



City of Winchester, Virginia

Parks & Recreation Master Plan 2009-2014



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Accomplishments & Opportunities

The Master Plan that follows is designed as a planning document to guide future improvements to Winchester Parks and Recreation Department (WPRD) facilities and programs. But the future is grounded on the dreams and efforts that lead to this point in time. We are pleased to celebrate the accomplishments of 2008, among which are:

- Construction a 21,000 square foot Active Living & Recreation Center
- Renovation and rededication of Douglass Park
- Construction of the Winchester Dog Park
- Awarded the Best New Publication honor for the “Junior Gazette” by the Virginia Recreation & Park Society
- Awarded the Best New Program honor for the “Eggcessible Easter Egg Hunt” by the Virginia Recreation & Park Society
- String of Pearls black tie fund raiser

We also look forward to 2009, with eyes on the opportunities that present themselves. In addition to the long-range plans that are outlined in what follows, there are some unique opportunities we can grasp for the betterment of our community. These include:

- Contracting to host the 2011 Cal Ripken/Babe Ruth 10 Year Old World Series. This will require some additional expenditures for field improvements and expenses. But the investment will generate both tax revenue and goodwill as teams from across the country come to Winchester
- Constructing the Green Circle trail alongside Shawnee Springs Park between Pleasant Valley Road and Kent Street. This second leg of the trail connects Shenandoah University and Jim Barnett Park with the downtown area, creating new opportunities both for recreation and non-vehicular commuting.



Planning Process

Needs Assessment

Citizen input was sought through public meetings. On March 6, 2006, and again on February 5, 2007, Park Board members and staff met with the North End Citizen's Group to explore ways to cooperate in the use of Douglass Park. Through November and December 2006 special meetings with existing user groups examined the long-term goals for facilities and programs. On May 10, 2007 a special session for the Board was devoted to public input. A range of issues were addressed by 12 presenters. They included specific requests for a dog park, a skate park, and funding for repairs to the press box at Bridgeforth Field; requests for a new satellite park in the York Avenue area, improvements at Frederick Douglass Park, and a clarified management arrangement for the Green Circle; initiatives about waterfowl management; and a request that preserving the green space in the parks take precedence over further development. A series of meetings in November and December, 2006 gave an opportunity for input from all the identified user groups and stakeholders who have been involved with the Parks & Recreation Department.

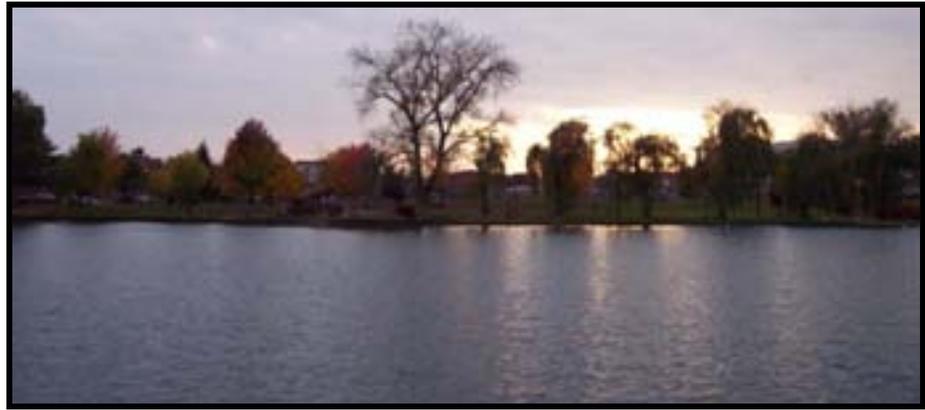


What emerges from the meetings is confirmation that the area parks are heavily used and much appreciated for an astonishing range of leisure, sports, recreational, and nature activities. Additional ideas and requests for funding far outstrip our current capacity to respond. The Parks & Recreation Department will continue to seek cooperative partnerships with current and new user groups to provide a range of recreational options.

Winchester residents were surveyed in 2008 as part of the Comprehensive Plan. Overall satisfaction with Department facilities and programs was high. There was a strong message that there needs to be an increase in trails to support pedestrian and bike travel for recreation and commuting. This supports the 2004 findings from an Opportunity Winchester survey.



