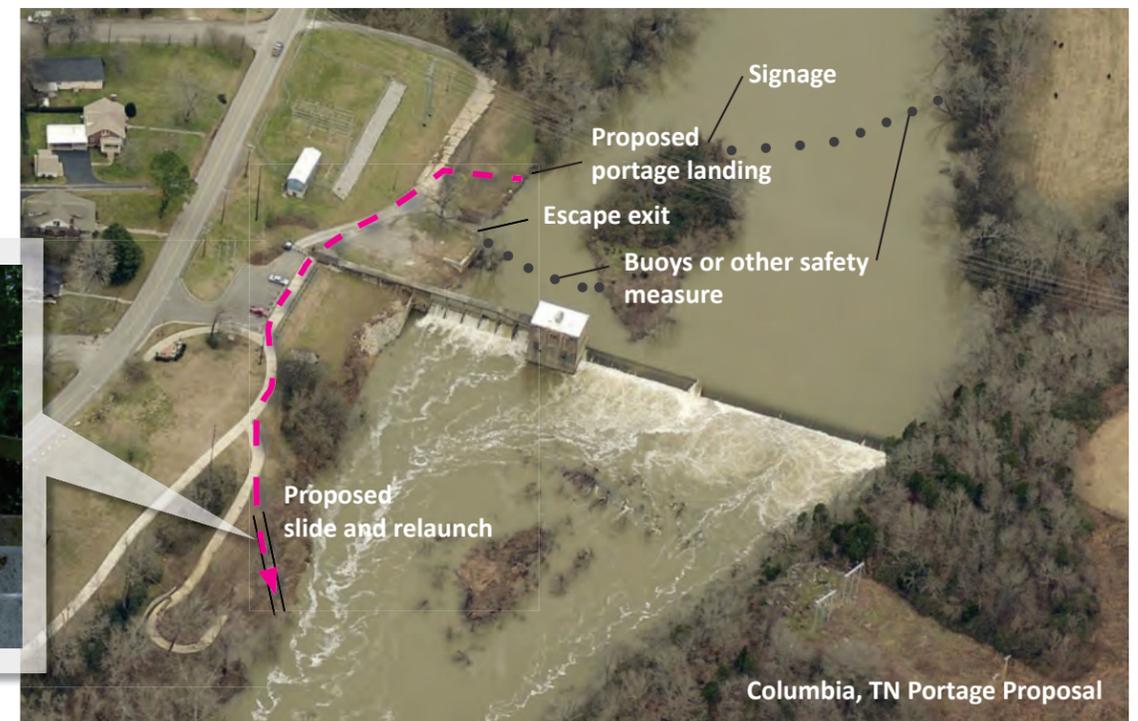
Hydraulic rollover is the rolling current beneath the water's surface just downstream of the dam. This safety concern is addressed with the distance downstream of the dam that a user should re-enter the water. Misleading currents are common with low-head dams and can be addressed with signage and more distance from the dam the access and exit points. Finally, low-head dams may lack visibility, especially from the perspective of a river floater. These safety concerns can be addressed with clearly marked portage locations and physical barriers indicating the need exit.

Addressing safety: The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) identifies ways to address safety concerns that arise from conflicts between river users and dams:

- **Signage:** potential dangers, identifying portage
- **Distance:** avoid risk, but limit distance users have to carry boats
- **Access points:** preferably on the inside of river bends or low current areas



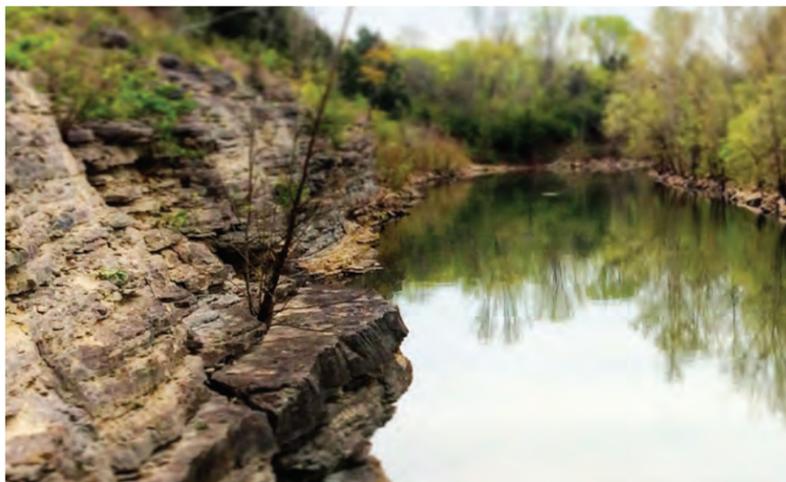
Clare, Indiana Portage Example



Columbia, TN Portage Proposal



Recommendations for the Duck River Blueway



Branding the Blueway:

As the most under utilized natural asset in Maury County, there is ample room for growth of blueway recreational opportunity. Branding the blueway raises awareness of the asset. This will both bring increased recreation and appreciation of the asset.

“Float the Duck” can become a mainstay phrase in Maury County as water-based assets are a mainstay to the state’s economy. To properly implement branding of the river, prioritization of access, wayfinding challenges, awareness, and education must be addressed. To the right are prioritization and partnership opportunities. To the left are images of the Duck River exemplifying wildlife, bluffs, and natural conditions unmatched by other recreational opportunities in the county.

Opportunity:

Stakeholders are eager and willing to take ownership of the process of lifting the Duck River blueway to the next level. Evidence of Inter-agency collaboration on access and promotion is evident through stakeholder engagement. Such collaboration can tackle challenges as a group.

As a specific example, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) is willing to partner in natural areas and work with the WMA/TWRA and the Henry Horton State Park.

“Tennessee’s water-based assets are mainstays to the state’s economy.”

-TN H2O 2018



Example of Blueway signage

Wayfinding: Working with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, a wayfinding and signage program will further the branding of the Duck River and ease in identifying recreation opportunities for users as well as help reduce barriers to use.

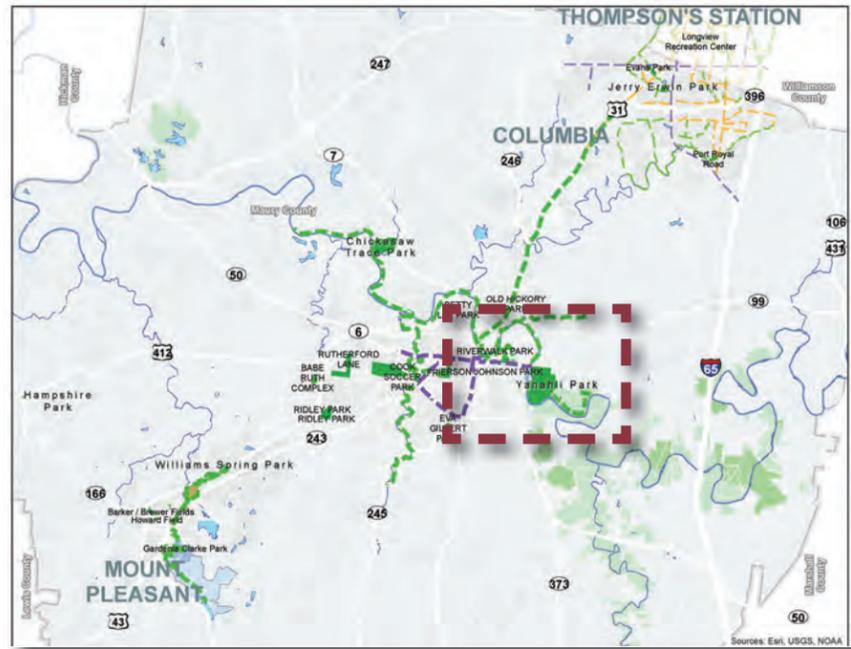
Outfitters: Partnering with those who have direct contact with blueway users will be mutually beneficial to market and brand the Duck River. These stakeholders are vital to capitalizing on the county’s natural assets like the Duck River. Ways outfitters can partner: concessions, report issues, and programming such as races.

Park & Float Program: TDOT and TWRA are partnering to create water access points adjacent to state bridges. There may be opportunity to petition the program for improved access near state owned bridges.

Organized Floats: TDEC organizes floats and promotes public process. Currently the county partners with TDEC to maintain Stillhouse Falls. An expanded partnership could aid in the branding of the Duck River as a State class recreational experience.

Land Acquisition: Outreach to the community, creating a feedback loop, throughout implementation of the plan will better ensure community buy-in. Partners in acquisition for river access could include TDOT, TDEC, the city of Columbia, the Duck River Agency, and the Land Trust for Tennessee.

Columbia - Yanahli Greenway / Blueway Loop



To Yanahli and back:

The Yanahli Greenway (7.2 miles), coupled with a blueway loop option (3.6 miles) will provide Maury County residents with a unique and diverse recreational experience.

