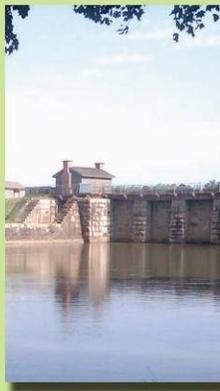


We Are Columbia



# **Parks and Recreation** master plan 2013

## **Columbia - South Carolina** ◀



# FIVE-YEAR LEISURE SERVICES MASTER PLAN

FOR THE

CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC

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This report's findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the public policy of the City of Columbia, SC.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recreation throughout the United States is an important element in total quality of life for all segments of the community. From the earliest settlers, it has been recognized that recreation and parks is primary service to be provided by the Government. Some of the most recognizable and iconic images in the country are parks – Yellowstone, Central Park, Century Park, etc. These amenities help shape, define, and develop our communities.

In 1919, the City of Columbia commissioned a study for the improvement of the City of Columbia. In that study, the section on the park system begins with a quote:

“Even the costliest municipal edifices, well as they may serve their purposes, sooner or later fall into ruin. They begin to deteriorate at the very start, and, though they may remain as architectural monuments for one or two centuries, their duration is as naught in comparison with that of the public pleasure playground, whose beauty increases, whose value augments, as the years go.”

The City of Columbia has realized the importance of parks and recreation as a health and quality of life for its citizens. Parks are more than amenities that provide public places to play, they are key factors that spur economic development, increase the quality of life for its citizens, form the core of many neighborhoods and bring these neighborhoods and communities together.

## PURPOSE AND GOAL OF THIS STRATEGIC PLAN

The goal of this strategic plan was to develop a five-year leisure services master plan; the purpose of which is to determine the long-term leisure service needs of the City of Columbia and to develop a comprehensive needs assessment and master plan for leisure services.

## OVERVIEW OF PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The City of Columbia Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for providing recreational and leisure services for the citizens and visitors to the City of Columbia. With a budget of approximately \$9.4M, the staff program and maintain:

- 60 city parks and green spaces
- 600 acres of city-maintained park land
- 55 tennis courts
- 16 city pools, spray pads and ponds
- 9 city-maintained fountains.

They system maintains a varied portfolio of parks including:

- Mini Park – open spaces with playgrounds, gardens, etc. Typically small spaces with limited amenities

- Neighborhood Park – Focused on providing services to neighborhoods on a community level. Often include facilities, but not in all cases.
- Community Park – Significant parks that include facilities, buildings, and large scale recreational opportunities
- Large Urban Park – Show piece recreational facilities like Finlay Park
- Recreational Complex – May include water parks, Zoos, and other similar destination recreational opportunities
- Sports Complex – Geared toward specific team and tournament events
- Regional Park – Similar to the Large Urban Park, but may exist in less populated areas of the community
- Greenway/Open Space – Trails, gardens, and un-planned spaces

## OVERVIEW OF OTHER AREA RECREATION PROVIDERS

The City of Columbia's citizens have many other opportunities for recreation than just provided by the City. This is not unprecedented even within South Carolina, but does offer options for the community, while simultaneously presenting coordination issues. One of the major concerns that surfaced in this strategic plan was the coordination and cooperation among various service providers in the community. This was especially true with the three school districts and the private recreational providers in the City.

## OVERVIEW OF PEER COMMUNITIES

The City was compared to other communities that were demographically similar to Columbia. In the state, comparisons were made to:

- Spartanburg, SC
- Greenville, SC
- Carrollton, TX
- Coral Springs, FL
- Charleston, SC
- Waco, TX
- Cedar Rapids, IA
- Sterling Heights, MI
- Fullerton, CA
- Cary, NC
- Knoxville, TN
- Raleigh, NC

Many of the peer communities had similar populations and similar amenities, or were additionally compared to Columbia in the recent Economic Development Strategic Plan.. Important comparisons included:

- Staffing ratios for the City of Columbia were the most of the peer communities. The staffing ratio is approximately 80% of the budget.

- While the overall budget for Columbia was middle of the pack, the maintenance budget was the second lowest
- The maintenance budget was the third lowest even considering one of the peer communities only had 28 facilities
- The City of Columbia had the second lowest capital improvement budget
- The facilities maintained by the City of Columbia are considerably older than the peer communities both in South Carolina and in the rest of the nation.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE MASTER PLANNING & PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

**Phase I – Data Collection** – The project team spent significant time with staff reviewing the available data for parks and recreation. The team evaluated inventories, park usage statistics, programs, and amenities. The staff also interviewed the administrative management team, various park leaders, and other staff. The team also met with community leaders from the neighborhoods, elected officials, and other service providers in the Midlands.

Significant evaluation of other peer communities included review of staffing, levels of service, maintenance levels, programs, budgets, and visual appeal.

**Phase II – Public Participation** – As with all projects in the City of Columbia, public participation is critical for success of any strategic plan that affects the lives of its citizens. The project team conducted six public meetings at various locations within the City at important recreational centers. Additionally, a scientific, random survey was conducted that provided a statistically valid sampling of the public opinion of the parks and recreation offered in the City. Finally, social media was utilized to create a Facebook page where comments and discussion about recreation issues could be conducted.

**Phase III – Preliminary Study Findings** – From this research, public participation, and analysis from the project team, a detailed list of preliminary findings and conclusions were developed. A steering committee used this data to perform a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). This helped the project team develop strategies to solve issues uncovered in the analysis. From that, recommendations were vetted by the steering committee leaving the ultimate final recommendations.

**Phase IV – Final Report** – The final report will include all of the analysis, evaluations and comparisons made by the team. It will also include all the public participation data and survey results. Finally, it will include a detail list of strategies and recommendations for the City staff to continue to meet the recreational and leisure needs of the community.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Needs Assessment focused on providing a community-wide, statistically valid needs assessment survey that includes a review of the current recreation programs and facilities as perceived by the community. Use the date to develop data-based recommendations for the design and prioritization of capital park/facility projects and recommendations for park programs. The assessment was built on a virtually identical assessment conducted for the City of Columbia for its 2001 Parks & Recreation

Master Plan. The survey went out to 5,000 residents randomly selected. While the return rate was lower than desired, it is still considered statically valid, especially in comparison with the 2001 study.

Some selected results include:

**Between 62% and 72% felt:**

- The Parks and Recreation Department facilities are conveniently located (1)
- I feel safe in the parks when I visit during the day (4)
- The park facilities are well maintained (2)
- There is adequate parking at parks and facilities
- The Parks and Recreation Department has safe recreation equipment at their facilities

**Between 43% and 58% felt:**

- The fees are a good value (1)
- I am satisfied with the public parks and recreation opportunities I receive for my tax dollars (2)

**Top 4 recreation issues were:**

- There should be additional recreation programs for teens (3)
- The Parks and Recreation Department is an important provider of recreation for my family (2)
- The Parks and Recreation Department is responsive to the recreation needs of the community (4)
- The Parks and Recreation Department offers activities in which the whole family can participate (NA)

**Observations from the survey included:**

- The Department needs to offer opportunities for the top recreation categories
- The community has interest in diverse offerings providing the Department with opportunities for serving different segments of the community
- The Department should evaluate opportunities for more collaborative programming especially for the teens
- The Department needs to continue to improve its marketing and promotion
- The Department should consider more on-site supervision, and there is a need for more staff since only half the respondents felt that the Dept. was adequately staffed
- The Department needs to address the issue of safety, since people do not feel safe at night - lighting
- Maintenance needs to be kept up to ensure people continue to be satisfied with the levels of maintenance
- The Department should use fees for funding programs that are of special interest
- The Department should consider the responses to the fees/tax questions to gauge what should be provided free (based on tax dollars only)

## KEY OBSERVATIONS/ISSUES

The project team came up with many observations and issues that were confirmed by the community input and steering committee work. Those include:

1. Surveys indicated a high desire for passive recreation over programmed recreation. This varied slightly among the districts.
2. Currently, there is no way to measure or quantify performance of the Parks and Recreation Department.
3. Where recreation programs are provided, the public feels that they meet their needs with certain gaps, most notably teen programs.
4. The public identified a need for more on-site supervision, but not necessarily more programmed time.
5. The public was well satisfied with the location and number of facilities.
6. The public felt safe during the day, less so during evenings.
7. While the public perception was that the Parks were well maintained, it is our professional opinion that many of the facilities have passed their useful life and that needs are now beyond maintenance. This is based on a comparative analysis with peer communities,
8. Currently, the City of Columbia has no identifiable landmark recreational destinations.
9. Due to the age of the facilities, the majority of the Parks and facilities do not meet fully ADA standards.
10. In areas where the private entities provide services on City property it appears to create financial or access barriers to some segments of the community.
11. Programming at various facilities currently matches the available resources – be it physical, building, or staffing. Often, the programming is out of touch with the community needs and exists simply because the resource is there.
12. The development of capital projects appears inconsistent with a programmed and global recreation plan. Neighborhood ownership of Parks appears to drive facilities without consideration of citywide needs. This results in overlapping or duplication of services.
13. The community desires and needs differ greatly within different communities. Some communities are focused on neighborhood recreation and heavily interested in programmed recreation while other locations are more interested in passive and un-programmed recreation.
14. The condition standards of many facilities do not match the standards of other similar communities.
15. The staffing levels at facilities are not set by programming needs. They are much more historically set.
16. Staffing experience and education are not up to levels of many other peer communities.
17. Neighborhoods where the communities are more engaged tend to have better programs and more pride in their facilities.
18. The City of Columbia has more facilities than can be properly maintained with the current funding and staffing. Currently there is no correlation between the budget, programs, staffing and facilities. The budget appears to be too small to cover the O&M for the current inventory.
19. Senior Park Leaders have the single largest impact on the success of a park. This is the City staff person that has the most interaction with the general park user and the community.

20. Each park appears to have a list of programs and amenities that are inherited rather than consciously determined. There is not a method to evaluate if the current or past park's services descriptions are adequate. Each park should have a written service description.
21. Given a park's services description, the Senior Park Leader's skill set should match.
22. The public is not adequately informed of recreational opportunities that are offered by the City.
23. Better marketing and advertisement should be developed.
24. The Parks and Recreation Department does not have a recognizable brand as an organization.
25. The public is open to increased user fees for good recreation and feel they get a good return for their tax dollars.
26. The park system appears dated and in need of modernization to compete with neighboring communities.
27. There is not strong coordination between public (County, County Recreation Commission, City, etc.) recreation providers and private recreation providers (YMCA, Columbia United, Palmetto Baseball League, Pop Warner, etc.) There are a number of overlapping programs that could be streamlined.
28. The City has no good method of tracking usage and program popularity. Without feedback, it is difficult for the City to modify programming and facilities to meet the community's needs.
29. The hours of many facilities do not match the desired usage by the public. Adults desire to use facilities primarily between the hours of 6:00 and 8:00 and on weekends – Saturday and Sunday. Youth desire to use the facilities between the hours of 4:00 and 7:00. Programming should consider this. Facilities should be open as much as possible during the public for these times

## RECOMMENDATIONS

From these observations and conclusions, and with extensive work from the steering committee, recommendations centered on seven main categories:

- Department Mission
- Facility Needs
- Level of Service
- Programming
- Staffing
- Financial
- Communication

The Recommendations are as follows:

### Department Mission

1.0 "Review and revise as needed an effective "mission" and "vision" for the Parks & Recreation Department with commensurate objectives/goals with measurable outcomes and implementation steps with specific timelines/budgets. The mission/vision should reflect an understanding that Parks and Recreation are integral parts of the City's overall Safety, Land Use, Economic Development, and Tourism planning initiatives."

- 1.1 "The Parks and Recreation Department's facilities and service offerings must show an understanding of the unique overlap of recreation providers within the Columbia area, both public and private, including Richland County, Richland County Recreation Commission, Irmo-Chapin Recreation Commission, Lexington County, Fort Jackson, University of South Carolina, YMCA, etc."
  - 1.1.1 "The City of Columbia should primarily provide facilities and programming for recreational and leisure needs of the community. In areas that private organizations desire to provide services, service contracts renewed yearly should be developed."
  - 1.1.2 "The City of Columbia should meet quarterly with other Recreational providers in the region to coordinate, solidify, and communicate roles of recreation providers in the Midlands."
  - 1.1.3 The City of Columbia should meet with all service providers using City facilities to set goals and parameters of use. Those goals should include access by all segments of the community.
  - 1.1.4 "Athletics Programs was listed as a recreational desire in the public surveys. Desire for more athletic programs ranked 1) Soccer, 2) Basketball, 3) Volleyball, 4) Football. The City of Columbia should focus programs in those areas. Missing from that list was baseball which is supported by a strong private and County system. "
  - 1.1.5 "The City of Columbia must balance the desire for athletic programs with the inherit good that youth athletics present. While in the community survey, athletics only ranked ninth behind items like outdoor recreation, arts and crafts, environmental, etc., its need in some communities is much greater and its impact more important. The City should balance its limited athletics resources more focused areas rather than City wide."
- 1.2 Focus on national trends toward "green recreation" and "passive" recreation areas that do not require the level of maintenance and upkeep as active recreation areas/facilities.
  - 1.2.1 The City of Columbia should remove under utilized facilities at current Parks and replace with passive green recreation to include: 1) Walking Trails 2) Picnic Areas 3) Natural Woods areas with limited trails
- 1.3 "Develop partnerships with other recreation providers to share resources – examples could be the coordination with school districts serving the City, other recreation providers such as Richland County Recreation Commission, and tangentially related service providers such as the Richland County Public Library."
- 1.4 "Pursue "Accreditation" in accordance with the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) ""National Accreditation Standards.""
  - 1.4.1 The goal is to achieve accreditation from CAPRA within 2-3 years.
- 1.5 "The City of Columbia professional staff must take the lead in ""system-wide"" programming of recreation globally throughout the park system for the City. (I.e., view the system's facilities and programs in their entirety as a recreational delivery system rather than focusing on making each park ""all things to all people.""
  - 1.5.1 Establish a global plan for the park facilities in the system identifying lead functions/services to be massed at each of the parks. The goal is to establish each park/facility

as a primary recreational provider for a major recreational service (or services) and to eliminate (or reduce) some facilities/programs not aligned with the lead function(s)/service(s).

1.6 "Establish a criteria for evaluating existing parks based on needs, location, facilities, and potential users. The result of the evaluation could include eliminating, repurposing, or consolidating some existing parks within the system based on a rating/prioritization system of the current park/facility inventory."

1.7 "Establish a criteria for evaluating proposed acquisitions and/or land donations and other gifts into the park system as these come with commensurate O&M costs. The goal is to limit shrinking maintenance cost versus the value of additional park spaces. Where possible, limit acceptance to only natural green spaces requiring limited maintenance, or additions to existing facilities."

1.8 "Parks and Recreation must be considered as a larger part of the overall economic development effort of the City. While the current system's ""top level"" facilities are competitive with peer communities, the current state of the facilities and programs overall put the City at a competitive disadvantage in prospect recruitment."

1.8.1 Focus funds and resources on two or three major parks to transform them into show parks for use in economic development and set an expectation for the remaining upgrades. The most logical candidate parks are Finlay Park and Riverfront Park. See recommendation 2.4.

#### Facility Needs

2.0 Modernize the entire park system (existing facilities)

2.1 "Establish criteria for ""minimally adequate"" facilities and leisure services by park type and focus on ""retrofitting"" those parks that currently do not meet that standard. This stems from a demand from all sectors of the community for equity and uniform quality in the provision of park and recreation resources, facilities, and programs. I.e., some parks in some areas of the system are less well maintained and offer fewer resources/programs than others and do not meet the ""localized"" recreation needs of those areas of the community. The initial prioritization of ""retrofits"" should be geared toward improvements related to safety and/or liability."

2.2 "In conjunction with maintenance and upkeep of existing parks and facilities, focus on retrofitting to comply with the requirements of the 2010 Americans With Disabilities Act (as amended). Initial focus should be on measures and upfits that can be accomplished quickly and inexpensively."

2.2.1 Partner with Able South Carolina to evaluate each facility and program for compliance with ADA and develop a capital improvement task list and budget for each facility and a program modification task list and budget for each program.

2.3 Update/develop a systematic Operations & Maintenance program that includes all parks/facilities and schedules for performing tasks.

2.4 "Establish at least one signature, landmark recreational destination for the City. This might include: a significantly upgraded Finlay Park, a completed Riverwalk, or another unidentified feature (e.g., a dedicated water park or other destination-type facility)."

2.5 "Focus on more system-wide park ""linkage"" via greenway space. Optimize existing waterway features such as Rocky Branch, Smith Branch, Gills Creek, and other logical areas for greenway expansion."

2.6 "Currently, there is not adequate access to the river provided by the City of Columbia. In conjunction with current plans to establish river access, the City should ultimately identify three to four locations within the park system along the riverfront to establish public access points with appropriate facilities."

2.7 "Over the years many of the neighborhood parks have added facilities that are normally provided in regional facilities. Where possible parks should be restored to their designated roles. This restoration may including adjusting program and facilities in order to provide the best usage at each facility and each park, which will assist in improving existing facilities and decrease total costs for maintenance."

#### Level of Service

3.0 Establish written services descriptions and corresponding levels of service for each park and facility.

3.1 "In conjunction with the current ParkTrac initiative, the City must develop a system-wide means for accurately tracking park and program usage statistics. One means (currently in development) is the issuance of "park cards" that are scannable upon entry to all City residents utilizing staffed buildings/facilities. Other means for tracking (or estimating) usage of passive parks should also be established. Without these statistics, it is currently impossible to complete an accurate Level of Service (LOS) analysis."

3.2 "The City should encourage via land use planning, economic development, etc., the establishment of commercial/retail venues in close proximity to key park facilities such as the Three Rivers Greenway and Finlay Park. The intent is to better serve park users with goods/services available within the marketplace in conjunction with park usage."

3.3 The hours of operation for the parks do not currently match the public desire for access based on community input. Hours of operation need to be aligned with the public's desires for park/facility access.

3.3.1 "Facilities by type should have consistent hours of operation each day of the week throughout the parks and recreation system (for example, until 9:00 pm for recreation centers). Based on community input, weekends are especially important and should be primarily available to the community with a focus on adults 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm and on weekends 10:00 am to 9:00 pm. Youth should be focused between the hours of 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Facilities should be open to the public as much as possible during these times."

3.3.2 "Outside entities wishing to rent or book facilities must do so through the administration, rather than through the local parks. "

3.3.3 "A minimum charge for facility usage should be set by market conditions that take into account total costs for usage. There needs to be an understanding that some facilities/functions should be revenue generating or at least revenue neutral. For example, it is estimated the per hour cost for meeting space is in excess of \$25/hr. The fee charged for usage needs to be significant enough to cover costs and (in specific cases) generate revenue. "

3.3.4 "Policy should be developed for premium centers versus neighborhood centers for rental fees, costs and availability. Such policies could include the following: 1) A maximum booking time should be established for each type of facility (meeting space,

basketball court, tennis courts, etc. for each type of use. No outside bookings should be allowed during peak usage times."

### Programming

4.0 Tailor programming to meet the needs of each area of the City while providing centralized services at existing facilities that make logistical sense.

4.1 "In certain areas of the City (primarily areas of higher population density, lower income, and/or higher crime rates, and based on expressed community desires), the City should increase focus on athletics and more heavily structured activities. Passive recreation should not be ignored in these areas, but the community desire for teen programs and programs offered after school and on weekends is important. "

4.1.1 "The Department must balance the need for structured programming and passive, unplanned recreation. The balance must be constantly evaluated and adjusted based on community feedback."

4.2 "In any City owned public facility or land where a private entity is providing recreational services, the City should develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with that entity, renewable each year, that outlines the specific obligations and responsibilities of each party. The MOUs should be specifically reviewed to ensure minimum barriers to access (i.e., financial, time constraints, etc.)"

4.3.1 "The MOU should include costs contributions by each party (including debt service for the City, O&M, utilities, etc.) and contributions by the organization. It should include how access by the public will be provided to the maximum extent possible (i.e., minimization of financial and time barriers to that access)."

4.3 "Each program at the various facilities should be examined, and out-of-date or low attendance programs should be eliminated. There is insufficient budget to continue offering the number of programs offered throughout the system."

4.4.1 Develop a comprehensive list of programs at each facility and look for overlaps.  
Remove overlaps where practical.

### Staffing

5.0 "Develop a uniform set of education, qualification, and experience standards for positions within the Parks & Recreation Department and adhere to those standards for evaluating existing staff and hiring new staff. Standards should include criminal background checks and drug testing."

5.1 Build pride in the staff by establishing dress codes and providing uniforms and improved equipment. It is essential that park users can easily identify Parks and Recreation staff members from the general public.

5.1.1 Match personnel skill levels with job description requirements - this is especially important for the Park Directors

5.2 Develop an accurate organizational staffing chart that defines chain of command and job roles

5.2.1 "Many of the larger facilities appear overstaffed. The primary purpose is to ensure appropriate staff levels at each facility, but it is recommended as a general rule that no more than 2 unassigned personnel be at any site at one time. Other assigned (i.e. an aerobics instructor, life guard, etc.) should be added as needed."

5.2.2 "Peer communities have personnel costs ratio between 60-70% of the overall P&R budget. The City has an 80% staffing ratio. Much of this is due to the reduction of the overall budget leaving little except staffing. When additional maintenance budget is added back, this percentage should reduce. "

5.2.3 Staff reorganization will likely be required moving some Operations staff back towards maintenance and to new functions including outdoor education and recreation opportunities. There are areas that are overstaffed that can be redirected towards new functions.

5.2.4 "It has been noted throughout this study at safety and security is a concern in parks, particularly after hours. The city should coordinate between departments to provide this needed service."

5.3 Finlay Park is in need of full-time oversight via a combination of Park Staff and security/police personnel - perhaps 24 hour

5.4 "Other parks need to be evaluated for either restricted access (fence), restricted vehicular, or policing during off hours."

#### Financial

6.0 The funding available for maintenance and upkeep of existing parks and facilities is not adequate to meet desired standards.

6.1 Develop specific measurable maintenance standards each facility within the park system.

6.2 "Develop a comprehensive budget for Parks and Recreation Department that is based on the full requirements of operating the number of existing parks and facilities within the system as it stands now. I.e., "bottom up budgeting" – to determine not what can be done with the amount currently budgeted, but to determine what it realistically would take to meet "minimally adequate" requirements for parks/programs."

6.2.1 "Currently, the approximately \$300,000 available for operation of facilities is not sufficient to keep the number of facilities operational at acceptable levels. Additional operations funding from an increased overall Parks and Recreation budget or a re-allocation of the existing Parks and Recreation Budget is needed to effectively operate existing facilities."

6.2.1.2 It is difficult to exactly determine cost of maintenance and percentage of the budget attributed to maintenance because the personnel costs are not separated by function. The City should establish cost centers through the financial system to account for each park/facility's total O&M cost.

6.2.2 "Currently, the approximately \$300,000 of revenue from recreational user fees is directed towards the City's general fund. This revenue should remain within the Parks and Recreation budget (or reserved for park and recreation uses)."

6.2.3 "The staffing budget is approximately 80% of the recreational budget. The staffing percentage is out of line with other similar peer communities. Some staff reductions are likely required to divert funds to other functions, including maintenance, etc. Other staff should be redirected from operations towards other duties such as maintenance."

6.3 "Increased funding or redirection of funding from capital projects towards O&M is required (i.e., in the near term, funding for the maintenance and upkeep of existing facilities should be emphasized over funding for construction of new facilities)."

6.4 Increased funding through user fees for Parks and Recreation programs/services should be considered. Other peer communities realize much higher revenue from recreation user fees than the City of Columbia.

6.4.1 "Establish a first year goal of 1% of the overall budget to be funded by user fees, increase by 1% each year to a overall goal of 10%."

6.5 Consider the inclusion of "impact fees" for new residential development within the City limits to accommodate park and recreation needs of a growing population.

6.5.1 Consider establishing a percentage of the overall development cost with a cap as an impact fee for recreation. Consider a fee of 1% of the overall project capped at a number to be determined to be contributed towards capital improvements for recreation.

6.6 Other revenue streams could include corporate sponsorships at local facilities - renewable for one year; Working agreements with companies that would pay the costs of repairs to facilities in exchange for advertising on each repair; Working with Telecommunications companies to locate cell towers in existing ball fields as large flag poles to blend into the recreational landscape;

6.7 Continue the staff work in securing and chasing grant monies. This will not be a large revenue source, but from time to time may allay some costs.

6.8 Include initiatives such as local (City) tax breaks or business license rebates for local businesses "donating" design or construction time and materials.

#### Communication

7.0 Develop a comprehensive information and marketing initiative to better communicate the facilities and programs (and park hours) that are already available so that all sectors of the community are aware of these offerings.

7.1 "Create a marketing plan that covers communication initiatives and includes mailings, website content, branding, and other information distribution geared both for City residents and a potential larger (tourist) market."

7.2 "Establish a "Midlands Recreation" clearinghouse mechanism to advertise/communicate the programs and facilities available throughout the Midlands region (i.e., City, County, County Rec Commission, Private Entities, School Districts, USC, Fort Jackson, etc. etc.). Could be tied to recommendation 1.1.1"

7.3 "Create a standardization (design guidelines) for parks that includes common fencing, equipment, painting, and especially signage."

- 7.4 Equip each major regional park with a scrolling marquee sign (or equivalent) to inform the public about services and events at the park.
- 7.5 "Maintain a method by use of both social media and the P&R Website of viewing the daily schedule for activities, available times, and services provided at each park. Currently, the website does not list those programs. The communication of the schedule must be kept up to date and be accurate."
- 7.6 Create a landmark/identity statement for recreation (a Destination) that defines recreation for the City of Columbia and market heavily both locally and nationally. Ties to recommendation 2.4

## PREFACE

### Acknowledgments

The Genesis Consulting Group and Ken Simmons Associates wish to acknowledge and thank the efforts of many in the preparation and compilation of this report. The result was developed from countless hours of both the professional staff of the City, and a large group of volunteers and stakeholders that desire to see the recreational and leisure services offered in their community continue to improve.

Specifically, the City of Columbia Parks and Recreation Staff, in addition to their normal duties, spent numerous additional hours, often past normal working hours, meeting with the public, stakeholders, and the steering committee. Park Directors and staff also attended individual meetings and made themselves available to the project team through the duration.

Additionally, staff undertook an important element of this planning process – development of a complete and detailed park inventory of both the grounds and the structures. This was crucial to the development of this master plan. Without a solid inventory, it would have been difficult to determine the level of service and amenities provided by the City for its citizens. This effort was produced in cooperation with the consulting team and is an appendix to this master plan.

Key staff included:

Mr. Jeffery Caton, Director of Parks and Recreation  
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The consultant staff would like to thank the City Council who hosted public meetings at each of the four districts and devoted several work sessions to the plan.

District I - Councilman Sam Davis  
District II - Brian DeQuincey Newman  
District III - Councilman Moe Baddourah  
District IV - Councilwoman Leona Plough  
At-Large – Councilwomen Tameika Devine  
At-Large – Councilman Cameron Runyan

The consultant staff would also like to thank the Mayor's Office including:

Honorable Steve Benjamin  
Mr. Sam Johnson

### **Genesis Consulting Group Project Team**

The Genesis Consulting Group Project Team partnered with Ken Simmons Associates as a joint venture to complete this plan. Both firms are small business enterprises headquartered in the City of Columbia. Principal authors of the plan include:

Mr. David Brandes, P.E. – Principal Genesis Consulting Group  
Mr. Ken Simmons, RLA – Principal KBSA  
Mr. Jeff Neuman – Senior Planner  
Mr. Kevin Krick, P.E. – Project Research  
Mr. Andrew Cheatham – Project Graphics

### **City of Columbia 5-Year Leisure Services Steering Committee**

The major objective for the Steering Committee was to assist in establishing high-level or overarching policy/goals for the master planning process. The group served as a sounding board to listen to analysis performed by the consulting team, to help decipher what the data meant in terms of meeting the recreational needs of the community, and to respond to recommendation from the consulting team. Constantly, the role of the steering committee was to question, "Is this meaningful information and how does this impact our community". The steering committee provided a useful link back to community to ensure recommendations were addressing citizen concerns.

The steering committee met as a formal group six times over the course of the study, and countless more informally, through email communication, and at regional public meetings. Their time, attention, and effort were greatly appreciated by the consulting team. Members of the Committee were:

Mr. Sam Johnson  
Mr. Domino Boulware  
Mr. Jannie Nelson  
Ms. Virginia Bedford  
Mr. Mike Miller  
Ms. Sandy Latham  
Mr. Pringle Boyle  
Mr. Travis Wheeler  
Ms. Robyn Waites  
Ms. Mary Baskin-Waters  
Mr. Mike Dawson

Ms. Krista Hampton  
Mr. Jeffrey Caton  
Ms. Sara Hollar

### Project Funding

The City of Columbia received a planning grant to prepare a Five-Year Recreation and Leisure Service Master Plan for the community. This grant included a percentage local match which was funded through the general fund from the City of Columbia.

## OVERVIEW OF PARKS & RECREATION IN COLUMBIA, SC

Recreation throughout the United States is an important element in total quality of life for all segments of the community. From the earliest settlers, it has been recognized that recreation and parks is primary service to be provided by the Government. Some of the most recognizable and iconic images in the country are parks – Yellowstone, Central Park, Century Park, etc. These amenities help shape, define, and develop our communities.

In 1919, the City of Columbia commissioned a study for the improvement of the City of Columbia. In that study, the section on the park system begins with a quote:

“Even the costliest municipal edifices, well as they may serve their purposes, sooner or later fall into ruin. They begin to deteriorate at the very start, and, though they may remain as architectural monuments for one or two centuries, their duration is as naught in comparison with that of the public pleasure playground, whose beauty increases, whose value augments, as the years go.”

The City of Columbia has realized the importance of parks and recreation as a health and quality of life for its citizens. Parks are more than amenities that provide public places to play, they are key factors that spur economic development, increase the quality of life for its citizens, form the core of many neighborhoods and bring these neighborhoods and communities together.

The City of Columbia’s park system is composed 60 parks ranging in size from tenths of acres to the largest park – Riverfront which is over 140 acres and expanding. A majority of the 60 parks are neighborhood parks created, probably by developers as the city’s residential areas developed. Most of them are older than 25 years and typically on steep, low, or undesirable land for development which prompted the donation. Many of the park structures in these parks resemble residential structures and appear to be at least 50-60 years old. Over the years these parks and buildings have been modified and changes in the facilities were made to address individual neighborhood’s desires. However it does not appear that there has ever been a complete analysis of park site conditions and a structured planning approach as to what facilities and programs should be at each individual park prior to this master plan.

