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STRATEGIC PLAN AND SYSTEMWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the overall recommendations of the *Your Parks, Our Future* Master Plan. The chapter presents the strategic plan with the new mission, vision, goals, and objectives. The chapter then describes a series of recommendations and implementation strategies that will help Lexington accomplish that vision.

The focus of this chapter is operations and programming recommendations, but includes overall strategies for improvement and development of park spaces. Chapter 7 focuses on specific facility needs, arranged by the five sectors identified in Chapter 2 and then by individual park. Chapter 8 provides an Action Plan with specific strategies for attaining each of the goals of this master plan.

6.2 STRATEGIC PLAN

6.2.1 Vision

Inspiring individuals to imagine and pursue greatness.

6.2.2 Mission

Build community and enrich life through parks, programs, and play.

6.2.3 Values

Community

We are committed to strengthening and celebrating a sense of community unique to Lexington. Our parks and programs will contribute to the health and wellbeing of our residents, businesses and visitors, and will contribute to our community's economic development.

Stewardship

We take seriously our role in preserving, conserving and boldly protecting the natural, historical and cultural resources within parks of Lexington. We will work tirelessly to protect, raise awareness, educate, and celebrate these unique resources for generations to come.

Inclusion

We believe everyone should have convenient access to a broad range of parks, places, and programs. We are committed to removing barriers and ensuring everyone in Lexington is welcomed warmly and can actively engage in a variety of great experiences.

Collaboration

We recognize we will not realize success in our quest for greatness all alone. It will take a great deal of work supplemented by promotion, outreach, engagement, collaboration and strong relationships. We are committed to fostering teamwork, working with others, and forging win-win partnerships based on the foundation of respect and integrity.

Innovation

We are not satisfied with the status quo. We are committed to thinking “big” and in unconventional ways to creatively serve Lexington residents, businesses and visitors. We envision being leaders at the community, state and national level in terms of how we leverage parks and recreation to build community and enhance quality of life.

6.2.4 Goals and Objectives

Areas of strategic priority have been identified and will guide advancement over the next three to five years.

Goal 1: Great Spaces

Connect people in a variety of environments through parks and spaces.

Objective 1.1 – Connect: Plan, develop and maintain spaces that align with community plans, services and points of interest.

Objective 1.2 – Gather: Provide safe and welcoming spaces that promote a sense of community.

Objective 1.3 – Balance: Offer parks, facilities and services that balance active and passive functions within developed and natural areas.

Goal 2: Great Experiences

Promote health, wellness and experiences for our growing population through programs and events.

Objective 2.1 – Community Impact: Contribute wellness and culture through parks and programs.

Objective 2.2 – Safety: Coordinate with public safety and partners to provide safe and secure settings.

Objective 2.3 – Innovation: Provide creative programs and events that reflect trends and community desires.

Goal 3: Great Stewardship

Value Lexington’s resources through preservation, education and sustainable management practices.

Objective 3.1 – Preservation and Conservation: Conserve significant historical, natural and cultural resources within parks.

Objective 3.2 – Acquisition: Develop a balanced park acquisition strategy to secure open space for future generations.

Objective 3.3 – Land Management: Utilize best practices for natural resource management.

Goal 4: Great Engagement

Engage members of the community in planning and promoting quality parks and programs.

Objective 4.1 – Access: Engage citizens to identify needs and barriers to park experiences.

Objective 4.2 – Community Engagement: Raise awareness to promote, plan and improve the quality of parks and programs.

Objective 4.3 – Collaboration: Foster partnerships to meet the current and future needs of parks and recreation.

Goal 5: Great Leadership

Assure that people, process and finances are managed efficiently and effectively.

Objective 5.1 – People: Develop an efficient organization of valued staff and volunteers.

Objective 5.2 – Process: Routinely evaluate facilities, services and systems.

Objective 5.3 – Finances: Implement operational practices to improve financial sustainability.

6.3 PRIMARY PARK SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS

These system-wide recommendations represent high level, aspirational strategies and are general in nature. These actions are essential for successful implementation of the goals of this master plan. They represent ongoing efforts that require annual review and evaluation.

Great Spaces

1. Focus short-term capital improvements on renovation/replacement of existing, key facilities (playgrounds, game courts, trails, picnic shelters, restrooms, etc.).
2. Increase the population served within a 10-minute walk of a Neighborhood Park (or larger) from the current 40% to 65% through development of existing parkland, new parks in growing areas (including developer contributions), and improved access to existing parks.
3. Increase the population served within a five-minute drive of a Community Park (or larger) from the current 70% to 85% through development of existing parkland and new parks in growing areas.
4. Improve and expand underutilized parks (add features) in underserved areas throughout Lexington to improve the level of park service in these areas.
5. Prioritize facility and program improvements in locations with high levels of social need.
6. Increase availability of multi-use trail loops within parks, providing easy access to these facilities throughout Lexington.
7. Increase availability of sports fields for open play, youth and adult programs, and tournament hosting.

Great Experiences

1. Increase accessibility of all facilities and programs, including ADA accessibility, information, and availability.
2. Explore multiple uses for all venues to maximize the community's ability to utilize the city's park resources (e.g., use of golf courses for alternate activities such as FootGolf, birding, walking, nature programs, pickleball on tennis courts, cross country in open areas, etc.).
3. Expand program and event offerings to meet the needs of the growing population with special consideration to new and innovative strategies for neighborhood and regional programs.
4. Add shade in the form of trees and structures throughout Lexington for facilities such as seating areas and playgrounds.

Great Stewardship

1. Seek a balance for parkland development, including a 50%/50% split between land developed for recreational use and land remaining in its natural state. Restore underused parklands to natural areas (including reduction/elimination of mowing and tree canopy improvements) and maintain natural areas in future parks.
2. Implement conservation policies and sustainable practices for development and management of park properties.

Great Engagement

1. Continuously evaluate and implement new technologies to provide contemporary services (Wi-Fi, mobile friendly platforms, social media, etc.) expected by Lexington residents.
2. Provide additional staff and resources to continue to expand marketing efforts to increase public knowledge of parks, facilities, and programs available, utilizing diverse types of media.

Great Leadership

1. Increase cost recovery of the division operating budget from 27% to 40% within 10 years by utilizing revenue generation and operations cost reduction tactics described in this master plan.
2. Reduce the operating deficit of the golf courses through the implementation of recommendations of the J.J. Keegan Golf Presentation.
3. Establish and nurture partnerships to increase the availability of both facilities and programs and to promote outreach, participation, fitness, and volunteerism.
4. Continually monitor national and regional trends in parks and recreation facilities and programs for their applicability in Lexington.
5. Begin implementation of the recently completed Bike and Pedestrian Plan to improve access to a variety of destinations (e.g., parks, schools, workplaces, business districts).

6.4 OPERATIONS/MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

6.4.1 Policies

As recommendations of this Master Plan are implemented, policies should be updated to reflect these changes. These updates include policies internal to the division and external to the public and should be updated in both electronic and physical copies.

Policy recommendations include:

1. Supply an internal, digital version of policies for quick access by staff.
2. Provide a digital copy of external policies on the website for access by the public.
3. Provide Wi-Fi at all Community and Regional Parks, community centers, pools, and indoor rental facilities to improve communication and program management for the operations of parks and to meet the expectations of park visitors.
4. Maintain and expand, as additional facilities are developed, sponsorships or scholarships for residents who cannot afford to use facilities and participate in programs.
5. Develop policies outlining procedures for corporate sponsorship of programs and facilities with initial focus on events.
6. Implement policies necessary in order to allow additional uses of existing facilities.

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7. Strive to include public art in parks throughout the city.
 8. Develop policies to encourage the presence of a variety of food options at Lexington parks.

These efforts improve awareness of the policies and improve access to parks and programs. These policies are intended to improve and modernize park experiences. These policies will foster increased use of park spaces and facilities by residents who do not currently utilize parks.

6.4.2 Partnerships

Stakeholder groups and representatives indicated strong support for partnerships throughout the public input process. The division currently partners with other LFUCG departments, non-profits, and businesses to provide facilities and programs for Lexington residents.

Successful Partnerships

Lexington Parks and Recreation has several recent successful partnerships. A recent example is the Phoenix Forward programs in June and July of 2017. This partnership between Parks and Recreation, the Lexington Downtown Development Authority (LDDA), the Lexington Public Library occurred through a grant from the Knight Foundation. Phoenix Forward offered a series of events that included vendors, performances, inflatables, and arts and crafts at Phoenix Park. This partnership helped bring new life to a park that has experienced a declining image. The division partnered with Anderson Communities, owners of the adjacent Park Plaza Apartments, to add a dog pad (a small dog park) to the Phoenix Park.¹

Another successful partnership established a temporary downtown sprayground in Northeastern Park. SplashJAM, a partnership between Blue Grass Community Foundation, Lexington Downtown Development Authority (LDDA), and the Gehl Institute, opened in July of 2016 and was removed in August of that year. This temporary sprayground was a popular attraction and it returned for the summer of 2017. Users indicated a desire for the facility to be replaced with a permanent feature, which was reiterated through the public input for this Master Plan.

The division has ongoing partnerships for the Pam Miller Downtown Arts Center. Parks and Recreation provides and manages the facility which is used by arts and civic organizations for performances, exhibitions, and special events. Parks and Recreation partners with Friends groups (see Subsection 6.6.2) for the development, improvement, and programming of park facilities.

Recommendations

Partnerships are necessary to engage underserved populations, including low-income, minority, and residents with disabilities. Collaboration with community leaders and organizations, including churches and civic associations, is important to improve awareness of recreation opportunities and to increase participation rates. These citizens are often difficult to engage through traditional means. The division should continue to seek partnerships with community leaders, partner organizations, and OneLex to accomplish this end.

The Phoenix Forward and SplashJAM partnerships provide a model of successful programming efforts that can be used to engage residents and activate a park. The division should utilize this model to pursue future partnerships for unique programming at other parks that have been underutilized or overlooked or are located in areas with high social needs.

Parks and Recreation and the city should work with partners to develop a campaign to challenge Lexingtonians to become more active and fit. The division is a provider of facilities to help in this endeavor, but it will take organizations working together in a unified manner to mount a successful campaign. The partner organizations will be essential as part of the effort to motivate residents to participate.

The division should continue to attend neighborhood association meetings and Fayette County Neighborhood Council meetings in order to maintain a list of contacts with these associations. This effort will ensure that Parks has a designated contact with each organization in case issues arise. These contacts will be necessary in

¹ Musgrave, Beth. (2017, May 31). Beer, books, movies and inflatables: Phoenix Park gets a summer makeover. *Lexington Herald Leader*. Retrieved January 01, 2018, from <http://www.kentucky.com/news/local/counties/fayette-county/article153520624.html>

order to implement the recommendations for Neighborhood Buildings in this Master Plan (see Subsection 6.14.2). Additionally, Parks should continue to contribute to their newsletters to promote relevant programs and improvements to neighborhood parks and to inform neighborhoods of upcoming improvements.

Lexington should increase efforts for cross promotion of offerings by other organizations that offer programs, such as Downtown Lexington Partnership, YMCA, arts organizations, and various franchise leagues. A common calendar for events throughout Lexington is one method that can increase exposure and help residents and visitors identify activities. Previous efforts have had limited success in Lexington; however, the division should continue to collaborate with partners to ensure that Parks and Recreation programs and events are represented on common calendars managed by others.

