

PUBLIC INPUT

Focus Group Meetings

An important consideration for any park master plan is complete understanding of the needs of groups and organizations representing thousands of youth and adult park patrons. Columbia Parks and Recreation Department (CPRD) staff communicated with a total of 58 park user groups at 45 separate meetings to solicit input on current and future park needs. Many of the organization's requests included items that could be funded through the City's operating budget or were already included and funded in the Department's Capital Improvement Program. Listed below is a summary of unfunded items requested during the focus group meetings.



Focus Group Meeting at PMC

I. Athletic Organizations

A. Boone County Baseball

1. Add batting cages at Albert-Oakland.
2. Need to provide one 60-90/360 ft. field for 13 -14 age bracket at Atkins Park instead of the planned 275 ft. and 300 ft. fields. Suggested that CPRD provide four fields with lights rather than five fields if funding is limited.
3. Need 8 full-size practice baseball fields at Philips Park.

B. Blue Thunder Track Club

1. Need a permanent home track and a storage facility to house track and field supplies.

C. Carrera Soccer

1. Need more practice fields.
2. Need a soccer complex with 10 – 12 artificial turf fields for league games and to host local and regional tournaments. This would allow Cosmo fields to be used as practice fields.
3. Need a full-field, indoor soccer facility with amenities to host events as well as sport tournaments.

D. Columbia Soccer Club

1. Need more full-sized game fields to allow for field recuperation as well as added opportunities to host state cup tournaments. Prefer development of 10 – 12 full-sized game fields at southeast regional park and practice fields at Cosmo.
2. Field improvements needed on Cosmo soccer fields #7, #8, #12, #13, #14, #15 and #16.
3. Need lights on select fields to allow more practice and game time for adult soccer.
4. Renovate existing Cosmo restrooms.
5. Need a full-field, indoor soccer facility with amenities to host events as well as tournaments.

E. Columbia Swim Club

1. Need assurance of an indoor aquatic facility that would remain available for year-round practice sessions. Preferred option would be construction of a new indoor natatorium, but continued maintenance and improvements to Hickman Pool will suffice for the short-term.
2. Need additional storage space or facility at Hickman Pool.

F. Columbia Youth Basketball Association

1. Need 4 – 6 indoor courts with dedicated time for youth basketball league. Construction of a wood floor, “no-frills” facility would suffice.
2. Collaborate with Columbia Public Schools in joint construction of sport facilities.

G. Columbia Youth Football League

1. Need additional game fields due to growth in program and overuse of existing fields.
2. Need spectator bleachers for Cosmo fields #5 and #6.
3. Need additional storage for equipment.
4. Consider offering Cosmo fields #13, #14 and #15 as multi-purpose fields instead of soccer use only.

H. Diamond Council

1. Need additional ag-lime fields with 225 ft. fences and irrigation on both the infield and outfield.
2. Need 2 more fields at 275 ft. fence distance at American Legion if space allows.
3. Convert 2 Antimi fields to 210 foot fences with netting to restrict foul balls from leaving field.
4. Update and enlarge dugouts at existing fields (Antimi).
5. Need more shade areas for spectators – including near concessions stands and bleachers - at all complexes.
6. Develop playground areas at all sport complexes for player siblings.
7. Renovate restrooms at all sport complexes.
8. Need lights on the east field at American Legion.
9. Need to build storage shed closer to Antimi.
10. Need lights for t-ball fields at Antimi.
11. Need lights between Antimi fields and parking lots.
12. Need additional batting cages at Antimi.
13. Need additional parking near Antimi Black & Gold fields.
14. Repairs needed to Antimi women’s restroom roof to allow for more dry storage. Build retaining walls at Gold Field and Green Field so players can more safely access dugouts.
15. Add water hookups to Antimi umpire room.
16. Add lightning warning lights and horns for Antimi and Rainbow – DC to pay for hardware.
17. Consider installing additional fencing at Antimi for a more controlled crowd entrance for tournament play.
18. Conduct pre and post meeting season meeting with CPRD and DC board.