Potential Partners: Maury County, City of Columbia, and TWRA

-  Planned city greenways
-  Proposed county greenways
-  Proposed county river access
-  Existing access locations



Legend

Proposed County Facilities

- Mt. Pleasant Greenway
- Highway 31 Greenway

River Access Points

- Existing Access Points
- Proposed Access Points

Columbia Parks

- Babe Ruth Complex
- Betty Lee Park
- Cook Soccer Park
- Eva Gilbert Park
- Fairview Park & Community Center
- Frierson Johnson Park
- Macedonia Community Center
- Old Armory Recreation Center
- Old Hickory Park
- Pillow Park
- Pop Greer Monument
- Ridley Park
- River Walk Park
- Rutherford Lane
- West Haven Park
- Woodland Park

Spring Hill Parks

- Evans Park
- Harvey Park
- Longview Recreation Center
- McLemore Park
- Port Royal Road
- Walnut Street Skate Park

Mt. Pleasant Parks

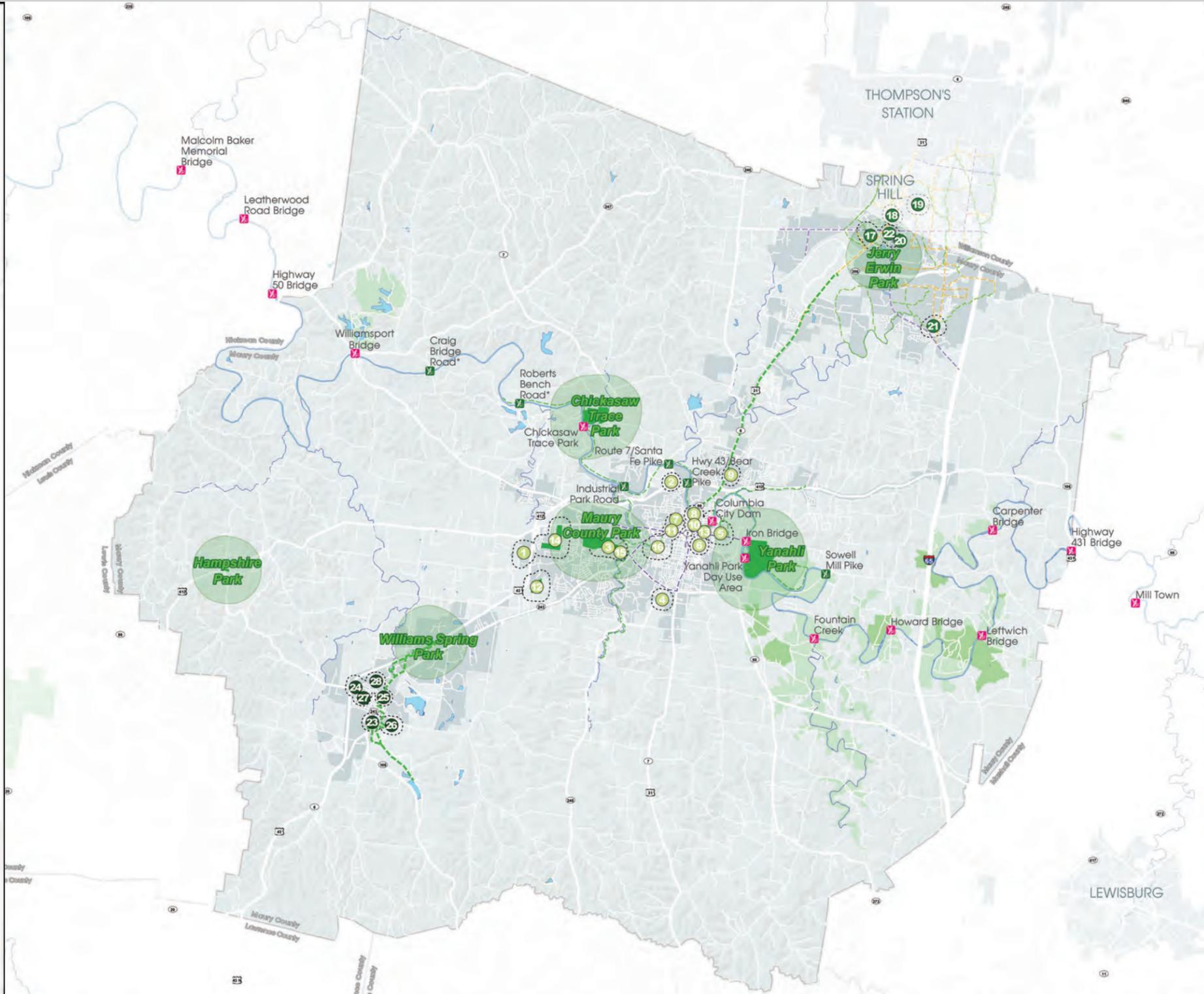
- Arrow Mines Park
- Barker / Brewer Fields
- Clarke Street Park
- Gardenia Clarke Park
- Howard Field
- Mt. Pleasant Community Center

Proposed City Facilities

- Potential Bike Lane
- Potential Greenway
- Potential Shared-Use Path

Service Areas

- City Park 1/4 Mile Service Areas
- County Parks 1 Mile Service Area



Proposed Facilities Map:

This map indicates proposed blueway access points to the Duck River as well as proposed multi-use trails connecting to Spring Hill and Mount Pleasant, in relation to existing park and recreation facilities.

Expo & Agricultural Center:

There is regional demand for a quality agricultural center to suit the needs of many stakeholders. A review of the WNC Agricultural Center and the Tunica Arena and Expo Center were done for the purposes of this plan. Regional draw for an expo or agricultural center can expect to draw over 200,000 visitors a year with a capacity to hold over 25,000 visitors in a single day. Precedent centers suggest 37-90 acres to accommodate all the center's needs.

Maury County is centrally located and well positioned as a statewide farm expo hub. With new and upgraded facilities paired with lodging and transportation partnerships, you can increase the event "envelope" by attracting fairs, expositions, training, agricultural related conferences, etc. A new agricultural center could also become an excellent link to greenway and blueway systems or trail systems. It could also be considered an affordable entertainment option and capture outflow from Williamson County and other "urbanizing" facilities.

Programing in regional expo and agricultural centers include:

- Trade shows
- Livestock shows
- Equestrian shows
- Fairs
- Circus/ carnivals
- Tractor pulls

Site elements commonly include:

- A large conditioned floor space for exhibits and shows (45,000-50,000sf)
- Covered, but not fully enclosed, arenas
- Livestock stalls (600-800)
- Outdoor "warm-up" rings
- Banquet kitchen
- Concessions
- Conference/meeting rooms



WNC Agriculture Center



Tunica Arena and Expo Center

12 Big Recommendations Summary

Facilities:

1. Create a greenway system in coordination with Columbia, Spring Hill, and Mount Pleasant. Prioritize a link from Yanahli to downtown Columbia.



2. Add additional water access points along the Duck River with a priority on access points and portage above and below the dam in Columbia and access points between Columbia / Chickasaw and Chickasaw / Williamsport.



3. Establish community and local parks along growth corridors in the county to help serve the communities surrounding Culleoka, Williamsport, and Mount Pleasant. These parks should be designed to meet a good balance of passive and active facilities and should provide a full range of recreational experiences.

Programs / Services:

1. Promote outdoor adventure programs including outdoor environmental education and hike, bike, and paddle opportunities.



2. Expand program opportunities at the Maury County Park Community Center with improved facilities and heated / cooled indoor space. This will increase program, partnership, and user fee opportunities.



3. Establish a location and program for a dog park in cooperation with the City of Columbia.



Economic Needs / Opportunities:

1. Provide for a permanent maintenance and operations fund specific to the needs of park and recreation facilities and programs, and establish friends of Maury County Parks and Recreation as a 501(C)3 foundation.



2. Market and Brand the Maury County area as a destination point for outdoor adventure and environmental education. Update and upgrade the Maury County Parks and Recreation web page to include more dynamic images.



3. Establish the location for a new regional agricultural and environmental expo center that could facilitate both local and regional events as an opportunity to promote regional events and tourism.



Partnerships:

1. Partner with the City of Columbia and TDEC to protect and promote the Duck River as a regional blueway experience.



2. Coordinate with Columbia, Spring Hill, and Mount Pleasant to meet the active recreational and athletic tournament needs for the area.



3. Establish partnerships with local and state education and natural resource agencies to fund high quality outdoor programs at Yanahli and expand recreational opportunities on WMA natural areas.



Parks & Recreation Budget Analysis

This section describes findings from an analysis of the Maury County Parks and Recreation Budget. Some demographic context is provided as background for the analysis, since it is helpful to know that Maury County has a growing population base and a growing share of the Nashville metropolitan area's market. Revenue and expenditure trends are analyzed, in the context of the County budget. Earned income is described, along with the department's fee structure and user charges. Finally, expenditure trends are analyzed in terms of the primary cost centers and changes over time.