In many cases, individual neighborhoods include numerous parks. In other portions of the city, parks are fewer and farther apart. Typically, older neighborhoods have more parks than newer neighborhoods. This may be in part because of escalating land prices that made donation of parks less attractive than in the past. There appears to be a strong association between the neighborhood association and the parks renovations and facilities. In neighborhoods like Melrose Heights, Earlewood and Emily Douglas, the park systems have benefitted from recent play equipment upgrades. In other areas where the neighborhood associations are not as active, upgrades have not been as recent. Similarly, the sizes of parks vary randomly. In the North Main Street area, one of the oldest parts of Columbia, there are two large parks located within a mile of each other - Hyatt and Earlewood. The Earlewood Park is now the home of the recently completed new parks department’s headquarters.

Over the last thirty years the City of Columbia has developed several new major destination parks. The flagship park in Columbia is the Finlay Park, originally names Sidney Park. It was first dedicated in 1859, named in honor of Algernon Sidney Johnson, a Columbia city councilman. The park fell into disrepair

after the Civil War and served as a site for commercial ventures until the late 1900's. In 1990 the park was reopened under the same name. In 1992, the park was renamed Finlay Park, in honor of Kirkman Finlay, Mayor of Columbia whose vision to reenergize the area known as the Vista, between Main Street and the river. The location, size and prominence are a major open space in the center of the commercial/ business center of downtown. There have been several residential and business redevelopments created do to this park.

The major active recreation park in Columbia is Owens Field. This Park is comprised of multiple soccer fields, recently completed skateboard park and very few additional amenities. It should be noted that this park is maintained by the City of Columbia but the property is owned by Richland County, as it was originally a portion to the Owens Field airport.

Swimming and tennis have a long history in the city parks. Maxie Gregg Park, which includes as an amenity an pool, has provided summer cooling and swimming lessons to many thousands of citizens for many decades. This pool, which has recently been completely renovated, has been active for over 60 years. Likewise the city tennis center on the top of the Pickens Street hill has provided tennis instruction and play for decades. This, like the Maxie Gregg pool, has recently undergone a complete renovation.

As an indication of the importance of tennis in the community almost every neighborhood park, with enough flat land, has at least one tennis court. Most parks have several tennis courts.

Many neighborhood parks have some type of ball field. These "ball fields" usually means baseball, softball or at least a backstop where baseball could be practiced. There is not a championship size baseball complex in Columbia.

Where team sport areas are located in parks there are usually very few restroom facilities. Where present the availability and condition of these facilities are limited, limited in both the hours open and in some cases the conditions of the facilities. Due to the number of parks spread across this community and the number of single facilities it is extremely difficult to service all of the fields, courts, restrooms and other non-manned facilities.

The new park facilities recently developed like the Drew Wellness and the Park Department Offices and meeting space at Earlewood Park mark a significant upgrade in recreational architecture. Where new park facilities have been constructed the City has provided their citizens with very impressive facilities.

The most recent park built is the Southeast Park. This park on the southeast side of Columbia was originally programmed as a major tennis complex. The idea was to provide a competition tennis complex in a location outside of the urban areas where adequate parking could be provided. Based on having to be within the incorporated areas of Columbia the locations were limited by available lands, size, and price of land. This 60-acre park includes a pond. This pond was programmed to be an environmental, education and water training facility. The first phase of this park, the only phase completed, included bringing the pond up to current standards, 16 tennis courts including the city's only clay courts, walking trails, and a nature based camping area.

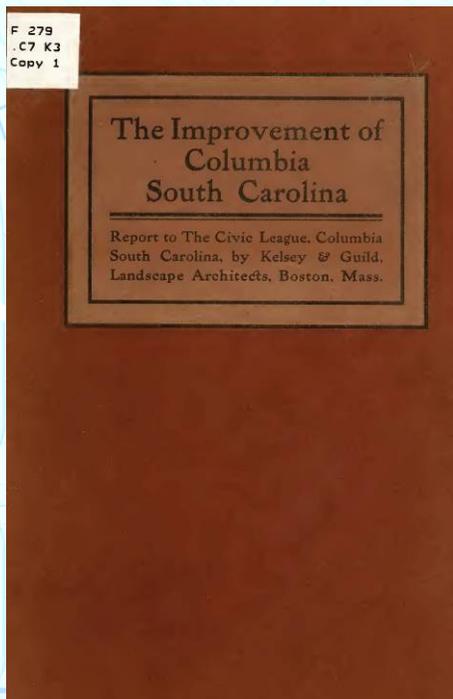
Since the Rivers running through Columbia are of such prominence, water training, canoe and kayak training was thought to be a good activity to teach in Southeast Park. The rivers at this location running through Columbia are much more than natural amenities. They are a major reason Columbia exist. Without going into the history of Columbia, from the establishment of Columbia on the Banks of the Saluda, Broad and Congaree rivers, the value of these rivers as amenities have been well documented. Ever city study has touted the value of these rivers for transportation, and recreation.

Although there have been studies of these rivers for public access and recreation since the beginning of Columbia until recently there has been very limited safe access to these natural wonders. In the late 1990' a group called The River Alliance, which is made up of the three cities and two counties, began planning a logical approach to the development of this great city amenity.

The Granby Park portion of this Three Rivers Greenway was the first phase of this project. Now, almost 20 years later, there are numerous phases completed, both in Columbia, West Columbia and Cayce. There are additional phases planned as well as phases connecting "inland' neighborhoods to this highly successful and desirable river access. However there still remain very few safe river access points for river use.

The City of Columbia has realized the importance of parks and recreation as a health and quality of life for its citizens. Parks are more than amenities that provide public places to play. They are the core of many neighborhoods and bring these neighborhoods and communities together. The City has acknowledged the importance of parks within their info structure and is committed to providing safe, attractive public places for all of us citizens to meet, play, socialize and learn.

## KELSEY 1919 REPORT



Parks and Recreation have been and integral part of the City of Columbia's planning since the City was first laid out in the late 1700's. Columbia was the second planned city in the United States and included from the very beginning, many quality of life amenities including parks and recreational areas. In 1919, the Civic League commissioned a study aimed at the improvement to the City. The report, entitled, The Improvement of Columbia South Carolina, was prepared by Kelsey & Guild, Landscape Architects, Boston, MS. The report recognized important recreational features such as the riverfront, impacts of railroads, billboards and signage, and other issues still being addressed today. Some interesting passages that set the tone for our continued discussion include:

"The Congaree River is undoubtedly by far the most notable landscape feature of Columbia, and should receive first consideration in any general plans adopted." (Page 23)

"To the west of Columbia and across the Congaree lies

Lexington County, which should be considered in any general plan, at least so far as the banks of the river are concerned. . ." (Page 23)



The unfortunate arrangement of the railroads which enter and completely encircle the city has already seriously hampered the best development of the streets and certain sections of the city, and stands in the way of much legitimate future development. Tracks occupy many streets and cross others at grade, while two freight and repair yards, for at least, on opposite sides of the city, begrime and disfigure what otherwise would be a continuation of the choicest residential sections. It is, perhaps, needless to say

that these unfortunate conditions might easily have been avoided with foresight, or had there been any influence exerted to properly safeguard the interests of the city. Many of the difficulties are now, no doubt, beyond remedy, except at unwarrantable cost. A lesson for the future may be wisely drawn, however, for the time has come when railroads may not, through corporate greed, arbitrarily and in total disregard of a city's best welfare, enter and despoil its beauty and become a constant and unnecessary menace to the lives and happiness of its citizens, unless, indeed, it be with the consent of the citizens themselves.

At all events, the railroad problem in Columbia must sooner or later be more reasonably and logically solved than at present, and delay but adds to the complications and makes the best solution more difficult and expensive. (Page 48)

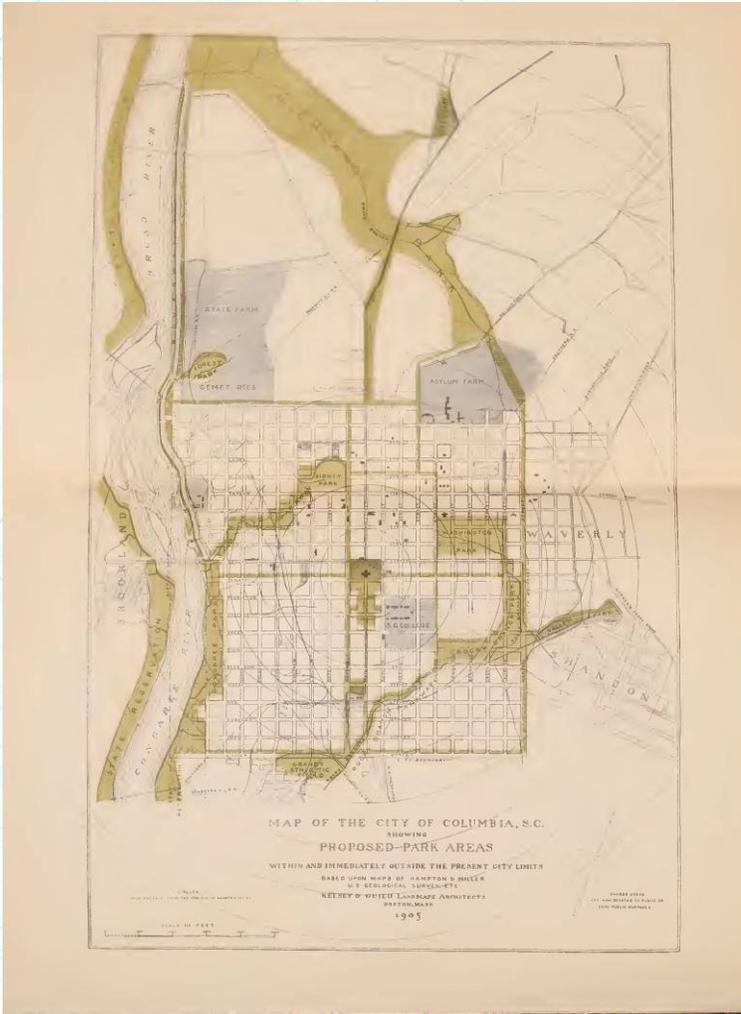
Columbia is no more free perhaps than are other cities from the curse of advertising signs and the bill-board. It is strange how the average American has come to accept these desecrations almost as a part of nature. In traveling, he finds the entire landscape from station to station apparently owned by these despoilers of nature—the bill-posters who thickly cover with daubs of paint and flaunting posters, all available buildings, fences, trees, rocks and other features. Throughout the city the same disregard is shown for the eternal fitness of things, and scarcely a view may be had in any direction or on any street that is not blotted by the persistent presence of the execrable bill-board. Much can be done to abate this growing and intolerable nuisance, by educating public taste and opinion, and by enacting and enforcing suitable city ordinances and state laws. The record of many municipalities proves that it is an evil that can be successfully fought in many ways. (Page 50)

The people of Columbia should take peculiar interest in the establishment of reservations, which will protect the banks of the Congaree River, and should endeavor (sic) to bring about a careful investigation to determine the feasibility of such a plan, so that definite action by the state might be made possible. So also with other state and national reservations that may have a bearing on the flow of the waters of the Congaree,\* for as this river is one of the largest

assets of the city, both commercially and esthetically, everything that may permanently affect it in any way should be a matter of deep concern to its citizens. (Page 51)

### Riverway

This includes both banks of the canal from Cervais street to the dam at the head of the canal, and would connect Congaree Park and Sidney Parkway with Richland Park, nearly two miles



above the city limits. It would make a magnificent winding drive some three miles long, furnishing constantly changing views of the beautiful swift-flowing Congaree and Broad Rivers, with their many islands on one hand, and the quieter flowing canal on the other. The high river-banks are already protected with a beautiful growth of native trees and shrubs, and the banks of the canal would be greatly strengthened by a similar planting. It will be easy to construct a roadway averaging 18 feet wide the entire distance, and a fairly good dirt road now exists. There is nothing in the vicinity of Columbia that offers any thing like the opportunities for a wonderful drive as this Riverway ; in fact, but rarely does such an opportunity present itself to any city. The cost would be comparatively small when one realizes the remarkable results possible of

attainment by using this long, narrow strip of land as a driveway. In any event, the city can never afford to lose its title to any portion of the banks of the Congaree and Broad rivers, within or near the city's limits. A bridge should span the canal at or near Lumber Street connecting with Elmwood Avenue, another at some point above the State Farm, and still another at or near the canal dam. The dam and canal gates are very interesting and would supply an attractive terminus to Riverway outside of Richland Park itself. It is difficult to determine from existing maps even approximately the area of this strip of land, but it would seem to contain about thirty acres. A narrow strip fringing the eastern shore of the canal and protecting it would contain from 40 to 50 acres. (Pages 58, 60)

## COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

### Demographics

The City of Columbia was founded in 1786, incorporated in 1805, and serves as the capital city of South Carolina. The City is a major governmental, educational, industrial, and cultural center located in the Midlands region of the state near the state's geographic center. The boundaries of the City fall within Richland and Lexington Counties, and the City currently has a land area of 125.2 square miles.

The City of Columbia is home of the University of South Carolina main campus that includes over 30,000 students on approximately 440 acres within the heart of the City. This, along with countless other governmental, schools, and religious / non-profit properties means a significant amount of the land is not on the property tax roles. Additionally, space for parks and recreation face greater outside threat from development than in other similar cities that do not have major universities and state government land within the city limits.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the City of Columbia's 2011 population was 129,612, which is a 11.5% increase since 2000. The median resident age in the City of Columbia is 28.1 years versus a state of South Carolina median resident age of 40.2 years. There are slightly more males (51.5%) than females (48.5%). The estimated median household income in the City of Columbia based on 2009 information was \$38,272 versus a state of South Carolina median household income of \$42,442. Estimated per capita income in the City in 2009 was \$24,221.

What these demographics reveal is a younger age group than typically found in the State of South Carolina. This matches well with other urban areas both in the City of Columbia and peer cities. Typically, urban areas tend to attract younger, professional workforces that often have a higher demand for recreational and leisure services.

Median household incomes are near the state level which is important because, it is not uncommon to find urban areas with significantly lower per capita incomes than outlying areas. This is due to the phenomenon of massing of pockets of poverty in more urban areas where services and opportunities are more varied than in outlying, rural areas. Lack of personal vehicles can be overcome in an urban environment, and greater access to social programs, both public and private, can help those living under the poverty level better survive.

While the overall incomes as an aggregate are close to the state average, this is not uniformly spread across the city. In deed, some census tracts such as the Lyon Street and Celia Saxon areas have median family incomes less than \$14,000, which means some areas are considerably higher income levels.

The income levels tell us two things as related to recreational and leisure services. First, we have two ends of the spectrum of recreation needs in the City. In some areas, we have a need for low cost, easy access to recreational activities. These might include recreation aimed at after school care, youth sports programs to fill gaps to keep youth out of trouble, ready access to resources like computers. Secondly, we have a more passive need for recreation for the a segment of the community that only wants a place to walk, bike, access the river, or play tennis. This second group is willing to pay more for

better services while the first group likely cannot support even a modest level of participation. These facts make a single approach to providing recreational and leisure services in the City impossible. The City must adopt at least two, tailored approaches to meet the needs of all the citizens.

## OVERVIEW OF PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Parks and Recreation Department in the City of Columbia has undergone significant reorganization and turn over in the past several years. The department has a new Director that was hired at the beginning of this master plan processes, has hired a parks planner and begun to refocus the Department toward meeting the recreational needs of today's citizens. As with most municipal departments since 2006, budget constraints from the Great Recession have negatively impacted staffing, capital improvements, and maintenance budgets.

Additionally, many of the facilities maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department are significantly beyond their useful life. Park facilities and buildings are often older than 50 years, which is nearing the useful life expectancy for a facility without major renovations and upgrades. Issues like accessibility, energy consumption, and a change in the desires for service make continued use of parks a difficult task. A larger percentage of the Parks and Recreation budget is being used for maintenance and this trend will continue without a significant increase in capital renovation projects.

Some important facts and observations about the Parks and Recreation Department include:

- City Parks & Recreation Department Operational Budget is approximately \$9 million (\$9.4 million for FY 2012). Approximately 80% of budget pays for salaries and benefits.
- City Parks & Recreation Department accounts for 214 jobs (down significantly since FY 2008)
- 2006 Master Plan called for upgrades to 14 Parks at a cost of \$1.7 million (due to City budget issues, however, work has been completed on only 4 of the 14 Parks at a cost of \$295,000).
- St. Andrews Park and Finlay Park require the most upgrades.
- In 2012, the City was programmed to spend \$6.9 million in capital improvements to upgrade 11 of the City's 54 Parks
  - \$3.37 million for P&R HQ, community center, and tennis court improvements at Earlewood Park;
  - \$1.72 million for new saltwater pool at Maxcy Gregg Park (other improvements – approximately \$400k – are already underway at park for pathways, etc.)
  - \$980,000 for 14 new tennis courts at Cola Tennis Center;
  - \$355,500 for parking lot, playground, and lighting upgrades at Rosewood and Valencia Parks;
  - \$179,200 for tennis court resurfacing at Woodlands Park;
  - \$104,706 for new playground at Pinehurst Park
  - \$10,300 for resurfacing tennis courts at Mays Park
  - \$10,000 for dog park at Emily Douglas Park
  - \$6,850 for resurfacing clay courts at Southeast Park
- Funding for the \$6.9 million comes mostly from the City's capital improvements budget and leftover money from \$20 million 2004 hospitality tax bond issuance. Federal funds and \$250k in private contributions (SCE&G, an insurance company, and Shandon residents) are paying for the rest. This funding is in addition to annual Operating Budget.

- Drew Wellness Center cost \$8.5 million to construct; it produces \$424,000 in annual revenue and costs \$1 million to operate).
- Finlay Park costs \$445,806 to operate; It generates \$26,620
- The Park system brought in approximately \$3.1 million in revenue from 2008-2012 (or approximately \$620k per year), mostly from Drew Wellness Center and fees for summer school/after-school/cultural arts programs.
- Riverfront Park is the most heavily used Park with approximately 6,500 visitors per year. It costs \$475,156 to operate.
- The City pays about \$980,000 for Park Rangers at Riverfront, Cranby, and Southeast Parks (ranger corps is limited to those parks because funding is from Hospitality Tax Revenues, which must be spent on venues that attract tourists).

### Administrative Structure

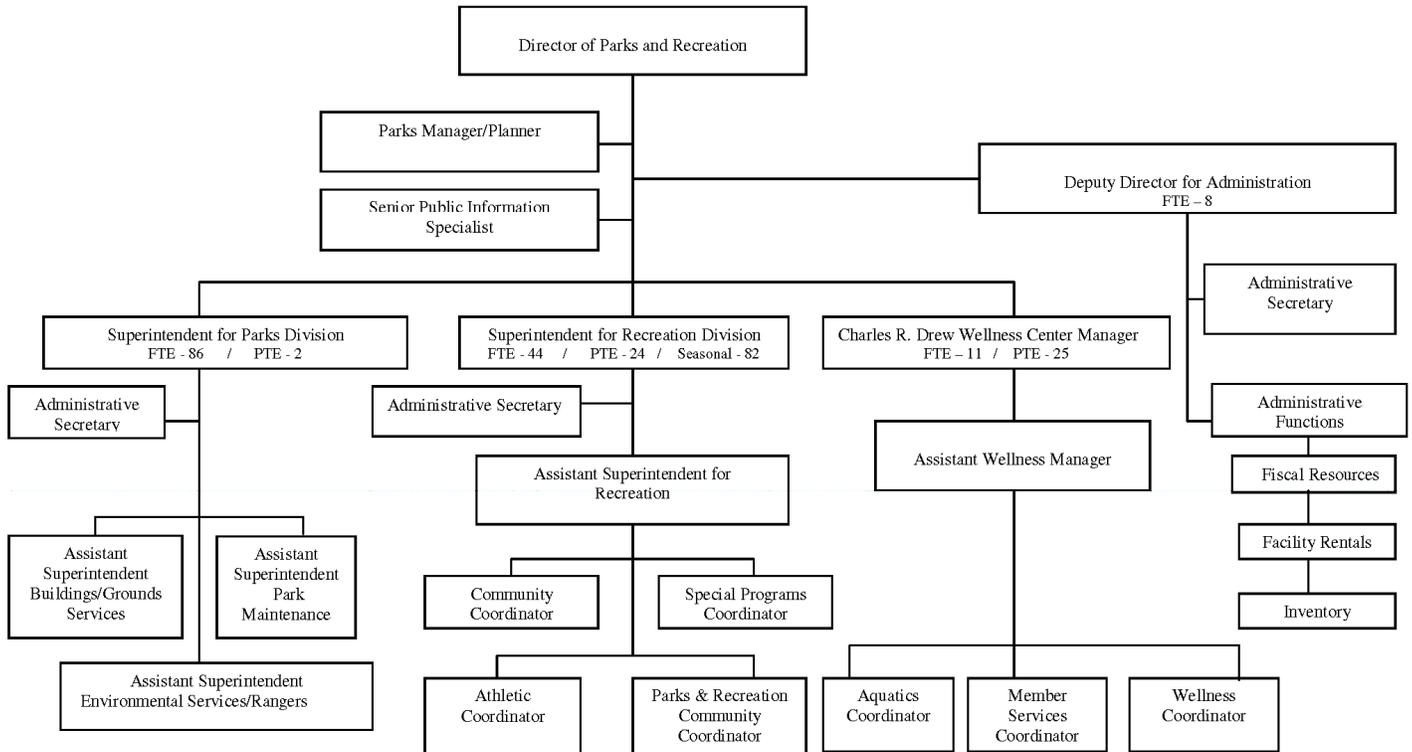
The administrative structure of the Parks and Recreation Department is similar to most of the departments in the City of Columbia. The Director has a direct report to an Assistant City Manager with direct report to the City Manager. Under the Director, is an administrative staff that includes public information specialist, park planners, and a Deputy for Administration. The Deputy for Administration includes all clerical staff as well as all financial responsibilities.

Further organizations provide key leadership positions with reporting and management responsibilities for a Superintendent for Parks (responsible for maintenance, sometimes called in other organizations Director of Maintenance); Superintendent for Recreation (responsible for programs, often called an Athletic Director in other organizations); and a special designation for the Drew Wellness Center Manager who directly supervises that function as well as the Aquatics program.

In reviewing the organizational structure, it is similar in function and nature to other peer communities and we do not feel any changes in the organization structure is necessary.

An organizational chart is included on the next page.

## City of Columbia Parks & Recreation Organizational Chart



### Staff Capabilities and Professional Registrations

The project team evaluated the staff capabilities as a part of this master planning process. As with any organizations, the performance often depends greater on the individuals that make up that organization than the structure. In the City of Columbia, we found the Parks and Recreation staff to be diligent and hard working. The staff seemed engaged throughout the planning process and worked hard to provide the level of data and input desired. At the beginning of the master planning process, there were limited number of professionally trained and educated Recreational Professionals in the administrative levels of the Department. At the time, there was no director. Since that time, the Director has been hired with significant educational credentials and experience in the field. In general, the overall educational level of the staff needs to be enhanced by hiring more degreed professionals and seeking certification of key administrative and recreational professional, especially at the Park Director level and above.

In our evaluations, we found a number of factors that were working against the staff reaching their full potential. These included:

### Salary Structure

According to [www.findthedata.com](http://www.findthedata.com), the average wage for a parks and recreation working in South Carolina is \$35,783 for a full time worker and \$10,100 for a part-time worker. South Carolina ranks 39<sup>th</sup> out of 51 (counting DC) in terms of average wage for parks and recreation workers. Similarly, the

average wage for a fire fighter is \$41,505 full time; for a police officer is \$42,707; and a utilities worker (sewerage) \$42,573. Just among similar public work force, the competition for workers puts parks and recreation at a disadvantage in terms of finding workers with beyond a high school education.

According to a University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Report in 2011, the average salary of people nationally with undergraduate degrees in recreation management was \$36,000 to \$40,000 for entry-level positions; \$40,000 to \$52,000 for middle-management positions; and \$62,000 to \$99,000 or more for owner or director positions. By contrast, the City of Columbia entry level position for maintenance functions in the Parks and Recreation is \$20,000 (to be verified), while an entry level position in the recreation or athletics functions is \$25,000 (to be verified) depending on education and/or experience. Again, this low salary range makes it difficult for the City of Columbia to compete with graduates of recognized Parks, Recreation, and Tourism degrees programs.

## Education

Clemson University offers a strong Bachelor Degree in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, and is recognized a leader in the country in this field. Clemson's program is fully accredited by the National Recreation and Park Association. Additionally, Benedict College offers a degree in Recreation and Leisure Service. The Recreation and Leisure Services Program is also accredited by the National Recreation and Park Association (in association with the American Association for Leisure and Recreation). Both of these institutions produce graduates that should be employed by the City of Columbia in leadership recreational positions.

It is common for maintenance staff to have high school diplomas or GED equivalents which is the case for the City of Columbia Parks and Recreation department. From our evaluation, the maintenance staff at this level is commensurate with other similar departments. From a staff position in recreation, from Park Director's to Junior Park Staff, there is a lower than anticipated number of Recreational oriented degreed professionals. Several of the Park Director's have degrees in other fields outside Recreation and perform well, but lack the formal education an undergraduate degree in Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Services provides. It is our recommendation that the Parks and Recreation Department set as a minimum standard for all Park Directors the requirement of a degree in a relevant Parks and Recreational, accredited program from a four year, accredited institution. Similarly, all administrative staff involved in either recreational programming or park management should have a degree in a relevant Parks and Recreational, accredited program from a four year, accredited institution. While preferred, it is not a requirement for Park Superintendents or similar maintenance staff to have degrees, but should have at significant experience in maintaining similar facilities.

From our evaluation, the most important position in the Parks staff is the Park Director. In Parks where the community felt where successful, the Park Director was engaged, pro-active, and involved in the community. In public input sessions, it was commented often, that our park is better now with our new park director. This highlighted the public perception that one position had that much of an impact on the park's success. The City of Columbia should continue to evaluate it Park Director's performance and make adjustments quickly in these position where either the Director does not have the education, experience, or skill set to make that position succeed.

## Certification

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) offers a Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) Certification for recreational and leisure services employees. The Certification offers some key benefits:

1. Greater career opportunities and advancement for employees
2. Demonstration of your commitment to the parks and recreation profession
3. Enhanced quality of parks and recreation services nationwide
4. Recognition for accomplishments and ability to meet national standards
5. Expansion of skills and knowledge through continuing professional development

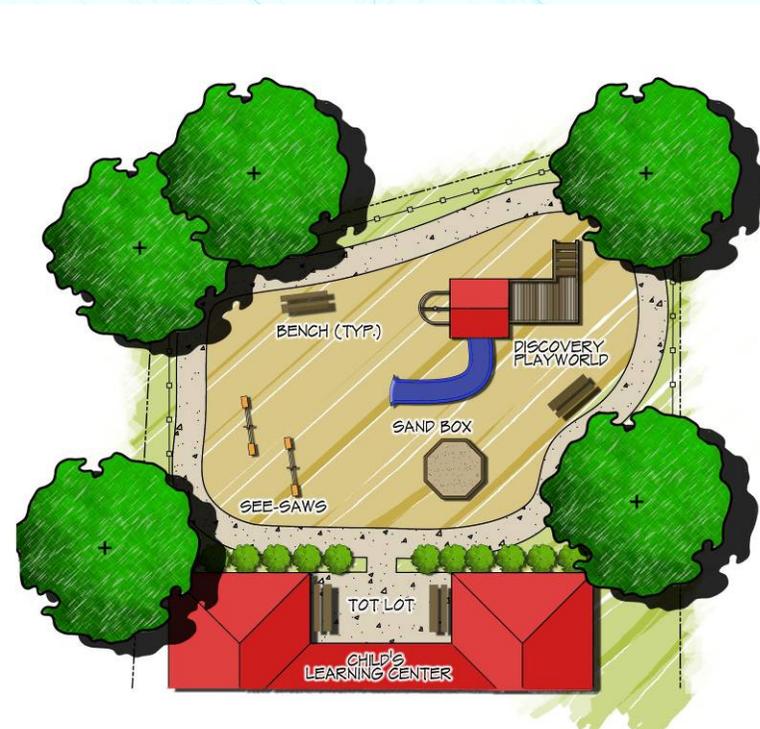
Certification is offered in:

- The Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) certification is granted to individuals employed in the recreation, park resources and leisure services profession who meet high standards of performance.
- Certified Park and Recreation Executive (CPRE) certification can be achieved by individuals employed in the recreation, park resources and leisure services profession who meet high standards of performance at a mastery (middle to upper management level).
- Aquatic Facility Operator (AFO) is a state-of-the-art certification for pool operators and aquatic facility managers. More than 16,000 aquatic facility operators have gained certification in the program's 16 years of existence.
- Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) provides the credentials to inspect playgrounds for safety ensuring that each playground meets the current national standards set by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

The City of Columbia should begin to require all employees in these areas to become certified in these field within the next three years. Certification will help ensure that staff is cable of performing their duties while enhancing their training and abilities. Some current staff members will have difficulty in meeting those requirements, but it is necessary to enhance the quality of the workforce in Parks and Recreation.

## Park/Program Classifications

The City of Columbia Parks and Recreation Department is in the process of classifying facilities and programs along industry accepted guidelines. In general, the organization of those classifications will be similar to those established by the American Planning Association and the National Recreation and Park Association. Those sources are: Mertes, Ph.D., CLP, James D. and James R. Hall, CLP. *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*. A Project of the National Recreation and Park Association and the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration. 1995, and American Planning Association. *Planning and Urban Design Standards*. 2006. General descriptions of those classifications are:



CHILD'S LEARNING CENTER MASTER PLAN  
COLUMBIA, SC 0 16 JUNE 18, 2012

## MINI PARK

*Mini parks are usually less than 5 acres, serving limited, isolated or unique needs such as a school or church playground.*

Although the past classification mini-park was often oriented toward active recreation, the new classification vest-pocket park has a broader application that includes both active and passive uses. Examples of passive uses include picnic areas, arbors, and sitting areas.

### Mini-Park

#### General Description:

Mini-park is the smallest park classification and is used to address limited or isolate recreational needs. Examples include:

- Concentrated or limited populations.
- Isolated development areas.
- Unique recreational opportunities.

In a residential setting, vest-pocket parks serve the same general purpose as mini-parks and totlots of the past. They are also intended to address unique recreational needs, such as:

- Landscaped public use area in an industrial/commercial area.
- Scenic overlooks.
- A play area adjacent to the downtown shopping district.

