



Bowling Green Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Adopted February 3rd, 2026

A special thank you to all the community members, stakeholders, and leaders who provided their feedback, support and local knowledge during the master planning process. We appreciate your partnership and efforts in creating a plan that supports the mission and vision of Bowling Green Parks and Recreation.

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The investment recommendations outlined in this Parks Master Plan are intended to guide long-term planning and prioritization. These recommendations do not constitute approved funding commitments. All proposed projects and expenditures remain subject to the applicable budgeting process and must be reviewed and approved by the Board of Commissioners prior to implementation.

Executive Summary

The Bowling Green Parks and Recreation (BGPR) Master Plan guides the next decade of parks planning and improvements.

This plan sets a path forward for BGPR and was informed, guided, and refined by thousands of conversations, ideas, and visions gathered through a yearlong planning process. By combining a deep analysis of existing conditions with thorough conversations with BGPR Staff and robust community engagement, this BGPR Master Plan aligns the department's operational and funding needs with Bowling Green's community priorities and expectations to establish a path forward.

As a first step, the planning team worked with BGPR Staff to inventory and catalog the department's land holdings, park categories, and understand its regional context. These existing conditions are summarized in **The BGPR System** chapter of this document as a larger more thorough appendix to this plan.

The plan's existing conditions inventory was aligned with a thorough analysis summarized in the **Analysis** chapter of this document that includes

regional demographics, national recreational participatory trends, as well as conducting a financial analysis of BGPR's expenditures, a benchmark analysis comparing BGPR with peer agencies, a program assessment, an organizational & staffing analysis, and a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis facilitated with BGPR Staff.

The plan's ideas and recommendations were developed with a foundation established by a thorough community engagement process, detailed in the **Community Voices** chapter of this report. Between January and October of 2025, the planning team engaged with more than 2,500+ Bowling Green residents to discuss the future of parks and recreation in Bowling Green. The plan's engagement included three community meetings, an online surveys, roundtable conversations with stakeholders, direct engagement and activities at community events and festivals, a dedicated project website with interactive



activities, and a statistically-valid survey. These engagement activities informed the planning team of the community's needs, wants, priorities, and aspirations for its parks and recreation system.

From this engagement and analysis, ten recommendation themes emerged to shape this plan's recommendations and future implementation action items. These are introduced in the **Growing Our Parks** chapter, and are shown in the accompanying graphic to the right. Each theme covers a specific topic of importance to BGPR, and together they outline a framework for investing in current and future parks, strengthen programming, expanding equitable access to parks, and improving operational readiness to achieve CAPRA Accreditation.

From improving neighborhood connectivity to BGPR parks, to upgrading existing parks amenities to reflect community priorities, this plan's recommendations span across multiple aspects of Bowling Green residents' lives. Key recommendations also include improving BGPR's marketing and communications strategies, creating new partnerships and strengthening existing relationships, and planning for future facilities that leverage Bowling Green's opportunities in sports tourism and fill a community desire for indoor aquatics and community wellness. The plan's implementation is guided in the last chapter of this document, **From Planning to Parks** which organizes the recommendations into a matrix form and highlights potential timeframes and partnerships.

As such, this plan establishes a clear vision for investment that builds on BGPR's prominent role in Bowling Green's cultural and civic life.

Recommendations Themes



ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY
to parks and trails.



FOSTER NATURAL SPACES
that connect residents with nature.



MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE
BGPR's existing facilities to continue serving the community.



INVEST IN NEW FACILITIES
to address service gaps.



CREATE AWARENESS
for BGPR's facilities and programs.



ENHANCE PROGRAMMING
to educate, inspire, and delight residents of all ages.



EXPAND THE GEOGRAPHIC REACH OF SYSTEM
to serve Bowling Green's growing population.



STRENGTHEN AND ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS
with local and regional entities and institutions.



PROMOTE BGPR
as a regional destination for recreation and events.



IMPROVE BGPR's OPERATIONAL PREPAREDNESS
to better provide services and implement this master plan.





01

Introduction

Introduction

Process & Schedule

How to Use the Plan



Introduction

The Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Master Plan represents a 12-month collaborative planning process that created a guiding document for the next 10 years of Parks and Recreation in Bowling Green.

The Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Master Plan (BGPR Master Plan) represents BGPR's commitment to offering a system of community-driven parks and programs throughout Bowling Green that meet the needs of the community and creates fun, accessible, and affordable spaces for all to enjoy.

This master plan is comprised of six (6) sections that highlight the research, ideas, and community insights that drove this planning process. These six (6) sections include — *Introduction, The BGPR System, Analysis, Community Voices, Growing Our Parks and From Planning to Parks* — which offer a complete view of the entire BGPR system, as demonstrated in **Map 1: Bowling Green's Park System**.

Using the information gathered during this planning process, the planning team helped create a snapshot of the existing BGPR system and a guide for the next 10-years that complements the hard work of the BGPR staff, community aspiration, and supports a sustainable future for parks and recreation.

Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Mission



Our mission is to offer a comprehensive variety of excellent recreational programs and facilities that promote wellness and enhance quality of life in our diverse community and represent our commitment to a safe and sustainable future.

Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Vision

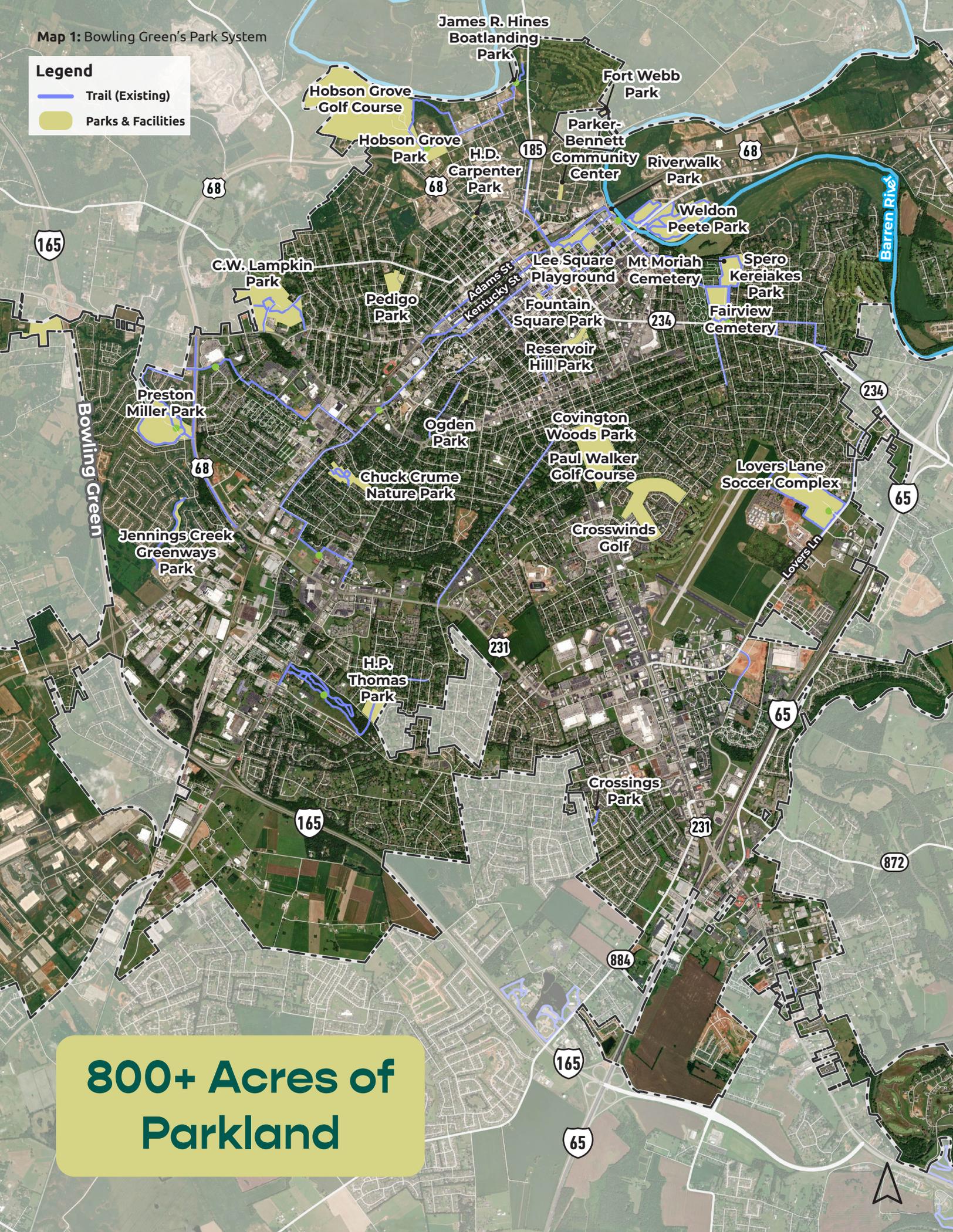


Our vision is to provide a wide range of park and recreational services that are balanced and inclusive for all residents and visitors. These services will encourage community health through the provision of welcoming parks, facilities, and programs, including athletics, that are clean, safe, and consistent in delivery. Services and facilities will be enhanced through collaboration and investment for a future that connects the community and embraces the City's diversity, both in terms of its residents and its resources.

Map 1: Bowling Green's Park System

Legend

-  Trail (Existing)
-  Parks & Facilities



**800+ Acres of
Parkland**



Process & Schedule

This 12-month process was guided by the BGPR mission and vision, community input, data-driven analysis, and a collaborative planning process that turned community ideas into implementable actions.

The planning team and Bowling Green Parks and Recreation (BGPR) staff kicked off the master planning process in late 2024 with Task 1, **Project Discovery**. In this task, the team visited parks and facilities across the BGPR system, getting to know the parks through exploration, **data collection and analysis**, and review of current and past planning and improvement efforts. Building off these initial efforts, the planning team introduced the master planning process to the BG community by launching a project website, community survey, and engaging with park commissioners and key local stakeholders.

With these initial tasks in progress, the planning team continued to **engage** with Bowling Green community through a variety of outreach and engagement tools — from an online survey to community events to meeting community members where they gather and recreate in parks and facilities. This task was also informed by a statistically valid survey that represented the city’s population and asked the community key questions about the current and

future conditions of the park system. Community feedback was also gathered during three (3) community meetings hosted at key points within the planning process, allowing for opportunities to build plan support, gather input, and keep the plan moving forward toward the goals, vision, and mission of BGPR.

In addition to the community engagement conducted during the initial tasks of the planning process, the planning team used **local, regional, and national data** to inform the data collection and analysis tasks. During these tasks, the planning team reviewed recreation trends and compared peer agencies, while also looking inward at the department’s programming and organization to identify opportunities, strengths, and areas of improvement within BGPR. From all of these efforts combined, the planning team used the information gathered to help shape the recommendations and themes of this plan.

With the help of BGPR staff and leadership, the final plan was drafted in the Fall of 2025 and finalized in Winter 2025/26.

The work of this plan was then reviewed by the Board of Park Commissioners, Bowling Green City Staff, and BGPR Staff. In early 2026, the master planning process was completed, and the BGPR team started plan implementation, and continued their pursuits in achieving CAPRA accreditation. For more information or a closer look at the planning process and timeline, see **Figure 1: Process & Schedule** or the following sections for more details on the information gathered during each task.

The master planning process, launched in late 2024, brought together BGPR staff and community members to shape a shared vision for Bowling Green’s parks — guided by data, community insights, and a commitment to CAPRA accreditation.

Task 1: Project Discovery (Dec 24'-March 25')

The planning team launched Task 1 in December 2024 with park and facility tours around Bowling Green. The team reviewed existing park plans, developed a project identity, launched a project website, established a focus group, and completed base-level analysis of existing parks and facilities.

Task 3: Data Collection (Mar-May)

The planning team began Task 3 by reviewing community feedback from Task 2, along with demographic data, recreation trends, and national best practices.

Task 2: Engagement (Feb - May)

The planning team focused on community engagement in Task 2, connecting with BG residents through surveys, events, and talking with stakeholders.

Task 4: Data Analysis (April-July)

The planning team continued analysis and review through Task 4. The team assessed the parks department and its programming, conducted a SWOT analysis, reviewed national trends, and compared BG to peer agencies.

Task 6: Draft Master Plan (Oct-Dec)

The planning reviewed the final community feedback and began drafting the Parks and Recreation Master Plan document.

Task 5: Engagement (May - Oct)

The planning team completed the final phase of community engagement in Task 5, connecting with BG residents through a Statistically Valid Survey, events, and focus group meetings. The team also finalized the data analysis and developed draft recommendations.

Task 7: Final Master Plan (Nov-Dec)

The final master plan document was drafted throughout Fall 2025 and Winter 2025/26. Developed with the help of the Bowling Green Community and BGPR staff, the plan reflects their collective input and represents BGPR's mission and vision.

Figure 1: Process & Schedule

How to Use the Plan

This Parks and Recreation Master Plan will be used to as a guiding document that will direct strategy and decision-making for the next 10 years.

This master plan is organized into five (5) major sections following the introduction, with a supporting appendix. Each section highlights the steps, efforts, and community input that shaped the master planning process — from planning to parks. The five (5) sections are as follows:

The BGPR System provides a summarized overview of the existing park system, including a list of existing parks and facilities within the BGPR system, and outlines the overall context for the master planning area.

Analysis reviews local, regional, and national level data and trends, programming analysis, benchmarking of peer agencies, and the SWOT analysis gathered during the data collection and analysis task of the planning process.

Community Voices summarizes what we heard from the Bowling Green community and how we engaged throughout the master planning process, this section including who we engaged with, how we engaged the BG community, insights and feedback provided, and key findings from the engagement process.

Growing Our Parks outlines the ten (10) recommendation themes that guide the master plan, each of these themes include recommendations, examples, and key takeaways.

From Planning to Parks organizes the plan recommendations by theme, providing its action item timelines, potential partners, park recommendations, and noting which of the recommendation items are related to the CAPRA accreditation process.

The master plan will be used as a guiding document to direct strategy and decision-making for BGPR and the City of Bowling Green as it relates to parks and recreation. Many of the community members, BGPR staff, and community leaders who participated in this master planning process will continue to play a role in implementing and supporting the plan. Some of the ways in which these planning process participants may play a role in the master plan implementation include:

- + Continued participation in visioning activities and providing input on future projects;

- + Advocating for the implementation or occasional updating of the plan's action items;
- + Serving as a local resource of Bowling Green knowledge;
- + Partnering with BGPR to help in implementing the plan's action items;
- + Supporting BGPR through policies, funding, or other resources; and
- + Helping to get the word out to the community about the goals, vision, mission, and successes of the plan as it is implemented.

Plan Organization

The Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Master Plan is structured around six (6) sections — *Introduction, The BGPR System, Analysis, Community Voices, Growing Our Parks and From Planning to Parks* — each with a supporting insights, context, and action items.

Plan Themes

From the master planning process, ten (10) guiding themes emerged, shaping the recommendations and plan implementation. Each of these themes are discussed in *Section 5: Growing Our Parks* and can be seen throughout the master plan. See **Figure 2: Plan Themes** for the ten (10) plan themes.



Figure 2: Plan Themes

Supporting Graphics, Mapping and Case Studies

Each plan theme has a set of supporting graphics, mapping and case studies that demonstrate and provide context to each plan theme and show examples of how or where the recommendations could be implemented in the BGPR system.

Implementation Plan & Matrix

The final section of the plan, *Section 6: From Planning to Parks*, lays out the plan action items and recommendations for each of the plan themes in an implementation matrix. The implementation matrix serves as a guide, laying out the timelines for implementation, partners, and highlights CAPRA-related initiatives. It was developed to support the implementation of the plan's recommendations and provide an easy-to-reference guide. See *Section 6* for the full implementation matrix and **Figure 3: Implementation Matrix Example** for an example of the implementation matrix layout.

Recommendation Themes & Actions	Timeline	Potential Partners	Capra Item
Plan Theme Example (PT)			
PT 1. Example Recommendation Action Text.	Short Term	City of BG	

Figure 3: Implementation Matrix Example





02

The BGPR System

Planning Context

BGPR System-Wide Maps

BGPR Parks and Facilities Inventory



Planning Context

Examining the Bowling Green Parks and Recreation system as a whole, helps create a base level understanding of the existing conditions and how the community uses the parks system.

The Bowling Green Parks and Recreation system makes up over **30 parks and recreation spaces** spread across the City of Bowling Green. As of Fall 2025, BGPR manages **over 800 acres of parkland, 12+ miles of trails and walking paths**, and maintains a collection parks properties ranging from cemeteries to small plazas to large golf courses. Within this system of parks, BGPR operates with **66 full time staff, 154 part-time staff and 117 seasonal staff** that maintain and operate the BGPR system, and contribute to making BGPR welcoming, well-maintained, and a resource for both BG residents and the greater region.

To better understand the BGPR system, the planning team completed a thorough analysis of the parks and recreation spaces within the system and completed multiple site visits during this planning process. In addition to the teams analysis of existing data and visiting the parks in-person, the team also connected with local residents and leaders to see how the spaces are used through programming, park access, and other activities, see

more on these insights in **Section 3: Community Voices**.

Park System Analysis & Mapping

As one of the fastest-growing communities in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Bowling Green is experiencing a steady growth of households. This growth highlights the need for parks and recreation spaces, places and programming that meet the needs of the growing population and supports the greater Bowling Green community.

The planning team, in an effort to further understand where parks and recreation spaces in Bowling Green and the greater surrounding area are located, have mapped the BGPR system, **Map 2: Bowling Green's Park System**, the county parks system, **Map 4: Regional Park System Map**, and the trail system with Bowling Green, **Map 3: Bowling Green's Trails System Map**. This collection of maps, a park inventory, and the completed Existing Conditions Report, see the **Appendix**, show the system existing conditions within this Section.

Parks Inventory

To kick-off the inventory and analysis of the existing parks and facilities, the planning team toured a select number of BGPR parks and facilities in December 2024, to gather an understanding of the current park system. From this tour, the planning team inventoried the parks, facilities, and properties owned and managed by BGPR. This park inventory, shown in **Figure 6: BGPR Park Inventory** and the **Appendix**, includes the following information: existing conditions data, property acreage, park classification, amenities and facilities, and an existing conditions score. The BGPR park system includes over 800+ acres of parkland, including a variety of park types, trails and walking paths, recreation centers and other recreation amenities, as shown on the following page in **Figure 4: Bowling Green Parks and Recreation At a Glance**. This inventory guided the planning team in combination with the analysis and research in **Section 3: Analysis**, and the community insights in **Section 4: Community Voices** to develop the recommendations of this plan.

297 Acres

258 Acres

91 Acres

88 Acres

72 Acres

Total: 841.3 Acres

21 Acres
6 Acres
5 Acres
2 Acres

- Nature Park/Open Space (NO)
- Special Use Park (SU)
- Neighborhood Park (NP)
- Mini or Pocket Park (MPP)
- Community Park (CMP)
- Linear Park (LP)
- Memorial Park (MP)
- Outdoor Aquatics (OA)
- Maintenance Facility (MAF)

800+ Acres of Parkland



17

BGPR Operated Trails
(Fitness, Walking, Nature, Bike & Mountain Biking)



6

Fitness/
Walking Paths



12

Miles of BG Trails



11

Parks with Fitness/
Walking Trails



32

Parks and Facilities



22

Community and
Neighborhood Parks



16

Playgrounds



4

Water Access Points



3

Golf Courses



2

Community Centers



2

Outdoor Fitness Areas



1

Aquatic Center

Figure 4: Bowling Green Parks and Recreation At a Glance

BGPR System-Wide Maps

Mapping Bowling Green’s parks, trails, and the greater regional parks system.

Zooming out and taking a look at the BGPR system, the planning team mapped Bowling Green’s parks and trails, in addition to the greater regional parks system within Warren County. Understanding the larger context helps identify the strengths and emerging challenges – such as trail connections, underserved park areas and overlapping services – and the opportunities where the parks system can expand, improve and coordinate efforts.

The BGPR System

Bowling Green Parks and Recreation manages 32 parks and facilities spread across over 800 acres of parkland as of November 2025. BGPR maintains a range of amenities including parks, playgrounds, golf courses, community centers, fitness areas, and an aquatic center, among other facilities within the system. The park system connects to the Barren River along the northeastern edge of Bowling Green through two (2) parks: Riverfront Park and Riverwalk at Mitch McConnell Park. The highest concentration of parks in Bowling Green can be found in the northeastern portion of the city.

The park types with the highest acreage amounts include:

- + Special Use Parks (SU) – 297 Acres;
- + Community Parks (CMP) – 258 Acres; and
- + Memorial Parks (MP) – 91 Acres

The park types with the lowest acreage amounts include:

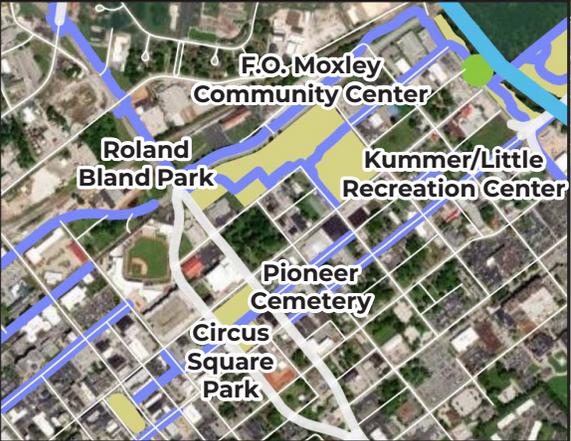
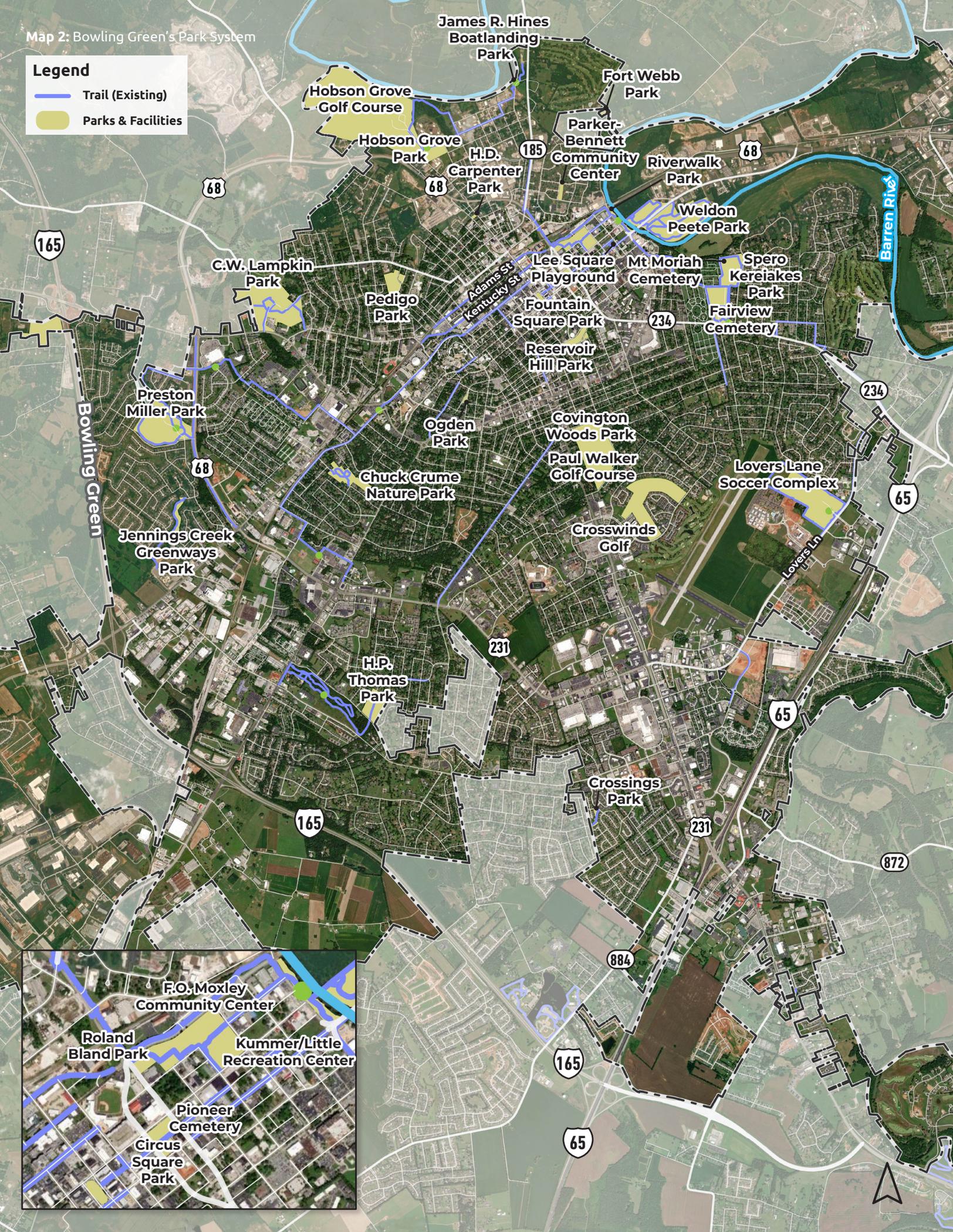
- + Mini or Pocket Parks (MPP) – 2 Acres;
- + Outdoor Aquatics (OA) – 5 Acres; and
- + Linear Parks (LP) – 6 Acres

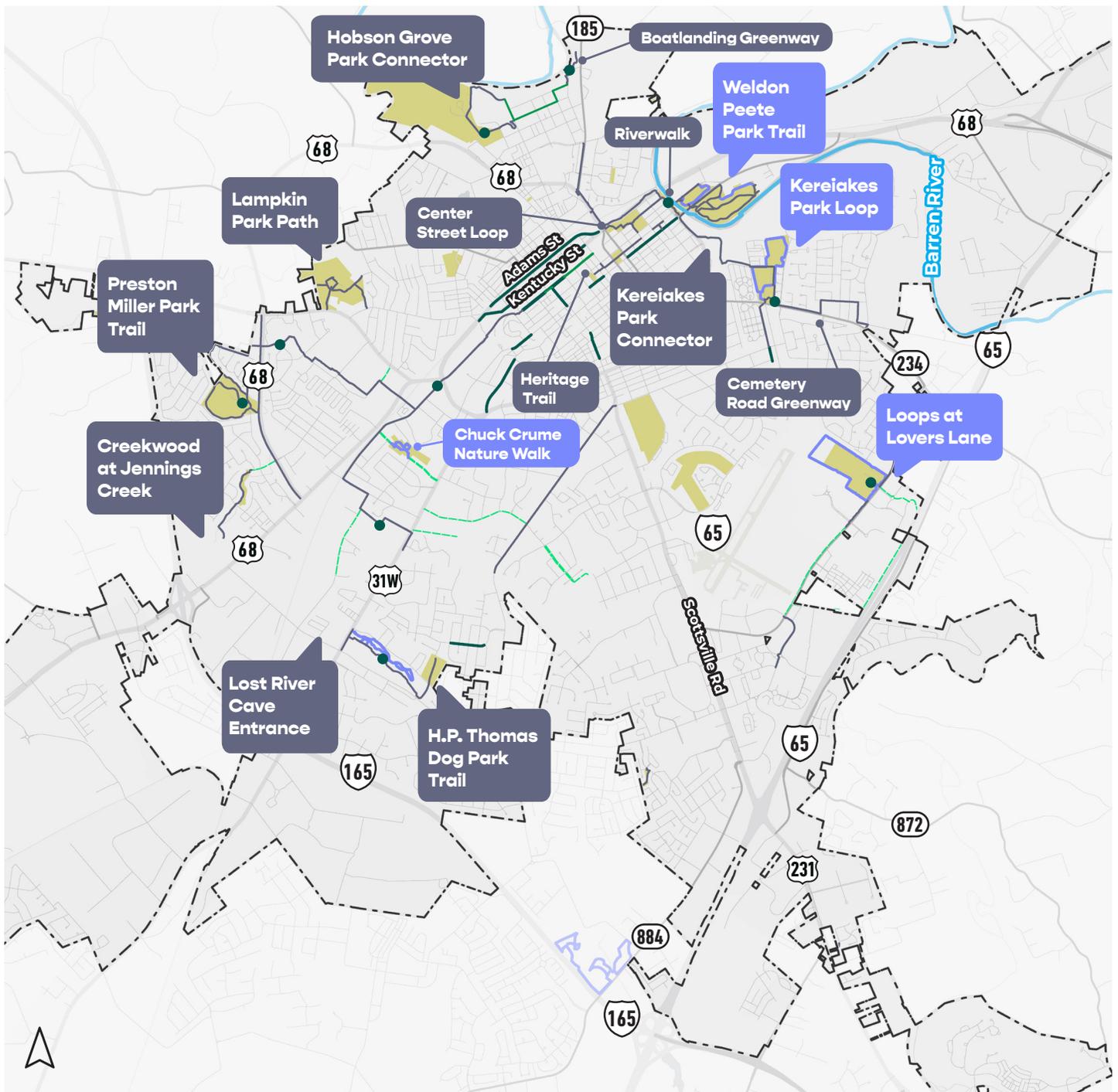
Map 2: Bowling Green’s Park System on the following page shows the BGPR parks and trails system.

Map 2: Bowling Green's Park System

Legend

-  Trail (Existing)
-  Parks & Facilities





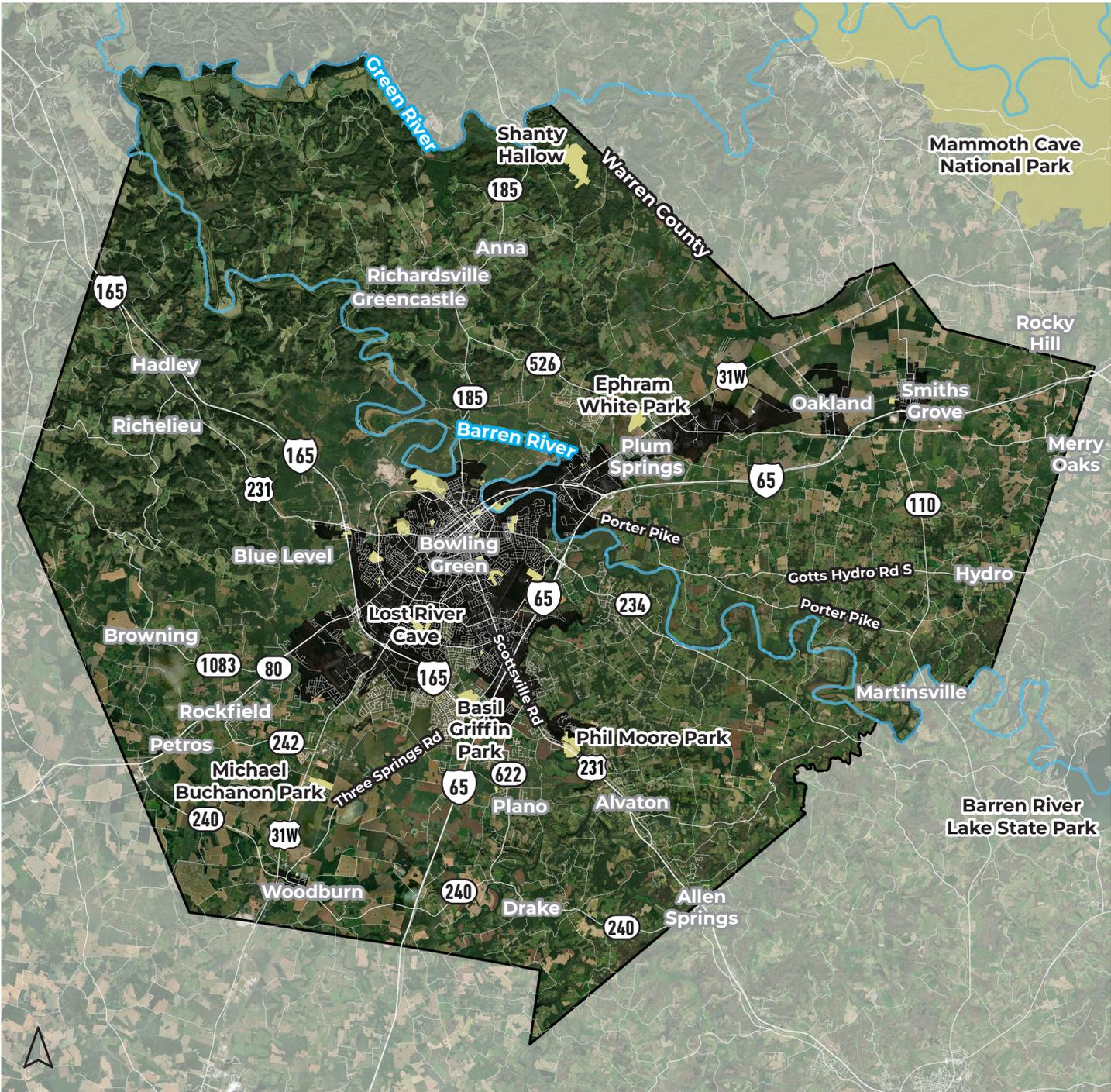
Map 3: Bowling Green's Trails System Map

Bowling Green's Trails System

Bowling Green's trail system consists of five (5) trail types: Bike Lanes, Park System Trails, Shared Lanes, Shared-Use Paths, and Potential Greenway Program Candidates. Of these trail types, BGPR manages a selection of Park System Trails and Shared-Use Paths. The remaining trails, pathways, and lanes are maintained by a combination of Western Kentucky University (WKU), Warren County, the State of Kentucky, Lost River Cave, City of Bowling Green, and individual property owners. In total, BGPR manages 12 miles of trails as shown in **Map 3: Bowling Green's Trails System Map** above, with a majority of managed trails located on the northern portion of Bowling Green.

Legend

- Bike Lanes
- Park System Trails
- Shared Lanes
- Shared-Use Paths
- - - Potential Greenway Program Candidates
- Trailhead
- River
- Bowling Green City Limits
- Parks & Facilities



Map 4: Regional Park System Map

Regional Parks System

Bowling Green is part of a larger regional park system in Warren County that includes an interconnected collection of parks, facilities and cave systems. Within close proximity to Bowling Green there are four parks, three indoor gymnasiums, one tennis & sports center, one nature preserve/park, one state park, and one national park. **Map 4: Regional Park System Map**, above, shows the surrounding parks, and municipalities.

- Legend**
- Roadways
 - River
 - Municipality
 - Parks & Facilities

BGPR Parks and Facilities Inventory

To understand the Bowling Green Parks and Recreation system as a whole, the planning team identified and documented all existing parks, facilities, and properties in a comprehensive inventory.

The development of the comprehensive inventory of BGPR parks, facilities, and properties began at the start of the planning process, as the planning team toured a select group of BGPR parks and facilities in December 2024. This tour set the framework for understanding the existing conditions of BGPR parks, facilities and properties, allowing the team to document existing conditions and gather information from parks staff. 24 parks, properties, and facilities were toured during the initial phase, they are as follows:

- + Chuck Crume Nature Park
- + Circus Square Park
- + Crosswinds Golf Course
- + Covington Woods Park
- + Fort Webb Park
- + F.O. Moxley Community Center/BGCC
- + Fountain Square Park
- + H.D. Carpenter Park
- + H.P. Thomas Park
- + Hobson Grove Park
- + James Hines Boat Landing Park
- + Jennings Creek Greenway

- Park
- + Kummer/Little Recreation Center
- + C.W. Lampkin Park (Lampkin Park)
- + Lee Square Playground
- + Lovers Lane Soccer Complex
- + Ogden Park
- + Parker-Bennett Community Center
- + Pedigo Park
- + Preston Miller Park
- + Reservoir Hill Park
- + Riverwalk Park
- + Roland Bland Park
- + Spero Kereiakes Park
- + Weldon Peete Park

Building on these initial findings, the planning team collected additional documentation, information and reviewed the previous Parks and Recreation Master Plan for park classifications and typing. The team then developed a comprehensive park inventory (See **Figure 6: BGPR Park Inventory**), and an Existing Conditions Report (**See Appendix**)

pulling together information such as park name, photos, park size (acres), previous and current park classification, amenities and facilities, and park condition score.

Park Classifications

In the previous Parks and Recreation Master Plan seven (7) park types were identified and adapted from the Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines published by the National Recreation and Park Association. The planning team has carried these seven (7) classifications forward to keep consistency among classifications and added an additional classification to cover a unique park type that BGPR manages and operates.

To see the park classifications and their determining factors, see **Figure 5: Park Classification System for Parks and Recreation Areas**. Park Classification System

	Park Type	Typical Size & Service Area	Acres/1,000 Population	Typical Features/Facilities	Characteristics
(MP)	Mini-Park or Pocket Park	+ Typical Size: +/- 1 Acre + Service Radius: + 1/8-1/14 Mile + 5 Minute Walk	0.25 Acres/1000	+ Playgrounds + Small Multi-Use Courts + Benches	+ Often associated with school facilities. + May provide open space as needed to in compact neighborhoods where yard space may not be available.
(NP)	Neighborhood Park	+ Typical Size: 5-15 Acres + Service Radius: + 1/2 - 1 Mile + Serve a Population up to 5,000.	2 Acres/1,000	+ Field Games + Court Games + Playground Apparatus + Small Pools + Small Neighborhood Centers + Drinking Fountains + Restrooms	+ Suited for intense development. + Easily accessible for neighborhoods, safe walking and biking distance. + May be developed as park/school facility or in conjunction w/ service agency. + May not be needed in areas served by a community, county or regional park.
(CMP)	Community Park	+ Typical Size: 25-50+ Acres + Service Radius: + 1-2 Mile + Serve several neighborhoods w/populations up to 20,000+	5 Acres/1,000	+ Facilities listed in Neighborhood Parks Plus; + Major Swimming Pool + Field or Court Game Complex + Major Recreation or Community Center + May be an area of natural quality for picnicking, walking, etc	+ Capable of providing a range of intensive recreational activities; or, provides one or two activities that attract users from multi-neighborhood areas. + Park should ideally be located at or near a school. + May meet needs of a neighborhood park for users within a 1-mile radius.
(LP)	Linear Park	N/A	N/A	+ Area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel (pleasure driving, hiking, walking, jogging, biking, etc.). + May also include active play areas, fitness courses, picnic areas, etc	+ Area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel (pleasure driving, hiking, walking, jogging, biking, etc.). + May also include active play areas, fitness courses, picnic areas, etc
(SUL)	Special Use - Local	+ Serves community-wide area.	N/A	+ Area for specialized or single purpose recreational activities; + Golf Courses + Plazas in Commercial Areas + Major Pools + Riverfront Park Areas + Indoor Facilities	+ Area should be located to meet the special needs of the intended use.
(NAP)	Nature Park/ Open Space	+ Size as needed to protect the resource.	N/A	+ Majority of park to remain in its natural state. + Facilities should focus on education by use of "nature activities" and should reinforce that philosophy by offering habitat enhancement, trails, nature centers, interpretive signage, parking and restrooms. + The park should be of sufficient size to protect the natural resource and provide a buffer from offsite condition.	+ Should include unique natural areas with ecological interest. + Typical size should be over 50 acres for management efficiency.
(MPC)	Memorial Park/ Cemetery	+ Size as needed for park or cemetery.	N/A	+ Benches + Monuments & Statues + Ground Markers + Graves, Graveyard + Natural Features	+ Open space with a park-like feel. + Often historical in nature. + Area for reflection or visitation.
(MF)	Maintenance Facility	+ Size as needed for maintenance facility.	N/A	+ Maintenance Facility + Storage Areas	N/A

Figure 5: Park Classification System for Parks and Recreation Areas.

Figure 6: BGPR Park Inventory

Park	Existing Conditions	Acres	Classification	Amenities & Facilities
<p>Chuck Crume Nature Park</p> 	<p>16.3 Acres</p>	<p>Previous: Nature Park / Open Space</p> <p>Current: Nature Park/ Open Space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Nature Trail - 0.44 Miles + Picnic Tables + Parking - 5 +/- Spaces, Additional Spaces Available at Universalist Church 	
<p>Circus Square Park</p> 	<p>3.3 Acres</p>	<p>Previous: Special Use Park</p> <p>Current: Special Use Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Spray Fountain + Restrooms (1) + Open Green Space/Lawn + Historic Landmark (1) + Seating + Parking - 46 +/- Spaces (Shared), Street Parking Available 	
<p>Covington Woods Park</p> 	<p>6.1 Acres</p>	<p>Previous: Neighborhood Park</p> <p>Current: Neighborhood Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Croquet (1) + Tennis Courts (2) + Shelters (3) + Basketball Court (1) + Baseball Field (1) + Playground (1) + Public Restroom (1) + Seating + Gazebo (1) + Parking - 121 +/- Spaces (Shared) 	
<p>Crossings Park</p> 	<p>2.9 Acres</p>	<p>Previous: Neighborhood Park</p> <p>Current: Neighborhood Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Gazebo (1) + Seating + Playground (1) + Trails - 0.18 Miles + Parking - 0 +/- Spaces 	
<p>Crosswinds Golf Course</p> 	<p>135.2 Acres</p>	<p>Previous: Special Use Park</p> <p>Current: Special Use Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + 18-Hole Golf Course + Cross Winds Pro Shop (1) + Restrooms (1) + Parking - 105 +/- Spaces 	

Park	Existing Conditions	Acres	Classification	Amenities & Facilities
C.W. Lampkin Park (Lampkin Park)		72.9 Acres	Previous: Community Park Current: Community Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Shelter (2) + Futsal Court + Basketball Courts (2) + Baseball Fields (5) + Tennis Court (2) + Soccer Field (1) + Spraygrounds + Maintenance Shop & Storage + Playground (2) + Public Restrooms (3) + Pathways - 1.41 Miles + Parking - 299 +/- Spaces
Fairview, Mt Moriah & Pioneer Cemeteries		91.7 Acres	Previous: N/A Current: Memorial Park/ Cemetery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Fairview Parking - 0 +/- Spaces, Pathways or Street Parking + Mt Moriah Parking - 0 +/- Spaces, Pathways or Street Parking + Pioneer Parking - 0 +/- Spaces, Pathways or Street Parking
F.O. Moxley Community Center		4 Acres (5 Acres w/ parking)	Previous: Special Use Park Current: Special Use Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Athletics, Administration and Fitness Offices + Game Rooms + Basketball Courts + Programming + Community Center + Parking - 84 +/- Spaces, 108+/- (Shared w/KLC)
Fort Webb Park		1.1 Acres	Previous: Special Use Park Current: Nature Park/ Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Trails - Undocumented + Historic Site (1) + Seating + Parking - 0 +/- Spaces, Gravel "Parking" Area
Fountain Square Park		1.2 Acres	Previous: Special Use Park Current: Special Use Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Seating + Open Spaces + Parking - 0 +/- Spaces, Street Parking Available

Park	Existing Conditions	Acres	Classification	Amenities & Facilities
H.D. Carpenter Park		0.4 Acres	<p>Previous: N/A</p> <p>Current: Mini Park/Pocket Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Playground (1) + Walking Track - 0.1 Miles + Seating + Shelter (1) + Parking - 0 +/- Spaces
Hobson Grove Golf Course		88.2 Acres (Golf Course Only)	<p>Previous: Special Use Park</p> <p>Current: Special Use Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Pro Shop (1) + Driving Range (22 Stalls) + Chipping/Putting Practice Green (1) + Maintenance Shop + Restrooms + 9-Hole Course + Parking - 73 +/- Spaces (Golf Course Only)
Hobson Grove Park		51.2 Acres (Park Only)	<p>Previous: Neighborhood Park</p> <p>Current: Community Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Baseball Fields (2) + Trail - 0.50 Miles + Playground + Parking - 76 +/- Spaces (Park Only) + 18-Hole Disc Golf Course + Restrooms (1)
H.P. Thomas Park		1.3 Acres	<p>Previous: Neighborhood Park</p> <p>Current: Neighborhood Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Playground (2) + Soccer Field (2) + Shelter (1) + Dog Park - Small & Large Dog Run (2) + Parking - 46 +/- Spaces + Trails - 0.20 Miles
James R. Hines Boat Landing Park		2.9 Acres	<p>Previous: Special Use Park</p> <p>Current: Special Use Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Water Access + Trail Connections + Boat Ramp (1) + Trails - 0.04 Miles + Parking - 10 +/- Spaces, Water Levels Affect Parking Availability
Jennings Creek Greenways Park		6.4 Acres	<p>Previous: N/A</p> <p>Current: Neighborhood Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Playground (1) + Trail Connections + Water Access + Trail - 0.65 Miles + Parking - 0 +/- Spaces, Parking Available at Jennings Creek Elementary

Park	Existing Conditions	Acres	Classification	Amenities & Facilities
Kummer/ Little Recreation Center		4.1 Acres (5.1 Acres w/Parking)	Previous: Special Use Park Current: Special Use Park	+ Basketball Courts + Walking Track + Community Center + Programming + Parking - 86 +/- Space, 108+/- (Shared w/Moxley)
Lee Square Playground		0.5 Acres	Previous: Mini Park Current: Mini Park/Pocket Park	+ Playground (1) + Shelter (1) + Pathways - 0.04 Miles + Parking - 0 +/- Spaces, Street Parking Available
Lovers Lane Soccer Complex		63.9 Acres (76.8 w/ Back Section)	Previous: Community Park Current: Community Park	+ Soccer Fields (15) + Playground (1) + Walking Trails - 2.33 Miles + Public Restrooms (2) + Concessions (1) + Shelter (1) + Parking - 569 +/- Spaces
Ogden Park		1.2 Acres	Previous: Special Use Park Current: Mini Park/Pocket Park	+ Playground (2) + Open Space + Parking - 0 +/- Spaces
Paul Walker Golf Course		55.1 Acres	Previous: Special Use Park Current: Special Use Park	+ 9-Hole Golf Course + Pro Shop (1) + Practice Green (1) + Restrooms (1) + Parking - 121 +/- Spaces (Shared w/ Park)
Parker- Bennett Community Center		1.8 Acres	Previous: Neighborhood Park Current: Neighborhood Park	+ Playground (1) + Basketball Courts (3) + Multi-Use Court (2) + Shelter (1) + Community Programming + Community Center Facility + Parking - 20 +/- Spaces

Park	Existing Conditions	Acres	Classification	Amenities & Facilities
Pedigo Park		12.2 Acres	Previous: Neighborhood Park Current: Neighborhood Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Baseball Fields (2) + Shelter (2) + Playground (1) + Batting Cages (7) + Restrooms (1) + Parking - 72 +/- Spaces
Preston Miller Park		59.1 Acres (w/ RSAC)	Previous: Community Park Current: Community Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + 18-Hole Disc Golf Course + Walking/Running Trail - 1.78 Miles + Basketball Court (1) + Soccer Fields (5) + Shelter (2) + Maintenance Shop + Playground (1) + Sand Volleyball Courts (3) + Outdoor Fitness(1) + Restrooms (2) + Parking - 584 +/- Spaces (284 +/- at RSAC)
Reservoir Hill Park		6.4 Acres	Previous: Neighborhood Park Current: Neighborhood Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Historic Site, Civil War Fort + Playground (1) + Trail Connections + Shelter (1) + Parking - 11 +/- Spaces
Mitch McConnell "Riverwalk" Park		1.8 Acres	Previous: Open Space Current: Linear Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Walking Bridge (1) + Trail Connections + Shelter (1) + Trails - 1.08 Miles + Parking - 30 +/- Spaces
Roland Bland Park		6.25 Acres	Previous: Neighborhood Park Current: Neighborhood Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Skate Park (1) + Pickleball Courts (6) + Basketball Courts (2) + Shelter (1) + Gazebo (1) + Playground (1) + Restrooms (1) + Trails - 0.25 Miles + Parking - 24 +/- Spaces

Park	Existing Conditions	Acres	Classification	Amenities & Facilities
Russell Sims Aquatic Center		<p>4.9 Acres</p>	<p>Previous: Outdoor Aquatics</p> <p>Current: Special Use Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Water Playground + 50-Meter Pool + Water Slides + Diving Boards + Splash Playground + Concessions + Parking - 284 +/- Spaces
Spero Kereiakes Park		<p>49.6 Acres</p>	<p>Previous: Community Park</p> <p>Current: Community Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Bike/Walk Trail - 1.79 Miles + Disc Golf Course + Gardens + Soccer Field (1) + Tennis Courts (10) + Baseball Fields (2) + Shelters (6) + Basketball Court (1) + Batting Cages (6) + Playgrounds (1) + Restrooms (2) + Parking - 159 +/- Spaces
Riverfront Park (Formerly Weldon Peete)		<p>53.9 Acres</p>	<p>Previous: Open Space</p> <p>Current: Special Use Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Boat Ramp (1) + Trails - 3.08 Miles + Mountain Biking Trails - 2.65 Miles + Parking - 32 +/- Spaces, Shared with Warren County Parks





03

Analysis

Demographic Analysis

Recreational Participatory Trends

Financial Analysis

Benchmark Analysis

Program Assessment

Organizational & Staffing Analysis

SWOT Analysis



Demographic Analysis

This analysis provides insight into the makeup of the population and identify market trends in recreation.

A key component of the Master Plan for Parks and Recreation is a Demographics and Recreation Trends Analysis. The purpose of this analysis is to provide Bowling Green's Parks and Recreation Department ("Department") with insight into the makeup of the population they serve and identify market trends in recreation. The report also helps to quantify the market in and around the City of Bowling Green, Kentucky ("City") and assists in providing a better understanding of the types of parks, facilities, and services used to satisfy the needs of residents.

Demographic Analysis

This analysis is two-fold; it aims to identify the who and the what. First, it assesses the demographic characteristics and population projections of Bowling Green residents to understand who the Department serves. Second, recreational trends are examined on a national and local level to understand what the population may want to do. Findings from this analysis establish a fundamental understanding that provides a basis for prioritizing the community's need for parks, trails, facilities, and recreation programs. This

assessment is reflective of the City's total population and its key characteristics such as age, race, and income levels. It is important to note that future projections are based on historical patterns and unforeseen circumstances during or after the time of the analysis and could have a significant bearing on the validity of projected figures. **Figure 7: Demographic Overview** provides an overview of Bowling Green's populace based on current estimates of the 2024 population. A further analysis of each of these demographic characteristics can be found in this section.

Methodology

Demographic data used for the analysis was obtained from U.S. Census Bureau and from Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI), the largest research and development organization dedicated to Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and specializing in population projections and market trends. All data was acquired in February 2025 and reflects actual numbers as

reported in the 2020 Census. ESRI then estimates the current population (2024) as well as a 5-year projection (2029). PROS then utilized straight line linear regression to forecast demographic characteristics for 10 and 15-year projections (2034 and 2039).

Demographic Overview

Population

- 2024 Population: 77,654
- Annual growth rate: 1.84%
- Total Households: 30,591



Age

- Median age: 30.7
- Largest age segment: 18-34
- Continued growth of 35-54 population through 2039

Race and Ethnicity

- 63% White Alone
- 14% Black Alone
- 10% Hispanic/Latino



Income

- Median household: \$50,619
- Per capita: \$29,490
- Continued economic growth through 2039

Figure 7: Demographic Overview

Race and Ethnicity Definitions

The minimum categories for data on race and ethnicity for Federal statistics, program administrative reporting, and civil rights compliance reporting are defined below. The Census 2020 data on race are not directly comparable with data from the 2010 Census and earlier censuses; therefore, caution must be used when interpreting changes in the racial composition of the US population over time. The latest (Census 2020) definitions and nomenclature are used within this analysis.

- + **American Indian or Alaska Native:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- + **Asian:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- + **Black or African American:** A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- + **Hispanic or Latino:** A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

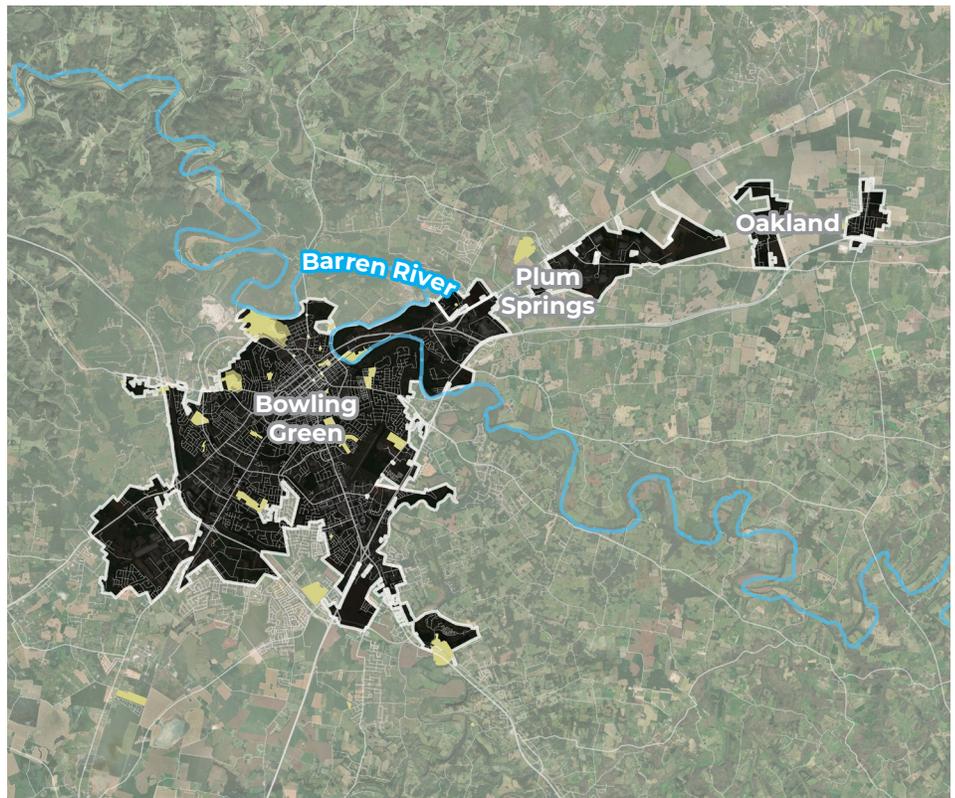


Figure 8: Service Area Boundaries

- + **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- + **White:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

Census states that “the race and ethnicity categories generally reflect social definitions in the U.S. and are not an attempt to define race and ethnicity biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. We recognize that the race and ethnicity categories include racial, ethnic, and national origins and sociocultural groups.”

Demographic Analysis Boundary

The Bowling Green boundaries shown above were utilized for the demographic analysis **Figure 8: Service Area Boundaries**.

Please note: The Census Bureau defines Race as a person’s self-identification with one or more of the following social groups: White, Black, or African American, Asian, American Indian, and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, some other race, or a combination of these. Ethnicity is defined as whether a person is of Hispanic / Latino origin or not. For this reason, the Hispanic/Latino ethnicity is viewed separate from race throughout this demographic analysis.

City Populace Population

Bowling Green has a steadily increasing population with a consistent yearly rate of change from 2010 to 2024. In fact, the population has increased from 61,166 in 2010 to an estimated 77,654 in 2024. The City's population is expected to continue to rise in the following 15 years, where it is projected to reach 94,099 residents by 2039 Figure 9: Bowling Green's Total Population and Annual Growth Rate. The total number of households has also increased at a rate proportional to the population growth, rising from 23,966 in 2010 to an estimated 30,591 in 2024. By 2039, it is estimated that there will be 37,367 total households within Bowling Green, which is likely to continue to increase **Figure 10: Bowling Green's Total Households and Annual Growth Rate.**

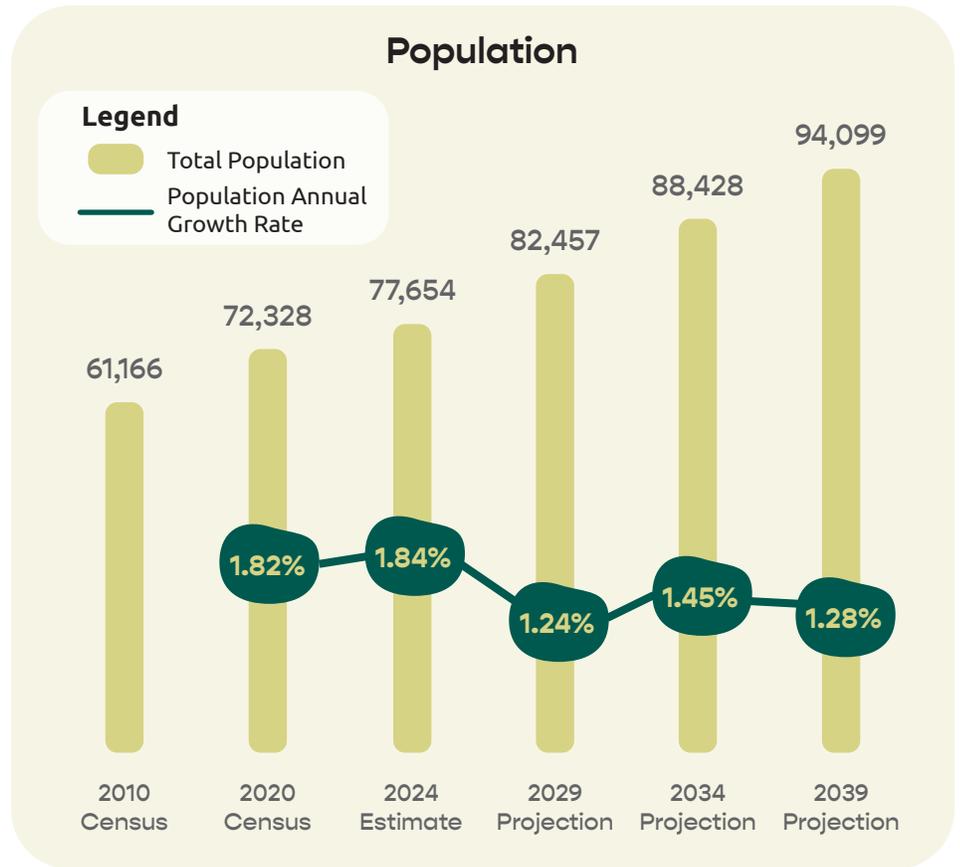


Figure 9: Bowling Green's Total Population and Annual Growth Rate



Figure 10: Bowling Green's Total Households and Annual Growth Rate

Age Segmentation

The largest age segments of Bowling Green’s current population are 18-34 (35%), 35-54 (22%), and 0-12 (16%), demonstrating a younger population. The top reason for this makeup is the existence of Western Kentucky within the service boundaries. However, there is an increasing family trend, with people between the ages of 18-34, decreasing from making up 43% of the population in 2010 to making up 30% of the population by 2039; meanwhile, the 35-54 age group is projected to increase from 21% of the population in 2010 to 23% of the population by 2039, along with the 0-12 age segment increasing from 12% of the population in 2010 to a projected 18% of the population by 2039. The median age has slightly increased from 28.2 in 2010 to 30.7 in 2024 and is projected to continue in the coming years. Therefore, the City should look to expand services for an increasing middle-aged adult demographic while keeping in mind the needs of families and young adults within the service area. **Figure 11: Bowling Green’s Population by Age Segments**

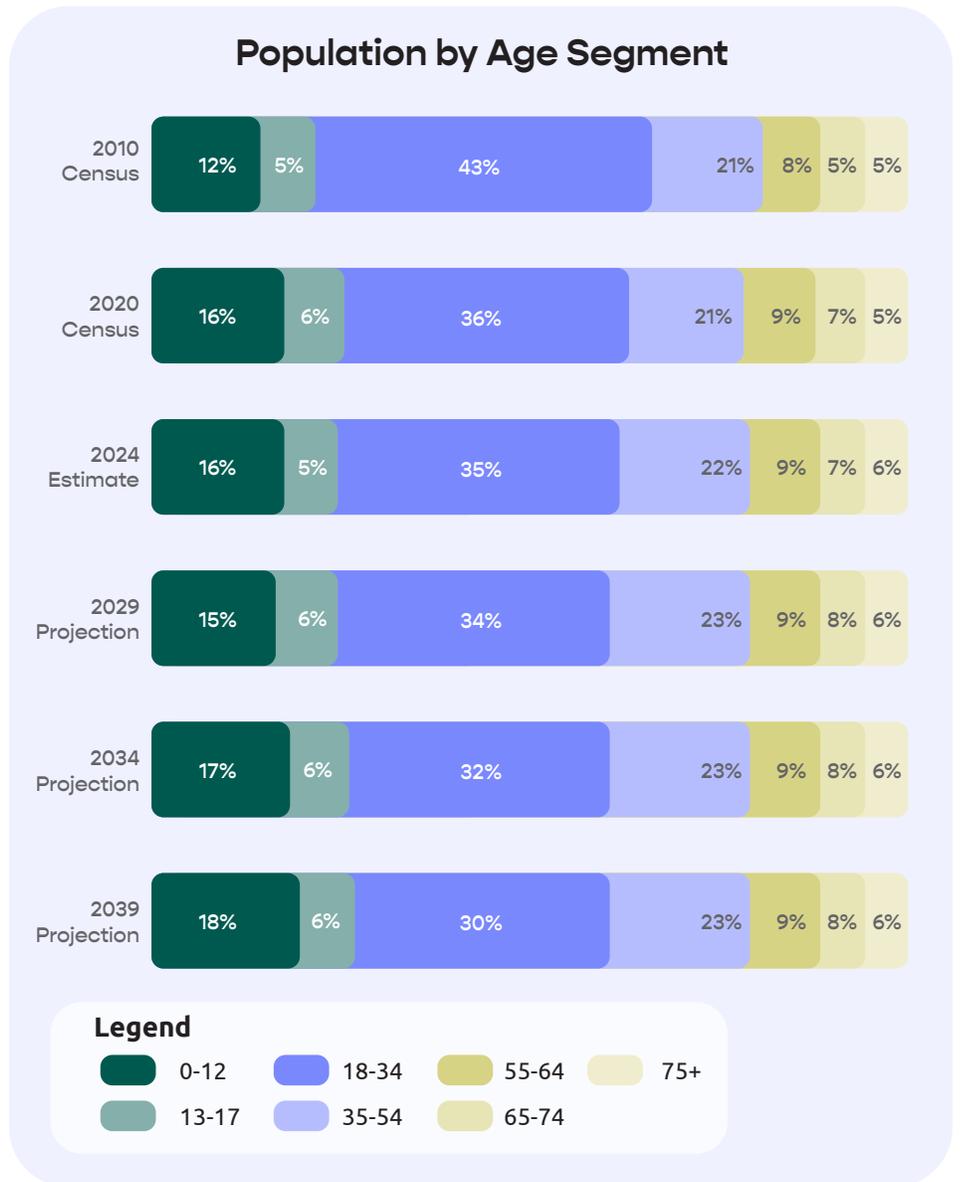


Figure 11: Bowling Green’s Population by Age Segments

The median age has slightly increased from 28.2 in 2010 to 30.7 in 2024 and is projected to continue in the coming years. Therefore, the City should look to expand services for an increasing middle-aged adult demographic while keeping in mind the needs of families and young adults within the service area.

