

# Facility Assessments and Recommendations

The Maryville-Alcoa-Blount County Parks and Recreation Commission is a unique organization in that the parks that they manage are owned by three separate government entities. A primary task of the master plan team was to evaluate these facilities to determine maintenance practices, age, condition and accessibility of amenities found in the parks. After site visits were complete, recommendations were made based upon National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines, staff response, public input and national trends around the country. The guidelines and community trend comparisons were then used to identify deficiencies within the system, whether by acreage, facility or distribution.

## NRPA Guidelines

In 1995, the NRPA published Park, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines. The book laid out a template of typical park classifications, number of acres a system should have, and recommended service levels based on population. Strictly intended as a guideline, the book did not take into account the unique character of each community throughout the country. Local trends and the popularity of some activities over others often dictate a greater need for particular facilities. The guidelines serve as a good baseline for determining a minimum standard. These guidelines, coupled with input received from the community, analysis of participation numbers for various activities and comparisons to similar communities, provide the necessary additional information for determining the number of facilities that are appropriate.

The guidelines suggest, "A park system, at a minimum, should be composed of a 'core' system of park lands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population." (Mertes, 1995) The types of parks that can be included to meet open space standards can be a combination of the following classifications as determined by the NRPA:

- Mini-park
- Neighborhood Park
- School Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Special Use Park
- Private Park/Recreation Facility
- Natural Resource Area/Preserve
- Greenway

Critical to the service delivery system of any department is the provision of the four basic park categories: mini, neighborhood, community and regional. Each is classified differently based upon the types of amenities, size, service area, and how access is gained to the facility. The following gives a description of the different types of parks common to a system.

### Mini Park

The smallest type of park, a mini park typically is a site less than five acres. In recent years, another term, “pocket park”, has been used in some instances to identify a mini park.

The park is designed primarily to attract residents who live within a quarter mile of the park. The park is generally a walk-to type park, meaning no parking facilities for autos are normally found. Mini parks service levels are one thousand per every .25 to .5 acres.

Size normally prescribes these parks to be passive, with benches, play facilities, tables and attractive landscaping. The parks are sometimes themed to blend in with the surrounding neighborhood. Designs sometimes match the existing homes, fencing, sidewalk pavers, etc. A park of this size is not developed with fields for league play or community-wide events.

#### Prototype

Average Size:	.3 to 5 acres (target size, 3 acres)
General Concept:	Playgrounds for children; benches, tables for adults
General Purpose:	Passive use, serves immediate neighborhood, no parking
Programs:	Unorganized activities

#### Proposed Play Facilities and Requirements

Children’s Play Area	1.75 acres
Apparatus Area	1.75 acres
Shelter	Approximately 1,000 sq. ft.
Game/Tennis Area	1-2 acres (if needed)
Walking Trails	Varies
Landscaping and Fencing	Varies
Utilities	Varies

### Neighborhood Park

Neighborhood parks are found in most county and city systems. The park normally has 5 to 20 acres and typically serves a population living within ½ mile of the park. Neighborhood parks conceptually concentrate intense recreation activities and facilities into a limited amount of space. Facilities typical to this park include:

- Playing Fields
- Playgrounds
- Shelters
- Walking Paths
- Restrooms/Concessions
- Swimming Pool
- Parking Facilities

As you will note, parking is necessary for this type of facility due to its scope of activities and size. The standard for parking is a minimum of seven spaces for the first ten acres

and one additional space for each additional acre. This may vary based upon the activities and program appeal.

Although the park is classified as a neighborhood park, the scope of people served can vary based upon densities and the number of other parks available. Typically, one neighborhood park should serve between 10,000 to 20,000 residents, or one to two acres per thousand people.

**Prototype**

Average Size:	5 to 20 acres
General Concept:	Active and passive recreation amenities
General Purpose:	Intense active recreation for daytime use within 1/2 mile radius
Programs:	League practice and play; open space play; not recommended for festivals or large-scale events on a regular basis

**Proposed Play Facilities and Requirements**

Soccer Fields	2 acres per field
Sports Fields	2 to 5 acres per field
Football Fields	2 acres per field
Running Track	5 acres
Swimming Pool	Varies
Trail System	Varies
Shelters	Approximately 2,000 sq. ft.
Basketball Courts	10,000 sq. ft.
Skate Park Area	Varies
Walking Paths	1 mile

**Community Parks**

Community parks are needed within a system to ensure that all users’ recreation needs and interests are addressed and included. This type of park expands beyond a local neighborhood and often serves several communities. The concept behind community parks is to include, basically, a one-stop shop for all recreation users. It should include a mix of active and passive activities and attract users of all ages. From a youth sports field to a multi-generational facility, the park should provide as many recreation and support services as possible. A park of this size and scope has from 20 to 75 acres; approximately 60 acres is considered a good size for such expansive activities.

The service area for such a facility can vary based upon the size and scope of activities offered. However, a facility of this type typically serves anywhere from 50,000 to 80,000 people, or 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 people. Some user analyses are based upon a service radius where others, in more urban areas, may be based upon drive times.

Community parks have both day and night activities. Large facilities, such as a large indoor fitness/recreation center or cloverleaf sports complex, can be placed in such a facility because of the amount of space available and ability to buffer from the surrounding community.

**Prototype**

Average Size	20 to 75 acres (target 60 acres)
General Concept	Combine passive and active activities into one locale and retain passive areas for non-organized recreation
General Purpose	Provide a full range of recreational activities for the entire population
Program	Active sports and multi-generational activities and passive areas with nature viewing, lake activities, and walking

**Proposed Play Facilities and Requirements**

Lighted Adult Softball Complex	15 acres per field
Lighted Youth Baseball Complex	8 to 10 acres per field
Football Field	2 acres
Community Center/Multi-generational area	50,000-80,000 sq. ft.
Trail System	Varies
Shelters	Approximately 2,000 sq. ft.
Outdoor Basketball Courts	1 to 2 acres
Volleyball	2 to 4 acres
Picnic Areas	10 acres
Lighted Tennis Complex	2 acres
Skate park Area	Varies
Lake	1 to 4 acres
Maintenance/Support Facility	1 acre
Walking Paths	1 mile
Parking	Varies

**Regional Parks**

The largest park typically found within a system is the regional park. These parks are normally found in large county systems. The size of a regional park varies from 50 to 250 acres, depending on the type of activities and the amount of use.

The service radius for this type of facility is based upon drive time and is typically within an hour's drive of most residents. Conceptually, the regional park is to provide large natural areas that can be accessed through a variety of means, from roadways to hiking and biking. Also, based upon the locale, it can have unique recreation areas, such as a water park or equestrian facility coupled with natural areas.

Regional parks are unique to the general area. Prototypical or preferred amenities vary.

**Special Use Parks**

Special use parks are designed to meet the needs of a specific user group. An example of a special use park would be a golf course, zoo, or a museum.

These facilities can vary in size according to the demand and type of layout. For example, a regulation size, par 72 golf course would need at least 140 acres while an executive style (par 60) layout may only require 100 to 120 acres, based upon amenities such as driving range and practice facilities.

A typical feature of these parks is that they are normally good revenue generators. If maintained and properly staffed, these parks can provide a substantial cash flow for the designated entity.

### **Natural Resource Area/Preserve**

According to the NRPA, natural resource areas are defined as “lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering.” These lands consist of:

- Individual sites exhibiting natural resources
- Lands unsuitable for development but offering natural resource potential (examples: parcels with steep slopes and natural vegetation, drainageways and ravines, surface water management areas--man-made ponding areas--and utility easements)
- Protected land, such as wetlands, lowlands and shorelines along waterways, lakes and ponds

Acquisition of natural resource areas and preserves serves to enhance the quality of the community by maintaining a portion of its natural amenities.

### **Greenways**

Greenways have become one of the most popular family recreation activities across the country. The value of greenways in terms of recreation, education, and resource protection is invaluable. Greenways serve as linkages between cities, parks, schools, commercial areas and neighborhoods. They provide a safe mode of transportation that preserves the environment.

Greenways can be located in a variety of settings and can be utilized for active and passive recreation activities. Typically, greenways range from 10 to 12 feet wide and can be paved or natural surface. When developing a greenway system, corridors should be identified where people will access the area easily, where it will connect elements within the community and where it will incorporate all the characteristics of the natural resource areas. Greenway corridors should be no less than 50 feet in width except in neighborhoods, where 25 feet may be acceptable. Julius Fabros, a professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Massachusetts, divides greenways into three categories: Ecological, Recreational and Cultural.

Ecological greenways are typically located along natural environments such as rivers, ridgelines and coastal areas. These trails provide connections to nature, protect and maintain biodiversity, minimize development and provide for wildlife migration across natural and manmade boundaries.

Recreation greenways commonly link elements that have diverse and significant landscapes. Many link rural areas to more urban locales and range from local trails to larger systems.