## Neighborhood Park

### General Description:

Neighborhood parks remain the basic unit of the park system and serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. They should be developed for both active and passive recreation activities geared specifically for those living within the service area. Accommodating a wide variety of age and user groups, including children, adults, the elderly, and special populations, is important. Creating a



sense of place by bringing together the unique character of the site with that of the neighborhood is vital to successful design.

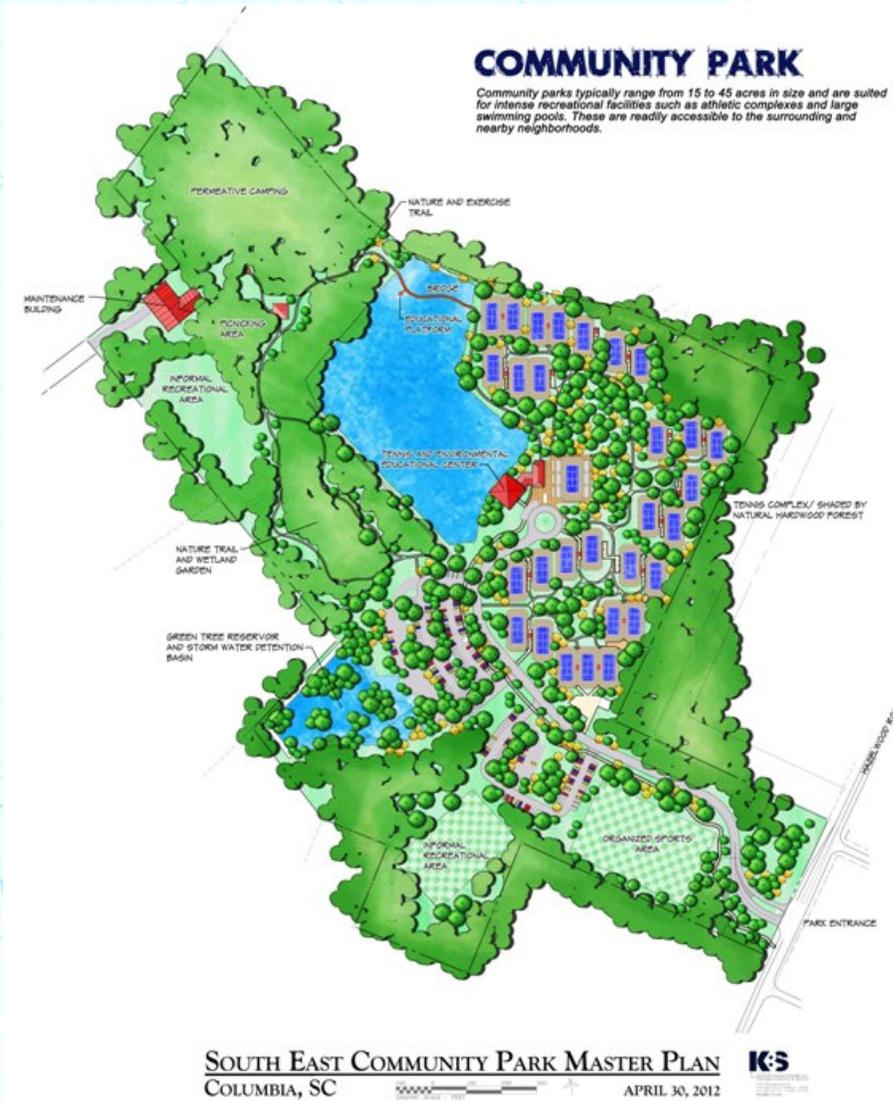
## School Park

### General Description:

By combining the resources of two public agencies, the School-Park classification allows for expanding the recreation, social, and educational opportunities available to the community in an efficient and cost effective manner.

Depending on the circumstances, school-park sites often complement other community open lands. As an example, an elementary/middle school site could serve as a neighborhood park. Likewise, a middle or high school could serve as a community park or as youth athletic fields. Depending on its size, one

school-park site may serve in a number of capacities, such as a neighborhood park, youth athletic fields, and a school. Given the inherent variability of type, size, and location, determining how a school-park site is integrated into the park system will depend on particular circumstances. The important outcome in the joint-use relationship is that both the school district and the park system benefit for share use of facilities and land area.



### Community Park

#### General Description:

Community parks are larger in size and serve a broader purpose than neighborhood parks. Their focus is on meeting the recreation needs of several neighborhoods or large sections of the community, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. They allow for group activities and offer other recreational opportunities not feasible – nor perhaps desirable – at the neighborhood level. As with neighborhood parks, they should be developed for both active and passive recreation activities.



**FINLAY PARK RENDERING**  
 COLUMBIA, SC                      JUNE 20, 2012

**Large Urban Park**

General Description:

From APA:

Community and large Urban Parks are considerable larger in scale and serve a broader purpose than neighborhood parks. The main difference between a community and a large urban park is that the latter is often associated with urban settings with large populations. Large urban parks also tend to be larger than community parks in order to provide more park space in a denser population urban setting. They are especially prevalent in urban areas with limited natural open spaces, such as New York City's Central Park. The focus of both types of parks is on meeting wide-ranging community recreation and social needs. The facilities found within these parks are entirely based on meeting defined community needs. Development focuses on both active and passive recreation with a wide array of programmed

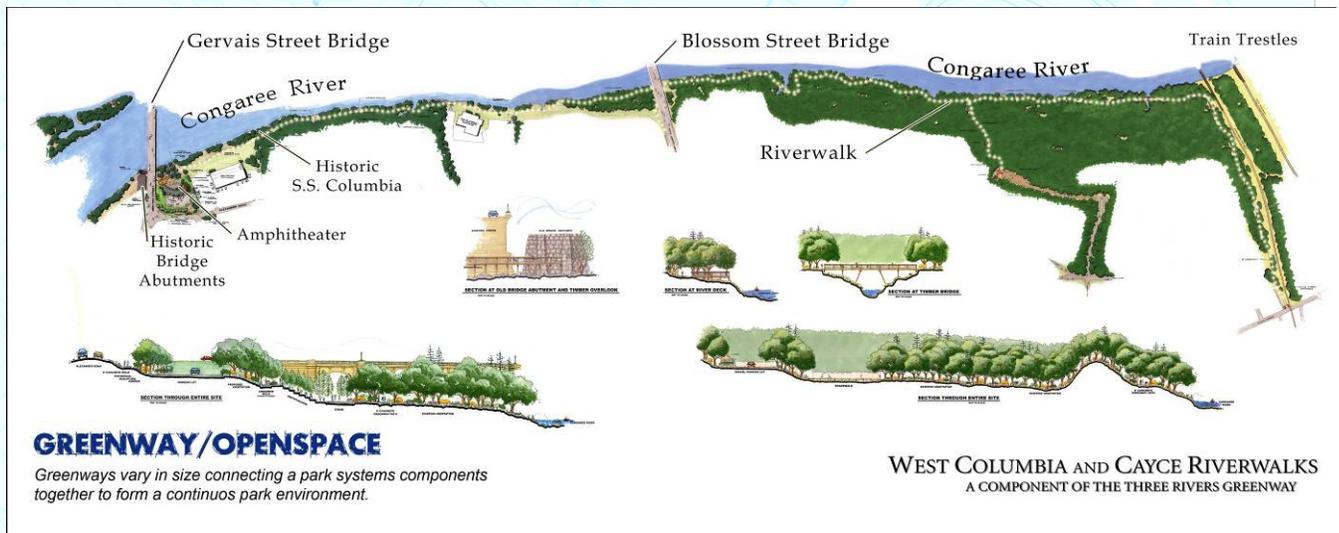
activities being accommodated. Special-use facilities are routinely located within these parks. This type of park also encompasses unique and extensive landscape features indicative of the region.

## Natural Resources Areas / Preserve / Open Lands

### General Description:

Natural resource areas are lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering. These lands consist of:

- Individual sites exhibiting natural resources.
- Lands that are unsuitable for development but offer natural resource potential. Examples include parcels with steep slopes and natural vegetation, drainageways and ravines, surface water management areas (man-made ponding areas), and utility easements.
- Protected lands, such as wetlands/lowlands and shorelines along waterways, lakes, and ponds.



### Greenways:

#### General Description:

Greenways serve a number of important functions:

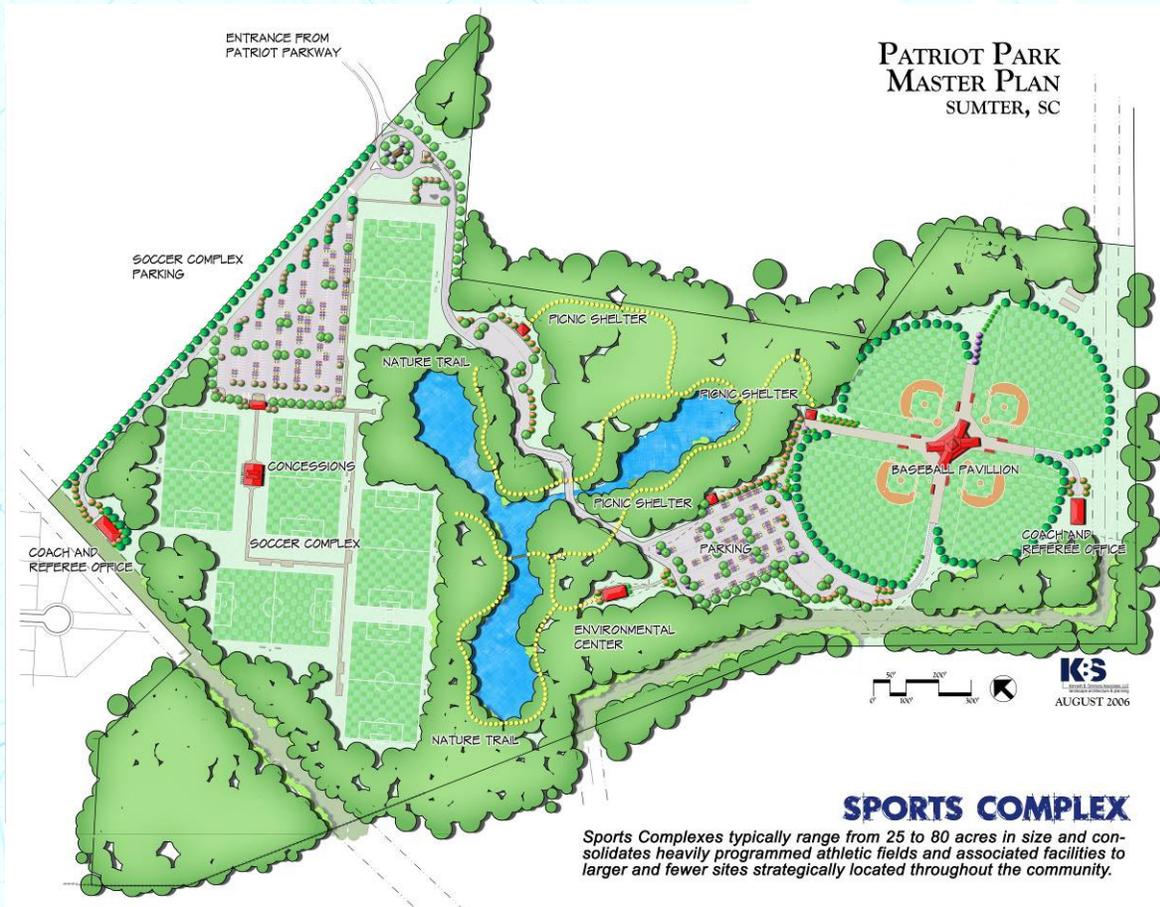
- They tie park components together to form a cohesive park, recreation, and open space system.
- They emphasize harmony with the natural environment.
- They allow for uninterrupted and safe pedestrian movement between parks throughout the community.
- They provide people with a resource based outdoor recreational opportunity and experience.
- They can enhance property values.

In many respects, greenways and natural resource areas have much in common. Both preserve natural resources and mediate between larger habitat areas, open space, and corridors for wildlife. The primary distinction between the two is that greenways emphasize use (i.e., park trails) to a greater extent than natural resource areas.

## Sports Complex

### General Description:

The Sports Complex classification consolidates heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities at larger and fewer sites strategically located throughout the community. This allows for:



- Economies of scale and higher quality facilities.
- Improved management/scheduling.
- Improved control of facility use.
- Greater control of negative impacts to neighborhood and community parks, such as overuse, noise, traffic congestion, parking, and domination of facilities by those outside the neighborhood.

Sports complexes should be developed to accommodate the specific needs of user groups and athletic associations based on demands and program offerings. Where possible, school-park sites should be used for youth athletics such as T-ball, soccer, and flag football, to minimize duplication of facilities. Athletic fields are a good example of the multiple use concept in park facility grouping. The fields can be used for a variety of sports so as to accommodate more participants. Also, the facility can be scheduled more participants. Also, the facility can be scheduled more heavily than a single use

facility. Sports Complexes include fields and courts for softball, soccer, tennis, basketball, volleyball, and racket ball.

### Special Use Park

#### General Description:

The Special Use classification covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose use. Special uses generally fall into three categories:

- **Historic/Cultural/Social Sites** – unique local resources offering historical, educational, and cultural opportunities. Examples include historic downtown areas, performing arts parks, arboretums, ornamental gardens, performing arts facilities, indoor theatres, churches, public buildings, and amphitheatres.
- **Recreation Facilities** – specialized or single purpose facilities. Examples included community centers, senior centers, community theatres, hockey arenas, marinas, golf courses, and aquatic parks. Frequently community buildings are located in neighborhood and community parks.
- **Outdoor Recreation Facilities** – examples include tennis centers, softball complexes, and sports stadiums.



The contribution that Private Parks/Recreation Facilities make in meeting community park and recreation needs must be determined on a case by case basis. Specific policy guidelines should be prepared for use in the subdivision exaction ordinance.

### **Park Trails (Types I, II, and III)**

#### **General Description:**

Park trails are multipurpose trails located within greenways, parks, and natural resource areas. They are the most desirable type of trail because they:

- Emphasize harmony with the natural environment.
- Allow for relatively uninterrupted pedestrian movement to and through the city's park system and development areas, including, where possible, through commercial and industrial parks.
- Effectively tie the various parks and recreation areas together to form a comprehensive park and trail system.
- Protect users from urban development and associated vehicular traffic.

The three types of park trails illustrated are intended to accommodate walkers, bicyclists, and in-line skaters.

Given their attributes, park trails are at the top of the trail classification hierarchy. They should be considered the preferred trail type and used to the greatest extent possible.

### **Connector Trails (Types I and II)**

#### **General Description:**

The significant difference between connector and park trails lies largely in their location. Park trails emphasize a strong relationship with the natural environment within a park-like setting, while connector trails or recreation connectors emphasize safe travel for pedestrians and bicyclists to and from parks and around the community. In general, connector trails are located within existing road rights-of-way and utility easements or along artificial drainageways. The two classes of connector trails illustrated are intended to accommodate walkers, horseback riders, bicyclists, and in-line skaters.

### **Bikeways (Bike Routes and Lanes)**

#### **General Description:**

Bikeways are paved segments of roadways that serve to safely separate bicyclists from traffic. They come in the form of bike routes and bike lanes. The distinction between the two is a matter of exclusivity. While bike routes are essentially paved shoulders or segments of the roadway that serve to separate bicyclists from traffic, bike lanes are designated portions of the roadway for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists.

It is important to recognize that bikeways serve distinct user groups, including:

- Commuters – those who use their bicycle as a means to get from point A to B as expeditiously as possible. Their trips can be viewed as substitutes for vehicle trips when planning light transportation ways.
- Fitness enthusiasts – those who cycle for fitness as well as recreation.
- Competitive athletes – those who bicycle competitively.

The needs of these user groups are distinctly different from those using park or connector trails for recreational purposes. The distinction is that of speed. At speeds in excess of 10 to 15 mph, the safety of a typical trail user (and bicyclist) becomes important. Although some commuter-type trails are specifically designed to accommodate higher speeds, the vast majority of recreation-type trails are not. Given this, it is important that the inherent differences in user groups be recognized and that trails not used as direct substitutes for bikeways (or vice-versa). Bikeways should be planned as stand-alone systems that connect to the off-street trail system.

### All Terrain Bike, Cross-Country Ski, and Equestrian Trails

#### General Description:

All-terrain bike, cross-country ski, and equestrian trails are similar to park trails in that they emphasize a strong relationship with the natural environment, although for somewhat different reasons. They are most often located within natural resource areas, greenways, community parks and special use facilities, such as golf courses. Since regional and state parks often develop and maintain these types of trails, the need for them at the local level is often limited.

### Park System and Condition

Included in Appendix B is a detailed list of all parks in the system. One important characteristic of the parks system is its age – many of the facilities have out lived their useful age and are not comparable to newer facilities located in peer communities. Without preparing a detailed list, some of the conditions issues of the system are included in the following pages. They are meant to show good and bad in our parks system, then some comparable parks that should be closer to our standard goals in other communities. There are examples of very good parks including the Drew Wellness Center, the new Parks Administration Building, the amphitheater at Earlewood Park, upgrades at Valencia Park to name a few. However, from these and many other observations, the project team and steering committee reached the conclusion that the condition of the City of Columbia Parks and Recreation Facilities we not up to par with our peer communities.

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Dumpster creates eyesore in middle of park. Needs screening



Water fountain is not in working condition.



Asphalt parking lot is deteriorating. Parking lot has no sign of striping.



WOODLAND PARK

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Tennis courts, nets, fencing are in need of replacing and resurfacing.



**USA TEAM TENNIS  
WHITE STRIPES CHAMPION  
SPRING 2002**

**COACHES: MICHAEL MUTHIG & MIKE CAPRIOTTI**

CAROLINE COTTER	KAITLYN PRUITT
CLEVELAND COVINGTON	MARGARET STEEM
LAUREN GAULIN	WILL MCARTHY
HELENA JEDZINIAK	CHRISTOPHER MUTHIG
LAURA KOERNER	TRAVIS MUTHIG
KATTIE LONGAKER	

**CTL KIDS LEAGUE**  
WWW.COLUMBIATENNISLEAGUE.ORG

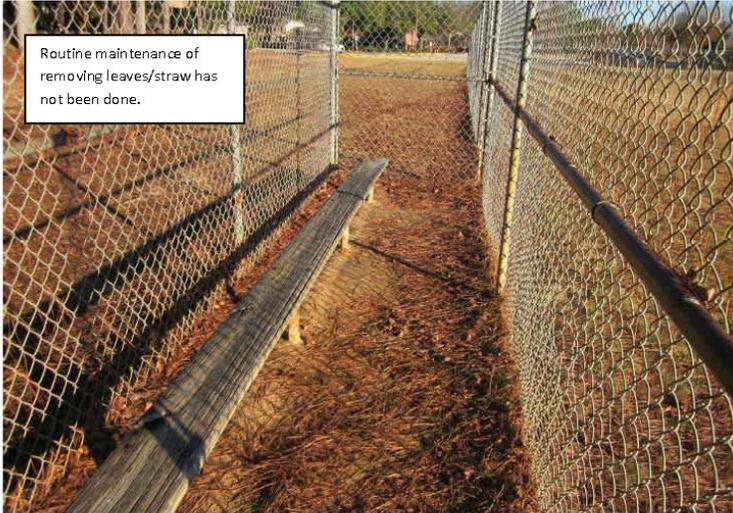


Routine maintenance of removing leaves has not been done.



**WOODLAND PARK**

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Routine maintenance of removing leaves/straw has not been done.



Parking lot in very poor condition



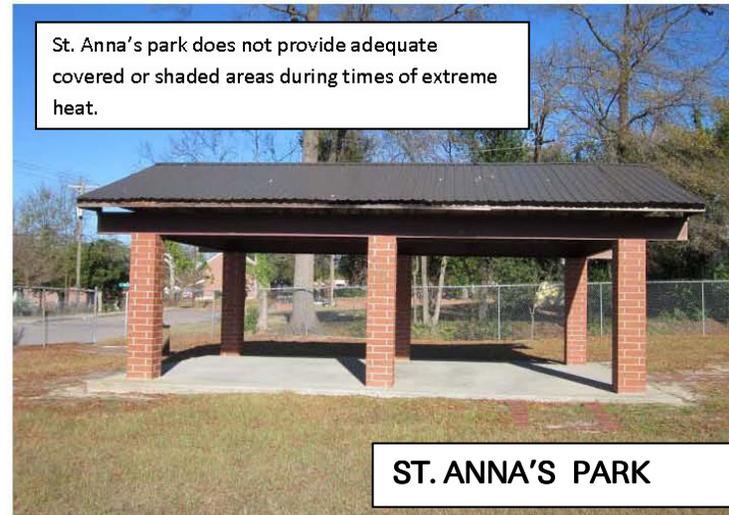
Routine maintenance of removing leaves has not been done.



Routine maintenance of removing leaves/straw has not been done.

**WOODLAND PARK**

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan  
FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Splash Park is out of date compared today's standards.



Basketball goals, nets, and courts are out of date and/or needs replacing.



Water fountain is not in working condition.



ST. ANNA'S PARK

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Southeast Park needs permanent restroom facilities.



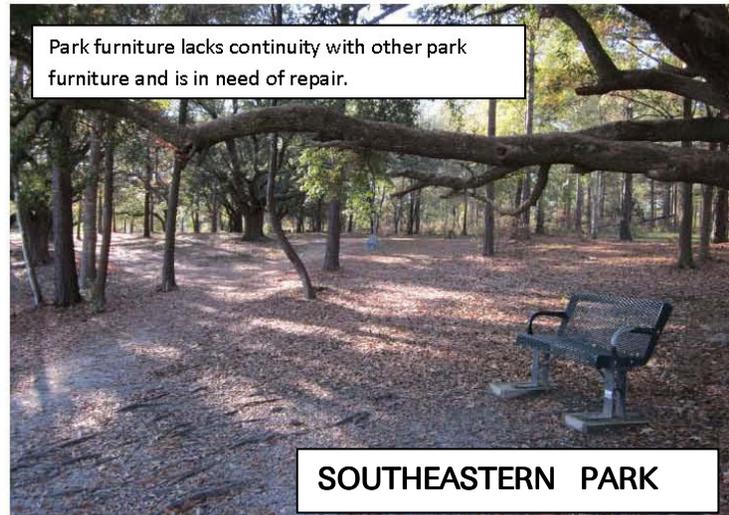
Electrical panel shall be screened with native plantings.



Tennis complex at Southeast Park is in great condition. Minor maintenance issue should be addressed due to wind damage during day of visit.

**SOUTHEASTERN PARK**

Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan  
FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan  
FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC

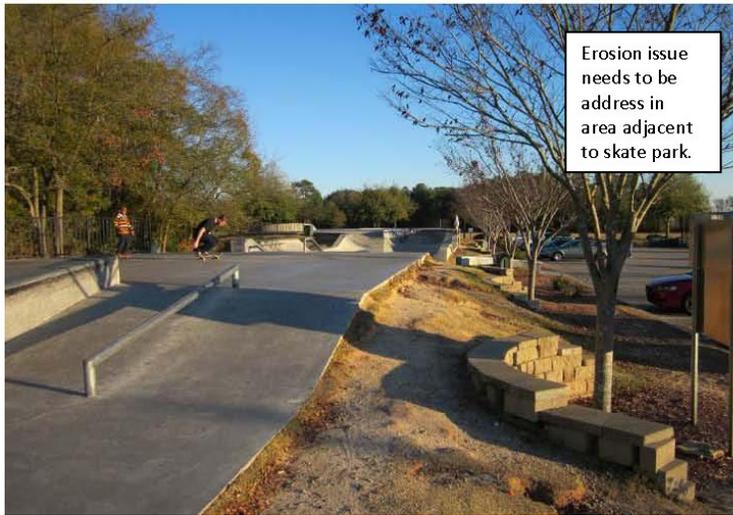


**OWEN'S FIELD PARK**

Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan  
FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Concession/re  
stroom facility  
needs minor  
maintenance  
and up keep.



Erosion issue  
needs to be  
address in  
area adjacent  
to skate park.



Concession/re  
stroom facility  
needs minor  
maintenance  
and up keep.

**OWEN'S FIELD PARK**

Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan  
FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



**MAYS PARK**

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Access to tennis courts do not meet ADA standards.



Signage on tennis courts need to be updated.

## MAYS PARK

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



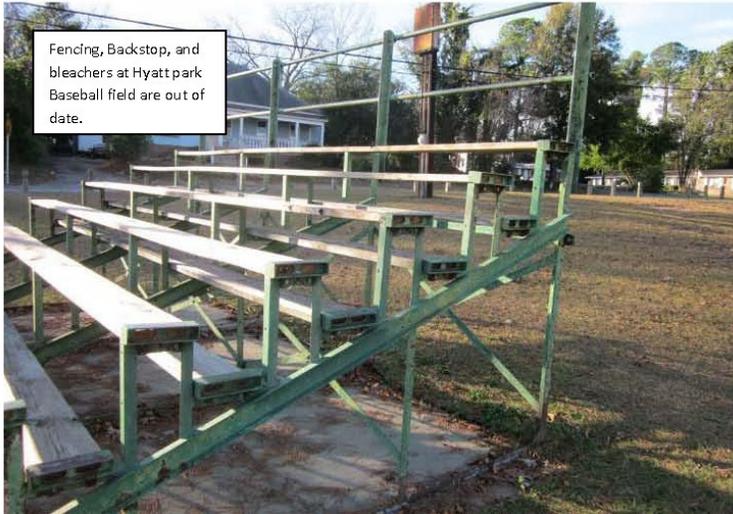
# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



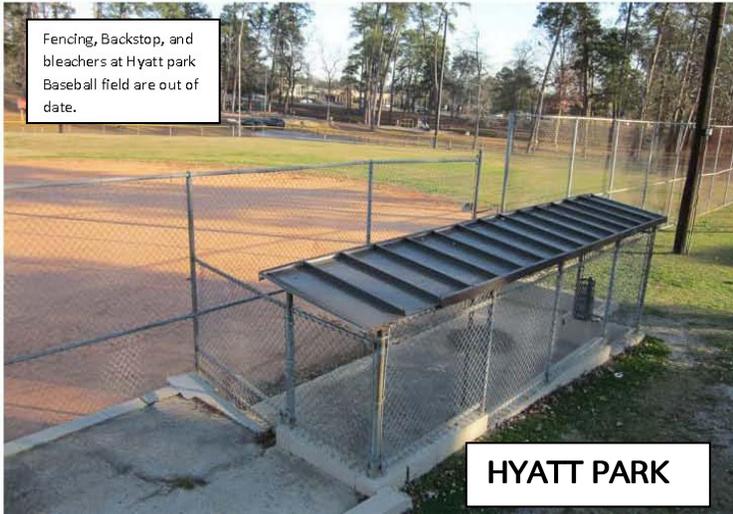
Fencing, Backstop, and bleachers at Hyatt park Baseball field are out of date.



Missing swings on playground equipment.



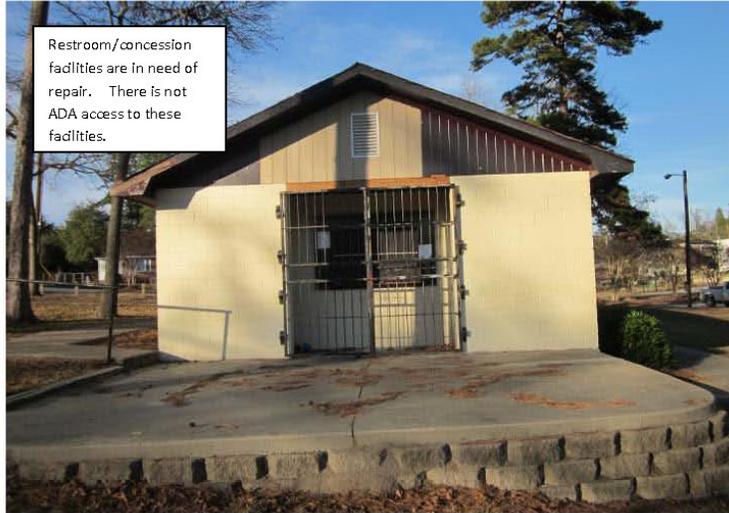
Fencing, Backstop, and bleachers at Hyatt park Baseball field are out of date.



Fencing, Backstop, and bleachers at Hyatt park Baseball field are out of date.

**HYATT PARK**

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Restroom/concession facilities are in need of repair. There is not ADA access to these facilities.



Routine maintenance and removal of litter and leaves is not being done on play surfaces and equipment.



Restroom/concession facilities are in need of repair. There is not ADA access to these facilities.

**HYATT PARK**

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Sediment covering asphalt walkway at Hampton Park.



Community center lacks design continuity with other community centers. Hampton Park's community center looks to have an unfinished addition.



Out dated dug out at baseball field



Grass parking lot

**HAMPTON PARK**

Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan  
FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



HAMPTON PARK

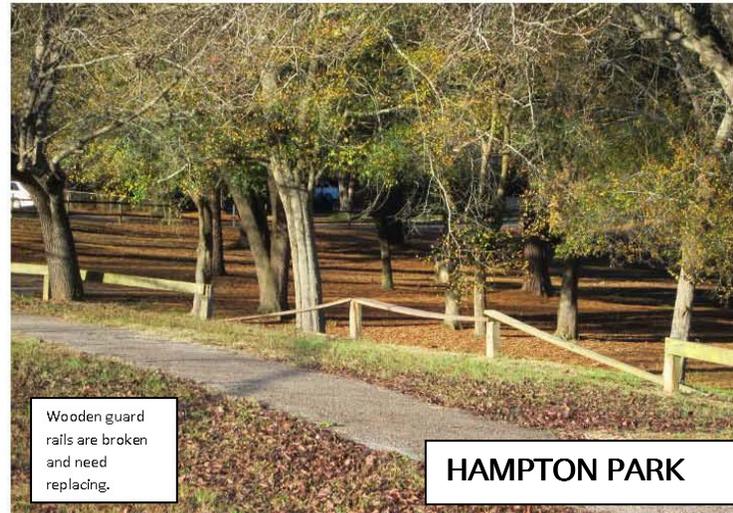
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FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Clogged spillway pipe should be cleaned on a regular basis.



Netting and framework needs to be repaired or replaced.



Wooden guard rails are broken and need replacing.

**HAMPTON PARK**

Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan  
FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



All park railings have flaking paint and some areas need to be re-secured.



Homeless living in the park is a hindrance to park users.



Decaying and missing wooden slats on walkway to island stage.