Other partnership recommendations include:

1. Partner with health providers, other recreation providers, schools, private fitness clubs, YMCA, and others in a “Get Fit Lexington” campaign to challenge Lexingtonians to become more active and fit.
2. Establish stronger relationships with partners for research, land acquisition, nature education, healthy lifestyle initiatives, and more.
3. Partner with national organizations such as USTA and USGA to increase youth participation and exposure to lifetime sports such as golf and tennis.
4. Partner with the managing organizations for the planned Town Branch Park and Karst Commons for programming of these new parks.
5. Continue existing partnerships for Pam Miller Downtown Arts Center programming.
6. Collaborate with LexTran to provide additional transit routes to regional parks and events.

This last effort is especially important as new facilities are developed. For example, it is currently difficult to reach the new spraygrounds at Masterson Station and Jacobson Parks via currently available mass transit. Lextran introduced a pilot route to Jacobson Park last summer (2017), which is expected again be offered this year.

6.4.3 Communications

Many stakeholder groups indicated a need for better marketing of Parks and Recreation offerings to improve awareness of opportunities and use of park. As noted previously, the most frequently cited reason for not using parks and programs was that people do not know what is offered. Stakeholder groups indicated a need for better communication between user groups of facilities. For example, groups often are not aware of how their use or modification of a facility affects other users of that facility. Similarly, communication between user groups of adjacent facilities is often limited.

The division has made significant efforts to increase outreach and marketing. However, additional measures are still needed in order to improve the public awareness about parks, facilities, programs, and events. A successful marketing strategy will require dedicated staff with an increased budget which is a critical component of the division's outreach.

Components of communications approach should include:

1. Offer signage, program information, the program guide, and instructions in Spanish as well as English at appropriate venues and program.
2. Utilize partnerships to maximize information dissemination and program opportunities.
3. Upgrade the website to provide virtual park tours, park maps, and other features to make the site more user friendly.
4. Develop an app to provide interactive park maps, event schedules, self-led programs, etc. to allow visitors to maximize their use and enjoyment of parks.

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5. Hire full-time professionals devoted to marketing, promotion, and outreach for parks and activities.

6.4.4 Maintenance

Overall, the parks offered by Parks and Recreation are well-maintained. The Mail Survey found that 89% of households rated the conditions of facilities as *good* or *excellent*. Assessments of the parks identified a number of park facilities that are outdated, deteriorated, or in need of replacement. The following recommendations are intended to help reduce these issues in the future:

1. Implement an equipment replacement and rotation program.
2. Establish a more proactive maintenance program.
3. Update the Maintenance Standards Manual.

These changes are necessary to ensure that replacement and upgrades to facilities are completed in a balanced and equitable manner. These actions are necessary so that the division can adequately plan for inevitable capital maintenance needs.

6.5 PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Quality recreational programming is an important aspect of a healthy community. As citizens of all ages seek to enrich their lives with productive use of leisure time, the availability of a diverse range of recreational activities becomes increasingly vital. Quality recreational programs reinforce societal values such as a community's attractiveness to parents and business leaders and civic spirit/pride. The core program concept was developed to provide direction in the planning, scheduling and coordination of community-based recreational activities. Emphasis must be given to the involvement of community representatives, parents, participants and advisory groups in the planning and development of the core program.

6.5.1 Public Engagement Program Findings

The statistically valid random sample survey (Mail Survey) identified that Lexington residents are pleased with the quality of the programs offered by Parks and Recreation with 34% of the respondents indicating that they, or someone in their household, have participated in programs. Of those, 30% rated the programs as *excellent*, 61% as *good*, 9% as *fair*, and only 0.3% as *poor*. A comparison to a survey performed in 2006 identified that only 70% indicated the quality of program as *excellent* and *good*. These ratings are much lower than the 2016 survey that indicated 91% of the programs as *excellent* or *good*. Although the questions may have been asked differently, the 21% difference clearly illustrates a strong improvement in public perception.

The 2016 survey identified the highest priorities based upon the results of two questions - one identifying the highest unmet needs and the other the importance of the program to the household. The chart below (Figure 6.1) illustrates the priorities. Follow-up online and handout surveys verified that 74% agreed with these top five high priorities.

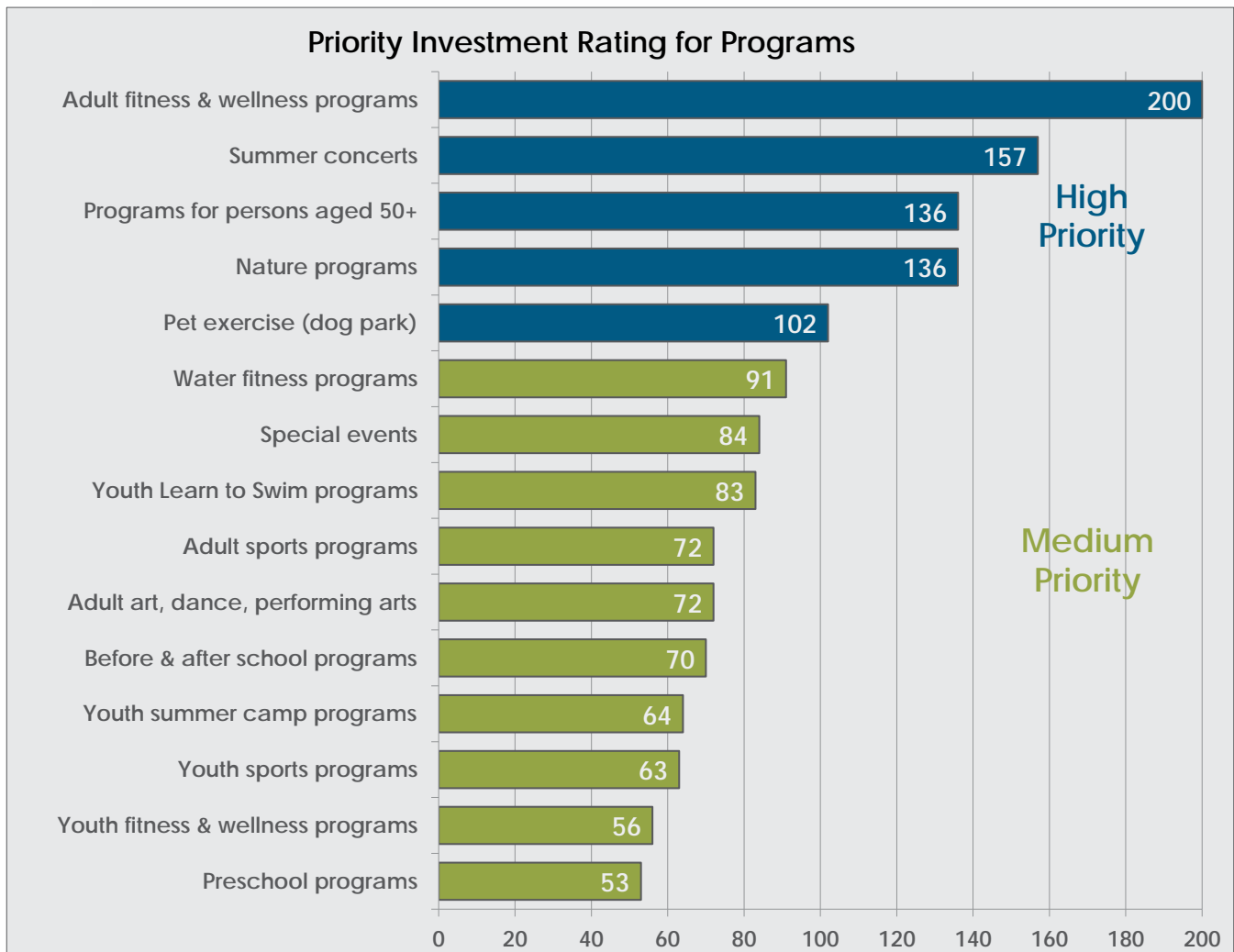
The mail survey asked respondents to identify the reasons preventing them from using parks and programs more frequently. *Do not know what is offered* was the top response by a large margin, indicating an area for improvement by the division. This need for improved marketing and communications was the most suggested improvement in the stakeholder conversations.

The Community Conversations workshops, summarized in Chapter 4, included a station for programs. Some of the most suggested improvements included:

- More youth programs (70 responses) including more intergenerational programs and more for older children
- More adult programs (42 responses) including more access to athletic fields, more pickleball courts, etc.
- More nature oriented programs (31 responses)
- More athletic programs (17 responses)

- More therapeutic programs (14 responses)

Figure 6.1: Priority Investment Rating for Programs



6.5.2 Program Participation

A review of the program inventory and participation in Chapter 3, along with data provided to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) as part of their benchmarking “Park Metrics” program, indicates that the number of participants in Lexington Parks and Recreation programs and events in 2015 and 2016 were in the range of approximately 650,000. This does not include the unprogrammed use of parks, team participants in franchise leagues, or spectators at games and activities, which could increase the figure to over one million visitors. A breakdown of the approximate participation by age group or audience type is as follows:

- Family Programming/Events 400,000 to 460,000
- Therapeutic Recreation 700
- Youth Programming 10,000 to 11,000
- Adult Programming 80,000
- Senior Programs 60,000 (provided by the Division of Aging Services)

This summary illustrates that the majority of programming is aimed at families and events, followed by adults and then youth. Attendance of events is difficult to estimate, but they reach all age ranges.

The growth of the population over age 60 clearly indicates a strong need to program for this age range. With the Senior Center and other Senior Services being programmed by the Department of Social Services, this frees up Parks and Recreation to focus on more active programs and those that attract adults and well as seniors.

The 2009 Master Plan indicated a need to increase arts programming. With the addition of Artworks at Carver School, Pam Miller Downtown Arts Center, and other endeavors, the city has made strides in this area. Moondance Amphitheater has allowed increased concert and performance programs.

6.5.3 Program Recommendations

The following efforts are recommended for the city to pursue to improve the overall service to the community through programs. Specific programs are not identified as they will vary with trends, popularity, and community needs. Instead, general direction is provided to guide the division.

Marketing and Participation

The following items represent important actions the division should take in order to increase participation and awareness of programs in Lexington.

1. Continue publication and disbursement of program guides supplemented with a robust social media presence.
2. Update the website regularly to include up-to-date program offerings, utilize email blasts to inform citizens of programs and events.
3. Include a comprehensive list of all program offerings in the Program Guide and on the website.
4. Consistently use a program evaluation process to track participant satisfaction, facility quality, participation levels, and cost recovery.
5. Continue to monitor the desires of the community in programming and event planning and implement changes based on this feedback.

Adult Programs

As a top priority of the public, opportunities for adult fitness and wellness should be increased through the development of additional facilities and programs. Improvements may include additional trails, partnering with additional sources for indoor fitness oriented activities, more fitness stations in parks, fitness programs in parks (e.g., yoga), etc.

