

# 2022 BEREA PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

July, 2022



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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



## 2022 Berea Parks and Recreation Master Plan Berea, Kentucky

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## THE NEED FOR A PLAN

Situated off of I-75 in south central Madison county Kentucky, Berea has experienced steady population growth and diversification in the past 40 years necessitating the need for a review of existing and available parkland and facilities. While the City of Berea has a quality existing park system and a myriad of agencies that provide a variety of space/programming, the additional services and improved spaces underscore the need for improvement to existing facilities and measured development of existing parkland.

This 2022 *Berea Parks and Recreation Master Plan* (Master Plan) will be critical to the city's future as it clarifies the department's own responsibilities and needs, as well as what partnerships can be leveraged to best deliver parks, facilities, and recreational choices to the citizens. Meant to instill focus, establish priorities, and inspire action over the next 5 to 10 years, this Master Plan was produced with guidance from an active steering committee appointed by city staff. It is supported by robust data collection, including hours of in-person engagement, and affirms the Berea Parks and Recreation Department as the community's primary provider of recreation facilities and experiences.

Changing community needs, development goals, and operational feasibility are all reasons enough for producing a future-forward plan. The COVID-19 Pandemic, besides dramatically altering daily life,

are shaping the future of communities in ways still impossible to fully understand; however, one certain result is the increasing value communities are placing on parks and recreation spaces. Communities across Kentucky are continuing to invest in their parks and park systems, especially with support from leadership within local government. Parks provide safe spaces for exercise, community-building and leisure, which are all important factors in ensuring Kentuckians are healthy and happy.<sup>1</sup> As civic spaces, parks act as operational hubs for addressing chronic issues like physical inactivity and poor health. Having even a simple connection to nature can relieve stress, improve mental health, and provide opportunities for interpersonal interaction.<sup>2</sup> Exposure to parks and greenspace can improve physical and mental health while providing nature-based alternatives for upstream health promotion.<sup>3</sup>

As the pandemic wanes, the increasing demand for outdoor and recreation spaces has remained high, adding stress to existing parks and outdoor infrastructure across the country. Agencies are adapting and finding creative funding solutions,<sup>4</sup> boldly stepping into the critical work of bridging inequity, safeguarding physical and mental health, and ensuring access. This type of flexibility exemplifies the substance of the recommendations in this Master Plan. While it is impossible to decipher a single "correct" path into the post-pandemic future, this plan underscores the need for responsive action, elevated experiences, and reinforced civic infrastructure. This Master Plan maps the beginning of multi-dimensional

<sup>1</sup> Gov. Andy Beshear, Office of the Governor, "Gov. Beshear Announces 41 Communities Selected for More Than \$4.3 Million to Improve Parks, Outdoor Spaces Across Kentucky" [https://kydlgweb.ky.gov/Articles/16\\_articleView.cfm?NewsID=712#:~:text=%E2%80%9CParks%20and%20recreation%20spaces%20are,Kentuckians%20are%20healthy%20and%20happy](https://kydlgweb.ky.gov/Articles/16_articleView.cfm?NewsID=712#:~:text=%E2%80%9CParks%20and%20recreation%20spaces%20are,Kentuckians%20are%20healthy%20and%20happy). (March 2021)

<sup>2</sup> National Recreation and Park Association, "Health and Wellness," <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/health-wellness/>, (March 30, 2022).

<sup>3</sup> North Carolina Medical Journal. March 2022. Nature-based Pathways to Health Promotion: The Value of Parks and Greenspace.

<sup>4</sup> McCormick, Kathleen. Room to Roam: The Pandemic Has Underscored the Need for More Urban Parks; So What Comes Next? Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. <https://www.lincolnst.edu/publications/articles/2020-10-room-roam-pandemic-urban-parks-what-comes-next>. (October 7, 2020). Accessed November 2020.

recovery where parks and recreation are not only important but essential for building a strong, vibrant community in the City of Berea.<sup>5</sup>

## EXISTING CONDITIONS OF PARKS AND RECREATION IN BEREA

Due to the nature of the existing park systems in Berea, it is necessary to classify the parks according to their functions. A park system should be evaluated as a composite of recreation areas with each meeting a particular public need; the system should provide a combination of smaller neighborhood parks, larger community parks, and special use parks. For all residents, whatever their background, parks help provide a variety of passive and active outdoor recreational opportunities. Proximity to these valuable resources invariably improves community health and wellness, not to mention create more adaptable, robust local economies.<sup>6</sup>

Berea maintains about 55 acres of parkland and six parks, including one neighborhood park, two community parks, and three special use parks. In addition to these properties, residents have access to several trails, parks, and open spaces managed by other city departments and outside entities (e.g., tourism, Berea College-owned parks and school-owned parks) within Berea and many more just beyond the township boundary.

### Demographic and Benchmarking Analysis

A strong, proactive approach to department operations requires knowledge and understanding of community demographics. The findings of this Master Plan (Chapter 2) show:

- The population has steadily grown over the past 40 years with growth projected to continue
- Household size has increased from 2.39 in 2000 to 2.44 in 2021
- The senior population (65+) as a percentage will outpace senior populations in Madison County but not Kentucky
- Median age is increasing

The analysis of existing conditions includes a benchmark comparison to 50 similar agencies using the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics database. The benchmarking shows the

city has lower service ratios (facilities per population) for all amenities but multipurpose rectangular fields, which could be more equitably utilized. The city population and availability of open park space provides opportunity to expand those underserved services to the community playgrounds, and programming, and management of existing fields.

These improvements will be especially critical as post-pandemic shifts in demand for parks and open space add to stresses on existing resources.

### Service Area Analysis (Gaps)

Maps of service areas for various parks and facilities were used to identify “Service Gaps” or underserved areas within Berea. Maps were also created to illustrate levels of access to various park categories and facilities. The analysis indicated that just about a third of Berea residents (32%) are within walking distance of a park. The city also has an existing extensive trail system that provides opportunity for connections and bridging the gaps between recreation areas as well as future plans to bridge said gaps.

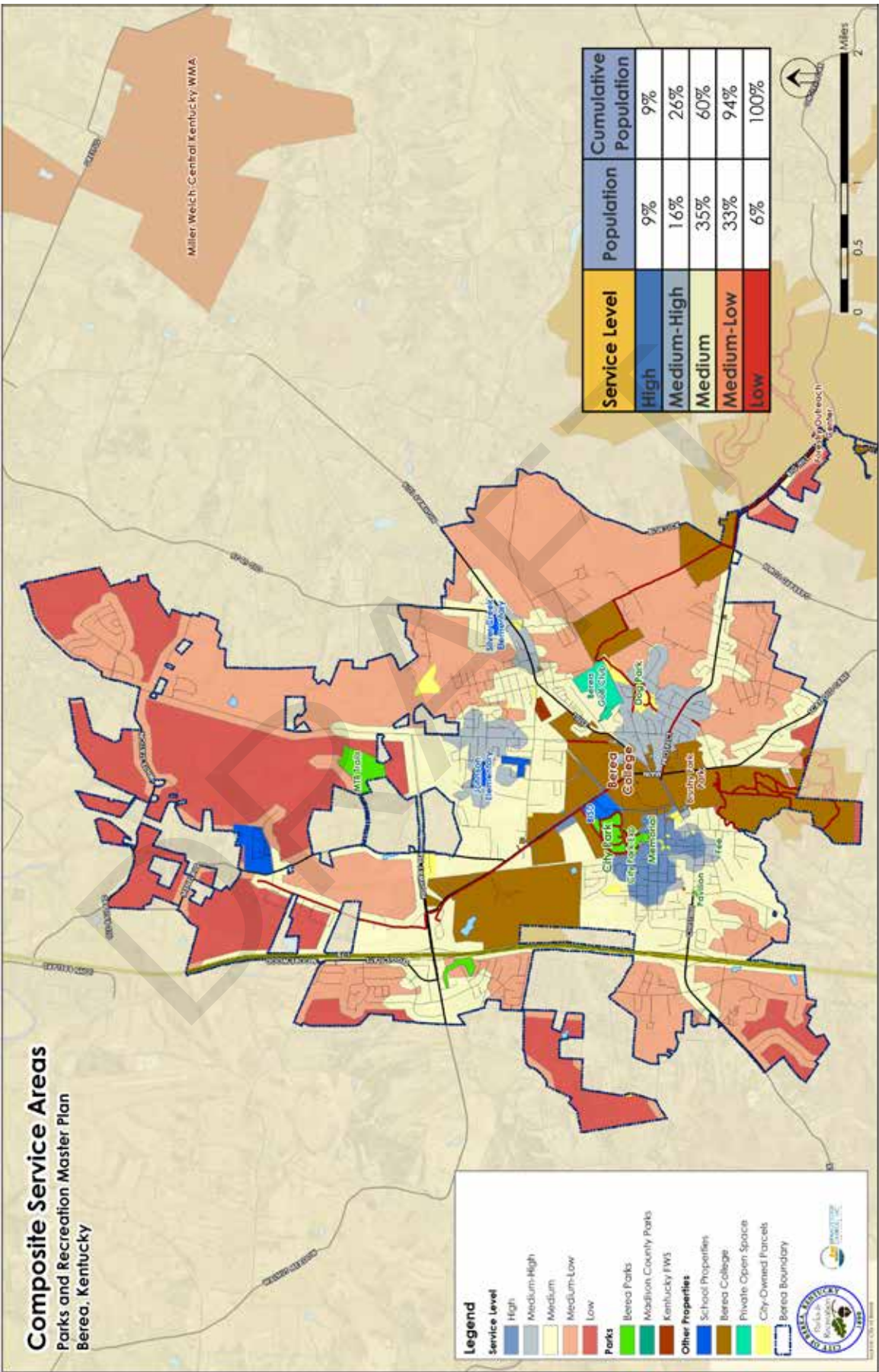
Lastly, a composite service areas map shows the overall level of service for parks and facilities, ranked from high to low, in turn revealing spaces of need and opportunity. Dark shades of blue indicate high service levels, while red areas show the areas with the lowest level of service to parks and facilities. Twenty-six percent (26%) of Berea’s residents live in the highest two categories; however, about 40% live within the medium to medium-low service areas.

Overall, Berea has a medium level of service for some type of park access whether that be a Berea property or another type of recreation area. Areas with the highest levels of service are those near Berea City Park, as this park offers a large variety of amenities.

Service Level	Population	Cumulative Population
High	9%	9%
Medium-High	16%	26%
Medium	35%	60%
Medium-Low	33%	94%
Low	6%	100%

<sup>5</sup> Marquis, Bridget. Infrastructure That Does More: Investing in Public Spaces for a Resilient America. Strong Towns. [https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2020/11/23/infrastructure-that-does-more-investing-in-public-spaces-for-a-resilient-america?fbclid=IwAR2Aa8OXGjUpGNv3ibIDHC-W40ic9L9QjnXvix\\_kgFSocTcEoi5vihqJ0bDg](https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2020/11/23/infrastructure-that-does-more-investing-in-public-spaces-for-a-resilient-america?fbclid=IwAR2Aa8OXGjUpGNv3ibIDHC-W40ic9L9QjnXvix_kgFSocTcEoi5vihqJ0bDg) (November 24, 2020). Accessed December 4, 2020

<sup>6</sup> Berg, Nate. Great Parks Don’t Just Have Rec. Space: They Create Jobs. 2021. Fast Company. [https://www.fastcompany.com/90624316/great-parks-dont-just-have-rec-space-they-create-jobs?mc\\_cid=105f89bd93&mc\\_eid=6c9b6b28d4](https://www.fastcompany.com/90624316/great-parks-dont-just-have-rec-space-they-create-jobs?mc_cid=105f89bd93&mc_eid=6c9b6b28d4)



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## A CITIZEN DRIVEN PLAN

To make informed decisions moving forward, Berea needs meaningful public input in addition to robust statistical and performance analysis. Including resident participation in the planning process gives actual park users a means to share their individual needs, perceptions, concerns, and desires for the park system they themselves use. This Master Plan process used several methods to connect with the community.

As the city begins to implement this plan, sustained efforts will be necessary to continuously solicit public feedback about development projects; allowing direct participation whenever possible will ensure the community feels heard and has pride in their parks. As the community finds new balance amid the coronavirus recovery, engagement efforts should be flexible and creative, utilizing tools like on-site feedback (e.g., bulletin boards) and interactive online platforms.

The summary below indicates the various ways the public was involved throughout this planning process.

### Engagement Summary

1. An open house workshop held on November 9, 2021 allowed attendees to learn more about the Master Plan and provide input on three general topics – “Parks and Facilities,” “Trails and Natural Areas,” and “Programs and Events.”
2. Meetings with stakeholder groups (July 2021) representing:
  - Madison United
  - Swim Teams (Berea dolphins & Madison County High School Swim & Dive)
  - Berea Youth Softball/Baseball League
  - Madison County Public Library and Berea College food programs
  - Berea Fitness and Crossfit Berea
  - Berea Tourism
  - Madison County Youth Football League
  - Berea Community Soccer
  - Berea Seniors
3. A statistically valid needs assessment survey (mail survey) conducted by the ETC Institute – 312 total surveys received
4. An online survey (Web Survey) – available from Spring to Fall of 2021 and powered by Survey Monkey – completed by 814 respondents (87% residents of Berea, 13% of another area)

## WHAT BEREA RESIDENTS SAID

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

### Stakeholder Groups

Discussions spanned a diversity of issues:

1. Connectivity & Wayfinding
2. Upgraded Facilities
3. Indoor Recreation Space
4. Field Space
5. New Facilities
6. Expanded Programming
7. Partnerships, collaboration, & marketing
8. Operations

### Survey Results

#### Visitation

According to the Mail Survey, 89% of residents visited a park in Berea at some point in the past year; 45% of these residents visited parks 20 or more times. The Web Survey reflects slightly lower usage rates; however, they are similar to the mail survey responses (see Chapter 4).

#### Physical Condition

According to the Mail Survey, 87% of households rated the facilities condition as good or excellent or good with 12% rating them as fair. Web Survey results were similar, but respondents were less likely to rate conditions as excellent.

#### Existing Parks Improvements (Mail/Web)

1. Restrooms (63%, 61%)
2. Drinking fountains (55%, 37%)
3. Shade structures (48%, 47%)
4. Picnic shelters (48%, 43%)

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

Unsurprisingly, the greatest household needs for parks and recreation concerned walking & hiking trails (75%) with natural areas/nature parks ranked second (64%). Picnic shelters were a close third (61%). However, the top unmet need according to the Mail



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Survey was picnic shelters/areas, followed by small neighborhood parks.

### Most Important Facilities (Sum of Top 4 Choices)

- Walking & hiking trails – 38%
- Natural Areas/nature parks – 27%
- Swimming Pools – 19%
- Picnic Shelters/areas – 17%

The results of the most important facilities were combined with the reported unmet needs to determine high (top 5) facility priorities for investment:

1. Walking & hiking trails
2. Natural Areas/nature parks
3. Picnic shelters/areas
4. Swimming pools (indoor)
5. Small neighborhood parks

### Most Important Programs (Sum of Top 4 Choices)

- Concerts/art performances – 32%
- Fitness/wellness programs – 21%
- Age 50+ programs – 19%
- Water fitness programs – 19%

The results of the most important programs were combined with the reported unmet needs to determine the high (top 7) program priorities for investment:

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

And finally, respondents shared their level of support for a range of improvements and potential development covered in the survey. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of households indicated support for upgrading existing parks and facilities, and about 77% supported development of new recreation trails and connecting existing trails.

### Learning about Activities

Currently, residents learn about programs and activity offerings via word of mouth, followed by social networking, and the newspaper. Moving forward, residents would overwhelmingly prefer to learn about these offerings via social networking or

Email notification and has notable opportunities to improve. Fifty-three percent (53%) of households said the top reason for not using facilities and programs was lack of information about what is available. Based on these results, the city should expand upon its online presence, potentially including additional platforms.

### Engagement Key Findings

Results indicate that generally the Berea community desires:

- Upgrades and improvements to existing parks
- Preservation of and access to natural areas
- Increased connectivity via trail systems
- Athletic field improvements – lighting, more field space, drainage improvements, shade
- New facilities – splash pad, futsal courts, amphitheater/stage, disc golf
- Expanded programming and events – concerts, festivals, outdoor movies
- More neighborhood parks
- Indoor recreation center
- Improved website and branding
- More partnerships
- Increased staff

## VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES FOR PARKS AND RECREATION IN BEREA

Berea and the steering committee, with support from the planning team, worked to craft a strategic plan. This facet of the document solidifies the daily purpose of the agency, its guiding values, and the long-term view of success.

### Vision

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

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

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## New Vision for Berea Parks and Recreation

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

**Parks and programs enrich life and bring our community together**

### Mission

#### Purpose of a Mission

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

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

#### Existing Mission for Berea Parks and Recreation

Consistently increase the quality of life for all residents within the community and to all who enjoy recreational pursuits in the City of Berea

#### New Mission for Berea Parks and Recreation

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

**Provide diverse spaces that bring excitement to the community and improve quality of life**

### Values

#### Community

Connecting the community to fun, nature, and each other

#### Wellness

Promoting health and wellbeing for all ages

#### Innovation

Encouraging exploration for diverse opportunities

#### Inclusion

Ensuring accessibility and affordability for our diverse population

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives will guide the operations, improvements, and services in parks and recreation in Berea over the next 5-10 years.

### Goal 1: Healthy Community

Deliver opportunities for wellness, creativity, and fun to improve physical and mental health and enrich the lives of our community.

**Athletics:** Ensure all in the community have access sports programs and facilities

**Arts & Culture:** Capitalize on Berea's unique heritage to enrich community vibrancy

**Wellness:** Encourage exploration & growth through diverse physical activities and learning opportunities

### Goal 2: A Connected Community

Enhance links between people, parks, and places

**Trails & Wayfinding:** Provide trails that connect users to destinations and activities

**Gathering:** Encourage community interaction through appealing and accessible offerings

**Nature:** Provide connections between the community and the natural environment through access, preservation, and education

### Goal 3: A Modern Community

Provide a wide range of modern features, updated infrastructure, and proactive maintenance to ensure everyone has opportunities for enjoyment

**Places:** Responsibly provide parks to engage and connect the community

**Amenities:** Provide Accessible facilities, structures, and support features

**Proactive Maintenance:** Enhance safety, accessibility, quality, and cost effectiveness by continuously examining maintenance standards and best practices

### Goal 4: A Driven Community

Employ strong leadership to direct an engage community using efficient management, exceptional customer service, sustainable operations, and productive partnerships

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**Operations:** Encourage an engaged and well-trained workforce of valued staff that inspire pride in the community

**Partnerships:** Continue to prioritize relationships and information sharing to effectively tackle collective goals across the community

**Engagement:** Meaningfully connect with residents and partners to respond to needs, eliminate barriers, and promote opportunities

**Finances:** Explore creative operational and capital strategies to enhance efficiency and promote economic development

## SYSTEMWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Add and expand existing support features throughout the park system such as restrooms, seating, picnic/shade structures, trees, and landscaping
2. Fill the vacant parks and recreation position along with budgeting for future positions to better manage new and improved parks
3. Expand capacity at existing Berea athletic field space by updating current facilities for multiuse, reconfiguration, and conversion to artificial turf
4. Update Berea's Master Trails Plan to include new park linkages with standards for design
5. Seek opportunities to add parks and amenities in underserved areas, such as Walnut Creek Dr and Mary St/Burchwood Park properties
6. Conduct ADA audit and improve ADA access to all existing and future facilities
7. Implement online registration to simplify program sign-up, relieve pressure on staff and improve awareness
8. Continuously seek opportunities to improve marketing and promotion, including additional social media platforms
9. Utilize existing parkland to meet unmet facility needs and to improve access to park features (e.g., amphitheater, pickleball)
10. Identify and address staffing, maintenance, and training requirements when adding new parks and amenities
11. Consider alternative funding opportunities, such as a Berea Parks Foundation, to fund park improvements and operations
12. Continue seeking grants and apply to foundations for project funding that enhances the park system
13. Institute an easy-to-understand Cost Recovery and Pricing plan for all services offered
14. Expand program and event offerings in response to community demand, potentially using vendors
15. Partner with other organizations to provide programming and facilities to the public the city does not currently offer
16. Seek partnerships to develop a new field complex to address the ever-increasing demand for fields and to potentially attract tournaments
17. Conduct a study with community engagement to determine the needs, feasibility, and costs (capital and operational) of an indoor recreation center

## ACTION PLAN

The *2022 Berea Parks and Recreation Master Plan* concludes with an Action Plan of 123 strategies and recommendations. These action items, which can be found in Chapter 9, detail specific actions for Berea to take to implement this long-range Master Plan.

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 THE NEED FOR A PLAN

The City of Berea located in Madison County Kentucky has experienced steady population growth since 1980 population of about 15,000 in 2021. While Berea has a great park system with quality parks, the quantity and types of program and facility offerings need diversification. The needs of the community have also evolved since the parks were constructed. This *2022 Berea Parks and Recreation Master Plan*, set in motion by the city, is needed to guide future improvement in response to growth and changes in the community.

While changing community needs and development goals taken altogether are reason enough for producing a future-forward plan, 2022 ushers in a post-pandemic future. Parks and recreation agencies are slowly re-opening programs and services and are rebuilding that sense of community that everyone has been craving since 2020. In a regional example, the Big South Fork Recreation Area in northeastern Tennessee saw a 10% increase in attendance in 2021.<sup>1</sup>

To overview of the current system, the Berea Parks and Recreation Department oversees over 50 acres of parkland, including one neighborhood park and two community parks. Because this plan is concerned with community access overall and demand for parks and recreation in general, it is important to also consider the many other providers in the city. Berea College and a few elementary schools offer recreational amenities to the community. Surrounding Berea are other parks and natural areas provided by the State of Kentucky, such as the Central Kentucky Wildlife Refuge and the John B Stephenson Memorial State Forest. A bit further, but still within driving distance is the Daniel Boone National Forest which offers various outdoor recreation opportunities.

In recognizing the need for a future-focused plan, City Council and Parks and Recreation Department staff determined a comprehensive planning process should be completed to best align services with community demand. The city appointed a steering committee to support and help guide the planning process. This *2022 Berea Parks and Recreation Master Plan* is the culmination of an engaged and informed planning process. Its 5 -10 year scope will provide critical guidance for parks, recreation, and community connection as Berea moves forward into the future.

<sup>1</sup> Commonwealth Journal. Press, A. Big south fork park attendance in 2021 sees nearly 10% rise. [https://www.somerset-kentucky.com/covid-19/big-south-fork-park-attendance-in-2021-sees-nearly-10-rise/article\\_3fdac1c4-9347-11ec-b563-636c994e8099.html](https://www.somerset-kentucky.com/covid-19/big-south-fork-park-attendance-in-2021-sees-nearly-10-rise/article_3fdac1c4-9347-11ec-b563-636c994e8099.html) , (February, 21 2022).

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## 1.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF PARKS

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

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

In assessing overall quality of life, a community's parks and recreation system is considered a primary indicator; higher quality programming and spaces correspond to higher quality of life. To begin with, parks can play a critical role in a strategy for promoting health and tackling challenges like poor nutrition, hunger, obesity, and physical inactivity. Whether through programming or excellent amenities, park spaces can encourage physical and social activity. And proximity matters – even living near a small neighborhood park like Memorial Park can encourage higher activity levels – because residents of all ages with access to a variety of recreation facilities are less likely to be overweight and more likely to be in better health. But beyond impacting physical health, studies also illuminate the powerful connection between nature and improved mental wellbeing. Spending time in passive parks and natural open spaces like Brushy Fork Park can help relieve stress, nurture longtime respect for the environment, stimulate imagination, and restore mental balance. Parks can make tangible contributions to residents too – community gardens, for instance, often provided in partnership with or by parks agencies themselves, can afford residents direct access to fresh food while simultaneously beautifying the neighborhood and fostering community interaction.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to all of these incredible individual benefits, parks can make an invaluable contribution to collective wellbeing. As gathering places for the community and hubs of connection, parks are where multiple interests and passions can play out at once – on game courts and fields, along trails and on playgrounds, and at shelters and picnic tables – helping to cultivate community ties. While less tangible, these collective benefits increase the livability and desirability of our communities and help begin to address the sociopolitical divisions that challenge every municipality.<sup>3</sup>

Residents in the City of Berea clearly place a high value on parks and recreation. According to the Berea Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment survey, 89% of residents in Berea have visited a Berea park in the past year with 45% of those having visited 20 or more times (see Chapter 4). Clearly, parks and recreation services are important to the people of Berea. By implementing this Master Plan and bringing its recommendations to life, Berea leadership will ensure all residents can enjoy quality gathering places, excellent recreation opportunities, and overall improved quality of life.

## 1.3 MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

The master planning process for this document consisted of four phases and ongoing dialogue between representatives from the City of Berea and the consultant team. The City of Berea staff appointed the plan

<sup>2</sup> Community gardening. LouisvilleKY.gov. (n.d.), <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/community-gardening> (April, 12 2022).

<sup>3</sup> National Recreation and Park Association, "Social Equity," <http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Impacting-Communities/Social-Equity/>, (December, 10 2019).

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Steering Committee – members of which included staff members, community leaders, and other stakeholders – to collaborate with and guide the consultant through the plan process. As each phase concluded documentation was submitted along with a presentation of findings. The following sections provide a summary of each phase in the process: Evaluate → Engage → Envision → Plan.

## 1.4 EVALUATE

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

### 1.4.1 Demographic Analysis

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

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

### 1.4.2 Benchmarking Analysis

Using information provided by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics program, Berea Parks and Recreation offerings were compared to 50 agencies located in Illinois, Indiana, North Carolina, Tennessee, Ohio, Missouri, Virginia, and, Arkansas (serving populations between 5,000 and 25,000) who participated in the Park Metrics program.<sup>4</sup> Comparisons between park systems covered several criteria such as parkland inventory, department functions, staffing, budgets, facilities offered, and more (see Chapter 2).

### 1.4.3 Inventory of Parks, Facilities, and Programs

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

#### Park Classification

As a first step, parks and related sites in the City of Berea were catalogued to better evaluate the overall recreation opportunities available to the public. In this updated inventory, sites were classified as neighborhood parks, community parks, or special use parks.

#### Parks, Open Space, and Facilities Inventory

The consultant team took stock of all existing parks and open space properties available in the Berea. Site visits enabled the team to identify existing conditions and assess opportunities for improvements. As part of this analysis each property was assigned an updated park classification. A comprehensive table provides a summary of the amenities offered at each park. Maps prepared using GIS software (ArcMap by Esri) serve to highlight the location of all the city-owned parks, as well as those offered by other providers in the area.

### 1.4.4 Needs Assessment and Identification

#### Level of Service Guidelines

The consultant synthesized public input, benchmarking comparisons, and existing standards to develop new guidelines for level of service provided by the Berea Parks and Recreation Department. These level of service

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<sup>4</sup> No agencies in Kentucky were available in this population range.

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guidelines were defined for each park classification, different recreation facilities, and for total acreage of both parkland and open space.

## **Geographic Distribution – Service Gap Analysis**

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

### **1.4.5 Trends**

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

## **1.5 ENGAGE**

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

### **1.5.1 Public Workshop Open House**

A public workshop was held at the Russel Acton Folk Center on November 9, 2021 to solicit input from citizens and users regarding their concerns and opinions about existing facilities and programs and to determine their desires for future facilities and programs. The meetings allowed participants to visit a series of stations in order to provide their input and learn more about the Master Plan.

### **1.5.2 Berea Community Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey**

A statistically valid mail survey (Mail Survey) was conducted by ETC Institute producing a total of 312 returned surveys. This portion of the public input was completed early in the process (October 2021). The survey was used to identify:

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

### **1.5.3 Web-Based Survey**

The planning consultant team prepared an additional survey, in both handout and web-based formats. All residents and program users were invited to complete the survey. In all, 814 individuals participated in the survey, 87% of whom identified as residents of Berea. Results are presented and examined extensively in Chapter 4.

### **1.5.4 Stakeholder Groups**

Berea provided coordination support and collaboration to convene conversations with about 25 special interest groups, as well as meetings with various levels of Parks and Recreation staff. These discussions helped



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illuminate priorities from various perspectives. Facilitation questions were prepared in advance and approved by the steering committee.

## 1.6 ENVISION

### Parks and Recreation Mission and Strategic Plan with Goals and Objectives

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

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

## 1.7 PLAN

In this final phase, a detailed action plan – informed by public and stakeholder input, data collected, service mapping, and steering committee guidance – was developed to direct the Berea Parks and Recreation Department in their efforts moving forward. Recommendations are separated into the following groupings.

### 1.7.1 Recommendations

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

### 1.7.2 Action Plan

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

The Action Plan provided specific strategies for:

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

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

### Draft Master Plan

A draft of the *2022 Berea Parks and Recreation Master Plan* was presented to the Berea Parks and Recreation Department and the steering committee in August 2022. Master Plan findings and recommendations will be presented to City Council in September.

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## PLANNING CONTEXT

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Planning Context chapter provides a summary of factors and trends that may influence the delivery of parks and recreation services throughout the City of Berea. This chapter begins with a summary of population and demographic trends in Berea and concludes with a benchmarking analysis comparing parks and recreation in the city with other agencies around the region.

### 2.2 POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Needs vary between demographic groups, and these needs also invariably change over time. Each of the following demographic categories examines specific elements of the population. This exploration of general demographic trends in Berea helps define current conditions as well as identify potential future needs for parks and recreation service in the community.

#### 2.2.1 Population Change

Figure 2.1 illustrates the population change in Berea from 1980 to 2026 (data collected from U.S. Census Bureau and Esri). The figure shows how Berea's population has nearly doubled over the last 40 years. By 2026, the city's population is expected to be just over 15,600. Growth has been steady between the decades, and projections indicate sustained but moderate increase.

#### 2.2.2 Household Size

Table 2.1 shows the number of households in 2021 along with the average household size from 2000 to 2026 for Berea, Madison County, Kentucky, and the USA. As evident in the table, Berea's household size has grown in the 20 years since 2000; all other comparison geographies show stable or decreased household size. Projections for 2026 show Berea's average household size will be 2.44 (2.39 in 2000). Kentucky and Madison County both have comparable household sizes to Berea's; all three of these geographies have a smaller average household size as compared to the nation as a whole (2.58).

Figure 2.1: Population Change in Berea

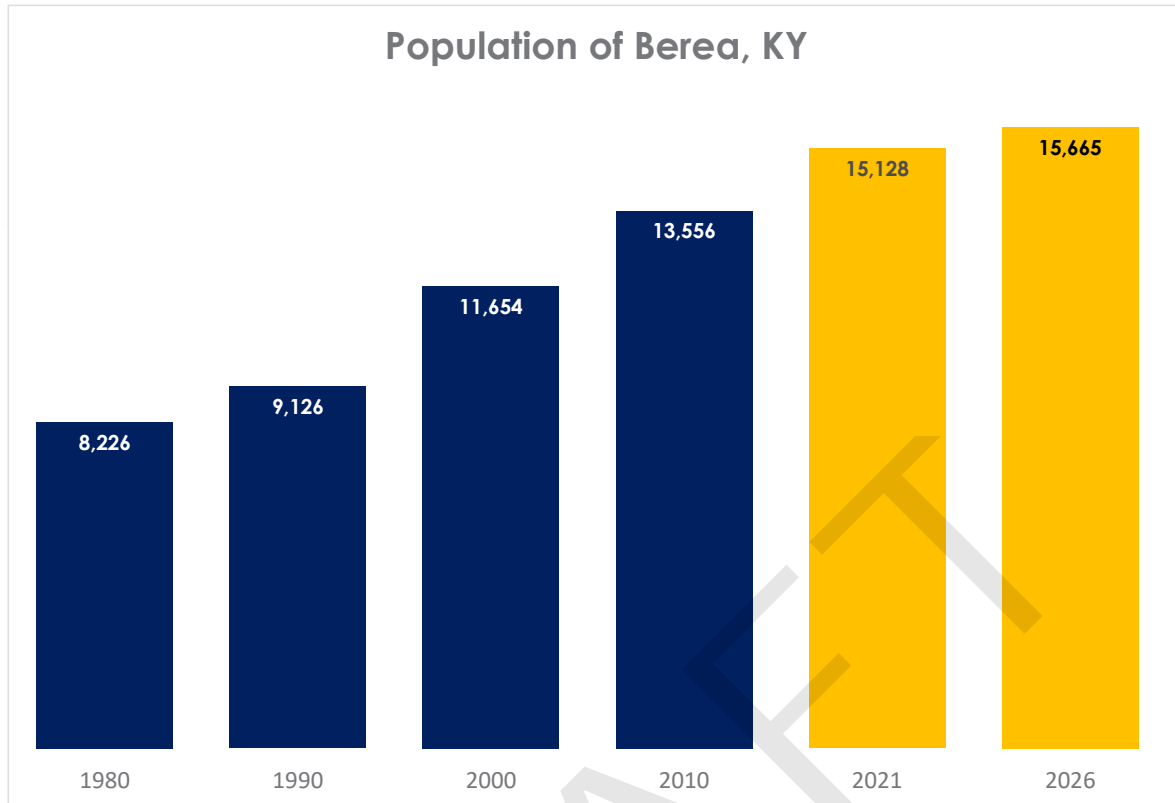


Table 2.1: Household Size in Berea

	Households	Average Household Size			
	2021	2000	2010	2021	2026
USA	126,470,675	2.59	2.58	2.58	2.58
Kentucky	1,818,999	2.47	2.45	2.45	2.45
Madison County	35,618	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.43
Berea	5,654	2.39	2.39	2.43	2.44

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

### 2.2.3 Median Age

Table 2.2 shows the median age for Berea, Madison County, Kentucky, and the USA for the decades between 2000 and 2021, including projections for 2026. The median age in Berea has increased since 2000 and is expected to reach 37.7 by 2026. As of 2021, Berea has a lower median age than Kentucky, but is slightly higher than Madison County. That said, all geographies have already and will continue to experience aging, while Kentucky and the USA both have higher median ages.

Table 2.2: Median Age of Berea

	2000	2010	2021	2026
USA	35.3	37.1	38.8	39.5
Kentucky	35.9	37.9	40.1	41.1
Madison County	30.8	33.0	36.0	37.3
Berea	31.7	32.5	36.4	37.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

**Table 2.3: Population Age 65 and Over**

	2000	2010	2021	2026
USA	12.4%	13.0%	17.2%	19.2%
Kentucky	12.5%	13.3%	18.0%	20.1%
Madison County	9.8%	10.9%	15.7%	17.7%
Berea	13.6%	12.7%	17.0%	18.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

## 2.2.4 Senior Population

Table 2.3 displays the population age 65 and over between the years 2000 and 2026. Berea’s 65+ population has grown in the last two decades, but the growth has been slightly less rapid compared to the changes at the other geographic levels. As of 2021, Berea has a comparable percentage population of 65+ residents to the USA, with Madison County having slightly fewer (15.7% versus Berea’s 17%) and Kentucky having slightly more (18% versus Berea’s 17%) seniors. Growth of the 65+ community is expected to continue into 2026.

## 2.2.5 Children

Table 2.4 presents percentages of population under age 18 between 2000 and 2021 with projections for 2026. As evident in the table, Berea has a comparable population of youth (20.4% compared to the nation’s 21.7%). Of note is the rate of change; while all geographies are experiencing declining percentages of the population under age 18, Berea saw a small uptick in 2010 (from 21% in 2000 to 22.7%) before decreasing to just over 20% by 2021. The percentages in Berea and Madison County are expected to stay about the same into 2026, both about 1% lower than the state or national levels.

**Table 2.4: Population Under Age 18**

	2000	2010	2021	2026
USA	25.7%	24.0%	21.7%	21.5%
Kentucky	24.6%	23.6%	21.3%	21.2%
Madison County	21.8%	21.7%	20.4%	20.5%
Berea	21.0%	22.7%	20.4%	20.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

## 2.2.6 Poverty

Table 2.5 shows percentages of the population living below the poverty line at each of the geographic levels. As of 2018, poverty in Berea (20.5%) was more than 12% lower than it was in 2010. The city had a slightly higher percentage of its population living in poverty in 2018 than Madison County or Kentucky (20.5% compared to 19.0% and 17.9% respectively); it had just over 6% more than the nation.

Table 2.6 describes poverty levels for children specifically. In 2010, Nearly 40% of children in Berea were living in poverty. By 2018, that number had been cut almost in half. Looking at the comparison geographies, though Berea still did not have the lowest rate, but the city had reduced child poverty to below that of Kentucky (24.4). Madison County and the nation each had lower percentages of children in poverty (19.7% and 19.5% respectively). Poverty in Berea was more than 6% higher than the nation as a whole.

**Table 2.5: Population Below Poverty Line**

	2010	2018
USA	13.8%	14.1%
Kentucky	17.7%	17.9%
Madison County	18.9%	19.0%
Berea	32.8%	20.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-year estimates

**Table 2.6: Children Below Poverty Line**

	2010	2018
USA	19.2%	19.5%
Kentucky	24.3%	24.4%
Madison County	23.3%	19.7%
Berea	39.6%	21.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-year estimates

## 2.2.7 Income and Educational Attainment

As presented in Table 2.7, the median household income in Berea (\$45,288 as of 2021) has declined slightly since 2010 after adjusting for inflation. Madison County has also seen a similar decrease since 2010. Though the median household income is expected to increase into 2026, the growth is considerably less than the change expected at the national level. In all timeframes, Berea was lower than the comparison median household income.

**Table 2.7: Household Income**

	2010	2010 Adjusted	2021	2026
<b>Median Household Income</b>				
USA	\$51,914	\$60,305	\$64,730	\$72,932
Kentucky	\$41,576	\$49,497	\$52,382	\$56,965
Madison County	\$41,894	\$50,574	\$49,474	\$53,641
Berea	\$38,333	\$46,275	\$45,288	\$49,564
<b>Per Capita Income</b>				
USA	\$27,334	\$31,752	\$35,106	\$39,378
Kentucky	\$22,515	\$26,805	\$28,425	\$31,796
Madison County	\$21,536	\$25,998	\$26,127	\$29,167
Berea	\$18,003	\$21,733	\$21,754	\$24,180

Source: Esri forecasts, BLS

Looking at per capita income, Berea still has the lowest values across the years and into 2026. However, the difference between per capita income at the different geographic levels is somewhat less stark than the median household income. In 2021, Berea's per capita income is almost exactly what it was in 2010 (looking at the adjusted 2010 value, \$21,733). It is about \$14,000 less than the national per capita income, about \$5,000 less than Madison County and \$7,000 less than Kentucky. The city has seen the smallest amount of income growth since 2010 across all comparison geographies.

Below, Table 2.8 shows Berea's rate of change in educational attainment between 2000 and 2021. Much like the comparison geographies, Berea has experienced an overall increase in higher educational attainment. Just over 40% of Berea's population in 2021 have a college degree (Associates or above). This is comparable to Madison County and the nation (both have between 41% and 43%), but it is considerably higher than Kentucky (just over 34% of the state has a college degree).

**Table 2.8: Educational Attainment Age 25 and Over**

Educational Attainment (Highest Level)	Berea		Madison County		Kentucky		USA	
	2000	2021	2000	2021	2000	2021	2000	2021
No High School Diploma	25.6%	12.7%	24.8%	11.1%	25.9%	12.4%	19.6%	11.1%
High School/GED	27.5%	29.9%	29.7%	28.2%	33.6%	33.4%	28.6%	26.9%
Some College, No Degree	18.9%	17.1%	19.2%	19.2%	18.5%	20.0%	21.0%	19.8%
Associates Degree	4.7%	10.2%	4.5%	8.8%	4.9%	8.6%	6.3%	8.7%
Bachelors Degree	14.2%	18.5%	13.1%	19.4%	10.3%	15.2%	15.5%	20.6%
Graduate/Professional/Doctorate Degree	9.2%	11.7%	8.8%	13.4%	6.9%	10.4%	8.9%	13.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

## 2.2.8 Growth of Population by Race

As shown in Table 2.9, Berea is experiencing a slight diversification trend. Multiracial and Hispanic populations have seen the greatest percentage of growth compared to any other race since 2010. While Berea is still majority white (85.4% in 2020). The city's racial composition is clearly shifting. Minority populations in general will likely continue to grow (despite often being undercounted).

**Table 2.9: Population by Race and Hispanic Origin**

Year	Total Population	White Alone		Black Alone		Asian Alone		Other Race Alone		Two or More Races		Hispanic	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2000	13,561	12,135	89.5%	535	3.9%	167	1.2%	80	0.6%	284	2.1%	360	2.7%
2020	15,539	13,272	85.4%	657	4.2%	191	1.2%	89	0.6%	706	4.5%	624	4.0%
# Change	1,978	1,137		122		24		9		422		264	
% Change	14.6%	9.4%		22.8%		14.4%		11.3%		148.6%		73.3%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census

## 2.2.9 Conclusion

The population in Berea is undergoing an aging trend. Though slower than comparison geographies, the change will certainly impact the needs and preferences for parks and recreation services in the community. While parks and recreation can play a role in driving economic growth through tourism and special events, the department will want to consider the financial burden of programming and services on the poorest of the community (and develop creative ways to disperse these costs). Accordingly, the city will need to consider income levels in order to ensure cost-effective solutions and accessible opportunities for all populations in the community. Overall, Berea has seen a decrease in the percentage of residents over 25 without a high school diploma, while attainment of college degrees has increased. These factors point to a more highly educated community with potential shifts in demand and preferences.

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

## 2.3 BENCHMARKING COMPARISONS

One method for evaluating parks and recreation services offered in a community is to use benchmark comparisons to other communities. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics program provides a variety of data for use in benchmarking. The following analysis uses data from 50 agencies located in Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, North Carolina, Missouri, Virginia, and Arkansas (serving populations between 5,000 and 25,000) that participated in the Park Metrics program (Table 2.10). Additionally, NRPA provides an annual report<sup>1</sup> which includes national performance benchmarks; these figures are also used in this evaluation process.

**Table 2.10: Benchmark Agencies**

Agency	State	Year	Population	Budget
Albemarle Parks & Recreation	NC	2020	16,000	\$1,900,000
Athens Parks & Recreation Dept	TN	2020	14,020	\$15,881,000
Ayden Arts and Recreation	NC	2019	5,143	\$21,671,217
Beachwood Recreation Department	OH	2020	11,000	\$3,515,500
Brentwood Parks and Recreation	MO	2020	8,055	\$2,877,620
Broadview Park District	IL	2020	7,755	\$1,200,000
Carrboro (Town of) Recreation and Parks Dept.	NC	2019	22,000	\$5,000,000
Christiansburg (Town of) Parks and Recreation Department	VA	2020	23,000	\$2,500,000
City of Union Parks & Recreation	MO	2020	11,990	\$16,245,839
Clayton Parks & Recreation Department	MO	2020	15,935	\$6,081,319
Clinton (City of) Recreation & Parks Department	NC	2020	8,639	\$9,424,200
Collegedale (City of) Parks & Recreation	TN	2020	11,500	\$8,359,927

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

Table 2.10: Benchmark Agencies (Continued)

Agency	State	Year	Population	Budget
Cramerton Parks and Recreation Department	NC	2019	5,000	\$5,271,400
Danville Parks and Recreation Department	IN	2020	9,001	\$900,000
Des Peres Parks and Recreation	MO	2019	8,573	\$16,814,055
Fairlawn Parks & Recreation	OH	2020	7,400	N/A
Fletcher Parks & Recreation	NC	2020	8,500	\$660,472
Graham Recreation and Parks	NC	2020	15,136	\$22,250,000
Grain Valley Parks and Recreation	MO	2020	14,200	N/A
Hampshire Township Park District	IL	2020	7,569	\$1,680,000
Herndon (Town of) Parks and Recreation Dept	VA	2020	24,545	\$45,647,891
Highland Parks & Recreation	IL	2019	10,000	\$2,245,388
Highland Parks & Recreation	IN	2019	23,727	N/A
Hopewell Recreation and Parks	VA	2020	23,000	\$1,888,610
King (City of) Parks and Recreation	NC	2019	6,877	\$7,548,080
Maryville Parks and Recreation	MO	2020	11,972	\$1,301,439
Mexico Parks & Recreation Dept	MO	2020	11,543	\$14,050,185
Mills River	NC	2020	7,406	\$4,507,100
Moberly Parks and Recreation	MO	2020	13,610	\$2,500,000
Mount Airy Parks and Recreation	NC	2020	10,232	\$13,552,613
Nappanee Parks & Recreation	IN	2019	6,839	\$8,513,439
Nashville (Town of) Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources	NC	2019	5,500	\$5,284,356
Newton (City of) - Parks & Recreation	NC	2020	13,300	\$901,464
Nixa Parks and Recreation	MO	2020	24,000	\$1,300,000
North College Hill	OH	2020	9,300	\$3,500,000
Palos Heights Parks and Recreation	IL	2019	12,590	\$1,984,800
Park Forest (Village of) Recreation & Parks Department	IL	2020	22,200	\$28,143,039
Perryville Parks & Recreation	MO	2019	8,200	\$1,900,000
Pleasant Hill (City of)	MO	2020	8,545	\$632,483
Raymore (City of)	MO	2019	22,000	\$1,500,000
Selma Parks and Recreation	NC	2020	6,913	\$6,538,857
Seymour Indiana Parks	IN	2019	19,731	\$1,103,345
Shelby Parks & Recreation Dept	NC	2019	20,018	\$24,035,223
Siloam Springs Parks & Recreation	AR	2020	15,039	\$19,577,483
Smithville (City of) Parks	MO	2020	10,795	\$646,880
Tallmadge (City of) Parks & Recreation Department	OH	2020	17,537	\$2,243,000
The City of Lewisburg	TN	2019	11,000	\$1,422,622
Vienna (Town of) Department of Parks & Recreation	VA	2020	16,556	\$26,725,030
Waynesville Parks and Recreation Department	NC	2020	9,971	\$1,074,120
Willard Parks and Recreation	MO	2020	5,430	\$5,919,743

Berea is not a participant in the NRPA Park Metrics program; figures were calculated based on information provided by the city. Because the data for other park systems was limited to parks and facilities managed by those agencies, only parks and facilities managed by Berea Parks and Recreation are included in this analysis (other agencies, schools, and private facilities were not included). The figures used in this analysis for Berea were those budgeted for fiscal year 2021, and the figures for the comparison municipalities were those entered for 2019 and 2020.

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



### 2.3.1 Parkland Information

Table 2.11 shows values for several aspects of parks for the City of Berea and benchmarks. For instance, the city provides 3.6 acres of parkland per thousand population, about a third of the benchmark (9.8) and national medians (9.9). As a percentage of the entire jurisdiction, which controls for the different land area of the comparison agencies, 0.5% of land in Berea is city-operated parkland, far less than the benchmark median (2.7%).

While the City of Berea has far less parkland than the benchmarks, a comparable percentage of that parkland is developed – 80% compared to the benchmark median of 83%. The population served per park (3,782) is more than twice the benchmark (1,701). It is also important to note that Berea College owns a large amount of land in and near the city, much of which is available for public access. This land helps meet some of the needs of residents.

**Table 2.11: Parkland Information**

PARKLAND INFORMATION	Berea	Benchmark	National
<b>Acreage of Parkland</b>			
Lower Quartile		65.8	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>143.5</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Upper Quartile		227.8	
<b>Acreage of Parkland per 1,000 Population</b>			
Lower Quartile		6.1	2.1
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>9.9</b>
Upper Quartile		17.2	17.1
<b>Population per Park</b>			
Lower Quartile		1,233	1,316
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>3,782</b>	<b>1,701</b>	<b>2,281</b>
Upper Quartile		2,286	4,140
<b>Parkland as a Percentage of Jurisdiction</b>			
Lower Quartile		1.4%	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Upper Quartile		5.0%	
<b>Percent of Acreage Developed</b>			
Lower Quartile		43%	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Upper Quartile		94%	

### 2.3.2 Trail Information

The comparison of total miles of trails managed by the City of Berea (Table 2.12) shows 2.2 miles of trails, compared to the benchmark median of 3.1 miles. Total trail miles per jurisdiction square mile is a measurement that controls for differences in the physical size of comparative municipalities. Berea has 0.13 miles of trail per square mile of the city, a fraction of the benchmark median of 0.51 miles. The trail miles per ten thousand population measurement, which controls for the population difference between the benchmark communities, shows a value of 1.5 for Berea, half the benchmark median (3.0).

While these numbers indicate that Berea has a lower level of service for trails offered by Parks and Recreation, the city has a growing trail system that is operated jointly between the Public Works Department and Berea College.<sup>2</sup> With connectivity an ever-growing demand in communities all over the country, including Berea, the city and partners will need to continue to seek opportunities to improve connectivity.

<sup>2</sup> Berea Parks and Recreation maintains 8.7% (2.2 mi) of the existing 25.3 mi of trails within the city according to the 2020 City of Berea Comprehensive Plan.

Table 2.12: Trail Information

TRAILS	Berea	Benchmark
<b>Total Trail Miles Managed or Maintained</b>		
Lower Quartile		2.0
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>3.1</b>
Upper Quartile		5.9
<b>Total Trail Miles per Jurisdiction Sq. Mi.</b>		
Lower Quartile		0.32
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>0.13</b>	<b>0.51</b>
Upper Quartile		0.87
<b>Total Trail Miles per 10,000 Population</b>		
Lower Quartile		1.8
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>3.0</b>
Upper Quartile		5.3

### 2.3.3 Department Functions

The list of department functions in Table 2.13 shows the percentage of benchmark and national departments that conduct each service and whether Berea currently conducts the service. The City of Berea provides many of the services listed, including some that less than half of benchmarks provide in their own municipalities.

Nearly half of comparison municipalities (46%) operate, maintain, or contract tennis center facilities, but the city of Berea does not. However, given that Berea College oversees an outdoor tennis complex near downtown, the city does not need to manage its own tennis complex. Just over 40% of benchmarks also administer community gardens but Berea currently does not. Notably, Berea Parks and Recreation is responsible for two functions, administer or manage tournament/event quality outdoor sports complexes and administer or manage farmer’s markets, conducted by less than 30% of benchmark agencies.

Table 2.13: Department Functions

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES	Berea	Benchmark	National
<b>The agency...</b>			
Provide recreation programming and services	✓	98%	93%
Operate and maintain park sites	✓	98%	96%
Operate and maintain indoor facilities	✓	85%	88%
Conduct major jurisdiction wide special events	✓	73%	77%
Have budgetary responsibility for its administrative staff	✓	71%	83%
Include in its operating budget funding for planning and development	✓	66%	67%
Operate, maintain, or manage trails, greenways, and/or blueways (TGB)	✓	63%	77%
Operate and maintain non-park sites	✓	56%	65%
Operate, maintain, or contract outdoor swim facilities/water parks	✓	56%	65%
Operate, maintain, or manage special purpose parks and open spaces	✓	54%	72%
Operate, maintain, or contract tennis center facilities		46%	52%
Administer community gardens		41%	41%
Administer or manage tournament/event quality outdoor sports complexes	✓	29%	56%
Manage large performance outdoor amphitheaters		29%	33%
Operate, maintain, or contract tourism attractions		22%	34%
Operate, maintain, or contract indoor swim facility		20%	31%
Administer or manage farmer's markets	✓	20%	19%
Administer or manage tournament/event quality indoor sports complexes		20%	18%
Maintain, manage or lease indoor performing arts center		17%	17%
Manage or maintain fairgrounds		10%	5%
Operate, maintain, or contract campgrounds		10%	18%
Operate, maintain, or contract golf courses		5%	33%

### 2.3.4 Staffing

Staffing metrics for Berea as compared to benchmark communities are outlined in Table 2.14. Berea employs 7.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, less than half the benchmark median (15.9). Additionally, Berea has about 5.1 full-time equivalent employees for every 10,000 residents, less than half of the benchmark (11.3) and below the lower quartile value. From a different perspective, acres of parkland per full-time employee, Berea has a lower ratio than the benchmark (7.1 acres per FTE vs. 8.2 per FTE) due to the low amount of parkland. Taken together, these metrics indicate that Berea has significantly fewer staff than benchmark agencies.

