

PARK ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Overview

Parks and open green space form an essential component of Columbia’s character. These parks, whether they’re a small neighborhood park like Paquin Park, or the 533-acre Columbia Cosmopolitan Recreation Area, help contribute to a desirable quality of life in Columbia. There has been a long and established planning history regarding the appropriate number and location of Columbia’s parks. Existing parks and open spaces provide numerous benefits to the community, including recreational opportunities, environmental protection, cultural and historic preservation, and social benefits.



Stephens Lake Park

This chapter evaluates needs and priorities for future acquisition of park land in Columbia. Using criteria established by park standards and proposed service areas, the Department is able to identify areas with no service or those that are underserved due to proximate location of existing parks. The targeted areas for acquisition is not based on specific lots or parcels as it identifies areas of need and provides approximate locations for future parks. This allows for reasonable negotiations to occur between the City and property owners. In this 2013 P&R Master plan, the Department is proposing that the following parks be acquired within the next 10 – 20 years:

Park Category	Current Number	Primary Priority	Secondary Priority	Tertiary Priority
Neighborhood Parks	34	5	10	7
Community Parks	17	0	0	0
Regional Parks	2	0	0	0
Special Purpose Parks	6	Pending available property		
Natural Resource Areas	7	Pending available property		

The Department has identified five priority areas where the City is currently deficient in park land and recommends that those be the primary acquisition target for the next 5-10 years. Depending on residential development and growth, some of the secondary and tertiary parks could move up in priority status. The current inventory of Community and Regional Parks accommodate an adequate service area for the existing city limits. When it comes to the acquisition of land for Special Purpose Parks or Natural Resource Areas, availability of land and willing sellers are crucial to the success of preserving these types of parcels. Priorities for land acquisition in these two categories often include acreage that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- areas of significant hydrology or geology
- unique examples of biological communities
- areas of cultural or historical significance
- land that protects stream corridors

Once a parcel is acquired, the Department generally prioritizes the park development by order of acquisition unless a specific recreation need or other factors move a parcel up in priority ranking for development.

Did you know?

84% of Missourians say when choosing a new residence, it is important to have parks and open space nearby.

The question, “Why does Columbia need more parks?” is posed periodically. The simple answer is that Columbia is a growing community. In order for the Department to keep pace with the population growth, the acquisition of additional park land is critical in meeting the needs of citizens and maintaining the existing ratio of park land acreage to citizens.

The following park categories and desired service radius areas have been developed to describe the various parks existing and analyze the need for proposed parks within the City of Columbia's park system. The acquisition and development needs of each park category are discussed in its respective section.

Chapter Section	Park Category	Service Radius
Section I	Neighborhood Parks	½ mile
Section II	Community Parks	3 miles
Section III	Regional Parks	5 miles
Section IV	Special Purpose Parks	Citywide
Section V	Natural Resource Areas	Citywide

Section 1 – Neighborhood Parks is the only park category that has a master plan, which identifies target areas for acquisition. Adoption of this *2013 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan* will include the adoption of the 2013 Neighborhood Parks Plan.



Cosmo-Bethel Park