19. Add more parking around Antimi complex.
20. Need portable fences – DC to purchase and CPRD to install as needed.
21. Requested that CPRD be a co-sponsor of a fall youth league.

I. Douglass Athletic Association/Douglass Baseball

1. Need storage area for game and other special events equipment at Douglass Park.
2. Add batting cages at Douglass Park.
3. Need increased safety measures (lights, fence, cameras, etc.) and substantial public relations campaign for families to support Douglass Park programs.

J. Mid-Missouri Lacrosse League

1. Need 2 -3 additional turf fields for game play and tournaments.
2. Add lights to Cosmo fields #4 & #5 for game play and tournaments.
3. Construct skills wall at existing Cosmo field practice facility.
4. Need an indoor facility for winter practice sessions and game play.
5. Requested that CPRD assist with referee training.

K. Rockers Girls Softball

1. Convert all Antimi fields to ag-lime.
2. Extend Antimi T-ball fields to 150 ft.
3. Update and enlarge dugouts at existing fields.
4. Convert Antimi fields to 210 foot fences with foul ball netting.

L. USTA Tennis

1. Continue promoting beginner tennis programs in Columbia, especially with current “10 and Under Tennis” promotion.
2. Keep up annual maintenance program and plan for re-surfacing tennis courts as suggested by USTA guidelines.

II. Sport Enthusiasts Groups

A. Archery

1. Develop a centrally located, special use park with approximately 80 – 100 acres for archery practice to serve as a location for Rinehart 100 archery target shoot. Land should be heavily forested and include adequate event parking and basic amenities.
2. Renovate American Legion archery range including lengthening and widening stalls, adding shelter to stalls, adding an accessible stall and improving existing hanging system.
3. Develop satellite archery facilities around the community.

B. Special Olympic Bocce Ball

1. Construct 6 clay bocce courts, 12 x 60 ft. with bumpers and backboards at a location with adequate parking for Special Olympic tournaments. Preferable locations are Cosmo Park, Rock Quarry or SE corner of Stephens Lake Park.

C. Columbia Bike Club

1. Provide parkland to accommodate a .5 - .75 mile cyclocross race course with varied terrain.
2. Provide dedicated area for weekly cyclocross practice.
3. Identify or acquire parkland for development of mountain bike trails – including parkland adjacent to Hinkson Creek Trail and the proposed Grindstone Trail.
4. Develop “bike skills” course adjacent to the MKT Trail to include features such as jumps, dips, berms, etc.
5. Provide wayfinding signs on trails system – including Rhett’s Run.
6. Create marketing campaign for local mountain bike trails – including online and collateral materials.

D. CoMo Bike Polo

1. Install lights at existing roller hockey rink.
2. Construct of 2 – 4 regulation sized, lighted bike polo courts with 4 ft. boards. Court space would allow the club to host regional tournaments.
3. Add water fountain to existing skate facility.

E. Ice Skating

1. Develop an indoor, single sheet (with option to expand) ice arena to support youth hockey league and recreational and competitive ice skating.

F. Pickleball

1. Construct a multi-purpose facility with 3 – 5 courts for year -round play.
2. Identify and renovate vacant warehouse to create pickleball facility.
3. Construct additional lighted outdoor facilities. Suggested locations include Rock Quarry Park, Albert-Oakland Park (convert sand volleyball courts), southeast regional park or vacant parking lots.
4. Construct a dedicated facility with 6 – 8 pickleball courts to accommodate state, regional and national competitions.
5. Resurface/re-stripe Albert-Oakland tennis courts.
6. Pickleball enthusiasts are interested in conducting clinics and implementing league play at the Armory or ARC in order to introduce residents to the sport.

G. Skateboarding

1. Install lights to expand hours of operation and alleviate crowding during daylight hours at Columbia Skate Park.
2. Expand Columbia Skate Park to include bowl design or simple small obstacles for intermediate skateboarders.
3. Construct satellite skate features (benches, ramps, rails) at various community locations to allow for better access to skate facilities.
4. Provide bleachers at Columbia Skate Park.
5. Provide shaded area for skaters and spectators.