The cultural trail connects areas of significant historic value and culture. In Georgia, one such proposal will link historic battlefields in the state with trail markers and interpretive signage. Economic benefits from these types of trails may be significant if linkages can be directed toward areas of commerce to provide an infrastructure for commuting.

### **School Parks**

School park sites are an excellent way to combine resources and provide accessible recreation amenities to the community. Depending on the school type (i.e. elementary, middle, high school) the size of the park will be dictated by the land available adjacent to the school. Typically, middle and high schools are constructed with youth athletic fields to support team sports. These facilities provide the basis for developing a community park or, at the very least, youth athletic fields for recreation programs. The selection of school sites is determined by the school district and is located according to the county or citywide distribution of students. The school site selection criteria may or may not meet the needs for parkland distribution. When development of school parks is possible, guidelines for neighborhood/community parks should be followed to meet the needs of residents. When joint developments occur, features common to other parks in the county (i.e. signs) should be used to identify the property as a public facility.

In recent years the high cost of land in many parts of the country and the need to develop new schools to meet growing population demand has driven joint development between school systems and other public and private agencies. Specific examples of this are seen in Chesapeake, Virginia where the school board teamed with the parks and recreation department to build a community facility inclusive of a public library and recreation center. In Medina, Ohio, the school system teamed with the city and local hospital to build a wellness center and 1,200 seat state of the art auditorium. The cooperative effort allowed for the construction of facilities that otherwise would not have been possible.

### **Private Park/Recreation Facility**

The private park and recreation facility, as described by the NRPA, meets one of the two following characteristics:

- “Private Parks, such as swimming pools, tennis courts, and party houses, are generally within a residential area developed for the exclusive use of residents and are maintained through a neighborhood association. They are not, however, a complete substitute for public recreation space, and
- Private Recreation Facilities that are for-profit enterprises, such as health and fitness clubs, golf courses, water parks, amusement parks and sports facilities.”

These facility types can be entirely private or, in many cases, be a joint venture between a public entity and a private organization. Partnerships of this kind allow for the provision of facilities and programs at a reduced cost to the public sector.

### **Blount County Parks Standards and Distribution**

The Maryville-Alcoa-Blount County Parks and Recreation Commission oversees the maintenance and programming of 16 park facilities on over 200 acres of land. This does not include properties that are tied to the Greenbelt Parks in Maryville and Alcoa or the greenway system found in Townsend but does include some acreage that is tied to the

portion of county greenway maintained by parks and recreation. One of these sections referred to as the Frank Bogle greenway is approximately ¾ of a mile in length on 8 acres of land. Blount County residents are also very fortunate to have the Great Smoky Mountains National Park located on their southeastern boundary. Other natural open space amenities are found along the Tennessee River and Fort Loudon Lake, which borders the northwest boundary of the County and provides many land and water recreation opportunities for residents. Public schools and private recreation providers are also found in Blount County and offer varied degrees of recreation opportunities.

The existing public parks maintained by the parks and recreation commission account for 16 properties, each owned by either the City of Alcoa, City of Maryville, or Blount County. The system is made up of a combination of mini, neighborhood and community parks. Classifications and ownership of the fifteen parks found in the system are as follows:

<b>Mini Parks</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
Richard Williams Park	1.0	Alcoa
Bassell Courts	1.0	Alcoa
Oldfield Mini Park	.5	Alcoa
Total	2.5	
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
Pole Climbers Athletic Fields	3	Alcoa
Howe Street Park	2	Alcoa
Rock Garden Park	4	Alcoa
South Hall Park	10	Alcoa
John Sevier Park	8	Maryville
Amerine Park	7	Maryville
Pearson Springs Park	8	Maryville
Total	42	
<b>Community Parks</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
Eagleton Park	22	Blount County
Everett Athletic Complex	12	Blount County
Louisville Point Park	16	TVA (on lease to County)
Springbrook Park	62	Alcoa
Sandy Springs Park	20	Maryville
Everett Park	20	Maryville
Total	152	

As shown, the Maryville-Alcoa-Blount County park system is made up of two mini parks, seven neighborhood parks and six community parks. The largest park, at 62 acres, is Springbrook Park, which represents the only true community park in the system. The other parks, which have been classified community parks, are smaller in size but offer amenities that are utilized by a large portion of the population. Parks such as Everett or Sandy Springs, each 20 acres in size, are definitely on the small end by community park standards; however, the amenities they provide are limited throughout the county and therefore they are relied upon more heavily for recreation programming opportunities.

**Figure 6.1** provides a look at the existing park inventory including the amenities found in each location.

Figure 6.1

Park Facility Name	Acres	Baseball/Softball	Baseball/Softball w/ Lights	Soccer	Soccer w/ Lights	Football Field	Football Field w/ Lights	Basketball	Basketball w/ Lights	Tennis	Tennis w/ Lights	Swimming Pool	Swimming Access	Recreation Center	Gymnasium	Playground	Pavilion	Walking Trail	Sand Volleyball	Shuffleboard Court	Horseshoe Pit	Parking	Restrooms	Concession Stand	Boat Ramp
Richard Williams Park	1															1	X					6			
Oldfield Mini Park	0.5							1																	
Eagleton Park	22	7						1								2	1	1.10				350	1	3	
Everett Athletic Complex	12			3			1							1	1			0.36				200	1	1	
Louisville Point Park	16												1				1					100	1		1
Bassell Courts	1							4			2														
Pole Climbers Athletic Fields	3	2																				50			
Howe Street park	2																					20	2		
Rock Garden Park	4						1		1									0.14				12	1		
South Hall Pool and Park Area	10											1		1								25			
Springbrook Park/Pool	62	1						2		4	1	1	1	1	2	4	1.40					145	2	1	
John Sevier Park/Pool	8							2		6	1				1	1						251	2		
Amerine Park	7	1						1								2						32			
Sandy Springs Park	20	1	2						2		4					4	1					217	2	1	
Pearson Springs Park	8	2		2																		1			
Everett Park/Everett Senior Adult Center	20		2											1		2	1		1	1	2	132	1	1	
Greenbelt Parks	115																	12.00					1		
Townsend Greenway	18																	5.00							
<b>Total</b>	<b>329.5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1540</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>

The distribution of parks throughout the county is primarily limited to the Maryville and Alcoa urbanized area. The only exception is Louisville Point Park, which is found in the county on Lake Loudon to the North. A look at the diversity of facilities found within the park system reveals a good mix of ball fields, recreation centers, swimming pools, pavilions, playgrounds and walking trails. The Maryville-Alcoa-Blount County Parks Commission oversees the operation of four community centers, three swimming pools, numerous baseball/softball fields, soccer fields and open space. **Figures 6.2 to 6.7** provide a location map for the existing facilities as well as service area maps for each of the three park designations found in the system: mini, neighborhood and community.

In addition to the facilities mentioned above, the communities of Maryville and Alcoa have developed a greenway system that provides over 12 miles of paved walking/biking trails. The longest segment stretches for nine miles and is lighted from one end to the other. The greenbelt, as it is referred to in the community, encompasses an estimated 115 acres of land in the cities of Maryville and Alcoa. The focal point of the greenbelt is central to the City of Maryville, in Greenbelt Park, where the trail meanders around a lake linking pedestrians to a state-of-the-art amphitheater and public library. Several segments of the greenbelt cross into Blount County. The largest of these segments is the Frank Bogle Greenway which is ¾ mile in length and runs across the street from Richard Williams Park. The parks and recreation commission maintains this and other portions located in the county. Greenbelt Park and the greenbelt segments located in the cities of Maryville and Alcoa are maintained by their respective Public Works Departments.

The City of Townsend also provides a paved walking/biking trail that follows Highway 321 for approximately five miles. Specific acreage numbers associated with the greenway were not available; however, assuming the greenway has a 30-foot right of way, the

associated acreage would be approximately 18 acres. As with Maryville and Alcoa, the City of Townsend maintains their portion of the greenway. **Figure 6.8** provides a look at the existing trail systems in the county.

### Other Park Providers

Other public facilities are found in the Blount County and Maryville and Alcoa school systems. The public school systems in Blount County are made up of 27 elementary, intermediate, middle and high schools. Recreation facilities found at these locations are active in nature and cater to team sport play. School facilities vary in size, quality, amenities offered and level of maintenance. Public input suggested that field and gymnasium use is limited to interscholastic play and offers very little opportunity for use by outside

Figure 6.9

	Gymnasium	Baseball Field	Softball Field	Football Field	Soccer Field	Practice Field	Track	Tennis Courts
<b>Elementary Schools</b>								
Eagleton Elementary	1							
Fairview Elementary	1							
Friendsville Elementary	1			1				
Lanier Elementary	1			1				
Middlesettlements Elementary	1							
Mary Blount Elementary	1							
Montvale Elementary	1							
Porter Elementary	1			1				
Rockford Elementary	1					1		
Townsend Elementary	1					1		
Walland Elementary	1					1		
Alcoa Elementary	1					1		
Foothills Elementary	1							
Fort Craig Elementary	1							
John Sevier Elementary	1				1			
Sam Houston Elementary	1							
<b>Middle Schools</b>								
Carpenters	1					1		
Eagleton	2			1				
Heritage	1					1		
William Blount	1		1					
Alcoa	1					1		
Maryville Intermediate	1							
Maryville	1			1			1	
<b>High Schools</b>								
Heritage	2	1	1	1		2	1	0
William Blount	2	1	1	1		2	1	4
Alcoa	1	1	1	1		1		
Maryville	1	1	1			2		
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

groups or organizations. **Figure 6.9** provides a look at the number of facilities found at each location which includes a combination of gymnasiums, baseball fields, softball fields, football fields, practice fields, tracks and tennis courts. The high schools provide the greatest number of athletic facilities with each offering a track, two practice fields, and game fields for baseball, softball and football. William Blount High School offers four lighted tennis courts which are the only courts found in the school system. Each high school is equipped with two gymnasiums. The elementary and middle schools are more limited with each providing a gymnasium and some combination of football, softball and practice fields.