Table 2.14: Staffing

STAFFING	Berea	Benchmark	National
<b>Full-Time Employees</b>			
Lower Quartile		5	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	4	9	N/A
Upper Quartile		17	
<b>Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Employees</b>			
Lower Quartile		6.0	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	7.7	15.9	N/A
Upper Quartile		27.6	
<b>FTE per 10,000 Population</b>			
Lower Quartile		6.7	4.5
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	5.1	11.3	8.1
Upper Quartile		22.4	14.9
<b>Acres of Parkland per FTE</b>			
Lower Quartile		3.7	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	7.1	8.2	N/A
Upper Quartile		17.1	

### 2.3.5 Operating Budget

For 2021, the total operating budget (Table 2.15) for parks and recreation in Berea was \$763,131, half the benchmark median (\$1.4 million) and only slightly higher than the lowest quartile comparison. The per capita operating expenditure for the City of Berea is \$50, less than half the \$114 median of benchmark municipalities.

Of note, Berea's total operating expenditure per acre of parkland was more than the benchmark median at \$13,926, compared to \$10,680. This difference correlates to Berea's comparably small amount of parkland overall.

The \$75,500 in earned revenue is far below the benchmark median (\$329,204) and similar to the lower quartile value (\$74,000). This revenue represents 10% of the Parks and Recreation budget, which is lower than the median revenue brought in by benchmark communities. Similarly, Berea expects to generate just \$5 non-tax revenue per capita (2021), a small fraction of the benchmark (\$25) and national (\$21) medians.

The previous table (2.14) indicates that Berea has about half the number of FTE employees per 10,000 population as the benchmark agencies. Table 2.15 shows that the department is committing more of its operating expenses per FTE than the benchmark comparisons due to this overall small number of staff.

Table 2.15: Operating Budget

OPERATING BUDGET	Berea	Benchmark	National
<b>Agency's TOTAL Operating Expenditures for the Fiscal Year</b>			
Lower Quartile		\$701,768	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	\$763,131	\$1,477,202	N/A
Upper Quartile		\$2,688,582	

Table 2.15: Operating Budget (Continued)

OPERATING BUDGET	Berea	Benchmark	National
<b>Agency's TOTAL Non-Tax Revenue for the Fiscal Year</b>			
Lower Quartile		\$74,000	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>\$75,500</b>	<b>\$329,204</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Upper Quartile		\$1,045,321	
<b>Revenue as a Percentage of Total Operating Expenditures</b>			
Lower Quartile		8%	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>26%</b>
Upper Quartile		43%	
<b>Operating Expenditures per Capita</b>			
Lower Quartile		\$75	\$46
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>\$50</b>	<b>\$114</b>	<b>\$81</b>
Upper Quartile		\$220	\$150
<b>Operating Expenditures per Acre of Parkland</b>			
Lower Quartile		\$6,002	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>\$13,926</b>	<b>\$10,680</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Upper Quartile		\$20,058	
<b>Operating Expenditures per FTE</b>			
Lower Quartile		\$69,340	\$70,329
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>\$99,108</b>	<b>\$93,571</b>	<b>\$97,093</b>
Upper Quartile		\$139,557	\$134,175
<b>Non-Tax Revenue per Capita</b>			
Lower Quartile		\$6	\$6
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>\$5</b>	<b>\$25</b>	<b>\$21</b>
Upper Quartile		\$67	\$50

### 2.3.6 Capital Budget

Table 2.16 shows capital budget comparisons for the benchmark communities. The annual average of approved capital budgets for 2021 and 2022 amounts to \$25,250, far below the benchmark median of \$180,465.

Table 2.16: Capital Budget

CAPITAL BUDGET	Berea	Benchmark
<b>Total Capital Park Budget for Next 5-Years</b>		
Lower Quartile		\$347,750
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>\$995,250</b>
Upper Quartile		\$2,805,339
<b>Total Capital Budget this Fiscal Year*</b>		
Lower Quartile		\$26,875
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>\$25,250</b>	<b>\$180,465</b>
Upper Quartile		\$430,525
<b>Total Capital Costs per Capita this Fiscal Year</b>		
Lower Quartile		\$3
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>\$2</b>	<b>\$12</b>
Upper Quartile		\$45

\*Projected average for 2021 and 2022

Because this Master Plan is intended to provide direction for capital improvements for Parks and Recreation specifically, the 5-year capital budget has not yet been determined. The median of the benchmark communities is close to \$1 million, which amounts to about \$200,000 per year or similar to benchmark for this year.

The capital cost per capita for Berea are only \$2, a sixth of the benchmark (\$12). To match the benchmark median of \$12, the city would need to allocate about \$180,000 annually to capital improvements.

### 2.3.7 Programs

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

Table 2.17: Programs

PROGRAMS	Berea	Benchmark	National
<b>Activities</b>			
Team sports	✓	88%	87%
Social recreation events	✓	80%	87%
Themed special events	✓	80%	88%
Fitness enhancement classes	✓	78%	82%
Health and wellness education		75%	81%
Individual sports	✓	58%	74%
Aquatics	✓	58%	71%
Safety training	✓	58%	72%
Racquet sports		55%	67%
Martial arts		45%	60%
Visual arts		43%	59%
Natural and cultural history activities		43%	59%
Performing arts	✓	40%	64%
Cultural crafts	✓	38%	61%
Trips and tours		35%	63%
Golf		18%	47%
<b>Out-of-School Time (OST) Activities</b>			
Specific senior programs	✓	70%	78%
Summer camp		65%	83%
Specific teen programs	✓	43%	65%
Programs for people with disabilities		40%	62%
After school programs		33%	57%
Preschool		20%	36%
Before school programs		10%	20%
Full daycare		10%	8%

The department offers programming in most of the top ranked program categories with two notable exceptions. Berea does not offer health and wellness education classes (offered by 75% of benchmark agencies) or racquet sports (offered by 55% of benchmarks).

Of the OST activities, the department offers teen and senior programs (through partnerships with outside organizations). Considering that 65% of benchmark agencies offer summer camp, they may represent an area of OST programming that the city could consider developing. Also of note, 40% of benchmark comparisons provide programming for people with disabilities. While the department does not currently have programs in this category, there may be community partners willing to collaborate to create such programs. When considering any new programs, the City of Berea should seek new and expanded collaborative partnerships to develop a fresh, effective recreation strategy.

## 2.3.8 Facilities

Table 2.18 continues the benchmark comparisons with an examination of how Berea’s facility offerings compare to benchmark agencies. Types of facilities are differentiated between outdoor and indoor areas. Berea offers all outdoor facilities provided by 50% or more of the benchmark communities, except tennis courts. Berea does not currently offer any community gardens, but 45% the benchmarks do offer this facility. Otherwise, the city provides some outdoor facilities that are provided by fewer than 30% of benchmarks, most notably a skate park and an aquatic center. Having these facilities helps set Berea apart in its level of recreation service. Of indoor facilities, Berea currently offers two of the facilities in the list, community centers and senior centers.

**Table 2.18: Facilities**

FACILITIES	Berea	Benchmark	National
<b>Outdoor Activity Areas</b>			
Playgrounds	✓	93%	94%
Basketball courts	✓	81%	87%
Diamond fields: baseball - youth	✓	79%	78%
Tennis courts (outdoor only)		72%	81%
Rectangular fields: multi-purpose	✓	53%	65%
Diamond fields: softball fields - adult	✓	51%	65%
Rectangular fields: soccer field - youth	✓	51%	47%
Diamond fields: baseball - adult	✓	49%	53%
Diamond fields: softball fields - youth	✓	44%	59%
Dog park	✓	44%	63%
Community gardens		42%	47%
Swimming pools (outdoor only)	✓	42%	51%
Rectangular fields: soccer field - adult	✓	28%	41%
Skate park	✓	26%	38%
Rectangular fields: football field	✓	23%	37%
Aquatics centers	✓	21%	N/A
Ice rink (outdoor only)		5%	17%
Multipurpose synthetic field		5%	19%
Golf Course (Regulation 18-Holes)		2%	N/A
Rectangular fields: lacrosse field		0%	11%
Driving Range		0%	N/A
<b>Indoor Activity Areas</b>			
Recreation centers (including gyms)		58%	61%
Community centers	✓	51%	60%
Performance amphitheater		26%	35%
Indoor competitive swimming pool		12%	N/A
Senior centers	✓	12%	41%
Indoor pool designated exclusively for leisure		5%	N/A
Nature centers		5%	29%
Teen centers		5%	14%
Ice rink (indoor)		2%	15%

While Table 2.18 highlights how well Berea compares to benchmark communities in terms of facilities provided, Tables 2.19 and 2.20 provide a comparison of population per facility to evaluate the existing supply. In other words, looking at population served per facility can help identify new facilities that the city may want to add in the future. These tables show the benchmark median values for a range of facilities – outdoor and indoor, respectively – plus upper and lower quartile values. A lower value indicates a higher level of service.

Figure 2.2. shows active use/athletic facilities per 10,000 population (converted from the numbers in Table 2.19) for playgrounds, basketball courts (outdoor), ballfields (youth baseball, youth softball, and adult softball diamonds), and multipurpose rectangular fields.

In terms of benchmark comparisons, Berea has lower service ratios (facilities per 10,000 population) for nearly all outdoor facility types. Multipurpose rectangular fields and diamond fields for youth softball are the only facilities with better ratios than the benchmarks. However, the city only has exclusive use of two of the four rectangular fields, and one of those fields is a practice field only. Of the other facilities, the most strained are playgrounds and youth baseball fields. These facilities are serving nearly twice the population per facility as the benchmark comparisons.

As for indoor facilities, Table 2.20 shows the population served by both existing indoor facilities (community center and senior center). Both are comparably strained, though not as severe as the outdoor facilities like playgrounds or trails (Table 2.19). Figure 2.2 underscores some of the same findings in Table 2.19, showing how Berea compares in providing adequate facilities per population. Playgrounds have the lowest service level by comparison of any of the facility types.

**Table 2.19: Population Per Facility (Outdoor)**

<b>POPULATION PER FACILITY (OUTDOOR)</b>	<b>Berea</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>National</b>
<b>Playgrounds</b>			
Lower Quartile		1,688	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>5,043</b>	<b>2,733</b>	<b>3,750</b>
Upper Quartile		3,815	
<b>Tennis Courts</b>			
Lower Quartile		1,852	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>3,171</b>	<b>5,004</b>
Upper Quartile		4,501	
<b>Basketball Courts</b>			
Lower Quartile		3,776	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>7,564</b>	<b>5,500</b>	<b>7,400</b>
Upper Quartile		8,000	
<b>Diamond Fields - Youth Baseball</b>			
Lower Quartile		1,955	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>3,782</b>	<b>2,707</b>	<b>6,779</b>
Upper Quartile		4,992	
<b>Diamond Fields - Youth Softball</b>			
Lower Quartile		2,636	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>3,782</b>	<b>4,986</b>	<b>11,511</b>
Upper Quartile		7,520	
<b>Diamond Fields - Adult Softball</b>			
Lower Quartile		4,430	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>7,564</b>	<b>7,370</b>	<b>13,510</b>
Upper Quartile		12,060	
<b>Rectangular Fields (multi-purpose)</b>			
Lower Quartile		3,336	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>3,782</b>	<b>6,877</b>	<b>8,150</b>
Upper Quartile		12,273	
<b>Multipurpose Synthetic Field</b>			
Lower Quartile		N/A	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>20,551</b>	<b>49,493</b>
Upper Quartile		N/A	

Table 2.19: Population Per Facility (Outdoor) (Continued)

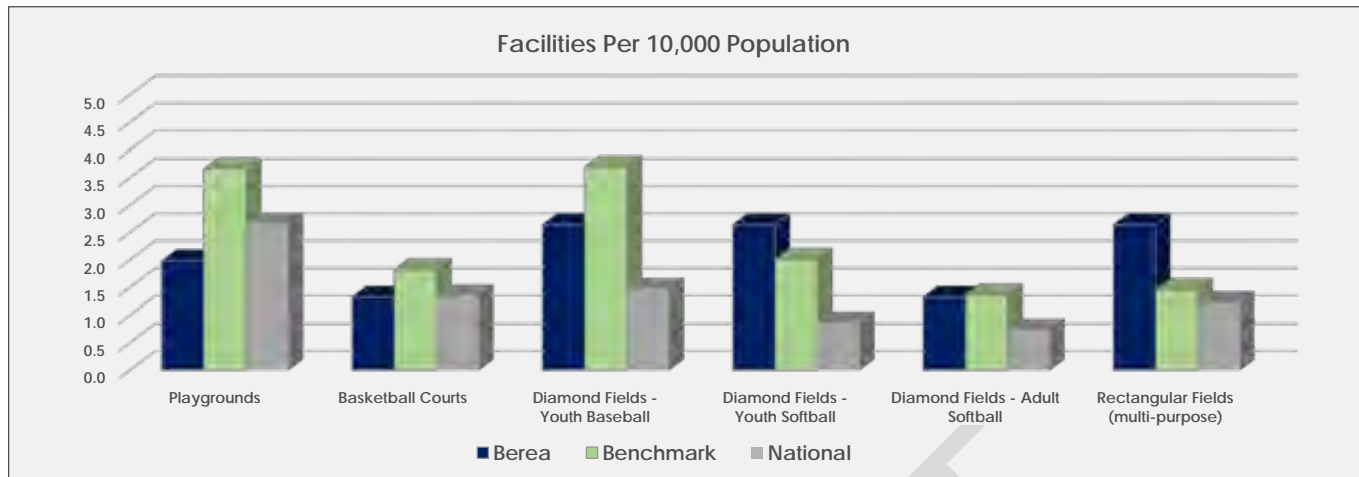
POPULATION PER FACILITY (OUTDOOR)	Berea	Benchmark	National
<b>Swimming Pools</b>			
Lower Quartile		5,400	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>15,128</b>	<b>8,273</b>	<b>35,837</b>
Upper Quartile		12,498	
<b>Skate Parks</b>			
Lower Quartile		10,795	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>15,128</b>	<b>14,020</b>	<b>49,500</b>
Upper Quartile		22,000	
<b>Dog Parks</b>			
Lower Quartile		8,639	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>15,128</b>	<b>13,610</b>	<b>45,899</b>
Upper Quartile		16,000	
<b>Community Gardens</b>			
Lower Quartile		6,408	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>8,773</b>	<b>29,273</b>
Upper Quartile		14,515	
<b>Trails</b>			
Lower Quartile			
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>6,876</b>	<b>3,324</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Upper Quartile			

Table 2.20: Population Per Facility (Indoor)

POPULATION PER FACILITY (INDOOR)	Berea	Benchmark	National
<b>Recreation Centers</b>			
Lower Quartile		6,211	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>10,232</b>	<b>31,141</b>
Upper Quartile		16,769	
<b>Community Centers</b>			
Lower Quartile		7,526	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>15,128</b>	<b>11,000</b>	<b>28,939</b>
Upper Quartile		16,801	
<b>Senior Centers</b>			
Lower Quartile		6,600	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>15,128</b>	<b>10,795</b>	<b>60,513</b>
Upper Quartile		20,269	
<b>Competitive Swimming Pools</b>			
Lower Quartile		7,131	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>9,971</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Upper Quartile		22,282	
<b>Nature Centers</b>			
Lower Quartile		N/A	
<b>Median/Agency Value</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>14,800</b>	<b>109,796</b>
Upper Quartile		N/A	



Figure 2.2: Facilities Per 10,000 Population



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## INVENTORY OF PARKS, FACILITIES, AND PROGRAMS

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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

### 3.2 PARKLAND AND RECREATION AREA CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

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

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

**Table 3.1: Park Classifications**

PARK CLASSIFICATION	TYPICAL SIZE and SERVICE AREA	DEVELOPED ACRES/1,000 POPULATION	TYPICAL FEATURES/FACILITIES	DESCRIPTION & DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS
<b>Local Space</b>				
Mini Park (MP)	Size: Less than 2 acres of developed parkland; less than 3 total acres 1/2 mile service area 10-minute walk	Combined with Neighborhood Park	Typical facilities may include playgrounds, small multi-use court area, and benches.	Often provided in association with school facilities. Some developed as part of residential developments. May also provide open space as needed to serve high density neighborhoods where households have limited yard space.

**Table 3.1: Park Classifications (Continued)**

PARK CLASSIFICATION	TYPICAL SIZE and SERVICE AREA	DEVELOPED ACRES/1,000 POPULATION	TYPICAL FEATURES/ FACILITIES	DESCRIPTION & DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS
Neighborhood Park (NHP)	<p>Size: 2-10 acres of developed parkland; 3-15 total acres</p> <p>½-1.0 mile service area</p> <p>10-minute walk</p> <p>To serve a population up to 5,000</p>	0.5 Acre/1,000	<p>Suited for intense development</p> <p>Typical facilities include athletic fields, game courts, playgrounds, drinking fountains, picnic areas/shelters, and walking trails.</p>	<p>Easily accessible to neighborhood population (safe walking and bike distance).</p> <p>May be developed as park/school facility or in conjunction with service agency facility.</p> <p>May not be needed in areas served locally by larger parks.</p>
Community Park (CP)	<p>10-30+ acres of developed parkland; 20 or more total acres</p> <p>1.0-2.0 mile service radius</p> <p>5-minute drive</p> <p>To serve several neighborhoods with populations up to 15,000</p>	3.5 Acres/1,000	<p>Typical facilities include all those listed for Neighborhood Parks plus; major swimming pool, field or game court complex, major recreation or community center, etc.</p> <p>May include an area of natural quality for picnicking, walking, etc.</p> <p>May have an active or passive recreation focus or a balance of both - parks with passive focus will have a higher percentage of undeveloped land</p>	<p>Capable of providing a range of intensive recreational activities; or, provides one or two activities that attract users from multi-neighborhood areas.</p> <p>Park should ideally be located near schools.</p> <p>May meet Neighborhood Park needs for users within a 10-minute walk.</p>
Special Use (SU)	Serves community-wide area	N/A (but may contribute to total open space requirement)	Area for specialized or single purpose recreational activities such as plazas, major pools, riverfront park areas, golf courses, athletic complexes, indoor facilities, etc.	Area should be located to meet the specific needs of the intended use.
Open Space (OS)	N/A	N/A (but contributes to total open space requirement)	<p>Special use areas of low or limited development. Includes undeveloped areas, urban greenspaces, and small designated natural areas.</p> <p>May include urban greenspaces (mowed and landscaped areas) of any size. These areas are considered developed but have predominantly passive uses, few structures, and limited impervious areas.</p> <p>Typical facilities include walking/hiking trails, picnic areas, gardens, and open grass areas.</p>	<p>Includes undeveloped properties that may be developed in the future.</p> <p>May also function as small Nature Parks.</p> <p>Educational opportunities desirable in developed or undeveloped areas.</p>
<b>Regional Space</b>				
Nature Parks or Preserves (NP)	Size as needed to protect the resource	N/A (but contributes to total open space requirement)	<p>Majority of park to remain in its natural state (less than 20% developed)</p> <p>Facilities should focus on education by use of "nature activities" and should reinforce that philosophy by offering habitat enhancement, trails, nature centers, and interpretive signage. Should also include parking and restrooms.</p>	<p>The park should be of sufficient size to protect the natural resource and provide a buffer from offsite conditions. Should include unique natural areas with ecological interest.</p> <p>Typical size should be over 50 acres for management efficiency and to promote ecosystem services.</p> <p>Typically provided by county or state park systems.</p>
State Parks (SP)	Size as needed to protect natural resources of State or regional significance	N/A	<p>Majority of park to remain in its natural state.</p> <p>The park should be of sufficient size to protect the natural resource and provide a buffer from offsite conditions.</p>	<p>Should include unique natural areas with ecological interest, lakes, or other features of state or regional interest.</p> <p>Serve state-wide area or beyond and may be a destination for tourists.</p> <p>Size will vary based on the area required to protect the resource.</p>

## 3.3 INVENTORY OF BEREA PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

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

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

## 3.4 NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

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

Berea Parks and Recreation oversees one neighborhood park, Memorial Park, located near downtown. The city does not currently have any mini parks, but some of the elementary schools (section 3.9) function as mini parks.

### 3.4.1 Memorial Park (2.0 acres) – Neighborhood Park

#### Park Location

Memorial Park is located between W Jefferson Street and Washington Avenue along N Broadway and across from the Russel Acton Folk Center. Situated just south of City Park Expansion, this neighborhood park is also adjacent to Berea College's Child Development Lab, part of the school's Ecovillage complex.

#### Existing Features & Amenities

- Playground w/ separate age 2-5 equipment
- 4 swings (2 belt, 2 tot)
- Large shelter with restrooms
- Medium shelter
- Lions Club memorial (includes 3 flagpoles)
- Pedestrian scale lampposts (all with electric hookups)

#### Park Issues & Opportunities

- Signage/wayfinding needs improvement
- Need additional entrance signage (Broadway)
- Existing rules signage illegible
- Trash receptacles set too far from pathway
- No recycling receptacles on site
- Limited landscaping
- Restrooms need improvement/accessibility upgrades



- Limited ADA access – playground, seating, restrooms, trash
- Swings lack edging and adequate surfacing

## 3.5 COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks are larger parks that serve multiple neighborhoods and offer a wider variety of facilities. Community parks should be conveniently located (within approximately a 5-minute drive) and easily accessible with facilities intended to occupy visitors for extended periods of time (field or game court complex, disc golf, etc.). Berea Parks and Recreation offers manages two community parks, City Park and City Park Expansion. These parks are contiguous and function as a single park.

### 3.5.1 City Park (35.0 acres) – Community Park

#### Park Location

This community park is dedicated primarily to athletic use and active recreation. First opened in July of 1993, Berea City Park is located behind Berea Community High School off of Ellipse Street. This park features the following facilities & amenities.

#### Existing Features & Amenities

- Park and Recreation Department offices
- Aquatic center w/ splash pad
- Playground w/ separate age 2-5 equipment and 4 swings (2 belt, 2 tot)
- Basketball court (lighted)
- 5 baseball/softball diamond fields
  - 1 grass infield and 325' fences (high school baseball, lighted)
  - 3 dirt infields and 200' fences (lighted)
  - 1 dirt infield and no fences (used for t-ball)
  - Batting cages
- Duerson Football Stadium
- Multipurpose field in outfield of small dirt ballfield (U-6, U-7, U-8 soccer)
- 3 restroom buildings (restroom and concessions building w/ press box at ballfield complex, adjacent to football stadium, at maintenance building near large shelter)
- Large shelter w/ grill and restrooms
- 2 sand volleyball courts
- Horseshoe pits
- ¾-mile lighted paved trail
- Story trail (partnership with Berea College)
- Parking lot (shared with high school)



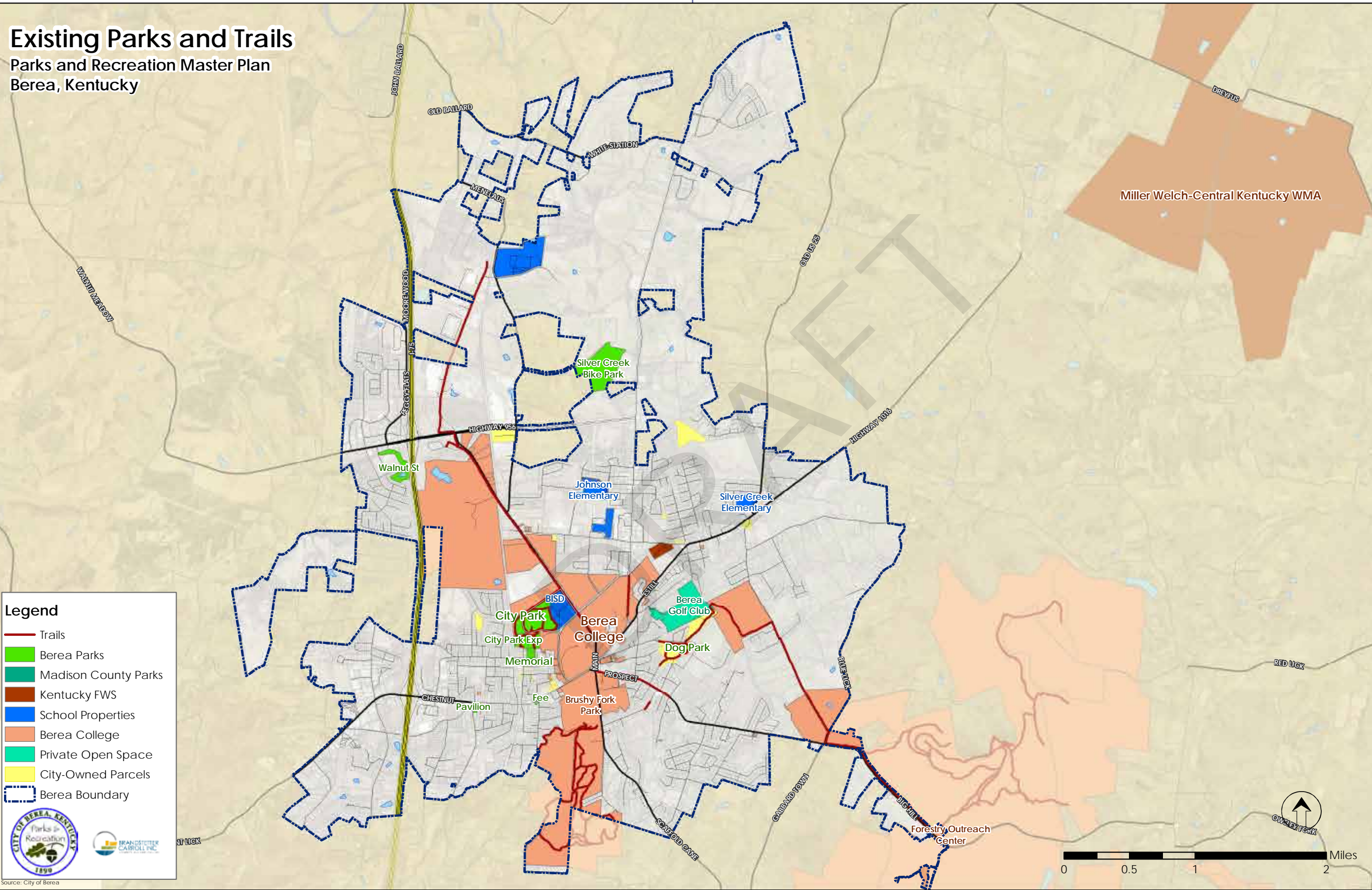
Table 3.2: Parks and Recreation Resource Inventory

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	Acreage		Athletic Fields					Game Courts			Outdoor Facilities			Trails (Mi)		Passive Recreation				Support			Indoor		Special Feature/Notes
		Total	Developed	Small Diamond	Large Diamond	Batting Cages	Small Rectangular	Large Rectangular	Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts	Playgrounds	Skate Parks	Aquatic Centers	Paved	Unpaved	Dog Parks	Large Shelters	Medium Shelters	Gazebos/Small Shelters	Restroom Buildings	Concessions Buildings	Parking	Meeting Room	Rental Facility	
<b>Berea Parks and Recreation</b>																										
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>																										
Memorial Park	Neighborhood	2.1	2.0									1						1	1		1		12			
<b>Subtotal - Neighborhood Parks</b>		<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Community Parks</b>																										
Berea City Park	Community	35.0	26.1	2	3	1		2	1		2	1		1	1.4			1			3	2	263			
Berea City Park Expansion	Community	13.6	11.9					2	1			1	1		0.3					1	1	1	142			
<b>Subtotal - Community Parks</b>		<b>48.6</b>	<b>38.1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Special Use Parks/Facilities</b>																										
Intergenerational Center	Center	0.9	0.9																				13	1	1	
Russel Acton Folk Center	Center	2.3	2.3																				62	1	1	
Tillie Memorial Dog Park	Special Use	0.9	0.9											0.5		1							63			Trail around Berea Municipal Utilities Building
<b>Subtotal - Special Use Parks</b>		<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Total - Berea Parks and Recreation</b>		<b>54.8</b>	<b>44.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Other City of Berea Properties</b>																										
Chestnut Street Pavilion	Special Use	1.4	1.4															1								Tourism
Fee Park	Plaza	0.5	0.5																	1						John G. Fee statue
Silver Creek Bike Park	Natural Area	46.8	1.0											4.8												Tourism, pump track
Walnut Creek Drive Property	Open Space	12.2	0.0																							Undeveloped with pond
<b>Subtotal - Other City of Berea Properties</b>		<b>60.9</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Berea College</b>																										
Tennis Center	Special Use	N/A	N/A							10													164			
Brushy Fork Park	Natural Area	N/A	N/A											3.3												
Berea Forestry Outreach Center	Nature Park	N/A	N/A											0.2	7.8						1			1		
<b>Subtotal - Nature Parks/Natural Areas</b>		<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>School Parks</b>																										
Berea Community Elementary	Neighborhood	N/A	N/A				1	1	1			1														BISD
Shannon Johnson Elementary	Mini	N/A	N/A						0.5			1											79			MCSD
Silver Creek Elementary	Mini	N/A	N/A						1			1		0.3					1				104			MCSD
<b>Subtotal - School Parks</b>		<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Total Parks in Berea</b>				<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	

Figure 3.1: Existing Parks and Trails

# Existing Parks and Trails

Parks and Recreation Master Plan  
Berea, Kentucky





## Park Issues & Opportunities

- Basketball court accessibility
  - No ADA accessible seating
  - Existing seating is minimal and in fair to poor condition
- Inconsistent ADA accessibility between walkways and bleachers/seating
- Dugouts are not accessible from diamond fields
- Limited landscaping
- Volleyball edging is deteriorating (e.g., joints loosening, rusted protruding nails)
- Some areas of trail need repaving
- Restrooms need improvements – expansion and ADA
- Potential to expand/diversify story trail
- Utilities are inside chain link fence but could be screened more effectively and attractively
- More signage and wayfinding needed
- Limited ADA access – playground, seating, restrooms, trash, spectator areas, small ballfield, drinking fountains
- Parking lot (shared with high school) not lighted
- Swings lack edging and adequate surfacing, too close to paved walkway
- Insufficient equipment storage



## 3.5.2 City Park Expansion (13.6 acres) – Community Park

### Site Location and Character

The City of Berea opened this park in July of 2010. The acquisition extends City Park south towards Jefferson Street, the Russel Action Folk Center, and Memorial Park. Walkable connectivity exists between the original City Park property and City Park Expansion, but there is opportunity to enhance linkages and improve wayfinding between the different areas.

### Existing Features & Amenities

- Perimeter trail (connects to City Park and Beebe White Shared-Use Path)
- Playground
- Skatepark (lighted)
- Football field (regulation size, lighted)
- Multipurpose rectangular field (regulation size, lighted – used primarily for soccer)
- Concessions/restroom building w/ covered dining area
- Small shelter
- Basketball court (lighted)
- Parking lot (160 spaces)



## Park Issues & Opportunities

- Some recurring vandalism around shelter and skate area
- Skate area lacks shade, minimal spectator seating
- Soccer field nets in disrepair; Berea High School replacing
- Basketball court needs additional access points, potential connections to sidewalk
- Athletic field spectator seating is not ADA accessible
- Play equipment is accessible but playground area lacks ADA walkway
- Some encroachment along paved walkway; needs resealing and crack repair
- Seating at shelter in poor condition; vandalism is an issue
- Pool drainage at football field
- Overuse of soccer field



## 3.6 SPECIAL USE PARKS & FACILITIES

Special use parks are areas designed for specialized or single purpose recreational activities, and can include places such as plazas, single use facilities, sports complexes, and indoor spaces.

### 3.6.1 Intergenerational Center (0.9 acres) – Center

#### Site Location and Character

This indoor community space is located off Jefferson Street and tucked behind the Russel Acton Folk Center between the City Park Expansion and Memorial Park. The Intergenerational Center is divided into the Berea Senior Citizen Center, Berea Head Start, and daycare. In the early 1990s, Berea celebrated its age diversity by creating this community space. The center brings together youth and senior citizens allowing them to learn from each other.



#### Existing Features & Amenities

- Community room (available for rent)
- Storage
- Office space
- Playground



#### Facility Issues & Opportunities

- Potential for more senior programs

### 3.6.2 Russel Acton Folk Center (2.3 acres) – Center

#### Site Location and Character

Situated in the midst of other city spaces and facilities, the Russel Acton Folk Center is the primary hub for the department's indoor program offerings. Visible from Memorial Park, the center is located along Jefferson Street.

### Existing Features & Amenities

- Community room (available for rent)
- Storage
- Restrooms
- Commercial kitchen (available for rentals)
- Small porch

### Facility Issues & Opportunities

- Acoustics need improvement
- Minor plumbing issues in restroom
- Floor needs replacing
- Opportunities for more rentals/programs



## 3.6.3 Tillie Memorial Dog Park (0.9 acres) – Special Use

### Site Location and Character

Named in honor of a local canine legend, this park is the newest addition to the city's system. Located along the John Stevenson Trail and off Harrison Road, Tillie Memorial Dog Park is adjacent the Berea Municipal Utilities building.

### Existing Features & Amenities

- Dog park
- Trail access

### Park Issues & Opportunities

- Lack of shade
- Some seating, may not be sufficient
- Could become a formal trailhead
- Potential to formalize creek access
- Could accommodate more features
- Potential space for pollinator garden, community raised garden beds, and/or landscaping



## 3.7 OTHER CITY OF BEREA PROPERTIES

In addition to the parks operated by the Parks and Recreation Department, the city offers other parks and open spaces that are maintained by other departments. Although not officially within the park system, these properties supplement recreational opportunities in Berea.

### 3.7.1 Chestnut Street Pavilion

#### Site Location and Character

The Chestnut Street Pavilion is located on the corner of Chestnut Street and Mt Vernon Road. This site was formerly a parking lot and has been developed to host the Berea Farmers Market. The project was spearheaded by the Berea Tourism Commission and will be maintained by Berea Public Works.



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### Existing Features & Amenities

- Large pavilion
- Parking lot

### Facility Issues & Opportunities

- Could be used to host additional programs and events

## 3.7.2 Fee Park

### Site Location and Character

Fee Park is a small plaza on the corner of Chestnut Street and Boone Street.

### Existing Features & Amenities

- Tables and seating
- Statues
- Gazebo



## 3.7.3 Silver Creek Bike Park

### Site Location and Character

The Silver Creek Bike Park is the newest park in Berea recently celebrating its grand opening on September 10, 2021. The park is located north of downtown on JC Chambers Lane. The development of the park was led by Berea Tourism Commission in partnership with Kentucky Mountain Bike Association (KYMBA). The facility is expected to draw users from all over central Kentucky.

### Existing Features & Amenities

- Pump track
- Mountain bike trails (4.8 miles)
- Obstacles
- Portable toilet
- Gravel parking lot

### Facility Issues & Opportunities

- Opportunity to expand trails and features



## 3.7.4 Walnut Creek Drive Property

### Site Location and Character

The Walnut Creek Drive property is an undeveloped property in a residential neighborhood in western Berea near the I-75 interchange at Walnut Meadow Road. The city-owned property can be accessed at the end of Walnut Creek Street.

### Existing Features & Amenities

- Pond w/ fishing

### Facility Issues & Opportunities



- Potential for development as park
- No parking and limited access

### 3.8 CITY FACILITIES SUMMARY

The table (Table 3.3) below provides a summary of the recreation facilities offered by the City of Berea, either by Parks and Recreation or other departments.

**Table 3.3: Recreation Facility Summary**

<b>Athletic Fields</b>	<b>#</b>
Small Diamond	2
Large Diamond	3
Batting Cages	1
Large Rectangular Fields	4
<b>Game Courts</b>	<b>#</b>
Basketball	2
Sand Volleyball	2
<b>Outdoor Facilities</b>	<b>#</b>
Playgrounds	3
Aquatic Centers	1
Skate Parks	1
<b>Trails (Miles)</b>	<b>#</b>
Paved	2.2
Mountain Bike Trails*	4.8

<b>Passive Recreation</b>	<b>#</b>
Dog Park	1
Large Shelters	2
Medium Shelters	1
Gazebos/Small Shelters	2
<b>Support Facilities</b>	<b>#</b>
Restroom Buildings	5
Concessions Buildings	3
<b>Cultural &amp; Community Spaces</b>	<b>#</b>
Russel Acton Folk Center	1
Berea Intergenerational Center	1

\*Not managed by Park and Recreation

### 3.9 BEREA COLLEGE PROPERTIES & SCHOOL PROPERTIES

Also included in Table 3.2 are parks by others within Berea. These sites and facilities are managed by either Berea College, Madison County Schools, or Berea Independent Schools. Brushy Fork Park and Berea Forestry Outreach Center are available for public use at all times like any public park. The Berea College tennis courts represent the only courts in the city and are available to residents when not in use by the college. The elementary schools can be used by the public outside of school hours.

### 3.10 OTHER PARKS

Additional parks are located outside of Berea but within a close driving distance. The two closest of these properties are Battlefield Park and Miller Welch Wildlife Management Area. Battlefield Park, by Madison County Parks, offers paved walking trails and historic interpretation. The Miller Welch Wildlife Management Area, by Kentucky Fish and Wildlife, offers an archery range and a gun range, along with hunting opportunities.

### 3.11 PROGRAMS INVENTORY

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

As Berea enters life after the COVID-19 pandemic, programming needs to be flexible in terms of format and

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scheduling. Virtual classes, self-guided tours, and individual-based challenges can help provide residents with expanded options to engage in recreation whatever their schedule, personal health situation, or abilities may be.

### 3.11.1 Core Program Guidelines

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

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

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

#### Core Program Components

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

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

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

#### 1. Broad Appeal

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

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

#### 2. Administrative Feasibility

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

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

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

#### 3. Coordination

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

Berea coordinates with partner organizations to expand recreational services; partner relationships range from regularly scheduled programming to one-time collaborations or providing space. Given input from extensive stakeholder discussions, there is considerable interest to grow and strengthen agency partnerships to build more recreation programs for the community. The following entities are either current or past partners with Parks and Recreation in providing programs and activities to the community (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Madison County Public Library
- Madison County School System
- Berea Community School System
- Berea College
- Kent Family Circus
- Folk Circle
- Berea Youth League
- Berea Tourism

#### 4. Settings and Times

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

Settings and formats include:

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

While some of the department's programs and activities are regularly scheduled through leagues or independent organizations, many of the department's programs are one-time or annually recurring events. While certain offerings are regularly scheduled, opportunities may exist to create a curated roster of daily, weekly, or monthly programs. Given the staffing capacity of Berea's Parks and Recreation Department, more frequent programming would depend heavily on partner involvement.

#### 5. Constructive Nature

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

#### 6. Diverse Range of Activities

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

- Athletics (O)
- Community Events (Y)

- Creative Arts (Y)
- Cultural Performances (N)
- Education, Life Skills, and Fun (Y)
- Games (L)
- Green Living/Environmental Education (O) – Berea College
- Health, Fitness, and Wellness Activities (Y)
- Health and Wellness Education (N)
- Heritage and History (N)
- Nature/Outdoor Programs (O) – Berea College
- Performing Arts (O) – Berea Arts Council
- Volunteer Training & Opportunities (N)

### 3.11.2 Berea Parks and Recreation Program Participation

Berea Parks and Recreation has a significant opportunity to provide consistent and diverse programming to the community. Through public engagement and stakeholder discussions, many programs, classes, and events have been well-received and utilized (e.g., seasonal events, fitness classes, family programs). The Spoonbread Festival attracts over 15,000 visitors, and the Halloween and 4th of July events attract over 1,000 each.

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

#### Program Participation

Table 3.4 shows the number of participants by program category for 2016 to 2020. Program participation in Berea increased slightly over that time period with the exception of 2020 when many programs were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, the 2020 numbers are not included in the % change calculations. The largest increase was for creative arts, followed by adaptive & therapeutic recreation programs, and education, life skills, & fun.

**Table 3.4: Participation Summary**

Participation Summary	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*	5-Year Total	% Change
Adaptive & Therapeutic Recreation	350	364	350	475	200	1,739	34%
Community & Annual Events	5,345	5,120	5,075	5,415	3,320	24,275	1%
Creative Arts	75	205	265	265	127	937	93%
Education, Life Skills, & Fun	283	269	319	354	195	1,420	26%
Games	0	0	0	450	40	490	N/A
Health, Fitness, & Wellness	289	336	437	329	189	1,580	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,342</b>	<b>6,294</b>	<b>6,446</b>	<b>7,288</b>	<b>4,071</b>	<b>30,441</b>	<b>15%</b>

\*Participation impacted by COVID-19 pandemic, not included % change (2016-2019 only)

The usage for facilities in Berea is presented in Table 3.5. These facilities generally charge for entry or are reservable for a fee, although free programs may be available at times. With the exception of 2020 when it was closed, the Berea Swimming Pool has seen increased usage over the 4-year period. Folk Center usage declined somewhat over the same timeframe. Usage of the Memorial Park shelter has decline, while the shelter at City Park has seen an increase in use. The fees for usage are as follows:



- Berea Swimming Pool
  - 3 and under free
  - Adults \$3 (Mon-Sat), \$2 (Sun)
  - Kids \$2 (Mon-Sat), \$1 (Sun)
- Memorial Park – Large Shelter \$50 (Seats 75)
- Memorial Park – Small Shelter \$25 (Seats 10-15)
- City Park Shelter – Large Shelter \$50 (Seats 75)
- Folk Center – 50 people for 3 hours \$65, plus \$45 for kitchen access

**Table 3.5: Facility Usage Summary**

Facility Usage	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*	5-Year Total	% Change
Berea Swimming Pool	19,164	21,384	21,068	23,365	0	84,981	22%
Folk Center	7,935	7,500	6,325	6,799	955	29,514	-14%
<b>Shelters</b>							
Memorial Park shelters	2,157	2,570	2,317	1,741	60	8,845	-19%
City Park Shelter	995	1,440	1,342	1,410	25	5,212	42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,251</b>	<b>32,894</b>	<b>31,052</b>	<b>33,315</b>	<b>1,040</b>	<b>128,552</b>	<b>10%</b>

\*Usage impacted by COVID-19 pandemic, not included % change (2016-2019 only)

### 3.11.3 Partner Organizations that use Berea Facilities

- Berea Community High School and Middle School (City Park)
  - Baseball/Softball: 80 participants annually
- Berea Community High School and Middle School (City Park)
  - Boys/Girls Soccer – 80 participants annually
- Berea Youth League (City Park)
  - Softball and baseball – 650 participants annually
- Southern Madison County Youth Football (City Park Expansion)
  - Youth Football – 150 participants annually
- MUSA (City Park Expansion)
  - Youth Soccer – 600 participants annually
- Folk Circle (Folk Center)
  - Dancing – monthly and annual events, 1,000 participants annually
- Spoonbread Festival (Memorial Park, Folk Center, and City Park Expansion)
  - Annual festival, 15,000+ attendees
- Farmers Market (Chestnut Street Pavilion)
  - May-October, twice a week, 5,000-6,000 attendees annually
- Dolphins (Berea Swimming Pool)
  - Youth swim team, June and July, 100 participants annually
- Summer Food Program (City Park and Memorial Shelters)
  - 3,500 participants annually

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DRAFT



## PUBLIC INPUT

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

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

1. Public Meetings
2. Stakeholder Conversations
3. Statistically Valid Survey (by ETC Institute)
4. Web Survey
5. Online Engagement (powered by MindMixer)

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

### 4.2 OPEN HOUSE

The city held an open house meeting (public workshop) on November 9, 2021 at the Folk Center to introduce the project to the public and to solicit feedback from the community regarding the present and future of parks and recreation in Berea.

Upon arrival, attendees were asked to sign in and were then given a dot to place on a map to indicate where they live. This map (Figure 4.1) shows the distribution of the meeting attendees. The map indicates that the attendees were generally well-distributed throughout Berea.

The meeting allowed participants to visit a series of stations in order to provide their input and learn more about the Master Plan. The primary input stations were arranged around the room and provided opportunities for input on three general topics. At each of these stations, participants were asked to share their responses to two questions: “What makes them great now?” and “What would make them better?”

The three input topics were as follows:

- Parks and Facilities
- Trails and Natural Areas

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- Programs and Events

A final station provided a few activities, including dollar allocation and dot voting (see Section 4.3). The summaries of comments in the ensuing text provide the number of times a topic was mentioned in parentheses after the item. The full text of comments can be found in Appendix D.

### Parks and Facilities

This topic represented built amenities and general recommendations for parks. Athletic fields (more fields, artificial turf and lighting) and indoor facilities (recreation center, fields, and a pool) were the subject of the largest number of comments. Attendees also indicated needs for upgrades to existing parks, the dog park (seating, shade, and agility features), and playgrounds.

What makes them great now?

- Athletic fields
- Recent improvements

What would make them better? – 53 comments and checkmarks/likes (# in parentheses)

- Athletic fields (15)
- Indoor facilities (15)
- Artificial turf (8)
- Existing park upgrades/improvements (7)
- Athletic field lighting (6)
- Dog park (5)
- Concessions (4)
- More/expanded playgrounds (4)
- Safety/security (3)
- Shade structures (3)



### Natural Areas and Trails

This station encouraged discussion of natural areas and trails. The largest number of comments were related to desire for more trails and better connectivity. However, the focus of many of the comments was on the need for better signage for naming, wayfinding, and information. Participants also indicated desire for more seating and fishing opportunities.

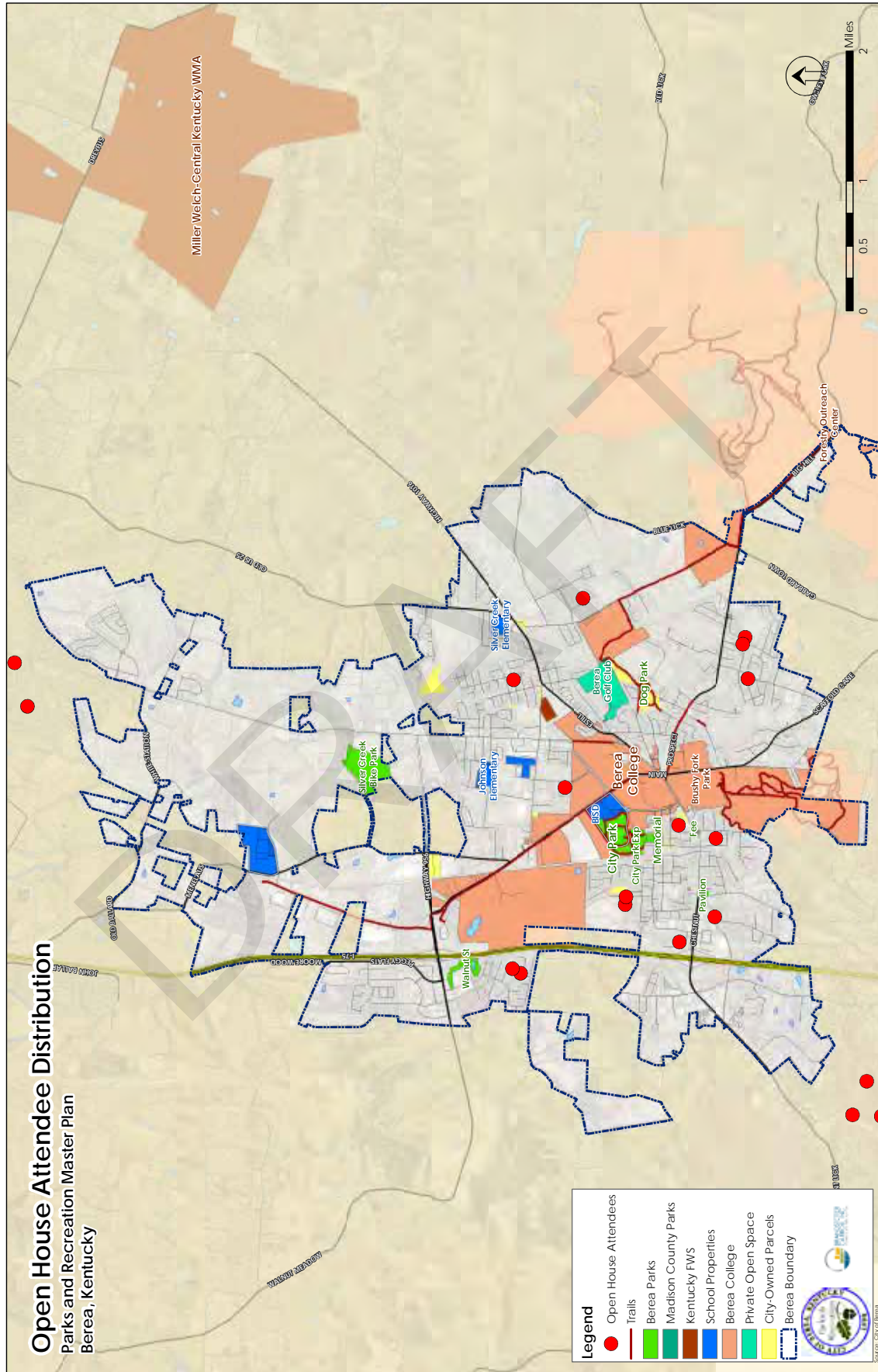
What makes them great now?

- Many great trails
- Variety of options

What would make them better? – 21 comments and checkmarks/likes (# in parentheses)

- More trails (8)
- Connectivity (6)
- Signage (6)
- Seating (3)
- ADA access (2)
- Fishing (2)
- Maintenance (2)
- Sidewalks (2)

Figure 4.1: Open House Attendee Distribution



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## Programs and Events

This topic provided a location for comments about programs, including athletics and events. Overall, attendees indicated desire for more programs in general and more adult programs in particular.

What makes them great now?

- Youth leagues
- Good variety
- Community events

What would make them better? – 13 comments and checkmarks/likes (# in parentheses)

- More programs (8)
- Athletics (4)
- Adult programs (3)
- Active/older adults (2)
- E-Sports (2)
- Adult sports (2)
- Aquatics (2)

### Overall Open House Comment Summary

The chart below (Figure 4.2) provides a summary of the comments to the question, “What would make them better?” at all stations. Each of the over 87 comments (and checkmarks/likes) were placed into one or more categories to show what improvements attendees of the meeting desired to see in the future. The list includes both general and specific items, so many comments qualified for multiple categories. Additionally, some comments discussed more than one topic and were categorized accordingly. The chart presents the results as a percentage of overall comments. The results indicate that attendees want indoor facilities and more/improved athletic fields. Additionally, many want more trails and connectivity and more program opportunities.

## 4.3 DOLLAR VOTING AND PREFERENCES

### 4.3.1 Preference Boards

Attendees of the open house meeting were given three red dots to place on a board indicating their preferences for park features. The board provided a list of 16 park amenities (represented by pictures). Attendees of the open house were also given three green dots for a second board. This board provided a list of 16 program categories (also represented by pictures). These activities requested that participants choose the features and programs most important to them and their households. Children were also invited to participate. At the open house, 19 community members participated in the activities for both features and programs. Counts of the selections are presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.



