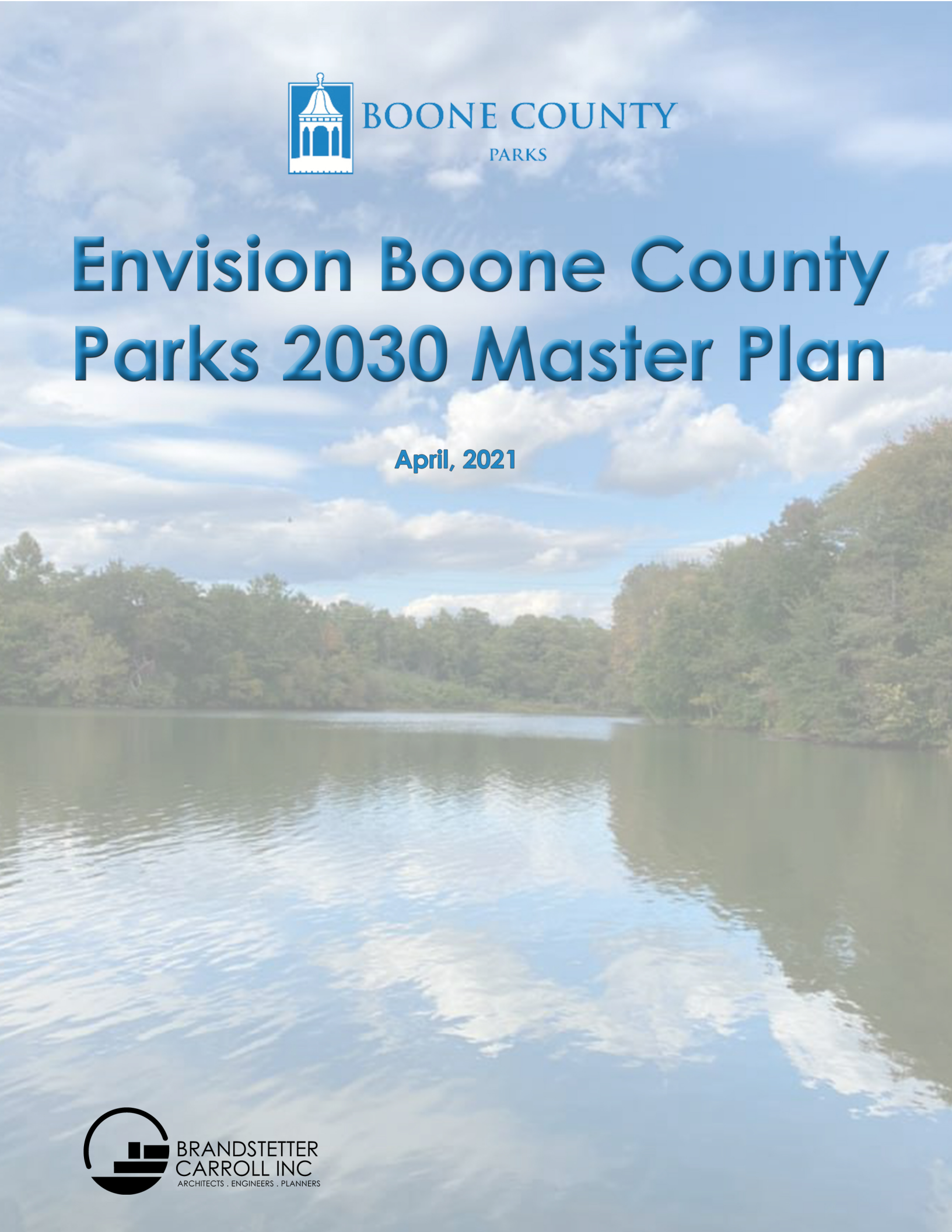
BOONE COUNTY
PARKS

Envision Boone County Parks 2030 Master Plan

April, 2021



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The Need for a Plan

Located in Northern Kentucky in the Greater Cincinnati area, Boone County provides a wide spectrum of parks and offers a variety of recreation opportunities to residents. Boone County has already experienced considerable growth (tripling in size between 1980 and 2020) and is expected to continue this trend of increase into 2030. This *Envision Boone County Parks 2030 Master Plan* is a guiding document meant to instill focus, establish priorities, and inspire action over the next 5 to 10 years. It is especially important as the county addresses its growing population and expanding development. This Master Plan underscores how the future rate of land acquisition, park development, and nature preservation must complement the existing and projected population growth in the county. It also distinguishes the department's responsibilities from other local agencies for bringing parks, facilities, and recreational choices to residents of Boone County wherever they live.

While deferred maintenance, changing community needs, development goals, and operational feasibility taken altogether are reason enough for producing a future-forward plan, 2020 ushered in an unprecedented layer of change and challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic that began with fervor in early March of 2020 in the United States has maintained its stronghold on communications, procedures, and everyday routine across all sectors of the economy. Besides impacting daily life, the effects of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic are shaping the future of communities in ways as yet impossible to fully understand.

Even before the pandemic began in the U.S., clear reporting existed on the value of parks and recreation. As civic spaces, parks act as operational hubs for efforts to address chronic issues like physical inactivity, poor health, and access to nutrition. Just by living close to a park, an individual is more likely to have higher activity levels. Having even a simple connection to nature – like a small Neighborhood Park with a healthy tree canopy – can relieve stress, improve mental health, and provide opportunities for interpersonal interaction.[1] Parks are part of hyper-local civic infrastructure, needed now more than ever, where citizens practice the "art of association" and do the work of knitting communities together.[2]

What has newly emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic is the vital role parks and recreation has played – and will continue to play – in the country's recovery. Six months into the pandemic, the National Recreation and Park Association published an extensive discussion of the myriad ways parks and recreation is both affected by and affecting the outcome of the pandemic.[3] Budget cuts, canceled programming, over-crowded spaces, once-vibrant facilities shuttered to protect against the spread; communities across the nation are still feeling these stings[4]. But agencies are also adapting and finding creative funding solutions,[5] boldly stepping into

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

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

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

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

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

the critical work of bridging inequity, safeguarding physical and mental health, and ensuring access.

Boone County Parks has maintained a visible presence in the community throughout the challenges of the pandemic year. Hosting holiday-themed craft contests via photo sharing on social media and scavenger hunts throughout the parks (e.g., "Search for Tom Turkey" in the fall of 2020 and later, Winter Bingo for all ages) have enabled residents to engage with their local parks while also adhering to CDC health guidelines. The department was able to host physically-distanced outdoor movie nights at different times, affording a sense of normalcy and feeling of community even under lockdown conditions. While Boone County Parks may have already been providing many of these programmatic opportunities – and utilizing the power of the department's social media presence online – the changes brought on by the coronavirus pandemic verify the importance and the need for this level of creative flexibility. Moving forward into post-pandemic life, the department will need to continue and expand these efforts to ensure the community continues having opportunities to gather, grow, and enjoy the county park system.

This 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. While the economic impact of COVID-19 manifests, there will be temptations to recover costs and cut spending. This Master Plan maps the beginning of multi-dimensional recovery where parks and recreation in Boone County is not only important but essential for building a strong, vibrant community post-pandemic.[6]

Existing Conditions of Parks and Recreation in Boone County

For many residents, parks are primary entry points for interacting with the natural environment and enjoying social connection. As COVID-19 has made abundantly clear, equity fissures persist and can in part be remedied through fair, inclusive access to open park spaces and quality facilities. For all residents, parks provide a variety of passive and active outdoor recreational opportunities and close access improves community health and wellness. As mentioned above, Boone County Parks services are a critical thread in the community's civic fabric and will play a crucial role in pandemic recovery.

Boone County Parks oversees spaces ranging from smaller neighborhood parks to sports fields to larger nature parks. In addition to what the Department has to offer, residents enjoy access to multiple city parks (via Walton and Florence), school parks, and state parks (e.g., Big Bone Lick State Historic Site). Boone County Parks Department maintains 1,792 acres of parkland and over 30 sites, including five Neighborhood Parks, three Community Parks, and two Regional Parks. The department also offers 12 Nature Parks/Natural Areas including Boone Cliffs Nature Preserve. Boone County Parks also maintains field facilities at several locations owned by different entities (mostly schools and churches) across the county. Most development is concentrated in the eastern half of the county with less dense and more rural areas across the western half; the location of park types largely reflects this pattern. One significant and unique aspect to Boone County's parks system is the Ohio River, which creates the entire western edge of the county.

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 steady and significant growth in the population (projected at four times the population in 1980 by 2030). Boone County as a whole is diversifying racially and ethnically; while all racial groups are increasing, the White Alone population is growing at the slowest rate with Black, Asian, Hispanic, and Multiracial populations seeing between 150% and 210% increases. The county also has a higher percentage of youth (compared to the State and the U.S.), though this percentage is expected to decrease slightly through 2030. While there is no certain way to prepare for changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, understanding past trends and projected changes will help identify present demand for parks and recreation and be useful for anticipating future need.

The analysis of existing conditions includes a benchmark comparison to 40 similar agencies using the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics database. The benchmarking shows that Boone County does comparatively well but has room to grow in terms of generating revenue (currently revenue is 27% of total operating expenditures in Boone County; the benchmark is 22%). Considering the impacts of COVID-19 – those already apparent and those still unknown – Boone County will need to be flexible in exploring revenue-generating options.

6 Marquis, Bridget. Infrastructure That Does More: Investing in Public Spaces for a Resilient America. Strong Towns. https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2020/11/23/infrastructure-that-does-more-investing-in-public-spaces-for-a-resilient-america?fbclid=IwAR2Aa8OXGjUpGNv3iblDHC-W40ic9L9QjnXvlx_kgFSoCtEoi5vihqJ0bDg (November 24, 2020). Accessed December 4, 2020.

Capital expenditures for Boone County are slightly above the benchmarks at $5 per capita (2019), compared to $4; however, Boone County's rapid growth will demand higher capital expenditures than other communities. Certainly the desires of the community indicated through this Master Plan will require more than the existing capital budget.

Service Area Analysis (Gaps)

Maps of service areas for various parks and facilities were used to identify "Service Gaps" or underserved areas within Boone County. The planning consultant also created maps to illustrate levels of access to various park categories and facilities. The analysis shows that one out of five residents (20%) live within a 10-minute walk to a park in Boone County, including those by other agencies. About 45% of residents of the three cities (Florence, Union, and Walton) live within a 10-minute walk of a park. To reflect the large amount of rural development within the county, driving access was also calculated. Ninety percent (90%) of Boone County residents live within a 10-minute drive of a larger park.

Lastly, a composite service areas map (see next page) shows the overall level of service for parks (4 types) and facilities (14 types), in turn revealing needs and opportunities. Dark shades of blue indicate high service levels while red areas show the areas with the lowest level of service to parks and facilities. Just 19% of Boone County residents live in the highest two categories, with 45% living in medium to low service areas.

The largest percentage of the county has medium level composite service for parks and recreation (36%) but the second highest percentage (28%) live in low service areas. Many higher-income homes are located in less dense, more rural parts of the county (due to the horse industry, farming, destination retirement, etc.) where there is lower service generally. There are also low service areas in the developed portions of the county. Given this dispersion, different kinds of action are needed – a greater focus on nature preservation in the less populated parts, combined with a more focused effort to develop recreation facilities and active use spaces in the more populated areas. The table below shows the percentage of the population by service level.

Service Level (Rank)	Population	Cumulative Population
High	4%	4%
Medium-High	15%	19%
Medium	36%	55%
Medium-Low	18%	72%
Low	28%	100%

A Citizen Driven Plan

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

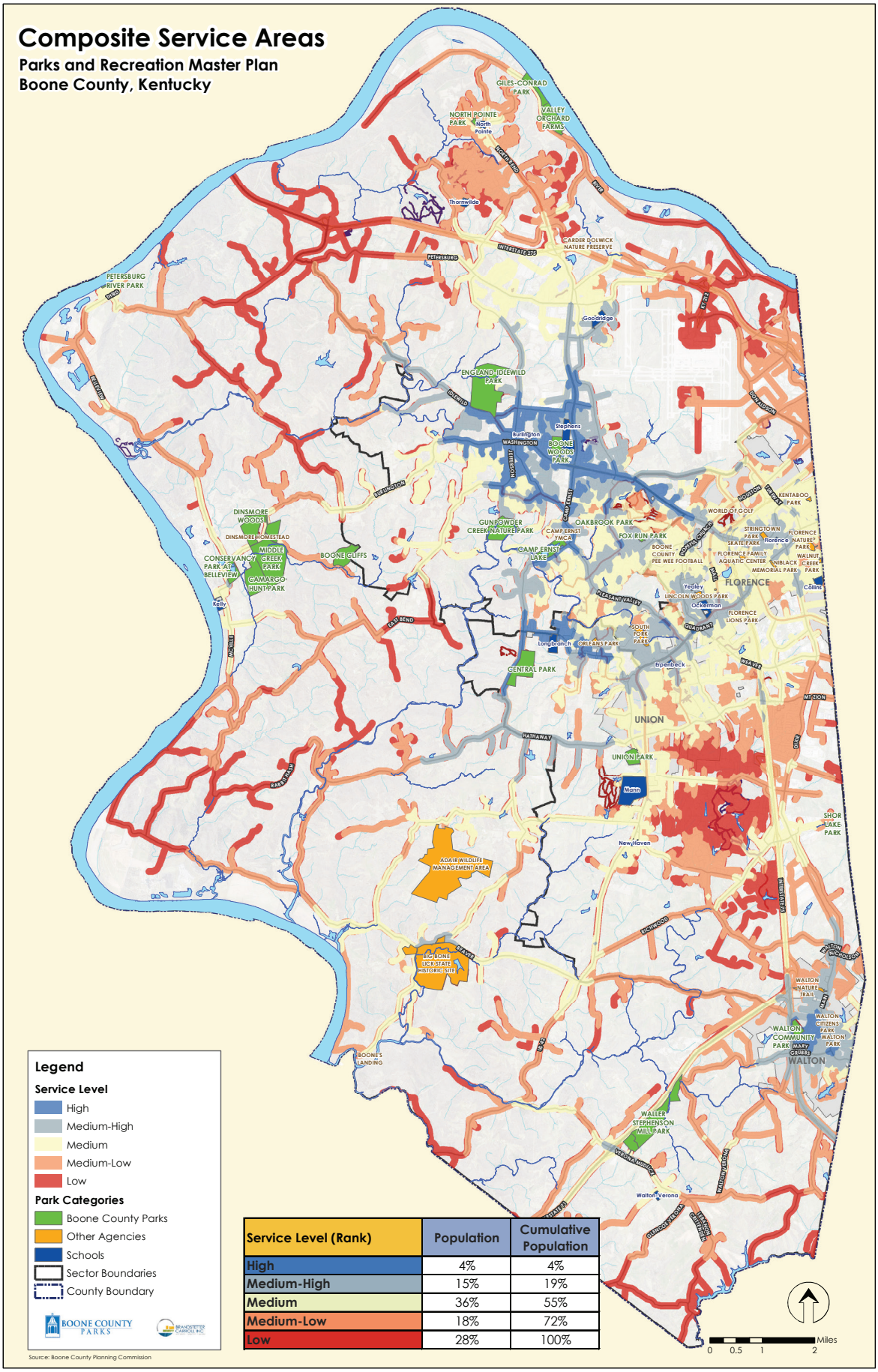
Engagement Summary

- Public meetings (open house, stakeholder groups)
- Dollar voting exercise
- Statistically valid Parks and Recreation Survey (by ETC Institute)
- Web-based and handout survey
- Online engagement (powered by MindMixer)

1. Open house workshops introduced the project and facilitated public input contributions at the following locations:
   - Hebron Branch Library on February 18, 2020
   - Walton Senior Center on February 19, 2020
   - Main Library on February 20, 2020
   - Ferguson Room in Burlington on March 3, 2020
   - Scheben (Union) Branch Library on March 4, 2020
   - Florence Senior Center on March 5, 2020
2. Meetings with stakeholder groups representing (July-October of 2019):
   - Administrator
   - County Commissioners
   - Program Staff
   - Florence Mayor and Administrator
   - Walton Mayor and Council Member
   - Union Mayor, Administrator, and Community & Operations Director

Composite Service Areas

Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Boone County, Kentucky



Legend

Service Level
- High
- Medium-High
- Medium
- Medium-Low
- Low

Park Categories
- Boone County Parks
- Other Agencies
- Schools
- Sector Boundaries
- County Boundary

BOONE COUNTY PARKS

Source: Boone County Planning Commission

Service Level (Rank)	Population	Cumulative Population
High	4%	4%
Medium-High	15%	19%
Medium	36%	55%
Medium-Low	18%	72%
Low	28%	100%

- Boone County Arboretum
- Bike Stakeholders
- Youth Sports
- Kings Hammer Soccer
- NKYA (baseball, football, basketball, cheer)
- NKB (16-18 baseball)

3. "Voting with Dollars" activity at six open house workshops and an event
4. A statistically valid needs assessment survey conducted by the ETC Institute – 710 total surveys received
5. A handout and web survey completed by 1,530 individuals (85% residents of Boone County)

What Boone County Residents Said

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

Community Meetings

Most discussed topics included:

1. Athletic Fields
2. Trails
3. More Programs
4. Game Courts
5. Multipurpose Fields
6. More Parkland/Acquisition
7. Lighting
8. Artificial Turf
9. Pickleball Courts
10. Specific Locations
11. Athletic Field Lighting
12. Natural Areas

Stakeholder Groups

Top recommendations:

1. Improve quality of facilities
2. Partnerships
3. More neighborhood parks
4. Acquire parkland adjacent to parks
5. Spraygrounds
6. Keep communities engaged
7. More soccer fields
8. Sports complex for tournaments
9. More trails and connectivity improvements
10. Blueways – Put-ins and take-outs
11. Indoor space/recreation center
12. Restroom upgrades
13. Arboretum education center

Dollar Voting

Participants at the events and the public workshop were asked how they would allocate $1,000 among different types of parks and recreation facility improvements in Boone County. The responses ranked as follows:

Action (Box Title)	Total
Develop a sprayground or splash pad	18%
Build new walking and biking trails	18%
Upgrade existing parks and facilities	15%
Build new parks (including land acquisition)	15%
Build new and improve quality of existing athletic fields	13%
Build new indoor recreation facilities	13%
Expand program offerings	5%
Other	8%
Total	**100%**

Statistically Valid Mail Survey

Eighty-six percent (86%) of residents visited a park in Boone County over the past year, and 37% of these residents visited parks more than 10 times. Central Park & Arboretum, England/Idlewild, and Boone Woods Park were the top three most visited sites (56%, 54%, and 53% respectively.

The top reasons for not using parks more often include:

- Do not know what is offered (27%)
- Do not have time (27%)
- Too far from home (23%)
- Facility or program not offered (20%)

These responses suggest that stronger communication efforts, adjusted scheduling, and added facilities would likely help increase resident use.

The improvements households would most like to see to existing parks included:

- Restrooms (45%)
- Walking/hiking trails (39%)
- Security cameras and lighting (25%)

These preferences suggest a desire for elevated support amenities and safety at sites, as well as increased access to nature.

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

- Walking & hiking trails (45%)
- Natural areas/nature parks (26%)
- Fishing lakes, ponds, streams (20%)
- Playgrounds (17%)

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

1. Walking/hiking trails
2. Natural areas/nature parks
3. Fishing lakes, ponds, streams
4. Paved bike trails
5. Spraygrounds/splashpads
6. Swimming pools/aquatic centers
7. Small neighborhood parks

The most important parks and recreation programs for households were (sum of top 5 choices):

- Fitness and wellness programs (28%)
- Concerts/art performances (24%)
- Programs for 55+ (22%)
- Nature Programs (20%)

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

1. Fitness & wellness programs (adult)
2. Concerts/art performances
3. Programs for 55+
4. Nature programs
5. Movies (outdoor)

Eighty-five percent (85%) of households were supportive of upgrading existing parks and facilities.

Key Findings (all methods)

Results indicate that the community desires:

- Upgrades to existing parks
- Trail improvements
- Spraygrounds
- Athletic fields
- Better access to streams, lakes, and ponds
- Nature center
- New Neighborhood Parks
- More/better restrooms
- Acquisition & preservation of open space & natural areas
- Safety & security improvements, including lighting & cameras
- Pickleball courts with lighting
- More trees
- New playground equipment
- More picnic shelters
- Support features
- More/expanded partnerships
- Improved marketing & communication
- Indoor facilities/recreation center
- Expanded program & event offerings

Vision, Mission, and Values for Parks and Recreation in Boone County

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

Mission

Enriching the community through safe parks and quality experiences

Vision

Our parks and programs inspire imagination

Values

Community

We build a stronger community through our diverse range of parks and programs. Our shared experiences connect and inspire our community.

Inclusion

We commit to removing barriers for everyone in our community and ensuring safe, convenient access to our parks and programs.

Fun

We create opportunities for memorable, family-friendly experiences that excite and engage the whole community. Providing possibilities for enjoyment enhances quality of life for everyone.

Innovation

We explore uncharted and creative ways to provide

our community with enriching experiences. To be industry leaders, we think outside-the-box and deliver high-quality programs and modern amenities.

Stewardship

We embrace our role in preserving, conserving, and protecting environmental, historical, and cultural resources within Boone County Parks. We celebrate the passive aspects of our parks and work tirelessly to raise awareness of our unique resources.

Goals & Objectives

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

Goal 1: Exceptional Spaces

Develop exceptional parks and facilities in response to growing needs of the community while ensuring inclusive access for all

Objectives

Accessibility: Develop modern and inclusive park features that accommodate community growth, trends, and desire for fun

Athletics: Ensure access to needed venues for team and individual sports

Support: Provide level of amenities that ensures access to and extended enjoyment of parks

Goal 2: Inspired Stewardship

Preserve parks, trails, and natural areas to develop opportunities for passive recreation and to increase connectivity between the community and these resources

Objectives

Conservation: Protect and conserve natural areas

Connectivity: Encourage bike and pedestrian connectivity, community fitness, and recreation by developing safe access to parks and waterbodies

Land Management: Focus acquisitions and future development around conservation and connected open space for the growing population

Goal 3: Diverse Programs

Objectives

Promote physical fitness, wellbeing, and social enrichment of the community through a varied assortment of programs, initiatives, and amenities

Wellness: Use parks and programs to foster greater awareness of healthy choices and quality of life improvements

Inclusion: Emphasize convenient and accessible programs that meet the needs of families and aging community members but are designed to serve everyone

Experiences: Expand the variety and frequency of concerts, movies, and special events to build community cohesion and attract visitors

Goal 4: Broad Outreach

Objectives

Expand awareness and grow user-base by promoting programs and amenities, providing educational opportunities, and pursuing strategic partnerships

Engagement: Connect with the community through a diversity of channels to determine needs, eliminate barriers, and ensure exceptional park experiences

Collaboration: Foster partnerships and recruit volunteers to meet current and future needs for parks and recreation in Boone County

Communication: Utilize technology to raise awareness, increase participation, and bridge gaps in service

Goal 5: Operational Excellence

Objectives

Implement current best practices across personnel, process, finance, and resource sectors to ensure appropriate maintenance, exceptional customer service, and efficient operations

Structure: Nurture an engaged workforce of valued staff through a culture of innovation and professional development

Maintenance: Develop requirements, policies, and procedures for maintenance and equipment replacement in order to ensure safe, enjoyable park experiences

Financial Stability: Implement operational practices and funding strategies to effectively utilize every available resource

Systemwide Recommendations

Public input (Chapter 4) and a needs assessment (Chapter 5) together informed the recommendations for improvement outlined extensively in Chapters 7 and 8. The following items are the top 25 broad

priorities determined by the Master Plan process along with regular consultation with the steering committee.

1. Perform an ADA Accessibility Assessment of smaller parks as well as programs communications (implement existing assessment at larger parks)
2. Establish a Boone County Parks Foundation to raise funds and recruit and organize volunteers
3. Continue to acquire land for parks and open space to meet the needs of the quickly growing population
4. Develop existing undeveloped and underdeveloped properties (e.g., Union Park, Erpenbeck/Plantation Point) to provide amenities in underserved areas
5. Add entrance and wayfinding signage where missing for ease of navigation
6. Develop interpretive signage throughout the park system (will require signage plans) to help visitors understand the natural features and history of Boone County parks
7. Complete a feasibility study for an indoor sports complex (gymnasium space, field space, program/meeting rooms, etc.)
8. Consider developing an archery and gun range in the western portion of Boone County to provide a permanent venue for residents to practice, support program opportunities, and generate revenue
9. Develop a championship level disc golf course (with adjustable difficulty) at Waller-Stephenson Mill Park to draw top level tournaments and expand opportunities for disc golf in Boone County
10. Add new pickleball courts and lining at some tennis courts to meet existing and projected demand (e.g., Union Park, Boone Woods, etc.)
11. Replace or add restrooms at heavily used parks that currently lack the facilities
12. Add playgrounds with themed equipment in strategic locations in the city; include separate age 2-5 equipment
13. Develop an additional dog park at Union Park and expand the dog park at England/Idlewild Park to improve turf conditions; consider including dog parks in future park development
14. Improve the existing amphitheater at Boone Woods Park, and develop new ones at Union Park and Walton Community Park for concerts, movies, fitness classes, and more
15. Develop an indoor nature center and outdoor classroom at a western nature preserve to expand nature programming and provide year-round opportunities
16. Develop a bike and pedestrian connectivity plan to integrate existing trail planning efforts, define alignments, and connections
17. Develop additional trails for mountain bike and equestrian uses
18. Prepare Park Master Plans for existing parks and any future parks prior to development of facilities to ensure that added features are complementary and accessible
19. Ensure inclusivity by developing therapeutic recreation offerings with a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, pursuing bi-lingual programming and marketing, and adopting inclusion standards
20. Identify and develop features determined by neighborhood residents at new and existing parks to include local preferences in the look, feel, and usability of their spaces
21. Seek opportunities to expand partnerships with local organizations to improve access to recreation facilities and programs; maintain existing successful partnerships
22. Expand and enhance online communication and programming efforts
23. Encourage and support staff development at all levels
24. Prepare an Operations Plan with Maintenance Standards
25. Institute an easy-to-understand Cost Recovery and Pricing Plan

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

Action Plan

This *Envision Boone County Parks 2030 Master Plan* includes a detailed Action Plan with 171 strategies. These strategies, which can be found in Chapter 9, represent specific actions for Parks and Boone County to take in implementing this plan.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Need for a Plan

Boone County, situated in northern Kentucky along the Ohio River in the Greater Cincinnati area, has a population of approximately 132,000 (as of 2019). Not only is the county population projected to increase by roughly 30,000 between 2020 and 2030, but the demographic character of the county is shifting dramatically as well (Chapter 2). All other racial groups besides the White Alone population have seen anywhere from 150% to over 200% increase since 2000. This kind of shift in the population affects the current need but also impacts the future demand for parks in Boone County. In order to best meet these changes the Boone County Fiscal Court and the Parks Department sought out a new Master Plan to help guide their actions moving forward. The *Envision Boone County Parks 2030 Master Plan* reflects input from the community, is supported by robust data collection and will prepare Boone County Parks to meet the dynamic needs of residents.

While changing community needs, development goals, and upgrade possibilities taken altogether are reason enough for producing a future-forward plan, 2020 ushered in an unprecedented layer of change and challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic that began with fervor in early March (2020) in the United States has maintained its stronghold on communications, procedures, and everyday routine across all sectors of the economy. Besides impacting daily life, the effects of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic are shaping the future of communities in ways as yet impossible to fully understand.

Even before the pandemic began in the U.S., clear reporting existed on the value of parks and recreation. As civic spaces, parks act as operational hubs for efforts to address chronic issues like physical inactivity, poor health, and access to nutrition. Just by living close to a park, an individual is more likely to have higher activity levels. Having even a simple connection to nature – like a small Neighborhood Park with a healthy tree canopy – can relieve stress, improve mental health, and provide opportunities for interpersonal interaction.[1] Parks are part of hyper-local civic infrastructure, needed now more than ever, where citizens practice the "art of association" and do the work of knitting communities together.[2]

What has newly emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic is the vital role parks and recreation has played – and will continue to play – in the country's recovery. Six months into the pandemic, the National Recreation and Park Association published an extensive discussion of the myriad ways parks and recreation is both

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

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

affected by and affecting the outcome of the pandemic.[3] Agencies are also adapting and finding creative funding solutions,[4] boldly stepping into the critical work of bridging inequity, safeguarding physical and mental health, and ensuring access.

Boone County Parks has maintained a visible presence in the community throughout the challenges of the pandemic year. Hosting holiday-themed craft contests via photo sharing on social media and scavenger hunts throughout the parks (e.g., "Search for Tom Turkey" in the fall of 2020 and, later, Winter Bingo for all ages) have enabled residents to engage with their local parks while also adhering to CDC health guidelines. The department was able to host physically-distanced outdoor movie nights at different times, affording a sense of normalcy and feeling of community even under lockdown conditions. While Boone County Parks may have already been providing many of these programmatic opportunities – and utilizing the power of the department's social media presence online – the changes brought on by the coronavirus pandemic verify the importance and the need for this level of creative flexibility. Moving forward into post-pandemic life, the department will need to continue and expand these efforts to ensure the community continues having opportunities to gather, grow, and enjoy the county park system.

As an overview of the system, Boone County offers over 1,792 acres of parkland and 22 parks and facilities, including 12 Natural Areas/Open Space Areas, five Community and Regional Parks, and four Neighborhood Parks. The department also manages park space at 12 other locations, including schools, churches, and industrial property. Because this plan is concerned with overall community access and general need for parks in the county, it is important to note there are also two State Parks and 13 school parks within the county that provide residents with additional access and more acres of parkland.

In recognizing the need for a future-focused plan, the Fiscal Court along with Parks staff, decided a comprehensive plan process should be completed to best align services with community demand. The county appointed a steering committee to support and help guide the planning process. This Master Plan is the culmination of an engaged and informed planning process. Its 5- to 10-year scope will provide critical guidance for parks, recreation, and community connection as Boone County moves forward into the future.

1.2 The Importance of Parks

Parks provide numerous benefits and services to the community. Local agencies have the responsibility to manage and provide parks so as to champion the health, safety, and welfare of the community. A master plan is a key tool that can assist agencies and direct the management and provision of their resources. For many residents, parks provide their primary access to the natural environment and their most significant opportunities for social interaction. For all residents, parks have the potential to provide a variety of social, active, and outdoor recreational opportunities that improve quality of life and make viable, thriving communities. Most importantly, 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 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 preliminary 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.

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

[4] 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.lincolninst.edu/publications/articles/2020-10-room-roam-pandemic-urban-parks-what-comes-next. (October 7, 2020). Accessed November 2020.

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 simply living near a park can encourage higher activity levels, and both teens and young adults with access to a variety of recreation facilities are less likely to be overweight and more likely to be in better health. 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 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, often provided in partnership with or by agencies themselves, can residents direct access to fresh food.[5]

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.[6]

Residents and political leadership in Boone County place a high value on parks. According to the Boone County Parks Needs Assessment Survey, 85% of residents support making upgrades to existing parks and facilities, and 81% support the acquisition and preservation of open space and natural areas (see Chapter 4 for more information). Clearly, parks services are important to the county. Through the implementation of this Master Plan, Boone County will ensure all residents can enjoy quality gathering places, excellent recreation facilities, and overall improved quality of life.

1.3 Master Planning Process

The master planning process consisted of four phases and regular dialogue between representatives from Boone County and the consultant team. Boone County Parks staff appointed the plan Steering Committee – members of which included staff, 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 county 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 county and other sources, the consultant team analyzed demographic and population characteristics of Boone County. Information included:

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

[5] National Recreation and Park Association, "Health and Wellness," http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Impacting-Communities/Health-and-Wellness/, (December, 10 2019).

[6] National Recreation and Park Association, "Social Equity," http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Impacting-Communities/Social-Equity/, (December, 10 2019).

1.4.2 Benchmarking Analysis

Using information provided by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics program, Boone County Parks was compared to 40 agencies (serving populations between 75,000 and 250,000) located in Virginia, Georgia, Maryland, Illinois, Florida, Missouri, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Iowa, Ohio, Michigan, and Minnesota and who participated in the Park Metrics program. Comparisons between park systems covered several criteria such as parkland inventory, department functions, staffing, budgets, facilities offered, and more.

1.4.3 Inventory of Parks, Facilities, and Programs

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

Park Classification

As a first step, parks and related sites in Boone County were catalogued to better evaluate the overall recreation opportunities available to the public. In this updated inventory, sites are classified as Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Regional Parks, Special Use Parks, Natural Areas, or School Parks.

Parks, Open Space, and Facilities Inventory

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

The facility inventory included passive and active use amenities as well as resources provided by other entities in the community (e.g., the schools, State Parks, and City Parks in Florence and Walton).

Programs Inventory

The programs inventory described activities based on the Core Program Components:

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

1.4.4 Needs Assessment and Identification

Level of Service Guidelines

The consultant synthesized public input, benchmarking comparisons, and existing standards to develop level of service guidelines for Boone County Parks. These level of service guidelines were defined for park classifications, recreation facilities, and total acreage of parkland and open space.

Geographic Distribution – Service Gap Analysis

A critical step in the process is to determine service gaps, identified by mapping locations and access for the system's existing facilities. The maps define service areas around specific facilities and park classifications, illuminating locations within Boone County that lack sufficient and quality access. In addition to two park service maps (Neighborhood Parks and Community/ Regional Parks), nine 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 Boone County.

1.4.5 Trends

Extending the scope of analysis further, national trends in parks services were reviewed. 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 in Boone County.

1.5.1 Boone County Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment

A statistically valid mail survey (Mail Survey) was conducted by ETC Institute producing a total of 710 returned surveys (with a goal of 600). This portion of the public input was initiated early in the process (winter/spring 2020). The survey was used to identify:

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

1.5.2 Input Gathering - Open Houses & Public Events

Six public workshops held at various library branches and community facilities around the county further broadened the input collected from citizens and users. Attendees could visit a series of themed stations to talk to the planning team, to share their thoughts, concerns, and ideas, and to learn more about the master plan process. Additional stations provided interactive activities for attendees to place priority on improvements. Discussions and activities were divided into three different but connected themes: 1) parks and facilities, 2) trails and natural events, and 3) programs and events.

In addition to these open house opportunities, members of the consultant team set up engagement activities at the annual Jack-O-Lantern Walk at the Boone County Fairgrounds. Available for conversation and to answer questions, the planning team used this event as a chance to hear more from residents and to engage with those in the county who may not have already been aware of the plan process.

1.5.3 Stakeholder Groups

Boone County Parks provided coordination support and collaboration to convene seven conversations with 11 specific groups, as well as meetings with Parks staff. These discussions helped illuminate priorities from various perspectives. Facilitation questions were prepared in advance and approved by the steering committee.

1.5.4 Web-Based Input Gathering

The planning consultant team prepared an additional survey in both handout and web-based formats (using Survey Monkey). All residents and program users were invited via email notifications, social media, the department website, and word of mouth to complete the survey. Additionally, the planning team organized an interactive web-based platform (using Mind Mixer) to give people another way to share preferences, ideas, and concerns. In all, 1,530 individuals participated in the survey, 85% of whom identified as residents of Boone County. The Mind Mixer platform had 153 total interactions (over 60 participants). Results of both engagement efforts are presented and examined in Chapter 4.

1.6 Envision

Parks Mission and Strategic Plan with Goals and Objectives

Following the above phases – Evaluate and Engage – Steering Committee members and Parks 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 services in Boone County. 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 Boone County Parks in their efforts moving forward.

1.7.1 Recommendations

Systemwide improvements for facilities, programs, and operations (Chapter 7) were provided to direct parks over the next 5- to 10-years and beyond. Priorities were provided for improvements that apply to the entire system and Boone County as a whole, such as operations, programs, budgets, development practices, and priorities for upgrades. Long-term needs for 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
- New Parks and Facilities
- Natural Areas, Open Space, and Nature Education
- Outdoor Athletic Fields and Courts
- Indoor Recreation
- Programming
- Operations, Maintenance, and Promotion
- Budget and Funding
- Partnerships and Sponsorships

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

Draft Master Plan

A draft of the Envision Boone County Parks 2030 Master Plan was presented to Boone County Parks and the steering committee in March 2021. Master Plan findings and recommendations will be presented to Fiscal Court on April 27, 2021.

2

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 Boone County. This chapter begins with a summary of population and demographic trends in Boone County and concludes with a benchmarking analysis comparing parks and recreation in Boone County with other communities throughout the United States.

2.2 Population and Demographic Trends

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

2.2.1 Population Change

Figure 2.1 illustrates the population change in Boone County from 1980 to 2030. This table uses U.S. Census Bureau data for historic figures provided by Esri forecast and the *Our Boone County – Plan 2040* for 2030. These numbers indicate a trend of rapid population increase in Boone County since 1980. The county experienced a sizable gain in population for each decade (2010 to 2019 is the lowest but still at around 12%). The 2030 projection indicates substantial growth over the next decade.

2.2.2 Household Size

Table 2.1 shows the number of households in 2019 and household size from 2000 to 2024 for Boone County, Kentucky, and the USA. The table indicates that in Boone County, the average household size has remained steady since 2000 and is expected to continue through 2024. The household size in Boone County (2.73) is much higher than the USA (2.59) which is higher than the State of Kentucky (2.46). Households size is expected to remain stable in the other geographies through 2024 as well.

Figure 2.1: Boone County Population Change

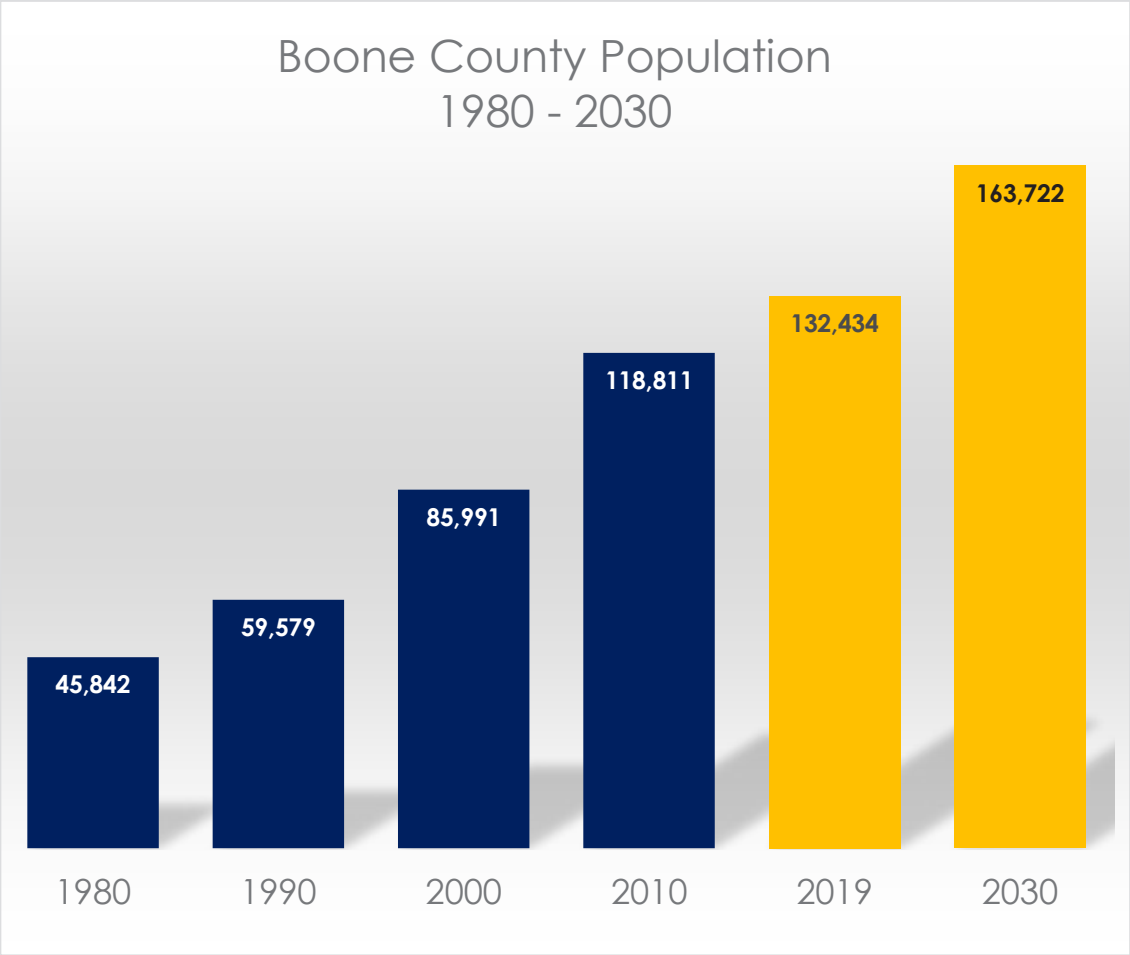


Table 2.1: Average Household Size (2000 to 2024)

	Households	Average Household Size			
	2019	2000	2010	2019	2024
USA	125,168,557	2.59	2.58	2.59	2.60
Kentucky	1,811,572	2.47	2.45	2.46	2.46
Boone County	48,245	2.73	2.73	2.73	2.73

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

2.2.3 Median Age

Table 2.2 shows the median age for Boone County, Kentucky, and the USA from 2000 through 2024. The median age in Boone County increased between 2000 and 2010 and then again through 2019. All geographic levels are increasing, and Boone County had a lower median age than the state or the USA.

The 2000 median age in Boone County (33.4) was much lower (more than two years younger) than the State of Kentucky or the USA, which were both in the 35 to 36 range. The 2019 median age was 37.1, keeping pace with the other geographies. The age of the residents is important because Boone County Parks needs to plan for the appropriate age groups that it will be serving.

Table 2.2: Median Age (2000-2024)

	2000	2010	2019	2024
USA	35.3	37.1	38.5	39.2
Kentucky	35.9	37.9	39.7	40.8
Boone County	33.4	35.6	37.1	37.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

2.2.4 Senior Population

Table 2.3 displays the population age 65 and over from 2000 to 2024 and shows that this age group has increased as a percentage of the population over this time period and is expected to continue to do so through 2024 for all geographic levels. In Boone County, the proportion of the population over 65 increased between 2000 and 2019 from 8.1% to 12.9% with most of the increase between 2010 and 2019. The same trend is apparent for the other geographic areas. The proportion of the population age 65 and over is expected to continue to increase. By 2024, Boone County is projected to have nearly 15% of the total population in this age cohort. While Boone County's percentage over age 65 is lower than the comparisons, it is increasing, emphasizing the importance of facilities and services for seniors in Boone County.

Table 2.3: Population Age 65 and over (2000-2024)

	2000	2010	2019	2024
USA	12.4%	13.0%	16.4%	18.5%
Kentucky	12.5%	13.3%	17.0%	19.4%
Boone County	8.1%	9.5%	12.9%	14.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

2.2.5 Children

Table 2.4 presents the population under age 18 from 2000 to 2024. The table indicates that in Boone County the percentage of children decreased from 28.7% in 2000 to 26% in 2019. The percentage of the population within this age group is expected to continue to decrease slightly to 25.6% by 2024. The trend of a declining percentage of children is apparent at the state, regional, and national levels. However, Boone County has a higher percentage of children than the state or the USA. Accordingly, children will continue to represent a substantial and important population into the future.

Table 2.4: Population Under Age 18 (2000-2024)

	2000	2010	2019	2024
USA	25.7%	24.0%	22.0%	21.8%
Kentucky	24.6%	23.6%	21.6%	21.5%
Boone County	28.7%	28.3%	26.0%	25.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

2.2.6 Poverty

Table 2.5 shows the percentage of the population living below the poverty line in each of the geographic areas. The table shows that the poverty level in Boone County is much lower than any of the comparisons at 7.6% as of 2017. Kentucky has the highest rate at 18.3%. The poverty rate in Boone County is approximately half that of the USA.

Table 2.5: Population Under the Poverty Line (2000-2017)

	2000	2010	2017
USA	12.4%	13.8%	14.6%
Kentucky	15.8%	17.7%	18.3%
Boone County	5.6%	7.5%	7.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

2.2.7 Income and Educational Attainment

The 2019 median household income in Boone County ($80,617) was much higher than the values for the State of Kentucky ($49,381) and the nation ($60,548). Household income in Boone County has grown slightly since 2000 and has kept up with inflation (see Table 2.6). This trend is contrary to the other geographic levels. Per capita income in Boone County is also higher than the figures for the other geographic levels. Per capita income has increased since 2000 and has kept pace with inflation in Boone County and at the other geographic levels.

Table 2.6: Household Income (2000-2024)

	2000	2000 Adjusted	2019	2024
Median Household Income				
USA	$41,994	$62,621	$60,548	$69,180
Kentucky	$33,672	$50,211	$49,381	$54,938
Boone County	$53,593	$79,917	$80,617	$90,116
Per Capita Income				
USA	$21,587	$32,190	$33,028	$37,585
Kentucky	$18,093	$26,980	$27,423	$31,389
Boone County	$23,535	$35,095	$35,798	$40,661

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts, BLS

As can be seen in Table 2.7, educational attainment has increased in Boone County since 2000. As of 2019, about a third (32.9%) of residents age 25 and older have a bachelor's degree or above, and 12% of residents in Boone County age 25 or over have a master's degree or above. These number are higher than Kentucky and similar to the USA. All areas have experienced increased educational attainment since 2000.

Table 2.7: Educational Attainment Age 25 and Over (2000-2019)

Educational Attainment (Highest Level)	Boone County		Kentucky		USA	
	2000	2019	2000	2019	2000	2019
No High School Diploma	14.9%	6.3%	25.9%	13.2%	19.6%	11.6%
High School/GED	32.8%	26.4%	33.6%	33.0%	28.6%	27.0%
Some College, No Degree	23.8%	26.0%	18.5%	21.5%	21.1%	20.2%
Associates Degree	5.7%	8.4%	4.9%	8.0%	6.3%	8.6%
Bachelors Degree	15.8%	20.9%	10.3%	14.3%	15.5%	20.0%
Graduate/Professional/Doctorate Degree	7.1%	12.0%	6.9%	10.2%	8.9%	12.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts

2.2.8 Growth of Ethnic Populations

Boone County has experienced a reduction in the proportion of the population consisting of White residents since 2000, while all other groups have increased (Table 2.8). The White population, while still representing the largest population group, declined to 91.4% in 2017, compared to 95.2% in 2000, although absolute numbers

have increased significantly due to the population growth in the county. While the White population has grown by just over 40% since 2000, the Hispanic, Black, and Two or More Races populations have grown by 200% or more and the Asian population has grown by nearly 170% over that time. The growing populations may have different recreation preferences than the populations during the time parks were constructed. Minority populations are projected to continue growing and are often undercounted, so engagement of these residents is essential for the county to continue to meet the parks and recreation needs of the population.

Table 2.8: Race and Hispanic Origin (2000-2017)

Year	Total Population	White Alone		Black Alone		Asian Alone		Other Race Alone		Two or More Races		Hispanic	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2000	85,991	81,822	95.2%	1,306	1.5%	1,108	1.3%	870	1.0%	885	1.0%	1,702	2.0%
2017	127,682	116,641	91.4%	3,907	3.1%	2,954	2.3%	1,452	1.1%	2,728	2.1%	5,201	4.1%
# Change	41,691	34,819		2,601		1,846		582		1,843		3,499	
% Change	48.5%	42.6%		199.2%		166.6%		66.9%		208.2%		205.6%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates (2013-2017)

2.2.9 Conclusion

These demographic trends indicate population growth, aging of the community, increased educational levels, and diversification of the population of Boone County. These trends will collectively shape the future of Boone County. The direction chosen for parks and recreation in Boone County will determine the availability of opportunities for these residents and will help to enrich the quality of life in the county for years to come.

2.3 Benchmarking Comparisons

One method of evaluating parks and recreation services offered in a community is to use benchmarking comparisons to other communities. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics program provides a variety of data for use in benchmarking. The ensuing analysis uses data from 40 county-wide agencies that served populations between 75,000 and 250,000 that participated in the Park Metrics program (Table 2.9). The NRPA also provides an annual report[1] that includes national performance benchmarks, which was also used as part of this analysis.

Table 2.9: Benchmark Agencies

Agency	State	Year	Population	Budget
Albemarle County Parks & Recreation	VA	2018	105,715	$2,885,745
Athens-Clarke County Leisure Services	GA	2018	125,691	$7,341,302
Augusta County Parks and Recreation	VA	2018	75,144	N/A
Augusta Recreation and Parks	GA	2019	201,800	$11,634,810
Calvert County Parks & Recreation	MD	2018	91,502	$9,557,516
Champaign County Forest Preserve District	IL	2018	209,399	$4,348,540
Charlotte County Community Services	FL	2019	184,998	$23,431,006
Cherokee Recreation & Parks Agency	GA	2019	247,894	$5,278,632
Clay County	MO	2018	242,874	$8,846,807
Craven County Recreation & Parks Department	NC	2019	102,912	N/A
Dodge County Land Resources & Parks	WI	2019	89,000	$878,000
Forsyth County Parks and Recreation	GA	2019	236,612	$10,098,545
Frederick County Division of Parks & Recreation	MD	2018	250,000	$9,086,739
Frederick County Parks and Recreation	VA	2019	88,355	$5,256,429

1 National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), "2019 NRPA Agency Performance Review Park And Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks," https://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/nrpa-agency-performance-review.pdf (accessed December 30, 2019).

Agency	State	Year	Population	Budget
Glynn County Recreation and Parks	GA	2019	85,282	$4,520,484
Hanover County Parks & Recreation	VA	2018	110,000	$3,650,000
Harnett County Parks and Recreation	NC	2019	134,214	$1,029,113
Haw River Trail	NC	2019	160,000	$1,863,000
Henry County Parks and Recreation	GA	2018	235,000	$1,400,000
James City County Parks and Recreation	VA	2019	76,397	$5,964,126
Johnston County Parks, Greenways and Open-Space	NC	2019	202,675	$12,000
Kenosha County Division of Parks	WI	2019	168,521	$9,740,820
Linn County Conservation Board	IA	2019	221,661	$4,386,000
Martin County Parks and Recreation	FL	2019	160,912	$10,863,879
Mohave County Parks	AZ	2019	209,550	$1,894,488
Nassau County Recreation Dept.	FL	2019	85,832	$1,135,287
National Trail Parks and Recreation District	OH	2019	134,557	$3,168,545
New Hanover County Parks & Gardens	NC	2019	232,274	$6,236,372
Onslow County Parks and Recreation	NC	2019	198,000	$1,835,975
Rockdale County Parks and Recreation	GA	2019	89,866	$3,010,857
Rockingham County Parks & Recreation	VA	2018	80,000	$1,536,021
Rowan County	NC	2018	141,917	$2,000,000
Saginaw County Parks and Recreation Commission	MI	2018	195,000	$1,300,000
Santa Rosa County Recreation Services	FL	2018	151,372	$1,190,350
SMC Recreation and Park's	MD	2019	112,664	$16,343,999
St. Clair County Parks & Recreation Commission	MI	2018	161,008	$2,694,000
Stafford County Parks Recreation and Community Facilities	VA	2019	149,960	$7,973,767
Trumbull County MetroParks	OH	2019	205,000	$127,000
Williamson County Parks & Recreation Dept	TN	2018	226,257	$13,589,585
Wright County Parks and Recreation Department	MN	2019	136,000	$1,909,010

Boone County is not a participant in the NRPA Park Metrics program, but figures were prepared based on information provided by the county. Because the data for other park systems was limited to parks and facilities managed by those agencies, only parks and facilities managed by Boone County are included in this analysis (school and private facilities were not included, unless maintained by Boone County Parks). The figures used in this analysis for Boone County were proposed for fiscal year 2020, and the figures for the comparison counties were those entered for 2018 or 2019.

The comparisons are organized into the following categories: parkland information, trail information, department functions, staffing, operating budget, capital budget, programs, and facilities. The following text details the findings of the benchmarking 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 2.10 indicates that Boone County provides 13.5 acres of parkland per thousand population. This number is much higher than the benchmark median of 10.1. This number indicates that Boone County provides more parkland and open space than other communities. The county's population per park of 6,020 is lower than the benchmark median of 8,763, indicating a higher level of service.

The parkland as a percentage of total jurisdiction land measurement of 1.1% places Boone County well above the benchmark median (0.5%), just below the upper quartile value of 1.2%. These comparisons indicate that

the county has a higher level of service compared to other jurisdictions.

Table 2.10: Parkland Information

PARKLAND INFORMATION	Boone County	Benchmark	National
Acreage of Parkland			
Lower Quartile		873	
Median/Agency Value	**1,792**	**1,646**	**N/A**
Upper Quartile		2,391	
Acreage of Parkland per 1,000 Population			
Lower Quartile		5.0	5.2
Median/Agency Value	**13.5**	**10.1**	**10.1**
Upper Quartile		17.6	17.1
Population per Park			
Lower Quartile		4,441	1,233
Median/Agency Value	**6,020**	**8,763**	**2,181**
Upper Quartile		17,426	4,451
Parkland as a Percentage of Jurisdiction			
Lower Quartile		0.2%	
Median/Agency Value	**1.1%**	**0.5%**	**N/A**
Upper Quartile		1.2%	
Percent of Acreage Developed			
Lower Quartile		22%	
Median/Agency Value	**19%**	**39%**	**N/A**
Upper Quartile		69%	

A look at the percentage of parkland that is developed for parks and recreation purposes shows that Boone County has a much smaller percentage of developed parkland (19%) than other benchmark communities (39%). This number indicates that while the county provides a higher level of service to parkland, less of that land is developed than in the benchmark communities.

2.3.2 Trail Information

The comparison of total miles of trails managed by Boone County (Table 2.11) shows 30.1 miles of trails, compared to the benchmark median of 18.0 miles. Total trail miles per jurisdiction square mile is a measurement that controls for differences in the physical size of comparative municipalities. Boone County has 0.12 miles of trails per square mile of the county, much higher than the benchmark median of 0.04 and above the upper quartile value of 0.10. The trail miles per ten thousand population measurement, which controls for the population difference between the benchmark communities, shows a value of 2.3 for Boone County which is well above the benchmark median (1.1).

Table 2.11: Trail Information

TRAILS	Boone County	Benchmark
Total Trail Miles Managed or Maintained		
Lower Quartile		11.0
Median/Agency Value	**30.1**	**18.0**
Upper Quartile		40.0
Total Trail Miles per Jurisdiction Sq. Mi.		
Lower Quartile		0.02
Median/Agency Value	**0.12**	**0.04**
Upper Quartile		0.10
Total Trail Miles per 10,000 Population		
Lower Quartile		0.6
Median/Agency Value	**2.3**	**1.1**
Upper Quartile		2.2

2.3.3 Department Functions

The list of department functions in Table 2.12 shows the percentage of benchmark departments that conduct these services and whether Boone County currently performs the function. The county conducts most of the functions at the top of the list to some degree. Two functions in this comparison are provided by more than 50% of the benchmarks but are not currently provided by Boone County Parks: *operate and maintain indoor facilities* (80% of the benchmark communities) and *operate, maintain, or contract outdoor swim facilities/ water parks* (60% of benchmarks).

Boone County is responsible for two functions that are conducted by fewer than half of the benchmark communities: *administer or manage tournament/event quality outdoor sports complexes* and *administer community gardens*. Unlike many other county-wide systems, Boone County Parks provides many of the facilities and services, including Neighborhood Parks and sports complexes, typically offered by city-level agencies.

Table 2.12: Department Functions

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES	Boone County	Benchmark	National
The agency...			
Operate and maintain park sites	X	97%	96%
Operate, maintain, or manage trails, greenways, and/or blueways (TGB)	X	86%	78%
Operate and maintain indoor facilities		81%	87%
Provide recreation programming and services	X	79%	93%
Conduct major jurisdiction wide special events	X	76%	76%
Operate, maintain, or manage special purpose parks and open spaces	X	73%	71%
Include in its operating budget funding for planning and development	X	68%	67%
Operate, maintain, or contract outdoor swim facilities/water parks		59%	59%
Operate and maintain non-park sites	X	57%	65%
Operate, maintain, or contract tourism attractions		43%	32%
Operate, maintain, or contract tennis center facilities		41%	51%
Operate, maintain, or contract campgrounds		41%	18%
Administer or manage tournament/event quality outdoor sports complexes	X	41%	57%
Operate, maintain, or contract golf courses	X*	24%	34%
Operate, maintain, or contract indoor swim facility		22%	28%
Manage large performance outdoor amphitheaters	X	19%	29%
Administer community gardens	X	16%	40%
Administer or manage tournament/event quality indoor sports complexes		11%	18%
Maintain, manage or lease indoor performing arts center		8%	17%
Administer or manage farmer's markets		3%	18%

*Performed by another county department

2.3.4 Staffing

Values related to staffing are provided for Boone County and benchmark communities in Table 2.13. Boone County employs 20 full-time employees, below the benchmark median. The department employs part-time staff representing the equivalent of 24.2 FTEs for a total of 44.2, just above the benchmark median. These numbers indicate that Boone County's staffing levels are similar to the benchmarks, but fewer employees are full-time.

On a per population basis, Boone County employs a similar amount of FTE staff (3.3 per 10,000 population) as the benchmark median (3.0). Boone County has a

Table 2.13: Staffing

STAFFING	Boone County	Benchmark	National
Full-Time Employees			
Lower Quartile		10.5	
Median/Agency Value	**20**	**30.0**	**N/A**
Upper Quartile		52.5	
Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Employees			
Lower Quartile		16.9	
Median/Agency Value	**44.2**	**40.9**	**N/A**
Upper Quartile		107.6	
FTE per 10,000 Population			
Lower Quartile		1.2	4.2
Median/Agency Value	**3.3**	**3.0**	**8.3**
Upper Quartile		6.6	15.1
Acres of Parkland per FTE			
Lower Quartile		17.6	
Median/Agency Value	**40.5**	**34.5**	**N/A**
Upper Quartile		53.5	

higher number of acres of parkland per FTE at 40.4 than the benchmark median of 34.5. These numbers indicate that compared to the number of acres offered by Boone County Parks, the county employs a smaller number of staff members.

2.3.5 Operating Budget

The total operating budget (Table 2.14) for parks and recreation in Boone County for 2020 is $3.0 million, which is lower than the $4.0 million median of the benchmark municipalities. The per capita operating expenditure for Boone County was $23, slightly lower than the benchmark median of $26. The national median values are much higher than the benchmark communities. Expenditures by Boone County were lower both in terms of total budget and on a per capita basis.

The total operating expenditure per acre of parkland was $1,682 for Boone County. This number is well below the benchmark median ($2,736) and similar to the lower quartile value but likely connected to the lower percentage of developed parkland. Boone County's expenditures per FTE were lower than the comparisons, however, because the department has a lower budget than the benchmarks. Boone County spends $68,241 per FTE, compared to $81,914 for the benchmark median. The $800,000 in earned revenue was just below the benchmark median. This revenue represented 27% of the Parks budget, which is just above the benchmark median (22%). Finally, Boone County Parks is projected to generate $6 per capita in 2020, just below the benchmark median of $7.

Table 2.14: Operating Budget

OPERATING BUDGET	Boone County	Benchmark	National
Agency's TOTAL Operating Expenditures for the Fiscal Year			
Lower Quartile		$1,760,987	
Median/Agency Value	**$3,014,135**	**$3,999,270**	**N/A**
Upper Quartile		$8,906,790	
Agency's TOTAL Non-Tax Revenue for the Fiscal Year			
Lower Quartile		$166,050	
Median/Agency Value	**$801,795**	**$890,212**	**N/A**
Upper Quartile		$2,518,775	
Percentage of Total Operating Expenditures within the Following Categories*			
Personnel Services	54%	55%	
Operating Expenses	35%	36%	**N/A**
Capital Expense not in CIP	7%	3%	
Other	5%	6%	
Revenue as a percentage of Total Operating Expenditures			
Lower Quartile		6%	13%
Median/Agency Value	**27%**	**22%**	**27%**
Upper Quartile		40%	45%
Operating Expenditures per Capita			
Lower Quartile		$12	$43
Median/Agency Value	**$23**	**$26**	**$79**
Upper Quartile		$58	$153
Operating Expenditures per Acre of Parkland			
Lower Quartile		$1,571	$2,924
Median/Agency Value	**$1,682**	**$2,736**	**$6,750**
Upper Quartile		$4,517	$16,020
Operating Expenditures per FTE			
Lower Quartile		$67,564	$67,050
Median/Agency Value	**$68,241**	**$81,914**	**$93,230**
Upper Quartile		$112,221	$131,008
Non-Tax Revenue per Capita			
Lower Quartile		$2	$7
Median/Agency Value	**$6**	**$7**	**$20**
Upper Quartile		$14	$51

*Average values used

2.3.6 Capital Budget

Table 2.15 shows capital budget comparisons for the benchmark communities. These numbers indicate a capital budget of $700,000 for Boone County Parks, compared to a benchmark median of $575,000. Because this master plan is intended to provide direction for capital improvements, the 5-year capital budget has not yet been determined for Boone County. The median of the benchmark communities is $4 million. The capital expenditures per capita in Boone County were $5, compared to the benchmark of $4.

Table 2.15: Capital Budget

CAPITAL BUDGET	Boone County	Benchmark
Total Capital Park Budget for Next 5-Years		
Lower Quartile		$868,750
Median/Agency Value	**TBD**	**$4,039,335**
Upper Quartile		$21,239,771
Total Capital Budget this Fiscal Year		
Lower Quartile		$187,500
Median/Agency Value	**$697,645**	**$575,000**
Upper Quartile		$2,190,012
Total Capital Costs per Capita this Fiscal Year		
Lower Quartile		$1
Median/Agency Value	**$5**	**$4**
Upper Quartile		$19

2.3.7 Programs

The list of program categories in Table 2.16 includes the percentage of benchmark departments that offer each type of program. The table also indicates whether Boone County offers programs of each type. The table is separated into two groups of programs: "Activities" which include programs for all users and "Out-of-School Time Activities" which include programs for specific user groups (children, seniors, etc.).

Table 2.16: Programs

PROGRAMS	Boone County	Benchmark	National
Activities			
Social recreation events	X	75%	86%
Themed special events	X	72%	87%
Team sports	X	64%	87%
Health and wellness education		64%	80%
Natural and cultural history activities		64%	55%
Fitness enhancement classes	X	61%	79%
Safety training		58%	71%
Racquet sports	X	58%	66%
Individual sports	X	56%	72%
Performing arts	X	50%	61%
Aquatics		47%	71%
Trips and tours		47%	62%
Cultural crafts	X	47%	60%
Visual arts		47%	57%
Martial arts		44%	60%
Golf	X*	36%	48%
Out-of-School Time (OST) Activities			
Summer camp	X	69%	82%
Specific senior programs	X	56%	78%
Programs for people with disabilities		47%	62%
Specific teen programs		33%	66%
After school programs	X	31%	56%
Preschool		19%	37%
Before school programs		11%	21%
Full daycare		3%	9%

*Performed by another county department

Boone County currently offers a variety of programming. The department offers many of the activity types to some degree with the notable exceptions of *health and wellness education, natural and cultural history activities,* and *safety training.*

The list of out-of-school time programs shows that Boone County has offerings in some of these categories. The most notable category not offered is *programs for people with disabilities*, which were offered by 47% of benchmark communities and 62% of departments throughout the country.

2.3.8 Facilities

Table 2.17 provides a list of recreational facilities with a mark to indicate whether the facility is offered by Boone County. This table also shows the percentage of benchmark communities that offer the facility. Boone County offers most outdoor facilities offered by a majority of benchmark departments. The notable exception is a swimming pool (38%). Boone County does not offer any indoor facilities. A community center is offered by 59% of benchmark departments, and a recreation center is offered by 50% of the benchmarks. A nature center is offered by 47% of benchmark communities.