As the population continues to age, it will be important to increase programs and activities for persons over age 50. The Senior Center provides many programs for those over age 60; however, program demands for those between 50 and 60 are not currently being met. In order to meet the needs of this growing cohort, Lexington should:

1. Increase the number and types of active adult programs.
2. Continuously investigate interest in adult sports leagues.

Youth Programs

Excellent programs are offered at the Community Centers, but the ones associated with schools have large gaps of time with no activity at the beginning and end of the summer season when no programs are offered. It is recommended to work to reduce or eliminate the gap in service delivery at these times when the usual participants have nothing to do. Other important recommendations for youth programs include:

1. Upgrade the community centers to meet the current and planned programming.
2. Continue to evaluate the pilot "Park and Play" program and offer this program in more locations if it is deemed successful.

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3. Provide additional programs in areas with higher social needs.

Section 6.14 provides details about the improvements needed at each of these community centers. Expansion of the “Park and Play” program will provide increased availability of scheduled and supervised activities in locations where they are needed the most by focusing first on areas with higher social needs (see Chapter 2, Figure 2.10).

Nature Programming

Public input indicated a need for additional nature programs; however, both McConnell Springs and Raven Run Nature Sanctuary have nearly reached capacity for programs. The continued heavy use of these two parks could cause damage to habitat and these natural areas and many fear that these existing facilities will be “loved to death.”

Hisle Farm Park represents the greatest opportunity for expanded nature programs because it is underutilized. This farm property offers different program opportunities than McConnell Springs and Raven Run due to its former use. For example, much of the property is undergoing nature restoration to prairie and woodland areas which could be utilized for numerous educational opportunities. This park could be used to alleviate some of the over use at McConnell Springs and Raven Run Nature Sanctuary.

Site improvements are needed at Hisle Farm Park to maximize potential use, most notably the addition of a nature center and site access improvements. The back portion of the property is only accessible by a bridge that is not suitable for public use. Improvements are necessary to relocate the equestrian program to this park (see Section 6.12); however, it represents another opportunity to bring users to the park.²

Additional opportunities for nature programming exist at other parks with large natural areas, such as Jacobson and Masterson Station Parks. Programming could be expanded at McConnell Springs if the existing nature center is expanded. These opportunities and others should be evaluated as Lexington attempts to meet the growing need for nature programming.

The most important actions for nature programming are:

1. Offer additional programs to respond to the growing demand for nature activities.
2. Increase the number of venues for nature programming.

Events

Community concerts are popular and highly requested. The demand for more of these programs was apparent throughout the public input process. Moondance Amphitheater is the largest and most popular facility for these events in Lexington, but it is not owned by the city and it offers convenient access to residents in the southwestern portion of the city. More of these venues are needed to meet the demand for these events. The division is in the process of acquiring Moondance Amphitheater to ensure the facility continues to meet program needs.

Residents requested more local social gatherings and neighborhood events. The division should employ innovative strategies for neighborhood programs and events by helping organizers find instructors, assisting with promotion/communication, and providing logistical support. The division should strive to foster unique activities when residents or groups indicate interest.

The following actions summarize the recommendations for events:

1. Partner with organizations to schedule more concerts, movie nights, and other types of performances.
2. Add venues throughout Lexington to provide equitable program distribution.
3. Identify and promote unique and innovative neighborhood oriented events.

² Capital improvement lists are provided in Chapter 7.

6.6 OPERATING BUDGET

6.6.1 Funding Mechanisms

As indicated above, Parks and Recreation should increase the percentage of the operating budget recovered from revenue from 27% to 40% within 10 years. The establishment of policies on fees and charges for programs is a critical part of this effort.

Potential methods include:

1. Consider charging for some programs and events, such as concerts at Moondance Amphitheater, Free Friday Flicks, etc.
2. Analyze the actual cost of every program to determine the appropriate fee. Estimate the actual cost on new programs and then monitor the actual costs when the program is in operation.
3. Charge a fee per player in the Franchise Leagues to cover some of the cost of maintenance and capital construction.
4. Investigate and utilize corporate sponsorships to help mitigate costs of programs and facilities.
5. Implement the select or appropriate recommendations of the Golf Course Presentation by J. J. Keegan to reduce the operating costs of the golf operations (see Section 6.13).
6. Rent shelters in half day increments instead of the current daily rates to allow more income and more opportunities for groups to use them.

For example, Freaky Friday Flicks recently charged \$2 for persons over 13 years old, and most participants paid without complaint. If a venue does not lend well to charging at the gate and the parking lot is on city land, then possibly charge per vehicle. These charges will likely reduce the demand for parking spaces by encouraging carpooling, biking, and walking to events.

It is important to note that not all programs can be self-sustaining, and the ability to pay must be considered as well as the target audience. Program charges should be applied primarily to future events, particularly those that may not be feasible without charges.

6.6.2 Foundations and Friends Groups

Currently, 11 Friends groups exist to improve various parks and recreation amenities throughout Lexington. The division should continue to utilize the resources provided by these groups who represent passionate users of Lexington parks. These groups provide funding, assist with maintenance, and offer programs for Lexington residents and visitors.

Existing Friends groups include:

- Friends of McConnell Springs
- Friends of Raven Run
- Friends of Dunbar
- Friends of the Parks
- Masterson Equestrian Trust
- Friends of the Dog Parks
- Friends of the Skate Parks
- Dance Attack Booster Club
- Friends of the Lexington Senior Center
- Cardinal Valley Park Activity Board
- Cardinal Hill/Easter Seals

The existing groups represent a broad cross section of park users. However, proponents of many activities and facilities remain unrepresented, Parks should assist these users in the creation of additional foundations. Based on input gathered throughout this Master Plan, interest may exist for foundations in support of the following:

- Arts & Community Centers
- Therapeutic Recreation
- Golf
- Aquatics
- Adventure Programs
- Trails

Parks and Recreation will need to continuously work to identify and assist underserved groups that may lack the resources to create foundations. In general, the division should ensure that venues exist for advocates who wish to raise or donate funds in support of specific facilities and programs.

Other strategies include:

1. Utilize existing foundations (or Friends groups) to assist with the acquisition of land and financial resources needed to implement the recommendations of this Master Plan.
2. Establish a part-time or full-time position to foster volunteerism and coordinate the efforts of the many Friends groups, including assistance in the creation of additional groups if necessary.
3. Facilitate meetings between parties proposing park improvements and the current users of facilities at those parks.

6.6.3 Endowment Concepts

Endowments provide a steady and targeted source of income to fund future development and maintenance and/or operations of a specific facility. They typically apply to facilities where an organization, businesses, or foundation has a vested interest in the success and ongoing operation of the facility. The division should continue to examine opportunities for endowments, particularly with regard to future facilities and parks with considerable capital or operation costs.

6.6.4 Grant Opportunities

Grant funding for parks and recreation is currently somewhat limited from government sources, with the most likely funding being for trails and multi-modal transportation. Foundations provide another source of grant funding and are specific within each community, there are some national programs, such as the Baseball Tomorrow Fund by Major League Baseball (MLB), USTA, and others. In addition, local foundations may be available.

The division has a grant specialist on staff, which is a major step toward maximizing these sources of funds. The dedicated position allows for the proper research and grant preparation expertise needed to be successful in competing for grants.

6.6.5 Funding Plan/Annual Budget

This plan indicates the development of additional facilities, trails, and programs. Additional maintenance staff must be brought on board to properly manage these recreational facilities, and more staff will be required for many of the other recommendations of this plan, including marketing and programming.

6.7 CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Many comments at the Community Conversations requested conservation of land to preserve natural resources and habitat. Natural areas and nature parks ranked as the third most important feature to Lexington households in the Mail Survey. As noted under Subsection 6.4.4, residents are supportive of acquisition of land

for the preservation of open space.

6.7.1 Conservation Policies

Parks and Recreation should develop a Conservation Policy and Procedures Manual that identifies goals and methods for conservation of natural resources within parks and natural areas. Many of these strategies present opportunities for partnerships with Environmental Services.

The manual should include strategies for the following:

- Greenway and trail corridor linkages
- Biodiversity and habitat protection
- Water quality protection
- Buffering and expanding existing parklands
- Educational programming
- Invasive species removal

The continued preservation and restoration of the most sensitive portions of existing and future park properties, such as floodplains and wetlands, will be a critical component of efforts to promote ecosystems services (air and water quality, hazard mitigation, wellness and educational opportunities, etc.).

6.7.2 Best Practices for Development

In order to facilitate continued implementation of best practices, the division should develop an Environmental Best Management Practices (BMPs) Manual of sustainable practices to be employed as part of development and maintenance of parks. LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) and SITES (Sustainable Sites Initiative) provide guidelines and standards for reference when determining BMPs.

The following strategies should be included in the BMP Manual:

1. Design sites to conform with or “fit” natural site topography/landforms.
2. Encourage the use of recycled construction materials and recycled construction waste materials.
3. Develop landscaping options that use less water, such as the use of native plants and drip irrigation, and advertise examples of these principles for the private sector to mirror.
4. Protect natural waterways before adding runoff and implement best practices to manage both quantity and quality.

It will be important for the division to promote conservation and sustainability efforts as they are implemented to encourage reduced levels of consumption and waste generation at the household and community levels.

6.7.3 Restoration of Underutilized Parkland

Currently, approximately 60% of parkland managed by Parks and Recreation is developed. Developed areas include all facilities, pavement, and mowed areas. If greenway properties are included, this number would drop to approximately 55%, assuming all greenway land is undeveloped.

In response to public desire for more natural areas, the division should seek a balance for parkland development, which should include a 50%/50% split between land developed for recreational use and land remaining in its natural state. In order to accomplish this goal, Lexington should restore underused parklands to natural areas and maintain natural areas in future parks. Part of the restoration of parkland should include the reduction or elimination of mowing in certain areas. The restoration of park spaces will reduce the amount of required maintenance, while improving park experiences.

Parks and Recreation must develop a plan to identify potential spaces for restoration before implementation can begin. As part of this plan, Parks staff should coordinate with the Division of Environmental Services on the implementation of the recently completed Urban Forestry Management Plan, which has goals to preserve

and expand the tree canopy. Identification of areas within parks for replanting will specifically assist with meeting the objective to “develop and implement canopy increase goals for public areas.”³

6.7.4 Monarch Conservation

In order to accomplish the Mayor’s Monarch Pledge, the City of Lexington has committed to taking a series of actions intended to help save the monarch butterfly.

Potential actions include:

- Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed/landscaping ordinances (if applicable).
- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.
- Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed where appropriate.
- Direct city property managers to consider the use of native milkweed and nectar plants at city properties where appropriate.
- Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city’s Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.
- Change landscape ordinances to support integrated pest management and reduced use of pesticides and insecticides.
- Adopt pesticide practices that are not harmful to pollinators.

6.7.5 Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plans

Parks and Recreation should develop a Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan for each city owned park (existing and future) to identify specific goals for each property. The completion of these plans at all parks represents a long-term goal extending beyond the 10-year implementation timeline of this master plan because of the large number of parks in the Parks and Recreation inventory. Initially focus on the larger parks in the system (over 20 acres in size).

6.8 PRIORITY IMPROVEMENTS AND UPGRADES AT EXISTING PARKS

In order to meet the needs of residents identified during the development of this plan, upgrades and enhancements are necessary to the parks system in Lexington. This section identifies the needs for overall improvements to service levels, including the expansion of existing parks in various areas of the city. These enhancements to existing parks represent the highest priorities for capital investment.