Local input can be analyzed in relation to standards developed through the experience of communities throughout the nation. The



National Recreation and Parks Association recommend the number of specific types of facilities based on the population of a community. While each jurisdiction will modify these recommendations based on local priorities, such standards provide useful perspective in considering our needs. The attached table (Appendix 1) compares the number of facilities in Winchester with the national standards. It is evident that there are critical needs for aquatic facilities, trails, and soccer fields.

A 50 meter indoor pool has been a 10-year goal since the 2001 version of the Master Plan. Our immediate priorities are to maintain our current pools. An expanded indoor pool remains a long-term goal but is not part of the 5 year plan. In contrast, the adult soccer field is part of our current list of capital improvement projects. Likewise, both citizen input and national standards emphasize need for additional trails for recreation and non-vehicular commuting. There



will be an addition to the Green Circle in 2009 which links Jim Barnett Park with the downtown area via a paved trail bordering Shawnee Springs Preserve. Additional trail construction is part of the long-term plan identified by the Master Plan.



Within the borders of Shawnee Springs Preserve are the remnants of the largest Civil War field hospital. Our long term plan calls for developing this property with trails, interpretive signage, and recreation amenities. A Master Plan for Shawnee Springs Preserve was developed in 1994 and the existing plans should serve as a starting point when this property is developed.

The Master Plan itself is reviewed and endorsed by the Park Advisory Board and then by City Council. Individual projects are similarly reviewed and developed by staff with input from user groups. Plans are then endorsed by the Parks & Recreation Department Advisory Board. Such endorsements are reviewed by City Council-Appointed Committees (such as Finance, Health, Education, & Welfare, Public Utilities, etc.) City Council ultimately acts on such projects by formal motion.

Implications for Recreation

In summary, an analysis of the preceding data with respect to recreation reveals the following:

- ✓ Recreation facilities and programs should respond to the high concentration of seniors and children which form almost half of the City's population. Creation of both passive and active recreation programs, facilities and staffing is needed for our growing senior population. The 2008 opening of the Active Living Center and the planned construction of the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum are specific examples of major efforts for these age groups.



- ✓ A well educated and prosperous population will presumably have greater interest and needs in leisure and recreational pursuits.



- ✓ Continued growth is predicted for the City and the area. As the population increases, the demand for parks and recreation will also increase.

- ✓ Parks and recreation facilities and programs in Winchester should respond to the needs of special populations and those with special needs.

- ✓ The City of Winchester provides a disproportionate percentage of the area-wide recreational programs. Cooperative planning with Frederick County, VA is imperative.

- ✓ Acquisition of additional park land and recreational facilities is needed in the North End of Winchester to expand program offerings and develop facilities for neighborhood use.

- ✓ Winchester is now home to many non-English speaking individuals. Non-traditional and diverse program offerings should be created to meet their needs.



- ✓ Recreation demands by both City and non-City residents as well as a rapidly growing community require that we continually enhance our program offerings and facilities. Personnel and budget adjustments should be pursued as we strive to meet these needs.

- ✓ Program diversification and trend awareness and our response to these changes over the next 5-10 years will provide many new recreational opportunities for those we do not currently target as patrons. The understanding and awareness of our ever changing demographics will allow the Department to expand programming so that recreational opportunities are inclusive not exclusive.



- ✓ There is a pressing need for year round, official size soccer fields to meet the ever increasing demands of both the adult Hispanic and youth soccer movement. Youth fields in community parks and on school grounds are being destroyed by unauthorized users, mainly adults, who do not have access to other facilities on which to play.