Recreation providers in the private and institutional realm account for facilities associated with the college, hospitals, churches, health clubs and various other leisure and recreation organizations. Some of the largest and most well known providers in the community include the Blount Memorial Wellness Center at Springbrook, Olympia Health and Fitness Club in Maryville, YWCA, YMCA and Maryville College. These facilities provide a mix of recreation amenities on a limited or membership-only basis.

The Blount Memorial Wellness Center is a new 30,000-square-foot facility that boasts an indoor swimming pool, fitness equipment and programming rooms. The facility provides training in fitness, sport specific training, strength training, weight management, stress management, and many other

instructional health classes. Similarly, Olympia Health and Fitness Club in Maryville provides weight training opportunities, racquet sports, and swimming. The Olympia center is reportedly the only facility with racquetball courts in the county. Other private recreation outlets found in Blount County include:

- Camp Montvale (YMCA)
- Camp Tipton
- Camp Wesley Woods
- River Rapids Go-Karts
- Thunderworld USA
- Gymnastics Counts
- Mountain Challenge
- River John's Outfitters
- River Rage Tube Rentals

### Parkland Distribution

Residents of the communities of Maryville and Alcoa are fortunate to have a number of parks in close proximity to their homes. Review of the park distribution finds that all but three of the existing city and county parks are found within the city limits of Maryville and Alcoa. Of the three remaining parks, Everett Athletic Complex, Eagleton and Louisville Point, only Louisville Point is greater than five miles from city residents.

The location of all of the active community parks within the cities of Alcoa and Maryville prompted planners to take a more detailed look at the number of residents being served within the two- and five-mile service areas of the most popular parks. The National Recreation and Park Association's recommended service area standard for a community park is two miles. The high land and development cost of new facilities as well as a willingness by users to drive greater distances for community services has seen community park service areas increase to five miles and above over the last decade. For this reason, population statistics were analyzed within the two-mile as well as the five-mile service area.

One of the most utilized parks in the Maryville-Alcoa-Blount County system is Springbrook Park. At 62 acres in size, Springbrook represents the only true community park in the system. As shown in **Figure 6.10**, the current total population within 2 miles of the park is 9,436 residents. Increasing to five miles reveals a population of 57,414

Population within 2 Mile and 5 Mile Radius

	1990 Total Population	2000 total Population	Percent Change	2004 Estimate	2000-2004 % Change	2014 Projection	2004-2014 % Change
<b>Everett Park/Athletic Complex/Senior Center</b>							
2 mile	10,144	10,460	3.12%	11,052	5.66%	12,106	9.54%
5 mile	48,682	54,755	12.47%	58,220	6.33%	69,203	18.86%
<b>Sandy Springs Park</b>							
2 mile	15,472	17,761	14.79%	18,724	5.42%	20,908	11.66%
5 mile	48,990	58,079	18.55%	61,739	6.30%	73,382	18.86%
<b>Springbrook Park</b>							
2 mile	8,796	8,919	1.40%	9,436	5.80%	11,083	17.45%
5 mile	48,195	53,978	12.00%	57,414	6.37%	68,372	19.09%

Figure 6.10

or over half of the entire Blount County population base. A look at other community parks in the system finds that 11,052 residents live within 2 miles of the Everett Park and Everett Athletic complex while 18,724 people are located within 2 miles of Sandy Springs Park. Increasing to five miles reveals 58,220 and 61,739 respectively. While it is clear that these parks are ideally situated within the high-density population areas of the county, the numbers also reveal nearly 50 percent of Blount County residents are located greater than five miles from a community park. Additionally, many residents within the cities of Maryville and Alcoa are likely within two or five miles of several or all of the community parks. **Figures 6.11 and 6.12** provide a look at the five-mile service area of all community parks.

A look at National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards for parkland per 1,000 people finds a minimum recommendation of 6.25-10.5 acres/1,000 people. As shown in the public input section of this report, steering committee participants felt a standard of 6.5 acres per 1,000 would be an appropriate goal for the parks and recreation commission to achieve. Based on the 2004 Blount County population of 113,578, the required acreage using the workshop adopted standard would be 738 acres. Ten-year projections for population would see this number increase to 847 by 2014. The current park acreage of 329 acres which includes all land tied to existing parks and greenways places the county at a current deficiency of 409 acres. Following the estimated growth trends this deficiency would increase to 518 acres by 2014 showing the need to acquire and develop new parks over the next ten years.

### Facility Distribution

In addition to looking at the distribution of parks and parkland around the county, the planning team also looked at the amenities found within those parks. Within the cities of Maryville and Alcoa there is a good mix of recreation centers, athletic fields, walking trails, swimming pools and support facilities. Outside of that regional area, there is very little for Blount County residents with the exception of the school system. As mentioned earlier, the school facilities are available on a limited, if at all, basis. As with park acreage, the NRPA established facility standards for communities to follow when evaluating their park system. The steering committee was charged with evaluating these standards and determining an appropriate level that should be achieved around the community. **Figure 6.13** provides a facility inventory with NRPA recommended standards and workshop participant recommended standards. Population projections have been provided through 2014 showing the new facilities needed to meet the population growth. Facility needs have been based on the steering committee workshop standards as opposed to the NRPA standards.

Following the recommended workshop participant standards, the largest deficiencies in the community are for volleyball courts, baseball/softball fields, soccer fields and multiple recreation courts. Other deficiencies are in the areas of tennis courts, basketball courts, football fields and swimming pools. These deficiencies are consistent with the facility needs that were identified during the public input process. With the exception of a large multi-purpose recreation center, all of these facility needs were identified by the public. The need for a recreation center, as identified by the public, would fill a void in the indoor facility realm for aquatics, racquet sports, weight training and programming space.

NRPA Standards for Park Facilities	NRPA Recommendations	Workshop Participant Standards	Existing Number of Park Facilities	2000 Facility Need based on a population of 105,823	Deficiency	2004 Facility Need based on a population of 113,578	Deficiency	2008 Facility Need based on a population of 120,584	Deficiency	2014 Facility Need based on a population of 130,244	Deficiency
Acreage	10.5/1000	6.5/1000	329	688	-359	738	-409	784	-455	847	-518
Outdoor Basketball	1/5,000	1/5,000	15	21	-6	23	-8	24	-9	26	-11
Tennis	1/2,000	1/4,000	17	26	-9	28	-11	30	-13	33	-16
Volleyball	1/5,000	1/10,000	1	11	-10	11	-10	12	-11	13	-12
Baseball/Softball	1/2,500	1/2,500	18	42	-24	45	-27	48	-30	52	-34
Football	1/20,000	1/20,000	1	5	-4	6	-5	6	-5	7	-6
Soccer	1/10,000	1/5,000	5	21	-16	23	-18	24	-19	26	-21
Swimming Pool**	1/20,000		3	5	-2	6	-3	6	-3	7	-4
Aquatic centers		1/100,000	0	1	-1	1	-1	1	-1	1	-1
Outdoor pools		1/50,000	3	2	1	2	1	2	1	3	0
Running Track	1/20,000	1/100,000	0	1	-1	1	-1	1	-1	1	-1
Indoor Roller Hockey	1/100,000	1/100,000	0	1	-1	1	-1	1	-1	1	-1
Golf Course (18 Hole)	1/50,000	1/100,000	0	1	-1	1	-1	1	-1	1	-1
Golf Driving Range	1/50,000	1/100,000	0	1	-1	1	-1	1	-1	1	-1
Multiple Recreation Court	1/10,000	1/25,000	0	11	-11	11	-11	12	-12	13	-13
	Developed Standard	Workshop Participant Standards	Existing Number of Park Facilities	2000 Facility Need based on a population of 105,823	Deficiency	2004 Facility Need based on a population of 113,578	Deficiency	2008 Facility Need based on a population of 120,584	Deficiency	2013 Facility Need based on a population of 130,244	Deficiency
Trail System	1mile/3,000	1/5,000	20	21	-1	23	-3	24	-4	26	-6
Gymnasium	1/20,000	1/20,000	2	5	-3	6	-4	6	-4	7	-5
Playground	1/1,000	1/5,000	17	21	-4	23	-6	24	-7	26	-9
Cultural Center	1/100,000		0	1	-1	1	-1	1	-1	1	-1
Community Center	1/50,000	1/50,000	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Picnic Pavilion	1/2,000	1/5,000	11	21	-10	23	-12	24	-13	26	-15
Outdoor Roller Hockey	1/25,000*		0	4	-4	5	-5	5	-5	5	-5
Inline Skating Court	1/25,000*	1/100,000	0	1	-1	1	-1	1	-1	1	-1
Skate Park	1/100,000*		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

\* Standard developed by Lose & Associates, Inc. to respond to recreation trends and growth in certain sports since 1983. \*\*NRPA standards do not differentiate between outdoor and indoor aquatic facilities.