H. Columbia Disc Golf Club

1. Develop long championship course with varied terrain that could accommodate 4 – 7 day tournaments with up to 500 players.
2. Update/replace tee signs on all three courses.
3. Provide scorecards with updated maps.
4. Consider mowing less area to accommodate “out of bounds” play.
5. Continue to add trees to existing courses for versatility of playing area.
6. Continue trimming and mulching tees and basket areas.
7. Continue to replace baskets with “old style” metal baskets as needed.
8. Construct bridges on Albert-Oakland back #10 and #11 and front #13.
9. Replace signs at Albert-Oakland to reflect new map.
10. Add more tee placements at Indian Hills for course versatility.
11. Provide additional benches to Indian Hills course.
12. Partner with club to introduce disc golf to local youth via clinics, summer camps or tournament play.

I. Columbia Track Club

1. Desire a permanent, regulation cross-country course with varied terrain at Cosmo Park.
2. Provide one year-round water fountain along trail at Cosmo Park.
3. Need adequate provision of year-round water fountains along all new trail development.

III. **Disabilities Commission and Seniors**

A. City of Columbia Disabilities Commission

1. Playground ADA issues should be a priority for P&R - including repairs and updates.
2. Park signage needs to be designed with ADA visibility standards (e.g. high contrast, low glare, non-serif font, large print, height level, etc.). Consider audible signage for sight-impaired individuals.
3. Create wheelchair accessible fishing dock at Philips Lake (similar to Stephens Lake with fence barrier).
4. Provide pull lift at ARC hot tub.
5. Expand community fishing programs.
6. Repair crumbling sidewalks at Cosmo-Bethel
7. Add accessible parking spaces at Cosmo-Bethel.
8. Adapt emergency response policies and protocol to allow for aging population at recreation and sport facilities.
9. Expand volunteer positions in the areas of research and project management to meet the desires of skilled baby boomers.

B. United Cerebral Palsy Heartland; Playground Design

1. Replace all wood mulch and pea gravel playground surfaces with poured pads.
2. Incorporate lower fall zone (2’ – 4’) into playground design to eliminate need for 6 ft. buffer. Design with lower ramps and platforms for better accessibility.
3. Develop paved areas or concrete existing trails for tricycle use – good for motor skills development.

4. Provide shade canopies over playground areas - many medications make children more sun sensitive.
5. Consider disabled parents when designing playground structures for able-bodied children – disabled parents need access to and under playground equipment.

IV. Economic Development and Tourism

A. City of Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau

1. Need indoor and outdoor sport facilities for hosting regional and state tournaments.
2. Need additional parking at Stephens Lake to better accommodate events.
3. Need variety of home/grounds upgrades to Nifong Park to accommodate senior programming.
4. Continue to be open to variances in the special event permitting process.
5. Consider historical reenactment programming at Nifong to attract regional tourism.
6. Collaborate on printing of a new trails map for increased tourism potential – including mountain biking/hiking and bicycling trails.
7. Collaborate on creation and implementation of tourist industry, hospitality training regarding local park amenities and trail routes.
8. Need “gateway signage” to market Columbia to I-70 and Hwy 63 traffic.
9. Incorporate QR codes and smart device applications for park and trail signage and marketing.

B. Columbia Chamber of Commerce

1. Community needs to collaborate on campaign for funding/constructing a major sports complex to host regional and national soccer tournaments. A feasibility study is needed to assess available weekends, hotel base, existing facilities, etc.
2. Add parking lots to neighborhood parks with open playfields.
3. Need small skate park facilities at various locations around the community to reduce skating on private property and shared public spaces.

C. Columbia Sports Group

1. Need to have a collaborative effort with the City, Columbia Public Schools, all three colleges and local sport organizations to bring in more events, continue to support and grow existing events and to identify and prioritize Columbia’s sport facility needs.