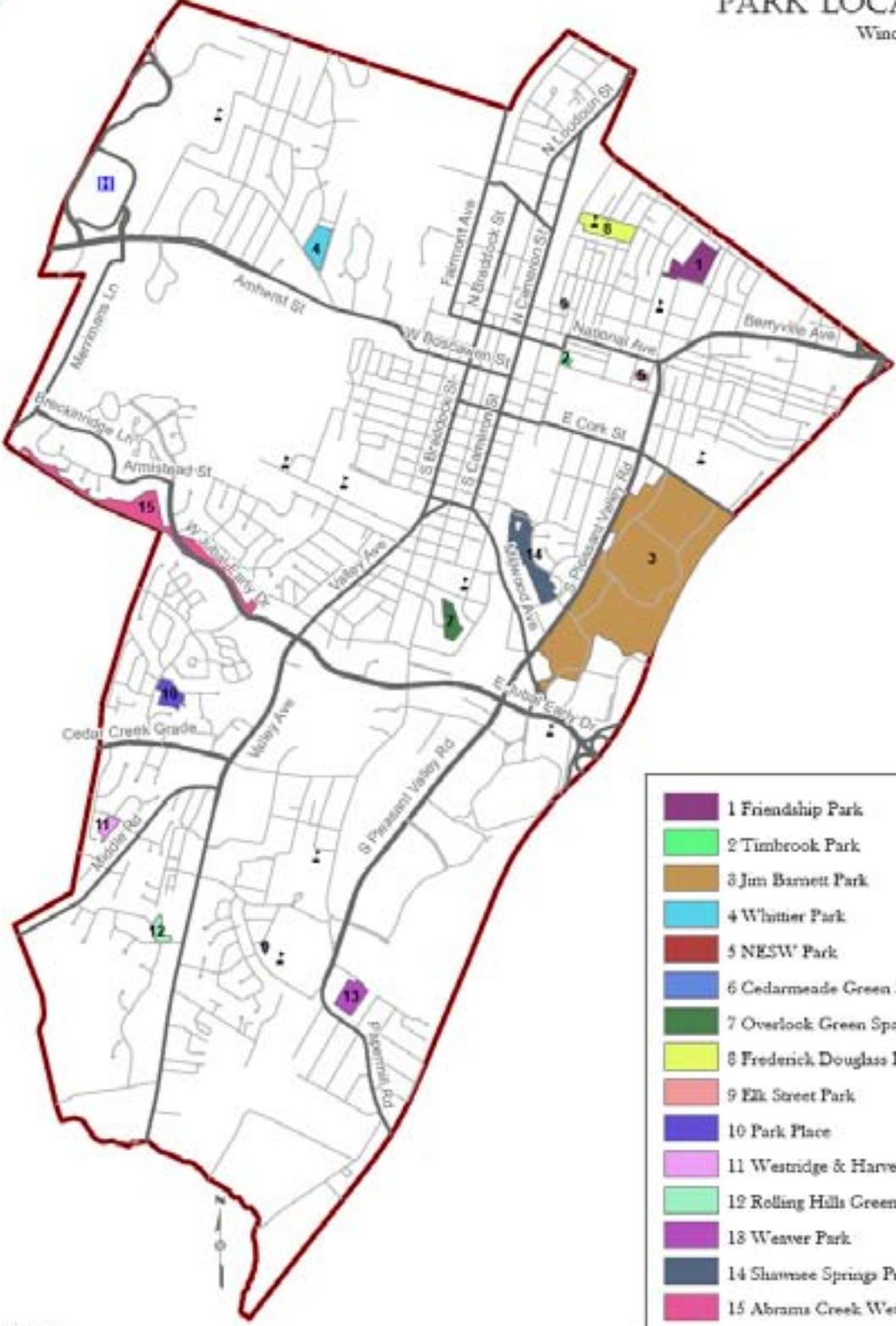
- ✓ There must be new trails. The Comprehensive Plan for Winchester speaks of a new urbanism which allows people to walk or bike to amenities in the community. Both for commuting and for recreation, there is a need for additional trails and a better integration of trails into both a local and regional network. The Green Circle remains a largely conceptual trail system within Winchester, VA. It has been endorsed by City Council. It is not currently part of the jurisdiction of the Parks & Recreation Department. We believe it should be, both because it is a natural expression of our mission and because it runs through Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve, Shawnee Springs Preserve and Jim Barnett Park.