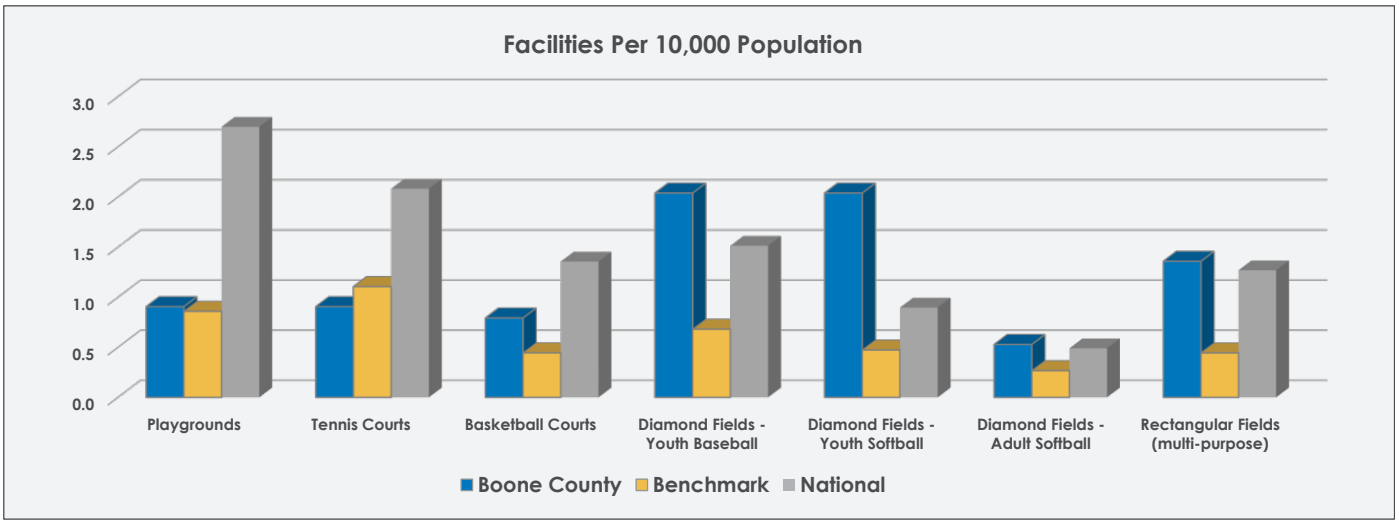
Table 2.17: Facilities

FACILITIES	Boone County	Benchmark	National
Outdoor Activity Areas			
Playgrounds	X	94%	94%
Basketball courts	X	78%	86%
Diamond fields: baseball - youth	X	75%	78%
Diamond fields: softball fields - adult	X	66%	67%
Tennis courts (outdoor only)	X	66%	80%
Dog park	X	63%	59%
Diamond fields: softball fields - youth	X	59%	61%
Rectangular fields: multi-purpose	X	56%	66%
Diamond fields: baseball - adult	X	56%	55%
Rectangular fields: football field	X	44%	38%
Rectangular fields: soccer field - adult	X	41%	41%
Skate park	X	38%	26%
Swimming pools (outdoor only)		38%	52%
Rectangular fields: soccer field - youth	X	38%	48%
Golf course (18-hole)	X*	22%	N/A
Community gardens	X	19%	46%
Multipurpose synthetic field		19%	N/A
Rectangular fields: lacrosse field	X	13%	12%
Rectangular fields: cricket field		9%	9%
Ice rink (outdoor only)		6%	17%
Diamond fields: tee-ball		6%	N/A
Indoor Activity Areas			
Community centers		59%	58%
Recreation centers		50%	57%
Nature centers		47%	28%
Performance amphitheater		28%	33%
Senior centers		19%	40%
Competitive swimming pools		19%	N/A
Gyms		16%	N/A
Therapeutic pool		16%	N/A
Stadiums		13%	18%
Fitness center		9%	N/A
Arena		6%	9%
Non-competitive pool (leisure only)		6%	N/A
Ice rink		3%	16%
Teen centers		3%	13%
Indoor track		3%	N/A

*Performed by another county department

A comparison of population per facility provides a way to evaluate the existing supply of each type of amenity compared to other communities. This comparison can help to identify facilities that the county might want to add in the future. Tables 2.18 and 2.19 show the numeric values for these and other facilities plus upper and lower quartile values. A lower value indicates a higher level of service. Figure 2.2.[2] shows facilities per 10,000 population (converted from the numbers in Table 2.18) for playgrounds, tennis courts (outdoor), basketball courts (outdoor), ballfields (youth baseball, youth softball, and adult softball diamonds), and rectangular fields.

Figure 2.2: Facilities Per 10,000 Population



Boone County has 12 playgrounds at 10 different parks throughout the county. The resulting population per playground is 11,036, which is similar level of service to the benchmark median. Boone County offers 12 tennis courts at three parks for a per population number of 9,460, similar to the benchmark median (9,038). The county has a higher level of service than the benchmark median for basketball courts with 9.5 at six parks or 12,613 population per facility, compared to 22,467 for the benchmark median.

Table 2.18 also shows population per facility values for three types of diamond fields. Boone County provides a higher level of service for each type of ballfield. The county also has a higher level of service for multipurpose rectangular fields with 8,277 population per facility, compared to the benchmark of 22,500. However, many of the fields offered by Parks are on land owned by others and scattered throughout the county.

Boone County formerly offered a swimming pool at Union Park. The two dog parks in Boone County offer a higher level of service than the benchmarks, and the two community garden locations provide a much higher level of service than the benchmarks.

Boone County offers no indoor facilities, but benchmarks are provided for reference in Table 2.19. Based on these median benchmarks, the county population could likely accommodate one of each facility and three gymnasiums.

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

Table 2.18: Population Per Facility (Outdoor)

POPULATION PER FACILITY (OUTDOOR)	Boone County	Benchmark	National
Playgrounds			
Lower Quartile		7,580	
Median/Agency Value	**11,036**	**11,640**	**3,706**
Upper Quartile		25,587	
Tennis Courts			
Lower Quartile		5,329	
Median/Agency Value	**11,036**	**9,038**	**4,803**
Upper Quartile		17,881	
Basketball Courts			
Lower Quartile		8,983	
Median/Agency Value	**12,613**	**22,467**	**7,375**
Upper Quartile		49,993	
Diamond Fields - Youth Baseball			
Lower Quartile		6,303	
Median/Agency Value	**4,905**	**14,691**	**6,608**
Upper Quartile		24,244	
Diamond Fields - Youth Softball			
Lower Quartile		11,494	
Median/Agency Value	**4,905**	**21,143**	**11,160**
Upper Quartile		61,666	
Diamond Fields - Adult Softball			
Lower Quartile		22,671	
Median/Agency Value	**18,919**	**37,490**	**20,412**
Upper Quartile		51,464	
Rectangular Fields (multi-purpose)			
Lower Quartile		6,090	
Median/Agency Value	**7,357**	**22,500**	**7,878**
Upper Quartile		43,033	
Multipurpose Synthetic Field			
Lower Quartile		10,461	
Median/Agency Value	**N/A**	**24,436**	**N/A**
Upper Quartile		155,460	
Swimming Pools			
Lower Quartile		39,693	
Median/Agency Value	**N/A**	**64,466**	**36,266**
Upper Quartile		104,612	
Skate Park			
Lower Quartile		80,173	
Median/Agency Value	**132,434**	**119,178**	**49,250**
Upper Quartile		235,528	
Dog Park			
Lower Quartile		56,463	
Median/Agency Value	**66,217**	**96,700**	**44,330**
Upper Quartile		186,250	
Community Gardens			
Lower Quartile		81,196	
Median/Agency Value	**66,217**	**193,399**	**29,750**
Upper Quartile		238,750	

Table 2.19: Population Per Facility (Indoor)

POPULATION PER FACILITY (INDOOR)	Boone County	Benchmark	National
Recreation Centers			
Lower Quartile		31,042	
Median/Agency Value	**N/A**	**69,850**	**30,470**
Upper Quartile		107,779	
Community Centers			
Lower Quartile		22,050	
Median/Agency Value	**N/A**	**58,750**	**28,750**
Upper Quartile		106,393	
Senior Centers			
Lower Quartile		47,000	
Median/Agency Value	**N/A**	**89,866**	**58,092**
Upper Quartile		160,912	
Gymnasiums			
Lower Quartile		21,675	
Median/Agency Value	**N/A**	**44,933**	**N/A**
Upper Quartile		92,807	
Competitive Swimming Pools			
Lower Quartile		84,216	
Median/Agency Value	**N/A**	**113,030**	**N/A**
Upper Quartile		174,444	
Nature Centers			
Lower Quartile		125,000	
Median/Agency Value	**N/A**	**184,998**	**104,180**
Upper Quartile		221,661	

3

INVENTORY OF PARKS, FACILITIES, AND PROGRAMS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter of the Master Plan identifies existing conditions of Parks facilities in Boone County. It begins with a description of park classifications to provide an understanding of their functions. An inventory of park facilities follows, including park locations, facilities offered, and other observations. The chapter concludes with an inventory of programs offered by Boone County Parks.

3.2 Parkland and Recreation Area Classification System

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

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 to fit Boone County from "Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines," published by the National Recreation and Park Association in 1987 and 1995.

3.3 Inventory of Boone County Parks and Recreation Areas

Residents of Boone County 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 Boone County as well as the classification for each location.

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 offered by the City of Boone County. The following text provides a detailed narrative summary of these facilities. Aerial photos of each park can be found in Appendix B.

Table 3.1: Park Classifications

PARK CLASSIFICATION	TYPICAL SIZE and SERVICE AREA	DEVELOPED ACRES/1,000 POPULATION	TYPICAL FEATURES/ FACILITIES	DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS
Local Space				
Mini Park (MP)	Size: Less than 2 acres of developed parkland; less than 3 total acres 1/2 mile service area 10-minute walk	Combined with Neighborhood Park	Typical facilities may include playgrounds, small multi-use court area, and benches.	Often provided in association with school facilities. Some developed as part of residential developments. May also provide open space as needed to serve high density neighborhoods where households have limited yard space.
Neighborhood Park (NP)	Size: 2-10 acres of developed parkland; 3-15 total acres ½-1.0 mile service area 10-minute walk To serve a population up to 3,000	0.2 Acre/1,000	Suited for intense development Typical facilities include athletic fields, game courts, playgrounds, drinking fountains, picnic areas/shelters, and walking trails.	Easily accessible to neighborhood population (safe walking and bike distance). May be developed as park/school facility or in conjunction with service agency facility. May not be needed in areas served locally by larger parks.
Community Park (CP)	10-30+ acres of developed parkland; 20 or more total acres 1.0-2.0 mile service radius 5-minute drive To serve several neighborhoods with populations up to 20,000	0.6 Acres/1,000	Typical facilities include all those listed for Neighborhood Parks plus; major swimming pool, field or game court complex, major recreation or community center, etc. May include an area of natural quality for picnicking, walking, etc. May have an active or passive recreation focus or a balance of both - parks with passive focus will have a higher percentage of undeveloped land	Capable of providing a range of intensive recreational activities; or, provides one or two activities that attract users from multi-neighborhood areas. Park should ideally be located near schools. May meet Neighborhood Park needs for users within a 10-minute walk.
Special Use (SU)	Serves community-wide area	N/A (but may contribute to total open space requirement)	Area for specialized or single purpose recreational activities such as plazas, major pools, riverfront park areas, golf courses, athletic complexes, indoor facilities, etc.	Area should be located to meet the specific needs of the intended use.
Open Space (OS)	N/A	N/A (but contributes to total open space requirement)	Special use areas of low or limited development. Includes undeveloped areas, urban greenspaces, and small designated natural areas. May include urban greenspaces (mowed and landscaped areas) of any size. These areas are considered developed but have predominantly passive uses, few structures, and limited impervious areas. Typical facilities include walking/hiking trails, picnic areas, gardens, and open grass areas.	Includes undeveloped properties that may be developed in the future. May also function as small Nature Parks. Educational opportunities desirable in developed or undeveloped areas.

Table 3.1: Park Classifications (Continued)

PARK CLASSIFICATION	TYPICAL SIZE and SERVICE AREA	DEVELOPED ACRES/1,000 POPULATION	TYPICAL FEATURES/ FACILITIES	DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS
Regional Space				
Regional Park (RP)	Size: 50+ acres of developed parkland; 100 or more total acres 3-5 mile service radius 10-minute drive Travel time within 10 minutes (potentially longer depending on amenities) To serve most of the city but located regionally	1.3 Acres/1,000 (Developed) 10.0 Acres/1000 (Total)	Large properties that contain some active recreation facilities and a large percentage of natural or geographical features. Should include both active and passive features. Target size of 100 or more acres with up to 50% developed for recreation. Should be located near major roads. Destination-oriented parks. May contain picnic areas, any of the active elements found in local space, regional aquatic facilities, and regional indoor facilities. Should connect to linear park and trail system.	Capable of providing a range of specific recreational facilities May include unique natural areas of ecological interest. May meet smaller park needs for users within those service areas. May be located in rural areas but should be readily accessible to most of the city and county population. Servce multiple jurisdictions. May serve population outside of the county as well.
Nature Parks or Preserves (NatP)	Size as needed to protect the resource	N/A (but contributes to total open space requirement)	Majority of park to remain in its natural state (less than 20% developed) Facilities should focus on education by use of "nature activities" and should reinforce that philosophy by offering habitat enhancement, trails, nature centers, and interpretive signage. Should also include parking and restrooms.	The park should be of sufficient size to protect the natural resource and provide a buffer from offsite conditions. Should include unique natural areas with ecological interest. Typical size should be over 50 acres for management efficiency and to promote ecosystem services.
State Parks (SP)	Size as needed to protect natural resources of State or regional significance	N/A	Majority of park to remain in its natural state. The park should be of sufficient size to protect the natural resource and provide a buffer from offsite conditions.	Should include unique natural areas with ecological interest, lakes, or other features of state or regional interest. Serve state-wide area or beyond. Size will vary based on the area required to protect the resource.

3.4 Neighborhood Parks

A Neighborhood Park is a small but highly developed park located within a short walking (10-minutes) 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.

3.4.1 Fox Run Park (5.2 acres) – Neighborhood Park

Site Location

Fox Run Park is located just south of Boone Links Golf Course, in the Oakbrook Neighborhood. It has vehicular access off Woodside Drive, and two pedestrian access points off Fieldview Circle and Ridgewood Court.

Existing Facilities

- Small practice diamond field with backstop
- Playground with swings (2 tot swings, 2 belt swings)
- Little Free Library
- 3 Benches
- 2 Single table picnic shelters
- Basketball goal in parking lot

Park Issues

- Small sections of sidewalk need replacing
- Playground has accessibility issues, small, and lacks edging
- Some drainage issues along parts of sidewalk and grass areas
- No lighting on site
- Limited features
- No park entrance sign (either entrance)
- Main entrance is difficult to find

3.4.2 Oakbrook Park (4.5 acres) – Neighborhood Park

Site Location

Located off Oakbrook Drive between Holbrook Lane and Shady Cove Lane. Oakbrook Creek runs along the west and southwest borders of the park.

Existing Facilities

- Playground with swings (2 tot swings, 4 belt swings)
- Small rectangular field
- Sand volleyball court
- Striped & paved parking lot
- Single table picnic shelter
- Bike rack
- Little Free Library
- Drinking fountain
- Parking lot – 19 spaces

Park Issues

- No lighting on site
- No play equipment for 2-5 year-olds
- Some drainage issues in parking area

Table 3.2: Parks and Recreation Resource Inventory

Boone County Parks Inventory

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	Acreage		Athletic Fields					Game Courts					Outdoor Facilities					Trails (Mi)		Natural Areas			Passive Recreation							Support		Special Feature/Notes
		Total	Developed	Small Diamond	Large Diamond	Playfield (Backstop)	Small Rectangular	Large Rectangular	Basketball Courts	Pickleball Courts	Shuffleboard Courts	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts	Playgrounds	Fitness Equipment	Skate Parks	Horseshoe Pits	Disc Golf (Holes)	Paved	Unpaved	Fishing Access	Lake/Pond/River	Natural/Wooded Area	Dog Parks	Boat Ramp	Community Gardens	Stage or Amphitheater	Large Shelters	Medium Shelters	Gazebos/Small Shelters	Restrooms	Parking	
Boone County Parks																																	
Neighborhood Parks																																	
Fox Run	Neighborhood	5.2	2.9	1		1			0.5					1									X									0	Parking on court
North Pointe Park	Neighborhood	4.9	4.0											1					0.3											1		5	
Oakbrook Park	Neighborhood	4.5	2.3				1						1	1									X									19	
Pete's Park	Mini	1.0	1.0											1																		0	
Petersburg Community Center and Park	Neighborhood	1.5	1.5	1					2					1									X						1			50	
Subtotal - Neighborhood Parks		**16.9**	**11.7**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**2.5**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0.3**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**74**	
Community and Regional Parks																																	
Boone Woods Park	Community	44.9	27.3					2	2	2	4	6	1	2			8	18					X				1	2			2	117	
Central Park & Arboretum	Regional	121.5	82.5	1	3			6	1			4		1					2.4	0.5	X	X	X					2			2	593	
England/Idlewild Park and Dog Park	Regional	289.6	92.5	6	3			2	2					1	1			24	1.8	6.0	X	X	X	1		1		3				446	Bike Park, MTB trails, Memorial
Giles Conrad Park	Community	46.0	18.8						1					1	1				1.8				X						1	1		29	
Walton Community Park	Community	29.5	18.9		1			1	2			2	1	1				9	0.7	0.1			X	1				4		1	1	183	
Subtotal - Community Parks		**531.4**	**240.0**	**7**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**11**	**8**	**2**	**4**	**12**	**2**	**6**	**2**	**0**	**8**	**51**	**6.7**	**6.6**	**2**	**2**	**5**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**11**	**1**	**2**	**5**	**1,368**	
Nature Parks/Natural Areas																																	
Boone Cliffs Nature Preserve	Nature	74.8	0.0																	1.7			X									GR	Trailhead
Camp Ernst Lake	Nature	65.6	20.7					1													X	X	X		1							GR	
Comargo Hunt Park	Nature	132.6	0.0																	3.0			X									0	
Conservancy Park Belleview	Nature	44.5	4.7																	1.3	X	X	X							2		GR	
Dinsmore Woods Nature Preserve	Nature	104.5	0.8																	1.3												0	
Gunpowder Creek (Sperti Ln) Park	Nature	123.0	2.4											1						1.2		X	X					1				10	
Middle Creek Park	Nature	318.7	4.7																	5.6			X									GR	
Petersburg River Park	Open Space	3.6	1.0																		X	X	X									0	
Shor Lake Park	Open Space	4.9	2.4																		X	X	X									GR	
Union Park	Open Space	45.8	7.1																							1						26	
Valley Orchard Farms	Undeveloped	94.0	1.5																			X	X									0	Barn, No public access
Waller-Stephenson Mill Park	Nature	184.8	7.3																	2.4												380	
Subtotal - Nature Parks/Natural Areas		**1,196.9**	**52.6**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0.0**	**16.5**	**4**	**6**	**9**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**416**	
Special Use Parks																																	
Skate Park	Special Use	N/A	N/A													1																Constructed as partnership between BCP and Florence	
Subtotal - Special Use Parks		**0.0**	**0.0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	
Fields Maintained by BCP																																	
Christ Chapel	Special Use	1.6	1.6	1																												N/A	
Cooper Soccer Fields	Special Use	7.7	7.7					2																								N/A	
Eagle Manufacturing	Special Use	6.4	6.4	3																												N/A	
Erpenbeck Elementary	Special Use	0.9	0.9	1																												N/A	
Florence Baptist Church Mt. Zion	Special Use	5.6	5.6	2				1																								N/A	
Florence Lions	Special Use	2.2	2.2	1																												N/A	
Hebron Cemetery Field	Special Use	2.9	2.9	1			1																									N/A	
Immanuel United Methodist Church	Special Use	1.9	1.9	1																												N/A	
Kelly Elementary	Special Use	7.6	7.6	3				1																								N/A	
Lincoln Woods Park Fields	Special Use	3.2	3.2	2																												N/A	
Ockermann Elementary	Special Use	3.1	3.1	1				1																								N/A	
RA Jones Middle School	Special Use	3.8	3.8	2																												N/A	
Subtotal - Other Fields		**47.0**	**47.0**	**18**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	
Total - Boone County Parks		**1,792.2**	**351.3**	**27**	**7**	**1**	**2**	**17**	**10.5**	**2**	**4**	**12**	**3**	**12**	**2**	**1**	**8**	**51**	**6.9**	**23.2**	**6**	**8**	**17**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**12**	**2**	**5**	**6**	**1,858**	

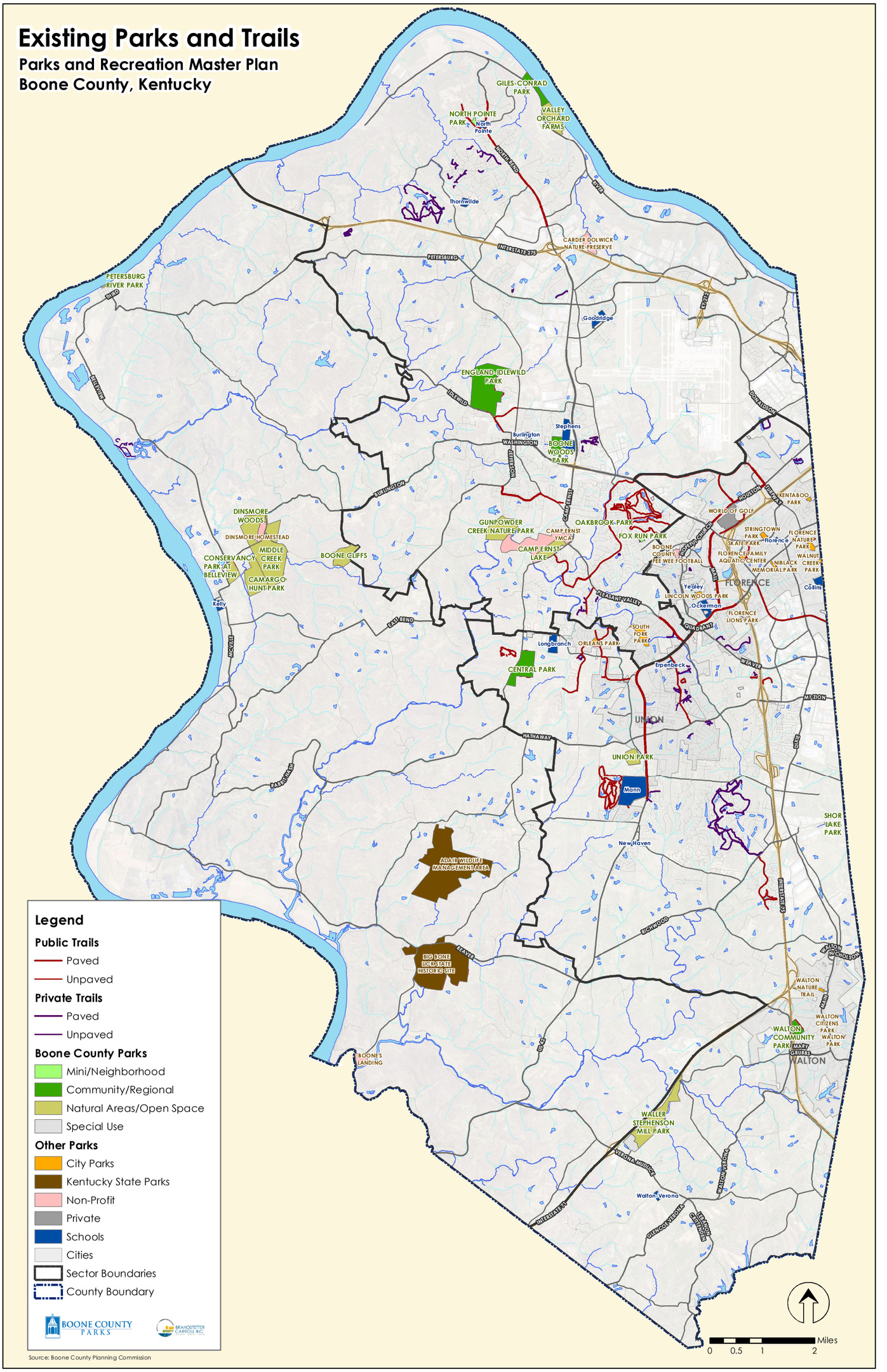


Figure 3.1: Existing Parks and Trails

3.4.3 Pete's Park (1.0 acre) – Mini Park

Site Location

Located off Nicholas Street between Washington Street and Gallatin Street, just east of the Boone County Fairgrounds.

Existing Facilities

- Swing set (4 belt swings)
- 3 benches

Park Issues

- Limited features
- No parking

3.4.4 Petersburg Community Center & Park (1.5 acres) – Neighborhood Park

Site Location

The community center is located near the corner of Petersburg Road and Highway 20 (3rd Street). Nearby, along the banks of the Ohio River, Petersburg River Park is accessed from Front Street.

Existing Facilities

- Playground & 2 swing sets (2 tot swings, 2 belt swings)
- Picnic shelter with 4 tables
- Diamond practice field
- 2 full basketball courts (undersized)
- Community center (rental facility)
- Parking lot – 50 spaces (5 ADA)

Park Issues

- Ballfield is overgrown
- Connectivity between park and space along Ohio River (Petersburg River Park)
- No park entrance sign

3.5 Community Parks

Community Parks are larger than Neighborhood Parks; these spaces serve multiple neighborhoods and offer a wider variety of facilities. Community Parks should be conveniently located (approximately a five-minute drive) and easily accessible to people. They should also provide facilities intended to occupy visitors for extended periods of time (e.g., field or game court complex, disc golf, etc.). Boone County offers three community and two regional parks.

3.5.1 Boone Woods Park (44.9 acres) – Community Park

Site Location

This park is located off the Burlington Pike along Veterans Way, near the R.C. Durr YMCA.

Existing Facilities

- 2 large rectangular fields

- 2 basketball courts (lighted)
- 2 pickleball courts
- 4 shuffleboard courts (lighted)
- 6 tennis courts (lighted)
- 1 volleyball court (lighted)
- 2 playgrounds
  - Lower – 1 large, one small structure, 10 swings (4 tot, 4 belt, 2 adaptive)
  - Upper – Climbing structures, 6 belt swings
- 8 horseshoe pits
- Disc golf course (18 holes)
- Amphitheater (with restrooms)
- 2 large picnic shelters
- Single table shelters
- Portable toilets
- Controllable lighting around tennis court
- Bat houses provided by Organization for Bat Conservation
- Woodland natural area; bridge crossing over creek bed
- Parking lot – 117 spaces (5 ADA)
- Gravel parking lot (near pickleball)

Park Issues

- Poor quality sidewalks – cracked, buckling, narrow
- Pickleball courts are difficult to access from parking lot when gate is closed
- Play areas have inadequate shade, sun-damaged equipment; secondary structures are rusted & unsafe
- Poor drainage and lack of accessible sidewalk at tennis courts
- No lighting at pickleball courts
- No accessible seating at amphitheater
- Lack of accessibility at restrooms
- No accessible walkways to some facilities (shelters, pickleball courts, playgrounds)
- No ramp to access stage
- Lack of edging at playgrounds

3.5.2 Giles Conrad Park (46 acres) – Community Park

Site Location

This park is located along the Ohio River, accessible via two separate entrances off River Road.

Existing Facilities

- Basketball half court
- Playground & Swing sets
- Parcourse Fit Circuit fitness equipment
- Paved trail (1.8 miles)
- Pergola (on concrete slab)
- Medium picnic shelter with electric (paved floor)
- Portable toilets
- Parking lot – 29 spaces (4 ADA)

Park Issues

- Walking trail needs resurfacing
- No lighting at parking lot
- Flooding issues – affects paved pathways & parking lot
- Bench seating & picnic table area have accessibility issues
- Playground equipment is outdated
- Fitness equipment is outdated

3.5.3 Walton Community Park (29.5 acres) – Community Park

Site Location

Interstate 75 borders Walton Community Park on the west; Bearcat Drive off Old Stephenson Mill Road provides 2 vehicular access points to the site.

Existing Facilities

- Large diamond field (260' – 300' fences)
- Large rectangular field
- 2 basketball courts (undersized)
- 2 tennis courts
- Volleyball court
- Playground – Separate age 2-5 and 5-12 structures, swings (2 belt, 1 adaptive, 1 wheelchair accessible, 1 tandem), seesaw
- Disc golf (9 holes)
- Paved trail (0.8 miles)
- Small nature path
- Dog park (separate areas for large breeds, small breeds, and agility training))
- Historic cemetery
- Restroom building
- Horseshoe pit
- Little Free Library
- Story walk signage for children

- Gazebo
- Bike rack
- 4 large shelters
- Drinking fountains
- Parking lots – 183 spaces (2 ADA)

Park Issues

- Tennis court surface is in significant disrepair
- Portions of trail need resurfacing
- Parking pavement has some cracking and areas of retention
- Disc golf needs signage
- Lack of accessibility to some features (2 shelters, drinking fountains, athletic field)
- No ADA parking at athletic fields or upper shelter
- Lacks standard Boone County Parks entrance sign

3.6 Regional Parks

Regional Parks are often larger with much of the acreage left undeveloped, and they generally draw users from a wider geographical area. Typically, Regional Parks will provide features and facilities appropriate for both active and passive recreation.

3.6.1 Central Park & Arboretum (121.5) – Regional Park

Site Location

This park is located off Camp Ernst Road in Union, KY.

Existing Facilities

- 4 diamond fields (1 small, 3 large) – all lighted
- Batting cages
- 6 large rectangular fields (1 lighted)
- 4 tennis courts (lighted)
- New playground
- Basketball court
- 2 new picnic shelters
- 2 restroom buildings
- Portable toilets
- Paved perimeter trails – 2.4 miles
- Unpaved arboretum trail – 0.5 miles
- Fishing access
- Children's garden with Little Free Library & picnic tables
- Defibrillators distributed across the site
- Arboretum: information kiosks
- GaGa ball pit
- Butterfly garden

- Striped parking with handicap spots
- Arboretum: storytelling plaques, informational signage, & wayfinding
- Parking lots – 593 spaces (33 ADA)

Park Issues

- Portions of trail need resurfacing
- Parking pavement has some cracking and areas of retention
- Lack of accessibility to some features (basketball court, drinking fountains, athletic fields) – paved walkways needed to all activity and seating areas
- Several ADA parking spaces lack paint or vertical signage, many lack walkways leading to park amenities
- Basketball court needs resurfacing

3.6.2 England/Idlewild Park & Dog Park (289.6 acres) – Regional Park

Site Location

This Regional Park is located off Idlewild Road, northwest of the Boone County Fairgrounds. The Dog Park has a separate entrance, just past Conrad Lane.

Existing Facilities

Main Park Area

- 9 diamond fields (6 small, 3 large)
- 2 basketball courts
- 2 large rectangular fields
- Playground – large age 5-12 structure, small age 2-5 structure, 10 swings (4 belt, 2 adaptive, 4 tot), track slide, balance beam, covered tables
- GaGa ball pit
- 3 large picnic shelters
- Disc golf (24 holes)
- 1.8-mile paved perimeter trail
  - Marked 5k course
- 6 miles of mountain bike trails
- Fitness equipment along trail
- Bike park
- Fishing access
- Flight memorial for crash victims
- Drinking fountains
- Portable toilets
- Parking lots – 426 spaces

Dog Park Area

- Dog park (5 separate areas – 2 for large breeds, 2 for small breeds, and 1 for agility training) – separate park entrance
- Community garden
- Parking lot – 20 spaces

Park Issues

- Main park trail needs resurfacing
- Need improved wayfinding and trailhead signage throughout site
- Age and condition of fitness equipment – no edging
- Minimal to no lighting across site
- Lack of accessibility to some features (playground, drinking fountains, athletic fields) – paved walkways needed to all activity and seating areas
- Accessibility at ballfields – paved paths needed from parking to seating areas and dugouts
- Drinking fountains are not accessible
- Parking lots need more ADA parking spaces with paint and vertical signage
- Parking at dog park needs resurfacing and restriping
- Condition of turf at dog park due to heavy use
- Some drainage issues at bike park
- More drinking fountains needed
- Lack of restrooms

3.7 Special Use Parks

These are public spaces designed for specialized or single purpose recreational activities (e.g. plaza, community center, skate park).

3.7.1 Florence-Boone County Skate Park

Site Location

This 20,000 sq. ft. skate park was developed through a partnership between the Boone Conservancy and the City of Florence. It is located on Elwing Boulevard off the Burlington Pike across Interstate 71 from the Florence Mall.

Existing Facilities

- Shelter
- Spectator area
- Emergency telephone

3.8 Natural Areas/Open Space

3.8.1 Boone Cliffs Nature Preserve (74.8 acres) – Nature Park

Site Location

This nature preserve is located in the southern part of the county, in Burlington, and is accessed off Highway 18 on Middle Creek Road.

Existing Facilities

- Nature trail (1.7 miles)
- Trailhead kiosk
- Small gravel parking lot at trailhead

Park Issues

- Not ADA compliant but adequate for intended use
- Lacks wayfinding signage

3.8.2 Camp Ernst Lake (65.6 acres) – Nature Park

Site Location

Also located in Burlington, Camp Ernst Lake is off Camp Ernst Road just north of the Camp Ernst YMCA.

Existing Facilities

- Boat ramp
- Large rectangular field
- Single table shelters
- Kiosk
- Gravel parking lot
- Fishing dock

Park Issues

- Portable toilets not ADA accessible
- Lack of trails and sidewalks – limited accessibility
- Limited features

3.8.3 Conservancy Park Belleview (44.5 acres) – Nature Park

Site Location

Conservancy Park is in the southern portion of the county, just inland east of the Ohio River. It is the site of a former gravel mine, reclaimed by the Kentucky Department of Mine Reclamation & Enforcement.

Existing Facilities

- Unpaved trail (1.3 miles)
- Shelter with picnic tables

Park Issues

- Lack of accessible parking
- No accessible walkways to features

3.8.4 Dinsmore Woods Nature Preserve (104.5 acres) – Nature Park

Site Location

Adjacent to the historic Dinsmore Homestead, the Dinsmore Woods Nature Preserve is located off the Burlington Pike, east of Conservancy Park Belleview and just north of Middle Creek Park.

Existing Facilities

- Trail (1.3 miles, unpaved)

Park Issues

- No entrance signage
- Limited wayfinding/trail signage

3.8.5 Gunpowder Creek | Sperti Lane (123 acres) – Nature Park

Site Location

This Nature Park is accessed by Sperti Lane, off East Bend Road.

Existing Facilities

- Unpaved trail (1.25 miles)
- Shelter structure with restrooms (locked in winter)
- Playground
- Little Free Library
- Parking lot – 10 spaces

Park Issues

- Playground is not disabled-inclusive
- No designated ADA parking
- No lighting at site
- No trailhead signage

3.8.6 Middle Creek Park (318.7 acres) – Nature Park

Site Location

Middle Creek Park is located just south of the historic Dinsmore Homestead and is accessible from the Burlington Pike.

Existing Facilities

- Equestrian trails (5.6 miles)
- Covered picnic tables (one with a grill)

- Portable toilet
- Gravel parking lot

Park Issues

- Site conditions are not ADA accessible
- Limited wayfinding

3.8.7 Shor Lake Park (4.9 acres) – Open Space

Site Location

This Open Space is located in Walton, bounded by Duro Way and Shorland Drive.

Existing Facilities

- Fishing pond (stocked)
- 2 covered picnic tables
- ADA accessible parking area

Park Issues

- Overgrown vegetation around lake make it difficult to access fishing

3.8.8 Union Park (45.8 acres) – Open Space

Site Location

Union Park is located near U.S. Highway 42 off Old Union Road, just south of Hathaway Road.

Existing Facilities

- Paved parking lot
- Community Garden

Park Issues

- Limited features
- Parking lot needs resurfacing

3.8.9 Valley Orchard Farms (94 acres) - Undeveloped

Site Location

This property was a family-owned & operated farm in Hebron, located off River Road in the northeast portion on the county. It was acquired by Boone County Parks in 2002 but never developed.

Existing Facilities

- Barn
- Open field

Park Issues

- Undeveloped – lacks facilities
- Previously proposed as an athletic complex

3.8.10 Waller-Stephenson Mill Park (184.8 acres) – Nature Park

Site Location

This park is located off Verona-Mudlick Road on the east side of Interstate 71 behind the Walton-Verona Athletic Complex.

Existing Facilities

- 2.4 miles of nature trails
- Portable toilet

Park Issues

- Wayfinding needed to and within park

3.9 Other Fields Maintained by Boone County Parks

Boone County Parks maintains several athletic fields throughout the county that are owned by other organizations. These supplement those offered by Boone County Parks but a distributed at many different locations and vary significantly in condition. The distributed nature of the fields makes maintenance challenging for staff, and lack of ownership by the department reduces investment in facility improvements. These fields are listed at the bottom of Table 3.2.

3.10 Facility Summary

The table (Table 3.3) below provides a summary of the recreation facilities offered by the Boone County Parks Department.

Table 3.3: Recreation Facility Summary

Athletic Fields	#
Small Diamond	27
Large Diamond	7
Playfield	1
Small Rectangular	2
Large Rectangular	16
Game Courts	**#**
Basketball	9.5
Tennis	12
Shuffleboard	4
Pickleball	2
Volleyball	3
Outdoor Facilities	**#**
Playgrounds	11
Fitness Equipment	2
Skate Park	1
Horseshoe Pits	8
Disc Golf (Holes)	51

Trails (Miles)	#
Paved	6.9
Unpaved	23.2
Natural Areas (# of Locations)	**#**
Fishing Access	6
Lake/Pond	8
Natural/Wooded Area	17
Passive Recreation	**#**
Dog Parks	2
Boat Ramp	1
Community Gardens	2
Stage or Amphitheater	1
Picnic Shelters	14
Gazebos/Small Shelters	5
Support Facilities	**#**
Restrooms	6

3.11 Schools

In addition to the sites offered by Boone County, elementary schools throughout the city offer some recreation areas for residents. School sites – particularly at the primary level - tend to offer amenities similar to a Neighborhood Park. However, they can have more limited features, and hours of access are sometimes restricted. Even so, these facilities can help serve the recreational needs of residents, particularly those living close to the school.

The following schools offer recreational amenities:

- Burlington Elementary – Playground & basketball court
- Collins Elementary – Playground & basketball court
- Erpenbeck Elementary – Playground & basketball court
- Florence Elementary – Playground, 1 full & 1/2 basketball court
- Goodridge Elementary – Playground, multipurpose rectangular field, & 1/2 basketball court
- Kelly Elementary – Playground & basketball court
- Longbranch Elementary - Playground & basketball court
- Mann Elementary – Playground & 1/2 basketball court
- New Haven Elementary – Playground & 2 basketball courts
- North Pointe Elementary – Playground, multipurpose rectangular field & 2 basketball courts
- Ockerman Elementary – Playground & basketball court
- Stephen Elementary – Playground & basketball court
- Thornwilde Elementary – Playground & basketball court
- Walton-Verona Elementary – Playground
- Yealey Elementary – Playground & basketball court

3.12 Other Parks

There are many other parks located in Boone County that do not fall within the inventory Boone County Parks. Table 3.4 identifies all the available park and open space sites outside the Boone County system. These areas provide additional facilities and amenities which can help meet the needs of Boone County residents; for example, a number of locations offer trails to the public. While these other parks and open spaces may not serve everyone across the county in the same way, they are important for understanding how well resident needs are being met and necessary to outline in a full assessment.

3.13 Programs Inventory

Quality recreational programming can be a critical component of building a healthy community. Citizens of all ages seek to enrich their lives through productive use of leisure time, which means providing a full variety of recreational activities is essential. Quality recreational programs also promote societal values such as civic pride and improve a community's attractiveness to parents and business leaders.

3.13.1 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, Boone County Parks is targeting these components.

Appendix C also 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 Boone County.

Core Program Components

The summary below uses the following abbreviations after each bullet point to describe the extent to which Boone County is providing the core program components:

(Y) = Yes, offered by Boone County Parks & Recreation

(L) = Limited, only 1 or 2 programs offered by Boone County

(O) = Offered by partner organizations in Boone County

(N) = No, not offered in Boone County

1. Broad Appeal

Parks and community centers develop broad appeal by conducting activities and special events for people of all ages, with varying needs and skill levels. Target groups for programs include:

- Preschool (Y)
- Elementary School Age (Y & O)
- Teens (L)
- Adults (Y)
- Seniors (Y & O)
- Intergenerational (Y)
- 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)

Boone County has not yet completed a detailed analysis of the costs of programs. This analysis would determine the cost of each program per participant in terms of dollars and staff time, then compare those numbers to program outcomes and revenues. This information can be especially useful for evaluating collaborations with partner organizations.

3. Coordination

Program and service offerings should be developed through coordination across the community, thus ensuring department activities and programs complement rather than duplicate what is already provided elsewhere by other organizations or agencies.

Boone County coordinates with several partner organizations to ensure complementary services. For example, the department coordinates with athletic groups, such as Kings Hammer Soccer, Northern Kentucky Youth Association (NKYA), and Northern Kentucky Baseball (NKB). The department also coordinates with Boone County Schools, Walton-Verona Schools, the cities of Florence and Walton, several churches, and local business for provision of facilities and programs. Though this level of collaboration is positive, these partnerships could be improved and expanded.

4. Settings and Times

Activities should be conducted in a variety of settings and formats, both formal and informal. Programs should also be offered at a range of times to best 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 (Y)
- Progressive Skill Levels (Y)
- Drop-In (Y)
- Special Events (Y)
- Special Interest Clubs (Y)
- Leagues and/or Tournaments (Y)
- Outings and Field Trips (N)
- After School Programs (O)
- Camps (Y)

5. Constructive Nature

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

6. Diverse Range of Activities

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

- Athletics (Y)
- Community and Annual Events (Y)
- Creative Arts (Y)
- Cultural Performances (N)
- Education, Life Skills, and Fun (Y)
- Games (L) – Seniors only
- Green Living/Environmental Education (N)
- Heritage and History (N)
- Health, Fitness, and Wellness Activities (Y)
- Health and Wellness Education (N)
- Nature/Outdoor Programs (Y)
- Performing Arts (Y)
- Volunteer Training (N)

3.13.2 Boone County Parks Program Participation

Boone County Parks provides a wide variety programs that are held at a variety of locations, including Boone Woods Park, Central Park and Arboretum, England/Idlewild Park and Dog Park, and more.

Program Participation

Table 3.4 shows the number of participants by program category from 2015 to 2019. Program participation in Boone County increased over that time period, although the trends vary by program type. Athletics have decreased the most, while special events and educational programs have increased the most over the 5-year time period.

Table 3.4: Participation Summary

Participation Summary	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	5-Year Total	5-Year Change
Athletics	1,171	1,357	969	872	696	5,065	-40.6%
Community & Annual Events	9,085	9,058	10,342	8,332	10,797	47,614	18.8%
Creative Arts	1,830	2,156	1,588	1,990	1,178	8,742	-35.6%
Education, Life Skills, & Fun	394	905	782	1,388	559	4,028	41.9%
Games	385	0	416	403	419	1,623	8.8%
Health, Fitness, & Wellness Activities	946	492	478	335	307	2,558	-67.5%
Nature/Outdoor Programs	2,336	3,252	4,127	4,667	5,533	19,915	136.9%
Performing Arts	4,773	3,517	7,551	6,074	3,107	25,022	-34.9%
Other	181	223	203	172	214	993	18.2%
Total	23,116	22,976	28,473	26,251	24,829	115,560	7.4%

4

PUBLIC INPUT

4.1 Introduction

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

1. Public meetings (open house, stakeholder groups, and events)
2. Dollar voting exercise
3. Statistically valid Parks and Recreation Survey (by ETC Institute)
4. Web-based and handout survey
5. Online engagement (powered by MindMixer)

The public engagement process is essential to identify the needs and preferences of Boone County 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 Public Meetings

This section provides a summary of public meetings (public workshop, stakeholder groups, and events) held or attended as part of the master planning process. Over 400 community members were engaged in person at these meetings, which were held between October 2019 and March 2020.

4.2.1 Public Workshop

The county conducted six public workshops (open house meeting) for the *Envision Boone County Parks 2030 Master Plan* to introduce the project to the public and to solicit feedback from the community regarding the present and future of parks and recreation in Boone County. The meetings were held as listed below. Fortunately, the open houses were completed just before the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown public meetings.

Open House Meeting Dates and Locations

- Hebron Branch Library on February 18, 2020
- Walton Senior Center on February 19, 2020
- Main Library on February 20, 2020
- Ferguson Room in Burlington on March 3, 2020
- Scheben (Union) Branch Library on March 4, 2020
- Florence Senior Center on March 5, 2020

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 with color coding for individual meetings. The map indicates that the attendees were generally well-distributed throughout Boone County with attendees generally participating in the meeting closest to their homes.

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?" Participants were able to provide their comments on the provided sheets and were encouraged to place a checkmark next to comments by others that they supported.

The three input topics were as follows:

- Parks and Facilities
- Trails and Natural Areas
- Programs and Events

A voting for improvements station provided two activities, dollar voting (see Subsection 4.2.4) and preference boards for facilities and programs. Summaries of comments in the ensuing text indicate the number of times a topic was mentioned in parentheses after the item, and comments could be counted in more than one category as many mentioned more than one topic. The full text of comments can be found in Appendix D.

Parks and Facilities

This topic represented built amenities and general recommendations for parks (Figure 4.2). Athletic fields were the subject of the largest number of comments, followed by game courts. Many athletic field comments focused on lighting, artificial turf, and tournament use. More comments described the need for multipurpose fields (soccer, football, lacrosse, etc.) than diamond fields. Most of the comments for game courts were related to pickleball.

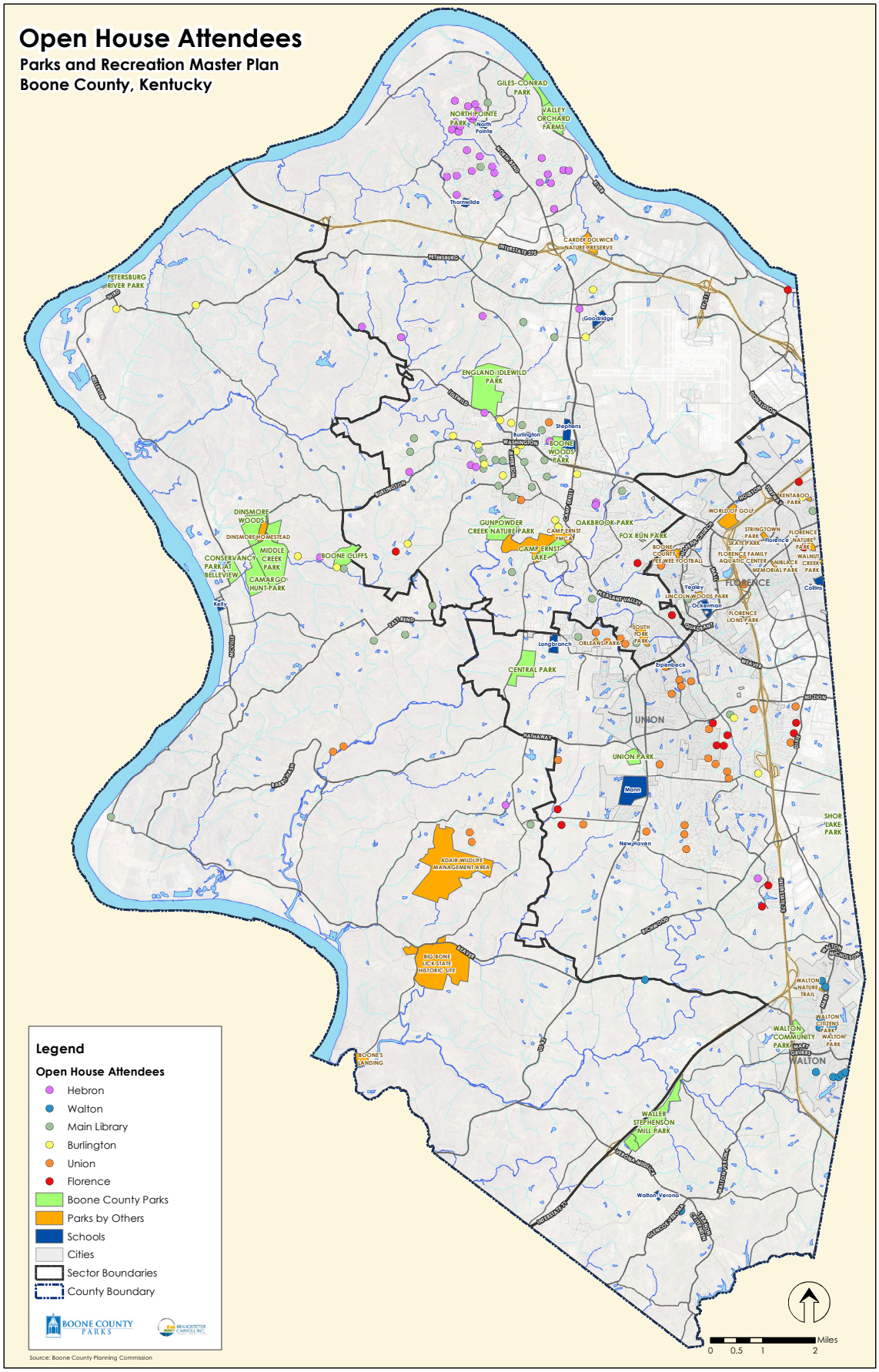
What makes them great now? (41 comments and checks)

- Facilities well-maintained
- Disc golf
- Dog parks
- Playgrounds
- Athletic fields
- Variety

What would make them better? (# of comments/checkmarks in parentheses) – 176 comments and checks

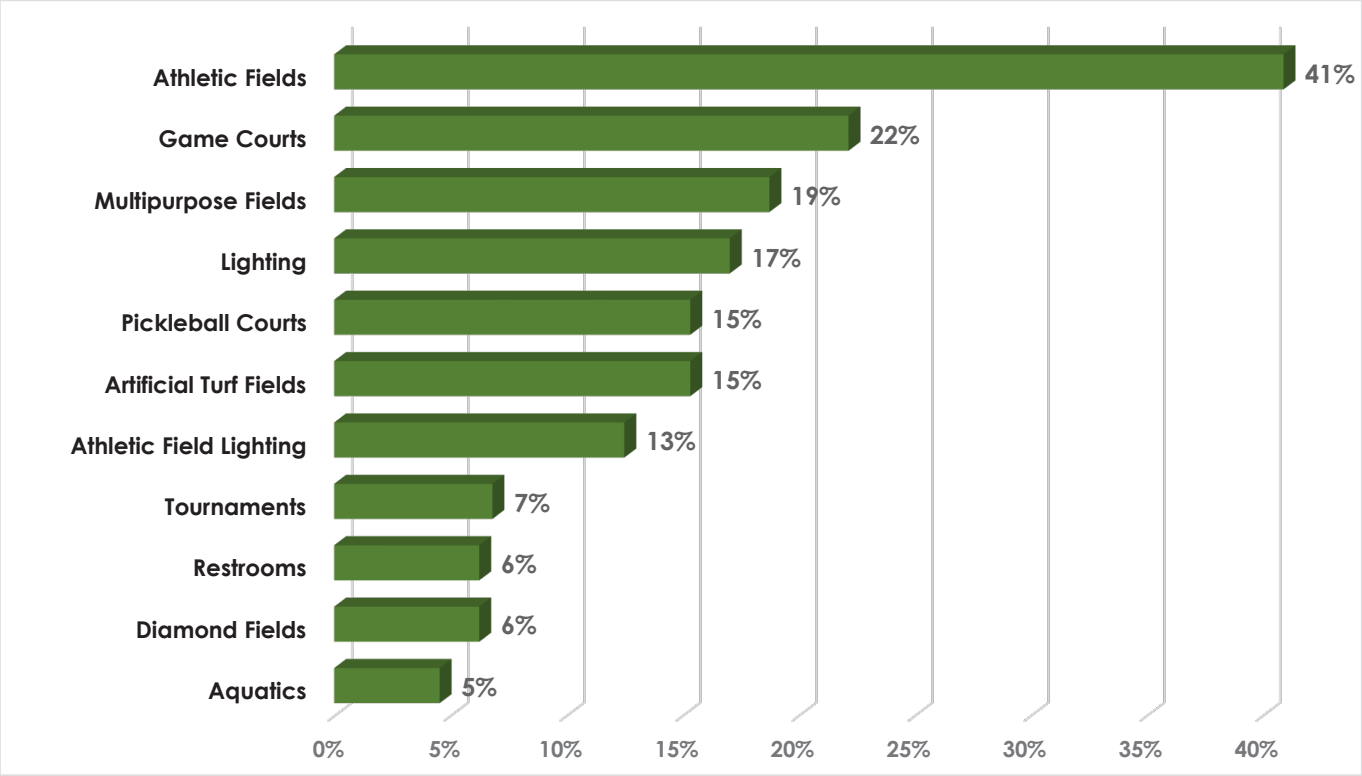
- Athletic Fields (72)
- Game Courts (39)

Figure 4.1: Public Workshop Attendee Distribution



- Multipurpose Fields (33)
- Lighting (30)
- Artificial Turf Fields (27)
- Pickleball Courts (27)
- Athletic Field Lighting (22)
- Tournaments (12)
- Diamond Fields (11)
- Restrooms (11)
- Aquatics (8)
- Dog Parks (7)
- Indoor Facilities (7)
- More or Expanded Playgrounds (7)
- Specific Locations (7)
- Parking (6)
- Splash Pad (6)
- Pickleball Gate (5)
- Soccer/Futsal Courts (5)

Figure 4.2: Most Discussed Topics – Parks and Facilities (Percentage of Comments/Checks)



Trails and Natural Areas

This station encouraged discussion of natural areas, conservation/preservation, and trails. The focus of most of the comments was on the need for more trails and better connectivity. Many comments (Figure 4.3) requested additional open space and natural areas, including acquisition of land to protect it from development and to provide wildlife habitat. Many attendees also requested more access to water, both for canoes/kayaks and fishing. Several attendees expressed a desire for equestrian facilities.

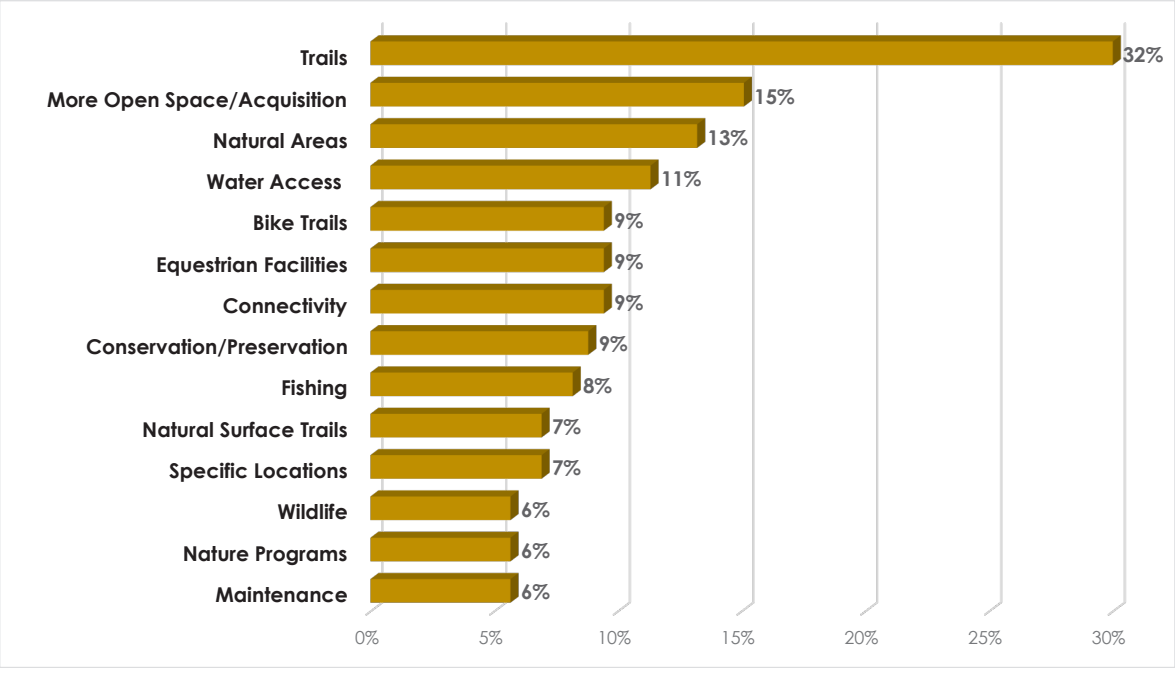
What makes them great now? (38 comments and checks)

- Well-maintained
- Diversity of trails
- Beautiful
- Access to ponds and streams

What would make them better? (# of comments/checkmarks in parentheses) – 159 comments and checks

- Trails (51)
- More Open Space/Acquisition (24)
- Natural Areas (21)
- Water Access (18)
- Connectivity (15)
- Equestrian Facilities (15)
- Bike Trails (15)
- Conservation/Preservation (14)
- Fishing (13)
- Specific Locations for Improvements or Acquisition (11)
- Natural Surface Trails (11)
- Maintenance (9)
- Nature Programs (9)
- Wildlife (9)
- Specific Trail Locations (8)
- Signage (7)
- ADA Access (6)
- Trail Maintenance (6)

Figure 4.3: Most Discussed Topics – Trails and Natural Areas (Percentage of Comments/Checks)



Programs and Events

This topic provided a location for comments about programs, including sports, nature programs, concerts, and events (Figure 4.4). In general, attendees discussed topics in need for more programs and want more nature programs and events. They also indicated the need for better marketing of program opportunities.

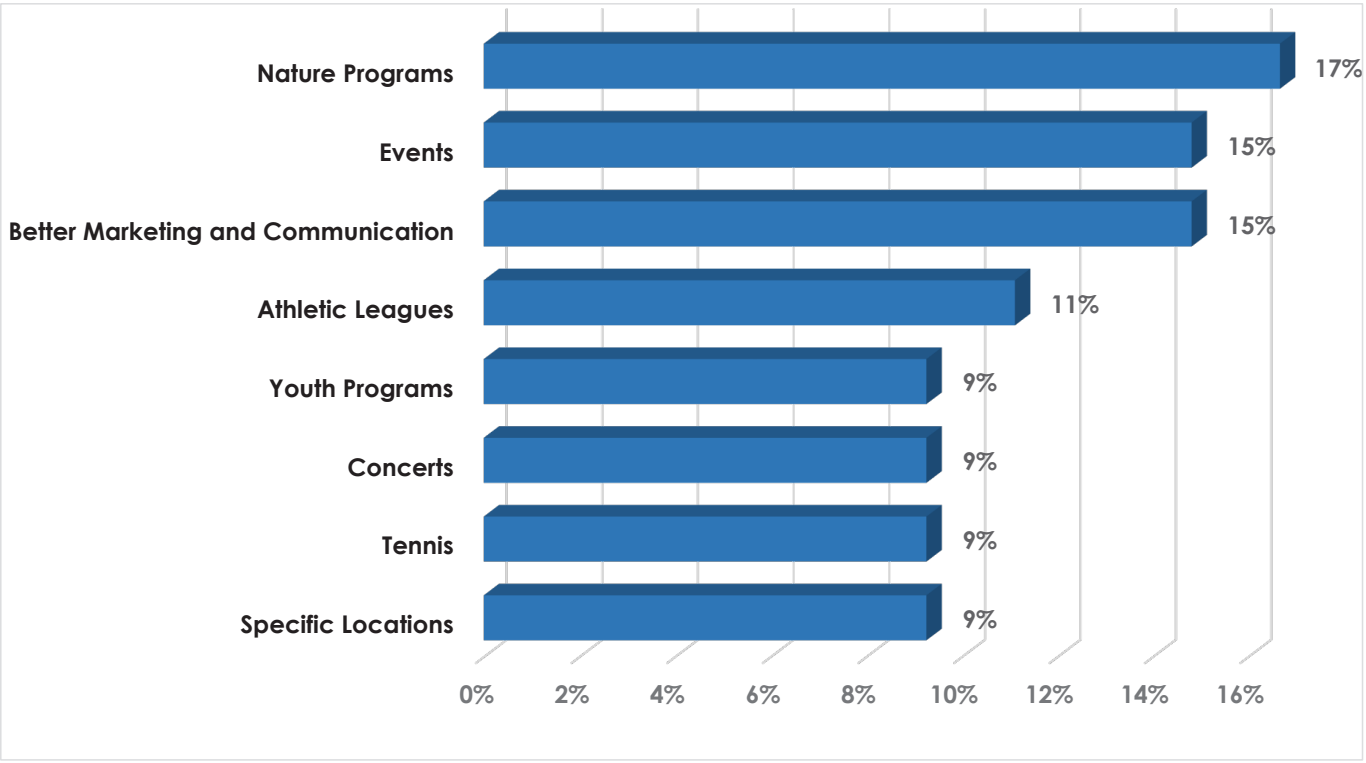
What makes them great now? (31 comments and checks)

- Variety of offerings
- Lots to do
- Free
- Events

What would make them better? (# of comments/checkmarks in parentheses) – 54 comments and checks

- Nature Programs (9)
- Better Marketing and Communication (8)
- Events (8)
- Athletic Leagues (6)
- Specific Locations (5)
- Tennis (5)
- Concerts (5)
- Youth Programs (5)
- Tournaments (3)
- Adult Programs (3)
- Summer Camps (3)

Figure 4.4: Most Discussed Topics – Programs and Events (Percentage of Comments/Checks)



Overall Open House Comment Summary

The following list provides a count of the comments to the question, "What would make them better?" at all stations. Each of the nearly 400 comments and checkmarks were placed into one or more categories to show what improvements attendees of the meetings 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. Figure 4.5 shows the percentage of interactions related to each topic.