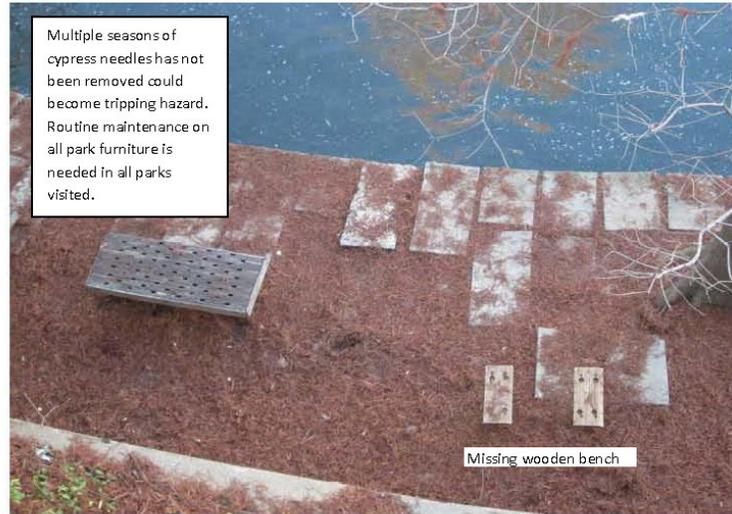
Homeless living in the park is a hindrance to park users.

FINLAY PARK

Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan  
FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Falling wall



Multiple seasons of cypress needles has not been removed could become tripping hazard. Routine maintenance on all park furniture is needed in all parks visited.

Missing wooden bench

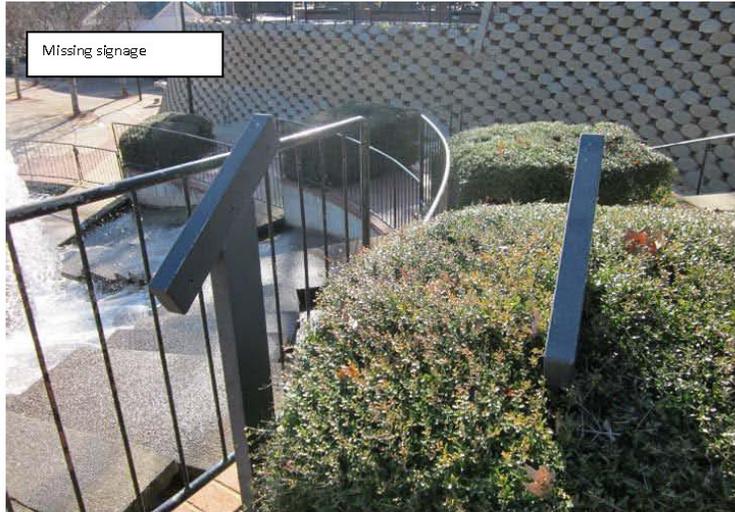


Routine maintenance on all park furniture is needed in all parks visited.

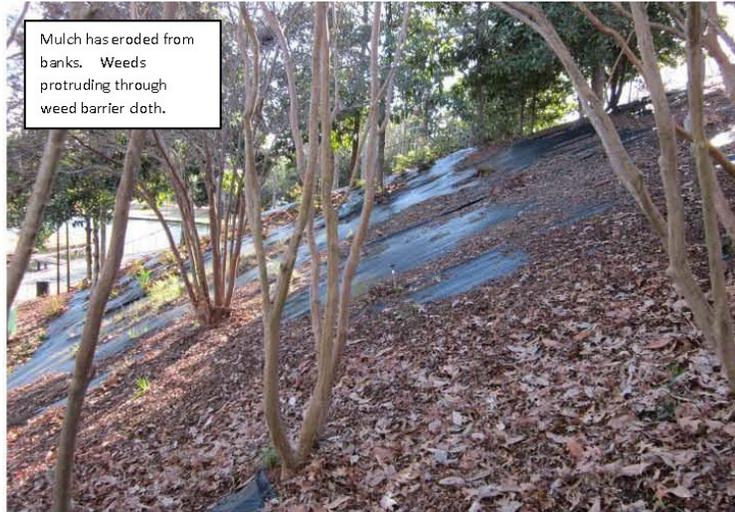


FINLAY PARK

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Missing signage



Mulch has eroded from banks. Weeds protruding through weed barrier doth.



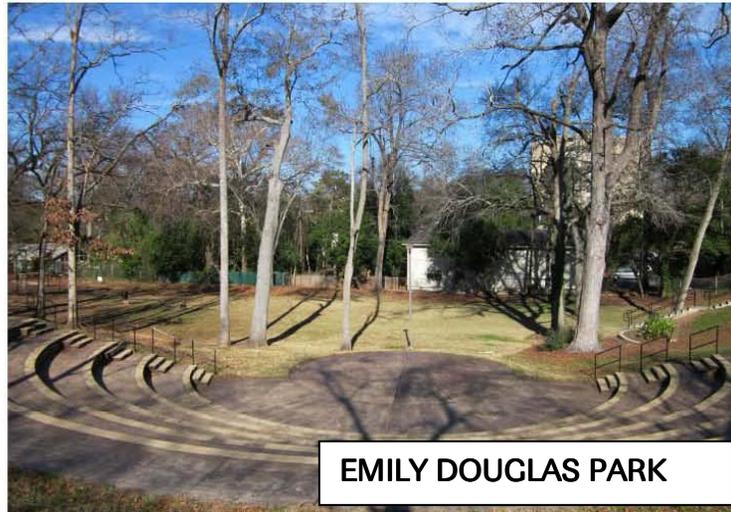
Exposed wiring



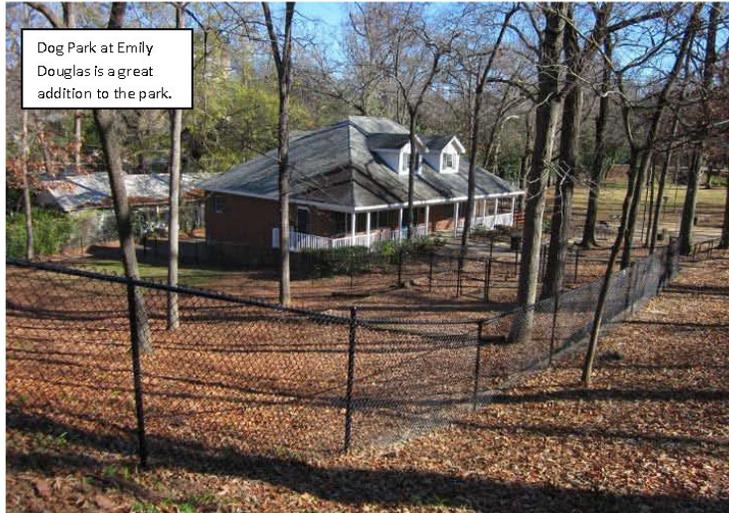
Mulch has eroded from banks. Weeds protruding through weed barrier doth.

FINLAY PARK

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



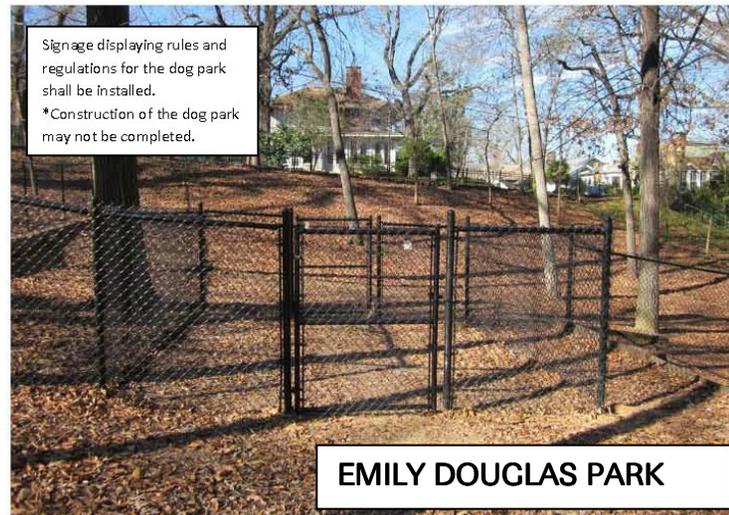
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FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Dog Park at Emily Douglas is a great addition to the park.



Community centers in all parks lack continuity of design. While the center at Emily Douglas looks to be in relatively good condition most other community centers lack routine maintenance and are out dated.



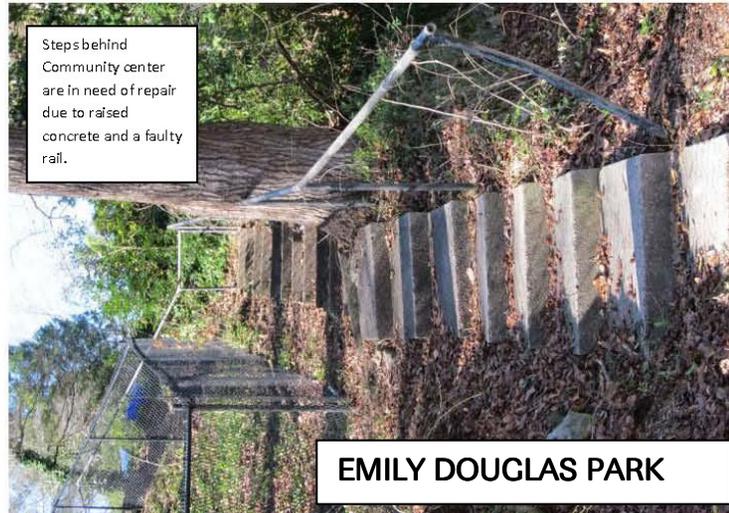
Signage displaying rules and regulations for the dog park shall be installed.  
\*Construction of the dog park may not be completed.

**EMILY DOUGLAS PARK**

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



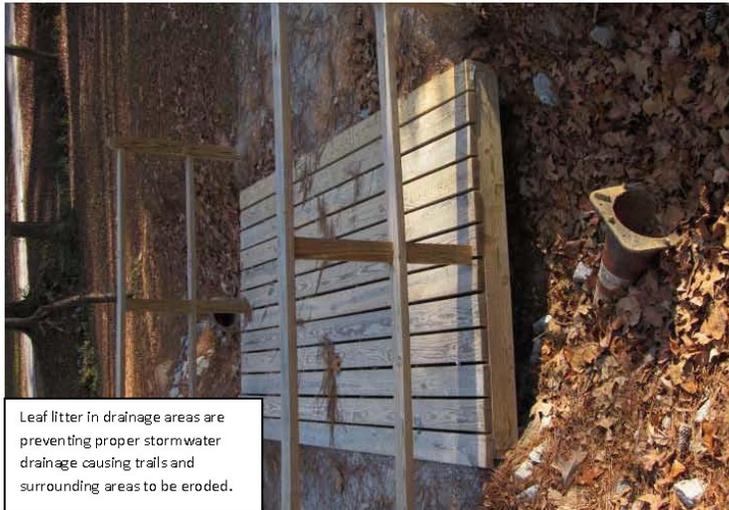
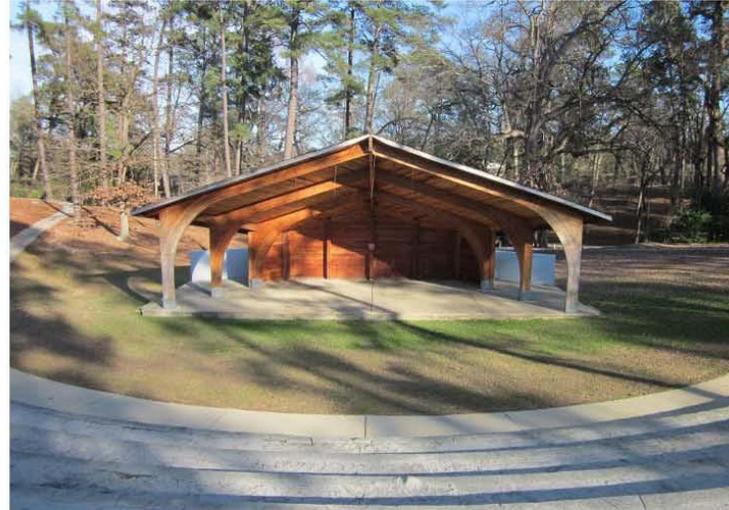
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# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Earlewood Park's Amphitheater is in relatively good condition. Some routine maintenance should be completed such as replading any damage or decaying wood, as well as replacing or re-gluing stone caps.



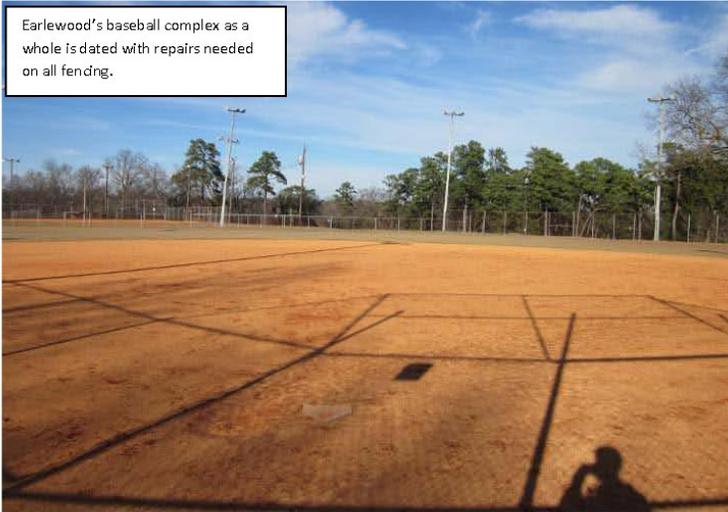
Leaf litter in drainage areas are preventing proper storm water drainage causing trails and surrounding areas to be eroded.



**EARLEWOOD PARK**

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC

Earlewood's baseball complex as a whole is dated with repairs needed on all fencing.



Erosion is prevalent throughout the disc-golf course.



Routine maintenance such as removing leaves from the baseball outfield is not being performed.

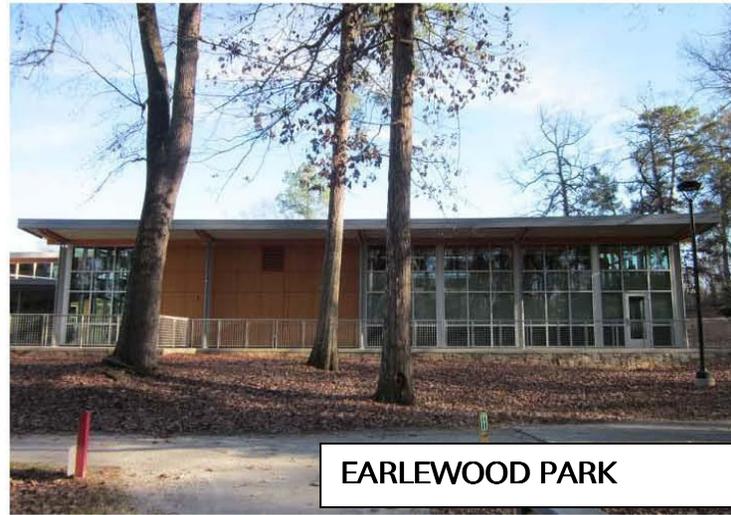


Fencing and backstops are rusting, deformed, and corroded.



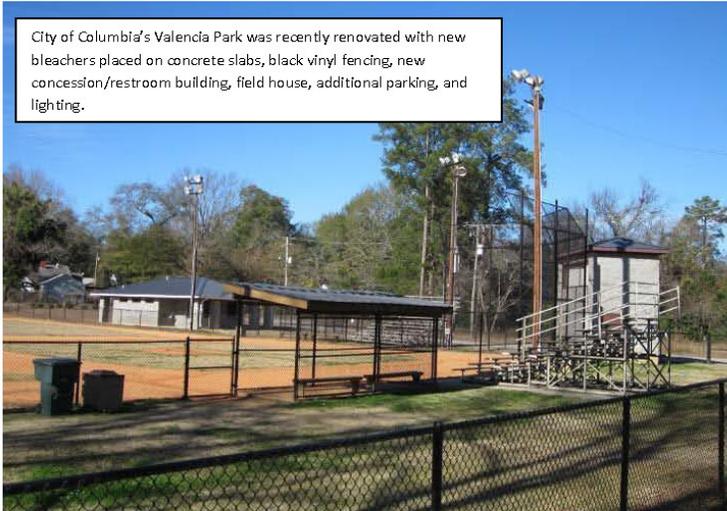
**EARLEWOOD PARK**

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC

City of Columbia's Valencia Park was recently renovated with new bleachers placed on concrete slabs, black vinyl fencing, new concession/restroom building, field house, additional parking, and lighting.



# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Complete renovation of Valencia Park is not yet completed. An ADA accessible walkway needs to be installed to the restroom/concession building as well as installation of new playground equipment and surfacing.



# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



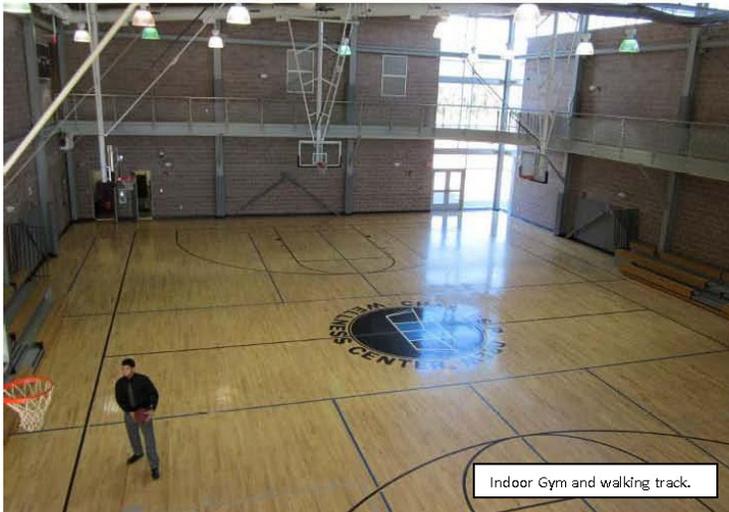
# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Indoor Pool



Newly installed playground equipment and outdoor pool.



Indoor Gym and walking track.



Open space with outdoor concrete and gravel walkway.

**DREW WELLNESS CENTER**

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Parking lot at the Columbia Tennis Center is in relatively good condition.



Newly resurfaced tennis courts



Black vinyl fencing

**COLUMBIA TENNIS CENTER**

Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan  
FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Seating area and pro shop

Columbia Tennis Center is a recently renovated facility that consist of 14 Tennis courts, lights, black vinyl fencing, seating, pro shop. The improvements at the CTC should be a standard for all tennis courts in Columbia Parks.



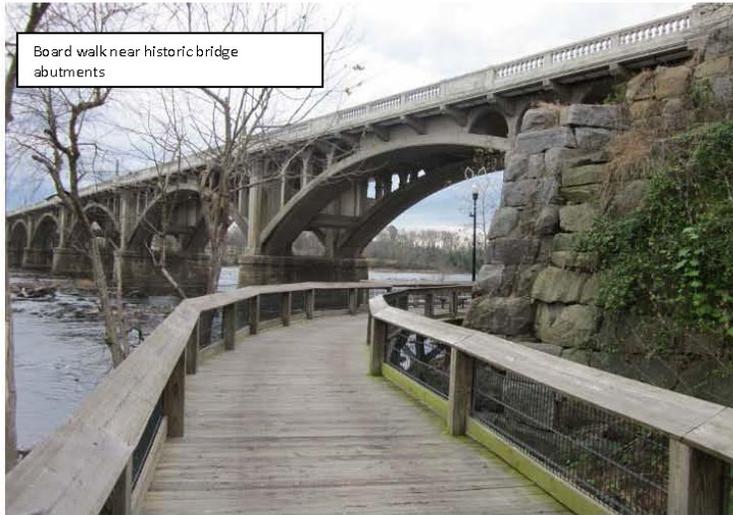
Pro shop



COLUMBIA TENNIS CENTER

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC

## Examples of other Parks and Recreation in competing communities



Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan  
FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



CAYCE RIVERWALK

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



ADA Accessible walkway to Amphitheater



Appropriate and adequate signage



CAYCE RIVERWALK

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Designed drainage feature

All walking surfaces are weed, litter, and leaf free, and pose no threat or hindrance to park users and handicap persons.



Water efficient splash pad designed with above and below water features (background)

Park furniture is well maintained and possesses continuity of design with all park facilities and design elements. (Foreground)

## Atlanta's Fourth Ward

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC

Atlanta's Fourth Ward Park is a well-designed, well-maintained park with a modern aesthetic appeal. The following images reflect the quality and quantity of maintenance needed to maintain a 17 acre park.



Park furniture is well maintained and possesses continuity of design with all park facilities and design elements.



Grass on this amphitheater is regularly mowed, with any lawn clippings, leaves, and litter removed.



Atlanta's Fourth Ward

Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan  
FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



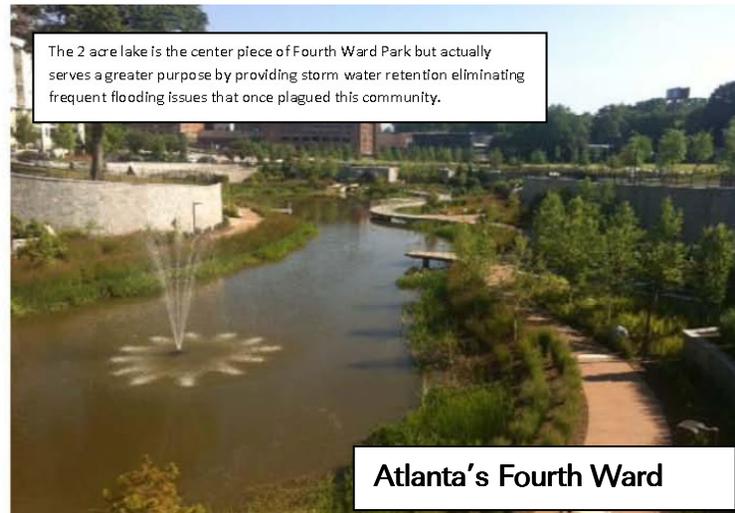
Designed drainage feature



Playground equipment has modern aesthetics with rubber surfacing underneath. This recycled material not only provides a soft landing in the event of a fall but is easy to maintain and kept free of weeds and litter.



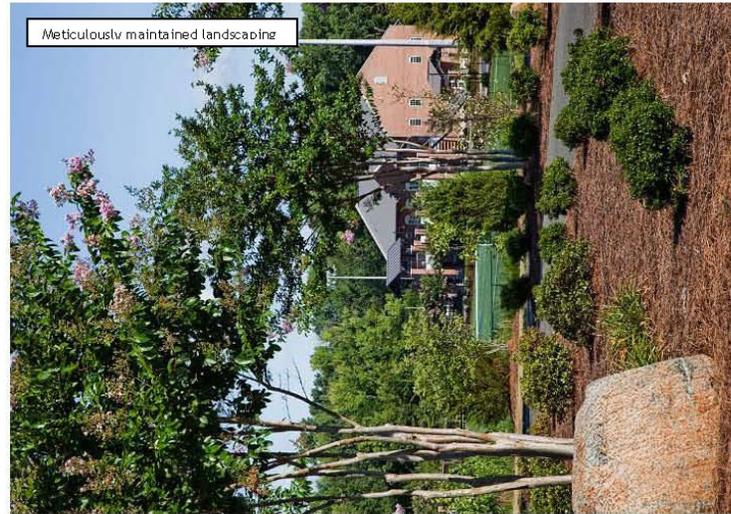
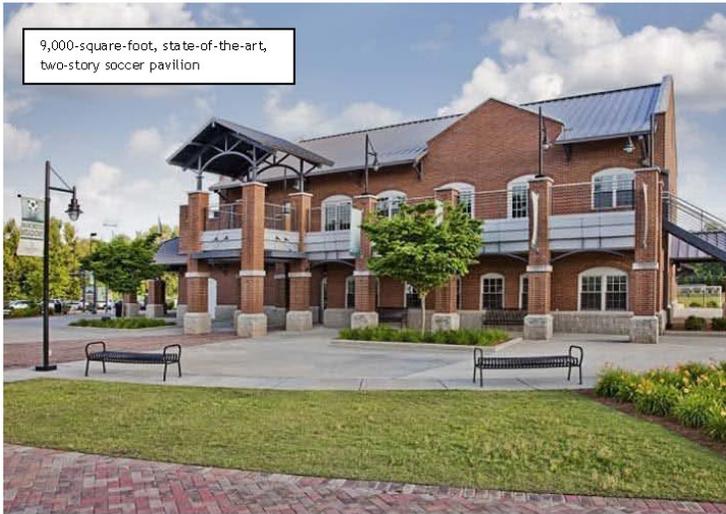
Designed drainage feature



The 2 acre lake is the center piece of Fourth Ward Park but actually serves a greater purpose by providing storm water retention eliminating frequent flooding issues that once plagued this community.

Atlanta's Fourth Ward

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan  
FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Interactive water efficient splash pad adjacent to playground and covered shelter area. Parents have the ability so sit in the shade as kids enjoy playground equipment.



Steward parks well maintained multi-purpose field contains lighting, black vinyl fencing, shaded bleachers, and state of the art irrigation system.

Spartanburg Parks

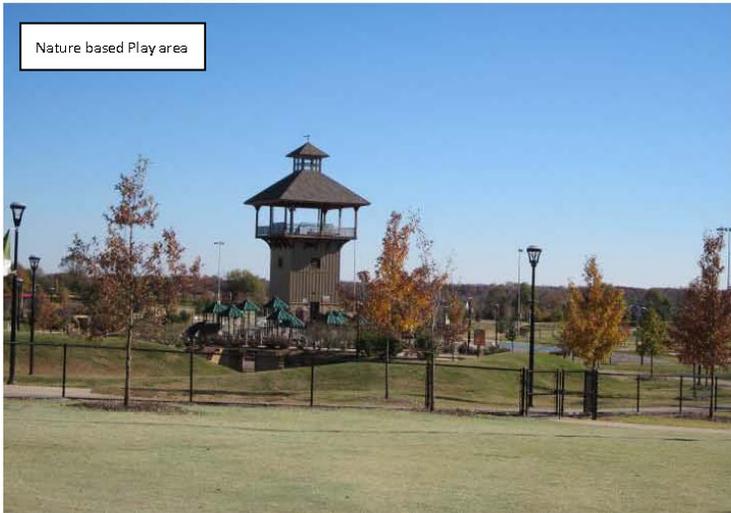
Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan  
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Play ground equipment is well maintained and the play surfaces is weed and litter free.



Well maintained landscape and walkway areas.



Nature based Play area



Spartanburg Parks

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



All sports fields are well maintained, with black vinyl fencing, and adequate lighting.



Congregation area near concession provides ample seating and trash receptacles for large crowds.

## Spartanburg Parks

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Basketball courts contain black vinyl fencing, lighting for night time play, new surfacing, and adjustable goal heights for all ages to enjoy.

Stewart Park's 8-plus acres includes a multi-purpose athletic field installed with a state-of-the-art irrigation system, basketball courts, walking trails, a splash pad, playground equipment, picnic shelter, and parking, setting a new standard for multi-use neighborhood parks in Spartanburg.



Interactive water efficient splash pad.

## Spartanburg Parks

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



Black vinyl fencing, new surfacing, lighting

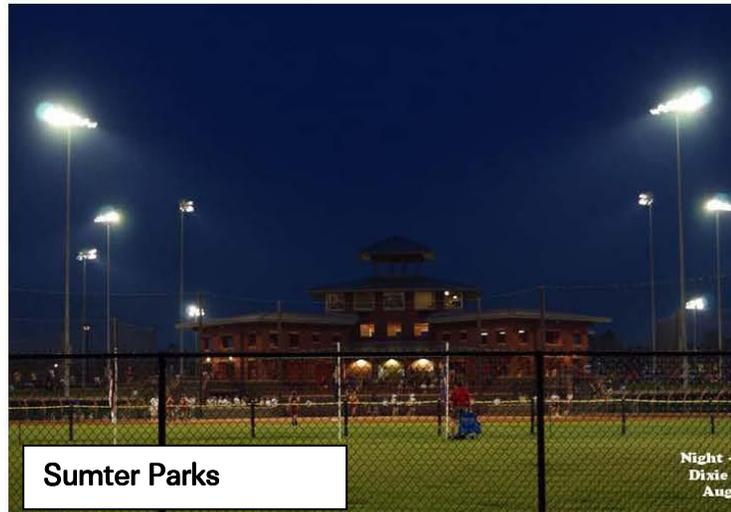


State of the art Pro shop/Tennis Center



Sumter Parks

# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC



# Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC

## National Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines

The National Recreation and Park Association offers guidelines as to what communities should provide in terms of facilities per capita. The recommendations are guidelines and averaged across the nation. This means that the average is not right for all communities and all locations.

In general, the City of Columbia fell short of most of the national standards. Columbia has significant numbers of parks and facilities, but often amenities are lacking. This was confirmed by the public surveys, the public input sessions, and our comparison to the national standards.

According to the national standards, the City is below the standard in:

- Basketball and Volleyball courts
- Handball
- Tennis
- Baseball
- Softball
- Archery
- Skeet shooting
- Football
- Soccer
- Swimming Pools.