V. Historical and Entertainment/Performing Arts

A. Boone County Historical Society

1. Install lights throughout Nifong Park.
2. Install an improved security system.
3. Improve and construct hard surface walkways to and around Maplewood House and connector walkways throughout Nifong Park.
4. Provide interpretive signs around perimeter of Nifong Park and pedways/trails connecting Nifong to Philips Park.
5. Replace shelter with larger structure to accommodate groups of 200 or more.

6. Provide additional event and porous surface overflow parking at Nifong Park.
7. Consider improvements at Nifong Park to address potential increase in visitor usage due to future construction of student housing and development of athletic facilities at Philips Park.
8. Repurpose animal barn as agricultural museum.
9. Renovate Maplewood House.
10. Raise tree canopy throughout the park.

B. City of Columbia Historic Preservation Commission

1. Interested in Heibel-March building as a location for sales/storage of architectural salvage items.
2. Redesign Village Square Park.
3. Consider Juliet Boiling House (circa 1904)/Moore's Depot as park acquisition.
4. Create MKT interpretive signage regarding history of railway.
5. Create CCRA interpretive signage or online information regarding aviation history – include PMC light beacon. Consider renaming Cosmo Park roadways with names associated with aviation themes.
6. Create an indoor interpretive center in one of the PMC hangars incorporating history of Candlelight Lodge, Stephen Women's pilot program, light beacon, plane displays, etc.
7. Consider retaining the original "Airport" lettering that is bleeding through the east side of the Park Management Center hangar.

C. Maplewood Barn Community Theater

1. Construct roof for outdoor stage to accommodate lights and for weather protection.
2. Add parking to Nifong Park to accommodate high attendance performances and facility rentals.
3. Add lights to park grounds surrounding Maplewood Barn.
4. Secure business identification and directional signs for Hwy 63 and south entrance from Discovery Ridge Parkway.
5. Install security system for Maplewood Barn.
6. Raise tree canopy in Nifong Park.
7. Add single table shelters and better access to Nifong Park to accommodate proposed construction of neighborhood student housing.

VI. Public Agencies

A. Boone County Parks Commission

1. Boone County Parks Commission supports proposed parks, trails and facilities that serve all of Boone County and is open to future collaborative efforts as appropriate.

B. Columbia Park and Recreation Commission

1. Supports inclusion of unfunded amenities from 2002 Facility Needs Update into the 2013 plan.
2. Consider adding ADA playground features to each neighborhood park.

C. Finger Lakes State Park

1. Collaborate with marketing of area mountain biking trails.

D. Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)

1. Consider partnering on Gans Creek Recreation Area (GCRA) stream restoration.
2. Construct connector trail from MDC offices on Gans Road to Rock Bridge State Park via GCRA.
3. Collaborate with MDC on GCRA pond management.
4. Continue joint partnership on Community Assistance Program and hunter registration classes.
5. Increase number of archery practice areas.
6. Partner with MDC on controlled burns of natural areas.
7. Consider joint equipment storage at GCRA.
8. Manage buffer zone of GCRA as natural area.
9. Consider co-op agreement for MDC programs with planned parking and restrooms near GCRA tennis courts – Gans building does not have an exterior restroom or abundant visitor parking.
10. Consider “Natural Playground” concept when designing parks.

E. Rock Bridge State Park

1. Construct connecting trail from GCRA area to Rock Bridge State Park.
2. Assist Rock Bridge staff in communicating with public and GCRA patrons regarding mountain bike restrictions at Gans Creek Wilderness Area.

VII. Sustainable Living Groups

A. Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture (CCUA) and Community Garden Coalition

1. Consider acquiring 1.3 acre property at 1207 Smith St. for an urban farm, special use park allowing CCUA to lease the land.
2. Consider acquiring Ameren UE property, 310 E. Walnut St. for development of an urban park.
3. Create community CPRD garden pilot program/facility at Fairview Park. Provide staff or volunteers to manage and program. Provide water, tool storage, deer fence (natural buffer fence or man-made), greenhouse and restrooms.
4. Consider establishing a working-farm, special use park with leased multi-acre plots made available for substantial food production. Perche Creek area should be considered as a location. CCUA would consider a ten-year lease agreement with City to manage the land.
5. Provide space for community garden plots within park boundaries.
6. Consider edible landscaping in parks and open space areas. Work with TreeKeeper volunteers to maintain and care for edible landscaping in exchange for first choice of harvest as well as the option to donate produce to local food pantry.