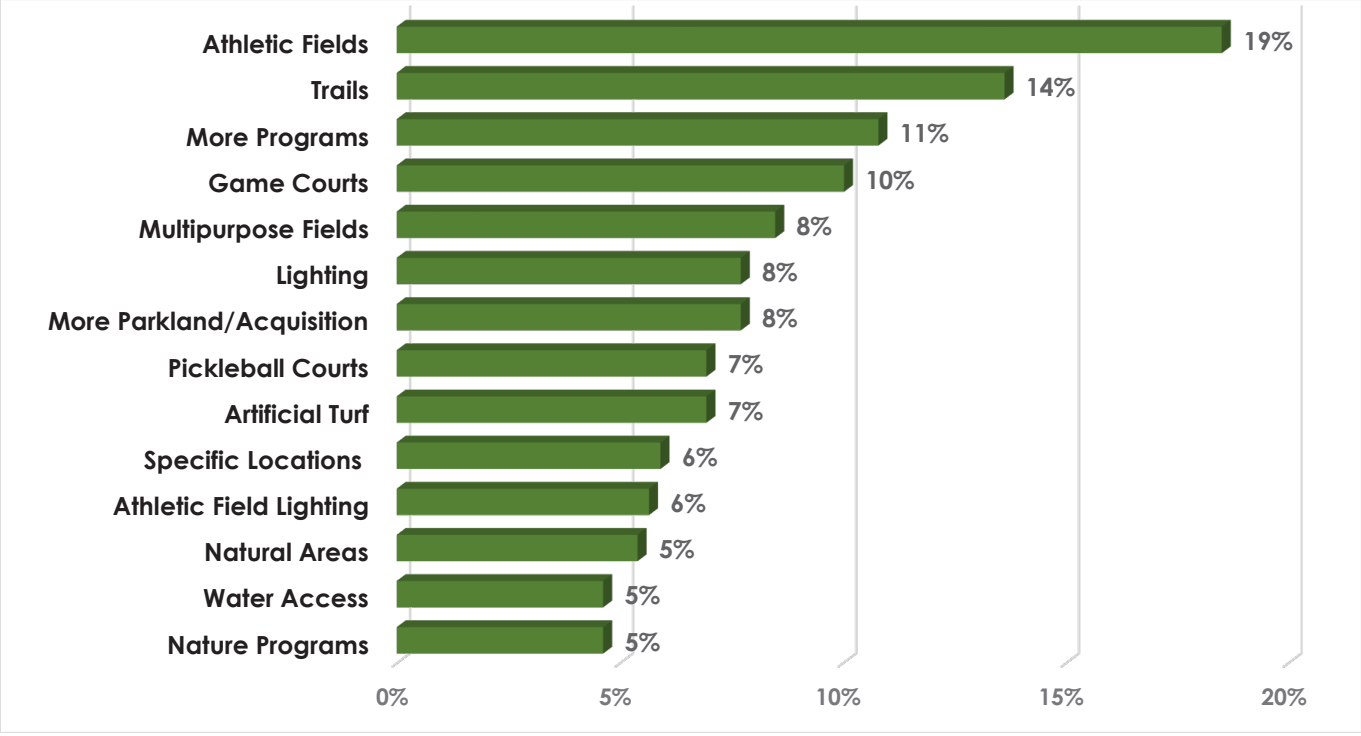
Most Discussed Topics (# of comments/checkmarks in parentheses):

- Athletic Fields (72)
- Trails (53)
- More Programs (42)
- Game Courts (39)
- Multipurpose Fields (33)
- More Parkland/Acquisition (30)
- Lighting (30)
- Artificial Turf (27)
- Pickleball Courts (27)
- Specific Locations (23)
- Athletic Field Lighting (22)
- Natural Areas (21)
- Nature Programs (18)
- Water Access (18)
- Conservation/Preservation (16)
- Tournaments (15)
- Fishing (15)
- Connectivity (15)
- Equestrian Facilities (15)
- Bike Trails (15)
- Maintenance (12)
- Natural Surface Trails (11)
- Diamond Fields (11)
- Restrooms (11)
- Better Marketing and Communication (10)
- Indoor Facilities (10)

Preference Boards

Attendees of the Open House meeting were given three blue dots and three red dots to place on boards indicating their preferences. One board provided a list of 15 park amenities (represented by pictures) plus an option for "Anything Else." The second board provided a list of 15 programs (also represented by pictures) plus an option for "Anything Else." These activities requested that participants choose the features and programs most important to them and their households. Children were also invited to participate. Between seven events, 344 community members participated in the activity for features and 343 participated for programs. Counts of the selections by event are presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.

Figure 4.5: Most Discussed Topics – Overall (Percentage of Comments/Checks)



On the features board (Table 4.1), trails received the largest number of dots (150), followed by natural spraygrounds (121), natural areas (117), and athletic fields (112). All options received some support, indicating that all amenities are important to Boone County residents to varying degrees. The provided features were intended to be general, so features were combined into categories whenever possible. Most of the "Anything Else" selections were requests for a gun range (16) or unspecified (8). On the programs board (Table 4.2), nature programs received the largest number of dots (186) by far, followed by youth sports (127) and festivals (108). Like features board, all options received some support. Most "Anything Else" dots were unspecified.

Table 4.1: Feature Preference Results

Park Features	Event							Total	%
	Jack-O-Lantern Walk 10/27/2019	Open House #1 (Hebron) 2/18/2020	Open House #2 (Walton) 2/19/2020	Open House #3 (Main Library) 2/20/2020	Open House #4 (Burlington) 3/3/2020	Open House #5 (Union Library)	Open House #6 (Florence) 3/5/2020		
Trails	63	28	5	18	16	18	2	150	15%
Spraygrounds	98	2	1	15	0	3	2	121	12%
Natural Areas	34	16	6	25	11	18	7	117	11%
Athletic Fields	33	25	2	4	13	15	20	112	11%
Indoor Recreation Facilities	42	9	7	8	2	10	0	78	8%
Fishing Piers/Boat Launches	37	7	2	13	11	7	0	77	7%
Playgrounds	41	5	0	14	1	4	3	68	7%
Restrooms	41	6	4	2	6	5	1	65	6%
Game Courts	11	11	2	15	1	4	6	50	5%
Dog Parks	22	7	1	3	1	6	7	47	5%
Outdoor Games	33	0	3	2	1	6	0	45	4%
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	22	1	0	3	0	1	0	27	3%
Event Spaces	8	2	3	0	0	6	2	21	2%
Equestrian Facilities	5	7	0	2	3	0	0	17	2%
Picnic Shelters	5	0	0	0	1	2	1	9	1%
Other	24	0	0	1	0	0	3	28	3%
Total	**519**	**126**	**36**	**125**	**67**	**105**	**54**	**1,032**	
Participants	**173**	**42**	**12**	**42**	**22**	**35**	**18**	**344**	

Table 4.2: Program Preference Results

Programs	Event							Total	%
	Jack-O-Lantern Walk 10/27/2019	Open House #1 (Hebron) 2/18/2020	Open House #2 (Walton) 2/19/2020	Open House #3 (Main Library) 2/20/2020	Open House #4 (Burlington) 3/3/2020	Open House #5 (Union Library) 3/4/2020	Open House #6 (Florence) 3/5/2020		
Nature Programs	73	21	4	29	24	24	11	186	18%
Youth Sports	49	25	4	12	12	12	13	127	12%
Festivals	80	2	3	11	3	6	3	108	10%
Movies/Music Concerts	34	7	1	15	6	10	4	77	7%
Annual Special Events	44	5	2	2	6	7	0	66	6%
Arts & Crafts Classes	38	7	2	8	1	4	1	61	6%
Fitness Classes	35	4	2	6	1	10	1	59	6%
Summer Camps	31	3	2	15	1	4	1	57	6%
Adult Sports	28	7	1	5	2	8	5	56	5%
Athletic Tournaments	23	11	1	4	3	4	7	53	5%
Senior Programs	18	10	8	6	1	3	2	48	5%
Runs and Races	21	8	2	3	5	8	0	47	5%
After School Programs	18	3	3	3	0	2	1	30	3%
Music Classes	14	1	0	2	1	0	2	20	2%
Dance and Drama Classes	15	0	1	3	0	0	0	19	2%
Other	5	7	0	0	3	0	0	15	1%
Total	**526**	**121**	**36**	**124**	**69**	**102**	**51**	**1,029**	
Participants	**175**	**40**	**12**	**41**	**23**	**34**	**17**	**343**	

4.2.2 Stakeholder Groups

A series of stakeholder group meetings were conducted between January and early March of 2020 to determine the parks and recreation priorities for various interest groups. Several stakeholder groups were engaged as part of this master plan. At these meetings, stakeholders were asked a series of questions about

Boone County Parks, recreation facilities, and programs, beginning with a discussion of strengths before moving to a discussion of opportunities for the future. Summaries of the meetings with complete comments can be found in Appendix D.

The following stakeholder group meetings were held as part of this master plan:

- Administrator
- County Commissioners
- Program Staff
- Cities
- Florence — Mayor and Administrator
- Walton — Mayor and Council Member
- Union — Mayor, Administrator, Community and Operations Director
- Boone County Arboretum
- Bike Stakeholders
- Youth Sports
- Kings Hammer Soccer
- NKYA (baseball, football, basketball, cheer)
- NKB (16-18 baseball)

Stakeholder Top Recommendations

- Improved quality of facilities
- Partnerships
- More neighborhood parks
- Acquire parkland adjacent to parks
- Spraygrounds
- Keep communities engaged
- More soccer fields
- Sports complex for tournaments
- More trails and connectivity improvements
- Blueways – Put-ins and take-outs
- Indoor space/recreation center
- Restroom upgrades
- Arboretum education center

4.2.3 Park Event

As another part of the effort to reach as many residents as possible, the planning team with Parks staff set up input stations at the Jack-O-Lantern Walk at the Boone County Fairgrounds on October 27, 2019 to encourage attendees to provide input on parks and recreation services in Boone County. Attendees were invited to complete the handout survey and to participate in the dollar voting and feature preference exercises. See the next heading for results of the dollar voting exercise and Subsection 4.2.1 for feature preference results. Survey results are presented in Section 4.3.

4.2.4 Dollar Voting

Participants at the public workshop, park event, and stakeholder groups were given $1,000 in play money to place into boxes to indicate how they would like Boone County to allocate funds for parks and recreation. Table 4.3 shows the total allocations for each of seven categories (or boxes). Participants could also place money into an "other" box, in order to request specific amenities or improvements not included in one of the seven provided categories. The combined results for the 337 participants at the events are presented below with the allocation for each park improvement category with the percentage of the total allocation.

Develop a sprayground or splash pad received the largest allocation at $61,000 or 18%. *Build new walking and biking trails* was second with 18% of the total allocation, and *upgrade existing parks and facilities* and *build new parks (including land acquisition)* were next, each at 15%. For "Other" improvements, participants wrote their chosen improvements with the allocation on a card and placed it and the money into the "Other" box. A

nature center was the most requested item in this box. The individual comments for this box can be found in Appendix C.

Table 4.3: Dollar Voting Allocation

Action (Box Title)	Event							Total
	Jack-O-Lantern Walk 10/27/2019	Open House #1 (Hebron) 2/18/2020	Open House #2 (Walton) 2/19/2020	Open House #3 (Main Library) 2/20/2020	Open House #4 (Burlington) 3/3/2020	Open House #5 (Union Library) 3/4/2020	Open House #6 (Florence) 3/5/2020	
Develop a sprayground or splash pad	$49,700	$700	$1,400	$5,800	$500	$1,900	$1,000	**$61,000**
	28%	*2%*	*13%*	*15%*	*2%*	*6%*	*6%*	*17%*
Build new walking and biking trails	$32,700	$9,300	$1,600	$4,900	$3,400	$6,500	$700	**$59,100**
	18%	*24%*	*15%*	*12%*	*16%*	*19%*	*4%*	*17%*
Upgrade existing parks and facilities	$29,700	$4,000	$1,300	$8,200	$3,100	$4,700	$500	**$51,500**
	17%	*10%*	*12%*	*21%*	*15%*	*14%*	*3%*	*15%*
Build new parks (including land acquisition)	$15,500	$9,700	$2,800	$5,500	$6,600	$7,600	$3,700	**$51,400**
	9%	*25%*	*26%*	*14%*	*31%*	*23%*	*23%*	*15%*
Build new and improve quality of existing athletic fields	$17,500	$9,600	$1,600	$1,600	$3,500	$4,900	$5,500	**$44,200**
	10%	*25%*	*15%*	*4%*	*17%*	*15%*	*35%*	*13%*
Build new indoor recreation facilities	$25,900	$2,500	$1,900	$5,700	$1,200	$3,600	$1,500	**$42,300**
	15%	*7%*	*18%*	*14%*	*6%*	*11%*	*9%*	*12%*
Expand program offerings	$7,800	$1,900	$900	$2,200	$900	$1,600	$1,100	**$16,400**
	4%	*5%*	*8%*	*6%*	*4%*	*5%*	*7%*	*5%*
Other	$6,500	$2,400	$0	$8,200	$2,700	$4,300	$3,000	**$27,100**
	4%	*6%*	*0%*	*21%*	*13%*	*13%*	*19%*	*8%*
Total	$177,500	$38,200	$10,600	$39,900	$21,000	$33,500	$15,900	**$353,000**

4.3 Public Opinion Surveys

The following pages summarize the findings of the statistically valid survey (Mail Survey) and the web and handout survey (Web Survey). Because the Mail Survey results were collected using a statistically valid random sample, they are intended to represent the residents of Boone County as a whole, both users and non-users. Web Survey results represent the respondents of the survey, but not necessarily Boone County residents as a whole. Some figures show only the top results; however, the full results with all response options can be found in Appendices E and F.

4.3.1 Statistically Valid Survey – Overview and Methodology

ETC Institute conducted a Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey (Mail Survey) in the winter/spring of 2020 to help establish priorities for the future development of parks, trails, programs, and open space in Boone County. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the county and was administered by mail and web.

The Brandstetter Carroll Inc. project team worked with Boone County Parks and Recreation staff and the steering committee on the development of the survey questionnaire. This collaboration resulted in a survey tailored to issues of strategic local importance, providing a tool for effective planning of the future of the parks, recreation, trails, and open space in Boone County. The four-page survey was mailed to a random sample of households throughout Boone County. These households were also provided with a web address to complete the survey online as an alternative to completing it by hand and returning it by mail.

For the purpose of providing statistically valid results, the goal was to obtain a total of at least 600 completed surveys. ETC Institute exceeded that goal with a total of 710 surveys. Based on this random sample of households, this survey has precision of at least +/-3.7% at the 95% level of confidence.

4.3.2 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 in over 49 states across the country.

The results of these surveys have provided an unparalleled database of information to compare responses from households in client communities to "National Averages" and, therefore, provide a unique tool to "assist organizations in better decision making." The National Benchmarking summary is included in Appendix F with the full survey report. Select information for this benchmarking is described within this section.

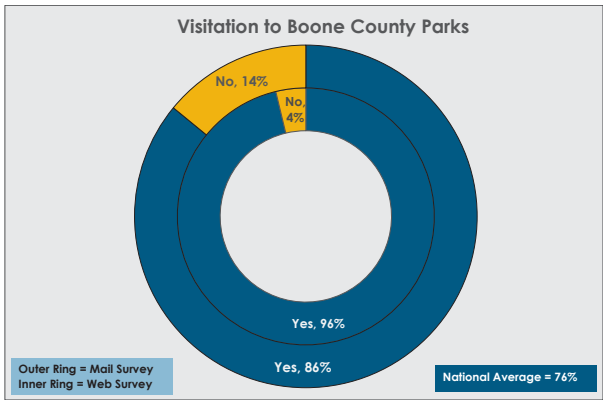
4.3.3 Web Survey – Overview and Methodology

An online and handout survey was administered by BCI and consisted of similar questions to the Mail Survey but with a reduced overall length (2 pages instead of 4). The web version was powered by Survey Monkey, and the handout version was available at the public meetings and various other locations throughout the county. The goal of this survey was to engage anyone who wished to share their ideas and 1,530 community members participated. Eighty-five percent (85%) of respondents indicated that they lived within Boone County, compared to 15% who did not. The full survey report can be found in Appendix F.

4.3.4 Visitation of Parks Offered in Boone County

Respondents to the survey were asked about their visitation to parks in Boone County over the last year. Figure 4.6 shows the proportion of respondents that reported that a member of their household visited a park in the last year. According to the statistically valid Mail Survey (outer ring), **86% of households visited parks** in Boone County. The national average for park visitation is 76%. Accordingly, residents in Boone County were much more likely than residents of other communities to visit parks. Respondents to the Web Survey (inner ring) were more likely to visit parks at 96%.

Figure 4.6: Visitation to Parks in Boone County

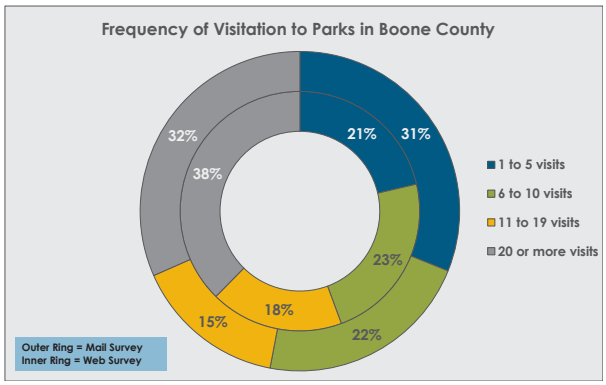


4.3.5 Frequency of Visits to Parks & Recreation Facilities in Boone County

Respondent households that visited parks and recreation facilities in Boone County during the last year were asked to indicate how often they have visited those facilities over that time. The results are presented in Figure 4.7.

According to the Mail Survey, Boone County households who visited parks or recreation facilities likely visited numerous times. Nearly a third (32%) reported visiting facilities 20 or more times over the last year. Results for the other visitation rates were: 1-5 times (31%), 6-10 times (22%), and 11-19 times (15%). Looking at the responses cumulatively, 47% of households visited parks 11 or more times, and 69% visited parks six or more times. Usage rates were higher among respondents to the Web Survey.

Figure 4.7: Frequency of Visitation to Parks in Boone County

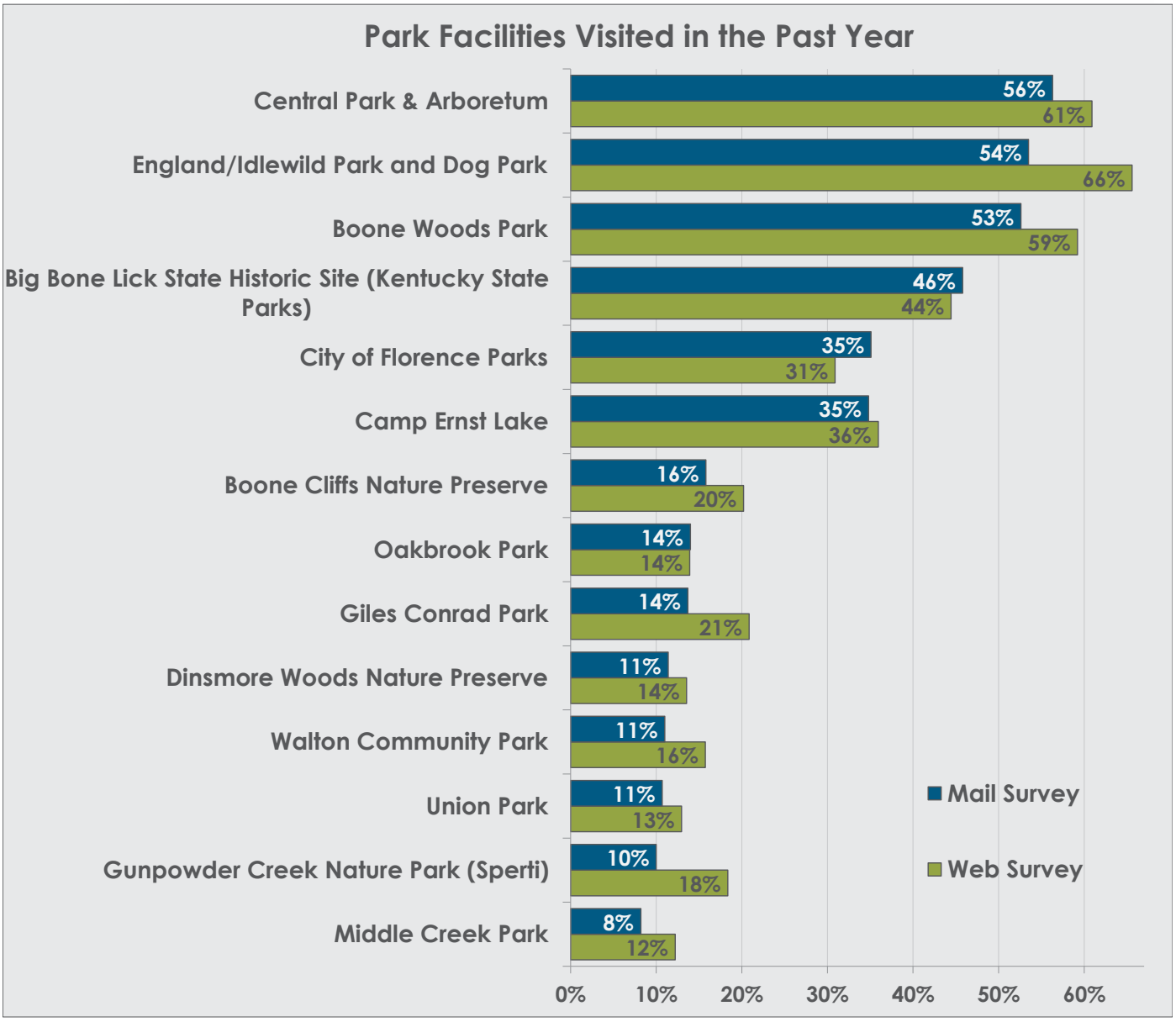


4.3.6 Parks and Recreation Facilities Visited Over the Past Year

Survey respondents were asked to indicate each of the parks offered by Boone County their households visited over the past year. Figure 4.8 shows the percentage of respondents whose households used each facility.

According to the Mail Survey, **56% of Boone County households visited Central Park & Arboretum** over the past year. England/Idlewild Park and Dog Park (54%) and Boone Woods Park (53%) were close behind in second and third. The most used facilities were generally those with the widest variety of amenities or those offering programs or hosting events. Web Survey respondents reported higher usage for most parks with similar overall rankings. England/Idlewild Park and Dog Park ranked first in the Web Survey at 66%.

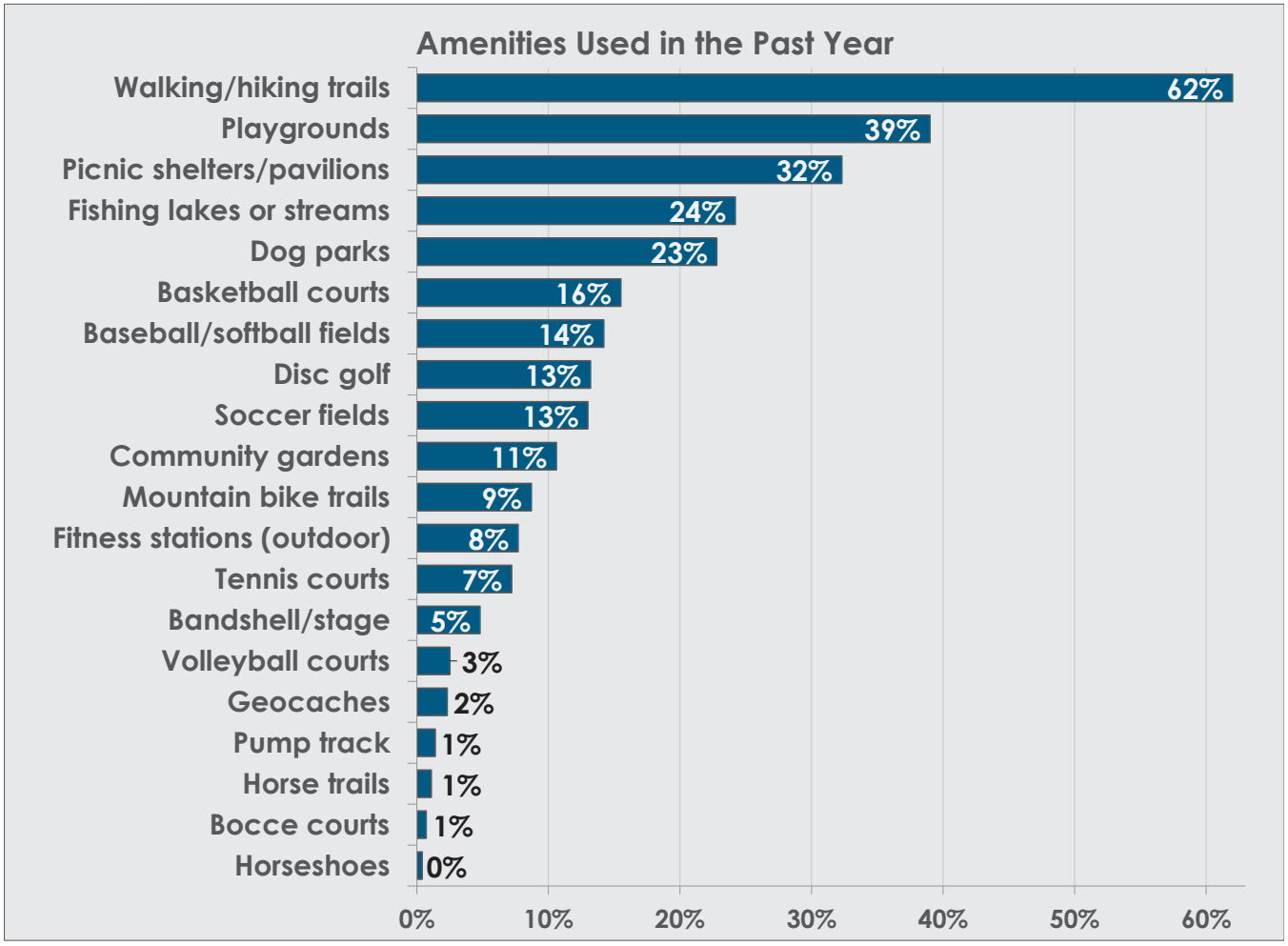
Figure 4.8: Parks Visited



4.3.7 Amenities Used

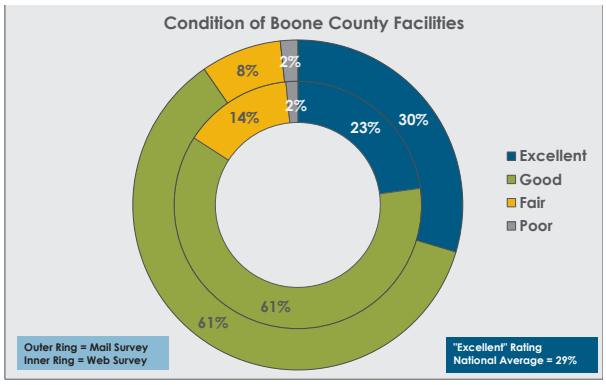
Respondents to the Mail Survey were asked to indicate which park amenities in Boone County their households had used over the past year. Figure 4.9 shows the results. Most households (62%) reported *using walking/hiking trails*. About 40% reported using *playgrounds*, and just under a third (32%) indicated use of *picnic shelters*.

Figure 4.9: Amenities Used over the Past Year



4.3.8 Physical Condition of Facilities Offered by Boone County

Figure 4.10: Condition of Facilities



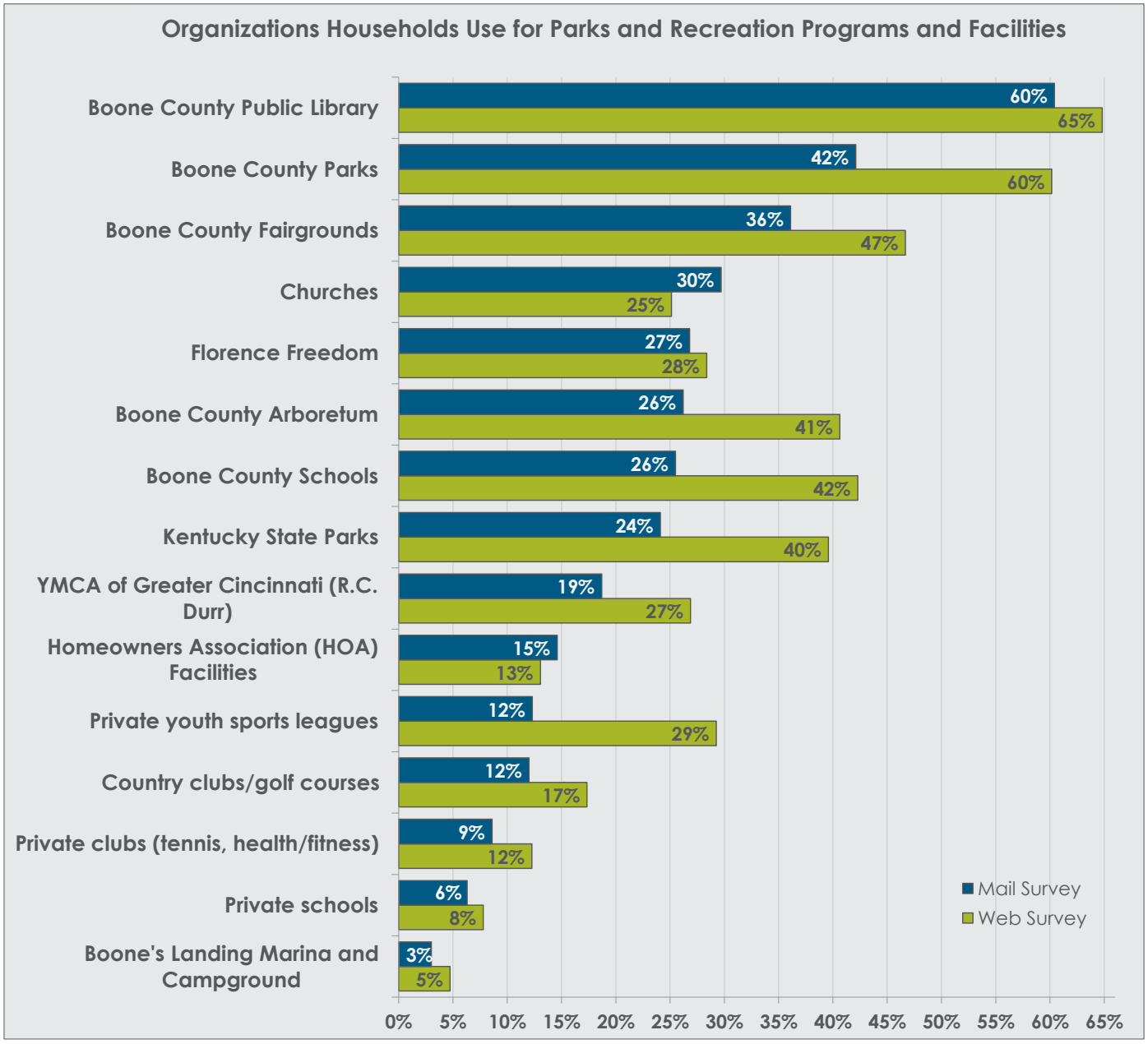
Respondent households were asked to rate the physical condition of facilities they visited. Figure 4.10 shows respondents' ratings of the condition of Boone County facilities.

According to the Mail Survey, 61% of households who visited these facilities over the past year rated the condition of those facilities as *good*, **30% rated the condition of the facilities as *excellent***, and 8% rated the condition as *fair*. Just 2% rated the facilities as *poor*. The numbers for *excellent* in Boone County are similar to the National Average (by ETC Institute) of 29%. Web Survey respondents were slightly less likely to rank facilities as *excellent* (23%).

4.3.9 Organizations Used for Parks and Recreation

The Mail Survey asked respondents to indicate which organizations they used for parks and recreation (Figure 4.11), and Boone County Parks ranked second with 42% of respondents indicating use. Boone County Public Library ranked first with 60% of respondents, and Boone County Fairgrounds ranked third at 36%. Web Survey respondents were more likely to report using most organizations, including Boone County Parks.

Figure 4.11: Organizations Used for Parks and Recreation



4.3.10 Participation in Programs Offered by Boone County

Respondents were asked if any members of their household participated in programs offered by Boone County Parks over the past year. These results are shown in Figure 4.12. According to the Mail Survey, 30% of Boone County households participated in programs offered by Boone County, and 70% did not. The number is just below the National Average of 33%.

4.3.11 Quality of Programs

Respondents who participated in programs offered by Boone County were asked to rate the quality of those programs, and Figure 4.13 shows the results. Fifty-five percent (55%) of households rated programs as *good*, **40% rated programs as *excellent*,** and 8% rated programs as *fair*. These results are above the National Benchmarks of 33% for *excellent*. The Web Survey results were very similar to the Mail Survey with 39% rating programs as *excellent*.

Figure 4.12: Participation in Programs by Boone County

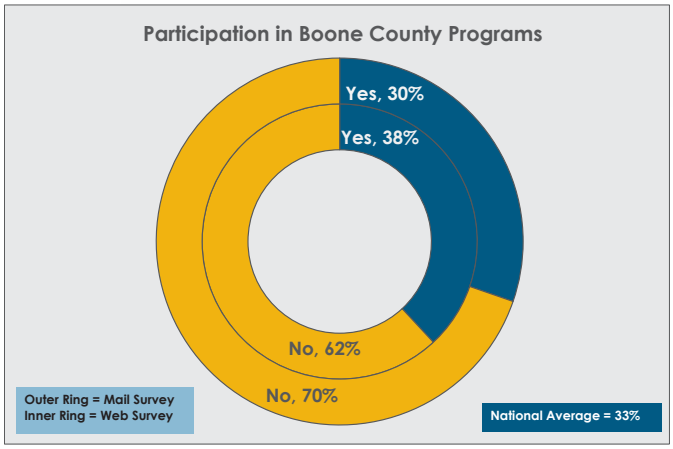
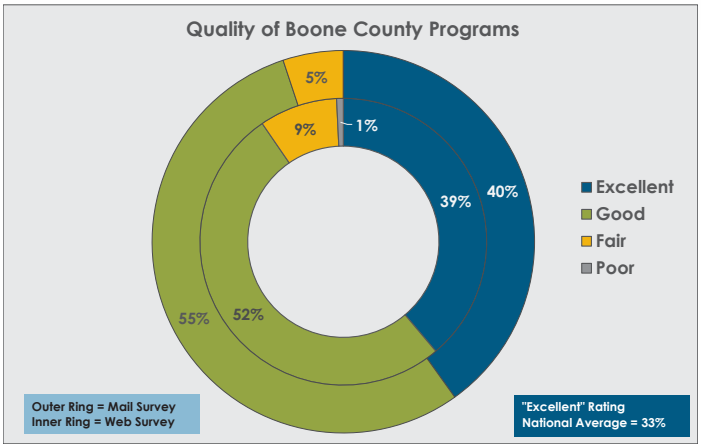


Figure 4.13: Quality of Boone County Programs



4.3.12 Upgrades to Existing Parks

Respondents were asked to identify upgrades their households would like to see to existing parks, and the responses can be seen in Figure 4.14. Support facilities represented most of the top upgrades. The **top response in the Mail Survey was *restrooms* (45%)**. *Walking/hiking trails* (39%) ranked second with *security cameras and lighting* (25%) and *drinking fountains* (23%) next. Many features ranked higher in the Web Survey, and *walking/hiking trails* ranked first with restrooms second. In general, the top items represent amenities that improve the overall park experience and can be included at nearly any park.

4.3.13 Need for Parks and Recreation Facilities

Respondents of the Mail Survey were asked to indicate facilities needed by any members of their households from a list of 32 parks and recreation facilities. Figure 4.15 shows the results as well as the national average for each facility.[1] In the column along the right side of the chart, national averages shown in red indicate Boone County's need at 5% or more below the national average. Black indicates within 5% of the national average or that comparison numbers are not available, while blue indicates Boone County household needs at 5% or more above the national average.

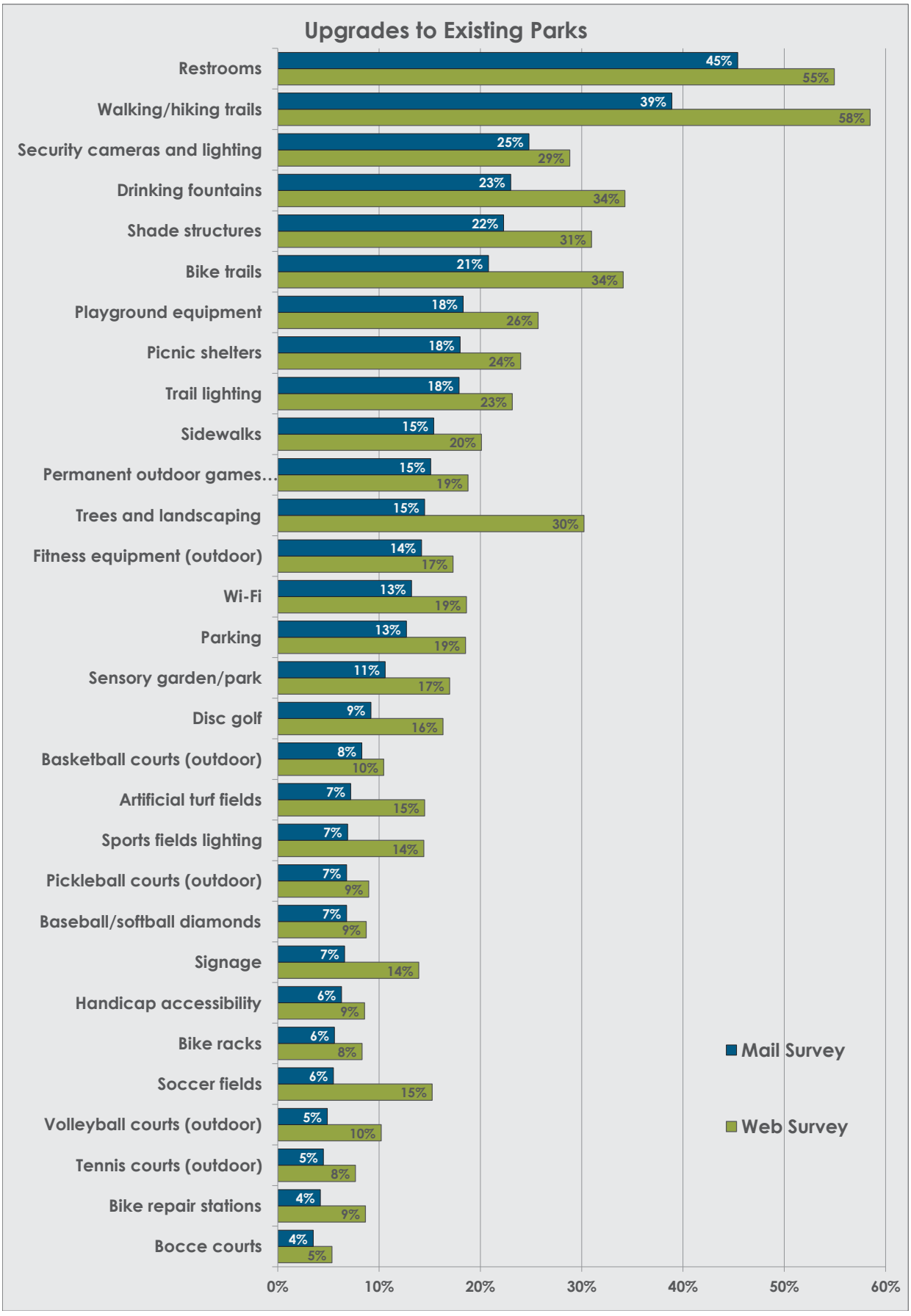
According to the survey, the **highest percentage of Boone County households (64%) had a need for *walking & hiking trails***. *Nature areas/nature parks* ranked second at 49%. *Picnic shelters/areas* were next with just under 40% of households indicating a need. Boone County households indicated a higher level of need than the national average for just one facility, *fishing lakes, ponds, & streams*. Households had a lower level of need for many facilities, including the top item in the list, *walking & hiking trails*, although the percentage of households needing these facilities was still high.

The survey also asked respondents how well their needs were met for parks and recreation facilities and then estimated the number of households for which needs were met at 50% or less based on these responses, combined with the total number of households in Boone County. Figure 4.16 shows the estimated number of households with needs met at 50% or less for these facilities.

The order of the items in Figure 4.16 varies somewhat from the list of needed facilities (Figure 4.15). **The most needed facility, *walking & hiking trails*, still ranked first for unmet needs (over 12,500 households)**. *Sprayground/splash pads* ranked second for households (10,700) with unmet needs compared to 14th for percentage with needs, the most notable difference in these results. Paved bike trails ranked third (10,661), compared to eighth for needed facilities. *Fishing lakes, ponds, & streams, swimming pools (indoor), natural areas/nature parks, and small neighborhood parks* also had unmet needs by more than 9,000 households.

[1] Provided by ETC Institute (see Appendix E).

Figure 4.14: Upgrades to Existing Parks



The most important facilities (total of top four choices) are presented in Figure 4.17. Overall, these items are similar to the results indicated in Figure 4.15 with some changes to the order of facilities. ***Walking & hiking trails* ranked as the most important facility to Boone County households** by far with 45% of households ranking them as one of their four most important facilities. *Natural areas/nature parks and fishing lakes, ponds, & streams* came next, with over 20%.

The survey results provided by ETC Institute included a Priority Investment Ranking for each of the facilities in this list that combines the unmet need ranking and most important facilities ranking for these facilities (see Appendix E for methodology). The results for the high and medium priority facilities can be seen in Figure 4.18.

Based on these results, the **seven high facility priorities** for investment in Boone County are:

1. **Walking & hiking trails**
2. **Natural areas/nature parks**
3. **Fishing lakes, ponds, & streams**
4. **Paved bike trails**
5. **Spraygrounds/splash pads**
6. **Swimming pools/aquatic centers (outdoor)**
7. **Small neighborhood parks**

4.3.14 Need for Programs

Respondents were asked to identify which programs were needed by their households from a list of 22 recreation program categories. Figure 4.19 shows the results as well as the national average for each program. As indicated previously for facilities, the national averages are shown in red to indicate Boone County's need at 5% or more under the national average, blue to indicate Boone County's need at 5% or more above the national average, and black indicates within 5% above or below the national average or that comparison numbers are not available.

According to the survey, the ***fitness & wellness programs (adult)* at 43% were the most needed recreation program** by Boone County households with *concerts/art performances* ranking second at 39%. Boone County households showed similar need for most of the programs in the list with lesser needs for seven programs and greater needs for *programs for persons age 50+*.

The survey also asked respondents how well their needs were met for recreation programs and then estimated the number of households for which needs were met at 50% or less based on these responses and the total number of households in Boone County. Figure 4.20 shows the estimated number of households with needs met at 50% or less for these programs.

The order of the items in Figure 4.20 is similar to the list of needed programs in Figure 4.19 with the top items appearing in both figures but the order changed slightly, indicating a need for the addition or expansion of these types of programs. ***Fitness & wellness programs (adult)* ranked first with over 14,000 households indicating unmet needs**. *Concerts/art performances* ranked a close second, indicating a demand for more of these events. *Programs for persons ages 50+ and nature program* were next with over 10,000 households.

The survey results by ETC Institute also included a Priority Investment Ranking for programs, combining the unmet needs ranking and most important programs ranking (Figure 4.21). The results for the high and medium priority facilities can be seen in Figure 4.22.

Based on these results, the **top five program priorities** for investment in Boone County are:

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

Figure 4.15: Need for Facilities

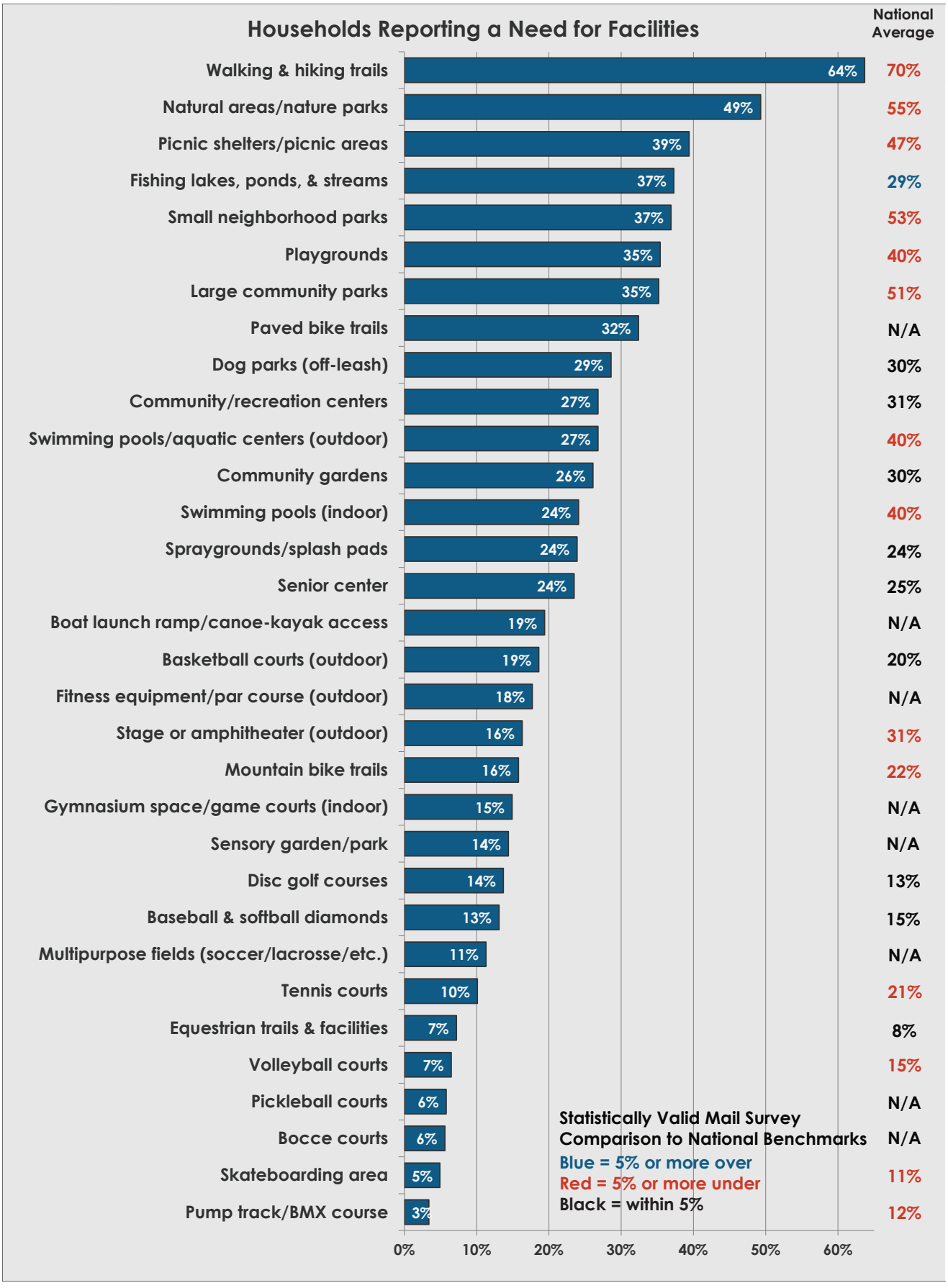


Figure 4.16: Estimated Number of Households with Unmet Facility Needs

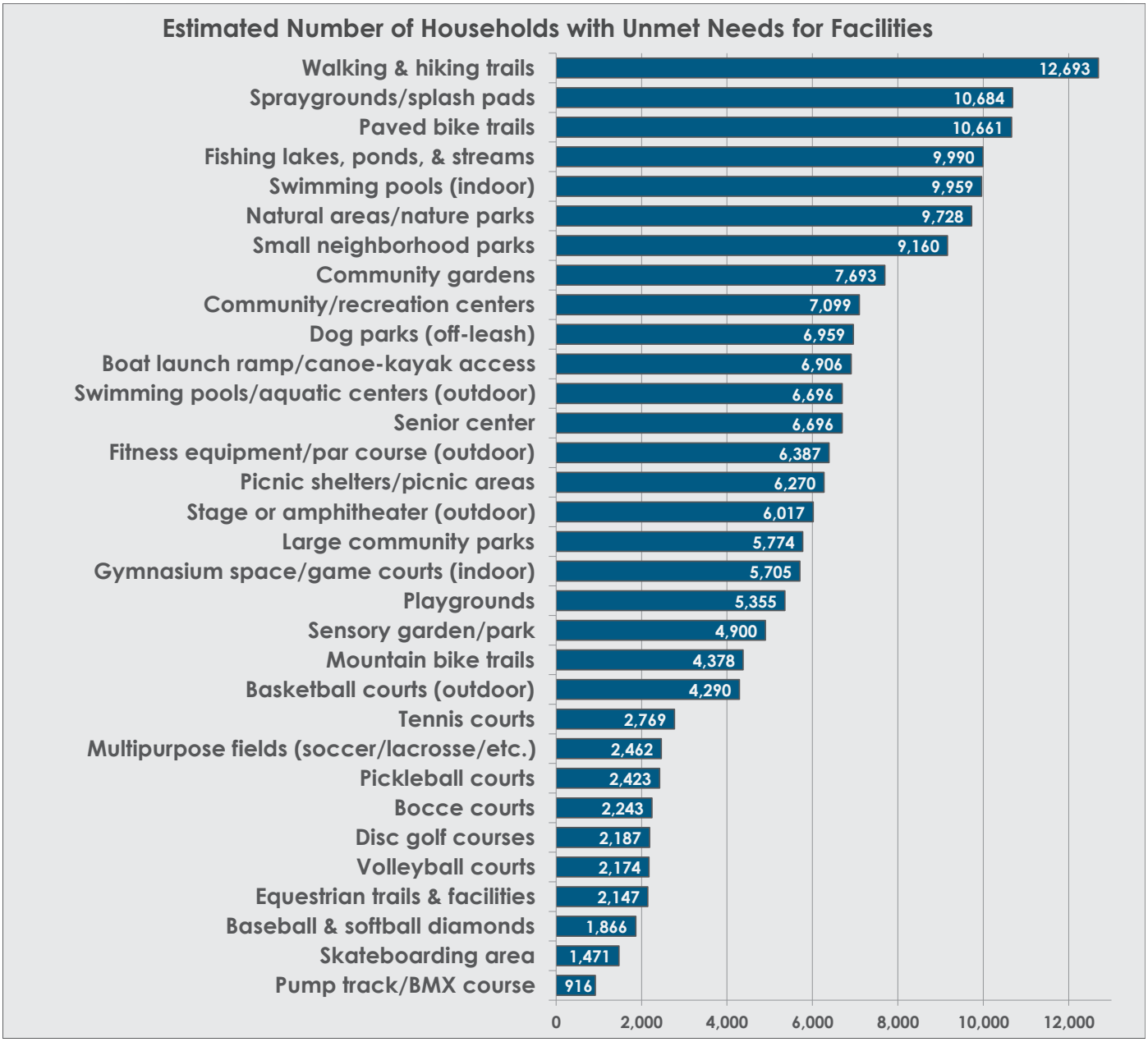


Figure 4.17: Most Important Facilities

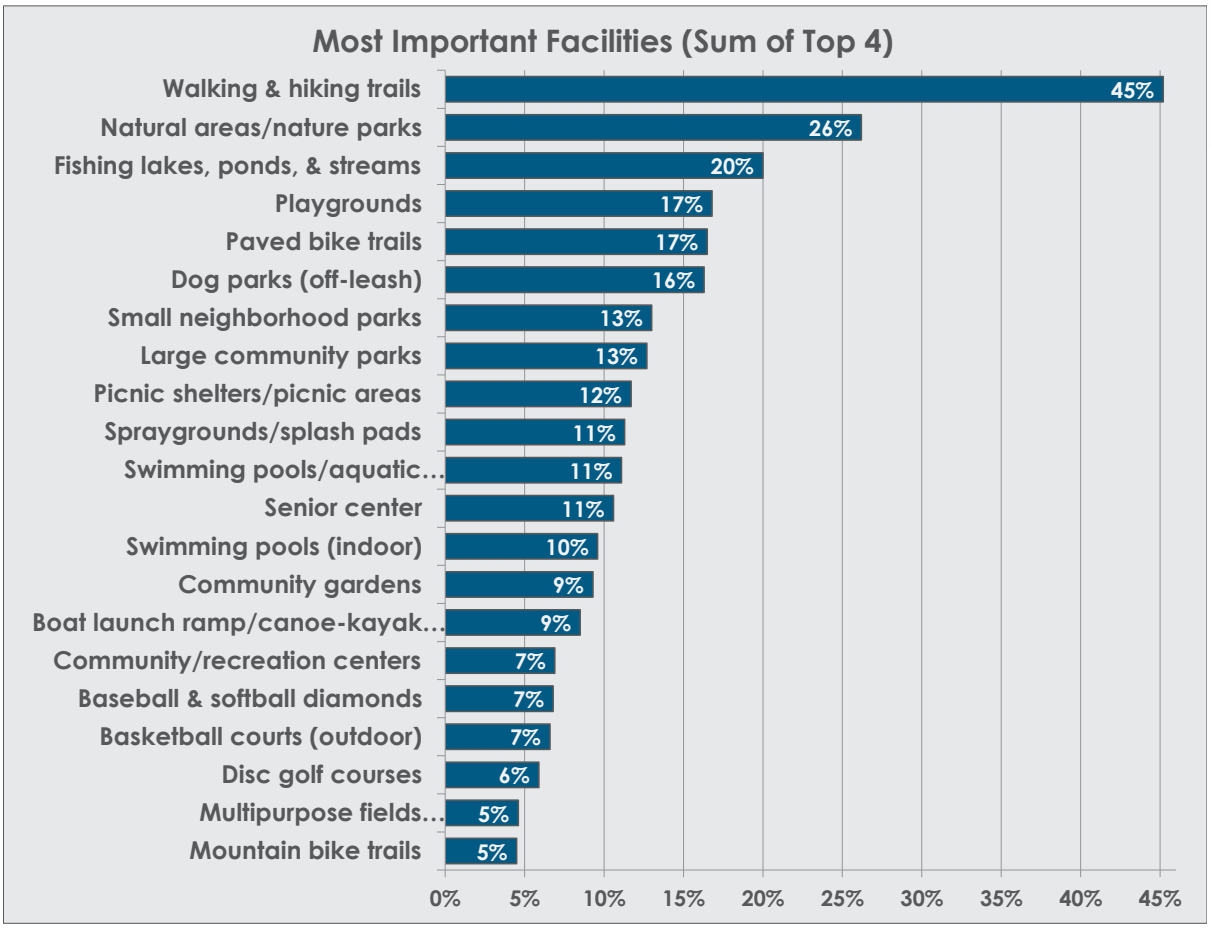


Figure 4.18: Facility Priorities for Investment

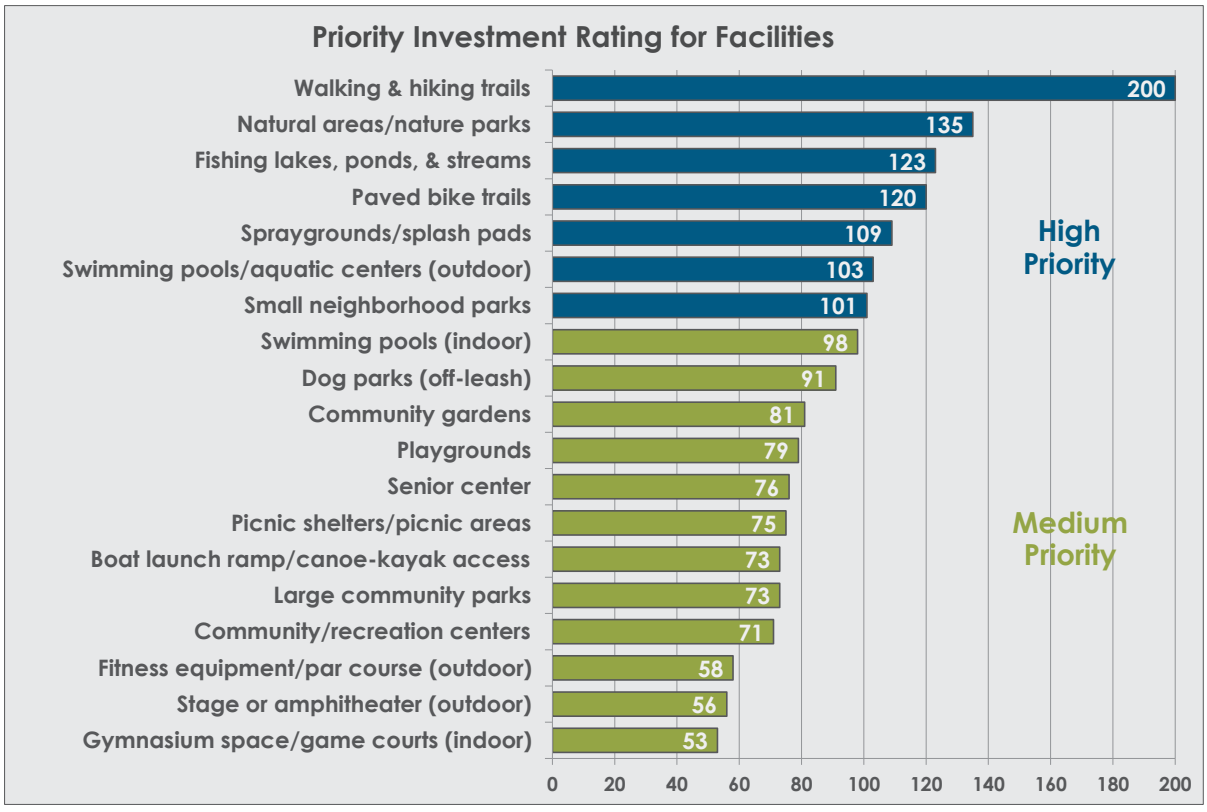


Figure 4.19: Need for Programs

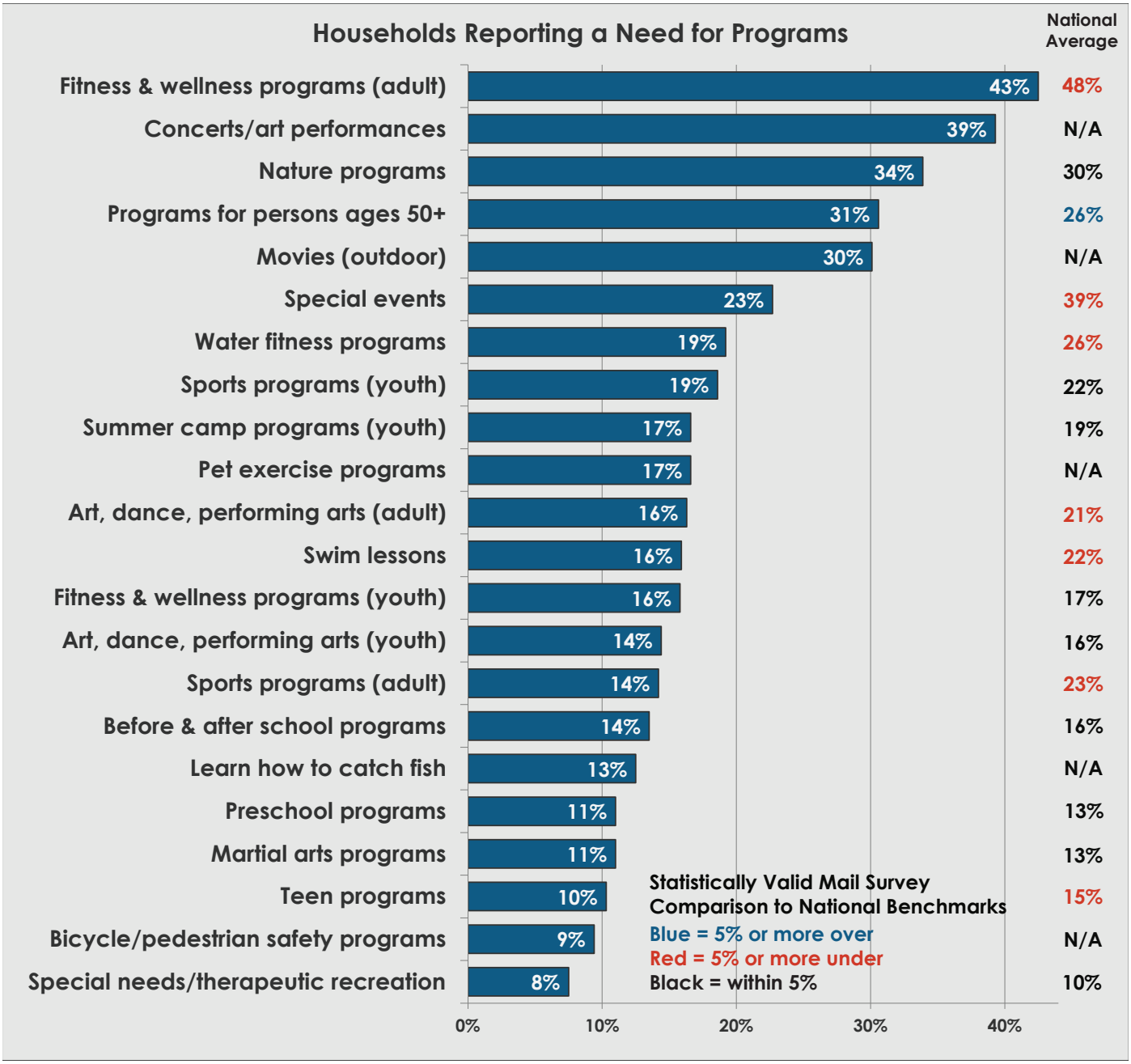


Figure 4.20: Estimated Number of Households with Unmet Program Needs

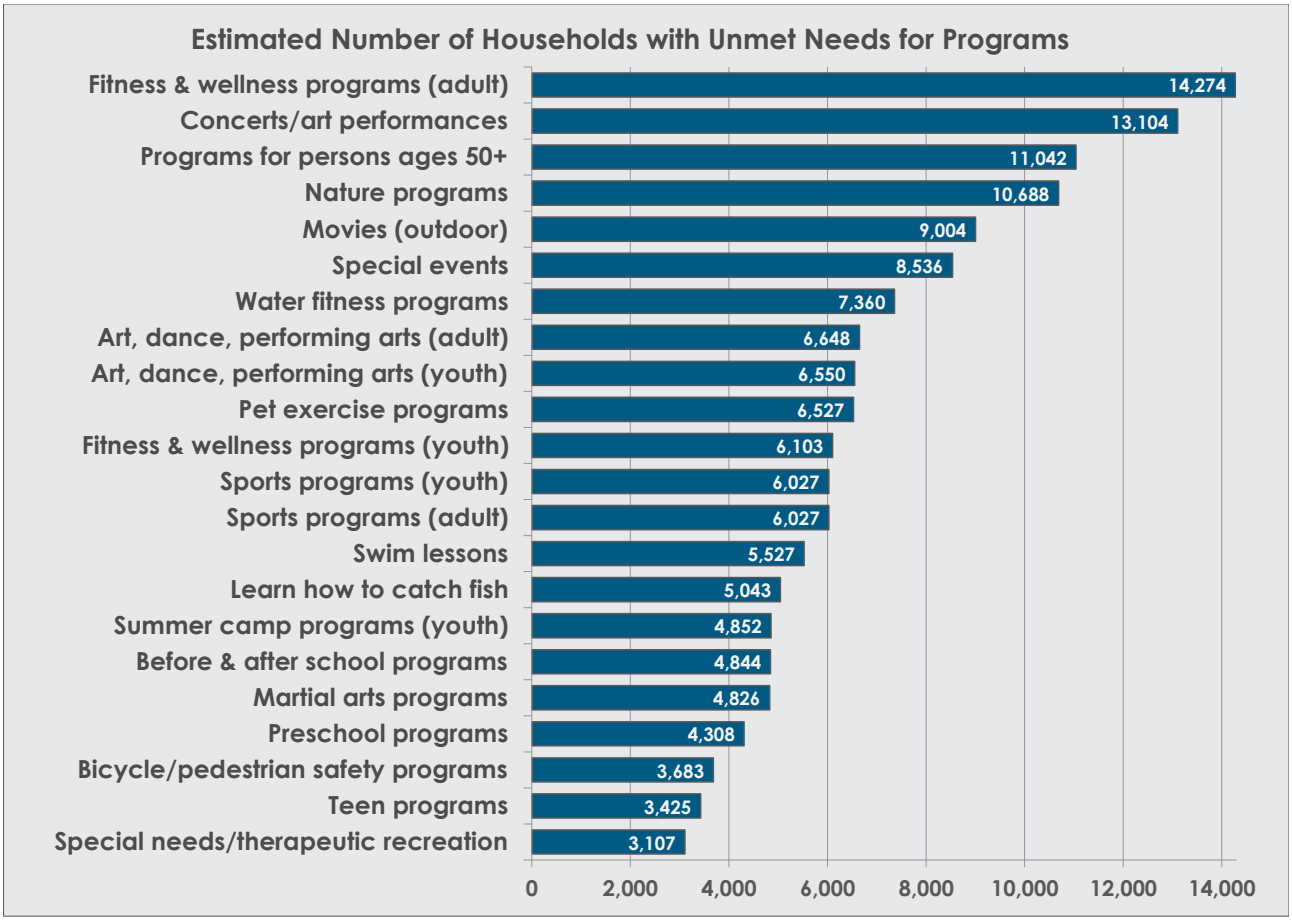


Figure 4.21: Most Important Programs

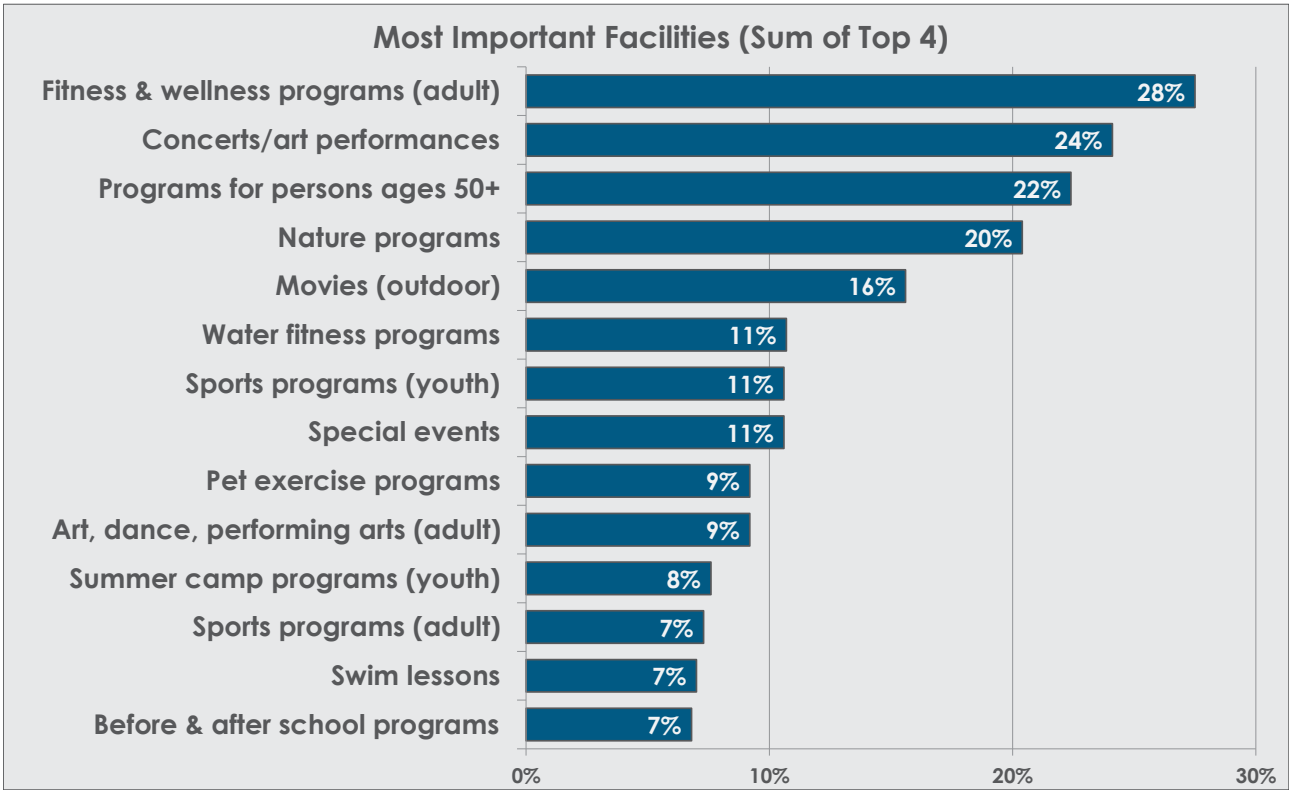
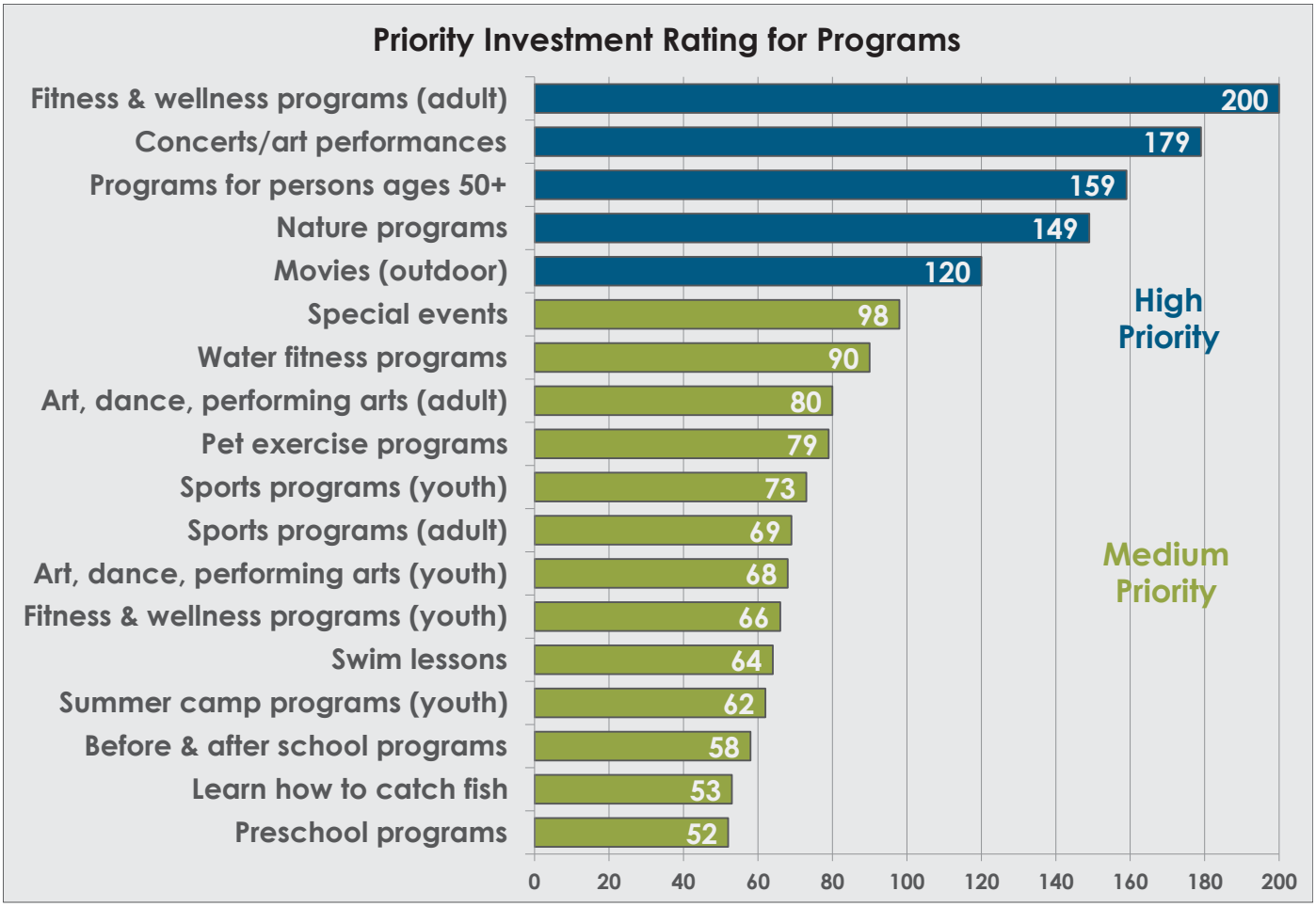


Figure 4.22: Program Priorities for Investment



4.3.15 Support for Park Improvements

Respondents to the Mail Survey were asked to indicate whether they were *very supportive, somewhat supportive, not supportive, or not sure* of 10 actions Boone County could take to improve parks and recreation services. The results, which can be seen in Figure 4.23, show the combined total of *very supportive and somewhat supportive* responses.

