

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

### ***Focus Group Meetings***

An important consideration for any park master plan is understanding the needs of the groups and organizations that represent the primary users of the parks and facilities. In order to better understand these needs, park planning staff conducted 21 focus group meetings to solicit input on current and future needs. Listed below is a summary of the focus group meetings.

#### **I. Athletic Organizations**

##### **A. Diamond Council (youth baseball and softball)**

1. Need more practice fields with skinned infields. Currently, two teams are scheduled to practice at the same time on one field.
2. Need 6 more fields at 200-ft. fence distance and 2 more fields at 275-325 ft. fence distance. Prefer fields to be in a complex at one location.
3. Concession and storage area at Antimi are inadequate/small.
4. Need more parking around Antimi complex and more tournament official/umpire parking at Rainbow Softball Center.

##### **B. Columbia Soccer Club**

1. Need more practice fields or areas.
  - a. Need several large areas for multiple teams with practice “kick-walls.”
  - b. Include a practice area in all existing and future neighborhood parks.
2. Need 10-12 more fields of various sizes. Ideal scenario is to build them all at regulation size which would allow for tournaments. Fields could then be marked as needed for youth and recreational play.
3. Desire all fields to be in complex at one location, preferably in south Columbia.
4. Need an indoor facility - approximately 110 x 60 yards will allow for all ages to play and practice. Two fields under one roof would be ideal.

##### **C. Columbia Youth Football League**

1. Two additional fields in CCRA will help, but there is a need for another complex with 4-6 fields. Do not mind co-use with Lacrosse.
2. Due to equipment needs, teams must practice at same location to maximize equipment use. Additional practice space is badly needed. Currently, four teams practice at the same time on one field.
3. Irrigate existing CCRA fields.
4. Add possible lights to existing fields if additional fields can't be constructed.
5. More parking in CCRA.

D. Columbia Youth Basketball Club

1. Need 4-6 indoor courts for youth and recreational games. Does not have to be a fancy facility (i.e., a large steel building will suffice). Floor should be wood if at all possible.
2. Proposed recreation center will help, but will not satisfy demand.
3. Program numbers are presently maximized. Without additional courts, they cannot accept any further participants.

E. Douglass Baseball (youth baseball)

1. Need storage area for game and field equipment.
2. Construct outfield perimeter fence on baseball field.
3. Add batting cages.

F. American Legion Baseball

1. Reconfigure existing fields to possibly fit 2 official baseball fields. Fields should be premiere with irrigation, grass infield, scoreboards, etc.
2. Add grass infield and irrigation to existing field unless above occurs.
3. Add batting cages.
4. Renovate restroom.
5. Improve parking lot.

G. Ice Skating

1. Develop an outdoor ice skating facility. Two sheets of ice are preferred.
2. Develop an indoor recreational ice skating facility with two sheets of ice.
3. Need for an indoor ice skating facility that can host competitive hockey leagues for recreational play, high school, college and minor leagues. Facility should also be available for other venues such as party rooms, concerts, craft fairs, and conventions. Seating needs range from 3500 to 5000.

H. Miscellaneous Association or Individual Comments

1. Need for a tennis complex similar to Springfield/Greene County's Cooper Complex (17 outdoor, 1 championship court, indoor complex, etc.)
2. Renovate existing tennis courts.
3. Want to dedicate a park as an outdoor winter sports area for cross country skiing, sledding and ice skating. Include a warming area.
4. Need lacrosse fields for both youth and adult teams. Can share with football if needed. Should lacrosse become a high school sport, the need will greatly increase.
5. Need additional 18-hole public golf course - championship quality with driving range and putt/chip practice area.
6. Boone County Baseball league needs 10 fields with amenities, such as, concessions, locker rooms, batting cages, etc.

7. Develop a boxing facility - indoor, 2-3 rings, with practice areas.
8. Develop a BMX (bike moto-cross) facility.
9. Develop a paint-ball course.
10. The Indian Hills area is in need of quality programs for youth, such as, indoor basketball & volleyball, baseball, football, softball, etc.