Figure 6.13

Although there are currently four community centers found in the community, none of them provides a full comprehensive recreation offering like is seen in many communities today.

The task of the Maryville-Alcoa-Blount County Parks and Recreation Commission will be to balance the actual need versus what the population and NRPA recommendations may suggest. The completion of public input revealed the desire for a large multi-sport

regional park, recreation center, existing facility renovations, continued development of the Greenbelt system and greater distribution of parks in the outlying areas of the county.

### **General Park Evaluations, Observations and Recommendations**

The completion of the existing facility assessments revealed a well maintained park system. What was immediately noticeable was the abundance of parks within the Maryville-Alcoa urbanized area and the lack of facilities outside of the city boundaries. Also noted was the age of facilities and the lack of new facilities within the last ten years or more. With the exception of Pearson Springs Park, the Everett Senior Center and the Greenbelt system, very little has been done in the way of new facility development. Renovations have taken place on older facilities, but the addition of athletic fields and amenities to meet the growing population base has not occurred. Park assessments revealed problems that were consistent throughout the system and that are common among parks nationwide. Some issues noticed include:

- Existing baseball/softball fields are lacking permanent outfield fencing. This was presumably to allow for greater versatility in a system with limited fields.
- Bath houses located at all three pools are in need of renovation.
- Universal accessibility is lacking at many parks and indoor facilities.
- Most playgrounds are not ADA accessible or safety compliant.
- Most playgrounds are in need of replacement.
- There are no consistent sign and amenity standards throughout the park system.
- There is no dedicated area for in-line skating or skateboarding.

#### *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*

A large issue facing both public and private recreation providers is the ability to enhance access for disabled patrons. Park and recreation departments are not exempt from this requirement, and legislation dictates that primary park amenities be barrier-free.

Primary access routes as described in the Recommendations for Accessibility Guidelines: Recreation Facilities and Outdoor Developed Areas, by the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (ATBCB), are defined in the following manner:

*“Outdoor recreation access routes are the paths that connect the primary developed spaces and elements that are basic to the recreation experience being offered at the site. For example, the outdoor recreation access routes at a picnic ground are the paths linking the parking area, restrooms, picnic units, and water hydrants. While many of these elements – parking area, restroom and water hydrant – are not the primary reason for a person to visit the site, they are basic developed elements that serve all visitors.*

*Designers and managers, in consultation with users, must determine which of the developed activities and elements at a recreation site are basic to the recreation experience being*

*offered. Further, they must secure that there is a comprehensive system of outdoor recreation access routes that connect all primary elements and spaces with each other and with accessible parking spaces and facility entrances. This determination should be based upon visitor expectations as well as the level of development at the site."*

The ADA regulations that govern design standards can be left up to some interpretation where athletic facilities are concerned; however, they are very specific in their requirements of restroom and pathway design. Before renovation of old facilities, or construction of new ones, the Maryville-Alcoa-Blount County Parks and Recreation Commission should seek counsel of the County/City legal department to interpret the laws and develop a standard by which they will begin to create a system that is sensitive to the needs of all users.

#### *Playground Safety Standards*

Another prominent issue within some park systems is the non-compliance of playground equipment to safety standards by organizations such as the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and the International Play Equipment Manufacturers' Association (IPEMA). The standards proposed by these organizations are meant to serve as a guideline to help create atmospheres that are safe and pose a minimal threat of injury. Studies show that the majority of injuries sustained on public playgrounds are to the head—a result of falls from the play structure to the ground. For this reason, consideration has been given as to what the critical fall height would be in which a fatal head injury might occur.

Guidelines have been established measuring the impact performance of various materials. As with ADA issues, alternatives should be studied and a standard established for implementation of safe play environments throughout the parks system.

### **Park Facility Assessments**

The following are individual park assessments and recommendations. Information has been provided according to size, location, and amenities provided within each park. Facilities were analyzed for their age, functionality and condition and recommendations were made accordingly.

#### **Amerine Park**

Location: Amerine Road

Size: 7 Acres

Classification: Neighborhood Park

#### **Overview:**

Amerine Park is a small Neighborhood Park hidden in a residential district of the City of Maryville. Although the park appears to be well hidden from large numbers of visitors, it is just a short distance from Highway 321. Amenities found in Amerine Park include playground structures, an open play field with a backstop and a basketball court. A parking lot provides off-street parking for park patrons.

**Review:**

Amerine Park is in need of a complete renovation. The basketball court is in poor condition and the playgrounds lack sufficient safety and accessibility measures. The parking lot needs to be repaved as does the walking trail that connects some of the park elements. Additional parking is needed. One option for expanded parking would be to bring traffic in from Highway 321 via Well Street and put a small lot on that end of the park. The level open nature of this park makes it the perfect location for a practice field for the various field sports in the area.

**Recommendations:**

- A master plan should be completed for Amerine Park.
- Renovate Amerine Park inclusive of the following elements:
  - Multi-purpose practice field
  - Basketball court
  - Playground
  - Parking
  - Small picnic pavilion with restroom facilities
  - Perimeter walking trail
  - Park signage

**Bassell Courts**

Location: Joule Street

Size: 1 Acre

Classification: Mini Park

**Overview:**

Bassell Courts consists of a series of multi-use courts that include tennis and basketball facilities. Two of the courts have been dedicated to tennis while the other two courts provide four basketball goals or two full court facilities. A chain link fence surrounds the courts, which have lighting on the tennis portion. A gravel parking lot provides off-street parking for visitors.

**Review:**

The Bassell Courts facility is in extremely poor condition. Park staff revealed that the property has been considered for sale to be used for commercial development. Capital expenditures have not been allocated to this property in anticipation of this sale. Facilities in this park should be relocated at the point in time that the Bassell Courts are sold.

**Recommendations:**

- No recommendations

**Eagleton Park**

Location: East Broadway Avenue

Size: 22 Acres

Classification: Community Park

**Overview:**

Eagleton Park is home to the Eagleton Baseball/Softball Association. The park provides seven lighted baseball fields that are all maintained by the association. In addition to three concession stand and restroom buildings, the park includes a basketball court, two playgrounds, a small picnic pavilion, walking trail and gravel parking for approximately 350 cars.

**Review:**

The Eagleton Park assessment revealed that this park is the primary responsibility of the baseball/softball association. Various leagues within the association handle all maintenance and capital improvements. This arrangement has created a series of problems ranging from varying levels of maintenance to inconsistencies in architectural styles and park elements. At the time of the park assessment there were several construction projects that, according to staff, had been ongoing for some time and were still incomplete. Safety hazards were present throughout the park, and the overall aesthetic appearance was poor.

The small portion of the park that contains the pavilion, basketball goal and playground was in fair condition and receives regular maintenance from parks staff. The pavilion was very small given the number of users drawn to the park by the athletic fields.

As previously stated, the condition of the portion of the park maintained by athletic associations is very poor. Many safety hazards are present in this area of the park creating liability issues that could fall on the county if an accident were to occur. For this reason, it is recommended that the park be split into two segments. A lease agreement should be drafted between the county and the youth athletic associations placing all maintenance responsibilities of the baseball complex on the associations. The portion of the park containing the small pavilion, basketball goal and playground should continue to be maintained by the parks and recreation commission. Should the county choose to maintain control of the park void of a lease agreement, then alternative recommendations have been made for a complete renovation of the park including the youth baseball complex.

**Recommendations:**

- New picnic pavilion
- New playground
- Paved access throughout park

**Alternative:**

- Paved access throughout the park
- Complete a park master plan
- Complete a park renovation to include:
  - New field layout
  - Consistent restroom/concession buildings based on needs of associations
  - Paved Parking
  - Picnic pavilions to meet team and park visitor needs
  - New playground

- Park signage
- Paved access throughout the park

### **Everett Athletic Complex**

Location: 318 South Everett High Road

Size: 12 Acres

Classification: Neighborhood Park

#### **Overview:**

Everett Athletic Complex is located in the City of Maryville and is home to the Maryville-Alcoa-Blount County Parks and Recreation Commission office. Also included in the complex is the Everett Recreation Center, three soccer fields, a lighted football field with seating for 1,000 spectators, a restroom/concession building and a paved walking trail. A parking lot is shared between the Commission office and the recreation center. An additional gravel lot and on street parking are also available for athletic field parking.