Race

Analyzing race, Bowling Green's current majority of the population makeup is White, with the 2024 estimate showing 63% of the population being White Alone, along with 'Black or African American Alone' (14%) and Asian Alone (8%) representing the next largest categories. Predictions for 2029 and beyond expect the population to diversify, with a decrease in the White Alone population accompanied by increases in the other populations by 2039 **Figure 12: Bowling Green's Population by Race.**

Ethnicity

Bowling Green's population was also assessed based on Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, which by the Census Bureau definition is viewed independently from race.

*It is important to note that individuals who are Hispanic/Latino in ethnicity can also identify with any racial categories identified in **Figure 12: Bowling Green's Population by Race.***

Based on the 2024 estimate, people of Hispanic/Latino origin represent **10% of Bowling Green's population**, which is below the national average (19% Hispanic/Latino), but above the state of Kentucky average (5.1% Hispanic/Latino). The City's Hispanic/Latino population has experienced a minor increase over time and is expected to continue growing slightly to **12% of the total population by 2039, Figure 13: Bowling Green's Hispanic Population.**

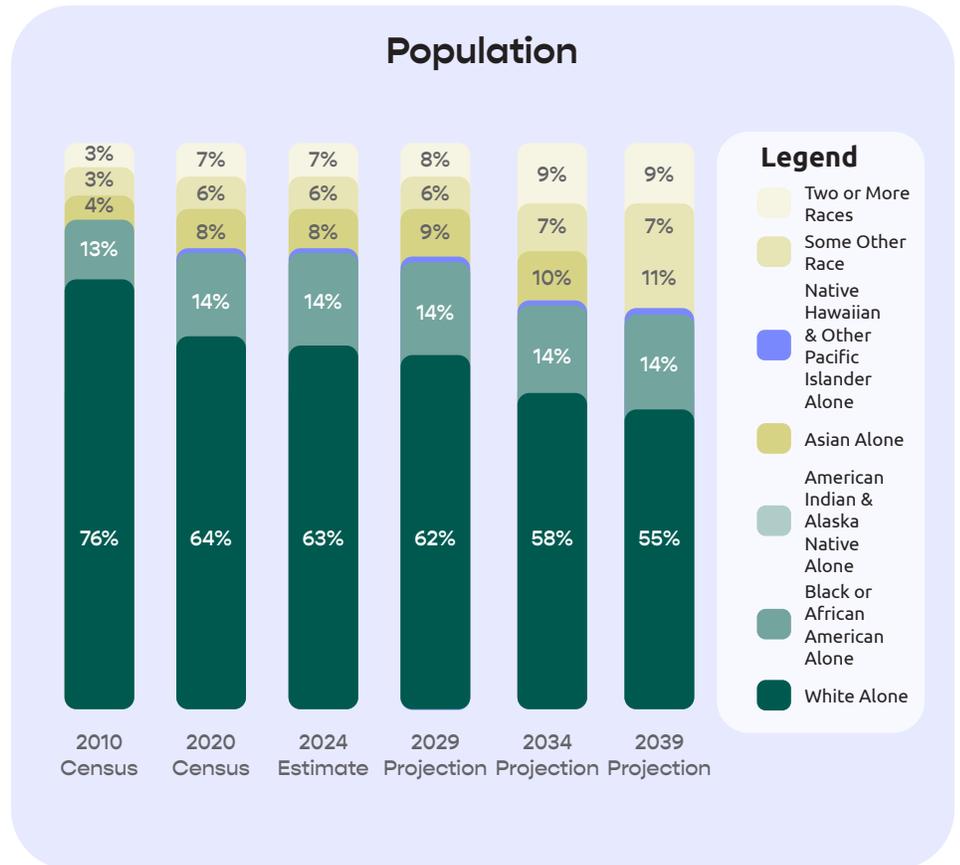


Figure 12: Bowling Green's Population by Race

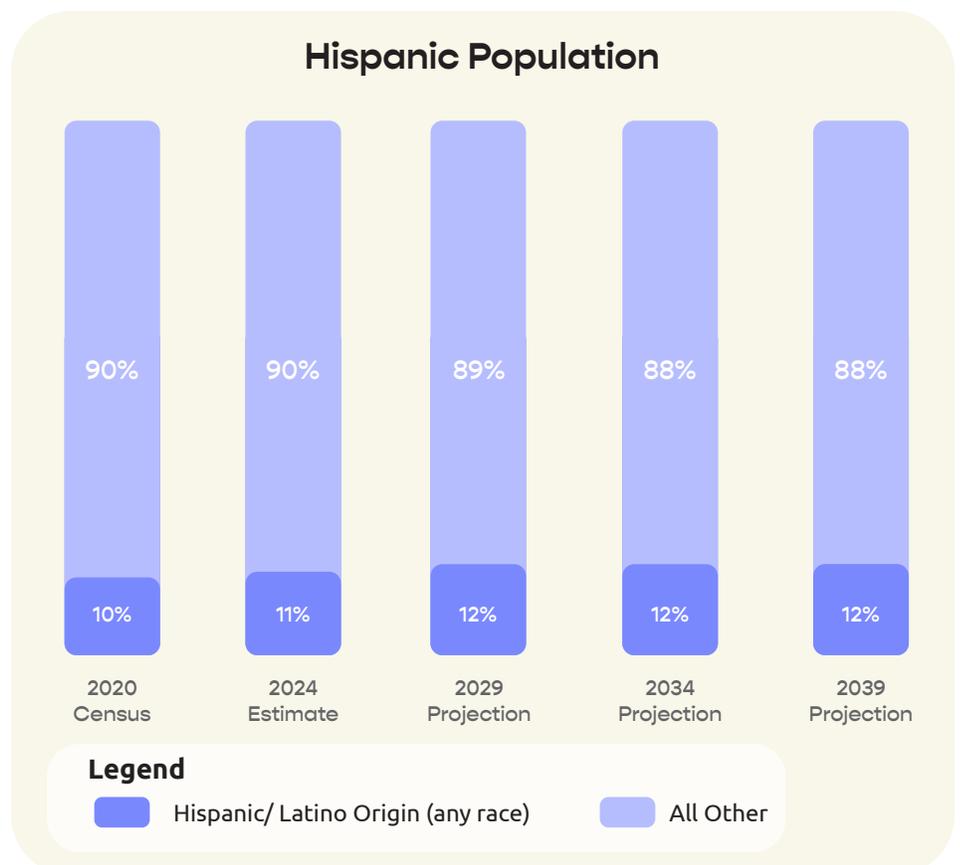


Figure 13: Bowling Green's Hispanic Population

Income Characteristics

When analyzing income, the per capita income is earned by an individual while the median household income is based on the total income of everyone over the age of sixteen living within the same household. Bowling Green’s per capita income (\$29,490) is significantly below the Kentucky average (\$35,232), while the City’s median household income (\$50,619) is also significantly below the Kentucky median (\$62,002). This can likely be attributed to the typically low income of university students, skewing the data down. Bowling Green projects to increase in both median household and per capita income, where the averages are expected to increase to \$67,317 and \$43,149 respectively by 2039. These relatively significant income projections should be taken into consideration when the Department is pricing out programs, calculating cost recovery goals, or planning out amenities for potential parks and trail systems **Figure 14: Income Characteristics of Bowling Green** and **Figure 15: Comparative Income Characteristics of Bowling Green**.

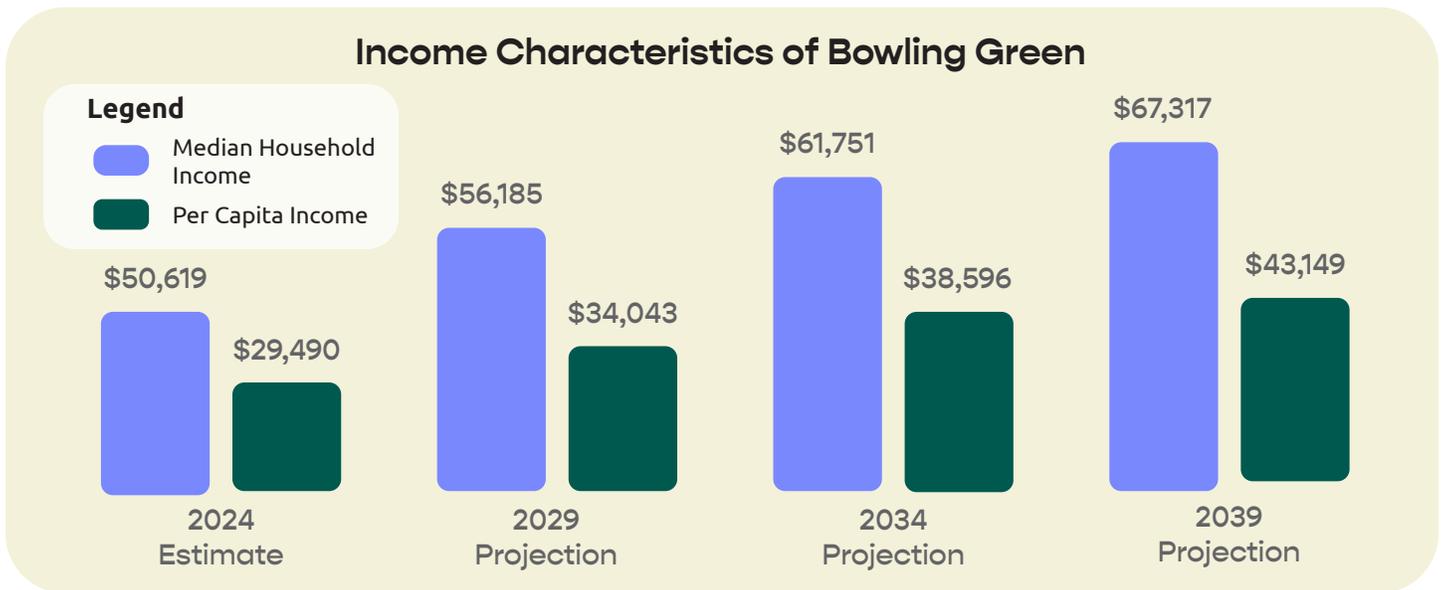


Figure 14: Income Characteristics of Bowling Green

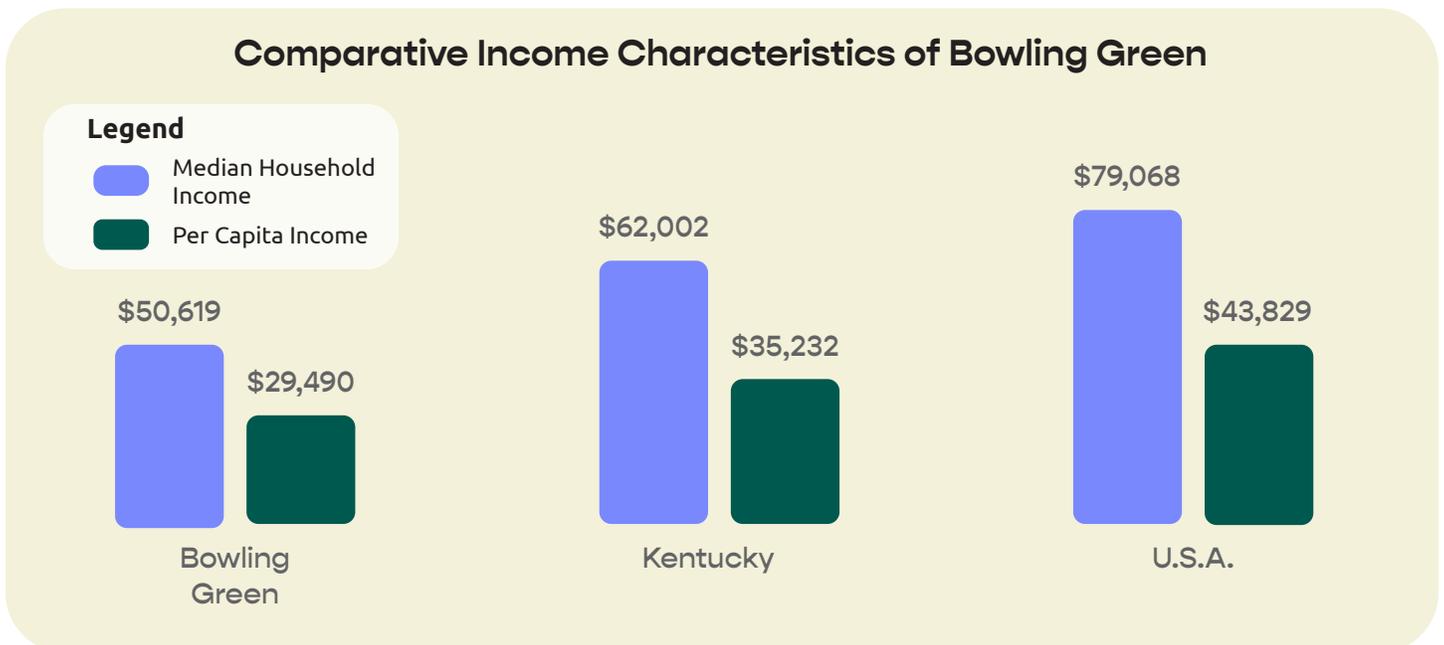


Figure 15: Comparative Income Characteristics of Bowling Green

Education

Assessing education, 20.7% of Bowling Green’s residents (aged 25+) have attained up to a bachelor’s degree, which is significantly below the national average (30.3%). 13.6% of the population hold Graduate or professional degrees, while a smaller portion of the population holds just an associate degree (7.1%), and a slightly larger number of civilians only have a high school degree (20.6%) or have some college education without earning a degree (19.9%). Alternatively, it is estimated that just 5.5% of the population never attained a high school diploma **Figure 16: Bowling Green’s Educational Attainment**

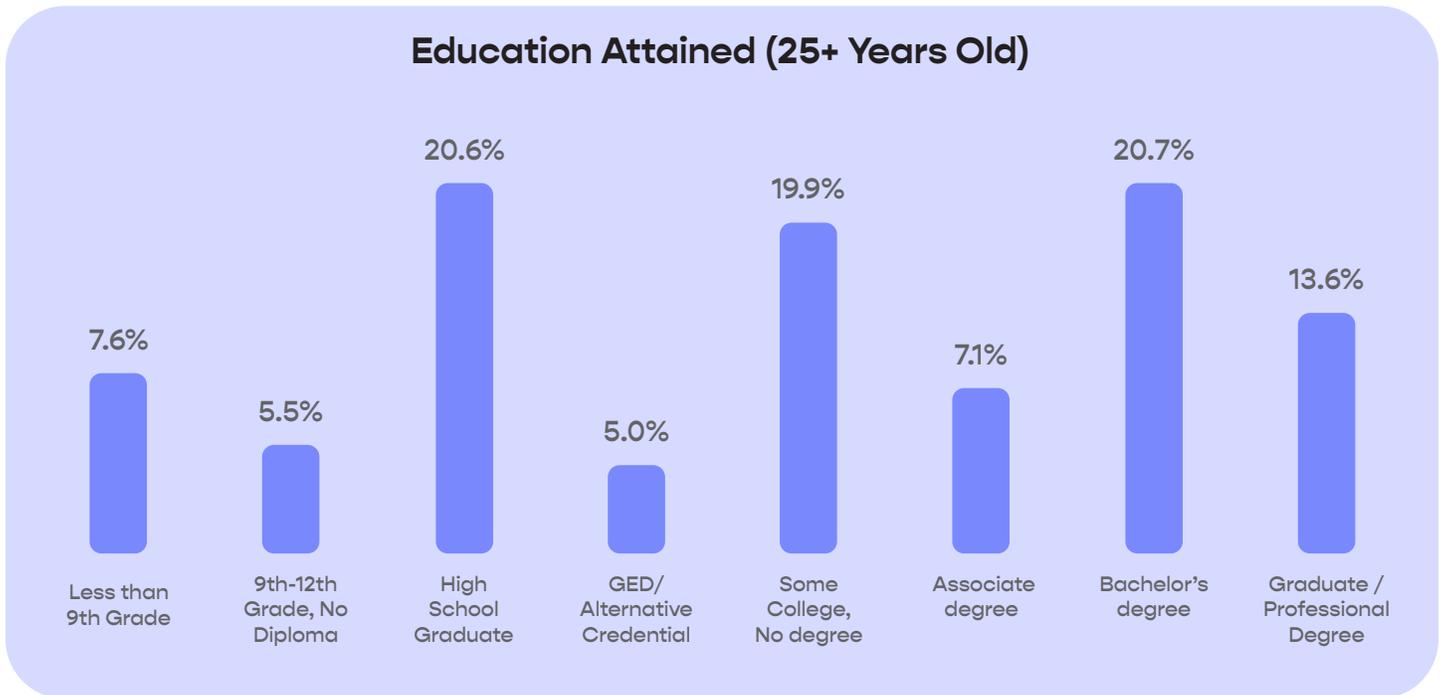


Figure 16: Bowling Green’s Educational Attainment

Unemployment

In assessing the civilian labor force (16+ years old), currently 94% of residents hold a full or part-time position, while the remaining 6% of Bowling Green’s (civilian) population are deemed unemployed. This is above with the national unemployment rate of 3.7%.

Note: The unemployment rate excludes individuals who are currently in institutions such as prisons, mental hospitals, or nursing homes **Figure 17: Bowling Green’s Employment Rates.**

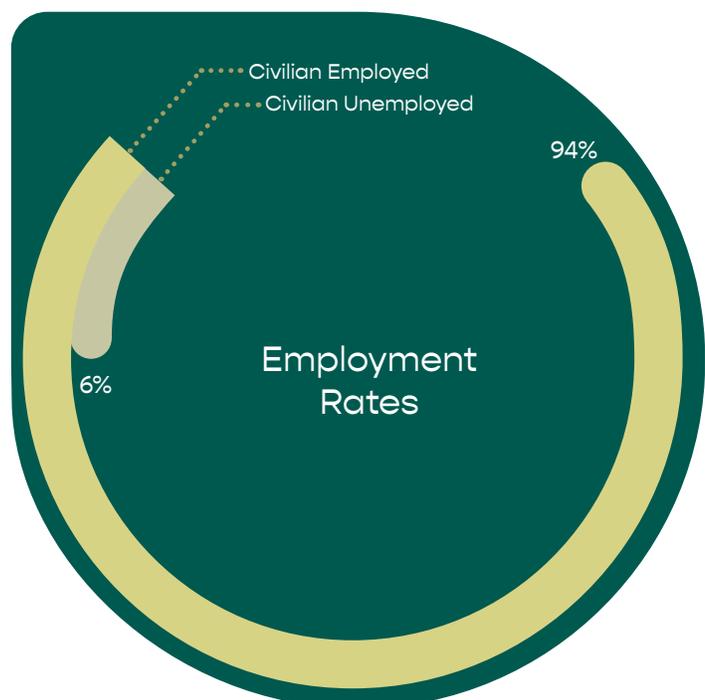


Figure 17: Bowling Green’s Employment Rates

Employment by Industry

Bowling Green’s population can also be analyzed by the industry makeup of its workforce. Within the service boundaries, ‘Services’ (49.4%) make up most of the working population’s industry, while ‘Manufacturing’ and ‘Retail Trade’ make up the next two most common occupations at 17.1% and 12.9%, respectively, **Figure 18: Bowling Green’s Employed Population by Industry.**

Within the service boundaries, ‘Services’ (49.4%) make up a majority of the working population’s industry, while ‘Manufacturing’ and ‘Retail Trade’ make up the next two most common occupations.

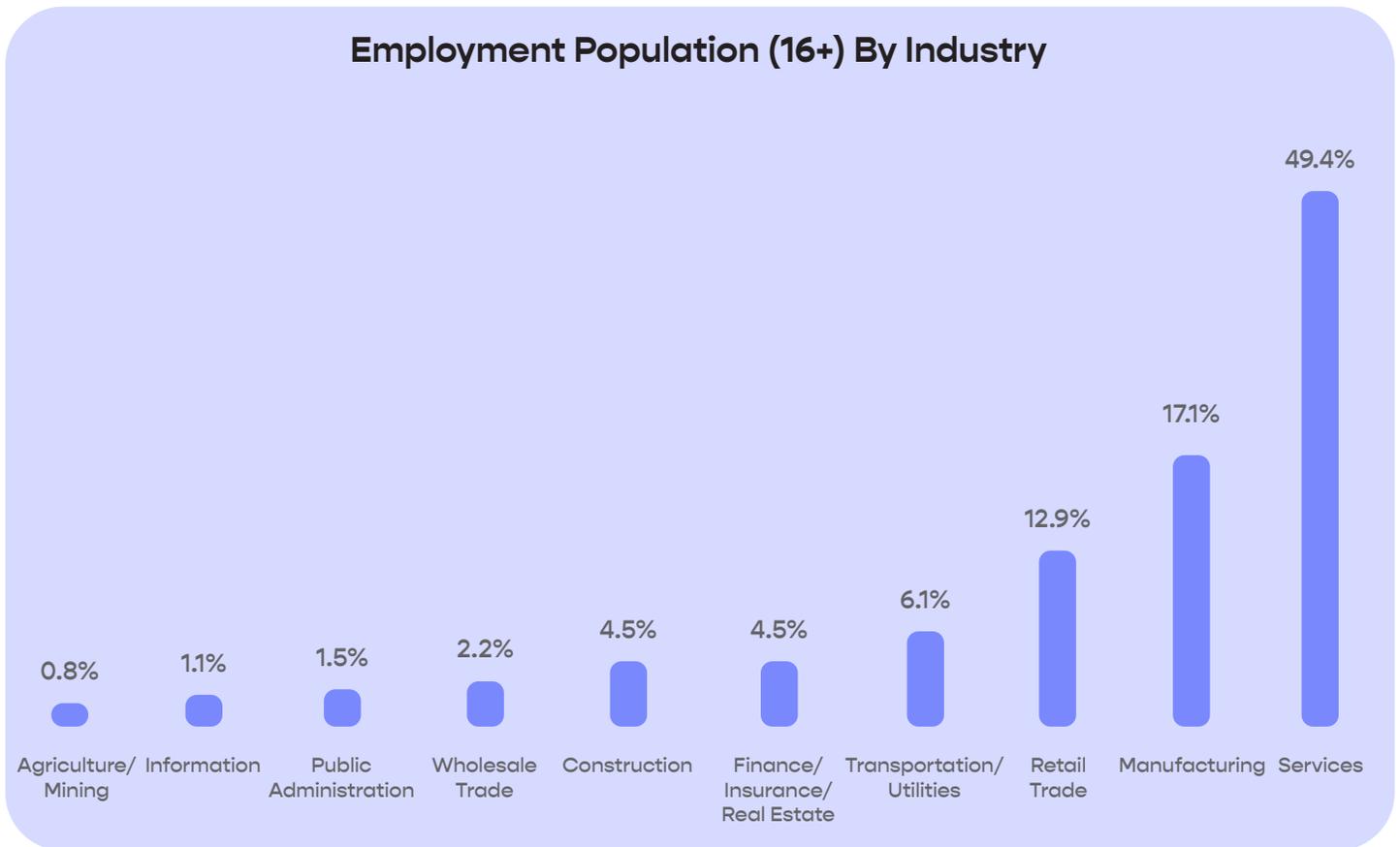


Figure 18: Bowling Green’s Employed Population by Industry

Demographic Implications

While it is important not to generalize recreation needs and priorities based solely on demographics, the analysis suggests some potential implications for Bowling Green, Kentucky:

- + Bowling Green's population trends may indicate a need to identify and understand the interests of all ages, especially **middle-aged and youth populations**. Adding more recreational activities for the active adult population, such as exercise/yoga classes, recreational sports like pickleball, or new nature trails, may prove to be beneficial in keeping many populations active. In addition to adults, the rising percentage of children may also give a better idea of what offerings may serve the community best. Projects like new parks with playgrounds, recreational sports leagues, and walking trails could provide the benefits needed by the children but also the parents that take them there.
- + The City's low household income characteristics suggest a **lack of potential disposable income**. The Department should be mindful of this when pricing out programs and events and considering amenities while staying aware of the projected upward income trend that they can expect over the next decade. The Department should consider the possibility of more cost-effective programming to fit the lower-income population it serves.
- + In comparison to the United States average (0.70%), Bowling Green had a **high annual growth rate from 2020 to 2024 (1.84%)**. However, the annual growth rate is projected to dip to 1.24% from 2024 to 2039, slowing a little, but still showing a continuation of the steady growth the community has seen in the past decade. This population growth should be considered and accounted for when planning new amenities and offerings for the community, as well as the maintenance and upkeep of current offerings to provide the same level of service or better.
- + Finally, the Department should ensure its **diversifying population is reflected in its offerings, marketing/communications, and public outreach**. With increasing diversity in both race and age, as well as uncommonly high population growth, Bowling Green should remain prepared to change its offerings over time to remain culturally relevant for its diversifying user base.



Recreational Participatory Trends

The Recreation Trends Analysis provides an understanding of national, regional, and local recreational trends.

Local Sport and Leisure Market Potential

Local Sport and Leisure Market Potential

The following charts show sport and leisure market potential data for Bowling Green residents, as provided by ESRI. Market Potential Index (MPI) measures the probable demand for a product or service within the defined service areas. The MPI shows the likelihood that an adult resident will participate in certain activities when compared to the U.S. national average. The national average is 100; therefore, numbers below 100 would represent lower-than-average participation rates, and numbers above 100 would represent higher-than-average participation rates. The service area is compared to the national average in four (4) categories – general sports, fitness, outdoor activity, and commercial recreation. *For this report, the activity participation percentage will be used and compared to the state and national averages.*

It should be noted that MPI metrics are only one data point used to help determine community trends; thus, programmatic decisions should not be based solely on MPI metrics.

Overall, when analyzing the City's participation, the data demonstrates mostly above-average participation numbers in assessed areas. For example, Basketball and Soccer both scored above the national average in the General Sport category while also leading all other activities in the category, besides Golf. Something to note about Bowling Green's scores is that there are some activities below the national average, with 18 of the measured 47 activities doing so. This becomes significant when the Department considers starting up new programs or building new facilities, giving them a strong tool to estimate resident attendance and participation.

The following charts compare participation for 47 sport and leisure activities that are prevalent for residents within the service area. The activities are categorized by activity type and listed in descending

order, from highest to lowest participation percentage. Percentages above the national or state average are significant because they demonstrate that there is a greater likelihood that residents within the service area will actively participate in those offerings provided by the Department.

General Sports Market Potential

The General Sports Market Potential Index (MPI) for Bowling Green, Kentucky, reveals strong local interest in a variety of sports compared to both the state and national averages. Bowling Green scores above the national average (100) in six out of ten sports categories, with particularly high potential in volleyball (127), soccer (122), football (121), and basketball (117). These results indicate a strong community appetite for competitive team sports. Baseball (106) and tennis (101) also exceed the national benchmark, showing solid interest. Pickleball and softball score right at or near the national average (99), while golf trails slightly behind at 94, but still within a competitive range **Figure 19: General Sports MPI for Bowling Green.**

These findings suggest strategic opportunities for Bowling Green to invest in programming, facility development, and partnerships that support high-interest sports. Volleyball, soccer, football, and basketball should be prioritized for expanded offerings and facility enhancements, with potential for tournament hosting and league development. Tennis, baseball, and pickleball warrant continued support and modest growth, while golf and softball could benefit from targeted marketing or niche programming. Overall, Bowling Green’s MPI profile positions it well to serve as a regional hub for youth and adult sports, particularly in high-performing team sports categories.

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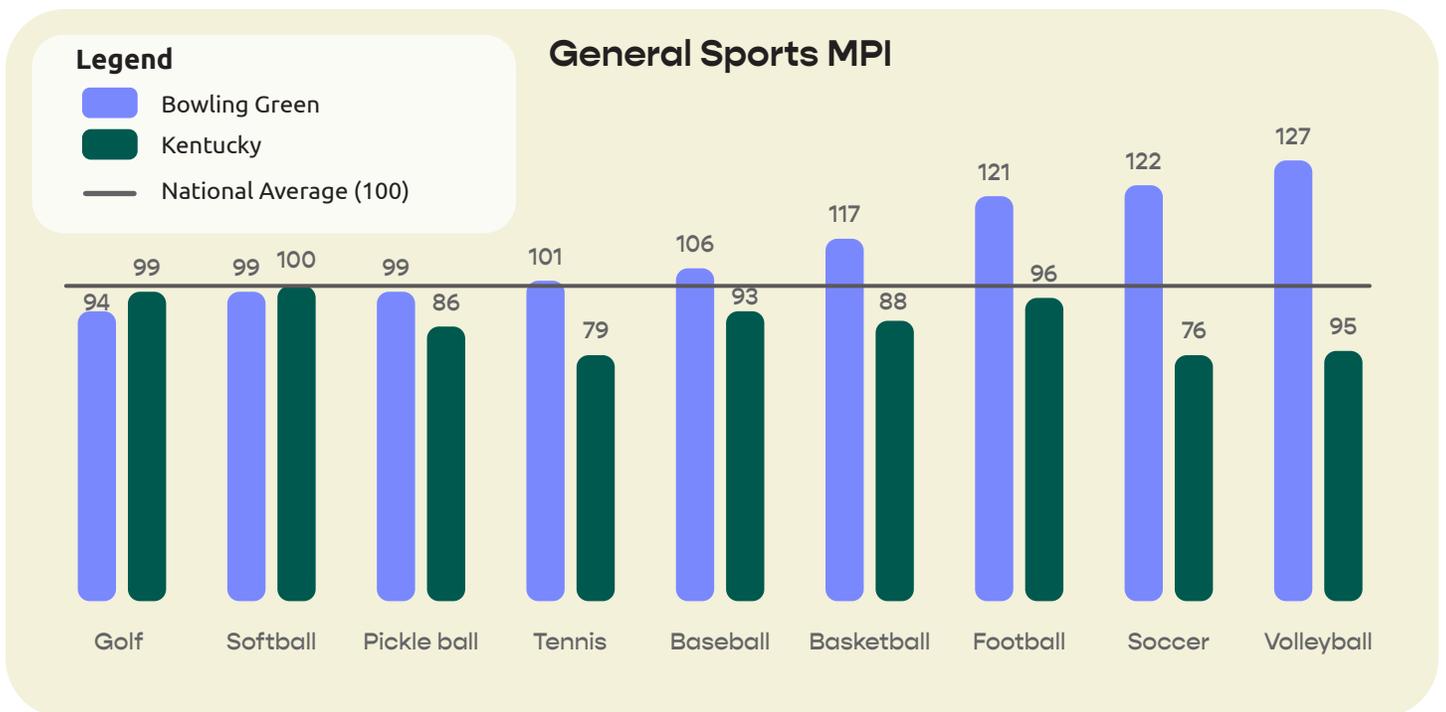
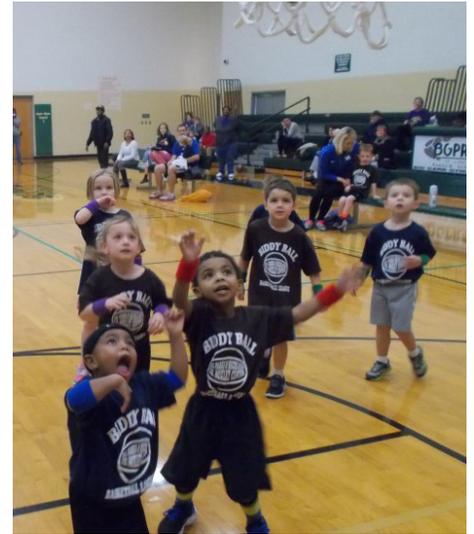


Figure 19: General Sports MPI for Bowling Green

Fitness Market Potential

The Fitness Market Potential Index (MPI) for Bowling Green, Kentucky, shows a strong and diverse interest in various fitness activities, with several categories performing at or above the national average (100). Notably, Bowling Green scores highest in Zumba (103) and Yoga (101), indicating strong local enthusiasm for group fitness classes with a rhythmic or holistic focus. Jogging/Running and Aerobics both meet the national benchmark (100), while Walking for Exercise (96) and Swimming (93) are slightly below but still demonstrating healthy engagement levels. Weight Lifting (97) is just below the national average and likely represents a steady participant base **Figure 20: Fitness MPI for Bowling Green**

Overall, Bowling Green’s fitness landscape reflects a well-rounded interest in both structured fitness programs and accessible, low-cost activities such as walking and running. The higher-than-average demand for Zumba, yoga, and aerobics suggests an opportunity to expand group fitness offerings. Meanwhile, moderate interest in weight lifting and swimming supports maintaining access to traditional fitness equipment and swimming. Pilates may represent an area for growth if paired with education or introductory classes. These MPI insights suggest that Bowling Green could strengthen its community fitness engagement by enhancing diverse, inclusive programming, especially in group fitness and accessible recreational activities.

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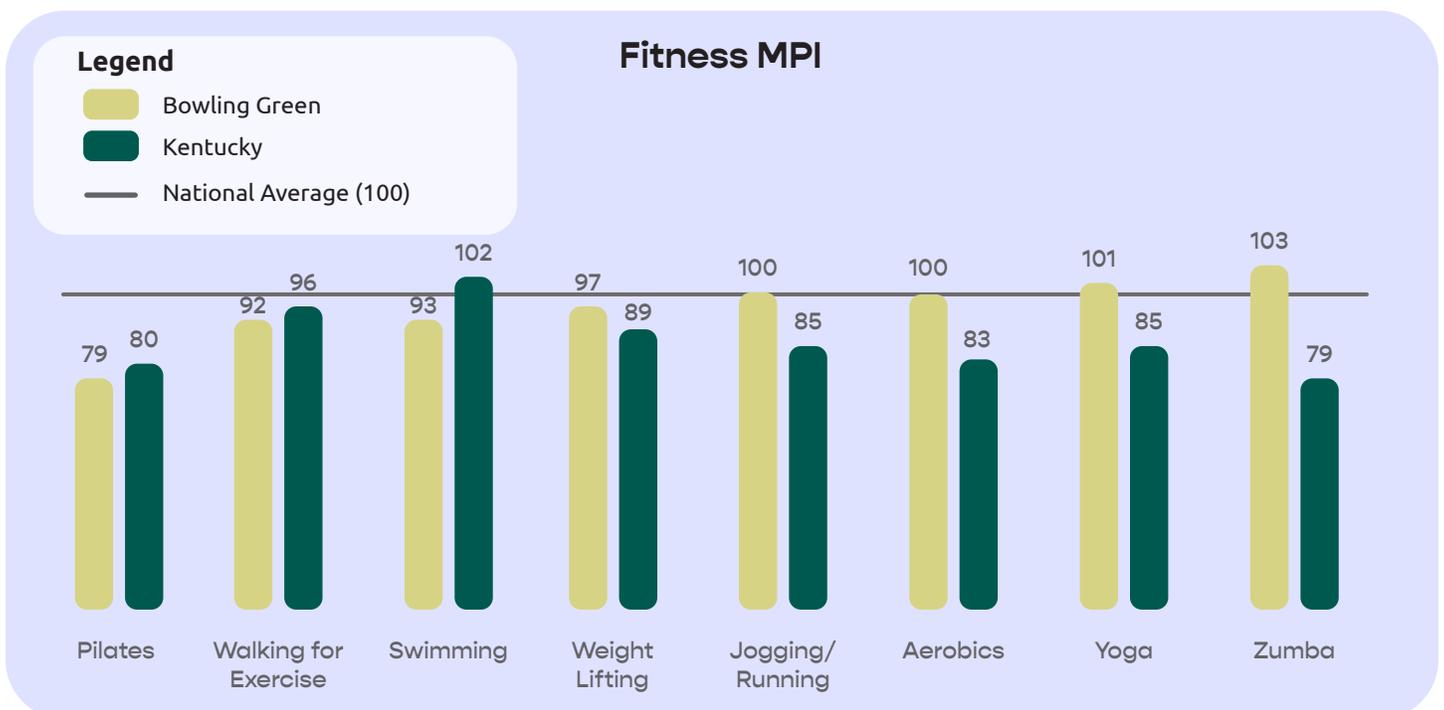
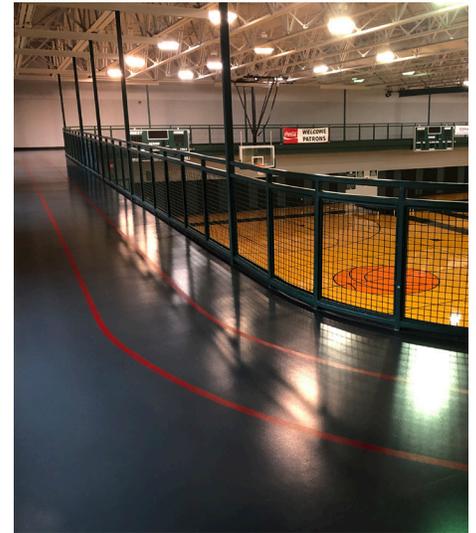


Figure 20: Fitness MPI for Bowling Green

Outdoor Activities Market Potential

The Outdoor Activities Market Potential Index (MPI) for Bowling Green, Kentucky, indicates a strong local interest in a wide range of outdoor pursuits, with several activities significantly exceeding the national average (set at 100). The most notable standout is rock climbing, with an MPI of 151, far surpassing both the national average and Kentucky's score of 84. This suggests a unique and highly concentrated interest in climbing that may warrant targeted facility investment or programming.

Bowling Green also performs well above the national average in several other activities, including horseback riding (112), backpacking (108), archery (104), mountain biking (103), and freshwater fishing (103). These scores suggest strong engagement in nature-based and adventure-oriented activities, positioning Bowling Green as a prime location for trail-based recreation and outdoor sports facilities. Additionally, activities such as canoeing/kayaking (96) and hiking (97) fall just below the national average, but still demonstrate broad appeal. **Figure 21: Outdoor Activity MPI for Bowling Green**

Overall, Bowling Green's outdoor recreation profile shows a well-rounded and highly active market, particularly in land-based adventure activities. With several scores well above the national average, there is strong justification for further investment in climbing walls or bouldering gyms, equestrian facilities, backpacking trailheads, and archery ranges. This data also supports a broader strategy to position Bowling Green as an outdoor recreation destination in the region.

Overall, Bowling Green's MPI profile positions it well to serve as a regional hub for youth and adult sports, particularly in high-performing team sports categories.

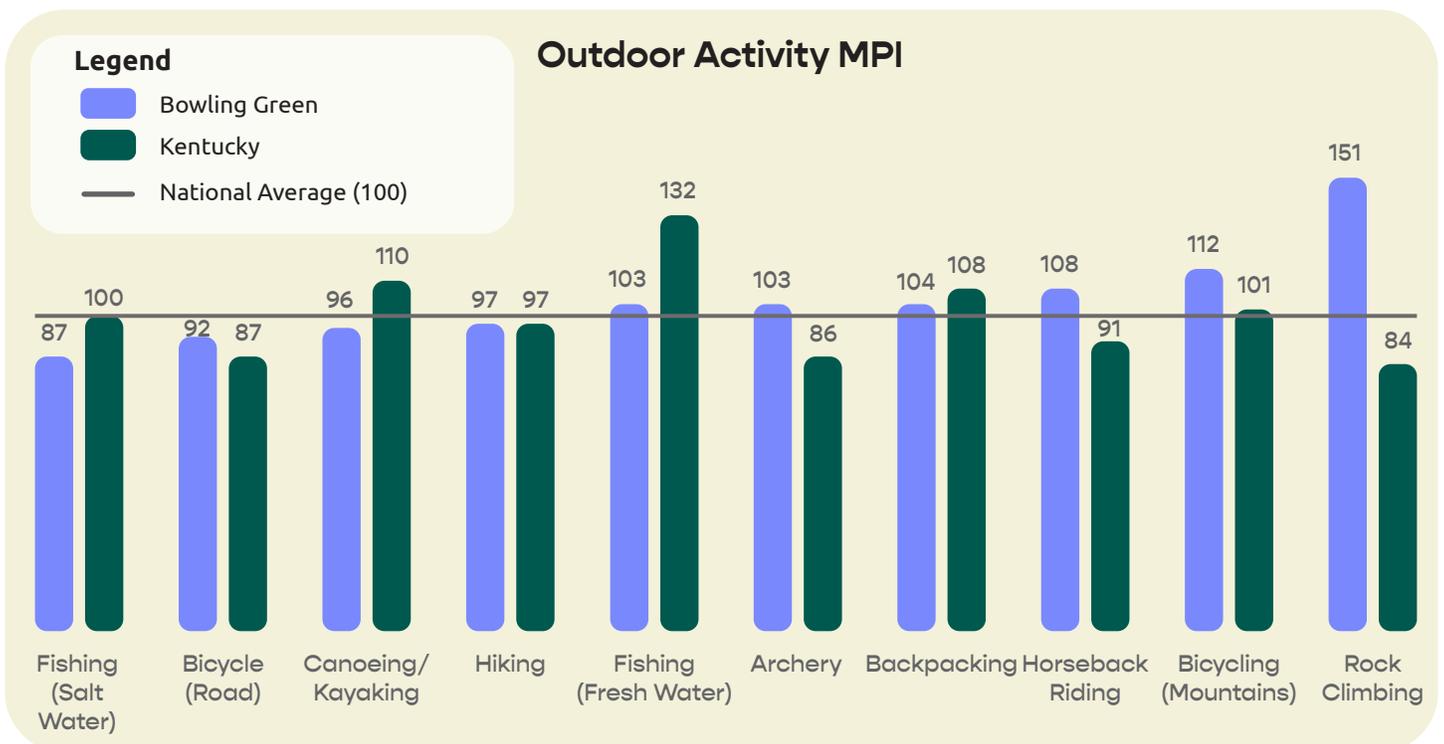


Figure 21: Outdoor Activity MPI for Bowling Green

Commercial Recreation Market Potential

The Commercial Recreation Market Potential Index (MPI) for Bowling Green, Kentucky, demonstrates a diverse and highly engaged audience for a wide variety of recreation-based consumer activities. Bowling Green exceeds the national average in 18 out of 24 categories, signaling a strong local demand for entertainment, cultural experiences, creative activities, and recreation-related purchases.

The most pronounced area of interest is video/electronic gaming (console), with an MPI of 121, indicating a significantly higher engagement level than both the national average (100) and the state average (102). This trend continues with portable gaming (112) and other screen-based or tech-oriented activities, such as flying drones (90) and photography (94), suggesting a tech-savvy population with interest in modern hobbies,

Figure 22: Commercial Recreation MPI for Bowling Green.

In summary, Bowling Green’s commercial recreation market is strong, especially in technology-driven entertainment, water-based and zoo attractions, and creative enrichment activities. With high participation across many categories, there are ample opportunities to support or expand services like indoor play and water centers, e-sports or gaming lounges, and community art and education spaces. These findings reinforce the city’s potential to enhance its commercial recreation footprint to meet resident demand and attract regional visitors.

Commercial Recreation

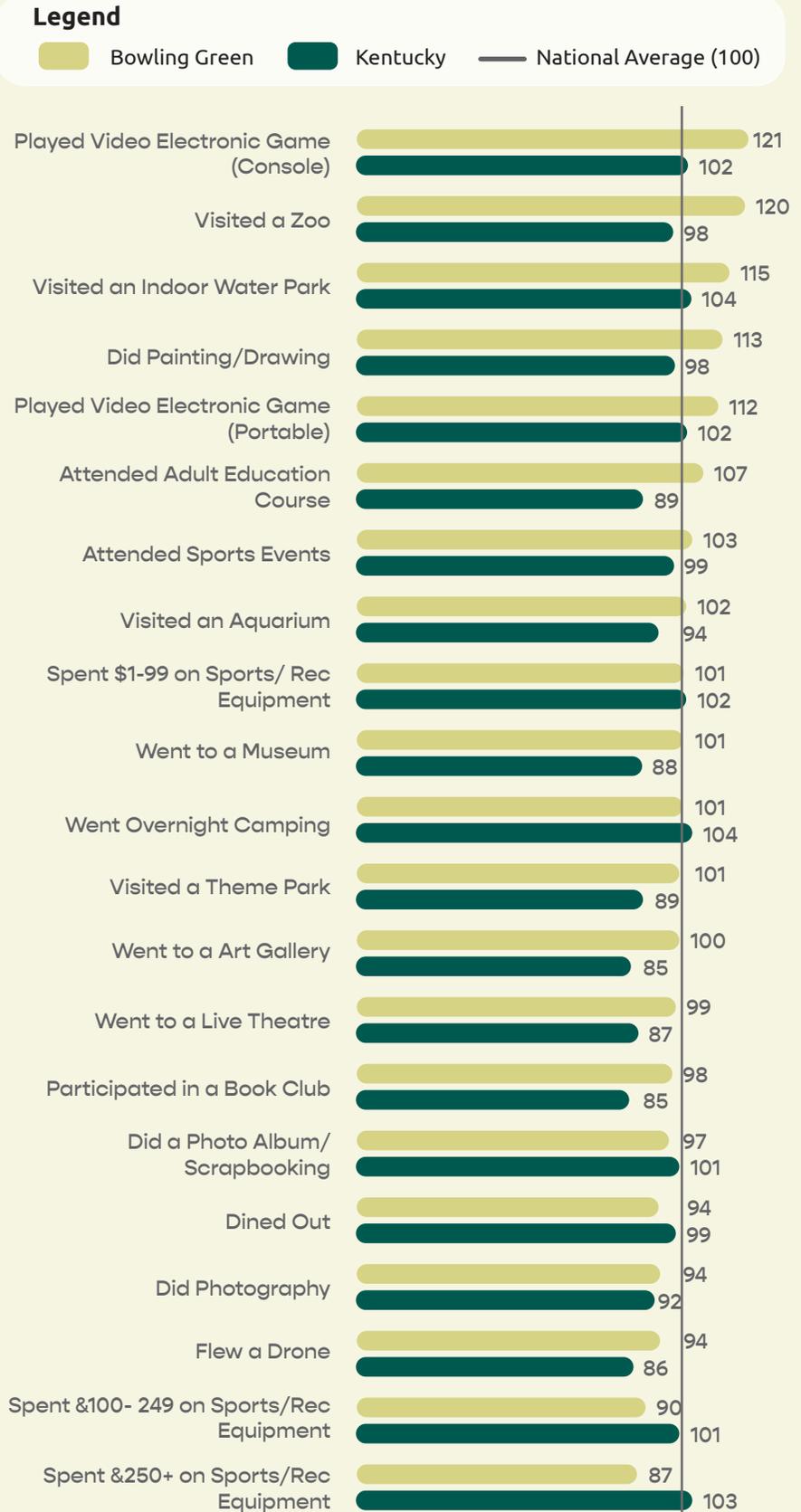


Figure 22: Commercial Recreation MPI for Bowling Green



Recreation Trends Analysis

The Recreation Trends Analysis provides an understanding of national, regional, and local recreational trends as well as recreational interest by age segments. Trends data used for this analysis was obtained from Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA), National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), and Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI). All trend data is based on current and/or historical participation rates, statistically valid survey results, or NRPA Park Metrics.

National Trends in Recreation Methodology

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) Sports, Fitness & Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report 2024 was utilized in evaluating the following trends:

- + National Recreation Participatory Trends
- + Core vs. Casual Participation Trends

The study is based on findings from surveys conducted in 2023 by the Sports Marketing Surveys USA (SMS), resulting in a total of 18,000 online interviews. Surveys were administered to all genders, ages, income levels, regions, and ethnicities to allow for statistical accuracy of the national population. A sample size of 18,000 completed interviews is considered by SFIA to result in a high degree of statistical accuracy. A sport with a participation rate of five percent has a confidence interval of plus

or minus 0.32 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level. Using a weighting technique, survey results are applied to the total U.S. population figure of 306,931,382 people (ages six and older).

The purpose of the report is to establish levels of activity and identify key participatory trends in recreation across the U.S. This study looked at 124 different sports/activities and subdivided them into various categories including: sports, fitness, outdoor activities, aquatics, etc.

Overall Participation

Approximately 242 million people ages six and over reported being active in 2023, which is a 2.2% increase from 2022 and the greatest number of active Americans in the last 6 years. This is an indicator that Americans are continuing to make physical activity more of a priority in their lives. Outdoor activities continue to thrive, recreation facilities reopened, fitness at home maintains popularity, and team sports are slowly reaching pre-pandemic participation levels.

Figure 23: Activity and Inactivity Trends depicts participation levels for active and inactive (those who engage in no physical activity) Americans over the past 6 years.

Core Vs. Casual Participation

In addition to overall participation rates, SFIA further categorizes active participants as either core or casual participants based on frequency of participation. Core participants have higher participatory frequency than casual participants. The thresholds that define casual versus core participation may

vary based on the nature of each individual activity. For instance, core participants engage in most fitness activities more than fifty times per year, while for sports, the threshold for core participation is typically 13 times per year.

In each activity, core participants are more committed and tend to be less likely to switch to other activities or become inactive (engage in no physical activity) than casual participants. This may also explain why activities with more core participants tend to experience less pattern shifts in participation rates than those with larger groups of casual participants. Increasing for the sixth straight year, 165 million people were considered CORE participants in 2023.



Activities and Inactivities Trend

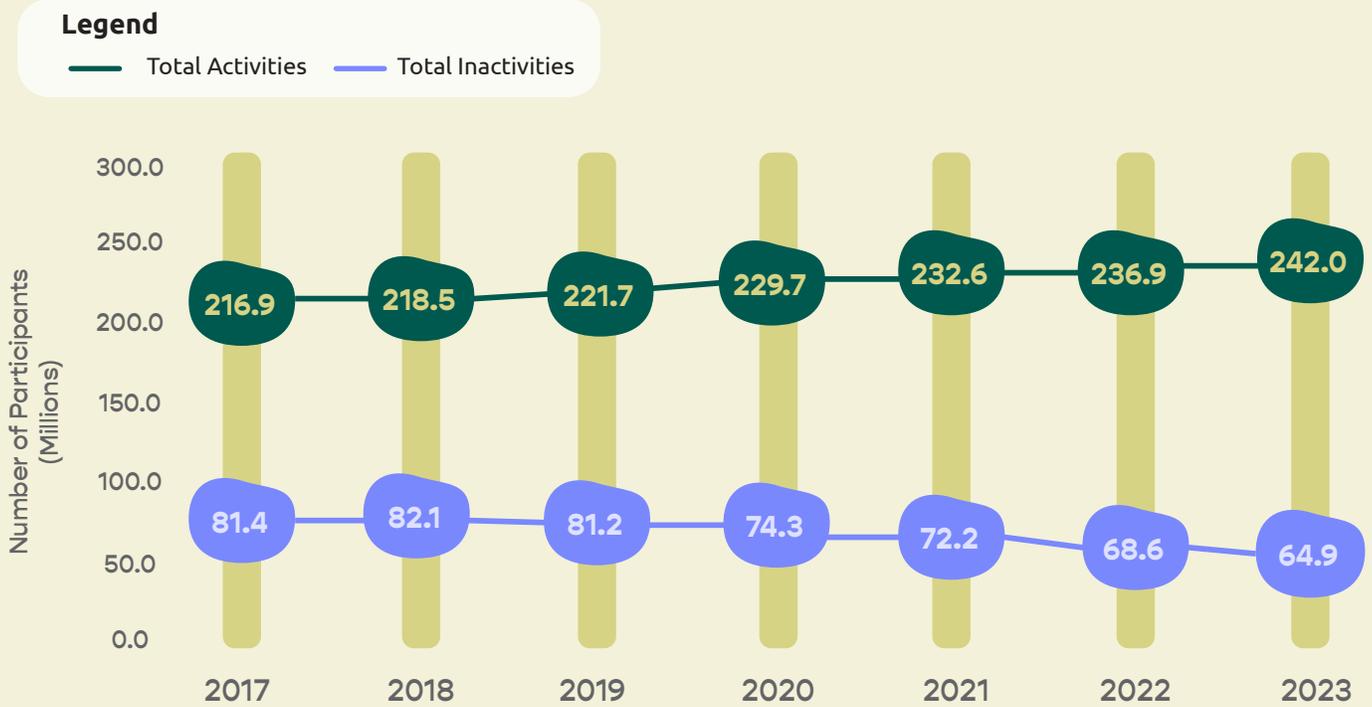


Figure 23: Activity and Inactivity Trends

Total Core Activities

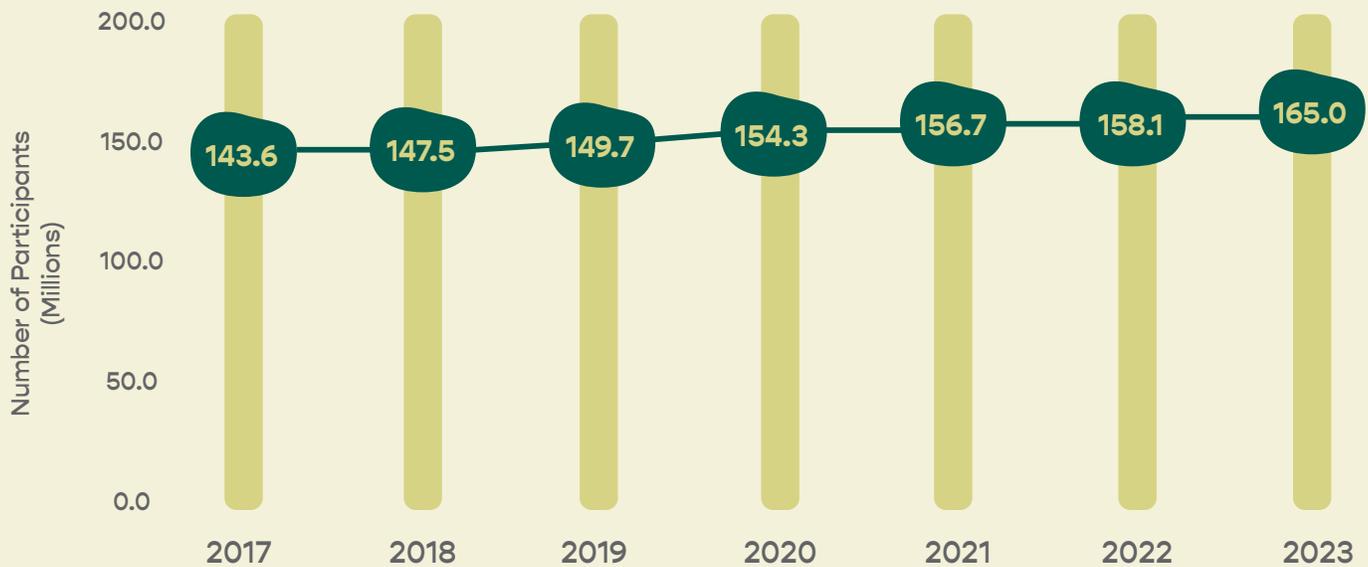


Figure 24: Total Core Activities

Participation by Generation

The following chart, **Figure 25: 2023 Participation by Generation**, shows 2023 participation rates by generation. Fitness sports continue to be the go-to means of exercise for Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials. Over half of the Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z generation participated in one type of outdoor activity. Team sports were heavily dominated by generation Gen Z and nearly a third of Gen X also participated in individual sports such as golf, trail running, and bowling.

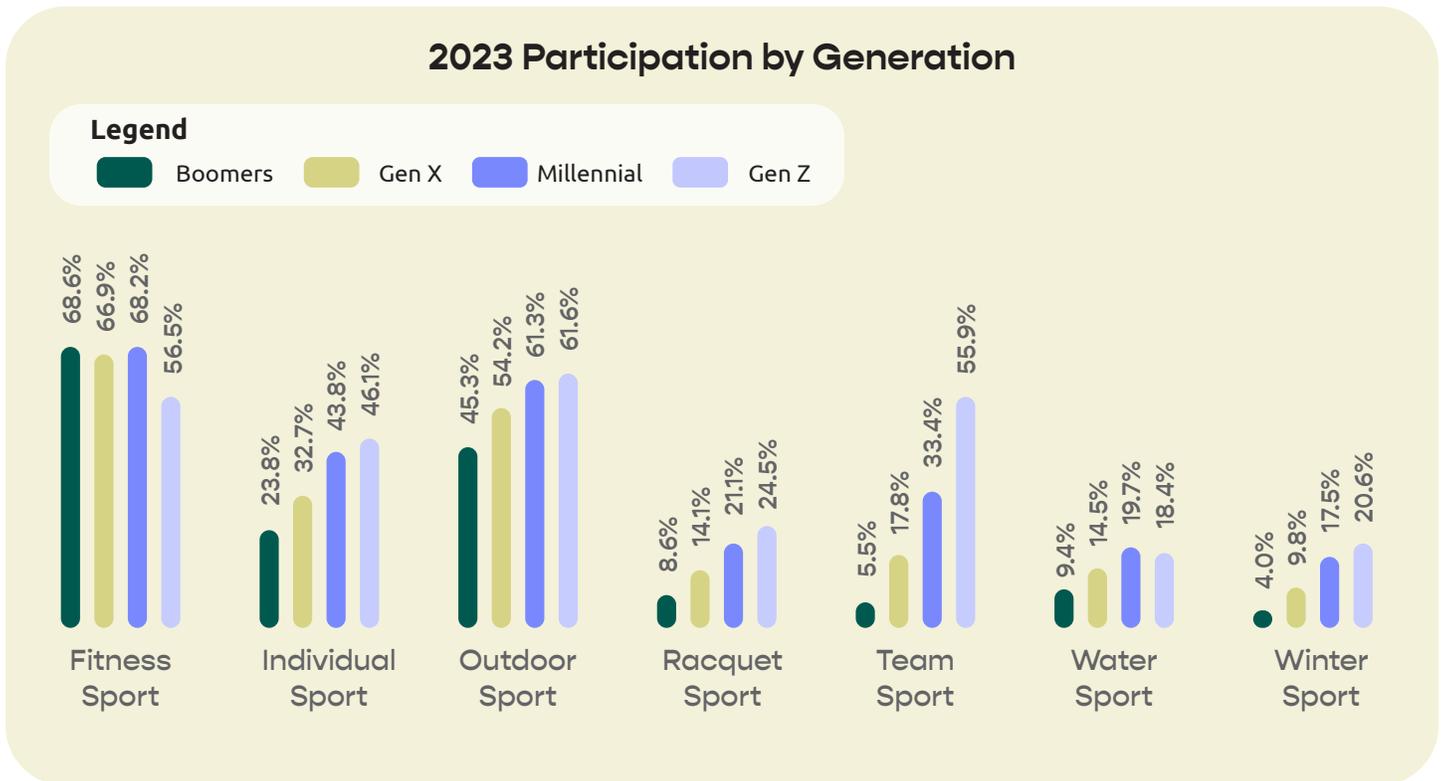


Figure 25: 2023 Participation by Generation

Important Highlights

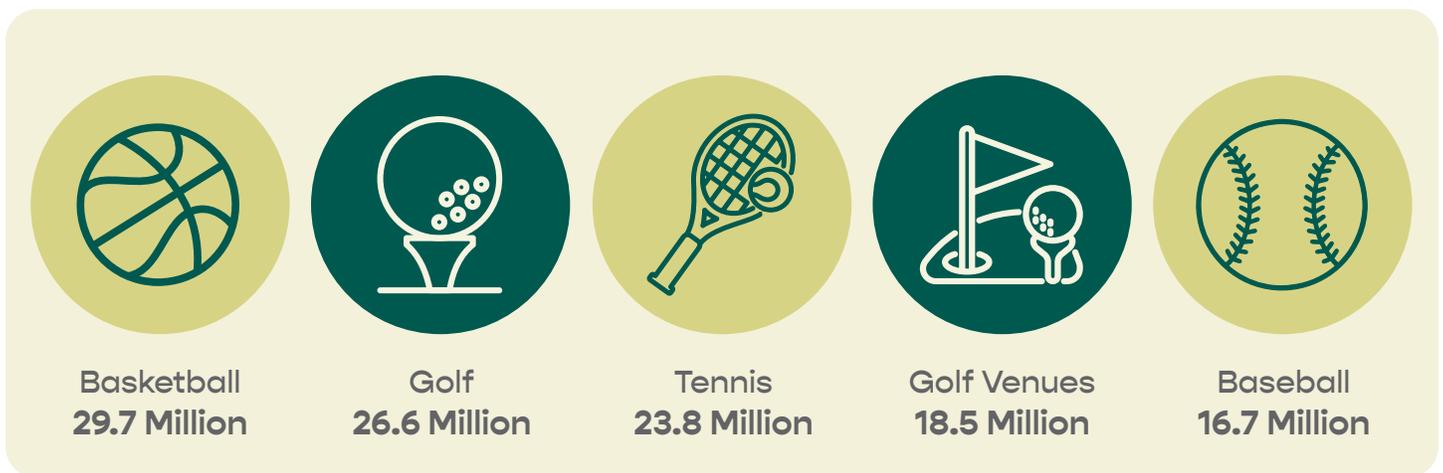
- + **Pickleball** continues to be the **fastest growing sport** in America by reaching 13.6 million participants in 2023 which is a 223.5% growth since 2020. The growth of pickle ball participants (13.6 million) has nearly reached the size of outdoor soccer participants (14.1 million). **Following the popularity of pickle ball, every racquet sport except table tennis has also increased** in total participation in 2023.
- + **Group, full-body workout activities** such as tai chi, barre and Pilates saw the biggest increase in participation this past year. Americans continued to practice yoga, workout with kettle bells, started indoor climbing, and while others took to the hiking trail. The waterways traffic had increases in participation in all activities in the past year.
- + **Over two-thirds (67.8%) of American's participated in fitness sports** followed by over half (**57.3%**) of Americans participated in outdoor sports. Total participation for fitness, team, outdoor, racquet, water and winter sports are higher than their pre-pandemic participation rates. Individual sports are the only category still not at their pre-pandemic participation levels (45% in 2019 currently at 42.1% in 2023).