Figure 4.2: Distribution of Open House Comments

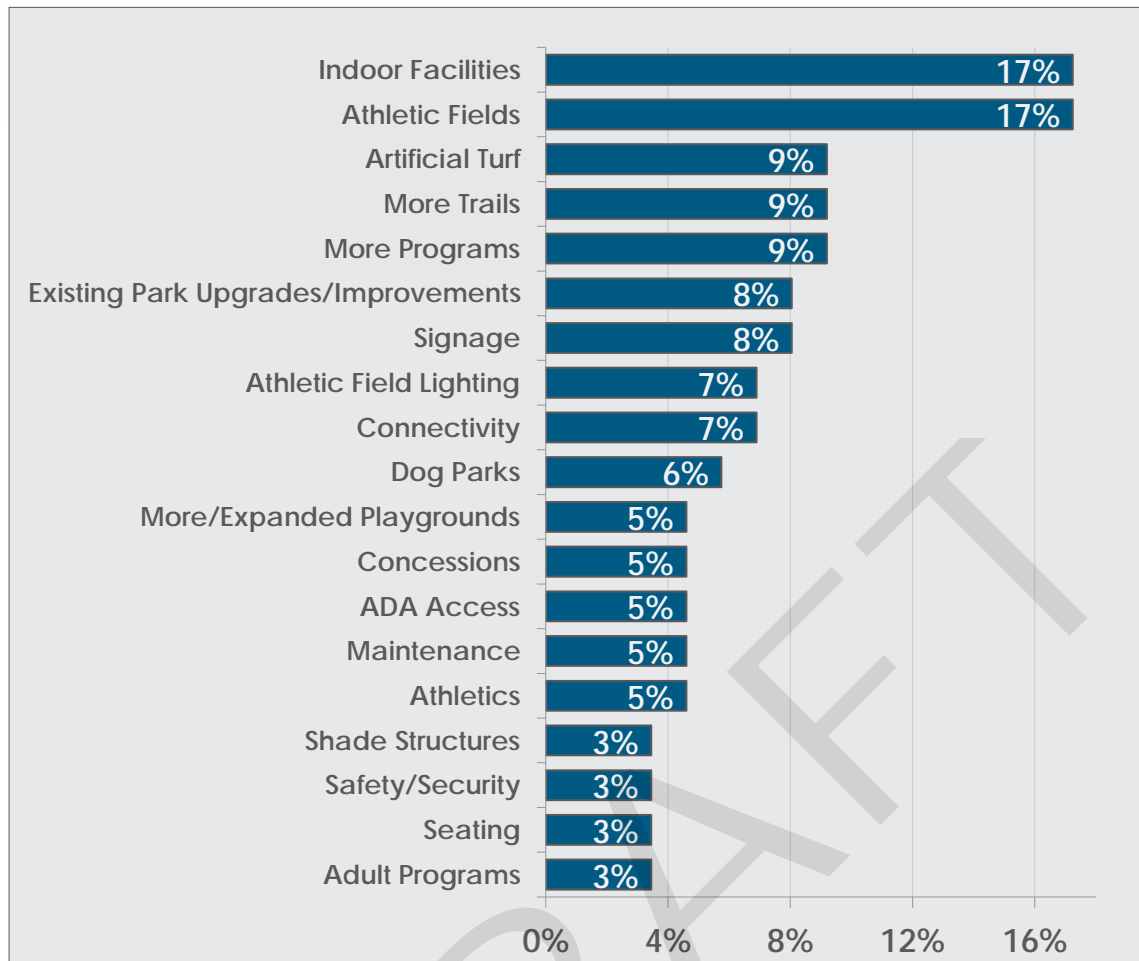


Table 4.1: Feature Preference Results

Park Features	Total	%
Recreation Centers	20	35%
Athletic Fields	9	16%
Event Space	4	7%
Playgrounds	3	5%
Trails	3	5%
Natural Areas	3	5%
Restrooms	3	5%
Spraygrounds	2	4%
Public Art	2	4%
Dog Parks	2	4%
Community Gardens	2	4%
Outdoor Games	2	4%
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	1	2%
Game Courts	1	2%
Picnic Shelters	0	0%
Disc Golf	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	
<b>Participants</b>	<b>19</b>	

Table 4.2: Program Preference Results

Programs	Total	%
Youth Sports	10	18%
Adult Sports	6	11%
Movies/Music Concerts	6	11%
After School Programs	6	11%
Festivals	6	11%
Annual Special Events	5	9%
Athletic Tournament	4	7%
Nature Programs	3	5%
Arts & Crafts Classes	3	5%
Senior Programs	2	4%
Runs and Races	2	4%
Dance and Drama Classes	1	2%
Summer Camps	1	2%
Fitness Classes	1	2%
E-Sports	1	2%
Music Classes	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	
<b>Participants</b>	<b>19</b>	

On the features board (Table 4.1), recreation centers received the largest number of dots (20), followed by athletic fields (9). The provided features were intended to be general, so features were combined into categories whenever possible. On the programs board (Table 4.2), youth sports received the largest number of dots (10), followed by adult sports, movies/music concerts, after school programs, and festivals (6 each).

### 4.3.2 Dollar Voting

Participants at the open house were given \$1,000 in play money to place into boxes to indicate how they would like Berea to allocate funds for parks and recreation. The planning team also setup a booth at the Spoonbread Festival to gather input. Table 4.3 shows the total allocations for each of seven categories (or boxes). Participants could also place money into an “other” box to request specific amenities or improvements not included in one of the seven provided categories. The combined results for the 102 participants at the events are presented below with the allocation for each park improvement category and the percentage of the total allocation.

Of the provided options *develop a new splash pad* received the largest allocation at about \$24,000 or 23% of total dollars. *Develop new indoor recreation facilities* was second with 20% of the total allocation, and *build new parks and facilities* was third with 14%. For “Other” improvements, participants wrote their chosen improvements with the allocation on a card and placed it and the money into the “Other” box. This box received the smallest allocation with only shade at the dog park requested by more than one participant. The individual comments can be found in Appendix D.

**Table 4.3: Dollar Voting Allocation**

Action (Box Title)	Event		Total
	Spoonbread Festival 9/17/2021	Open House 11/9/2021	
Develop a new splash pad	\$23,000 28%	\$900 5%	\$23,900 23%
Develop new indoor recreation facilities	\$14,600 18%	\$6,200 33%	\$20,800 20%
Build new parks or facilities	\$12,200 15%	\$2,500 13%	\$14,700 14%
Build new walking and biking trails	\$11,300 14%	\$1,800 9%	\$13,100 13%
Build new athletic fields	\$8,200 10%	\$3,400 18%	\$11,600 11%
Upgrade existing park facilities	\$5,200 6%	\$2,100 11%	\$7,300 7%
Expand program offerings	\$5,800 7%	\$1,200 6%	\$7,000 7%
Other	\$2,700 3%	\$900 5%	\$3,600 4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$83,000</b>	<b>\$19,000</b>	<b>\$102,000</b>

## 4.4 STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

In December 2021, the consultant met with a series of stakeholders to establish their priorities for Parks and Recreation in Berea. These conversations were conducted at the Folk Center with COVID-19 protocols in place. More than 10 stakeholder groups participated in these discussions, contributing their respective visions to this Master Plan. At these meetings, stakeholders were asked a series of questions about Berea parks, recreation facilities, and programs, beginning first with a discussion of strengths before moving on to a discussion of future opportunities. Summaries of the meetings with complete comments can be found in Appendix D.



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### 4.4.1 Groups Engaged

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

- City Council
- Parks and Recreation Staff
- Soccer – Madison United (MUSA)
- Swim Teams – Berea Dolphins and Madison Southern High School Swim and Dive
- Baseball/Softball – Berea Youth Softball/Baseball League & Berea Community Girls Soccer
- Library Outreach
- Grow Appalachia/Berea Kids Eat
- Local Gym – Berea Fitness/Crossfit Berea
- Tourism
- Football – Southern Madison Youth Football League (SMYFL)

### 4.4.2 Stakeholder Broad Recommendations

- Connectivity & wayfinding
  - Upgraded, expanded signage systemwide
  - Informational signage throughout parks and trails
  - Improved website & branding
- Upgraded facilities
  - Improvements to existing parks and facilities
  - Additional site amenities – seating, lighting, security
  - Specific dog park improvements – seating, shade, agility features
  - Accessible spaces & features, including playgrounds
- Indoor space
  - Recreation center w/ gym
  - Field space
  - Multi-use
  - Pool
- Field space
  - More needed – too many groups sharing same fields
  - Additional lights
  - Artificial turf
  - Better use of existing space – only 200' needed for baseball/softball
  - Drainage improvements
  - Shade, batting cages, improved turf, storage, more restrooms
  - Host tournaments – economic development
- New facilities
  - Futsal
  - Outdoor fitness equipment
  - Amphitheater/stage
  - Disc golf

- 
- Expanded programming
    - Community gatherings, concerts – amphitheater
    - Healthy & fitness
    - Senior/active adult classes
  - Partnerships, collaboration, & marketing
    - Consistent, clear communication from the department
    - Pursue more strategic & improved marketing
    - Improved visibility and better promotion
    - Open to and need for regularly scheduled information-sharing sessions
    - Continued communication with the community
    - Shared calendar
  - Operations
    - Analyze cost and market rate for rentals
    - Transportation needed for seniors
    - More staff

## 4.5 PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS

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

### 4.5.1 Statistically Valid Survey – Overview and Methodology

ETC Institute conducted a Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment survey (Mail Survey) during the summer of 2021 to help establish priorities for the future development of parks, trails, and programs in Berea. This Mail Survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the city.

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

ETC Institute had a goal of 300 survey responses to ensure statistically valid results. ETC Institute exceeded this goal with a total of 312 surveys. Based on this random sample of households, the overall results have a precision of at least +/-5.4% at the 95% level of confidence.

### 4.5.2 National Benchmarking

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

The results of these surveys have provided an unparalleled database of information against which to compare responses from households in client communities. This unique tool enables clients to see their results compared to national averages, assisting them in better decision making. This National Benchmarking summary is

included in Appendix E with the full survey report. Select information from the benchmarking is included in some of the following figures.

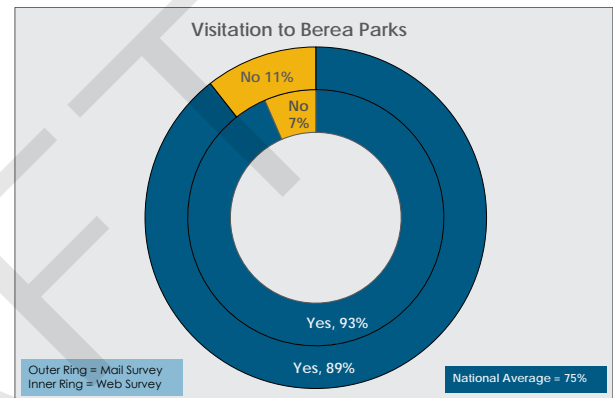
### 4.5.3 Web Survey – Overview and Methodology

In addition to the input-gathering conducted by ETC Institute, a Web Survey was administered by BCI during the summer and fall of 2021. This Web Survey was similar to the Mail Survey; however, the overall length was reduced (2 pages instead of 5) for ease and improved likelihood of completion. This version was powered by Survey Monkey with a total of 814 surveys completed. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of those who responded said they live within the City of Berea and 13% live outside of the county. The full survey report can be found in Appendix F.

### 4.5.4 Results – Visitation of Parks Offered in Berea

Respondents to the survey were asked about their visitation to parks in Berea over the past two years. Figure 4.3 shows the proportion of those who reported at least one member of their household had visited a city park. According to the statistically valid Mail Survey (outer ring), an impressive 89% of households visited parks in Berea. Comparably, of those who responded in the Web Survey, 93% had visited a park. In contrast, the national average for park visitation is 75%, according to ETC Institute benchmarking. Thus, residents in Berea are considerably more likely than residents of other communities to visit parks.

Figure 4.3: Visitation

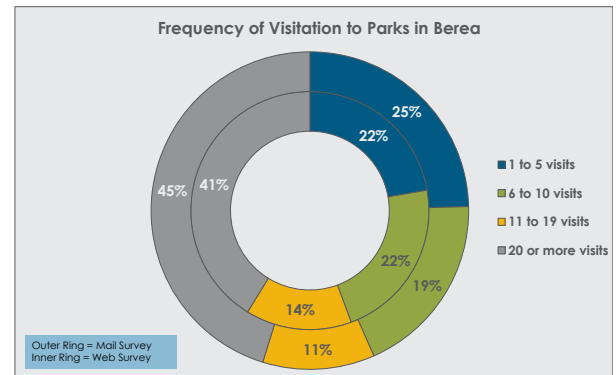


### 4.5.5 Results – Frequency of Visits to Parks & Recreation Facilities in Berea

As a follow-up, respondent households that visited Berea Parks and Recreation facilities during the past two years were asked how often they have visited those facilities over that time. The results are presented in Figure 4.4.

According to the statistically valid Mail Survey, households who visited the city’s parks and recreation facilities in the last year likely visited many times. **Forty-five percent (45%) reported visiting 20 or more times.** Other results were: 25% visited 1-5 times, 19% visited 6-10 times, and 11% visited 11-19 times. Looking at the responses cumulatively, 56% of households visited parks 11 or more times, and 75% visited parks six or more times. It is worth noting that both sets of participants (Web and Mail Survey) responded similarly, emphasizing the high rate the parks are visited in Berea.

Figure 4.4: Frequency of Visitation

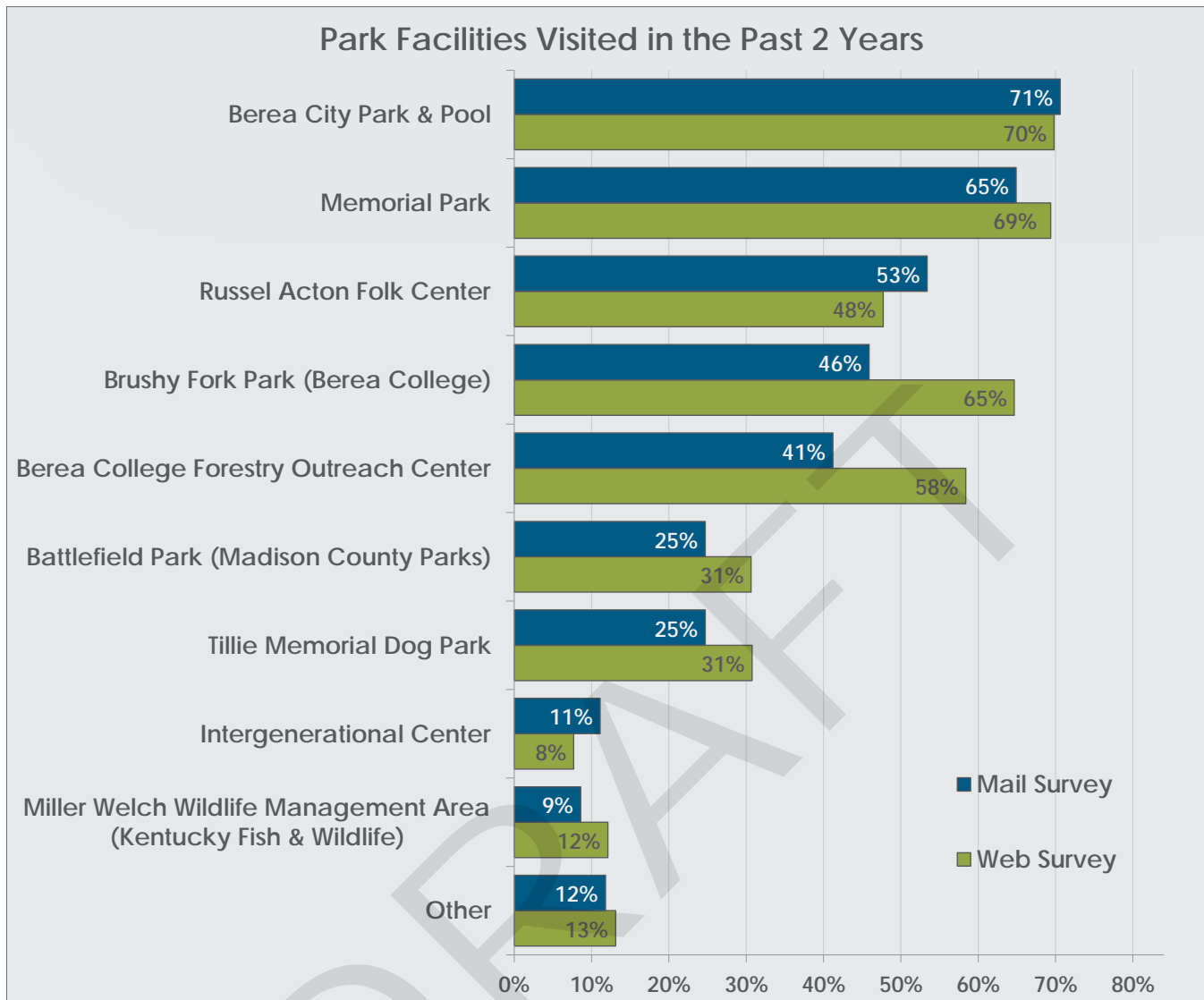


### 4.5.6 Results – Parks and Recreation Facilities Visited Over the Past Year

Survey respondents were asked to indicate which of the parks offered by Berea their households visited over the past two years. Figure 4.5 shows what percentage of respondents have used each park or facility in the past two years.

According to the statistically valid Mail Survey, **71% of households have visited Berea City Park & Pool** in the past two years; 70% of the Web Survey respondents also indicated that they visited this park. At 65% of Mail Survey households, Memorial Park was a close second. The Russel Acton Folk Center was also visited by over 50% of households. Overall, Web Survey respondents were more likely to visit most of the parks in Berea.

Figure 4.5: Parks Visited

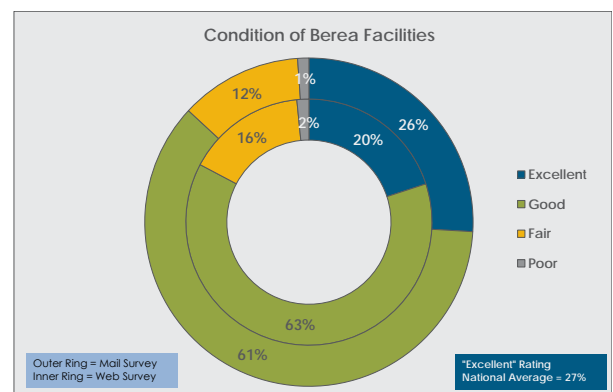


#### 4.5.7 Results – Physical Condition of Facilities Offered by Berea

Households were asked to rate the physical condition of facilities they visited. Figure 4.6 shows respondents' ratings of the condition of facilities in Berea.

According to the Mail Survey, 61% of households who visited these facilities over the past two years rated the condition of those facilities as *good*, **26% rated the condition of the facilities as excellent** with 12% rating the condition as *fair* and 1% as *poor*. The *excellent* rating provided by Mail Survey respondents is similar to the national average (according to the ETC Institute) of 27%. Web Survey responses were similar, but respondents were slightly more likely to rate conditions as poor or fair and less likely to identify conditions as excellent. Taken altogether, **87% of households see the condition of Berea's facilities as either excellent or good**, according to the Mail Survey.

Figure 4.6: Condition of Facilities



## 4.5.8 Results – Participation in Programs Offered by Berea

Respondents were asked if any members of their households participated in programs offered by Berea Parks and Recreation over the past two years. The results are shown in Figure 4.7. According to the Mail Survey, **66% of Berea households have not participated in programs offered**, while 34% have participated. This rate of participation corresponds with the National Average of 32%. In contrast, nearly two-thirds of Web Survey respondents (64%) participated in programs.

## 4.5.9 Results – Quality of Programming

Those who participated in programs offered by Berea were asked to rate the quality of those programs; Figure 4.8 shows the results. Of households who participated in programs offered by the department, **81% rated programs as excellent or good**, according to the Mail Survey. The National Average for excellent is 22%, compared to 17% in Berea). Web Survey respondents were more likely to rate programs as excellent, but responses between surveys were similar.

## 4.5.10 Results – Upgrades to Existing Parks

Households were asked to identify upgrades they would like to see to existing parks; Figure 4.9 shows the responses. The **top response in both surveys was restrooms (63% – Mail, 61% – Web)**. *Drinking fountains/bottle fillers* were second in the Mail Survey at 55% of households. *Picnic shelters, shade structures, security cameras and lighting, trails - walking/hiking, and seating/benches* were next, all at over 40%. Outside of the top item, Web Survey respondents had somewhat different priorities, with *trails - walking/hiking* ranking second at 50% and *shade structures and seating/benches* tied for third with 47%.

Differences commonly occur between the two different survey types because Web Survey respondents likely have higher use of the city's parks and programs than the public as a whole and will offer input corresponding to their specific experience in the parks. In general, the top prioritized items are reflected in both survey groups. In this case, many of these facilities are amenities that would add to the user experience and enjoyment at any of the parks across Berea.

## 4.5.11 Results – Household Needs for Parks and Recreation

Respondents of the Mail Survey were asked to identify (from a list of 28 different types of parks and recreation facilities) if any members of their households have a need for any particular facility (i.e., do they use a certain facility or would they if it were available). Figure 4.10 shows the results.

According to the survey, **the highest percentage of Berea households (75%) have needs for walking & hiking trails** (i.e., they either use or would like to use trails). *Natural areas/nature parks* ranked second (64%). *Picnic shelters/picnic areas* (61%) ranked as third most-needed facility, and small neighborhood parks and large community parks were needed by more than half of Mail Survey households. Figure 4.10 also shows benchmarks provided (by ETC Institute), and Berea's level of need is much above these numbers, especially for the items at the top of the list.

In addition to outlining their general needs, respondents were also asked how well these needs are currently being met by facilities in Berea. Out of these responses, the percentage of households for which needs were met at 50% or less was combined with the total number of households in Berea. Figure 4.11 shows the estimated number of households with needs met at 50% or less for the listed facilities.

Figure 4.7: Program Participation

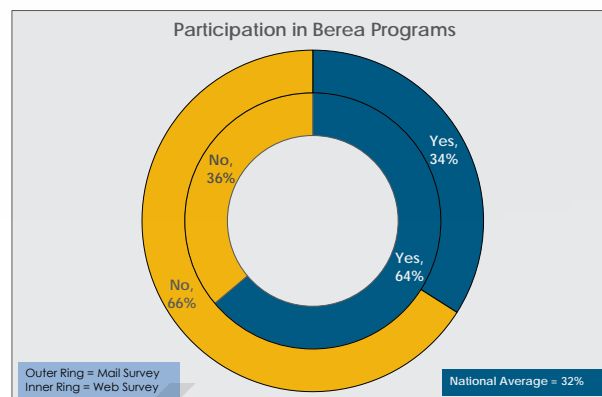


Figure 4.8: Quality of Programming

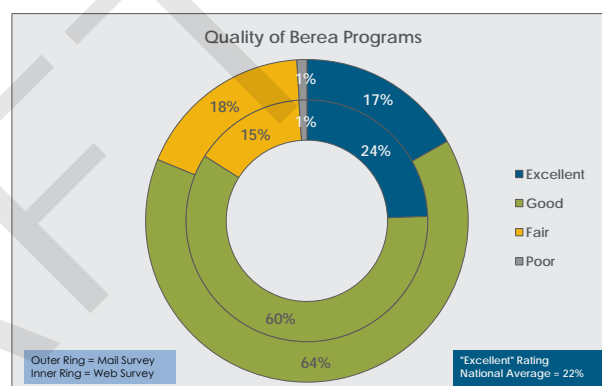


Figure 4.9: Upgrades to Existing Parks

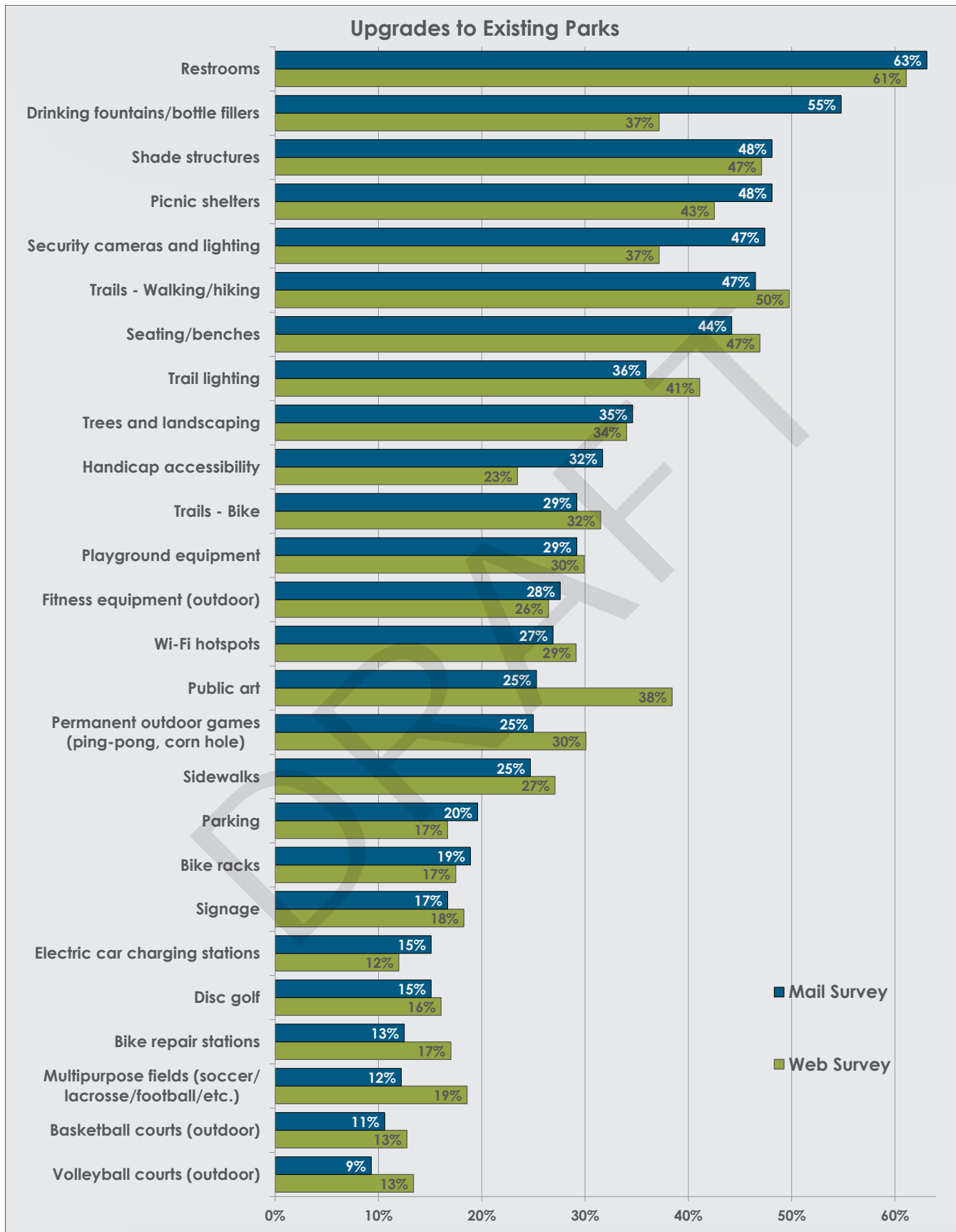
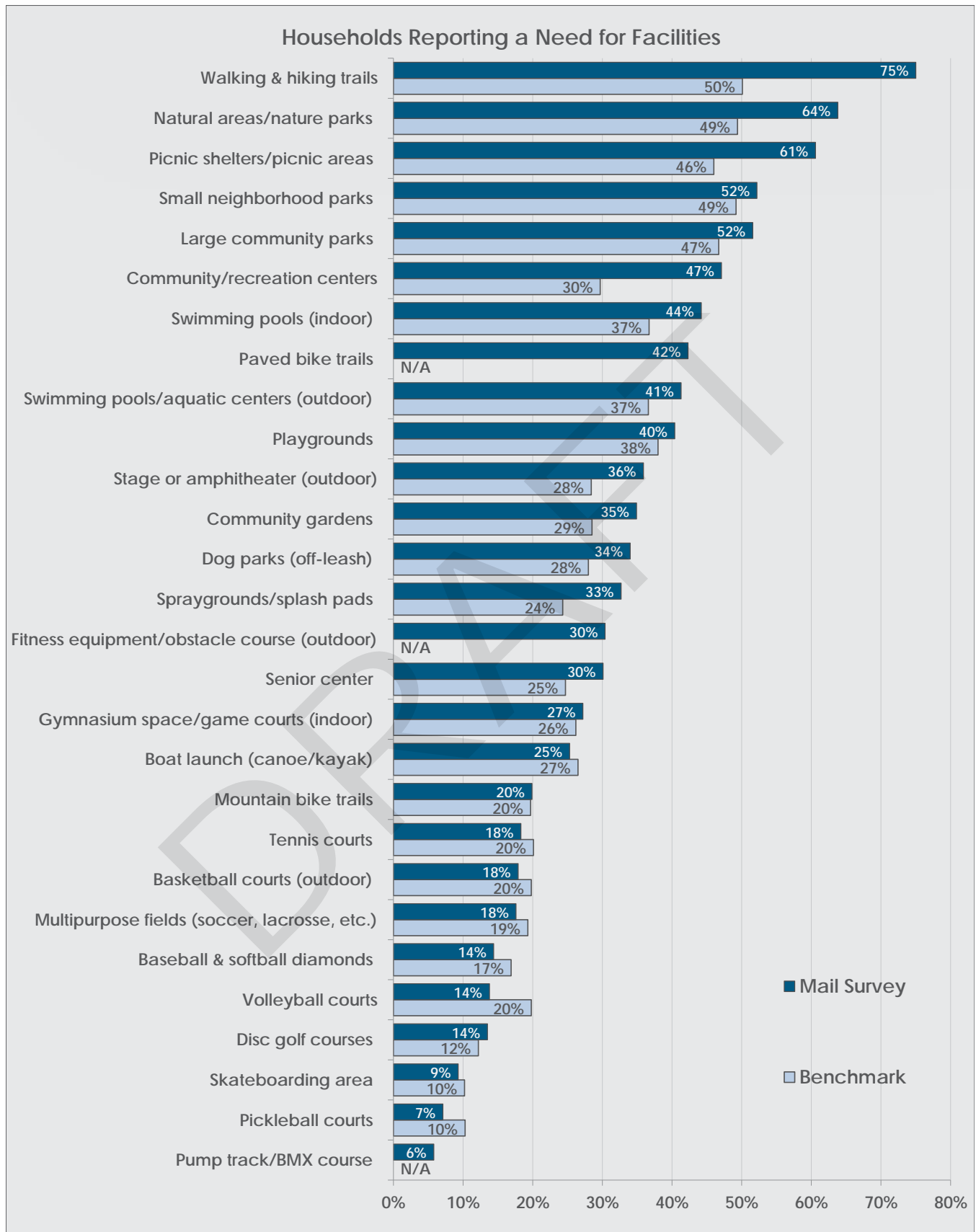
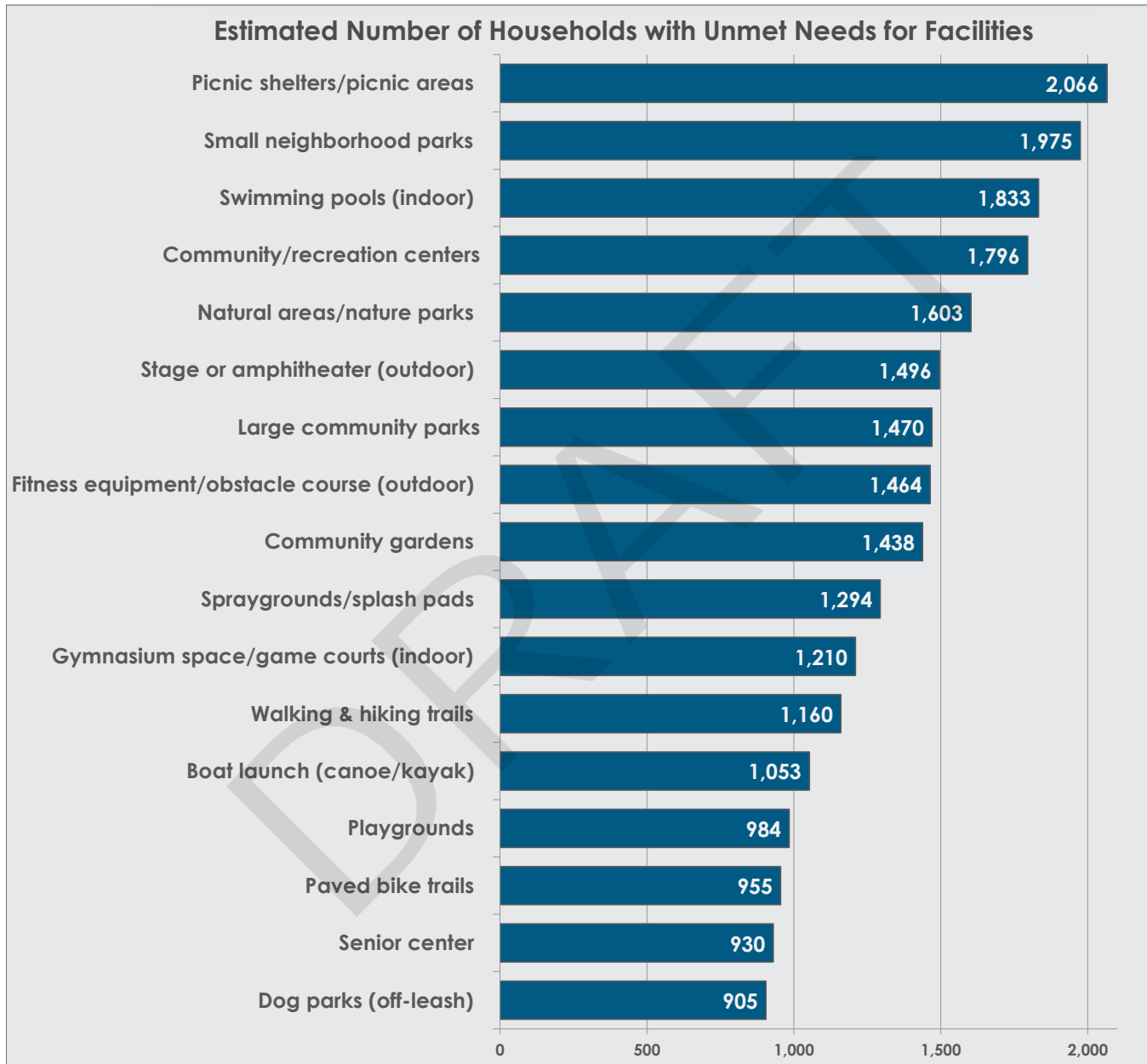


Figure 4.10: Need for Facilities



The order of the items in Figure 4.11 varies from the results shown in Figure 4.10. **The top ranked unmet need was picnic shelters/picnic areas at just over 2,000 households.** Sixty-one percent (61%) of households indicated needs for this facility, third overall. The second unmet need was *small neighborhood parks*, just under 2,000 households; these facilities ranked fourth in Figure 4.10. The top facility from Figure 4.10, *walking & hiking trails*, ranked 12th in unmet needs (about 1,200 households), indicating that many, although not nearly all, of the needs are met. In contrast, swimming pools (indoor) were the third ranked unmet need (1,800 households), compared to the seventh ranked need overall, indicating few of these needs are met.

Figure 4.11: Estimated Number of Households with Unmet Facility Needs

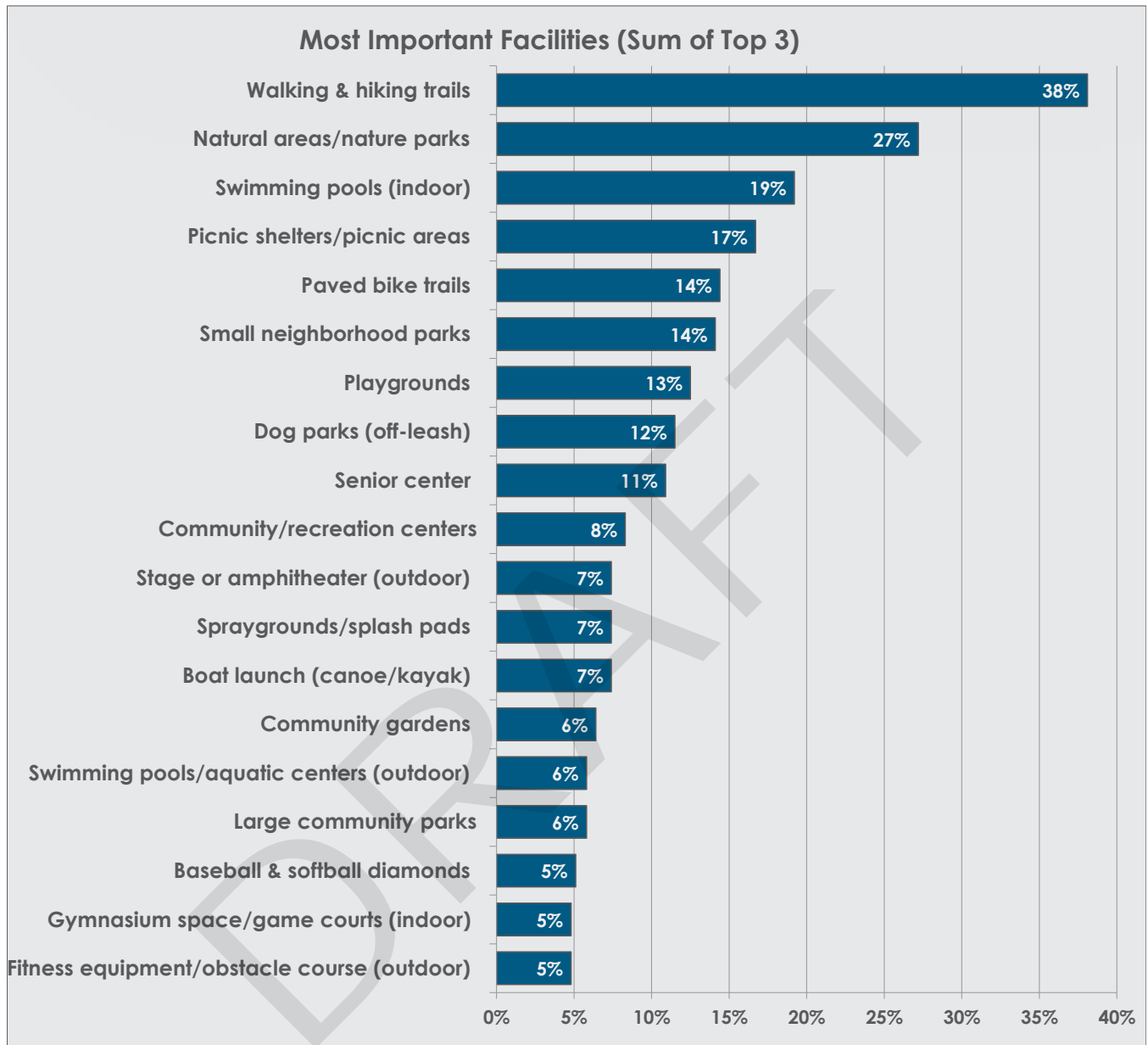


Another component of the surveys pertaining to facilities gave participants an opportunity to indicate which are most important to them. Figure 4.12 presents the most important facilities overall (by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top three choices). These items closely reflect the ranking results in Figure 4.10 with **walking & hiking trails as the most important facility by far for Berea households** (38% of households selected it as one of their top three most important facilities). **Natural areas/nature parks and swimming pools (indoor) come in at second and third** with 27% and 19% of households, respectively, ranking them in their top three. *Picnic shelters/picnic areas* ranked fourth with 17% of households identifying them in



their top three most important facilities. Notably, swimming pools (indoor), senior center, and dog parks (off-leash) ranked substantially higher for most important facilities than for unmet needs overall.

Figure 4.12: Most Important Facilities

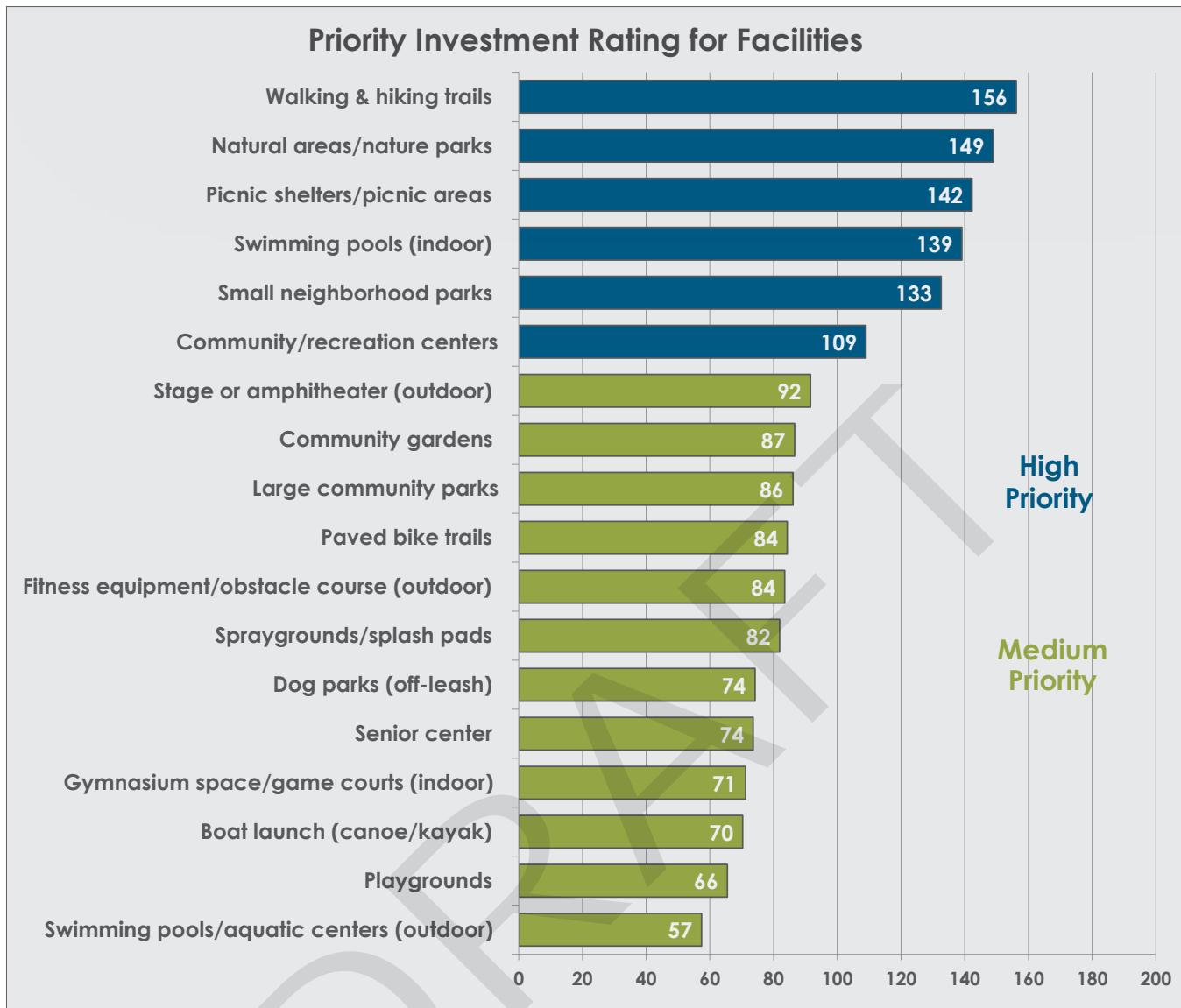


The survey results provided by ETC Institute include a priority investment ranking for each of the facilities that combines the level of unmet needs and the importance of facilities (see Appendix E for methodology). The results for the high and medium priority facilities can be seen in Figure 4.13.

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

1. **Walking & hiking trails**
2. **Natural areas/nature parks**
3. **Picnic shelters/picnic areas**
4. **Swimming pools (indoor)**
5. **Small neighborhood parks**
6. **Community/recreation centers**

Figure 4.13: Facility Priorities for Investment



#### 4.5.12 Results – Household Need for Programs

Mail Survey respondents engaged with similar questions focusing on programs in Berea. First, respondents were asked to choose (from a list of 21 recreation program categories) which programs their households need (i.e., programs they use would if available). Figure 4.14 shows the results.

**Concerts/art performances are the program needed by the largest percentage of households in Berea at 59%.** Fitness & wellness programs (adult) and special events ranked second (50%) and third (44%), followed by movies (outdoor) (also 44%), nature programs (42%), and programs for persons ages 50+ (39%). As for facilities, many of these programs are needed by Berea households at a higher rate than in other communities, according to the benchmarks.

To determine the level of unmet need experienced by residents, the survey asked respondents to define how well their needs are currently met by the recreation programs provided in Berea, then estimated the number of households for which need is met at 50% or less. Figure 4.15 shows the estimated number of households with unmet need for various programs.

The order of the items in Figure 4.15 is similar to the list of needed programs in Figure 4.14 with the top five items appearing in both rankings, although in different orders, indicating a need for the addition or expansion of

these types of programs. **Concerts/art performances** ranked highest with over 2,300 households indicating **unmet needs**. *Fitness & wellness programs (adult)* and *movies (outdoor)* came up as second and third with around 2,000 households. Over 1,500 households also had unmet needs for *nature programs*, *special events*, *programs for persons ages 50+*, and *water fitness programs*.

**Figure 4.14: Need for Programs**

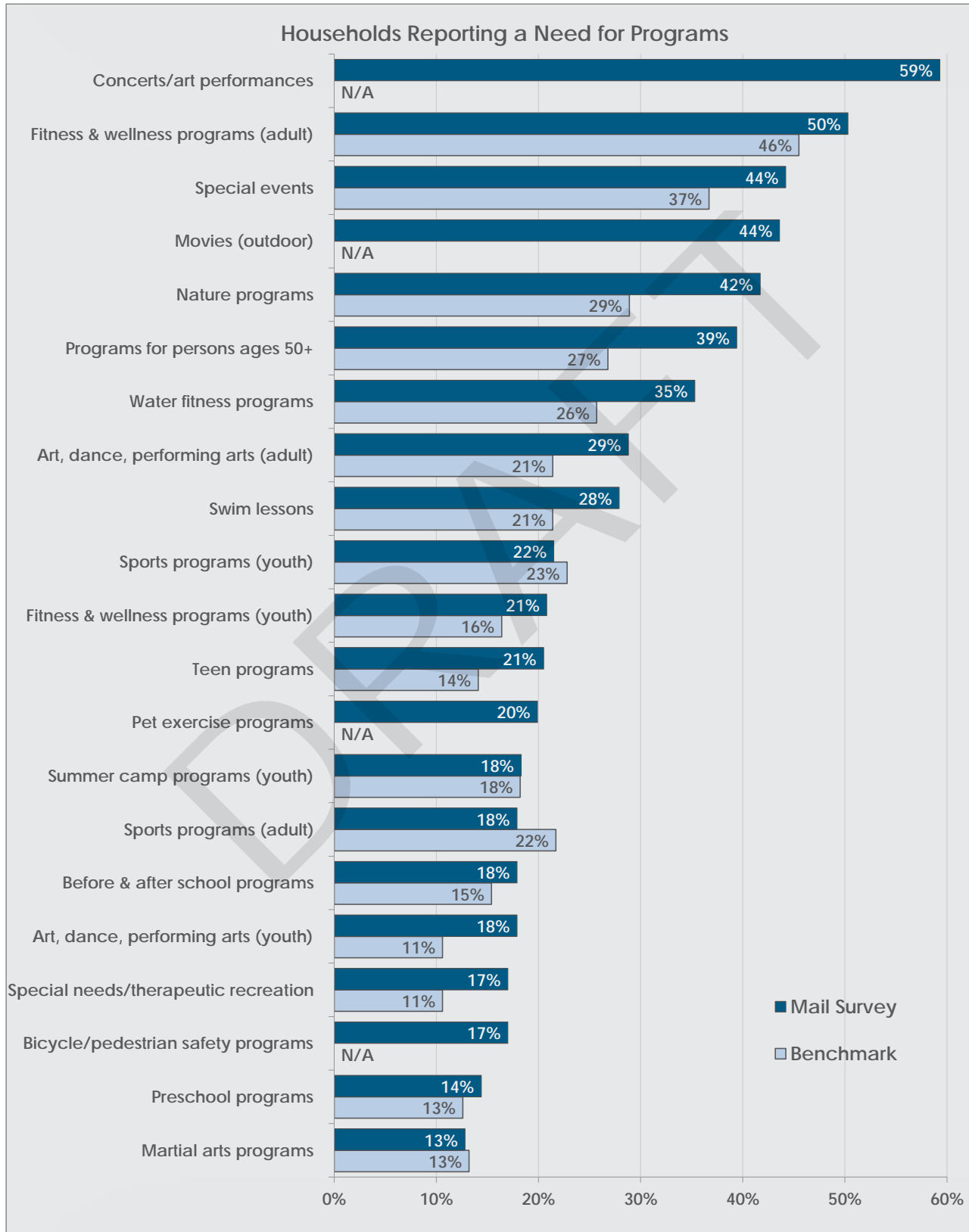
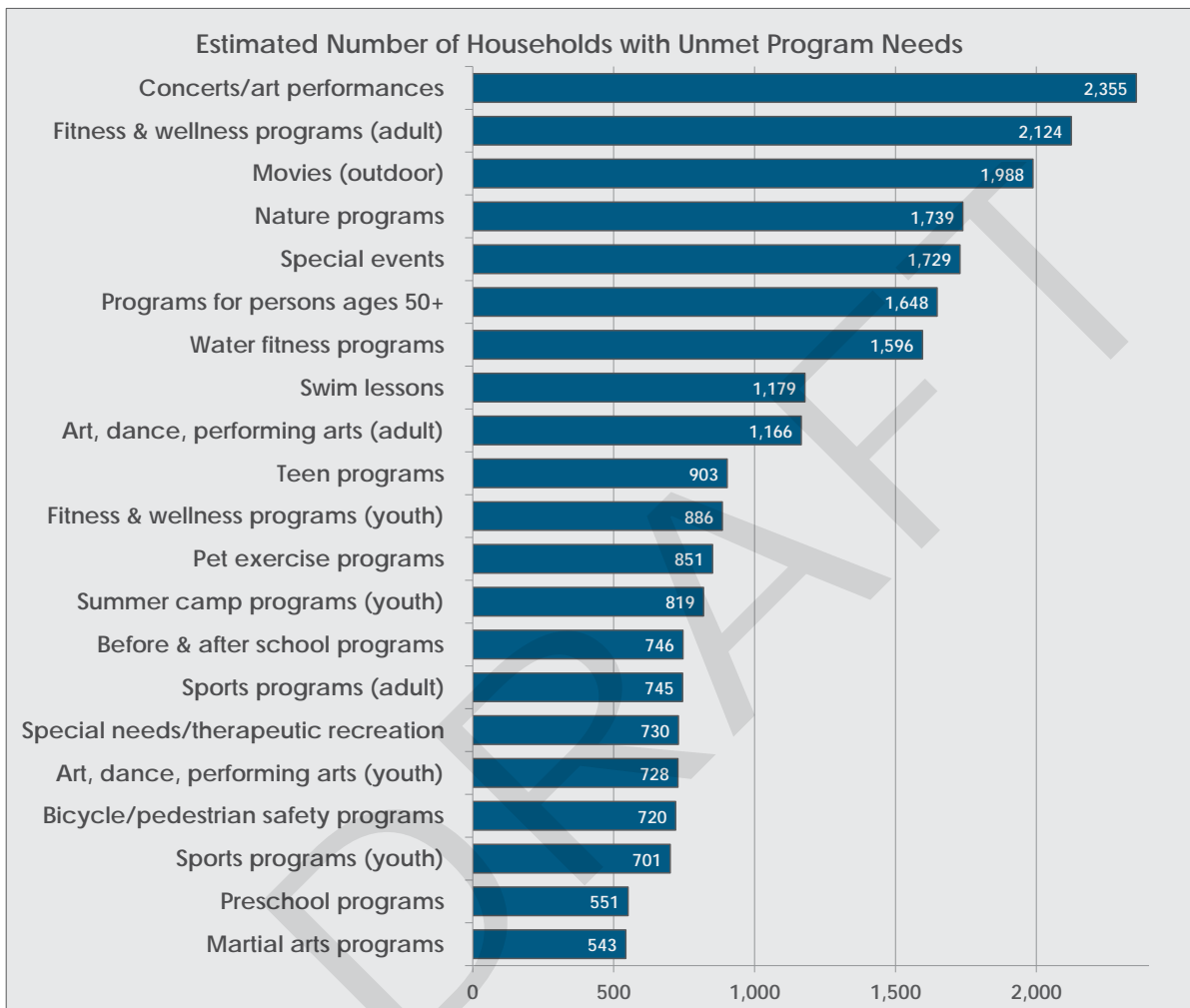


Figure 4.16 shows the most important programs identified by households. The top program categories are similar to the list of unmet needs for programs overall; however, water fitness programs and programs for persons ages 50+ were higher in this list.