6.8.1 Renovation of Older Parks

Lexington parks are well-maintained with regard to ongoing maintenance such as mowing and clean-up. According to the Mail Survey, most Lexington households believe the parks are in *good* (64%) or *excellent* (25%) condition. However, considerable maintenance is required throughout the park system in terms of replacement and renovation of existing facilities. Most notably are parking lots, shelters, asphalt walkways, tennis and basketball courts, playground structures, safety surfacing, concession and restroom buildings, tables, and benches. Wooden furniture is often found unusable.

Public Input

The need for improvements of existing park facilities was a prominent theme throughout the public input. When asked about actions Lexington could take to improve parks and recreation the highest level of support was given to upgrading older parks and recreation facilities with 88% of respondents supporting this action (61% very supportive). Upgrading older parks was the second most important action for the city to take. Upgrades to existing parks received the highest dollar allocation in the survey. Similarly, the need for improvements at existing parks was prominent at the Community Conversations and stakeholder groups.

³ *Urban Forestry Management Plan*. (2017). LFUCG.

Recommendations

Parks and Recreation should focus short-term capital improvements on renovation and replacement of existing, key facilities, including playgrounds, game courts, trails, picnic shelters, restrooms, etc. Priority for these improvements should be placed on facilities in the poorest condition, with consideration to the availability of other similar facilities nearby and social needs of the area.

6.8.2 New Facilities to Improve Levels of Service

Analysis in Chapter 5 identified service areas for many facilities based on location within Lexington. The analysis included a composite map showing the overall level of service for park and facilities throughout the city. This map was then combined with the Social Needs and Conditions Index (Figure 2.10) to produce a map showing the Areas Most in Need of Additional Park Amenities (Figure 5.22).

The Priority Park Improvement Areas map (Figure 6.2) highlights the areas that are most in need of additional amenities and indicates which parks could be upgraded to improve these levels of service. These high need areas are most in need of neighborhood level, daily access facilities, although enhancements at larger parks nearby will improve service levels as well.

Public Input

The need for local neighborhood parks was a prominent and reoccurring theme of the public input. Many comments at the Community Conversations mentioned improvements to or the need for neighborhood parks (in top five subjects discussed). Neighborhood Parks were the second most important facility (after trails) and ranked as the third highest priority for investment in the statistically valid Mail Survey.

Attendees of stakeholder groups indicated a need for parks in some areas that were developed without parks (primarily recent developments). Stakeholder group attendees requested that some of the greenway properties owned by the city, but not by Parks and Recreation, be made available for public access to improve opportunities in areas currently lacking park space.

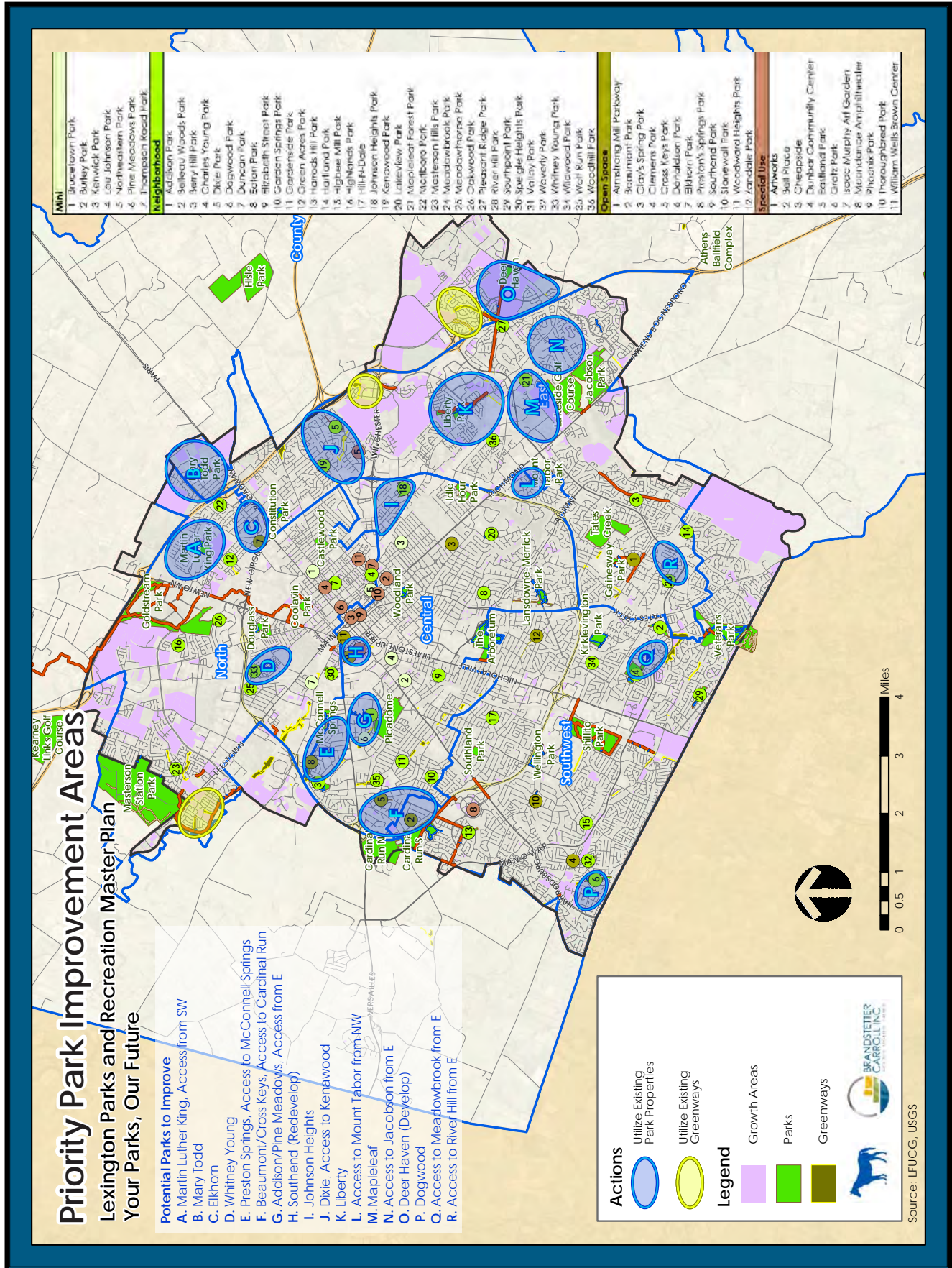
Recommendations

Improved levels of service can be accomplished in most of the existing residential areas using existing park properties. Lexington should upgrade and expand underutilized parks in underserved areas. Some of the more recent (and future) residential developments could be served through the development of existing parkland, notably Liberty and Deer Haven Parks (K and O on Figure 6.2). Many of these properties are undeveloped or underdeveloped but could support recreational amenities. Such properties are identified in Figure 6.1 with blue outlines and coded with letters. The properties in question are indicated on the left side of the map and should be improved to provide increased levels of service for the noted areas.

Improved service can be provided in many of these areas by enhancing access to existing parks through the development of walkways and trails connecting to adjacent neighborhoods. As a result, Lexington should place a high priority on developing these access points.

Recreation needs for some areas could possibly be met using existing greenway properties. These areas are indicated with yellow outlines. The indicated areas represent larger greenway properties that could more easily accommodate recreational amenities, but improvements should be considered wherever feasible to meet unmet recreational needs of Lexington residents. As noted above, residents have requested access to some of these properties. In the future, the city should consider incorporating these greenways as part of larger park acquisition and development.

Figure 6.2: Priority Park Improvement Areas



The specific proposed improvements at the parks highlighted in Figure 6.2 are presented in Chapter 7, Individual Park Recommendations. Special emphasis should be placed on improvements at parks in underserved areas with high social needs as outlined in Chapter 2. Implementing these improvements will help Lexington accomplish the goal of increasing the population served within a 10-minute walk of a park from 40% to 65%. While these recommendations focus on residents most in need based on demographics, similar opportunities should be considered in other parts of Lexington with lower levels of service based on community feedback.

Lexington is fortunate to have existing land in many of these underserved areas, making increased levels of service possible. Existing land can meet the needs of most areas in Lexington but not all. Some developed areas cannot be met by existing parks, and no land is likely to be available. These areas will likely represent long-term challenges for parks, and they indicate the importance of proactive land acquisition (see Section 6.15).

6.8.3 Park Development Plans

Many of the Lexington's parks were developed over a long period of time in response to the demands of the time and without a long-term plan. As a result, full potential has not been realized at many properties, where the relationship between amenities is not optimal. Many venues like playgrounds, shelters, and fields are inaccessible or not attractive due to the remoteness of their locations or ill placement in relation to parking, general viewing, or other access points or points of interest.

Significant changes or upgrades to parks should be implemented following a master planning process to ensure that parks are developed in a way that best utilizes site resources and provides the optimal user experience. These park development plans should generally be completed in-house with input from the community. Partnerships may be advantageous for park development plans for some parks, such as Coldstream Park (UK owns adjacent land).

The following parks should have park development plans developed or updated:

- Beaumont Park
- Cardinal Run Park North (Update)
- Castlewood Park
- Charles Young Park
- Coldstream Park (Potential UK partnership)
- Deer Haven Park
- Elkhorn Park
- Hisle Farm Park(Update)
- Jacobson Park (Update)
- Kenawood Park
- Liberty Park
- Mapleleaf Park
- Martin Luther King Park
- Mary Todd Park
- Masterson Park (Update)
- Masterson Hills Park
- Northeastern Park
- Oakwood Park
- Phoenix Park
- Shillito Park (Update)
- Southend Park
- Valley Park
- Veterans Park
- Woodland Park

6.8.4 ADA/Accessibility Improvements

Handicapped inaccessibility at many of the parks and facilities is commonplace. Such facilities include playgrounds, access walkways and trails, spectator areas, shelters, remote picnic tables, bench swings, etc. An audit is mandated in the Americans with Disabilities Act enacted in 2010 and to have a plan in place by 2012. The last Accessibility Audit was performed in 2006, prior to the changes in the 2019 Americans with Disabilities Act with the revised 2012 implementation regulations.

Lexington Parks and Recreation should engage a consultant to conduct an accessibility audit of all facilities (indoor and outdoor) and programs. Upgrades of accessibility are necessary at all facilities, including access to athletic fields, spectator areas, restrooms, playgrounds, picnic shelters, and in buildings. Accessible walks must be a minimum of four feet wide. Six feet wide is recommended, which avoids the need for passing areas every 200 feet. Grass is not considered an accessible surface.

The division should prepare an implementation plan outlining upgrades to access over a five-year period. Implementation must include physical facilities, websites, communications, marketing, policies, and practices.

6.8.5 Safety and Security Improvements

Safety and security in parks was a prominent theme of the public engagement. Attendees of public workshops requested lighting on some segments of trails. Implementation of these recommendations should start with the most used trail loops at larger parks. Security and lighting ranked highest in the Mail Survey for improvements respondents would like to see at existing parks.

The following recommendations are intended to address major concerns:

1. Install security lighting at all Community and Regional Parks and maintenance facilities to encourage a safe atmosphere and to prevent damage to park property.
2. Collaborate with law enforcement to increase presence in the parks and an improved perception of safety for park users.
3. Add mileage information and emergency signage at trail markings along trails throughout the city.
4. Add lighting along select segments of trails and trail loops to extend hours of use and to promote a safer experience.