***Upgrade existing parks & facilities* received the highest level of support with 85% of respondents supporting this action** (61% very supportive). *Acquire & preserve open space & natural areas* ranked second with 81% of respondents supporting this action (61% *very supportive*). *Develop new recreation trails & connecting existing trails* ranked third with 79% of respondents supporting this action (56% *very supportive*). More than 70% of respondents were supportive of all 10 actions. These results indicate support for parks and recreation improvements in general by Boone County residents.

4.3.16 Visitation and Support for Spraygrounds

The Mail Survey asked respondents whether any member of their household had visited a sprayground or splash pad over the past year. Only 22% of households reported visiting such a facility (see Figure 4.24). Boone County does not currently operate any of these facilities, so these households visited these facilities by others outside of Boone County, leading to lower levels of visitation. While most households had not visited a these facilities in the previous year, **most households (72%) indicated support for the development of splash pads in Boone County** (Figure 4.25).

Figure 4.23: Support for Actions to Improve Parks and Recreation

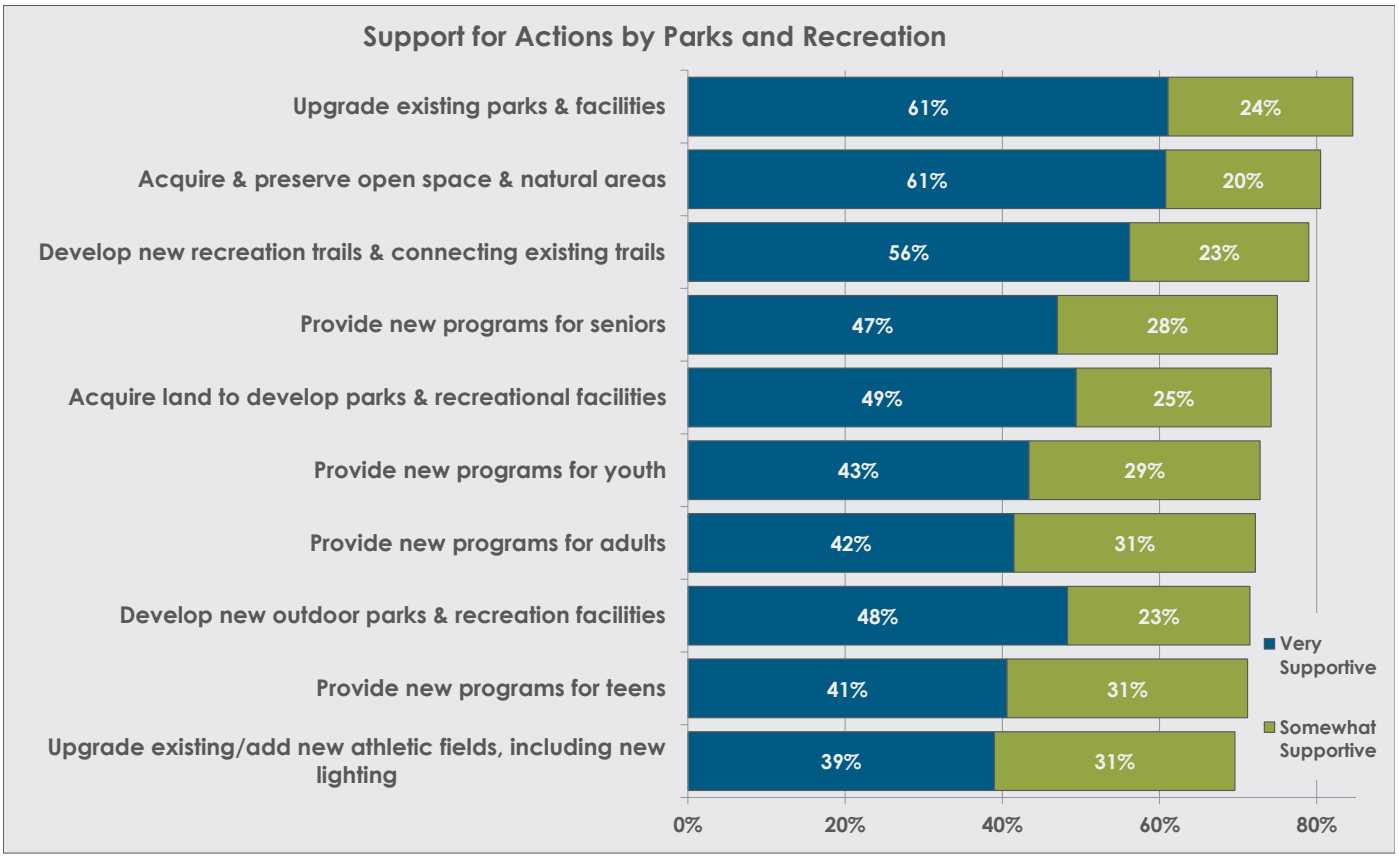


Figure 4.24: Visitation to Spraygrounds

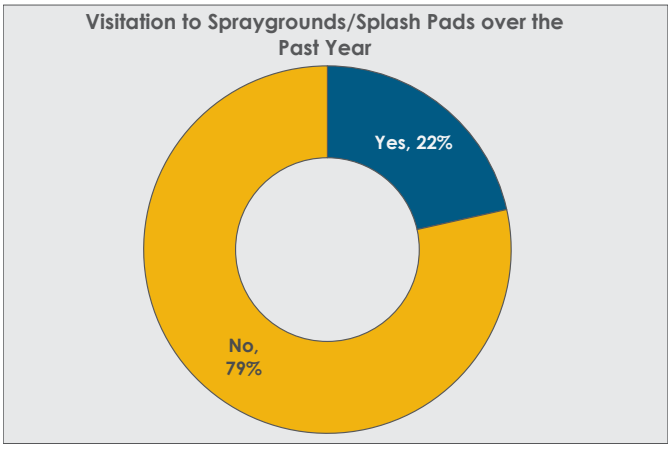
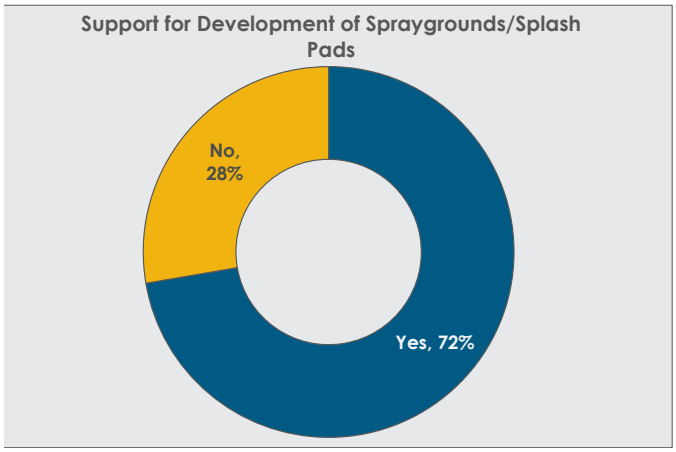


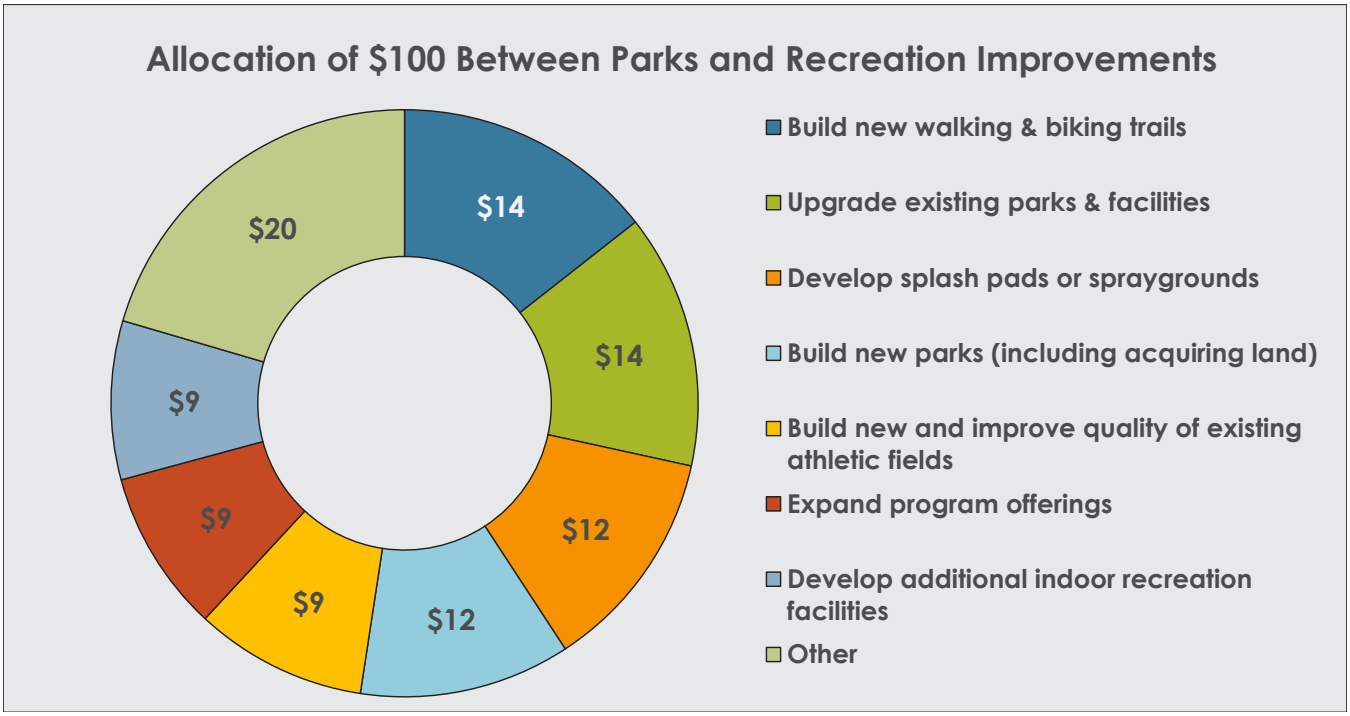
Figure 4.25: Support for the Development of Spraygrounds



4.3.17 Allocation of $100 Between Parks and Recreation Improvements

Survey respondents were asked how they would allocate $100 between seven different parks and recreation improvements in Boone County. Of the options provided (Figure 4.26), **residents would allocate the largest amount of the presented options to *build new walking & biking trails* with *upgrade existing parks* a close second ($14)**. ranked second also with $12. *Develop splash pads or spraygrounds and build new parks (including acquiring land)* were third and fourth, both at $12. *Other* received the largest allocation at $20, and the most requested features were dog parks, senior programs, and trails.

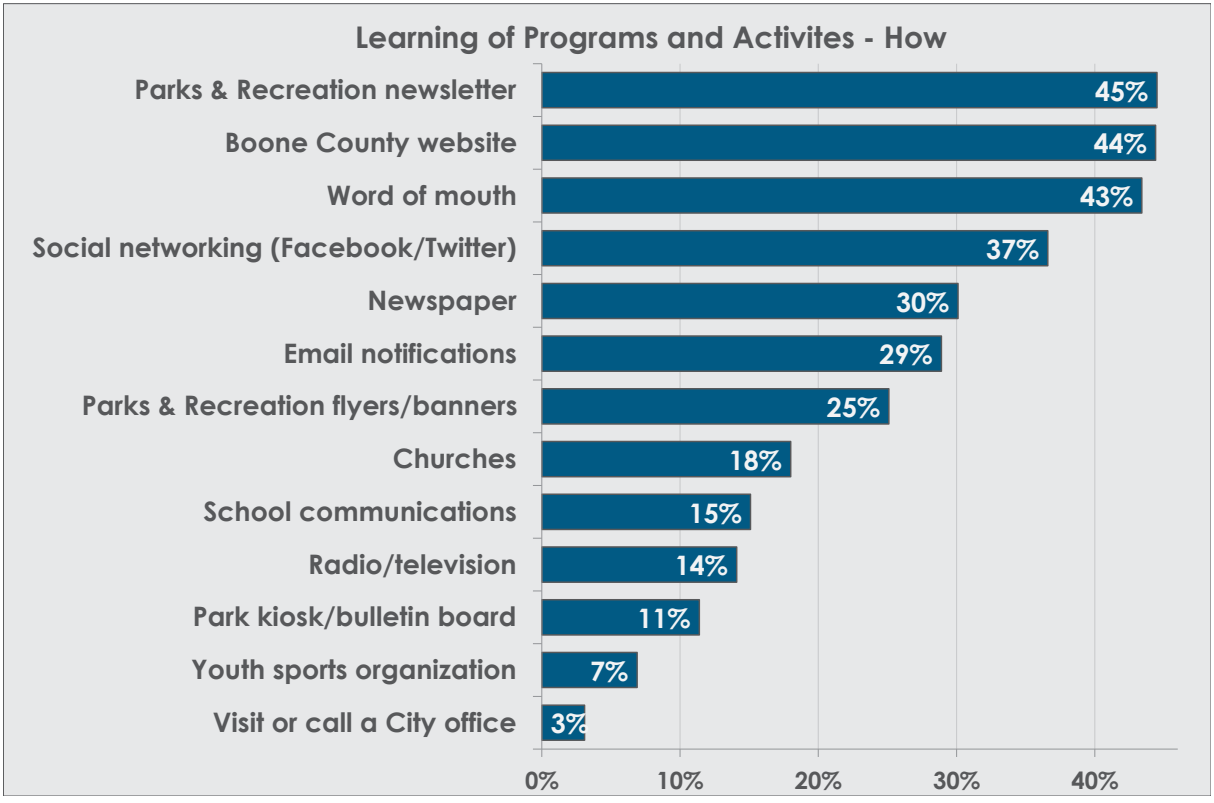
Figure 4.26: $100 Allocation for Park Improvements



4.3.18 Learning about Recreation or Activities in Boone County

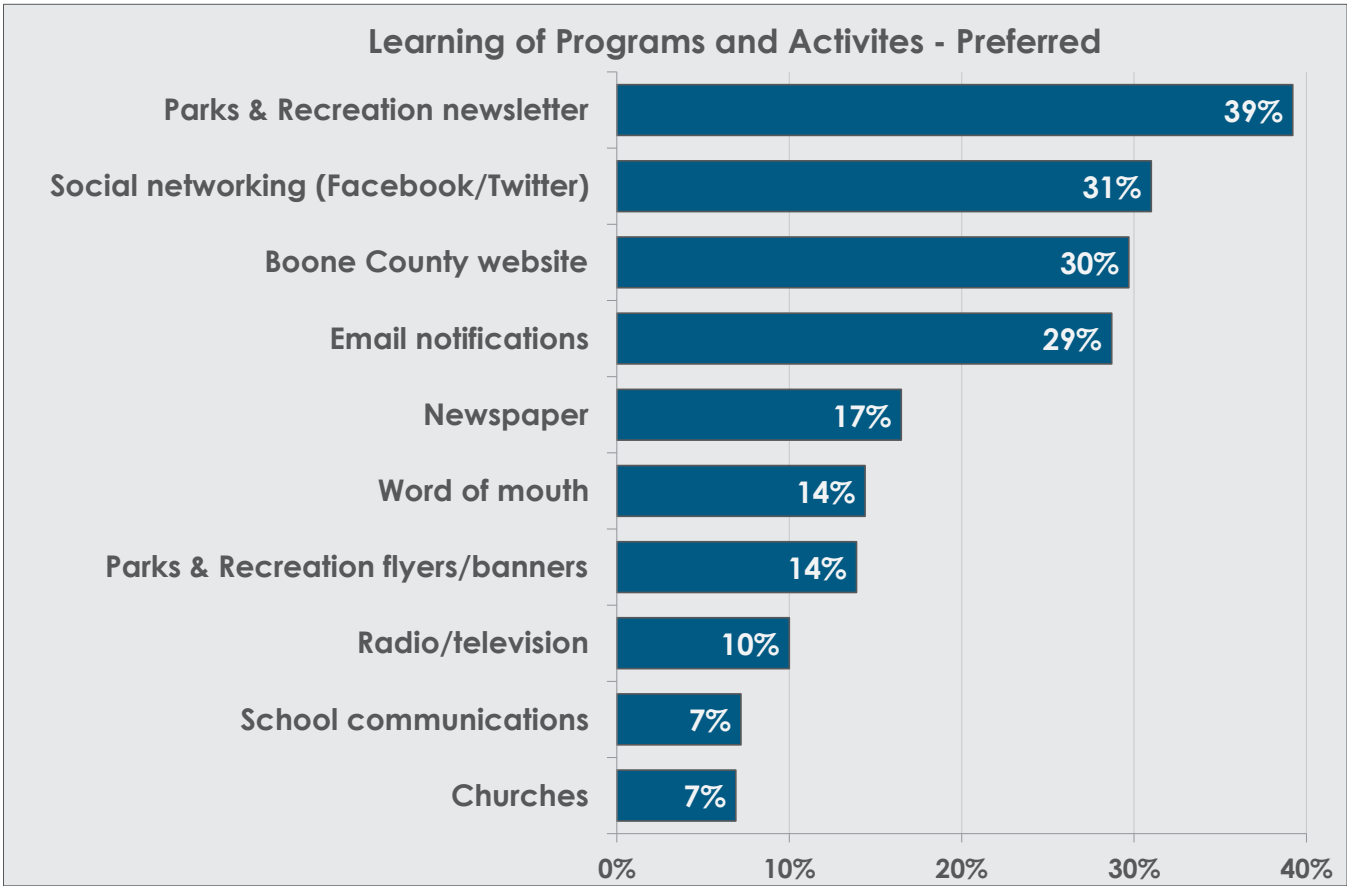
Mail Survey respondents were asked to identify ways from which they learn about Boone County Parks and activities. The results can be seen in Figure 4.27. Respondents indicated the *Parks & Recreation newsletter* as the most common way they learn of programs and activities with 45% choosing this option, followed closely by the *Boone County website* (44%) and *word of mouth* (43%).

Figure 4.27: Ways Households Learn about Recreation and Activities



A follow-up question asked respondents how they would like to be notified about programs and activities. The results can be seen in Figure 4.28. The *Parks & Recreation newsletter* again was first (39%), but *social networking* (31%) moved up to second. Only 14% selected *word of mouth*, ranking sixth, compared to the third for how households learned of programs and activities.

Figure 4.28: Ways Households Would Like to Learn about Recreation and Activities



4.3.19 Reasons Preventing Use of Parks, Recreation Facilities, Trails, and Programs More Often

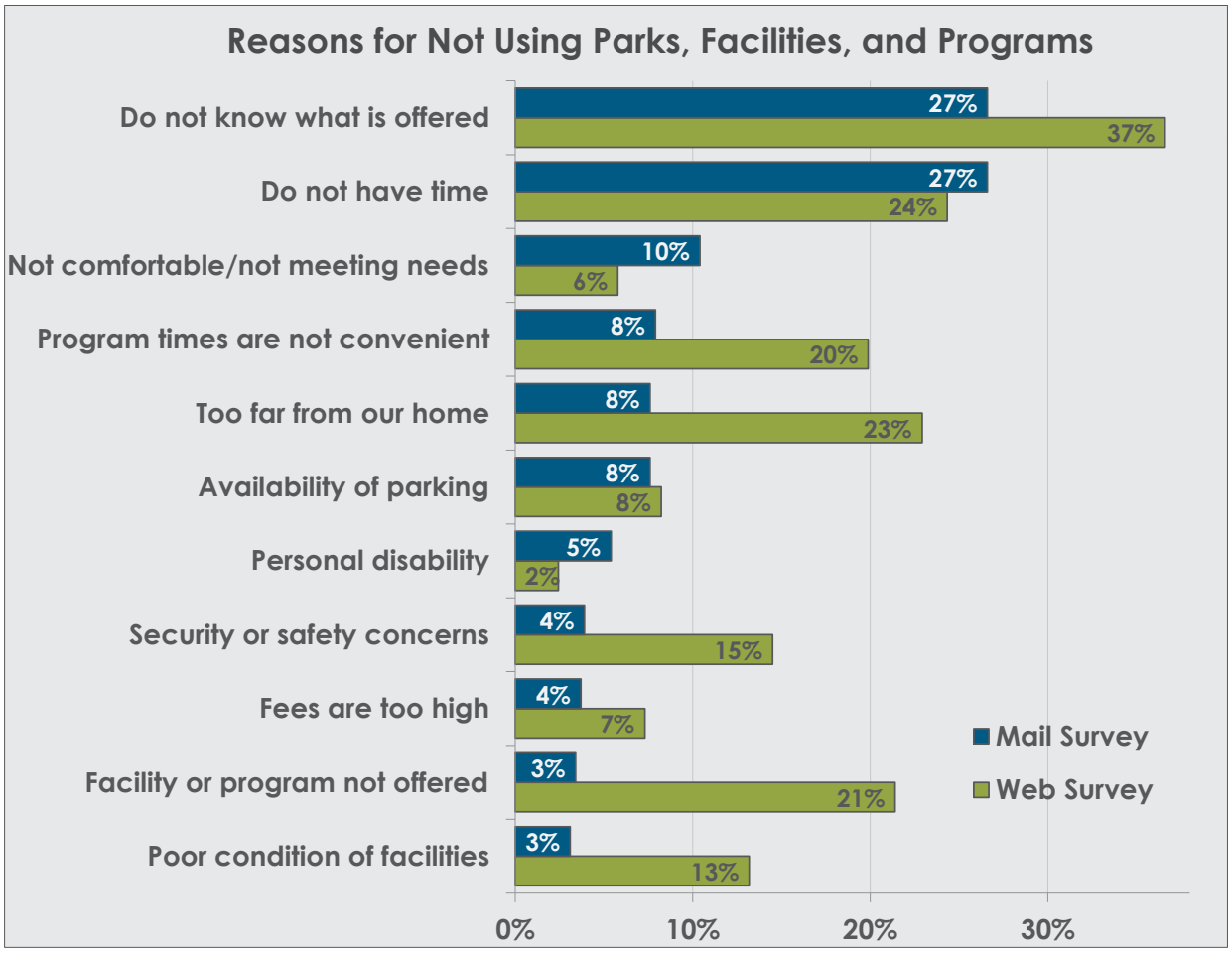
Respondents to both surveys were asked to select barriers to their households' use of parks, recreation facilities, trails, and programs from a list of 16 options. Figure 4.29 shows the results. According to the Mail Survey, **the number one reason was that households *do not know what is offered*** (27%). According to the National Benchmarking,[2] this reason is often at the top of the list, and Boone County's response rate to this option was lower than the national average of 35%. The second most common reason was *do not have time* at 27%, compared to the national average of 32%. Web Survey respondents were far more likely to select reasons for not using parks.

4.3.20 Survey Household Demographics

In an effort to verify the demographic representation of the survey responses with that of the population of Boone County, the distribution of age groups of respondent households was compared to the most recent population estimates.[3] Figure 4.30 shows the representation by age of survey respondent household members and the estimated 2018 Boone County population of each age cohort (the most recent available for these age demographics).

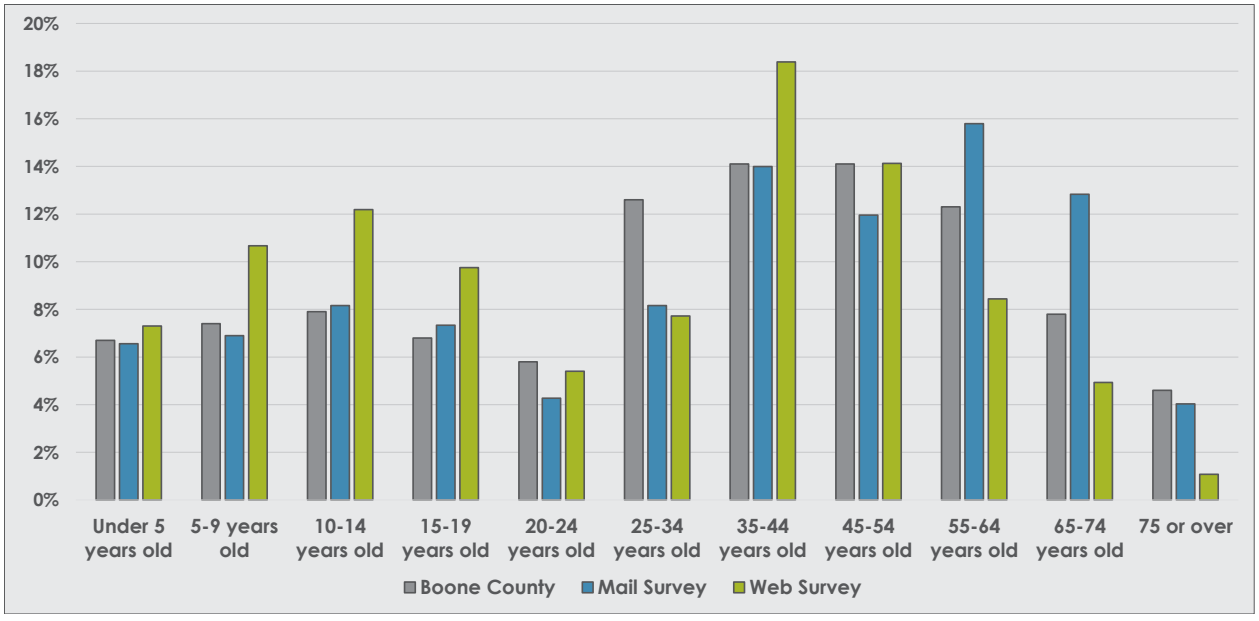
[2] Provided by ETC Institute (see Appendix G).
[3] 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figure 4.29: Reasons for Not Using Parks, Recreation Facilities, Trails, and Programs



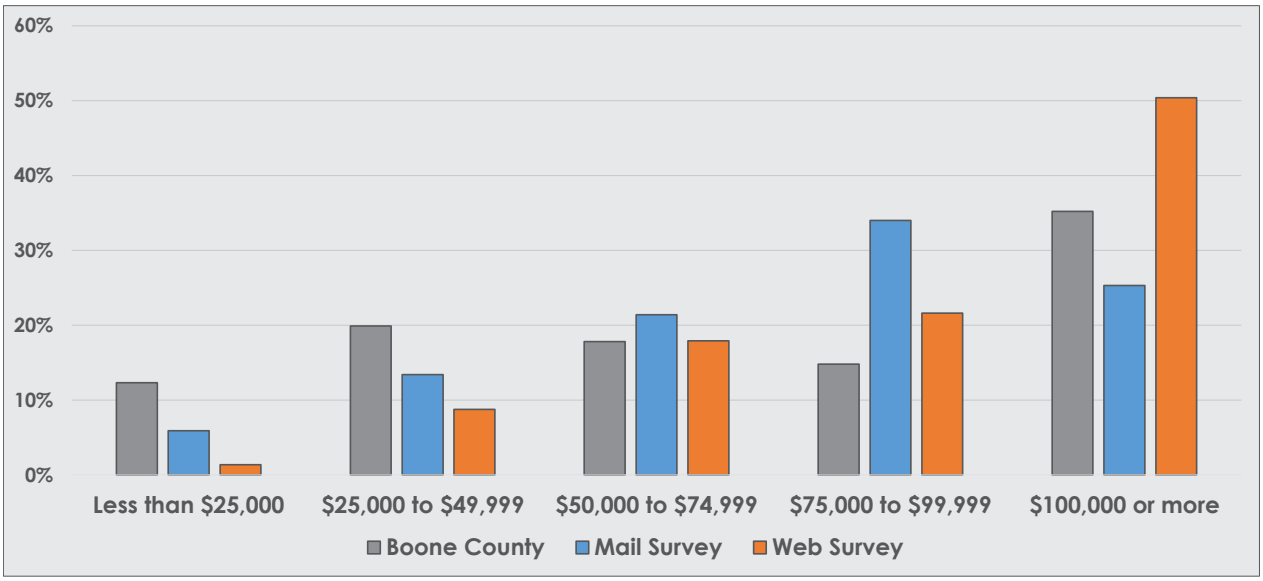
Based on this comparison, the respondents of the Mail Survey closely aligned with the age demographics of the Boone County population. Both surveys underrepresented ages 25-34. The Mail Survey was fairly close on most age demographics but over represented residents 45-74. The Web Survey overrepresented ages 35-44 and 5-19 while underrepresenting those age 55+.

Figure 4.30: Survey Household Demographics - Age



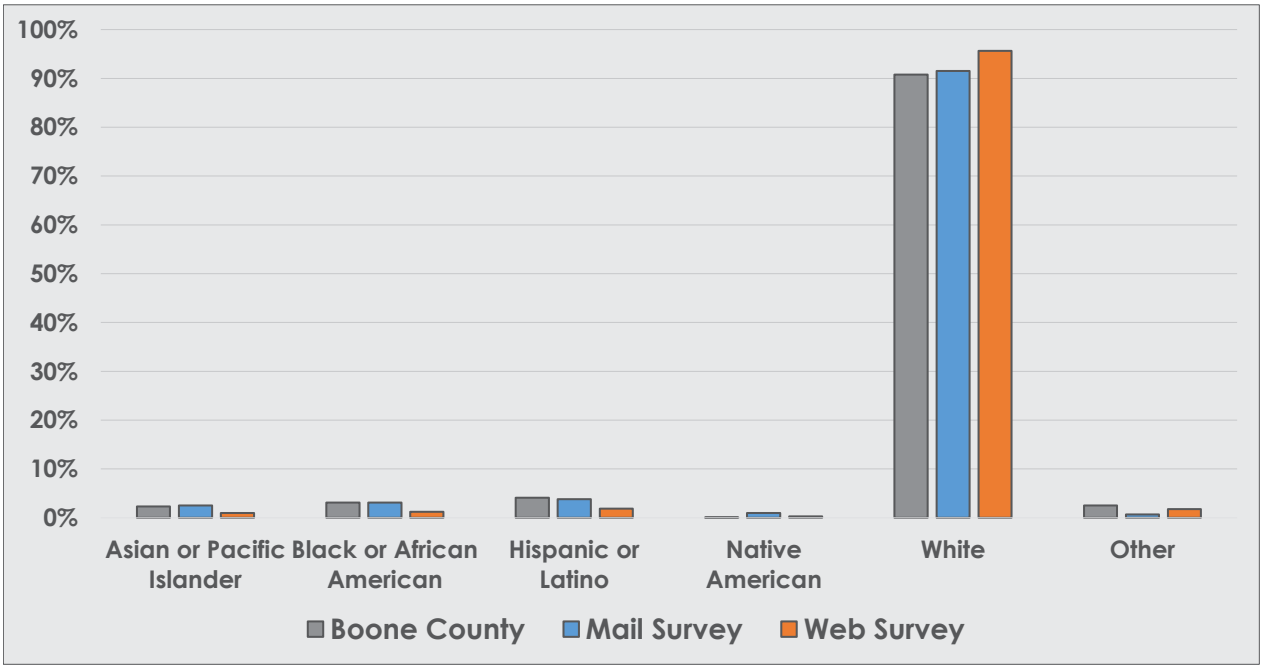
The median household income for respondents to the surveys and Boone County can be seen in Figure 4.31. These numbers indicate that the respondents to the Mail Surveys were fairly consistent with the incomes of the Boone County population as a whole with a slight underrepresentation of lower income households and an overrepresentation of incomes between $75,000 and $99,999. The Web Survey greatly overrepresented incomes of $100,000 or more and underrepresented incomes under $50,000.

Figure 4.31: Survey Household Demographics - Income



Race and ethnicity of respondents to the surveys and Boone County can be seen in Figure 4.32. The results show that both surveys gathered information from households that were similar to Boone County as a whole, although the Web Survey had a higher representation of White (Non-Hispanic) households.

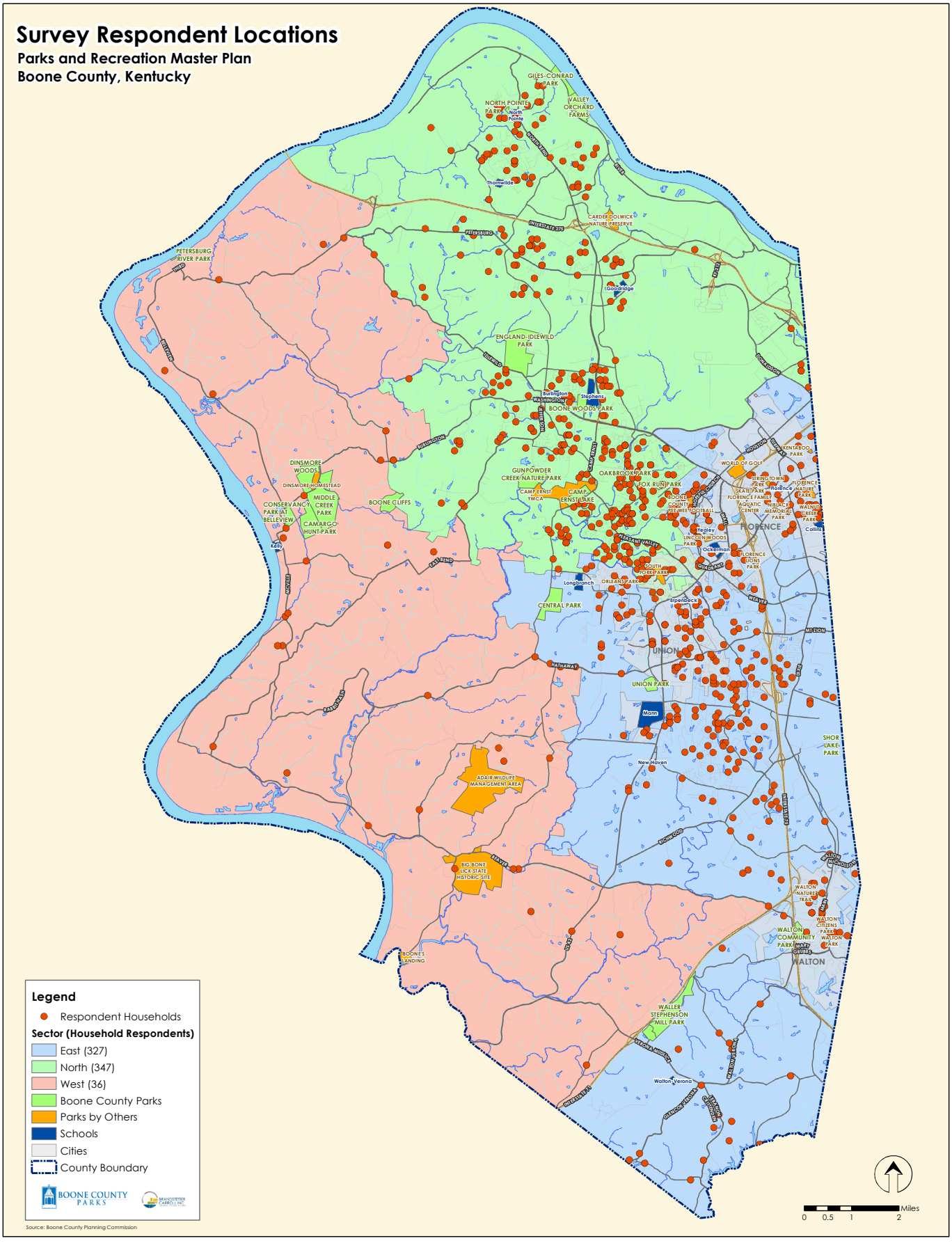
Figure 4.32: Survey Household Demographics - Race or Ethnicity



4.3.21 Distribution of Returned Surveys

ETC Institute provided data for the location of returned surveys (to nearest block). The results can be seen in Figure 4.33. This figure indicates a relatively balanced distribution of responses throughout Boone County.

Figure 4.33: Survey Respondent Locations



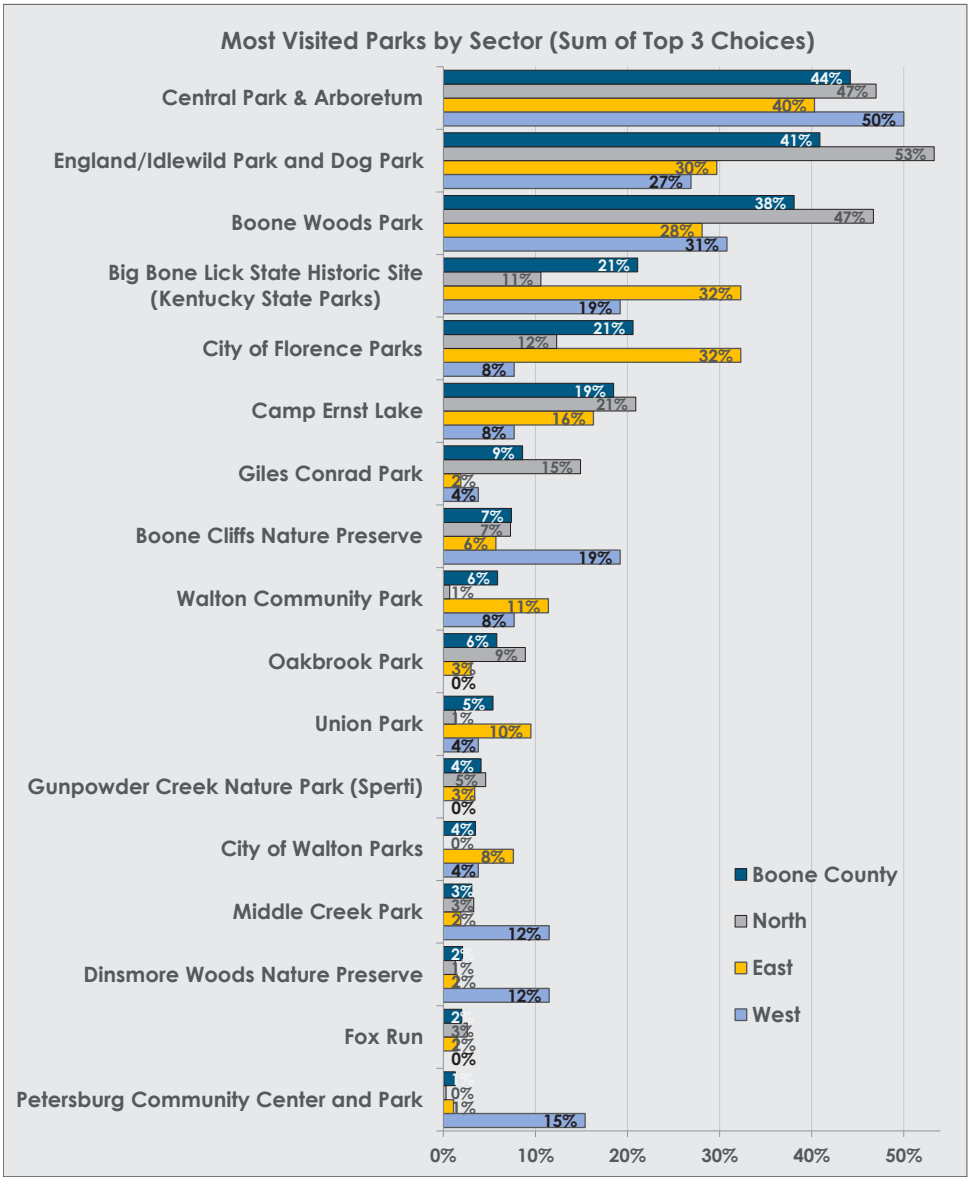
4.4 Survey Results by Sector

The results for the survey contained cross tabular data for Boone County for three areas or sectors. The three sectors as identified in this analysis can be seen in Figure 4.33. This analysis of the variation between the sectors examines park visitation, the most important facilities, the most important programs, support for actions, and the reasons for not using parks and programs. The margin of error for the West Sector is much higher due to the small sample size (only 36 households, compared to 327 and 347 for the East and North, respectively). This likely error is most obvious when the results indicate that 0% of households selected a response.

Park Visitation

Visitation to specific facilities varied substantially between the three sectors. Figure 4.34 shows the most visited parks and facilities for the three sectors. As would be expected, households were more likely to visit parks closer to where they live. Central Park was the most used park by all but the North Sector, although households in this sector used the park often. North Sector households also indicated heavy use of England/Idlewild Park and Boone Woods Park. East Sector households were the most likely to use Big Bone Lick State Historic Site and Florence, and West Sector were more likely to use Boone Cliffs Middle Creek, Dinsmore Woods, and Petersburg Park.

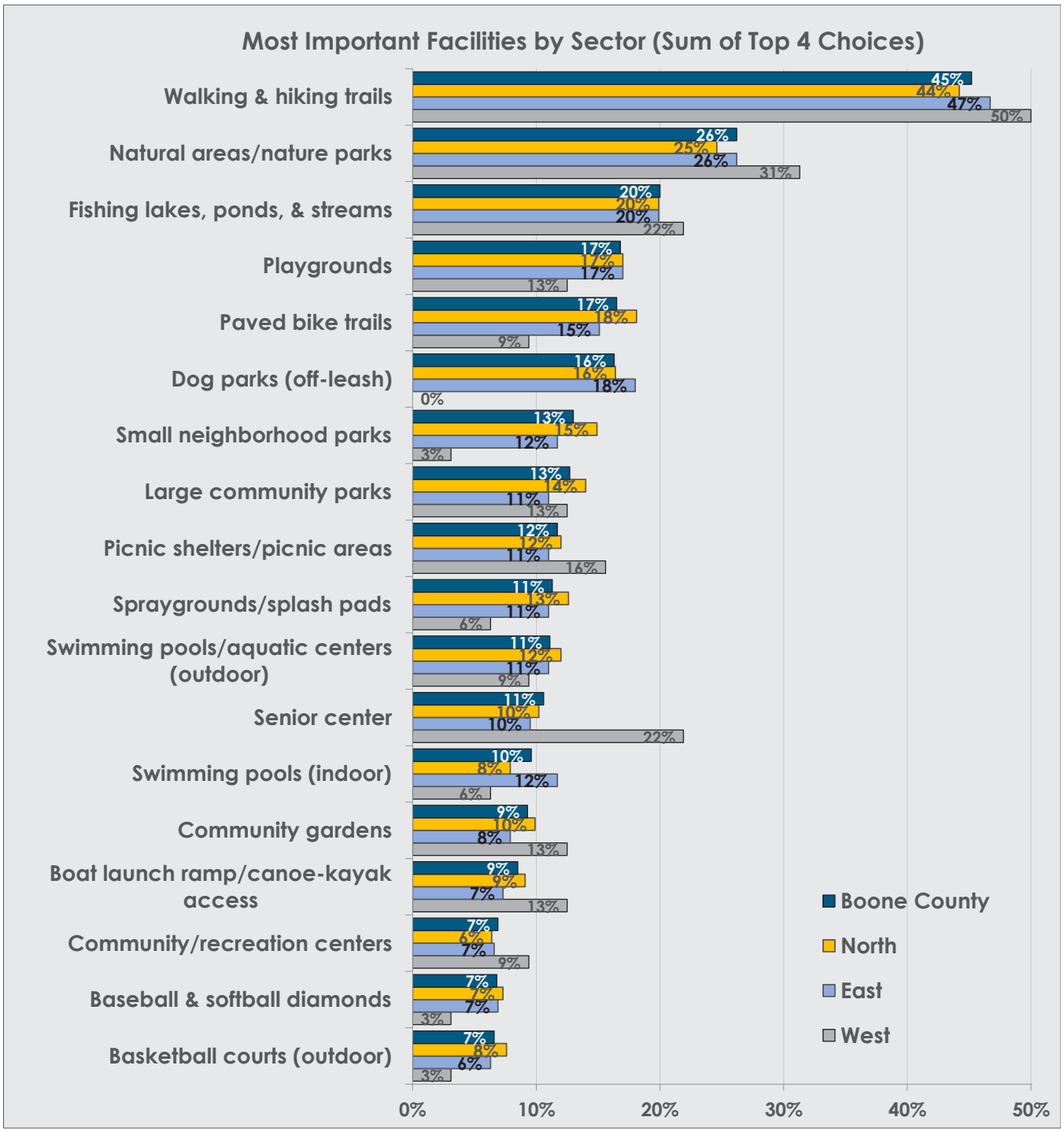
Figure 4.34: Most Visited Parks by Sector



Most Important Facilities

The most important facilities (sum of top four) to households (Figure 4.35) were generally consistent between the two sectors with a few notably differences. ***Walking & hiking trails* ranked first in all three sectors**, *natural areas/nature parks* ranked second, and *fishing lakes, ponds, & streams* ranked third. *Dog parks* were more important to households in the North and East sectors, and a *senior center* was more important in the West Sector.

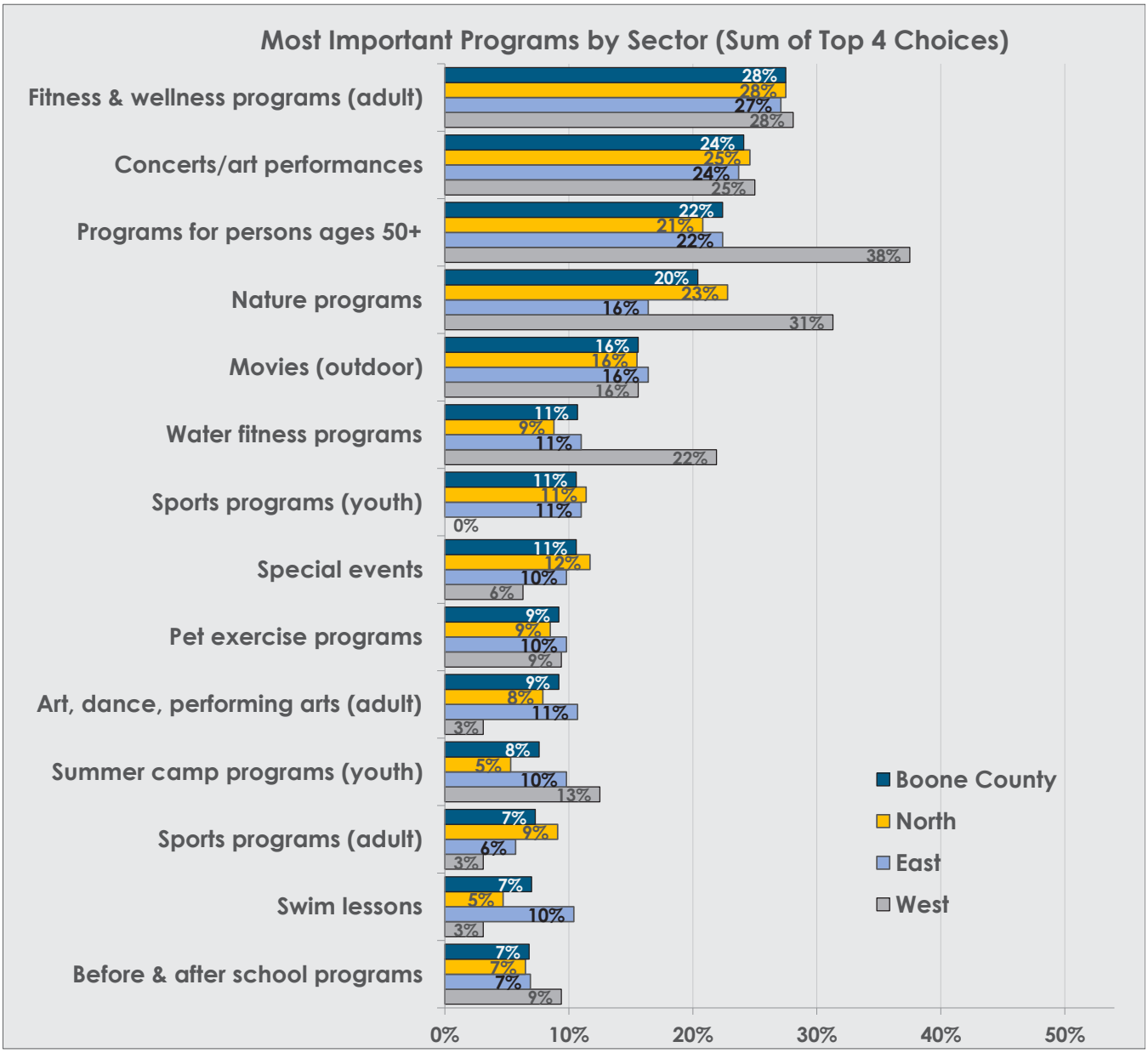
Figure 4.35: Most Important Facilities (Sum of Top 4 Choices) by Sector



Most Important Programs

The most important programs (sum of top four) to households (Figure 4.36) were similar between the three sectors. The top three results were the same for both the North and East sectors: *Fitness & wellness programs (adult)*, *concerts/art performances*, and *programs for persons ages 50+*. In contrast, West Sector households ranked *programs for persons ages 50+* first by far, followed by *nature programs*. West Sector households were also much more interested in *water fitness programs*.

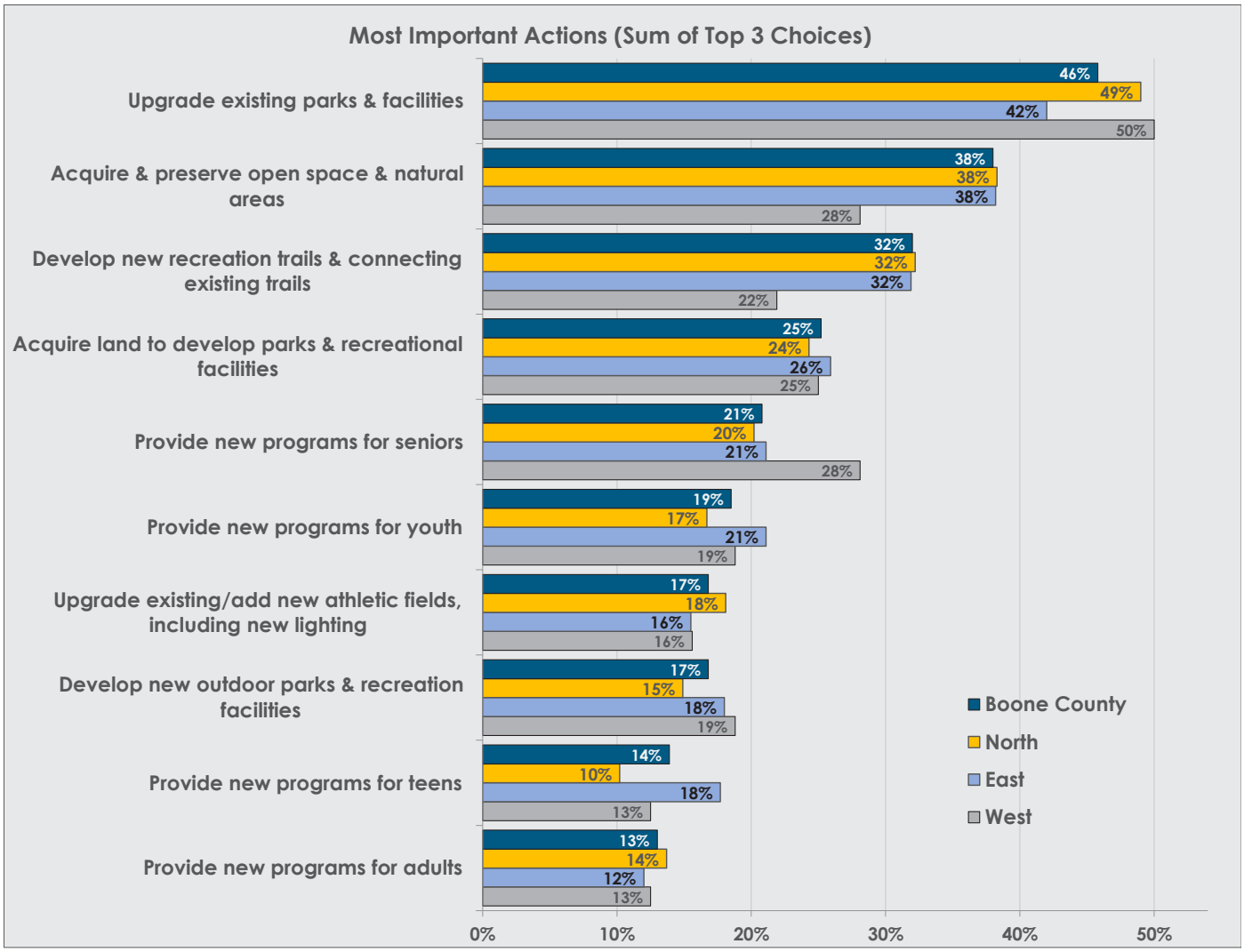
Figure 4.36: Most Important Programs by Sector



Support for Actions to Improve Parks and Recreation

Figure 4.37 shows the most important actions to improve parks and recreation in Boone County by sector. The figure shows similar priorities for the actions between the three sectors overall. The most notable differences are slightly lower importance for *upgrade existing parks & facilities* in the East Sector, although still the most important action, and higher importance for *provide new programs for seniors* in the West Sector.

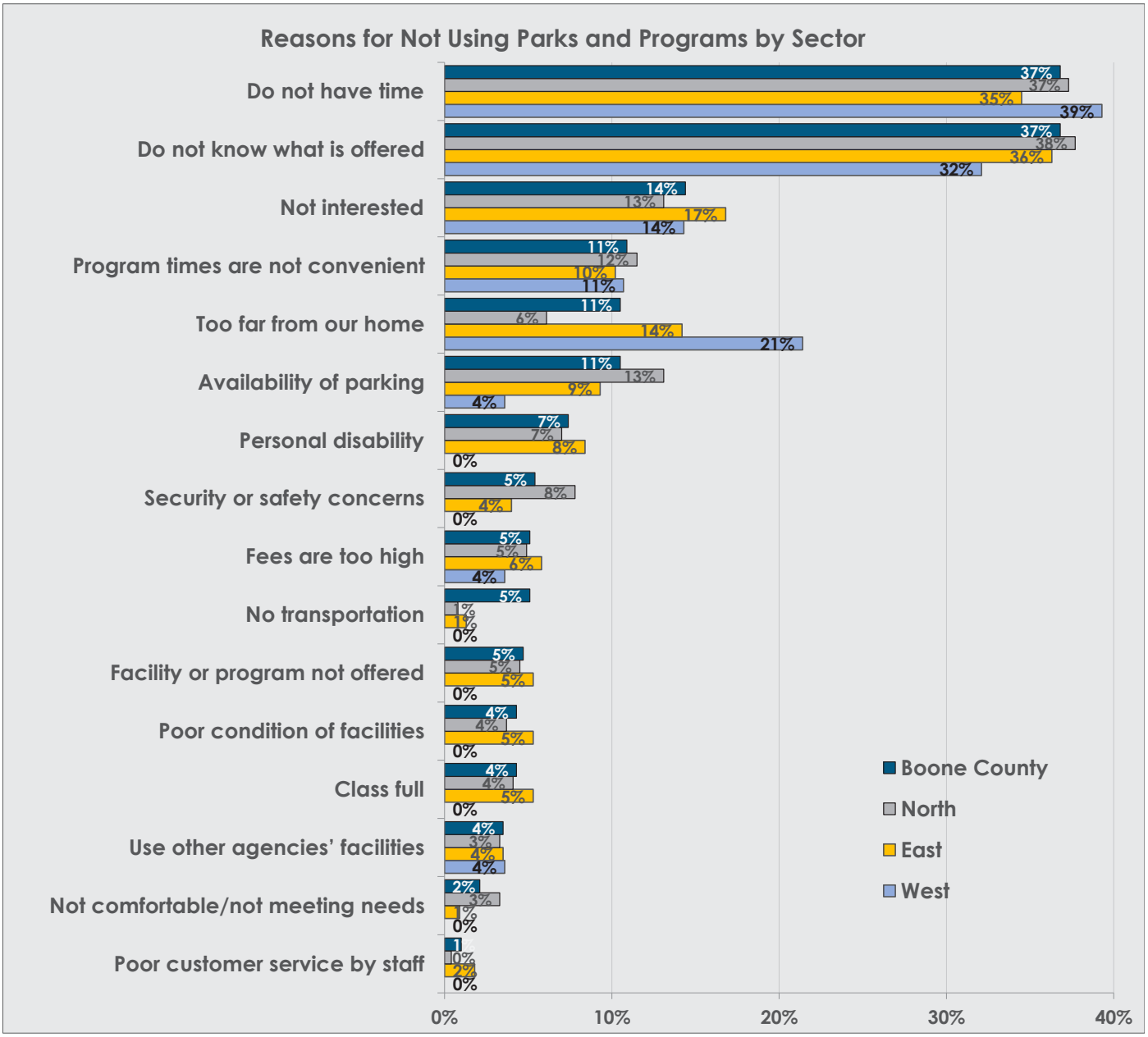
Figure 4.37: Most Important Actions by Sector



Reasons for Not Using Facilities and Programs

As indicated in Figure 4.38, households in all three sectors identified the same two reasons as by far the most likely for not using Boone County parks, facilities, and programs: *do not have time* and *do not know what is offered*. Overall, the reasons were indicated at similar levels throughout the sectors. However, North Sector households were least likely to indicate that parks were *too far from our home*, while West Sector residents were most likely to select this option. This result is not surprising as there are fewer parks in the western part of Boone County and more in the northern portion.