With so many the same categories of programming appearing at the top of the results in each of these results, Parks and Recreation has a significant opportunity to expand existing programming to add offerings within these categories. Altogether, these results suggest a demand for greater sense of community, interaction with nature, healthy activities, and opportunities for older age groups.

**Figure 4.15: Estimated Number of Households with Unmet Program Needs**



As with the facilities, the survey results from the ETC Institute also include a priority investment ranking for programs, combining the unmet needs ranking and most important programs ranking (Figure 4.16). Figure 4.17 shows the high and medium priority facilities.

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

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

Figure 4.16: Most Important Programs

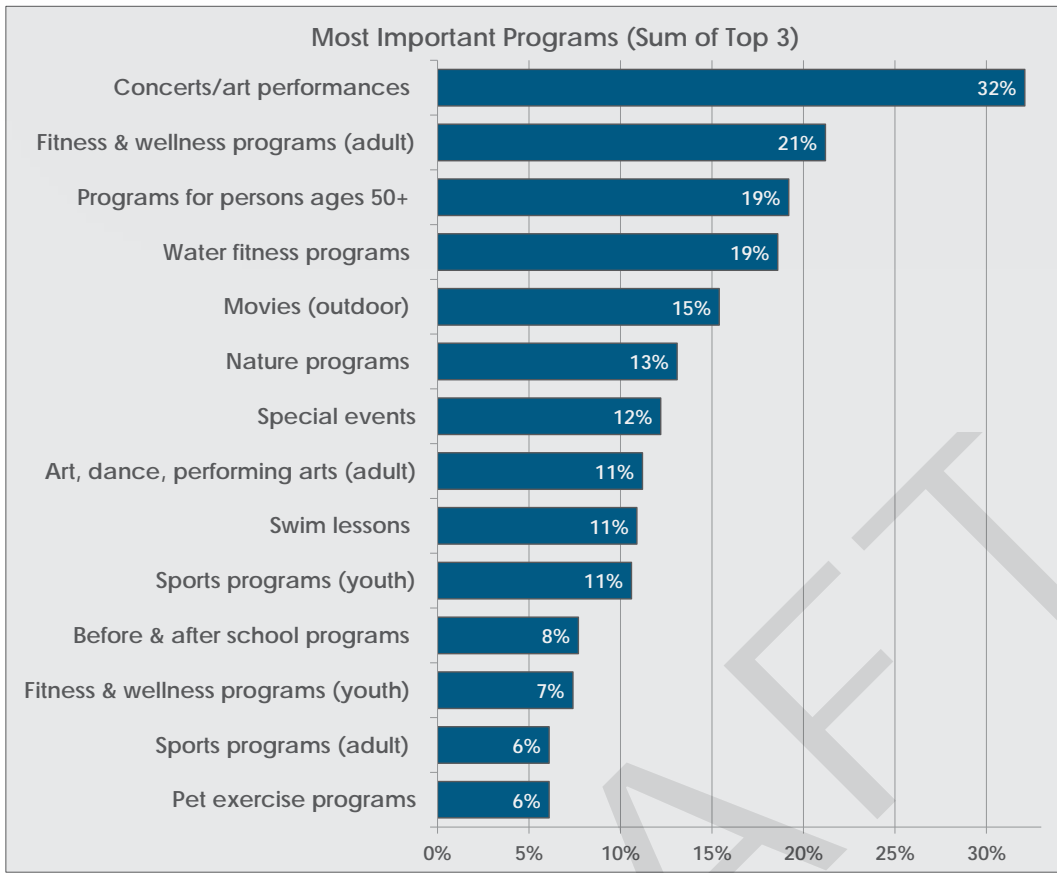
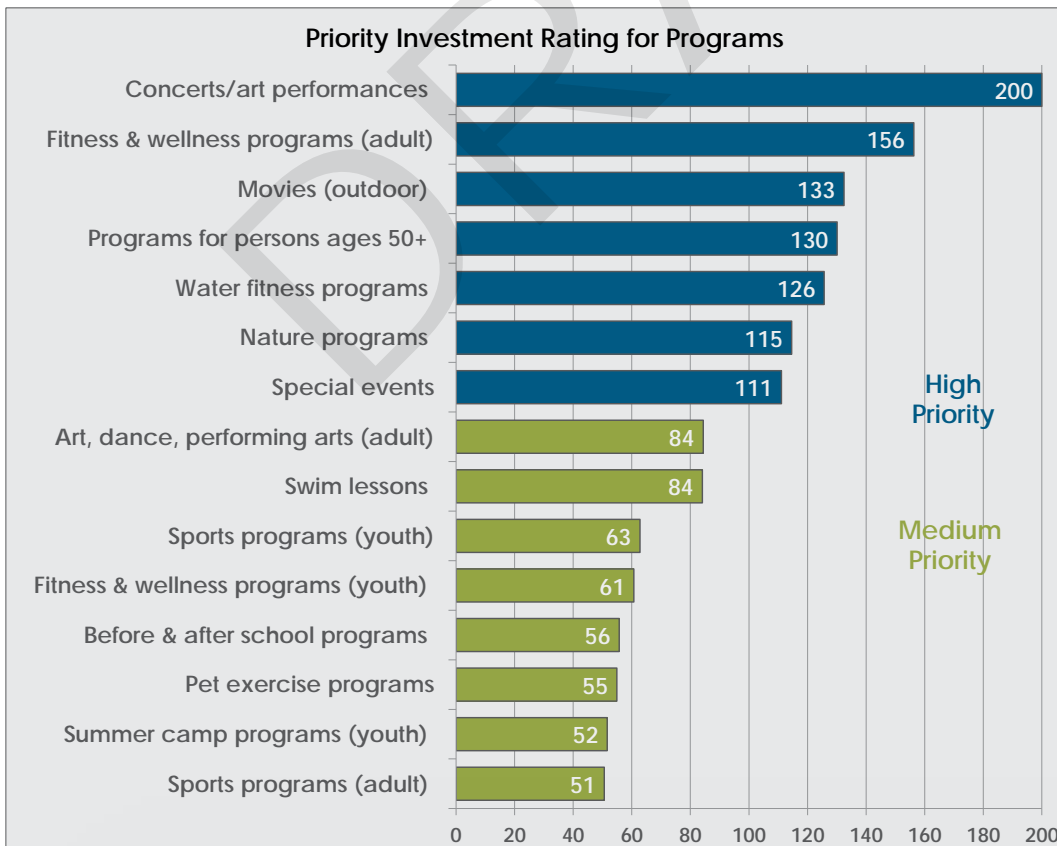


Figure 4.17: Program Priorities for Investment

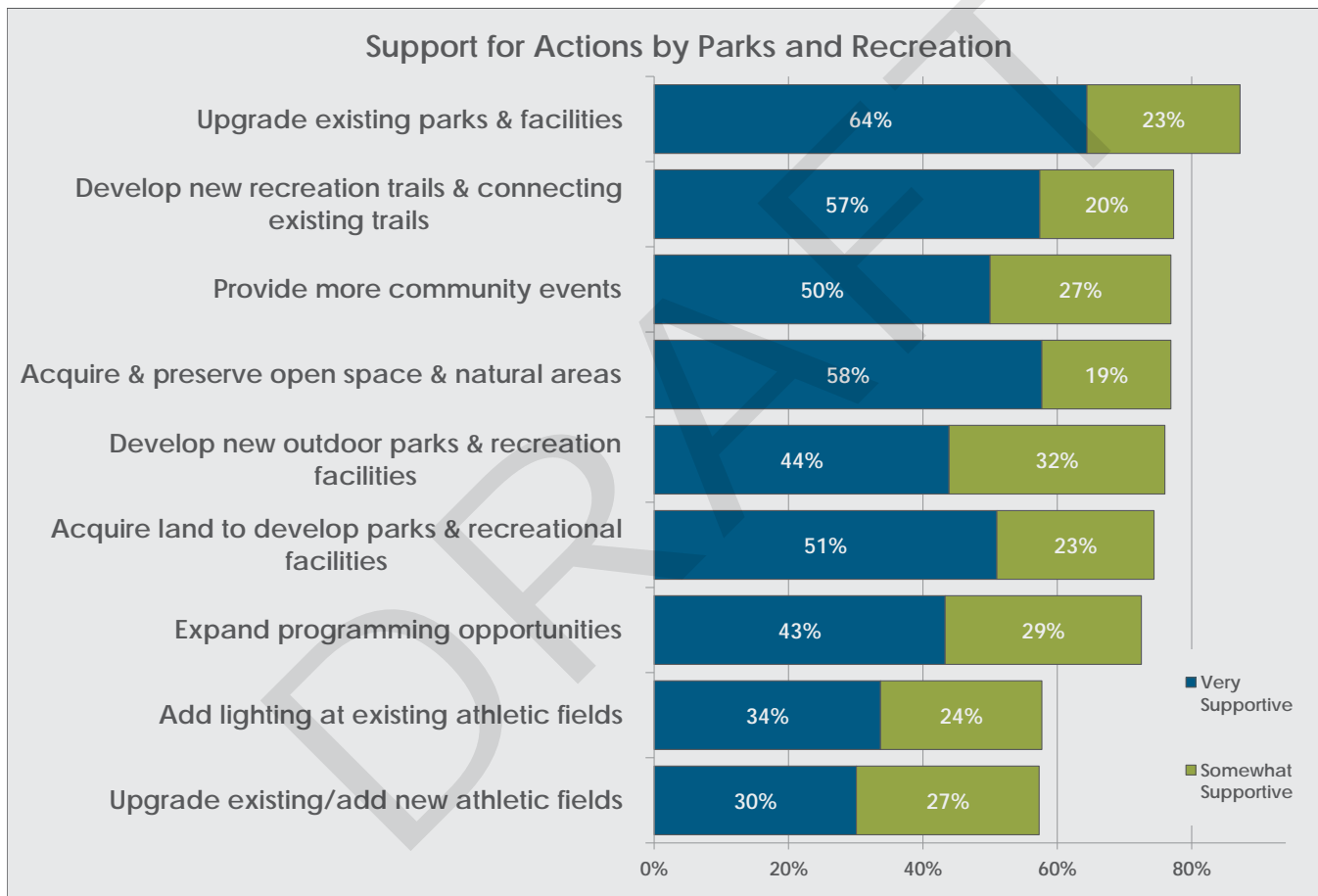


### 4.5.13 Results – Support for Park Improvements

Mail Survey households were asked to indicate whether they were *very supportive*, *somewhat supportive*, *not supportive*, or *not sure* of nine different actions Berea could take to improve Parks and Recreation services. The results, displayed in Figure 4.18, show the combined total of *very supportive* and *somewhat supportive* responses.

**Upgrade existing parks & facilities received the highest level of support with 87% of respondents supporting this action** (64% very supportive). *Develop new recreation trails & connecting existing trails* ranked second with 77% of respondents supporting this action (57% very supportive). *Provide more community events* ranked third with 77% of respondents supporting this action (50% very supportive). More than 50% of respondents were supportive all nine actions, with the two athletic field improvements having the lowest level of support (still nearly 60%). This level of support for various actions indicates overall strong support from residents regarding improvements to Parks and Recreation in Berea.

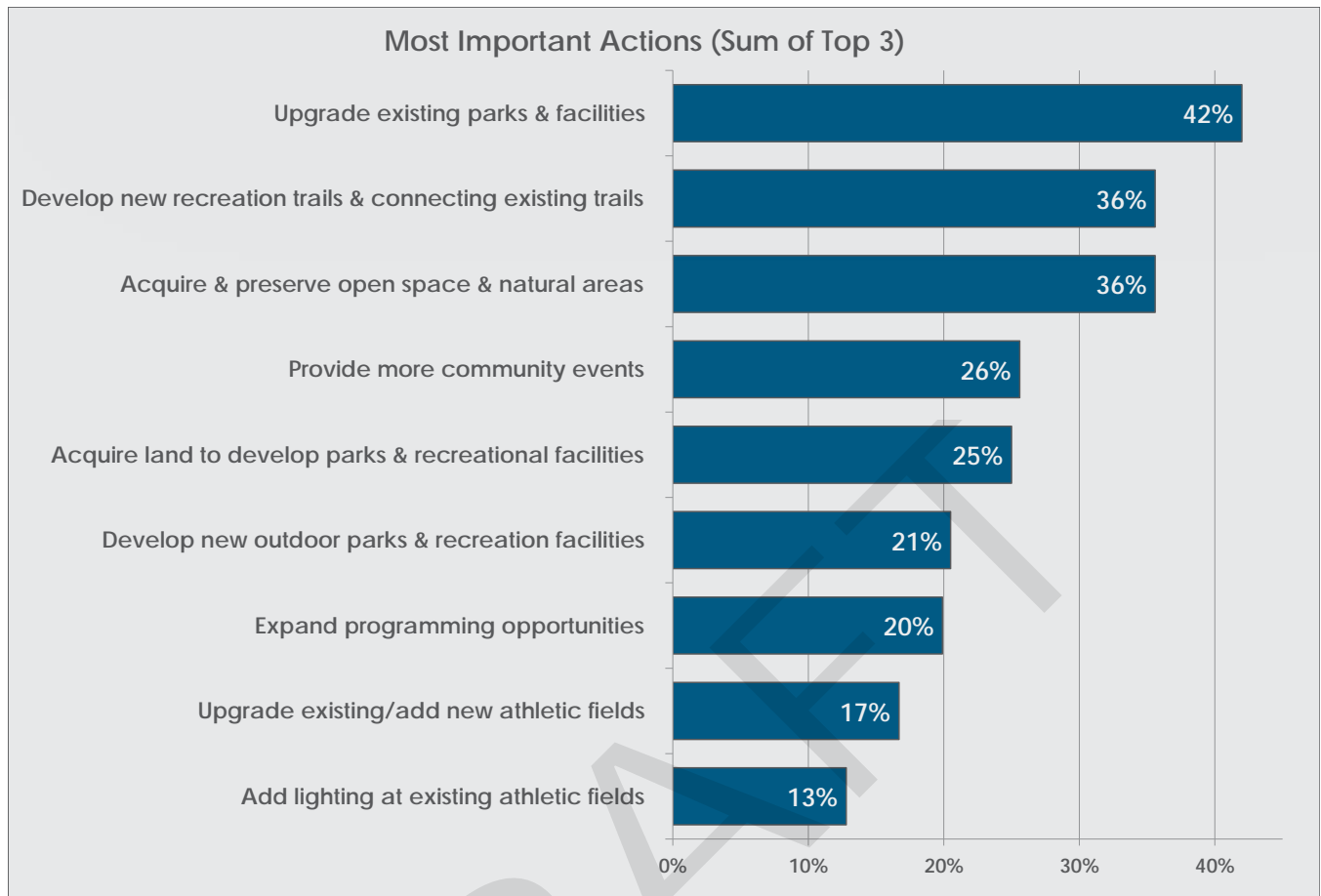
Figure 4.18: Support for Actions to Improve Parks and Recreation



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

After indicating their general support for various possible actions, survey participants were then asked to identify the most important actions for Parks and Recreation to take to improve the quality of the system. Figure 4.19 shows the results of this question, revealing *upgrade existing parks & facilities* as the most popular choice for most important action by a sizable margin. **Forty-two percent (42%) of households selected upgrades to existing parks & facilities** as one of their top three actions. Tied for second were *develop new recreation trails & connecting existing trails* and *acquire & preserve open space & natural areas*, both at 36%. Overall, the results are similar in order to those from Figure 4.18.

Figure 4.19: Most Important Actions for Improving Parks and Recreation in Berea



#### 4.5.15 Results – Organizations Used for Parks & Recreation Activities

Both surveys asked respondents to identify which organizations they use to access parks and recreation activities. Figure 4.20 shows the results of these survey questions. **Berea Parks Department is the top organization residents use for activities with over 50% of households reporting use.** Web Survey respondents – often choosing to submit feedback because they already engage in parks and recreation – returned similar use of the Parks Department but much higher use of other providers, especially *private youth sports leagues and Madison County Parks*.

#### 4.5.16 Results – Learning about Facilities, Programs, Activities, or Events in Berea

Households were asked to identify ways they learn about Berea facilities, programs, activities, or events (Figure 4.21). **Word of mouth is the most common way households currently learn about offerings** in the city with over two-thirds of households (68%) identifying this method. *Social networking* (55% of respondents) and *the newspaper* (39%) were the next most common methods of staying informed. Only about a quarter of households (28%) use the city *website* to learn about opportunities.

To identify how Parks and Recreation should communicate with the community in the future, households were then asked their preferred method to learn about potential opportunities (Figure 4.22). While *word of mouth* is the primary method to learn about offerings now, it not their preferred choice. **Social networking (Facebook/Twitter) is the by far the preferred choice for staying informed (49%),** followed by *word of mouth, newspaper, website, and email notification* (all around 25%). Of these methods, *email notification* has notable opportunity to improve compared to current levels of engagement. Figure 4.22 highlights the opportunities to grow and improve promotions and more effectively communicate with residents.

Figure 4.20: Organizations Used for Parks and Recreation Activities

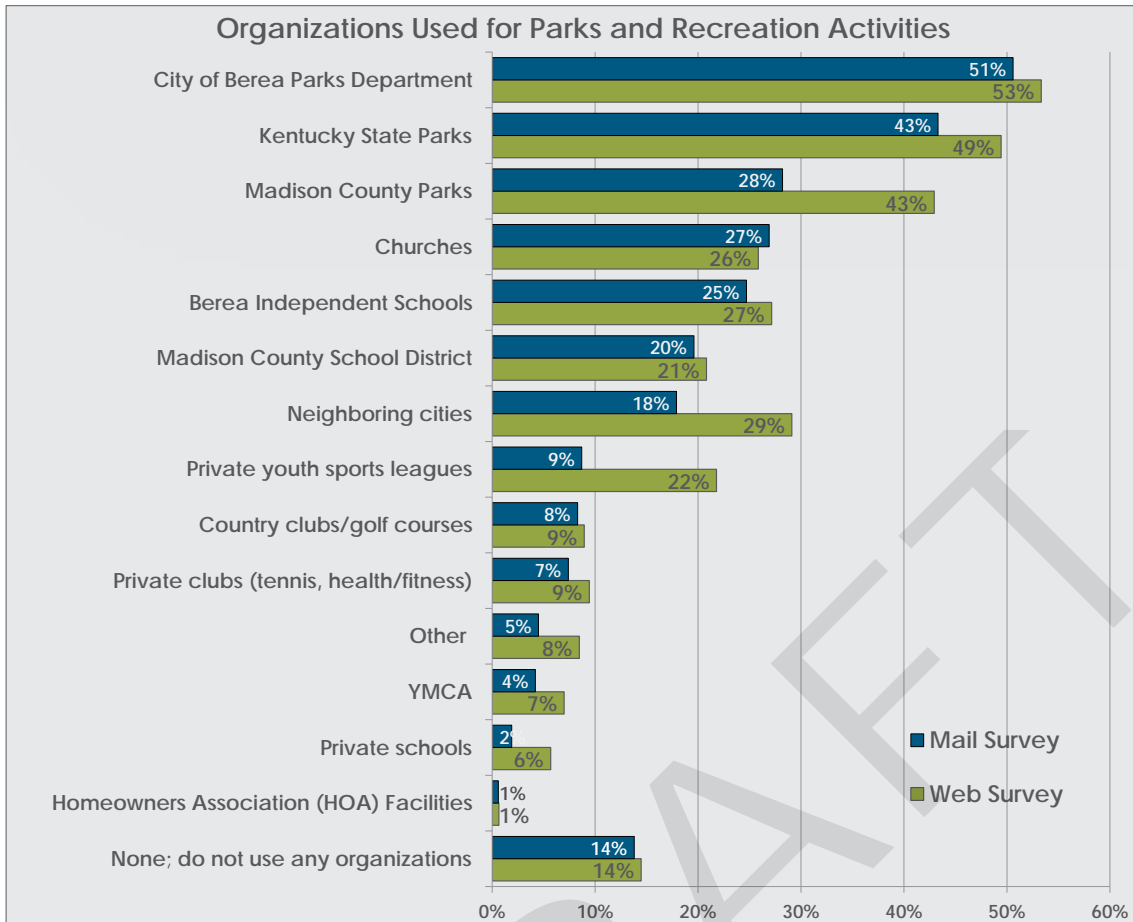


Figure 4.21: Ways Households Learn about Facilities, Programs, Activities, or Events

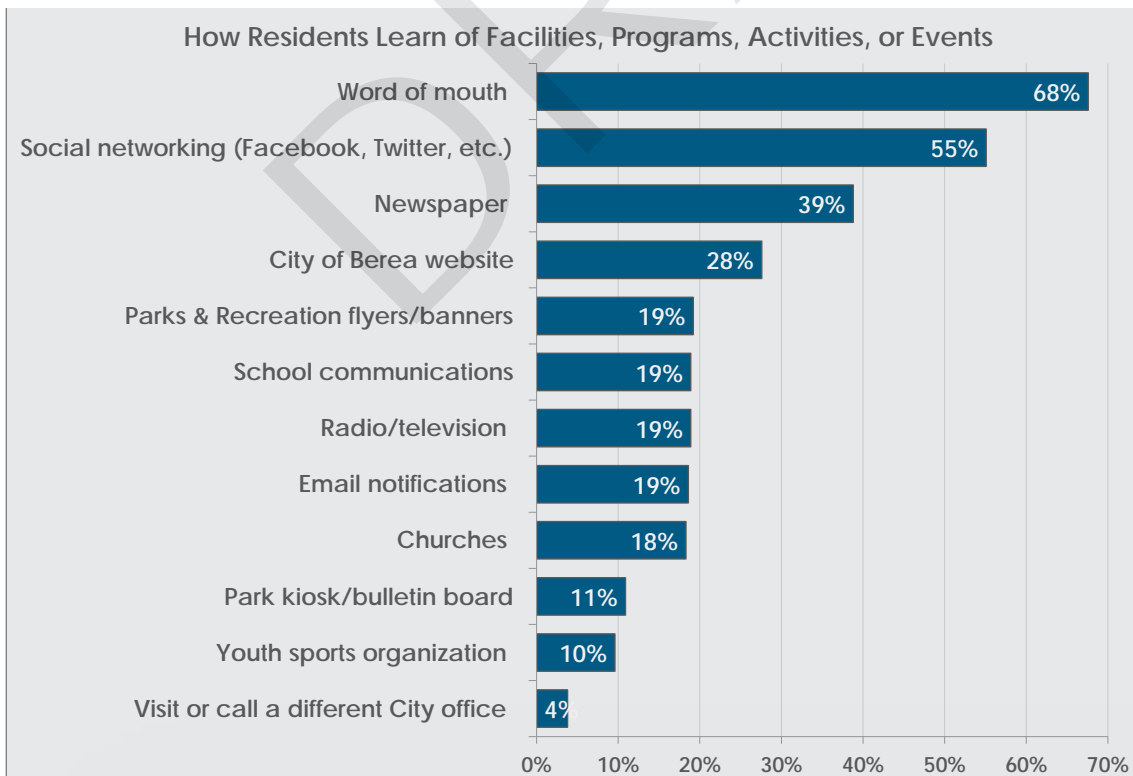
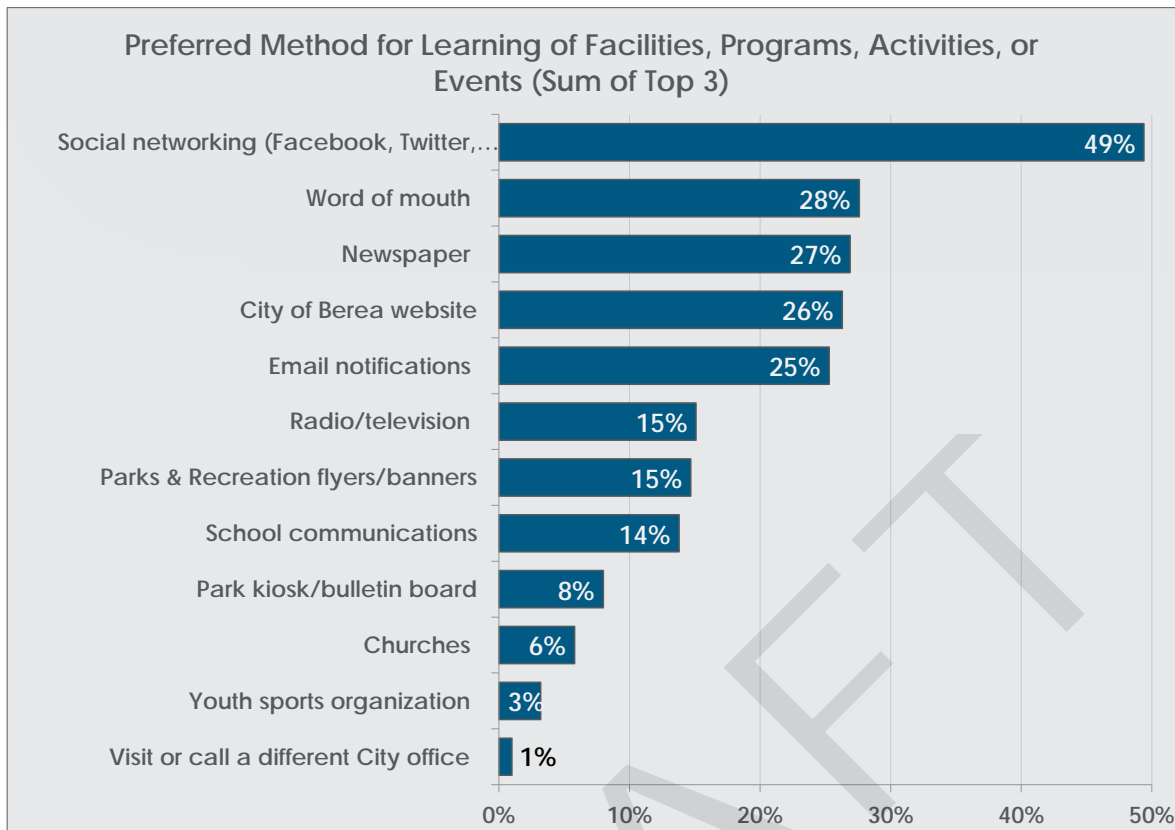




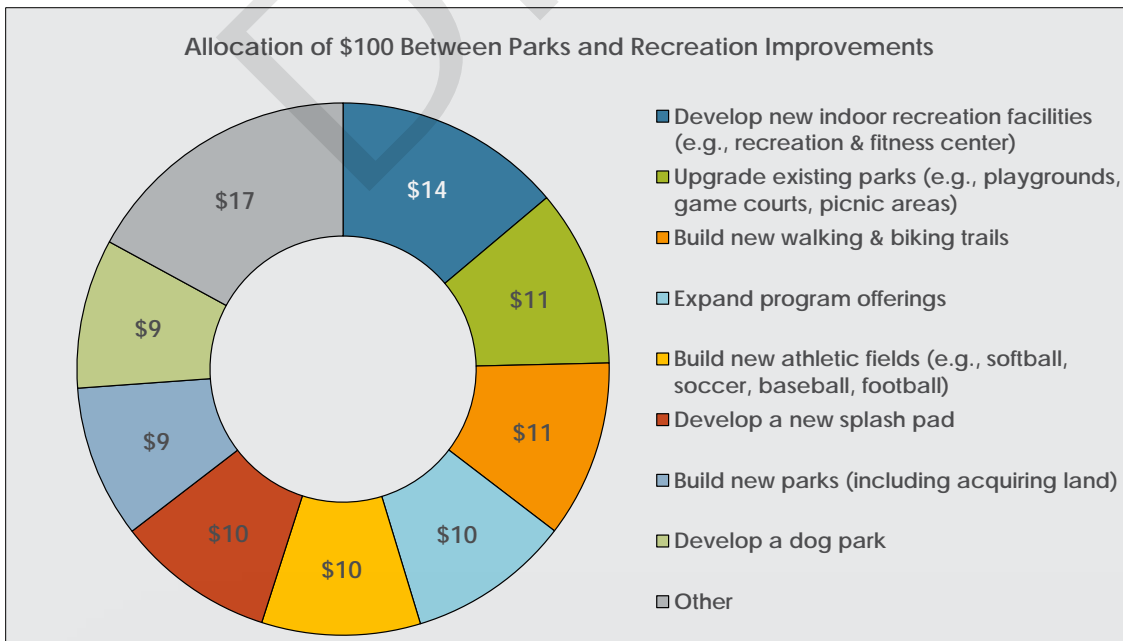
Figure 4.22: Ways Households Would Like to Learn about Recreation and Activities



#### 4.5.17 Allocation of \$100 Between Parks and Recreation Improvements

Survey respondents were asked how they would allocate \$100 between eight different Parks and Recreation improvements in Berea plus an “other” option. Of the options provided (Figure 4.23), **residents would allocate the largest amount to develop new indoor recreation facilities (\$14)**. All of the remaining options received allocations of between \$9 and \$11, indicating similar priority for these options. *Other* received the largest allocation at \$17 with indoor pool, outdoor stage, disc golf, and pickleball the most common requests.

Figure 4.23: \$100 Allocation for Park Improvements

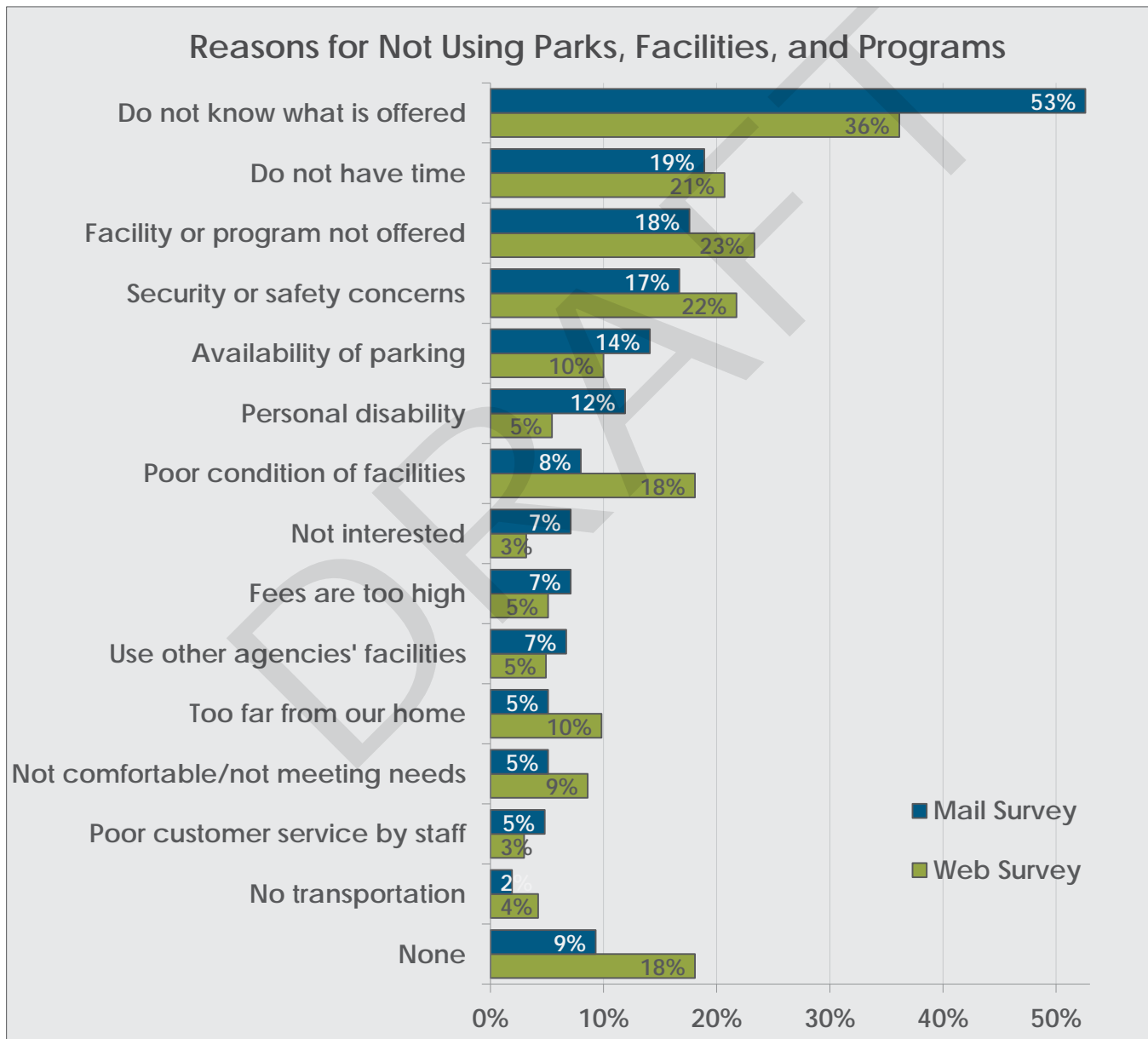


### 4.5.18 Results – Reasons for Not Using Parks, Facilities, & Programs

To determine opportunities for the department to realign and move forward, survey participants were asked to share their reasons for not utilizing offerings provided by Berea Parks and Recreation more often (Figure 4.24). According to the Mail Survey, **over half (53%) of households in Berea do not participate because they do not know what is offered**, far above any of the other options. While this is a commonly reported reason for lack of participation, this number is much higher than the benchmarking by ETC Institute showing a national average of 33%.

While Web Survey respondents also identified lack of information as the top reason for not participating, several options were cited at much higher rates than in the Mail Survey, including facility or program not offered, security or safety concerns, poor condition of facilities, and too far from our home. These results provide insight into why existing park users do not use parks more frequently.

Figure 4.24: Reasons for Not Using Parks, Facilities, & Programs



### 4.5.19 Demographics of Survey Households

The distribution of age groups of respondent households was compared to the most recent population estimates<sup>1</sup> to verify the degree to which the demographic representation of the surveys corresponds with the population of Berea. Figure 4.25 shows the representation by age of survey respondent household members and the estimated 2019 Berea population of each age cohort (the most recent available for these age demographics).

Figure 4.25: Age Demographics of Mail Survey Households

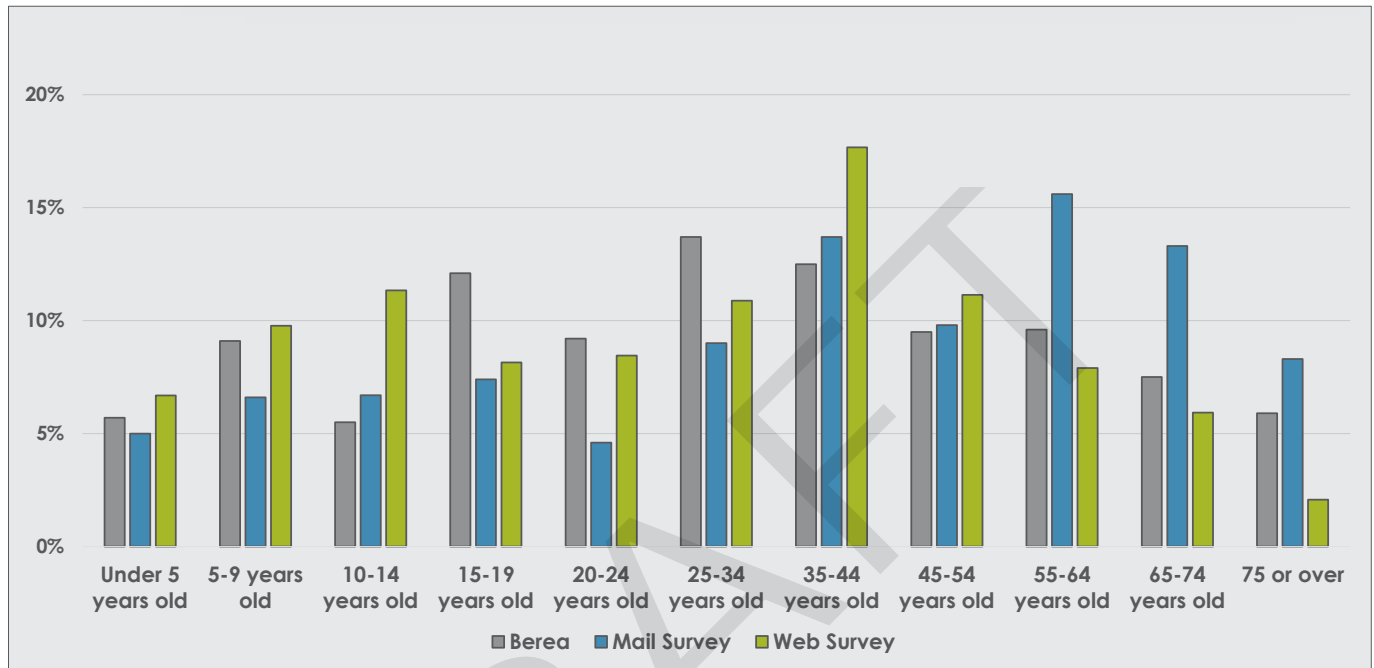
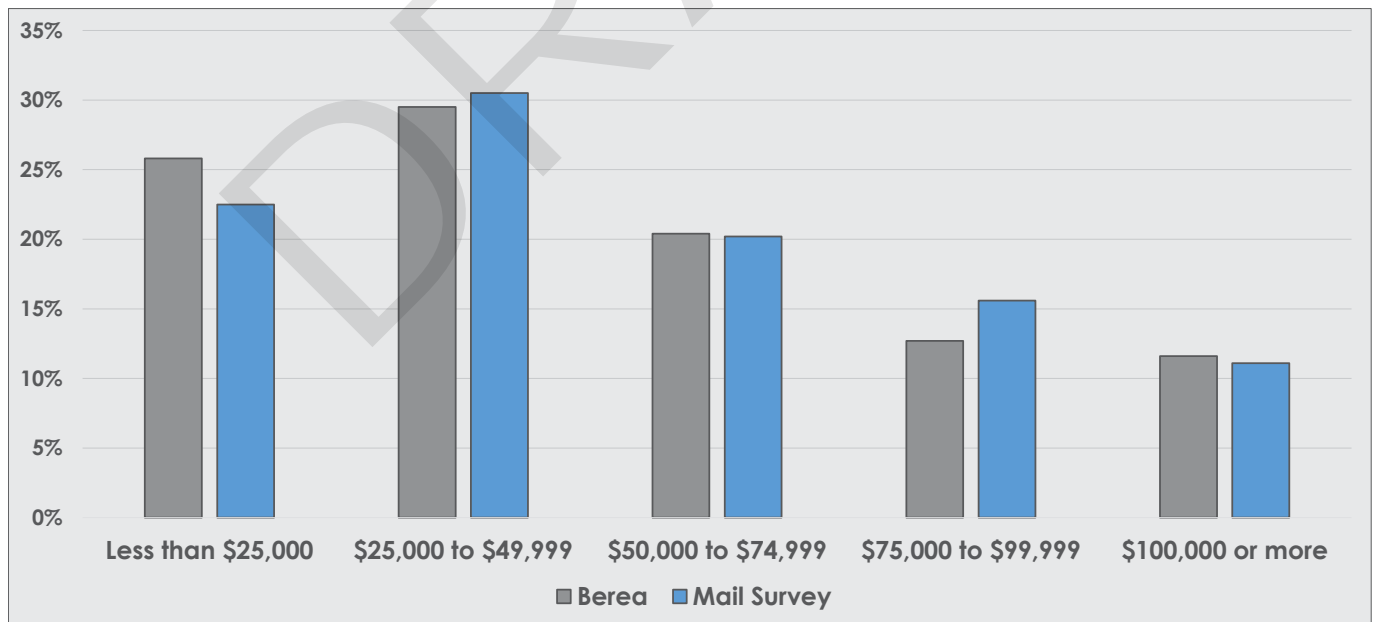


Figure 4.26: Income of Mail Survey Households



<sup>1</sup> 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

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As shown in Figure 4.25, **survey participants for the most part closely aligned with the age demographics of Berea ensuring an accurate representation was achieved.** Where the participation varied from census numbers, the two surveys over and under sampled different cohorts. While the Mail Survey overrepresented those age 55 and over, the Web Survey underrepresented those age groups. The Web Survey overrepresented families with children, and both surveys under sampled ages 15 to 34, difficult age ranges to engage.

Because typical Web Survey respondents are more engaged with the park system, the results in Figure 4.25 also provide information about which age groups are the heavier users of Berea Parks and Recreation offerings. As evident from other elements in this plan, families with children are a major demographic for the city to continue engaging and supporting.

Household income levels of Mail Survey participants are indicated in Figure 4.26. These numbers indicate that the households sampled for the survey very closely align with the actual income levels of the city. In general, higher income households are more likely to complete a survey. However, participants of this survey were very similar to incomes of the city as a whole, even the lower income levels that are often more difficult to engage.

#### 4.5.20 Distribution of Returned Surveys

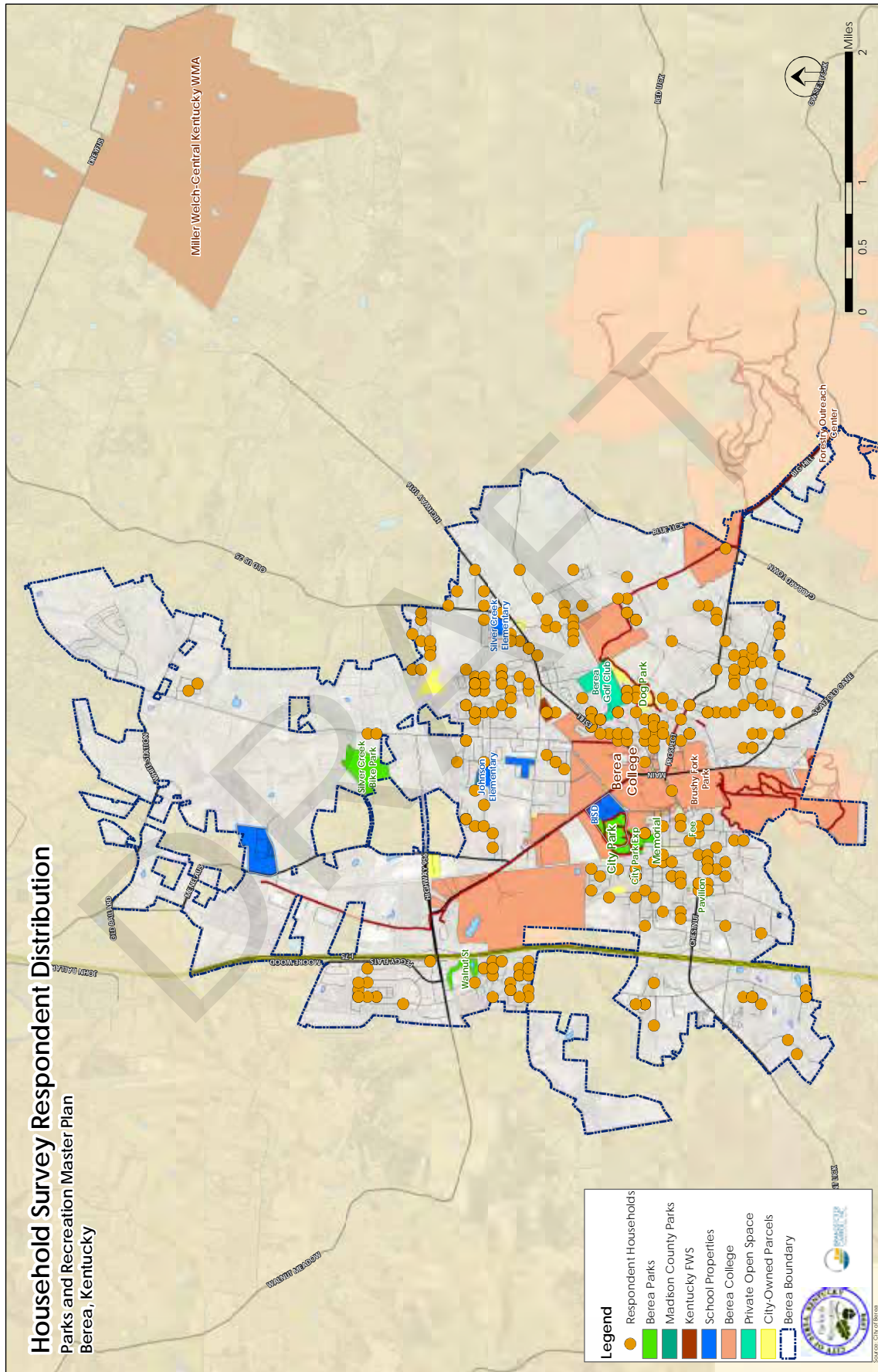
The ETC Institute provides data for the location of returned surveys (to the nearest block), the results of which are shown in Figure 4.27. This figure illustrates a relatively balanced distribution of responses throughout Berea, largely corresponding to residential areas across the city.

### 4.6 CONCLUSION

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

- Upgrades and improvements to existing parks
- Athletic field improvements
  - More fields space – too many groups sharing same fields
  - Lights
  - Artificial turf
  - Better use of existing space
  - Drainage improvements
  - Support elements – shade, batting cages, improved turf, storage, more restrooms
- Dog park improvements – seating, shade, agility
- Accessible spaces & features, including playgrounds
- Preservation of and access to natural areas
- Connectivity and trails, including:
  - New trails
  - Additional mountain bike trails
  - Signage and wayfinding
- Accessibility across the system
- New facilities
  - Splash pad
  - Futsal courts
  - Outdoor fitness equipment
  - Amphitheater/stage
  - Disc golf

Figure 4.27: Survey Respondent Locations



- 
- Expanded programming and events
    - Concerts & live performances
    - Fitness & wellness classes
    - Festivals and special events
    - Nature classes & activities
    - Active adult (age 50+) activities
    - Outdoor movies
  - Upgraded playgrounds
  - Accessible, adaptive equipment
  - More neighborhood parks
  - Support amenities
    - Restrooms
    - Improve wayfinding
    - Consistent, high-quality signage
    - Site security and lighting
    - More shade
    - More seating
  - Indoor recreation center/field space
    - Gym space
    - Field/training space
    - Year-round recreation & programming
    - Indoor program space
    - New indoor aquatic facility
  - Strategic and collaborative marketing and promotion
    - Improved website & branding
    - More partnerships, collaboration, & marketing
    - Consistent, clear communication
    - Improved visibility and better promotion
    - Regularly scheduled meeting with and between partners
    - Continued communication with the community
    - Shared calendar of opportunities
  - More staff

The word cloud image below (Figure 4.28) uses font size to show how frequently a word appears in the public comments (collected from stakeholder conversations, open house comments, and Web Survey results). While value is not applied to any one word – for example, whether or not residents spoke positively about facilities – the graphic is valuable because it illustrates the elements of Parks and Recreation in Berea that are most important, for better or worse, to the community. This image is provided in conclusion to reinforce the myriad of comments, suggestions, and requests heard during the multifaceted public engagement phase.



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DRAFT





## NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND IDENTIFICATION

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

### 5.2 NEEDS, STANDARDS, AND GUIDELINES FOR PARKLAND AND RECREATION AREAS IN BEREA

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

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

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

## 5.2.1 Level of Service Standards for Developed Acres

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

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

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

Park Classification	Existing Developed Acres	Existing Developed Acres per 1000 Population	Target Acres per 1000 Population	2021 Developed Acres Target	2021 Surplus (+) Deficit (-)	2026 Developed Acres Target	2026 Surplus (+) Deficit (-)
Neighborhood	2.0	0.1	0.5	7.6	-5.6	7.8	-5.8
Community	38.1	2.5	3.5	52.9	-14.8	54.8	-16.7
Special Use Parks	4.0	0.3	0.3	3.9	0.1	4.1	-0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>44.1</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>64.4</b>	<b>-20.3</b>	<b>66.7</b>	<b>-22.6</b>

1. See Chapter 2 for population estimates

2. Does not include parks by others or school grounds

Table 5.1 identifies the current developed park acreage for Berea (see Chapter 3 for more detailed information). While the population count is projected to increase by roughly 500, there is also an ongoing trend of diversification (see Chapter 2) which will likely continue. Existing acreage per 1,000 population (Table 5.1) shows that the community parks consist of the most acreage enjoyed by the public while the neighborhood parks have the least. Looking ahead to 2026 and calculating with the same target per population quantities, community and neighborhood park acreage deficits will increase.

Fortunately, some of these deficits, especially for neighborhood parks, can be met through the development of existing parkland and existing city owned property. The Walnut Street property and others have the potential to be developed to help address the needs for neighborhood park space. Taken together, this data indicates that Berea Parks and Recreation would most benefit from focusing on development of new and existing city owned properties.

## 5.2.2 Guidelines for Open Space

Park systems provide invaluable benefits to public health,<sup>1</sup> economies,<sup>2</sup> local environment and ecology,<sup>3</sup> community social fabric, and overall quality of life.<sup>4</sup> Beyond the developed park acreage, a park system includes additional undeveloped open space and natural areas. These acres, while often overlooked, have tremendous potential to benefit the community. Undeveloped open space, or even acres that are lightly developed as parks, can positively impact an entire community through improvements to air and water quality, increased biodiversity, wildlife habitat protection, noise reduction, reduction of erosion, and protection of water resources.<sup>5</sup>

Setting acreage targets – aiming for a certain number of parkland acres overall – is one way of achieving

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Parks, Trails, and Health Resources. [cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/parks\\_resources.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/parks_resources.htm)

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

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

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

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

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

## Methods of Measurement

There are two common metrics for measuring the level of service of open space: acres per population and percentage of total area. Both are provided below to serve as guidelines for evaluating and measuring open space available in Berea.<sup>6</sup> Table 5.2 identifies total acres of parks and open space acreage, both developed and undeveloped, in Berea. The table shows targets based on 7 acres per 1,000 population and 1% of the total acreage in the city. The 7 acres per 1,000 target is nearly double the current value for Berea (3.6).

These values were chosen because Berea is below both the per 1,000 population median and the median for the overall percentage of the jurisdiction (see benchmarking in Chapter 2). However, public input indicates residents of Berea desire development of trails, diversified and additional recreation opportunities on existing parkland, and land preservation (especially of natural areas). The service area mapping provided later in this chapter (Sections 5.4 and 5.5) show some areas where service could be improved. Other open space (Berea Other) owned and/or operated by the city (e.g., Silver Creek Bike Park) is also shown in the table but not counted toward or against targets. Land owned by the two local school districts (i.e., Madison County Schools and Berea Independent Schools) and Berea College are shown in the table for reference only.

### Acres per Population

Using the target of 7 acres per 1,000 population, Berea has (as of 2021) an open space deficit of 51.1 acres. Keeping proportional target acreage would mean that by 2026 the city would have an acreage deficit of about 55 acres. These targets represent roughly what would be required to meet unmet community needs as indicated by the public input and are in addition to the other city-owned open space, even if it were to be brought into the park system.

### Percentage of Total City Area

The percentage of total area is not tied to population which means it can potentially represent a more flexible objective that may be adjusted over time. Berea Parks and recreation and city owned property currently represent 1.1% of the land in the city, with Berea College and the school districts together comprising about 11%. As noted above, Table 5.2 includes 2026 targets for the city based on a 1% of total area goal. This target would require the acquisition of roughly 50 additional acres to the park system. If the “Berea Other” open space were to be converted to parkland, the target should be increased to 1.5%.

**Table 5.2: Open Space Guidelines**

Open Space Category	Existing Acres	Existing Acres Per 1000	7 Acres per 1000 Population				Existing % Preserved	1% of Area	
			2021 Target Acres	2021 Surplus/Deficit	2026 Target Acres	2026 Surplus/Deficit		Target Acres	Surplus/Deficit
Berea Parks and Recreation	54.8	3.6	105.9	-51.1	109.7	-54.9	0.5%	106.2	-51.4
Berea Other	60.9	4.0	60.9	0.0	60.9	0.0	0.6%	60.9	0.0
<b>Berea City Total</b>	<b>115.7</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>166.8</b>	<b>-51.1</b>	<b>170.6</b>	<b>-54.9</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>167.1</b>	<b>-51.4</b>
<b>Parks by Others<sup>2</sup></b>									
Berea College <sup>3</sup>	1,110.3	73.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10.5%	N/A	N/A
School Properties <sup>4</sup>	45.1	3.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.4%	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,271.1</b>	<b>84.0</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>12.0%</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>

1. See Chapter 2 for population estimates

2. Includes only portions of parks within city limits

2. Excludes campus area

3. Assumes half of school acreage as open space

<sup>6</sup> These totals do include some structures, but these features represent a relatively small percentage of the total acreage.