National Trends in General Sports

Participation Levels

The top sports most heavily participated in the United States were basketball (29.7 million), golf (26.6 million), and tennis (23.8 million) which have participation figures well more than the other activities within the general sports category. Playing golf at an entertainment venue (18.5 million) and baseball (16.7 million) round out the top five.

The popularity of basketball, golf, and tennis can be attributed to the ability to compete with small number of participants, this coupled with an ability to be played outdoors and/or properly distanced helps explain their popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Basketball's overall success can also be attributed to the limited amount of equipment needed to participate and the limited space requirements necessary, which make basketball the only traditional sport that can be played at most American dwellings as a drive-way pickup game. Golf continues to benefit from its wide age segment appeal and is considered a life-long sport. In addition, target type game venues or golf entertainment venues have increased drastically (99%) as a 5-year trend, using golf entertainment (e.g., Top Golf) as a new alternative to breathe life back into the game of golf.



Five-Year Trend

Since 2018, pickleball (311.5%), golf - entertainment venues (99.0%), and tennis (33.6%) have shown the largest increase in participation. Similarly, outdoor soccer (23.4%) and basketball (22.7%) have also experienced significant growth. Based on the five-year trend from 2018-2023, the sports that are most rapidly declining in participation include roller hockey (-28.7%), rugby (-28.7%), and ultimate frisbee (-23.0%).

One-Year Trend

The most recent year shares some similarities with the five-year trends; with pickleball (51.8%) and golf - entertainment venues (18.8%) experiencing some of the greatest increases in participation this past year. Other top one-year increases include court volleyball (13.3%), ice hockey (9.6%), and cheerleading (8.3%).

Sports that have seen moderate 1-year increases, but 5-year decreases are cheerleading (8.3%), track and field (5.8%), lacrosse (5.5%) and slow-pitch softball (5.3%). This could be a result of coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic and team program participation on the rise. Like their 5-year trend, roller hockey (-9.6%), sand/beach volleyball (-5.1%), and rugby (-4.6%) have seen decreases in participation over the last year.

Core vs. Casual Trends in General Sports

General sport activities, basketball, court volleyball, and slow pitch softball have a larger core participant base (participate 13+ times per year) than casual participant base (participate 1-12 times per year). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most activities showed a decrease in their percentage of core participants, but these percentages for core users are slowly reaching their pre-pandemic levels. Please see the **Appendix** for the full Core vs. Casual Participation breakdown.

National Participatory Trends - General Sports					
Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2018	2022	2023	5 Year Trend	1 Year Trend
Basketball	24,225	28,149	29,725	22.7%	5.6%
Golf (9 or 18-Hole Course)	24,240	25,566	26,565	9.6%	3.9%
Tennis	17,841	23,595	23,835	33.6%	1.0%
Golf (Entertainment Venue)	9,279	15,540	18,464	99.0%	18.8%
Baseball	15,877	15,478	16,655	4.9%	7.6%
Soccer (Outdoor)	11,405	13,018	14,074	23.4%	8.1%
Pickleball	3,301	8,949	13,582	311.5%	51.8%
Football (Flag)	6,572	7,104	7,266	10.6%	2.3%
Volleyball (Court)	6,317	6,092	6,905	9.3%	13.3%
Badminton	6,337	6,490	6,513	2.8%	0.4%
Softball (Slow Pitch)	7,386	6,036	6,356	-13.9%	5.3%
Soccer (Indoor)	5,233	5,495	5,909	12.9%	7.5%
Football (Tackle)	5,157	5,436	5,618	8.9%	3.3%
Football (Touch)	5,517	4,843	4,949	-10.3%	2.2%
Gymnastics	4,770	4,569	4,758	-0.3%	4.1%
Volleyball (Sand/Beach)	4,770	4,128	3,917	-17.9%	-5.1%
Track and Field	4,143	3,690	3,905	-5.7%	5.8%
Cheerleading	3,841	3,507	3,797	-1.1%	8.3%
Racquetball	3,480	3,521	3,550	2.0%	0.8%
Ice Hockey	2,447	2,278	2,496	2.0%	9.6%
Softball (Fast Pitch)	2,303	2,146	2,323	0.9%	8.2%
Wrestling	1,908	2,036	2,121	11.2%	4.2%
Ultimate Frisbee	2,710	2,142	2,086	-23.0%	-2.6%
Lacrosse	2,098	1,875	1,979	-5.7%	5.5%
Squash	1,285	1,228	1,315	2.3%	7.1%
Roller Hockey	1,734	1,368	1,237	-28.7%	-9.6%
Rugby	1,560	1,166	1,112	-28.7%	-4.6%

NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over.

Participation Growth and Decline:	Large increase (Greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0 to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0 to 25%)	Large Decrease (Greater than 25%)
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Figure 26: National Participatory Trends - General Sports

National Trends in General Fitness

Participation Levels

Overall, national participatory trends in fitness have experienced growth in recent years. Many of these activities have become popular due to an increased interest among Americans to improve their health and enhance quality of life by engaging in an active lifestyle. The most popular general fitness activities in 2023 were those that could be done in multiple environments such as at home, gym or in a virtual class setting. The activities with the most participation was walking for fitness (114.0 million), treadmill (54.8 million), free weights (53.9 million), running/jogging (48.3 million), and yoga (34.2 million).

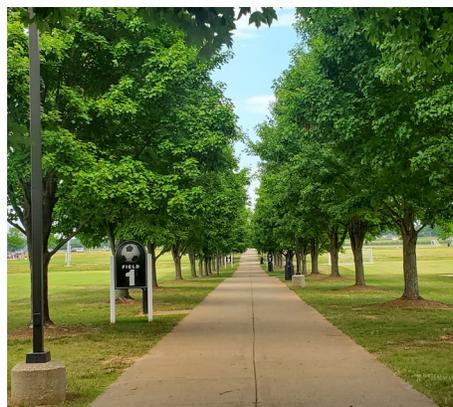
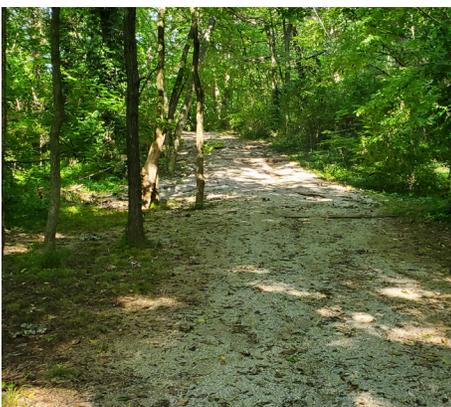


Five-Year Trend

Over the last five years (2018-2023), the activities growing at the highest rate were trail running (48.7%), Pilates training (30.6%), barre (21.6%) and yoga (19.1%). Over the same period, the activities that have undergone the biggest decline in participation include group stationary cycling (-34%), cross-training style workout (-29.5%) and traditional/road triathlons (-19.8%).

One-Year Trend

In the last year, fitness activities with the largest gains in participation were group-related, slow, intentional movements activities, tai chi (16.3%), Pilates training (15.0%), and barre (12.9%). This 1-year trend is another indicator that participants feel safe returning to group-related activities. Trail running (12.3%) also saw a moderate increase indicating trail connectivity continues to be important for communities to provide. In the same span, fitness activities that had the largest decline in participation were boxing/MMA for fitness (-14.4%), traditional/road triathlons (-2.4%) and weight/resistant machines (-1.9%).



Core vs. Casual Trends in General Fitness

Participants of walking for fitness are mostly core users (participating 50+ times) and have seen a 1.3% growth in the last five years. Please see **the Appendix** for the full core vs. casual participation breakdown.

National Participatory Trends - General Fitness					
Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2018	2022	2023	5 Year Trend	1 Year Trend
Walking for Fitness	111,001	114,759	114,039	2.7%	-0.6%
Treadmill	53,737	53,589	54,829	2.0%	2.3%
Free Weights (Dumbbells/ Hand Weights)	51,291	53,140	53,858	5.0%	1.4%
Running/Jogging	49,459	47,816	48,305	-2.3%	1.0%
Yoga	28,745	33,658	34,249	19.1%	1.8%
Stationary Cycling (Recumbent/Upright)	36,668	32,102	32,628	-11.0%	1.6%
Weight/Resistant Machines	36,372	30,010	29,426	-19.1%	-1.9%
Free Weights (Barbells)	27,834	28,678	29,333	5.4%	2.3%
Elliptical Motion/ Cross-Trainer	33,238	27,051	27,062	-18.6%	0.0%
Dance, Step, & Choreographed Exercise	22,391	25,163	26,241	17.2%	4.3%
Bodyweight Exercise	24,183	22,034	22,578	-6.6%	2.5%
High Impact/ Intensity Training	21,611	21,821	21,801	0.9%	-0.1%
Trail Running	10,010	13,253	14,885	48.7%	12.3%
Rowing Machine	12,096	11,893	12,775	5.6%	7.4%
Stair Climbing Machine	15,025	11,677	12,605	-16.1%	7.9%
Pilates Training	9,084	10,311	11,862	30.6%	15.0%
Cross-Training Style Workout	13,338	9,248	9,404	-29.5%	1.7%
Boxing/MMA for Fitness	7,650	9,787	8,378	9.5%	-14.4%
Martial Arts	5,821	6,355	6,610	13.6%	4.0%
Stationary Cycling (Group)	4,434	6,628	6,227	-34.0%	-0.7%
Cardio Kickboxing	6,838	5,531	5,524	-19.2%	-0.1%
Boot Camp Style Cross-Training	6,659	5,192	5,434	-18.4%	4.7%
Barre	3,532	3,803	4,294	21.6%	12.9%
Tai Chi	3,761	3,394	3,948	5.0%	16.3%
Triathlon (Traditional/Road)	2,168	1,780	1,738	-19.8%	-2.4%
Triathlon (Non-Traditional/ Off Road)	1,589	1,350	1,363	-14.2%	1.0%

NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over.

Participation Growth and Decline:	Large increase (Greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0 to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0 to 25%)	Large Decrease (Greater than 25%)	
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Figure 27: National Participatory Trends - General Fitness

National Trends in Outdoor/ Adventure Recreation

Participation Levels

Results from the SFIA report demonstrate rapid growth in participation regarding outdoor/adventure recreation activities. Much like general fitness activities, these activities encourage an active lifestyle, can be performed individually, and are not as limited by time constraints. In 2023, the most popular activities, in terms of total participants include day hiking (61.4 million), freshwater fishing (42.6 million), road bicycling (42.2 million), camping (38.6 million), and wildlife viewing (21.1 million)



Five-Year Trend

From 2018-2023, camping (40.7%), birdwatching (33.0%), skateboarding (37.3%), BMX bicycling (29.7%), and day hiking (28.4%) has undergone large increases in participation. The five-year trend also shows that only two activities declined in participation, adventure racing (-18.4) and backpacking overnight (-5.2%).

One-Year Trend

The one-year trend shows most activities growing in participation from the previous year. The most rapid growth being indoor climbing (10.0%), BMX bicycling (6.7%), fly fishing (5.8%), and adventure racing (5.5%). Over the last year, the only activities that underwent decreases in participation were road bicycling (-3.0), overnight backpacking (-2.2%), RV camping (-2.0%), and skateboarding (-1.1%).



Core vs. Casual Trends in Outdoor/Adventure Recreation

Although most outdoor activities have experienced participation growth in the last five years, it should be noted that all outdoor activities participation, besides adventure racing, consist primarily of casual users. Please see **the Appendix** for the full core vs. casual participation breakdown.

National Participatory Trends - Outdoor/ Adventure Recreation					
Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2018	2022	2023	5 Year Trend	1 Year Trend
Hiking (Day)	47,860	59,578	61,444	28.4%	3.1%
Fishing (Freshwater)	38,998	41,821	42,605	9.2%	1.9%
Bicycling (Road)	39,041	42,554	42,243	8.2%	-3.0%
Camping	27,416	37,431	38,572	40.7%	3.0%
Wildlife Viewing (>1/4 mile of Vehicle/Home)	20,556	20,615	21,118	2.7%	2.4%
Camping (Recreational Vehicle)	15,980	16,840	16,497	3.2%	-2.0%
Birdwatching (>1/4 mile of Vehicle/Home)	12,344	15,818	16,423	33.0%	3.8%
Fishing (Saltwater)	12,830	14,344	15,039	17.2%	4.8%
Backpacking Overnight	10,540	10,217	9,994	-5.2%	-2.2%
Bicycling (Mountain)	8,690	8,916	9,289	6.9%	4.2%
Skateboarding	6,500	8,916	8,923	37.9%	-1.1%
Fishing (Fly)	6,939	7,631	8,077	16.4%	5.8%
Archery	7,654	7,428	7,662	0.1%	3.2%
Climbing (Indoor)	5,112	5,778	6,356	24.3%	10.0%
Roller Skating, In-Line	5,040	5,173	5,201	3.2%	0.5%
Bicycling (BMX)	3,439	4,181	4,462	29.7%	6.7%
Climbing (Traditional/Ice/ Mountaineering)	2,541	2,452	2,569	1.1%	4.8%
Climbing (Sport/Boulder)	2,184	2,452	2,544	16.5%	3.8%
Adventure Racing	2,215	1,714	1,808	-18.4%	5.5%

NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over.

Participation Growth and Decline:	Large increase (Greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0 to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0 to 25%)	Large Decrease (Greater than 25%)	
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Figure 28: National Participatory Trends - Outdoor/Adventure Recreation

National Trends in Aquatics

Participation Levels

Swimming is deemed a lifetime activity, which is why it continues to have such strong participation. In 2023, fitness swimming remained the overall leader in participation (28.2 million) amongst aquatic activities.



Five-Year Trend

Assessing the five-year trend, all three aquatic activities saw moderate increases in participation.

One-Year Trend

In 2023, all aquatic activities saw moderate increases in participation which can be asserted to facilities and programs returning to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels. Swimming on a team (14.6%) saw the highest percentage increase in participation.

Core Vs. Casual Trends in Aquatics

All activities in aquatic trends have undergone an increase in casual participation (1-49 times per year) over the last five years. Please see **the Appendix** for full the core vs. casual participation breakdown

National Participatory Trends - Aquatics					
Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2018	2022	2023	5 Year Trend	1 Year Trend
Swimming (Fitness)	27,575	26,272	28,173	2.2%	7.2%
Aquatic Exercise	10,518	10,676	11,307	7.5%	5.9%
Swimming on a Team	3,045	2,904	3,327	9.3%	14.6%

NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over.

Participation Growth and Decline:	Large increase (Greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0 to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0 to 25%)	Large Decrease (Greater than 25%)	
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Figure 29: National Participatory Trends - Aquatics

National Trends in Water Sports Activities

Participation Levels

The most popular water sports / activities based on total participants in 2023 were recreational kayaking (14.7 million), canoeing (10.0 million), and snorkeling (7.5 million). It should be noted that water activity participation tends to vary based on regional, seasonal, and environmental factors. A region with more water access and a warmer climate is more likely to have a higher participation rate in water activities than a region that has a long winter season or limited water access. Therefore, when assessing trends in water sports and activities, it is important to understand that fluctuations may be the result of environmental barriers which can influence water activity participation.



Five-Year Trend

Over the last five years, surfing (38.9%), recreational kayaking (33.7%), stand-up paddling (19.6%) and rafting (19.0%) were the fastest growing water activities. From 2018-2023, activities declining in participation were water boardsailing/windsurfing (-7.8%), water skiing (-6.8%), snorkeling (-4.2%) and sea/touring kayaking (-0.2%).

One-Year Trend

In 2023, zero activities saw a decrease in participation. Activities which experienced the largest increases in participation include scuba diving (15.2%), sailing (12.9%), and rafting (12.7%).



Core vs. Casual Trends in Water Sports/ Activities

Although most outdoor activities have experienced participation growth in the last five years, it should be noted that all outdoor activities participation, besides adventure racing, consist primarily of casual users. Please see **the Appendix** for the full core vs. casual participation breakdown.

National Participatory Trends - Water Sports/ Activities					
Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2018	2022	2023	5 Year Trend	1 Year Trend
Kayaking (Recreational)	11,017	13,561	14,726	33.7%	8.6%
Canoeing	9,129	9,521	9,999	9.5%	5.0%
Snorkeling	7,815	7,376	7,489	-4.2%	1.5%
Jet Skiing	5,324	5,445	5,759	8.2%	5.8%
Stand-Up Paddling	3,453	3,777	4,129	19.6%	9.3%
Sailing	3,754	3,632	4,100	9.2%	12.9%
Rafting	3,404	3,595	4,050	19.0%	12.7%
Surfing	2,874	3,692	3,993	38.9%	8.2%
Water Skiing	3,363	3,040	3,133	-6.8%	3.1%
Scuba Diving	2,849	2,658	3,063	7.5%	15.2%
Kayaking (White Water)	2,562	2,726	2,995	16.9%	9.9%
Wakeboarding	2,796	2,754	2,844	1.7%	3.3%
Kayaking (Sea/Touring)	2,805	2,642	2,800	-0.2%	6.0%
Boardsailing/Windsurfing	1,556	1,391	1,434	-7.8%	3.1%

NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over.

Participation Growth and Decline:	Large increase (Greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0 to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0 to 25%)	Large Decrease (Greater than 25%)	
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Figure 30: National Participatory Trends - Water Sports/Activities

Financial Analysis

The section of the report presents the financial assessment of the Bowling Green Parks & Recreation Department .

Financial Analysis

The section of the report presents the financial assessment of the Bowling Green Parks & Recreation Department (“Department”) as a part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. As a key element of the Master Plan, available information was reviewed to assess the financial situation of the Department. The cost recovery for facilities, programs, and services at major functional levels has also been analyzed to assess adequacy of revenues to cover continuing operations.

A summary of revenues and transfers, expenditures, equipment replacement, capital improvements, and cost recovery for Fiscal Years Ending 2023 through 2025 are shown in **Figure 31: Department Summary of Revenues and Expenditures**.

The cost recovery from revenues and expenditures for 2023 through 2025 are 35%, 37%, and 30%, respectively.

Department Summary of Revenues and Expenditures			
	Actual 2025	Actual 2024	Actual 2023
Revenues			
Revenues	\$3,890,974.95	\$3,733,805.77	\$3,178,391.80
Transfers	\$5,416,234.89	\$4,359,181.05	\$2,100,722.75
Total Revenues	\$9,307,209.84	\$8,092,986.82	\$5,279,114.55
Expenditures			
Expenditures	\$12,923,588.06	\$10,093,679.68	\$9,198,593.18
Equipment Replacement	\$1,157,025.29	\$659,810.29	\$522,083.91
Capital Improvements	\$1,577,941.68	\$3,283,941.87	\$2,346,888.64
Total Expenditures	\$15,658,555.03	\$14,037,431.84	\$12,067,565.73
Revenues Over / (Under) Expenditures	(\$9,032,613.11)	(\$6,359,873.91)	(\$6,020,201.38)
Cost Recovery	30%	37%	35%
Revenues and Transfers Over / (Under) Expenditures, Capital Replacement, and Capital Improvements	(\$6,351,345.19)	(\$5,944,445.02)	(\$6,788,451.18)
Cost Recovery	59%	58%	44%

Figure 31: Department Summary of Revenues and Expenditures

Financial Assessment Summary

Department Funding

The City of Bowling Green General Fund budget provides more than \$100 million in annual revenues, primarily from Wage and Profit taxes. The Department has received an average of 11.6% of the General Fund revenues over the past three years. These funding have enabled the Department to be less dependent on user fees and charges to fund programs and services and to maintain and improve facilities and equipment.

For example, the average cost recovery of similar operations is 60%. The Departments recovery has been approximately 30% in recent years.

Capital Renewal

The City provided over \$9.5 million for Department equipment replacement and capital improvements over the study period as shown in **Figure 32: Department Equipment Replacement Fund and Capital Improvements** Capital funding demonstrates the City's willingness to maintain quality facilities and equipment.

For a more comprehensive review of the financial analysis refer to **the Appendix**.

Department Equipment Replacement Fund and Capital Improvements			
	Actual 2025	Actual 2024	Actual 2023
Equipment Replacement	\$1,157,025.29	\$659,810.29	\$522,083.91
Capital Improvements	\$1,577,941.68	\$3,283,941.87	\$2,346,888.64
Total Capital	\$2,734,966.97	\$3,943,752.16	\$2,868,972.55

Figure 32: Department Equipment Replacement Fund and Capital Improvements

Recommendations:

To maintain the strength of the Department, PROS recommends:

- + Establishment of **financial guidelines and policies** to manage the overall financial planning of the Department.
- + **Annual review schedules of charges for programs and services for compliance with pricing policies.** Regular **review of fees and user charges** assures that the General Fund revenues are used consistently with pricing policies and the needs of the citizens.
- + **Annual review of partnerships and sponsorships** to identify successes and shortcomings.

Benchmark Analysis

This benchmark report will provide reference point metrics from the participating benchmark agencies and show how Bowling Green Park and Recreation aligns with these agencies in their park system operations.

Methodology

Data for the City of Bowling Green and the benchmark agencies were categorized with the methods that NRPA utilizes to segment cities and park systems. When compared to Kentucky's income and population distribution, and other demographic information about their cities, this places Bowling Green in the median quartile for NRPA cities nationwide on populations of 50,000 to 99,999.

The quartile population of a city refers to how the population is divided into equal parts (or quartiles) for statistical analysis. It is not a count of people, but a way to group data points, such as income, age, or household size, based on where individuals or households fall in comparison to other groups.

National Recreation and Parks Association

To broaden the benchmark beyond Lexington and Owensboro, the *National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA)* provides park system data in the *NRPA Park Metrics Guide*, which is the most comprehensive source of benchmark data and insight for parks and recreation agencies to use and evaluate statistics of park systems throughout the nation. Park and recreation agencies also use the *NRPA Agency Performance Survey* that was prepared for the years 2022 to 2024 for agencies to self-report data about their park systems.

Ultimately, the 2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review¹ is the source of information that will be presented throughout this report when the metrics chosen by Bowling Green have corresponding data. NRPA categorizes the data they have for park systems into the

quartile populations of a city and demographics divided into equal parts (quartiles) for statistical analysis. This method is not only a count of people, but a way to group data points, such as park information.

www.NRPA.org/APR¹



Cities

The benchmark cities that will be used as references have statistics that are listed below. This chart **Figure 33: City and Park Statistics** is to provide a comparison for city size and their population density. Per 1,000 residents is the most effective calculation to make comparisons in this benchmark analysis since the per 1,000 residents is the measurement used with the denominator shown as: acres / parkland size per number of residents specified.

Parks and Population

Lexington, the largest of the three cities, serves a community more than four times the population of the benchmark cities of Bowling Green and over five times larger than Owensboro. Despite its size, Lexington’s acres of parkland are only slightly higher (about 2% more) park acreage per 1,000 residents than Bowling Green. Owensboro offers about 38% more parkland per 1,000 residents than Lexington and about 40% more than Bowling Green, indicating a greater park-to-resident ratio among the benchmark cities. See **Figure 34: Benchmark Cities**.

Bowling Green and the two benchmark cities are listed with acres of parkland per 1,000 residents for those agencies that report to NRPA.



10.2
Acres of
Parkland per
1,000 Residents
(NRPA Average)

Benchmark Data: Cities and Park Statistics			
City	Population	Land Area Square Miles	Number of Parks
Bowling Green	76,212	819.91*	30
Lexington	329,437	285 Sq Miles	112**
Owensboro	60,140	22.1 Sq Miles	26

**The Acreage for Bowling green includes 3 Golf Courses.
** Includes Golf courses, trails (linear parks) for Lexington.*

Figure 33: City and Park Statistics

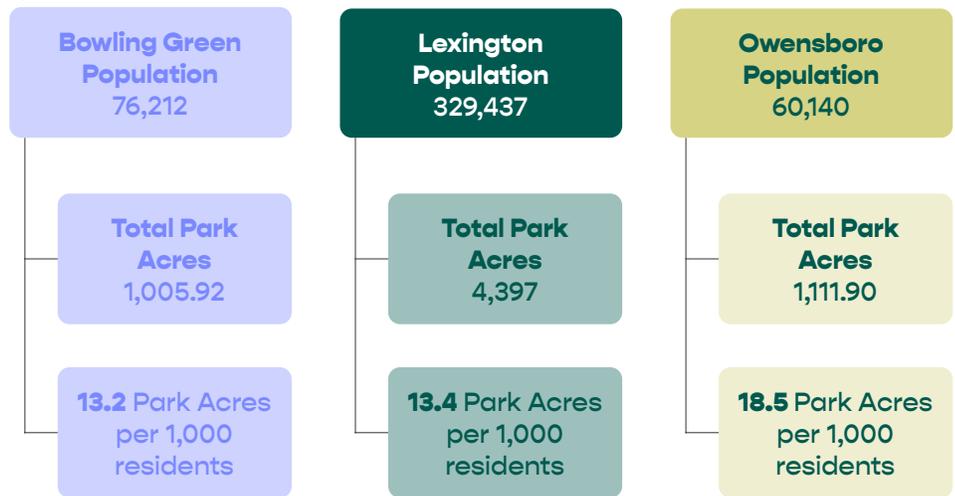
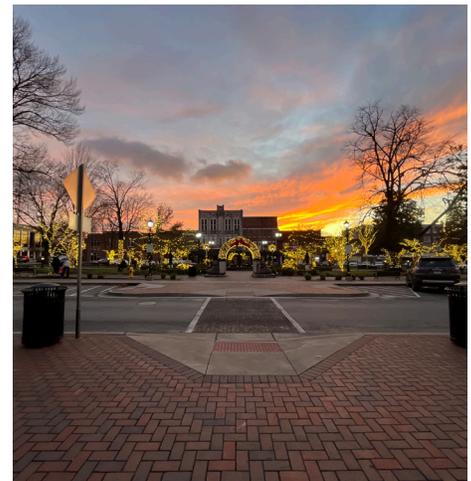


Figure 34: Benchmark Cities

Bowling Green is 3.0 acres above the NRPA Agencies.
Lexington is 3.2 acres above the NRPA Agencies.
Owensboro is 8.3 acres above the NRPA Agencies.



Parkland

Bowling Green is the smallest system in total acres of the two benchmark agencies regarding their developed acres. **Figure 35: Types of Parkland Acres** Lexington and Owensboro park systems have the smallest portion of parkland classified as undeveloped. Their system has green space / natural areas that are a part of smaller areas of the city's built-in environmental areas. The 76.61 undeveloped acres provide areas that could be developed by adding additional facilities, trails, or parks. Their park acre ratios reflect a park system that has an efficient use of space but they are limited to new growth due to available space.

Lexington stands out as the largest and most expansive park system. With a larger number of acres, it is populated with many large regional parks, small neighborhood parks, and mini parks. This range of park types in combination with open spaces support both active recreation and natural preservation. Their undeveloped acres are more than the total acres of Bowling Green and Owensboro.

Owensboro falls between the other two systems in both system size and operations. It maintains slightly more developed acres than Bowling Green, and nearly twice as many undeveloped acres for possible park growth. Owensboro and Bowling Green have total park acres that are very similar.

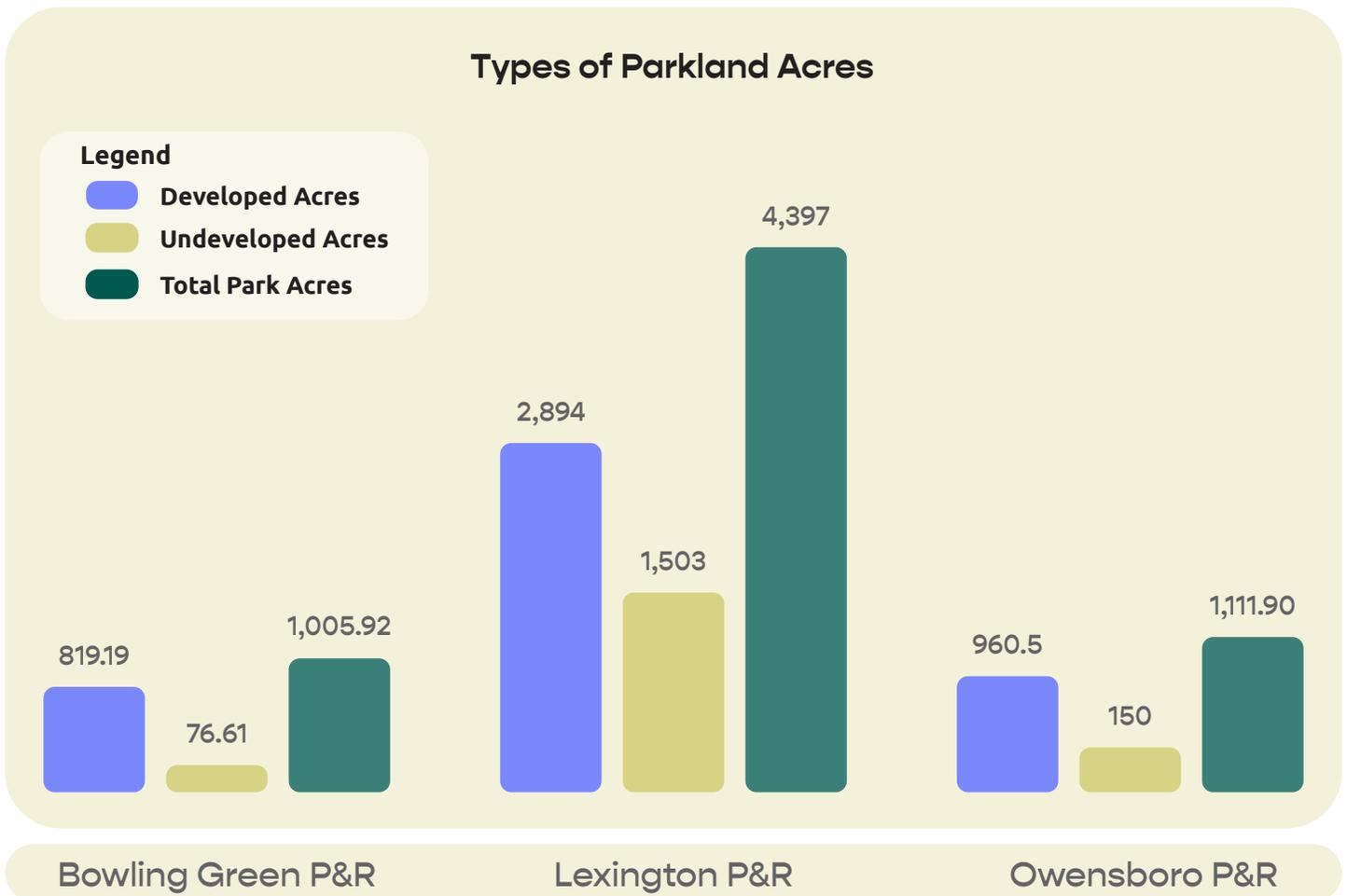


Figure 35: Types of Parkland Acres

Survey data by Rails to Trails Conservancy shows that 81% of people said they use trails to be physically active and 97% say trails make a difference for mental health/well-being. Trails are highly valued by residents as a great mode for biking, walking, running, and enjoying the outdoors.

In relation to the size in acres of Bowling Green and the two benchmark agencies, the miles of trails are fairly proportionate. **Figure 36: Trail Miles.**

Bowling Green has 9.39 total trail miles.
Lexington has the most total trail miles, 102 miles.
Owensboro has 32.2 total trail miles.



Figure 36: Trail Miles

Recreation Facilities

The chart, **Figure 37: Benchmark Data - Recreation Facilities**, compares recreation facilities and highlights the differences in both the number and size of recreation and aquatic amenities.

Bowling Green maintains the same number of facilities as Owensboro and their emphasis is on indoor recreation space complemented by a single outdoor aquatic feature. Their recreation facilities are active for youth activities and sports and include leagues, and after school programs as well. The Parker Bennett Community Center, the F.O. Moxley Community Center, and the Kummer / Little Recreation Center are also enjoyed by a wide age segment of users and sports players.

Lexington operates the largest and most extensive system, offering numerous recreation sites and several outdoor pools that provide a wide range of opportunities for residents. Owensboro has a smaller system similar in scale to Bowling Green, with limited recreation facilities and a couple of outdoor aquatic areas that support community swimming and leisure use

According to NRPA agencies, Lexington is close to the statistic for one recreation center per 30,805 population segment. Bowling Green and Owensboro are under that specified number.

Benchmark Data: Recreation Facilities						
Park City	Number of Rec. Facilities	Total Square Footage of all Facilities	Number of Indoor Aquatic Center/Pools	Total Square Footage of Indoor Aquatic Center/Pools	Number of Outdoor Aquatic Center/Pools	Total Square Footage of Outdoor Aquatic Center/Pools
Bowling Green Parks and Recreation	3	74,034 Sq. Ft.	0	0	1	22,415 Sq. Ft.
Lexington Parks and Recreation	11	175,560 Sq. Ft.	0	0	5	68,084 Sq. Ft.
Owensboro Parks and Recreation	3	N/A	0	0	2	12,350 Sq. Ft.

Recreation Facilities are for Sports and Recreation Activities, Senior Centers, and Community Centers

Figure 37: Benchmark Data - Recreation Facilities



Sports Courts and Fields

Recreation Centers have a variety of sports courts and areas for indoor activity. NRPA data indicates that 63% of park systems have recreation centers. The benchmark agencies were asked to provide information about their recreation centers and the type and number of courts within their centers. Outdoor fields and courts are also charted by type and quantity for each system. To show the prevalence of indoor sports courts in Recreation Centers, percentages provided below are from NRPA **Figure 38: NRPA Percentages**.

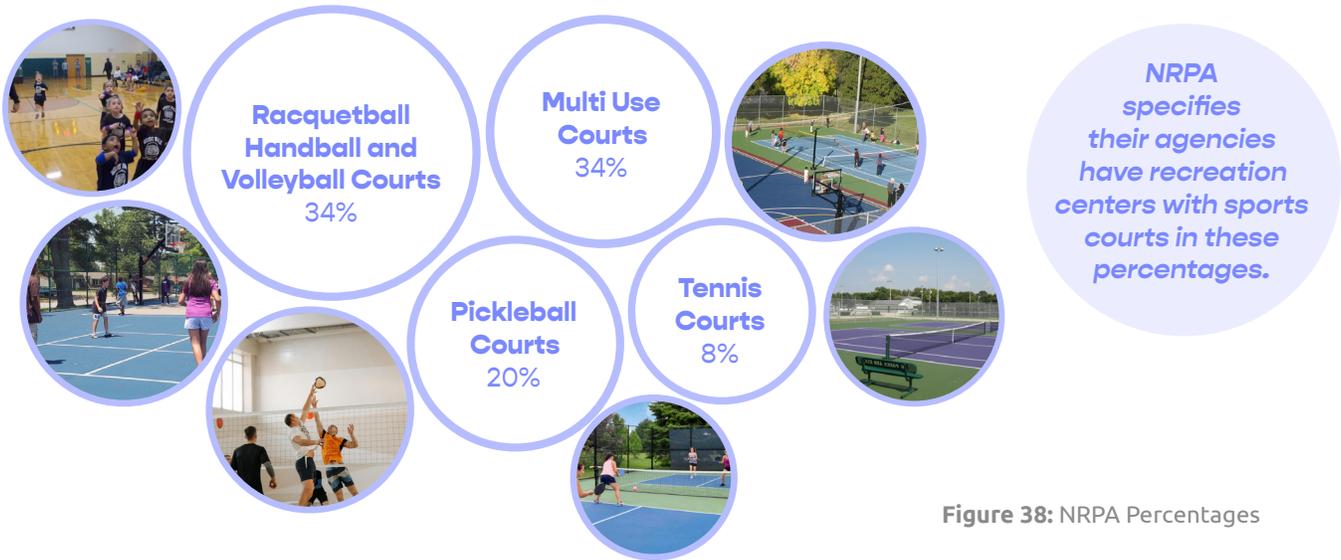


Figure 38: NRPA Percentages

Type and Number of Courts

Lexington leads Bowling Green and Owensboro in the number of basketball courts, offering nearly three times more than Bowling Green and more than four times as many as Owensboro **Figure 39: Benchmark Data - Total Number of Courts**. Bowling Green is the only city with racquetball courts, where all others have tennis and pickleball as their racquet sports. Owensboro is noted for the majority of their tennis courts as outdoor and six are located inside. Indoor and outdoor courts could be present at the other agencies, but they did not provide that information in the data they provided. The high number of volleyball courts in Lexington shows the community enjoys the sport at a high level and there is an opportunity for a large number of league play along with tournaments routinely. Of the eight categories of courts in the chart, an ice rink and racquetball are the only courts present at just one park system. Of the most popular sports courts from Bowling Green and the benchmark agencies, below are those that parallel the court sports recognized by NRPA as popular sports activities.

Benchmark Data: Total Number of Courts			
Type of Court	Bowling Green Park and Recreation	Lexington Park and Recreation	Owensboro Park and Recreation
Basketball	15	50+	12
Ice Rink	-	-	1
Multi-Use	1	8	-
Pickleball	6	41	4
Racquetball	2	-	-
Tennis	14	35	32 Outdoor/ 6 Indoor
Volleyball	3	55	2

Figure 39: Benchmark Data - Total Number of Courts

The most popular courts with NRPA agencies are:

- + **Volleyball** – listed by NRPA with 34% of agencies offering this sport.
- + **Pickleball** – listed by NRPA with 20% of agencies offering this sport.
- + **Basketball** – listed by NRPA with 34% of agencies offering this sport (Basketball can be played on multi-use courts).

Type and Number of Fields

Bowling Green offers a variety of field types in minimal quantities except for the 19 soccer fields in the parks. **Figure 40: Benchmark Data - Total Number of Fields.** Lexington has more types of fields as well as larger quantities of fields than Bowling Green and Owensboro. Bowling Green’s field quantities are varied, with soccer fields being the most prevalent. Owensboro and Bowling green only lack rectangular fields. Among the variety of fields Owensboro has, they have versatility for additional football and soccer on the eight multi-use fields they have. Lexington has the ability to supplement their football and soccer games and practices with their rectangular fields and also multi-use turf fields. The number of fields that Lexington has defines large participation in those sports, leagues and large tournaments.

Benchmark Data: Type of Fields			
Type of Fields	Bowling Green Park and Recreation	Lexington Park and Recreation	Owensboro Park and Recreation
Adult and Youth Softball	3	included in all types	6 Youth and Adult
All types of Ball Fields	2 Multi-Use	62	1(H.S. Regulation)
Football	-	7	4
Multi-Use Turf Field	1	16	8
Rectangular (Soccer and Football)	-	48	-
Regulation and Youth Soccer Field	19	38	11
Youth Baseball	3	included in all types	8
Youth only Softball	2	included in all types	above

Figure 40: Benchmark Data - Total Number of Fields



Figure 41: Fields in Bowling Green



Staff

Bowling Green has a moderate number of staff compared to the benchmark agencies. They maintain a total of 64 staff members, and 78 FTEs and their part-time and seasonal staff are not as large as the benchmark agencies.

The larger number of park acres in Lexington is more than Bowling Green and Owensboro (4 to 4.5 times more acres respectively). Their larger park system will require more staff overall to maintain parkland, fields, facilities, direct programs, and assist with special events and seasonal/holiday activities.

Owensboro’s total staff levels are substantially lower for their total staff, but in the part time, FTE column, they are comparable to Bowling Green and Lexington. A relationship to Bowling Green and Lexington part time staff cannot be made since Owensboro includes their seasonal/FTE employees in their part time numbers. This calculation is also present for their seasonal staff FTEs.

These staff number differences illustrate how employee levels relate to parkland, seasonal needs and part-time needs. Many other factors influence staffing levels present at park systems, and the efficiency and ability of staff members will need to be considered. See **Figure 43: Benchmark Data - Staff Information**.



Figure 42: Bowling Green Staff

Benchmark Data: Staff Information					
Agencies	Total Staff	Total Number of Part Time Employees	FTE Equivalent	Total Number of Part Time Employees	FTE Equivalent
Bowling Green Parks and Recreation	64		157/48.38		115/30.32
Lexington Parks and Recreation	152		998/300	included in part time employees	
Owensboro Parks and Recreation	16		196/37.5	included in part time employees	

Figure 43: Benchmark Data - Staff Information

Core Programs

Bowling Green Parks and Recreation offers 10 of the 12 core programs listed in the chart below **Figure 44: Benchmark Data - Core Programs**. The span of programs also includes an extensive list of other programs found on their website. The majority of their core programs are fitness-based and include several individual and team sports.

Lexington offers all programs in the chart with the exception of day camps. Their community centers provide programs and activities enjoyed by all ages.

Owensboro offers the same number of programs as Bowling Green (10 programs) and like Bowling Green, they do not offer Performing Arts. Bowling Green and the two benchmark agencies provide sports for all ages in their offerings. There are eight programs that are common among the agencies. NRPA data shows the percentages of agencies offering the programs that are common with Bowling Green and the benchmark agencies. This shows that these agencies are in line with the majority of NRPA agencies at 50% or above.

Benchmark Data: Core Programs				
Type of Program	Bowling Greens	Lexington	Owensboro	Percent of NRPA Agencies Offering
After School Programs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Aquatics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	68%
Athletics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	68%
Community Center Youth Program	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Day Camp	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fitness and Wellness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	82%
Golf	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	50%
Performing Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	64%
Raquet Sports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	76%
Special Events	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	64%
Summer Camp	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Figure 44: Benchmark Data - Core Programs

- Bowling Green**
- + Offers aquatics, athletics, fitness, and wellness programs that support active community lifestyles.
 - + Provides youth-focused opportunities including after-school programs, day camps, and summer camps.
 - + Features adaptive and inclusive recreation that ensures access for participants of all abilities.
 - + Delivers performing arts, racquet sports, special events, and golf programs that broaden community engagement.

- Lexington**
- + Offers inclusive recreation and aquatics programs for all ages and abilities.
 - + Provides athletics, fitness, and wellness programs that promote active lifestyles.
 - + Hosts performing arts and cultural events supporting community participation.
 - + Delivers summer camps and special events that engage youth and families.

- Owensboro**
- + Features adaptive, aquatic, and athletic programs across facilities.
 - + Promotes health through fitness, wellness, and youth programs.
 - + Provides day camps and performing arts to enrich community life.
 - + Offers inclusive and family-oriented recreation opportunities year-round.

Contractors

All three park systems—Bowling Green, Lexington, and Owensboro—use contractors to support operations **Figure 45: Benchmark Data - Contractor Use** Bowling Green relies on them for maintenance and facility services such as mowing, pest control, and waste management. Lexington extends contractor use to capital projects, performing arts, and food vendors. Owensboro primarily contracts for mowing, pest control, portable toilets, and golf course maintenance.

Benchmark Data: Contractor Use						
Do you use Contractors? If so, for what tasks or duties?	Bowling Green Parks and Recreation		Lexington Parks and Recreation		Owensboro Parks and Recreation	
	Use Contractors	Task/Duties	Use Contractors	Task/Duties	Use Contractors	Task/Duties
	Yes	Mowing, Pest Control, Disc Golf Vendor, Arboricultural Services, Waste Management, Portable Restrooms, Pepsi Vending Weather Radar for Golf Course	Yes	Mowing, Capital Design and Construction, Performing Arts, Tree Removal, Equipment Maintenance, Food Vendors	Yes	Green space, park Mowing, Pepsi Vending, Portable Toilets, Golf Course Green or Tree box replacement or Construction, Pest Control

Figure 45: Benchmark Data - Contractor Use

Financials

Data obtained from Bowling Green and the benchmark agencies are from their budgets in the fiscal years of 2024 and 2025 **Figure 46: Benchmark Data - Revenue and Expenses**. Agencies record, compile and present their finances in ways that are best suited for their system and city.

Benchmark Data: Revenue and Expenses					
Agencies	Total Revenue	Total Operating Expenses	Earned Revenues (event fees, user fees, parking fees, memberships and program fees)	User Earned Revenue (Sponsorships, grants, partnerships, interest earnings, donations, sale of fixed assets)	Expenses as percentage of Revenue
Bowling Green Parks and Recreation	FY 24' Actual \$3,180,619	FY 24' Actual \$9,937,868	FY 24' Actual \$3,180,619	FY 24' Actual	FY 24' Actual \$8,637,196
	FY 25' Budgeted \$2,956,203	FY 25' Budgeted \$13,449,261	FY 25' Budgeted \$2,956,619	FY 25' Budgeted	FY 25' Budgeted \$8,062,141
Lexington Parks and Recreation	FY 24' Actual \$7,510,984	FY 24' Actual \$28,972,183	FY 24' Actual \$1,296,174	FY 24' Actual	FY 24' Actual
	FY 25' Budgeted \$7,510,983	FY 25' Budgeted \$28,835,567	FY 25' Budgeted \$1,524,472	FY 25' Budgeted \$1,524,472	FY 25' Budgeted
Owensboro Parks and Recreation	FY 24' Actual \$4,522,593	FY 24' Actual \$8,845,987	FY 24' Actual \$2,422,593	FY 24' Actual	FY 24' Actual
	FY 25' Budgeted \$4,691,572	FY 25' Budgeted \$9,370,546	FY 25' Budgeted \$2,537,974	FY 25' Budgeted	FY 25' Budgeted

Figure 46: Benchmark Data - Revenue and Expenses

Cost Recovery

The three agencies demonstrate varying approaches to cost recovery that reflect their operational priorities and community expectations **Figure 47: Benchmark Data - Cost Recovery**. Lexington has established the most ambitious goal, aiming to recover a larger portion of its costs through fees and program revenues. Bowling Green's target is slightly lower, showing a balanced approach that supports financial sustainability while maintaining accessibility. Owensboro, by contrast, currently recovers less of its total operating costs, which may indicate a stronger emphasis on community access and affordability over full cost recovery.

Setting realistic cost recovery goals requires careful program pricing, consistent evaluation of participation trends, and thoughtful alignment of fees with service levels. Each agency's approach should match its community's values, funding capacity, and operational structure to ensure both fiscal responsibility and equitable access.

Information from NRPA agencies signifies that agencies recover 32.8% of their annual operating expenditures from non-tax revenue (Cost recovery). Bowling Green and the two benchmark agencies are near the NRPA-reported cost recovery levels. Bowling Green and Owensboro set realistic cost recovery goals and their actual cost recovery is within 2% of their goal. Lexington has set a cost recovery goal higher than what NRPA has listed. At 26.10%, their actual goal, they will need to evaluate revenue and expenditures and make financial adjustments in order to meet their elevated goal.

Membership

Memberships at recreation centers promote activity, sports, and community connection. Various facilities, programs, camps, and other recreational activities can also have membership benefits. Bowling Green offers memberships for their recreation center, their golf courses, fitness, and aquatic facility. Membership fees vary with each facility for children, youth, adults, families, and seniors. Memberships at Bowling Green provide different levels of engagement and facility use while their punch cards are available for a given number of visits.

Owensboro is similar to Bowling Green regarding multiple types of memberships, punch cards, and types for all age groups and types of facilities. Their fees are dependent on the number of visits, type of facility, and length of membership or unlimited passes.

Lexington did not provide information on the memberships they offer, yet their website does provide fees for seasonal pool passes and after school programs. None of the community centers in their system charge a fee or offer memberships.

Technology and Public Communication

New technologies are reshaping how park systems operate, maintain facilities, and engage with their communities. Many of the tools now used—like those in Bowling Green and Owensboro—reflect a shift toward smarter, data-driven management and more connected visitor experiences.

Benchmark Data: Cost Recovery	
Lexington	
What is your cost recovery goal?	40%
What is your actual cost recovery?	26.10%
Bowling Green	
What is your cost recovery goal?	33%
What is your actual cost recovery?	32%
Owensboro	
What is your cost recovery goal?	30%
What is your actual cost recovery?	28%

Figure 47: Benchmark Data - Cost Recovery

Technology

Bowling Green uses a range of technologies to improve operations, safety, and communication. Systems like RecTrac, MainTrac, and ForeUp manage registration, facilities, and golf operations, while automated irrigation, lighting, and mowing technologies increase efficiency in park maintenance. GPS and GIS tools help track vehicles and map assets, and communication platforms—such as public Wi-Fi, the BGPR website, social media, and text alerts—keep residents informed and engaged. Weather and emergency tools further support safe and reliable park and facility operations.

Owensboro Parks and Recreation uses a broad mix of technologies to manage operations, communication, and community outreach. Software such as RecTrac, ForeUp, and New World supports registration, golf, and financial management, while Microsoft programs, Outlook, and others aid with park operations. Irrigation, lighting, and GIS systems improve maintenance and

safety, and staff communication is maintained through cell phones and two-way radios. Public Wi-Fi, social media, and digital design tools like Canva and Adobe enhance public engagement and marketing for programs and events.

Social Media

Bowling Green is starting to use social media to promote their park system. They are starting the process with Facebook and Instagram, but do not have a staff member assigned to the task. With the current platforms, they have 2.6K followers on Facebook and 519 on Instagram.

Owensboro has one social media staff member that monitors their Facebook and Instagram accounts. Their success is growing, and notifying the public about activities and events in their system has 11,000 Facebook followers and 2,505 Instagram followers

Program Assessment

This assessment takes a data-driven approach to evaluating the current program offerings and aligns it with the community needs, trends and BGPR goals.

Introduction

BGPR enters this program analysis with a record of excellent service amid rapid population growth and surging demand. According to survey results 84% of residents rate the quality of programming good to excellent. This assessment applies a clear, data-driven framework to evaluate how well current offerings align with community needs, participation trends, and organizational goals so BGPR can decide which programs to grow, refine, or phase out. The framework ties program delivery to staffing, facilities, and finance to ensure that what the department provides matches what residents expect and can sustainably support.

To focus resources where they matter most, the analysis organizes services into Core Program Areas and documents BGPR's collaborative Program Development Process, from identifying needs and activating spaces, to partnering across the City and budgeting at the program level. The report then examines who is being served (age segments), what role each program plays for the public

(service classification), how programs perform financially (cost of service and cost recovery), and how fees are set (pricing strategies). It also reviews lifecycle balance across the portfolio, ancillary services that strengthen financial resilience, and the department's use of best practices.

Ultimately, the analysis confirms BGPR's strengths in meeting high-priority community interests while operating at a high standard under pressure. It also pinpoints targeted opportunities such as fine-tuning cost recovery, right-sizing saturated offerings, and expanding into emerging priorities. BGPR can continue to scale responsibly, protect access to programming, and deliver maximum impact for residents across every age and interest.

BGPR delivers programs across a wide network of facilities that collectively serve as the backbone of the city's recreation system. Key locations include the Moxley Center, Parker Bennett Community Center and the Kummer/Little Recreation Center, which supports youth and community programs. Major outdoor venues such as

Kereiakes Park, Lampkin Park, and the Lovers Lane Soccer Complex provide space for sports leagues, tournaments, and community events, while Hobson Grove Park, supports neighborhood recreation and informal play. BGPR also partners with Western Kentucky University to utilize facilities for adaptive recreation and offers outdoor educational programs at the Agricultural Farm. The City's three golf courses (CrossWinds, Paul Walker, and Hobson Grove) serve as year-round recreation and learning spaces for golfers of all ages and abilities. Russell Sims Aquatic Center provides one of the region's most popular destinations for water recreation and summer programming. This diverse mix of indoor and outdoor sites allows BGPR to reach residents citywide, offering accessible, high-quality recreation opportunities across a range of interests and age groups.

Program Framework

Conducting a program assessment as part of a parks and recreation master plan provides a picture of how well current offerings align with community needs, participation trends, and organizational goals. By analyzing programs and services the framework allows BGPR to make data-driven decisions about which programs to grow, modify, or phase out. It also connects program delivery to broader financial and operational strategies, ensuring that goals, staffing, and facility usage are aligned with the community's expectations. Most importantly, a program assessment ensures that recommendations in the master plan are rooted in community feedback, creating a roadmap that balances innovation, sustainability, and enables BGPR to maximize impact across all age segments and a variety of interests.

Core Program Areas

Public recreation is challenged by the premise of being all things to all people. To help reach this goal, it is important to identify Core Program Areas based on current and future needs to create a sense of focus around specific program areas of greatest importance to the community. The philosophy of the Core Program Area assists staff, policy makers, and the public focus on what is most important. Program areas are considered as Core if they meet any one or more of the following categories:

- + The program area has been provided for a long period of time (over 4-5 years) and/or is expected by the community. The program area consumes a relatively large portion (5% or more) of the agency's overall budget.
- + The program area has been provided for a long period of time (over 4-5 years) and/or is expected by the community.
- + The program area consumes a relatively large portion (5% or more) of the agency's overall budget.
- + The program area is offered 3-4 seasons per year.
- + The program area has wide demographic appeal.
- + There is a tiered level of skill development available within the program area's offerings.
- + There is full-time staff responsible for the program area.
- + There are facilities designed specifically to support the program area.
- + The agency controls a significant percentage (20% or more) of the local market.



Existing Core Program Areas

Through discussions with the BGPR staff, three Core Program Areas were identified as currently being offered for recreation programs. Descriptions and goals of each Core Program Area follow and are well-written providing direction to staff on what the Department is intentionally working to achieve with each program offered within the Core Program Areas.

Core Program Areas

- + Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation
- + Aquatics
- + Athletics
- + Community Center Youth Programs
- + Fitness & Wellness
- + Golf
- + Special Events

Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation

Description: Providing year round opportunities in various passive an active recreational and/or sport programs for individuals with intellectual and/or physical disabilities.

Goals:

- + Providing year round opportunities in various passive an active recreational and/or sport programs for individuals with intellectual and/or physical disabilities.

Aquatics

Description: The Aquatics Program offers a variety of water-based activities for all ages and skill levels, promoting safety, fitness, and fun in the water.

Goals:

- + Creating a safe environment for all customers is our #1 priority.
- + Aquatics programs aim to deliver an atmosphere of fun in every way possible; from creating a themed, immersive experience, to offering up an array of unique special events.
- + The main goal is to be the premier aquatic experience in South Central Kentucky.

Athletics

Description: The Athletics Program provides youth and adult sports opportunities that promote teamwork, skill development, and healthy competition. The program encourages active lifestyles and community engagement. The well-maintained fields and courts, along with dedicated staff and volunteers, ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all participants.

Goals:

- + Increase community involvement by offering diverse and inclusive athletic programs that cater to all ages, abilities, and interests.
- + Encourage active lifestyles and improve overall community well-being through accessible sports leagues, fitness activities, and wellness events.
- + Provide a positive environment for youth to develop physical skills, teamwork, and leadership through structured athletic programs and mentorship opportunities.

Community Center Youth Programs

Description: The Community Center & Youth Programming offers welcoming spaces and enriching activities for children, teens, and families. Through after-school programs, summer camps, mentoring, arts and crafts, and leadership development, BGPR provides safe, engaging environments that support social, emotional, and physical growth.

Goals:

- + Ensure that the programs we offer are unique, innovative, and provide the opportunity to participate in activities youth would not be able to participate in anywhere else in our community.
- + Ensure all staff are well trained and equipped to provide the most effective and efficient programs possible for the youth in our community to become the best version of themselves.
- + Provide a safe, supportive and fun environment through quality programs for the youth in our community.

Fitness and Wellness

Description: Fitness/wellness activities and education to promote healthy lifestyles for all ages through use of our fitness facilities and programs.

Goals:

- + Provide a fitness facility and fitness programs for ages 11 and up that promote wellness and enhance quality of life which are affordable and accessible by all users.

Golf

Description: Provide a year-round golf programming for all ages, along with company/group rentals of the golf course.

Goals:

- + Provide a fun and affordable environment to bring a positive impact to golf in the Bowling Green Public area. Programs net 30% and current pricing compares to other public courses around.

Special Events

Description: Special Events Program brings the community together through fun, inclusive, and memorable experiences year-round. From seasonal festivals and holiday celebrations to outdoor concerts, movies in the park, and family-friendly activities, our events are designed to foster community pride and connection.

Goals:

- + Offer a creative lineup of community wide special events that bring people together in our community within their local park system.
- + Embrace the philosophy that special events are the “front porch” to our department, acting as a way for us to introduce ourselves to the community we serve, encouraging them to become regular participants in the programs we offer throughout the year.
- + Consistently evaluate and reflect on the programs and events offered to ensure they are addressing areas of improvement, evolving year after year to remain innovative and fun, and that they are still relevant to the residents.



Program Development Process

BGPR program development process is a collaborative and need-driven approach that combines internal creativity with community input. The process begins by identifying a community need or opportunity and then activating available spaces to meet that demand. Staff engage in brainstorming sessions involving both the department and other city partners to ensure alignment with broader community goals. Community partnerships play a key role in shaping and supporting program delivery, while budgeting occurs at the program level to ensure financial accountability and sustainability. Special events remain a top priority, serving as high-impact opportunities to engage residents and strengthen community connections.

Implementing a formal Program Development Process is especially valuable for BGPR as the community has experienced population growth and increasing demand for recreation opportunities. A structured and consistent approach ensures that new and expanded programs are thoughtfully planned, mission-aligned, and responsive to the evolving needs of residents. This process encourages staff to think critically and creatively about program ideas. By using standardized worksheets and decision-making tools, BGPR can identify target audiences, assess service gaps, and develop realistic budgets that align with cost recovery goals. The framework also supports strategic marketing and partnership development, helping programs reach their intended audiences effectively. As participation grows, this process allows BGPR to scale programs responsibly, maintaining quality and consistency across all offerings while ensuring that new initiatives remain feasible and reflective of the community's interests and values.