Figure 4.38: Reasons for Not Using Parks and Programs by Sector



4.5 Online Engagement

Boone County utilized MindMixer, an online civic engagement tool, to enable residents to provide input regardless of their location or the time of day. The site was devoted specifically to this Master Plan and provided a forum for residents to submit ideas, provide input on priorities, engage in conversation with the parks and recreation leaders and others, and stay up to date on the planning process. The planning consultants managed and updated the website, which experienced 153 total interactions (64 participants). This section summarizes the results of the input gathered from the website. Topics on the website were posted to follow up on previous public input and to keep the public involved throughout the process. Two different types of topics were posted on this website: polls and open-ended questions.

4.5.1 Activities at Parks in Boone County

Visitors were also asked to select their favorite activities at parks from a list (up to 3). The most popular activities can be seen in Figure 4.39, based on 22 participants. The top two options by a wide margin were *walking/jogging* (70%) and *enjoying nature* (62%), which are passive activities that can be enjoyed at any age.

4.5.2 Improvements to Parks

Open-ended topics on the MindMixer website prompted visitors to indicate improvements they would like to see at Boone County Parks if they had a magic wand. The topics asked respondents to indicate their vision for the future of parks and recreation in Boone County. A summary of the 25 ideas and 103 interactions is provided below. These items represent the most discussed topics and are listed in the percentage of points. Participants could score comments by how much they agreed. Trails in parks were the most discussed topic, followed by the need for a nature center and trail connectivity in the county.

Figure 4.39: Favorite activities at Boone County Parks

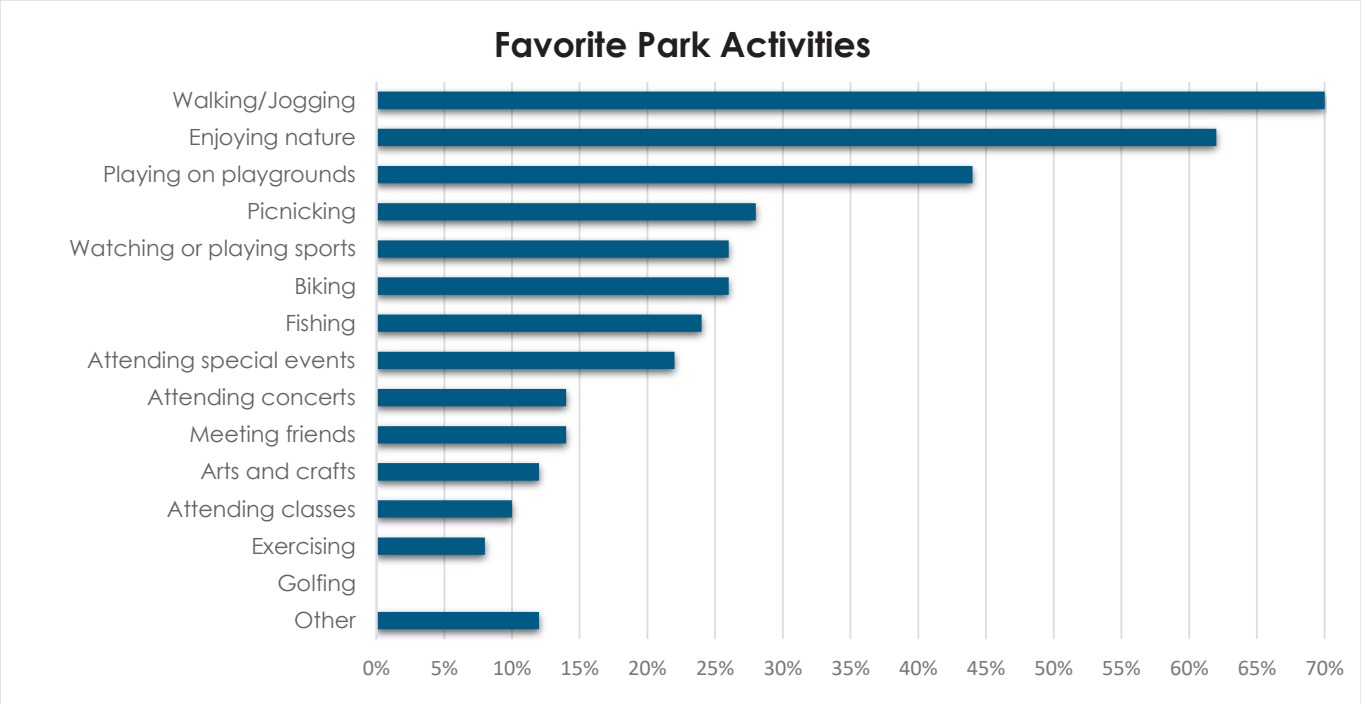
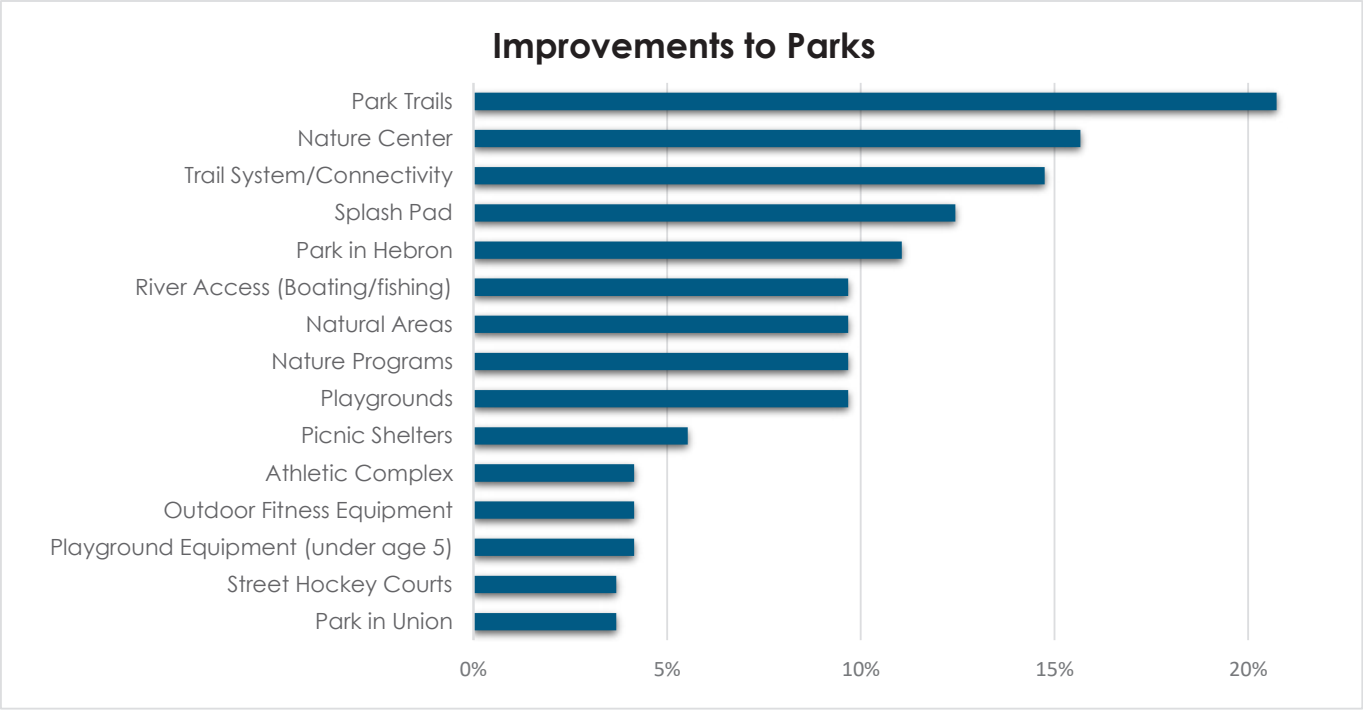


Figure 4.40: Magic Wand on Change (Comment Rank)



4.6 Conclusion

The public input process as a whole provided an abundance of information about the needs and desires of Boone County residents. Although data was gathered through a variety of methods, some trends were apparent throughout the process.

Results indicate that the community desires:

- Upgrades to existing parks
- Trail improvements
  - Trails system/connectivity
  - More trails in parks
  - Paved and unpaved
  - Lighting
- Spraygrounds
- Athletic fields
  - Lighting
  - Artificial turf
  - Complex for tournaments
  - Multipurpose/soccer fields most needed
- Better access to streams, lakes, and ponds
  - Canoe/kayak access
  - Fishing
- Nature center
- New Neighborhood Parks
  - Hebron

  - Union
  - Growing areas
  - Partnerships with developers
- More/better restrooms
- Acquisition and preservation of open space and natural areas
- Safety and security improvements, including lighting and cameras
- More dog parks
- Pickleball courts with lighting
- More trees
- New playground equipment
- More picnic shelters
- Support features
  - Drinking fountains
  - Shade
  - Lighting
- More/expanded partnerships
- Improved marketing and communication
- Indoor facilities/recreation center
- Expanded program offerings
  - Nature programs
  - More outdoor movies and concerts
  - Adult fitness & wellness programs
  - Programs for persons aged 50+
  - Special events

A word cloud, which uses font sizes to show the frequency of word appearance, can be seen in Figure 4.41. This concluding image, created using text of public meeting comments and survey responses, provides a visual representation of the voice of the community through this public input process and serves to reinforce the results presented above and throughout this chapter.

Figure 4.41: Public Input Word Cloud

5

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND IDENTIFICATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter of the *Envision Boone County Parks 2030 Master Plan* identifies and presents an assessment of needs for parks and recreation in Boone County. 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 Boone County 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 county is providing parkland. However, total acreage alone does not account for where park acres are located – and, thus, who has access. Therefore, it is critical to also consider the location of the county'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 Boone County's Parkland and Recreation Areas

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 Boone County, they are intended to be attainable but also ambitious enough to inspire Boone County Parks in its continuing work of improving the quality of life for residents.

Parkland is generally classified as either developed or undeveloped. Developed acres typically include features like athletic fields and courts, picnic shelters, playgrounds, and any mowed areas, while undeveloped acres are those in their natural state, including woodlands, prairies, wetlands, without developed features. When acquired and maintained at a beneficial ratio (specific to the locality) both types of park acre 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 described the different classifications of parks and recreational areas (in general, these categories are consistent with the National Recreation and Park Association criteria but do include some modifications to match local circumstances) and provided an overview of facilities in Boone County. 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 Boone County.

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 Boone County. This table includes only properties offered by Boone County Parks. 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 by Developed Acreage Park Classification

Park Classification	Existing Developed Acres	Existing Developed Acres per 1000 Population	Target Acres per 1000 Population	2019 Developed Acres Target	2019 Surplus (+) Deficit (-)	2030 Developed Acres Target	2030 Surplus (+) Deficit (-)
Neighborhood	11.7	0.1	0.2	26.5	-14.8	32.7	-21.0
Community	65.0	0.5	0.6	79.5	-14.5	98.2	-33.2
Regional	175.0	1.3	1.3	172.2	2.8	212.8	-37.8
Nature Parks/Natural Areas	52.6	0.4	0.4	53.0	-0.4	65.5	-12.9
Other	47.0	0.4	0.3	39.7	7.3	49.1	-2.1
Total	351.3	2.7	2.8	370.8	-19.5	458.4	-107.1

1. See Chapter 2 for population estimates
2. Does not include parks by others or school grounds unless maintained by Boone County Parks
3. Mini Parks included with Neighborhood Park totals

Table 5.1 identifies the current developed park acreage for Boone County and estimates future need based on projected population change through 2030. In the coming decade (2020-2030) the population in Boone County is expected to see roughly twice the increase experienced between 2010 and 2020 (see Chapter 2). Parts of the county expected to see most of this growth overlap with areas currently lacking in park acreage and amenities.

Based on park sizes from the park classification system presented in Chapter 3, Boone County will need the equivalent of four to five new Neighborhood Parks, and two new Community Parks by 2030 to meet needs as presented in Table 5.1. Some of this developed acreage could be improved at existing parks or other land owned by the county, including those that are undeveloped (or underdeveloped), by adding features. For example, Union Park could provide a new Community Park and the Erpenbeck/Plantation Point (not currently in the park inventory) could become a Neighborhood Park, if upgraded.

5.2.2 Guidelines for Open Space

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

[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Parks, Trails, and Health Resources. cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/parks_resources.htm
[2] WeConservePA. (2012). The Economic Benefits of Land Conservation: A Guide. Pennsylvania Land Trust Association.
[3] John L. Crompton (2008). Empirical Evidence of the Contributions of Park and Conservation Lands to Environmental Sustainability: The Key to repositioning the Parks Field. World Leisure Journal, 50(3), 154-172
[4] John L. Crompton (2008). Empirical Evidence of the Contributions of Leisure Services to Alleviating Social Problems: A Key to Repositioning the Leisure Services Field. World Leisure Journal, 50(4), 243-258.

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.[5]

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

What follows is an examination of the current state of open space in Boone County.

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 Boone County. Table 5.2 identifies total acres of parks and open space acreage, both developed and undeveloped, in Boone County.[6] The table shows inventory targets based on the 13.5 acres per 1,000 population and 1.4% of the total acreage in the county. The 13.5 acres per 1,000 represents the currently level of service which would decline to 11 acres per 1,000 population by 2030 if no additional land were acquired. The 1.4% of total area number is a slight increase from the current 1.1%.

These values were chosen because, although Boone County is currently well above the median for both values, the residents strongly indicated the desire for additional parkland and open space and the population is growing rapidly. Boone County also has needs for open space acquisition based on the service area mapping provided later in this chapter (Sections 5.4 and 5.5). Land owned by other agencies, including city and state parks, are shown for reference only. They are not included in the recommendations because the county has no control over them, and parks by others were not included in the benchmark comparisons.

Acres per Population

Using the target of 13.5 acres per 1,000 population, based on the current level of service, Boone County will have a deficit of about 418 acres by 2030 due to the rapid population growth in the county. The target represents a feasible goal within the next 10 years, especially with potential donations and land received as part of mitigation efforts, but is dependent on the availability of land. Some land acquisitions may be contiguous to existing parks, but potential acquisitions for new parks would allow for development in underserved areas.

Percentage of Total County Area

The percentage of total area is not tied to population which means it can potentially represent a longer-term, more flexible objective. Boone County Parks currently represent 1.1% of the land in the county, with state parks providing another 0.7% and non-profits representing 0.2%. City parks cover 0.1% of the county's total area. Boone County is well above the benchmark median (0.5%). As noted above, Table 5.2 includes targets for the county based on this 1.4% of total area goal. This target would require the acquisition of roughly 500 additional acres, slightly above the number indicated by the acres per population metric.

[5] F.D.B. (2007). The economic benefits of land conservation. San Francisco, CA: The Trust for Public Land.
[6] These totals do include some structures, but these features represent a relatively small percentage of the total acreage.

Table 5.2: Open Space Guidelines

Open Space Category	Existing Acres	Existing Acres Per 1000	13.5 Acres per 1000 Population				Existing % Preserved	1.4% of Area	
			2019 Target Acres	2019 Surplus/ Deficit	2030 Target Acres	2030 Surplus/ Deficit		Target Acres	Surplus/ Deficit
Boone County Parks	1,792.2	13.5	1,787.9	4.4	2,210.2	-418.0	1.1%	2,297.9	-505.7
Parks by Others									
City Parks	127.9	1.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.1%	N/A	N/A
State Parks	1,155.2	8.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.7%	N/A	N/A
Non-Profits/Trusts	306.2	2.3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.2%	N/A	N/A
Boone County Total	3,381.5	25.5	1,787.9	4.4	2,210.2	-418.0	2.1%	2,297.9	-505.7

1. See Chapter 2 for population estimates
2. City Parks include those provided by Florence and Walton (see Chapter 3)

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 slightly above benchmark and current due to demand and Boone County's higher percentage of children
- Picnic Pavilions/Shelters – Set at increase due to demand and current distribution
- Paved Trails (miles) – Set at increase due to demand and trends
- Unpaved Trails (miles) – Set at slight increase due to demand and trends
- Skate Parks – Set at slightly increase, currently below benchmark
- Outdoor Theaters – Set at increase due to demand and current distribution
- Dog Parks – Set at increase due to demand and current distribution, already above benchmark
- Community Gardens – Set at increase due to demand and current distribution, already above benchmark
- Splash pads – Set at increase due to demand and trends, none currently

Outdoor Fields & Courts

- Youth Baseball Fields – Set at current, well above benchmark
- Youth Softball Fields – Set at current, well above benchmark
- Adult Softball Fields – Set at slight reduction, currently well above benchmark, trends indicate decreasing demand
- Multipurpose Fields – Set at slight increase due to demand and trends, currently well above benchmark
- Basketball Courts – Set at current, well above benchmark

- Tennis Courts – Set at current, slightly above benchmark
- Pickleball Courts – Set at increase, none currently, trends indicate growth

Indoor Areas

- Recreation Centers – Set at 1, below benchmark but some amenities currently offered by others
- Community Centers – Set at 1, below benchmark but some amenities currently offered by others
- Gymnasiums – Set at benchmark, none currently
- Nature Centers – Set at 1, slightly above benchmark, none currently
- Senior Centers – Set at 1, below benchmark but some amenities currently offered by others

Table 5.3: Facility Level of Service Standards

Facility	Per Population Target	Existing per Population	Existing Total Supply	2019 Target	2019 Surplus / Deficit	2030 Target	2030 Surplus / Deficit
Outdoor Recreation Areas							
Playgrounds	10,000	11,036	12	13.2	-1.2	16.4	-4.4
Picnic Pavilions/Shelters	7,000	9,460	14	18.9	-4.9	23.4	-9.4
Paved Trails (miles)	13,000	19,161	6.9	10.2	-3.3	12.6	-5.7
Unpaved Trails (miles)	5,000	5,720	23.2	26.5	-3.3	32.7	-9.6
Skate Parks	100,000	132,434	1	1.3	-0.3	1.6	-0.6
Outdoor Theaters	60,000	132,434	1	2.2	-1.2	2.7	-1.7
Dog Parks	50,000	66,217	2	2.6	-0.6	3.3	-1.3
Community Gardens	50,000	66,217	2	2.6	-0.6	3.3	-1.3
Splash Pads	55,000	N/A	0	2.4	-2.4	3.0	-3.0
Outdoor Fields & Courts							
Youth Baseball Fields	5,000	4,905	27	26.5	0.5	32.7	-5.7
Youth Softball Fields	5,000	4,905	27	26.5	0.5	32.7	-5.7
Adult Softball Fields	25,000	18,919	7	5.3	1.7	6.5	0.5
Multipurpose Fields	7,000	7,357	18	18.9	-0.9	23.4	-5.4
Basketball Courts	12,500	12,613	10.5	10.6	-0.1	13.1	-2.6
Tennis Courts	12,000	11,036	12	11.0	1.0	13.6	-1.6
Pickleball Courts	20,000	N/A	2	6.6	-4.6	8.2	-6.2
Indoor Areas							
Recreation Centers	160,000	N/A	0	0.8	-0.8	1.0	-1.0
Community Centers	160,000	N/A	0	0.8	-0.8	1.0	-1.0
Gymnasiums	45,000	N/A	0	2.9	-2.9	3.6	-3.6
Nature Centers	160,000	N/A	0	0.8	-0.8	1.0	-1.0
Senior Centers	160,000	N/A	0	0.8	-0.8	1.0	-1.0

1. See Chapter 2 for population estimates and benchmarking

5.3.2 Facility Level of Service Standards

The values in Table 5.3 indicate a potential need for various facilities. The largest current facility deficits (2019) are for trails and pickleball courts; picnic shelters, playgrounds, youth ball fields, and multipurpose fields all have relatively high deficits as well. The demand for additional trails was clear through the public input and benchmarking data affirms this. Boone County has a relatively low need for indoor facilities, but this is largely due to spaces provided by other entities and organizations in the county.

The values in Table 5.3 highlight what additional facilities are needed to meet the demand but do not indicate where in Boone County 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 Boone County 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 existing parks with service areas for various park classifications. The methodology for this analysis (and the facility analysis in Section 5.5) can be found in Appendix A. These service areas do not necessarily represent all users of the parks; some users are willing to travel greater distances than those described in the figures. In general, however, the most frequent users live within the areas indicated and usage rates tend to decline sharply when residents have greater travel times.

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. The 10-minute walking distance represents the average time it takes to travel one half mile (on foot) and is a common measurement of walkability. As part of the multi-pronged campaign, cities commit to ensuring that by 2050 all residents will have access to a park within a 10-minute walk of their home. Mayors throughout the country have already taken the pledge, and more continue to do so. Several mayors in Kentucky have committed to the cause, including in Paducah, Hopkinsville, and Winchester.[7] **Currently, one out of five residents (20%) live within a 10-minute walk to a park in Boone County, including those by other agencies. About 45% of residents of the three cities (Florence, Union, and Walton) live within a 10-minute walk of a park.** Due to the rural nature of much of the county, it is not feasible for all residents in the entire county to be within a 10-minute walk to a park, but Boone County could help the cities and subdivisions improve access. In Figure 5.1, the bright green areas represent a 10-minute walk to a Neighborhood Park (or larger). Light orange areas represent a 10-minute walk to any other park, including School Parks.

Boone County is a large jurisdiction encompassing areas that are both primarily rural and less developed (e.g., the western edge along the Ohio River) as well as areas that are more densely populated and have more development (e.g., Walton, Union, Florence, Burlington, and Hebron). Because this plan is looking at the county as whole, access distance is measured by drivetime (within 5- and 10-minutes) in addition to walk time (within 10-minutes). Only 16% or Boone County residents live within a 5-minute drive to a Community Park, but 90% live within a 10-minute drive.

In Figure 5.2, bright green areas represent a 5-minute drive to a Community or Regional Park (by Boone County Parks), beige areas represent Nature Parks, and brown areas show State Parks. The lighter shades identify corresponding park areas within a 10-minute driving distance. The purpose of these maps is to identify the service gaps where neighborhoods and resident have low access to parks.

In an examination of the county by three sectors, the North Sector has a considerable amount of area within a 5-minute drive to a Community or Regional Park, while the West and East sectors have high portions that are within a 10-minute drive of a Nature Park. There are small patches of area sprinkled across the county within a 10-minute walk of a park, but most of these are concentrated in the East Sector near Florence or Walton.

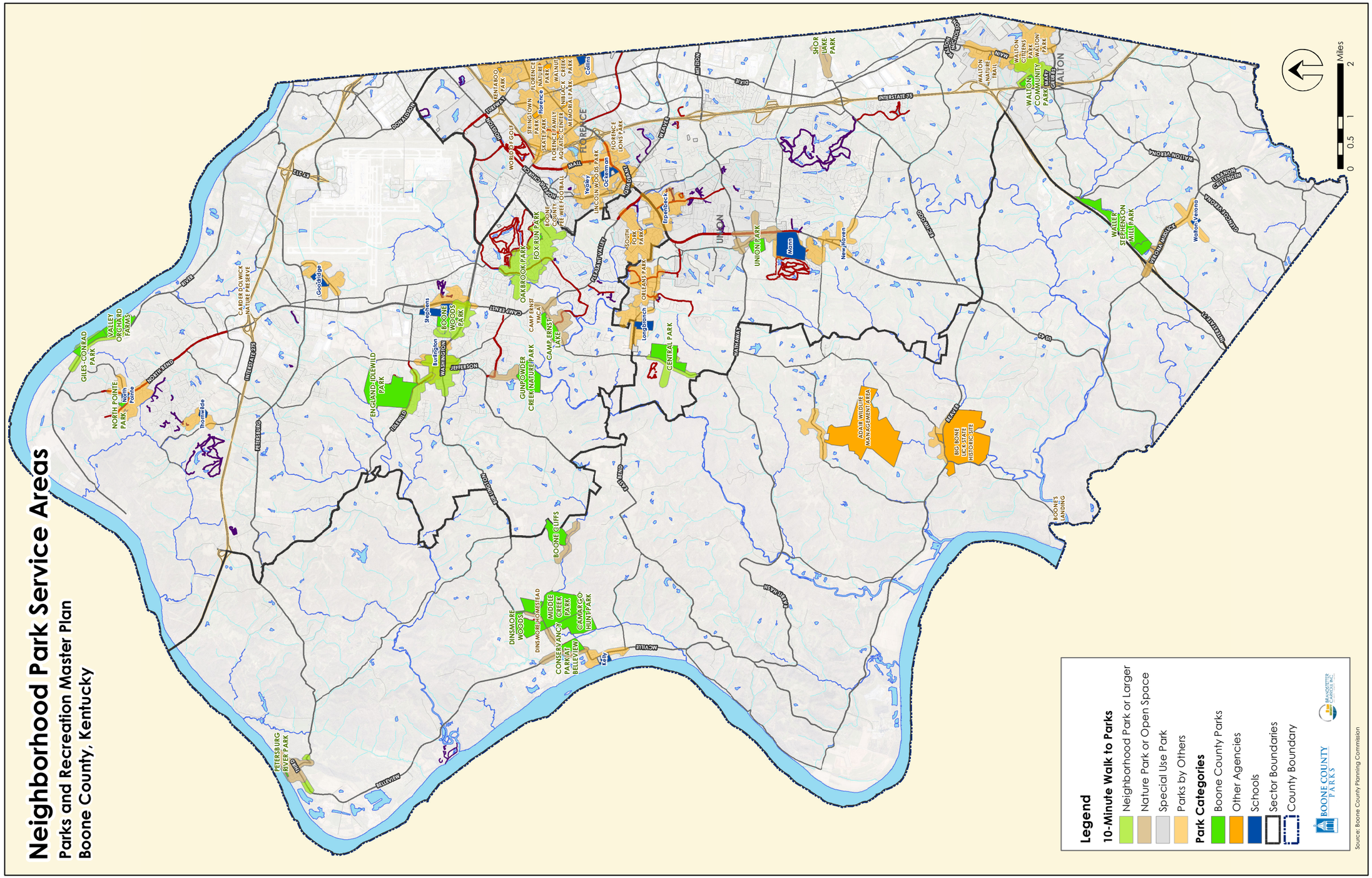
5.5 Geographic Distribution of Facilities

This portion of the needs analysis focuses on the distribution of facilities provided by Boone County for use by residents. Service areas for these key facilities within Boone County are illustrated in Figures 5.3 through 5.10.

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 Boone County; though portions of the county are highlighted that are located outside of facility service areas, a new facility is not necessarily recommended for these areas. As with the geographic distribution of parks, both drive and walk times are used for defining service areas.

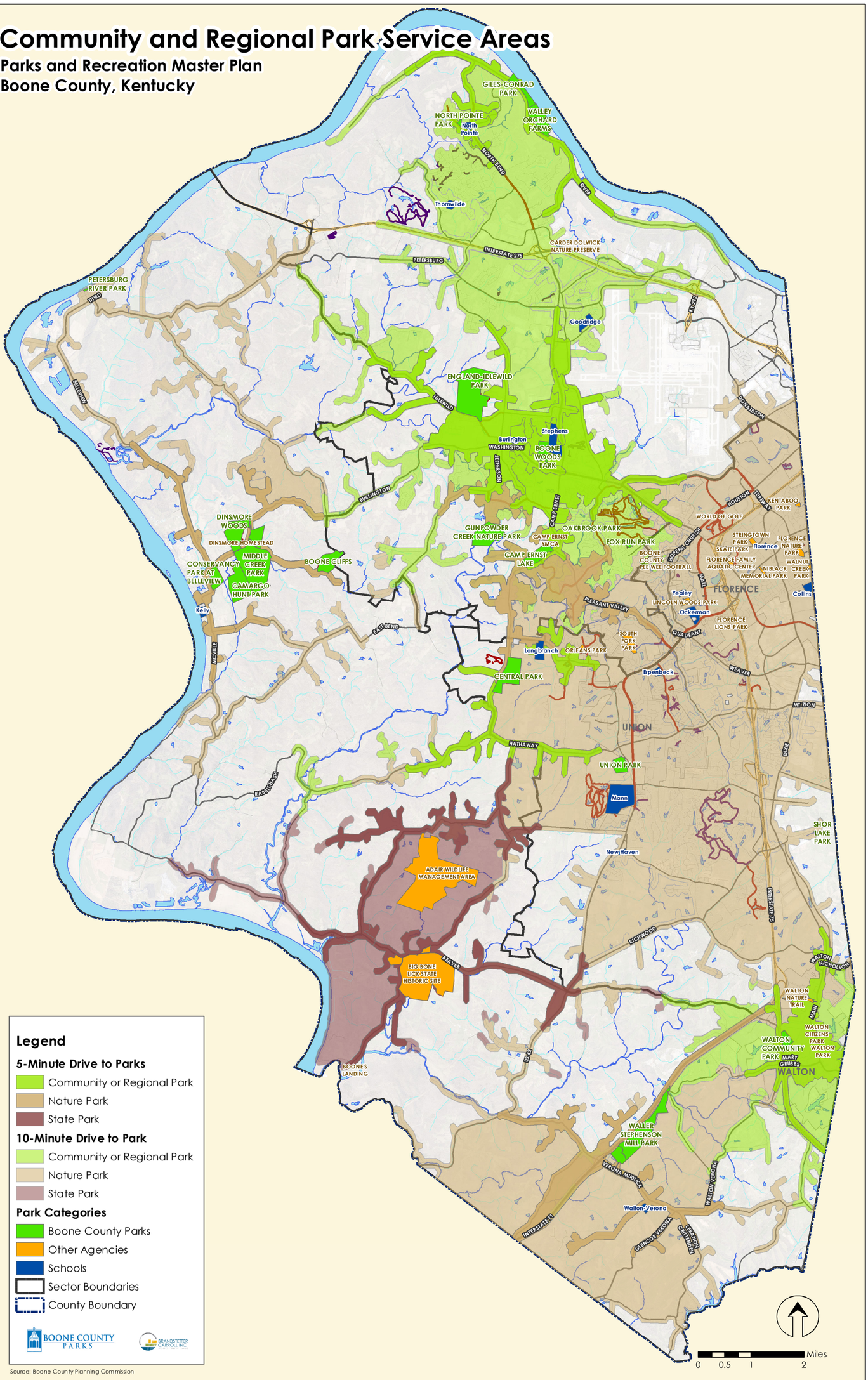
[7] https://10minutewalk.org/

Figure 5.1: Neighborhood Park Service Areas



Community and Regional Park Service Areas

Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Boone County, Kentucky



Source: Boone County Planning Commission

Figure 5.2: Community and Regional Park Service Areas

5.5.1 Playgrounds

Figure 5.3 shows the service areas (10-minute walk and 5-minute drive) for playgrounds in Boone County. The county offers playgrounds at 10 different parks, with service areas shown in green. Playgrounds are also available at 15 elementary schools and seven parks by others, shown in blue. As with the parks themselves, playgrounds are concentrated in the East Sector.

5.5.2 Basketball Courts (Outdoor)

Figure 5.4 displays service areas for outdoor basketball courts measured by a 10-minute walk and a 5-minute drive. Boone County offers basketball courts in seven parks. Fourteen schools offer basketball courts as do seven parks by others. The map shows that the existing basketball courts are located at almost the exact same distribution of playgrounds. Large parts of the city are outside of these service areas – primarily the southeast, western, and northwestern portions of the county – but these areas generally less densely populated.

5.5.3 Picnic Shelters

Figure 5.5. depicts the service areas for picnic shelters across the county. Eight parks across Boone County managed by the department provide picnic shelters (includes large and medium shelters). About half of the shelters available are provided by other entities, mostly in the area around Florence (City of Florence parks). Shelters provided by Boone County are mostly in the north, with a few spots of access in the far west along the river and the southern part of the county in Walton. The location of shelters corresponds to parks service areas, particularly those for Community and Regional Parks.

5.5.4 Baseball/Softball Diamond Fields

Boone County's diamond ballfield service areas are illustrated in Figure 5.6, with distances defined by 5- and 10-minute drivetimes (bright green and light green, respectively). As evident in the figure, Boone County offers significant access to diamond ballfields. There is extensive service in the eastern half, and the west side of the county provides decent service in both 5- and 10-minute driving distance. Five county parks have diamond fields (small or large). The county also manages diamond fields at 11 other spaces, including schools and churches. As with other facilities, this coverage corresponds to the distribution of population within the county.

5.5.5 Multipurpose (Rectangular) Fields

Figure 5.7 displays the service areas for multipurpose rectangular fields in Boone County. Six county parks include multipurpose/rectangular playing fields. The department also maintains fields at four other locations. The service areas map out very similar to the diamond ballfields; however, the far west and northernmost tip do not have dedicated rectangular fields.

5.5.6 Dog Parks

Figure 5.8 shows the 5- and 10-minute drivetime service areas to dog parks. Boone County offers dog parks in two locations, England/Idlewild Park and Walton Community Park. These locations provide good access for residents in the north central Boone County (Burlington) and in the City of Walton. Most of the rest of the county is more than a 10-minute drive from a dog park, most notably the highly populated areas in and around the cities of Union and Florence.

5.5.7 Trails

Figures 5.9 and 5.10 show service areas across the county for unpaved and paved trails, respectively. The bright green areas indicate where residents are a 5-minute drive to a trail, paved or unpaved; the light green areas indicate a 10-minute drive to a trail. Orange areas, both bright and light shades, represent access to trail facilities offered by other entities in the county.

Some portions of the county have service to both types trails, primarily the central part of the county, near

England/Idlewild Park and Central Park and Arboretum. In the southern part of the county, Adair Wildlife Management Area and Big Bone Lick State Historic Site (both outside the Boone County Parks system) offer access to unpaved and paved trails. For paved trails specifically, service areas include locations near:

- Giles Conrad Park (northernmost tip)
- England/Idlewild Park and Central Park and Arboretum (central)
- City of Florence (eastern edge) – served by the city
- Adair Wildlife Management Area and Big Bone Lick State Historic Site (southwest)
- Walton Community Park (south eastern)

For unpaved trails specifically, service areas reflect locations near:

- Dinsmore Woods, Middle Creek Park, and Camargo Hunt Park (western edge)
- England/Idlewild Park and Central Park and Arboretum (central)
- Waller Stephenson Mill Park (southeastern corner)
- Adair Wildlife Management Area and Big Bone Lick State Historic Site (southwest)

In total, Boone County oversees 11 parks that provide trails; there are several parks by others that have trails as well. As with service areas for other facilities, while the western portion of the county has less coverage, the population is significantly lower and decentralized. Overall, Boone County's parks provide fairly good coverage for paved trail access, although the City of Union is notably lacking. There are opportunities for additional unpaved trails, primarily in the rural portions of the county.

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 county. Service areas for four park classifications and 14 facilities 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 Boone County. Figure 5.11 shows the composite service areas for the county 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). For example, a resident living within one of the dark blue areas would more likely be within a short drive to park and/or most of the facilities previously described (e.g., ball fields and picnic shelters) and within a short walk of some facilities.

According to Figure 5.11, a concentrated area around Boone Woods Park, a (smaller) area near Orleans Park, and an even smaller pocket in Walton have the highest composite levels of service in the county. Some of this comparatively high service area extends, at a slightly lower level, into the Florence area. Many of Boone County's residents reside in the areas with moderate (medium) level of service. The northern sector of the county (around Hebron and north of Florence) and the southeastern corner (between Union and Walton) show the lowest levels of service in the county.

In Table 5.4, the different levels of service ratings are interpreted through a variety demographic metrics: 1) proportion of the county's population in each level of service composite area, 2) median household income, 3) annual shift in population, and 4) median age of resident. The medium level service area has the largest proportion at 36% of the total county population, while the high service level areas have only a 4% share of the total population in Boone County. Looking at the lowest level service area, these vicinities are inhabited by the second largest portion of the county's population (28%) but actually have the highest median household income ($101,272). Many higher-income homes are located in less dense, more rural parts of the county (due to the horse industry, farming, destination retirement, etc.), so since much of the lowest level service areas are located in these same rural portions of the county, the breakdown of population is more clear.

Figure 5.3: Playground Service Areas

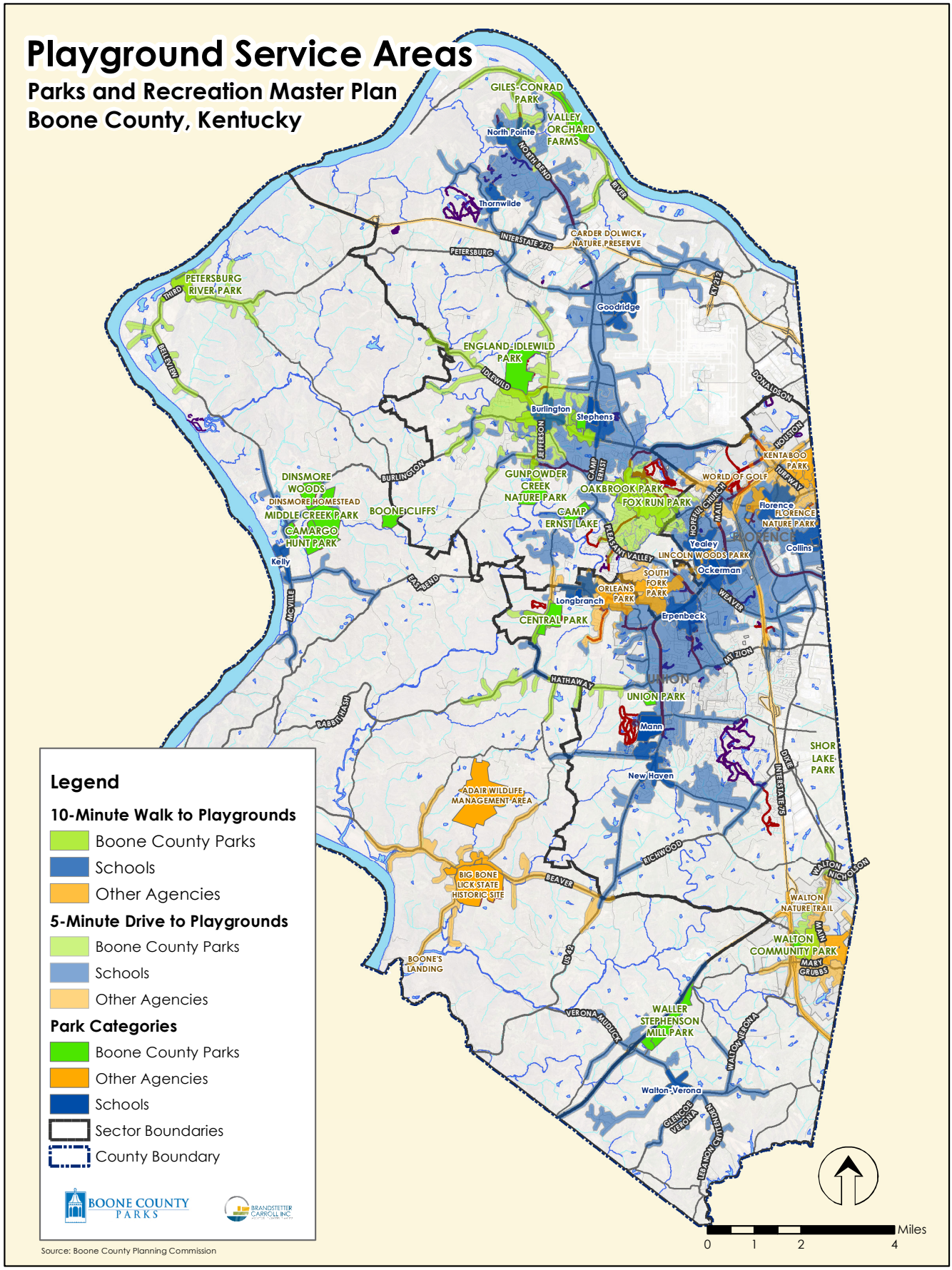
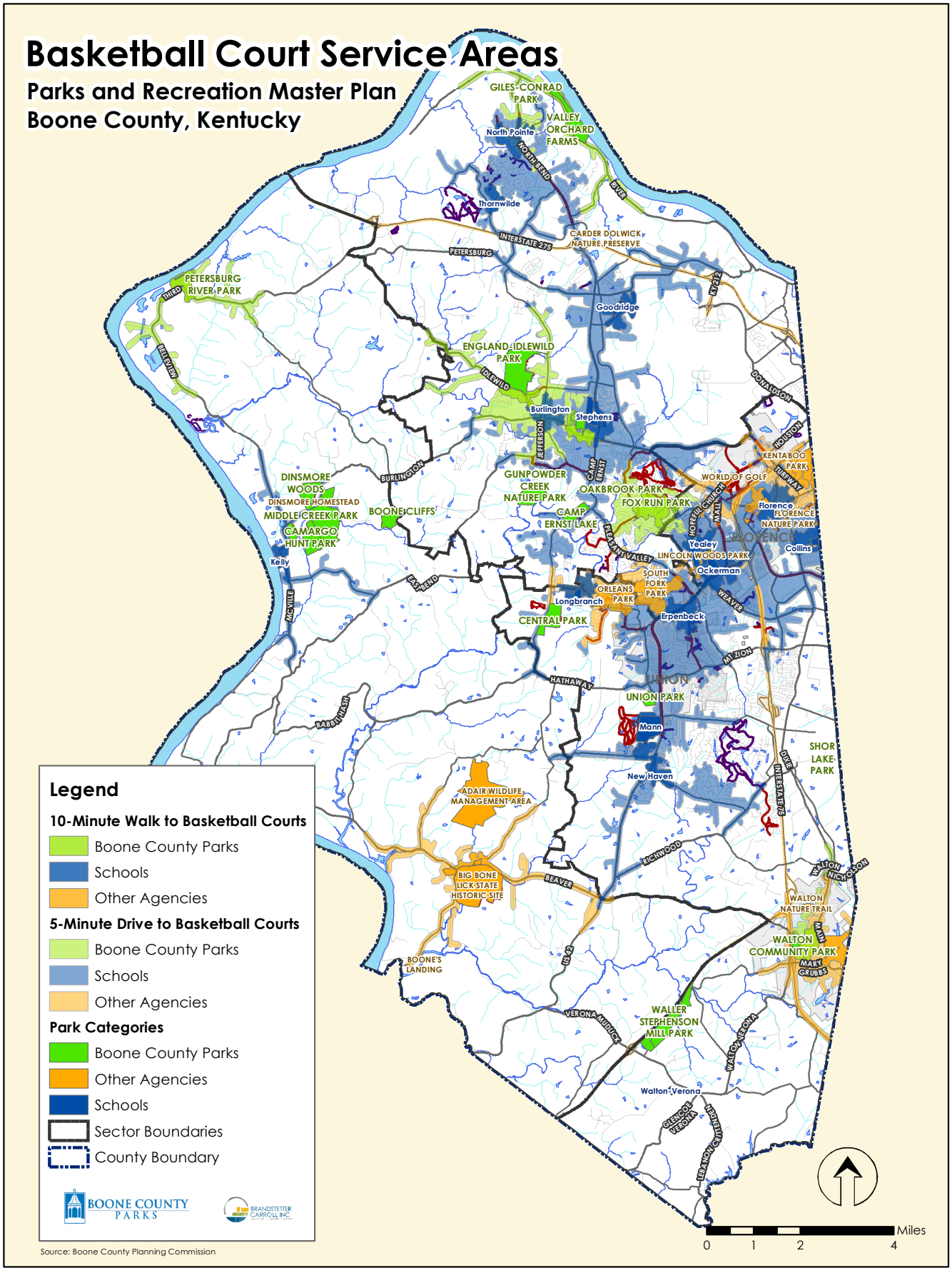


Figure 5.4: Outdoor Basketball Court Service Areas



Source: Boone County Planning Commission

Figure 5.5: Picnic Shelter Service Areas

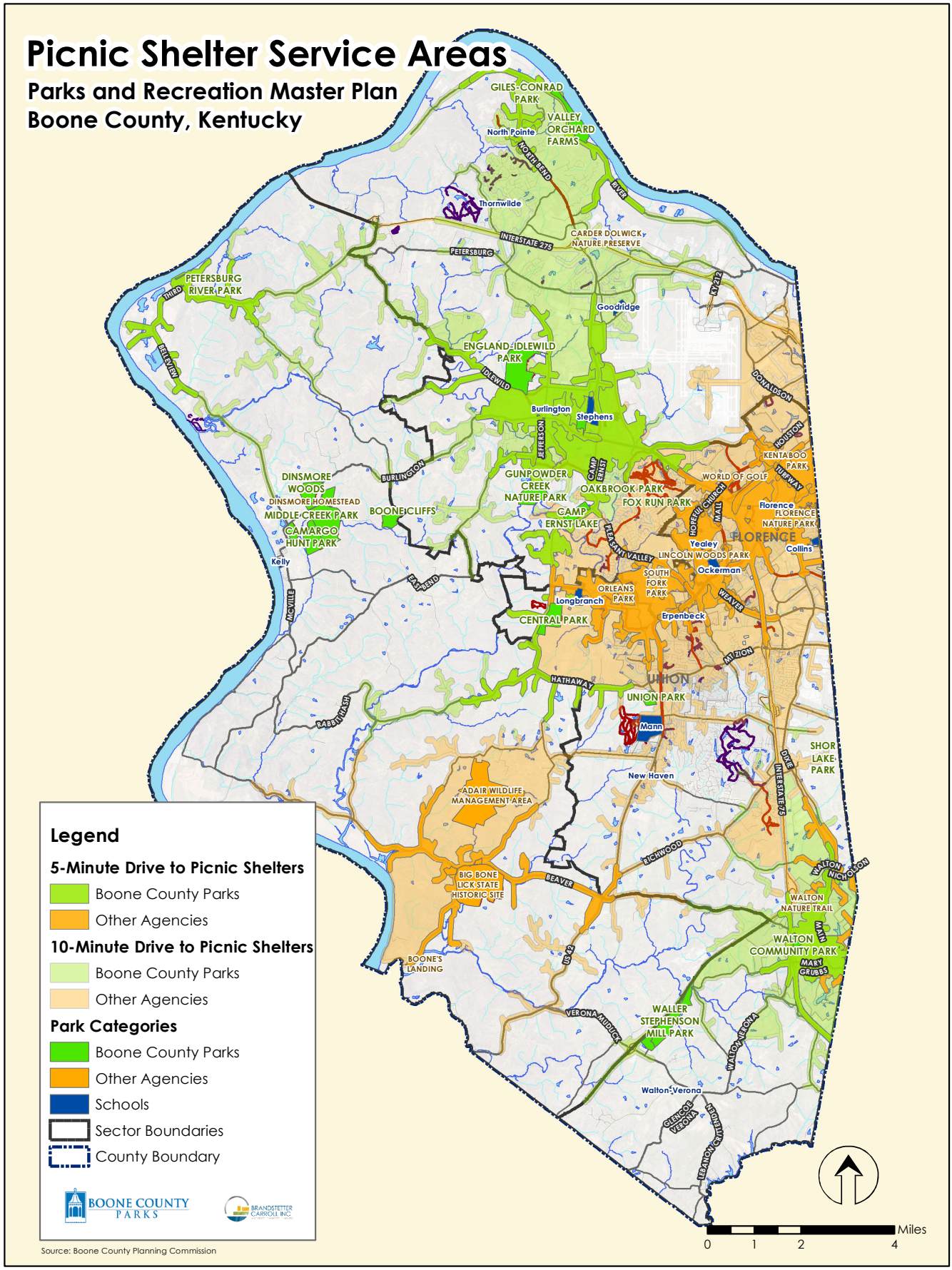


Figure 5.6: Diamond Field Service Areas

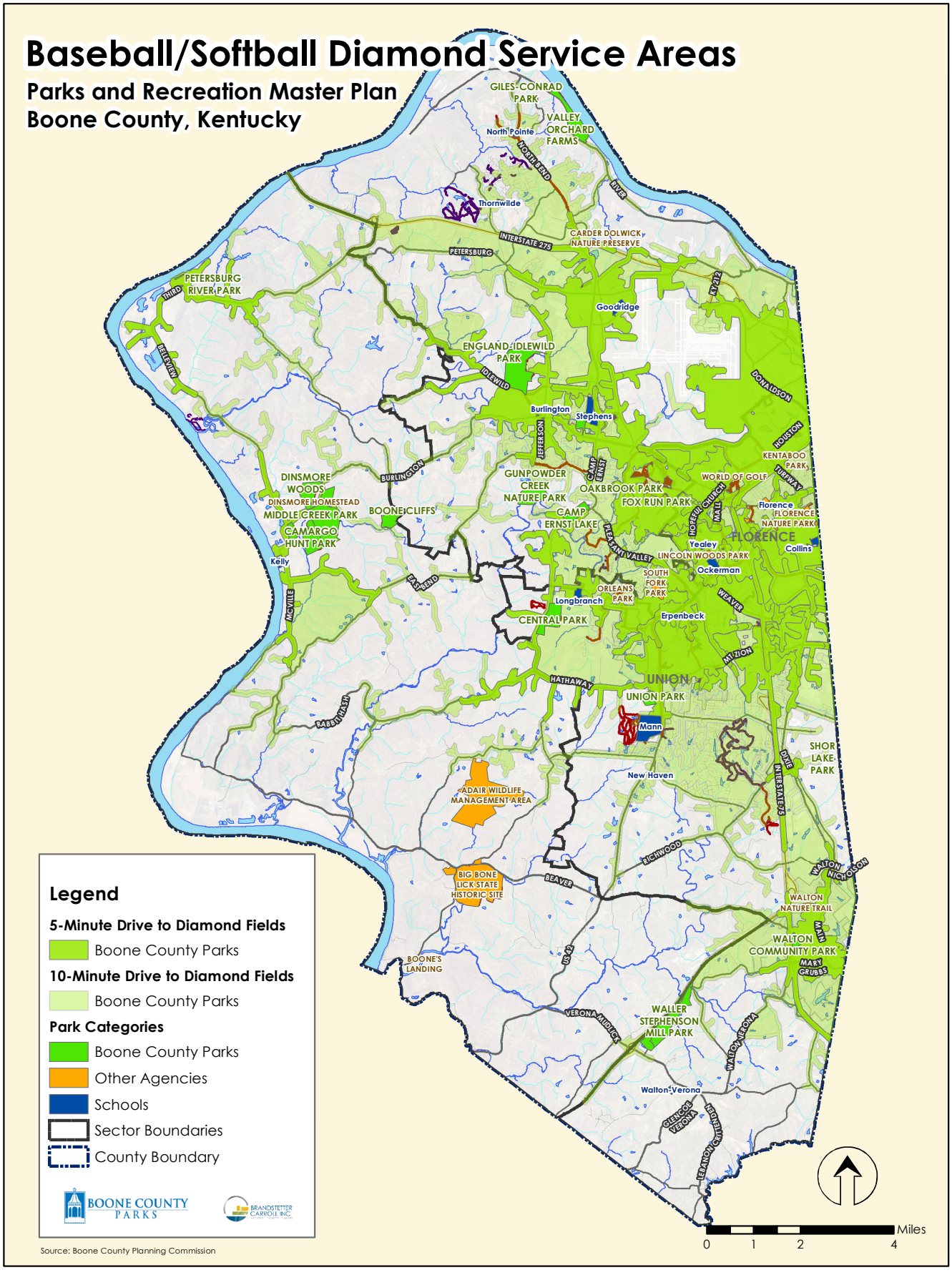


Figure 5.7: Multipurpose Field Service Areas

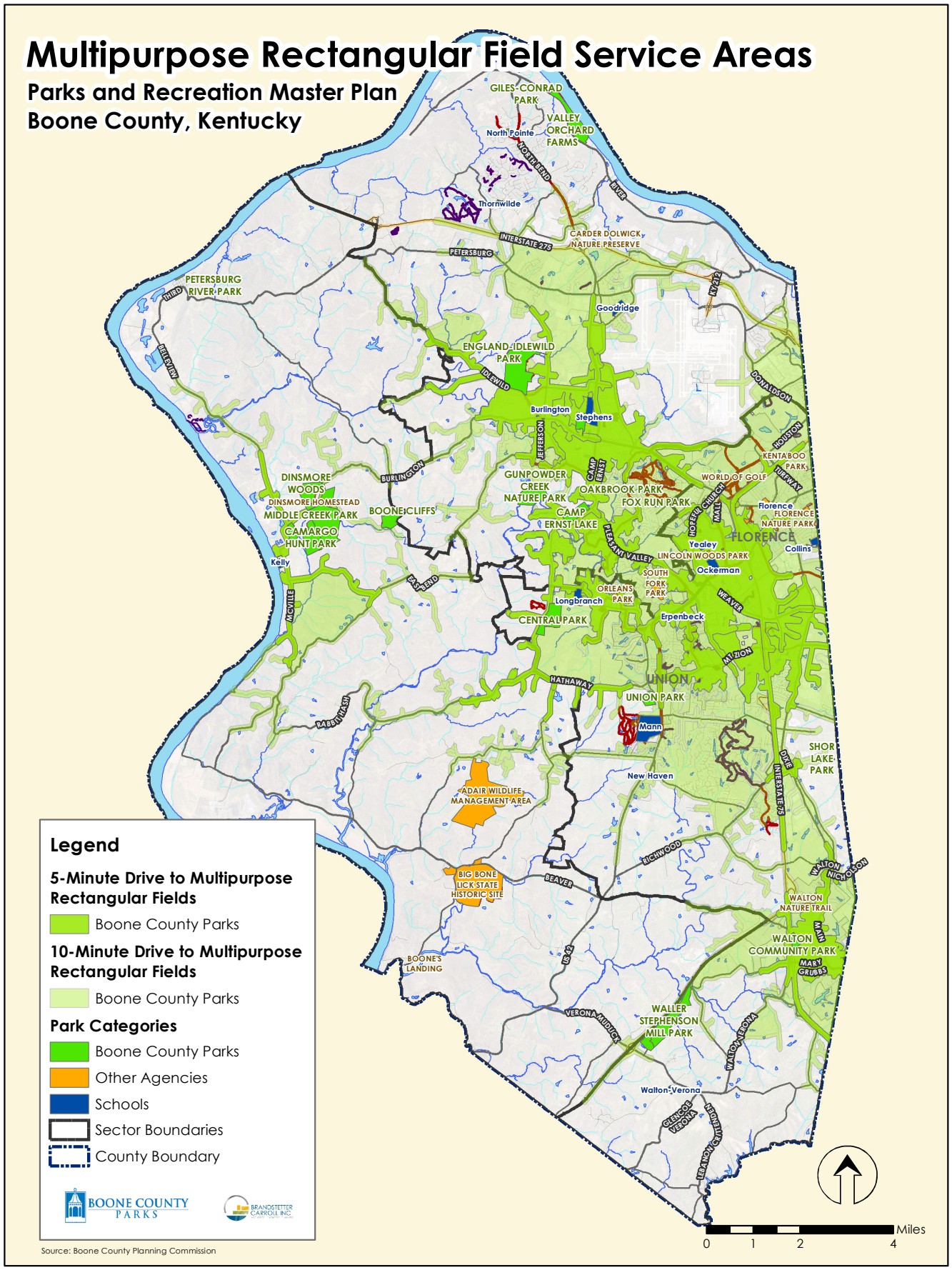
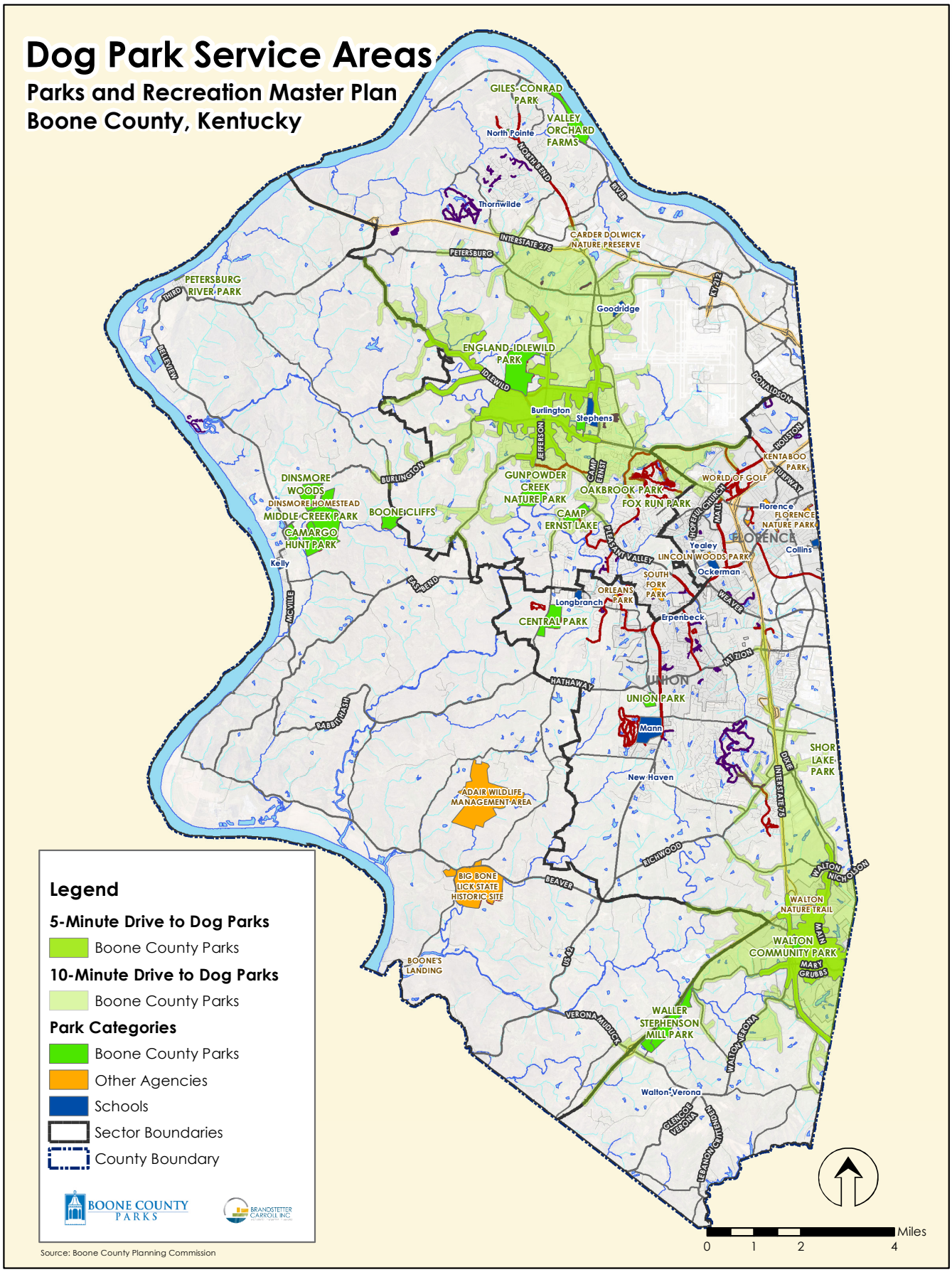


Figure 5.8: Dog Park Service Areas



Source: Boone County Planning Commission

Figure 5.9: Trail Service Area - Unpaved

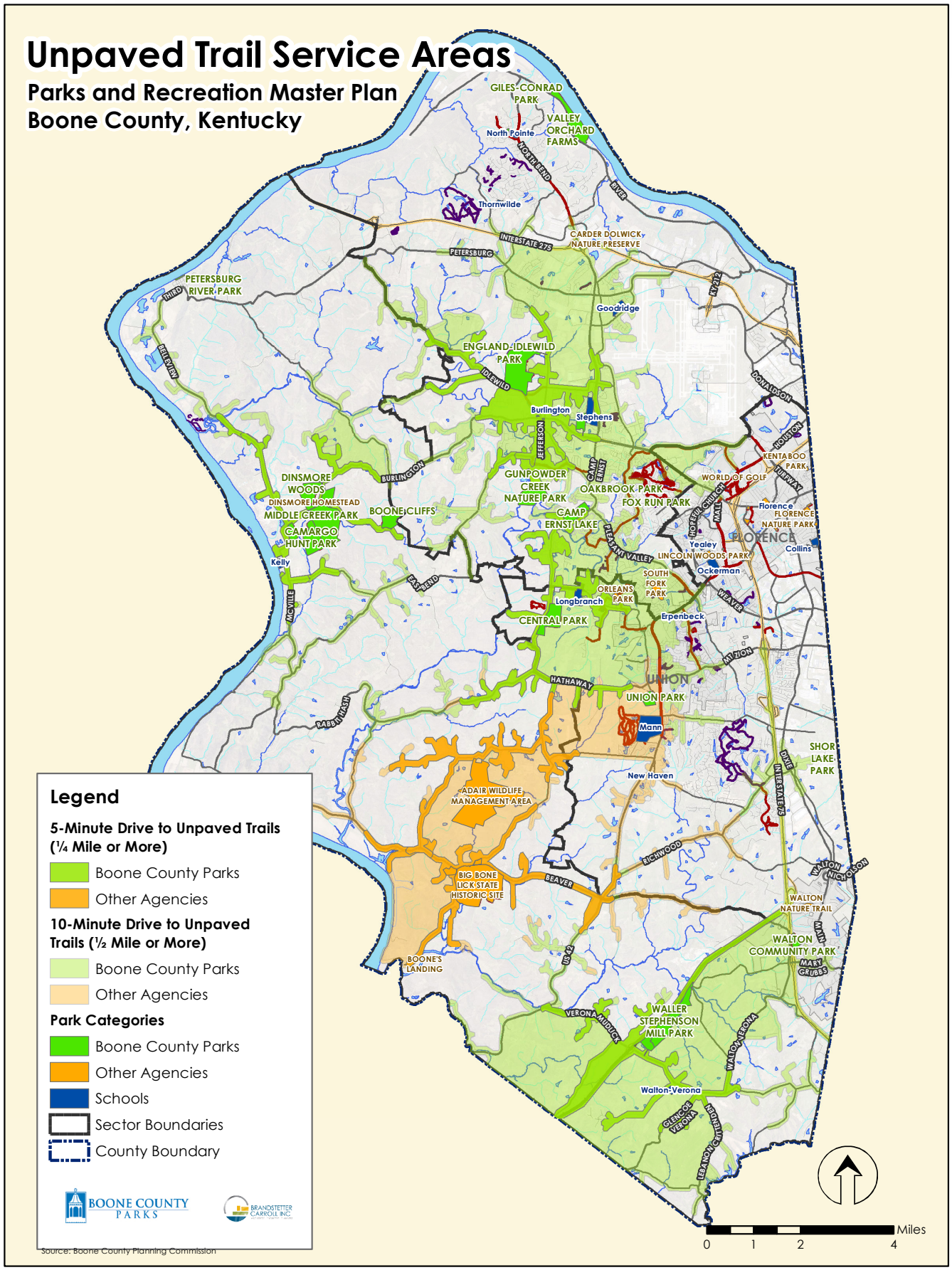
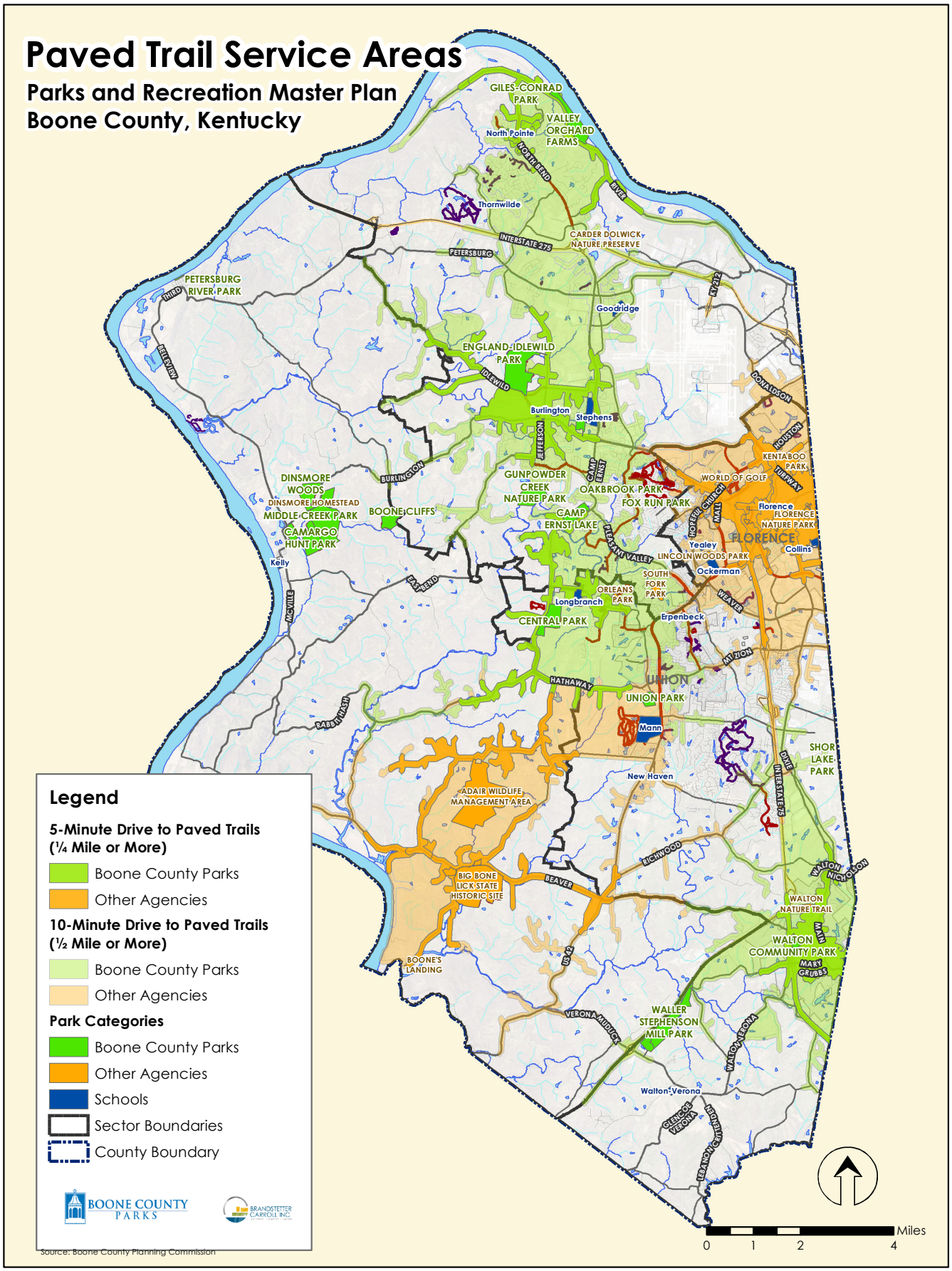


Figure 5.10: Trail Service Area - Paved



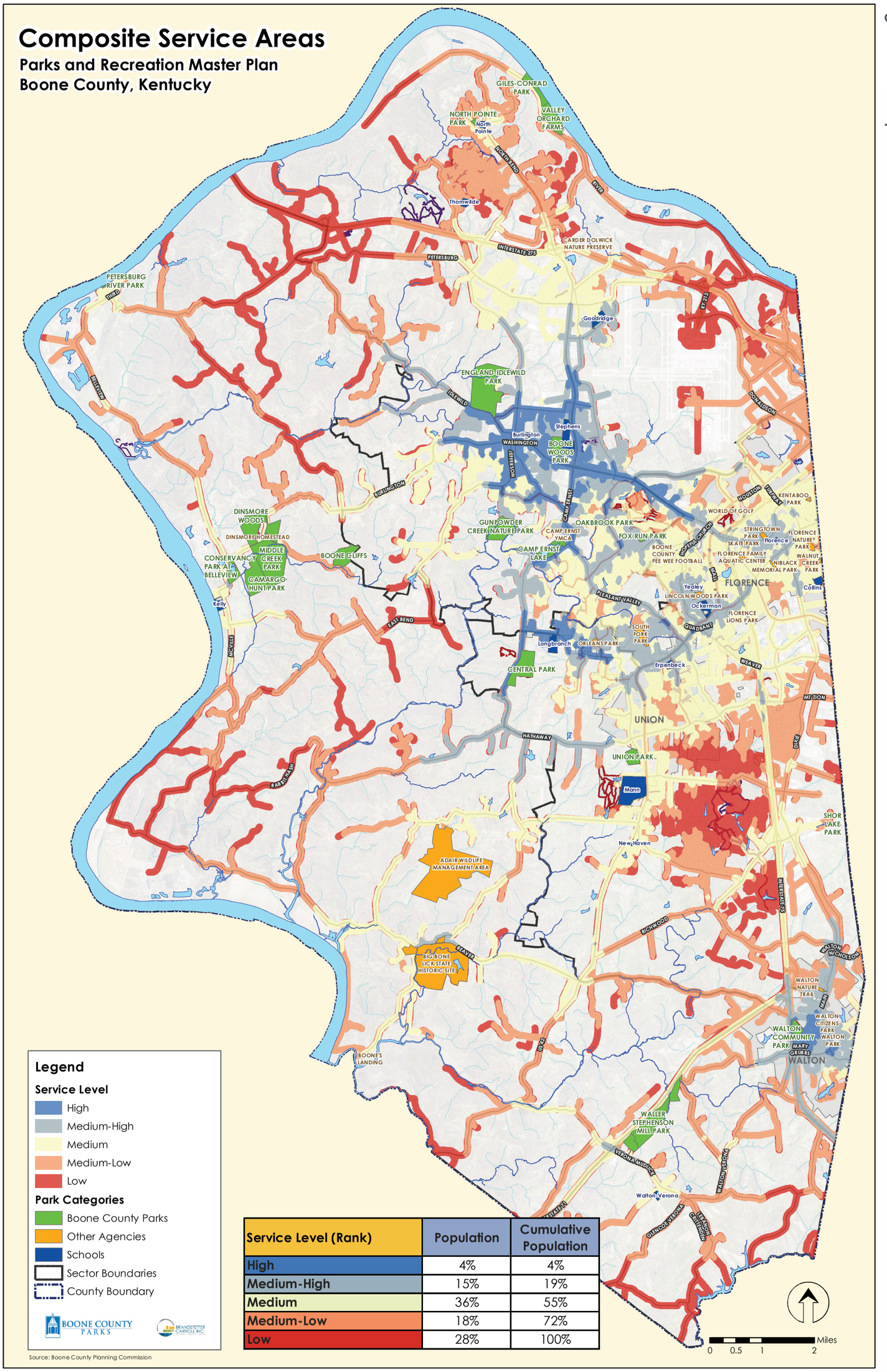


Figure 5.11: Composite Park Service Areas

Table 5.4: Population by Composite Service Area

Service Level (Rank)	Proportion at Composite Service Level				Median Household Income	Annual Population Change	Median Age
	Population	Cumulative Population	Area	Cumulative Area			
High	4%	4%	2%	2%	$68,595	0.88%	36.3
Medium-High	15%	19%	5%	7%	$72,870	1.03%	36.2
Medium	36%	55%	12%	19%	$76,515	1.02%	36.1
Medium-Low	18%	72%	18%	37%	$65,054	1.21%	36.8
Low	28%	100%	63%	100%	$101,272	1.45%	39.6

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 Boone County) occurring in programming and facilities across the nation.