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## 5.3 FACILITIES NEEDS ANALYSIS AND LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

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

### 5.3.1 Facility Level of Service Rationale

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

#### Outdoor Recreation Areas

- Playgrounds – Set at benchmark/increase due to demand and current distribution
- Picnic Pavilions/Shelters – Set at increase due to demand and current distribution
- Trails (miles) – Set at benchmark/increase due to demand, trends, and current distribution
- Skate Park – Set at current/benchmark
- Amphitheaters – Set at increase to 1 due to demand
- Dog Park – Set at current (1), similar to benchmark
- Community Gardens – Set at increase to benchmark
- Swimming Pools – Set at current (1), below benchmark but meeting needs
- Splash Pads – Set at increase to due to demand and trends

#### Outdoor Fields & Courts

- Youth Baseball Fields – Set at slight increase to benchmark
- Youth Softball Fields – Set at current/benchmark
- Multipurpose Fields – Set at increase due to demand, well above benchmark
- Artificial Turf Multipurpose Fields – Set at benchmark, none currently
- Basketball Courts – Set at benchmark, slight increase
- Tennis Courts – Set at none/current, met by others
- Pickleball Courts – Set at increase due to trends and growing demand, none currently

#### Indoor Areas

- Recreation Center – Set at 1, none currently
- Community Center – Set at benchmark, slight increase
- Gymnasiums – Set at 1 due to demand
- Senior Centers – Set at current, slightly below benchmark

**Table 5.3: Facility Level of Service Standards**

Facility	Per Population Target	Existing per Population	Existing Total Supply	2021 Target	2021 Surplus / Deficit	2026 Target	2026 Surplus / Deficit	Benchmark Median
<b>Outdoor Recreation Areas</b>								
Playgrounds	2,700	5,043	3	5.6	-2.6	5.8	-2.8	2,700
Picnic Pavilions/Shelters	3,000	5,043	3	5.0	-2.0	5.2	-2.2	N/A
Trails (miles)	3,000	6,876	2.2	5.0	-2.8	5.2	-3.0	3,300
Skate Park	15,000	15,128	1	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	14,000
Amphitheaters	15,000	N/A	0	1.0	-1.0	1.0	-1.0	N/A
Dog Park	15,000	N/A	1	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	13,600
Community Gardens	9,000	N/A	0	1.7	-1.7	1.7	-1.7	8,800
Swimming Pools	15,000	15,128	1	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	8,300
Splash Pads	8,000	15,128	1	1.9	-0.9	2.0	-1.0	N/A
<b>Outdoor Fields &amp; Courts</b>								
Youth Baseball Fields	2,700	3,782	4	5.6	-1.6	5.8	-1.8	2,700
Youth Softball Fields	5,000	5,043	3	3.0	0.0	3.1	-0.1	5,000
Multipurpose Fields	2,500	5,043	3	6.1	-3.1	6.3	-3.3	6,900
Artificial Turf Multipurpose Fields	20,000	N/A	0	0.8	-0.8	0.8	-0.8	20,600
Basketball Courts	5,500	7,564	2	2.8	-0.8	2.8	-0.8	5,500
Tennis Courts	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3,200
Pickleball Courts	8,000	N/A	0	1.9	-1.9	2.0	-2.0	N/A
<b>Indoor Areas</b>								
Recreation Centers	15,000	N/A	0	1.0	-1.0	1.0	-1.0	10,200
Community Centers	10,000	15,128	1	1.5	-0.5	1.6	-0.6	11,000
Gymnasiums	15,000	N/A	0	1.0	-1.0	1.0	-1.0	N/A
Senior Centers	15,000	15,128	1	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	10,800

1. See Chapter 2 for population estimates and benchmarking

### 5.3.2 Facility Level of Service Standards

The values in Table 5.3 illustrate potential need for various facilities. The largest current facility deficits (as of 2021) are for multipurpose fields (3.1), picnic shelters/pavilions (-2.0), trail miles (-2.8), pickleball courts (-1.0), and playgrounds (-2.6); other facilities with deficits are amphitheaters, splash pads, and indoor spaces like gymnasiums and recreation centers.

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

## 5.4 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

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

A 10-minute walking distance represents about a half mile range and is a commonly used measurement for the walkability of an area; most residents can easily travel this distance without using a car. The Trust for Public Land, NRPA, and the Urban Land Institute have all joined forces to develop the “10-minute Walk Campaign” which strives for healthy, walkable communities and easy access to greenspace for everyone in the country. As part of their multi-pronged campaign, cities all over the U.S. are committed to ensuring that by 2050 all residents will have access to a park within a 10-minute walk of their home. Mayors throughout the country have already taken the pledge, and more continue to do so. Several mayors in Kentucky have committed to the cause, including in Lexington, Paducah, and Winchester.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> <https://10minutewalk.org/>

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**Across the whole city, about a 12% of residents are within a 10-minute walk to a neighborhood park, while another 7% are within a 10-minute walk to a school with a playground.** An additional 13% can walk to some other type of park by the city or others. **In total, about a third of the population (32%) lives within a 10-minute walk to some type of park.** The existing degree of walkable access is understandable, considering the Berea park system is centrally concentrated. While providing walkable access to all residents everywhere in the city is challenging, Berea has many opportunities to add neighborhood parks and to link existing sites and facilities. These efforts would greatly increase the overall percentage of residents within a 10-minute walk to a park.

Figure 5.1 shows the areas in Berea where residents are within a 10-minute walk to a neighborhood park, school Park, nature area, or other parks. This map illustrates the locations of walkable access distributed across the city. Walking access to Berea's parks is concentrated largely the areas of development near City Park and Berea College, with sizeable gaps between walkable nodes in the southeast, southwest, and northeast.

Figure 5.2 shows how much more accessible parks are across Berea by motor vehicle. Drivetime (5-minutes) to Community Parks (bright green) plus Nature Parks/Open Space (yellow) are indicated. Gaps in service are apparent toward the edges of the city. Overall, nearly 60% the population lives within a 5-minute drive areas to City Park or City Park Expansion.

## 5.5 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF FACILITIES

This portion of the needs analysis focuses on the distribution of facilities provided by Berea for use by residents. Service areas for these key facilities within Berea are illustrated in Figures 5.3 through 5.11. As with the geographic distribution of parks, both drive and walk times are used for defining service areas

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

### 5.5.1 Playgrounds

Figure 5.3 shows the service areas (10-minute walk and 5-minute drive to city and school parks) for playgrounds in Berea. The city offers three playgrounds at three different parks; residents also have access to three additional playgrounds provided by schools which have availability outside of school hours. Walkable access is available in many of the most populated areas with the 5-minute drive areas extending to cover most residential areas.

### 5.5.2 Basketball Courts (Outdoor)

Figure 5.4 displays service areas for outdoor basketball courts calculated by the same access measures as playgrounds (10-minute walk and 5-minute drive). Berea offers two basketball courts in two different parks; there are three other courts offered by elementary schools in Berea's city limits (1 half court, 2 full courts). The map shows existing areas of access to basketball courts are similar to the playground access in Figure 5.3.

### 5.5.3 Diamond Fields

Berea's diamond ballfield service areas are illustrated in Figure 5.5 with distances defined by 10-minute walk, 5-minute drive, and 10-minute drive access. Much of the city is within a 5-minute drive of a diamond field, while 5-minute walking access is concentrated towards the center of town. The entire city is within a 10-minute drive to these fields.

### 5.5.4 Multipurpose Fields

Figure 5.6 displays the service areas for multipurpose rectangular fields in Berea. There are four rectangular fields in the city park system and another rectangular field located at Berea Community Elementary. Considering 10-minute drive access alone, service areas are comparable to those for diamond fields, with almost the entire community being less than a 10-minute car ride away.

Figure 5.1: Neighborhood Park Service Areas

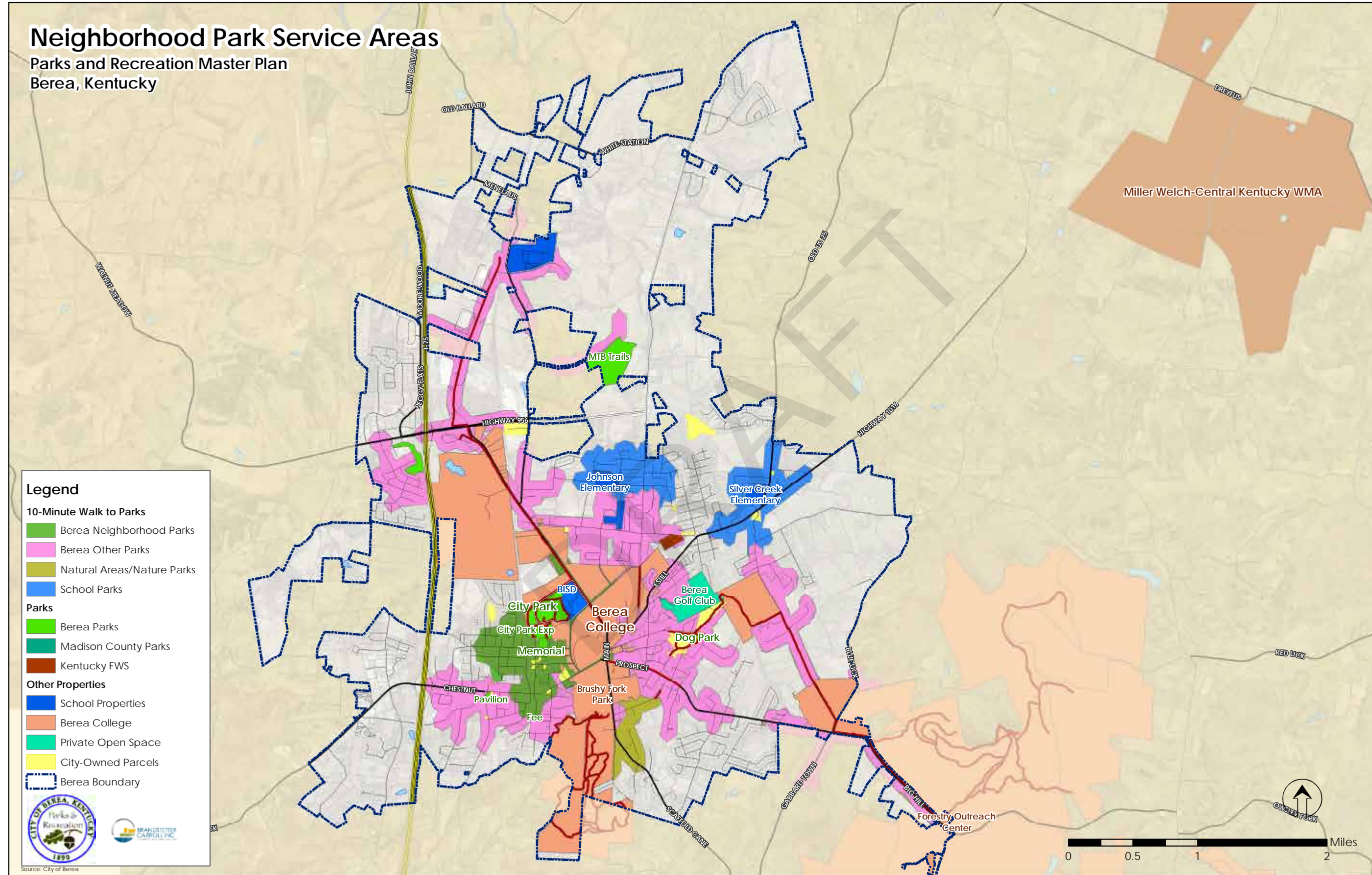


Figure 5.2: Community and Regional Park Service Areas

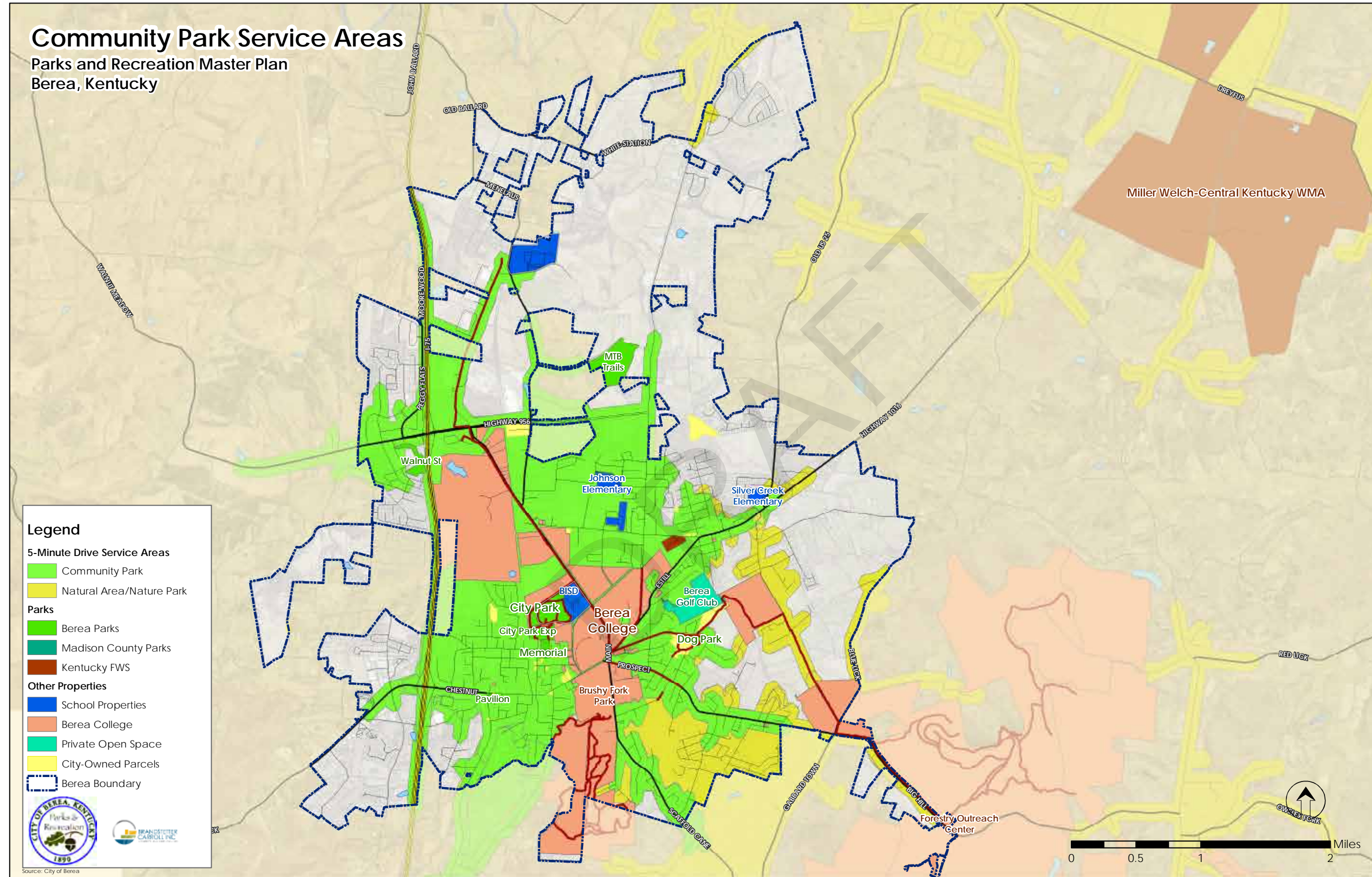




Figure 5.3: Playground Service Areas

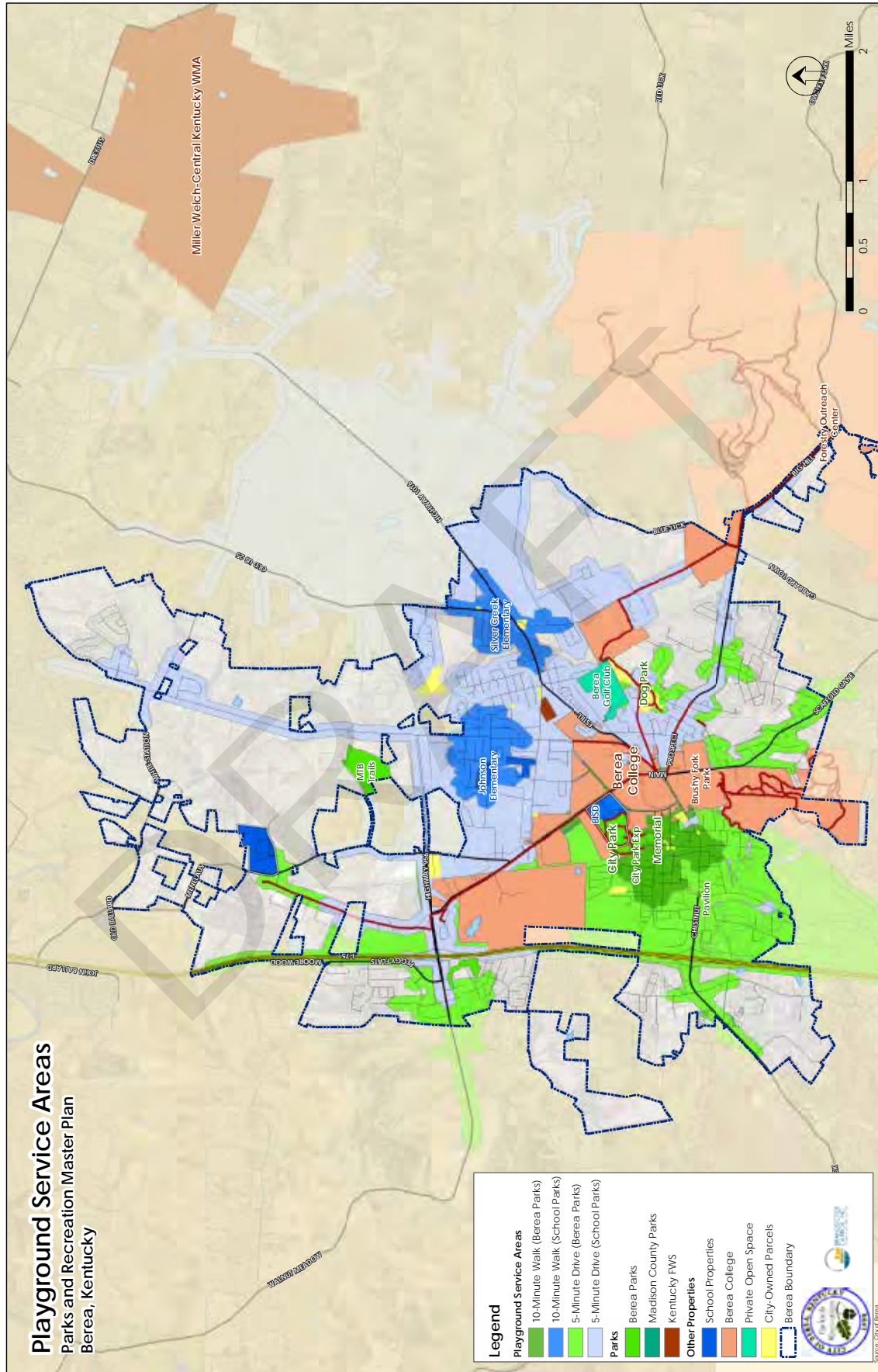


Figure 5.4: Outdoor Basketball Court Service Areas

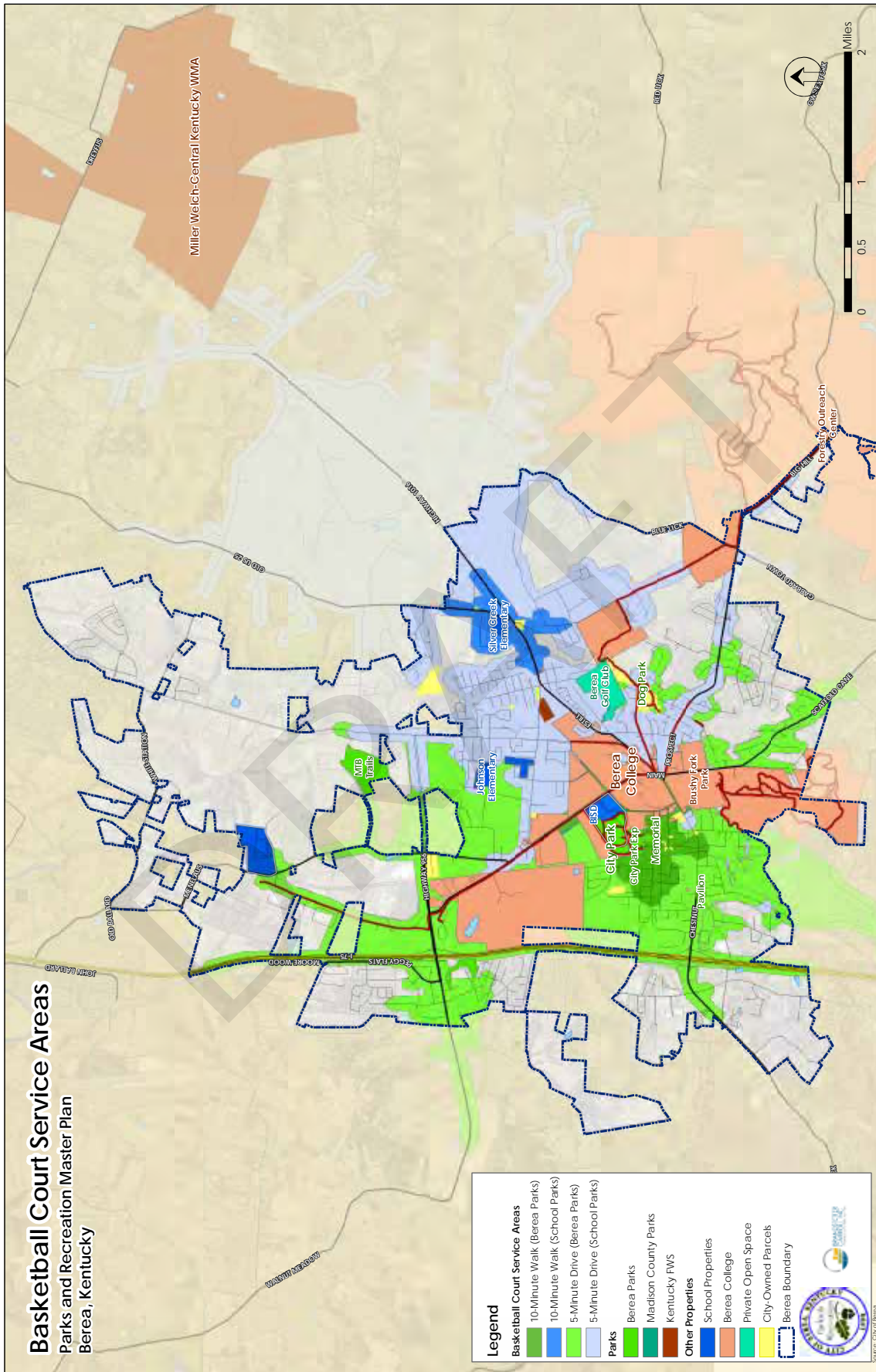
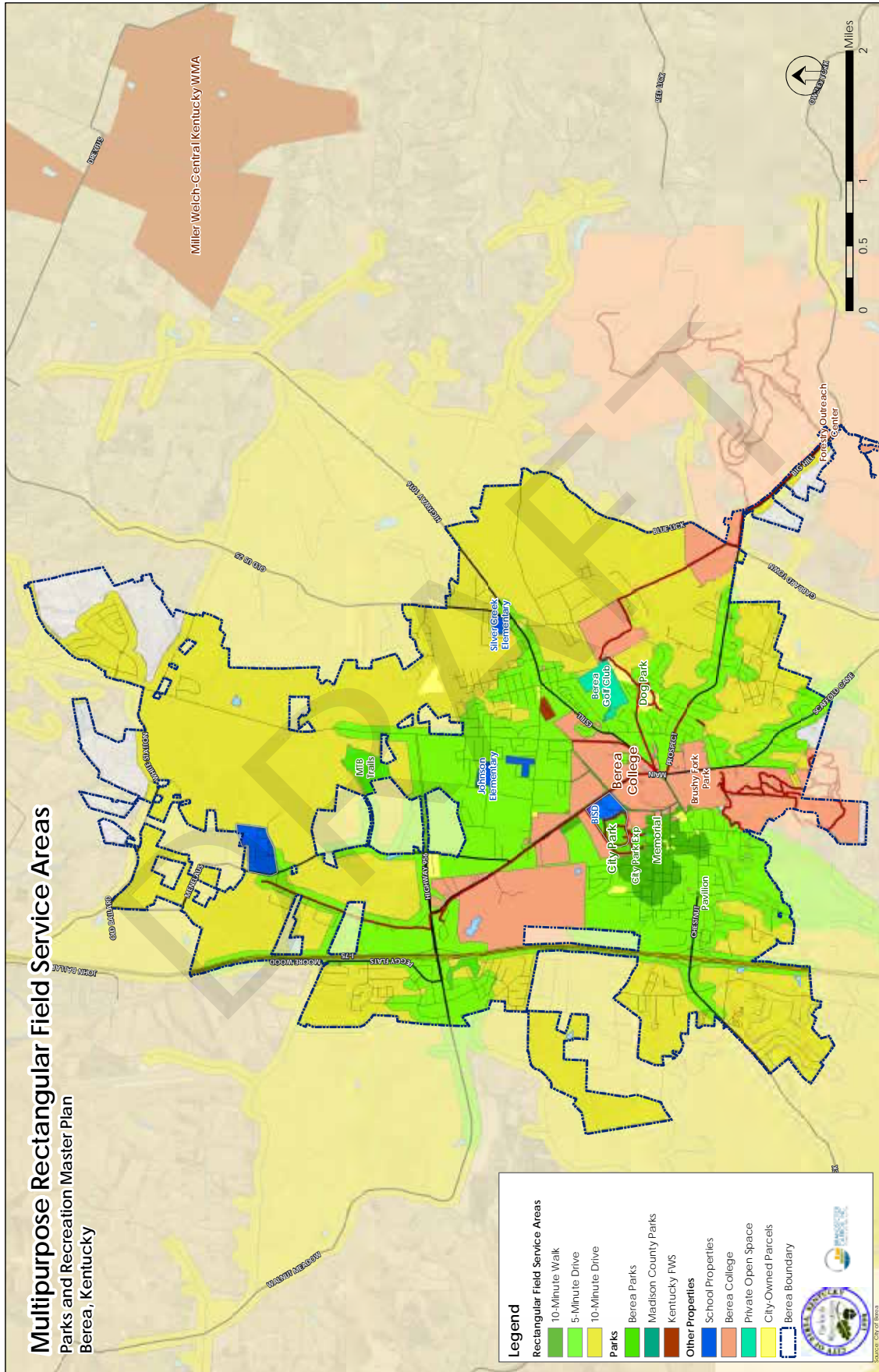




Figure 5.6: Multipurpose Field Service Areas



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### 5.5.5 Aquatic Facilities

Figure 5.7 shows the service area for the city's pool, located at Berea City Park. The facility is within a 10-minute driving access from nearly the entire city but is not walkable to most of the population in Berea; however, much the population enjoys only a 5-minute drive to the pool.

### 5.5.6 Tennis

Figure 5.8 shows that service areas for tennis courts are much less comprehensive than the previously discussed facilities. Aside from a pocket of walkability at the Berea College campus, the available courts are not walkable to the rest of the community. While only limited portions of the city are within a walkable range of tennis courts, many residents are within a 5-minute drive to these facilities. Some limited areas are beyond a 5-minute drive (areas in the western part of the city, on the other side of I-75).

### 5.5.7 Picnic Shelters

Picnic shelter access is limited. Figure 5.9 depicts the service areas (10-minute walk and 5-minute drive) for the picnic shelters provided by the city at Berea City Park and Expansion and Memorial Park. The access is the same as many previous facilities located at these parks.

### 5.5.8 Trails

Figure 5.10 shows a range of service areas across the city for trails: 10-minute walk to a trail access point and a 5-minute drive to at least a ½-mile trail. Walkable access to trails is concentrated around the center of town. In all, Berea residents have access to roughly over 18 miles of trails, many of which are unpaved and located at the Berea Forestry Outreach Center just outside city limits. Overall, Berea has an established trail system and sidewalk system. There are areas highlighted outside of city boundaries that have access to other trails outside of the city; however, those areas are primarily north and southeast of the city, leaving the southwestern portion and northern portion available for trail development and opportunity for a more established multi-modal trail system that connects the more densely populated areas near the core of Berea. Many of these trail connections are proposed in the Master Trails Plan prepared by the City of Berea GIS-Survey Department in 2016.

### 5.5.9 Dog Park

As evident in Figure 5.11, quick access to the city's one dog park is mostly accessible to the eastern half of the community (5-minute drive indicated in light green, 10-minute walk in dark green) with some pockets to the west of downtown and between Johnson Elementary and Silver Creek Elementary. The rest of the community is within a 10-minute drive of the dog park.

Figure 5.7: Aquatic Facility Service Area

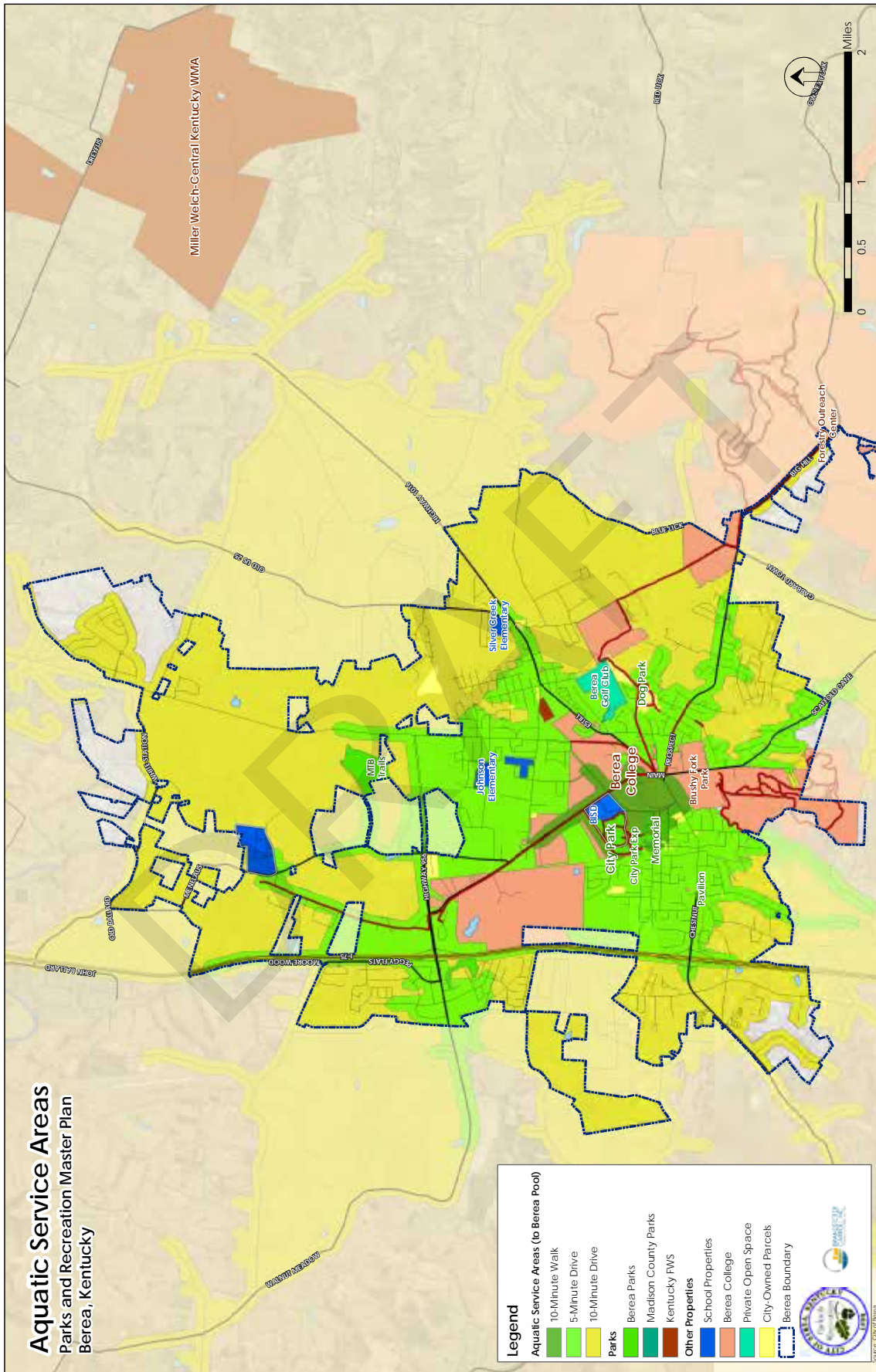


Figure 5.8: Tennis Service Area

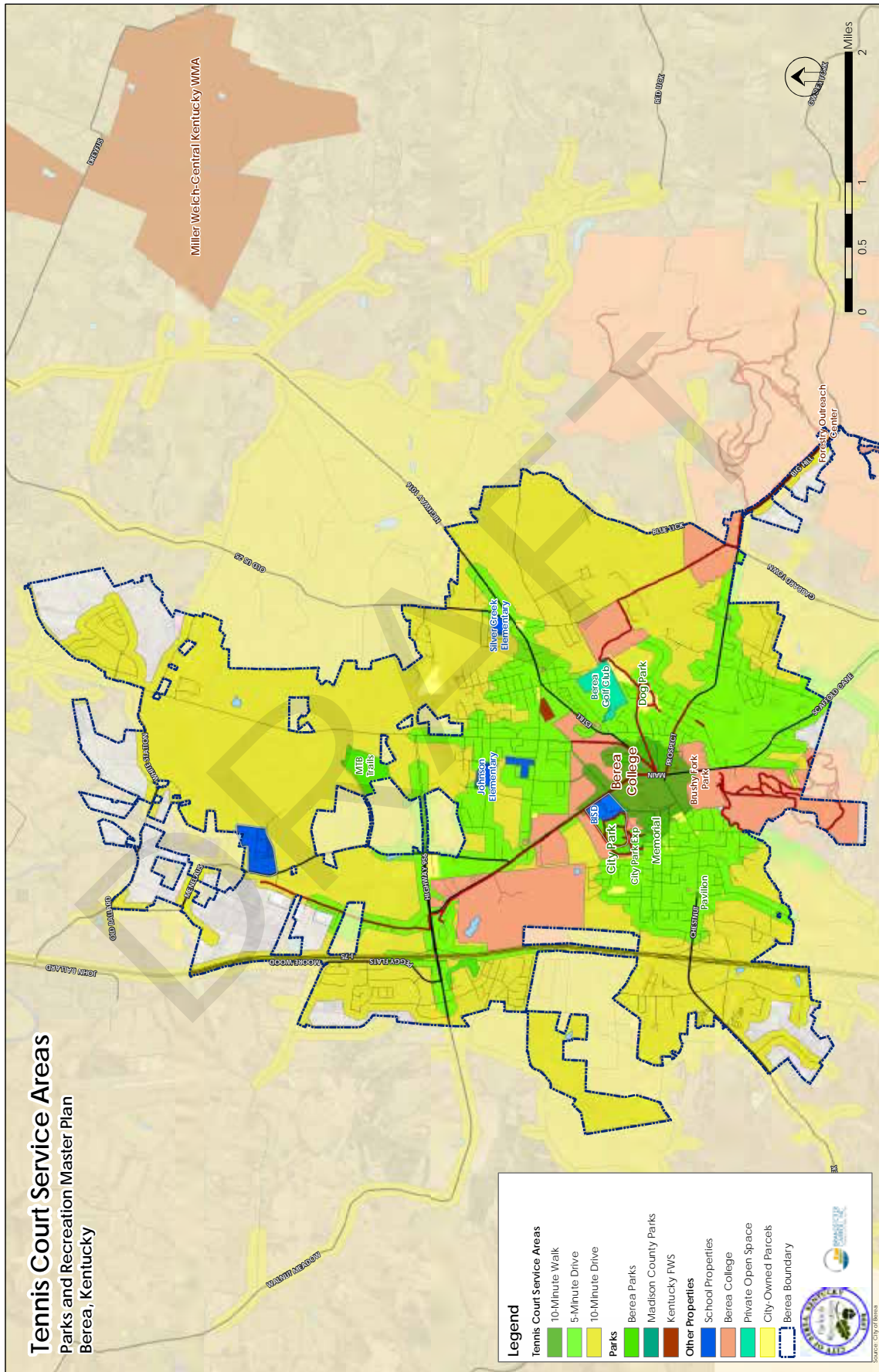


Figure 5.9: Picnic Shelter Service Areas

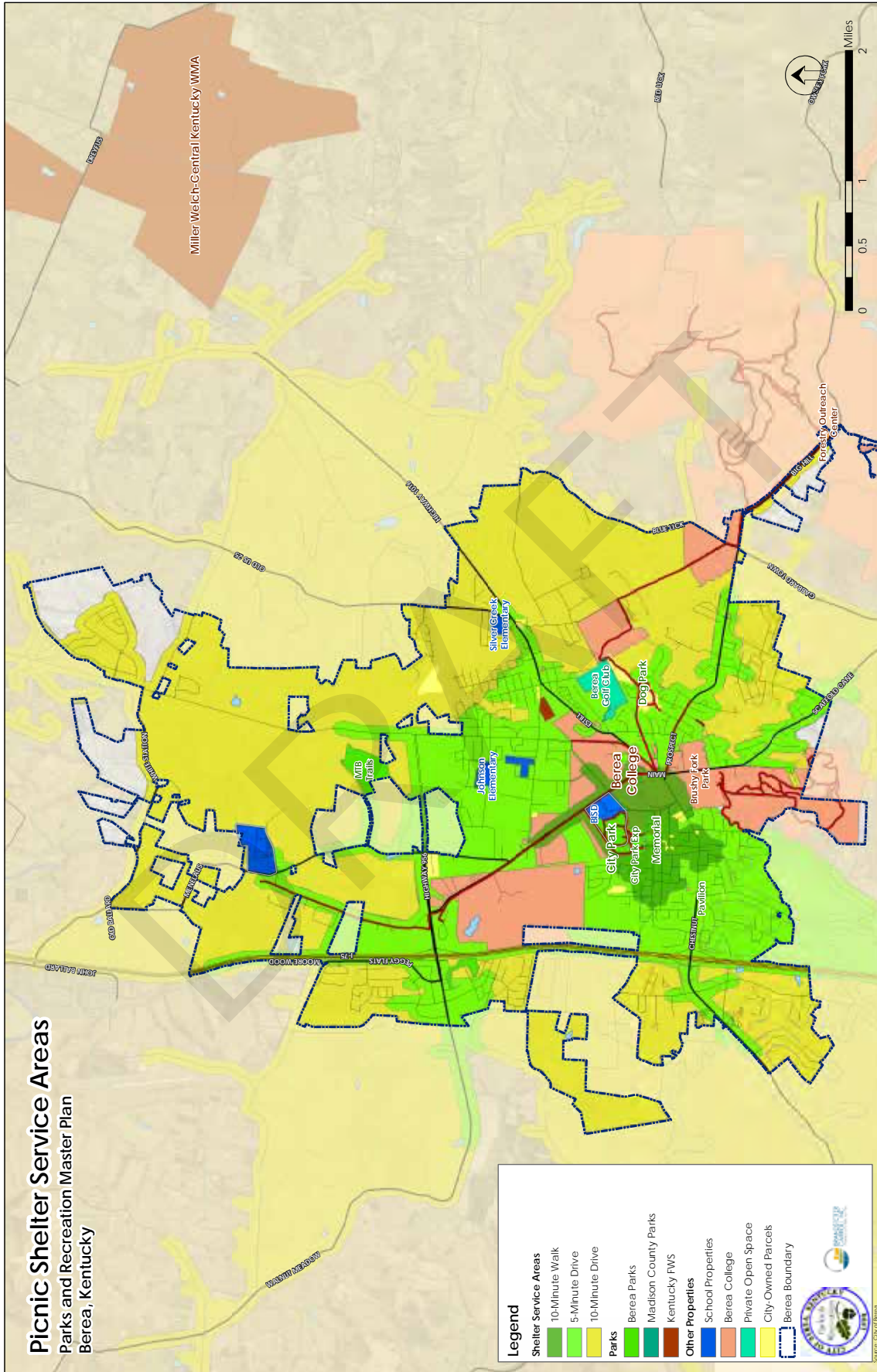
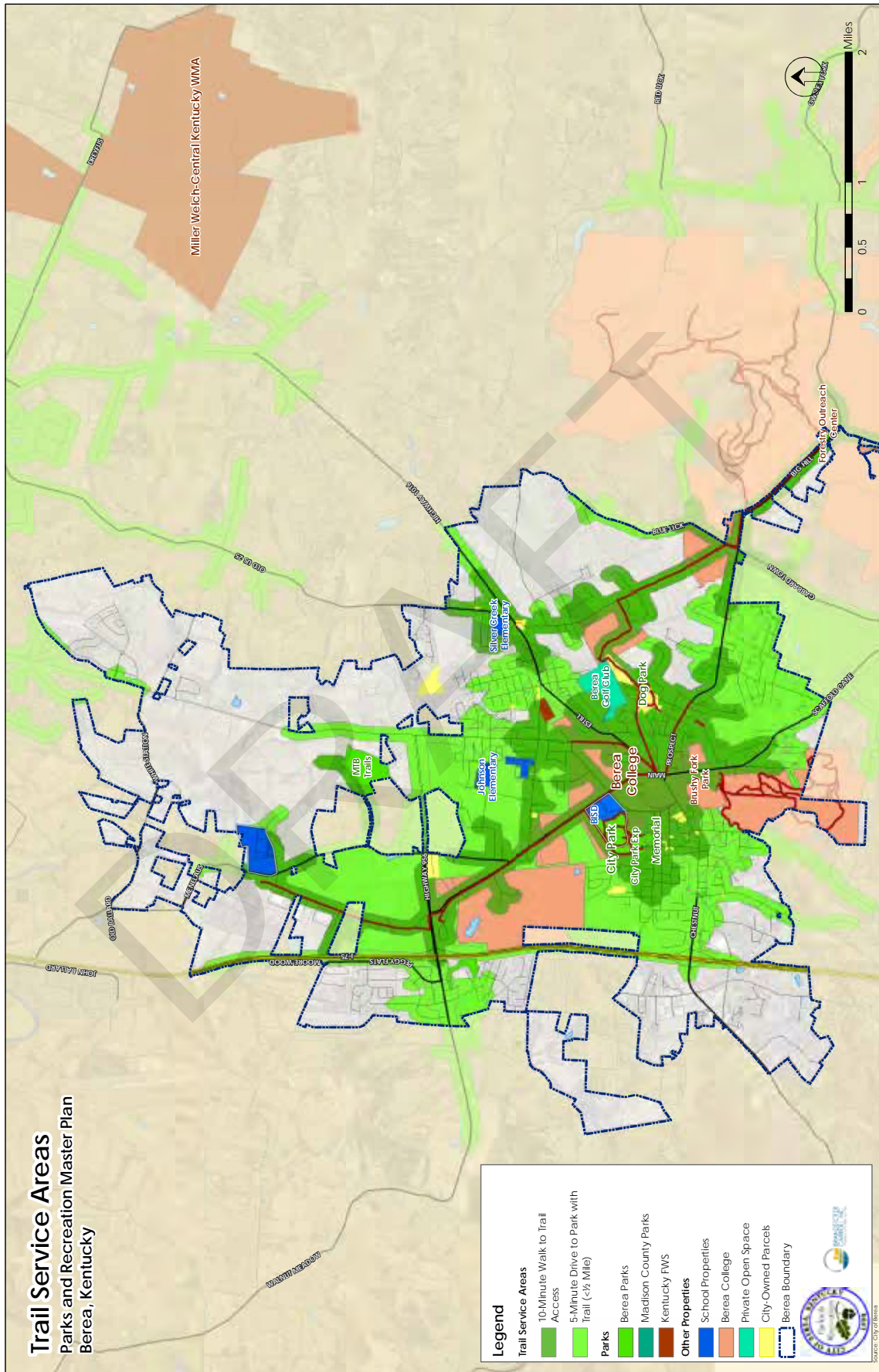




Figure 5.10: Trail Service Areas





## 5.6 COMPOSITE GEOGRAPHIC PARK SERVICE AREAS

While the preceding text outlined the level of access to parks and facilities by geographic distribution and type, a composite analysis provides a more robust depiction of the level of service residents experience across the city. Service areas for 6 park classifications and 16 facilities (some not mapped in Section 5.5.) were assigned scores based on distance from the amenity (e.g., 5-minute drive vs. 10-minute walk), then GIS software (ArcGIS) was used to produce an overlay map with a combined score for all areas of Berea. Figure 5.12 shows the composite service areas for the city based on this multi-layered level of access analysis. A more detailed description of the methodology can be found in Appendix A.

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

As shown in Figure 5.12, compact areas with the highest composite level of service are anchored to Berea City Park. Looking at population distribution, just 9% of the community enjoy a high level of service, while more than a quarter (35%) of residents are living in areas currently limited to medium level service. Another third (33%) of the community lives where there is only medium-low service, and only 6% live within the lowest service level. Looking at how the medium service level areas are dispersed, there are sizeable areas of opportunity between for new or upgraded parks throughout the city.

Table 5.4: Population by Composite Service Area

Service Level (Rank)	Proportion at Composite Service Level				Median Household Income	Diversity Index	Median Age	Children
	Population	Cumulative Population	Area	Cumulative Area				
High	9%	9%	4%	4%	\$36,006	31.2	29.0	19%
Medium-High	16%	26%	5%	10%	\$42,519	25.5	34.1	19%
Medium	35%	60%	30%	39%	\$41,102	25.1	37.0	20%
Medium-Low	33%	94%	39%	79%	\$55,605	18.1	38.3	22%
Low	6%	100%	21%	100%	\$44,159	19.1	39.3	17%

## 5.7 TRENDS IN PARKS AND RECREATION

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

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

### 5.7.1 Trends in Recreation Participation

On an annual basis, the Sport and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) conducts a survey<sup>8</sup> of individuals and households throughout the United States to determine participation in a variety of sports and fitness activities. By using a weighting technique, the survey produces results reflective of the total U.S. population age 6 and older; the 2018 sample consisted of 20,069 online interviews of households. The following text examines the findings of this SFIA report and connects relevant data to generate insights about Berea.

<sup>8</sup> He, S., Lee, J., Langworthy, B., Xin, J., James, P., Yang, Y., & Wang, M. (2021, November 22). Delay in the effect of restricting community mobility on the spread of covid-19 during the first wave in the United States. OUP Academic. Retrieved April 5, 2022, from <https://doi.org/10.1093/ofid/ofab586>

Figure 5.12: Composite Park Service Areas

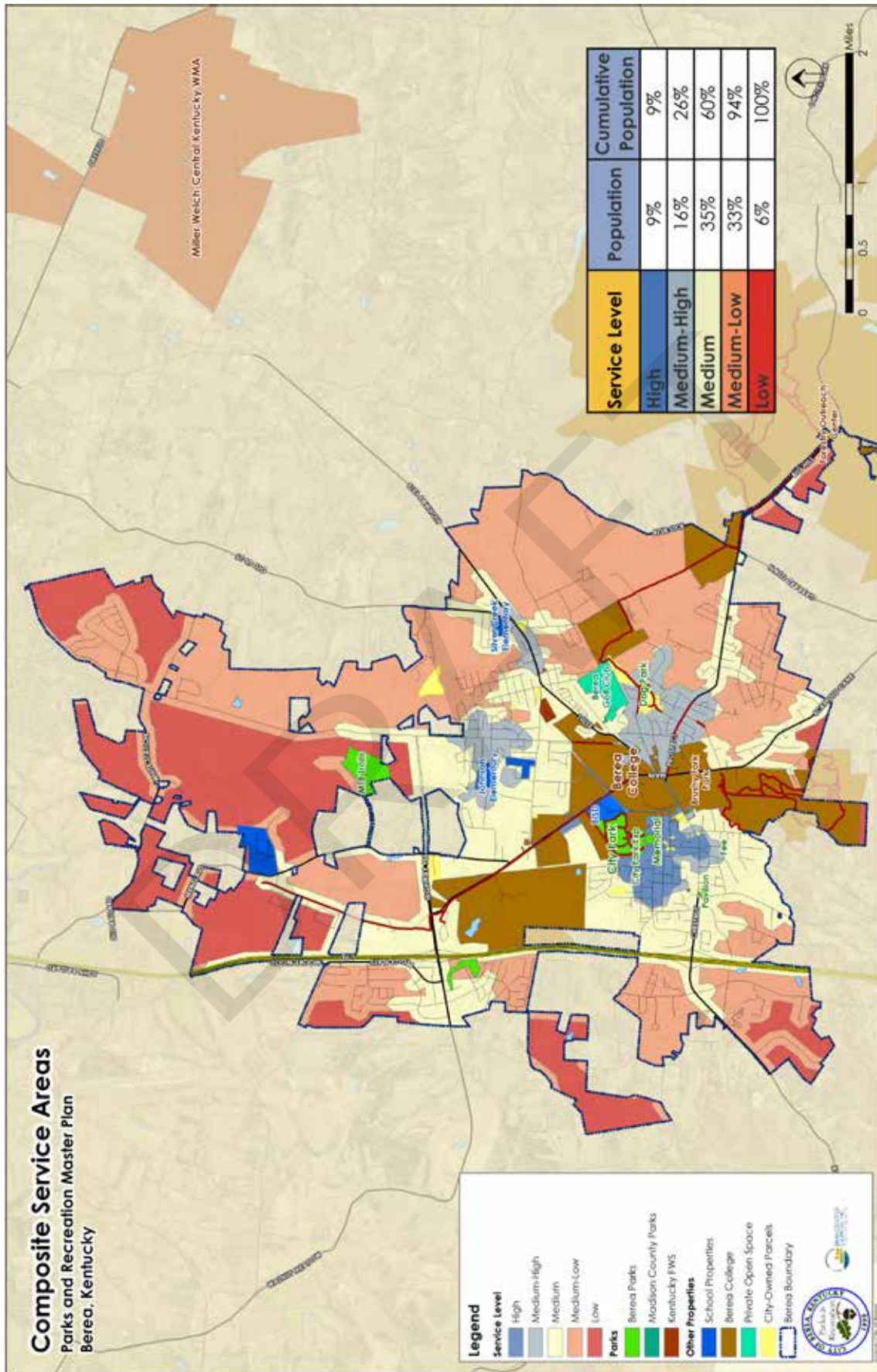


Figure 5.13: Participation Rates by Generation

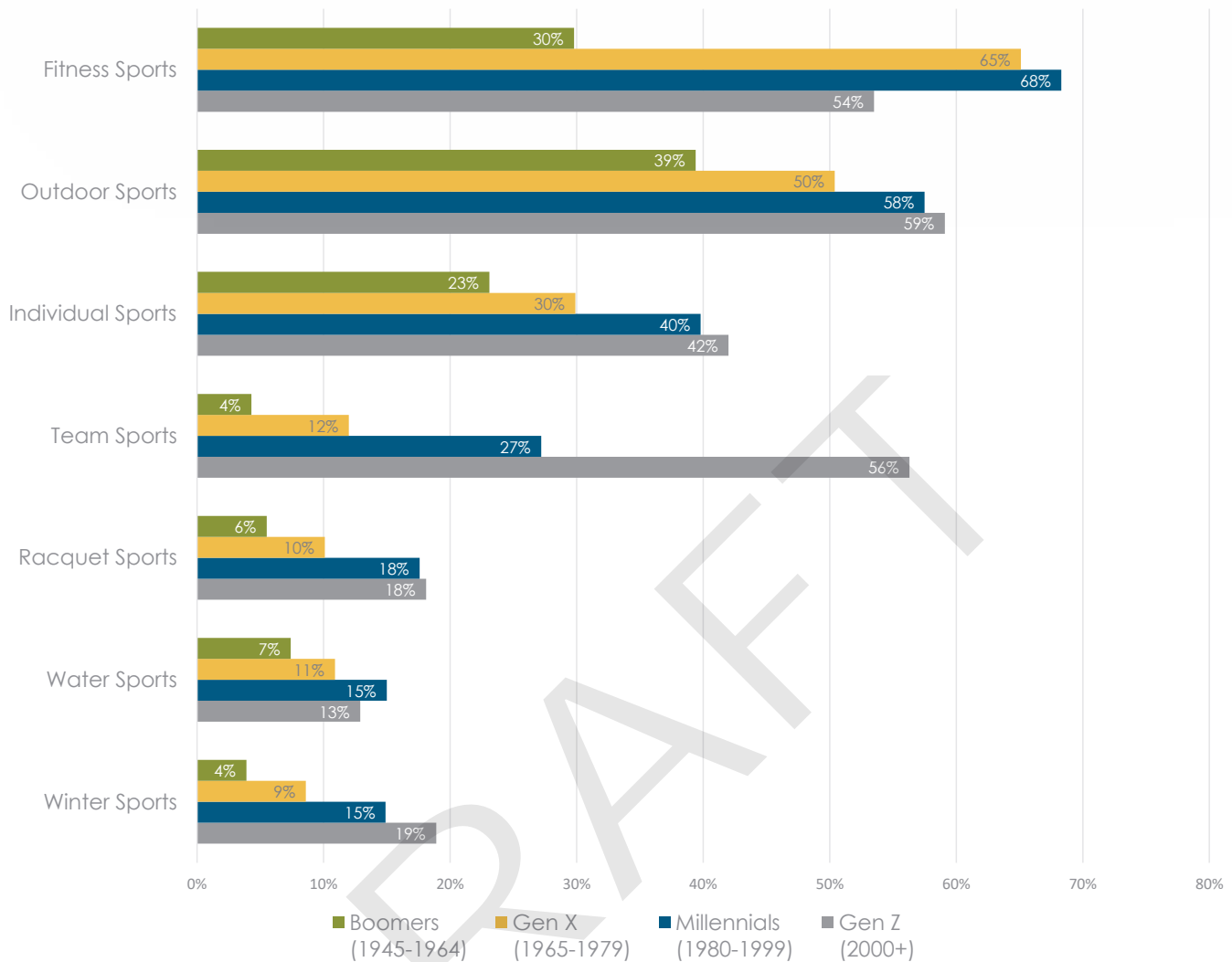


Figure 5.13 shows the difference in participation rates between generations for seven types of sports. The youngest generation (Gen Z) had the highest participation rates for Individual Sports (e.g., archery, skateboarding, golfing, etc.), Team Sports (e.g., baseball, ultimate frisbee, soccer, etc.), and Outdoor Sports (e.g., hiking, trail running, bicycling, etc.). With each generation, participation rates dropped as age increased. While the other three generational groups had the highest participation rates in Fitness Sports (e.g., barre, weight-training, kettlebells, etc.) Gen Z had the lowest participation. The remaining three types of sports (Racquet, Winter, and Water Sports) have similar trends, Millennials and Gen Z representing the highest levels of participation.