PARK LOCATIONS

Winchester, Virginia



1 inch = 2,000 feet



Needs Identification

The future recreational needs of the community, as important as they are, should not overshadow the current maintenance needs of existing facilities. As we continue to expand to meet future needs we must continue to repair and maintain existing infrastructure



CIP Projects to consider:

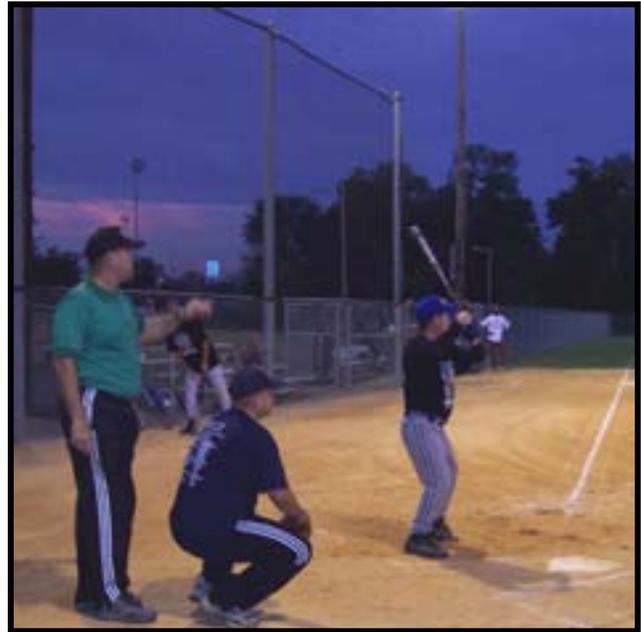
- ✓ Resurface basketball courts/reline
- ✓ Park road paving
- ✓ Tennis court repaving/reline
- ✓ Replace electrical/lighting system at Potts & Lowry
- ✓ Renovate Familyland-New lights under shelter, new benches and tables, update restrooms, and renovate concessions
- ✓ Resurface par course and purchase new Kiwanis equipment on course
- ✓ New fence at outdoor pool
- ✓ New leisure pool amenities
- ✓ Water parks around Winchester-community parks
- ✓ Football shack-Expand renovate restrooms
- ✓ New retaining wall at Preston and replace backstop
- ✓ Replace all bleachers in park
- ✓ Siding on Rotary press box
- ✓ Bodie Grim press box and fence
- ✓ BMX Track-Upgrade concessions, parking, restrooms
- ✓ Restrooms at horseshoe courts
- ✓ Update playground equipment

Many of these projects shall be done with limited City funding. User groups, community fundraising and contributions along with Parks & Recreation fund balance monies shall be used to complete these projects.

5 Year Plan Capital Improvement Projects

At a time of budget constraints, the immediate priorities for WPRD are expressed in those projects for which we seek additional funding. They are major projects costing more than \$50,000. These are the priorities:

- ✓ Fiscal year 2010: **Resurface the outdoor pool.** This is routine maintenance, last completed in 2002. It involves white coating the surface, caulking, repairs to expansion joints, and addressing any delamination areas on the pool surface. \$65,000 in funds from the General Fund Reserves is requested.
- ✓ Fiscal year 2010: **Lighting for Bridgeforth Field.** The 30 year lighting is archaic to the point it has become unsafe. The existing lighting would be demolished and replaced with energy-saving light technology. This is part of a major renovation of the Bridgeforth Field being done cooperatively with Shenandoah University and The Winchester Royals. \$350,000 from General Funds Reserves is requested.



- ✓ Fiscal year 2011: **Replace Fitness Equipment and Resurface the Par Course Trail.** A smooth asphalt trail will replace the worn tar and chip trail. The wood fitness equipment would be replaced with modern equipment that would



be wheel chair accessible and offer new exercises. \$115,000 is requested from Park and Recreation Fund



- and General Fund Reserves. The local Kiwanis Club has also been approached about assistance with funding.
- ✓ Fiscal year 2011: **Bridgeforth Field Improvements.** The field and surrounding buildings are in need of repairs after 30 years of heavy use. A committee of user groups has prioritized improvements and considered funding options. \$1,000,000 in General Fund Reserves is requested as part of a \$4,000,000 project. User group contributions and private donations are also being sought.
 - ✓ Fiscal year 2012: **Weaver Park Soccer Field.** A full-size soccer field will be designed and constructed, with an expanded parking area able to accommodate 50 vehicles. Adult groups and Blue Ridge Youth Soccer have long sought a full-size field within the City. \$100,000 in General Reserve Funds is requested; it will be supplemented with another \$50,000 sought through user groups.
 - ✓ Fiscal year 2012: **Outdoor Pool Spray Park.** A spray park can attract new users; even non-swimmers can enjoy the amenities. \$150,000 in General Fund Reserves is requested.
 - ✓ Fiscal year 2012: **Amphitheatre Renovation.** Renovation of the existing amphitheatre would include upgrading the electrical system, seating, stage construction, lighting, and trail improvements. Uses of the renovated facility would include theatre, educational presentations, concerts, and private events. \$1,000,000 is requested from the General Fund Reserves to supplement contributions anticipated from Shenandoah University, the Discovery Museum, local theatre companies, and private donors.