Demographic Context:

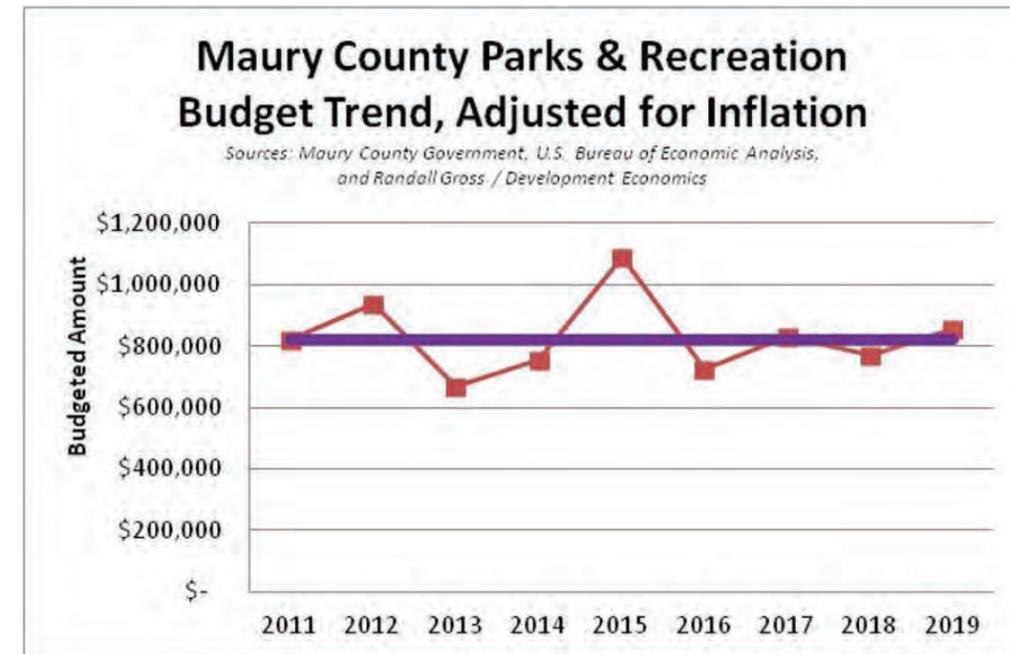
As a basis for understanding Maury County's overall budget and the role of parks and recreation within that budget, a brief analysis was conducted of Maury County's demographic trends and share of the regional market. Maury County's population has been increasing at the rate of about 2.4% per year since 2000. Presently, the population is estimated at about 94,300, and is projected to reach 100,000 by around 2021. Maury County is the 7th largest county within the Nashville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and Middle Tennessee, after Davidson, Rutherford, Montgomery, Williamson, Sumner, and Wilson. However, in 1950, Maury County was the 3rd largest in Middle Tennessee, behind Davidson and Montgomery counties.

After years of stagnation, Maury County now represents a growing share of the Nashville MSA market base, with almost 5.0% of the region's population, up from 4.7% in 2010. Maury County is a further commute from Nashville but offers more affordable housing conditions for the region's workers. As housing prices and rents escalate in Nashville in inner suburbs, Columbia and Maury County have become increasingly attracting locations for commuters looking for more affordable homes on larger lots.

Columbia, with 40,000 residents, now represents about 40% of the county's population and is increasingly an urban hub for arts and culture, dining and entertainment. The City of Columbia has its own Parks and Recreation Department, which recently opened new community facilities. Spring Hill, a more suburban community that has nearly 42,000 residents, is located on the county's northern border with Williamson County. Spring Hill is among the fastest-growing cities in Middle Tennessee and offers its own growing Parks and Recreation Department program. Finally, tiny Mt. Pleasant (population about 4,800) also operates a Parks and Recreation Department, so there are three active and growing municipal parks & recreation programs operating within the county.

Parks & Recreation Budget Trends:

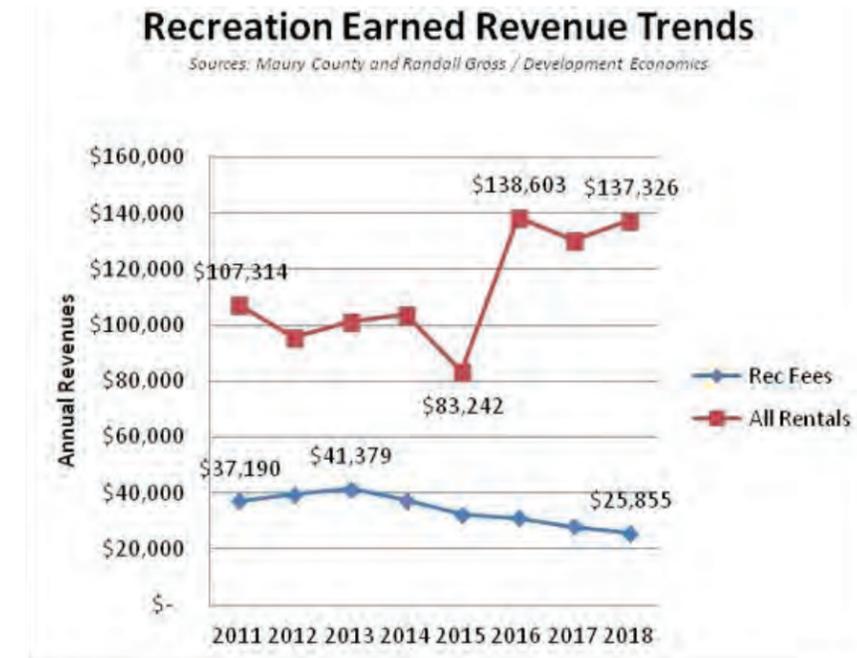
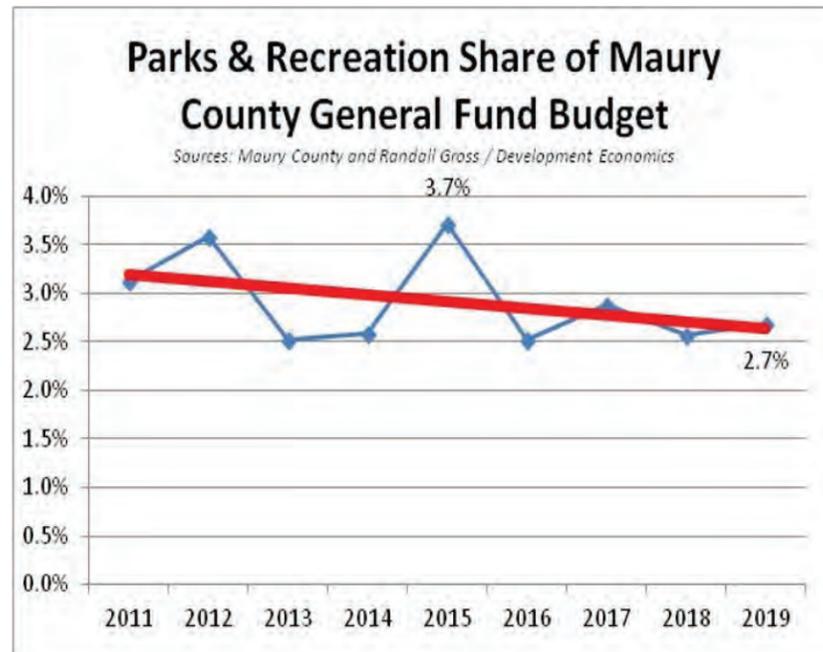
The Maury County Parks & Recreation Department budget trends were analyzed, in terms of operating revenues and expenditures. A trend analysis determined that the budget has remained relatively stagnant or has even declined after adjusting for inflation, at around \$800,000, despite some annual fluctuations up and down.



There were higher budgets in 2012 and 2015, but lower budgets in four other years since 2011.

Share of General Fund

Parks & Recreation also represent a declining component of the Maury County General Fund budget. The share allocated to parks and recreation started at about 3.1% in 2011, but has gradually fallen to about 2.7% today. Again, there have been peaks and valleys, with parks and recreation garnering at most 3.7% of the County budget in 2015 and a minimum of 2.5% in 2013 and 2016. The stagnant budget and declining share for Parks & Recreation provide perhaps an unintended perspective on County priorities. Declining parks revenue is also counter-intuitive, given that parks often fare worse during economic downturns, not upswings. The overall trend in share of County budget is summarized in the following chart.



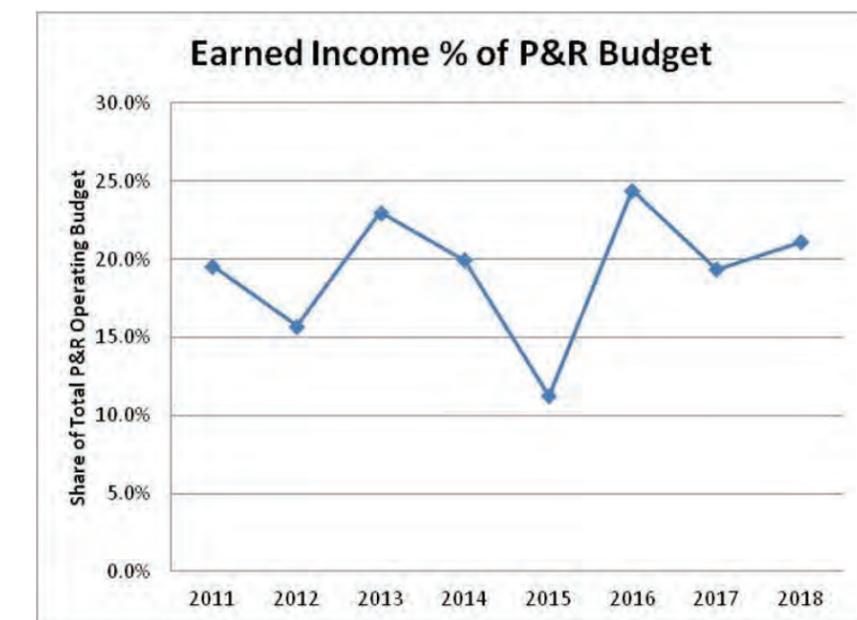
Revenues & Earned Income Trends

Maury County Parks & Recreation generates 81% of its revenue through annual County General Fund Budget appropriations. This share compares with a national average of 59%, according to the National Parks and Recreation Association (NPR). Within that budgeting process, Maury County's Parks and Recreation Department has little dedicated funding and is subject to the annual allocation process which depends on overall County revenue and prioritization.