The Everett Recreation Center is one of four community centers found in the Maryville – Alcoa – Blount County Park System. One of the most widely utilized recreation centers, the facility includes a full gymnasium, meeting rooms, kitchen, offices and storage.

#### **Review:**

Review of the Everett Athletic Complex found that athletic fields are in fair condition complete with irrigation and lights on the football field. The restroom and concession buildings are also in good condition and provide a consistent architectural style with the recreation center and the Parks and Recreation Commission Office. The athletic fields are highly utilized for both games and practices. The heavy use dictates a need for a modified turf program to repair bare areas and low spots on the fields.

Handicap accessibility is an issue throughout the park and in the recreation center. The restroom on the main level of the recreation center is not designed to adequately accommodate handicap access. A lower level restroom has been designated for handicap use; however, a lack of signage fails to identify the access route to the lower level. Access to the lower level is available via a ramp around the side of the building. Similarly, handicap seating has not been identified at the athletic fields or in the gymnasium.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Pave existing gravel parking lot
- Improve handicap signage in community center
- Light soccer fields
- Athletic turf renovation
- Install new fencing around football field

### **Everett Park**

Location: South Everett High Road

Size: 20 Acres

Classification: Neighborhood Park

**Overview:**

Everett Park is located approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile from the Everett Athletic Complex. Amenities located in Everett Park include two lighted softball fields, a sand volleyball court, shuffleboard court, horseshoe pits, restroom/concession building and the newly completed Everett Senior Center. A large barn structure is also found in the park and serves as a picnic pavilion as well as for storage.

The Everett Senior Center was opened at the beginning of this year and is a high quality facility offering large and small meeting rooms, games rooms, offices and storage. In addition, the senior center represents the first joint effort for a large capital improvement project between the three government entities of Maryville, Alcoa and Blount County. Highly successful, the center will serve the community well for many years to come.

**Review:**

A review of the Everett Park facilities revealed the need to provide improvements to several of the park amenities. As in all of the parks, the level of general maintenance was high; however, capital improvements are needed to rectify issues outside the realm of general maintenance. The athletic fields are in good condition, but as with many fields in the system, they lack permanent fencing around the outfield. While a large majority of the park provides handicap accessibility, there is room for improvement, specifically from the upper level of the park where the barn pavilion is found to the restroom facilities found near the ball fields. Additional access is needed from parking areas to the spectator bleacher areas.

The barn pavilion is an old structure, presumably a leftover from the time when the property was under private ownership. It has been retrofitted to provide covered picnic and storage areas, but the structure is beginning to show its age. The condition of the structure is beginning to present some liability issues. Consideration should be given to removing the structure and replacing it with a new pavilion. The architectural character of the barn should be replicated in the new structure to maintain a link to the park's past.

The restroom and concession buildings found in the park are in good shape and display an architectural style consistent with other parks in the system. Construction of the Senior Center required the removal of playgrounds found in the park however, they are scheduled for replacement. The new playground should be accessible and provide an adequate safety surfacing.

**Recommendations:**

- Install new playground
- Replace existing barn pavilion with new pavilion
- Install outfield fencing on existing softball fields
- Improve accessibility throughout park
- Install trail lighting
- Resurface trails to restroom
- Replace picnic tables and grills

## **Howe Street Park**

Location: W. Howe and Edison Street

Size: 2 Acres

Classification: Neighborhood Park

### **Overview:**

Howe Street Park is a neighborhood park located in a residential district in the City of Alcoa. The park provides a good mix of amenities with a pavilion/restroom building, lighted trail, basketball court and playground. The park appears to be one of the newer additions to the Alcoa park system.

### **Review:**

Howe Street Park is one of the nicest parks in the Alcoa park system. Nevertheless, a reputation for criminal activity is probably limiting its true potential. The park assessment revealed a litter problem, and staff indicated vandalism is frequent in this location. A greater police presence could help to curb some of the criminal activity.

### **Recommendations:**

- Increase police presence in the park to deter criminal activity and loitering in the park.

## **John Sevier Pool/Park**

Location: Westfield Drive

Size: 8 Acres

Classification: Neighborhood Park

### **Overview:**

John Sevier Park is located in the City of Maryville and is home to a newly renovated swimming pool, six lighted tennis courts, two lighted basketball courts, a playground, restroom building and picnic pavilion. Pool renovations completed last year included a new pool liner, perimeter fencing and lighting. The pool is well maintained and is very inviting with a mix of paved deck areas and large lawn areas for use by pool patrons. According to parks staff, the pool generates enough revenue to cover operating expenses. A large support building for the pool provides changing rooms, restrooms, concessions and offices.

### **Review:**

The site visit to John Sevier Park revealed a very well maintained facility. The park is popular for its swimming pool but is also popular to tennis enthusiasts who visit the park for the lighted omnycourts. The tennis courts and basketball courts share a common building which offers restrooms and concessions.

Close review of the park amenities revealed the pool house was not renovated at the time of the pool renovation and will require updating in the near future. The pavilion is a concrete structure that appears to have been built at the same time as the pool and pool house. Not unlike the pool house, the pavilion is dated and in need of renovation. The playground found in the park is old and in need of replacement as well. Other improvements needed in the park are resurfacing of the tennis court parking lot and the

addition of concrete bleacher pads under existing spectator bleachers. Walkways around the pool area are also in need of resurfacing.

**Recommendations:**

- Renovate existing pool house
- Renovate existing pavilion
- Install water playground
- Resurface tennis parking lot
- Install concrete bleacher pads around tennis courts
- Replace walkways in the pool area

**Louisville Point Park**

Location: Cox and Louisville Road

Size: 16 Acres

Classification: Community Park

**Overview:**

Louisville Point Park is 16 acres located on a peninsula of the Tennessee River. Owned by the Tennessee Valley Authority and leased to Blount County, the park provides open passive areas, a sand beach for swimming and a boat ramp for access to the river. Other amenities include a large pavilion, playground and two buildings. Each building provides restrooms while one is equipped with a concession stand. The park is in a natural setting and provides exceptional views of the river.

**Review:**

Louisville Point Park is supervised by a full-time resident who handles all mowing, trash collection and general maintenance. This is an ideal arrangement in that it provides for 24 hour monitoring of the park and relieves park staff from having to travel on a regular basis to the park. The rural nature of the park would otherwise make it susceptible to frequent vandalism and would require a great deal of time for staff to travel to the park to perform routine maintenance. Staff revealed that this park is highly utilized. The park lacks paved trails connecting the various park elements. In addition, the playground is old and does not meet acceptable safety and accessibility standards. The boat ramp is in good condition however, the parking areas and entry road need repaving.

**Recommendations:**

- Construct a new playground
- Construct a pedestrian perimeter loop trail and interior trails linking existing park elements
- Resurface entry road and parking lot
- Replace courtesy boat dock

**Oldfield Mini Park**

Location: Intersection of Steele and Burns Streets

Size: 1/2 Acre

Classification: Mini Park

**Overview:**

Oldfield Mini Park is a mini park located in a residential section of the City of Alcoa. The park is found just a few blocks from the new Richard Williams Park and provides a basketball goal and small swing set.

**Review:**

Oldfield Mini Park provides a small offering of activities for area residents. The condition of existing amenities in the park is fair. The lack of paved access to the playground and basketball goal limits handicap accessibility.

**Recommendations:**

- Improve access in the park

**Pearson Springs Park**

Location: Montvale Station Road

Size: 8 Acres

Classification: Neighborhood Park

**Overview:**

Pearson Springs Park is the newest park in the overall system. The park was built on the greenbelt, which provides connection to Sandy Springs Park and other parks. Pearson Springs includes a large open field area that can be divided into baseball/softball fields and soccer fields. The open playfield includes two backstops with skinned infields with an intended use for practice. The entire area is irrigated, which helps to keep turf in fair condition during the extremely heavy use that this park receives. Paved parking and a restroom building are also located in the park.

**Review:**

Pearson Springs Park has been very well received by the community and as a result is a high use facility. The park lacks any support facilities such as lighting spectator or concession areas. The restroom building was constructed with an overhang that was intended for picnic tables however the area is small and very limiting in the number of tables that can be placed there. The park sign utilized in Pearson Springs would serve as a good prototype for future parks signs in the system. The design could be modified to provide different sizes dependent upon the size of the park where the sign is to be utilized.

**Recommendations:**

- Construct a picnic pavilion
- Construct a playground
- Add spectator bleachers

**Pole Climbers Athletic Fields**

Location: Hall Road and Joule Street

Size: 3 Acres

Classification: Neighborhood Park

**Overview:**

Pole Climbers Park is owned by the City of Alcoa and provides two lighted baseball fields. It is located on one of the main thoroughfares into the city and provides an open green space within an otherwise commercial setting. The park has many large trees around the perimeter of the property.