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

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

*Walking for fitness*, *treadmill*, *free weights (hand weights)*, *running/jogging*, *hiking (day-hikes)* have the largest number of participants. *Walking for fitness* has by far the greatest number of participants (over 100 million

participants nationally) and *hiking* is growing nearly 7% annually even with already high participation (nearly 50 million). Three of the top five activities are oriented around trails (bicycling too, ranked six). It is no surprise these facilities are in such high demand; Berea residents are not unusual in expressing their strong interest in trail-based activities.

**Table 5.5: Nationwide 5-Year History of Selected Sports Participation (2015-2020)**

Sport/Fitness Activity	Category							5-Year Average Annual Growth
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
Walking for Fitness	Aerobic Activities	109,829	107,895	110,805	111,001	111,439	114,044	0.8%
Hiking (Day)	Outdoor Activities	37,232	42,128	44,900	47,860	49,697	57,808	9.3%
Free Weights (Hand Weights)	Strength	54,716	51,513	5,217	51,291	51,450	53,256	-0.5%
Running/Jogging	Aerobic Activities	48,496	47,384	50,770	49,459	50,052	50,652	0.9%
Treadmill	Aerobic Activities	50,398	51,872	52,966	53,737	56,823	49,832	0.0%
Bicycling (Road/Paved Surface)	Outdoor Activities	38,280	38,365	38,866	39,041	39,388	44,471	3.2%
Fishing (Freshwater)	Outdoor Activities	37,682	38,121	38,346	38,998	39,185	42,556	2.5%
Yoga	Conditioning	25,289	26,268	27,354	28,745	30,456	32,808	5.4%
Weight/Resistance Machines	Strength	35,310	35,768	36,291	36,372	36,181	30,651	-2.6%
Elliptical Motion Trainer	Aerobic Activities	32,321	32,218	32,283	33,238	33,056	27,920	-2.6%
Basketball	Team Sports	23,410	22,343	23,401	24,225	24,917	27,753	3.6%
Swimming for Fitness	Aerobic Activities	26,319	26,601	27,135	27,575	28,219	25,666	-0.4%
High Impact/Intensity & Training	Aerobic Activities	20,464	21,390	21,476	21,611	22,044	22,487	1.9%
Tennis	Racquet Sports	17,963	18,079	17,683	17,841	17,684	21,642	4.2%
Table Tennis	Racquet Sports	16,565	16,568	16,041	15,592	14,908	16,854	0.5%
Baseball	Team Sports	13,711	14,760	15,642	15,877	15,804	15,731	2.8%
Birdwatching (>¼ Mile from Home)	Outdoor Activities	13,093	11,589	12,296	12,344	12,817	15,228	3.5%
Kayaking (Recreational)	Water Sports	9,499	10,017	10,533	11,017	11,382	13,002	6.5%
Soccer (Outdoor)	Team Sports	12,646	11,932	11,924	11,405	11,913	12,444	-0.2%
Trail Running	Individual Sports	8,139	8,582	9,149	10,010	10,997	11,854	7.8%
Aquatic Exercise	Aerobic Activities	8,226	10,575	10,459	10,518	11,189	10,954	3.7%
Pilates Training	Conditioning	8,594	8,893	9,047	9,084	9,243	9,905	2.9%
Ice Skating	Individual Sports	10,485	10,315	9,998	9,721	9,460	9,857	-1.2%
Bicycling (Mountain/Non-Paved Surface)	Outdoor Activities	8,316	8,615	8,609	8,690	8,622	8,998	1.6%
Skateboarding	Individual Sports	6,436	6,442	6,382	6,500	6,610	8,872	7.4%
Fishing (Fly)	Outdoor Activities	6,089	6,456	6,791	6,939	7,014	7,753	5.0%
Archery	Individual Sports	8,378	7,903	7,769	7,654	7,449	7,249	-2.8%
Football (Flag)	Team Sports	5,829	6,173	6,551	6,572	6,783	7,001	3.8%
Softball (Slow-Pitch)	Team Sports	7,114	7,690	7,283	7,386	7,071	6,349	-2.1%
Martial Arts	Individual Sports	5,507	5,745	5,838	5,821	6,068	6,064	2.0%
Stationary Cycling	Aerobic Activities	35,553	36,118	36,035	36,668	9,930	6,054	-5.0%
Badminton	Racquet Sports	7,198	7,354	6,430	6,337	6,095	5,862	-3.9%
Volleyball (Court)	Team Sports	6,423	6,216	6,317	6,317	6,487	5,410	-3.1%
Football (Tackle)	Team Sports	6,222	5,481	5,224	5,157	5,107	5,054	-4.0%
Volleyball (Beach/Sand)	Team Sports	4,785	5,489	4,947	4,770	4,400	4,320	-1.7%
Pickleball	Racquet Sports	2,506	2,815	3,132	3,301	3,460	4,199	11.0%
Bicycling (BMX)	Outdoor Activities	2,690	3,104	3,413	3,439	3,648	3,880	7.7%
Gymnastics	Team Sports	4,679	5,381	4,805	4,770	4,699	3,848	-3.2%
Stand Up Paddling	Water Sports	3,020	3,220	3,325	3,453	3,562	3,675	4.0%
Racquetball	Racquet Sports	3,883	3,579	3,526	3,480	3,453	3,426	-2.4%
Cheerleading	Team Sports	3,608	4,029	3,816	3,841	3,752	3,308	-1.4%
Tai Chi	Conditioning	3,651	3,706	3,787	3,761	3,793	3,300	-1.8%
Swimming on a Team	Team Sports	2,892	3,369	3,007	3,045	2,822	2,615	-1.5%
Kayaking (White Water)	Water Sports	2,518	2,552	2,500	2,562	2,583	2,605	0.7%
Scuba Diving	Water Sports	3,274	3,111	2,874	2,849	2,715	2,588	-4.6%
Cardio Tennis	Racquet Sports	1,821	2,125	2,223	2,499	2,501	2,503	6.8%
Mixed Martial Arts for Fitness	Individual Sports	2,612	2,446	2,376	2,365	2,405	2,445	-1.3%
Ultimate Frisbee	Team Sports	4,409	3,673	3,126	2,710	2,290	2,325	-11.8%

Table 5.5: Nationwide 5-Year History of Selected Sports Participation (2015-2020) (Continued)

Sport/Fitness Activity	Category	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	5-Year Average Annual Growth
Ice Hockey	Team Sports	2,546	2,697	2,544	2,447	2,357	2,270	-2.2%
Adventure Racing	Individual Sports	2,864	2,999	2,529	2,215	2,143	1,966	-7.0%
Lacrosse	Team Sports	2,094	2,090	2,171	2,098	2,115	1,884	-2.0%
Triathlon (Traditional/Road)	Individual Sports	2,498	2,374	2,162	2,168	2,001	1,846	-5.8%
Softball (Fast Pitch)	Team Sports	2,460	2,467	2,309	2,303	2,242	1,811	-5.6%
Roller Hockey	Team Sports	1,907	1,929	1,834	1,734	1,616	1,500	-4.6%
Rugby	Team Sports	1,349	1,550	1,621	1,560	1,392	1,242	-1.2%

Legend

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

### 5.7.2 Aging Communities

Throughout the United States and in Berea, the median age of the population is increasing (currently 36.4 in Berea and 38.8 in the USA). The number of persons in the age group 65 and over is growing rapidly. Census data indicates that the percentage of the Berea population age 65 and older was 13.6% in 2000 but is expected to increase to reach over 18% by 2025 (see Chapter 2).

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



Photo credit: The Conversation (2017)

*“Why Communities Should Be Designing Parks for Older Adults”*

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

The big picture data is certainly mirrored at the local level in Berea. The surveys and other forms of public engagement (see Chapter 4) show strong community support for expanding programs and facilities to accommodate residents age 50+ and older.

### 5.7.3 Universal Access

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

Some simple examples of physical treatments that go beyond the basic ADA requirements: textured edging



Photo credit: Ann Arbor's Gallup and Access Park (2017)

*Ann Arbor's Universal Access Park*

on trails help to make the facilities more accessible for the visually impaired; fragrant plants and sensory gardens, as well as interactive displays provide a more hands-on approach to education and engagement; including therapeutic textures, ground-level features, and mobility-enhancing elements like ramps or bridges in playground equipment ensures all children – including those who are differently-abled – have space to play.

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

Some existing playgrounds in the city are in need of improvement and replacement; the city has a real opportunity to prioritize accessibility and universal access for the benefit of the community. In some cases, existing play equipment and sidewalks leading to the amenities are not at the universal access standard need for a fully engaging and participatory experience. For example, Memorial Park playground lacks a sidewalk to some of the equipment, and the sidewalk at City Park Expansion ends before it reaches the playground.

### 5.7.4 Fitness and Wellness

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

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



Kennesaw, GA Parks and Recreation

Wellness Station

Additionally, partnerships are key; many agencies collaborate with community health providers to offer fitness facilities and programs. The health benefits that can be provided by parks extend to mental health benefits as studies indicate that a connection to nature can relieve stress, improve interpersonal relationships, and improves mental health.<sup>9</sup>

### 5.7.5 Technology

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



Photo credit: mycountyparks.org, Denison, IA

Smart Trail Signage, Denison, IA

The use of technology in parks has many advantages. Wi-Fi access in parks enables users to stay connected via social media or other online activities, register for programming, and even interact more directly with

<sup>9</sup> National Recreation and Park Association, "Health and Wellness," <http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Impacting-Communities/Health-and-Wellness/>, (April 8, 2019)



staff (e.g., reporting maintenance issue or asking a question about scheduling). Installing device-charging benches gives people a place to keep those devices powered-up. Developing park-specific apps can inform visitors of opportunities at individual sites or system-wide. QR codes are yet another technological tool that visitors can use for quick access to information (e.g., tree and other plant identification, trail maps, park history and cultural context, park hours, etc.).

Employing technology in parks can supply helpful information for internal agency operations as well. For example, Wi-Fi hotspots record the number of connections or searches to create a picture of visitation trends.<sup>10</sup> Or, beacon counters can detect cellphone signals to help determine the number of users in an area. Sensors along paths can distinguish between walkers, runners, and cyclists, as well as numbers for visitation frequency. Collectively, this type of data can describe information about popular visitation times, success of new features, and other descriptors.

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

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

### 5.7.6 Geocaching

Geocaching is a technology-based activity that has been growing in popularity since the early 2000s, when GPS technology improved significantly. Participants travel to local parks and open spaces to hunt for objects previously hidden by others using a set of coordinates and a digital GPS device (typically on a smart phone). Once found, participants generally exchange the now-discovered item for a new item, guaranteeing future use of the same geocache. The search can have varying levels of complexity - one cache leads to another, or a puzzle must be completed.<sup>11</sup>

Geocaches are already present at various locations in Berea, including in some of the city parks. The Chamber of Commerce operates an annual geocaching event in October which began in 2016. Opportunities may exist for the department to promote and encourage this activity by creating their own caches or organizing community geocaching events through collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce.

### 5.7.7 Environmental Education

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



Photo credit: NRP

Geocaching



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

Environmental Education Center at Lord Stirling Park, Basking Ridge, NJ

<sup>10</sup> Dolesh, R. J. (2019, January). Top Trends in Parks and Recreation for 2019. Parks & Recreation.

<sup>11</sup> National Recreation and Park Association, "How to Leverage Geocaching to Promote Park and Recreation Events," <https://www.nrp.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2017/october/how-to-leverage-geocaching-to-promote-park-and-recreation-events/>. (October 5, 2017)

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

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

Berea could potentially partner with Berea College to offer and promote additional nature education programs at Brushy Fork Park, the Berea Forestry Outreach Center, and potentially at some city parks.

### 5.7.8 Birdwatching (or Birding)

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

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report also includes an analysis of the economic impact of birdwatching activities. Birdwatchers direct substantial amounts of dollars into the economy because of trip-related (\$15 million) and equipment expenditures (\$26 million). The report finds that the birding industry, including indirect effects resulting from the multiplier effect, generates over \$100 billion annually throughout the United States and supports 666,000 jobs. These expenditures lead to an additional \$6 million in state tax revenues and \$7 million in federal tax revenues.<sup>12</sup>

The Berea College Forestry Outreach Center already encourages birding and hosts educational programs on the subject. In the engagement for this Master Plan, a recurring need emerged for additional opportunities to connect and interact with nature. Berea Parks and Recreation should consider expanding the relationship with the Outreach Center and others for collaborating to provide expanded birding opportunities.

### 5.7.9 Environmental Best Management Practices (BMPs)

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

- Site Selection (which properties to acquire and protect)



Environmental Education at Mammoth Cave, KY



<sup>12</sup> Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis, Addendum to the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2013.

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

While Berea Parks and Recreation does not necessarily own or operate a true nature park, the department does have the opportunity to encourage best management practices within existing parks and future park developments where natural areas are present.

### 5.7.10 Trails and Connectivity

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



Don Valley Bike Trails

The expressed need for trails – both for recreational use and for transportation – was conveyed clearly through the public input process. Berea already has a variety of paved and unpaved trails throughout the park system, as well as considerable support for trail connectivity. Section 5.5.9 (above) also points to the opportunity to connect between all the city’s existing and future parks plus other community destinations.

### 5.7.11 Nature Play Areas

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



Nature Play Structure (Silver Falls State Park – Oregon)

“A designated, managed area in an existing or modified outdoor environment where children of all ages and abilities play and learn by engaging with and manipulating diverse natural elements, materials, organisms, and habitats, through sensory, fine motor and gross motor experiences.”<sup>13</sup>

The following are examples of nature play features.

<sup>13</sup> Moore, R. (2014). *Nature Play & Learning Places*. Creating and managing places where children engage with nature. Raleigh, NC: Natural Learning Initiative and Reston, VA: National Wildlife Federation. Version 1.6. (pages vii, 5, 7-8, 51, 65, 71-83).

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## Natural Play Structures

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

## Multipurpose Lawns

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

## Meadows and Woodlands

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

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

## Vegetable Gardens

Hands-on garden beds give visitors opportunities to participate in the growth of vegetables, herbs, and other edible plants, not to mention the benefit of tasting fresh produce. Children can discover different kinds of fresh food, learn more about what it takes to grow from seed, and better understand the source of the food they eat. Partnering with Grow Berea an organization that offers a community garden at Berea College and/or with the Glades Community Garden offered by Glades Christian Church could prove beneficial for the department or serve as a starting point for starting a city provided garden.



*Vegetable Gardens*

## Aquatics

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

## Gathering and Performance Structures

It is a vital role of parks to give community space to gather. These structures - decks, patios, or gazebos - encourage social interaction and can be utilized for programming. To accommodate performances, these spaces can include things like stages, campfire circles, and amphitheater seating. These settings are also useful for team-building and group presentations.<sup>14</sup>



*Missouri State Parks, Hawn State Park Amphitheater*

## Opportunities in Berea

Berea has many natural areas but has not invested much in these types of amenities, but these features can be incorporated into playground development or added at one of Berea College's nature parks through a partnership with the city.

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<sup>14</sup> Moore, R. (2014). Nature Play & Learning Places. Creating and managing places where children engage with nature. Raleigh, NC: Natural Learning Initiative and Reston, VA: National Wildlife Federation. Version 1.6. (pages vii, 5, 7-8, 51, 65, 71-83).

## 5.7.12 Mountain Bike and BMX Facilities

Off-road bicycling activities are growing in popularity, although they still represent a relatively small percentage of all bicycling activities. Modern mountain biking (MTB) originated in the 1970s in California with a group of enthusiasts who modified existing bikes for off-road use. These cyclists organized first downhill races which they called “Repack.” This name referred to the need to “repack” the brakes with fresh grease after each race due to the excessive heat from braking during the descent.<sup>15</sup>

During the early years of mountain biking, enthusiasts used single-track trails intended for hiking as bikes were not specifically forbidden from using these trails. However, as the sport gained in popularity, bikes have been banned from most hiking trails, and single-track trails designed specifically for mountain bikes have been established.<sup>16</sup> More recently, a new style of trail called a “flow trail” has appeared which provides more predictable surfaces, banked turns, and a lack of obstacles. These trails require little peddling and minimal braking that appeal to a wider variety of users, including families. These trails can be designed to allow beginners to bypass any more technical trails.<sup>17</sup>

Another trend in off-road bicycle facilities is the pump track. These tracks, which began to appear in the 2000s, are looping tracks that can be ridden continuously without the need to pedal. A user’s speed is dependent on “pumping” the terrain transitions of the track. A pump track requires approximately 50’ by 50’ of space (minimum) and generally feature a series of rollers and steeply bermed corners.<sup>18</sup> Unlike many of the other off-road facilities, pump tracks are usable by both mountain bike and BMX riders.

Berea is ahead of this trend with an extensive MTB trail network at Silver Creek Bike Park. Nearly 5 miles of trails are available in various difficulties, and the park also offers a pump track and jump lines. Berea Tourism and the Kentucky Mountain Bike Association (KYMBA) partnered to develop the park which has the potential for expansion.

## 5.7.13 Dog Parks

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

Optimally, a dog park is at least three acres in size and includes three separate areas: for large dogs, for small dogs, and a rotating unused area to allow for regeneration of turf. Some dog parks include an additional area for agility and training. Many dog parks are larger, reaching well over



Silver Creek Bike Park



Pump Track



Northbrook Dog Park

<sup>15</sup> Marin Museum of Bicycling, “Mountain Biking History,” <http://mmbhof.org/mtn-bike-hall-of-fame/history/>, (April 8, 2019).

<sup>16</sup> Singletracks, “Visiting the Birthplace of Mountain Biking: Marin County, California,” <http://www.singletracks.com/blog/mtb-trails/visiting-the-birthplace-of-mountain-biking-marin-county-california/>, (April 8, 2019).

<sup>17</sup> IMBA, “Flow Trails,” <https://www.imba.com/model-trails/flow-trails/>, (April 15, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> Adventure Sports Journal, “Pumpin’: An Introduction to the World of Pump Tracks,” <http://adventuresportsjournal.com/pumpin-introduction-to-the-world-of-pump-tracks/>, (April 8, 2019).

10 acres in size. Typical quality amenities include shade, seating, water (for both human and animal), and restrooms.

Berea currently offers one dog park at Tillie Memorial Park. This site has the potential to be expanded to include additional areas to provide an agility area and improved seating.

### 5.7.14 Creative Placemaking

The Trust for Public Land – a nonprofit organization with a mission to bring high-quality parks within a 10-minute walk of every person in the U.S. – is a leading champion of creative placemaking as a strategy for affecting change. Creative placemaking is a collaborative, community-based process that captures the power of art, vibrancy of local heritage, and potential of place to build memorable spaces rooted in culture and local identity. Parks and recreation agencies around the nation offer community connection in physical and social forms; creative-placemaking is just another tool for ensuring successful parks that equitably reflect the people who use them.<sup>19</sup> Many agencies partner with local entities (like other government departments, nonprofits, schools, places of worship, art institutions, and other groups) to put in place opportunities for resident-led installations, programs, and events.

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

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

Berea could include creative placemaking into any future park improvement by incorporating it into the planning process. It provides an opportunity to make every park unique and to build and connect community around these parks. The arts community in Berea and the surrounding area is vibrant and growing. With clear expectations, fair compensation, and meaningful engagement, the arts community in Berea has the power to enliven the city's parks and community spaces.

### 5.7.15 Drones

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



Photo: Madisonville\_Creative Placemaking Billiter Studio

*Creative Placemaking in the Madisonville Neighborhood of Cincinnati (2015)*

<sup>19</sup> Trust for Public Land, Creative Placemaking, <https://www.tpl.org/our-work/creative-placemaking>

Popularity of drones is only growing, but regulations at the federal, state, and local levels have been slow to prevent, mitigate, or manage negative impacts. Many cities have enacted no-fly zones and other restrictions which means UAV-users – licensed or not – have limited available spaces. This then has led drone pilots to look to parks and public open space for flying opportunities.

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

“[P]ark agencies will face increasing public pressure to look at allowing hobbyist flights and commercial-use drones in parks... By creating stronger guidelines and policies about how to fly drones in parks instead of adopting blanket restrictions, parks can give people an outlet and place to fly recreationally. New programming and events can be planned around drones, bringing in visitors and related businesses that benefit the parks...[K]eep it focused on safety and respect for all parties. [A]cceptance will protect the public and park resources and enable an exciting new form of recreation to take place.”<sup>20</sup>



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

## 5.8 CONCLUSION

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

The level of service standards outlined at the start of this chapter – and developed with input from residents of Berea – provide a foundational guideline for the number of parks, open space, and recreation facilities needed in Berea. Overall, there is demand for more field space, additional trails (paved and natural), upgraded amenities, additional programming, and more community events. Residents also want year-round recreation programming and field/training space.

The geographic analysis of service areas identifies specific areas to target for investment in additional parks and recreation facilities. The mapping analysis shows higher levels of service in the center of the city, anchored around Berea City Park, with lower service on the surrounding outskirts of the community. **The findings described above, combined with public input requesting additional services and improved spaces, underscore the need for improvements to existing facilities, especially fields, and development of additional parkland to meet unmet facility needs. These pursuits should be the highest priorities for the department moving forward.**

<sup>20</sup> Wootton, Courtney; Bradley, Michael J.; Ray Neal NRPA. Drones in Parks: It's All About Perspective. <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2018/december/drones-in-parks-its-all-about-perspective/>

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DRAFT





## STRATEGIC PLAN

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The *2022 Berea Parks and Recreation Master Plan* represents a collective imagination of the future. While the action plan component (Chapter 9) is a detailed account of all the recommendations developed – both operational and capital – to guide investment priorities, the strategic plan component in this chapter is intended to provide the department with a clearly defined purpose and underlying motivation for tackling those action items.

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

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

### 6.2 VISION

#### 6.2.1 Purpose of a Vision

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

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

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## 6.2.2 New Vision for Berea Parks and Recreation

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

**Parks and programs enrich life and bring our community together**

## 6.3 MISSION

### 6.3.1 Purpose of a Mission

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

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

### 6.3.2 Existing Mission for Berea Parks and Recreation

Consistently increase the quality of life for all residents within the community and to all who enjoy recreational pursuits in the City of Berea

### 6.3.3 New Mission for Berea Parks and Recreation

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

**Provide diverse spaces that bring excitement to the community and improve quality of life**

## 6.4 VALUES FOR BEREA PARKS AND RECREATION

### 6.4.1 Purpose of Values

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

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

### 6.4.2 Core Values

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

**Community** – Connecting the community to fun, nature, and each other

**Wellness** – Promoting health and wellbeing for all ages

**Innovation** – Encouraging exploration through diverse opportunities

**Inclusion** – Ensuring accessibility and affordability for our diverse population

## 6.5 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### 6.5.1 Function of Goals and Objectives

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

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

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

Goals:

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

Objectives:

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

### 6.5.2 Proposed Goals and Objectives for Berea Parks and Recreation

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

#### Goal 1: A Healthy Community

Deliver opportunities for wellness, creativity, and fun to improve physical and mental health and enrich the lives of our community

Objective 1.1 – **Athletics**: Ensure all in the community have access sports programs and facilities

Objective 1.2 – **Arts & Culture**: Capitalize on Berea’s unique heritage to enrich community vibrancy

Objective 1.3 – **Wellness**: Encourage exploration & growth through diverse physical activities and learning opportunities

#### Goal 2: A Connected Community

Enhance links between people, parks, and places

Objective 2.1 – **Trails & Wayfinding**: Provide trails that connect users to destinations and activities

Objective 2.2 – **Gathering**: Encourage community interaction through appealing and accessible offerings

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Objective 2.3 – **Natural Environment:** Connect the community to nature through access, education, and sustainable practices

### **Goal 3: A Modern Community**

Provide a wide range of modern features, updated infrastructure, and proactive maintenance to ensure everyone has opportunities for enjoyment

Objective 3.1 – **Places:** Responsibly provide parks to engage and connect the community

Objective 3.2 – **Amenities:** Provide accessible facilities, structures, and support features

Objective 3.3 – **Proactive Maintenance:** Enhance safety, accessibility, quality, and cost effectiveness by continuously examining maintenance standards and best practices

### **Goal 4: A Driven Community**

Employ strong leadership to direct an engage community using efficient management, exceptional customer service, sustainable operations, and productive partnerships

Objective 4.1 – **Operations:** Encourage an engaged and well-trained workforce of valued staff that inspire pride in the community

Objective 4.2 – **Partnerships:** Continue to prioritize relationships and information sharing to effectively tackle collective goals across the community

Objective 4.4 – **Engagement:** Meaningfully connect with residents and partners to respond to needs, eliminate barriers, and promote opportunities

Objective 4.4 – **Finances:** Explore creative operational and capital strategies to enhance efficiency and promote economic development

## **6.6 STRATEGIES**

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



## SYSTEMWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

Berea's population has been growing steadily for decades, but the park system has not grown at the same rate. Additionally, many of the city's parks and facilities are aging and in need of investment. This Master Plan identifies needs for investment in both new and existing amenities and infrastructure. In order for many of these community desires to come to fruition, the continuation and growth of partnerships with other providers will be critical as the city, and Parks and Recreation cannot meet all of these needs alone.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted how and whether users experience parks and recreation. In this time of public health inequity and economic disruption, people everywhere are living out the effects of having (or not having) access to open space and parks.<sup>1</sup> For over two years, the coronavirus pandemic has blazed through communities, and public parks and open space continue to provide respite, solace, and connection. Parks helped people cope, and they will continue to help communities recover.<sup>2</sup>

Families, seniors, youth, and everyone in between will always need ample opportunity to connect socially, to practice healthy habits, and to enjoy all the benefits of time in nature. Parks and recreation agencies across the nation have a critical role to play in a brighter, more equitable future. The recommendations in this chapter are intended to guide the city through a post-pandemic future and continued growth in the community.

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

- Existing Park Improvements
- Outdoor Athletic Fields and Courts
- Trails and Connectivity
- New Park and Facility Development
- Natural Areas, Open Space, and Nature Education

1 McCormick, Kathleen. Room to Roam: The Pandemic Has Underscored the Need for More Urban Parks; So What Comes Next? Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. <https://www.lincolnst.edu/publications/articles/2020-10-room-roam-pandemic-urban-parks-what-comes-next>. Accessed July 2022.

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

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- Programming
  - Operations, Promotion, and Partnerships
  - Budget and Funding

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

## 7.2 EXISTING PARK IMPROVEMENTS

### 7.2.1 Observations and Analysis

Through the public input process, Berea residents voiced a strong desire for improvements to existing parks. According to the Mail Survey, 87% of households support upgrades to existing parks – the most support for any action – and upgrades to existing parks were also clearly the most important action. Sixty-one percent (61%) of households who visited parks over the past year rated park conditions as good, but 12% rated them fair. Attendees of the open house workshop and stakeholder groups also indicated a desire for improvements to existing parks and facilities. Combine these numbers with the resounding support for improvements and it is clear the Berea community desires better quality parks and improved opportunities for recreation.

As far as specific upgrades to existing parks, the top response – over 60% – in the surveys was restrooms. Drinking fountains were second, followed by shade structures and picnic shelters. Security improvements and seating also were high in the list. All of these amenities were identified by over 40% of households. While Berea parks already have some of these amenities, many are in need of replacement, and residents tend to notice the areas where they are missing. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic has put pressure to accelerate transitioning from standard drinking fountains to bottle filler stations. Additionally, accessibility deficiencies were noted throughout the park system – by planning staff during park assessments but also by the public during engagement efforts – with many issues stemming from lack of passable sidewalks.

The need for improved and consistent signage throughout the park system was apparent early in the planning process. Some parks entrances lack signage, and signage that exists is not consistent. Wayfinding signage within parks is limited, and wayfinding between parks and across the city is also lacking. Numerous stakeholder groups discussed needs for various types of signage: entrance, wayfinding, interpretive (e.g., educational, historical, etc.), and informative (e.g., bulletins, program opportunities, and development updates).

Any plan produced after the beginning of the pandemic in 2020 will be different from those completed pre-pandemic. Among its numerous impacts, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed an incredible demand for outdoor gathering spaces. With many gatherings and activities moved outside, more people are realizing the pleasure of being in the open air, and there will likely be continued demand for these experiences. Berea offers picnic shelters or pavilions in City Park and Memorial Park. While these facilities are limited in number, they are also geographically close together and in need of upgrades. Shelters also have the potential to host a variety of programs, including nature programs, classes, and more. Demand for these facilities is likely to continue to increase, especially adjacent to new or expanded facilities.

Berea Parks and Recreation has not yet implemented many technology-related improvements at parks. The city has room to better utilize technology in the parks, such as park apps and mobile device charging stations. If developed, an app in Berea should be part of a partnership with other agencies providing recreational opportunities, including Madison County Parks, Berea College, the school districts, and others, to provide comprehensive information about opportunities in and near the city. Households indicated desire for Wi-Fi hotspots in Berea parks, which would help the success of any future app and would also allow the city to collect data about park usage. If implemented, Wi-Fi access should include information indicating its availability.

As noted in Chapter 5, security cameras can measure activity levels in the parks in addition to providing security and preventing vandalism. Although the city has cameras at City Park Expansion that have not prevented all vandalism at the restroom/concessions building, they are successful in many parks when combined with lighting and visibility. Cameras along with the signage indicating their presence can also improve the perception of safety.

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## 7.2.2 Recommendations

1. Add support features throughout the park system such as seating/benches, shade structures, trash/recycling receptacles, drinking fountains, and trees & landscaping
  - Include bottle fillers at all new drinking fountains and whenever existing features are replaced
2. Add or improve restrooms throughout the parks
3. Add and upgrade signage – entrance, wayfinding, interpretive, informative, and rules (e.g., no survey) – throughout the park system
4. Develop interpretive and informational signage throughout the park system (will require signage plans) to help visitors understand the natural features and history of Berea parks while improving awareness of sensitive ecosystems and rare species
5. Pursue and implement an ADA Accessibility Audit of all facilities, programs, and communications
6. Add security cameras and lighting throughout parks in locations that have perceived security concerns
7. Replace dated playgrounds, including separate age 2-5 equipment, or add where unavailable
8. Add and upgrade picnic shelters at parks to increase overall access to these facilities, as well as make them more inviting, and to facilitate opportunities for outdoor community gatherings
9. Add Wi-Fi access to parks; promote park hotspots to ensure awareness
10. Upgrade and utilize technology in parks for the benefit of both patrons and staff (see Chapter 5, Technology, Subsection 5.7.5)
11. Explore development of a searchable mobile app to communicate site locations, services, and special events to the public
12. Improve ADA access throughout the park system, ensuring accessible walkways to all facilities and seating areas
13. Acquire land contiguous to existing parks, whenever available, to allow for additional features and increase the total amount of parkland available to residents with minimal impact to system maintenance and operations

## 7.3 OUTDOOR ATHLETIC FIELDS AND COURTS

### 7.3.1 Observations and Analyses

Compared to the benchmarks, Berea provides a lower level of service for youth baseball fields. While the city has a slightly higher service level for multipurpose rectangular fields, these fields also serve the schools, compared to most communities where school fields supplement city offerings. The site assessments (see Chapter 3) indicate that many of the fields need improvements, and nearly 60% of households (according to the Mail Survey) support upgrading youth athletic fields, including adding lighting.

The two basketball courts offer a lower level of service as the benchmarks (one per 7,500 compared to a median of one per 5,500). These facilities are also located close together. Based on the public input, the two sand volleyball courts at City Park are meeting most of the community's needs, but the courts need some minor repairs. While the city does not offer any tennis courts, the need for these facilities appears to be largely met by the courts at Berea College. However, the city does not yet offer any pickleball courts, currently the fastest growing sport in the country.

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



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### 7.3.2 Athletic Fields

All of Berea's diamond fields are at City Park. These five fields serve both Berea Community baseball and softball and the Berea Youth Softball/Baseball League. As noted previously, these fields provide a lower level of service than the benchmarks despite serving multiple user groups. Berea Youth Softball/Baseball League indicated that their needs would largely be met by the four fields they use (no use of Field #1 – HS baseball) if the fields were not often in use by the schools. Their largest need is for wee ball and t-ball fields. They also indicated the need for batting cages.

#### Baseball/Softball Diamonds

The high school baseball field is unable to host regionals due to the outfield fence reaching less than 325' in some places. When the fields are improved, the fence should be extended to 325' with higher fencing where that is unfeasible due to the location of the football field. The lower field (Field #5) is in need of repairs, including a new backstop, fencing, and dugouts. A sixth field would fit opposite this field, helping to meet existing needs and potentially allowing for growth. All fields would benefit from upgrades to LED lighting.

The needed wee ball and t-ball fields may fit in the current space with some modification of the existing fields. Two of the fields have 300' fences but are typically used as 200' fields for softball. Field #2 may be the best option to utilize this outer field space for these smaller fields.



#### Multipurpose Rectangular Fields

The city has four full-sized multipurpose rectangular fields at City Park, but only three are available for community use (no use of HS football field for youth soccer or football leagues). While the three fields appear to provide a slightly higher level of service than the benchmarks, they are not meeting the community's growing field needs. The primary field at City Park Expansion (adjacent to the skate park) is used beyond capacity and turf conditions deteriorate quickly. The football field has poor drainage and is often unplayable.

In the short-term, these fields should be improved to allow for better playing conditions. Improved drainage at the football field would reduce the number of rainouts and accommodate additional use. Both fields need improvements to accessibility and spectator seating. Like the diamond fields, they would benefit from LED upgrades to the lighting. As part of the improvements to Field #5 at City Park, the space should be improved to better function as true multipurpose field. If Field #5 and the new Field #6 use temporary fencing (or no fencing at all), the shared outfield could be upgraded to provide another high-quality rectangular field. This area would need lighting and accessible spectator areas.

Because national trends indicate faster growth of sports that use multipurpose rectangular fields than those using diamond fields, the need for multipurpose fields will likely continue to grow. Several stakeholders indicated a desire for artificial turf fields. This type of field can better withstand heavy use, limiting turf damage and reducing the number of rainouts due caused by poor drainage. Due to its heavy level of use, the primary field by the skate park is the most obvious choice for artificial turf. Any artificial turf field should include lining for multiple sports.



While these upgrades will help address some of the needs in the short-term, the need for additional fields will continue to grow. Ultimately, a new field complex – focusing on multipurpose fields for soccer, football, lacrosse, and more – should be developed to address the ever-increasing demand for these fields. The development of this new complex will require partnerships, and Madison United (MUSA) has indicated willingness to help with fundraising and management of the proposed field complex. Ultimately, the complex will also provide opportunities for Berea to host tournaments, including larger tournaments in conjunction with the new complex under construction in Richmond.



### 7.3.3 Game Courts

As noted previously, pickleball is a rising trend in parks and recreation across the country, due in part to its popularity with older residents. Berea has not yet responded to this trend. Bocce courts are also growing in popularity with the senior population. These activities could help address the need seniors have expressed for more active opportunities in parks.

The limited availability of parkland and the costs required to maintain facilities make multiuse spaces even more important. One possible way to add pickleball opportunities without building new courts is to add lining at existing courts, such as basketball courts or tennis courts. The city does not currently offer any tennis courts of their own, so a partnership with Berea College would be required for that option.

While sharing court space with tennis is a good opportunity to provide multiple uses of space, it is recommended that the courts be lined not to share nets due to the different net heights between the two sports. If the nets are shared, any pickleball game would fall short of the national guidelines for competition. This option requires users to bring their own nets, however, providing a barrier to use. The addition of lines to basketball courts has the same challenges. Ultimately, dedicated courts will likely be required as this sport continues to grow.



*Futsal Court*

The basketball court at City Park needs resurfacing, so lines for pickleball could be added at that time. Similarly, courts at existing or future parks could be lined for multiple uses. A potential futsal court at City Park Expansion, for example, could be lined for multiple sports, depending on the surfacing used.

Futsal is a growing sport in parks and recreation due in part to limited field space, as experienced in Berea. Futsal courts give users a chance to play soccer where space is otherwise limited and provide for a faster paced game. A futsal court in Berea will provide opportunities for pick-up play without placing additional stress on the limited field spaces. They could also be added at future parks that lack the space for larger fields.

### 7.3.4 Recommendations

1. Expand capacity at Berea parks to meet growing needs for field space
  - Regrade and improve drainage at the football field at City Park Expansion
  - Consider converting the outer portion of the outfield at Field #2 at City Park to t-ball fields
  - Upgrade baseball/softball diamond Field #5 at City Park with new backstops, fencing, dugouts, and spectator areas
  - Add a baseball/softball diamond (Field #6) at the opposite side of the open field (from Field #5)
  - Configure the outfield space of these fields to form a full-sized multipurpose rectangular field
  - Include field lighting and accessible spectator areas with shade
  - Consider adding an artificial turf at City Park Expansion to relieve stress on the existing fields, allow for additional use, and reduce rainouts; line for multiple sports
2. Develop a new field complex – focusing on multipurpose fields for soccer, football, lacrosse, and more – to address the ever-increasing demand for these fields and to potentially attract tournaments
3. Add batting cages (1 per field) at the diamond fields in City Park
4. Consider adding pickleball lining to existing and future game courts, including basketball, to provide more multiuse facilities and to meet growing demand
5. Consider developing dedicated pickleball courts and bocce courts at City Park Expansion, due to its proximity to the Intergenerational Center
6. Consider adding a futsal court to existing and future parks to provide additional places for residents to play soccer

7. Ensure ADA accessibility to all athletic fields and all spectator areas, including connecting pathways
  - Provide shaded seating at spectator areas
8. Update field lighting to LED fixtures to reduce frequency of bulb replacement and energy use
  - Ensure all new lighting is calibrated to reduce light pollution
9. Consider future field needs during renovations and improvements to parks and athletic fields – make multiuse spaces wherever possible
10. Consider adding basketball courts in areas of the city where none are available when new parks are developed
11. Improve the existing volleyball courts at City Park with new edging and accessible spectator seating
12. Coordinate with Berea Community Independent Schools to upgrade the high school baseball field to 325' outfield fences to accommodate regional games

## 7.4 TRAILS AND CONNECTIVITY

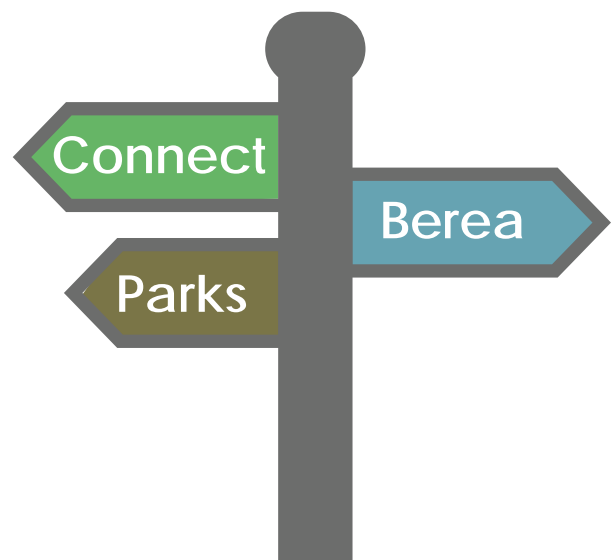
### 7.4.1 Observations and Analyses

According to the benchmarking in Chapter 2, Berea has 1.5 miles of trail per 10,000 population, below the median of the benchmark communities (3.0 miles), and but more trails are available by others in or near the city. However, throughout the country, trails consistently emerge at the top for desired improvements, even in jurisdictions that have an extensive network of trails. In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic has only emphasized the demand for trails as park usage rates skyrocketed, and trails were the best provider of outdoor, physically-distanced activities. Berea is no different; residents clearly communicated their preference for more trail connectivity, through stakeholder discussions, the open house workshop, and survey responses.

According to the survey results, the highest percentage of Berea households (75%) have a need for walking & hiking trails, which then ranked 12th for (about 1,200 households), indicating that some of these needs are met by existing facilities either in Berea parks or by others. However, most households (77%) were supportive of developing new and connecting existing trails in Berea. Additionally, walking & hiking trails ranked first in the Priority Investment ratings (by ETC) for new facilities, due to their ranking as the most important facility to households with 38% ranking trails as one of the three most important facilities. Finally, about half of households indicated a desire for more trails at existing parks; however, of the existing parks, only Memorial Park lacks a walking trail.

Need for mountain bike trails in the area is currently met by the recently opened Silver Creek Bike Park. The new park was funded by Berea Tourism and was developed in partnership with Kentucky Mountain Bike Association (KYMBA). There is opportunity to expand the trails, and some users have requested a second pump track that would be useable by beginners. The park is not currently part of the Berea Parks and Recreation system. Optimally, the park would be brought into the system for more efficient management and programming. However, additional staff would be required to manage the property.

The Master Trails Plan, prepared by the City of Berea GIS-Survey Department in 2016 and last updated in 2019, provides a template for a connected trails system throughout the city and beyond. The document should be updated to include proposed and completed development and to identify potential corridors and linkages between the city's proposed new parks. The update should also include formalized standards for design, signage, and maintenance (including staffing requirements) to ensure trail experiences are consistent throughout Berea. Updating and implementing Berea's Master Trails Plan will help the city respond to demands for citywide trails and connectivity.



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Phase II of the Berea Bypass is currently under construction, and plans include a 10' multi-use trail along the southern side of the road. *The Boone Trace Master Plan for Kentucky 2018* proposes a trail that would connect five counties, including Bell, Knox, Laurel, Rockcastle and Madison. The trail would travel through the middle of Berea from north to south and should be incorporated into future trail planning and interpretive signage plans.

The effort to establish a trail system coincides with the “10-Minute Walk Campaign” led by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), Trust for Public Land (TPL), and Urban Land Institute – a national movement supported by hundreds of communities across the country to ensure everyone has walkable access to parks and trails.<sup>3</sup> Trail and connectivity improvements in Berea will establish safe routes, create alternate means of transportation, increase access to parks and destinations throughout the city, as well as contribute to an overall sense of community cohesion.

## 7.4.2 Recommendations

1. Update Berea’s Master Trails Plan to include new park linkages along with standards for design, signage, and maintenance
  - Incorporate the Phase II Berea Bypass trail and Boone Trace Master Plan into trail planning and interpretive signage plans
2. Add paved trail loops in any future parks
  - Include trail links between parks and adjacent neighborhoods wherever possible
3. Replace trail lighting at the City Park Trail with solar LED lighting as many of the fixture are no longer functional
4. Improve existing trail surfaces to enhance longevity and ensure proper accessibility
5. Consider signing on to the 10-Minute Walk Mission by the TPL and NRPA to show the city’s commitment to connectivity and access to parks
6. Partner with Berea Tourism and (KYMBA) to expand the Silver Creek Bike Park
7. Consider bringing the Silver Creek Bike Park into the park system for more efficient management and programming but only if additional staff are provided to manage the property

## 7.5 NEW PARK AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

### 7.5.1 Observations and Analyses

Trends indicate a steadily growing population in Berea from 1980 to 2020 that is expected to continue growing slowly through 2025. The current population is about 15,000 and is expected to grow by about 500 residents over the next five years. As population grows, the composition is becoming more diverse. Overall, the city has done well at keeping pace with trends, but the system has not grown with the population. Additionally, the needs of residents have changed over time, which is a reason for which this Master Plan was authorized.

The median age in Berea (36.1) has increased substantially since 2000 (31.7) and is catching up to the state and the USA (after being well behind in 2000). The population age 65 and over has increased as a percentage since 2000 and is expected to exceed 18% by 2025. At the same time, the percentage of children (under age 18) has declined slightly. While facilities for children will remain important, demand for senior activities will continue to increase. Demographic changes will likely continue and often lead to changing recreation needs. The needs of specific demographic groups should be addressed during the individual park master planning process.

According to the benchmarking presented in Chapter 2, Berea provides fewer acres of parkland per thousand population (3.6) than the benchmark median (9.8), and a similar amount of the land is developed at 80%, compared to 83%. These numbers indicate that Berea has a smaller amount of parkland than other communities. Although a large amount of open space is provided by others, most of it is undeveloped. Additionally, public input indicates demand for new facilities, and Parks and Recreation is nearly out of land to develop them.

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<sup>3</sup> NRPA, TFPL, and ULI’s 10-Minute Walk campaign: <https://10minutewalk.org/>

## 7.5.2 New and Upgraded Parks

About a quarter (26%) of the population lives in areas with “High” or “Medium-High” service levels, but 40% live in areas with “Low” or “Medium-Low” service levels (see Composite Service Areas map, Figure 5.12 in Chapter 5). These service levels emphasize the need for new parks and facility locations. The need for new parks is limited to smaller Neighborhood Parks strategically located in underserved areas, plus a site to host additional athletic fields, as described in Section 7.3. As current only about 12% of the population lives within a 10-minute walk from a Neighborhood Park with another 7% within 10-minutes to a school property with recreation amenities, efforts to make Berea a walkable and bikeable community will require the development of some new parks in neighborhoods with linking paths.



Forest Field Park, Centerville OH

The city already owns some land with potential for development as new neighborhood parks. The 12-acre property on Walnut Creek Drive has challenging topography but, if carefully planned, could provide recreational opportunities for nearby residents, including trails, fishing access, and play equipment. Similarly, Tillie Memorial Dog Park could be upgraded to offer more than just a dog park, potentially providing a Neighborhood Park with a variety of amenities for residents in that portion of the city who already have trail access to the park.

Another possible location for a new park is the 4-acre property in the Burchwood neighborhood, an area that will likely continue to grow. The 2020 City of Berea Comprehensive Plan identifies a 50-acre area to the northwest of this property as medium-density residential in the Future Land Use map. Other potential areas for new parks are in the northeast part of the city. One along the bypass (possible using land left after the road construction is complete, with connection to the path along the road. Another potential location would be the northeast edge where a large amount of land is considered for low-density residential development.

Small neighborhood parks were the second ranked unmet need in the Mail Survey (about 2,000 households), and they were requested at the open house workshop or stakeholder groups. Playgrounds were one of the top 10 most important facilities to households, and playground equipment was identified by about 30% of households as needing improvements to existing parks, a need which could also be met at new parks.

When constructing new playgrounds (or replacing existing), the city should make efforts to ensure variation (e.g., themes and features) to provide unique experiences and a reason for families to visit different parks. The city should also consider incorporating nature play elements into playgrounds

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

## 7.5.3 Outdoor Aquatics

Berea Swimming Pool is one of the most popular facilities in Berea. It draws visitors from Berea and beyond. According to the survey results, the pool is largely meeting the needs of the community. However, the facility is aging and will need investment in the relatively near future in order to continue operating. When the facility is updated, the city should consider option to update and modernize the features offered.

Although residents are largely satisfied with the Berea Swimming Pool, there is some demand for a separate splash



Bill Cappel Youth Sports Complex, Covington KY

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pad in the city. Berea Swimming Pool already offers a splash pad, but some residents do not want to travel the distance from their homes to access the facility or do not want to pay for entry. Additionally, the existing splash pad is limited to children 6 and under.

Splash pads come in many sizes with vertical features, such as those at Berea Swimming Pool, or they may be limited to ground-based jets and sprays, allowing the space to function as an open plaza when not in use. Because splash pads do not require lifeguards or attendants when operated separate from pools, they have much lower operating costs. While no obvious location currently exists, the city should consider adding another splash pad in the future in a different part of the city from the Berea Swimming Pool, possibly at the proposed sports complex as the facility would be attractive to tournament organizers.

#### 7.5.4 Indoor Facilities

The City of Berea has limited access to indoor recreation and program spaces, especially for active programs and sports. Parks and Recreation's primary indoor space currently is the Russel Acton Folk Center, which the department puts to great use. However, the building offers just one room and cannot accommodate many of the desired indoor activities of the community, such as training and indoor sports.

Stakeholder groups indicated a high demand for indoor spaces that is not met by any existing facilities. The Mail Survey indicated that community/recreation centers were a high priority for investment (according to ETC Institute), and about 1,800 households indicated unmet needs for these facilities and 1,200 for gymnasium space. Many of the unmet program needs, including the second ranked fitness and wellness programs, could be offered in an indoor facility.

The need for indoor program space in Berea is not new. An indoor recreation center was a recommendation in the *2020 City of Berea Comprehensive Plan*, and the demand for such a facility has been a persistent theme of public input in the community for many years. This need will likely not go away, but the development of an indoor facility comes with substantial capital and ongoing operating costs.

The city should conduct a feasibility study to determine the location, size, and amenities offered at the potential recreation center. Due to the high costs associated with the development of an indoor facility multipurpose spaces will be likely be necessary to meet the needs of the community while keeping the building footprint and costs in check. The study should include analysis of potential revenue, operating costs, and attendance as well as potential partnerships. The partnerships could include naming rights, shared use of space, and more. This type of facility will require dedicated staff both to operate and maintain the building, so staffing needs and funding must be included as part of the study.

#### 7.5.5 Other New Facilities

##### Outdoor Fitness

Facilities popular with seniors were requested throughout the public input. Facilities for active adults are a trend for parks and recreation agencies throughout the country. These facilities include outdoor fitness equipment, pickleball courts (see Section 7.3), and trails (see Section 7.4). Outdoor fitness equipment has become a popular addition to parks for users of all ages (in addition to active adults/seniors). The equipment could be added at relatively low cost at several parks in Berea and was specifically requested during a meeting with users of the Senior Center. Small amounts of this equipment can be incorporated into playground development. Larger groups of equipment provide a potential gathering space and a venue for programs for seniors.