Programming must accommodate the new users coming to Jim Barnett Park. With the influx of senior citizens coming to the Active Living Center, there should be additional personnel: Coordinators of Seniors Activities and Therapeutic Recreation. Appropriate expansion in personnel is indicated within the next 5 years. The Discovery Museum should come on line in Jim Barnett Park during this period. Again there will be the need to coordinate programming with new user groups and to develop creative ways to welcome new visitors into WPRD offerings.



10 Year Vision

The master plan seeks to provide a long-term perspective to guide the development of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Improved Aquatics Facilities: Between 2006-2008 the indoor pool underwent a transformation through improvements to the existing facility. Such improvements included new paint, windows, sound tile, roof, lockers, floor tile, water heater and diving board. These improvements have revitalized the local interest in swimming and we must continue to make constant improvements to meet the current needs. There continues to be a pressing need for more access to pool time by the Winchester Swim Team, various high school swim teams, children needing lessons, recreational and fitness users, and master's swimmers. The existing pool is inadequate for the number of residents of Winchester, Frederick County and other surrounding communities who use the facility. Future renovation could include expansion to a 40 yard by 25 meter configuration. The original Master Plan developed in 2001 called for a 50 meter pool. We can either construct one at Jim Barnett Park or cooperate with another entity to see such a pool built at another location. Working with City Council and other localities, we will choose and implement the most viable option.

Green Circle Linear Park: Shawnee Springs, Abrams Creek Wetlands, and Jim Barnett Park provide anchor points for what remains a conceptual trail linking the different neighborhoods of Winchester. We will continue to work to capitalize on opportunities to complete the Green Circle and link it with regional trail systems. It is assumed that the Green Circle Trail, once built, will become the responsibility of the Winchester Parks & Recreation Department to maintain and program.



Land Acquisition: With the growth within the region there is an ever increasing demand on the existing facilities. With the increasing “balkanization” of Jim Barnett Park, there is need to develop new and larger parks within the Winchester community. Whenever rezoning raises the possibility of a proffer of land, we must be ready to assume ownership of appropriate acreage and create new recreational programming. We support the additional option of having developers contribute funding to existing parks rather than proffering land in undesirable locations or land that holds no significant recreational value.

Maintenance: Existing infrastructure must be maintained. The vehicle fleet must be upgraded. The War Memorial Building will need improvements. We must maintain what we have with as much energy as we put forth pursuing new opportunities.

Explore Cooperation with Frederick County Parks: Many of our programs and facilities in fact serve the regional community not just Winchester’s citizenry. Cooperation in developing programs and facilities with Frederick County is indicated.

New Program Development: As the demographics of our community change we must be ready to diversify our commitment to providing recreational opportunities to our patrons. The aging Baby Boomers and Hispanic populations will bring about new recreational demands and we must be ready to diversify programming and understand trends in order to plan for, rather than react to, the demands for new opportunities. To achieve this, the Winchester Parks & Recreation Department, its board and the City of Winchester must commit to hiring and training qualified staff, providing funding for new programming, communicating with the community, and keeping an open mind to new ideas.