Program Performance

Age Segments

An Age Segment Analysis was conducted to review the who is served by different program areas and identify any gaps. It is recommended that staff perform an Age Segment Analysis by individual programs to further understand and tailor future offerings to community needs. Primary age segments served refers to the main or most important age groups that BGPR targets with its programs and services. Secondary age segments refers to additional age segments that programs and services may reach as a result of being offered but are not the primary target age segment.

BGPR provides a well-rounded mix of programs that serve residents across all ages, with particular strength in adult and multigenerational offerings. Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation and Aquatics reach nearly every age group, ensuring accessibility and lifelong participation. Athletics and Community Center Youth Programs focus primarily on youth and teens, while Fitness & Wellness and Golf engage adults of all ages with strong recreation and health benefits and provide introductory programs to youth essentially growing future users of these core program areas. Special Events unite the community through inclusive, all-ages experiences. Overall, BGPR effectively serves the community’s diverse needs, with future opportunities to expand programming for preschoolers, older adults, and intergenerational participation.

Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Age Segments Served								
Core Program Areas	Preschool (5 and Under)	Elementary (6-12)	Teens (13-17)	Adult (18-34)	Adult (35-50)	Adult (51-69)	Adult (70+)	All Ages Programs
Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation	S	P	P	P	P	S	S	
Aquatics	P	P	S	P	P	S	S	P
Athletics	S	P	P	P	P	S		
Community Center Youth Programs	S	P	S					
Fitness & Wellness		S	S	P	P	P	P	
Golf		S	S	P	P	P	P	
Special Events								P

Primary Age Segment - P, Secondary Age Segment - S

Figure 48: Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Age Segments Served

Program Classification

Conducting a classification of services analysis informs BGPR how each program serves the overall organization mission, the goals and objectives of each Core Program Area, and how the program should be funded regarding tax dollars and/or user fees and charges. How a program is classified can help to determine the most appropriate management, funding, and marketing strategies.

Program classifications are based on the degree to which the program provides a public benefit versus a private benefit. Public benefit can be described as everyone receiving the same level of benefit with equal access, whereas private benefit can be described as the user receiving exclusive benefit above what a general taxpayer receives for their personal benefit.

For this exercise, the Department used a classification method based on three categories: Core Services, Enhanced Services, and Specialized Services. Where a program or service is classified depends upon alignment with the organizational mission, how the public perceives a program, legal mandates, financial sustainability, personal benefit, competition in the marketplace, and access by participants. The following graphic describes each of the three program classifications. Core programs reflect high public expectation and provide broad community benefits such as health, safety, and access to services despite socioeconomic circumstances, often requiring public funding to remain accessible to all. Enhanced programs balance both public and individual benefits, covering some direct costs while still requiring support to ensure access where alternative providers are limited. Specialized programs are designed to meet the interests of specific individuals or groups, often in markets where other providers exist, and are expected to recover most costs through fees with limited public subsidy. This framework helps BGPR clearly define the role of each program, prioritize resources, and ensure that services are delivered in a way that benefit all residents within the community, create financial sustainability, and ensure mission-driven outcomes.



Core Classification

BGPR Must Provide; if it protects assets & infrastructure, is expected and supported, is a sound investment of public funds, is a broad public benefit, there is a negative impact if not provided, is part of the mission, and needs high to complete subsidy.

Enhanced Classification

BGPR Should Provide; if it expands & enhances core services, is broadly supported & used, has conditional public support, there is a economic/social/ environmental outcome to the community, has community importance, and needs moderate subsidy.

Specialized Classification

BGPR May Provide; if it expands & enhances core services, is broadly supported & used, has conditional public support, there is a economic/social/ environmental outcome to the community, has community importance, and needs moderate subsidy.

Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Program Classification			
Factors	Core	Enhanced	Specialized
Public Interest; Legal Mandate; Mission Alignment	High Public Expectation	High Public Expectation	High Individual and Interest Group Expectation
Access	Open Access by All	Open Access, Limited Access to Specific Users	Limited Access to Specific Users
Benefits (Health, Safety, Protection of Assets, Etc.)	Substantial Public Benefit*	Public and Individual Benefit	Primarily Individual Benefit
Financial Sustainability	Free, Nominal or Fee Tailored to Public Needs, Requires Public Funding	Fees Cover Some Direct Costs, Requires a Balance of Public Funding and a Cost Recovery Target	Fees Cover Most Direct and Indirect Costs, Some Public Funding as Appropriate
Similar Provider Offerings	Limited or No Alternative Providers	Alternative Providers Unable to Meet Demand or Need	Alternative Providers Readily Available
BGPR Program Distribution	52%	24%	24%

*Negative Consequence if not provided.

Figure 49: Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Program Classification

BGPR program classification distribution reflects a strong commitment to public service and accessibility, with 52% of programs classified as Essential, 24% as Enhanced, and 24% as Specialized. This distribution indicates that more than half of BGPR’s offerings focus on high public interest, mission-driven programs that provide substantial community benefit and require public funding to remain affordable and accessible. Overall, the distribution shows BGPR’s emphasis on community-wide access while maintaining a balanced portfolio that supports both financial sustainability and program diversity.

As BGPR continues to evolve to better meet the community’s needs, there could be an added benefit to managing the services if they all were classified according to the Cost Recovery Service Classification Model depicted below, **Figure 50: Service Classification Model**, based on the amount of community benefit versus individual benefit each program/ service provides.

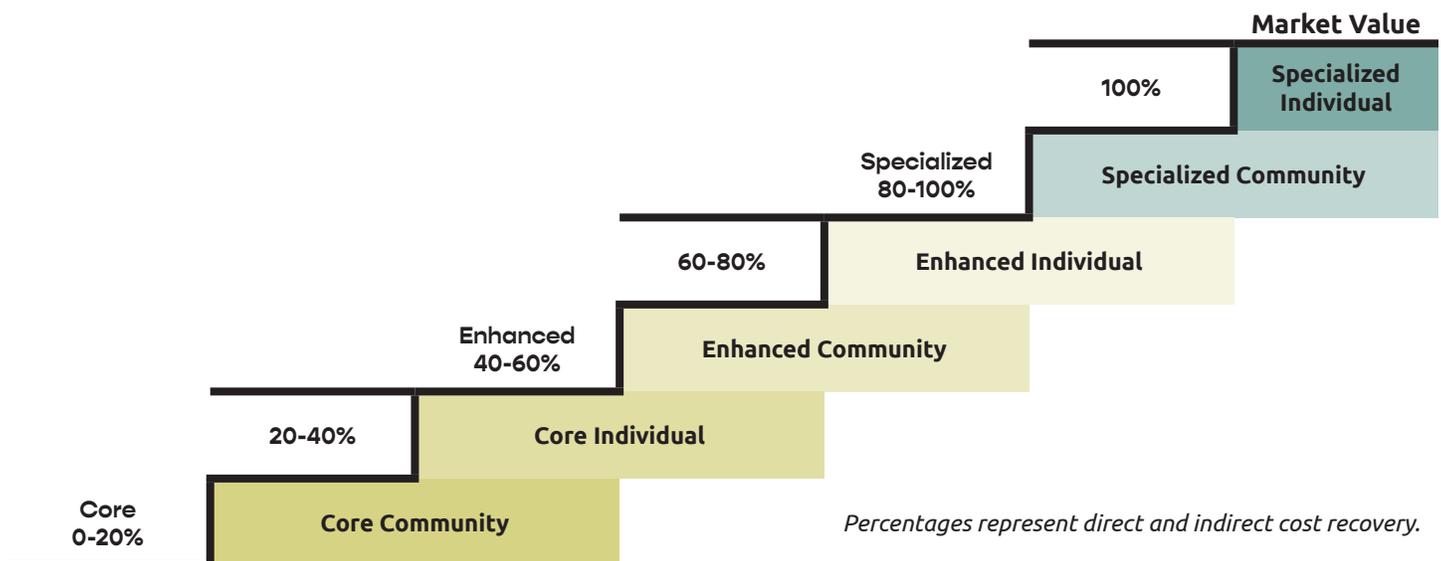


Figure 50: Service Classification Model

Cost of Service and Cost Recovery

The previously identified Core Program Areas would serve as an effective breakdown for tracking cost recovery metrics including administrative costs. Theoretically, staff should review how programs are grouped for similar cost recovery and subsidy goals to determine if current practices still meet management outcomes.

Determining cost recovery performance and using it to make informed pricing decisions involves a three-step process:

1. Classify all programs and services based on the public or private benefit they provide (as completed in the previous section).
2. Conduct a Cost-of-Service Analysis to calculate the full cost of each program.
3. Establish a cost recovery percentage, through Department policy, for each program or program type based on the outcomes of the previous two steps and adjust program prices accordingly.

Understanding the Full Cost-of-Service

To develop specific cost recovery targets, full cost of accounting needs to be created on each class or program that accurately calculates direct and indirect costs. Cost recovery goals are established once these numbers are in place, and BGPR's program staff should be trained on this process. A Cost-of-Service Analysis should be conducted on each

program, or program type, that accurately calculates direct (i.e., program-specific) and indirect (i.e., comprehensive, including administrative overhead) costs. Completing a Cost-of-Service Analysis not only helps determine the true and full cost of offering a program, but it also provides information that can be used to price programs based upon accurate delivery costs. The figure below, **Figure 51: Common Costs in Cost-of-Service Analysis**, illustrates the common types of costs that are accounted for in a Cost-of-Service Analysis

The methodology for determining the total Cost-of-Service involves calculating the total cost for the activity, program, or service, then calculating the total revenue earned for that activity. Costs (and revenue) can also be derived on a per-unit basis. Program or activity units may include:

- + Number of participants

- + Number of tasks performed
- + Number of consumable units
- + Number of service calls
- + Number of events
- + Required time for offering program/service

Agencies use Cost-of-Service Analysis to determine what financial resources are required to provide specific programs at specific levels of service. Cost recovery goals are established once Cost-of-Service totals have been calculated. Program staff should be trained on the process of conducting a Cost-of-Service Analysis and the process should be undertaken when the program plan is updated.

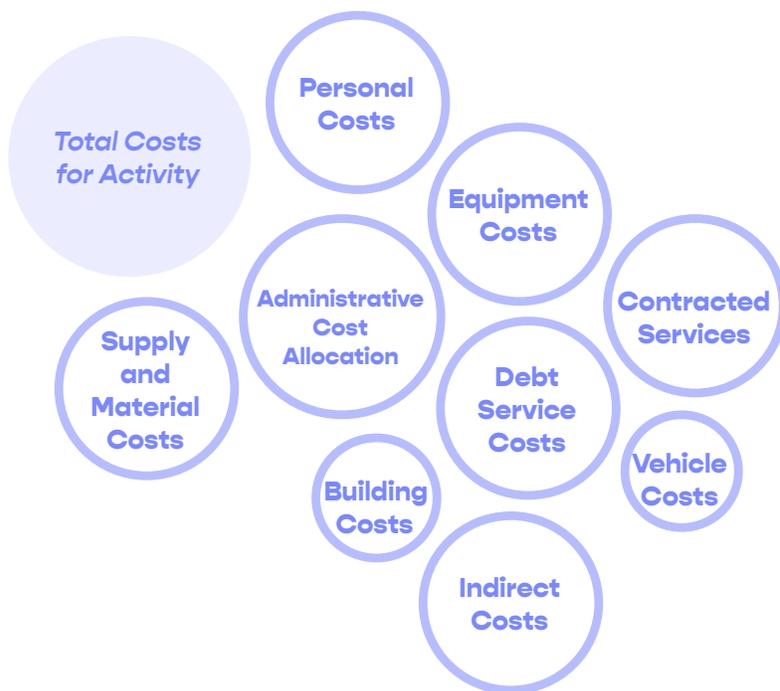


Figure 51: Common Costs in Cost-of-Service Analysis

Cost Recovery

BGPR maintains a balanced approach between community access and financial sustainability, with cost recovery performance varying across program areas and reflecting the department’s mix of essential and revenue-generating services.

Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Goals by Core Program Area			
Core Program Area	Current Cost Recovery Goal	Actual Cost Recovery Achieved	Best Practice Direct and Indirect Cost Recovery Goal
Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation	<i>No Cost Recovery Associated</i>		
Aquatics	60%	54%	50-100%
Athletics	80%	60%	75-100%
Community Center Youth Programs	25%	19%	0-50%
Fitness & Wellness	70-75%	50%	75-100%
Golf	85%	89%	100%+
Special Events	<i>No Cost Recovery Associated</i>		

Figure 52: Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Goals by Core Program Area

Key Observations

Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation & Special Events

- + No direct cost recovery goals, as they are publicly supported and focused on community accessibility and inclusion.

Aquatics

- + Achieves 54% cost recovery, slightly below the 60% goal.
- + Within best practice range (50–100%).
- + Opportunity to modestly increase pricing or participation.

Athletics

- + Achieves 60% cost recovery compared to an 80% goal.
- + Within best practice range (75–100%) but under-performing against internal targets.
- + Potential to adjust league fees, scheduling efficiency, or sponsorships.

Community Center Youth Programs

- + Achieves 19% cost recovery versus a 25% goal.
- + Within best practice range (0–50%), reflecting its role as a highly subsidized essential service.
- + Supports mission-driven youth engagement and equity objectives.

Fitness & Wellness

- + Achieves 50% cost recovery, below the 70–75% goal.
- + Best practice range: 75–100%.
- + Opportunity to boost memberships, participation, or pricing alignment.

Golf

- + Achieves 89% cost recovery, exceeding its 85% goal.
- + Aligns closely with best practice (100%+) levels.
- + Demonstrates strong operational efficiency and revenue generation.

Special Events

- + No direct cost recovery targets, emphasizing their role as publicly supported services that promote accessibility and community cohesion.
- + Provide significant social and community value beyond financial return.

Pricing Strategies

To ensure access, financial sustainability, and market competitiveness, best practice pricing strategies can be applied to offset operational costs in delivering programs and services. These strategies consider factors such as age, household status, and residency, allowing pricing to reflect user characteristics and encourage participation across demographics. Operational variables like day of the week, time of day, and location help align pricing with demand patterns and facility use. **Figure 53: Best Pricing Strategies** shows the best practices in pricing programs and services.

BGPR employs a multifaceted pricing strategy designed to balance access and financial sustainability across its programs and services. Currently, BGPR uses the following pricing strategies, as shown below in **Figure 54: BGPR Pricing Strategies Implemented**.

Best Pricing Strategies	
Pricing Strategy	Description
Age Segment	Different prices offered for different ages.
Bundle Pricing	Programs/services are grouped together at a single, often discounted price.
By Competition (Market Rate)	Competitors' prices influence your price.
By Cost Recovery Goals	Dept. cost recovery goals influence your price.
By Customer's Ability to Pay	Scholarships, subsidies, discounted rates offered for low-income
By Location	Different prices at different locations
Family/Household Status	Different prices offered for family/household groups
Group Discounts	Different prices for groups
Introductory Pricing	Program/Service is offered at a lower price for a limited time when it's first launched
Prime/Non-Prime Time	Different prices for different times of the day
Residency	Different prices for resident vs non-resident
Subscription/Member Pricing	Pay a recurring fee at regular intervals (i.e. memberships, member/non-member)
Weekday/Weekend	Different prices for different days of the week

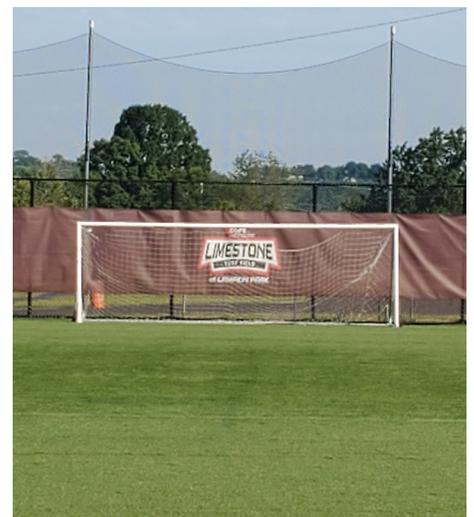
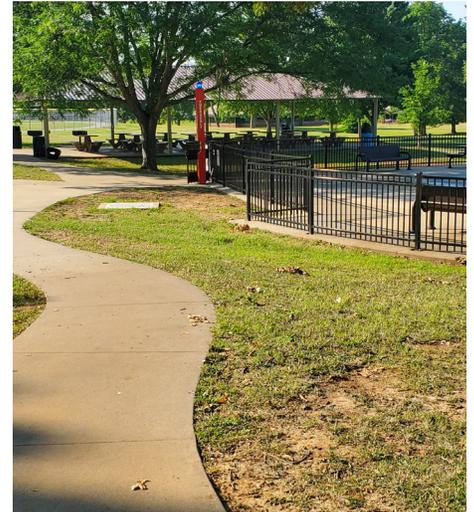
Figure 53: Best Pricing Strategies

BGPR Pricing Strategies Implemented										
Core Program Area	Age Segment	Family/ Household Status	Residency	Weekday/ Weekend	Prime/Non- Prime Time	Group Discounts	By Location	By Competition (Market Rate)	By Cost Recovery Goals	By Customer's Ability to Pay
Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation										X
Aquatics	X				X	X		X	X	
Athletics	X								X	X
Community Center Youth Programs										X
Fitness & Wellness	X	X				X		X	X	X
Golf	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Special Events	No Fees									

Figure 54: BGPR Pricing Strategies Implemented

It is important to note the following pricing strategies and how they contribute to BGPR and its ability to adapt and align with community needs:

- + Golf demonstrates the most comprehensive pricing model, incorporating nearly all strategies including age, family status, residency, time of use, competition, cost recovery goals, and ability to pay reflecting its mature business operations and market alignment.
- + Fitness & Wellness also applies multiple strategies, adjusting fees based on age, household status, competition, cost recovery goals, and affordability to ensure inclusivity while maintaining financial performance.
- + Aquatics utilizes targeted pricing factors such as age, weekday/weekend, prime time, location, and market rate comparisons, creating flexible options for diverse users.
- + Athletics applies age-based and cost-recovery pricing to balance accessibility with sustainability.
- + Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation and Community Center Youth Programs prioritize affordability through ability-to-pay considerations, supporting access and participation for all.
- + Special Events are intentionally free, reinforcing their role in community engagement and broad public access.



Program Lifecycle

BGPR program lifecycle distribution, **Figure 55: Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Lifecycle Distribution**, shows a healthy balance of established and emerging programs but indicates opportunities to introduce more new and rapidly growing offerings.

Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Lifecycle Distribution				
Lifecycle Stage	Description	Actual Program Distribution		Recommended Distribution
Introduction	New Program; Modest Participation	27%	68%	50-60% Total
Take-Off	Rapid Participation Growth	5%		
Growth	Moderate, but Consistent Population Growth	35%		
Mature	Slow Participation Growth	17%	17%	40% Total
Saturation	Minimal to No Participation Growth; Extreme Competition	13%	15%	0-10% Total
Decline	Decline Participation	2%		
No-Go	Cancelled Programs	1%	1%	

Figure 55: Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Lifecycle Distribution



Key Observations

- + **Introductory Stage:** 27% of programs are in this stage, reflecting active innovation and responsiveness to community needs.
- + **Take-off Stage:** 5% of programs are in the Take-Off Stage, signaling a potential need to nurture promising new initiatives into higher participation levels.
- + **Growth Stage:** 35% are in this stage, representing strong, steady participation and alignment with resident demand.
- + **Mature Stage:** 17% of programs are Mature falling short of the recommended 40% total for mature offerings
- + **Saturation Stage:** 13% are in Saturation, slightly above the suggested threshold, indicating some areas may be experiencing competition or plateaued participation.
- + Very few programs are in Decline (2%) or No-Go (1%), showing effective program management and limited underperformance.
- + The BGPR program lifecycle distribution reflects a healthy focus on innovation, with 68% of programs in the early to mid-stages of Introduction, Take-Off, and Growth, aligning well with the recommended 50–60%. However, the distribution shows 15% of offerings in Saturation and Decline, above the recommended 0–10%, indicating some programs are decreasing in relevance or facing heavy competition from alternate providers. BGPR should focus on critically evaluating saturated and declining programs for revitalization or retirement to ensure long-term balance and continued positive impact.

Ancillary Services Three Year Analysis

Ancillary Services are additional services to the main line of business that enhance or support the agencies main line of business. In parks and recreation agencies, these are typically non-programmatic services that are provided to the public such as shelter rentals, venue rentals and special use facilities. The following are BGPR's ancillary services in a summary and the analysis period is defined as Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-2024. For the ancillary services analysis by the numbers see **Appendix**.

The ancillary services for Bowling Green Parks and Recreation (BGPR) reflect a diverse mix of revenue-generating amenities that enhance the user experience and strengthen the department's overall financial sustainability. These services can be categorized into facility rentals, fitness and wellness, aquatics, golf operations, and community amenities.

- + **Facility Rentals and Community Amenities** – This category includes community gardens, shelters, memorial benches, and both indoor and outdoor facility rentals. Participation and revenue have increased significantly in most areas, particularly outdoor rentals (+67%) and community gardens (+47%), showing strong public engagement and effective use of available spaces.
- + **Fitness and Wellness Services** – Programs such as weightlifting, aerobics, and insurance-based fitness participation continue to perform well, with insurance-based programs increasing 60% in revenue and weightlifting showing steady growth (+15%). Personal training, however, declined (-58%), suggesting the need to reassess pricing or promotion strategies. Overall Fitness and Wellness are rebounding since a decline during the Pandemic.
- + **Aquatics Services** – Aquatic operations demonstrate healthy growth across participation and revenue categories, especially in season passes (+50%), rentals (+67%), and instructional swim (+8%), underscoring consistent community demand for aquatic recreation.
- + **Golf Operations** – Golf remains a substantial revenue source across three courses (Crosswinds, Paul Walker, and Hobson). Key revenue drivers include green fees, cart rentals, and driving range use, with the latter growing 56% at Hobson. Retail and merchandise sales show mixed trends, while essentials like balls and concessions increased, equipment sales (clubs, bags, apparel) declined, indicating possible market saturation or changing customer habits.
- + **Community Partnerships and Sponsorships** – The Community Action and Pepsi sponsorship contracts remain stable revenue contributors (\$24,000 each annually), while vending commissions grew significantly (+479%), suggesting growth in passive revenue sources.

Overall, BGPR's ancillary services portfolio demonstrates solid growth and diversification, with notable strengths in facility rentals, golf, and aquatics. Opportunities exist to enhance retail sales, revitalize personal training services, and continue leveraging partnerships and sponsorships to expand financial resilience and continue providing great community value.



Best Practices

Best practices are methods, guidelines, or procedures that are proven through research and experience to be the most effective way to achieve a desired outcome, often leading to enhanced efficiency, quality, and customer satisfaction. BGPR has a framework for this analysis based on different implementation of a couple of recreation services vs programming. Fitness and Wellness and Golf are standing alone as their unique operations include programs and self-directed activities. All other Core Program Areas are within Recreation & Athletics (Adaptive & Inclusive, Aquatics, Athletics, Community Center Youth Programs, Special Events). Not all services will use all practices based on unique operations.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Tracking

BGPR understands the need to track the data it creates from service delivery. They tracks KPIs to better inform decision making for the program portfolio. Currently, the following, **Figure 56: BGPR Key Performance Indicators**, is tracked for Core Program Areas placed into the categories.

BGPR Key Performance Indicators		
Fitness & Wellness	Golf	Recreation & Athletics
Total Participants	Total Participants	Total Participants
Program Cancellation Rate	Merchandise Sales	Program Cancellation Rate
Customer Satisfaction Level	Total Rounds, Cart Rental, Club Rental, Concessions	Customer Satisfaction Level
Membership Revenues		Customer Retention Rate
Insurance Based Fitness		Program Revenues
		Outdoor Facility Rentals
		Aquatic Season Passes, Rentals, Attendance, Instructional Swim, Daily Admission

Figure 56: BGPR Key Performance Indicators



Human Resources Practices

BGPR Human Resource Practices, **Figure 57: BGPR Human Resources Practices**, demonstrate a strong commitment to staff development, safety, and consistent performance evaluation across all core program areas. Fitness & Wellness, Golf, and Recreation & Athletics all emphasize fundamental best practices such as basic life safety training, continuing education, and performance reviews for full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees. This is ensuring staff are supported and held to consistent standards. While each area applies best practices tailored to its functions, expanding shared practices such as marketing training, lesson planning, and enhanced cost analysis could strengthen consistency and staff capacity across the department. Overall, BGPR's human resource practices support operational excellence systemwide.

BGPR Human Resources Practices			
Best Practice	Fitness & Wellness	Golf	Recreation & Athletics
Regularly and Consistently Update Policies & Procedures	X		X
Instructor Quality Check		X	X
Lesson Plans			
Program Evaluation System		X	X
Customer Service Training		X	X
Basic Life Safety Training (Ex. CPR, First Aid)	X	X	X
Enhanced Life Safety Training		X	X
Specialty Skill Training		X	X
Marketing Training			
Training on Calculating/Tracking Total Cost of Facility Operations	X		
Training on Calculating/Tracking Cost of Service	X		
Continuing Education	X	X	X
Diversity Training	X	X	X
Performance Reviews; Full-Time	X	X	X
Performance Reviews; Part-Time	X	X	X
Performance Reviews; Seasonal		X	X

Figure 57: BGPR Human Resources Practices

Marketing

BGPR currently utilizes a variety of grassroots and digital marketing approaches to reach the community, though marketing responsibilities are shared across staff rather than managed by a dedicated professional or team. While the City employs a Public Information Officer and communications specialist, BGPR manages most outreach internally through a mix of traditional and emerging methods. BGPR promotes programs via RecTrac email lists, school newsletters and printed flyers, and in-person engagement at health fairs, activity fairs, and local businesses.

Recently, BGPR expanded its digital presence by launching Facebook and Instagram accounts, which have significantly increased reach and engagement, particularly evident through the 71,000 visitors at the water park this past summer. Additional outreach includes text messaging, podcasts produced by the City, website-based program listings, and multilingual materials to improve accessibility. Traditional media such as newspaper and radio ads continue to serve older residents, while QR code signage in underserved neighborhoods connects residents to the quarterly program guide. This diverse, community-centered approach allows BGPR to reach a wide audience despite limited formal marketing infrastructure, and with continued growth in social media and digital tools, the department is well-positioned to strengthen its visibility and connection across all demographics.

BGPR Marketing and Promotions			
Best Practice	Fitness & Wellness	Golf	Recreation & Athletics
Program Guides (Print)	X	X	X
Program Guides (Online)	X	X	X
Website	X	X	X
Smart/Mobile Phone Enabled Site	X		X
Flyer and/or Brochures	X	X	X
Direct Mail	X	X	X
Email Blasts and/or Listserv			X
Public Service Announcements (PSAs)	X	X	X
Roadsign Marquees		X	X
Paid Advertisements		X	X
Radio (Paid or Free)			X
TV (Paid or Free)	X	X	X
On-Hold Pre-Programmed Phone Messages			X
SMS/MMS/Text Message Marketing	X		X
Newsletters (Print)		X	X
Newsletters (Online)			X
In-Facility Signage	X		X
Facebook	X		X
Instagram	X		X
Twitter	X	X	X
YouTube Channel			X
Blogs/Vlogs			X
Webinars			
QR Codes	X		X

Figure 58: BGPR Marketing and Promotions

Customer Feedback

Currently, BGPR utilizes the following, **Figure 59: BGPR Customer Feedback**, to gain insight into customer perceptions for Fitness & Wellness and Recreation & Athletics. Golf operations may not use the below feedback methods, by nature of the sport, there are online reviews that serve the same purpose:

- + Cross Winds Golf Course 4.0 out of 5 (144) in Google Reviews.
- + Hobson Golf Course & Driving Range 4.4 out of 5 (272) in Google reviews.
- + Paul Walker Golf Course 4.2 out of 5 (197) in Google Reviews.

Statistically Valid Survey Results

A statistically Valid Survey was sent out at random to residents of the City to collect feedback on various services and operations of BGPR. The following, **Figure 60: Top Priorities for Investment for Program/Activities Based on Priority Investment Rating**, identifies the high priorities of respondents regarding programming. Section 1.6 entails the comparison of current programs versus the community priorities in the Top Program Priorities for Investment from the survey results. The goal is to determine how well the current program portfolio aligns with the priorities the community has identified.

BGPR Customer Feedback			
Best Practice	Fitness & Wellness	Golf	Recreation & Athletics
Pre-Program Surveys	X		X
Post-Program Surveys	X		X
Regular/Recurring User Surveys			X
Non-Customer/Non-User Surveys	X		
Focus Group	X		X
Statistically Valid Surveys	X		X
In-Facility, In-Park, or On-Site Surveys	X		X

Figure 59: BGPR Customer Feedback

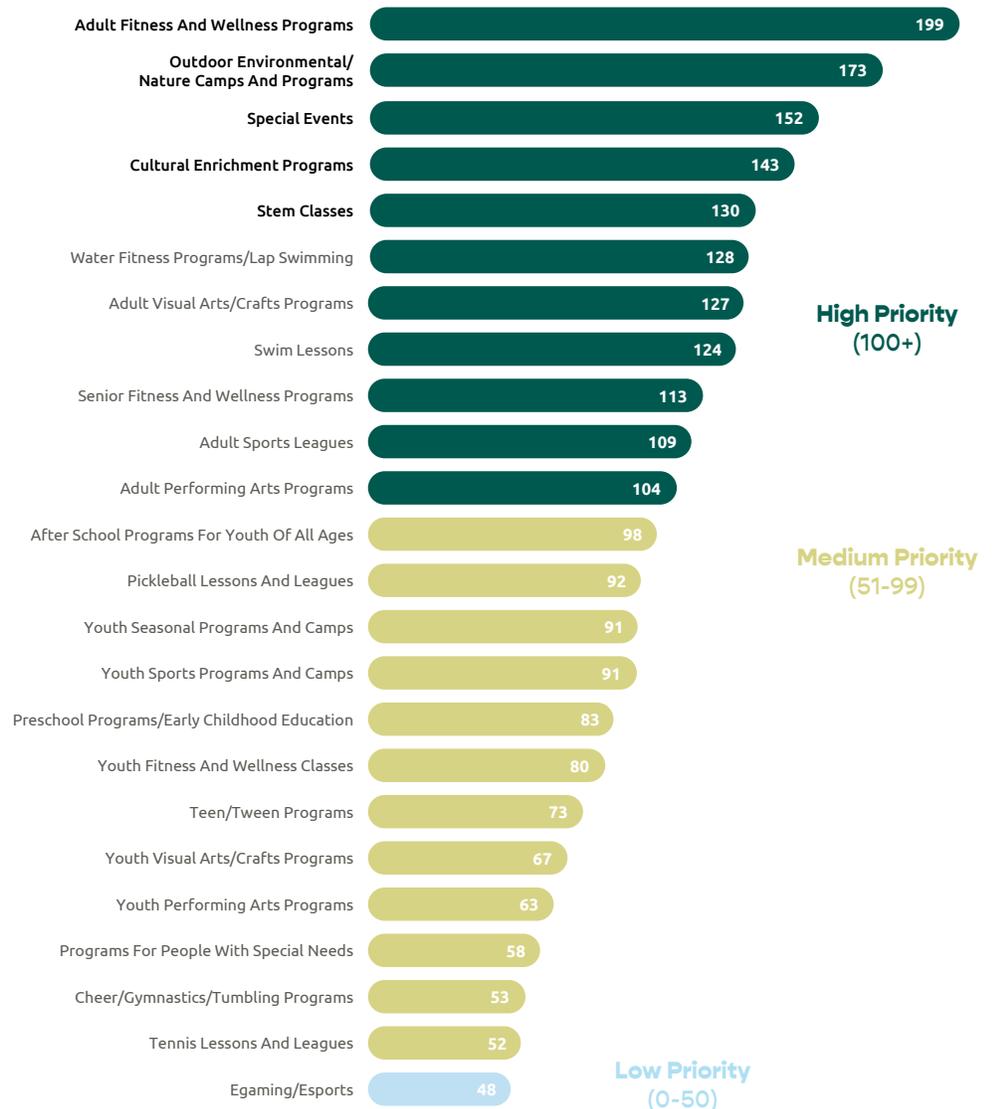


Figure 60: Top Priorities for Investment for Program/Activities Based on Priority Investment Rating

Aligning with Community Priorities

BGPR Program Alignment Matrix, **Figure 61: BGPR Program Alignment Matrix (Current Programs vs Community Priorities)**, illustrates a strong connection between the department’s existing programs and the community’s highest recreation priorities, while also highlighting opportunities for strategic growth. BGPR demonstrates excellent alignment in several key areas, including adult fitness and wellness, special events, aquatics (swim lessons and water fitness), community center youth programs, and athletics, which closely match the top community priorities identified in the statistically valid survey. These programs represent BGPR’s core strengths, particularly in promoting health, engagement, and multigenerational participation. However, some gaps exist in areas such as outdoor environmental and nature programs, cultural enrichment, and adult arts and performing arts, which are only minimally represented within current offerings. Expanding in these areas through nature-based programming, arts partnerships, and creative youth and adult enrichment would allow BGPR to better meet emerging community needs and demand. Overall, the matrix confirms that while BGPR is effectively serving its residents through high-demand programs, strategic diversification and partnerships will be essential to align more fully with the evolving priorities of the community.

BGPR Program Alignment Matrix (Current Programs vs Community Priorities)								
Community Priorities (PIR Ranking)	Adaptive & Inclusive Recreation	Aquatics	Athletics	Community Center Youth Programs	Fitness & Wellness	Golf	Special Events	Alignment Notes
Adult Fitness & Wellness (199.1)	X	X	X		X			Strong in Fitness & Wellness; Expand Senior/Adult Offerings in Other Areas
Outdoor Environmental/Nature Programs (173.2)				X				Limited Presence; Develop Nature-Based Recreation and Outdoor Education
Special Events (151.6)	X	X	X	X			X	Strong Alignment; Continue Expanding and Diversifying Community Events
Cultural Enrichment Programs (143.4)				X				Opportunity to Integrate Arts, Heritage, and Cultural Programs
STEM Classes (130.3)				X				Emerging Area; Can be Incorporated into Youth Programs or Camps
Water Fitness/Lap Swimming (127.9)		X						Strong Alignment; Expand Adult Water Fitness and Lap Swim Programs
Adult Visual Arts/Crafts (126.8)	X			X			X	Opportunity for Community Art Workshops and Partnerships
Swim Lessons (124.2)		X						Well-Served through Aquatics; Maintain Focus on Instruction for All Ages
Senior Fitness & Wellness (113.1)	X	X	X		X			Strong in Fitness & Wellness; Expand Adaptive/Senior-Friendly Options
Adult Sports Leagues (109.2)	X		X			X		Strong Alignment with Athletics; Maintain and Diversify Leagues
Adult Performing Arts (104.3)				X			X	Potential Collaboration with Local Arts Organizations

Figure 61: BGPR Program Alignment Matrix (Current Programs vs Community Priorities)

Operational Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

BGPR demonstrates significant strengths in its programming through its trusted reputation, creative staff, and strong community partnerships. The department provides safe, inclusive, and innovative programs that meet diverse community needs while fostering a strong sense of belonging and pride among residents. However, several challenges impact programming effectiveness, including staffing limitations, budget constraints, and barriers to access such as transportation, affordability, and language differences. BGPR is experiencing growing demand driven by the city’s population growth, which has also created space and scheduling pressures, particularly at the Parker Bennett Community Center and in adaptive and athletic programs. Despite these challenges, BGPR is well-positioned to capitalize on numerous opportunities, including facility expansion, the addition of an indoor pool for year-round aquatics, staff growth, and the introduction of new and creative recreation offerings. By addressing resource limitations and continuing to innovate, BGPR can strengthen its capacity to serve an expanding community and continue high-quality recreation experiences for all residents.

The following, are the identified strengths and challenges.

Figure 62: BGPR Recreation Program Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

BGPR Recreation Program Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities		
Strengths	Challenges	Opportunities
Safe spaces where parents trust leaving children in staff care	Barriers to access such as transportation and language limitations	Develop an indoor pool to expand aquatic programming
Strong networking and partnerships for programs (e.g. Bunny Hop Trail)	Limited budget and inflation impacting operations and pricing	Establish 12-month aquatic operations to meet demand year-round
Inclusive and welcoming programming approach	Transportation challenges for residents to reach facilities	Add full-time and part-time staff to build capacity
Wide range of quality recreation programs	Language barriers that limit participation for non-English speakers	Create larger classrooms for expanded programs
Dedicated to community service and responsiveness	Staff shortages adaptive and center staff stretched thin supporting special events	Expand or develop new facilities to meet growing demand
Ability to calibrate and adapt programming to community needs	Lack of dedicated special event staff	Enhance accessibility through creative, nontraditional approaches
Strong community relationships and support	Need for improved staff training and motivation in non-interest areas	Renovate and expand BGCC to modern standards
Creative and resourceful staff approach to program delivery	Fitness programming only recently recovered from COVID impacts	Offer new and expanded holiday outings and special events
Innovative programming that meets emerging interests	Residents developed independent recreation habits, creating new participation trends	Introduce new sports such as football to diversify offerings
Programs that make a meaningful community impact	Rapid population growth driving increased program demand	Enhance safety training and emergency preparedness
Commitment to meeting the diverse needs of the residents	Sports participation has not fully recovered post-COVID	Ensure inclusive programs that serve all children equitably
Strong sense of opportunity and growth mindset	Adaptive recreation participation slow to rebound due to population served	Develop a sports complex addition to improve scheduling and availability
Staff’s deep love and pride for the community	Financial barriers for youth sports participation (equipment fees)	Increase staff engagement through quarterly outings and team-building activities
	No indoor aquatics facility for Special Olympics or specialized swim programs	
	Lack of special needs swim lessons	
	Cost challenges for families with multiple children in programs	
	Increased demand at Parker Bennett without facility space	

Key Areas of Focus

Based on the detailed assessment of BGPR programs and services, the following, **Figure 63: BGPR Key Area of Focus for Recreation Programs & Services**, key areas should remain in focus while delivering services to residents to ensure quality, sustainability, and alignment with community needs:

Figure 63: BGPR Key Area of Focus for Recreation Programs & Services

BGPR Key Areas of Focus for Recreation Programs & Services	
Key Focus Area	Potential Strategies
Program Expansion & Innovation	Develop new and innovative programs in underrepresented areas such as nature-based recreation, cultural enrichment, and adult arts; nurture emerging programs from introduction to growth stages.
Facility Access	Plan for renovated community centers; improve access through transportation partnerships and continued use of satellite sites such as schools and WKU facilities.
Staff Development & Capacity Building	Add full-time and part-time staff to meet demand; provide cross-training in program delivery, customer service, and cost recovery; enhance staff engagement through quarterly outings and professional development.
Financial Sustainability & Cost Recovery	Refine cost recovery goals for each core program area; conduct cost-of-service analysis routinely; align pricing with community affordability and market rates to maintain sustainability.
Community Engagement & Partnerships	Strengthen partnerships with schools, universities, health agencies, and community groups to co-sponsor programs, enhance volunteerism, and leverage shared resources for greater community reach.
Inclusive & Adaptive Recreation	Expand adaptive and inclusive programming with specialized staff, equipment, and facilities; increase offering for participants with special needs and older adults; ensure all programs are accessible to diverse populations.
Marketing & Communications	Enhance marketing through expanded social media use, storytelling, and targeted outreach; utilize QR codes, podcasts, and multilingual materials; consider adding a dedicated marketing position or team.
Performance Tracking & Evaluation	Implement standardized program evaluation tools; track participation trends, cost recovery, and community impact; use data to guide program decisions.



Organizational & Staffing Analysis

The operational analysis looked at the current practices, future Department organization and staffing needs.

Introduction

Bowling Green Parks and Recreation was recently recognized along with Warren County Parks and Recreation as being outstanding departments by the Kentucky Recreation and Parks Society for their contributions to the profession. As the steward of a large and complex parks and recreation system, BGPR relies on a committed and skilled workforce that consistently exceeds expectations in serving a rapidly growing community.

The operational analysis looked at the current practices, future Department organization and staffing needs, improved operational efficiencies, policy development, technology improvements and marketing/communication opportunities. The consulting team also looked to see if there are opportunities to improve overall operations and the Department's capacity to implement the parks and recreation plan including public identified priorities. The process included review of existing Department policies, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis, interviews of key staff, facilities

tours, and reviews of Department processes, reports, and organizational structure.

Parks and Recreation agencies continue to face a multitude of growing market demands, ranging from providing a superior customer experience, addressing the needs of neighborhoods and community at large, capital development project management, keeping up with changing industry regulatory requirements, to attracting and retaining the best possible employees.

This review brings together staff insights, operational assessments, and organizational analysis to better understand current strengths, identify structural and staffing gaps, and determine the resources needed to maintain and elevate service delivery. By examining divisional functions, governance, workload distribution, and emerging needs, the review offers forward-looking foundation for strengthening internal operations, supporting staff success, and positioning the department to effectively scale up as Bowling Green continues to grow.



Department Overview

BGPR oversees a large and diverse system that includes more than 800 acres of parkland, 22 community and neighborhood parks, three golf courses, two community centers, an aquatic center, extensive trails, and dozens of recreation amenities and sports facilities. Despite the scale and complexity of this system, staff consistently deliver exceptional service to residents through hundreds of high-quality programs, special events, and services that engage all ages and reflect the community’s values. Resident support for BGPR remains strong, with consistently high satisfaction levels affirming the department’s commitment to accessibility, safety, and excellence. As Bowling Green continues to grow, the department must be positioned to scale its operations, staffing, and facilities to maintain this high standard of service and meet the increasing demand for recreation, open space, and community-building experiences.



BGPR Parks and Recreation System Overview

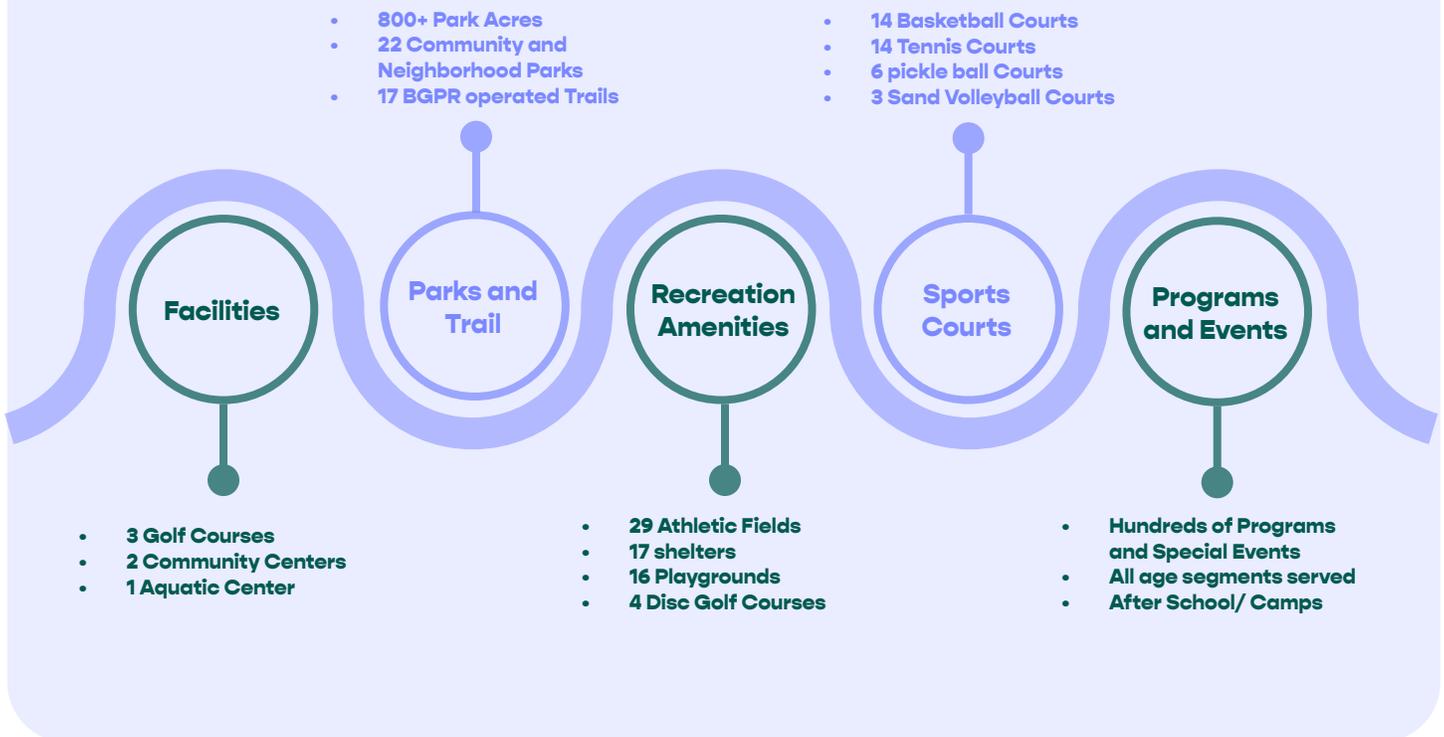


Figure 64: Bowling Green Parks and Recreation System Overview

Department Divisional Structure

BGPR operates through a comprehensive organizational structure that has helped in the delivery of high-quality parks, programs, and services to the community. Each division plays a vital role in maintaining the City’s 800+ acres of parkland, three golf courses, extensive trail system, and diverse recreational facilities. From planning and administration to maintenance, programming, and public safety, these divisions work collaboratively to support BGPR’s mission of enhancing quality of life through recreation, wellness, and community engagement. Together, they provide hundreds of programs, events, and services that serve all ages and abilities, reflecting BGPR’s commitment to accessibility, operational excellence, and community pride.

BGPR Department Division and Major Functions	
Division	Major Function
Adaptive Research	Offer adaptive and inclusive recreation programs, working with Western Kentucky University facilities and partners to serve all abilities
Administration	Provide overall department management, budgeting marketing, sponsorships, human resources, rentals, and public communications
Aquatics	Operate Aquatic center with swim lessons, open swim, lifeguard staffing, concessions, rentals, special events and aquatic fitness programs
Athletics Courts	Manage sports leagues, tournaments and scheduling for 29 fields, 14 basketball courts, 14 Tennis courts, 6 Pickleball courts and 3 Sand Volleyball courts
Cemetery	The Cemetery Division manages the sales, maintenance, operations and records of the City’s municipal cemeteries, ensuring respectful burial services and preservation of the grounds
Community Centers	Operate Community Centers, providing after school programs, camps, recreation programs, and Community Events
Fitness/ Wellness	Deliver fitness and wellness programs, classes, memberships serving all age segments through the Fitness center
Golf Pro Shops	Operate Golf Course retail and food service area, and manage tee times. Provide tournaments and customer service for golfers.
Landscaping	Design and maintain the City and park landscaping, tree care, and beautification projects across all the properties/facilities to written standards
Maintenance (Golf)	Maintain and manage 3 Golf Courses, turf care, equipment, greens, fairways, and course facilities to written standards
Maintenance (Grounds)	Maintain 22 Parks, 29 athletic Fields, Playgrounds, courts, shelters and Park infrastructure year round to written standards
Park Rangers	Provide Public Safety, park patrols, and visitor assistance across the park system
Park Planning	Oversee park planning, master plans, development projects for the 800+ acres of park, CAPRA Accreditation

Figure 65: BGPR Department Division and Major Functions

Governance and Organizational Chart

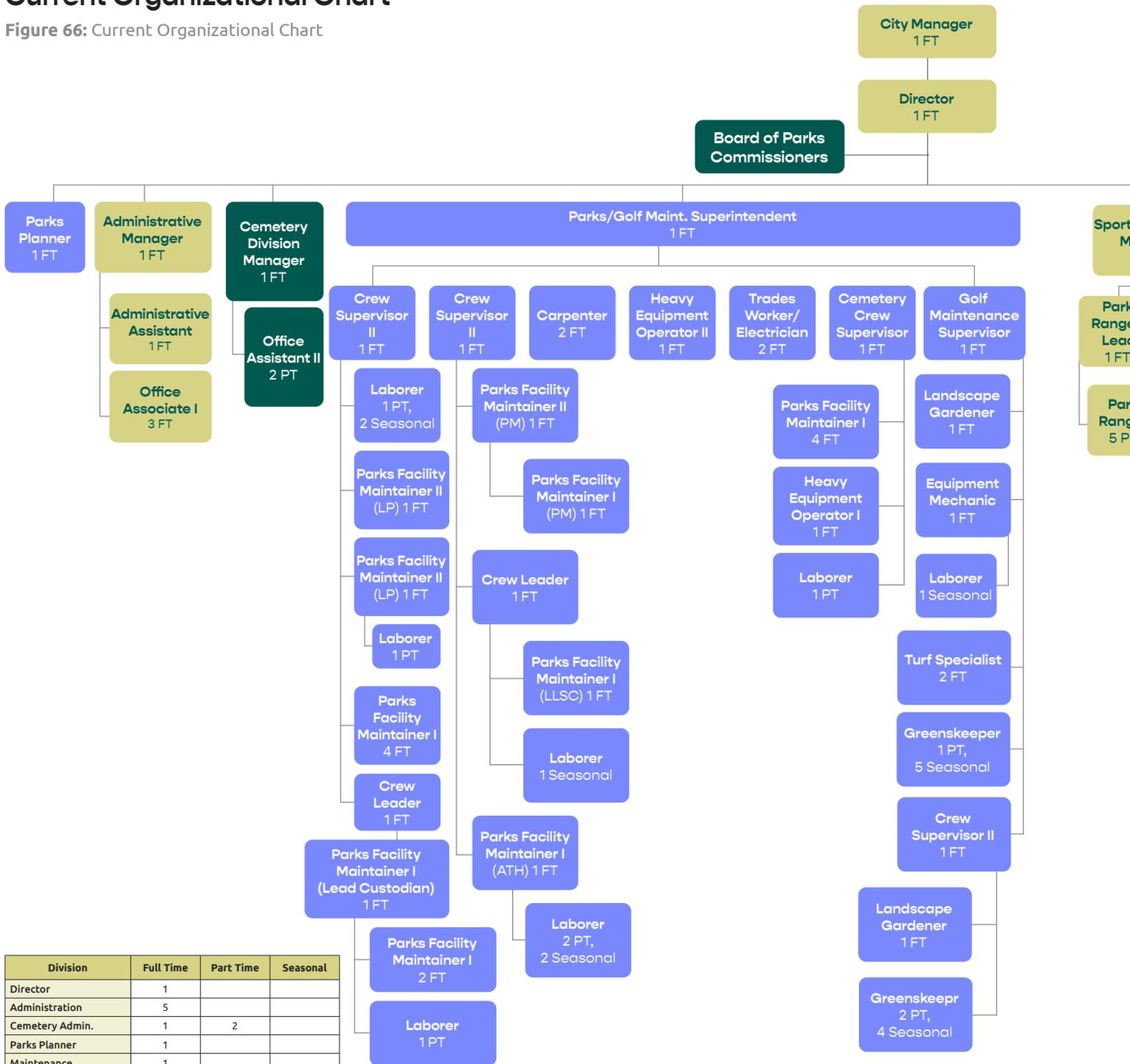
Bowling Green, KY has a City Manager form of government where the Board of Commissioners holds both executive and legislative power and hires a City Manager to handle daily operations. The mayor presides over the Board of Commissioners, a role that includes signing official documents. The Board of Park Commissioners serves an advisory role to the city's Parks & Recreation Department. It does not have final decision-making authority.

The BGPR organizational chart, **Figure 66: Current Organizational Chart**, illustrates the department's comprehensive structure and the coordinated effort required to manage its wide range of parks, facilities, and programs. Under the leadership of the City Manager, the Director, and the Board of Park Commissioners, the organization is divided into specialized divisions that oversee planning, administration, maintenance, recreation, athletics, golf, aquatics, landscaping, and cemetery operations. Each division includes a mix of full-time and part-time staff dedicated to maintaining the City's 800+ acres of parks, 22 community and neighborhood parks, and extensive recreation services. The chart highlights the depth of professional expertise and teamwork that supports BGPR to deliver exceptional recreational opportunities and maintain a high standard of community service.



Current Organizational Chart

Figure 66: Current Organizational Chart



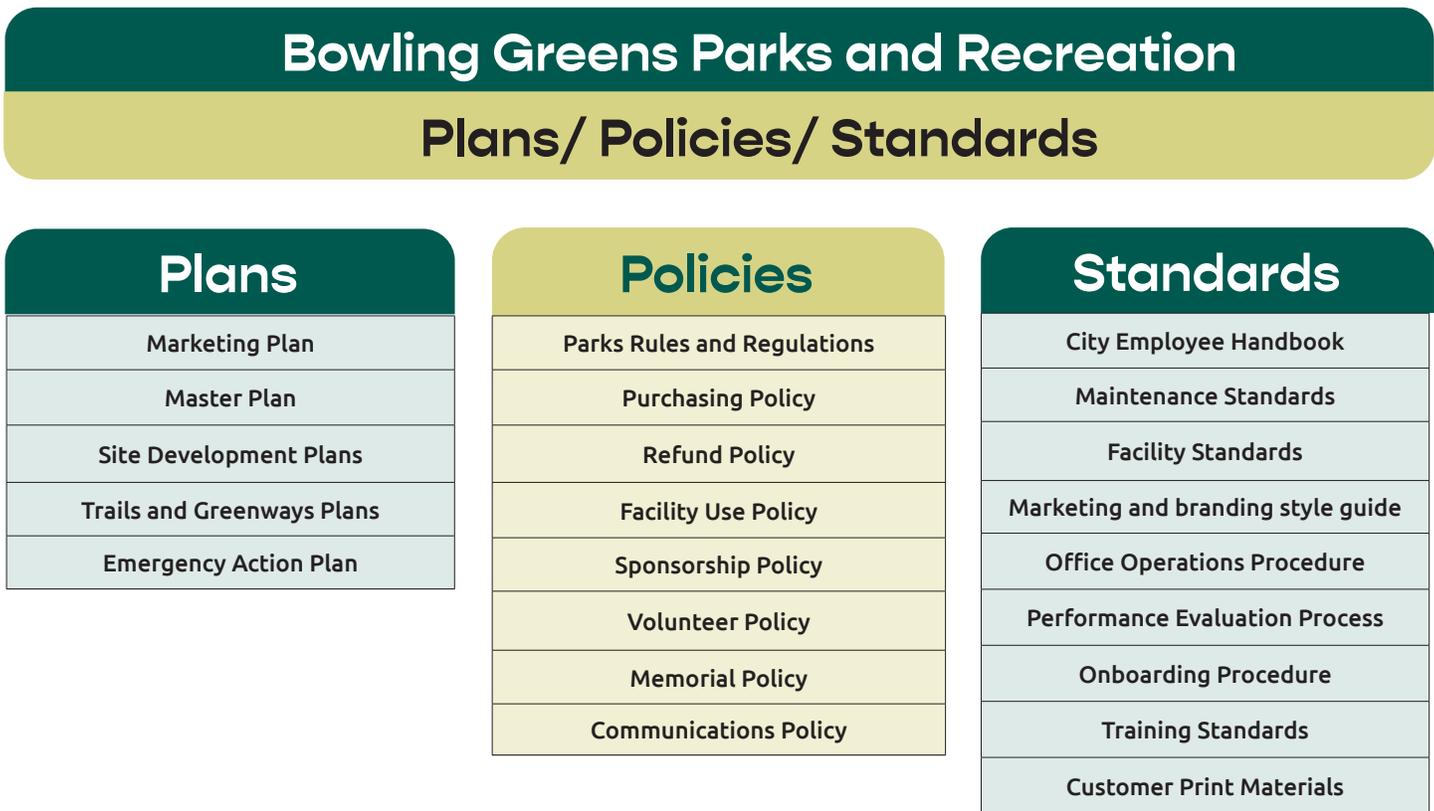
Division	Full Time	Part Time	Seasonal
Director	1		
Administration	5		
Cemetery Admin.	1	2	
Parks Planner	1		
Maintenance	1		
Parks	22	5	5
Cemetery	6	1	
Golf	7	3	10
Sports/Wellness	1		
Athletics	2	82	
Fitness	2	9	
Park Rangers		6	
Recreation	1		
Adaptive	2	3	20
Community Centers	5	9	15
Aquatics			66
Landscape	7	3	
Golf Pros Shops	2	31	1
TOTAL	66	154	117



Plans Policies and Standards

BGPR operates under a well-defined framework of plans, policies, and standards that guide the department’s daily operations, decision-making, and long-term growth. These foundational documents ensure consistency, transparency, and accountability across all programs, facilities, and services. Strategic plans such as the Master Plan, Marketing Plan, and Trails and Greenways Plan set the vision and direction for future development. Operational policies including facility use, purchasing, sponsorship, and communication provide clear guidelines for staff and the public. Supporting these are departmental standards like maintenance protocols, staff training procedures, and branding guidelines, which uphold the quality, safety, and professionalism that define BGPR’s commitment to serving the community.

Figure 67: BGPR Plans, Policies & Standards



Organization Functions & Staffing Optimization

The consulting team collaborated closely with departmental leadership and staff to review and strengthen the organizational structure across the divisions of the Department. This work focused on clarifying functional responsibilities, aligning staffing to service demands, and identifying opportunities to streamline operations and improve internal coordination. Through this process, the team validated existing roles, reorganized functions into a clearer divisional framework, and identified five new positions (Business Coordinator, Community Engagement and Marketing Analyst, Recreation Superintendent, Parks Superintendent, and Equipment Manager) that will enhance efficiency, improve communication, and support more proactive, data-driven service delivery. The current Parks/ Golf Superintendent position should be reclassified as Parks/ Golf Manager due to the increased knowledge/ skill set needed with additional services under the proposed Parks Superintendent position (cemeteries, landscaping, etc.). This optimized structure positions the department to better manage its growing workload, elevate customer experience, and continue delivering high-quality parks and recreation services to the community.

Proposed Position Descriptions

Business Coordinator

Overview: The Business Coordinator will provide centralized financial and administrative support to ensure consistency across all divisions.

Importance: This position strengthens internal controls, enhances transparency, and allows program and facility managers to focus on service delivery minimizing financial/administrative responsibilities.

Key Responsibilities:

- + Coordinate program and facilities budget tracking, purchase orders, and contract compliance.
- + Work with program and facility staff on financial reporting for revenue, expenditures.
- + Support the integration of cost recovery and business planning frameworks department-wide.

Community Engagement and Marketing Analyst

Overview: This role will lead data-driven community outreach, marketing performance evaluation, and communication alignment to strengthen public engagement and awareness.

Importance: The position optimizes outreach efforts by ensuring marketing investments are guided by analytics, improving participation, satisfaction, and community trust.

Key Responsibilities:

- + Analyze program participation, marketing effectiveness, and demographic trends.
- + Develop targeted outreach campaigns to engage underrepresented groups.
- + Manage digital platforms, brand consistency, and marketing data dashboards.

Recreation Superintendent

Overview: The Recreation Superintendent will oversee all recreation programming divisions including athletics, fitness, aquatics, community centers, and adaptive recreation to ensure cohesive service delivery and operational consistency. Direct management will continue to be the responsibility of the Recreation Manager.

Importance: This position provides a vital leadership layer between the Director and staff, improving coordination, efficiency, and quality control across multiple facilities and programs. This position serves as part of the leadership team.

Key Responsibilities:

- + Supervise and mentor division managers and program coordinators.
- + Standardize program development, pricing, and performance evaluation.
- + Align recreation services with the Department's mission, goals, and CAPRA standards.

Parks Superintendent

Overview: The Parks Superintendent will oversee maintenance and operations for park grounds, athletic fields, cemeteries, landscape, forestry, and golf course facilities to ensure consistent quality, safety, and sustainability.

Importance: By combining oversight of parks and golf maintenance, this role enhances resource sharing, improves scheduling efficiency, and optimizes use of labor and equipment.

Key Responsibilities:

- + Direct and lead maintenance staff across parks and golf courses.
- + Implement preventive maintenance programs and safety standards.
- + Align maintenance services with the Department’s mission, goals, and CAPRA standards.

Equipment Coordinator

Overview: The Equipment Coordinator will coordinate the department’s specialized equipment across all divisions including the coordination of obtaining alternative equipment when downtime is extended (rental or other departments).

Importance: Centralizing equipment coordination reduces downtime, extends asset life, and improves cost efficiency through preventative maintenance and tracking systems.

Key Responsibilities:

- + Coordinate data collection/tracking, repairs, maintenance, and replacement schedules for all BGPR equipment not under the purview of DPW.
- + Maintain inventory, safety inspections, and lifecycle replacement plans.
- + Support divisions with equipment allocation, training, and purchasing coordination.