##### Disc Golf

Berea Parks and Recreation does not offer a disc golf course, and none are currently provided by others in the city. A course was previously provided by Berea College, and the equipment may still be available for reuse. As noted in Chapter 5, disc golf is a growing sport throughout the country. During the COVID-19 pandemic,



disc golf has increased in popularity due to the outdoor and socially distant nature of the sport. While disc golf was not identified as one of the highest priorities in the surveys, there is a group of potential users as 16% of households indicated desire to have them added to existing parks. The course could be installed in any underutilized space including natural areas and challenging topography, although it is important to ensure that it does not conflict with other uses, such as bike trails. The costs for a course are modest and a local association may be willing to assist in the design and construction of the course.

## Outdoor Stages/Amphitheaters

Outdoor stages and amphitheaters can host all types of concerts and events that were repeatedly requested by the community through the various methods of public input. According to the Mail Survey, 1,500 households have unmet needs for outdoor stages or amphitheaters, sixth in the list of facilities. In addition, over 2,300 households have unmet needs for concerts or art performances and 2,000 for outdoor movies, two of the top three unmet needs for programs and two of the top three program priorities for investment. Both types of programs could be held at outdoor amphitheaters. Other programs such as fitness programs (second program priority for investment) could also be hosted at these facilities.



*Indian Fort Theater*

Berea does not currently offer an amphitheater, but Parks and Recreation has hosted concerts and movies at Memorial Park. An amphitheater was previously proposed at City Park Expansion, but the space is now the much-needed football field. It may be possible to find a space within City Park or the Expansion, but better short-term option is to use Chestnut Street Pavilion, which already begun.

A larger amphitheater could be considered at a future park, such as the proposed sports complex. Another possibility would be to partner with Berea College to restore the Indian Fort Theater. This large amphitheater formerly hosted large events but has been left unused in recent years. The amphitheater will need substantial upgrades, including ADA accessibility and utilities, before it can be restored to use. It will also need security improvements.

## Community Gardens

The survey results indicted a potential need for community gardens in Berea as the city does not currently offer an area where residents can grow their own food or learn about gardening. According to the Mail Survey, over 1,400 city households have unmet needs for community gardens. Although most residents in Berea have access to yards that could be used for private gardens, community gardens offer prepared plots and opportunities for socialization. Educational programs are also common at community garden areas. No obvious space exists for this amenity in any of Berea's current parks, but opportunities should be considered in the future if the arise, including partnership.



Photo: Grow Appalachia  
2021 Annual Report

*Community Garden*

### 7.5.6 Recommendations

1. Utilize existing parkland to meet unmet facility needs and to improve access to park features
2. Prepare park master plans for existing parks and any future parks prior to development of facilities to ensure that added features are complementary, desired, and fully accessible
3. Develop the Walnut Creek Drive and purchase park properties as neighborhood parks and officially bring them into the Parks and Recreation system to meet a variety of needs and improve access to parks
4. Continually evaluate opportunities to develop new parks in underserved areas, especially at land already owned by the city; consider selling or trading city-owned land to accommodate new parks

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5. Provide outdoor stages in Berea to host more community events, such as concerts and movies, highly desired by residents
    - Expand use of the Chestnut Street Pavillion for more scheduled events
    - Evaluate the potential to partner with Berea College to restore the Indian Fort Theater as a venue for large outdoor events
  6. Conduct a recreation center feasibility study to determine the location, size, and amenities (multipurpose whenever possible) offered
    - Include analysis of potential capital funding, operating costs, attendance, and staffing with an emphasis on potential partnerships
  7. Add outdoor fitness equipment at select parks to expand opportunities for improved community health
  8. Consider themed playground equipment, such as climbing rocks, sensory features, etc., potentially providing for marketing and resident/visitor photo opportunities
  9. Incorporate nature play elements as part of playground development and replacement, especially in more passive park areas
  10. Consider additional dog parks to meet the growing needs of Berea households
  11. Consider developing a second splash pad in a future Berea park to expand access to aquatic facilities in the city
  12. Explore the development of disc golf course in Berea through a partnership with the local disc golf association and Berea College
  13. Evaluate the demand for community gardens and find a location for the plots if demand exists
  14. Formulate and post a policy for (or against) use of drone within the park system and implement signage to designate whether (and where) drones are permitted

## 7.6 PROGRAMMING

### 7.6.1 Observations and Analyses

The COVID-19 pandemic took a toll on not only the Berea Parks and Recreation Department but all parks and recreation departments around the country. As park programs were canceled, governments felt the need to make fiscally conservative decisions. In October of 2020, the department consisted of a director plus two additional people that worked out of the Parks and Recreation office performing many diverse tasks. One of the two office people moved out of the area, and this position was not permitted to be filled. It continues to be vacant as of this writing.

As a result of the diminished staff, programs had to be cut or were not able to be reestablished. Today, programs subsidized by the City of Berea (nearly 99% of all offerings) are fewer than prior to the pandemic. The ability to address growing needs for programs will be limited unless staff is increased or the department increased emphasis on the utilization of partners, and outside vendors. A combination of both efforts will likely be required. In summary, in order to do more, the department needs more people to do the work. The existing staff are or even beyond at their limit.

Concerts & art-based performances were the most needed recreation program category in Berea according to Mail Survey results (59% of households); fitness & wellness programs for adults ranked second (50%), and special events and outdoor movies tied for third (41%). Each of these program types appeared as top unmet needs in the Mail Survey results with 2,000 households with unmet needs for these program categories. Programs for those age 50+ and nature programs were identified by about 1,800 households each.

#### Program Staff

First, the city should fill the position that became vacant during the COVID-19 pandemic. If the city is not able to rehire the vacant position, the department should consider the utilization of outside vendors and contractors to provide some of the citizens special events and programs. Funds for these vendors could come from the funds that were to be allocated to the vacant position. Alternatively, a special event vendor could

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be utilized to obtain sponsors which could then be used to pay the contractor. Optimally, a combination of all these strategies should be employed.

## Program Registration

Berea Parks and Recreation does not currently offer online registration for programs. If users desire to sign-up for a program, they must call or visit the Parks and Recreation office and speak directly with one of the two staff members. Online registration would relieve some pressure on staff and make it easier for many to sign-up for programs. Users would also be able to register any time of day or day of the week, improving participation. Finally, the registration program could also serve as a library of available programs to help inform residents of potential opportunities.

## Community/Family-Oriented Programming & Events

Overall, Berea residents have expressed a desire for the kind of programs that bring community together and can be enjoyed by all ages. The city currently hosts some of these programs, but residents would like to see more. Berea Parks and Recreation does not currently have an amphitheater or dedicated event space. Those proposed on the previous section would help the city accommodate these events. There could also be programs oriented around new and existing picnic shelters (e.g., craft demonstrations).

Given staffing and funding limitations, the department should pursue outside partnerships to achieve the events desired by the community. Releasing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a special event vendor in Berea would potentially expand capacity for hosting an event series for Berea. Upon selection, the department should negotiate with the selected event vendor to determine what specific types of events, when, and how the revenue should be split between the city and the vendor.

Branded Berea-specific events hosted in partnership with existing groups like Berea Tourism, local restaurants, the Chamber of Commerce, and others would create broad appeal and a broad audience base. These events should be contractually owned by the city and incentivized. If the event is successful and growing, the contract can continue. The city will need to consider fresh approaches – like alcohol sales, charging fees, and shared responsibility.

## Senior Programs

As noted previously, Berea, like most of the country, has an aging population and a growing percentage of residents over age 65. Given this aging population, it is unsurprising that many survey respondents requested more senior programs. During the stakeholder group at the Senior Center, participants indicated interest in more active programs, although programs through the center are limited to ages 60+. It may be important to offer both 50+ and 60+ programs to best meet the demand for programs.

Additionally, it is important to note that many citizens who qualify as “seniors” based on age (an arbitrary delineation) do not self-identify as seniors; they will sometimes elect not to participate in senior-targeted programs because of stigma or perception of aged people. Wherever communities advertise programs for “seniors” alone there will often be this problem. Because some of the most active people in fitness and recreation are over the age of 50, it is important to separately brand and market programs geared towards active seniors (e.g., “Berea Active Adults”).



Pickleball at The Villages, FL

Any programs that fit into this kind of category are more likely to succeed when grouped together and marketed specifically to more active, physically sound seniors. Proposed new features, such as outdoor fitness equipment and pickleball courts, can provide opportunities for programming oriented towards older residents. The department should continue to coordinate with Berea Fitness, who indicated desire to partner for more fitness classes, any other local institutions (e.g., churches), and vendors to create effective, appealing offerings that do not duplicate existing services. Additionally, health care facilities, health insurance providers,



and grocery store chains can all be potential funding and resource sponsors for expanded programs and activities.

Pickleball is an obvious program to consider right away as it can be setup in a temporary location fairly easily. Until dedicated courts are constructed, basketball courts or even parking lots could be used for a scheduled program. For an indoor option, both the Folk Center and the Senior Center have the required space to setup a temporary pickleball court.

### Nature Programs and Environmental Education

Residents indicated desire for more access to natural areas and nature programs in Berea. Nature programs were a high priority in the Priority investment Ratings by ETC. According to the Mail Survey, 42% of households have a need for nature programs, and most indicated these needs were unmet. Natural areas/nature parks were ranked as the second most important facility and as a high priority for investment (second). With the large amount of available natural areas in Berea, expansion and promotion of opportunities should be the focus over attempts to add more land.

As noted in the trends section of Chapter 5, environmental education cultivates understanding of the benefits of natural habitats and open spaces. Nature education provides opportunities to engage all ages and abilities and provides great potential for intergenerational programming. The school districts, Berea College, and nonprofit groups are potential partners for environmental programs, including nature classes and activities. Potential programs – which could involve partnerships with the school districts – include community events, field trips, or classes covering habitat restoration, wildlife identification (e.g., bird watching), invasive species removal, and more.



Photo: Berea Community Middle School

Summer Activity

### Other Programming Needs

There are some unmet demands for other program categories. Water fitness program and swim lessons both have some unmet needs that should be evaluated at Berea Swimming Pool. The survey results indicated about 1,200 households with unmet needs for adult art, dance, and performing arts programs and 700 with unmet needs for these programs for youth. Based on the survey, unmet needs for pet exercise programs, summer camps, before & after school programs, and therapeutic recreation programs should be reviewed to see if sufficient demand exists to add or expand these programs.

Finally, there are some needs for teen programs. Esports are growing in popularity, as described in Chapter 5, and serve this hard-to-reach age group. Optimally, an Esports area would be located in a teen room at a future recreation center but could be held in the Folk Center on a scheduled basis if a permanent television or projector was added to the facility.

## 7.6.2 Annual Implementation Plan for Business Operations

The diagram below (Figure 7.1) illustrates the ongoing evolution of a typical parks and recreation agency's working operations. Each cycle begins with an annual plan and ends with evaluation. Creating an annual plan allows the department to establish goals for both internal operations and external performance (i.e., programming). An annual operations plan is helpful for establishing pricing and costs, as well as for defining more specifically the ways which the agency will benefit the community; a yearly evaluation is critically important to ensure efficiency, appropriateness, and vitality. Hosting a year-end retreat for the department staff is a helpful way to collectively evaluate performance and to identify goals and objectives for the coming year.

Most of the funding for the department's budget comes from General Fund Appropriations. Some programs have fees attached, but fees and charges are inconsistent. While the programs currently or recently offered are generally popular and well-attended, there is a real opportunity to strengthen and refresh programming;

Figure 7.1: Ongoing Annual Operation Plan Diagram



doing so would benefit not only the community, but department staff as well. Berea Parks and Recreation must consider overall operations in their entirety then determine what operations the department should “Stop, Start, and Continue.” This is practical strategy for proactively addressing need and challenges and can meaningfully realign services. Considering the condition of facilities, the success of both existing and former program offerings, and how extended the current staff is, Berea Parks and Recreation will benefit from assessing what strengths and opportunities there are to build stronger programs and more sustainable operations. The following steps are intended to guide the department in defining the purpose of its programming and the direction the agency would like to take moving forward:

### Program Review

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

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

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

### Budgeting

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

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



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## Participation

Estimate participation based on historic data from previous years.

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

## Determine Market Rate

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

## Evaluate Direct Costs

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

## Pricing

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

## Evaluate

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

## 7.6.3 Recommendations

1. Be a mission driven agency; pay very close attention to the new **mission** of Parks and Recreation (Chapter 6) Ensure every action and decision always connects back to the department's mission
2. Fill the recreation position that became vacant during the COVID-19 pandemic
3. Add online registration to make it easier for users to sign-up for programs and to relieve some pressure on staff and improve participation and awareness
4. Establish an annual assessment process to determine if Berea should stop offering a program, continue offering a program, or start a new program (Annual Implementation Plan for Business Operations)
5. Develop an online program calendar, including the ability to sync directly to personal calendars
6. Regularly evaluate program times to ensure programs are offered when community members can actually participate
7. Expand existing concert, movie, and live performance program offerings to address unmet community needs
  - Utilize existing spaces and proposed amphitheaters for additional and enhanced program opportunities
8. Release a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for an event coordinator to develop and produce a consistent line-up of branded Berea community events
  - Establish split revenue percentages with funding channeled directly to Parks and Recreation
9. Continuously evaluate the demand for new or expanded programs as indicated by the survey results and other public input
10. Seek opportunities to add Esports programs to attract the hard-to-reach teenage population
11. Maintain existing and successful partnerships with other Berea-based organizations
12. Make full use of new facilities – amphitheaters, outdoor fitness equipment, picnic shelters, etc. – by programming and offering activities anchored around these sites
13. Explore new partnership opportunities to grow a line-up of adult fitness and wellness programs, as well as nature programs

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14. Consider utilizing picnic shelters as venues for outdoor education programs and events
  15. Partner with local entities like Berea Fitness to develop more age 50+ programming and to ensure offerings align with local needs
  16. Brand and market active senior programs together under a unique category (e.g., "Berea Active Adults")
    - many can be offered outdoors
    - Strategically market these programs with support from partners and related service-providers
  17. Evaluate the demand for pickleball programs, initially using existing facilities (e.g., basketball courts, parking lots, Folk Center, and/or Senior Center)
  18. Monitor nationwide and regional recreation trends regularly, especially concerning growing population groups (50+ and BIPOC communities in Berea) to best serve the needs of the whole community
  19. Explore partnerships with nearby environmental and nature organizations (e.g., Berea College Forestry Outreach Center, Audubon Society of Kentucky, etc.) to create and promote additional nature-based group outings, participatory activities, and community events
  20. Regularly identify needs of underserved populations
  21. Utilize the Core Program Guidelines in Appendix C as a source for potential program offerings
  22. Partner with other agencies to organize events and community-engaged activities around trails and bike paths

## 7.7 OPERATIONS, PROMOTION, AND PARTNERSHIPS

### 7.7.1 Observations and Analyses

The Berea Parks and Recreation Department should be commended for their efficiency as the scope of their work far exceeds the number of staff responsible to meet all the needs of the community. As a result, the existing staff ensures that the citizens of Berea enjoy a well-organized and professional parks and recreation department.

On a per population basis, Berea employs far fewer full-time equivalent (FTE) staff than the benchmark median. Nearly half of these staff members are part-time seasonal and summer staff for the Berea City Pool which generates much of the department's revenue. The recommendations that follow should help solidify greater success for the department.

### 7.7.2 Pricing Philosophy

#### Direct & Indirect Costs

Nearly all (about 99%) of the Parks and Recreation Department's programs are subsidized by the City of Berea. Decision makers should be commended for this provision of service. However, the need for additional funds often leads to the difficult decision to cut staff and programs. Rather than cut services, especially as needs increase, Berea should determine a funding philosophy and funding policies for Parks and Recreation. Some people in Berea can afford to pay market rate fees, while some cannot. In general, fees should be established for the 80% that can pay the fee instead of the 20% that cannot. The citizens of Berea want more parks and recreation opportunities, and it are very likely willing to pay for them. For those that cannot, scholarship programs can easily be established.

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

- Direct Costs: any expenditures related to the operation of a specific park, program, or facility rental (e.g., instructor fees, materials, staff time directly related to the specific service, etc.)

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- Indirect Costs: any expenditures that remain after removing direct costs; usually more general and systemwide (e.g., administrative tasks, facility maintenance, utilities, etc.)

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

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

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

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

### 7.7.3 Deferred Maintenance

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

As the department currently operates, there is typically not enough funding to replace facilities beyond their useful life. Whatever amount is added to the budget is often spent replacing smaller capital items, leaving larger capital items unaddressed. All deferred maintenance should be identified and prioritized over a multi-year period. Creating a comprehensive preventive maintenance plan for equipment safeguards against costly repairs that might otherwise have been avoided. Whenever items are purchased, plans for their eventual replacement must be put in place.

### 7.7.4 Park Operations

Moving forward over the next 10 years, the Berea Parks and Recreation Department will need to adopt a strategy of sustainability – not simply environmental, but economic as well. Qualities like consistency, fairness, and flexibility will be crucial to the long-term durability of the department and the services it provides to the entire Berea community. To efficiently operate an extensive and high-quality system like that in Berea, an appropriate amount of funds for staffing, equipment, and grounds management must be in place.

Park and recreation agencies are increasingly focusing on preservation and restoration of natural resources. Natural areas provide numerous benefits to the health and wellness of a community, including opportunities for all residents. Studies indicate that a connection to nature can relieve stress, improve interpersonal relationships, and improve mental health.<sup>4</sup> Because they are typically one of the largest landowners in their jurisdictions,

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<sup>4</sup> National Recreation and Park Association, "Health and Wellness," <http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Impacting-Communities/Health-and-Wellness/>, (April 17, 2020)

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parks and recreation departments have the opportunity to lead in the implementation of sustainability or best management practices (BMPs), efforts that can double as engagement and educational opportunities.

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

## Maintenance Requirements

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

- Level 1,2,3,4 or 5 turf – standards set by the department
- Restroom cleaning (e.g., daily, twice daily, etc.) – standards set by the department

Capital replacement (e.g., roofs, HVAC systems, etc.) requires items to be placed on a list with an "expiration date" based on the general length of time an item lasts in good condition. Costs should be determined and provided to the city's budgetary administration years in advance to ensure the city is prepared for necessary appropriations.

- Painting schedule (e.g., number of years between re-painting, per item) – standards set by the department; painted items should be included on a multi-year list for funding
- Maintenance equipment replacement (e.g., lawn mowers, trucks, irrigation systems, etc.) – standards set by the department in collaboration with the city

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

## Turf Maintenance Levels

### 1. State of the Art Maintenance

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

### 2. High Level Maintenance

- Park/Land Categories
  - Well-developed park areas
  - Reasonably high visitation
  - Athletic practice fields

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- Maintenance Standards
    - Mow every week
    - Fertilize, aerate regularly
    - <5% weeds
    - Daily inspection
  - 3. High Level Maintenance
    - Park/Land Categories
      - Moderate to low level of development and visitation
      - Non-playing field areas in developed parks
    - Maintenance Standards
      - Mow every 10 days
      - Fertilize if needed
      - No irrigation
      - Weekly inspection
  - 4. Moderately Low-Level Maintenance
    - Park/Land Categories
      - Low level of development
      - Low visitation
      - Undeveloped parks
      - Remote parks
  - 5. Maintenance Standards
    - Low frequency mowing
    - No fertilizer or irrigation
    - Monthly inspection
  - 6. High Visitation Natural Areas
    - Park/Land Categories
      - Natural areas of high visitation
      - Nature Parks
    - Maintenance Standards
      - No mowing / cleaning on complaint
      - Annual bush hogging, monthly inspection (prairie/meadow areas)
  - 7. Minimum Maintenance Level
    - Park/Land Categories
      - Undeveloped parks
    - Maintenance Standards
      - No mowing
      - Occasional bush hogging, monthly inspection

### **Staffing Needs**

The success of any future development hinges equally on funding and staffing capacity. The department currently employs 7.7 full-time equivalent staff members, only 2.0 of whom are maintenance. The need for operations and programming staff was discussed earlier in this chapter, but maintenance staff needs also

need to be addressed. As public input indicated a desire for a continued high level of maintenance at the parks, additional staff will be needed as more land is added to the system and features are developed.

Table 7.1 shows the acreage maintained and managed plus the current number of full-time equivalent staff now. The table then shows what would be required to operate additional land at the same level on a per acre basis – meaning the numbers do not include any additional requirements of specific facilities.

Based only on the additional land recommended to be developed at existing and proposed parks (see Chapter 5), the department would need to add one full-time equivalent maintenance employee to provide the same level of service as provided currently. **These numbers indicate that the maintenance staffing requirements at the Berea Parks and Recreation Department will increase by as much as 45% based on proposed improvements in this plan, assuming no increase in service levels or requirements.** The table also include the number of staff needed per acre and by park category when new land is added to the system. In order to improve service levels, staffing numbers will need to increase even more.

**Table 7.1: Staff Requirements to Maintain Desired Improvements at Current Service Levels**

<b>Acreage and Existing Staff</b>	
Total Developed Acreage	44.1
Full-Time Maintenance Equivalent Staff	2.0
Maintained Acres per FTE Staff	22.1
<b>Acreage and Future Staff Needed to Maintain at Current Level</b>	
Proposed Maintained Acreage*	64.4
Needed Full-Time Maintenance Staff	2.9
Full-Time Staff Needed Per New Acre	0.05
Full-Time Staff Needed per New Neighborhood Park	0.5
Full-Time Staff Needed per New Community Park	1.4

\*See target acres in Chapter 5

### 7.7.5 Training

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

### 7.7.6 Partnerships

Collaborative partnerships will necessarily continue to play a critical role in the future of parks and recreation in Berea. Through strategic transparent partnerships, the department can both reduce costs and generate additional revenue. In stakeholder conversations, the need for partnership and collaboration emerged over and over. Berea already has several formal partnerships – including with sports, schools, and business groups – as well as a widely held positive and responsive reputation in the community.

Looking forward along the 10-year timeline of this Master Plan, many actions will require expanded support from partner groups in order to be truly successful. In fact, some new facilities will likely only be possible through partnerships with other organizations in order to adequately cover both capital and operating costs. Any partnership the departments pursue must be mutually beneficial, and terms clearly stated for all parties. The city has an opportunity to establish more consistent lines of communication with existing and potential partner groups such as the school districts, Berea College, Madison County Parks, and private recreation



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providers. Each agency should convey its priorities and objectives, helping clarify services provided to ensure facilities and programs are provided while avoiding inefficient duplication of effort from all entities.

### 7.7.7 Marketing and Outreach

The community has indicated a desire for continuous, ongoing engagement with Parks and Recreation to make sure public needs are heard and addressed (Chapter 4). Some of the specific park improvements recommended in this plan will require local resident engagement to ascertain whether needs are effectively being met or if adjustments should be made. In the upcoming years of implementing this Master Plan, any major improvement project – whether capital or operational – should incorporate authentic outreach and engagement, as well as follow consistent standards of communication, to ensure transparency. According to the public engagement (Mail & Web Surveys), not knowing what is offered was the primary reason – expressed by over half (53%) of households – for not using parks or participating in programs.

While not knowing what is available will likely always be a top reason keeping people out of parks and programs, the department could make a significant shift in awareness by steps as simple as streamlining registration, as noted above. Regularly updating and sharing an event calendar and partnering with local organizations can also extend outreach. By first establishing guidelines for things like promotion, registration, and social media engagement pertaining to any events, programs, and camps, the department can build a stronger foundation of community awareness and involvement, a critical foundation for the success of any future programming the city develops.

Social media platforms are useful for staying connected but can be a challenge to sustain between staff changes and to update with engaging, interactive content. The department already uses Facebook regularly, posting images, updates, and more. According to survey results (Chapter 4), residents would prefer to learn about recreation opportunities and events through online social media over other methods. Parks and Recreation should consider promoting opportunities on additional social media platforms, including Instagram and Twitter to widen the reach of their efforts. Additionally, promoted postings can reach residents who do not follow the departments accounts.

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

Figure 7.2 outlines three necessary elements that should be considered to conduct a successful marketing campaign. The top section, the first element, defines the department's identity. The middle section – the second element, containing the visual identity and messaging platform – describes what brochures, ads, flyers, and media will look like. The third element, at the bottom, lists a range of mediums for how the messaging can be shared.

Figure 7.3 is intended as a big-picture guide for crafting a marketing strategy. The strategic plan in Chapter 6 defines most of the top section for the Berea Parks and Recreation Department, but the middle section is left to the discretion of the agency in terms of visual identity and messaging platform. Any marketing materials Park and Recreation creates should look to this branding for inspiration on color, style, and more.

The most important takeaway is that marketing can, and should be, easily implemented once it is standardized but still flexible for modifications. Figure 7.3 offers an example of a simple format that would be easily recognizable as messaging from the department. The title and images of a standard flyer or brochure can easily be changed to reflect what the agency wants to communicate or promote.

The standard event flyer format should include:

- Pictures (at the top and middle)
- Event name (in the front banner)
- Time and location (across the middle)
- Sponsors (at the bottom)
- Brand, logo, website and social media information

Any other materials, like the brochure in Figure 7.4, should incorporate similar visual identity and messaging structure. The same visual identity should also be used for online marketing, including social media and email notifications. Standardized, expanded marketing has the potential to attract additional users to the events, spaces, and programs offered by Berea.

Figure 7.2: Essential Marketing Communication Elements



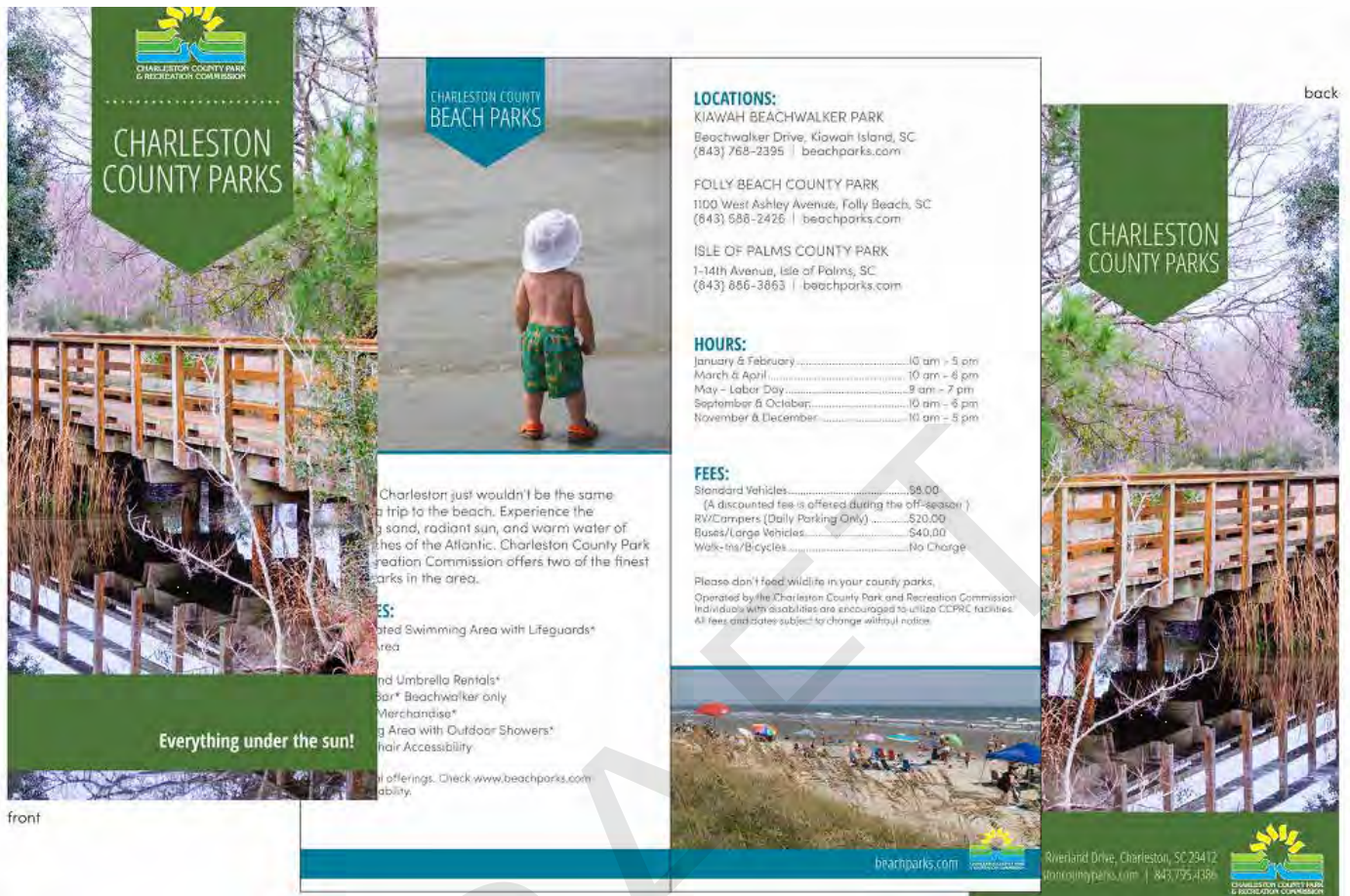
Figure 7.3: Sample Event Flyer

**HARVEST FESTIVAL 2014**  
Everything under the sun.  
LIVE BLUEGRASS BY:  
ROGER BELLOW AND THE DRIFTING TROUBADOURS  
FLATT CITY  
BLUE PLANTATION  
YEE HAW JUNCTION  
BLUESTONE RAMBLERS  
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, NOON-6PM  
\$8/ADULTS, FREE/KIDS 12 & UNDER, GOLD PASS MEMBERS  
Mullet Hall Equestrian Center, Johns Island County Park  
charlestoncountyparks.com | 843.795.4386

**DOG DAY AFTERNOON 2014**  
Everything under the sun.  
Celebrate the dog days of summer with  
MAN'S BEST FRIEND!  
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, NOON-5PM  
\$10/DOG, \$8/CCR (Charleston County Resident Discount)  
Whirlin' Waters Adventure Waterpark, North Charleston  
charlestoncountyparks.com | 843.795.4386

**LOWCOUNTRY CAJUN FESTIVAL 2014**  
Everything under the sun.  
LIVE ZYDECO MUSIC BY:  
SHELLY WATERS  
"SWAMP POP PRINCESS"  
UNKNOWN TONGUES  
CRAWLWALK ZYDECO  
SUNDAY, APRIL 6, NOON-6PM  
\$10/ADULTS, FREE/KIDS 12 & UNDER, GOLD  
James Island County Park  
charlestoncountyparks.com | 843

Figure 7.4: Sample Brochure



## 7.7.8 Recommendations

### Operation and Maintenance

1. Adopt this Master Plan at the level of City Council; ensure commitment of legislative officials and city leaders
2. Prepare an Operations Plan which defines Maintenance Standards (Section 7.7.4)
3. Consider maintenance and staffing needs when adding parkland to the system
4. Increase maintenance budget in order to sustain current levels as new facilities and programs are developed
5. Implement conservation policies and sustainable practice guidelines for future development and management of park properties
6. Elevate parks by setting examples for Best Management Practices (BMP) like stormwater detention, recycling, etc.
7. Know the true costs to deliver services (direct and indirect costs)
8. Establish and adjust fees for programs according to direct and indirect costs
9. Create and implement professional and career development strategies for management and supervisory staff
10. Identify and allocate funding for critical staff development opportunities (including conferences, training, memberships, etc.) with consideration to licensure and certification requirements
11. Encourage continued staff training for leadership and continued growth within respective fields
12. Incentivize management level staff to attend professional development programs offered by state, regional, and national training organizations

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13. Incentivize and support staff members to pursue Certified Park & Recreation Professional (CPRP), Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) and Aquatic Facility Operator (AFO) certifications

### **Partnerships and Sponsorships**

1. Treat all vendors, contractors, and partners in a professional, consistent manner with legal, signed contracts containing the following:
  - Name, entity, and address
  - Obligations of each party
  - Terms of the contract
  - Price (if any, and who pays for what)
  - Representations and warranties – (insurance, who owns what)
  - Termination of the contract – when and by whom
  - Signed, witnessed, and reviewed periodically
2. Explore and solidify contracted partnerships with outside vendors and organizations, including private providers, to produce more programming
3. Develop working agreements with all partners (all outside groups using Berea facilities) including measurable outcomes; review every two years, at minimum
4. Ensure all future contracts benefit Berea and its residents, in addition to the relevant partnering vendor or contractor
5. Understand all agency costs, both indirect and direct, before entering into agreements; understand how much investment a partner will commit to collaboration
6. Host quarterly or semiannual check-ins with all community partners; host roundtable discussion where all parties share program progress and emerging needs
7. Require a maintenance plan that identifies ongoing funding needs for partnership projects
8. Establish policies for accepting sponsorships and selling naming rights
9. Seek opportunities to install public art in parks and develop cultural programming in collaboration with creative, arts-advocacy entities in Berea
10. Continue open dialog with developers as neighborhoods are planned to ensure coordinated, strategic growth and the inclusion of needed park space and facilities

### **Engagement and Promotion**

1. Develop a Master Plan Implementation Committee (e.g., can include members of plan steering committee) to facilitate, market, and guide implementation of the Action Plan (Chapter 9)
2. Maintain continuous public engagement throughout the implementation of this plan
  - Engage neighborhood residents during park improvement processes using bulletin boards, monitored social media posts, and other methods
3. Establish a consistent messaging strategy for the department
4. Determine standard formatting for all marketing and promotional materials (consider samples provided above) based on the medium (e.g., social media, newspaper, etc.)
5. Create an eye-catching brand, including color, style, logo placement, and flyer layout
6. Consider promoting opportunities on additional social media platforms, including Instagram and Twitter to widen the reach of department efforts
7. Expand marketing of programs and facilities through existing and future collaborative relationships to increase community awareness and participation
8. Know the demographics of the citizens served; track population trends
9. Establish an opt-in email blast for community members to stay informed and connected, possibly as part of program or event registration

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10. Utilize this Master Plan to guide decision making – regularly monitor progress
  11. Collaborate with partners and other service-providers in the city to cross-promote and share information about services

## **7.8 BUDGET AND FUNDING**

The total operating budget (see Table 2.15) for Parks and Recreation in Berea for FY 2020 was \$760,000. The table also shows a per capita operating expenditure of \$50, less than half of the benchmark median of \$114. It is also important to note that the city provides services to residents of nearby area, but those populations are not included in these numbers. Proposed facility development, especially a new athletic field complex or an indoor recreation center, would have a large impact on the overall budget of the department, and the city should be prepared for these additional budgetary demands – including but not limited to staffing – when expanding or developing new facilities.

Generated revenue represents just 10% of the Parks and Recreation budget, well below the benchmark of 16%, and the per capita revenue in Berea is \$5, compared to \$25 for the benchmarks. As noted previously, the city will not likely be able to continue to add offerings without increasing revenue. An increase to 15% cost recovery should be an attainable goal with 10 years as new programs are added and other cost recovery strategies are implemented. Even higher cost recovery should be attained if indoor facilities are developed.

Accordingly, Berea Parks and Recreation will need to consider some modifications to business operations in order to accommodate the growth identified in this plan. Applying these business management principals to operations, programs, and services will better prepare the department to tackle the financial challenges facing it in the future.

### **7.8.1 Management and Budget**

Budget and financial performance analysis are necessary to fully understand costs for the department but are not currently being completed. It is important for the department to have a firm grip on the costs associated with operating any given program or facility. Simply generating more revenue will not be beneficial if costs are not simultaneously controlled. If costs are not known, it is not possible to correctly calculate cost recovery. Instituting a cost recovery and pricing plan for all offerings (see next subsection) will help the department more efficiently tackle its budgeting.

#### **Consistent Pricing for Programming**

Programming fees should reflect the indirect costs of putting on the program. As department costs increase, these costs need to be explained and then distributed to the contractors conducting the programming.

#### **Creating Revenue from Events**

The City of Berea and its family friendly reputation lends itself to a series of community-wide events that can generate substantial revenue through entrance fees, operations, and sponsors.

#### **Gaining Control and an Understanding of Maintenance Costs**

The department should know the exact cost to maintain outdoor parks. A maintenance standard by season should be set along with the number of people required to maintain one acre of parkland. If additional parkland is developed, the maintenance costs should be a part of planning and development discussions; having standards in place significantly helps with deliberation.

#### **Vendors**

In order to provide for the growing demands of programs and events identified through this planning process, the city must consider using outside vendors and partners to perform some of the necessary tasks of program coordination. The city will need to ensure these vendors are accomplishing objectives identified through this Master Plan. Vendors should provide their service for a split of revenues. As noted previously, outside vendors and contractors can be obtained through an RFQ (Request for Qualifications), allowing the city to choose the best people based on qualifications and previous experience.

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## Rentals

The city reserves picnics shelters on a daily basis, though most events last only two hours or less. A fee to reserve picnic shelters for half days (with an hour between reservations) would allow expanded use of existing facilities. Changing the reservation structure in this way may require emptying trash receptacles and other tasks between rental sessions to maintain expected service levels. If city staff are unavailable, this service may be outsourced with the cost included in the rental fee. The city should also add new shelters to the rental inventory as they are developed and consider developing an online reservation platform including a calendar of availability.

Consider adjusting the rental cost for Folk Center, as the facility currently cost less to rent than comparable facilities by others in the area. The facility needs a projector or TV screen to better accommodate classes and meetings. This addition could also help justify a higher rental cost.

### 7.8.2 Potential Funding Sources

Parks and Recreation projects can be funded in many different ways. Unfortunately, many of these strategies can be very hard to implement and may take years to see any results. Examples of some of these ideas include maintenance endowment funds, conservation districts, license tags, transient occupancy taxes, income taxes, lease backs, real-estate transfer fees, land dedication and/or park impact fees, and park authorities. Although all of these can be explained and should be considered, the strategies below could have an immediate impact on the operations and capital improvements of Berea Parks and Recreation.

There are numerous sources that will show ways to fund Parks and Recreation projects, but many of these strategies can be very hard to establish and take years to see any results. Examples of some of these ideas include maintenance endowment funds, conservation districts, license tags, transient occupancy taxes, income taxes, lease backs, real-estate transfer fees, land dedication and/or park impact fees, and park authorities. Although all of these can be explained and experimented with, three ideas could have an immediate impact on the operations of Berea Parks and Recreation.

#### Forming a Parks Foundation

Establishing a Berea Parks Foundation, which would operate separately as a 501c3 organization, is an opportunity Berea should pursue. A foundation enables the city, its programs, and its facilities to receive philanthropic funds. There are philanthropists in Berea that want to donate to programs and services that add Parks and Recreation value to the city. A foundation must be promoted and actively utilized to fund park improvements. There must be a Foundation Board to guide efforts, and the members of this board should be intentionally recruited. Funds generated can create opportunities for capital projects, but also for programming. Funding can also be used to support volunteer recruitment and organization, enabling the city to introduce park ambassadors and other engaged members as part of the Berea's parks and recreation service.

As noted previously, Berea residents generally believe that program costs are fair. For those in the community who are unable to pay, the department is flexible in allowing them to participate in programs. Yet, there is currently no system for tracking these informal agreements and no set guidelines for determining who is qualified for assistance. However, the pricing for programs may still not be affordable for everyone in the community. A parks foundation can solicit donations for any participant that may not be able to pay for offerings, including covering program and user fees.

#### Volunteer Power

Park ambassadors provide directions, offer assistance, or remind visitors of park policies. They may also assist with maintenance activities, like litter pickup. The presence of ambassadors often helps visitors feel more comfortable in park spaces, and they can monitor sites to make sure people feel welcome and have good access to features of the park.

Adopt-A-Trail or Adopt-A-Park programs are an additional, more formalized way for volunteers to assist with park maintenance in Berea. These programs encourage interested residents and groups to become involved in keeping parks clean for their community. These programs give new possibilities for involvement to those

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residents who have the interest but need a structured opportunity. Louisville Metro has an established Adopt-A-Park program; this could serve as a regionally relevant example Berea can look to for inspiration. Again, partnerships with local entities can be a great way to explore and initiate volunteer interest in the city. And target areas can be as small as a single facility or as large as an entire park.

### **Creating a Scholarship Fund**

Around the country, parks and recreation agencies are exploring ways to utilize the patronage of those already paying for recreation services. Berea Parks and Recreation can explore a couple of options for building a robust scholarship fund:

- Apply an additional \$2.00 charge to the registration fee for all those who pay for programs. Funnel the funds generated into a scholarship fund that can be accessed for those patrons unable to pay
- Add an option to the registration process where those signing up can opt to donate (e.g., \$2.00 or \$5.00) to help those in their community who are unable to pay to participate

### **American Rescue Plan**

The American Rescue Plan Act was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President on March 12, 2021. The bill provides direct aid to local governments that can be used for a wide variety of city needs, including potentially parks and recreation improvements. The City of Berea is to receive an estimated \$4.2 million, according to the National League of Cities.<sup>5</sup> If a portion of these funds were designated to parks and recreation, they would allow for a great start to the implementation of this Master Plan.

### **Grants and Application for Funding**

Not all grants are beneficial; most are positive, but some require more work from staff than the grant's potential benefits. Berea has previously taken advantage of grants for facility development, including recently from the Madison County Agricultural Development Board, Kentucky Agricultural Development Board, and USDA Rural Development for the Chestnut Street Pavilion.

The City of Berea should continue to be on the lookout for grants that will enhance the park system. Applying to established foundations is often easier and has a higher acceptance rate. There are sometimes local foundations that are more amenable to giving locally. In all, grants can come from the federal government, state sources, and sometimes local entities. Indianapolis, for example, has received over \$100 million in foundation grants from the Lilly Endowment over the past 20 years for park related improvements in the city.

### **Example Grant Sources:**

- National Recreation Trails Program
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program
- Conservation Reserve Fund
- Community Forest and Open Space Program (Federal)
- Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Grant (FEMA)
- Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Grants (USDA)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (Federal)
- AARP Community Challenge

### **General Funding Sources for Parks, Recreation, and Sports Facility Operations**

Below is a general list of ideas that communities have used to supplement costs of operations. Some of these may be more effective in Berea than others.

- Official Drink for Parks and Recreation

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<sup>5</sup> National League of Cities, "Estimated Local Allocations in the American Rescue Plan," <https://www.nlc.org/resource/estimated-local-allocations-in-the-american-rescue-plan/>, (May 24, 2022)

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- Tournament fees – if an outside vendor makes money, the city should as well
  - Scoreboard sponsors
  - Parking fees at events
  - Field permits when outside groups are not using the fields
  - Advertising Sales
  - Wi-Fi revenue through sponsorship, if a vendor provides the Wi-Fi
  - Cell Tower Leases
  - Privatization of various park and recreation programs and services
  - Sports booster clubs
  - Corporate sponsorship in exchange for advertising

### 7.8.3 Recommendations

#### Management and Budget

1. Know the value of assets (excluding land values); know where those assets are in their life cycle
2. Determine maintenance standards that include how many employees are required to maintain one acre of parkland; consider these standards when adding parkland to the system
3. Know the true costs to deliver services (direct and indirect costs)
4. Establish and adjust fees for programs according to direct and indirect costs
5. Classify the agency's services according to how they align with the agency's mission
6. Inform users, partners, and citizens of the true costs of services
7. Know the demographics of the citizens served
8. Track population trends
9. Control labor costs
10. Consider using outside vendors and partners, selected through an RFQ process, with a revenue split to perform some of the staffing tasks of a programmer

#### Cost Recovery

1. Increase cost recovery to (15%) or better as new features are developed, and new programs are added
2. Institute an easy-to-understand Cost Recovery and Pricing Plan for everything that is offered
3. Price services furthest away from the mission at full cost recovery levels
4. Analyze potential costs versus revenue before adding new features
5. Establish a fee to reserve picnic shelters for half days (with an hour between reservations) to allow additional use of existing facilities
6. Add new shelters to the rental inventory as they are developed
7. Allow online reservations for all rental facilities with a calendar to view availability
8. Identify potential revenue sources at community events, including sponsorships and entry fees
9. Develop a program for recruiting and scheduling volunteer park ambassadors to promote wellbeing and provide assistance at parks
10. Utilize volunteers to assist with park maintenance through efforts such as the adoption of sections of parks or trails in Berea

#### Funding Sources

1. Find dedicated funding sources for Parks and Recreation that can be depended upon annually
2. Seek philanthropists in the community to support the agency's causes



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3. Consider creating a Berea Parks Foundation to raise funds, recruit and organize volunteers, and promote the parks
  4. Continue seeking grants and apply to foundations for project funding that enhances the park system; be sure this is consistent with the mission of Parks and Recreation while also considering associated costs to the city
  5. Create a Scholarship Fund, potentially by requesting an optional additional \$2.00 charge during registration
  6. Utilize a portion of the American Rescue Plan funds allocated to the City of Berea for parks and recreation improvements to begin to implement the recommendations of this plan

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## INDIVIDUAL PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes recommendations for individual park improvements including proposed new facilities and upgrades to existing parks. Each section reviews the findings explored in the park inventory (Chapter 3) and offers steps forward. These recommendations are presented as a starting point for future discussions with users, neighbors, partners, and the community at large. Before pursuing development, each park site will need a deeper investigation into capacity and precise details like placement, materials used, and maintenance considerations.

This chapter also includes a suggested level of priority for each improvement recommendation; priority is based on public engagement, steering committee input, and the condition of facilities. Priorities should always be confirmed before implementation through community engagement which will be especially important as the city faces recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to the following recommendations for each park across the system, three parks were selected for a more detailed design analysis. Opportunity, needs, community input, and departmental goals all informed the selection of these specific sites. The four concept plans offered are intended to support any funding or development pursuits and to guide the improvement process. Parks are listed according to the park classification following the proposed improvements.

### 8.2 NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

#### 8.2.1 Mary Street Property/Burchwood Park

##### Background

The Mary Street property or Burchwood Park is a 4-acre open space in the Burchwood neighborhood with the potential to be developed as a neighborhood park to serve residents in the area.

##### Improvement Recommendations

1. Develop a park master plan with community engagement to ensure the site is developed with consideration to long-term needs

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2. Provide ADA accessible walkways to all existing and future park features
  3. Add a half basketball court to improve the variety of features at the park and increase usage
  4. Construct a small parking lot to provide access to this new neighborhood park
  5. Construct a picnic shelter to add a quality gathering place, meet local need, and provide potentially programmable (and revenue-generating) space
  6. Include a playground with accessible, engaging equipment for ages 2-5 and 5-12
  7. Include a paved perimeter trail connecting to site features and neighborhood access points
  8. Add site furnishings, site lighting, entrance signages, trees, landscaping, and bottle filler/drinking fountain
  9. Develop a neighborhood feature based on the preferences of the nearby residents as determined through neighborhood outreach

## Concept

Figure 8.1 shows a potential layout for the Burchwood Park property if developed as a neighborhood park. This park would primarily serve those living in the Burchwood neighborhood and is located at 250 Mary Street. Part of the property is located within the flood plain due to the stream running through the property. Proposed park features such as the parking area and part of the walking trail are located within the flood plain, while the playground, shelter, and basketball court are mostly outside the boundary.

## 8.2.2 Memorial Park

### Background

Memorial Park is located between the Berea Tourism/Welcome Center and the Russel Acton Folk Center and adjacent to the Berea Ecovillage. Memorial Park is Berea's oldest park and is the second most visited park in the city according to the public survey as identified in Chapter 4 of this plan. This park contains two playgrounds (age 2-5 and age 5-12), two reservable picnic shelters (1 large and 1 small), a restroom facility (attached to the large shelter), and a sidewalk system with lighting. The park often hosts events, including the Spoonbread Festival and movie nights.

The following park issues and opportunities were identified through site assessments and public input:

- Current signage exists but is faded
- Trash receptacles located too far from pathway
- The large shelter's roof and floor are in fair condition
- Restrooms not ADA accessible
- Playground reaching the end of useful life and some users requested a fence for increased safety

### Improvement Recommendations

1. Provide ADA accessible walkways to all existing and future park features
2. Install security cameras for enhanced safety and improved surveillance
3. Replace the aging shelter and restrooms to accommodate continued programming of rentals and events
4. Expand the playground with improved ADA access
5. Add safety fencing at playground when it is upgraded due to its location near a busy intersection
6. Consider using a vendor or partner to provide a temporary ice rink during the holiday season
7. Upgrade landscaping and consider adding infrastructure to support food trucks if additional events are planning in the park

Figure 8.1: Burchwood Park Concept



Figure 8.2: Walnut Creek Drive Concept



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## 8.2.3 Tillie Memorial Dog Park

### Background

The Tillie Memorial Dog Park opened in 2021 and is home to Berea's only dog park. It also serves as a trailhead for the Silver Creek John Stephenson Memorial Trail. The park currently offers only the dog park, but the property has open land that could potentially accommodate several additional amenities.

The following park issues were identified through site assessments and public input:

- Paved trail has some drainage issues
- No ADA connection to dog park areas

### Improvement Recommendations

1. Upgrade to a neighborhood park following the development of a park master plan with community engagement to ensure the site is developed with consideration to long-term needs
2. Improve the dog park by adding shade, seating, and water access to improve user experiences
3. Consider adding agility features to one of the dog park areas to attract additional users
4. Provide ADA accessible walkways to the dog park and all future park features
5. Add a half basketball court to improve the variety of features at the park and increase usage
6. Add a bike repair station to improve trailhead functionality
7. Install outdoor fitness equipment to diversify site usage and complement existing trail access
8. Consider adding a picnic shelter to meet the demand for community gathering spaces and the growing needs for rentals
9. Add a playground or nature play area for children in the surrounding neighborhoods
10. Install security cameras for enhanced safety and improved surveillance
11. Add site furnishings, site lighting, entrance signage at secondary entrances, trees, and landscaping
12. Develop a neighborhood feature based on the preferences of the nearby residents as determined through neighborhood outreach

## 8.2.4 Walnut Creek Drive Property

### Background

The Walnut Creek Drive property is a 12-acre open space with the potential to be utilized as park space. The property has challenging topography but would provide a park in a currently underserved area of Berea.

### Improvement Recommendations

1. Develop a park master plan with community engagement to ensure the site is developed with consideration to long-term needs
2. Provide ADA accessible walkways to all park features
3. Provide a pier to improve fishing access to the pond
4. Install energy-efficient pedestrian scale lighting for visibility and improved security
5. Consider added play pods along the walking path to provide a unique play opportunity that is better suited to the site's challenging topography than a traditional playground
6. Develop a paved trail loop around the park perimeter to provide connectivity and meet community demand for more walking paths
7. Construct a picnic shelter to add a quality gathering place, meet local need, and provide potentially programmable (and revenue-generating) space
8. Consider developing a small dog park to address community demand and improve service citywide

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9. Develop a neighborhood feature based on the preferences of the nearby residents as determined through neighborhood outreach
  10. Add site furnishings (e.g., benches, trash/recycling receptacles, bike rack, pet waste station), entrance signage, trees, landscaping, and a bottle filler/drinking fountain

## Concept

Figure 8.2 shows a potential layout for the Walnut Creek Drive property if developed as a neighborhood park. This park would primarily serve those living along Walnut Creek Drive, Jamestown Drive and other streets in the neighborhood. Based on the steep topography and existing pond, play pods, a dog park, a fishing dock, walking trail, and a small shelter are proposed for this new neighborhood park.

## 8.3 COMMUNITY PARKS

### 8.3.1 Berea City Park

#### Background

The largest park in the city's park system, Berea City Park draws both regional and local visitation. This expansive site includes sports-oriented and passive-use facilities as well as aquatic facilities. Centrally located behind Berea Community School off Ellipse Street, this park is the most visited park in the city according to the survey.