**Review:**

Pole Climbers has had little if any capital improvements for many years. Development around the park has limited parking to a few on-street spaces, which is severely insufficient during games. The two ball fields lack any support facilities such as restrooms, concessions or dugouts and there are no paved access routes located in the park. It has been indicated that the property will likely be sold for commercial development; that is the primary reason no capital improvements have been made.

**Recommendations:**

- Relocate existing ball fields to a more appropriate location with parking and support amenities
- Maintain existing park as a passive open space

## **Richard Williams Park**

Location: Lincoln and Steele Street

Size: 1 Acre

Classification: Mini Park

**Overview:**

Richard Williams Park was under construction at the time of the planning team's site visit. Features planned for the park included a large picnic pavilion, restrooms, a walking path and a paved seating area adjacent to a small stone waterfall and pond. A parking lot for approximately six cars was also planned for the site.

**Review:**

Although the park was still under construction, features already completed in the park appeared to provide some nice amenities for park users. The seating area had a large pad with a stamped and colored asphalt finish. A paved path links the seating area to the picnic pavilion and parking lot. The restrooms were not complete at the time of the assessment.

While the amenities planned or constructed for the park will be nice for park patrons, some inadequacies do exist. The pavilion, nearly complete at the time of the inspection, is large and has the potential to accommodate large gatherings. Support parking will only accommodate approximately six cars, an incompatible number relative to the size of the pavilion.

Additionally, the waterfall and pond, which provide a nice feature near the seating area, will be very labor intensive for park maintenance crews. If at all possible, the parks and recreation commission should seek the help of a neighborhood association or adopt-a-

park group to help oversee the regular maintenance of the pond. A vegetative screen is needed to provide a buffer between the seating area and Lincoln Street. The close proximity of the seating area to the heavily traveled street minimizes the tranquility provided by the water feature.

**Recommendations:**

- Provide a vegetative buffer between the park and Lincoln Street
- Provide additional parking
- New playground

**Rock Garden Park**

Location: Harrison Street

Size: 4 Acres

Classification: Neighborhood Park

**Overview:**

Rock Garden Park is a small neighborhood park that provides a tennis court, basketball court, playground and restroom building. With many large trees throughout the park and around the perimeter it is a very inviting facility.

**Review:**

Facilities found in Rock Garden are in need of renovation or replacement. The playground is old and does not appear to meet safety or accessibility standards. Improvements are needed to the restroom building in the form of new entry doors. The lack of a small pavilion limits the ability for picnics in the park.

**Recommendations:**

- Replace existing playground
- Renovate existing restroom building
- Construct small pavilion in the park

**Sandy Springs Park**

Location: Montvale Station Road and Best Street

Size: 20 Acres

Classification: Community Park

**Overview:**

Located in the City of Maryville, Sandy Springs Park is one of the most utilized parks in the system due to the fact that it offers a wide variety of amenities. The park includes three softball fields, two basketball courts, four tennis courts, four playgrounds, a walking trail, a pavilion/restroom building, and a restroom/concession building. Sandy Springs Park is home to the Smoky Mountain Classic Softball Tournament, which is an annual event that hosts 36 softball teams from around the country.

The park is linear in nature and is bordered by the Maryville greenbelt, which stretches the entire length of the park. Amenities are located among large hardwood trees and passive open spaces.

**Review:**

The Sandy Springs Park assessment found a facility that is highly utilized by the entire community. The park is well maintained and, with the exception of the playgrounds, has good accessibility around the park. As with other fields in the system, the softball fields lack permanent outfield fencing. The practice of not installing permanent fencing is an obvious attempt to keep fields as universal as possible allowing multiple uses during various times of the year. Two of the fields are irrigated which helps maintain adequate turf conditions during times of heavy use.

Playgrounds appear to lack sufficient safety surfacing. On the day of the assessment, evidence of vandalism was present in the form of graffiti on the pavilion/restroom building. Park maintenance staff had already covered up the writing with a primer but the building still required a final coat to match existing paint. Park staff revealed this was a frequent problem in the park.

Sandy Springs Park has an abundance of earth berms that serve to separate some of the uses in the park and add visual interest throughout the various park trails. Some of the berms have been planted with large hardwood trees and shallow root systems have resulted in a lack of soil and grass. The lighted tennis and basketball courts are in need of new lighting.

**Recommendations:**

- Resurface tennis and basketball courts
- Complete landscape improvement to add vegetation to existing berms within the park
- Add outfield and sideline fencing to softball fields
- Replace playground

**South Hall Park**

Location: Franklin Street

Size: 10 Acres

Classification: Neighborhood Park

**Overview:**

South Hall Park is located in the city of Alcoa and is home to the South Hall Pool and Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center. The community center is approximately ten years old and provides a large community room, library, caterer's kitchen and small offices. Original plans for the facility included a full gymnasium; however, to date, that has not been constructed. A playground is located adjacent to the community center.

The 1,600-square-foot outdoor pool is enclosed by a perimeter fence and includes a small wading pool and concrete deck space. A pool house with restroom/changing rooms is also located adjacent to the pool.

**Review:**

South Hall Park is located on the Alcoa greenway less than one mile from Springbrook Park. The pool is the least popular pool of the three found in the system. It lacks the aes-

thetic and interactive features that are found at the Springbrook and John Sevier Pools, a fact which likely contributes to the low attendance. Additionally, residents living in close proximity to South Hall Pool are also within walking distance of the Springbrook Pool facility. The South Hall pool has not had any large capital improvements completed in many years, and interviews with staff revealed large expenditures will be unavoidable in the near future.

The park assessment revealed plans to locate basketball courts in the park. The courts are intended to replace courts that were lost in Charles Hall Park when a new school was built. Current plans do not call for the courts to be lighted. The existing playground adjacent to the community center lacks appropriate accessibility and safety measures.

The Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center is a very nice neighborhood community center. The existence of the Springbrook Park Community Center and Gymnasium in close proximity negates the need for a gymnasium at the MLK Jr. community center at this time.

**Recommendations:**

- Construct a pavilion with restroom facilities
- Demolish South Hall Pool

**Springbrook Park**

Location: Springbrook Road

Size: 62 Acres

Classification: Community Park

**Overview:**

Springbrook Park is located in the City of Alcoa adjacent to Alcoa Elementary and Middle Schools. The park is 62 acres in size and provides a mix of passive and active elements. Springbrook Park is popular with area residents for a number of reasons including the newly renovated swimming pool, the 1.4 miles of lighted and paved walking trails and the Springbrook Recreation Center, located in the park. Other attractions include four lighted tennis courts, two outdoor basketball courts, two playgrounds, four picnic pavilions and a lighted baseball/softball field. The park property stretches for several city blocks providing active elements such as the swimming pool at one end and the recreation center, ball field and tennis courts at the other. The two active ends of the park are connected by a large expanse of passive open space with the lighted walking trail. A natural spring found in the park serves to feed a creek and duck pond.

**Review:**

Springbrook Park is one of the best assets in the community of Alcoa. Review of the facilities found that a \$900,000 renovation project had recently been completed on the swimming pool providing a much-needed update. The Springbrook Recreation Center also received improvements with a new roof added in late 2003. Maintenance in the park is very good with all facilities displaying a consistent level of upkeep and cleanliness. While some facilities have received needed renovations in recent times, others are in poor condition.

The pool house located adjacent to the pool is a functional building with changing rooms, a concession area, restrooms, office space and a covered picnic area. The building is in poor condition and in need of renovations and repairs. The largest problem with the building is a leaky roof. On the day of the site assessment, water was leaking through the roof and running down the walls in various sections of the building. Standing water was found in several areas. The exterior of the building showed problems with decaying soffit and fascia boards, a direct result of the poor roof condition.

Rooms located on the interior of the pool house are also in need of renovation and repair. Showers located in the changing rooms are in very poor condition and appear to be inoperable. The concession area is outdated and lacks features consistent with modern day concession buildings. While the building appears to have a good functional relationship with the pool, a complete renovation would make this feature a true asset like so many others in the park.

The Springbrook Recreation Center is a reuse of a former school. The center provides a full gymnasium and programming space for various recreation activities. A portion of the building is dedicated to the Kiddie Korner Pre-School program. In the basement of the facility are storage rooms and locker facilities that are accessible via stairs or doors leading outside to the park. With the exception of the Kiddie Korner program space, all program rooms are located on the second floor with only stairway access. The windows in the center are original and are in need of replacement as are the doors. Reports from citizens and staff revealed the need to replace the gymnasium floor. Prior to the roof replacement, water damage caused some warping of the floor. Additionally, the age and number of times the floor has been stripped and refinished have eliminated the ability to refinish the floor again. Restrooms in the facility are also in need of renovation.

The ball field located adjacent to the recreation center is a field typical of others found in the park system. The field has been built using temporary fencing around the outfield. No spectator seating or accessible walkways are found around the field although lights offer opportunities for night play. A concession building located on the outside of the recreation center serves park users. A stand-alone building and pavilion provide restrooms and covered picnic areas for the ball field and park visitors.