Below is the actual matrix with requirements and existing:

ACTIVITY/ FACILITY	RECOM. SPACE REQUIRE MENTS	RECOM. SIZE AND DIMENSIONS	RECOM. ORIENTATION	NO. OF UNITS PER POPULATION	SERVICE RADIUS	LOCATION NOTES	City of Columbia - Needs	Columbia - Existing	Notes
<b>Badminton</b>	1620 sq. ft.	Singles – 17'x44' Doubles – 20'x44'	Long axis north-south	1 per 5000	¼ - 1/2 mile	Usually in school, recreation center or church facility. Safe walking or bike access.	26	None specifically identified - available in some facilities	This space is available but takes away other spaces such as basketball
<b>Basketball</b>  <b>1. Youth</b>	2400- 3036 sq. ft. 5040- 7280 sq. ft.	46-50'x84'  50'x84'	Long axis north-south	1 per 5000	¼ - ½ mile	Same as badminton. Outdoor courts in neighborhood and community parks, plus	26	<b>21</b>	The number is lower than the national standard and is combined with volleyball which further impacts the availability. Additional indoor

Five-Year Leisure Services Master Plan  
FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC

2. High School	5600-7980 sq. ft.	50'x94' with 5' unobstructed space on all sides				active recreation areas in other park settings.			courts are needed.
3. Collegiate									
Handball (3-4 wall)	800 sq. ft. for 4-wall 1000 for 3-wall	20'x40' – Minimum of 10' to rear of 3-wall court. Minimum 20' overhead clearance	Long axis north-south. Front wall at north end.	1 per 20,000	15-30 minute travel time	4-wall usually indoor as part of multi-purpose facility. 3-wall usually outdoor in park or school setting	7	1	This is not a large recreational need, but could be because the locations are not available. A low cost recreational alternative.
Ice Hockey	22,000 sq. ft. including support area	Rink 85'x200' (minimum 85'x185') Additional 5000 sq. ft. support area	Long axis north-south if outdoor	Indoor – 1 per 100,000 Outdoor – depends on climate	½ - 1 hour travel time	Climate important consideration affecting no. of units. Best as part of multi-purpose facility.	1	1	Counting the skating rink in this tally, this is not a large need in the south.
Tennis	Minimum of 7,200 sq. ft. single court (2 acres for complex)	36'x78'. 12' clearance on both sides; 21' clearance on both ends.	Long axis north-south	1 court per 2000	¼-1/2 mile	Best in batteries of 2-4. Located in neighborhood/community park or adjacent to school	65	54	While we show below the national average, other recreational providers - specifically the County provide a number of available courts at Caughman Road and Parklane which makes this need met for the community.
Volleyball	Minimum of 4,000 sq. ft.	30'X60'. Minimum 6' clearance on all sides	Long axis north-south	1 per 5000	¼ - ½ mile	Same as other court activities (e.g. badminton)	26	None specifically identified - available in some facilities	There are no specifically designated courts which puts upward pressure on the basketball courts. More outdoor sand courts should be considered.
Baseball	3.0-3.85 A minimum	Baselines – 90' Pitching distance 60 ½' foul lines – min. 320' Center field – 400'+ Baselines – 60' Pitching distance – 46' Foul lines –	Locate home plate to pitcher throwing across sun and batter not facing it. Line from home plate through pitchers mound run east-north-east.	1 per 5000  Lighted 1 per 30,000	¼ - ½ mile	Part of neighborhood complex. Lighted fields part of community complex.	26  4	19 (shared with baseball)  0	The participation of the City baseball has dropped significantly in the past 20 years, other leagues such as the Palmetto Baseball League at Hammond School and the Dixie Youth at Caughman Road are more common places for baseball and help fill the need.
1. Official									

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	1.2 A minimum	200' Center field – 200' – 250'							
<b>2. Little League</b>									
<b>Field Hockey</b>	Minimum 1.5 A	180' x 300' with a minimum of 6' clearance on all sides.	Fall season – long axis northwest to southwest. For longer periods north-south	1 per 20,000	15-30 minutes travel time	Usually part of baseball, football, soccer complex in community park or adjacent to high school.	7	0	Multi-purpose fields could be used for this activity. Currently, there are no City programs for this growing sport.
<b>Football</b>	Minimum 1.5 A	160' x 360' with a minimum of 6' clearance on all sides.	Same as field hockey.	1 per 20,000	15-30 minutes travel time	Same as field hockey.	7	0	Multi-purpose fields could be used for this activity. Currently, most of the youth football is covered by Pop Warner.
<b>Soccer</b>	1.7 – 2.1 A	195' to 225' x 330' to 360' with a minimum 10' clearance all sides.	Same as field hockey.	1 per 10,000	1-2 miles	Number of units depends on popularity. Youth soccer on smaller fields adjacent to schools or neighborhood parks.	13	1	Much of the soccer in the City is either handled by private entities like Columbia United or the YMCA. The City does provide fields at Owens Field.
<b>Golf-driving Range</b>	13.5 A for minimum of 25 tees	900' x 690' wide. Add 12' width for each additional tee.	Long axis south-west-northeast with golfer driving toward northeast.	1 per 50,000	30 minutes travel time.	Part of a golf course complex. As separate unit may be privately owned.	3	1	This need is met with numerous public and private golf courses and ranges in the area.
<b>¼ Mile Running Track</b>	4.3 A	Overall width – 276' Length – 600.02' Track width for 8 to 4 lanes is 32'.	Long axis in sector from north to south to north-west-south-east with finish line at northerly end.	1 per 20,000	15-30 minutes travel time	Usually part of high school, or in community park complex in combination with football, soccer, etc.	7	7	This need is met, but could be inexpensively extended in a community that highly desires this activity.
<b>Softball</b>	1.5 to 2.0 A	Baselines – 60' Pitching distance- 46' min. 40'	Same as baseball	1 per 5,000 (if also used for youth baseball)	¼ - ½ mile	Slight differences in dimensions in 16" slow pitch. May also be used for youth baseball.	26	19 (shared with baseball)	Softball shares with baseball leaving the total number lower than the national standard.

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		women. Fast pitch field Radius from Plate – 225' Between foul Lines. Slow Pitch – 275' (men) 250' (women)							
<b>Multiple Recreation Court (basketball, volleyball, tennis)</b>	9,840 sq. ft.	120' x 80'	Long axis of courts with <i>primary</i> use is north-south	1 per 10,000	1-2 miles.		13	16	Meets requirements, however, many of the other categories use these fields.
<b>Trails</b>	N/A	Well defined head maximum 10' width, maximum average grade is 5% not to exceed 15%. Capacity rural trails – 40 hikers/day/mile . Urban trails – 90 hikers/day/mile .	N/A	1 system per region	N/A		1	9	Significantly above the national average, but a demonstrated need and desire of the community.
<b>Archery Range</b>	Minimum 0.65 A	300' Length x Minimum 10' wide between targets. Roped clear space on sides of range minimum 30', clear space behind targets minimum of 90'x45' with bunker.	Archer facing north = or – 45 degrees.	1 per 50,000	30 minutes travel time	Part of regional or metro park complex.	3	0	Could be added to existing facilities.

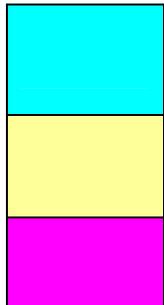
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<b>Combination Skeet and Trap Field (8 Stations)</b>	Minimum 30 A	All walks and structures occur within an area approximately 130' wide by 115' deep. Minimum cleared area is contained within 2 superimposed segments with 100-yard radii (4 acres). Shot-fall danger zone is contained within 2 superimposed segments with 300-yard radii (36 acres).	Center line of length runs northeast-southwest with shooter facing northeast.	1 per 50,000	30 minutes travel time	Part of regional/metro park complex	3	0	Could be added to existing facilities.
<b>Golf</b>  <b>1. Par 3 (18 hole)</b>  <b>2. 9-hole standard</b>  <b>3. 18-hole standard</b>	50-60 A	Average length vary 600-2700 yd.	Majority of holes on north-south axis	--	½ to 1 hour travel time	9 hole course can accommodate 350 people/day.	N/A	0	Given the number of private and public courses in the area, the public need is well met in this area.
	Minimum 50 A	Average length ~2250 yards		1/25,000		18 hole course can accommodate 500-550 people/day. Course may be located in community or district park, but should not be over 20 miles from population center.			
	Minimum 110 A	Average length 6500 yards		1/50,000					
<b>Swimming Pools</b>	Varies on size of pool and amenities. Usually ½	<i>Teaching</i> -minimum of 25 yards x 45' even depth of 3 to 4 ft.	None-although care must be taken in siting of lifeguard stations in	1 per 20,000	15 to 30 minutes travel time	Pools for general community use should be planned for teaching, competitive and recreational purposes with	7	3	We are still below the national average, but private pools like Hunting Creek, the YMCA, etc. help fill the need. Additional pools could be considered, but are expensive.

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	to 2 A site.	<i>Competitive</i> – minimum of 25 m x 16 m. Minimum of 27 square feet of water surface per swimmer. Ratios of 2:1 deck vs. water.	relation to afternoon sun.	(Pools should accommodate 3 to 5% of total population at a time.)		enough depth (3.4m) to accommodate 1m and 3m diving boards. Located in community park or school site.		
<b>Beach Areas</b>	N/A	Beach area should have 50 sq. ft. of land and 50 sq. ft. of water per user. Turnover rate is 3. There should be 3-4 A supporting land per A of beach.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Should have sand bottom with slope maximum of 5 % (flat preferable). Boating areas completely segregated from swimming areas.	N/A	0

Color Code



Does not meet National Standards, but seems to meet local standards (need being provided by other private or County providers).

No defined service provided now - but not a strong local desire for this service - perhaps an opportunity for diversity in recreation.

This area is underserved and there is some local desire for more of this service. See notes on each service.

### Adjustments and notes for our community

As stated, the national standards do not always meet the community needs. As such, we have tailored those based on the community surveys, the public input sessions, and our own professional experience.

- Basketball and Volleyball courts – The additional need for these facilities is confirmed. Often, volleyball and basketball conflict for the same space making it difficult to schedule both uses. A majority of the indoor courts are single courts that cannot support more than one activity at a time and a single game use. Often, we see at peak times 30 or more players waiting for pick-up games of basketball in the most popular indoor courts. While a number of half court, outdoor courts exist, those are less popular and do not meet the recreational desires of the community. Over the past few years, a number of full court facilities have been reduced to half court. For example, Heathwood Park, Rosewood Park, and Mays Park all used to have full outdoor courts, but were converted to half. Much of this was in response to heavy use, and unfortunate trouble at these facilities. The response was to remove the amenity rather than deal with the actual trouble. This removed the problem, but also removed the amenity. We would recommend an additional 2-5 basketball/volley ball courts be constructed. We would anticipate these to be expansions to existing facilities so that there would be at least two courts at some facilities.
- Handball – The City does have some handball courts – at Heathwood for example. There is not an overwhelming need and we do not recommend additional courts.
- Tennis - While we show below the national average, other recreational providers - specifically the County provide a number of available courts at Caughman Road and Parklane as well as regional centers in Lexington. Given these additional resources, we do believe the community desires are being met for this recreational need. We do wish to note that in several communities, one or two courts exist that could be eliminated in favor of massing more courts in a single location reducing maintenance costs and better providing for recreational needs.
- Baseball – The participation of the City baseball has dropped significantly in the past 20 years. Private leagues such as the Palmetto Baseball League at Hammond School and the Dixie Youth at Caughman Road and Trenholm Park are more common places for baseball and help fill the need. In the community meetings and through the surveys, it appears the needs are being met, but cost can be a concern. While the City has baseball fields at twelve facilities, it only has multiple fields at four locations – Earlewood (3), Greenview (2), Hyatt (2), and TS Martin (2). Additionally, the City only offers baseball as an organized league at Hyatt, Valencia, and Martin Luther King. We would recommend keeping those facilities as long as there is interest, but removing most of the single field locations as possible and leave baseball to the County and private leagues. It should be noted that few of the baseball fields are beyond youth sizes and most are in need of upgrades to meet minimum standards.
- Softball – similarly to baseball, the participation in City Leagues has dropped significantly in the past 20 years. Currently, the City offers adult co-ed softball at only one location that is currently undetermined. The City has no individually designated softball fields, but uses combined use fields for youth baseball and softball. Currently, the vast majority of softball is played in either Richland or Lexington County leagues. While we believe it is important for the City to offer this

sport, the lack of resources and coverage by other providers makes this a logical program to completely eliminate from the City.

- Archery – this was not an noted need in the community, but could be added to a summer program. Trained staff would be required before adding this to existing facilities, but it could be done relatively inexpensively.
- Skeet shooting – this is not a need in this community outside what is being provided by private shooting ranges.
- Football – Football is available at Greenview Park, Hyatt Park (flag) and St. Anna (a camp). No appropriate football facilities are located at any City parks (goal posts, lines, stands, locker rooms, etc.). It is not financially feasible for the City to add this program at this time with this level of funding. Programs could be added at existing schools that have proper facilities, but the cost of the equipment is much higher than other similar sports. Unless the City is willing to fully invest in this program, we recommend not providing this program. Other private leagues such as Pop Warner, and County leagues are meeting some of the needs of the community, but their are not enough teams for the desired use. The City could partner with the Counties and offer assistance to better meet this need.
- Soccer – The majority of the soccer offered in the City of Columbia is offered either through Columbia United and the YMCA at the Owens Field complex or other locations throughout the County. Leagues are listed at Melrose Park, Pinehurst, and St. Anna, but usage is not determined at the time of this report. The access to the programs at Owens field was a concern as well as price. The cost of soccer was indicated as too high, and the public, non-league access to the fields was questioned. The City of Columbia should review the MOU agreement with both the YMCA and Columbia United to make sure access both in terms of time and money is available to all citizens of the City. Additional soccer fields could be constructed with reduction of some other amenities such as baseball in some parks.
- Swimming Pools - We are still below the national average for swimming pools, but private pools like Hunting Creek, the YMCA, etc. help fill the need. Additional pools could be considered, but are expensive. With the given funding levels, additional pools at this time are not considered a needed program expense.

### Issue of City Program versus Private Program

Whether a conscious decision, or the result of dwindling resources, the level of participation in City sponsored leagues and athletics has greatly reduced. Twenty years ago, if you played basketball, you likely played in a City league. The City sponsored Church basketball leagues are various parks and had a vibrant adult league at almost every location. Softball was played almost every weeknight at Pacific and Valencia, and summer youth leagues were a constant at Hyatt, Martin Luther King, Hampton, and Woodland Parks. JTL was a strong tennis league at Woodland as well as other parks in the area.

However, these leagues reduced in part because the level of services offered began to decline. Much of this was due to facilities that were getting old and did not minimum standards. For example, the basketball court at Woodland is not a regulation length making adult play difficult, the softball field at Hampton is not regulation and there is little parking in the area, etc. To fill the gap, many churches built recreational facilities that included basketball courts. Now, the Columbia Interfaith Basketball League, Upward Basketball, the YMCA, and the Columbia Youth League sponsor over a hundred teams from 6 years to 18 years in multiple locations throughout the city. Adult leagues are also sponsored by similar organizations. Also, the county sponsors a similar number of teams at Bluff Road, Caughman, Meadowlark, and other facilities. The story is the same in terms of private baseball leagues, football, and soccer.

### Benefits of Private Sponsorship

Having private sponsorship is not necessarily bad. Often, the private sector will not step up to fill a public need. However, in this case, the desire for recreation is so strong, that the public is willing to pay more for a better recreational experience. This in large part was why the participation in City sponsored recreation reduced. Benefits include:

- Impacts of the free market - if the recreation offered does not meet desire levels, other providers will step up and fill the need. This is evident by the adult soccer leagues offered by the Plex in the Northeast. They are popular because they have indoor facilities, good scheduling, and good competition.
- Tax burdens – the burden for the cost is bore by the participants, not taxpayers
- Investment – if the public is making more of the time and money investment, they often will have greater concern and attention to that investment making the public more involved

### Drawbacks of Private Sponsorship

An extremely important characteristic that shapes a community is access to high quality recreation. As recently identified by the City's economic development strategic plan, quality of life can be as important as infrastructure and workforce towards a communities success. Allowing an important element of that quality of life to be outside the City's control can present issues. Drawback include:

- Access by Time – allowing a private entity to control public land and assets means could mean that access to these facilities could be limited. As public lands, unrestricted access at some times is important
- Access by Money – without proper guidelines, access to programs or land could be limited by financial status making some segments of the community unable to enjoy public assets. It is

important to make sure that all parts of the community, young and old, rich and poor, have good access to public recreation



OVERVIEW OF OTHER AREA RECREATION PROVIDERS

Organization	Park/ Facility Name	Street Address	Facility Type	Amenities (with Dimensions)	Programs that Use Park/Facility
Richland County Recreation Commission	Adult Activity Center	7494 Parklane Road	Adult activity center	Fitness center, banquet facilities	Adult services
	Anna Boyd Park	633 Anders Street	Neighborhood park	2 playgrounds, basketball court	
	Ballentine Community Center	1009 Bickley Road	Community Center	Recreation building with meeting rooms, kitchen, crafts room, fitness room, basketball courts, soccer fields, playground, and walking trail	Walking trails
	Bluff Road Park	148 Carswell Road			
	Blythewood Park	126 Boney Road	Park	Fitness rooms, basketball, tennis camps, playground	Afterschool programs, athletic league programs, walking trails
	Caughman Road Park	2800 Trotter Road	Park	Recreation building, gymnasium, club room, game room, arts/crafts room, racquetball court, lighted Dixie Youth/Boys field, lighted softball field, lighted Coaches' pitch field, picnic facility, playground, walking trail	Afterschool programs, athletic league programs, walking trails
	Caughman Road Tennis Center	2800 Trotter Road	Tennis facility	Tennis service building, concession area, restrooms, 12 lighted tennis courts, picnic facility with shelter	

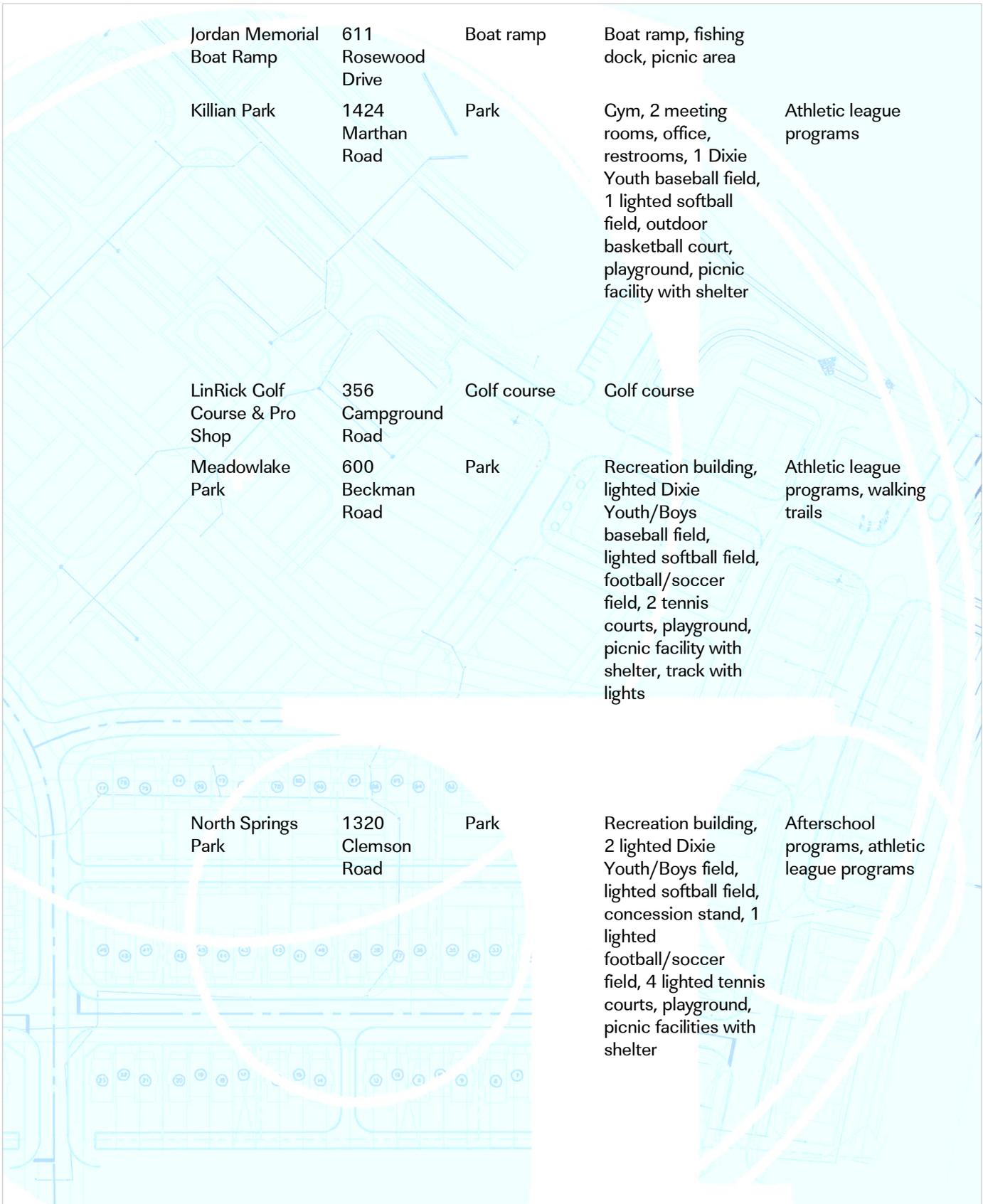
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Crane Creek Community Center	7405 Fairfield Road	Community Center	Conference room, cafeteria/auditorium, basketball court, playground, kitchen, and game room	Afterschool programs
Crane Forest Park	1220 Peachwood Drive	Neighborhood park	Playground, basketball court, picnic area	
Crossroads Community Center	2750 McCords Ferry Road	Community Center	Meeting rooms, kitchen, ball field, basketball court, playground	
Denny Terrace Community Center	6429 Bishop Avenue	Community Center	Kitchen/cafe/teria, classrooms, playgrounds, gym, tennis courts, walking trail, game room	Adaptive recreation, adult services, athletic league programs, summer camps, walking trails
Denny Terrace Gymnasium	6429 Bishop Avenue	Gymnasium	Gymnasium, concession area, workout area	Adaptive recreation, athletic league programs, summer camps
Eastover Park	1031 Main Street	Recreation complex	Gym, game room, fitness room, classrooms, kitchen, lighted adult field, lighted Dixie Youth field, 2 lighted outdoor basketball courts, football/soccer field, playground, picnic facility with shelter	Athletic league programs, walking trails
Forest Lake Park	6820 Wedgefield Road	Park	Recreation building, gym, game room, club room, arts/crafts room, kitchen, 1 Dixie Youth baseball field, 2 playgrounds	Afterschool programs, athletic league programs

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Olympia Park	1050 Olympia Avenue	Neighborhood park	2 picnic tables, playground, trail	Walking trails
Perrin-Thomas Neighborhood Park	1010 Andrews Road	Neighborhood park	Activity rooms, picnic shelter, playground	Walking trails
Pine Grove Community Center	937 Piney Woods Road	Multi-purpose facility	Rental facility	
Polo Road Park	730 Polo Road	Park	Recreation building, gym, game room, fitness room, classrooms, kitchen, lighted softball field, 6 lighted soccer fields, football field	Afterschool programs, athletic league programs, walking trails
Richland County Tennis Center	7500 Parklane Road	Tennis facility	Tennis service building, 12 lighted courts, pro shop, concessions, restrooms, lounge, kitchen, picnic facilities with shelter	
Ridgewood Park	805 Crest Street	Neighborhood park	Picnic shelter, playground, security lighting, walking trail, exercise stations	Walking trails
Serenity Park	403 Riley Street	Neighborhood park	Gazebo, walkway, picnic tables, benches	
Sharpe Road Park	501 Sharpe Road	Neighborhood park	Playground, basketball court, picnic area	
St. Andrews Park	920 Beatty Road	Park	Athletic fields and tennis courts	Aquatics programs, athletic league programs

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Starlite Park	4300 Laclair Drive	Neighborhood park	Playground, picnic shelter, tables, grill		
Summerhill Park	210 Durango Avenue	Neighborhood park	Basketball court, picnic shelter, playground, security lighting		
Trenholm Park	3900 Covenant Road	Park	Recreation building, 8 lighted tennis courts, playground, swimming pool, lighted Dixie Youth baseball field, lighted Pony league field, football/soccer field, picnic facilities with shelter	Aquatics programs, athletic league programs	
Upper Richland Community Center	280 Campground Road	Multi-purpose facility	Rental facility		
Washington Park	175 Aster Circle	Neighborhood park	Basketball court, picnic shelter, playground, water fountain, baseball field	Walking trails	
Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission	Crooked Creek Park	1098 Old Lexington Highway	Recreation complex	Community center, 6 athletic fields, 6 tennis courts, picnic facilities, walking trails, playgrounds	Youth baseball, youth softball, youth soccer, youth track, junior golf, adult soccer, adult golf (55+), adult softball, adult kickball, tennis, therapeutic recreation, after school programs, youth/adult programs, senior programs, camps

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Halleywood Park	Maple Road	Park	Baseball, tennis courts, picnic shelters	
Howard Sports Complex	200 Cougar Drive	Park	Football, baseball, press box, canteens, restrooms	
James R. Metts Boat Landing	Hope Ferry Road	Boat ramp	Boat landing	
M Avenue Park	400 Michaelmas Avenue	Park	Baseball, tennis courts, canteen, restrooms, playground	
Midlands Sports Complex	4533 Pond Branch Road	Park	Baseball, tennis courts, press boxes, canteens, restrooms, playground, picnic shelters	
Oak Grove Sports Complex	420 Oak Drive	Sports complex	4 lighted softball fields, canteen, picnic area, playground	Softball leagues, tournaments
Pineview Ball Park	1300 Methodist Park Road	Park	Football, baseball, press box, canteens, restroom, playground	
Red Bank Arena	1159 Nazareth Road	Park	Baseball, softball, canteens, restrooms, BMX track	
Red Bank Park	228 Community Drive	Park	Softball, tennis courts, community building, picnic shelters	
Rosamunda Percell-Butler Park	1100 Raleigh Street	Park	Basketball, playground, picnic shelter	

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South Congaree Town Park	Berry Road	Park	Basketball, sand volleyball, playground, picnic shelter
Spires Recreation Center	1500 Dunbar Road	Park	Baseball, softball, tennis, basketball, room rentals
Sunnyside Park	1411 Sunnyside Drive	Park	Football, baseball, soccer, canteens, restrooms, playground
Tri-City Leisure Center	485 Brooks Avenue	Leisure & Wellness Center	Racquetball, basketball, walking Adult leagues, adult programs, arts/crafts, aerobics, fitness
West Columbia Soccer Complex	760 Old Barnwell Road	Soccer complex	Soccer, restrooms, picnic shelters
Lexington County Soccer Complex	299 Duffie Drive	Sports complex	13 lighted soccer fields, canteens, restrooms, playgrounds, walking trails, picnic tables
Lexington County Tennis Complex	425 Oak Street	Tennis facility	21 hard courts, paved/lighted parking, clubhouse, pro shop, canteen, shower/change rooms, stadium court Junior programs, li'l bits, stars program, novice program, tournaments, adult programs, LATA leagues, summer camps, home school programs
Lexington Leisure Center	108 Park Road	Leisure & Wellness Center	Racquetball, wallyball, basketball, volleyball, walking Adult leagues, adult programs, arts/crafts, fitness, youth programs

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	Lexington Sports Complex	501 Ball Park Road	Sports complex	5 Youth baseball fields, 1 intermediate baseball field, 1 regulation baseball field, 2 t-ball fields	Room rentals, arts & crafts
Health Clubs/Fitness Facilities	Anytime Fitness	5082 Sunset Boulevard	Health club	Cardio equipment, strength equipment	Wellness programs
	Anytime Fitness	111 Sparkleberry Crossing Road	Health club	Cardio equipment, strength equipment	Wellness programs
	Anytime Fitness	715 University Village Drive	Health club	Cardio equipment, strength equipment	Wellness programs
	Anytime Fitness	2726 North Lake Drive	Health club	Cardio equipment, strength equipment	Wellness programs
	Anytime Fitness	2806 Devine Street	Health club	Cardio equipment, strength equipment	Wellness programs
	Anytime Fitness	11107 Broad River Road	Health club	Cardio equipment, strength equipment	Wellness programs
	Anytime Fitness	425-b Lexington Avenue	Health club	Cardio equipment, strength equipment	Wellness programs
	Anytime Fitness	221 W Columbia Avenue	Health club	Cardio equipment, strength equipment	Wellness programs
	BodyFit	3718 Rosewood Drive	Health club	Aerobic classes	

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Brickhouse Cym	519 Huger Street	Cym	Circuit training room, free weights, indoor cycling, agility room, turf room, fitness classes, personal training	
Brookland Baptist Health and Wellness Center	1066 Sunset Boulevard	Health and wellness center	Personal trainers, youth basketball, basketball league, walking	Brookland youth basketball, men's basketball, soul line dancing classes, fitness training
Curves	2319 Augusta Road	Cym	Cardio and strength training	
Curves	6169 St. Andrews Road, Suite 100	Cym	Cardio and strength training	
Curves	205 Columbia Avenue, Suite M	Cym	Cardio and strength training	
Curves	741 Fashion Drive, Suite A	Cym	Cardio and strength training	
Curves	135-J Blythewood Road	Cym	Cardio and strength training	
Doctor Wellness Center	One Monckton Boulevard	Health and wellness center	Personal training	General wellness, nutrition counseling, weight management, diabetes management, hypertension management, cholesterol management
Freeplay Athletic Training	5301 Forest Drive	Fitness Center	Boot camp, person training, nutritional consultation	Boot camp, person training, nutritional consultation

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Katie & Irwin Kahn Jewish Community Center	306 Flora Drive	Community Center	Group fitness, yoga, personal training, weight watchers	Summer camps, golf classics, taekwon do, swim team, swim lessons, stroke clinic, weight watchers, family fitness nights
Ladies Choice Fitness Center	736 St. Andrews Road	Health Club	Fitness equipment and aerobics programs	Zumba, step and kickboxing, pilates
Ladies Choice Fitness Center	6644 Carner's Ferry Road	Health club	Fitness equipment and aerobics programs	Zumba, step and kickboxing, pilates
Health Directions Wellness Center	3225 Sunset Boulevard	Health and wellness center	Fitness equipment, Epic and FreeMotion strength training equipment, free weights, prowler, sled, and ropes	Group fitness classes, personal training and nutrition education classes
Health Directions Wellness Center	1674-E Lake Murray Boulevard	Health and wellness center	Fitness classes, personal training	Group fitness classes, yoga/pilates studio, cycle studio, personal training
Personally Fit	1315-A Gadsden Street	Fitness Training	Fitness training, nutritional guidance	One on one fitness training specializing in weight loss, muscle toning, & injury rehab
Pivotal Fitness	4350 St. Andrews Road	Health club	Strength and free weight equipment, group fitness classes, personal training	Nutritional and weight loss programs, group exercise programs
Planet Fitness	7531B Carner's Ferry Road	Fitness health club	Cardio and strength equipment	Cardio and strength equipment

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Planet Fitness	421 Bush River Road	Fitness health club	Cardio and strength equipment	Cardio and strength equipment
Plex Indoor Sports - Sandhills	741 Fashion Drive	Indoor soccer & sports recreation	Indoor soccer & sports recreation	Soccer, flag football, basketball, lacrosse, volleyball, skatepark, exercise classes, roller skating, inline hockey, summer camps, youth programs, youth instruction, birthday parties
Plex Indoor Sports - Ice Irmo	1019 Broad Stone Road	Indoor soccer & sports recreation	Indoor soccer & sports recreation	Public ice skating, lessons, ice hockey, figure skating, soccer, flag football, lacrosse, skatepark, afterschool sports academy, no school/sports galore, summer camps, parties
Stronghold Athletic Club	925 1/2 Huger Street	Cym	Rock climbing wall, bouldering room, fitness classes	Rock climbing wall, bouldering room, fitness classes
Wolf's Fitness Center	5432 Augusta Road	Cym	Locker rooms, showers, child playroom, sauna, tanning, sports supplements, group fitness classes, weight machines, free weights, cardio equipment, indoor track	Locker rooms, showers, child playroom, sauna, tanning, sports supplements, group fitness classes, weight machines, free weights, cardio equipment, indoor track