The addition of mileage information will require coordination with the city's implementation of the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan. The lighting of trails should focus on trail segments that may be used as transportation corridors, and trail loops should be selected to provide a balance of service throughout Lexington as lighting will not be added to most trails.

6.8.6 Signage and Support Features

While users do not tend to visit parks specifically to use support features, they serve to make those visits more pleasant and encourage users to stay longer. Support features often represent the most desired improvements at parks. For example, restrooms ranked highest in Mail Survey for improvements respondents would like to see at existing parks. Drinking fountains were fourth and shade structures were fifth. Such improvements were requested by stakeholder groups and at the Community Conversations.

Signage

Various types of additional signage are needed throughout the park system in order to improve user experiences. Prior to the development of this signage, the division should develop consistent signage and branding standards for use at all parks and facilities. Signage should be added at park entrances where none currently exist. Additionally, wayfinding signage is needed at all parks to identify and direct users to attractions (coordination with external partners may be required). Wayfinding signage should be located at each park at kiosks, bulletin boards, or other information centers and should indicate trail lengths, accessibility, and difficulty levels. Interpretive signage should be provided at locations of natural resources in parks and along trails to provide educational opportunities.

Seating

In general, more seating is desired throughout parks and along trails. Seating should be provided adjacent to features or in scenic areas. Depending on the location benches or permanent tables may be appropriate.

Shade

Many residents indicated a desire for more shade at parks. Accordingly, shade should be provided in the form of trees and structures throughout Lexington parks for facilities such as seating areas and playgrounds. Wherever possible, shade should be provided through the addition of trees; however, fabric structures will be necessary in some areas.

Restrooms and Drinking Fountains

Restrooms and drinking fountains should be included as part of any park improvement project as defined by park classification. Restrooms, in particular, help to extend park visits and should be a priority at the largest parks. Drinking fountains with dog bowls and bottle filling stations should be provided at strategic locations.

6.9 TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS

Trail recommendations focus on two main categories of trail: recreational trails needed within parks and a system of interconnected trails throughout Lexington. The trail system recommendations emphasize coordination with partners, including the Division of Planning, on implementation of the Bike and Pedestrian Plan, while many of the park trail recommendations require specific actions and investment by Parks and Recreation.

6.9.1 Public Input

Trails and connectivity represented the most commonly discussed facility improvements. Trails ranked second in the Mail Survey for improvements at existing parks. Eighty-two percent (82%) of Lexington households support building new recreational trails & connecting existing trails, according to the statistically valid Mail Survey. In order to reiterate the widespread support for trail improvements, highlights of the public input results are listed below by input method. Transportation, notably connectivity and trails, was one of the most prominent topics of the public input from the city's *2018 Comprehensive Plan Update*,⁴ which was underway during the process of this Master Plan.

Public Meetings

- One of most requested at Community Conversations
- First on feature preference board
- Trails/connectivity one of most discussed in stakeholder groups

Mail Survey

- Second ranked improvement needed at existing parks (63%)
- Most needed facility overall (68%)
- Unmet needs for facilities (Most needed – over 42,000 households)
- Most important facility (First)
- Priority Investment – Walking & hiking (First) and Paved bike trails (Fourth)
- Most Important Actions (Third)
- \$100 Allocation (Second)

Follow-Up Survey

- 70% agreed that walking & hiking trails and paved bike trails were in the top five (5) facility priorities
- Biggest need for next 5-10 years (open-ended) – Trails/Connectivity most desired

Online Engagement

- Trails were the most requested improvements

⁴ From analysis of over 10,000 comments from "On the Table" participants

6.9.2 Citywide Trail System

The most important recommendation related to the citywide trail system is to coordinate with partners and implementation of the recently completed Bike and Pedestrian Plan. The Bike and Pedestrian Plan is intended to improve access to a variety of destinations, such as parks, schools, workplaces, and business districts. Once implementation begins for the Bike Plan and the Parks Master Plan coordination with the Division of Planning will be essential to ensure that the recommendations of both plans are considered during the improvement and acquisitions processes.

The Bike and Pedestrian Plan makes recommendations for a transportation network for both bicyclists and pedestrians. The plan outlines four types of projects: bikeway, shared use trail, pedestrian improvement, and complete street projects. These projects are separated into short-term and mid- and long-term priorities which are presented in Figure 6.3, which is reproduced from that plan. Bikeways are divided into three types of routes, major, minor and local bikeways. The type of facility will be determined during the design phase and will be based on parameters defined in the plan.

Proposed shared-use trail routes traverse or connect the following parks and trails:

Short-Term Priorities

- Valley Park/Preston's Springs Park/McConnell Springs
- Idle Hour Park
- Liberty Park/Brighton East Trail (connection to trail along Man-o-War Blvd)
- Pine Meadows Park
- River Hill Park

Mid- and Long-Term Priorities

- Masterson Station Park
- Coldstream Park (South of Citation Blvd)
- Jacobson Park
- Veterans Parks
- Belleau Woods Park
- Cardinal Run South Park
- Clemens Park
- Deer Haven Park (North/South link to Brighton East Trail)
- Dogwood Park
- Douglass Park (connection to Legacy Trail)
- Mapleleaf Park
- Masterson Hills Park
- Southpoint Park
- Town Branch Trail (connections to Masterson Station Neighborhood)

The following proposed bikeways connect or provide access to Regional Parks and major trails:

Bikeway Priorities

- Neighborhood connections to Legacy Trail (Oakwood, Highlands, and Sandersville neighborhoods)
- Coldstream Research Campus
- Cardinal Run Park North and South
- Jacobson Park (along Richmond/Athens Boonesboro)
- Shillito Park

-
- Veterans Park

The plan indicates bikeway connections between many other in the system to each other, to trails, and to nearby neighborhoods, including several downtown. Residents near several parks near the Legacy Trail have indicated a desire for connections between parks and the trail. As the trail system is developed, Lexington will likely encounter increasing requests for connections between new or expanded trails, neighborhoods, and parks. Parks and Recreation and internal partners must be prepared to respond to these requests, including connections not identified in the Bike and Pedestrian Plan.

Two additional strategies will be important for the long-term planning and sustainability of the trail system:

1. Coordinate with the Divisions of Planning and Environmental Services within the city to coordinate maintenance of the trail system.
2. Plan for interconnected trails leading through and out of all future residential developments.

Trail Maintenance

Parks and Recreation is responsible for the maintenance of hard surface trails in greenways and parks after they are constructed. The Bike and Pedestrian Plan includes recommendations for the construction of bike lanes, which are extensions of the roadway and are primarily composed of asphalt. The Division of Streets and Roads will be responsible for the maintenance of these bike lanes. Street and Roads provides contractual resurfacing and conditioning of asphalt. The Bike and Pedestrian Plan provides four key principles for maintenance of the trail system:

- Develop a management plan that is reviewed and updated annually with tasks, operational policies, standards, and routine and remedial maintenance goals.
- Maintain quality control and conduct regular inspections.
- Include field crews, police and fire/rescue personnel in both the design review and ongoing management process.
- Maintain an effective, responsive public feedback system and promote public participation.

The implementation of these key principles will require Parks and Recreation to partner with other city departments, including Streets and Roads, Environmental Services, Police, and Fire and Emergency Services.

Trails in Future Residential Developments

Providing an interconnected trail system in future neighborhoods will be easier to accomplish if they are included as part of the development plan for the subdivision. Trails, like parks, should be considered vital infrastructure and planned during the development process.

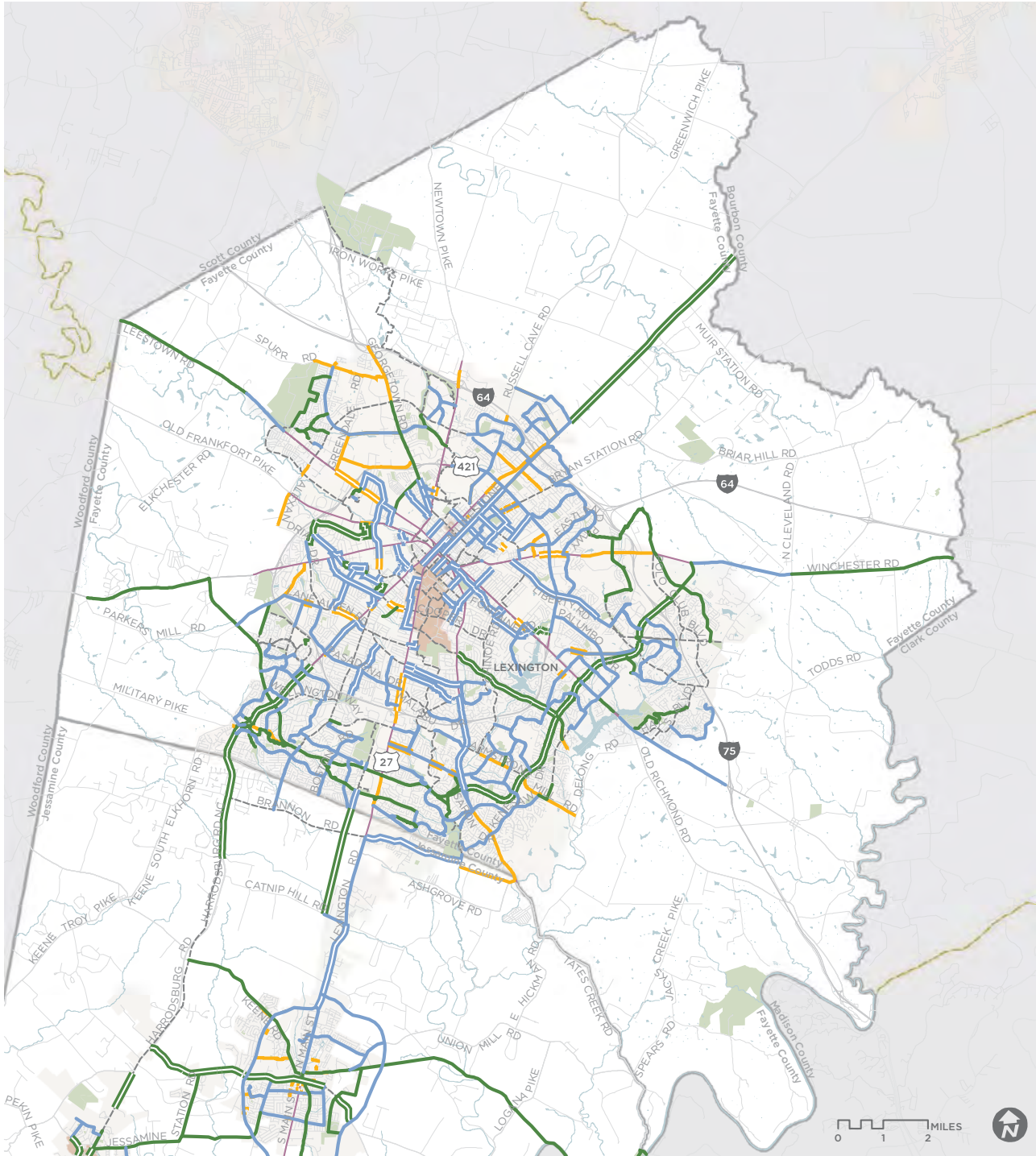
6.9.3 Park Trails

Dedicated walking trails represent a unifying element for parks but few in Lexington have these trails available. The analysis in Chapter 5 showed most of the city lives within a five-minute drive of a walking trail, but as walking trails have become a basic service desired by most residents, these facilities should be accessible within a walking distance. Additionally, many parks have walkways that are counted as walking trails, but many do not provide complete loops, which are preferred by park users.