Maury County Parks & Recreation generates relatively small amounts in earned income, mainly from rental fees charged for use of its facilities festivals and events, picnics, and other activities. The County's rental rates are relatively reasonable in comparison to other counties and jurisdictions in the Metro Nashville area. Rentals generated about \$100,000 on average to the County from 2011 to 2014, but fell to \$83,200 in 2015 while the County closed its Exhibit Building Conference Center for renovations. Following completion of the renovations, rentals increased significantly to \$138,600 and have remained near \$140,000 since that time, an increase of 38%. This shift illustrates the value of maintaining and improving capital facilities in order to boost the very revenue stream that helps to support them.

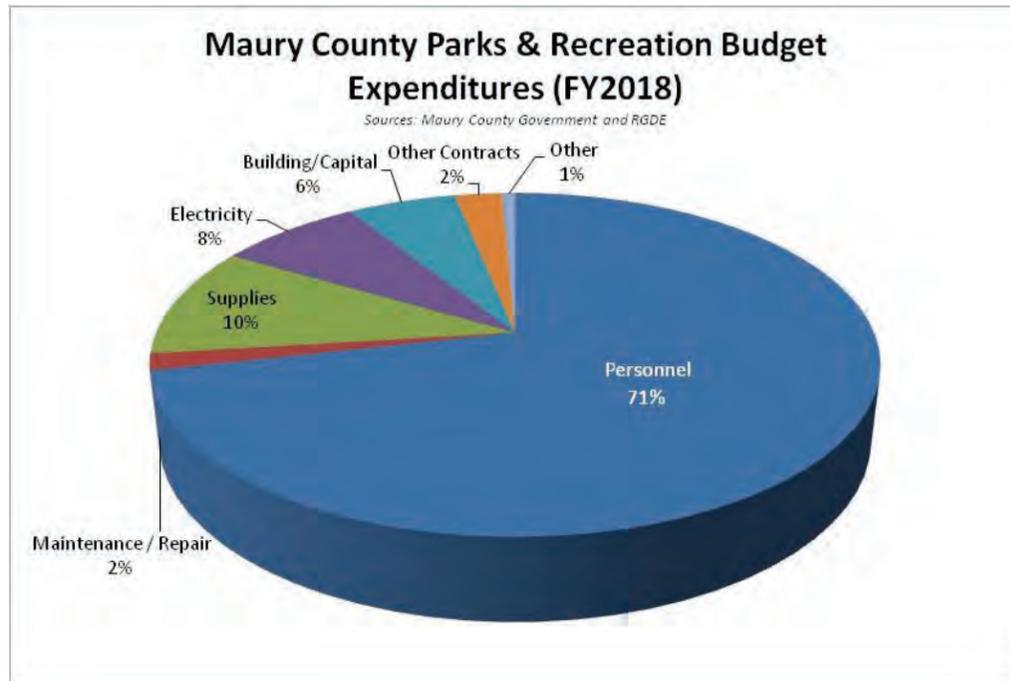
The County generates relatively small amounts from recreation "fees," and this number fell by 38% from a peak of around \$41,400 in 2013 to about \$25,900 today. Fees account for just about 3.0% of the Parks and Recreation Department budget. The lack of, and decrease in, fee revenue is due in part to a lack of programmatic activities for which the County charges fees and also due to a perceived decrease in the quality of certain facilities. These trends are summarized in the following chart.

Overall, earned income is averaging about 20% of total revenues to the Parks and Recreation Department. That share is increasing, but remains slightly lower than the national average of 27.3% (according to NPR). However, the number is roughly within the performance range of departments in this region. Earned income fell in 2015 largely because of the temporary closure of the conference facility.



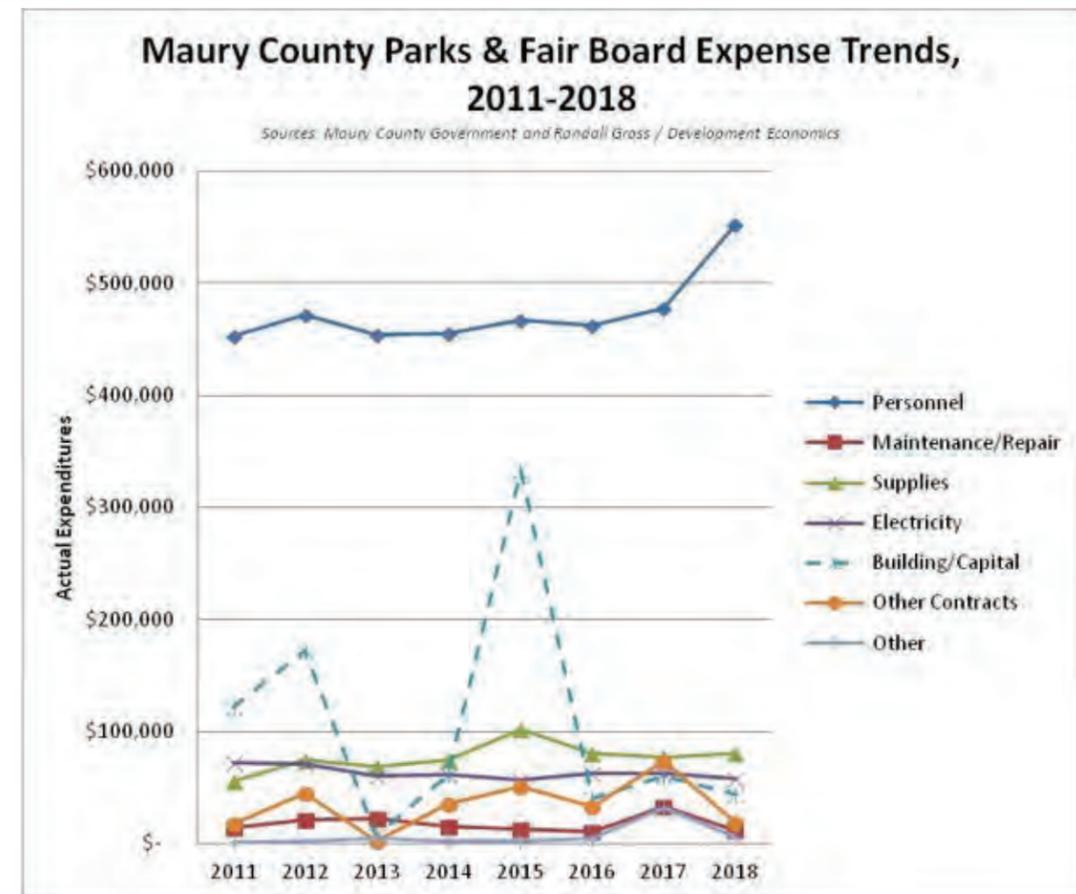
Expenditures

The Parks and Recreation Department budget totals \$853,985 (FY2018). Expenditures are disaggregated below by primary item.



Personnel accounts for about 71% of the Parks & Recreation operating budget in Maury County, versus 55% nationwide (NPRA). Meanwhile, non-personnel Operating & Maintenance (O&M) expenses typically account for 38% of the budget, according to NPRA, but account for only 23% in Maury County. Maintenance and repair account for just 2.0% of the department's expenditures.

Key Trends. Most expenditures, other than personnel and building (capital) have remained relatively stable. Personnel costs increased during the latest fiscal year due to the addition of a maintenance staff position. At the same time, contract labor costs fell this year, perhaps as the full-time staff replaced some work formerly completed by contractors. Capital costs fluctuate wildly each year due to the need for replacement of equipment or refurbishment of capital plant. An example would be the renovation of the Exhibit Building in 2015, which resulted in capital expenditures and a temporary drop in rental revenues (but, as observed above, a long-term increase in rentals due to the enhanced quality of the space).



As noted before, most other operating expenditures have remained fairly stagnant. In general, very little is spent each year on maintenance and repair, contractors, utilities and supplies.

This section provides a summary of the primary funding and operating challenges for Maury County Parks & Recreation, as identified by County staff, stakeholders, and through a review of budgets and programs. Strategies or solutions are provided in response to each of the challenges, based again on stakeholder input, but also on experience and best practices.

Dedicated Park Funding:

As noted earlier, Maury County lacks a dedicated park funding mechanism. Coupled with the fact that the county generates limited earned income, the lack of dedicated funding puts undue pressure on the Parks and Recreation Department to ensure that there is sufficient annual funding to maintain facilities and to recruit and retain dedicated staff. The County also lacks a park-specific capital improvements program or CIP to accommodate more capital-intensive mid- and long-term needs.