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MetroFit Center	1322 West Main Street	Cym	Weight room, cardio equipment, personal training, crossfit classes, nutrition center	Classes, fitness assessment, personal training, body sculpting, weight loss
Back in Shape Fitness Center	510 Columbia Avenue	Fitness Center	Group fitness, personal training, cardio equipment, free weights	Group fitness, personal training, cardio equipment, free weights
YMCA - Downtown	1420 Sumter Street	Cym	Exercise equipment, aquatics, group exercise, men's and women's training areas	Active older adults, child care, community outreach, family time, health & well-being, sports, summer day camp, swim, youth
YMCA - Northwest Family	1501 Kennerly Road	Cym	Sports, strength and wellness, health screenings, tennis, childcare	Active older adults, child care, community outreach, family time, health & well-being, sports, summer day camp, swim, youth
YMCA - Jeep Rogers Family	900 Lake Carolina Drive	Cym	Sports, strength and wellness, health screenings, tennis, childcare	Active older adults, child care, community outreach, family time, health & well-being, sports, summer day camp, swim, youth
YMCA - Lexington Family	401 YMCA Road	Cym	Sports, strength and wellness, health screenings, equestrian, childcare	Active older adults, child care, community outreach, equestrian, family time, health & well-being, sports, summer day camp, swim, youth

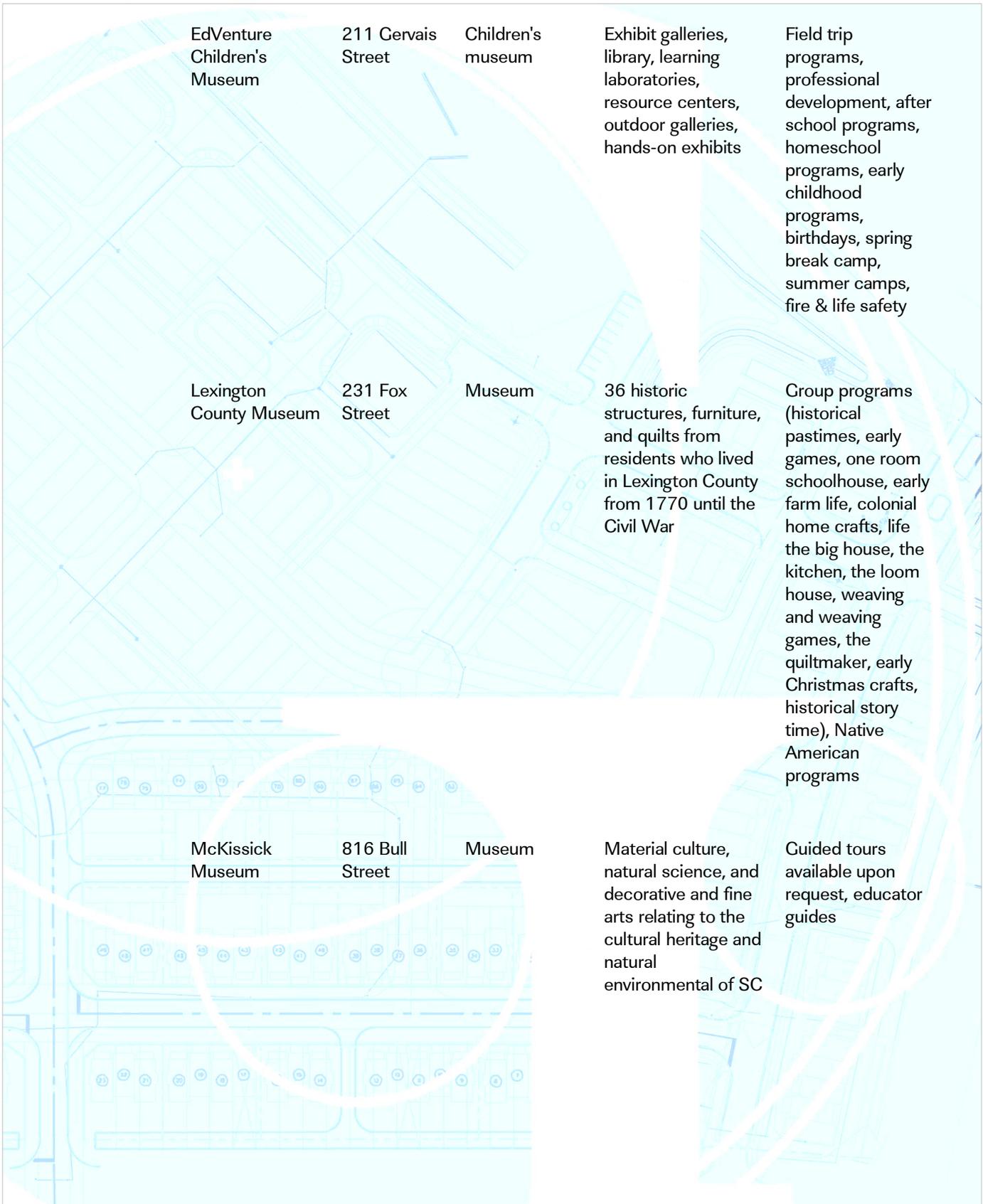
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Amusements	Renaissance Cultural Arts Center	1247 Sumter Street	Historical museum and arts venue	Meeting space, plays, visual artists, exhibits	Historical museum, National Heritage Tour Site, arts venue
	AMF Columbia Lanes	1733 Bush River Road	Bowling center	Bowling, parties & events, leagues & clubs, pro shop, wheelchair accessible	Bowling, parties & events, leagues & clubs
	AMF Park Lanes	900 Axtell Drive	Bowling center	Bowling, parties & events, leagues & clubs, pro shop, wheelchair accessible	Bowling, parties & events, leagues & clubs
	Anchor Lanes	1000 Columbia Avenue	Bowling center	Bowling, moonlight bowling, league bowling, pro shop, tournaments, parties, fundraisers	
	Royal Z Lanes	8512 Two Notch Road	Bowling center	Bowling, moonlight bowling, league bowling, pro shop, tournaments, parties, fundraisers	
	Frankie's Fun Park	140 Parkridge Drive	Amusement park	Go kart racing/courses, drop zone, bumper boats, mini golf, arcade, batting cage, laser tag, fun house, fun slide, rock wall	

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	FUNZONE Irmo	105 Ministry Drive	Indoor, inflatable party and play center	Double slide, obstacle course, 5 in 1 sports combo, bungee basketball, bounce house	Private birthday parties, day care field trips, mom's groups, sports team parties, home school groups, church youth groups
	J C's Lexington Bowl	5380 Augusta Road	Bowling center	Bowling, leagues, tournaments, parties	Bowling leagues
	Monkey Joe's	171 Newland Road	Indoor, inflatable party and play center	Inflatable slides, jumps, obstacle courses	Fundraisers, special events, parties
	Monkey Joe's	4586 Sunset Boulevard	Indoor, inflatable party and play center	Inflatable slides, jumps, obstacle courses	Fundraisers, special events, parties
	Palmetto Falls Mini Golf	3209 Charleston Highway	Miniature golf	18 holes of championship miniature golf, natural environment, waterfalls, rivers	
	Skate Station USA	129 Oak Drive	Skating rink	Skating rink, birthday/private parties	Monday Family Night
	Three Fountains Recreation	2724 Emanuel Church Road	Skating rink and miniature golf	Skating rink, indoor miniature golf	Parties, Adults Only Night, Ladies Night
Museums	Cayce Historical Museum	1800 12th Street	Museum	Chronicles the history of the first European settlement in South Carolina's Midlands	Interprets the agricultural, social, and cultural heritage of Cayce, Old Saxe Gotha, Granby, and West Columbia; features Native American artifacts
	Columbia Museum of Art	1515 Main Street	Art Museum	Art exhibits, fine and decorative art, rental facility	Performances, music series, tours, films, galleries

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South Carolina Confederate Relic Room & Military Museum	301 Gervais Street	Museum	Exhibits that focus on South Carolina's military history	Groups and tours, school tours, family activity guide, spanish gallery guide
South Carolina Law Enforcement Officers Hall of Fame	5400 Broad River Road	Museum	Exhibit areas about South Carolina law enforcement with artifacts, photographs, and text	Group tours available upon request
South Carolina Military Museum	1225 Bluff Road	Museum	Exhibits of weapons, uniforms, and other artifacts carried or worn by members of SC's militia and National Guard	Group tours available upon request
South Carolina State Museum	301 Gervais Street	Museum	Exhibits art, history, natural history, and science/technology; long-term exhibits and 5 changing exhibit galleries	Museum roadshow, Congaree art festival, Southeastern toy soldier show, tricks & treats at the State museum, Fall heritage festival & pig pickin' party, Winter fest, camps, mad science summer camps
U.S. Army Adjutant General Corps Museum	4392 Strom Thurmond Boulevard	Museum	Historical documents, photos, uniforms, and equipment	Group tours available upon request; handicap accessible
U.S. Army Chaplain Museum	10100 Lee Road	Museum		

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Williams-Brice Stadium	1127 George Rogers Boulevard	Football stadium	USC football stadium, outdoor concerts, events
Charlie W. Johnson Stadium	2000 Two Notch Road	Football stadium	Benedict football stadium, outdoor concerts/events
South Carolina State Fairgrounds	1200 Rosewood Drive	Fairgrounds	Fair, exhibits, trade shows, banquets, craft shows, home/garden shows
Jamil Shrine Center	206 Jamil Road	Meeting facility	Meeting rooms, auditorium, rental facility, trade shows, banquets
Capital City Stadium	301 S Assembly Road	Baseball stadium	Minor league baseball stadium, rental facility, corporate events, product launches, carnivals, concerts
Koger Center for the Arts	1051 Greene Street	Performing Arts venue	Performances, rental facilities (commercial and not-for-profit), series memberships
Township Auditorium	1703 Taylor Street	Performing Arts venue	Concerts, performing arts, comedy
Sports Facilities	University of South Carolina Natatorium	Aquatic venue	USC aquatic facility

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Carolina Stadium	USC	Baseball stadium	USC baseball stadium	Birthday party rental areas available
Benedict College HRC Arena	1600 Harden Street	Basketball	Benedict basketball facility, events	
Eugene Stone Soccer Stadium	Whaley at Marion Street	Soccer stadium	USC soccer stadium, press box, electronic scoreboard, team rooms, referee room, concession stand, restrooms	
Beckham Field	150 S Marion Street	Softball stadium	USC softball stadium, electronic scoreboard, covered batting cages	
Weems-Baskins Track Facility	USC	Track & Field venue	USC outdoor track	Hosts youth and high school competitions
USC Indoor Facility	USC	Indoor sports facility	USC indoor sports facility, 60-yard astroturf field, 4 tennis courts, 4-lane track, batting cages, portable pitching mounds	
Miscellaneous Sports Venues	Columbia BMX Track	4651 Percival Road	BMX track	Hosts local, state, and regional events
	Lexington BMX Track	1201 Nazareth Road	BMX track	Hosts local, state, and regional events
	Richland County Rowing Center	1600 Garner Lane	Secure boathouse, storage areas for staging trailers and boats,	Juniors programs, college programs, master programs, launches available for rent

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Parks	Historic Columbia Speedway	2001 Charleston Highway	Racetrack	half-mile asphalt oval, 9-acre grassed infield	Hosts festivals, concerts, cycling, car shows, and tradeshow
	Harbison State Forest	5600 Broad River Road	State forest	18 miles of trails for walking, jogging, hiking, and bicycling; canoe landing, kayaks	Education programs, rental facility, picnic areas, gazebo
	Sesquicentennial I State Park	9564 Two Notch Road	State park	Nature trails, picnic areas, lake access, boat rentals, soccer fields, softball fields, basketball court, bicycle trail	Retreat center, meeting rooms, ropes course, education programs
Sports Organizations	Carolina Cyclers	716 Meeting Street	Cycling club	Weekend and weekday evening rides	Monthly club meetings, out-of-town/weekend cycling events, camping/biking trips
	Carolina Marathon Association	PO Box 5092	Walking and running events	Providence Heart & Sole Women's Five Miler, Governor's Cup Road Race	Timed road races and walks
	Columbia Disc Golf Club	4064 Beltline Boulevard	Disc golf club	Tournaments, monthly meetings	
	Columbia Men's Adult Baseball League		Men's adult baseball	Divisions - 18+ some college, minor leaguers, experienced players	Play at Bray Park, Eau Claire, Irmo High School, John Hall Field, Keenan High School, Lexington High School, Polo Field
	Columbia Blowfish	301 S Assembly Road	Coastal Plain League baseball team	Baseball league, special game promotions, facility rental	

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Columbia Running Club	PO Box 50205	Running club	Organized races, trail races	Run at Three Rivers Greenway, Sesquicentennial State Park, Harbison State Forest, Carolina Marathon race course
Columbia Quadsquad Rollergirls	206 Jamil Road	Roller derby	Roller derby bouts, off track events	
Columbia Sailing Club	292 Shuler Road	Sailing club	Sailing events and activities, marina, 4 launching ramps, a gin pole	Hosts regattas; offers community sailing, seamanship, and boating safety programs; youth sail camps
Columbia Ski and Adventure Club	PO Box 12481	Ski and snowboarder club	Ski trips, racing team	
Columbia Swimming League		Competitive swimming league	Swim meets, competitive and non-competitive races	
Columbia Wildcats	1024 Valhalla Drive	Hockey	Competitive hockey league	
Lake Murray Sailing Club	235 Old Forge Road	Sailing club	Sailing events and activities, racing	Instructional programs for men, women, teens, and kids; Intro to Sailing programs; adult small boat instruction, summer youth camp sailing programs
Lake Murray Yacht Racing Association		Sailboat racing	Sailboat races	
Lexington County Girls Soccer Association	PO Box 2168	Girls soccer association	Divisions based on age, tournaments	

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Lexington County Soccer Club		Soccer club	Divisions based on age, tournaments, academy	Adult programs, camps
Midlands League Baseball		Adult baseball league	Adult baseball games, tournament, field locations at Polo Road Park and Columbia High School	
Olde Grey Rugby Football Club	Earlewood Park	Rugby	Rugby matches, tournaments	
Providence Athletic Club		Competitive high school level sports for home schoolers	Baseball, basketball, cross country, golf, football, soccer	
South Carolina Athletic Hall of Fame	1310 Lady Street, 9th Floor	Athletic hall of fame	Preserves records of teams and individuals, promotes sports traditions	Banquets, induction ceremonies, golf tournaments
South Carolina United FC	PO Box 24942	Soccer program for boys and girls from 3-19 years of age	Soccer league, games, tournaments, recreation games, special needs	Soccer camps, player development program, junior academy, select teams
Strictly Running	736 Harden Street	Running club	Running club, races, training	
Festivals/ Events	Auction To Benefit Animals	PO Box 5354	Animal Protection League of South Carolina	
Augusta Baker's Dozen	1431 Assembly Street	Storytelling festival		
Balloons, Blues, & BBQ	Blythewood	Festival	Hot air balloons, blues music, bbq	
Bark to the Park	Finlay Park	Event to benefit homeless pets	Festival, walk	

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Battle for Columbia	1215 Valley Ridge Road	Education living-history event	War reenactment, picnic foods, souvenirs
The Big Nosh	Tree of Life Congregation - N Trenholm Rd	Jewish festival	Food, entertainment, education
Carolina Carillon Holiday Parade	Cervais Street	Parade	Parade, 5K run, beauty pageant
Carolina Celebration of Liberty	1306 Hampton Street	Fourth of July celebration	Army band, color guard, flags, balloons, drama, music, indoor fireworks show
Carolina Children's Home BBQ Cook-Off Festival	1200 Rosewood Drive	BBQ cook-off and festival	BBQ cook-off, craft vendors, rides, music
Celebrate Freedom Festival	Finlay Park	Festival	Living history focused on Vietnam War, buffalo soldiers, helicopters/military vehicles, field encampments, music, food, kids activities, living museum
Central Carolina Food and Wine Festival	The Medallion Center	Food & Wine festival	Wine tastings, food, music
Columbia Blues Festival	2300 Greene Street	Music festival	Music, food
Columbia Christmas Pageant	1306 Hampton Street	Christmas pageant/drama	Christmas show

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Columbia International Festival	1200 Rosewood Drive	Festival	Ethnic foods, cultural performances, parade of nations, fashion show, national exhibits, bazaar/shopping
Columbia SC Marathon	Columbia	Running race	Marathon
Columbia's Creek Festival	Sumter & Calhoun Street	Creek festival	Food, music, tours, crafts, shopping
Congaree Swamp Fest	Congaree National Park	Heritage celebration	West African drumming, step teams, carnival rides, Native American dancing, walkathon
Cook-Out for Kids	2900 Millwood Avenue	Food festival	Cook-out teams, music
Eau Claire Ribs & Renaissance	North Main Town Plaza	Festival	BBQ cook-off, craft vendors, sidewalk gallery, marketplac, performing artists
Ethnic History Parade & Gospel Soiree/Festival	2300 Greene Street	Parade and festival	Parade, gospel soiree festival
Five After Five	Five Points	Concert series	Concert series
Columbia Filipino-American Association Gala	1200 Hampton Street	Gala	Gala
Governor's Cup Road Race	Columbia	Half marathon race	Marathon

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Holiday Market	1200 Rosewood Drive	Junior League holiday craft sale	Crafts, vendors, food, shopping	Ladies Night Out, PJs with Santa, silent auction
Indie Crits Film Festival	Nickelodeon Theatre	Film festival	Film, music, crafts, food, art, kids programs	
Italian Festival and Bocce Tournament	Main Street	Festival	Festival, music, food, bocce tournament	
Jazzin for Education Cultural Youth Summit and Gala	Columbia Marriott	Gala	Art auction, live jazz, silent auction	
Junior League of Columbia's Clean Sweep	1200 Rosewood Drive	Fundraiser	New and used donated items	
Kickin Cancer Night Owl Ride	Columbia	Bike Ride	All-night bike ride fundraiser for cancer	
Lights Before Christmas	500 Wildlife Parkway	Christmas lights	Lights, animated images, motion lights, Santa visits, bonfire	
Main Street Latin Festival	Main Street	Festival	Music, food, dance, kids activities	
Midlands CROP Walk Against Hunger	State House grounds	Fundraiser	Walk, fundraiser	
Midlands Master Gardeners Association Spring Symposium	Columbia Conference Center	Symposium	Presentations, demonstrations, book/vendor sales, food	
Movies in the Park	Finlay Park	Movies	Movies, free popcorn, free drinks	
Oktoberfest	3005 Devine Street	Festival	Food, music, bounce castles	

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Palmetto Half Marathon	Columbia	Half marathon race	Half marathon, 5K run/walk, race expo, youth half marathon, youth fun run
Palmetto Patriot's Ball	The Medallion Center	Ball/Party/Dance	Dance, music, food, silent auction
Palmetto Sportsmen Classic	1200 Rosewood Drive	Hunting and fishing outdoor show	Products, samples, seminars, demonstrations
Poochapalooza	Lake Carolina	Animal benefit/fundraiser for PAALS	Dog walk, 5K run, dog show
Providence Heart & Sole Women's Five Miler	Finlay Park	Women's 5 mile run/walk	Run, walk
Ray Tanner Home Run	Columbia	Fundraiser race to benefit the Ray Tanner Foundation	12K run, 5K run/walk, 1 mile run, kids fun run, finish line party, awards ceremony
Oyster Roast & Toast to Camp Hope	1200 Lincoln Street	Oyster roast	Oyster roast, beer, wine, music, karaoke
Rosewood Crawfish Festival	Rosewood	Festival	Music, food, 5K race, kids activities, craft vendors, pole vaulting
St. Nicholas Festival	724 Buff Street	Festival	Choral presentations, St. Nicholas visit, holiday crafts, food, bell ringing
St. Pat's in Five Points	Five Points	Festival	Music, parade, food, kids activities, 5k race

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South Carolina Book Festival		Festival	Authors, book signings, book sales, presentations, children's pavilion with performances, storytelling, summer readin station, exhibitors
South Carolina Indian Affairs Commission Unity Pow Wow	Riverfront Park	Festival	American Indian dancing, drumming, games, food, arts, and crafts
South Carolina State Fair	1200 Rosewood Drive	Fair	Rides, food, games, animals, exhibits
Southern Exposure New Music Series	USC	Music series	Concerts
Sparkleberry County Fair	900 Clemson Road	Fair	Entertainment, rides, animals, Native American exhibits, classic cars, model trains, tractor show, food
Symposium on South Carolina Civil War History	8301 Parklane Road	Symposium	Speakers, presentations, reception
Viva la Vista	The Vista	Food festival	Food, shopping, music, 5K race
USMC Ultimate Challenge Mud Run		Race	Race, obstacle course
VDP Get Your Speed on 5K & 1-mile Run	Lake Carolina	Race	5K race, youth 1-mile race, awards ceremony, post-race party

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	William Wilson Memorial 5K Run and Walk	Columbia	Race	5K race and walk	
	Wine Tasting at Riverbanks Botanical Garden	500 Wildlife Parkway	Wine tasting	Wine tastings, food, music, silent auction, beer garden	
	World Beer Festival	1200 Lincoln Street	Beer Festival	Beer, bands, food vendors	
Dance Companies	Carolina Ballet	914 Pulaski Street	Dance Company	Performances, classes	Education outreach programs - dance forms, history and stagecraft
	Columbia City Ballet	1545 Main Street	Dance Company	Performances, classes	
	Columbia Classical Ballet	2418 Devine Street	Dance Company	Performances, classes	
	USC Dance Program	324 Sumter Street	Dance Company	Performances, classes, 2 dance major curriculum	
Music Performances	Arpad Darazas Singers		Choir	Concerts	
	Columbia Choral Society	PO Box 5563	Choral Society	Concerts, community events, scholarship program, annual gala	
	Columbia Community Concert Band	PO Box 1154	Concert band	Concerts, free admission	
	Lexington County Choral Society	PO Box 1179	Vocal Ensemble	Concerts, scholarships	

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Organization	Address	Type	Activities
Palmetto Mastersingers	PO Box 7441	Men's vocal ensemble	Concerts, private functions, charitable events
Sandlapper Singers	PO Box 50261	Professional choral ensemble	Concerts Youth programs, children and youth choir
South Carolina Philharmonic	721 Lady Street, Suite B	Symphonic music	Concerts, gala Educational programs
Chapin Community Theatre	PO Box 360	Community Theatre	Plays
Columbia Children's Theatre	PO Box 3096	Children's theatre	Plays, acting classes, summer camps Field trips, in-school programs, summer camps
Columbia Marionette Theatre	401 Laurel Street	Children's theatre	Plays, custom puppets and shows, birthday parties, traveling shows Field trips
South Carolina Shakespeare Company	PO Box 50807	Theatre	Plays, student matinees Education outreach, spring/summer/fall workshops
Theatre South Carolina	Longstreet Theatre	USC theatre company	Plays, BA in theatre or dance, MFA in acting, design or directing, MA and MAT degrees
Town Theatre	1012 Sumter Street	Community Theatre	Plays, youth theatre, memberships
Trustus Theatre	520 Lady Street	Community Theatre	Plays, facility rental, playwrights festival
Village Square Theatre	PO Box 412	Community Theatre	Plays, scholarship Summer acting workshops
Workshop Theatre	1136 Bull Street	Community Theatre	Plays, acting classes, memberships

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Libraries	Richland County Public Library	1431 Assembly Street	Library	Books, children's area, meeting rooms, reference desk, computer/internet access	Children's programs, teen programs, book club meetings, book sales, sew divine, literary residents, computer classes, english classes, exhibits, summer reading programs
	Lexington County Public Library	5440 Augusta Road (Main Library)	Library	Books, children's area, meeting rooms, South Carolina Room for local history/genealogy, reference desk, computer/internet access	Children's programs, teen programs, bookmobile
	South Carolina State Library	1430 & 1500 Senate Street	Library	Books, meeting rooms, facility rental	
Golf Courses	Forest Lake Club	340 Country Club Drive	Private golf course	18 holes, Par 72	
	Riverside Golf Center	1600 Carner Lane	Public golf course	9 holes, Par 27	
	Northwoods Golf Club	201 Powell Road	Public golf course	18 holes, Par 72	
	Oak Hills Golf Club	7629 Fairfield Road	Public golf course	18 holes, Par 72	
	Spring Valley Country Club	300 Spring Valley Road	Private golf course	18 holes, Par 72	
	The Country Club at Wildewood	90 Mallet Hill Road	Private golf course	18 holes, Par 72	
	Golf Center Par 3	109 Tat Road	Public golf course	9 holes, Par 27	
	The Woodlands Country Club	100 Norse Way	Private golf course	18 holes, Par 72	
	Charwood Country Club	222 Clubhouse Drive	Public golf course	9 holes	

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Indian River Golf Club	200 Indian River Drive	Public golf course	18 holes, Par 71
Hidden Valley Country Club	147 Excaliber Court	Public golf course	18 holes, Par 72
Golden Hills Golf & Country Club	100 Scotland Drive	Public golf course	18 holes, Par 71
Country Club of Lexington	1066 Barr Road	Private golf course	18 holes, Par 72
Fort Jackson Golf Course	Semmes Road	Private golf course	18 holes, Par 72
Sedgewood Country Club	9560 Carners Ferry Road	Public golf course	18 holes, Par 72
Club at Rawls Creek	2121 Lake Murray Boulevard	Public golf course	9 holes, Par 35
The Windermere Club	1101 Longtown Road East	Private golf course	18 holes, Par 72
Columbia Country Club	135 Columbia Drive West	Private golf course	18 holes
The University Club at Cobblestone Park	400 Blythewood Road	Private golf course	18 holes
The Golf Club of SC at Crickentree	1084 Langford Road	Public golf course	18 holes, Par 72
The Country Club at Woodcreek Farms	300 Club Ridge Road	Private golf course	18 holes, Par 72
Green Hill Golf Club	1608 Ridgeway Road	Public golf course	9 holes, Par 36
Lake Murray Golf Center	2032 Old Hilton Road	Public golf course	9 holes, Par 27
Timberlake Golf Club	284 Club Drive	Public golf course	18 holes, Par 72
Mid-Carolina Country Club	3593 Kibler Bridge Road	Public golf course	18 holes, Par 72
Ponderosa Country Club	190 Durango	Private golf course	18 holes, Par 72

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## OVERVIEW OF PEER COMMUNITIES

The City was compared to other communities that were demographically similar to Columbia. In the state, comparisons were made to:

- Spartanburg, SC
- Greenville, SC
- Carrollton, TX
- Coral Springs, FL
- Charleston, SC
- Waco, TX
- Cedar Rapids, IA
- Sterling Heights, MI
- Fullerton, CA
- Cary, NC
- Knoxville, TN
- Raleigh, NC

Many of the peer communities had similar populations and similar amenities, or were additionally compared to Columbia in the recent Economic Development Strategic Plan.. Important comparisons included:

- Staffing ratios for the City of Columbia were the most of the peer communities. The staffing ratio is approximately 80% of the budget.
- While the overall budget for Columbia was middle of the pack, the maintenance budget was the second lowest
- The maintenance budget was the third lowest even considering one of the peer communities only had 28 facilities
- The City of Columbia had the second lowest capital improvement budget
- The facilities maintained by the City of Columbia are considerably older than the peer communities both in South Carolina and in the rest of the nation.

City	State	Population	Total Budget (FY 12-13)	Maintenance	Capital Improvements	Personnel Services	Staffing Ratios by \$	Staff / FTEs
Spartanburg	SC	37,401	\$1,743,845	Unknown	\$2,500,000	\$1,244,126	71.3%	14
Greenville	SC	60,709	\$7,184,599	\$1,728,221	Unknown	\$4,904,540	68.3%	92
Carrollton	TX	122,640	\$9,645,482	\$1,737,885	\$173,306	\$6,391,606	66.3%	21
Coral Springs	FL	123,338	\$9,860,570	\$1,929,324	\$150,000	\$3,824,544	38.8%	80

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Charleston	SC	125,691	\$23,000,654	Unknown	Unknown	\$13,361,411	58.1%	419
Waco	TX	126,697	\$8,953,446	\$1,106,596	\$267,735	\$5,998,973	67.0%	118
Cedar Rapids	IA	127,905	\$8,155,332	\$1,285,188	\$142,700	\$5,542,354	68.0%	115
Sterling Heights	MI	129,880	\$1,848,820	\$721,070	\$200,000	\$1,499,800	81.1%	42
Columbia	SC	130,591	\$9,494,072	\$1,141,200	\$125,635	\$7,742,580	81.6%	214
Fullerton	CA	137,183	\$7,983,652	\$5,012,400	\$79,720	\$3,075,922	38.5%	22
Cary	NC	139,633	\$13,803,873	\$1,348,867	\$6,708,901	\$3,379,425	24.5%	72
Knoxville	TN	182,200	\$6,833,210	Unknown	\$2,300,000	\$6,833,210	N/A	57
Raleigh	NC	423,179	\$48,722,519	Unknown	Unknown	\$33,053,024	67.8%	443

City	State	Total Number of Parks /Facilities	Total Acreage	Other Facilities	Revenue from Parks & Rec	Revenue as percentage of Budget
Spartanburg	SC	37	301	Has reduced budget by 16% for recreation this FY. The budget adopted is far less than the projected cost.	\$205,089	11.8%
Greenville	SC	39	500	Includes a Zoo - Note Parks and Recreation account for 11% of the total budget	\$549,687	7.7%
Carrollton	TX	61	1,230	Fishing, geocaching, museums, aquatics, trails	Not Listed	N/A
Coral Springs	FL	49+	700	Gymnasium, aquatic center, skate park	\$1,792,383	18.2%
Charleston	SC	120	1,806	Includes Urban Forestry, Baseball Park and a Municipal Golf Course. Not all staff are full time employees - the number is a FTE	\$2,932,918	12.8%
Waco	TX	60+	1,484	Ballpark, river paddling trails, golf course, water parks	\$498,668	5.6%
Cedar Rapids	IA	74	3,360	4 Golf Courses, Farmers Market, Historical Village	\$2,502,407	30.7%
Sterling Heights	MI	28	820		Not Listed	N/A

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Columbia	SC	56	600	Tennis courts, pools, spray pads, fountains	\$770,000	8.1%
Fullerton	CA	57	Not Listed	Cymnasium, swim complex	\$4,259,848	53.4%
Cary	NC	117	2,517	Greenways, Arts Center, Baseball Training Complex	\$5,069,364	36.7%
Knoxville	TN	81	1,854	Note - Maintenance in other divisions (Public Works) - Includes Golf Courses, 65 Miles of Greenway, 1,000 acre greenways	\$508,000	7.4%
Raleigh	NC	81	9,900	Note - Maintenance in other divisions (Public Works) - Includes Golf Courses, 65 Miles of Greenway, 1,000 acre greenways	\$8,398,434	17.2%

		Total Budget (FY 12-13)	Maintenance	Capital Improvements	Personnel Services	Staffing Ratios
		Rank - Low to High	Rank - Low to High	Rank - Low to High	Rank - Low to High	Rank - Low to High
Columbia	SC	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
Fullerton	CA	5	9	1	3	2
Cary	NC	11	5	10	4	1
Cedar Rapids	IA	8	4	3	7	8
Sterling Heights	MI	2	1	6	2	11
Coral Springs	FL	10	9	4	5	3
Carrollton	TX	9	7	5	9	5
Knoxville	TN	3	11	8	11	14
Raleigh	NC	13	13	N/A	14	7
Greenville	SC	4	6	11	6	9
Spartanburg	SC	1	10	9	1	10
Charleston	SC	12	12	N/A	13	4
Waco	TX	7	2	8	8	6

When examined on a per capita basis, Columbia is still in the middle of the pack in terms of spending per person. However, spending based on the peer communities we were paired with during the economic development study indicated we were below per capita spending for a number of those Cities where recreation was considered an asset.