There will be different emphasis and considerations particular to Boone County, 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 Boone County. Equipped with industry context the Boone County Parks Department can better sustain, expand, and realign its existing offerings.

5.7.1 Trends in Recreation Participation

On a regular basis, the Sport and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) conducts a survey[8] 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 Boone County.

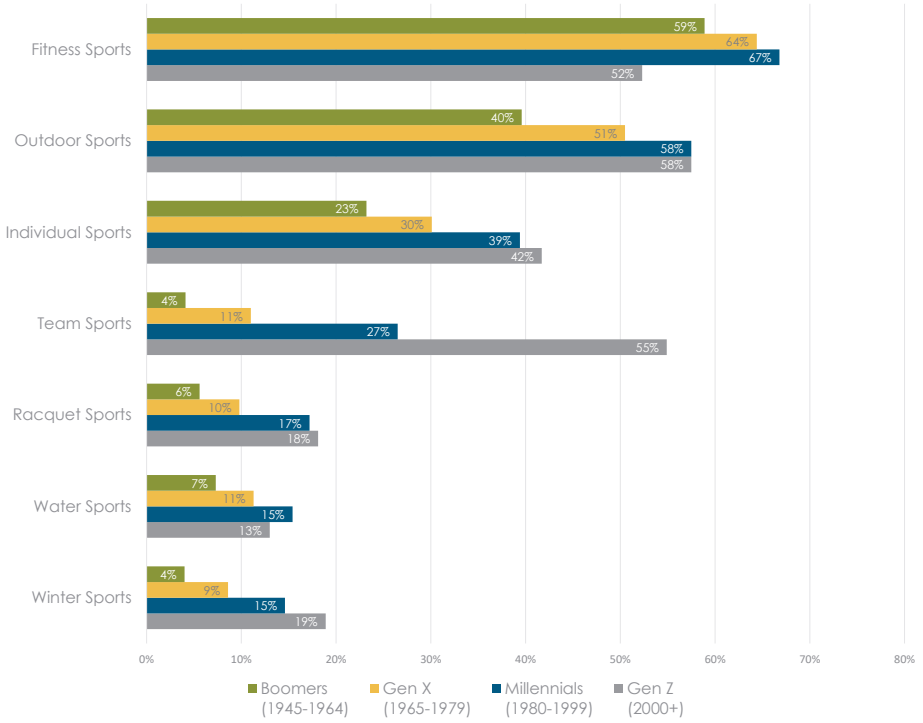
Figure 5.12 shows the difference in participation rates between generations for seven types of sports. The youngest generation (Gen Z) had the highest participation rates for Individual Sports (e.g., archery, skateboarding, golfing, etc.), Team Sports (e.g., baseball, ultimate frisbee, soccer, etc.), 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, Millennial's and Gen Z representing the highest levels of participation.

With high percentages of Boone County residents in the older two generations – and these numbers only increasing – demand for fitness sports programming is likely to 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 last five years.

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

Figure 5.12: Participation Rates by Generation



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; Boone County residents are not unusual in expressing their strong interest in trail-based activities.

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

Sport/Fitness Activity	Category	Participants (In Thousands)						5-Year Average Annual Growth
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Adventure Racing	Individual Sports	2,095	2,368	2,864	2,999	2,529	2,215	2.1%
Aquatic Exercise	Aerobic Activities	8,483	9,122	8,226	10,575	10,459	10,518	4.6%
Archery	Individual Sports	7,647	8,435	8,378	7,903	7,769	7,654	0.2%
Badminton	Racquet Sports	7,150	7,176	7,198	7,354	6,430	6,337	-2.2%
Baseball	Team Sports	13,284	13,152	13,711	14,760	15,642	15,877	3.7%
Basketball	Team Sports	23,669	23,067	23,410	22,343	23,401	24,225	0.5%
Bicycling (BMX)	Outdoor Activities	2,168	2,350	2,690	3,104	3,413	3,439	9.8%
Bicycling (Mountain/Non-Paved Surface)	Outdoor Activities	8,542	8,044	8,316	8,615	8,609	8,690	0.4%
Bicycling (Road/Paved Surface)	Outdoor Activities	40,888	39,725	38,280	38,365	38,866	39,041	-0.9%
Birdwatching (>¼ Mile from Home)	Outdoor Activities	14,152	13,179	13,093	11,589	12,296	12,344	-2.5%
Cardio Tennis	Racquet Sports	1,539	1,617	1,821	2,125	2,223	2,499	10.3%
Cheerleading	Team Sports	3,235	3,456	3,608	4,029	3,816	3,841	3.7%
Elliptical Motion Trainer	Aerobic Activities	30,410	31,826	32,321	32,218	32,283	33,238	1.8%
Fishing (Fly)	Outdoor Activities	5,878	5,842	6,089	6,456	6,791	6,939	3.4%
Fishing (Freshwater)	Outdoor Activities	37,796	37,821	37,682	38,121	38,346	38,998	-0.4%
Football (Flag)	Team Sports	5,610	5,508	5,829	6,173	6,551	6,572	3.3%
Football (Tackle)	Team Sports	6,165	5,978	6,222	5,481	5,224	5,157	-3.1%
Free Weights (Hand Weights)	Strength	58,267	56,124	54,716	51,513	5,217	51,291	-2.5%
Gymnastics	Team Sports	4,972	4,621	4,679	5,381	4,805	4,770	2.5%

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

Sport/Fitness Activity	Category	Participants (In Thousands)						5-Year Average Annual Growth
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
High Impact/Intensity & Training	Aerobic Activities	17,323	19,746	20,464	21,390	21,476	21,611	4.6%
Hiking (Day)	Outdoor Activities	34,378	36,222	37,232	42,128	44,900	47,860	6.9%
Ice Hockey	Team Sports	2,393	2,421	2,546	2,697	2,544	2,447	4.9%
Ice Skating	Individual Sports	10,679	10,649	10,485	10,315	9,998	9,721	-1.9%
Kayaking (Recreational)	Water Sports	8,716	8,855	9,499	10,017	10,533	11,017	4.8%
Kayaking (White Water)	Water Sports	2,146	2,351	2,518	2,552	2,500	2,562	3.7%
Lacrosse	Team Sports	1,813	2,011	2,094	2,090	2,171	2,098	3.1%
Martial Arts	Individual Sports	5,314	5,364	5,507	5,745	5,838	5,821	1.8%
Mixed Martial Arts for Fitness	Individual Sports	2,255	2,455	2,612	2,446	2,376	2,365	1.1%
Pickleball	Racquet Sports	N/A	2,462	2,506	2,815	3,132	3,301	9.7%*
Pilates Training	Conditioning	8,069	8,504	8,594	8,893	9,047	9,084	2.4%
Racquetball	Racquet Sports	3,824	3,594	3,883	3,579	3,526	3,480	-1.7%
Roller Hockey	Team Sports	1,298	1,736	1,907	1,929	1,834	1,734	6.9%
Rugby	Team Sports	1,183	1,276	1,349	1,550	1,621	1,560	5.9%
Running/Jogging	Aerobic Activities	54,188	51,127	48,496	47,384	50,770	49,459	-1.7%
Scuba Diving	Water Sports	3,174	3,145	3,274	3,111	2,874	2,849	-2.1%
Skateboarding	Individual Sports	6,350	6,582	6,436	6,442	6,382	6,500	0.5%
Soccer (Outdoor)	Team Sports	12,726	12,592	12,646	11,932	11,924	11,405	-2.1%
Softball (Fast Pitch)	Team Sports	2,498	2,424	2,460	2,467	2,309	2,303	-1.6%
Softball (Slow-Pitch)	Team Sports	6,868	7,077	7,114	7,690	7,283	7,386	1.6%
Stand Up Paddling	Water Sports	1,993	2,751	3,020	3,220	3,325	3,453	12.3%
Stationary Cycling	Aerobic Activities	35,293	35,693	35,553	36,118	36,035	36,668	0.8%
Swimming for Fitness	Aerobic Activities	26,354	25,304	26,319	26,601	27,135	27,575	0.9%
Swimming on a Team	Team Sports	2,638	2,710	2,892	3,369	3,007	3,045	3.3%
Table Tennis	Racquet Sports	17,079	16,385	16,565	16,568	16,041	15,592	-1.8%
Tai Chi	Conditioning	3,469	3,446	3,651	3,706	3,787	3,761	1.7%
Tennis	Racquet Sports	17,678	17,904	17,963	18,079	17,683	17,841	0.2%
Trail Running	Individual Sports	6,792	7,531	8,139	8,582	9,149	10,010	8.1%
Treadmill	Aerobic Activities	48,166	50,241	50,398	51,872	52,966	53,737	2.2%
Triathlon (Traditional/Road)	Individual Sports	2,262	2,203	2,498	2,374	2,162	2,168	-0.6%
Ultimate Frisbee	Team Sports	5,077	4,530	4,409	3,673	3,126	2,710	-11.7%
Volleyball (Beach/Sand)	Team Sports	4,769	4,651	4,785	5,489	4,947	4,770	0.3%
Volleyball (Court)	Team Sports	6,433	6,304	6,423	6,216	6,317	6,317	-0.3%
Walking for Fitness	Aerobic Activities	117,351	112,583	109,829	107,895	110,805	111,001	-1.1%
Weight/Resistance Machines	Strength	36,267	35,841	35,310	35,768	36,291	36,372	0.1%
Yoga	Conditioning	24,310	25,262	25,289	26,268	27,354	28,745	3.4%

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

Legend

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

5.7.2 Aging Communities

Throughout the United States and in Boone County, the median age of the population is increasing (currently 37.1 in Boone County and 38.5 in the USA). The number of persons in the age group 65 and over is growing rapidly. Census data indicates that the percentage of the Boone County population age 65 and older was just under 13% in 2010 but is expected to increase to reach about 15% by 2024 (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.

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 Boone County. The surveys and other forms of public engagement (see Chapter 4) show 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. Parks 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.

Ann Arbor's Gallup Universal Access Park (2017

Some simple physical treatments can go beyond the basic ADA requirements. Textured edging on trails helps to make 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 helps to ensure 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.

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. Boone County has some older par course equipment, but newer offerings more closely resemble what would be found at an indoor fitness center and are typically easier to use.

Kennesaw, GA Parks & 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, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and improves mental health.[9]

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

5.7.5 Technology

The use of technology is becoming increasingly common in parks and recreation. Many parks 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. 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 a necessary element to keep people – especially youth – engaged.

Photo: mycountyparks.org, 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, and to interact more directly with staff. 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 hot-spots record the number of connections or searches to create a picture of visitation trends.[10] Or, beacon counters can detect cellphone signals to help determine the number of users in an area.[11] 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. Parks 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.[5]

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 anew 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.[12]

Photo credit: NRPA

Geocaches are already be present in Boone County Parks, and the department has a policy on their website describing the process to add geocaches to Boone County Parks. Opportunities may exist for the department to promote and encourage this activity by creating their own caches, organizing events, and adding additional locations for potential geocaches.

[10] National Recreation and Park Association, "Parks Using Technology to Engage and Inspire," https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2017/may/parks-using-technology-to-engage-and-inspire/. (May 1, 2017)
[11] Dolesh, R. J. (2019, January). Top Trends in Parks and Recreation for 2019. Parks & Recreation.
[12] National Recreation and Park Association, "How to Leverage Geocaching to Promote Park and Recreation Events," https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2017/october/how-to-leverage-geocaching-to-promote-park-and-recreation-events/. (October 5, 2017)

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.

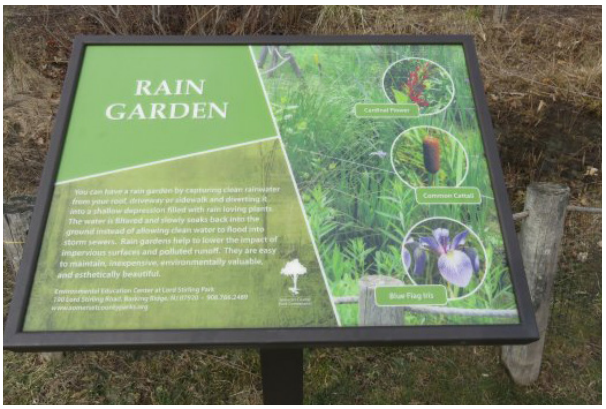


Photo Environmental Education Center at Lord Stirling Park, Basking Ridge, NJ

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

Photo: National Park Service, Environmental Education at Mammoth Cave, KY

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

Boone County Parks has many natural areas with the potential for expanded nature education programs. The department has a few rings currently, primarily fishing programs. The lack of an indoor program facility makes offering educational programs more challenging, but a potential nature center at one of the large Nature Parks in the county would provide a venue for these events.

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 percent of the population. The most common form of birding is watching birds near one's home; however, 38% of birders, or 18 million people, participate in birding away from the home. Participants in birdwatching tend to be older and more highly educated than the general population.

Photo credit: USFWS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report also includes an analysis of the economic impact of birdwatching activities. Birdwatchers direct substantial amounts of dollars into the economy because of trip-related ($15 million) and equipment expenditures ($26 million). The report finds that the birding industry, including indirect effects resulting from the multiplier effect, generates over $100 billion annually throughout the United States and supports 666,000 jobs. These expenditures lead to an additional $6 million in state tax revenues and $7 million in federal tax revenues.[13]

[13] 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.

Boone County residents already use many the parks for birdwatching. Boone Cliffs State Nature Preserve is a popular birding location, and Conservancy Park Belleview offers the Lee McNeely Birding Trail. However, formal programs could help residents identify bird species and increase interest in natural areas in Boone County. Partnerships with local birding groups, such as the Northern Kentucky Bird Club (NKBC), could expand the participation in this activity.

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.[14] Some potential categories include (with examples):

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

5.7.10 Trails and Connectivity

Demand for trails, trail linkages, and pathways that connect parks, open spaces, and other destination sites (like downtown districts) has been growing all over the U.S. including in Boone County. 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.

Photo credit: Jeff Carson, Dandy Horseman Magazine

The expressed need for trails – both for recreational use and for transportation – was conveyed clearly through the public input process. Boone County has a variety of paved and unpaved trails throughout the park system. Many parts of the county, however, lack easy access to trails, and connectivity within the community (outside of parks) is somewhat limited.

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

Natural Play Structure (Silver Falls State Park – Oregon)

[14] Environmental Best Management Practices Manual. City of Fort Collins Parks and Recreation. 2011.

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:

"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."[15]

The following are examples of nature play features.

Natural Play Structures

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

Multipurpose Lawns

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

Meadows and Woodlands

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

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

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.

Photo: Charleston Parks Conservancy

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.[15]

Photo: Missouri State Parks, Hawn State Park Amphitheater

[15] 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).

Opportunities in Boone County

Boone County has many natural areas but has not yet invested in these types of amenities. Some of the more natural parks could also offer some of these amenities allowing additional play opportunities in parks while remaining consistent with the character of the parks. Waller-Stephenson Mill Park in particular has a lot of potential for expanded use as a Nature Park if more features are added, and a nature play area would expand the potential user base. The two Regional Parks (Central and England/Idlewild) provide potential locations for some of these amenities as they playgrounds are replaced or expanded, due to their mix of active and passive uses.

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 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.[16]

Photo: MTBPROJECT Flow Trail

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 popularly, bikes have been banned from most hiking trails, and single-track trails designed specifically for mountain bikes have been established.[17] 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.[18]

Photo credit: Jason Myers/TPL Pump Track

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.[19] Unlike many of the other off-road facilities, pump tracks are usable by both mountain bike and BMX riders.

Boone County is ahead of this trend with an extensive bike park at England/Idlewild Park with over 6 miles of mountain bike trails. The bike park also offers two pump tracks, a dual slalom course, and three jump lines. These facilities represent one of the largest bike parks in the region. To remain a leader in bike park features, Boone County may want to consider expanding and updating these offerings over the next 10 years. A flow trail would be the most obvious bike feature to add to the county's inventory.

[16] Marin Museum of Bicycling, "Mountain Biking History," http://mmbhof.org/mtn-bike-hall-of-fame/history/, (April 8, 2019).
[17] 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).
[18] IMBA, "Flow Trails," https://www.imba.com/model-trails/flow-trails, (April 15, 2016).
[19] Adventure Sports Journal, "Pumpin': An Introduction to the World of Pump Tracks," http://adventuresportsjournal.com/pumpin-an-introduction-to-the-world-of-pump-tracks/, (April 8, 2019).

5.7.13 Splash Pads or Spraygrounds

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

Boone County does not currently offer any splash pads, but the desire for these facilities was strongly indicated through the public input process. The City of Florence offers the only municipal pool in the county, so additional aquatic opportunities would certainly be popular. Over 10,500 households indicated unmet needs for splash pads, the second most of any facility. Potential locations for splash pads in Boone County include England/Idlewild Park, Union Park, and Walton Community Park.

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

Photo: Northbrook Dog Park, Northbrook, ILI

Boone County currently offers two dog parks, one at England/Idlewild Park and another at Walton Community Park. The larger dog park at England/Idlewild Park offers four separate areas, and both dog parks include agility training areas. Due to the high level of demand for these facilities, it is likely that residents will continue to request more dog parks. Union Park is the most obvious location for a new dog park in Boone County.

5.7.15 Creative Placemaking

The Trust for Public Land – a nonprofit organization with a mission to brings 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.[20] 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.

Photo: Billiter Studio's Creative Placemaking in the Madisonville Neighborhood of Cincinnati (2015)

Creative-placemaking can take countless forms. It may look like an outdoor sculpture walk at the center of the neighborhood park featuring residents' 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.

Boone County 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.

5.7.16 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: NRPA 2018

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."[21]

[20] Trust for Public Land, Creative Placemaking, https://www.tpl.org/our-work/creative-placemaking

[21] Wootton, Courtney; Bradley, Michael J.; Ray Neal NRPA. Drones in Parks: It's All About Perspective. https://www.nrpa.org/parks-

Boone County Parks 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 county may want to designate such an area and formulate and post a policy for (or against) use of drone within the park system.

5.7.17 Esports

Esports (Electronic Sports) refers to organized, multiplayer video-gaming events. A growing genre since the early 2000s, esports around the world are generating remarkable revenue (industry growth expected to reach $1.8 billion by 2022)[22] and gaining a foothold both in professional sports and in college athletics. Tournaments reliably attract significant crowds, in turn opening up an uncharted avenue in the spectator sport economy. The majority of athletes and viewers are between age 18 and 34, and the games themselves are geared towards either multiplayer or individual competition. Newzoo's *2018 Global ESports Market Report* projects an estimated audience of more than 550 million viewers by 2021. Put differently, this means esports would see a 200 percent growth in viewership in just five years.

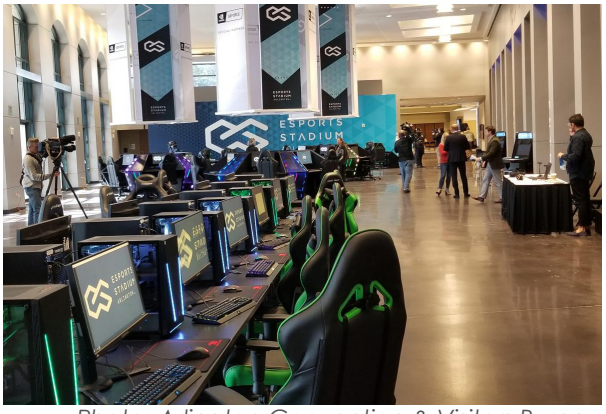


Photo: Arlington Convention & Visitors Bureau Esports facility (2018)

According to the NRPA, esports provide a way for agencies to reach traditionally difficult-to-reach groups (per the National Alliance for Youth Sports Poll, 70% of kids stop playing sports by age 13, while 90% of kids ages 12–17 play video games.) They can also help agencies address underutilized facility space, promote other programs to a new audience, and drive up revenue through rental/participant fees, membership charges, or sponsorships.

Esports may seem sedentary, and therefore counter the mission many agencies have of promoting healthy, active lifestyles. However, there are interactive and immersive games that utilize virtual reality to get participants moving and players often experience comparable heart rates and efforts of stamina as other athletes.

Boone County Parks does not currently offer eSports as indoor space needed to host the programs is lacking. If the county builds indoor programming space in the future, space for eSports should be included as the target age group for these programs is generally underserved by parks and recreation offerings.

5.8 Conclusion

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

The level of service standards outlined at the start of this chapter – and developed with public input from residents of Boone County - provide a foundational guideline for the number of parks, open space, and recreation facilities needed in Boone County. Overall, there is demand for more trails (paved and natural), dog parks, community gardens, splash pads, and pickleball courts. In terms of indoor facilities specifically: senior, community, nature and recreation centers are all in demand and there is opportunity for Boone County to secure additional spaces to meet those needs. Additionally, due to the rapidly growing population in Boone County, new facilities of all types are needed in order to maintain the same level of service as provided currently.

The geographic analysis of service areas identifies specific areas to target for investment in additional parks and recreation facilities. The mapping analysis shows higher levels of service in the eastern half of the county (this corresponds to the population distribution) and more prominent service gaps around Union, Florence, and Hebron. **These findings, combined with public input requesting additional services and improved spaces,**

recreation-magazine/2018/december/drones-in-parks-its-all-about-perspective/

[22] EU Business School. The Business of eSports: 3 Things You Need to Know. 2020. web: https://www.euruni.edu/blog/business-esports/

indicate that construction of features lacking in the county and measured development of parkland should be the highest priorities for this Master Plan. Additionally, general development and population growth in the areas around Hebron and Union are expected to increase; service improvements should be thoughtfully concentrated accordingly. Proactive development is appropriate for ensuring comprehensive quality of life improvements for both existing and incoming residents.

Boone County is in a good position to confront many of the trends discussed in this chapter that have not yet been addressed. The aging population of Boone County provides additional incentive for the city to address many of these trends, including fitness programming, universal access, nature education, and expansion of trails. The analyses from this chapter and the preceding chapters provide the foundation for the specific recommendations presented later in this document.

6

STRATEGIC PLAN

6.1 Introduction

This *Envision Boone County Parks 2030 Master Plan* represents the collective vision for parks and recreation in Boone County. This cohesive vision for continually improving parks and recreation opportunities represents a culmination of the engagement process. The vision, mission, and values outlined below will guide implementation of this master plan and the future of parks, recreation, and trails in Boone County. A series of goals and objectives will help realize this vision.

6.2 Mission

6.2.1 Purpose of a Mission

A mission identifies your purpose and reason for existence. A mission should:

1. Be a simple, concise statement
2. Express reason for being or reason for existence
3. Provide guidance, focus
4. Define what you do, who you do it for, how you do it, and why
5. Be EASY to remember and recite
6. Clearly define your purpose (why you exist) to:
   - Staff
   - Customers
   - Partners
   - Stakeholders
7. Provide focus – energy, time, and resources
8. Anchor decision making
9. Guide all aspects of the organization – what you will and will not do

6.2.2 Existing Mission for Boone County Parks and Recreation

Boone County Parks and Recreation has an existing mission which is as follows:

> *Strengthening the community, creating quality recreation and leisure experiences through people, park and programs*

Original 1972 Mission:

> *To provide safe, diverse Parks and wholesome recreation programs to enhance the quality of life in Boone County*

6.2.3 Proposed Mission for Boone County Parks and Recreation

Considering the nine factors described above and building on the existing mission and upon the vision exercise of the Master Plan Steering Committee, the new mission for Boone County Parks is:

Enriching the community through safe parks and quality experiences

6.3 Vision

6.3.1 Purpose of a Vision

A vision answers the questions – What do you hope to become? What impact will you make in Boone County? The vision:

1. Defines an envisioned future
2. Describes where you want to go and what you hope to become
3. Identifies what impact you hope to make
4. Deals with the long term – usually 10 to 20 years out
5. Establishes focus, direction, and a clear finish line
6. Shapes organizational strategy and priority setting
7. Motivates and inspires
8. Serves as a unifying force; aligns people and activities
9. Guides decision making – what you will and will not do
10. Serves as a "north star" during times of uncertainty or turbulence
11. Promotes positive change and hope for the future

6.3.2 Proposed Vision Options for Boone County Parks

Boone County Parks does not currently have a vision statement. With the factors listed above in mind and building on the vision exercise of the Master Plan Steering Committee,the new vision statement is:

Our parks and programs inspire imagination

6.4 Values for Boone County Parks and Recreation

6.4.1 Definition

An organization's values identify their beliefs and guiding principles. Values should accomplish the following:

1. Lay the foundation for how the department conducts itself
2. Guide decision making, behaviors, and interactions with others

3. Convey the personality of the department
4. Reflect the essence of the department's identity
5. Never be compromised
6. Communicate what is important
7. Inspire behaviors that support mission attainment
8. Influence positive behavior
9. Shape organizational culture
10. Encourage greater employee engagement
11. Support quality recruitment efforts (enhance good job fit)

6.4.2 Core Values

The core values should be unique to the department. Based upon the citizen engagement and Steering Committee discussions, the following values for Boone County Parks are:

Community

We build a stronger community through our diverse range of parks and programs. Our shared experiences connect and inspire our community.

Inclusion

We commit to removing barriers for everyone in our community and ensuring safe, convenient access to our parks and programs.

Fun

We create opportunities for memorable, family-friendly experiences that excite and engage the whole community. Providing possibilities for enjoyment enhances quality of life for everyone.

Innovation

We explore uncharted and creative ways to provide our community with enriching experiences. To be industry leaders, we think outside-the-box and deliver high-quality programs and modern amenities.

Stewardship

We embrace our role in preserving, conserving, and protecting environmental, historical, and cultural resources within Boone County Parks. We celebrate the passive aspects of our parks and work tirelessly to raise awareness of our unique resources.

6.5 Goals and Objectives

6.5.1 Function of Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives identify your areas of strategic priority and accomplish the following:

1. Describe in a more concrete way how the department will fulfill its mission and seek to realize its vision within a designated planning timeframe
2. Provide focus and direction
3. Indicate how the department will invest its time, talents and resources
4. Clarify what the department will/will not do

Goals – Describe intended outcomes

- Overarching areas of strategic priority
- Broad demonstrations of intent
- Results-based measurement
- Longer timeframe (3-5 years, or more)

Objectives – Provide direction for action

- More concrete descriptions of how the department seeks to address an issue
- Measured by observable metrics (e.g. "increase," "expand," "reduce," "consolidate," "improve," "distribute," etc.)
- Shorter timeframe (1-5 years, or more)

6.5.2 Proposed Goals and Objectives for Boone County Parks

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

Goal 1: Exceptional Spaces

Develop exceptional parks and facilities in response to the growing needs of the community while ensuring inclusive access for all

Objective 1.1 – Accessibility: Develop modern and inclusive park features that accommodate community growth, trends, and desire for fun

Objective 1.2 – Athletics: Ensure access to needed venues for team and individual sports

Objective 1.3 – Support: Provide level of amenities that ensures access to and extended enjoyment of parks

Goal 2: Inspired Stewardship

Preserve parks, trails, and natural areas to develop opportunities for passive recreation and to increase connectivity between the community and these resources

Objective 2.1 – Conservation: Protect and conserve natural areas

Objective 2.2 – Connectivity: Encourage bike and pedestrian connectivity, community fitness, and recreation by developing safe access to parks and waterbodies

Objective 2.3 – Land Management: Focus acquisitions and future development around conservation and connected open space for the growing population

Goal 3: Diverse Programs

Promote physical fitness, wellbeing, and social enrichment of the community through a varied assortment of programs, initiatives, and amenities

Objective 3.1 – Wellness: Use parks and programs to foster greater awareness of healthy choices and quality of life improvements

Objective 3.2 – Inclusion: Emphasize convenient and accessible programs that meet the needs of families and aging community members but are designed to serve everyone

Objective 3.3 – Experiences: Expand the variety and frequency of concerts, movies, and special events to build community cohesion and attract visitors

Goal 4: Broad Outreach

Expand awareness and grow user-base by promoting programs and amenities, providing educational

opportunities, and pursuing strategic partnerships

Objective 4.1 – Engagement: Connect with the community through a diversity of channels to determine needs, eliminate barriers, and ensure exceptional park experiences

Objective 4.2 – Collaboration: Foster partnerships and recruit volunteers to meet current and future needs for parks and recreation in Boone County

Objective 4.3 – Communication: Utilize technology to raise awareness, increase participation, and bridge gaps in service

Goal 5: Operational Excellence

Implement current best practices across personnel, process, finance, and resource sectors to ensure appropriate maintenance, exceptional customer service, and efficient operations

Objective 5.1 – Structure: Nurture an engaged workforce of valued staff through a culture of innovation and professional development

Objective 5.2 – Maintenance: Develop requirements, policies, and procedures for maintenance and equipment replacement in order to ensure safe, enjoyable park experiences

Objective 4.1 – Financial Stability: Implement operational practices and funding strategies to effectively utilize every available resource

6.6 Strategies

Specific strategies will be identified for each objective listed above. The strategies will be discussed in Chapter 7 under categories of recommendations and will be listed in the Action Plan in Chapter 9, which also identifies a timeframe, responsible party, and potential funding source.

7

SYSTEMWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic will impact government budgets for years to come. Already, agencies across the country are facing fiscal pressures or receiving requests to cut their spending.[1] Meanwhile, in this time of public health inequity, social rupture, and economic disruption, people everywhere are living out the effects of having (or not having) access to open space and parks.[2] As the coronavirus pandemic blazes an unchartered trail through our communities into 2021, public parks and open space are providing respite, solace, and connection. Parks are helping people cope – and they will help communities recover.[3]

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

Bearing all of this in mind, the recommendations in this chapter are intended to guide Boone County in a post-pandemic future. Because the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be felt for many years, the following recommendations are presented with the vitality and durability of Boone County Parks and Recreation at the core.

The following chapter of the *Envision Boone County Parks 2030 Master Plan* presents observations and findings gained through the first three phases of this master plan – Evaluate, Engage, and Envision. The subsequent recommendations are divided into the following categories:

- Existing Park Improvements
- Trails and Connectivity
- New Park and Facility Development
- Outdoor Athletic Fields and Courts

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- Natural Areas, Open Space, and Nature Education
- Programming
- Operations, Maintenance, and Promotion
- Budget and Funding
- Partnerships and Sponsorships

Recommendations by park are provided in Chapter 8, which also includes detailed cost estimates for improvements.

7.2 Existing Park Improvements

7.2.1 Observations and Analysis

Public input indicated a fairly high level of satisfaction with Boone County parks. Sixty-one percent (61%) of households who visited parks over the past year rated them as good, and 30% rated them as excellent. Only 8% rated them as fair. These numbers are similar to the National Benchmarking by ETC Institute showing 29% for excellent. According to the Mail Survey, 85% of residents support upgrades to existing parks. The high level of satisfaction combined with support for improvements indicate that residents desire added features and amenities in the parks.

For preferred upgrades to existing parks, a top response in both surveys was restrooms (first in the Mail Survey and second in the Web Survey after trails). Restrooms were a reoccurring theme in the stakeholder groups as well. Security cameras and lighting ranked third for improvements to existing parks, although relatively few households indicated safety concern as a reason for not using parks and facilities (4% Mail Survey, 15% Web Survey). Support features such as drinking fountains, shade structures, sidewalks, trees, landscaping, and Wi-Fi were also requested by many households. While many Boone County parks have these amenities, residents tend to notice where they are missing. Accessibility deficiencies were noted throughout the park system during the park site assessments, likely related to the need for sidewalks. Shade was specifically requested at the bocce and shuffleboard courts at Boone Woods Park and at playgrounds.

Playground equipment ranked in the top 10 for improvements in the Mail Survey, and age of equipment was noted during the park assessments. Some parks lack entrance signage, especially when the park has multiple entrances. Wayfinding signage was noted as lacking in several parks during the site assessment process. While only 3% of Mail Survey respondents identified the lack of a facility or program as a reason for not using Boone County Parks, 21% of Web Survey respondents chose this option (4th most), indicating that those who use the parks the most want to see more features.

The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the demand for outdoor gathering spaces. As many gatherings in the past year were moved outside, rediscovering enjoyment of the outdoors may lead to continued demand for these venues in the future. Boone County offers picnic shelters or pavilions in several parks, although the size of gatherings has been limited during the pandemic. Other parks in Boone County, including Oakbrook, Boone Woods, England/Idlewild, Giles Conrad, Union, and more, could accommodate outdoor venues, and the public input indicated that more are needed. Any future picnic areas should be designed for rental and potential program use. A very popular program opportunity today is culinary cooking classes. An outdoor kitchen at one of the shelters could provide an opportunity to teach cooking classes for the community and could also justify a higher rental rate.

About 20% of the population lives in areas with "High" or "Medium-High" service levels, and more nearly half (45%) live in areas with "Low" or "Medium-Low" service levels (see Composite Service Areas map, Figure 5.11). Improvements at existing parks would increase the service level for many residents living in areas with lower service levels. Some notable areas with lower service levels – Union and Hebron – would benefit from improvements at parks already in the system, North Pointe Park and Union Park, although new parks will be required to fully meet the needs of these growing parts of the county.

Boone County has room for growth in technology in the parks with features like park apps and charging stations. Many of Boone County's parks already offer Wi-Fi hotspots, yet many households indicated a need. The county should investigate adding hotspots at the parks that lack them, but it appears that signage to indicate the presence of the hotspots is also needed.

Individual parks with significant investment should have master plans finalized prior to development or redevelopment to ensure that 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 versus reactive in the face of challenges and changing circumstances.

7.2.2 Recommendations

1. Add support features throughout the park system such as sidewalks, shade structures, drinking fountains, security lighting, and trees/landscaping
    - Include bottle fillers at all new drinking fountains and when replacing existing features
2. Add restrooms at heavily used parks that currently lack the facilities
3. Add playgrounds in strategic locations in the county and add separate age 2-5 equipment where it is unavailable
    - Consider themed playground equipment, such as climbing rocks, sensory features, etc., potentially providing for marketing and photo opportunities for residents and visitors
4. Add shade at select facilities (e.g., bocce and shuffleboard at Boone Woods and some playgrounds) and seating areas
5. Add picnic shelters at existing and future parks to expand access to these facilities and to promote opportunities for outdoor community gatherings
6. Implement a consistent, durable wayfinding signage program for all county parks and facilities (e.g., trails and disc golf courses)
7. Add Wi-Fi access in high traffic areas including buildings and event spaces (e.g., picnic shelters and sports complexes)
8. Continue to upgrade and utilize technology in parks for patrons and staff (see Chapter 5, Technology, Subsection 5.7.5)
9. Incorporate nature play structures as part of playground development and replacement, especially in more passive park areas
10. Perform an ADA Accessibility Assessment of all facilities, programs, and communications (by an outside consultant)
11. Improve ADA access throughout the park system, including walkways to all facilities and seating areas
12. Prepare Park Master Plans for existing parks and any future parks prior to development of facilities to ensure that added features are complementary and accessible

7.3 Trails and Connectivity

7.3.1 Observations and Analyses

Trails are consistently a top request for improvements throughout the country, including in jurisdictions with the most extensive networks of trails, and Boone County residents are similarly interested in trails. The COVID-19 pandemic has only emphasized the demand for trails as park usage rates jumped, and trails provided opportunities for outdoor, socially distanced activities. According to the benchmarking in Chapter 2, Boone County has 2.3 miles of trail per 10,000 population, above the median of the benchmarked communities (1.1). The county also has more trail miles per jurisdiction square mile (0.12) than the benchmarks (0.4). However, the bulk of the trails are concentrated in a small number of parks and are not evenly distributed throughout the county. Many households are beyond a 5-minute drive from a trail in Boone County.

Boone County residents requested more trails through all types of public input. Trails represented two of the top improvements at existing parks – walking/hiking trails second and bike trails sixth). Support for trails was even stronger in the Web Survey. Trails were one of the most requested features at the open house meetings. They were also the top preference on the feature preference board.

The highest percentage of Boone County households (64%) had a need for walking & hiking trails, and walking & hiking trails ranked first for unmet needs (nearly 13,000 households). Paved bike trails ranked third for households with unmet needs for facilities (over 10,500 households). Most households (79%) were supportive of developing new and connecting existing trails in Boone County. Additionally, walking & hiking trails ranked first by a large margin in the Priority Investment Rankings by ETC. Paved bike trails were fourth.

Walking & hiking trails ranked as the most important facility to Boone County households by far (45% of households ranked as one of four most important facilities; next most received 26%). When provided funds to allocate, households would provide the most funding to build trails (according to the Mail Survey). Similarly, trails ranked second in the dollar voting exercise at the public meetings. Trails and connectivity were by far the most discussed and requested features on the MindMixer online engagement website.

While the public input indicated very strong support for walking and biking trails in Boone County, some residents would also like to see more mountain biking and equestrian trails. Both types of trails were requested in the comment fields of the surveys. The mountain bike group indicated that their needs were mostly met, but they would like to see trails at Waller-Stephenson Mill Park which have been proposed previously. A partner has indicated willingness to help develop a flow trail (see Chapter 5, Subsection 5.7.12), which would increase the opportunities for mountain bike riders in Boone County. Waller-Stephenson Mill Park is also a potential site for equestrian trails. Land in the East Bend area of the county has also been proposed for equestrian trails but would require partnerships, because the land is not owned by Boone County Parks.

The county does not have a countywide planning document that incorporates and connects trail systems in the county to each other, although many trails are planned or in progress. A countywide bike and pedestrian connectivity plan would combine the existing trail plans and discuss potential linkages between the main trail corridors and other destinations throughout Boone County. Currently, only the City of Florence has a Bike and Pedestrian Plan. Many comments in the survey results requested specific connections within the community.

The countywide document should provide design, signage, and maintenance standards that ensure that trail experiences are consistent throughout. The plan should also provide recommendations for sidewalk improvements, street crossings, and on-road elements. Trail and connectivity improvements will help improve access to parks within a walking distance and ensure that those within a walking distance can reach the parks safely. The plan would be a potential resource for communities within Boone County and could provide guidance to developers who wish to incorporate trails into their developments.

7.3.2 Recommendations

1. Develop a bike and pedestrian connectivity plan to integrate existing trail planning efforts and to define alignment and feasibility of smaller connecting spurs, sidewalk improvements, and on-road elements
    - Develop design guidelines and estimates of probable costs as part of this planning process
    - Prioritize improved safety when determining timelines for trails, sidewalks, and crossings
    - Consider linkages between parks
    - Provide guidance to communities and developers
2. Add paved trail loops within existing parks that lack and can accommodate this facility (e.g., Boone Woods, Union, Waller-Stephenson Mill) and in any future parks
    - Include paved trail loops at all new parks
3. Extend natural surface trails in Boone Cliff Nature Preserve, Dinsmore Woods Nature Preserve, and Gunpowder Creek Park and add at Union Park, Waller-Stephenson Mill Park, and future natural areas
4. Include mountain bike trails at Waller-Stephenson Mill Park to provide more opportunities and better access to this facility in southern Boone County
5. Develop a flow trail somewhere in the county to add to the inventory of bike focused amenities in the system
6. Add equestrian trails at Waller-Stephenson Mill Park and in the western portion of the county to improve access to these trails
7. Improve connectivity between parks and adjacent neighborhoods by adding connecting paths where possible

8. Include support features along existing and future trails, including mile markers (every ¼ mile), wayfinding markers, speed limit signs, and bike repair stations (at trailheads)

7.4 New Park and Facility Development

7.4.1 Observations and Analyses

Trends indicate a growing population in Boone County since 1980 that is expected to continue to grow through 2030. While the total population is growing, the composition also continues to change. The county has done well at keeping pace with trends but has not met all of the changing needs of residents which is a primary reason for which this master plan was authorized.

The median age in Boone County (37.1) has increased since 2000 (33.4). It is lower than the comparisons but is still increasing. The population age 65 and over has increased as a percentage since 2000 and is expected to reach 15% by 2024. Over that time period, the percentage of children is expected to decline slightly to under 26%. Like the state and the USA, Boone County is experiencing a decline in children accompanied by an increase in the senior population. However, Boone County is far behind on this trend with a much younger population overall. Accordingly, demand for activities for seniors will continue to grow, but demand for youth activities will remain stronger than in many other communities.

Educational attainment, already higher than Kentucky, has increased in Boone County since 2000. Income has remained the same over this period when adjusted for inflation as in the comparisons, but incomes in Boone County are much higher than in the state or the USA. The county, although still largely white, has become more diverse since 2000 with the largest growth in the Hispanic population. These demographic changes will likely continue and often lead to changing recreation needs. The needs of specific groups should be examined during the individual park master planning process.

According to the benchmarking presented in Chapter 2, Boone County provides slightly more acres of parkland per thousand population (12.4) than the benchmark median (10.0), but a much lower amount of the land is developed at 19%, compared to 39%. These numbers indicate that Boone County has more parkland than other communities, yet some portions of the county remain underserved by parks, according to the service area analysis (Chapter 5), especially those in and near Hebron and Union which continue to grow.

About 20% of the population live within a 10-minute walking distance to a park, including those by other agencies. Because much of the county is rural, it makes sense to also consider the more urban areas separately. Limited to just the three cities in Boone County (Florence, Union, and Walton), about 45% of residents of the three cities live within a 10-minute walk of a park. Only 16% of Boone County households are within a 5-minute drive of a Community Park or larger, but 90% are within a 10-minute drive. These numbers leave room for improvement which will require new parks.

About 8% of households indicated through the Mail Survey that parks were too far from their homes as a reason for not visiting more often, 23% selected this option in the Web Survey which was completed by Boone County residents that are more likely to be park users. The results by sector in Chapter 4 also reaffirm that residents are more likely to use parks that are closer to their homes.

7.4.2 New and Upgraded Parks

New parks would increase access in lower service level areas in Boone County. Public input specifically requested additional parks in Hebron, Union, and Richwood. Development at existing parkland in underserved areas could meet some of these needs, especially at Union Park, Waller-Stephenson Mill Park, and the Erpenbeck/Plantation Point property. Union Park and Waller-Stephenson Mill Park have access but are underdeveloped, while the Erpenbeck/Plantation Point property is undeveloped and not yet officially part of the park system. The Proposed Parks and Facilities map (Figure 7.1) highlights the potential areas to be served by developing these existing parks.

While opportunities exist to improve park and facility service levels using existing parkland, many improvements will require new parkland. While adding facilities at existing parks will improve service levels in a few portions

of the county, new parkland would be required to raise the level of service in many areas. The county should continue to consider land for new parks in areas with lower service levels, especially if the land is needed to accommodate high demand facilities (e.g., splash pads, dog parks, recreation center) or new residential development is expected. To meet the needs of the growing population in Boone County, five new parks are recommended in addition to the development of existing parkland. Figure 7.1 highlights the general area for these new parks.

New Neighborhood Parks are proposed in the following areas:

1. New Park Neighborhood #1 — Union
2. New Park Neighborhood #2 — Hebron
3. New Park Neighborhood #3 — Near I-275/237 Intersection
4. New Park Neighborhood #4 — N of I-275/west of North Pointe/Thornwilde
5. New Park Neighborhood #5 — Richwood

While public input indicated a strong desire by residents for park within easy access of residents and neighborhoods, Boone County Parks cannot meet all of the needs for parks in a large and growing population. City parks in Florence and Walton help meet these needs as do the elementary schools throughout county. Boone County Parks should continue to partner with these cities and Boone County Schools to ensure that these facilities remain open for public use. Many HOA parks fill neighborhoods needs as well, and it will be important for the county to continue to encourage developers to set aside land for or to develop park in new communities.

7.4.3 Outdoor Aquatics

Splash pads, like at Florence Family Aquatic Center, are a recent trend in aquatics that have replaced wading pools at many aquatic facilities and can be developed as standalone features in other park areas. They can come in any size and do not require lifeguards, leading to much lower operating costs than swimming pools. They do require some staff times to operate, including monitoring of water chemistry. Splash pads were a top request throughout all phases of engagement.

At the public meetings, splash pads were a frequent request. They were the top request in the dollar voting and second on the feature preference board. Stakeholder groups also requested splash pads. They were second for unmet needs (nearly 11,000 households) in the Mail Survey and a high priority for investment according to the ETC Institute. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of all households indicated support for the development of splash pads in Boone County.

Boone County Parks do not currently offer any splash pads, but they could be developed in some existing parks. England/Idlewild Park and Union Park offer ideal opportunities for developing these facilities, and the City of Walton plans to build one in Walton Community Park. Other opportunities should be considered at future parks to provide equitable distribution of opportunities throughout the county.

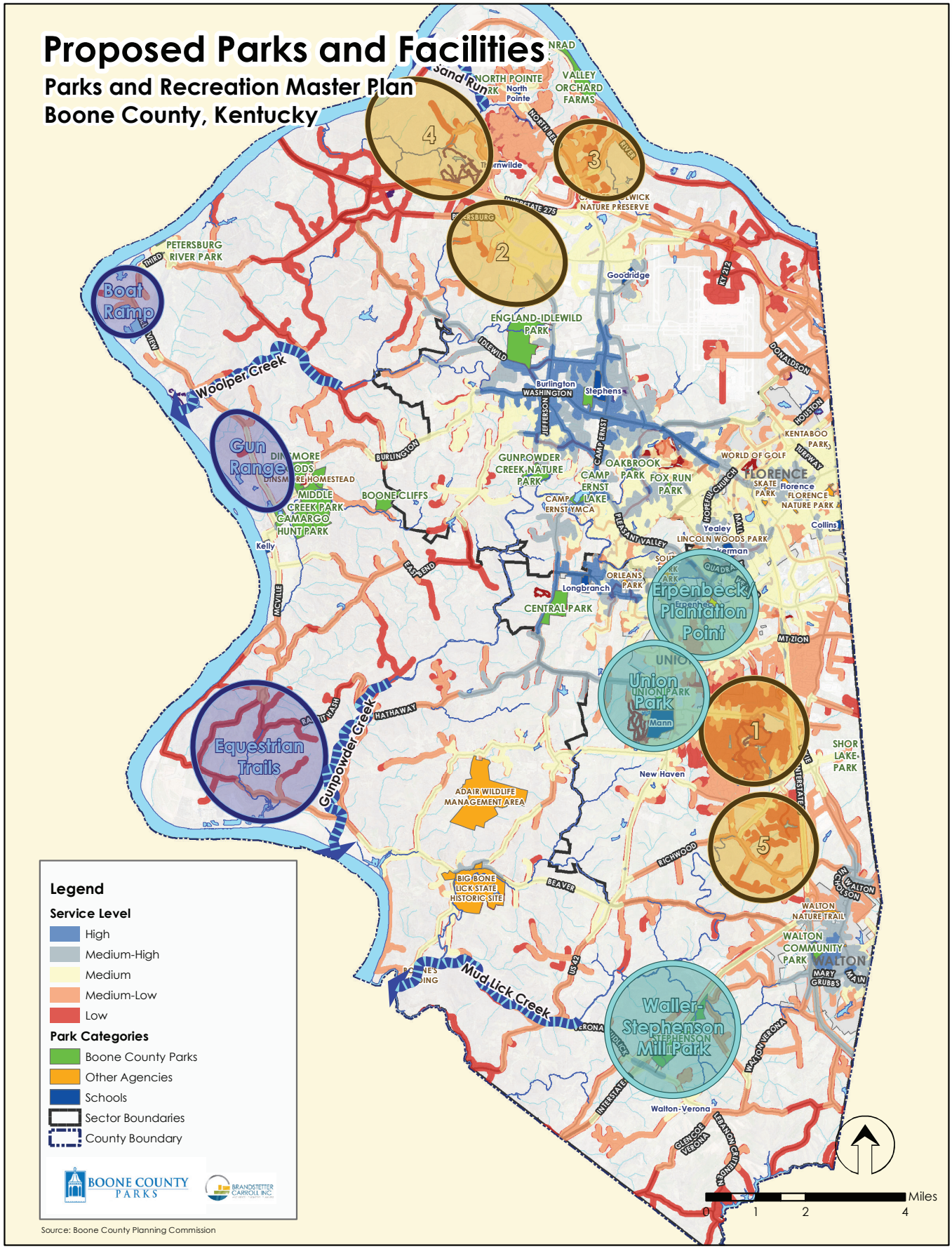
7.4.4 Indoor Facilities

Boone County has limited access to indoor recreation and program spaces, which are highly desired by residents. Boone County has access to a couple of meeting rooms and have limited access to use of the gyms at Boone County Schools, but the use is restricted and not meeting all of the community's needs. Gym space is in high demand and limited availability constrains potential program offerings by Boone County Parks. The county also lacks rooms for fitness classes, indoor field space, and indoor pool access.

Recreation Center

Stakeholder groups indicated a high demand for indoor spaces that is not met by existing facilities. While the Mail Survey indicated that community/recreation centers were a medium priority for investment (according to ETC Institute), about 7,000 households indicated unmet needs for these facilities and 5,000 for gymnasium space. The top unmet program need, fitness and wellness programs (14,000 households), would utilize an indoor facility, as would age 50+ programs, the third ranked unmet program need (11,000 households). A

Figure 7.1: Proposed Parks and Facilities



feasibility study is necessary to determine the specific features to be developed as part of the facility. The study should also determine capital and operating cost and to explore potential partnerships. Union Park is a potential location for the development of this facility, but other sites should also be evaluated as part of the feasibility study.

Indoor Pool

Many residents indicated desire for an indoor aquatic facility. Medium priority for investment and about 10,000 households indicated unmet needs, according to the ETC Institute. The county does not currently have an obvious location to develop an indoor pool, so land acquisition may be required. The development of an indoor pool will require 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. Boone County Schools could be a potential partner as part of a program to teach elementary school children to swim.

7.4.5 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 7.5), and trails (see Section 7.3). Outdoor fitness equipment has become a popular addition to parks for users of all ages (in addition to active adults/seniors) and was a desired improvement to existing parks. 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 and other adults.

Dog Parks and Amenities

As noted in Chapter 5, dog parks are a growing trend in parks and recreation, and Boone County has a popular dog park at England/Idlewild Park. This existing feature is heavily used and needs expansion. England/Idlewild Park and the other dog park at Walton Community Park, nearly a quarter (23%) of households used these facilities in the last year. About 7,000 households indicated unmet needs for dog parks. Union Park is an obvious location for a dog park as it is located between the two existing locations, but more dog parks will likely be in demand in the future.

Community Gardens

Over 7,500 households indicated unmet needs. Although most residents in Boone County 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. While the existing gardens at Union and England/Idlewild Park should be relocated to allow the land to be used for other facilities (dog park expansion in England/Idlewild and active amenities in Union), the county should seek additional locations for community gardens in existing or future parks.

Disc Golf

Boone County Parks currently offers disc golf courses in three parks: England/Idlewild Park, Boone Woods Park, and Walton Community Park. The courses range in difficulty with England/Idlewild Park as the most difficult and Walton Community Park as the easiest course. These courses make Boone County one of the most attractive locations in the greater Cincinnati area for disc golfers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, disc golf has increased in popularity, including in Boone County, due to the outdoor and socially distant nature of the sport.

The county frequently hosts tournaments, including an annual tournament at England/Idlewild Park. The 2020 Idlewild Open was held at England Idlewild Park in August 2020 despite the pandemic (spectators were not allowed). Another tournament was held at Boone Woods Park, the Boone County Open, in November 2020. These events featured both amateur and professional competitions.

Although the county has great disc golf courses that host tournaments, Boone County lacks a true championship level course to draw top level tournaments. Waller-Stephenson Mill Park has the potential to accommodate such a course as it has the desired topography and plenty of space. If developed, the course should be adjustable in difficulty to ensure it meets the everyday needs of residents as well. A beginner level course at England/Idlewild Park – additional land required – would allow that park to accommodate all levels of users and would provide a beginner course in the northern part of Boone County.

Outdoor Stages/Amphitheaters

Boone County has a large amphitheater at the Boone Woods Park which is used to host a variety of events. However, the facility is aging and needs considerable improvement, including ADA accessibility improvements. Renovation is necessary for the space to continue as an event venue (and potential source of revenue) into the future.

Even with improvements to this existing facility, more facilities are needed to meet the needs of residents in Boone County. While 6,000 households indicated an unmet need for an outdoor stage or amphitheater, more than twice as many (13,000 households) indicated unmet needs for concerts and art performances that would be held in such a facility, the second ranked unmet need. An additional 9,000 households indicated unmet needs for outdoor movies, ranking fifth. Both programs were high priorities for investment according to the ETC institute. Other programs such as fitness programs could also be hosted at these facilities.

Potential locations for new outdoor stages or amphitheater include Union Park and Walton Community Park, which has a hillside that could be used for seating. A partnership with Boone County Public Library — Hebron Branch to program the amphitheater on the site would provide a northern location for events. These new and existing locations, plus the new amphitheater at Burlington Commons, would provide venues throughout Boone County for concerts, movies, and other programs.

ATV Site

Residents in Boone County have indicated some desire for ATV trails. While not a top priority from the public input, an ATV site would attract users from all over the county and beyond. It would also be a potential revenue source as users are typically willing to pay to use these facilities.

Archery and Gun Range

Some stakeholders indicated a desire for an archery and gun range in Boone County. It was not included as an option in the surveys, but some households indicated a need in the "other" fields. A permanent archery range would provide a home youth archery programs as well as a place for users to practice their skills. A potential location for this range would be in the western portion of the county away from much of the densely residential portions of the county but still within easy access for most potential users.

Drones Launch Area

As noted in Chapter 5, Boone County Parks lacks a designated location for launching drones and has no official policy for flying them in the parks. The county should formulate and post a policy for (or against) use of drone within the park system. If the department chooses to permit drones in some locations, areas away from population centers make the most sense; for instance, a good location could be at or near the potential ATV site or archery/gun range.

7.4.6 Recommendations

1. Utilize existing parkland to meet unmet facility needs and improve access to park features
2. Add outdoor fitness equipment at select parks to expand opportunities for improved community health
3. Develop an additional dog park at Union Park and expand the dog park at England/Idlewild Park to improve turf conditions
    - Consider including dog parks in future park development
4. Develop a championship level disc golf course (with adjustable difficulty) at Waller-Stephenson Mill Park to draw top level tournaments and expand opportunities for disc golf in Boone County

- Consider a beginner level course at England/Idlewild Park to attract more participants to the sport

5. Identify a potential site for the development of ATV trails to provide opportunities for residents and visitor and to generate revenue
6. Relocate the community gardens at England/Idlewild Park and Union Park to make room for needed facilities and seek locations for additional gardens
7. Improve the existing amphitheater at the Boone Woods Park to keep the venue available for programs and events
8. Develop new amphitheaters at Union Park and Walton Community Park to provide venue in these portions of Boone County be used for concerts, movies, theater productions, fitness classes, and more
9. Consider developing an archery and gun range in the western portion of Boone County to provide a permanent venue for residents to practice and to support program opportunities
10. 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
11. Develop new parks in growing and underserved areas throughout Boone County (see Figure 7.1)
12. Continue to partner with cities and the Boone County Schools to ensure that facilities remain open and available for public use
13. Continue to encourage developers to set aside land for or to develop park in new communities
    - Consider incentives for developers to increase the amount of parkland available to residents
14. Consider developing an indoor sports complex with gymnasium space, field space, program/meeting rooms, and more, following the preparation of a feasibility study
15. Seek opportunities for new parkland to meet the demands of desired facilities and to improve service levels for existing and future residents
16. Evaluate the feasibility and demand for an indoor pool to serve all of Boone County with consideration to potential partnerships

7.5 Outdoor Athletic Fields and Courts

7.5.1 Observations and Analyses

Boone County provides a higher level of service for youth baseball diamond fields, youth softball diamond fields, and multipurpose rectangular fields than the benchmark comparisons. The site assessments (see Chapter 3) indicated that most of the fields are in good condition, although some have issues with drainage and most have accessibility concerns. Only the diamond fields and one multipurpose rectangular field at Central Park currently have lighting. Many of the game courts in Boone County need resurfacing, and some lack lighting. Seventy percent (70%) of households indicated support for upgrading or adding athletic fields, including adding lighting, in the Mail Survey.

7.5.2 Athletic Fields

The largest number of diamond fields in Boone County are at Central Park & Arboretum and England/Idlewild Park. However, these fields are insufficient to meet the needs of leagues in the county, so Boone County Parks uses and maintains fields at many other properties throughout the county. Many of these fields are in poor condition, but since they are not owned by the county, they see minimal investment. The county should seek opportunities of additional fields, including acquisition of existing field complexes owned by others if they become available. Boone County Arboretum has proposed the development of an event venue that would replace field space at Central Park. If this facility is developed, the organization should be required to replace any impacted fields at another location.

The county has 11 full-sized multipurpose rectangular fields with the largest number at Central Park. Like the diamond fields, these fields are insufficient to meet the needs of leagues, and Boone County Parks uses and maintains fields at many other properties.