Strategies & Solutions

There are several opportunities to enhance dedicated funding streams to Maury County Parks and Recreation, both through County tax and funding mechanisms as well as through independent non-profit or foundation support.

County Government. Before even seeking to establish sources of funding, there is opportunity to create a park-specific accounting fund within the County budget so that Parks and Recreation revenues and expenditures can be itemized and segregated for planning and auditing purposes. The latter would ensure that any County funds that are legally bound for distribution to Parks and Recreation (such as a dedicated percentage of the County's 5% Lodging Tax) are tracked into the department's revenues. Similarly, earned income such as user charges and rental fees should be itemized and tracked within the department's unique fund. Finally, a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) should be established for parks and recreation facilities as one line item in the broader Countywide CIP budgeting process.

The State of Tennessee enables County governments to establish **Special Purpose Funds** that can levy a special tax on property to generate additional funding for parks and recreation. One of the advantages of special funds is that, in places where taxpayers are sensitive to their tax burden, special tax funds help them prioritize and link their tax payments to specific uses where they can "see" the results. In general, taxpayers are less likely to support paying more taxes for General Government funding than they are to support taxes for specific purposes like Parks & Recreation for which they have an affinity and can envision their tax dollars being used for a service that they can see and use.

At present, 29 Tennessee counties impose some type of Special Purpose Fund tax levies, which generate revenues targeted to industrial/economic and community development, recycling, fire services, animal control, ambulance service, public libraries, debt service, and parks & recreation. Of these, four counties specifically target the tax levy to parks and recreation-related use. These counties are Grainger County (Parks and Recreation), Lewis County (Sports and Recreation), Putnam County (Sports and Recreation), and Wilson County (Ag Center).

Tennessee also allows for counties to establish a **County Conservation Fund**, which is another special tax levy that can be used for acquisition of land, property and capital equipment for recreation and conservation purposes. This differs from special purpose funds because it is targeted specifically to capital expenses and, in particular, acquisition of property and equipment.

State Government. The State of Tennessee provides support to parks & recreation through the **Local Parks & Recreation Fund (LPRF)**. The LPRF program provides grants for acquisition of land for parks, natural areas, greenways and recreation facilities. The funds are also available for capital projects including construction of greenways, trails, and other capital projects in parks and natural areas. Again, this fund is focused on capital acquisition and development.

Foundations and Conservancies. An increasing number of parks departments generate dedicated funding through foundations or conservancies established to invest contributory income and generate annual operating revenues. These funds act as a "conduit for philanthropy" and help leverage funding from individuals as well as the corporate and institutional sectors. Many communities have non-profit "stewards" for individual parks or park systems established as "conservancy" organizations. These groups are engaged in active fundraising to support maintenance and conservation of specific parks and facilities. One well-known example in the region is the Centennial Park Conservancy, established to raise funds to maintain, plan, and rehabilitate the Parthenon and Centennial Park in Nashville. Foundations and Conservancies tend to be focused on fundraising, including grant writing and investment.

"Friends-Of" Groups. Maury County already has a friends group (Friends of Maury County Parks) dedicated to assisting the area's parks. Friends groups tend to be more focused on advocacy (such as showing up to support the parks as part of the budgeting process), programming, and education aimed at preserving, protecting, and promoting local parks. Friends groups often raise internal funding through a membership dues structure but are not as focused on external fundraising as are foundations and conservancies.

Budget Planning:

Another key challenge for Maury County's Parks & Recreation Department is the question of how to anticipate future operating & maintenance costs as well as future revenues, for budgeting and planning purposes. The department's budget should adjust over time not only to the programmed addition of park facilities but also to broader demographic & user base growth and the demand for park program services in the county.

Strategies & Solutions

There are several approaches that collectively help to address this challenge now and in the future, as outlined below.

Utilization Tracking. The County should continually track utilization of its programs, services, and facilities. One reason for doing so is to illustrate to the County Commission the level of community engagement and utilization within the Parks & Recreation Department. Utilization justifies funding for the department and is used to benchmark its success. Another reason is to help guide the department on where refinements and improvements are needed in order to boost participation rates. Finally, utilization trends help provide a baseline for projecting future needs and budgetary requirements. Utilization can be tracked through gate attendance counts and user charges, fees associated with leagues and other activities, rental agreements, traffic counts, and other approaches.

User Surveys. Surveys and focus groups are additional source of information on utilization that provide even more in-depth information on the "why" and "how" questions associated with patron usage of Parks and Rec facilities and programs. As above, this information can be used to guide the County Commission and the department, and coupled with tracking can serve as a basis for needs assessments and planning purposes.

Needs Assessments. The County should periodically conduct needs assessments as a basis for determining the current and projected future need for programs, services and facilities. A facility needs assessment was conducted as input to this Master Plan, based on park & recreation standards as well as community stakeholder input and a "heat map" facility access analysis. The facilities identified as part of this Master Plan form a basis for capital cost planning. Operating costs for those facilities would need to be determined as part of the planning process based on local experience with comparable or similar facilities as well as on regional norms.

More detailed needs assessment may be required in order to forecast the future need for facilities, programs, and services in relation to the County's demographic growth and changing behavior, such as a shift in recreation activity preferences. There are various components to such a detailed needs assessment, including the following:

- **Utilization Forecasting.** Once the existing user base is understood, it is critical to forecast future utilization. Such forecasts are made based on demographic projections, participation rates, and other data inputs for Parks and Recreation "catchment" areas (or user base). Utilization forecasts are made for facilities, but also for programs and services. The forecasts not only generate an understanding of the usage for existing facilities and programs, but also help identify where there are gaps for new activities (Parks & Recreation facilities, programs, and services) that will have an audience in Maury County in the future. This information, coupled with the Master Plan, will help the department plan for capital expansion and programming to meet future needs relating to growth and changing user preferences.
- **Revenue and Cost Projections.** Once utilization schedules have been generated, then it is possible to project revenues (e.g., user charges, rental fees, etc) as well as certain operating and maintenance costs. Use of the County's parks, recreation facilities, and programs is linked directly to the cost of maintaining those activities.

Maintenance and Replacement Schedules. Aside from user needs assessments, there is the ongoing need for maintenance and replacement of capital equipment. Standard maintenance and replacement schedules should be used as an accepted norm for planning future capital costs as input to both the operating and capital improvements budgeting processes.

Inflation Factors. When engaged in cost planning, it is essential to incorporate cost and price inflation factors to ensure sufficient resources to meet future needs. Construction and maintenance costs tend to rise more quickly than the Consumer Price Index (CPI), so the appropriate inflation factors should be used in order to account for these differences. Ultimately, the inflation factors are applied to all cost projections, regardless of whether they are sourced from standard maintenance schedules or new facility cost estimates.

Plan Facilities and Programming to Meet Future Needs. To reiterate, the Master Plan and needs assessments will help guide the department on existing gaps and future opportunities in the provision of programs, services, and facilities.

Cost Recovery:

There has been some concern that existing rental and other fees may not align with the actual costs for use of County Parks and Recreation facilities. County Parks and Recreation provides a public service, so the revenues collected from rentals, user charges, and fees is not always intended to recover all costs to the department, let alone generate net profits.

Strategies & Solutions

That being said, there are certain services, facilities and programs from which the County could expect to at least recover costs if not generate net income. Some examples of where this is possible and recommended include the following:

Non-Resident Rates. Many of the parks and recreation departments in surrounding jurisdictions charge a differentiated user fee rate schedule for certain facilities and programs. In other words, a premium is charged to non-residents on top of the normal cost for use of facilities and programs. While the user charges paid by residents may not be intended to recover the cost of a program or O&M, the non-resident charges should be designed in a way that they help recover some of the gap in costs while remaining competitive in the regional market. The County's programs have not warranted a non-resident rate structure in the past, but new facilities and programs including those recommended herein will help create new opportunities for use of such structures.

Separate Facility Funding Structure. The County hosts existing and potential new programs and events that derive a significant share of their attendance from non-resident patrons and (potentially), tourists. The County cannot treat such events and programs as a public service by directly subsidizing their rental charges and fees. Such activities should be directed to a premium rental rate or program user charge as noted above for non-residents and tourists.

Where the event or program generates significant economic benefit to Maury County, then the County or its Parks & Recreation Department should simply require a statement of those benefits as part of the rental application process, backed by data monitored through admissions/gate and other independent utilization tracking (as noted earlier). If the benefits are real and meet a certain threshold established by the County's economic development entity, then discounted rates should be applied.

The event facility could also be disaggregated from the main Parks & Recreation budget into a special purpose fund or an internal fund that can access revenues from other sources. For example, the lodging tax might be directed to help fund facilities like the Fairgrounds or an Agriculture and Environmental Expo Center that is meant to bring in tourism and other non-resident activity to the county.

Premium Programs & Services. The Parks and Recreation Department should eventually offer access to premium programming, both for residents and non-residents alike. Such programming might include personalized or specialized nature and recreation guiding services as part of a conference or special event, for example. The department might also consider allowing limited, premium access during off hours. The Nashville Zoo is an excellent example of a nature-based attraction that provides after-hours access for a premium charge as part of fundraising and other events.