City	State	Total Budget (FY 12-13)	Population	Per Capita Spending - Recreation
Charleston	SC	\$23,000,654	125,691	\$183
Greenville	SC	\$7,184,599	60,709	\$118
Raleigh	NC	\$48,722,519	423,179	\$115
Cary	NC	\$13,803,873	139,633	\$99
Coral Springs	FL	\$9,860,570	123,338	\$80
Carrollton	TX	\$9,645,482	122,640	\$79
<b>Columbia</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>\$9,494,072</b>	<b>130,591</b>	<b>\$73</b>
Waco	TX	\$8,953,446	126,697	\$71
Cedar Rapids	IA	\$8,155,332	127,905	\$64
Fullerton	CA	\$7,983,652	137,183	\$58
Spartanburg	SC	\$1,743,845	37,401	\$47
Knoxville	TN	\$6,833,210	182,200	\$38
Sterling Heights	MI	\$1,848,820	129,880	\$14

## PEER COMMUNITIES AT A GLANCE

### Spartanburg, SC

The Spartanburg system consists of far fewer parks and total acreage than Columbia, approximately 27 parks covering approximately 150 acres. As a community, Spartanburg is about 28% the size of Columbia and has a budget about 18% of Columbia's Parks and Recreation Budget. The city includes several colleges including Spartanburg Methodist and Wofford. Spartanburg has been dropping their budget for Parks and Recreation significantly over the past few years and its budget is down 16% over the last two years. Spartanburg receives about 12% of their budget from revenues generated by recreation. The median income is \$33,375 compared to City of Columbia's \$24,603.

### Greenville, SC

The Greenville system consists of fewer parks and total acreage than Columbia, approximately 39 parks covering approximately 500 acres. As a community, Greenville is about 46% the size of Columbia and has a budget about 75% of Columbia's Parks and Recreation Budget. The city includes Furman University. The City of Greenville spends more per capita on parks than the City of Columbia does. Greenville includes a Zoo which accounts for about 11% of their budget. Greenville receives about 8% of its budget from revenues generated by recreation. The median income is \$40,925 compared to City of Columbia's \$24,603.

### Carrollton, TX

The Carrollton system consists of similar number parks, but more total acreage than Columbia, approximately 61 parks covering approximately 1,230 acres. As a community, Carrollton is about the same size as Columbia and has a budget almost the same as Columbia's Parks and Recreation Budget. Carrollton includes museums and recreational fishing, items not covered under Columbia's budget. Carrollton is a suburb of the Dallas area and has close access to major universities and other amenities afforded a large city. Carrollton does not report recreational revenue in its yearly budget. The median income is \$31,563 compared to City of Columbia's \$24,603.

### Coral Springs, FL

The Coral Springs system consists of similar number parks and total acreage as Columbia, approximately 49 parks covering approximately 700 acres. As a community, Coral Springs is about the same size as Columbia and has a budget almost the same as Columbia's Parks and Recreation Budget. Coral Springs also includes a skate park like Columbia. There are no major universities, but Coral Springs does have several community colleges. Coral Springs receives about 18% of its budget from revenues generated by recreation. The median income is \$31,201 compared to City of Columbia's \$24,603.

### Charleston, SC

The Charleston system consists of many more parks and a significantly greater total acreage as Columbia, approximately 120 parks covering approximately 1,800 acres. As a community, Charleston

is about the same size as Columbia and has a budget significantly larger (more than 240% larger) as Columbia's Parks and Recreation Budget. Charleston budget includes several very large capital projects. Charleston includes major universities including College of Charleston, the Citadel, and MUSC. Charleston also is a major tourist destination. Charleston receives about 13% of its budget from revenues generated by recreation. The median income is \$31,287 compared to City of Columbia's \$24,603.

#### Waco, TX

The Waco system consists of similar number parks, but more total acreage as Columbia, approximately 60 parks covering approximately 1,400 acres. As a community, Waco is about the same size as Columbia and has a budget almost the same as Columbia's Parks and Recreation Budget. Waco also includes golf courses, a water park, and river paddling. It is located about halfway between Dallas and Austin, Texas. Baylor University is located in Waco Texas. Waco receives about 6% of its budget from revenues generated by recreation. The median income is \$31,201 compared to City of Columbia's \$24,603.

#### Cedar Rapids, IA

The Cedar Rapids system consists of a similar number parks and more total acreage as Columbia, approximately 60 parks covering approximately 1,484 acres. As a community, Cedar Rapids is about the same size as Columbia and has a budget almost the same as Columbia's Parks and Recreation Budget. Cedar Rapids also includes four golf courses, a Farmer's Market, and a Historical Village. No major universities are located in Cedar Rapids, although there are several community colleges. Cedar Rapids receives about 31% of its budget from revenues generated by recreation. The median income is \$28,008 compared to City of Columbia's \$24,603.

#### Sterling Heights, MI

The Sterling Heights system consists a smaller number parks and less total acreage as Columbia, approximately 28 parks covering approximately 820 acres. As a community, Sterling Heights is about the same size as Columbia and has a much smaller budget as Columbia's Parks and Recreation Budget (about 20%). It appears that some of Sterling Heights maintenance is done by other departments. Sterling Heights is a suburb to Detroit and enjoys the access to amenities offered by a large city. No major universities are located in Sterling Heights, although they have close access to colleges in Detroit. Sterling Heights does not report the amount of revenue it receives from recreation. The median income is \$26,544 compared to City of Columbia's \$24,603.

The Parks & Recreation office collaborates with three municipalities and three school districts to bring quality and affordable programs and events to City residents.

#### Fullerton, CA

The Fullerton system consists of a similar number parks as Columbia, approximately 57 parks, and does not list the acreage. As a community, Fullerton is about the same size as Columbia and has a budget almost the same as Columbia's Parks and Recreation Budget. Fullerton has similar parks and recreation offerings as Columbia. Cal State is located in Fullerton, along with several community

colleges. Fullerton receives about 53% of its budget from revenues generated by recreation. The median income is \$30,967 compared to City of Columbia's \$24,603.

#### Cary, NC

The Cary system consists of a significantly more parks and more total acreage as Columbia, approximately 117 parks covering approximately 2,517 acres. As a community, Cary is about the same size as Columbia and has a budget almost 150% as Columbia's Parks and Recreation Budget. Cary also includes Greenways, Arts Center, and a Baseball Training Facility. Cary is in close proximity to Duke, North Carolina, and NC State. Cary receives about 37% of its budget from revenues generated by recreation. The median income is \$42,344 compared to City of Columbia's \$24,603.

#### Knoxville, TN

The Knoxville system consists of a more parks and more total acreage as Columbia, approximately 81 parks covering approximately 1,854 acres, 1,000 of those in Greenways. As a community, Knoxville is larger than the City Columbia (about 50,000 larger) and has a budget smaller than Columbia's Parks and Recreation Budget, but has maintenance located in the Public Works Division. Knoxville also includes over 65 miles of Greenways and several golf courses. Knoxville includes the University of Tennessee's main campus. Knoxville receives about 17% of its budget from revenues generated by recreation. The median income is \$22,655 compared to City of Columbia's \$24,603.

#### Raleigh, NC

The Raleigh system consists of a significantly more parks and more total acreage as Raleigh, approximately 81 parks covering approximately 9,900 acres. As a community, Raleigh is much larger in size than Columbia (about five times) and has a budget almost five times as much (\$48M) as Columbia's Parks and Recreation Budget. Raleigh community centers, two arts centers, four lakes, 43 miles of greenway trails, two historic carousels, a multimillion dollar sports/recreation/entertainment facility, two performing arts theaters, two historic and renovated home sites, and numerous special facilities. Raleigh is home, or in close proximity to Duke, North Carolina, and NC State. Raleigh receives about 17% of its budget from revenues generated by recreation. The median income is \$30,377 compared to City of Columbia's \$24,603.

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

### DESCRIPTION OF THE MASTER PLANNING & PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

**Phase I – Data Collection** – The project team spent significant time with staff reviewing the available data for parks and recreation. The team evaluated inventories, park usage statistics, programs, and amenities. The staff also interviewed the administrative management team, various park leaders, and other staff. The team also met with community leaders from the neighborhoods, elected officials, and other service providers in the Midlands.

Significant evaluation of other peer communities included review of staffing, levels of service, maintenance levels, programs, budgets, and visual appeal.

**Phase II – Public Participation** – As with all projects in the City of Columbia, public participation is critical for success of any strategic plan that affects the lives of its citizens. The project team conducted six public meetings at various locations within the City at important recreational centers. Additionally, a scientific, random survey was conducted that provided a statistically valid sampling of the public opinion of the parks and recreation offered in the City. Finally, social media was utilized to create a Facebook page where comments and discussion about recreation issues could be conducted.

**Phase III – Preliminary Study Findings** – From this research, public participation, and analysis from the project team, a detailed list of preliminary findings and conclusions were developed. A steering committee used this data to perform a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). This helped the project team develop strategies to solve issues uncovered in the analysis. From that, recommendations were vetted by the steering committee leaving the ultimate final recommendations.

**Phase IV – Final Report** – The final report will include all of the analysis, evaluations and comparisons made by the team. It will also include all the public participation data and survey results. Finally, it will include a detail list of strategies and recommendations for the City staff to continue to meet the recreational and leisure needs of the community.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Needs Assessment focused on providing a community-wide, statistically valid needs assessment survey that includes a review of the current recreation programs and facilities as perceived by the community. Use the date to develop data-based recommendations for the design and prioritization of capital park/facility projects and recommendations for park programs. The assessment was built on a virtually identical assessment conducted for the City of Columbia for its 2001 Parks & Recreation Master Plan. The survey went out to 5,000 residents randomly selected. While the return rate was lower than desired, it is still considered statically valid, especially in comparison with the 2001 study.

Some selected results include:

**Between 62% and 72% felt:**

- The Parks and Recreation Department facilities are conveniently located (1)
- I feel safe in the parks when I visit during the day (4)
- The park facilities are well maintained (2)
- There is adequate parking at parks and facilities
- The Parks and Recreation Department has safe recreation equipment at their facilities

***Between 43% and 58% felt:***

- The fees are a good value (1)
- I am satisfied with the public parks and recreation opportunities I receive for my tax dollars (2)

***Top 4 recreation issues were:***

- There should be additional recreation programs for teens (3)
- The Parks and Recreation Department is an important provider of recreation for my family (2)
- The Parks and Recreation Department is responsive to the recreation needs of the community (4)
- The Parks and Recreation Department offers activities in which the whole family can participate (NA)

***Observations from the survey included:***

- The Department needs to offer opportunities for the top recreation categories
- The community has interest in diverse offerings providing the Department with opportunities for serving different segments of the community
- The Department should evaluate opportunities for more collaborative programming especially for the teens
- The Department needs to continue to improve its marketing and promotion
- The Department should consider more on-site supervision, and there is a need for more staff since only half the respondents felt that the Dept. was adequately staffed
- The Department needs to address the issue of safety, since people do not feel safe at night - lighting
- Maintenance needs to be kept up to ensure people continue to be satisfied with the levels of maintenance
- The Department should use fees for funding programs that are of special interest
- The Department should consider the responses to the fees/tax questions to gauge what should be provided free (based on tax dollars only)

## KEY OBSERVATIONS/ISSUES

### Important Observations

1. Surveys indicated a high desire for passive recreation over programmed recreation. This varied slightly among the districts.
2. Outdoor, Environmental scored high with the public as well as performing arts.
3. Currently, there is no way to measure or quantify performance of the Parks and Recreation Department. Measurable goals and achievements should be set, measured, and progress reported.
4. Where recreation programs are provided, the public feels that they meet their needs with certain gaps, most notably teen programs.
5. The public identified a need for more on-site supervision, but not necessarily more programmed time.
6. The public was well satisfied with the location and number of facilities.
7. The public felt safe during the day, less so during evenings.
8. While the public perception was that the Parks were well maintained, based on a comparative analysis with peer communities, this does not appear founded.
9. Currently, the City of Columbia has no identifiable landmark recreational destinations. Finlay Park and Three Rivers Greenways have the opportunity if the maintenance, and/or completion of the facilities are achieved. Currently, there are no iconic images of recreation in Columbia.
10. Due to the age of the facilities, the majority of the Parks and facilities do not meet fully ADA standards.
11. In areas where the private entities provide services on City property it appears to create financial or access barriers to some segments of the community.
12. Programming at various facilities currently matches the available resources – be it physical, building, or staffing. Often, the programming is out of touch with the community needs and exists simply because the resource is there.
13. The development of capital projects appears inconsistent with a programmed and global recreation plan.
14. Neighborhood ownership of Parks appears to drive facilities without consideration of citywide needs. This results in overlapping or duplication of services.

15. The community desires and needs differ greatly within different communities. Some communities are focused on neighborhood recreation and heavily interested in programmed recreation while other locations are more interested in passive and un-programmed recreation.
16. The condition standards of many facilities do not match the standards of other similar communities.
17. The staffing levels at facilities are not set by programming needs. They are much more historically set.
18. Staffing experience and education are not up to levels of many other peer communities.
19. Neighborhoods where the communities are more engaged tend to have better programs and more pride in their facilities.
20. The City of Columbia has more facilities than can be properly maintained with the current funding and staffing. Currently there is no correlation between the budget, programs, staffing and facilities. The budget appears to be too small to cover the O&M for the current inventory.
21. Park Director's have the single largest impact on the success of a park. This is the City staff person that has the most interaction with the general park user and the community.
22. Each park appears to have a list of programs and amenities that are inherited rather than consciously determined. There is not a method to evaluate if the current or past park's services descriptions are adequate. Each park should have a written service description.
23. Given a park's services description, the Park Director's skill set should match.
24. The public is not adequately informed of recreational opportunities that are offered by the City. Better marketing and advertisement should be developed.
25. The Parks and Recreation Department does not have a recognizable brand as an organization.
26. The public is open to increased user fees for good recreation and feel they get a good return for their tax dollars.
27. The park system appears dated and in need of modernization to compete with neighboring communities.
28. The age of the Parks keep them from meeting adequate standards for ADA, safety, and many other federal standards.
29. There is not strong coordination between public (County, County Recreation Commission, City, etc.) recreation providers and private recreation providers (YMCA, Columbia United, Palmetto Baseball League, Pop Warner, etc.) There are a number of overlapping programs that could be streamlined.

30. The City has no good method of tracking usage and program popularity. Without feedback, it is difficult for the City to modify programming and facilities to meet the community's needs.
31. The hours of many facilities do not match the desired usage by the public. Adults desire to use facilities primarily between the hours of 6:00 and 8:00 and on weekends – Saturday and Sunday. Youth desire to use the facilities between the hours of 4:00 and 7:00. Programming should consider this. Facilities should be open as much as possible during the public for these times.

#### Important Conclusions

1. In areas where the private entities are providing services, the City needs oversight and input to insure all segments of the community are fully represented. Financial and access barriers need to be monitored by the City.
2. Programming at various facilities currently match the available resources – be it physical, building, or staffing. Often, the programming is out of touch with the community needs and exists simply because the resource is there.
3. The community desires and needs differ greatly within different communities. Some communities are focused on neighborhood recreation and heavily interested in programmed recreation while other locations are more interested in passive and un-programmed recreation.
4. The condition standards of many facilities do not match the standards of other similar communities.
5. The staffing levels at facilities are not set by programming needs. They are much more historically set.
6. Staffing experience and education are not up to levels of many other peer communities.
7. Neighborhoods where the communities are more engaged tend to have better programs and more pride in their facilities.
8. The City of Columbia has more facilities than can be maintained with the current funding and staffing. Maintenance budgets at this level cannot even maintain current substandard levels.
9. In order to meet the desired level of services of the community, several underutilized facilities should be closed or programs reduced to redistribute funding.
10. The public is not well informed of recreational opportunities that are offered by the City. Better marketing and advertisement should be developed.
11. The public is open to increased user fees for good recreation.
12. The City has no good method of tracking usage and program popularity. Without feedback, it is difficult for the City to modify programming and facilities to meet the community's needs.

13. The hours of many facilities do not match the desired usage by the public. Adults desire to use facilities primarily between the hours of 6:00 and 8:00 and on weekends – Saturday and Sunday. Youth desire to use the facilities between the hours of 4:00 and 7:00. Programming should take this into account. Facilities should be open as much as possible during the public for these times.
14. The public desires as much un-programmed time as programmed.
15. Use of facilities by outside organizations (AAU teams, volleyball club teams, Columbia United Soccer, tennis leagues) should be monitored and balanced by the City. Fees should be charged and usage limited to no more than twice per week and an hour to two hours at a time. Times open to the public should exceed all programmed time that restricts use by the public.
16. AAU and club teams should be encouraged to rent school facilities rather than take City resources.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Correlation of Recommendations to CAPRA Standards

The result of the planning process was the development of 70 separate recommendations within 7 broader categories as follows:

- Department Mission
- Facility Needs
- Level of Service
- Programming
- Staffing
- Financial
- Communication

A compilation of these recommendations is provided in a spreadsheet as Appendix E. Provided in this section are the specific recommendations by the Genesis Consulting Group team with accompanying explanatory narrative as needed. It should be noted that many of the recommendations are aligned with specific standards as delineated by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies in its *National Accreditation Standards* (Fourth Edition, Revised April 2009). Many of these standards are considered “fundamental standards” and are required of all agencies that seek accreditation through the Commission. Such “fundamental standards” are denoted with a ★ below.

Additionally, a toolbox icon has been placed next to a necessary tool that the staff does not currently have to implement that particular recommendation.

### Recommendations and Corresponding CAPRA Standards

**Recommendation Category:** Department Mission

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

- 1.0 Review and revise as needed an effective “mission” and “vision” for the Parks & Recreation Department with commensurate objectives/goals with measurable outcomes and implementation steps with specific timelines/budgets. The mission/vision should reflect an understanding that Parks and Recreation are integral parts of the City's overall Safety, Land Use, Economic Development, and Tourism planning initiatives.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

The City of Columbia Parks and Recreation Department’s mission should convey the specific purpose of the agency and its reason for existence. A mission statement should reflect what the agency intends to accomplish by providing facilities and services and should denote the desired outcomes and impacts for its constituency. The City of Columbia’s Parks and Recreation Department’s current mission is “to enhance the quality of life for all citizens through: good stewardship of the city's natural and physical resources, safe and accessible facilities, and exemplary leisure services.” The Department should

review and revise this mission (with a commensurate vision) to ensure its accuracy and effectiveness. Once established, the mission statement should be periodically reviewed again to ensure continued relevance. The mission itself should be implemented through the establishment of corresponding policies that assist the agency in achieving its goals.

As a corollary to the mission statement, the agency should establish measurable goals/objectives for the agency as a whole and for each organizational component of the agency. These goals/objectives are intended to impact the direction of the department (and organizational components), as well as establish the means for measuring progress toward accomplishing the agency's mission. The goals/objectives should be reviewed at least annually, and progress toward meeting the goals/objectives should be documented.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

1.3 *Mission* ★

*Standard: There shall be an established mission statement, which defines the direction and purpose of the Agency.*

1.3.1 *Agency Goals and Objectives* ★

*Standard: There shall be established, measurable goals and objectives for the agency and for each organizational component within the agency. Such goals and objectives shall be directed toward accomplishing the agency mission, be reviewed annually, and distributed to all appropriate personnel.*



The P&R staff should meet to rewrite the mission and vision statement with senior leadership from the administration to revised and modify the mission and vision statement in light of this master plan and recommendations.

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

1.1 The Parks and Recreation Department's facilities and service offerings must show an understanding of the unique overlap of recreation providers within the Columbia area, both public and private, including Richland County, Richland County Recreation Commission, Irmo-Chapin Recreation Commission, Lexington County, Fort Jackson, University of South Carolina, YMCA, etc.

1.1.1 The City of Columbia should primarily provide facilities and programming for recreational and leisure needs of the community. In areas that private organizations desire to provide services, service contracts renewed yearly should be developed.

It is our recommendation that the City should continue to work with private organizations to provide recreational needs, while the City continue to provide facilities. In each area where a private entity provides recreational services, a yearly service contract should be signed. This would include complete costs, fees to be charged, times, etc. It should be for all AAU, Church, YMCA, Schools, and similar organizations that use City owned facilities.



Administration and Legal need to develop a draft service contract in conjunction with P&R.

- 1.1.2 The City of Columbia should meet quarterly with other Recreational providers in the region to coordinate, solidify, and communicate roles of recreation providers in the Midlands.



The P&R staff should set up the meeting and provide the space. This should be an ongoing meeting with reports to each appropriate City Manager and/or Parks Director. Ancillary groups interested in recreation may also be invited.

- 1.1.3 The City of Columbia should meet with all service providers using City facilities to set goals and parameters of use. Those goals should include access by all segments of the community.

- 1.1.4 Athletics Programs was listed as a recreational desire in the public surveys. Desire for more athletic programs ranked 1) Soccer, 2) Basketball, 3) Volleyball, 4) Football. The City of Columbia should focus programs in those areas. Missing from that list was baseball which is supported by a strong private and County system.

It is our recommendation that the City should focus athletics on soccer, basketball, volleyball, and perhaps football. It appears that baseball is being well handled in the County and private entities. Football may be considered, but the cost of outfitting and field modifications may make it not attractive for inclusion. Access to low cost recreation should continued to be monitored for activities not included such as football or baseball. The City offers some league play for at Hyatt, Greenview, and TS Martin for baseball and Greenview for football. Those programs should continue, but be monitored for use.



A budget for these activities should be presented and discussed with senior staff to determine which programs maybe offered. This information should be provided to the Administration to understand where reduced athletic's programs maybe felt in the community.

- 1.1.5 The City of Columbia must balance the desire for athletic programs with the inherit good that youth athletics present. While in the community survey, athletics only ranked ninth behind items like outdoor recreation, arts and crafts, environmental, etc., its need in some communities is much greater and its impact more important. The City should balance its limited athletics resources more focused areas rather than Citywide.

As noted in the explanation for 1.1.4, communities where athletics have been tagged as important to the community, they should be continued. This included Hyatt Park, Greenview, St. Anna, Lorick, Valencia, Martin Luther King, and Pinehurst Parks. A focused athletic program in those parks and neighborhoods that desire it should continue for the youth programs.

- 1.2.1 The City of Columbia should remove under utilized facilities at current Parks and replace with passive green recreation to include: 1) Walking Trails 2) Picnic Areas 3) Natural Woods areas with limited trails



On the next page is a list of amenities and parks that could be closed in response to either their condition, use, or proximity to other parks in the area.

A recent trend in recreation is the conversion of more active parks to more passive parks. In several communities including the Woodlands Area and Shandon, a stronger voice for passive recreation was heard including the greater need for access to the River in all meetings. Given the recommendation to remove limit baseball and softball at some facilities, we believed that the following baseball fields should be removed:

- Woodland
- Bethel Bishop (Remove entire Park to passive green space)
- Pacific
- T.S. Martin
- Rosewood

They could be replaced with walking trails, picnic areas, or replaced with natural woods.

Additionally, tennis facilities that could be allowed to phase out (i.e. no capital or maintenance improvements in the next design life to funded. Facilities that become unusable in the next 10 years would be slowly phased out.). These could be phased out at:

- Earlewood
- Hampton (with the new Woodland Project and close proximity of the Southeastern Park)
- Heathwood

Additionally, if Heathwood maintains its basketball facilities, the facilities at Mays should be closed. They are in very poor repair and would need significant dollars to make the playing surfaces level. Perhaps Mays could be converted to tennis and remove the tennis at Heathwood which is close by.

The pottery kiln at Woodland should be relocated to the Arts Facility at Calhoun and all pottery baked at this location.

The Arts Facility at Calhoun Street is a successful program in terms of usage and awards. However, a better home should be sought for this facility – perhaps in conjunction with the State Museum and/or EdVenture. Co-locating in the vicinity of this and the new riverwalk would allow a synergy of arts and culture to mass. It could also provide necessary manned facilities (restrooms, police/ranger) on the riverwalk route and serve a dual purpose.

Finally, several park facilities should be slated for complete closure and sold as excess land. Many of these are very close to other parks in the vicinity. They include:

- Fairwold Park
- Isaac McClinton Park

### 1.3 Develop partnerships with other recreation providers to share resources – examples could be the coordination with school districts serving the City, other recreation providers such as

- Richland County Recreation Commission, and tangentially related service providers such as the Richland County Public Library.

With severely dwindling resources, both the school districts and the City should find ways to share resources. A primary use of City facilities and staff is in after school care including assistance with homework. However, much of that infrastructure and staff exist in the existing schools. A partnership where students were not required to move or be picked up from a school and transported to a City facility could be developed. Either funding or staff could be used at the school and athletic facilities could be shared. This could extend to the library and County facilities.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

There are a significant number of public and private Recreational providers throughout the Midlands region. It is imperative that the City of Columbia establish and maintain communication among these providers to ensure cooperation and to mitigate against the duplication of efforts. Consequently, establishing a liaison mechanism can be key in increasing efficiency and cost effectiveness in accomplishing the mission of the City's Parks and Recreation Department by clearly differentiating the facilities, programs, and services best offered by each Recreational provider. Such a mechanism would be the quarterly meeting with other Recreational providers in the region. Along with top-level representation from the Parks and Recreation Department,



This initiative level must be at higher levels than P&R staff and should be adopted as a Council Initiative with School Districts to share space, staff, and utilization.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

1.5 Agency Relationships ★

*Standard:* There shall be an understanding of the roles of counterpart and complementary organizations through liaison roles with nearby park and recreation agencies, public and social service organizations, and other local government agencies.

1.5.1 Operational Coordination and Cooperation Agreements

*Standard:* There should be established policies on cooperative use and maintenance of facilities and program operation, facility design, land development, finances, etc., with other agencies or organizations or individuals.

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

- 1.6 Establish a criteria for evaluating existing parks based on needs, location, facilities, and potential users. The result of the evaluation could include eliminating, repurposing, or consolidating some existing parks within the system based on a rating/prioritization system of the current park/facility inventory.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

The City Parks and Recreation Department has begun development of a needs based, bottom up budget for the maintenance of the park system. The inventory of all maintenance items is not complete,

but preliminary numbers on just items counted thus far is in excess of \$750,000 and the total is anticipated to be in excess of \$1.5 million just to keep up with the existing amenities now in place. This will use up the approximately \$1.1 budgeted now for maintenance. This does not account for the construction of new facilities that will come on line for maintenance and no mention of the greenways to be constructed in the one-penny sales tax. Once complete, it will certainly show we are behind in our funding for maintenance of the facilities we now have in place.



Staff inventory this is an appendix to this plan.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

7.2 *Development of Areas and Facilities*

*Standard: The agency should have established policies and procedures for the development of park and recreation land and facilities.*

7.4 *Disposal of Lands*

*Standard: The agency should have established procedures regarding the disposal of park and recreation lands.*

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

- 1.7 Establish a criteria for evaluating proposed acquisitions and/or land donations and other gifts into the park system as these come with commensurate O&M costs. The goal is to limit shrinking maintenance cost versus the value of additional park spaces. Where possible, limit acceptance to only natural green spaces requiring limited maintenance, or additions to existing facilities.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

In the past, the City has accepted parks and spaces from developers, private citizens, and the community to maintain without fully understanding the operation and maintenance costs. No new acquisitions should be allowed without a calculation of the annual O&M costs and presentation of that to the Council for use in deciding whether to take a property into the system.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

5.1.2 *Acceptance of Gifts and Donations*

*Standard: The agency should have an established policy for the acceptance of gifts and donations.*

7.1 *Acquisition of Park and Recreation Lands*

*Standard: The agency should have established policies and procedures for the acquisition of lands for park, recreation, conservation, and historical-cultural purposes.*



Written Council Policy on criteria to accept new parks. All new property must include a detailed O&M cost before acceptance of any facility to the Park system.

Recommendation(s) Not Relevant to a Specific Standard (s)

- 1.2 Focus on national trends toward "green recreation" and "passive" recreation areas that do not require the level of maintenance and upkeep as active recreation areas/facilities.

*Explanatory Narrative:*



See 1.2.1 narrative. The recommendation is to convert underutilized baseball fields into green recreation spaces.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

N/A

Recommendation(s) Not Relevant to a Specific Standard (s)

- 1.4 Pursue "Accreditation" in accordance with the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) "National Accreditation Standards".

- 1.4.1 The goal is to achieve accreditation from CAPRA within 2-3 years.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

There are many benefits to accreditation of both individuals and the entire recreational department. By going through the process of accreditation, the Parks and Recreation Department will be led through a thorough self-examination and internal audit of all procedures and operations that will help focus objectives and operations. It will help attract better employees with professional backgrounds in recreation that will help improve the Parks and Recreation Departments. It will provide a mechanism for continued improvement and connection back to the latest trends in recreation and leisure services. And finally, it will mark an achievement in which both staff and the community take pride.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*



Funding for training and certification of key staff to meet accreditation standards. Without additional training and certification, accreditation is much more difficult and unlikely.

N/A

Recommendation(s) Not Relevant to a Specific Standard (s)

- 1.5 The City of Columbia professional staff must take the lead in "system-wide" programming of recreation globally throughout the park system for the City. (I.e., view the system's facilities and programs in their entirety as a recreational delivery system rather than focusing on making each park "all things to all people".