The fields generally lack the necessary accessible pathways and seating areas at the game fields. Because national trends indicate faster growth of sports that use multipurpose rectangular fields compared to those that use diamond fields, the need for these fields will likely grow, although Boone County is above the benchmark for these fields. Population growth in Boone County will further increase the demand for these fields. Valley Orchard Farms presents the best location for additional fields at existing park property. Field lighting could help reduce the need for additional fields by extending hours of use, especially at Central Park.

Many stakeholders indicated a desire for artificial turf fields. These fields can hold up to heavy use without damage to the turf and can reduce the number of rainouts due to improved drainage. Central Park and Boone Woods Park are the best current locations for artificial turf fields, because these fields are or could be lighted for extended use. The airport prohibits lighting of fields at England/Idlewild Park.

As the makeup of the population of Boone County changes and the population continues diversifying, needs will also shift. Boone County is less diverse than many of the surrounding communities but, as noted above, is increasing. Optimizing multipurpose space can be an important tool for the county to use in facing limited space for expansion. Additionally, with field lighting Boone County may be able to offer athletic leagues for adults who are requesting more active programming and are willing to use facilities later in the evening. Boone County Parks recently had many requests for cricket, but there is no available location for users to play. Valley Orchard Farms has space to accommodate the growing need for a cricket pitch in the county.

7.5.3 Game Courts

The 10.5 basketball courts at seven parks offer a higher level of service than the benchmarks (one per 12,613 compared to the median of 22,467). Several courts are also offered by others in Boone County. However, some residents indicated an unmet need for basketball courts, and some portions of the county are beyond a 5-minute drive – notably areas without packs in general. The county has a similar level of service for tennis courts and has responded to the trend for pickleball courts with two at Boone Woods Park.

With full-sized basketball courts at five larger parks, Boone County should prioritize half basketball courts in future locations. These smaller courts require less space and cost less to develop. Additionally, these courts tend to draw smaller groups and children more than adults and are a better fit for a smaller Neighborhood Park. Erpenbeck/Plantation Point and future Neighborhood Parks are a potential location for new courts in Boone County.

Pickleball courts are a rising trend in parks and recreation across the country, due in part to their popularity with older residents. Boone County offers two dedicated pickleball courts at Boone Woods Park. As the demand and the population continue to grow, additional locations will likely be desired. The simplest solution would be to add pickleball lines at existing tennis courts. Pickleball lines at Boone Woods Park courts would provide the desired lighted courts in that park, and lines at Walton Community Park would provide access in the southern portion of Boone County. New dedicated courts should be developed at Union Park, Central Park and Arboretum, and future parks.

7.5.4 Recommendations

1. Investigate opportunities for obtaining land for additional baseball/softball fields and acquire existing field complexes if they become available
2. Add lighting at rectangular fields at Central Park and Boone Woods Park to extend the hours of use and reduce the demand for additional fields
3. Require the replacement of any fields lost at Central Park due to the development of an arboretum center
4. Consider converting fields at the Central Park (2) and Boone Woods Park (1) to artificial turf to accommodate increased use and to reduce rainouts; line for multiple sports
5. Develop a cricket pitch at Valley Orchard Farms to meet the existing and growing demand for this sport in Boone County
6. Provide smaller half basketball courts at future parks to reduce space requirements and prioritize use by neighborhood children and smaller groups

7. Add pickleball lining Boone Woods Park and Walton Community Park tennis courts at to provide additional and lighted courts for this sport
    - Add new pickleball courts at Union Park and Central Park and Arboretum
8. Ensure accessibility at all athletic fields and spectator areas (to and within)
9. Improve drainage at England/Idlewild Park and throughout the system to improve field conditions
10. Prepare for changes in field demands in response to trends and changing demographics; consider adaptability during field development and improvement

7.6 Natural Areas, Open Space, and Nature Education

7.6.1 Observations and Analyses

Boone County offers a wide range of natural areas. Several parks, such as Boone Cliffs Nature Preserve, Conservancy Park Belleview, Dinsmore Woods Nature Preserve, and Middle Creek Park, and primarily natural and passive in use. Other parks provide a combination of active and passive uses, but offer large amounts of natura area (e.g., Central Park & Arboretum, England/Idlewild Park). In total, the department has over 1,000 acres of natural land that could be utilized for nature activities and passive features.

Public input indicated support for conservation and preservation of natural resources, and opportunities exist to take advantage of many of Boone County properties for educational purposes while preserving natural resources. Survey results indicated a strong need for more access to natural areas and nature programs in the county.

Nature programs were a high priority in the Priority investment Ratings by ETC and the top requested program category at the open house meetings in the comments and the feature preference boards. More than a third of households (34%) indicated a need for nature programs (Mail Survey), and most survey respondents indicated these needs were unmet (representing over 10,600 households). Looking at program participation rates between 2015-2019 (see Chapter 3), nature/outdoor programs saw a nearly 140% increase. Offerings in this category have been expanded, but the interest and participation levels underscore the community demand for such experiences.

Although Boone County already has a significant inventory of natural areas, 81% of households indicated that acquiring and preserving natural areas was important for Boone County Parks to pursue. Nearly half (49%) of households indicated a need for natural areas/nature parks, and they were the second most important facility. Natural areas/nature parks were the sixth ranked unmet need in the Mail Survey with over 9,700 households indicating an unmet need. Finally, natural areas ranked as a high priority (second) in the Priority Investment Rankings by ETC.

As such a high priority for Boone County residents, the county should continue to seek opportunities to acquire open space where it is available and in advance of residential development. Many desired amenities cannot be developed without the acquisition of large parcels in the county (see Section 7.4 and Figure 7.1), much of which would remain natural. Some existing and underutilized parkland, including Waller-Stephenson Mill Park and Union Park offer potential opportunities for access to nature and educational programming.

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.[4] Because they are typically among the largest landowners in their jurisdictions, park and recreation departments can lead in the implementation of sustainability or best management practices (BMPs), which also provide potential educational opportunities for residents.

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 provide great opportunities for intergenerational programming. Potential partners

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

for environmental programs include Boone County Schools, Boone County Arboretum, Northern Kentucky Bird Club, and more (see Section 7.11). Potential programs include community events, field trips, or classes covering habitat restoration, wildlife identification (e.g., bird watching), invasive species removal, and more. Interpretive signage is another effective way to provide nature education opportunities in Boone County Parks.

A venue is needed for some types of programs, including many with an educational component, and one of the nature preserves in western Boone County (Boone Cliffs or Dinsmore Woods) would likely be the best location for an indoor nature center and outdoor classroom. A nature center would provide indoor space for year-round programming and would be available during inclement weather.

Access to water in general was a top request at the stakeholder groups and the open house meetings. Residents want water trails for canoes and kayak and more boat ramps on the Ohio River for larger boats. Fishing lakes, ponds, & streams were a high priority for investment according the ETC Institute. Additionally, nearly 10,000 households indicated unmet needs for fishing lakes, ponds, & streams in the Mail Survey. They were also one of the most important facilities. Public input also indicated desire for canoe/kayak lessons which could be structured to accommodate a variety of ages and abilities.

Existing ponds in Boone County Parks could be opened up for fishing and a proposed pond at Union Park would provide additional fishing opportunities. Water trails could be implemented at several streams in Boone County, including Sand Run, Woolper Creek, Gunpowder Creek, and Mud Lick Creek, which are highlighted in Figure 7.1. The launch points for these streams could be used for fishing opportunities as well.

7.6.2 Recommendations

1. Continue to seek opportunities to acquire natural areas throughout Boone County as land becomes available
2. Develop passive recreational and educational features as part of development at Waller-Stephenson Mill Park and Union Park
3. Add or expand nature programming throughout Boone County Parks
4. Develop an indoor nature center and outdoor classroom at the western nature preserves (Boone Cliffs or Dinsmore Woods) to expand nature programming and provide year-round opportunities
5. Utilize nature trails for programming, including guided hikes and plant identification
6. Seek opportunities for additional natural areas and open space if land becomes available
7. Consider acquisition of any private parks and open space in Boone County that become available for sale to ensure that residents continue to have access to these amenities, especially in environmentally sensitive areas
8. Develop interpretive signage throughout the park system (will require signage plans) to help visitors understand the natural features and history of Boone County parks
9. Implement conservation policies and sustainable practices for development and management of park properties
10. Utilize parks as examples of Best Management Practices (BMP) for stormwater detention, recycling, etc.
11. Promote conservation and sustainability efforts as they are implemented to encourage reduced levels of consumption and waste generation at the household and community levels
12. Acquire land contiguous to existing parks if it becomes available to allow for additional features and to increase the total amount of parkland available to residents
13. Establish and expand partnerships for nature education programs within Boone County Parks (see also Section 7.10)
14. Implement water trails at Sand Run, Woolper Creek, Gunpowder Creek, and Mud Lick Creek to provide opportunities for paddling throughout Boone County; pursue adding to Kentucky Tourism's Blue Water Trails inventory
15. Explore partnership opportunities with Kentucky Tourism and the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources to develop programs like paddling events and lessons.

16. Utilize these access points and other ponds in parks for expanded fishing access
    - Partner with Northern Kentucky Fly Fishers to expand fishing programs in new locations
17. Seek a location for an additional boats ramp to improve motorized access to the Ohio River

7.7 Programming

7.7.1 Observations and Analyses

Adult fitness and wellness programs were the most needed recreation programs in Boone County (43% of households) according to the Mail Survey with concerts/art performances ranking a close second (39%). Nature programs, programs for ages 50+, and outdoor movies were all indicated as needed by more than a fourth of households. These programs all ranked at the top of the list for most important programs as well.

In addition to being the most needed programs, adult fitness and wellness programs (e.g., yoga, Zumba, CrossFit) were the top unmet need identified by over 14,000 households, while concerts/art performances were second (13,104 households), and programs for persons age 50+ (11,042) were third. Other unmet needs indicated by the survey include nature programs (10,688 households) and outdoor movies (9,004), both of which were also identified in the top five most important programs.

Two of the top three reasons for not using parks and programs were that households do not know what is offered and that there is not enough time. Improved marketing may attract some of these households to existing offerings, but a different approach will likely help reach those who feel they cannot make time for programming. It may require altering schedules or considering a wider range of times. Residents may participate more fully in programs that flexible timewise, including virtual and pre-recorded offerings. Putting up targeted polls on the website and social media on a regular basis could be one way for the department to connect with existing and potential patrons across the county. Maintaining an ongoing campaign of checking in with residents about their needs and preferences will help Boone County Parks to stay fresh and relevant.

Community/Family-Oriented Programs

Overall, Boone County residents indicated a desire for programs that bring members of the community together and for Boone County Parks to offer opportunities oriented around nature, popular culture (movies, concerts, etc.), and fitness. The department could potentially design new offerings that accommodate different ages (e.g., family-friendly activities) but also some that are intended for older citizens specifically.

Annual family-friendly events – like the well-attended community favorite Jack-o-Lantern Walk and the Boone Woods Art & Craft Show – help to strengthen the department's presence in the community and provide opportunities for improved and equitable access to experiences.

Considering the high demand for concerts and performances, Boone County should utilize the additional outdoor stages or amphitheaters recommended in Section 7.4 and may want to invest in a portable stage to improve variety and number of locations for performances. Expanding the concert series with events scheduled throughout the county would be a great way to bring residents together and fulfill this general unmet need. Residents have varying preferences for music, so the concert series should provide for a wide variety of music tastes (e.g., country, reggae, symphonic). An important element – as with many other programmatic recommendations – is to create a branded well-advertised series (see Subsection 7.8.3) starting a year in advance, so that people know the opportunities and can plan to attend. This type of long-range program planning is a vital step towards increased revenue generation and more partnership opportunities.

Senior Programs

As noted in Section 7.4, Boone County's population, like most of the country, is aging and a large percentage of residents over age 65. Therefore, it is unsurprising that many survey respondents requested more programs for those age 55+. This demand, combined with a high need for fitness and wellness resources, suggests that new offerings should largely be oriented around activity-based content.

Additionally, many citizens who qualify according to an arbitrary age do not consider themselves to be seniors and will not participate due to the perception that some have of seniors. Communities that program "seniors," under one umbrella, often have this problem. Some of the most active people in fitness and more active programs are over the age of 60. It is important to brand and market active senior programs together under a separate program name (i.e., Boone County Active Adults). Programs that fit into this category should be grouped together and marketed to more active seniors. Hospitals, health insurance providers, and grocery store chains provide an attractive source of prospecting for sponsors for programs and events.

Evening and Weekend Events for Adults

Boone County has a tremendous opportunity in creating a series of events that are held on a year-round basis, branded, and presented for adults in Boone County. It is not important that this plan identify what will be offered as that will, and should, change from year to year, season to season. Variety will make this program series work. An RFQ can be offered to event planners in Boone County or the surrounding area to provide this series of programs. A business arrangement can be contracted to where the county, Parks, and the citizens all benefit from the relationship.

As noted in Section 7.5, lighting at athletic fields will allow for use later in the day, potentially allowing for the formation of adult leagues. If lighting is added to the fields, especially the multipurpose rectangular fields, Parks should evaluate the need for adult sports leagues, especially soccer.

Other Programming Needs

While survey results indicated the strongest support for more senior programs, households were supportive of more programming for all ages. Beyond the more competitive type activities, many public comments provided at the workshop and in the Web Survey reflect the desire for creative, arts-based opportunities like theater and dance classes. While Boone County Parks has not offered many of these kinds of programs, there are local groups that may be willing to offer programming support if provided space and access to interested community members through Parks' marketing efforts. Many of these additional programs can more easily be accommodated with indoor program space but are possible to program outdoors. Offerings should be reevaluated if additional indoor space is developed.

Boone County currently offers inconsistent adaptive programs, but public comments submitted at the workshops and via the Web Survey suggest there is a need for offerings, particularly geared towards adults. This need can be partially accomplished through partnership with existing organizations, such as the Boone County Schools or Boone County Public Library, to incorporate adaptive experiences within existing programs.

Currently, Boone County has limited offerings for teenagers, but 72% of households support adding more teen programs. This age range is very often difficult to engage in any community but introducing programs like Esports leagues can lead to greater participation, although the lack of indoor program space is a challenge. Beyond the more competitive type activities, the county should also seek out ways to incorporate creative, performative, and cultural arts programming for those of all ages.

7.7.2 Annual Implementation Plan for Business Operations

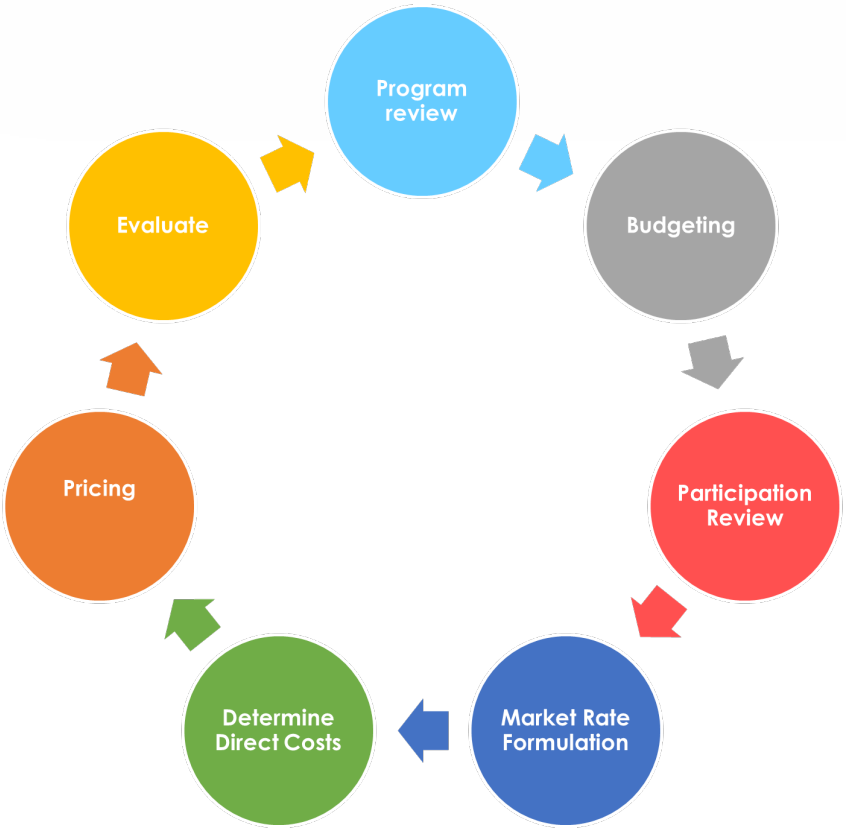
The diagram below illustrates how the *Envision Boone County Parks 2030 Master Plan* is an ongoing working operation, starting with an annual plan and ending with evaluation. This plan allows Parks to establish department and program goals, identify how they benefit the community, determine pricing and costs, and, finally, evaluate each of these steps. It is recommended that each year a department retreat is held to identify goals and objectives for the year.

Program Review

Review every program in the department for the following:

- What is the purpose of the program or activity?
- What is the program attempting to accomplish?
- What are the goals for the program?

Figure 7.2: Ongoing Annual Operation Plan Diagram



Budgeting: Use the 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 FT wages, maintenance costs, or utilities

Participation

Estimate participation based on the historic data of previous years.

- Set minimum and number of participants
- Set a maximum number of participants

Determine Market Rate

Utilize the program total direct cost from the budget information to set the Market Rate Price.

Determine Direct Costs

This is the most important step prior to determining pricing. Calculate all direct costs and then determine the percentage of cost recovery that the program should recover.

Pricing

Based on the calculations from determining direct costs and cost recovery, set a standard price. Calculate the Market Rate, and then the Resident Discount.

Evaluate

- Purpose of the program
- Participation Goal
- Cost recovery Goal

7.7.3 Recommendations

1. Be a mission driven agency; pay very close attention to the mission of Boone County Parks
   - Make sure actions and decisions always tie back to the mission
2. Establish an annual assessment process to determine if Boone County should stop offering a program, continue offering a program, or start a new program (Annual Implementation Plan for Business Operations – Subsection 7.7.2.)
3. Expand program offerings to meet unmet community needs, including concerts/art performances, adult fitness and wellness programs, outdoor movies, special events, and programs for age 50+
4. Utilize the existing performance space at Boone Woods Park and future amphitheaters for additional and enhanced program opportunities, including concerts, movies, and children's theater
5. Utilize new facilities, including outdoor fitness equipment, outdoor classrooms, outdoor games, community gardens, and more, for expanded program opportunities that result from the availability of these facilities
6. Establish a youth archery league to utilize the new archery range once developed
7. Consider offering programs at picnic shelters as the demand for outdoor programs continues to increase
8. Brand and market active senior programs together under a separate program name, "Boone County Active Adults," and offer these at alternating locations throughout the county; expand the programs to indoor space if developed
9. Continuously monitor trends in recreation, particularly among growing population groups, to ensure program offerings meet the needs of the community
10. Consider creating a series of year-round events, potentially with a contractor, that are branded and presented for adults in Boone County
11. Explore ways to permit alcohol sales at specific events as well as agreements with food truck vendors as possible boost for revenue generation and attendance
12. Develop programs to meet needs for more creative and cultural arts programs for both youth and adults
13. Utilize the Core Program Guidelines in Appendix C as a source for program offerings
14. Develop therapeutic recreation programs and improve accessibility within existing programs for those with special needs
15. Utilize new amenities developed at a future recreation center and nature center for additional year-round program opportunities, including nature programs, active adult programs, and fitness programs
16. Increase capacity to host additional events, which were highly desired by residents to bring the community together
17. Schedule more summer concerts and movies – including performers that attract a more diverse age group
18. Seek opportunities for additional teen programs, including Esports programs
19. Consider expansion of programming coming from vendors and contractors through the private sector
    - Allows for expansion of programming without hiring additional staff
    - Many new requests by public can be provided by private vendors

7.8 Operations, Maintenance, and Promotion

7.8.1 Observations and Analyses

On a per population basis, Boone County Parks employs fewer full-time staff (20) than the benchmark median (30). However, the full-time equivalent (FTE) staff numbers are similar to the benchmark median, indicating that a higher percentage of staff in Boone County are part-time. Boone County's expenditures per acre of parkland are also lower than the comparisons – about 40% less than the benchmark median ($1,682 vs. $2,736) – and the agency's expenditures per FTE are lower than the benchmark by about $14,000 (see Table 2.14). Boone County's operational budget is comparable if slightly below the benchmark median,

and the county spends less per acre due to higher overall average and a lower operating budget. Moving forward, while faced with significant demographic shifts and changing community needs, Parks will need to act proactively to ensure that both revenue and costs match pace with development in a sustainable way.

7.8.2 Structure

The addition of facilities and developed parkland will add to the maintenance segments of the park system. As the numbers show, Boone County current workforce is already at capacity. It will be a challenge for existing staff to operate the additional parks, trails, and other facilities that are needed. Bearing in mind the longevity of high-quality service and the sustainability of operations, new development should be accompanied by additional staff. The staffing levels required should be evaluated continually throughout park development. The development of large facilities, such as an indoor recreation center, will require significant staffing levels which must be considered in any feasibility study prior to development.

Beyond just staffing, maintenance standards should also be assessed during the development process. Often, maintenance efforts are neglected in pursuing new development, but understanding the maintenance demands of any new or even existing facility is critical for long-term success. If maintenance staff are consulted during development, they may be able to provide input that reduces maintenance demands. For example, if Parks maintenance staff use a 72-inch-wide lawn mower, space between vertical obstructions in grass areas should be at least that distance wherever possible. It is also important to make sure that maintenance staff have the necessary knowledge to maintain a feature or amenity prior to its addition to the system.

Staff will benefit, and community perception of the department improve, if there is continued training offered for leadership and cultivated growth within their respective fields. For example, the existing team can 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) – certificates are offered for splash pad operations. As needs arise, staff may pursue other relevant certifications. Boone County Parks staff identified the need for someone with the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) credential to lead programs for those with disabilities. To accommodate staff seeking these credentials, Boone County must be intentional about identifying and allocating funding for professional development opportunities (e.g., conferences, training, memberships, etc.) with additional consideration to licensure and certification requirements.

As a way to increase variety and availability of programming, Boone County Parks should explore local partnerships. Opening dialogue, connecting with existing providers, and researching alternative sources are all methods the department can pursue for developing outside vendor or community partner contracts that can help meet community programming demands. Collaborating with external partners is an ideal way for existing staff to oversee more programs within a smooth, streamlined, clearly defined process. But, as much as partnership with outside vendors and contractors can effectively expand programs and events, not all programs can or should be transferred to contractors. Any contracts pursued must remain consistent and formally structured in writing with clear parameters understood by all parties to ensure benefits for both Boone County and contractor (see Subsection 7.9.2).

The parks are currently open from 8:30 a.m. to dusk. As a result, the hours for parks vary based on the time of year and are open for interpretation. Additionally, during the winter, this policy effectively closes the parks on weekdays as there is not time outside of regular work hours when the parks are open. A change to the ordinance for park hours to include specific hours would allow for more use of parks during much of the year while eliminating the existing ambiguity for the hours of operation. This change should be implemented in conjunction with the recommended addition of lights on trails, fields, and courts.

7.8.3 Promotion

The number one reason for not using parks and programs was that households do not know what is offered (37% of Web Survey, 27% of Mail Survey households). Public comments and stakeholder groups indicated a desire for better promotion of facilities, programs, and events, which would improve access to information about offerings by Parks and Recreation. The county should not be overly criticized for residents' level of knowledge about parks and programs as this is a common answer to this question all around the country. However, it is essential for the department's success to create simple and easy fundamental marketing and

branding techniques that will enable the staff to promote programs in a simple and efficient manner.

With the development of this *Envision Boone County Parks 2030 Master Plan*, there is incredible opportunity to step up efforts to promote and market opportunities. Figure 7.3 shows the three elements necessary for a successful marketing campaign. The top section in the figure indicates the identity of the agency. The middle area, containing the visual identity and messaging platform, expresses what brochures, ads, flyers, and media will look like. The bottom provides examples of how the message will be distributed. This figure is meant to be a guide.

The strategic plan in Chapter 6 defines most of the top element for Boone County Parks. The middle element then defines the agency's visual identity and messaging platform accordingly. The result must be easy to implement and modify as needed. Standard formatting should be established for all marketing and promotional efforts. Figure 7.4 represents an example of a very simple "one look" that everyone will recognize as the department's messaging platform. The title and images of a standard flyer or brochure can easily be changed within minutes based on what the agency is doing.

The standard event flyer format should include:

- Pictures (at the top and middle)
- Event name (in the front banner)
- When and where (across the middle)
- Sponsors (at the bottom)
- Brand, logo, website development

Other efforts, like the brochure in Figure 7.5, should employ the same visual identity and messaging platform. The same visual identity should be used for online marketing, including social media and email notifications.

Figure 7.3: Essential Marketing Communication Elements

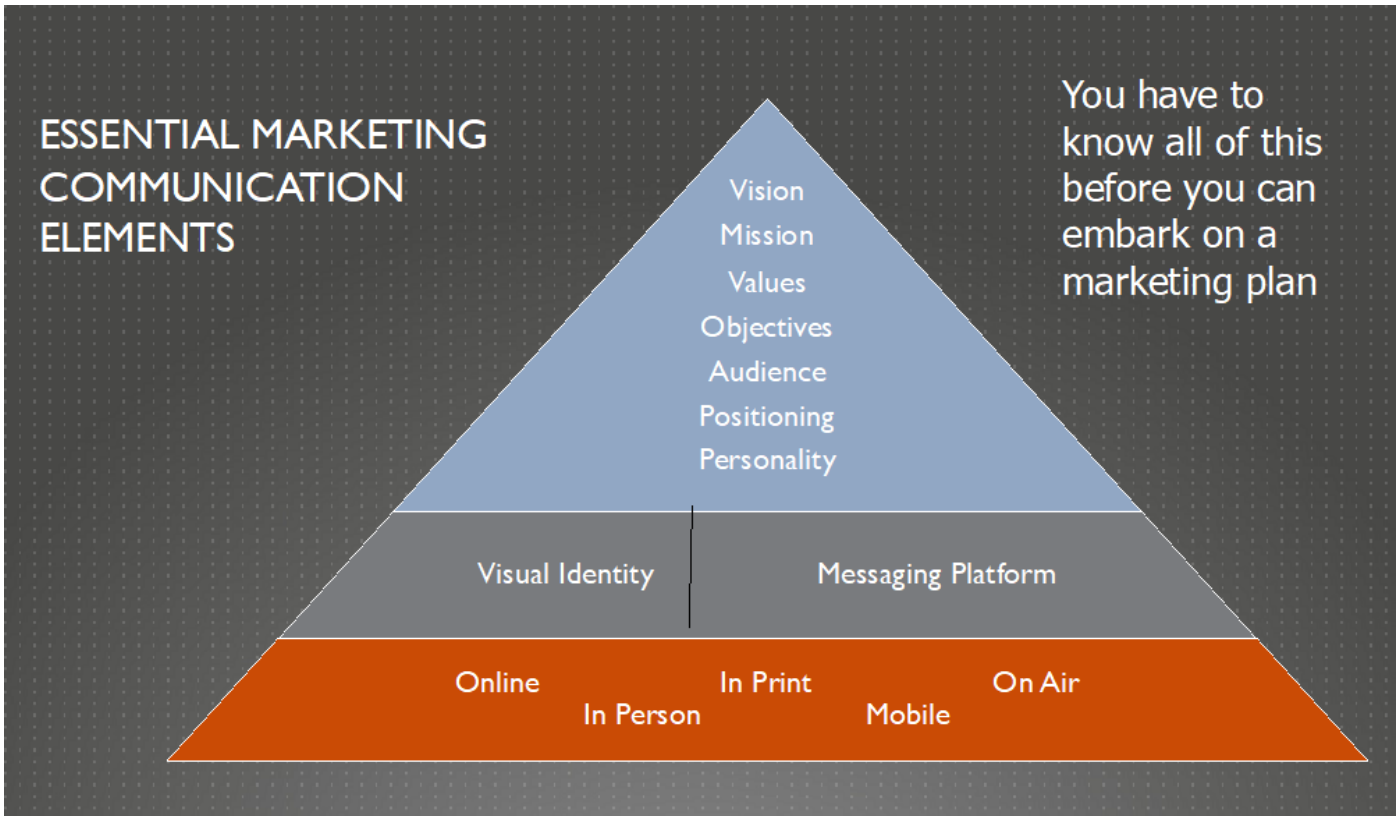


Figure 7.4: Sample Event Flyer

Figure 7.5: Sample Brochure

7.8.4 Recommendations

1. Prepare an Operations Plan with Maintenance Standards
2. Increase maintenance budget to accommodate new facilities and programs
3. Consult maintenance staff during park development to help reduce maintenance requirements and ensure staff are able to adequately maintain new features
4. Update the ordinance that identifies the hours of operation to include a specific timeframe rather than simply "dawn to dusk" to allow for extended use, especially during the winter months
5. Train staff
    - Create and implement professional and career development plans for management and supervisory staff
    - Identify and allocate funding for critical staff development opportunities (including conferences, training, memberships, etc.) with consideration to licensure and certification requirements
    - Encourage continued staff training for leadership and continued growth within their respective fields
    - Encourage management level staff to attend professional development programs offered by state, regional, and national training organizations
    - Encourage staff members to pursue the Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP), Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) certifications and Aquatic Facility Operator (AFO)
    - Train or hire a staff member as a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS)
6. Determine the agency's visual identity and messaging platform
7. Identify standard formatting for all marketing and promotional efforts (consider samples provided above) based on this platform
8. Identify a consistent brand as it relates to color, style, logo & placement, and promotional materials
    - Ensure that park signage is consistent with this branding
9. Expand marketing of programs and facilities to improve awareness of existing and future opportunities
10. Engage neighborhoods during park improvement process
11. Utilize this *Envision Boone County Parks 2030 Master Plan* to guide decision making – Monitor progress regularly
12. Consider mobile apps to enhance park experiences

7.9 Budget and Funding

The operating budget (see Chapter 2, Table 2.13) for Boone County Parks for 2019 shows a per capita expenditure of $23, just below the benchmark median of $26. Proposed facility development, especially an indoor recreation center, would have a large impact on the overall budget of the department. Increased budgets will be required as new parks are developed and the population continues to grow.

Generated revenue represents 27% of the Parks budget, slightly above the benchmark of 22%. Similarly, the per capita revenue in Boone County is $23, slightly below the benchmarks ($26). Departments throughout the county are trying to increase cost recovery, especially as municipal budgets are stressed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Improvement of cost recovery in Boone County is also challenged by the county's continued growth as the department's operations continue to expand. Boone County should seek to at least maintain the current level of cost recovery as operations expand. Higher cost recovery should be attained if revenue generating facilities, such as an indoor recreation center, ATV site, or gun range, are developed.

It will be a challenge for Boone County Parks to sustain the growth identified in this plan without changes to business operations. Applying these business management principals to operations, programs, and services will better prepare the department to tackle the financial challenges facing it in the future.

7.9.1 Management and Budget

Boone County Parks is similar to many other agencies throughout the country confronting budget constraints and stress on operating costs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, the pandemic has emphasized the desire of residents to visit and enjoy parks. The effect of this pandemic will not be experienced in the same way by all residents, with many feeling the economic impact more acutely than others. This complicated situation underscores the need for Boone County to institute an easy-to-understand Cost Recovery and Pricing Plan covering everything that is offered. Some programs and services may still not charge any fee, while others may charge more than in the past.

New programs should generate revenue, as can rental opportunities through additional facilities. New facilities, especially a new indoor recreation center, will generate revenue (albeit likely not be enough to completely offset operating costs.) Sponsorships (see Section 7.10) can also be pursued to improve cost recovery. The following recommendations can reduce the amount of subsidy, but more importantly adoption of these findings will enable the staff, the administration, and elected officials to understand the complete financial story.

Boone County should enhance the "Enterprise" culture for the agency by

- Setting up business enterprise systems for revenue producing facilities and programs
- Designing parks and recreation facilities for efficiency, productivity, and revenue production to offset operational costs
- Looking at fee structures and vendor contracts every two years
- Developing and managing an annual revenue plan

Adoption of a Department Cost Recovery Model

As the operating needs of the department increase, Boone County Parks will need to consider recovery models that will enable users to pay a fair share of increased programming cost. Therefore, it will be essential for the department to have a clear understanding of all costs associated with a program or event. This understanding is the foundation of a true "cost-recovery" strategy that the department should adhere to in the future.

Once costs have been identified, Parks should create a plan to cover all costs through a combination of fees, sponsorships, grants, and subsidies – according to the mission – to ensure that the program will not be a burden to taxpayers. As the *Envision Boone County Parks 2030 Master Plan* is implemented, an established fee structure and cost recovery guidelines will be essential for making small but tangible improvements through incremental fee increases thereby achieving adequate funding gradually rather than by a dramatic increase all at once.

As of now, there is no mandate on the percentage of costs that each program should recover. This amount can vary based on staff and fiscal court decisions. As a rule, programs and events that serve the overall needs of Boone County residents should have a higher subsidy by the community than those that provide individual benefits specific to participants. This exercise may take years of "continual tweaking," but the alternative – not having any plan to recover costs or a rationale for why – makes cost recovery very difficult to manage.

Consistent Pricing for Programming

It will be important to have programming fees reflect the indirect costs of putting on the program. As department costs increase, these costs need to be explained, and then passed on to participants or the contractors teaching the class.

Creating Revenue from Events

Boone County and its family friendly reputation lends itself to a series of community-wide events that can generate substantial revenue from operations and sponsors. With the demand for more events, the importance of cost recovery will also increase.

Gaining Control and an Understanding of Maintenance Costs

The department should know the exact cost to maintain outdoor parks and facilities. Maintenance standards should be set by season, and the number of staff required to maintain one acre of parkland should be determined for parkland for various categories (e.g., park classification, athletic field, open space). More parkland will likely be acquired in the future, existing land will be cleared, and more facilities will be developed. Maintenance costs should be a part of all discussions when new parkland is brought into the department. Development of maintenance standards is an important part of this process.

Park Ambassadors and Volunteers

Park ambassadors could provide directions, assistance, or reminders of park policies. They may also assist with maintenance activities, such as litter collection. The presence of ambassadors may help make users feel more comfortable in the parks, while ensuring that they are welcoming and accessible to all users.

Adopt-A-Trail or Adopt-A-Spot programs are another opportunity to utilize volunteers to assist with park maintenance in Boone County. These programs can help encourage residents to become involved in keeping their parks clean. Establishment of these programs can facilitate participation in residents who would like to help but need to be presented with a formal opportunity. Public input relayed an existing interest in tree-planting events and other volunteer opportunities; local pride and sense of belonging are strong sentiments and would likely buoy any effort Boone County Parks makes to expand park, trail, and program volunteer initiatives.

Rentals

The county reserves picnics shelters on a daily basis, but most events last two hours or less. A fee to reserve picnic shelters for half days (with an hour between reservations) would enable expanded use of existing facilities. Changing the reservation structure in this way may require emptying trash receptacles between rented sessions and other tasks to maintain the expected level of service; if parks staff are unavailable, this service may be outsourced with the cost included in the rental fee.

7.9.2 Contracts

The concept "LESS may be MORE" can apply to Boone County Parks. Realistically, the department cannot, and should not, do everything. It may be better to manage a few programs well and with more capacity than numerous poorly run activities. Some programs, especially those further from the mission, may be best left to outside vendors or partners (see Section 7.10).

As discussed previously, allowing vendors, contractors, and partners to provide recreation services, especially for programs and events, can extend the level of service available to the community. A vendor can be hired to provide some of the requested events and programs where a revenue split can benefit both the provider and Boone County Parks.

Each contract with outside vendors, contractors, and sports is different. It would help the execution and administration of these contracts by having a set of contract guidelines to go by when entering into a contractual agreement. It also is important to ensure that they are written in a way that they can be administered by the county. In contract agreements, the contract must be good and favorable for both sides. Contracts should not benefit the contract holder at the expense of the residents of Boone County. To ensure fairness, all partnership agreements should be revisited at least every two years.

7.9.3 Concessions

Construction of individual concession stands at small parks is inefficient and a poor use of capital spending. With the growth of the food truck industry, it would be very easy to have consistent concession operations available to program users, event attendees, and spectators. If placed properly and consistently open at advertised times, food trucks in parks could become a good revenue source for the county with a revenue split agreement put in place. Food trucks can supplement concession offerings at tournaments when visitors may desire complete meals.

Alcohol sales at the existing amphitheater and future events spaces would greatly increase the attractiveness of programs to young adults and in gaining corporate sponsors for events and performances. It could also provide a source of income for the county, even if a vendor sold the drinks and the county gained a percentage of the income. A beer truck could provide the refreshments without the county having to provide anything other than a place for it to park and a change to the statute to allow the vendor to sell alcohol.

7.9.4 Potential Revenue Sources

The days of counties providing all park and recreation services with tax dollars are in the past. Financially sustainable parks and recreation agencies can no longer rely exclusively on taxes for revenue generation, especially heading into a post-pandemic operating environment. Successful park systems of the future will develop new options to support both operational and capital park and recreation needs. Boone County should immediately begin to develop policies on pricing of services (to include cost recovery models) and firm up the vendor and partnership agreements. In addition, Boone County has a unique opportunity to create facilities, amenities, programs, and events that will enhance economic development.

There are numerous sources that will show ways to fund parks and recreation projects but many of these are 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 tax, income tax, lease backs, real-estate transfer fees, land dedication and/or park impact fees, and park authorities. Although, all of these can be explained and tried, three sources have been identified that can have an immediate impact on the operations of Boone County Parks.

Formation of a Parks Foundation

Exploring a Parks Foundation is one tremendous opportunity Boone County can pursue. A foundation enables the county and its programs and facilities to be the recipient of philanthropic funds. Boone County has philanthropists that want to donate to programs and services that add parks and recreation value to the county. A foundation must be promoted and actively utilized in order to successfully fund park improvements. Funding opportunities are not just for capital projects but also for programming and events. These funds could also serve to support volunteer recruitment and organization, introducing park ambassadors and other engaged members as part of the county's parks and recreation service.

Grants and Foundation Application for Funding

Not all grants are beneficial. Some are more work for staff than the grant provides, but most are very positive. Boone County currently takes advantage of grants on an annual basis and should continue to be on the lookout for grants that will enhance the park system. Applying to "foundations" for funding is often easier and is accepted at a higher rate. There also are local foundations that like to give to local causes. Grants can come through the federal government, state grant sources, and local sources. Indianapolis, for example, has received over $100 million in foundation grants within the past 20 years from the Lilly Endowment for park related improvements in the county.

Example Grant Sources:

- National Recreation Trails Program
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- Conservation Reserve Fund
- Community Forest and Open Space Program (Federal)
- Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Grants, (USDA)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (Federal)

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 work, some may not.

- Official Drink for Parks and Recreation

- Tournament fees – When an outside vendor makes money the county should also.
- 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

7.9.5 Recommendations

Finances and Management

1. Know the value of assets (not including land) and where those assets are in their life cycle
2. Determine maintenance standards that identify the number of employees required to maintain one acre of parkland and consider these costs 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 by how they fit into the agency's mission
6. Stop maintaining features and spaces in the park system that are unused and remove them from the system
7. Inform users, partners, and citizens of the true costs of services
8. Know the demographics of the citizens that are served
9. Track population trends
10. Control labor costs

Cost recovery

1. Maintain at least the current level of cost recovery as operations expand with higher cost recovery if revenue generating facilities are developed
2. Institute an easy-to-understand Cost Recovery and Pricing Plan for everything that is offered
3. Establish a fee to reserve picnic shelters for half days with an hour between reservations to allow additional use of existing facilities
4. Price services furthest away from the mission at full cost recovery levels
5. Consider pricing events and programs for the 80% that can pay and accommodate the 20% who cannot
6. Identify potential revenue sources at community events, including sponsorships and entry fees
7. Develop a fee structure to charge non-residents more for program registration and facility use
8. Develop a program (or expand existing) to recruit and schedule volunteer park ambassadors to promote wellbeing and provide assistance at parks

Fundraising

1. Find dedicated funding sources for Parks and Recreation that can be counted on annually
2. Seek philanthropists in the community to support the agency's causes
3. Establish a Boone County Parks Foundation to raise funds and recruit and organize volunteers
4. Continue to seek grants and apply to foundations for funding for projects to enhance the park system, consistent with the mission of Parks and Recreation with consideration to associated costs to the county

Contracts and Partnering

1. Develop working agreements with each partner (all outside groups that use Boone County facilities) with measurable outcomes and reviewed within a minimum of every two years
2. Do not enter into any agreement unless agency costs are known, both indirect and direct, and know how much investment the partner is bringing to the agreement
3. Never allow private or not-for-profit groups to make money from Boone County facilities unless the county receives a share of the gross revenue
4. Ensure all future contracts benefit Boone County and its residents, as well as the vendor or contractor
5. Require county-owned properties to remain available to Boone County residents when not in use by a lessee
6. Develop a policy with revenue split agreements and the needed infrastructure to accommodate food trucks in parks to provide concessions and a revenue source for the county
7. Consider a targeted amendment to Ordinance 710.5 to allow alcohol sales at concerts and events to increase the attractiveness of programs to young adults and to assist in gaining corporate sponsors for events and performances (could be provided by a vendor)

7.10 Partnerships and Sponsorships

7.10.1 Observations and Analyses

Partnerships and sponsorships can help reduce costs or provide revenues to help expand parks and recreation opportunities for residents. Stakeholder groups indicated a need for more partnerships. Boone County currently partners with many organizations, including sports leagues, civic groups, business groups, and more, to offer programs and events in Boone County. Some new facilities, such as an indoor sports center or outdoor aquatic center, will likely only be possible in conjunction with partnerships with other organizations for both capital and operating costs.

Boone County maintains a working relationship with the multiple school systems within the county, with most of the outdoor facilities available for use by the public when not in use for school programs. Boone County Parks also utilizes gym space for recreation programs outside of school needs. Opportunities may exist to partner with the schools to expand youth programming. As noted in Section 7.6, Nature and environmental programs are another obvious potential partnership opportunity with Boone County Schools, Boone County Arboretum, Northern Kentucky Bird Club, and more.

Hospitals and health institutions are other parks partners, and such collaboration is becoming more common across the country. These collaborations can develop health and wellness programming, and hospital systems customarily provide financial resources while the parks department provides the programming.

7.10.2 Recommendations

1. Treat all vendors, contractors, and partners in a professional, consistent manner with a legal, signed contract containing the following:
   - Name, entity, and address
   - Obligations of each party
   - Terms of the contract
   - Price (if any, and who pays for what)
   - Representations and warranties – (Insurance, who owns what?)
   - Termination of the contract – when and by whom
   - Signed, witnessed, and reviewed periodically
2. Seek opportunities to expand partnerships with local organizations to improve access to recreation facilities and programs
3. Require a maintenance plan that identifies ongoing funding needs for partnership projects

4. Establish policies for accepting sponsorships and selling naming rights
5. Partner with Boone County Schools, Boone County Arboretum, Northern Kentucky Bird Club, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife, and others for nature education programs throughout parks in Boone County
6. Partner with health care providers to promote and financially underwrite healthy lifestyle programs and senior activities
7. Consider partnering with Boone County Public Library for educational programs and cross promotion of offerings
    - Partner with Boone County Public Library - Hebron Branch to program the amphitheater on the site to provide a northern location for events and for use of the site as a park
8. Seek partnerships for the operation and programming of the potential indoor recreation center and recreation programs offered within
9. Pursue partnerships for the development and operation of a potential indoor pool
10. Expand partnership with the NKY Area Agency on Aging and area senior centers for transportation for seniors to the proposed recreation center for new active programs once established
11. Partner with other organizations, including meetNKY: Northern Kentucky Convention & Visitors Bureau, Northern Kentucky Tri-Ed, and athletic leagues, to bring tournaments the county and for the development of needed facilities

8 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, a deeper investigation into the capacity and potential of each of these parks will be needed to determine 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 county recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to the following recommendations for each park across the system, five 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 five 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 Fox Run

Background

This Neighborhood Park has both vehicular and pedestrian access points and includes some typical features for a park of its size and location. Features lack of accessibility and insufficient amenities are available.

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

- Small sections of sidewalk need replacing
- Playground has accessibility issues, small and lacks edging
- Some drainage issues along parts of sidewalk and grass areas

- No lighting on site
- Limited features
- No park entrance sign (either entrance)
- Main entrance is difficult to find

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Replace playground equipment and add inclusive play features
2. Improve drainage at ballfield to make the area more attractive and accessible to the community
3. Replace or repair existing walkways and add where needed; ensure ADA compliance (6' wide)
4. Install new landscaping in designated areas to improve aesthetics and signify county park ownership
5. Resurface and restripe parking lot, including designated ADA spaces
6. Relocate basketball half court to a dedicated space separate from the parking lot
7. Enhance neighborhood accessibility by linking to adjacent cul-de-sac
8. Develop a neighborhood feature based on the preferences of the nearby residents as determined through neighborhood outreach
9. Add entrance signage (primary and secondary), a drinking fountain with bottle filler, site furnishings, trees, and landscaping

8.2.2 Erpenbeck/Plantation Point

Background

Erpenbeck/Plantation Point is a county-owned property that is currently undeveloped but is situated along the eastern edge of the Magnolia Trace and Tara neighborhoods in the central portion of Boone County near the City of Union boundary. The property is about a quarter of a mile east of Erpenbeck Elementary School and has the potential to serve as a Neighborhood Park for nearby residents with multiple existing and potential pedestrian access points.

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Develop the property as a Neighborhood Park to serve nearby residents
2. Develop Park Master Plan using the concept plan (Figure 8.1) as a starting point for conducting thorough engagement with local community; ensure development coincides with long-term needs
3. Coordinate to Grace Fellowship Church on Gunpowder Road to the south of the property for use of their parking lot to serve as vehicular access to the proposed park
4. Add ADA walkways (6' wide) to connect between site features and ensure sitewide accessibility
5. Develop a perimeter trail with formal connections to multiple adjacent neighborhood access points
6. Install playground to meet neighborhood demand
7. Include a basketball half court to provide neighborhood access to this feature
8. Install outdoor fitness equipment to meet demand for health and fitness resources
9. Add picnic shelter to allow for rentals, programming, and gathering space per public input
10. Add site furnishings (e.g., benches, trash receptacle, bike rack, pet waste station, and landscape beds) and amenities including drinking fountain with bottle filler
11. Add lighting for visibility and improved security
12. Develop a neighborhood feature based on the preferences of the nearby residents as determined through neighborhood outreach
13. Add entrance signage (primary and secondary), a drinking fountain with bottle filler, site furnishings, trees, and landscaping

Concept

This 22-acre property is currently undeveloped and inaccessible to residents of the adjoining neighborhood; however, the property has great potential to serve as a Neighborhood Park. Existing sidewalks lead to the park in three separate locations, and the county owns land leading to another potential access point.

Over 11 acres of the property are within the 100-year floodplain or about 53% of the land in the proposed park. Additional acreage is characterized by steep slopes, leaving a relatively small portion of the park as buildable space but sufficient to accommodate the needs of a Neighborhood Park.

The proposed concept plan (Figure 8.1) is provided to inspire and illustrate the potential of the space to be a comprehensive park site amenable to families, youth, and others. The concept shows pedestrian access for neighbors at four locations and a potential fifth access point from the south. This final access point would link to the parking lot at Grace Fellowship Church and would require coordination with them as well as the privately-owned of the parcel between the park and the church. The potential connection to the cul-de-sac on Belvedere Court will be challenging due to the narrow width of the access point and the steep topography of the property in that area.

The park features a playground near the main entrance right off of the perimeter trail loop of about a third of a mile. A picnic shelter is situated behind the playground to offer a resting place for parents and rental opportunities for meetings and gatherings. A half basketball court will provide additional opportunities for users, and the outdoor fitness equipment will supplement the perimeter trail in offering health activities. A small playing field will provide neighborhood children with a place for pick-up games. The meadow to the east of the active area will provide for reduced maintenance requirements and enhancement of the natural character of the site. Finally, a restroom is indicated if usage levels are high enough to support its development.

8.2.3 North Pointe Park

Background

This Neighborhood Park was recently completed to serve the nearby community. It features a small playground, a shelter, and a walking path. The park is located on Northpointe Boulevard, adjacent to North Pointe Elementary School.

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Complete Phase II development to include installing outdoor fitness equipment
2. Install new playground equipment that is appropriate for ages 5-12

8.2.4 Oakbrook Park

Background

This Neighborhood Park is bounded on two sides by Oakbrook Creek and includes a variety of facilities and amenities.

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

- No lighting on site
- No play equipment for 2-5 year-olds
- Some drainage issues in parking area

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Replace sand volleyball court to improve usability
2. Add small picnic shelter
3. Add lighting for visibility and improved security
4. Install edging around playground for safety and to delineate play activity areas

5. Install ADA walkways to all features
6. Add seating sitewide (e.g., benches)

8.2.5 Pete's Park

Background

Pete's Park is a Mini Park located near the Boone County Fairgrounds with very few site features.

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

- Limited features
- No parking on site

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Expand existing playground to increase attractiveness and visitation
2. Install ADA walkways to all features
3. Add site furnishings and amenities (e.g., benches, trash receptacle, bike rack, pet waste station)

8.2.6 Petersburg Community Center and Park

Background

The community center and the adjacent Neighborhood Park are located in the west of Boone County, along the Ohio River. There are several facilities and amenities already on site, but steps are needed to elevate the space to its full potential.

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

- Ballfield is overgrown
- Connectivity between park and space along Ohio River (Petersburg River Park)
- No park entrance sign

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Install ADA walkways sitewide to connect all features
2. Add entrance signage for ease of navigation and to advertise the site as a county park
3. Improve condition of ballfields to ensure quality use
4. Relocate shelter to be situated across from parking lot
5. Add site furnishings (e.g., benches, trash receptacle, bike rack, pet waste station) and amenities (e.g., drinking fountain with bottle filler)
6. Add lighting for visibility and improved security

Figure 8.1: Erpenbeck/Plantation Point Park Concept

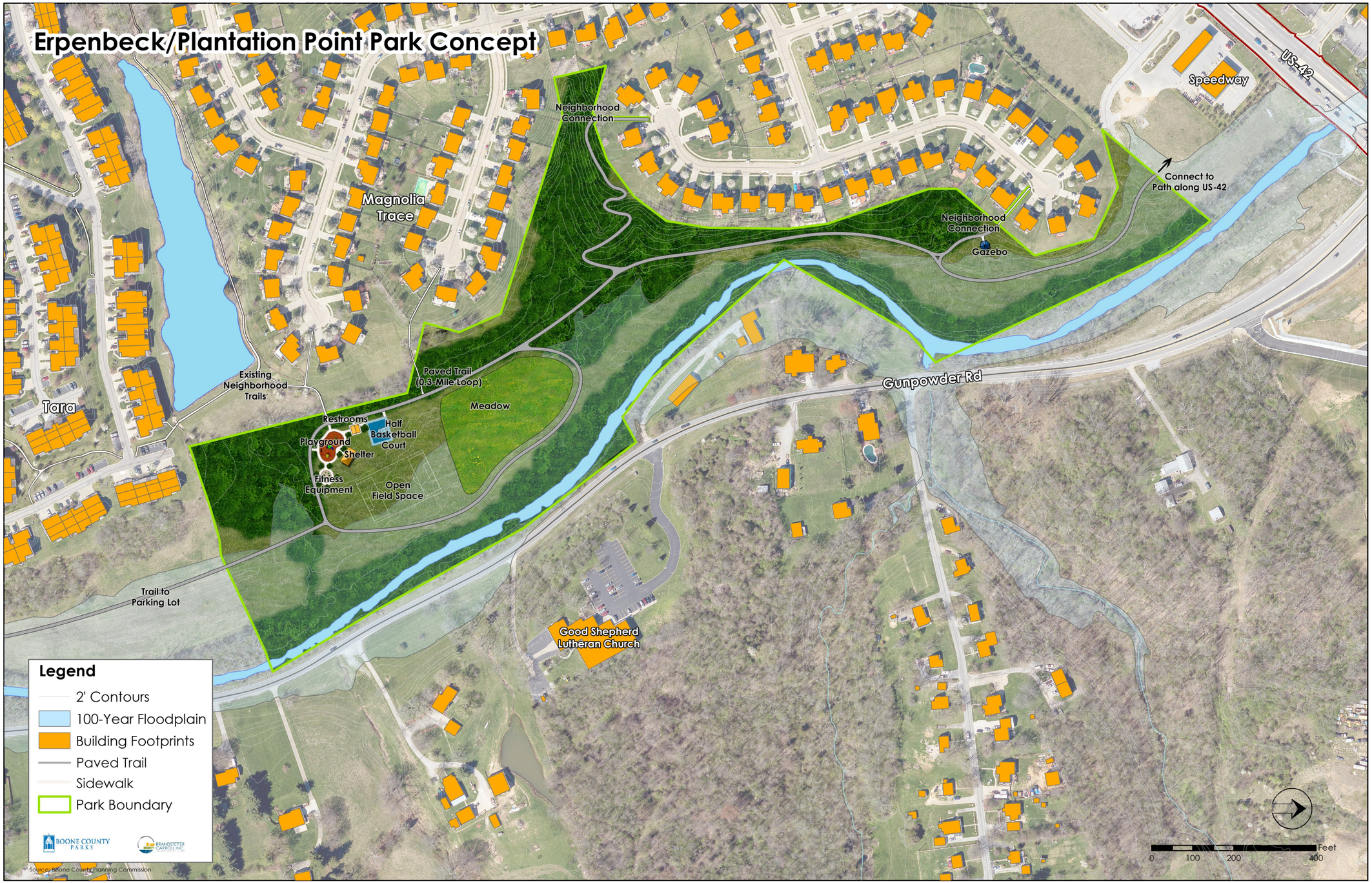


Figure 8.2: Boone Woods Park Concept

8.3 Community and Regional Parks

8.3.1 Boone Woods

Background

This Community Park is nearly 50 acres with numerous active-use facilities and passive-use amenities. The site includes a natural wooded area and a performance amphitheater. Boone Woods Park is located adjacent to the R.C. Durr YMCA facility.

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

- Poor quality sidewalks – cracked, buckling, not wide enough
- Pickleball courts are difficult to access from parking lot when gate is closed
- Play areas have inadequate shade, sun-damaged equipment; secondary structures are rusted and unsafe
- Poor drainage and lack of accessible sidewalk at tennis courts
- No lighting at pickleball courts
- No accessible seating at amphitheater
- Lack of accessibility at restrooms
- No accessible walkways to some facilities (shelters, pickleball courts, playgrounds)
- No ramp to access stage
- Lack of edging at playgrounds
- Small portion of the park within the 100-year floodplain
- One of the top three most visited park sites in the system (see Chapter 4)

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Update the previous Park Master Plan using the Concept Plan (see Figure 8.2) as starting point for conducting thorough engagement with local community; ensure development coincides with long-term needs
2. Develop paved loop trail to connect the various activity areas in the park and provide an additional desired feature
3. Install outdoor fitness equipment to diversify site usage and attract more visitors
4. Replace playground with new equipment and install edging for safety and to delineate play activity areas
5. Expand parking throughout the site to accommodate additional usage
6. Relocate and replace secondary playground to a more accessible location with parking and other amenities
7. Replace existing ADA walkways and add where lacking to connect to all park features
8. Upgrade existing amphitheater to enhance visitor experience, facilitate more creative programming, and improve accessibility
9. Add shade at bocce/shuffleboard in response to user requests
10. Add picnic shelters near pickleball court and at new playground/disc golf area
11. Relocate disc golf holes to accommodate additional parking and features in the northern portion of the site
12. Add pickleball lines at two tennis courts to address increasing demand and provide lighted courts for extended use
13. Develop an artificial turf field with lighting to address increasing demand and extend hours of use

14. Add wayfinding signage for ease of navigation
15. Install improved security cameras for safety and more efficient site monitoring
16. Add support amenities, including drinking fountains with bottle fillers (replacements), Wi-Fi hotspots, site furnishings, trees, and landscaping

Concept

The concept plan for Boone Woods Park is provided in Figure 8.2. The figure incorporates many of the recommendations from the previous master plan from 2003, including portions of the perimeter trail and some of the parking layout. The result is a well-connected park with improved amenities as requested through the public input process.

The relocation of four disc golf holes allows for the expansion of parking to accommodate the improve amphitheater and a secondary playground, shelter, and fitness equipment. The new playground should utilize some of the existing equipment at the existing playground near the pickleball courts. The amphitheater needs ADA upgrades to both the stage and restroom and to the spectator areas.

Sidewalks throughout the park will improve accessibility and ensue ADA access to all features. The perimeter trail connects to all activity areas and completes a 1-mile loop around the park. The trail connects to existing access points and the trail along Veterans Way for a total of 1.5 miles of trails including all connecting trails.

The addition of pickleball lines at two of the tennis court will provide more of these courts as well as lighting for extended use in the mornings and evenings, while maintaining the two dedicated courts in the north end of the park. Finally, the addition of a lighted artificial turf field will accommodate increased field use and reduce rainouts.

8.3.2 Central Park and Arboretum

Background

Due to its size and amount of undeveloped acreage, this Regional Park located within Union, KY, has tremendous potential to be a significant regional attraction to Boone County.

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

- Portions of trail need resurfacing
- Parking pavement has some cracking and areas of retention
- Lack of accessibility to some features (basketball court, drinking fountains, athletic fields) – paved walkways needed to all activity and seating areas
- Several ADA parking spaces lack paint or vertical signage, many lack walkways leading to park amenities
- Basketball court needs resurfacing
- Most visited park (per Mail Survey, see Chapter 4)

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Develop a Park Master Plan with community engagement to ensure the site is developed with consideration to long-term needs
2. Repair existing and add ADA Walkways to connect site features and ensure accessibility
3. Develop two artificial turf fields with lighting to address increasing demand and extend hours of use
4. Add lighting sitewide for visibility and improved security
5. Add lighting at all multipurpose fields to extend house of use and meet expanding needs
6. Install outdoor fitness equipment to diversify site usage and attract more visitors
7. Reseal and reline parking lot, including designated ADA spaces
8. Add two pickleball courts with lighting

9. Repair restroom/concessions building roof
10. Consider developing an Arboretum Center through an outside partnership and ensure that where any field space lost to development is replaced with new ballfields elsewhere in the system
11. Pursue acquisition of additional land to improve service levels, accommodate additional features, and ensure adequate land preservation
12. Install upgraded security cameras to improve safety and deter vandalism
13. Add wayfinding signage for ease of navigation and communication about site usage; includes adding signage at ballfields
14. Add support amenities, including drinking fountains with bottle fillers (replace existing), Wi-Fi hotspots, site furnishings, trees, and landscaping

8.3.3 England/Idlewild Park

Background

This Regional Park is the one of the largest parks in Boone County offering both active and passive recreation opportunities. Located in the northcentral part of the county, England/Idlewild Park already offers a wide array of facilities to visitors, but current lack of accessibility and amenities limit the full potential of this site.

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

- Main park trail needs resurfacing
- Need improved wayfinding and trailhead signage throughout site
- Age and condition of fitness equipment – no edging
- Minimal to no lighting across site
- Lack of accessibility to some features (playground, drinking fountains, athletic fields) – paved walkways needed to all activity and seating areas
- Accessibility at ballfields – paved paths needed from parking to seating areas and dugouts
- Drinking fountains are not accessible
- Parking lots need more ADA parking spaces with paint and vertical signage
- Parking at dog park needs resurfacing and restriping
- Condition of turf at dog park due to heavy use
- Some drainage issues at bike park
- More drinking fountains needed
- Lack of restrooms
- One of the top three most visited parks in the system (top visited per Web Survey, see Chapter 4)

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Update previous Park Master Plan with Concept Plan (see Figure 8.3) as starting point for conducting thorough engagement with local community; ensure development coincides with long-term needs
2. Repair existing and add ADA Walkways to connect site features and ensure accessibility
3. Enhance fields with improved drainage
4. Relocate community garden to a new location within park to accommodate expansion of the dog park
5. Expand the dog park to improve turf conditions
6. Replace existing fitness equipment with more modern features
7. Add lighting sitewide for improved security and visibility
8. Add picnic shelters at the bike park, the soccer fields, and the splash pad
9. Install a splash pad to meet demand and to increase diversity of uses across the site
10. Add a restroom building to address demand and improve user experience

11. Develop a secondary entrance through Ethans Glen
12. Expand parking to accommodate new features and increased site visitation
13. Install improved security cameras to improve safety and deter vandalism
14. Resurface and reline existing parking lots, including designated ADA spaces
15. Pursue land acquisition for park expansion where available
16. Expand trails as parkland is added
17. Add wayfinding signage and signs at secondary entrances (2) for ease of navigation and to signify park boundaries
18. Add support amenities, including drinking fountains with bottle fillers (replacements), Wi-Fi hotspots, site furnishings, trees, and landscaping

Concept

With nearly 290 acres of parkland, ranging in character from natural woods or wetland to manicured active use areas, England/Idlewild Park already provides significant benefit to the county. However, the site lacks accessibility and some valuable amenities. Additionally, the growing population – including in the northern part of the county, around the park – and the ever-increasing demands of the community for open space and recreation opportunities (far from diminished since the start of the pandemic), underscore the chance Boone County Parks has to provide truly remarkable service. The concept plan for England/Idlewild Park is provided in Figure 8.3, and like the other concepts, it is intended to illustrate what possibilities there are and how specific developments could more fully utilize the park's potential.

As with many other sites throughout the system, an extensive overhaul of all pathways, facilities, and parking areas is needed to ensure complete ADA accessibility, including paved access points and accessibility markings. Paved access to all fields is especially important and required to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Access must be provided to fields and spectator areas. To better serve visitors and users of the athletic fields and other visitors, a series of centrally-located facilities are shown: an accessible restroom building, a secondary playground, a rentable picnic shelter, and a new splash pad. These amenities, especially when located in the heart of the park, would engage family members and friends of those playing on the fields as well as encourage additional visitors to the site. A new restroom facility would address the clear need for this support amenity, and the shelter could be rented for parties and gatherings where people could enjoy the splash pad and playground. The department could also host fitness classes or other programs from the shelter and in this general area.

To the northeast in what was formerly Ethans Glen, a section is marked with a new 1-mile paved trail loop, encircling a beginner level disc-golf course and utilizing some of the existing roadbeds. The course could potentially supplement the existing more advanced course to provide opportunities for all skill levels. This is to illustrate how the currently undeveloped part of the park could be more fully utilized so as to provide multiple uses and meet a variety of community needs. Additional shelters are placed at strategic locations along this loop; these would serve the adjacent disc golf and community gardens but could also allow for get-togethers and potential revenue-generation, through rental fees and/or programs. With such a heavily used park, and given public input requesting better connectivity to the parks in general, a secondary entrance is shown linking this new area to the bike park/field area and Bullittsville Road.

An extension of the dog park is indicated into the existing community garden area. This expansion would permit a greater number of visitors to use the facility while improving turf conditions. The larger dog park would help meet the demand for more dog park space in the county. The community garden plots would be relocated to a new location at the edge of the potential paved loop trail in the Ethans Glen expansion area. This relocation would potentially provide a quieter environment for users, while freeing up space to expand the dog park.

New parking lots and additional and wider spaces are shown scattered across the site, specifically near the areas of proposed development and where already-high use could be expected to increase. Whatever improvements made to the park, the department will want to ensure that there is adequate – and therefore, safe – parking available to accommodate growing visitation.

Figure 8.3: England/Idlewild Park Concept

Figure 8.4: Union Park Concept

8.3.4 Giles Conrad Park

Background

This Community Park located along the Ohio River has both active-use and passive recreation facilities. Due its proximity to the water, there are recurring flood events that affect the possibilities of improving this site.