Administration Division	Recreation Division	Parks and Open Space Division
Department Administration	Department Administration	Department Administration
Business Development	Adaptive Programs	Cemetery Management
Communications and Marketing	Adult and Senior Activities	Facilities and Aquatic Facility Maintenance
Community Engagement	Aquatics	Golf Maintenance
Division Administration	Community Centers	Landscape Management
Governance	Division Administration	Natural Resources Manager
Leadership and Workforce	Fitness and Wellness	Park Maintenance
Planning and Policies	Golf Operations	Shop Maintenance
	Special Events	Sports Field Maintenance
	Sports/Athletics	Urban Forestry
	Youth Development	Equipment Coordination
Budget FY2025	Budget FY2025	Budget FY2025
General Fund	General Fund	General Fund
\$911,000 Budget	\$3.6M Budget	\$8M Budget
\$52,076 User Fees	\$766,700 Aquatics and Sports	\$31,600 User Fees
	\$1.7M Golf	\$4,852,000 Park Maintenance
	\$158,600 Other	\$2,712,000 Golf
		\$945,500 Cemetery
Staffing	Staffing	Staffing
Parks and Recreation Director (1)	Golf Manager (1)	Parks Superintendent (1)
Parks Planner (1)	Sports and Wellness Manager (1)	Cemetery Manager (1)
Administration Manager (1)	Recreation Manager (1)	Parks/Golf Manager (1)
Office Associate II (1)	Community Center Manager (1)	Golf Superintendent (1)
Office Associate I (2)	Adaptive Programs Supervisor (1)	Golf Maintenance (3)
Community Engagement and Marketing Analyst (1)	Recreation Center (5)	Landscape Manager (1)
Business Coordinator (1)	Golf (2)	Golf Pro Shop (1)
	Adaptive (2)	Forestry Manager/ Arborist (1)
	Fitness (2)	Office Associate II (1)
	Park Rangers (6)	Park Supervisor (3)
	Recreation Superintendent (1)	Irrigation Technician (1)
		Landscape Maintenance (6)
		Facility/ Custodial Staff (5) - Trades
		Maintenance Workers (23)
		Forestry Staff (1)
		Equipment Coordinator (1)
		Equipment Mechanic (1)

Figure 68: BGPR Organization Functions & Staffing Optimization

Proposed Functional Organization Structure

BGPR should transition from a traditionally flat organizational structure to a more clearly defined functional structure, creating stronger alignment between responsibilities, expertise, and service delivery. This refined framework organizes work into dedicated administrative, parks, and recreation functions, allowing staff to specialize, improve coordination, and better support the department’s growing operational demands. By grouping related operational areas under focused leadership, the department can enhance communication, streamline decision-making, and strengthen accountability. This functional structure not only clarifies roles and workflow but also positions the organization to deliver higher-quality, more consistent services to the community, while ensuring that each division has the support necessary to operate efficiently and sustainably.

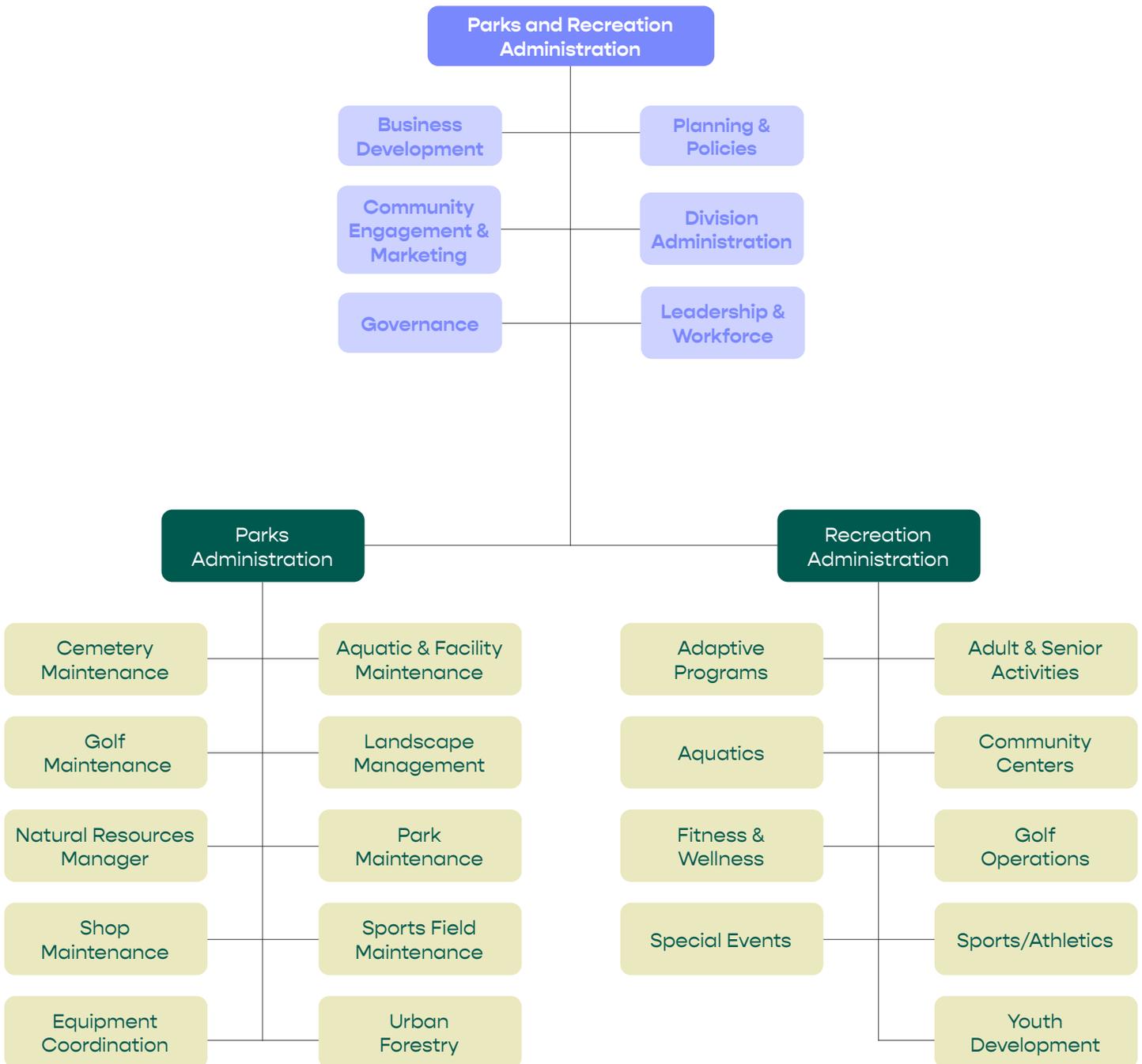


Figure 69: Proposed Functional Organization Structure



SWOT Analysis

A divisional S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis engaged leaders from all BGPR Divisions.

Introduction

As part of the organizational evaluation in the master planning process, the Consulting Team conducted a divisional S.W.O.T. analysis, engaging leaders from each division including Park Maintenance, Landscaping, Golf, Administration, Cemetery Services, Sports, Wellness, and Recreation. In addition to the leadership S.W.O.T., Bowling Green Parks and Recreation (BGPR) conducted a SWOT with the majority of remaining staff to increase engagement to be department wide. The responses to the department lead exercise are also included in this summary. This staff engagement process was designed to uncover internal strengths and weaknesses as well as identify external opportunities and threats that impact daily operations and long-term goals. Through this inclusive engagement process, BGPR has gained valuable insights into its workforce, infrastructure, and potential for growth. The feedback reflects a department fueled by passion, professionalism, and a clear desire to better serve the community.

SWOT Analysis

The following definitions were used to prepare the staff for engagement in both the leadership and department wide SWOT.

Strengths

Strengths are an internal analysis of what an organization does well and it is useful to think of strengths such as special capabilities or expertise. These are things that have enabled the organization to be successful to this point, and how it has prepared itself to compete in the future.

Weaknesses

Weaknesses are also considered to be an internal analysis and is an opportunity for an organization to identify areas of improvement. They include problems that need to be corrected, deficiencies recognized through a comparison with other agencies or best practices, or deficiencies such as lacking the resources to grow.

Opportunities

Once strengths and weaknesses have been identified, the SWOT analysis becomes more external in nature and involves identifying ways in which the organization can better position itself for increased success in the future. Opportunity seeking is an external analysis of strategic factors that can enhance or improve services the organization offers (both new and existing services), and a defined customer group at which that service is targeted (again including new and existing customers)

Threats

Threat identification is also external in nature as “internal threats” are considered to be weaknesses. Threats are external trends or forces that adversely affect the organization that cannot be left unaddressed or even ignored.

Summary of Findings

The following is a summary of emerging themes from all SWOT responses.

Emerging Organizational Strengths

Across all divisions, staff emphasized the department’s most valuable asset, its people. BGPR is powered by a highly skilled, multitiered, and community-driven workforce. Teams are adaptive, collaborative, and deeply committed to delivering quality services. The diversity of programming, strength of leadership, and responsiveness of operations reflect a strong organizational culture focused on public service and inclusion.

Common Organizational Weaknesses

Despite the dedication of its workforce, the department

faces persistent challenges. Staffing shortages, limited training opportunities, outdated infrastructure, and inefficient hiring and communication systems hinder operational capacity. These issues were consistent across all divisions, particularly in Parks and Golf Maintenance, where the need for updated documentation (standards) and formal training programs was emphasized.

Opportunities for Advancement

Staff identified a wealth of potential for positive transformation, including clearer career paths, investment in new and upgraded facilities, and improved knowledge transfer processes. There was strong interest in leveraging BGPR’s role in community development by expanding service offerings, embracing innovative technologies, and maximizing underutilized resources. Notable opportunities include an indoor

aquatic center, expanded parkland in underserved areas, and enhanced professional development opportunities.

External Threats and Emerging Pressures

Rapid population growth, recreation service providers with similar initiatives, and social issues such as homelessness continue to apply pressure on departmental resources. The department also highlighted insufficient funding mechanisms and slow internal processes, particularly in hiring and procurement, as external risks that threaten operational agility and staff morale.

Important Highlights

- + **Indoor Aquatic Center:** Nearly all divisions noted a critical need for year-round indoor aquatics to serve a diverse population and address program capacity constraints.
- + **Staffing and Workforce Expansion:** Increasing both full-time and part-time personnel is essential to meet current service demands and future growth.
- + **Infrastructure and Preventative Maintenance:** Investment in equipment, facility modernization, and a formal maintenance strategy is a top priority.
- + **Equity in Facility Distribution:** Staff consistently advocated for new park development in underserved neighborhoods such as Russellville Road and South Warren.
- + **Signature Park Features:** Visionary ideas such as a BG-themed playground, sensory gardens, and a CrossPlex-style indoor sports facility demonstrate staff creativity and alignment with broader community trends.



BGPR



BOWLING GREEN PARKS & RECREATION





04

Community Voices

***Stakeholder &
Community Engagement Summary
Statistically Valid Survey***



Stakeholder & Community Engagement Summary

Bowling Green residents and community members played a major role in the planning process, shaping the plan through their insights, collaboration, and willingness to participate.

From January through October 2025, the planning team engaged with over 2,500+ Bowling Green community members and residents, shaping the plan to meet the needs, wants, and aspirations for the future of parks and recreation in Bowling Green. Through a wide variety of events, activities, and surveys – all aiming to hear from as many people as possible in the community – the planning team and BGPR staff connected with the community in-person, virtually, and where they gathered. All of the engagement tools used during this planning process included:

- + Community Events
- + Three (3) Community Meetings
- + Stakeholder Roundtables
- + Statistically Valid Survey
- + Community Survey (Online)
- + Project Website
- + BGPR Staff Attendance at Community Events & Parks
- + Two (2) Focus Group Meetings
- + Mobile Engagement Toolkit

The planning team and BGPR staff gathered a wide range of feedback and insights from these community connection and engagement tools, this section summarizes their efforts, impressions, and key findings from the community and this engagement process. See **Figure 70: Community Engagement Overview** for the community engagement overview.

The community engagement process started with the development of a mobile engagement toolkit, that allowed BGPR staff to have materials and content to bring to events, community centers, programming, and interested community members. The toolkit included information sheets, engagement boards, and a feedback tree. This toolkit was used across many events and helped capture all ages from young children to older adults through meeting people where they gather and participate in recreation.

In addition to the mobile engagement toolkit, the planning team engaged with multiple focus groups comprised of local leaders, stakeholders and members of the

Board of Parks Commissioners. These focus groups met multiple times throughout the process and supported the planning and community engagement process, provided local insights, and acted as a sounding board for the planning team and BGPR staff.

The Bowling Green community was engaged through a variety of tools in addition to the mobile engagement toolkit, including both in-person and virtual engagement opportunities. These opportunities included an online survey, project website, community events & meetings, stakeholder roundtables and, pop-up BGPR staff attendance at local events and programming.

Throughout all of these engagement opportunities the Bowling Green community showed up and provided all the feedback and insights shown in this section. The work of this plan could not have been completed without the efforts of the community and the want to be engaged throughout the master planning process. From these insights came the recommendation themes and actionable recommendations.

Engagement Tools

- + **Community Events:**
 - + January - BGHS Community Fair
 - + February - Youth Basketball Games
 - + April - Staff Members, Lovers Lane Soccer Complex
 - + April/May - Adaptive Recreation and Senior Programming Participants
 - + May - After School Programs, Academy for New Americans, Parker-Bennett-Curry Field Day
- + **Community Meetings (3)**
- + **Online Survey**
- + **Stakeholder Roundtables:**
 - + Local Tourism
 - + Non-Profits/Community Services
 - + City of Bowling Green Staff
 - + City-County Planning Commission
 - + Sports Leagues
 - + Neighborhood Associations
- + **Statistically Valid Survey**
- + **Project Website**
- + **Focus Group Meetings (2)**
- + **Mobile Engagement Toolkit**



2,800+
BG Voices

Engaged BG Locals



150+
Attendees

3 Community Meetings



25
Stakeholders

Stakeholder Roundtables



1,100+
Visitors
(2,100 Pageviews)

Project Website



533
Responses

Community Survey



1,030+
Table Visitors

Community Events



5,560+
**Comments, Sticky Dots,
Beads, and Ideas**

Community Participation

Figure 70: Community Engagement Overview



What are the biggest gaps or needs for BGPR today?

...More Staffing, More Space, Connectivity, Partnerships...

What word comes to mind when you think of BGPR?

...Community, Variety, Activities, Greenspace, Urban, Quality, Fun, Athletics, Soccer...

Do you have ideas for a specific park?

...Indoor Soccer Facility, Turf Fields, White Water Park, Running Paths, Fitness Centers, Trails...

What are the biggest gaps or needs for BGPR today?

...More Staffing, More Space, Connectivity, Partnerships...

What are your favorite things to do at a BGPR Park?

...Run, Walk, Soccer, Golf, Basketball, Tennis, Concerts, Sports...

Park Commissioners & Focus Group

To gain insight and perspectives from local leaders, stakeholders, and members of the Board of Park Commissioners, two (2) focus groups were established for this master plan. The groups were comprised of 14-members who provided local context, supported community engagement efforts, and offered feedback to the planning team on key topics throughout the process.

They met two (2) times with the planning team – once at the beginning of the process during Task 1: Project Discovery, and again midway through during Task 4: Data Analysis. These meetings ensured focus group members stayed informed about the plan progress and had opportunities to provide meaningful feedback.

- + **Meeting 1:** The planning team introduced the master planning process. Focus group members discussed park opportunities, gaps, and assets, discussed master plan goals and outcomes, and shared park inspiration.
- + **Meeting 2:** The planning team shared the community engagement results and the findings from research and analysis. The focus group provided their thoughts on the results and analysis, and ideas for plan recommendations and themes.

These focus groups played an important role in the planning process by offering a steady stream of feedback from a local perspective, helping ensure that

the plan aligned with local goals and priorities. Representing a wide range of interests and organizations, members were invested in the future of parks and recreation in Bowling Green.

Throughout the engagement process, focus group members also helped with community outreach by promoting opportunities for the community to participate and provide feedback during the planning process.

Stakeholder Roundtables

Hosted virtually in May 2025, the planning team met with 25 stakeholders that represented a wide range of Bowling Green community residents and members. During these meetings, the planning team introduced the master planning process, discussed parks and programming, and the goals for the plan outcomes. Some key findings from these discussions include:

- + **Strengths:** BGPR offers conveniently located parks, assorted programming, a growing population and large international community, and promotes community connection through recreation.
- + **Facilities or Amenities in Demand:** While BGPR offers a wide range of sports fields and courts, high-demand facilities and amenities include: pickleball courts, outdoor fields and courts, indoor multi-sport facilities, lighting for outdoor spaces, play areas connected to large sport complexes, and large sport complexes.
- + **Opportunities:** Stakeholders highlighted opportunities such as new courts, turf and fields, tournament hosting, park information and content, park improvements and upgrades, all-age programming, indoor pool, restrooms and park amenities, sensory play and adaptive recreation, rent-able park/sports equipment and indoor activities.
- + **Barriers/Challenges:** Challenges identified include park access and connectivity, park offering awareness and marketing, program pricing, lack of available land within city limits, maintenance, and people facing housing insecurity.
- + **Gaps:** Identified gaps include tournament hosting capabilities, large event spaces, weather-resistant facilities, spread out park locations, pavilions and nature-based experiences.
- + **Planning:** Local planning discussions noted a interest in developing indoor sports facilities, open space and recreation amenities standards and requirements, infill development, and improved greenway and pedestrian connectivity.
- + **Partnership Opportunities:** Potential partnership opportunities include the rail park, local leagues, Western Kentucky University (WKU), United Way, local housing authority, Warren County, larger sponsors, and the local school system.
- + **Future Tourism:** Stakeholders suggested investment in riverfront activities and sport tournaments tourism to boost visitors.
- + **Other:** Other opportunities mentioned were safety amenities, connections to Downtown Bowling Green and other local assets, recognition of hidden park gems (i.e. Carpenter Woods), signage and keeping connections with the community through the small stuff (i.e. neighborhood events).



25

Stakeholders Engaged

Local Tourism

*Non-Profits/
Community Services*

City of Bowling Green

City-County Planning Commission

Sports Leagues

Community Members

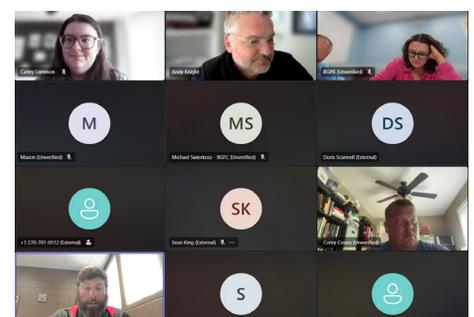
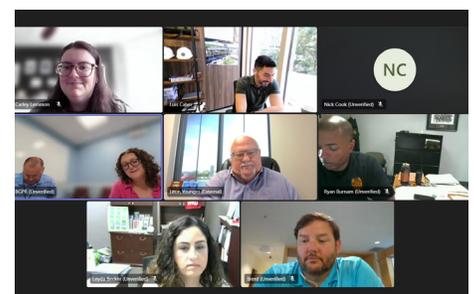
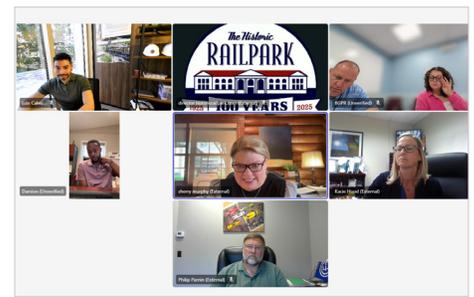


Figure 71: Stakeholder Meetings

Engagement Tools, Methods & Events

From January to October 2025, the planning team and BGPR staff engaged with over 2,500 Bowling Green Voices ranging from young kids to older adults, using a variety of engagement tools, methods and events. Throughout this planning process, engaging with the Bowling Green community was at the heart of the planning efforts, to ensure the goals and recommendations of this plan met the needs, wants and desires of the community and those invested in the future of parks and recreation. This plan could not have been accomplished without the insights, feedback and great ideas provided during these opportunities, all which can be seen reflected in this section and throughout the plan and recommendations. The engagement tools used during this planning process included:

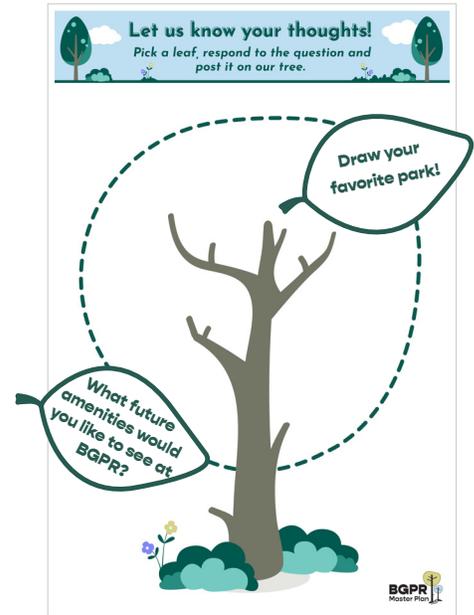
- + Community Events
- + Three (3) Community Meetings
- + Stakeholder Roundtables
- + Statistically Valid Survey
- + Community Survey (Online)
- + Project Website
- + BGPR Staff Attendance at Community Events & Parks
- + Two (2) Focus Group Meetings
- + Mobile Engagement Toolkit

Mobile Engagement Toolkit

Community engagement started with the development of the Mobile Engagement Toolkit, a toolkit that allowed BGPR staff to engage with the community in-person at events, community centers, programming and the like. This toolkit was important to the engagement process as it allowed staff to ask consistent questions across multiple events and spaces and meet the community where they were already participating in recreation and socializing.

This toolkit included:

- + **Information Sheet:** An information sheet that described the master planning process, and ways to get involved. This sheet was available in both Spanish and English.
- + **Boards:** A set of boards that described the master planning process, BGPR parks, properties and trails, and asked questions like – which parks attendees visited most and why, and what they liked to do when at BGPR parks.
- + **Feedback Tree:** A feedback tree board, that had a large open tree with a set of question leaves to post on the tree board. Respondents could pick a question leaf, responding about future amenities, favorite parks, park attractions, favorite programs, sports, community wants, favorite memories and biggest needs.



BGPR Master Plan **Bowling Green**
Parks and Recreation Master Plan

What is a Parks and Recreation Master Plan?

The Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Master Plan will support and augment the department's mission to offer an array of excellent recreational programs and facilities that promote wellness and enhance quality of life in Bowling Green.

Through a community engagement process that will include community events, stakeholder conversations, and a Focus Group of residents, community leaders, and officials, this effort will result in a guiding document that will direct strategy and decision-making for the next 10 years.

Please note that your picture may be used in our social media, or displayed on our project website.

Get Involved!
Participate in the survey, visit our website and provide feedback at events.

Project Timeline & Tasks

Project Discovery January - March	Task 1
Engagement Phase 1 February - April	Task 2
Data Collection March - April	Task 3
Data Analysis & Findings April - May	Task 4
Engagement Phase 2 May - November	Task 5
Draft Master Plan July - August	Task 6
Final Master Plan & Presentations August - November	Task 7

For more information, visit the project website!
www.bgprmasterplan.com

Figure 72: Mobile Engagement Toolkit

Community Events, Meetings & Staff Attendance

Kicking off the in-person community engagement, Bowling Green Parks Staff attended over ten (10) different community events and programs throughout the spring and early summer. They connected with people of all ages – from young students to older adults – and gathered a great deal of feedback on park usage, needs and wishes using the mobile engagement toolkit. Some of the community events and programs they attended include:

- + **January:** BGHS Community Fair
- + **February:** Youth Basketball Games
- + **April:** Staff Members, Lovers Lane Soccer Complex
- + **April/May:** Adaptive Recreation and Senior Programming Participants
- + **May:** After School Programs, Academy for New Americans, Parker-Bennett-Curry Field Day

In addition to this pop-up attendance at events and programs, the planning team held three (3) community meetings. In March 2025, the team hosted the first large community event of the planning process, with over 100 community members in attendance. These attendees helped the planning team learn what residents enjoyed most about the parks, how parks are used and accessed, and what ideas residents had for the future of parks and recreation. Attendees could also learn about the master planning process, what

is included in a master plan, and connect with the planning team in-person.

In June 2025, the planning team hosted a BGPR booth at Duncan Hines Days, which saw more than 200 community members stop by. This booth had multiple activities, where the community could catch-up on the progress of the plan and spend fake money to vote on where the parks should invest their dollars for future improvements. This community event booth created a connection point for residents, and allowed the team to engage with community members that may not otherwise attend a meeting or take a survey.

Lastly, in October 2025, the planning team finalized the recommendation themes and concluded the community engagement with a final community event. Attendees at this event were able to see plan progress, analysis and findings, community engagement summaries, and provide their feedback on the recommendation themes and preliminary recommendations. Many of the community members in attendance agreed with the plan recommendations, and noted that many of the recommendations had been something they had desired for years or found important for parks or found important for BGPR to implement. In addition to this final community event, BGPR staff were also invited to learn about the plan recommendations through two (2) presentation opportunities, where they also confirmed that many of the recommendations they had been discussing long-term and met their goals for the department.

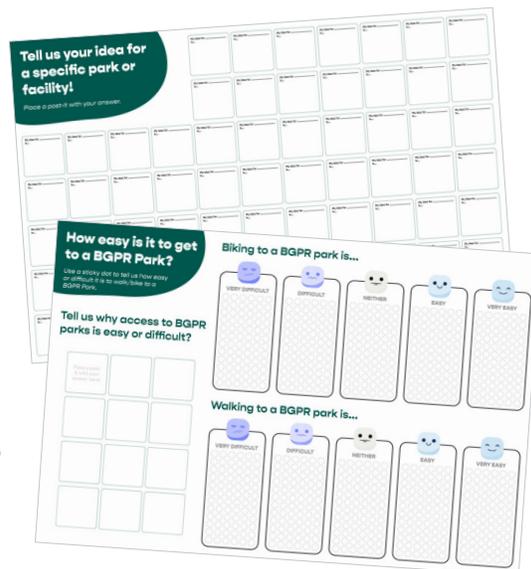


Figure 73: Community Event #1 Boards



Figure 74: Duncan Hines Days Boards



Figure 75: Community Event #3 Boards

Community Survey

In Spring 2025, the team launched an online community survey, open from March to May, bringing in over 500 responses. The online survey was made available through BGPR’s website, the project website, and distributed using the department’s and City’s social media channels. The survey was also emailed to BGPR’s email distribution lists and shared with key project contacts. This survey helped give the planning team a deeper look into how the community uses the parks and what they want to see in the future. The survey consisted of 21 questions, covering topics such as:

- + Demographics
- + BGPR Park Visitation
- + BGPR Park Conditions
- + Regional Park Visitation
- + Favorite Park Activities
- + Park and Facilities Improvements
- + Park and Facilities Wants
- + Services Provided Effectiveness
- + Ideas for Parks and Programming
- + Programming
- + BGPR Marketing & Information

Project Website

As part of the community engagement process a project website was created to serve a hub for project information, project schedule, and events. The website included project timeline and tasks, ways to join the conversation and engage with the plan, about the project team, and explanations on what a master plan is, and how to get involved or stay in contact.

The website gathered over 2,100+ page views, 1,300 website visits, and a majority of website visitors came to the website for the community engagement page or to view the project timeline and tasks.

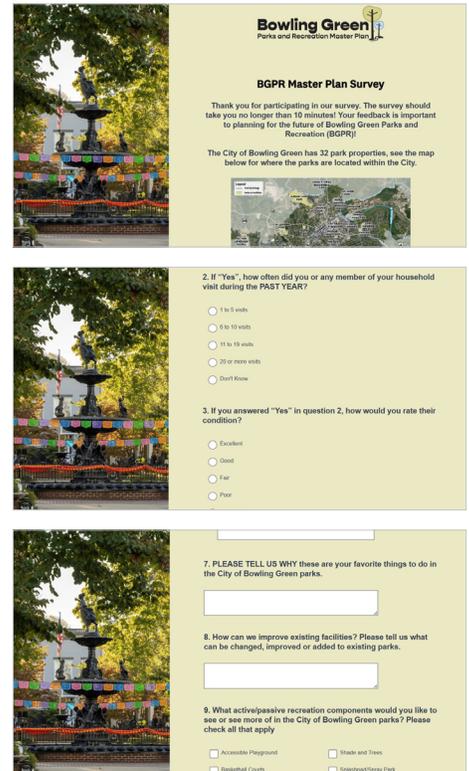


Figure 76: Online Survey



Figure 77: Project Website



Figure 78: Community Engagement

Community Engagement Results & Key Takeaways

From all of the community engagement efforts described in this section, the planning team gathered thousands of ideas, comments, sticky dots and survey responses. This feedback was important for developing the plan recommendations and identifying the community’s goals, aspirations and needs.

The full community engagement summary can be found in **the Appendix**, detailing the community engagement throughout all engagement tools, tasks, and opportunities. The following pages summarize the key findings, engagement highlights, and engagement themes and topics.

The topics that can be found in this summary include:

- + Most Frequented Parks and Facilities
- + Park Access and Connectivity
- + Bowling Green Community Needs
- + Favorite Park Activities
- + Active and Passive Recreation
- + Programming
- + Parks Changes/Improvements

Community Meeting and Events: Park Visits

Meeting and event attendees were asked which of the parks they like to visit and why, from the BGPR park selection, no park had the majority, and the question responses were spread throughout all parks. The top parks were either under 10 acres or over 70 acres, demonstrating the importance of different park types, accessibility and park amenities. The top four (4) parks were: Russell Sims Aquatic Center (11.4%), C.W. Lampkin Park (9.5%), Lovers Lane Soccer Complex (8.1%), and Covington Woods Park (7.1%).

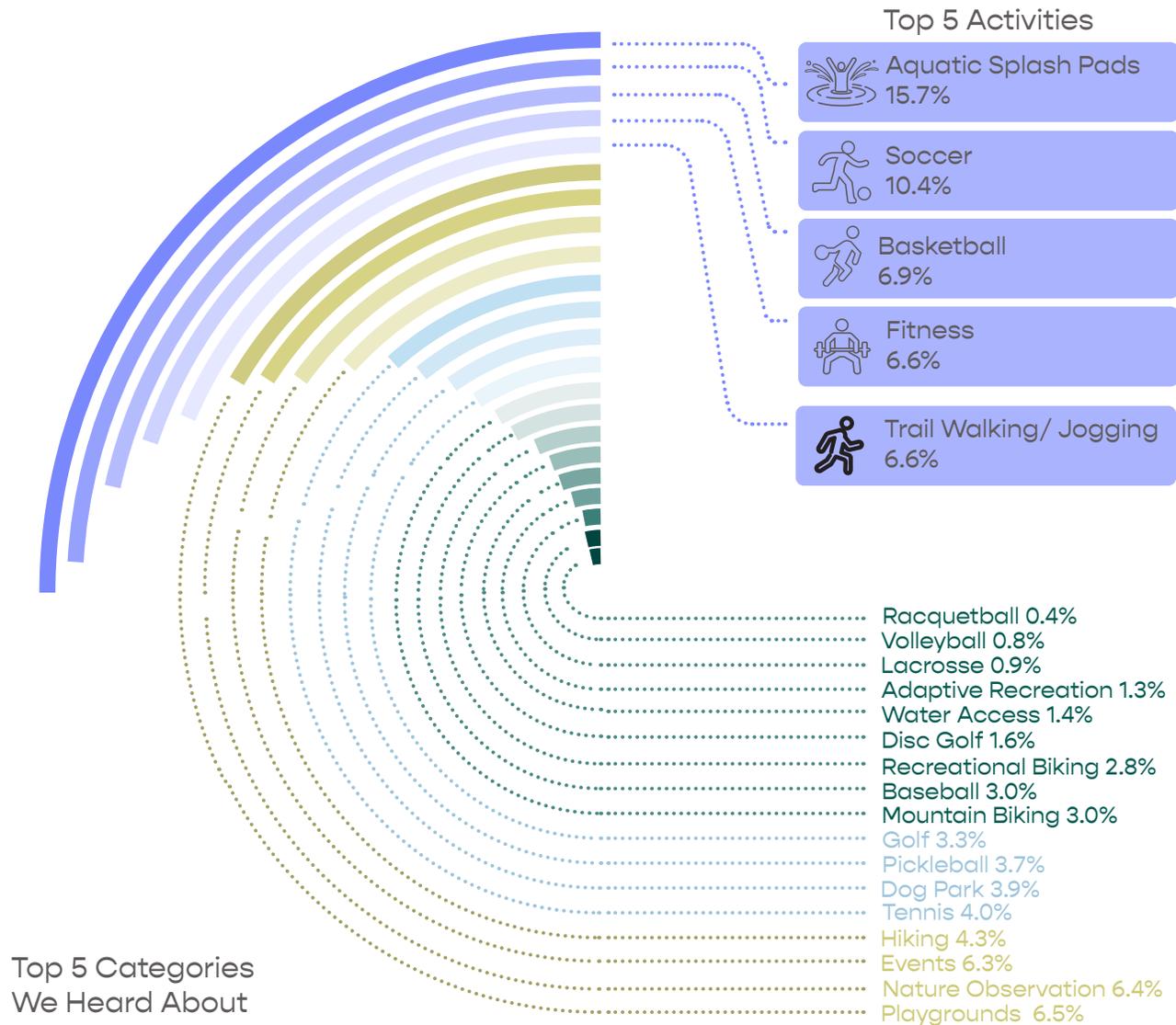
+ Which parks do you like to visit & why?



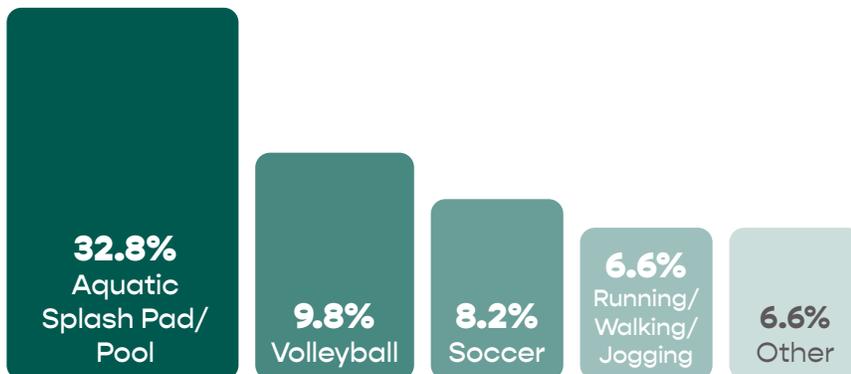
Community Meeting and Events: Park Activities

Meeting and event attendees were asked what they like to do when visiting BGPR parks, a large majority of these attendees participated in active recreation activities. Similarly, much of the ideas and recommendations from the Bowling Green community focused on increasing these opportunities for active recreation. The top five (5) activities attendees liked to do at parks included Aquatic and Splash Pads (15.7%), Soccer (10.4%), Basketball (6.9%), Fitness (6.6%), and Trail Walking/Jogging (6.6%).

+ What do you like to do at BGPR Parks?



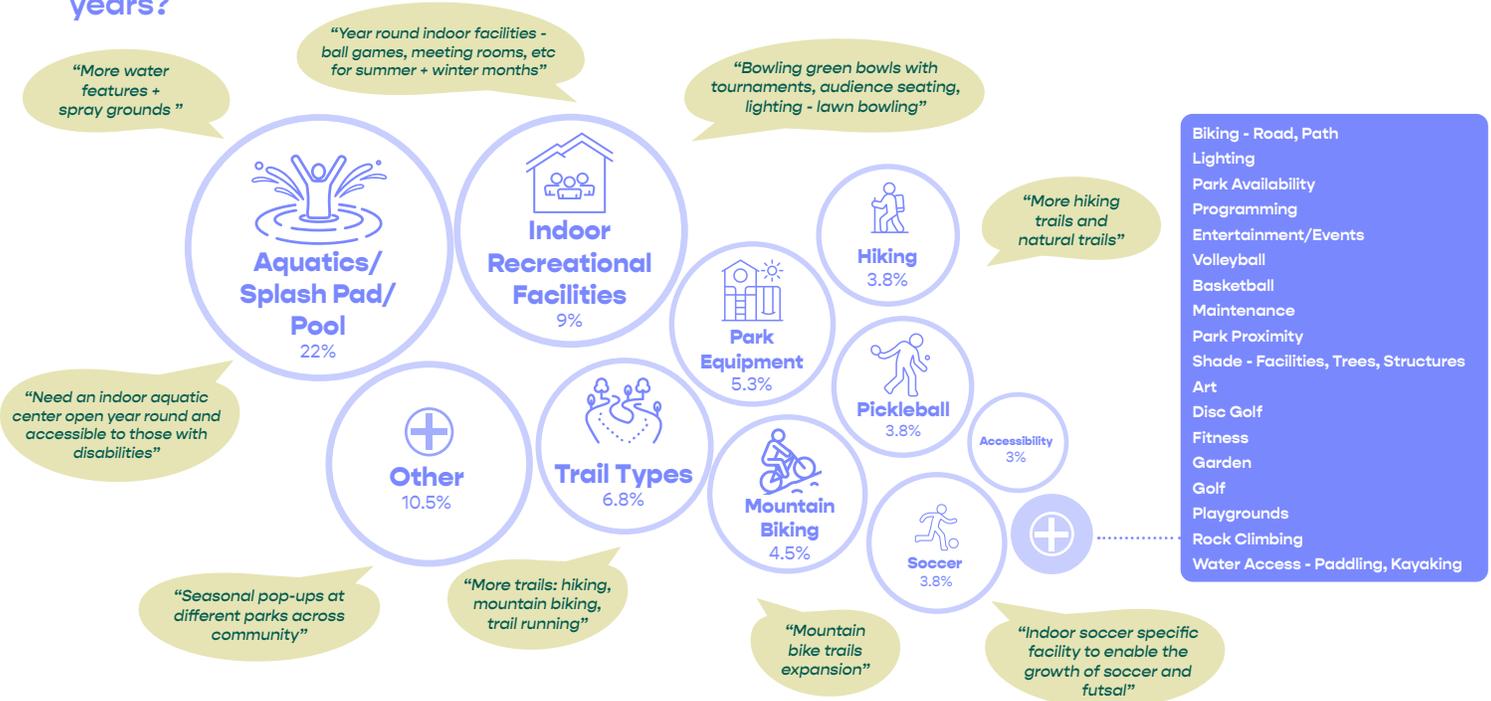
Top 5 Categories We Heard About



Community Meeting and Events: Changes/Improvements

Meeting and event attendees were asked what types of changes and improvements they would like to see happen at BGPR. A large majority expressed a want for indoor facilities, and aquatics spaces, both mentioned frequently in community discussions. The top changes and improvements were Aquatics/Splash Pad/Pool (22%), Other Listed Ideas (10.5%), Indoor Recreational Facilities (9%), Trail Types (6.8%) and Park Equipment (5.3%).

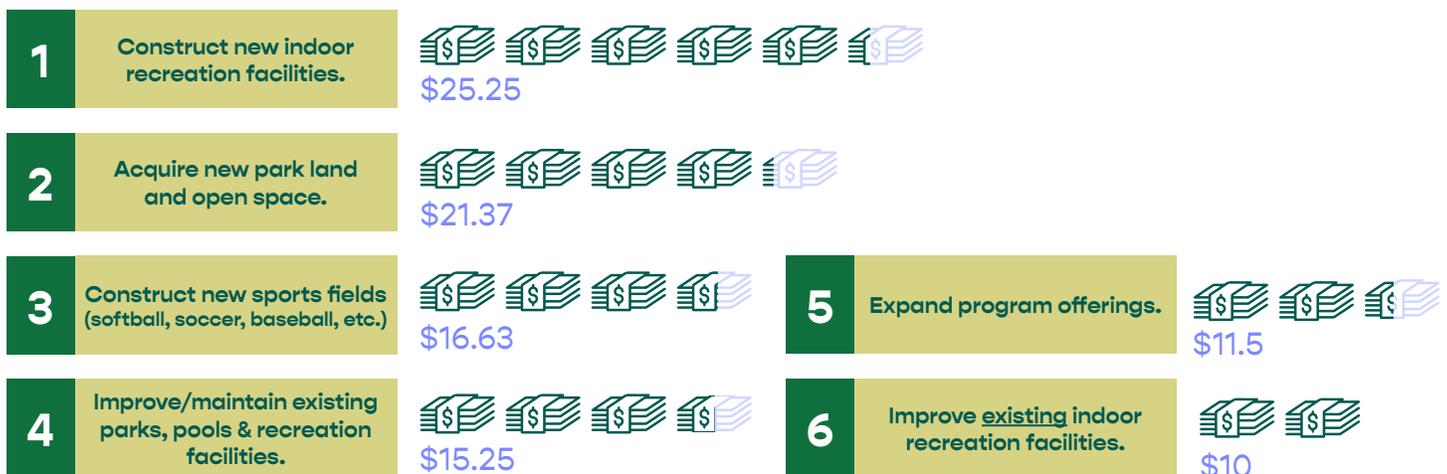
What types of changes/improvements would you like to see happen at BGPR in the next 10 years?



Duncan Hines Days: Parks and Recreation Funds

Duncan Hines Days booth visitors were asked where they would spend parks and recreation funds amongst the categories shown below. Visitors voted for new indoor facilities and new space acquisition, aligning with the community engagement across the board and the general want for more opportunities for recreation.

If you had \$100, how would you spend these funds among the parks and recreation categories listed below?



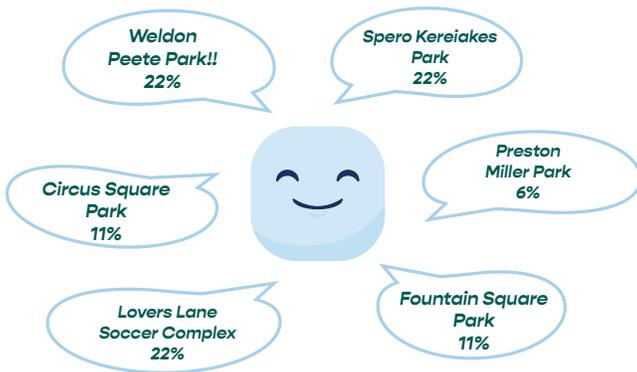
Community Meeting and Events: Park Access

Meeting and event attendees were asked how they access BGPR parks and facilities, how easy it is to get to parks and facilities, level of access difficulty and their aspirations for connectivity to parks and facilities. Most attendees access parks and facilities via walking or driving, and found it difficult to access parks via pedestrian based connectivity. While pedestrian based activity was difficult, they aspired to access parks and facilities via these methods, and was a frequent topic of discussion and high on many's wants.

+ How do you get to a BGPR Park?



+ I like to walk or bike to...

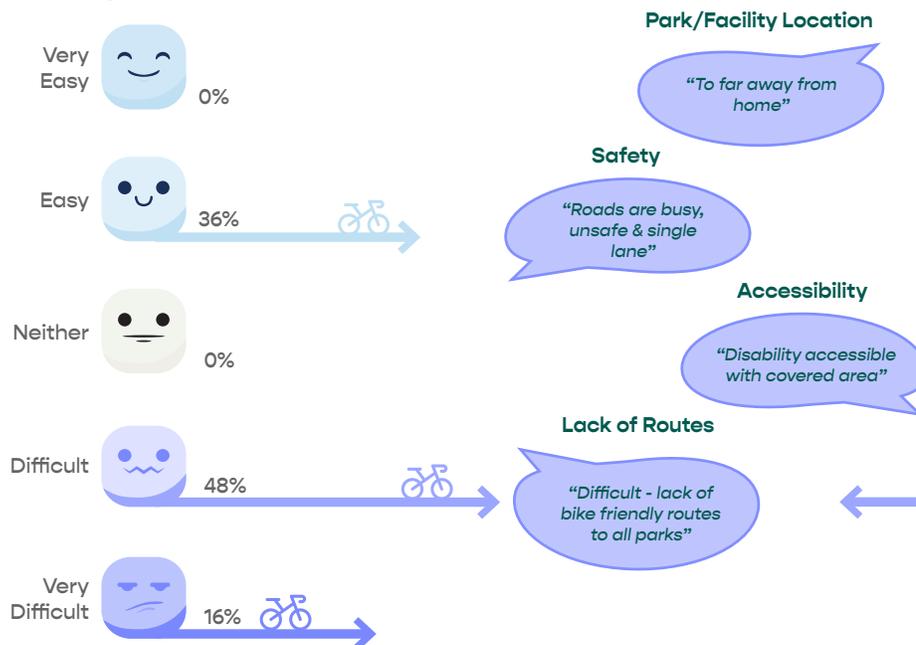


+ I wish i could walk or bike to...

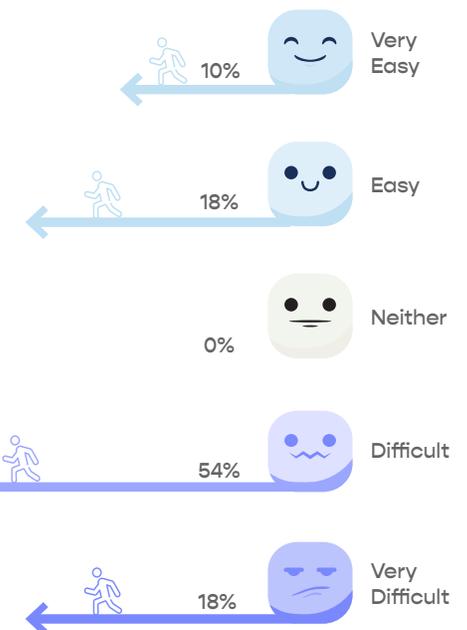


+ How easy is it to get to a BGPR park? Tell us why access to BGPR parks is easy or difficult?

+ Biking to a BGPR park is...



+ Walking to a BGPR park is...



Online Survey Results: Park Visits

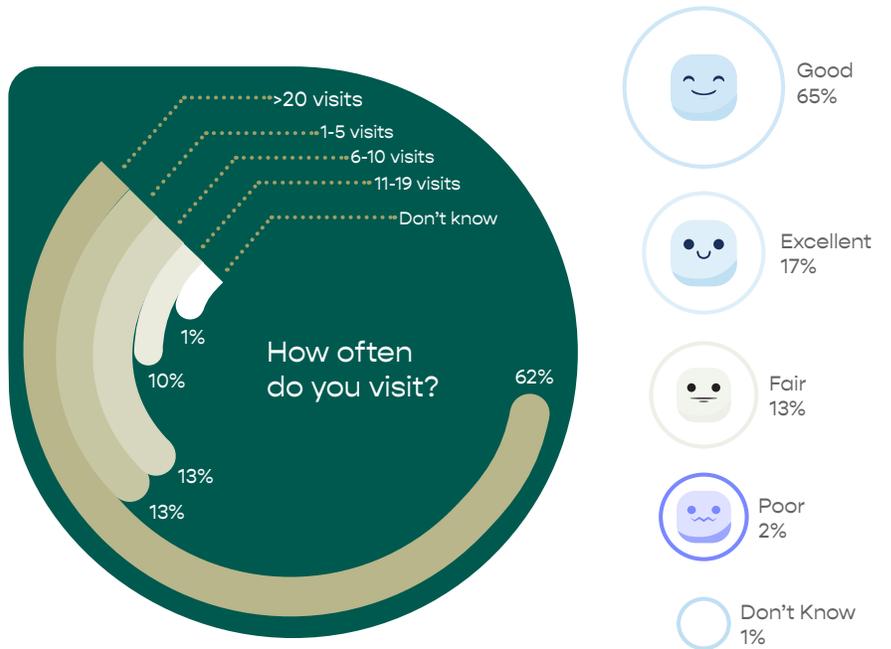
Online survey respondents were asked if household members visited BGPR parks, visitation frequency, and what parks and recreation facilities they visited. Almost all respondents visited a park or facility within the last year, and a majority visited over 20 times a year and found the parks in good condition. The parks and facilities most visited by online respondents were Fountain Square, Circus Square, Lovers Lane Soccer Complex and Covington Woods Park, the last two were similarly visited among in-person respondents.

+ Have you or a member of your household visited any parks or recreation facilities offered by the City of Bowling Green in the past year?

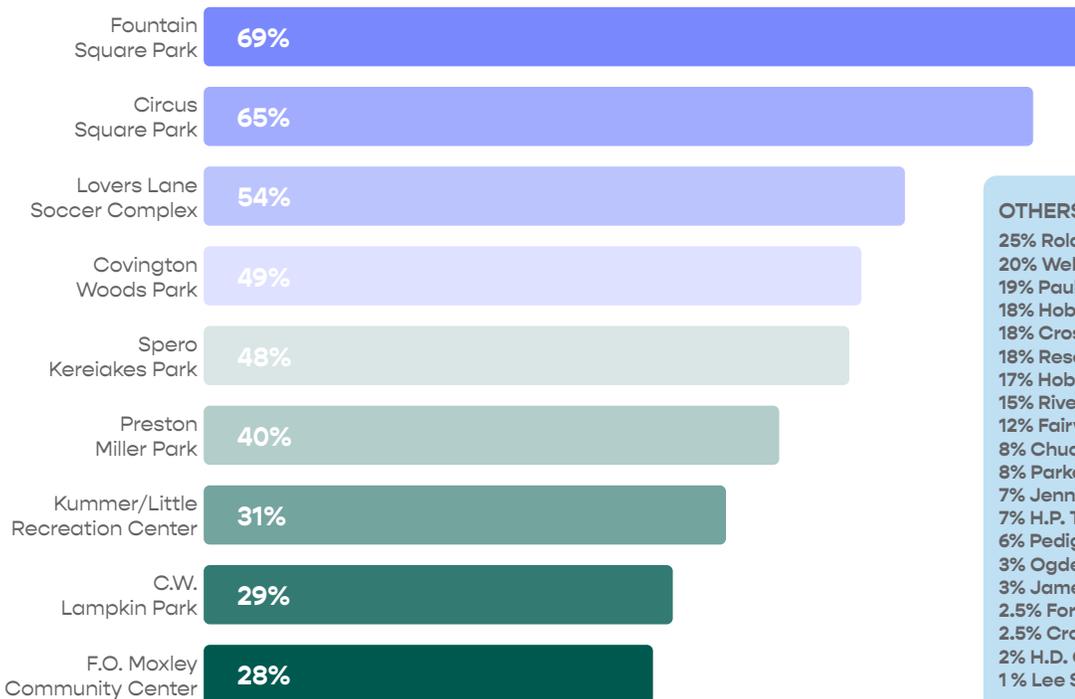
+ If “Yes”, how often did you or any member of your household visit during the PAST YEAR?



+ And how would you rate their condition?



+ Please CHECK which City of Bowling Green parks and recreation facilities you or a member of your household visited in the PAST YEAR.



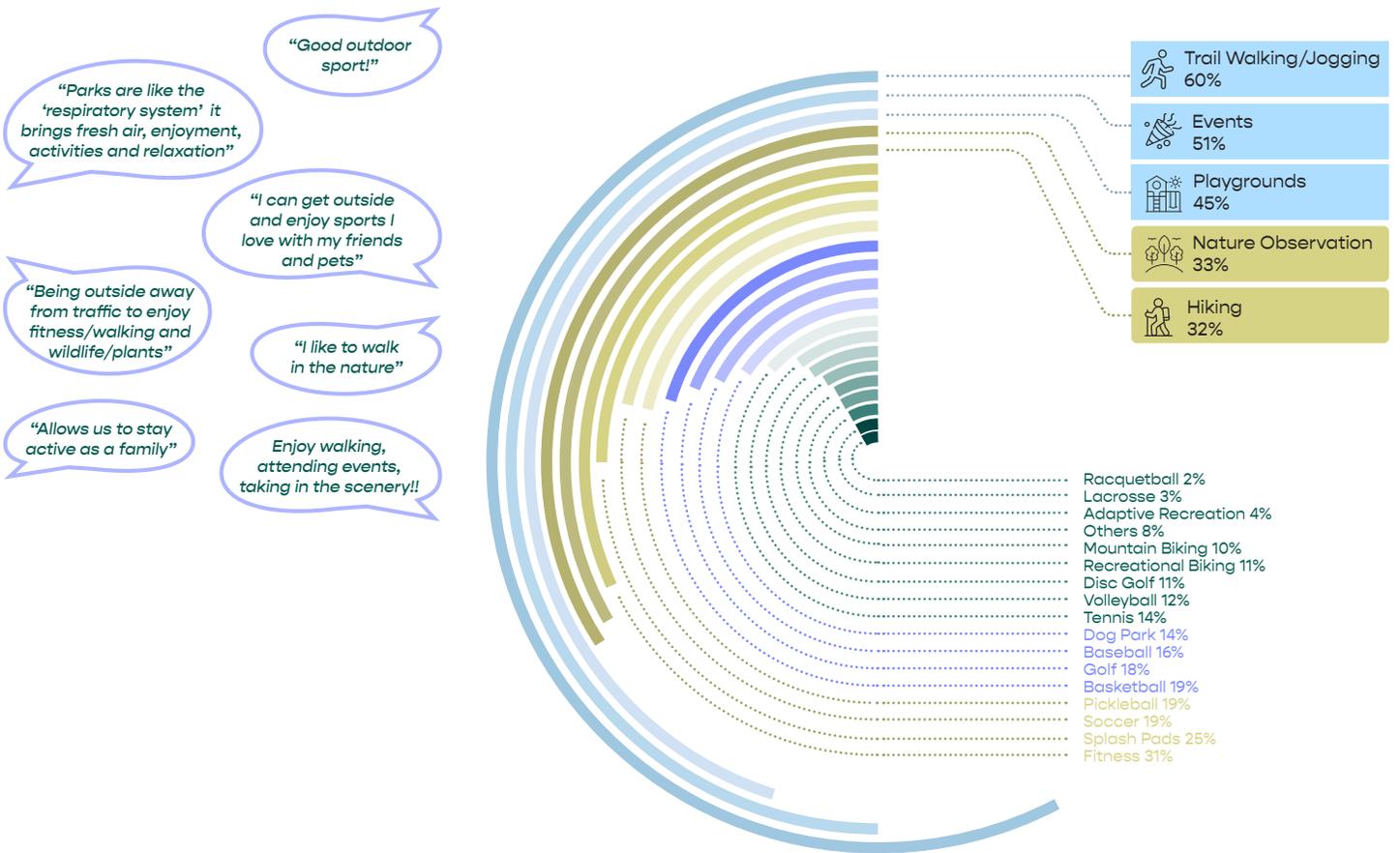
OTHERS

- 25% Roland Bland Park
- 20% Weldon Peete Park
- 19% Paul Walker Golf Course
- 18% Hobson Grove Golf Course
- 18% Crosswinds Golf Course
- 18% Reservoir Hill Park
- 17% Hobson Grove Park
- 15% Riverwalk Park
- 12% Fairview, Mt Moriah, Pioneer Cemeteries
- 8% Chuck Crume Nature Park
- 8% Parker-Bennett Community Center
- 7% Jennings Creek Greenways Park
- 7% H.P. Thomas Park
- 6% Pedigo Park
- 3% Ogden Park
- 3% James R. Hines Boatlanding Park
- 2.5% Fort Webb Park
- 2.5% Crossing Park
- 2% H.D. Carpenter Park
- 1% Lee Square Playground

Online Survey Results: Favorite Activities

Online survey respondents were asked what their favorite activities to do at BGPR parks and facilities were, similarly to in-person attendees a majority of activities selected were active recreation, but there was a increase in passive recreation among online respondents with the introduction of events and nature observation. The top five (5) favorite park activities were Trail Walking/Jogging, Events, Playgrounds, Nature Observation and Hiking.

✦ What are your favorite things to do at City of Bowling Green Parks? Please check all that apply.



Online Survey Results: Improving Existing Facilities & Recreation Components

Online survey respondents were asked how BGPR can improve existing facilities. Respondents told us that existing facilities could be improved in six key categories – improved nature and green spaces, timely repairs and maintenance, enhanced programming and recreation, additional health and fitness, improved accessibility and safety, and new amenities and features. All of which continue the narrative of wanting more recreation spaces and programming and connectivity to parks and facilities. The top types of improvements were Shade and Trees, Indoor Aquatics, Walking + Running Paths, Multi-use Paths, and Concert Venues.

✦ How can we improve existing facilities? Please tell us what can be changed, improved or added to existing parks.

Improved Nature and Green Spaces

"Allow for more natural terrain and wildlife to be incorporated throughout parks."

"More natural spaces with native plants."

"Shade! The lack of shade at some of the parks makes the summer heat nearly impossible use the facilities."

Timely Repairs and Maintenance

"Renovations to the field's "laser leveling" and more parking for games and events.."

"Playground upgrades for most parks. New equipment and accessibility"

"Improved safety, cleanliness, and upkeep."

Enhanced Programming and Recreation

"Add more pickle ball courts, indoor- sports, playgrounds and pool"

"Adding community centers that offer art and nature programs for various ages"

"Bowling Green is sorely in need of larger enclosed concert venues and community events."

Additional Health and Fitness

"Offer more fitness classes for a variety of ages"

"More outdoors exercises stations with more machines"

"Fitness facility needs wider range hours. It is often crowded. Another location or maybe something bigger would be great."

Improved Accessibility and Safety

"Surfacing that children who use wheelchairs can push on. Playground with universal design surfaces is great!"

"I am concerned about my safety so I would appreciate safety enhancements and oversight."

"Make wheelchair accessibility easier."

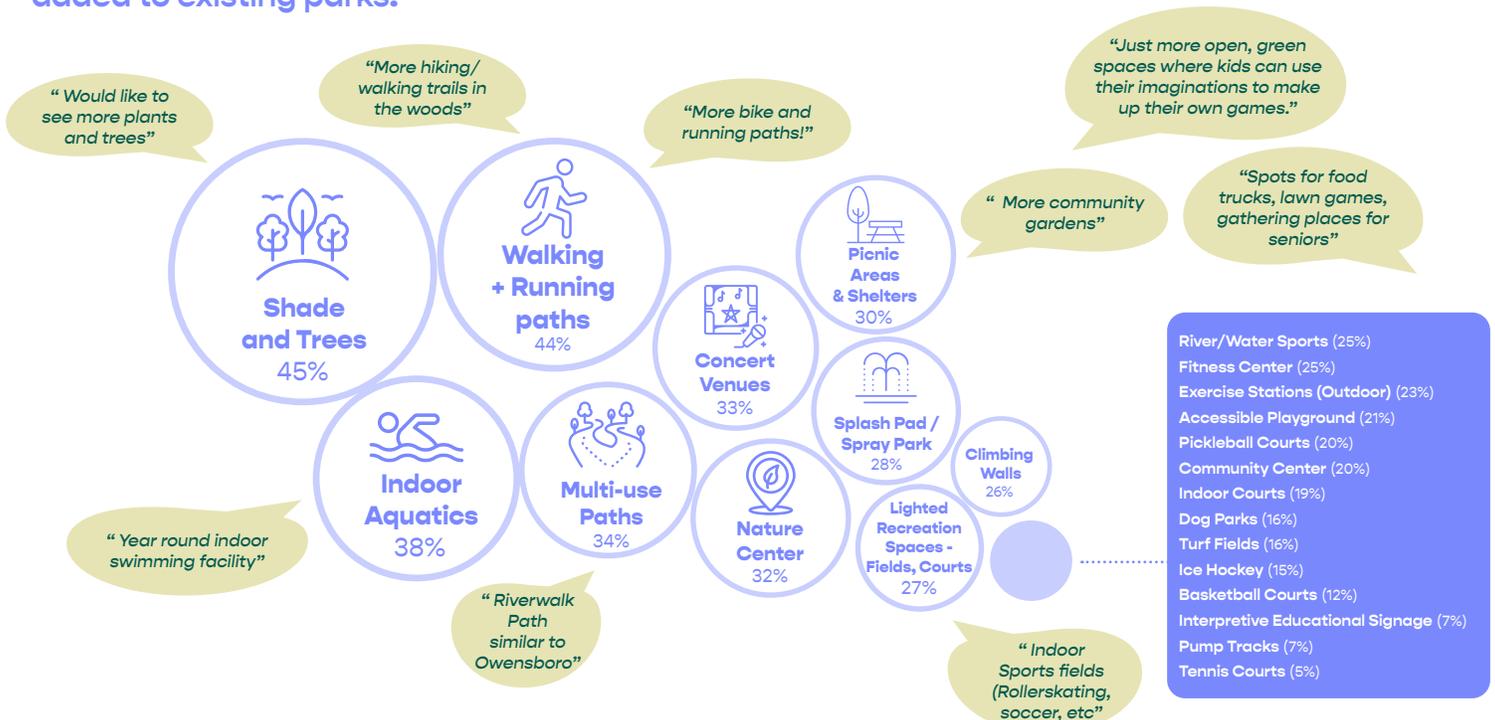
New Amenities and Features

"Better and well maintained Restrooms"

"With the growing BG / Warren County population we need more of all facilities."