- 1.5.1 Establish a global plan for the park facilities in the system identifying lead functions/services to be massed at each of the parks. The goal is to establish each park/facility as a primary recreational provider for a major recreational service (or services) and to eliminate (or reduce) some facilities/programs not aligned with the lead function(s)/service(s).



Written goals for each park facility. If desired, allow community input for each park with a public input session for each park's global plan.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

It was evident in the evaluation of the programs offered in the various facilities that many of the programs and facilities evolved over time. It was also apparent that each community park strived to have as many amenities as possible, without consideration for space and man-power to maintain or staff. What resulted was parks with one baseball facility, one tennis court, or one outdoor basketball court rather than multiple, massed facilities that would serve the public need. In the past, neighborhood recreation was tied much closer to walking to parks. Today, that has been significantly reduced and the public is much more willing to drive to facilities for recreational opportunities. Safety precautions have made it less likely for youth to walk several blocks to a facility which affords us the opportunity to remove under used or aging amenities at selected locations.

It also will allow park administrative staff to view recreation globally and begin to mass activities into larger, regional parks that can have a greater impact and reduced maintenance than corresponding acreage at smaller parks. This system wide planning will allow staff to interact with communities and neighborhoods to let them know the plan for their parks and allow input and reaction. This should reduce the calls for "our own" when considering recreational amenities.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

N/A

Recommendation(s) Not Relevant to a Specific Standard (s)

- 1.8 Parks and Recreation must be considered as a larger part of the overall economic development effort of the City. While the current system's "top level" facilities are competitive with peer communities, the current state of the facilities and programs overall put the City at a competitive disadvantage in prospect recruitment.
  - 1.8.1 Focus funds and resources on two or three major parks to transform them into show parks for use in economic development and set an expectation for the remaining upgrades. The most logical candidate parks are Finlay Park and Riverfront Park. See recommendation 2.4.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

As referenced in the recently completed City of Columbia Economic Development Strategic Plan, quality of life, and recreation in particular, is a very important aspect of economic development. Large scale examples like Central Park in New York, or Centennial Park in Atlanta have been major economic drivers in the community. The City parks systems lacks the major impact of a tourist attraction quality

recreational show piece. No single park comes to mind when thinking of the recreational opportunities that rival our peer cities. Focus on development of a show piece recreational amenity is a strong recommendation of this master plan.



*Funding is the key missing ingredient, without additional funding to upgrade the physical condition of the existing facilities, recreation in the City will be lacking in comparison to other competing Cities.*

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

N/A

**Recommendation Category: Facility Needs**

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

- 2.0 Modernize the entire park system (existing facilities)
- 2.4 Establish at least one signature, landmark recreational destination for the City. This might include: a significantly upgraded Finlay Park, a completed Riverwalk, or another unidentified feature (e.g., a dedicated water park or other destination-type facility).
- 2.5 Focus on more system-wide park “linkage” via greenway space. Optimize existing waterway features such as Rocky Branch, Smith Branch, Gills Creek, and other logical areas for greenway expansion.
- 2.6 Currently, there is not adequate access to the river provided by the City of Columbia. In conjunction with current plans to establish river access, the City should ultimately identify three to four locations within the park system along the riverfront to establish public access points with appropriate facilities.
- 2.7 Over the years many of the neighborhood parks have added facilities that are normally provided in regional facilities. Where possible parks should be restored to their designated roles. This restoration may including adjusting program and facilities in order to provide the best usage at each facility and each park, which will assist in improving existing facilities and decrease total costs for maintenance.



A coordination of the County’s One Penny Sales Tax and how it interfaces with the River access is important. A meeting with the County and the River Alliance is now appropriate. Funding for a capital improvement to develop a signature, landmark park will be required.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

As previously stated, the City needs to focus on creating at least one show piece recreational amenity. This could either be the completed Riverwalk Greenway or an enhanced Finlay Park. The completed Greenway should also help address access to the river which is almost non-existent within the City of Columbia.

Additionally, many of the neighborhood parks have functions normally reserved for regional facilities. The location of a single baseball field or one tennis court stretches the maintenance dollars too thin and does not fully meet the recreational needs if they were massed in a regional location. In areas where single amenities exist, they should be removed from the system.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

- 2.4 **Comprehensive Plan** ★  
*Standard: There shall be a comprehensive park and recreation system plan, which is basically an inventory of existing conditions and recommendations for future*

*programs and services, acquisition and development of areas and facilities, and administration. The plan shall be officially adopted by the appropriate governing body, updated regularly, be linked with a capital improvement budget and a phased development.*

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

- 2.1 Establish criteria for “minimally adequate” facilities and leisure services by park type and focus on “retrofitting” those parks that currently do not meet that standard. This stems from a demand from all sectors of the community for equity and uniform quality in the provision of park and recreation resources, facilities, and programs. I.e., some parks in some areas of the system are less well maintained and offer fewer resources/programs than others and do not meet the “localized” recreation needs of those areas of the community. The initial prioritization of “retrofits” should be geared toward improvements related to safety and/or liability.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

Similar to other recommendations, the City has already begun a detailed inventory program that lists all available resources and programs at various parks. This will allow staff to identify underused amenities and continue to reorganize uses to better fit the communities, while taking some natural regional uses and transferring to more regional parks with more space.



The City inventory and bottom up budget will be the primary tool for this recommendation.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

2.4.3 *Community Inventory*

*Standard: There should be a compiled, complete and current inventory of all agency used and/or managed areas, facilities, programs and services, as well as, alternative providers of such.*

2.7 *Site Plans*

*Standard: There should be site plans to guide the use of existing and the development of future areas and facilities.*

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

- 2.2 In conjunction with maintenance and upkeep of existing parks and facilities, focus on retrofitting to comply with the requirements of the 2010 Americans With Disabilities Act (as amended). Initial focus should be on measures and upfits that can be accomplished quickly and inexpensively.
- 2.2.1 Partner with Able South Carolina to evaluate each facility and program for compliance with ADA and develop a capital improvement task list and budget for each facility and a program modification task list and budget for each program.



Prepare and direct contract with the DAC or prepare and RFP for a full ADA inspection of Park facilities to develop a comprehensive list of the ADA needs of the facilities.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

The age of our parks, often in excess of 50 years, has made full compliance with the 2010 Americans With Disabilities Act updates impossible. While it is impossible to make all the upgrades necessary in the foreseeable future, it is important to take inventory and begin to mitigate impacts so that all segment of the community can access facilities and programs. A local non-profit – Able South Carolina, is willing to help the City make these evaluations at a very low cost compared to hiring a private firm to make the evaluations and inventory.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

6.4 *Outreach to Underserved Populations* ★

*Standard: The agency shall proactively extend programs and services to residents who may be underserved in the community.*

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

2.3 *Update/develop a systematic Operations & Maintenance program that includes all parks/facilities and schedules for performing tasks.*

*Explanatory Narrative:*



The City Parks and Recreation staff has already begun this program and is attached as Exhibit B to this report.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

7.5 *Maintenance and Operations Management Plan* ★

*Standard: There shall be an established maintenance and operations plan for management of the agency's park and recreation areas, facilities, and equipment.*

*Recommendation(s) Not Relevant to a Specific Standard (s)*

None

*Explanatory Narrative:*

N/A

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):* N/A

**Recommendation Category: Level of Service**

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

3.0 Establish written services descriptions and corresponding levels of service for each park and facility.

3.2 The City should encourage via land use planning, economic development, etc., the establishment of commercial/retail venues in close proximity to key park facilities such as the Three Rivers Greenway and Finlay Park. The intent is to better serve park users with goods/services available within the marketplace in conjunction with park usage.

 Have planning staff and P&R staff develop a master plan for the land development around the Finlay Park and adopt as a special overlay district to encourage mixture of recreation and commercial development.

3.3 The hours of operation for the parks do not currently match the public desire for access based on community input. Hours of operation need to be aligned with the public's desires for park/facility access.

 Have staff review the current operational hours and make adjustments.

3.3.1 Facilities by type should have consistent hours of operation each day of the week throughout the parks and recreation system (for example, until 9:00 pm for recreation centers). Based on community input, weekends are especially important and should be primarily available to the community with a focus on adults 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm and on weekends 10:00 am to 9:00 pm. Youth should be focused between the hours of 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Facilities should be open to the public as much as possible during these times.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

Currently, there is no correlation between commercial and residential development and parks and recreation. Some encouragement of commercial opportunities next to existing parks or redevelopment of residential near aging parks would be beneficial. Studies have shown that recreational opportunities benefit near strong commercial – especially retail, and near good residential development.

The hours of operation of many facilities do not match the public desire. Recreational centers vary opening and closing times randomly throughout the system. With a varying of hours worked for our workforce, closing facilities at 8:00 leave a lot of the community without access to recreation. Many close at 6:00 on Saturday s, which is far too early for many desiring flexibility in use. It has been noticed that many facilities are taken by private users such as club or AAU teams during peak times. No private entity should be allowed to use a facility longer than 1 to 1-1/2 hours and not during the peak usage times.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

1.5.1 *Operational Coordination and Cooperation Agreements*

*Standard:* There should be established policies on cooperative use and maintenance of facilities and program operation, facility design, land development, finances, etc., with other agencies or organizations or individuals.

2.4 *Comprehensive Plan*

*Standard:* There shall be a comprehensive park and recreation system plan, which is basically an inventory of existing conditions and recommendations for future programs and services, acquisition and development of areas and facilities, and administration. The plan shall be officially adopted by the appropriate governing body, updated regularly, be linked with a capital improvement budget and a phased development.

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

3.1 In conjunction with the current ParkTrac initiative, the City must develop a system-wide means for accurately tracking park and program usage statistics. One means (currently in development) is the issuance of "park cards" that are scannable upon entry to all City residents utilizing staffed buildings/facilities. Other means for tracking (or estimating) usage of passive parks should also be established. Without these statistics, it is currently impossible to complete an accurate Level of Service (LOS) analysis.

*Explanatory Narrative:*



Implement the ParkTrac system and use staff to periodically do Park inspections for a two to three hour time period tracking all usage. Use these periodic inspections to establish a baseline for typical park and program usage.

Without solid usage data, it is impossible to modify or craft programs to meet the desires of the community. Many programs exist at facilities simply because they have always been there, or the amenity exists such as a kiln or stage. With good usage data, programs can be tailored to better meet demand.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

3.6 *Records Management Policy and Procedure*

*Standard:* The agency should have established policy and procedures for control, maintenance, and retention of records.

6.8 *Program and Service Statistics*

*Standard:* The agency should collect statistics on its programs and services for evaluation and future program and service development.

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

- 3.3.2 Outside entities wishing to rent or book facilities must do so through the administration, rather than through the local parks.



Reassign staff person or hire new staff person for booking of facilities.

- 3.3.3 A minimum charge for facility usage should be set by market conditions that take into account total costs for usage. There needs to be an understanding that some facilities/functions should be revenue generating or at least revenue neutral. For example, it is estimated the per hour cost for meeting space is in excess of \$25/hr. The fee charged for usage needs to be significant enough to cover costs and (in specific cases) generate revenue.
- 3.3.4 "Policy should be developed for premium centers versus neighborhood centers for rental fees, costs and availability. Such policies could include the following: A maximum booking time should be established for each type of facility (meeting space, basketball court, tennis courts, etc. for each type of use. No outside bookings should be allowed during peak usage times."

*Explanatory Narrative:*

Our revaluation shows that the fees and revenues collected by the Parks and Recreation are below some peer communities. Some communities desire to have recreation as a public provided service with very low cost. Often, these systems are lacking in quality, new recreational opportunities and fall behind other systems that choose to charge more for quality recreation. Groups use City of Columbia facilities, especially athletic recreational facilities, because other parts of the community charge far more. Schools, for example, charge for use of the athletic facilities by AAU teams. The City should charge similar amounts to make sure all costs including debt service, electricity, water, security, janitorial, and staffing is covered. Some general times to be considered include:

- 1) A maximum booking time should be established for each type of facility (meeting space, basketball court, tennis courts, etc. for each type of use.
- 2) For heavily used facilities, no entity should be allowed to book a public facility for more than 2 hours and for more than 2 times per week;
- 3) All entities not located within the City of Columbia should be given lowest priority for booking or renting facilities;
- 4) No facility should be allowed to be booked during peak public usage time. For example, if a recreation center facility peak usage is 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm on Saturday, no booking should be allowed for that time. Bookings should be on off peak times such as 10:00 am to 12:00 pm on weekends, 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm on weekends, or 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm on weekdays.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

5.2 Fees and Charges ★

Standard: There shall be an established policy on the type of services for what fees and charges may be instituted and the basis for establishing the amount of such fees and charges.

Recommendations Not Specific to a Standard: None

Recommendation(s) Not Relevant to a Specific Standard (s)

None

*Explanatory Narrative:*

N/A

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

N/A

**Recommendation Category: Programming**

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

- 4.0 Tailor programming to meet the needs of each area of the City while providing centralized services at existing facilities that make logistical sense.
- 4.3 Each program at the various facilities should be examined, and out-of-date or low attendance programs should be eliminated. There is insufficient budget to continue offering the number of programs offered throughout the system.
- 4.3.1 Develop a comprehensive list of programs at each facility and look for overlaps. Remove overlaps where practical.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

The City staff has begun this process and is putting in place mechanisms for evaluating a programs use.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

- 6.1 **Recreation Programming Plan** ★  
*Standard: The agency shall utilize a recreation programming plan that includes both a long-range plan covering 3-5 years or more that is periodically reviewed and a current-year implementation plan.*

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

- 4.1 In certain areas of the City (primarily areas of higher population density, lower income, and/or higher crime rates, and based on expressed community desires), the City should increase focus on athletics and more heavily structured activities. Passive recreation should not be ignored in these areas, but the community desire for teen programs and programs offered after school and on weekends is important.



This needs to be an Administrative led directive in conjunction with the Police Department and the Planning Staff. An ad hoc committee of City Staff should be developed to provide recommendations to the Council and the Council make appropriate policy decisions of where to focus limited resources throughout the City.

- 4.1.1 The Department must balance the need for structured programming and passive, unplanned recreation. The balance must be constantly evaluated and adjusted based on community feedback.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

The desire and need for athletic based, structured recreation versus unplanned, passive recreation was unique to this study. In areas of the city where population density was higher, where the income levels where lower, or the crime was a pubic concern, the community sees athletic programs for youth an

integral method of improving the quality of life. In these areas, programs aimed at at-risk youth ages 12-18 was an important community desire. Programs like mid-night basketball, homework assistance, arts and crafts, etc. are needed regardless of the attendance. They should be offered and kept focused on this important service recreation provides in our community. In other areas with less density, higher incomes, there was a more expressed desire for more passive, unstructured recreation. Free play basketball, access to walking trails and work out equipment, classes that meet at multiple times for dance, zumba, or arts and crafts were more desirable recreational programs.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

**6.1.4 Leader-Directed Programs and Services**

*Standard: The agency should offer self-directed recreation opportunities.*

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

**4.2** In any City owned public facility or land where a private entity is providing recreational services, the City should develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with that entity, renewable each year, that outlines the specific obligations and responsibilities of each party. The MOUs should be specifically reviewed to ensure minimum barriers to access (i.e., financial, time constraints, etc.)

**4.2.1** The MOU should include costs contributions by each party (including debt service for the City, O&M, utilities, etc.) and contributions by the organization. It should include how access by the public will be provided to the maximum extent possible (i.e., minimization of financial and time barriers to that access).

*Explanatory Narrative:*



Have Administrative staff prepare and MOU draft. Staff must develop facility specific O&M costs that must be accounted for by a user. Whether or not this is recouped is a policy decision that needs Administrative guidance.

A major concern from the surveys and community input sessions was access both in terms of times and money to the City's facilities. Often, private entities utilize City facilities for practice or games that conflict with peak times desired by the public. In areas like soccer, there were public complaints about the cost of the private entities that run the programs on City fields. MOU's with all entities that use facilities should be made that include obligations and responsibilities of each party, costs and fees to be paid, and times of uses.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

**1.5.1 Operational Coordination and Cooperation Agreements**

*Standard: There should be established policies on cooperative use and maintenance of facilities and program operation, facility design, land development, finances, etc., with other agencies or organizations or individuals.*

Recommendation(s) Not Relevant to a Specific Standard (s)

None

*Explanatory Narrative:* N/A

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*  
N/A

**Recommendation Category: Staffing**

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

5.0 Develop a uniform set of education, qualification, and experience standards for positions within the Parks & Recreation Department and adhere to those standards for evaluating existing staff and hiring new staff. Standards should include criminal background checks and drug testing.

5.1.1 Match personnel skill levels with job description requirements - this is especially important for the Park Directors



Work with HR to develop a job description and educational level requirement that meets the needs of this position.

5.2.1 Many of the larger facilities appear overstaffed. The primary purpose is to ensure appropriate staff levels at each facility, but it is recommended as a general rule that no more than 2 unassigned personnel be at any site at one time. Other assigned (i.e. an aerobics instructor, life guard, etc.) should be added as needed.

5.2.3 Staff reorganization will likely be required moving some Operations staff back towards maintenance and to new functions including outdoor education and recreation opportunities. There are areas that are overstaffed that can be redirected towards new functions.



The P&R staff have the ability to do the reorganization, but must be empowered by Administration to do this task.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

Based on our evaluation, it appears the educational levels of the staff, in terms of specific Parks and Recreational degrees, is less than other peer cities. Minimum standards that include required specific skill sets and degrees need to be evaluated and modified. A crucial focus should be Park Directors. They were identified as the single most important position in the Parks and Recreation Department mainly due to their interaction with the community.

Larger facilities appeared overstaffed while many smaller facilities could benefit from an additional staff member. Some movement of staff from operation towards maintenance or a combined maintenance/operational status may be required.

A very good way to enhance staff, and ultimately test drive many potential employees is a strong intern system. This system should be developed in conjunction with Universities and Colleges that offer accredited degrees in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism (or similar specific degree programs) and can be tailored from Administrative, to Programs, to actual Facilities in the system.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

4.1 *Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual*

*Standard: There shall be established policies, which govern the administration of personnel procedures for both professional and nonprofessional employees that are reviewed annually.*

4.1.2 Recruitment Process

*Standard: There should be a comprehensive recruitment process to attract qualified personnel.*

4.1.4 Selection Process

*Standard: There should be comprehensive procedures for the process of hiring personnel.*

4.1.5 Background Investigation

*Standard: Personnel hiring should include procedures for background investigation prior to appointment, including verification of a candidate's qualifying credentials, review of a candidate's civil and criminal record, particular attention to drug and child/adult-abuse records, and driving record for employees assigned to operate motor vehicles.*

4.1.9 Performance Evaluation

*Standard: There should be a fair and systematic procedure for annual appraisal of job performance.*

4.2 Staff Qualifications ★

*Standard: The agency shall employ professional staff qualified to develop and operate programs and services.*

4.3 Job Analysis and Job Descriptions ★

*Standard: Established job descriptions for all positions shall be based on the job analysis and include, at a minimum: duties, responsibilities, and tasks of each position; and minimum level of proficiency necessary in the job-related skills, knowledge, abilities, and behaviors.*

4.4 Chief Administrator ★

*Standard: There shall be a professionally-qualified administrator who is responsible to the approving authority for the management, direction, and control of the operations and administration of the agency, and who shall have authority to perform such responsibilities.*

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

5.2 Develop an accurate organizational staffing chart that defines chain of command and job roles

*Explanatory Narrative:*

Staff has been working on this recommendation.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

**3.1 Organizational Structure** ★

*Standard: The agency shall establish a staff organizational structure, specifying the interrelationships within the organization.*

**3.1.1 Statement of Purpose for Each Organizational Component**

*Standard: The agency should have an established purpose statement for each organizational component that is available to all employees.*

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

**5.2.4** It has been noted throughout this study at safety and security is a concern in parks, particularly after hours. The city should coordinate between departments to provide this needed service.

**5.3.1** Finlay Park is in need of full-time oversight via a combination of Park Staff and security/police personnel - perhaps 24 hour



Administration needs to decide how this oversight should be handled, whether with P&R staff or with Police personnel.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

No matter when asked, in what situation, safety is always a concern. Parks, by their size, lighting, etc. often can feel less safe – especially at night – than other facilities. It is much harder to police and secure 100 acres that it is to secure a single building, which lends to the safety concern – whether real or perceived. Additional fencing, low level lighting, and cameras all would help, but never eliminate the concern. One area that is legitimately a concern is Finlay Park. It is in need of full time dedicated security whether it be police or park staff.

The greatest single issue of security that is faced by the P&R staff is vandalism. The City is already considering installing cameras in many areas of the City. Select areas that have experienced vandalism or safety issues should be targeted for security cameras.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

**8.2 Authority to Enforce Laws by Law Enforcement Officers** ★

*Standard: The authority of Law Enforcement Officers to enforce laws and ordinances pertaining specifically to activity within parks and recreation areas and facilities shall be clearly established to ensure that enforcement actions are upheld.*

**8.4 Public Safety and Law Enforcement Role of Agency Staff** ★

*Standard: Agency staff has a role in educating and informing patrons of laws, ordinances, rules and regulations that apply to parks and recreation areas and facilities. This role and level of authority shall be established through policy directive.*

**8.5 General Security Plan** ★

*Standard:* The agency shall have a comprehensive general security plan addressing all major areas, buildings and facilities under its jurisdiction.

Recommendation(s) Not Relevant to a Specific Standard (s)

5.1 Build pride in the staff by establishing dress codes and providing uniforms and improved equipment. It is essential that park users can easily identify Parks and Recreation staff members from the general public.

*Explanatory Narrative:*



Funds for new uniforms or shirts as required.

The current dress code is not uniform throughout the park staff. In the past, a tan motif for shirts were being used and is still utilized by some staff. Currently, a dark blue scheme is used by the majority of the parks staff. Some red or crimson shirts still exist. Consistency would help build pride and make identifying staff much easier.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

N/A

Recommendation(s) Not Relevant to a Specific Standard (s)

5.2.2 Peer communities have personnel costs ratio between 60-70% of the overall P&R budget. The City has an 80% staffing ratio. Much of this is due to the reduction of the overall budget leaving little except staffing. When additional maintenance budget is added back, this percentage should reduce.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

Mostly in response to reduction of other portions of the budget, the Parks and Recreation budget has a staffing ration of 81.6%. This makes it the highest staffing ratio by dollars of any other department examined. It not always an exact comparison as some Department share maintenance across other departments, blend their salaries to maintenance and recreation staff, or have enterprise funding for special uses like zoos or golf courses that reduce the cost impact. So just because a budget reflects a staffing ratio of 24%, it does not always mean that salaries only reflect 24% of the budget. Items like major capital improvements in a certain year can also impact the staffing ratio significantly.

However, we have evaluated the numbers enough to conclude that the staffing ratio at the City is higher than expected and a staffing evaluation should be performed to identify excess staff.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

N/A

**Recommendation Category: Financial**

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

- 6.0 The funding available for maintenance and upkeep of existing parks and facilities is not adequate to meet desired standards.
- 6.1 Develop specific measurable maintenance standards each facility within the park system.
- 6.2 Develop a comprehensive budget for Parks and Recreation Department that is based on the full requirements of operating the number of existing parks and facilities within the system as it stands now. I.e., "bottom up budgeting" – to determine not what can be done with the amount currently budgeted, but to determine what it realistically would take to meet "minimally adequate" requirements for parks/programs.



Staff is working on this budget.

- 6.2.1 Currently, the approximately \$300,000 available for operation of facilities is not sufficient to keep the number of facilities operational at acceptable levels. Additional operations funding from and increased overall Parks and Recreation budget or a re-allocation of the existing Parks and Recreation Budget is needed to effectively operate existing facilities.



This is a budgeting and policy decision that must be made by Administration and the Council.

- 6.2.1.2 It is difficult to exactly determine cost of maintenance and percentage of the budget attributed to maintenance because the personnel costs are not separated by function. The City should establish cost centers through the financial system to account for each park/facility's total O&M cost.

- 6.2.2 Currently, the approximately \$300,000 of revenue from recreational user fees is directed towards the City's general fund. This revenue should remain within the Parks and Recreation budget (or reserved for park and recreation uses).



This is a budgeting and policy decision that must be made by Administration and the Council.

- 6.2.3 The staffing budget is approximately 80% of the recreational budget. The staffing percentage is out of line with other similar peer communities. Some staff reductions are likely required to divert funds to other functions, including maintenance, etc. Other staff should be redirected from operations towards other duties such as maintenance.

- 6.3 Increased funding or redirection of funding from capital projects towards O&M is required (i.e., in the near term, funding for the maintenance and upkeep of existing facilities should be emphasized over funding for construction of new facilities).

*Explanatory Narrative:*

In simple terms, the City has more facilities than can be maintained with the current budget. The budget must be cut by staff positions to redirect more money towards maintenance. More revenue must be generated by the recreational users to help cover this short fall. More budget must be directed toward recreation to bring the City of Columbia's recreation department up to the par of many of our peer communities.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

5.1 *Fiscal Policy* ★

*Standard: Fiscal policies setting guidelines for management and control of revenues, expenditures, and investment of funds shall be set forth clearly and in writing, and the legal authority must be clearly established.*

5.4 *Annual Budget* ★

*Standard: There shall be an annual operating and capital improvements budget(s), including both revenues and expenditures.*

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

6.4 Increased funding through user fees for Parks and Recreation programs/services should be considered. Other peer communities realize much higher revenue from recreation user fees than the City of Columbia.

6.4.1 Establish a first year goal of 1% of the overall budget to be funded by user fees, increase by 1% each year to an overall goal of 10%.



This is a budgeting and policy decision that must be made by Administration and the Council.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

The public will support increased user fees for good, quality recreation.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

5.2 *Fees and Charges* ★

*Standard: There shall be an established policy on the type of services for what fees and charges may be instituted and the basis for establishing the amount of such fees and charges.*

6.1.6 *Fee-Base Programs and Services*

*Standard: The agency should offer programs and services for a fee.*

*Recommendation(s) Not Relevant to a Specific Standard (s)*

6.5 Consider the inclusion of "impact fees" for new residential development within the City limits to accommodate park and recreation needs of a growing population.

- 6.5.1 Consider establishing a percentage of the overall development cost with a cap as an impact fee for recreation. Consider a fee of 1% of the overall project capped at a number to be determined contributed towards capital improvements for recreation.



This is a budgeting and policy decision that must be made by Administration and the Council.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

Additional sources of income must be generated for recreation. Developments that benefit from recreation would be willing to pay fees towards improvements provided that impact is reasonable.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

N/A

Recommendation(s) Not Relevant to a Specific Standard (s)

- 6.6.1 Other revenue streams could include corporate sponsorships at local facilities - renewable for one year; Working agreements with companies that would pay the costs of repairs to facilities in exchange for advertising on each repair; Working with Telecommunications companies to locate cell towers in existing ball fields as large flag poles to blend into the recreational landscape

- 6.6.2 Continue the staff work in securing and chasing grant monies. This will not be a large revenue source, but from time to time may allay some costs.

- 6.6.3 Include initiatives such as local (City) tax breaks or business license rebates for local businesses "donating" design or construction time and materials.

*Explanatory Narrative:*

Local enterprises that would donate services useful to the Parks and Recreational Department such as landscaping, painting, materials, etc. could have tax breaks or licensing fees reduced.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

N/A

## 7.0 Communication

*Recommendation(s) Relevant to a Specific CAPRA Standard(s):*

7.0 Develop a comprehensive information and marketing initiative to better communicate the facilities and programs (and park hours) that are already available so that all sectors of the community are aware of these offerings.



This could be from an outside firm or from the Public Information Department of the City. Administration needs to decide which is appropriate given funding and/or staff availability.

7.1 Create a marketing plan that covers communication initiatives and includes mailings, website content, branding, and other information distribution geared both for City residents and a potential larger (tourist) market.

Currently, Parks and Recreation lacks a good branding and marketing campaign. More than almost any other touch point in the City, recreation needs strong marketing and recognition to be fully successful in the community. Most communities with good reputations in recreation have that reputation due in large part to a successful marketing and branding program. The Parks and Recreation Department should not brand or market like Engineering, Public Works, Streets or even the Police Department. Their mission is unique and is often competing with private entities offering similar functions. No other department has this issue. Rebranding should include:

- Logos
- Uniforms
- Signage
- Paint schemes (could be City Blue)
- Correspondence
- Social Media
- Programs and Facility names – both formal and informal
- Fencing
- Landscaping,
- Etc.

7.2 Establish a “Midlands Recreation” clearinghouse mechanism to advertise/communicate the programs and facilities available throughout the Midlands region (i.e., City, County, County Rec Commission, Private Entities, School Districts, USC, Fort Jackson, etc. etc.). Could be tied to recommendation 1.1.1

7.3 Create a standardization (design guidelines) for parks that includes common fencing, equipment, painting, and especially signage.

7.4 Equip each major regional park with a scrolling marquee sign (or equivalent) to inform the public about services and events at the park.



Requires Capital Improvement Funding

7.5 Social Media should play a larger role in communicating programs/services provided, and access to facilities. Accuracy and timeliness is the key to being successful.



Requires assistance from the Public Information Department and the IT Department.

7.6 Create a landmark/identity statement for recreation (a Destination) that defines recreation for the City of Columbia and market heavily both locally and nationally. Ties to recommendation 2.4

*Explanatory Narrative:*

One of the main issues discussed in the public input sessions was lack of awareness of programs and amenities at each park. As a city, we have done a poor job of marketing recreation consumer products. Most of the community has no idea of what is offered, the times and types of programs of which they have access. More information properly recriminated would up utilization and increase public awareness of recreation their tax dollars provide.

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

N/A

3.3 *Communication System*

*Standard: A communication system shall be established to ensure the accurate and timely transfer of information, both internal and external.*

3.4 *Process for Public Information, Community Relations, Marketing*

*Standard: There shall be an established process regarding the integrated role of public information, community relations, and marketing functions of the agency including periodic reporting and evaluation.*

3.4.3 *Marketing Plan*

*Standard: The agency should have an established marketing plan, based on market research that includes an annual evaluation.*

Recommendation(s) Not Relevant to a Specific Standard (s)

None

*Explanatory Narrative:*

N/A

*Relevant CAPRA Standard(s):*

N/A

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A - Synopsis of Public Input from Public Meetings

- Appendix A.1 – City of Columbia Parks Questionnaire – Facilities
- Appendix A.2 – City of Columbia Parks Questionnaire – Programs

### Appendix B - Inventory of Parks and Programs

### Appendix C - Demographic Information by Census Tract

### Appendix D - CAPRA Accreditation Standards – Excerpts

### Appendix E – Table of Recommendations