Recommendations for trails within parks include:

1. Improve access between parks and adjacent neighborhoods through the addition of paved walkways, providing improved park service with minimal investment.
2. Increase availability of multi-use trail loops within parks.
3. Offer walking and/or biking trails and provide good circulation (walkways/ADA access) at all Community Parks (or larger) and Neighborhood Parks where feasible.

Figure 6.3: Bike and Pedestrian Plan Priorities



NETWORK PRIORITIES Fayette County

| SHORT-TERM | MID- AND LONG-TERM | |
|------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | BIKEWAY PROJECT |
| | | SHARED USE TRAIL PROJECT |
| | | PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENT PROJECT |
| | | COMPLETE STREET PROJECT |
| | | EXISTING AND FUNDED BIKEWAY NETWORK |



-
4. Develop additional nature trails in unutilized and inaccessible portions of Hisle Farm Park and Raven Run Nature Sanctuary.
 5. Add mountain bike trails in the north, west, and east portions of the city to balance the existing location in the south (Veterans Park).
 6. Investigate and improve water trail opportunities on West Hickman Creek, Elkhorn Creek, and the Kentucky River.

Since trails are such a desirable feature to Lexington residents, they should be incorporated into any park unless the feature is impractical or cost prohibitive. See Chapter 7 for trail recommendations by park and trail type. Proposed shared-use trail connections within parks are included in the priorities lists in the previous subsection (6.9.2).

6.10 ATHLETIC FIELD COMPLEXES

The need for a large sports complex has been a recurring concept of planning in Lexington for years. The need for additional athletic fields was identified throughout the public input process, particularly at the Community Conversations Open Houses (second most requested facility). Stakeholder groups indicated difficulty finding fields for practice and game use.

6.10.1 Previous Efforts

The Bluegrass Sports Commission previously approached the city about a partnership for the development of a sports complex to promote economic development. They produced a feasibility study, *Lexington Sports Complex Market and Feasibility Analysis*, in 2015 outlining the benefits of such a facility. According to this document, a tournament sports complex, proposed at the Cardinal Run Park North property, would cost around \$30 million. They projected 517 events per year, including 56 tournaments. These tournaments would occur nearly every weekend of the year. The report detailed a variety of economic impacts, including job creation, new spending, new earnings, and taxes. None of the tax dollars would be returned directly to Parks and Recreation or the city, however.

Due to its heavy use by visitors, a tournament focused complex would not likely meet the growing needs of Lexington residents unless use agreements could be worked out that ensured sufficient local use to meet existing and future needs. Many Lexington athletic leagues are located regionally and might not be best served by a large facility located in a different part of the city. Additionally, the proposed Cardinal Run Park North site is only accessible from Parkers Mill Road, making the complex unfeasible without access to Versailles Road, which the State of Kentucky has not indicated a willingness to grant.

6.10.2 Recommendations

The needs of Lexington residents will likely be best served through the development of more regional athletic field complexes like the existing facilities at Cardinal Run Park South. Such facilities are more easily accommodated by existing land in Lexington Parks and Recreation Inventory. For example, a rectangular field complex at Cardinal Run Park North (as part of a larger park) could meet a regional need without the potential traffic problems associated with the proposed tournament complex.

Figure 6.4 shows the recommended rectangular field complexes, utilizing land already owned by Parks and Recreation. This figure indicates that most of the city is located within a 10-minute drive of these areas with the eastern portion of the city the obvious exception. Existing diamond field complexes (three or more) provide service within a 10-minute drive to most residents of Lexington with the eastern and northwestern portions of the Urban Services Area as notable exceptions.

A potential Tournament Sports Complex should be evaluated based on its merits as a driver of economic development. Any such complex will have some local use, but the needs of local teams as identified through this planning process are better addressed by facilities managed by Parks and Recreation. A tournament complex may be advantageous to Lexington for its potential to promote tourism, benefit local businesses, and generate additional tax revenue.

Sports Complex Recommendations include:

1. Develop a diamond field complex on the eastern side of the city to balance the existing facilities on the western side at Cardinal Run Park South.
2. Develop additional rectangular field complexes at Cardinal Run Park North (6 fields), Coldstream Park (6 fields), and Martin Luther King Park (3 fields).
3. Continue to investigate potential opportunities for a large Tournament Sports Complex for economic development purposes.

6.11 AQUATICS

The city has begun the implementation of the Aquatics Master Plan with the construction of the new spraygrounds at Masterson Station and Jacobson Parks, and new spraygrounds will replace the wading pools at Castlewood Aquatic Center and Douglass Pool in 2018. A waterslide was designed for Douglass Pool and should be implemented in a future phase. Improvements have been made at Southland Aquatic Center to update this facility with more shade shelters, a dumping bucket, and resurfacing of the slide.

The full content of the Aquatic Master Plan recommendations will not be duplicated here, but main items include:

1. Continue to implement Health, Safety and Regulatory Improvements at all pools.
2. Develop spraygrounds in several locations.

Spraygrounds at Castlewood Aquatic Center and Douglass Pool are scheduled for construction. As noted in Subsection 6.4.2, the temporary sprayground at Northeastern Park should be replaced with a permanent feature at Charles Young Park. That park has enough space to accommodate the facilities needed for a permanent structure and is located along the future Town Branch Trail.

3. Develop Shillito Pool as a Regional Family Aquatic Center.

Shillito Pool currently underperforms due to the lack of attractions in a demographic environment where it should thrive. The pool is located in a popular location within the city.

4. Implement Aquatics Master Plan improvements at Woodland, Southland (pool house), and Tates Creek Aquatic Centers (capital maintenance).
5. Seek and establish partnerships to develop an indoor aquatic center in Lexington to meet the documented and growing need for indoor competition and programming.

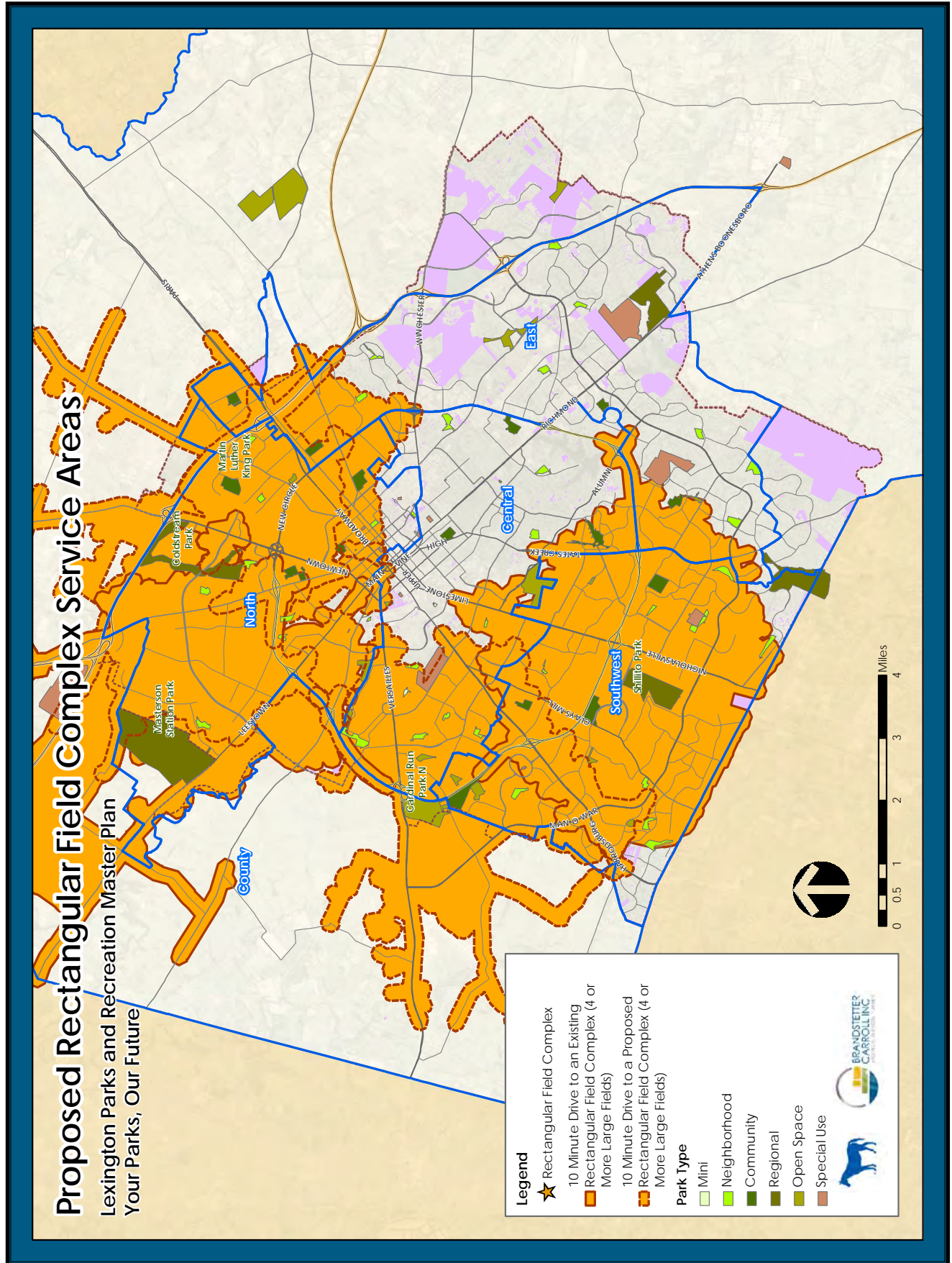
The city has a strong need for an indoor center for competition, swim team practice, and programming. The high capital cost and annual cost of operations requires that partnerships will need to be formed to make this a reality.

6.12 EQUESTRIAN FACILITIES

The *Your Parks, Our Future* Master Plan recommends the relocation of the recreational equestrian program from Masterson Station Park to Hisle Farm Park. The 2009 Master Plan Update previously recommended the relocation.

The relocation will require a series of improvements including lesson rings, tack barn/office, run in sheds, fencing, stables, and pasture area. Hisle Farm Park is underutilized, and the relocation of the program will help reduce conflict between the needs of the equestrian program and the recreational needs of the growing residential population near Masterson Station Park. Parks and Recreation should continue to evaluate the demand for the perimeter equestrian trail at Masterson Station Park with consideration to other competing needs of residents and park users.

Figure 6.4: Proposed Rectangular Field Complex Service Areas



The remaining facilities at Masterson Station Park are primarily used for programs and events organized and managed by the Masterson Equestrian Trust. Stakeholders in this group indicated a willingness to partner for investment in improvements to these facilities. The division should continue to evaluate opportunities to partner with this group for improvements to these facilities.

6.13 GOLF COURSES

Community Conversations comments mostly requesting courses stay open; however, attendees of both the Community Conversations and the stakeholder groups indicated desires to use golf courses for other recreational opportunities.