"Continue to add recreational activities like pickleball and programs like lacrosse for multiple age groups"

✦ How can we improve existing facilities? Please tell us what can be changed, improved or added to existing parks.



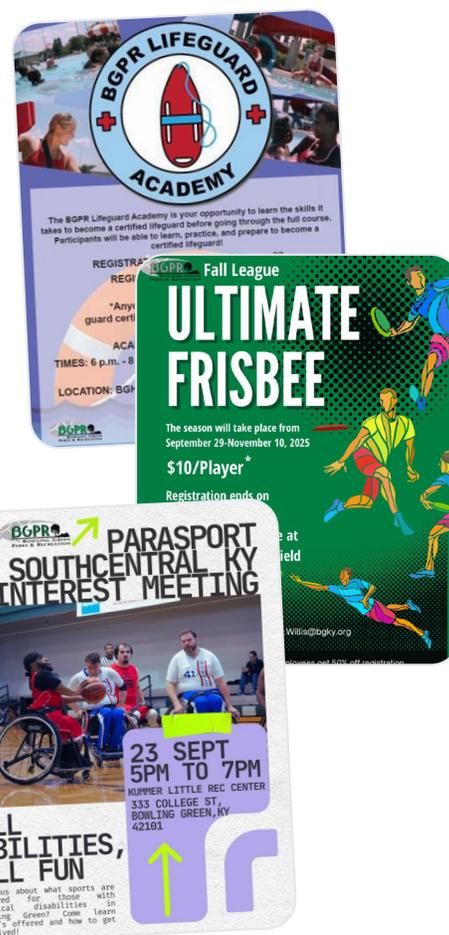
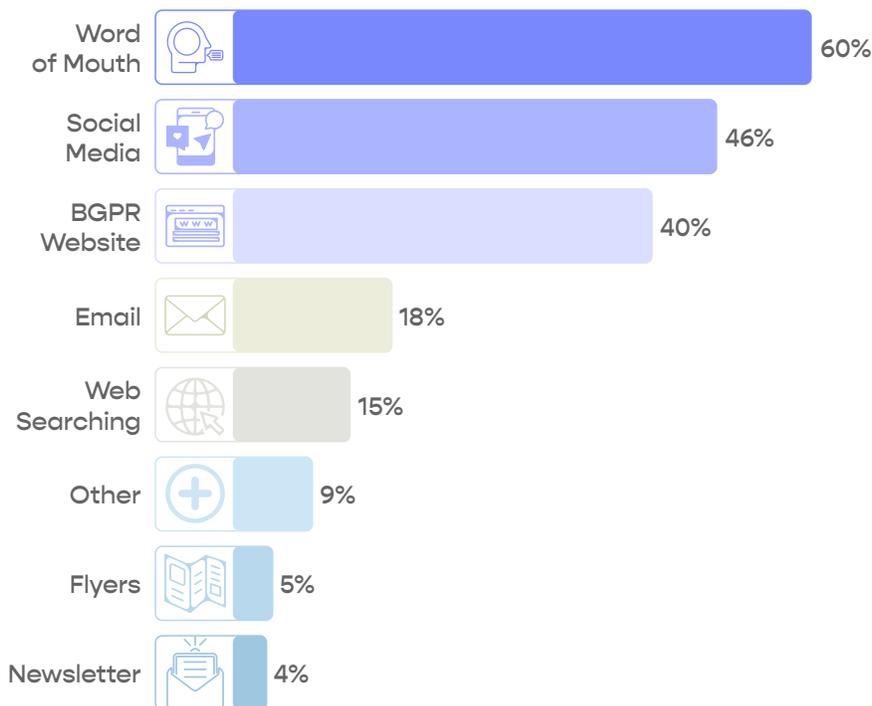
Online Survey Results: Community Needs

Online survey respondents were asked how effective BGPR was in meeting the needs of the community and how they learned about BGPR facilities, programs and services. A majority of respondents agreed that BGPR was very or extremely effective in meeting the needs of the community, with a minority noting a lesser effectiveness in meeting community needs. Respondents frequently learned of BGPR facilities, programs and services through word of mouth, social media, and the BGPR website. Throughout the community engagement process both in-person and virtually, it was mentioned often that the community was unaware of the happenings of BGPR, and this is shown in this result as a majority of respondents learned of BGPR happenings via word of mouth.

+ How effective is BGPR in meeting the needs of the community?



+ How did you learn about BGPR facilities, programs, and services?



Online Survey Results: Specific Improvements

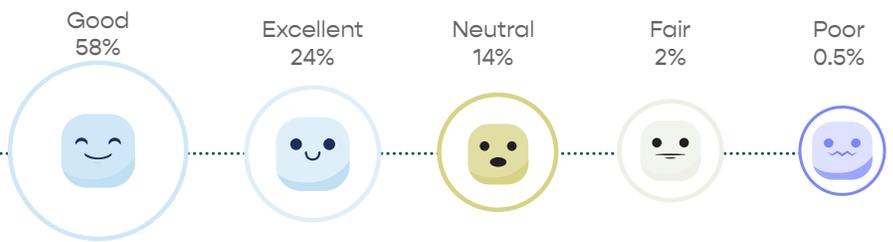
Online survey respondents were asked if anyone in their household attended any BGPR programming within the past year, how they rate the quality of these programs, and if there were any barriers preventing participation in programs. A majority of respondents had attended a program offered by BGPR, and had rated the quality of the program as good or excellent. If they had not attended a program, the biggest barrier to attendance was Lack of Knowledge or Time Constraints. Lack of knowledge was a consistent theme across many engagement results, as respondents and attendees were unfamiliar with how to find information on facilities, programming and services, this finding was used to help create the create awareness recommendations of this plan.

+ Have you or a member of your household attended any programs offered by the City of Bowling Green in the PAST YEAR?



Yes!
63%

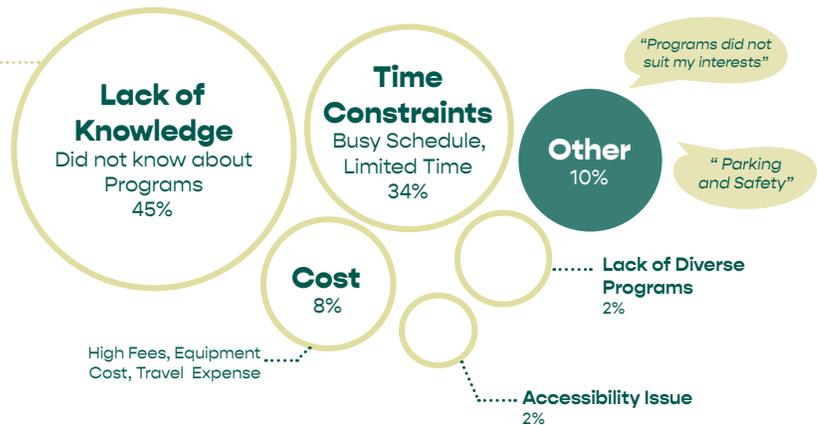
+ If “Yes”, how would you rate the quality of these programs?



+ If “No”, what barriers are preventing you from participating in parks and programs?



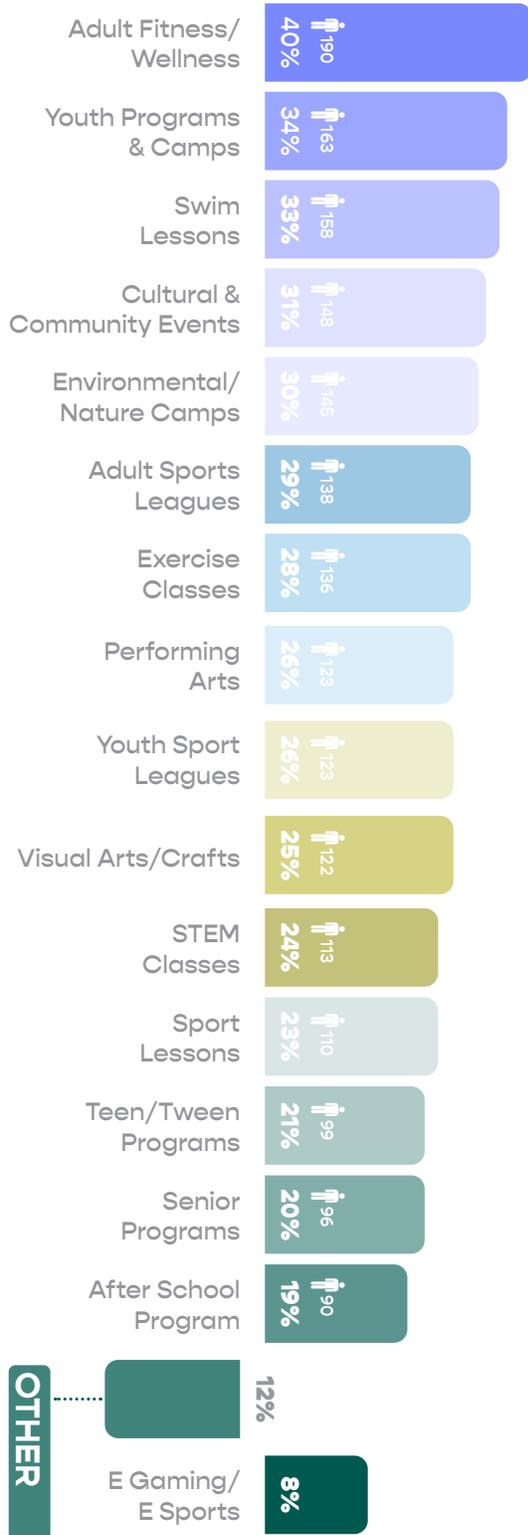
No!
37%



Online Survey Results: Programming

Online survey respondents were asked what recreation programs they would like to see or see more of in the City of Bowling Green. The top three programming wants were Adult Fitness, Youth Programs & Camps, and Swim Lessons. All of which match with the general want and need for more active recreation opportunities and indoor aquatics areas.

+What recreation programs would you like to see or see more of in the City of Bowling Green?



Community Engagement Key Takeaways

Common themes and ideas we heard across the community engagement efforts and from various groups and populations:

* Stakeholders and residents alike would like to see more indoor facilities. Residents would like an indoor athletic facility, whereas stakeholders would like to see indoor facilities that serve residents but can also attract out-of-town tournaments.

* Those we engaged visit parks often and find them in good to great condition.

* Respondents often hear about BGPR spaces through word of mouth, and would like better ways to learn about what is available and where.

* Participants love active recreation, such as soccer, walking/jogging, and basketball.

* Respondents like visiting parks for activities such as playgrounds or events, and experiences like hiking, observation and trail walking/jogging.

* The community finds it very difficult or difficult to walk or bike to a BGPR park because of the parks' locations, pedestrian/cyclist safety concerns, accessibility issues, and lack of safe routes.

* The community enjoys visiting BGPR's landmark parks, including Fountain Square Park, the Russell Sims Aquatic Center, and Lovers Lane Soccer Complex.

* Respondents that attend BGPR programming rate these programs highly, but wish they had more information about what is available.

* The community would like to see more and safer walking and biking routes to BGPR Parks.

* Respondents want to see park improvements, such as new pathways, shaded areas, and event spaces.

Statistically Valid Survey Key Results

In the spring of 2025, a statistically valid survey was conducted, gathering 503 survey responses that helped identify the community's priorities for parks and recreation in Bowling Green.

Introduction

A statistically-valid survey was conducted in Spring 2025, to support the community engagement results, ensure the whole Bowling Green community was represented, and help recognize trends within the community. The goal was to collect a minimum of 500 surveys from residents. This goal was met with 503 surveys collected, helping add an additional 500+ voices heard during the community engagement process, making for a total of over 2,100+ community voices contributing to the planning process. This section highlights the key findings and trends from the survey, the full, complete survey findings report can be found in **Appendix**.

Methodology

ETC Institute mailed a survey packet to a random sample of households in the City of Bowling Green. Each survey packet contained a cover letter, a copy of the survey, and a postage-paid return envelope. Residents who received the survey were given

the option of returning the survey by mail or completing it online at BGKYSurvey.org.

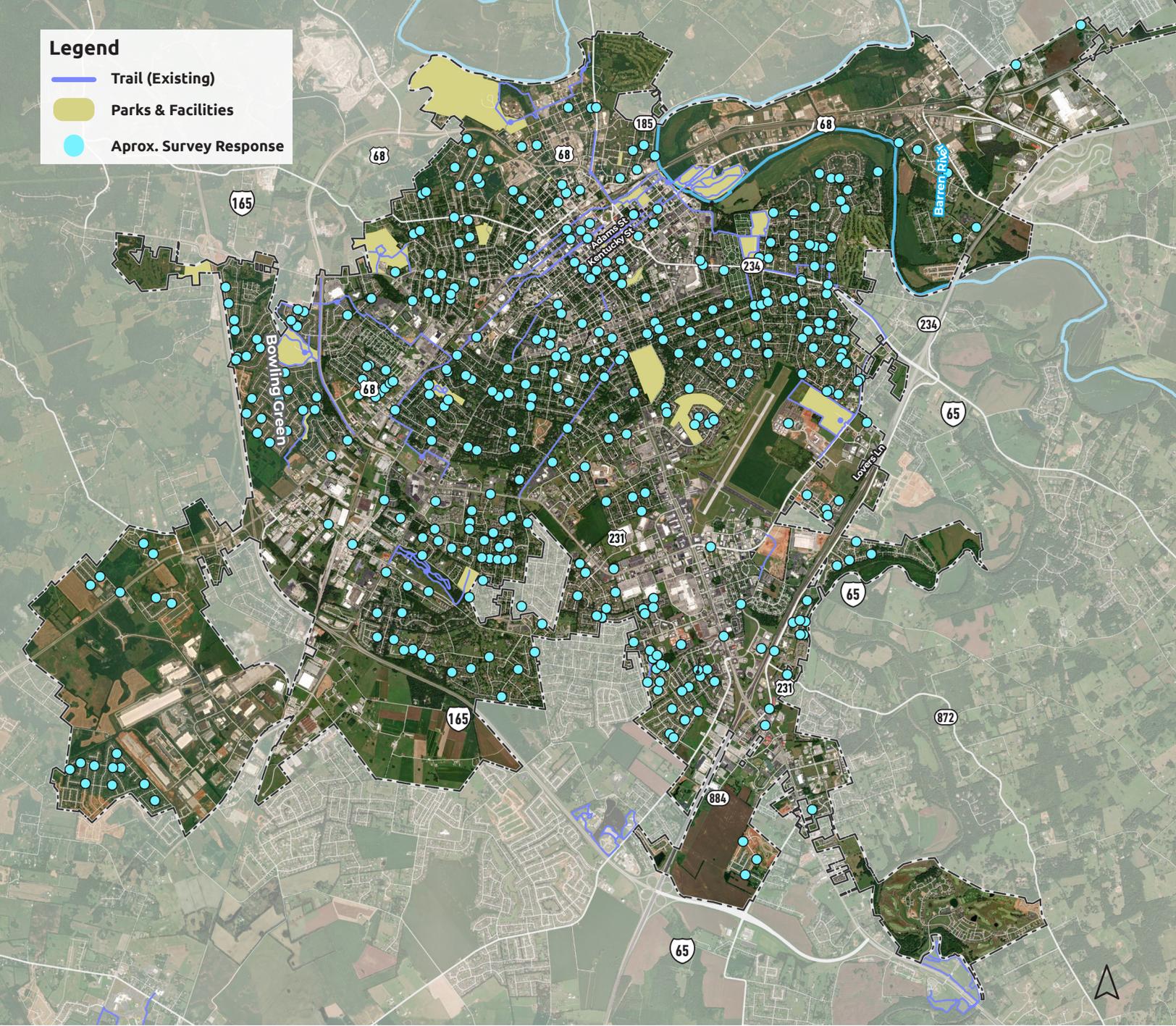
After the surveys were mailed, ETC Institute followed up with residents to encourage participation. To prevent people who were not residents of Bowling Green from participating, everyone who completed the survey online was required to enter their home address prior to submitting the survey. ETC Institute then matched the addresses that were entered online with the addresses that were originally selected for the random sample. If the address from a survey completed online did not match one of the addresses selected for the sample, the online survey was not included in the final database for this report. The overall results for the sample of 503 surveys has a precision of at least +/- 4.3 at the 95% level of confidence.

Survey Respondent Demographics

Bowling Green residents that participated in the statistically valid survey collectively representing the demographics of the City of Bowling Green. The survey collected information on a few key demographic characteristics, including household ages, gender identity, years lived in Bowling Green, and race/ethnicity. This information was key to ensuring the Bowling Green community was represented in this engagement process. **Map 5: Statistically Valid Survey Responses**, on the following page demonstrates where survey respondents were generally clustered around the city.

Legend

- Trail (Existing)
- Parks & Facilities
- Aprox. Survey Response



Map 5: Statistically Valid Survey Responses

503
Survey Respondents

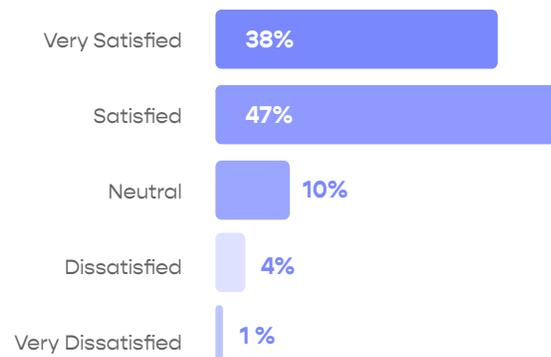
95%
*Level of confidence
with a precision rate of
at least +/- 4.3.*



Usage and Ratings of Parks and Facilities

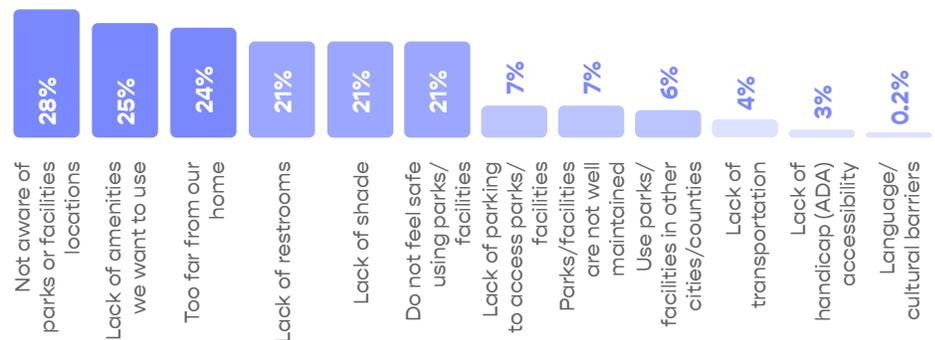
Most respondents (85%) rated their satisfaction with overall cleanliness of parks they have visited as either “satisfied” (47%) or “very satisfied” (38%). The highest percentage (44%) of respondents visit parks in the afternoon.

+ How satisfied are you with the overall cleanliness of the City of Bowling Green parks you have visited?



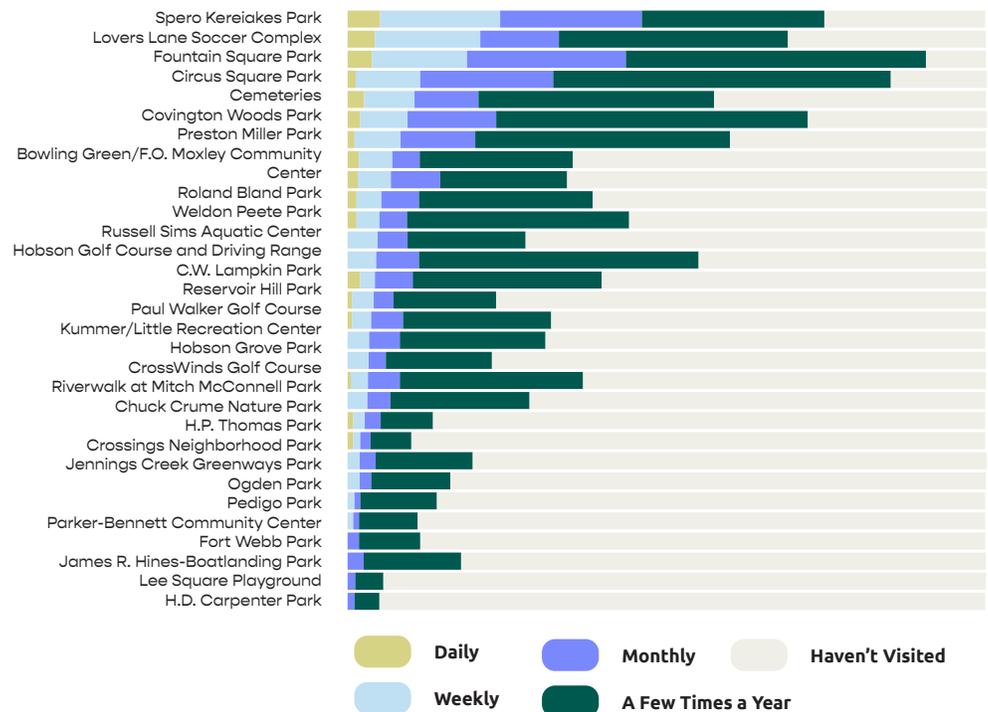
The three most commonly selected reasons why respondents do not visit parks and facilities more often are not being aware of parks or facilities locations (28%), lack of amenities they want to use (25%), and distance from home (24%).

+ Reasons that prevent you or members of your households from visiting City of Bowling Green parks & recreation facilities more often.



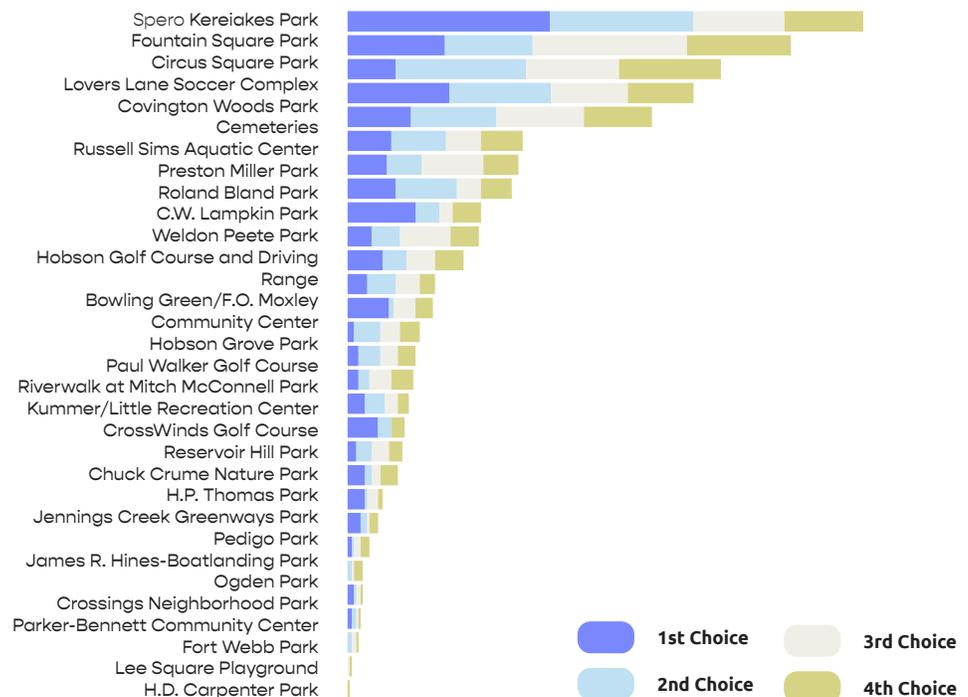
The facilities visited by the highest percentage of respondents are Fountain Square Park (91%), Circus Square Park (85%), and Spero Kereiakes Park (75%).

+ Please indicate how often you and members of your household have visited each of the following City of Bowling Green parks and recreation facilities.



The four parks/facilities most important to households are Spero Kereiakes Park (47%), Fountain Square Park (41%), and Circus Square Park (34%).

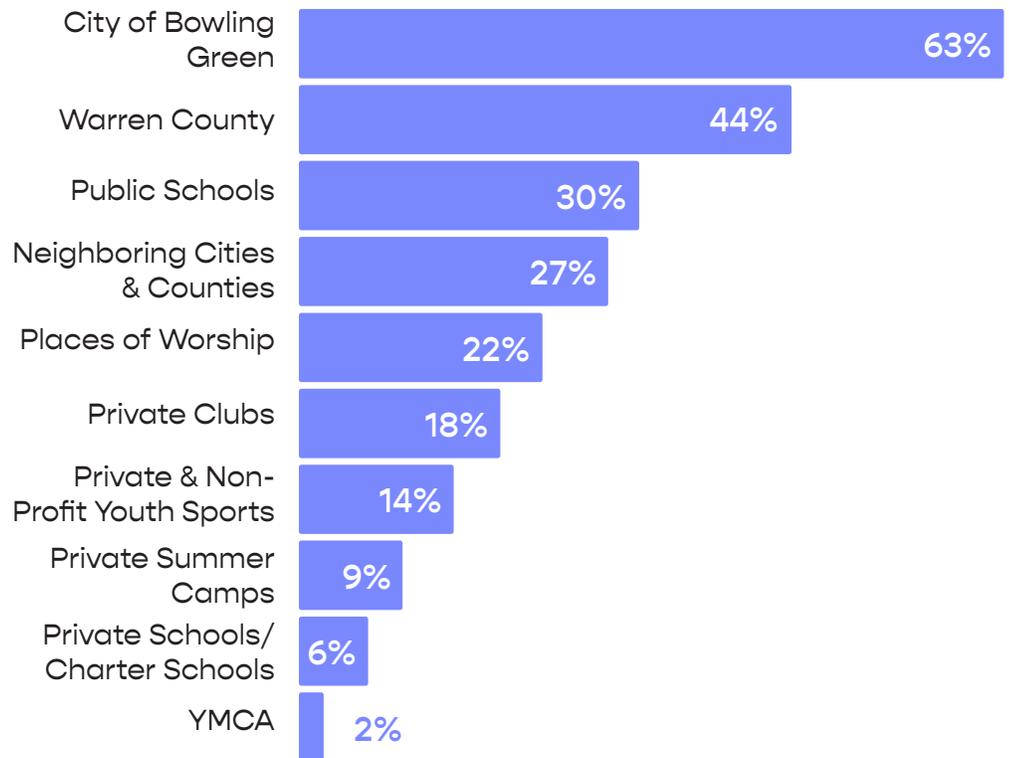
+ Which FOUR parks/facilities from the list in Question 2 are MOST IMPORTANT to your household?



Programming

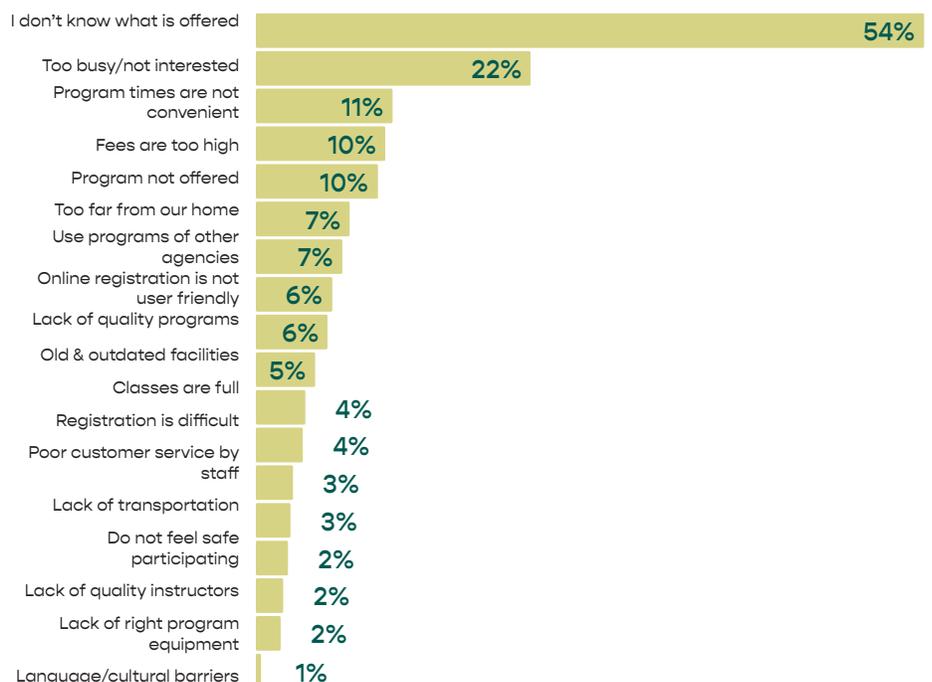
The three organizations used by the highest percentage of respondents for recreation and sports activities in the past year was the City of Bowling Green (63%), Warren County (44%), and Public Schools (30%). Most respondents feel it is very important (90%) for the City of Bowling Green to provide high quality parks, recreation facilities, and programs.

+ Please CHECK ALL of the organizations that you or members of your household have used for recreation and sports activities during the last 12 months.



Respondents were asked to select all the reasons their household does not participate in programs offered by the City of Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Department more often. Not knowing what is offered (54%), too busy/lack of interest (22%), and inconvenient program times (11%) were selected most often.

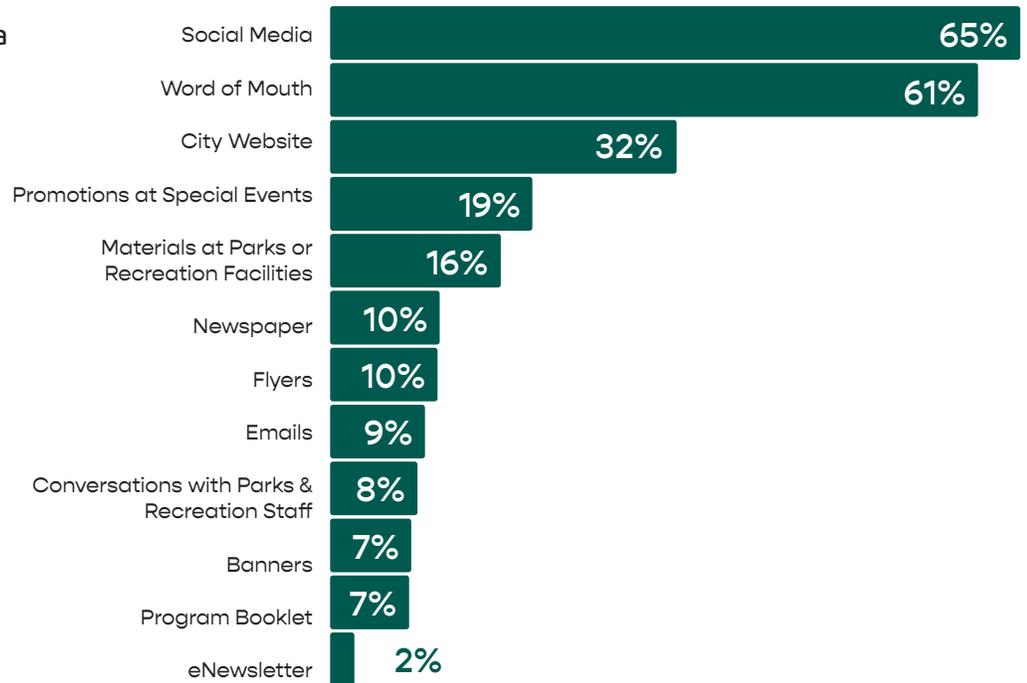
+ Reasons that prevent you or members of your household from participating in City of Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Department programs more often.



Communication Methods & Website Use

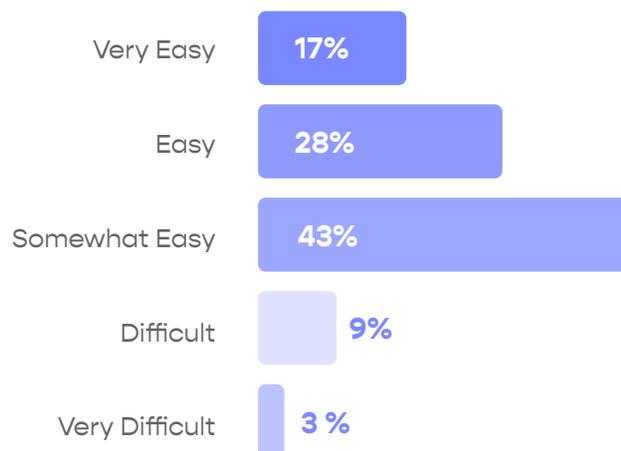
Respondents were asked to select all the ways they hear about City of Bowling Green parks, recreation facilities, programs, and events. The highest percentages elected social media (65%), word of mouth (61%), or the City website (32%). They would most prefer to use social media (77%), the City website (35%), or emails (30%).

✦ From the following list, please CHECK ALL the ways you hear about City of Bowling Green parks, recreation facilities, program, and events.



About half (51%) of respondents who were program participants say they registered online for the program or event. This highest percentage (43%) of these respondents felt it was “somewhat easy” to find the information they need on the online registration website.

✦ How easy was it to find the information you needed on the online registration website?



Priorities for Parks and Recreation Investments

The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) was developed by ETC Institute to provide governments with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on parks and recreation investments. The Priority Investment Rating was developed by ETC Institute to identify the facilities and programs residents think should receive the highest priority for investment. The priority investment rating reflects the importance residents place on items (sum of top 4 choices) and the unmet needs (needs that are not met or only partly met) for each facility/program relative to the facility/program that rated the highest overall. Since decisions related to future investments should consider both the level of unmet need and the importance of facilities and programs, the PIR weights each of these components equally.

The PIR reflects the sum of the Unmet Needs Rating and the Importance Rating as shown in the equation: $PIR = UNR + IR$

For example, if the Unmet Needs Rating for Community Gardens were 98.9 (out of 100) and the Importance Rating for Community Gardens were 21.6 (out of 100), the Priority Investment Rating for Community Gardens would be 120.5 (out of 200).

The following pages show the Unmet Needs Rating, Importance Rating, and Priority Investment Rating for facilities and programs.

High Priority (100+)

High Priority Areas are those with a PIR of at least 100. A rating of 100 or above generally indicates there is a relatively high level of unmet need and residents generally think it is important to fund improvements in these areas. Improvements in this area are likely to have a positive impact on the greatest number of households.

Medium Priority (50-99)

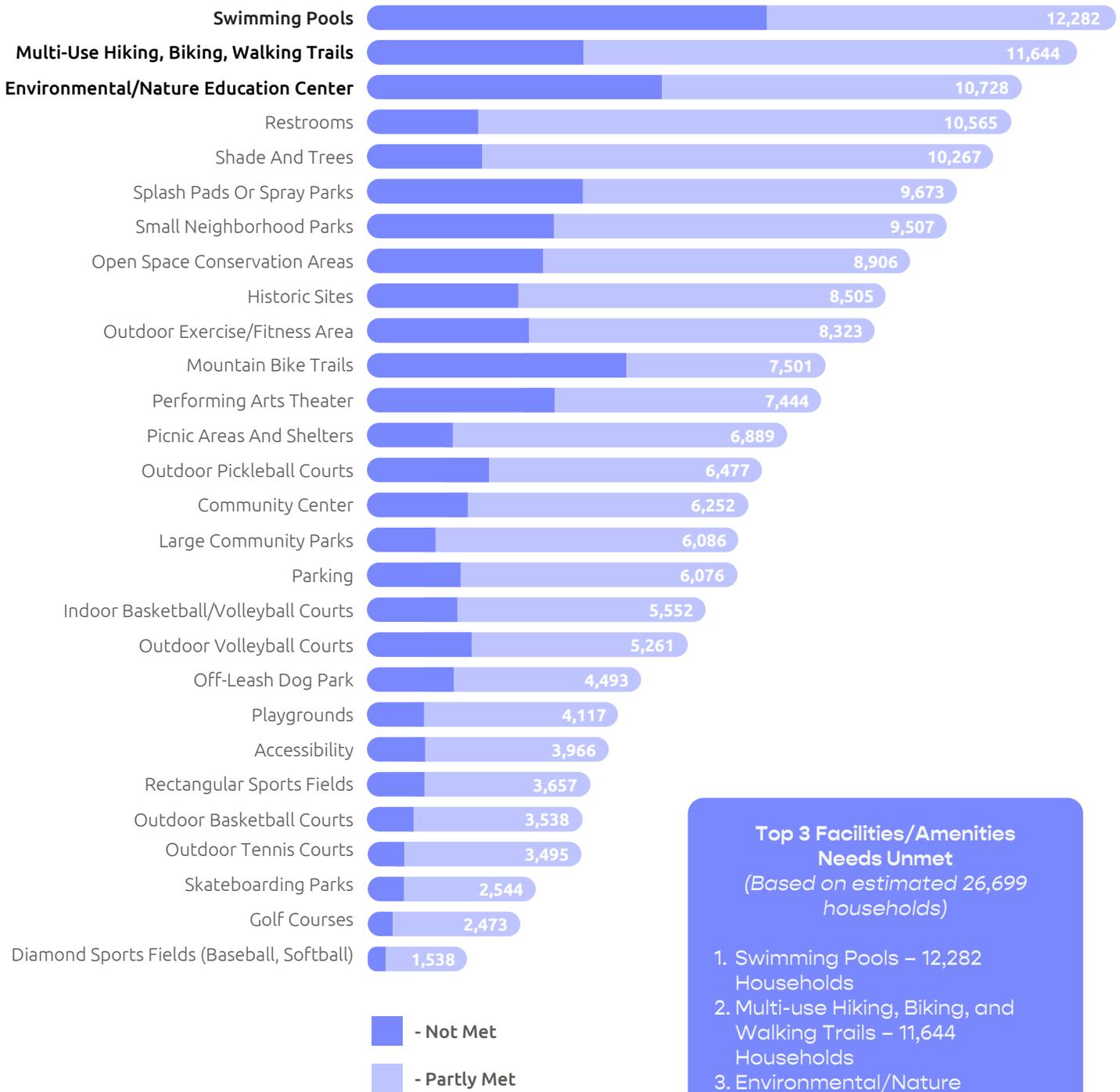
Medium Priority Areas are those with a PIR of 50-99. A rating in this range generally indicates there is a medium to high level of unmet need or a significant percentage of residents generally think it is important to fund improvements in these areas.

Low Priority (0-49)

Low Priority Areas are those with a PIR below 50. A rating in this range generally indicates there is a relatively low level of unmet need and residents do not think it is important to fund improvements in these areas. Improvements may be warranted if the needs of very specialized populations are being targeted.

Recreation Facilities/Amenities Needs

Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 28 facilities/amenities and to rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had the greatest “unmet” need for various facilities/amenities. The three amenities/facilities with the highest percentage of households that have an unmet need: Swimming Pools, Multi-use Hiking, Biking and Walking Trails, and Environmental/Nature Education Courses.

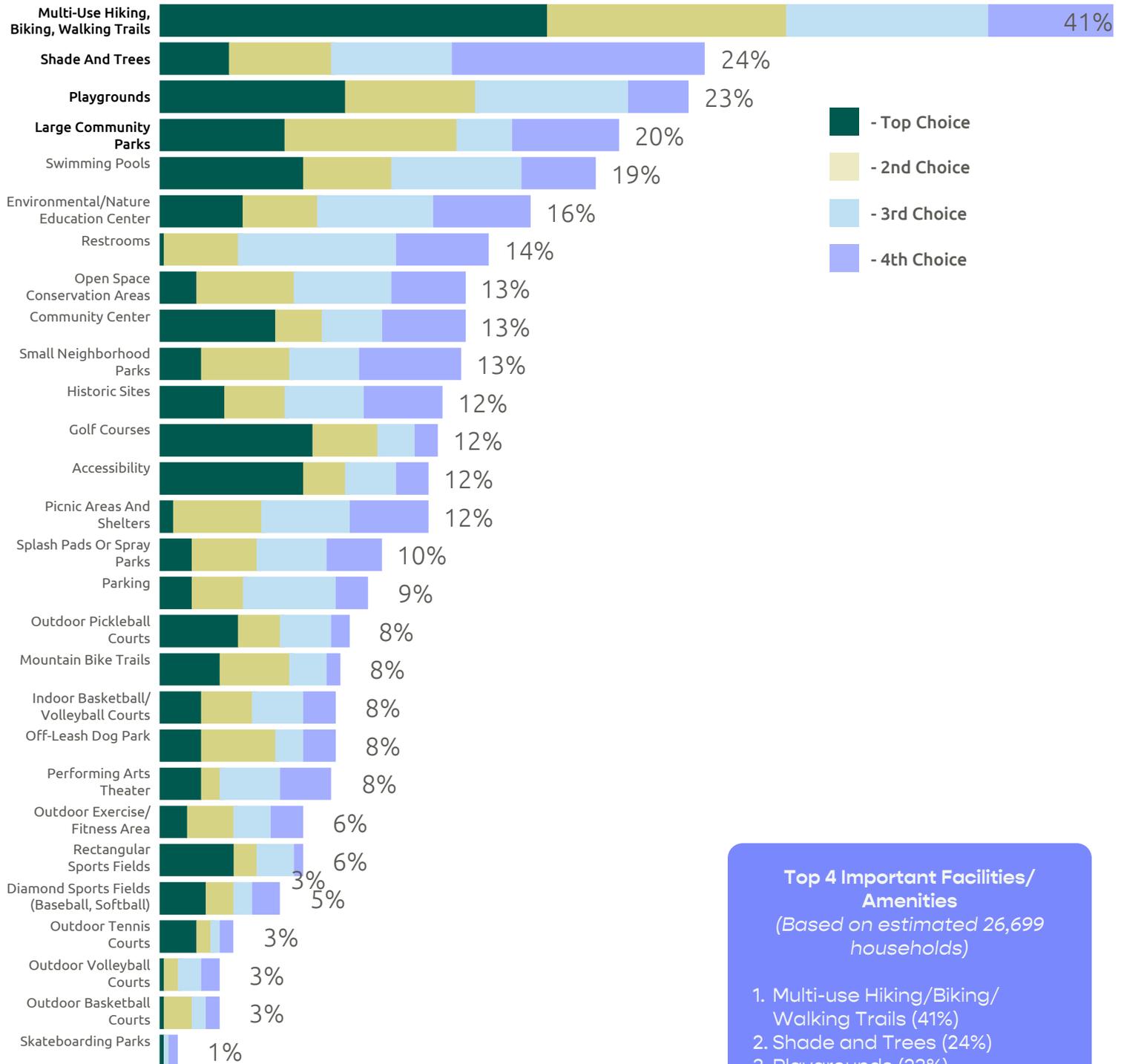


Top 3 Facilities/Amenities Needs Unmet
(Based on estimated 26,699 households)

1. Swimming Pools – 12,282 Households
2. Multi-use Hiking, Biking, and Walking Trails – 11,644 Households
3. Environmental/Nature Education Centers – 10,728 Households

Recreation Facilities/Amenities Importance

In addition to assessing the needs for each amenity/facility, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents placed on each item. Based on the sum of respondents' top four choices, these were the four amenities/facilities ranked most important to residents: Multi-Use Hiking/Biking/Walking Trails, Shade and Trees, Playgrounds, and Large Community Parks.

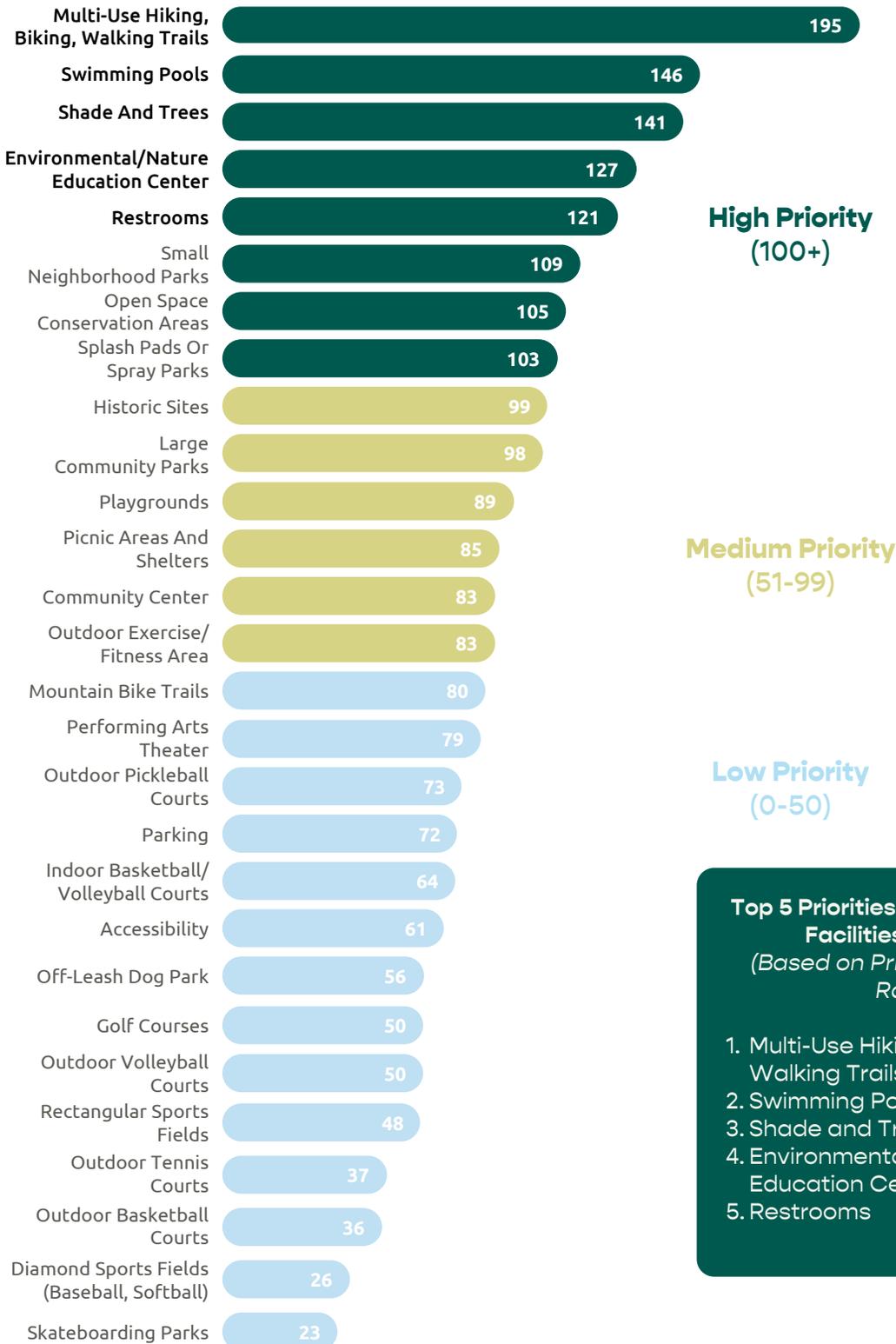


Top 4 Important Facilities/Amenities
(Based on estimated 26,699 households)

1. Multi-use Hiking/Biking/Walking Trails (41%)
2. Shade and Trees (24%)
3. Playgrounds (23%)
4. Large Community Parks (20%)

Priorities for Facility Investments

The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on recreation and parks investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weighs (1) the importance that residents place on amenities/facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the amenity/facility. Based the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following amenities/facilities were rated as high priorities for investment: Multi-use Hiking/Biking/Walking Trails, Swimming Pools, Shade and Trees, Environmental/Nature Education, Restrooms, Small Neighborhood Parks, Open Space Conservation Areas and Splash Pads or Spray Parks.

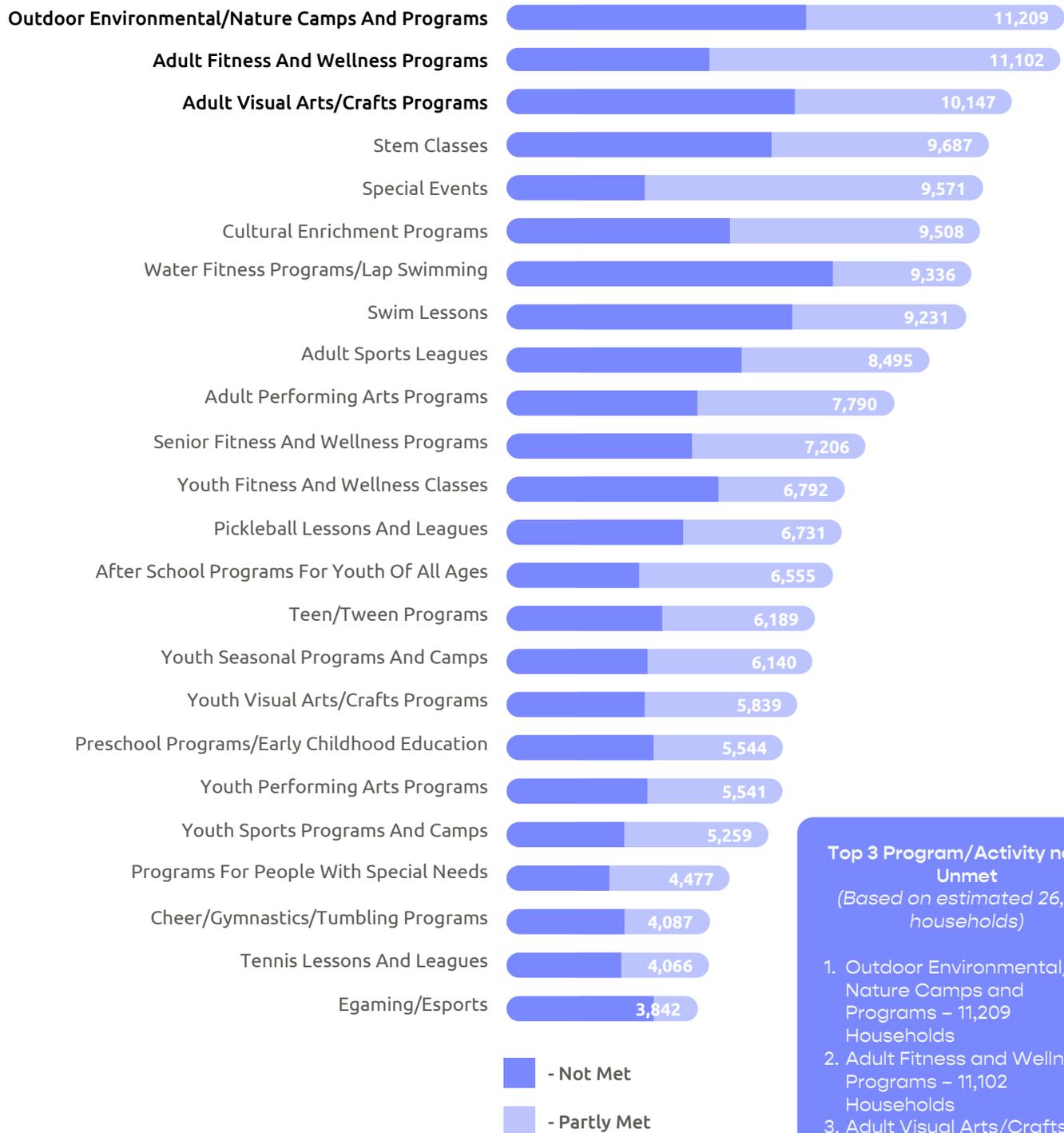


Top 5 Priorities for Investment for Facilities/Amenities
(Based on Priority Investment Rating)

1. Multi-Use Hiking, Biking and Walking Trails
2. Swimming Pools
3. Shade and Trees
4. Environmental/Nature Education Center
5. Restrooms

Recreation Program Needs

Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 24 recreation programs and to rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had the greatest “unmet” need for various programs. The three programs with the highest number of households that have an unmet need: Outdoor Environmental/Nature Camps and Programs, Adult Fitness and Wellness Programs, Adult Visual Arts/Crafts Programs.

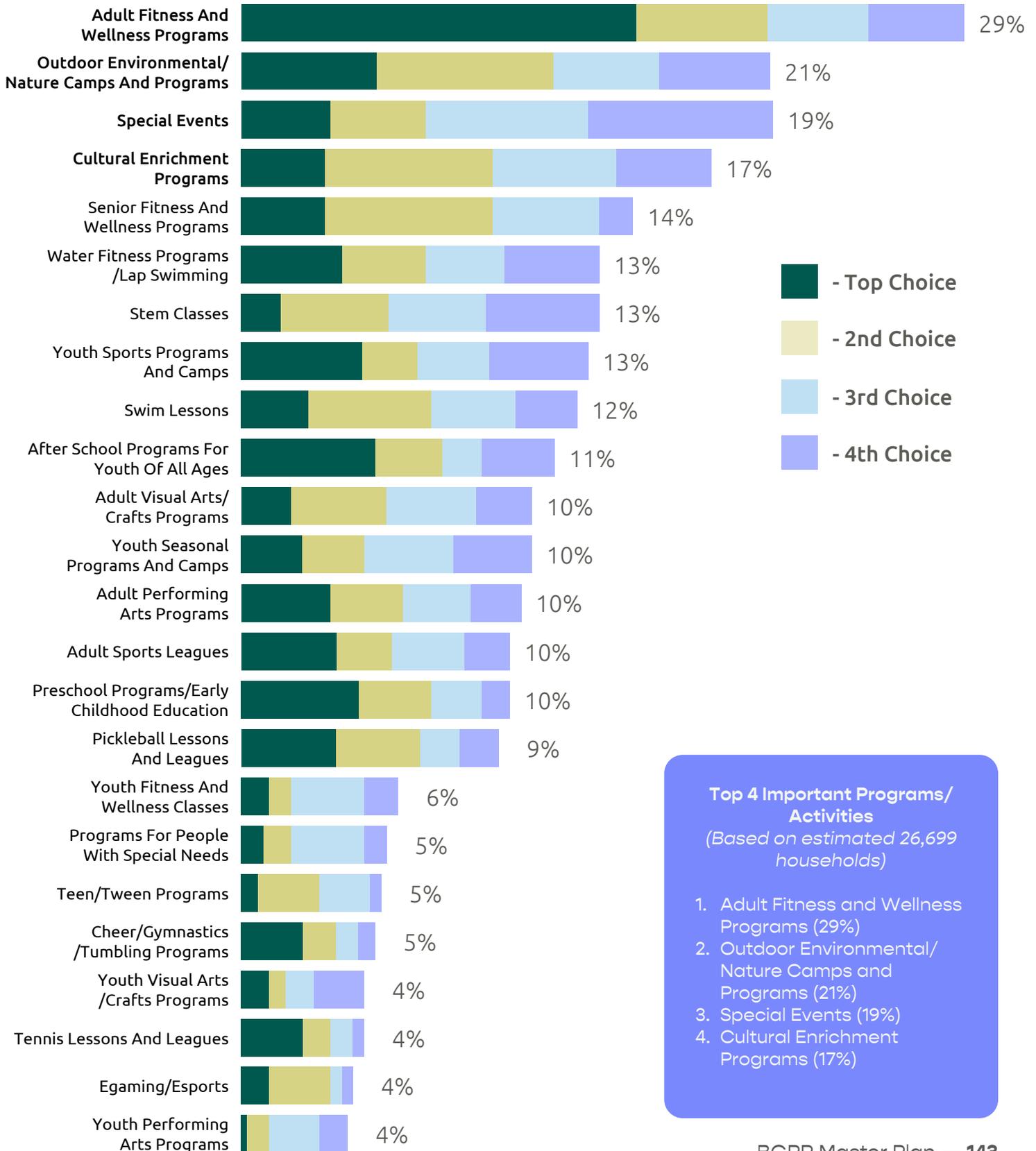


Top 3 Program/Activity needs Unmet
 (Based on estimated 26,699 households)

1. Outdoor Environmental/ Nature Camps and Programs – 11,209 Households
2. Adult Fitness and Wellness Programs – 11,102 Households
3. Adult Visual Arts/Crafts Programs – 10,147 Households

Recreation Program Importance

In addition to assessing the needs for each program, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents placed on each item. Based on the sum of respondents' top four choices, these are the four programs ranked most important to residents: Adult Fitness and Wellness Programs, Outdoor Environmental/Nature Camps and Programs, Special Events and Cultural Enrichment Programs.



Top 4 Important Programs/ Activities
(Based on estimated 26,699 households)

1. Adult Fitness and Wellness Programs (29%)
2. Outdoor Environmental/Nature Camps and Programs (21%)
3. Special Events (19%)
4. Cultural Enrichment Programs (17%)

Priorities for Facility Investments

The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on recreation and parks investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weighs (1) the importance that residents place on amenities/facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the amenity/facility. Based the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following activities/programs were rated as high priorities for investment: Adult Fitness and Wellness Programs, Outdoor Environmental/Nature Camps and Programs, Special Events, Cultural Enrichment Programs, STEM Classes, Water Fitness Programs/Lap Swimming, Adult Visual Arts/Crafts Programs, Swim Lessons, Senior Fitness and Wellness Programs, Adult Sports Leagues and Adult Performing Art Programs.



Top 5 Priorities for Investment for Programs/Activities (Based on Priority Investment Rating)

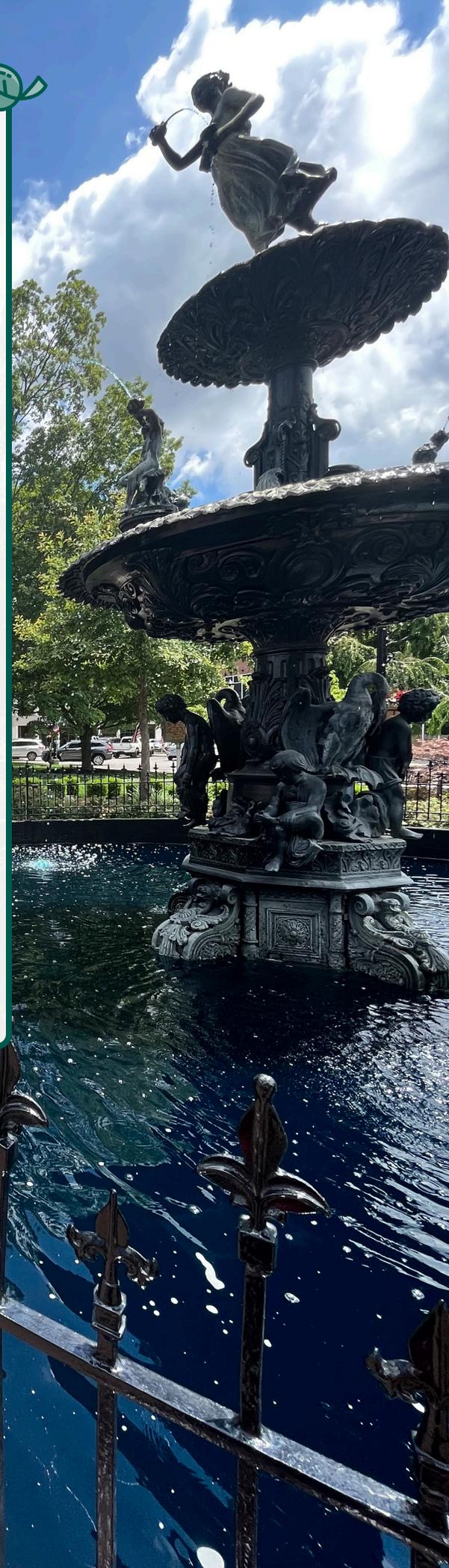
1. Adult Fitness and Wellness Program
2. Outdoor Environmental/Nature Camps and Programs
3. Special Events
4. Cultural Enrichment Programs
5. STEM Classes

BG2050 Project Connection

"What Could BG Be?" was a month-long, online conversation hosted by the BG2050 Project between February and March of 2025. Over this month-long period, Warren County and their consultant team, engaged community members and partners across the county to kick-off a long-term community visioning and planning effort aimed at preparing for the anticipated growth over the next 25 years. During this period, 7,890 local residents shared 3,940 ideas for the future of Warren County and weighted in over 1 million times on a range of community topics, including environment and sustainability.