The following park issues were identified through site assessments and public input:

- Press box/restrooms in fair condition, some paint chipping
- Entrance to restroom and building is not ADA accessible
- Paved trails are overall good, some areas are crumbled or have cracks
- No lighting in school parking lot
- Ballfield dugouts are difficult to access from fields
- Field #1 outfield needs regraded
- Basketball court needs resurfaced, seating needs added, and ADA access
- Fencing around utility equipment could be improved

#### Improvement Recommendations

1. Provide ADA accessible walkways to all existing and future park features
2. Provide batting cages at the baseball/softball fields to address the needs of users
3. Make necessary improvements to the Berea Swimming Pool to ensure continued operations
4. Update and relocate the playground swings and improve the surfacing
5. Replace volleyball edging and consider adding accessible spectator seating
6. Resurface basketball court and replace goals
7. Upgrade all bleachers to include the required fence along upper edge and provide shade cover
8. Replace the existing drinking fountains with bottle fillers, starting near Field #5; ensure replacements are ADA accessible with a paved path
9. Investigate the potential to add t-ball fields using the outer portion (beyond 200') of the outfields of Field #2 or #3
10. Replace the backstop, fencing, dugouts, and spectator areas of Field #5



Figure 8.3: Berea City Park Concept



Figure 8.4: Berea City Park Expansion Concept



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11. Formalize the rectangular field in the outfield of Field #5 and add an additional diamond on the opposite side of this field space
  12. Replace and expand the restroom near the high school football field; ensure new building is ADA accessible
  13. Consider adding seating, including swinging benches, along the trail
  14. Coordinate with the Berea Community Schools to extend the high school baseball field fence to 325' (or fence height equivalent) to accommodate regional games
  15. Upgrade lighting at Fields #1 to #4 to LED fixtures to reduce maintenance needs, energy use, and light pollution

## Concept

The concept for City Park is presented in Figure 8.3. The improvements at this park focus on improving the use and functionality of existing spaces. The most obvious changes are to the athletic fields. The concept shows four t-ball fields in what was part of the outfield of Field #3 plus some area beyond. Each field, including new fields, should have upgraded and accessible spectator areas with shade cover. New batting cages are also included at the request of the users of the fields.

The field space in the southeastern portion of the park has been upgraded to include a second diamond field and a multipurpose rectangular field. Because these fields do not have outfield fencing, temporary fencing could be brought in to provide a 300' field if needed after Field #3 is reduced to 200'. The figure also shows an extended fence at the high school baseball field fence to accommodate regional games.

The concept shows a new restroom building to replace the structure near the high school football field. Swinging benches along the trail would provide a pleasant resting space for park users. Other improvements include game court improvements, shelter improvements, new playground swings, and expansion of storage. Finally, accessibility should be improved throughout the site with sidewalks linking all amenities.

### 8.3.2 Berea City Park Expansion

#### Background

Berea City Park Expansion opened in July of 2010 to include shared use paths, an ADA accessible playground, a skatepark, regulation size lighted football and soccer fields, concession stand with restrooms and shelter area, a lighted basketball court, and an additional 160 parking spaces. The eastern side of the property currently has a no build clause with Berea College that will need modification before the area can be developed.

The following park issues were identified through site assessments and public input:

- Concession building needs repairs
- Tables under shelters need replaced, some are missing seats
- Paved trail has encroachment along edging, some places need resealing
- Handicap parking space needs pole signage
- Skatepark does not have any shade
- Seating at football & soccer fields does not meet ADA requirements
- Basketball court needs additional access points to connect to other areas of the park

#### Improvement Recommendations

1. Coordinate with Berea College to modify or eliminate the no build clause on the eastern side of the park to allow for the development of desired community amenities.
1. Provide ADA accessible walkways to all existing and future park features
2. Regrade and reseed the football field to improve drainage and playing conditions
3. Improve restroom and concessions building with vandalism resistant table and chairs
4. Add storage building for equipment near football field

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5. Add a bike repair station to improve trailhead functionality
  6. Upgrade all bleachers to include the required fence along upper edge and provide shade cover
  7. Install outdoor fitness stations with shade where necessary, to meet demand for health & wellness activities (Chapter 4) and to create potentially programmable space
  8. Expand parking lot to accommodate heavy and expanding use
  9. Add pickleball courts to provide opportunities for seniors and other age groups to play the country's fastest growing sport
  10. Add a large picnic shelter to meet the demand for community gathering spaces and the growing needs for rentals
  11. Replace trail lighting with solar fixtures
  12. Consider adding artificial turf at the main multipurpose/soccer field as heavy use of the field makes it difficult to maintain healthy grass
  13. Add bocce or shuffleboard courts to provide greater variety of recreation opportunities for all ages
  14. Upgrade field lighting to LED fixtures to reduce maintenance needs, energy use, and light pollution
  15. Consider adding a futsal court to provide a location for unscheduled play, prevent damage to the primary soccer field, and provide additional practice space

## Concept

The concept for City Park Expansion is presented in Figure 8.4. The proposed improvements build on the amenities already available at the park with a focus on athletics. Starting at the western edge of the park, improvements are indicated at the football field. The concept indicates improvements to improve drainage, ultimately expanding the overall availability of the field for use.

Several park features – notably the football field and playground – need accessibility improvements for users, spectators, and coaches. Additional sidewalks are indicated throughout the park. The concept indicates improvements at the restroom/concessions building to address vandalism and to improve the appearance and functionality of the area. The figure also indicates LED upgrades to both the field and trail lighting within the park. Minor expansion of the skatepark is also indicated.

Moving toward the center of the park, the concept shows upgrading the soccer field to artificial turf due to the heavy amount of use. This upgrade will greatly improve the use of the field as the turf conditions currently quickly deteriorate throughout the season. This improvement will immediately improve field conditions and will continue to be valuable to the community even if a future sports complex is developed elsewhere. When developed, the field should be lined for multiple sports.

The new features at the park are all located at the eastern side of the property. These features will address unmet needs and frequent requests of the community but can only be developed if the no build clause on this portion of the property is removed or modified through agreement with Berea College. The futsal courts will provide a new amenity for the community while also relieving pressure on the existing fields by providing a location for open use. A picnic shelter will provide additional gathering space for the community and users of these facilities.

Pickleball courts are indicated just to the south of the futsal courts to provide a dedicated location for this fast-growing sport. Bocce courts and expanded parking are shown in the southwest corner of the property. Both the pickleball and bocce courts have room to expand in the future if needed. The location of these courts was selected to be easily accessible from the Senior Center (and Folk Center) as these activities are popular with active adults. Finally, a covered area is indicated at the Senior Center as this amenity was the top request during the stakeholder group of users.

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## 8.4 SPECIAL USE PARKS

### 8.4.1 Intergenerational Center

#### Background

The Intergenerational Center is an indoor facility that houses the community's Senior Center and is the home of Berea Head Start. Seniors requested the addition of outdoor gathering space during the stakeholder group meeting at the facility.

#### Improvement Recommendations

1. Create a covered outdoor seating area for senior activities

### 8.4.2 Russel Acton Folk Center

#### Background

The Russel Acton Folk Center was built and owned by a group of volunteers in the mid-1980s. Its intent was to preserve the art of Folk Dancing in Appalachia. The facility, now owned by the City of Berea, is available for rental and also holds contra dances in addition to numerous dance related workshops and activities.

#### Improvement Recommendations

1. Add a projector or large TV screen to support classes/events

## 8.5 NEW PARK DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

### 8.5.1 Standard Features

The text below outlines the features that should be included in the development of new parks in Berea. The development of any new park should be preceded by the preparation of a detailed master plan for the property that utilizes community input. Public input indicated need for parks throughout the city, and the service area mapping shows lower levels of service in several areas. Fortunately, some additional parks can be added in Berea without the acquisition of additional land.

### 8.5.2 New Neighborhood Parks

Optimally, neighborhood parks should be minimum of 8 to 10 acres in size. With the recommendation to develop up to four new neighborhood or mini parks over the next 10 years, Berea should have a standard list of elements to include in each park. These standards should function as a starting point for engagement with the community but ensure that all new parks provide a variety of amenities for all users. Partners that develop neighborhood parks should be encouraged to follow these standards.

#### Typical Neighborhood Park Elements include:

1. Playground
2. ½ basketball court (may be swapped for another feature if desired by the community)
3. Gathering area/picnic shelter
4. Walking trail
5. Good circulation – walkways/ADA access
6. Restrooms (small) if usage rates support
7. Landscaping/trees for shade
8. Open grass area/athletic field – practice or pick-up use (if adequate space exists)

9. Unique neighborhood determined feature(s) based on local interest – could be related to sports, environment, arts, etc.
10. Parking (if space allows)

**Typical Mini Park Elements include:**

1. Playground
2. ½ basketball court (may be swapped for another feature if desired by the community)
3. Gathering area w/ shade
4. Good circulation – walkways/ADA access
5. Landscaping/trees for shade
6. Open grass area (if adequate space exists)

## 8.6 PARK IMPROVEMENT LIST

The improvements by park are presented in Table 8.1. These improvements should be reevaluated prior to new development and after any follow-up planning studies. All costs in Table 8.1 are estimated in 2022 dollars and will need to be evaluated for potential escalation at the time of development. The master planning process completed before large-scale improvements should include a detail estimate of the costs for the improvements at each park.

Grant opportunities exist and should be explored for many of these improvements, particularly trail system development, helping to reduce the required contributions by the City of Berea. Additionally, partnerships, including for fundraising efforts, should be considered as part of any improvement, particularly those with substantial capital costs.

**Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects**

Park Name		Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>						
<b>Memorial Park</b>						
1	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Short	\$14,000	\$0	\$0	\$14,000
2	Security Cameras (2)	Short	\$37,000	\$0	\$0	\$37,000
3	Restroom Replacement	Short	\$216,000	\$0	\$0	\$216,000
4	Shelter Replacement	Medium	\$0	\$92,000	\$0	\$92,000
5	Fencing at Playground	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
6	Landscaping	Medium	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
7	Playground Replacement/Expansion w/ Improved ADA	Medium	\$0	\$185,000	\$0	\$185,000
8	Food Truck Pad and Infrastructure	Long	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
9	Temporary Ice Rink (Partnership)	Long	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership
<b>Project Total</b>			<b>\$267,000</b>	<b>\$301,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$578,000</b>
<b>Tillie Memorial Dog Park</b>						
1	Upgrade to Neighborhood Park	Medium	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	Park Master Plan	Short	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
3	Lighting - Site/Security	Short	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
4	Shade, Seating, and Accessible Entry at Dog Park	Short	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
5	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Short/Medium	\$17,000	\$17,000	\$0	\$34,000

**Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects (Continued)**

Park Name		Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
6	Basketball Half Court	Medium	\$0	\$43,000	\$0	\$43,000
7	Bike Repair Station	Medium	\$0	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000
8	Drinking Fountain w/ Dog Bowl Filler at Dog Park	Medium	\$0	\$7,000	\$0	\$7,000
9	Fitness Stations/Area	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000
10	Picnic Shelter	Medium	\$0	\$99,000	\$0	\$99,000
11	Playground/Nature Play Area	Medium	\$0	\$185,000	\$0	\$185,000
12	Security Cameras (2)	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000
13	Signage - Entrance (Secondary)	Medium	\$0	\$15,000	\$0	\$15,000
14	Trees and Landscaping	Medium	\$0	\$18,000	\$0	\$18,000
15	Dog Park Agility Features	Long	\$0	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
16	Neighborhood Determined Feature	Long	\$0	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
<b>Project Total</b>			<b>\$92,000</b>	<b>\$485,000</b>	<b>\$124,000</b>	<b>\$701,000</b>
<b>NEW - Mary Street Property/Birchwood Park (See Concept)</b>						
1	Park Master Plan	Medium	\$0	\$40,000	\$0	\$40,000
2	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Long	\$0	\$0	\$27,000	\$27,000
3	Basketball Half Court	Long	\$0	\$0	\$43,000	\$43,000
4	Bottle Filler/Drinking Fountain	Long	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000
5	Lighting - Site/Security	Long	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000
6	Neighborhood Determined Feature	Long	\$0	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
7	Open Field Area	Long	\$0	\$0	\$12,000	\$12,000
8	Parking Lot - Small	Long	\$0	\$0	\$22,000	\$22,000
9	Picnic Shelter	Long	\$0	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
10	Playground	Long	\$0	\$0	\$185,000	\$185,000
11	Signage - Entrance (Primary)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$6,000	\$6,000
12	Signage - Entrance (Secondary)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000
13	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$18,000	\$18,000
14	Trail - Paved Perimeter - 8' Wide (0.25-Mile Loop), Connect to Neighborhood Access Points	Long	\$0	\$0	\$112,000	\$112,000
15	Trees and Landscaping	Long	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000
<b>Project Total</b>			<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$619,000</b>	<b>\$659,000</b>
<b>NEW - Walnut Creek Drive Property (See Concept)</b>						
1	Park Master Plan	Short	\$40,000	\$0	\$40,000	\$80,000
2	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Medium	\$0	\$27,000	\$0	\$27,000
3	Bottle Filler/Drinking Fountain	Medium	\$0	\$7,000	\$0	\$7,000
4	Fishing Pier	Medium	\$0	\$49,000	\$0	\$49,000
5	Lighting - Site/Security	Medium	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000
6	Picnic Shelter	Medium	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$62,000

Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects (Continued)

Park Name		Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
7	Play Pods	Medium	\$0	\$154,000	\$0	\$154,000
8	Signage - Entrance (Primary)	Medium	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
9	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium	\$0	\$18,000	\$0	\$18,000
10	Trail - Paved Perimeter - 8' Wide (0.5-Mile Loop), Connect to Neighborhood Access Points	Medium	\$0	\$120,000	\$0	\$120,000
11	Trees and Landscaping	Medium	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000
12	Dog Park - Small	Long	\$0	\$0	\$92,000	\$92,000
13	Neighborhood Determined Feature	Long	\$0	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
<b>Project Total</b>			<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$492,000</b>	<b>\$194,000</b>	<b>\$726,000</b>
<b>NEW - Northeast Park 1 (Along Bypass)</b>						
1	Park Master Plan	Medium	\$0	\$0	\$40,000	\$40,000
2	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Long	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000
3	Basketball Half Court	Long	\$0	\$0	\$43,000	\$43,000
4	Bottle Filler/Drinking Fountain	Long	\$0	\$0	\$7,000	\$7,000
5	Lighting - Site/Security	Long	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000
6	Neighborhood Determined Feature	Long	\$0	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
7	Open Field Area	Long	\$0	\$0	\$6,000	\$6,000
8	Parking Lot	Long	\$0	\$0	\$22,000	\$22,000
9	Picnic Shelter	Long	\$0	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
10	Playground	Long	\$0	\$0	\$185,000	\$185,000
11	Signage - Entrance (Primary)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000
12	Signage - Entrance (Secondary)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
13	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$18,000	\$18,000
14	Trail - Paved Perimeter - 8' Wide (0.25-Mile Loop), Connect to Neighborhood Access Points	Long	\$0	\$0	\$141,000	\$141,000
15	Trees and Landscaping	Long	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000
<b>Project Total</b>			<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$676,000</b>	<b>\$676,000</b>
<b>NEW - Northeast Park 2 (Northeast Edge)</b>						
1	Park Master Plan	Medium	\$0	\$40,000	\$0	\$40,000
2	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Long	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000
3	Basketball Half Court	Long	\$0	\$0	\$43,000	\$43,000
4	Bottle Filler/Drinking Fountain	Long	\$0	\$0	\$7,000	\$7,000
5	Lighting - Site/Security	Long	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000
6	Neighborhood Determined Feature	Long	\$0	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000
7	Open Field Area	Long	\$0	\$0	\$6,000	\$6,000
8	Parking Lot	Long	\$0	\$0	\$22,000	\$22,000
9	Picnic Shelter	Long	\$0	\$0	\$62,000	\$62,000



**Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects (Continued)**

Park Name		Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
10	Playground	Long	\$0	\$0	\$185,000	\$185,000
11	Signage - Entrance (Primary)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000
12	Signage - Entrance (Secondary)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
13	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$18,000	\$18,000
14	Trail - Paved Perimeter - 8' Wide (0.25-Mile Loop), Connect to Neighborhood Access Points	Long	\$0	\$0	\$141,000	\$141,000
15	Trees and Landscaping	Long	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000
	<b>Project Total</b>		<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$636,000</b>	<b>\$676,000</b>
<b>Community Parks</b>						
<b>Berea City Park (See Concept)</b>						
1	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Short	\$31,000	\$0	\$0	\$31,000
2	Batting Cages (4)	Short	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$100,000
3	Playground - Update/Relocate Swings, Improve Surfacing	Short	\$123,000	\$0	\$0	\$123,000
4	Volleyball Edging Repair & Spectator Seating	Short	\$12,000	\$0	\$0	\$12,000
5	Aquatic Center Improvements	Medium	\$0	\$2,218,000	\$0	\$2,218,000
6	Basketball Court Resurfacing/Goal Replacement	Medium	\$0	\$31,000	\$0	\$31,000
7	Bleachers - Upgrade w/ Shade & Rear Fence	Medium	\$0	\$517,000	\$0	\$517,000
8	Bottle Filler/Drinking Fountain (Replacement)	Medium	\$0	\$15,000	\$0	\$15,000
9	Diamond Fields #6 - New (Opposite Field #5)	Medium	\$0	\$246,000	\$0	\$246,000
10	Field Improvements - Backstop/Fencing/Dugouts (Field #5)	Medium	\$0	\$246,000	\$0	\$246,000
11	Fields - T-ball (4) in Field #2 or #3 Outfield	Medium	\$0	\$246,000	\$0	\$246,000
12	Rectangular Field (Field #5 Outfield) w/ Lights (Whole Area) in Outfields	Medium	\$0	\$493,000	\$0	\$493,000
13	Restroom Replacement - Near HS Football Field	Medium	\$0	\$370,000	\$0	\$370,000
14	Seating along Trail - Swinging Benches	Medium	\$0	\$59,000	\$0	\$59,000
15	Shelter Improvements (Paint)	Medium	\$0	\$6,000	\$0	\$6,000
16	Field Improvements - Extend HS Baseball Fence to 325' (or Fence Height Equivalent)	Long	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership
17	Field Lighting - Upgrade to LED Fixtures (Fields #1-#4)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$739,000	\$739,000
	<b>Project Total</b>		<b>\$266,000</b>	<b>\$4,447,000</b>	<b>\$739,000</b>	<b>\$5,452,000</b>
<b>Berea City Park Expansion (See Concept)</b>						
1	Field improvements - Regrade/Reseed Football Field, Improve Drainage	Short	\$123,000	\$0	\$0	\$123,000
2	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Short	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000	\$74,000
3	Restroom/Concessions Building Improvements	Short	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000	\$74,000
4	Signage - Entrance (Primary)	Short	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
5	Storage Building (Near Football Field)	Short	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership
6	Bike Repair Station	Medium	\$0	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000

Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects (Continued)

Park Name		Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
7	Bleachers - Upgrade w/ Shade & Rear Fence	Medium	\$0	\$259,000	\$0	\$259,000
8	Fitness Stations/Area	Medium	\$0	\$99,000	\$0	\$99,000
9	Parking Expansion	Medium	\$0	\$86,000	\$0	\$86,000
10	Pickleball Courts	Medium	\$0	\$123,000	\$0	\$123,000
11	Picnic Shelter	Medium	\$0	\$99,000	\$0	\$99,000
12	Trail Lighting Replacement (Solar)	Medium	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000
13	Artificial Turf at Soccer Field	Long	\$0	\$0	\$1,232,000	\$1,232,000
14	Bocce/Shuffleboard	Long	\$0	\$0	\$37,000	\$37,000
15	Field Lighting - Upgrade to LED Fixtures	Long	\$0	\$0	\$370,000	\$370,000
16	Futsal Court	Long	\$0	\$0	\$185,000	\$185,000
<b>Project Total</b>			<b>\$202,000</b>	<b>\$693,000</b>	<b>\$1,898,000</b>	<b>\$2,793,000</b>
<b>Special Use Parks</b>						
<b>Intergenerational Center</b>						
1	Covered Outdoor Seating Area	Short	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000
<b>Project Total</b>			<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>Russel Acton Folk Center</b>						
1	Projector or Large TV Screen for Classes/Events	Short	\$0	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000
<b>Project Total</b>			<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>
<b>Systemwide</b>						
1	ADA Accessibility Assessment	Short	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
2	Trail Plan Update	Short	\$30,000	\$0	\$0	\$30,000
3	Wayfinding Plan & Signage for All Parks	Short	\$75,000	\$0	\$0	\$75,000
4	Site Furnishing Upgrades at all Existing Parks (Trash & Recycling Receptacles/Bike Racks/Pet Waste Stations)	Short/Medium	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	\$100,000
5	Bike Rental Program (Partnership)	Medium	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership
6	Community Gardens (Location TBD)	Medium		\$31,000	\$0	\$31,000
7	Disc Golf Course (Location TBD - Partnership)	Medium	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership
8	Indoor Recreation Center Feasibility Study & Needs Assessment	Medium	\$0	\$37,000	\$0	\$37,000
9	Maintenance Storage	Medium	\$0	\$308,000	\$0	\$308,000
10	Silver Creek Bike Park - Expand Trails & Add Beginner Pump Track (Partnership w/ Tourism)	Medium	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership
11	Soccer/Multipurpose Field Complex (Site TBD, Partner w/ MUSA & Others)	Medium	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
12	Wi-Fi Hotspots	Medium	\$0	\$123,000	\$0	\$123,000
13	Electric Car Charging Stations (Partner w/ Vendor)	Long	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership
14	Splash Pad (Location TBD)	Long	\$0	\$0	\$493,000	\$493,000
<b>Systemwide Total</b>			<b>\$180,000</b>	<b>\$549,000</b>	<b>\$493,000</b>	<b>\$1,222,000</b>
<b>TOTAL PARKS</b>			<b>\$1,047,000</b>	<b>\$7,074,000</b>	<b>\$5,389,000</b>	<b>\$13,510,000</b>

\*Values include 10% contingency and 12% for design, engineering, bidding, construction administration, etc. (except non-construction items)



## ACTION PLAN

### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

The Action Plan table on the following pages (Table 9.1) provides a detailed list of recommendations for the *2022 Berea Parks and Recreation Master Plan*. These strategies represent specific actions for parks and recreation facilities in City of Berea to take to implement this plan.

### 9.2 ACTION PLAN STRATEGIES

These strategies are listed under the four goals and 13 objectives from the Strategic Plan (Chapter 6). The legend at the top of the table identifies the abbreviations used throughout the table. Checkmarks indicate the timeframe for the completion of each strategy within the time periods of 0-2 years, 3-5 years, or 6-10 years. Some strategies are indicated as "Ongoing" as they apply to all timeframes or represent more general actions that should always be considered. The final column identifies strategies related to or directly from the 2020 Berea Comprehensive Plan. Abbreviations in this column are based on the Implementation Strategies and Elements used in the plan. For example, LUA3 indicates the strategy is based on the Land Use Element, goal A, objective 3. A total count of strategies by timeframe is located at the end of the table in the corresponding columns.

The other columns provide information regarding the implementation of each strategy. "Category" describes the type of action within the following four options: capital (capital improvements); policy (guidelines for the Parks and Recreation department, possibly including legislation); planning (long-term parks outlook, which includes conduction of studies); or operations. The column for "Agency" indicates who is expected to implement the strategy, usually the City of Berea Parks and Recreation Department, another city department, or partners. "Funding Source" indicates how the strategy should be funded or the type of funds used (operating or capital funds).

### 9.3 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITY RATING

The steering committee reviewed potential solutions and participated in an exercise to help verify capital improvement priorities for the Action Plan. Committee members were asked to rate each of the potential improvement projects through the engagement software Mentimeter on a scale of 0-5 with the Highest Priority (5) and Not Needed (0).

The priority ranking was used to help rank the importance of improvements but not necessarily the order in

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which they should be developed. Figure 9.1, located after the Action Plan, identifies the capital improvement rating based on the average of the ranking for each item. These rankings were used as part of the process for recommending priorities along with public input and analyses completed throughout this master planning process.

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Table 9.1: Action Plan

ACTION PLAN - 2022 Berea Parks and Recreation Master Plan										
Legend of Abbreviations/Organizations										
Parks = Berea Parks and Recreation Department		OP = Park Operating Budget								
City = City Council, Other City Departments		CIP = Capital Improvement Budget								
Partners = Other Organizations (County/state park departments, Berea Tourism, private agencies, schools, state/federal grants, etc.) Revenue = Items that Generate Additional Revenue										
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Category	Agency	Funding Source	2020 Comp Plan	Timeframe (Years)			Ongoing	Capital/ Operations	Parks/City/ Partners
					0-2	3-5	6-10			
<b>Goal 1: A Healthy Community</b>										
Deliver opportunities for wellness, creativity, and fun to improve physical and mental health and enrich the lives of our community										
<b>Objective 1.1 – Athletics: Ensure all in the community have access sports programs and facilities</b>										
<b>Strategy 1.1.1:</b>	Expand capacity at existing fields in Berea by improving drainage; adding upgraded amenities to existing fields; adding lighting, and increasing ADA accessibility						✓	✓	Capital/ Operations	Parks/City/ Partners
<b>Strategy 1.1.2:</b>	Ensure ADA accessibility to all athletic fields and all spectator areas, including connecting pathways and provide shaded seating at spectator areas						✓	✓	Capital	Parks
<b>Strategy 1.1.3:</b>	Consider converting the outer portion of the outfield at Field #2 at City Park to t-ball fields								Capital	Parks/ Partners
<b>Strategy 1.1.4:</b>	Upgrade baseball/softball diamond Field #5 at City Park with new backstops, fencing, dugouts, and spectator areas						✓	✓	Capital	Parks
<b>Strategy 1.1.5:</b>	Add a baseball/softball diamond (Field #6) at the opposite side of the open field (from Field #5); configure the outfield space of these fields to form a full-sized multipurpose rectangular field						✓	✓	Capital	Parks/ Partners
<b>Strategy 1.1.6:</b>	Add batting cages (1 per field) at the diamond fields in City Park						✓	✓	Capital	Parks/ Partners
<b>Strategy 1.1.7:</b>	Conduct recreation center feasibility study to determine the location, size, and amenities offered, including an analysis of potential capital funding, operating costs, attendance, and staffing with an emphasis on potential						✓	✓	Capital	Parks/ Partners
<b>Strategy 1.1.8:</b>	Consider adding pickleball lining to existing and future game courts, including basketball, to provide more multistuse facilities and to meet growing demand						✓	✓	Capital	Parks/ Partners
<b>Strategy 1.1.9:</b>	Consider developing dedicated pickleball courts and bocce courts at City Park Expansion, due to its proximity to the intergenerational Center						✓	✓	Capital	Parks
<b>Strategy 1.1.10:</b>	Consider adding an artificial turf at City Park Expansion to relieve stress on the existing fields; allow for additional use, and reduce rainouts							✓	Capital	Parks/ Partners
<b>Strategy 1.1.11:</b>	Develop a new field complex – focusing on multipurpose fields for soccer, football, lacrosse, and more – to address the ever-increasing demand for these fields and to potentially attract tournaments						✓	✓	Capital	Parks/ Partners
<b>Strategy 1.1.12:</b>	Update field lighting to LED fixtures to reduce frequency of bulb replacement and energy use and ensure lighting is calibrated to reduce light pollution							✓	Capital	Parks
<b>Strategy 1.1.13:</b>	Consider adding a futsal court to existing and future parks to provide additional places for residents to play soccer							✓	Capital	Parks
<b>Strategy 1.1.14:</b>	Improve the existing volleyball courts at City Park with new edging and accessible spectator seating						✓	✓	Capital	Parks
<b>Strategy 1.1.15:</b>	Consider adding basketball courts in areas of the city where none are available when new parks are developed						✓	✓	Capital	Parks
<b>Objective 1.2 – Arts &amp; Culture: Capitalize on Berea's unique heritage to enrich community vibrancy</b>										
<b>Strategy 1.2.1:</b>	Create regular communication between local organizations and the city with the goal to coordinate local historic educational efforts							Ongoing	Operations	Parks/City/ Partners
<b>Strategy 1.2.2:</b>	Work with local organizations to promote and market local cultural experiences and opportunities							Ongoing	Operations	Parks/City/ Partners
<b>Strategy 1.2.3:</b>	Promote an active and vibrant performing arts and entertainment program							Ongoing	Operations	Parks/City/ Partners

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source	2020 Comp Plan
	0-2	3-5	6-10				
<b>Strategy 1.2.4:</b> Encourage the cross-promotion of the Kentucky Artisan Center and other artists/tourism organizations		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/City/Partners	OP	EDB3
<b>Strategy 1.2.5:</b> Seek opportunities to install public art in parks and develop cultural programming in collaboration with creative, arts-advocacy entities in Berea		Ongoing		Operations/Capital	Parks/City/Partners	OP	
<b>Objective 1.3 – Wellness: Encourage exploration &amp; growth through diverse physical activities and learning opportunities</b>							
<b>Strategy 1.3.1:</b> Replace dated playgrounds, including separate age 2-5 equipment, or add where unavailable	✓	✓		Capital/Planning	Parks/Partners	CIP/Partners	
<b>Strategy 1.3.2:</b> Incorporate nature play elements as part of playground development and replacement, especially in more passive park areas		Ongoing		Capital/Planning	Parks	CIP	
<b>Strategy 1.3.3:</b> Consider themed playground equipment, such as climbing rocks, sensory features, etc., potentially providing for marketing and resident/visitor photo opportunities		Ongoing		Capital/Planning	Parks/Partners	CIP	
<b>Strategy 1.3.4:</b> Brand and strategically market active senior programs together under a unique category (e.g., "Berea Active Adults") – many can be offered outdoors		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	
<b>Strategy 1.3.5:</b> Evaluate the demand for pickleball programs, initially using existing facilities (e.g., basketball courts, parking lots, Folk Center, and/or Senior Center)	✓			Operations	Parks	OP	
<b>Strategy 1.3.6:</b> Add outdoor fitness equipment at select parks to expand opportunities for improved community health		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	
<b>Strategy 1.3.7:</b> Evaluate the demand for community gardens and find a location for the plots if demand exists		Ongoing		Capital/Planning	Parks	CIP/Partners	
<b>Goal 2: A Connected Community</b>							
<b>Enhance links between people, parks, and places</b>							
<b>Objective 2.1 – Trails &amp; Wayfinding: Provide trails that connect users to destinations and activities</b>							
<b>Strategy 2.1.1:</b> Consider signing on to the 10-Minute Walk Mission by the TPL and NRPA to show the city's commitment to connectivity and access to parks	✓			Policy	City	N/A	
<b>Strategy 2.1.2:</b> Include trail links between parks and adjacent neighborhoods wherever possible		Ongoing		Capital/Planning	Parks/City/Partners	CIP	
<b>Strategy 2.1.3:</b> Partner with other agencies to organize events and community-engaged activities around trails and bike paths		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/City	OP	
<b>Strategy 2.1.4:</b> Update Berea's Master Trails Plan to include new park linkages along with standards for design, signage, and maintenance	✓			Planning	Parks/City	CIP	
<b>Strategy 2.1.5:</b> Adopt a master transportation plan that contains guidelines and standards to help implement interconnectivity of roadways, trails, sidewalks, bikeways, and park-and-ride facilities	✓			Planning	City	CIP	TRA
<b>Strategy 2.1.6:</b> Incorporate the Phase II Berea Bypass trail and Boone Trace Master Plan into trail planning and interpretive signage plans	✓			Capital/Planning	Parks/City/Partners	CIP	
<b>Strategy 2.1.7:</b> Consider a shared-bike program		✓		Capital/Planning	City/Partners	CIP/Partners	TRA
<b>Objective 2.2 – Gathering: Encourage community interaction through appealing and accessible offerings</b>							
<b>Strategy 2.2.1:</b> Create a citizen/city committee to create, support, and coordinate festivals and civic events	✓			Operations	Parks/City/Partners	OP/Partners	HCRB1
<b>Strategy 2.2.2:</b> Replace the large shelter/restroom building at Memorial Park to allow for continual programs and rentals	✓	✓		Capital	Parks/City	CIP/Revenue	
<b>Strategy 2.2.3:</b> Add and upgrade picnic shelters at parks to increase overall access to these facilities, as well as make them more inviting, and to facilitate opportunities for outdoor community gatherings		✓	✓	Capital	Parks	CIP/Revenue	
<b>Strategy 2.2.4:</b> Evaluate the potential to partner with Berea College to restore the Indian Fort Theater as a venue for large outdoor events	✓			Capital/Planning	Parks/Partners	CIP/Partners	
<b>Strategy 2.2.5:</b> Seek opportunities to add Esports programs to attract the hard-to-reach teenage population	✓			Operations/Capital	Parks/Partners	OP/CIP	

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source	2020 Comp Plan
	0-2	3-5	6-10				
<b>Strategy 2.2.6:</b> Consider utilizing picnic shelters as venues for outdoor education programs and events	✓			Operations	Parks/Partners	OP/Revenue	
<b>Objective 2.3 – Natural Environment: Connect the community to nature through access, education, and sustainable practices</b>							
<b>Strategy 2.3.1:</b> Encourage development of recreational activities and facilities, such as eco- and adventure tourism, that capitalize on Berea's distinctive characteristics and natural setting	✓			Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP/Partners	EDB1
<b>Strategy 2.3.2:</b> Create promotional items or an online guide for residents and businesses that would support reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting; promote through parks and programs	✓			Operations	Parks/City	OP	EA
<b>Strategy 2.3.3:</b> Develop interpretive and informational signage throughout the park system (will require signage plans) to help visitors understand the natural features and history of Berea parks while improving awareness of sensitive ecosystems and rare species		Ongoing		Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP/Partners	
<b>Strategy 2.3.4:</b> Explore partnerships with nearby environmental and nature organizations (e.g., Berea College Forestry Outreach Center, Audubon Society of Kentucky, etc.) to create and promote additional nature-based group outings, participatory activities, and community events	✓			Operations	Parks/Partners	CIP/Partners	
<b>Strategy 2.3.5:</b> Implement conservation policies and sustainable practice guidelines for future development and management of park properties	✓			Operations/Policy	Parks	OP	
<b>Strategy 2.3.6:</b> Acquire land contiguous to existing parks, if it becomes available, to allow for additional features and increase the total amount of parkland available to residents with minimal impact to system maintenance and operations		Ongoing		Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP/Partners	
<b>Strategy 2.3.7:</b> Elevate parks by setting examples for Best Management Practices (BMP) like stormwater detention, recycling, etc.		Ongoing		Operations/Policy	Parks/City	OP	
<b>Goal 3: A Modern Community</b>							
<b>Provide a wide range of modern features, updated infrastructure, and proactive maintenance to ensure everyone has opportunities for enjoyment</b>							
<b>Objective 3.1 – Places: Responsibly provide parks to engage and connect the community</b>							
<b>Strategy 3.1.1:</b> Utilize the park development standards in this plan (Chapter 8) as a starting point for engagement with the community to ensure that all new parks provide a variety of amenities for all uses		Ongoing		Capital/Policy	Parks/Partners	CIP/Partners	
<b>Strategy 3.1.2:</b> Continually evaluate opportunities to develop new parks in underserved areas, especially at land already owned by the city		Ongoing		Capital/Planning	Parks	OP	
<b>Strategy 3.1.3:</b> Utilize existing parkland to meet unmet facility needs and to improve access to park features		Ongoing		Capital/Operations	Parks	CIP	
<b>Strategy 3.1.4:</b> Develop the Walnut Creek Drive property as a Neighborhood Park and officially bring it into the Parks and Recreation system to meet a variety of needs and improve access to parks		✓		Capital/Planning	Parks/Partners	CIP	
<b>Strategy 3.1.5:</b> Develop the Mary Street Property (Birchwood Park) property as a Neighborhood Park to meet the needs of the adjoining neighborhood			✓	Capital/Planning	Parks/Partners	CIP	
<b>Strategy 3.1.6:</b> Budget for property acquisition and construction of an indoor recreation center following the preparation of a feasibility study			✓	Capital/Planning	Parks/Partners	CIP/OP/Partners	CFA9
<b>Strategy 3.1.7:</b> Consider developing a second splash pad in a future Berea park to expand access to aquatic facilities in the city			✓	Capital/Planning	Parks	CIP/OP	
<b>Objective 3.2 – Amenities: Provide accessible facilities, structures, and support features</b>							
<b>Strategy 3.2.1:</b> Use this Master Plan and the list of capital improvements (Table 8.1 of Chapter 8) as a guide for park development over the next 10 years		Ongoing		Capital/Policy	Parks/City/Partners	CIP	
<b>Strategy 3.2.2:</b> Pursue and implement an ADA Accessibility Audit of all facilities, programs, and communications	✓			Capital/Planning	Parks	CIP	
<b>Strategy 3.2.3:</b> Add or improve restrooms throughout the parks	✓	✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	
<b>Strategy 3.2.4:</b> Pursue grants or other funding opportunities that help communities facilitate the implementation of internet infrastructure		Ongoing		Capital	Parks/City	OP/Revenue	EDA1
<b>Strategy 3.2.5:</b> Add support features throughout the park system such as seating/benches, shade structures, trash/recycling receptacles, drinking fountains, and trees & landscaping		Ongoing		Capital	Parks	CIP	

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source	2020 Comp Plan
	0-2	3-5	6-10				
<b>Strategy 3.2.6:</b> Include bottle fillers at all new drinking fountains and whenever existing features are replaced		Ongoing		Capital	Parks	CIP	
<b>Strategy 3.2.7:</b> Add and upgrade signage - entrance, wayfinding, interpretive, and informative - throughout the park system		Ongoing		Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP/Partners	
<b>Strategy 3.2.8:</b> Replace trail lighting at the City Park Trail with solar LED lighting as many of the fixtures are no longer functional	✓			Capital	Parks/City	CIP	
<b>Strategy 3.2.9:</b> Add Wi-Fi access to parks; promote park hotspots to ensure awareness	✓			Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP/Partners	
<b>Strategy 3.2.10:</b> Revise regulations to encourage and incentivize shared parking facilities and permeable surfaces; implement and promote in parks	✓			Policy/Capital	Parks/City	OP/CIP	
<b>Strategy 3.2.11:</b> Consider developing electric vehicle charging stations on city-owned property	✓			Policy/Capital	Parks/City/Partners	Partners	
<b>Strategy 3.2.12:</b> Consider additional dog parks to meet the growing needs of Berea households		Ongoing		Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP/Partners	
<b>Objective 3.3 - Proactive Maintenance: Enhance safety, accessibility, quality, and cost effectiveness by continuously examining maintenance standards and best practices</b>							
<b>Strategy 3.3.1:</b> Prepare an Operations Plan which defines Maintenance Standards (Section 7.7.4)	✓			Operations	Parks	OP	
<b>Strategy 3.3.2:</b> Consider park facilities and improvements that reduce maintenance needs		Ongoing		Operations/Policy	Parks	OP	
<b>Strategy 3.3.3:</b> Increase maintenance budget in order to sustain current levels as new facilities and programs are developed		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/City	OP	
<b>Strategy 3.3.4:</b> Add security cameras and lighting throughout parks in locations that have perceived security concerns		Ongoing		Capital	Parks	CIP	
<b>Strategy 3.3.5:</b> Require a maintenance plan that identifies ongoing funding needs for partnership projects		Ongoing		Policy	Parks/Partners	N/A	
<b>Goal 4: A Driven Community</b>							
<b>Employ strong leadership to direct an engaged community using efficient management, exceptional customer service, sustainable operations, and productive partnerships</b>							
<b>Objective 4.1 - Operations: Encourage an engaged and well-trained workforce of valued staff that inspire pride in the community</b>							
<b>Strategy 4.1.1:</b> Fill the recreation position that became vacant during the Covid-19 pandemic	✓			Operations	Parks/City	OP	
<b>Strategy 4.1.2:</b> Ensure every action and decision always connects back to the department's mission		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	
<b>Strategy 4.1.3:</b> Consider maintenance and staffing needs when adding parkland to the system		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	
<b>Strategy 4.1.4:</b> Continue to staff an ADA coordinator to assist with accessibility of public and private spaces		Ongoing		Operations	City	OP	HOA1
<b>Strategy 4.1.5:</b> Create and implement professional and career development strategies for management and supervisory staff		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	
<b>Strategy 4.1.6:</b> Encourage continued staff training for leadership and continued growth within respective fields		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	
<b>Strategy 4.1.7:</b> Incentivize management level staff to attend professional development programs offered by state, regional, and national training organizations		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	
<b>Strategy 4.1.8:</b> Incentivize and support staff members to pursue Certified Park & Recreation Professional (CPRP), Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) and Aquatic Facility Operator (AFO) certifications		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	
<b>Strategy 4.1.9:</b> Consider bringing the Silver Creek Bike Park into the park system for more efficient management and programming but only if additional staff are provided to manage the property	✓			Operations	Parks/City/Partners	OP	



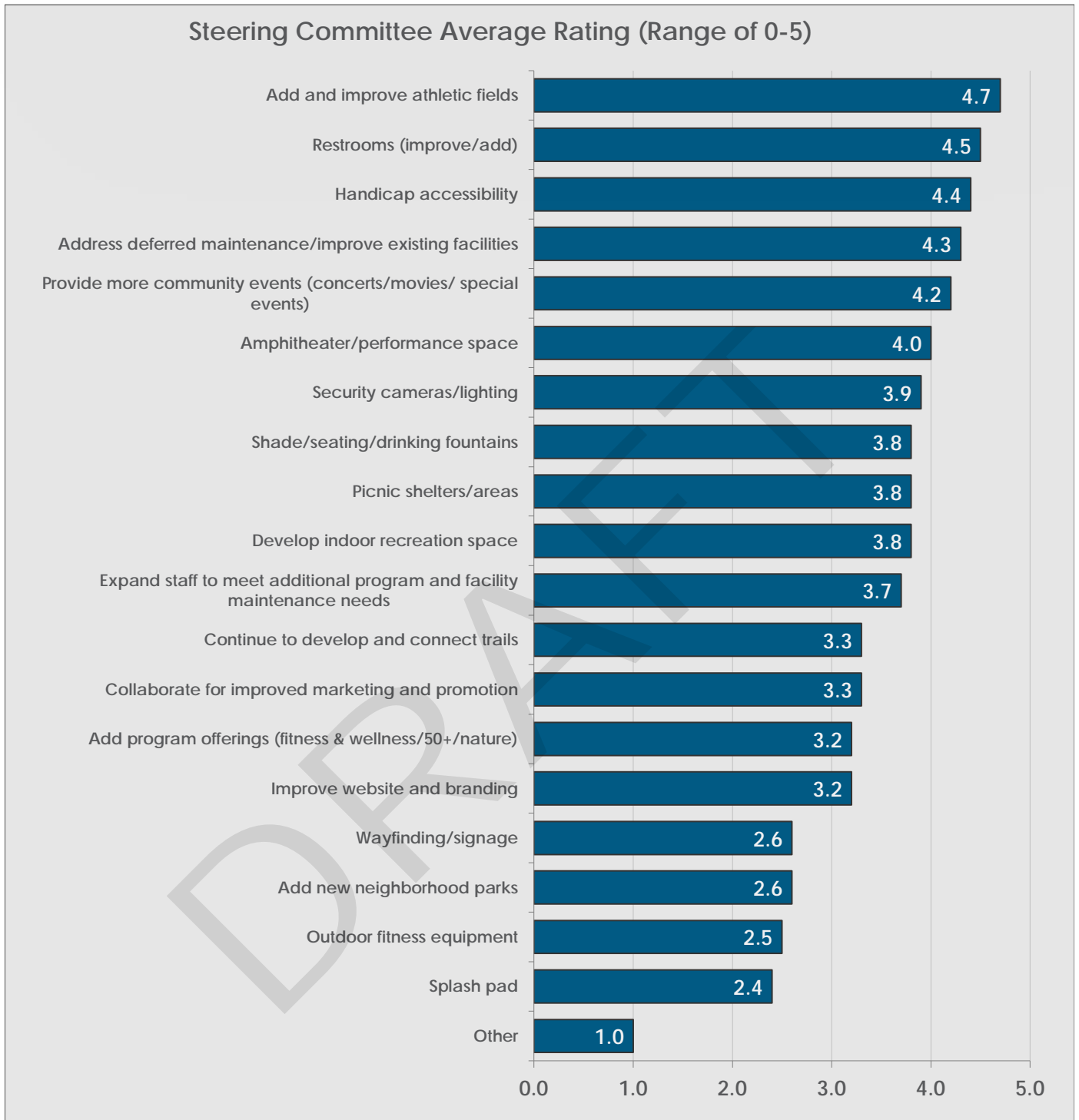
Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source	2020 Comp Plan
	0-2	3-5	6-10				
<b>Strategy 4.1.10:</b> Release a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for an event coordinator to develop and produce a consistent line-up of branded Berea community events	✓	✓		Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue	
<b>Strategy 4.1.11:</b> Utilize the Core Program Guidelines in Appendix C as a source for potential program offerings		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	N/A	
<b>Strategy 4.1.12:</b> Identify and allocate funding for critical staff development opportunities (including conferences, training, memberships, etc.) with consideration to license and certification requirements		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	
<b>Strategy 4.1.13:</b> Formulate and post a policy for (or against) use of drone within the park system and implement signage to designate whether (and where) drones are permitted	✓			Capital/Planning	Parks/City	OP	
<b>Objective 4.2 – Partnerships: Continue to prioritize relationships and information sharing to effectively tackle collective goals across the community</b>							
<b>Strategy 4.2.1:</b> Develop working agreements with all partners (all outside groups using Berea facilities) including measurable outcomes: review every two years, at minimum		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	
<b>Strategy 4.2.2:</b> Treat all vendors, contractors, and partners in a professional, consistent manner with legal, signed contracts		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP/Partners	
<b>Strategy 4.2.3:</b> Explore new partnership opportunities to grow line-up of adult fitness and wellness programs, as well as nature programs		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP/Partners	
<b>Strategy 4.2.4:</b> Partner with local entities like Berea Fitness to develop more age 50+ programming and to ensure offerings align with local needs		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	CIP/Partners	
<b>Strategy 4.2.5:</b> Seek philanthropists in the community to support the agency's causes		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP/Revenue	
<b>Strategy 4.2.6:</b> Partner with Berea Tourism and (KYMBA) to expand the Silver Creek Bike Park	✓	✓		Capital	Parks/City Partners	CIP/Partners	
<b>Strategy 4.2.7:</b> Explore the development of disc golf course in Berea through a partnership with the local disc golf association and Berea College		✓		Operations/Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP/Partners	
<b>Strategy 4.2.8:</b> Coordinate with Berea Community Independent Schools to upgrade the high school baseball field to 325' outfield fences to accommodate regional games			✓	Operations	Parks/Partners	OP/CIP	
<b>Objective 4.3 – Engagement: Meaningfully connect with residents and partners to respond to needs, eliminate barriers, and promote opportunities</b>							
<b>Strategy 4.3.1:</b> Adopt this Master Plan at the level of City Commission; ensure commitment of legislative officials and city leaders	✓			Operations	Parks/City	N/A	
<b>Strategy 4.3.2:</b> Develop a Master Plan Implementation Committee (e.g., can include members of plan steering committee) to facilitate, market, and guide implementation of the Action Plan (Chapter 9)	✓			Operations	Parks	OP	
<b>Strategy 4.3.3:</b> Maintain continuous public engagement throughout the implementation of this plan and development of new or existing facilities through bulletin boards, monitored social media posts, and other methods		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	
<b>Strategy 4.3.4:</b> Add online registration to make it easier for users to sign-up for programs and to relieve some pressure on staff and improve participation and awareness	✓			Operations	Parks/ City	OP	
<b>Strategy 4.3.5:</b> Establish an annual assessment process to determine if Berea should stop offering a program, continue offering a program, or start a new program (Annual Implementation Plan for Business Operations)	✓			Operations	Parks	OP	
<b>Strategy 4.3.6:</b> Prepare Park Master Plans for existing parks and any future parks prior to development of facilities to ensure that added features are complementary, desired, and fully accessible		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	CIP	
<b>Strategy 4.3.7:</b> Continue open dialog with developers as neighborhoods are planned to ensure coordinated, strategic growth and the inclusion of needed park space and facilities		Ongoing		Capital/Planning	Parks/Partners	OP/Partners	
<b>Strategy 4.3.8:</b> Regularly evaluate program times to ensure programs are offered when community members can actually participate		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP	
<b>Strategy 4.3.9:</b> Regularly identify needs of underserved populations		Ongoing		Planning/Operations	Parks/City	OP	
<b>Strategy 4.3.10:</b> Know the demographics of the citizens served & track population trends		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/City	OP	
<b>Strategy 4.3.11:</b> Host quarterly or semiannual check-ins with all community partners; host roundtable discussion where all parties share program progress and emerging needs		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source	2020 Comp Plan	
	0-2	3-5	6-10					
<b>Strategy 4.3.12:</b> Consider promoting opportunities on additional social media platforms, including Instagram and Twitter to widen the reach of department efforts		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP		
<b>Strategy 4.3.13:</b> Collaborate with partners and other service-providers in the city to cross-promote and share information about services		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/Partners		
<b>Strategy 4.3.14:</b> Create a Scholarship Fund, potentially by requesting an optional additional \$2.00 charge during registration	✓			Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP		
<b>Strategy 4.3.15:</b> Develop an online program calendar, including the ability to sync directly to personal calendars	✓	✓		Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/Partners		
<b>Strategy 4.3.16:</b> Consider creating a photo contest to promote Berea and identify opportunities for investment	✓			Operations	Parks/City	OP	EDB	
<b>Strategy 4.3.17:</b> Explore development of a searchable mobile app to communicate site locations, services, and special events to the public		✓		Capital/ Planning	Parks/ Partners	CIP		
<b>Objective 4.4 – Finances: Explore creative operational and capital strategies to enhance efficiency and promote economic development</b>								
<b>Strategy 4.4.1:</b> Find dedicated funding sources for Parks and Recreation that can be depended upon annually		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue		
<b>Strategy 4.4.2:</b> Consider developing an endowment or fund for maintenance as new park facilities are developed	✓	✓		Capital/ Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/Revenue		
<b>Strategy 4.4.3:</b> Continue seeking grants and apply to foundations for project funding that enhances the park system; be sure this is consistent with the mission of Parks and Recreation while also considering associated costs to the city		Ongoing		Operations	Parks/City	OP/Revenue		
<b>Strategy 4.4.4:</b> Utilize a portion of the American Rescue Plan funds allocated to the City of Berea for parks and recreation improvements to begin to implement the recommendations of this plan	✓			Capital/ Operations	Parks/City	OP/CIP		
<b>Strategy 4.4.5:</b> Consider creating a Berea Parks Foundation to raise funds, recruit and organize volunteers, and promote the parks	✓			Capital/ Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP/Revenue		
<b>Strategy 4.4.6:</b> Continuously evaluate facility rates and program fees offered by the department based on current community conditions		Ongoing		Capital/ Operations	Parks	OP		
<b>Strategy 4.4.7:</b> Establish split revenue percentages with funding channeled directly to Parks and Recreation from events by partners	✓			Operations/ Policy	Parks/City	OP/Revenue		
<b>Strategy 4.4.8:</b> Increase cost recovery to (15%) or better as new features are developed, and new programs are added		Ongoing		Operations	Parks	OP		
<b>Strategy 4.4.9:</b> Establish and adjust fees for programs according to direct and indirect costs		Ongoing		Operations/ Policy	Parks	OP		
<b>Strategy 4.4.10:</b> Establish policies for accepting sponsorships and selling naming rights	✓			Operations	Parks/City	OP/Revenue		
<b>Strategy 4.4.11:</b> Institute an easy-to-understand Cost Recovery and Pricing Plan for everything that is offered	✓			Operations	Parks	OP		
<b>Strategy 4.4.12:</b> Consider establishing a fee to reserve picnic shelters for half days (with an hour between reservations) to allow additional use of existing facilities	✓			Operations	Parks/City	OP/Revenue		
<b>Strategy 4.4.13:</b> Identify potential revenue sources at community events, including sponsorships and entry fees	✓			Operations	Parks/City	OP/Revenue		
<b>Strategy 4.4.14:</b> Develop a program for recruiting and scheduling volunteer park ambassadors to promote wellbeing and provide assistance at parks	✓			Operations	Parks/ Partners	OP		
<b>Totals by Timeframe</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9</b>					
<b>Total Number of Strategies = 123</b>	<b>Ongoing = 55</b>							

Figure 9.1: Capital Improvement Priority Rating



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