B. Columbia Farmers Market

1. Need access to water for drinking fountain – would also service sport groups utilizing Clary-Shy Park – and hand-washing station for sanitary purposes (completed summer 2012).
2. Consider constructing a large shelter or pavilion allowing vendors to sell from back of vehicle during market hours.
3. Extend hard surface lot to provide for additional accessible parking areas closer to vendors. Extension would also provide for additional vendor space and entertainment.
4. Need increased access to electrical outlets.
5. Need on-site restrooms to serve growing market crowds – also to be used by sport groups and West Junior High physical education classes.
6. Construct shared storage facilities for market and possible sport groups.

C. Sustainable Farms and Communities, Inc.

1. Supports extension of lease for future permanent facility at the existing ARC location.
2. Continue to work with City on plans for new building.

VIII. Trails and Non-Motorized Transportation

A. City of Columbia Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission

1. Connect the new high school and surrounding neighborhoods with the existing trails system.
2. Continue to move forward and expand city-wide trail system.
3. Continue to allow Commission to comment on future trails plan and GetAbout Columbia (GAC) project list.

B. City of Columbia GetAbout Columbia Advisory Board

1. Continue dialogue regarding the GAC Advisory Board's priority ranking of the proposed Shepard to Rollins Connector (important for access to east campus area) and County House Trail Phase II East and West (important for connecting two neighborhoods to MKT).
2. Consider trailhead at Old 63 Park and clear tree line to provide scenic vista of campus.
3. Include access to MKT from Thornbrook and proposed Creeks Edge development (north of Thornbrook) neighborhoods on Trails Plan.
4. Improve bicycle access to County House Branch Trail off of Chapel Hill for both east and west bound traffic.
5. Improve bicycle access to the MKT from the north travel lane of Forum Blvd.
6. Improve travel path of bicyclists through Twin Lakes parking lot from County House Branch Trail to MKT connector.
7. Support development of Proctor Park pedestrian bridge for improved non-motorized transportation and recreation access to Bear Creek Trail.
8. Support development of Parkside Drive pedways for improved non-motorized transportation and recreation access to CCRA.

C. PedNet Coalition

1. Continue dialogue with GAC, CPRD and PedNet regarding the proposed GAC funded Shepard to Rollins Connector (important for access to east campus) and County House Trail Phase II East and West (important for connecting two neighborhoods off Rollins to MKT).
2. Consider alternative bicycle friendly route to CCRA from Bear Creek Trail – trail is too steep for average bicyclist.
3. Identify route for Bucks Run access off of Hominy Branch Trail.
4. Consider Clark Lane and Rice Rd connectors to Hinkson Creek Trail – study area needed.
5. Unified signage needed for entire trails/on-road non-motorized transportation system.
6. Consider additional layers when revising 2010 Trails Plan to provide more details on connector trails.
7. Consider “all-in-one” bike repair stations at select trailheads.
8. Continue to develop city-wide network of nature trails and urban pedways connecting residential subdivisions, employment centers, businesses, parks, schools, public buildings and downtown.

IX. Environmental Groups

A. Greenbelt Land Trust of Mid-Missouri (GBLT)

1. CPRD should prioritize preserving open space - especially water shed, riparian and storm water.
2. Collaborate with GBLT and other select agencies in community planning (area concepts and land acquisition criteria/matrix development) and land preservation efforts (controlled burns, cleanup days, etc.).
3. Collaborate with GBLT to develop a Regional Open Space Plan for minimal management of designated areas.
4. Consider GBLT for financial assistance to help acquire/manage open space.
5. Review BonFemme/Clear Creek Valley as an ecologically significant area for park acquisition.
6. Continue managing rough areas of golf courses as natural areas using “green” products when possible.
7. Actively seek to remove all non-native invasive species from parks and other public spaces.
8. Consider excess of 100 ft. buffer zone for open space designation.