Unique Role for County Parks & Recreation:

While it has not been identified explicitly as a challenge or issue, the County's parks & recreation program must operate within the same "space" as three municipal parks & recreation departments in Maury County, namely Columbia, Spring Hill, and Mt. Pleasant. There is the potential for overlap, inefficiencies, and competition for the user base if facilities and programs are not differentiated between City and County.

Strategies & Solutions

There are several strategies or solutions for addressing this challenge and avoiding conflict in the future as Maury County Parks and Recreation expands its services and facilities.

Focus on County Residents and Tourists. Certainly the County has an important role to play in providing parks and recreation access to residents of the county who are not otherwise located in one of the three municipal jurisdictions. The County can also boost tourism and day trips through its parks and recreation programs, to the benefit of the County as well as the three municipal jurisdictions within.

Establish a Unique Identity & Create Destinations. The Master Plan and recommendations herein can help the County avoid such issues, by directing the County to establishing and strengthening its unique identity associated with natural areas, conservation, blueways, greenways and connectivity in a way that differentiates the County but also benefits all four local jurisdictions. The County should take advantage of destination opportunities including but not limited to:

- Natural areas
- Adventure recreation
- Ag/Exhibition and equestrian facilities
- Linkages with lodging
- Regional events
- Blueways, greenways and other natural linkage opportunities

County Parks & Recreation Department would continue to collaborate with municipal park systems for tourism, programming, and destination attraction development.

Fee Structure:

The Parks & Recreation Department has a nominal user fee structure, and fee revenues appear to be decreasing. Several opportunities are suggested below for bridging the gap between current low-volume fee-based services and a broader set of facilities and services in the future.

Strategies & Solutions

The following strategies and solutions seek to broaden the revenue base for Maury County Parks and Recreation, while also generating deeper revenue opportunities from existing programs, facilities and services.

Broader Application. User fees should be applied to existing and future athletic leagues and other user groups where possible. Currently, there is some fee revenue that is funneled through from users to leagues to the County. More effort needs to be applied to tracking the user base (as noted earlier) and ensuring that fees are pertinent to the user base as it grows and expands. But there are also opportunities identified in the Master Plan and later in this report for expanding the fee base by expanding the number, scale and scope of programmatic services offered by the County. A prime opportunity rests in the provision of guiding services for nature and recreational activity as well as for nature-based education programming. Access to boating, fishing and other activities and equipment rentals will also help generate new fee revenue.

Differentiated Rates and User Charges. As noted earlier, the application of differentiated user rates over time can help increase user fee and rental income. Tourists and non-residents will pay more for the County's services if there is a market for them, so there is the opportunity to charge a differentiated rate. By doing so, Parks and Recreation will also receive positive feedback from residents, who will see that they benefit from the direct expenditure of their tax dollars and are therefore charged less than non-residents. Thus, the differentiated fee is not just an approach for raising revenue, it also helps generate support for parks and recreation programs among taxpayers.



Tourism & Economic Development Opportunities

Several opportunities have been identified for enhancing parks and recreation-related tourism and economic development within Maury County. These opportunities are discussed in several places throughout the Master Plan, since they were identified through stakeholder input, needs assessment, and a review of assets and competitive features. These key opportunities are discussed below.

Tennessee Agriculture & Environmental Expo Center:

Maury County currently operates equestrian and other agricultural exposition facilities at Maury County Park (MCP). These facilities include two equestrian arenas, the Skillington Livestock Barn and stall barns, the Baker Building and Exhibit Conference Center, along with eight pavilions. The park also offers trails, sports fields, Mid-South Live Steamers miniature trains, and Lindsey Nelson Football Stadium.

Because of its central location in Tennessee on the perimeter of the rapidly-growing Nashville Metropolitan Area, Maury County is well-positioned as a statewide agricultural exposition hub. And, because of Maury County's growing reputation and potential as a center for environmental education, eco-tourism, and river-based adventure, there are opportunities for an environmental programming and conferencing component as part of an exposition hub that broadens the event base. The following concept builds on both the agricultural and environmental strengths to create a unique center for expositions, conferencing, education, and events.

User Base

A broad-based set of local and regional groups might consider use of this facility, including environmental and conservation organizations, local/state and federal government agencies, farming and agricultural organizations, fairs and festivals, equestrian show groups, live entertainment promoters, farm or environmental remediation equipment manufacturers, community-based advocacy groups, universities and research institutions, food manufacturers, environmental technology groups, clean water advocates, and others. The market potentials for this concept would need to be tested and quantified, but there appears to be a broad base of possible users that could be identified as a starting point.

The facility would specialize in hosting agricultural and environmental-related fairs and expositions, training, conferences, tournaments, meetings, festivals and special events, environmental programming, equestrian shows, and other activities for the aforementioned groups.

Facilities

The expo center would offer new and/or upgraded facilities including flexible arena and/or exhibition space, meeting and conference rooms, catering kitchens, loading, and other requisite components. The facility would also offer outdoor amenities including linkages with the greenway and/or blue way systems, water access, and trails including equestrian trails. The development program for such a facility would be defined based on the market analysis and financial sustainability tested through an operating pro forma.

Competitive Features

The facility must have direct access to and partnerships with lodging and transportation in order to be competitive, especially for conferences and regional events. The facility would also need to be competitive on a price basis within the region, which may be one of its defining characteristics for marketing. As such, the facility is better placed to capture "outflow" from Williamson County and other "urbanizing" portions of Middle Tennessee. The facility would help anchor a broader eco-tourism marketing initiative for Maury County.

Middle Tennessee's Eco-Tourism Hub:

As noted above, Maury County has the opportunity to become an eco-tourism hub for Middle Tennessee. The county already sports an impressive list of environmental and recreation assets, such as Yanahli, Chickasaw Trace (mountain biking, trails), and the Duck River Blueway. It's a matter of strengthening the destination anchor venues (as with the agricultural/environmental expo center, above), linking various assets together through programming, and marketing the county as a center for these activities. Several opportunities for strengthening the County's asset base and brand are provided below.

Guided Greenway & Blueway Trail Tours

There is the opportunity for Maury County Parks and Recreation to provide guided greenway and blue way trail tours, focused on birding, kayaking & canoeing, environmental education, and wetland flora and fauna. The guiding program would generate revenue to the department and expand education partnerships and advocacy within area schools.

"Safari" Park & Outdoor Adventures

There is also the opportunity for the department to be directly engaged in adventure recreation and tourism, leading research expeditions and photo "safaris," managing overnight camping activities; and providing catering, equipment, and other necessities through concession contracts. The department might consider forming partnerships with the region's parks and environmental organizations, science museums, universities, the Nashville Zoo, and Hohenwald Elephant Sanctuary or others to assist conservation efforts and deliver destination visitor experiences.

Nature Center

An anchor nature center would be developed to host education programming including regional education and outreach efforts. The center would include permanent collections and special exhibits, veterinary clinic (with regional partners), outdoor recreation facilities and amenities, viewing stations, trail connectivity, and possible equestrian facilities. The scale and scope of the facility should be sufficient to garner regional visitation. The center might be associated with Yanahli or co-located with the proposed agricultural & environmental expo center.

Funding Strategies Summary & Action Plan

This section summarizes recommendations for future funding mechanisms and opportunities for partnerships. Some of these recommendations were provided in the previous section in response to specific challenges posed by the department and stakeholders. Others are developed here based on analysis and stakeholder input. An Action Plan for phasing is also provided as a preliminary guide for funding in support of the Master Plan.

Options for Future Funding:

The following options for future funding for parks and recreation are recommended based on the review of the existing budget, Master Plan concepts and opportunities, and stakeholder guidance.

- **Differentiated Pricing.** As County parks and recreation programs expand, the opportunity will exist for differentiated pricing, disaggregating non-resident fees on a premium basis.
- **Dedicated Tourism Tax.** Distribution of the County's lodging tax revenues is meant to be apportioned to include a dedicated share to parks and recreation. This share should be made more explicit as a funding mechanism, and potentially tied to destination and tourism-related projects and programs.

Once key programs and facilities are in place, every effort should be made to evaluate the economic impacts of Parks and Recreation venues and programs in capturing destination markets and generating spin-off in the local economy. By calculating both the direct and indirect impacts of facilities and programs, there will be a strong case made for attaching lodging tax dollars as a dedicated funding source for Parks and Recreation activities.

- **Concessions.** There will be increasing opportunities over time for the County to enter into concession agreements to supply food & beverage (F&B), catering services, equipment, and other inputs to park and recreation facility users.
 - **Equipment Rentals.** As the County develops its eco-tourism and environmental education brand, there will be opportunities to concession out the rental of equipment such as kayaks, canoes, camping gear, bicycles, canteen (F&B), and other supplies for participants in blue way and greenway hiking, biking, boating, and other activities. County Parks & Recreation would generate a share of revenue from these rentals with minimal direct management and operating cost. New technologies will allow for user-based rental systems that reduce direct operating costs even more.
 - **Catering.** If the County is to offer conferencing, event space, and arena facilities along with other venues, there is the potential to concession for catering services that will greatly increase the marketability and competitiveness of these venues.
- **Commercial Use Authorization (CUA).** It is recommended that Maury County also consider use of CUAs, which (according to the U.S. National Park Service-NPS) allow for "an individual, group, company, or other for-profit entity to conduct commercial activities and provide specific visitor services" within a park. Allowable activities should be restricted to those that "are determined to be an appropriate use of the park; will have minimal impact on park resources and values; and are consistent with the park purpose, management plans, policies, and regulations." (NPS).