Facility Type	City of Winchester, VA	Winchester Public School Sites	Total Inventory	Winchester Current Service Level Based on City Inventory	National Guideline Service Level**	Recommended City Standard	Surplus/Deficit	Comments
Neighborhood Parks (Acres)	77.69		77.69	3.12 acres/1,000	2 acres/1,000	50	Exceeds	
School Grounds (Acres)		133.35	133.35	5.33 acres/1,000	1 acre/1,000	25	Exceeds	
District Parks (Acres)	170.5		170.5	6.82 acres/1,000	10 acres/1,000	250	Need 79.5 acres	Exceeds with FCPRD (394acres)
Total Park Acres	248.19	133.35	381.54	15.26 acres/1,000	15 acres/1,000	375	Exceeds	
Tennis Courts	7	6	13	2.6 courts/5,000	1 court/5,000	5	Exceeds	
Outdoor Basketball	6.5	7.5	14	1.4 courts/5,000	1 court/2,500	10	Exceeds	
Playgrounds	10	6	16	.8 sites/1,250	1 site/1,250	20	Need 4 Sites	
Picnic Shelters (Reservation)	12	0	12	2.4 shelters/5,000	1 site/5,000	5	Exceeds	
Outdoor Pools	1	0	1	1 pool/25,000	1 pool/20,000	1	Meets	50 meter pool
Spray/Wade Pools	1	0	1	1 wade pool/25,000	n/a	1	Meets	
Golf (Holes)	0	0	0	0	1 hole/4,500	0	Need 5.6 holes	Minimum of 9 holes
Trails-Soft Surface (Miles)	6*	0.5	6.5	.26 Miles/1,000	.4 mile/1,000	10	Need 3.5 Miles	JBP Bike Trails
Trails-Hard Surface (Miles)	2.3*	0.5	2.8*	.112 Miles/1,000	.4miles/1,000	10	Need 7.2 miles	Green Circle Project.
Diamond-Skinned Fields	4	2	6	1.2 fields/5,000	1 field/5,000	5	Exceeds	
Diamond-Grass Fields	4	1	5	1.4 fields/7,000	1 field/7,000	3.57	Exceeds	
Diamond-Lit Fields	7	0	7	2.8 fields/	1 field/10,000	2.5	Exceeds	
Soccer Fields	5	7	12	1.9 fields/4,000	1 field/4,000	6.25	Exceeds	
Soccer Lit Fields	0	0	0	0	1 field/5,000	5	Need 5	Space is limited
Dog Parks	1	0	1	1 site/50,000	1 site/50,000	1	Meets	
Skate Parks	0	0	0	0	1 site/50,000	1	Need 1	Site location determined
Lighted Horseshoe Courts	24	0	24	24 courts/25,000	n/a	24	Meets	
Lighted BMX Track	1	0	1	1 track/25,000	n/a	1	Meets	
Lighted R/C Car Track	1	0	1	1 track/25,000	n/a	1	Meets	
Recreation Centers (Square Feet)	17128	47480	64608	2.02 sf/person	1sf/person	2.58sf/person	Exceeds	
Community Centers (Square Feet)	19688	0	19688	.507sf/person	.5 sf/person	.79sf/person	Exceeds	
Fitness Center (Square Feet)	900	0	900	.069 sf/person	.5 sf/person	12500 sf	Need 11,600 sf	Rely on Private Industry
Indoors Pools (Square Feet)	7412	0	7412	.296 sf/person	.5 sf/person	12,500 ft2	Need 5088 sf	Only public pool in region

*Estimated

Figures based upon 25,000 residents

**National guideline service level figures compiled by Pros Consulting

Updated 5/18/09

Appendix 1-Needs Assessment

Parks

Neighborhood Parks - Location	Ball Field	Basketball	Horseshoe	Open Area	Playground	Shelter	Soccer	Swings	Trail	Volleyball
Abram's Creek Wetlands Preserve - 1643 Meadow Branch Avenue				•					•	
Cedarmeade Open Space - Adjacent to Frederick Douglass Elementary School				•						
Elk Street - 405 West Lane Corner of Elk & Chase Streets				•	•	•		•		
Frederick Douglass - Behind the Douglass Community Learning Ctr. on N. Kent Street	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Friendship - On Bruce St. between Battle Avenue & Kerr Street off Pleasant Valley Rd.		•		•		•	•			
Harvest Ridge - 805 Crestview Terrace Harvest Ridge subdivision on Middle Road				•			•			
North-East-South-West - Between Darrview, East, South & West Streets				•	•			•		
Overlook - 50 Montague Circle				•		•				
Park Place - 2024 Harvest Drive				•	•		•	•	•	
Rolling Hills - On Valley Avenue in the Rolling Hills subdivision				•						
Shawnee Springs - (10 acres of wetlands) West of Hollingsworth Drive				•					•	
Timbrook - On the corner of East Lane and Piccadilly Streets		•		•	•	•		•		•
Weaver - Southern end off Papermill Road		•		•	•	•	•	•		
Whittier - On Whittier Avenue		•		•	•	•	•	•		

Appendix 2-Park Amenities