The golf courses represent an excellent opportunity to explore multiple uses for park facilities to maximize resources as indicated in the Top 20 recommendations in Section 6.3. Golf courses could be used for alternate activities such as FootGolf, birding, walking, nature programs, and more. FootGolf is offered at Picadome, but the other opportunities are waiting to be explored, most notably at Meadowbrook Golf Course. These uses could be accommodated with temporary amenities, including mobile bird blinds or disc golf holes. Running events were suggested during the public input process as another possible use.

The implementation of the recommendations of the Golf Course Presentation by J. J. Keegan will be an important component of the division's efforts to increase cost recovery for Parks and Recreation and decrease the operating deficit of the golf courses.

The following changes should continue to be implemented:

1. Eliminate \$5 loyalty card stacked discounts.
2. Increase minimum age for senior rate from 50 to 57.
3. Issue RFP for management company if financial losses at golf courses are not reduced within two years.
4. Continue to implement the following rate adjustments.
 - Increase cart fees.
Rates were increased \$1 per 9 holes, \$2 per 18 (adjusted August 2017), leading to a projected revenue increase of \$109,500.
 - Simplify rates by eliminating, Dusk rate, Twilight at Meadowbrook Golf Course, and Twilight on weekends.
 - Increase price of Range Card from \$150 to \$200.
 - Add Junior rate (no cart) on weekends.
 - Allow rate changes 1 year prior to adjusting additional rates.
5. Expand customer database/E-mail marketing to core customers.
 - Capture tournament participant emails to add to database.
 - Capture cart rental email to add to database.
The email database increased by 1,000 addresses in 3 months as a result of these efforts.
6. Utilize course staff to set budgets that are centrally approved.
7. Decrease golf shop staff by 30%.
 - Combine Pro Shop/Grill at Picadome.
This action results in 100 hours per month reduction of staffing levels above the 27% already achieved and allows the Grill to stay open year-round.
 - Schedule based on demand.

This scheduling will allow for in further reduction of staffing levels.

8. Develop inclement weather parameters for winter and severe weather closures.
9. Continue to implement the following actions.
 - Expand play through youth and diversity outreach and tournament opportunities.
 - Identify additional efficiencies.
 - Centralize purchasing.
 - Upgrade RecTrac.
 - Explore mobile options for booking tee times.

Many of the areas adjacent to the golf courses are poorly served by parks. If a decision is made in the future to cease operations of any of these properties as golf courses, first consideration should be given to maintaining the land as parkland.

6.14 INDOOR FACILITIES

Lexington currently offers six community centers: Artworks at Carver School, Castlewood Community Center, Dunbar Community Center, Gainesway Community Center, Kenwick Community Center, and William Wells Brown Community Center. These facilities offer after school programs, teen programs, fitness programs, arts and crafts, classes, and more. The Black & Williams Neighborhood Center and Charles Young Community Center offer some programming. Thirteen (13) neighborhood buildings are available for use by neighborhood association, some of which offer neighborhood programming. McConnell Springs and Raven Run Nature Sanctuary both offer nature centers with indoor programming. See Chapter 3 for a summary of program offerings.

Through the public input, Lexington residents indicated that they would like more availability of indoor programming (see Section 6.5 for programming recommendations), particularly youth, therapeutic recreation, nature, and fitness programs. Existing programs fill up quickly and more demand exists; however, most classes cannot be expanded without additional program space.

6.14.1 Community Centers

Community center stakeholders in general wanted to see additional program offerings and better marketing of existing programs. Accessibility of the buildings is a common problem. Stakeholders would like to see extended hours and days of operation. These groups indicated that many of the frequent users of centers were left with nowhere to go when centers are closed, particularly during school breaks and when camps are offered at the centers. Hours and days of operation should be extended where possible to accommodate the needs of these users (youth in the neighborhoods).

An analysis of usage times/dates should be conducted in order to maximize the use of existing facilities as additional program and rental opportunities may be possible at exiting spaces. Internet connectivity is poor at community centers in general, and the computers are old and outdated. These amenities, in particular, need to be improved at all centers to enable visitors to access electronic services and to allow for additional educational programs. Recommendations for specific community centers are provided below.

Dunbar Community Center

Dunbar Community Center stakeholders indicated that the center is underutilized and should be available for more programming opportunities with consideration to the needs of both new and long-term residents (the neighborhood has experienced changes in composition). As part of this effort, the center should extend program offerings beyond its current focus on youth sports.

Some improvements are needed at Dunbar Community Center, including computer lab, weight room, new windows, and restrooms. Dunbar program offerings should be increased to include health and wellness classes, fitness programs, educational programs, and more summer programs.

Castlewood Community Center

Upgrades are needed at the Castlewood Community Center in order for it to serve as an improved program facility. The facility currently houses many of the therapeutic recreation programs. A condition assessment, prepared in 2016, provided recommendations for improvements needed at the center.

Kenwick Community Center

The Kenwick Community Center should be redeveloped to better serve community needs. The existing site has limitations that were identified in a condition assessment prepared in 2016. Deficits included accessibility issues that would be difficult to address in the existing building.

6.14.2 Neighborhood Buildings

The neighborhood buildings in Lexington parks are primarily used by neighborhood associations for monthly meetings. Agreements with these neighborhood associations should be formalized for the use and maintenance of these facilities. Many of these organizations may not be aware of these existing agreements, so it will be important to ensure these associations are aware of the existence and content of these agreements.

Since these buildings are left unused most of the time, they represent a potential location for additional neighborhood programs and events. Parks and Recreation should continue to assist these associations in their efforts to provide neighborhood programming. Public input indicated a desire for more indoor meeting space, so neighborhood associations could potentially make these building available to meet this need while generating some revenue for the upkeep of the buildings. Better use of these buildings would help meet the goal of finding multiple uses for city-owned facilities and resources.

Any revenue from these programs or rentals should be used to fund needed maintenance at these neighborhood buildings, and the agreements between the division and the neighborhood associations should include details regarding anticipated revenue and maintenance requirements.

6.14.3 Recreation Center

The existing community centers emphasize programming and services for youth and seniors. The need for additional indoor program space was a reoccurring theme of the public input process, and many residents indicated that they would like to see a facility like the Lexington Senior Center that would be available for all residents of Lexington.

A large recreation center would help meet this growing demand for indoor recreation, including program space for a wide variety of activities. A potential location for a future recreation center is in the northwestern portion of the city where community centers and potentially competing facilities, like the YMCA, are not currently offered. The first step in the process of developing such a facility would be the completion of a feasibility study. A feasibility study would define the demand for the facility, the amenities needed, the size of the facility, and any potential partners that might be interested. The facility could potentially include an indoor pool, which would address a longstanding need for Lexington residents, as identified in the Aquatics Master Plan (see Section 6.11).

6.14.4 Nature Centers

Nature programs ranked as highly needed in every public input method. They were frequently cited at the Community Conversations and were the third ranked unmet need and fourth most important program type in the Mail Survey. While some nature programs are conducted outside, many offer indoor educational opportunities, which take place at the nature centers. The two existing nature centers (McConnell Springs and Raven Run Nature Sanctuary) are heavily programmed and would present challenges for larger or additional programs without expansion.

The expansion of the McConnell Springs nature center is recommended to allow for additional programming and larger groups at this centrally-located facility. A nature center at Hisle Farm Park is recommended as program offerings are currently limited at this location due to the absence of an indoor facility, for even outdoor programs need access to indoor facilities in case of poor weather and for restroom and other support

facilities. Hisle Park is presently underutilized while Raven Run experiences excessive traffic. Future nature centers may be desirable in other parks as program offerings are expanded and depending on continued growth of demand for nature education.

6.15 PARKLAND ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

The previous section focused on improvements at existing parks. The acquisition and development of new parks will be necessary to meet the needs of residents in some portions of Lexington. Public input consistently indicated support for preservation of open space. The public input from the city's *2018 Comprehensive Plan Update* indicated strong interest in green space, including parks and natural areas.

6.15.1 Parks in Growth Areas

The analysis in Chapter 5 identified areas with low levels of park service. These areas were generally located in recently developed areas and future growth areas and cannot be adequately served through existing parks.

Public Input

Public input indicated a need for parks in growing areas to ensure all residents have access to parks. Most of the public input described in Section 6.8 is important when considering growth areas. Some of these areas may be served by existing parks, especially if improved as recommended in this master plan. However, due to location, existing parks will not be able to fully meet the needs of these new developments.

Recommendations

New parks will be needed in these growing areas in order to provide a level of service comparable to the rest of Lexington in terms of access to facilities and proximity to accessible open space. Land for these new parks should be set aside during and as part of the development process. Like the need for future trails described in Subsection 6.9.2, parks and open space must be considered vital infrastructure for new residential developments to best accomplish this goal.

Figure 6.5 highlights areas that will need new parks as they are developed in order to receive a similar level of service for parks that is seen in the rest of the city. The areas to be served by future parks are indicated with purple outlines and include some recent subdivisions that are adjacent to growth areas. The park needs of these areas will require new parkland, which could be provided by developers as part of the development process or could be purchased with exaction credits in some areas (see Subsection 6.15.3). Optimally, many of these parks would be owned and operated by homeowners associations. If no arrangements can be made with developers, the city should explore other opportunities to develop parks in these areas.

6.15.2 New Regional and Nature Parks

Regional Parks and Nature Parks tend to be located regionally, while serving citywide needs. Parks and Recreation currently operates five (5) Regional Parks: Coldstream Park, Jacobson Park, Masterson Station Park, Shillito Park, and Veterans Park. Although these parks are well distributed, gaps exist in the northeastern and western portions of Lexington, which were noted in Chapter 5. The city has three Nature Parks (four counting The Arboretum), which are distributed throughout the county, but none are located in the north or west. Raven Run Nature Sanctuary and McConnell Springs experience heavy use, which could lead to negative impact on the character of the sites and user experiences.

Public Input

Stakeholder groups requested more parks and more parkland in general. Attendees of the Community Conversations requested more natural areas and more nature parks like Raven Run Nature Sanctuary in other parts of the county. According to the Mail Survey, Lexington households are very supportive of acquiring land to preserve open space, natural, and historic areas 83% supporting this action and 64% very supportive.

Recommendations

The map presented in Figure 6.5, Proposed Regional and Nature Parks, identifies four new or expanded parks

in Lexington that would help to meet the needs of the growing population of the city. These improvements represent the development of one existing park, one private park, and two long-term acquisition areas.

Although the need for the development of the new parks is long-term, the acquisition of the land of these potential parks should be considered before the necessary land is no longer available or becomes cost-prohibitive. Lexington should investigate opportunities for the acquisition of land for a future Regional Park in the northeast portion of Fayette County to meet the needs of a growing and underserved area. The city should similarly explore potential acquisition of land for a new Nature Park (or preserve) to be located to the west of the Urban Service Boundary to meet expanding regional demand and to prevent overuse of existing natural areas. Both of these areas are outlined in Figure 6.5.

Expansion of Cardinal Run Park North to a Regional Park would address the gap in service for Regional Parks in the western portion of Lexington. Figure 6.6 shows the area within a 10 minute drive of Cardinal Run Park North. The specific amenities that should potentially be offered on the Cardinal Run Park North property are presented in Chapter 7, but the park should include a wide variety of features with both active and passive uses. The improvements at this park would help to improve the service levels of areas E, F, and G of Figure 6.2 as many of the proposed features of the park are not currently available in that part of Lexington.