The National Park Service (NPS) generates revenue from these commercial activities which (depending on the park) can include guided backpacking and trail uses, bike tours, kayak trips, photography workshops, fishing trips, and a wide variety of other uses. Since Maury County will be focusing more on greenway, blue way, and nature-based programming, these kinds of CUAs will become an important opportunity for the Parks and Recreation Department to generate revenue with (as a form of concessions), minimal direct operational or management cost to the County. A disadvantage of CUAs is that the Parks and Recreation Department would lose some direct control over interpretation of its parks and assets.

- **Recreation and Interpretation User Fees.** As the County develops more interpretive programming in line with the expansion of its asset base and branding efforts, there will be increasing opportunities to collect user fees. There are also opportunities to refine the current fee structures as they exist now.
- **In-House Interpretive Programming:** It is recommended that the County examine its existing and potential capacity for developing an interpretive program that would offer guiding, nature education programming, demonstrations, and other interpretive activities. As compared with use of CUAs, in-house programming ensures that Parks and Recreation maintains more control over the interpretation of its assets. Normally, park staff members (such as rangers in national and state parks) do not charge for limited services such as brief demonstrations, information, or educational talks. However, there may be an opportunity for the County to charge for certain programming like higher-cost (i.e., more time-consuming) bicycling, birding, and kayaking tours geared to group sales, such as for conferences, destination tours, and research activities. Typically, such user fees are structured to recover costs and only occasionally generate net revenue to the department.

Thus, CUAs are more likely to generate more net revenue for parks and recreation that would in-house ranger services. On the other hand, in-house services ensure more control over interpretation of the County's assets. So, these advantages and disadvantages must be weighed against each other.

The County will also need to assess its capacity for providing in-house services versus alternative or complimentary models such as the CUAs for commercial operators or volunteer programs targeted to youth and seniors. Any or all of the three models (In-house, CUA, and Volunteer) could operate simultaneously, depending on the scope and scale of interpretive programming that is developed, the mission of the department relating to interpretation, and the County's in-house capacity.

Funding Strategies Summary & Action Plan

- **League / Operating Fee Structures.** Currently, the only user fees collected by Parks and Recreation are indirect fees that pass through facility rentals paid by sports and athletic leagues. First, there is a need to ensure that facilities are designed and maintained in a way that meets the current and future needs of these user groups, or the fee revenue is likely to continue falling over time. Second, there may be other user fees that the County could be collecting directly through services such as sports and athletic training or department-sponsored leagues. The Master Plan does not recommend development of new county swimming pools or tennis facilities in the near term, but if those types of facilities are built, they would need to generate user fees to help recover the cost of operations.
- **Exhibition Space Rentals.** As noted earlier in this report, rental fees for events that generate a majority of their attendance from outside of Maury County should be paid at a premium. As part of the application process for large users, there should be an effort to collect supportable (documented) information on the activity's attendance inflow and net economic benefits to the County. Such information can then be used to evaluate the opportunity for discounts for certain events.
- **Sponsorships and Naming Rights.** There are opportunities for Parks and Recreation to seek individual, non-profit, and corporate sponsors for park facilities, programs, and events. Sponsorships can help pay for new equipment for existing programs, expansion of those programs, and start-up for new programs. Naming rights and sponsorships are also associated with capital projects, and garnering those rights can be more political. The tolerance for sponsorships is different in each community, according to Athletic Business, Inc., so there would need to be some engagement with stakeholders to measure the willingness to see private names and products associated with public facilities. Regardless, small businesses have famously sponsored Little League teams and other sports and recreation activities for many years, so people are used to seeing a business name associated with athletic activities.

In Maury County, the strongest potential revenue-generating sponsorship opportunities may be associated not with athletics but with outdoor equipment, such as kayaks, climbing equipment, bicycles, canoes, hiking apparel and footwear associated with the County's emerging outdoor recreation brand. Purchase of such equipment could potentially be offset through sponsorships and donations by equipment manufacturers. At a minimum, such producers can be expected to sponsor events such as an annual kayaking race or outdoor recreation festival.

- **Foundation Support.** As noted before, there is the opportunity for Maury County to establish a foundation for parks and recreation that would garner financial support for the activities of the department. But there are also opportunities to access foundation and non-profit support for existing and new parks and recreation facilities, programming, and services.
- **Maury County Parks & Recreation Foundation.** A foundation could access and leverage funding from private individuals, non-profit organizations, and private companies in support of parks and recreation activities, facilities, and services. A foundation would have an independent board and would operate as a non-profit entity charged with capturing funds in support of parks and recreation in the county. Income invested by the foundation could yield annual revenue in support of regular operations and maintenance, in addition to capital facilities and programming. Typically, foundations focus on closing funding "gaps" in the park budget, sponsoring events, advocating for parks & recreation, funding studies and assessments in support of the parks, and building partnerships with non-profits and other entities.
- **Outside Foundation Support.** Other support can be accessed by Maury County Parks and Recreation through grants and donor support from a variety of non-profit foundations whose mission is to support parks and recreation, environmental education, conservation, and related activities.

Examples of prospective foundation grantors and donors include the U.S. Soccer Foundation (Safe Places to Play Grants), Whole Kids Foundation Garden Grants, Home Depot Foundation (Community Impact Grants), GameTime (Playground Grants), Waste Management Charitable Giving, The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation, Major League Baseball (Baseball Tomorrow Fund), USDA (Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program), Keep America Beautiful (Community Restoration and Resiliency Fund), US Golf Association (Alliance Grant Program), US Tennis Association (Facility Assistance Program), eCivis (Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program, Watchable Wildlife Program, and National Trails Training Program), American Water Charitable Foundation (Building Better Communities Grant), and others.

Particularly useful may be targeted grants from groups like Outdoor Nation, a collaborative between paddle-sport manufacturers, outdoor retailers, and the National Park Service. Paddle Nations Grants support blue way development and activities associated with getting more Millennials outdoors.

Partnership Opportunities:

In addition to the aforementioned funding mechanisms, there are also opportunities to engage in partnerships that help create more efficiencies in park and recreation service delivery, garner financial support for park programs, and help to promote Maury County's parks and recreation activities to a broader audience.

Municipal Park Systems

Maury County has three municipal park systems, as discussed elsewhere in this report. These systems offer multiple opportunities for collaboration and mutual benefit, such as through the following:

Reducing Redundancy. There are opportunities to reduce any redundancies not only in product and services but also in operations and maintenance in order to improve overall operating efficiencies. For example, if each department is contracting for certain similar services, there may be cost savings in entering into joint contracts that provide more economies of scale. A similar opportunity exists for sharing in the capital (or rental) expense associated with equipment, such as mowers, that are used periodically but not on a daily basis.

Collaborate on Programming. There are also opportunities to collaborate in designing programming that utilizes both County and municipal facilities or that offers a program that could not otherwise be offered by any one jurisdiction individually. Pooling resources can sometimes open up new opportunities for programming that would not have otherwise been available in the County.

Enhance Connectivity. Each of the jurisdictions is working to enhance connectivity within their recreation systems, but there are also opportunities to link these systems together in a way that creates a more substantial and coherent countywide greenway, blue way, and bicycling network.

Shared-Use Destination Facilities. Collaboration could also extend to destination facilities or venues that could offer joint programming or a wider variety of programs offered by different jurisdictions. Obviously the location of such facilities does impact on the willingness of other jurisdictions to participate.

Enhanced Funding Opportunities. Working collaboratively to access larger grants, targeted resources, and local sponsorships can work to benefit all jurisdictions by creating more economies of scale and reducing competition for funding.

State Government

If the County pursues outdoor recreation and conservation activities as envisioned in the Master Plan, then there will be increasing opportunities for collaboration with State Government agencies including Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC). Benefits of collaboration could include joint education programs, branding and marketing, and shared resources.

Environmental Organizations

Partnerships with environmental organizations can help create opportunities for grant funding of specific programs, and can help supply staffing support for conservation and environmental education programs. Ultimately, the partnerships could help with marketing a prospective agriculture & environmental expo center to environmental and conservation groups as a center for training, conferencing, and research.

Outdoor Recreation Organizations

There are also opportunities for partnerships with hiking, biking, boating and other outdoor recreation-based organizations that could not only sponsor training programs and activities but also advocate for and promote the County's outdoor recreation systems. As with the environmental and conservation groups, outdoor recreation organizations can become a market base for use of an agriculture & environmental exposition center.