Signage in the park was very old and in need of replacement. A new sign standard similar to that used in the new Pearson Springs Park should be incorporated into Springbrook Park.

**Recommendations:**

- A renovation of the pool house should be completed. Improvements to the exterior should include a new roof, soffit, fascia, paint, windows and doors. Interior improvements should include renovated changing rooms, restrooms and concession areas.
- The Springbrook Recreation Center should receive renovations in the form of a new gymnasium floor, windows and doors and updated restrooms.
- Renovate the ball field to include new fencing, covered dugouts, spectator seating and improved access.
- New park signage.

## **Additional Recommendations**

Assessments, public input, and standards developed by the community revealed that the Maryville-Alcoa-Blount County region has a good mix of recreation facilities. Recent renovations to two of the community's pools have made them a popular destination point for people in the area. Sandy Springs Park continues to draw teams from all around the country for the Smoky Mountain Classic and the Greenbelt system is one of the finest in the state with lighted trails linking parks from Maryville to Alcoa.

Elements missing in the current park system include larger community parks with athletic fields and large expanses of open space. Also missing are skate parks that cater to individuals not into team sports. Indoor facilities for swimming and tennis are some of the other features that are becoming more commonplace in today's most sought-after communities. Recommendations in this master plan address these facility needs as well as look at improvements to existing facilities. The following recommendations provide information as to new facilities that should be developed over the next ten years.

## **Land Acquisition**

Critical to the development of new parks will be the acquisition of land. Additional park property is needed in the outlying areas of the county for both passive and active use. The interview process revealed several properties currently set aside for future park development. The city of Alcoa owns approximately nine acres on Springbrook Road, referred to as the Burris Property. Also owned by the City of Alcoa is a one-acre parcel on the north side of the city which has been planned for passive use. While these parcels will serve to supplement the parks in the Alcoa area, additional properties will be needed in other areas of the county.

In addition to uncovering properties owned by the City of Alcoa, the master plan process revealed the availability of land currently owned by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Several properties have been identified by the TVA for potential park use. These lands are invaluable because of their natural settings and picturesque views along Fort Loudoun Lake. Additionally, the ability to secure a low cost lease on the land would alleviate the need for the county to spend funds on property acquisition. Many parcels have been identified. Two parcels that are of most interest to the planning team are found northwest of Alcoa. These properties are 83.5 and 70.5 acres and are in close proximity to one another offering the potential to link them via a greenway trail. Both parcels are on the waterfront and their location in the county would provide some public access passive recreation opportunities to residents in the area. These parcels are the largest publicly controlled lands on the reservoir and have been identified by TVA as potential marina locations. Access to the properties are available via public roads and a railroad right-of-way that was turned over to TVA. This same railroad right-of-way provides the potential link between the two properties.

The need for active parks in the outlying areas will require the acquisition of land by the county for development. A 15-acre parcel has already been set aside for a future park development at the planned Carpenter's High School location on Huffstetler Road. A master plan developed for this property has identified picnic pavilions, passive walking trails, a practice soccer/little league baseball field, and an outdoor basketball court. The

development of this park on the southwest side of Maryville will help to alleviate shortages for park facilities in this area. If, however, additional land is available, it should be purchased for a wider range of recreation opportunities including tennis courts, a playground and additional athletic practice fields.

Future land acquisitions should occur in areas south and east of Maryville and Alcoa where demographic research revealed the highest growth areas exist. One parcel, no less than 30 acres, should be acquired in the south end of the county for the development of a community park to serve residents in this region. A larger parcel should be acquired in the eastern part of the county for the development of a larger regional park. Ideally, the property should be no less than 100 acres in size. If larger tracts are available, they should be considered for the ability to offer future expansion or to provide greater separation between park elements. If tracts of 80 acres or more are not available, then two smaller tracts in close proximity to one another should be acquired. The ability to link these parcels via a greenway should be a high priority in the final decision process. The addition of the parcels discussed above would add an estimated 309 acres of passive and active park land to the Maryville-Alcoa-Blount County park system. Current land deficiencies call for an additional 409 acres. With the expansion of the greenway and the addition of the properties described above, the county could achieve their goal. Future lands would need to be acquired to meet the population growth projected through 2014.

### **Community Parks**

The desire to see the development of new facilities to accommodate the many recreation leagues that exist in the community as well as to accommodate non-team-based recreation enthusiasts has directed recommendations for new park and greenway development. The property acquisitions described above would bring four new community parks into the system not including the small parks planned by the City of Alcoa. Two of the four parks will not require land acquisition, but the facilities that they will provide do not include those most desired by the community. The following provides recommendations that should be considered for each new park. **Figure 6.14** provides a look at the service areas of recommended parks in conjunction with service areas of existing parks. Park locations south and east of Maryville and Alcoa are approximate. New parks in those areas will be dependent on the availability of land.

#### *Lake Loudoun Community Park*

The need for additional recreation opportunities in the northwest portion of the county and the availability of TVA land for recreation purposes brings a recommendation for a passive community park. Two parcels of land are located on Lake Loudoun totaling 154 acres. TVA has identified this area as a potential marina location. A master plan should be completed and the park developed to include interpretive nature trails, fishing piers, boat launch, restroom and picnic facilities. A boat marina should be given consideration for the revenue potential that exists with such a facility. The railroad right of way should be utilized to provide connection between the two parcels and to connect the park to other parks in the system.

*Carpenter's School Community Park*

The future site of Carpenter's High School has already been identified for a 15- acre park. Elements included in the park master plan are a multi-purpose soccer/baseball practice field, picnic pavilions, a basketball court, parking and a one-mile loop trail. If possible, additional land should be secured to allow for additional practice fields, a playground and tennis courts. If additional land is not available, a joint use agreement should be established to allow for the joint use of tennis courts and athletic courts to be developed on the school site. Joint use can be in exchange for development dollars to build the facilities.

*Southeast Community Park*

A community park is needed in the southeast end of the county to serve residents of Townsend, Walland and the surrounding region. The park should be a minimum of 30 acres and include a mix of active and passive park elements. A park master plan should be completed inclusive of the following elements:

- Multi-purpose field
- ADA compliant playground
- Restroom building
- Picnic pavilion
- Parking
- Walking trail
- Tennis courts
- Basketball courts

*East Side Community Park*

The east side community park should be a minimum of 100 acres and should provide tournament-level facilities for adult softball, soccer, tennis and swimming. The east side community park should be accessible to residents of Maryville, Alcoa and Blount County. A recreation center should be located in the park to provide indoor competition and family aquatic facilities. In addition to aquatics, the facility should include meeting space, programming space, offices, an indoor track, weight training, cardio training, gymnasiums and support facilities such as storage and mechanical rooms. A steering committee should be formed to help develop a program that more clearly defines the spaces desired for the new center. A building approximately 70,000 square feet in size would be large enough to accommodate the elements described above depending on the desired number of office and meeting rooms. Consideration should be given to allowing future expansion of the center to accommodate indoor tennis. Public meetings and the steering committee workshop identified indoor tennis as a high priority. However, results from the random survey did not place a high priority on indoor tennis. At the point in time that funding is available and other higher priority needs have been met, an indoor tennis complex should be constructed.

In addition to a 5-field adult softball complex and 10-field soccer complex, the community's first skate park should be an element of the park. Support facilities such as pavilions, playgrounds and walking trails should also be provided.

## **Athletic Fields**

The completion of public input and review of the NRPA and citizen steering committee standards revealed a need for additional athletic fields. Representatives of soccer, baseball/softball, rugby and football all expressed a need for more game and practice facilities. In order to meet the needs of these sports, renovations have been recommended at existing athletic facilities. New facilities have been recommended throughout the county to help alleviate the practice and game field shortages. A new 5-field adult softball complex is recommended at a new community park. Soccer, rugby and football enthusiasts should have their needs met at one of two new athletic field complexes. The City of Alcoa has planned for the development of soccer fields on the Burrus Property, and a new 10-field complex is recommended at a new community park. In addition, joint facility agreements should be worked out with the school system to make better use of athletic fields in those locations. The renovation of existing fields, development of new fields and increased use of existing school fields should help to alleviate current field shortages and provide better recreation services to the community.

## **Playgrounds**

As noted earlier in the general park evaluations and observations, playgrounds found throughout the park system require replacement due to age, condition, safety concerns, accessibility or some combination of these elements. The planning team has recommended the replacement of play structures in many parks. Cost estimates for new parks have included the provision of rubber surfacing underneath all play structures. Although the initial cost of rubber surfacing is much higher than other forms, the long-term maintenance and replacement costs will help offset the initial investment. A variety of playgrounds that meet the needs of different age groups should be utilized around the community.