The City of Lexington and Parks and Recreation should continue to encourage the private development of the proposed Town Branch Park. This privately-operated park would provide a much needed regional recreational attraction in downtown Lexington.

6.15.3 Acquisition Strategies

As described under 6.8.2, public input indicated a desire for parks and more parkland, particularly in underserved areas. As described previously, park needs may be met in many of the underserved areas through existing parks.

Developer Provided

The need for additional parks will continue to increase as the population of Lexington grows and as new residential subdivisions are developed. Most new developments in Lexington are located beyond the service areas of existing parks. Recent residential developments have not included open space suitable for recreational uses. Park needs should be considered from the beginning of the development process as it is difficult to find suitable parkland once development has begun.

The following strategies are important to ensure that Lexington and developers collaborate to provide sufficient levels of park services in future residential developments.

1. Acquire land in projected residential growth areas for Community and Neighborhood Parks and natural areas using developer exaction credits.
2. Encourage the dedication and development of parkland as part of the residential development process (not necessarily city-operated).

These two actions will require collaboration with the Department of Planning, Preservation, and Development to determine potential locations for future parks and to ensure that land dedicated as open space is appropriate and adequate for the recreational needs of the neighborhood or neighborhoods to be served. These future parks and recreational features do not need to be owned or operated by the city or Parks and Recreation. For many of these amenities, particularly smaller parks, ownership and operation by homeowners' association may be preferred.

Donations

Much of the land currently in Parks and Recreation inventory was acquired through donations, including Hisle Farm Park. Similar opportunities may arise in the future, and it will be important for the city to evaluate how these potential properties may meet the current or future needs for parks and natural areas. Potential tracts of land that meet the needs outlined in this plan should be actively encouraged; however, any potential property should be evaluated for recreation or conservation value. Overall, the city should pursue opportunities for the acquisition of large tracts in rural areas that meet long-term future park needs as identified in this plan, including those identified in Figure 6.6.

Figure 6.5: Parks Needed During Development

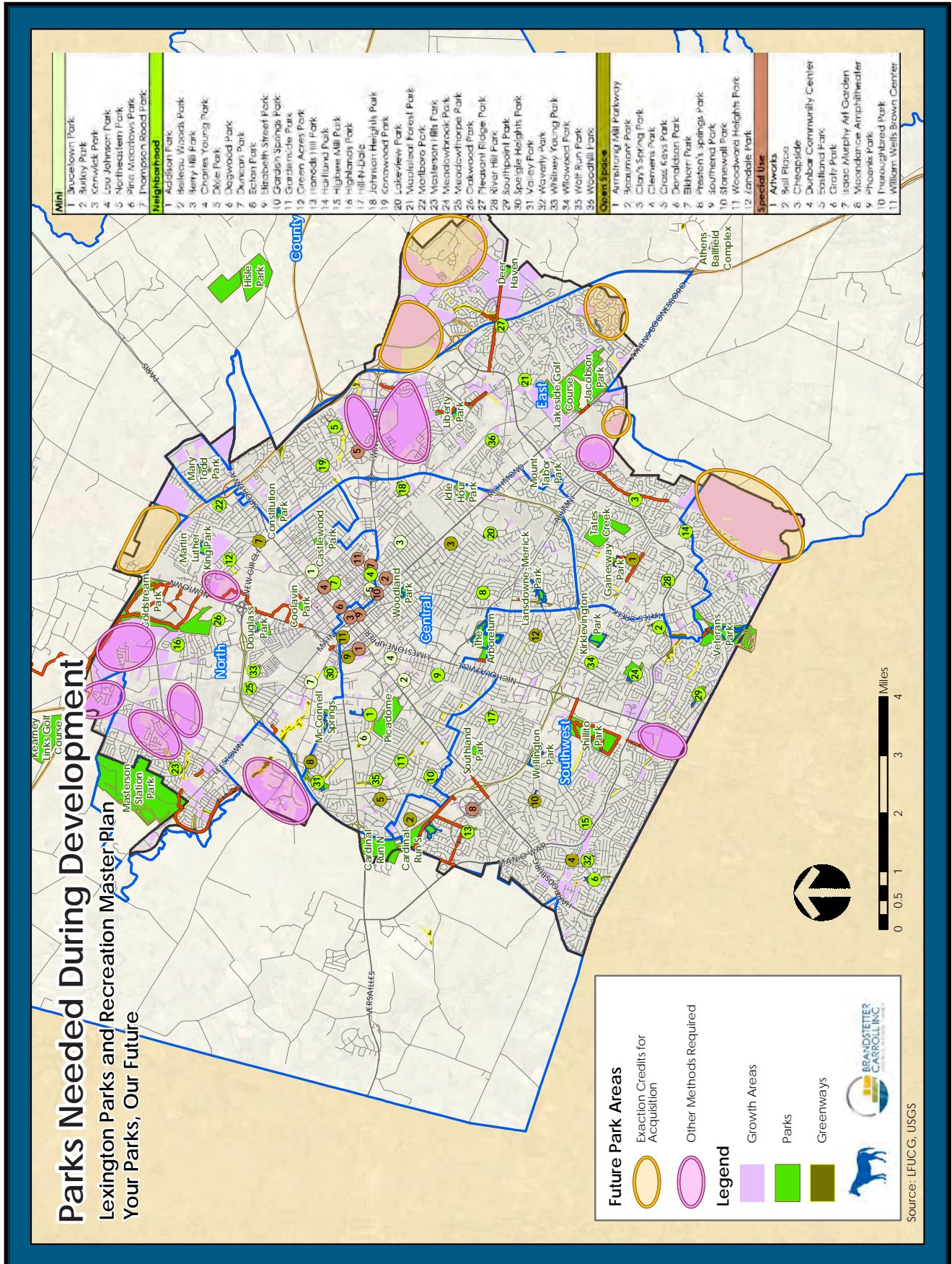
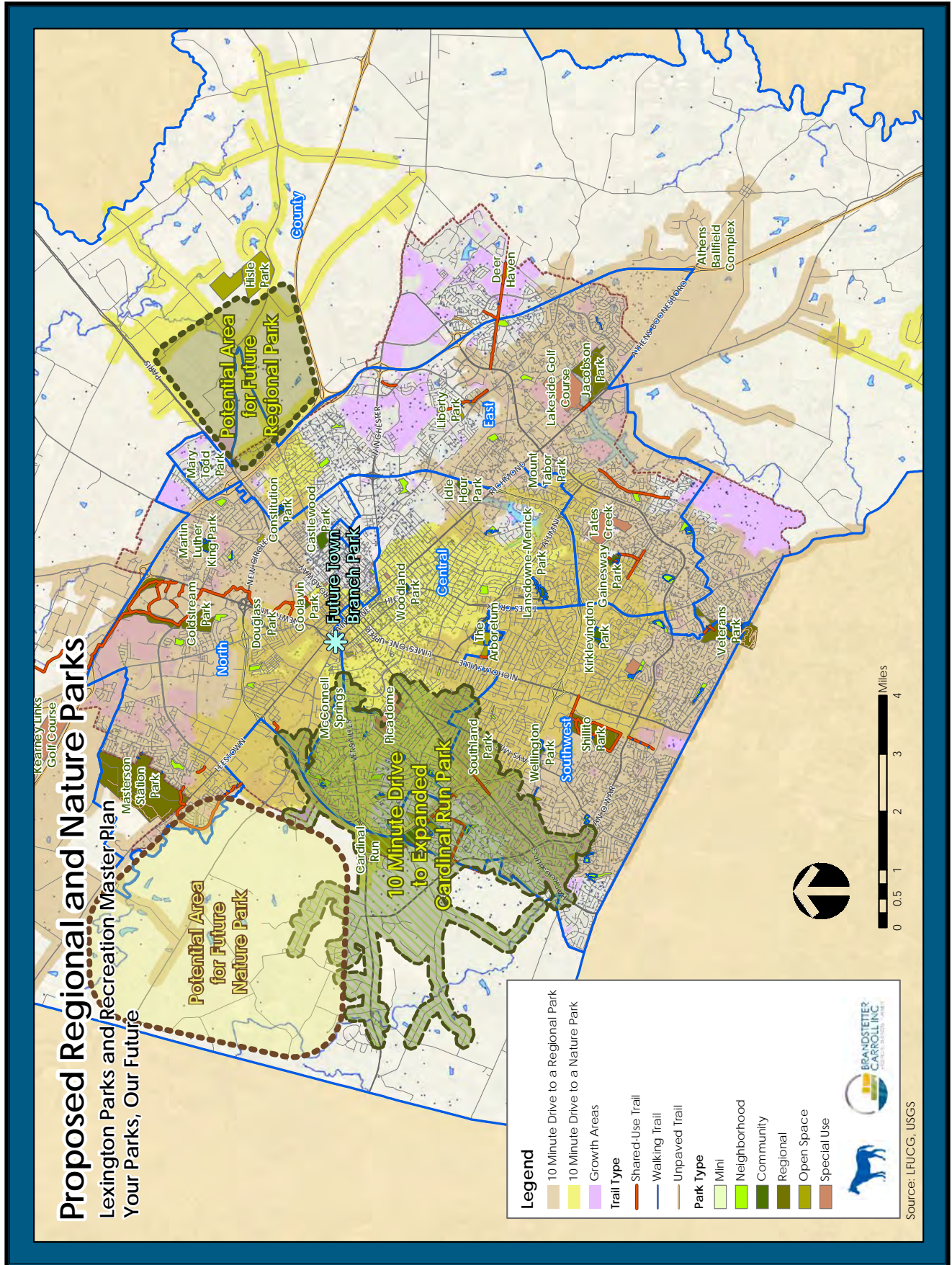


Figure 6.6: Proposed Regional and Nature Parks



Purchase

While other strategies are preferable, it may be beneficial to purchase land for parks in certain locations to meet specific needs. For example, the city should acquire land contiguous to existing parks when it becomes available. Such acquisitions are especially important for parks where development is limited by space or where more natural areas are desired. Because it will be located at existing parks, this land would have a limited impact on maintenance costs. Such land presents the potential to reduce the percentage of developed parkland. The purchase of land that is not contiguous to existing parks should be part of a strategy to meet specific recreational needs of the community, such as trail linkages.

6.16 DESIGN GUIDELINES

Buildings in the park system were built at many different times for different uses before the establishment of design guidelines. As a result, these buildings lack a strong united theme influencing architectural design. Buildings vary extensively in age, style, and level of repair. Design guidelines should be updated in order to provide a palette of building material types, styles, colors, and roof material types and colors to help in moving toward a unified theme for the park system.

Baseball and softball fields in more recent developments appear to be implementing a more prototypical layout, specifically as it relates to fencing, backstops and the open screened dugout style. Scorer's tables, press boxes, storage facilities range in style, material, and state of repair. Older fields in older neighborhoods consist of a variety of construction, color and materials. As these older fields are replaced, improvements should be implemented to complement the design of these more recent fields.

Sports field and security lighting components and manufacturers vary widely throughout the parks. More efficient and long-lasting light sources are now available and should be implemented to save energy and extend the life of lights.

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