Heritage Farms & Other Historic Properties

The County's Parks and Recreation Department should consider outreach and partnerships with heritage farms and historic properties in the area. Research indicates growing involvement among parks and recreation agencies in heritage sites and related education and tourism activities. Rather than taking on the burden of maintaining historic sites like houses or farms, the County might consider a partnership with a local heritage farm where the County could provide interpretive support. Agricultural heritage is an important part of Maury County's brand and image, and will contribute to the marketing of an agricultural exposition hub. Education about the county's farm heritage will be an important service to provide to Maury County children, since only a small number of them now grow up on farms or are taught about the county's agricultural heritage.

Hotels & Tourism

Since Parks and Recreation will increasingly attract visitors from outside of Maury County to its greenway, blue way, and environmental conservation programs, there are mutually beneficial reasons to collaborate with area hotels and tourism agencies. Parks and Recreation activities will generate tourism and economic benefits to the county if its assets and resources are promoted. Thus, tourism agencies engaged in promoting the County will need to be tied into those programs. The partnerships mentioned above will also be essential in promoting the County's assets. In pursuing the concept of an agriculture and environmental exposition center, hotels will need to be close partners to ensure packaging and marketing of the facility with overnight accommodation. The marketability of such a facility for destination conferences and activities is highly dependent on the availability of high-quality and proximate hotel rooms.

Funding Action Plan:

An action plan for funding has been developed that provides phasing for implementation of some of these funding mechanisms and concepts. The plan is meant as a general framework for implementation. Phasing is split into short-term (1-3 years), mid-term (3-5 years), and long-term (5+ years) actions.

Short-Term Actions

The following actions are recommended within the short-term, between one and three years from the date of this master plan.

- County Budgeting for Parks and Recreation. Dedicate a specific portion of the general fund to the Maury County Parks and Recreation department and establish a strategy to increase funding to meet the growing population in the county.
- Interpretation Programs. Develop interpretation objectives and programming concepts (e.g., blue way tours, bike tours, greenway and birding guiding, environmental education, etc.) relevant to the emerging outdoor recreation brand reinforced by this Master Plan. As part of this interpretive planning effort, identify partners including heritage farms or others to expand sites and opportunities above and beyond County- and municipally-owned assets, blue ways, greenways, and WMAs.
- Interpretation Program & Concession Revenues. Project income-generating potential from new programs and concessions, including interpretation programs (eco-tourism guiding, education), nature center programs, equipment concessions, rentals, and partnerships.
- Interpretation Program Operating Model. Determine the balance of in-house, CUA, and volunteer interpretation that best suits the Parks and Recreation Department's needs, in terms of revenue diversification, in-house capacity, interpretation mission, and service to the community. Based on this review, it is likely that a concession model including CUA will be best suited for most interpretive activities (yielding the highest operating margins) but that the department may want to reserve a place for some in-house and volunteer-driven programming as well. Once this balance has been established, then draft the legal requirements and application procedures for each revenue model.
- Differentiated Rate Structures. Establish differentiated rate structures (e.g., resident/non-resident) to align with programming and venue use as the department evolves to a new level of service.
- Tourism Partnership. Establish a tourism partnership with area tourism agencies, hotels, and services. Communicate with the partners the overall vision and plan for County parks and recreation which includes the establishment of a strong destination visitor component for eco-tourism, conservation and environmental education, outdoor recreation, and (eventually) ag/environmental expo center. Develop baseline attendance and user base information as a starting point for conducting needs assessments and for communicating

economic impacts. As this relationship develops, a dedicated funding source should be negotiated out of the lodging tax to help fund facilities and programming for key parks and recreation department activities.

- Agriculture & Environmental Exposition Center. Conduct a feasibility assessment indicating the market potentials, financial sustainability, and economic benefits of an agriculture & environmental expo center in Maury County. A component of this study should examine how the facility might anchor a destination tourism strategy focused on the county's agricultural and environmental / outdoor recreation assets. Integration of a nature center and lodging may also be considered as part of this study.

Mid-Term Actions

The following mid-term actions are recommended over the period from three to five years from the date of this Master Plan.

- Parks & Recreation Foundation. Establish a Parks & Recreation Foundation for Maury County, to help leverage new revenue sources and advocate for county parks. This could also involve short-term actions to work with the existing friends of Maury County to form a 501C-3 organization that could assist in seeking grants, partnerships, volunteers, and promotion of facilities and programs.
- Eco-Tourism Projects. Assess the viability of new eco-tourism and outdoor recreation capital projects and programs. Smaller efforts may only require identification, assessment, and interpretation of the unique characteristics of local flora, fauna, geological formations, view sheds, and water ways. More extensive capital projects would require more in-depth feasibility analysis and assessment of environmental impacts. Programming should be developed around these projects, with an emphasis on environmental education and interpretation consistent with the department's stated mission and objectives.

Long-Term Actions

Long-term actions are recommended for the timeframe beyond five years from the date of this Master Plan.

- Expo Center Complex. If recommended by feasibility assessments, then continue with further investment in a new agricultural and environmental exposition complex in partnership with area tourism agencies and lodging facilities. The initial phases would require siting, environmental impact, design, construction level costing, and other assessment. In the interim, existing facilities should be upgraded where possible to accommodate small-scale conferencing activities.

Implementation Tools Summary

Facilities:	Programs / Services:	Economic Needs / Opportunities:	Partnerships:
<p>1. Create a greenway system in coordination with Columbia, Spring Hill, & Mount Pleasant.</p> <p><u>1-5 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize a link from Yanahli to downtown Columbia. <p><u>5-10 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenway trail extended to Mount Pleasant and/or Spring Hill in partnership with these communities and city leadership. <p><u>10-20 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a county-wide greenway trail system that connects to the Branding of outdoor recreational experiences in Maury County. <p>2. Add additional water access points along the Duck River.</p> <p><u>1-5 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize access points above and below the dam in Columbia. <p><u>5-10 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access points between Columbia & Chickasaw Trace Access points between Chickasaw Trace and Williamsport. <p><u>10-20 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect the blueway system to a regional branding of outdoor recreational experiences in Maury County. <p>3. Acquire park land and establish new community and local parks in growth corridors within the south and east areas of the county where city facilities do not meet recreational demand</p> <p><u>1-5 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire through purchase or donation at least one new park land area in the range of 20-50 acres. <p><u>5-10 year goal.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan, design, and build at least one new community park in the recommended areas of growth Acquire new prime environmental areas available along the duck river corridor by purchase or donation. <p><u>10-20 year goal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire land, plan, design, and build a second community park in the recommended areas of growth. (20 – 50 acres in size) 	<p>1. Promote outdoor adventure.</p> <p><u>1-5 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maury County is in a great position to offer outdoor adventure programs such as, outdoor environmental education, hiking, biking, and paddling opportunities. This could include guided tours and programmed educational events. <p>2. Expand program opportunities at the Maury County Park Community Center.</p> <p><u>1-5 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing facility is in need of heated and cooled indoor space. <p><u>5-10 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renovate/expand Maury County Senior Center. <p><u>10-20 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a new County Recreation Center that might include a pool / aquatics center. <p>3. Establish a location and program for a dog park.</p> <p><u>1-5 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This facility could be done in partnership with the City of Columbia. The park should be designed with controlled entry points. Shade and access to water for both people and dogs. <p><u>5-10 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for additional joint facilities with cities to expand program opportunities. 	<p>1. Establish a permanent maintenance and operations fund.</p> <p><u>1-5 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This fund would be used to address the specific needs of the Parks & Recreation Facilities & Programs. Consider hotel / motel tax as a possible funding source. <p><u>5-10 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase user fees and concession revenues to match the value of improved facilities and increased cost of maintenance. <p>2. Market & Brand the Maury County area as a destination point for outdoor adventure and environmental education.</p> <p><u>1-5 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the county website with improved images, descriptions, and links to promote existing facilities and programs. Coordinate with Maury County Visitors Bureau and the City of Columbia tourism department. <p><u>5-10 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch a major campaign to promote outdoor experiences in Maury County. <p>3. Consider establishing a new regional agricultural and environmental expo center.</p> <p><u>1-5 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The creation of a regional expo center will require an in-depth feasibility study and partnerships with local and state agencies. <p><u>5-10 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This facility should be designed, constructed, and located to hold both local and regional events. 	<p>1. Promote the Duck River as a regional blueway experience In coordination with City of Columbia and TDEC.</p> <p><u>1-5 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to seek joint grant applications for improvement to portage the dam in Columbia. Work with TDOT to allow river access improvements along state route bridges/river crossings. <p><u>5-10 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a greenway / blueway loop along the Duck River <p>2. Coordinate with Columbia, Spring Hill, and Mount Pleasant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships should be made with the municipalities within Maury County to meet the active recreational and athletic tournament needs for the County. A prime opportunity exists to partner with the Muletown Disc Golf Club to establish a course at Maury County Park. <p>3. Continue to expand recreational opportunities at Yanahli Park and WMA natural areas in partnership with state and environmental agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Especially passive use activities like hiking, picnicking, nature observation and camping. Establish an outdoor recreational training program in partnership with state agencies. <p><u>1-5 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a boat ramp and access pier Establish Duck River day use area <p><u>5-10 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish primitive camp sites and extend trail networks <p><u>10-20 year goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish nature and ecology center