## **Skate Park**

Skate park development is a fast growing trend in the recreation field and provides an individual-based recreation activity for users not involved in team sports. Skate park design takes on many levels from very simple flat paved surfaces with prefabricated elements to open bowls with many diverse elevations and landforms. Elements that may be included in a skate park are a mini ramp, fly box, grind rails, ledges, banks, spines, vertical ramps and pyramids. It will be necessary for the MAB Commission to determine the level of park they are going to provide for area residents. Lack of involvement in the design process by the primary users could result in the failed success of a new park. The Commission should seek the help of a professional skate park designer to ensure proper design and construction and the ultimate success of the park. Safety precautions must be made by the Commission including proper design and equipment, limit of liability signs and park rules signs.

A resource and potential partner for operations of the skate parks is Action Park Alliance (APA). The Action Park Alliance joins with cities and counties in public-private partnerships to provide complete supervision for municipal parks designed and built for action

sports such as skateboarding, BMX biking, and inline skating. In order for APA to consider partnering with a municipality, the facility must be equipped with the following:

- Fencing
- Lights
- Support amenities (restrooms, water fountain, public phone)
- Building to house park office and pro shop

The APA operates the facility once the community has funded development. In return, the APA carries complete insurance coverage, furnishes the pro shop, maintains the park, provides the staff and conducts program activities.

### **Greenways**

Although the term Greenway encompasses a variety of concepts, most greenway projects share some common elements. Greenways are linear parks or corridors. They are often developed from unused pieces of land such as abandoned railroad tracks, utility easements or floodplains. They frequently follow some outstanding natural feature such as a stream or riverbank. Greenways are even developed in urban settings to create, in the heart of a community, a green oasis. They can be used to link existing parks or join residential neighborhoods to schools and shopping. Imaginative and energetic communities can create greenways of almost any description to provide safe and secure places for people to walk, jog, bicycle or simply enjoy the landscape.

Maryville, Alcoa and Blount County have been actively developing a greenway system known around the community as the Greenbelt. The Greenbelt is nine miles of lighted, paved trails that links community elements such as parks, schools and downtown Maryville and Alcoa together. An additional three miles of greenbelt connecting spurs access downtown and parks not adjacent to the trail. The Greenbelt has been highly successful in the community and has created the desire for more. In addition to the Greenbelt in Maryville and Alcoa, the city of Townsend has also developed five miles of paved trails.

Expanding the trail network came out as a high priority in the public input forums of the master plan. The planning team analyzed existing and proposed trail routes that have been identified by the cities of Maryville and Alcoa and looked for opportunities to expand the system. Utilizing future trail routes already developed by the City of Alcoa and trail opportunities identified in discussions with TVA, the planning team recommends the development of 20 miles of greenway trails. Added to trails that already exist in the community, this would bring the trail total to approximately 40 miles. The following provides a description of the various proposed greenway phases.

#### *Culton Creek (Phase I, II, III)*

The Culton Creek section of the greenway has been identified by the City of Alcoa and is approximately 1.85 miles in length. This section of the greenway would provide residents on the west side of the U.S. 129 bypass with a connection to the Springbrook Corporate Center trail. The Springbrook Corporate Center trail is already linked to the remainder of the Greenbelt taking users into the Cities of Alcoa and Maryville.

*Hunt Road Greenway Extension*

The Hunt Road Greenway extension has been identified by the City of Alcoa as a potential link from Springbrook Park to McGhee Tyson Airport. The total length of this trail segment is .75 miles.

*N. Wright Road Greenway Extension*

Also identified by the City of Alcoa, the N. Wright Road Extension is 2.4 miles in length and offers expanded trail opportunities from Springbrook Park to the north part of the city of Alcoa.

*Pistol Creek (Phase III) and Pistol Creek Extension*

Also proposed by the City of Alcoa, the Pistol Creek section of greenway is 2.85 miles and would link the existing Clayton Trail to the existing Greenbelt trail. In addition, the new Pistol Creek section would link residents to the proposed Williams Mill Park, which is a passive park located on the Clayton Trail.

*Culton Creek (Phase III) to Louisville Point Park*

Information from TVA identified the existence of an abandoned railroad line that is located along the northern boundary of Blount County. This rail line links many TVA properties together along Lake Loudoun. An existing TVA easement running from the Culton Creek area north to Lake Loudoun offers an opportunity to link residents of Maryville and Alcoa to Louisville Point Park via a greenway trail. This trail segment would be approximately 5.25 miles.

*Louisville Point Park to Passive Community Park (Proposed)*

Following the railroad line identified by TVA this trail would link Louisville Point Park to the proposed passive community park to the west on Lake Loudon. The approximate trail length is 4 miles.

*Passive Community Park to Friendsville*

Continuing along the railroad line, this segment of trail would link residents of Friendsville to the new passive community park, Louisville Point Park and Alcoa and Maryville beyond. The proposed trail length for this segment is 2.5 miles.

The opportunity to link these communities together via a greenway with very little property acquisition is one that can not be overlooked. The estimated acreage associated with 20 miles of trail would add an additional 70 acres of passive green space. Future opportunities also exist to link Louisville Point Park to TVA properties located to the east. **Figure 6.15** provides a look at the existing and proposed trail routes throughout the county.

## **Facility Design Standards**

The basis for creating a strong park facility image is the utilization of design guidelines and standards that allow a visitor to immediately identify a park by the elements that are present there. Observations made during individual park assessments revealed the lack of common elements throughout the park system. Obviously the ability to update

all parks with consistent park elements is an expensive investment and one that can take years to implement if a strong capital improvement program is not in place. Park design standards can be as simple as having a common sign that is present in every park or, for a much stronger approach, standards can be carried to every level of the park. The most common types of standardization include:

- Architectural
- Athletic Amenity Standards
- General Site Amenity Standards
- Parking and Circulation Standards
- Signage and Promotional Materials Standards

#### *Architectural*

Architectural standards apply to the built structures within a park and dictate such elements as construction materials, roofing materials, paint colors, hardware selections and furnishings. While a strong system does not require that every structure look exactly the same, using some combination of the same building materials and colors serves to create an identity for the park structures.

#### *Athletic Amenity Standards*

Athletic amenity standards relate to backstops/dugouts, bleachers, fencing gates, lighting, scorer's stands and elements that make up the athletic fields. Using the same dimensions, fencing colors, and light fixtures helps to further strengthen a system's image.

#### *General Site Amenity Standards*

Probably the easiest and most cost feasible to implement are the general site amenity standards. General site amenity standards include such things as fencing and gates, furniture, irrigation, landscape planting, lighting, and playgrounds. In developing a standardization package for park site amenities, a system should provide elements that are by the same product supplier, that are of the same color scheme and that are used in similar fashions throughout the park system. Using the same plant materials at park entrances and around key park features such as pavilions or restroom buildings is another method to help create an identity for the system.

#### *Parking and Circulation Standards*

Parking and circulation standards relate to distances, parking, paving, roads, walks/trails. These standards help dictate the parameters for layout of new or redeveloped existing parks. Separating incompatible activities and locating compatible activities in close proximity should be a high priority. Other factors to consider are:

- Shade for picnic areas during 11:00 am and 5:00 pm
- Maximum buildable slope of 20% with 2-15% desirable
- Enhanced visual experience by coordination of all aspects of the park environment with all man-made elements relating to the resource, either blending with it or enhancing it
- A proper balance of wooded and open space
- Minimizing offensive sounds and smells through careful site selection
- Enhancing pleasant smells with certain plant materials

When looking at layouts and dimensions the following should be considered:

- Parking screened from roads and activity areas with plants or by grading
- Right-angled parking for the greatest space efficiency
- Overflow parking provided on stabilized turf, where practical
- Wheel stops installed where parking spaces abut sidewalks

#### *Signage and Promotional Materials Standards*

Consistent signage design readily identifies a facility as part of the county's park system. The design of the signage, the mounting materials and materials used should be chosen, then applied at all park locations. Similarly, all promotional materials should tie in with the signage design, at least utilizing a consistent logo and color scheme. As mentioned in the individual park assessments, the Pearson Springs signage is very attractive and could be adopted as the prototype. A budget number has been assigned to each park to allow for new signage.

It is the recommendation of the planning team that the Maryville-Alcoa-Blount County Parks and Recreation Commission initiate a design standard program that places similar design elements in every park. As existing parks are renovated and new parks are developed, the adopted standards should be utilized.

### **Administrative and Facility Maintenance Facilities**

Recommendations contained in this master plan have called for the addition of administrative and maintenance staff. The current administrative office located adjacent to the Everett Recreation Center has limited storage and office space for future growth. The addition of administrative and program staff will require an expansion of the existing office. A gravel lot located behind the building provides the perfect opportunity for a building expansion. A planning workshop should be conducted as part of the design process to determine the size and use of the new addition.

The current maintenance facility utilized by the maintenance superintendent and staff is leased from the City of Alcoa. Although the central location of the building is ideal for maintaining parks, the age, lack of covered space and storage make the facility less than adequate. A new maintenance facility is needed in a central location to accommodate maintenance staff. The recommendation to build a large regional park east of Maryville and Alcoa should include the construction of a maintenance facility to house on site maintenance staff. The size and high use of a regional park like the one recommended will require fulltime, dedicated staff to oversee daily maintenance.