This feedback is important because it demonstrates alignment between the long-term visioning efforts reflected in this plan and the BG2050 Project. Of the 3,940 ideas gathered from the community, 124 directly relate to parks and green spaces, and 68 relate to preservation and conservation. Several key themes that emerged from the BG2050 feedback directly relate to this plan, including:

- + Pedestrian Connections to Parks and Open Space - Sidewalks, Trails, Bike Lanes, Multi-Use Paths etc.
- + More green spaces, parks and open space.
- + Trees and protecting trees is important
- + Better riverfront utilization through development and connections
- + Improvement of parks and facilities - equipment, natural playgrounds, new specialized parks etc.
- + More events - festivals, community celebrations, themed events etc.
- + Better communication about community resources.






FIELD
1

2

7



05

Growing Our Parks

10 Recommendation Themes



Recommendation Themes

Ten guiding themes emerging from our engagement and analysis shape this plan's recommendations and future implementation action items.

The ten recommendation themes align community priorities identified in our engagement process with the outcomes from this plan's analysis of the existing system to serve as the foundation for this master plan. Together, they outline a framework for investing in current and future parks, strengthening programming, expanding equitable access to parks, and improving operational readiness to achieve CAPRA Accreditation. Each theme reflects an aspect of what residents expressed that they value from BGPR, such as welcoming and accessible parks, strong connections to neighborhoods, high-quality facilities, programs for diverse users, and a parks system that supports Bowling Green's growth. These themes not only organize the recommendations that follow but also guide future decision-making through this plan's Implementation Matrix. Outlined in the last chapter of this report, this matrix summarizes recommendations under each of the ten themes shown to the right:

- 1. Enhance connectivity to parks and trails:** Connecting people to parks by improving walkability, expanding trails, and ensuring equitable access for all Bowling Green residents.
- 2. Maintain and improve BGPR's existing facilities to continue serving the community:** Focus on strategic upgrades, accessibility improvements and data-driven planning to ensure safe, inclusive, and high-quality experiences for all users.
- 3. Create awareness for BGPR's facilities and programs:** Refresh BGPR's branding and content, improve communication with the Bowling Green community, and develop a marketing strategy.
- 4. Expand the geographic reach of the system to serve Bowling Green's growing population:** Ensure an equitable distribution of parks throughout the community, develop land acquisition strategies, and use tools to help plan for the future.
- 5. Promote BGPR as a regional destination for recreation and events:** Leverage existing and potential partnerships to plan for new facilities that meet community needs while strengthening Bowling Green's position as a regional destination for sports recreation.

6. **Foster natural spaces that connect residents with nature:** Connect residents to nature through new and expanded trails, naturalized spaces, and nature education opportunities.
7. **Invest in new facilities to address service gaps:** Plan for new facilities that address the needs of Bowling Green’s growing population and develop universal design standards for BGPR Parks.
8. **Enhance programming to educate, inspire, and delight residents of all ages:** Implement best-practice management, development, planning and delivery practices for BGPR’s programming.
9. **Strengthen and establish partnerships with local and regional entities and institutions:** Strengthen existing partnerships and develop new partnerships to advance BGPR’s mission and serve the community.
10. **Improve BGPR’s operational preparedness to better provide services and implement this master plan:** Bolster organizational resilience, achieve CAPRA accreditation, and create a parks and recreation department that can better provide services for the Bowling Green Community.

Recommendations Themes



ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY
to parks and trails.



FOSTER NATURAL SPACES
that connect residents with nature.



MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE
BGPR’s existing facilities to continue serving the community.



INVEST IN NEW FACILITIES
to address service gaps.



CREATE AWARENESS
for BGPR’s facilities and programs.



ENHANCE PROGRAMMING
to educate, inspire, and delight residents of all ages.



EXPAND THE GEOGRAPHIC REACH OF SYSTEM
to serve Bowling Green’s growing population.



STRENGTHEN AND ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS
with local and regional entities and institutions.



PROMOTE BGPR
as a regional destination for recreation and events.



IMPROVE BGPR’S OPERATIONAL PREPAREDNESS
to better provide services and implement this master plan.

1 | Enhance Connectivity

Enhance connectivity to parks and trails: Connecting people to parks by improving walkability, expanding trails, and ensuring equitable access for all Bowling Green residents.

Throughout the engagement process, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity quickly emerged as one of the strongest priorities for Bowling Green residents. The people we engaged told us they would like to access parks without needing a car and feel better connected to BGPR's facilities. This recommendation theme focuses on improving connectivity to parks for all users, helping remove barriers to visiting BGPR's parks and programming for those who are unable to drive, or would rather walk/bike.

By improving sidewalks, multi-use trails, on-street bike facilities, and park entrances, Bowling Green can create a seamless network of green and active corridors connected to recreational opportunities offered by BGPR. The action items below outline how BGPR and the City can weave parks more deeply into the fabric of everyday life, ensuring that every neighborhood feels connected, accessible, and integrated with the park system. The action items to help BGPR improve connectivity are:



Improve walkability along city streets, with a focus on streets connecting residential areas with greenways and BGPR Parks and Facilities.

Improving walkability will require a coordinated focus between BGPR and Public Works to identify gaps in the sidewalk system within a 10-minute walkshed of BGPR parks and facilities. Recommended enhancements may include widening sidewalks, improving or adding pedestrian crossings, installing pedestrian-scale lighting, and adding street trees that provide shade.

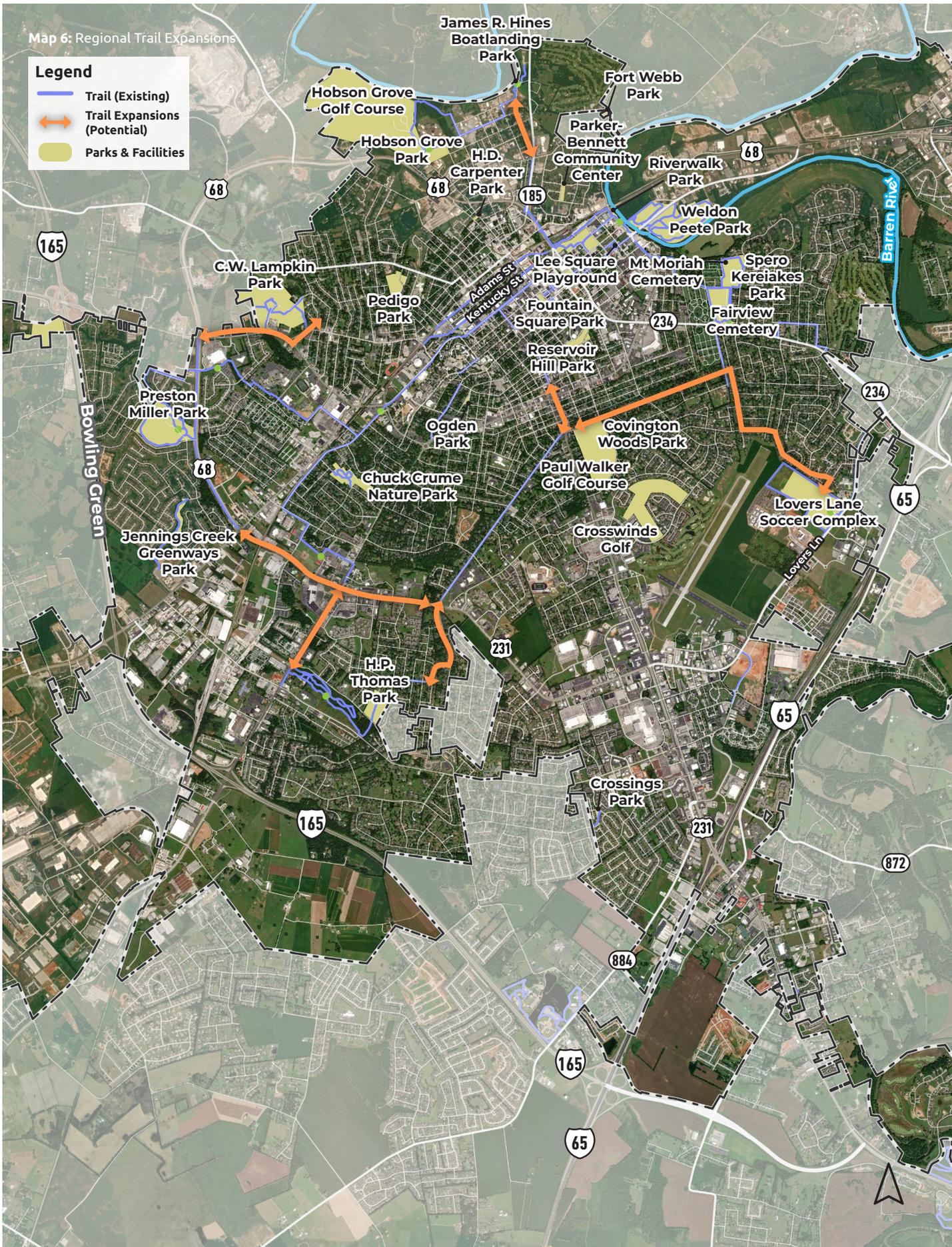
Expand the regional trail system to create a connected Loop Trail that enables walkable connections between neighborhoods with BGPR Parks and Facilities.

A fully connected Greenways Trail will provide a continuous, high-quality link between Bowling Green's neighborhoods, parks, schools, and destinations. Achieving this vision requires filling strategic trail gaps in the system, negotiating easements, leveraging utility corridors, and partnering with regional agencies. Once developed, these improvements will have the potential to create a citywide Loop Trail where residents have a safe and seamless connection to parks.

Map 6: Regional Trail Expansions

Legend

- Trail (Existing)
- Trail Expansions (Potential)
- Parks & Facilities



The Crossings Park entrance is a great example of pedestrian-scale entry elements that are inviting and reinforce neighborhood pride.



Kereiakis Park is an example of a park where pedestrian-scale elements are well within the park rather than at park entrances, which are designed for a car entry experience.

Expand and improve bike-friendly infrastructure near BGPR Parks, such as dedicated on-street infrastructure and off-street trails.

Improving bike access to parks means providing safe, visible, and connected bike routes for users of all ages and abilities. This may include adding protected bike lanes and improving off-street multi-use paths that connect directly into park entrances or are within a 10-minute walkshed of parks. While a longer-term effort that will require coordination with City, State, and County partners, shorter term wins may include identifying pilot demonstration projects (such as quick-build

painted lanes or bollard-protected segments), and coordinating with local and regional bike advocates to identify key corridors for future improvements.

Improve park entrances to reinforce a pedestrian-facing entry, with attractive pedestrian-scale signage, lighting, and bike parking.

For many, the first impression of BGPR's facilities occur before entering the park itself and happens at the park's entrance. As such, ensuring that the park entry experience is designed for pedestrian users is a critical piece in making parks more walkable and bikeable. Improvements may include adding visible crosswalks

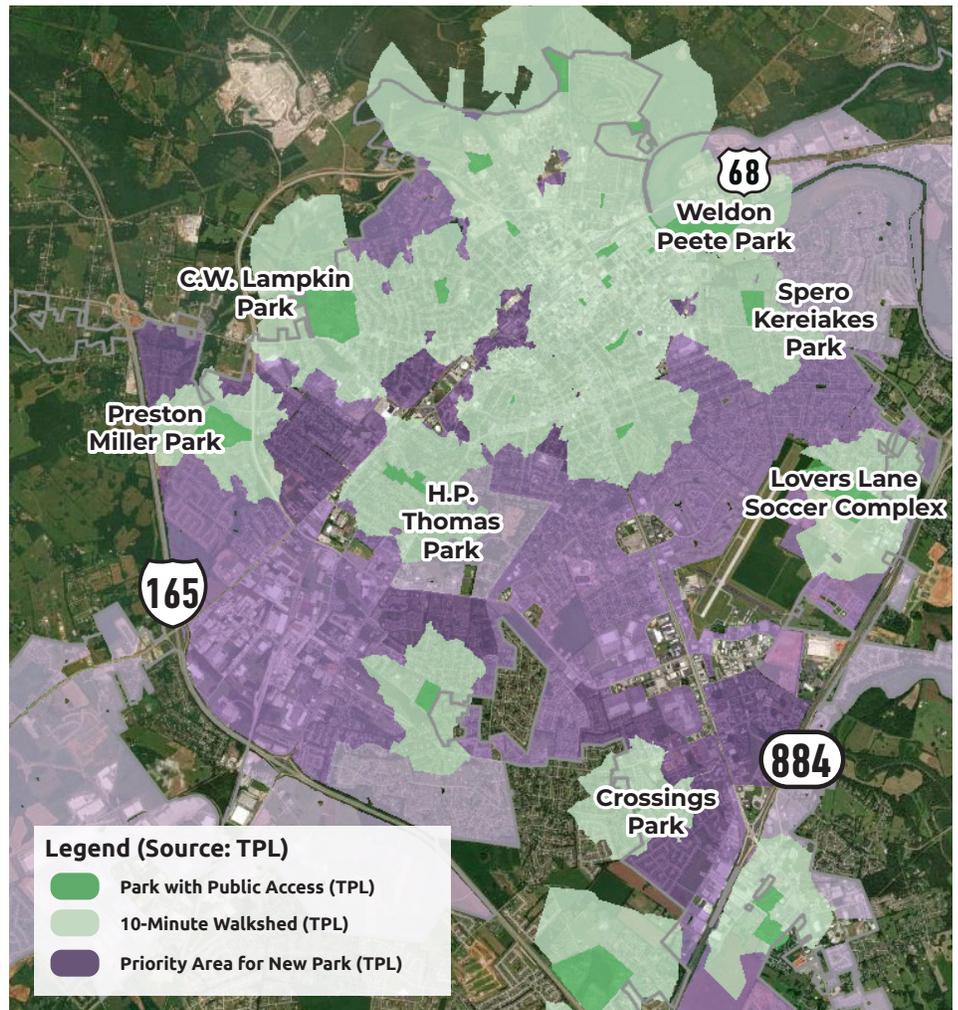
leading into parks, designing pedestrian-scale gateway elements, installing shade trees, and ensuring park entrances are well lit during early morning and evening hours. Additions like bike racks and wayfinding signage help orient visitors and support pedestrian access, especially for those unable to drive. Key next steps include developing a consistent park entrance kit of parts, prioritizing entrances with the highest visibility, and integrating these upgrades into capital improvement plans.

Address pedestrian connectivity gaps to BGPR parks in the current system, with a focus on underserved neighborhoods such as Russellville Road and South Warren.

Closing connectivity gaps is a critical step toward ensuring access to parks is equitable across Bowling Green’s neighborhoods. This work involves identifying barriers to walkability in vulnerable communities, or those with traditionally disadvantaged resident groups, such as areas highlighted in the CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index (SVI). Once these communities of focus are identified, improvements may include constructing new sidewalks where gaps exist, installing pedestrian refuge islands, narrowing crossings, or providing new mid-block connections where traditional street networks are limited.

Establish a goal that a majority of Bowling Green residents live within a comfortable, safe, and pleasant 10-minute walk to a BGPR Park or facility.

A 10-minute walkshed is often regarded as a clear and measurable benchmark for pedestrian accessibility to parks and is recognized as the key standard by the Trust for Public Land (TPL). TPL uses nationally available park data to create the walkshed analysis, and classifies parks or ‘park-like’ places as outdoor, named destinations that encourage informal public use, and support at least one ‘park-like’ activity. Open spaces at school playgrounds and privately



Map 7: Park Access, Walkshed & Priority Areas

managed parks are included in the walkshed analysis, if they allow public use of the space.

Achieving this goal requires a focused commitment to identifying walksheds from BGPR parks, inventorying gaps, and establishing priority areas, such as areas with widespread sidewalk or trail gaps where residents are unable to walk to a BGPR park, or areas currently underserved by BGPR. Improvements may include improving sidewalks and trails, expanding the park network where gaps exist, and enhancing safety and comfort along routes that currently deter walking. A key next step includes developing a more detailed walkshed analysis to map current access to parks,

identifying neighborhoods with limited access, and creating a targeted implementation strategy that combines park expansion, access improvements, and partnerships that secure new parkland in areas experiencing growth.

“40% of Bowling Green residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park.”

- Trust for Public Land

2 | Maintain & Improve

Maintain and improve BGPR’s existing facilities to continue serving the community: Focus on strategic upgrades, accessibility improvements and data-driven planning to ensure safe, inclusive, and high-quality experiences for all users.

As noted in the community engagement and Statistically Valid Survey results, Bowling Green residents perceive BGPR parks as strong community anchors that are well-maintained, welcoming, and providing great value to their communities. Continuing these high standards and community satisfaction relies on consistent care, modernization, and reinvestment in BGPR’s existing parks and facilities. Throughout the planning process, both stakeholders and community members emphasized the need and importance of maintaining and improving current parks. As reflected in planned Capital Improvement Projects (CIP), BGPR is already making great strides to refresh aging facilities and ensure their long-term use. By continuing to focus on strategic upgrades, improving accessibility for all users, modernizing maintenance practices, and reinvesting in park features nearing the end of their lifespan, BGPR can continue delivering high-quality experiences for residents. The



following recommendations outline how BGPR can continue to improve and maintain its existing facilities to this same level of care.

Address needed improvements to parks and facilities to improve accessibility for all users, such as inclusive surfacing and accessible playground equipment.

Ensuring that all residents, regardless of their age, ability, or mobility, can fully participate in recreation opportunities is central to BGPR’s mission and vision. With recent improvements to parks,

such as fully accessible or partially accessible playgrounds, and more accessible surfacing, BGPR is already championing a more inclusive recreation landscape in Bowling Green. However, there is opportunity for additional improvements, such as installing inclusive play equipment at play areas nearing their end of their lifespans, upgrading surfacing materials to accessible standards across heavily used parks, improving slopes and routes along walking paths and trails, enhancing seating and shade, and ensuring ADA-compliant access to key BGPR amenities. These upgrades will increase

comfort, safety, and usability for all families regardless of abilities, as well as older adults and individuals with disabilities. As a next step, BGPR is recommended to continue to prioritize these improvements guided by conducting an accessibility audit, prioritizing high-use locations, and integrating universal design principles into renovations and capital improvement projects.

Renovate current facilities reaching their end of their usable lifespan, such as spraygrounds, restrooms, and parking surfacing.

As understood by this plan's existing conditions analysis, a variety of park features like playgrounds, restrooms, and parking areas are near the end of their usable lifespans and may require reinvestment to remain safe, functional, and appealing. Continuing BGPR's ongoing dedication to park improvements, renovations may include replacing outdated infrastructure, improving water and pump systems, upgrading lighting and plumbing at restrooms, resurfacing parking areas, renovating maintenance and concessions buildings, improving lighting, and upgrading athletic fields. These improvements enhance visitor experience and reduce future maintenance burdens.

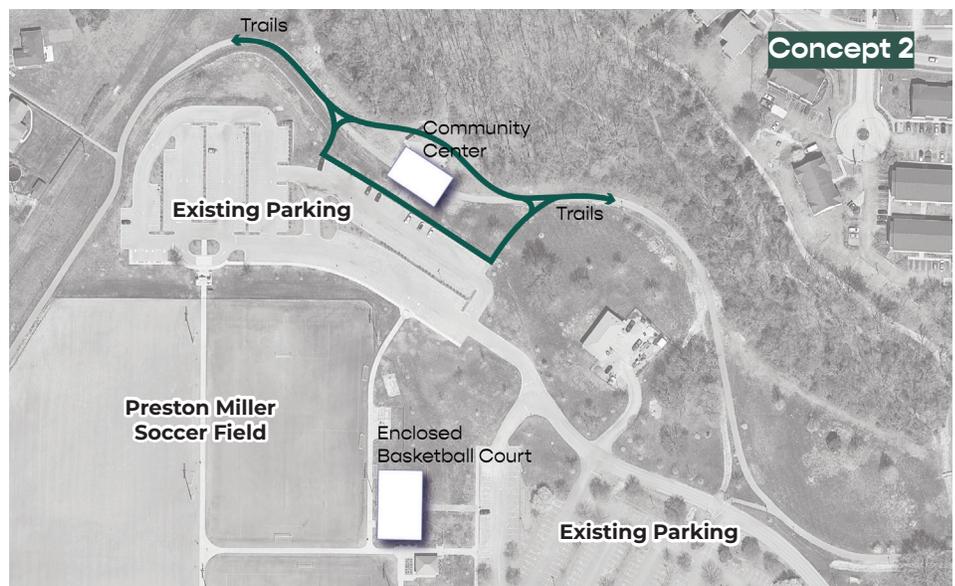
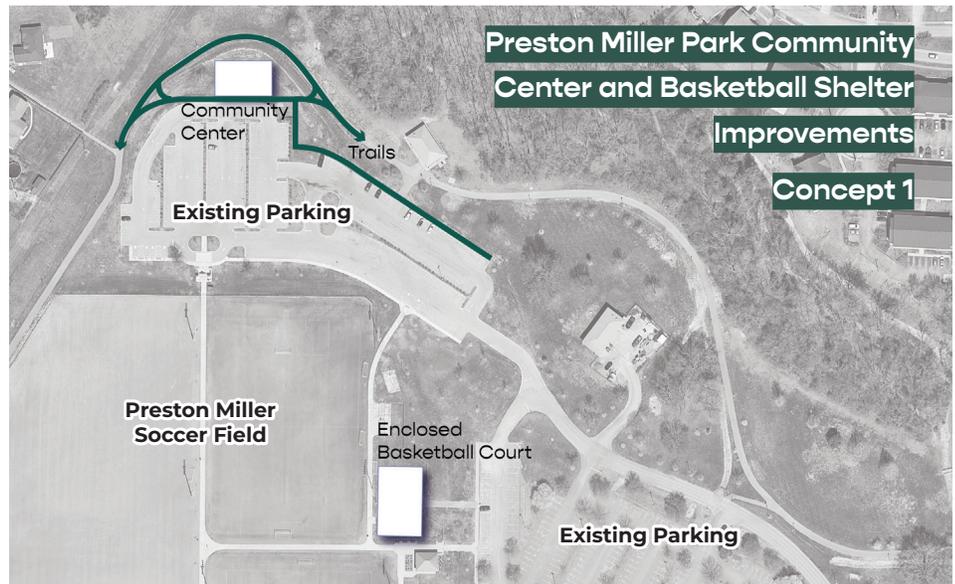


Figure 79: Preston Miller Park Community Center and Basketball Shelter Improvement Concepts

Assess heavily utilized parks and facilities to identify improvements to key recreational and supportive facilities, such as shelters, restrooms, and recreational courts/fields.

BGPR's most heavily used parks, such as Fountain Square, Circus Square, Lovers Lane Soccer Complex, and the Russell Sims Aquatic Center, are community anchors that help define Bowling Green's overall identity. Their success in bringing people across

the region together is one of BGPR's key strengths, however this also places key emphasis on their ongoing maintenance and quality. These high-usage parks require ongoing evaluation to ensure they continue meeting their high community demand, such as assessing the state of amenities like athletic courts, recreation fields, park shelters, concession stands, and restrooms. This next step analysis, using objective scoring criteria, will help guide where upgrades will be most impactful and support allocation of funding in future CIPs.

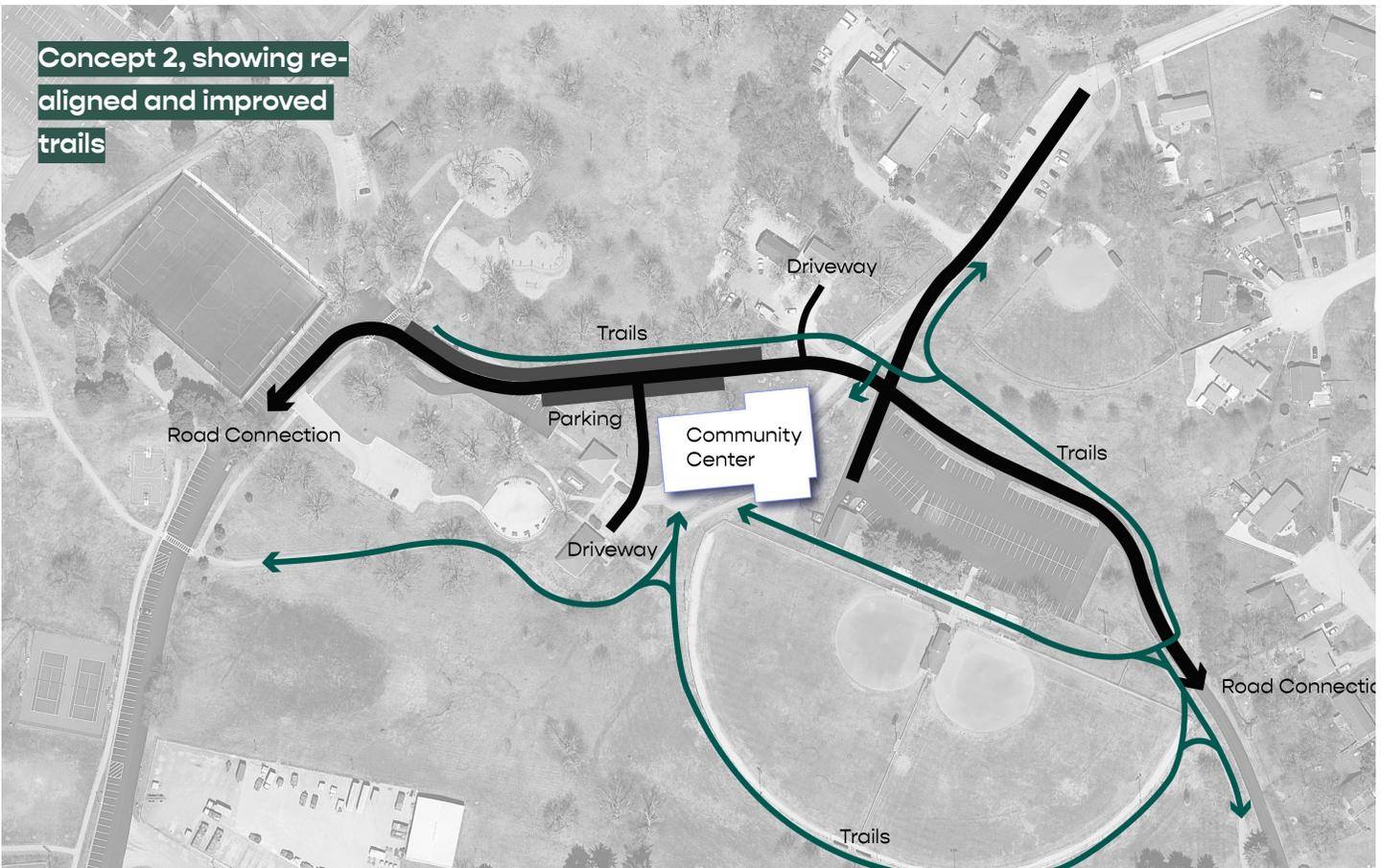
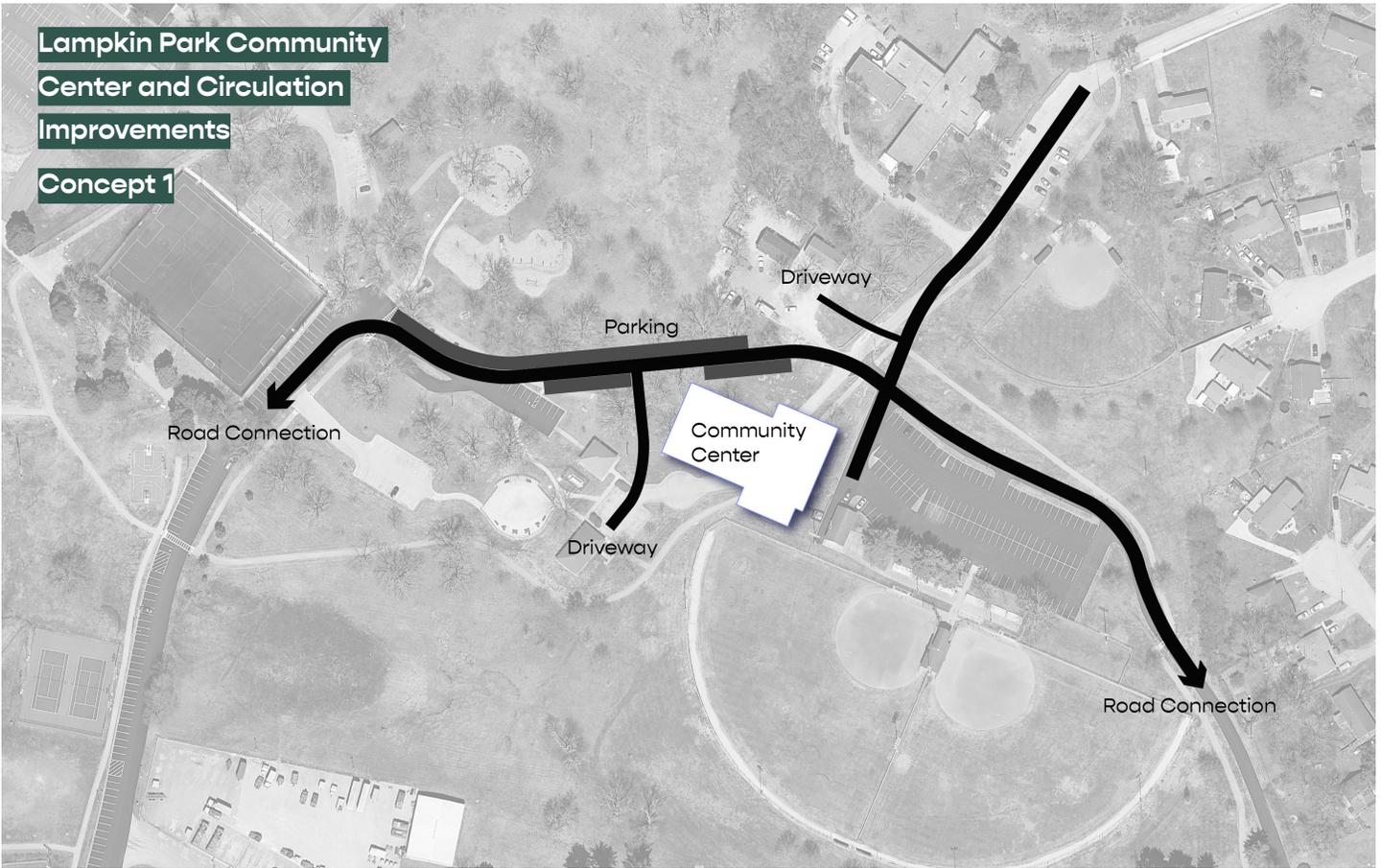


Figure 80: Lampkin Park Community Center and Circulation Improvement Concepts

Restroom upgrades are opportunities at high use parks, such as Lampkin Park, which will benefit from a new Community Center and improved circulation.



Advance preventative maintenance planning & standardize documentation.

Preventative maintenance is essential for protecting BGPR's investments in its parks and facilities, and helping reduce long-term costs associated with delayed maintenance. This is augmented by standardizing documentation of ongoing maintenance procedures, such as establishing routine inspections, consistent reporting, and scheduling maintenance proactively. This minimizes unexpected issues and makes for more predictable and consistent budgeting and staffing.

Modernize maintenance operations, replace outdated equipment and integrate technology for tracking.

Modernizing maintenance operations helps improve BGPR's overall efficiency as it manages a growing system of parks, facilities, and supportive staff. This may include replacing outdated maintenance vehicles and equipment and integrating software that helps staff respond more quickly to issues and track maintenance needs.

Repurpose underutilized spaces, both indoors and outdoors, into facilities identified as having a high need through this process.

This planning process has highlighted a variety of needs and priorities for improvements, both through the existing conditions

analysis and in the engagement results. These include multi use trails, aquatic facilities, shade and trees, education classroom space, restrooms, and splash pads. Accommodating or improving these facilities in existing parks with limited space is a potential hurdle. As such, identifying underutilized spaces in existing parks, such as unused rooms, outdated courts, or low-use park features, can help repurpose these areas into the amenities identified in this plan as having high unmet needs. To identify these underutilized spaces, it is recommended that BGPR conduct an inventory of park and facility features that assesses conditions, use, and its readiness for repurposing or reimagining.

Design guidelines can help standardize park signage, landscaping, entry features, and the types of facilities offered.



Establish a phased improvement plan to guide upgrades across existing assets based on use, condition, and community impact.

The park and facility inventory outlined in the previous recommendation may include a phased improvement plan that prioritizes improvement projects based on the park facility's condition, use, accessibility, and community benefit. This can help create a roadmap for investment based on objective criteria resulting from a thorough analysis.

Create design guidelines for each park classification (community parks, neighborhood parks, natural areas, destination parks) to establish baseline standards.

Design guidelines tailored to each of BGPR's park classification categories, including community parks, neighborhood parks, natural areas, and destination parks, will help create a consistent park experience while still allowing each park to express a unique character. These guidelines may address landscape standards, lighting, materials,

signage and wayfinding, building orientation and siting, and accessibility standards. The addition of these standards support more predictable design outcomes and help Bowling Green residents advocate for park improvements.

The new Pro Shop at Paul Walker Golf Course will completely reimagine the pro shop, and add a new patio, cart barn, and a golf simulator.

(Image Source: BGPR)



Invest in golf courses to improve golf cart paths, maintenance facilities, and existing shelters.

BGPR's three golf courses, CrossWinds, Hobson, and Paul Walker, serve as important recreation destinations for the region in picturesque settings. With planned improvements like a new Pro Shop at Paul Walker Golf Course, BGPR continues to focus on golf as a major component in its offerings. Improvements may include resurfacing cart paths, modernizing maintenance facilities, upgrading site features and irrigation systems, and enhancing shelters. These upgrades improve player experience and help extend the course's longevity.

Potential improvements for each of the three golf courses include:

- + **CrossWinds Golf Course:** Level tees, design CrossWinds lake, renovate river pump system, building roof replacement
- + **Hobson Golf Course:** Tree trimming, improve hole #6 tee, level tees, addition of miniature golf course
- + **Paul Walker Golf Course:** Pro shop replacement (planned), renovate cart path, level tees

3 | Create Awareness

Create awareness for BGPR’s facilities and programs: Refresh BGPR’s branding and content, improve communication with the Bowling Green community, and develop a marketing strategy.

Bowling Green residents noted often across all community engagement efforts that being unaware of facilities, programs and services was frequently a preventing factor in visiting BGPR parks more regularly. They found out about these spaces and services primarily through word of mouth, social media and the BGPR website, but as many conversations held with stakeholders and residents occurred, they still felt unaware of what is offered. This recommendation theme focuses on creating BGPR branding and content, creating signage, and developing a marketing strategy for BGPR to spread its reach and knowledge of BGPR offerings.



Creating a communication strategy that effectively engages Bowling Green residents, while balancing frequency of content and the proper amount of information, is key to building a strategy that benefits both the community and BGPR staff. The action items outlined in this section show how BGPR can more effectively communicate with the community, build local awareness, increase participation and inclusion, and overall make Bowling Green a more active and better-connected community.

Develop department-wide branding and outreach plan to guide messaging with unified themes, storytelling, contests, etc.

Developing a department-wide branding and outreach plan across the parks and facilities will be key in creating messaging that is unified, consistent and easily identifiable as BGPR. Starting with a BGPR department wide branding and marketing audit will help define trends in marketing and branding content, identifying the BGPR brand, and determining what content reaches the Bowling Green community best. From the audit, a branding and outreach strategy should be developed answering questions of how, where and when BGPR will communicate with the community. Key items in

this strategy should include items like content type, communications avenues, content schedule, and staff engagement. Having a dedicated strategy will help build community trust, make outreach more effective as it relays consistent messaging, support staff, improve participation, and inspire people to go out and enjoy the BGPR parks and facilities.

Invest in a Community Engagement and Marketing Analyst position as part of BGPR administrative staff to enable a more robust communications strategy and implement a branding and outreach plan.

Investing in a Community Engagement and Marketing Analyst position as part of the BGPR administrative staff team will strengthen the connection between the department and the Bowling Green community, providing a dedicated individual that will establish an effective, consistent, and streamlined approach to outreach, branding, and communication, in addition to administrative leadership. The creation of this role is important because it provides BGPR with a dedicated individual to serve as the leading staff member and implementer of the communications strategy, ensure a consistent message, coordinating efforts across internal departments, freeing up staff to focus on operations, assisting with administrative tasks, and overall supporting departmental management. The first step in creating this role will be to identify the needs and goals of the department, and outline key duties the role might entail, this will ensure the role starts



off with the mission and vision of BGPR in mind.

Implement a comprehensive signage and wayfinding plan.

Implementing a comprehensive signage and wayfinding plan is important to the safety, awareness, and inclusion of people visiting parks and facilities. Creating an established plan also contributes to a cohesive, consistent brand for BGPR that is easily identifiable, understandable and accessed. Starting the plan development by conducting a wayfinding and signage assessment that identifies existing wayfinding and signage, accessibility, sign types and common issues among participants or visitors as it relates to signage will be key in determining how to implement the plan. From there as signage needs to be replaced, park upgrades and improvements are made, and new signage



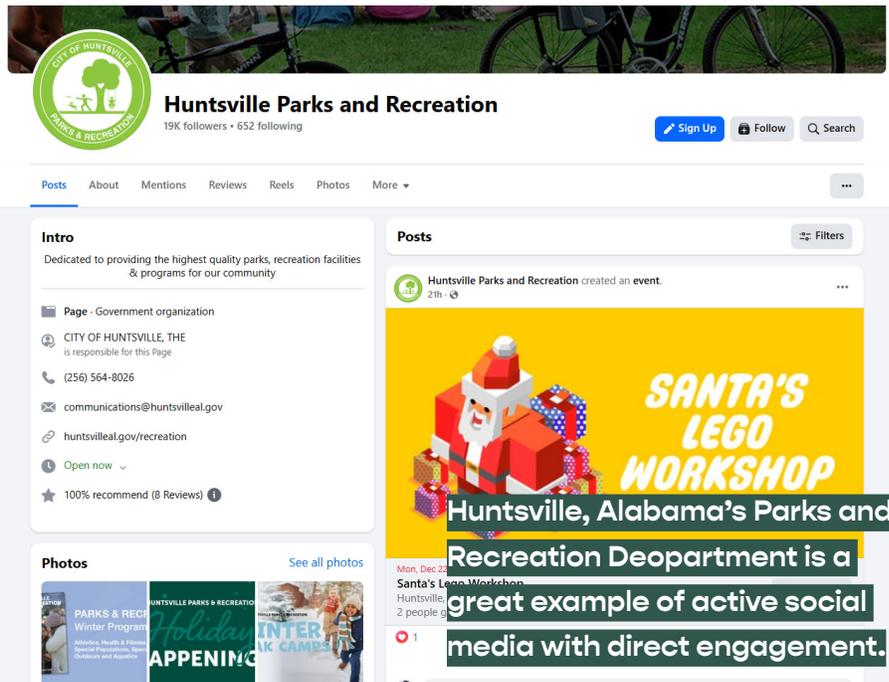
and wayfinding is developed, BGPR should develop a signage replacement and installation strategy. This strategy should determine timelines for change out, consistent placement among park amenities, and a design concept that is consistent among all BGPR parks, facilities and programming. Signage and wayfinding are the first impression for many visiting the BGPR system and is a key component is developing a communication strategy that supports the community and staff. Some signage and wayfinding that could be included in the plan include the following trail and park maps, park specific information boards, park entry and navigation, trail/pathway markers, safety and accessibility information among others.

Develop a user-friendly mobile app that allows residents to browse and register for programs and events, explore park locations and amenities via interactive maps, and allow for push notifications.

Developing a user-friendly mobile app for residents will help create an information hub for all things Bowling Green Parks and Recreation, allow users to register for programs and events, explore parks virtually, and keep users informed on the happenings of the department. This app will become part of the overarching strategy for BGPR communications and will help address the community want to access information more easily and gather a better understanding of park services, facilities, and programming. To accomplish the development of this mobile app, BGPR should develop an understanding of what features the app will include, identify the target users of the app, and determine how the app will integrate into the communication strategy.

Improve the BGPR website to better share park and facility information through advanced search capabilities, facility information and pictures, and programming information.

The BGPR website can be a useful tool in communicating with the Bowling Green community as it an already established communication tool that residents are aware of and use regularly for BGPR related information. The website can



be improved and updated to better share park, facility and programming information in an accessible and easy to find way. Some ways the website can be improved, include developing a more robust advanced search capability, pictures and information on facilities and parks, park maps, programming information in easy to find areas and implementing a 3-Click Rule, where users are able to find the information in no more than 3 clicks. Website updates should focus on accessibility, ease of access, and matching the branding of BGPR.

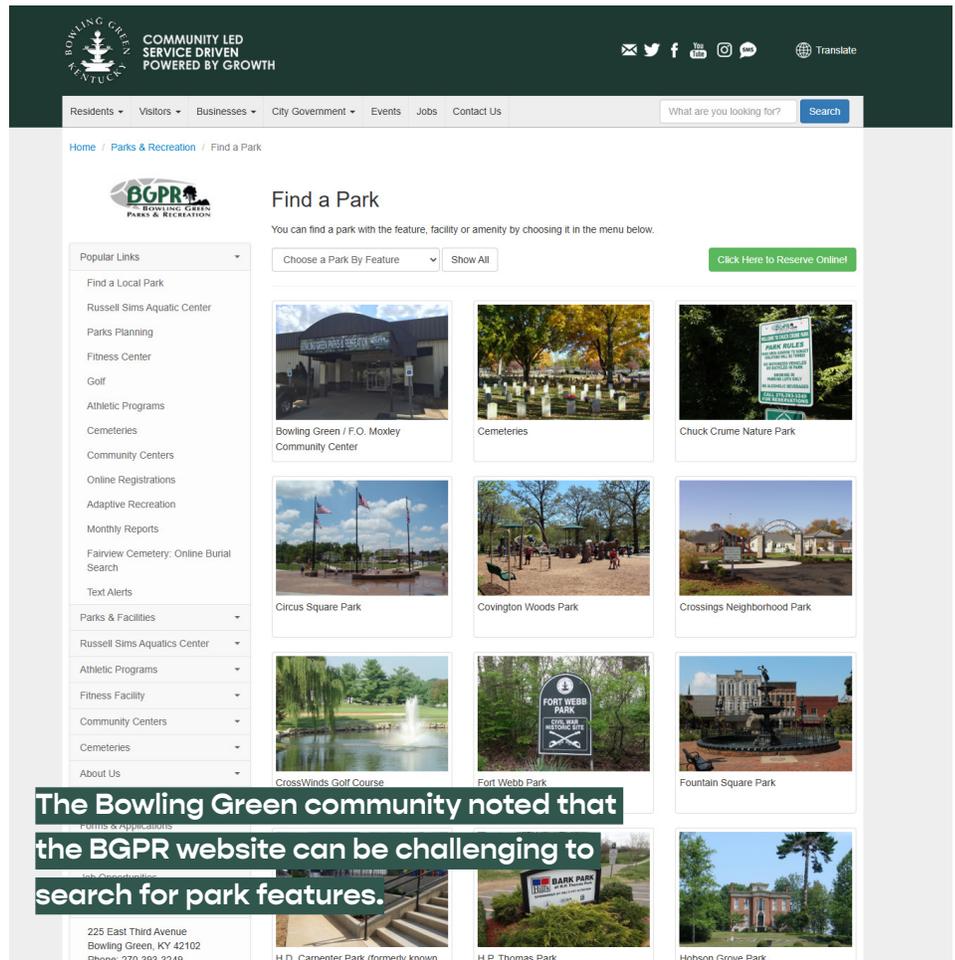
Address fragmentation and create a centralized approach to marketing programs and services.

Reducing fragmentation and strengthening cohesion across BGPR's marketing, content and communications is essential for building community awareness

and developing a communication strategy that effectively supports the department and community. Fragmentation can be addressed through the creation of a centralized approach to marketing programs and services, a task that can be accomplished through the recommendations of this section. Some key tools that can be used to centralize marketing include: developing a department-wide marketing strategy, establishing a point person or lead for marketing efforts such as a business coordinator or staff member, developing a branding and outreach strategy, establishing a regular content schedule for posting, meeting internally across the department to stay in informed about content-worthy activities, defining marketing tasks and systems, and track the results of engagement to see what works best for the Bowling Green community. Creating a marketing approach that allows BGPR to consistently, and effectively communicate with the community will strengthen BGPR awareness and recognition, build trust and support BGPR staff efforts.

Improve BGPR's social media presence and communication at the neighborhood level, with additional outreach and a social media calendar.

In the community engagement results, it was mentioned that the community finds out most about BGPR programs, facilities and services through word of mouth and social media. Strengthening BGPR's social media presence and communication can help reach community members where they are currently looking for information and reach a whole new audience of potential park and program participants. Like many of the recommendations in this section, creating a strategy and schedule for social media posting will help create a consistent flow of content, and regularly keep viewers informed about BGPR happenings. With communication tools like social media, BGPR can directly communicate with the community, encourage participation, engage with quick questions or surveys, partner with local neighborhood leaders or groups to share content between platforms, provide real-time updates at events, on maintenance or weather and track engagement metrics like comments, clicks, shares or responses.



Implement a geographically inclusive marketing plan that promotes programs, events, and services offered at all parks and facilities.

Bowling Green parks and facilities are spread across the city in 32 different locations, creating a geographically inclusive marketing plan allows the community to be aware of all programming, spaces and services available across the entire system. Many of the participants and stakeholders mentioned during the community engagement efforts, that they had a park or space that they particularly enjoyed and felt like it was a "hidden gem". These "hidden gems" should be recognized in all marketing efforts, to encourage

the community to find the parks spaces in their neighborhoods, across the city, and throughout the system. Using a marketing strategy that highlights all the spaces and programming will create awareness of parkland throughout the system and connect the community to spaces they may have never visited prior or were unaware of in the system. Some methods of implementation include highlighting parks and programming occurring across the system, park or programming spotlights, community testimonies, video-walk throughs of park amenities to familiarize yourself with parks, a centralized calendar for park events and programs, and staff awareness of park offerings.

4 | Expand the Geographic Reach

Expand the geographic reach of the system to serve Bowling Green’s growing population: Ensure an equitable distribution of parks throughout the community, develop land acquisition strategies, and use tools to help plan for the future.

As Bowling Green continues to grow, making sure that new and current residents continue having access to high-quality parks and recreation opportunities is increasingly important. Some of Bowling Green’s neighborhoods, especially those rapidly growing or historically underserved, lack walkable access to parks, trails, and BGPR facilities. As well, development patterns in new suburban areas with limited street grids make it challenging to provide walkable connections to parks and trails. Given these parameters, expanding the geographic reach of the BGPR system will require identifying areas with high growth and/or limited access to parks, preparing for future growth through land acquisition strategies, and using data-driven tools to ensure equitable distribution of parks across the city for current and expected future residents. The following recommendations outline how BGPR can create a more equitable park system that meets these current and future community needs.



Plan for an equitable distribution of park amenities, especially in underserved areas and vulnerable neighborhoods.

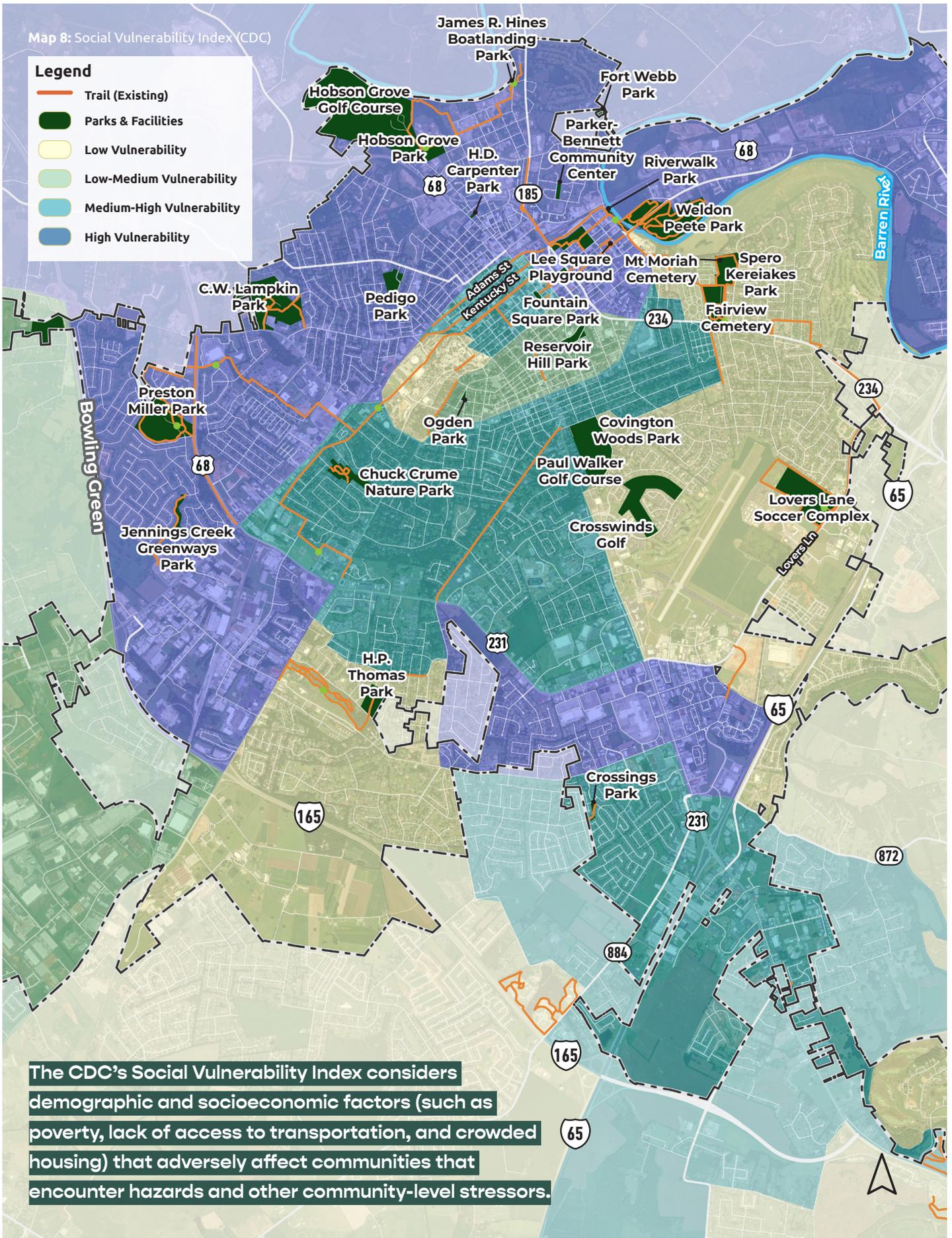
Achieving equitable access to parks and BGPR facilities will hinge on properly identifying current neighborhood access to BGPR amenities and understanding how these neighborhoods fare in terms of socioeconomic vulnerability, as identified by trusted indicators like CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) or Trust for Public Land’s ParkScore. This analysis includes confirming gaps in the park network and understanding

barriers to walkable access to parks, such as wide streets, rail lines, or unsafe intersections. Future improvements should focus on addressing these gaps in vulnerable communities through strategies like new neighborhood parks in areas with little park access, expanding amenities in parks with limited features, and linking parks to trails through these communities. As a next step effort, BGPR is recommended to identify priority investment zones that aligning future park improvements with areas experiencing high population growth or have been subject to historic disinvestment.

Map 8: Social Vulnerability Index (CDC)

Legend

- Trail (Existing)
- Parks & Facilities
- Low Vulnerability
- Low-Medium Vulnerability
- Medium-High Vulnerability
- High Vulnerability



The CDC's Social Vulnerability Index considers demographic and socioeconomic factors (such as poverty, lack of access to transportation, and crowded housing) that adversely affect communities that encounter hazards and other community-level stressors.

Deploy mobile recreation units and outreach staff to bring programs directly into underrepresented communities.

While the addition of new parks and amenities to communities with high needs is a long-term goal, shorter term solutions may lead to more immediate wins while funding becomes available. For instance, BGPR can reach residents who currently have little or limited access to parks and programming by deploying mobile recreation units. These mobile units, such as BGPR-branded vans with pop-up recreation programming or nature education activities, will allow BGPR to meet people where they are and build new or strengthen relationships with communities that have been traditionally underserved by the City. As well, mobile recreation units can bring new or creative programming to existing parks, schools, events/festivals, and non-BGPR community spaces operated by partners. These mobile units provide flexible, lower-cost programming that increase BGPR's visibility and encourages new users to discover the department's value. Notable examples across the country include Atlanta (GA) Parks and Recreation Department's Play Mobile, and the City of Sioux Falls (SD) Parks and Recreation's Mobile Recreation Unit.



Utilize tools like GIS, LOS (Level of Service) standards, and population projections to plan ROW acquisition for future or planned trails.

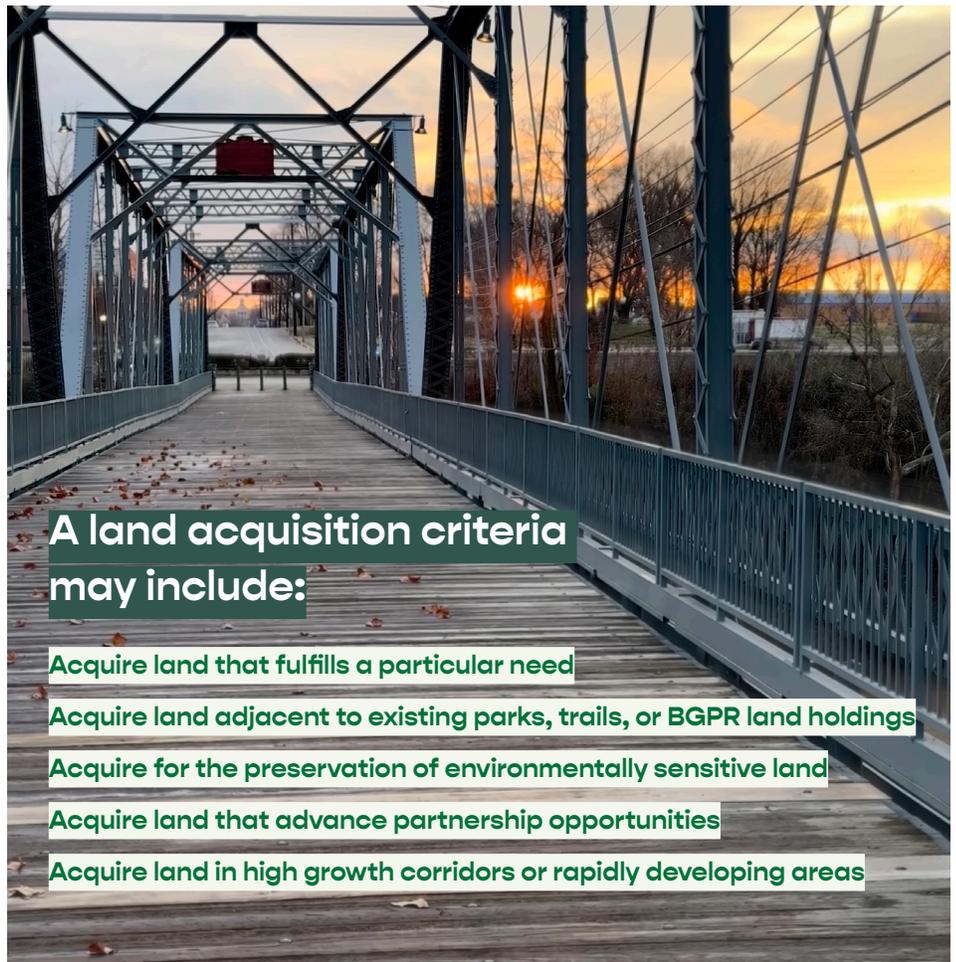
The results of this plan's Statistically Valid Survey highlight a high need and community priority for improving and expanding the City's trails and walking paths. This finding, further augmented in the plan's community engagement process, highlights BGPR's current strengths in offering high quality walking paths in its parks, though also shining a light on Bowling Green's limited system of citywide trails and greenways. Improvements are needed, and this will require coordination with other City Departments. Using GIS

mapping, Level of Service (LOS) standards, and population growth forecasts will thus enable BGPR to anticipate where future trail connections will be needed the most. These tools, in coordination with other departments, help identify right-of-way opportunities along key corridors, current trail gaps, and areas where development pressures will likely limit future access to parks if proactive planning is not in place. This data-driven approach will require coordination with planning staff to monitor new development proposals and establishing a process for evaluating and prioritizing potential ROW improvements or acquisition to accommodate trail and greenway infrastructure.

Develop land acquisition criteria to vet future park land opportunities.

As noted throughout this document, Bowling Green’s population Growth will likely require expanding access to parks and park amenities, which will require additional land in an already constrained City boundary. Currently, land acquisitions occur opportunistically, responding to opportunities as they arise or as land becomes available or is offered to BGPR, and are vetted through criteria that differ among properties. A clear and more objective set of land acquisition criteria will enable BGPR to evaluate opportunities quickly and consistently, ensuring that every new property considered supports the system’s mission and vision, and fulfills community needs. This criteria may include the following priorities:

- 1. Acquire land that fulfills a particular need**, such as adding park features, trail connections, park expansions, or parkland in areas with high need or those traditionally underserved.
- 2. Acquire land adjacent to existing parks, trails, or BGPR land holdings**, if they enable needed park expansions, support maintenance operations, or create trail connections to neighborhoods.
- 3. Acquire for the preservation of environmentally sensitive land**, to protect naturalized environments and support nature-based programming.
- 4. Acquire land that advance partnership opportunities**, to create or expand park spaces as joint ventures with regional agencies or institutions.
- 5. Acquire land in high growth corridors or rapidly developing areas**, to ensure that new residents will have access to BGPR parks and facilities.



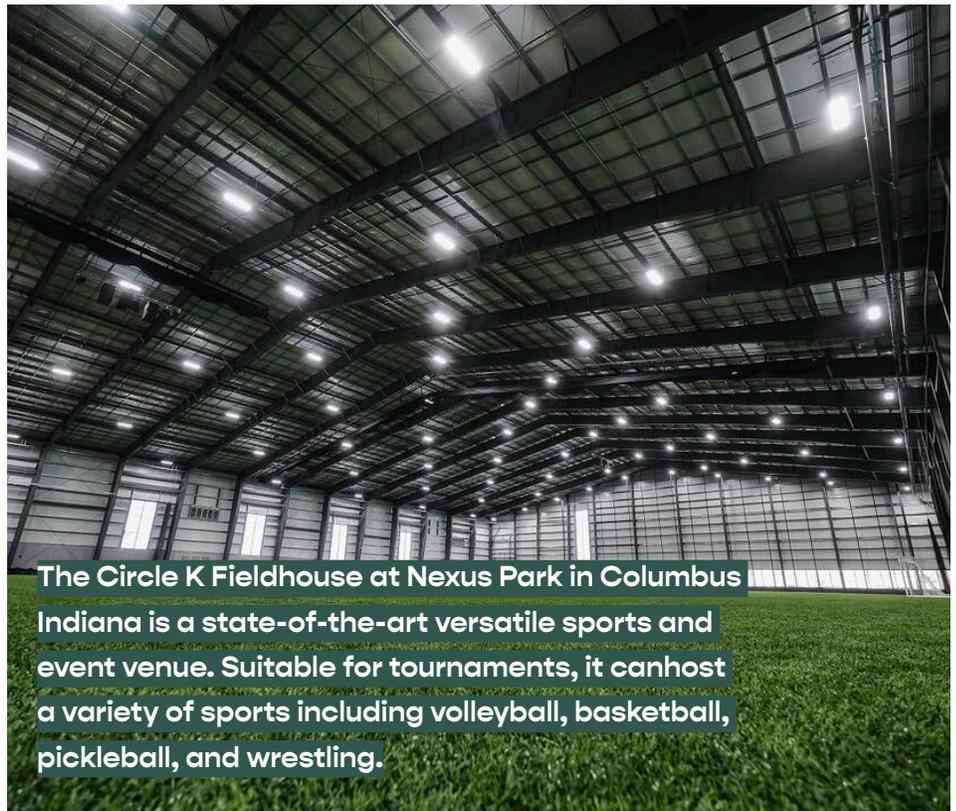
A land acquisition criteria may include:

- Acquire land that fulfills a particular need**
- Acquire land adjacent to existing parks, trails, or BGPR land holdings**
- Acquire for the preservation of environmentally sensitive land**
- Acquire land that advance partnership opportunities**
- Acquire land in high growth corridors or rapidly developing areas**

5 | Promote BGPR

Promote BGPR as a regional destination for recreation and events: Leverage existing and potential partnerships to plan for new facilities that meet community needs while strengthening Bowling Green’s position as a regional destination for sports recreation.