B. Audubon Society

1. Continue to jointly plan and develop Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary and adjacent Columbia Audubon property.
2. Develop interpretive signs throughout Bonnie View.
3. Implement Audubon Society mission in future open space development plans by providing an environment supportive of bird habitat.

X. Central Columbia

A. Douglass Park Neighborhood Association

1. Redesign Douglass Park to discourage illicit activities, while providing for community and school activities.
2. Construct shelter at Douglass Park with design elements (including loading area, storage, stage area, base area for speakers) specific to cultural and community events.
3. Need a community center in downtown Columbia.

B. Douglass Park Forum and Douglass Park Planning Committee

1. Renovate existing cameras and install additional security cameras in the park.
2. Provide year-round restroom facilities at Douglass Park.
3. Renovate existing restroom facilities at Douglass Park.
4. Develop outdoor facilities at Douglass Park including: tennis courts, multiple small picnic shelters/tables, community garden plots, skate park, concession stand, event storage space, amphitheater, adult fitness station clusters and walking trail.
4. Replace and relocate medium shelter with large “events” shelter.
5. Plant edible landscaping and orchards.
6. Develop African-American Heritage Center and trailhead.
7. Replace existing playground surface with rubber tile safety surface.
8. Provide location for police substation at Douglass Park.
9. Relocate parking lot to 5th St.
10. Add parking to 5th St. and relocate existing parking lot.
11. Add parking to 5th St. and replace existing lot with porous paving product for overflow event parking.
12. Collaborate with Columbia Public Schools (CPS) to develop parking on west side of 5th St. north of Rogers.
13. Collaborate with CPS to develop track on existing CPS lot west of 5th St.
14. Protect memorial trees when developing park.
15. Develop YMCA, multi-purpose building/community center at Douglass Park.
16. Identify or construct a downtown facility to serve as a youth community center.

XI. Columbia Public Schools, Higher Education and Private Schools

A. Columbia Public Schools (CPS)

1. Continue working with CPS on acquiring park land adjacent to new schools.
2. Develop trail connections that link schools to neighborhoods. Priority schools include Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary, Battle High School and future elementary school adjacent to Battle.
3. Continue playground and outdoor fitness improvement program for elementary and middle schools.
4. Co-sponsor construction of tennis courts at Hickman High School.
5. City sponsorship of a portion of new elementary school gym construction so that the gyms may be enlarged and made available for CPRD programs.

B. Douglass High School

1. Redesign Douglass Park to discourage illicit activities while providing for community and school activities.
2. Need downtown community center.
3. Consider collaborative efforts to increase summer recreational programming and evening year-round programming at Douglass High School.
4. Construct skate park features (grinding rail, fun box or ramp) at Douglass Park.
5. Provide additional fencing around baseball diamond to prevent park patrons from interrupting class time.
6. Work with Douglass High School to utilize Douglass Pool for physical education water safety/aquatic programs.

C. Columbia Council PTA

1. Continue offering Annual City/School Park improvements funds.
2. Provide trail connections where appropriate.

D. Father Tolton High School

1. Provide trail connection from Philips Park to Tolton High School.
2. Consider joint development of tennis courts at Gans Creek Recreation Area.
3. Provide availability of athletic fields and tennis courts in exchange for P&R use of gym.

E. Columbia College

1. Continue to work with Columbia College on providing a game and practice field for their softball program.
2. Cooperate with joint development of future recreational facilities where appropriate.

F. University of Missouri – Mizzou Rec Clubs and Mizzou Athletics

1. Potential need for tennis courts due to growth in participants and lack of campus facilities.
2. Rugby Club needs more field space for tournaments.
3. Need cross country course for training and to host events.

G. Stephens College

1. Continue to work with Stephens College on providing a game and practice field for their softball program.
2. Cooperate with joint development of future recreational facilities where appropriate.