## **II. Central Columbia**

- A. Need neighborhood community center in Douglass Park.
- B. Desire black staff/lifeguards at Douglass Pool.
- C. Desire longer Douglass Pool hours or provide alternate aquatic structures such as a sprayground area.
- D. Parks should be family-oriented – designed with activities for youth to seniors.
- E. Desire minority representation on Parks and Recreation Commission.
- F. Desire trails and exercise amenities in parks such as Douglass and Again.
- G. Consider use of park rangers that can provide both interpretative and law enforcement duties in parks.
- H. There should be more emphasis placed on development of youth programs in the NE portion of Columbia.
- I. Would like to see more sports fields in the inner city. Youth and families find it difficult to participate in field activities due to transportation problems.
- J. Would like to see an inner-city farmers market, possibly on the property located on the NE corner of Broadway and Providence.
- K. Need more activities for older youth, such as, boxing, gardening, organized sports, martial arts classes, etc.

## **III. Historical and Entertainment/Performing Arts**

- A. Review and develop a new master plan for Nifong Park. Work in conjunction with the Boone County Historical Society (BCHS).
- B. Continue improvements to structures at Nifong Park. Priority facilities include the servants quarters, pump house, animal farm facility, and Maplewood Barn.
- C. Develop a “historical town” at Nifong Park with historic structures such as a log cabin, old school house, general store, etc.
- D. Move Parks and Recreation day camp from Nifong Park in order to concentrate on historical aspects of park.
- E. Recognize Native American heritage in parks where evidence of previous habitats and other cultural significance existed.
- F. Construct amphitheater suitable for plays and musical concerts.
- G. Renovate Maplewood Barn as a community theater site or develop an alternate location for community theater activities.
- H. Increase public art in new and existing parks.

#### **IV. Environmental Groups**

- A. Continue to develop city-wide network of nature trails and urban "pedways" that connect residential subdivisions, employment centers, businesses, parks, schools (including local colleges and MU), the public library, the recreation center, and downtown. Trail development should be Department's number one priority.
- B. Acquire additional natural areas and stream corridors whenever possible.
- C. Acquire additional land for intense active recreation uses (athletic fields, etc.), instead of trying to force these uses into existing parks.
- D. Work with volunteer groups such as TreeKeepers, Wild Ones, and the Native Plant Society on long-range native species planting projects.
- E. Use "green" products and natural products whenever possible. Use "natural pest" management instead of chemicals.
- F. Actively seek to remove all non-native invasive species such as honey-suckle from parks and other public spaces.
- G. Develop a nature/interpretive center similar to the Runge Center in Jefferson City. A preferred location is the Russell property.
- H. Work with Audubon Society in the development of Russell Property. Audubon owns approximately 20 acres of land adjacent to the property and development should consider all 100 acres.
- I. Acquire, develop, and repair ample stream buffers and storm water controls.
- J. Parks and Recreation should add a staff person with a background in environmental education and coordination. That person could build a strong coalition with various special interest groups to help meet environmental goals. Person would also promote educational opportunities.

#### **V. Disability Commission and Seniors**

- A. Stephens Lake Park and Lions-Stephens Park are in close proximity to large population of persons with disabilities and low income. Park features should reflect this demand.
- B. Trails should be paved to accommodate wheeled and walker-assisted visitors.
- C. Trails need to have distance signs to accommodate an electric chair user.
- D. Shelters should have vehicle access, ceiling fans, textured concrete floors, and possible heated walkways.
- E. If park is on bus route, consider installing protected "waiting" area to keep people out of the elements.
- F. New restrooms should have textured floors and small toilets for children and individuals with dwarfism.
- G. Develop athletic fields and courts to accommodate persons of all skill levels. Example - lower basketball rims with different angles, multi-purpose athletic fields with all synthetic surface.
- H. Need new public 18-hole golf course. Could be a par-three course for youth to learn on. Needs to include a driving range and practice area.

- I. Need new public 18-hole championship caliber course. Higher fees okay. Limit number of rounds played to maintain course quality.
- J. Hire more seniors to work at Parks and Recreation facilities.
- K. Continue and expand recreation programming needs for seniors. Senior softball has been great. Would like to see same in other sports.
- L. Continue to expand city-wide trail system. Consider lighting some trails such as the MKT Trail.