Due to its advantageous location and regional amenities, Bowling Green is well positioned to build a more prominent role as a regional destination for sports-based tourism, recreation, and events. With a growing population, strong local partners, and affordable lodging, Bowling Green has a unique opportunity to leverage an increasing national and regional demand for tournament-ready facilities into an economic development opportunity that will also benefit residents. Several Kentucky cities within a day’s drive of Bowling Green, such as Lexington, Louisville, and Paducah already have high quality facilities that attract athletic and recreational tournaments. Nonetheless, Bowling Green’s advantages remain competitive if the City were to invest in a modern indoor facility and high-quality event infrastructure. This type of facility is regional in scale and likely beyond the capacity and funding BGPR is currently able to secure, making partnerships with Warren County or Western Kentucky University key. The



The Circle K Fieldhouse at Nexus Park in Columbus, Indiana is a state-of-the-art versatile sports and event venue. Suitable for tournaments, it can host a variety of sports including volleyball, basketball, pickleball, and wrestling.

following recommendations outline how BGPR can build an economically sustainable approach to sports tourism that enhances recreational opportunities for visitors and residents alike.



The Paducah Sports Park reimagined the former Bluegrass Downs and Stuart Nelson Park into a sports tourism destination.

Establish a sports tourism strategy in partnership with businesses, regional organizations, local institutions, and Warren County.

A regional sports tourism strategy will help position Bowling Green as a hub for tournaments, events, and recreation-minded visitors. A strategy of this kind will require regional scale resources in economic development, marketing, development, and most importantly, land for a future facility. Consequently, developing this strategy will require new and strengthened partnerships with local businesses, institutions, athletic organizations, tourism officials, and state entities. In particular, a partnership with Warren County will enable BGPR to establish a shared vision for this facility and pool resources, available land, and access to funding. To ensure that local residents continue to benefit from BGPR's recreation, such as addressing a need for athletic facilities by local leagues, new facilities must be designed to continue to serve residents. A potential next step includes the creation of a recreation tourism

working group, composed of BGPR, City, and County staff. This group may be tasked with assessing Bowling Green's competitive strengths and leading a feasibility study for a future facility.

Design and enhance destination-level parks and multi-use facilities capable of hosting large-scale events and tournaments.

Bowling Green's investment in its riverfront is a generational investment in creating a destination-level park based around water and community recreation. Similarly, BGPR has an opportunity to invest in a destination-level park and facility equipped with high-quality fields, courts, and gathering areas. This will create opportunities for BGPR to host regional tournaments, festivals, and community celebrations. Alternatively, BGPR may consider enhancing existing parks to support a greater event capacity with improved lighting, expanded seating, shaded spectator areas, upgraded restrooms and concessions, and new event plazas.

Partner on an indoor athletic facility that both serves the community and allows for recreation tourism.

An indoor athletic facility can help meet community needs for year-round recreation, as noted in the community engagement results, while attracting tournaments and regional sporting events. Such a facility might include turf areas, an indoor track, flexible event rooms, and spectator seating. This type of facility will require partnerships and can support youth sports, adult leagues, in addition to regional tournaments.

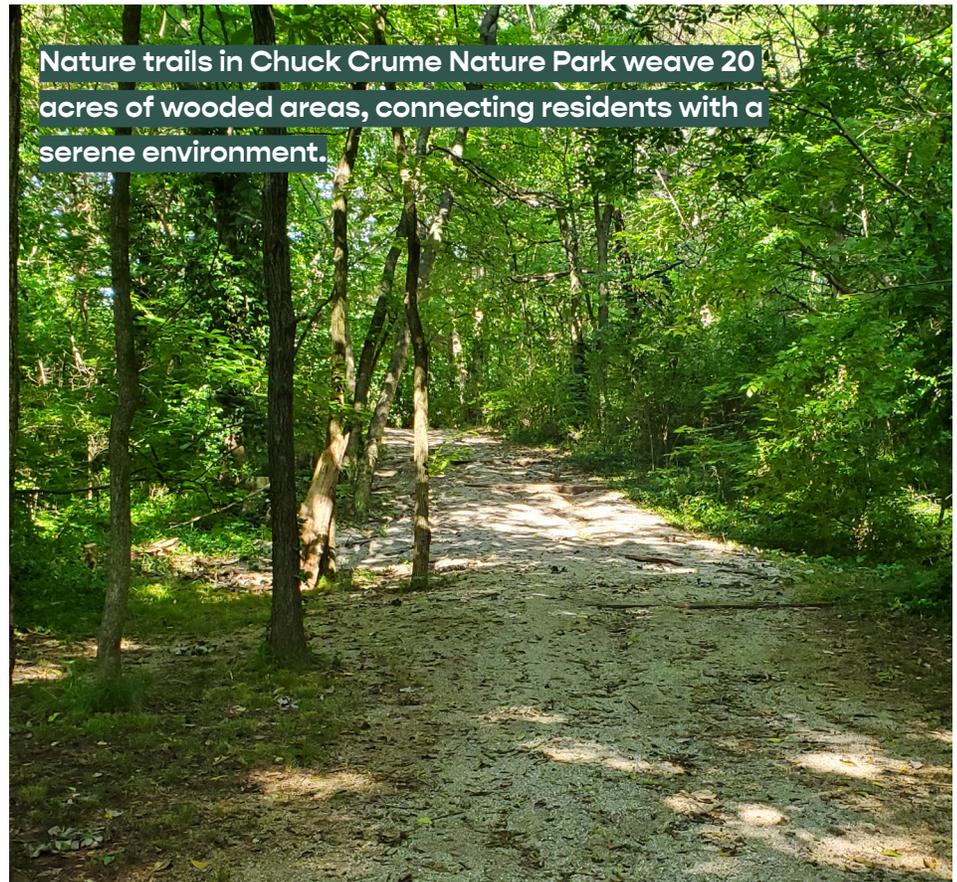
Plan for a Regional Field House with Multi-Use Indoor Capacity.

A Regional Field House will provide a flexible indoor environment capable of supporting year-round tournaments, league practices, community programming, and recreation events. With versatility in mind mirroring best practice examples like the Circle K Fieldhouse at NexusPark in Columbus, Indiana, a Field House could include multi-purpose courts, turf surfaces, walking tracks, meeting rooms, event space, and amenities for local and regional users. This investment both expands programming capacity in addition to augmenting the City's ability to host indoor events during winter months or in unpredictable weather.

6 | Foster Natural Spaces

Foster natural spaces that connect residents with nature: Connect residents to nature through new and expanded trails, naturalized spaces, and nature education opportunities.

Ranked consistently among the top amenities in the park system by Bowling Green residents, natural spaces and the opportunity to connect with nature are vital components of Bowling Green Parks and Recreation. Currently, only 9% of the parkland is designated as natural park areas, highlighting a significant opportunity for growth. To meet public demand for more natural environments, BGPR should develop a comprehensive strategy aimed at increasing this percentage. This can be achieved by restoring underutilized parklands into thriving natural habitats and integrating natural areas into future park designs. Practical steps include reducing or eliminating mowing in select areas, which not only enhances the natural beauty and biodiversity but also enriches visitor experiences. Additionally, these initiatives can lead to decreased maintenance requirements, making parks more sustainable and cost-effective. Embracing this approach will



foster a deeper connection between residents and their natural surroundings, creating more inviting, ecologically diverse parks that serve the community's evolving needs and desires.



Fort Webb Park blends natural environments with a Civil War historical site. From the top, Fort Webb overlooks miles of Bowling Green’s countryside.

Add low-impact nature trails that offer environmental education and passive recreation opportunities, incorporating interpretive signage.

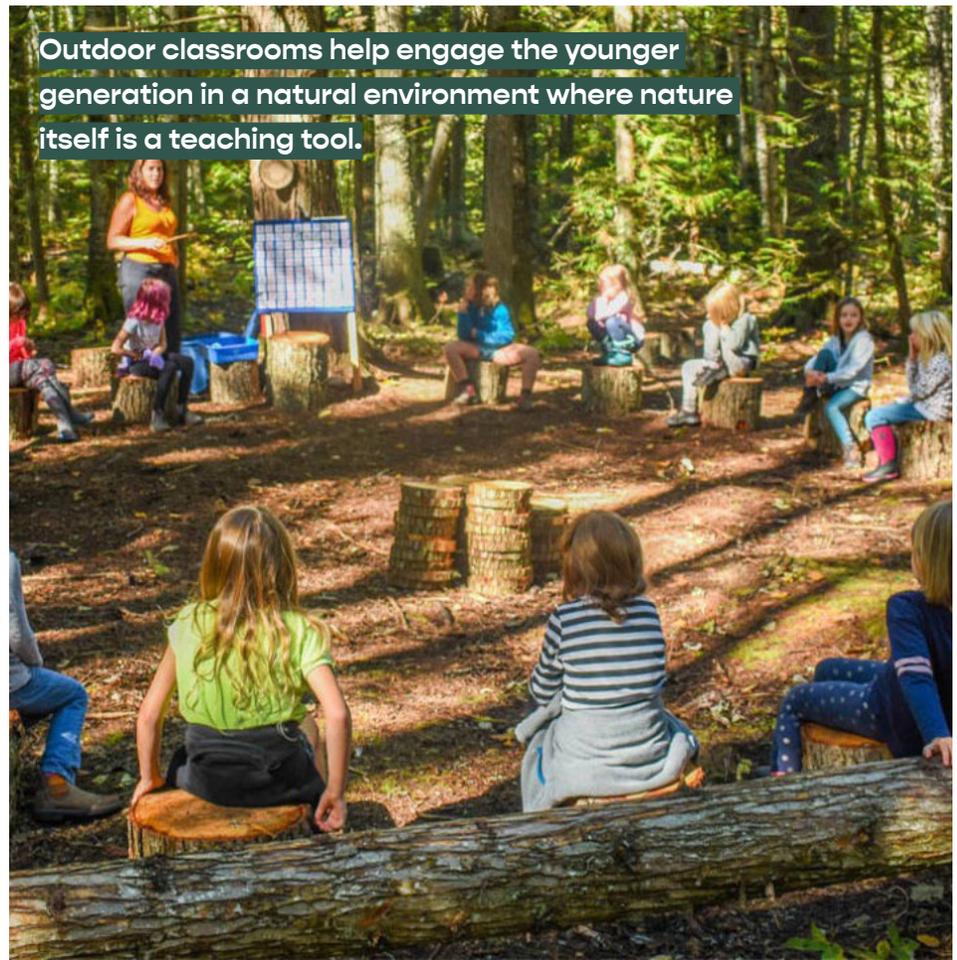
Throughout this comprehensive master planning study, trails designated for walking and jogging have emerged as one of the most highly prioritized features for the residents of Bowling Green. While the city already boasts several miles of paved walkways and greenways within the BGPR parkland system, there exists a significant opportunity to expand this network by adding more nature trails through existing

natural areas. Additionally, incorporating low-impact trails into restored natural environments and future parks can greatly enhance the outdoor experience. Expanding the trail system offers park visitors a unique chance to reconnect with nature and observe local wildlife in their natural habitats. These low-impact trails, whether paved or unpaved, are ideal for walking, running, and various other activities, all designed to minimize environmental disturbance. Beyond their recreational and ecological benefits, these trails can serve as educational platforms, featuring interpretive signage, artwork, or environmental

graphics that inform visitors about local ecosystems and natural systems. This initiative not only promotes outdoor activity and environmental stewardship but also enriches the community’s connection to its natural surroundings, fostering a healthier, more engaged population, and a more sustainable future for Bowling Green.

Develop and maintain natural areas and passive recreation features that invite exploration and interaction with the environment, such as recent play equipment at Jennings Creek.

Integrating recreational activities into natural parkland areas will significantly enhance the user experience within the BGPR system, offering a vibrant and engaging environment for visitors. Imagine trails equipped with exercise stations and nature-based play zones designed for children and families—these are just a few examples of the exciting recreational amenities that can be incorporated into existing, restored, or future natural areas. Such enhancements not only diversify the recreational options available but also, foster a deeper connection with nature, encouraging visitors to explore, enjoy, and appreciate the natural beauty around them. This approach transforms traditional parkland into dynamic spaces that promote health, wellness, and community engagement, making every visit a memorable adventure.



Outdoor classrooms help engage the younger generation in a natural environment where nature itself is a teaching tool.

Establish a comprehensive program focused on environmental learning and interaction with nature.

Enhancing the preservation, restoration, and expansion of natural areas within the park system not only fosters a more sustainable and healthier environment for recreation and connection with nature but also opens exciting opportunities to develop comprehensive environmental education programs for all visitors. These programs serve as vital educational initiatives, offering unique and immersive experiences that allow users to explore and address pressing environmental issues firsthand.

By engaging with topics such as water conservation, biodiversity, wildlife habitats, and forest management, visitors can deepen their understanding of the environment and become active participants in its preservation. Expanding and innovating these programs within the natural areas of the BGPR system will inspire a new generation of environmentally conscious individuals, fostering a stronger bond between people and nature while promoting sustainable practices that benefit our planet for years to come.

Develop an indoor nature facility that enables BGPR staff to conduct educational programs, provide classroom space, and facilitate field trips.

Throughout the development of the master plan, the community's strong desire for an Environmental or Nature Education Center has consistently emerged as a top priority. This envisioned facility will serve as a vital hub for nature-based education and engaging programming within the BGPR system. By seamlessly integrating with the surrounding natural landscape, the center/classroom will offer an inspiring environment that fosters a deeper connection with nature and promotes environmental awareness for visitors of all ages. Although the specific scale, location, and design of this innovative facility are still under consideration, BGPR staff has identified Kaz Abe Landscape Facility as a promising site for its future development. This strategic placement will maximize the educational impact and enhance the park's role as a sanctuary for environmental learning and community engagement.

The Kaz Abe Landscape Facility is home to Bowling Green's Landscape Division.



7 | Invest in New Facilities

Invest in new facilities to address service gaps: Plan for new facilities that address the needs of Bowling Green’s growing population and develop universal design standards for BGPR Parks.

As Kentucky’s fastest-growing city, Bowling Green’s need for high-quality parks, recreation facilities, community gathering spaces, and year-round amenities continues to increase. As noted in previous sections of this plan, outcomes and takeaways from this plan’s community engagement, demographic trends, and system wide analysis point toward gaps in BGPR’s offerings of indoor facilities, special event capacity, and park amenities. Investing in new facilities provides an opportunity to meet these future needs from a growing population while elevating the quality and inclusiveness of the BGPR system. The following recommendations outline an approach for planning and designing new parks and facilities so they feel welcoming, are accessible to all users, and align with the community’s long-term vision as established in this planning process.



Establish design standards for parks and facilities that incorporate universal design principles and sensory friendly amenities.

Creating a cohesive set of design standards for new BGPR Parks will ensure that new parks and facilities are built with accessibility, inclusivity, and comfort in mind. These design standards should reflect Universal design principles that help ensure park spaces work for all Bowling Green users, regardless of their

age, abilities, or neurodiversities. These design standards can prioritize elements such as clear wayfinding, barrier-free access, shade and seating variety, and predictable circulation for the visually impaired. Sensory-friendly elements could include nature-based play, low-stimulation lighting, and clear signage. Once developed, a future BGPR Design Standards may be applied into all future design contracts and capital improvement projects for new parks or the renovation of existing parks.



The vision for the revitalized Bowling Green Riverfront will connect 70-acres of underutilized land back with the Barren River.

Develop a signature Riverfront Park with multi-use amenities, improved river access, and event/gathering areas.

Bowling Green’s future Riverfront Park is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a landmark destination on the Barren River that celebrates the city’s natural character, enhances community wellness, and expands opportunities for play, gathering, and nature-based recreation. The vision for Riverfront Park includes a network of trails and loops that link users to meadows, wooded landscapes, riparian edges, and a diverse mix of active and passive amenities. The plan features sculpted bouldering walls, themed play areas for all ages, performance lawns, an elevated canopy walk through the trees, interactive water features, food truck areas, and multiple opportunities to engage with the river itself. Once built, the new Riverfront Park will become a regional destination for recreation and a new cultural hub for the region, while strengthening connections to downtown and the greenway system.



The new Kentucky Sports Factory in Madisonville is a 90,000 square foot facility with the flexibility to host local, regional, and national events across numerous sports.

Construct a joint sports complex and special event grounds.

A combined sports complex and event grounds would address Bowling Green’s emerging status as a recreational tourism destination for athletic field space, tournament-ready facilities, and event infrastructure. With a focus on attracting regional and national tournaments in mind, a new joints sports complex facility could include multi-purpose fields, courts, shaded spectator areas, trails, concessions, restrooms, and a programmable event plaza capable of hosting

festivals, concerts, and cultural celebrations. This type of facility is supported by the plan’s engagement as it strengthens opportunities for youth sports, expands family recreation options, and positions Bowling Green as a regional destination for sports tourism, which was a key outcome from stakeholder conversations. To make this vision a reality, BGPR should focus on crafting a feasibility plan for this facility that evaluates site options, explores partnerships, conducts a demand study, and establishes a phased implementation strategy tied to potential funding.

Invest in a Community Hub with aquatics, meeting space, and banquet facilities.

A new Community Hub would address opportunities identified in the planning process around indoor aquatics, flexible meeting space, and spaces for community gatherings. Strongly supported by the plan's engagement results as it relates to indoor aquatics, this facility could serve as a year-round destination for indoor swimming, multipurpose rooms, banquet/event space, wellness programming, and programming for youth, adults, and seniors. As such, a new Community Hub has the opportunity to become an anchor for the Bowling Green community. With multiple opportunities for a potential site for this facility, BGPR is recommended to undergo a feasibility and site analysis to develop conceptual design alternatives, assessing long-term operational needs, and pursuing partnerships that support the new facility's ongoing programming.

Community Hub at BGPR Offices

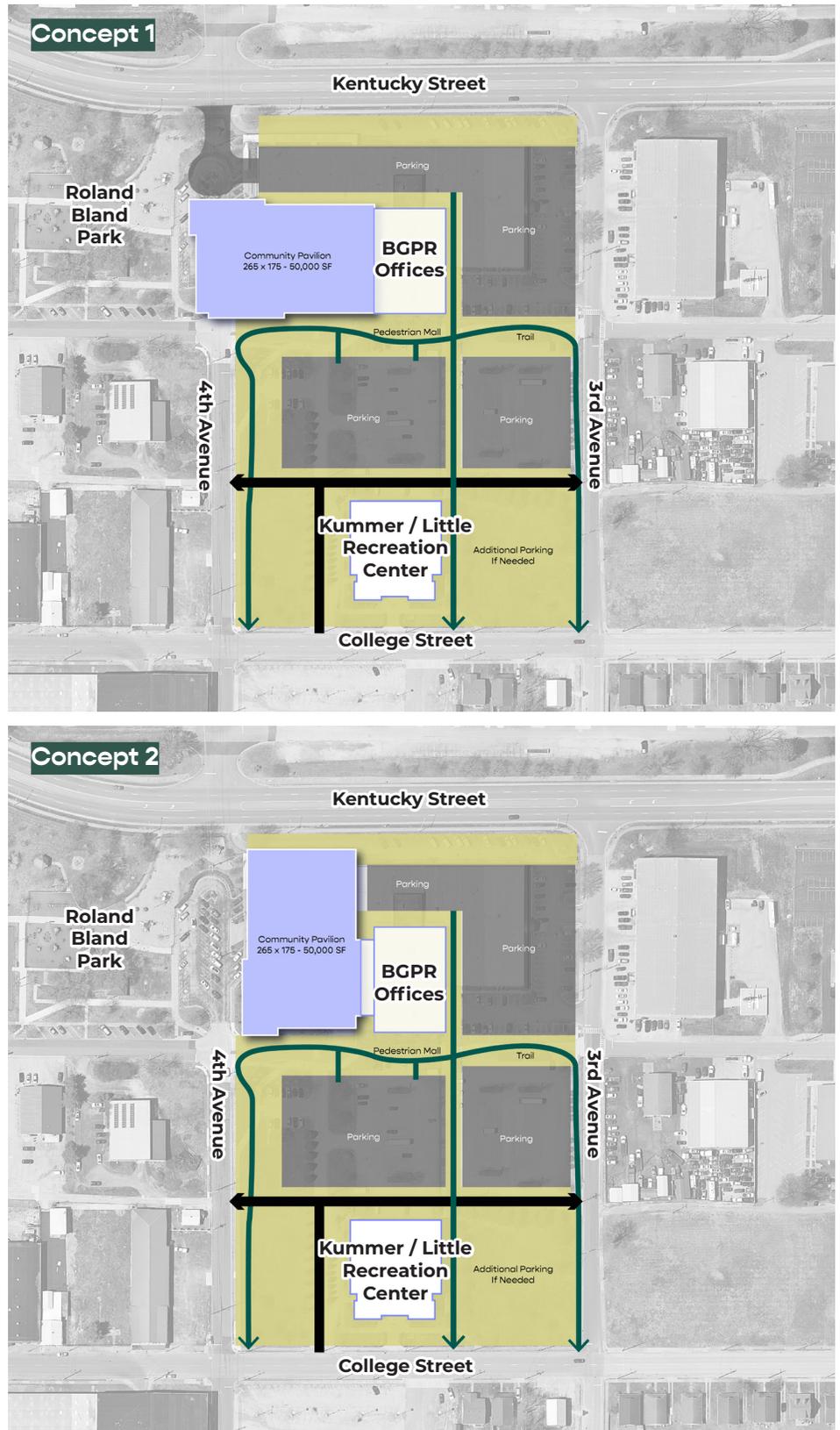


Figure 81: Community Hub at BGPR Offices Concepts



The Pavilion in Georgetown, Kentucky, offers an eight lane competition lap pool, a leisure pool with whirlpool and 108 ft. slide.



Consider the impact of new facilities on current operations, investing in additional staff and resources to maintain new facilities at the same level of care.

As new facilities are added to the BGPR system, maintaining the department's current level of high-quality care and reliable operations will require additional funding to ensure proper investments in staff, equipment, and training. Each new facility, whether a riverfront park, community hub, or sports complex, creates new operational needs for maintenance, programming, security, and beautification. Considering these operational impacts early in the planning ensures that new facilities do not dilute the quality of service for existing parks and instead bring in new resources for the entire system. A potential way to address these future needs is preparing an operational impact assessment for each new facility added to BGPR that identifies expected required staffing for operations and maintenance and incorporates these needs into future budget planning and CIP prioritization.

8 | Enhance Programming

Enhance programming to educate, inspire, and delight residents of all ages: Implement best-practice management, development, planning and delivery practices for BGPR's programming.

BGPR continues to deliver high-quality programs and facilities that residents value, and participation remains strong across all offerings. As community demand increases and the population becomes more diverse, the department must remain flexible and intentional in how programs are designed and delivered. Staff are committed to meeting these expectations and want to strengthen internal consistency, adopt shared standards, and ensure that programs align with community priorities. Implementing this theme will help BGPR refine its program management practices, elevate service delivery, and expand programming in ways that enrich the experience of residents of all ages.



Establish program management best practices for all BGPR programs.

BGPR should begin by implementing a unified set of program management best practices that guide how programs are created, evaluated, and improved. This includes standard approaches to program planning, quality assurance, documentation, and lifecycle tracking. Establishing these expectations early, and training staff to apply them consistently, will allow the department to adapt more efficiently to community needs and support long-term scalability as growth continues.

Standardize the program development process incorporating pricing strategies, marketing methods, estimated/actual budgeting, and cost recovery.

A consistent program development process is essential for transparency, operational clarity, and financial sustainability. BGPR should create standardized tools and templates for pricing, marketing, budgeting, and cost recovery analysis. Using the same process across all divisions helps ensure that programs are evaluated consistently, developed with clear expectations, and aligned with departmental goals. As growth continues, this standardization will help BGPR balance community access, demand, and fiscal responsibility.

Activate existing facilities with multigenerational programming for residents of all ages.

Many BGPR facilities have the capacity to support more multigenerational use. Enhancing current offerings to intentionally bring together children, teens, adults, and older adults in shared activities will help maximize facility utilization and broaden community impact. This could include mixed-age fitness, arts, and wellness programs that create meaningful interactions across generations while adding variety to the program portfolio.

Offer parallel programming at the same facility or park to encourage family participation and cross-generational engagement.

Offering programs for different age groups at the same facility and at the same time encourages families to participate together. This approach reduces scheduling barriers, strengthens the convenience of BGPR facilities, and positions community centers as hubs for all ages. Over time, parallel programming will help BGPR serve more residents with fewer time constraints and increase participation among busy families.



Bowling Green's continued growth and cultural diversity require BGPR to proactively plan for shifting interests, languages, and participation patterns.

Plan for demographic and trend shifts in Bowling Green, addressing the region's strong population growth and influx of immigrant communities.

Bowling Green's continued growth and cultural diversity require BGPR to proactively plan for shifting interests, languages, and participation patterns. Staff should be trained to understand demographic data, emerging trends, and evolving recreation preferences. Incorporating this knowledge into program planning will help the department remain relevant, inclusive, and responsive to community needs while supporting long-term program sustainability.

Build consistent delivery of service through program standards and staff training to achieve outcomes.

To ensure programs are delivered consistently and effectively, BGPR should establish clear program standards and provide ongoing staff training. Training should include safety protocols, customer

service expectations, evaluation methods, and communication practices. Staff want the tools and guidance necessary to achieve program outcomes, and these standards will help strengthen performance, support professional development, and build organizational capacity during periods of high demand and growth.

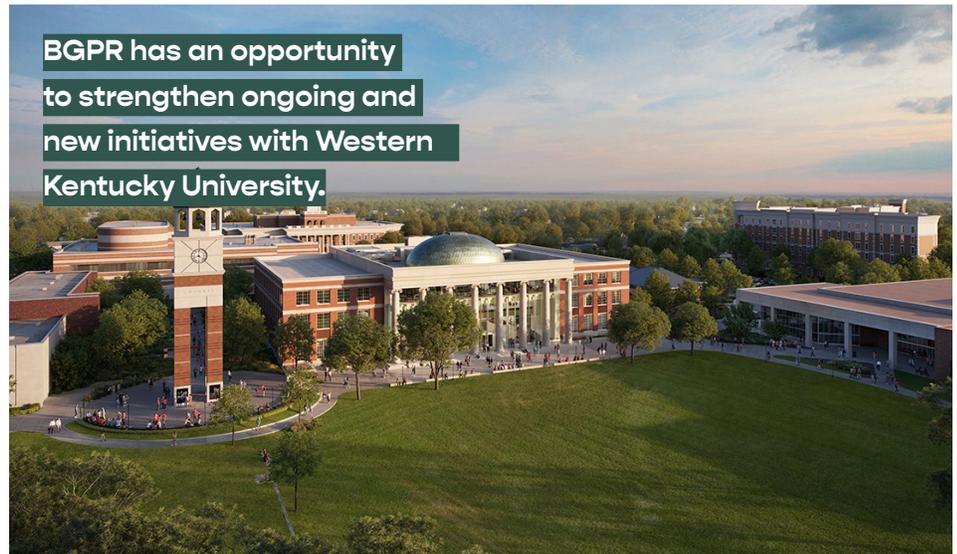
Use existing and new special events as a platform to introduce recreation services and boost visibility of cultural, fitness, and nature-based programs.

Special events offer a strong platform to showcase BGPR services to a wide audience. By aligning events with key program themes, such as cultural arts, fitness, nature education, or wellness, BGPR can introduce residents to new programs and encourage ongoing participation. Events also provide opportunities to highlight successes, test new ideas, and reinforce BGPR's role as a central provider of recreation experiences in the community.

9 | Strengthen & Establish Partnerships

Strengthen and establish partnerships with local and regional entities and institutions: Strengthen existing partnerships and develop new partnerships to advance BGPR's mission and serve the community.

Partnerships play a critical role in supporting BGPR ability to meet rising community expectations, manage increasing participation levels, and broaden access to specialized resources. As demand continues to grow, partnerships allow the department to enhance programming, expand facilities, improve workforce readiness, and maximize operational efficiency without placing unnecessary strain on staff or budgets. A more structured, intentional, and internally coordinated approach to partnerships will help BGPR strengthen its organizational capacity, create smoother processes, and better leverage regional expertise and assets. The following actions outline how BGPR can build a comprehensive partnership system that supports both day-to-day operations and long-term strategic goals.



Source: Western Kentucky University Website

Continue to strengthen existing partnerships, such as those with Western Kentucky University, hospitals, and local business.

BGPR benefits from strong relationships with educational institutions, health systems, businesses, and community organizations. Strengthening these partnerships requires more consistent communication, clearer coordination across BGPR divisions, and intentional

alignment with departmental goals. Refreshing these relationships helps BGPR reduce duplication, coordinate shared programs more efficiently, and ensure partners understand the department's evolving needs as the population expands. Strengthening existing collaborations also supports smoother internal workflows by providing staff with predictable, reliable points of contact and reducing the need to repeatedly negotiate arrangements.

Establish a formal partnership policy that clearly defines types of partnerships (Public/Public, Public/Nonprofit, Public/Private).

A department-wide partnership policy is needed to bring clarity, structure, and consistency to how BGPR evaluates and enters into partnerships. The policy should define partnership categories, outline approval processes, assign departmental roles, establish documentation requirements, and clarify expectations for resource sharing. Internally, a formal framework will help staff navigate partnership requests more confidently, reduce uncertainty, and improve decision-making. By standardizing how agreements are created, staff across all divisions will be able to follow the same procedures, resulting in smoother cross-department coordination and better oversight of partnership delivery on terms.

Establish a multi-department Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with WKU to support BGPR's workforce through internships.

Internships can help BGPR build its workforce pipeline while supporting growing operational demands. A multi-department Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) framework ensures that intern placement, supervision, and scheduling are consistent across the organization. This structure helps staff understand how interns can be integrated into daily tasks, seasonal operations, and special projects, reducing onboarding time and improving continuity. Internally, a unified MOU system helps divisions

streamline communication, coordinate training, and ensure interns receive a structured and meaningful experience while supporting the department's operational needs.

Develop a tiered partnership strategy that identifies high-impact, high-return partnerships aligned with core service areas.

A tiered partnership strategy allows BGPR to differentiate between high-impact strategic partners, operational partners, and smaller-scale collaborators. Internally, this helps staff prioritize time and resources more effectively by clearly identifying which partnerships require ongoing engagement and which require minimal oversight. A structured tier system also supports long-term planning by aligning the department's most critical partnerships with program priorities, facility needs, and emerging service gaps. This strategic approach reduces organizational inefficiencies and creates a clear roadmap for developing future partnerships.

Document and track partnerships in a database and assign oversight and deliver BGPR terms.

A central system for tracking partnerships is essential for improving communication and operational coordination. A database that captures contact information, agreement terms, renewal timelines, deliverables, and collaboration history ensures that staff across divisions have access to consistent, up-to-date information. Assigning

oversight roles helps maintain accountability and prevents agreements from becoming outdated or overlooked. Internally, this system reduces reliance on individual institutional knowledge, minimizes confusion, and supports continuity during staff transitions. It also enables staff to evaluate partnership performance more effectively and streamline administrative processes.

Partner with a regional partner to establish a senior center serving the region's aging population.

Given the region's growing older adult population, BGPR should explore the feasibility of a regional senior center. Internally, pursuing such a project would allow BGPR to redistribute existing programs, reduce space constraints at current facilities, and better align staffing and resource allocation with community needs. A regional collaboration also allows the department to coordinate services, share responsibility across multiple entities, and plan long-term facility operations more sustainably. This effort would also shape BGPR's long-term strategy by identifying future staffing needs, program opportunities, and operational models tailored to senior populations.

10 | Improve Operational Preparedness

Improve BGPR's operational preparedness to better provide services and implement this master plan: Bolster organizational resilience, achieve CAPRA accreditation, and create a parks and recreation department that can better provide services for the Bowling Green Community.

As Bowling Green Parks & Recreation (BGPR) continues to evolve alongside community growth, operational preparedness is essential to sustaining high-quality services and implementing this master plan successfully. The department must strengthen organizational systems, modernize policies, develop staff capacity, and adopt consistent management practices across all facilities. These improvements will help BGPR operate with greater efficiency, support accreditation readiness, and enhance its ability to make informed decisions about capital planning, staffing, and revenue strategies. The following actions establish a roadmap for building a more resilient, coordinated, and future-focused organization.

Bolster organizational resilience to improve readiness for accreditation.

BGPR should begin by reviewing internal systems, identifying operational vulnerabilities, and strengthening core practices that support accreditation readiness. This includes improving documentation, enhancing evaluation processes, and increasing consistency in how programs and operations are managed. Building internal resilience ensures that staff are prepared for accreditation reviews while also creating a more structured and dependable operating environment. Over time, this helps the department improve quality control, maintain institutional knowledge, and increase organizational confidence.



Advance policy reforms to pursue CAPRA accreditation.

Accreditation requires alignment between organizational practices and national standards. Updating policies such as governance, financial management, maintenance, safety, and public engagement will help BGPR achieve greater consistency and transparency. These reforms reduce ambiguity for staff, clarify expectations, and support more efficient decision-making. Modernizing policies also helps streamline operations by removing outdated procedures and ensuring that all divisions follow standardized guidelines grounded in best practices.

Establish clear career pathways, succession planning, address staffing shortages, and align pay scales to remain competitive.

Strengthening BGPR's workforce is critical to long-term operational readiness. The department should develop structured career pathways, succession plans for key positions, and competitive compensation to address staffing shortages. This work improves retention and employee morale while ensuring continuity of service during operational transitions. Internally, clearer pathways help staff understand expectations for advancement, reinforce long-term commitment to the organization, and ensure the department has skilled professionals ready to fill essential roles.



Standardize maintenance and operational practices for CAPRA Readiness.

Maintenance standards vary across facilities, and standardization is necessary for consistent service delivery and accreditation readiness. BGPR should establish uniform operating procedures, inspection schedules, safety protocols, and documentation practices. Standardizing these processes improves efficiency, strengthens accountability, and ensures that every facility meets the same expectations for cleanliness, safety, and functionality. It also helps the department better manage resources and plan for lifecycle replacement needs.

Benchmark recommendations regarding capacity based on functions and amount of assets per full-time employee.

BGPR should conduct a capacity analysis comparing staff workload, facility size, maintenance responsibilities, and operational expectations. Benchmarking helps the department understand whether staffing levels are adequate and where adjustments are needed to sustain service quality. Internally, this analysis supports equitable workload distribution, improves scheduling efficiency, and ensures that expectations match the capacity of each team. It also provides data to support future budget requests and staffing proposals.

Develop a standardized business plan template to be applied across all revenue-generating facilities (Golf, Aquatics, Community Center, Sports Fields, Entertainment Venue, Food Truck Area).

A unified business plan template allows BGPR to evaluate facilities consistently and make data-informed decisions. This template should include sections for pricing, cost recovery, staffing needs, operating schedules, marketing approaches, financial projections, and performance indicators. Having a single format streamlines internal workflows, improves transparency across divisions, and equips staff with the tools needed to manage facilities strategically to desired outcomes. A standardized

approach also ensures alignment with department-wide revenue, service, and operational goals.

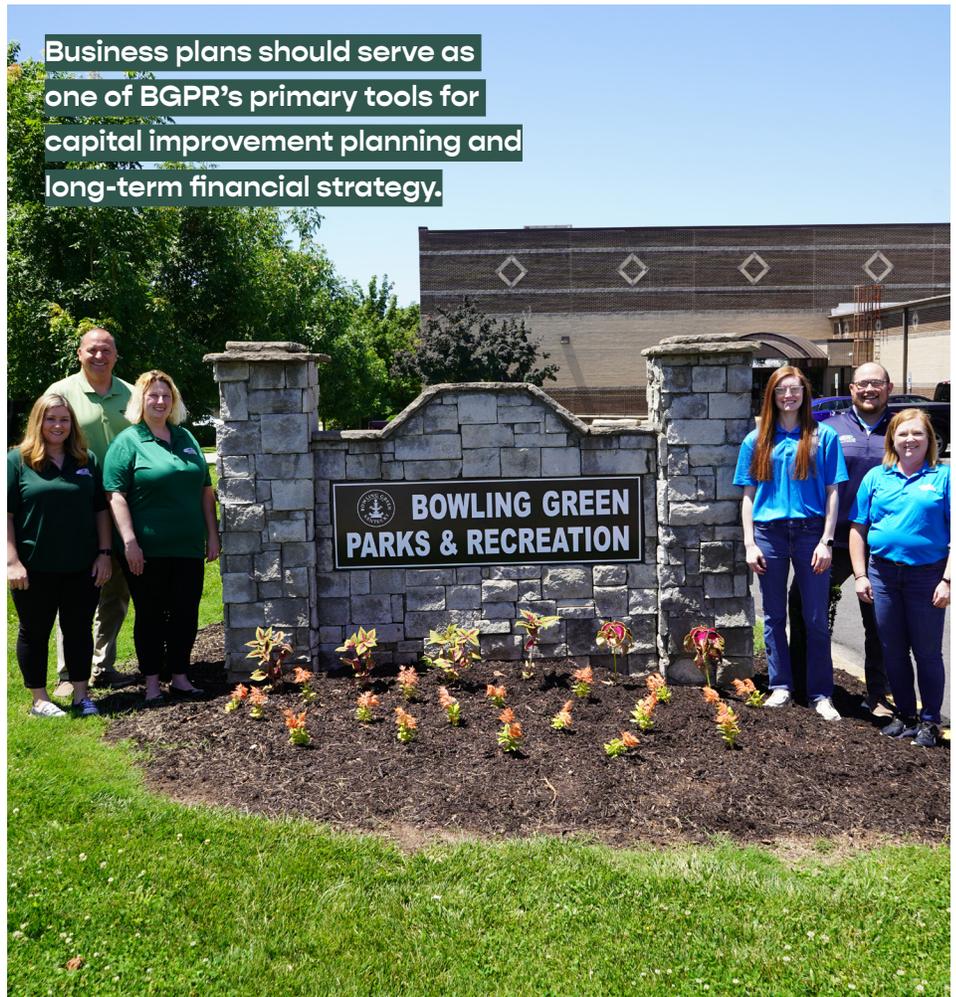
Group similar facilities to develop business plans in thematic bundles, reducing duplication of effort and uncovering cross-facility synergies.

Organizing facilities into groups, such as sports fields, aquatics, golf, or community centers allows BGPR to develop business plans that leverage shared operational needs. This reduces duplication of effort, encourages cross-facility collaboration, and identifies synergies in staffing, scheduling, marketing, and equipment needs. Bundling helps the department better understand system-wide patterns and fosters strategic operational alignment across facilities with similar missions and challenges.

Update the Department's pricing policy and integrate it directly into each facility's business plan using a core/enhanced/specialized service framework (earned income strategy, cost recovery goals).

BGPR should update the Department's pricing policy and integrate it directly into each facility's business plan using a core/enhanced/specialized service framework that reflects earned income strategies and cost recovery goals. The revised pricing structure must balance financial sustainability with equitable community access. This includes incorporating mechanisms such as fee assistance, price sliding scales, or alternative funding supports

Business plans should serve as one of BGPR's primary tools for capital improvement planning and long-term financial strategy.



to ensure residents with financial limitations have equal access to facilities and programs. By embedding access considerations directly into business plans and pricing decisions, BGPR can uphold its commitment to serving the entire community. A unified pricing framework also reduces internal confusion, promotes fair and consistent fee-setting practices, and allows staff to communicate pricing decisions clearly, transparently, and with sensitivity to varying community needs.

Use Business Plans to Inform Capital Planning and Revenue Strategies.

Business plans should serve as one of BGPR's primary tools for capital improvement planning and long-term financial strategy. When business plans identify operational gaps, facility needs, or revenue potential, these insights can guide decisions about future capital investments, renovations, and funding opportunities. This improves internal alignment between operations, finance, and planning while creating stronger justification for future resource allocation.

A structured workforce development program will support consistent performance, strengthen employee engagement, and build operational capacity.



Establish a Workforce Excellence Program with training, evaluation, and recognition.

A structured workforce development program will support consistent performance, strengthen employee engagement, and build operational capacity. The program should include onboarding, ongoing training, leadership development, performance evaluations, and staff recognition. Internally, this effort promotes a culture of continuous improvement, ensures staff have the skills needed to meet operational expectations, and reinforces a sense of pride and professionalism across the department.

Add a Business Coordinator to BGPR to coordinate financial efforts, pricing, and earned income initiative.

Adding a Business Coordinator will centralize financial oversight and support BGPR's shift toward more strategic revenue management. This position will help coordinate pricing, assist with business plan implementation, track financial performance, and support earned income initiatives. Internally, having a dedicated financial professional reduces pressure on existing staff, strengthens department-wide financial consistency, and ensures BGPR can make informed decisions backed by accurate and timely data.





06

From Planning to Parks

Implementation Matrix



Implementation Matrix

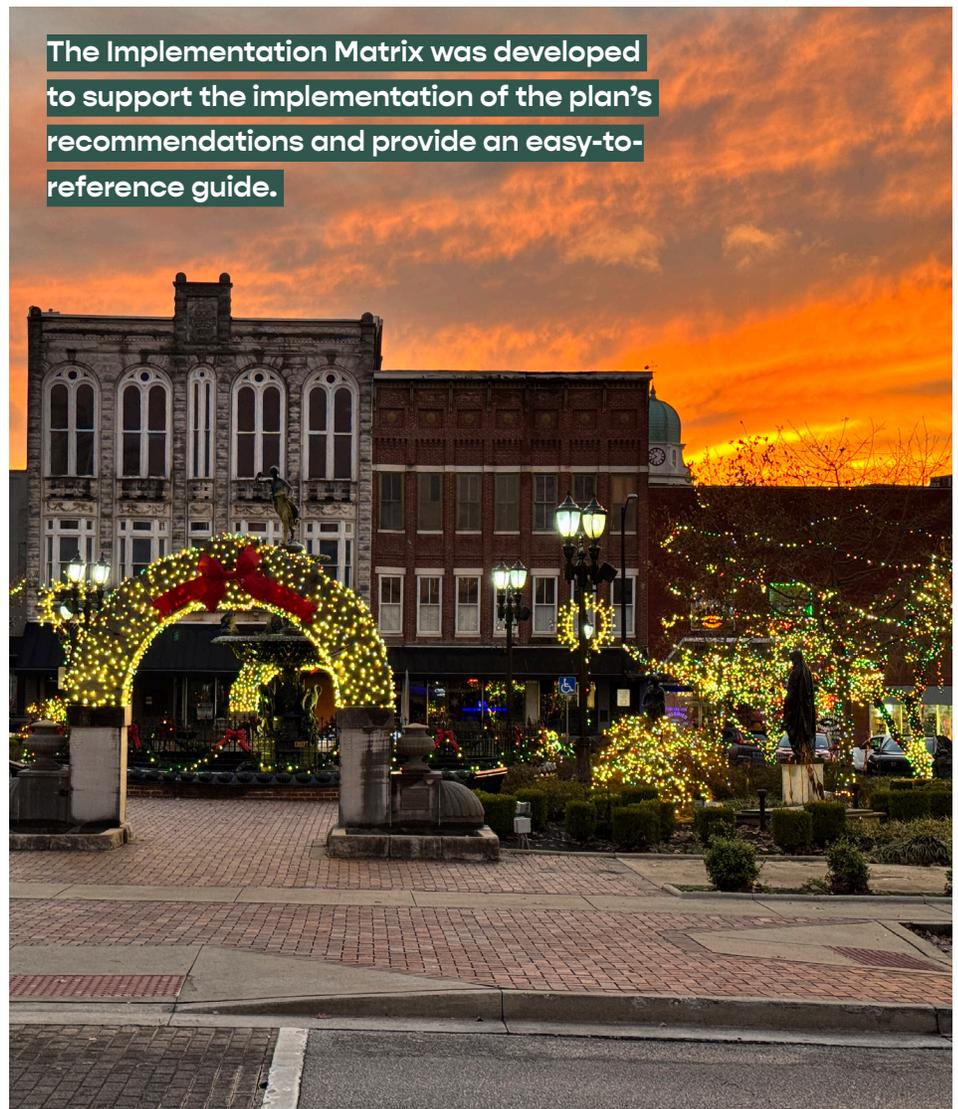
This section organizes the plan recommendations by theme, providing its action item timelines, potential partners, park recommendations, and noting which of the recommendation items are related to the CAPRA accreditation process.

The implementation matrix in the following pages serves as a guide for how to translate the ideas in this plan into actionable next steps. It was developed to support the implementation of the plan's recommendations and provide an easy-to-reference guide.

This table lays out suggested timelines for implementation, focusing on three major timeframes:

- + **Short** Term: 0 - 1 Years
- + **Mid** Term: 1 - 5 Years
- + **Long** Term: 5 - 10 Years

The table also lists potential partners to support the plan's implementation, recognizing that many of these next steps will require thoughtful coordination with existing and new partnerships. Lastly, the matrix highlights CAPRA-related initiatives, in support of a future CAPRA accreditation.



Recommendation Themes & Actions		Timeline	Potential Partners	CAPRA Item
1	Enhance connectivity to parks and trails			
1.1	Improve park entrances to reinforce a pedestrian-facing entry, with attractive pedestrian-scale signage, lighting, and bike parking.	Short to Mid-term	City Public Works, local sign and lighting contractors, local bike shops, neighborhood associations.	7.1, 7.3, 9.2
1.2	Improve walkability along city streets, with a focus on streets connecting residential areas with greenways and BGPR Parks and Facilities.	Mid-term	City of Bowling Green Public Works & Planning, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC), Bowling Green MPO, neighborhood associations.	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 7.1, 10.2, 10.3
1.3	Expand the regional trail system to create a connected Loop Trail that enables walkable connections between neighborhoods with BGPR Parks and Facilities.	Long-term	City of Bowling Green Public Works & Planning, Warren County Government, Bowling Green MPO, BG/WC Greenways & Trails groups, WKU Planning/GIS programs.	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 7.1, 7.3, 10.3
1.4	Expand and improve bike-friendly infrastructure near BGPR Parks, such as dedicated on-street infrastructure and off-street trails.	Long-term	City Public Works, Bowling Green MPO, WalkBikeBG / local bicycle advocacy groups, WKU bike/ped advocacy groups.	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 7.3
1.5	Address pedestrian connectivity gaps to BGPR parks in the current system, with a focus on underserved neighborhoods such as Russellville Road and South Warren.	Long-term	City Planning & Neighborhood Services, Housing Authority of Bowling Green, neighborhood associations (Russellville Rd, South Warren), Warren County Schools (for safe routes).	3.1, 3.3, 3.5, 10.2, 10.3
1.6	Establish a goal that a majority of Bowling Green residents live within a comfortable, safe, and pleasant 10-minute walk to a BGPR Park or facility.	Long-term	City Planning Department, Bowling Green MPO, WKU GIS/Planning programs.	3.1, 3.3, 10.2, 10.3
2	Maintain and improve BGPR's existing facilities to continue serving the community.			
2.1	Address needed improvements to parks and facilities to improve accessibility for all users, such as inclusive surfacing and accessible playground equipment.	Short to Mid-term	Playground manufacturers, inclusive play vendors, Med Center Health (accessibility input), disability advocacy organizations.	2.5, 7.1, 7.4, 7.7
2.2	Renovate current facilities reaching their end of their usable lifespan, such as spraygrounds, restrooms, and parking surfacing.	Short to Mid-term	Local architecture/engineering (A/E) firms, construction contractors, utility providers.	7.3, 7.4, 5.10
2.3	Invest in golf courses to improve golf cart paths, maintenance facilities, and existing shelters.	Short to Mid-term	Golf course design firms, turf and irrigation vendors, local golf associations.	7.4, 7.5, 5.10

Recommendation Themes & Actions		Timeline	Potential Partners	CAPRA Item
2.4	Assess heavily utilized parks and facilities to identify improvements to key recreational and supportive facilities, such as shelters, restrooms, and recreational courts/fields.	Mid-term	A/E firms, facility assessment consultants, WKU Recreation & Facility Management programs.	7.1, 7.4, 10.2
2.5	Advance preventative maintenance planning & standardize documentation.	Mid-term	City Public Works/Facilities, asset management software vendors.	7.5, 7.4
2.6	Create design guidelines for each park classification (community parks, neighborhood parks, natural areas, destination parks) to establish baseline standards.	Mid-term	Landscape architecture firms, WKU Architectural & Design programs, Kentucky Recreation & Park Society (KRPS).	7.1, 7.3
2.7	Modernize maintenance operations, replace outdated equipment and integrate technology for tracking.	Long-term	CMMS/asset management software vendors, City IT Department, equipment suppliers.	2.3, 7.4, 7.5
2.8	Repurpose underutilized spaces, both indoors and outdoors, into facilities identified as having a high need through this process.	Long-term	Local nonprofits (youth/senior services), schools, WKU Recreation & Community Development programs.	3.3, 7.3
2.9	Establish a phased improvement plan to guide upgrades across existing assets based on use, condition, and community impact.	Long-term	A/E firms, planning consultants, City Finance/Budget Office.	3.3, 7.4, 5.10
3	Create awareness for BGPR's facilities and programs.			
3.1	Develop department-wide branding and outreach plan to guide messaging with unified themes, storytelling, contests, etc.	Short-term	VisitBGKY (CVB), Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce, local marketing/branding agencies, WKU Marketing & Communications.	9.1, 9.2, 9.4
3.2	Invest in a Community Engagement and Marketing Analyst position as part of BGPR administrative staff to enable a more robust communications strategy and implement a branding and outreach plan.	Short-term	City HR Department, WKU Gordon Ford College of Business, Chamber of Commerce business network.	2.3, 9.1
3.3	Improve the BGPR website to better share park and facility information through advanced search capabilities, facility information and pictures, and programming information.	Short-term	City IT/Web team, local web development firms, registration software providers.	2.3, 9.2
3.4	Address fragmentation and create a centralized approach to marketing programs and services.	Short-term	VisitBGKY, Chamber of Commerce, WKU Communications, City Communications office.	9.1, 9.2, 9.3
3.5	Improve BGPR's social media presence and communication at the neighborhood level, with additional outreach and a social media calendar.	Short-term	WKU Social Media/Digital Marketing programs, neighborhood associations, local media outlets.	9.2, 9.5

Recommendation Themes & Actions		Timeline	Potential Partners	CAPRA Item
3.6	Implement a comprehensive signage and wayfinding plan.	Mid-term	Local sign design/fabrication companies, City Public Works (right-of-way signage), VisitBGKY.	9.2, 7.4
3.7	Develop a user-friendly mobile app that allows residents to browse and register for programs and events, explore park locations and amenities via interactive maps, and allow for push notifications.	Mid-term	Recreation software providers (e.g., CivicRec/RecTrac), local app development firms, WKU Computer Science/IT programs, Esri or GIS vendors.	2.3, 9.1, 9.2
3.8	Implement a geographically inclusive marketing plan that promotes programs, events, and services offered at all parks and facilities.	Mid-term	Housing Authority of Bowling Green, International Center of Kentucky, neighborhood associations, local faith-based and community organizations.	9.1, 9.2, 9.5
4	Expand the geographic reach of the system to serve Bowling Green's growing population.			
4.1	Deploy mobile recreation units and outreach staff to bring programs directly into underrepresented communities.	Short-term	Local schools, Community Action of Southern Kentucky, Boys & Girls Club, faith-based organizations, International Center of Kentucky.	6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 9.5
4.2	Develop land acquisition criteria to vet future park land opportunities.	Short-term	City Planning, local real estate community, land trusts/conservation organizations.	7.2, 3.1, 3.3
4.3	Utilize tools like GIS, LOS (Level of Service) standards, and population projections to plan ROW acquisition for future or planned trails.	Mid-term	Bowling Green MPO, City Planning/GIS, WKU GIS & Geography programs.	2.3, 3.1, 7.2, 10.2, 10.3
4.4	Plan for an equitable distribution of park amenities, especially in underserved areas and vulnerable neighborhoods.	Long-term	City Planning, Warren County Government, Housing Authority of Bowling Green, International Center of Kentucky.	1.2, 3.1, 3.3, 10.3
5	Promote BGPR as a regional destination for recreation and events.			
5.1	Establish a sports tourism strategy in partnership with businesses, regional organizations, local institutions, and Warren County.	Short-term	VisitBGKY, Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce, Warren County Government, WKU Athletics, hotel & hospitality industry, local sports tournament organizers.	2.2, 3.4, 6.5, 9.2
5.2	Plan for a Regional Field House with Multi-Use Indoor Capacity.	Mid to Long-term	Warren County Government, WKU, school districts, VisitBGKY, private sports/event promoters.	3.4, 7.3, 5.10
5.3	Design and enhance destination-level parks and multi-use facilities capable of hosting large-scale events and tournaments.	Long-term	A/E firms specializing in sports/event venues, VisitBGKY, regional sports organizations.	7.1, 7.3, 5.10

Recommendation Themes & Actions		Timeline	Potential Partners	CAPRA Item
5.4	Partner on an indoor athletic facility that both serves the community and allows for recreation tourism.	Long-term	WKU, local school districts, private sports facility operators, hospital/health systems, developers.	2.2, 3.4, 6.5
6	Foster natural spaces that connect residents with nature.			
6.1	Add low-impact nature trails that offer environmental education and passive recreation opportunities, incorporating interpretive signage.	Short-term	Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife, Kentucky Division of Forestry, local conservation groups, WKU Biology/ Environmental Science programs.	7.7, 3.6, 3.3
6.2	Establish a comprehensive program focused on environmental learning and interaction with nature.	Short-term	WKU Environmental Education programs, local schools, Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, conservation organizations.	6.1, 6.2, 6.3
6.3	Develop and maintain natural areas and passive recreation features that invite exploration and interaction with the environment, such as recent play equipment at Jennings Creek.	Mid-term	Conservation nonprofits, Kentucky Division of Forestry, volunteer groups, master naturalist programs.	7.7, 7.4
6.4	Develop an indoor nature facility that enables BGPR staff to conduct educational programs, provide classroom space, and facilitate field trips.	Mid-term	WKU, local school districts, conservation nonprofits, Med Center Health (for wellness/nature connections).	7.3, 3.4
7	Invest in new facilities to address service gaps.			
7.1	Consider the impact of new facilities on current operations, investing in additional staff and resources to maintain new facilities at the same level of care.	Short-term	City HR Department, South Central Workforce Development Board, WKU Recreation and Business programs.	4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.10
7.2	Establish design standards for parks and facilities that incorporate universal design principles and sensory friendly amenities.	Mid-term	Accessibility design consultants, disability advocacy organizations, WKU Special Education/OT programs, A/E firms.	2.5, 7.3
7.3	Invest in a Community Hub with aquatics, meeting space, and banquet facilities.	Mid to Long-term	Local hospitality and catering industry, hotel partners, Med Center Health, WKU, community nonprofits.	3.4, 6.1, 7.3
7.4	Develop a signature Riverfront Park with multi-use amenities, improved river access, and event/gathering areas.	Long-term	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (if applicable), local river and watershed groups, VisitBGKY, waterfront-adjacent businesses, A/E firms.	3.4, 7.3, 5.10
7.5	Construct a joint sports complex and special event grounds.	Long-term	Warren County Government, WKU Athletics, school districts, VisitBGKY, sports tournament organizers, private sponsors.	2.2, 3.4, 7.3

Recommendation Themes & Actions		Timeline	Potential Partners	CAPRA Item
8	Enhance programming to educate, inspire, and delight residents of all ages.			
8.1	Establish program management best practices for all BGPR programs.	Short-term	NRPA, Kentucky Recreation & Park Society (KRPS), WKU Recreation Administration.	6.1, 6.2
8.2	Use existing and new special events as a platform to introduce recreation services and boost visibility of cultural, fitness, and nature-based programs.	Short-term	VisitBGKY, Downtown BG/SoKY Marketplace, SKyPAC and local arts groups, health systems, sponsors.	6.5, 9.2
8.3	Activate existing facilities with multi-generational programming for residents of all ages.	Short-term	AARP Kentucky, senior centers, youth-serving nonprofits, local arts and fitness providers.	6.1, 6.2, 6.3
8.4	Standardize the program development process incorporating pricing strategies, marketing methods, estimated/ actual budgeting, and cost recovery.	Short-term - Mid-term	WKU Business & Recreation programs, NRPA, financial/management consultants.	6.2, 6.3, 5.3
8.5	Build consistent delivery of service through program standards and staff training to achieve outcomes.	Short-term - Mid-term	NRPA, KRPS, WKU Recreation Administration, Red Cross (for safety training).	4.6, 6.4
8.6	Offer parallel programming at the same facility or park to encourage family participation and cross-generational engagement.	Mid-term	School districts, childcare providers, youth-serving nonprofits, faith-based groups.	6.2, 6.3
8.7	Plan for demographic and trend shifts in Bowling Green, addressing the region's strong population growth and influx of immigrant communities.	Mid-term	International Center of Kentucky, local cultural organizations, school ESL programs, Med Center Health (community health outreach).	6.2, 9.5
9	Strengthen and establish partnerships with local and regional entities and institutions.			
9.1	Continue to strengthen existing partnerships, such as those with Western Kentucky University, hospitals, and local business.	Short-term - Ongoing	Western Kentucky University (multiple departments), Med Center Health & TriStar Greenview, Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce, major local employers.	2.2, 6.5
9.2	Establish a formal partnership policy that clearly defines types of partnerships (Public/Public, Public/Nonprofit, Public/Private).	Short-term	City Legal Department, KRPS, NRPA (model policies).	2.1, 2.2
9.3	Establish a multi-department Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with WKU to support BGPR's workforce through internships.	Short-term	WKU Recreation Administration, WKU Public Health, WKU Business & Marketing, WKU Kinesiology and Sport.	2.2, 4.6, 10.4
9.4	Document and track partnerships in a database and assign oversight and delivering BGPR terms.	Short-term - Mid-term	City IT Department, CRM/software vendors, WKU Data Analytics/Information Systems programs.	2.3, 2.2
9.5	Develop a tiered partnership strategy that identifies high-impact, high-return partnerships aligned with core service areas.	Mid-term	Chamber of Commerce, major corporate employers, health systems, foundations.	2.2, 5.4

Recommendation Themes & Actions		Timeline	Potential Partners	CAPRA Item
9.6	Partner with a regional partner to establish a senior center serving the region's aging population.	Long-term	Area Agency on Aging & Independent Living, Community Action of Southern Kentucky, AARP Kentucky, Med Center Health, senior housing providers.	2.2, 6.5
10	Improve BGPR's operational preparedness to better provide services and implement this master plan.			
10.1	Bolster organizational resilience to improve readiness for accreditation.	Short-term - Ongoing	NRPA/CAPRA advisors, CAPRA-accredited peer agencies (e.g., Lexington), KRPS.	1.2, 2.6, 4.1, 5.1-5.10, 7.4
10.2	Advance policy reforms to pursue CAPRA accreditation.	Short-term	City Legal Department, NRPA/CAPRA reviewers, KRPS.	1.1-10.4
10.3	Add a Business Coordinator to BGPR to coordinate financial efforts, pricing, and earned income initiative.	Short-term	WKU Accounting/Finance programs, local CPA firms, Chamber of Commerce employer network.	5.1, 5.3, 5.5
10.4	Benchmark recommendations regarding capacity based on functions and amount of assets per full-time employee.	Short-term	NRPA (benchmark data), CAPRA-accredited peer agencies, WKU Data Analytics programs.	10.2, 10.3
10.5	Establish clear career pathways, succession planning, address staffing shortages, Align pay scales to remain competitive.	Short-term - Mid-term	City HR Department, South Central Workforce Development Board, WKU HRD/Business programs.	4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6
10.6	Standardize maintenance and operational practices for CAPRA Readiness.	Mid-term	City Public Works/Facilities, CAPRA-accredited agencies, maintenance software vendors.	7.4, 7.5
10.7	Develop a standardized business plan template to be applied across all revenue-generating facilities (Golf, Aquatics, Community Center, Sports Fields, Entertainment Venue, Food Truck Area).	Mid-term	WKU Business School, financial consultants, NRPA (financial management resources).	5.1-5.10, 6.1, 6.3
10.8	Establish a Workforce Excellence Program with training, evaluation, and recognition.	Mid-term	City HR Department, WKU HRD/Leadership programs, NRPA (training), KRPS.	4.1, 4.6, 4.8
10.9	Update the Department's pricing policy and integrate it directly into each facility's business plan using a core/ enhanced/ specialized service framework (earned income strategy, cost recovery goals).	Mid-term	NRPA, peer agencies with mature cost-recovery models, WKU Economics/Business.	5.3, 6.3
10.10	Group similar facilities to develop business plans in thematic bundles, reducing duplication of effort and uncovering cross-facility synergies.	Mid-term - Long-term	WKU Business School, financial consultants, facility managers.	5.1-5.10
10.11	Use Business Plans to Inform Capital Planning and Revenue Strategies.	Mid-term - Long-term	City Finance/Budget Office, City Manager's Office, local financial institutions, NRPA.	5.10, 10.3