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

- Walking trail needs resurfacing
- No lighting at parking lot
- Bench seating and picnic table area have accessibility issues
- Playground equipment is outdated
- Fitness equipment is outdated
- Flooding issues – affects paved pathways and parking lot
- Most of park located with the 100-year floodplain

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Install new ADA walkways site wide
2. Conduct erosion mitigation to address problems of safety and appearance on site
3. Replace fitness equipment with modern features
4. Resurface walking trail across the site to ensure safe use and accessibility
5. Add wayfinding signage for ease of navigation and communication of site features
6. Resurface basketball half court
7. Add another picnic shelter to allow for rentals, programming, and gathering space per public input
8. Install swinging benches along the Ohio River side near the trails as a unique site feature and to attract visitation
9. Add trail extension to adjoining properties (Valley Orchard Farms)
10. Add support amenities, including drinking fountains with bottle fillers, site furnishings, trees, and landscaping

8.3.5 Union Park

Background

Located in Union, KY, this site currently has limited features (including community garden plots) but its nearly 46 acres holds tremendous potential to meet growing population and demand for improved parks service. As it is largely undeveloped now, the recommendations below span a wide range of improvements.

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

- Limited features
- Parking lot needs resurfacing
- Small portion of park located withing the 100-year floodplain

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Update Park Master Plan using the concept plan (Figure 8.4) as a starting point for conducting thorough engagement with local community; ensure development coincides with long-term needs
2. Add consistent signage at main and secondary entrances to signify park property site
3. Install ADA walkways to connect features and ensure sitewide accessibility
4. Build an amphitheater to facilitate programming and community events desired by community
5. Develop a dog park to meet growing public demand

6. Relocate the community garden to the western portion of the park to increase utility of the site
7. Pursue land acquisition for park expansion, improved service, and an additional access point
8. Add lighting sitewide for visibility and improved security
9. Install outdoor fitness equipment to meet demand for health and fitness resources
10. Develop parking lots throughout the site to ensure access to features
11. Add picnic shelters throughout the park to support gatherings and rentals
12. Install playground to provide to meet community's expressed need for more opportunities for play
13. Develop an accessible paved trail as a recreation feature and to provide more equitable mobility sitewide
14. Develop unpaved hiking trails in the northern portion of the park to expand opportunities for passive activity
15. Add arboretum signage to educate visitors on the presence of various tree species
16. Conduct habitat restoration efforts to create a meadow area and set an example to lead in county conservation efforts
17. Add pickleball courts to meet community demand
18. Build ponds to improve visual aesthetic and afford more opportunities to engage with water-based recreation
19. Build docks for fishing and canoe/kayak access to meet demand for increased water access
20. Install a splash pad to meet community demand and diversify uses across site
21. Build restroom building near the splash pad to meet demand and to accommodate increased visitation
22. Add wayfinding signage for ease of navigation and communication of site features
23. Add support amenities, including drinking fountains with bottle fillers, Wi-Fi hotspots, site furnishings, trees, and landscaping

Concept

This large park is currently underdeveloped with only community garden plots. The property has great potential to serve as a large Community Park for Union residents and others in Boone County. The park is located in one of the fastest growing portions of the county and with the development of features identified in the concept (Figure 8.4) will become an important gathering attraction to the community.

The park features a 3-season pavilion that could host large gatherings and receptions. The structure should have restroom and a catering kitchen to support rentals. This pavilion would overlook a large pond that could be used for fishing and canoe/kayak access. The rest of the northern portion of the park would be characterized by passive uses including a natural surface trail, a shelter, and a meadow. This area also has a separate entrance.

To the south of the pavilion near the entrance is the main activity area that offers a large, all-access playground, a splash pad, two shelters, and a restroom building. This area is near a proposed large amphitheater that could host concerts, movies, and other highly requested community events. A small pond forms the backdrop of the amphitheater and would offer additional fishing access.

Pickleball courts, outdoor fitness equipment, and a small shelter are indicated beyond the amphitheater. The demand for these features continues to increase in Boone County. The fitness equipment supplements the exercise opportunities offered by the 0.8-mile pave trail loop that traverses the park.

The final area on the western side of the park provides a dog park, which is another strong and growing demand in Boone County. Union Park is a central location between the two existing dog parks at England-Idlewild Park and Walton Park. This area also shows the relocation of the community gardens from the front of the park to make room for many of the active park features.

8.3.6 Walton Community Park

Background

Located in Walton, KY in southern Boone County, this Community Park is roughly 30 acres and includes unique features like an historic cemetery and a story walk for children. This site primarily needs accessibility and user experience improvements.

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

- Tennis court surface is in significant disrepair
- Portions of trail need resurfacing
- Parking pavement has some cracking and areas of retention
- Disc golf needs signage
- Lack of accessibility to some features (2 shelters, drinking fountains, athletic field)
- No ADA parking at athletic fields or upper shelter
- Lacks standard Boone County Parks entrance sign

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Develop a Park Master Plan with community engagement to ensure the site is developed with consideration to long-term needs
2. Install ADA walkways to connect features and ensure sitewide accessibility
3. Add signage for disc golf course for improved usage and navigation clarity
4. Add restroom building through a partnership with the City of Walton to address demand
5. Add a splash pad through a partnership with the City of Walton to address demand and increase usability of site
6. Renovate tennis court and add lining for pickleball to address demand and align with preferred use and trends
7. Resurface walking trail for safety, accessibility, and longevity
8. Add wayfinding signage for easier navigation sitewide
9. Build an amphitheater to support the high demand for community concerts, movies, and other events
10. Develop a skate park to meet the needs of residents in the south portion of Boone County
11. Add lighting and improved security cameras for visibility, improved security, and to deter vandalism
12. Resurface and reline parking lot at softball field, including designated ADA spaces
13. Add support amenities, including drinking fountains with bottle fillers (replacements), site furnishings, trees, and landscaping

8.4 Nature Parks/Natural Areas/Special Use

8.4.1 Boone Cliffs Nature Preserve

Background

A largely undeveloped site, this Nature Park requires relatively simple and few improvements to enhance the experience of its natural beauty.

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

- Not ADA compliant but adequate for intended use
- Lacks wayfinding signage

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Add signage at trailhead to signify official use and communicate trail information
2. Extend trails where land permits

8.4.2 Camp Ernst Lake

Background

At just over 65 acres, this Nature Park offers opportunities for passive and water-based recreation to residents and visitors in the northcentral part of the county and beyond.

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

- Portable toilets not ADA accessible
- Lack of trails and sidewalks – limited accessibility
- Limited features

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Install walkways along the lake to ensure accessibility for all users
2. Install canoe/kayak launch to meet demand
3. Add fishing dock to increase opportunities at the site and to meet public demand
4. Add site furnishings and amenities (e.g., benches, trash receptacle, bike rack, pet waste stations) to enhance user experience and quality of the site

8.4.3 Conservancy Park Belleview

Background

This site is in the southern part of Boone County, just inland east of the Ohio River. It is the site of a former gravel mine, reclaimed by the Kentucky Department of Mine Reclamation and Enforcement.

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

- Lack of accessible parking
- No accessible walkways to features

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Install ADA walkways to connect features and ensure sitewide accessibility
2. Build habitat structure in lake to foster species regeneration and exhibit exemplary conservation efforts to the community
3. Install shade structures throughout site to enhance visitor experience

8.4.4 Dinsmore Woods Nature Preserve

Background

Located next to the Dinsmore Homestead historic site, this Nature Park is over 100 acres and includes over one mile of unpaved trails.

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

- No entrance signage
- Limited wayfinding/trail signage

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Add signage at trailhead to signify official use and to communicate site information (e.g., natural area prohibited use, trail length and difficulty level, species presence, etc.)
2. Extend trails where land permits

8.4.5 Gunpowder Creek

Background

Over 120 acres, this Nature Park is largely undeveloped though there are support amenities on site like restrooms and a shelter structure.

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

- Playground is not disabled-inclusive
- No designated ADA parking
- No lighting at site
- No trailhead signage

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Pursue land acquisition to improve service and access
2. Develop parking lot to safely accommodate increased visitation
3. Add hiking trails throughout the site
4. Add signage at trailhead to signify official use and to communicate site information (e.g., natural area prohibited behavior, trail length and difficulty level, species presence, etc.)

8.4.6 Middle Creek Park

Background

The largest property within Boone County Parks jurisdiction, this Nature Park provides access to nature including almost 6 miles of equestrian trails.

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

- Site conditions are not ADA accessible
- Limited wayfinding

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Install ADA walkways to connect features and ensure sitewide accessibility
2. Add paved an ADA space at parking lot
3. Add signage at trailhead to signify official use and to communicate site information (e.g., natural area prohibited behavior, trail length and difficulty level, species presence, etc.)
4. Add site furnishings (e.g., benches, trash receptacles) to improve user experience

8.4.7 Petersburg River Park

Background and Recommendation

About two blocks from Petersburg Community Center and Park along the Ohio River, it is recommended that this open space area be maintained as a passive use space.

8.4.8 Shor Lake Park

Background

This nearly 5-acre park is located in Walton, KY and includes a fully-stocked fishing pond.

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

- Overgrown vegetation around lake makes it difficult to access fishing

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Conduct cleanup of Shor Lake
2. Install ADA walkways to connect features and ensure sitewide accessibility
3. Pave existing gravel parking lot to ensure accessibility, longevity, and improved appearance
4. Build a fishing dock to meet community's expressed need
5. Add picnic shelter to accommodate visitors and meet demand for more passive use gathering spaces

8.4.9 Valley Orchard Farms

Background

Acquired in 2002 by Boone County Parks, this site remains to be fully developed as a park. It holds significant potential to meet growing demand for athletic field space, particularly in the northernmost part of the county.

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Update Park Master Plan – and conduct robust local community engagement – to ensure the site is developed with consideration to long-term needs
2. Develop multipurpose/soccer fields to serve the diverse and growing needs of the community
3. Develop cricket pitch to meet demand
4. Add signage at all entrances to signify park property and include wayfinding signage sitewide for ease of navigability
5. Install ADA walkways to connect features and ensure sitewide accessibility
6. Develop a paved trail with a connection to nearby Giles Conrad Park
7. Upgrade existing barn for use as sports tournament headquarters
8. Build a parking lot to accommodate visitors
9. Add support amenities, including drinking fountains with bottle fillers, site furnishings, trees, and landscaping

8.4.10 Waller-Stephenson Mill Park

Background

This property is nearly 200 acres and, while largely undeveloped (except for roughly 2.5 miles of trails), there is great opportunity in improving the space to meet growing demand and changing demographics in Boone County.

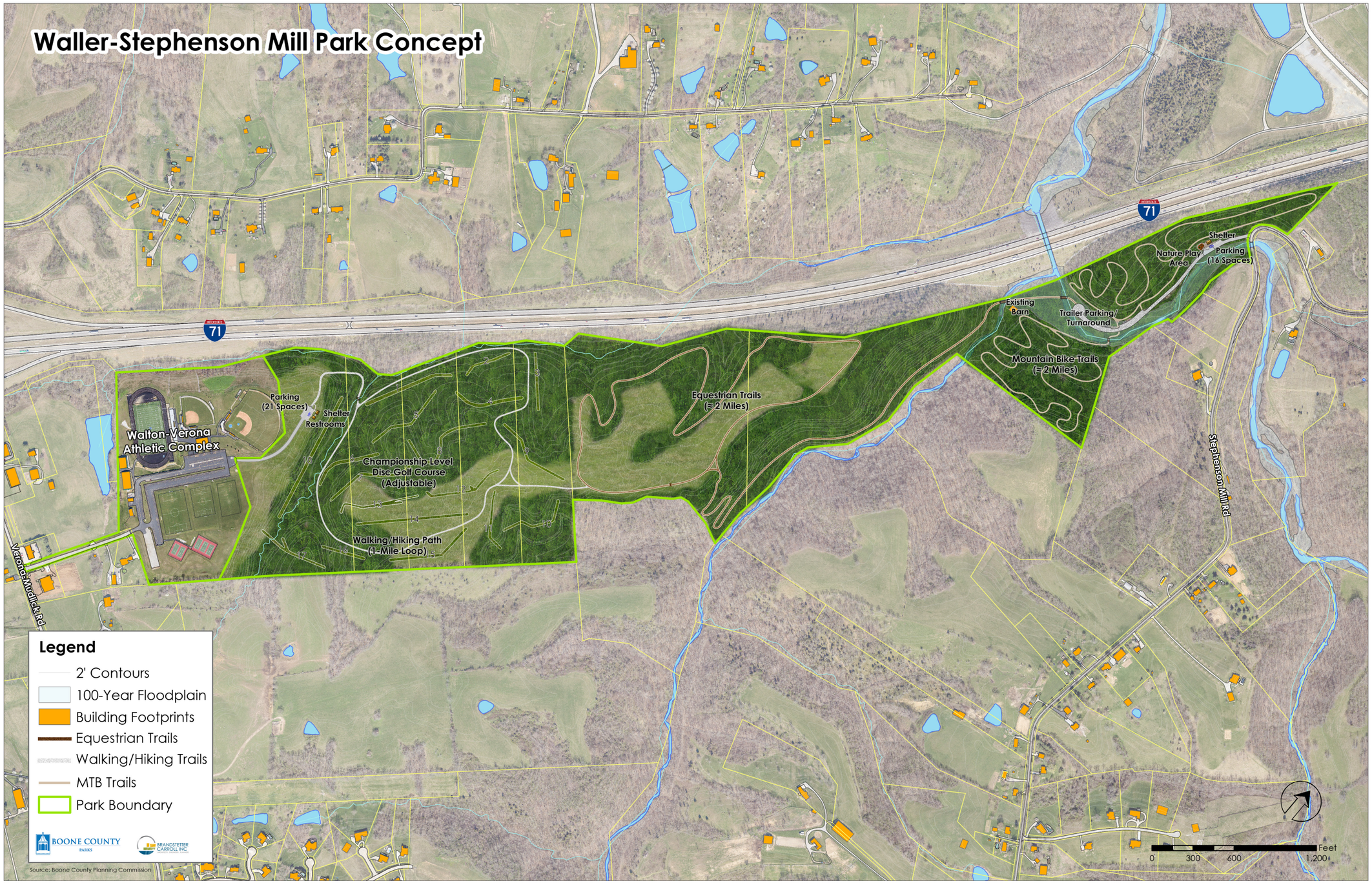
The following park issues were identified through site assessments and public input:

- Wayfinding needed to and within park

Park Improvement Recommendations

1. Update Park Master Plan using the concept plan (Figure 8.5) as a starting point for conducting thorough engagement with local community; ensure development coincides with long-term needs
2. Develop a championship level disc golf course – adjustable to accommodate different experience levels – to meet local demand and to attract tournaments

Figure 8.5: Waller-Stephenson Mill Park Concept



3. Add natural surface trails for equestrian, hiking, and mountain bike use
4. Add signage at all entrances to signify park property and include wayfinding signage sitewide for ease of navigability
5. Add parking lot with a roadway at the main entrance from Stephenson Mill Road
6. Include a nature play area to create additional opportunities for immersion in the natural environment and unstructured play
7. Install interpretive signage throughout site to convey site context and communicate information about site features
8. Add support amenities, including drinking fountains with bottle fillers, site furnishings, trees, and landscaping

Concept

One of the largest properties within the Boone County Parks system, this site is especially important as the department faces a growing population in the area along with increasing demands for open space access and recreation. The site is largely undeveloped but its size provides ample opportunity to address demand for trails, disc golf, and access to nature. The concept plan for Waller-Stephenson Mill Park is provided in Figure 8.5.

At the north end, roughly 2 miles of mountain bike trails roll across the landscape; the plan shows how the area could be more fully and efficiently utilized. This northern area also has a nature play area, along with a shelter and new parking lot, which would help address community desire for nature-oriented recreation.

Equestrian trails meander through the center of the park, separate from the mountain bike trails (and walking path further south on the site) to avoid conflicts of use. There is a trailer entrance, turnaround point, and parking indicated, to show the potential for access point and trailhead for the equestrian trails.

Lastly, in the southern third of the site there is a championship-level disc golf course encircled by a walking path loop. This combination would allow for multiple uses and increased visitation of the park by making efficient and responsible use of the space. While all trails on the property should allow pedestrian use, this loop would allow users to avoid interaction with larger and faster moving equestrians and mountain bikers. The disc golf course should have variable difficulty levels to accommodate a wider range of users.

To accommodate projected visitation increases, an additional parking lot and shelter combination is shown near the access point of the disc golf course, as well as a restroom facility. These amenities will enhance user experience and ensure that the site maintains quality even as there are more visitors because of development. As public input emphasized a strong demand for restrooms, in particular, this concept illustrates where such a facility could be included in the park with the location chosen to meet the needs of the new championship disc golf course.

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 Boone County. The development of any new park should be preceded by the preparation of a detailed master plan for the property that utilizes community input. Potential locations for new parks are identified in Figure 7.1 in Chapter 7.

8.5.2 New and Redeveloped Neighborhood Parks

Optimally, a Neighborhood Park should be minimum of 8 to 10 acres in size. Boone County already has a number of Neighborhood Parks within its system, but several need redevelopment in order to meet existing and future demand. The elements listed below should be included when redeveloping a Neighborhood Park.

Typical Neighborhood Park Elements include:

1. Small Playground
2. ½ Basketball Court (may be swapped for another feature at more passive parks)
3. Gathering Area/Small Picnic Shelter with Seating
4. Small Walking Trail
5. Good Circulation – Walkways/ADA access
6. Landscaping/Trees for Shade
7. Security/Lighting
8. 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, environmental, arts, etc.

8.5.3 New Community Parks

A Community Park should be at least 20 acres in size and developed with consideration to a higher volume and extended duration of visitation. Boone County has one park that could with considerable development, serve the community, Union Park (described above).

The following features are typical of Community Parks, but any development undertaken by Boone County should also include an engagement campaign to solicit direct public input from across the county.

Potential elements include:

1. Large playground
2. Basketball court or another preferred feature
3. Two tennis or pickleball courts
4. Central gathering area/nucleus with seating
5. Walking and/or biking trail
6. Outdoor fitness equipment
7. Good circulation – walkways/ADA access
8. Picnic shelters/gathering and event space
9. Landscaping
10. Trees
11. Shade at gathering areas, seating areas, playgrounds, etc.
12. Security cameras/lighting
13. Restroom
14. Athletic fields – Depending on needs
15. Unique element
16. Parking

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 follow-up planning studies. 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 Boone County. 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
Neighborhood Parks		
Erpenbeck/Plantation Point - See Concept		
1	Develop as a Neighborhood Park	Medium
1	Park Master Plan	Short
2	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Medium
3	Basketball Half Court	Medium
4	Drinking Fountain with Bottle Filler	Medium
5	Entrance Signage	Medium
6	Entrance Signage - Secondary (5)	Medium
7	Lighting - Site/Security	Medium
8	Nature Restoration (Meadow)	Medium
9	Open Field Area	Medium
10	Picnic Shelter	Medium
11	Picnic Shelter (Small/Hexagon)	Medium
12	Playground	Medium
13	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium
14	Trail - Paved - 8' Wide (0.33-Mile Loop), Connect to Neighborhood Access Points	Medium
15	Tree and Landscaping	Medium
16	Neighborhood Determined Feature	Long
17	Outdoor Fitness Equipment	Long
18	Restroom Building	Long
Fox Run Park		
1	Entrance Signage	Short
2	Entrance Signage - Secondary (3)	Short/Medium
3	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide (Repair/Add)	Medium
4	Basketball Half Court Relocation	Medium
5	Drinking Fountain with Bottle Filler	Medium
6	Field Improvements (Drainage)	Medium
7	Neighborhood Connections/Connect Cul-de-sac	Medium
8	Parking Lot Resurfacing/Restriping w/ADA Spaces	Medium
9	Playground Replacement	Medium
10	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium
11	Trees and Landscaping	Medium
12	Neighborhood Determined Feature	Long
North Pointe Park		
1	Fitness Area (Phase II)	Short
2	Restroom Building (Phase II)	Medium
3	Playground - Age 5-12 Equipment	Long
Oakbrook Park		
1	Sand Volleyball Court Replacement	In Progress
2	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Short

Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects (Continued)

Park Name		Term
3	Playground Edging	Short
4	Lighting - Site/Security	Medium
5	Picnic Shelter (Small/Hexagon)	Medium
6	Site Furnishings (Benches)	Medium
Pete's Park		
1	Playground Expansion	Short
2	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Medium
3	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium
4	Neighborhood Determined Feature	Long
Petersburg Community Center and Park		
1	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Short
2	Drinking Fountain with Bottle Filler	Short
3	Entrance Signage	Short
4	Field Improvements	Short
5	Shelter Relocation (Across from Parking Lot)	Short
6	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Short
7	Lighting - Site/Security	Medium
Community and Regional Parks		
Boone Woods - See Concept		
1	Park Master Plan Update	Short
2	Amphitheater Upgrades	Short
3	Picnic Shelter (Near Pickleball)	Short
4	Restroom Improvements - ADA Access	Short
5	Security Cameras	Short
6	Signage - Wayfinding/Trailhead	Short
7	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Short
8	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide (Repair/Add)	Short/Medium
9	Disc Golf Relocation (4 Holes)	Medium
10	Field Lighting - Multipurpose/Soccer	Medium
11	Outdoor Fitness Equipment	Medium
12	Parking Lot Expansion Along Road	Medium
13	Parking Lot Expansion at Disc Golf	Medium
14	Parking Lot Paving at Playground/Shelter	Medium
15	Parking Lot/Road Paving at Pickleball	Medium
16	Pickleball Lines at Tennis Courts	Medium
17	Picnic Shelter (Near Disc Golf)	Medium
18	Playground - Secondary (Replacement/Relocation)	Medium
19	Playground Replacement	Medium
20	Shade Structures (Bocce and Shuffleboard)	Medium
21	Trail Loop - Paved - 8' Wide (1-Mile Loop and Connecting Paths)	Medium
22	Trees and Landscaping	Medium

Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects (Continued)

Park Name		Term
23	Wi-Fi Hotspots	Medium
24	Artificial Turf Field	Long
Central Park and Arboretum		
1	Park Master Plan	Short
2	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide (Repair/Add to All Features and Fields)	Short
3	Drinking Fountain with Bottle Filler (Replacement)	Short
4	Wayfinding Signage	Short
5	Artificial Turf Field (2)	Medium
6	Lighting - Multipurpose/Soccer Fields	Medium
7	Lighting - Site/Security/Parking	Medium
8	Outdoor Fitness Equipment	Medium
9	Parking Lot - Reseal/Reline w/ ADA Spaces and Larger Spaces	Medium
10	Pickleball Courts (2) w/ Lights	Medium
11	Restroom Concessions Building Roof	Medium
12	Security Cameras	Medium
13	Signage - Fields	Medium
14	Wi-Fi Hotspots	Medium
15	Arboretum Center (by Others) - Must Replace Lost Fields	Long
16	Land Acquisition	Long
England/Idlewild Park - See Concept		
1	Park Master Plan Update	Short
2	Drinking Fountain with Bottle Filler (Replacements)	Short
3	Entrance Signage - Secondary (2)	Short
4	Field Improvements (Drainage at Diamonds and Multipurpose)	Short
5	Wayfinding Signage	Short
6	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide (Repair/Add)	Short/Medium
7	Bike Repair Stations	Medium
8	Community Garden Relocation within Park	Medium
9	Dog Park Expansion (Improve Turf Conditions)	Medium
10	Fitness Equipment Replacement	Medium
11	Land Acquisition/Expansion	Medium
12	Lighting - Site/Security/Parking	Medium
13	Parking Lot - Expansion at Splash Pad	Medium
14	Parking Lot - New Lots w/ Road Near Secondary Entrance	Medium
15	Parking Lot - Resurface/Reline (Existing Lots/Roads) w/ ADA Spaces and Larger Spaces	Medium
16	Picnic Shelters (2 - Small/Hexagon)	Medium
17	Picnic Shelters (3) - Bike Park/Soccer Fields/Splash Pad	Medium
18	Playground - New at Fields/Splash Pad	Medium
19	Restroom Building	Medium
20	Security Cameras	Medium

Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects (Continued)

Park Name		Term
21	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium
22	Splash Pad	Medium
23	Disc Golf Beginner Course	Long
24	Playground Replacement	Long
25	Trail Loop - Paved - 8' Wide (Extension to Ethens Glen and New 1-Mile Loop)	Long
26	Wi-Fi Hotspots	Long
Giles Conrad Park		
1	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Short
2	Erosion Mitigation	Short
3	Fitness Equipment Replacement	Short
4	Trail Resurfacing (Throughout)	Short
5	Wayfinding Signage	Short
6	Basketball Half Court Resurfacing	Medium
7	Picnic Shelter	Medium
8	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium
9	Swinging Benches (along Ohio River)	Medium
10	Trail Extension to Adjoining Properties	Medium
Union Park - See Concept		
1	Upgrade to a Community Park	Medium
2	Park Master Plan Update	Short
3	Entrance Signage	Short
4	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Medium
5	Amphitheater	Medium
6	Community Garden Relocation	Medium
7	Dog Park	Medium
8	Drinking Fountain with Bottle Filler	Medium
9	Entrance Signage - Secondary (2)	Medium
10	Land Acquisition	Medium
11	Lighting - Site/Security	Medium
12	Outdoor Fitness Equipment	Medium
13	Parking Lot/Road - Dog Park/Community Gardens	Medium
14	Parking Lot/Road - Pickleball/Amphitheater	Medium
15	Parking Lot/Road - Playground/Splash Pad (2 Lots)	Medium
16	Parking Lot/Road - Small Pond	Medium
17	Parking Lot/Road - Trailhead/Small Hexagon Shelter	Medium
18	Picnic Shelters (4 - Small/Hexagon)	Medium
19	Playground (Large All-Access)	Medium
20	Pond - Small	Medium
21	Restroom Building	Medium
22	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium
23	Splash Pad	Medium

Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects (Continued)

Park Name		Term
24	Trails - Hiking/Natural Surface (0.6-Mile Loop)	Medium
25	Trails - Paved - 8' Wide (0.8-Mile Loop w/ Connecting/Secondary Paths)	Medium
26	Wayfinding Signage	Medium
27	Picnic Shelters (2 - Medium)	Medium/Long
28	Arboretum Signage	Long
29	Docks (2)	Long
30	Nature Restoration (Meadow)	Long
31	Parking Lot/Road - Large Pond/Shelter/Trailhead	Long
32	Parking Lot/Road - Pavilion	Long
33	Pavilion - Large 3-Season	Long
34	Pickleball Courts (2)	Long
35	Pond - Large	Long
36	Wi-Fi Hotspots	Long
Walton Community Park		
1	Park Master Plan	Short
2	Disc Golf Signage	Short
3	Restroom Building (by City)	Short
4	Splash Pad (by City)	Short
5	Tennis Court Replacement/Add Pickleball Lining	Short
6	Trail Resurfacing and Extension (Complete Loop, Connect to Playground/Shelter and Field Area)	Short
7	Wayfinding Signage	Short
8	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Medium
9	Amphitheater	Medium
10	Drinking Fountain with Bottle Filler (Replacements)	Medium
11	Trees and Landscaping	Medium
12	Lighting - Site/Security/Parking	Medium
13	Parking Lot - Resurface/Reline (at Softball Field)	Medium
14	Security Cameras	Medium
15	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium
16	Skate Park	Long
17	Wi-Fi Hotspots	Long
Nature Parks/Natural Areas		
Boone Cliffs Nature Preserve		
1	Signage - Trailhead	Medium
2	Trails - Extend	Medium
Camp Ernst Lake		
1	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Short
2	Canoe/Kayak Launch	Short
3	Dock	Short
4	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Short

Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects (Continued)

Park Name		Term
Conservancy Park Belleview		
1	Signage - Trailhead	Short
2	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide (to Shelter)	Medium
3	Parking Spaces - Paved ADA	Medium
4	Shade Structures	Medium
5	Habitat Structure in Lake	Long
Dinsmore Woods Nature Preserve		
1	Signage - Trailhead	Short
2	Trails - Extend	Medium
Gunpowder Creek Park		
1	Land Acquisition to Improve Access	Medium
2	Parking Lot	Medium
3	Signage - Trailhead	Medium
4	Trails - Hiking/Natural Surface	Medium
Middle Creek Park		
1	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Medium
2	Parking Spaces - Paved ADA	Medium
3	Signage - Trailhead	Medium
4	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles)	Medium
Petersburg River Park		
1	Maintain as Open Space	Ongoing
Shor Lake Park		
1	Clean Up Lake	Short
2	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Medium
3	Parking Lot - Pave Gravel Lot	Medium
4	Dock	Long
5	Picnic Shelter	Long
Valley Orchard Farms		
1	Park Master Plan Update	Short
2	Multipurpose/Soccer Fields (8)	In Progress
3	Cricket Pitch	Short
3	Entrance Signage	Short
6	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Medium
7	Barn Upgrades for Use as Tournament Headquarters	Medium
8	Drinking Fountain with Bottle Filler	Medium
9	Entrance Signage - Secondary	Medium
10	Parking Lot	Medium
11	Picnic Shelter	Medium
12	Playground	Medium
13	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium
14	Trail - Paved - 10' Wide w/ Connection to Giles Conrad	Medium

Table 8.1: Capital Improvement Projects (Continued)

Park Name		Term
15	Wayfinding Signage	Medium
Waller-Stephenson Mill Park - See Concept		
1	Park Master Plan Update	Short
2	Disc Golf Course - Championship Level/Adjustable (18 Holes)	Short
3	Entrance Signage	Short
4	Parking Lot w/ Entrance Road - South	Short
5	ADA Walkways - 6' Wide	Medium
6	Drinking Fountains with Bottle Filler	Medium
7	Entrance Signage - Secondary (2)	Medium
8	Nature Play Area	Medium
9	Parking Lot w/ Entrance Road - North	Medium
10	Picnic Shelters (2)	Medium
11	Restroom Building	Medium
12	Signage - Interpretive w/ Signage Plan	Medium
13	Site Furnishings (Benches/Trash Receptacles/Bike Rack/Pet Waste Station)	Medium
14	Trails - Equestrian	Medium
15	Trails - Mountain Bike	Medium
16	Trails - Walking/Hiking	Medium
17	Wayfinding Signage	Medium
Systemwide		
1	ADA Accessibility Assessment for Smaller Parks (Required)	Short
2	Land Acquisition	Ongoing
3	Parks Office with Classrooms	Short
4	Nature Center (Boone Cliffs/Dinsmore Woods)	Medium
5	River Access Points for Water Trails & Fishing	Medium
6	New Park Neighborhood #1 - Union	Medium
7	New Park Neighborhood #2 - Hebron	Medium
8	New Park Neighborhood #3 - Near I-275/237 Intersection	Long
9	New Park Neighborhood #4 - N of I-275/west of North Pointe/Thornwilde	Long
10	New Park Neighborhood #5 - Richwood	Long
11	Archery/Gun Range	Long
12	ATV Site (200+ Acres/20 Miles)	Long
13	Indoor Pool	Long
14	Recreation Center/Field House	Long
15	Trails - Equestrian - East Bend (10 Miles)	Long

9

ACTION PLAN

9.1 Introduction

The Action Plan table on the following pages (Table 9.1) provides a detailed list of recommendations for the *Envision Boone County Parks 2030 Master Plan*. These strategies represent specific actions for Boone County Parks to take in order to fully implement the goals and objectives of this master plan.

9.2 Action Plan Strategies

These strategies are listed under the five goals and 15 objectives from the Strategic Plan (Chapter 6). The legend at the top of the table identifies the abbreviations used throughout the table. Checkmarks indicate the timeframe for the completion of each strategy within the time periods of 0-2 years, 3-5 years, or 6-10 years. Some strategies are indicated as "Ongoing" as they apply to all timeframes or represent more general actions that should always be considered. A total count of strategies by timeframe is located at the end of the table in the corresponding columns.

The other columns provide information regarding the implementation of each strategy. "Category" describes the type of action within the following four options: capital (capital improvements); policy (guidelines for Fiscal Court and the Parks 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 Boone County Parks. "Funding Source" indicates how the strategy should be funded or the type of funds used (operating or capital funds). The final column, "Planning Link," to indicate when a strategy is consistent with recommendation of another planning document (other planning documents summarized in Appendix G).

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 rating was used to help rank the importance of improvements but not necessarily the order in which they should be developed. Figure 9.1, located after the Action Plan, identifies the capital improvement rating based on the average of the ranking for each item. These rankings were used as part of the process for recommending priorities along with public input and analyses completed throughout this master planning process.

ACTION PLAN - Envision Boone County Parks 2030 Master Plan

Legend of Abbreviations/Organizations

Parks = Boone County Parks	OP = Parks Operating Budget
County = Fiscal Court, Other County Departments	CIP = Capital Improvement Budget
City = Walton, Florence, Union (noted in text)	Revenue = Items that Generate Additional Revenue
Partners = Other Organizations (foundations, businesses, schools, civic associations, state/federal grants, etc.)	

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies		Timeframe (Years) 0-2	3-5	6-10	Category	Agency	Funding Source	Planning Links
Goal 1: Exceptional Spaces								
Develop exceptional parks and facilities in response to the growing needs of the community while ensuring inclusive access for all								
Objective 1.1 – Accessibility: Develop modern and inclusive park features that accommodate community growth, trends, and desire for fun								
Strategy 1.1.1:	Perform an ADA Accessibility Assessment of smaller parks as well as programs and communications (by an outside consultant); implement existing ADA Assessment of larger parks	✓			Capital/ Planning	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.1.2:	Improve ADA access throughout the park system, including walkways to all facilities and seating areas	✓	✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.1.3:	Ensure accessibility at all athletic fields and spectator areas (to and within)	✓			Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.1.4:	Update the ordinance that identifies the hours of operation to include a specific timeframe rather than simply "dawn to dusk" to allow for extended use, especially during the winter months	✓			Operations/ Policy	Parks/County	OP	N/A
Strategy 1.1.5:	Improve the existing amphitheater at the Boone Woods Park to keep the venue available for programs and events	✓			Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.1.6:	Replace aging playground equipment, including modern edging and surfacing to ensure accessibility (e.g., Boone Woods)	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.1.7:	Add playgrounds in strategic locations in the county and add separate age 2-5 equipment where it is unavailable	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks	CIP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Strategy 1.1.8:	Consider themed playground equipment, such as climbing rocks, sensory features, etc., potentially providing for marketing and photo opportunities for residents and visitors	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.1.9:	Implement a consistent, durable wayfinding signage program for all county parks and facilities (e.g., trails and disc golf courses)	✓	✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.1.10:	Add entrance signage where missing and to secondary entrances for ease of navigation (e.g., Fox Run, Petersburg, Dinsmore Woods)	✓	✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.1.11:	Develop interpretive signage throughout the park system (will require signage plans) to help visitors understand the natural features and history of Boone County parks		✓		Capital/ Planning	Parks	CIP	Union Park Master Plan
Strategy 1.1.12:	Extend natural surface trails in Boone Cliff Nature Preserve, Dinsmore Woods Nature Preserve, and Gunpowder Creek Park and add at Union Park, Waller-Stephenson Mill Park, and future natural areas	✓	✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	Union Park Master Plan
Strategy 1.1.13:	Develop new amphitheaters at Union Park and Walton Community Park to provide venues in these portions of Boone County to be used for concerts, movies, theater productions, fitness classes, and more		✓		Capital	Parks/City	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.1.14:	Develop an additional dog park at Union Park and expand the dog park at England/Idlewild Park to improve turf conditions; consider including dog parks in future park development		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Strategy 1.1.15:	Install splash pads at Union Park and Walton Park (through partnership with city)		✓	✓	Capital	Parks/City	CIP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Objective 1.2 – Athletics: Ensure access to needed venues for team and individual sports								
Strategy 1.2.1:	Investigate opportunities for land for additional baseball/softball fields and acquire existing field complexes if they become available	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Strategy 1.2.2:	Add pickleball lining at Boone Woods Park and Walton Community Park tennis courts to provide additional and lighted courts for this sport	✓			Capital	Parks	CIP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Strategy 1.2.3:	Develop a cricket pitch at Valley Orchard Farms to meet the existing and growing demand for this sport in Boone County	✓			Capital	Parks	CIP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Strategy 1.2.4:	Add lighting at rectangular fields at Central Park and Boone woods Park to extend the hours of use and reduce the demand for additional fields		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.2.5:	Consider developing an archery and gun range in the western portion of Boone County to provide a permanent venue for residents to practice and to support program opportunities		✓	✓	Capital	Parks	CIP	2006 Parks Master Plan

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies		Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source	Planning Links
		0-2	3-5	6-10				
Strategy 1.2.6:	Consider developing an indoor sports complex with gymnasium space, field space, program/meeting rooms, and more, following the preparation of a feasibility study		✓	✓	Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Strategy 1.2.7:	Require the replacement of any fields lost at Central Park due to the development of an arboretum center	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks/Partners	N/A	2006 Parks Master Plan
Strategy 1.2.8:	Provide smaller half basketball courts at future parks to reduce space requirements and prioritize use by neighborhood children and smaller groups	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks	CIP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Strategy 1.2.9:	Convert former barn at Valley Orchard Farms into tournament headquarters facility		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.2.10:	Add new pickleball courts at Union Park and Central Park and Arboretum		✓	✓	Capital	Parks	CIP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Strategy 1.2.11:	Develop a championship level disc golf course (with adjustable difficulty) at Waller-Stephenson Mill Park to draw top level tournaments and expand opportunities for disc golf in Boone County		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Strategy 1.2.12:	Consider converting fields at the Central Park (2) and Boone Woods Park (1) to artificial turf to accommodate increased use and to reduce rainouts; line for multiple sports		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Strategy 1.2.13:	Consider a beginner level course at England/Idlewild Park to attract more participants to the sport			✓	Capital	Parks	CIP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Strategy 1.2.14:	Establish a youth archery league to utilize the new archery range once developed			✓	Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 1.2.15:	Seek opportunities for additional teen programs, including Esports programs	*Ongoing*			Operations/ Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP/OP	N/A
Objective 1.3 – Support: Provide level of amenities that ensures access to and extended enjoyment of parks								
Strategy 1.3.1:	Add support features throughout the park system such as sidewalks, shade structures, drinking fountains, security lighting, and trees/landscaping	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.3.2:	Add restrooms at heavily used parks that currently lack the facilities	✓	✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.3.3:	Include bottle fillers at all new drinking fountains and when replacing existing features	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.3.4:	Add shade at select facilities (e.g., bocce and shuffleboard at Boone Woods and some playgrounds) and seating areas	✓	✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.3.5:	Add picnic shelters at existing and future parks to expand access to these facilities and to promote opportunities for outdoor community gatherings	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.3.6:	Include support features along existing and future trails, including mile markers (every ¼ mile), wayfinding markers, speed limit signs, and bike repair stations (at trailheads)	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.3.7:	Install swinging benches along the Ohio River side near the trails at Giles Conrad to provide a unique site feature and to attract visitation	✓			Capital	Parks	CIP	Comp Plan
Strategy 1.3.8:	Add Wi-Fi access in high traffic areas including buildings and event spaces (e.g., picnic shelters and sports complexes)		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 1.3.9:	Seek a location for an additional boats ramp to improve motorized access to the Ohio River		✓		Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP	N/A
Goal 2: Inspire Stewardship								
Preserve parks, trails, and natural areas to develop opportunities for passive recreation and to increase connectivity between the community and these resources								
Objective 2.1 – Conservation: Protect and conserve natural areas								
Strategy 2.1.1:	Continue to seek opportunities to acquire natural areas throughout Boone County as land becomes available	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks/County	CIP	Comp Plan
Strategy 2.1.2:	Incorporate nature play structures as part of playground development and replacement, especially in more passive park areas	✓	✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	Comp Plan
Strategy 2.1.3:	Develop passive recreational and educational features as part of development at Waller-Stephenson Mill Park and Union Park	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks	CIP	Comp Plan
Strategy 2.1.4:	Implement conservation policies and sustainable practices for development and management of park properties	✓	✓		Operations/ Policy	Parks	OP	Comp Plan
Strategy 2.1.5:	Conduct clean-up of Shor Lake	✓			Capital/ Operations	Parks	CIP/OP	Comp Plan

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies		Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source	Planning Links
		0-2	3-5	6-10				
Strategy 2.1.6:	Build habitat structure in lake at Conservancy Park Belleview to foster species regeneration and exhibit exemplary conservation efforts to the community	✓			Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP	Comp Plan
Strategy 2.1.7:	Develop an indoor nature center and outdoor classroom at a western nature preserve (Boone Cliffs or Dinsmore Woods) to expand nature programming and provide year-round opportunities		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	Comp Plan
Strategy 2.1.8:	Utilize nature trails for programming, including guided hikes and plant identification	*Ongoing*			Operations	Parks	OP	Comp Plan
Strategy 2.1.9:	Build boat docks and kayak/canoe access points to respond to community demand for greater fishing access and opportunities to enjoy water-based recreation (e.g., Union and Camp Ernst Lake)		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	Comp Plan
Strategy 2.1.10:	Promote conservation and sustainability efforts as they are implemented to encourage reduced levels of consumption and waste generation at the household and community levels	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP	Comp Plan
Objective 2.2 – Connectivity: Encourage bike and pedestrian connectivity, community fitness, and recreation by developing safe access to parks and waterbodies								
Strategy 2.2.1:	Develop a bike and pedestrian connectivity plan to integrate existing trail planning efforts and to define alignment and feasibility of smaller connecting spurs, sidewalk improvements, and on-road elements	✓	✓		Planning/ Capital	Parks/County	CIP	Comp Plan
Strategy 2.2.2:	Develop design guidelines and estimates of probable costs as part of the bike and pedestrian connectivity plan	✓	✓		Planning/ Policy	Parks/County	OP	Comp Plan
Strategy 2.2.3:	Improve connectivity between parks and adjacent neighborhoods by adding connecting paths where possible	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks	CIP	Comp Plan + Florence Bike/Ped Plan
Strategy 2.2.4:	Prioritize improved safety when determining timelines for trails, sidewalks, and crossings	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	N/A	N/A
Strategy 2.2.5:	Explore making linkages between parks	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Capital	Parks	N/A	Comp Plan
Strategy 2.2.6:	Provide guidance to communities and developers regarding trail locations and design guidelines	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP/CIP	N/A
Strategy 2.2.7:	Add paved trail loops within existing parks that lack and can accommodate this facility (e.g., Boone Woods, Union, Waller-Stephenson Mill) and in any future parks	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks	CIP	Comp Plan + Florence Bike/Ped Plan
Strategy 2.2.8:	Include paved trail loops at all new parks	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks	CIP	Florence Bike/Ped Plan
Strategy 2.2.9:	Explore partnership opportunities with Kentucky Tourism and the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources to develop programs like paddling events and lessons	*Ongoing*			Operations	Parks/Partners	OP/Revenue	N/A
Strategy 2.2.10:	Develop a flow trail somewhere in the county to add to the inventory of bike focused amenities in the system	✓	✓		Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Strategy 2.2.11:	Implement water trails at Sand Run, Woolper Creek, Gunpowder Creek, and Mud Lick Creek to provide opportunities for paddling throughout Boone County; pursue adding to Kentucky Tourism's Blue Water Trails	✓			Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 2.2.12:	Utilize access points along established water trails, and other ponds in parks, for expanded fishing access	✓			Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 2.2.13:	Add equestrian trails at Waller-Stephenson Mill Park and in the western portion of the county to improve access to these trails		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 2.2.14:	Include mountain bike trails at Waller-Stephenson Mill Park to provide more opportunities and better access to this facility in southern Boone County		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 2.2.15:	Identify a potential site for the development of ATV trails to provide opportunities for residents and visitor and to generate revenue			✓	Capital	Parks	CIP/Revenue	N/A
Objective 2.3 – Land Management: Focus acquisitions and future development around conservation and connected open space for the growing population								
Strategy 2.3.1:	Prepare Park Master Plans for existing parks and any future parks prior to development of facilities to ensure that added features are complementary and accessible	*Ongoing*			Planning/ Capital	Parks/County /City	CIP	N/A
Strategy 2.3.2:	Utilize existing parkland to meet unmet facility needs and to improve access to park features	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Strategy 2.3.3:	Continue to encourage developers to set aside land for or to develop park in new communities	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks/County	OP	Comp Plan
Strategy 2.3.4:	Consider incentives for developers to increase the amount of parks available to residents	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks/County	CIP/OP	Comp Plan
Strategy 2.3.5:	Seek opportunities for new parkland to meet the demands of desired facilities and to improve service levels for existing and future residents	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks/County	CIP/OP	Comp Plan

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies		Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source	Planning Links
		0-2	3-5	6-10				
Strategy 2.3.6:	Consider acquisition of any private parks and open space in Boone County that become available for sale to ensure that residents continue to have access to these amenities, especially in environmentally sensitive areas	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks/County	CIP	Comp Plan
Strategy 2.3.7:	Utilize parks as examples of Best Management Practices (BMP) for stormwater detention, recycling, etc.	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks/County	N/A	N/A
Strategy 2.3.8:	Acquire land contiguous to existing parks if it becomes available to allow for additional features and to increase the total amount of parkland available to residents	*Ongoing*			Capital	Parks/County	CIP	Comp Plan
Goal 3: Diverse Programs								
Promote physical fitness, wellbeing, and social enrichment of the community through a varied assortment of programs, initiatives, and amenities								
Objective 3.1 – Wellness: Use parks and programs to foster greater awareness of healthy choices and quality of life improvements								
Strategy 3.1.1:	Add outdoor fitness equipment at select parks to expand opportunities for improved community health	✓	✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 3.1.2:	Add or expand nature programming throughout Boone County Parks	✓	✓		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	Comp Plan
Strategy 3.1.3:	Establish and expand partnerships for nature education programs within Boone County Parks (see also Section 7.10)	✓			Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 3.1.4:	Utilize new facilities, including outdoor fitness equipment, outdoor classrooms, outdoor games, community gardens, and more, for expanded program opportunities that result from the availability of these facilities	*Ongoing*			Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Objective 3.2 – Inclusion: Emphasize convenient and accessible programs that meet the needs of families and aging community members but are designed to serve everyone								
Strategy 3.2.1:	Brand and market active senior programs together under a separate program name, "Boone County Active Adults," and offer these at alternating locations throughout the county; expand the programs to indoor space if	✓			Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Strategy 3.2.2:	Develop therapeutic recreation programs and improve accessibility within existing programs for those with special needs	✓			Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 3.2.3:	Ensure ADA accessibility at all rental facilities	✓			Policy/ Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 3.2.4:	Pursue opportunities to provide bi-lingual programming, in addition to offering bi-lingual marketing of existing programs	✓	✓		Policy/ Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 3.2.5:	Encourage program partners to establish inclusion and accessibility standards	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Objective 3.3 – Experiences: Expand the variety and frequency of concerts, movies, and special events to build community cohesion and attract visitors								
Strategy 3.3.1:	Expand program offerings to meet unmet community needs, including concerts/art performances, adult fitness and wellness programs, outdoor movies, special events, and programs for age 50+	✓	✓		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 3.3.2:	Utilize the existing performance space at Boone Woods Park and future amphitheaters for additional and enhanced program opportunities, including concerts, movies, and children's theater	*Ongoing*			Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 3.3.3:	Schedule more summer concerts and movies – including performers that attract a more diverse age group	✓	✓		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 3.3.4:	Consider offering programs at picnic shelters as the demand for outdoor programs continues to increase	✓	✓		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 3.3.5:	Consider creating a series of year-round events, potentially with a contractor, that are branded and presented for adults in Boone County	✓			Operations/ Policy	Parks/Partners	OP/Revenue	N/A
Strategy 3.3.6:	Explore ways to permit alcohol sales at specific events as well as agreements with food truck vendors as possible boost for revenue generation and attendance	✓			Policy/ Operations	Parks/County /City	OP/Revenue	N/A
Strategy 3.3.7:	Develop programs to meet needs for more creative and cultural arts programs for both youth and adults	✓	✓		Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 3.3.8:	Utilize the Core Program Guidelines in Appendix C as a source for program offerings	*Ongoing*			Operations	Parks	N/A	N/A
Strategy 3.3.9:	Consider a targeted amendment to Ordinance 710.5 to allow alcohol sales at concerts and events to increase the attractiveness of programs to young adults and to assist in gaining corporate sponsors for events and performances	✓			Operations/ Policy	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 3.3.10:	Utilize new amenities developed at a future recreation center and nature center for additional year-round program opportunities, including nature programs, active adult programs, and fitness programs		✓	✓	Operations	Parks	OP	N/A

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies		Timeframe (Years) 0-2	3-5	6-10	Category	Agency	Funding Source	Planning Links
Goal 4: Broad Outreach								
Expand awareness and grow user-base by promoting programs and amenities, providing educational opportunities, and pursuing strategic partnerships								
Objective 4.1 – Engagement: Connect with the community through a diversity of channels to determine needs, eliminate barriers, and ensure exceptional park experiences								
Strategy 4.1.1:	Formally recognize this Master Plan as the guiding document for park development, improvement, and operations	✓			Policy	City	N/A	N/A
Strategy 4.1.2:	Establish an implementation committee to monitor timelines, measure progress, update priorities, and ensure continued enthusiasm for Master Plan goals and recommendations	✓			Policy	Parks/City	N/A	N/A
Strategy 4.1.3:	Be a mission driven agency; pay very close attention to the mission of Boone County Parks	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	N/A	N/A
Strategy 4.1.4:	Pursue neighborhood engagement with the adjacent communities before, during, and after any park or facility development	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.1.5:	Conduct surveys biannually to assess resident satisfaction; solicit ideas for improvements, programs, and events; and determine potential operational shifts (e.g., new hours, changes to program schedule, etc.)	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.1.6:	Host informal pop-ups in each park to provide residents and visitors an opportunity to "meet the people behind the parks"	*Ongoing*			Operations/ Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.1.7:	Inform users, partners, and citizens of the true costs of services	*Ongoing*			Operations/ Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.1.8:	Develop Neighborhood Determined Features at expanded or improved parks to allow local preferences influence over the look, feel, and usability of spaces	*Ongoing*			Operations/ Capital	Parks/Partners	CIP	N/A
Strategy 4.1.9:	Maintain continuous public engagement throughout the implementation of this plan	*Ongoing*			Operations/ Capital	Parks/County /City	OP	N/A
Objective 4.2 – Collaboration: Foster partnerships and recruit volunteers to meet current and future needs for parks and recreation in Boone County								
Strategy 4.2.1:	Continue to partner with cities and the Boone County Schools to ensure that facilities remain open and available for public use	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks/Partners	OP	Comp Plan
Strategy 4.2.2:	Develop working agreements with each partner (all outside groups that use Boone County facilities) with measurable outcomes and reviewed within a minimum of every two years	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP	Comp Plan
Strategy 4.2.3:	Do not enter into any agreement unless agency costs are known, both indirect and direct, and know how much investment the partner is bringing to the agency. Never allow private or not-for-profit groups to make money from Boone County facilities unless the county receives a share of the gross revenue	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP/Revenue	N/A
Strategy 4.2.4:	Require county-owned properties to remain available to Boone County residents when not in use by a lessee	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.2.5:	Ensure all future contracts benefit Boone County and its residents, as well as the vendor or contractor	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.2.6:	Never allow private or not-for-profit groups to make money from Boone County facilities unless the county receives a share of the gross revenue	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP/Revenue	N/A
Strategy 4.2.7:	Partner with Northern Kentucky Fly Fishers to expand fishing programs in new locations	✓	✓		Policy/ Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.2.8:	Increase capacity to host additional events, which were highly desired by residents to bring the community together	✓	✓		Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.2.9:	Consider expansion of programming coming from vendors and contractors through the private sector	*Ongoing*			Operations/ Policy	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.2.10:	Facilitate partner discussions quarterly to share information, generate new collaboration possibilities, and aid in to cross-promotion of offerings	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.2.11:	Develop a policy with revenue split agreements and the needed infrastructure to accommodate food trucks in parks to provide concessions and a revenue source for the county	✓			Policy	Parks	OP/Revenue	N/A
Strategy 4.2.12:	Treat all vendors, contractors, and partners in a professional, consistent manner with a legal, signed contract	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP/Revenue	N/A
Strategy 4.2.13:	Seek opportunities to expand partnerships with local organizations to improve access to recreation facilities and programs	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.2.14:	Establish policies for accepting sponsorships and selling naming rights	✓			Policy	Parks/Partners	N/A	N/A
Strategy 4.2.15:	Partner with Boone County Schools, Boone County Arboretum, Northern Kentucky Bird Club, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife, and others for nature education programs throughout parks in Boone County	✓	✓		Policy/ Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies		Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source	Planning Links
		0-2	3-5	6-10				
Strategy 4.2.16:	Partner with health care providers to promote and financially underwrite healthy lifestyle programs and senior activities	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.2.17:	Consider partnering with Boone County Public Library for educational programs and cross promotion of offerings	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.2.18:	Partner with Boone County Public Library - Hebron Branch to program the amphitheater on the site to provide a northern location for events and for use of the site as a park	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.2.19:	Expand partnership with the NKY Area Agency on Aging and area senior centers for transportation for seniors to the proposed recreation center for new active programs once established	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	Comp Plan
Strategy 4.2.20:	Partner with other organizations, including meetNKY: Northern Kentucky Convention & Visitors Bureau, Northern Kentucky Tri-Ed, and athletic leagues, to bring tournaments the county and for the development of needed	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	Comp Plan
Strategy 4.2.21:	Seek partnerships for the operation and programming of the potential indoor recreation center and recreation programs offered within	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks/Partners	OP	Comp Plan
Strategy 4.2.22:	Maintain existing, successful partnerships	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks/Partners	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.2.23:	Pursue partnerships for the development and operation of a potential indoor pool		✓	✓	Policy/ Operations	Parks/Partners	OP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Objective 4.3 – Communication: Utilize technology to raise awareness, increase participation, and bridge gaps in service								
Strategy 4.3.1:	Continue to upgrade and utilize technology in parks for patrons and staff	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Capital	Parks	CIP/OP	N/A
Strategy 4.3.2:	Determine the agency's visual identity and messaging platform	✓			Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.3.3:	Identify standard formatting for all marketing and promotional efforts	✓			Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.3.4:	Identify a consistent brand as it relates to color, style, logo & placement, and promotional materials	✓			Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.3.5:	Ensure all park signage is consistent with branding protocol	✓			Policy/ Capital	Parks	OP/CIP	N/A
Strategy 4.3.6:	Expand marketing of programs and facilities to improve awareness of existing and future opportunities	✓			Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 4.3.7:	Consider mobile app development to help enhance park experiences and improve data collection	✓	✓		Operations/ Capital	Parks	OP/CIP	N/A
Strategy 4.3.8:	Post the Parks and Recreation Mission and Vision Statements, along with Values, on the website, promotional materials, and internal communications to foster unified character and inspire a motivated staff	✓			Operations/ Policy	Parks	N/A	N/A
Strategy 4.3.9:	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	✓			Policy/ Capital	Parks	OP/CIP	N/A
Strategy 4.3.10:	Expand FAQ section on department website to include visuals, maps, etc. (e.g., edit "Where are walking trails in Boone County?" to include map or searchable list of parks with trails)	✓			Operations/ Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Goal 5: Operational Excellence								
Implement current best practices across personnel, process, finance, and resource sectors to ensure appropriate maintenance, exceptional customer service, and efficient operations								
Objective 5.1 – Structure: Nurture an engaged workforce of valued staff through a culture of innovation and professional development								
Strategy 5.1.1:	Create and implement professional and career development plans for management and supervisory staff	✓	✓		Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.1.2:	Identify and allocate funding for critical staff development opportunities (including conferences, training, memberships, etc.) with consideration to licensure and certification requirements	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.1.3:	Encourage continued staff training for leadership and continued growth within their respective fields	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.1.4:	Encourage management level staff to attend professional development programs offered by state, regional, and national training organizations	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.1.5:	Encourage staff members to pursue the Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP), Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) certifications and Aquatic Facility Operator (AFO)	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	N/A

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies		Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source	Planning Links
		0-2	3-5	6-10				
Strategy 5.1.6:	Classify the agency's services by how they fit into the agency's mission	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	N/A	N/A
Strategy 5.1.7:	Train or hire a staff member as a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS)	✓	✓		Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Objective 5.2 – Maintenance: Develop requirements, policies, and procedures for maintenance and equipment replacement in order to ensure safe, enjoyable park experiences								
Strategy 5.2.1:	Prepare an Operations Plan with Maintenance Standards	✓			Operations/ Planning	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.2.2:	Improve drainage at England/Idlewild Park and throughout the system to improve field conditions	✓			Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 5.2.3:	Prepare for changes in field demands in response to trends and changing demographics; consider adaptability during field development and improvement	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	N/A	N/A
Strategy 5.2.4:	Increase maintenance budget to accommodate new facilities and programs	✓			Policy	Parks/County	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.2.5:	Consult maintenance staff during park development to help reduce maintenance requirements and ensure staff are able to adequately maintain new features	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.2.6:	Know the value of assets (not including land) and where those assets are in their life cycle	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.2.7:	Determine maintenance standards that identify the number of employees required to maintain one acre of parkland and consider these costs when adding parkland to the system	✓			Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.2.8:	Stop maintaining features and spaces in the park system that are unused and remove them from the system	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.2.9:	Require a maintenance plan that identifies ongoing funding needs for partnership projects				Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.2.10:	Know the demographics of the citizens that are served	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Objective 5.3 – Financial Stability: Implement operational practices and funding strategies to effectively utilize every available resource								
Strategy 5.3.1:	Utilize this *Envision Boone County Parks 2030 Master Plan* to guide decision making – Monitor progress regularly	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Planning	Parks/County /City	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.3.2:	Relocate the community gardens at England/Idlewild Park and Union Park to make room for needed facilities and seek locations for additional gardens		✓		Capital	Parks	CIP	N/A
Strategy 5.3.3:	Evaluate the feasibility and demand for an indoor pool to serve all of Boone County with consideration to potential partnerships		✓		Planning/ Capital	Parks/Partner s	CIP	2006 Parks Master Plan
Strategy 5.3.4:	Institute an easy-to-understand Cost Recovery and Pricing Plan for everything that is offered	✓			Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.3.5:	Establish a fee to reserve picnic shelters for half days with an hour between reservations to allow additional use of existing facilities	✓			Policy/ Operations	Parks	N/A	N/A
Strategy 5.3.6:	Price services furthest away from the mission at full cost recovery levels	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks	N/A	N/A
Strategy 5.3.7:	Consider pricing events and programs for the 80% that can pay and accommodate the 20% who cannot	✓			Policy/ Operations	Parks	N/A	N/A
Strategy 5.3.8:	Identify potential revenue sources at community events, including sponsorships and entry fees	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue	N/A
Strategy 5.3.9:	Develop a fee structure to charge non-residents more for program registration and facility use	✓			Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP/Revenue	N/A
Strategy 5.3.10:	Develop a program (or expand existing) to recruit and schedule volunteer park ambassadors to promote wellbeing and provide assistance at parks	✓			Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.3.11:	Establish an annual assessment process to determine if Boone County should stop offering a program, continue offering a program, or start a new program	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.3.12:	Maintain at least the current level of cost recovery as operations expand with higher cost recovery if revenue generating facilities are developed	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Operations	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.3.13:	Continue to seek grants and apply to foundations for funding for projects to enhance the park system, consistent with the mission of Parks and Recreation with consideration to associated costs to the county	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP	N/A

Table 9.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years)			Category	Agency	Funding Source	Planning Links
	0-2	3-5	6-10				
Strategy 5.3.14: Find dedicated funding sources for Parks and Recreation that can be counted on annually	✓			Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.3.15: Seek philanthropists in the community to support the agency's causes	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.3.16: Establish a Boone County Parks Foundation to raise funds and recruit and organize volunteers	✓			Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.3.17: Know the true costs to deliver services (direct and indirect costs)	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	N/A	N/A
Strategy 5.3.18: Establish and adjust fees for programs according to direct and indirect costs	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.3.19: Track population trends	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.3.20: Control labor costs	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Strategy 5.3.21: Continuously monitor trends in recreation, particularly among growing population groups, to ensure program offerings meet the needs of the community	*Ongoing*			Policy	Parks	OP	N/A
Totals by Timeframe **Ongoing = 81**	**65**	**45**	**9**				
Total Number of Strategies = 171							

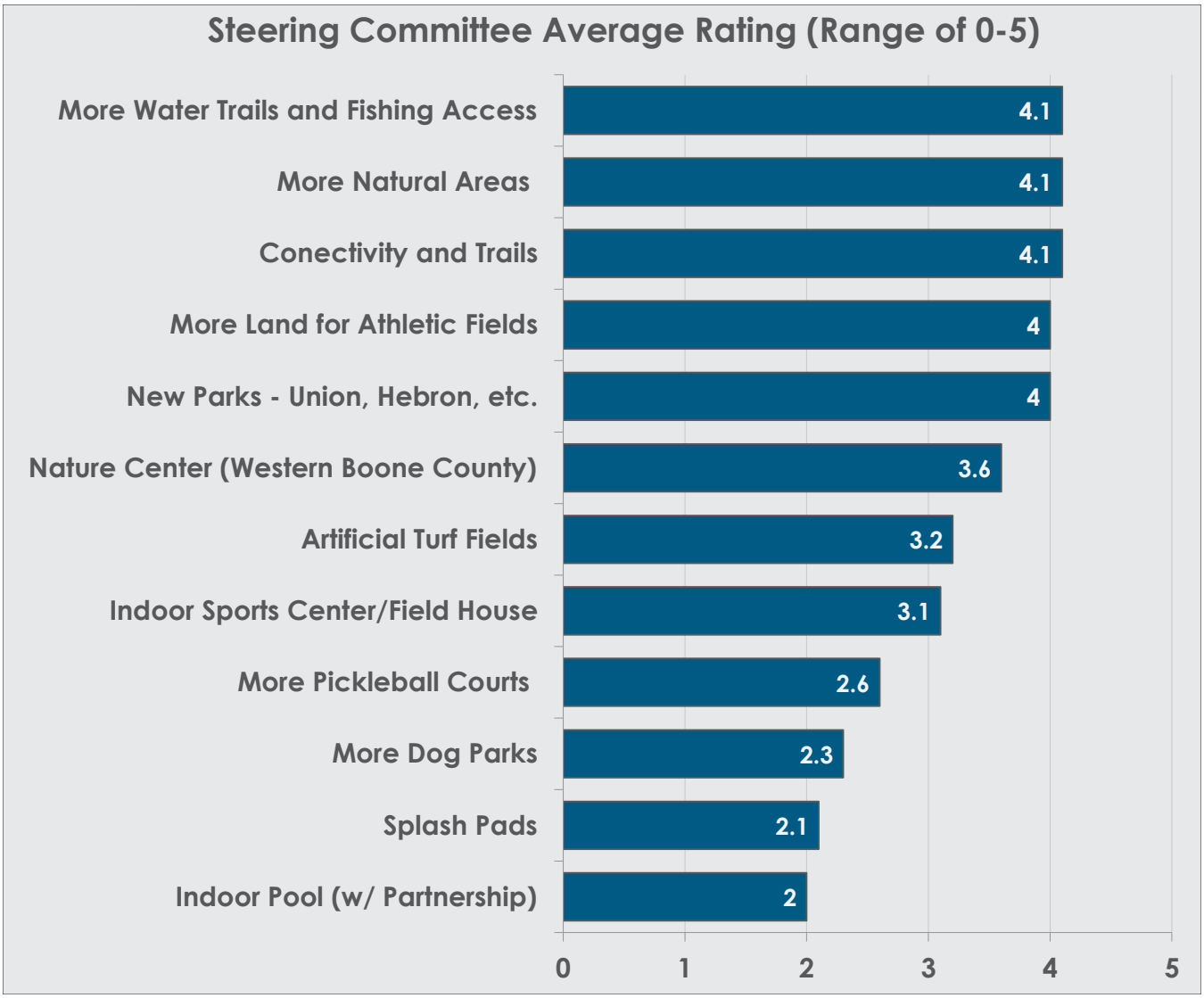



Figure 9.1: Capital Improvement Priority Rating